

TOWARD A PERFORMANCE TRADITION FOR THE
MATURE PIANO WORKS OF ARNOLD VAN WYK (1916-
1983)

by

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Declaration

I declare that this research thesis is my unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Music at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Duncan', with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

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Abstract

The aim of this project was to present the five mature piano compositions of the South African composer, Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983) across two recital programmes. In these programmes, his pieces would be played alongside works by other composers who influenced him or who he performed. The dialogues that arose from the curation of these programmes, the autoethnographic reflection I underwent throughout this process in the form of a journal, and the analytical activities I undertook are used to inform a performance tradition of these pieces. This performance tradition, itself a reflection of the key aspects of playing these works from the perspective of the performer, is divided into three levels, each of which reflect a step in the artistic process. The notational details in the form of articulation and expression marks correlate to the notational level of comprehension. Accentuating the various musical parameters involves the syntactic processes of meaning making. Lastly, considering this music through the lens of a dream aesthetic corresponds with the artistry involved in playing these pieces. The resulting performance tradition of these works suggests that the performer needs to have a precise approach to the notational details, a flexible and creative response to accentuating the music, and be capable of organising these pieces into larger forms disclosed by psychological narratives.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This project was borne out of a desire to play the complete piano works of the South African composer, Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983). This artistic impulse was shaped by a number of nebulous factors. His works had been included in a course I had undertaken on piano literature as an undergraduate student, as part of which we needed to be able to identify the different movements of *Night Music* in a listening test. I had seen sepia photographs of him displayed in glass cabinets at Stellenbosch University, and had pored over his scores when searching for a South African piece to present as an undergraduate exam requirement. I had heard performances of his pieces in concert, especially in his centenary year. As a postgraduate student I studied and performed *Night Music* in recitals several times between 2015 and 2016, including at a centenary concert at the University of Cape Town where his complete piano works were performed by students and faculty. Though he is a relatively unknown figure, even amongst South African musicians, I had encountered him throughout my artistic life.

Despite these encounters, I began this project with more questions than answers. His scores can only be found as physical copies, mainly in university libraries, and the scant recordings of his works are of varying quality and accessibility. The other factor pushing me toward his music was because I wanted to expand my own artistic horizon and deepen my own practice by learning his entire oeuvre. As this desire began to form, it became the structuring force of this project. I decided to present the five mature Van Wyk piano works across two seventy minute recitals, choosing complementary repertoire for each.

Title	Movements	Year of Publication
<i>Pastorale e Capriccio</i>	1. Pastorale 2. Capriccio	1948, revised 1955
<i>Night Music</i>	1. Molto lento 2. Presto non troppo 3. Larghetto, poco rubato 4. Tempo giusto: allegretto fantastico	1945-1958

	5. Lento non troppo, teneramente 6. Allegro agitato e tempestoso 7. Adagio	
<i>Four Piano Pieces</i>	1. Dumka: Hommage à Epétopoïret 2. Scherzino 3. Romanza 4. Toccata	1965
<i>Tristia</i>	1. Rondo desolato 2. Ostinato 3. Berceuse	1968-1978
<i>Ricordanza</i>		1973-1979

Table 1.1: List of the mature piano compositions of Arnold van Wyk

Each recital came to represent a different concept and pieces were chosen to underline this. The first recital would pair the first two Van Wyk compositions, *Pastorale e Capriccio* (1948-1955) and *Night Music* (1945-1958), with a Chopin Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 1, and the four *Nachtstücke*, Op. 23, by Schumann. This recital was an exploration of the themes associated with night, and its artistic representation through music. The second recital would pair the remaining Van Wyk pieces, *Four Piano Pieces* (1965), *Tristia* (1968-1978) and *Ricordanza* (1973-1979), with sonatas by Haydn (Piano Sonata in C major, Hob XVI:50) and Schubert (Piano Sonata in A minor, D.784). These composers featured prominently in the numerous recitals Van Wyk gave as a pianist, and I hoped their inclusion would yield further insights into his pianistic world. By placing the Van Wyk pieces alongside others by composers with established performance traditions, I hoped dialogue between them would occur. Said another way, these programmes were curated in order to encourage links between Van Wyk and other composers.

Thus, this project became an artistic undertaking guided by various methodological and artistic practices in order to come to a conclusion concerning what a performance tradition for these pieces encompasses. Methodologies were informed by my artistic practice insofar as I sought to find answers to questions that arose in practice, and my practice informed which methodologies would be most useful. Key to this was being self-reflective, and journaling about the questions, thoughts and insights I uncovered through my practice. The overarching themes of my journal formed the

basis for the chapters that follow on aspects of the notation, accentuation and psychological aspects of this music. I selected programmes, in consultation with my supervisors, and set out to learn these pieces in order to generate questions and find answers using both analytical and autoethnographical processes. This was done in order to reflect upon the facets of these works that become evident from this approach to artistic practice. The combination of these facets would then coalesce into a performance tradition.

Research Question

The primary research question guiding this study became: what are the facets of a performance tradition for the mature piano works of Arnold van Wyk? By making this the central concern of the project, several subsidiary questions became evident. Namely, how effectively can a single performer define the aspects of a performance tradition? How effectively can a performance tradition be developed within the framework of an artistic research project? How does putting this repertoire in conversation with other compositions help in establishing this tradition? And lastly, what is the efficacy of my chosen methodologies as they relate to my own practice?

These questions were inspired in part by the first complete commercial recording of the five mature piano works by Arnold van Wyk, released in 2018 by pianist Daniel-Ben Pienaar as a project funded by the Arnold van Wyk Centenary Fund established in 2016 by the Africa Open Institute (Muller and Pienaar 2020, 56). Pienaar discussed his approach to these pieces in a conversation with Muller at the time this recording was released. He stated:

My idea with music that is as finely made as this, with such compositional finish and so rich in its literary sensibility and in its awareness of the world of gesture and diction and enunciation and sound colour, and that, as yet, does not have a tradition of recordings or performances of different kinds to go alongside it, is to play a game where I imagine such traditions might exist and what they would be – based on my experience of what performers do in the repertoire that I normally play (Muller and Pienaar 2020, 58).

Pienaar describes his practice as being guided not only by the score, but also by different media. For example, his own interpretation of *Night Music* was influenced by the recording Arnold van Wyk made in 1961. Van Wyk was pleased with his recording, writing to Freda Baron:

I think I did well: things went so well that I and Christie who was turning were almost crying as I was playing. There are still a couple of wrong notes but they are inconspicuous and the new recording has what even the penultimate one didn't, sweep and spontaneity. So all in all I am very pleased (quoted in Muller 2014, 332).

As Ribeiro notes, this performance differs from the score, especially regarding tempo (Ribeiro 2009, 67). Pienaar played several pieces much faster than indicated in the score to approximate the effect of sweep and spontaneity Van Wyk captured in his less technically precise playing (Muller 2018, n.p.).

Pienaar also embraces the idea of borrowing different ways of performing from various performance traditions. He adopts an eclectic approach to the playing of canonical repertoire, writing:

Nothing prevents the performer from acquiring techniques and aesthetic and expressive models from a variety of traditions. Think of the exciting explorations of textures, buoyancy of rhythms and possibilities for stylisation that 'period instruments' have given us; of the miracles of characterisation, timing and phrasing, the ambiguities of sensibility of the pre-second-world-war players; and of some of the startling new sounds that can emerge when, in modernist fashion, the traditional relationship between means and ends is over-thrown, or when we hear the music through our more recent 'digital' interpretations of the world (Pienaar 2011, 2).

What Pienaar advocates for is an imaginative approach toward considering the possibilities for an interpretation of a given piece of music. As he says, 'choices are never a simple reaction to the text; rather something that results as a synergy between what the performer actively brings and what he perceives in the score and its contexts' (Muller and Pienaar 2020, 73). This approach and the possibilities it encompasses can make for compelling performances. While my own approach

to artistic practice was different, Pienaar provided me with an impetus to define what a performance tradition would mean and consist of from my own perspective.

Performance Tradition

Although I would not be following the same artistic approach Pienaar espouses, I too wanted to explore what a performance tradition for the mature Van Wyk piano pieces might be. Because Pienaar is a performer with his own horizon of knowledge and pianistic skill, his process will lead to a different outcome from that of another performer. Indeed, interpretations between performers may be similar but are never identical or formed in the same way. Perhaps this is why some performers are ambivalent about the concept of a performance tradition. The pianist, Artur Schnabel, was wary of relying on ‘stylistic generalisations’ (Wolff 1972, 16). For him, each composition was ‘all-inclusive, all-embracing’ and not necessarily comparable to other compositions by the same author (Wolff 1972, 17).

The pianist Herbert Henck touched upon this in his discussion about how Bach should be performed on the piano. Within the context of scholarly debates around Historically Informed Performance, Henck argued that performance should not be guided by tradition alone:

Immer hätte ich einer ganz aus der Intuition schöpfenden und so erst künstlerisch anspruchsvollen Interpretation den Vorzug gegeben vor einer zwar verdienstvollen, im Grunde aber anrühigen, nach Mottenkugeln duftenden Korrektheit, die nichts wagte und daher auch nichts gewann. Das Brechen mit Traditionen und ihre Anpassung an die zeitgemäßen, individuellen Bedürfnisse erscheint mir heute jedenfalls als die einzig authentische Tradition in der Kunst, für die sich der Einsatz lohnt. Nie konnte ich mir vorstellen, dass ein begabter, schöpferischer Mensch, wie Bach es war, den Wunsch hätte haben können, die Spieler seiner Musik auf die Replikation seiner selbst und immergleiche Wiedergabe festzulegen (Henck 2000, n.p.).¹

¹ I would always have preferred an interpretation that was based entirely on intuition and thus artistically demanding, to a correctness that was certainly worthy but essentially disreputable and smelled of mothballs, which dared nothing and therefore gained nothing. Breaking with traditions and adapting them to contemporary, individual needs seems to me today to be the only authentic tradition in art that is worth the effort. I could never imagine that a talented, creative person like Bach could have wanted to force the players of his music to replicate himself and always play the same way (my translation).

There is a danger of relying on tradition as a stopgap to avoid the effort required to develop an interpretation which is guided by a justifiable response to the music. Similarly, performance traditions can harden into dogma, or impose limits upon interpretation. But what performers like Henck and Pienaar suggest is that pianists should at least have a knowledge of these traditions, which can be applied or not applied depending on different musical contexts. For Roger Heaton, performance traditions represent:

...what José Bowen has called “remembered innovations” [...] that attaches itself to a work, changing it over time, located specifically in performer ‘expression’. The tradition of expression is a consciously applied subset of the more embedded ‘musicality’ learnt through the conservatoire apprentice model of teaching that builds on a more fundamental sensitivity to musical sound and organization. This expressive tradition is based on performance practices originating from the techniques and idiosyncrasies of specific performers at any time in musical history. These are consolidated over time and apply just as much in contemporary art music as in earlier styles (Heaton 2012, 98).

In this way, a performance tradition is made up of ways of performing expressively that coalesce through the activities of performers of a work or set of works. These innovations might be replicated by other performers to give an expressive account of the music in question. A performance tradition, therefore, represents an approach to musical expression grounded in a response to sound and how it is organised, and this always occurs within the broader context of how music is being performed more generally. The elements of a performing tradition include specific approaches to the various aspects of music, such as timing or sound quality, as well as specific technical approaches to achieve expressive ends. In my own experience as a performer with the Gauteng Opera, performance traditions developed within the institution and I was involved in the development of these traditions. For instance, specific tempi and approaches to *recitativi* and *a piacere* sections became generally agreed upon and formed the basis of future interpretations even as the singers or pianists changed.

In attempting to establish a performance tradition for these pieces, my intention is not to suggest *how* to play these works. Rather, this tradition reflects my own understanding of these pieces by

having made them the central focus of my artistic practice for the duration of this project. Through this process, I was able to arrive at a conception of these pieces as a whole. This conception could not have been formed by simply conforming to a performance tradition and bypassing having lived with the music itself. The intention of my performance tradition is not prescriptive or pedagogical, but instead concerned with broadening our understanding of the qualities and meanings of these works. In defining limits for this project, I decided not to engage deeply with the existing traditions found in recordings of these pieces, limited as they are, as Pienaar did. My artistic practice formed the locus of this project, and I decided to focus on the scores as its guiding force. Through engaging with these scores on multiple levels, from the prescriptive toward the suggestive, I wanted to define this tradition based on my response to the music first and foremost.

Wolff suggests that for Schnabel, analysis is a ‘clarification and intensification of musical sensitivity, an additional push in the right direction as established by musical instinct’ (Wolff 1972, 19). This suggests that certain facets of a composition become evident for the performer studying a work, which can maybe be explained by analysis but would not necessarily be at the forefront of score analysis. Or, as John Rink states, there are ‘a range of musical parameters that typically are given short shrift by analysts but which have much to do with music as experienced both by those performing it and, in principle, by those who choose to listen to it’ (Rink 2015, 130). Therefore, performers have a unique perspective because of the ways in which we engage with musical scores and our relationship to the traditions that shape how we approach these scores and their realisation.

The goal of my practice has been to focus on a faithful rendering of the score in all its detail, while simultaneously trying to form a conception of each specific piece in order to present a meaningful interpretation. This means I have moved from the smallest details of articulation to expressive markings, to a consideration of the process of balancing the various levels of accentuation that happen simultaneously such as harmony, rhythm and melodic contour. This close reading of the score represents an earnest attempt to deeply understand the spirit of each composition, and what the conception of these compositions as performable works can mean. Beyond notational and interpretive considerations, the artistic qualities of these works are explored through the lens of a poetic conception of music and structure. This is all done in order to arrive at a performance tradition which encompasses the expressive qualities of these pieces and their innovations from

the point of view of the performer. This performance tradition is defined by my own artistic practice and experience of playing these works, and my playing of these works is informed by my exploration of the questions that arose as a result of my artistic practice.

Aim

The initial aim of my project was to present these five piano pieces in recital and explore them. This topic grew in scope as my research progressed. Through engaging with the literature written about Van Wyk as well as encountering various projects in the emerging discipline of artistic research, I discovered that studying these piano pieces from the point of view of the performer has much to add to the existing literature. The aim of this project is to determine what the unique facets of a performance tradition for the mature piano works of Van Wyk might be. As one of the preeminent South African Western art music (WAM) composers, Van Wyk has been cast as a pioneer and pivotal figure in South African music. The life and music of Van Wyk has gained a surprisingly large amount of scholarly attention, and he is the subject of an extensive biography (Muller 2014). Approached from the point of view of existing scholarship, one might assume his works enjoy a frequent place in the repertoire. Instead, it seems that what is of interest to the musicologist, biographer and postgraduate student does not hold the same appeal for performers.

As Daula notes, '[o]pportunities for concert performances of Arnold van Wyk's entire corpus of mature piano music have, since his death in 1983, generally coincided with an anniversary project' (Daula 2021, 151). The most recent anniversary, the centenary of his birth in 2016, saw several concerts devoted to, or including, pieces by Van Wyk. There is also a small body of recordings of his piano works, some available commercially and some on sharing platforms such as SoundCloud or YouTube. His most frequently recorded piece, *Night Music*, has at least nine extant recordings, *Pastorale e Capriccio* has six, the *Four Piano Pieces* have five, and *Ricordanza* and *Tristia* have three. Many of these recordings are lost or contained within archives that are not easily accessible to the general public. However, scholars from 1984 to the present day have remarked upon the fact that his music is seldom played, with Muller writing that:

[P]erhaps surprisingly, his music remained (and continues to remain) to a large extent unknown, unclaimed and unloved in South Africa. Even his most often performed works, like the First Symphony, did not become part of the standard repertoires of South African symphony orchestras, even when the latter still flourished in the late seventies and eighties (Muller 2008b, 77).

Because so few performers have answered the clarion call to play his music, this situation persists today. This is part of why I wanted to perform these works that exist on the margins of the repertoire and for which no strong performance traditions exist.

Because of the limited nature of these traditions, the music can be played in a variety of ways - some performers may emphasise the modern and angular aspects of the music, while others may emphasise the Romantic expressiveness of it. Van Wyk emphasised the latter in his performances, with Ribeiro writing that Van Wyk ‘played piano in an anachronistically “Romantic” manner’ (Ribeiro 2009, 18). However, Van Wyk himself did write that ‘real sharp, spiky sounds [were] very much a part of [him]’ (quoted in Muller 2014, 342). Other performers might emphasise neither element too strongly and play the music in a direct manner, lending the music what Pienaar refers to as a ‘daily bread’ quality (Muller 2020, 59). All of these interpretations of the music are informed by the artistic conceptions of the music from the perspective of the performers who play them. Again, my goal is not to apply an approach to the music, so much as it is to try as far as possible to be led by the score, sound and musical content toward interpretations that encompass my conception and perspective of these works. In doing so, I hope to redress the relative neglect of these pieces and illuminate the aspects of them that emerge when approached from the perspective of a performer.

Rationale

Having lived with the music as a performer, I believe that intensive study of the piano works can reveal much about the music that has not yet been considered or spoken about. Part of this is understandable because performing these pieces requires a different mode of thinking from analysing these pieces from scores or recordings or considering them from different perspectives. For instance, scholars like Wilding have provided a comprehensive analysis of these works using

a variety of analytical approaches that allowed him to arrive at several conclusions about the musical language and processes of these pieces (Wilding 2007). Other authors like Nothling have provided pedagogical insights into the performance of the early works, *Pastorale e Capriccio*, *Night Music* and *Four Piano Pieces* (Nothling 2014), while Thom has provided insight into the compositional processes and poetic inspiration behind the late pieces *Tristia* and *Ricordanza* (Thom 2006). This project serves as an attempt to widen the horizons for future research by including the perspective of a performer who has played these works within the context of two recitals. Though Ribeiro discussed two performances of *Night Music* in his dissertation and used language to describe this that reveals his expertise as a performer, he did not perform the works himself. Similarly, while Nothling made use of her knowledge as a performer and pedagogue to discuss these piano works, her playing of them was not the focus of her dissertation which was written with the aim of being a pedagogical guide to the repertoire. Lastly, while Pienaar describes many fascinating aspects to these pieces as well as his own approach in playing them, his artistic practice was not grounded in methodology toward the end of artistic research and differs from my project in this way.

Moreover, unlike existing scholarship I am engaging directly with these piano works and their context in performance. This is not an attempt to divorce these works from their historical context but rather to try to situate them more in line with where van Wyk saw them existing - within the broader international and historical frame of WAM. After all, he published these scores so that they might be performed. This performance tradition represents an addition to the literature already existing around Van Wyk because so far, discussions of these piano works have been from a musicological or pedagogical perspective. In including the perspective of a performer of these pieces, I am able to foreground aspects of the music which might appear insignificant to the analyst, or might be sidelined when discussing Van Wyk as an historical figure within a specific socio-political context.

Performing these pieces and defining their performance tradition represents an attempt to add to the collaborative efforts of scholars and performers who have engaged with these works. This is something Pienaar touches upon in conversation with Muller, who asked Pienaar why he felt the need to refer to the existing recordings which Muller did not believe were texts that could influence

or add to how one might perform the music. Pienaar responded by saying, ‘I believe that, with more readings and more exposure, [V]an Wyk’s music will also accrue, as you rightly say, other texts around it – which in time may become part of a web of things we think of as [V]an Wyk, but which is in fact a kind of collaborate effort’ (Muller and Pienaar 2020, 58). By following a process similar to that which Pienaar followed but different in both methodology and approach, I hope to also contribute to the texts around the mature piano works through performances of these pieces and written reflection.

Another part of my rationale for exploring these works is that I had played *Night Music* several times in 2015, and again in 2016, as part of two concerts commemorating the centenary of his birth. I found the piece to be technically and interpretively challenging and felt that it would be valuable to revisit it to delve deeper and build upon what I had discovered in the work the first time around. Because Van Wyk did not write many piano works, I have been intrigued by the idea of presenting all five works as a whole. This interest was further encouraged by the release of the Pienaar recording of these works which I discovered in 2021.

The interesting and wide ranging commentary on *Night Music* that can be found in Volume 3 of the freely available internet publication Herri (<https://herri.org.za/3/sections/theme/>) was a source of further inspiration. The articles contained therein suggested that there is a far wider range of methods of considering *Night Music* than I thought possible, with some authors drawing on literary theory, philosophy and psychology, and one even presenting a collaborative response to the piece *Night Music* through the medium of video art. This is in keeping with the field of artistic research. As Peters suggests, artistic research is a specific artistic practice that engages in thought that proceeds via an artistic medium, and one of its hallmarks can be engagement with other forms of inquiry (Peters 2017, 25). This is why my project is framed as the unfolding of a process informed by methods and data as opposed to a generalised area of study.

Chapter Outline

In order to situate this project within existing research surrounding Van Wyk, and artistic research from the perspective of a pianist more generally, Chapter 2 will present a survey of the literature.

Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology and the frameworks that inform this project. This includes defining my artistic practice as well as the generative and reflective methodologies that inform my performance tradition. Further contextual information is contained in Chapter 4 which explores the biographical context in which Van Wyk wrote his five mature piano works and his training as a composer. With these elements of the project defined, Chapter 5 highlights the details of articulation and expression found in these scores, and their technical realisation. In Chapter 6, the poetic inspiration and nature of these works is explored, as well as how the music can be interpreted in order to reflect this poetic quality. Chapter 7 outlines the emotional qualities and potential meanings of these pieces that I uncovered through my artistic practice.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are prefaced with a brief dialogue between Van Wyk and the composers I programmed alongside him in my recitals. These dialogues became a way of structuring an artistic process that is not linear, but rather open-ended and recursive. In Chapter 5, considering Haydn alongside Van Wyk threw technical and compositional aspects of these works into relief. Placing Schumann and Chopin beside Van Wyk facilitated an exploration of the poetic aspects of these compositions in Chapter 6. Lastly, Schubert, a composer with whom Van Wyk shared a special relationship, inspired the discussion of the emotional and psychological qualities of these works which follows in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 summarises the insights from the preceding discussions of musical details, technical and interpretive considerations and the emotional content of the music. Additionally, this chapter contains my general reflections upon this project. These insights and reflections form the basis of my performance tradition for these piano works.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Ek kry Edu in sy kamer, waar hy besig is om sketse op musiekpapier uit te werk. Hy kyk skaars op as ek inkom en vra my om hom vir 'n oomblik te verskoon. Tot my verwondering voel ek g'n spoor van verontagsaming nie en ek gaan sit op die bed. So bekyk ek hom. Hy lyk sleg, blou kringe onder sy oë en sy hand senuweeagtig deur sy hare as hy met sy pen op die papier krap Half eerbiedig voel ek my. Hier is 'n skeppingsfeer. Dan sien ek die twyfel in sy oë en opeens voel ek jammer vir hom. Ook by hom kan die lewe nie gelykmatig verbygaan nie. Hy kyk op. "Dit sal weer vrot word" en ek troos hom. "Jy kan dit nie objektief beskou nie." Dan werk hy weer en ek probeer my gevoelens te definieer. Om beurte kom hulle op. Simpatie, bewondering (Johanssen 1938, 43-44).²

The Cape Town based anthropologist, Hans Holleman, published his novel *Gety* in 1938 using the pen name Holmer Johanssen. Though the novel is largely forgotten today, the character of Edu was based on Arnold van Wyk, who was a music student at the University of Stellenbosch at the time (Muller 2008c, 5). We know through his letters that Van Wyk knew Holleman and knew the character was based on him. In the novel, Edu is portrayed as a brooding and sensitive musician and composer. His compositional talent and skill as a pianist inspire awe in the other characters, and the rehearsal of one of his early string quartets is fictionalised in the book (Johanssen 1938).

This is among the earliest of a surprisingly large body of writings about Van Wyk. Some of these are in the form of reviews, newspaper and magazine articles and profiles, and interviews. His resignation from a post at Stellenbosch University in 1978 was considered newsworthy enough to be reported upon in newspapers throughout South Africa (King 2020, n.p.). During his lifetime, he was profiled by Howard Ferguson for *Tempo* in 1944 and 1958. Van Wyk himself gave interviews and published articles in *Die Huisgenoot*. In addition to this, there are several

² I find Edu in his room, where he is working out sketches on music paper. He barely looks up when I come in and asks me to excuse him for a moment. To my surprise, I feel no trace of disregard and I sit down on the bed. I look at him. He looks bad, blue circles under his eyes and his hand nervously running through his hair as he scratches the paper with his pen. I feel almost reverent. There is a creative aura here. Then I see the doubt in his eyes and suddenly I feel sorry for him. For him too, life cannot pass smoothly. He looks up. "It will be rubbish again" and I console him. "You cannot look at it objectively." Then he works again and I try to define my feelings. They come up in turns. Sympathy, admiration (my translation).

dissertations and academic writings about Van Wyk. Indeed, in 1984 Izak Grové wrote that ‘[d]issertasies en verhandelinge oor aspekte van sy werk vul reeds 'n kleinerige boekrak’ (Grové 1984, i).³

That same year, the year after his death, Van Wyk was memorialised in a volume of the journal, *Acta Academica*, which consisted of twelve articles. These range from recollections and memorials, to short biographies, to musicological considerations of his music. Also included are the two articles Van Wyk wrote for the magazine, *Die Huisgenoot*, in 1948 describing a concert tour he undertook, funded by the *Reddingsbond* (Van Wyk 1984). Several persistent narratives have already taken root in these articles which will find echoes in even recent scholarship. There is an acknowledgment by many of these authors that Van Wyk is a marginalised figure within South Africa at large. For instance, Malan writes:

Dit moet sterk betwyfel word of hierdie pionier van Suid-Afrikaanse muiek selfs naasteby na verdienste gewaardeer word. Daarmee word nie die belewenis van 'n relatief klein kringetjie kenners bedoel nie, maar 'n werklik nasionale aanvaarding van sy betekenis, wat byvoorbeeld met die aanvaarding van Pierneef of NP van Wyk Louw vergelyk kan word. Sy werk is nog ver daarvan verwyder om as 'n doodgewone bestanddeel van konsert- of radioprogramma beskou te word (Malan 1984, 12).⁴

Stegmann is even more emphatic when he writes:

Daar bestaan geen twyfel nie dat Van Wyk een van Suid-Afrika se grootste seuns is. Laat ons hom daarvoor eer, laat ons sy werke leer ken en waardeer. Ons mag nie uit die oog verloor nie dat ons kultuur, en dus ons voortbestaan as 'n volk, in die eerste plek afhang van ons skeppende kunstenaars. Dit is ons heilige plig om hulle heelhartig te ondersteun (Stegmann 1984, 30).⁵

³ Dissertations and treatises on aspects of his work already fill a small bookshelf (my translation).

⁴ It must be strongly doubted whether this pioneer of South African music is valued even close to what he deserves. This does not mean the experience of a relatively small circle of experts, but a truly national acceptance of its significance, which can be compared, for example, with the acceptance of [Jacob Hendrik] Pierneef or NP van Wyk Louw. His work is still far removed from being considered an ordinary fixture of concert or radio programmes (my translation).

⁵ There is no doubt that Van Wyk is one of South Africa's greatest sons. Let us honor him for that, let us get to know and appreciate his work. We must not lose sight of the fact that our culture and therefore our survival as a people, depends in the first place on our creative artists. It is our sacred duty to support them wholeheartedly (my translation).

Stegmann and Malan attempt to situate Van Wyk within a broader South African tradition, and exhort the public to embrace Van Wyk as an important national figure. Van Wyk himself was conscious of the fact that there was a push within South Africa during his lifetime to create a national artistic tradition. He wrote in a letter in 1947:

And everywhere there is a strong tendency to make art strictly nationalistic and to use it only for political purposes. And we are so aware of the fact that we have achieved but little in art that we want to create a tradition overnight, as well as a proud history. Everyone paints if the brush does not fall out of his hands, and everyone writes if he possesses only a thorough knowledge of grammar and in an overview of composers Hubert du Plessis is compared to M.L. de Villiers (quoted in Muller 2005, 39).

While some of these articles bear the fingerprints of complex ideological and political agendas, the information they provide is of historical interest. The articles Van Wyk penned, though more conversational in tone, also provide an insight into his perspective on piano playing and repertoire (Van Wyk 1984).

The nationalist streak in *Acta Academica* is contrasted by the more balanced critical and artistic responses found in Issue 3 of the online journal, *Herri*. Published in 2020, this issue is devoted in part to Van Wyk, and more specifically, the piece *Night Music*. As stated in the previous chapter, these articles use a far wider range of methodologies and are concerned with a wider array of research questions. Panoussis presents his research as the aforementioned video art set to *Night Music* (Panoussis 2020). Whyman considers *Night Music* through the philosophical lens of hauntology (Whyman 2020). The interview between Muller and Pienaar regarding the recording of the latter made of the piano works has been most useful to my project. The insightful commentary from Pienaar as one of the few pianists who has played all of these works in addition to a large amount of other standard repertoire has proven valuable. In the lengthiest article of the collection, Praeg considers the complex relationship between Van Wyk, his socio-political context, his identity and his compositional language (Praeg 2020). Rounding out the collection are a portion of the short story *Sonny's Blues* by James Baldwin, a quote from 'Toward an Ethics of

Improvisation' by Cardew accompanied by art by Garth Erasmus, and a portion from *Fragments* by Ghanaian author Ayi Kwei Armah.

One cannot write about the literature surrounding Arnold van Wyk without referring to the monumental three-volume biography, *Nagmusiek*, written by Stephanus Muller and published in 2014. The first volume is a catalogue of everything van Wyk composed, along with information regarding compositional sketches, performances, recordings, reception and programme notes the composer provided. This is a boon for van Wyk scholars, because, as Pistorius points out, 'Muller's catalogue is the first systematic ordering and description of a South African composer's complete oeuvre. It therefore not only forms the foundation of this specific text but also of a far-reaching project of canonization' (Pistorius 2015, 130). The second volume comprises 806 footnotes and an index, providing additional supplementary commentary on the biography proper. The third volume, by far the longest of the three, is written from the perspective of a fictionalised biographer, Werner Ansbach, who we follow through the process of constructing the biography. Tasked with forming a coherent narrative based on the myriad materials of a historicised life including lists, letters, photographs and newspaper materials, the biography is presented in a fragmentary way. Written mainly in Afrikaans, it provides the reader with an abundance of contextual information and an insight into Van Wyk the man. Peppered throughout are fragments from letters, interviews and presentations that give us a sense of how Van Wyk thought about a range of topics. Winning the University of Johannesburg Debut Prize for the best Afrikaans creative debut in 2015, this book explores larger notions of language, biography, and identity within South Africa.

Additionally, Muller has written numerous articles that shed further light on van Wyk, the context in which he lived and how he composed. 'Queer Alliances' examines the relationship between the Apartheid state, Afrikaans culture and queer composers like Van Wyk (Muller 2005). Muller explores the historical insights that can be gained from the novel *Gety* in 'Musiekgeskiedenis en fiksie: Hans Holleman en Arnold van Wyk in Holmer Johanssen se roman *Gety*' (Muller 2008c). Two other articles from 2008 - 'Arnold van Wyk's Hands' and 'Arnold van Wyk's Hard, Stony, Flinty Path, or Making Things Beautiful in Apartheid South Africa' - both give additional insight into the composer (Muller 2008a, Muller 2008b). The former is a musing upon how Van Wyk sought to canonise himself and represent himself as a specific kind of a composer, while the latter

is a condensed biography which traces the life of the composer while also exploring his national identity.

Rounding out the general commentary on Van Wyk are Ferguson (Ferguson 1987), in his chapter “Arnold van Wyk” from the book *Composers in South Africa Today*, and May (May 2001), in his entry on the composer from *Grove Music Online*, which provide concise descriptions of his compositional style and output. Ferguson also provides analyses of several important works from the Van Wyk catalogue, including *Night Music* (Ferguson 1987). Strauss also provides valuable insight into the reception of these pieces in her article, ‘Die selektiewe kanoniserings van Arnold van Wyk (1916–1983) se werke’ (Strauss 2013). She argues that his works with melancholy and tragic associations, often suggested by their titles, are privileged within the Van Wyk canon. Further she suggests, like Muller, that Van Wyk cast himself in the mold of the Romantic artist, with authors writing about him following suit (Strauss 2013, 524).

There are several dissertations that engage directly with the piano works under consideration. Ribeiro wrote about the contrast between two performances of *Night Music*: one by Van Wyk and the other by South African pianist, Stefan de Groote in his dissertation ‘Exploring Authenticity in Performance: A Comparative Performance Analysis of Arnold van Wyk’s *Night Music* for Piano’ (Ribeiro 2009). He considers how both performances relate to the score and uses his own knowledge as a performer to do a close analysis of how accurately both performers realise the instructions in the score. Ribeiro is somewhat critical of Van Wyk as a pianist - especially in the ways he deviates from the instructions in the score, writing that his playing is ‘riddled with inaccuracies’ (Ribeiro 2009, 71). He suggests that the recording Van Wyk made is different enough from the score that it constitutes an additional text or revision of *Night Music*. Ribeiro concludes that Van Wyk’s ‘primary aim as a performer was rather to transmit the full poetic substance of the work’ (Ribeiro 2009, 70). This became the aim of my own artistic practice as well. Ribeiro focuses on many of the same considerations my project did, especially regarding the score and its realisation, and the ‘great depth of interpretation and spiritual insight’ required of the performer (Ribeiro 2009, 57). Further, because of his access to the Van Wyk archive, this dissertation contains much useful contextual information including reviews and quotes from interviews and letters.

Nothling considers the early piano works - *Pastorale e Capriccio*, *Night Music* and the *Four Piano Pieces* - in her dissertation 'A Performance Guide to Arnold Van Wyk's Early Solo Piano Compositions' (Nothling 2014). Her performance guide constitutes an analysis of form and phrase structure, advice regarding pedalling, technical issues, rhythm and metre; and a glossary of tempo indications and performance terms. Some have taken issue with her arguments and opinions. Daula points out that her suggestion that the "Pastorale" and "Capriccio" can be played separately is incorrect, noting 'the published score, which bears Van Wyk's indication of 'attacca' at the end of the 'Pastorale' section, gainsays such a pronouncement' (Daula 2021, 153). However, her insights into the compositions and the fact that she approaches these pieces from the perspective as a pianist writing for student pianists make this a valuable point of departure for performers of these works.

Where Nothling focuses on the early works, Thom attends to the late works in her dissertation 'Die laat klavierwerke van Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983)', which focuses on *Tristia* and *Ricordanza* (Thom 2006). She explores the context and history of these pieces as well as the generative processes involved in their composition. This is noteworthy because these pieces were collated from dated sketches into a definitive version by Howard Ferguson after Van Wyk died. Thom highlights compositional techniques he used, including incorporating elements of the Prelude in D major from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1 by JS Bach in *Ricordanza*, and basing the 'Rondo desolato' from *Tristia* on a Middle Dutch poem. Thom has also written articles on *Ricordanza* and *Tristia*, as well as others on the *Duo Concertante* and several Van Wyk art songs in her articles 'Arnold van Wyk se *Ricordanza* as musikale aandenking' (Thom Wium 2008), 'Egidius as musikale interteks' (Thom Wium 2009), 'An Intertextual Reading of the 'Elegia' from Arnold van Wyk's *Duo Concertante*' (Thom Wium 2010a), and '"My country, my dry, forsaken country": On exile in Arnold van Wyk's, NP van Wyk Louw's and Ovid's *Tristia*' (Thom Wium 2010b). Thom is interested in the relationships these compositions share with other art forms, especially poetry. She explores the varied influences that Van Wyk used when composing. This is fertile ground for research since Van Wyk used such diverse methods to inspire and structure his compositions. Retracing these processes helped guide my practice toward a poetic basis for understanding and interpreting these piano works.

Wilding undertook an in-depth analysis of the entire Van Wyk piano oeuvre in his doctoral thesis, 'A Study of the Five Solo Piano Works of Arnold van Wyk' (Wilding 2007). Using a variety of analytical methodologies including reduction techniques and pitch-set theory, he presents 18 dynamic graph representations of six musical elements: form, melody, tonality, texture, dynamics and register. These 18 analyses, representing the entire piano output, are useful for reference. Through his analytical activities, he is able to come to evidence-based conclusions about technical and stylistic aspects of these piano works. As comprehensive as his project is, these analyses overlook some of the concerns that would be foremost in the mind of the performer - namely texture, sonority and phrase structure. This gives further credence to the idea that performance-led analysis will often lead to discoveries about music that might fall outside of the concerns of traditional analysis. What Wilding does do, in contrast to other authors, is represent a complete overview of the piano works and thus, he is able to discuss the changes in style Van Wyk made as his life progressed. Wilding also discusses the compositional process for each piece, including an account of the various sketches and revisions Van Wyk made. These aforementioned studies approach these piano works from a variety of perspectives, all with their own value. But none of these sources, with the exception of the interview between Muller and Pienaar, are explicitly written from the perspective of the artist scholar or from someone with stated experience performing these works.

The role of the artist scholar is in keeping with the new discipline of artistic research. While this discipline will be explained more fully in Chapter 3, artistic research refers to research which occurs through artistic practice, the results of which can also be presented via an artistic medium or as traditional written research. Owing to the fact that artistic research is an emergent form of research, there is a great deal of literature, especially from Europe and Australia, that seeks to delineate this mode of inquiry. There are sources such as the book, *Music and Knowledge: A Performer's Perspective*, by Dahl (Dahl 2017). This book explores various conceptions of knowledge in music research, and strategies for artistic research. Dahl presents numerous methodologies from both the humanities and sciences and shows how they might apply to a performer undertaking research through their own practice. Two similar books, *Perspectives on Artistic Research in Music* (Bruke and Onsman 2017), and *Artistic Practice as Research in Music* (Doğantan-Dack 2016), are valuable resources on artistic research, with both seeking to arrive at

a clearer picture of the discipline by defining its characteristics and methodologies. Both books explore the role of artistic research within institutions of higher learning and provide numerous examples of artistic research projects.

There are numerous artistic research projects that informed the methodologies I used and which will be explored in the theoretical framework. These include Pauw, who made curation the central topic of her dissertation which detailed the recitals she curated and performed of South African flute music around the theme of landscape (Pauw 2015). This process enabled her to combine her roles as a performer, curator and researcher, and demonstrate how curatorial intervention was able to challenge both the participants in her concerts and the conventions that underpin concert practice. Hultgren and Emmerson furnished me with examples of autoethnography, the first being from the perspective of a composer and the second from a pianist. Hultgren presented his doctoral thesis and composition portfolio as a website entitled ‘A Story Worth Telling’ - <https://doctorate.hultgren.com.au/> (Hultgren 2012). Hultgren presents several case studies detailing his compositional process. These case studies include technical explanations, conversations he had, journals, manuscripts from throughout the process, and emails and reflections from other people (Hultgren 2012). Emmerson presents an autoethnography from the point of view of a pianist in his chapter from the book, *Music Autoethnographies*, entitled ‘Evoking Spring in Winter’ (Emmerson 2009). Emmerson explores his own relationship with the *Winterreise* by Schubert, and how his conception of the piece has been shaped by his own practice, his own study of the texts and music, commentary by other performers of this work and reflecting upon various recordings of the work (Emmerson 2009). These projects demonstrate the potency of effective curation, and the broad range of materials that can be used to form an autoethnography.

One of the most distinctive voices in artistic research from the point of view of the pianist is Doğantan-Dack. She has undertaken many artistic research projects in order to advocate for the value of how performers experience and understand music. For instance, in her article, ‘Artistic Research in Classical Music’, she took the score of the Moment Musical in D flat major by Rachmaninoff and removed all expressive markings including the tempo instruction from the score (Doğantan-Dack 2015). She then recorded an interpretation of this piece based on the relationship between the notes alone, informed by how a performer conversant with the style would play the

music (Doğantan-Dack 2015, n.p.). The result is considerably faster than the instruction *Andante espressivo* and follows a different and generally louder dynamic plan. In doing so, Doğantan-Dack problematises notions that an interpretation is the inevitable result of playing a piece of music, but is informed and shaped by the activities of the performer. In another project, ‘Performing Beethoven’s Musical Dynamics’, she recentres the body of the performer in the realisation of music by considering the somatic experience of realising the dynamics in the Piano Trio in E flat major, Op. 70, No. 2 (Doğantan-Dack 2020). By highlighting the ‘non-conceptual, non-linguistic and embodied processes involved in music making and listening’ (Doğantan-Dack 2020, 28), she emphasises the value in considering aspects like dynamics in relation to how we understand music. Though Doğantan-Dack emphasises her role as an artist-scholar, she is not the first pianist to write about music from the perspective of the performer.

There are several pianists who have written or spoken about both their artistic practice and the music of the composers they play. It could be argued that these writings are on the margins of scholarship, informed mainly by the artistic practice of their authors, but these writings have value for performers and scholars alike. For instance, Brendel, in his collection of essays entitled *Alfred Brendel on Music* touches upon a wide variety of topics with essays about Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Liszt as well as other concepts related to music. He notes that ‘[his] essays arose from questions for which the literature available to [him] did not provide satisfying answers’ (Brendel 2000, xiii). In other words, he did not find answers to questions that arose as a result of his artistic practice. The pianist, Henck, also wrote autobiographical and music related essays where he reflects upon his thoughts about music, pianism and performance practice housed in an internet archive - <http://www.herbert-henck.de/Internettexte/internettexte.html>. To consider just one, he wrote a detailed and technical two-part essay entitled ‘Klaviaturen’ where he discusses the concept of playability on a keyboard instrument with a focus on contemporary piano techniques (Henck 2001). Henck demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of music as a performer noted for playing contemporary music. Like Brendel, Henck is informed by his artistic practice and uses this as both an impetus for inquiry and a site where research occurs.

Cortot is another pianist who wrote with pianists in mind, writing numerous books including a biography of Chopin entitled *In Search of Chopin* (Cortot 1951). Like Muller, Cortot takes an

unorthodox approach to biography, organising each section around specific topics instead of following a linear path. Because of his in-depth knowledge of the piano music, Cortot seeks to paint a picture of Chopin not as he might be understood based on biographical materials and historical accounts. Instead, Cortot glimpses '[a] kind of second Chopin, unheard by those around him' (Cortot 1951, 208). This second Chopin is inspired by the ineffable qualities that can be experienced through the body of the performer who plays these pieces. In a similar way, this project represents an attempt to touch upon these qualities through my encounters with the Van Wyk piano works. Cortot is also famous for his student editions of piano works by composers like Chopin and Liszt which contain both technical advice and evocative interpretive suggestions. For instance, his edition of the Chopin Nocturne which I included in my programme contains the following description of the work:

Un commentateur compréhensif de l'œuvre de Chopin a justement pu dire de cet admirable Nocturne qu'il contenait en sesquelques pages une plus grande somme d'intensité dramatique que nombre d'opéras en cinq actes. Et le génie douloureux de Chopin ne s'est peut-être jamais exprimé d'un accent plus désespéré que dans ce chef-d'œuvre qui atteste d'autre part l'infinie plasticité expressive de la forme dont Field n'avait guère envisagé que les modalités salonniers (Cortot 1945, 40).⁶

Cortot was a performer who frequently commented upon the emotional and poetic qualities of instrumental music, emphasising the importance of embodying these in order to create affecting performances. His use of descriptive language underlines his belief that this mode of thinking enables 'interpreters to leave the problems of technique where they belong - in a place of secondary importance - and allow[s] them to place their imagination rather than their fingers at the service of the inner significance of [...] music' (Cortot 1951, 52).

In a similar way, the book *The Teaching of Artur Schnabel* by his student Wolff explains the ideas Schnabel had on the interpretation of piano music (Wolff 1972). Though Schnabel was less inclined toward the use of poetry and metaphor as an interpretive stimulus than Cortot, Wolff

⁶ An insightful commentator on Chopin's work was rightly able to say of this admirable Nocturne that it contained in its few pages a greater amount of dramatic intensity than many five-act operas. And the melancholy genius of Chopin has perhaps never been expressed in a more desperate accent than in this masterpiece, which also attests to the infinite expressive plasticity of the form of which Field had hardly envisaged anything beyond the salon style (my translation).

outlines how Schnabel taught his students in terms of accentuating piano music on harmonic, melodic, grouping, metrical and rhythmic levels. These levels encompass most, if not all, of the levels at which interpretive activity can occur. Parncutt explains these forms of accentuation in detail in his article ‘Accents and expression in piano performance’ (Parncutt 2003), emphasising how the activities of performers can underline these different elements of music within a performance. While Cortot and Schnabel represent different approaches to artistic practice, they represent pianists who reflected upon their artistic practice, used these insights to create new knowledge and disseminated this knowledge with the view to helping performers deepen their own practice. The final part of the literature that informed this study includes authors who touch upon topics specific to this project.

In a 2012 study undertaken by Marín, Echeverría and Hallam, the authors investigated how students across different levels used the score in their practice (Marín, Echeverría and Hallam 2012). They suggest a framework whereby the performer begins from a notational level, taking cognisance of the notes, rhythms and dynamics. This is followed by the syntactic level where performers begin to take notice of formal and harmonic structures and musical phrasing. The final stage, or artistic level, is where performers incorporate elements of style and emotion (Marín, Echeverría and Hallam 2012, 207). This framework also became a structuring force in the discussion in Chapter 5, 6 and 7 insofar as each chapter corresponds to each level of processing. Further insights into notation, especially as it relates to Van Wyk, were to be found in considering the notation of both Debussy and Bartók. In her dissertation, ‘Debussy’s Pianistic Palette: Understanding his Innovative Notation’, Rushing describes the innovative ways in which Debussy communicated his compositional and pianistic ideas through the medium of notation (Rushing 2018, iii). Debussy would influence other twentieth century composers, such as Bartók, in the way they notated the piano works. Fischer explores the use of notation in the Bartók piano works in her articles, ‘Articulation Notation in the Piano Music of Béla Bartók’ (Fischer 1995), and ‘Articulating Bartók: Interpretation of the Piano Notation’ (Fischer 2000). She describes the various innovations Bartók made in terms of notation, and which became influential in the first half of the twentieth century. This topic is also explored by Suchoff in his book, *Guide to Bartók’s Mikrokosmos*, which also explains the technical realisation of the wide array of articulation markings Bartók used (Suchoff 1971).

Beyond notation, authors writing about the other composers on my recital programmes helped me to consider Van Wyk from different angles. For instance, authors like Diergarten and Friedman have written articles which challenge pre-existing notions of Haydn and which emboldened me to consider Van Wyk differently. In his article, ‘Haydn and the Aesthetics of Naivety’, Friedman discusses the relationship between Haydn and the concept of naivety, symbolised by his reputation as the kindly Papa Haydn, and how this has affected his reputation as a composer throughout history (Friedman 2021). In a similar vein, Diergarten demonstrates that Haydn had studied partimento counterpoint, a form of Italian thoroughbass, and that it informed his compositional style and contrapuntal writing (Diergarten 2011). These authors shed light on how a researcher might challenge preconceptions about a composer or repertoire by offering a different perspective.

In the chapter entitled ‘Robert Schumann and Poetic Depth’ from her book *Metaphors of Depth in German Musical Thought*, Watkins explores how Schumann conceived of the poetic in music and how this reflected not only his understanding of music, but his compositional activity and the music itself (Watkins 2011). This poetic conception of music finds an echo in the writings of Cortot. The book, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, by Eigeldinger contains detailed materials that relate to how Chopin taught the piano (Eigeldinger 1986). This information is at once technical and poetic, and along with the aforementioned sources about Schumann and Chopin, guided me toward an understanding of how music can incorporate the qualities of the poetic through the activities of interpretation in Chapter 6.

Leong explores the concept of the dream aesthetic in his dissertation, ‘The Interpretation of Musical Dreams: Expanding Hermeneutic Approaches to the Dream Aesthetic in Franz Schubert’s Music’ (Leong 2022). Leong demonstrates how the state of dreaming, separate as it is from our waking lives, is invoked in discussions about the music of Schubert. He suggests a framework that divides this dream aesthetic into three further categories. The first, perfect dreams and imperfect realities, is used by authors to account for musical contrasts and pastoral tropes in his music. The second category involves dreamlike states and experiences which commentators use to describe non-teleological repetitions, harmonic progressions and music with soft or hazy pianistic textures. The final category, irrational dreams, includes the subversion of expectations which has a

destabilising effect on listeners (Leong 2022, 118). By adapting these categories to include the subconscious, I apply a similar framework to the Van Wyk piano works in order to account for their emotional content in Chapter 7. This wide ranging approach to literature reflects the variety of activities involved in artistic practice. This is especially true of artistic research which includes not only artistic practice but the use of research methodologies in order to guide practice toward the creation of new knowledge as well as artistic output.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Artistic Research

This project foregrounds my role as a performer as the driving force behind this research. As Crispin writes, ‘there is a special mode of functioning as an artist that goes beyond the natural and intuitive enquiring of the artistic mind and encompasses something of the more systematic methods and explicitly articulated objectives of research’ (Crispin 2015, 56). This emergent form of research, known as artistic research or practice-based research, differs from other forms of artistic practice. It creates new information through engaging in research via an artistic medium such as painting, composing or staging a play. Artistic practice and research methodologies are carried out in tandem, with both activities informing and shaping the other. This form of research can engage with other forms of inquiry, and the research results can be in the form of written or artistic products (Peters 2017, 25). My project has been informed and shaped by both my existing artistic practice and incorporating other methodologies, namely curation, analysis and self-reflection in the form of auto-ethnography.

Artistic research is undertaken by practitioners across various artistic disciplines, however Emmerson suggests that WAM performers should ensure that certain criteria are met for their artistic research to be more than the usual preparation required for a performance (Emmerson 2015). Emmerson suggests that there are six criteria that qualify a performance as artistic research:

1. Intent
2. Contextualisation
3. Process
4. Documentation
5. New Insights
6. Dissemination (Emmerson 2015, 35-36).

Intent refers to a distinct artistic research question or problem that the practitioner seeks to address, while contextualisation entails situating the research within a broader field of inquiry. Process refers to the systematic and methodologically informed investigation which occurs over a period of time and which may or may not include established methodologies. Documentation for a performance can include documenting the process of preparing a performance, or recording the performance itself. It may also include a separate recording process which is not in itself a live event. The new insights derived from this process correlate with the intent of the initial investigation. Emmerson notes that without intent and contextualisation, even the most excellent performances may not yield new insights (Emmerson 2017, 34). How the insights are disseminated is important because they should be accessible to the community of artists and researchers who are concerned with similar research questions. Dissemination is important in order to add new knowledge to the artistic field. Emmerson also questions the validity of research which is done primarily for the benefit of the artist without broader significance for the research community at large (Emmerson 2017, 35).

In order to demonstrate how these criteria might be met, Emmerson describes his own research project, *Around a Rondo*. A pianist himself, Emmerson detailed his own preparation for a performance of the Rondo in A minor, K. 511 by Mozart on the fortepiano. The research output was in the form of two DVDs, the first of which contained eight video performances of the piece recorded over the span of a year alongside a forty-five minute documentary film. The second DVD contained more audio and video recordings as well as digitised annotated scores with some 100 000 words of commentary. This commentary was written with the intent of outlining the decision-making process that occurs in an historically-informed performance, and satisfies the requirements for contextualisation, process, and new insights. Furthermore, because it was published, it is both documented and disseminated (Emmerson 2017, 36-37).

The intent of my project is defining the performance tradition for the mature piano works of Arnold van Wyk. This project is undertaken within the context of an academic degree, as well as within the broader conversation surrounding both Van Wyk and artistic research more generally. The performance tradition is discovered through a methodologically guided process which involves both generative steps including curating the recital programmes, undertaking to learn and interpret

the music, reflecting upon this process in a journal and following the threads of questioning in order to arrive at a tradition. This tradition, though informed by my own practice, is in dialogue with a variety of sources. This process is documented in my autoethnography, but also in this dissertation. These insights are disseminated through the publication of this dissertation as well as through the recitals given at Wits University.

Curation

When deciding how to present the five Van Wyk piano works, there were several considerations and exigencies which needed to be considered. The degree guidelines meant that I had to present the pieces across two seventy-minute recitals. The Van Wyk pieces account for seventy minutes of music, and so I had the opportunity to throw different aspects of them into relief by playing other compositions alongside them. I decided to split his works between the two recitals, playing the pieces chronologically. The first two compositions - *Pastorale e Capriccio* and *Night Music* - would be in the first recital, and the *Four Piano Pieces*, *Tristia* and *Ricordanza* in the second. In a process akin to curation, I paired Van Wyk with other composers in order to stimulate meaningful conversation between them. According to Persohn, curation ‘extends beyond selection, places multiple artefacts in dialogue with each other, instantiates them around a complex set of themes, elicits multiple meanings from related artefacts and narratives, and promotes questions as often as answers’ (Persohn 2021, 21). Thus, programming involved considering what themes and features to highlight within the Van Wyk piano works. This was done in order to, as Persohn describes it, show ‘a path to thematic interpretations of the artefacts’ (Persohn 2021, 21).

Though curation was a generative methodology in the context of my own project, explorations of the potentials of curation as the basis for artistic research can be seen in several projects. For instance, Pauw explored curating recital programmes of South African flute music within specific exhibition spaces and incorporating visual art, all around the theme of landscapes (Pauw 2015). Her project ‘demonstrates the power of the flute and its Western scored notations to intervene, transform and be transformed locally amidst curations that are context sensitive’ (Pauw 2015, vii), and seeks to invigorate and interrogate concert practices. Echoing this, my first recital programme, as seen in the table below, was organised around the theme of night.

<i>Night Music</i> (1945-1958)	Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983)
I. Molto lento	
II. Presto non troppo	
III. Larghetto, poco rubato; il tutto legatissimo	
IV. Tempo giusto: allegretto fantastico	
V. Lento non troppo, teneramente	
VI. Allegro agitato e tempestoso	
VII. Adagio	
<i>Pastorale e Capriccio</i> (1948, revised 1955)	Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983)
I. Pastorale: Andante sostenuto e piacevole, molto rubato	
II. Capriccio: Molto ritmico	
Nocturne in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 1	Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)
<i>Nachtstücke</i> , Op. 23	Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
I. Mehr langsam, oft zurückhaltend	
II. Markiert und lebhaft	
III. Mit grosser Lebhaftigkeit	
IV. Einfach	

Table 3.1: First recital programme

This recital was presented in three parts, with short breaks after *Night Music* and the Chopin Nocturne. *Night Music* is the longest of the five piano works, and considered by many to be his most important (Ribeiro 2009, 24). It even merits a mention in the famous *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire* by Hinson and Roberts - Van Wyk and Hubert du Plessis being the only South African composers mentioned: '[e]xtensive nocturne, closer to a symphonic rhapsody. Contemporary idiom. Virtuoso technique required' (Hinson and Roberts 2014, 1031). While it is not unusual for the Van Wyk pieces to bear generic titles, *Night Music* is unique insofar as it represents a sustained exploration of extra-musical themes. Van Wyk said in his programme notes, that in writing *Night Music*, it was his intention to 'give a comprehensive portrayal of night in this work – to speak of its beauty, mystery and fearfulness, and to show night as the prototype of love, sleep and death' (quoted in Wilding 2007, 153).

Night Music invited comparison with other musical explorations of these themes which in turn drew me to the Chopin nocturnes and *Nachtstücke* by Schumann, which represent very different

perspectives to both Van Wyk and each other. Furthermore, as a composer Van Wyk was inspired by Chopin and Schumann. If *Night Music* is the centrepiece of the programme, *Pastorale e Capriccio*, might be thought of as the show piece of it. Described by Ferguson as ‘an exceedingly brilliant piece of virtuoso keyboard writing’, he suggests that it is an answer to the ‘often-heard wish of pianists for "something really effective for the end of a programme"' (Ferguson 1958, 5).

Piano Sonata in C major, Hob. XVI:50	Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
I. Allegro	
II. Adagio	
III. Allegro molto	
<i>Tristia</i> ⁷ (1968-1978)	Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983)
I. Berceuse	
II. Ostinato	
III. Rondo desolato	
<i>Ricordanza</i> (1973-1979)	Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983)
Piano Sonata in A minor, D. 784	Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
I. Allegro giusto	
II. Andante	
III. Allegro vivace	
<i>Four Piano Pieces</i> (1965)	Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983)
I. Dumka: Hommage à Epétopoïret	
II. Scherzino	
III. Romanza	
IV. Toccata	

Table 3.2: Second recital programme

The second recital, outlined in the table above, included *Tristia*, *Ricordanza* and the *Four Piano Pieces* as well piano sonatas by Haydn and Schubert. As a pianist, Van Wyk often played the works of Schubert, and to a lesser extent, Haydn. Indeed, Van Wyk was playing Schubert piano sonatas as early as 1947 (Ribeiro 2009, 37), at a time when it was still uncommon to play them in

⁷ Ferguson has ordered these three pieces: ‘Rondo desolato’ then ‘Ostinato’ and then ‘Berceuse’. I played *Tristia* in reverse order, reflecting how Van Wyk had performed these movements in a concert in 1972 (Muller 2014, 341). His compositional plan for this piece underwent many changes, but ‘Rondo desolato’ was consistently the final movement (Wilding 2007, 97-98).

concert. Indeed, he was a lifelong advocate of these works, playing a wide range of solo and piano duet works. In 1982, the year before his death, Van Wyk undertook a tour to Bloemfontein, Potchefstroom, Johannesburg and Pretoria where he gave lectures on the interpretation of the piano music of Schubert, and an all-Schubert recital (Muller 2014, 350). Additionally, he had played the same Haydn Sonata in a recital in 1967 at Suid-Afrika Huis in Europe, writing in a letter ‘I’m doing [...] Haydn’s English Sonata, to annoy the verkrampptes’ (quoted in Muller 2014, 336). His experience as a pianist meant that Van Wyk had a close relationship to piano technique, the possibilities of the instrument and a particular understanding of the sounds it could produce. By playing the composers and compositions he played, I hoped to explore his piano works from his vantage point as a pianist.

These dialogues, made possible through curating these programmes, enable the Van Wyk works to be considered from various perspectives. For instance, it is possible to draw a parallel between the compositional processes that Schumann and Van Wyk employed since both used literature and early music as the basis for some of their compositions. In a similar way, understanding how Schubert used form as a means to construct a compelling psychological narrative is reflected in how Van Wyk constructed his larger scale compositions like *Tristia* or *Night Music*. These conversations help to emphasise various musical and extra-musical parameters that contribute toward a conception of these pieces. Additionally, these conversations form part of the structure of this dissertation because they initiated various ways of considering these pieces.

Notation and Interpretation

The true meaning of notation is not apparent until the spirit of the work is apprehended, for what is written down is only comprehensible in connection with what cannot adequately be expressed by the symbols of musical notation. The interpreter has two tasks which are inseparable. [They] must absorb the score as it is, and [they] must try to perceive the composer’s idea behind it. [...] In cases where the traditional interpretation is at variance with the expressed intentions of the composer, the performer must have the courage to go against tradition (Wolff 1972, 73).

In order to situate my artistic practice, it is important to highlight how both the score and the process of interpreting it function within this practice. The use of scores is central to the WAM

tradition, and is the primary medium through which performers learn the music they perform. In this tradition, the composer originates a musical idea which is written down and codified within notation which the performer uses, often in conjunction with an instrument, to create sound which reaches the listener. Building upon this, Dahl suggests a chain of events that takes place at three levels:

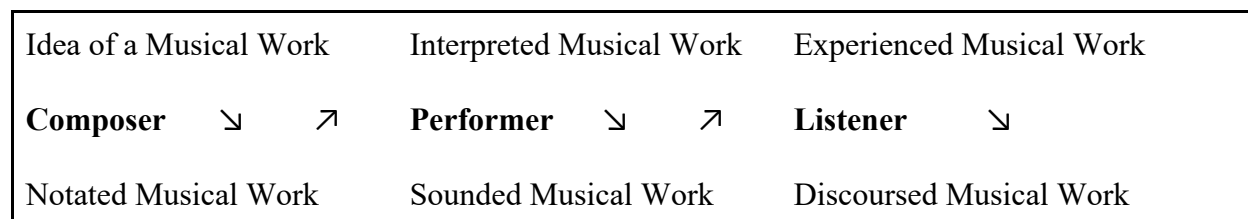


Figure 3.1: The communicative chain (Dahl 2017, 66)

The uppermost layer represents ideas or cognitive processes, the middle layer people and the lowest layer objects. The composer begins from the idea of a musical work which is usually notated. The notated score is interpreted by the performer and played as a musical work in sound. The listener experiences the sound of the music which can then be expressed as discourse surrounding music - be it written or verbal. The ideas on the uppermost layer are sometimes limited through the processes that concretise them. Notation might not be able to accurately represent the exact musical idea a composer has, and likewise an interpreter of the score may need to add nuance and detail that is not represented in notation. As Davies notes, a performance is always ontologically thicker than even the most detailed score (Davies 2001). A performer will undergo a process of adding properties that open up potential meanings and expressive potentials within a score. This process is affected by the skill level and horizon of knowledge that the performer has (Dahl 2017, 157).

This model is overly simplistic in defining the roles of composer, performer and listener, and suggesting that these are fixed identities without overlap. It also suggests that this chain of communication only moves in one direction, suggesting that performers do not listen, experience or perceive the idea of a musical work for instance. Despite this, Dahl does underline that one of the key roles of the performer is interpreting the notated musical work in order for it to be perceived as a sounded musical event. Interpretation of the score is guided by the approach taken by the performer, and can encompass a wide range of possibilities. Schnabel taught his students that the

ideal of the interpreter is to make music that is both faithful to the score and uninhibited. As Wolff explains, '[i]ntense penetration of the letter and spirit of a composition acts as a stimulation and leads to its revitalization in performance' (Wolff 1972, 15). In order to fully apprehend the music itself, the performer must use the score and their own perception of the music as a basis for their interpretation. In this way, notation as an object of research and interpretation as an activity of research are the cornerstones of this project.

Winget suggests that scores function as boundary objects (Winget 2008, 1878). A boundary object is an artefact or object that is used by people from different communities to share understanding: they simultaneously occupy different social worlds and meet the informational requirements of these worlds (Winget 2008, 1879). Instead of being fully comprehensible to everyone, boundary objects exist as a point of negotiation and mediation. Fox defines them as 'entities that enhance the capacity of an idea, theory or practice to translate across culturally defined boundaries, for example, between communities of knowledge or practice' (Fox 2011, 70). As boundary objects, musical scores can be used in a variety of different ways. Representing a codification of musical ideas, scores can be analysed using a plethora of methods and realised by performers with varying levels of expertise.

Marín, Echeverría and Hallam explored the use of the musical score as a learning object in their 2012 study (Marín, Echeverría and Hallam 2012). Depending on the skill level of the executant, the score moves from being a pragmatic tool toward an epistemic one. As they explain, the score enables one to access knowledge through a representational system (pragmatic function), and use this knowledge as a starting point for developing new knowledge (epistemic function) (Marín, Echeverría and Hallam 2012, 195). They suggest these functions are accompanied by hierarchical layers of comprehension on the part of the score reader moving from the simple to the sophisticated. At the simplest level, the reader can take note of only some of the elements and the relationships between them. The highest level takes into account not only what appears on the page, but broader contextual information about musical style, musical history and approaches to the music of a particular composer for instance.

Marín, Echeverría and Hallam suggest three levels of comprehension that they observed as they studied flautists learning a new piece of music:

• Notational Level Playing the correct notes and rhythms. Observing the printed dynamic markings.
• Syntactic Level Identifying the structure and sections of a piece, as well as its tonality and main chords. Shaping phrases.
• Artistic Level Identifying the style and period. Communicating the style and emotive content of the piece.

Figure 3.2: Levels of processing when using scores (Marín, Echeverría and Hallam 2012, 199)

The notational level corresponds to observing the score as it is written, which leads to the syntactic level where the structural relationships and groups are identified and understood. The artistic level encompasses contextual information alongside perceiving the emotional content of the music. While Marín, Echeverría and Hallam noted that more experienced performers moved quickly through the first two levels of processing toward the artistic level (Marín, Echeverría and Hallam 2012, 208), each level is capable of adding to our understanding and perception of music.

The scores of Arnold van Wyk are meticulous in their detail. This is unsurprising when one considers how long some of them took to compose, and the revisions he made to works like *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Muller 2014, 763). He would carefully date his drafts, and would write in different colours in his manuscripts to indicate when a composition was amended or added to. Thanks to this, it was easy for Ferguson to edit and publish *Tristia* and *Ricordanza* after Van Wyk died since he could easily determine which version was the latest and therefore, the most definitive (Van Wyk 1984b). Van Wyk took great pains to use notational symbols and expressive terms to communicate nuance and guide the performer in their understanding of the syntactic and artistic aspects of his pieces. The richness of these scores means that they have much to offer the artist researcher at the notational, syntactic and artistic levels.

My Position as a Performer

As Dahl says above, every performer has a unique horizon of experience and capabilities. This project hinges on my position as a pianist performing these works. My own experience includes having completed an undergraduate and honours degree and performance diploma, as well as my ongoing work related to this current project. During the course of these qualifications, I completed eleven examinable public recitals and several closed exams. I also have professional experience as a collaborative pianist at two South African universities and a South African opera company, as well as over ten years of teaching experience. This experience coupled with my own practice as a student and professional musician are what I bring to bear on the music I study and perform. This process was also informed by lessons with my current piano lecturers, Malcolm Nay and Pauline Nossel, who provided input and helped me to arrive at artistic conceptions of these pieces. Further, the numerous technical, interpretive and artistic challenges involved in learning and performing these pieces widened my own artistic horizon and has shaped my artistic practice.

My Artistic Practice

There was a time when I was trying to play Mozart so desperately, and it was never good enough. I couldn't get at him. Now I play him with more pleasure. [What made it so difficult was] probably because the details were not right. [...] Beethoven you can understand through intellect, and through actually getting so much into his music. You sort of get to a certain point - never further - but still to a certain point. Mozart is somebody who you can solve from the other side: through the technical means and through absolute detail. But only up to a certain point, thereafter it is... But I wasn't even there (Uchida 2010).

I have described how Pienaar characterises his own artistic practice, and from the above we have a sense of how Uchida found she was best able to approach specific composers. For instance, she discovered she could better understand and perform Beethoven through approaching the music intellectually, or tackling Mozart through a focus on detail and technique. Regardless of the specific practice, in order to get to the heart of a composition, or the works of a composer, the performer must delve deeply into the music itself. The goal of my practice has been to focus on a faithful rendering of the score in all its detail, while simultaneously trying to form a conception of

each specific piece in order to present a meaningful interpretation. Much like the three levels of comprehension drawn from Marín, Echeverría and Hallam, I have tried to focus my practice on the notational level, then the syntactic level and lastly the artistic level. For performers, each of these different levels can be revealing and useful in their practice.

Borrowing from how Uchida was able to best understand Mozart (Uchida 2010), I started by taking note of all notational details in the Van Wyk scores, starting with the notes, rhythms and articulation markings. I began by working slowly and methodically, often with a metronome. This is not dissimilar to the process Callas dubbed ‘straitjacketing’. In the first stage of learning a role, Callas would sing the notes ‘exactly as written’ (Kostenbaum 1993, 149), without any additional nuance or inflection. By working this way, the performer is able to work on the music in a way that resists the influence of their preconceptions, and allows for suggestions from the music itself to become apparent. This close reading of the score represents an earnest attempt to deeply understand the spirit of each composition itself. However, a rendering with all the articulation, dynamics, notes, rests and rhythms played accurately would not necessarily amount to an artistic performance.

As Wolff writes, ‘[u]nwritten rules govern the subtle nuances of dynamics and rhythm. There are no symbols that would make notation of these subtleties possible, and even if there were, the composer would risk a distortion in the total unity of the work by notating them’ (Wolff 1972, 26). Moving beyond the realisation of the notes and details, the performer is able to incorporate their own interventions in the accentuation of a piece of music. This process of accentuation is informed by a sense of the syntactic relationships between various musical parameters. This stage of my practice was characterised by judging which musical elements should be emphasised or concealed, how this might be best done and how these elements are best balanced. After all, the elements of music that performers accentuate, be they rhythmic, melodic or harmonic in nature, occur simultaneously. This process of discernment and balancing is experienced intellectually and somatically by the performer. This process also involves greater participation from the performer and is the point where the performer begins to shape and be shaped by the experience of the music.

Furthermore, the act of accentuating the music across various levels gives way to broader considerations of the piece as a whole. The final stage of my artistic practice was then attempting to render an artistic vision of these pieces informed by their context as well as their emotional content. Beyond the notational and syntactic considerations, these pieces were explored through the lens of their poetic conception. The poetic aspects of these compositions include their literary and extra-musical allusions as well as the creative processes involved in their composition. These aspects have a different implication for the performer as opposed to the commentator or analyst. For some performers, notably Cortot, these aspects are a stimulus toward specific modes of interpretation. For instance, a performer who knows the poetic conception of *Night Music* might be inspired to interpret the work with an emphasis on its darker qualities. For Uchida, considering the poetic inspirations behind how Schumann composed helped her to get a better feeling for his music. By understanding his imagination and sense of fantasy, and exploring how he composed, Uchida was able to get a sense of what she calls his ‘peculiar thought processes’ (Uchida 2009). For his part, Schnabel cautioned his students that reliance on programmatic, descriptive and poetic images in performance should be avoided. He believed music should be self-sufficient despite the existence of poetic inspiration (Wolff 1972, 16). I suggest that one reason for his perspective is because this aspect of artistic practice is not something that can be superimposed upon an interpretation, but must be experienced and understood first before becoming part of it.

Therefore, poetic inspiration and the emotional qualities suggested by both these inspirations and the music itself informed the final stage of my artistic practice. This stage is influenced by the experience of playing these pieces as well as the research activities I undertook alongside my practice. These emotional qualities guide the interpretation of the nuances, and in so doing, often lead the performer to reconsider the conclusions that had been made along the way. These qualities are difficult to articulate, being related to the perception and experience of the music. They are often expressed poetically or metaphorically, referring back to their poetic basis. In summary, the goal of my artistic practice is firstly to arrive at a conception of these pieces in order to perform them in recital, and secondly, to use these conceptions to inform my performance tradition. In order to be useful toward both ends, my practice has been structured and reflected upon.

Analysis

For Schnabel, analysis for the performer is a ‘clarification and intensification of musical sensitivity, [and] an additional push in the right direction as established by musical instinct’ (Wolff 1972, 19). In other words, certain facets of a composition become evident for the performer studying a work based on their perception of the music. While these aspects can perhaps be explained by analysis, they would not necessarily be at the forefront of score analysis. One reason for this is that performers engage with scores in a different way from analysts. Performers spend a relatively long time with a given piece of music considering the time spent learning, interpreting and memorising a piece. Building on this, Rink states, there are ‘a range of musical parameters that typically are given short shrift by analysts but which have much to do with music as experienced both by those performing it and, in principle, by those who choose to listen to it’ (Rink 2015, 130). These include phrase rhythm, texture, register, sonority, melodic contour and dynamics to name a few (Rink 2015, 136).

For this project I undertook two analyses in order to better account for insights and questions raised by my study of the Van Wyk piano pieces. The first is a statistical analysis which seeks to account for the use of expressive markings, dynamic ranges within these pieces, and the *una corda* pedal. This was done by collecting parametric data from the scores, and informed by my own practice, in order to be able to quantitatively account for the dynamic intensity and expressive modes that are common to these pieces. By doing so, I was able to account for different facets of the sound world of these pieces, and the implications of this for the performer. Sometimes statistical analysis has been used solely for ‘formal confirmation of results obtained by other methods’ (Beran and Mazolla 1999, 47). In this instance, my practice led me to have a specific experience of both performing the dynamics and the use of the *una corda* pedal which led me to explore the extent that these parameters are present in the scores themselves.

The second analysis is a graphic presentation in the form of an annotated score that reflects the different layers of accentuation that are involved in interpretation. Borrowing from Parncutt, I show through the use of different colours how a section of *Ricordanza* might be accentuated in order to underline the rhythm, metre and grouping, as well as the melodic and harmonic material (Parncutt 2003). Accentuation often involves the intervention of the performer through the use of

instrumental techniques, gradation of dynamics and agogic emphasis for instance. Further, accentuation is an interpretive activity that I wanted to reflect upon in a structured way. This was done in order to show how these processes are subtly guided by Van Wyk through his notation and expressive markings, and facilitate a discussion of their significance.

Autoethnography

Throughout this project, I kept a journal of the questions and insights that came about as a result of my artistic practice. In reflecting upon my practice, and putting these reflections into words, I was guided to refine my understanding, make connections and seek answers to the questions that arose in the practice room. An excerpt from my journal can be found in Appendix C (page 200). As Bartleet and Ellis note, ‘written in the first-person voice, autoethnographic work appears in a variety of creative formats; for example, short stories, music compositions, poetry, photographic essays, and reflective journals’ (Bartleet and Ellis 2009, 7). Despite the variety of forms it can take, for Creps, ‘[a]rtistic autoethnography is grounded in the stuff of living, or the *facts* of life’ (Creps 2023, n.p.). It involves ‘interpretations of the reality of lived experiences. These are grounded in the artist’s own understandings about what is important or valuable’ (Creps 2023, n.p.). Different projects will be grounded in different truths depending on the individual artist experiencing them.

This methodology has been the basis of several compelling artistic research projects, and is especially useful in enabling composers and performers whose practice involves the abstract medium of sound to articulate and organise their practice. For instance, Emmerson reflects upon performing *Winterreise* by Schubert in his autoethnography entitled ‘Evoking Spring in Winter: Some personal reflections on returning to Schubert’s cycle’ (Emmerson 2009). The focus of this study is the introduction to ‘Frühlingstraum’ which differs from the rest of the cycle in character. Emmerson notes that some commentators hear this introduction as simple, innocent and charming, while others hear it as ironic or sentimental, while still others hear pathos and sadness behind it. He explores how these characters might be realised in practice by listening to various recordings, and reflects upon the changes he made in collaboration with different artists in order to realise different interpretations of this work (Emmerson 2009).

In his study, Emmerson draws from a wide range of sources in order to account for the decision making that goes into interpretation. In a similar way, the contents of my journal encouraged me to undertake research and analysis in order to better understand the Van Wyk piano works. For instance, the analyses in Chapter 6 and 7 were done in order to account for my experience of playing these works and illustrate the process of accentuating the music respectively. In this journal, I also reflected upon how Van Wyk might be compared to the other composers in my programmes both musically and more generally. Artistic practice is an open-ended and recursive process, and part of the challenge of autoethnography is to organise these wide-ranging reflections into patterns, themes and topics. The molding of my reflections into a structure was guided by the various frameworks that inform it. In conclusion, my artistic practice was stimulated by curating two recital programmes, and was reflected upon in an autoethnographic reflective journal. This journal encouraged research activities which include drawing upon and devising epistemological frameworks as well as undertaking analysis. These methodologies are employed in order to lead to a conception of these pieces that can be reflected as a performance tradition.

Chapter 4

4.1 Van Wyk's Piano Works

In order to contextualise these piano works, I became interested in the type of compositional training Van Wyk would have had both in South Africa and abroad in order to better understand him as a composer. His music education started later in life and was perhaps neither consistent nor systematic. It was extensive however, and Van Wyk supplemented it with a lifelong interest in the music of other composers. In fact, Van Wyk was known for his wide-ranging musical expertise as evidenced by his contemporary, Grové, remarking upon '[s]y ensiklopediese kennis wat uit eie ervaring gewring is' (Grové 1984, 3).⁸ Van Wyk would bookend his compositional career with works for the piano, starting with his earliest composition, a Bagatelle in C minor written in 1930 (Muller 2014, 680), and ending with *Ricordanza* which was left incomplete at the time of his death in 1983.

Arnold van Wyk was born into a musical family in 1916 in Calvinia, in the erstwhile Cape Province. He received occasional and informal piano lessons from his older sister Minnie while a boy. The young Van Wyk showed a talent for music, and became known for improvising at the piano while telling stories. He went to Stellenbosch Boys High School as a boarder at age 12 in 1928 where his formal music education began (Ferguson 1987, 1). He only learned to read and write music notation at this time (Muller 2014, 451). Despite this comparatively late start, Van Wyk was known in later life as a brilliant sight reader (Muller 2014, 61).

His earliest compositions stem from the time when he began to receive serious music instruction during his school years. Van Wyk was composing but wrote in 1932 that he was doing so 'without instruction':

I have only my little Harmony, my little Counterpoint to help me, so you can readily understand that my compositions come out misformed and hunchbacked. There is no one in Stellenbosch who can teach composition properly, Hans Endler is a damn old fool and no more. In [Cape] Town you

⁸His encyclopaedic knowledge gleaned from experience (my translation).

have [William Henry] Bell, Colin Taylor and Lissant-Collins. It will help me ever so much if I can study under some of them, for I really think that with a little instruction I will be able to do something for my people and my country. You see, I haven't got the technique to write (quoted in Muller 2014, 293).

His earliest juvenilia dates from 1930 until 1938, or from when he was aged 14 to age 22 (Muller 2014, 680-684). This corresponds with his time as a high school student and later a BMus student at Stellenbosch University (Ferguson 1987, 1-2). Of the completed juvenilia, 31 pieces are for solo piano, 23 are for voice and piano, and 14 pieces are for piano and solo instruments or chamber ensemble. In fact, there are only eight compositions from this time that do not involve the piano at all (Muller 2014, 680-684).⁹

Regarding his compositional training, Van Wyk states in the above letter that he has access to a complete section of 5 volumes of the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (either the second edition from 1904, or the third edition from 1927) at the Stellenbosch Library, as well as *Fugue* (1891), *Musical Form* (1893), *Applied Forms* (1895), and *The Orchestra* (1898) by Ebenezer Prout (Muller 2014, 293). Perhaps unsurprisingly, all these resources are British. Even the school music syllabus of the time bore the fingerprints of British influence. As Jacobs writes:

In 1893 Thomas Muir, Superintendent-General of Education in the Cape Colony, observed the higher than average ability of the people for music, but saw a need for qualified music teachers. He arranged for two experts in school music from England to assist in drawing up a syllabus, and organising courses for teachers (Jacobs 2010, 62).

These educational tenets would not change drastically in the intervening years between 1910 and 1948. As Jacobs writes, '[under] the United Party, the syllabus for black and white secondary schools was essentially the same, comprising morals and religion, a local vernacular, English or Afrikaans, manual and industrial arts, arithmetic, geography, history, nature study, music, hygiene, drill and games' (Jacobs 2010, 45-46).

⁹ This includes the E minor string quartet that was central to the plot of the novel *Gety* by Johanssen (Muller 2008c).

The external music examinations Van Wyk completed while at school were also influenced by the British educational system. The first music examinations had taken place in South Africa in 1894 and were administered by the University of the Cape of Good Hope in partnership with the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM). In 1918 Unisa assumed responsibility for these examinations, though still in partnership with the ABRSM (Unisa 2023, n.p.). These examinations involved a compulsory written paper and performance on an instrument or voice, and were offered at two levels: Lower and Higher Division. Van Wyk completed the Pianoforte Higher Division examination in 1930 with distinction (Muller 2014, 164). In 1932, the ABRSM introduced graded exams which began with a preliminary exam and went up to Grade 8 (Fowles 1932, 910). In 1933 Van Wyk completed his Grade 8 in piano passing with distinction (Muller 2014, 295). After matriculating with music as one of his subjects, Van Wyk continued to have piano and theory lessons with Alan Graham in 1934 and completed the Unisa Advanced Rudiments of Music Theory exam with distinction (Muller 2014, 167).

In 1935, Van Wyk also began an association with the British composer William Henry Bell, of whom Van Wyk wrote:

[He] has offered to give me lessons, as far as I know, gratis. This will, of course, be in composition principally, although he says we'll have to do a bit of harmony too. My counterpoint he considers remarkably good considering that I have had such poor training, and so little of it such as it was. [...] But he thinks I have to improve my harmonic palette, as it consists too largely, according to him, of the same progressions and the same chords. Composition, of course, he can't teach me, as he himself says, but he can guide me in the right direction. The sure, but slow, way, he says, is to write, write, write, even if you write or rather copy a composition by somebody else. He says 'Get used to holding a pen.' Opinion differs whether I should go to him for lessons. His trend of thought is largely modern, whereas my tendency is strictly towards the classical model (quoted in Muller 2014, 297).

That Bell was thought of as modern in Cape Town in 1935 is a revealing statement. His music is tonal and influenced by the expressivity of Romanticism, with Jansen van Rensburg writing that it is 'both conservative (in its loyalty to a nineteenth century aesthetic) and progressive (Bell's desire to improve the 'self-expressiveness' he felt was lacking in Cape Town's musical culture)

(Jansen Van Rensburg 2017, 70). Regardless, Bell would not become a major influence for Van Wyk, and the extent of these lessons is not as significant as those Van Wyk had with Graham. Graham would also teach him harmony and counterpoint in addition to piano when Van Wyk began his studies as a Bachelor of Music candidate at the Stellenbosch Konservatorium in 1936, after Van Wyk was unable to take the place offered to him at the Curtis Institute in 1935 due to financial constraints (Muller 2014, 296).

In 1939, Van Wyk interrupted his studies to attend the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in London after receiving a bursary from the Performing Right Society in London (Ferguson 1987, 2). With the commencement of his studies at the RAM, Van Wyk began his mature compositional period. Due to the outbreak of war, Van Wyk would spend four years in London where he studied composition with Theodore Holland and piano with Harold Craxton (Ferguson 1987, 2). Van Wyk was ambivalent about the instruction he received from Holland, writing in 1939:

From the above, you will realize that I am not at all satisfied with Holland. That he is a good teacher of the purely technical side of composition - that I do not deny for a moment, but a Master as I see it, must have more than the technique of the subject at his command. He must be an 'inspiration' to the student. And, furthermore, what I need is not a thorough knowledge of the technique of writing. I want to know where I am going and whether I am going in the right direction, whether I am doing the right thing to get to wherever I want to be or ought to be! (quoted in Muller 2014, 468).

Van Wyk was more enthusiastic about the piano lessons he received from Craxton, with whom he began lessons in 1941:

I am liking my piano lessons very much, although I get so very little time to practise. Craxton is a marvellous teacher - he must be one of the greatest. This is a great statement at this time of day, but I don't think it is exaggerated... Even in composition, I am learning much from him, and that is perhaps as well, as Mr. Holland has outlasted his utility, if I may say so without sounding high and mighty and brutal. I really am not learning anything from my lessons anymore & it is distressing to find that he more often than not does not in the least understand what I'm trying to say (quoted in Muller 2014, 470).

During his years at the RAM, Van Wyk completed exams in harmony, ear training and bassoon in 1939. In 1940, he won the Frederick Corder Memorial Prize for the best composition submitted for examination for the first movement of his violin concerto, in addition to receiving the Silver Medal for composition, ear training and harmony (Muller 2014, 305). In 1941, he won the Worshipful Company of Musicians Medal which was awarded every three years for the most distinguished student at the academy. He also won the Oliveria Prescott Prize, in addition to receiving Certificates of Merit for harmony, composition, ear training, and a Bronze Medal for piano (Muller 2014, 306). Van Wyk would receive the Oliveria Prescott Prize again in 1943, along with a Certificate of Merit for piano (Muller 2014, 308).

Thus, Van Wyk was educated within the context of the British education system, and many of the important figures in his training were conservative within the context of composition in their time. Bell wrote in a tonal idiom not distantly removed from the music of the nineteenth century. Similarly, Theodore Holland is best remembered for his theatrical music, and by the twentieth century the ‘tonal generosity of his music was already deemed old-fashioned in the face of accelerating modernity and the music of the Second Viennese School’ (Wilson 2012, n.p.). That Van Wyk did embrace an expanded tonal palette despite this is noteworthy. Van Wyk is painted as a Romantic composer by authors like Muller (2008), and others like Schoeman who writes ‘these works reveal a predilection for densely-textured Romantic piano writing’ (Schoeman 2016, 21). Even Van Wyk said in an interview that ‘[v]ery often I think my music is more or less Romantic, traditional and so on’ (Muller 2014, 274). However, even his earliest mature compositions contain a strong element of modernism. I would argue that as a composer, Van Wyk belongs to the twentieth-century ahead of any other time.

His first mature composition for solo piano, *Pastorale e Capriccio*, was written over an extended period. The first sketches for the ‘Pastorale’ date from August to October, and December of 1948, two years after Van Wyk returned to Cape Town from London (Wilding 2007, 5). There is a sketch dated August 1947, but this is presumed to be a mistake. Van Wyk returned to this movement four times before completing it between January and March in 1955: July 1949, August 1951, May 1952 and January 1954 (Wilding 2007, 5). The ‘Capriccio’ underwent a similar process with initial work beginning in July to August of 1948 before further revisions in April, July and October 1949,

January, August to September and December 1950, and October to November 1942 before it was completed between December 1954 and February 1955 (Wilding 2007, 5). The work was published in 1955 by Boosey & Hawkes, London (Nothling 2014, 9). Three of these sketches bear the title *Flavius* which Wilding notes ‘refers to the Romanized Jew, Flavius Josephus, and it could be that as an Anglicized Afrikaner, van Wyk identified himself with this historical figure’ (Wilding 2007, 5).

The final version is made up of two contrasting movements. Van Wyk wrote programme notes for this piece in 1976 where he performed it in one concert of three given to celebrate his sixtieth birthday in Stellenbosch:

‘n Ietwat dromerige, wydvertakte melodie in G-kruis mineur begin en eindig die drieledige *Pastorale*. Die sentrale gedeelte - tydmaatteken 7/8 - begin as ‘n dans in die verte; ‘n sterk klimaks word bereik voordat die aanvangsmateriaal in verwerkte vorm weer gehoor word. ‘n Kort koda eindig met ‘n eggo van die dans. Die baie lewenslustige *Capriccio* is in C mineur, in sonatevorm en is eintlik ‘n eksperiment in wisselende ritmiese patrone. (Daar is selfs ‘n maat in 17/4!) (quoted in Muller 2014, 763).¹⁰

Van Wyk had performed this piece in 1948, when he undertook a concert tour of South Africa with the support of the Reddingsbond. In this tour, he programmed the *Pastorale e Capriccio*, although only the ‘Capriccio’ was complete at that time. He would improvise during these performances and on the occasion that the audience called for the work to be played again, he would try to improvise in the same way (Muller 2014, 145). A review for the piece exists in the 2 September 1965 edition of the *Pretoria News*, although the pianist is unknown. It praises the work for its ‘sombre, shifting harmonies’, ‘intricate modulations’ and ‘brilliant passage work’ (Muller 2014, 763-764).

¹⁰ A somewhat dreamy, wide-ranging melody in G-sharp minor begins and ends the three-part *Pastorale*. The central section - time signature 7/8 - begins as a dance in the distance; a strong climax is reached before the opening material is heard again in reworked form. A short coda ends with an echo of the dance. The very lively *Capriccio* is in C minor, in sonata form and is actually an experiment in varying rhythmic patterns. (There is even a bar in 17/4!) (my translation).

Van Wyk referred to his second piano work, *Night Music*, as ‘one of the bitterest struggles I can remember or imagine’ (Muller 2014, 327). Initially Van Wyk wanted to write three nocturnes for piano, and although these form part of the work, the final version was a larger scale piece that would take thirteen years to reach its final form. Between 23 July 1945 and his return to South Africa in December 1946, Van Wyk made preliminary sketches for these nocturnes (Nothling 2014, 39). He continued work in 1953 following the suicide of his friend, Australian pianist Noel Mewton-Wood, to whom the work was dedicated (Wilding 2007, 21). Between December 1954 and December 1955, Van Wyk undertook an extended trip to Europe (Muller 2014, 181-182). While on this trip, he continued to work on *Night Music* in preparation for a broadcast performance of it for the SABC in Johannesburg in 1956 (Wilding 2007, 21). After this performance, he began revising it between 1957 and 1958, adding an additional 36 pages of sketches to the existing 66 (Wilding 2007, 21). The final revision was dated 4 June 1958 (Nothling 2014, 39). *Night Music* was published by Holland-Afrikaansche Uitgewers Maatschappij (HAUM) in Cape Town and the revised version was performed by the composer in September 1959 (Wilding 2007, 21).

The final form of the piece consists of an introductory section, four nocturnes, an extended movement in sonata form and an epilogue which includes references to the preceding movements. Van Wyk wrote extensive programme notes to the piece to accompany a recording entitled *Arnold van Wyk: Nagmusiek; Hubert du Plessis: Trio vir Klavier, Viool & Tjello*. Van Wyk recorded the work in broadcasts for the SABC in 1956, 1961 and again in 1963. After the initial recording of *Night Music* was aired on 17 February 1957, Van Wyk wrote that it was not good in his diary (Muller 2014, 326). Additionally, he performed it on several occasions including on 26 June 1956 in Hiddingh Hall in Cape Town (Muller 2014, 326), in Stellenbosch in 13 September 1961 during the Kunsfees Stellenbosch (Muller 2014, 145), and 1980 in Stellenbosch. He wrote in a letter on 2 July 1980 that this performance would be his last:

The reason for my practising is that I have to play *Night Music* here in Stellenbosch at a concert... I’m actually thinking of memorising that frightening score, for what I think will be the very last time I’ll play it in this life, which means THE VERY LAST TIME, because I don’t think they have pianos in hell (quoted in Ribeiro 2009, 42).

There are reviews of Van Wyk playing this work in 1959 in addition to reviews of performances given by Irene Kohler in 1960, John Clegg in 1966, and John Ogdon in 1968. The reviews for the Kohler performance were negative, referring to the work as ‘not easy to follow’, ‘loosely constructed and prolix’, ‘[having] an emotional, even hectic quality that did not seem wholly resolved in the sectional form adopted’ (Muller 2014, 766). The reviews for Clegg highlight the positive qualities of *Night Music* referring to it as a ‘fine, predominantly elegiac piece’ and a ‘deeply felt elegy... music in which fear and protest play as large a part as poetic assuagement’ (Muller 2014, 767-768). However, the reviews are more critical of how Clegg performed the work noting his ‘rather tentative reading’ and ‘emotional reticence’ (Muller 2014, 768). Both reviews for the Ogdon performance are positive about both the performance and *Night Music* itself, with Crichton from the *Financial Times* writing of the recital that *Night Music* ‘made the deepest impression... John Ogdon played *Night Music* with warm sympathy and faultless technical control’.

The reviews that we have of the recital Van Wyk gave in 1959 where he presented the work in its final form are of great interest. The musicologist Jan Bouws was glowing in his review:

Dit sal seker selde gebeur dat ‘n konsertpubliek in sy geheel so diep onder die indruk kom van ‘n nuwe komposisie - én van die vertolking daarvan - soos die gehoor op Stellenbosch by die kamerkonsert van Woensdagaand, toe Arnold van Wyk sy groot klavierwerk, *Nagmusiek* 1956), uitgevoer het. ‘n Groot deel van die toehoorders was deur die middaglesing reeds op die hoogte van die ontstaan en bou van dié werk. Maar ook die res van die publiek het steeds meer in die ban van hierdie magiese musiek gekom. Dit was of daar agter die klavier ‘n towenaar gesit het wat met sy vreemde klanke onbekende droomwêreld vir ons opgeroep het - nagvisioene, waardeur ons die werklikheid om ons heen vergeet het. Ek het altyd gedink dat Arnold van Wyk met sy lieder siklus *Van liefde en verlatenheid* die hoogste en aangrypendste bereik het, maar die betowering van sy *Nagmusiek* is so sterk dat ek ure na die uitvoering nog nie van die beklemming kon loskom nie (quoted in Muller 2014, 766-767).¹¹

¹¹ It will probably seldom happen that a concert audience as a whole is as deeply impressed by a new composition - and its interpretation - as the audience in Stellenbosch at the chamber concert on Wednesday evening when Arnold van Wyk performed his large piano work, *Night Music* (1956). A large part of the audience was already aware of the origin and construction of the work through the afternoon lecture. But the rest of the public came under the spell of this magical music. It was as if there was a magician sitting behind the piano who conjured up unknown dream worlds for us with his strange sounds - night visions - whereby we lost awareness of the reality around us. I always thought

The composer, Rosa Negpen, was similarly complimentary, writing:

Die meeste mense het waarskynlik gekom om die hersiene van die *Nagmusiek* te hoor en hulle is ryklik beloon. Vir 'n moderne werk is dit besonder vas en stewig inmekaar geweef, byna soos 'n fyn tapisserie, maar met sterk kleur en baie detail. In teenstelling met sommige ander eietydse werke, waarin die tegniek en vorm hoofsaaklik is, besit dié werk sekerlik ook musikale inhoud, wat tot die gevoel spreek - soms baie sterk. Tegnies is dit 'n duiwel... Één besonderheid: sy pragtige gebruik van die glissando en baie trillers was nie net trucs nie. Hulle is werklik geïntegreer met die musikale motiewe self. Met dié werk het Arnold van Wyk sy posisie as komponis verstewig - en nie net in ons land nie! (quoted in Muller 2014, 767).¹²

Both Bouws and Beatrix Marx from the *Cape Times* did note that some of the success of the piece hinged on the way Van Wyk performed it. As Marx said, the strength of the performance was due in part, 'to [Van Wyk's] actual handling of the work, the touch employed in the various episodes to underline individual interpretations of each, and the sympathy with which a composer approaches his own work' (Muller 2014, 767).

Of all his piano compositions, the *Four Piano Pieces* have the shortest gestation period. Van Wyk began work on the pieces in January 1965 and had completed them by February 1966 (Wilding 2007, 69). Writing for the Unisa graded piano examinations, the 'Toccata' was the first piece Van Wyk started on in January 1965, and work continued on it through March and April until it was completed in July. Sketches of the 'Dumka' date from the same time, and it was completed in September along with the 'Romanza' which he began in August. The 'Scherzino' was the final piece of the set and he began it in December 1965 completing it the next month, where he revised

Arnold van Wyk had reached the highest and most touching with his song cycle *Van liefde en verlatenheid*, but the enchantment of his *Night Music* is so strong that hours after the performance, I could not shake the impression it left (my translation).

¹² Most people probably came to hear the revised form of the *Night Music* and they were richly rewarded. For a modern work, it is particularly tight and firmly woven together, almost like a fine tapestry, but with strong colour and a great deal of detail. In contrast to some other contemporary works, in which the technique and form are the main focus, the work certainly also has musical content, which speaks to the feeling - sometimes very strongly. Technically it is a devil... One particularity: his beautiful use of the glissando and many trills that are not just tricks. They are truly integrated with the musical motifs themselves. With this work, Arnold van Wyk strengthened his position as a composer - and not only in our country! (my translation).

both the ‘Romanza’ and ‘Toccata’ (Wilding 2007, 69). The work was published by Boosey & Hawkes in London in 1968, and Van Wyk recorded the set for the SABC the year prior.

Regarding the titles, Nothling notes the Dumka originates from several Northern and West Slavonic countries and refers to a sung lament or instrumental piece with a reflective character, often contrasted with a faster section. The title, ‘Dumka: Hommage à Epétopoïret’ is an anagram for the nickname, Otterpoepies, that Van Wyk gave to his friend, Chris du Plessis (Nothling 2014, 77). The word games did not stop at the titles. As Wilding writes, ‘The phrase “Universiteit van Suid Afrika Eksamenstukke” (University of South Africa Exam Pieces) yielded the capitalised musical notes (ut is used for C, and re for D): UnivERSitEit vAn SUiD AFRiKA EkSAmEnStUkkE, which inspired the melody of the first sketch. This was modified by experimentation in serial technique (rare for van Wyk) to produce the final version’ (Wilding 2007, 76).

In addition to the SABC broadcast, Van Wyk performed these pieces on 24 September 1965 in Stellenbosch, and 16 December 1967 in London. On 6 April 1972, he performed the ‘Romanza’ and ‘Dumka’ in Pretoria (Muller 2014, 146). There are no surviving reviews for any of these performances. Unisa included these pieces along with the *Pastorale e Capriccio* and *Night Music* as optional South African pieces in their first international piano competition in 1982 (Wilding 2007, 2). Of these four pieces, only the ‘Toccata’ was included in the 2008 piano syllabus for their Performer’s Licentiate exam (Unisa 2008, 47). The ‘Dumka’ is part of their current 2016 syllabus for Grade 8, while the ‘Toccata’ is an option for their Performer’s Assessment exam (Unisa 2016, 27, 34). Interestingly, in the 2008 syllabus the *Pastorale e Capriccio* and *Night Music* are also options toward their Performer’s Licentiate and any piece from *Tristia* is an option for their Grade 8 exam (Unisa 2008, 40, 47). In the newer syllabus, *Ricordanza* joins both the *Pastorale e Capriccio* and *Night Music* as options for the Performer’s Assessment exam (Unisa 2016, 34). Despite being commissioned by Unisa for pieces appropriate for their piano exams, the difficulty of these pieces mean that Unisa has not seen fit to prescribe them for any grade other than 8 or their post grade diplomas or licentiates since 2008 (Unisa 2023, n.p.).

If the *Four Piano Pieces* represent the work Van Wyk composed the quickest, then *Tristia* represents the one that took him the longest. The conception for the first ideas of the cycle came about in 1952 and it was incomplete when Van Wyk died 31 years later in 1983. The initial germ of 1952 would eventually become three heavily revised drafts and three incomplete movements. The three drafts were published in 1984 by the Arnold van Wyk Trust after being edited by Howard Ferguson (Wilding 2007, 97). In 1952, Van Wyk began work on a choral piece based on the words of the medieval Dutch poem, *Egidius, waer bestu bleven?* This was later reworked into a song for piano and voice. In 1968, Van Wyk again returned to the idea and rewrote it for solo piano with the title 'Rondo desolato'. He wanted it to form part of a larger composition with the potential titles *Egidius*, *Tristia* or *Sonatina Prima*. It was to consist of five movements: 'Presentimento', 'Ostinato', 'Berceuse', a fourth 'Barbaric' piece (Wilding 2007, 97), and close with the 'Rondo desolato' (Wilding 2007, 97).

Work had already begun on the 'Berceuse' in 1958 to 1959, and Van Wyk had written the theme of what would become the 'Ostinato' in 1963 in sketches for incidental music for 'Becket'. He worked at the 'Rondo desolato' from 1968 and completed it in 1970. In the same year, he started work on the 'Ostinato' which at various times was also called 'Winter Landscape' or 'Grido'. He completed a draft of this in July 1970, and another during the period between 1970-1972, reworking the ending in August 1972 (Wilding 2007, 109). Van Wyk performed these three pieces in Stellenbosch on 25 August 1972, writing in a letter:

I played the same programme as in Cape Town, but substituted a new(?) piece by myself for the Chopin group. I've placed a ? after 'new' because the three pieces of which *Tristia* consists (at present) are: a) a re-working of a little piece I wrote as long ago as 1958 or 1959; b) a piece based on a theme from the music I wrote for 'Becket' in 1963 - I wrote half of this [in] 1968-70 and completed it (if complete it is) just in time for the concert and c) a piece based on old sketches and which has been ready for at least two years, waiting for something 'to go with it.' The three titles are *Berceuse*, *Ostinato* and *Rondo desolato* and the third is the most substantial & the one I'm most pleased about although it is extremely sad. The reception by the audience was cordial and I had to repeat the Cradle Song (quoted in Muller 2014, 341).

In January 1973, work began on the opening piece for the cycle alternately called ‘Presagio’ or ‘Presentimento’. In March, Van Wyk made another draft of the ‘Ostinato’ and in May another draft of the ‘Berceuse’. The final drafts for both were completed in July 1975. In September 1975, Van Wyk began work on a new movement entitled ‘Primavera’ or ‘Danza Lontana’. By 1975, the cycle had expanded to be six movements with a tonal plan beginning and ending in E flat minor. Van Wyk continued to work on ‘Presentimento’ and ‘Primavera’ but never completed either, with the final drafts for both made in February 1977 and October 1979 respectively. There are no drafts of the fourth Barbaric piece from the cycle (Wilding 2007, 97-98).

Another draft of the ‘Rondo desolato’ was made in January 1978. Additional sketches of the ‘Ostinato’ from November 1977, and the ‘Berceuse’ from 1983 were not incorporated by Ferguson in the final version. As Ferguson wrote in his forward of the work:

To come up with this printed version it was always easy to use the last version as Van Wyk generally dated his sketches and rough work. The only exception is a short section in the “Berceuse” (bars 57-62), of which there is a late sketch dated 13 January 1983. However, it was not possible to use it, as its continuity is indecipherable (Van Wyk 1984b, n.p.).

Both Ferguson (1984, n.p.) and Wilding (2007, 97) have inferred that the title *Tristia* bears a relation to the collection of poetry by the same name by NP van Wyk Louw. This is disproven by the programme notes Van Wyk wrote to accompany the first performance of the three completed pieces:

Tristia is gebaseer op sketse wat oor ‘n lang tydperk - sowat sestiën jaar - aangeteken is. (Die werk het, terloops, niks met Van Wyk Louw se digbundel te doen nie.) Die Berceuse kan sonder kommentaar gelaat word; die Ostinato maak gebruik van slegs die hoë registers van die klavier en is in die eerste plek ‘n saak van skerp-gekontrasteerde sonoriteite; die Rondo desolato het die tydsoort 7/16, maar die trae gang van die stuk en die aanwysing dat dit “soos ‘n mens praat” en “senza rigore” gespeel moet word - dit alles beteken dat daar eintlik geen waarneembare polsing is nie. Die drie refreine van die *Rondo* word letterlik, hoewel in verskillende toonsoorte, herhaal; elke refrein is yler as die vorige, en die stuk het geen tonaliteit nie, en eintlik ook geen einde nie. Die “klankwêreld” van die stuk strek van velle *fortissimo*-klanke (selde!), deur alle graderings tot by

die nouliks hoorbare en uiteindelik tot absolute stilte (sover so iets moontlik is) (quoted in Muller 2014, 775).¹³

Thom Wium has written about the connections between *Tristia* and the collections of poetry by NP Van Wyk Louw and Ovid with the same name as they all relate to the concept of exile. She suggests that because of his position as a WAM composer, Van Wyk was isolated from the society around him (Thom Wium 2010, 35). This also harkens back to his use of *Flavius* as a possible title for *Pastorale e Capriccio*. No reviews exist for any performance of *Tristia*. However, in addition to the premiere of these pieces in Stellenbosch in 1972, the musician Stewart Young recalls a different occasion when Van Wyk performed *Tristia* at Hiddingh Hall at the University of Cape Town. He described it as an ‘intensely melancholic and uncommonly integrated creative experience’ (Wilding 2007, 98). It is tantalising to think what the completed cycle may have been like. Ferguson, writing about Van Wyk before his death, thought that ‘[m]ore significant [than *Ricordanza*] is a group of pieces with the over-all title of *Tristia* [...] When completed, the work will reflect different aspects of a very characteristic side of the composer’s make-up’ (Ferguson 1987, 13).

During work on *Tristia*, Van Wyk was commissioned to write a piano piece by the SABC for their piano competition in 1974. Hastily drafted between 3 December 1973 and February 1974, Van Wyk wrote in his diary on 25 January 1974, ‘I’m in labour with *Ricordanza*. I work hard but it becomes clear during the course of the day that I will not finish the fair copy in time [...]. I am also starting to feel very tired. Call 6:30’s side to Anton [Hartman] and ask if I can’t just post the thing on Monday. But he asks that I better try to get it on the plane tomorrow’ (Thom 2006, 30). The early sketches also had other titles including *Simple aveu*, *Lento teneramente*, *Beim Schlafengehen*, *En reve* and *J. S. B. met slapenstyd* (Thom 2006, 37). Of the 1974 version, Van Wyk wrote:

¹³ *Tristia* is based on sketches recorded over a long period of time - about sixteen years. (The work, by the way, has nothing to do with Van Wyk Louw’s collection of poems.) The Berceuse can be left without comment; the Ostinato makes use of only the high registers of the piano and is primarily a matter of strongly contrasted sonorities; the Rondo desolato has the time signature 7/16, but the slow tempo of the piece and the indication that it should be played “as one speaks” and “senza rigore” - all this means that there is actually no discernible pulse. The three refrains of the Rondo are repeated literally, although in different keys; each refrain is sparser than the last, and the piece has no tonality, and indeed no end. The “sound world” of the piece extends from fierce *fortissimo* sounds (rarely!), through all gradations to the barely audible and finally to absolute silence (as far as such a thing is possible) (my translation).

I've written only about 4 minutes of the 6 required. I haven't the slightest idea a) whether it is any good - sometimes I think it is fine, then again it looks too awful to contemplate, and (b) how I am to proceed further. I spent at least five hours at it today and I got no further (quoted in Muller 2014, 343).

The work was revised on several occasions between May 1975 and April 1980, and like *Tristia* had not reached a final form (Wilding 2007, 127). Like *Tristia*, the final drafts were compiled by Howard Ferguson and *Ricordanza* was published by the Arnold van Wyk Trust in 1984.

The inspiration for this piece was 'a combination of personal and musical reminiscences' (Wilding 2007, 127). In November 1973, a student named Marthinus Basson visited Van Wyk and played the D major Prelude from the first book of *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, BWV 850. A few weeks later Van Wyk wrote, 'I'm starting work on a black meditation on the D major prelude that MCB played just a little on the piano that night. Perhaps it will serve for the SABC-competition' (Wilding 2007, 127). Both Thom (2006, 38) and Wilding (2007, 127-128), argue that *Ricordanza* incorporates musical material from the aforementioned Prelude, but again the programme notes Van Wyk wrote to accompany his performance of the piece on 18 September 1976 contradict this:

Ricordanza ("herinneringe" of "aandenking"), die stuk wat Arnold van Wyk sowat twee jaar gelede geskryf het toe die SAUK ses komponiste uitgenooi het om kort werke vir sy Klavierprys te komponeer, is eintlik 'n sonoriteitstudie - die stuk vereis, soos so baie van Van Wyk se werke, 'n baie groot kleurpalet en ragfyne kleurskakerings. Die algemene stemming van die stuk (wat, baie vryelik, gebaseer is op die vierde van Bach se Sechs Kleine Praeludien) is bitter-soet en nostalgies (quoted in Muller 2014, 779).¹⁴

Aside from sharing the key of D major, the melodic content of both the Prelude and *Ricordanza* are surprisingly similar:

¹⁴ *Ricordanza* ("memories" or "souvenir"), the piece that Arnold van Wyk wrote about two years ago when the SABC invited six composers to compose short works for the Piano Prize, is actually a sonority study - the piece required as so many of Van Wyk's works, a very large colour palette and subtle colour shades. The overall mood of the piece (which is, very loosely, based on the fourth of Bach's Sechs Kleine Praeludien) is bittersweet and nostalgic (my translation).



Figure 4.1: Bars 1-7 of Praeludium in D major, BWV 936 (Bach 1994)



Figure 4.2: Bars 11-15 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

Both melodies begin with a perfect fourth from A to D, though Van Wyk writes an octave lower. In their next bar they reach E on the second beat of the bar via C sharp. Furthermore, Van Wyk uses the two-note slur idea from bars 3, 4 and 5 from the Bach Prelude to inform the melody in bars 14 and 15 of his piece. In fact bar 5 of the Bach Prelude and bar 15 of *Ricordanza* use the exact same notes. The melodic line in *Ricordanza* continues on for several bars, and is couched in a completely different texture, but this is a striking example of quotation.

Van Wyk performed the work twice in September 1976, on the 14th in Cape Town and the 18th in Stellenbosch (Muller 2014, 146). Neither performance received any surviving reviews. A review of both posthumous pieces appeared in *SAMUS* in 1986 after their publication in 1984. In it, Feenstra writes:

Together the three movements [of *Tristia*] form a well-balanced unit which can display not only the composer's gifts, but also a gifted pianist's technical mastery... [*Ricordanza*] too, is not only characteristic of Van Wyk's particular melodic, harmonic and rhythmic style but also demands a prodigious pianistic technique to recreate the textural intricacies which the score demands... It is sincerely to be hoped that, with the publication of these two works, their inclusion in the pianist's permanent repertoire will follow (Feenstra 1986, 105).

These compositions were written between 1948 and 1980, a period of 32 years or from when Van Wyk was aged 32 to age 64, and represent approximately 70 minutes of music. There is a similarity

between Arnold van Wyk and the Spanish composer, Manuel de Falla, who was a pianist himself but only left piano compositions totalling approximately 70 minutes of music and who was similarly self-critical (Hess 2001). Another parallel might be drawn between the small compositional output of other composers active in the twentieth century such as Duparc whose output consists of 15 short songs (Cooper 2001), or Varèse whose twelve compositions amount to about two and a half hours of music (Griffiths 2024). This small output is remarkable for its diversity, attention to detail and the care Van Wyk lavished upon each piece. Furthermore, these compositions came from throughout his life, and reflect the changes he underwent as a composer.

4.2 Van Wyk's Compositional Language

Knowing how Van Wyk approached the composition of his piano works and their biographical context enabled me to have a sense of the pains he took in writing them and suggests that each one had a personal significance to him. As a result of both his educational influences and personal artistic identity, Van Wyk developed his own voice and style. There are many ways to account for this compositional language, and knowing the general aspects of this language can help performers to identify the key features of this music to underline and orient their practice towards. In his succinct entry on Van Wyk for *Grove Music Online*, May begins by proposing that Van Wyk composed with motivic development as his primary concern. Writing in an expanded tonal idiom, Van Wyk favoured certain intervals and notes, namely major and minor thirds, sharpened fourths and flattened sevenths. May notes that Van Wyk uses pedal points as a harmonic device, and his melodic material often circles around a central pedal note. He also argues that Van Wyk rarely wrote contrapuntally, which would be a natural extension of his preoccupation with motivic development (May 2001, n.p.).

Though Van Wyk may not have written contrapuntally in the strict sense very often, his piano music is usually conceived with multiple simultaneous textures. These textures are often organised into a hierarchy through the use of dynamics, different registers of the piano or articulations. As Wilding writes, Van Wyk prefers to write 'thick rather than thin textures' (Wilding 2007, 144). For instance, in the excerpt from *Ricordanza* below there are four separate dynamic ranges occurring at once: *forte*, *mezzo forte*, *pianissimo* and *pianississimo*. The uppermost line is a legato melody, the inner voice is *mezzo staccato* and the lightest texture, although it is written in the same register as the melody. The melody is supported by full chords and a lower part which is a characteristic pedal point.



Figure 4.3: Bars 25-26 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

Building upon the summary given by May, Wilding suggests that the hallmarks of Van Wyk's compositional language are:

[the] complexity of [his] tonal language, his use of sevenths, added-note chords, and split-third chords to invigorate tertiary harmony, his shaping of melodic form by developmental variation, and his use of melody, tonality, texture, register and dynamics to create complex delineations of form and give diversity to large-scale unified structures (Wilding 2007, 145).

Van Wyk alludes to his own compositional language in lecture notes he prepared about *Night Music*. In shorthand, he writes that his language is 'Laat Romanties'¹⁵ with harmonies which are traditional 'plus'. He says he does not write according to a system, but rather 'ek skryf maar wat vir my mooi en gepas klink' (Muller 2014, 454).¹⁶

¹⁵ Late Romantic (my translation).

¹⁶ I write what sounds beautiful and fitting to me (my translation).

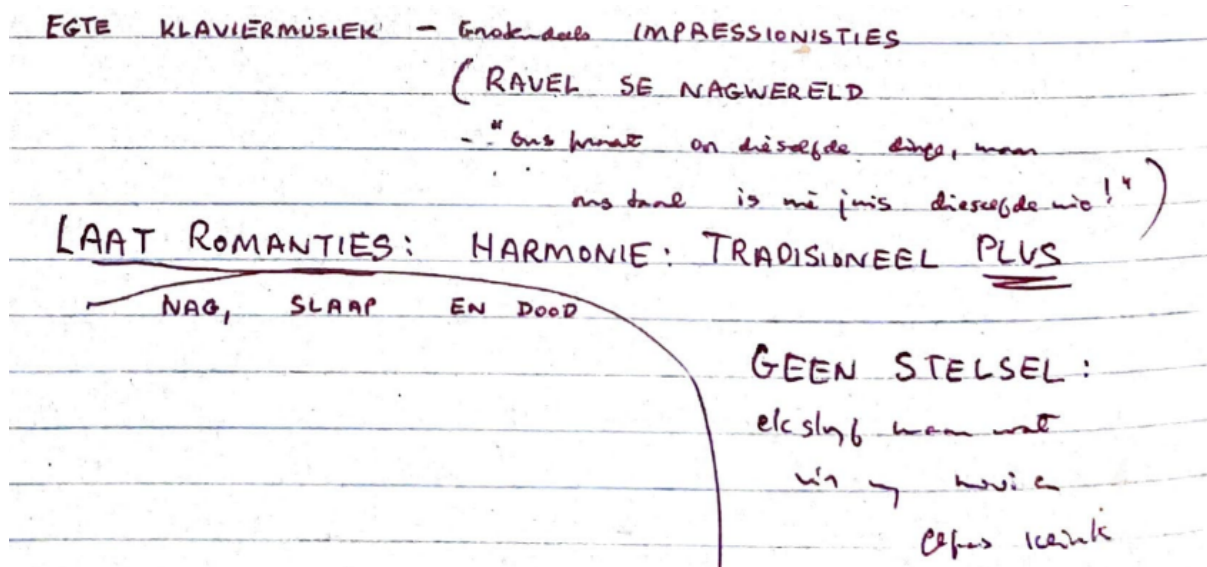


Figure 4.4: Lecture notes on *Night Music* (Muller 2014, 454)

Although van Wyk wrote this for his own use, it does confirm that in *Night Music*, he used both traditional and non-systematic, non-functional harmonic progressions. These, and other elements of his music have been described by different authors in greater depth.

Tonality and Harmony

By undertaking analyses of these piano works, Wilding arrives at several conclusions relating to how Van Wyk used both tonality and harmony. Firstly, true atonality is a relatively rare occurrence, usually reserved for developmental sections, and can only be said to happen on a large scale in the fourth movement of *Night Music* (Wilding 2007, 135). Tonality is suggested by the prolongation of tonal centres, especially in the earlier *Pastorale e Capriccio* and *Night Music* where the keys are sustained throughout each piece. Large scale prolongation becomes less common in the later works, and tonal centres are usually shown through the use of pedal points (Wilding 2007, 134-135). Van Wyk also suggests tonality through the use of conventional and analysable harmonic progressions, even as late as in the 'Romanza' from the *Four Piano Pieces*, and the 'Berceuse' from *Tristia* (Wilding 2007, 135). When learning these pieces, there were many instances where the harmonic material was easily identifiable. In other instances, it was possible for me to identify chords by considering one or more of the notes as additional, or considering chords in different parts of the texture as separate entities. At other times, the chords were not

easily identifiable and were best thought of in terms of the shape my hand needed to make in order to play them. Though there are many ways to account for these structures, including analytical approaches like set theory, these chords often function as an extension of harmonic progressions one might find in music of the nineteenth century. Wilding echoes this when he concludes that:

[t]he inner conflict in van Wyk’s music is between the deeper level, which is almost always basically triadic, and the surface, which is hardly ever simply triadic. A structural major or minor tonality is usually realized in the actual music as a triad with an added pitch, forming a seventh chord, a split-third chord, or an added-note chord (Wilding 2007, 141-142).

Concurring with May, Wilding notes that Van Wyk frequently uses major and minor thirds simultaneously, and he also finds widespread use of major and minor sevenths. He suggests that the ‘minor seventh was one of van Wyk’s favourite sonorities’ (Wilding 2007, 143).

Owing to his training in harmony within a more conservative educational environment, it is unsurprising that tonal centres would become an important structural consideration for Van Wyk. Consider the tonal plan for *Night Music* as can be seen in the table below. As Wilding notes, the outer movements are in closely related keys, the third and fifth movement are in distantly related keys and the middle movement is a rare instance where Van Wyk writes with no discernible tonal centre (Wilding 2007, 22).

Movement	Key
Introduction	A minor
First Nocturne	C major
Second Nocturne	A flat major
Third Nocturne	Atonal
Fourth Nocturne	E flat major
Sonata	A minor
Epilogue	A minor

Table 4.1: The tonal plan for *Night Music* (Wilding 2007, 22)

This concern with organising music around tonal centres would persist for his entire compositional life. Even in the projected plans for *Tristia* from 1975, Van Wyk intended the piece to represent a tonally closed cycle beginning and ending in E flat minor.

Title	Key
1. Presentimento	E flat minor
2. Ostinato	A minor
3. Berceuse	E minor
4. (Fourth Piece)	Unknown
5. Primavera / Danza lontana	Unknown
6. Rondo desolato	E flat minor

Table 4.2: Compositional plan for *Tristia* (Wilding 2007, 98)

In his harmonic progressions, Van Wyk often uses chromatic mediant and tritone relationships as substitutes for the dominant. Chromatic mediant and tritone relationships also occur between sections, with chromatic mediant relationships dictating the tonal areas explored with the sonata form of *Ricordanza*. The development and recapitulation are in F major and B major respectively before returning to the initial D major home key (Wilding 2007, 141).

It is important to note that while certain pieces, such as the ‘Capriccio’ from *Pastorale e Capriccio*; the second, fourth and sixth movements of *Night Music*; the ‘Scherzino’ and ‘Toccata’ from the *Four Piano Pieces*; and the ‘Ostinato’ from *Tristia* do have tonal centres and are underpinned by harmonic progressions, these are less grounded in convention and contain more frequent dissonances and use of non-chord notes. In other words, Van Wyk uses a spectrum of expanded tonality that moves from the complex and dissonant at one end, to the simple and consonant on the other.

Melodic Material

May suggests that Van Wyk writes melodies that develop slowly and tend to hover around a single note (May 2001, n.p.). This is especially true in the later works, such as in the ‘Berceuse’ from *Tristia*:



Figure 4.5: Bars 44-49 from the ‘Berceuse’ from *Tristia* (Van Wyk 1984b)

In the above melodic fragment, the note B accounts for fifteen of the nineteen notes that make up the melody. This repeated B is written over shifting harmonies with each one changing the colour and emotional affect of the melody, in a similar way to the *Prélude* in E minor by Chopin.



Figure 4.6: Bars 1-4 from *Prélude* in E minor from *24 Préludes* (Chopin 2010)

Wilding notes that all of the piano works are written with prominent melodies (Wilding 2007, 135). Though he does not use the signs for *Hauptstimme* and *Nebenstimme* that Schoenberg originated in order to differentiate between the primary and secondary parts within a texture (Read 1970, 282-283), Van Wyk always indicates that his melodies are the principal part either through dynamic markings that are louder than the accompanying musical material or through the instructions *cantabile* or *espressivo*. Van Wyk does not usually subject these melodies to

procedures like repetition and sequence. Instead, he uses what Wilding terms ‘developing variation’ (Wilding 2007, 135), whereby melodic material is modified when it returns, but often with a characteristic element present so as to underpin the similarity.



Figure 4.7: Bars 5-9 of the ‘Pastorale’ from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1965)



Figure 4.8: Bars 82-84 of the ‘Pastorale’ from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1965)

Comparing the above excerpts, the repeated C sharps are still present in both melodies, but the repetition is modified by being truncated to two bars instead of three. These types of variation predominate in *Night Music*, which is based on four themes which form the basis for the thematic materials which occur in the other movements (Ferguson 1987). There are exceptions where repetition occurs. For instance, the melodic material from the recurring A section of the ‘Rondo desolato’ from *Tristia* is repeated exactly, but each repetition is presented with a different texture in a different key and register.

Form

In the piano works, Van Wyk limits himself to the use of binary, ternary, three-part ABC, rondo and sonata forms (Wilding 2007). In other words, he makes use of conventional forms. If Van Wyk is careful to avoid literal repetition in his melodic material, the same can be said for his formal sections. In his ternary pieces, such as the 'Pastorale', 'Dumka', and the first and second movements of *Night Music*, Van Wyk always modifies the return of the A section, making these movements ABA' as opposed to ABA. A similar trend is evident in his rondo movements. The fourth movement from *Night Music*, as well as both the 'Rondo desolato' and 'Berceuse' from *Tristia* present each reprise of the A section in a modified form.

Six of these pieces are written in sonata form: the 'Capriccio' from *Pastorale e Capriccio*, sixth movement of *Night Music*, the 'Romanza' and 'Toccata' from the *Four Piano Pieces*, the 'Ostinato' from *Tristia* and *Ricordanza*. This means that there is at least one piece in sonata form in each of the five piano works. Regarding these works, Wilding remarks that:

His recapitulations are shorter than his expositions and the formal lines are indistinct: development, recapitulation, and coda function as one unit. This fusion of sections, obscuring the exact point of recapitulation, and highlighting the binary aspect of sonata form, is even more important in the later works of van Wyk (Wilding 2007, 139).

Aside from the 'Capriccio' where the recapitulation begins with a restatement of the opening theme in the tonic key and a statement of the second theme, the recapitulations in the other five pieces are obscured by either reversing the order of themes, omitting one of the themes or by exploring a third tonal area.

Wilding also suggests that while in earlier works, Van Wyk sought contrast between formal sections, he became more interested in finding continuity between these sections later in life, placing them 'ambiguously between the categories of "sectional" and "continuous."' (Wilding 2007, 139). This suggests that Van Wyk was at once making use of highly organised forms, and writing in a way to conceal them. Furthermore, Van Wyk was concerned with overarching forms in the structure of his multi-movement piano works. Wilding says these are characterised by

‘competing aspects of unity and variety. Sectional forms contain unifying aspects, and continuous forms contain distinguishing aspects’ (Wilding 2007, 140). For instance, Van Wyk implies an overall ternary structure for *Tristia* through the use of a diversity of form, tempo and texture.

	Berceuse	Ostinato	Rondo desolato
Form	Rondo	Sonata	Rondo
Tempo	Slow	Fast	Slow
Texture	Thin	Thick	Thin

Table 4.3: Table of diverse elements of *Tristia* (Wilding 2007, 140)

This overarching ternary form is unified through the use of tonality which forms a tonal arch.

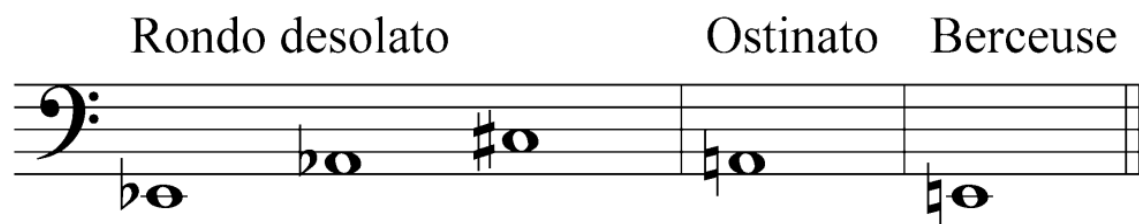


Figure 4.9: The tonal arch based on the keys of the movements of *Tristia* (Wilding 2007, 122)

In conclusion, throughout his piano works, Van Wyk at once makes use of traditional forms, harmonic progressions and tonal plans, and uses compositional techniques to conceal both his formal sections and harmonic structures. This survey of his compositional language is guided by many of the concerns that underpin analysis. Both May and Wilding attempt to show how Van Wyk organises and develops his musical materials toward the end of structural unity. There is value in this broader contextual knowledge both as a frame of reference and this understanding shaped my perception of these piano works. In the chapters to follow, I will explore the aspects of these works that became apparent through my artistic practice.

Chapter 5

5.1 Van Wyk and Haydn

In playing piano works by both Haydn and Van Wyk, and considering how these composers might relate to each other, two comparisons stood out to me. Both Haydn and Van Wyk have a reputation within their respective canons that is at odds with who they were and how they composed. By interrogating these reputations and exploring how they composed within the context of their daily lives, two different pictures emerge. Haydn is thought of as good-humoured and noted for his prodigious output, while Van Wyk is regarded as a tragic figure with a small oeuvre. Although Van Wyk played many pieces by Haydn in his recitals (Ribeiro 2009, 37-38), the two composers had a different overall approach to composition. However, in considering both composers in relation to their reputation, the concept of the body was activated in my imagination. Because my artistic practice is closely related to the physical experience of making music, considering how both composers experienced composition using the piano as a compositional tool became a rich topic of exploration.

While it would be incorrect to say that both composers stayed within the limits of the prevailing style of their time, both Haydn and Van Wyk had a relationship with existing forms and harmonic language as well as knowledge of the various styles of their time. Both composers sought to use and develop these toward their own artistic ends. It is ironic then that, as the conductor Kenneth Woods notes, Haydn is often evoked as a representation of the normal. His music represents a template that a composer like Beethoven might deviate from (Woods 2009, n.p.). This association persists even recently when critic Ivan Hewett suggested that Haydn was the ideal composer to listen to during the Covid 19 pandemic because ‘[o]rdinariness is Haydn’s preferred territory. He expresses what you might call the sane middle ground of human life. It’s no good looking to him for extremes of anger or heroism or sadness’ (Hewett 2020, n.p.).

In a similar way, Van Wyk is a composer we can look to for music with ‘elegiac connotations’ (Strauss 2013, 525). The despair and loneliness that many commentators hear in these compositions, which often bear titles attesting to this, suggests that Van Wyk operated from a basis

of melancholy. While he may have frequently experienced these types of emotion, Van Wyk was also witty, and in certain company, a bon vivant. As Praeg puts it, ‘it is abundantly clear that at parties Arnold van Wyk was a real tonic’ (Praeg 2020, n.p.). Beyond his complexity as a human being, Van Wyk also wrote music that encompasses a wide variety of styles and expressive casts. This perception of both Van Wyk and Haydn can be linked in part to their reputations as composers. These have been shaped through complex processes of canonisation which are often affected by factors separate to the music itself.

Friedman has shown that in the eighteenth century, due to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, many writers began to idealise the concept of naivety. This term was associated with both nature and the innocence of childhood, and had the qualities of goodness, simplicity, and sincerity which was unburdened by artifice or deliberate thought (Friedman 2021, 689-690). This association became a desirable quality in art at the time. In music, the naive manifested as natural melodies, avoidance of both dissonance and complex counterpoint, and simple, happy music, with Haydn being named by authors as its prime representative (Friedman 2021, 693-694). This was the basis of the perception of Haydn as the ‘kindly ‘papa’ figure or the lighthearted, mischievous prankster’ (Friedman 2021, 688). This perception was further entrenched by his rustic origins, occasional use of a folk-like idiom as well as his musical humour. As Friedman describes it:

Humour and folksiness are two foundational qualities of the most persistent trope of Haydn reception: ‘Papa Haydn’. Given the centrality of childlike purity to naivety, aligning ‘a venerated fogy’ (as Raymond Knapp puts it) like ‘periwigged Papa Haydn’ with the concept might appear odd. Yet ‘Papa Haydn’ is in essence an embodiment of naivety, channelling several of its central qualities: unselfconsciousness, childlike innocence (manifesting in playfulness), and the pursuit of a ‘natural’ state of being (Friedman 2021, 699).

This association with naivety would become problematised in the nineteenth century. In his review of *The Creation*, Berlioz summed up the emerging attitude toward both Haydn and the naive saying, ‘[n]aiveté is all very fine, but too much of it we don’t need!’ (quoted in Friedman 2021, 703). At odds with Romantic ideals of expressivity and associated by some writers with immaturity, naivety was no longer a desirable quality, a point which persists today (Friedman

2021, 703). Despite attempts within the twentieth century to allow for a more nuanced understanding of Haydn as a composer, his status as an icon of naivety has proven persistent.

If Haydn is thought of as ‘Papa Haydn’, the image most canonically associated with Van Wyk is that of the tragic, Romantic artist. Strauss notes that evidence of this ‘elegiac image’ associated with Van Wyk can be found in articles, memoirs about him as well as his own statements in interviews and correspondence (Strauss 2013, 524). Indeed, Strauss continues, this image has become so important to his mythology that the works that are seen as his truest and best compositions, are ones which find Van Wyk composing in an elegiac mode. Through researching the writings of several authors, Strauss concludes that there has been a selective canonisation of specific works that corroborate this mythology, namely the *Vier weemoedige liedjies* (1934–1938), *Vyf elegieë vir strykkwartet* (1940–1941), *Van Liefde en Verlatenheid* (1953), *Night Music* (1955–1958), and *Missa in illo tempore* (1979) (Strauss 2013, 526). This is summed up in a statement made by Van Wyk in an interview when he succinctly said ‘Ek kan eintlik net hartseer musiek skryf’ (Strauss 2013, 526).¹⁷

In both instances, these reputations limit our understanding of these composers. For a performer, these preconceived notions might affect how one approaches works by either composer. Pienaar is aware of how Van Wyk is often written about, and suggested that he was a more technical composer than his reputation might imply, saying:

[Van Wyk] is able to pare down his means to essentials and where details are never just ‘filler’ material. He is also very technical in the way he can build lines and sustain musical ‘arguments’ (think of the storm section in *Night Music*, or the build-up at the end of the ‘Toccata’). And technical in the way he can absorb hackneyed references and formal conventions from ‘old’ music and make them do new things – even as late as the 1970s. I think his concentration and specificity of thought are ill-served by tarring everything with the brush of self-absorbed melancholy or slowness (Muller & Pienaar 2020, 69).

¹⁷ I can only write sad music (my translation).

Because so much has been written about Haydn and his music, much recent scholarship seeks to redress some of the established understandings that have been put forth. For instance, there are many sonata form movements that Haydn wrote that do not correspond to the conventional formal model, and are consequently explained away as predecessors to sonata form or seen as a conscious deviation of it (Birson 2020, 1). Birson has shown, for example, that instances where Haydn writes a continuous exposition - where the exposition contains only one distinct theme - has its precedence in the *da capo* aria. These movements are therefore not simply a deviation from sonata form, but rather informed by the context in which Haydn was composing (Birson 2020). Korstvedt suggests that, at times, ‘within the framework of a larger binary design, musical contrasts function locally, working against what has immediately gone before, rather than balancing a corresponding section elsewhere in the form’ (Korstvedt 2013, 27). In other words, considering these compositions from a local point of view instead of using metrics like structural unity to judge them, can bring us closer to the spirit of how they were intended to be heard.

If we were to take historical judgements at face value, we might conclude that Haydn had a limited knowledge of counterpoint. Based on the counterpoint exercises that Haydn gave Beethoven, and subsequently corrected, Nottbohm argued that ‘Haydn was hasty, careless, and inconsistent in his teaching and [...] he was, in fact, not thoroughly familiar with the rules and principles of strict counterpoint’ (quoted in Mann 1970, 713). Town states plainly that ‘[the] fugues of Haydn have been viewed as inferior, or even abortive, [in] essays by nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians who were comparing them with the compositions of J.S. Bach and G.F. Handel’ (Town 1986, 326). However, Diergarten has suggested that *partimento* counterpoint may form the basis of how Haydn approached teaching, composition as well as counterpoint.

Haydn claimed to have learned the fundamentals of composition from the Neapolitan composer, Nicola Popora, who would have been familiar with the *partimento* tradition coming as he did from the centre of the tradition (Diergarten 2011, 53). While *partimento* refers more generally to figured and unfigured thoroughbass, the *partimento* tradition is ‘the improvisational realization of such bass voices using a repertoire of voice-leading patterns. These schemata, which partimento students learn to apply above the given bass lines, consist primarily of the various types of cadence, the rule of the octave and numerous sequential progressions’ (Diergarten 2011, 55). The young

Haydn acted as a *répétiteur* for Popora, accompanying his vocal students as they sang their arias and *solfeggi*, most of which would consist of a vocal part and unfigured bass (Diergarten 2011, 57).



Figure 5.1: *Solfeggi fugati* by Nicola Popora (Diergarten 2011, 59).

Haydn would maintain the position that thoroughbass is an important musical practice for composers (Diergarten 2011, 57). Moving beyond the realisation of thoroughbass, *partimento* also had a contrapuntal element:

Partimento counterpoint involves the polyphonic figuration of schemata internalized by partimento students. Partimento counterpoint, William Renwick explains, ‘adds imitative counterpoint to the framework of pure voice leading, and . . . reflects a method of conceptualizing fugal composition and improvisation as an extension and refinement of thoroughbass’ (Diergarten 2011, 61).

For the experienced thoroughbass player, their tactile experience means they can feel ‘incorrect consecutives immediately in [their] fingers, which [they] can then forestall and thus implement the proper consecutives before [their] eye can correctly comprehend it’ (Diergarten 2011, 75). According to his biographers, Griesinger and Dies, Haydn typically composed by improvising at the piano until he found an idea and then set it down. These ideas would then form the basis for whatever he was composing that day (quoted in Diergarten 2011, 74). His improvisational framework was influenced by his experience as a keyboard player capable of realising basslines. As Diergarten summarises, ‘the compositional and improvisational training of the eighteenth century and the relationship of the two thus leads to the very core of the creative process: to the relationship between invention and elaboration, improvisation and composition, physicality and notation’ (Diergarten 2011, 75).

From this, we can conclude that Haydn was a composer whose artistic practice included realising music through the conventions of thoroughbass as mediated by the *partimento* tradition. Instead of understanding counterpoint as a discipline, Haydn understood it as an embodied phenomenon which was both theoretically informed and practically experienced. Although Van Wyk was primarily a pianist, he said, ‘Ek het nie 'n klavier nodig wanneer ek komponeer nie, maar as dit ‘n klavierwerk is wat ek skryf, het ek wel die instrument nodig’ (Muller 2014, 139).¹⁸ His compositional training did not retain the practical element that was part of how Haydn composed, and so Van Wyk was able to work out ideas separately from the tactile experience of playing them. However, for his piano works, Van Wyk did need an instrument in order to feel how the works would be played.

In attempting to find the performing body in how Van Wyk wrote, we can consider how he described his compositional process in a letter written in 1978:

Ek begin liever met [...] die herkoms van idees en materiaal. As dit oor 'n abstrakte, nie-programmatiese stuk gaan, dan moet ek soos Brahms sê: Ek weet nie waarvandaan die idee kom nie. Dis sommer 'n skielike inval of 'n gewaarwording wat mens, op die onwaarskynlikste tye partykeer, te binne skiet. Baie keer is dit nie eers definitief in die sin van se 'n melodie of 'n ritmiese patroon of 'n besondere harmoniese progressie nie. Dit kan ook net 'n soort tekstuur wees of 'n soort karakter. [...] Dis miskien die veiligste om te se dat idees in die onderbewussyn gevorm word, en 'n mens weet mos nie wat daar aangaan nie! [...] Wat die komponeerdery self betref: ek weskaf maar seker met die materiaal, probeer dit ongin, probeer dit elke keer 'n bietjie verbeter. Ek skets baie en baie keer staan daar by die potloodsketse alternatiewe moontlikhede wat ek in verskillende kleure aandui (quoted in Muller 2014, 138-139).¹⁹

¹⁸ I do not need a piano when I am composing, but if I am writing a piano work, then I very much need the instrument (my translation).

¹⁹ I prefer to start with [...] the origin of ideas and material. If it is an abstract, non-programmatic piece, then I, like Brahms, have to say: I do not know where the ideas come from. It is a sudden impulse or perception that strikes, sometimes at the unlikelyest times. Many times, it is not even definitive in the sense of it being a melody, rhythmic pattern or particular harmonic progression. It can also be a kind of texture or character. [...] It is perhaps safest to say that ideas are formed in the subconscious, and one does not know what is going on in there! [...] As for composition itself: I work with the material for sure, try to exploit it, try to improve it a little each time. I sketch many times, and often there are alternative possibilities that I indicate in different colours (my translation).

The process he describes in his letter suggests that Van Wyk would begin composing from the basis of a subconscious inspiration, reworking the compositional material until he felt it expressed what he desired best. Furthermore, unlike Hadyn, Van Wyk was realising his harmonic structures with various added notes at a much slower pace. Despite not being the result of thoroughbass extemporisation, it is clear to the performer that Van Wyk wrote these pieces as a performer. They are realisable by performers, and respect the limits of the instrument and performer while still asking much of them. Because writing music was a slow process for Van Wyk, and because he was fastidious in his proofreading, his scores are a rich source of heretofore unmined information that the performer is implicated in on a bodily level. These scores became the first site of study in my own practice and in this dissertation.

5.2 Notation

Van Wyk took pains to ensure his scores were an accurate representation of his musical ideas. In a letter to Graham Newcater, Van Wyk reminds the young composer that incorrect writing can waste time in rehearsals, and that ‘neatness always pays’ (Van Wyk 1958, n.p.). Beyond the care taken in ensuring his scores were readable and reflective of his musical ideas, certain aspects of his notation are in line with other composers of the twentieth century. Both Debussy and Bartók had an indelible impact on pianism and piano writing in the twentieth century. Through comparing how these composers approached the medium of notation, it is possible to see how their notational advances had an impact on Van Wyk. Furthermore, through the use of these notational devices, Van Wyk is able to communicate valuable interpretive information to the performer.

The French pianist, Marguerite Long, said that Debussy often told pianists to ‘[a]bove all, make [him] forget the piano has hammers’ (quoted in Long 1972, 13). Accounts of his playing highlight that Debussy played with sensitivity and a wide range of touch and colour (Rushing 2018, 3-4). In contrast, Bartók argued that the true nature of the piano was percussive. In a response to a questionnaire in 1927, he wrote:

The neutral character of piano tone has long been recognised. Yet it seems to me that its inherent nature becomes really expressive only by means of the present tendency to use the piano as a percussion instrument. Indeed, the piano always plays the part of the universal instrument. It has not lost its importance for concert performances (Bartók 1976, 288).

Indeed, his playing was described by one critic as sounding like a ‘two-stone hammer upon [a] red-hot horseshoe’ (Fischer 1995, 292). These perceptions are reductive since both Bartók and Debussy wrote piano music and performed in a way that encompassed a wide range of piano sonorities. However, both composers were interested in exploring the possibilities of the instrument, and reflecting this in their notation. Through the use of articulation and expressive markings, these composers sought to communicate their ideas with performers.

Bartók

Although Bartók was inspired by Debussy (Fischer 2000, 427), let us start with the former. While his early compositions from 1903, such as the *Funeral March*, do display notational details, suggesting that Bartók had an interest in colour and articulation, these belong to the Romantic era (Fischer 2000, 422-423). In 1907 and 1908, after a four-year break from composing for the piano, Bartók burst forth with the *Fourteen Bagatelles*, *Ten Easy Pieces* and four volumes of folk-song settings called *For Children* (Fischer 2000, 423). These pieces contained a radically new approach to notation, filled with a preponderance of articulation markings which were often combined.

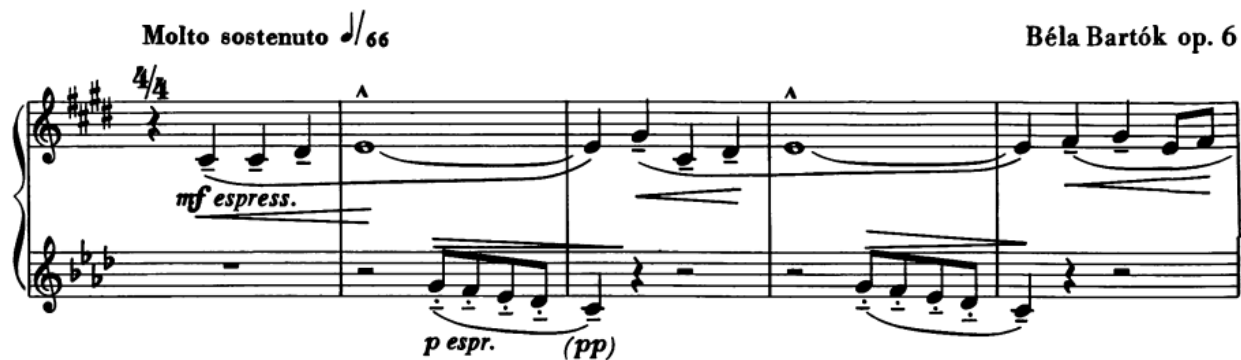


Figure 5.2: Bars 1-5 from No 1 from *Fourteen Bagatelles*, Op. 6 (Bartók 1981a)

Fischer suggests three possible reasons for this new style of articulation. The first is that Bartók was seeking to capture new timbral qualities from the piano. Through his friend, Kodály, Bartók was introduced to the music of Debussy in 1907. Bartók must have been impressed by the new approach to piano sonority and notation he found in these piano works, and performed and taught them often (Fischer 2000, 426-427). The second reason is that in 1907, Bartók began the process of making his own Hungarian editions of keyboard works by Bach, Scarlatti, Mozart and Beethoven. Of particular interest is his edition of *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, which reorders the preludes and fugues in order of difficulty, contains some fugues written in multiple staves to encourage part reading and contains an abundance of instructive articulation markings.



Figure 5.3: Bars 1-7 of the Prelude in G major, *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier II* edited by Bartók (Bach 2019)

Bartók uses these markings for pedagogical reasons and they are intended to guide students playing these works toward a specific musical result. In the above example, the pedal point G is accented in order for the note to continue sounding for the duration of the bar as the sound decays. The inner quavers are to be played detached to differentiate them from the semiquavers played by the right hand. Bartók uses *portamenti* to indicate that the moving semiquavers should be brought out ahead of the upper repeating D which is merely under a legato slur. The slurs indicate a phrase length, with a particular phrasing design implied by the *crescendo* and *decrescendo* markings.

The third reason for this change of approach is that in 1904 Bartók began his ethnomusicological studies in Hungarian folk music (Fischer 2000, 423). He sought to capture the ‘characteristic peculiarities deserving of precise annotation, such as for example, the vocal portamento, irregular rhythm, and so forth, none of which can be recorded with the aid of conventional musical signs’ (quoted in Fischer 2000, 430). Bartók would notate his transcriptions of these melodies with extensive articulation and expressive markings in order to communicate something of the *parlando rubato* style of Hungarian folk music. In a similar way, Van Wyk often used text and the conventions of vocal music as a way to devise and colour melodic lines in his piano works. While Van Wyk did not transcribe melodies and was not influenced in a meaningful way by South

African indigenous music, he did use notational detail to suggest vocal colour in a similar way to Bartók.

In the introduction of his edition to the *Notenbüchlein für Anna Magdalena Bach*, Bartók supplies the table of articulation markings seen in Figure 5.4. Suchoff has noted that similar markings appear in *Mikrokosmos*, and that these are demonstrative of the ideas Bartók had about piano playing and musicianship (Suchoff 1971, 13). For Suchoff, these markings run the gamut from percussive to non-percussive touches. These touches imply a technical approach with the percussive touches requiring a striking of the key and the non-percussive requiring a pressing of the key (Suchoff 1971, 13).

- ▼▼▼ = sharp staccato (staccatissimo) implying a certain accentuation and stronger tone color
- · · = the regular staccato, whereby the sounding of the note ranges from the shortest in value to one-half the value of the note
- ⌒ = portamento [portato], whereby the tones must be permitted to sound almost up to half of the note value in conjunction with a certain special coloring
- τ τ τ = the symbol for half-shortening (the tones should sound longer than half of the note value)
- = the tenuto symbol above individual notes signifies that they must be held for their entire note value; when above each note of a group, that we must permit the notes to sound throughout their entire note value if possible, without linking them to one another
- = the well-known legato symbol, which we are also using, in the case of legato parts, for marking the phrase for lack of another symbol
- sf*** = the strongest accentuation
- Λ = accentuation still forceful enough
- > = weak accentuation
- = the tenuto symbol above the different tones of the legato parts signifies delicately emphasizing the tone by way of a different tone coloring

Figure 5.4: List of articulation markings given in the preface to the *Notenbüchlein für Anna Magdalena Bach* edition (Bach 1950)

The percussive touches - *staccatissimo*, *staccato*, *non-legato*, *legato* and *legatissimo* - fall on a spectrum with *staccatissimo* meaning the note should be played a quarter of its length, and *legatissimo* implying overholding the note so that it is held even while the next note is played.

Long slurs indicate legato, and Suchoff suggests that Bartók did not mean for the performer to shorten the last note of a legato phrase (Suchoff 1971, 15). *Legatissimo* would be indicated through writing the word in the score. The non-percussive touches are *tenuto*, *dotted tenuto*, *portamento*, *espressivo* and *dolce*. The *tenuto* and *dotted tenuto* are not struck as much as they are played with weight. *Portamenti* are similar to a *dotted tenuto*, except pressed without additional weight. *Espressivo* and *dolce* are modes of expression, and as such, require different technical approaches depending on their context (Suchoff 1971, 14). Further, Bartók organises accents into degrees of stress from *sff*, *sf* (*sforzato*), $\wedge$ (*marcatissimo*) and $>$ (*marcato*) (Suchoff 1971, 15). Gerou and Lusk organise these into articulations of force and duration.

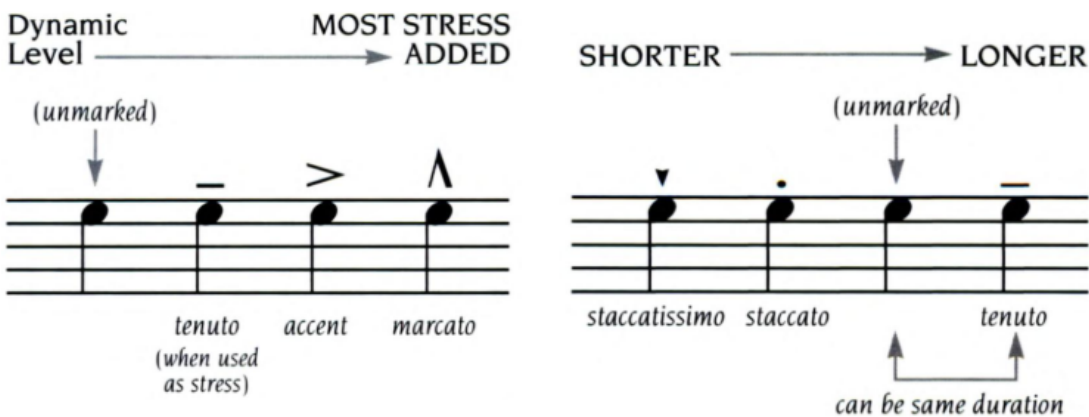


Figure 5.5: The common articulations of force and duration, excluding the permutations of *sforzandi* (Gerou and Lusk 1996, 27, 33)

These articulations can be combined, something both Bartók and Van Wyk do, although normally accents of either type would not be combined with accents of the same type. For instance, combining *staccato* and *staccatissimo* or *marcato* and *marcatissimo* would be redundant since both combinations suggest different degrees of the same thing (Gerou and Lusk 1996, 39). More often, accents of force and duration are combined, with the most common combinations being the ones seen in Figure 5.6. These articulations and combinations thereof can also appear under a slur which further alters how they might be understood or played.



Figure 5.6: The most common combinations of articulations (Gerou and Lusk 1996, 39).

Many of these signs call for changes and inflection in tone colour that are context specific and difficult to explain in a single way. For instance, the *tenuto* might affect both the duration and colouring of a note, or can be used by a composer to guide the inflection of a phrase. Similarly, the *portamento* sign indicates a specific duration, colour and technical approach but can also be used to suggest rubato. Van Wyk does this for instance in the example below. In bar 9, the *portamenti* chords might be stressed by separating them but also by slowing down slightly over these three notes. This idea is furthered by the *ritardando* in bar 8.

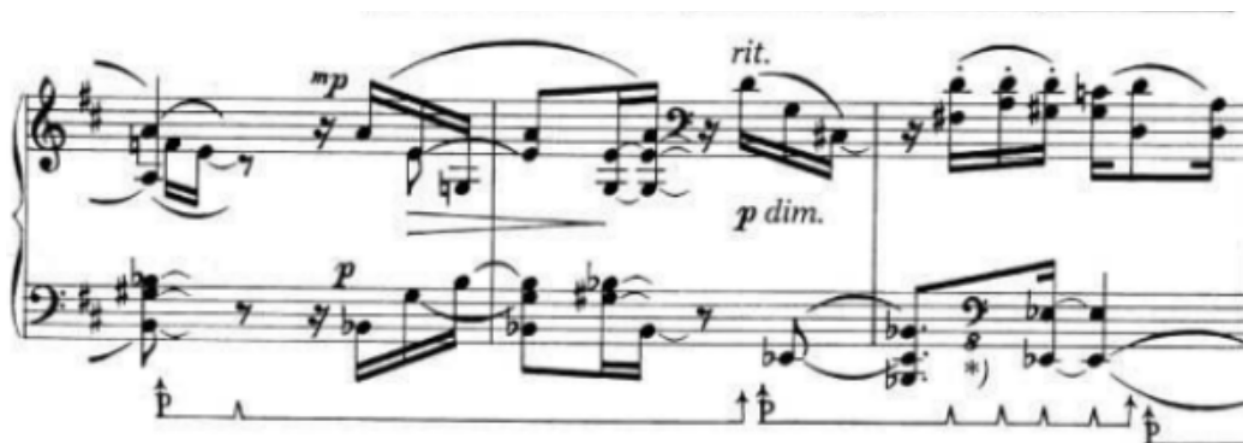


Figure 5.7: Bars 7-9 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

These signs therefore need to be interpreted by the performer based on the music in which they appear. After all, in the Van Wyk scores, we find every form of articulation, though some appear more rarely. For instance the *staccatissimo* wedge is found in only two bars of the ‘Capriccio’ from *Pastorale e Capriccio* and is used to instruct the player to play the notes on the first and third beats of the bar shorter than the notes on the second and fourth.



Figure 5.8: Bars 9-10 of the 'Capriccio' from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

Similarly, the *mezzo-staccato* combination of *staccato* and *tenuto* can only be found in the sixth movement of *Night Music*.

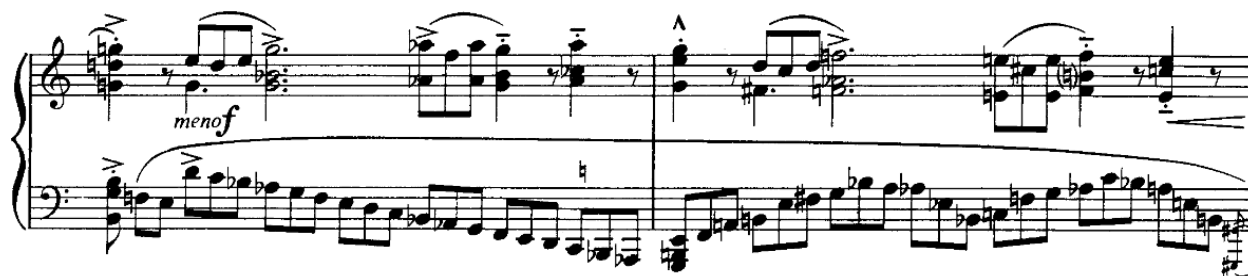


Figure 5.9: Bars 362-363 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

In Figure 5.10 below, we can see a sample of articulation markings that Van Wyk uses. For instance, we find both the *marcato* accent in bar 1, and the *sf* (*sforzando*) and *marcatissimo* accent (^) in combination in bar 2. While it might seem unnecessary for Van Wyk to combine the *sforzando* and *marcatissimo* accent in bar 2, there are possible interpretations of this combination. One is that Van Wyk wants the performer to play this chord with a slight agogic delay, emphasising it through consciously placing it later. Another way that this instruction might be interpreted is that this chord represents the climax of a phrase, implying that there is a *crescendo* from the first bar to the second. Van Wyk uses slurs to indicate both phrase length and instruct the pianist to play legato. The *portamenti* in bars 2, 3 and 4 are longer than the *staccati* outside of the slurs in bars 3 and 4. There are numerous *tenuti* which in this instance do not represent an expressive marking so much as an indication to the performer to underline the subdivisions within a bar.



Figure 5.10: Bars 1-4 of the Capriccio from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

As mentioned above, both Van Wyk and Bartók incorporate the characteristics of vocal music to their writing for solo piano. For Bartók this is done in his transcriptions of Hungarian folk melodies in which he seeks to accurately represent the flexible approach to the vocal line and how it conveyed the text (Fischer 2000, 436).



Figure 5.11: Bars 1-4 of 'The Peacock' from *3 Hungarian Folksongs from Csík* (Bartók 1981b)

Van Wyk would often use the setting of a text to music to inspire his piano writing. For example, the melodic material from the epilogue of *Night Music* was inspired by a setting he made of the poem *Ernste Stunde* by Rilke. These phrases lie within the tessitura of a mezzo-soprano and might suggest a transcription of an art-song. From a melodic standpoint, this melody contains numerous

examples of text painting. For instance, the word *weint* (cries or howls), appears three times with each successive appearance having a wider interval.

396
wer jetzt weint ir-gend-wo in der Welt,
400
oh-ne Grund weint in der Welt,
403
weint üb-er mich wer jetzt stirbt
409
ir-gend-wo in der Welt, oh-ne Grund stirbt
412
in der Welt: sieht mich an.

Figure 5.12: Melodic material from bars 396-414 of *Night Music* with the words from the poem *Ernstste Stunde* by Rilke written below (Wilding 2007, 61)

As can be seen in the full score, the stress of each successive *weint* is underlined through the use of articulation. The first *weint* appears as a two-note slur which usually indicates a diminuendo from the first to the second note in Van Wyk, which here is further suggested by the *tenuto* on the first note. The second *weint* has a *crescendo* between the two notes, again under a slur, and both are marked with a *tenuto*. The final one has a *crescendo* to a *forte* between the two notes, both of which are to be played *tenuto*.



Figure 5.13: Bars 319, 402 and 404 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

Further, the last three words of the first phrase in bars 398 and 399 - *in der Welt* - have no articulation markings other than being beneath a legato slur implying they receive less stress than the *tenuti* which appear on the other notes between bars 396 to 398. The implication is that the important phonemes in the sentence occur at the beginning and middle, and not the end. The word *stirbt* (dies) appears in bar 408 as a long note with an abrupt thinning in texture - instead of rippling arpeggios to be played *senza misura*, we find open fifths with a renewed rhythmic emphasis.



Figure 5.14: Bars 406-408 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

As can be seen from the above, Van Wyk uses a wide range of articulation to suggest a wide array of sonorities. These are instructive for the performer, and are used in order to not only exploit the possibilities of the piano but to suggest other forms of expression be they vocal or orchestral. In this way, Van Wyk wants the performer to be capable of playing the piano as if it has no hammers,

or play as if they are playing with a two-stone hammer, and be capable of realising all the possibilities in between.

Debussy

In the scores of Debussy, we find many of the same articulation markings used in innovative ways. Rushing notes that these markings convey information about the music and its realisation to the performer. Indeed, Marguerite Long declared that Debussy has left performers with all the information necessary they might need for an effective interpretation of his music, provided they can understand and execute his instructions (Rushing 2018, 15). There are three additional facets that we can consider relating to notation: articulation markings that clarify *texture*, that indicate *technical execution*, as well as *additional approaches* to notation that did not occur in our survey of Bartók.

Beginning with articulation and texture, Rushing notes that Debussy sometimes used the *tenuto* as a metrical stress instead of a melodic one, such as in the example below where he places the *tenuto* on the beats he wants subtly emphasised (Rushing 2018, 10-11).



Figure 5.15: Bars 14-18 of 'Les tierces alternees' from *Préludes, Livre 2* (Debussy 2011b)

Van Wyk uses a similar process in the 'Capriccio' of the *Pastorale e Capriccio* in Figure 5.10 above. Here the *tenuti* imply a subtle emphasis on the subdivisions of the bar and suggest that the performer delineates these groups into rhythmic cells of three or four beats.

In Debussy sometimes the *tenuto* can be applied to a single note - often a bass note - and have the implication of emphasising that note and lightening the surrounding texture (Rushing 2018, 11). This has the advantage of clarifying thick textures, and exploits the resonance of the lower register of the piano.



Figure 5.16: Bar 15 of 'Ce qu'a vu le Vent d'Ouest' from *Préludes, Livre I* (Debussy 2011a)

In the above figure, the bass part does not play a melodic role but by giving more weight to the bass notes and lightening the inner *staccato* quavers and upper triplet part, the thick texture can still have clarity.



Figure 5.17: Bars 85-86 of the Pastorale from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

Van Wyk employs the same technique in Figure 5.17, writing *tenuti* on the bass notes, and implying that the remaining semiquavers should all float over these reverberating G sharps. Van Wyk also makes use of *laissez vibrer* slurs on these notes which further suggests they should resonate within the texture, and encourages the performer to use a long pedal.

Debussy would sometimes use a variety of articulations - and therefore touches - simultaneously. In the below example, the chords are marked with *portamenti* while the melodic line is legato. This suggests a different technical approach for the chords and melody. In this case, the melody notes should be held longer and resound differently than the chords which should be lightly played.



Figure 5.18: Bars 1-3 of 'Danseuses de Delphes' from *Préludes, Livre I* (Debussy 2011a)

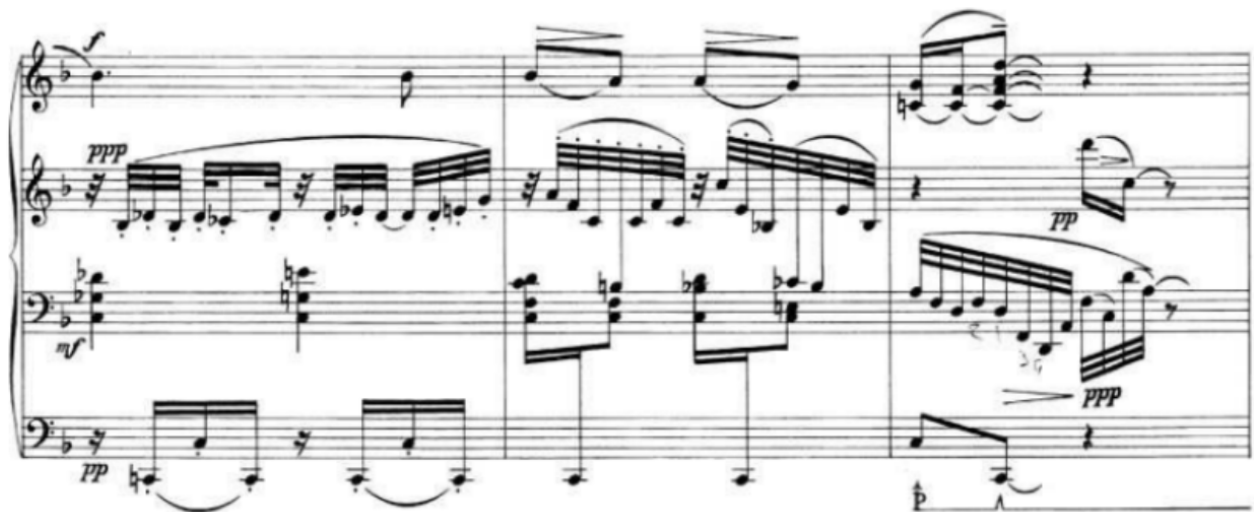


Figure 5.19: Bars 25-27 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

In the above excerpt from *Ricordanza* Van Wyk uses *portamenti* in both the inner voice and lowest voice to suggest a specific technical approach - the *staccati* are to be lightly played while the melodic line is to be connected either as two-note slurs in bar 26 or as a three note slur in bar 27. In my own practise, I found the inner and lowest voices are best played with a touch akin to

plucking the notes. This approach lightens the texture and allows the melody to predominate. Like Debussy, Van Wyk uses articulation in order to clarify what would otherwise be complex textures.

Rushing has suggested that because Debussy was a composer-pianist, the tactile element was a crucial part of his piano writing (Rushing 2018, iii). Because of this, we can infer that his articulation notation can have an impact on how to play his music. Indeed, his articulation can often be interpreted as technical advice. In the example below, Rushing notes that interpreting an accent on a short note in a quick tempo does not imply the weight of a *tenuto*, but suggests the performer ‘employ a quick attack, resulting in a gesture which is both an attack and a release, propelling the hand down an octave in time for the next chord’ (Rushing 2018, 16).



Figure 5.20: Bars 27-28 of ‘Le vent dans la plaine’ from *Préludes, Livre I* (Debussy 2011a)

Van Wyk uses accents in a similar way in chordal passages or those with large jumps. The use of accents encourages the performer to use the action of playing these notes as a springboard to shift quickly to another position. In other cases, the performer can use the residual momentum from playing an accent to play the subsequent chords or octaves. In the example in Figure 5.21, I would use the momentum of the first chord in the middle stave to propel me downwards toward the lower C in bar 58, and vice versa in bar 59. Similarly, the accents in the upper stave suggested that I play these with more energy on the chords on the fifth and ninth beats while the subsequent octaves would be played as a result of that movement.



Figure 5.21: Bars 58-59 of the Capriccio from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

As Rushing notes, Debussy is famous for his three stave notation - although examples of this writing can be found in other composers like Liszt, Albeniz, Chabrier, Rachmaninoff and Ravel (Rushing 2018, 22). Sometimes the use of multiple staves is necessary for practical reasons, being the easiest means of representing the music. In Figures 5.19 and 5.21 above, Van Wyk could have written both instances over two staves. However, as in the Debussy example below, Van Wyk uses this method of writing to clarify his textures. Visually separating the various textural parts often requires the performer to choreograph the music by deciding which hand will play which notes - a process which occurs less often in music notated in two staves. However, this is a way of notating music that allows both Debussy and Van Wyk to communicate their desired effect more clearly to the performer.

Figure 5.22: Bars 10-14 of 'Feuilles mortes' from *Préludes, Livre 2* (Debussy 2011b)

One major difference between the piano scores of Van Wyk and Debussy is that Debussy did not add pedalling instructions to his music, while Van Wyk did. However, an innovation that Rushing finds in Debussy is the use of long notes to indicate pedalling. By writing in a way where a note is unable to be played for its full length without the use of the sustaining pedal, Debussy is able to communicate his pedalling indications.



Figure 5.23: Bars 2-3 of 'Ce qu'a vu le Vent d'Ouest' from *Préludes, Livre I* (Debussy 2011a)

In the above example, the performer is not able to sustain the low F sharp and play the quavers marked *main gauche* in the upper stave without the use of the pedal. Similarly, in the 'Romanza' from the *Four Piano Pieces*, Van Wyk implies the use of the pedal in order to sustain the chords which cannot be held by the left hand owing to the melody in the lower register. The use of the pedal in both the above and below example requires care on the part of the pianist because sustaining notes should not come at the expense of a comprehensible musical texture.

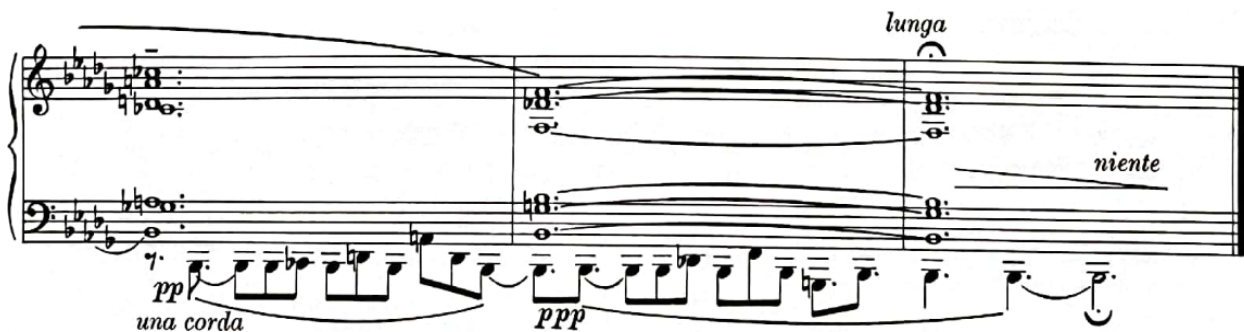


Figure 5.24: Bars 31-31 of the 'Romanza' from *Four Piano Pieces* (Van Wyk 1968)

While slurs are used by Van Wyk for a variety of reasons, the interpretation of these is informed by their historical application. Our understanding on the use of slurs can be traced back to various

historical treatises. CPE Bach, in his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, writes on the execution of slurs:

[n]otes which are to be played legato must be held for their full length. A slur is placed above them... Patterns of two and four slurred notes are played with a slight, scarcely noticeable increase of pressure on the first and third tones. The same applies to the first tones of groups of three notes. In other cases only the first of the slurred notes is played in this manner (Bach 1951, 154).

Türk echoes this in his *School of Clavier Playing*, writing that notes under a slur are connected, receive their full duration, and the first note is emphasised (quoted in Zeller 2021, 35). The shortest type of slur, between two notes, is usually played by giving weight to the first note and then lightening the second. Technically, this can be done by playing the first note with weight, and during the process of removing that weight, playing the second note which gives it a lightness. This can be done with a movement of the wrist or arm. Short groups of notes under a slur can be given a similar treatment with the last note of the group culminating in a subtle lift of the wrist or arm. There is often the implication that the first note of a short slur will be emphasised but this is dependent on musical context.



Figure 5.25: Bars 163-166 of the 'Toccata' from *Four Piano Pieces* (Van Wyk 1968)

Because there is a technique associated with short slurs involving giving weight to the first note and playing the subsequent notes using the momentum of the first, these signs often have a technical implication. In Figure 5.25, Van Wyk accents the first note of the slur groups at the start of bars 163, 164 and 165. The remaining groups are written without an accent. By executing these slurs through a downward motion, using the residual energy to play the subsequent notes and also

using this movement to springboard to the next notes, Van Wyk gives performers a clue to the technical realisation of these bars. Debussy uses the short slur in the same way to aid the performer with a proposed technical solution to his more virtuosic pieces (Rushing 2018, 18-19).

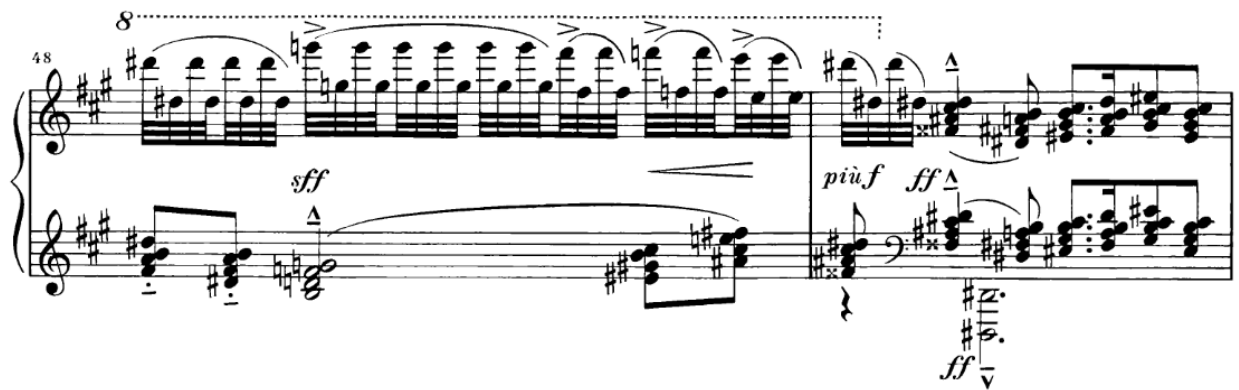


Figure 5.26: Bars 48-49 of 'Ce qu'a vu le Vent d'Ouest' from *Préludes, Livre I* (Debussy 2011a)

The broken octaves in bar 48 are marked legato but as the broken octaves descend in bar 48, Debussy uses the *marcato* accent. If the performer uses the stress-release approach described above, they will only need to aim for the first note of each short slur group, and can use these to move to the next. Debussy also adds a *tenuto* and *marcato* accent on the chord on the second crotchet beat of bar 49 which implies the performer should land on this chord, perhaps with a slight agogic delay (Rushing 2018, 18-19).

Like Debussy, Van Wyk had an in-depth knowledge of ways of writing for the piano that could enable ease of execution while creating musical effects. He uses the two-note slur technique as a means of facilitating technical execution such as in the passage below where the momentum of lifting the second note in each slur enables a rapid shift to the next. By staggering the hands so that there are notes being played on every quaver beat, Van Wyk is able to create a brilliant effect that is relatively simple to execute.



Figure 5.27: Bars 106-108 of the Capriccio from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

Although Debussy predicates his use of short slurs on the expected performance practice of these figures, Van Wyk is usually more specific with how the performer should approach these.



Figure 5.28: Bars 80-83 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

Here we see that Van Wyk uses precise articulation on each group of two-note slurs. The first slur between bars 80 and 81 has the first notes function as a grace note to the longer notes which are to be played louder. The slurs in bars 82 and 83 function as normal two-note slurs with the first notes receiving emphasis. In this instance, the last notes should not be shortened because of the hanging slur and longer note value. In my own practice, I generally treated unmarked two-note slurs and short slurs by subtly emphasising the first note and ensuring the last note is detached from what succeeds it.

Long slurs can be used for a variety of musical reasons including showing larger phrase units or suggesting the bowings of string instruments (Zeller 2021, 33). In the Romantic era it became common for slurs to extend over longer areas, and the idea that the first note of a slur was to be

emphasised became less pervasive. In addition to suggesting to the performer to play legato, long slurs suggest that the musical idea is a larger unit, while shorter slurs become a means of accentuating smaller groups. Using the correspondence between Brahms and Joachim as evidence, Brown argues that ‘Brahms regarded the shortening of the last note in [slurred] pairs as obligatory, whether or not a rest or *staccato* mark was indicated, and in a longer group as optional’ (Brown 1999, 233). In contrast, Kleczynski writes that ‘Chopin attached great importance to these [phrasing slurs], which by the way are not always correctly drawn in the greater part of his works; whenever this mark terminated he detached the hand after having diminished the tone’ (Eigeldinger 1986, 45). Suchoff writes that Bartók did not intend the final note of a long slur to be detached unless it was followed by a separating sign (a vertical line at the end of a phrase) or by a comma (Suchoff 1971, 15).

In Van Wyk, we find specificity. If he ends a phrase with a hanging slur, the last note is to be held for its full length or allowed to continue reverberating.

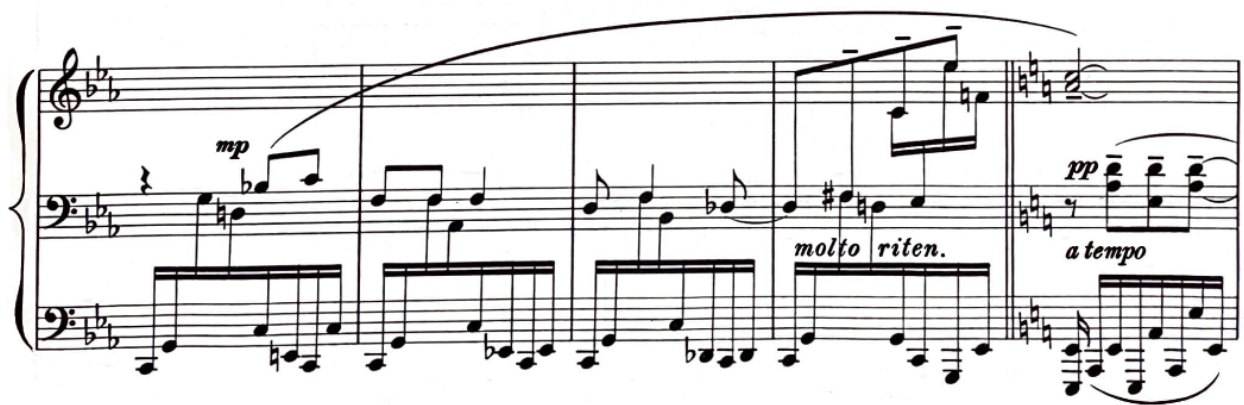


Figure 5.29: Bars 25-29 of the Pastorale from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

If he wants the final note shortened, it will be marked *staccato*.



Figure 5.30: Bars 5-6 of the Capriccio from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

Often, the final note of a slur will be the first note of the subsequent slur. This occurs often in Bartók, and Suchoff notes that the performer needs to demarcate that note as being the end of one phrase and the start of another (Suchoff 1971, 15).



Figure 5.31: Bars 352-353 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

I interpret an unarticulated end to a long slur in Van Wyk to mean that the phrases should be detached although this does not necessarily need to constitute a movement of the hand, wrist or arm.



Figure 5.32: Bars 43-46 of the Pastorale from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

In the above example, the legato slurs in the lower part require separation every bar while the upper part has slurs that extend over two bars.

The final significance of the long slur, which can be found with great proliferation in every Van Wyk piano work, is the implication that the performer should endeavour to play long phrases. Kleczynski wrote that Chopin instructed his students to avoid playing in short phrases, and his long slurs attest to this idea (Eigeldinger 1986, 43-44). In a similar vein, Van Wyk shows the breadth of his musical ideas by the length of slurs and though there is space for expression within them, he wants the performer to maintain a grander sense of structure.

Whether Van Wyk intended his scores to have a pedagogical aspect with the same authority that we can say Bartók did is unknown, although authors like Nothling believe he did (Nothling 2014, 2). However, what is evident is that the articulation markings he used are consistent with other pianist-composers writing in the twentieth century. There is a degree of sophistication in his use of articulation markings that are effective in communicating both technical solutions and a range of pianistic colours. In some instances, he uses articulation markings in a way that is often consistent with how a melody might be sung or text underlined. Van Wyk assumes the performer is conversant with these markings, and will use additional markings to clarify their execution when they deviate from standard practice. Furthermore, his use of long slurs communicates a desire for the performer to think in long phrases despite the abundance of detail within his musical textures.

The richness and specificity of these scores made the scores by Haydn, Schubert, Chopin and Schumann, which do not have as much detail, seem to hold more possibilities. It also made the notational details in those scores stand out more richly and profoundly. If one is to consider the various articulation markings played across the wide dynamic range that Van Wyk uses in his piano works, the performer would be required to have hundreds of touches at their disposal. This range of colours, separate from pianistic figuration and pedalling effects for instance, suggests that the extent to which a performer is able to realise these scores has a direct impact on their interpretation.

Chapter 6

6.1 Van Wyk, Schumann and Chopin

[Poetry] may make us from time to time a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves, and an evasion of the visible and. sensible world. But to say all this is only to say what you know already, if you have felt poetry and thought about your feelings (Eliot 1933, 155).

Schumann and Chopin played a part in how Van Wyk developed as a young composer. In his early life, before receiving composition lessons and because he played the piano, Van Wyk wrote imitative piano pieces and Schumann, Chopin and Brahms were among the composers he modelled himself after (Muller 2014, 215). The influence of Schumann is evident in his juvenilia which includes two movements of a sonatina, a nocturne and a scherzo which make up an *Album for the Young* for piano (Muller 2014, 682), a song for soprano and piano entitled *Evening Song* after Schumann, and *Dreaming*, subtitled ‘na ‘n lied van Robert Schumann,’ for piano (Muller 2014, 681). Chopin likewise features in the juvenilia with ballades, mazurkas, and a nocturne and berceuse for piano surviving (Muller 2014, 680-683). In a letter written in 1932, Van Wyk describes composing six nocturnes, writing ‘[t]he Nocturnes are progressing favourably, and the Chopin scent is becoming less and less obnoxious’ (Muller 2014, 143).

While the permeation of their influence is difficult to gauge within the context of his mature work, Van Wyk shares a commonality with Schumann and Chopin through their association with the poetic. A 1972 review of a Van Wyk performance was published under the banner ‘Poetical playing by tone poet’ (Ribeiro 2009, 40). Reviews of his playing emphasised the delicacy and intimacy of his playing. Critics also pointed to his emotional involvement, with one reviewer noting Van Wyk seemed ‘deeply affected by every thematic change of the composition’ (Ribeiro 2009, 40). These reviews remind one of the attention Chopin received as a pianist. Despite only making thirty concert appearances, Chopin became known as a sensitive and poetic pianist in his lifetime (Cortot 1951, 84). As a composer, Chopin was also associated with poetry. Liszt referred

to him as ‘the most ethereal, subtle, and delicate among our modern tone-poets’ (Liszt 1863, 7). Sobaskie suggests that for Chopin, poetry might have held an appeal due to its capacity for nuance, its ability to engage the imagination, stimulate expectation, and to suggest more than it connotes. He writes that although ‘one finds nothing analogous to syllabic patterns, rhyme schemes, alliteration or assonance, there is an unmistakable seductiveness to Chopin’s music, as well as a certain vocality, that is reminiscent of poetry’ (Sobaskie 2007, 26-27). For Schumann, the poetic was the common substance of all arts (Smith 2017, 135). He believed that music had the power to move the heart in all directions, but it was not the only art that could do so, writing ‘poetry can also do such great things’ (quoted in Watkins 2011, 90). Because of the volume of writing Schumann left behind, scholars like Watkins have been able to arrive at his conception of the poetic. I suggest that a relationship to the poetic is a key quality of the Van Wyk piano works and their performance practice.

Schumann composed in a unique way. His music is littered with hidden mottos and ciphers, poetic titles and literary allusions. Watkins suggests that Schumann left us scores that seem like ‘repositories of secrets, inviting interpretations which move from surface-level inscriptions to deeper meanings in need of reconstruction’ (Watkins 2011, 86). Schumann himself was sceptical of music that was purely denotative, writing that it is a mistake to assume composers write with the intent of expressing or describing a single phenomena (Watkins 2011, 97). As he wrote in his review of the *Symphonie Fantastique* by Berlioz:

Was überhaupt die schwierige Frage, wie weit die Instrumentalmusik in Darstellung von Gedanken und Begebenheiten gehen dürfe, anlangt, so sehen hier viele zu ängstlich. Man irrt sich gewiß, wenn man glaubt, die Componisten legten sich Feder und Papier in der elenden Absicht zurecht, dies oder jenes auszudrücken, zu schildern, zu malen. Doch schlage man zufällige Einschlüsse und Eindrücke von außen nicht zu gering an. Unbewußt neben der musikalischen Phantasie wirkt oft eine Idee sort, neben dem Ohre das Auge, und dieses, das immer tätige Organ, hält dann mitten unter den Klängen und Tönen gewisse Umrisse fest, die sich mit der vorrückenden Musik zu deutlichen Gestalten verdichten und ausbilden können. Je mehr nun der Musik verwandte Elemente die mit den Tönen erzeugten Gedanken oder Gebilde in sich tragen, von je poetischerem oder plastischerem Ausdrucke wird die Composition sein, - und je phantastischer oder schärfer der

Musiker überhaupt auffaßt, um so mehr wird sein Werk erheben oder ergreifen (Schumann 1914, 84).²⁰

For Schumann, there was a permeability between the senses, emotions, art forms and external phenomena. The composer uses both impressions and sensations to guide the act of composition through what Smith calls a ‘synthesis of poetic consciousness’ (Smith 2017, 149). This synthesis results in music that is capable of eliciting a multitude of responses in those who hear it. In this way, through the synthesis of poetic consciousness the composer is able to stimulate similar responses in others through music, forming a cycle. Indeed, Schumann believed that tones which were created with the most specific thoughts are the most meaningful and capable of evoking responses from listeners (Smith 2017, 150).

Of the three composers, Chopin left the least evidence of the poetic inspirations and ideas that might have informed his compositions. Writing about this situation, Cortot says:

The disappointment one may feel at not having had the benefit of some revealing hint as to the source of his inspiration or the correct interpretation of his work should not spur us on in a search for the ideology of an art so obviously full to overflowing with the language of the spirit, but rather serve to remind us of the words with which Chopin rejected a title that illustrated the idea contained in one of the Nocturnes: “No, it is better to let them find that out for themselves” (Cortot 1951, 74).

Despite this, an example of a poetic listener response can be found in the private titles that Cortot gave to the Chopin *Préludes*. These include ‘Des souvenirs délicieux flottent comme un parfum à travers la mémoire...’²¹ for the seventh *Prélude*, and ‘La neige tombe, le vent hurle, la tempête fait

²⁰ Many people get far too worked up over this thorny question of how far instrumental music ought to go in representing thoughts and events. They do indeed delude themselves if they imagine that composers take up paper and pen with no more worthy intent than of expressing or depicting or portraying something or other. All the same, let us not belittle the effect of random external influences and impressions. Often when the musical imagination is at work, an idea [Idee] acts upon it unbeknownst. Often the ear is influenced by the eye - and that ever-alert organ, amidst the world of noises and musical sounds, holds constant certain visual profiles which can transform themselves and develop into audible contours as the music takes shape. The more that elements related to music embody ideas or images manifested in the notes, the more poetic or graphic will the composition be; - and the more imaginatively and acutely the composer can observe all that goes on around him, the more sublime and exalted will his work be (translated by Bent 1994, 193).

²¹ Delicious recollections drift like a perfume across the memory... (my translation).

rage; mais en mon triste coeur, l'orage est plus terrible encore'²² for the eighth (quoted in Mullen 2004, 700). For Mullen, these titles do not represent an attempt to apply a programme to these works or reflections on his psyche, but instead 'a hand outstretched to touch an unnameable thing' (Mullen 2004, 700). In other words, the poetic inspiration behind the composition might be thought of as inspiring a similar poetic impression in the listener and performer.

In Van Wyk, there are a considerable number of musical and non-musical influences that inspired the composition of *Night Music*, for instance. It began life as a series of Nocturnes, inviting comparison with Chopin, and the coda is a wordless setting of the Rilke poem *Ernste Stunde*. Additionally, Grové notes that the sketches for *Night Music* contain personal notes like those one might find in a diary (Grové 2008, 10). He also points out similarities between the second nocturne and the *Sonetto 123 del Petrarca* by Liszt (Grové 2008). The piece was dedicated to the memory of his friend and pianist, Noel Mewton Wood, who had committed suicide (Muller 2014, 106). On one level, this piece is a memorial not unlike the Fantasy in C major, Op. 17 that Schumann wrote as a monument to Beethoven (Marston 1991, 247). In addition to this, Van Wyk spoke about wanting *Night Music* to be a 'comprehensive portrayal of night [...] – to speak of its beauty, mystery and fearfulness, and to show night as the prototype of love, sleep and death' (quoted in Wilding 2007, 153). Van Wyk was reluctant to share this inspiration, writing:

I am less eager to write about the "meaning" of the work. Mendelssohn spoke the truest word about "poetic" illustration: words cannot explain music because they are too definite: the particular power of music is that it says different things to different people: programmatic elucidation limits this power (quoted in Wilding 2007, 153).

In other words, the poetic inspiration for the work was wide-ranging and connotative. Furthermore, *Night Music* itself inspired similarly vivid responses from listeners, as can be seen in the reviews discussed in Chapter 4.

²² The snow falls, the wind howls, the tempest is wild; but in my sad heart the storm is even more terrible (my translation).

Schumann also saw innovation as another facet of the poetic in music, writing music should have ‘novelty everywhere, in the details as in the whole’ (Watkins 2011, 91). Van Wyk must have held similar principles because in all of the piano works one finds abundant creative touches and very little repetition. Van Wyk creates unique sounds and textures through his use of articulation, register and pedalling in addition to his characteristic keyboard writing. His melodies are not subject to repetition or sequence, but instead transformed his technique of ‘developing variation’ (Wilding 2007, 135), whereby fragments of his melodies are developed and fused with new melodic material. On a larger scale, Wilding writes that ‘Van Wyk’s non-repetitive approach to phrases and melodies is replicated by the non-repetitive character of larger formal sections’ (Wilding 2007, 138). For instance, the repeating A sections in his ternary forms, such as the ‘Pastorale’ or ‘Dumka’ are significantly modified when they return. As Van Wyk developed as a composer there was less drastic contrast between formal sections leading to an ambiguity between sectional or continuous music (Wilding 2007, 138-139). Likewise, in his sonata form movements, there is a similar blurring of lines between development, recapitulation and coda with very short recapitulations, highlighting the binary aspect of sonata form (Wilding 2007, 139).

For all three composers, the music of the past was an important source of inspiration. Schumann believed that JS Bach was the ‘most significant source for contemporary composers, one which, like a healthy mountain spring, is inexhaustible’ (Watkins 2011, 94). As he wrote in 1854, ‘[w]iederum fiel mir ein, wie man mit Bach doch niemals fertig, wie er immer tiefer wird, je mehr man ihn hört’ (Schumann 1914, 492).²³ Chopin also revered Bach, regarding *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* as ‘his daily bread’ (Eigeldinger 1986, 135). It was this music he practiced to prepare for his concerts and not his own compositions (Eigeldinger 1986, 135-136). Indeed, he told his student Camille Dubois to ‘toujours travailler Bach - ce sera votre meilleur moyen de progresser’ (quoted in Eigeldinger 1986, 61).²⁴

In addition to his admiration of Bach, Van Wyk was also a proponent of studying Renaissance polyphony. For him, the solutions to many compositional problems were to be found in the music

²³ Once again it occurred to me how one is never finished with Bach, how he becomes ever deeper the more one listens to him (my translation).

²⁴ [P]ractice Bach constantly - this will be your best means to make progress (my translation).

of the past. In order to effectively modulate, one could study the works of Schubert. The problem of sustaining a composition across a larger formal plan and avoiding perfect cadences could be found in the music of Wagner. Brahms can help guide the young composer to hide the compositional seams by showing how to make main figures of one section into subsidiary figures in the next (Van Wyk 1958, n.p.). For Van Wyk, a composer needed a thorough knowledge of harmony, counterpoint and orchestration informed by the music of the past.

By invoking JS Bach as the main primeval source, Watkins argues that on one hand, Schumann was seeking to create a view of evolution based on forces internal to music. On the other hand, he was encouraging a return to the primeval origins of music and a 'higher poetic phraseology', that is to say an aperiodic one (Watkins 2011, 94-95). Both Schumann, and later Wagner, felt music would become a living form when liberated from the mechanism of a regular beat (Watkins 2011, 95). Van Wyk echoed this sentiment when extolling the benefits of studying sixteenth century polyphony, writing:

[It] is the most splendid discipline and, if it teaches you nothing else, it will show what beauty and fluidity of line means; it will teach you a lot about texture and you should enjoy its polyrhythms – wonderful it is to be freed from the tyrannies of the bar line and of a fixed metre! (Van Wyk 1958, n.p.).

There is a tendency toward both polyphony and rhythmic freedom in the piano works. Van Wyk often uses indications to direct the performer toward a flexible approach to rhythm and tempo. Eigeldinger suggests that Chopin based his rubato on music from the past writing that, 'his particular conception of rubato is vocal and Baroque in essence, in that it seeks, wherever apt, to release the melodic part from all metrical fetters and let it expand with the perfect freedom of inflection found in singing' (Eigeldinger 1986, 15). Van Wyk even looks toward musical prosody in pieces like the 'Rondo desolato' from *Tristia*, where, as he describes in his programme notes in Chapter 4, there is in effect no strict tempo.

For Schumann, connecting with the music of the past and fusing the poetic influences through a process of synesthesia ultimately leads an artist down a path to the unknown regions of the human

soul, where concepts and feelings commingle and intertwine (Watkins 2011, 98). This presages the concept of the subconscious, which is where Van Wyk believed his compositional ideas were formed (Muller 2014, 138). For Van Wyk, the act of composition had a similar degree of mutability between different modes of poetic consciousness as it did for Schumann, and also came from a similarly unknowable place.

In summary, the key aspects of poetic music are a tendency toward rhythmic freedom, nuance and suggestion, a profusion of influences, and innovation and variety. A composer might use any number of influences, including subconscious ones, in order to imbue their music with a significance that is thought to excite new inspirations in the listener. In Van Wyk, we find all the characteristics of poetic music utilised by Schumann and Chopin, including his use of synthesis of poetic consciousness, music of the past, and his search for originality and freedom. However, these are tempered by the changes in performance practice and the compositional landscape of the twentieth-century. Although it has been suggested that Van Wyk played the piano in an ‘anachronistically Romantic manner’ (Ribeiro 2009, 18), his piano music belongs to the twentieth century. Many of the piano works are deeply poetic, but all of them are constructed using a musical language far removed from Schumann and Chopin. Indeed, Pienaar is reluctant to label Van Wyk as a strictly poetic composer because he views him also as a ‘technical composer’ (Muller & Pienaar 2020, 69).

In my own practice, I found the Van Wyk works to be poetic. His music is expressive, and the performer is invited to accentuate its nuances and details through their own interpretations of it. The technical side of his writing as seen in the formal construction of the music itself, suggests that all of these nuances should function within a larger form. The performer walks a fine line between emphasising expressive moments and allowing the form of the music to take shape. Just as Chopin and Schumann did before him, Van Wyk wrote music with poetic depth which often affects and inspires listeners. But as Smith points out, this is mediated by the body of the performer (Smith 2017, 177). By simultaneously underlining the expressive nuances through both articulation and accentuation, and by being aware of the context of the music, the performer is best able to play this music as it was conceived and constructed.

6.2 Accentuation

Chopin had a horror of all exaggerated accentuation, which, in his opinion, took away the poetry from playing and gave it a sort of dry pedantry (Eigeldinger 1986, 54).

If we think of articulation markings as the most detailed aspect of a score, in some cases only applying to one note within a musical phrase, moments of accentuation might be thought of as the next level of music detail which correspond to the syntactic level of the use of the score. At this stage, the performer gives greater consideration to musical elements such as structure, harmony and phrasing, moving toward the artistic stage (Marín, Echeverría and Hallam 2012, 199). Some authors refer to moments of accentuation as accents, but for the purpose of distinguishing these from the *marcato* accents mentioned in the previous chapter, the word accentuation will be used. They are defined by Parncutt as salient events in music that attract the attention of the listener (Parncutt 2003, 164). Roeder posits that accentuations are important time-points in music that are the culmination of both preceding and succeeding contextual processes (Roeder 1995, 4). Often, accentuation is considered to be a vehicle for expression and how performers realise or underline these moments are considered an important aspect of an expressive performance.

One of the most comprehensive and influential discussions of accentuation can be found in the book *The Teaching of Artur Schnabel* by Wolff. In it, Wolff explains how Schnabel approached accentuation - in this book referred to as articulation - from a pedagogical and artistic point of view (Wolff 1972). For Schnabel, accentuation refers to the ‘clarification of musical detail by any means available to the performer such as length, loudness, timing, etc. [Accentuation] is a most subtle element in performance, too subtle, most of the time, to be precisely indicated in the score’ (Wolff 1972, 26). Accentuation is guided by performance tradition because ‘[u]nwritten rules govern the subtle nuances of dynamics and rhythm. There are no symbols that would make notation of these subtleties possible, and even if there were, the composer would risk a distortion in the total unity of the work by notating them’ (Wolff 1972, 26). The four categories of accentuation are melodic, harmonic, metric and rhythmic accentuation, and for each there are tools a performer can use to underline these elements of music.

These forms of accentuation are succinctly explained by Parncutt, who points out that the relationship between accentuation and expression is complex enough to account for the large variety of interpretive approaches to expressive piano playing. An integral part of any acoustic communication, accentuations help listeners to decode individual acoustic events. Parncutt distinguishes between immanent accentuations which are within the score, and performed accentuations which are added by the performer (Parncutt 2003, 164). He begins with a table of accentuations:

	IMMANENT ACCENTUATIONS	PERFORMED ACCENTUATIONS
Time	Grouping Metrical	Onset time (agogic) Duration (articulation) Amplitude envelope
Pitch	Melodic (contour) Harmonic Reductional	Intonation
Loudness	Dynamic	Stress
Timbre	Instrumentation Orchestration	Colouration

Table 6.1: Table of accentuations (Parncutt 2003, 164)

Beginning with the immanent accentuations, grouping accentuations occur at the beginning and ends of groups of notes, while metrical accentuations occur on important beats. Melodic accentuation refers to the apex or nadir of a group of notes, or in other cases, a large jump between one note to the next. Harmonic accentuations occur with prominent changes in harmony. Their strength generally depends on the degree of dissonance or expectedness of the harmony. Reductional accentuations borrow from the analytical model devised by Schenker and refer to important notes within larger musical structures. Dynamic accentuation is often indicated by the composer and refers to volume and texture. Instrumentation and orchestration applies to chamber music and orchestral music respectively, which are outside the remit of this study. For the piano, there are subtle methods of changing timbre such as through the use of pedalling, articulation and the technical approach to producing sound (Parncutt 2003).

Performed accentuations are the prerogative of the performer and are used in the service of underlining immanent accentuations, though they can be used anywhere. In solo piano music, accentuations can be shown by altering the onset time of a musical event - known as an agogic accentuation. By placing a note or chord slightly later than expected, the performer communicates that this event is accentuated. Similarly, the offset time can be altered, that is to say the duration of a note or group of notes can be altered. Many forms of articulation affect the offset time of notes with *staccatissimo* notes being made much shorter while *legatissimo* means the notes are overheld. Intonation refers to the changes in tuning a performer might use which does not apply in solo piano music. Stress again refers to how loud or softly notes are played, especially relative to the preceding and succeeding notes. Stress also accounts for the intensity or volume of notes in dynamic ranges, or through the process of increasing or decreasing volume. Colouration refers to the changes in piano colour mentioned above, as well as being a term for the general emotional or expressive colours a pianist seeks to achieve by combining all of the above methods (Parncutt 2003).

Both immanent and performed accentuations have a direct correlation to the primary perceptual aspects of sound: time, pitch, loudness and timbre. Through this model, Parncutt suggests that the roles of the composer and performer are interwoven, and the role of the performer in communicating these accentuations is pivotal but subtle. Performed accentuations must occur within the limits of time, pitch, loudness and timbre or they risk becoming exaggerated, mannered or unstructured. At the same time, not all immanent accentuations will be obvious to the listener and their salience is hierarchical, although the hierarchies at play are dynamic and changeable. One shortfall of these categories is that any accentuation is often affected by other musical parameters. For instance, any performed accentuation taking place within the context of a specific texture or dynamic range will be affected by those considerations.

Van Wyk will sometimes direct the performer to make choices regarding accentuation through his use of articulation and expression markings. For instance, he will often use articulation to suggest a specific rendering of a phrase which might be otherwise accentuated. Throughout the following discussion of the various forms of accentuation, we can see how these occur in complex ways in

Van Wyk and their treatment is often novel and subtle. Through considering how the performer might underline immanent accentuations, it is possible to observe trends within their realisation.

Grouping Accentuations

Grouping accentuations correspond to the beginning and ends of groups of notes. These are hierarchical - the most important grouping accentuations will be the beginning of the piece and the end, then the start and end of each section, sub-section, phrase and sub-phrase (Parncutt 2003, 173). Often, Van Wyk begins pieces unobtrusively.



Figure 6.1: Bars 1-3 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

Despite being a highly salient grouping accent, the beginning here is marked *ppp* and obscured by the use of both the *una corda* and sustaining pedals. The effect is textural and static, and the goal of my practice was to render the beginning of the piece ambiguous as if it was a continuation of the silence preceding the movement as opposed to a true beginning.

Van Wyk displays a wide range of creativity when it comes to grouping formal sections, both within pieces and between movements of his larger works. Some of these groupings are obvious while others are done with greater subtlety. Giving advice to a young Graham Newcater, Van Wyk suggests several ‘dodges’ that enable a composer to sustain music for a movement or larger structure and bridge the gaps between structural sections. He advises the young composer to avoid

‘showing the seams’, and his wide ranging approach to obscuring or emphasising these structural accentuations speaks to this preoccupation (Van Wyk 1958, n.p.). For instance, between the opening and second movements of *Night Music*, Van Wyk oscillates between the notes C and B, ending on a long B. This is the softest point of a diminuendo, and the sonority is left to hang before the next movement begins again *pianissimo* and *sotto voce*.

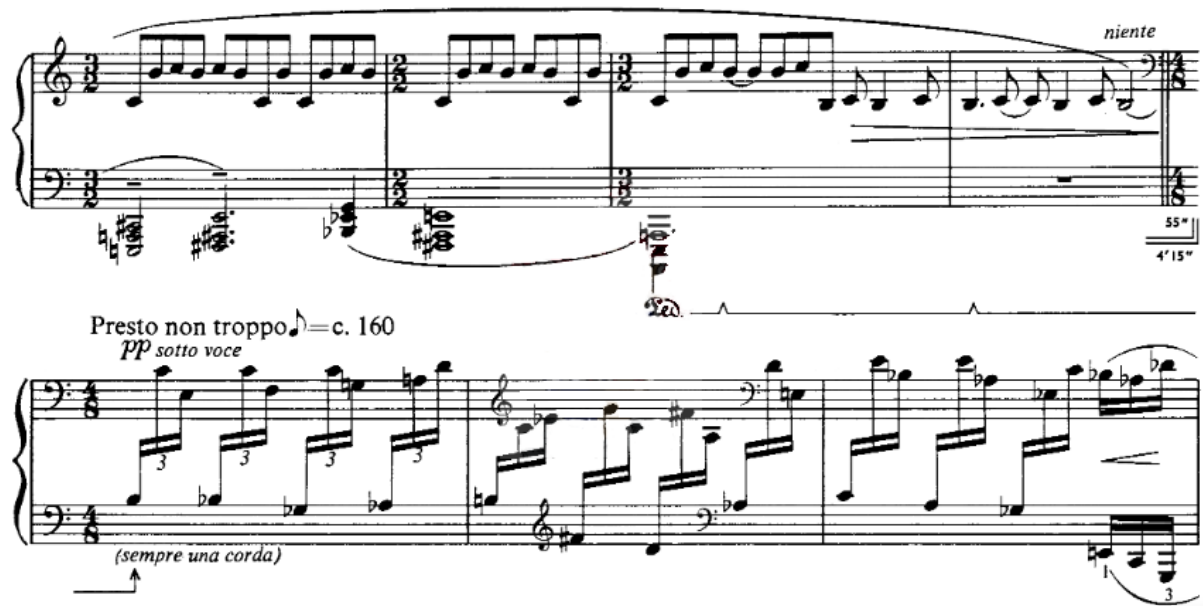


Figure 6.2: Bars 32-38 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

Van Wyk similarly obscures or underlines the grouping accentuations of phrases and sub-phrases. He often elides phrases or begins them in ways that are problematic for a performer to bring out in a meaningful way such as in the Pastorale from *Pastorale e Capriccio*:



Figure 6.3: Bars 85-88 of the Pastorale from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

Here the phrases overlap in ways that are difficult to show. The upper phrase in bar 86 terminates after two notes in bar 87. Here the new phrase cannot be shown agogically because there is a phrase in the bass which cannot be interfered with rhythmically. This means the E which begins the phrase in bar 87 must be played with a different colour. In my practice I found the best solution was to start this phrase louder than the preceding one, and follow this with a diminuendo so that the quaver melody notes in the lower part could come through the texture. Van Wyk further problematises the grouping accentuation by adding *tenuti* to the last three notes of the phrase. Again here, the inflections in the upper voice cannot interfere with the melodic line in the middle register, and so rubato is not possible. Instead Van Wyk is guiding the performer to stress these notes.

These types of grouping subtleties abound in Van Wyk, and resulted in me carefully considering how to show the beginning and termination of these phrases. Some instances can be solved by means of articulation - especially by ensuring that the last note of the preceding phrase is separate from the first of the next. Others can be solved by adjusting the dynamic intensity - for instance by becoming softer at the end of one phrase or beginning a new phrase at a different dynamic level. Lastly, some phrases can be shown by rhythmic inflection, ending one phrase by slowing down and resuming the speed in the next to give an example. Again, because the long slur is one of the most predominant articulation markings Van Wyk uses, the treatment of this requires consideration

by the performer and asks a great deal of their artistry. This can apply to the treatment of section breaks and how to begin or end a piece as well.

Metrical Accentuations

Metrical accentuations correspond to important beats and occur in music with a consistent tempo or music with metrical rhythmic patterns. Parncutt notes that in contrast to other accentuations which are common in speech forms, metrical accentuations are confined to music, recited poetry or rap which conform to these regular rhythmic patterns (Parncutt 2003, 170-171). They also have a correlation to dance and regular bodily movement. In earlier classical music such as the music of Mozart or Beethoven, though metrical intricacies were not uncommon, metre was often consistent for the duration of a piece and divergences from it would stand out as more salient metrical accentuations. The strong beats in a bar - especially the first - stand out as metrically important.

In the music of Van Wyk, one of the cornerstones especially of his more expressive pieces is rhythmic flexibility. He indicates rubato in a number of ways, including the use of *tenuti*, *portamenti*, and expressive markings like *ritardando*, *accelerando* and *sempre rubato*. Metre is often hidden and obscured so that pieces have an improvisational or *recitativo* effect.



Figure 6.4: Bars 16-20 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

Here metre is obscured by the *accelerando* and *ritardando* in bar 16. The final note of that bar followed by a change in time signature in bar 17 is more akin to a fermata on the final note of bar 16 than a true metrical accentuation. The tempo change in bar 18 also has the effect of obscuring the metre. Further, the entry of the subsequent phrase on the last quaver beat of bar 19 followed by another change of time signature again gives the music both a static yet extemporaneous quality. In my own practice, I tried to observe all the correct rhythmical values of this section of *Night Music* because it has a rhythmical structure. From that basis, the expressive gestures such as the aspiring two-note slur effect suggested by the *tenuti* in bar 18 or the melodic sub-phrase in bar 19 can be given expressive treatment. Furthermore, the phrase between bars 16 and 19 is motivically important to the composition as a whole, and so, requires greater intervention from the performer owing to its significance.

When Van Wyk uses more explicit metrical accentuations, it often happens in complex ways with metrical shifts in irregular time signatures being common. Although Nothling makes the assertion

that '[i]n general the pianist does not have to deal with complicated rhythmic patterns during the *Pastorale* or *Capriccio*' (Nothling 2014, 35), there is a great deal of complicated metrical accentuation in both.



Figure 6.5: Bars 1-4 of the Capriccio from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

I agree that from a visual point of view, the metrical accents are regular and uncomplicated. From a cursory glance, the first six bars are consistently subdivided into the grouping 4 + 4 + 3. The use of only crotchets and minims further suggests the rhythm is possible to follow. Indeed for the first ten bars, the use of groups of four and three remains consistent although they are reordered into 4 + 3 + 4 in bar 7. However, the execution of this is once again problematised by how Van Wyk writes within this metre. In the first bar, the *tenuti* in the right hand occur in the important metrical places. The second *tenuto* in the left hand on the sixth beat of the bar is a reminder that Van Wyk still wants the performer to follow the melodic line and emphasise the interval of a minor seventh in the lower part. The metre is obscured at the start of the second bar. The first phrase terminates on the first beat of the second bar, weakening the impact of that downbeat because of the phrase contour and articulation of the last chord. Van Wyk then accents the second beat of the bar and more strongly accents the third. The *tenuto* on the fifth and ninth beats then re-establish order. Although the metre looks self-evident, in performance, the first phrase suggests that a bar is 12

beats, followed by two punchy accents (the second and third beats of the second bar). The second accent appears to be the start of a two beat metrical group, followed by a group of four and then five beats.



Figure 6.6: Annotation of bars 1-4 of the Capriccio from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

Thus the effect of the first three bars is not $4 + 4 + 3 \mid 4 + 4 + 3 \mid 4 + 4 + 3$ but rather $4 + 4 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 4 + 5 + 2 + 4 + 3$ (considering the phrase in bar 2 terminates on the second beat of bar 3). In my own practice, though it was important to maintain the inner feel of the groups as they appear (i.e. $4 + 4 + 3$) I also had to accentuate these phrases correctly. The bodily effect of this for the performer is more closely aligned with the complex formula because of the experience of accentuating these phrases in line with their notation and musical contours.

I would argue that Van Wyk has a sophisticated approach to rhythm and metre. He can run the gamut from expressive writing that has an arrhythmic and ametrical effect to complex and overlapping metrical accentuations. I disagree with Nothling who asserts that Van Wyk has a ‘conservative approach to rhythm’ (Nothling 2014, iii), finding that the metrical aspect of his compositions is obscured and complicated by both his expressive indications and articulatory detail. Though it is important to be aware of the underlying metrical structures, the bodily feel of

rhythmic flexibility or overlapping phrases, or the energy needed to bring out expressive details like accents or other articulations means the metrical feel of his music is seldom straightforward.

Melodic Accentuations

Melodic accentuations are a widely discussed form of accentuation owing to the fact that their presence in music is easily distinguished while others like harmonic or timbral accentuations might not be evident to all listeners. We understand melodic accentuations because in many forms of verbal communication, certain phonemes are given stress, or are of higher pitch (Parncutt 2003, 166). The application of these accentuations has been used by scholars like Roeder to suggest that moments of climactic accentuation can serve to structure the shaping of time in music that has no pitch or metrical hierarchies, such as *Sequenza* [I] by Berio (Roeder 1995). These accentuations can be divided into turns and skips. Turns refer to peaks or valleys in a group of pitches, while skips are disjunct intervals between consecutive notes (Parncutt 2003, 166). The strength, or salience, of these accentuations can be affected by a number of factors and conditions. According to Roeder, the greater the time spent leading to or away from a melodic accentuation, the greater the salience. Likewise, the further a melodic peak is from the notes preceding or following it, the greater the weight (Roeder 1995, 6). Furthermore, if a melodic accentuation arrives earlier or later than it is expected based on stylistic convention or the musical material that precedes it, it stands out more (Bisesi and Parncutt 2011, 285).

Parncutt notes that in polyphonic piano music, the uppermost and lowest voices tend to stand out ahead of the inner voices. This is partly because the inner voices are masked on both sides while the upper voice has nothing above it and the lower voice has nothing below it. In the upper voice, the melodic peaks are more strongly accentuated while in the lower voice, the valleys are (Parncutt 2003, 166). In Van Wyk, where the music often consists of several simultaneous musical lines, the melodic accentuations are treated with characteristic creativity. Although, as May notes, ‘his melodic ideas evolve slowly, often around a central pedal’ (May 2001, n.p.), Van Wyk lavishes care upon each musical strand.

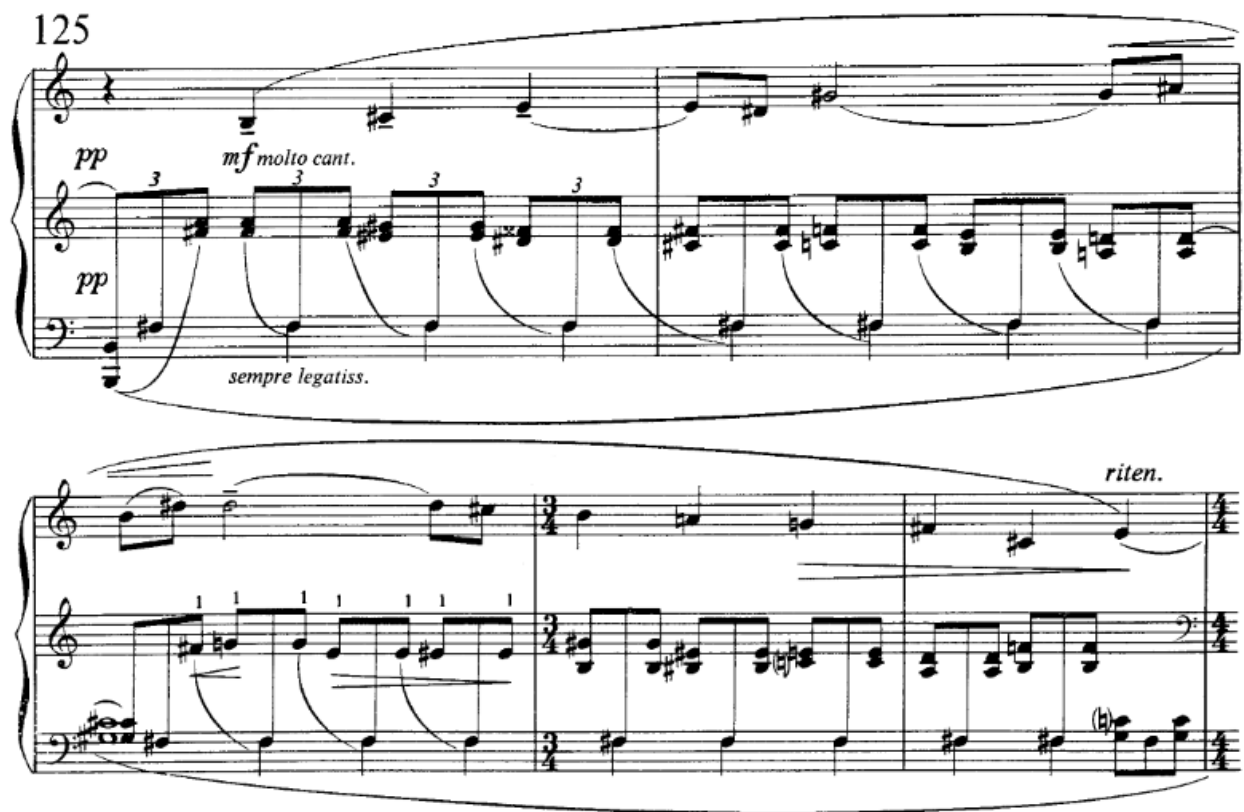


Figure 6.7: Bars 125-129 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

The above example, one of the lush melodies Van Wyk wrote, is polyphonically conceived insofar as there is a legato upper line, an inner voice consisting of dyads and a droning bass note. Because the climactic turn of the melody is preceded by an ascent lasting two bars, the repeated D sharp is a weighty melodic accentuation. It corresponds to the peak of the *crescendo* which occurs in the inner voice simultaneously. This was supported in my own practice by a search for an appropriately rich sound in both the inner and upper voice that would be intensely expressive without being percussive.

The shaping of melodic lines is one of the central remits of the pianist. The technical and the aural components go hand in hand when one is attempting to produce a *cantabile* sound. According to the *bel canto* tradition, good legato involves an attempt to connect notes across different registers with a beautiful tone (Zeller 2021, 26). For a pianist, creating a *legato* line presents two issues: control of the keys and intelligently planning the shape of a phrase. The speed of the descent of the keys must be controlled. Furthermore, phrases must be treated dynamically so that they are

moving to or from points of climax. These climactic timepoints often correspond to moments of melodic accentuation. Additionally, the nature of the way the piano generates sound through the striking of a hammer on a string means notes are only ever capable of decaying. Because of this, the shaping of melodic lines requires careful attention on the part of the pianist.

Harmonic Accentuation

Harmonic accentuation refers to harmonic events that attract attention. Parncutt distinguishes between harmonic changes which occur in a progression, and harmonic dissonances which occur in vertical structures (Parncutt 2003, 168). The distance between a harmonic change and its context, and the amount of dissonance in a given vertical structure affect the strength of these accentuations. Harmonic accentuations also include appoggiaturas because they are a dissonant tone in a vertical harmony (Bisesi and Parncutt 2011, 285). This is not to suggest that dissonance is the primary determinant in the salience of these accents - sometimes consonant harmonies which occur unexpectedly or are unrelated to the previous harmony can warrant strong accentuation. Van Wyk makes extensive use of additional notes in his harmonic structures, and often these progressions are the result of voice leading or sequential progressions. In my own analytical activities, as well as through the comprehensive analyses provided by Wilding (2007), it became clear that while there are many ways to account for these harmonic changes and dissonances, in practice, harmonic change is considered perceptually.

Often the harmonic accentuations that would be highlighted corresponded to bass movements. Van Wyk often makes use of pedal points to suggest harmonic progressions, especially in his later works. For instance, despite the thickness of the writing in Figure 6.8, the moments of harmonic accentuation relate to the bass movement. The introduction of the C pedal point in bar 54 - itself moving from the G in the preceding bar - the D pedal which is followed by a B flat pedal note in bar 56, and the moving baseline in bar 57 consisting of A flat to E flat to G flat represent the salient points of harmonic change.



Figure 6.8: Bars 53-59 of the 'Rondo desolato' from *Tristia* (Van Wyk 1984b)

Despite the presence of jarring dissonances in *Night Music*, one of the most striking harmonic accentuations occurs between bars 396 and 397, as can be seen in the figure below. The return of A major, the enharmonic major of the home key of the piece, is unequivocally presented in bar 397. This moment of tonal writing stands out in contrast with the generally dissonant and colouristic harmonic changes that Van Wyk writes previously.



Figure 6.9: Bars 394-397 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

The harmonic changes in the below passage stand out in the context of the movement they come from. This is because they are much thicker in texture than the previous musical texture and the harmonic changes are therefore more fully expressed. The final chord in bar 159 stands out because it is the resolution of a cadence, and because of the expressive colouring it has.



Figure 6.10: Bars 158-160 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

In Parncutt, one gets the sense that the greater the levels of dissonance such as those that occur in the tonic six-four chord or dominant seventh in standard progressions would be the moments of biggest harmonic accentuation. However, in practice, often the resolution of a harmonic progression stands out with greater salience, often due to the length of the preceding contextual

processes. In Van Wyk, harmonic accentuation occurs at moments of extreme dissonance or consonance and the performer is guided by his use of pedal points which intimate toward conventional harmonic progressions.

6.3 Ricordanza and Accentuation

In the analysis that follows, we can see the important accentuations that stood out through my own work on a section of the exposition of *Ricordanza*. It is important to note that at various stages, certain accentuations would have been more or less prominent. These accentuations could change especially as the performer moves from the beginning of an interpretation toward a holistic conception in the piece. This does not represent a systematic method of accentuation that can apply more broadly, and if there is similar musical material later in the piece, it may well be accentuated differently. The accentuations are colour coded to avoid ambiguity between metrical and melodic accentuations both being marked with M. Grouping accentuations are marked in green and correlate to the start and ends of sections, sub-sections, phrases, sub-phrases and rhythmic cells. The harmonic accentuations are blue and occur at moments of harmonic change, usually suggested by bass movement. The metrical accentuations are orange and relate to the strong beats in the bar, while the melodic accentuations are red and relate to both turns and skips in the musical material. This analysis is reproduced fully in Appendix A (page 192).

Metrical Accentuations

The metrical accentuations are an important basis for the treatment of the material. The beginning of each bar is an important rhythmical event, as are notes which occur in the middle of a bar. Chopin was said to repeat often to his new students that:

[N]otice must be taken of natural accents. For instance, in a bar of two, the first note is strong, the second weak, in a bar of three the first strong and the two others weak. To the smaller parts of the bar the same direction will apply. Such then are the rules: the exceptions are always indicated by the authors themselves (Eigeldinger 1986, 42).

Note that in bars 3, 4, 5 and 6, the metrical accentuations on the third beat of the bar fall in the inner voices as can be seen by the two orange Ms in bars 3, 4 and 5 and the single one in the middle of bar 6. In my interpretation, I found myself giving a slight stress to the notes in those bars in order to preserve the sense of metre and emphasise the syncopated tied notes that precede them.

In the introductory section from bars 1 to 10, there is a recurring figure of three semiquavers leading to the downbeat of the bar, such as from bars 1-2, 2-3 and 4-5 in the figure below. This again requires subtle metrical accentuation.

Figure 6.11: Bars 1-6 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

In bars 15 and 16, the time signature changes from 4 to 5 beats in a bar. This is a difficult change to accentuate meaningfully, especially considering the absence of a prominent downbeat in bar 16, although the D major chord in the inner line again became gently stressed in my own interpretation. In these two bars, metrical accentuation is suspended until the more straightforward 4/8 bar in bar 17.

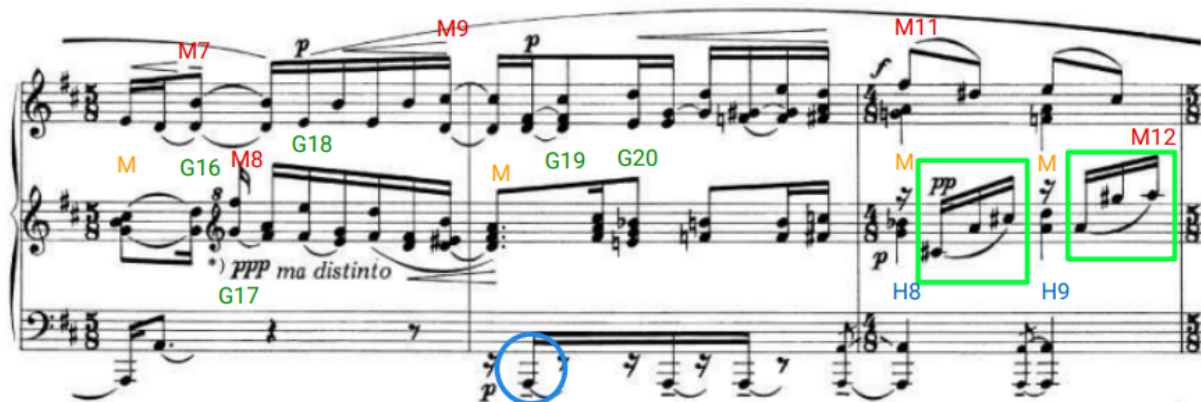


Figure 6.12: Bars 15-17 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

In bar 19, the change to 3/4 is made clear by the *tenuti* in the bass part underlining each crotchet beat. The effect is undercut by bar 20 continuing the same rhythmic pattern, thus giving bars 19 and 20 a cumulative effect of 5/4 instead of a bar of 3/4 and 4/8. In bar 21, the metrical accentuation of the downbeat is helped by the bass note, as can be seen in Figure 6.13 below. However, the next point of metrical emphasis occurs in the upper register and is therefore harder to underline. The downbeat is less strong in bar 22 and stronger in bar 23.

Figure 6.13: Bars 20-21 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

In my interpretation, all these metrical accents received slight stress and have musical significance since they establish the rhythmic structure of the piece. In terms of importance, the following table serves to represent their salience:

More Important	Downbeats of bars 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23 Third quaver beat of bars 14, 17
Important	Downbeat of bars 1, 9, 10, 12, 20 Third quaver beat of bars 9, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20 Fifth quaver beat of bars 19
Less Important	Downbeat of bars 16, 22 Third quaver beat of bars 3, 4, 5, 6, 21, 22

Table 6.2: Table of metrical accentuations ordered by salience

The downbeats in bars 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 are important in establishing a sense of pulse - especially considering the slow tempo and somewhat fragmentary phrases. The other more important downbeats often coincide with other accentuations such as in bars 13 or 23, or are not affected by phrases made up of several bars, like bars 13 or 19. The phrases which extend over several bars have the effect of undercutting the downbeats in bars 12, 16 or 22 with bar 16 being problematised by the metrical instability mentioned above. The only significant metrical accentuations that occur on both the downbeat and third quaver beat occur in bars 14 and 17 which consist of two appoggiaturas in the melodic line. This motive, which occurs throughout the piece, is both very expressive and recognisable, and so is useful as a signpost for the listener. Lastly, several third beat accentuations are less important due to the layer of the musical texture that they occur in.

Grouping Accentuations

Unlike metrical accentuations, grouping accentuations, represented by green letters or green rectangles, are not only indicated by stress. As mentioned above, the treatment of phrase beginnings and endings are often indicated by Van Wyk and their realisation can be shown agogically or through articulation or colouration. G1, seen in Figure 6.11, stands out as the beginning of the piece and calls for a special delineation and sound quality. The end of the phrase, marked G2, will stand out due to the silence that follows it and part of my interpretation involves starting the phrase marked G3 with an almost imperceptible agogic delay. Although G10-G11

seems like a series of fragments of smaller phrases, in practice I try to conceive of these notes as belonging together owing to their shared function as a closing of the introduction.

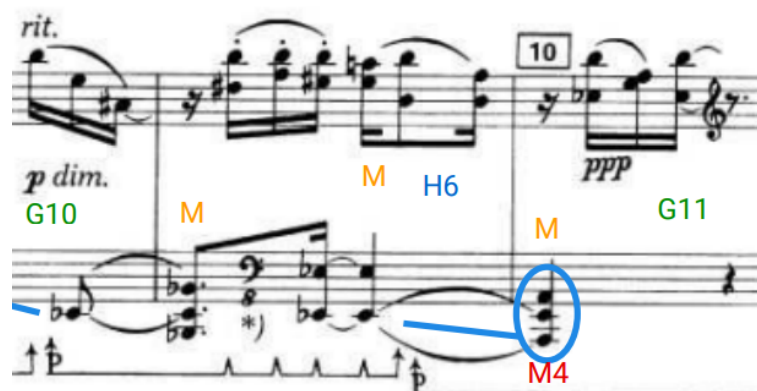


Figure 6.14: Bars 8-10 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

G4 represents a sub-phrase that I chose to accentuate as a new group within the larger phrase which starts in bar 2 and ends in bar 5. Often, to sustain a longer melodic line, it is helpful to divide it into smaller yet connected sub-phrases. The sub-phrases indicated at G4, G18, G20, G26 and G28 do not represent strong grouping accentuations, but rather my own interpretation of longer melodic lines. Here, the grouping accentuations are used as a guideline to shape the sound in ways that allow the line to continue without simply sustaining the sound and intensity, or shaping the line over too long a period of time in a single direction or toward a single melodic climax.

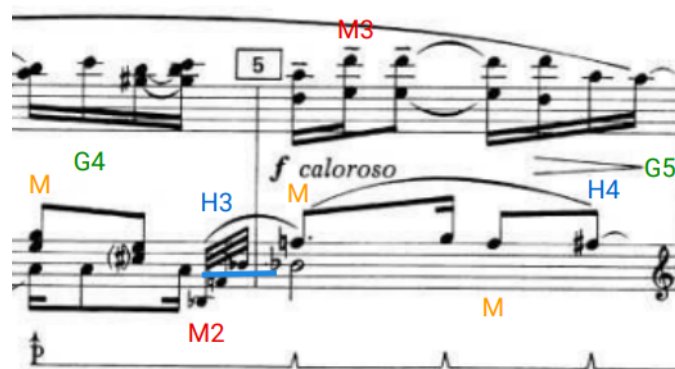


Figure 6.15: Bars 4-5 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

G12 is an example of a grouping accentuation that would be shown through stress, considering it is the first note of a melodic line that goes on from the end of bar 9 to bar 23 - although there are definitely breaks within this line. G14 represents the first time that an inner voice occurs at a higher register than the predominant melodic line, and as such, stands out as a grouping accentuation. This happens again at G17, and the small groups shown in green rectangles also represent fragments whose status as groups is obvious due to their brevity, seen in Figure 6.16 below. The only exception is the accompaniment figure in the bass in bars 11, 12 and 13. This group stands out as a more active accompaniment figure against sustained upper voices. The previous bars did have subsidiary groups such as the tenor melody in bars 3 and 4, but these do not stand out as groups with strong accentuations. That said, none of these grouping accentuations are very strong, but instead are obvious as immanent accentuations.

Figure 6.16: Bar 19 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

G24, seen above, is an interesting example. It might be possible to play this bar with a group starting on the second semiquaver beat of the bar lasting until the tied fourth semiquaver, similarly a group from the 6th to 9th semiquaver, a group from the demisemiquaver D to E flat, and a group beginning with the third to last demisemiquaver in the bar. However, the long slur gainsays such an interpretation. For Van Wyk, the ability to sustain a musical throughline over the course of a section, or piece as a whole is the mark of an accomplished composer (Van Wyk 1958, n.p.). Similarly, in music like this, the role of the performer is to ensure the continuity of the line is present while still allowing for it to be expressive.

Melodic Accentuations

The melodic accentuations, here indicated in red and through red lines, are perceptually conceived. More than the metrical or grouping accentuations, the melodic accentuations represent an interpretation of the material based upon having played it and hearing it. Below is a table categorising the melodic accentuations:

Climactic melodic peak	M1, M3, M5, M7, M9, M11, M14, M17, M18 M6, M8, M12, M16
Climactic melodic nadir	M2, M4, M10,
Salient harmonic note	M10, M13, M15, M19

Table 6.3: Table of melodic accentuations organised by salience

M1, M3, M5, M7, M9, M11, M14, M17 and M18 represent true melodic peaks in that they are the climactic points of accentuation of their respective phrases. These often coincide with dynamic stress, sometimes with a surprising degree of physical intensity such as at M3 (seen below), M5 and M11. They can also be placed agogically, although this would be guided by the articulation such as the *tenuti* at M3.

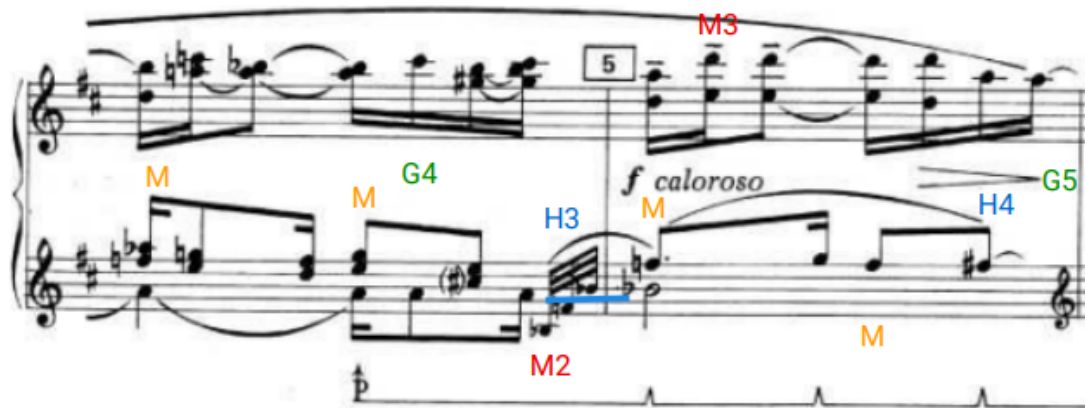


Figure 6.17: Bars 4-5 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

M6, M8, M12 and M16, and M2, M4 and M10 represent registral peaks and nadirs respectively. These notes stand out as immanent by virtue of their position relative to the general musical

texture. Often, the bass notes do require a degree of sensitivity and awareness since they occur while one is trying to give focus to the delineation of the key musical material. The notes that occur in the extreme treble, such as M8, often stand out more due to the quality of the upper register and the fact that the upper voice is more traditionally thought of as being more important musically (Parncutt 2003).

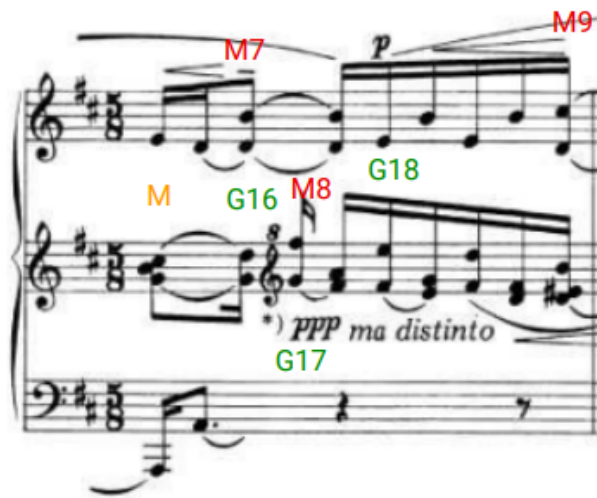


Figure 6.18: Bar 15 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

The red lines in bars 1, 2 and 8 represent wide melodic intervals that are gently accentuated. In general, despite the preponderance of wide registral skips, the musical material of these groups is often in conjunct motion or with intervals less than an octave in range. It is interesting to note that melodic climaxes are often followed by a registral peak or valley, and this has the effect of undercutting their climactic feeling. This is an almost Wagnerian approach to sustaining the musical intensity by having climax succeed climax.

M10, M15 and M19 are ambiguous in the sense that these notes would be accentuated melodically because of their status as registral nadirs but also because they represent important bass movement harmonically. M13, seen in Figure 6.16, is not the nadir of the bass voice, but because it is a sustained note and an unexpected harmonic inversion, it stands out as a melodic accentuation ahead of the lower A that precedes it.

Harmonic Accentuation

Melodic accentuations like M13 are also circled in blue which is the colour of the harmonic accentuations I found most salient in my interpretation of *Ricordanza*. Similar to the climactic melodic accentuations, the harmonic accentuations that stood out to me were perceptually guided, and, though they can be justified, the reasons they stood out ahead of others are again a question of balancing the various demands of interpreting music at several hierarchical levels simultaneously. Thus, it is fair to say that there are many immanent harmonic accentuations that would be evident to the listener, but the ones highlighted in my analysis represent those that would coincide with a form of performed accentuation, or have significance in my perception of the piece.

Wilding notes in his analysis of *Ricordanza* that many of the harmonies are tertian, but that tonality is indicated by pedal points (Wilding 2007, 129), and thus bass movement. He notes the introductory section of the first 10 bars is over a dominant pedal A. The first tonal area is D major and this extends from bars 10-19, however here a dominant pedal still predominates. Bars 19-20 represent a transition to the second tonal area which is explored between bars 21-28, again over a dominant pedal point C (Wilding 2007, 129). He writes, '[h]armony in *Ricordanza* is tertiary, but major sevenths and minor sevenths are much more common than triads. Because of the omnipresence of a dominant pedal point, triads are often in second inversion' (Wilding 2007, 131). The only example of non-tertiary harmony he finds is in the very first phrase which ends on the fourth semiquaver beat of bar 2. The notes G, A, B, C# represent a whole tone [0,2,4,6] pitch class with an A pedal which is gradually revealed to be the dominant of the key (Wilding 2007, 131).

The ambiguous opening harmony stands out as a salient harmonic feature. H1 represents the first time we hear the pitches in combination and gives the sense of a dominant ninth chord.



Figure 6.19: Bar 2 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

The bass A is important, as is the unambiguous A major triad in bar 3. H2 represents an expressive dissonance. The dominant bass pedal moves from A to B flat at the end of bar 4, which is also a registral nadir, and the harmonic shift from A to B flat is accentuated by the dynamic intensity and flourish which precedes it. H4, while not an outright statement of D major, represents to me an intimation of resolution to the tonic and coincides with a slight rubato. H5 is again an expressive dissonance, and one of the instances where the harmonic change can be indicated by an agogic delay. These delays should be sparingly employed because they lose their significance through overuse. H6 again represents an intimation of resolution to D major, but like H4, is obscured by the clashing pedal. H7 is the true resolution to D major, but again is directly followed by a lower dominant note which undercuts its strength.

Bar 14 has expressive appoggiaturas which are harmonic accentuations insofar as they represent dissonances which resolve. H8 and H9, seen in Figure 6.12, stand out as a more dissonant, and thus more salient, version of the appoggiaturas in bar 14 seen below in Figure 6.20.

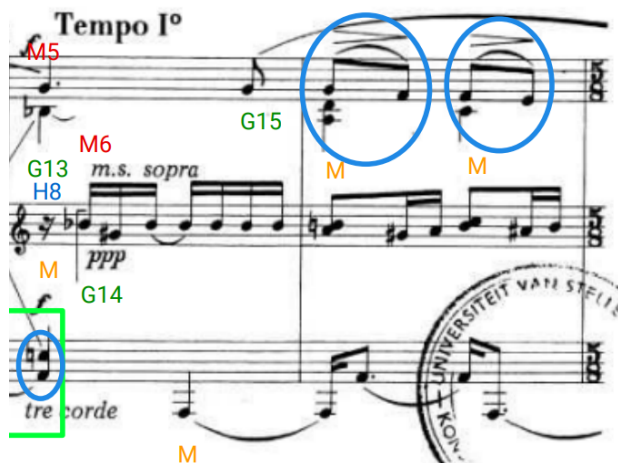


Figure 6.20: Bars 13-14 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

The musical origin of these appoggiaturas has been studied by Thom, who asserts that Van Wyk was writing based on the Prelude in D major, BWV 850 from the first book of *Das Wohltempierte Clavier* (Thom 2006, 38). Wilding shows that the appoggiatura figure is taken from the final two bars of the Bach Prelude.

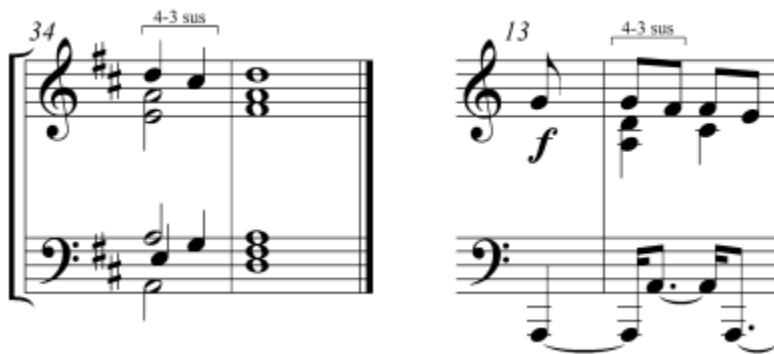


Figure 6.21: Bars 34-35 of Prelude in D major, BWV 850 from *Das Wohltempierte Clavier I* and Bars 13-14 of *Ricordanza* (Wilding 2007, 128)

I have shown in Chapter 4, that this figure could also be derived from the D major Prelude, BWV 936. I would argue that beyond representing an expressive dissonance, the musical significance of this figure is minimal because the appoggiatura is a commonly recurring figure in music. For the performer, there is no special musical or extra-musical meaning attached to the Bach example beyond being a final cadence.

H10 stands out as an unexpected harmonic change due to its inversion and presence of the flattened seventh degree. Likewise, H11, H12 and H13, seen in Figure 6.13, stand out as dissonances. As mentioned above, Wilding argues that bar 19 is part of a transitional section moving from the first tonal area to the second. Analytically, he argues the second key area begins in bar 21. This is in part due to the visual cue of the modulation. In playing this piece, one does not get the sense of a new tonal area until bar 23 with the clear resolution to F major. Thus, the harmonic accentuation does not correspond to the analytical point of view. Bar 21 represents a dissonant harmonic accentuation, and H13 is preceded by two other harmonic dissonances that are accentuated. However, the sense of resolution in bar 23 is a much stronger accentuation, representing, as it does, a long-awaited resolution.

From the above survey, it is clear that the role of the performer moves from realising details in the score such as notational and articulatory markings, toward realising moments of immanent accentuation in the music. Some of these are left to speak for themselves, and will be clear to listeners as a result of how the music has been written. Others are brought out by the performer as a result of interacting with the music. These performed accentuations have to function within the limits of musical structure and proportion. In general, they need to be subtly executed and strongly performed accentuations such as timing, intensity and colour must be reserved for highly significant musical events.

It is clear to me that Van Wyk understood these moments of accentuation because he treats them with such variety. He will often obscure or make obvious his grouping and metrical accentuations. His melodic and harmonic accentuations are frequently guided by his expressive markings. Often the most salient of these for the performer do not correspond with what would be significant to the analyst who might be exploring the motivic or harmonic content. The approach to these accentuations is in a dynamic relationship, and their interplay shifts as the performer experiments and grows with their own interpretation. In Van Wyk, one finds an extremely sophisticated and musicianly approach to accentuation that perhaps speaks to his concerns as a performer, but is also one of his traits as a composer.

Chapter 7

7.1 Van Wyk and Schubert

Playing Haydn while studying the Van Wyk works gave me insights into how both composers might have approached the craft and details of composition. By considering the care Van Wyk lavished on notational details, as well as through analysing specific aspects of these compositions relating to articulation and the use of piano sound and techniques, it is possible to arrive at conclusions about the objective sound world of these pieces. Likewise, Schumann and Chopin throw the poetic aspects of the Van Wyk pieces into relief. The permeability between different art forms and how they can influence each other is evidenced in the myriad processes Van Wyk undertook in order to facilitate and inspire his compositions. These processes find an echo in the manifold creative ways a performer can accentuate and inflect the music.

It is well known to us that Schubert was an important figure to Van Wyk. For Muller, the relationship between Van Wyk and Schubert could be described as:

[Van Wyk] wou nie Schubert verbeter nie, hy wou Schubert *wees*. En wanneer hy Schubert was - soos wanneer hy sy musiek gespeel het, of sy werk koesterend voltooi soos hy gemaak het met die onvoltooide A mineur klaviersonate (D 845), of sy potensiaal gerealiseer het in die Fantasie - dan was dit 'n daad van intense identifikasie, van uitreik na 'n musikale geesgenoot. [Van Wyk] was *lief* vir Schubert, en dit het musiek in hom lewend maak (Muller 2014, 271).²⁵

Van Wyk was playing the A minor Piano Sonata, D.537 in 1947, at a time when it was still uncommon to play Schubert sonatas in concert. For context, Schnabel had made some of the first recordings of Schubert sonatas in the 1930s. As Brendel writes:

It is only recently that Schubert has been recognised as one of the great piano composers and one of the supreme masters of the sonata. We are indebted for this to Artur Schnabel and, in Germany,

²⁵ [Van Wyk] did not want to improve Schubert, he wanted to *be* Schubert. And when he was Schubert - like when he played his music, or lovingly completed his work as he did with the unfinished A minor Piano Sonata (D 845) or realised the potential in the Fantasie - then it was an act of intense identification, of reaching out to a musical soulmate. [Van Wyk] *loved* Schubert, and that made music come alive in him (my translation).

to Eduard Erdmann, who, as performers and influential teachers, opened the road to future generations. But they were isolated cases within their time. In 1928, the year of the centenary of Schubert's death, Rachmaninov, the celebrated pianist, admitted to Cesar Saerchinger that he had not realised that sonatas by Schubert existed (Brendel 2001, 134).

While Chopin, Schumann and Haydn might have served as models for Van Wyk, Schubert was arguably the one who most influenced his actual approach to composition and the content of his compositions most of all. Indeed, trying to understand how best to approach Schubert as a composer unlocked a much deeper understanding for how to approach Van Wyk. This occurred on a practical level in that I needed to discover a particular mode of thinking in order to better play Schubert. In my experience, in Schubert it is useful to think of musical events as leading from one to the other, and to link and relate these events. In other words, the various sections, and phrases within each section, should lead to the next. Furthermore, these sections are influenced and transformed by what has preceded them. In this way, for instance, the recapitulation within sonata form is not merely a return of the material of the exposition but a recontextualisation of it based on the content of the development section.

This is not dissimilar to the approach Birson espouses relating to the music of Haydn, and discussed in Chapter 4, where he suggests that considering musical events locally brings us closer to the spirit in which his music might have been conceived (Birson 2020). However, performers need to be aware of the overarching organisation of these components lest they play the music in a pedantic way, underlining each section too obviously. Van Wyk might have been aware of the pitfalls of this approach to interpreting music since in his own music he often elides these musical events so as to integrate them. Aside from influencing my approach to this music, Schubert also activated a deeper consideration of emotion in the music of Van Wyk.

In both Schubert and Van Wyk, there is an emotional element that determines the course the music takes. The pianist Alfred Brendel famously compared Beethoven and Schubert by calling one an architect and the other a sleepwalker (Brendel 2001, 45). This suggestive metaphor is due to the idea that, for Brendel, Beethoven predicates his compositional processes upon logical principles

of development and structure, while Schubert writes according to a logic determined by the psychological narrative of his pieces. As Brendel writes:

Beethoven seems determined to create the firmest intellectual basis in order to make all matters of emotional character as unmistakeable as possible. Schubert puts more trust in the directness of his emotions. Economy to him is hardly a matter of prime importance. And over all its prodigious emotional range, his music remains mysteriously episodic (Brendel 2001, 139).

For Van Wyk, the form of his pieces is also guided by their overall emotional arc. His key structures and relationships, as well as formal lines, are chosen in order to structure what can be thought of as psychological narratives. In this way, Van Wyk acts as both architect and sleepwalker. In his music, the technical aspects of composition inform the psychological narrative and vice versa.

That composition was difficult for Van Wyk has been spoken about in depth already. In addition to his self doubt, Van Wyk suffered from bouts of depression which made composition difficult for him. As Thom writes, during these ‘periodes van uiterste neerslagtigheid, [...] hy nie komponeer nie en niemand sal sien nie’ (Thom 2006, 28). In his own words, Van Wyk wrote:

Ek het die simfonie met baie groot moeite en met emmers vol tranes klaar gemaak, en selfs daarna weet ek nog nie of die ding die moeite werd is nie. Ek is alweer in die skaduwees wat die komposisie betref (as ek ooit daaruit gekom het) en ook wat die lewe betref. Ten spyte van my baie vriende is ek alleen (quoted in Du Plessis 1984, 39).²⁶

On occasion Van Wyk used the term *accida* to describe this state of being, describing the affliction as a combination of ‘deep melancholy and sloth’ (Muller 2014, 450).

Van Wyk also spoke about being emotionally overcome in performance. As mentioned in Chapter 1, he related that during recording sessions for *Night Music*, both he and Christie Feros, who was

²⁶ I finished the symphony with great difficulty and buckets of tears, and even now I do not know if it was worth it. I am again in the shadows as far as composition is concerned (if I ever get out of them) and also as far as my life is concerned. Despite my many friends, I am alone (my translation).

turning pages, were ‘almost crying’ (Ribeiro 2009, 16). In another instance in 1981, Van Wyk wrote that during a performance of the Schubert Piano Sonata in B flat major, D.960, ‘I suddenly got emotionally too overwrought and physically too overtired to continue’ (Muller 2014, 350). These performances suggest that Van Wyk was emotionally involved in the music he was performing.

Strauss writes that specific Van Wyk works with tragic implications are privileged in the canon. She suggests that Van Wyk self-consciously positioned himself as an elegiac figure, especially by saying things like:

Ek is nie ’n groot komponis nie want ek kan eintlik net weemoedige musiek skryf. As jy my vra watter werk ek die liefste sou wou geskryf het, dan sal ek vir jou ’n werk noem soos die Vierde Beethoven Klavierkonsert of die Vioolconcerto. As ek daardie sereniteit kon ontdek, maar ek kan nie. Ek kan eintlik net hartseer musiek skryf (quoted in Strauss 2013, 526).²⁷

I see statements like that as echoing what Schubert wrote in his 1822 story, ‘Mein Traum’:

[...] und mit einem Herzen voll unendlicher Liebe für die, welche sie verschmähten, wanderte ich abermals in ferne Gegend. Lieder sang ich nun lange, lange Jahre. Wollte ich Liebe singen, ward sie mir zum Schmerz. Und wollte ich wieder Schmerz nur singen, ward er mir zur Liebe. So zerteilte mich die Liebe und der Schmerz (Schubert 1822, n.p.).²⁸

Though ‘Mein Traum’ is a work of fiction and authors are divided about how autobiographical it is, the intermingling of hope and despair is common to both composers, albeit in different ways. These statements also affect the way that the music of Schubert and Van Wyk is perceived, and suggests there is a relationship between their music and personal experiences.

²⁷ I am not a great composer because I can only write melancholy music. If you ask me what piece I would have loved to write, I would tell you a work like the fourth Beethoven Piano Concerto or the Violin Concerto. If I could discover that serenity, but I cannot. I can only write sad music (my translation).

²⁸ [...] and with a heart full of infinite love for those who spurned that love, I wandered once more into distant regions. For long, long years I sang songs. If I wished to sing of love, it turned to pain for me. And if I wished to sing only of pain again, it turned to love for me. Thus love and pain divided me (my translation).

Though it is possible to account for elements of the emotional lives of both composers and the emotions that we perceive in their music, the overlap between them is not simple. In my opinion, for both Schubert and Van Wyk, it is less useful to conflate biography and psychology in order to arrive at specific understandings of their compositions than it is to acknowledge that complex psychological processes were a factor for them in the act of composition. In other words, someone who felt as deeply as Van Wyk did was likely to have these emotions spill over into other areas of his life. However, the act of composition was not a spontaneous one for Van Wyk and his emotions were often a hindrance to it. I would suggest that both composers were influenced by their emotions and suffused their compositions with emotional content, but that this was done in a way separate from their emotional lives.

Likewise for the performer, the experience of emotion, while not uncommon, does not necessarily lead to an effective musical performance. As Foxcroft and Panebianco-Warrens write:

Performers may experience both musical and performance-related emotions during performance. However, these emotions bear little relation to the diverse musical emotions represented to the audience during a performance. The essence of a performer's emotional responses to perceived musical emotions is represented to the audience in a carefully constructed interpretation. The successful delivery of a musical interpretation that will 'move' the audience is the performer's main priority, rather than a profound personal experience of the musical emotions (Foxcroft and Panebianco-Warrens 2015, 494).

Communicating through the act of composing or performing involves perceiving the emotional content of the music, and realising it through interpretations which underline it. In this way, Van Wyk had an emotional life characterised by periods of depression, and was able to perform and write music in a way where the emotional content of that music was communicated through the act of interpretation or composition. That his performances of his own works deviate from the score does not suggest that the details contained therein are not important, but rather that for Van Wyk an expressive performance was his principle aim. Indeed, Ribeiro argues that his 'primary aim as a performer was rather to transmit the full *poetic* substance of the work' (Ribeiro 2009, 70), and perhaps this was his aim as a composer too.

Indeed, the emotional aspects of his music were evident to contemporary reviewers. For instance, reviews of *Night Music* played by John Clegg in 1966 suggest that the performer was a crucial part in realising the inherent qualities of the work. An unknown reviewer for the *The Times* in London wrote the following review of the performance given by Clegg:

Arnold van Wyk's extended *Night Music* suffered most from under-interpretation. This is a deeply felt elegy, written in memory of Noel Mewton-Wood, music in which fear and protest play as large a part as poetic assuagement. The score is full of violent dynamic contrasts and arresting expressive indications like *spettrale pppp* and *largo irrealmente glaciale*. But Mr Clegg made his way through it all with an emotional reticence strangely at variance with the composer's intensity (Muller 2014, 768).

In contrast, reviews of the premiere of the final version of the piece given by Van Wyk in 1959 suggested that he was able to communicate the emotional qualities of the work successfully as can be seen by the reviews cited in Chapter 4. Even more recently, Panoussis who undertook a project of creating video art set to a recording of *Night Music* said that he was drawn to the Van Wyk recording of the piece because 'no other performance of *Nagmusiek* quite captures the cataclysmic darkness encoded within van Wyk's own recording' (Panoussis 2020, n.p.).

The emotional content of the Van Wyk piano works covers a wide range - moving from the spiky irony of the 'Scherzino' from the *Four Piano Pieces* to the passion of the sixth movement of *Night Music* to the abyss of the 'Rondo desolato' from *Tristia*. Furthermore, many indications in his scores are imaginative, often suggesting freedom from both metre and tempo, and indicating qualities of the music that are beyond the technical. In this way, both Van Wyk and Schubert are composers whose music is a reflection of their inner lives, but whose musical emotions were realised through the technical means of composition. This music follows a logic that is not solely concerned with formal and motivic organisation, but also the expression and organisation of perceivable emotional qualities through the medium of music.

7.2 Dream Aesthetic

In music scholarship and other writing about music it is common to interpret instrumental music as being a medium for conveying or representing non-verbal subjective categories and experiences (Leong 2022, 9). This can range from comments as simple as saying a certain piece of music sounds happy or sad, to suggesting as Muller does, that Van Wyk uses sonata form as a method of closeting himself, using classical structure as a means to ‘protect his vulnerability in a homophobic society’ (Muller 2014, 458). It is possible to undertake readings of a composition from the point of view of a hypothetical musical subject, as Muller does when he views Van Wyk as the central subject of his own sonata form movements. However, I tend to agree with Cumming who argues that music should not be ‘imagined to represent states that existed in the composer prior to its composition, but to embody states that are formed by its own materials’ (Cumming 1997, 16). In other words, though Van Wyk may have written his piano works while experiencing certain emotional states, he also intended them to be suggestive of emotional states and the latter states are to be found within the music.

In his dissertation on the hermeneutics of the dream aesthetic in Schubert, Leong argues that the notion of dreaming and a dreaming musical subject is often invoked in discussion surrounding the instrumental music of Schubert (Leong 2022, 15). He identifies three categories of dream characterisation which are invoked to describe this music:

1. The idealised dream as opposed to harsh reality
2. The dream-like experience or altered experience
3. Irrational dreams

I believe that these categories can be modified so they can apply to Van Wyk because he believed that the origins of his expression were related to the subconscious (Muller 2014, 138-139), and his music often aligns with this dream aesthetic albeit in different ways. The concept of the dream was an important facet of Romanticism, and the influence of Freud and his theory of the subconscious had a similar significance for composers in the twentieth century. Moreover, this type of thinking

had a direct bearing on my artistic practice as it related to forming a conception of both the Schubert and Van Wyk pieces I studied.

Category 1: Idealised Dream versus Harsh Reality

The dialectic between the infinite and the mundane is one of the cornerstones of Romanticism. Through comparing songs which focus on the concept of dreaming to instrumental works, Schubert scholars have long been interested in how he invoked the transcendental and contrasted this with a bleaker vision of reality (Leong 2022, 27-28). Through musical contrasts such as between major and minor, consonance and dissonance, dynamics, register, tempo and rhythmic accentuation, Schubert is able to colour and underpin meaning in his *Lieder* through these contrasts. These processes are frequently found in his instrumental music as well. The qualities ascribed to these contrasts - such as between the finite and infinite - are metaphors that are used by listeners, performers and commentators toward various ends. Leong also notes that Schubert often writes music that is evocative of pastoral tropes - such as writing using:

[a] mixture of the following traits: major mode, 6/8 or 12/8 metre, slow tempo and harmonic rhythm, soft dynamic, harmony in thirds, the use of a drone or pedal point, emphasis on the subdominant, [...] the siciliano rhythm gesture, musette or Ländler allusions, and modal inflections (Leong 2022, 39).

One could add his use of horn fifths to this list. Much writing about Van Wyk, and indeed by Van Wyk, speaks to his dissatisfaction with his life and socio-political context. This can be seen in his sense of alienation, frustration with both audiences and institutions he was affiliated with, as well as his struggles with both mental and physical health. We can only speculate what the transcendental might have meant to Van Wyk. Afrikaner society at that time was Calvinist and conservative, which meant that Van Wyk was no doubt exposed to this form of Christianity. However, Muller also includes a handwritten astrological birth chart reading that Van Wyk had paid for in his biography, *Nagmusiek* (Muller 2014, 148-155). Further, his liturgical work, *Missa in illo tempore*, was a 'Roman Catholic Mass to celebrate the tercentenary of an Afrikaner Calvinist intellectual stronghold [...] that flew in the face of what would have been deemed a highly

puritanical Afrikaner establishment' (Viljoen 2012, 82). It is possible that, as a composer who saw himself within the Western tradition, Van Wyk was using the mass as a preexisting musical form. However, Viljoen believes there is earnest religious feeling in the work, with its 'intense melodicism' which 'constantly presents the listener with subjective expressions of theological content via intensive motivic cross-referencing' (Viljoen 2012, 82).

Beyond his complex relationship with the transcendental, I suggest that for Van Wyk, the idealised world of the past may have held a strong pull. This can be seen in his invocation of Bach in both *Ricordanza*, and the 'Credo' of the *Missa in illo tempore* which uses the same liturgical melody as the 'Credo' from the Mass in B minor (Viljoen 2012, 80). It would be easy to see the 'Dumka' from the *Four Piano Pieces* as looking backward, in both its form and strangely naive middle-section, which uses only the white notes of the piano. The contrast between the 'Pastorale' and 'Capriccio' can speak directly to this metaphor, with the former being characterised as 'ietwats dromerig'²⁹ by Van Wyk, and the latter being called 'lewendig'³⁰ (quoted in Muller 2014, 763).

Instead of composing in a way that sets up a binary between an ideal dream and harsh reality, I would argue that Van Wyk wrote in a way that is suggestive of a *search for transcendence*. In other words, to again contrast the words of both composers, Schubert vacillated between love turning to sorrow and sorrow turning to love, while Van Wyk sought to write sublime music which turned to music suffused with melancholy. The music of Van Wyk is concerned with a search for psychological resolution - he seeks to reconcile the violent, the harsh, and the banal. Unlike Schubert, Van Wyk seldom lingers in the transcendental when he does reach it.

There are many instances where Van Wyk denies himself, and us as listeners, with psychological resolution. He does this using a variety of musical means, including dynamics and harmonic progressions. For instance, in *Tristia*, the climactic and apothec moments are usually curtailed before they can truly take flight:

²⁹ somewhat dreamy (my translation).

³⁰ lively (my translation).



Figure 7.1: Bars 21-28 of 'Rondo desolato' from *Tristia* (Van Wyk 1984b)

In bar 23, Van Wyk instructs the performer to get faster, *crescendo* from *piano* to *forte appassionato* in bar 25, only to *decrescendo* and grow calmer within the same bar. Thus, the implied aesthetic shift from a softer dynamic range and contemplative character into something more passionate and louder is forestalled.

We can see a similar instance in the third Nocturne from *Night Music*:



Figure 7.2: Bars 133-139 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

In bars 133-134, there is the implication of C sharp minor which shifts to C major in bars 135-136, in a *dolcissimo* passage of great beauty, which Van Wyk instructs to be played very tenderly. This again is short lived as C sharp minor returns in bar 137. The brief foray into C major is a fleeting intimation - a look into heaven instead of a shift into it.

The closest Van Wyk comes to sustained transcendence is surely the coda of *Ricordanza*. It is poetic that his last piano composition should end on a note of sustained benediction:



Figure 7.3: Bars 61-63 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

After reestablishing the tonality of D major in bar 58, Van Wyk sustains the D pedal point and allows for a wash of this harmony to pervade the progression from bar 58 through to the final cadence in bars 61-62, itself a type of plagal cadence.

There are instances where Van Wyk allows for the music to build momentum and reach sustained passages of climax. In three of his pieces, namely the 'Capriccio' from the *Pastorale e Capriccio*, the stormy extended sixth movement from *Night Music*, and the 'Toccata' from the *Four Piano Pieces*, Van Wyk writes music that moves inexorably forward with a great deal of speed and energy. In these movements, there are passages of sustained loudness, thickness of texture and astringent dissonances. The effect of these climactic sections can be exciting due to their energy and momentum, however Van Wyk often undercuts this. If we consider the build up that occurs in the recapitulation of the sixth movement in *Night Music*, we might expect the culmination of a passage like this to represent a moment of apotheosis:



Figure 7.4: Bars 367-369 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

Instead, this section culminates in a moment of crisis, with a dissonant chord to be played louder than *fff* - a rare instance for Van Wyk. Two notes of the chords are held, and eventually one note remains causing the texture to thin dramatically.

Figure 7.5: Bars 370-372 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

This leads directly into the epilogue where snatches of each preceding movement return and fade away before the coda ends the work quietly in the extreme bass. In this instance, even a resolution which points towards chaos is forestalled and leads back into resignation.

Category 2: Dream States

Leong notes that even modern scholars write about how the music of Schubert is capable of inducing a dreamlike experience for listeners or transporting listeners to an altered state (Leong 2022, 42). Leong says Schubert accomplishes this through his use of the $\flat$ VI chord, as well as non-teleological repetitions and harmonic progressions, and continuous accompaniment figures which are often in a soft dynamic range (Leong 2022, 118). Schubert uses these compositional methods to set up what authors refer to as a dream-like aesthetic level. He often connects this level to the waking aesthetic level via passages of transition, which occur at the threshold of both levels. Such threshold passages might contain writing in unison, or a slowing of musical momentum (Leong 2022, 118).

Like Schubert, Van Wyk often uses the chromatic mediant in his piano pieces. As Wilding notes, the ‘Pastorale’ and ‘Capriccio’ are linked in tonality via a chromatic mediant relationship, with the triads of G sharp minor and C minor sharing a D sharp/E flat in common (Wilding 2007, 141). The same relationship exists between movements of both *Night Music* and the *Four Piano Pieces*. These relationships are also found within pieces such as in *Ricordanza* which is in D major, where the secondary key area of B major is explored (Wilding 2007, 141). However, unlike Schubert, the harmonic progressions used by Van Wyk, be they teleological or not, do not necessarily function in the same way. Instead of setting up a dialectic, the ‘inner conflict in [V]an Wyk’s music is between the deeper level, which is almost always basically triadic, and the surface, which is hardly ever simply triadic’ (Wilding 2007, 141-142). Although Van Wyk and Schubert differ in how their harmonic progressions might be interpreted by listeners, Van Wyk does use harmony to establish aesthetic levels. Van Wyk also uses both slowed musical momentum, and continuous accompaniment figures and textures, often at a soft dynamic level, to establish an aesthetic level with a static quality.

I would suggest that instead of evoking dream states in the same manner as Schubert, Van Wyk occupies *liminal spaces*. Leong suggests that these dream states are connected by threshold passages in the music of Schubert (Leong 2022, 118). Burnham describes these shifts between aesthetic levels, writing:

[T]hese passages connect musics of such surpassing difference, I like to think of them not as transitions, but as thresholds. The crossing they enable feels more like an astonishing transformation than a willed process of development (Burnham 2014, 159).

Again, Van Wyk eschews binaries - he is concerned with an inner conflict that exists within the space between the obvious aesthetic levels of dreaming and waking. From this position, there is the potential for Van Wyk to move toward different aesthetic levels, but I believe that he operates from this liminal aesthetic level as opposed to either extreme. Pienaar warns pianists against a 'generalised lushness' in performing Van Wyk, and describes the various aesthetic levels at play when he suggests:

[I]t is cardinal to be able to differentiate between things that are meant to be warm or generous or gorgeous or sensual and things that are plain, quotidian, everyday, dry or speech-like. And also of course to be able to enjoy the simplicity and 'kindness' in some of the everyday things. To be able to take flight when needed, to lose control, but also to be able to moderate (Muller & Pienaar 2020, 60).

For the performer it is difficult to parse what type of aesthetic level Van Wyk is employing, and these shifts are often brief and fragmentary. Owing to this, I believe that there are moments within these pieces that can be thought to be glimpsing potentialities. Through the use of pedal points for instance, Van Wyk is able not only to suggest conventional harmonic progressions, but also undercuts the dissonances of his harmonic structures. In these pieces, there are often passages with a static feel, such as the recurring theme in 'Rondo desolato':



Figure 7.6: Bars 56-69 of 'Rondo desolato' from *Tristia* (Van Wyk 1984b)

The rondo theme, shown above in its third iteration from bars 59-69, is presented over a tonic G sharp pedal. The nuances in bars 59-60, 63, 64-65 and 68 all occur within the context of a static texture that does not rise above a *pianissimo* dynamic range. Though Van Wyk instructs the performer to consider bars 59-62, 62-65, 65-67 and 67-69 as extended phrases through the use of slurs, the phrases within these slurs have a fragmentary quality, and long notes separate the musical ideas. This passage is remarkable for its immutable quality, and while it hints toward nuance, it can give no other impression than of blank desolation.

An interesting comparison can be made between the opening movement of *Night Music* and the opening of the Sonata in B minor by Liszt. As Ribeiro notes, '[r]egarding form, the work has been compared to Franz Liszt's famous B minor sonata' (Ribeiro 2009, 22). Both composers begin with a statement of the motives that will form the basis of the work.



Figure 7.7: Bars 1-17 of Piano Sonata in B minor (Liszt 1960)

In the first seven bars, Liszt follows the isolated repeating Gs with a descending scale. In bar 8 to bar 13, the next motive is presented in bare octaves. Bar 13 to 17 sees a third motive in the bass consisting of repeated notes. Hopkins writes that ‘[i]t is almost irresistible to describe theme II as ‘heroic’, theme III as ‘menacing’ or theme IV as ‘grandiloquent’. Indeed, I am positive that Liszt meant us to think of them in this way’ (Hopkins 1971, 160). For Hopkins, the transformation of these themes in the course of the work has more to do with their treatment or presentation - in other words the ‘volume, tempo, instrumental timbre, harmonization and [...] standards of performance’ (Hopkins 1971, 161). Therefore, Liszt shifts between aesthetic levels as he transforms these motives such as when the third motive is presented in the treble, to be played *cantando espressivo* with the *portamenti* further encouraging a melodic treatment of the material.

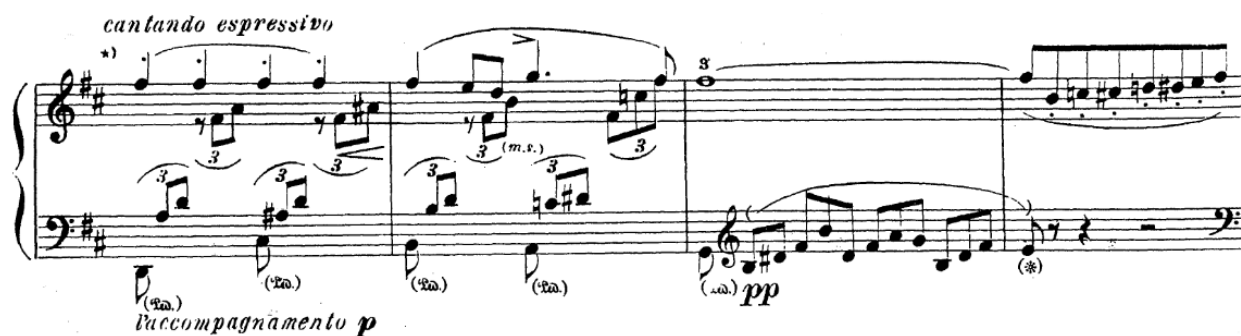


Figure 7.8: Bars 157-160 of Piano Sonata in B minor (Liszt 1960)

In *Night Music*, Van Wyk also opens with four motives which appear in succession.



Figure 7.9: Bars 1-5 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

The first motive, motive a, appears against a murmur of very soft quavers, in bars 3-5.



Figure 7.10: Bars 9-12 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

Motive b is introduced in bars 9 to 12. While the first motive is notable for its diatonic ascent followed by a jagged descending motive, this new motive oscillates between two notes - E flat and F flat - emphasising the interval of a minor second, before descending.

Figure 7.11: Bars 16-19 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

The third motive, motive c, is presented without a continuous quaver accompaniment and in unison two octaves apart. Like motive b, this motive emphasises the minor and major second in bar 18 as it moves from E flat to D and then E flat to D flat, before again ending with a diatonic descent.

Figure 7.12: Bars 19-20 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

The fourth motive (d) follows directly from motive c. This is the most distinctive of the four motives because it is presented in the extreme registers and has a semiquaver rhythm which has

not yet occurred in the piece. Again, the minor second is emphasised by the notes E F F which are repeated twice.

In Liszt, the tension between the contrast of the motives as well as their potentials to be used as musical material with different aesthetic implications is the basis for much of the work. In *Night Music*, the motives are less distinctive. One can argue that motives a, b, c and d are all concerned with the interval of a major and minor second to some degree. Only motive d differs rhythmically from the others by virtue of its semiquavers. There have been many analytical discussions of the motivic processes Van Wyk undertakes in this piece, such as Ferguson (1987), Wilding (2007) and Ribeiro (2009). In my own practice, these motivic processes were often not audibly obvious or distinctive. Such as in the third nocturne, where a melodic line is derived from motive a:

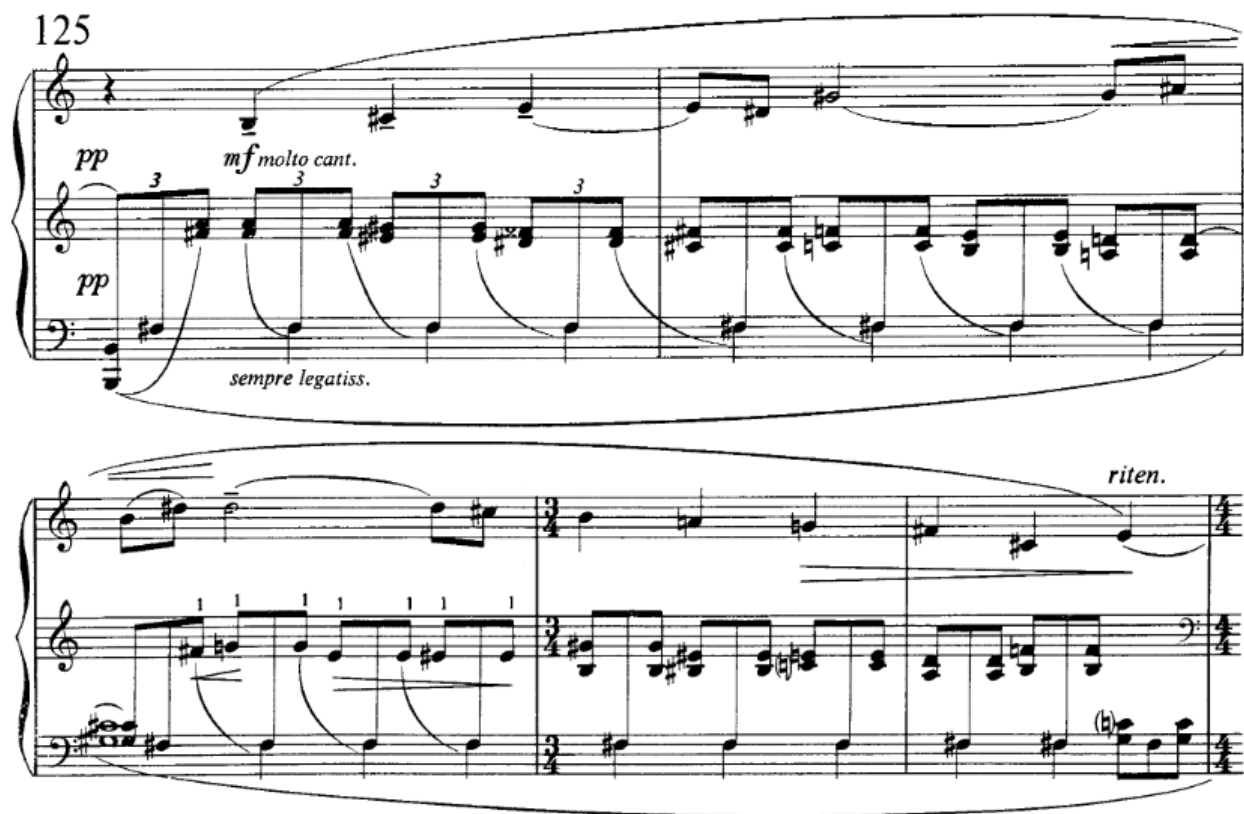


Figure 7.13: Bars 125-129 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

The difference between this passage and the initial appearance of motive a is subtle. Both occur with a relatively static accompaniment: motive a with continuous quavers and a pedal point, and the passage in Figure 7.13 with continuous quaver triplets over a pedal point.

I suggest that the musical materials in *Night Music* are less concerned with aesthetic contrast, despite the presence of a variety of textures, instrumental techniques and a very wide dynamic range. Instead, the liminality of the music is what is important and the performer needs to be carefully attuned to the subtle changes in character, inflection and colour. Perhaps Van Wyk offered us a clue to this when he wrote in a letter in 1935, when he was 19:

Today I enriched the world of art with two magnificent masterpieces: a watercolour sketch and a song, which I consider so excellent, that I am sending you a copy under separate cover. It is indeed a beautiful song and I hope you'll like it and will sing it again and again. In case you should think it monotonous, it isn't really - if it's sung intelligently and with ever so many shades of tone and feeling (quoted in Muller 2014, 296).

Category 3: Anti-rational Dreams

For Leong, the roots of this third category of dream characterisation can be found in the myth of Schubert as a composer who wrote intuitively, ‘during a state of clairvoyance or somnambulism, without any conscious action on the part of the composer, but inevitably, by an act of providence and inspiration’ (Leong 2022, 73). This myth finds a curious echo in the fictionalised account by Johanssen of the young Van Wyk feverishly composing in a ‘skeppingssfeer’ (Johanssen 1938, 44).³¹ While neither account of these composers is accurate, it is an interesting contrast that while both composers wrote in an aura of creativity, in his myth Schubert did so unselfconsciously while Van Wyk was ever self-conscious and self-critical.

The myth about Schubert as an intuitive musician has had direct implications in the way his music has been analysed and written about. Indeed, even Brendel has contributed to the idea that the Schubert piano sonatas unfold with a logic that is not determined by rational processes, as

³¹ creative aura (my translation).

mentioned above. Instead of characterising his use of form and avoidance of harmonic practices associated with the classical period in favour of modulatory schemes as irrational, Leong suggests these practices are anti-rational because they seek to subvert expectation (Leong 2022, 102). In other words, it is possible to read these supposedly intuitive processes as a sophisticated method of setting up a dialectic between what is conventional and an extension of that, and thus creating two distinctive aesthetic levels. Moreover, Schubert was able to infuse sonata form with an element of fantasy - especially in his development sections. Leong writes:

If the sonata-form development section in general may be taken as a dream scene, then, Schubert's development sections, whose musical language is enormously expanded—or 'fantasticised'—would be particularly apposite to be contemplated in line with the dream scenes of Romantic literature (Leong 2022, 116).

In *Van Wyk*, the association between development sections and dream scenes is made explicit. For instance, in the development section of the sixth movement of *Night Music*:

Pochissimo più mosso, spettrale

The image shows a musical score for two systems of piano music. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'Pochissimo più mosso, spettrale'. The first system (bars 315-316) features a treble staff with a melodic line marked '8va' and a bass staff with a bass line marked 'una corda pppp'. The second system (bars 317-318) continues the melodic and bass lines, with the treble staff marked '8va' and the bass staff marked 'pppp'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 7.14: Bars 315-317 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

Not only does Van Wyk circumscribe the dynamic range of the development between *pppp* and *p*, and subtly increase the tempo, but he also includes the instruction *spettrale* which means ghostly or spectral. The section functions as a contrast to the more forceful and energetic exposition and recapitulation sections and has a surreal and ghostly effect.



Figure 7.15: Bars 34-35 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

The development of *Ricordanza* likewise has an instruction suggestive of a dream scene in the term *sognando*, which means dreaming or dreamily. This development section is notable for again occupying a liminal space with irrational elements such as the end of it where motivic fragments appear in obscure guises:



Figure 7.16: Bars 45-46 of *Ricordanza* (Van Wyk 1984a)

It would be impossible to know whether Van Wyk detected the dreamlike psychological framework that Schubert used in his development sections, but it is interesting that his own approach to the form mirrors it. In the case of Van Wyk, these dreaming sections are irrational to a degree that one finds rarely in Schubert such as in the slow movement of the Piano Sonata in A major, D959 where, as Brendel puts it, ‘this eruption of the irrational must rank among the most daring and terrifying pages in all music’ (Brendel 2001, 159).

What I would put forth is that instead of seeking to utilise the binary of the rational and irrational or anti-rational, in Van Wyk we find a *concealment* of both. I argue that Van Wyk uses both the rational and anti-rational simultaneously creating what Wilding refers to as a tension between the triadic underpinnings of his complex and often dissonant harmonic structures. In this way, the rational and anti-rational problematise each other. Van Wyk takes pains to conceal his sectional forms through compositional devices like eliding phrases, and starting new phrases from the subsidiary materials of the preceding phrase. He conceals his harmonic progressions through the use of additional chord tones. His formal demarcations in his later compositions begin to forgo contrast in favour of integration; moving from a sectional form toward a continuous one. Thus, the rational techniques of composition, such as form and harmonic structure, and the irrational aspects of psychodrama that permeate compositions like *Night Music*, *Tristia* and *Ricordanza* are used to create music with an overriding sense of alienation, searching and subtlety.

On a more literal level, Van Wyk obscures his melodic content through thick textures and piano figuration, or by using his preferred *piano* dynamic.

Piece Name	Beats	Una Corda	pppp-pp	p-mp	mf-f	ff-fff
Pastorale	566	450	434	169	75	34
		79.51%	76.68%	29.86%	13.25%	6%
Capriccio	848	0	262	278	449	171
		0%	30.90%	32.78%	52.95%	20.17%
Night Music 1	425	367	385	260	9	0

		86.35%	90.59%	61.18%	2.12%	0%
Night Music 2	873	873	795	88	91	0
		100%	91%	10%	10.42%	0%
Night Music 3	382	4	314	192	71	31
		1%	82.20%	50.26%	18.59%	8.12%
Night Music 4	516	516	435	122	55.5	0
		100%	84.30%	23.64%	10.76%	0%
Night Music 5	242	66	165	114.5	35	0
		27.27%	68.18%	47.31%	14.46%	0%
Night Music 6	2130	492	797	555	956	145.5
		23.10%	37.42%	26.06%	44.88%	6.83%
Night Music 7	816	636	587.5	428	58	0
		77.94%	72.00%	52.45%	7.11%	0.00%

Table 7.1: Table showing the distribution of dynamics and *una corda* in *Pastorale e Capriccio* and *Night Music*

The above table is a representation of how much of the music is written within four dynamic parameters moving between *pppp* to *pp*, *p* to *mp*, *mf* to *f*, and *ff* to *fff*. An example of how this data was collected can be found in Appendix B which shows the data from the *Four Piano Pieces* (page 196). In all of these pieces, the louder dynamic ranges are always less than the softer ranges except in the extended sonata form movements - the ‘Capriccio’ and sixth movement of *Night Music*. The extremely soft dynamic range often accounts for over 60% of the musical material. Indeed, the second movement of *Night Music* is the most proportionally soft piece Van Wyk wrote for solo piano, with over 90% of it to be played *pianissimo* or softer. Part of this is because Van Wyk will give soft dynamic markings for textures within the music, but it does speak to an overall trend within the music toward being soft rather than loud. Further, the *una corda* is used extensively. This pedal, which lessens the number of strings the hammers strike or causes the hammer to strike less of the string, has the effect of thinning the sound. Van Wyk uses it for the duration of two movements of *Night Music*, and in every other piece from this time barring the virtuosic ‘Capriccio’.

Piece Name	Beats	Una Corda	pppp-pp	p-mp	mf-f	ff-fff
Dumka	502	27	174	175	204	74
		5.38%	34.66%	34.86%	40.64%	14.74%
Scherzino	254	0	59	99	92	55
		0.00%	23.23%	38.98%	36.22%	21.65%
Romanza	390	154	196	282	50	0
		39.49%	50.26%	72.31%	12.82%	0.00%
Toccata	910	0	247	355	339	108
		0.00%	27.14%	39.01%	37.25%	11.87%
Rondo desolato	485	350	308	184	51	0
		72.16%	63.51%	37.94%	10.52%	0.00%
Ostinato	266	266	148	67	124	74
		100.00%	55.64%	25.19%	46.62%	27.82%
Berceuse	219	128	126	130	35	0
		58.45%	57.53%	59.36%	15.98%	0.00%
Ricordanza	570	293	383	240	207	32
		51.40%	67.19%	42.11%	36.32%	5.61%

Table 7.2: Table showing the distribution of dynamics and *una corda* in *Four Piano Pieces*, *Tristia* and *Ricordanza*

The later works exhibit many of the same traits as the earlier. ‘Ostinato’ represents the work with the largest proportion of *fortissimo* playing, however this is undercut by the fact that even the *fortissimo* sections are to be played with the *una corda* depressed. Van Wyk avoids the very loud dynamic range, with it never accounting for more than 28% of a movement. In keeping with the theme of concealment, Van Wyk circumscribes his dynamic ranges and avoids loud and very loud sounds. He often asks for the piano to be played with the *una corda* pressed down, further dulling the sound. Despite tending toward thick as opposed to thin textures as Wilding notes (Wilding 2007, 144), Van Wyk asks the performer to hide much of the material.

In summary, the dream aesthetic in Schubert finds a parallel in the subconsciously informed aesthetic in Van Wyk. Instead of using binaries such as the contrast between dreams and reality or the rational and irrational, Van Wyk instead searches for transcendence from a space of liminality.

All the while, he undercuts what would be aesthetic binaries through processes of concealment. It might seem that one consequence of occupying a liminal space and concealing musical processes is that the music can seem colourless. However, this is not what occurs in practice. Within this liminal space, Van Wyk not only suggests different emotional casts but often explores these more fully. The consequence of operating from this space instead has the effect of making these explorations more profound. Likewise, the act of concealment lends these works a richness which makes them rewarding upon knowing them better.

Schubert Category	Relevant Musical Features	Van Wyk Category	Relevant Musical Features
Category 1: Ideal Dreams and Harsh Realities	Pastoral tropes Musical contrasts major/minor, consonance/dissonance, soft/loud, slow/fast momentum, attenuated/accentuated rhythm	Category 1: Search for Transcendence	Invocation of the past quotes from other composers, old dance forms Avoidance of sustained unambiguous musical character Forestalling moments of climax and sensuousness
Category 2: Dream States	Schubertian chromatic mediant Non-teleological repetitions and harmony plagal prolongations, hexatonic and octatonic cycles Continuous accompaniment patterns haze, tremolos, figuration often in a soft dynamic Often precipitated by transitional passages on the threshold of dream and reality	Category 2: Liminal States	The musical subject operates from the liminal threshold state musical characters are intimated to and glimpsed, but return to the liminal There is an inner conflict between simple form and triadic movement and complex realisations of these forms the conflicting aspects make it unable to occupy a single aesthetic space
Category 3: Irrational and Anti-rational Dreams	Use of sonata form Tonal subversion generically expected fifth-based tonal goals of the transition subverted by third based modulation Conflation of first and second practice harmonies	Category 3: Concealment of the Irrational and Rational	The simultaneous use of traditional forms and harmonic progressions is offset by the subversive expressionist harmonies and concealment of formal boundaries Dynamics and use of the pedal

Table 7.3: Table comparing my categories with those of Leong (Leong 2022, 118)

By deeply considering the metaphorical application of various facets of the dream aesthetic to writings about Schubert, Leong has shown that a single metaphor goes a long way in explaining how his music might be better understood. By adapting these categories so they apply to Van Wyk from my perspective as a performer who has knowledge of his piano works, I argue that the above are specific qualities in his music which can be metaphorically understood and function as guiding ideas in its interpretation.

Chapter 8

8.1 Reflections

I have often tried to picture Chopin as he really was, not from a study of the literature about him or from documentary evidence, but by living with his music. I have tried to call him into being, both spiritually and physically, consumed by his fever, by chaste but passionate torments, by that noble melancholy which runs throughout his music. Perhaps I am not entirely mistaken in claiming a semblance of reality for my assumptions (Cortot 1951, 75-76).

Interpreting a piece of music is like a palimpsest - an interpretation is done, undone, and redone again and again for as long as the performer plays that piece. Some of the intentions remain while others fall away. At one time, some aspect of a piece can seem very important while at other times, it seems less important. Interpretation can be an expansive process which opens up possibilities contained within, and suggested by, the score. The performer is concerned with judging how a performance might be better, balancing various considerations and employing techniques to accomplish these ends. Studying these works has left me with a sense of who Van Wyk was as a composer and pianist. Part of this is informed by my acquaintance with the literature surrounding him, including biographical materials like his letters and articles. Anyone familiar with these would recognise the pithy and ironic tone of his writings. However, through close contact with the music, and through the embodied experience of playing the music that he wrote and played, I have a sense of how he might have understood music and what it could mean. These insights occurred on different levels: namely, the *technical*, *intellectual* and *emotional*.

From a *technical* point of view, I deepened my understanding about how to play the piano through the demands that Van Wyk makes of the performer. Some of his musical demands required me to discover technical solutions in order to bring these to life.



Figure 8.1: Bars 113-115 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

In the above figure, Van Wyk requires that the trills in the upper part be played *pianissimo*. This led me to study how to better play trills. I did this by practising these trills extensively, trying various positions of the wrist, hand and fingers. Because these trills needed to be played softly, it became apparent that I would need to maintain contact with the keys in order to avoid any unwanted accents or unevenness. To borrow from Suchoff, the keys would need to be pressed as opposed to struck (Suchoff 1971, 13). I sought exercises to help develop this technique, finding the trill exercises from the *School of Advanced Piano Playing* by Joseffy, with the help of my piano teacher, Malcolm Nay:



Figure 8.2: Exercise 4 II from *School of Advanced Piano Playing* (Joseffy 1902)

Practising trills in this way helped me to improve my technique more generally and gave me a deeper understanding of the capacity for nuance that exists within trills and ornaments.

Similarly, the familiar instruction of *la melodia sempre in rilievo*, or other permutations of that idea, encouraged me to consider all the ways that a chord can be voiced.



Figure 8.3: Bars 8-13 of the 'Berceuse' from *Tristia* (Van Wyk 1984b)

Because of the density and variability of texture within these piano works, it became part of my practice to try and play chords and see if I were able to bring out each chord note in succession. This is not dissimilar to the exercise from *Exercises for the Independence of the Fingers* by Isidor Philipp, which asks the pianist to bring out the notes with larger heads:

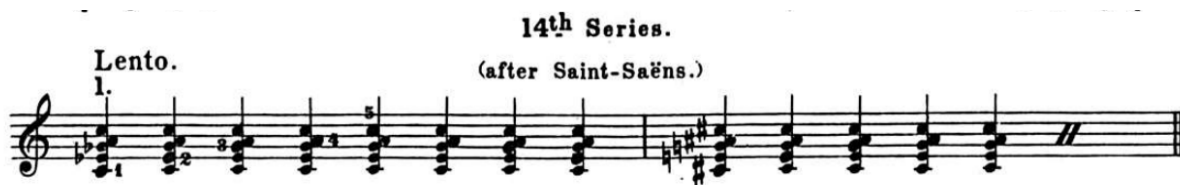


Figure 8.4: Exercise 1 of the 14th Series from *Exercises for the Independence of the Fingers* (Philip 1898)

Speaking more generally, trying to follow the articulation and accentuation markings Van Wyk wrote made me aware just how much variation is possible in terms of the sonority of the piano. When it came to musical nuance and inflection, Van Wyk always sought to make his music less obvious and square. Thinking about these aspects of my practice has enabled me to take a more detail-oriented and creative approach to all the music I play. The sophistication of his musical thinking challenged me, not only on a technical level, but also on an *intellectual* one.

It was an intellectual challenge for me to learn all this music. From start to finish, it was a long process. This was especially true during the initial stages where I was grappling with the notes

themselves. I would work for several weeks to develop enough fluency and familiarity with the music in order to consider it more carefully in terms of interpretation and expression. As this project progressed, I developed some helpful strategies in order to learn the music quicker. Interestingly, one of the most useful strategies was to try and memorise the music as quickly as possible. Part of this involved writing in fingerings and using these as a tool for memorisation.



Figure 8.5: Bars 5-12 of my score of the 'Toccata' from *Four Piano Pieces* (Van Wyk 1968)

Another method to facilitate memorisation was to try and understand the harmonic structures in a way that would be personally intelligible, if not analytically rigorous. For instance, in my own score of *Night Music*, in the first three bars of the fifth movement, I added chord symbols that helped me to quickly understand these structures. This was done in order to play the chords based on their shape and relationship to harmonies I know and can play. It enabled me to give a mental image to the chords based on an understanding of how the notes might relate to each other.



Figure 8.6: Bars 247-250 of my score of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

To explain my thinking, consider the progression starting from bar 247 and ending on the third quaver beat of bar 248.

Lento non troppo, teneramente ♩ = c.100

Chord progression for bars 247-248:

- Bar 247: E♭ major 7th, A7 add E♭, Em, G♭ major 7th, B♭9 add ♭9, E♭ major 9th, E♭ with suspension 4-3

Figure 8.7: Bars 247-248 of *Night Music* (Van Wyk 1964)

Using mainly jazz notation, I understood these chords to be the following:

Chord	Chord Spelling
-------	----------------

E $\flat$ major 7th	E $\flat$ -G-B $\flat$ -D
A dominant 7th with added E $\flat$	A-C $\sharp$ -E $\flat$ -G
E minor in first inversion with added A $\flat$	G-B-F $\flat\flat$ -A $\flat$ (with F $\flat\flat$ functioning as E)
G $\flat$ major 7th	G $\flat$ -B $\flat$ -F
B $\flat$ dominant 9th with flattened 9th	B $\flat$ -A $\flat$ -C $\flat$
E $\flat$ major with a suspension from 4-3	E $\flat$ -A to G-G
E $\flat$ major 9th with flattened 6th	E $\flat$ -C $\flat$ -F

Table 8.1: Table of harmonic structures in the fifth movement of *Night Music*

This process of analysing the music to form a mental picture of the notes was useful in learning and internalising these works. The pianist Angela Hewitt encourages these types of activities as a means of memorising a work, saying:

[...] the best memory work is done away from the keyboard – just looking at the score, memorising your fingering, the harmonies, the places where it's easy to go wrong, the intervals, how many notes there are in a chord, the dynamics, phrasing; nothing is too simple or evident to go unnoticed. You must visualise yourself playing the piece without being at a keyboard. Then go and play and you will be amazed by the progress you have made (Hewitt 2023, n.p.).

Playing this music from memory helped me to feel liberated to focus on the expression of the music, and the intellectual component allowed me to focus on the *emotional* content of these pieces.

It was a challenge to differentiate between the various colours, characters and emotional qualities in the music since Van Wyk often writes in an ambiguous or subtle way. In an interdisciplinary study undertaken by Margulis, Levine, Simchy-Gross and Kroger, the researchers found that listeners - in this case undergraduate psychology students - were directly influenced by extra-

musical information when exposed to expressive ambiguity in both poetry and music (Margulis et. al. 2017, 1). They conclude that:

[for] neither of the categories of artworks were the ambiguous excerpts preferred. On the contrary, disambiguation [...] produced the strongest increases in enjoyment and movingness. Although theoretical approaches have often extolled the value of ambiguity in creating rich, relevant, and multiply-interpretable works of art, this benefit does not seem to extend to expressive ambiguity. Instead, people seem to report more satisfying aesthetic experiences in response to works of art whose primary expressive cast is clear (Margulis et al 2017, 13).

Perhaps this phenomenon partly explains why Van Wyk compositions with tragic titles and associations have been more readily embraced, as Strauss argues (Strauss 2013, 523). The expressive ambiguity of the Van Wyk piano works is suggested in part by his harmonic language. Authors like Wilding are able to account for these harmonic structures by pointing out that ‘structural major or minor tonality is usually realized in the actual music as a triad with an added pitch, forming a seventh chord, a split-third chord, or an added-note chord’ (Wilding 2007, 142). However, Wilding and other scholars do not comment upon the emotional qualities of harmony, beyond Ribeiro suggesting that harmony plays an ‘expressive role’ (Ribeiro 2009, 27). For Adorno, alternative systems of tonality, such as the one developed by Scriabin, which seek to form their own systems of differentiation, often end up being ‘so restricted to a kind of dominant harmony that their effect is genuinely gray on gray’ (Adorno 2006, 63).

For a performer, this perspective can be disempowering. After all, there are emotional qualities that stand out in the Van Wyk pieces that are audible even to new listeners. In describing his first impression of hearing *Night Music*, Whyman touches upon several emotional qualities of the piece without knowing anything about Van Wyk or the poetic inspiration behind this composition:

[W]hat I hear is something very austere, very introverted – but also very self-abnegating. It’s hard to know what exactly the piece is trying to express, because it seems to be trying to represent an absence – the absence, indeed, of the very self who is doing the expressing. There is clearly a deep sadness – but sadness over what? Is Van Wyk heartbroken, grief-stricken, in despair? It is almost as if the piece is trying to tip-toe around its own subject matter (Whyman 2020, n.p.).

Schumann, speaking through the persona of Eusebius, wrote that ‘Durch tieferes Eindringen in die Geheimnisse der Harmonie hat man die feineren Schattierungen der Empfindung auszudrücken erlangt’ (Schumann 1914, 27)³². I believe that Van Wyk was attempting to communicate complex psychological states and sought to use his intuitively devised harmonic language to express these. Further, I believe that the ambiguity in the music is because these emotions are never simple or singular. Although the two composers were different in many respects, I believe that there is an overlap in how both Van Wyk and Schoenberg thought of the emotional content of their music. In a letter written to Busoni, Schoenberg described these emotional qualities writing:

And the results I wish for: no stylized and sterile protracted emotion. People are not like that: it is impossible for a person to have only *one* sensation at a time. One has *thousands* simultaneously. And these thousands can no more readily be added together than an apple and a pear. They go their own ways. [...] It should be an expression of feeling, as our feelings, which bring us in contact with our subconscious, really are, and no false child of feelings and “conscious logic” (Auner 2003, 70-71).

Van Wyk sought to express and organise the subconscious origins of his music through both technical finish and by using the structures and harmonic language of the music of composers he knew and loved as a basis for his compositions. The emotional colours of this music might indeed be thought of as grey on grey to borrow from Adorno, but through deeper familiarity with his music, it becomes possible to differentiate between these shades in order to see how they might be embodied in performance. Indeed, the shades become more vivid.

Furthermore, it is possible to discern how these various shades are suggestive of an overall structural arc within each piece as a whole - something that becomes more pronounced in his later works. Brendel sees this as a characteristic of Romantic music, writing that in this style, ‘[o]nly insight into the psychology of the piece can bring about the vision of form - form is disclosed by emotion’ (Brendel 2001, 46). For Van Wyk, this emotion was coloured by the concept of the

³² By penetrating deeper into the secrets of harmony one has achieved the ability to express the finer shades of feeling (my translation).

subconscious which he suggested was the source of his compositional materials (Muller 2014, 138).

Through this process, I formed an impression of Van Wyk through his music and reading about him. I had the sense that he felt misunderstood, being as serious as he was about music within the context of a society that was not always able to fully understand or appreciate his artistic self. It is common for both performers and composers to have insecurities and feel doubts, and Van Wyk was not immune to either. However, he had the courage to compose and perform despite not always winning approval for either. I believe that his music, though always technically complex and composed with artistic flair and finish, was informed by a subconscious desire to express himself. This expression is characterised by a searching quality and an alienation - and does not offer the performer or listener the prospect of either transcendence or dissolution into chaos, tending instead toward resignation. Lastly, I believe that Van Wyk conceived of music in a larger sense and that his forms are the result of an emotional arc which is not programmatic, but narrative in the sense it is a psychological progression through various emotional states.

8.2 Conclusion

As far as the choice of singer is concerned, if only she knew that I don't care a tupenny damn who sings the blasted songs. Even more: in the last resort I don't particularly, in my heart of hearts, want them sung at all. If only she'd realize that really once a [composition] is finished that's the end of the matter as far as the composer is concerned. It's only one's baser self that likes performances, nice things said about one's work and the rest of it (Muller 2014, 322-323).

Though this may not be completely reflective of how Van Wyk thought about the performance of his works, this extract from a letter he wrote in 1954 does suggest that for him composition and performance were separate activities.³³ On the one hand, composition entailed creating the music and codifying it within a score - a process that for Van Wyk often included extensive revising and reworking. On the other hand, performance involved playing the music in a way that was representative of the intention behind it, which was frequently associated with a psychological narrative, or 'sweep' as he called it (quoted in Ribeiro 2009, 18). Considering music from the perspective of a performer has allowed me to account for specific attributes that apply to a performance tradition for these piano works. Though this is a partial tradition defined by a single performer with a specific perspective, knowledge and experience, I believe that this perspective has not been fully explored in scholarship surrounding Van Wyk, and is able to supplement our understanding of these pieces.

The first aspect of this performance tradition relates to the scores themselves. In order to realise these scores, the performer must contend with what Wilding refers to as their 'initial unapproachable complexity' (Wilding 2007, 144). Often written over three or four staves, the performer must choreograph these pieces in order to render them. At this stage in the learning process, two important facets of these pieces become evident, namely, variety of touch and quality of sound. In keeping with the performance practice of the earlier twentieth century, as can be seen in the scores of Bartók or Debussy, Van Wyk makes use of a wide array of articulation markings.

³³ This letter was written to Freda Baron, a lifelong friend and mother figure to Van Wyk. Van Wyk was set to perform his song cycle, *Van lifede en verlatenheid* in Haifa, Israel as part of an ISCM conference. Chisholm, then the South African chairman of the ISCM, tried to prevent Van Wyk from performing with one singer in favour of another (Muller 2014, 322).

Based on these, it is clear that he was aware of the various ways that articulation can affect the sound and characterisation of piano music. These articulations, encompassing both the percussive and non-percussive touches, require distinctive approaches and differentiating between these enables the performer to widen their array of expressive colours.

In terms of dynamic range, Van Wyk prefers for his music to be mostly played softly. His textures are often thick, but the dynamic levels undercut this thickness. Music written in the *fortissimo* dynamic range or louder is rare, accounting for approximately 7% of all his piano music, while music written in the *pianissimo* range or softer represents 60% of it. Though this figure is somewhat misleading, since a portion of this *pianissimo* music occurs simultaneously with louder material as accompaniment or additional texture, it does demonstrate that Van Wyk calls for extreme delicacy much of the time. He also frequently calls for the use of the *una corda* pedal in order to thin out the sound, sometimes even in louder dynamic ranges. Despite the use of the *una corda* being so widespread, Van Wyk often writes his melodic material to be played *tre corde*, or without the *una corda* pedal depressed, such as in pieces like the ‘Berceuse’, or *Ricordanza*. This suggests that he wants performers to be capable of rendering not only lighter textures, but also playing with a full bodied tone for melodies. From both the articulation and dynamic markings, I believe the Van Wyk performance tradition encompasses a wide array of touches with an emphasis on dynamic control and subtlety. It requires a judicious use of both pedals, with Van Wyk being especially specific about the use of the *una corda*. Furthermore, Van Wyk writes in a way where his melodic lines can, and should, be allowed to predominate the texture.

Moving further into the realm of interpretation, Van Wyk frequently makes use of compositional techniques in order to both ‘sustain the span of a movement’ and hide the compositional ‘seams’ (Van Wyk 1958, n.p.). Some of these techniques include the use of non-triadic notes in his chords, eliding phrases, blurring formal lines and the use of non-repetitive melodic variation (Wilding 2007). These techniques are reflected in the sophisticated ways a performer might approach rhythm, tempo and melodic inflection. In some pieces, such as the ‘Capriccio’ or ‘Toccata’, there is a sustained sense of moving forward rhythmically. However, in the majority of these pieces, Van Wyk asks for rhythmic freedom in the form of *rubato*, as well as *ritardando* and *accelerando* markings. While some authors have suggested this is a remnant of Romanticism, I believe that

Van Wyk wants the performer to be ‘freed from the tyrannies of the bar line and of a fixed metre’ (Van Wyk 1958, n.p.). At other times, the performer is required to separate rhythmic cells in a way that does not necessarily correspond to the metre of the music. Van Wyk uses shorter slurs over rhythmic cells to make these distinctions clear, and this requires a subtle separation of these units to achieve the rhythmic effect they imply:



Figure 8.8: Bars 5-8 of the ‘Capriccio’ from *Pastorale e Capriccio* (Van Wyk 1956)

In a similar way, Van Wyk asks for his melodies to be inflected in novel ways, often subdividing his phrases in the process, despite writing these lines under long slurs. For instance, in Figure 8.9 below, the phrase between bars 17 and 21 is written beneath a long slur, suggesting that it is a single, sustained melodic idea. However, the dotted quaver D sharp in bar 19 sounds like the end of a phrase, and the undulating demisemiquaver melody which begins at the end of bar 19 can easily sound separate from what came before it. In interpreting this phrase, the performer is encouraged by the notation to inflect this melody in a way that simultaneously connects it as a single musical idea and, at the same time, emphasise specific notes in a way that is suggestive of shorter phrases. Furthermore, Van Wyk frequently gives his melodies expressive instructions, with

dolce, *espressivo* and *cantabile* appearing frequently in his scores, inviting the performer to use touch, dynamics and inflection in different ways to realise these instructions.



Figure 8.9: Bars 17-23 of the ‘Dumka’ from *Four Piano Pieces* (Van Wyk 1968)

These approaches to accentuating the musical material inform the performance tradition. Van Wyk took great pains that his music should avoid being literal, obvious, square or rigid. One of the key elements of playing this music successfully is to reflect this mercurial and imaginative approach through flexibility and creativity in its interpretation.

Scholars like Thom have spoken of the poetic inspiration for many of these pieces (Thom 2006). For instance, in the coda of *Night Music* and the ‘Rondo desolato’ from *Tristia*, Van Wyk uses poetry to inform his musical materials. He also incorporates music from other composers, such as using material from the Bach Prelude in D major, BWV 936 in *Ricordanza*. The use of these Schumannesque processes lends these pieces a tangle of extra-musical associations. Watkins notes that for Schumann, music was poetic due to the ‘profusion of non-musical ideas involved in its conception’ (Watkins 2011, 97), and the appeal of this music ‘lies not in its meaning, but in its promise of meaning’ (Watkins 2011, 87). The implication of these compositional techniques for the performer is more suggestive than prescriptive. That Van Wyk was inspired by various sources

suggests that the music held meaning for him beyond being organised sounds. Furthermore, I believe that though Van Wyk used these processes, the result always needed to be musically convincing.

These poetic processes find their echo in the emotional qualities of these works, coloured by the concept of the subconscious. The most exacting aspect of this performance tradition is the sensitivity and commitment required from the performer in order to plumb the psychological depths of these pieces. Through the use of poetic processes and invocations of the past, Van Wyk at once looks backwards toward the forms and conventions of earlier music, and subverts these traditions through his harmonic language and techniques of occlusion. By avoiding sustained and overt musical character, and forestalling moments of climax or resolution, Van Wyk writes music that is concerned with a search for resolution but does not find it. This is a quality Whyman recognises when he says, ‘I think of Van Wyk’s hands [...] taut and nervous, trembling instead of plunging the knife in’ (Whyman 2020, n.p.). Instead, these pieces operate from a liminal state where clearer expressive casts are glimpsed but just as quickly disappear from view. However, these shades of feeling are organised into structured narratives. By recognising, embodying and linking these various states into a meta-narrative, the performer can guide the listener through a journey disclosed by them. The subtlety and ambiguity of these colours are difficult to parse, but I believe they become clearer through a deeper identification and understanding of these pieces.

I tried to approach this project with curiosity, and not to let myself be unduly influenced by the literature surrounding Van Wyk. At the end of it, I am left with a profound respect for him as a composer and musician. It is difficult to say whether these piano pieces will ever become more widely loved or played. And yet, despite this, I believe that these compositions are valuable pieces of art from a composer with a unique point of view. Further, by undertaking this project I actually played these pieces publically, and grew to appreciate them myself. Their subtlety and complexity make them difficult to comprehend or know easily. However, having done so has not only helped me to improve my own skill as a performer but has been an intensely enriching experience. I believe that other performers would be able to add to my performance tradition by undertaking their own artistic journey with these pieces. Similarly, this method of study could fruitfully be

applied to the Van Wyk pieces for voice and piano which have the benefit of texts to study, or his other compositions.

In summary, the performance tradition for the Van Wyk piano works involves a precise approach to articulation, dynamic and expressive detail, and a flexible and creative approach to rhythmic and melodic accentuation. These pieces require the performer to be capable of executing complex and often technically demanding textures with precision and control. Likewise, the performer needs to be attuned to subtle musical colours and emotional musical qualities, and to organise these qualities across formal lines in order to underline the psychological narrative of these pieces. Throughout this project, I was able to glimpse in certain moments how these pieces might be brought to life on stage. When the details and the overarching form are able to merge, it makes for music that is deeply affecting and satisfying for both performers and listeners.

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RICORDANZA

(1973 – 79)

ARNOLD VAN WYK

Largo, molto espressivo, ♩ = c. 88

PIANO

pp *teneramente* *ppp* *una corda* *p* *aumentando* *f caloroso* *rit.* *p dim.* *Più cant.* *ppp* *p*

M1 M2 M3 M4 M5 M6

G1 G2 G3 G4 G5 G6 G7 G8 G9 G10 G11 G12 G13 G14 G15

H1 H2 H3 H4 H5 H6 H7 H8

5 10

legatiss. tre corde

m.s. sopra

*) ♩ = one octave higher
een oktaaf hoër ♩ = one octave lower
een oktaaf laer

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The musical score is presented in four systems. The first system shows the piano introduction with a tempo of Largo, molto espressivo, ♩ = c. 88. It includes markings for piano (pp), molto espressivo (tenderamente), and piano (ppp) with a 'una corda' instruction. The second system continues the piano part with a 'f caloroso' marking. The third system introduces the vocal part with a 'Più cant.' marking and a 'rit.' instruction. The fourth system shows the piano part with a 'legatiss.' marking and a 'tre corde' instruction. Various musical notations are present, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Annotations include letters M (melody), G (gesture), and H (harmony) with subscripts, and circled notes indicating specific features. A green box highlights a section of the piano part in the fourth system. A circular stamp from the University of Stellenbosch is visible in the bottom right corner.

Handwritten musical score with annotations. The score is divided into four systems, each with a treble and bass staff. Annotations include measure numbers (M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M14, M15, M16, M17, M18, M19), guitar fret numbers (G16, G17, G18, G19, G20, G21, G22, G23, G24, G25, G26, G27, G28, G29), and other markings (M, H8, H9, H10, H11, H12, H13, H14, *ppp ma distinto*, *p*, *p dolce*, *pp*, *mp*, *cresc.*, *f*, *rubato*, *dim.*, *mp cant.*, *cresc.*). Green boxes highlight specific musical phrases. Blue circles highlight specific notes or chords. A vertical line separates the first two systems from the last two.



Description of the Annotations

Grouping Accentuation	Description	Grouping Accentuation	Description
G1	Start of piece, introductory section and phrase	G16	End of principal theme and phrase, and accompaniment phrase
G2	End of phrase	G17	Start of accompaniment phrase
G3	Start of phrase	G18	Start of phrase
G4	End of sub-phrase, start of sub-phrase	G19	End of sub-phrase
G5	End of sub-phrase and phrase	G20	Start of sub-phrase
G6	Start of phrase	Rectangles in Bar 17-20	Accompaniment figures in consistent rhythmic groupings
G7	End of phrase	G21	End of sub-phrase
G8	Start of phrase	G22	Start of sub-phrase
G9	End of phrase	G23	End of sub-phrase and phrase
G10	Start of phrase comprising of sub-phrases	G24	Start of phrase
G11	End of introductory section, phrase comprising of sub-phrases	G25	End of sub-phrase
G12	Start of section, principal theme and phrase	G26	Start of sub-phrase
Rectangle in Bar 11-13	Salient accompaniment figure in the bass register	G27	End of sub-phrase
G13	End of phrase	G28	Start of sub-phrase
G14	Start of accompaniment phrase	G29	End of sub-phrase, phrase and section
G15	Start of phrase		

Melodic Accentuation	Description	Melodic Accentuation	Description
Line in Bar 0-1	Interval of a major 9th	M9	Melodic peak
Line in Bar 1-2	Interval of an octave	M10	Melodic nadir
M1	Melodic peak	M11	Melodic peak

Line in Bar 2	Interval of an octave	M12	Melodic peak
M2	Melodic nadir	M13	Melodic climax
M3	Melodic peak	M14	Melodic peak
Line in Bar 7-8	Interval of a major 9th	M15	Melodic nadir
M4	Melodic nadir	M16	Melodic nadir
M5	Melodic peak	M17	Melodic climax
M6	Melodic peak	M18	Melodic peak
M7	Melodic peak	M19	Melodic nadir
M8	Melodic peak		

Harmonic Accentuation	Description	Harmonic Accentuation	Description
Circled note in Bar 1	A or dominant pedal point	Circled figures in Bar 14	Expressive appoggiatura figures
H1	Intimation of A dominant ninth or dominant chord	Circled note in Bar 16	A or dominant pedal point
H2	Expressive dissonance	H8	Expressive appoggiatura figure
Circled chord in Bar 3	A major or dominant chord	H9	Expressive appoggiatura figure
H3	Pedal point on B flat	H10	D dominant seventh in first inversion
H4	Intimation of D major or tonic chord	Circled chord in Bar 19	G pedal point
H5	Expressive dissonance	H11	Expressive dissonance
Line in Bar 8	Pedal point on B flat moving to E flat	H12	G pedal point leading to C pedal point
Line in Bar 9	Pedal point on E flat moving to A or dominant pedal point	H13	C pedal point
H7	Intimation of D major or tonic chord	H14	F pedal point and intimation of F major as the new key
H8	Intimation of A major or dominant chord		

Appendix B: Parametric Analytical Data from *Four Piano Pieces*

Bar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	TOTALS
Quaver Beats	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	75
<i>Appassionato</i>					3	3	3	3																		12
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>					1	1		1	1	1		1									1	1			3	11
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>												3								1			1	3		8
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2		1	2			61
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>																		1			3	2				6
Bar	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49		
Quaver Beats	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	168	
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>	7	7	7	7	7	7	7														7	7	7	7	77	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>	7	7	7	7	7	7	5	7	7		4	4	4	4							7	7	7	7	105	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>							2			7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7					79	
Bar	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70					
Quaver Beats	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7				147	
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>	7	7	7																						21	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>	7	7	5	7	7	3	4	4	4										7						55	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>			2			4	7	7	7	7															34	
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>											7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7							56	
Bar	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82														
Quaver Beats	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3													36	
<i>Una Corda</i>	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3													36	
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3													36	
Bar	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102						
Quaver Beats	7	7	7	3	3	3	7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3					76	
<i>Una Corda</i>				3	3	3									3	3	3	3	3	3					27	
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>				3	3	3					1	1			3	3	3	3	3	3					29	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>										3			1	3											7	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>	7	7	7					3	3			1	2												30	
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>							7				3	2													12	

Analytical data for 'Dumka' from *Four Piano Pieces* (Van Wyk 1968)

Bar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18				TOTALS	
Crotchet Beats	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4				70	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>						1	4	4	4	3				1	3							20	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>	4	4	3	4	4	4				1	4	1		2	1	4	2					38	
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>			1									3	4	1				4				13	
Bar	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33								
Crotchet Beats	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4							60	
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>			2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4							50	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>			2	4	3	4	3	4	3	3		4	4	4	4	4						46	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>	2	1		1		1				1					4							10	
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>	2																					2	
Bar	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	
Crotchet Beats	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	88	
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>						3																3	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>				1	3	3	2														4	4	17
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>	4	3		1			1							1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		38
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>		1	4	2			1	4	4	4	4	4	4	3									35
Bar	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64														
Crotchet Beats	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4													36	
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>				4	2																	6	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>	4	4	4		2	2																16	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>						2	4															6	
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>								4	1													5	

Analytical data for 'Scherzino' from *Four Piano Pieces* (Van Wyk 1968)

Bar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	TOTALS
Quaver Beats	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	15	12	12	12	12	12	9	9	9	12	18	216
<i>Una Corda</i>									1	12	12	12	12	9	9	9	12	18	106
<i>Dolce</i>	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	15	3										102
<i>pppp to pp</i>	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	15	8		8		8	3	3	3	6	12	150
<i>p to mp</i>	12	12	9	12	12	6	12	15	4	12	12	12	12	7	8	8	11	6	182
<i>mf to f</i>			3																3
Bar	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32					
Quaver Beats	12	12	12	18	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12					174
<i>Una Corda</i>									12			12	12	12					48
<i>Cantabile</i>										12									12
<i>Calore</i>			12	18	6														36
<i>Appassionato</i>						12	3												15
<i>Espressivo</i>								3	12										15
<i>pppp to pp</i>									12			11	11	12					46
<i>p to mp</i>	12	10			6		12	12		12	12	12	12						100
<i>mf to f</i>		2	12	12	9	12													47

Analytical data for 'Romanza' from *Four Piano Pieces* (Van Wyk 1968)

Bar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22						TOTALS		
Quaver Beats	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5						111	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>									4	5	1				3				5		5		2							25	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>	1	4		5	5	5	4	4	1		4	4	4	5	2	5	4	4		4		5	3							73	
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>							1	1				1	1				1	1		1										7	
Bar	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47						
Quaver Beats	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	125	
<i>Incoloro</i>	5	5	5	5	1																									21	
<i>Dolce/Cantabile</i>																	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		40	
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	5	5	5	2						5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		86	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>					2	2	1				3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		67	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>							1					2	2	2														5		12	
Bar	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68										
Quaver Beats	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5							105			
<i>Dolce/Cantabile</i>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5																		50			
<i>Scherzando</i>															5	5	5			5	5	5							30		
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5					5	5	5			5	5	5							80		
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	1				5	5												70	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>												1	4					5	5											5	
Bar	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91								
Quaver Beats	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5						115		
<i>Robusto</i>												4	5	5	5					4	5		4	5						37	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>	5	5	5	5		5	5		5							2	2	5	1		1									46	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>					5			5		5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3		4	5	4	4	5							68	
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>																															
Bar	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112										
Quaver Beats	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5							105			
<i>Cantabile</i>																	5	5	5	5	5	5							30		
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>									5	5	5	5					5	5	5	5	5	5							50		
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>	2	2	5		5			2									5	5	5	5	5	5							46		
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>	3	3					5	3					5	5	5															29	
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>				5		5																								10	
Bar	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136							
Quaver Beats	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	120	
<i>Cantabile</i>	1																													1	
<i>Deciso</i>																			5	5							5			15	
<i>pppp</i> to <i>pp</i>	1			5	5	5	5	5	5																					31	
<i>p</i> to <i>mp</i>				5	5	5	5	5	5						4	5	5	5			4	5	5	5						68	
<i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>	5	5								5	5	5	5	1					5	5	1					5				47	
<i>ff</i> to <i>ffff</i>			5																												

Analytical data for 'Toccata' from *Four Piano Pieces* (Van Wyk 1968)

Appendix C: Excerpt from my Journal

Thoughts on Schumann's *Nachtstücke*

- Motivic and rhythmic connections

The sections within these pieces are linked by motivic and rhythmic means. These are often subtle and the connections are only revealed through creative practice and long-term exposure.

- Compositional techniques

Schumann made use of certain compositional techniques:

- Rhythmic cells - such as the dotted quaver - semiquaver rhythm that predominates Nos. 1, 2 and 4
- Melodic shapes that recur through contrasting materials - for example the descending melodic figures in No. 1, repeated notes in No. 2

Nachtstück No. 1

There is a strong compositional link between the initial theme and the first episode:

- Both consist of three crotchet beats, with the Schumannesque dotted quaver - semiquaver rhythm on the third beat
- The first three crotchet beats are melodically descending

There is a challenge in communicating the funereal atmosphere, maintaining pulse and sustaining the melodic line.

- The compositional background (see Watkins 2011) suggests that this piece is a type of funeral march. However, the length of the phrases calls for a tempo that can accommodate a coherent melodic line. There is a pull between playing slowly for the sake of characterising the music and playing faster to make the phrases long enough.
- Of the two recordings I listened to (Richter, Ashkenazy), I prefer Richter's slower tempo. But in performance, this might not come across as well. (Malcolm suggests that Richter often played slowly as a matter of obstinacy, and that his tempi could be exasperating for audiences, which Malcolm felt might be a danger with my own tempo.)

The climactic section is problematic because Schumann clearly indicates which parts must be *forte* and which *fortissimo*, but he has a crescendo from a *fortissimo* to a *forte* at the final cadence before the coda. The loud sections must be shaped correctly but also logically. Does one cut the sound at the start of the crescendo, or is the indication a warning to not play too loudly on the chords, or does the *forte* indication of each of the chords mean they should be underlined in the same way one would play a *sforzando*.

The articulation of this movement poses many questions. Should long notes be joined in the initial theme: should the crotchets on the fourth beat of the bar sustain until the following bar so as to differentiate them from the quaver chords? Are the quaver chords played *staccato* or played in such a way that they sound aspirated - ie long but with distinct gaps. In the same way, would a string player pluck these chords or simply use a detached style bowing?

The question of nuance and repetition becomes very poignant. In all these *Nachtstücke*, Schumann uses the rondo form and each iteration of the A theme seems to invite new nuances. Pauline and Malcolm have suggested various different nuances (one without nuance, played in a ghostly way; another pressing forward; another with subtle crescendi in each bar). The important thing is to decide which nuance to do, and then inculcate them through careful practice.

It is difficult to underline the harmonic ambiguity and dissonance of the recurring theme in performance. The quaver chords are not marked *staccato* but must necessarily be detached, but their dissonance is not immediately audible and the instability of the harmonic progression is not easy to communicate. How does one play a chord so that it is dissonant, and how does one underline consonance? How does one show a stable resolution versus an unstable one?

Più lento, spesso ritardando

1 *p*

Ped. Ped. Ped. # simile

mf

Bar 1: secondary diminished sevenths resolving to A minor (ii-vi)

Bar 2: ii - V with additional secondary diminished sevenths

Bar 3: first intimation of C major with Ib, Vc, I resolving to a secondary dominant

Bar 4: ii - Vb

Bar 5: same as bar 1 with doubled bass

Bar 6: same as bar 2 with doubled bass

Bar 7: similar to bar 3

Bar 8: IC - V - I cadence in C major

There are many additional chords - borrowed and secondary. To characterise these chords in a meaningful way in performance or to show instability is a difficult task for the performer. The better tools would be quality of sound, articulation, how the chords are placed and subtle body language for example by trying to communicate the grandness of the cadence in bar 8.

Playing LEGATO (see Doğantan-Dack 2017).

This is a complicated topic for a number of reasons - the result is a sounded entity above all. It is a specific expressive mode that a performer can feel when correct, and when not correct. It is the connection of sound that is done by means of the fingers, pedal and by the pressure applied to the

keys. It is an expressive mode because the performer uses physiological, aural and instrumental techniques to ensure that the sounds are connected and form a coherent phrase. Moreover, the phrase must have a direction and a point. Phrasing is an important consideration and one of the touchstones of classical music performance - because the notes and rhythms of a phrase are written with additional expressive indications, the performer is able to turn their attention to *how* a phrase is played (see Barolsky 2007). This type of playing can be revealing in and of itself - witness how the playing of the Chopin sonata finale could suggest new insights to the analyst instead of the other way around as is often bemoaned (Barolsky 2007).

In specific keyboard textures such as the first episode, it requires a specific way of playing these chords:



The uppermost voice can only be sustained by means of pedalling or substituting the top note of the chord with the fifth finger so as to play the subsequent chord with the fourth finger - this is how an organist might play it legato. This also involves giving more weight to the highest note of the chord and transferring the weight to each subsequent chord. The melody must come out within the thicker texture. Additionally, the melody must not only be legato but must be shaped.

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