Bridging the Great Divide: An Exploration of Postmodernism in the Guitar Music of Nigel Westlake

Melissa Claire Fitzgerald

Edith Cowan University

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Bridging the Great Divide: 
An Exploration of Postmodernism 
in the Guitar Music of Nigel Westlake

A series of studio recordings and live performances of 
Nigel Westlake’s guitar works

— and —

An exegesis

This thesis is presented for the degree of 
Doctor of Philosophy (Performing Arts)

Melissa Claire Fitzgerald

Edith Cowan University 
Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts

2017
Abstract

This research explores the tension between ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ musical styles in eight significant works of guitar music by Australian composer Nigel Westlake; namely Antarctica, Songs from the Forest, The Hinchinbrook Riffs, Six Fish, Shadow Dances, Shards of Jaisalmer, Jovian Moons, and Mosstrooper Peak. Through detailed analysis and recorded musical performances, consideration is given to the extent that these works bridge the aesthetic divide identified by Adorno, Jameson, Huyssen, and others; exploring their potential conformity to notions of postmodernity in music. The argument is advanced that Westlake has created a musical language that simultaneously combines sophistication and mainstream appeal. Illumination is made of many significant details of Westlake’s guitar music—including rock guitar techniques, harmonic formulations from popular music, and the extensive use of the more esoteric idiom of octatonicism—which provide a foundation for future analysis, evaluation, and performance of Westlake’s music. The creative research component comprises two audio CDs containing edited studio recordings of six works featuring the classical guitar in both a solo and ensemble setting, as well as documentation of other live performances.
Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

1) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

2) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis;

3) contain any defamatory material;

4) contain any data that has not been collected in a manner consistent with ethics approval.

Melissa Fitzgerald
July 17, 2017
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1 Introduction

In 2000, Nigel Westlake encapsulated the dilemma facing modern composers, and the difficulty of striking a balance between commercial and aesthetic demands:

...what percentage of a given population has the slightest interest in the work of the ‘arthouse’ composer community? So much energy has been spent on turning audience alienation into an artform that composers have only themselves to blame...[If] it would be impossible to continue working as a full-time composer if I didn’t pursue my own commercial agenda in the form of film music. This functional use of my work also helps me to clarify my position in the community as one that has some relevance, and that allows me the freedom to indulge my interests in concert music.¹

Similarly, highly respected Australian guitarist and educator Timothy Kain describes Nigel Westlake’s music in terms that raise key issues in contemporary classical music, issues which motivate and enliven this study. He remarks on Westlake’s blending of styles from ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ cultures, and sees the guitar as uniquely positioned to cross over between these two opposed musical styles. In Kain’s view (as expressed in an interview with the current author), Westlake’s musical palette imbues his compositions with both a complexity that appeals to educated audiences, and also a simplicity and instant accessibility that engages listeners who prefer popular musical styles:

Westlake’s guitar music has a very wide appeal without being superficial. It has a lot of depth as well as immediate appeal... As a composer he sits in a really interesting spot in contemporary music—and that is coincidentally where the guitar itself also sits as an instrument. I think maybe this is where there is a kind of meeting of minds, that he’s a completely well-grounded, if you like, contemporary conventional classical musician, but at the same time completely at home in popular music.²

Nigel Westlake appears to acknowledge that there is a divide between elite and popular culture, believing that in order to pursue his interests as a ‘classical’ composer, he must also work in the popular music industry to survive and promote himself. To some extent, Westlake’s comments suggest that he does not see any overlap between the two worlds. In contrast, Kain’s comment about Westlake’s music suggests that he believes Westlake can comfortably cross between elite and popular styles, or even blend the two together in order to create music which has “depth as well as immediate appeal.”³ These two quotes both highlight the relationship between high and low culture music, and considering Kain’s opinion, question whether the divide between elite and popular is still relevant.

One characteristic of postmodernism is the breaking down of the divide between elite and popular culture. In this dissertation, ‘postmodern’ is used in the sense described by Jameson:

---

² Timothy Kain, interview by Melissa Fitzgerald, June 11, 2014. See Appendix I.
³ Ibid.
cultural expression of an economic and social phase where the market has invaded every part of our lives, including the cultural realm.\(^4\)

The principal purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the roles played by elite and popular culture in Nigel Westlake’s guitar music, to see if there is still a meaningful divide between high and low culture, or simply a seamless blend, and if there is a difference, to investigate how and why Westlake might use them.

In order to do this, my research follows a systematic study of Westlake’s guitar work, from the perspectives of both performer and scholar. This project consists of a series of studio recordings, recitals, and this dissertation.

1.1 Elite and Popular Music: The ‘Great Divide’

Cultural theorists have drawn a distinction between elite and popular styles for much of the history of Western music. Amongst the most influential twentieth-century theorists to acknowledge this distinction are Theodor Adorno, Andreas Huyssen, and Fredric Jameson.

The ‘Great Divide,’ a term coined by Andreas Huyssen, describes the long-standing categorical distinction between elite and popular musical styles.\(^5\) In his Philosophy of Modern Music, Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) argues that elite music is deliberately difficult to understand, requiring the concentration of an educated and privileged listener. Through its deliberately ‘difficult’ language it is protecting itself from becoming a commodity like popular music. In Adorno’s view, popular music (which encompasses jazz) is a commodity “adjusted to mass culture by means of calculated feeble-mindedness,”\(^6\) characterised by simplicity, syncopation, danceable rhythms, and repetition. He viewed the latter as a direct result of technology in the form of film, radio, and singing commercials, which led to the exploitation of mass-produced, easily-consumable music. Adorno believed that the consequences of this commodification of music were the dumbing down of culture and the repudiation of elite music, which was not so immediately approachable. He also implicates music publishers and distributors, who restrict freedom of choice and dictate what is to be played to the masses, further influencing what will become popular. Adorno believed that these two sides of the Great Divide were two separate entities, completely unbridgeable:

They do not hang together in such a way that the lower could serve as a sort of popular introduction to the higher, or that the higher could renew its lost collective strength by borrowing from the lower…Between incomprehensibility and inescapability, there is no third way; the situation has polarised itself into extremes which actually meet. There is no room between them for the ‘individual.’\(^7\)

---


Adorno’s remark that the “extremes actually meet” means that the music is either popular or elite, and there is no opportunity for blending of the two styles—in effect, it is either black or white, with no grey area in between.

Jameson shares Adorno’s views on the destructive connection between capitalistic consumerism and the commodification of music in a postmodern society. He sees postmodernism as a penetration of consumerism into every aspect of society, including culture. Jameson argues that art in a postmodern capitalist society lacks depth and takes the form of low quality ‘kitsch’ driven by profit. He is especially critical of the popular music industry that emerged in the 1960s during the ‘golden age’ of capitalism. Where music was once complex, requiring repeated listening or detailed analysis to truly understand (elite music), it has become something that can be readily consumed by all, easily understood, and easily replicated (popular music, or ‘light art’). In this way, Jameson sees the same end result as Adorno in the commodification of music: a separation between ‘true’ art, which can only be appreciated by the cultural elite, and a second, more popular style, which is easily consumable by the masses. It is easy to create the next popular music hit. However, the number one song of a rock band can only remain popular for a short time before being supplanted by ‘the next big thing.’ Many works of art are now produced with a specific aesthetic in mind: something mass-produced, accepted quickly and willingly by a broad audience, and easily disposed of once it ceases to be popular. In contrast to art prior to the postmodern era, which was seen as something long lasting and of substance, Jameson suggests that art as a commodity becomes a means to an end, rather than an end in itself:

It no longer has any qualitative value in itself, but only insofar as it can be ‘used’: various forms of an activity lose their immanent intrinsic satisfactions as activity.

Not all agree with Adorno’s conclusion that there can be no reconciliation between elite and popular cultures. In After The Great Divide, Andreas Huyssen acknowledges Adorno’s view on the separation between high and low culture, but believes that over time:

The boundaries between high art and mass culture have become increasingly blurred, and we should begin to see that process as one of opportunity rather than lamenting loss of quality and failure of nerve.

---

8 Jameson, “Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture,” 137.
9 In other words, all that exists in the artwork can only be observed or heard by looking at the surface; there is nothing more to the artwork than meets the eye.
11 The golden age of capitalism began after the end of World War II and lasted until the 1970s.
15 Huyssen, After the Great Divide, ix.
Despite believing that commodification of music results in a separation between elite and mass culture, Jameson also maintains that a fundamental feature of postmodernism is the removal of the Great Divide, and the creation of new art infused with the low culture styles that Adorno disparaged, or in the words of Bennett and Kouvaras “the dismantling of the authentic art/popular culture hierarchy.”

The views of Jameson, Adorno, and Huyssen are reasonable enough in regards to the distinction between high and low culture. However, it is possible to create music in a postmodern society that bridges the Great Divide without being drawn into the negative connotations of postmodernism highlighted by Adorno and Jameson. Extensive discussions on the manifestations of postmodernism in Australian music have been published by Linda Kouvaras and David Bennett. One describes “the programmatic cultivation of pastiche, quotation, stylistic eclecticism and disunity; the critique of authenticity, creativity and originality; the ‘nostalgia mode’ … and the decenring of Western canons of ‘high culture’.” However, the notion of postmodernism that will be dealt with in this dissertation is that of Jameson.

Composers such as Westlake have created a variety of works that sit on both sides of the spectrum, even blurring the line of the Great Divide—not for the purpose of creating a mass-culture hit-sensation, but simply because they are “aesthetically pleasing” [to the composer]. The various perspectives of Adorno, Jameson, and Huyssen, along with Kain's observations, suggest three questions that arise in the context of Westlake’s guitar music, and which undergird this research:

1. What aspects of Westlake's music reflect high/low culture?
2. To what extent and in what respect is the ‘Great Divide’ relevant to Westlake’s music?
3. In what sense might Westlake’s music be ‘postmodern’ in Jameson’s sense? (Or in any other sense?)

Throughout this thesis, the terms ‘elite,’ ‘accessible,’ ‘high culture,’ and ‘low culture’ are frequently used. Elite and high culture both refer to music that is not intended for the mass market. On the opposite end of the spectrum, accessible and low culture both refer to music that is easily understood by a wide audience, and in the case of popular and rock musical styles, deliberately

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created for a mass market. Although these words form binary pairs, creating the impression of a ‘black or white’ situation, it should be acknowledged that all music falls on a spectrum between these extremes. Moreover, in using these terms, no value judgement is implied.

1.2 Postmodern Music
There are many facets to postmodern music, and Jonathan Kramer has listed some of the salient features that he believes characterise a piece of music as ‘postmodern.’ These include:

1. music containing aspects of both rejection and continuation of modernism;
2. seeking to break down barriers between ‘high’ and ‘low’ styles;
3. showing disdain for structural unity;
4. refusing to accept the distinction between elite and popular values;
5. avoiding totalising forms; and
6. encompassing pluralism and eclecticism.21

Daniel Albright has also summarised the tendencies of musical postmodernism.22 One of Albright’s tendencies of particular relevance to Westlake’s music is polystylism. Albright writes, “a polystylist may combine Gregorian chant, tuneful tonalism, and obnoxious dissonances into a single composition, in order to create incongruities that deny the propriety or the tenability of any single style.”23 Westlake has grown up with exposure to a broad musical palette, and takes inspiration from these styles in the process of composing his own music.

Without pigeonholing Westlake’s music, his guitar works can be understood as displaying multiple postmodern characteristics, and serve as an ideal study of the relationship between high and low styles for two main reasons: first, the guitar has arguably always been inherently a ‘crossover’ instrument;24 and second, Westlake’s formative musical experiences come from both sides of the divide. Before examining his music in detail it will be helpful, therefore, to consider these two factors further.

1.3 The Rise of the Classical Guitar in Australia
The guitar has been utilised in amateur and professional music-making for hundreds of years, but it has only been over the last fifty years that the classical guitar has become a popular instrument in Australia, with a significant increase in the number of performers and composers exploiting its unique qualities. The guitar has an ability to assume a harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, or blended

23 The other tendencies of postmodernism as suggested by Albright include bricolage and randomness. See: Albright, Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources, 12-13.
24 The term ‘crossover’ refers to the ability to play music of a wide range of styles. Arguably, the guitar is one of the few instruments that can be seen across a wide range of musical styles, from Baroque repertoire through to jazz and progressive rock.
musical role—a trait shared with keyboard instruments, harp, and tuned percussion. The guitar’s musical flexibility, combined with its wide timbral palette, have possibly contributed to its ability to traverse many different genres and styles. The development of the electric guitar and its widespread use in rock and jazz bands has also explosively broadened the guitar’s popularity. Likewise, the accessibility of the guitar in accompanying popular song has ensured its relevance in popular culture.

Since arriving on Australian shores in the early days of the colony, the guitar has been used across a wide range of styles and as an instrument capable of crossing the divide between high and low culture. Angelina Ellis has traced the history of the guitar in Australia from the 1830s to the present. At that time, a large number of British people were emigrating to Australia, and they brought the musical culture of Great Britain with them. While the piano was popular, the guitar’s portability made it an inexpensive alternative. In fact, the guitar is recorded as having been used as an accompaniment to song and dance on the long boat journey from England to Australia in the 1830s.25

According to Ellis, there is little information on the guitar in nineteenth-century Australia, perhaps because the guitar was not as prized a possession as the piano. However, a journal of a young girl living in colonial New South Wales describes learning the guitar as both an accompaniment instrument and a solo instrument. In the 1890s, immigrants from Italy and America who were multi-instrumentalists began arriving in New South Wales. Performers on the banjo, mandolin and guitar, they began to offer lessons in these various string instruments. At this time, the guitar was still largely seen as an instrument for accompanying folk songs. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, English guitarist Ernest Shand26 travelled to Australia and delighted audiences with his solo guitar playing.27 This is perhaps the first instance of ‘elite’ guitar repertoire being performed in Australia.

It was not until after World War II that the guitar as an elite solo instrument became more firmly established in Australia, a tradition in which the instrument became designated as the ‘classical guitar.’28 In 1939, Len Williams (father of prominent Australian guitarist John Williams)

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28 In late-eighteenth century America, the six-string guitar was referred to as the ‘Spanish guitar.’ This is different to the ‘English guitar,’ which had steel strings, a different tuning, and was played with a plectrum. The terminology arose out of a need to distinguish the elite European solo tradition from the ‘English style.’ See: Jeffrey J. Noonan, “Guitar,” Grove Music Online, The Grove Dictionary of American Music, 2nd edition, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed March 14, 2017, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.ecu.edu.au/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2256667. In the early twentieth century, ‘Spanish guitar’ was replaced by the term ‘classical guitar,’ again appearing from the need to distinguish between elite classical music, and emerging contemporary styles. In his book on the history of the guitar in America, David Noonan cites a quote from George Krick,
emigrated with his family. Not long after, he opened a studio in Melbourne and taught classical and jazz styles, which attracted many students.\(^29\) One such student was Melburnian Sadie Bishop, who would go on to become an important figure in elevating the status of the classical guitar in Australia. Although initially interested in jazz, Bishop was captivated by the classical guitar and studied with Len for several years until the Williams family returned to England in 1952.\(^30\) According to Sadie Bishop: “Williams was ‘the pioneer of the instrument in Melbourne’ - there was no [classical] guitar scene to speak of before Len arrived.”\(^31\) During the years that Len ran his home studio, guitar societies began to form around the country. Despite this growth in popularity, with the exception of Len and John Williams and Sadie Bishop, there were still very few Australian residents who were well trained in classical guitar. Because of Australia’s geographical isolation from the rest of the world, there were also very few artists at the time who made the long journey to Australia to perform concerts.\(^32\)

Perhaps the defining moment for the classical guitar in Australia occurred when Andres Segovia toured the continent for the first time in 1961.\(^33\) He was booked to give eight concerts in all the major capital cities, all of which sold out almost immediately.\(^34\) Extra concerts were arranged to meet the demand, which also sold out promptly, and led to a second tour in 1964.\(^35\) Ellis believes that Segovia’s successes proved to the Australian public that the classical guitar was an instrument worthy of a concert hall stage, as much as was the piano or orchestral instruments.\(^36\) Segovia’s popularity in Australia led to more classical guitarists making the long journey to Australia. Between 1965 and 1975, many other internationally-renowned guitarists, including Alirio Diaz and John Williams, toured the country.
Although the guitar experienced a relatively late rise in popularity, composition was alive in Australia in the post World War II environment. Peter Sculthorpe, Richard Meale, and Nigel Butterley are several of the composers exhibiting a large compositional output during this time. The Whitlam Government years (1972-1975) were a major turning point for the arts. The creation of the Australia Council for the Arts saw a significant funding increase for music, supporting an influx of touring artists, and the creation of new opportunities for Australian composers and performers through commissions and programs like Musica Viva. From the 1980s, there were many composers rising to prominence, including Graeme Koehne, Carl Vine, Ross Edwards, Matthew Hindson, and Nigel Westlake. All of these favourable conditions in the 1970s form the contextual background to Sadie Bishop's appointment as guitar teacher, first at the Melbourne Conservatorium and later at the Canberra School of Music. In addition to the guitar's inclusion in tertiary courses, the number of professional classical guitarists in Australia has increased dramatically over the past thirty years. Many of these performers have become internationally recognized and are active in the industry performing concerts, winning competitions, recording albums, and even commissioning new works. John Williams is arguably among the most famous, and has generally been regarded as an ‘Australian’ classical guitarist despite his family’s return to England. In addition to Williams, other highly-acclaimed guitarists include (in no particular order): Timothy Kain, Craig Ogden, Slava and Leonard Grigoryan, Karin Schaupp, Toniè Field, Gareth Koch, Jonathan Paget, Anthony Garcia, and Alexander Tsiboulski. These performers are by no means the only successful Australian solo classical guitarists, but a small cross-section of an ever-growing number. Some of these guitarists are recognised as crossover artists, particularly the Grigoryans, Schaupp, and Field, with projects spanning genres including pop, jazz, and mixed-media. The guitar ensemble has also become a popular fixture in Australian music, with the creation of many new performing groups that champion Australian music: Guitar Trek, Saffire, the Melbourne Guitar Quartet, the Australian Guitar Duo, and most recently, the Perth Guitar Quartet.

Searching the Australian Music Centre's catalogue reveals a large number of Australian guitar compositions. Percy Grainger appears to be the first major Australian composer to have composed for voice and guitar (between the years of 1912-1937). Following Grainger’s works, the

37 In addition to added funding for the arts, Whitlam’s government believed in ‘education for all,’ and with the abolition of university tuition fees, universities grew, enabling more people the opportunity to study at a tertiary level. 38 These composers have been acknowledged in Gordon Kerry, *New Classical Music: Composing Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009), 95-113. 39 In her obituary, Bishop is recognized as working tirelessly to have the guitar accepted at tertiary institutions and treated as a serious concert instrument. See: Pat Shiel, “Free thinker brought guitar to the fore,” Sydney Morning Herald, July 26, 2008, accessed October 10, 2015, http://www.smh.com.au/news/obituaries/free-thinker-brought-guitar-to-the-fore/2008/07/25/1216492727822.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1. 40 These artists will be explored further in Chapter 4. 41 The Australian Music Centre has a catalogue of many Australian works. It was established in 1975 and is largely reliant on composers sending them materials to list in the catalogue. While pieces prior to 1975 are listed in the catalogue, the growth in the number of works from the 1970s onwards could be as a result of more composers submitting materials to the Australian Music Centre. It could also be attributed to an increase in active composers and performers due to arts funding from the Whitlam Government, although there is no hard evidence to substantiate this claim.
earliest known Australian solo classical guitar piece (according to the Australian Music Centre catalogue) is *Nocturne No.1*, composed by Colin Brumby in 1962. There is a noticeable increase in guitar solo and chamber compositions from the 1970s, with major contributors to the guitar repertoire including well-known composers such as Peter Sculthorpe, Larry Sitisky, Philip Bračanin, Ross Edwards, Graeme Koehne, Elena Kats-Chernin, Nigel Westlake, Robert Davidson, and Brett Dean. There are also many works by player-composers such as Richard Charlton, Gerard Brophy, Phillip Houghton, Paul Svoboda, Ken Murray, and Doug de Vries.

Prominent guitar composers have a range of opinions on why this growth in classical guitar composition has occurred over the last few decades. Phillip Houghton suggests social factors, such as the popularity of the guitar in pop and folk music, an improvement in teaching standards, and an increase in visiting artists. In a similar vein, player-composer Richard Charlton suggests that the greater number of professional performers and students engaged in tertiary education has created a new market for guitar music, a view with which Timothy Kain agrees.

The history of the guitar in Australia and its wide range of repertoire suggests that it is ideally placed as an instrument to explore the boundaries between high and low culture. Similarly, Westlake’s biography suggests a composer exposed to a wide range of genres on both sides of the Great Divide. It makes sense, therefore, to explore these issues in the context of his music.

1.4 **Nigel Westlake: a Brief Biography**

Nigel Westlake was born in Perth, Western Australia, in 1958, but relocated with his family to Sydney as a child. His mother was a violinist, and his father a clarinetist, both employed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Influenced by his parents, he developed a love of music from an early age, and decided at age six that he would become a musician. At age ten, Nigel began receiving clarinet lessons from his father, and would watch the Sydney Symphony Orchestra perform regularly. His passion for music became so all-consuming that he chose to leave school early to pursue a career in performance. With no interest in academic subjects unrelated to music, Westlake remarks that he “just wanted to get on with playing the clarinet.” He received multiple lessons a week from his father, which continued until he reached the age of twenty-two.

At the same time he was studying clarinet, Nigel began dabbling in rock music, and formed several experimental bands in which he was both the saxophone and clarinet player. The first of

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42 Kirsty Jane Gillespie, “An Australian Guitar School?...” (Masters diss., Australian National University, 1999), 39–40
44 Ibid, 114.
these was the garage band, Eggs Benedict, which performed original compositions and covers of music by Frank Zappa, King Crimson, and Genesis.\textsuperscript{48} The second band was called The Magic Puddin’ Band and performed classical, jazz, fusion, and rock styles very similar to Eggs Benedict.\textsuperscript{49} Interested in experimenting with electronics and music technology, Westlake often had a microphone on his instrument that was connected to various effects pedals.\textsuperscript{50} Westlake describes himself as a “closet rocker,” a passion which he says will “stay with me for the rest of my days.”\textsuperscript{51} In an interview with Charles Southwood, Westlake describes how his father could never understand why he was so fascinated by rock music. However, the answer was simple: it was the rhythm that really captivated him.\textsuperscript{52}

During the 1970s, Westlake travelled to Holland to study bass clarinet with Harry Spaarnay. This experience was highly inspirational as he discovered there an openness of approach to composition, where one could write a piece about anything, and for any reason.\textsuperscript{53} Resolving to return to Australia and make a career as a performer of experimental music on bass clarinet,\textsuperscript{54} Westlake took the contemporary techniques he had learned in Holland and put them into practice in his first ‘experimental’ work for bass clarinet and digital delay, \textit{Onomatopoeia} (1984).\textsuperscript{55}

Since his earliest works in the 1980s, Westlake’s compositional output has been substantial. Television and film scores comprise the bulk of his writing, with some of the most popular being \textit{Antarctica} (1992), \textit{Babe} (1995), and \textit{Miss Potter} (2007). His most recent film score was for the Australian movie \textit{Paper Planes} (2014). He has composed themes for many Australian television shows, radio shows, and commercials, with examples including the ABC’s \textit{Radio National}, \textit{Dateline} on SBS TV, and ABC TV’s \textit{Backchat}. In addition to producing a wide range of soundtracks for film and television, Westlake has also composed many large orchestral works, smaller chamber music works, and instrumental solos.

Across various interviews, Westlake has given some insight into his compositional process, an approach which he believes is more intuitive than rigidly intellectual.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{To me composition is about how notes work together and the building of resonances, melodic contours and rhythmic impetus to create sonic constructions that I find aesthetically pleasing.}\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{48} Grant B. Dalton, “Nigel Westlake’s ‘Omphalo Centric Lecture’: A guide for performance including a biography of the composer and an examination of the different versions of the work” (DMA diss., Ohio State University, 2006), 5.


\textsuperscript{50} Kevin Matthew Estes, “Solo and Chamber Percussion works by Nigel Westlake” (DMA diss., Ohio State University, 2014), 15.

\textsuperscript{51} Westlake and Southwood, Composer Profile No.49.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{55} Estes, “Solo and Chamber Percussion works by Nigel Westlaker...,” 19.


\textsuperscript{57} Cooney, “2006 Sydney Symphony Education Program.”
I recognise that my music is not overly concerned with content. It basically draws upon unadventurous harmonic and melodic principles and tries to be interesting rhythmically.\(^{59}\)

The creative process is a mystery I don't really understand. I might embark on a new work armed with two basic concepts—the germ of an idea and an overview of the shape and form of the final work. By constantly asking myself what needs to occur to my basic idea in order to germinate and transform it into the finished work, I subject it to a series of rigorous processes and refinements. One of the techniques I employ to kick-start the creative process when commencing a new piece is to imagine the performers I am writing for, poised ready to perform. Then if I listen really carefully (to my imagination) I can actually hear the piece I am about to write—or at least bits of it.\(^{59}\)

Westlake has also remarked that one of his primary goals is to create a unique musical voice, and that he invariably draws inspiration from a wide range of musical styles that have inspired him:

> It’s inevitable that one will be influenced by the people whose work one admires (and there are hundreds!), but to develop a clear individual voice remains a primary aim, each new piece being another step further to this goal…Originality and clarity are the qualities I most admire in composition; however, if the truth be known, all my work is probably derived in one way or another from music I’ve been inspired by.\(^{60}\)

Timothy Kain believes that Westlake has already been successful in creating his own individual, recognisable voice:

> if you listen to Brahms, then…you know it’s Brahms because he does certain things in a certain way; Mozart's the same; Bach… It's a language of his own though, Nigel's…\(^{61}\)

Whether or not Westlake has succeeded in creating a unique voice is an issue for debate, but in listening to his works, one can certainly hear his disparate influences in the sounds and techniques of minimalism, pop music, rock music, film music, jazz, and non-Western cultures such as West African and Indian music. In a way, this broad palette of influences could be likened to a musical version of pop-art, a style of art that aimed to blur the boundaries between high art and low culture by working mass culture elements into paintings and sculptures, thus removing the concept of a Great Divide.\(^{62}\)

Similar to the way pop-artists blur the boundaries between high and low cultures, Westlake combines elements from elite and popular musical styles, something he has been doing throughout his working life as a musician and composer. Perhaps not coincidentally, the cover artwork for *Onomatopoeia* (the first CD consisting entirely of his own works, released on the Tall Poppies record label in 1994) looks like a Warhol-style pop-art painting (Figure 1).\(^{63}\) It is conceivable that the pop-art style cover is Westlake’s way of acknowledging that the music

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60 Ibid, 52.

61 Kain, interview. See Appendix I.


contained on the disc is drawing influence from varying styles, and actively trying to reach a wide audience by crossing the Great Divide.

![Figure 1. Cover artwork for Onomatopoeia](image)

This theme is picked up in the reactions of reviewers, who recognise Westlake as a modern classical composer but are pleasantly surprised that ‘contemporary new music’ does not equate to being unenjoyable. Reviews of *Onomatopoeia* note the diverse range of influences, resulting in an instantly likeable CD:

(Westlake’s music is) clearly aimed at enjoyment, and that is wonderfully refreshing when so many of his contemporary peers seem constantly intent on persuading us that the world is a terrible place…

Effectively Sydney composer Nigel Westlake’s greatest hits, it will restore in the faint-hearted faith in contemporary music by offering over an hour of intelligent, colourful, exciting and listener-friendly works. The key to the album’s success is a free-spirited rhythmic near-funkiness which combines with an irrepressible lyricism and a taste for the instrumentally bizarre to transport Westlake’s brand of minimalism a galaxy away from the comparative sterility of his American compatriots.

This Tall Poppies anthology of music by Nigel Westlake deserves to become one of the most popular new music records and to do so – in my opinion – without any need to apologise for its agreeableness… He helps to give minimalism a good name when he conforms to its aesthetics; mostly, however, he constructs his dancing melody patterns and his bright elated rhythms on far more developed lines… All in all, this is the most companionable disc of new music to come my way for a long time.

Slava Grigoryan’s *Shadow Dances: Music for Guitar by Nigel Westlake*, a recording which contains almost all of Westlake’s guitar works, has garnered similar reviews:

…there is much variety and invention in Westlake’s guitar music, which is superbly and most idiomatically written for the instrument, be it alone or accompanied. Moreover, Westlake’s

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inexhaustible melodic fund and rhythmic verve make his music particularly accessible and enjoyable...67

1.5 The Guitar Works of Nigel Westlake

Timothy Kain first discovered Nigel Westlake’s music while listening to ABC’s Radio National:

They had a Radio National theme for brass instruments…and I really admired this theme…I'd think “gee, that's fantastic, I wonder who wrote that?,” and later I learned it was a composer called Nigel Westlake...68

The year was 1987 and Kain had recently formed his quartet, Guitar Trek. He was seeking new compositions for the group to perform rather than arrangements of existing pieces.69 Westlake immediately came to Kain’s mind, so Kain contacted him. Westlake believes he would not have written for the guitar had he not been commissioned by Kain: “I would have found it somewhat intimidating as I had no previous knowledge or understanding of how to compose for the instrument.”70

In response to Kain’s commission for Guitar Trek, Westlake’s first work for guitar was Winter in the Forgotten Valley (1989). Leading up to this composition Westlake had not composed for the instrument before, so Kain supplied him with various articles on guitar composition written by Julian Bream and Stephen Dodgson, as well as short guitar compositions which illustrated a wide range of techniques for the instrument. These included a Bach Prelude and Leo Brouwer’s Elogo de la Danza.71 In addition to these resources, Westlake also purchased an old classical guitar to learn how the instrument worked, and test ideas on the instrument at a very basic level.72

In an interview with Julian Byzantine, Westlake mentions that he always has a picture of the fingerboard in front of him when writing for the guitar, allowing him to check that what he had composed was playable in a comfortable and logical way.73

By the year 2000, Westlake had become familiar enough with the guitar, observing:

I just find writing for guitar is a constant process of discovery…the guitar has an intimacy all of its own, which you just don’t find with other instruments…Musically, its fast attack and decay are unique to the guitar. I enjoy the percussiveness, its immediacy and its tactile nature.74

To date, Westlake has written over a dozen works for the instrument, many of which were commissioned by Timothy Kain. His guitar oeuvre includes solos, duets, trios, quartets, mixed


68 Kain, interview. See Appendix I.

69 Ibid.


71 Kain, interview. See Appendix I.

72 Ibid.


chamber ensembles, and works for guitar and orchestra. A full list of Westlake’s guitar works is included in Table 1. The years indicated are the dates when the pieces became available for public purchase as visible on his website, though some pieces had been composed several years before their public release. Of the works listed, all but three are available for public viewing and purchase. *Winter in the Forgotten Valley*, *Blue on Gold*, and *Touch Wood* are no longer available in Westlake’s catalogue, and they are listed in red. According to Timothy Kain, these works have been withdrawn as Westlake intends to revise them.\(^75\)

Table 1. Nigel Westlake’s guitar works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Piece</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Winter in the Forgotten Valley</em></td>
<td>guitar quartet</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Blue on Gold</em></td>
<td>guitar, violin &amp; flute</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Antarctica Suite</em></td>
<td>guitar &amp; orchestra</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tall Tales But True</em></td>
<td>2 guitars, bass clarinet, violin, double bass, piano &amp; percussion</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Touch Wood</em></td>
<td>2 guitars, bass clarinet, violin, double bass, piano &amp; percussion</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Songs from the Forest</em></td>
<td>guitar duo</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Songs from the Forest</em></td>
<td>guitar &amp; percussion</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hinchinbrook Riffs</em></td>
<td>solo guitar &amp; digital delay</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Songs from the Forest</em></td>
<td>guitar duo &amp; double bass</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jovian Moons</em></td>
<td>guitar &amp; piano</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Six Fish</em></td>
<td>guitar quartet</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shadow Dances</em></td>
<td>guitar &amp; orchestra</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shards of Jaisalmer</em></td>
<td>guitar trio</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mosstrooper Peak</em></td>
<td>solo guitar</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mosstrooper Peak</em></td>
<td>guitar duo</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6 A Review of Literature on Nigel Westlake

Scant attention has been paid to Westlake’s guitar works by the scholarly community, with only three works receiving attention, namely, *The Hinchinbrook Riffs*, *Jovian Moons*, and *Antarctica*. *The Hinchinbrook Riffs* has been discussed by the present author in her Bachelor of Music (Honours) dissertation focusing on minimalist guitar works.\(^76\) Following this dissertation, the present author and principal supervisor co-authored an academic paper on *The Hinchinbrook Riffs*, observing the use of minimalism in Australian guitar music.\(^77\) Emeritus Professor Larry Sitsky has

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\(^75\) Kain, interview. See Appendix I.

\(^76\) Melissa Claire Branson, “Minimalism and the Guitar” (BMus Hons. diss., Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, 2011).

discussed *Jovian Moons* in his book *Australian Chamber Music with Piano*, under the chapter entitled ‘Pluralism.’ The short discussion on the work focuses on how Westlake achieves a space-like atmosphere through his skillful writing for guitar and piano.\(^78\) The *Antarctica* concerto has been included previously in the Australian high-school music curriculum for year 11 and year 12 examinations. As a result, two analysis guides of the work have been created. One is a PDF download on Westlake’s website (the author is presumed to be Westlake), and the other is a resource kit by Kim Waldock, titled *Out of the Blue*. *Out of the Blue* consists of a book, audio recording, and musical score.\(^79\) These two analysis guides on *Antarctica* explore the work on a very basic level, suggesting the form of each movement, broad key centres, and motifs. These guides by Westlake and Waldock provided a starting point for my own analysis. Finally, *Soundboard* Magazine features an article on the guitar music of Australia.\(^80\) Paul Ballam-Cross mentions Westlake as one of the prolific Australian composers for the guitar, alongside Peter Sculthorpe and Philip Houghton. Much of the information that Ballam-Cross mentions in this article is taken from the liner notes of various albums listed in the discography at the back of this dissertation. However, in the introductory paragraph on Westlake, Ballam-Cross observes the diversity of Westlake’s oeuvre:

Nigel Westlake’s music crosses a remarkably broad range of genres and styles. He has the enviable ability to write traditional film scores (among his works are the *Babe* films, and *Miss Potter*), as well as in a powerful modern style, which does not neglect the audience. Although his guitar music is idiomatically written for the instrument, they are virtuoso works.\(^81\)

Non-guitar-specific literature tends to provide biographical information on Westlake, with the two main sources being *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, and *A Dictionary of Australian Music*. In a similar manner to Ballam-Cross’s *Soundboard* article, in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, Barkl observes Westlake’s music is a blending between high and low culture styles:

Westlake’s attractive blend of minimalism, improvisation and elements from popular music has firmly established his presence in both concert music and music for radio and film.\(^82\)

However, two books do make a slightly more significant mention of Westlake. These are Larry Sitsky’s *Australian Piano Music of the Twentieth Century*, and *New Classical Music: Composing Australia*, by Gordon Kerry. Sitsky briefly highlights Westlake’s *Piano Sonata* (1997), mentioning “it seems to me to be an important piece, full of an energy rivaling that of Villa-Lobos, with a similar


\(^81\) Ibid, 35.

earthy approach and a similar piling up of cumulative ostinati.” Kerry, interestingly, acknowledges similar traits in Westlake’s music that were observed not only by Sitsky, but also by Barkl, and Ballam-Cross:

Overall, Westlake’s music tends to cultivate deceptively simple tonal harmony and often minimalist rhythmic figures to create a sense of great energy. He is also capable of music of crystalline elegance…as well as breathtaking virtuosity…

Westlake has been interviewed many times. One of the his earliest interviews was with Charles Southwood in 1990 as part of the Composer Profile series for ABC Radio. Peter Thompson (of ABC’s Radio National) has also conducted a lengthy interview with Westlake which has been published in his book, Wisdom: The Hard-Won Gift. It consists of anecdotes from his upbringing, with a brief insight into the compositional process. Interviews with Westlake also appear in two music journals, Sounds Australian, and Context. While these also provide brief biographical information, they tend to focus more on his compositional processes. Within the last decade, Westlake has been frequently interviewed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, making appearances on the 7.30 Report television show and the Radio National radio station. The interviews within the last five years have focused on Westlake’s orchestral works and choral works, namely Missa Solis: Requiem for Eli, Compassion (song cycle for voice and orchestra, featuring Australian singer-songwriter Lior Attar), and the re-orchestration of the film score for Babe, which celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2015.

To date, only one completely guitar-specific interview has been conducted, and that is by British guitarist, Julian Byzantine in Classical Guitar Magazine (October and November 2000). Rather than focusing on specific pieces, however, Byzantine’s interview focuses on what prompted Westlake to write for the guitar, how he approaches writing for the instrument, and whether he believes there is an ‘Australian sound’ present in Australian guitar composition. In this article, Westlake is interviewed alongside Ross Edwards, Larry Sitsky, and Peter Sculthorpe.

Through a search of the ProQuest dissertation register, it is evident that Westlake’s percussion works are of great interest to American postgraduate percussion students with five Doctor of Musical Arts theses written between 2006-2016 featuring his percussion pieces.

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84 Kerry, New Classical Music: Composing Australia, 97-98.
85 Charles Southwood, Composer Profile No.49, ABC Radio Tapes, 1990, cassette tape.
89 The theses are: Grant B. Dalton, “Nigel Westlake’s “Omphalo Centric Lecture”: A guide for performance including a biography of the composer and an examination of the different versions of the work” (DMA diss., Ohio State University, 2006); Stefan Patrick Ice, “The percussion quartet: A chronological listing and performance guide of six selected works” (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2012); Kevin Matthew Estes, “Solo and Chamber Percussion works by Nigel Westlake” (DMA diss., Ohio State University, 2014); James William Doyle III, “Original chamber percussion works for silent or silenced film in live performance” (DMA diss.,
of these theses were of little use to this study, as they focus more on specific marimba pieces and techniques. Of these theses, the most useful was by Kevin Matthew Estes (Ohio State University). It provided some useful analysis of the marimba arrangement of *The Hinchinbrook Riffs*, and the transcript of his interview with Westlake provided insights into *Shards of Jaisalmer* which had never been mentioned in any other source. Similarly, James William Doyle III (University of Nevada) included a transcript of his interview with Westlake which also provided some current musings from Westlake. While Doyle’s interview largely focused on percussion, there were some broad statements which helped clarify points in my own work.

Taking all of the pre-existing literature into consideration, my research attempts to address the clear gap in the knowledge of Westlake’s guitar music through a systematic study of his guitar works, from the perspectives of both the performer and scholar. This project consists of a series of recitals, studio recordings, and this dissertation, which explores the research questions on page 4 through a series of analytical discussions of Westlake’s guitar works. The performances and dissertation work together to explore issues relating to the existence or otherwise of the idea of a Great Divide in Australian music, and its relevance to Westlake’s musical practice.

1.7 Methodology
The methodology underpinning this study involved multiple approaches:

1. Analysis of Westlake’s guitar works
2. Exploration of the literature
3. Conducting an interview with Timothy Kain
4. Performances (studio recording and live)

The analyses in this dissertation were guided by my research questions, so identifying stylistic influences, particularly the influence of high and low culture styles was paramount. Therefore, certain analytical techniques were utilised more often. After identification of compositional techniques from musical movements (for example, the use of extensive repetition found in minimalism), traditional harmonic analysis techniques such as labelling chords and identifying harmonic progressions were employed. Due to the influence of popular music, this was sometimes straightforward, for example, recognising the use of modal interchange (the $♭VI - ♭VII - I$ progression in particular is a recurring element in much of Westlake’s guitar music, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.2). However, some chords and progressions proved difficult to define in traditional harmonic terms due to Westlake’s ample use of extensions, thus making the underlying harmony ambiguous. In these instances, pitch-class set analysis proved advantageous.

as it illuminated the use of octatonicism and other patterns, such as recurring pitch class sets (pcs). Throughout this study, I have used the nomenclature of Straus whenever discussing pitch-class set analysis or labelling octatonic collections.  

A semi-structured interview with Timothy Kain was conducted in June 2014 at his home in Canberra. This interview was conducted in the hope that Kain would be able to share insights on how Westlake had come to be writing for the guitar, and ascertain whether specific harmonic and rhythmic devices I had discovered in the music were immediately obvious to the performers for whom they were intended. This interview provided answers to many of my questions and also highlighted the elite/popular issue which ended up becoming of key importance to this study. The questions I had intended to ask Kain, along with the transcript of this interview can be found in Appendix I. Several other Australian guitarists were contacted to take part in similar interviews. Some declined the opportunity to participate due to busy schedules, while others felt they could not accurately provide comment on some questions regarding Westlake’s guitar repertoire.

Over the course of this study, I also attempted to make contact with Westlake a few times, and met him after his Perth performance of Compassion (December 2013). When we met, he expressed interest in taking part in an interview and suggested I contact him via his website. However, his busy schedule over the last few years prevented him from getting written answers back to me within the deadline.

The dissertation and performances are intertwined through practice-led research. Two methods of practice-led research have been utilised in this study: research for practice, and research through practice. 

Research for practice has involved utilising my own score analysis, interviews, articles, and recordings by other artists to provide context for my own interpretations of Westlake’s works. Research through practice has allowed me the freedom to experiment on the guitar, playing sections of works and discovering patterns, sonorities and idiomatic passages that may not be immediately noticed when visually studying the scores. Finally, practice-led research has been crucial to the success of the practical component of this study. Through the process of learning, and refining my interpretations of Westlake’s works, a noticeable difference between my recital and recordings can be heard, not just in terms of technical facility, but also in communication of ideas. While the studio recordings are the main practical component to this research, I believe the live performance is also important as a clear development in my practice can be observed from the time of this early live performance to the subsequent studio recordings.

The DVD recordings are of a live recital presented on September 21, 2014 in the Braham Auditorium at Trinity College, Perth. This 65 minute recital featured The Hinchinbrook Riffs, Songs from the Forest, Six Fish, Shards of Jaisalmer, and Mosstrooper Peak. A copy of the program

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from the recital is included in Appendix II. Due to the lengthy nature of this recital, I performed *Jovian Moons* for guitar and piano the week prior at a concert by the guitar department at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (September 16, 2014).

I recorded studio versions of these same works over the course of 2015-2016. This was a lengthy process and involved not only recording the works, but selecting the best takes to create what I feel is my most compelling interpretation of Westlake’s works. Due to the large volume of repertoire, the works will not fit on one audio CD alone, so they have been split across two discs. The CD track listings, along with venue information, musicians involved, and dates that the recordings took place are included in Appendix II.

Several works were excluded from the performances and recordings. The concerti and *Tall Tales But True* were not performed or recorded due to the logistics of organising an orchestra and chamber group willing to work without financial remuneration. *Winter in the Forgotten Valley, Blue on Gold*, and *Touch Wood* were all excluded as the scores have been withdrawn from Westlake’s catalogue.

Throughout this study, I gave regular performances of Westlake’s works, with most pieces being programmed on at least two public concerts (including my live recital in 2014). Of all of the works, *Six Fish* was performed the most regularly because of its accessible nature. My ensemble, the Perth Guitar Quartet, performed *Six Fish* (either as select movements or in its entirety) seven times in a three-year span, with the most recent performance (October 2016) being a collaboration with the ballet troupe at a local girls’ school.

The second most performed work was “Butterfly Bay” from *Mosstrooper Peak*. Due to its accessibility, this particular movement was performed at numerous recitals and concerts, including the ‘Sound from the Ground’ concerts (April 29 and 30, 2016) which headlined the National Trust of Australia’s *Heritage Week Festival*. The performance of “Butterfly Bay” on April 29, 2016 has also been included on the DVD of performances as I believe that this performance is my most compelling interpretation of the work to date. The program notes contextualising the ‘Sound from the Ground’ performance are included in Appendix II.92

The following research questions were outlined at the start of this chapter:

1. What aspects of Westlake’s music reflect high/low culture?
2. To what extent and in what respect is the ‘Great Divide’ relevant to Westlake’s music?
3. In what sense might Westlake’s music be ‘postmodern’ in Jameson’s sense? (Or in any other sense?)

These three questions have guided all aspects of this project, from the dissertation through to the recordings.

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92 The “Sound from the Ground” concerts were held at the historic East Perth Cemeteries. More information on the project can be found on the National Trust of Australia (WA)’s website: https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/initiatives/sound-from-the-ground/. The full program from the concert can be viewed at https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NTWA-Sound-from-the-Ground-Programme.pdf.
1.8 Structure

The components presented for examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Performing Arts) consist of:

1. This dissertation;
2. Two audio CDs containing studio versions of *The Hinchinbrook Riffs*, *Songs from the Forest*, *Six Fish*, *Shards of Jaisalmer*, *Jovian Moons*, and *Mosstrooper Peak*, recorded over 2015 and 2016 (split across two discs); and
3. A DVD containing my live 2014 recital performances of the same works, and a live performance of “Butterfly Bay,” performed at “Sound from the Ground” in 2016 (viewable on television or computer).

Similar to the recording, in this dissertation, I explore all of Westlake’s guitar works, with the exceptions of *Blue on Gold* and *Touch Wood*. These two pieces have been excluded from this study as both scores and recordings are unavailable. The other pieces are arranged into chapters according to differing themes:

*Antarctica* is explored in **Chapter 2 (Antarctica: a ‘Populist’ Australian Guitar Concerto)** with a focus on how Westlake uses popular music idioms to create a concerto that is readily accessible for the masses.

**Chapter 3 (The Accessibility of a Minimalist Groove)** examines the influence of minimalist-inspired techniques on Westlake’s style, resulting in two pieces (*Tall Tales But True* and *The Hinchinbrook Riffs*) heavily reliant on ostinati for the creation of rhythmic grooves.

*Winter in the Forgotten Valley*, *Songs from the Forest*, *Six Fish*, *Shadow Dances*, and *Shards of Jaisalmer* are discussed in **Chapter 4 (Towards a New Guitar Virtuosity)**. It becomes evident across these works that Westlake is writing with specific guitarists in mind, and the degree of virtuosity and harmonic language in these chamber works changes depending on for whom he is composing.

**Chapter 5 (Octatonicism and Other Worlds)** marks a departure from tonal, functional harmony. *Jovian Moons* is the first of Westlake’s guitar works to utilise octatonicism almost exclusively. However, the difficult nature of these harmonies is not a point of exclusion for listeners, as Westlake creates strong programmatic associations in the work.

Finally, Westlake’s newest work, *Mosstrooper Peak* forms the content for **Chapter 6 (Mosstrooper Peak: a Postmodern Elegy)**, with an exploration of the ways Westlake has composed a work which is his most elite guitar work to-date.
The order of these works is mostly chronological. Interestingly, it becomes evident that in this largely chronological order, the music sits on a spectrum ranging from the most popular (accessible), to most elite (difficult to comprehend).
2. *Antarctica*: a ‘Populist’ Australian Guitar Concerto

The *Antarctica* concerto has its origins in the film score from the 1991 IMAX motion picture of the same name. Commissioned by film maker John Weiley, Westlake’s brief was to compose music that captured the “awe-inspiring grandeur, beauty, desolation and harshness of the images.”

Originally, Westlake intended for the entire IMAX score to be a guitar and orchestra soundtrack, but this changed due to time constraints and alterations to the film, with only a portion of the score featuring guitar (played by Timothy Kain). The following year, Westlake subsequently adapted the film music to create a concerto for guitar and orchestra, drawing on and reworking material from the film, as well as composing new material specifically for the concerto.

When the Australian Broadcasting Corporation invited me to write a guitar concerto for John Williams and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra as part of the ABC’s 60th birthday celebration a year or so after completing the film, I seized the opportunity to explore some of my original ideas for the film in the form of a suite for guitar and orchestra. The suite...is reworked from the film score; it also incorporates ideas developed during the initial writing process but not included in the film. It is in four movements, the last comprising two sections joined by a short cadenza.

The concerto has garnered critical acclaim and become one of Australia’s most popular guitar concertos, perhaps due to its programmatic nature and accessibility for a wide audience. Reviewer Neil Horner remarks: “the music itself is never inaccessible and manages to combine a yearning lyricism (e.g. Threnody) with a real sense of nature’s power (e.g. The Last Place on Earth).” A reviewer of Grigoryan’s recording of the concerto with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra concluded that “this is a lovely score with much colourful and readily accessible music; and its popularity is undoubtedly well deserved.” Despite its popularity, only a few commercial recordings of the *Antarctica* concerto have been released to date, performed by John Williams, Timothy Kain, and Slava Grigoryan.

For decades, film music has regularly negotiated the combination of popular and elite musical styles, exposing audiences to a range of avant-garde sounds and techniques. This chapter explores the ways in which Westlake has embraced the crossover nature of film music,

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95 Westlake, “Antarctica – Suite for Guitar and Orchestra.”


97 Culot, “CD Review.”

98 The three main recordings are: John Williams with the London Symphony Orchestra, *From Australia*, Sony, SK 53361, 1994, compact disc; Timothy Kain with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, *Out of the Blue*, ABC Classics 4620172, 1999, compact disc; and Slava Grigoryan with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, *Shadow Dances: Music for Guitar by Nigel Westlake*, ABC Classics, 4765744, 2006, compact disc. Additionally, excerpts of Timothy Kain’s performance can also be heard on a variety of compilation albums by ABC Classics.

creating a highly-accessible, well-received work with specific focus given to the way that tonal melodies, functional harmony, and modal interchange are used freely in the film-inspired score. *Antarctica* features a strong use of tonality throughout many of the movements, with popular music progressions dominating in “Wooden Ships” and “Penguin Ballet”, and clear V-I cadential points in the final movement. This is contrasted with moments of dissonance used sparingly in “The Last Place on Earth” and more pervasively in the opening for “The Ice Core.” However, Westlake’s use of ostinati and rhythmic layering creates a way to engage a listener unfamiliar with the harmonic language by ‘normalising’ these uses of dissonance.

2.1 Movement I: The Last Place on Earth

Westlake’s program notes describe the inspiration for this movement:

>The music begins at an aerial shot of the ice cap, taken at midnight. Due to the midnight sun, it is in full daylight.\(^{100}\)

Kim Waldock writes “the purpose of the first movement of *Antarctica* was to evoke in the audience the images of Antarctica as a stark, desolate, and imposing land.”\(^{101}\) By evoking programmatic images through orchestration; making use of one key centre throughout the movement; and employing repetitive rhythms which normalise elite moments of harmonic tension, Westlake creates a work that is readily accessible to a wide audience.

The suite begins with the guitar written in *scordatura*, meaning that some of the strings are tuned to different pitches. In this movement of *Antarctica*, the A and E (fifth and sixth) strings are lowered: A is tuned down to G, and E is lowered by a full major third down to C. By altering the guitar’s tuning, a richness of tone is created in the low register, revealing a depth of sound normally unattainable on the guitar.\(^{102}\) It is possible this tuning was prompted by the instrumentation of the film score: as cello was featured in the the IMAX film, it seems likely that Westlake altered the guitar’s tuning to match it more closely to that of a cello. With this scordatura tuning, the lowest three strings of the guitar are the same sounding pitch as the lowest three strings of the cello.

![Figure 2. Scordatura for “The Last Place on Earth”](image)

\(^{100}\) Westlake, “Antarctica – Suite for Guitar and Orchestra.”

\(^{101}\) Kim Waldock, *Out of the Blue* (Grosvenor Place, New South Wales: Australian Music Centre, 2000), 43.

\(^{102}\) *Koyunbaba* by Carlo Domeniconi, is a popular twentieth century work that uses scordatura where the standard E-A-D-G-B-E tuning is changed to C♯-G♯-C♯-G♯-C♯-E. However, this is an extreme example of scordatura. The most common scordatura is to lower the E (sixth string) to D. Occasionally, the A (fifth string) may be lowered to G. The resultant effects of such scordaturas are similar to “The Last Place on Earth”: a depth of sound seldom found in classical guitar repertoire.
This movement is largely tonal, characterised by easily identifiable key centres and functional sonorities, though many chords feature the use of tertian extensions and/or quartal/quintal harmonies. Westlake’s use of extensions and open chords could perhaps be attributed to his jazz training, but could also reflect the impact of composers such as Stravinsky, Debussy, or even Zappa, showing Westlake’s diverse range of musical influences.

While there are multiple ways to analyse the pitch and harmonic content in “The Last Place on Earth,” I believe it is most compelling to view the movement in C minor, juxtaposed with moments of tonal ambiguity and chromaticism that Westlake uses to create tension. This contrast between a clear tonal centre and dissonant chromaticism can be seen at the very beginning of the movement, which opens with a D minor ostinato in the harp, supported by sustained D’s in the lower strings (mm.1-14, Figure 3). Above this D minor foundation, the guitar plays a melody based around the upper extensions of a D min chord. Combined with a B♭ pedal in the second violin part, these pitches form a D min13 chord.

Figure 3. “The Last Place on Earth,” mm.1-14

The quiet, simmering triadic introduction is interrupted by a jarring fortissimo chord in m.15, dubbed the ‘Antarctica chord’. In the film, this chord can be heard when the camera zooms in towards the continent’s mountainous peaks. Waldock suggests that the ‘Antarctica chord’ is a C altered chord, or a polychord made up of a C altered (♭9 #9 #13) and a C♯ minMA7 chord. Another, perhaps more compelling, way to view this sonority is by thinking of it as a C min7 chord with surrounding colour notes to the sides of the third and fifth. In the concerto, the guitar plays the entire ‘Antarctica chord’ (minus one pitch), while the complete chord is divided between the other orchestral instruments, each assigned a different pitch. Clashes from the resulting series of tones and semitones can be observed within each section of the orchestra, for example, the flutes and

piccolos play D♯ and E, while the clarinets play G♯ and A♯. **Figure 4** is a reduction of all of the pitches of the chord, as they would sound on a grand stave, followed by a further reduction to show the ‘core’ pitches making up the chord. The figure reveals how the chord is constructed of these closely-voiced clusters. Arguably, the underlying harmonic derivation is somewhat ambiguous, and less significant to the overall effect, which is about the tension resulting from a dissonant conglomerate. In the same way that dissonance is often used in thriller movies, Westlake employs this chord (with its chromatic clashes) as the camera approaches the imposing mountains, evoking a feeling of tension and anticipation in the listener.105

![Figure 4. The ‘Antarctica chord’](image)

Similarly, at mm.30-35 (**Figure 5**), several textural layers create a certain harmonic complexity and ambiguity. A dyad of E♭-A♭ in the low strings forms the foundation above which the guitar’s notes create a quartal/quintal or pentatonic set (E♭, F, A♭, B♭). Upper strings and flutes play an octatonic tetrachord (E, F, G, A♭), which fills in the space between F and A♭ (also found in the guitar). The second violins and clarinets create another layer (G, A, B♭), and horns interject further with a dissonant B♮.

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The use of tonality in a film score creates a sense of stability and familiarity for a popular music-oriented audience. By suggesting a tonal centre with constant restatement of a C centre throughout the movement, Westlake is able to indulge in moments of localised colour without alienating an audience. The C centre is finally confirmed at the end of the movement, which closes with the restatement of material from the opening (originally centred on D), but transposed down a whole step to the tonic key of C minor. This can be clearly seen in the ostinato figure in the harp, long sustained notes in the strings, and melodic material in the guitar (see Figure 6, and refer back to Figure 3 for mm.1-14).
Another example can be found in the guitar cadenza, which begins in m.40 after an abrupt pause. The guitar opens the cadenza by arpeggiating another ambiguous sonority that could be viewed as a C minMA7♯11. This chord is similar to the ‘Antarctica chord’ (both chords are shown side-by-side in Figure 7) in that both are based upon the foundation of the open fifth dyad, C-G—here the open strings of the guitar scordatura. The effect of this low dyad pedal is to reinforce the C-centricity of the cadenza. The unusual spelling of the chord (see Figure 7) might also suggest a possible bitone derivation, with a B major triad (B, D♯, F♯) superimposed over the C-G pedal. However, the way that the melodic content of the cadenza unfolds also suggests a slightly different interpretation (Figure 8). The sonority outlined at the opening of the cadenza continues to be reiterated throughout the cadenza as a kind of harmonic reference point. Moreover, the melodic content appears to emerge from this sonority in a kind of melodic unfolding. For instance, the melody of mm.42-44 picks up on the principal pitches of the chord (particularly B, C, F♯=G♭, and E♭=D♯). All these pitches belong to an octatonic 0,2 collection, as does the added F, and only the pitch E♮ has to be viewed as a chromatic surface decoration. The prominent tritone from C to G♭ (in m.43) can be viewed as an inversion of the tritone C-F♯ that forms the outer extremities of the opening chord of the cadenza. The prominent sequence of tritones that occur in the treble in mm.49-50 and again at mm.51-52 clearly pick up this idea, and also conform to the oct 0,2
collection, as does the remaining melodic content in mm.52-53. The only exceptional bar is m.48, which must be viewed as a moment of harmonic difference. Otherwise, it becomes clear that the derivation of the pitch content in the cadenza is primarily the superimposition of an oct 0,2 collection above the foundation C-G dyad.

![Figure 7](image7.png)

**Figure 7.** The ‘Antarctica chord’ at m.15 compared to the cadenza chord at m.40

![Figure 8](image8.png)

**Figure 8.** “The Last Place on Earth,” mm.40-55 (guitar cadenza)

In addition to the use of chromatic non-chord tones to highlight the pitches of a triad or scale, Westlake also employs a more freely atonal approach, with several instances of all twelve pitches being stated within a very short period of time. The first instance of aggregate completion occurs in mm.15-23 (Figure 9), where Westlake uses a brief interlude to create interest after an introduction constructed from the D minor ostinato and ‘Antarctica chord.’ While the strings play a
slowly descending glissando from the pitches E, B and A, aggregate completion occurs between the flute, piccolo and harp parts over mm.18-19.

Another example can be found in mm.93-94. In this passage (Figure 10), the piccolos play in a conversational manner, splitting a single melodic line between the two instruments which present all twelve pitches over two bars. These moments of chromatic saturation are merely short bursts of colour ‘sandwiched’ between larger sections of tonality, and therefore do not require the listener to understand serialism in order to engage with the piece. In “The Last Place on Earth,” chromaticism is used in what may be considered small transitions between sections. This contrasts with Tall Tales But True, where chromaticism is used only at the climax of the piece.106

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106 Tall Tales But True will be explored in Chapter 3.1.
repetitive rhythmic ostinati combine with a static harmony that features dissonance and semitonal clashes. By layering ostinati with different groupings and accent patterns, Westlake creates cross-rhythms, thereby making rhythm the focal point of attention in an area of unchanging harmony.  

This is a technique used in an array of styles, but one composer most notable for this technique is Stravinsky. By creating rhythmic and textural interest for the listener to engage with, even a complex harmony consisting of many semitonal clashes becomes ‘normal’ and comprehensible.

2.2 Movement II: Wooden Ships

Approximately six minutes into the film, a scene shows the early explorers of Antarctica sailing on a wooden ship, hacking away at the frozen landscape with ice picks. The narration recounts the story of their lives on the continent, accompanied by music which evokes a sense of nostalgia. When Westlake rewrote *Antarctica* for guitar and orchestra, he significantly re-worked material for the “Wooden Ships” movement of the concerto. While there are melodic similarities, “Wooden Ships” was effectively created as a new piece. The feel of this movement stands in stark contrast to “The Last Place on Earth.” In the lecture guide for *Antarctica*, Westlake describes the images he intended to create:

[Wooden Ships] introduces the human element into the landscape—sailing ships on calm seas—human emotions, a sense of nostalgia and quiet reflection. It is not so much the majestic, rugged beauty but rather an appreciation for the delicacy and serenity of the surroundings. For this reason perhaps, the music is lyrical and nostalgic; a reflection of the frailty of humankind in this environment.

The lyrical and evocative nature of the movement is also noted by Frindle:

“Wooden Ships” is a tribute to those first explorers who bravely risked their lives in vessels that would splinter under the pressure of the frozen ice. Harp and pizzicato strings as well as guitar create a delicate effect in a movement that is lyrical, even nostalgic.

The lyrical melodies in “Wooden Ships” add to the sentimental feel of the movement, and are most often played by the guitar. Westlake writes for the instrument in such a way that it is always able project the melodic line as expressively as possible. With the exception of the cadenza, throughout the work the guitar melodies are relatively sparse in texture, allowing the performer to concentrate on the expressivity of the phrases. English composer Stephen Dodgson shares a similar approach to composition on the guitar:

More and more I’ve come to think of the guitar as a melody instrument. When the player’s concentration is upon a single line, the expressive projection is at a maximum. Too much harmony cramps the hand, dulls the sound, and impedes the movement.

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107 For example, there is a four against three cross-rhythm resulting from the interaction between the accented notes in the guitar, percussion, and viola against the accented notes in the flutes, clarinets, and violins.


It is definitely a mistake to think of the guitar (as many do, apparently) as: first and foremost a harmonic instrument; a mistake, because it leads the innocent into writing too many notes.\textsuperscript{111}

**Figure 11** is of the guitar melody which begins at m.4. As a single line melody, the guitarist can make expression and phrasing the primary focus, without the added workload of adding accompanimental figures or bass notes. The melody takes on a nostalgic yet uplifting feel, mostly created through a combination of jumps no larger than a perfect fifth, and light ornamentation. Furthermore, the relatively simple rhythms allow the room for phrases to be developed with crescendos and diminuendos. This expressive nature of the melody, coupled with E major key signature, creates a feeling of positivity and joy. This feature of the main melodic content is one way that Westlake makes the work appealing to a wide audience.

![Figure 11. “Wooden Ships,” mm.1-36](image)

In addition to the lyrical melodies, Westlake’s treatment of harmony adds to the nostalgic affect of the work. In contrast to the more elite-oriented language and procedures of the first

movement, the harmonic procedures of “Wooden Ships” are simple, straightforward, and readily accessible. Westlake employs familiar sounds with his consistent use of tonality, functional and popular-music-inspired chord progressions, and pervasive consonance. From m.1, a clear key centre of E major is established, reinforced through an ostinato which emphasises the tonic and dominant pitches of the key (mm.1-8, Figure 12). The guitar’s melody is also based around an E major scale, further reinforcing the key centre with multiple statements of V-I (B-E). The rest of the A section remains solidly in E major, constructed largely from chords I and V (E and B). At m.21 (Figure 13), there is an extended passage on the dominant chord, before closing the section with a return to the tonic. The simple progression and consonant harmony stands in stark juxtaposition to the semitone clashes and dissonance of the first movement.

The form of “Wooden Ships” is also quite straightforward, best described as an A-A1 form. The two main sections are connected by a short modulatory transition for solo guitar which takes A1 to the distant key of C♯ major (Figure 14). Chord functions and melodic figuration in A1 are similar to those heard in the A section, and Westlake is consistent in his use of consonance and functional harmony.

Figure 12. “Wooden Ships,” mm.1-8
To facilitate the unexpected modulation from E major to C♯ major, Westlake makes use of a miniature guitar ‘cadenza’ which serves as a transitional modulatory passage between A and A1 (Figure 15). Westlake starts the process with a sequence of two V − I progressions, where an F lydian scale is used to create a V − I progression from F major to G major in mm.38-39, which is then repeated down a tone using a D♯ lydian scale to create another V − I progression from E♯ major (enharmonic spelling) to F major in mm.40-41. The rate of change then accelerates as the
harmonic and melodic movement of these two bar patterns is condensed into a single bar, with mm.42-44 each maintaining the same surface figuration and ♭VII – I harmonic motion. The pitch content of these three bars is drawn exclusively from the C♯ wholetone collection, and while the underlying harmony is not entirely functional, the bass movement still suggests VII – I resolutions at the end of each bar (for example the C♯ resolving to D♯ in m.42). This progression is used to modulate, arriving on a C♯ major triad in m.45 which now feels like the ‘tonic,’ even though the G♯ in the accompaniment is a pitch not found in the C♯ wholetone collection. The melodic movement in this passage also helps to facilitate the modulation, descending through the entire C♯ wholetone scale (B in m.38, A in m.40, G in m.42, etc.) down to the first degree of the scale with the arrival of the C♯ major triad (C♯ on b.1 of m.45). Through this use of sequence, and a descending melody throughout the cadenza, Westlake effects an unusual modulation to an unexpected, yet satisfying key.

![Fig. 15. “Wooden Ships,” mm.37-46 (guitar cadenza)](image)

The ♭VII - I progression in the above example hints at the ♭VI - ♭VII - I progression which has been seen throughout Westlake’s guitar oeuvre. This style of progression is referred to as ‘modal interchange,’ and is common to film music. Schneller observes that modal interchange is frequently found in the film music of composer John Williams, and involves the replacement of diatonic minor and diminished chords with chords borrowed from other modes. Of particular focus in this dissertation is the ♭VI – ♭VII – I progression, and the ♭VII – I progression which acts as a cadential figure, replacing a V-I cadence. The ♭VI – ♭VII – I progression is also heard regularly in

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112 John Williams (composer) is not to be confused with the guitarist of the same name.
popular/rock music, and even in video game music, including the theme for the *Super Mario Brothers* game (refer to the final measure in Figure 16). Sadoff describes this chord progression as having the ability to “elicit cultural affect: hope, righteousness, and euphoria.” An example of this euphoric feeling can be found in the song “Ewok Celebration” which accompanies the final scene of *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*.

Schneller describes the ♭VII chord as “musical shorthand for America.” Due to its prevalence in a wide range of popular musical sources, the familiarity and sentimentality conjured by this progression helps create a piece of music that is instantly relatable to a wide persuasion of listeners.

Figure 16. An excerpt from the *Super Mario Brothers* theme

In “Wooden Ships,” the triumphant, euphoric feeling of arrival can be observed when Westlake utilises the ♭VI - ♭VII - I chord progression after remaining on an E major triad for the first twelve bars of “Wooden Ships” (see mm.13-17, Figure 17). This progression results in an uplifting feeling in the listener (Similarly, in A1, this modal interchange progression occurs in the key of C♯ major from mm.57-62 for the same effect (Figure 18).

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118 Ibid, 53.

119 Score example sourced from Brame, “The “Mario” Cadence.”
Like the immediate appeal afforded by Westlake’s use of consonant harmony and lyrical melodies, his treatment of rhythm in this movement also augments its accessibility. With the use of smooth, flowing rhythmic ostinati in the strings and harp throughout “Wooden Ships,” Westlake gently reinforces the static harmony. The style of lilting accompaniment employed is reminiscent of a barcarolle, a popular musical style during the eighteenth century, which imitates the motion of a boat moving through water.¹²⁰ The examples below demonstrate a rhythmic foundation of steady crotchets at the start of the A section (mm.1-8, Figure 19), and a constant quaver pulse at the end of A1 (mm.75-80, Figure 20). These repetitive accompanimental figures can be found consistently throughout the movement, which a listener may imagine to represent the wooden ships sailing through the water.

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2.3 Movement III: Penguin Ballet

Emperor penguins are seen as never before in a ‘ballet’ underneath an ice cap. They leave the water at high speeds through a hole in the ice to escape leopard seals eating them.\textsuperscript{121} Westlake has captured the spirit of the penguins and leopard seals in both the film score and concerto rescoring. Neither feature brass instruments, which helps to keep “Penguin Ballet” light and playful, in contrast to the sense of awe and power conjured by Westlake’s use of brass in “The Last Place on Earth.”

“Penguin Ballet” is also highly programmatic, complete with motifs that represent the imagery of the penguins and seals.\textsuperscript{122} The movement takes the form of a modified rondo (ABABCDAB + Coda), and in the film score, the A sections match with the recurring vision of

\textsuperscript{121} Westlake, Westlake, “Antarctica – Suite for Guitar and Orchestra.”

\textsuperscript{122} Waldock, Out of the Blue, 59-60.
penguins ‘dancing’ underwater. This ‘penguin theme’ is described as a “rippling pas de deux” between the harp and guitar, with the guitar part characterised by playful ornamentation, while the harp plays a repetitive dance-like rhythm against a semiquaver ostinato. Both instruments are playing at the upper-end of their registers, resulting in a sound reminiscent of a music box (Figure 21). The penguin theme has a cheerful character, with a lyrical and readily accessible popular quality.

In contrast, the ‘leopard seal theme’ features a slow, foreboding chromatic descent in the violas (Figure 24), with the lively semiquaver rhythm of the ‘penguin theme’ giving way to a slower moving, ominous atmosphere. When this theme is presented in the film score, the predatory seal pokes its head under the ice to search for the penguins. This use of dissonance to represent the leopard seals is not unlike dissonance used in film music for ominous events, such as the theme from Jaws which features its iconic semitone movement. Normally, difficult chromaticism of this nature in the leopard seal theme might alienate an audience unfamiliar with the harmonic language. However, in a film music scenario, the visual imagery of the leopard seals puts the harmony into context for the audience. In a concert setting, due to the absence of visuals, the same music runs the risk of becoming less accessible. However, Westlake also sets the chromaticism of the theme against a triadic and consonant background, which helps to make it more easily accessible for the average listener.

While consonant and triadic harmony are employed throughout, the key areas and harmonic progressions of “Penguin Ballet” can be somewhat ambiguous. With a key signature suggesting D major, the movement begins on a dominant pedal, with an A sustained in the cello and an A major triad stated through successive entries in the strings. The use of G♮ in mm.1-2 (and again at m.7) hint at A mixolydian, while the ever expanding intervals of the harp’s

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123 The ‘pas de deux’ literally translated means ‘step of two.’ In ballet, it is a dance duet between the leading man and woman. The ‘penguin theme’ has been described as the ‘pas de deux’ in Waldock, Out of the Blue, 59; and Westlake, “Antarctica – Suite for Guitar and Orchestra: Lecture,” 8-9.
arpeggiation builds anticipation for what is to come (Figure 22). The penguin theme in m.8 is preceded by a three octave A mixolydian scale in the harp (refer back to Figure 21). While the bass progression E-A-B-E would suggest a move to E dorian, the guitar melody lends itself to D major, with the E that ends the motifs in m.9 and m.11 sounding distinctly like the supertonic awaiting resolution down to D. The harp contributes to this ambiguity, alternating between G major and A major triads, which could equally be viewed as IV and V in D major or ♭ⅡⅦ and I in A mixolydian.

![Figure 22. “Penguin Ballet,” mm.1-6](image)

It is not until the start of the B section at m.18 (Figure 23) that Westlake actually articulates a clear cadence to D major, an event repeated again at m.39. At mm.18-28 and similarly at mm.39-49 (see Figure 24), Westlake creates a sequence of chords reflecting modal interchange: first I - ♭Ⅶ in D, then I - ♭Ⅶ in B. This is supported by a sequential melodic line in the violins. M.22 (and m.43) present the expectation of a full ♭Ⅵ - ♭Ⅶ - I cadence, but though the melody does cadence to the B (expected as a tonic), the harmony is substituted with a surprising twist—the presentation of a pentatonic collection (G, A, B, D, E) with E in the bass (see Figure 24).
On its second iteration (m.50), another abrupt harmonic shift occurs, this time to a C chord, with dorian melodic content. Such unprepared tonal shifts are arguably a feature borrowed from contemporary popular music.

Figure 24. “Penguin Ballet,” mm.38-54
There are many popular music elements in this movement, the most obvious being the form. The ABABCDAB + Coda structure is, perhaps not coincidentally, strikingly similar to the stereotypical AABA format of American popular songs from the Tin Pan Alley composers. The simple, repetitive chord progressions are also reminiscent of the sort of harmonic treatment found in much popular music. In addition, several examples of folk guitar technique can be found throughout the movement, for example the guitar’s arpeggiated pattern in mm.18-22 and again at

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124 The stereotypical format of American popular songs is verse – chorus (A), verse – chorus (A), bridge (B), verse-chorus (A). In the structure of “Penguin Ballet,” the AB sections can be likened to an A section, and CD sections are likened to a B section, creating the overall AABA form similar to popular songs.
mm.39-43 (Figure 24) is similar to the idiomatic ‘fingerpicking’ patterns often found in contemporary popular music and folk music songs.

Through the use of memorable melodies that invite the listener to imagine penguins and seals, consonant and accessible harmonies, and a popular-music-inspired form in which the catchy melodies return in a similar way to a ‘chorus,’ Westlake has created a movement that is immensely appealing to a large audience, successfully making the leap from film score to concert hall stage. At the same time, his use of tonal ambiguity and unexpected changes of mode help to maintain interest for a more elite-oriented listener.

2.4 Movement IV: The Ice Core

An ice core extracted by Antarctic scientists can reveal changes in the earth’s atmosphere and phenomena such as the hole in the ozone layer. For this section of the music Westlake creates ethereal effects with pitch bending from the guitar and hypnotic repeated patterns in the harp. In the film, this movement accompanies an image of the abstract and peculiar ice core, cross-section of layers of ice built up over time. Contrasting to “Wooden Ships” and “Penguin Ballet,” consistent use of dissonance in “The Ice Core” creates an air of mystery and suspense. After the consonance of the previous two movements, Westlake sustains dissonant sonorities in “The Ice Core” for extended periods through the use of rhythmic ostinati. These otherwise inaccessible harmonies become normalised; they simply blend into the texture, no longer a point of focus for the listener.

This normalising of extended harmonies through repetitive ostinati can be seen clearly in mm.20-35, where a mesmerising repetitive quaver pattern appears in the guitar part, along with two other ostinato patterns in the percussion and harp. By constantly repeating dissonances and rhythmic patterns, Westlake helps to make these difficult harmonies clear and comprehensible. Against this backdrop of dissonance, a plaintive melody emerges across the woodwinds and violin (Figure 26).

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125 Frindle, Liner notes for Out of the Blue, 4.
Similarly to the first movement, “The Ice Core” opens without a key signature, however, constant repetition of the pitch ‘C’ creates the impression of a C key centre. This can be seen in the harp’s ostinato on C, the sustained C in the violin 1 part, and the repeated bends in the guitar part which begin on and return to a C (Figure 27). A coloured C minor sonority is suggested through semitone clusters across the string parts which create dissonance as they move away from the notes of the triad, and a sense of resolution as they return. For example, the first violins play and hold divisi C and D, while the second violins move in semitone steps (pitches include D to E♭, B to B♭, and F♯ to G). At the same time, the harp’s ostinato consists of an augmented fourth.
interval (C to F♯), and the guitar features pitch bending while executing a rapidly accelerating and decelerating rhythm. All of these elements combine together in mm.1-7 to create an atmosphere described by Frindle as “ethereal,” while still maintaining a sense of pitch centre.

Figure 27. “The Ice Core,” mm.1-7

Unlike the lyrical, singable melodies found in previous movements of the *Antarctica* concerto, the guitar melody in “The Ice Core” features heavy chromaticism and un-singable contours (Figure 28). This melodic treatment is very similar to the alien sounding melodies of “Callisto” from *Jovian Moons*, and could perhaps be symbolic of the mysterious ice core. For example, the melody beginning on beat 4 of m.8 is angular, with an improvisatory feel. Its pitch language is freely chromatic, with irregular rhythm and unpredictable intervallic leaps leading to aggregate completion in mm.13-14.

Figure 28. “The Ice Core,” mm.5-19 (guitar part)

126 Frindle, Liner notes for *Out of the Blue*, 4.
127 “Callisto” will be explored in Chapter 5.3.
2.5 Cadenza

Although “The Last Place on Earth” and “Wooden Ships” have featured miniature quasi-cadenzas, this is the most substantial guitar cadenza in the *Antarctica* suite, and the most virtuosic of the three. The idea of incorporating an extended cadenza into the work was suggested to Westlake by John Williams as a way to bridge the gap between the fourth and fifth movements. This cadenza opens with a dissonant, spacious texture reminiscent of “The Ice Core” before moving onto the lively rhythms of the “Finale,” introducing several themes which will become more prominent throughout the final movement. On CD recordings of the *Antarctica* concerto, these three movements appear attacca on one track, a testament to the seamless transition the cadenza allows between them.

The beginning of the cadenza is unmeasured, opening with widely spaced chords played freely. The first chord is constructed almost entirely from the C wholetone collection, and the second is a cluster of tones and semitones (if the chord were transposed into the tightest possible configuration). These chords create colour and are a continuation of the dissonance found in “The Ice Core.” The lack of barlines (as seen in Figure 29) and use of fermatas implies that the introduction is to be played freely, maintaining the sense of spaciousness created in the previous movement.

![Figure 29. “Cadenza,” m.1](image)

To connect the cadenza to the final movement, rhythmic grooves begin to dominate, with the first occurring after the chords in the introduction. A groove is created with the low E coming in and out of synchronisation with the beat (Figure 30). This rhythmic groove features time signature changes, alternating between $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$, so in order to make the three-note groove line up perfectly with the start of each new bar there are small variations at the end of every bar. This sort of technique is a trademark facet of minimalist styles, and will be explored next chapter in relation to *Tall Tales But True.*

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128 Waldock, Out of the Blue, 66.
As the cadenza builds momentum with the increasing rhythmic intensity, at m.21 the guitar introduces a melodic motif that will return prominently in the final movement. The motif has been decorated in rapid semiquaver sextuplets, adding to the virtuosity of the guitar part. **Figure 31** shows this final section of the cadenza, with the melodic motif highlighted in pink. This figuration is highly idiomatic, and very common in the guitar repertoire. The moving melodic line is played entirely on the third and fourth strings from mm.21-23. The melody is plucked with the thumb, while the open first and second strings are repeated so quickly with the fingers that they essentially become a background texture against which the melody stands out in relief. The descending stepwise motion down to F♯ in mm.24-26 seamlessly leads into the finale, which begins on E in the guitar and double bass. The descending motif hints at an extended B7 chord. This suggests a V7–I cadence, with chord I being on the first beat of the finale.

**Figure 31. “Cadenza,” mm.21-26**

### 2.6 Movement V: Finale

This final section of Antarctica is lively and rhythmic, its uplifting mood reflecting the optimism that surrounded the signing of the Antarctic Treaty just as the film was being completed. 129

After a highly dissonant fourth movement, the final few bars of the cadenza set up a transition back towards tonality for the exciting finale. This movement features a ternary form in which the A sections strongly exhibit the influence of popular music, while the B section occupies an elite sound world, more closely resembling the language of “The Ice Core.”

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129 Frindle, Liner notes for Out of the Blue, 4-5.
The A section has a clear popular music influence, featuring memorable, lighthearted melodies which return throughout the movement; motifs which utilise the uplifting sound of the lydian mode and major scales;\textsuperscript{130} clear key centricities and cadence points; and tonal harmonies. One example of a popular catchy melody can be seen in the guitar and strings in mm.21-24. Initially introduced towards the end of the guitar cadenza, this melody recurs again in m.88 to provide a sense of unity and closure to the work. The series of strong V-I progressions that accompany this melody further emphasise Westlake’s clear use of tonality (Figure 38 and Figure 39).

Unlike previous movements, which remain in one key centre for their entirety, the finale shifts rapidly through different key areas, creating a feeling of forward motion and anticipation. For instance, the first twelve bars feature three key centres: E, E\textsubscript{♭} and A\textsubscript{♭}. The finale opens with an E centricity, prepared by the descending scale in the cadenza (Figure 31). Following a dissonant rhythmic motif in \( \frac{5}{8} \) (mm.1-2, Figure 32), Westlake rapidly switches towards an E\textsubscript{♭} minor centre in mm.4-6, suggested by the constant G\textsubscript{♭} heard in the cello and bass. However, the scalic motif in the guitar part begins on an A\textsubscript{♭}, hinting at the A\textsubscript{♭} lydian \( \flat7 \) scale and lending a bright, uplifting sound in spite of the minor tonality. In m.9 (Figure 33), Westlake moves towards a B centre, firmly established with a melody that was initially alluded to in the guitar’s sextuplet figurations from the cadenza. The motif starts in the piccolo part, before being joined by the guitar in m.11. This is another example of an easily singable, memorable melody, whose constant return functions like the chorus in a popular music song.

\textsuperscript{130} The lydian mode and its characteristics will be addressed subsequently in Chapter 4.3.
In stark contrast to the popular influence of the A section, the B section is strongly elite, featuring sustained dissonance, cluster chords, and aggressive extended techniques such as Bartok pizzicato\textsuperscript{131} and rasgueado. Dissonance was employed in “The Last Place on Earth” to create a sense of the grandeur and imposing power of the icy mountains of Antarctica. In “The Ice Core,” it created a sense of mystery and otherworldliness. In the finale, Westlake uses dissonance throughout the B section to create an angry, almost apocalyptic sound, bringing the work to a climax of intensity.

The arrival of the B section is marked by the return of the opening dissonant motif (as in the cello and guitar part, mm.1-2) played by the tenor trombones and cello, accompanied by a descending chromatic line in the guitar part from mm.25-29 (Figure 34). The dissonance becomes increasingly pervasive, building to a climax of ferocity not previously seen in this work. A sense of unease begins at m.31 (Figure 35), in which the violins each play a consonant major third a tritone apart (C-E in violin 1, F♯-A♯ in violin 2), against a cluster chord of E, F, G and A♭ in the guitar. The combination of these pitches results in a large chromatic cluster that features five consecutive semitones. While this extremely dissonant simultaneity is sustained across the guitar and violins, Westlake juxtaposes it against a consonant and tonal move in the remaining strings. The viola, cello, and bass each sustain a perfect fifth on C, which glissandos up to E♭, before returning back down to C. The texture is further thickened with a descending chromatic scale in the tenor trombone parts, starting on a G♭ at the end of m.32 and ending on a C at the end of m.36.

\textsuperscript{131}Bartok pizzicato is widely recognised as a technique for string instruments, however is far less common in the classical guitar repertoire. Only a handful of modern classical guitar composers employ this technique—for example, Roland Dyens, Leo Brouwer, and Nikita Koshkin.
This dense, dissonant orchestration continues, growing in intensity until a climax in m.47 (Figure 36). Explosive sforzando stabs from the clarinets, bassoons, brass, percussion and strings are heard between the violent sounds of the guitar’s Bartok pizzicato, the first instance of this extended technique in the *Antarctica* suite. Bartok pizzicato is generally associated with elite music that is complex and difficult to understand, in contrast to the straightforward lyrical guitar melodies of “Wooden Ships” and “Penguin Ballet.” To add to the dramatic nature of this climax, the guitar also makes use of aggressive and extremely loud rasgueado strumming at m.52 (Figure 37), with its ascending pattern of the quartal chords contributing to the overall tension. Against this dissonant backdrop, tonal melodies from the A section occur throughout, helping to keep an audience unfamiliar with the harmonic language engaged with the piece, for example the horns quoting part of the guitar’s triplet motif in m.32 (Figure 35).

![Figure 34. “Finale,” mm.25-30](image-url)
Figure 35. "Finale," mm.31-38
M.72 marks the return of the tonal A section, and a respite from the dissonant language of the B section. The guitar opens the section with a motif identical to the one first presented in mm.5-
6, but transposed to the key of B♭ major (constructed with the E♭ lydian scale). At m.84, this motif is iterated again, this time up a semitone in the key of B major (using E lydian). This sort of direct modulation is common to popular music, where choruses are repeated multiple times at the end of a song, often featuring a key change up a semitone (or tone) to create a feeling of elation in the listener. The use of such a commonly heard popular music technique stands in stark contrast to the dissonance of the B section, and is one way in which the work reaches out to a popular music audience. As in popular songs, this new B major centricity remains for the rest of the movement, and is further emphasised in the final measures which strongly reinforce the tonal nature of the A sections. This can be seen in the descending B major scale (with some chromatic alterations) in the bassoon parts (mm.85-87, Figure 38), and the repetition of clear V – I cadences (Figure 38 and Figure 39). The work closes with a conclusive cadence on a B major add11 chord, providing the listener with a satisfying tonal resolution to this movement’s tumultuous harmonic journey.

132 For example, Michael Jackson’s Man in the Mirror (1988) features a euphoric key change up a semitone after the bridge. Ironically, this abrupt modulation takes place as Jackson sings the word “change”. Other examples of abrupt modulations include Mr Big’s Be With You (1991), and Beyoncé’s Love on Top (2011).
Figure 38. “Finale,” mm.85-89
The *Antarctica* concerto is amongst Westlake’s most popular works, and is perhaps Westlake’s most accessible guitar work, owing much more to popular music than elite music: hence, to some extent it could be considered a ‘populist’ work. Tonality is a major feature of the concerto, and perhaps, in addition to the music’s programmatic nature, is one of the reasons for its success. As demonstrated, functional harmonies can be seen throughout the movements, from modal interchange in “Wooden Ships,” to popular music progressions in “Penguin Ballet,” and clear V-I
cadences concluding the “Finale.” Dissonance is still found throughout the concerto, used particularly in “The Last Place on Earth” and the “Finale” as a way of creating tension and building to a climax, and in “The Ice Core” to represent the mysterious nature of the ‘unknown.’ However, this dissonance is used relatively sparingly throughout the suite, and the music ultimately always returns ‘home’ to consonant tonality.

In many of the examples explored in this chapter, pitches surrounding the notes of a triad are included in chords to create dense cluster chords, introducing colour against an otherwise tonal backdrop. On the rare occasions that dissonance is sustained, such as the opening of “The Ice Core,” the constant repetition of the dissonance results in the sounds becoming normalised and less foreign to the listener. Additionally, cross rhythms resulting from multiple rhythmic layers (as seen in “The Last Place on Earth”) also create interest and accessibility in an area of static, dissonant harmony, ensuring that the listener has something to engage with beyond the unfamiliar harmonic language. Similarly to many film music scores, it is this blending of popular and elite that has resulted in a work that is appealing and accessible for a wide audience.
3 The Accessibility of a Minimalist Groove

Nigel Westlake has denied being influenced by minimalism, attributing any minimalist sounds in his work to his time performing rock music with The Magic Puddin' Band.\(^{133}\) While it is not my intention to pigeonhole Westlake, many of his guitar works contain characteristics that could be considered minimalist. Indeed, a critic at the Sydney Morning Herald described his style as sitting “at the cutting edge of post minimalism.”\(^{134}\)

Musicologist Kyle Gann describes minimalist music as combining tonal simplicity with rhythmic interest,\(^{135}\) and Dan Warburton characterises it as ‘systems music’ or ‘process music.’ Process music refers to minimalist works that are structurally defined by a single transparent transformational process, whereas systems music incorporates more than one linear process.\(^{136}\)

This kind of music is often associated with being able to draw listeners into a trancelike state, as gradual changes of a repetitive figure over a long span may alter a listener’s perception of time.\(^{137}\)

As a musical movement, minimalism occupies an equivocal position along the line of tension between elite and popular culture. Taruskin believes that minimalism was never completely bound to the ‘classical’ music world, as minimalist composers such as Young, Riley, Reich, and Glass were also listed in encyclopedias of modern music.\(^{138}\) Thus, neither a completely elite, nor entirely popular style, minimalism blends the two together in an attempt to cross the Great Divide. Taruskin notes:

> Its existence and success have thus been among the strongest challenges to the demarcation between “high” and “popular” culture on which most twentieth-century esthetic theorizing and artistic practice have depended.\(^{139}\)

Potter defines minimalism as “a term borrowed from the visual arts to describe a style of composition characterised by an intentionally simplified rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic vocabulary.”\(^{140}\) In this way, minimalist composers sought to rebel against the elite music of the time (for example, the European modernist composers such as Stockhausen, Berio and Boulez) which they viewed as becoming increasingly inaccessible—perhaps even hostile—to the general public.

Steve Reich’s distaste for the modernist style is evident:

\(^{133}\) Mackay, “Nigel Westlake, Composer/Performer,” 21.


\(^{135}\) Kyle Gann, American Music in the Twentieth Century (Ohio: Cengage Learning, 2006), 199.


\(^{137}\) An example of this is Steve Reich’s Music for 18 Musicians where a series of chords are explored and developed over an hour, yet by the end of the work it feels like no time has passed at all.


\(^{139}\) Ibid.

Stockhausen, Berio, and Boulez were portraying in very honest terms what it was like to pick up the pieces of a bombed-out continent after World War II. For some Americans in 1948 or 1958 or 1968—in the real context of tail-fins, [the rock ‘n’ roll singer] Chuck Berry and millions of burgers sold—to pretend that instead we’re really going to have the dark brown angst of Vienna is a lie, a musical lie.¹⁴¹

One means of achieving this simplified style was to return to a simple, largely-consonant harmonic palette, and construct works using straightforward processes that would be audible to the average listener. In this way, minimalism could be seen as popular culture music, as it intended to be accessible and appealing to a wide audience. However, the style could still be classified as a high culture art form, as in spite of its wide appeal, minimalist works are still most often performed in a concert setting for an elite, cultured audience.

La Monte Young is the composer credited with beginning the minimalist movement, while composers such as Phillip Glass, Terry Riley, and Steve Reich developed the style and brought it to popularity in the 1960s and 1970s. Riley, Glass and Reich’s influence can also be seen in popular music and progressive rock. For example, the introduction to Baba O’Riley (1971) by The Who is inspired by Riley’s A Rainbow in Curved Air (1969), and Little Fluffy Clouds (1990) by The Orb samples the third movement of Steve Reich’s Electric Counterpoint (1987).¹⁴²

A variety of techniques are used in the composition of minimalist music, and hence there is no singular element which would necessitate the labelling of a piece as ‘minimalist.’ The most significant techniques—or at least the ones that are pertinent to this study of Westlake’s guitar works—are listed here with brief definitions.

**Extreme simplicity in harmony and melody:** A small number of notes are used in the composition of a melody, and phrases are often short and memorable to make the processes applied to them easily perceptible. Harmonies are usually tonal and consonant, often involving triads or quartal/quintal chords. Sometimes the changes between chords will be gradual (utilising techniques mentioned below), while at other times the shift will be sudden and to unexpected keys.

**Extensive repetition of ideas with gradual change:** A key feature of minimalist music is the use of extensive repetition, a technique especially prevalent in the music of Steve Reich. Two noteworthy examples include his epic work, Music for 18 Musicians (1976), and his guitar composition, Electric Counterpoint. Both of these pieces open with constantly pulsing quavers (in fact, the first section of Music for 18 Musicians is called “Pulses”). Against the background of the extensive repetition of a rhythmic idea, subtle changes of melody and harmony occur over a span of time, with different rhythmic patterns emerging (such as phasing, cross-rhythms, or isorhythms).

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In the same way, the pitches in these ostinati are also gradually changed to move the music in new harmonic directions. New thematic ideas, harmonies, and rhythms are gradually introduced to create metamorphoses from section to section.

**Slow rates of harmonic change:** Similar to modal jazz, it is not uncommon for a piece of minimalist music to remain on a single harmony for a remarkably long time. Through the use of extensive repetition, additive/subtractive processes, and phasing of dynamics, the harmonies slowly change over time, comparable to the natural process of metamorphosis where the chords change in incremental pitch alterations. While typically consonant, the harmonies may be non-tonal and non-functional.

**Additive and subtractive processes:** A small number of notes are gradually expanded upon with subsequent repetitions, creating the growth of a melodic line. The same idea can be applied to rhythm and textures, with more and more voices/instruments being added to create increasingly complex rhythms and denser textures.

**The use of isorhythms:** Isorhythm is a type of phasing process, whereby a cross-rhythm results from the interaction of a repeating motif moving in and out of phase with the prevailing metre. **Figure 40** is an example of an isorhythm from *The Hinchinbrook Riffs*. Four pitches are repeated following a repetitive rhythm. Every time the melodic pattern is reiterated, it begins on a different part of the beat, until eventually the pattern returns to once again line up with the first semiquaver of a beat.

![Figure 40. An example of isorhythm from The Hinchinbrook Riffs](image)

Many of these techniques did not originate with the founders of minimalism: Riley, Reich and Glass all drew influence from non-Western musical sources. For example, Reich undertook a five-week study in African drumming at the University of Ghana in 1970, and discovered that the phasing processes found in the music of the Ewe people were similar to processes in his own tape-loop works. Upon returning from Ghana, he worked on ways to make these African drumming

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143 By phasing of dynamics, I refer to the gradual diminuendo of one voice, and the simultaneous crescendo of another. The resulting effect is a gradual change of harmony as the emphasis on pitches changes. An example of this style of dynamic phasing can be heard in Steve Reich’s *Electric Counterpoint*, movement 1.
techniques fit into a Western performance tradition.° After exposure to Reich’s pulse music, Glass met Indian musician Ravi Shankar, and began studying Indian cyclic rhythms with a tabla master. The merging of Indian influences along with other styles in his compositions helped to distinguish Glass’s individual voice.°

The influence of minimalism is strongly evident in Westlake’s works, and can be found as far back as his very first concert work Omphalo Centric Lecture (1984) for marimba quartet. Interestingly, Westlake has remarked that he does not think of Omphalo Centric Lecture as a minimalist work, but instead one inspired by African balafon music.

The piece also owes much to African Balofon (or xylophone) music, with its persistent ostinati, cross-rhythms and variations on simple melodic fragments. Like African music it seeks to celebrate life through rhythm, energy, and movement.

Several years later he composed Winter in the Forgotten Valley (1989) for guitar quartet, which also makes use of several minimalist techniques.

It is especially noteworthy that while minimalist techniques can be found in his early compositions, Westlake claims that “at the time I’d never heard any minimalist works at all. I didn’t even know who Steve Reich was.” He attributes the minimalist elements in his works to influences from performing rock music with The Magic Puddin’ Band, as “rock and minimalism have the same roots in African music.” It was not until later on that Westlake discovered—and was not especially fond of—Reich and the other minimalist composers:

I can’t stand Philip Glass. I find his work incredibly cold and mechanical. You would never know that there were live performers, it just sounds like sequenced lines. I don’t like a lot of Steve Reich’s music either, although some of it’s very warm and communicates something to me. I’m not actively seeking to associate myself with the minimalist school.

While the use of some minimalist techniques will be highlighted in subsequent chapters, this chapter specifically examines the use of minimalism in two of Westlake’s works, Tall Tales But True (1992) and The Hinchinbrook Riffs (2003), which both exhibit minimalist tendencies more pervasively than any of Westlake’s other guitar compositions. Minimalist techniques and procedures are employed consistently throughout both works, such as the use of ostinati consisting of odd numbers of notes to create isorhythms and grooves, and the use of gradual variation and rate of change to subtly alter melodies and harmonies.

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145 Ibid.
149 Ibid, 21.
150 Westlake, interview comments as published in: Mackay, “Nigel Westlake, Composer/Performer,” 21.
151 As Tall Tales is a chamber work featuring other instruments, the analysis shifts between focusing solely on the content of the guitar’s parts, and on the content of the whole ensemble.
The word ‘groove’ is used throughout this chapter. ‘Groove’ is a term that has strong connotations to jazz and popular music styles. Feld defines ‘groove’ as “an unspecifiable but ordered sense of something that is sustained in a distinctive, regular and attractive way, working to draw the listener in.”

Whittall suggests more specifically that ‘groove’ is “created within a piece of music by shifting timing and dynamic elements away from the expected pulse or dynamic level.” Therefore, as the performer plays repeating patterns, interacting with the underlying beat, a feeling of rhythmic propulsion creates a ‘groove’ and engages a listener.

3.1 Tall Tales But True

_Tall Tales But True_ (hereafter referred to as _Tall Tales_) was composed in 1992 for the Attacca group, with its unusual instrumentation of violin, bass clarinet, piano, two guitars, double bass, and percussion. The group recorded the work in 1994 with John Williams and Timothy Kain as the guitarists, released on a CD on the _Tall Poppies_ label. It remains the only commercially-released recording of the piece to date.

Westlake was inspired to write _Tall Tales_ after creating a “mystery/thriller home movie of the same name with his two sons and youngest sister.” Westlake remarks that the piece is “a response to the energy, fantasy, and imagination of young minds at play.” In _Tall Tales_, the guitars are not featured as solo instruments, but instead, help to establish rhythmic grooves, much like the guitar’s role in the rhythm section of a jazz or fusion band.

The compositional techniques employed in the work are almost exclusively minimalist, with the use of extensive repetition, gradual variation, phasing of dynamics, and additive and subtractive processes dominating the work. These techniques are combined with popular and elite harmonic techniques, such as modal interchange (which have been discussed at length in the preceding chapter), and the use of dissonant semitone clashes and chromatic accumulation, as seen in some high culture works.

In the two guitar parts, the use of extensive repetition is undoubtedly the most prominent minimalist technique, with both parts constructed largely from a sequence of successive ostinato patterns. A majority of both guitars’ content is based on repetitive patterns that are driving rhythmically and convey a sense of forward motion. The very first ostinato, a six-note pattern made up of the pitches A, G and E, is introduced in guitar 1 (G1) at m.17. At m.19, guitar 2 (G2) enters

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154 The recording of the Attacca group is available on the compilation album: Nigel Westlake, _Onomatopoeia_, Tall Poppies, TP047, 1994, compact disc.


156 Ibid.
and doubles the G1 part. This ostinato is repeated multiple times, but is interrupted every few repetitions by a slightly altered version (marked in red), changing both the pitch content and number of notes of the original pattern. This substitution is likely imperceptible to the listener due to the fast tempo, but is clearly visible in the score (Figure 41). Westlake varies the number of repetitions of the original pattern before a new version interjects, making its appearance unpredictable. Because the number of notes in each new interjection is inconsistent, its rhythmic duration is also unpredictable, however in almost every case the metre is altered to facilitate the return of the original ostinato pattern on a downbeat. Later in the work at m.226 (Figure 42), the piano has a six-note ostinato figure identical to the guitars’ and is treated similarly, but transposed up a fourth and intervallically altered.

This six-note pattern (with small interruptions) established at m.17 continues in the guitar parts for twenty-nine bars, before G1 begins a new ostinato at m.46 (Figure 43). Meanwhile, G2 continues repetitions of the original ostinato pattern, doubled by the bass clarinet and supported by the double bass, which plays notes of the pattern that fall on the beat (i.e. every other pitch). As the G1 ostinato changes, so does the rest of the ensemble, becoming more frenetic. After remaining on one harmony and ostinato pattern for a long period of time, the pitch material of all parts is transposed, creating harmonies reminiscent of the modal interchange Ⅵ – Ⅶ – I progression A7 (♭VI) - B add9 (♭VII) - C♯ add9add11 (I), Figure 43). The music remains on C♯ add9add11 for four bars, reaching the end of a thematic section and beginning the next (m.56) in A major.
Figure 41. Tall Tales But True, mm.16-28
Figure 42. *Tall Tales But True*, m.226

Figure 43. *Tall Tales But True*, mm.44-49
While the guitars play the bulk of the ostinati, the piano and percussion parts also make use of extensive repetition throughout the piece. For example, the percussionist has an ostinato beginning at m.56, played on marimba. The bass line maintains a steady crotchet pulse, resembling an inverted version of the ostinato from the previous section (compare with the double bass part, Figure 43, mm.46-54), while the treble voice plays a syncopated quaver rhythm (Figure 44).
The marimba’s bassline features a two note pattern that sets up an unusual harmonic effect. It contains one pitch that remains constant (B), and one that changes every two bars (from mm.56-67, A – G – A – G – F – D). Meanwhile, there is a constant leaping minor seventh figure between C#-B in the treble, which creates a mesmerising effect as it interacts with the changing bass line. In mm.56-57, a minor seventh dissonance is formed when the treble ostinato is coupled with the bass notes in mm.56-57 (the C# is consonant and the B is dissonant), creating an underlying harmony of A major. However, as the pitches in the bass ostinato change every two bars, in mm.58-59, the C# stands out as the dissonance, while the B becomes harmonically consonant (creating an underlying harmony of G major). As the treble notes C# and B exchange roles from consonant to dissonant, a mesmerising, pulsating effect is created.

Figure 44. Tall Tales But True, mm.56-67

Through the use of extensive repetition of ostinato patterns, Westlake forms isorhythms that interact with the underlying metre. One such example in Tall Tales can be found in the G1 part from mm.147-158 (Figure 45). The repeated semiquaver pattern is constructed from a group of six notes, which must be repeated eight times (spanning three bars) to again begin on a downbeat. The ostinato pattern, starting with the accented B, therefore moves in and out of phase with the principal metre every three bars, a technique reminiscent of the music of Steve Reich. G2 further
emphasises the start of each repetition of the pattern, doubling the B in G1 by playing a repeating dotted crotchet ostinato. The pulsing quavers in the marimba part from mm.226-240, in which the percussionist performs a gradual crescendo and diminuendo of a constantly repeated chord (Figure 46), is another example of a device strongly reminiscent of Reich, often heard throughout his *Music for 18 Musicians*.

![Figure 45. Tall Tales But True, mm.147-150](image1)

![Figure 46. Tall Tales But True, mm.226-231](image2)

One of the few non-minimalist aspects of this piece is Westlake’s use of harmony. In early minimalist compositions, harmonies tended to be largely consonant, whereas late minimalist and post-minimalist works tend towards chromatic harmonic constructions, and the use of quartal and quintal chords.\(^{157}\) *Tall Tales* best fits into the latter category, as it relies heavily on the use of extensions and non-chord tones to create dissonance. For example, the very first chord in the piece features a semitone clash between C♯ and D (Figure 47), and numerous examples of

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dissonance from these devices can be seen throughout the previous musical examples. The dissonance becomes more pervasive as the texture thickens and slowly builds in intensity starting in m.56, finally reaching a climax with the most extreme use of dissonance in mm.159-166 (**Figure 48**). This eight bar section features aggregate completion – all twelve pitches are utilised in each bar, resulting in many jarring semitone clashes (for example the F in the G2’s ostinato and the F♯ in the top voice of the G1’s rasguedo strums, m.159). After this climactic moment of tension, Westlake takes the listener back to the very start of the work, whose clashing semitones now feel like a release and moment of stasis.

![Figure 47. Tall Tales But True, mm.1-7](image-url)
Despite the use of modal interchange, the most-often dissonant harmonic language in *Tall Tales* might be seen as leaning the piece towards an elite aesthetic. However, by employing minimalism in the compositional process, Westlake is able to create a work that ultimately sits on the boundary between high and low culture. Westlake’s pervasive use of ostinato and isorhythms throughout result in the creation of mesmerising, pulsating, catchy grooves. These grooves potentially work to engage an audience otherwise unfamiliar with the sounds of dissonance and chromatic accumulation found throughout the work.
3.2 The Hinchinbrook Riffs

The Hinchinbrook Riffs was first composed for Westlake’s garage band Eggs Benedict, but was reworked in 2003 for solo classical guitar and digital delay. The work is based around various riffs that Westlake imagined after a trip to Hinchinbrook Island, which is part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, characterised by its lush tropical gorges, rugged mountain peaks, and diverse bird and sea-life.\(^\text{158}\) The world premiere recording was by Timothy Kain in 2003, with subsequent recordings released by prominent Australian guitarists Slava Grigoryan (2006), Craig Ogden (2006), Matthew Withers (2010), and Duo 19 - Antony Field and Daniel McKay (2012).\(^\text{159}\)

Prior to The Hinchinbrook Riffs, Westlake experimented with digital delay and bass clarinet in his very first composition, Onomatopoeia (1983). He went on to compose two more works that incorporate electronics, Fabian Theory (1987) for percussion and delay, and Moving Air (1987) for percussion and tape. Digital delays are regularly used in contemporary music to create looping effects, but in The Hinchinbrook Riffs (hereafter referred to as Hinchinbrook) Westlake utilises the delay to create the illusion of two guitars playing the same material, but one crotchet beat apart. As a result of the crotchet delay, unique textures, colours and rhythms are created through the interaction of the two parts.

Hinchinbrook owes far more to minimalism than Tall Tales and is perhaps the most minimalist guitar work that Westlake has composed. This minimalist quality of Hinchinbrook has been recognised by the present author and principal supervisor of this dissertation, and explored in a joint paper focusing on the minimalist connection in Australian guitar music.\(^\text{160}\) The piece is replete with all of the techniques outlined previously in this chapter. In particular, extensive repetition and gradual change combine to allow various small one or two bar motifs to develop and evolve into new ideas. Formally, Hinchinbrook is mostly through-composed with clear sections that each explore different motivic ideas, joined together by short transitory flourishes.

One of the defining features of the work is Westlake’s treatment of rhythm. In addition to the clever use of digital delay to create complex rhythmic interaction between the parts, Westlake utilises the minimalist technique of isorhythm, as can be observed from the very first bar (Figure 49). The four-note ostinato figure (five semiquavers in duration) becomes offset from the beat by a semiquaver with each repetition, thus moving in and out of phase with the main pulse and creating a catchy groove. The effect is intensified further by the use of the digital delay, as the entrance of


\(^{159}\) Australian recordings of The Hinchinbrook Riffs include: Timothy Kain, Mirrors of Fire, Tall Poppies, TP169, 2004, compact disc; Slava Grigoryan, Shadow Dances: Music for Guitar by Nigel Westlake, ABC Classics, 4765744, 2006, compact disc; Craig Ogden, The Hinchinbrook Riffs, Tall Poppies, TP187, 2006, compact disc; Matthew Withers, Solo, 2011, compact disc; and Duo 19 (Antony Field and Daniel McKay), Fluid Lines, Move Records, MD3355, 2012, compact disc. (Duo 19’s recording is especially noteworthy, as Field and McKay have performed the piece as a duet, rather than with one guitar and digital delay.)

the delayed ostinato figure fills the ‘gaps’ left by the live guitar, with the interaction of the parts resulting in a stream of steady semiquavers (Figure 50)

![Figure 49. The Hinchinbrook Riffs, mm.1-4](image1)

In comparison to the extensive use of isorhythm at the start of the piece, most other isorhythms in Hinchinbrook tend to be fairly short, lasting no more than one or two measures. With these shorter examples, Westlake continues to use odd numbers of notes in the repeating ostinato so that the pattern moves in and out of phase with the metre. Figure 51 is one such example, with its grouping of five notes further illustrating Westlake’s preference for metric patterns using multiples of five – a trait that can be seen frequently throughout his guitar works. Figure 52 shows the same phasing effect, also with a grouping of five.

![Figure 51. The Hinchinbrook Riffs, mm.57-58](image2)

![Figure 52. The Hinchinbrook Riffs, m.61](image3)

In his treatment of pitch, the minimalist process of gradual variation is the driving force moving the harmony forward. Applied to many motifs throughout the piece, this technique is perhaps most readily visible in Westlake’s treatment of the harmonic idea presented at the opening of Hinchinbrook. Figure 53 is an excerpt of mm.1-28, showing the opening two-bar theme as it undergoes a process of metamorphosis. Initially, Westlake gradually changes pitches to alter the
harmonies, for example, in m.5, two extra notes (A and F♯) are added to the underlying harmony of E minor. A similar process occurs in m.7, where the A remains but the F♯ becomes D♯. I propose that these opening bars can all be heard as E minor, over which Westlake explores different harmonic colours through experimentation with extensions of the E minor chord. In m.13 the rhythm is varied with the introduction of open string harmonics, and by m.21, Westlake has combined elements of the original thematic material as seen in mm.5-9 with open string harmonics. This process of gradual metamorphosis and re-combining of elements is indicative of how Westlake constructs the work. The use of messa-di-voci over each bar in this excerpt (and at varying points throughout the work) is also integral to the effect of the piece, maintaining a focus on timbre, texture, and dynamic shaping.

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161 In *The Hinchinbrook Riffs*, Westlake indicates harmonics with small circles above the note. These are not to be confused with open strings, which are denoted by small circles to the left of the note.
Similarly, mm.86-101 is a more complex example of how Westlake sets up a repetitive rhythmic groove to which he applies the process of gradual change, altering just one pitch every few bars. Figure 54 highlights the changing pitches, where each new pitch receives a different colour. These notes have also been put into a table for easier reading (Table 2). After m.101, the rate of change accelerates dramatically, allowing the work to transition to the next section while still retaining the motivic contour.

Figure 54. The Hinchinbrook Riffs, mm.86-104

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm.</th>
<th>common pitches</th>
<th>changing pitch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86-89</td>
<td>D E A F# C#</td>
<td>G#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>D E A F# C#</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-97</td>
<td>D E A F# C#</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98-101</td>
<td>D E A F# C#</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the majority of the motifs are developed in the systematic manner observed in the above examples, Westlake also uses the process of gradual variation in a more ad hoc way. For example, Figure 55 demonstrates how a two-bar melodic idea presented in mm.147-148 is explored. Westlake freely experiments with the content, reordering the pitches and putting them into smaller motivic units, as well as changing the rhythm and pattern of accents. Westlake uses
this passage of frenzied variation to move the music toward a climax, concluding a section before starting a new theme.

Hinchinbrook appeals to a wide audience largely because of its uniqueness. Seldom is a classical guitarist seen using technology in performance, especially in the context of a solo piece. While the use of electronics in contemporary art music can often alienate listeners and limit appeal to a niche market, Westlake keeps the work accessible by inviting the audience to engage with the work through programmatic associations, textures, colours, sounds, and the rhythmic grooves being produced. In keeping with many of the tenets of minimalism—such as consonant harmony, transparent audible processes, and gradual variation—Westlake has created a piece which, like minimalism itself, transcends the boundaries of the Great Divide.
Towards a New Guitar Virtuosity

Much of Westlake’s guitar music has been written for and premiered by some of the most influential classical guitar ensembles in Australia: Guitar Trek, Saffire, and the Grigoryan Brothers. Each of these groups has been signed to major record labels, allowing them to reach a large audience due to widespread marketing across multiple platforms, from posters to promotion on radio, internet, and television. Many of the performers in these groups could also be considered ‘crossover’ artists, performing a diverse range of non-traditional styles and thus appealing to a wide group of listeners. This unique set of circumstances makes these artists ideal for performing Westlake’s music, and for bringing his music to a large audience.

This chapter explores Westlake’s guitar chamber works, beginning in 1989 with his first guitar composition, *Winter in the Forgotten Valley* for guitar quartet. Since that time, he has contributed significantly to the guitar repertoire with four additional ensemble works: *Songs from the Forest* for guitar duo (1994), *Six Fish* for guitar quartet (2004), *Shadow Dances* for guitar and chamber orchestra (2004), *Shards of Jaisalmer* for guitar trio (2007), and an arrangement for guitar duo of the solo work, *Mosstrooper Peak* (2012). Over the eighteen year span that these works were composed, one can identify similarities and patterns in Westlake’s compositional style. Each of these works blends elite and popular culture, but perhaps owe more to the influence of popular styles (film music and rock music) than the music of elite composers such as Stravinsky or Debussy. This tendency is evident in Westlake’s consistent use of functional harmony and modal interchange. All of these chamber works (with the exception of *Shadow Dances*) are also highly programmatic, a feature which can be seen throughout much of Westlake’s guitar oeuvre.

The trio and quartet works explored here break away from the traditional classical guitar ensemble instrumentation, which typically consists exclusively of standard classical guitars. Instead, Westlake utilises members of the entire classical guitar family as well as a selection of

162 Guitar Trek has just celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary as a quartet. Unfortunately, Saffire is no longer performing as a group, but each of the members have continued on to maintain their solo careers and collaborate with other artists (see Footnote 164). The Grigoryan Brothers maintain a busy schedule and tour internationally regularly.

163 Slava Grigoryan’s first record deal was at age seventeen with Sony Classical. Guitar Trek, Saffire and the Grigoryan Brothers have released albums with ABC Classics. Currently, the Grigoryans run their own record label called Which Way Music, which aims to promote new works in classical, jazz and contemporary music. This label can be compared in a way to ECM Records, which mainly showcases jazz records and new improvised works. Jazz on the ECM label draws inspiration from a wide range of sources resulting in a distinctly different sound to ‘traditional’ jazz styles such as swing and bebop.

164 Slava and Leonard Grigoryan regularly collaborate with Joseph and James Tawadros for their classical/jazz/world music cross-over project (Band of Brothers). Karin Schaupp has many collaborations. Most recently she worked with an actor in a music/drama production of Don Juan, and she also has a duo with contemporary singer, Katie Noonan, with their third album *Songs of the Latin Skies*, released in February 2017. Tonie Field has focused her research into gender diversity and has just worked on a video project called ‘Corpus is Opus.’ Many of her projects currently focus on combining classical music with theatre, drama and fashion.

165 Mosstrooper Peak will be explored in a separate chapter.
‘contemporary’ steel string guitars. The combination of these non-standard instruments with the traditional classical guitar results in the creation of new and unique textures.\textsuperscript{166}

Finally, as all of these works have been composed for Australian virtuosi, this chapter will highlight the virtuosic elements of each piece, and argue that the ‘magic’ of virtuosic moments in live performance is essential to creating a successful piece of music that appeals to a broad audience.

4.1 Winter in the Forgotten Valley

Commissioned by Timothy Kain, \textit{Winter in the Forgotten Valley} (1989) was composed relatively early in Westlake’s career for Australia’s flagship guitar quartet, Guitar Trek. Unlike a typical guitar quartet of four standard classical guitars, Guitar Trek uses treble, standard, baritone, and bass guitars.\textsuperscript{167} By utilising the entire guitar family, they are able to achieve an unusual depth of sound, which is perhaps a contributing factor to the group’s widespread popularity. When Kain approached Westlake about composing for Guitar Trek, it was with the intention that they would finally have some original compositions for their unusual instrumentation, rather than relying on arrangements of existing works.\textsuperscript{168} Thus, Westlake can be seen as an innovator for the modern guitar quartet in Australia, as \textit{Winter in the Forgotten Valley} is the first ever Australian-composed work to utilise members of the extended guitar family. Subsequent compositions employing non-standard guitars by other Australian composers, such as Phillip Houghton and Richard Charlton, did not emerge until the early 1990s.

\textit{Winter in the Forgotten Valley} is a three-movement work blending diverse musical styles, with each movement being stylistically distinct. The first movement is minimalist in approach and makes use of extensive repetition; the second is more classical in style, featuring lyrical melodies and a gentle arpeggiated accompaniment throughout most of the movement (reminiscent of the second movement of the \textit{Antarctica} concerto, see Chapter 2.2); the third movement shows rock influence and is filled with syncopation, isorhythms, and edgy power chords.\textsuperscript{169} Unfortunately, the score has been withdrawn from Westlake’s catalogue and I have been unable to source a copy for the purposes of this research, making any detailed analysis difficult.

Not much has been written about the work. However, in an interview with \textit{Classical Guitar Magazine}, Westlake remarks that there are elements in the piece that have been inspired by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{166} While many guitar quartet works utilise the contrabass classical guitar, I am yet to find any other chamber work aside from \textit{Six Fish} which utilises the dobro and 12-string (either separately or simultaneously).
\item \textsuperscript{167} A standard guitar’s sounding range is E2 – B5. The treble guitar is also referred to as the requinto guitar, and is tuned five semitones above a standard guitar resulting in a higher pitched sound. The baritone guitar is tuned a fifth below the standard guitar, with the sixth string tuned to an octave below the A string on a standard guitar. It has a sound sometimes likened to a cello. The bass guitar is tuned an octave below the standard classical guitar and can come in four string (EADG) or six string (EADGBE) varieties.
\item \textsuperscript{168} Kain, interview. See Appendix I.
\item \textsuperscript{169} A power chord consists of the tonic and fifth of a chord. As the third is omitted it can be used for major and minor chords. Typically played on only the fifth and sixth strings of the guitar, they produce low pitched chords. The left hand fingerling to produce this chord is such that it can be shifted around the fretboard speedily, resulting in parallel harmony.
\end{itemize}
blues/folk guitarist, Leo Kottke - a throwback to Westlake’s experience playing in folk and rock bands in his youth.\textsuperscript{170}

Guitar Trek’s debut album contains the only recording of \textit{Winter in the Forgotten Valley},\textsuperscript{171} though the second movement of this recording has since been added to an ‘easy-listening’ ABC Classics compilation album, which features music by Liszt, Debussy, Britten, Tchaikovsky, Vivaldi, and others. Westlake is the only Australian composer featured on the album, with \textit{Winter in the Forgotten Valley} and “Wooden Ships” from \textit{Antarctica} both included on the disc. The album title \textit{Winter Solstice – Beautiful Music for Solitude and Reflection}, and its marketing description, clearly indicate that it is intending to appeal to a wide audience by commercialising high culture music, associating it with a winter landscape and the promise of being able to relax and de-stress after a busy day:

Wrap yourself in music this winter! Composers across the ages have been inspired by this season of fresh stillness, dancing snowflakes, mighty storms and sleeping life.\textsuperscript{172}

\section*{4.2 Songs from the Forest}

\textit{Songs from the Forest} was composed in 1994 for the John Williams/Timothy Kain duo, which formed after their large chamber ensemble Attacca disbanded. The piece reached a broad audience both because of John Williams’s prominence as a classical guitarist, as well as his success as a crossover artist. (Williams released several crossover albums in the 1970s and 1980s, both as a solo artist, and also with progressive rock group, Sky. Williams’s foray into contemporary music was much to the chagrin of Andres Segovia who “looked down on music without the right classical provenance.”)\textsuperscript{173}

Westlake wrote the piece on the outskirts of the Yengo National Park in New South Wales, a part of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area filled with valleys, ridges, caves, creeks, and rivers. Mount Yengo is also a sacred site for several Aboriginal communities that occupied the area, resulting in an abundance of rock art.

Westlake has also arranged \textit{Songs from the Forest} for guitar duo with the addition of double bass (2003). The Grigoryan Brothers have recorded this arrangement with Nigel’s son Joel Westlake as the bassist. Reviewer Hubert Culot writes of the recording:

This is a short, dance-like, jazzy piece replete with what I have once termed Westlake’s fingersnapping, foot-stamping music; a most attractive work for a rather unusual instrumental group.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{170} Byzantine, “Australian Guitar Composers - part 2,” 24.
\textsuperscript{172} While the album is no longer available for purchase on the ABC Classics website, this description can be found on Buywell Classical Music. See: “Winter Solstice,” accessed October 20, 2016, http://www.buywell.com/cgi-bin/buywellic2/afy.html?mv_arg=14488
\textsuperscript{174} Culot, “CD Review.”
In addition to the Grigoryan Brothers, there are many other notable Australian recordings of this work. Another arrangement exists for guitar and percussion, made by the OgdenTanner duo (Craig Ogden, guitar and Paul Tanner, percussion), which Westlake describes as “absolutely sensational.”

Westlake has expressed that when composing for a specific performer, he imagines her/his sound, and tries to engage the performer’s personality as a musician in the compositional process. For example, Westlake feels that John Williams favours lyrical music and is not overly concerned with extended techniques or complex percussive devices. Undoubtedly, Williams’s recordings tend to gravitate towards works that have broad popular appeal. For example, recent albums have included a collaboration with jazz/fusion guitarist John Etheridge, and several albums of self-composed pieces. These works are all highly lyrical, and do not contain unusual techniques or post-tonal harmonies. Songs from the Forest, however does contain complex rhythmic devices such as obscuring the pulse and underlying metre to create an agitated, unsettled feeling (for example mm.56-57, Figure 56), as well as the use of percussion on the guitar body. At the same time, the melodies are lyrical, and this is maintained throughout. The opening line played by Guitar 1 (G1) is an excellent example of such a lyrical, memorable melody (Figure 57). In the slower middle section (mm.85), G1’s melody adopts an improvisatory character, while guitar 2 (G2) provides a repetitive finger-picking style accompaniment to outline the harmonies, not unlike the sort of repetitive fingerpicking that is often heard in pop-rock music (Figure 58).

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175 Australian recordings of Songs from the Forest include: John Williams and Timothy Kain, The Mantis & The Moon: Guitar Duets from Around the World, Sony, SK62007, 1998, compact disc; Slava and Leonard Grigoryan, with Joel Westlake (bass), Shadow Dances: Music by Nigel Westlake, ABC Classics, 4765744, 2006, compact disc; Duo 19 (Antony Field and Daniel McKay), Fluid Lines, Move Records, MD3355, 2012, compact disc; Brew Guitar Duo (Bradley Kunda and Matt Withers), Landscape, Soundset Recordings, 0793573736376, 2010, compact disc; and The Australian Guitar Duo (Rupert Boyd and Jacob Cordover), Songs from the Forest, 884501675895, 2012, compact disc.

176 This arrangement can be heard on OgdenTanner, Songs from the Forest, CP6701, 2001, compact disc.

177 This comment from Westlake is written in the liner notes for OgdenTanner’s album, as mentioned in the previous footnote.


180 John Williams and John Etheridge, Places Between, Sony Classical, 88697009072, 2006, compact disc; John Williams, Pure Acoustic, West One Music, WOM 142, 2008, compact disc; and John Williams, From a Bird, JCW Recordings, JCW1, 2008, compact disc.
Figure 56. *Songs from the Forest*, mm.56-57

Figure 57. *Songs from the Forest*, mm.1-5
As with Winter in the Forgotten Valley, Songs from the Forest blends high and low cultural elements. Its popular music aesthetic can be clearly heard in the opening bars, which employ the use of functional harmony and modal interchange. Figure 57 shows the ♭VI – ♭VII – I progression in mm.2-4 of the G2 part from Songs from the Forest. Part of the main thematic material, this chord progression returns multiple times throughout the work.

However, not all of the harmonies in Songs from the Forest can be linked to film music and pop songs. Westlake chooses to contrast these straightforward harmonies with quartal and quintal chords,\(^{181}\) often heard in the elite music of some of his other influences: Stravinsky, Debussy, jazz,

\(^{181}\) By quartal chords, I refer to chords that are created by stacking fourths, and by quintal chords I refer to chords that are created by stacking fifths.
as well as key progressive rock artists such as Frank Zappa and King Crimson. An example of quartal harmony in the music of Debussy can be seen in the opening of *La Cathédral engloutie* (1910) (Figure 59). Debussy employs chords constructed entirely of perfect fourths and fifths, which he then transposes in a process known as chord planing, creating an open and spacious sound. Pitch-class set analysis of this excerpt results in a prime form of set-class [02479] in m.1, revealing that the passage is constructed entirely from notes of the pentatonic scale.

Westlake utilises quartal and quintal in a similar manner. In *Songs from the Forest*, they can be heard in mm.77-84 in the G1 part, giving a sense of resolution and closure to the opening section after a dramatic crescendo of repetitive triplet patterns (Figure 60). Pitch-class set analysis reveals that the vertical sonorities in the G1 part of this excerpt form set-class [024579] chords, the same pentatonic sonorities which Debussy employed, with the addition of an extra pitch from outside the pentatonic system. This ‘extra’ pitch is noteworthy, as it introduces a major third into an otherwise completely quartal/quintal sonority, adding some harmonic colour to the chord’s ‘open’ sound. It also creates a chord whose intervals align almost exactly with the intervals of the strings of the guitar, with only the top pitch being a tone too large. This results in a very idiomatic chord shape for the player, which Westlake then transposes much in the same way as Debussy, executed with the highly guitaristic chord planing technique of simply shifting a left hand shape. The spacious, open sound that these chords provide, along with the triplet patterns in the G2 part, creates a smooth transition into the slower middle section of the piece.

![Figure 59. La Cathédral engloutie, mm.1-3](image)

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182 King Crimson was a progressive rock band which formed in 1968. The band’s style is eclectic, with their inspiration for compositions coming from a wide range of sources including Béla Bartók, jazz, minimalism, and gamelan.

183 The intervals of the guitar strings are P4-P4-P4-M3-P4. The chords seen in Figure 60 are constructed of P4-P4-P4-M3-P5.

In addition to the harmonic language in *Songs from the Forest*, Westlake combines elite and popular musical styles through his treatment of rhythm. **Figure 56** illustrated the way that Westlake obscures pulse and creates metric ambiguity through layering rhythms. In contrast, the work also makes use of syncopation typical of popular music since its beginnings in the early twentieth century. An example of syncopation in *Songs from the Forest* can be seen in mm.36-37 and mm.39-40 (**Figure 62**). This use of syncopation is one of Westlake’s signature techniques and will be identified throughout his works in subsequent chapters.

*Songs from the Forest* also shows the influence of elite musical styles by composing in odd-time signatures, as in the opening measures of the work. Between mm.1-10, the metre changes six times between $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{6}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ (see **Figure 61**). The middle section of the work also makes use of $\frac{5}{4}$ metre (refer back to **Figure 58**).

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185 A study was conducted on American popular music between 1890-1939, with a large number of sound recordings analysed for various types of syncopation. Results showed an increase in the quantity of syncopation used over this fifty year time period. See: David Huron and Ann Ommen, “An Empirical Study of Syncopation in American Popular Music, 1890–1939,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 28 (2) (2006): 211–231.
Undoubtedly, the lyrical nature *Songs from the Forest* suits the playing styles of the Williams/Kain duo. The popularity of both performers in Australia, coupled with Williams’s international success as a crossover artist allowed for *Songs from the Forest* to reach a wide audience in Australia and abroad. However, there is more to the composition than a pretty melody that is immediately heard on the surface. The use of quartal harmonies, an improvisatory-style slower section, and unusual time signatures such as $\frac{5}{4}$ coupled with metric ambiguity gives the piece greater depth. Arguably, it is this blending of elite and popular elements that bridges the Great Divide, allowing the work to be well received by a wide audience.

### 4.3 Six Fish

The Saffire Guitar Quartet followed Guitar Trek’s path to become the next classical guitar quartet to rise to prominence in Australia. Featuring some of Australia’s finest young classical guitarists, the founding members were Slava Grigoryan, Tonié Field, Karin Schaupp, and Gareth Koch. Field was later replaced by Slava’s younger brother, Leonard Grigoryan. Over the group’s nearly decade-long existence, they commissioned new works from various Australian composers, and Koch arranged many pieces for the quartet. Saffire developed a large fan-base around Australia, largely due to their wide and varied repertoire spanning Renaissance music through to arrangements of rock songs (Koch’s arrangement of Deep Purple’s *Highway Star* (1972) is one
such example). A review of the group’s 2004 CD Nostálgica acknowledges their remarkable stylistic diversity and ability to bridge the Great Divide:

So what is this? Cross-over? Any record covering both Bartók and Deep Purple could with some justification be labelled ‘cross-over’, but to me it is something else. ‘Cross-over’ implies that there are borders to cross, and these four eminent musicians see no borders; this is border-less music. Maybe the guitar is the instrument that lends itself most easily to building bridges between genres, styles and times, especially when played as on this disc.\(^\text{186}\)

Westlake’s six-movement suite, Six Fish was composed for the group in 2003. They premiered the work and released it on their second album the following year.\(^\text{187}\) It received an APRA/AMC award in 2005 for ‘Instrumental Work of the Year’,\(^\text{188}\) and owes some of its wide appeal to Westlake’s blending of elite and popular musical styles. One the most obvious ways in which Westlake has achieved this is through his unusual choice of instrumentation: instead of four standard classical guitars, he composed for two classical guitars, a dobro (resonator) guitar, and a 12-string guitar. By employing the dobro and 12-string guitar, two instruments almost exclusively used in popular music and certainly strongly associated with popular music in the minds of the listeners, Westlake immediately increases the accessibility and appeal of the work.

This unique instrumentation also results in strongly contrasting timbres and textures rarely heard in the classical guitar repertoire, a feature further enhanced by Westlake’s distribution of melody between the four players. Often in guitar ensemble repertoire, guitar 1 plays the melody, guitar 2 has a harmony, and guitars 3 and 4 have accompanimental roles. Westlake instead chose to share melodic lines amongst all of the quartet members, meaning that sometimes a melodic line will be played by the dobro or 12-string. These instruments create a metallic, shimmery sound which is not possible on a standard classical guitar. In the album’s liner notes, Koch remarks that the dobro guitar creates an aqueous swelling sound, and the 12-string guitar adds glimmering textures.\(^\text{189}\)

Another means by which Westlake makes the work accessible to a wide audience is through musical depiction. Similarly to Winter in the Forgotten Valley and Songs from the Forest, Six Fish is highly programmatic, giving non-musically educated audiences a way into the music.\(^\text{190}\)

On his compositional process for Six Fish, Westlake writes:

> As the movements took shape, they seemed to take on a life of their own, each one marked by individual, distinguishing characteristics. I was reminded of various fish I have encountered in the wild


\(^{187}\) The premiere recording of Six Fish is found on: Saffire, Nostálgica, ABC Classics, 4763611, 2004, compact disc. The other known recording is of Guitar Trek: Guitar Trek, Six Fish : celebrating 25 years, Tall Poppies, TP221, 2012, compact disc.

\(^{188}\) APRA (Australasian Performing Right Association) joined with the AMC (Australian Music Centre) for the first time to present awards for Australian classical music in 2001. These awards are now known as the ‘Art Music Awards’, and are presented by APRA AMCOS in conjunction with the AMC.


\(^{190}\) After my recital, I received feedback from friends who have never received musical tuition and have had little exposure to classical music. They were all transfixed by Six Fish and commented on how much they loved the suite for its ability to transport them to another place.

83
– the diversity, awesome beauty and weirdness of sea creatures is of great interest to me. I was also reading Richard Flanagan’s extraordinary work *Gould’s Book of Fish* at the time, which may have been an influence.\(^{191}\)

The six movements of the suite are each named after different fish: “Guitarfish,” “Sunfish,” “Spangled Emperor,” “Sling-Jaw Wrasse,” “Leafy Sea Dragon,” and “Flying Fish.” Given Westlake’s comments, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the strongly contrasting textures, styles, and timbres throughout the work are used to conjure images of the fish after which each movement is titled.

Westlake also uses distinctly different melodic figuration and harmonic content in each movement to suggest the programmatic imagery. Two of Kramer’s suggestions are that postmodernist music avoids totalising forms, and embraces eclecticism.\(^ {192}\) In *Six Fish*, rather than repeating the same motifs and harmonic progressions across movements to give a sense of unity throughout the suite, each movement is markedly different, inviting listeners to imagine an array of different types of fish. By removing one of the ideals of elite musical culture, Westlake is making the work more accessible to a wide audience. For example, the fifth movement (“Leafy Sea Dragon”) features a delicate, ornamented melody in the G2 part, suggesting the image of an elegant leafy sea dragon moving gracefully through water (Figure 63).

In contrast, the sixth movement (“Flying Fish”) is vibrant and full of energy with a lively tempo. An ‘uneducated’ audience might be invited to hear this ornamented melodic line to represent the fish swimming quickly through the water (Figure 64), and the hocketing\(^ {193}\) of the melody between the G1 and G2 in mm.50-51 as the flying fish leaping out into the air (Figure 65).

\(^{191}\) Koch, Liner notes for *Nostálgica*, 10.


\(^{193}\) A definition of hocketing along with its use in *Six Fish* is explored later in the chapter.
Figure 63. “Leafy Sea Dragon,” mm.14-18

Figure 64. “Flying Fish,” mm.45-48
Westlake’s treatment of harmony in *Six Fish* borrows much from popular music and film scores, which usually feature clearly-defined key centres and functional harmony. Several writers note the tendency of film music composers such as John Williams and James Horner to use the lydian mode because of its ability to cultivate ethereal, celestial sounds and a feeling of wonderment. Examples of the use of the lydian mode include the melody of the popular television theme from *The Simpsons*, and the “Flying Theme” from the film *E.T.*

Perhaps due to his film music background, Westlake utilises the lydian mode in several movements of *Six Fish*. For example, after the opening chords in “Guitarfish,” a B♭ pedal note begins in m.10. Despite the lack of a key signature, the constant pedal from mm.10-26 establishes the tonic. It is only with the appearance of E♮ in the melody played by G1 (as seen between mm.18-20 of Figure 66) that use of the B♭ lydian mode becomes clear.

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Most of the other movements of *Six Fish* also make use of tonal, functional harmony. After an A aeolian scale in the opening three bars of “Sunfish,” the piece is clearly structured around an E centricity (Figure 67). Again, there is no key signature, but the use of accidentals, E pedal notes, and V7-I cadences between mm.12-13 and mm.16-17 all point to a key of E major. While there are chords not part of E major (for example, the G and D triads), these are used to add colour to the underlying tonic. The same modal interchange progression used in *Songs from the Forest* (♭VI – ♭VII – I) also appears in “Sunfish.” As described on pp.36-37 the use of this chord progression will no doubt be familiar to broad audiences from its prevalence in film scores and popular music contexts. Figure 67 demonstrates the shortened ♭VII – I cadential figure (D chord moving to an E chord, mm.7-9). Meanwhile, Figure 68 illustrates an extended use of modal interchange with two ♭VI – ♭VII – I progressions in succession (the second transposed down a fourth). This material closes the opening section, and as “Sunfish” is written in ternary form, the same material also concludes the movement (mm.71-73).

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195 This cadential figure was discussed in relation to the *Antarctica* concerto. It also appears in other works that will be discussed subsequently.
Figure 67. “Sunfish,” mm.1-20
Similarly, functional tonality and modal interchange are easily identifiable in the third and sixth movements. In “Spangled Emperor,” the movement begins based around a G mixolydian mode, with ii (A minor), IV (C major) and I (G major) chords accounting for most of the harmonies (Figure 69). The remainder of the movement continues on using functional harmony, largely based around G, F and C chords. Modal interchange can be observed in mm.8-9 with the progression E♭ – F/A – G/B. This progression is repeated again in m.11, but instead of concluding on the G chord (chord I), Westlake unexpectedly shifts to an F♯ chord, followed by a C chord, effecting an abrupt modulation toward C major. The sixth movement, “Flying Fish,” also makes use of modal interchange although it takes on a more frenzied manner by coupling it with hocketing as can be seen in mm.29-30 (Figure 70).
Figure 69. “Spangled Emperor,” mm.1-12

Figure 70. “Flying Fish,” mm.29-30
In stark contrast to these popular music inspired harmonies, Westlake also utilises non-tonal symmetrical collections such as the octatonic and whole tone scale. In Figure 71, two whole tone scales are stated in their entirety, with the C whole tone scale in the 12-string guitar part, and the C♯ whole tone in the dobro. Rhythmically separated by a quaver, these two parts create a sequence of 5-6 intervals as they ascend through their respective whole tone scales. The chord progression resulting from the interaction of all four parts is crafted from a rather ingenious combination of the two collections: by staggering the two whole tone scales, Westlake is able to draw pitches from both collections to form major triads. The result is a non-functional progression of parallel major triads, constructed entirely around a whole tone collection, with root notes rising through a C♯ whole tone scale. This passage is an especially clear example of Westlake’s combination of high and low culture elements, combining in the first fifty bars both popular music inspired progressions in the form of modal interchange, and the elite compositional element of non-functional symmetrical collections.

As with the whole tone scale, octatonic collections are an elite compositional element that have long been associated with mystery and the metaphysical world. The sounds of the octatonic collection have been associated with the music of Debussy, Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabin, and Stravinsky. Haunting, mysterious sounds are created with the use of this collection in a variety of works. For example, in Petrouchka (1911), Stravinsky represents the ‘supernatural’ event of the puppet coming to life through the sounds of the ‘Petrouchka chord,’ which consists of a C major chord and F♯ major chord played simultaneously. Another work which demonstrates the haunting quality of the octatonic collection is Scriabin’s Vers la Flamme, Op.72 (1914).

While many of the other movements of Six Fish are tonal and based on functional or modal harmony, the fifth movement, “Leafy Sea Dragon,” is based entirely around the octatonic 0,2 and

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196 If using a single whole tone scale, augmented [048] triads are the only possibility.
1,2 collections (Figure 72 and Figure 73). This fits with the historical use of octatonicism to depict the otherworldly, as the leafy sea dragon is a truly bizarre looking creature. Figure 74 shows the pitch class sets (pcs) of all pitches in each bar, revealing that the first six measures are constructed entirely from the oct 0,2 collection. Perhaps the clearest use of the oct 0,2 collection can be seen in m.6, where all pitches of the collection are present in order, starting on an A in the bottom voice of the G2 part. The dense texture created in m.6 with the meandering semiquavers in G1 and G2 and chords in G3 and G4 brings the movement to a climax, and the abrupt change to the oct 1,2 collection on beat 1 of m.7 gives a sense of resolution. Westlake continues to use this collection for a further three bars before transitioning back to oct 0,2 for the rest of the movement.

Figure 72. The octatonic 0,2 collection

Figure 73. The octatonic 1,2 collection
In keeping with the use of popular culture styles that easily appeal to a broad audience, the influence of rock music can be found throughout the suite, but most pervasively in the fourth movement, “Sling-Jaw Wrasse.” This movement is brash, bold, and aggressive, filled with rock-inspired techniques such as power chords, soloistic riff-like figures, string bends, and use of a glass slide. Although Westlake has not received formal training on the guitar, Kain suggests that
many of these ideas could be the result of his own experimentation on the instrument. This experimentation is likely the reason why many of the soloistic figures in this movement fit so comfortably under the left hand of guitarists, as such idiomatic writing is usually only achieved through deliberate design. Examples of such idiomatic passages can be seen in the use of the bottle neck in the G3 part (Figure 75) and in Figure 76. “Sling Jaw Wrasse” culminates in a massive unison tutti figure demonstrating the technical facility of all of the members of the quartet (Figure 76). It looks and sounds technically challenging when played at tempo, but in reality, many of the runs from mm.47-49 fit very naturally under the fingers, and are easy to execute with the marked slurs.

![Figure 75. “Sling Jaw Wrasse,” mm.35-37](image)

![Figure 76. “Sling Jaw Wrasse,” mm.47-50](image)

This style of idiomatic soloing could be likened to rock guitar music, particularly that found in the music of Frank Zappa. Many of Zappa’s guitar solos are built upon scalar passages, executed with idiomatic left hand fingerings and utilisation of slurs and ‘hammer-ons’ to facilitate speed. An

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197 Kain, interview. See Appendix I.
example of this can be seen in *Rat Tomago* (1979) (Figure 77), which is a sample representative of the soloing style popular with Zappa.\(^{198}\) It is possible that Westlake drew inspiration from Zappa, and other progressive rock guitarists such as Robert Fripp from King Crimson, or even from listening to John Williams play with his progressive rock group Sky.

Rhythmic devices from West African music can be found throughout *Six Fish*. One such device is ‘hocketing,’ defined by Simha Arom as “the interweaving, interlocking and overlapping of rhythmic figures.”\(^{200}\) While the use of hocketing in Europe dates back to thirteenth century sacred vocal music, it is a technique that has been used extensively in West African music. This technique in Westlake’s music may have resulted from his time in The Magic Puddin’ Band, working closely with percussionist Greg Sheehan, who spent time listening to African music.\(^{201}\)

Hocketing sometimes occurs in a relaxed manner, and sometimes in a more frenzied way. For example, in m.32 of “Sunfish,” the hocketing between G1 and G2 is fairly relaxed with a full beat of material being passed between them (Figure 78). This continues in the same manner with hocketing between the G3 and G4 parts in mm.33-34. As this second hocket in mm.33-34 is executed by the dobro and 12-string guitars, a unique textural element is introduced as the timbre constantly changes when moving between the two instruments, creating – in Koch’s words – “aqueous, swelling” sounds.\(^{202}\)

In contrast, mm.50-51 of “Flying Fish” (Figure 79) reveals a more energetic use of hocketing. This example is lively, with the hocket occurring every quaver beat between G1 and G2. Westlake superimposes this onto another layer of hocket created by slower moving crotchets between G3 and G4. This two-bar hocketing figure is used to transition back to the opening motif in m.52, and draws its pitch material from the two wholetone collections: C♯ wholetone in G1 and G3, and C wholetone in G2 and G4.

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\(^{201}\) Mackay, “Nigel Westlake, Composer/Performer,” 22.

\(^{202}\) Koch, Liner notes for *Nostalgica*, 10.
Also worth noting is the virtuosity required to perform this excerpt. In addition to the technical demands of playing this fast passage, it is also incredibly difficult from an ensemble perspective for G1 and G2 to execute the hocket with the extreme rhythmic precision required to sound like a single guitar. This sort of virtuosity is often found in music that has broad appeal, as its theatricality can easily engage a live audience.

Figure 78. “Sunfish,” mm.31-34

Figure 79. “Flying Fish,” mm.49-52

Many songs in popular music feature drums or other forms of percussion to keep the beat and create a groove. A unique ability of the classical guitar is that in addition to providing a melody and harmony, it can also function as a percussion instrument. By tapping on different parts of the guitar body with the palm of the hand, fingers, or fingernails, the guitarist can produce a range of percussive sounds: low and resonant like a bass drum by striking the middle of the soundboard with the side of the thumb, or short and sharp like a snare drum by hitting the side of
the guitar with a fingernail. Use of percussion effects is quite common in many modern classical guitar compositions by international composers.

Westlake uses the guitar as a percussion instrument in different ways, and employs these techniques in several pieces. In one section of *Songs from the Forest* (Figure 80), Westlake uses percussive taps (as indicated by the ‘x’ noteheads) in the G2 part as a textural feature, and to add excitement as the piece builds towards a climax.

In contrast to *Songs from the Forest*, the guitar is used percussively in *Six Fish* simply to provide a beat, not dissimilar to a drum kit in popular music. The following excerpt (Figure 81) shows percussive rhythms notated and played by G1 from mm.19-22 in “Sling-Jaw Wrasse.” The different locations of the ‘x’ noteheads, along with Westlake’s timbral descriptions of ‘short and bright’ and ‘low and resonant,’ helps the performer to identify exactly where on the guitar they are required to play. The resulting sound is reminiscent of a snare and bass drum, and the rhythm similar to a typical rock drumming pattern (bass drum on beats 1 and 3, snare on beats 2 and 4), often used when drummers learn to play a rock beat on drum kit for the first time.

![Figure 80. Songs from the Forest, mm.37-44](image)

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203 For examples of a variety of percussive techniques in guitar works, listen to Leo Brouwer’s *Elogio de la Danza* (1964), Paolo Bellinati’s *Jongo* (1988), Nikita Koshkin’s *The Prince’s Toys Suite* (1980), and Roland Dyens’ *Night in Tunisia* (2004). (These pieces are by no means the only ones to use percussion on the guitar, nor are these the only composers to employ this technique in their works.)
By using these contemporary rock rhythms and extended guitar techniques in *Six Fish*, Westlake continues to craft this suite into a work which can appeal to an audience which has little or no exposure to classical guitar music, or ‘classical’ music in general.

*Six Fish* does not contain as many elements of minimalism as some of Westlake’s other compositions from the same time period, but its influence can still be seen in the processes of addition and subtraction, and the use of extensive repetition. For example, these two techniques are employed simultaneously in the first movement, “Guitarfish.” After sweeping chords which open the movement, a B♭ pedal note is repeated extensively beginning at m.10. Not only does this imply a B♭ centricity as discussed earlier, but it also gives a simple foundation from which the piece can grow and develop, starting with the processes of addition and subtraction in the G1 melody from m.13. Westlake maintains rhythmic interest within the subtle development of the melody by starting each new phrase on a different beat within the bar. Figure 82 shows the melodic phrases undergoing this metamorphosis, gradually increasing in length (the phrases have been circled in red). The pitch content of the phrases has also been collated into a table, with the pitches

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204 These processes and two of Westlake’s minimalist pieces were discussed and explored in Chapter 3.
reordered for ease of reading. As the table displays, B♭ is a constant pitch throughout the first nine melodic phrases, re-emphasising the B♭ centricity.

![Figure 82. “Guitarfish,” mm.12-20](image)

**Table 3. The pitch content of each sub-phrase in Figure 82**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phrase</th>
<th>pitch content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A B♭ C G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A B♭ C G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A B♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A B♭ D G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A B♭ D G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A B♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A B♭ E F G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>B♭ E F G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A B♭ C E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>C E G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar example can be observed in the final movement, “Flying Fish.” The melody, which is shared between G1 and G2, begins tentatively in mm.21-24 and grows in complexity from mm.25-30 (Figure 83).
Six Fish evidently makes use of a large number of popular music styles and techniques such as the use of the \( \flat VI - \flat VII - I \) progression, the lydian mode for melodic construction, and rock guitar techniques. “Sling Jaw Wrasse” features highly virtuosic passages, drawing on the inspiration of rock music, and “Flying Fish” is a zestful movement that requires virtuosi to execute it with ease. On the surface, these compositional techniques and use of virtuosity appeal to audiences who enjoy popular music and the spectacle of an engaging live performance. At the same time, Six Fish features octatonicism, wholetone scales, and hocketing, giving the piece depth.
and a quality that appeals to audiences appreciative of elite styles. The programmatic nature of the work (titling each movement after different types of fish) gives popular music audiences a ‘way in’ to understanding the work in these moments of complex harmony (such as that heard in “Leafy Sea Dragon”).

4.4 Shadow Dances

*Shadow Dances* was commissioned by Timothy Kain and premiered under the name *Images* (2000). Images began as a multi-movement work, but after receiving a Fellowship from Australian National University in 2004, Westlake re-worked and re-orchestrated the piece for Slava Grigoryan. The resulting work became *Shadow Dances.* Harold Gretton (one of Kain’s students) gave the premiere performance of at Australian National University. It has also been recorded by Slava Grigoryan with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Westlake remarks:

> The guitar writing in Shadow Dances has been very much informed by my long association with Tim Kain, who has been guiding me through the labyrinth of mysteries surrounding guitar composition since 1989.

In the same time period that Westlake composed *Images*, he also composed *Piano Concerto* for Michael Kieran Harvey, and *Jovian Moons* for guitar and piano. *Jovian Moons* was revised in 2002 and both *Shadow Dances* and *Piano Concerto* were re-worked during Westlake’s 2004 Fellowship. Interestingly, Westlake approaches harmony in the same way for all three works, displaying a predilection for octatonicism and chromaticism. This is in stark contrast to *Six Fish* and *Songs from the Forest*, which are tonal with clear examples of functional harmony. Additionally, similar melodic motifs and rhythmic concepts can be found to occur across the works, for example a raga-inspired section in *Shadow Dances* appears in a similar manner in “Io,” the fourth movement of *Jovian Moons*.

For *Shadow Dances*, this gravitation away from tonality arguably places the work firmly in an elite category. However, Westlake incorporates a strong rhythmic drive and draws upon the virtuosity of the guitarist to maintain the interest of listeners unfamiliar with the highly dissonant tonal language.

The works previously discussed in this dissertation all have a degree of programmatic association, from the highly programmatic *Antarctica*, through to *Six Fish*, whose evocative title

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207 Westlake, interview comments as published in: Cooney, “2006 Sydney Symphony Education Program.”


209 Westlake, “Shadow Dances.”

210 Jovian Moons will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.
encourages listeners to imagine different types of fish. Shadow Dances however, is far more abstract:

Shadow Dances opens with an abrupt explosion that immediately settles into a fluid texture of sustained dissonance. Fragments of colour and melody evolve and build towards the first guitar entry. In a gentle exploration of polychromatic lyricism, the orchestra resonates and responds to the gestures of the guitar, creating an intimate dialogue between soloist and ensemble. An extended free-form cadenza forms a bridge to the “dance,” a pulsating, high energy sequence of rhythmic invention based on repetition and variation.211

True to Westlake’s description, dissonance is established from the very beginning of Shadow Dances, with the “abrupt explosion”212 built around a B diminished chord. Following this jarring flourish, a series of semitone clashes follow, consisting solely of the pitches A♯ and B, fading in and out, creating an overall feeling of mystery. Over the top of the dissonances, Westlake creates small melodies that are passed around the orchestra. For example, the oboe melody is echoed by the trumpet in mm.9-10 (Figure 84), and small fragments of melodies are passed around to explore the timbral qualities of the instruments. One of these examples is mm.17-18 where a four-note motif is passed from clarinet to flute, trumpet (with mute), and oboe (Figure 85). The constant clashes created as the melody interacts with the underlying sustained A♯ and B create tension and unease for the listener.

Figure 84. Shadow Dances, mm.8-10

211 Westlake, “Shadow Dances.”
212 Ibid.
The guitar’s melodic writing in *Shadow Dances* contrasts to Westlake’s approach in the middle movements of *Antarctica*, *Songs from the Forest*, and *Six Fish*. Dodgson’s ‘more is less’ approach to guitar composition is still applicable to *Shadow Dances* as much of the guitar part is single line writing. However, while the guitar parts in the aforementioned works are highly melodic, allowing for room to let notes sing with the use of vibrato, in *Shadow Dances* a greater emphasis is placed on extreme virtuosity of single note lines, and rhythmic variations. This virtuosity allows audiences a ‘way in’ to engage with the otherwise difficult harmonic language of the piece. By comparison with Westlake’s other guitar works composed up to 2004 (previously discussed in this dissertation), this is undoubtedly his most virtuosic.

Throughout the concerto, a large number of the guitar’s phrases make use of chord planing, resulting in parallel harmony. This technique was utilised in *Songs from the Forest*, although the technique made use of sustained chords to create an open sound. In *Shadow Dances* chord planing is used in conjunction with repetitive rhythmic figurations. One of the early examples of chord planing occurs at m.24 (*Figure 86*) with a left hand pattern shifted down the fretboard from eleventh position to second position. The first four iterations are direct transpositions of set-class [0268], but the fifth iteration and sixth iterations change to set-classes [0369] and [0147]. A second example is several bars later from mm.30-31 (*Figure 87*). In m.30, Westlake makes use of another descending shifting shape, constructed completely with the oct 0,2 collection, followed only several beats later with an ascending pattern in m.31. The first chord is set-class [0156], but is then followed by three transpositions of an [0247] chord.
The guitar’s cadenza is described as an “extended free-form.” This cadenza begins with spacious arpeggiated chords based on octatonic and whole tone collections, before branching off into a virtuosic display of arpeggios. Similarly, these arpeggios are constructed with chord planing. One example is at m.49 where an [0257] chord is transposed around the neck. (Figure 88) shows the number of semitones up or down the chord has been transposed (indicated by t- or t+).

Other examples of chord planing are observable at m.60 and mm.63-64. Interspersed with these passages of virtuosity are small one and two-bar melodic phrases, based around the oct 1,2 collection (annotated in Figure 89).

All of these chord planing examples look challenging, and certainly sound ‘flashy’ because of their speed. However, these are idiomatic to the guitar, because in addition to the shifting left hand shapes, Westlake makes use of repetitive right hand fingerings that are incredibly idiomatic for classical guitarists. For example, Figure 86 makes use of a standard a-m-i-p pattern in m.24, and m.49 of Figure 88 is executed with a repetitive p-i-m-a-m-i pattern. Despite their idiomatic patterns, there is great technical mastery required of the performer to accurately subdivide the beat and play these ascending and descending phrases with precision at a fast tempo. As discussed earlier, these moments of virtuosity are engaging for audiences who may not understand the elite elements of a work. For a performer such as Grigoryan, this virtuosity is one of his key attributes and a way that he is able to reach a broad audience.

213 Westlake, “Shadow Dances.”
Similarly to the cadenza in *Antarctica* bridging the fourth and fifth movements, the cadenza in *Shadow Dances* is a bridge between the slow, dissonant opening and the high-energy dance section. Melodic material from the end of the guitar cadenza forms the main thematic material for the dance section. This lively section is characterised by pulsating quavers and is rhythmically reminiscent of the second movement of Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* (1913). One of the characteristics of this movement of *Rite of Spring* is the pulsing quavers and accentation of different beats of the bar. A comparison between an excerpt of *Rite of Spring* (**Figure 90**) and *Shadow Dances* (**Figure 91**) reveals that Westlake’s pattern of accenting in the semiquavers found in the woodwind and brass instruments shares similarities with Stravinsky’s. Both feature accents that are always changing and occurring on different beats, rather than always occurring on the strong beats of the bar. The result of the constant quavers in the strings along with these stabbing accents creates a pulsating feel.
Figure 90. *Rite of Spring*, mm.13-19

Figure 91. *Shadow Dances*, mm.88-92

The virtuosity of the guitar part comes to the forefront in the dance section. Many of the techniques employed by Westlake here also re-emerge in Jovian Moons and Shards of Jaisalmer. A section featuring phrasing reminiscent of an Indian raga can be observed from m.106 (Figure 92). The raga generally begins with an alaap, a simple introduction or prelude (for example, m.106) which then builds in intensity (from mm.107-111). The pitches of these opening bars (G, A♭, B♭) correspond to the ‘scale’ on which a raga is based, which are then subjected to development through improvisation. This can be seen in the rising and descending figuration, particularly in mm.109-112 and mm.114-115, with ample repetition of phrases to amplify the raga’s development. Indian ragas end with a pre-composed section called the gat which is explosive, featuring short phrases repeated rapidly with emphasis on the first beat of a rhythmic cycle.215 While this is where the excerpt from Shadow Dances differs, the sextuplets in m.119 are certainly virtuosic and feature an entire octave of the oct 1,2 collection spelled out across beat 2 and the first half of beat 3. The return of the main melodic material for the dance section begins on beat 1 of m.120. This example of the influence of Indian raga is most likely derived from Westlake’s fantasy of wanting to study tabla, in conjunction with Westlake’s time with Greg Sheehan in The Magic Puddin’ Band:

It was an early fantasy of mine to go to India and study tabla...a lot of my rhythmic ‘devices’ I’ve picked up from people I’ve been working with—particularly Greg Sheehan. It’s very much his way to divide sixteenth notes into groups of different lengths, displacing accents over long periods of time”216

The various groupings can all be observed in Figure 92 with phrase lengths varying between two semiquavers, three semiquavers, and even twenty-eight semiquavers. In particular, the placement of accents at the start of each phrase from m.114 creates rhythmic grooves as the accents move in and out of phase with the underlying metre. A similar example of this style of displacement of accents can be observed in Figure 93 from mm.128-130.


216 Westlake, interview comments as published in: Mackay, “Nigel Westlake, Composer/Performer,” 22.
Shadow Dances is vastly different to the works previously explored in this dissertation, because of its lack of functional harmony, instead making use of chromaticism and octatonicism, moving it towards the elite side of the Great Divide. However, rather than creating a completely elite work, Westlake juxtaposes the difficult harmonic language with moments of extreme virtuosity in the guitar part (much of which has been previously unseen in his guitar writing), as a way to engage an audience that may not be familiar with such harmonic language. It is also interesting to note that the techniques introduced by Westlake in Shadow Dances begin to appear with greater prevalence in his newer works: Jovian Moons, Shards of Jaisalmer, and most recently, Mosstrooper Peak, suggesting a move towards more virtuosic guitar music for guitar, coupled with a more complex use of harmony.

4.5 Shards of Jaisalmer

Shards of Jaisalmer is a rarely-performed guitar trio that was composed in 2007 for the MGT Trio (Wolfgang Muthspiel, Slava Grigoryan, and Ralph Towner). MGT never actually performed the work, however, and the only commercially-released recording is by the Grigoryan brothers with Doug deVries. In a 2013 interview, Westlake discusses the origin of the piece:

This is just a little piece that I wrote for some friends of mine. You know it was one of those rare times where a piece wasn’t actually commissioned I just felt like writing it. And a good friend of mine, Slava Grigoryan, was working together with Ralph Tanner [sic], American guitarist now based in Europe. He had a trio with Slava and an Austrian guy named Wolfgang Muthspiel. These are amazing jazz players and Slava had casually suggested, since he was doing a tour with these guys, that it might be nice if I could write them a piece.

They are mainly improvisation players so as it turns out, that particular trio never performed the work, but Slava made sure that it was played with his brother and some other people as well. It has been recorded and performed a bit but not for the original people it was written.

Shards of Jaisalmer was inspired by a trip that Westlake made to India. He recounts that during his time there, he experienced traditional Rajasthan music played by buskers on street corners:

I heard a lot of traditional Rajasthan music, which is from that Northern area of India: beautiful desert music and all sorts of weird and wonderful instruments. Violins with two strings on them with and tiny little bodies that made a nasally sort of sound. All sorts of string instruments and percussion instruments, which are just played on the street by guys busking… I thought the most important thing when I got back to Australia was reflecting on the trip and on that particular part of India and Rajasthan and Jaisalmer.

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219 Ibid, 185.
According to Westlake, in *Shards of Jaisalmer* he does not try to directly replicate traditional Indian music, but instead endeavours to evoke the atmosphere of the exotic desert fortress of Jaisalmer, which lies on the ancient camel trade routes of western Rajasthan in India: “…it is simply a fleeting vision of the alleyways, ramparts, havelis and intricate jail screens by a transitory traveller.” He also describes the work as “…nothing more than a short fantasy which incorporates a bit of improvising for all the players because it was their wish that it would do that.”

In the piece, Westlake draws upon many different musical genres such as rock, jazz, and minimalism, a diverse palette of styles which matches the diverse skill set of the MGT Trio. Westlake has also matched the instrumentation to the sounds and strengths of the players in the ensemble. *Shards of Jaisalmer* is composed for two standard classical guitars and a 12-string guitar. Towner has long been known for his 12-string playing, favouring the instrument because he “can create interesting overtones that are closer to those of a harpsichord.” Additionally, the use of the 12-string guitar might be a reference to the variety of stringed instruments that Westlake heard during his time in India, as it creates a sound which a listener might loosely associate with a sitar in Indian music.

While the melodic content of *Six Fish* and *Songs from the Forest* display tonal tendencies (“Leafy Sea Dragon” is the exception), *Shards of Jaisalmer* is completely atonal in the melody of the A section, with the mix of octatonic collections and wholetone collections resulting in an exotic sound that invites the listener to imagine ‘the exotic desert fortress of Jaisalmer.’ After a minimalist-style introduction, G1 plays the melody at m.14 (Figure 94). The melody is constructed with a mix of oct 0,1 and oct 0,2. Triadic harmony is created in mm.24-26 (A, D and B major), however these triads are non-functional as it is set against an arpeggiated G2 accompaniment that has no functional progression, moving between triadic harmony, octatonicism, and the wholetone collection.

The use of octatonicism in some of Westlake’s other guitar works is identified and explored in Chapter 5, so (similarly to *Shadow Dances*), the harmonic content of *Shards of Jaisalmer* is not the main focus of this analysis. Rather, this discussion focuses on a selection of rock and popular elements that Westlake integrates into the work, turning the attention away from the harmonies, and towards the virtuosic aspect of the music, creating a work which engages a wide audience.

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221 A fantasy (or fantasía) was a musical style popular on the lute and vihuela in the sixteenth century, characterised by pieces that are free and of an improvisatory sound. Westlake mentions his inspiration for the piece in: Estes, “Solo and Chamber Percussion works by Nigel Westlake…”, 184-185.

The technique of chord planing is also found in *Shards of Jaisalmer*, although it is utilised in a different manner to that found in *Songs from the Forest* and *Shadow Dances*. In the guitar music of Heitor Villa-Lobos, chord planing can be found in many of his preludes and etudes, with one famous example being his *Prelude No.1* (1940), where a fully diminished seventh chord is used to build excitement and tension in the music before a V-I cadence brings back the opening theme. *Figure 95* is an annotated excerpt from *Prelude No.1*. Boxes are drawn around diminished seventh chord shapes that are shifted up and down the guitar neck, with Roman numerals indicating the position at which each chord is played.

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223 For a description of chord planing and its use in *Songs from the Forest*, refer back to page 80.
Westlake’s use of chord planing in *Shards of Jaisalmer* is similar to that of Villa-Lobos and can be seen in mm.104-106 (Figure 96). The G1 and G2 parts feature a two chord pattern which is sequentially transposed down a minor third, executed simply by shifting the left hand chord shape down the fingerboard. Similarly to the Villa-Lobos example, this use of chord planning functions as a quasi-cadential figure, creating excitement and tension in the music as the end of the section approaches. Westlake arrives on an F♯ major chord (with the addition of a G♯ and B for colour) on beat 4 of m.105, beginning a progression similar to the modal interchange observed in *Songs from the Forest* and *Six Fish*, albeit of a more extended nature. As the annotation shows, the chord progression could be labeled F♯ (II) – A♭ (♭IV) – B♭ (♭V) – C (♭VI) – D (♭VII) – E7 (I).

Like his blending of functional harmony and symmetrical collections in *Six Fish*, in m.104 of *Shards of Jaisalmer* Westlake utilises the oct 0,1 scale in the top voice of the G3 part (highlighted in pink), moving to a C wholetone scale (the pitches have been highlighted in green with the pitch classes annotated) which is played against the modal interchange chord progression (m.106). This same technique of juxtaposing a wholetone scale against triadic harmony was utilised in “Flying Fish” (refer back to Figure 70 and Figure 71), and is yet another example of Westlake’s combination of popular and elite musical elements, and a way that Westlake manages to engage a broad audience.

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As Westlake composes with specific performers in mind, there is a strong jazz influence in *Shards of Jaisalmer*. In addition to extended tertian harmony, the piece requires the musicians to perform improvised solos. As the piece was written for three proficient improvisers, it makes sense that an extended improvisatory section would be included in the piece. This is the first (and only) of Westlake’s guitar works to make use of improvisation, reinforcing his description of the work as a fantasy inspired in part by Indian street buskers. In the improvised section, G2 and G3 have to create improvised solos over complex chord changes, all of which contain extensions (for example, F add6#11/D in m.121, Figure 97).
While G2 is improvising using their chord chart, they are supported by a simple arpeggiated accompaniment in the other parts. This minimalist-inspired use of extensive repetition is utilised to construct the harmonic foundation for the soloist to improvise over, as can be seen in the repetitive pattern of the G1 part (Figure 98). This example is representative of the accompanimental style of the supporting parts throughout the first solo section. Harmonies morph slowly, with only one or two notes changing every few measures. When G3 begins an improvised solo, G1 and G2 again use the same techniques of extensive repetition and slowly changing harmonies. However, in the second solo section, the supporting parts also make use of hocketing, passing the accompaniment back and forth. All of these techniques combined together with the timbral differences of standard and 12-string guitars, help to create a shimmery, exotic textural effect which would appeal to a more popular music oriented listener. The sparse nature of the accompaniment allows the soloist the room to develop their improvisations.
Throughout *Shards of Jaisalmer*, Westlake places an importance on the feeling of rhythmic propulsion, thus creating grooves. For example, the minimalist-style repeating patterns in the G1 and G2 parts from mm.1-13 have a strong feeling of groove that results from the interaction of G1’s repeated quavers with G2’s repeated four-note motif that makes use of metric displacement. *Figure 99* is an example of these layered rhythms between mm.1-9. While the groove resulting from these devices may difficult to see on paper, it can be easily felt when listening to the recording.

Not only are Muthspiel, Grigoryan and Towner all skilled improvisers, but they are also highly versatile players with experience in popular music and contemporary guitar technique. Westlake writes to these strengths, emulating the sound of a plectrum in this introduction by specifying ‘pizz. (quasi plectrum)’ in the G1 part. From mm.6-12, G1 plays straight staccato quavers with the pizzicato technique, resulting in a very punctuated, crisp, attack and contributing to the groove at the start of the piece.

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225 Refer back to page 60 for a discussion on the term ‘groove.’
A similar effect is used mm.60-63, in which G2 plays a repeated pitch with staccato pizzicato semiquavers, before passing the figuration on to G1 in m.64 (Figure 100). This repetitive ostinato of sorts is reminiscent of that found in *Eye of the Tiger* (1982) by rock group, Survivor. Figure 100 shows the pizzicato semiquaver figure from mm.60-63 of the G2 part of *Shards of Jaisalmer*. This example also highlights the creation of a sense of groove at m.60. In addition to G2’s repetitive semiquavers, G3 has an off-beat repetitive rhythm consisting of artificial harmonics. Meanwhile, G1 is playing a melody consisting of three pitches arranged in different ways. As all three parts interact with the underlying metre, a strong feeling of groove is created, propelling the music forwards. For the originally intended performers of *Shards of Jaisalmer* (the MGT trio), and the
performers who recorded it (Slava and Leonard Grigoryan with Doug deVries), this style of groove based playing is not uncommon for them, and plays to their strengths as crossover musicians.

Another technique which Westlake has borrowed from contemporary rock guitarists is left hand hammering, used in many rock-fusion bands but perhaps most associated with the music of Eddie Van Halen. For Van Halen, it is a vehicle for virtuosity, allowing the guitarist to execute many notes at a fast tempo. In *Shards of Jaisalmer*, this technique is utilised in much the same manner. As it is seldom seen in classical guitar repertoire, such extended passages of left hand hammering make watching a live performance of this work a theatrical event. The effect in the music, when coupled with the harmonics played on the 12-string in the G3 part, is the creation of a pitched percussion sound with a glistening texture. Westlake indicates the use of left hand

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226 Left hand hammering involves hammering the fingers on to the guitar neck without using the right hand to pluck the string. A normal use of this technique results in slurring between two to four notes. In *Figure 101*, an extreme use of left hand hammering is employed, with multiple bars of constant hammering without rearticulating each downbeat.

227 Eddie Van Halen is best known for his use of the two-handed tapping technique that will be explored further in the next chapter. Van Halen has also made use of left hand tapping in his works. While he did not create the left hand tapping technique, he has been regarded as the first guitarist to use the technique in a rock context. See: Chris Yancik, “The History of Shred: Eddie Van Halen,” accessed February 18, 2017, https://web.archive.org/web/2011006083521/http://house-o-rock.com/HouseofShred/features/shredhistory/history_1001.html.
hammering by using diamond noteheads in the score (as in the G1 and G2 parts from mm.55-57 in Figure 101).

![Figure 101 Shards of Jaisalmer, mm.55-57](image)

Much like *Six Fish*, one element that underpins *Shards of Jaisalmer* is Westlake’s use of rhythm. Aside from the grooves created from layering repeating ostinato textures and left-hand hammering, the piece is filled with virtuosic unison lines, often shared between G1 and G2. These unison lines create excitement for the listener in multiple ways. The virtuosity required of the performers to execute these phrases in time with one another makes for an exhilarating theatrical performance. Secondly, syncopation, shifting accents, and metric displacement create a sense of forward motion and drive, and ultimately help to generate a visceral sense of groove. An example of this rhythmic treatment can be seen in mm.67-75 (Figure 102). Phrasing of this nature can often be heard in the music of rock and fusion bands, such as King Crimson and Genesis, who Westlake listened to—and derived inspiration from—while playing in his garage bands.
Shards of Jaisalmer features a blending of elite and popular styles. It incorporates techniques found in elite music, such as octatonicism and chord planing, alongside popular elements found in rock music: emulating a plectrum on the guitar, left hand only hammering, and improvisation. However, to downplay the difficult harmonic language found throughout the piece, Shards of Jaisalmer relies heavily on the grooves created through repetitive patterns, specific articulations, and syncopation, along with the virtuosity required to execute long semiquaver phrases and extended improvisations over complex chord changes. Ultimately, it is this strong rhythmic impetus and virtuosity throughout the music which helps to bridge the divide between elite and popular culture.
Across this selection of works, a few consistent traits have become evident. All of these works have been composed for virtuosi, who could also be considered cross-over artists. With the exception of *Songs from the Forest* which was initially composed for the Kain/Williams duo, the other pieces in this chapter have all been composed with Slava Grigoryan in mind, whose playing style is arguably well-suited for performing music of increasingly complex harmonies combined with moments of extreme virtuosity. Perhaps, in writing for Grigoryan, Westlake felt confident to experiment and use the language found in varying styles of music, from the lyrical melodies favoured by John Williams, to jazz and rock techniques, and strong ‘groove-based’ playing found in repertory of the Grigoryans, Muthspiel and Towner, as well as the procedures of elite Western art music such as minimalism and octatonicism. Using Grigoryan and his contemporaries as a vehicle for broadcasting these works, Westlake’s music undoubtedly reaches a particularly wide audience base, from lovers of elite classical repertoire, through to fans of rock music and contemporary ECM jazz.\(^{228}\) Certainly, the works discussed in this chapter demonstrate an attempt by Westlake to move Australian guitar repertoire towards a new style of virtuosity, demanding much from the performer.

\(^{228}\) As discussed in Footnote 163 on page 74, ECM jazz draws inspiration from a wide range of sources.
5 Octatonicism and Other Worlds

The octatonic collection is one of the most significant departures from the major/minor system in twentieth century music. It is the second mode of Olivier Messiaen's 'modes of limited transposition,' as the octatonic collection's symmetrical nature only allows for three possible transpositions (which create distinct pitch-class sets). It is generally associated with the music of high-culture, and can be found in works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabin, and Debussy. It is a particular feature of the music of Igor Stravinsky, whose Rite of Spring had a profound effect on Westlake.

As discussed in previous chapters, many of Westlake's guitar works utilise octatonic collections, but do so within the context of a largely tonal framework. Shadow Dances and Shards of Jaisalmer have exhibited a shift towards a more elite harmonic language, making greater use of non-tonal elements, but still retain some elements of functional harmony. The focus of this chapter, Jovian Moons, derives its pitch content from octatonic collections to a much greater degree than any of Westlake's other guitar works, and abandons tonality and functional harmony to a greater extent. In Jovian Moons, Westlake uses octatonicism to create ‘alien’ sound worlds, conjuring images of the moons of Jupiter. This work rests firmly on the elite side of the Great Divide. Nevertheless, despite the octatonic collection's elite associations, this chapter will examine how Westlake combines octatonicism with elements of tonality, minimalism, rock, and dazzling virtuosity. However, Jovian Moons still reaches a wide audience, and this is perhaps due to Westlake's detailed program notes. Each Movement is inspired by and named after one of Jupiter’s moons: Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, and Io. Westlake describes Jovian Moons as:

…a set of fantasies...inspired by the unique characteristics of Jupiter's four largest moons. Known as the Galilean satellites after Galileo Galilei, who discovered them in 1610, these moons are particularly intriguing since each exhibits its own distinctive properties.

Arguably, the programmatic aspect of Jovian Moons is of high importance for giving audiences a ‘way in’ to understanding this work. The descriptions supplied by Westlake allows audiences unfamiliar with the complexities of this harmonic language the opportunity to imagine the moons of Jupiter, not unlike programmatic associations when hearing music in film and television. Reviewer Hubert Culot writes of the work:

Each [movement] evokes albeit without blunt description, the four moons of Jupiter, that became better-known after the Galileo and Voyager missions. The music and the instrumentation perfectly

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229 A 'collection' is a group of pitches which do not imply a tonal centre, yet are used to generate musical material. An octatonic collection is created by alternating half and whole steps. Throughout this dissertation, the words 'octatonic collection' are used rather than 'octatonic scale', as using the word "scale" would imply a key centre.


suggest vast, empty spaces, while still allowing for contrast and variety. I do not know many duos for guitar and piano, but this one works remarkably well.

Certainly, classical guitar and piano are seldom heard together in modern guitar repertoire, as the guitar is a soft instrument easily overpowered by the piano, even if the pianist is using the ‘una corda’ (or ‘soft’) pedal. The only way to overcome this balance issue is through the use of amplification, however, too much amplification results in the quality of the guitar’s timbre being compromised. In his book on Australian piano chamber music, Larry Sitsky remarks that the combination is difficult to write for, however, observes that Westlake achieves a good balance between the two instruments:

The work [Jovian Moons] is written for the strange and dangerous combination of guitar and piano, and poses various traps for the composer, unless the guitar is amplified beyond sounding like an acoustic instrument, which I am certain was not the intention, as Westlake has been ultra-cautious—and with good reason—with the balance of the duo. It is, by its very nature, a limited possibility acoustically... It is a fascinating attempt at a combination that will be attempted very rarely, at least with acoustic guitar.

Jovian Moons was originally composed in 2001 for Slava Grigoryan and Simon Tedeschi, but was later revised in 2002 and premiered in 2003 for Slava Grigoryan and Michael Kieran Harvey. At present, the only commercial recording of Jovian Moons is by Grigoryan and Harvey.

5.1 Movement I: Ganymede

“Ganymede” is composed almost exclusively using the octatonic 1,2 collection, constructed by alternating half and whole steps starting on a C♯ (pitch class 1).

![Figure 103. The octatonic 1,2 collection](image)

The form of this movement is best described as (ABA1), with a short transitional passage between the B and A1 sections. The A section presents the three main motifs, with motifs 2 and 3 separated by a short two-bar ostinato figure in the guitar part on the pitch E. The B section is marked by a dramatic texture change, dominated by a melody in the guitar part accompanied by unrelenting motoric semiquavers in the piano. A short transitional passage returns the listener to

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232 Culot, “CD Review.”

233 In contrast, the guitar and piano duo was quite common in the nineteenth century. The balance between the two instruments was not an issue as the fortepiano was smaller, quieter and had a tone similar to the guitar. Composers like Carulli, Giuliani, Mertz and Diabelli all wrote guitar and piano duets.

234 Sitsky, Australian Chamber Music with Piano, 211.

235 Slava Grigoryan with Michael Kieran Harvey (piano), Shadow Dances: Music for Guitar by Nigel Westlake, ABC Classics, 4765744, 2006, compact disc.
the texture of the opening, though Westlake begins A1 with motif 2. The ‘E’ ostinato figure that separated motifs 2 and 3 in the original A section returns, greatly expanded, and continues on as an accompanimental figure while the piano restates in order the three motifs from the A section.

Figure 104. The form of “Ganymede”

The main motivic content of “Ganymede” is formed exclusively from the oct 1,2 collection with these motifs representing a majority of the movement’s melodic content. Pitches from outside of this collection are mainly used in cluster chords for added colour, or as passing notes in scalar passages. Figure 105 – Figure 107 show the three main motifs with pitch classes indicated in red. In the opening A section, motif 1 is played by the guitar and the right hand of the piano. Motif 2 (mm.10-12) is played by right hand of the piano. Motif 3 is stated twice in the A section: first in the right hand of the piano (mm.18-20), which is then joined by the guitar for a second statement in mm.23-25. This five-note motif contains the same pitch content as motif 1, and it demonstrates another instance of Westlake’s penchant for groupings of five. Figure 107 shows motif 3 with the original pitches from motif 1 highlighted in blue.

Figure 105. “Ganymede,” mm.1-8 (motif 1)
Table 4 summarises the pitch content of all three motifs. As the table shows, the same pitches in the oct 1,2 collection are being utilised for all three motifs (D, E, G♯, A♯, B), with two extra pitches found in motif 2 (C♯, G).
Table 4. The pitch content of the three “Ganymede” motifs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ganymede motifs</th>
<th>Pitches used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motif 1</td>
<td>D E G♯ A♯ B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motif 2</td>
<td>C♯ D G G♯ A♯ B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motif 3</td>
<td>D E G♯ A♯ B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As has been seen in Westlake’s other guitar works, octatonicism is juxtaposed against triadic harmony throughout “Ganymede.” In motif 2 (Figure 106) a C/E – A/E – E minor progression is created in the guitar and left hand of the piano. The purely octatonic motif played against it results in semitone clashes, with the ear drawn to the melody due to its syncopated rhythm and unusual sound. This combination of octatonicism and tonal harmony is one means by which Westlake helps to keep the piece accessible to a wide audience, adding a familiar sound in what would otherwise be a foreign pitch language to all but the most cultured listeners.

A feature that becomes progressively more noticeable in “Ganymede” is the prevalence of the pitch ‘E.’ It is stated with increasing pervasiveness in melodic motifs and in accompanying parts throughout the movement. For example, the chord progression in the guitar part accompanying motif 2 (Figure 106) starts with an E min7 chord from beat 3 of m.8 to m.9, followed by triads which, due to the use of inversions, always feature E as the bass note. The transitional figure between motifs 1 and 2 (mm.16-17) consists entirely of repeated E quavers, an idea substantially expanded in the A1 section, where the opening motifs are heard against a constant repeated E ostinato in the guitar part from mm.59-96 (Figure 108). This E centricity can also be seen in the B section through a sustained E in the piano part in m.29 (Figure 109), and again through the restatement of the pitch E in the guitar ostinato in the transitional passage from mm.42-47 (Figure 110).
In some instances, Westlake structures completely octatonic melodies in such a way as to create a feeling of E as the tonic. The start of motif 1 (Figure 105) resembles an E natural minor scale (the scale degrees used are 7-1-5-7-1-5); it is not until halfway through the second bar with the addition of the pitch A♯ (pc 10) that the melody gives any indication of a lydian character.
Similarly, the end of the phrase in m.4 concludes with a distinctly tonal motion of 5-1 (B-E), with E sounding like a stable tonal centre. In an octatonic work where the concept of a tonic key is absent, suggesting a key centricity to the listener in this way can provide a sense of grounding and ‘home.’ Presenting the listener with these familiar elements helps what would otherwise be a work of elite music appeal to a popular audience.

By adding programmatic associations, Westlake provides the audience with another means to engage with the piece. Of the moon Ganymede, Westlake writes:

Ganymede is the largest satellite in the solar system. If it orbited the sun instead of Jupiter it could be classified as a planet. Ganymede’s mantle is most likely composed of ice and silicates, and its crust is probably a thick layer of water ice. It has mountains, valleys, craters, and lava flows, and certain regions exhibit a bizarre, grooved surface of complex patterns.

This description of Ganymede likely inspired the way in which Westlake approached the composition, and certainly listeners are invited to imagine the relationship between the unique features of the moon and what is occurring in the music. For example, Michael Hannan observes:

The icy crusted Ganymede is reflected in cold and austere textures dominated by upper register piano figurations and ostinato patterns for the guitar.

The melodies in “Ganymede” can be heard to represent the alien, other-worldly quality of the moon. As well as being constructed from the unearthly-sounding octatonic collection, the melodic contours of the main motifs sound unfamiliar, shaped in a way which is not common in classical repertoire or popular music. This can be seen in the jagged lines of motif 1, leaping in unpredictable ways (especially mm.5-8). Motif 2 (Figure 106) is even less predictable, with several sudden leaps spanning over two octaves. In contrast to melodic lines typically seen in traditional classical repertoire, these motifs are essentially ‘un-singable,’ and lend to the work an alien quality perhaps representing the unfamiliar nature of the moon.

The B section of “Ganymede” contrasts greatly with the irregular motifs in the opening of the piece, featuring a lyrical melodic line in the guitar part accompanied by flowing semiquavers in the piano. However, like the motifs in the A section, the B section is constructed entirely with the oct 1,2 collection. Figure 111 is an excerpt of the first four bars of the B section, showing the guitar’s step-wise melodic line above the piano’s constant semiquavers, perhaps suggesting Ganymede’s “grooved surface of complex patterns.”

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236 Westlake, “Jovian Moons.”


238 Westlake, “Jovian Moons.”
While Westlake’s use of octatonicism is arguably the most important element in the construction of *Jovian Moons*, there are other devices and styles working in conjunction with the octatonic collection that help make the piece more accessible. Similarly to many of his other works, Westlake’s use of minimalist techniques to create grooves is one means by which the piece engages with listeners. Perhaps the most obvious example of minimalism in this movement can be seen in Westlake’s rhythmic treatment of the main motifs. For example, motif 3 makes use of repetition with rhythmic displacement: the theme is presented three times in a row, with each statement being shifted by a quaver. The first statement begins on the beat, the second statement on the second half of beat four, and the third (incomplete) iteration on beat four. (Figure 112 shows motif 3 with the entries highlighted in yellow). This use of rhythmic displacement results in an isorhythm, as the guitar interacts with the underlying metric pulse creating a feeling of groove.

Another example of minimalism can be seen in the A1 section of “Ganymede,” where the guitar plays a repeating ostinato for the majority of the section. The ostinato consists of a repetitive octave pattern on the note E, with bass notes alternating between a low E (the guitar’s lowest note) and a D. Sitsky likens the ostinato to a pendulum swinging. The off-beat entries of the E on the second half of beat 1 and second half of beat 3 create a feeling of groove. The groove is intensified

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239 Sitsky, *Australian Chamber Music with Piano*, 211.
as the restatement of the motifs by the piano interacts with the guitar’s ostinato (refer back to Figure 108).

Figure 113. “Ganymede,” mm.59-68 (guitar part)

One final example of Westlake’s blending of octatonicism and minimalism can be observed in the transitional passage from mm.42-47. The right hand of the piano plays scalic figurations constructed from the oct 1,2 collection, which unpredictably expand and contract in length. In Figure 114, the number of semiquavers in each phrases has been marked for ease of viewing.

The process of expansion and contraction appears to be ad hoc, as there is no discernible pattern of addition/subtraction, and phrases rarely begin on the beat. Combined with a syncopated ostinato in the guitar part, the piano’s meandering lines move in and out of sync with the underlying pulse. This creates a feeling of increased tension, which builds until the return of motif 2 with the start of A1 in m.48.

Similarly to Figure 108 and Figure 112, this example has a feeling of groove. Even when using a harmonic language that is foreign to a ‘less educated’ audience, a catchy rhythmic feel provides the listener with an immediately accessible musical foundation.
Westlake gives the following description of Europa:

Europa is bright and smooth with an almost complete absence of craters. Its surface looks like broken glass that has been repaired by an icy glue oozing up from below. Low ridges, straight and curved, crisscross the surface. Flows and fractures, pits and frozen puddles all hint at a unique geologic history. It is thought that volcanoes of liquid ice may be a regular event on Europa.\textsuperscript{240}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node (A) at (0,0) {A};
\node (B) at (1.5,0) {B};
\node (C) at (3,0) {C};
\node (A2) at (4.5,0) {A};
\draw[->] (A) -- (B);
\draw[->] (B) -- (C);
\draw[->] (C) -- (A2);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{Figure 115. The form of “Europa”}

“Europa” shares many similarities with “Ganymede.” The form is similar, with outer sections containing the main motifs, juxtaposed against a middle section of strongly contrasting textures and quasi-improvisatory material. Also like “Ganymede,” majority of the movement is constructed from the oct 1,2 collection, with the main motifs drawn from it exclusively (\textbf{Figure 116-118}). Each motif is stated by both the piano and the guitar, with the piano sometimes doubling the guitar part.

\textsuperscript{240} Westlake, “Jovian Moons.”
within its accompaniment texture, as seen in the right hand of the piano in Figure 117. Motif 3 is noteworthy because in addition to the piano doubling the guitar motif in the left hand, a variation of motif 1 begins to emerge in the right hand (see Figure 118, where the pitches of the varied motif 1 are highlighted in green), until an exact restatement returns in m.15 and subsequently pervades the texture of the piano part.
Throughout “Ganymede” and most of “Europa,” pitches which do not belong to the oct 1,2 collection are primarily used in passing. Motif 3 is a notable exception, as it contains one pitch from outside the octatonic collection that is frequently restated: G♭ (pc 6). To view this motif from a different angle, all of its pitch content with the exception of B (pc 11) also belongs to the wholetone collection. This creates some ambiguity, as the passage in question is neither purely octatonic nor purely whole tone. It is possible that Westlake has chosen to add pitches from outside the collection, consciously or unconsciously, for harmonic colour. Whatever his rationale, Westlake returns to a purely octatonic pitch language with the start of the new phrase and recurrence of motif 1 in m.15. Unlike “Ganymede,” with its clear establishment of E as a pitch centre, in “Europa” there does not appear to be any one pitch that dominates or assumes the role of ‘tonic.’

As with “Ganymede,” minimalist techniques can be found throughout “Europa,” with the use of ostinati being among the most pervasive. In Figure 119, an uneasy feeling is created by the interaction of the repeating ostinato pattern in the piano’s right hand and the syncopated bass line shared by the guitar and the piano’s left hand.
The processes of addition/subtraction can also be found in “Europa.” In the completely octatonic B section, cascades of notes in the piano part are echoed by the guitar, exactly repeated a quaver later (Figure 120). Each phrase group descends, with Westlake freely adding and subtracting pitches, resulting in groups that range anywhere from two to twelve notes. Despite specifying that the sustain pedal is not to be used, the pitches still ring on, creating a wall of sound that is further intensified by the guitar’s canonic repetition. A listener may imagine these smooth cascades of notes to represent a smooth, glass-like moon, with the “icy glue oozing up from below.” As the intensity builds with the change from semiquavers to sextuplet semiquavers, once again a feeling of unease and tension is created, growing to a climax in m.26 with the start of the C section, which could be likened to volcanic eruptions of liquid ice, as mentioned in the program notes.

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241 Westlake, “Jovian Moons.”
242 Ibid.
The C section of “Europa” features one of the clearest influences of rock music in the entire work. The guitar part in mm.34-38 specifies ‘bends,’ a technique very common in rock music and other contemporary styles, but one seldom found in classical guitar repertoire (Figure 121). This technique involves bending the string to raise the pitch without changing frets, creating a sound not unlike a miniature glissando. While very easy and idiomatic on an electric guitar with low string tension, on a classical guitar with thicker strings and higher tension, it is rather cumbersome to execute. Furthermore, Westlake utilises fast idiomatic demisemiquaver passages reminiscent of
the virtuosic sounding solos of a rock guitarist (as shown in the red circles in Figure 121). While the pitch content is derived from the oct 1,2 collection, the notes are arranged so that they fit easily under the fingers and are simple to execute very quickly. All but mm.34-35 is playable in first position, with virtuosic speed further facilitated by the introduction of slurs and copious use of open strings. This sort of idiomatic writing is likely the result of Westlake experimenting on the instrument himself. Both this example and the cascading semiquavers in Figure 120 are highly virtuosic in nature. As in previous examples, Westlake’s incorporation of rock-inspired techniques and extreme virtuosity in an elite work gives listeners an element that can be easily engaged with, aiding in the accessibility of an otherwise high culture piece.

Figure 121. “Europa,” mm.31-39 (guitar part)

5.3 Movement III: Callisto

Callisto is the outermost of the Galilean satellites and orbits beyond Jupiter’s main radiation belts. It is a cold icy ball, densely covered in craters and thought to have been dead for billions of years.

“Callisto” is unique amongst the movements in Jovian Moons for a number of reasons: it is the only movement that is through-composed; the only one to lack any recurring melodic motifs; and the only one to completely avoid tonal implications, instead utilising chromaticism in addition to the octatonic collections. However, Westlake does not require listeners to try to understand the


244 Westlake, “Jovian Moons.”
harmony. Instead, the program notes invite a listener to imagine the long dead alien world, perhaps evident through the sparseness of melodic lines, absence of any motivic recurrence, and the sustained cluster chords (which bleed into one another and slowly decay). Additionally, the through-composed structure and heavy reliance on chromaticism and octatonicism means that nothing is familiar to the listener, creating the impression of a cold, dark, isolated landscape. The use of an exclusively non-tonal pitch language stands in stark contrast to the chamber works explored in Chapter 4, which all incorporate contemporary pop music progressions, making “Callisto” perhaps the least accessible of any work examined thus far.

There are many other features here that might disorient the listener, suggesting that “Callisto” is strongly an elite work. For instance, the opening of the piece features cluster chords, chromaticism, and many sustained sonorities—a texture which is representative of the rest of the movement (Figure 122). At a metronome marking of \( \dot{=} 42 \), the pulse is extremely slow, which Westlake further obscures through complex and irregular rhythms, including cross rhythms such as seven against eight (m.11) and fifteen against twelve (m.20). This very slow tempo, combined with unpredictable, non-metric rhythms, effectively removes any sense of pulse or metre, further disorienting the audience. Extremes of range, timbre, dynamics, and a preponderance of extended techniques, all work together to create a strange and unstable sound world. Harmonics are prevalent in the guitar part, including full chords of extremely high pitched harmonics (m.9), starkly contrasted with bass notes at the very bottom of the range of the piano (for example, m.12 and m.14). Sudden and dramatic changes of dynamic add to the erratic nature of the movement, as can be seen in the shift from fortississimo and sforzando to pianississimo in mm.35-37 of the guitar part (Figure 123). The guitar also features extended techniques which add to the unusual timbres of the movement, including substantial passages of ‘Van Halen hammering’ (mm.16-19 and mm.29-34),\(^{245}\) glissandos of over an octave (m. 20, Figure 124), and ‘feather tremolo’ (mm.37-39, Figure 123), executed by rapidly brushing the index finger of the right hand across the strings, creating an ethereal texture that moves from tasto to ponticello and back.

\(^{245}\) Refer back to page 116 for information on left hand hammering. In contrast, Van Halen hammering involves rapid alternation of left and right hand fingers on the fretboard. This is also referred to as ‘tapping.’
Figure 122. “Callisto,” mm.1-14
Westlake also contributes to the bizarre sound world of the movement through his treatment of ‘melody,’ where sparse melodic lines feature contours that are uneven and disjointed. **Figure 125** is an excerpt of the guitar part from mm.22-27, which, like the motifs in “Ganymede,” has an unnatural, un-singable shape due to its construction from large leaps. While previous movements of *Jovian Moons* certainly incorporated such otherworldly melodies (for example motif 2 from “Ganymede”), they were always balanced by the introduction of more lyrical, stepwise
melodic lines. “Callisto,” however, has no such repose, instead maintaining its alien soundscape throughout. This melody is also an example of Westlake’s use of chromaticism, as the pitch language is freely atonal and draws on all notes of the chromatic scale. Within this atonal context, however, Westlake still organises pitches in such a way as to provide some familiar sounds for the listener to grasp. For example, he arpeggiates an F major triad on beat 1 of m.22, and a B major triad across the last beat of m.23 and beat 1 of m.24.

![Figure 125. “Callisto,” mm.22-27 (guitar part)](image)

Although the features discussed above tend to classify “Callisto” as an elite work, Westlake also incorporates some elements that help to engage a popular music audience. As was seen in “Europa,” the use of rock guitar techniques are a sign of Westlake’s garage band past, and in the context of this movement they help to captivate the listener. As previously mentioned, Westlake utilises extended passages of left-hand only hammering (m.32) and Van Halen hammering (mm.33-34), techniques which are highly theatrical (Figure 126). These hammering techniques are easier to execute on the electric guitar, but are incredibly difficult on the nylon string classical guitar. Great technical facility is required of the guitarist, as these devices demand accuracy, speed, and strength to execute. This figure also illuminates the added challenge of extreme dynamic control, with the guitarist instructed to gradually crescendo from pianississimo to fortissimo. When executed correctly, a pitched yet percussive sound slowly emerges from the texture. This visual virtuosity helps to focus the listener’s attention on the physicality of the performance, rather than the abstract nature of the harmony, thus allowing an otherwise esoteric movement to resonate with a wider audience.
5.4 Movement IV: Io

Io is the most volcanically active body in the solar system. The gravitational influence of the large moons Europa and Ganymede on Io’s orbit of Jupiter create tremendous tidal forces that are the cause of immense volcanic activity. Oceans of liquid sulphur lie beneath the crust, and the surface is constantly renewing itself, filling in any impact craters with molten lava lakes and spreading smooth new floodplains of liquid rock. The surface is very colourful, mottled with red, yellow, white, and orange-black markings.

This final movement is the most energetic and explosive of Jovian Moons. Its form could best be described as seven-part rondo with elements of arch form. The A section opens with three statements of an ostinato motif, followed by a B section delineated by a dramatic change in texture and figuration. A section material returns with just one statement of the opening motif before moving onto a C section that features call and response between the parts. A transitional section builds intensity with strummed chords based on the first motif, preparing the way for a complete return of the A section. The B section is then restated with only minor changes before leading into a ‘coda’ of sorts, which closes the work with extensive repetition of a motif from the end of the B section.

Figure 127: The form of “Io”

In a similar manner to the previous movements, “Io’s” main motivic material is constructed from the oct 1,2 collection. Motif 1 can be seen in m.2, containing pcs 4, 5, and 11 (Figure 128).

This single line motif is stated twice more with subtle variations on each repetition, resulting in increasingly dense chords constructed from the same oct 1,2 pitches. The first restatement retains the same pitch classes, but creates three-note chords which are strummed by the guitar (m.6). Westlake also changes the rhythm from semiquaver sextuplets into semiquavers in the second

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246 Westlake, “Jovian Moons.”
statement, with a tie added between the last semiquaver of beat 1 and the first semiquaver of beat 2. The second restatement of motif 1 (m.10, Figure 129) adds a fourth pitch to the guitar’s chords (doubling B, pc 11), and maintains the rhythm of the first restatement heard at m.6. Throughout all of these motifs, the right hand of the piano also makes use of pitches from the oct 1,2 collection, although occasionally one or two pitches from outside the collection will creep in, adding splashes of colour for example, the C (pc 0) in mm.2-5 of the piano part as seen in Figure 128.

The second restatement of motif 1 is the most complex. Underneath the guitar’s chords, the right hand of the piano is playing a three-note ostinato consisting of the pitches E and B. Meanwhile, a melody consisting of parallel octaves using pitches from the C wholeton scale (in order, pcs 8-10-0-2) occurs on the first beat of each bar between mm.10-13. Westlake juxtaposes this with major triads in the left hand of the piano (B♭ (enharmonic equivalent) – E – C – A). This technique was also found in “Ganymede” (Figure 106), and is one of the ways that Westlake blends the use of wholetone and octatonic collections with tonality.

Like “Ganymede,” despite making clear use of the oct 1,2 collection, the note E appears to be a focal pitch, as it is stated more prominently and frequently throughout the work than any other note: the main motifs in the A section feature the pitch E almost constantly; the B section features E major arpeggios in the left hand of the piano between mm.19-21, and subsequently in the second B section from mm.80-84 (Figure 130); the C section creates an improvisation based around an E centricity, a transitory passage makes use of an E major chord in the piano left hand and the note E is in the guitar and piano right hand (mm.68-71, Figure 131); and in the coda, E is re-stated continuously in the piano part (see Figure 132). The opening and closing sonorities of the movement also suggest that E is to be heard as the key centre. In the anacrusis figure in m.1, the piano arpeggiates an E minor triad before descending through pitches of an E harmonic minor scale, with piano and guitar coming together on the downbeat of m.2 with the note E across four octaves. The bass note in the piano’s final chord is an E, with E also found in both the top and bottom voices of the guitar part (m.99). In this way, “Io” could be seen as a return to more tonal practices after the intense octatonicism and chromaticism of the previous movement.
Figure 128. "Io," mm.1-6

Figure 129. "Io," mm.10-15
Figure 130. “Io,” mm.19-21

Figure 131. “Io,” mm.68-71
There is a greater blending of elite and popular musical styles in “Io” than in any of the previous three movements. The use of a more clearly defined key centre is the first way in which Westlake incorporates familiar elements for the listener. Another way is through the combination of multiple styles of music, like a patchwork quilt. For example, influences of minimalism and Indian music can all be observed in the C section of “Io” (mm.36-48). In Figure 133, the minimalist technique of addition and subtraction is clear. Phrase markings (and the annotations) show that phrases begin as small groups of just two notes, before increasing to groups of three, four and five. At m.44, Westlake’s trademark of grouping in fives comes to the forefront for three bars, before shortening back down to groupings of fours and threes at the end of m.46 into m.47. The patterns that the guitarist is required to play are mostly idiomatic but can be executed more easily with the use of slurs and hammer-ons.

It is impressive to watch the guitarist perform this section, however, it is perhaps even more exhilarating to watch the guitarist and pianist interact. The start of Figure 133 shows a call and response style opening from mm.36-39 between the guitar and piano, setting up small motifs that are subsequently developed. In m.40 the instruments move from call and response to playing in unison, which in a fast section of constant semiquavers (full of constantly changing groupings), is quite aurally and visually engaging.

This example, while displaying strong minimalist tendencies, could also be likened to an Indian raga. The traits of the raga were discussed earlier on pp.113-114. In this excerpt, the alaap-like section could be compared to mm.36-39, which builds in intensity. The development of the
‘improvisation’ continues from mm.40-46. Contrasting to the example in *Shadow Dances*, the short phrases repeated rapidly in m.47 (culminating on the first beat of m.48) could be likened to the *gat*.

After the extreme chromaticism and octatonicism of “Callisto,” the use of a constantly repeated focal pitch and juxtapositioning of chords in “Io” is a welcome change for audiences unfamiliar with atonal music. Likewise, the blending of minimalist processes and the Indian raga is a way for Westlake to create excitement through showcasing virtuosity. The music is highly
programmatic, also, with the repeating motifs possibly representing the constant volcanic activity, and the raga-inspired section perhaps inviting listeners to imagine the movement of liquid sulphur beneath the moon’s surface, building a sense of anticipation for an impending series of eruptions. Through combining all of these elements together, Westlake is downplaying the elite nature of “Io” and creating a work which is still elite, but simultaneously accessible to a popular audience.

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*Jovian Moons* is one of Westlake’s most programmatic guitar works, as he supplies descriptions of the Galilean moons. Because of its longstanding association with the sounds of the supernatural and ‘other worlds,’ the use of the octatonic collection creates an elite work. However, rather than making *Jovian Moons* deliberately inaccessible to a broad audience, Westlake makes use of popular music elements in order to maintain a wide appeal. In particular, the synchronisation between the performers, virtuosic moments, rock guitar techniques, and a vivid program, help to engage an audience that may not otherwise be able to relate easily with the more esoteric harmonic nature of the piece. This sort of blending between elite elements (like uneven contours and un-singable melodies), along with ‘crowd-pleasing’ elements (such as virtuosic idiomatic lines at climactic moments) is a vivid example of Westlake crossing the Great Divide.

As mentioned in Chapter 4 (*Towards a New Guitar Virtuosity*), Westlake composes with specific performers in mind. *Jovian Moons* was written for Slava Grigoryan and Simon Tedeschi (before being revised for Slava Grigoryan and Michael Kieran Harvey), all of whom are well known for their virtuosic playing and generally accepted as crossover artists. In a way, by writing an esoteric work for these artists with a large and broad audience base, Westlake is ensuring that it will be heard by a diverse group of music lovers. Grigoryan and Harvey become something of a vehicle to deliver difficult repertoire to a group of listeners that might otherwise never have been exposed to such a work. Through incorporating small elements which provide a degree of familiarity—such as key centricities, minimalism, rock guitar techniques, along with the programmatic nature of *Jovian Moons*, Westlake presents listeners with a means to engage with the piece, and ultimately broaden their musical horizons.
After a lengthy hiatus from composing, in 2010 Westlake released his largest solo guitar work to date: the *Mosstrooper Peak* sonata. Commissioned by Timothy Kain, the work is a dedication to the memory of Westlake's son, Eli, who was tragically killed in 2008. Kain reveals a request for music on the elite side of the Great Divide:

> I wanted it to be a substantial piece. Not that length means quality, but I just thought that I had quite a few other commissions that were five to seven/eight minutes (like a lot of guitar pieces). I was also thinking maybe Nigel, being who he was—and the way that he understood the guitar—would write something really good that was of a longer nature.  

Shortly after its completion, Westlake rescored the work for the Grigoryan Brothers’ guitar duo. According to Westlake, the duo is:

> ...based on an identical form as the original solo, the second guitar part has been added in order to amplify the resonances, augment the harmonic structure and share and ornament the melodies and textures, resulting in a tightly knit, intimate dialogue between the 2 instruments.

Kain premiered the sonata on his Australian tour in 2012. The Grigoryan Brothers’ first public performance of the duo arrangement was in 2013, followed by a second performance in early 2015. At present, the only commercially-released recording of *Mosstrooper Peak* is of the duo version, performed by the Grigoryan Brothers on their 2014 album *This Time*. Reviewer John Hardaker suggests that the suite’s conceptual weight makes it the centrepiece of the record.

*Mosstrooper Peak* consists of six movements, each named after a different location in Australia’s idyllic Whitsunday Islands (Burning Point, Mosstrooper Peak, Nara Inlet, Tangalooma, Butterfly Bay, and Smoky Cape). In the program notes that accompany the score, Westlake explains their significance:

> Each movement is named after a remote location on the east coast of Australia, places that hold a special meaning for me and that were visited during a huge time of upheaval in my life. They are locations of repose and meditation, and upon each site stands a shrine to the memory of my son Eli... the shrines will become larger and more elaborate, and the places upon which they are built will become more remote and precarious.

The character of the movements range from meditative and introverted, to energetic and extroverted. Westlake remarks that these changes of mood invoke “a sense of energy and movement, as if marking the journey to these remote locations.”

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247 Kain, interview. See Appendix I.


252 Westlake, Mosstrooper Peak.
In light of Westlake’s comments, *Mosstrooper Peak* could be considered a modern example of an elegy. A musical genre that dates back to the sixteenth century, an elegy is an instrumental piece or setting of a poem that laments the loss of someone deceased. In the nineteenth century, the genre was featured in major works for classical guitar, such as Johann Kaspar Mertz’s *Elegie*, and *Fantasie Elegiaque* by Fernando Sor. *Mosstrooper Peak* encapsulates Westlake’s grief and mourning after the loss of his son, and in this way can be viewed as a twenty-first century example of the genre.

Due to its sombre subject matter, the musical approach adopted in *Mosstrooper Peak* stands in stark contrast to Westlake’s other guitar works. While works such as *Six Fish* and *Songs from the Forest* were generally uplifting and light-hearted—with lyrical melodies—much of *Mosstrooper Peak* is solemn, with a darker, melancholy sound. This markedly different style suggests a high culture aesthetic, lacking the same instant accessibility and mass appeal of Westlake’s earlier works. Adorno has observed:

> All that the public grasps of traditional music is its crudest aspects: easily remembered themes; ominously beautiful passages, moods, and associations.

Easily remembered motifs and lightheartedness are absent from *Mosstrooper Peak*. Arguably, one explanation for Westlake’s choice to keep this work firmly on the elite side of the Great Divide is to keep his personal expression of grief sacred, and not commodify it for mass commercial consumption.

The following discussion examines the six movements in sequential order, exploring a selection of the harmonies and compositional devices that have been used in the writing process. For the majority of the *Mosstrooper Peak* sonata, the addition of the G2 part in the duo arrangement clarifies the underlying harmonies and thickens the textures. However, the G2 part does not only function in this manner. There are instances where completely new material has been composed for G2. This analysis mostly focuses on the solo sonata, however examples from the duo arrangement will be explored whenever it differs from the solo version in its harmonic structure or use of extended techniques. This chapter attempts to reveal how the writing style employed in *Mosstrooper Peak* is different to Westlake’s earlier guitar pieces, resulting in a powerful work that is an intimate articulation of grief and loss, and as Hardaker writes, “monumental in its depth, invention and plain guts.”

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255 Hardaker, “Album review: This Time (Grigoryan Brothers).”
6.1 Movement I: Burning Point

Located on Shaw Island, Burning Point is characterised by pristine beaches with beautiful turquoise coloured water. Westlake writes:

The work begins very tentatively, reflecting as it does the building of the first shrine at Burning Point. On a pristine white beach, in the twilight of a magical tropical sunset, a family gathers shells and small flowers. In silence they arrange their offerings around a small photo of the departed, lighting incense and candles, which burn late into the night.

This first movement of the sonata opens in a very mysterious and understated manner, with its reflective feel achieved most notably through the open bass string ostinato consisting of A and E. These are the very first notes played in m.1, and remain constantly present throughout “Burning Point,” becoming a defining feature of the movement (Figure 134). While common in minimalist music, Westlake specifically attributes the use of this two-note ostinato to the influence of Indian ragas, in which drones provide a solid sense of the tonic and dominant pitches, and create a foundation upon which the piece can develop.

While the opening ostinato may be inspired by Indian ragas, the movement develops through use of the minimalist processes of addition and subtraction. Using the ostinato as a foundation, Westlake adds a new pitch every two bars (Figure 135). This process continues for the first eight bars, resulting in an increasingly dense texture with dissonances being created through semitone clashes, such as the A and B♭ in m.3. This process is reversed at the end of the movement, brought to a close with the opening material presented in retrograde (compare mm.1-4, Figure 135 with mm.22-25, Figure 136). In this example, the process of subtraction is used to remove pitches, bringing the piece back to the sparse texture of the opening motif (plus one extra pitch) before concluding with a miniature coda.

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256 Westlake, Mosstrooper Peak.

257 Minimalist guitar music often makes use of ostinato due to the guitar’s ability to maintain an ostinato while playing a melodic line. Another example of ostinato and melody co-existing can be seen throughout Philip Houghton’s Ophelia, where Houghton has repetitive minimalist style ostinati with melodies that develop through subtle alterations to the ostinati.

258 In a guitar lesson with Timothy Kain in June 2013, he mentioned that Westlake drew influence from Indian music when composing the opening drones in “Burning Point.”
After the additive processes of the opening eight bars, Westlake maintains the texture while exploring the creation of dissonance, a feature which becomes a focal point of the movement. The pitch language is based around the oct 0,1 collection, with every pitch from the collection stated
every two bars (see mm.9-10, mm.11-12, and mm.13-14, **Figure 137**). He explores these octatonic sonorities with chord planing, transposing a variety of left hand shapes around the guitar neck to form the material for the middle of the piece between mm.9-16. **Figure 137** shows these shifting left hand shapes in the set-classes [016], [025], and [0257] (indicated by the red circles). As this example reveals, each three-note (and four-note) chord is transposed downwards three semitones (t-3), perpetually falling through the notes of a fully-diminished seventh chord, and hence arriving at the pitches of the octatonic collection. By utilising octave displacement, Westlake is able to continue this constant downward transposition while remaining within range of the guitar.

![Figure 137. “Burning Point,” mm.9-16 (solo)](image)

The ear is drawn to the top voice of each chord as the melody, which in all but one instance simply descends by minor third through the pitches of a fully-diminished seventh chord. In the second chord of m.10, while Westlake still transposes the set-class [016] sonority by t-3, he swaps the position of the first and third notes, resulting in a major third between the previous melody note of E and C♯. This sonority is transposed up an octave at the start of m.11, and the process of transposition down by t-3 begins again. This operation is noteworthy, as the swapping of pitches in m.10 has allowed Westlake to reuse the same octatonic sonorities from mm.9-10, but with a different melody note on top as the pitches are now in retrograde, with the middle note acting as an axis of symmetry, and the outer pitches displaced by an octave (compare m.11 - beat 3 of m.12
with mm.9-10). A similar process occurs between m.12-13, where the E bass note of the chord in the second half of m.12 is transposed up an octave in m.13, but this time with a set-class [025] sonority constructed above it. It is again transposed down by t-3, resulting in the same diminished seventh chord melody notes heard in mm.11-12, but in a different order. Finally, two of the chords in m.13-14 are used again in m.15 (circled in orange), with one extra pitch added to create a thicker texture. This is highly cerebral, elite writing, and a stark departure from the popular inspired melodies of Six Fish and Songs from the Forest.

There are no significant differences between the solo and duo arrangements of “Burning Point,” confirming the view that the movement is an elite exploration of texture and colour. In the duo arrangement, G1 plays the solo version in its entirety, while G2 moves between playing in unison with G1, and clarifying the harmony through the introduction of additional pitches. For example, on some occasions G2 employs pitches from oct 0,1 to create a denser texture, while other times Westlake fills in the third or fifth to create major/minor triads with extensions (mm.9-14, Figure 138). While the creation of these triads makes the harmony less ambiguous, it is still non-functional.

![Figure 138. “Burning Point,” mm.9-12 (duo)](image)

There are also instances in the duo arrangement where Westlake does not add or alter any pitches, but instead divides existing material between the two instruments to create an effect that would be impossible on a single guitar. Such an example can be found in the coda (mm.26-27, Figure 139 and Figure 140), where a scalic pattern is broken down into groups of five quavers.
and shared between the two guitars. The resulting effect is that G1 creates a sustained chord over the second half of m.26 while G2 takes over the melodic line, which is then sustained as the melodic line is passed back to G1. In this way, Westlake creates a denser, more resonant texture, which is unachievable in the solo version.

![Sheet music of Movement II: Mosstrooper Peak](image)

6.2 Movement II: Mosstrooper Peak

The lush, green Border Island is home to Mosstrooper Peak, which offers panoramic views of the Whitsundays. However, reaching this peak requires traversing precarious, rocky ground. In contrast to “Burning Point,” this movement has an extroverted character. Westlake writes that the lively nature

Invokes a sense of energy and movement, as if marking the journey to these remote locations, a process that sometimes involved several hours of challenging bush walking through tropical rainforest and dry creek beds and the scaling of treacherous mountain peaks.\(^{259}\)

\(^{259}\)Westlake, Mosstrooper Peak.
The melody in the main theme of this movement sounds different to any other guitar melody composed by Westlake, described by Hardaker as reminiscent of half-tone melodies in the music of Bartok. The melody from mm.5-8 is tinged with sadness and longing, yet still has a lyrical quality. With Westlake's detailed articulation (slurs, staccato notes, tenuto, and plenty of phrase markings), it sounds akin to a melody played by a clarinet or perhaps even the human voice (see Figure 141). Similar to “Burning Point,” the melodic content is derived from the octatonic collections, and the harmonies are ambiguous, with many different analytical possibilities. However, the duo arrangement suggests a more definite, harmonically traditional analysis.

Westlake essentially splits the solo version into two parts, with the melody played by G1, and the accompaniment played by G2. The G1 melody is constructed of notes from the oct 0,2 collection (with the exception of a B♭ passing tone on beat 5 of m.5), while G2’s accompaniment is filled out with new pitches to create an arpeggiated style of accompaniment (mm.5-8, Figure 142). While this more fully-formed accompaniment gives a clearer picture of the underlying harmony, like in “Burning Point,” the progression is not functional, with Westlake simply using the chords as a means to colour the octatonic melodic line.

![Figure 141. “Mosstrooper Peak,” mm.5-8 (solo)](image)

260 Hardaker, “Album review: This Time (Grigoryan Brothers).”
Figure 142. “Mosstrooper Peak,” mm.5-8 (duo)

The oct 0,2 collection is used again at m.93 where Westlake incorporates a direct quotation of mm.9-14 from “Burning Point” (refer back to Figure 137). Interestingly, at the end of m.94, the chord (circled in red) is spelled with the notes C, G, C (Figure 143). This is a variation on the original material from “Burning Point,” where the sonority was spelled C♯, G, C. The variation results in consistent t-3 transpositions in both the top and bottom voices of the chords, whereas in “Burning Point” there was a t-4 in the top voice and t-2 in the bottom voice. Also in contrast to the first movement, in mm.99-100 Westlake doubles the rhythm, turning quavers into semiquavers. This rhythmic intensification creates tension that continues to build with a flourish of arpeggiated semiquaver chords in m.101 and scalic runs in mm.102-103, constructed entirely from the oct 0,2 collection. While the rhythm returns to quavers and the tempo slows at m.104, the feeling of tension remains.
The tranquil, reflecting affect of “Burning Point” is contrasted with this movement, which is highly virtuosic and demanding for the performer, featuring a variety of advanced and often unusual extended techniques. For example, at m.38, Westlake employs the rock guitar technique of left-hand-only hammering (Figure 144). This technique has previously been discussed in the analyses on “Callisto” from Jovian Moons and Shards of Jaisalmer, in which it was used to create a visual spectacle to help engage audiences in an elite work. The duo arrangement also features this technique, but with G2 harmonised a third below and both parts playing in synchronisation. The hammering technique, coupled with the challenge of playing perfectly in time, is a virtuosic
feat for two guitarists to achieve, and one of the traits for which the Grigoryan Brothers are renowned.

Another extended technique employed in “Mosstrooper Peak” is Bartok pizzicato, which Westlake has previously used in *Antarctica* as a means of creating intensity and building to a climax. Unlike *Antarctica*, which featured the standard use of Bartok pizzicato on single notes (refer back to Chapter 2.6), the pizzicato in “Mosstrooper Peak” is atypical. Westlake indicates that the Bartok pizzicato is to occur across three strings simultaneously, immediately followed by a barre chord which is hammered down by the left hand and slid up the neck, producing a glissando. This extremely unusual combination of Bartok pizzicato, left-hand-only hammering, and glissando can be seen in the ‘Ritmico’ section between mm.108-115 (Figure 145). The combination of these techniques combined together create an unexpected, jarring surprise for the listener and are undoubtedly a virtuosic high point of the movement.
Finally, the climax of the work features fast, virtuosic soloistic figures that grow in intensity from pianissimo to fortissimo. Consisting of semiquavers joined together with left hand slurs and patterns that fit easily under the left hand, these figurations are reminiscent of rock guitar solos that are idiomatic and easy to execute with great speed (Figure 146). This is especially true of mm.126-127, in which Westlake writes short repetitive two, three, and four-note figures. This flurry of notes takes the piece to a peak of intensity, before returning to the opening material, which brings the movement to a close. While the harmonic language of “Mosstrooper Peak” is firmly elite, the resulting spectacle and virtuosity from Westlake’s incorporation of rock guitar techniques may provide an avenue for a casual listener to engage with.

Figure 146. “Mosstrooper Peak,” mm.124-128 (solo)

6.3 Movement III: Nara Inlet

“Nara Inlet” is another introverted, reflective movement. Located in the Whitsundays, the location is described as a stunning, peaceful inlet with picturesque, fjord-like cliffs that run along the water. Onshore, there are caves and a waterfall. Westlake instils this feeling of peace and reflection through a poignant melody with an expressive, lyrical quality. Supporting the melody is a flowing quaver accompaniment, which begins at m.16, after a jumpy triplet figure from mm.8-15 (Figure 147).

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The solo and duo arrangements are similar in terms of content, but are written in different time signatures. The solo version is in \( \frac{7}{4} \) (Figure 148) whereas the duo arrangement is in \( \frac{4}{4} \) (Figure 149). Both imply compound time due to the prevalence of triplet rhythms, and thus there is no change to the overall feel of the work because of the different time signatures.
Similarly to “Mosstrooper Peak,” fuller harmonies are created through the addition of pitches in the G2 part (mm.1-3, **Figure 149**). For example, while the opening bars of the solo version are rather harmonically ambiguous, the duo arrangement suggests a progression of $F^\#7_9$ – B minor – $C^\#7_9$ – $F^\#7_9$ – B minor – E7 – F$. The $F^\#7_9$ could also be viewed as an A$^\#_2$ fully diminished 7(enharmonic equivalent). Both progressions hint at a style of V-I (or viiº – I) cadences.

A similar example can be found when comparing mm.66-67 of the solo version (**Figure 150**) to m.34 of the duo arrangement (**Figure 151**). In m.34, G2 fills in the texture by harmonising with the G1 part, adding pitches which are sometimes a third, fifth, or sixth above the original melody. Another instance where Westlake has clarified the harmony in the duo arrangement can be observed in mm.40-41 (compare **Figure 150** with mm.77-79 of the solo arrangement, **Figure 151**), where colouring notes have been added to the original bassline, highlighting a B major triad on beats 1 and 2 of m.40, followed by an A$\flat_1$ major triad in first inversion on beats 3 and 4. While suggested in the solo version at mm.77-78, Westlake has made these harmonies much more obvious in the rescoring for duo.\footnote{262 NB: the bar numbers in the solo and duo arrangement are not identical because the two arrangements have different time signatures.}

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**Figure 149. “Nara Inlet,” mm.1-3 (duo)**

**Figure 150. “Nara Inlet,” mm.66-67 (solo)**

**Figure 151. “Nara Inlet,” mm.34 (duo)**
6.4 Movement IV: Tangalooma

The fourth movement of *Mosstrooper Peak* draws its name from Tangalooma, a resort on Moreton Bay. The area is a hive of activity well known for its whale watching, dolphin feeding program, sand dunes, and wreck diving. Westlake invites an audience to imagine the liveliness of Tangalooma by imbuing the movement with the extroverted character of rock and blues.

The movement is in ternary form, with rock music influences pervading the A section. This can be seen in the extensive chord planing of dominant 7 and minor 7 chords, which are shifted up and down by semitones (m.1 and m.3 of Figure 152). These types of chords, along with audible glissandos along the fretboard, can frequently be heard in blues and rock music. For example, Frank Zappa’s *Zoot Allures* features this sort of parallel harmony, although the jump between chords is much larger (see Figure 153). In addition, rock-inspired soloistic phrases constructed from the E pentatonic scale (with a phrygian ♭2) are interspersed with the chord planing (m.2,
These demisemiquaver figures are extremely idiomatic for the left hand, consisting of hammer-ons from open strings to fretted notes in the first position.

In the duo arrangement, G2 doubles G1’s rhythms in this section, thickening the texture as in previous movements. For example, G1’s parallel harmonies in Figure 154 are transposed an octave lower for G2, resulting in a greater depth of sound. This makes the G2 part significantly more challenging to play, as at this lower octave the parallel chords contain several awkward left hand shifts. The idiomatic run in m.2, however, is played at the original pitch level by G2, with G1’s part transposed up a perfect fourth.
The B section of “Tangalooma” is significantly longer than the A section (mm.8-33), and departs from the bluesy, rock inspired sound with a return to octatonicism. It is as though Westlake has returned to painful introspection while surrounded by the lively environment of Tangalooma. This section has a dreamy yet unsettled feeling, with all three octatonic collections utilised over a short span of time (Figure 154). In this excerpt, mm.14-16 make consistent use of oct 0,2, with only a single pitch from outside the collection (pc 7 – G) appearing in m.15. Oct 0,1 is then employed from m.17-18, again with one added pitch from outside the collection (pc 8 – G♯). Westlake then briefly returns to oct 0,2 for one bar, before creating a melody based on oct 1,2 in mm.20-21. This constant switching between octatonic collections disorients the listener, obscuring any sense of key centricity before a texture change in m.22 (Figure 156).
The octatonic melody in mm.20-21, leads into an ethereal section with a texture reminiscent of the B section in Villa-Lobos’s *Etude No.7*. The harmonies created by the descending arpeggios in Figure 156 are built exclusively from notes of the oct 1,2 collection, with pc 6 (F♯) being the only pitch drawn from outside the collection (found in the pcs 1,4,6,10 sonorities in m.22 and m.26). The harmonies created between mm.22-30 suggest triadic formations that are non-functional, with one possible analysis annotated in Figure 156. While not tonal, these triadic sounds help to give the listener something familiar to engage with in spite of this section’s pervasive use of octatonicism.
6.5 Movement V: Butterfly Bay

“Butterfly Bay” is the fifth movement of *Mosstrooper Peak*, returning once more to an introverted nature, similar to “Burning Point” and “Nara Inlet.” This movement is the most tonal of the entire sonata, with functional harmony and clear key centricities dominating throughout. The opening A section is based around an A centricity with chords based on I, IV and V (A – D – E), accompanying the main melodic motif from mm.3-5 (Figure 157). Modal interchange, a technique featured throughout Westlake’s guitar oeuvre, is also used in this excerpt, with a clear example in the opening two bars. Three major triads, all in first inversion, create a V – ♭VII – I progression which becomes a recurring motif, used multiple times throughout the movement to signify the opening and closing of different sections.

Figure 156. “Tangalooma,” mm.22-30 (solo)
Figure 157. “Butterfly Bay,” mm.1-7 (solo)

The B section (Figure 158) is based around D minor, as evidenced by the open string D drone and arpeggiated accompanimental harmonies that strongly suggest the key of D minor. As this section develops, other chords are explored in a non-functional progression, before returning to the same V – ♭VII – I progression found in mm.1-2. (Figure 157). Parallel harmony and modal interchange are employed again between mm.58-69 to effect a return back to the A section. As Figure 159 shows, parallel harmonies based around triads with extensions are used from m.60-65. A brief tonicisation of E with a i – II – v – I progression (E minor – F# – B minor – E) occurs from mm.65-68. Beat 1 of m.68 is elided with the V – ♭VII – I motif heard throughout the work (mm.68-69), signaling the return of the A section.
Figure 158. “Butterfly Bay,” mm.22-41 (solo)
As these excerpts have shown, tonal (and often functional) harmony dominates this movement, setting it apart from the more elite musical language of the preceding movements. However, Westlake still intersperses the oct 1,2 collection amongst triadic chords and seventh chords. For example in Figure 160, tension results from the use of the oct 1,2 collection in mm.12-13, which is then released from mm.14-15 through a progression which descends down through the circle of fifths. This method of freely shifting between octatonicism and tonality is different to the harmonic treatment in “Mosstrooper Peak” and “Tangalooma,” in which Westlake used tonal, triadic harmonies to accompany an octatonic melody.
While the solo and duo arrangements of “Butterfly Bay” are fairly similar harmonically, with the addition of extensions to some chords to add depth to the harmonies, in the duo Westlake often splits the solo version into two separate parts. As a result, G1 is able to focus on the melody, allowing it to become as expressive and legato as possible. For example, in m.12, G1 has a reduced part between mm.12-13 (Figure 161), allowing the player to focus on bringing out the melodic line. Meanwhile, G2’s part is far more complex than the original accompaniment, featuring constant semiquavers and additional pitches which are not in the solo version.

6.6 Movement VI: Smoky Cape

This final movement of Mosstrooper Peak is perhaps the most emotionally charged. It combines elements from the previous movements, such as melodic and rhythmic motifs, and chord progressions, which return either as exact repetitions or adaptations to create a sense of unity
across the entire suite. The movement also features new material with a clear influence of rock and minimalist music, which helps to make the work more accessible to a wider audience, without downplaying its elite nature.

“Smoky Cape” opens with an ascending scalic figure drawn from the end of the first movement, “Burning Point,” constructed from the oct 1,2 collection. This now familiar motif creates a sense of return as the final movement begins.

A miniature quotation from the second movement occurs when the piece reaches its climax at mm.110-113. The beats 1 and 3 of mm.110-111, and all of m.112 are identical to what was heard in the climactic rock-inspired section of the second movement, featuring virtuosic and idiomatic writing that fits easily under the hand (refer back to Figure 146).

Another unifying element that has been featured consistently across all movements, with the exception of “Tangalooma,” is the use of the open A and E strings as drones. In this movement, despite a key signature that suggests G major/E minor, the consistent use of A and E drones establish an A key centre. This is reinforced by the use of C♮ and G♯ throughout the opening melody (Figure 164), with its pitch material constructed from the A harmonic and melodic minor
scales. The key centre of A minor is retained throughout “Smoky Cape,” and is strongly reinforced in the final ‘Calmato’ section through extensive use of the open A and E strings in a minimalist-inspired ostinato (Figure 165).

![Figure 164. “Smoky Cape,” mm.5-9 (solo)](image)

![Figure 165. “Smoky Cape,” mm.121-126 (solo)](image)

As with previous movements, G2 in the duo arrangement clarifies the underlying harmonies and thickens the texture. However, in “Smoky Cape” there are several instances where G2 introduces new material. Two such examples can be seen in the creation of new basslines early in the movement at mm.7-8 (repeated in mm.11-12), and a new accompanimental figure at mm.19-20. The first example (Figure 166) is a descending scale against a B drone, which creates a feeling of tension and forward momentum. This bassline does not exist in the solo arrangement, as it would be physically impossible for a single guitarist to play both parts at the same time. The new accompaniment at mm.19-20 features repeated minor sixths, played with pizzicato (Figure 167). In a similar manner to the descending scale, this repeated figure, with its pizzicato and staccato
articulation, creates forward momentum and a feeling of groove. Both of these additions are reminiscent of rock music, and an example of Westlake’s integration of popular music elements into an elite setting.

Figure 166. “Smoky Cape,” mm.10-12 (duo)

Figure 167. “Smoky Cape,” mm.18-20 (duo)

The feeling of rhythmic groove is always present in this extroverted movement, especially throughout the sections marked ‘Tempo Giusto/Ritmico’ (mm.5-40, mm.48-95, mm.105-122). This can be seen in mm.31-36, with the interaction of multiple rhythmic layers which move in and out of phase with each other. Phrases of odd numbers of notes move in and out of time with the principal metre, as well as the syncopated open E bass notes between mm.31-33, mm.35-36 (Figure 168). This example also makes use of modal interchange, with the same V – VII – I chord progression that opened “Butterfly Bay” appearing across mm.33-34 (E – G – A) before the harmonic progression from mm.31-34 repeats itself.
Figure 168. “Smoky Cape,” mm.31-36 (duo)

Similar to the final movement of Antarctica and “Mosstrooper Peak,” advanced extended techniques which demand virtuosity from the performer are used to bring “Smoky Cape” to a climax. For example, staccato six-note chords are separated with percussive string slaps, a ‘golpe’ technique common in twentieth century repertoire including music such as Elogio de la Danza by Leo Brouwer, which is a work that Kain recalls sharing with Westlake when he was starting to first compose for guitar. While percussion has been employed in some of Westlake’s guitar works including “Sling Jaw Wrasse” from Six Fish and Songs from the Forest, this is the first instance of percussive string slaps in this sonata. The fiery nature of this section (mm.114-117, Figure 169) is reminiscent of parts of the “Sacrificial Dance” in Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring, in which the wind, brass and strings play on opposite beats to the percussion, resulting in an angry, apocalyptic sound. If Mosstrooper Peak is a reflection of Westlake’s grief and anguish, the audience may imagine this as the feeling of intense agony building up before being released with a massive

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263 Kain, interview. See Appendix I.
Bartok pizzicato. Hardaker also draws the same conclusion, remarking that this movement reflects “a father’s raw anguish in chopped muted chords.”

The movement—and the entire suite—closes with a section returning to an A minor centricity, featuring an ostinato bassline of open A and E strings (as seen in Figure 165). This gives a sense of unity and closure as the first movement opened with an ostinato consisting of the same notes (refer back to Figure 134). The glistening harmonics that finish the movement (mm.135-142, Figure 170) bring a feeling of peace after the savage climax of this final movement. Hardaker aptly describes them as “resigned dulled pearl notes of a broken heart.”

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264 Hardaker, “Album review: This Time (Grigoryan Brothers).”
265 Ibid.
Mosstrooper Peak is a testament to Westlake’s versatility as a composer, illustrating that he is just as comfortable writing difficult works on the elite side of the Great Divide as he is writing popular, accessible works. Without question, Mosstrooper Peak is Westlake’s most elite work for classical guitar, and is perhaps the most challenging for a modern audience to understand because of its harmonic language and noticeably darker colours and themes. The duo arrangement does add depth and resonance to the harmonies found in the sonata, but it does little to create a more accessible version of the work. While Mosstrooper Peak makes use of tonality and some popular music-inspired harmonies, especially in the more introverted “Nara Inlet” and
“Butterfly Bay,” Westlake does not remain completely in a tonal language throughout these movements, instead integrating octatonicism with tonality and switching between common practice harmony and the octatonic collections.

The harmonies in *Mosstrooper Peak* are intensified by the use of extended techniques, including multi-string Bartok pizzicato and punctuated string slaps. These jarring sounds are uncommon outside of avant-garde repertoire, and certainly less familiar to the ears of a popular audience. By combining these techniques with darker harmonies and juxtaposing them with moments of tonality, Westlake has created a work which is a unique and personal expression of grief. The elite nature of this elegy prevents Westlake’s personal sentiments from becoming commodified; it remains, rather, a sacred expression of his loss.
7  Navigating the ‘Great Divide’ in Performance

Westlake’s guitar music could be considered postmodern in one of Kramer’s criterions, as it breaks down the barrier between high and low styles. The virtuosity, rock guitar techniques, incorporation of contemporary guitars into a classical setting, use of technology, and sheer emotional depth of his most recent work, required me to push the boundaries of my own playing. This process of learning, refining, performing and recording undoubtedly contributed to my development as a guitarist and musician. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on my performances and recordings, exploring what I have learned over the course of the degree, and examine the ways that Westlake’s guitar repertoire resulted in a variety of challenges for me as a musician.

7.1  Outside the Comfort Zone

A preponderance of techniques found throughout Westlake’s music require a guitarist with strict classical training to push the boundaries of their own playing, and learn techniques from other genres, expanding their abilities outside their comfort zone. While I had initially begun my undergraduate studies majoring in jazz electric bass, I ended up switching to a classical guitar major—the instrument I first learned as a child and through my teenage years. Having no desire as a teenager to learn rock music or play in garage bands, many of Westlake’s pieces challenged me to develop a completely different skill set in order to perform and record his works.

Several major technical challenges arose that required much focus to overcome. Perhaps the most notable techniques included the extended passages of left hand hammering, and the Van Halen hammering technique (Figure 171). Being rock guitar techniques, I had never encountered these before in classical guitar repertoire. Similarly, I found that emulating a plectrum was incredibly difficult as I did not initially possess the flexibility in my right wrist to execute this technique quickly enough (Figure 172). It was only through consulting electric guitarists for advice on how best to execute the two-handed Van Halen hammering, along with months of practice, that I was able to improve on my accuracy and speed with these three techniques.

Figure 171. Van Halen hammering in “Callisto”
The use of improvisation in _Shards of Jaisalmer_ is another way in which a classical guitarist is challenged to come out of their comfort zone. Becoming familiar with modes and soloing over complex changes is a daunting prospect for some classical guitarists. Thankfully, the guitarists on my recording have experience with improvisation from playing jazz and rock music, so they were happy to step up to the challenge.

Combining virtuosic advanced extended techniques into an ensemble context proved just as difficult as learning them in the first place. The Van Halen hammering (as seen in Figure 171) was particularly challenging: the guitar part is written in demisemiquavers, and Westlake switches positions on the fretboard on the last four demisemiquavers of each beat. If it was not difficult enough, the speed was fairly slow ($\nu=42$), and I was required to ‘lock-in’ with the piano’s quaver triplets.

Other instances of virtuosity and synchronisation coming together arose throughout the chamber works. For example alternating rapidly between arpeggios and percussion in _Songs from the Forest_ (Figure 173), and remaining perfectly in time with each other. Also, in “Flying Fish” from _Six Fish_, the hocketed passages coupled with the speed of the piece was difficult. It is imperative that all parts are in time with one another so that the hocketed semiquavers are clearly articulated. When performed correctly, a moment of exhilarating virtuosity occurs (see Figure 174).
In *Jovian Moons*, tight ensemble playing came to the forefront in “Europa” with virtuosic unison passages requiring the piano and guitar to align semiquavers with precision (Figure 175), and in “Io,” with the guitar and piano playing an Indian raga-inspired improvisation in perfect time with each other (Figure 176).

7.2 Borrowed Sonorities

Timbre is an important consideration in the chamber music works. *Songs from the Forest* was composed for two standard guitars, whereas *Shards of Jaisalmer* and *Six Fish* were composed for a mixture of standard guitars and steel-string guitars. The result of using the instrumentation suggested by Westlake is a wide timbral variety, seldom heard in guitar quartets. By introducing
popular music instruments into a classical music context, Westlake is attempting to bridge the Great Divide between elite and popular musical traditions.

Despite Westlake’s intentions, when I performed and recorded these works, The Perth Guitar Quartet used four standard guitars for *Six Fish*, and three standard guitars for *Shards of Jaisalmer*. The main factor influencing this decision was financial. In the same way that the best classical guitars are expensive, so too are 12-string and dobro guitars. Cheap guitars often have tuning issues and the quality of tone is noticeably compromised. To purchase a top quality 12-string and dobro for one performance and recording session was not practical. The second factor is technique. The width and thickness of a steel string guitar neck differs to a classical guitar, with a steel string neck being considerably narrower. A classical guitarist lacking experience on these instruments needs to considerably adapt their left hand technique to be able to play with fluency and accuracy. In addition, the steel strings damage the right hand fingernails, which are an accepted part of twentieth century classical guitar right hand tone production.

Due to not using the instruments specified by Westlake, a more homogenous sound resulted, but it was an interesting and challenging exercise in listening and trying to explore the extent to which we were able to replicate Westlake’s original timbral intentions. However, the Perth Guitar Quartet underwent a change in members at the start of 2016, and the new guitarist was well-versed in both classical and contemporary guitar styles. More importantly, he had a good quality steel string guitar. In October 2016, when we performed “Guitarfish” and “Sunfish” with choreography provided by a ballet troupe, we decided to experiment with timbres and replace the 12-string guitar with a steel string acoustic guitar. Interestingly, performing the work with this resulted in us hearing the music in a new way. The steel string adds a vibrancy and edge to the texture that cannot be achieved with a classical guitar, completely changing the atmosphere of the work.

The venue used for recording *Six Fish* was the Chapel of St. Michael the Archangel, in Leederville. This space was incredibly reverberant and suited the aqueous quality of the music. The high level of natural reverb is an acoustic well-suited for a non-musical audience, as the beauty of the work resulting from a warm sound and washes of colour are brought to the forefront. The reverb also plays down the more elite moments in the work that require a degree of musical education to understand and appreciate. Due to this level of reverb, there was no extra reverb added post-production.

The other chamber works (*Songs from the Forest*, *Shards of Jaisalmer*, and *Jovian Moons*) were recorded in the Music Auditorium at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. Perhaps the most challenging work of the three was *Jovian Moons* as it is essential to achieve a good balance between the guitar and piano. In live performance, it is necessary to use amplification for the guitar to boost the volume of the guitar slightly (for the benefit of both performers, as well as the audience). As discussed in Chapter 5, over-amplification of the guitar
can result in a change to the instrument’s timbre which is not ideal. Therefore, in the recording process, retaining the quality of the ‘natural’ guitar sound was a key consideration, so no amplification was used. It made ensemble playing far more difficult as David Wickham (piano) was unable to hear me as clearly. We had to rely even more on visual cues and watching each other’s hands to be sure that we were ‘locking-in.’ The microphone placement was of utmost importance in the recording process, as the goal was for the guitar and piano to sound as if they are in the same space, rather than the guitar sticking out in front with the piano as an ‘accompaniment.’ To achieve the ideal sound for the recording, there was a room microphone, and separate cardioid microphones on both the guitar and piano. Positioning of the cardioid microphones can result in brighter or darker sounds, so this was taken into consideration when setting up the microphone placement. The three microphones were mixed together post-production to create the perfect balance.

7.3 Technologically-Enhanced Virtuosity

Performing and recording The Hinchinbrook Riffs presents a completely different set of challenges for a classical guitarist. Many popular singer-songwriters make use of the digital delay to create looping accompaniment for their songs. Unless performing new music, it is highly uncommon for classical guitarists to perform with effects pedals such as a digital delay. It is especially uncommon for classical guitarists to use a digital delay to take the place of a duo partner. Therefore, this positions The Hinchinbrook Riffs as a trailblazing work for classical guitar, one which challenged me to bridge the ‘Great Divide’ between traditional classical guitar and present-day contemporary guitar.

Preparing for a performance of The Hinchinbrook Riffs is technical and involves consistent metronome practice to ensure that a steady tempo can be kept at all times. The player must be able to keep perfectly in time with the underlying pulse, and the delayed sound. Any fluctuations in tempo or traces of rubato to execute a difficult passage results in the live guitar and delay getting out of synchronisation, thus destroying the creation of intricate grooves and textures. Westlake recommends a delay rate of 600 milliseconds (τ=100). However, an alternative rate of 630 milliseconds (τ=95) is also suggested. Over the last six years, I have performed The Hinchinbrook Riffs several times. In my Honours studies in 2011, I performed the piece for the first time. The metronome marking I worked at was approximately τ=82. In the lead up to my recital in September 2014, I experimented with various tempi, and decided to perform it at a similar tempo. At the time, I felt that this tempo was comfortably within my technical abilities. Fear of failure prevented me from rehearsing and playing at a faster tempo, and I was convinced that a slower tempo offered technical security and greater control of the dynamics and textures. In the two years that followed, I

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266 An example of a current guitar singer-songwriter using looping effects in their music is Ed Sheeran.
was able to extend my technique sufficiently to achieve the marked tempo of \( \text{\texttt{\textsuperscript{\textbullet}}} = 100 \). Listening back to the 2011, 2014 and 2016 performances I have realised that the suggested tempi by Westlake are indeed the ideal speeds. By playing it any slower, The Hinchinbrook Riffs loses its effectiveness. By performing at the suggested speeds, the intricate grooves emerge, and the dynamic shaping is actually easier to control, thus allowing the textures to develop.

In addition to the metronome practice, learning to play perfectly in time with the digital delay is another challenge. Living in an inner-city apartment is not conducive to practicing The Hinchinbrook Riffs. At the very least, the setup for the delay involves an amplifier, microphone and delay pedal. In a small space, even a cardioid microphone will pick up the delayed sound from the amplifier, thus creating an endless loop of live sound and delayed sounds, making it difficult to work on bringing out the different grooves and textures. Furthermore, I had to take into consideration my neighbours in surrounding apartments. Thankfully, an app called AmpliTube is available for iPhone. This app is an amplifier simulator, and it is possible to purchase varying styles of amplifier and microphones to create different sounds. For less than $10 it was possible to purchase a clean sounding amplifier and cardioid microphone simulator. The app has a built in delay feature that allowed me to select the delay speed I wanted (either in milliseconds or by matching to a metronome), then with headphones in, I was able to hear the delayed sound played back while I was playing unamplified on my guitar. While the sound quality was not as desirable as practicing in a large room with high-end equipment, this was a workable solution for a problem that could not otherwise be rectified, and allowed me the opportunity to practice and feel comfortable playing with the delay at faster tempo.

When performing, the setup of the speakers is another factor to consider. Westlake’s program notes suggest that if the performer is to use a stereo sound system, send the ‘live’ guitar to the left channel, and the ‘delayed’ guitar to the right channel so that maximum separation can be achieved between the two guitars. It is also suggested that to avoid feedback, the performer should monitor the signals through mini earphones instead of a foldback. 267 I have tried performing it in this manner and have also tried performing it by just sending the live guitar through an effects pedal, and having the delay coming out of a speaker to my right. After experimenting with both methods, I came to prefer the latter, as I was able to match the volume of the delayed sound exactly to my unamplified live guitar sound.

Recording The Hinchinbrook Riffs was one of the most challenging recordings for this project. I was initially unsure of how to approach the recording, but discussions with several prominent Australian guitarists who have recorded this work revealed different approaches. One recorded themselves playing with a click-track in the ear, then added post-production delay. Another recorded themselves with a click-track, and then copied and pasted the recording so that it

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starts a crotchet beat later. A third guitarist that I spoke to recorded with themselves in one room, a speaker in the other room, and listened to the delayed sound via headphones. Each of these methods were logical, because they were all able to achieve maximum separation of sound between the ‘live’ guitar and the ‘delayed’ guitar, yet still maintain a very similar sound quality between the two sounds.

In my first attempt at recording the work in June 2016, I experimented with a click-track through in-ear headphones, and adding post-production delay. While it had potential to be effective, I felt that as I was unable to interact with the delay; my playing was too mechanical and lacked sincerity. For my second attempt in October 2016, I was set up in the same room as the speaker and I recorded without wearing monitor earphones. The result was that I was able to hear delayed sound clearly and interact with it, resulting in a more natural process of developing and shaping the motifs. The high-end recording gear and the careful placement of cardioid microphones in the Braham Auditorium at Trinity College, East Perth, ensured that there was clear separation of sound into two distinct channels, and that the delayed sound was as true as possible to my natural acoustic instrument. The venue was such that there was a small amount of natural reverb, but not too much. This was considered ideal because too much reverb would result in the rhythms sounding too ‘washy,’ and the listener would lose the feel of the grooves being created through the interaction between the guitar and digital delay. The grooves are, of course, one of the key elements of The Hinchinbrook Riffs that draw listeners in and give the work a wide appeal.

7.4 Mosstrooper Peak: Eclectic and Esoteric

Mosstrooper Peak presents many performance and interpretative challenges. It presents a full panoply of rock-inspired virtuosity and styles (eclecticism), combined with an esoteric (high-art) aesthetic. This is a rare and potentially confusing combination. Firstly, the sheer number of advanced extended techniques in Mosstrooper Peak highlighted deficiencies in my own technical facility, and created a need to work further on improving my execution of rock guitar techniques. These problems were all overcome through practice. Aside from the technical aspects, possibly the biggest challenge encountered with Mosstrooper Peak was forming an interpretation. At the time of learning it, no recordings existed that I could listen to as reference points for my interpretation. A series of lessons with Timothy Kain in June 2014 provided valuable feedback that my interpretation of the melodies and the extended techniques were correct. Not long after these lessons, the Grigoryan Brothers released their album, This Time, allowing me the opportunity to listen to the duo arrangement. Kain’s solo recording is much anticipated and to this date, still unreleased.

Capturing the sentiment behind the sonata was incredibly challenging. While some pieces naturally come together through consistent practice, Mosstrooper Peak required deep reflection in
order to understand the piece on an emotional level as well as a technical level. I had never performed a work with such emotional content before, so I felt a sense of immense pressure to convey this piece with conviction and do the piece justice. The pressure of live performance in the 2014 recital resulted in some phrases not being played the way I would ideally prefer. However, the recording process allowed the opportunity for multiple takes of phrases, so that the most convincing interpretations could be created.

Mosstrooper Peak was recorded in the Braham Auditorium at Trinity College, East Perth. The acoustics of the room provided a desirable sound, with a natural reverb that was not as extreme as the chapel used for recording Six Fish. Unfortunately, as the room is climate-controlled, extraneous room noise (air-conditioning) resulted in the need for cardioid microphones instead of omnidirectional microphones. Initially, I was not happy with the resulting sound because a lot of the natural reverb was lost, and even with the slightest amount of post-production reverb, the sound was too direct for my liking. On reflection, this drier sound works well for Mosstrooper Peak. The complex harmonies and articulation can all be heard clearly. The listener has to work hard to engage with the music, making it a very direct, heartfelt work of art, keeping Westlake’s personal expression of grief guarded from a broad audience.

7.5 Performance Informing Research / Research Informing Performance

My interpretations of the works undoubtedly developed over the time that elapsed between performing in the recital in 2014 and recording over 2015-2016. These changes were due to various reasons. First and foremost, my own abilities improved over time. Through self-devised exercises and a wide range of repertoire including Bach Preludes, Villa-Lobos Etudes, and Walton’s Five Bagatelles, my technical facility improved. Secondly, regular recitals as a soloist and chamber musician resulted in increasing confidence as a performer. Thirdly, having lived with Westlake’s pieces for four years, I became more comfortable with the repertoire and his style of writing.

The process of analysing Westlake’s works in this study also led to my interpretations developing a growing richness and deepening conviction. For example, I became increasingly aware of the virtuosic yet idiomatic nature of guitar solos by Zappa and how such idiomatic left hand fingerings permeated their way into Westlake’s rock-inspired phrases. Also, it made me aware of how Westlake makes use of rhythmic interest, and how he is specific with his accentuation of notes in areas of static harmony to create a strong rhythmic impetus. After closely examining the patterns of accentuation, I began to make more of the accents and phrasing in my own playing. This involved returning to memories of my electric bass studies, and trying to ‘play up’ the groove-based elements in the music. It came quite naturally to me, and I discovered a newfound rhythmic energy occurring. Becoming aware of these elements ultimately changed the way
that I approached the soloistic sections in pieces including “lo” from *Jovian Moons*, *The Hinchinbrook Riffs*, and “Tangalooma” from *Mosstrooper Peak*. When listening to the live performances and the recordings of these pieces, the difference in the way the music grooves can be immediately heard and felt.

On the other side, having such an intimate knowledge of the pieces due to performing and recording them allowed me to identify characteristics of various styles throughout the scores with greater ease. Even four years after my initial analyses, I still find new rhythmic techniques, evidence of the $\text{♭VI} \rightarrow \text{♭VII} \rightarrow \text{I}$ progression, or the use of parallel harmonies. There are many phrases that I notice repeated between works composed in the same time period, suggesting specific concepts that Westlake may have been exploring at the time.
8 Conclusion

Since his first guitar composition, *Winter in the Forgotten Valley* (1989), through to the most recent *Mosstrooper Peak* (2012) it is evident that Westlake’s music is a blending of high and low musical styles. This combination of elite and popular culture translates across all of Westlake’s works, and is, something that has not gone unnoticed by listeners:

While the rhythmic exuberance and energy is comparable to popular genres, the melodic and harmonic language is influenced by many of the significant orchestral composers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.  

It is Westlake’s belief that he is “not consciously trying to create music that is a blend of styles.” However, he feels that as a result of a diverse musical background “it is inevitable that certain characteristics of styles will ‘come out in the wash.’”  

The classical guitar is undoubtedly a diverse instrument, and has proved itself to be the perfect vehicle for Westlake because of its ability to play repertoire ranging from both sides of the Great Divide. The guitar can sustain drones and develop melodies in a minimalist manner, and it has a rich timbral palette, unlocking a range of textures. Westlake has capitalised on the guitar’s uniqueness in his compositions, and this has been acknowledged by Kain during our interview:

It’s very colourful music, even before you get to changing tone colour on the guitar. He uses resonance very well on the guitar… He knows how to mix the open strings with other things to make—in his case—often quite original textures.  

Following *Winter in the Forgotten Valley*, Westlake composed the *Antarctica* concerto (1991), inspired by the IMAX film score. As Chapter 2 (*Antarctica: a ‘Populist’ Australian Guitar Concerto*) demonstrated, *Antarctica* is highly accessible not only because of its programmatic associations, but also because of its clear use of tonality. The middle movements (“Wooden Ships” and “Penguin Ballet”) are reminiscent of popular music as they feature functional harmony and the use of modal interchange, eliciting feelings of familiarity and euphoria. Westlake uses dissonance sparingly throughout the concerto only as a means to highlight different parts of the film, for example, the grandeur of the mountains in “The Last Place on Earth,” or to represent the mysterious ice core sample, in “The Ice Core.” However, these uses of dissonance do not isolate listeners. Westlake subtly repeats the dissonance, using rhythmic devices as a means to provide interest in sections of static harmony.

Two of Westlake’s minimalist-style works, *Tall Tales But True* (1992) and *The Hinchinbrook Riffs* (2003) were explored in Chapter 3 (*The Accessibility of a Minimalist Groove*).


269 Westlake and Southwood, Composer Profile No.49.

270 Kain, interview. See Appendix I.
Interestingly, Westlake rejects association with the minimalist school and instead credits any minimalist sounds to the influence of rock and African music. He mentions that he dislikes the music of Philip Glass, finding it cold and mechanical. As for the music of Steve Reich, some of it is “quite warm and communicates something” to him. \(^{271}\) Perhaps it is the groove-based elements in Reich’s music (which draw inspiration from West African drumming) that speak to Westlake, as groove dominates in *Tall Tales But True* with the pervasive use of ostinati. *The Hinchinbrook Riffs* combines extensive repetition with gradually changing pitches to develop melodic ideas. The addition of the digital delay in *The Hinchinbrook Riffs* adds another layer of complexity as the repetitive rhythms are doubled (a crotchet later) and both move in and out of phase with the underlying metre.

**Chapter 4 (Towards a New Guitar Virtuosity)** explored Westlake’s writing for the guitar in a chamber context, and observed his move towards a more virtuosic style. Inspired by the performers for whom he is writing, it becomes apparent that Westlake is playing to the strengths of performers like the Williams/Kain duo and Slava Grigoryan:

> Being familiar with the musical strengths of the musicians for whom you are writing is a key factor in this strange and esoteric process. Ideas evolve from focusing on the musical identities and trademark sounds of the players; phrases and textures somehow becoming permeated with their personalities. \(^{272}\)

Westlake observes that Williams, in particular, is drawn to lyrical playing:

> John Williams, I have found, is drawn to lyrical writing, and so I don’t feel I could present him with anything that is overly complex or containing involved percussive devices... \(^{273}\)

Meanwhile, Grigoryan is well known for his crossover status, having released many albums as a classical guitarist, and as a jazz artist with MGT (consisting of Wolfgang Muthspiel, Grigoryan, and Ralph Towner).

Presented in order of the pieces’ composition dates: *Songs from the Forest* (1994), *Six Fish* (2003), *Shadow Dances* (2004), and *Shards of Jaisalmer* (2007), trends begin to emerge. For example, the harmonic language becomes more elite (less tonal and functional), and at the same time, the complexity of the guitar parts increases, with greater use of fast soloistic lines, chord planing coupled with idiomatic right hand fingerings (executed at fast tempi), and groove-based playing. It could be inferred that the increase in virtuosity is Westlake’s response to Grigoryan’s crossover style.

Continuing on the theme of elite harmonic language, *Jovian Moons* (2003) is the piece that marks a total departure from Westlake’s pop-inspired harmonies. In **Chapter 5 (Octatonicism and Other Worlds)**, *Jovian Moons* is revealed as using octatonicism extensively. Despite this complex harmonic language, listeners are given a ‘way in’ to understanding the music through

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programmatic associations from Westlake’s very descriptive program notes. Westlake also uses moments of virtuosity and rock techniques as a way to keep listeners engaged in an otherwise esoteric work.

*Mosstrooper Peak* was the focus of Chapter 6 (*Mosstrooper Peak: a Postmodern Elegy*). This is Westlake’s most recent work for guitar and features a juxtapositioning of tonally functional harmonies and octatonicism, along with the move towards a new virtuosity (as explored in Chapter 4). *Mosstrooper Peak* is an expression of a father’s grief, and the elite nature of the work reflects the complexity of Westlake’s emotions.

The works explored in this dissertation were addressed in an almost chronological order. Through the process of analysis, it became apparent that as Westlake continued to write more works for the classical guitar, his harmonic language began to shift, moving from a very pop-influenced idiom to a more elite one, making more frequent use of octatonicism and chromaticism. This sound can also be observed in his other instrumental works, with *Compassion* (song cycle for voice and orchestra), and *Requiem for Eli* (SATB choir and orchestra) being composed around the same time period as *Mosstrooper Peak*. This shift in his writing to a more elite sound can also be observed across his other instrumental works (such as his percussion works), and has been acknowledged by Westlake:

I might approach writing for percussion-only quite differently now. I look at lot of my early pieces like *Moving Air* that are very aggressive with a lot of youthful testosterone—real driven—and think I’d probably be much more retrospective. I’d try to work for a bit more depth, a bit more musical spirituality, if you like. I’m pretty sure I’d approach it differently now.274

Although moving towards an elite harmonic language, rhythm is still a driving factor in all of his works, as has been observed throughout these analyses of Westlake’s works. Rhythm is perhaps one of the characteristics that makes his music so well received. Westlake’s most recent work, *Spirit of the Wild* (2017) is an oboe concerto that was written for (and performed by) Diana Doherty (principal oboist of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra). In a recent interview on *Radio National*, Doherty mentions:

One thing I love about Nigel’s work and really wanted—hoped he’d put in this one—is that kind of rhythmic energy that shifts—shapeshifts almost—with different accents and things, and how that affects the balance...275

The study suggests that the idea of a Great Divide remains relevant to Westlake’s practice. As mentioned in the introduction, he observes that the lack of public interest in elite music has made sustaining a career on elite music alone a difficult task.276 Certainly, his music could not exist if this divide was unbridgeable, and it is evident that Westlake does not believe in positioning

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276 Refer back to page 1.
himself only on one side of the divide. Although many of Westlake’s guitar works are readily accepted by a wide audience, Kain believes that Westlake’s music has “a lot of depth as well as immediate appeal,” and it is Kain’s belief in this depth (and the continuation of the Great Divide) that led to him commissioning Westlake to write *Mosstrooper Peak*:

> I wanted it to be a substantial piece. Not that length means quality… maybe Nigel, being who he was—and the way that he understood the guitar—would write something really good that was of a longer nature…

The longer nature and complexity of *Mosstrooper Peak* suggests that Westlake is striving for depth and “musical spirituality,” perhaps feeling that a personal expression of grief found in the elegy for his son, Eli, cannot be ‘commercialised’ in the same manner as a piece such as *Songs from the Forest*. This suggests that Westlake occupies an equivocal position, jumping between the two sides of the Great Divide effortlessly.

The performance component to this study also emphasised the idea of the Great Divide. *Chapter 7 (Navigating the ‘Great Divide’ in Performance)* discussed the processes of performing and recording all of Westlake’s guitar works. It is coming up to three years since my live recital of Westlake’s works, and two years since the recording process began. As a classically-trained guitarist, I had to cross the Great Divide in my own way, learning and adapting techniques from rock guitar, placing them into a classical guitar context.

When comparing the live performance videos with the studio recordings, it is difficult for me not to be somewhat critical of my own playing. I erred on the side of caution in playing most of the pieces under tempo. At the time, my mindset was that a slower tempo was actually allowing me the opportunity to really produce good tone and communicate ideas effectively. By the time I started recording in April 2015, a noticeable difference can be heard in my playing. It becomes evident that I had developed greater technical facility, as I was developing better command of the advanced extended techniques in *Mosstrooper Peak*. By June 2016, when I was recording *Jovian Moons* and in September 2016 when recording *Hinchinbrook*, it can be observed that I had increased the tempi of the piece, bringing them much closer (if not exactly) to the specified metronome markings. The result is that the music sounds more virtuosic and has a stronger sense of groove, which is one of the main elements that Westlake holds in high regard. In addition to the faster tempo creating the feeling of groove, I was also deepening my knowledge of Westlake’s musical style.

In April 2016 I performed “Butterfly Bay” from *Mosstrooper Peak* at the ‘Sound from the Ground’ concerts. Removing the pressure of academia and playing the work for a ‘random’ audience who had come to experience a classical guitar concert meant that I had to really focus on expressing the emotive content behind the music, as opposed to striving for academic precision.

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277 Kain, interview. See Appendix I.

278 Ibid.
Simply connecting with the music was liberating, and a powerful experience, hopefully as Westlake intended. Arguably, the success of this performance illustrates the poignancy and power of Westlake’s music. In its ability to bridge the Great Divide—as Huyssen suggests is possible—Westlake’s music arguably does not lack the depth of mainstream popular culture (as Jameson claims) and yet achieves widespread appeal to contemporary audiences.
9 Bibliography


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10 Scores


11 Discography


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OgdenTanner. Songs from the Forest. CP6701, 2001, compact disc.


Williams, John. From a Bird. JCW Recordings JCW1, 2008, compact disc.


Withers, Matthew. Solo. 2011, compact disc.
Appendix I

Interview Questions

1. How did you first come to be involved with Nigel Westlake?
2. How would you characterise Westlake’s music (in general and for the guitar)?
3. To what extent do you think that Westlake has developed his own recognisable sound?
4. Do you think that his guitar works have a different sound to his orchestral works?
5. To what extent do you find Westlake’s music to be idiomatic for the guitar?
6. Can you detect any stylistic influences in Westlake’s writing for guitar?
7. Are you aware of any instances of recurring rhythms, harmonies or scales across his oeuvre? (for example: the use of quartal chords/the octatonic scale/love of $\frac{5}{3}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ time signatures)
8. Have you noticed any other ideas or themes repeating across his works?
9. How flexible was Nigel during the process of composing a piece? Was there ever the opportunity for you to suggest changes to the works?
10. Did the pieces change during the lead-up to the first performance? If so, how did they change?
11. Can you comment on the significance of Westlake as a composer in Australia?
12. Can you comment on the significance of the contribution of Westlake to the body of Australian guitar music?
Interview with Timothy Kain: June 11, 2014, Canberra, ACT.

MF: How did you first get involved with Nigel Westlake?

TK: Nigel Westlake... It was in the late 1980s. At that time I listened to Radio National quite a bit, and they had a Radio National theme written for brass instruments as I remember. I always really admired this theme. Sometimes they'd play snippets of it, sometimes the whole thing, and I'd think “gee, that’s fantastic, I wonder who wrote that?” Later, I learned it was a composer called Nigel Westlake.

Around that time I formed my group Guitar Trek, a quartet of different-sized guitars, and we were looking for new repertoire. The whole idea of the group was centered around a newly constructed guitar ‘family’ consisting of treble, standard, baritone, and bass guitars. As a newly created medium it needed a repertoire of its own. We started with arrangements but then wanted to commission new original works, and Nigel Westlake sprang to mind, so I gave him a call. He was very interested in the whole idea and very happy to write us a piece. We put in to the Australia Council, the commission came through, and Nigel wrote Winter in the Forgotten Valley. This is the first Guitar Trek original piece—and there’s about twenty of them now.

In the process of that I helped him in how to write for guitar. I think I initially sent a couple of articles about how to write for guitar—some very good ones by Julian Bream, and Stephen Dodgson, a fingerboard chart and one or two other things. Obviously we talked and I showed Nigel the instruments and so on, and then sent him scores and recordings of what I thought were helpful representative pieces—a Bach Prelude, and I think Brouwer’s Elogio de la Danza was one, and a number of others—nothing too long or drawn out—just things that I thought gave ideas as to what works on guitar and that tied in with the articles, so that’s the only, if you like, ‘tuition’ that he had in writing for the guitar.

MF: Wow.

TK: He then got himself an old guitar which he has nearby when he’s writing guitar music. He’s certainly done that in the past so I assume he still does that now. So he tries things out in a really basic way as he doesn’t play the guitar. He’s highly intelligent so he got the idea of how the instrument works very quickly, and wrote really well immediately—very idiomatic music right from the start. Because Nigel’s own personal compositional style is very individual and very personal, fitting that around an instrument as difficult to write for as the guitar is an achievement in itself. Having said all that, we then went on to work together on I think altogether it’s eight commissions, from memory, and only, in more recent years, did we attempt a solo, which became Mosstrooper Peak - the sonata. I wanted it to be a substantial piece. Not that length means quality, but I just
thought that I had quite a few other commissions that were five to seven/eight minutes (like a lot of
guitar pieces). I was also thinking maybe Nigel, being who he was—and the way that he
understood the guitar—would write something really good that was of a longer nature. So that’s
how Mosstrooper came about.

After that initial working together with Winter in the Forgotten Valley, I commissioned a trio
for flute, violin and guitar Blue on Gold, for my trio, the Austral Trio which was touring a lot for
Musica Viva and the ABC at that time. I actually forget the order of things… but then I think
Antarctica came fairly soon after that which was…

**MF:** It was 1991?

**TK:** Yeah, and that was written for John Williams… and before the actual well known suite for
guitar and orchestra came the film soundtrack which, which I played on… so there was that bit of
collaboration. Then Nigel and I both played in a group called Attacca, which was John Williams’
group. It was a seven piece group: two guitars and mixed ensemble… so a further connection was
made there, and after that, John said he’d like to do duos together… so we did that!

John and I both loved the pieces Nigel had written for Attacca so we commissioned Songs
from the Forest to add to our program to tour and record.

And then later I commissioned a concerto. That had quite a long gestation and history to it.
It became three movements and eventually got pared down into one.

**MF:** Shadow Dances?

**TK:** Shadow Dances… that Slava recorded. All that eventually led to the sonata.

**MF:** I noticed on his website, Winter in the Forgotten Valley and Blue on Gold… you can’t actually
access the scores.

**TK:** No.

**MF:** Do you know what the reason is?

**TK:** Why? He wants to revise them.

**MF:** Oh, okay. Cool! ‘Cause, you know, you can hear the recording of Winter in the Forgotten
Valley on Naxos, but Blue on Gold doesn’t exist anywhere…
TK: I’ve got a tape

MF: and same with *Touch Wood*... Attacca... can’t find any information on it... even a date of composition. But *Tall Tales*, you’ve got the score and the recording... and so I thought that was interesting. Just wondering if there was a reason behind that?

TK: No, I don’t know. *Touch Wood*... Attacca never recorded it.

MF: Interesting!

TK: It was broadcast by the ABC. It was part of a live broadcast from Sydney or Melbourne of an Attacca concert, so you would be able to get it through them. It’s only a quite short piece, four or five minutes. We used it to open the program in the Attacca concerts.

MF: How would you characterise Westlake’s music for the guitar? If you could?

TK: Characterise it? Well, it’s individual like the rest of his music. It has a very wide appeal without being superficial. It has a lot of depth as well as immediate appeal. I think it’s... it’s very colourful music, even before you get to changing tone colour on the guitar. He uses resonance very well on the guitar... that’s a feature. He knows how to mix the open strings with other things to make—in his case—often quite original textures.

What other things would I say? Rhythm is a really fundamental thing in Nigel’s music. It’s always there as a strong element. As a composer he sits in a really interesting spot in contemporary music—and that is coincidentally where the guitar itself also sits as an instrument. I think maybe this is where there is a kind of meeting of minds, that he’s a completely well-grounded, if you like, contemporary conventional classical musician, but at the same time completely at home in popular music. He’s a terrific clarinetist, playing in the Australian Ensemble for years so he knows all that traditional and contemporary repertoire... but he also played in his own band from when he was very young. The Magic Puddin’ Band was a rock band, so he’s had a deep interest in and familiarity with all kinds of pop music, and world music. I think, like a lot of composers today, he grew up with this kind of music in his ears because it’s everywhere, and in a way forms the background to a lot of people’s lives now.

I feel with lots of composers it feeds through into what they write in their so called ‘serious pieces’... and with Nigel it does so in a very fundamental and very engaging way. And... it ends up with some really highly original music, that’s still very appealing and has real emotional depth. So, the general public tend to like his music a lot... and it’s very skillfully crafted as well... he’s not somebody who’s fishing around, you know, note spinning in any way... he knows entirely what
he’s doing. His ear is extremely sharp. He hears it before it comes out—so to speak—it’s internal, as the process needs to be with any truly communicative composer. I think that crossover element that we were talking about is an integral part of Nigel’s background and his music and at the same time it’s obviously part of the guitar’s whole positioning in the music world.

It’s a classical guitar he writes for but the guitar is the whole backbone of rock music, all kinds of pop music, folk music, and a lot else… and that’s part of why it’s such a great instrument. And that’s why it appeals to so many people… and why as a guitarist, you can enjoy such a huge range of repertoire. We don’t have the great standard classics but in some ways, we’re lucky for that.

MF: Do you think that his guitar works have a different sound to his orchestral works?

TK: Well… yes… in the sense that…

MF: Like, stylistically I suppose.

TK: Yeah, well… yes… he uses the orchestra in such a full, complete, and colourful way. That’s there in the guitar in its own way, but it’s scaled way, way down, but you do find—it’s still Nigel. I guess he’s got his own individual melodic and rhythmic ideas and harmonic progressions and things like that, so it’s still recognisable either way, when you hear the guitar pieces or you hear the orchestral works… you know that’s Nigel Westlake. Even though he’s composing an original work he’s not like some composers who do write similar things over and over… he doesn’t do that. So I think there’s a lot of common ground from piece to piece, a common voice, but for me to actually define it for you verbally… I’m not sure I could.

MF: That’s alright. So that leads me to the next sort of thing… Composers like Sculthorpe, he has a certain chord that he likes—a sonority. Ross Edwards might have a specific little motif that he likes.

TK: He does, yeah.

MF: Westlake… in your opinion… are there certain little rhythmic or motivic ideas that he seems to like and favour in his guitar writing?

TK: In the guitar writing… well right across the board probably. Defining them is a harder thing. One of the things we were grappling with today, for example, in the guitar sonata is polyrhythm. Having two or three different rhythms—in one case, in the last movement, three different rhythms
broken up into three lines—those kind of rhythmic ideas are very common. So the notes might group into different repeated lengths in different parts within the same time signature – both parts say are written in $\frac{5}{4}$ and one part might actually divide into $\frac{3}{4}$ with the groups of three crossing the barline and eventually everything ends up back on the beat together somewhere down the line… that’s a common thing… and you know, a common device of minimalist music for instance. And so there are obviously minimal elements in Nigel’s music, especially the earlier ones.

MF: But it’s interesting… I read an interview with him, and he said he didn’t really know much about minimalism at the time, and he didn’t really like the music of Glass and Steve Reich… found it to be very mechanical… yet here he is, doing this… and it just sounds so good!

TK: Yeah, but he puts it to quite a different use, doesn’t he? Using some elements and in selected passages. He’s not ‘ideological’ about it.

MF: Yeah, I suppose so.

TK: Yeah, but then again if you think of Omphalo Centric Lecture… if that’s not minimalist then I’m not sure…

MF: In a way, the bass line for that kind of reminds me of the beginning of Tall Tales with the… Very similar, not identical… but…

TK: So there are common elements to pieces. But you know, it’s part of any composer’s language. I mean, if you listen to Brahms, then… you know it’s Brahms because he does certain things in a certain way. Mozart’s the same… Bach… It’s a language of his own though, Nigel’s…

MF: That is true. You’ve kind of answered a lot of questions in just one answer. This is wonderful! When it comes to the compositional process… how much involvement do you get in the process of composition?

TK: The actual writing of the piece—none. None at all. So in the case of the sonata I said I was hoping for a large-scale work. It’s my policy with composers in general to give them as much latitude as possible. I usually give them a rough idea of the length, and sometimes, I might suggest a kind of form—with some composers, not usually though—but otherwise… no… Nigel knows what he’s doing. Nigel writes what he wants to write.

In terms of actually making the guitar part really playable and as user friendly as possible while still getting exactly what he wants, I sometimes play quite a big role. With the sonata—quite a
few little, little things... but he understands really well how the guitar works, in a particular way—his way. So on the micro finessing level I think I played an important role in the solo work, but such is Nigel's understanding of the guitar there was nothing at all actually miscalculated or needing to be rewritten.

In other works, you know, like if he's writing for guitar and piano as in *Jovian Moons*, well the guitar's mostly just going to have a solo line. In terms of writing for the guitar, that's a lot less complicated than if you're writing a solo work... and the same goes for quartet writing really, because it's four, often single lines, making up the whole. All the other works have all been for the guitar in ensemble. So—you know—you can still go wrong there but any role I've had in those has been fairly small. I'd say “this would be better that way,” “turn these notes around here,” or whatever... or finding solutions on the guitar, for instance, “it seemed really awkward but if you just change that note and then it allows this one to ring out”... just little detail type things.

But basically, what I'm saying is that he knows the guitar really well. He writes really well for it, and when it comes down to it, in essence, there's not a lot for the guitarist to have to change.

**MF:** Well that's wonderful, isn't it! It's really, really cool! So that answered my question “did he offer opportunities for you to suggest changes?”... which... he did.

**TK:** Oh he did, lots! Yeah... We to-ed and fro-ed a lot...

**MF:** Yeah, so would he contact you and say “play me this section so I can hear it and get your opinions?”

**TK:** Yeah, I went to Sydney a couple of times... I can’t remember whether we did much over the phone. I've done that with other composers quite a lot, especially with Mark Isaacs. In that concert in Perth [in 2012] I also added some new pieces from Mark Isaacs—I did all that over the phone with him. With Nigel we did a bit of that over the phone. We certainly talked a lot over the phone and he sent me bits as he wrote them.

**MF:** Cool!

**TK:** Yeah, there was a lot of that sort of interaction.

**MF:** You've pretty much answered all of these questions! Stylistic influences... recurring rhythms, harmonies or scales... we haven't really talked about that. Are you aware of those?
**TK:** Yes, but not really, really consciously. Like, I don’t analyse them… perhaps I should! More rhythmic things I’ve noticed, but I hear the other things.

**MF:** ‘Cause I noticed through looking at lots of his works he has his fascination with five… and odd groupings… in odd numbers… I was wondering if that was just…

**TK:** Yeah, that’s him… I don’t know the source of that!

**MF:** No? Ok. That’s what I’m trying to find out! Yeah, ‘cause is it linked to being inspired by Stravinsky or…

**TK:** No idea.

**MF:** Something to do with African… West African drumming?

**TK:** Might be with Nigel, you never know! Like when you raised the question of influences, and I mentioned that Nigel had said the opening section of *Mosstrooper* has Indian music influence, for instance, and there’s another bit that is reggae derived… and there’s another bit where he said to me “sort of like a blues player would do it”…you know.

**MF:** It’s kind of like a patchwork quilt isn’t it?

**TK:** Yeah! A whole range of influences. Coming back to what I said earlier about this growing up with all those styles of music around him. He’s got a sharp ear and great imagination and it all comes together. And on the guitar, again he makes use of a lot of popular guitar derived techniques like continued hammered on passages, slurred on passages and other things.

**MF:** Like the Van Halen hammering?

**TK:** Yes. Exactly. Like you find in rock guitarists, blues guitarists. The use of the Bartok pizz. is very Nigel, as well…

**MF:** The percussion on the guitar…

**TK:** Percussion, yes, but very cleverly incorporated into a more traditional use of the instrument.

**MF:** It’s done in a very effective way, that it doesn’t sound cheesy or cliché, you know?
**TK:** Yes that’s right. That’s right. It’s often a very funky rhythmic character that he’s after. Yeah.

**MF:** I guess the last question: can you comment at all on the significance of Westlake as a composer in Australia, and the body of Australian guitar music?

**TK:** In Australia? Well he’s one of the very best. If that’s any kind of statement. Very obviously so. To me, especially the works of recent years have the depth and significance of truly great works, on a universal level.

**MF:** I agree with that, yep.

**TK:** And he’s now in his prime really… The works he’s written in the last couple of years are superb pieces of music. They really have a whole other layer of feeling in them. I’m thinking there of *Compassion*, and the *Requiem for Eli*, and I find a lot of depth in the *Sonata*. It’s full of beautiful things. So he’s very important in that way and I think that his importance will become more and more apparent as time goes by.

In some ways he’s quite representative of his generation as I said before, with a lot of influence from a lot of music—popular music from all around the world filtering in to what are substantial serious, if you like, classical pieces. So he’s very important in that way.

In the guitar sense, well… hugely… Could one say the most popular of the Australian guitar composers? It’s hard to say, and a bit of a silly thing to say. I mean, Peter Sculthorpe’s written many really beautiful, and enduring pieces for guitar and Ross Edwards has written some wonderful pieces, and a number of other composers have written some great things.

**MF:** Houghton, Charlton…

**TK:** Yes, of course, my mind was running on the non-guitarist-composer line for a minute. Phil Houghton is fantastic, and Rick Charlton too. So it’s hard to single anyone out, but Nigel somehow sits in his own area, doesn’t he? So, just very broadly, if for no other reason—for the quantity and breadth, the large amount of music that he’s written… we’ve gotta be happy about that.

I’m proud of the role that I’ve played in having those eight successful commissions written. I guess I got onto the fact that he was pretty good, pretty quick! But we got on… we got on really well! And that kind of helps, and he’s a close friend. A very special person.
After completing her Bachelor of Music (First Class Honours) in 2011, Melissa returned to WAAPA in 2013 to begin her Master of Arts (Performing Arts). Under the supervision of Dr. Jonathan Paget, she has been researching the guitar music of Nigel Westlake.

It has been a busy two years in the Masters program: while maintaining her practice and thesis writing, Melissa was a finalist in the 2013 Vitalicana Concerto Competition and was given the opportunity to perform Leo Brouwer’s Concierto Elegiaco with the Faith Court Orchestra. This year, she travelled to Canberra to interview and receive lessons from Timothy Kain. The experience was incredible and uncovered a great deal of information about Westlake’s guitar music.

It’s time for some #thankyounotes…

The Perth Guitar Quartet (Duncan, Chris and Daniel): I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you guys. Thanks for being such an awesome group of guys to rehearse and perform with. I look forward to seeing where the future takes our quartet!

Hayden: Thanks so much for sacrificing your time preparing for your graduation recital to help me out with preparing for mine. It’s been great fun to play the duo together!

Dr. Jonathan Paget: What a last two years it’s been! Thanks for all of the guitar lessons and supervision sessions. I appreciate all of the guidance, support and encouragement!

Kris Bowtell: Thanks for coming along to video record this recital!

Dr. Robert Braham: Thanks so very much for allowing me to use this awesome auditorium! I am very blessed to be working at Trinity College and to have the opportunity to play here.

Finally…

My husband, Jonathan: You are always so encouraging, supportive, helpful, and tolerant of my practice. Thanks also for recording the recital today - I have no doubt it will sound amazing!

My parents, Maryanne and Pat: Thanks for always being very encouraging and supportive of my studies, for always taking the time out to come to my performances, and for always being the most amazing parents!

…and all of you wonderful people for coming to listen, of course!!! ;)

THE GUITAR MUSIC OF NIGEL WESTLAKE
Master of Arts (Performing Arts) - graduation recital

2.30pm, Sunday 21 September, 2014

Melissa Fitzgerald
...about the composer

Nigel Westlake (1958) has become one of Australia’s most loved composers. Originally born in Perth, Nigel moved to Sydney at a young age and has lived there ever since.

Since his early 20s, Westlake has been an avid composer, and has composed works for orchestras, solo instruments and chamber groups. He does not limit himself to the concert hall stages though - he has also composed a great deal of film and television music. Some of these most notable works include the scores for *Babe*, *Miss Potter*, and the *Radio National* theme on ABC radio.

To date, Westlake has composed just over a dozen works for the classical guitar. His works are very unique and are inspired by many different sources: Rock, Jazz, Classical, Blues, Indian and African music, and even the world around him.

...about the pieces

Hinchinbrook Island is located off the coast in North Queensland. The rugged peaks and tropical gorges on the island inspired Westlake to write a series of riffs that formed the basis for his composition, *The Hinchinbrook Riffs*. The use of digital delay in this piece create interesting melodic and rhythmic surges, similar to water coming in and out of the shore.

*Mosstrooper Peak* was commissioned by Timothy Kain, and is Westlake’s newest composition. It is dedicated to the memory of his son, Eli. The movements of the sonata are named after different islands in the Whitsundays, and it reflects the sheer beauty of the landscape, as well as conveying the wide range of emotions felt by Westlake and his family after the loss of their son.

*Songs from the Forest* was written for the John Williams/Timothy Kain guitar duo. It was composed on the outskirts of the Yengo National Park in New South Wales.

*Shards of Jaisalmer* was composed for the Grigoryan Brothers. Westlake drew his inspiration for this piece from a trip to India. The piece depicts the exotic desert fortress of Jaisalmer, and the sights of alleyways, private mansions, jail barriers, and the landscape on this ancient camel trade route.

*Six Fish* was inspired by two main sources: Westlake’s deep love of the ocean, and Gould’s *Book of Fish*, which he was reading at the time. The piece was originally composed for Saffire, and it received an APRA award for “Instrumental work of the year” in 2005. Each movement in *Six Fish* depicts a different type of fish... and yes, the Guitarfish is real!

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**Program**

- *The Hinchinbrook Riffs* (2003) 9’
  - i. Burning Point
  - ii. Mosstrooper Peak
  - iii. Nara Inlet
  - iv. Tangalooma
  - v. Butterfly Bay
  - vi. Stormy Cape
- *Songs from the Forest* (1994) 7’
- *Shards of Jaisalmer* (2007) 9’
- *Six Fish* (2003) 15’
  - i. Guitarfish
  - ii. Sunfish
  - iii. Spangled Emperor
  - iv. Sling-Jaw Wrasse
  - v. Leafly Sea Dragon
  - vi. Flying Fish

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CD Track Listing

1. The Hinchinbrook Riffs
2. Songs from the Forest (featuring Jonathan Paget)
3. Six Fish (featuring Chris Kotchie, Duncan Gardiner, and Daniel Christoffersen)
4. Shards of Jaisalmer (featuring Robert Parker and Craig Lake)
5. Jovian Moons (featuring David Wickham)
6. Mosstroper Peak

Recording Times and Locations

Track 1: recorded on September 28, 2016 in the Braham Auditorium at Trinity College, East Perth
Track 2: recorded on June 23, 2016 in the Music Auditorium at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
Track 3: recorded on May 31, 2015 in the Chapel of St. Michael the Archangel, West Leederville
Track 4: recorded on October 9, 2016 in the Music Auditorium at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
Track 5: recorded on May 14, 2016 in the Music Auditorium at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
Track 6: recorded on April 8, 2015 in the Braham Auditorium at Trinity College, East Perth
EAST PERTH CEMETERIES HISTORY

From tuberculosis, brought to the colony from the Old World, to typhoid, a fever that struck Perth at the same time as gold fever, the graves of East Perth Cemeteries are a record of the first 70 years of European migration.

The 1850s and 1860s saw an explosion of religious denominations in the State of Western Australia, with a concomitant need for religious sites to accommodate them. The Protestant denominations were often denominational and were located in the city of Perth, while the Catholic and Jewish denominations were located in the City of Perth. The first Jewish cemetery in Australia was established in 1859, in the East Perth area. The Jewish cemetery was established in 1859, and the Catholic cemetery was established in 1867.

SOUND FROM THE GROUND: PROJECT BACKGROUND

The collection of graves at East Perth Cemeteries represents a cross section of Perth society from 1829 to 1969, with a setting that provides a storehouse experience of isolation and tranquility in the midst of a busy city. It is a particularly significant collection generally considered to be of few other than genealogical researches.

There is no doubt the individual grave markers at East Perth Cemeteries provide an invaluable resource for people tracing their family histories. They are also a reminder of our own impermanence and mortality. But when considered as a collection these tangible elements of stone, slate and marble are prompts for memory and contemplation.

Uniquely West Australian stories are embodied in this highly significant collection that reflects the stories of 115,000 lives. It is open to us today the stories of the past, of commerce and government, family and relationships, exploration and change, faith and community, hardship and struggle, love and ultimate loss. The grave markers have also inspired fellow guitarist and composer Duncan Gardiner. He has been commissioned by the National Trust to compose an original work for Sound from the Ground that will serve as a contemporary response to the gravestones. The title Stone, Shovel River and Newton is taken from the material evidence Duncan has observed as he has explored the graves in their unique landscape setting.

Superbly interpreted by Jonathan, Duncan, Melissa Fitzgerald and Joanne Fidler, the musical narratives both historical and contemporary reveal new and unexpected layers of significance and will doubtless inspire audiences to consider the collection of graves in new ways. Ultimately, Sound from the Ground will leave a musical legacy for the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sound from the Ground has been generously supported by the Department of Culture and the Arts Connect Community Collection Program specifically the category that enables collecting organisations to engage with individuals to document or comment on works in our community's unique way.

The historic sites and stories of East Perth Cemeteries have been made possible due to the support of the Department of Culture and the Arts Connect Community Collection Program.
a purely musical context to describe the composer’s "unfaithfulness" to traditional harmonic rules, but could also point to extra-musical meaning of the term – an individual who does not adhere to a particular set of religious beliefs and is thus isolated from the majority.

Graves that have inspired the project:
- Richard Carrow – Grave #739
  - suicide by gunshot
- Edward Edward – Grave #108
  - ingested rat poison
- Reginald Arthur Scott Hill
  - Grave #705 – cut own throat
- John Lewis – Grave #426 – "suicide in a fit of mental derangement"

Unmarked graves on the perimeter of the Cemeteries:
- John Mackay – Private 21st Regiment, suicide by drowning at age 28
- George Parker – Convict No 7816, suicide by drowning at age 75
- Franz Erdmann – executed by hanging at age 35
- John Collins – Convict No 6540, executed by hanging at age 40

Nigel Westlake – Mosstrooper Peak
Mosstrooper Peak is a six movement work for solo guitar written in 2010 by Perth-born composer Nigel Westlake. Each movement represents a location around the Whitsunday Islands where Westlake has built a shrine to his deceased son Eli. Westlake writes:

On a pristine white beach, in the twilight of a magical tropical sunset, a family gathers shells and small flowers. In silence they arrange their offerings around a small photo of the departed, lighting incense and candles, which burn late into the night.

Thus begins a practice of remembrance that will become a daily ritual over the coming months. On each occasion the shrines will become larger and more elaborate, and the places upon which they are built will become more remote and precarious.

They are located within caves and crevices amongst peaceful inlets, tidal estuaries, coral beaches, and rocky ridges upon the tropical islands, overlooking the fringing reefs and deep blue waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

Some of the shrines will be washed away by peak tides and cyclones, others will stand for hundreds of years.

Of the estimated 10,000 burials at East Perth Cemeteries, 745 graves are identifiable through the extant collection of headstones. Like Westlake’s shrines washed away by tides, the timber grave markers have long since disintegrated with only marble, iron, slate and sandstone surviving the elements and the numerous “clean-ups” at the site over the past century.

To contemplate:
- Notice all of the empty space within the confines of the Cemeteries. In reality, this “empty space” is actually graves for which the markers have disintegrated over time or otherwise been removed, or never existed.

George Auric/Paul Dehn – The Weeping Willow
The Weeping Willow tree was one of many symbols representing death and mourning in Victorian England that pervaded art, literature, and the decorative elements of cemeteries. As the Weeping Willow (Salix babylonica) is not native to Australia, the similar visual features of the Western Australian Peppermint (Agonis flexuosa) made it the ideal colonial substitute. These trees can be seen throughout the East Perth Cemeteries and are indicative of a way in which the English traditions surrounding death and burial were altered in response to the conditions of the new colony.

This song was originally composed by Georje Auric for the 1961 film "The Innocents," and was subsequently covered by the Kingston Trio the following year. The text speaks of the loss of a lover or spouse, which like the tragic story of the Hester family, was an all too common occurrence in the early days of the settlement.

We lay my love and I beneath the weeping willow.
But now alone I lie and weep beside the tree.
Singing “Oh willow waly” by the tree that weeps with me.
Singing “Oh willow waly” till my lover return to me.
We lay my love and I beneath the weeping willow.
A broken heart have I. Oh willow I die, oh willow I die.

Graves that have inspired the project:
- Jane Pearson – Grave #423
- Eliza Whitehead – Grave #455
- Along with the many Western Australian Peppermint trees throughout the Cemeteries and the 30 or more graves that feature willows among their symbols.