

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 an 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.



50 *sul pont.*

*pp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *pp*

55

*mp* *pp* *p* *pp*

58

*mp* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*

62

*mp* *pp* *mf* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

69

*f* *mf* *f* *mp*

73

*pp* *p*

77

*pp* *mp* *pp* *p* *f*

Violin I

## II. Imbolc

♩ = 80-90 *sarabande-like*

*sul tasto*

*pp*

8

A

16

24

B

*ord.*

*f.mp*

33

42

C

*sul tasto*

*f* ————— *p*

52

D

60

*pp*

Violin I

III. Ostara

♩ = 60 *bursting*

*sempre div.*

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The piece is in 3/4 time. Measures 1-3 feature a series of chords with accents and *sfz* dynamics. Measures 4-5 contain a long note with a *fp* dynamic. Measure 6 ends with a *fp* dynamic.

Musical notation for measures 7-17. Measure 7 starts with a *ff* dynamic and a 4-measure rest. Measures 8-10 contain eighth notes with accents. Measure 11 has a 3-measure rest. Measures 12-13 are marked *pizz.* and *mf*. Measure 14 ends with a *mf* dynamic.

Musical notation for measures 18-24. Measures 18-20 feature eighth notes with accents. Measures 21-22 have a 3-measure rest. Measures 23-24 contain eighth notes with accents and a 3-measure rest.

Musical notation for measures 25-30. Measures 25-26 have a 3-measure rest. Measures 27-28 contain eighth notes with accents and a 3-measure rest. Measures 29-30 feature eighth notes with accents and a 3-measure rest.

Musical notation for measures 31-36. Measures 31-33 contain eighth notes with accents. Measures 34-35 have a 3-measure rest. Measure 36 ends with a *sfz sfz sfz* dynamic and is marked *arco*.

Musical notation for measures 37-45. Measure 37 starts with a *fp* dynamic and a 4-measure rest. Measure 38 has a *ff* dynamic. Measures 39-40 contain eighth notes with accents. Measures 41-42 have a 4-measure rest. Measures 43-45 feature eighth notes with accents.

Musical notation for measures 46-48. Measures 46-47 contain eighth notes with accents and a 3-measure rest. Measure 48 ends with a *f* dynamic and a 3-measure rest.

Musical notation for measures 49-51. Measure 49 has a *ff* dynamic. Measures 50-51 feature eighth notes with accents.

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VIOLIN I

IV. Beltane

TACET *attacca*

Violin I

V. Litha

Vivace ♩ = 90-105

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 12/8 time signature. Measures 1-3. Dynamics: *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 12/8 time signature. Measures 4-6. Dynamics: *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 12/8 time signature. Measure 7. Section marker **A**. Dynamics: *p*, *mp*.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 12/8 time signature. Measures 14-16. Dynamics: *mf*, *fp*, *p*, *mf*.

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, 12/8 time signature. Measures 17-19. Section marker **B**. Dynamics: *mf.p*, *mf*, *mp*.

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, 12/8 time signature. Measures 20-22. Dynamics: *mf*, *fp*, *p*.

Musical staff 7: Treble clef, 12/8 time signature. Measures 23-24.

Musical staff 8: Treble clef, 12/8 time signature. Measure 25. Section marker **C**. Dynamics: *f*.

Violin I

27 *ff*

Musical staff 27-30: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 27-30 contain eighth and sixteenth notes with accents. Measure 29 has a dynamic marking of *ff*.

30 *f* [D]

Musical staff 30-33: Treble clef. Measure 30 has a dynamic marking of *f* and a boxed letter 'D'. Measures 31-33 contain eighth notes with accents and slurs.

34

Musical staff 34-36: Treble clef. Measures 34-36 contain eighth notes with accents and slurs.

37 *ff* *mf* div.

Musical staff 37-40: Treble clef. Measure 37 has a dynamic marking of *ff*. Measure 38 has a 'div.' marking. Measure 39 has a dynamic marking of *mf*. Measure 40 ends with a fermata.

40 [E] 6 *mp*

Musical staff 40-47: Treble clef. Measure 40 has a boxed letter 'E'. Measure 41 has a '6' marking. Measure 42 has a dynamic marking of *mp*. Measures 43-47 contain eighth notes with accents and slurs.

48 [F] *mf* *fp* *p* *mf* *mf.p*

Musical staff 48-50: Treble clef. Measure 48 has a boxed letter 'F'. Measures 48-50 contain eighth notes with dynamic markings: *mf*, *fp*, *p*, *mf*, and *mf.p*.

51 *poco rit.*

Musical staff 51-53: Treble clef. Measure 51 has a dynamic marking of *poco rit.*. Measures 51-53 contain eighth notes with accents and slurs.

54 *p* *pp*

Musical staff 54-56: Treble clef. Measure 54 has a dynamic marking of *p*. Measure 55 has a dynamic marking of *pp*. Measures 54-56 contain eighth notes with accents and slurs.

Violin I

# VI. Lughnasadh

♩ = 80 *still, glistening*

10 A 10 B *pp*

24

31 C *mf*

37 D *p*

Violin I

VII. Mabon

♩ = 80-90 *macabre*

*pizz.*

1 *f*

6

12

27 **A** *pizz.* *f*

37

43

48 **B**

65 **C** *arco* *mp* *mf* *f* *f*

71 *mf* *mp* *f* *mp*

Violin I

77

*mp < f* *> mf < f* *ff*

84

**D**

*mp < f* *mp f*

91

*mp < f* *mp f*

*attacca*

Violin I

# VIII. Samhain

♩ = 110-120 *haunting*

6

div.

*f*

13 **A**

2

*fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

21 **B**

3

*pp*

32

42 **C**

12

*mf*

59

*f* *ff*

62