

Feda

For Flute, Bb Clarinet, Harp, Violin, Viola, Cello and Double Bass

Score in C

Aileen Sweeney

(2020)



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Instrumentation

Feda is scored for chamber ensemble including these instruments:

Flute (with B foot joint)

Clarinet in Bb

Harp

Violin

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

Duration

c. 9 minutes.

Co-Commissioned by **sound** and **Red Note Ensemble** for **soundfestival** 2020/21.

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Programme Note

In early medieval times, trees played an important role in Irish and Scottish Celtic culture and traditions. Trees formed the basis of literature, religion, myth, legend and symbolism and were believed to be sacred. They were regarded as "sustainers of life," offering food, medicine, warmth and housing as well as forming connections to the spiritual worlds. Trees were marvelled for their longevity, living sometimes for thousands of years which to people of the time, seemed something almost eternal. To fell a tree unnecessarily was considered taboo and could result in severe punishment.

Trees were also used to form an alphabet and calendar known as Ogham. The alphabet contained twenty distinct characters called *Feda* meaning trees. The letters of the alphabet corresponded with a particular tree, the characteristics of which symbolised a certain attribute of human existence.

I - Beith (Birch Tree) – *The Lady of the Woods* 

The Birch Tree is one of the first trees to come into leaf and therefore represented new beginnings, change, new life and rebirth along with purification, protection and healing. It is therefore used as the first letter in the alphabet and calendar. The birch is an extremely resilient "Pioneer Tree" meaning it can restart colonisations after natural disasters. It was also known as "*The Lady of the Woods*" for having associations with femininity, grace and purity.

II – Luís (Rowan Tree) – *The Veil Between the Heavens* 

Rowan trees are not tall so are found growing singly, away from other trees. They can grow in shallow soil and at high altitudes, where few other trees could grow so are often found atop mountains in the Scottish Highlands. Celts believed there was a veil between the heavens and the mortal world which was thinnest on top of mountains, closest to heaven which is perhaps why the Rowan has such a special spiritual significance. It is associated with humanity, life and blessings and offered protection against evil enchantments and magic.

III – Eadha (Aspen Tree) – *The Whispering Tree* 

The small, circular shape of Aspen leaves are unique to this tree. The leaves tremble in the wind which creates a whispering sound which the Celts believed was the souls of their ancestors communicating giving it the title of "*The Whispering Tree*." This gave this tree particular sacred significance and was often rumoured to be connected to the realm of the Faeries and the underworld.

Performance Directions

General:

- There are a number of fermatas used throughout the piece. As guidance, once the resonance has died from the previous phrase, move on to the next bar.

Woodwind:

- Timbral trills are notated with a trill sign to the same note bracketed, meaning that the player should find an alternative fingering for the note and trill between the two resulting in microtonal differences. Generally, the trill should start slowly before increasing in speed.
- All lip falls should be played using embouchure/breath as opposed to using fingerings to create a glissando effect.
- Cross head notation shows that an unpitched air sound should be played. A higher sounding air pitch should be made if possible.
- Bracketed notes with diamond head notation asks for an alternate fingering to be used. This is not to necessarily alter the pitch but to give a rougher, less pure tone quality, creating a ghost note effect.

Harp:

- Harmonics are written to show the string the harmonic should be played on with it to sound an octave higher.

Strings:

- Natural harmonics are written at sounding pitch.
- Tremolando are not to be measured.
- Harmonic Trills: Play the lower note whilst trilling to the bracketed harmonic.
- Glissandi: Should be played slowly, lasting the full duration of the notated note allowing all notes in between to be heard. The glissandi should not be broken by a bow change in order to create the illusion of a continuous note.

Technique Abbreviations

Sul Tasto:	s.t.
Molto Sul Tasto:	m.s.t.
Quasi Sul Pont:	q.s.p.
Sul Pont:	s.p.
Normale:	norm.
Directional Arrows:	Move smoothly from one technique to another.

Beith

The Lady of the Woods



Resonant yet earthy and raw.

♩ = 80

Aileen Sweeney (b.1994)

Flute

Breathy tone.
Free Breathing.

Timbral trill.
Slow → Fast

Clarinet in Bb

p

Harp

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

s.t
airy, wispy.
Sul G.

q.s.p

(Harm. Gliss) → s.p

pp → *p*

6

Move on once
resonance has died.

Simile.

Fl.

Cl.

Hp.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Simile.
tr

p → *mp*

norm.

q.s.p

p → *mp*

2 12 (with vla.)

Fl. *mp*

Cl. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Hp. *mf* *mp*

Vln. *p* *mp* *p*

Vla. (with fl.) *mp* *solo* *mf* *f*

Vc. *mp* *p*

Cb. *mp* *mf* *mp*

l.v sempre

(matching d.b pitch) s.t. q.s.p.

s.t. norm.

18

Cl. *mp* *p*

Hp. *p*

Vla. s.t. *p*

Cb. s.t. *p* *pp*

23 3

Cl. *pp* *pp* *mp*

Hp. *pp* *p* *pp*

Vla. s.t. *pp*

Cb. *pp* norm. *pp* *mp*



29 wispy and delicate.

Fl. *ppp*

Cl. *mf* *ppp* wispy and delicate.

Hp. *pp* *mp* *mf*

Vln. s.t. wispy and delicate. *ppp*

Vla. s.t. wispy and delicate. *ppp*

Vc. s.t. wispy and delicate. *ppp*

Cb. *mf* s.t. wispy and delicate. *ppp*

Luís

The Veil Between the Heavens



**Fragile yet mystical.
With freedom.**

♩ = c. 55

1 Solo.
l.v. sempre

Hp. *pp* *mp* *p* *mf* *f* *mp*

Vln.



5 *poco rit.*

Hp. *mf* *f* *p*

Vln.



a tempo
♩ = c. 55

9 More introverted.

Hp. *mp* *mf* *mp* *sub. pp* *mp*

Vln.

Eadha

The Whispering Tree

Extremely delicately.
Like leaves trembling in the wind.

♩ = 70



1

Flutter Tongue.
Airy, breathy sound.

Air Sound.

Simile.

Fl. *mp*

Air Sound.
Like an exhale.

Cl. *mf*

Simile.

Hp. *ppp shimmering*

Vln. *ppp shimmering*
m.s.t. *tr*

Vc. *ppp shimmering*
m.s.t. *tr*

Trill cont.

Col Legno, full wood. Let bow drop and bounce naturally. Like branches rustling.

Cb. *mp*

Simile.

mp

5

Like an exhale.

Fl. *fp*

Breathy, fragile tone.

Cl. *fp*

Hp. *ppp shimmering*

Vln. *ppp shimmering*

Vc. *ppp shimmering*

Cb. *mp*

8

Fl. *mf* *fp*

Cl. *mf* *fp* *mp*

Solo.
Freely with an improvised feel.

Hp.

Vln.

Vla. *pizz*
mf freely echoing clarinet

Vc.

Cb. *mp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 8 through 11. The Flute part begins with a *mf* dynamic and a slur, then transitions to a *fp* dynamic for a sixteenth-note scale starting in measure 9. The Clarinet part also starts with *mf*, has a *fp* dynamic in measure 9, and ends with *mp* in measure 11. The Harp part features a series of chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. The Violin part has a long slur across all measures. The Viola part has a *pizz* (pizzicato) marking in measure 9 and is described as *mf* freely echoing the clarinet. The Violoncello part has a long slur across all measures. The Contrabass part plays a continuous sixteenth-note pattern in measure 8, then rests in measures 9-11.



12

Fl. *mf* *fp*

Cl. *mf* *fp* *mp*

Hp.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb. *mp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 12 through 15. The Flute part has a *mf* dynamic in measure 12, rests in measure 13, and then plays a *fp* dynamic sixteenth-note scale in measure 14. The Clarinet part has a *mf* dynamic in measure 12, rests in measure 13, and then plays a *fp* dynamic sixteenth-note scale in measure 14, ending with *mp* in measure 15. The Harp part continues with chords and notes. The Violin part has a long slur across all measures. The Viola part is silent. The Violoncello part has a long slur across all measures. The Contrabass part plays a continuous sixteenth-note pattern in measures 12-14, then rests in measure 15.

16

Fl.

Cl.

Hp.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

mf

3



19

Fl.

Cl.

Hp.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

f

mf

f

mf

Normale.

arco

mp

mf

mf

Pages have been removed from this perusal score. If you would like to see the full score, feel free to get in touch on aileensweeney5@gmail.com