

Caitlin Harrison

Pagan Scenes and Dances

for orchestra

Each movement of *Pagan Scenes and Dances* is named after the points of The Pagan Wheel of the Year. The wheel traces the change of seasons with ceremonial occasions to celebrate or reflect on the current environmental state. The most prominent themes are from darkness to light, along with tracing the fertility of spring to the summer and autumn harvests before the death of winter. The wheel is cyclical, with every year end, *Samhain*, going into *Yule* to start the pattern again. With this in mind, the piece could technically be performed starting at any movement, although most effective would be beginning with *Yule*, *Beltane* or *Lughnasadh*. Many of the pagan festivals correlate to modern ones such as *Yule* and Christmas, *Imbolc* and Candlemas, *Ostara* and Easter, and *Samhain* and Halloween.

I. Yule — Scene

Yule starts the pagan wheel at the very darkest moment of the year, the winter solstice. Despite the stark and bleak landscape *Yule* is reminiscent of lighter times, a likely tactic to help Pagans of centuries gone by get through the harshest time of year. The movement begins by setting the barren scene with delicate higher textures in the upper strings and wind, before the darker depths of the lower instruments enter. A light snowflake-like dance takes over for the second half of the movement as the darkness begins to dissipate.

II. Imbolc — Dance

One of the more ceremonial movements, *Imbolc* symbolises the light emerging from the darkness. Like a candle in the darkness, the glockenspiel guides the deep tones of the lower instruments upwards until the emergence of the Cor Anglais solo. Whilst the slow 3/4 metre and sombre mood resembles a sarabande, the 'dance' element remains abstract until the solo.

III. Ostara — Dance

Ostara marks the spring equinox, symbolising rebirth and the boom of life one sees in nature. This is represented through the blooming fanfares in the brass and large tutti chords, with the offbeat rhythms bringing contrast to the primal dance.

IV. Beltane — Scene

After the bloom of spring comes the beginning of summer, *Beltane* (or May Day). *Beltane* celebrates the fertility of the lighter months, with bonfires traditionally lit as a purification ritual. Harking back to the more ceremonial mood of *Imbolc*, this movement contains unruly solos in the clarinet and piccolo, untameable like a flame or nature itself.

V. Litha — Dance

Litha celebrates the summer equinox, also called Midsummer, the lightest part of the year. The sun is worshipped with dancing around and jumping over bonfires. The 12/8 metre forms a clear and joyful dance, with bouncing dotted rhythms littering the canonic string theme. Some Pagan cultures also view this as the win of light over dark; the second half of the movement represents more of a battleground, with loud and turbulent gestures littering the soundscape before the opening light theme ultimately wins.

VI. Lughnasadh (*LOO-na-sa*) — Scene

Lughnasadh is a reflective occasion that thanks the Gaelic God, Lugh, for the year's harvest. The movement itself is a prayer, contrasting the rest of the work not only in theme but also texture as the instrumentation is heavily stripped back from the previous movement. The origins of *Lughnasadh* has funeral themes, marking the beginning of the death of the earth for this cycle. The prayer is also cautious, as the people ask for a forgiving winter to come.

VII. Mabon — Dance

The autumn equinox marks not only the final harvest but mostly importantly the beginning of the earth's decay. It is a dark death, with unpredictable rhythms and timbres littering *Mabon* as wild themes in the oboe and other solos represent the oncoming chaos and decent.

VIII. Samhain (*SAH-win*) — Scene

The cycle comes to and end with *Samhain*, what we commonly refer to as Halloween. The veil is at its thinnest between the living and the dead. Grand gestures open the movement before haunting themes take over in the brass and solo bassoon. The piece ends with a final dramatic run into a wild and terrifying darkness.

Bass Drum
Sleigh Bells
Triangle

for London Euphonia Orchestra

Pagan Scenes and Dances

for orchestra
I. Yule

Caitlin Harrison

♩ = 120 *desolate*

Bass Drum

16

2

22 [A]

2

3

34

To S.Bells

3

46 [B] Sleigh Bells

pp

56

65 [C]

74

Triangle

pp

f

Glockenspiel

II. Imbolc

♩ = 80-90 *sarabande-like*

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The piece is in 5/4 time. Measure 1 is a whole rest. Measures 2-6 feature sustained chords with various accidentals (sharps and naturals). Dynamics include *p* *Red.* and ** Red.*

Musical notation for measures 7-11. Measures 7-10 feature sustained chords with various accidentals. Measure 11 is a whole rest. Dynamics include ** Red.* and ** Red.*

Musical notation for measures 12-18. Measure 12 is a whole rest. Measure 13 is a whole rest. Measure 14 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *f* *Red.*. Measure 15 is a whole rest. Measure 16 is a whole rest. Measure 17 is a whole rest. Measure 18 is a whole rest. Dynamics include *f* *Red.* and ***.

Musical notation for measures 45-48. Measure 45 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *mf* *Red.*. Measure 46 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *mp*. Measure 47 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *p*. Measure 48 features a melodic line with dynamics *pp*, *mp*, and *pp*. Dynamics include *mf* *Red.*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*, and *pp*.

Musical notation for measures 52-55. Measure 52 is a whole rest. Measure 53 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *mp*. Measure 54 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *p*. Measure 55 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *mp*. Measure 56 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *p*. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*.

Musical notation for measures 60-63. Measure 60 is a whole rest. Measure 61 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *p*. Measure 62 features a sustained chord with a dynamic of *pp*. Measure 63 is a whole rest. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*.

PERCUSSION

III. Ostara

TACET

Bass Drum

IV. Beltane

♩ = 80 *mysterious*

6/8 13 A 6 B 9

29 C 14 D 10 E 5 F 62 70 78 G 7

fp *fp* *mp* *p*

attacca

Glockenspiel
Bass Drum

V. Litha

Vivace ♩ = 90-105

pp con ped., l.v.

7 **A**

11

14

* pp mp mf

17 **B**

p mp pp

20

* mp pp p

23 **C**

ff

Bass Drum

Glockenspiel, Bass Drum

31 **D**

mf

35

mp

40 **E**

p

43

p

48 **F**

mp

poco rit.

3

Glockenspiel

p

PERCUSSION

VI. Lughnasadh

TACET

VII. Mabon

TACET *attacca*

Bass Drum
Triangle

VIII. Samhain

♩ = 110-120 *haunting*

2/2 3 ff ff

A 13 f mf mp

B 22 Triangle Bass Drum f mp

31 mp mp

C 42 pp

53 p mp mf

58 ff

63