'THE BRIGHT PLACES OF LIFE AS CLEARLY AS THE DARK': THE MUSIC OF LINDA BUCKLEY

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Abstract: Linda Buckley is one of the leading figures in the thriving Irish new music scene, a composer whose work draws together many different elements, from spectralism, to ambient electronica, to minimalism and Irish traditional music. This article uses five works created in the last decade as lenses through which to examine a creative practice in which these apparently disparate elements have become increasingly integrated. From the 2008 string trio, *Fiol*, to the orchestral work *Chiyo* (2011), to *Torann* for large ensemble and electronics (2015), and finally to two works with string quartet, *ó íochtar mara* (2015) and *Haza* (2016), these works represent stages within the evolution of a highly distinctive musical language.

A bird lifting from clear water

As is the case for many Irish artists of her generation, Linda Buckley inhabits a world that is simultaneously transnational and local. During her lifetime the repressive influence of the Catholic Church has waned in the Republic of Ireland, a process marked decisively by the referendum on equal marriage in 2015, and there has been a concomitant growth in national self-confidence. Nevertheless, Buckley has been relatively unusual in consistently basing her life in Ireland, albeit with regular periods abroad for artist-residencies, in Berlin, Iceland (a particular favourite, of which more later), Sweden, Italy and, most recently, a Fulbright Fellowship in New York.

Earlier generations of artists would leave Ireland to validate their academic and creative credentials, some never returning, and although this became progressively less prevalent after the Republic joined the European Union in 1973 it remains a common career path: undergraduate degree in Ireland, or perhaps in the UK, postgraduate study at one or more centres in the EU or in the USA. Buckley, on the other hand, chose to stay close to home for her first degree, studying at University College Cork and then going on to Trinity College Dublin for her doctoral studies. In any previous era such choices might have seemed parochial, but for someone born in 1979, whose teens and twenties therefore coincided with the boom years of the Irish economy, they must have seemed like very good opportunities.

The optimism fuelled by the Celtic Tiger economy was matched by developments in Irish cultural life and in music the formation in 1997

of the Crash Ensemble was particularly significant. Under the leadership of Donnacha Dennehy it quickly established both a reputation as a formidably good performing ensemble and an identity as a group that could travel its own distinctive path rather than just trying to follow the example of similar-sized new music groups in Vienna, Paris or Amsterdam. Instead of a modern music chamber orchestra, like Klangforum Wien or Ensemble Modern, the musicians of the Crash Ensemble developed a post-minimalist band whose nearest equivalent was the Bang On A Can All Stars.

But while the Crash Ensemble consolidated the belief that new music in Ireland could be just as strong as new music anywhere else, it did less to address the peculiarly Irish dilemma of how transnational new music, that loose collection of evolving genres, styles and tendencies that connects composers and performers around the world, might relate to Irish traditional music. In Europe – western Europe at least – there is no other traditional musical culture with the vitality of that in Ireland, nor with such powerful connections to ideas of nationality, both at home and amongst the Irish diaspora. Generations of Irish musicians have sought ways of relating the music of their homeland with other musical traditions, whether those be rock, jazz or classical, but the relationship between the classical and Irish traditions has been perhaps the most awkward, especially when a symphonic mediation has been attempted, as in Seán Ó Riada's overblown orchestration of the tune 'Roisin Dubh' in his score for the film *Mise Éire* (1959).

Linda Buckley is better qualified than most to resolve this dilemma. She grew up, the youngest of nine children, on her parents' farm on the Old Head of Kinsale, due south from the city of Cork, in a family for whom the singing and playing of Irish music was part of everyday life, albeit leavened by the enthusiasms of her older siblings for contemporary indie pop music.[1] This musical mix continued at university: she has described how as a student at University College Cork – where Ó Riada (1931–71) had himself been a student and later, between 1963 and his death, a teacher – 'a very natural experience for me would be to go into college and have a sean-nós lesson, perform in the Javanese Gamelan ensemble and then study music of the thirteenth century, such as Pérotin'.[2] In the same interview with Bob Gilmore she went on to say that 'I think the range of different musics was hugely important for me and I never really felt that I had to choose between them. I always found very strong connections between them ... they all felt natural'.

Like a slow air

This fluid relationship between different sorts of music is evident in all the works discussed here, but a central preoccupation in Buckley's music is the relationship between traditional and composed music. As I have already suggested, this is perhaps a peculiarly Irish fascination, one that grows out of the continuing strength of the performance practice of Irish traditional and its significance for Irish national identity. From my own perspective, as a composer with both

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[1] For example, Buckley cites the Cocteau Twins 'Great Spangled Fritillary' (1985) as 'having a great impact on me as a kid' (email to Christopher Fox, 26 November 2017).

[2] Bob Gilmore, 'All Collisions End as Static: the Music of Linda Buckley', *Journal of Music* (September 2008), http://journalofmusic.com/focus/all-collisions-end-static-music-linda-buckley.
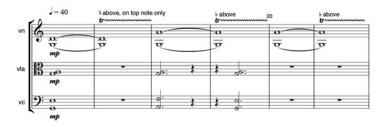
English and German heritage, I find it difficult to imagine what it must feel like to have grown up in a culture where traditional music is not just a quaint ritual for special occasions for the village green or the market square, or a faint echo in a commercial 'folk music' overwhelmed by the hegemony of Anglo-American pop music, but a living language exerting a magnetic force on all the other music around it.

There are other cultures in and around northern Europe where traditional music also continues to thrive. Buckley's interest in incorporating aspects of the folk music cultures of Scandinavia, for example, might even be seen as a creative strategy, a way of discovering how to combine composed music with the traditional music of a different culture before turning to the more complicated issue of how to do this with the music of her own culture. *Fiol* (2008) provides a particularly clear example, a work whose sound world was inspired by the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle, the Hardinfele, or 'fiol' as it was known in the Danish Norwegian of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This instrument is at the heart of Norwegian folk music and is similar in construction to the violin: four of the strings are strung and played like a violin, but the instrument also has an additional four or five sympathetic strings that catch the resonance of the other four.

In her performance notes at the head of the score Buckley asks that the players' tone should be 'quite non-vib throughout – think of a fiddle tone from Norwegian hardangfele, quite pure & sweet'. A similar instruction applies to how the trills in the score are to be played: 'almost like ornamentation in Irish (or Norwegian) traditional music – not strict/classical'.[3] In themselves these instructions might signify no more than a little local colour, but Buckley goes further, reconceiving the function of the string trio in such a way as to remove it from the orbit of 'strict/classical' music. In particular she re-models the ensemble so that instead of it consisting of three individual voices it becomes what she describes as 'a single twelve-stringed "meta-instrument" almost like a hardingfele or Baroque viola d'amore with sympathetic resonating strings'.[4]

In turn the taxonomy of this meta-instrument yields the musical material of *Fiol*. The work begins with double-stops in viola and cello, the cello moving up and down by a second, marked 'sense of slow inhale & exhale'. Open G strings in both instruments provide a ground for the music and when the violin enters it too does so with an open G, adding an open D, then a trill on the D, then A and a trill on the A (see Example 1). Out of these trills, particularly the latter semitonal trill, all the subsequent melodic material evolves and even in its earliest iteration, when it consists of little more than a slow oscillation between two notes, this more melodic writing is marked to be played 'like a slow air'.[5]

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[3] Lina Buckley, *Fiol* (2008), p. 1.
[4] Buckley, *Fiol*, programme note.
[5] Buckley, *Fiol* (2008), violin, bar 27.

Example 1:
Linda Buckley, *Fiol* (2008),
bars 16–21

For about 15 minutes the music ebbs and flows, from denser double-stopped textures to solo passages, but throughout the sounds of open strings and movement by a second are predominant. Two further examples illustrate what is a remarkably disciplined piece of sustained compositional development: the first (see Example 2) a passage in which a richly chordal music gives way to a meditation around B and C; the second a more rhythmically defined canonic passage (see Example 3).

Example 2:
Linda Buckley, *Fiol* (2008),
bars 105–113

Example 3:
Linda Buckley, *Fiol* (2008),
bars 125–129

What is equally remarkable is that at no point does the spinning out of the music seem at all 'strict' or 'classical'. As Example 3 shows, the melodic writing is full of details of articulation, some of which are exchanged between the instruments, but none of these details assumes a significance that one might hear as motivic or thematic in the classical, or contemporary classical, sense. For all its careful composition the music instead has the fluid invention of an improvisation. In *Fiol*, for perhaps the first time in her compositional output, Buckley completely liberates a classical ensemble from its conventional frame of reference: on stage we see the familiar instruments of a string trio but what we hear is the unfolding of music derived not so much from the individual identities of violin, viola and cello but instead from their shared acoustic characteristics.

The beauty of hidden things

Something similar occurs in *Chiyo* (2011) for orchestra. The title is taken from the work of the eighteenth-century haiku poet Chiyo-ni, and Buckley cites three of her poems as a particular inspiration:

> cool clear water
> and fireflies that vanish
> that is all there is . . .
> only in the river
> darkness flows
> fireflies
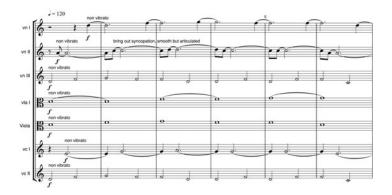> moonflowers
> the beauty
> of hidden things

The music, however, has only two fundamental types of material: melodies that (with two exceptions) rise and fall within the compass of a perfect fifth (see Example 4a), and a rising heptatonic scale made up of two groups of major seconds separated by a minor third (see Example 4b).

Example 4a:
Linda Buckley, *Chiyo*: melodies

Example 4b:
Linda Buckley, *Chiyo*: heptatonic scale

This material is presented in the strings at the start of the work, the melodies first, then the scale, but the dense canonic writing obscures the outlines of the material, particularly the melodies. Example 5 shows the opening, with the melody presented simultaneously in minims in violin III and cello II, at half-speed in viola II and quarter-speed in viola I. Delayed half-speed entries follow: in violin II, a fifth higher; then in cello I, a tone higher; finally in violin I, an octave higher.

Example 5:
Chiyo, bars 1–6

What gives *Chiyo* its paradoxical beauty is that, although none of the later sections is as texturally complicated as the opening, in none of these later sections are these materials stated so clearly. In each of the four large divisions of the work the scale always follows the melodies but the elements of both are fragmented: the melodies may be reduced to a repeated interval or to a series of single notes, the scale may be incomplete, or just a few notes may be looped. Only in the final section does the scale come into focus again, repeated six times by the first horn before finally disappearing heavenwards in the flutes.

It as if each subsequent section is based on a different aural memory of the opening, with different elements of the opening remembered by different parts of the orchestra. The *Chiyo* paradox is that this act of collective remembering by the orchestra, these multiple attempts at an aural analysis of the first section, both illuminate and obscure our own attempts to disentangle the canonic strands of the opening. Nothing that follows the opening matches its 'intense beauty, ecstasy' (the composer's own marking at the head of the score) but that is itself inevitable in a work that is about our inability to recapture the complexity of any single moment.

Magma

Both *Fiol* and *Chiyo* are written for ensembles familiar from European classical music and, for all their compositional individuality, they fall within the conventional technical specifications of that music: no unusual playing techniques, no additional technology. Increasingly, however, such works are becoming unusual in Linda Buckley's output, and the most recent works I want to consider in this article all combine live performance on acoustic instruments with a very distinctive electronic sound world.

As I explained earlier, hers is a rich musical background in which traditional Irish music rubbed shoulders not only with the early-80s post-punk, Goth and indie of her sisters' record collections but also with the complex drones emanating from the Dairymaster milking machines on her parents' farm. It's an unlikely provenance, and one with very particular musical results. We are familiar with a spectral music that has its roots in the analysis of bell sonorities, the overtones of orchestral instruments, the interplay between sounds and resonant spaces, less so with one based in milk production. Similarly, the history of electronic music in the classical domain has tended to prioritise virtuosic studio practice, pushing the envelope of the available technology's potential, and when electronic sounds were combined with live voices and acoustic instruments the conventional expectation was that the electronics would display at least some of the qualities

of the instrumental playing. In Buckley's music, however, the relationship between electronic and instrumental sounds owes much more to an ambient electronica sensibility, with acoustic instruments floating in and on a sea of sustained electronic tones.

Torann (2015) is the most substantial example of this aspect of Buckley's work to date. Written for the Crash Ensemble, it began life, says its composer, as a

> sonic poem to my childhood, … sounds of milking machines and the ebb and flow of the tide at home in the Old Head of Kinsale … are embedded and transformed throughout the electronic aspect of the piece. The title connects to this – torann is Gaelic for 'noise'.[6]

The oceanic ebb and flow is evident from the start, open fifth harmonies in the strings slowly shifting from C to D, then E♭ to F, then by step back down to C. The live instruments are reinforced by grainy versions of themselves in the tape part, and this subtly altered sonority continues as the flute and bass clarinet join in and the modal harmony becomes a little more dissonant.

Gradually the music evolves: D emerges as a focal point in the instrumental parts and in the tape a tight, noise-rich cluster centred on a B is suspended above the ensemble sound. Nearly seven minutes into the piece the instrumental writing becomes more energetic, with repeated chords in the piano and marimba and, eventually, more agitatedly repeated notes in the strings too. By around nine minutes a triplet-based texture centred on F♯ has begun to pulsate across the entire ensemble, loud at first, finally flickering away after a couple of minutes. White-note modal sonorities return, now triads with an added seventh; there's a tiny melodic flourish (see Example 6), a moment of animation in the strings and then, 15 minutes after it began, the tidal flow returns us to that opening C–G fifth.

Example 6:
Linda Buckley, *Torann*, bars 199–201

Some of the composition of *Torann* took place during a residency in Iceland in August 2014, and Buckley has suggested that something of that 'expansive landscape … seeped into my music'. She

[6] Linda Buckley, *Torann*, p. 3.

acknowledges that 'news broke of an impending volcanic eruption' which brought 'something new, . . . the movement of magma . . . tectonic plates shifting'.[7] Certainly the slow shifts in tonal centre, texture density and volatility, can be heard as sonic analogies for the volcanic processes of heat, flow and cooling. The work is also a deeply affective lament for its dedicatee, Bob Gilmore, who died at the beginning of 2015. Buckley writes that 'the piece became about something else, part of the grieving process, but also somehow a celebration of his spirit, resonating through the harmonies and microtones'.[8]

Like waves of the sea

Another northern residency, this time 56 miles east of the Swedish mainland on the Baltic island of Gotland, was the site for work on *ó íochtar mara* (2015), music in which, paradoxically, Buckley might be said to have come closest to her Irish roots. Throughout her life she has been a practitioner of sean nós, the Irish 'old style' of elaborately ornamented solo singing, and *ó íochtar mara* (from ocean's floor) seems to me to be a particularly successful confluence of different musical traditions, drawing together a string quartet, electronics and the voice of Iarla Ó Lionáird. Ó Lionáird is one of the finest contemporary exponents of sean nós, even if, to the dismay of some traditionalists, he is more widely known for his collaborations with musicians from other traditions in groups like the Afro Celt Sound System and, more recently, The Gloaming. Ó Lionáird has also worked with a number of composers, including Ailís Ní Ríain and Donnacha Dennehy,[9] but *ó íochtar mara* achieves a particularly rich symbiosis between his improvisatory skills and Buckley's composed music.

Buckley describes the work as a song-cycle, the four movements based on Gaelic poems taken from a collection edited by Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, *Filíocht ghrá na Gaeilge*.[10] There is an historic progression through the poems: the first, 'Fil Duine' (Gráinne speaks of Diarmuit), is by an anonymous author from the seventh century; the second, 'Cridhe lán do smuaintighthibh' (A heart made full of thought), is by Maghnas Ó Dómhnaill and dates from the sixteenth century; the third is again anonymous, 'A Ógánaigh an chúil cheangailte' (O youth of the loose bound hair), this time from the eighteenth century; the last poem, 'Áimhréadh' (Entanglement), is by Caitlín Maude (1941–82) and a line from it gives the work its title, 'I speak to you every night from ocean's floor'. English translations of excerpts from the four poems, chosen by the composer are given below:

> I
> There is one
> on whom I should gladly gaze,
> to whom I would give the bright world,
> all of it, all of it, though it be an unequal bargain.
> (Translation by Gerard Murphy)

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[7] Buckley, *Torann*, p. 3.
[8] Buckley, *Torann*, p. 3.
[9] Ó Lionáird appears on the title track of Dennehy's *Grá agus Bás* CD (Nonesuch, 2011).
[10] Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, *Filíocht ghrá na Gaeilge* [Love poems in Irish] (Dublin: Cois Life, 2008).

II
A bird lifting from clear water,
A bright sun put out –
such my parting, in troubled tiredness,
from the partner of my heart.
(Translation by Thomas Kinsella)

III
And to me, my dear,
you were sun and moon,
and more than that
you were the snow on the hills,
and more than that still
you were a guiding-light from God,
or the star of knowledge
before and behind me.
(Translation by Ciarán Mac Murchaidh)

IV
I once walked on the beach –
I walked to the water's edge –
wave frolicked with wave –
the white foam tongued my feet –
I slowly raised my eye
And there far out on the deep
where foam and wave tangle
I saw the loneliness in your eye
and the anguish in your face.
(Translation by Ciarán Mac Murchaidh)

Each movement is anchored by a drone and Buckley says that 'when writing I actually used the drones first as a point of departure – weaving lines around them'.[11] In the first movement the drone is centred on B, its sonority based on what sounds like a combination of stretched voice and string tones, and the music begins with Ó Lionáird repeating a rising major second, from the A to B below middle C, on the words 'fil', 'duine', 'frismad', 'buide', 'lemm'. An example from the score would misrepresent the music, however, since Ó Lionáird's ornamentation of each word is subtly different; the performance notes in the score instruct that the 'vocal line may be embellished as desired, with your own ornamentation'.[12] This opening vocal phrase ends on the upper D and four more vocal phrases make up the rest of Ó Lionáird's contribution to this first movement, each rising, the third climactically to the F above middle C. This tritone relationship between starting point and climax is reminiscent of the C–F♯ trajectory of *Torann* but, as in *Torann,* the relationship is modal rather than tonal. Ó Lionáird's final phrase begins on a repeated low E, reiterates the A–B dyad of the opening, and then rises slowly by step to the upper E, confirming this as the movement's Phrygian tonic.

Around Ó Lionáird's voice Buckley weaves simple string patterns, in and around the tessitura of the vocal part, and, as in *Fiol*, these patterns manage to avoid sounding either thematic or motivic. Only once, between the third and last vocal phrases, does the viola reiterate the A–B head motif with which the music began. The second movement works in a similar way – the voice and string writing is more continuous, the overall sense of movement rather quicker and the intervallic movement more consistently by step – but at no point

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[11] Linda Buckley, email to Christopher Fox, 21 September 2017.
[12] Linda Buckley, *ó íochtar mara*, p. 3.

does a particular melodic line or figure emerge as the focus of the music.

In the work of a less technically assured composer this might appear to be a fundamental weakness – diffuse music is usually dull music – but here it becomes the defining characteristic of the music's elusive beauty. Most importantly, this quality of continuous variation is also a defining characteristic of the greatest sean nós singers. The artistry of a singer like Darach Ó Catháin,[13] for example, lies not in his faithfulness to the tunes on which his performance is based, nor in the grain of his voice, but in the subtlety of his ornamentation, pulling apart the identity of the tune. It is this aspect of *ó íochtar mara*, rather than Ó Lionáird's presence, that places it within the tradition of sean nós and, although the concepts of sean nós and composition may be irreconcilable, defines Buckley as a composer.

Working with any musician from outside the tradition of western classical notation always presents technical as well as aesthetic challenges, however. Iarla Ó Lionáird is a musician who habitually seeks opportunities to work beyond Irish traditional music, but he does not read notated music and instead learns scores aurally. This may explain the pared-down quality of the vocal writing in the first, second and fourth movements of *ó íochtar mara* but in the third and longest movement, Ó Lionáird moves centre-stage and sean nós is explicitly invoked. Buckley says of the work as a whole that it includes 'no traditional melodies at all, yet the third song feels perhaps the most "sean nós", maybe because I sang this, recorded it and then transcribed it afterwards, with the ornaments etc.'.[14]

Two extended vocal passages dominate this third movement, the first accompanied only by a deep drone on A derived from the Buckley farm milking machine, and the second underscored by long notes in the strings. Example 7 shows the opening and as the performance notes in the score explain, 'the third song includes notated ornaments ... as a guide, this can be deviated from a little also'.[15] Buckley told me that 'of course Iarla does a beautiful job ornamenting this in his own way, but he did comment that he felt in that song I was writing in this very ornate Connemara style, which I had no realisation of at all'.[16]

Example 7:
Linda Buckley, *ó íochtar mara*, vocal part only, bars 138–151

After the second vocal passage there is a string interlude on harmonics and then the more reduced vocal writing of the first movement returns.

[13] See, for example, *Darach Ó Catháin*, Gael Linn CEFCD 040 (1975, 2004).
[14] Linda Buckley, email to Christopher Fox, 21 September 2017.
[15] Buckley, *ó íochtar mara*, p. 3.
[16] Linda Buckley, email to Christopher Fox, 21 September 2017.

In the final movement, the electronic sounds, now based on Buckley's voice, become more mobile, shadowing the main pitch centres in the live vocal part, and the string quartet returns to the more subsidiary role it played in the first movement. The text setting is also more straightforward, perhaps because the words are those of a near-contemporary, Caitlín Maude, a fellow sean nós singer. Two whispered passages interrupt the singing before the music ends with what the score describes as 'soft "white noise" bowing – unpitched, like a "sssh" sound, draw bow across strings perhaps with extreme sul pont, whispery, ghostly, ethereal. Like waves of the sea – vary in intensity, come in and out of texture. Become calmer near end, react to sense of closure in electronics'.[17] It's a beautiful ending, its imagery quite straightforward yet realised with great subtlety, and the perfect conclusion to a work in which so many elements of Buckley's creative personality come together; as she acknowledges 'one of the most personal things I've ever done'.[18]

Home/homeland

From August 2016 to June 2017, Linda Buckley lived in New York City on a Fulbright scholarship. Relocations can be both stimulating – a new physical and cultural landscape, different weather – and disturbing – to what extent must one adapt one's modus vivendi, perhaps even one's identity, to survive in this new landscape? Narratives of relocation, whether sought or compelled, actual or metaphorical, are also at the heart of modern life. 'Man … hath a home, but scarce knows where,/ He says it is so far/ that he has quite forgot how to go there' wrote Henry Vaughan in the middle of seventeenth century, and this sense of the forgotten, inaccessible homeland continues to haunt humanity, its reality driven by economic migration from countryside to city, by war and ethnic cleansing, and by the desire to escape poverty.

As I suggested earlier, the relocation narrative has been at the heart of the Irish experience for many centuries: Buckley's maternal grandfather, for example, went to New York in 1925 to work on the construction of the new high-rise cityscape, including the Empire State Building, before returning to west Cork nine years later. Perhaps only in his granddaughter's generation did the decision to leave Ireland lose this economic imperative, but although Buckley's career has been based in Ireland she has regularly chosen to spend time elsewhere, living for a while in Berlin and more recently taking up artistic residencies in Iceland, Italy and Sweden. The extended period in New York, however, seems to have raised existential questions that were not so pressing on previous absences from home and these inform a work for string quartet with electronics, *Haza* (2016).

Haza was written for the ConTempo Quartet, four Romanian musicians who have been based in Galway since 2003 and are currently the RTÉ's Quartet in Residence, and the work was first performed in a programme that also included Bartók's Fourth String Quartet. Although not a specific response to the Bartók quartet, something of the spirit of that music informs Buckley's work, particularly in its latter stages, as does her sense of the ConTempo's playing which she describes in her programme note as 'totally embodied and visceral'.[19] *Haza* is the

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[17] Buckley, *ó íochtar mara*, p. 26.
[18] Linda Buckley, email to Christopher Fox, 21 September 2017.
[19] Linda Buckley, *Haza*, p. 3.

Hungarian word for 'home' and in a series of conversations about the work Buckley told me that in New York she was also very conscious that Bartók had spent his last years there, walking the same streets, in poor health, short of money and longing for his homeland. It is this sense of a lost land that haunts this music, the sense that somewhere there is, or was, another place, but that we have 'quite forgot how to go there'.

The result is a remarkable work. In many ways *Haza* occupies a musical landscape already familiar from *Torann* and *ó íochtar mara*, using sustained electronic tones to create harmonic foundations for the string quartet and consequently often blurring the distinction between live and prerecorded sounds, but the first two movements, subtitled 'Wonder' and 'Float' are, to date, Buckley's most extended exploration of this territory, lasting together a little over nine and a half minutes. As in *Torann* and *ó íochtar mara* the instrumental textures are mostly slow, constantly varied, yet consistently athematic, the only significant difference between the two movements being the predominance of harmonics in 'Float'.

In the latter stages of 'Float' passages based around upward semitonal movement begin to appear and this becomes the focus of the music at the opening of the third movement, 'Rise, Home', with all four instruments playing a rising semitonal scale beginning on middle C. The entries are staggered, violin I beginning, the others each a beat later, and the tempo quickly speeds up from mm.60 to mm.100. Soon the texture starts to break up, the cello drops to its bottom F and this becomes a tonal centre in the electronics too, with the quartet and electronics more at odds with one another than in any of Buckley's recent music. The quartet textures continue to intensify, with gapped rising figures in the upper instruments set against a cello part in which F continues to function as a pedal tone.

A moment of double-stopping in the violins and viola hints at the beginning of a melody and then the slow upward semitones return briefly before the music becomes even more animated, with repeated quaver triplets juxtaposing B in the upper instruments and F in the cello: that climactic tritone again, as in *Torann* and the first movement of *ó íochtar mara*. More pitches are added, arriving at a collection that might be a Dorian mode on B but with an additional flattened second (see Example 8a). There's an exhilarating modulation in which the music slips down a tone to the Dorian mode on A, but with the cello note at the bottom of the harmony changing from E, the fourth note of the mode, to C, the third note of the new mode (see Example 8b). The electronics fade out and in a brief coda the

Example 8a:
Linda Buckley, *Haza*, bars 192–194

(b)

Example 8b:
Linda Buckley, *Haza*, bars 201–203

live instruments seem to break free. The coda maintains the texture shown in Example 8b and ends without any harmonic resolution.

It's an extraordinary conclusion that brings *Haza* to somewhere quite different from where it began 15 minutes earlier: not 'home', because that would be wholly inauthentic, but to somewhere recognisable, yet transformed, elevated. It's also a conclusion that, in its difference from much of Linda Buckley's recent music, holds out the promise of many new musical territories for her to explore.