

# A Sovereign Hawk

*for symphony orchestra*

Martin Humphries

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### Performance note:

In composing *A Sovereign Hawk* I sought to create a piece of music that would be equally rewarding to, and importantly, playable by amateur and professional orchestras alike. In doing so I have removed several avenues for complexity, forcing myself to create quality music from a more limited pool of resources.

Most notably I have restricted the rhythmic content of the work to just ten rhythmic cells - each is just one bar long, always begins on a down beat, and consists of nothing more complex than quavers. Players need only learn the ten rhythmic cells (printed below) in order to render the entire rhythmic content of the work quite playable by musicians of diverse standards. In addition to this, the piece utilises only one constant tempo (crotchet = c.132), metre (3/4), and phrase length (consistently grouped in ten-bar phrases), further removing potential hurdles for players of lower abilities. Finally, I have retained a largely consonant harmony within each timbral grouping (winds/brass/strings), providing each individual player (and section) with comfortable, melodic lines. However, by stacking one choir upon another, a more dissonant and forward-facing harmonic landscape is facilitated through otherwise highly playable individual lines.

The restrictions I placed upon myself were employed to help compose a work that is fundamentally accessible by those of a non-professional performance standard (i.e. youth and community orchestras). That said, the quality of composition and originality of the sonic landscape should not be lessened in any way by these criteria. I seek to forge a compositional language that is original, exciting, and rewarding, yet which does not require complexity as a fundamental component – music which is equally at home in professional and amateur contexts.

The image displays ten rhythmic cells, numbered 1 through 10, arranged in two rows of five. Each cell is a single bar of music in 3/4 time, starting on a downbeat. The notation uses various note values including quavers, crotchets, and minims.

Example: Rhythmic Cells

### Programme note:

This work for orchestra takes its starting point in the muddy histories surrounding the last king of Wales: Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. By the end of his life, Wales had become an annex of England under the rule of King Edward I (Longshanks), a legacy which has made Llywelyn a controversial figure in Welsh history. Following a fierce rivalry, Llywelyn imprisoned his brother Owain Goch in Castle Dolbadarn for more than twenty years and took control of his lands. A contemporary poet of the time reflected on the way history may have been written if the brothers had united against the English - my composition explores this theme, with every attempt at heroism negated by the imposing walls of the castle prison:

There is a hero in a tower,  
In long captivity,  
A brave, kingly, sovereign hawk.  
A hero whose loss I feel from amongst the living,  
A hero who would not allow England to burn his border.

(*Hywel Foel ap Griffri ap Pywll Wyddel*)

**Instrumentation:**

2 Flutes  
2 Oboes  
2 Clarinets in B $\flat$   
2 Bassoons

4 Horns in F  
3 Trumpets in B $\flat$  1  
(each requiring straight mute)  
2 Trombones  
Bass Trombone  
Tuba

Percussion (3 players):  
Snare Drum – High Tom – Mid Tom – Low Tom – Bass Drum (with towel for muting)

Strings

Score in C

Duration: c. 4 minutes

# A Sovereign Hawk

Martin Humphries

Mechanical, metronomic and unchanging ( $\text{♩} = c.132$ )

Flute 1 *ff*

Flute 2 *ff*

Oboe 1 *ff*

Oboe 2 *ff*

Clarinet in Bb 1 *ff*

Clarinet in Bb 2 *ff*

Bassoon 1 *ff*

Bassoon 2 *ff*

Horn in F 1+2 *ff*

Horn in F 3+4 *ff*

Trumpet in Bb 1 *ff*

Trumpet in Bb 2+3 *ff*

Trombone 1 *ff*

Trombone 2 *ff*

Bass Trombone *ff*

Tuba *ff*

Percussion 1 *ff* Snare (on) crisp and tight

Percussion 2 *ff* Low Tom always let ring

Percussion 3 *ff* Bass Drum always let ring

Violin 1 *ff*

Violin 2 *ff*

Viola *ff*

Violoncello *ff*

Double Bass *ff* div.

11 **A**

Fl. 1 *p* *mp* *mf*

Fl. 2 *p* *mp*

Ob. 1 *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

Ob. 2 *mp* *p* *mp*

Cl. 1 *mp* *p* *mp*

Cl. 2 *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

Bsn. 1 *p* *mp*

Bsn. 2 *p* *mp* *f*

Hn. 1+2 *div.*

Hn. 3+4 *div.* *mf* *à2* *div.* *f*

Tpt. 1 *p* *mp* *mf*

Tpt. 2+3 *div.* *p* *mp* *mf*

Tbn. 1 *mp sub.* *pp* *mf*

Tbn. 2 *mp sub.* *pp* *mf*

B. Tbn. *mp sub.* *pp* *mf*

Tba. *mp sub.* *pp* *mf*

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Vln. 1 *mf* *f*

Vln. 2 *mp sub.* *p* *mp sub.* *mf*

Vla. *mp sub.* *p* *mp sub.* *mf*

Vc. *mp tutti* *p* *mp* *mf*

Db. *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

21 **B**

Fl. 1 *ff*

Fl. 2 *ff*

Ob. 1 *ff*

Ob. 2 *ff*

Cl. 1 *ff*

Cl. 2 *ff*

Bsn. 1 *ff*

Bsn. 2 *ff*

Hn. 1+2 *ff* *à2*

Hn. 3+4 *ff* *à2*

Tpt. 1 *ff*

Tpt. 2+3 *ff* *à2* *div.*

Tbn. 1 *ff*

Tbn. 2 *ff*

B. Tbn. *ff*

Tba. *ff*

Perc. 1 *ff* *To High Tom*

Perc. 2 *ff*

Perc. 3 *ff* *To Mid Tom* *sfz*

Vln. 1 *ff* *fp* *ff*

Vln. 2 *ff* *fp* *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Db. *ff* *snap pizz.* *sfz*

31 **C**

Vln. 1  
Vln. 2  
Vla.  
Vc.  
Db.

*pizz.*  
*mp*

*pizz.*  
*mp*

*pizz.*  
*mp*

*pizz.*  
*mp*

*mp*



41 **D**

Fl. 1  
Fl. 2  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2  
Vla.  
Vc.  
Db.

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*mf*

*pp*

*mf*

*pp*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*mf*

*no dim.*

*no dim.*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*



51 **E**

Fl. 1 *mf* *no cresc.*

Fl. 2 *mf* *no cresc.*

Ob. 1 *mf* *no cresc.*

Ob. 2 *mf* *no cresc.*

Cl. 1 *mf* *mp* *solo* *f*

Cl. 2 *mf* *no cresc.*

Bsn. 1 *mf sub.* *no cresc.*

Bsn. 2 *mf sub.* *no cresc.*

Vln. 1 arco; punta d' arco *p cresc.* *mp cresc.* *(mf)*

Vln. 2 arco; punta d' arco *p cresc.* *mp cresc.* *(mf)*

Vla. *mp cresc.* *(mf)*



61 **F**

Fl. 1 *ff sub.*

Fl. 2 *ff*

Ob. 1 *ff sub.*

Bsn. 1 *ff* *pp sub.*

Bsn. 2 *ff* *pp sub.*

Tpt. 1 *mf* *solo; broad*

Vc. arco *mp*

71 **G**

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1+2

Hn. 3+4

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2+3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

*pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

*mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

*mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

1. solo. *mf* div.

div. *mf*

2. solo *mf* div.

solo *mf* div.

solo *mf*

solo *mf*

solo *mf*

High Tom *pp* To Snare no cresc.

*pp*

Mid Tom *pp* To Bass Drum no cresc.

ord. *mp*

ord. *mp*

ord. *mp*

div. *pp* *mf* *pp* *pp* *ff*

arco *mf* *pp* *pp* *ff*

*mf* no dim. *ff*

81 **H**

Fl. 1 *ff* soli w/cl.

Fl. 2 *ff* soli w/cl.

Cl. 1 *ff* solo w/fl. 1+2

Cl. 2 *pp* sub.

Bsn. 1 *pp*

Bsn. 2 *pp*

Hn. 1+2 *ff* à2 soli w/tpt.

Hn. 3+4 *f*

Tpt. 1 *ff* solo w/hn. 1+2

Tpt. 2+3 *f*

Tbn. 1 *mf*

Tbn. 2 *mf*

B. Tbn. *mf*

Tba. *mf*

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Vln. 1 *f no dim.*, *fp*, *sfz*, *fp*, *fp*

Vln. 2 *f*, *p*, *fp*, *fp*, *fp*, *sfz*

Vla. *f*, *p*, *fp*, *sfz*, *fp*, *sfz*

Vc. *f*

Db. *f*, div.

I

This page of a musical score covers measures 91 through 100. The orchestration includes woodwinds, brass, strings, and percussion. The woodwind section (Flutes 1 & 2, Oboes 1 & 2, Clarinets 1 & 2) plays a melodic line marked *ff*. The brass section (Trumpets 1, 2 & 3, Trombones 1, 2, and Bass Trombone) provides harmonic support with a rhythmic pattern. The string section (Violins 1 & 2, Viola, and Double Bass) features sustained notes. The percussion section includes Snare and Bass Drum, with dynamics ranging from *mf* to *mp*. A rehearsal mark 'I' is located at the beginning of the page.

101

Fl. 1  
Fl. 2  
Ob. 1  
Ob. 2  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Bsn. 1  
Bsn. 2

This section contains the musical staves for the woodwind instruments: Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, Clarinet 1 and 2, Bassoon 1, and Bassoon 2. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ff*. Some notes are marked with 'v' for accents.

Hn. 1+2  
Hn. 3+4  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2+3  
Tbn. 1  
Tbn. 2  
B.Tbn.  
Tba.

This section contains the musical staves for the brass instruments: Horns 1+2 and 3+4, Trumpets 1 and 2+3, Trombone 1 and 2, Baritone Trombone (B.Tbn.), and Tuba (Tba.). The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ff*. Some notes are marked with 'div.' for divisi.

Perc. 1  
Perc. 2  
Perc. 3

This section contains the musical staves for three different percussion instruments. The notation shows rhythmic patterns with dynamic markings such as *ff*.

Vln. 1  
Vln. 2  
Vla.  
Vc.  
Db.

This section contains the musical staves for the string instruments: Violin 1 and 2, Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ff*. Some notes are marked with 'tutti'.

K

Fl. 1  
 Fl. 2  
 Ob. 1  
 Ob. 2  
 Cl. 1  
 Cl. 2  
 Bsn. 1  
 Bsn. 2  
 Hn. 1+2  
 Hn. 3+4  
 Tpt. 1  
 Tpt. 2+3  
 Tbn. 1  
 Tbn. 2  
 B. Tbn.  
 Tba.  
 Perc. 1 (High Tom)  
 Perc. 2  
 Perc. 3 (Mid Tom)  
 Vln. 1  
 Vln. 2  
 Vla.  
 Vc.  
 Db.

Dynamics: *pp*, *f*, *pp sub.*, *mf*  
 Performance instructions: *pp*, *f*, *pp sub.*, *mf*, *mf*  
 Fingerings: III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII

121 **L**

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1  
*pp*

Cl. 2  
*pp*

Bsn. 1  
*pp*

Bsn. 2  
*pp*

Hn. 1+2  
*mp* *à2*

Hn. 3+4  
*mp* *à2*

Tpt. 1  
*mp*

Tpt. 2+3  
*mp* *2.*

Tbn. 1  
*mp*

Tbn. 2  
*mp*

B. Tbn.  
*mp*

Tba.  
*mp*

Perc. 1  
*mf* *f* *pp*

Perc. 2  
*f* *pp*

Perc. 3  
*mf* *f* *pp*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*1.* *div.* *f* *mf*

*pp sub.* *mf* *p* *f* *mp*

*pp sub.* *mf* *p* *f* *mp*

*pp sub.* *mf* *p* *f* *mp*

*mp* *f* *p*

131 **M**

Fl. 1 *mf*

Fl. 2 *mf*

Ob. 1 solo *mf*

Cl. 1 *mp*

Hn. 1+2 *p*

Hn. 3+4 *p*

Tpt. 1 con sord. (straight) *mf* (into stand)

Tpt. 2+3 con sord. (straight) *mf* (into stand)

Tbn. 1 *p*

Tbn. 2 *p*

B. Tbn. *p* *mp*

Tba. *p* *mp*

Vln. 1 punta d' arco *pp*

Vln. 2 punta d' arco *pp*



141 **N**

Ob. 1 *p*

Ob. 2 *p* solo *mp*

Cl. 1 *p*

Cl. 2 *p*

Vln. 1 (punta d' arco) *pp* sub. *cresc.* → ord.

Vln. 2 (punta d' arco) *pp* *cresc.* → ord.

Vla. *pp* *cresc.* pizz.

Vc. div. outside pizz. *pp* *cresc.*

Db. *pp* pizz. *mf*



151 **O**

Fl. 1 *pp* *f* *mf* *p* *f* *pp cresc.*

Fl. 2 *pp* *f* *mf* *p* *f* *pp cresc.*

Ob. 1 *mf sub.* *pp* *mp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp cresc.*

Ob. 2 *mf* *pp* *mp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp cresc.*

Cl. 1 *mf sub.* *pp* *mp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp cresc.*

Cl. 2 *mf sub.* *pp* *mp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp cresc.*

Bsn. 1 *pp* *f* *mf* *p* *f* *pp cresc.*

Bsn. 2 *pp* *f* *mf* *p* *f* *pp cresc.*

Hn. 1+2 *à2* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *ff*

Hn. 3+4 *à2* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *ff*

Tpt. 1 *senza sord.* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf*

Tpt. 2+3 *à2* *senza sord.* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf*

Tbn. 1 *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Tbn. 2 *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

B. Tbn. *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Tba. *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Perc. 1 *pp* *cresc.* *f*

Perc. 2 *pp* *cresc.* *f*

Perc. 3 *pp* *cresc.* *f*

Vln. 1 *mf* *div. outside pizz.*

Vln. 2 *mf* *div. outside pizz.*

Vla. *arco* *mf* *div. outside pizz.*

Vc. *tutti arco* *mf* *div. outside pizz.*

Db. *f* *mf*

**P**

161

Fl. 1 *ff*

Fl. 2 *ff*

Ob. 1 *ff*

Ob. 2 *ff*

Cl. 1 *ff*

Cl. 2 *ff*

Bsn. 1 *ff*

Bsn. 2 *ff*

Hn. 1+2 *ff*

Hn. 3+4 *ff*

Tpt. 1 *ff* div.

Tpt. 2+3 *ff*

Tbn. 1 *ff*

Tbn. 2 *ff*

B. Tbn. *ff*

Tba. *ff*

Perc. 1 *ff* Snare

Perc. 2 *ff* always mute

Perc. 3 *ff* always mute Bass Drum (dampened with towel) LH

Vln. 1 *ff* tutti pizz.

Vln. 2 *ff* tutti pizz.

Vla. *ff* tutti pizz.

Vc. *ff* tutti pizz.

Db. *ff*