

How I made pages...

Here's just a little bit about how I made pages and the music and meaning within will hopefully speak to you in its own way.

I spent most of 2008 working alone on this album. I have never spent so much time working alone on any project as I did on this one. It's how I needed to do it, and while often very confronting, I really wanted to get to the root of what I wanted to express. I also had a particular sound in my head for the album which involved using an orchestra with songs in a way I hadn't heard before so I wanted to explore that world. Since '13 songs', in exploring the orchestral sound-world I spent my time developing my orchestration and conducting skills in a number of ways. I scored '13 songs' for 65-piece orchestra and I had 2 compositions premiered by the Crash Ensemble. I scored also for a string orchestra which I conducted in concert. I worked on compositions, and I studied orchestration and conducting.

Between February and March I spent about 5 weeks at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Annaghmakerrig, which is an Artists' Retreat in Co. Monaghan. I spent my time there only working on words, with just with my pen and all of my thought-copies, and I worked in silence. I stayed in the self-catering cottages out the back, and while it was very isolated and confronting to work alone for so long, it felt very challenging and exposing. I thought a lot about what I wanted to say in terms of text, and why I should say it. I had a very large amount of material accumulated in many 'thought-copies', and I had to systematically filter everything down into a number of prose essays. I then re-drafted each essay a few times until I had a number of poems where each one was essentially a distillation of a different thought-stream from my thought copies. I ended up with a series of poems and would later decide if every poem would end up on pages in the form of a song or not.

I spent most of April to July working on the orchestrations at home. Many of these started with pencil and manuscript working in silence from my head. Many started on the piano as chords, which I later transferred to my lap-top by typing in every single note that was to be played. Tedious this phase was but incredibly rewarding it was too. Sometimes I got really scared of the whole thing knowing that every one of these written notes was going to be played by the orchestra in the space of a day, and there would be no re-takes after that because everything was going to be played live. I didn't want to record any playing after the orchestral recording day or I didn't want to add any instruments. If a piece didn't work it would have to be cut.

I then had many pots to distil from: 'husband and wife' pairings of each poems with their spouse-melodies, married because a melody had asked for certain words or because certain words had sung out certain melodies; some poems with no music at all; fully orchestrated pieces already married to poems; 'unattached' orchestral pieces...it nearly became too big!

But I knew that many of my decisions would fall into place after hearing the orchestra play the music for the first time on the recording day, and I practised the conducting of each piece a lot beforehand. I knew it was going to be very intense and I had to be well-prepared. The recording day in July was definitely one of the best and happiest days of my life and I can't believe that we got 14 pieces rehearsed and recorded in 6 hours. There was a brilliant atmosphere and the players were so amazing to work with. The orchestra included trumpets, French horns, trombone, vibraphone, clarinet, flute, oboe, bassoon, violins, violas, cellos, double bass, glockenspiel, sticks and more. I needed to take a full week to recover after it however! The scariest thing on the day was that I was the only person in the room that had heard any of the orchestral music or had heard any of the songs, because they were only in my head. I was the composer, producer, conductor, and would later be the singer. Neither did anybody else apart from me even know the real titles, as I used initials as the working titles. So I didn't really know if any of it was any good or not!

Back at home from August I spent a lot of time alone reviewing every single recording to find the takes that I liked and that I felt I could sing well over. After that and up to the 26th of September I was joined by the wonderful engineer Ger McDonnell and we recorded and mixed all of the vocals after the orchestra was mixed. I only had about 2 days off between producing, singing, mixing, reviewing etc., from early August to the end of September. When I was on my own I just went into a zone where I would work for hours like a zombie without moving and on all the days when Ger was coming over I needed to be prepared for him for an early start, so I would work until about 2, 3 or 4am the night before. I didn't want him to have to wait around for any faffing the next day. I think we both ended up with very pale complexions!

Back on my own again, I remixed the vocals on 6 of the pieces in early October. I then took myself over to London to get the album mastered by Jon Astley. On the 28th of October, the day my wonderful singing teacher Evelyn Dowling was laid to rest, the name 'pages' came to me after many tough weeks of indecision. The memory of Evelyn definitely inspired me on that. The final, final approval master of pages was done on the 19th of November and that felt very final indeed.

There is so much more to tell but that's all for now! I'm happy to say that I am truly happy with it and that I couldn't have done any more. I like attempting to get to the stage of accepting my position on my personal creative road at each point in life. Where I am creatively right now is where I really am, and being a perfectionist I had to work on accepting that pages truly does represent me, right now at this time in my life. If I were to do more to it then it wouldn't be pages anymore.

Love Is A Tricky Thing

Alas bewildered lover you've met love's most famous friend.
Sorrow's bid you morning and kicks back till the day's end
and now you're done with love and you're not looking for love or his boring friend.
You've built a world without love and wonder if you're burying your face in the sand

Love is a tricky thing and it brings you lightly.
Love's not what you think it should be then it sings to you rightly.

So then bewildered lover is this ringing any bells with you?
And could you really want to sing back to love if it crept up and enveloped you?
Or do you still want a kind of adjustable love that doesn't infuse and consume your being?
a made-to-order kind of love for the heart that beats so weary?

Love is a tricky thing and it brings you lightly.
Love's not what you think it should be then it sings to you rightly.

Oh bewildered! Looking for a lover? Maybe you'll discover a friend
A friend to play the knowing glance game, two spoons of sugar and milk
Someone to share the minute details with in your playground love-well
When all the really good and bad things happen it's the one you want to tell but

Love is a tricky thing and it brings you lightly.
Love's not what you think it should be then it sings to you rightly.

Love is a tricky thing and it brings you lightly.
Love's not what you think it should be then it sings to you rightly.

Impossibly Beautiful

I know not your heart or your mind or your name,
your Achilles heel or from where you came.
Though it's written in the stars my desires will flame
I might take a pass on what the stars are saying
You're impossibly beautiful, is that cos I'm waiting?
Is that cos I'm looking or is it just cos you are?

The indignant look as you catch the eye
of the onlooker caught in a gaze at thine
as you're innocently flaunting your beauty, 'Ah!'
you've no idea how beautiful you are
You're impossibly beautiful, is that cos I'm waiting?
Is that cos I'm looking or is it just cos you are?

You're not laid so bare by the vanity fare
To tamper with your charms oxygen in a jar.
You're not an assembled cocktail of bits and not
a stuck together look all made up with tricks
You're impossibly beautiful, is that cos I'm waiting?
Is that cos I'm looking or is it just cos you are?

You don't play the love game of toxic love
of trading love for beauty the wining of.
Will you ever wish you knew what a spell you cast?
Or maybe it's a beauty you'll always have
You're impossibly beautiful, is that cos I'm waiting?
Is that cos I'm looking or is it just cos you are?





Grace

You gave me grace
You gave me grace
Help me today to feel the grace

Help me today
to feel the grace
cos here's the day
to feel the grace

You gave me grace
Help me today to prove
What good is grace if I don't know,
if I don't know how to use it?

Grace, you gave me grace.
Help me today to feel the grace

Help me today
to feel the grace
Here's the day
to feel the grace

You gave me grace
Help me today to prove
Help me today to find the grace cos here's the day
Here's the day,
day to use it

Valentine's Song

She broke his heart into a million billion pieces and
she stood and she watched him cry.
She stood and watched him fumble around
He lost his heart, it couldn't be found

She walked away taking all of the embraces
never seeing him shudder in pain.
She didn't stroke his hair or his face like she so loved to
she just left and she left him to cry

Boy nothing you can do will stop you wondering
and nothing you can do will ease the pain
Remember you are blind to the intricacies of the mind
so just stay and stand the time
Pain goes away when you stand the time

Boy nothing you can do will stop you wondering
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Remember you are blind to the intricacies of the mind
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Pain goes away when you stand the time.



One More Tune

He's living in a world that has left him behind.
He used to be taller, he used to be kind.
She's plagued with images from the dark side of her mind,
unsavoury days, unsavoury nights.

But she still waits to hear one more tune, one more tune, one more tune!

She doesn't think too much about the meaning of her life
She thinks she's happy and you think you're right
He's pulling faces, saying "you won't like me when I'm mad!"
She says "I don't like you anyway and the bravado dance!"

They still wait to hear one more tune, one more tune, one more tune!
They still wait to hear one more tune, one more tune, one more tune!

He turns tricks as he licks his lips holding court on a throne.
He gets kicks as he blinks thinking of rouses yet unknown
She's got a witch laugh and a guy who knows how to humour her
He's in a romance with romance and likes her approval

And they still wait to hear one more tune, one more tune, one more tune!
One more tune, to hear one more tune, one more tune, one more tune!



Myth

Myth grows bigger than the truth, tragedies or dreams
Myth grows bigger than the truth, tragedies or dreams
It sticks if it's mud, it pools if it's good,
then myth lasts longer than the truth, the truth, the truth,
the truth, the..

Myth grows bigger than the truth, tragedies or dreams
Myth grows bigger than the truth, tragedies or dreams
It sticks if it's mud, it pools if it's good,
then myth lasts longer than the truth, the truth, the truth,
the truth, the..
Haa ha ha ha ha ah ha ha ha ssshhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!
Haa ha ha ha ha ah ha ha ha ssshhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!
Gaaaaaaaasppppppp!!!

Myth grows bigger than the truth, tragedies or dreams
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Haa ha ha ha ha ah ha ha ha ssshhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!
Haa ha ha ha ha ah ha ha ha ssshhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!
Gaaaaaaaasppppppp!!!



Mr. Roving Eye Guy

Mr. Roving Eye Guy with high wall round his heart
he said he couldn't find a good enough girl for him.
He found flaws with every girl he'd meet,
she had big hands or funny feet.
He found ways out of meeting the girl of his dreams,
refusing to succumb or surrender to a new queen
U u u u u u u u u u u u

Mr. Roving Eye Guy found a haven to protect him
from rejection nothing brought in or out from there.
Dancing girls dressed up as romance,
aesthetically pleasing pretend romance
Good time romances not long time romance "it's been fun",
a holding pattern of romances, comfort blankets, glances
U u u u u u u u u u u u
U u u u u u u u u u u u

Mr. Roving Eye Guy found a girl that every other
Mr. Roving Eye Guy would gaze at.
Would he settle for the best of his bad lot,
or still roam the hills to see what they'd got?
Would he unleash his fears and let inertia bleed?
Would he break his own rules and think of,
and think of his dreams?
Would he just U U U U U fall in love?
Would he just U U U fall in love?

U u u u u fall in love
U u fall in love
U u u u u u u u u u u u
U u u u u u u u u u u u



Stay

Stay, just stay
And wait, just wait

The little fire inside you is much bigger there's a,
a little fire inside you

Just dream, just dream
You'll see, you'll see

I wish I could abate your desire to decorate your life
I wish I could abate your fear
The little fire inside you is much bigger there's a,
a little fire inside you.

Just dream, just dream.
You'll see, you'll see

The little fire inside you is much bigger there's a,
a little fire inside you.
I wish I could abate your desire to decorate your life
I wish I could abate your fear.

Just stay, just wait

You'll see

Life's Nudge

You didn't recognise the magic in your life till life's nudge knocked to shock you
Thirty days and nights full of cement inside, a crying feast emotion cocktail.
Limbs broken but moving the hurt-shell still hopeful you file it all under bewildered
Significances cling to ordinary things, peculiar superstitious comforts

Challenging times straining the head, puzzling the heart, a tumbling head
Puzzling days, puzzling dreams, treading water just to try to breathe
Get out of the world, get out of the dreams, and get out of the place, out of the anxiety
Out of the head, out of the sleeping, a weak kind of rage, get out of the dreaming

Time for thrills without the big dreams, reality reminds of Tolstoy's themes
Torment rips around the being but funnily life feels too good to believe him
Life's unexpected nudge has come and, can't blame anyone,
Life's unexpected nudge has come, you can't let it keep you down

Keep the wolves from your head as you wait for the horse,
the hollow insides slowly fill with hope
Eyes adjust to the dark light, shapes form like in the dead of night
Time to shed the heavy cape, the exhausted aura wants to emanate,
The exhausted aura's gonna radiate, the quivering smile's gonna find it's face

Time for thrills without the big dreams, reality reminds of Tolstoy's themes
Torment rips around the being, but funnily life feels too good to believe him

Life's unexpected nudge has come and, can't blame anyone,
Life's unexpected nudge has come, you can't let it keep you down



Monster

Fascinated by the charm of a beautiful and delicate thing
Dazzled by its beauty you f-forget you know what lies within in
You forget you know what lies within in in in

Innocently frolicking you stir the side of a nook then
You remember that you knew what was in
the beautiful tree before it you shook shook
the beautiful tree before it you shook shook shook shook shook shook shook

The beautiful tree needs to be preened, an elegant daily tending
But the power is known a monster's grown,
unstirred for fear of what might be pending,
unstirred for fear of what might be pen-ding ding ding ding ding

But you know if you shake the tree the contents down will fall
And for a pretty tree the contents aren't really that very pretty at all
They aren't really that very pretty at all all all all all



Nothing to Declare

You let me fall so I pushed those wicked dreams away
And now you're gone I can't find those wicked dreams again

So why have I got nothing to declare but love for you?
And it's just easy to declare my love for you

You let me dream so I gave the other dreams away
Now you're gone I can't find the other dreams again

So why have I got nothing to declare but love for you
And it's just easy to declare my love for you

I've got nothing to declare but love for you
And it's just easy to declare my love for you

Nothing to declare but love for you
I've got nothing to declare but love for you

Knock Knock

With innocent eyes and expectant faces
Momentary amnesia, lured by graces,
Perils forgotten and the heart embraces
Knock knock, it's here again.
It's a place inside you, you thought had died
It knocks on millions and thousands or tries and
it remembers yours cos you've subscribed
Knock knock, it's here again
And two become one familiarity restricted
One looks through the others eyes to see themselves reflected
You've got dreams to remember you've got believe
You're Cinderella remember and your knight is here
You might need to shine up that shiny armour
Or maybe you won't need to shine it at all
With innocent eyes and expectant faces
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Music and words composed, orchestrated and produced by Julie Feeney.

Orchestra conducted by Julie Feeney.

Singing in all octaves by Julie Feeney.

Violins: Pieter André Swanepoel,
Diane Daly, Kenneth Rice, Louis Roden,
Ioana Petcu Colan, Oonagh Keogh,
Clíodhna Ryan, Maria Ryan
Violas: Mark Coates Smith, Cian Ó Dúill,
Edward Creedon
Celli: Ben Rogerson, Richard Angell
Double bass: Mercedes Carroll
Harp: Aisling Ennis

Flute: Vourneen Ryan
Oboe: Lauren Weavers
Clarinet: Ramon Wodkowski
Bassoon: John Hearne
Trumpet: Simon Menin
French horns: James Palmer, Jocelyn Lightfoot
Trombone: Michael Marshall
Untuned percussion: Ger McDonnell
Tuned percussion: Stephen Kelly



Orchestra recorded over 2 sessions on July 14 2008 in the
Irish Chamber Orchestra Studio at the University of Limerick.
Engineered by Ger McDonnell.

Assistant Engineered by Edel Griffith.

Score-reader: Graeme Stuart.

Orchestra booker: Gerry Keenan.

Sessions edited by Julie Feeney.

Mixed by Ger McDonnell at Julie's studio.

All vocals subsequently recorded at Julie's by Ger McDonnell
except track 3 and track 11 which were recorded by Julie on
30 August 2009. Vocals mixed by Ger McDonnell.

Tracks 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10 vocals remixed by Julie.

Studio setup technical assistance by Owen Drumm.

Soup, hot chocolate, tea and moral support by Michael Maguire
(chief!), Rebecca Collins, Peter, Edward and Warwick Harte.