A Study into Narrative and/as Composition (within popular music from the late-20th century onwards)

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Abstract

Works by Nicholls (2007) and Negus (2012) establish popular music to be rarely mentioned in narrative studies, and despite one of the fundamentals of narratology being “the isolation of patterns that recur across works” (Hogan, 2011, p. 9), a feature prevalent in much music through form, structure, and repetition, Nicholls argues that a single popular music track describes “entirely static - rather than kinetic - cameos, vignettes, or states of mind” (2007, p. 297) and that a single track alone cannot convey a narrative.

In this dissertation, applying theories of narratology to *Jeff Wayne’s Musical Version of The War of The Worlds* (Wayne, 1978) and *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (Wakeman, 2014) alongside musical analysis of the pieces will identify how music can convey a narrative, translating an existing book into music within the context of a concept album. Further analysis of works by Led Zeppelin reveal how the characters and narratives within a book can be re-contextualised to tell new narratives within a single track by utilising nostalgia to help the listener understand what the artist is describing. Using the techniques employed by Wayne, Wakeman, and Zeppelin, I will present my own original works portraying the narrative of Beowulf, further showing how narratives can be used as a creative implement within music composition and providing a further example of how music can convey narrative.

Though a single popular track alone cannot convey a narrative, the result of this analysis and practical implementation shows that a series of tracks in the form of a concept album can provide each other narrative context that creates a consistent or continuous story, while a single track which makes reference to other works - both musical and non-musical - is given additional context, enabling the listener to form their own narrative or grant insight into the intended narrative of the artist.

Contents

Introduction 4

Narratology 5

Study 1: Wayne

- Artist Background 8
- Narrative Summary 8
- Album Analysis 10

Study 2: Wakeman

- Artist Background 16
- Narrative Summary 16
- Album Analysis 17

Study 3: Zeppelin

- Artist Background 21
- Music Analysis 21

Conclusion 25

Commentary

- Creative Background 27
- Narrative Summary 28
- Portfolio Analysis 30
- Final Conclusions 37

Bibliography 38

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Introduction

In ‘Narrative, Interpretation, and the Popular Song’, Negus (2012) suggests that “the value of narratives in human understanding of the world is widely recognised” (p. 368), going on to identify that despite the importance of narrative in many mainstream media, “the popular song - one of the most pervasive narrative forms that people encounter in their daily lives - has been almost entirely ignored in the vast literature on narrative” (p. 368). While academic works on Western art and film music often refer to narrative studies and methods, Negus points out that “theories of narrative have rarely been foregrounded in the study of popular songs” (p. 368). Nicholls (2007) also addresses this when referencing Barthes *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives* (1975), stating that “the narratives of the world… may indeed be numberless; but in Barthes’ own list of narrative genres - which includes ‘myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting… stained-glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, [and] conversation’ - music is conspicuous by its absence” (Nicholls, 2007, p. 297).

There are numerous songs inspired by books, including the likes of ‘Wuthering Heights’ (Bush, 1978), ‘Pet Sematary’ (Ramones, 1989), and ‘1984’ (Bowie, 1974), and there are several concept-style albums that retell a book in its entirety, such as *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (Wakeman, 1974). While it is often easy in the aforementioned works to see how the lyrics of such songs relate to the words of their respective books, what is rarely identified and discussed is the greater compositional process that leads to creating a narrative piece of music; how does the story inspire the choice of instrumentation or use of melody and harmony? How does writing a narrative-inspired piece change the use of musical structure?

By researching narratology and popular music to gain insight on how the subjects are linked, and applying these theories to three case studies on narrative-inspired albums, I will build on existing contextual research and provide support for my own practice-based research, addressing the gap in literature on narrative within music by discussing how music can convey a narrative through compositional techniques.

Narratology

Before discussing the details of writing compositional works with a narrative focus, it is important to first understand in more depth what is involved in narratology and how it can be integrated into the field of music. Hogan states that “human beings have a passion for plot” (2011, p. 1), and throughout *Affective Narratology* he explores why this is the case. In short, we humans experience real emotional responses when perceiving the fictional emotions implied by the author. While he makes reference to other neurocognitive systems, Hogan points out that “story structures are fundamentally shaped and oriented by our emotion systems” (p.1), continuing to explain how “emotion systems govern not only goals but also the ways in which stories are developed, what sort of things protagonists do or encounter, how trajectories of goal pursuit are initiated, what counts as a resolution, and so on” (p. 2). This extends deeper to the idea that “we are born with emotional (or proto-emotional) propensities” (p. 24) which are realised through experience, and that stories may be a “key part of that realization” (p. 24).

Hogan also suggests that “the isolation of patterns that recur across works” is one of the fundamentals of narratology as it sets a baseline for “understanding the various sorts of particularity that are important for historical or hermeneutic study” (p. 9). He goes on to trace the theory of story structure to Aristotle’s Poetics (cited from *Aristotle’s Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, edited by S.H. Butcher, 1951), which “stresses the emotional force of such recurring story elements as recognition and reversal” and suggests that “story structure is fundamentally guided by the generation and catharsis of emotions, particularly fear and pity” (Hogan, 2011, p. 10), again pointing out the “profound interconnection of emotions and stories” (p 24). While music can portray the emotions and experiences of the artist, Nicholls suggests that a narrative is a “representation of events in time” (2007, p. 297), and a single popular music track describes “entirely static - rather than kinetic - cameos, vignettes, or states of mind” (p. 297). He later references Nattiez (1990), agreeing with his idea that “music is not a narrative and that any description of its formal structures in terms of narrativity is nothing but superfluous metaphor” (Nicholls, 2007, p. 300). In *Can One Speak*

of Narrativity in Music?, Nattiez explains this theory by suggesting that "in music, connections are situated at the level of the discourse, rather than the level of the story" (1990, p. 244), giving the example that you might hear a military march in a piece and several men marching, but you "don't know which men . . . where they have come from or where they are going" (p. 244). However, Nicholls continues to suggest that "music can become part of a narrative discourse, either in those instances where it is ascribed extra-musical meaning through association with an object or concept . . . or where it interacts with one or more other media" (2007, pp. 300-301). This reinforces the argument presented by Negus in which "songs do not convey narrative meanings as texts alone or in relation to the supporting conceptual package" (2012, p. 370).

Returning to the idea that narratives are driven by our emotional response to certain situations (Hogan, 2011), a recent study from Kurzom and Mendelsohn discusses the "ability of musical stimuli to induce strong emotional responses" (2022, p. 1). In this, they describe how "musical experiences are unique in that depending on context, they may evoke a sense of abstract expectation, which awaits to be resolved into a more stable state". They continue to explore in more detail the idea of musical tension, "which is often evoked by chords that within a particular context instil an unresolved sensation, which creates an expectation towards resolution to a more stable chord" (p. 2), also suggesting that the longer an unresolved chord continues, the more intense the period of tension. In their own studies, they invited participants to listen to three different pieces of piano music composed specifically for the study. During the pieces, "tension was achieved by playing a musical phrase twice, first devoid of delays in tension release, and once again with delaying tension release" (p. 3) with the intention that participants would compare one with the other, creating a forced perception of tension. Their results supported the hypothesis, showing that "delays in harmonic resolutions relate to higher levels of felt tension" (p. 7), and further that "the tension condition is accompanied by an expectation, which is resolved only upon the release from tension" (p. 10).

The research of Kurzom and Mendelsohn shows that music can be written from a purely compositional/arrangement view in a way that can directly influence a listener's emotions without the use or presence of lyrics (2022). This, combined with the idea that “story structures are fundamentally shaped and oriented by our emotion systems” (Hogan, 2011, p. 1), supports the argument that a single track can convey narrative meanings contrary to the findings of Negus (2012) and Nicholls (2007). However, to truly understand how narrative can be used in music composition, it is important to look at it in several contexts from different composers. I have carried out three case studies on different artists, two of which re-tell pre-existing narratives across the context of a complete album, with the third appropriating narrative concepts to tell new stories in the context of single tracks. Through these, we see several methods of integrating narrative concepts within musical works, utilising differences of instrumentation, rhythm, recognition and reversal, which I will later apply to my own compositional portfolio to show how music can convey narrative.

Study 1: Wayne

Jeff Wayne started much of his early career composing and producing jingles for radio and television commercials, and later soundtracks for film and television. His first big success came when he produced David Essex's album *Rock On* (1973), from which the title track became both a number one hit and a Grammy nominee (Eder, n.d.). This was not the end of their professional relationship, as Wayne would go on to produce Essex's following albums, and later cast Essex as the Artilleryman in *Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War of The Worlds* (Wayne, 1978), for which Wayne won two Ivor Novello Awards, with the double album reaching "Top 10 in 22 countries and No.1 in 11 of them" (Wayne, n.d.). Wayne has since toured the musical with full cast and orchestra, selling out arenas worldwide. Furthermore, in 2012 he "re-imagined the 1978 double album with a modern twist" (Wayne, n.d.), releasing *Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War of The Worlds - The New Generation* (Wayne, 2012) with an updated cast featuring the likes of Gary Barlow, Joss Stone, and Liam Neeson.

The original release of *Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War of The Worlds* (Wayne, 1978) was self-produced by Wayne, and featured the vocal performances of the aforementioned David Essex alongside Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzy, Justin Hayward of the Moody Blues, and actor Richard Burton, among others. Similarly to H. G. Wells' original novel of the same title (1898), *War of the Worlds* (Wayne, 1978) is split into two parts - 'The Coming of the Martians', and 'The Earth Under the Martians' - the titles being derived directly from Wells' book (1898). Wayne's re-telling, while not totally faithful, remains true to Wells' original (1898); the story starts at the eve of war when the narrator - herein referred to as the Journalist - denotes a green flame erupting from Mars. This recurs for several nights until what is described as a falling star strikes the middle of Horsell Common, with many locals going to investigate. While Wells' opening chapter and Wayne's opening track share the same title, Wayne's is a summation of the first two chapters in Wells' story - as I show in Figure 1. - featuring full string orchestra and rock band, and both spoken and sung lyrics.

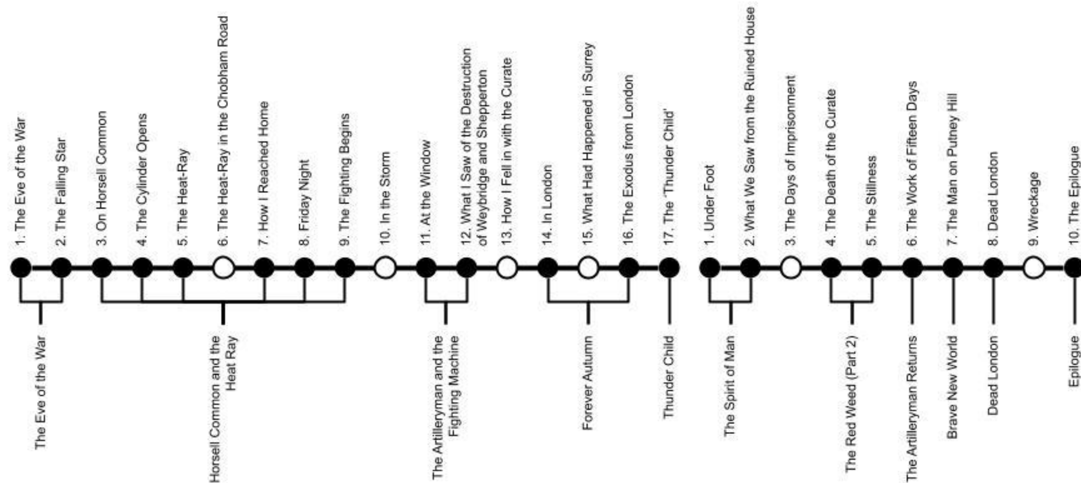

Figure 1. Wells' chapters and their relation to Wayne's tracks.

Wayne continues to accumulate Wells' chapters in his second track, 'Horsell Common and the Heat Ray' (Wayne, 1978), which reveals the fallen star to be a Martian vessel as the first Martian emerges, unleashing a deadly heat-ray on the unfortunate on-lookers. The Journalist runs for the safety of their own home, but soon observes that life around them seems to be continuing as normal, with few people having heard of the destruction at Horsell Common. Again, Wayne takes narrative points from six of Wells' chapters in this single track, however emitting elements from 'The Heat-Ray in the Chobham Road' (Wells, 1898), indicated in Figure 1. by a white circle. Wayne also skips the events of 'In the Storm' (Wells, 1898), as his third track starts with narration telling the events of 'At the Window' (Wells, 1898), in which a young artilleryman enters the Journalist's house, hiding from the Martian fighting machines, and the pair agree to travel to London where the artilleryman might rejoin his battery. Arriving at Byfleet, they witness the decapitation of one of the fighting machines only for several more to replace it and destroy much of Weybridge, with the Journalist miraculously escaping, though having been separated from the young artilleryman. During 'How I fell in with the Curate' (Wells, 1898), the Journalist travels down-stream in an abandoned boat where he is now joined by a curate and the two continue together towards

London. Wayne skips this interaction, instead choosing to introduce the curate later on in 'The Spirit of Man' (Wayne, 1978), and finishes 'The Coming of the Martians' (1978) with two tracks that re-contextualise the last four chapters of Well's 'Book One' (1898) in which the Journalist details his brother's account of the events in London, though as we will explore later, Wayne tells this as a first-person account from the Journalist's point of view, removing the brother entirely. Both Wayne (1978) and Wells (1898) finish their respective versions of 'The Coming of the Martians' with the destruction of the Thunder Child, a steamboat whose sacrifice ensures the escape of many refugees out of London.

Wayne starts his version of 'The Earth Under the Martians' (1978) with a predominantly instrumental track that establishes a shift in tone through a variation in pacing and instrumentation that will be discussed later in this chapter. It is after this that we are introduced to the curate - referred to instead as the Parson - during the events of 'The Spirit of Man' (Wayne, 1978), which begins with Wayne's own version of how the Journalist and Parson meet before they resume their course hiding from the Martians as per the events of Wells' 'Under Foot' (1898). 'The Red Weed (Part 2)' (Wayne, 1978) picks up with the pair having hidden for 9 days at which the Parson plans to cast out the Martians, believing them to be demons. As per the events of 'The Death of the Curate' (Wells, 1898), the Journalist renders the Parson unconscious only for him to be taken by a Martian as the Journalist remains hidden. 'The Stillness' (Wells, 1898) describes the Journalist as having remained hidden another 6 days, which Wayne alludes to through extended instrumentation before he continues Wells' narrative as the Journalist emerges to find all of the Martian machinery gone. The last four tracks of Wayne's album correlate to a single chapter of Wells' original respectively, as shown in Figure A.; 'The Artilleryman Returns' (Wayne, 1978) to 'The Work of Fifteen Days' (Wells, 1898), 'Brave New World' (Wayne, 1978) to 'The Man on Putney Hill' (Wells, 1898), with 'Dead London' and 'Epilogue' (Wayne, 1978) referencing the chapters of the same titles. During these final plot points, we see several moments of hope turn to despair; the young artilleryman returns with dreams bigger than he can achieve, and the Journalist wanders through London to find the Martians defeated by bacteria which their

bodies had not adapted to combat. But as life returns to normal, people fear a second attack. While Wells' doesn't further explore this possibility in *The War of the Worlds* (Wells, 1898), Wayne includes an addition to his epilogue in which several NASA stations can be heard communicating until their communications are ominously interrupted, implying a second invasion from the Martians and concluding Wayne's version of the narrative.

Returning to the opening track of Wayne's works, 'The Eve of the War' (1978) is the most lyrically book-accurate song on the album, its opening lines having been taken directly from Wells' opening paragraph (1898) with only minor alterations, featuring a creative use of paraphrasing to reduce word count and minimise the length of the spoken-word introduction, as shown in Figure 2.

Wells, H. G. (1898). *The War of the Worlds*. William Heinemann.	Wayne, J. (1978). *Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War of The Worlds* [Album]. CBS.
No one would have believed, in the last years of the nineteenth century,	No one would have believed, in the last years of the nineteenth century,
that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own;	that human affairs were being watched from the timeless worlds of space.
that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinized and studied,	No one could have dreamed we were being scrutinized,
perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water…	as someone with a microscope studies creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water.
No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable…	Few men even considered the possibility of life on other planets.
Yet across the gulf of space,	And yet, across the gulf of space,
minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic,	minds immeasurably superior to ours
regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us.	regarded this Earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely they drew their plans against us.

Figure 2. A comparison of Wells (1898) and Wayne (1978).

What remains becomes a perfect reference to and recognition of the book on which the work is based. This narration is quickly followed by the opening orchestral chords as the war looms ever closer, giving us our first glimpse of the grandeur of Wayne's composing style. Summers describes what ensues as a "stylistic/generic hybrid . . . fusing disco rhythms with orchestral strings, prog rock guitars and synthesizers" (2018, p. 233). Throughout the rich instrumentation - made up predominantly of the aforementioned strings, synthesisers and

guitars, as well as drums, percussion, acoustic piano, and other acoustic stringed instruments including the mandolin, santoor, and zither - Wayne intersperses further narration and sung word, with the inclusion of dialogue between characters in later tracks. Many of the album's lyrics are direct quotations from the book - or a variation on a quotation - however some lyrics make use of creative licensing and merely take inspiration from Wells' work. An example of the former, 'The Eve of the War' (Wayne, 1978) also includes the recurring use of the sung phrase "the chances of anything coming from Mars are a million to one" (Wayne, 1978), a line with few changes from the wording within the book: "the chances against anything man-like on Mars are a million to one" (Wells, 1898). Meanwhile, the sung lyrics of 'Forever Autumn' (Wayne, 1978) - the fourth track of part one - seem to be of Wayne and Hayward's own invention, referring to events within the novel (Wells, 1898) without making any direct quotations.

Wayne's creative licensing is prevalent not only in his lyric writing, but also the choice of characters portrayed and the blurring of their roles within the story. For example, Wayne's Journalist, originally performed by actor Richard Burton, takes on the combined roles and stories of Wells' (1898) narrator and of the narrator's younger brother, who is never mentioned within the album. Wayne re-contextualises the brother's story into that of the narrator, allowing him to minimise on casting and audience confusion within an already thematically busy narrative situation. Returning to Wells' original (1898), we read the narrator's re-telling of his brother's journey out of London, travel along the Thames, and of the valiant last fight of the steamer - the Thunder Child - along the Essex coast. However, in the album (Wayne, 1978) we instead witness these events from the Journalist's own perspective as he reaches London in search of his wife, the "beloved Carrie", only to find her swept away on a fleeing steamer as the "mighty metal War-Lord", the steamboat Thunder Child, sacrifices itself to ensure the refugees' escape. The resulting narrative still serves the same purpose of describing the exodus from London, and displaying the pure technological might and fright of the Martian fighting machines. However, due to the recontextualisation of the story through the eyes of the journalist, the presentation of the narrative is simplified, not

introducing any additional or unnecessary characters, allowing the listener to focus solely on the occuring events without the requirement for any prior introductions. This also helps to create a distinction between Wayne's altered narrative and an audiobook version of Well's original book (1898), in which you would expect a more faithful reading of the book, perhaps with further voice-acting and added dramatisation.

That is not to say that the music itself doesn't serve a purpose within the narrative; as previously identified, Hogan highlights that story structure theory can be traced back to the works of Aristotle, stating that "for Aristotle, story structure is fundamentally guided by the generation and catharsis of emotions" (2011, p.10), stressing the "emotional force of such recurring story elements as recognition and reversal". In a similar sense, Nattiez describes how "any perception of music triggers off the establishment of a link between the work and the experience of the listener" (1990, p. 251), with musical discourse consisting of "repetitions, returns, preparations, expectations, resolutions, and . . . techniques of continuity" (p. 244). Wayne's music supports the spoken elements of the narrative through contextualised repetition similar to leitmotif; the narration might suggest an emotional response in the listener, with an identifiable instrument, sound or melody accompanying it. This accompaniment can then be repeated later either in the same piece or another piece within the works, re-conveying the relevant emotions and allowing the composer to reference the specific narrative elements without the requirement of a constant narrator. Sapiro (2017) pin-points several of these recurring melodies in Wayne's work (1978), including one representing the Martian heat ray which "utilises a slightly overdriven guitar timbre [as] a second narrative marker" (2017, p. 344), and another utilising "descending octaves that can be heard as representing radio communications" (p. 344). Sapiro continues to explain how "there are often long passages with no dialogue or lyrics in which the music is the sole storytelling element, and the placement and interaction of Wayne's various themes enable the listener to create the story in their own imagination" (p. 344), giving the example of the interplay between themes in 'Thunder Child' (Wayne, 1978) which Wayne uses to portray the battle between the steamer and the Martian fighting machines.

The second act of the album - titled ‘The Earth Under the Martians’ (Wayne, 1978) - begins with ‘The Red Weed (Part 1)’, a mostly instrumental piece bookended by short spoken narrative segments. The piece features the return of the recurring synthesised descending octaves, identified by Sapiro (2017) as representing the Martian radio communications, but this time over a new, slower, melancholic melody that, in comparison to the general pacing, tempo and energy of the previous tracks, creates an eerie peacefulness. This represents the Martians’ reach having spread so far that nothing and nobody is attempting to resist, and the Earth is truly controlled by the Martians. A mix of both the tempo change and shifted instrumentation lends to the eeriness of the track, with Wayne introducing new and unusual synthesised tones including one with rapid vibrato, contrasted by melodically dissonant movements performed on an acoustic piano by Paul Hart - of instrumental rock band Sky - to create an extended sense of tension.

During the ensuing track, ‘The Spirit of Man’ (Wayne, 1978), we are introduced to the characters of Parson Nathaniel and his wife (Beth) as the Journalist comes across the unconscious body of Nathaniel in a ruined churchyard. Wayne uses Nathaniel to present an alternate view of the situation as Nathaniel believes the Martians are in fact demons sent by Satan “in their search for the sinners” (Wayne, 1978). While the views of the Parson and the untimely event of his death are mirrored between both book and album, the introduction of him in the album comes much later in Wayne’s story than in the book, in which the Journalist and Parson meet on the river whilst travelling towards Halliford and Walton. This happens before the Journalist tells of his brother’s experience of the exodus from London and before the events of ‘The ‘Thunder Child’’ (Wells, 1898). On top of Wayne’s altered timeline and narrative, the character of Beth, Nathaniel’s wife, is never mentioned within the book, making her a character entirely of Wayne’s own invention to act as a voice of reason; while many of Nathaniel’s lines within ‘The Spirit of Man’ (Wayne, 1978) speak of death and destruction at the hands of Satan’s demons, Beth plays a role of encouragement, trying to talk him out of his misconceptions and bring him back to his senses. The interaction between Beth and Nathaniel adds additional depth to the latter, compensating for the character development

that was removed from the previously omitted chapters. Wayne structures the track as a conversation between the couple, switching between sung and spoken word where the two argue opposing views as to who the Martian invaders are and how they might be defeated. Wayne further intersperses shorter instrumental riffs and additional dialogue from the Journalist, allowing for a more varied structure. The following track - ‘The Red Weed (Part 2)’ (Wayne, 1978) - tells of the death of Nathaniel. However, it does so only through dialogue between the Journalist and Nathaniel, completely contrasting the sung call-and-response of ‘The Spirit of Man’ (Wayne, 1978), the effect of which highlights how little communication happens between the two characters as they hide for nine days from the martians. The rest of the scene is presented through the previously mentioned use of leitmotif, along with some use of audio effects to narrate how the Journalist knocks Nathaniel unconscious in a desperate attempt to prevent him giving away their location to the nearby Martians.

Despite the various changes to Wells’ original novel (1898), Wayne’s *War of the Worlds* (1978) remains an accurate re-telling of the story, with many of the more prevalent narrative themes and characters being present in both. As to the incorporation of the narrative within the music, Wayne’s Journalist delivers narration that provides context to the musical accompaniment, and the sung words of the individual characters are written and performed in a way that fits the musical style while still driving the narrative forward. The listener is provided information about both where a scene takes place and who is there through narrated exposition, and the events unfold through a mixture of dialogue and lyrics that are emotionally supported by the melodic content, instrumentation and performance. The final product is an album that not only tells a story overtly, but does so in a way that is memorable and re-tellable in its own right, separate from having been based on and inspired by a pre-existing novel.

Study 2: Wakeman

According to his online biography (Wakeman, 2022), Rick Wakeman quit the Royal College of Music of his own accord to pursue a career in music. He soon joined a local pub band playing keyboard, before leaving them to join English rock band Strawbs, as well as doing many recording sessions for artists such as Black Sabbath, Elton John, and David Bowie, for whom he appears on 'Space Oddity' (Bowie, 1969). In August 1971 he left Strawbs to join the progressive rock band Yes, going on his first American tour before signing a solo record deal with A&M. This deal spawned several progressive/symphonic rock concept albums, including *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1974) and *The Myths and Legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table* (1975), both of which have a strong focus on the narratives which inspired them. Despite being described as the album that "rewrote the rules" (Mathias, E., 2014) and "one of the rock era's landmark achievements" (Barr, G., 2014), *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (Wakeman, 1974) was only performed three times in the UK before all hard-copies of the score were lost for almost three decades, being rediscovered and restored by Wakeman for several tours in 2012, followed by the album's re-recording and re-release with additional material in 2014.

Wakeman's 2014 re-release featured the return of Ashley Holt's vocals from the original 1974 release, as well as Wakeman's own keyboard performance, with the other instruments now performed by members of the English Rock Ensemble, and with Peter Egan replacing David Hemmings as the narrator. *Journey* (Wakeman, 2014) follows a very close structure to Verne's original novel, *Voyage au centre de la terre* (1864), beginning as Professor Lidenbrock and his nephew Axel discover and begin to translate an ancient manuscript. Verne spends six chapters describing how the pair decode the parchment, while Wakeman summarises the events in a single track narrated by Peter Egan. I have displayed the correlation between chapter and track in Figure 3. Wakeman follows up the opening narration with an instrumental track - denoted in Figure 3 by a white circle - which introduces some of the themes and melodies from the remainder of the album as performed by members of the English Chamber Choir, the English Rock Ensemble, and the Orion

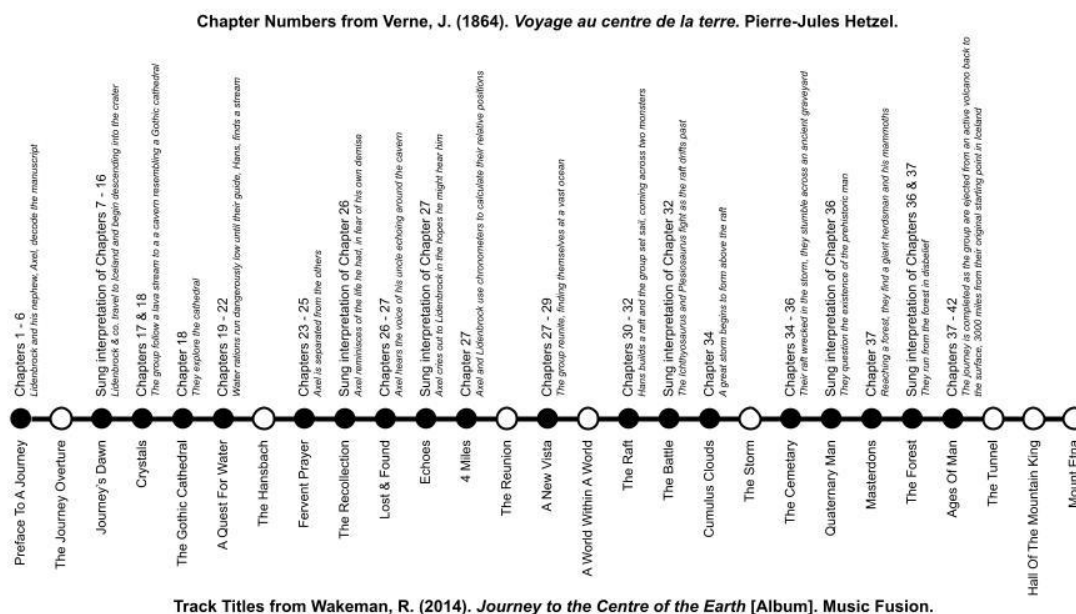

Figure 3. Wakeman's tracks and their relation to Verne's chapters.

Orchestra. The third track, 'Journey's Dawn' (Wakeman, 2014), tells of Lidenbrock and Axel's journey to Iceland and down into the volcanic crater of Snæfellsjökull - herein referred to as Snaefells - where they begin deeper towards the Earth's core. Again, Wakeman summarises chapters 7 through 16 (Verne, 1864) in this single track, but using sung vocals written by Wakeman and performed by Hayley Sanderson. The remaining tracks continue to switch between spoken word, sung interpretation, and instrumental interludes, the narrative of each seen summarised in Figure 3; in summary, Lidenbrock, Axel, and their companions continue deeper into the centre of the Earth, running out of clean water rations, getting separated and reuniting, discovering a vast underground ocean with its own weather system that destroys their raft as they attempt to cross, and trekking through a forest before running from the giant who inhabits it. They finally exit the Earth's core via the volcanic eruption of Mount Stromboli, ejecting them in Italy, 3,000 miles from where they had first descended to the Earth's core in Iceland.

While Wayne's (1978) narrative style creates more of a dramatisation of the source material, Wakeman's (2014) approach takes on the role of a third-person narrator, telling the story through longer prose sections, un-interrupted by character dialogue. The opening track

from Wakeman's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (2014) is a minute-long preface which Wakeman uses to set the scene for his musical version of *Voyage au centre de la terre* (Verne, 1864). Where Wayne's (1978) approach to perspective follows that of Wells' original novel (1898), Wakeman (2014) instead subverts the original perspective of Verne's (1864); the novel begins in the first-person, saying "on Sunday, 24th May, 1863, my uncle Professor Lidenbrock came suddenly home, much too early for dinner" (Verne, 1864). Meanwhile, Peter Egan - in his role as Wakeman's narrator - reads in the third-person, saying "the story begins on the 24th of May 1863 in Hamburg, when Professor Lidenbrock and his nephew Axel discover an old parchment in a 12th century book called 'Heims Kringla'" (Wakeman, 2014). While this is a very similar opening to that of Wayne's 'The Eve of War' (Wayne, 1978) - a short segment of narration with no musical backing to set the scene and give some context to the coming narrative - the use of a third-person perspective in *Journey* (Wakeman, 2014) creates a more removed and almost voyeuristic approach - as if we are watching the events unfold from afar or being told the story many decades after its occurrence - whereas the first-person approach of Wayne brings the listener into the events, sitting them at the table with the characters. The remainder of the preface acts as a brief recap of the first six chapters of Verne's novel (1864), as shown in Figure 3, leading up to the point where the journey from Hamburg to the centre of the Earth actually begins.

What follows is fifty-three minutes of sweeping, synth-based progressive rock combined with full orchestral accompaniment. Similar to Wayne, Wakeman writes longer instrumental sections interspersed with shorter sung or spoken segments that describe and narrate the events of the story. However, as previously mentioned, Wakeman continues to subvert Verne's original perspective, telling the story from the more voyeuristic third-person. An alternating pattern occurs between most tracks, one featuring spoken narration over a musical vamp followed by another that is mostly - if not entirely - consisting of instrumental composition in a development of the previous vamp. Much of the emotion, recognition and reversal, which Hogan (2011) identifies as fundamental story elements in narratology, are portrayed through Wakeman's instrumentation in both composition and arrangement. For

example, both ‘Journey’s Dawn’ and ‘The Recollection’ (Wakeman, 2014) begin with a short introduction followed by the same phrasing pattern that we will describe here as ABAB, where A equates to a verse and B to a chorus. Both songs are also in the same key, with their respective A and B sections following identical chord progressions and melodies. The only differences in these sections are in the arrangement and narrative context; ‘Journey’s Dawn’ (Wakeman, 2014) establishes this particular progression as the theme for hope and new beginnings, setting the characters on their journey and describing the initial wonder and awe they experience as they descend down into the crater of Snaefells. The soft vocals of Hayley Sanderson add to this sense of calm beauty, and the limited use of percussion gives the track a slower, more relaxed pace. When the progression later returns in ‘The Recollection’ (Wakeman, 2014), the character of Axel has just become separated from the rest of the group, kneeling in prayer as he fears his death is close. The immediate introduction of a full drum kit suggests the scene to be more desperate in comparison to its previous version, with the vocals of Ashley Holt representative of Axel’s own voice. However, despite the dire nature of the lyrics and the reversal of certain arrangement elements, the recognition provided by the returning progression and melody portrays the scene as much more hopeful, as if Axel is praying for deliverance in true belief that his god may save him. This use of recognition and reversal can be seen repeated throughout the album, displayed in Figure 4.

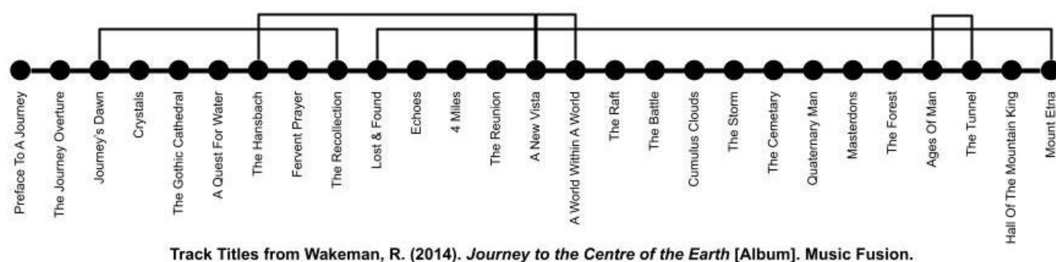

Figure 4. Wakeman’s tracks and where their melodies repeat.

In addition to the chord progression and melodies from ‘Journey’s Dawn’ (Wakeman, 2014) returning in ‘the Recollection’ (Wakeman, 2014), the main rhythm and key from ‘The

Hansbach' (Wakeman, 2014) return in 'A New Vista' and 'A World Within A World' (Wakeman, 2014), the narrative of each involving the characters discovering a new body of water, with the repeated musical elements inferring that the Hansbach is a tributary to the underground ocean. Otherwise, each of the three tracks have differences in instrumentation, mood, and structure; The opening of 'The Hansbach' (Wakeman, 2014) features rounded electric guitars that rhythmically sync with the drums and synthesisers to create a constant driving motion, representing the determined nature of the group as they follow the river deeper into the centre of the Earth. When this returns in 'A New Vista' (Wakeman, 2014), the guitars and drums have been removed, leaving only a synthesiser with a soft chorus effect, repeating the original phrase as a vamp. The minimalistic texture of the lone synth alludes to the fact Axel has been separated from the rest of the group, but also creates a sense of scale to his surroundings, with the repetitiveness of the phrase implying the continuous nature of the tunnels. The track continues directly into 'A World Within A World' (Wakeman, 2014), which re-introduces percussion alongside orchestral instruments and a choir, symbolising the vast ocean that the group finds, this scale represented in the textural difference between the two tracks. The introduction of melody and harmony and eventual resolution to a new phrase also shows the movement and changing nature of the new surroundings.

Overall, Wakeman's rendition of *Journey* (2014) covers a lot more of Verne's original narrative (1864) than Wayne (1978) does with Wells' (1898). However, Wakeman tends to do so in a vaguer manner, highlighting key moments through interspersed narrative overviews rather than dwelling on them with drawn-out dialogue between characters. This creates a reliance on the use of musical composition, recognition and reversal to establish and develop the emotional content that Hogan suggests to be fundamental in shaping story structures (2011, p. 1), but also makes for a very different listening experience in comparison to the approach of Wayne, both of which successfully convey narrative through music.

Study 3: Zeppelin

Originally billed as the New Yardbirds but later changing their name in 1968 after a cease and desist letter, Led Zeppelin were “a major influencer in ‘70s rock” with music that is “riff-heavy (when it needs to be), experimentally progressive, and thunderous without being bombastic, yet universally palatable” (Consequence of Sound, 2014), and have since inspired many artists. However, even the progenitors of metal have their own inspirations: Smith mentions how “[Robert] Plant was known for inserting Tolkien references into songs, to the delight of both Zeppelin and Tolkien enthusiasts” (2017, p. 414), and a detailed analysis of the lyrics of Zeppelin reveal numerous references to characters and places within J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle Earth series (Tolkien, 1937, 1954a, 1954b, & 1955), as well as references to Vikings and Arthurian mythology. These are presented merely as references and inspirations to Zeppelin’s songs, appearing as hidden details within the lyrics instead of becoming the main focus of the albums as we see in Wayne’s and Wakeman’s narrative epics. This final case study will seek to highlight some of those references, identify how they helped inspire the tracks they feature in, and discuss how Led Zeppelin’s more discrete approach to referencing narrative differs to the more direct approach of Wayne (1978) and Wakeman (2014) while still conveying narrative in a musical context.

The influence of Tolkien on Zeppelin’s works can be seen most overtly in their untitled fourth studio album (1971), which Smith describes as being “awash in a mix of blues, Tolkien references, hippie rhetoric and a stairway to heaven” (2017, p. 410). The album itself is the band’s most successful, selling over 23 million copies and remaining in the billboard charts for 281 weeks (Schaal, 2019). After delving into some of Zeppelin’s lyrics and discussing how the vocal performances of Sandy Denny and Memphis Minnie represent the ideas of light and chaos - a concept similar to Wayne’s (1978) employment of different voices for different characters - Smith goes on to explain how the album takes on a “vague quest narrative and constant theme of travelling” (2017, p. 424) focused around the adventures of Plant’s “male traveller”. This adventure takes us from Evermore, to the Misty Mountains, and even to California, with various other stops in-between. The third track on

the album, ‘The Battle of Evermore’ (Zeppelin, 1971), tells the story of a war fought between the “Queen of Light” and the “Dark Lord”. The lyrics themselves make multiple references to Tolkien’s Middle-earth, for example, the aforementioned “Dark Lord” relating to Tolkien’s character Sauron, the maker of the “One Ring”. These references drive the narrative in such a way that some fans believe the song is actually about the Battle of Pelennor Fields - in which the forces of Gondor and Rohan unite to defend Minas Tirith from the invading forces of Mordor during *The Return of the King* (Tolkien, 1955) - and while this hasn’t been disproved, Carlos argues that the imaginative space in which the song is narratively set is “not only a place, but also, equally important, a time” (2020, p. 535), identifying it as a more barbaric image of the Middle Ages. Carlos then explains that “a key element of medieval fantasy, recreated musically by Led Zeppelin, is a popular vision of the Middle Ages as a time of noble actions amid barbaric wars” (p. 535), also identifying this vision within Tolkien’s stories through the bravery of Frodo and Sam as they stand against the forces of evil.

Turning back to ‘The Battle of Evermore’ (Led Zeppelin, 1971), while the actions of the characters can be interpreted through the lyrics of the song, the way the track is rooted in a particular time period is much more discrete; discussing medievalism as a practice, Carlos explains it to be reliant on “cultural memory and ideas of a historically distant past” (p. 531), and is heavily rooted in nostalgia, using “the past to imagine a future” based on the relevant values (p. 532). Using this to interpret Zeppelin’s music, Carlos identifies certain instrumentation and stylistic choices to be playing on the listener's nostalgia, specifically those relating to the folk and folk-rock traditions. ‘The Battle of Evermore’ (Led Zeppelin, 1971) starts off with and heavily features the use of a mandolin, a member of the lute family developed in the 18th century, immediately creating a sonic tone reminiscent of the past, albeit post-middle ages. Shortly after, a call-and-response between male and female vocals begins, which Carlos points out “may evoke older conceptions of singing, especially as found in liturgical church traditions including antiphonal psalm singing” for some listeners (p. 536). Once the classic-rock vocals of Robert Plant are combined with Sandy Denny’s folk-styled vocals in this call and response, all topped off by the bright tone of the mandolin, the listener

is thrown back in time and space to a fantastical creation for which all parts combine and contribute to what Carlos describes as the song's "ethereal aesthetic" (p. 536).

Zeppelin's untitled fourth album (1971) also features the song 'Misty Mountain Hop', named after the mountains under which Bilbo stumbles across the "One Ring" in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937). When identifying the relation between the song and the fictional location, Carlos theorises that Zeppelin uses "the physical setting of the Misty Mountains as an idealized space of adventure to which the singer longs to return", representing a "liminal space between fantasy and reality" (2020, p. 536). Carlos expands on the relationship between fantasy and reality, explaining how Zeppelin used combined fictional and non-fictional geographical concepts to convey ideas to their listeners, such as how they use the direction in which the mountains lie in respect to the Shire - another location in Tolkien's Middle Earth - matching that in which the sun rises in real life to "allude to new beginnings or origins" (p. 536). Similarly to 'The Battle of Evermore' (Zeppelin, 1971), 'Misty Mountain Hop' (Zeppelin, 1971) also plays on the listeners nostalgia, with the reference to the fictional location operating as "both fantasy longing and nostalgic remembrance" and representing "a world of childhood play and fantasy from [the listeners'] own individual experiences of reading the novels" (Carlos, 2020, p. 537). Carlos also suggests that "while 'The Battle of Evermore' creates a musical setting that seems to reside in a past fantasy realm", 'Misty Mountain Hop' (Zeppelin, 1971) instead resides within a version of the contemporary world in which it "offers a dialogue between an imagined medieval past and 1970s British youth culture, through its connection to Tolkien's fantasy world" (p. 538).

Another of Zeppelin's albums regularly mentioned with regard to the influence of Tolkien on their music is their untitled second studio album (Led Zeppelin, 1969), which Spracklen describes as being "the first album where Plant explores Arthurian mythology and Middle-earth" (2018, p. 145), directing us to the lyrics of 'Ramble On', which have mentions to "the darkest depths of Mordor" - a location within Tolkien's world - and to Gollum - one of Tolkien's characters, first introduced in *The Hobbit* (1937). However, unlike 'The Battle of Evermore' and 'Misty Mountain Hop' (Zeppelin, 1971), it is much less clear whether 'Ramble

On' (Zeppelin, 1971) takes place in the contemporary or fictional worlds; Carlos points out a connection to nature, but suggests that "it is unclear whether that setting refers to the reality of a contemporary environment (with metaphorical references to figures from *The Lord of the Rings*) or to the fantastical world of Middle-earth" (2020, p. 539). This confusion comes from a disconnect between the lyrics, where some, as previously identified, overtly refer to characters of Tolkien's creation while others speak of events that do not occur in the books, nor do they "make sense in the context of Middle-earth" (p. 539).

Overall, Zeppelin's inclusion of Tolkien's work within their own is more commonly seen as a reference to help listeners engage and understand the concepts and scenarios they are trying to describe. Spracklen suggests that most of these themes "construct ideas of masculine belonging in some mythological medieval time and place" (2018, p. 141). He later expands on this, saying that the tracks were "made by their creators in their leisure time to make sense of their own views about identity" (p. 149), having then been "embraced by listeners and readers who wanted to identify with them, and with the myths of identity and masculinity in them". Although the majority of their songs don't tell tales directly from Tolkien's original novels, they do use the pre-existing narratives to create and tell new stories of their own, making overt references to the inspiring material as both a homage to the works and a hidden surprise for those familiar with the texts, engaging with the nostalgic side of the listener as described by Carlos (2020).

Conclusion

Across all three case studies, it is evident that use of repetition and recollection are key components in the composition of narrative-inspired music, aligning with Hogan's study of Aristotle's Poetics, which he suggests "stresses the emotional force of such recurring story elements as recognition and reversal" (2011, p. 10). Compositionally, this repetition might happen through the reprising of musical phrases as seen in Wayne's use of leitmotif, or by recalling "ideas of a historically distant past" as Carlos describes in the works of Led Zeppelin (2020, p. 531). Either way, it can be used as "musical stimuli to induce strong emotional responses" as suggested by Kurzom and Mendelsohn (2022, p. 1), aligning with Hogan's idea that "emotion systems govern not only goals but also the ways in which stories are developed" (2011, p. 2).

Through the works of both Wayne and Wakeman, it can be seen that, while instrumental sections of music can portray emotions and make use of recognition and reversal, the combination of sung and spoken lyrics are required to give narrative context to those sections, supporting Nattiez's theory that "in music, connections are situated at the level of the discourse, rather than the level of the story" (1990, p. 244). This supports the concept that a single track alone cannot convey narrative meaning as described by Nattiez (1990), Nicholls (2007), and Negus (2012) respectively, but can also by extension satisfy Nicholls' theory that "music can become part of a narrative discourse" through its inclusion within a larger works or completed album (2007, p. 300).

However, we have also seen through the works of Led Zeppelin that existing narratives can be used compositionally as a 'concept' to tell new stories and narratives, making use of recognition and nostalgia to recall the events and emotions of the original narrative, then recontextualising them to aid in conveying certain emotions and memories in the new tale. This use of nostalgia through recontextualization can work both in telling one story that closely resembles another - such as 'The Battle Of Evermore' carrying many resemblances to the battle of the Pelennor fields in *The Return of the King* (Tolkien, 1955) - or by referencing the intended narrative in a more overt manner, as seen in the way 'Misty

Mountain Hop' (Zeppelin, 1971) uses the image of the mountains to represent a "liminal space between fantasy and reality" (Carlos, 2020, p. 536). This use of a 'concept' is prevalent in much of the wider progressive rock literature, with Hill (2013) identifying specifically English progressive rock to explore ideas of "Englishness, Anglicanism and mythology" through references and inspiration to the work of authors, as we see in Zeppelin's use of Tolkien.

Led Zeppelin's 'The Battle of Evermore' (1971) also presents a good example of how the intended theme or time period in which a narrative occurs can be used to inspire instrumentation, with the call-and-response vocals resembling "older conceptions of singing" such as "liturgical church traditions" (Carlos, 2020, p. 536), and the mandolin, being an instrument developed during the 18th century, immediately creating a sonic tone reminiscent of the past. Similarly, Wayne uses synthesised and electronic sounds in *War of the Worlds* (1978) to portray the un-earthly nature of the martian invaders, evident in the distorted electric guitar used to represent the martian heat ray, or the synthesised descending octaves representing their radio communications.

By combining all of the compositional techniques explored across the three studies, a composer or songwriter is able to produce a single track or an entire works that follow or are inspired by any given narrative. These new works may take on forms much different to those discussed here, but the fundamentals of recognition and reversal will largely remain the same due to the "profound interconnection of emotions and stories" (Hogan, 2011, p 24). To present this, I have written an original portfolio of music based on the narrative of *Beowulf* - as translated by Heaney (1999) - which uses the same techniques of repetition, recognition and reversal, instrumentation and textural contrast, and lyrical adaptation of the source material as seen in the case studies and detailed in the accompanying commentary.

Commentary

For my own compositional practice, the most important starting decision was to choose a pre-established narrative on which to base my own works. At first there were no particular stories that I had a desire to tell, and so I wrote a list of some books I had read and that I knew fairly well, going through each in turn to identify key moments in their story and consider how I might tell them. With none of these providing any truly exciting ideas, I turned to my bookshelf to see what else I had in my possession that I might re-read, at which point I rediscovered my copy of Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* (1999) which I had studied briefly for A-Levels. It is worth mentioning that *Beowulf* is not a novel, but rather a poem which Heaney identifies as having been "composed some time between the middle of the seventh century and the end of the tenth century of the first millennium in the language that is today called Anglo-Saxon or Old English" (1999, p. ix). This will create some differences between my own portfolio work and the works studied, as all of the case studies were inspired by novels. However, Negus (2012), when listing the mediums in which "the importance of narratives is apparent" (p. 368), refers to both novel and poem together when he mentions the more general category of written fiction, commenting that "literary approaches to lyrics have sometimes emphasized a poetics of storytelling" (p. 368). After identifying the key plot-points of the story, I broke it down into three main acts, each culminating in a great battle against an even greater foe. This repeated narrative theme of rising to defeat a new enemy (or being eventually defeated by said enemy in the final act) would allow for extended use of repeating themes and leitmotifs, as seen in the works of Wayne (1978). However, I decided that for my own works I would only retell the first act, in which Beowulf challenges and defeats the demon, Grendel. This would allow me to fully explore the narrative throughout the composition and to utilise similar methods to those found in the case studies without forcing vast and complex story elements into a small space of time relative to the length of the original text. With my specific narrative chosen, I began to break the act down into four main narrated tracks:

1. The initial journey and introduction of the Geats.
    - The Danish king, Hrothgar, and his home of Heorot are threatened by a powerful demon, his people left helpless, praying to heathen gods for help.
    - Beowulf hears of the demon (Grendel) and sails from Geatland (Sweden) with a band of his strongest men to aid the Danes.
    - They are greeted by a Danish coastguard who confronts them before bringing the Geats to his king.
2. The distrust and opposition of Unferth.
    - While most of the Danes welcome the arrival of the Geat hero, Unferth is envious of the stranger and speaks against him.
    - Beowulf listens to Unferth's story and corrects him, proving Beowulf to be the hero he claims to be.
    - Before the night ends, Beowulf makes the bold claim that he will defeat Grendel without weapons using only his bare hands.
3. Beowulf's fight and victory against Grendel.
    - The Geats wait as Grendel approaches the hall, expecting another easy meal, only to be caught off guard by the Geatish hero.
    - Beowulf makes good on his claim and succeeds in defeating Grendel with his bare hands, ripping Grendel's arm clean from his shoulder.
4. The celebration of Grendel's defeat (undermined by an unseen threat).
    - Tale of Beowulf's victory spreads far as Heorot is rebuilt and fitted for a great feast in his honour.
    - Unbeknownst to the Geats and Danes, Grendel's mother lurks, waiting for the opportunity to avenge the death of her son.

These became the basis for my own narrative structure - as presented in Figure 5. - with the addition of two instrumental tracks, 'Mourning' and 'Lure', and a shorter narrative track, 'Lament', which explores Grendel's final moments. Similarly to Wayne (1978) and Wakeman (2014), I decided to emit certain characters and events from the original narrative within my

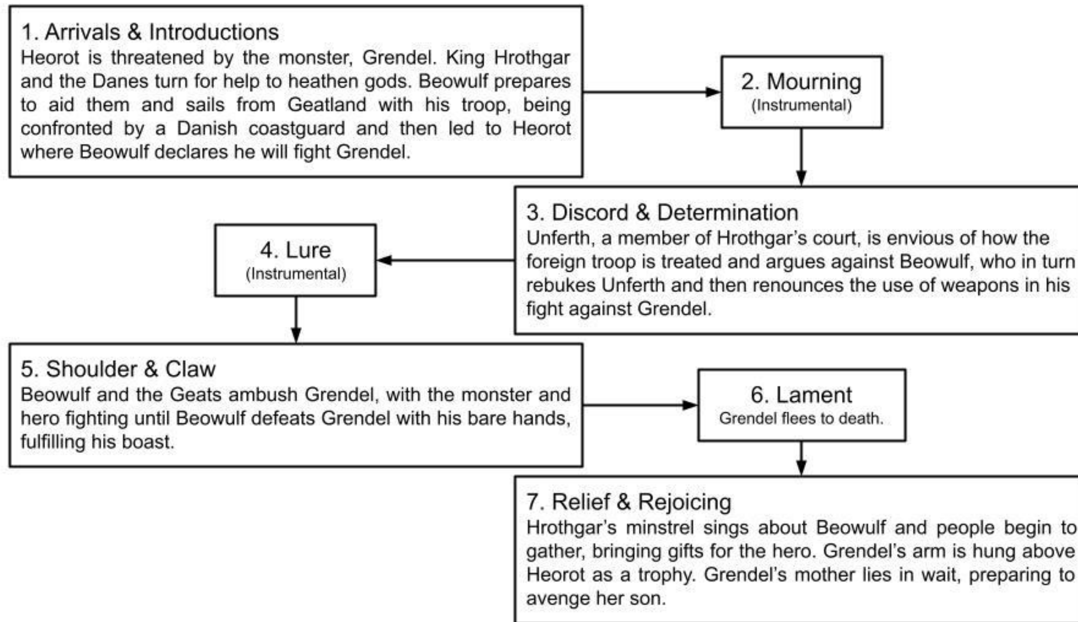

Figure 5. Narrative structure of *Beowulf*.

own retelling. These included the history of Shield Sheafson and his heirs leading to Hrothgar, and the events of many banquets, such as Wealhtheow - Hrothgar's queen - serving drinks to the heroes. While these events are recorded in Heaney's translation (1999), I decided their inclusion in my own works would only serve as additional information that wasn't necessary to drive the narrative, introducing characters that would only be mentioned briefly in a single passing sentence.

In both Wayne's (1978) and Wakeman's (2014) work, the opening tracks to their respective albums start with isolated dialogue from the narrator, providing some context to the narrative plot of the ensuing music. As both a narrative function and homage to Wayne and Wakeman, I decided to also start my opening track, 'Arrivals & Introductions' - and by extension the entire portfolio - with isolated narration:

"Times were pleasant for the people of Heorot.

The fortunes of war had favoured King Hrothgar.

And as such, it came as a surprise to all when a powerful demon,

the prowler through the dark, began to work his evil."

This allowed me to provide important narrative context to the listener, establishing a brief background for the story and introducing key characters and themes. However, unlike Wayne and Wakeman who both placed their opening narrations before any instrumentation started, I chose to begin building up the texture during the dialogue, introducing an acoustic guitar part-way into the narration, quietly setting up the musical element of the project in the background whilst the narrative was also being set-up, and giving the listener a hint as to the tone and energy of what was to come. Building on from this, the first four minutes of the track are structured in a way that loosely foreshadows the rest of the act: a slow build representing the steady rise of Grendel and Beowulf's journey to meet the looming threat, the confrontation of the Coastguard mirroring that of Unferth later questioning the hero's actions, reaching a crescendo upon arrival at Heorot similar to that of the battle between the hero and demon that takes place in that same hall, finally resolving to a more energetic and triumphant variation of the previous melody, before developing into a quieter, menacing melody that hints at the presence of another unseen threat. This again allowed me to provide narrative information, though in a discreet manner, hinting at the events that would later unfold, similarly to how Wakeman's 'The Journey Overture' (2014) establishes both the instrumentation and tone of the following album.

Whilst starting this compositional process, I decided it was also worth deciding early on what quality and level of production I was seeking to achieve throughout the portfolio. Tobias argues that "given the creative processes and decisions involved in producing popular music, and the increasing role that shaping sound through digital means plays in creating a wide range of popular music, producing can be seen as a way of composing or creating music" (2013, p. 215). However, I decided that for my own works, while it would be important to produce the music in a way that allows all elements of the composition to be perceived in context, the composition process itself should be more focused around the notation and instrumentation, allowing better manipulation of tension and release to influence emotion as seen in the study by Kurzom and Mendelsohn (2022) and fulfilling the requirement for narratives to be governed by emotion, as described by Hogan (2011).

In *War of the Worlds* (Wayne, 1978), a sense of coherence between tracks is provided by the consistent instrumentation, with “the placement and interaction” of specific instruments and melodies sometimes acting as “the sole storytelling element” (Sapiro, 2017), further unifying the work as a single narrative. I decided to mirror this in my own works, keeping the style and instrumentation mostly the same, predominantly using vocals to narrate the story both through spoken dialogue and sung lyrics, but also utilising recurring riffs and chord progressions similarly to Wayne’s use of leitmotif (1978), also adhering to common structures of popular music (verse, chorus, bridge). With much of my own compositional experience being focused around the rock genre, specifically metal, progressive, and alternative rock, and with my case studies having used similar instrumentation, it made the most sense to focus my arrangements around electric and bass guitars. The inclusion of acoustic guitars on top of this was to allow a variation of textures to help create moodscapes and differentiate between sections, also helping to place the narrative as happening at the time of the poem's conception through using specifically non-electric tones without limiting myself to only using mediaeval-style instruments. To further this idea of including more acoustic instruments as a musical context, I had originally planned to include strings and perhaps a full woodwind section similar to those in Wayne’s and Wakeman’s works, but soon decided against this, arranging a short section at the end of ‘Arrivals and Introductions’ performed on alto and bass recorders. This section acts not only as a change in texture to follow the mood of the narrative, but also as a reference both to more mediaeval-style music and to the introduction of ‘Stairway to Heaven’ (Zeppelin, 1971) which also features recorders.

‘Discord & Determination’ is the second narrated track and focuses on the distrust and jealousy of Unferth. I structured this similarly to ‘The Spirit of Man’ (Wayne, 1978) in that it both presents an alternate view on current events and is structured as a form of call-and-response, with the sung lines switching between the characters of Unferth and Beowulf as Wayne does between Nathaniel and Beth. I originally intended this to be a repetitive call-and-response where Unferth tells a small piece of his version of events,

Beowulf responds, and Unferth twists Beowulf's response to weave a new lie. This may have been presented as the verse being sung by one character and the choruses the other, as Wayne does in ‘The Spirit of Man’ (1978). However, when I began writing the piece in full, I felt it more appropriate to stick closer to the text as translated by Heaney (1999), which presents the interaction as being less repetitive; Unferth shares all of his thoughts and opinions, and then Beowulf corrects his tales in full. This creates a clearer structure to the track while also implying a more patient characteristic of Beowulf, showing him to be careful and methodical, not jumping in until he has all the information - a trait we see again as he lies in wait for Grendel, not attacking until the most opportune moment. The first two rounds of verse and chorus in ‘Discord & Determination’ are sung from Unferth’s perspective, starting as Unferth addresses King Hrothgar - “This man who claims he can tame the beast comes weaving tales of noble feats, but if he fails, if he won't do, then all our deaths will be on you.” - before turning to the room and occasionally to Beowulf directly, accusing the latter of being a “lying fraud” and “rotten cheat” who couldn’t possibly beat Grendel. The irregular shifting of addressing allowed me to present the drunken insanity of Unferth without the need for providing visual aids, keeping a coherent performance tone that aids the flow of the music. Unferth tells of a swimming competition between Beowulf and Breca - who Heaney translates to be a childhood friend of Beowulf (1999) - in which Breca outswam Beowulf, using this as a basis for his argument. Wayne (1978) paraphrases the words of Wells (1868) when writing his sung lyrics, and I chose to do similarly, adapting sections of Heaney’s translation (1999) as shown in Figure 6.

Heaney, S. (1999). *Beowulf*. Faber and Faber Limited.	Lyrics from ‘Discord & Determination’
It was sheer vanity made you venture out on the main deep . . .	A swimming match for vanity.
You waded in, embracing water, taking its measure, mastering currents, riding on the swell.	Into the deep he waded out,
The ocean swayed, winter went wild in the waves, but you vied for seven nights;	Of his own strength he had no doubt.
and then he outswam you, came ashore the stronger contender . . .	Breca was the strongest man,

Figure 6. A comparison of Heaney (1999) with my own works.

This provides coherency between my own narrative and the original it is based upon while also maintaining a poetic flow that lends to the words being of sung nature rather than spoken. The third and final verse and chorus are then presented from Beowulf's perspective as he responds to Unferth's accusations. Again, the lyrics of both verse and chorus are an interpretation of Heaney's translation (1999), further continuing the narrative coherency.

When breaking down *War of the Worlds* (Wayne, 1978), Sapiro identifies that "dialogue is delivered by actors and songs are performed by performing pop artists" (2017, p. 343), specifically identifying that "the spoken narration is delivered by [Richard] Burton, but the recognizable tone and timbre of his voice is replaced by that of Moody Blues singer and guitarist Justin Hayward when the journalist is called upon to sing". Compositionally, the different voices provide important narrative information in the same way different instruments can signpost events or characters, allowing the listener to identify specific characters as if they were in the same room without the requirement of a narrator stating which characters are present or talking. Using this approach to distinguish between different characters, especially during dialogue or any interaction between two or more characters, I enlisted performers from within the University of Huddersfield to perform the various parts. While the results of the performance vary depending on how experienced the individual was at the time, the tonal difference of each voice succeeds in differentiating between the characters, allowing the listener to take a less active role in listening as they do not have to decipher which character is speaking/singing at any one point.

Another compositional feature of Wakeman's works is his use of textural contrast between tracks, for example in *Journey* (Wakeman, 1974) where the synthesiser solo of 'Journey's Dawn' concludes and is preceded by 'Crystals', which features the narrator with a backing of only sound effects, no instrumentation. This is also found in another of Wakeman's works, *The Myths and Legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table* (1975): the opening track, 'Arthur', finishes with a grand ritardando as the brass and choir rejoin the rest of the instrumentation, returning to a more orchestral feel for the piece. The instruments slowly fade away to nothing, signalling the ending of the track. The

preceding track, ‘Lady Of The Lake’ (Wakeman, 1975), is a 45-second expositional piece arranged solely for choir in a style similar to the liturgical church singing mentioned by Carlos (2020). As the choir fades out, the piano solo of ‘Guinevere’ (Wakeman, 1975) begins, providing yet another break from the progressive synth riffs prevalent throughout the rest of the album. In both examples, the drastic shifts in tone show a change in the narrative, representing the passage of time and development of the story as one track ends and a new track begins. To emulate and adapt this idea for my own works, I wrote a series of ambient-style pieces to bridge the story between the four main narrated tracks, focusing their instrumentation on the acoustic instruments already featured in my other works to continue building upon the coherency provided through instrumentation. These songs recapitulate the chord progressions and melodies of the previous narrative tracks in a subtle reprise, utilising anti-meter to create a sense of peace and tranquillity while also using more melancholic progressions and harmonisations to imply a contradicting sense of sadness or fear. Without context, these pieces provide little narrative context, correlating with Nicholls idea that a single track portrays “entirely static - rather than kinetic - cameos, vignettes, or states of mind” (2007, p. 297). However, when listening in context, the tracks each tell a new part to the story; ‘Mourning’, coming after the narrator tells of how Grendel butchered the Ring-Danes, portrays the distress and fear of the Danes as they awake to find their families and loved ones ravaged by the demon. Similarly, the minor key of ‘Lure’ creates an underlying sense of fear as the Danes know Grendel approaches, but by resolving to a major chord, I denote the optimism they have that the Geats will defeat their oppressor.

‘Shoulder & Claw’, the third narrated track, is a much more chaotic rock track portraying the fight between Grendel and the Geats. I wanted the pulse of the track to be pushing and pulling, creating a constant sense of motion. I alternated the time signature every few bars during the instrumentals and when leading into a new section or melody, almost as if beats were missing or added, but while making sure to keep the basic pulse consistent so as to keep the piece flowing. In the early demos, the piece only had one guitar during the solos, but the part as performed didn’t seem chaotic enough and came across as

quite tame given the context of the piece. The addition of a second guitar simultaneously playing a completely different, less structured solo not only re-introduced the desired chaos, but also alludes towards the presence of the two separate fighters; soloists in their own right, one taking a very methodical and structured approach to combat the other's wild, almost feral style.

The fight concludes with Beowulf the victor, and while he doesn't directly kill Grendel himself, it is the wounds he dealt to the demon that result in Grendel's demise. I wanted to separate this from the fight itself, almost providing it as subcontext to the story as, while it isn't vital to know exactly how Grendel dies, it does present additional qualities to the narrative, showing the mortal side of both villain and hero; Grendel isn't the immortal demon he appears to be, but equally Beowulf is perhaps not as strong as he presents himself. This narrative concept again isn't vital to the story at this moment, but lays the groundwork for Beowulf's future weakness and own mortality, mirroring how the dragon in the final act doesn't kill Beowulf directly, but rather the venom from its bite slowly consumes him. For 'Lament' I chose to return to a more acoustic focus as used in the previous ambient tracks to highlight these events as happening after the fight, foregoing the electronic chaos as Grendel recedes back to his lair. However, contrary to the ambient tracks, I also chose to keep a more driven, regular metre to the piece, repeating the chord progression from the fight with some chords changed from major to minor to add a sense of melancholic tension, emphasising the emotions of despair and defeat as seen from Grendel's point of view.

The first half of 'Relief & Rejoicing' reprises many of the musical themes, progressions and melodies of 'Arrivals & Introductions', utilising Wayne's (1978) application of leitmotif to conform with Hogan's theory of recognition and reversal (2011), and implying a reset in which the characters' lives have returned to a state of normality as they were before the events involving Grendel. This however is undermined by a new progression that emerges from out of the old, providing the reversal Hogan (2011) describes to be a key narrative feature. A large pause is held, creating a delay similar to that mentioned by Kurzom and Mendelsohn (2022), before a discordant electric guitar riff is introduced, creating a

sense of tension and unease as the narration returns to describe and introduce Grendel's mother, the latest threat to Beowulf and the people of Heorot. The track repeats the discordant guitar riff until the last chord is held as one final delay, unresolved and suggesting that the narrative will continue but, without giving away what course the story may take.

Overall, much of the narrative throughout the portfolio is carried by the context the vocals provide towards their instrumental accompaniment. This meant it was important to make sure words were chosen that suited both the style and execution of the works as a whole, and I made a very simple distinction between the spoken and sung words: most of the spoken words are paraphrased or reordered lines from Heaney's translation of the poem (1999) in the same way that we see Wayne paraphrasing Wells in 'The Eve of the War' (1978), while all of the sung words are original to my own composition, inspired by and referencing elements of Heaney's translation in a similar way to how Led Zeppelin took inspiration from Tolkien. This meant the spoken lyrics could create a base narrative context and oratory fashion, allowing the sung lyrics to follow a similar style while also matching any rhythmic and timing patterns in the instrumentation, thus creating a more succinct integration between vocals, instrument, and narrative.

Looking back at the pieces in their current form, they remain consistent in style, achieving a sense of unification across the project as a whole, making it a cohesive portfolio with clear direction and purpose. However, a continuation of this project would see various changes and improvements; the mix for example could be completed to a higher standard, given my previously mentioned focus on composition and arrangement, fundamentally using production only for the purposes of ensuring all parts can be heard together in context. Further continuation of the project would likely entail contacting and collaborating with a professional producer to improve the mix, as well as working with professional session musicians and actors who could bring a new energy and level of quality to the individual parts, much as an orchestra is made of many musicians, not just many instruments. Furthering the project would also involve composing and arranging music for the remaining acts of the story, in which Grendel's mother attacks Heorot and captures Beowulf before

being slain by the hero, who is soon named king of the Geats and rules for many years until a dragon threatens his home and his people in the same way Grendel threatened Heorot in the first act.

Throughout the portfolio, both as it exists now and in whatever form it may continue in, narrative is and always will be the focus, using methods of tension and release as discussed by Kurzom and Medelsohn (2022), portraying the story through the chord progressions and rhythmic changes to achieve a plotted shift in emotions, which Hogan would describe as a fundamental part of story structure (2011). The provided context of the musical project as a whole allows the listener to experience the narrative in full, not limiting the works to an entirely static state of mind as discussed by Nicholls (2007), but rather building into the conceptual package through association with the rest of the narrative discourse.

In summary, by including compositional techniques employed by Wayne, Wakeman and Zeppelin, I was able to compose in a manner that provides a coherent narrative, confirming that music can represent “events in time” (Nicholls, 2007) and satisfy Nicholls’ requirement for connections to be situated on “the level of the story” (1990, p. 244) as well as that of the discourse. Akin to the application of leitmotif in Wayne’s work (1978), recurring musical themes and melodies in my own portfolio provide recognition and reversal, which are described by Hogan as being fundamental elements of story structure (2011, p.10). By re-phrasing and taking inspiration from the words of Heaney’s *Beowulf* (1999), I crafted lyrical conversations between characters alongside a constant narrator that support the narrative structure and give context to the musical content in a similar manner to both Wayne (1978) and Wakeman (2014), though with my own inspired by a poem rather than a novel. And finally, coherency across the portfolio is provided through the choice of instrumentation and arrangement as seen in the works of both Wayne (1978) and Wakeman (2014), with changes in texture and tone used to create tension and release, encouraging an emotional response in the listener and fulfilling Hogan’ s theory that story structures are “fundamentally shaped and oriented by our emotion systems” (2011, p.1).

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