Chapter Nine

Case Study Number 3: A Performer’s Guide to Shrouded Mirrors by James Dillon

9.1 Introduction

Shrouded Mirrors was written in late 1987. It was commissioned by Curo Ltd (Sweden) and dedicated to the Swedish guitarist Magnus Andersson who premièred the work on 27th May 1988 in Busto Arsizio in Italy.

Magnus Andersson recorded the work for the BBC but has not made a commercial recording. Two commercial recordings are known; one by Stefan Östersjö and the other by Todd Seelye. My performance is included as a supplementary data file.

9.2. The score

The score is a facsimile of the composer’s manuscript. It is thus an invaluable primary source. The score is prefaced with a page of ‘performance notes’, including the following:

It is extremely important that the natural resonance of the instrument should be allowed to speak. Rhythmic organisation is built around the placement of attacks and it is suggested that any damping of durational units is therefore minimised to facilitate this resonance.
A rhythmic balance should be maintained between the two principal polyphonic streams of the work. To achieve such a balance, it may be necessary to give a slight emphasis to the bass line.

9.3 Form

_Shrouded Mirrors_ is in four sections (numbered by the composer) of roughly equal lengths (measured by the number of bars) and played without break (see Table 9.1). It is not easy to see any particular large scale characteristic that distinguishes each section, the overall effect being, more or less, a continuous interplay of two voices in a distorted ‘mirroring’, punctuated by several episodes of gestural interest.

**Table 9.1** Dillon, _Shrouded Mirrors_ – the four sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Bars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>38-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>75-106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>107-145 (end)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.4. Tempo

Each section has a different profile of tempo indications.
Table 9.2 Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, tempo indications for each section

### Section 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ (8th)</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>No. of Bars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 72</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td><em>tempo giusto</em></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 48</td>
<td>7-10</td>
<td><em>rit $\rightarrow$ pause</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 72</td>
<td>11-14</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 48</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 72| 19-20  | *tempo giusto $\rightarrow$ poco*  
|                                        |        | *rit*                      | 2           |
| Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 72| 21     | *a tempo*                  | 1           |
| Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 72| 22-25  | redundant                  | 4           |
| Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 48| 26-29  |                            | 4           |
| Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 72| 30-37  | Comma, pause, comma,        
|                                        |        | pause end of 33, pause bar 37| 8           |

### Section 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ (8th)</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>No. of Bars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 48</td>
<td>38-41</td>
<td><em>Accel. bar 41</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 63     | 42-56  | *Poco rit bar 49*           
|                                        |        | *a tempo bar 50*            
|                                        |        | *stringendo bar 52*         
|                                        |        | *stringendo bar 53*         
|                                        |        | *stringendo bar 55*         
|                                        |        | comma end of bar 56         | 15          |
| Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 48| 57-58  | *meno mosso*                | 2           |
| Sub. *a tempo* $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 63 | 59-66 |                             | 8           |
| Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 48| 67-70  |                            | 4           |
| Sub. $\frac{\mathbf{\dot{m}}}{4}$ = 63| 71-74  | *rall. bar 74*              | 4           |
Section 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm $\frac{1}{8}$ (8th) =</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>No. of Bars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\frac{1}{8}$ = 56</td>
<td>75-83</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub. $\frac{1}{8}$ = 48</td>
<td>84-87</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub. $\frac{1}{8}$ = 56</td>
<td>88-93</td>
<td>Poco rit bar 90</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub. $\frac{1}{8}$ = 48</td>
<td>94-97</td>
<td>meno mosso</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub. $\frac{1}{8}$ = 56</td>
<td>98-106</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm $\frac{1}{8}$ (8th) =</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>No. of Bars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub. $\frac{1}{8}$ = 48</td>
<td>107-145</td>
<td>poco rit end of bar 125 to comma pause a tempo bar 126 rall. e dim. bar 144 pause on trill bar 145</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is readily seen that Section 1 alternates between two tempi: $8^{\text{th}} = 72$ for the most part but slowed to $8^{\text{th}} = 48$ three times for four bars. There is a redundant $8^{\text{th}} = 72$ at the start of bar 21 – although it may be there to support the sotto voce indication. The tempo giusto leads to a ritenuto and fermata in bars 9 and 10 (respectively). All but one tempo change is to be subito. The impression is therefore of several attempts to ‘awaken’ the music (also supported by the risvegliato in bar 11). The brief pauses (bars 12, 33, and 37) do not coincide with any tempo changes so they could be construed as minor interruptions to the musical flow.

Östersjö and Seelye both take the opening $8^{\text{th}}$ at 72 but Andersson is substantially faster.
Section 2 contains a similar number of tempo changes, again all but two to be *subito*. The overall tempo is slower with $8^{\text{th}} = 63$ the fastest, and again there are the three bar $8^{\text{th}} = 48$ interludes, effectively forced *ritenutos*. There is less of a sense of *giusto* here as there are many more *rallentandos, accelerandos, poco ritenutos and stringendos*, especially in bars 42 to 56.

Section 3 continues the progressive slowing of the pulse. The base tempo of $8^{\text{th}} = 56$ is again slowed to the $8^{\text{th}} = 48$ for four bar interludes, but only twice this time. There are no pauses, commas and only one *poco rit.* and *a tempo* in bars 90/91. Again, the changes are all *subito*.

Section 4 is at $8^{\text{th}} = 48$ throughout with only one *poco rit.* and *a tempo* in bars 125/126 (with a comma on the separating bar line) and a *rall. e dim.* from bar 144 to the *fermata* on the last chord.

The impression through the duration of the work is of a progressive slowing of the pulse from $8^{\text{th}} = 72$ to 48. It cannot be accidental that the two-voice counterpoint arrives at octave relationships several times during this final section (Example 9.1).

**Example 9.1** Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bars 120 – 122

$8^{\text{th}} = 48$
9.5 Rhythm

There are few bars with a simple 8th pulse and no fractional or irrational subdivisions. On the other hand, the performer is aided by the fact that the beat is easily identifiable in every bar. An approximation to the rhythm, at least in the early learning of the piece is, therefore, relatively easy. Dillon’s handwritten score represents the proportionality of the note relationships but there are errors and one can only speculate as to why that should be. For example, bars 2, 13 and 30 (Examples 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4) show misalignments of notes that could easily be misinterpreted by the performer not prepared to do the arithmetic and make a detailed study of the score.

Example 9.2 Dillon, Shrouded Mirrors, bar 2

8th = 72

In bar 2 the C sharp and D should be played together. Östersjö and Seelye do this, but Andersson does not.

Example 9.3 Dillon, Shrouded Mirrors, bar 13

8th = 72
Here the D and E in the first beat should be played together.

**Example 9.4** Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bar 30

8\textsuperscript{th} = 72

Here the C sharp and E in the first beat should be played together.

As mentioned, the quaver (8\textsuperscript{th}) pulse is evident in almost every bar. The subdivisions of this pulse into 3 or 5 present no especial difficulty. The rhythmic problems arise when these, and other, subdivisions in one part (of the usual two part texture) are combined with rhythmic complexities in the other part. It would seem that approximation\textsuperscript{4}, or proportion\textsuperscript{5} are the best solutions. There is however the risk of underestimating the requirements and challenges. In preparing this work, the performer challenges the aesthetics of this style of composition; that is, the challenges of the aesthetics of performance perhaps mirror those of, or posed by, the composer in the composition. Any interpretation for expressive purposes may quite easily deviate from the detailed prescriptions in the score. On the other hand, the preference to have any performer at all would seem to imply an acceptance by the composer that the decisions made by the performer will possibly conflict with a literal reading of the score.

Recalibrating the metronome mark (Schick’s method 2 – see Part 1, Chapter Four, section 4.8) will deal with the rhythmic complexities in the following example (Example 9.5).
Example 9.5 Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bars 51 – 52

$8^{\text{th}} = 48$

The following table (Table 9.3) shows the bars that might well benefit from this recalibration.

**Table 9.3** Bars of *Shrouded Mirrors* for which recalibration of tempo is possible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Original mm</th>
<th>Recalibrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 52$</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 87$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 63$</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 74$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 63$</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 87$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 48$</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 56$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 48$</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 72$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 48$</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 60$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 48$</td>
<td>$\downarrow = 66$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst it is sensible on the whole to keep to the quaver pulse, there are some bars where it is more practicable to take the recalibrated pulse and approximate the other part (in the original note values) to that. For example, in bar 127 (Example 9.6) the upper voice is in regular $16^\text{th}$ notes (with simple $32^\text{nd}$ subdivisions later), so the evenness may be better achieved with the recalibrated pulse.
Example 9.6 Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bar 127

8th = 48

9.6 Timbre

The piece starts with a fairly dramatic use of tone, with bar 1 beginning *sul pont.* and progressing through *sul tast*o to *ord.* by bar 5. Thereafter there are fewer indications. In Section 1 there is *pont.* or *sul pont.* at bars 18 and 21 and *sul tast*o at bars 20, 23 and 30. There is a progression from *tasto* to *pont.* over bars 24 and 25.

Section 2 has a *sul tast*o at bar 52, a *sul pont.* at bar 54 and a progression *pont.* to *ord.* in bar 56.

There are no tonal indications at all in Section 3. In Section 4 there is only *(s.t.)* on the note preceding the last chord and *(s.p.)* on the last chord itself.

As in most music, the absence of the composer’s indications of tone, or tonal variation, does not necessarily imply their expectation of a bland tonal palette. The inference should be that this aspect, once the explicit instructions have been followed, should be left to the performer’s judgement. Similarly, no inference can be made from the variation in terminology (*sul*, *s.t.* etc).
9.7 Dynamics

These are copious, detailed and essential for a convincing performance. Ranging from ffff (bar 107) to ppp (throughout) with several sfff, sff etc., the demands on the performer are realistic. Bar 18 (Example 9.7) contains seven rapid alternations from mp to pp, crescendo/diminuendo but in the context of a rapid tremolando and trill, the effect is obvious and a performer might be allowed a degree of flexibility in the interpretation.

Example 9.7 Dillon, Shrouded Mirrors, bar 18

8th = 48

9.8 Performance notes

Unlike the previous two case studies, this score presents no problems where identification of performance issues is concerned. For convenience, the problems are discussed under separate headings.

Special techniques

With the exception of apagado the demands are conventional. Dillon’s explanations of his terminology are not always completely clear but his intentions usually are. There remain some ambiguities: for example, he describes (in his performance
notes) the quaver with a cross through it as ‘a left – hand hammered stroke using the pad of the finger’. His only use of this is at the start of bar 12. (Example 9.8)

**Example 9.8** Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bar 12

8\textsuperscript{th} = 72

![Musical notation](image)

The realisation of this is probably that the bass E (6\textsuperscript{th} string) ringing on from the previous bar is to be touched (with a left hand finger) at the 12\textsuperscript{th} fret, thus producing a harmonic. The indication is doubly notated as he has written the standard open lozenge note E together with the indication *harm.* above it. The ambiguity results from the extra indication (*m.d.*), which now seems contradictory, or at best redundant. There is also the consequence that the bass E (marked *ff*) will no longer ring for the notated duration, but a harmonic at the harmonic pitch indicated is impossible without stopping the 6\textsuperscript{th} string. This duration may of course simply be the consequence, or manifestation, of a compositional process and an indication of such to the performer.

The rapid *tremolando* in bar 18 (Example 9.7) can be achieved by a rapid ‘fluttering’ of the right hand index finger. Other techniques such as *golpe*, *martellato*, *note-bend (as in blues)*\textsuperscript{6} are probably well known to anyone considering learning this piece.
The harmonics are problematic. Dillon does not state whether they are written at pitch or are to be sounded an octave higher. For example, the G harmonic in bar 9 is almost certainly a 12th fret ('natural') harmonic on the third string and thus sounding at the pitch indicated (bearing in mind the usual octave transposition of guitar notation). The harmonics in bars 57 and 58 (Example 9.9) are obviously played with the standard 'artificial' harmonic technique and should probably, therefore, be played by fingering the notes one octave lower than written and employing this technique. It does produce harmonics that are rather low in the guitar range, and it is moot whether or not a realisation of the harmonics one octave higher is more effective in performance. Seelye plays them at pitch whilst Andersson and Östersjö play them one octave higher.

Example 9.9  Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bar 57

\[ 8^{\text{th}} = 48 \]

The passage from bar 84 to 86 (Example 9.10) is especially difficult as the rapid tremolando (played as suggested above by fluttering the right hand index finger) is accompanied by another lower line. This might present a problem for some players. One solution is to strike the lower line with the left hand fingers only, leaving the right hand playing the tremolando line. This is, arguably, an acceptable method as the lower line produced by this method is quite audible. Once this is mastered it may be easier to start striking the notes with the right hand as well.
Example 9.10 Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bars 84 – 86

\[8^{th} = 48\]

In the performance notes Dillon explains his use of *apagado* in the following manner:

strike the string with the right hand, simultaneously hammering it with the left hand

This is not a clear indication of what he intends. It is not a standard musical term and does not appear in the 1984 Groves Dictionary of Music, but the word is defined in the Spanish dictionary as ‘dull’ or ‘muted’ \(^7\). Since Dillon was originally a guitarist\(^8\) it is odd that he is not more specific about the means to produce the sound he requires. He uses it in bars 108 and 110 to 112 (Example 9.11) where the instruction is supplemented with wedge (*staccatissimo*) and *tenuto* marks\(^9\). The implication seems to be some sort of *pizzicato*, or *spiccato*, effect.

Example 9.11 Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bar 108

\[8^{th} = 48\]
Unusual Terms

The only unusual terms used are *apagado* (discussed above) and *risvegliato* that means starting or waking up.

Dillon also uses many standard ornamentation signs, mordents, trills and the like. He stipulates they are to be played to the nearest semitone unless otherwise directed. Their use and performance is not problematic.

9.9 Impossibilities and controversial solutions – my own practice

My solutions to what I consider to be impossible demands in the score are as follows:

1. Bar 33 (Example 9.12) contains a stretch from a B flat on the 6th string, 6th fret, to an F on the first string 13th fret. Whilst the stretch is just about possible the need for the left hand to relocate immediately afterwards to the G sharp on the 6th string 4th fret (still maintaining the high F), is impossible even for the largest hands.

Example 9.12  Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bar 33

8th = 72

Unless some radical solution is discovered, the preferred option by the performers who have made recordings is to omit the B flat altogether.
2. In bar 51 (Example 9.5) the five-note chord on the second beat is unrealistic. It is probably best to omit the G natural as it is much lower in the voicing. The five-note chord immediately following this one may be played satisfactorily using the thumb and all four fingers of the right hand.

3. As already mentioned, the use of the left hand only to play the lower voice in bars 84 – 86, might be considered a controversial solution. After a great deal of practice I found I could strike the strings with the right hand with sufficient accuracy and this is my preferred solution for the present.

4. Following Andersson and Östersjö, I play the harmonics in bar 57 one octave higher.

5. I found Schick's third method the most practical way for dealing with the rhythmic issues of the piece. My analysis of the first six bars, given in section 5.9 of Chapter Five, shows that on a purely rhythmic analysis the results were comparable to the most accurate of the other performers whose music I analysed. To repeat what I stated earlier in Chapter Five, section 5.10 concerning my performance, 'there were no egregious [rhythmic] errors for which explanations or speculations need to be contrived. There were no instrumental issues to influence the performance of the rhythmic figures, the tonal changes from *sul pont* to *sul tast*o being routine for guitarists'. This does not mean however that the performance itself necessarily fulfilled the aesthetic demands of the composer. That question cannot be answered by me. My view was that the *Tempo giusto* indication at the start implicitly meant the rhythmic pulse should be prioritised. The quintuplet is a familiar, routine, subdivision and my performance of these figures was reasonably accurate – that is, to a similar tolerance to other performances I have analysed. In addition, I have already mentioned that, as this was my first attempt at learning the piece, it is probable that, should I relearn the piece in the future, I would refine my interpretation in the same way that Chris Redgate refined his performance of *Ausgangspunkte* over successive re-learnings.
6. Unlike the other two case studies, this piece has been recorded at least three times. I listened to them for the purposes of this thesis and it is surprising to me that so little of these performances carried over in to my interpretation. Whilst I used a metronome to establish tempi for the different sections, I soon stopped doing so. Hence my own memory for work I had done, and the other performances I had heard was soon overwritten by my active interest in my interpretative work at the time. Whilst I am surprised that my opening tempo is slower than the composer’s indication, for me, the essence of my interpretation goes a fair way to meeting the aesthetic demands of the score. Again, I am not in a position to assert this as a conclusion that should be unequivocally accepted by others.

9.10 Aesthetic considerations

A précis of Dillon’s aesthetic concerns, as reported by Toop in 1988, was given in Chapter Two and in Chapter Three, where a short account was given of his interview with the BBC in 2010. Unlike the other composers who have been highlighted in the study, Dillon has not used the guitar very much in his other music. *Shrouded Mirrors* is still his only work for the solo guitar. There is a part for the classical guitar in *Vernal Showers*, his 1992 piece for violin and chamber ensemble written for Irvine Arditti and the Nieuw Ensemble, and he uses the electric guitar in *Temp’est* written in 1994. It would therefore seem that Dillon does not find the guitar useful for his compositional textures. A simple explanation of this might be the relatively quiet dynamic of the (unamplified) instrument in ensemble situations and Dillon has, or had, the reputation of writing music that can be loud and aggressive in its impact. One cannot imagine a section or a part for the guitar in *Nine Rivers* for example.

Stefan Östersjö, in the notes for his recording of *Shrouded Mirrors*, writes:
The title of “Shrouded Mirrors” alludes to a prose poem by Borges (Los espejos velados) which has provided poetic substance to this composition.

In “Shrouded Mirrors” James Dillon creates abstract representations of obscure mirrors through a two part counterpoint with imitations of rhythmical and intervallic patterns. But these reflections are blurred to such an extent that they are perceptible only through reading of the musical text. Clearly audible though are the reflections appearing in the rapid flow of music, with echoes from the guitar repertoire, having allusions both to renaissance and baroque music, as well as to the romantic guitar tradition. Perhaps the the tremolo passages, as a reminiscence of Tarrega’s “Recuerdos de la Alhambra”, are also another allusion to Borges, to whom Islam and Sufism was an important influence. Through this framework of metaphors, however, “Shrouded Mirrors” evokes that same cerebral, pessimistic gloom as many of the tales and poems of Borges.

Todd Seelye in his notes simply quotes the passage from Borges (also quoted by Östersjö):

As a child, I felt before large mirrors that same horror of a spectral duplication or multiplication of reality. Their infallible and continuous functionings, their pursuit of my actions, their cosmic pantomime, were uncanny then, whenever it began to grow dark.

For me, Östersjö stretches credulity with his suggested linking of the musical material in Dillon’s piece for guitar with the guitar’s traditional repertoire and in particular the piece by Tarrega. Dillon uses a tremolando technique that has quite a different effect to that evoked by the usual classical style of tremolo. The consequent illative link to Islam and Sufism is, therefore, speculative. The use of
two-part counterpoint does not of itself inevitably evoke baroque or renaissance music, for if so any use of it anywhere would imply such a reference. Unfortunately Dillon has not written a programme note for this work (or none appears on the Peters Edition website where there are programme notes for many of his other works\textsuperscript{10}).

An alternative view, which could be seen as supporting Östersjö is given by Potter in (Potter 1990) and Whittall (Whittall 2007). Potter suggests, perhaps provocatively, that Dillon’s compositional aesthetics can be seen as postmodernist, despite his being seen as essentially a committed modernist. He cites Dillon’s \textit{Del Cuarto Elemento} for solo violin – written in 1988, the same year as \textit{Shrouded Mirrors} – so it is possible that Dillon’s compositional preoccupations were similar for the two pieces. Potter notes the ‘avant-garde acrobatics’, which the listener might interpret as hinting at Xenakis, also suggest ‘folk fiddle traditions’. He goes on to suspect Dillon of subverting modern techniques and confronting the whole violin tradition – both classical and modern (Potter 1990, 259). Whittall makes a similar point where he discusses \textit{The book of elements}, Dillon’s five volume set of piano pieces, and notes Dillon’s own proposition of its formal associations ranging from Beethoven to Schoenberg (Whittall 2007, 10). Whittall quotes Pace’s notes for the first performance of the work which also refers to the ‘resonances and echoes of the music of Debussy, Ravel, Scriabin… and numerous others’ (Whittall 2007, 10). Whittall also suggests that the ‘violinistic pyrotechnics of \textit{Traumwerk} pay homage to the 19\textsuperscript{th}-century heritage extending from Paganini to Ysaïe’ (Whittall 2007, 10).

Another way of thinking of \textit{Shrouded Mirrors} might be via Dillon’s idea that braiding is a ‘good metaphor for all music’ (Potter 1990, 256). Potter explains that Dillon came to this idea while plaiting his daughter’s hair. Whilst this metaphor has direct application in the 1983 String Quartet (Potter’s example) it is easy to see this, admittedly on a smaller scale, in the two-part interplay of the guitar piece. Whittall continues the idea when he describes ‘the image pinned down in the title
of *La navette* is that of a weaving shuttle’ and refers to the ‘belief of Middle Eastern carpet makers that to weave successfully one must become possessed’ (Wittall 2007, 5). The weaving shuttle imagery immediately reminds one of Stockhausen’s *Trans* and the carpet weaving analogy of Feldman, as mentioned in Chapter One.

It may be that the mirror metaphor is the most apt and it is here that Whittall’s description of Book 3 of *Traumwerk* seems equally applicable to *Shrouded Mirrors*:

The music, even at its most disturbed, is palpably dream-like in the way it offers haunted ‘distortions’ ... of archetypal musical, acoustic phenomena. Dreams teach us the inescapability of memory – but they invariably reconfigure (distort) memory, which is why we may prefer to marginalise them, regard them as decorative embellishments of reality rather than central to the reality of the material world itself. (Wittall 2007, 7)

The notion of distorted mirrors – the quality that imbues *Shrouded Mirrors*, reflects the distortion of dreams, subverting memory. Whittall quotes Dillon; ‘Perhaps all music is a play with memory. [...] The allusions are generally fleeting and in a state of flux’ (Whittall 2007, 10).
Notes

1. Curo Sweden also commissioned Brian Ferneyhough’s Kurze Scahtten 11 for guitar. It is not easy to find out any information about Curo Sweden and a google search was not illuminating.

2. i) Todd Seelye: Sheer Pluck, Music and Arts Programs of America Inc CD - 1032  
    ii) Stefan Ostersjo: dB Productions Sweden 7 393787 97031 8  
    iii) BBC recording by Magnus Andersson made some time in the early 1990s.


4. See Chapter Four, section 4.9.

5. See Chapter Four, section 4.13.

6. From the performance notes in the score.


8. Most recently mentioned in the BBC Proms Composer Portrait (Hear and Now 2010) devoted to James Dillon broadcast on 19th August 2010 (included with the data files).

9. See, for example, (Read 1974) for a discussion of the various interpretations of this.

10. www.editionpeters.com, accessed several times prior to 22nd October 2010