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PhD in Musical Composition

Portfolio of Compositions
with Commentary

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Submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Sussex
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Declaration

The contents of this portfolio are the product of my own research. Any sources of information have been acknowledged.

No part of this portfolio has been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree.

Simon Ronald Ashley Fricker
The ‘Portfolio of Compositions’ comprises three works, 'Contretemps', 'Awaken' and 'The Pit and the Pendulum', all of which share a common origin, a point of conception. The circumstances of their inception and subsequent development are explained in the commentary, a document which also sets out in an attempt to contextualise the relationship, diversity and scope of their respective content, through reference to both the commonality of the compositional stimulus and the precepts of my research plan.

The main focus of the portfolio, 'The Pit and the Pendulum', is a work of operatic stature, inspired by a short story of the same name by Edgar Allan Poe. The two shorter pieces were completed first, but were also, however, born out of the beginnings of the major work; a few pages of orchestral score, scribbled quickly, the result of my initial emotional response to Poe's opening lines. Pages that survive virtually unchanged in the final orchestration, setting the "harmonic" scene for the unfolding tale. Developing an interest in the complex and algorithmic properties of effective or fulfilling musical 'line', I wondered if there might be found, in Poe's written prose, some suggestion of a literary equivalence of melodic line and counterpoint, mirrored in his narrative style. The objectives of my research questions, then, are as follows:

The production of a large-scale musical composition, created entirely in artistic response to Edgar Allen Poe's short tale. The composition shall sit within the restrictive framework of Poe's unaltered narrative: the perceived spoken rhythm of each line of his prose, at first carefully transcribed as a stream of un-pitched notation, thereby providing a clearly defined stimulus for subsequent melodic and harmonic development. This 'musicalisation' to be inspired by the characteristics and style of Poe's narrative content, fully preserved and presented, verbatim, in the finished work as the vocal line. Through intertextual exposition, it is anticipated that some justification of my postulations on Poe's method might be revealed.

The process has generated an outcome for further discussion; a portfolio of three discrete compositions, all inspired by the same source and which can be directly related to each other through reflective consideration and articulation of the creative process.
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(Intended only to be used as an aid, when reading through the scores.
The CD and safety copy each contain mp3 files of the three works.)

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### Separately Bound Compositions

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The Commentary

An Introduction
My relationship with music began at the age of four. Opening the lid of our old upright piano and experimenting with the keyboard it soon became apparent that, to the delight of my mother and father, I had perfect pitch and the ability to reproduce any piece of music that was played to me. The intensity and extent of my innate relationship with music, although profound and most difficult to comprehend, I do consider it to be relevant in my approach to the current research.

Throughout my early childhood I was often taken to rehearsals; my mother and my sister were frequently involved in amateur dramatic productions. I developed an obsessive fascination with model theatres, tirelessly experimenting for hours on end, trying to recreate the atmosphere of that which I had seen on the stage. Actively fostering an enduring passion for special effects and illusion, exploring the mechanism of their realisation by both artistic and scientific means. I was also at this time, I suspect as a consequence of the above, inexorably drawn towards ‘horror’ films. Such a clearly remembered example of this genre being a lurid and atmospheric, if somewhat loose, adaptation of Poe’s ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’. One of a whole series of films based upon the stories of Poe, directed to some acclaim in the early sixties by the American, Roger Corman.

Training as a ‘classical’ pianist followed, studying the violoncello and spending several years as a chorister whilst at grammar school. At this time my connection with music seemed so natural to me that I did not feel the compulsion, as I did with scientific matters, to explore it much further. Whilst gaining a Licentiate of Trinity College diploma in piano performance, I embarked upon a BSc(Hons) degree in Chemistry at Manchester University. During the summer break, at the end of the first year, I was casually asked if I would like to take on the musical direction of a touring theatre production. This transpired to be a defining moment of self-realisaiton and, as a direct result of this, the next twenty-one years were spent forging a career in the theatre as musical director and arranger for countless shows and musicals. Revisiting academia after a long break, whilst reading BA(Hons) Music at the University of Chichester, I recommenced piano and pipe organ studies with renewed vigour.

Having developed a healthy interest in ‘composition’ at undergraduate level, further study for the master’s degree served not only to foster this, but engendered, through mandatory, disciplined allocation of time for contemplation of well-placed and candid guidance, a far more refined and mature personal awareness of the enormity of the subject area. With the new enlightenment, however, came a somewhat irrational fear of the unknown that, over a period of time, has been
systematically addressed and diluted, thus strengthening my resolve to explore further, the focus having shifted from feelings of futility and impotence to that of compellation towards an ongoing study of the 'compositional process'.

Attempting to find a higher level of personal satisfaction and fulfilment, whilst simultaneously addressing the criteria for a research degree of this stature, the primary emphasis of my study was on the production of a large-scale musical work. Of, seemingly, particular interest to me at the time was the contemplation, experimentation with, and at least some attempt at the practical articulation of my own theories and suspicions regarding the significance of the role that both counterpoint and musical line might play, over and above tonal hierarchy and harmonic constraints, in the process of engaging the listener, more readily, in 'new' music. That is not to say that my intentions were to actively avoid tonality or exclude diatonic process, but rather to shift focus elsewhere, allowing the compositional process to be freed of at least some of the burden of conventional expectancy.

Due to having worked with some relatively dark, brooding and thought-provoking examples of Robert Browning's poetry, in the construction of several recent compositions, I felt drawn toward the work of Edgar Allan Poe for inspiration. Reading and revisiting the short story, 'The Pit and the Pendulum', several times, the concept of using it as the stimulus for a substantial musical composition began to crystallise in my thoughts. Might a narrative that had inspired such a lurid and artistic response in the form of a film, so memorable to me after some forty years, provide the subject for my investigation through composition? It wasn't so much the story itself, but the manner in which it is told that fuelled my interest. By way of clarification, as suggested earlier, the filmic adaptation of the chosen work pays little attention to the plot of Poe's story. In fact, if one looks carefully beneath the surface, the plot itself comprises very little content on which to base a significant, progressive narrative representation through another art form, other than that of the purely visual. Here, though, lies the very key to why it appears such attractive and compelling material for artistic assimilation; Poe's 'manner' of storytelling, his quite unique ability to 'paint' such a vivid picture purely through the juxtaposition of carefully selected words. Poe lived in Baltimore between 1831 and 1835. He also died and was buried there in 1849. On January 21st, 1994, in an article for the Baltimore Sun newspaper entitled 'Poe's writings inspire opera called 'Ligeia', the staff writer, Steve McKerrow, published the following:

'The life and work of Edgar Allan Poe sing out for an opera, says composer Augusta Read Thomas. So she has written one. "I think that everything Poe ever wrote, almost, it just screams opera. It's just so dramatic and has so many layers of fantasy and reality and different types of human experience ranging from horror to love," says the 29-year-old composer, a professor at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y.'
But then, on February 20th, 1994, in a subsequent article for the Baltimore Sun entitled ‘Portents are dire for attempts to turn Poe's work into opera’, the music critic, Stephen Wigler, wrote the following:

‘But why should Poe's work be so difficult to translate operatically? His language is lyrical - composers from Rachmaninoff ("The Bells") to Bernstein ("Songfest") have enjoyed success in setting his words to music. It has emotional high points -- the narrator's first celebration of his dead love in "Ligeia" practically calls out for a tenor aria. And, perhaps most importantly, his characters are passionate.’

Later in the article, clearly supporting some of my theories, he goes on to say:

‘Poe was a master of gloom and of the dim glow of expiring lives and civilizations, but there is a way out of "Ligeia"s" existential stasis and apparent lack of focus: It is to mine the psychic energy that lies beneath it. It was not for nothing that Baudelaire called Poe "a writer of nervous tension" or that Walt Whitman referred to the "demonic undertone behind every page."

Might the fascination with his work be then, in fact, a reaction to Poe's own branch of artistry; his apparent facility for taking something of more sparse narrative substance and making it seductive through a sustained, reiterative, emotive and highly descriptive rhetoric? It is worth noting that most of Poe's compositional output features such obsessive treatment of material in this manner, and always within the confines of a relatively short form. These observations on Poe's technique piqued my curiosity. So much so, that I began to investigate the circumstances of Poe's upbringing and relatively short life, his creative output and the academic esteem in which it is so apparently and widely held. Certainly, in consideration of my fascination with Poe's story-telling ability, it was of great interest to find two academic papers suggesting, and providing suitable evidence, that he, himself, had appropriated material from several other sources in the manufacture of this tale, set against the backdrop of the Spanish Inquisition.

Clark makes the following poignant observations in the last paragraph of his essay:

‘Poe, then, undoubtedly read his Brown and his Blackwood's and appropriated, much as did Shakespeare, his source. In this case he was unusually slavish in following those sources, for he not only took the four threads of his story from others, but followed Brown in the smallest details. It is, however, to be noted to his credit that when the materials passed through the crucible of his brain the amalgam was essentially his own, and something essentially finer than the originals.’

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1 Title: The Sources of Poe's the Pit and the Pendulum  Author: David Lee Clark  Source: Modern Language Notes, Vol. 44, No. 6 (Jun., 1929), pp. 349-356  Publisher: The Johns Hopkins University Press
My casual use of the term ‘backdrop’ may not be so perfunctory; Poe’s story-telling prowess might well have germinated during his early years, growing up, as he did, surrounded by actors. His family history is firmly and thoroughly entrenched in the theatrical arts. I do suspect that my own background in musical theatre has fostered a subliminal empathy with his work, instigating a creative process, which I must now try to elucidate in some finer detail.

Inspired by Poe’s use of language – descriptive, economical, extremely effective in its purpose, eloquent and rhythmic – I quickly wrote a few pages of musical score in artistic response, not to the rhythm of the prose, but to the powerful and quite lurid feelings generated by simply ‘listening’ to it. Having a personal predilection for using specific timbres during the composition stage, rather than arranging and orchestrating at a later date, some of my initial response required rather a large array of forces. With the likelihood and slender possibility of future performance resting not only on the perceived quality and value of the compositional outcome but also, in these times, on budget, prudence in instrumentation is, sadly, an area that does require some forethought and consideration. A temporarily palliative solution was simply to write and allow the ensemble to develop, as required, rather than specifying and writing to the capacity of a full, modern orchestra from the outset.

Delving further into the complex, and sometimes algorithmic properties of effective or fulfilling musical ‘line’, however intangible and confusing these initially seem to be, I wondered if there might not be found some equivalence in Poe’s written prose, some mechanistic reflection of melodic ‘line’ or counterpoint mirrored in his written style? Playful postulation caused me also to wonder if my attraction to the work of this author were not fuelled by the incidence of some creative parallels. Might my suspicion that – in order to more readily engage and satiate the itinerant listener, some ‘formality’ must remain to make the perception of ‘new’ music more ‘musical’, irrespective of, perhaps, irregular or unfamiliar harmonic or other treatment – be somehow echoed and inherent in Poe’s literary mechanism? He does, on a regular basis, seem able to take rather discomfiting subject material, perhaps in this case suggested by the restless harmonic backdrop elicited in my initial orchestral response, making it such compelling reading, drawing the ‘listener’ inexorably onwards towards ever more uncomfortable emotional territory; all this by means of a well-crafted written ‘line’. Clear examples of Poe’s skill in this respect are demonstrated in his most successful and inspiring works, those which are of the ‘gothic horror’ genre: ‘The Masque of the Red Death’, ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’, ‘The Black Cat’, ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’, ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’, ‘The Raven’. Apart from the nature of the subject material itself, his expertise in storytelling relies upon skillful, tireless and innovative emphasis of the mysterious, the grotesque, and often the psychological crumbling of isolated and desolate characters. Ultimately demonstrating his belief, and proof through successful exposition, that ‘terror’ itself is a justifiably literary subject. ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ is generally considered to be the precursor to the modern detective story.
Such thoughts gave me pause to seriously consider that experimentation with Poe’s unaltered text and syntax might, on many levels, serve well as inspiration to create ‘good’ music, and on rather a grand scale, too. To adopt this approach, rather than to convert the ‘story’ into libretto, manipulating subject material linguistically and grammatically, achieving rhythm and rhyme in order to construct or even ‘fit’ a melody – the latter quite feasibly, in some cases, conceived independently. Whereas concise, economical poetry had before inspired and nourished my compositions – still, nevertheless, requiring melismatic manipulation, repetition and other means of prolongation of the text – might a more substantial piece of free prose, as conceived by such a respected artist, in itself provide the structural framework or ‘container’ for a large-scale musical work, rather than vice versa. To diligently follow this course of investigation and produce a substantial work, inspired in such a manner, seemed to constitute a worthy research project, the outcome offering some contribution to the repertoire, however small. As I write this commentary, having already completed my somewhat extensive research through the lengthy process of composition, I feel that both the journey, articulated and summarised in this document, and the compositional output do clearly demonstrate an element of success in the realisation of my research question objectives, these being as follows:

The production of a large-scale musical composition, created entirely in artistic response to Edgar Allen Poe’s short tale. The composition shall sit within the restrictive framework of Poe’s unaltered narrative: the perceived spoken rhythm of each line of his prose, at first, carefully transcribed as a stream of un-pitched notation, thereby providing a stimulus for subsequent, melodic and harmonic development. This ‘musicalisation’ to be inspired by the characteristics and style of Poe’s narrative content, fully preserved and presented, verbatim, in the finished work as the vocal line. Through intertextual exposition, it is anticipated that some justification of my postulations on Poe’s method might be revealed.

Although it was my intention that the focus of the portfolio should take the form of an Opera, a work eminently suitable for a modern ‘staged’ performance, I also felt, quite strongly, that the resultant composition should be able to function, successfully, on the concert platform; these criteria placing significant demands on various qualities of the music in order that it might work on more than one level, to adequate effect. I thought it conceivable that a ‘filmic’ approach might be taken or developed, employing through-composed underscore, as might be found in a cinematic setting, serving as programmatic music in concert, punctuated by vocal episodes. I began to consider my own perception of various relevant and, sometimes, idiosyncratic works of a theatrical and operatic nature, amongst which the new composition might tentatively be positioned, or at least related to in terms of its various potential functions within the literature.

‘Trouble in Tahiti’, an opera by Leonard Bernstein, was first performed in 1952. In one act, lasting forty minutes, it deals with the troubled relationship of a young married couple, through a
series of seven scenes. The intimacy of the work, the emotionally charged content and the conversational realism of the vernacular language was fundamental in attracting my interest. ‘Candide’, based upon a novella by Voltaire, was intended as a play with music by the librettist, Lillian Hellman. Bernstein, however, developed the piece into operetta and over time there have been many contributors to the text. Relative to aspirations for the performance versatility of my own new work, it is noteworthy that ‘Candide’ has been performed on both stage and concert platform with equal success. Clarity of the narrative is inherent within the composition itself. I consulted the score for Stravinsky’s Opera/Oratorio, ‘Oedipus Rex’. Although Cocteau’s French libretto was translated into Latin for the composition, in performance the story is elucidated by scripted narration in the native language of the audience. The original performance, in 1927, as concert oratorio in Paris was closely followed by a staged production in 1928, by the Vienna State Opera. I found elements of Stravinsky’s rhythm and metric construction of interest, in relation to patterns found in my rhythmic interpretation of Poe’s text and their assimilation in the musical texture. One such element, the obstruction of a repetitive, motivic, musical ‘motor’ by means of dramatic interjection and punctuation, occurs just after rehearsal mark 50 in my score, and again after rehearsal mark 53. Luigi Dallapiccola’s ‘Il Prigioniero’, originally a 1949 ‘radio opera’, was first staged in Florence in 1950. Of around fifty minutes in duration, it is concerned with a French tale entitled ‘La Torture par l’espérance’ (Torture by Hope). Similar, in terms of the subject material, to ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’, at its commencement it also features a direct, referenced quote from the latter. Some of the musical material is based upon an earlier work entitled ‘Canti di Prigionia’ (Songs of Imprisonment) and I recently discovered a fascinating paper by Dallapiccola, dealing with the genesis of these two works. ‘Duke Bluebeard’s Castle’, composed by Bartók in 1911, is a sixty minute opera featuring two singers and large orchestra. Of interest to me, here, is both the significance of the minor second interval, and the highly chromatic, speech rhythm influenced vocal line. The opera has an inherent feeling of stasis; the pacing of the libretto, interspersed with episodes of orchestral exposition, allowing the full horror of the narrative to develop within the mind of the listener.

Last, but not of the least importance in my wider reading, is Michel Legrand’s handling of the musical score for ‘Les Parapluies de Cherbourg’, a film directed by Jacques Demy in 1964. The entire dialogue throughout the film is set to music in the manner of enhanced recitative. The inspiration that this work has provided for me cannot be over emphasised. Rhythms of natural and casual speech are maintained in Legrand’s music and, most importantly, he incorporates these in such a way that the music feels completely natural too; behaving in a manner that, informed by some formality, I suspect most functional and well-conceived music does. Hence, my decision to focus on the ‘rhythmic framework’ of Poe’s prose as a means of propounding at least some equivalence with musical line; through this aspect of certain, inherent commonality between speech and music. Legrand’s inspirational work I consider to be operatic in both nature
and stature; demonstrating those very qualities that I have already suggested should inform the outcome of my own research through composition.

**Contretemps** (Completed on 20\(^{th}\) April 2010)

During the early stages of my research, an opportunity arose to write material for violin and piano, this to be performed in a workshop environment. Whilst considering the transformation of ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’ into a large-scale theatrical production, it had already occurred to me that an element of ‘ballet’ might be incorporated to good effect. I had certainly not decided, at this point, that the whole of Poe’s text would be vocalised, rather that it would simply be used in its entirety, in some way, to inform the final composition. In fact, I fancied that the different qualities, moods or modes, which I perceived in Poe’s literary ‘voice’, might suggest that areas of the text could be incorporated into the score as performance directions, scenic suggestions or such like. Embracing this approach, for a limited period, I duly prepared a copy of the text that contained various colour-coded sections, with the intention of indicating passages that might be realised through vocalisation and dance, or simply used to inform performance and set design. Evidence of my preliminary experimentation is clearly documented in Appendix A. A particular section of the story that did seem to promote itself as suitable balletic stimulus; the moment when the rats swarm upon the prisoner:

‘Observing that I remained without motion, one or two of the boldest leaped upon the frame-work and smelt at the surcingle. This seemed the signal for a general rush. Forth from the well they hurried in fresh troops. They clung to the wood — they overran it, and leaped in hundreds upon my person. ......

They pressed — they swarmed upon me in ever accumulating heaps. They writhed upon my throat; their cold lips sought my own; I was half stifled by their thronging pressure; disgust, for which the world has no name, swelled my bosom, and chilled, with a heavy clamminess, my heart.’

I began fervent experimentation and the working title for my smaller composition, in response to this text, became ‘Rat Race’. Chromatic, ‘wriggling’, motivic fragments from the initial orchestral abstract (still preserved at rehearsal mark 1 in ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’) came to represent the scurrying of the rats, a highly contrapuntal piece of writing began to develop. By the time the opportunity arose for the piano and violin workshop, I had written several pages. I had also ‘moved on’ with my concept for the ‘Pit and the Pendulum’ and had more or less ruled out the inclusion of a balletic sequence or interlude, but more of this later. ‘Contretemps’ was born, a restless disagreement between the two instrumental forces; lines careening off each other and in, seemingly, tireless counterpoint (seeking some ‘escape’, in my mental visualisation, like
trapped rodents), sometimes with blatant harmonic disregard for each other but still ‘connected’, if only suggested to be so through bitonality and even rhythmic avoidance. Needless to say, the musical output does strongly reflect my mental imagery, which in turn was inspired by the narrative. At this juncture it should also be pointed out that from the very first orchestral sketch, and throughout the ‘Portfolio of Compositions’, is featured my experimentation and playful fascination with the inversion of the major seventh interval to form the minor ninth, or indeed the minor second. I must stress, however, that it is my ‘experimentation’ which regularly features – the expansion and contraction of the interval by a semitone, simultaneously at both ends, is not always used explicitly in motivic form, but the varied contextual, harmonic assimilation available to these pairs of notes, in different configurations, may be felt, very often. At rehearsal letter C, (Contretemps), I have presented the original, rhythmic violin motif in the form of an ostinato pattern for the piano (RH), the now more ‘fluid’, melodic sequence in the violin part is echoed in the piano (LH), but in an augmented form. At letter D, an augmented form of the ‘fluid’ violin melody begins, thus providing the scope for a systematic and sequential build (melodic and harmonic) towards the climax at letter E, the ensuing material yet another variation on the chromatic melody already heard. Recapitulation of various ideas brings the piece to a point of satisfactory closure – a final statement of the original motif and a very clear example of my major seventh/minor ninth dialectic in all its glory. The major seventh, in this case however, expounded enharmonically as a diminished octave.

**Awaken (Completed on 31st December 2010)**

Again, this work began as an experiment with ‘ideas’, suggested both in and by my initial sketch for orchestra. Although the compositional focus, here, was on the construction of an extended form for larger forces. A call for compositions to be played by the symphony orchestra as part of the celebration of the University of St. Andrew’s 500th Anniversary, and thereby providing the slim chance of another live performance opportunity, was the catalyst in this case.

As yet another concept for the staging and fundamental musical design of the ‘Opera’ had begun to take shape in my imagination, I now needed to consider the possibility of roles for multiple singers. The plot of Poe’s story revolves around a solitary figure and there is only a cursory mention of other characters, both at the beginning and at the very end. Featured throughout, however, are references to various actions, which are presumably undertaken by unseen characters. Furthermore, there is the energetic and crucial role played by the rats. Might there also be room for a chorus element? If so, how might I engineer this, being restricted by my own precepts to using Poe’s original text, unabridged, unedited and in the first person?
The story is prefaced by a quatrain in Latin. Its recitation in a sombre and stentorian tone does, as I'm sure Poe intended it to, help in setting the scene for the ensuing horror. Within his first paragraph, Poe implies the 'presence' of the Inquisition:

'I was sick — sick unto death with that long agony; and when they at length unbound me, and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were leaving me. The sentence — the dread sentence of death — was the last of distinct accentuation which reached my ears. After that, the sound of the inquisitorial voices seemed merged in one dreamy indeterminate hum. ……

Yet, for a while, I saw; but with how terrible an exaggeration! I saw the lips of the black-robed judges. They appeared to me white — whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words — and thin even to grotesqueness; thin with the intensity of their expression of firmness — of immovable resolution — of stern contempt of human torture. I saw that the decrees of what to me was Fate, were still issuing from those lips. I saw them writhe with a deadly locution. I saw them fashion the syllables of my name; and I shuddered because no sound succeeded.'

I saw a glimmer of opportunity, the chance to give a voice to these shadowy figures. Might they intone the Latin quatrain at the outset? Might their sombre, choral and even, perhaps, wordless music reappear later, when the prisoner tells of the imagery on the walls of the iron chamber and even later still, when these images become incandescent and the walls begin to close in?

'The figures of fiends in aspects of menace, with skeleton forms, and other more really fearful images, overspread and disfigured the walls.'

'I have observed that, although the outlines of the figures upon the walls were sufficiently distinct, yet the colors seemed blurred and indefinite. These colors had now assumed, and were momentarily assuming, a startling and most intense brilliancy, that gave to the spectral and fiendish portraiture an aspect that might have thrilled even firmer nerves than my own. Demon eyes, of a wild and ghastly vivacity, glared upon me in a thousand directions, where none had been visible before, and gleamed with the lurid lustre of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal.'

And so, ‘Awaken’ begins with a slow undulating line, meted out in short phrases – reminiscent of a plainchant or cantus firmus. The sole purpose of its creation being to see if I might have the compositional stamina to develop a complete orchestral piece, perfused with such a hypnotic, musical mantra. Furthermore, might this provide yet another source of reference material, or at least a starting point, for the main focus of my research? As in the first orchestral sketch, my response to Poe, the opening, undulating melodic fragments in ‘Awaken’ are initially spasmodic and fragmented, gradually gaining in strength and determination in order to establish and
maintain a more regular pulse, a sense of forward momentum. This mechanistic feature still prevails in the overture of ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’, although serving an entirely different semiotic purpose – but more of that later.

In this piece, which is much longer and more sophisticated in construction than ‘Contretemps’, most of the opening section (from rehearsal letter A to B) is concerned with a prolonged and staged crescendo to the point of climax; the musical substance mainly founded upon or forged from variations and restatements of the initial simple motif or ‘chant’. A rhythmic gesture to the violin motif from ‘Contretemps’ appears in the piccolo part (third bar of letter A) and also, most importantly, a new melodic fragment is introduced and then repeated systematically, its first appearance being in the hands of the oboes at bar 41. The point of climax is a forceful statement of the reiterating piccolo motif. Section B develops the new melody in a more languorous setting before the violent recapitulation of the original motivic materials at letter C. Section D once again makes use of the opening chant-like motif, this time with a major tonality, in order to instigate the modulation at letter E. In this section, there begins a lilting rhythmic accompaniment to herald the arrival of a soaring, romantic melody, the centrepiece of the work, at letter F. This appears first in the ‘cellos, is later reinforced by the fiddles and finally the woodwinds and horns join in, a few bars before letter G. The orchestration sets the melody against a countermelody, based upon the melodic fragment that formerly appeared at bar 41. At letter G, a development of the first few notes of the main theme, placed in an ascending sequence, provides a growing sense of urgency in preparation for the grand orchestral tutti, a bold restatement of the melody at letter H. A different mood is developed during letter I. Fresh and incisive motifs are introduced by the muted brass and horns – these are interspersed by punctuation provided by the woodwinds and percussion (yet again based upon further, brittle and rhythmic variants of the inverted chant-like motif). Progressively, more heavily textured statements of the initial motif start to build towards the presentation of disfigured fragments of the central theme, first showcased at letter F. On reaching letter K, the orchestration seems to signal that a long-awaited and wholesome return of this tune might be imminent. Hopes are dashed, however, as part of the cycle simply begins again at letter L, thereby prolonging the tension even further. Finally, an apparent perfect cadence into E flat at letter N which, instead of providing closure, simply remains on the dominant and presents not the expected melody, but another instalment of the chant-like motif with which the work humbly began. At O, the soli violins do play a shortened and plaintive version of the once expansive melody, but this simply prefaces three more gentle and interleaved statements of the opening motif, which are now presented homophonically by various mixed forces, creating in the process an almost bitonal harmonic setting. Peace eventually arrives with the final, long suggested and awaited chord of E flat major.
The Pit and the Pendulum (Completed on 14th December 2012)

I err on the side of caution when setting out to discuss the lengthy, mechanical development and compositional process of my third piece of work, lest the language sound and tend towards the overly analytical. Furthermore, there really is no need to quote portions of the text and illuminate these with notated examples in order to expound my method – Poe’s words, my stimulus, are written out in their entirety, underneath the very music for which they are, solely, the inspiration. Within the intentionally restricted scope of this supportive commentary, then, I try rather to consolidate and expand upon some of the more aesthetic and artistic facets of my response. After all, the musical ‘mechanism’, itself, is plain to see. I tread cautiously, also, for another reason; Edgar Allan Poe penned his ‘Philosophy of Composition’ in 1946, three years before his death. This intricate essay focuses upon the construction of his poem ‘The Raven’, in order, apparently, to demonstrate and elucidate a meticulous and premeditated approach.

‘It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition - that the work proceeded step by step, to its completion, with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.’

He does concede, in an earlier breath, however:

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

Poe’s explanation has given pause, for some, to the idea or view that, itself, the essay might well be just another example of his literary prowess, an exercise in storytelling. The biographer, Joseph Wood Krutch considers the essay thus:

‘A rather highly ingenious exercise in the art of rationalization than literary criticism.’

But, according to T. S. Eliot:

‘It is difficult for us to read that essay without reflecting that if Poe plotted out his poem with such calculation, he might have taken a little more pains over it: the result hardly does credit to the method.’

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As I begin, now, to describe my approach to this particular composition, it might always best be remembered that the outcome is, first and foremost, the result of an artistic response to the extensive groundwork and foundations prepared so masterfully, by whatsoever means, by Poe. As discussed in the introduction, my real interest being in the treatment by means of which he gives such lengthy literary consideration to what is, essentially, a rather simplistic conceit.

**The First Stage**

In accordance with my artistic and research motives, it became easily apparent, early on, that I might achieve far more by facing the considerable challenge of setting all of Poe’s words, verbatim, to music; akin to Michel Legrand’s extensive treatment of the narrative in the film, ‘Les Parapluies de Cherbourg’. Henceforth, I discarded the idea, discussed earlier (Contretemps), of using parts of the descriptive narrative to inform staging and scenic concerns. Instead, the result of several months of rather intense work, during the summer of 2011, was the production of a complete rhythmic response to the narrative. Every word, phrase, sentence of Poe’s rhetoric, as spoken by me, set out as a notated, rhythmic figure in manuscript form. During an arduous and time-consuming first process, I made a conscious and determined effort to try and avoid any unbidden thoughts concerning melody or harmony. By way of comprehensive example, the initial transcription process is documented, almost in its entirety, in Appendix B. This comprises my penciled notation in response to ‘reading’ the story. Even at this early juncture, however, it was clear to me that somehow my own interpretation and vocalisation of Poe’s metric structures had begun to influence the first, physical stage of the transformation. I found myself, from time to time, revisiting, correcting and adapting the initial notated response; vocalising the prose in a different way. A process which I suspect to be somewhat akin to the personal and individual interpretation of notated music; although performance directions may be comprehensive, outcomes in performance are frequently, and acceptably so, very different. What I did notice particularly was that, through the developing language of my own response, various patterns appeared to be emerging. Referring back to the evidence in Appendix B, it now seems easily apparent that, at times, I was compelled to use different time signatures in order to better facilitate the physical notation process. This was not always due to the accommodation of metric irregularities caused by troublesome syntax, however. Perceived moods of anxiety or mental and physical activity, for example, seemed to suggest a compound metre. My notated response often features a consequential reaction to these bursts of energy: contrasting phases of less frenetic rhythmic intensity, often featuring a simple metre. Moments of perceived relaxation or resignation, these manifest themselves more clearly in the second stage of ‘musicalisation’, as they are often reinforced or enhanced by means of harmonic procedure. Incidences of these phases, existing within the finished score, are further referenced and exemplified in the section concerned with the various functions of musical material.
Although responding to a stimulus based in prose and not a libretto, one especially structured and prepared for the assimilation of musical support, Poe’s writing seemed somehow, through my chosen medium of rhythmic commonality, capable of suggesting the vague beginnings, the outline of some musical form. Encouragingly, I was able to relate this to the concept of the ‘restrictive framework’ outlined in my research questions.

The Second Stage
A marriage of narrative and music is, essentially, symbiotic; both participants potentially benefit from the relationship, often in equal proportion, and to their mutual advantage. Either of these willing partners, however, may survive perfectly well out of wedlock. Both music and narrative, written or spoken, rely on a plethora of subject-specific, mechanistic features, which serve to inform and reinforce their structural framework, or form, allowing for a robust and effective tapestry to be woven in and around it. Music, of course, may imply a narrative, or at least some outline or suggestion of one. ‘Programme’ music is that which has this propensity. ‘Le Carnaval des Animaux’ (Saint-Saëns) provides us with a plethora of simple examples. It is so easy, for instance, to imagine the qualities of a graceful swan whilst listening to its musical facsimile, presented poignantly in the ‘arched’ melody played by the violoncello. The ‘cello might even be perceived to possess an appropriate timbre to describe this elegant animal as it floats on the gently rippling water, itself described persuasively by the undulating accompaniment. But, if the piece had no title, how successfully might it then convey a specific imagery? Some composers make a conscious effort in order to avoid programmatic connotation in the presentation of their work. Max Reger being, in my opinion, one notable example of a proponent of such ‘absolute’, but richly emotive music.

What I have tried to do here is find a ‘music’ that might, justifiably, be generated, in the first instance, by the narrative in a physical way. The programmatic title of the work and the fact that Poe’s text is incorporated verbatim is not the main issue. Referring back to the first objective of my research questions – ‘the production of a large-scale musical composition, created entirely in artistic response to Edgar Allen Poe’s short tale’ – the outcome must, of course, satisfy and support the semantic demands of the narrative in performance, as is the very nature of a piece of musical theatre. But, specifying next that ‘the composition shall sit within the restrictive framework of Poe’s unaltered narrative’ is to state my foremost intention, to use the rhythmic and metric framework of Poe’s text to guide the formation of the physical musical structure itself; to use it as a feature of commonality between the languages of speech and music, as discussed earlier. Once again, I refer back to my initial rhythm transcription process, demonstrated and documented in Appendix B. Melodic and harmonic development, subsequent ‘musicalisation’ of the restrictive framework, then undoubtedly becomes a programmatic concern; counterpoint and texture inspired by the characteristics and style of Poe’s narrative content.
Music relies on anticipation – the hope, and so often its prolongation, that certain expectations will be satisfied. But, the uncertainty of how and when this sense of closure will be achieved goes a very long way in helping to explain both our constant source of fascination with, and our passion for the medium. A parallel might be drawn here with the concept of a popular narrative plot, and yet the multitude of ways in which a story can be built around it. I refer back to my earlier observations on Poe’s literary prowess and success, set out within the introduction; his apparent ability to draw the ‘listener’ inexorably onwards, towards ever more uncomfortable emotional territory, by means of a well-crafted written ‘line’.

It would appear that a story might often progress towards and then continue through each cornerstone of the plot, without the necessity to look back. The premise, seemingly, that what has already been ‘said’, remains so. Music, however, appears to favour frequent recourse to an element of restatement and recapitulation, albeit perhaps in altered form. I have observed through this research that whilst Poe’s text may not necessarily recapitulate specific content, it frequently recapitulates the ‘manner’ in which it conveys content. I see some evidence of this in the recurrence of rhythmic patterns, already discussed, and the distribution of other material, such as that which I perceive to constitute ‘aria’. This is discussed further in the section dealing specifically with aspects of aria and recitative. Does all this say something about a fundamental difference in the nature of these art forms; with respect to their conveyance of ‘meaning’ often, though not exclusively, through, perhaps, medium specific mechanisms of self-expression? It is beyond the scope of this writing to ponder further, but suffice it to say that this discussion, or at least the physical and experimental articulation of it, really is deeply embedded in the very heart of my research interests.

Far more challenging than the first, the second stage of composition involved allocating pitches to the constituent note values of each rhythmic figure of the first draft. Notwithstanding the fact that these collections of pitches should then, in their sequence, also satisfy the tenets of ‘good’ melodic writing, in order for me to propound the existence of some parity with musical ‘line’ in Poe’s narrative – some vestige only of which might possibly remain, maybe just the odd rare specimen, once the words had been interpreted and uttered – I forged ahead.

The explosive, opening vocal motif was my very first musical response to the short preceding overture, which was in turn, and so remains, my initial orchestral sketch in artistic response to Poe’s narrative, as already discussed. So far so good! There were to follow, however, many more months of intense scrutiny and manipulation of the contents of my, essentially, ‘rhythmic’ manuscript. During the summer of 2012, experimentation relied heavily upon those principles and tools founded in musicianship. The result was a score for piano and voice, which encompassed the entire narrative. How might I begin to explain such a process? I can begin by saying that, in stark contrast to my usual method of writing for orchestral forces, the reasons
for completing the whole ‘short score’ for piano and voice were fourfold: First, the fear of losing my initial compositional momentum whilst pondering over varied forces and their placement. Second, the hope of ‘setting’ all the narrative to melody more expeditiously and, in doing so, to reach a position of security, from whence I could reflect, refine and then safely indulge myself in the orchestration. Third, to maintain a ‘working’ copy of the manuscript throughout, from which I could both play and sing. Fourth, to focus and enforce my concentration on the creation of a highly contrapuntal material in response to the narrative – a compact collection of concurrent, well-crafted melodic lines, vocal part included, that are equally able to function independently and as one – a quality which I perceive to be inherently musical.

The Third Stage
Orchestration, the time for thoughtful and, often, speculative conversion of my compact, concise and organic contrapuntal writing into a far more expansive orchestral texture, was challenging. Not more so than in the fact that, by engaging in this time consuming and lengthy process, a whole raft of new questions and aesthetic considerations were brought to the foreground. It was also during this time that the work first became labeled, in my mind, as ‘Historia Cantada’ rather than ‘Opera’ – literally a sung story and, I suppose, similar in nature to a ‘Cantata’. Inspiration for this came without a doubt from Poe’s frequent, direct and indirect references to the Spanish Inquisition; these sometimes made through the skilful incorporation of those semiotic signifiers by which it might most easily be connoted. Likewise, I found myself making the occasional musical allusion; a mere flavour, here and there, inspired by Poe’s inferences, appearing in both melody and harmony from time to time. A brief rhythmic acknowledgement of the Habanera, a small fragment of altered Phrygian modality, perhaps, and the ‘Andalusian’ cadence; use of these inspired by both my experience of, and high regard for Flamenco music, with its disquieting, fiery and sometimes unpredictable, volatile musical nature. Notable examples of this ‘seasoning’, part of my extended palette in the musical ‘theatricalisation’ of Poe’s short story, may be easily seen at rehearsal numbers 13 and 48.

On Recitative and Aria
I had no preconceptions about the inclusion of, or even the necessity for featuring, a gratuitous balance of ‘recitative’ and ‘aria’ in my compositional response. Nor, indeed, was I at first sure whether I would find, within Poe’s unaltered text, an appropriate opportunity to feature any significant element of aria. Recitative most definitely – due to my decision to include the whole of Poe’s text in the vocal line – but not necessarily the ongoing relationship between recitative and aria that one might expect to find, albeit in varied proportion and quality, throughout the ‘operatic’ repertoire.
And then, came the ‘call’ for aria, unconventionally and out of the blue! Within the first page of Poe’s text, his ‘tone of voice’ changes, albeit subtly, and I became enchanted by the beginnings of a rich musical theme that started to coalesce in response to his words. First, Poe seems to announce the imminent arrival of what I perceived to be the ‘aria phase’. He stops the flow of narrative with several short questions:

‘*In the deepest slumber — no! In delirium — no! In a swoon — no! In death — no!*’

Then, come two profound statements that set the ‘scene’:

‘*Even in the grave all is not lost. Else there is no immortality for man.*’

Poe is going to talk philosophically about aspects of the human condition and is not continuing with the plot in the ensuing passage; and so the aria begins. This exciting moment of discovery occurred whilst I was engaged in the very early stages of my initial rhythmic transcription. Writing a few notes down, lest I should forget my ideas, was the only concession I made whilst trying to banish any thoughts of melody and harmony at this stage of my process, as detailed earlier. A fragment of the melodic material is notated at the beginning of Appendix B. The first occurrence of the aria phase is also clearly highlighted in purple on the first page of Appendix A. This phase of the music is quite prolonged, beginning at rehearsal number 17 with the words, ‘*Arousing from the most profound of slumbers …*’ and finally coming to an end at number 27 ‘*… the madness of a memory which busies itself among forbidden things.*’ Two distinctive sections of the extensive aria melody are reiterated several times throughout the work, but always in a truncated and sometimes fragmentary form.

Musical material from the beginning of the aria is ‘summoned’ again, at moments of perceived poignancy, when Poe appears to want to convey narrative in the same manner. For example, between rehearsal numbers 74 and 75 the prisoner again expresses something about his own condition. At number 91, a quotation of one bar of the aria material, ‘*… arousing from lethargy or sleep!*’, supports narrative with the same meaning as that at the outset of its first exposition; at number 17, ‘*Arousing from the most profound of slumbers, we break the gossamer web of some dream.*’ In a more substantial passage, beginning at 124 and extended until 126, the prisoner again speaks philosophically about his own condition, commencing with the question, ‘*Yet what business had I with hope?*’ This is where I start to feel that part of the mechanism of Poe’s language – maybe my suggested, literary equivalence of musical line and counterpoint – is indeed beginning to surface; finding a new and, perhaps, enhanced means of expression through my concerted and prolonged attempt at the musical contextualisation, realisation and setting of his narrative. Put more concisely, through intertextuality.
The more ‘jubilant’ section of the melody from the aria, presented first at 21, ‘He who has never swooned …’, is also reiterated, if sparingly, in more than one form. At number 25, somewhat morosely, but at 82 jubilantly once again, ‘I unclosed my eyes, the objects around me were visible.’ Ultimately, it is ‘called for’ right near the end, at 196, in full jubilant form, the exciting moment of the prisoner’s imminent escape; ‘The fiery walls rushed back!’ The sentiment in Poe’s writing seems, once again, to find some equivalence, on a subliminal level, with both the potency and quality of the same music, inspired during its first exposition in the full aria near the beginning of the work.

Otherwise, briefly, the musical presentation of the whole narrative might holistically be thought of as a much enhanced form of recitative, not ‘secco’ or ‘accompagnato’ in the Italian tradition, or even ‘simple’, ‘accompagné’ or ‘mesuré’, as in the French, but as a through-composed score in which both the orchestra and the voice play equally important and constantly interactive parts. Fluctuation between accompaniment and solo, or the specific, functional roles of reinforcement, enhancement and concerted statement are inherent features of the counterpoint throughout.

**Motivic Aspects**

Two clear examples of motivic material arise from their first statement, in my initial orchestral sketch; that which has now become the overture. This sketch provided an important opportunity to introduce elements of my compositional response that were not informed by the ‘restrictive framework’ of the initial rhythmic transcription. I make reference here to the second objective of my research questions: ‘This ‘musicalisation’ to be inspired by the characteristics and style of Poe’s narrative content, fully preserved and presented, verbatim, in the finished work as the vocal line.’ So, the following motifs were not directly inspired by Poe’s rhythmic structure.

*The Opening Motif* – a cry for help – an ineffectual attempt at escape from the darkness of the subterranean cell, appears first at bar one. The three successive ‘cries’ from the woodwind each result in unsatisfying, but resolute, dissonance; each one differently voiced, weak and helpless, unresolved. This motif is heard again, in altered form, for example at rehearsal number 51.

*The Pendulum Motif* – is first established at bar seven and is ‘heard’ for the duration of the piece. Incompletely stated, it is consistently woven throughout the harmony and melodic line. It surfaces, in full, at moments of climax and often at the ends of certain sections, used as a means of punctuation. Finally, it is allowed to become the main focus when the pendulum is in ‘full swing’, for example at rehearsal number 132. (Indeed, when the prisoner’s terror variously gives way to a more manic and fevered fascination with the movement of the pendulum, the orchestral texture even allows for a modicum of jollity, featuring a somewhat pompous pizzicato bass – my working title for such sections was, ‘the fairground ride begins!’) The pendulum motif
is, by nature of both its rhythmic and harmonic construction, mechanistic in promoting continuity and momentum throughout the work. A quality that lends it considerable significance; its musically functional centrality to the whole work in direct parallel with the repetitive, lateral movement of the physical object, featured so obsessively in the story. Also of importance is the semiotic support it provides, throughout the whole, closely combined, musico-narrative process; the long, metered wait for the story to reach some inevitable conclusion, as both the literary and musical pendulum swing constantly back and forth, marking time for the inexorable process.

The harmonic aspect of the initial sketch developed as a consequence of the juxtaposition of the two motifs outlined above. The resultant ‘mood’ or ‘modality’, developed in so doing, is perpetuated throughout the work. Bitonal harmonic elements and octatonic melodic tendencies permeate the piece and conspire to create what I perceive as a ‘sallow stagnancy’. These two words, which I initially scribbled down when considering my reaction to Poe’s language, reflect my perception of the atmosphere in the claustrophobic cell.

I should now shift focus to that motivic material which is clearly informed by my rhythmic analysis of Poe’s text in its entirety.

The opening melodic cry from the prisoner, ‘I WAS sick …’, seen at rehearsal mark 3, I feel in its first exposition to be a musical representation of exasperation. This motif spans and articulates the very interval, the subject of my fascination, as discussed earlier (Contretemps). Returning frequently, throughout the work, particularly at moments of apparent heightened stress, it is used for its ‘emphatic’ and ‘declamatory’ nature. Evidence of its employment is both obvious and frequent in the vocal melody. (For example at 4, ‘The sentence …’ and at 14, ‘I had swooned …’.) Its configuration of pitches, however, also appears as a chord-shape in the orchestration, from time to time; for example, in the woodwinds, at the agitato, four bars before 43. On this occasion, the melodic motif is featured concurrently in the vocal line, ‘… lest I should be impeded by the walls of a tomb.’ I should also point out the noteworthy, successive and insistent reiteration of the motif before the more jubilant aria theme returns, at the moment of imminent escape; beginning at 193, ‘I struggled no more …’ Building expectation with its declamatory nature, both literally and, hence, musically in my response. It is finally given a ‘helping hand’ to reach the point of climax, at 196, by a sequential and concerted statement, over the previous four bars, of the pendulum motif.

The ‘Wall’ – this word ‘required’ a motif to be associated with it; another example, like the ‘melodic cry’ (see above) and the ‘call for aria’ (experienced much earlier), where the process of analysing Poe’s entire rhythmic framework clearly drew my attention to it. I noticed that it became a feature, a focal point within one particular section of the narrative; best demonstrated in the green highlighted section, at the bottom of the second page of Appendix A. I have circled
the word, on three occasions, with red pen. I should point out that, in the same section, I was also drawn towards Poe’s rhythmic placement of the words, ‘smooth, slimy and cold’. These words are underlined and also emphasised musically, in the ninth bar after rehearsal number 51. A similar form of Poe’s rhythmic emphasis is indicated on the fifth page of Appendix A. The word ‘down’ is circled four times. Representing the inescapable confines of the cell, something as obstructive as the ‘wall’ seemed significant enough to receive special treatment and, as a consequence of this status, the intrinsic capability of obstructing the musical flow, by its very own interjection. The recurring motivic figure appears in the sixth bar after rehearsal number 51, again two bars later, then two bars before 53 and 55, respectively.

**Various Functions of Musical Material**

The metric quality of 6/8 or 9/8 is frequently employed in different guises, one of its various functions being to provide energy in response to action suggested in the narrative. A clear example is seen, for the first time, immediately after the aria finishes; the ‘con moto’ at rehearsal number 28. At this juncture, the 6/8 metre provides a welcome change in mood, a feeling of energy as the prisoner breaks free from his reverie; ‘Very suddenly there came back to my soul motion and sound – the tumultuous motion of the heart, and, in my ears, the sound of it beating.’ A compound metre is also used to enhance the feeling of mounting anxiety when Poe’s narrative builds upon a concept and then obsesses, in progressively greater detail, employing an ever increasingly emphatic ‘tone’ of voice. The 9/8 metre, for example, is employed in response to Poe’s emphatic tone at rehearsal mark 30, a moment of realisation; ‘Then, very suddenly, thought, and shuddering terror, and earnest endeavor to comprehend my true state.’ Note that an element of rhyme creeps into the narrative here, perhaps encouraging the use of a compound metre? Often, this lilting metre seems summoned by Poe’s text; I briefly discuss this in the earlier section entitled, ‘The First Stage’. Again, the identification of a ‘call’ for such metric treatment is so clearly a consequence of having analysed Poe’s line in its entirety, the genesis of the ‘restrictive framework’.

Whilst on the subject, another device I employed to provide kinetic energy in the music is seen, for example, eight bars before 51. Featuring semiquaver movement, its function is different, however, in that it does not really provide significant forward momentum, due to its slow harmonic pace. Whilst referencing such mechanistic material I should, at this point, make it abundantly clear that it was not, and has never been, my intention simply to add ‘appropriate’ orchestral underscore in order to enhance the story; in the manner of a ‘pit’ orchestra supporting a silent movie. I consider this merger of music and narrative to be a homogenous entity.

Moments of resignation or relaxation, found frequently throughout the narrative, are often marked by a musical ‘sigh’, a sinking settlement towards a reluctant tonal resolution. One
instance of this is seen at rehearsal number 45 and another, five bars before 63. There are also ‘quieter’ periods; for example, when the prisoner wakes from slumber and reaches out an arm for food. These seem to call for similar musical treatment each time they occur – Poe’s text again informing musical structure through my rhythmic analysis (examples at 57 and 79).

At rehearsal number 40, clear appropriation of the intervals of the major seventh and minor ninth can be seen in the harp part – ‘sounding’ the death knell. Incidentally, I became most interested in the resolute ‘thrum’ of the harp playing these wide and dissonant intervals – sounding somewhat ‘immovable’ and somehow ‘judgmental’, rather like the indistinct, robed figures at the beginning of the story. This type of effect on the harp, but employing unison over a span of three octaves, I have featured as punctuation when the pendulum motif really ‘gets going’ (for example at 132). Providing, in my mind, a satisfying ‘twang’ of the suspension wire as the pendulum swings back and forth, and effectively suiting purpose, no doubt, because of the similarity in the way that the sounds might be perceived to have been generated.

Specific tempi, metrical constructions, significant melodic motifs and rhythmic figurations – all these developed in the manner of a ‘language’, through successive exposition and subsequent reiteration in my sustained response to the narrative – are inspired by my rhythmic analysis of Poe’s entire story; itself forming the ‘restrictive framework’ within which the composition sits.

On Performance

The reading and internalisation of Poe’s story takes a quarter, or less, of the time taken to either listen to or perform the ‘Historia Cantada’. Various processes that take place when assimilating written prose – the comprehension, interpretation of meaning, associated mental imagery and emotional response – are, of course, all virtually simultaneous and extremely personal to each reader. They are also unvoiced, in the physical sense. In this, quite, intense musical work, the demands of the vocal line are not always virtuosic, in terms of tessitura, but those of stamina in its effective execution quite often are. For the competent, professional singer it might appear, on the surface, that these simply amount to an equivalence of ‘telling’ the story. I do suggest, however, that a certain independence and strength in delivery of the vocal line, due to the latter’s important role as an inseparable faction of the counterpoint, should be well considered. This does place demands on the performer, particularly with respect to immaculate intonation and consistency.

I designed ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’ to be performed by ‘tenor voice (or multiple instances thereof) and orchestra’. And, in doing so, addressed my own criteria, set out in the introduction. The diverse, perceived moods of the prisoner, those represented semantically in the music, might be realised, on the concert platform, by different performers. Another scenario, the
concept of which I begin to find more and more appealing, is such that where two singers (or more), being fully prepared, would sing various sections of the work, chosen spontaneously during the performance, perhaps sharing phrases or even singing together. Thereby, each outcome might, potentially, have a radically different meaning and a fresh dynamic contour.

On Staging
Firmly in my mind, from the outset and throughout the whole duration of the compositional process, has been the concept for a theatrically staged production. In the very briefest of detail, the tale is told by two characters, an elderly man (narrator) and the prisoner – the old man has been stricken by a degenerative and worsening illness. During the course of the performance, he tells elements of the story in different ways – sometimes he is seen reading from, or writing in, a diary or book, at others he simply sings as he sits in bed, or in his chair. We are not sure whether this elderly gentleman is imagining that the action is taking place, has perhaps dreamt it, or whether, at some point in his youth, he has lived through the experience himself. Is he recalling the past, is he living through the whole vivid experience in his, progressively, more and more delirious imaginings, or is he in the process of writing a story, or his memoirs?

The scene is set such that the old man's chamber is on one half of a revolving stage, which is divided by a gauze curtain, and the prisoner is on the other side. The ‘revolve’ allows us to see either the old man's chamber, in isolation, or the torture chamber. The gauze is painted on both sides to reflect a backdrop for each respective scene. However, when action is taking place on either side of the gauze, shadows or images may be allowed to pass through from the other side. For example, when the old man is, perhaps, being attended to by his nurses, the silhouette of this can be seen by the audience, through the gauze, as a backdrop to the torture chamber. Nursing apparel in the 1800s did comprise long, fever-proof gowns and aprons, although those in attendance might also be, conceivably, nuns wearing long habits; their robed figures in silhouette appearing as the shadowy figures seen by the prisoner in the early stages of the story. There is a fireplace in the old man's bedroom and the light cast by this may be seen as a red flickering glow, through the gauze, in the final stages of the story; thus representing the fiery glow of the walls as they advance upon the prisoner. The possibilities are, of course, endless and exciting, the vocal line being voiced by the two characters. The musical structure is quite sectional and, at times, there are musical interludes, which might suggest and help facilitate the turning of the revolving stage. Were the vocal line to be passed very quickly between the two singers, it is envisaged that both chambers might be seen at the same time; the gauze screen perpendicular to the audience and, therefore, invisible. In these instances, the interplay between the performers being facilitated most easily by lights up or down on their respective areas of the stage. Poe finishes and dismisses the outcome of the story quite flippantly. At this point the old man's struggle is over and, simultaneously with the escape of the
prisoner, he dies. The torment of his long illness is over and the agenda of the torturer is concluded – these two ideas linked inextricably and, somewhat, mystically throughout the performance of the work.

**Concluding Thoughts**

The outcome of my research, my findings, might well be considered, I suppose, as more easily apparent and readily accessible to the musical practitioner; the results of my investigative and experimental process – those elements contained within and yet, at the same time, defining the large-scale musical form – being more easily ‘felt’ or identified through the process of physical performance. Certainly, my own relationship with Poe’s narrative has become much stronger throughout the forging of this rather emotional, artistic response. I feel able to state, with some confidence, that this relationship is not born, purely, out of obvious and overt familiarity with the text; for me, now, the words and music are inseparable and I cannot hear one without the other.

To make better, organised sense of that which been such a lengthy and convoluted process, I should commence by relating my findings to the initial questions, those that frame my research and investigation. First, and most satisfyingly so, the resultant, large-scale musical composition is, in its entirety, the product of a focussed, much considered, artistic response to Poe’s writing.

Syntactically, the patterning of Poe’s insistent, reiterative rhythm – that which I now perceive to be of formative significance in his literary prowess and success – I took as both initial stimulus, and as a pervasive, restrictive influence throughout the compositional process. As discussed in the section entitled, ‘The Second Stage’, my first consideration of the rhythmic element was due to the obvious physical commonality between speech and music. If the properties of effective and fulfilling musical ‘line’ are, as suggested in the summary, complex and algorithmic in nature, so, I postulated, might be those of my proposed literary equivalent. The rhythmic element does not, in either of these cases – essentially, although not exclusively – convey a specific ‘meaning’ but it is, without doubt, fundamental to the architecture, function and perceived success of each respective structure; hence a convenient starting point, my ‘restrictive framework’.

Semantically and secondarily, in my consideration of Poe’s skilful manipulation of the reader’s perception, I have tried to demonstrate some parity, through the disposition of vertical harmony and counterpoint in my artistic response, with the manner and style of Poe’s own narrative treatment; the second main objective of my research questions, that process which I have called ‘musicalisation’. Material generated thus, I consider programmatic in nature; also as discussed in ‘The Second Stage’. Another question emerges, though, which in light of my investigations I might now try to succinctly address. Musical counterpoint provides for the emphasis of a linear subject, through vertical juxtaposition with other linear material in simultaneous exposition. How
might this mechanism be conceptually related to a species of some literary equivalence? Does Poe really achieve a comparable form of mechanistic counterpoint – that to which I have aspired to respond and reflect in my musical texture – within a single line? I tentatively suggest that the manner in which Poe sets each carefully chosen word in the context of another is his means of achieving counterpoint within a single, apparently multiplexed stream of information. Similar, perhaps, to the way in which a melodic musical line may often suggest its own inherent, vertical harmony. Attempting to demonstrate Poe’s method of creating and enriching texture within his line, I again quote the following short excerpts from his first paragraph:

‘Yet, for a while, I saw; but with how terrible an exaggeration! I saw the lips of the black-robed judges. They appeared to me white – whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words – and thin even to grotesqueness; thin with the intensity of their expression of firmness – of immovable resolution – of stern contempt of human torture’

And then, immediately afterwards, with no respite:

‘I saw that the decrees of what to me was Fate, were still issuing from those lips. I saw them writhe with a deadly locution. I saw them fashion the syllables of my name; and I shuddered because no sound succeeded.’

These written structures, with their overt and obsessive descriptiveness – achieved through constant and relentless comparison – surely do lend themselves to ‘musicalisation’. Repetition of motivic material, with restatement in the context of new harmonic or rhythmic treatment, is a frequently observed and fundamental feature of musical mechanism; piquing and stimulating the listener’s curiosity and interest yet, ultimately, fulfilling their expectations. A clear and obvious example of such manipulation is the use of fugue or, even more simply, the musical sequence.

Rhythm is contributory towards achieving shifting prominence of the constituent lines of vertical, musical counterpoint and, as this research strives to demonstrate, appears to share a degree of commonality with the functional role that it also plays within the linear, literary construct. The calculated metric elements of both musical and literary narrative seem significantly related to the perceived efficacy of the outcome.

Continuation along my chosen research pathway might easily provide scope for further investigation. Perhaps through a more formal and in-depth literary analysis of Poe’s works? He does, for example, make frequent recourse to various literary mechanisms such as anaphora, alliteration, simile and metaphor. The current research, however, is intentionally restricted in accordance with my research objectives. Irrespective of any perceived ‘quality’ of the outcome, I do feel, with the benefit of hindsight, that my primary method of investigation has provided for
an appropriate and functional starting point; initial steps that I would confidently take, were I again at the commencement of my research. Exploration of Poe’s poetry – that in which he demonstrates to the reader a more overtly organised, linear aspect – might also provide for an alternative, clearly focussed comparison of literary and musical constructs; the narrative already having undergone some preliminary transformation – might I go so far as to suggest a process of literary ‘musicalisation’? And then, for example, were I to set ‘The Raven’ to music, might I discover evidence of creative parallels with Poe’s methodology; as described and set out so meticulously and pedantically in his ‘Philosophy of Composition’? If I had not planned to include any of Poe’s physical narrative in my current artistic response, might the comparison between a purely musical response and the source material have stimulated further discussion? For the itinerant listener, how programmatic in effect would the music seem to be, in the absence of an accompanying narrative?

Although elusive and transient in substance, I feel that I may have uncovered sufficient evidence to suggest some literary equivalence of musical line and counterpoint in Poe’s written prose; or perhaps, at the very least, brought it a little closer to the surface. As suggested in the summary, the journey has been satisfying and, to a degree, successful in that it has clearly generated an outcome for further discussion; a portfolio of three discrete compositions, all inspired by the same source and which can be directly related to each other through reflective consideration and articulation of the creative process.

Ultimately, it is clear that the focus of research and comparison, here, is on mechanism and not content. It is well documented that music and narrative complement each other in programmatic relationship; an artistic representation drawing upon the strength of combined forces. Perhaps, through the course of this research, I have stumbled upon Poe’s secret; that which has earned his work enduring acclaim and respect. To reiterate a comment from my introductory section, ‘It wasn’t so much the story itself, but the manner in which it is told that fuelled my interest.’ Maybe Poe’s narrative style is itself, in fact, intrinsically musical.

I really should bring my investigation to a close, for now, with the following quotation, yet another response to Poe’s ‘Philosophy of Composition’.

‘Now what shall be said of this cold-blooded piece of analysis? To most historians it has seemed to be a grand hoax or a bit of unparalleled effrontery. Or at least the whole thing must be taken as an ex post facto account, so to speak; for it is impossible that any poem deeply emotional and effective, or any true product of inspiration, should be thus put together like a piece of calculated machinery. And from the ordinary theory and practice of art such an opinion is right. But I am inclined to believe that The Raven was actually composed very much as the author explains, and that his essay is not only essentially true to facts but throws a remarkable light on one phase of his genius. I do not mean to say
that in all details the reflection on the method to be adopted would precede by an 
appreciable moment of time the actual invention; the two processes may have gone on 
together in his mind. The point is that this conscious logical analysis was present with him 
throughout the whole work of composition to an abnormal degree, now preceding, now 
accompanying, now following the more inscrutable suggestions of the creative faculty. 
This, I take it, is Poe's original note, the quality which distinguishes his art from that of the 
other masters of unearthly revery. Here, too, lies the principal sphere of his influence on 
Baudelaire and the whole line of foreign poets who have imitated him without reaching his 
supremacy – they could borrow his method, they could not steal his brains.5

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16th December 2012

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Appendix A

Early Experiments with Colour Coding
Very suddenly there came back to my soul motion and sound — the tumultuous motion of the heart, and in my ears the sound of its beating. Then a pause in which all is blank. Then again sound, and motion, and touch, a tingling sensation pervading my frame. Then the mere consciousness of existence, without thought, a condition which lasted long. Then, very suddenly, THOUGHT, and shuddering terror, and earnest endeavour to comprehend my true state. Then a strong desire to lapse into insensibility. Then a rushing revival of soul and a successful effort to move. And now a full memory of the trial, of the judges, of the table draperies, of the sentence, of the sickness, of the swoon. Then entire forgetfulness of all that followed, of all that a later day and much earnestness of endeavour have enabled me vaguely to recall.

So far I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and what I could be. I longed, yet dared not, to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest there should be NOTHING to see: At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly anointed my eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. I struggled for breath. The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason. I brought to mind the inquisitorial proceedings, and attempted from that point to deduce my real condition. The sentence had passed, and it appeared to me that a very long interval of time had since elapsed. Yet not for a moment did I suppose myself actually dead. Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence; — but where and in what state was I? The condemned to death, I knew, perished usually at the auto-da-fe, and one of these had been held on the very night of the day of my trial. Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months? This I at once saw could not be. Victims had been in immediate demand. Moreover my dungeon, as well as all the condemned cells at Toledo, had stone floors, and light was not altogether excluded.

A fearful idea now suddenly drove the blood in torrents upon my heart, and for a brief period I once more relapsed into insensibility. Upon recovering, I once more started to my face, trembling convulsively in every fibre. I thrust my arms wildly above and around me in all directions. I felt nothing; yet desired to move a step, lest I should be impeded by the walls of a TOMB. Perspiration burst from every pore, and stood in cold big beads upon my forehead. The agony of suspense grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward, with my arms extended, and my eyes unblinking from their sockets, in the hope of catching some faint ray of light. I proceeded for many paces, but still all was blackness and vacancy. I breathed more freely. It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, the most hideous of fates.

And now, as I still continued to move cautiously onward, there came throning upon my recollection a thousand vague rumours of the horrors of Toledo. Of the dungeons there had been strange things narrated — fables I had always deemed them — but yet strange, and too ghastly to repeat, save in a whisper. Was I left to perish of starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate perhaps more fearful awaited me? That the result would be death, and a death of more than customary bitterness, I knew too well the character of my judges to doubt. The mode and the hour were all that occupied or distracted me.

My outstretched hand at length encountered some solid obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry — very smooth, stiff, and cold. I followed it up, stepping with all the carefulest distrust with which certain antique narratives had inspired me. This process, however, afforded me no means of ascertaining the dimensions of my dungeon; as I might make its circuit, and return to the point whence I set out, without being aware of the fact, so perfectly uniform seemed the wall. I therefore sought the knife which had been in my pocket when led into the inquisitorial chamber, but it was gone; my clothes had been exchanged for a wrapper of coarse serge. I had thought of forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the masonry, so as to identify my point of departure. The difficulty, nevertheless, was insurmountable. I seized at first impulsively one of the bars from the door, and passed the fragment at full length, and at right angles to the wall. In groping my way toward the prison, I could not fail to encounter this rag upon the wall. So, at least, I thought, but I had not counted upon the extent of the dungeon, or upon my own weakness. The ground was moist and slippery. I staggered onward for some time, when I stumbled and fell. My excessive fatigue induced me to remain prostrate, and sleep soon overtook me as I lay.
Upon awaking, and stretching forth an arm, I found beside me a loaf and a pitcher with water. I was too much exhausted to reflect upon this circumstance, but ate and drank with avidity. Shortly afterwards I resumed my tour around the prison, and with much toil came at last upon the fragment of the serge. Up to the period when I fell I had counted fifty-two paces, and upon resuming my walk I had counted forty-eight more, when I arrived at the rag. There were in all, then, a hundred paces; and, admitting two paces to the yard, I presumed the dungeon to be fifty yards in circuit. I had met, however, with many angles in the wall, and thus I could form no guess at the shape of the vault, for vault I could not help supposing it to be.

I had little object — certainly no hope — in these researches, but a vague curiosity prompted me to continue them. Quitting the wall, I resolved to cross the area of the enclosure. At first I proceeded with extreme caution, for the floor although seemingly of solid material was treacherous with slime. At length, however, I took courage and did not hesitate to step firmly — endeavouring to cross in as direct a line as possible. I had advanced some ten or twelve paces in this manner, when the remnant of the torn hem of my robe became entangled between my legs. I stepped on it, and fell violently on my face.

In the confusion attending my fall, I did not immediately apprehend a somewhat startling circumstance, which yet, in a few seconds afterward, and while I still lay prostrate, arrested my attention. It was this: my chin rested upon the floor of the prison, but my lips, and the upper portion of my head, although seemingly at a less elevation than the chin, touched nothing. At the same time, my forehead seemed bathed in a clammy vapour, and the peculiar smell of decayed fungus arose to my nostrils. I put forward my arm, and shuddered to find that I had fallen at the very brim of a circular pit, whose extent of course I had no means of ascertaining at the moment. Creeping about the masonry just below the margin, I succeeded in dislodging a small fragment, and let it fall into the abyss. For many seconds I hearkened to its reverberations as it dashed against the sides of the chasm in its descent; at length there was a sudden plunge into water, succeeded by loud echoes. At the same moment there came a sound resembling the quick opening, and as rapid closing of a door overhead, while a faint gleam of light flashed suddenly through the gloom, and as suddenly faded away.

I saw clearly the doom which had been prepared for me, and congratulated myself upon the timely accident by which I had escaped. Another step before my fall, and the world had seen me no more and the death just avoided was of that very character which I had regarded as fabulous and frivolous in the tales respecting the Inquisition. To the victims of its tyranny, there was the choice of death with its direst physical agonies, or death with its most hideous moral horror. I had been reserved for the latter. By long suffering my nerves had been anstrung, until I trembled at the sound of my own voice, and had become in every respect a fitting subject for the species of torture which awaited me.

Shaking in every limb, I groped my way back to the wall — resolving there to perish rather than risk the terrors of the wells, of which my imagination now pictured many in various positions about the dungeon. In other conditions of mind I might have had courage to end my misery at once by a plunge into one of these abysses; but now I was the veriest of cowards. Neither could I forget what I had read of these pits — that the SUDDEN extinction of life formed no part of their most horrible plan.

Agitation of spirit kept me awake for many long hours; but at length I again slumbered. Upon arousing, I found by my side, as before, a loaf and a pitcher of water. A burning thirst consumed me, and I emptied the vessel at a draught. It must have been dragged, for scarcely had I drunk before it became irresistibly drawings. A deep sleep fell upon me — a sleep like that of death. How long it lasted of course I know not; but when once again I unclosed my eyes the objects around me were visible. By a wild sulphurous lustre, the origin of which I could not at first determine, I was enabled to see the extent and aspect of the prison.

In its size I had been greatly mistaken. The whole circuit of its walls did not exceed twenty-five yards. For some minutes this fact occasioned me a world of vain trouble; vain indeed — for what could be of less importance, under the terrible circumstances which environed me than the mere dimensions of my dungeon? But my soul took a wild interest in trifles, and I busied myself in endeavours to account for the error I had committed in my measurement. The truth at length flashed upon me. In my first attempt at exploration I had counted fifty-two paces up to the period when I fell; I must then have been within a pace or two of the fragment of serge; in fact I had nearly performed the circuit of the vault. I then slept, and upon awaking, I must have returned upon my steps, thus supposing the circuit nearly double what it
I had been deceived too in respect to the shape of the enclosure. In feeling my way I had found many angles, and thus deduced an idea of great irregularity, so potent is the effect of total darkness upon one arising from lethargy or sleep! The angles were simply those of a few slight depressions or niches at odd intervals. The general shape of the prison was square. What I had taken for masonry seemed now to be iron, or some other metal in huge plates, whose sutures or joints occasioned the depression. The entire surface of this metallic enclosure was ruddy dished in all the hideous and repulsive devices to which the chancel superstition of the monks has given rise. The figures of fiends in aspects of menace, with skeleton forms and other more really fearful images, overspread and disfigured the walls. I observed that the outlines of these monstrosities were sufficiently distinct, but that the colours seemed faded and blurred, as if from the effects of a damp atmosphere. I now noticed the floor, too, which was of stone. In the centre yawned the circular pit from whose jaws I had escaped; but it was the only one in the dungeon.

All this I saw indistinctly and by much effort, for my personal condition had been greatly changed during my term. I now lay upon my back, and at full length, on a species of low framework of wood. To this I was securely bound by a long strap resembling a surcingle. It passed in many convolutions about my limbs and body, leaving at liberty only my head, and my left arm to such extent that I could by dint of much exertion supply myself with food from an earthen dish which lay by my side on the floor. I saw to my horror that the pitcher had been removed; I say to my horror, for I was consumed with intolerable thirst. This thirst it appeared to be the design of my persecutors to stimulate, for the food in the dish was meat pungently seasoned.

Looking upward, I surveyed the ceiling of my prison. It was some thirty or forty feet overhead, and constructed much as the side walls. In one of its panels a very singular figure riveted my whole attention. It was the painted figure of Time as he is commonly represented, save that in lieu of a scythe he held what at a casual glance I supposed to be the pictured image of a huge pendulum, such as we see on antique clocks. There was something, however, in the appearance of this machine which caused me to regard it more attentively. While I gazed directly upward at it (for its position was immediately over my own), I fancied that I saw it in motion. In an instant afterward the fancy was confirmed; its sweep was brief, and of course slow. I watched it for some minutes, somewhat in fear but more in wonder. Wearying at length with observing its dull movement, I turned my eyes upon the other objects in the cell.

A slight noise attracted my notice, and looking to the floor, I saw several enormous rats traversing it. They had issued from the well which lay just within view to my right. Even then while I gazed, they came up in troops hurriedly, with ravenous eyes, allured by the scent of the meat. From this it required much effort and attention to scare them away.

It might have been half-an-hour, perhaps even an hour (for I could take but imperfect note of time) before I again cast my eyes upward. What I then saw confounded and amazed me. The sweep of the pendulum had increased in extent by nearly a yard. As a natural consequence, its velocity was also much greater. But what mainly disturbed me was the idea that it had perceptibly DESCENDED. I now observed, with what horror it is needless to say, that its under extremity was formed of a crescent of glittering steel, about a foot in length from horn to horn; the horns upward, and the under edge evidently as keen as that of a razor. Like a razor it seemed rusty and heavy, tapering from the edge into a solid and broad structure above. It was appended to a weighty rod of brass, and the whole HISSED as it swung through the air.

I could no longer doubt the doom prepared for me by monkish ingenuity in torture. My cognisance of the pit had become known to the inquisitorial agents—THE PIT, whose horrors had been destined for so bold a recusant as myself, THE PIT, typical of hell, and regarded by rumour as the Ultima Thule of all their punishments. The plunge into this pit I had avoided by the merest accidents, and I knew that surprise or entrapment into torment formed an important portion of all the grotesquerie of these dungeon deaths. Having failed to fall, it was no part of the demon plan to hurl me into the abyss, and thus (there being no alternative) a different and a milder destruction awaited me. Milder! I half smiled in my agony as I thought of such application of such a term.
What boots it to tell of the long, long hours of horror more than mortal, during which I counted the rushing oscillations of the steel! Inch by inch — line by line — with a descent only appreciable at intervals that seemed ages — down and still down it came! Days passed — it might have been that many days passed — ere it swept so closely over me as to fan me with its acrid breath. The odour of the sharp steel forced itself into my nostrils. I prayed — I weared heaven with my prayer for its more speedy descent. I grew frantically mad, and struggled to force myself upward against the sweep of the fearful scimitar. And then I fell suddenly calm and lay smiling at the glittering death as a child at some rare bauble.

There was another interval of utter insensibility; it was brief, for upon again lapsing into life there had been no perceptible descent in the pendulum. But it might have been long — for I knew there were demons who took note of my swoon, and who could have arrested the vibration at pleasure. Upon my recovery, too, I felt very — oh! inexplicably — sick and weak, as if through long inanition. Even amid the agonies of that period the human nature craved food. With painful effort I outstretched my left arm as far as my bonds permitted, and took possession of the small remain which had been spared me by the rats. As I put a portion of it within my lips there rushed to my mind a half-formed thought of joy — of hope. Yet what business had I with hope? It was, as I say, a half-formed thought — man has many such, which are never completed. I felt that it was of joy — of hope; but I felt also that it had perished in its formation. In vain I struggled to perfect — to regain it. Long suffering had nearly annihilated all my ordinary powers of mind. I was an imbecile — an idiot.

The vibration of the pendulum was at right angles to my length. I saw that the crescent was designed to cross the region of the heart. It would fray the surge of my robe; it would return and repeat its operations — again — and again. Notwithstanding its terrifically wide sweep (some thirty feet or more) and the hissing vigour of its descent, sufficient to sunder these very walls of iron, still the fraying of my robe would be all that, for several minutes, it would accomplish; and at this thought I paused. I dared not go farther than this reflection. I dwelt upon it with a pertinacity of attention — as if, in so dwelling, I could arrest HERE the descent of the steel. I forced myself to ponder upon the sound of the crescent as it should pass across the garment — upon the peculiar thrilling sensation which the friction of cloth produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity until my teeth were on edge.

Down — steadily down it crept, I took a frenzied pleasure in contrasting its downward with its lateral velocity. To the right — to the left — far and wide — with the shriek of a damned spirit! to my heart with the stealthy pace of the tiger! I alternately laughed and howled, as the one or the other idea grew predominant.

Down — certainly, relentlessly down. It vibrated within three inches of my bosom! I struggled violently — fanatically — to free my left arm. This was free only from the elbow to the hand. I could reach the latter, from the platter beside me to my mouth with great effort, but no farther. Could I have broken the fastenings above the elbow, I would have seized and attempted to arrest the pendulum. I might as well have attempted to arrest an avalanche.

Down — still hesitatingly — still inevitably down! I gasped and struggled at each vibration. I shrank convulsively at its very sweep. My eyes followed its outward or upward whirls with the eagerness of the most meaningless despair; they closed themselves spasmodically at the descent, although death would have been a relief, O, how unspeakable! Still I quivered in every nerve to think how slight a sinking of the machinery would precipitate that keen glittering axe upon my bosom. It was hope that prompted the nerve to quiver — the frame to shrink. It was HOPE — the hope that triumphs on the rack — that whispers to the death-condemned even in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

I saw that some ten or twelve vibrations would bring the steel in actual contact with my robe, and with this observation there suddenly came over my spirit all the keen, collected calmness of despair. For the first time during many hours, or perhaps days, I THOUGHT. It now occurred to me that the bandage or sarsaparilla which enveloped me was UNIQUE. I was tied by no separate cord. The first stroke of the razor-like crescent athwart any portion of the band would so detach it that it might be unwound from my person by means of my left hand. But bow fearful, in that case, the proximity of the steel! The result of the slightest struggle, how deadly! Was it likely, moreover, that the minions of the torturer had not foreseen and provided for this possibility! Was it probable that the bandage crossed my bosom in the track of the pendulum? Dreading to find my faint, and, as it seemed, my last hope frustrated, I so far elevated my head
as to obtain a distinct view of my breast. The surcingle enveloped my limbs and body close in all directions except one. To save the Path of the Destroying Crescent.

Scarcely had I dropped my head back into its original position when there flashed upon my mind what I could not better describe than as the unformed half of that idea of deliverance to which I have previously alluded, and of which a moiety only floated indeterminately through my brain when I raised food to my burning lips. The whole thought was now present—feeble, scarcely sane, scarcely definite, but still entire. I proceeded at once, with the nervous energy of despair, to attempt its execution.

For many hours the immediate vicinity of the low framework upon which I lay had been literally swarming with rats. They were wild, bold, ravenous, their red eyes glaring upon me as if they waited for motionlessness on my part to make me their prey. "To what food," I thought, "have they been accustomed in the well?"

They had devoured, in spite of all my efforts to prevent them, all but a small remnant of the contents of the dish. I had fallen into an habitual see-saw or wave of the hand about the platter; and at length the unconscious uniformity of the movement deprived it of effect. In their voracity the vermin frequently fastened their sharp fangs in my fingers. With the particles of the oily and spicy viand which now remained, I thoroughly rubbed the bandage wherever I could reach it; then, raising my hand from the floor, I lay breathlessly still.

At first the ravenous animals were startled and terrified at the change—the cessation of movement. They shrank alarmedly back; many sought the well. But this was only for a moment. I had not counted in vain upon their voracity. Observing that I remained without motion, one or two of the boldest leaped upon the frame-work and smelt at the surcingle. This seemed the signal for a general rush. Forth from the well they hurried in fresh troops. They clung to the wood, they overran it, and leaped in hundreds upon my person. The measured movement of the pendulum disturbed them not at all. Avoiding its strokes, they busied themselves with the assortment of bandages. They pressed, they swarmed upon me in ever accumulating heaps. They writhed upon my throat; their cold lips sought my own; I was half stifled by their thronging pressure; disgust, for which the world has no name, swelled my bosom, and chilled with heavy clamminess my heart. Yet one minute and I felt that the struggle would be over. Plainly I perceived the loosening of the bandage. I knew that in more than one place it must be already severed. With a more than human resolution I lay still.

Nor had I erred in my calculations, nor had I endured in vain. I at length felt that I was FREE. The surcingle hung in ribands from my body. But the stroke of the pendulum already pressed upon my bosom. It had divided the serge of the robe. It had cut through the linen beneath. Twice again it swung, and a sharp sense of pain shot through every nerve. But the moment of escape had arrived. At a wave of my hand my deliverers hurried tumultuously away. With a steady movement, cautious, sidelong, shrinking, and slow, I slid from the embrace of the bandage and beyond the reach of the scimitar. For the moment, at least I was FREE.

Free! and in the grasp of the Inquisition! I had scarcely stepped from my wooden bed of horror upon the stone floor of the prison, when the motor of the heel-stone ceased and I beheld it drawn up by some invisible force through the ceiling. This was a lesson which I took desperately to heart. My every motion was undoubtedly watched. Free! I had but escaped death in one form of agony to be delivered unto worse than death in some other. With that thought I milled my eyes nervously around on the barriers of iron that hemmed me in. Something unusual—the same change which at first I could not appreciate distinctly—it was obvious had taken place in the apartment. For many minutes of a dreamy and trembling abstraction I busied myself in vain, unconnected conjectures. During this period I became aware, for the first time, of the origin of the sulphurous light which illuminated the cell. It proceeded from a fissure about half-an-inch in width extending entirely around the prison at the base of the walls which thus appeared, and were completely separated from the floor. I endeavoured, but of course in vain, to look through the aperture.

As I arose from the attempt, the mystery of the alteration in the chamber broke at once upon my understanding. I have observed that although the outlines of the figures upon the walls were sufficiently distinct, yet the colours seemed blurred and indefinite. These colours had now assumed, and were
momentarily assuming, a startling and most intense brilliancy, that give to the spectral and fiendish portraits an aspect that might have thrilled even firmer nerves than my own. Demon eyes, of a wild and ghastly vivacity, glared upon me in a thousand directions where none had been visible before, and glared with the lurid lustre of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal.

UNREAL! -- Even while I breathed there came to my nostrils the breath of the vapour of heated iron! A suffocating odour pervaded the prison! A deeper glow settled each moment in the eyes that glared at my agonies! A richer tint of crimson diffused itself over the pictured horrors of blood. I paused! I gasped for breath! There could be no doubt of the design of my tormentors -- oh most unrelenting! oh, most demoniac of men! I shrank from the glowing metal to the centre of the cell. Amid the thought of the fiery destruction that impended, the idea of the coolness of the well came over my soul like balm. I rushed to its deadly brink. I threw my straining vision below. The glare from the enkindled roof illumined its utmost recesses. Yet, for a wild moment, did my spirit refuse to comprehend the meaning of what I saw. At length it forced -- it wrestled its way into my soul -- it forced itself upon my trembling reason. O for a voice to speak! -- oh, horror! -- oh, any horror but this! With a vast rush I rushed from the margin and buried my face in my hands -- weeping bitterly.

The heat rapidly increased, and once again I looked up, shuddering as if with a fit of the ague. There had been a second change in the cell -- and now the change was obviously in the FORM. As before, it was in vain that I at first endeavoured to appreciate or understand what was taking place. But not long was I left in doubt. The inquisitorial vengeance had been hurried by my two-fold escape, and there was to be no more dallying with the King of Terrors. The room had been square. I saw that two of its iron angles were now acute -- two consequently, oblique. The fearful difference quickly increased with a low rumbling or moaning sound. In an instant the apartment had shifted its form into that of a Lorenzo. But the alteration stopped not here -- I neither hoped nor desired it to stop. I could have clasped the red walls to my bosom as a garment of eternal peace. "Death," I said "any death but that of the pit! For I might not have known that INTO THE PIT it was the object of the burning iron to urge me! Could I resist its glow? If even that, could I withstand its pressing? And now, flatter and flatter grew the Lorenzo, with a rapidity that left me no time for contemplation. In its centre, and of course, its greatest width, came just over the yawning gulf. I shrank back -- but the closing walls pressed me resistlessly onward. At length for my seared and writhing body there was no longer an inch of foothold on the firm floor of the prison. I struggled no more, but the agony of my soul found vent in one loud, long, and final scream of despair. I felt that I tottered upon the brink. -- I averted my eyes --

There was a discordant hum of human voices! There was a loud blast as of many trumpets! There was a harsh grating as of a thousand thunders! The fiery walls rushed back! An outstretched arm caught my eye as I felt floating into the air. It was that of General Luxadc. The French army had entered Toledo. The Inquisition was in the hands of its enemies.

KEY

RECIT
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BALET
MUSIC ONLY
STAGE DIRECTIONS
SCENIC CONCERNS
Appendix B

Initial Rhythm Transcription Process
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The answer is to be the obvious expert push of the known given arm.

Two and others really feel images are stand or depend the

wells.
I have found 1 hypnotic feeling of the smell!

But of the highest sphere has death! Was it likely unknown

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so far, the only bearers or - experiment was

I am a little in the blood. I am, and it is coming my last hope has been.

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This is all as medium. Since SAND IN THE MIND IN 2

ENLARGED

So if I stepped back into it's a regular place. When

Please reply, and also I cannot before the sake that as the

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...
slow - measure

There was no constant turn of human nature.

But an odd, thin, long-legged, many-legged fly

slow. A fly will not contend with a spider. A spider catches its own

tiny, thin, long-legged, many-legged fly.

It is the general sale. They feel so kind

in the head of the

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Composition

A way of life, at it - restlessness by

the rhythms set out by Poe but they

also act to inspire creativity - by its

very nature, requiring eleven and interesting

approach in various ways.

Without some accompaniment, it doesn't work.

But other new keep rent on simple notes

so much more intimate
Appendix C

The Pit and the Pendulum

Impia tortorum longas hic turba furores
Sanguinis innocui, non satiata, aluit.
Sospite nunc patria, fracto nunc funeris antro,
Mors ubi dira fuit vita salusque patent.

[Quatrain composed for the gates of a market to be erected upon the site of the Jacobin Club House at Paris.]

I WAS sick — sick unto death with that long agony; and when they at length unbound me, and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were leaving me. The sentence — the dread sentence of death — was the last of distinct accentuation which reached my ears. After that, the sound of the inquisitorial voices seemed merged in one dreamy indeterminate hum. It conveyed to my soul the idea of revolution — perhaps from its association in fancy with the burr of a mill-wheel. This only for a brief period; for presently I heard no more. Yet, for a while, I saw; but with how terrible an exaggeration! I saw the lips of the black-robed judges. They appeared to me white — whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words — and thin even to grotesqueness; thin with the intensity of their expression of firmness — of immoveable resolution — of stern contempt of human torture. I saw that the decrees of what to me was Fate, were still issuing from those lips. I saw them writhe with a deadly locution. I saw them fashion the syllables of my name; and I shuddered because no sound succeeded. I saw, too, for a few moments of delirious horror, the soft and nearly imperceptible waving of the sable draperies which enwrapped the walls of the apartment. And then my vision fell upon the seven tall candles upon the table. At first they wore the aspect of charity, and seemed white and slender angels who would save me; but then, all at once, there came a most deadly nausea over my spirit, and I felt every fibre in my frame thrill as if I had touched the wire of a galvanic battery, while the angel forms became meaningless spectres, with heads of flame, and I saw that from them there would be no help. And then there stole into my fancy, like a rich musical note, the thought of what sweet rest there must be in the grave. The thought came gently and stealthily, and it seemed long before it attained full appreciation; but just as my spirit came at length properly to feel and entertain it, the figures of the judges vanished, as if magically, from before me; the tall candles sank into

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nothingness; their flames went out utterly; the blackness of darkness supervened; all sensations appeared swallowed up in a mad rushing descent as of the soul into Hades. Then silence, and stillness, and night were the universe.

I had swooned; but still will not say that all of consciousness was lost. What of it there remained I will not attempt to define, or even to describe; yet all was not lost. In the deepest slumber — no! In delirium — no! In a swoon — no! In death — no! even in the grave all is not lost. Else there is no immortality for man. Arousing from the most profound of slumbers, we break the gossamer web of some dream. Yet in a second afterward, (so frail may that web have been) we remember not that we have dreamed. In the return to life from the swoon there are two stages; first, that of the sense of mental or spiritual; secondly, that of the sense of physical, existence. It seems probable that if, upon reaching the second stage, we could recall the impressions of the first, we should find these impressions eloquent in memories of the gulf beyond. And that gulf is — what? How at least shall we distinguish its shadows from those of the tomb? But if the impressions of what I have termed the first stage, are not, at will, recalled, yet, after long interval, do they not come unbidden, while we marvel whence they come? He who has never swooned, is not he who finds strange palaces and wildly familiar faces in coals that glow; is not he who beholds floating in mid-air the sad visions that the many may not view; is not he who ponders over the perfume of some novel flower — is not he whose brain grows bewildered with the meaning of some musical cadence which has never before arrested his attention.

Amid frequent and thoughtful endeavors to remember; amid earnest struggles to regather some token of the state of seeming nothingness into which my soul had lapsed, there have been moments when I have dreamed of success; there have been brief, very brief periods when I have conjured up remembrances which the lucid reason of a later epoch assures me could have had reference only to that condition of seeming unconsciousness. These shadows of memory tell, indistinctly, of tall figures that lifted and bore me in silence down — down — still down — till a hideous dizziness oppressed me at the mere idea of the interminableness of the descent. They tell also of a vague horror at my heart, on account of that heart's unnatural stillness. Then comes a sense of sudden motionlessness throughout all things; as if those who bore me (a ghastly train!) had outrun, in their descent, the limits of the limitless, and paused from the wearisomeness of their toil. After this I call to mind flatness and dampness; and then all is madness — the madness of a memory which busies itself among forbidden things.

Very suddenly there came back to my soul motion and sound — the tumultuous motion of the heart, and, in my ears, the sound of its beating. Then a pause in which all is blank. Then again sound, and motion, and touch — a tingling sensation pervading my frame. Then the mere consciousness of existence, without thought — a condition which lasted long. Then, very suddenly, thought, and shuddering terror, and earnest endeavor to comprehend my true state. Then a strong desire to lapse into insensibility. Then a rushing revival of soul and a successful
effort to move. And now a full memory of the trial, of the judges, of the sable draperies, of the sentence, of the sickness, of the swoon. Then entire forgetfulness of all that followed; of all that a later day and much earnestness of endeavor have enabled me vaguely to recall.

So far, I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back, unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and what I could be. I longed, yet dared not to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest there should be nothing to see. At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly unclosed my eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. I struggled for breath. The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason. I brought to mind the inquisitorial proceedings, and attempted from that point to deduce my real condition. The sentence had passed; and it appeared to me that a very long interval of time had since elapsed. Yet not for a moment did I suppose myself actually dead. Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence; — but where and in what state was I? The condemned to death, I knew, perished usually at the auto-da-fes, and one of these had been held on the very night of the day of my trial. Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months? This I at once saw could not be. Victims had been in immediate demand. Moreover, my dungeon, as well as all the condemned cells at Toledo, had stone floors, and light was not altogether excluded.

A fearful idea now suddenly drove the blood in torrents upon my heart, and for a brief period, I once more relapsed into insensibility. Upon recovering, I at once started to my feet, trembling convulsively in every fibre. I thrust my arms wildly above and around me in all directions. I felt nothing; yet dreaded to move a step, lest I should be impeded by the walls of a tomb. Perspiration burst from every pore, and stood in cold big beads upon my forehead. The agony of suspense, grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward, with my arms extended, and my eyes straining from their sockets, in the hope of catching some faint ray of light. I proceeded for many paces; but still all was blackness and vacancy. I breathed more freely. It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, the most hideous of fates.

And now, as I still continued to step cautiously onward, there came thronging upon my recollection a thousand vague rumors of the horrors of Toledo. Of the dungeons there had been strange things narrated — fables I had always deemed them — but yet strange, and too ghastly to repeat, save in a whisper. Was I left to perish of starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me? That the result would be death,
and a death of more than customary bitterness, I knew too well the character of my judges to doubt. The mode and the hour were all that occupied or distracted me.

My outstretched hands at length encountered some solid obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry — very smooth, slimy, and cold. I followed it up; stepping with all the careful distrust with which certain antique narratives had inspired me. This process, however, afforded me no means of ascertaining the dimensions of my dungeon; as I might make its circuit, and return to the point whence I set out, without being aware of the fact; so perfectly uniform seemed the wall. I therefore sought the knife which had been in my pocket, when led into the inquisitorial chamber; but it was gone; my clothes had been exchanged for a wrapper of coarse serge. I had thought of forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the masonry, so as to identify my point of departure. The difficulty, nevertheless, was but trivial; although, in the disorder of my fancy, it seemed at first insuperable. I tore a part of the hem from the robe and placed the fragment at full length, and at right angles to the wall. In groping my way around the prison, I could not fail to encounter this rag upon completing the circuit. So, at least I thought: but I had not counted upon the extent of the dungeon, or upon my own weakness. The ground was moist and slippery. I staggered onward for some time, when I stumbled and fell. My excessive fatigue induced me to remain prostrate; and sleep soon overtook me as I lay.

Upon awaking, and stretching forth an arm, I found beside me a loaf and a pitcher with water. I was too much exhausted to reflect upon this circumstance, but ate and drank with avidity. Shortly afterward, I resumed my tour around the prison, and with much toil, came at last upon the fragment of the serge. Up to the period when I fell, I had counted fifty-two paces, and, upon resuming my walk, I had counted forty-eight more — when I arrived at the rag. There were in all, then, a hundred paces; and, admitting two paces to the yard, I presumed the dungeon to be fifty yards in circuit. I had met, however, with many angles in the wall, and thus I could form no guess at the shape of the vault; for vault I could not help supposing it to be.

I had little object — certainly no hope — in these researches; but a vague curiosity prompted me to continue them. Quitting the wall, I resolved to cross the area of the enclosure. At first, I proceeded with extreme caution, for the floor, although seemingly of solid material, was treacherous with slime. At length, however, I took courage, and did not hesitate to step firmly — endeavoring to cross in as direct a line as possible. I had advanced some ten or twelve paces in this manner, when the remnant of the torn hem of my robe became entangled between my legs. I stepped on it, and fell violently on my face.

In the confusion attending my fall, I did not immediately apprehend a somewhat startling circumstance, which yet, in a few seconds afterward, and while I still lay prostrate, arrested my attention. It was this: my chin rested upon the floor of the prison, but my lips, and the upper
portion of my head, although seemingly at a less elevation than the chin, touched nothing. At the
same time, my forehead seemed bathed in a clammy vapor, and the peculiar smell of decayed
fungus arose to my nostrils. I put forward my arm, and shuddered to find that I had fallen at the
very brink of a circular pit, whose extent, of course, I had no means of ascertaining at the
moment. Groping about the masonry just below the margin, I succeeded in dislodging a small
fragment, and let it fall into the abyss. For many seconds I hearkened to its reverberations as it
dashed against the sides of the chasm in its descent: at length, there was a sullen plunge into
water, succeeded by loud echoes. At the same moment, there came a sound resembling the
quick opening, and as rapid closing of a door overhead, while a faint gleam of light flashed
suddenly through the gloom, and as suddenly faded away.

I saw clearly the doom which had been prepared for me, and congratulated myself upon the
timely accident by which I had escaped. Another step before my fall, and the world had seen me
no more. And the death just avoided, was of that very character which I had regarded as
fabulous and frivolous in the tales respecting the Inquisition. To the victims of its tyranny, there
was the choice of death with its direst physical agonies, or death with its most hideous moral
horrors. I had been reserved for the latter. By long suffering my nerves had been unstrung, until
I trembled at the sound of my own voice, and had become in every respect a fitting subject for
the species of torture which awaited me.

Shaking in every limb, I groped my way back to the wall — resolving there to perish rather than
risk the terrors of the wells, of which my imagination now pictured many in various positions
about the dungeon. In other conditions of mind, I might have had courage to end my misery at
once, by a plunge into one of these abysses; but now I was the veriest of cowards. Neither
could I forget what I had read of these pits — that the sudden extinction of life formed no part of
their most horrible plan.

Agitation of spirit kept me awake for many long hours; but at length I again slumbered. Upon
arousing, I found by my side, as before, a loaf and a pitcher of water. A burning thirst consumed
me, and I emptied the vessel at a draught. It must have been drugged — for scarcely had I
drunk, before I became irresistibly drowsy. A deep sleep fell upon me — a sleep like that of
death. How long it lasted, of course, I know not; but when, once again, I unclosed my eyes, the
objects around me were visible. By a wild, sulphurous lustre, the origin of which I could not at
first determine, I was enabled to see the extent and aspect of the prison.

In its size I had been greatly mistaken. The whole circuit of its walls did not exceed twenty-five
yards. For some minutes this fact occasioned me a world of vain trouble; vain indeed — for
what could be of less importance, under the terrible circumstances which environed me, then
the mere dimensions of my dungeon? But my soul took a wild interest in trifles, and I busied
myself in endeavors to account for the error I had committed in my measurement. The truth at length flashed upon me. In my first attempt at exploration, I had counted fifty-two paces, up to the period when I fell: I must then have been within a pace or two of the fragment of serge; in fact, I had nearly performed the circuit of the vault. I then slept — and, upon awaking, I must have returned upon my steps — thus supposing the circuit nearly double what it actually was. My confusion of mind prevented me from observing that I began my tour with the wall to the left, and ended it with the wall to the right.

I had been deceived, too, in respect to the shape of the enclosure. In feeling my way, I had found many angles, and thus deduced an idea of great irregularity; so potent is the effect of total darkness upon one arousing from lethargy or sleep! The angles were simply those of a few slight depressions, or niches, at odd intervals. The general shape of the prison was square. What I had taken for masonry seemed now to be iron, or some other metal, in huge plates, whose sutures or joints occasioned the depression. The entire surface of this metallic enclosure was rudely daubed in all the hideous and repulsive devices to which the charnel superstition of the monks has given rise. The figures of fiends in aspects of menace, with skeleton forms, and other more really fearful images, overspread and disfigured the walls. I observed that the outlines of these monstrosities were sufficiently distinct, but that the colors seemed faded and blurred, as if from the effects of a damp atmosphere. I now noticed the floor, too, which was of stone. In the centre yawned the circular pit from whose jaws I had escaped; but it was the only one in the dungeon.

All this I saw indistinctly and by much effort — for my personal condition had been greatly changed during slumber. I now lay upon my back, and at full length, on a species of low framework of wood. To this I was securely bound by a long strap resembling a surcingle. It passed in many convolutions about my limbs and body, leaving at liberty only my head, and my left arm to such extent, that I could, by dint of much exertion, supply myself with food from an earthen dish which lay by my side on the floor. I saw, to my horror, that the pitcher had been removed. I say, to my horror — for I was consumed with intolerable thirst. This thirst it appeared to be the design of my persecutors to stimulate — for the food in the dish was meat pungently seasoned.

Looking upward, I surveyed the ceiling of my prison. It was some thirty or forty feet overhead, and constructed much as the side walls. In one of its panels a very singular figure riveted my whole attention. It was the painted figure of Time as he is commonly represented, save that, in lieu of a scythe, he held what, at a casual glance, I supposed to be the pictured image of a huge pendulum, such as we see on antique clocks. There was something, however, in the appearance of this machine which caused me to regard it more attentively. While I gazed directly upward at it, (for its position was immediately over my own,) I fancied that I saw it in
motion. In an instant afterward the fancy was confirmed. Its sweep was brief, and of course slow. I watched it for some minutes, somewhat in fear, but more in wonder. Wearied at length with observing its dull movement, I turned my eyes upon the other objects in the cell.

A slight noise attracted my notice, and, looking to the floor, I saw several enormous rats traversing it. They had issued from the well, which lay just within view to my right. Even then, while I gazed, they came up in troops, hurriedly, with ravenous eyes, allured by the scent of the meat. From this it required much effort and attention to scare them away.

It might have been half an hour, perhaps even an hour, (for I could take but imperfect note of time) before I again cast my eyes upward. What I then saw, confounded and amazed me. The sweep of the pendulum had increased in extent by nearly a yard. As a natural consequence, its velocity was also much greater. But what mainly disturbed me, was the idea that it had perceptibly descended. I now observed — with what horror it is needless to say — that its nether extremity was formed of a crescent of glittering steel, about a foot in length from horn to horn; the horns upward, and the under edge evidently as keen as that of a razor. Like a razor also, it seemed massy and heavy, tapering from the edge into a solid and broad structure above. It was appended to a weighty rod of brass, and the whole hissed as it swung through the air.

I could no longer doubt the doom prepared for me by monkish ingenuity in torture. My cognizance of the pit had become known to the inquisitorial agents — the pit, whose horrors had been destined for so bold a recusant as myself — the pit, typical of hell, and regarded by rumor as the Ultima Thule of all their punishments. The plunge into this pit I had avoided by the merest of accidents, and I knew that surprise, or entrapment into torment, formed an important portion of all the grotesquerie of these dungeon deaths. Having failed to fall, it was no part of the demon plan to hurl me into the abyss; and thus (there being no alternative) a different and a milder destruction awaited me. Milder! I half smiled in my agony as I thought of such application of such a term.

What boots it to tell of the long, long hours of horror more than mortal, during which I counted the rushing oscillations of the steel! Inch by inch — line by line — with a descent only appreciable at intervals that seemed ages — down and still down it came! Days passed — it might have been that many days passed — ere it swept so closely over me as to fan me with its acrid breath. The odor of the sharp steel forced itself into my nostrils. I prayed — I wearied heaven with my prayer for its more speedy descent. I grew frantically mad, and struggled to force myself upward against the sweep of the fearful scimitar. And then I fell suddenly calm, and lay smiling at the glittering death, as a child at some rare bauble.
There was another interval of utter insensibility; it was brief; for, upon again lapsing into life, there had been no perceptible descent in the pendulum. But it might have been long — for I knew there were demons who took note of my swoon, and who could have arrested the vibration at pleasure. Upon my recovery, too, I felt very — oh, inexpressibly — sick and weak, as if through long inanition. Even amid the agonies of that period, the human nature craved food. With painful effort I outstretched my left arm as far as my bonds permitted, and took possession of the small remnant which had been spared me by the rats. As I put a portion of it within my lips, there rushed to my mind a half-formed thought of joy — of hope. Yet what business had I with hope? It was, as I say, a half-formed thought — man has many such, which are never completed. I felt that it was of joy — of hope; but I felt also that it had perished in its formation. In vain I struggled to perfect — to regain it. Long suffering had nearly annihilated all my ordinary powers of mind. I was an imbecile — an idiot.

The vibration of the pendulum was at right angles to my length. I saw that the crescent was designed to cross the region of the heart. It would fray the serge of my robe — it would return and repeat its operations — again — and again. Notwithstanding its terrifically wide sweep, (some thirty feet or more,) and the hissing vigor of its descent, sufficient to sunder these very walls of iron, still the fraying of my robe would be all that, for several minutes, it would accomplish. And at this thought I paused. I dared not go farther than this reflection. I dwelt upon it with a pertinacity of attention — as if, in so dwelling, I could arrest here the descent of the steel. I forced myself to ponder upon the sound of the crescent as it should pass across the garment — upon the peculiar thrilling sensation which the friction of cloth produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity until my teeth were on edge.

Down — steadily down it crept. I took a frenzied pleasure in contrasting its downward with its lateral velocity. To the right — to the left — far and wide — with the shriek of a damned spirit! to my heart, with the stealthy pace of the tiger! I alternately laughed and howled, as the one or the other idea grew predominant.

Down — certainly, relentlessly down! It vibrated within three inches of my bosom! I struggled violently — furiously — to free my left arm. This was free only from the elbow to the hand. I could reach the latter, from the platter beside me, to my mouth, with great effort, but no farther. Could I have broken the fastenings above the elbow, I would have seized and attempted to arrest the pendulum. I might as well have attempted to arrest an avalanche!

Down — still unceasingly — still inevitably down! I gasped and struggled at each vibration. I shrunk convulsively at its every sweep. My eyes followed its outward or upward whirls with the eagerness of the most unmeaning despair; they closed themselves spasmodically at the descent, although death would have been a relief, oh, how unspeakable! Still I quivered in every nerve to think how slight a sinking of the machinery would precipitate that keen, glistening axe
upon my bosom. It was hope that prompted the nerve to quiver — the frame to shrink. It was hope — the hope that triumphs on the rack — that whispers to the death-condemned even in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

I saw that some ten or twelve vibrations would bring the steel in actual contact with my robe — and with this observation there suddenly came over my spirit all the keen, collected calmness of despair. For the first time during many hours — or perhaps days — I thought. It now occurred to me, that the bandage, or surcingle, which enveloped me, was unique. I was tied by no separate cord. The first stroke of the razor-like crescent athwart any portion of the band, would so detach it that it might be unwound from my person by means of my left hand. But how fearful, in that case, the proximity of the steel! The result of the slightest struggle, how deadly! Was it likely, moreover, that the minions of the torturer had no foreseen and provided for this possibility? Was it probable that the bandage crossed my bosom in the track of the pendulum? Dreading to find my faint, and, as it seemed, my last hope frustrated, I so far elevated my head as to obtain a distinct view of my breast. The surcingle enveloped my limbs and body close in all directions — save in the path of the destroying crescent.

Scarcely had I dropped my head back into its original position, when there flashed upon my mind what I cannot better describe than as the unformed half of that idea of deliverance to which I have previously alluded, and of which a moiety only floated indeterminately through my brain when I raised food to my burning lips. The whole thought was now present — feeble, scarcely sane, scarcely definite — but still entire. I proceeded at once, with the nervous energy of despair, to attempt its execution.

For many hours the immediate vicinity of the low framework upon which I lay, had been literally swarming with rats. They were wild, bold, ravenous — their red eyes glaring upon me as if they waited but for motionlessness on my part to make me their prey. “To what food,” I thought, “have they been accustomed in the well?”

They had devoured, in spite of all my efforts to prevent them, all but a small remnant of the contents of the dish. I had fallen into an habitual see-saw, or wave of the hand about the platter; and, at length, the unconscious uniformity of the movement deprived it of effect. In their voracity, the vermin frequently fastened their sharp fangs in my fingers. With the particles of the oily and spicy viand which now remained, I thoroughly rubbed the bandage wherever I could reach it; then, raising my hand from the floor, I lay breathlessly still.

At first, the ravenous animals were startled and terrified at the change — at the cessation of movement. They shrank alarmedly back; many sought the well. But this was only for a moment. I had not counted in vain upon their voracity. Observing that I remained without motion, one or
two of the boldest leaped upon the fame-work [[frame-work]], and smelt at the surcingle. This seemed the signal for a general rush. Forth from the well they hurried in fresh troops. They clung to the wood — they overran it, and leaped in hundreds upon my person. The measured movement of the pendulum disturbed them not at all. Avoiding its strokes, they busied themselves with the anointed bandage. They pressed — they swarmed upon me in ever accumulating heaps. They writhed upon my throat; their cold lips sought my own; I was half stifled by their thronging pressure; disgust, for which the world has no name, swelled my bosom, and chilled, with a heavy clamminess, my heart. Yet one minute, and I felt that the struggle would be over. Plainly I perceived the loosening of the bandage. I knew that in more than one place it must be already severed. With a more than human resolution I lay still.

Nor had I erred in my calculations — nor had I endured in vain. I at length felt that I was free. The surcingle hung in ribands from my body. But the stroke of the pendulum already pressed upon my bosom. It had divided the serge of the robe. It had cut through the linen beneath. Twice again it swung, and a sharp sense of pain shot through every nerve. But the moment of escape had arrived. At a wave of my hand my deliverers hurried tumultuously away. With a steady movement — cautious, sidelong, shrinking, and slow — I slid from the embrace of the bandage and beyond the reach of the scimitar. For the moment, at least, I was free.

Free! — and in the grasp of the Inquisition! I had scarcely stepped from my wooden bed of horror upon the stone floor of the prison, when the motion of the hellish machine ceased, and I beheld it drawn up, by some invisible force, through the ceiling. This was a lesson which I took desperately to heart. My every motion was undoubtedly watched. Free! — I had but escaped death in one form of agony, to be delivered unto worse than death in some other. With that thought I rolled my eyes nervously around on the barriers of iron that hemmed me in. Something unusual — some change which, at first, I could not appreciate distinctly — it was obvious, had taken place in the apartment. For many minutes of a dreamy and trembling abstraction, I busied myself in vain, unconnected conjecture. During this period, I became aware, for the first time, of the origin of the sulphurous light which illumined the cell. It proceeded from a fissure, about half an inch in width, extending entirely around the prison at the base of the walls, which thus appeared, and were completely separated from the floor. I endeavored, but of course in vain, to look through the aperture.

As I arose from the attempt, the mystery of the alteration in the chamber broke at once upon my understanding. I have observed that, although the outlines of the figures upon the walls were sufficiently distinct, yet the colors seemed blurred and indefinite. These colors had now assumed, and were momentarily assuming, a startling and most intense brilliancy, that gave to the spectral and fiendish portraitures an aspect that might have thrilled even firmer nerves than my own. Demon eyes, of a wild and ghastly vivacity, glared upon me in a thousand directions,
where none had been visible before, and gleamed with the lurid lustre of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal.

Unreal! — Even while I breathed there came to my nostrils the breath of the vapor of heated iron! A suffocating odor pervaded the prison! A deeper glow settled each moment in the eyes that glared at my agonies! A richer tint of crimson diffused itself over the pictured horrors of blood. I panted! I gasped for breath! There could be no doubt of the design of my tormentors — oh! most unrelenting! oh! most demoniac of men! I shrank from the glowing metal to the centre of the cell. Amid the thought of the fiery destruction that impended, the idea of the coolness of the well came over my soul like balm. I rushed to its deadly brink. I threw my straining vision below. The glare from the enkindled roof illumined its inmost recesses. Yet, for a wild moment, did my spirit refuse to comprehend the meaning of what I saw. At length it forced — it wrestled its way into my soul — it burned itself in upon my shuddering reason. Oh! for a voice to speak! — oh! horror! — oh! any horror but this! With a shriek, I rushed from the margin, and buried my face in my hands — weeping bitterly.

The heat rapidly increased, and once again I looked up, shuddering as with a fit of the ague. There had been a second change in the cell — and now the change was obviously in the form. As before, it was in vain that I at first endeavored to appreciate or understand what was taking place. But not long was I left in doubt. The Inquisitorial vengeance had been hurried by my two-fold escape, and there was to be no more dallying with the King of Terrors. The room had been square. I saw that two of its iron angles were now acute — two, consequently, obtuse. The fearful difference quickly increased with a low rumbling or moaning sound. In an instant the apartment had shifted its form into that of a lozenge. But the alteration stopped not here — I neither hoped nor desired it to stop. I could have clasped the red walls to my bosom as a garment of eternal peace. “Death,” I said, “any death but that of the pit!” Fool! might I have not known that into the pit it was the object of the burning iron to urge me? Could I resist its glow? or if even that, could I withstand its pressure? And now, flatter and flatter grew the lozenge, with a rapidity that left me no time for contemplation. Its centre, and of course, its greatest width, came just over the yawning gulf. I shrank back — but the closing walls pressed me resistlessly onward. At length for my seared and writhing body there was no longer an inch of foothold on the firm floor of the prison. I struggled no more, but the agony of my soul found vent in one loud, long, and final scream of despair. I felt that I tottered upon the brink — I averted my eyes —

There was a discordant hum of human voices! There was a loud blast as of many trumpets! There was a harsh grating as of a thousand thunders! The fiery walls rushed back! An outstretched arm caught my own as I fell, fainting, into the abyss. It was that of General Lasalle. The French army had entered Toledo. The Inquisition was in the hands of its enemies.
Simon R. A. Fricker

Contretemps

Violin & Pianoforte

20th April 2010
Simon R. A. Fricker

Contretemps

Violin & Pianoforte

Duration: ca. 3’20’’

20th April 2010

For Albert Edward Fricker

8th November 1923 – 10th September 2010

Revised 15th December 2012
'Contretemps’ - Score
Simon R. A. Fricker

Awaken

Symphony Orchestra

31st December 2010
Simon R. A. Fricker

Awaken

Symphony Orchestra

Score in Concert Pitch
Duration: ca. 11’36”

31st December 2010

For Albert Edward Fricker

8th November 1923 – 10th September 2010

Revised 14th December 2012
Instrumentation

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoons
4 French Horns
3 Trumpets
2 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Tuba
Timpani
Glockenspiel
Xylophone
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
Picc.

Fl. & 2

Ob. & 2

Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn. & 2

Hn.

Tpt. & 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. & 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Glock.

Xyl.

Vln. 1

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

con sord.

senza sord.

senza sord.

'Awakening' - Score
Simon R. A. Fricker
Based upon a story by Edgar Allan Poe

The Pit and the Pendulum
La Historia Cantada

A Work for Tenor Voice
(or multiple instances thereof)
& Orchestra

14th December 2012
Simon R. A. Fricker
Based upon a story by Edgar Allan Poe

The Pit and the Pendulum

La Historia Cantada

A Work for Tenor Voice
(or multiple instances thereof)

& Orchestra

Score in Concert Pitch
Duration: ca. 90 minutes

14th December 2012

For Albert Edward Fricker

8th November 1923 – 10th September 2010
The Orchestra

Piccolo
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet
Bassoon
Contrabassoon
2 French Horns
Timpani
Harp
Celesta
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabass
(6, 6, 4, 3, 2)
The Pit and the Pendulum

Edgar Allan Poe

Simon R. A. Fricker

Plaintively \( \frac{1}{4} = 54 \)

Piccolo

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Bassoon

Contrabassoon

Horn in F

Horn in F

Timpani

Harp

Tenor Solo

Celesta

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

© Simon R. A. Fricker 14th December 2012 Tel. 01983 406490 Mob. 07971 163123 E-mail stricker@talktalk.net
*The Pit and the Pendulum* - Score
I was sick unto death, with that long agony.
and when they at length un-bound me, and I was permit- ted to sit,
sound of the in-qui-si-tor-i-al voices seemed merged in one dreamy in-do-ter-mi-nate express.
It conveyed to my soul the idea of revolution—perhaps from its association in fancy with the burt of a
Poco più mosso \( \dot{=} \) 70

mill wheel. This only for a brief period; for presently I heard no more. Yet, for a while, I saw; but with how
terrible an ex-ag-ger-a-tion!
I saw the lips of the black-robed judges.
They appeared to me white — whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words — and thin even to grotesqueness;
I saw that the decrees of what to me was Fate, were still issuing from those lips.
I saw them writhe with a dead-by lo-cu-tion. I saw them fash-ion the sylla-bles of my name; and I
my vision fell upon the seven tall candles upon the table. At first they wore the aspect of charity and seemed
The Pit and the Pendulum - Score

poco rall.

Meno mosso \( \dot{\gamma} = 60 \)
an-gel forms be-came mean-ing-less spec-tres, with heads of flame, and I saw that from them there would be no help. And then there...
The Pit and the Pendulum - Score

stole in-to my fan-cy, like a rich mu-si-call note, the thought of what sweet rest there must be in the grave, The thought came
feel and en-ter-tain it, the fi-gures of the ju-dges van-ished, as if ma-gi-cal-ly, from be-fore me; the tall can-dles sank in-to
and stillness and night were the universe I had swooned.

rall.
Picc
Fl
Ob
Cl
Bsn
Cbsn
Hn
Hn
Timp
Hp
T. Solo
Cel
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla
Vc
Ch

but still will not say that all of consciousness was lost. What of it there remained I will not attempt to define, or

*The Pit and the Pendulum* - Score
In de-li-ri-um — no! In a swoon — no! In death — no! E-ven in the grave all is not lost.
most profound of sham-bers, we break the gos-sa-mer web of some dream. Yet
In the return to life from the swoon there are two stages; first,
first, we should find these impressions eloquent in memories of the gulf beyond...
He who has never swooned, is not

*poco accel.*

*The Pit and the Pendulum* - Score
”The Pit and the Pendulum” - Score
down—till a hideous dizziness oppressed me at the mere idea of the in-ter-mi-na-ble-ness of the descent. They tell also of a vague
Then comes a sense of sud.den mo.non.less through.out all things, as if those who bore me (a ghast.ly train!) had out. run, in their des.cent, the

'The Pit and the Pendulum' Score
I call to mind flat-ness and damp-ness; and then all is mad-ness — the mad-ness of a mem-o-ry which
sound _ the tumultuous motion of the heart, and, in my ears, the sound of it beating _
Then a pause in which all is blank. Then again sound, and mo-tion, and touch—a ting-ling sen-sa-tion per-va-ding...
thought, and shud-der-ing terror, and earn-est en-deav-our to com-pre-hend my true state. Then a strong de-sire to
poco rit.
far... I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay, upon my back, un-bound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon...
some-thing damp and hard __________  There____ I suf-fered it to re-main for ma-ny min-utes,_________ while I
dreaded the first glance at objects a-round me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horri-bale, but that I grew a-ghast
rall.  
Meno mosso $\frac{j}{e} = 70$

Con moto $\frac{j}{e} = 120$

Piccolo

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet

Bassoon

Cello

Horn

(only if two percussionists)

Timpani

Harp

T. Solo

Cellos

Viola

Violin I

Violin II

Viola da Gamba

Violoncello

(The Pit and the Pendulum)
I quickly unclosed my eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night en-
from that point to deduce my real condition. The
rall.

Had I been re-man-ded to my dun-geon, to a-wait the next sac-rifice, which would not take place for man-y months?

\*The Po and the Pendulum\* - Score
This I at once saw could not be. Vic-tims had been in im-medi-ate de-mand. More o-ver, my dun-geon, as
fearful idea now sud-den-ly drove the blood in tor-rents up-on my heart, and for a brief per-i-od, I once more re-lapsed in-to insen-

thrust my arms wildly above and around me in all directions. I felt no thing yet.
pore, and stood in cold big beads upon my forehead. The agony of suspense, grew at last intolerable, and I
cautiously moved forward with my arms extended, and my eyes strain-ing from their sock-ets, in the hope of catch-ing some faint ray of
"The Pit and the Pendulum" Score
And, now, as I still continued to step causiously...
\begin{musicstaff}
\begin{align*}
\text{Picc.} & \quad \text{Fl.} \\
\text{Ob.} & \quad \text{Cl.} \\
\text{Bsn.} & \quad \text{Cbsn.} \\
\text{Hn.} & \quad \text{Hn.} \\
\text{Timp.} & \quad \text{Hp.} \\
\text{T. Solo} & \quad \text{Cel.} \\
\text{Vln. I} & \quad \text{Vln. II} \\
\text{Vla.} & \quad \text{Va.} \\
\text{Vc.} & \quad \text{Cb.}
\end{align*}
\end{musicstaff}

\text{onward... there came throng-ing u-pon my recollection a thousand vague rumors of the horrors of To-}
always deemed them— but yet strange,
and too ghastly to repeat,
save in a whisper.
Was I left to perish of starvation
in this subterranean world of
cold.
up; stepping with all the care-ful dis-trust with which cer-tain an-tique nar-ra-tives had inspired me.
This process, however, afforded me no means of ascertaining the dimensions of my dungeon; as I
might make its circuit, and return to the point whence I set out, with-our being aware of the fact, so perfectly uniform seemed the
led in-to the in-qu-i-si-tor-i-al cham-ber; but it was gone; my clothes had been ex-changed for a wrap-per; of course
I had thought of forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the ma-son-ry, so as to i-

"The Pit and the Pendulum" - Score
den-ti-fy  
my point of de-pature.

The dif-fi-culty, ne-ver-the-less, was but triv-i-al; al-though,

'The Pit and the Pendulum' Score
I tore a part of the hem from the robe, and placed the fragment at full length, and at
*The Pit and the Pendulum* - Score
slippery I staggered onward for some time, when I stumbled and fell. My excessive fatigue induced me to re-
side me a loaf and a pitch with wa-ter.

I was too much ex-haust-ed to re-flect u-pon this cir-cum-

The Pit and the Pendulum - Score
molto accel.

"The Pit and the Pendulum" - Score
tour a-round the pri-on, and with much toil, came at last u-pon the frag-ment of the serge.
poco accel.  \hspace{8.5cm} \textbf{Più mosso} \cdot \text{\textit{j \cdot 76}}

\textbf{Picc.}

\textbf{Fl.}

\textbf{Ob.}

\textbf{Cl.}

\textbf{Bsn.}

\textbf{Cbn.}

\textbf{Hn.}

\textbf{Timp.}

\textbf{Hp.}

\textbf{T. Solo}

\textbf{Ccl.}

\textbf{Vln. I}

\textbf{Vln. II}

\textbf{Vla.}

\textbf{Vc.}

\textbf{Ch.}

\textit{The Pit and the Pendulum} - Score
u-pon re-sum-ing my walk, I had count-ed for-ty-eight more -- when I ar-rived at the rag.
There were in all, then, a hundred paces, and, admitting two paces to the yard.

I pre-
molto accel.

and thus I could form no guess at the shape of the vault; for
length, how-ev-er, I took cour-age, and did not hesi-tate to step firm-ly -- en-dea-vour-ing to cross in as di-rec t a line as pos-si-ble.
I had advanced some ten or twelve pages in this manner, when the
remnant of the torn hem of my robe be-came en-tangled be-tween my legs. I stepped on it, and fell vio-lent-by on my face.
In the con-fu-sion at-tend-ing my fall, I did not im-me-di-ate-ly ap-pre-hend a some-what start-ling cir-cum-stance.
'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
At the same time, my fore-head seemed bathed in a clam-my va-pour, and the pe-cu-li-ar smell of de-cayed
fun-gus a-rose to my nos-trils, I put for-ward my arm, and shud-dered to find that I had fal-len, at the ve-ry brink of a cir-cu-lar
Grooping a-bout the ma-son-ry, just be-low the mar-gin, I suc-ceed-ed in dis-loc-ting a small
Più mosso $\approx 90$

accel.

fragment, and let it fall into the abyss.

accel.

Più mosso $\approx 90$
Succeed by loud echo. At the same moment, there came a sound resembling the quick
o-pen-ing, and as ra-pid clo-sing of a door o-ver-head, while a faint gleam of light flashed
sud-den-ly through the gloom, and as sud-den-ly faded away, I saw
caped.  
Ano-ther step be-fore my fall,  
and the world had seen me no more.  
And the death just-a-void-ed, was of that we-ev
To the victims of its Tyranny, there was the choice of death with its direst physical agonies, or death with its most hideous moral.
By long suffering, my nerves had been unstrung, until I
grasped my way back to the wall — resolving there to perish rather than risk the terrors of the wells, of which my imagi-
might have had courage to end my misery at once, by a plunge into one of these abysses, but now I was the veriest of
that the sudden extinction of life formed no part of their most horrible plan.
ta-tion of spi-rit kept me a-wake for ma-ny long hours; but at length I a-gain slum-bered.

"The Pit and the Pendulum" Score
Upon arousing, I found by my side, a loaf and a
emp-tied the ves-sel at draft.  It must have been drugged -- for scarce-ly had I drunk, be-fore I be-ca-me ir-re sis-ti-bly drow-ny --
A deep sleep fell upon me—
a sleep like that of death.
How long it lasted, of course, I know not, but when,

'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
Once again, I un-closed my eyes, the

"The Pit and the Pendulum" Score
objects around me were visible. By a wild, sulphurous lustre, the origin of which at first I could not de-
"The Pit and the Pendulum" - Score
mi-nutes this fact oc-ca-sioned me a world of vain trou-ble;_ vain in-deed—_ for what could be of less im-por-tance,
soul took a wild interest in trifles, and I busied myself in endeavors to ac-

'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
I must then have been within a pace or two of the fragment of serge, in fact, I had
wa-king, I must have re-turned a-pon my ships— thus sup-po-sing the cir-cuit near-ly dou-ble what it ac-tual-ly was

My con.
fusion of mind prevented me from observing that I began my tour with the wall to the left, and ended it...
with the wall to the right, I had been deceived, too in respect to the shape of the enclosure.
In feeling my way, I had found many angles, and thus deduced an idea of great irregularity.
The angles were simply those of a few slight depressions, or
What I had taken for masonry seemed now to be iron, or some other metal, in huge plates, whose su-tures or joints o-casioned the de-
and repulsive devices to which the charnel superstition of the monks has given rise. The figures of fiends in
as-pects of me-nace, with ske-le-ton forms, and other more real - ly fear-ful in-ag-es, o-ver-spread and dis-ti-gared the walls.
I observed that the outline of these monsters were sufficiently distinct.
but that the colours seemed faded and blurred, as if from the effects of a
stone. In the centre yawned the circular pit from whose jaws I had escaped, but it was the only one in the
All this I saw distinctly and by much effort for my personal consolation had been...
spec-ies of low frame-work of wood. To this I was securely bound by a long strap resembling a sur-cin-gle. It passed in
ma-nucon-vo-la-tions a-bout my limbs and body, leaving at li-ber-ty on-ly my head, and my left arm to such ex-tent, that I
I saw, to my horror, that the pitcher had been removed. I say, to my horror -- for I was consumed with in- tolerable...
thirst. This thirst it appeared to be the design
of my per-se-cu-tors to stimu-
late -- for the food in the dish was meat
pun-gent-ly
pan, a very singular figure

It was the painted figure of Time
as he is common-ly re-pre-sented,

save that, in lieu of a scythe,

he held, what at a casual glance, I sup-
While I gazed directly upward at it,
(for its position was immediately
over my own,) I fancied that I saw
it in motion.
Its sweep was brief, and of course slow. I watched it for some minutes, somewhat in fear, but more in
wonder. Weary at length with observing its dull movement, I turned my eyes up the other objects in the cell.
A slight noise attracted my notice, and, looking to the floor, I saw several enormous rats trad-
ver-sing it. They had is-sued from the well, which lay just with-in view to my right. E-von then, while I gazed, they
came up in troops, hurriedly, with ravenous eyes, allured by the scent of the meat. From this required much effort and at-
ten-sion to scare them a-way.
time) before I again cast my eyes upward. What then I saw confounded and amazed me.

The

rall.

‘The Pit and the Pendulum’ - Score
But what mainly disturbed me was the idea that it had perceptibly des-
pen-ded to a weigh-ty rod of brass, and the whole hissed as it swung through the air, I could
cog-ni-sance of the pit had be-come known to the in-qui-si-tor-i-al a- gen-tis—the pit, whose hor-rous had been des-tined for so
bold a re-cu-sant as my self — the pit — ty-pi-cal of hell, and re-gar-ded by ru-mour as the Ul-ti-ma Thule of all their
The plunge into this pit I had avoided by the merest of accidents and, 1
deaths, 

Having failed to fall, it was no part of the demon plan to hurl me into the abyss.
Smiled in my agony as I thought of such application of such a term. What boot is to tell of the long, long hours of
Fl.  
Ob.  
Cl.  
Bsn.  
Cbn.  
Hn.  
Hn.  
Timp.  
Hp.  
T. Solo  
Cbn.  
Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Via.  
Vc.  
Ch.

line by line — with a des-cent on-ly ap- pre- ci-able at in-ter-val that seemed a- ges — down and still

"The Pit and the Pendulum" Score
down it came! Days passed— it might have been that many days passed— ere it swept so close— over me as to
sud-den-ly calm, and lay smil-ing at the glit-ter-ing death, as a child at some rare bau-ble.
Picc
Fl
Ob
Cl
Bsn
Cbsn
Hn
Hn
Hn
Timp
Harp
T. Solo
Cel
Vln. I
Vln. II
Via
Vc
Ch

There was a no-th-er in-terval of ut-ter in-sen-si-ly.
it was brief for, u-pon a-gain lap-sing in-to life, there had been no per-
cep-ti-ble des-cent in the pen-di-hum.
But it might have been long--for I knew there were
demons who took note of my
swoon, and who could have ar-

'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
and weak, as if through long inanition.
Even amid the agonies of that period, the human nature craved...
With painful effort I outstretched my left arm as far as my bonds permitted, and took po-
there rushed to my mind a half-formed thought of joy -- of hope.

accel.

Piu mosso \( \downarrow = 70 \)
Ye, what bus-iness had I with hope?

It was, as I say, a half-formed thought —
The Pit and the Pendulum - Score
The vibration of the pendulum was at right angles to my length. I saw that the...
walls of iron, still the fraying of my robe would be all that, for several minutes, it would accomplish. And
til my teeth were on edge. Down steadily it crept, I took a frenzied
*The Pit and the Pendulum* - Score
free my left arm. This was free only from the elbow to the hand. I could reach the
later, from the platter beside me, to my mouth with great effort, but no farther. Could I have

*The Pit and the Pendulum* - Score
broken the fastenings, above the elbow, I would have seized and at-temp-ted to ar-rest the pendulum. I might as
well have at-tempt-ed to ar-rest an a-va-lanche! Down-- still un-cea-singly — still in-ev-ir-ab-ly

“The Pit and the Pendulum” Score
ea - ger - ness of the most un - mean - ing des - pair; they closed them-selves spas-mod-i-cally at the des-
I, in despair, though death would have been a relief, oh, how unspeakable! Still I quivered in every
nerve to think how slight a sinking of the machinery would pre-cipitate that keen, glist-en-ing axe upon my bosom
I saw that some ten or twelve vibrations would bring the steel in actual contact with my robe—
It now occurred to me, that the
band-aid, or sur-cingle, which en-vel-oped me, was un-ique, I was tied by no se-pa-rate cord, The first
might be unwound from my person by means of my left hand. But how fearful, in that case, the proximity of the
that the minions of the torturer had not foreseen and proposed for this possibility. Was it probable that the
cin-gle en-vel-oped my limbs and bo-dy close in all di-rec-tions save in the path of the des-troy-ing cres-cent
Sci. had I dropped my head back into its original position, when there flashed upon my mind what I cannot better describe than as the unformed half of that idea of deliverance to which I have previously alluded, and of which a moiety only floated indeterminately through my brain when I raised food to my burning lips. The whole thought now was present — fieble, scarcely sane, scarcely definite — but still entire. I proceeded at once, with the nervous energy of despair, to attempt its execution. 
red eyes glaring upon me as if they waited but for motionlessness on my part to make me their prey. “To what food,” I thought,
They had devoured, in spite of all my efforts to prevent them, all but a small remnant of the
In their voracity, the vermiform-fasted their sharp fangs in my fingers.
With the partic-l-es of the oil-y and spi-cy vi-and which now re-mained,
thoroughly rubbed... the bend... where... I could reach it... then raising my hand from the floor.
I lay breathless still.

At first, the ravenous animals were
'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
Well, but this was only for a moment. I had not counted in vain upon their vanity. Ob-

'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
ser-ving that I re-mained with-out mo-tion, one or two of the bold-est leaped up-pon the frame-work and smelt at the sur-cin-gle.
This seemed the signal for a general rush. Forth from the
well they hastened in fresh troops

They clung to the wood—threw over ran it, and leaped in hundreds upon my

'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
The measured movement of the pendulum disturbed them not at
throat, their cold lips sought my own, I was half sti - fled by their
‘The Pit and the Pendulum’ Score
I at length felt that I was
The sur-cin-glue hung in ri-bands from my bo-dy.
'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
gain it swung, and a sharp sense of pain
shot through every nerve.
But the moment of escape had arrived.
At a wave of my hand  my de-liv-er-er  hurried tri-um-phant away.
I slid from the em-brace of the band-age and be-yond the reach of the sci-mi-tar

For the mo-ment, at least, I was
ceased, and I held it drawn up, by some invisible force, through the ceiling. This was a lesson which I took.

'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
"The Pit and the Pendulum" - Score
o-regin of the sul-phur-ous light which li-la-mined the cell. It pro-ceed-ed from a fus-ure, a-bout half an inch in width,
ex-tend-ing en-tire-ly a-round the pri-son at the base of the walls, which thus ap-peared, and were com-plete-ly sep-ar-at-ed from the floor.
I endeavoured, but of course in vain, to look through the aperture.

As I a-rose from the at-tempt, the mys-te-ry of the al-ter-a-tion of the
walls were suf-fi-cient-ly dis-tinct, yet the col-ours seemed blurring and in-de-fi-nite.
These col-ours had now as-sumed, and were...
wild and ghastly vi-va-ci-ty, glared u-pon me in a thou-sand di-rec-tions, where none had been vi-sible be-fore, and
The Pitt and the Pendulum - Score
well came o-ver my soul like balm. I rushed to its dead-ly brink. I threw my strain-ing vi-sion be-

'Pam and the Pendulum' - Score
pon my shud-der-ing rea-son. Oh! for a voice to speak! -- oh! hor-ror! -- oh! a-ny hor-ror but this!

"The Pit and the Pendulum" - Score
With a shriek, I rushed from the margin, and buried my face in my hands weeping bitterly.
The heat rapidly increased, and once again I looked up,
un.der. stand what was ta. king place. But not long was I left in doubte. The
In quasi-toral ven-gance had been hur-ried by my two-fold es-cape, and there was to be no more
The room had been square.
I saw that two of its iron angles were now acute, two, conjunctly, obtuse. The fearful difference.
But the alteration stopped not there—
I neither hoped or desired it to
stop. I could have clasped the red walls to my bosom as a garment of eternal peace. "Death," I said.
flatter and flatter grew the lozenge, with a rapidity that left me no time for contemplation.
centre, and of course, its greatest width, came just over the yawning gulf. I shrank back— but the closing walls pressed me resistibly
onward

At length for my seared and wris-thing bo-

dy

'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
there was no longer an inch of foot hold on the firm floor of the prison. I struggled no more,
Flutter

There was a discordant hum of human voices!

‘The Pit and the Pendulum’ - Score
"The Pit and the Pendulum" Score

outstretched arm caught my own as I fell, fainting, into the abyss. It was
le - do  The  In - qui - si - tion was in the  hand - s  of its  en-en-emies

'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score
Meno mosso  \( \approx 50 \)

'The Pit and the Pendulum' - Score