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PUTTING IT DOWN: the Making of a CD with

Special Reference to Hendrik Hofmeyr's

Notturno Elegiaco for Piano Trio

Malcolm Nay

A research report submitted in the Music Division of the Wits School of Arts in completion of the requirements of the Degree of

Master of Music

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

SEPTEMBER 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DECLARATION

I would like to express my most sincere appreciation to the following persons who assisted me in the completion of this research project:

Prof. Jeanne Zaidel Rudolph: my supervisor - for her unwavering enthusiasm and commitment to this project. Her perceptive insights, thoughtful suggestions and clarity of intellectual vision have enabled me to broaden my own intellectual capacities. Her belief in my ability to 'put it down' and to bring this project to fruition has encouraged me to continue researching, producing papers and ultimately to register for a Doctorate. I wish further to thank Prof. Zaidel Rudolph's husband, **Prof. Michael Rudolph** and their family for allowing me the important time with Jeanne and space in their home on so many occasions.

Dr Federico Freschi: for his uncompromising and fastidious focus, his highly critical faculties that hone in on retaining only what is relevant to the research topic; this has been enormously helpful and enabling in the completion of this study. I could not have wished for a better co-supervisor.

Prof Hendrik Hofmeyr: for his unstinting generosity both with his time and expertise, and his willingness to share his brilliant insights and private musical space – this is much appreciated.

Kevin Barnes: for giving of his time and expertise unstintingly with a commitment and dedication of a true friend. His consistent belief in my abilities and his encouragement has spurred me on to complete this enormously fulfilling project –thank you!

Prof. Mary Rorich: who encouraged me, particularly at the inception of this research project, and with whom I spent valuable time planning the parameters and direction of this research. Her help and guidance with the formulation of the proposal was the bed-rock of this research project - my grateful thanks.

Nicolette Richard: for undertaking the difficult job of proofreading and her helpful suggestions, which were incorporated in the final version of this research report.

Irene Reverschon and **Craig Morrison:** for their enthusiasm, ongoing support and interest.

I hereby declare that this is my own research.

Malcolm Nay

Student Number: 7853801

_____ Date:_____

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Trio Hemanay CD **inside back cover**

Introduction

The broad structure of this reflexive essay is twofold: First I discuss my experience of making a compact disc (CD) recording with the Trio Hemanay, which consists of three performer-musicians – Marian Lewin (cello), Helen Vosloo (flute) and myself, Malcolm Nay (piano), and second I offer an analysis of Hendrik Hofmeyr's *Notturno Elegiaco for Piano Trio*, a work composed specifically for the Trio Hemanay,.

I draw on writings of other performers and recording artists, who have contemplated and engaged with the recording process, in order to place myself, the Trio and our music-making within a South African context. I further contextualise the Trio with reference to other well-known performing ensembles in South Africa.

I refer to the inception and constitution of the Hemanay Trio and give some insights into aspects that inform the aesthetics and rationale of its establishment and existence. I also discuss the practicalities of financing and producing such a recording, and the extent to which non-musical issues inevitably impact on the artistic outcome. I further elaborate on the value of documenting music through recordings, both from a personal and from an objective perspective, and I reflect on what I have learnt from the recording experience; where relevant, I collate this with the experience of my two colleagues. In Part II, I offer an analysis of the musical content and a stylistic scrutiny of Hendrik Hofmeyr's *Notturno Elegiaco*, recorded by Trio Hemanay on the CD under discussion (the only current recording of this work).

This essay is written in a narrative form, which allows me to discuss the inception of the recording, the development of the process and the elements that have contributed to the acquisition of greater insights for both me and for the Trio, all of which may influence future projects.

PUTTING IT DOWN: the Making of a CD with Special Reference to Hendrik Hofmeyr's *Notturno Elegiaco for Piano Trio*

PART I

The Recording Process versus Live Performance

The essence of a live performance can be located in the relationship between the performing artist and the composer, as well as in the aural and visual contact between the performer and the audience. In a recording, however, this visual contact is absent, as is the elusive and subtle awareness that the music is taking place in the presence of the audience.

It is impossible for a performer, in a live concert situation, to recreate the music in precisely the same manner from one concert to another. Even consistent performers such as the pianist Alfred Brendel, with sincere and reliable intentions, will render a performance that differs from his previous performances. He has, in fact, produced three separate and different recordings of the Beethoven Sonatas throughout his career. These are: 'Vox Cycle' (1960s), 'First Phillips Cycle' (1970s) and 'Second Phillips Cycle' (1990s). The performances on all three recordings of the Sonatas are underpinned by the same overriding vision and interpretive concept; however there are many subtle differences in tempi, dynamics, nuances and articulations.

The responsibility of the performer in a concert is to combine and balance the freedom afforded him to present original and different interpretive ideas whilst at the same time maintaining the integrity required to reproduce the score in the most honest, responsible and informed manner possible. It is impossible to recapture or replicate the spontaneous quality of a good performance since the intangible aural experience dissipates and exists in the subjective musical memory of both the performer and the listener.

Recording technology commenced in the 1900s with the advent of the valve in 1906 which, as Peter Johnson notes, facilitated the following recording technologies: acoustically recorded shellac disc (1900 - 25); electrically recorded shellac disc (1925-54); monophonic vinyl LP (1950 to c.1960); stereophonic

vinyl LP (1958 to c. 1985); and modern digital recording starting with the CD in the early 1980s (Johnson 2002, 198).

The early recordings, although technically distorted and flawed by the recording process, suffered from less intervention and manipulation by the producer (ibid). When doing a re-take of the music in the early period of recording, the performer was obliged to repeat large sections of the work (indeed sometimes entire movements) leaving the player susceptible to more inaccuracies and slips. The nervous tension experienced by early recording artists is succinctly expressed by the great pianist, Artur Schnabel.[1] He described his experience of entering the recording studio in the early 1930s as the equivalent of walking into a 'torture chamber':

> I felt as though I were being harried to death. Everything was artificial-the light, the air and the sound…. My body is too weak for this process. I was close to a breakdown and almost wept on the street (Saerchinger 1957, 224).

In explaining what Schnabel perceived as the practical limitations of the recording process, he observed: "It is almost impossible to play with the mechanical exactitude which is required for a definitive, never-to-be changed performance without sacrificing some measure of concentration and freedom". In other words the spontaneity gets lost in the process - and furthermore, "It remains a lie. Man cannot be deprived of his soul; and the machine cannot be given a soul - The boundaries between them cannot be effaced" (Saerchinger 1957, 224).

Digital recording technology, which has the potential to replace and fix one single 'wrong' note without the performer even having to sing or play the note, has now become a fundamental aspect of this century. Although the sophisticated advances in recording techniques allow for the manipulation of many aspects of the final musical product – for example, balance between various instruments, enhancement of the resonance of different instruments, amplification of the voice – the listener seems to accept the recording as an accurate and credible reproduction of the performer's musical persona (Johnson 2002, 197). The endless possibilities afforded to a performer by the recording engineer's manipulations have the potential

[1] It is important to note that Schnabel's recordings were made before the advent of editing by 'splicing' small sections in a 'cut-and-paste' fashion, which became possible with the invention of the tape recorder.

to enhance his performance to a level beyond his capabilities. In his book, *Maestros, Masterpieces & Madness*, Norman Lebrecht refers to the renowned German pianist, Wilhelm Kempff as a "studio master… whose records entered thousands of homes". In stark contrast to his studio recordings, Kempff's stage persona failed to communicate the authoritative conviction found on these recordings:

> Lacking stage magnetism, he did not visit London or New York till 1951 and many who queued for hours to hear Kempff repeat his estimable studio interpretations came away feeling defrauded. Where was the raptness, the subtle variations of colour, when this nondescript little fellow sat upon an empty platform? Kempff, they complained, was a synthetic invention- a soloist who could never have flourished before the anonymity of recording. His fame came from work done in the dark (Lebrecht 2008, 8).

The converse is often the case: many musicians play spectacularly in live concert situations, but this is not evident in their studio performances.

The Rumanian pianist, Dinu Lipatti, both recorded and performed live superlatively. His recorded legacy is relatively small, but is regarded by musicians as exceptional. In his article, "Prince of Pianists", Mark Ainley writes: "The bold and profoundly inspiring nature of Dinu Lipatti's pianism continues to move lovers of fine piano playing the world over" (www.markainley.com/music/classical/lipatti/prince_of pianists, accessed 20 August, 2008). His student, the Hungarian pianist Bela Siki, my mentor in America between 1981 and 1982, informed me that the recording of Ravel's *Alborado del Gracioso* from 'Mirroirs' was made whilst Lippati was 'fooling around' in the studio between takes of other works. The recording engineer captured the work without Lippati's knowledge, resulting in a spontaneous and exciting rendition characteristic of his live concert performances.

Brendel writes that "the ability to convince the public in the concert hall is quite independent of absolute perfection. The studio is ruled by the aesthetics of compulsive cleanliness" (Brendel 1990, 200–201). The 'compulsive cleanliness' alluded to by Brendel has set up certain expectations in the listening public, who have, for example come to expect recordings that exhibit perfect accuracy in terms of immaculate intonation, tonal quality and faultless technical delivery of the notes, especially in all virtuoso passages. A favourite CD will likely be repeatedly played. This repetition has the problematic potential to reinforce the perception by the listener that this recording is a definitive and authoritative rendition of a particular work.

However, in spite of the limitations of electronic and digital recordings to be discussed later in the essay, the immense advantages in terms of documentation far outweigh the disadvantages, since recordings are the only means for creating an archive of musical performance. Additionally, they record and capture the distinctive musical characteristics and unique sound of great musicians. The recorded legacy, dating from the 1930s, of pianists such as Artur Schnabel and Alfred Cortot, faithfully indicate the unedited and quintessential characteristics of these musicians, as repeated takes were rare during that period. Recording at that time was rather a means of 'putting something down', creating an aural memory similar to a photographic image for posterity. Indeed Schnabel's and Cortot's recordings are riddled with wrong notes. When asked to repeat a 'smudgy' passage during a recording session, Schnabel famously replied, "I could play more perfectly, but I could not play better" (Morrison 1993, 5).

In an article in *High Fidelity Magazine* in 1966 entitled 'The Prospects of Recording', Glenn Gould states:

> I herewith reaffirm my prediction that the habit of concert-going and concert-giving, both as a social institution and as a chief symbol of musical mercantilism, will be as dormant in the 21st Century as, with luck, will Tristan da Cunha's Volcano; and because of its extinction music will be able to provide a more cogent experience than is now possible (www.collectionscanade.ca/glenngould, accessed 6th December 2006).

Gould withdrew from the concert platform for a variety of personal reasons. His obsessive need for perfection and his desire to control every aspect of a performance led to his reclusive retreat into the recording studio, where he exercised maximum control over the final recording result. His narcissistic projection that concerts would cease to exist and his funereal predictions about the future of live performances, have thankfully not come to fruition. In fact, as Brendel notes, "Concert halls continue to be the setting for the most vivid music-making" (Brendel 1990, 202).

Gould presents a cogent argument for his belief that recording is an inevitable touchstone for the future of music. His notion about the influence of recordings on performance practices has proved correct, in that the future of performances would be rooted in recordings since sound technology would develop in influence and sophistication. He stresses the value of archival recordings, both in terms of source material and the potential influence these have for performing musicians. He further states that the enormous range of music which the musician will encounter in recordings will enhance his/her own interpretations and influence the choice of repertoire. He also promotes an alternative approach to playing, one that is

informed by recordings and playing that is no longer concerned with the projection of sound to the back of the concert hall. Instead he advocates a more limited range of dynamics and expression, one that is more intimate, "an acoustic with a direct and impartial presence, one with which we can live in our homes on rather casual terms" (www.collectionscanade.ca/glenngould, accessed 6th December 2006).

Recording has become an important facet in the furthering of any musician's career. Indeed, there is a limit to the amount of concerts that can be given by any one performer or group. A CD, however, has the potential to afford a performer increased exposure and recognition. The popular Internet site *You Tube* (http://www.youtube.com/), contains video and recorded material of famous and lesser-known musicians. The 'hit count' on these sites suggests that certain famous musicians' performances are being accessed on a continual basis throughout the world.

A recorded album or CD used to have a certain exclusivity attached to it for a number of reasons. Only the very best performing talents were accepted by the prestigious recording companies such as EMI, Sony, Columbia and His Masters Voice since their fame and status largely guaranteed excellent financial returns for both the artists and the company. New young artists who were offered recording contracts were therefore virtually guaranteed a performing career.

The cost of producing a CD used to be prohibitively expensive since only professional studios could master the necessary music collections from which good quality copies could be made. With the burgeoning advances in technology, it has become easier and quicker for any individual with reasonably good home studio recording equipment and computer software to almost single-handedly manufacture a good quality CD.

An exploration of *You Tube* reveals recordings of Beethoven's *Für Elise* played by rank amateurs, and indeed it has become possible for any performer at any stage of his/her musical development to make a CD and get it heard and viewed on the Internet. For the professional musician, however, the release of a CD provides him/her with a certain status, derived from the knowledge that the product will be sold in CD outlets, with the potential for radio broadcasts and that s/he is in a position to accept critical public appraisal of the product. It is further an expression of pride in his/her performing capabilities and provides a sense of self worth. In addition, a CD has the potential to reach a much larger audience than a single

concert. This has been demonstrated by the Trio Hemanay, whose CD has been widely broadcast on classic music stations in South Africa and consequently reaches many more people than could possibly be present at a single concert.

The Trio Hemanay CD has received several positive local reviews. It was favourably reviewed by the music critic, Paul Boekooi in a review entitled 'These South Africans Are As Good As the Best':

> It happens seldom enough that one's reactions and convictions about South African classical musicians can be focused so positively that one dares without diffidence to compare them with the foremost international exponents in their craft. The three musicians' first collective CD combines more than two centuries of music – from the Classical period to our own time – with such exuberant proficiency in and a deeply lived through feeling for almost every one of the six composers' music, that the experience will carry you away and even elicit repeated listening. It's a mere illusion that such a need is totally normal: it is rather most unusual (Translation from the Afrikaans by Boekkooi, 2007).

In spite of this complimentary appraisal, we are aware of the fact that we still have to evaluate and assess the CD as objectively and honestly as possible. The final product allows one to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of the music making. In this way the recording has enabled the Trio to grow in confidence and to improve technically and interpretively for future performance ventures.

Chamber Music

The Chamber Music genre has been the vehicle for some of the most sublime and profoundly beautiful music penned by great composers for nearly two hundred and fifty years (Zaidel-Rudolph 2005, 1). Goethe, in referring to music for small and intimate ensembles, in particular the 'hallowed' string quartet likened this genre to a "discussion between four intelligent people" (Várnai et al 1983, 172). This profound insight into the nature of chamber music, as an intelligent discourse between the performing musicians, contrasts markedly with the dictionary definition which foregrounds chamber music as: "The delight of the performing amateur and of the listening connoisseur" (Scholes 1955, 169). The aesthetic, performance aspirations and ethos of the Trio Hemanay is informed by Goethe's notion of an 'intelligent discussion'.

Chamber music, as the term is understood today from the advent of Haydn's early works (ca.1750) up to the present day, demands a level of technical and musical prowess and proficiency that firmly places it in the hands of highly trained professional musicians. As a 'symphony for a small group of instruments' the perception and difficulties involved in interpreting and performing this music successfully require a totally different mindset far removed from the 'amateur' (Scholes 1955, 169).

In South Africa there are currently several professional Chamber Groups - not of the 'ad hoc' variety, but rather ensembles such as the Hemanay Trio that have worked together over a number of years. Representative of these are the Sontonga String Quartet, the Rosamunde String Quartet, the Odeion String Quartet, the Soweto String Quartet, the Musaion Trio, the Kerimov Piano Trio and Two Pianists (Piano Duo). Also worthy of mention is the Buskaid Ensemble. While this group cannot be defined as a chamber ensemble, they are, however, relevant to a discussion regarding the recording of local music as they are a string orchestra which has recorded several CDs. In order to place the Hemanay Trio in the context of a local cultural milieu, therefore, I shall briefly discuss the groups mentioned above.

The Buskaid Ensemble, a charitable trust, is a classical music project which was initiated by the violist, Rosemary Nalden in 1998. Nalden initially worked in London for many years under the famous British conductor, Sir John Elliot Gardener. The concept of Buskaid was initiated in 1992 when Nalden, in response to a BBC radio interview, highlighted the difficulties of a group of young string players in Diepkloof, Soweto. Nalden enlisted the support of over a hundred of her colleagues who participated in a simultaneous 'busk' in March 1992 at 16 British Rail stations and raised 6,000 pounds. She subsequently started a permanent String Ensemble in Diepkloof in 1998.

Since its inception it has grown from an initial group of approximately 18 players to the current number of 70 students, whose ages range from six to twenty-seven, all of whom are representative of the formally disadvantaged Diepkloof community. The ensemble has toured extensively, both nationally and internationally and has produced four CDs – 'A Sowetan Kid's Christmas', 'Soweto Dance', 'Tshwaranang', and 'Buskaid Live!' A fifth CD, 'Crazy', is soon to be released. The CD titles suggest the market-orientated intentions of the project – all have a certain sympathetic and populist public appeal. Funding, which is essential to the sustainability of this project, is derived from "corporate sponsorship and individual donations, as well as from CD sales" (www.buskaid.org.za, accessed 30 May, 2008).

The performances of this group are of a high standard for student players. They received "standing ovations and a rave review from *Le Monde*" (ibid) after performing in Paris in February 2008. However they are nevertheless still amateur musicians, not dependant financially on performing at a peak professional level.

The Sontonga Quartet was formed in 2002 and named in recognition of Enoch Sontonga, the composer of part of the present South African National anthem, *Nkosi Sikelel i'Africa.* It established itself as one of the foremost professional string quartets in South Africa, performing both the classical and contemporary repertoire. The Quartet performed world premieres of several South African composers, including works by Kevin Volans, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph and Peter Louis van Dijk and its repertory consisted of more than 30 works by South African composers. Their commitment to promoting the best of South African art music throughout the country and abroad parallels Trio Hemanay's similar dedication to ensuring local and international exposure of South African music.

Until its disbandment in 2006, the young, vibrant and highly successful Sontonga Quartet, consisting of Mark Uys (violin), Waldo Alexander (violin) Pieter van Dijk (viola) and Edward McLean (cello), was the first and only independent, full-time professional classical chamber group in South Africa. In spite of their prolific repertoire of South African compositions, it is highly regrettable that not one work was 'put down' in CD format – to the detriment of South African composers and audiences (Telephonic interview with Marc Uys, 30 July, 2008). Given the time, dedication and expertise needed to acquire and record this specific South African repertoire, the likelihood of any string quartet replicating this considerable feat in the future is highly unlikely. This has led to an archival vacuum and there is now a lack of recordings of quality South African string quartets. This situation was a further catalyst for Trio Hemanay's commitment to record their repertoire of South African compositions, and especially those that were dedicated and/or commissioned for them.

The Odeion String Quartet is the only permanent string quartet in this country that is attached to a University. This 'Quartet-in Residence' was formed in 1991, but has recently been reconstituted with new faculty members as a result of previous members retiring from the quartet and the university. Professor Frederick Fourie, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State, articulated the aims of this quartet:

“The Odeion String Quartet also plays an important strategic role in the development of symphony orchestra music and classical music training in the Free State. This is why a real attempt was made to obtain top class musicians” (www.ufs.ac.za, accessed 22 May 2008).

Many ensembles abroad are affiliated to universities or conservatoires, which affords the members time for preparation and study of repertoire. This usually results in a high performance level and the Odeion Quartet is expected to rehearse for a minimum of four hours daily (ibid). This is an ideal arrangement for optimal performance levels, and one that is not often granted to other ensembles, especially Trio Hemanay, whose members are currently geographically dispersed.

The Soweto String Quartet, a group of black musicians comprising of Sandile Khemese (Violinist & Music Director), Thami Khemese (Second Violin), Makhosini Mnguni (Viola) and Reuben Khemese (Cello) became a full-time professional ensemble in 1992, at a time when South Africa was in the throes of dramatic change. Commenting on how the changes affected the band, Sandile stated: "The elections in 1994 turned everything around for us. Our first really important gig was actually at President Mandela's inauguration. That was very emotional, but it was also the turning point for our career. The President even started recommending us for all sorts of other jobs"
(www.entertainment-online.co.za/band_soweto_string_quartet.html, accessed 15 August 2008).

Perceptions of and interest in the chamber music genre has undergone a shift – these Soweto string players have popular appeal since they present an exotic and multi-cultural brand of accessible hybrid music. By incorporating African folk and popular elements into the standard Western music repertoire, they have attracted a much broader audience to what was essentially a Western Classical music format. “The Soweto String Quartet takes a genre hallowed in Western music and creates an entirely new repertoire for it” (Klatzow 2004, 135). The Hemanay’s repertoire while quite diverse, does not include any popular light music arrangements or hybrid genres, as we have confined ourselves to the performance of Western art music, including contemporary South African compositions.

The Musaion Trio was formed in 2001 and was the resident Trio of the University of Pretoria for about three years. It comprised Malcolm Nay (piano) – Music Division, School of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Zanta Hofmeyer (violin) and Helen du Plessis (cello), both of the School of Music,

University of Pretoria. This Trio has performed at major venues nationally as well as in Holland, but has been in abeyance for five years, since du Plessis has been studying in America. She will be returning to South Africa later in 2008, at which stage the Trio will resume performing and will make its first CD recording in 2009.

The Potch Trio consists of Francois du Toit (piano) of the College of Music (University of Cape Town), Piet Koornhof (violin) and Human Coetzee (cello), both of the School of Music, Northwest University. It is an ensemble 'in residence' at Northwest University, Potchefstroom. The members have "a preference for 'exotic', i.e. lesser known but accessible works of the 20th Century" (www.puk.ac.za/opencms/export/puk/html, accessed 22nd July 2008). A CD recording of works by the Armenian composers, Arno Babadjanian and Peteris Vasks, has recently been released. Unlike Trio Hemanay, their repertoire contains few original South African compositions.

The Kerimov Trio for violin, cello and piano comprising Christopher Duigan (piano), Elena Kerimova (violin) and Boris Kerimov (cello) is a Kwa-Zulu Natal-based ensemble, which was formed in 2000. Similar to Trio Hemanay, the Kerimov Trio has performed extensively throughout the country at important festivals and venues and has gained a popular following as a result of the Trio's high standard of performance. Their repertoire is wide and varied, and in a further parallel with Trio Hemanay they have a commitment to performing contemporary South African works. This is evidenced by the world premières of three new works which were commissioned for them by New Music South Africa, performed at the New Music Indaba in 2006 at the Grahamstown Festival (www.musicrevival.co.za, accessed 22nd July 2008).

Interviewed telephonically, Christopher Duigan (28th July 2008,) spoke of the Kerimov Trio fulfilling the dual aim of performing first the standard classical repertoire of music from the Baroque period through to modern Russian, Siberian and Armenian composers and second the more accessible and popular traditional Russian folk music, gypsy music and popular vocal arrangements of opera and operatic arias with the South African Baritone, Federico Freschi. They have recorded two CDs entitled 'Gypsy Violin' and 'Moscow Nights'.

Two Pianists – comprised of Nina Schumann and Luis Magalhaes – is a wife and husband piano duo based at the Stellenbosch Conservatory of Music, University of Stellenbosch that has had wide exposure both nationally and internationally. Their first CD, produced in 2007, is 'The Complete Works for Two Pianos' by Sergei Rachmaninoff. Of specific relevance and interest to this particular research report is the fact that both artists participated in a video recording which documented the process of this production. This recorded interview is released in disc form and accompanies the CD. Having viewed the video of this articulate duo elaborating on their choice of repertoire and the diverse challenges facing them in making their recording, I was impressed by the similarities as well as the significant differences between their experience and that of the Trio Hemanay in the recording process. Whilst one of the rationales of this essay is to document the recording process for Trio Hemanay, it is worthwhile to reflect on certain salient points elucidated by Schumann and Magalhaes pertaining to the production of their CD:

- The choice of repertoire was informed by the fact that Rachmaninoff is a composer whose music is both pleasing to the audience and pianist alike. Furthermore, a factor governing this choice of repertoire was the fact that, until their recording, there had been no complete recording of Rachmaninoff's two-piano oeuvre.
- Similar to the recording of the Trio Hemanay CD, the production team was small. However, although budgetary constraints were not discussed on their video, there apparently were sufficient funds to enable them to fly out a sound engineer from Deutche Gramophonen in Germany to record and produce the CD.
- The Endler Hall at the University of Stellenbosch has one of the finest acoustics worldwide, which makes it a desirable but expensive venue for performances and recordings. The fact that both pianists are employed by the University meant that this venue was available to them. Additionally, the Endler Hall is equipped with the latest and most sophisticated equipment in the country.
- The Endler Hall has two new Bösendorfer full concert grand pianos of exceptional quality which were anonymously donated in 2006.

Factors such as the expertise of the sound engineer, the superb acoustic quality of the hall, the high-quality of the pianos and recording equipment contributed to a product of exceptional quality which is clearly aimed at international as well as local markets. These advantageous circumstances were not available to

Trio Hemanay due to severe budgetary constraints, and the resultant technical quality of the recording does not compare with the technical recording excellence of the Two Pianists' CD, 'The Complete Works of Rachmaninoff'.

PUTTING IT DOWN - THE HEMANAY TRIO

Background

> Here we have three musicians with obvious soloist characteristics, as proven through the years, but together they form one of the very few ensembles here who can compete in the international market. Apart from their spirited music making grounded on firm technique, one finds spontaneity and discipline (Thys Odendaal, Beeld, August 1999 translated by Helen Vosloo).

This affirmation by a well-known South African music critic endorses the Trio's status as one of South Africa's preeminent ensembles and situates it within the professional realm of chamber music-making in South Africa. In support of this assertion, numerous quotes from reviews will be referred to in the body of the essay.

Trio Hemanay was established in 1997, at a time when the members all resided and worked in Johannesburg. There was an immediate rapport between the three of us, and our objective from the outset was to achieve a high standard of music-making that would exhibit the qualities of both professionalism and musical integrity. This objective is unattainable without regular, intensive rehearsals and vigorous and open exchange of views between the members of the group. We did not wish to meet intermittently with the aim of just performing in ad hoc 'gigs'[2] but wanted rather to become a more established, recognisable ensemble. Confirmation of the attaining of our goals came in the form of an affirming review by Paul Boekooi in the daily Festival review newspaper, *Cue*, in which he refers to our first appearance together at the Grahamstown Festival in 1998: "Trio Hemanay, with their elevated musicianship, show us the way….Trio Hemanay gives us chamber music of the highest standard" (Paul Boekkooi, 1998).

[2] A colloquial term used by popular musicians who are hired for specific music entertainment events, including recording sessions, on an ad hoc basis.

Regular concerts at major venues and festivals in South Africa continue, allowing the Trio to maintain an important role in the contemporary art music scene. Important performances that have established the Trio's reputation have been repeated appearances at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, the Cape Town Music Society, the Johannesburg Music Society, the UNISA Concert Series and the Northwestern University Concert Series (previously Potchefstroom University). Overseas appearances took place in 2000 at the National Flute Convention in the United States of America as well as performances in New York and Amsterdam.

When formulating various concert programmes, The Trio attempts to highlight a broad spectrum of music covering different eras and music periods, composers of different nationalities with obvious different stylistic characteristics and works that contrast or complement each other in the most effective way possible. In this representation the Trio aims to establish an effective balance between the popular genres and the less accessible, but significant, works. In addition the Trio is committed to programming and performing works by South African composers. The more serious works on a typical programme are successfully offset by the juxtaposing of works in a lighter, more effervescent, even jazzy vein – from humorous Haydn (Classical) to serious Hofmeyr (Contemporary South African) to frivolous Kuhlau (Romantic) to Jazzy Damase (French).

What follows is an example of a typical programme on offer by the Hemanay Trio, in this case for two performances at the Grahamstown National Art's Festival in June 2003:



MUSIC
Rhodes Chapel
Programme 1
Sat 28 June at 17:00
Programme 2
Mon 30 June at 11:00
No Interval
Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes

Trio Hemanay

Helen Vosloo (flute) **Marian Lewin** (cello) **Malcolm Nay** (piano)

Programme 1

Frans Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)
Trio no. 2 (Hob. XV : 16) in D major
Allegro
Andantino piuttosto Allegretto
Vivace assai

Hendrik Hofmeyr (b. 1957)
Notturno Elegiaco per flauto,violoncello e pianoforte (1999)

Erik Satie (1866 - 1925)
Trois Gymnopédies
Arranged for flute, cello and piano by Michael Tuffin – commissioned by the SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts 1999
Lent et douloureux
Lent et triste
Lent et grave

Bohuslav Martinu (1890 – 1959)
Trio for flute, cello and piano
Poco Allegretto
Adagio
Andante - Allegretto scherzando

Programme 2

Frans Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)
Trio no. 1 (Hob. XV : 17) in F major
Allegro
Finale: Tempo di Menuetto

Max Reger (1873 – 1916)
Weihnachten op 145-3
Arr for flute. Cello and piano by Carl Heuer

Friedrich Kuhlau (1786 – 1832)
Trio op. 119
Allegro moderato
Adagio
Finale: Allegro

Béla Bartók (1881 – 1945)
Romanian Dances
arr for flute, cello and piano by Thomas Rajna – arrangement commissioned by the SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts 1999
Stick Dance
Round Dance
Tiptoe Dance
Dance from Bucium
Romanian Polka
Fast Dance with small Steps

Jean-Michel Damase (b. 1928)
Sonata en Concert 1952
Prelude : Largo ma non troppo
Rigaudon: Allegro
Aria : Andante
Intermezzo: Allegro molto
Sicilienne : Andantino
Gigue : Presto

Formed in 1997 the Hemanay Trio quickly earned a reputation as one of the premier chamber music groups in the country. In 2000 they undertook a successful tour to the US and the Netherlands. **Marian Lewin** is widely regarded as the doyenne of South African cellists. She was Principal Cellist of the PACT Orchestra for 20 years and she has recently recorded the complete collection of Glière cello duets. **Malcolm Nay** (piano) is considered by many cognoscenti as one of South Africa's top chamber musicians and accompanists. He studied in Johannesburg, Cincinnati and Washington and has appeared as a soloist with most of South Africa's major orchestras. **Helen Vosloo** is Principal Flute with Johannesburg's Philharmonic and Festival Orchestras and the Chamber Orchestra of South Africa. She has undertaken frequent study tours of Europe and the USA and is a member of the Tapiola Sinfonietta in Finland.



The following reviews over a period of about ten years, illustrate the critics' appreciation of the musical and technical qualities displayed in the Trio's performances:

In her article 'Chamber Music at its Best' in the *Classic Feel Magazine*, Iliska Crossley refers to the very high standard of the Trio:

> Trio Hemanay is one of the country's leading ensembles, and critics have noted that the group is one of the very few ensembles who can compete in the international market. Consisting of three of the country's top instrumentalists… one can sense a tangible creative energy between the players when they perform together that translates into performances filled with vigour, colour and contrast (Crossley 2007, 40).

In a similar vein, Michael Traub in *The Citizen* refers to the technical and expressive power of the Trio as follows:

> About the players themselves it suffices to say that each brought a degree of technique and interpretive power to the ensemble which made the whole much more than the sum of the instruments (Traub 1999).

In assessing and reviewing the concerts of the year 1997, the Pretoria composer and critic, Stefans Grove, had the following to say:

> In the area of chamber music, the performance by the Hemanay Trio was the best of the year. The Ensemble's sensitivity and refinement of nuance was exceptionally imposing (Grove 1998)

Performances by the Trio are not as frequent as in previous years because we are geographically dispersed. Marian Lewin now resides in Cape Town while the other members are in Johannesburg. When we are in one location preparing for concerts for short periods of time, the rehearsals are often crammed and tense, as we no longer have the luxury of regular practice sessions. Maintaining a consistent standard, therefore, becomes more difficult. This obstacle, however, is usually overcome by maximising rehearsal time by working at an intensive level of critical awareness. Learning new repertoire, however, is problematic and there is a limited amount of time and opportunity to master new works. In spite of this limitation we added an additional major work to our performing repertoire - the *Mendelssohn Trio in D minor*, opus 49 - which we played at our most recent concert for the Cape Town Music Society (May,

2008), In spite of the new rehearsal constraints, this recent performance received an extremely favourable review:

> As one would have expected from three top-ranking South African musicians, the ensemble playing was impeccable. Added to that, the interpretation was colourful, stylistically true and filled with delicate nuances (Kooij 2008).

A number of important works have been commissioned for the Hemanay Trio by the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) and by composers such as Stefans Grove (*Soul Bird*), Hendrik Hofmeyr (*Notturno Elegiaco*) and Hans Huyssen (*The Cattle Have Gone Astray*). A performance of Hofmeyr's *Notturno* elicited this favourable comment by Paul Boekkooi:

> The Trio Hemanay brings well-prepared and magnificent programmes to audiences, and the most inventive, original and satisfying work they played on Saturday was also South African: Hendrik Hofmeyr's *Notturno Elegiaco* dedicated to this Trio. This truly inspired composer extracted a plethora of some of the most unimaginable, exotic and pliable sounds from these instruments. Music it certainly was. No spectre of an experimental, cold or rational nature could be found (Boekkooi 1999).

In response to a concert in which the Hemanay Trio performed Stefans Grove's *The Soul Bird*, Mary-Ann van Rensburg appraised the work and performance in the following words:

> An important brand new work on their programme, which definitely draws the most attention, is *The Soul Bird*. The Trio performed this work with sustained concentration and one's attention was thoroughly captured by the splendid creation of a prehistoric time. This was achieved by unconventional sound effects. The piano part is very percussive and there is an abundance of interesting rhythmical shifts, patterns and tempo changes. The ecstatic 'flight', through descriptive flute playing and attractive surging rhythm, creates a dramatic and exciting mood. This technically demanding work was excellently performed (Van Rensburg 1999).

The performance of these works in America, a tour sponsored by the Oppenheimer Trust of the Anglo American Corporation, was seminal in the Trio's decision to produce our own compact disc. A further two works were commissioned as arrangements by SAMRO for the Hemanay Trio, namely, Thomas Rajna's arrangement of Bartok's *Rumanian Folk Dances* and Michael Tuffin's arrangement of Satie's *Three Gymnopédies*. These well-written and representative works by eminent South African composers generated enthusiastic verbal responses from overseas listeners and although there are no written reviews,

we felt passionate about documenting and recording these works. Furthermore, there were sufficient funds remaining after the tour to warrant the creation of a CD.

There were also various other reasons – both professional and personal – that motivated the Trio's desire to record a compact disc:

i) As discussed above, making the recording had as much to do with the status given to recording, as opposed to that which is given to live concerts.
ii) The Trio, having made an important contribution in South Africa - both by the number of works commissioned for them and the performances thereof - has established itself as a reliable vehicle for composers who demand accurate and memorable performances of their works. Having given repeated performances of these formerly unknown works, it became imperative to document them permanently.
iii) The life-span of our Ensemble is being prescribed by two factors: The geographical displacement of the Trio and the discrepancy in ages of the members (Vosloo is in her 30's, Nay in his 50's and Lewin in her 60's). Lewin is concerned that maintaining her current standard of performance might be compromised by the onset of arthritis in her hands. We therefore wished to 'document' our repertoire while we are at our peak and before any limitations affect the standard of our performance.

Making the Recording

Until the 1990s, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was committed to recording and broadcasting both Western Classical Music and works written by South African composers. Prominent amongst these were Peter Klatzow, Carl van Wyk, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, Graham Newcater, Stefans Grove, Hans Roosenschoon and Roelof Temmingh. The commissioning of works by South African composers was mainly in the hands of the SABC and SAMRO. In many ways, however, the SABC remained a tool of the apartheid Nationalist Government. As Peter Klatzow notes in his article, 'The Composers Dilemma: Writing for Time or Place', in his formative years "and that of every other post-war composer in South Africa, the predominant nationalism in music which was promoted, was Afrikaner

nationalism" (Klatzow 2004, 138). Amongst examples of such works were Hubert du Plessis's *Huguenot Cantata* and *Suid-Afrika – Nag en Daeraad*.

During the past fourteen years however, the commitment to broadcasting and recording of so-called 'Classical' music as well as art music by South African composers, has diminished substantially by the SABC. In post-Apartheid society there has been a radical shift in perceptions about, as Peter Klatzow puts it, "what represents South African music…..[It] becomes more complex with the accessibility and assimilation of the diversity of national cultures" (Klatzow 2004, 138). The role and function of supporting and broadcasting South African performers and Western art music has largely been entrusted to private radio stations. With the advent of classical music radio stations such as Classic FM in Johannesburg and Fine Music Radio in Cape Town, the broadcasting of musical works in historically Western genres and styles within a broad repertoire has introduced the listening public to a range of music that they previously might not have been exposed to. The positive spin-off of this availability of music is that there is a greater appreciation of more 'serious' art music developing within the listenership of these radio stations as evidenced in the following tabulation taken from the South African Advertising Research Foundation:

Listenership Statistics for the Period August 2007 to April 2008[3]

	RAMS® 2007 AUG '07		RAMS® 2007 OCT '07		RAMS® 2007 NOV '07		RAMS® 2007 FEB '08		RAMS® 2008 APR '08
RADIO STATION	**%**	**'000**	**%**	**'000**	**%**	**'000**	**%**	**'000**	**%**
5FM	4.6	1408	4.7	1453	4.8	1481	4.8	1498	4.6
567 CapeTalk	0.4	120	0.4	119	0.4	134	0.4	140	0.5
94.2 Jacaranda	8.0	2467	8.4	2611	8.2	2549	8.2	2562	8.3
94.2 Jacaranda / RMFM	8.1	2515	8.5	2649	8.3	2577	8.3	2595	8.4
94.5 Kfm	3.8	1159	3.7	1140	3.6	1128	3.5	1096	3.6
94.7 Highveld Stereo	4.0	1238	3.9	1204	3.9	1226	3.8	1192	4.0
99.2 YFM	3.7	1148	3.7	1163	4.0	1245	3.9	1200	3.9
Algoa FM (Radio Algoa)	2.2	676	2.5	774	2.5	786	2.5	786	2.6
BRFM (the Border Drive)	0.3	85	0.3	106	0.3	102	0.3	102	0.4
CKI FM Stereo / tru fm	1.9	601	1.8	553	1.8	545	1.7	525	1.7
Classic FM 102.7	0.6	171	0.6	184	0.6	180	0.7	208	0.7

Table Key: % = Listenership market percentage; **'000** = Listenership in thousands.

[3] The acronym 'RAMS®', which stands for Radio Audience Measurement Survey, is a registered trade name of the SAARF (South African Advertising Research Foundation). The SAARF's main objective is to direct and publish media and product/brand research for the benefit of its stakeholders.

Even though the numbers fluctuate from month to month, one can clearly see an upward growth in Classic FM's listenership, specifically from August 2007 with a figure of hundred and seventy-one rising to two hundred and eight in April 2008 (www.saarf.co.za, accessed 20 August 2008).

There is a slot on Classic FM devoted entirely to the best of South African performers presented by cellist, Kutlwano Masote. The hour-long programme, Classic SA, is broadcast every night at 22h00. The exception to Classic FM's supportive role appears to be the broadcasting of original South African art music, which enjoys almost no exposure. The repertoire for Trio Hemanay CD was partially chosen with this consideration in mind. However several other challenging and important parameters other than radio listenership had to considered, which influenced our decision on the final choice of repertoire for inclusion in the recording.

Relative to the important repertoire for the trio combination of piano, violin and cello, there are far fewer works in number and quality written for flute, piano and cello. For the piano, violin and cello combination there are important, representative works by Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Faure, Saint-Saens and Prokofiev. Haydn composed three Trios for flute, piano and cello while none of the above-mentioned composers were inspired to write for this specific combination. Since its inception, Trio Hemanay has regularly performed all three Haydn Trios. We chose, however, to record Haydn's *Trio No 2 in D major* because its first and third movements have a playful and accessible, *divertimento* –like quality. The slow movement written in the tonic minor key is mournful and touching, giving it a personal quality which elevates the status of this entire work.

One of the most prominent works of the 19th Century written for piano, violin and flute is the *von Weber Trio* (opus 63), a work of charm and skilled craftsmanship. Evidence of its popularity is that it is currently one of the most frequently recorded works for this particular combination of instruments. Because of this, we decided against including this composition in the CD. We were, however, committed to recording a 20th Century work by Martinu – *Trio in F 1944*, a work of depth and quality and an affirmation of his Czech roots, which can be heard in the folk-like melodic elements, the beauty of the lyricism and the repetitive rhythmic cells. After hearing the premiere performance of this work in February 1945, Virgil Thomson, the American composer and critic, evaluated it as a "gem of bright sound and cheerful

sentiment" (Castello 1995). Trio Hemanay is in accord with this viewpoint and has a passionate commitment to performing this work – hence its inclusion.

Within the realm of 'art' music, a further breakdown exists, namely the more 'popular classics' as opposed to the more 'esoteric' or 'specialised' art music. This is confirmed by the distinguished pianist, Alfred Brendel, who comments:

> Recital programmes may have to accommodate various necessities. In terms of the repertory, two extreme positions are embodied by the player of hits and the player of oddities. The hit player, persuading himself that the best is also the best loved, caters for the biggest public attendance. The player of unfamiliar music, on the contrary, resents popularity as debasing or shies away from competition in the established field…I would not want to bully anybody into anything. But I feel it ought to be a matter of personal pride for younger performers to play a fair share of the new repertory (Brendel 1990, 214 – 215).

Although Trio Hemanay has sufficient representative repertoire of both popular and less familiar works to record three new CDs, the final choice of repertoire for our first CD, however, was a compromise between the polarities referred to by Brendel; Haydn is a readily recognisable composer and a 'popular' classical choice, while the Martinu may be less familiar to the general listening public. Additionally, we wished to record some 20th Century compositions as well as meet the fresh challenge of original South African works. In its choice of repertoire for live concerts, the Trio also strives to reconcile the extreme positions that are articulated above by Brendel.

There were various reasons motivating the inclusion of the works on the CD. Appropriate material is important for the exposure of local artists and in the case of Classic FM this means choosing compositions that are readily accessible, relatively short or can be divided into shorter segments. Consistent with this viewpoint, the *Trois Gymnopedies* (Satie), and the *Romanian Dances* (Bartok) were included in the repertoire for the CD as both works are frequently broadcast in various arrangements by classical radio stations such as Classic FM and Fine Music Radio. These works are compositions which can be played either in their entirety or in separate, shorter movements. The longest of these movements is in fact the first 'Gymnopedies' which is three minutes and eighteen seconds in duration, and the shortest movement from the Bartok Romanian Dances is 'The Romanian Polka', which lasts a mere thirty-four seconds. Ironically, Classic FM has broadcast more repetitions of the longer, more substantial movements from the

Haydn and Martinu Trios than the shorter Bartok or Satie works chosen specifically for their shorter length.

In a conversation, Mike Ford, Managing Director of Classic FM, prefaced his comments regarding Classic FM's choice by first complimenting the Hemanay Trio as having produced a CD that "stands out above any local CD recording by far" (21 August, 2008). The selection of movements from the Martinu and Haydn Trios was because the panel who selected the works believed that the performances of these particular works were of such a high standard that their relative length was overlooked. He concluded this telephonic interview by generously offering financial assistance towards the recording of a further CD by Trio Hemanay.

Souvenir du Rigi by Albert Franz Doppler was chosen as a representative sop to what, in my opinion are the syrupy, hackneyed, run-of-the-mill compositions for piano, cello and flute by Hummel, Kuhlau and Ries. *Souvenir du Rigi* is a 'postcard' cameo reminiscence of a mountain range and town called Rigi. It is a pot-pourri of Italian, Polish, Russian and Hungarian musical influences and is a relatively short - six minutes and thirty-nine seconds - piece of 'musical candy floss', which is nonetheless enjoyed by audiences wherever it has been performed by Trio Hemanay.

The inclusion of Hendrik Hofmeyr's *Notturno* is indicative of the commitment of the Trio to promoting, performing and recording outstanding South African composers. The Hemanay Trio believes that South African composers have something unique to offer. Like many South African artists and writers, local composers find their inspiration in the African landscape and its indigenous cultures. Amongst these are Hans Huyssen whose *Cattle Have Gone Astray* and Zaidel-Rudolph's *Lifecycle*, both which are prefaced by references to the African landscape, traditional songs and instruments. Zaidel-Rudolph describes how her inspiration for her piece *Lifecycle* emerged when on a research field trip: "The process began with a visit to the Ngqoko Village (Eastern Cape Province, South Africa) in 2003… a brief instrumental introduction portrays the pastoral character of the village. I recorded and video-taped the unique and beautiful 'overtone' singing, playing of instruments and dancing" (Zaidel-Rudolph, Watt 2006, 139).

Hofmeyr is regarded as one of the most dramatic, successful and lyrical composers working in South Africa today. On completing the *Notturno* he dedicated the work to Trio Hemanay. We immediately

recognised and responded to the powerful dramatic and emotional content, as well as the superb craftsmanship and melodic accessibility of this work. Michael Traub, in a review of a Hemanay concert held in the Linder Auditorium in August 2004, wrote in *The Citizen*: "A South African work by Hendrik Hofmeyr proved to have plenty of interest, being gloomy and passionate by turns. It included some strumming of the piano strings by hand, which meant that Nay had to have the music held up for him by human agency and not a wooden music stand" (Traub 2004). The strumming on the piano strings and the unusual timbrel effects which are both subtle and soft make it difficult to project live, but would be more pronounced in a recorded version since the microphones can be strategically placed for maximum effect. This was a powerful motivating rationale for its inclusion in the choice of repertoire on the Trio's CD. The historical conception and analysis of this seminal work is discussed further in this research report and it is our hope that it will serve as an important reference point for future performances of this composition by Trio Hemanay, as well as by any other ensemble choosing to programme this complex and technically challenging work.

Trio Hemanay was privileged that Hendrik Hofmeyr acceded to our request to produce the CD. Hofmeyr gave his time and expertise free of charge, which is testimony to his generosity. His impeccable musical taste, aural sophistication and insight, contributed enormously to the quality and success of the recording. Not only did he offer invaluable advice regarding phrasing and articulation, but he found himself in the unique position of participating as an 'extra' in his own composition when required, as opposed to playing on the piano keys, which I was doing concurrently. Playing inside the body of the piano, Hofmeyr articulated the 'plucking', finger glissandi and the dampening of the strings. It was both interesting and amusing to observe the composer's visible nervousness and difficulty in executing this task. Doubtless, however, his personal experience of the challenges posed to him in performing in one of his own works will not curb Hofmeyr's propensity to extend the technical boundaries of any instrument for which he chooses to compose.

My single reservation in recording *Notturno* had been a reluctance to carry out these difficult, unconventional performance requirements. Any performer that embraces the challenge of one of Hofmeyr's compositions knows, or will soon realise, that he/she will be challenged to the maximum regarding both technical and musical abilities. Specifically, in *Notturno*, the pianist is required at times to alternate between a sitting and standing position in order to perform the required actions required inside

the body of the instrument. S/he must then swiftly return to the keyboard in order to perform on the keys in the conventional manner. In the recording situation these movements are noisy, cumbersome and distracting and add additional stress to the pianist.

Local recording initiatives have to an extent been supported by Classic FM in various ways in order to increase the quota of local content. Specific to Trio Hemanay, Classic FM sponsored the initial launch of the CD (10th July 2007). Thereafter, complimentary copies thereof were given to listeners during the extensive promotion of the CD, and this new album featured on the Classic FM Charts from the 7th July, 2007 for ten weeks giving the CD its initial valuable public exposure. Furthermore the CD carries the Classic FM logo and an article on the Hemanay Trio and it was featured in an article in *Classic Feel* (November 2007, 40).

Although radio stations in South Africa are obliged to give a specified amount of 'needle time' to local composers and performers, this is not a guarantee that the public will necessarily appreciate the value and talent of local musicians. However, one would hope that this exposure will over time generate a much greater appreciation and support for local South African artists. 'Serious' or art music has always been a minority pursuit and practice globally and has therefore enjoyed a smaller listenership than popular music genres. Local popular music is enjoying unprecedented recognition and demand by the general public, which is evidenced by the number of award categories devoted to it locally.

In May 2008, at the 14th Annual MTN Music Awards, widely regarded as the premier popular music award event in South Africa, there were a record number of competing categories, forty eight in all. The CD, 'Trio Hemanay' was the *only* classical nomination for this event. In the absence of a Classical Music Category, the Trio was placed in a miscellaneous section for Best Instrumental Album, together with a range of Popular CDs including 'Colour' (Kellerman), 'Pops Mohammed Presents Healing Sounds From Mother Africa' (Pops Mohammed), 'Spha Bembe Presents the African Groove Experience' (Spha Bembe) and 'Blue Anthem' (Tony Cox).

Although the prize in this category was awarded to Tony Cox, the recognition that the Trio Hemanay CD received is important. In a discussion with me after the award ceremony David du Plessis from the Recording Industry of South Africa (RISA) expressed the view that in the future there should be a separate

category for local classical music. Currently there are no awards or ceremonies acknowledging excellence in classical recordings in South Africa, and this event underscores the imperative for equivalent awards for serious art music.

Budget and Venue for the Recording

In the South African context it is currently unrealistic and unlikely that anyone could produce a classical music CD for considerable financial return. However, musicians do wish, and expect at the very least, to cover their production costs and hope also to make some profits from the venture. Having accepted that the production of the CD would not yield significant profits, we hoped to at least gain as much exposure as possible for ourselves, the CD and also for the featured works.

The production budget for this project was very small – R18, 000 in all, the major expense being the fee for the recording engineer at R12, 500. Miscellaneous expenses included two airfares to Cape Town, the piano tuner and page turner, which came to R5, 500. In addition an honorarium of R500 was paid to Hendrik Hofmeyr. The final CD product, which included printing, jewel case, plastic wrapping and duplication of 1000 copies, came to R12, 000, which was sponsored by Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust. The grand total for the realisation of the CD was R30, 500. Because of our limited budget we had to rely on the generosity and goodwill of people involved to whom we had to pay reduced professional rates.

Due to these economic restraints we had to use our time productively and economically – the entire recording time had to be concentrated into five days. The Hugo Lamprecht Hall in which we recorded the CD was made available to us at no cost and Hofmeyr's generous contribution has been previously documented. Marik Pinsky, a violinist in Cape Town, who is currently engaged in sound engineering work, was the major expense in making the CD, but since he fully believed in the project, he also went way beyond the call of duty and gave generously and patiently of his time to produce the best quality.

The choice of venue was important both financially and acoustically. The final venue decided upon was the most convenient for us for various reasons – it was near to Lewin's residence in Cape Town, and far

from the distractions of home for the other Trio members. The drawback of the venue was the poor quality of the piano – an old and unresponsive Steinway, which proved problematic in terms of the standard of the final recording. The process of recording the music and subsequent editing also posed a number of challenges: Pinto, the recording engineer, originally used the 'pick-up' microphone on the piano, but this served to amplify its defects, and the consequent recorded sound proved tinny, aggressively heavy, loud and lacking both in sonority and refinement. Pinto's solution was to remove the microphone from the piano and provide individual microphones only for the flute and cello. This assisted him in camouflaging the defects in the sonorities of the piano. My lack of knowledge of and experience in recording processes and techniques was to my detriment as I had no way of predicting the difficulties involved in achieving a satisfactory sound-balance in the final mix.

The Recording Experience

Alfred Brendel, in an illuminating chapter from *Music Sounded Out*, writes about the difference between live concerts and studio recordings and their respective requirements:

> In a concert one plays just once, in the studio several times if necessary. In a concert you must convince the audience at once; in the studio it is the accumulated result that counts. In a concert the performance is only experienced once; in the studio it can be reproduced. In a concert the performer must get to the end of the piece without a chance to make corrections. In the studio he can make corrections, learn while he records and get rid of nerves (Brendel 1990, 202).

If these observations are true for a solo performer, how much more challenging is it for an ensemble to be in agreement with one another in the recording environment? In the case of the relationships between the members of the Trio negotiation and trust are essential when either performing live or making a recording. In order to achieve an optimum result we have needed to be patient with, and supportive of, one another. Throughout the recording of the CD our inter-personal relationships were at times severely tested as the necessity of many re-takes demands a heightened level of focus and concentration, which was vastly different from a live performance. It was unusual for all three of us to be playing well simultaneously and there was a mutual understanding that if mistakes were made – and there were numerous - repeats could be done and improvements made. The individual egos had to be subdued and contained in the greater service of the combined conviction and unity of the group. The danger inherent in repeated takes is the

possibility of an acute sense of self-doubt, self-critical awareness which may result in a lack of musical spontaneity and ultimate irritability. However, we had no choice but to become patient with one another and indeed the Trio adapted very well to the recording circumstances - in fact the repeated takes heightened our confidence and ultimate performance.

> The player before the public must do four things at the same time: he must imagine the performance, play it, project it and listen to it. In the studio he has the opportunity to listen to it again, and to react accordingly (ibid)

In the eleven years of the Trio's existence, during which time it has performed prolifically, a common value is our shared commitment to projecting to the audience our idealised concept of a work. It was somewhat surprising therefore, that on hearing the playbacks, the recorded product did not seem to reflect our musical intention or conception of the work. The ethnomusicologist, Charles Seeger's observation that "we do not hear what we think we hear" (Seeger 1990, 40) became significant in this context.

We soon came to the realisation that we were accustomed to performing in live concerts in large halls and were over-projecting musical details and emotional affects which are appropriate in that setting. Confirming this quandary, Brendel further observes:

> When playing before the public, the details must be projected to the end of the auditorium, just as the whisper of an actor must be heard throughout the theatre. In front of the microphone one tries, on the contrary to get away from exaggerations and aims for the interpretation that will bear frequent hearing (Brendel 1990, 202).

Realising that exaggerations of mood and dynamics in the recording studio resulted in a distorted, overblown outcome, it took little time to adjust to the recording situation and make the necessary modifications in our approach. In the course of the production of the CD, the numerous replays enabled us to almost instantly recognise problem areas and rectify them. For the cello and the flute, intonation proved an aspect of performance that needed constant fine-tuning. Both Hofmeyr and Pinto have a heightened awareness of accurate pitch, demanding extremely accurate intonation from both the flute and the cello. Testimony to this is the agreement of those involved in the production of the CD that the final result evidenced acute awareness and accuracy of pitch.

> In a concert it is the broad sweep that counts. The studio demands control over a mosaic; while it offers the performer the possibility of loosening up, there is also the danger of diminishing freshness. And there is the painful business of choosing between takes. The ability to convince the public in the concert hall is quite independent of absolute perfection. The studio is ruled by the aesthetics of compulsive cleanliness (Brendel 1990, 201).

Without exception, the making of a recording requires many takes as it is virtually impossible for performers to record a perfect take once-off. This raises some important ethical and moral issues regarding the editing and splicing of several performances into one composite recording.

Glenn Gould articulated this quandary for musicians when he calls the correcting of mistakes for a recording, "a dishonest and dehumanizing technique that purportedly eliminates those conditions of chance and accident upon which, it can safely be conceded, certain of the more unsavoury traditions of Western music are founded." (www.collectionscanada.ca/glenngould, accessed 6th December 2006).

Brendel concurs with Gould's statement in his reference to the aesthetics of 'compulsive cleanliness' in the studio. He implies that the potential 'mistakes' of a live performance, like incorrect notes, blurry textures, and faulty intonation, detracts from, rather than enhances the listeners' experience when listening to a CD.

To strengthen his argument, Gould quotes John McClure from Columbia Records as saying,

> Here's the dilemma. You get an extraordinary beautiful take of a movement, but there are two or three flaws – a horn didn't quite make it, or the pizzicato weren't together, or something. Now you go back and retake the movement, but somehow the men and the conductor can't quite recapture the same peak of expression. What do you do? If you're sensible and not involved in moral issues, you fix those few mistakes in the first take with inserts from the inferior take – using as little as possible, to be sure – and you end up with something far beyond what is normally possible at a concert (ibid).

The experience of Brendel, Gould and McClure became a point of reference for Trio Hemanay in the process of assembling our CD.

Gould describes the 'overwhelming sense of power' that editorial control makes available to him. In the editorial stage of our CD production, the painful but powerful decisions of choosing between takes were

entrusted to Marian Lewin. Logistically and financially it made sense for her to take the major and disproportionate responsibility of editing Trio Hemanay's CD, as both she and Pinto reside in Cape Town and there was no budget for either Helen Vosloo or me to fly down to participate in this process. They spent approximately thirty hours in the studio, spanning a two week period. The intensity of the mental effort and attention given to splicing, the evaluation of several takes, consideration of subtle details, level adjustments, etc was both physically and emotionally taxing for both of them.

Once the first version of the CD was produced, it was brought to Johannesburg for review by Helen Vosloo and me. The reaction to the first playing of the CD was extremely disheartening for Marian Lewin, as Helen Vosloo and I were intensely disappointed with the results. The defects of the piano – the boisterous and excessively bright qualities – were clearly audible. There was a total imbalance between the three instruments; the loud bass sound of the cello was too prominent, the piano sounded as if it had been recorded in a hall separate from the other instruments and certain notes in both the flute and cello were out of tune.

One of the abiding difficulties of recording is obtaining consensus from all group members, and the discussions around the first production of the CD were tense and fraught, with vigorous exchanges of opinion. Indeed, one of the most contentious issues was one of balance; whilst Vosloo and I felt strongly that there was an imbalance between the piano and the other instruments, Lewin completely disagreed with this assessment.

In order to resolve this impasse, other musicians were consulted in order to gain diverse opinions to assist the Trio in making a final assessment and decision. Without any foreknowledge of the Trio's dilemma, the highly respected South African violinist Zanta Hofmeyr immediately identified the disproportionate balance of the piano as problematic: in her view the piano was clearly far too soft. Lewin agreed to attempt to rectify the problem of balance together with Pinto in Cape Town.

Rodney Trudgeon, a radio music announcer and critic, with years of experience with the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Classic FM and presently with Fine Music Radio, was asked to listen to the second version of the CD as a further objective adjudicator. His opinion was that, apart from some changes that needed to be made to the tone of the cello, the CD was impressive and should not be further

modified. Once the cello tone had been rectified, the Trio felt that, in spite of certain minor blemishes, the second version should be the final product. At this juncture, Vosloo articulated the feelings of all who had been involved in the production of the CD: “There comes a point in recording when you say, ‘This is what we can do – there is a cut-off point where you have to live with your performance as it is’ ”.

The Trio was in agreement regarding the ethics and morality of editing and splicing. The range of editing possibilities made us uncomfortable regarding the authenticity of the ‘perfect result’ that this process makes possible. Using technology, notes that are slightly out of tune can be modified and corrected by the recording engineer without the performer’s presence in the studio. Other adaptations are also common – the final version of our CD was a collage of numerous takes rather than a single, uninterrupted and original performance. David Soyer of the Guarneri Quartet comments, “…on the finished version we may end up doing something that’s glib - because it’s take number ten” (Blum 1992, 21). Lewin, after the intensity of involvement in the editorial process of the CD, expressed the view that the degree to which it is possible to alter and modify a performance can be regarded, in some instances, as making the entire process ‘a sham or a scam’. This phenomenon is often verified by the disappointing quality of live concerts by artists whose recorded works are of an exceptional standard. That is the nature and possible deception of modern recording.

The Russian pianist Sviatoslav Richter, commenting on a recording he made of Bach’s English Suite No 3 in G Minor, writes:

> A very old recording, certainly outdated in terms of recording techniques. But I understand absolutely nothing about these things, which are a matter of total indifference to me. As long as a piece is correctly played, the recording technique shouldn’t bother you. But nowadays many listeners seem to attach great importance to the technical quality of a recording. I think this is because it is something they understand and that they care more for it than they do for music. They’re simply incapable of appreciating the true value of interpretation. It’s a reflection of this century, with its concerns for machines and technology. People are further away than ever from nature and genuine human feelings and are gradually turning into machines themselves (Monsaigneon 2005, 183-4).

None of the Trio is entirely happy with the final product and there is unanimity regarding the particular shortcomings of the CD. We take comfort in Richter’s words, however, as the technical quality achieved is reminiscent of the sound of less sophisticated, earlier recordings of the 20th Century. The piano volume

is too soft in contrast to the dominant flute and cello and it sounds somewhat separate in its integration with the other two instruments, almost as if it had been recorded at some distance from the rest of the ensemble. The resonant acoustic of the hall in which we recorded gave the flute and cello an overblown sound that was more fitting for a live concert.

We have performed several of these works post-recording and our interpretation has been deepened by the recording process, and in many instances our conception of the works has been radically altered. This experience is confirmed by Daniel Barenboim in conversation with Edward W Said (Barenboim and Said 2003, 29):

> EWS: A performance has no repeatability in a way. Even if there is a tape, it's not the same thing; it's already another. Don't you think?
>
> DB: Of course, even it is repeated the next day, it is a different performance.

The choice of the Bartok and the Satie, in retrospect, was not a considered one as the arrangements of these works have certain shortcomings. The Bartok is a work originally composed for piano and in Rajna's arrangement the piano role is substantially reduced, and the cello and flute do not always have the volume required because of the register in which they are often required to play. The members of the Trio felt that the translation of the work, originally for solo piano, was not idiomatically successful for the three instruments. The extensive use of *pizzicato* in the cello, for example, creates a texture that is too dry and prominent; in the original version, however, the staccato notes in the bass are sustained by the pedal.

In his review of Michael Tuffin's arrangement of the Satie, Paul Boekkooi expresses his reservation about this transcription of the work: "In the timeless, fragile vulnerability and simplicity conveyed in the original piano pieces, the score has become over-burdened" (Boekkooi 2007).

Lebrecht in describing a recording as a "hybrid object - part art, part engineering", identifies the need for both the artistic and technical qualities to be equally balanced and of high quality in order to attain the optimum result in a recording (Lebrecht 2008, 2). The Hemanay's lack of expertise in the sound engineering process as well as knowledge of the technical demands of the recording, such as the number

and placement of the microphones, as well as the budget constraints, combined to contribute to an end product that is deficient in cutting-edge technical sound quality excellence. Regrettably this reality has led to the Hemanay's reluctance to actively promote the CD internationally.

On the positive side, however, our view is that this CD recording sounds more like a live performance than a studio recording. The clinical feel one often experiences in listening to a CD or DVD is absent, and the joy experienced in a perceived live performance overrides our sense of frustration that certain parts of the recording do not work satisfactorily from a technical viewpoint. In the recording, we believe an illusion is created of a live performance, one that is spontaneous, energetic and with an element of risk-taking, and intermittently there is a sense of the music-making being unpredictable and improvisatory. All these elements contribute to an ambience of fresh excitement and in spite of the mechanical shortcomings combine to make the recording a worthy and worthwhile endeavour for the Trio.

The Trio is planning to produce a further CD in the very near future and central to the choice of repertoire will be Stefans Grove's *The Soulbird*. Each member of the Trio is undertaking extensive research into the best recording equipment available, the most effective placement of the mikes and the sourcing of an appropriate venue with the best acoustic and piano. Only when sufficient funds are available for the project, will the Trio embark on this future recording as it is not prepared to compromise on crucial equipment or the best recording technicians. Hendrik Hofmeyr, who excelled in his role of producer, will be approached to once again fulfill this role.

PART II

NOTTURNO ELEGIACO for flute, violin and piano

Composed by Hendrik Hofmeyr (1998) and dedicated to Trio Hemanay

Background and Environment

In the South African context there is a spectrum of aesthetics that informs the music of South African composers. “Two traditions still predominate - neo-romanticism and modernism - but we can also find aspects of impressionism, neo-classism, folklorism and cross-culturalism on the one side, and minimalism, reductionism, experimentalism and postmodernism on the other” (Blake 2005, 130).

The above dual streams have left a rather polarised legacy with adherents on either side of the aesthetic divide expressing strong views as to the legitimacy of current composition. There is a viewpoint that promotes the idea that a composer who tends to use music vocabularies from previous epochs only in an aesthetic rather than in a socio-political way is circumventing an engagement with current musico-political thought. To endorse this viewpoint, David Smith comments that a lot of South African art music follows this trend and the music thereby “suffers from a sense of re-running parts of the past century” (Blake 2005, 128).

The South African composer, Michael Blake, who shares this opinion states in his article, “The Present-Day Composer Refuses to Budge: Case Studies in New South African Orchestral Music” that:

> One of the major tendencies in new composition today is still what Smith noted: re-running (or in Adorno’s harsher terms ‘regressing into’) the past… but now reinvented in a post-apartheid context (Blake 2005, 129)

The South African musicologist, Stephanus Muller, in adding his voice to this debate argues in his review of the 2001 new Music Indaba in Grahamstown that:

> A true South African music of the twenty-first century depends on radical thought, directed at dismantling atrophic paradigms and cultural traditions piece by piece and reduce these to basic, material points of departure from which a beginning can be made in the construction of a ‘South African-sounding’ music (Muller 2001, 90).

Clare Loveday, in a research paper entitled "Locating Blink" read at a seminar at the University of the Witwatersrand is of the opinion that "the South African art composition field is fraught with political-in-fighting over aesthetics" (Loveday 2007, 1). She continues by claiming that "there are cliques, there are people who become favourites with funders or the public. Peter Klatzow and Hendrik Hofmeyr in South Africa, for example, seem to be popular with both commissioning bodies and the public" (ibid). Klatzow and Hofmeyr do indeed enjoy many commissions, both locally and internationally as well as broad public acclaim, not as a nepotistic concession but rather as a result of their reputations internationally as leading South African composers.

Klatzow comments that, "I'd rather have my music programmed along with the general repertoire, rather than belonging to some aggressive and politicized musical ghetto" (Odendaal 2004, 143). Klatzow is of the opinion that the best compositions of any era, by virtue of their quality, relevance and substantial contribution to the literature, will take their place alongside the great works in the Western musical canon without the "protectionism of small contemporary music festivals" (Klatzow 2004, 117).

The above divergence of opinions as well as defensive and provocative remarks point to a rather polarised creative music environment with adherents on either side of the aesthetic divide expressing strong views as to the legitimacy of current compositional styles. It is, however, beyond the scope of this Research Report to explore the complex and multi-factorial issues that have historically played a role in, and are still impacting on this fractured contemporary music scene in South Africa.[4]

It is within this turbulent music milieu that the composer, Hendrik Hofmeyr, engages with the creative process and current music aesthetics within a South African environment. In this conflicted setting it takes conviction and courage to write expressively and expansively – Hendrik Hofmeyr is undaunted and has this courage and enviable craftsmanship (Zaidel-Rudolph 2008, 84).

In a telephonic interview with the composer (1 August, 2008), Hofmeyr described his compositional and philosophical music aesthetic. His core approach is eclectic in its broad acknowledgement of the vast

[4] It is this author's intention to further pursue in-depth research, for doctoral purposes, into the present hostile music environment in composition aesthetics in South Africa which is giving rise to heated debate amongst the entire music community.

music legacy of both the past *and* the present and has a profound influence on his writing. Through his compositions he engages with the performer and his audience not only on an intellectual level but, as importantly, on an emotional level which is intended to move and affect the listener. The antithesis of Hofmeyr's aesthetic is expressed by Stravinsky (cited in Machlis 1961: 162) who maintains that "music is by its very nature essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, a state of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, and the like. Expression has never been an inherent property of music. That is by no means the purpose of its existence". Beethoven, ironically one of Stravinsky's icons, though belonging to a very different epoch from Stravinsky (the former Romantic, the latter Modern), counsels the performer antithetically from Stravinsky, with the words: "From the heart, may it go to the heart".

Hofmeyr skillfully reconciles the opposing aesthetics of Stravinsky and Beethoven by displaying the perfect integration of technical skills and emotive expression. The theorist and musicologist, James May, succinctly describes Hofmeyr's mature style as having "evolved from such diverse influences as African music and the works of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Szymanowski and Arnold van Wyk. His work is characterized by an adherence to expanded tonality, directness of expression, contrapuntal fabrics and an exceptional sense of orchestral colour" (May 2003, 43)

Responding to an inference by this author that selected minimalist techniques are perceptible in certain textures within the *Notturno*, Hofmeyr replied circuitously that he draws inspiration from many sources and integrates the material in a personalised manner that suits his own compositional language (telephone interview with the composer, 1 August, 2008).

In his book, *Music: Healing the Rift*, Ivan Hewitt (2003, 193) speaks of the "obsessiveness of the material" in minimalism. Hofmeyr concurs with this observation and expressed a reservation about composing exclusively in a minimalist style. His ethos is that the human being is a complex and multifaceted organism, and therefore the reductionist approach implied by the term, 'minimalism', can never embrace the subtle, multi-layered richly-nuanced variations experienced in life and in art by both the performer, composer and his/her audience. When this author suggested to Hofmeyr that his sporadic use of limited minimalist techniques in *Notturno* are used in a way that 'humanises' the process, this was

positively confirmed by the composer. The relentless repetitive and mechanised rhythmic and formal design of minimalism is loosened and softened in Hofmeyr's works.

Approach and Analysis

Ensembles other than the Hemanay will undoubtedly in the future include the *Notturno Elegiaco* in their repertoire. The historical background to the work, as well as an elaboration of its materials and structures, can provide very useful insights into *Notturno* for other ensembles.

The analytical approach in this section is driven far more by a desire to explore the poetic and symbolic aesthetics represented in the music than merely to embark on a 'bar-by-bar' structural or formalist analysis. Discussing the value of various approaches to analysis, specifically from the performer's viewpoint, Brendel argues that

> as for analysis, there are many ways of analysing music, some more helpful to performers than others. But it is interesting to note that composers have rarely spoken at all about musical analysis. They've avoided the subject to an extent which seems to me very revealing. One finds, on the other hand, a lot of comment about atmosphere, about character, about poetic ideas-even in the most unlikely places. Performers who nourish poetic ideas are excused by the composers themselves. Analysis should never be taken for the key to the sort of insight which enables a great performance (Brendel 1982, 145).

Arnold Schoenberg, the great composer and supreme analyst, stated in a letter that, "formal analysis is often overrated because it shows *how* something is done, not *what* is done" (Brendel 1982, 145)

Hendrik Hofmeyr's *Notturno Elegiaco* (November, 1998) is not programmatic in any conventional sense, but as the title suggests, expresses a tragic lament for the dead (in this case, a lament for the 'non-life' of the composer's operas). In a subjective and introspective manner, Hofmeyr allows himself to dig deeply into the human psyche and reflect upon aspects of pain and loss and the uncertain poignancy of the human condition.

In a telephone interview (Sunday 1 June, 2008) the composer referred to the term 'lugubrious', used in his programme notes of the CD, in the context of the background to the writing of this piece. The work is

permeated by a mournful, dismal and desolate atmosphere. In the insert of the CD, Hofmeyr has written of his *Notturno Elegiaco*: "This lugubrious night-piece seeks to conjure up a ghostly colloquy, sometimes gloomy, sometimes nostalgic, sometimes ardent, but frozen 'outside' time like spectral reminiscence. The obsessive, static nature of the work is reflected in the form, which retains the vaguest outlines of sonata-form, but in which all the themes are based on variants of the same motifs". The 'colloquy' referred to by Hofmeyr in the programme note of the Hemanay CD insert, alludes to the three ghosts of past defeated expectations and the attendant disillusionment –a revisiting of what might have been, but now having "shuffled off their mortal coil", and which in effect embody the themes drawn from the operas that did not see the light of day in performance. It is a meeting of ghosts in a desolate plain – a landscape reminiscent of the sparse emptiness of the Karoo and one which conjures up the same feeling of mournful isolation. Like the dust of the Karoo, man is dust and turns to dust and only returns in a disembodied form.

After the great success of Hofmeyr's opera *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1987), which premiered at the State Theatre in Pretoria in 1988, and for which he received first prize in the SA Opera Competition, as well as the Nederburg Opera Prize (1988), the then Director of CAPAB Opera, Professor Angelo Gobbato requested him to compose a new chamber opera as a companion piece to this work. In response to this request Hofmeyr composed a chamber opera based on Yeats's verse drama, *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1989). Gobbato's idea was to nominate Hofmeyr for the Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award on the strength of these two works, and to present them at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival in collaboration with CAPAB Opera (Interview with composer, 1st June 2008). Gobbato's feedback to Hofmeyr was that the subject matter of the works was not 'relevant' enough to a local context. In addition a shift of orchestral fee structures at CAPAB in which each member of a chamber ensemble would have to be paid a soloist's fee, made the potential production of this work financially not viable (ibid).

In view of the above, Angelo Gobbato subsequently suggested to Hofmeyr that he write a full-length opera on an African subject for CAPAB. Hofmeyr based this work on 'The Story of Lumukanda' from *Indaba My Children* by Credo Mutwa, a poignant indigenous story of great beauty. This work blossomed into the opera, *Lumukanda* (1991-93). Unfortunately, by the time the work was completed, CAPAB was in its death throes. Both of the aforementioned operas "came to grief" and have yet to be mounted.

Notturno Elegiaco was indirectly influenced by Arnold van Wyk in its mood of loneliness and pain and particularly the use of the minor 2nd. It also expresses a similar mood to Hofmeyr's *First String Quartet* and specifically the third movement with its Karoo-like stark bleakness and nocturnal atmosphere.

What follows is an analysis of the *Notturno*, in which I proceed from a discussion of its background and origination to the formal structural analysis of aspects of the work.

The Macro-Structure

The work is in free rhapsodic form combining elements of sonata and ternary form, such as introductory material, subjects (or themes) which return in different guises and are recapitulated; bridge-like transitions as well as a coda. While there are some deliberately abortive attempts at thematic evolution and interaction, the music is designed to rotate obsessively around itself and development in the traditional sense is largely avoided. This is not motivicly- or thematically-based music but rather music of sonic effect and mood. The piano establishes at the very outset the sound world of the entire work with its translucent, atmospheric and indefinite quality. Two intervallic shapes are introduced and dominate the texture – that of the falling semitone and the rising open 5ths and 4ths. Bars 1 to 5 represent introductory material, and are followed by the exposition and interaction of four thematic ideas, A (which is reiterated as A1), B, C, and D. D serves as a middle section, after which the first three ideas are reprised in the loosely reversed order B, C, A1 and A, with the latter serving as coda (letter G).

The Micro-Structure

Three of the four main themes in the work are culled from the three above-mentioned operas. *B* (found at letter 'C' in the score) is original, but is designed as a kind of 'prequel' to *C*. The three 'ghosts' (opera themes) meet on the desolate plain to lament their lot and to ponder the dead past; the mood is static, dark and sombre. This 'ghost-like' sound-world is a metaphor for the 'non-life' of the musical material: unlike in real life, all attempts at development of the musical material are aborted and come to nought. The material is lyrically non- developmental.

The Introduction immediately alerts the listener to Hofmeyr's use of startling and unusual tonal effects which create a chilling and eerie landscape in this work. The very first bar is 'silent' with the piano mutely depressing the initial chord – this chord encapsulates the harmonic essence of the entire piece, especially the outer sections, and is activated and released (in bar 2) into the sound environment by the right hand fingernail drawing across the strings inside the piano. The cello in *fortissimo* then articulates the significant interval of the minor 2nd first as a descending *pizzicato glissando*, followed by a soft echo an octave lower as a bowed *flautando glissando*. The piano quietly picks up the final note of the cello with an arpeggiated version of the initial chord. The cello, coinciding with the last piano note, plays the broken 'A major' chord *pianissimo* as a glissando in harmonics (*indistinto*). This links up with the flute entry which softly restates the falling minor 2nd, followed by the same broken chord in the cello. The piano, with the motivic falling minor 2nd interval (F to E), completes this introduction but also elides into the first section. This fragmented opening sets the scene for the first theme of the piece which begins in an icy-cold framework emphasising the trapped, frozen and static *(gelido)* sound environment.

The first theme in *Notturno* (at 'A' in the score), taken from the opera, *The Land of Heart's Desire*, is played on the flute – similar to its scoring in the opera. In fact all of the four themes in *Notturno* show a predilection for certain instruments. This theme, in the Locrian mode on E, has a lyrical, distant and haunting quality – reminiscent of an Irish folk-song, many of which are written modally and with a nostalgic feel. The murmuring texture in the piano based on the Phrygian mode on 'A' provides the revolving repetitive accompaniment. Superimposed on this 'canvas' of piano and flute timbres is the cello with its individual colour produced by the *glissando* harmonics alternating with *sul ponticello* articulations – this creates the effect of short gusts of 'whooshing' sporadic winds.

In the 6-bar long transition back to the first theme, the flute re-echoes the interval of a falling minor 2nd, this time with a *frullato* (flutter-tongue) effect combined with the flautist singing into the instrument. These bridging bars accelerate and crescendo into a tumultuous climax which represents the 'creative life-force' (Interview with the composer, 1 July, 2008), but one which is still stuck and revolves around itself;

its human passion limited by its harmonic *staticity* (a term used to describe Ligeti's music).[5] The cello dramatically laments the first theme in *fortissimo* while the left hand of the piano underpins the cello theme by both reflecting its dynamic forcefulness and emulating its exact rhythmic contour. Against this declamation of the theme, the piano right hand and flute swirl in rapid arpeggio figurations creating a point of high emotional intensity, culminating in an operatic 'shriek' - a glissando in the uppermost range of the cello. The flute takes the emotional thread from this cello highpoint reaching the high 'A' from which it undulates and descends while retaining the dynamic intensity - this forms the link to the second theme.

The second theme (at 'C'), marked *lugubre*, uses original material and is introduced by the piano in the rich sonorous bass register. The theme passes from the right hand to the left hand and although 'new', it shares motivic elements with all the other themes, and forms a link between the first and third themes. While the first theme begins with an ascending perfect 5^{th}, this theme mirrors the interval and opens with a descending perfect 5th. Similarly it is followed by more conjunct movement. Its latter part contains motifs which evolve into the third theme. The legato melancholic mood in the piano is contrasted vividly and punctuated by the percussive 'clicking' of the flute keys and the 'nail *pizzicato*' of the cello. This new flute colour adds to the compendium of unusual sonic effects. This plucked sound is reflected a few bars later in the piano by the indication to pluck the strings inside the piano with the fingernail. A clear D minor tonality permeates this phrase with a bowed warm partial repetition of the piano theme in the cello. Extended fragments of the theme follow, forming a link to the third theme.

The third theme, which is not a full theme but rather draws on a motif taken from *The Fall of the House of Usher* is played *appassionato* in unison by the flute and cello. The chordal harmonies in the bass of the piano have a shifting, unstable and chromatic quality. The unison melody in the flute and cello creates a high late-Romantic sound world, emphasised by the use of dynamic gestures of short crescendos and decrescendos. This expressive Straussian-type yearning quality of chromatic *angst* is contrasted vividly by the right hand of the piano which continues to obsessively pluck the inside of the piano. The arid sound

[5] What Hofmeyr shares with the great composer, György Ligeti is the ability to write music in thickly textured blocks of sound which when deconstructed appear to be mobile figurations with inner movement; however these oscillating figures create the illusion of movement, yet remain stuck in a musical 'stasis'

produced by this plucking effectively introduces the *Danzante* canonic section (letter D), which abruptly shifts into a brighter tonal area around 'B minor' (now with 2 sharps instead of one flat). The flute and cello imitate and integrate the sound qualities, timbres and articulations set up by the piano in the preceding section.

In the *Danzante* Section, the instruments successively imitate one another and alternate in the role of the 'dux' or leader in this canon, based on the three phrases of the first theme, which are interspersed with 'premonitions' of the fourth theme. The two themes share the opening interval of an ascending perfect 5^{th}. The first theme is enunciated by the piano in a 'quasi-marimba' fashion. This wooden timbrel effect is achieved by dampening the strings with either the right hand or a blackboard eraser, while the left hand articulates the short fragmented *Danzante* theme on the muted keys. The flute 'stops' the sound with the tongue and the cello performs a dampened *pizzicato*. This sonic world using percussive motivic snatches is strongly suggestive of an African landscape and practice, since indigenous instruments like the African xylophones[6] do not resonate as long as the Western orchestral keyboard percussion instruments, which have cylindrical metal resonators below.

The *molto secco* quality is associated with dry barren African landscapes, especially that of the Karoo, where the piece was composed. Hofmeyr stressed that this arid musical quality is an intentional audio association that he wished to create (Interview with the composer, 1st June, 2008). The dry, crackling sound quality is juxtaposed with and alternated by a bar of music written in a warmer connected style, texturally more orientated towards the sound quality of early Impressionistic piano music (like Debussy) with its use of open 5ths, 4ths and 8ves which are sustained atmospherically by the depressed pedals – this interpolated bar anticipates the fourth and final theme. In this contrasting bar the flute slurs the figure in a legato manner while the cello similarly reverts to a smooth *arco* sound (bowed) and the piano emphasises the vertical texture by playing the arpeggio-like figure with the pedal down for the entire bar. These two ideas – the brittle, dry African-sounding music, reminiscent of the plucked *mbira* or *kalimba* and the lyrical, transparent (*transparente*) responding bars, continue to contrast the two different tonal worlds and create a rather startling effect.

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[6] This is a generic term for melodic percussion instruments that have mostly wooden bars or keys and are beaten with wooden sticks sometimes with rubber at the end and resonators made from natural plant calabashes.

The pervading absence of development in the work is particularly evident in this *Danzante* section which represents a macabre attempt at musical development. The piano's ghoulish marimba-like rattle together with the flute's hollow, empty breathy sound in conjunction with the cello's *pizz sord* (dampened pizzicato) emphasise the soulless quality of this chilling dance.

The musical technique of canon, characterised by close imitation of the voices, which Hofmeyr utilises so effectively, represents the sound image of "aging actors talking *past* one another" rather then communicating *with* one another (Interview with composer, 1st June, 2008). This imitative trialogue goes around repetitively but fails to develop.

The final theme, derived from Hofmeyr's opera, *Lumukanda*, continues the imitative technique between the flute and the cello. It is an extended section and locates itself as the virtual centre of the piece or second section of a quasi-ternary form. Although similar in concept to the *Danzante* section in which the so-called 'players' are talking in parallel but on different wavelengths, I believe that the *Lumukanda* theme in this case is used in a poignant unifying sense of longing where the flute and cello now mirror each other's emotions in canon. This is supported by broken arpeggios in the bass of the piano. Towards the end of this middle section, the piano twice reminds us of the second *lugubre* theme, in preparation for the reprise at letter 'E' of this theme, now heard against fragments of the *danzante* version of the first theme on the flute.

As before, it leads to the third theme, now also treated imitatively as a canon between the cello and flute in an extended fully-textured and richly harmonic transition. The composer uses Romantic gestures of *accelerando* and long broken *crescendos* and thus creates powerful harmonic tensions leading to the final appearance of the first theme (at F in the score), all in *fortissimo*. The effect of this return after the preparatory transition material is an intensification of raging despair, more urgent and gut-wrenching than in its first appearance. This section abruptly unwinds with a *rallentando* and dissipates on to a held 'E' in the flute which, using the *frullato* blowing technique glides into a reprise of fragments of the *Danzante* version of the first theme, now no longer harmonically static, but modulating downwards with each new fragment, and disappearing into silence.

The Coda is preceded by a bar of silence, which allows the pianist to prepare for a return of the mute germ-cell chord found right at the beginning of the piece - this time inverted on to the dominant note (E). This time the silent depressed chord undergoes pitch changes, creating new harmonic ladders. The bass of this chord rotates chromatically around the 'E' note generating fresh overtones. In addition new pitches are added in a crab-like, fairly stepwise voice-leading fashion creating new harmonic entities. The piano right hand rips across the strings thereby activating the series of harmonics contained in each chord. Against this background, the cello plays the metrically displaced first theme *flautando*, which creates a spectral, other-worldly, disembodied soundscape as middle-ground. In the foreground, the flute, playing *espressivo con molto rubato*, provides the human voice of longing and nostalgia and seems to encapsulate the composer's sense of loss and sadness at the unfulfilled potential of the operas. This plaintive melody makes itself heard in the icy, barren environment created by the cello and piano. The flute material, based on a melodic integration of the third and fourth themes, is described by the composer as a 'peroration'.[7] This melodic continuum arrives at a dynamic climax which peaks in the middle of the Coda. Thereafter the melody descends into the fragmented closing six bars of the piece.

Just as the Introduction presents dislocated fragments in sporadic fashion that coalesce into the first theme, the Coda ends with the progressive fragmentation of the head-motif (A) of the last theme, which is finally reduced to the falling semitone which opened the work, and from which much of its material is generated. The falling semitone, played as a nail pizzicato glissando on the cello, initially heard at the start of the work against a strummed piano chord is now sounded against the piano's final plucked low 'A' and allowed to disappear into a glacial infinity. This original and moving Coda comes full circle and completes this sombre soulful journey.

Melody in *Notturno Elegiaco*

Hofmeyr believes that the most successful operas throughout history contain the most memorable themes (Interview with composer, 1st June, 2008). Having transplanted his operatic themes into *Notturno*, they constitute an extremely important musical parameter in this work, contributing to its accessibility to the

[7] In Schenkerian terms, this refers to coda-type material which follows the actual structure of the composition and is purely a further treatment of previous material, namely an extension

listener. The practice of transcribing operatic themes into piano works found its heyday in the Romantic period with composers like Liszt and Chopin. Their intention with these transcriptions was to popularise the operas or Lieder. However, as previously stated, Hofmeyr's primary motivation in using his operatic themes was his desire to resuscitate the themes from his operas that were not performed. All the themes are accessible and singable and have defined emotional connotations embodied in the intervals. The use of the minor 2nd, for example, both ascending and descending, is an interval associated in this context with grief and pervades this piece. In his book, *The Elements of Musical Expression*, Deryck Cooke refers to the 'painful' nature of the minor 2nd interval. He cites several examples from various composers' works ranging from Josquin (around 1500) through Purcell (1692), Mozart (1789), Richard Strauss (1888), Stravinsky (1930), Vaughan Williams (1994) to Britten (1954). "Composers of all periods have drawn on its intensely expressive quality….the minor 2nd is an expression of anguish" (Cooke 1974, 77).

The opening figure in the cello in fact, is a falling minor 2nd (Bb to A), a gesture which introduces the bleak, stark landscape of the whole work. It comes full circle and ends with a falling minor 2nd, this time from an 'F' to an 'E', significantly the upper dominant relationship. A dominant relationship is consistent with the interval of a 5th, which characterises much of the melodic material.

Melodic design is predominantly intervalically driven – the melodic contour is formed from discrete directional and recurring intervals rather than being intrinsically bound up with the rhythmic impetus. The dominating interval is the perfect 5th both ascending and descending. In the three themes, A, B, and D, the perfect 5th opens each statement, and forms the characteristic initial melodic gesture. This suggests an expression of longing and spatial unattainability, as well as a contrast to the continuation of the melodic line which moves more conjunctly. The perfect 5th is gradually 'filled in' with itself as a fulcrum around which the melody is 'stuck'. The opening melody 'plays around' with the duality of major/minor located on the 3rd degree. When the cello repeats the theme, the perfect 5th is strategically embellished so as to link the two outer notes by filling in the inner missing tones of the opening flute line. Psychologically one can imagine this as a gesture of connectedness.

The second theme is ushered in by the piano whose melody notes form part of a richly harmonic texture. The perfect 5th is now inverted as a descending interval at the opening and once again uses the diatonic

scale notes to fill in the interval. Once again the interval of a major 3rd completes the melodic line, first ascending and then descending.

The third theme is the most 'tortured' and fragmented – the intervals are wider and more urgent. The use of much smaller and therefore shorter note values gives this theme an intensity which is highlighted by the constant and frequent use of swells of crescendos and diminuendos. In addition the use of extremely high ranges in both the flute and cello reinforces the tension and drama of this section. The intervals created are tonally far more ambiguous, since the melody changes from flats to sharps indicating a duality of key centres. The usage of late-Romantic gestures, such as emotive appoggiaturas and chromatic passing notes, is reminiscent of Wagnerian melodies for example, the famous opening from *Tristan and Isolde*, which is laden with these chromatic expressive gestures. The interval space here has opened up into dramatic leaps and the intensity is reinforced by the flute and cello playing in unison.

In the 4th theme, the melodic line is heard in canon between the flute and cello while the right hand of the piano, using some characteristic thematic intervals plays a more sustained melodic role against the theme. Melodically the linking bars make use of additive and *stretto* techniques to emphasise the momentum and intensify the emotional content. This is achieved by obsessive repetitions of melodic fragments.

Harmonic Language in *Notturno Elegiaco*

Although the *melodic* material is conceived largely diatonically, it is in the use of the richly-textured vertical sonorities that support the linear melodies, that the harmonic language is heard in washes of unapologetic dissonant material alternating with the more 'gentle' harmonies of Ravellian Impressionism. This is not surprising as Ravel is a defining model in Hofmeyr's quest for the refinement of a harmonic vocabulary (Interview with the composer, 1 July, 2008). Out of the *hexatonic* harmonies emerge chords like the French 6th (in the right hand of the piano ten bars before letter F) as well as many augmented triads based on the whole-tone scale (*hexatonic* scale) in the right hand of the piano (the modulatory section three bars before letter F).

Hofmeyr uses the harmonic technique of 'added-note' chords and lush quartal harmonies which spice up and enrich the textural beauty – many examples of these chordal constructs can be found throughout the

work but most particularly in the modulatory section before letter F in the score. Another example is found in the piano part of the second theme in which the D minor chords are expanded and enriched by the attached major and minor 2nds.

Although Hofmeyr also has a predilection for material using octatonic and hexatonic scale material in many of his works, for example, *Aleenstryd*,, a song cycle for voice and piano, he has generally limited his material in 'Notturno' to modally based intervals and harmonies. Although these harmonies in *Notturno Elegiaco* are more modally than tonally based, there are definite areas of shifting tonal centres which locate the chordal and melodic material on different recognisable keys. Much of the material used in this work is based on three scales within the same diatonic system, namely E Locrian (E F G A Bb), A Phrygian (A Bb C D E), very closely related modes and D minor.

At the very outset of the work, the 'silent' chord comprising of two superimposed perfect 5ths a semitone apart is a germ cell constructed initially on the A with two semitone 'clusters' and finally on the E (the inversion) which begins the Coda. The harmonic material consists of a vertical Phrygian aggregate on A and later on E as the tonal basis. As the threads of this 'silent' chord are unfurled linearly, the two voices imply a quasi bi-tonal texture, that of A minor and Bb major superimposed.

The manner in which Hofmeyr breaks up his chords in the piano and flute parts in the *tumultuoso* section creates a harmonic texture that is block-like and static. At letter 'C' in the score the flowing broken chords are drawn together and consolidated into block-like chordal entities which produce very rich sonorities. There are hierarchical points of focus whereby the A acts as a tonic to the E dominant and then the A itself resolves on to the D as a temporary tonic.

The underlying chromatic harmonic usage between all the instruments, together with the aggressive percussive piano plucking in the 3rd theme (six bars before letter D) causes 'crunch-like' harmonic ambivalence as well as heightened tension that results from the use of unyielding sharper dissonant chordal aggregates.

In *Notturno,* Hofmeyr applies the concept of the cadence in an expressive and individual way – he retains the element of the 'moment of repose' and its usage as a phrase separation. However he removes it from

its traditional harmonic relationships by creating an *appoggiatura*-type moment in which the bass leans on a note a minor 2nd above the resolution chord and establishes a Phrygian cadence as it falls. In the bar before letter G the note G in the bass resolves to F# while the top note of the chord follows with an echo of this Phrygian cadence.

Rhythmic Elements in *Notturno Elegiaco*

In *Notturno Elegiaco,* the parameter of rhythm is utilised a reasonably conservative modality and does not display an attempt to push the boundaries experimentally Hofmeyr uses rhythmic motifs in conjunction with intervallic motifs to produce dramatic gestures and startling effects. A notable example of such usage is found right at the opening of the work in which the emotive falling minor 2nd, previously discussed, is linked rhythmically to a semiquaver followed by a quaver below. There is a sense of the time being suspended and it is only this rhythmic motif that grounds the opening. A quasi-mirror which imitates this rhythmic figure is found in the concluding six bars of the work, but this time exclusively articulated by the cello and in rhythmic diminution and augmentation. In the closing phrase a short demisemiquaver value is followed by a crotchet - the final two-note gesture uses a semiquaver and dotted quaver in order for the work to come full circle.

In the bar after A in the score, the flute melody in long note values heralds in a more measured three crotchet per bar (3/4) rhythm, while the piano keeps a stabilising pulse moving in quavers punctuated by gusting and rapid ascending and descending flourishes in cello harmonics. Three rhythmic shapes are at play here. The use of a monotonous, repetitive, non-expressive *ostinato*-type figure in the piano exhibits a quasi-minimalist approach. However the concurrent intermittent timbrel cello effects as well as the expressive flute melody against the piano serves to highlight how Hofmeyr engages with a style like minimalism. This mode of composition is not generally in alignment with Hofmeyr's compositional aesthetic, yet he embraces this contemporary approach but individualises it by transforming its elements - he attaches expressive and irregular rhythmic contours to the texture and in this manner 'humanises' the potential sterility of the minimalist style.

One of Hofmeyr's rhythmic signatures is his use of combinations of different rhythmic groupings simultaneously. An example of this can be found in the *tumultuoso* section of *Notturno* in which flowing

arpeggiations in rhythmic groupings of sixes in the flute (in semiquavers) are played against irregular rhythmic groupings of tens in the piano (five plus five demisemiquavers). This rhythmic device creates a dense and chaotic vibrating texture. The resultant sound world is a layered and stratified rhythmic shape which at times tends to obscure the domination of the bar-line. These layered rhythms create a heightened tension and contribute to the turbulent sonic environment desired by the composer.

Ponderous rhythmic syncopations are introduced at letter C in the cello and the piano left hand which create the effect of a thick but mobile rhythmic texture. This soon dissipates nine bars later into a more whimsical rhythmic structure defined by the flute trills and rising flourishes, yet it retains elements of the syncopatory figurations in the piano. For the first time (at the start of the third motif, six bars before letter D), the flute and cello team up rhythmically at the interval of a major 6^{th} apart.

From letter D a new rhythmic figure is introduced, one which uses triplets containing irregular dotted values in all three instruments. This is followed by a section in ¾ in which the dotted rhythms in the flute and cello are now accompanied by straight triplets in the piano left hand. The thick chordal syncopated rhythm re-appears at letter E with fragments of the dotted rhythms accompanying this piano figuration. All of these stratified rhythmic patterns add to the fluidity of the work and rhythmic variety.

Six bars before letter F the music reflects neo-Romantic gestures with groups of twos against threes. Letter F brings a reprise of the 'six against ten' figures culminating in the *Danzante* section. Here the rhythm and entire texture thins out to create the spectral ambience. A strict melodic and rhythmic canon follows for ten bars in a contrapuntal texture. The piano string *glissandi* irregularly punctuate the regular rhythmic design.

Hofmeyr's application of metric changes is based on the musical rationale of separating different rhythmic events from one another– this is not done simply for effect or as an imperative of 'new' writing technique, but as an intrinsic part of the overall structural and rhythmic design.

Hofmeyr's use of Romantic notions of tempo as being flexible, fluid and therefore expressive can be observed in his frequent use of indications like *accelerando, ritenuto, rallentando* and *con molto rubato*.

However, these freer sections are structurally juxtaposed with sections of motoric (*Tumultuoso*) and inflexible rhythms (*Danzante*).

Technical Challenges and Difficulties in *Notturno Elegiaco*

The score reflects Hofmeyr's meticulous attention to detail regarding dynamic markings, articulation directions as well as expressive terminologies. In order to achieve the desired colouristic effects, Hofmeyr stretches the instruments to extremes in register as well as extremes in performance technique. The performance challenge is exacerbated by the composer's requirement of speeds that are on the edge of possible. This is particularly evident in the *tumultuoso* section (four bars after letter B) in which a hurricane-like effect is obtained by the swirling arpeggiated figurations at top speed by the flute and piano. Ultimately it is the effect that is required and not the exactness of every pitch. In the service of creating multi-dimensional and exciting timbrel and textural sonorities, Hofmeyr makes both musically and technically virtuosic demands on the instrumentalists. He is not content with applying the limited range of usual instrumental articulations; as mentioned previously, the pianist plays both inside the piano on the strings as well as on the keys and the flute and cello are required to play a range of diverse articulations; namely *senza vibrato, glissandi*, 'clicking of keys', tongued 'stopped' sounds and *frullato* in the flute, and *pizzicato, glissandi, flautando, glissando* harmonics, *sul ponticello, nail pizzicatos, pizz. sordino* and *molto vibrato* in the cello. These technical demands, however, are still within the bounds of idiomatic writing yet are not for the 'faint-hearted' performer – highly skilled musicians are needed to interpret the piece with its nuances and intricate technical demands.

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