

COMPOSITION PORTFOLIO

by

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In memory of my late parents

Sydney Thomas “Tom” Hanmer and Marjorie Kathleen “Marge” Hanmer

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

REFLEXIVE COMMENTARIES

1. INTRODUCTION	Page 5
2. THE BOW PROJECT – A set of two pieces written for Phase II of the Bow Project	Page 13
3. REQUIEM FOR THE 1 ST PEOPLES	Page 30
4. SYMPHONY – FROM THE OLD WORLD	Page 83
5. IN CLOSING	Page 120
6. RECORDINGS	Page 121
7. LIST OF REFERENCES	Page 122
8. APPENDIX	Page 125
9. PORTFOLIO OF WORKS – SCORES:	Page 126
• <i>uNtsiki</i> and <i>Ntwazana</i> – pieces for The Bow Project, Phase II	
• <i>Requiem for The 1st Peoples</i>	
• <i>Symphony – from The Old World</i>	
• Excerpts from the composer's Autograph Score of <i>Symphony – from The Old World</i> : -A MSG From MPHO; -E♭ Allegro	

ADDENDUM: Recording of Works in this Portfolio [access on Google Drive]

REFLEXIVE COMMENTARIES

1. INTRODUCTION

My family comes from various parts of the Cape Province in South Africa. My mother was born in Victoria-West, a small town in the Karoo, which is a semi-arid region in the interior of the southern part of the Northern Cape Province. However, she spent most of her youth in Piketberg, which is approximately 80 km north of Cape Town in a wheat-growing region near Malmesbury known colloquially as “die Swartland” – literally “the Black Lands” – so named for the overriding colour of the vast fields of ripening wheat which characterise this area. Her father was a schoolmaster. Her parents had died by the time I was two years old, so I have no memory of either of them. She was born Marjorie Kathleen de Jager.

My father’s father was a cabinet-maker by profession. He grew up in Doornfontein, Johannesburg, where he learnt to work with wood from his own father. He later married and settled in Worcester, in a fruit-growing region of the Western Cape Province, where my father Sydney Thomas Hanmer was born and grew up. By the time we came to stay with my paternal grandparents, the company my grandfather worked for, Bell-Webb, was located at premises on Queen’s Park Avenue in Woodstock, Cape Town, almost directly opposite the house where my grandparents had by then been living for some years. [This was the early 1960’s, and we lived in Woodstock while our Crawford house was being extended to accommodate our growing family.]

Hanmer is a Welsh surname and certainly there was a Hanmer way back in my ancestry who, although married with children in the United Kingdom, nevertheless ended up in Cape Town and started a second family with a different woman. He was pursued to Cape Town by his aggrieved and rightful wife many years later. Apparently, this Hanmer nevertheless remained with his new family and it is from this branch of Hanmer’s that my father’s father is descended.

My mother’s family were in general terms more fair of complexion [having the Dutch roots from my maternal grandfather’s side reflected in their surname de Jager], with brown, green, grey and blue eyes evident in my mother and her siblings. Nevertheless, all of my ancestors going back at least three generations were all classified “coloured” in the nomenclature of the Afrikaner National Party state.

And by “coloured” I do not mean “black” as in the common parlance of the United States, but rather the more nuanced [but equally sinister, though ultimately without any basis in truth or fact] sense of being “of mixed racial identity”. This term could therefore include – as well as exclude – almost anyone, and forms one of a number of catch-all terms invented by the Apartheid government for herding people and families into particular areas, in both urban and rural settings, throughout South Africa; tagged and labelled forevermore by these random “racial markers”. This system has ultimately led to untold suffering and confusion - and even death - for countless ordinary South Africans; its devastating effects remain with us still, and its after-effects will continue to reverberate through succeeding generations, long after we have departed this earthly realm.

So, there were people who had the Afrikaans surname van Staden [to choose a random example] who were termed “coloured” and some others, with the same surname, who were

designated “white” and who were therefore given far greater privileges – in life and in society at large.

To add to the general confusion and potential for chaos, one could also apply for “racial re-classification” – which many people did, either in search of a better life, or simply to remain together with those they loved – which often led to infinitely sad and stressful outcomes; such as a “coloured” couple moving into a “white” area, but unwilling to let their [perhaps darker than expected] children play on the street with their much fairer friends in the afternoons for fear of embarrassing anyone; or else ensuring that their daily school drop-off was always timed to take place a few minutes later than the start of the morning assembly; so that their children would not be seen out in the open schoolyard for even a moment, lest they be “spotted” – and possibly reported – for being in the wrong place with the wrong racial “credentials”.

Some people, like my paternal grandmother, Wilhelmina Paulse, were midnight-dark in complexion and probably descended from West African slaves shipped to St. Helena island around 1840. Many from that island came to Cape Town as ordinary workers, labourers and servants. They brought with them a truly British way of speaking English, a fondness for English tea and “proper” silverware for the table, as well as beautiful manners. I believe my grandmother, along with her sister “Aunty Kitty”, were amongst this influx of people. Wilhelmina was born in 1888 and my name is derived from her maiden surname, Paulse.

I grew up in relatively modest fashion. I am not attempting to downplay my inherently privileged existence by stating so. Yet it is imperative that I should immediately add that my family was way better off than the vast majority of South Africans, who instead knew the most grinding, and virtually inescapable, poverty; and still do.

My family and I lived amongst other “coloured” people in a section of what was in those days known as Crawford. We were Christians, Muslims and people of African, Indian, Arab, Indonesian and Filipino descent. Some of us were half-Egyptian. We were made up of people who were blond-haired and blue-eyed, dark-skinned and black-eyed, frizzy-haired and straight-haired, and everything else in between. And we were all termed “coloured” as if the beautiful and astonishing variety of our origins had absolutely no bearing on our being placed together – in suburbs, schools, churches and mosques, income brackets as well as the range of professions that our parents had access to. And of course, while none of this should have mattered at all, there have always been so many complicated and often painful issues around racial difference, accent, social status and other often spurious forms of distinction.

To this day, there is enormous fallout from this system of both dividing, as well as uniting, people of South Africa. This was all governed by the iron hand of the state; absolutely. My parents’ colleagues and friends were schoolteachers too. They were all employed by, literally, “The Department of Coloured Affairs”. There were, of course, also departments of Indian Affairs, Bantu Affairs, etc. Each department was set up to deal solely with matters pertaining exclusively to the people of each particular “racial category”. It is doubtful that we as a nation will ever expunge the pervasive and horrific spiritual, mental and physical effects and after-effects of this wickedly pernicious and degrading system of governance and social perversion.

I befriended the sons and daughters of my parents’ colleagues. My circle also included the children of our immediate neighbours in the avenues of Crawford, down to Garlandale, which is where I attended primary school [sub A, sub B, and standards 1 up to 5; my first seven years

of schooling] and where, in Lady May Street at the Blake household, I had my first six or seven years of piano and music theory lessons from Anthony “Tony” Blake¹, who attended Athlone High School with my eldest sister, Lyn. These lessons started in 1970, the year of a big drought in the Western Cape as well as a terrible earthquake centred at the town of Ceres, about 50 km from Cape Town, where the powerful after-shocks were worryingly felt too. The neighbouring areas to the east of Crawford were the suburbs of Athlone and Belgravia, also designated for “coloured” folks. The areas to the west and south were reserved for “white” folks; and there was a “no-build” zone running across all ten avenues of Crawford, perhaps 90 metres wide, to divide the “white” area of Crawford from the “coloured” part. And this zone [officially termed a buffer zone in Apartheid terminology] is where, on the white river sand between 4th and 5th Avenues, we played soccer, and sometimes cricket, in the afternoons after school.

This is also where, half-hidden by dewy overgrown grass closer to the railway line running parallel to the avenues, I saw a dead person for the first time one morning; presumably a homeless man who had probably died of exposure during the night out on that field.

Like many of my parents’ generation, most of my teachers and those who taught in the schools my friends attended came from smaller towns outside of Cape Town such as Worcester, Paarl, Genadendal, Oudtshoorn, Pacaltsdorp and Riversdale to receive training in “the Mother City” – as Cape Town is fondly called – as schoolteachers and later to find jobs, to find love, set up homes and raise families. My parents, who were both life-long teachers, were part of this ‘migration’, with my mother attending Batswood College in Claremont and my father and his brother, Stanley, attending Hewat Teacher Training College in Belgravia.

This account does not include a picture of life in the “white” suburbs, the “Indian” areas, the “black” neighbourhoods, or the bleak [and generally sandy and windy] areas to which “coloured” people were moved – to make way for exclusively “white” people to settle in their place – in their tens of thousands, during the notorious and brutally carried out “forced removals”, some of which happened during the early 1960’s.

In the micro-cosmos of Crawford, my sisters and I were afforded a decent life. We each completed 12 years of public schooling, received music lessons, attended ballet and/or art classes and sometimes went on weekend day-drives out of Cape Town with our parents – to see some of the diversity and beauty, as well as the wealth and poverty of this place we called home. My father’s specialist subject and interest was geography, and he truly loved his subject. So we would set off - usually on a Saturday - with a packed lunch, chequered blanket and flask of brewed coffee in the trunk of the family sedan and head for Paarl, Stellenbosch, Wolseley or Ceres. Somewhere en route we would stop for some refreshments and to stretch our legs, and return to Crawford by late afternoon.

My siblings and I all attended university too. Our parents made sure to provide each of us with a tertiary education, since they firmly believed in the value of having such an education. I spent a year working as a trainee estimator for a firm which produced flexible packaging, after matriculating from Harold Cressy High School. I did so because I was unsure whether to pursue a career as a silversmith or as a classical musician.

¹ Anthony Blake (b. 1952) was born and raised in Cape Town. Although he was offered a scholarship to study music abroad, he chose to study medicine instead, latterly becoming a specialist in geriatric medicine. Today, he lives and work in the United Kingdom. I received piano and theory lessons from him from 1970 to 1976.

While in high school, I also developed an interest in the idea of becoming a solar physicist; an idea I rapidly abandoned when it became clear that the levels of achievement in physical science and mathematics required by that discipline were clearly far beyond what I by then [even at tenth year level of schooling] felt I was capable of attaining. It was also during 1979, my post-matric year, that I started rehearsing in Woodstock [a suburb of Cape Town] with an amateur band called Tarkus, led by the brothers Gregory [guitarist] and Stephen [electric bassist] Groenmeyer and featuring jazz singer and songwriter, Tina Schouw. Because I was earning a small salary from my full-time job as trainee estimator at DRG Flexible Packaging, I was also able to afford to purchase both raw silver and jewellery-making tools and began making a few pieces at home as a fairly serious hobby.

I then decided to pursue a B Mus degree at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and enrolled as a full-time student at that institution's College of Music in 1980.

I did well at university and really enjoyed the environment – being with so many young and often really gifted and generally crazy musicians from all over the country, being taught by an even more diverse and often eccentric range of older musicians – our tutors and lecturers – most of whom also played in the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra and whom we could then hear performing, at specially priced Thursday evening concerts at the City Hall.

These teachers were from various far-flung corners of the world, but included some of the finest South African musicians too. The timpanist and first trombone were from the United States. Various piano lecturers came from South Africa, Hungary, North America and elsewhere; my late piano teacher, Neil Solomon², spent his youth and early adulthood in London. Many of the string players hailed from various European countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary and Belgium. The Early Music specialist was Belgian too. The principal contrabassist was from Czechoslovakia. At university, I really absorbed for a time the unfortunately erroneous idea that the world of music could somehow transcend the bounds of the usual human failings such as prejudices of various kinds, general forms of pettiness, and professional jealousy.

This misconception helped me to focus on my musical education for the two years I managed to spend at UCT before taking a two-year long “leave of absence” to join a professional band.

The truth is that I left university to avoid following my father's decree: that I get a teaching qualification. Instead, I wanted to study for a degree in music composition, but my father felt that he could not justify paying for an education that probably would not enable his son to find work that would allow him to adequately support himself, let alone a family of his own, one day. So I left university. I joined a “cover band” [that is, a band that played copycat versions of existing songs, mostly learned by ear and rote] led by the late Taliep Petersen³; living and performing six nights a week in various hotels. Thus, I began my professional career as a musician and performed for a succession of “cover bands” over the next seven years or so, up

² Neil Solomon (17 July 1931 - 11 January 2015) was my piano teacher during the time I attended the University of Cape Town's College of Music between 1980 and 1984. He was a composer and pianist, who was a Schubert specialist. He composed an opera named *You, Anna and I*.

³ Born in Cape Town's District 6 neighbourhood, South Africa, on 15 April 1950, Taliep Petersen was a singer, composer, band leader and musical director; most notably of *Kat and the Kings*, which was the first Cape Town musical to be staged on West End and Broadway.

until 1989, when I joined an “original” band [in contrast to a “cover” band] called “Wired to the Floor”, led by Pietermaritzburg-born vocalist and songwriter, Gavin Minter.⁴

I returned to university in 1984, after two years with Taliep Petersen, and resumed with my third year of study at UCT – having successfully enrolled in the Composition stream this time – but I was no longer the same; and I left university midway through 1984 to join yet another cover band, led by guitarist Darryl Andrews, and went to work in Botswana.

In August 1987, I moved to Johannesburg, leaving yet another “cover” band known as Equinox to do so. I have lived in the city ever since.

The majority of the musicians I worked with in the cover band circuit were self-taught and really skilled. And even though my formal training as a musician was really aborted [mostly by myself, of course] and became supplanted by an informal relationship with new musical material, I never stopped learning; especially from my fellow bandmates. Performing for four hours per night, six nights per week for several years was an education in itself, to say nothing of the various ways in which musicians tried to keep themselves occupied, sane and up to the best standard of playing they could muster. Most of these bands had at least two or three members who were able and willing to write their own songs too; mostly in pop, R&B or rock styles. Their need, however, to keep abreast of new repertoire and maintain employment meant that many such dreams typically remained unfulfilled.

I am going to take up my story now in the early Johannesburg period – circa 1989 – when I was already living in a rented house in Bertrams and trying to exist as a freelance musician, for the first time in my life.

Basically, I was in search of South Africa – musically speaking – eager to hunt down the original sounds of this truly diverse and variegated home of many nations. I had learned Baroque, classical, Romantic and French Impressionist music; through my work as a bandsman I gained insight into rock, R&B, soul, funk, jazz and straight ahead pop music, yet I had virtually no knowledge of any South African musical idioms. It wasn’t until I was almost 30 that I began to feel that I had possibly found this “fabled land of music” called South Africa, or at least knew beyond which gateways it might be best accessed.

Two things were key to this pursuit and my then opposite neighbour, pianist Denzil Weale⁵, had a prominent role to play in both of these; as shall shortly be revealed.

- i) Observing Zimbabwean-born pianist Denzil Weale busy with an ancient cassette tape-deck, transcribing Abdullah Ibrahim’s recordings wrapped up in scarves, coats and a thick jersey, seated at an ancient rented upright piano with a red-hot two-bar heater placed perilously close to his feet.
- ii) Going with Denzil to drummer Ivor Back’s house further along the same street [Berea Road in Bertrams, Johannesburg] we both lived on, to hear – for the first

⁴ Gavin Minter is a singer, saxophonist, percussionist, writer, composer, producer, promoter and music agent. (<http://gavinminter.co.za/bio.html>)

⁵ Born in 1959, jazz pianist, Denzil Weale, studied classical music formally and started playing with cover bands at the age of 14. He studied composition and piano and obtained his L.R.S.M (Piano Performers) in 1981. Denzil has performed in Europe and the USA as well as various African countries. He has special interest in the classic works of past and living South African jazz masters. (<https://phatbrass.wordpress.com/alumni/denzil-weale/>)

time in my life – the Keith Jarrett Trio playing several of the *Standards – Volume I* tracks on vinyl record.

Weale had a Teacher's Licentiate qualification and was, by that time, one of the most profoundly well-informed of the pianists playing jazz in Johannesburg. He was almost ridiculously well-equipped, both technically and theoretically, and yet there he was, in mid-winter on the Highveld, transcribing Abdullah Ibrahim's⁶ music in humble surroundings and on his own time, fuelled by his own initiative entirely. His line of reasoning was more or less as follows:

While [he said] previously published transcriptions of Abdullah's music available at the time were certainly respectfully and skilfully done, they were nevertheless invariably rhythmically and stylistically not entirely accurate. Weale suggested that we [as fellow Southern African musicians] had both a responsibility and a moral obligation even – to put these matters to rights. This had to be done by accurately notating the music of our compatriots once and for all; and making published editions of these transcriptions commercially available, so that musicians and music students everywhere could gain access to them – alongside any other published editions of this same repertoire to be found “out there” at any particular time.

Hearing the breathtaking pianism of Keith Jarrett made me realize that I could not [and absolutely should not] ever try to lobotomise my classical training; but that I should instead harness this background when approaching any kind of music-making, for or stemming from, the piano. I also realised that I couldn't “become more South African” by attempting to sound raw and un-schooled.

It wasn't until six years later, in 1995, that I made a recording which would come to somehow define my musical identity. This was a radio transcription recording made at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) for the local saFM radio station which, when released on the Sheer Sound label in 1997, bore the title *Trains to Taung*.

Around this time, Denzil Weale also urged clarinettist Robert Pickup⁷ to seek me out and work with me; which he (Robert) did, bringing cellist, Kendall Reid, along with him. This resulted in an initial repertoire of pieces I wrote for this trio to perform together, and later record, in 1996. These recordings were then added to in 1998 and collectively became my second album for Sheer Sound, entitled *Window to Elsewhere*, which was released at the end of that year.

⁶ Born and baptised Adolph Johannes Brand in South Africa in 1934, Abdullah Ibrahim is a pianist and composer with his early musical roots in traditional African Khoi-san songs and the Christian hymns, gospel tunes and spirituals that he heard from his grandmother and mother. His distinguished music career spans many years since his first professional debut at the age of 15. Today, he divides his time between South Africa, Germany and the United States.
(<https://abdullahibrahim.co.za/biography/>)

⁷ Robert Pickup attended Pro Arte High School in Pretoria and complete a BMus (musicology) and a Performer's Licentiate at UNISA. His clarinet teachers were Herbert Klein and Mario Trincherio and he won several music competitions in South Africa, including the SASOL Music Prize, the SABC Music Prize, the Jim Joel Scholarship and the UNISA Overseas Scholarship. This enabled him to further his studies with Thomas Friedli in Geneva, where he obtained a Diplôme de Virtuosité. While studying in Geneva, Robert played in the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra. Before joining the Philharmonia Zürich – where he is the principal clarinettist – in 1999, he was co-principal clarinettist of the Brabants Orchestra in Holland and the National Symphony Orchestra of the SABC. Robert is also principal clarinettist of the period instrument orchestra La Scintilla. (<http://www.join-mozart-festival.org/programme-2013/artists/soloists/robert-pickup/>). In addition, he is currently Clarinet Lecturer at the HSLU, Luzern.

Robert, Kendall and I also performed together during 1995 and 1996, mostly at a small though justly famous Johannesburg club known as The Bassline, which was founded and managed by Bradley Holmes.⁸

Notably, Weale urged me to write out more than just the lead melody and some chords to accompany it when notating my own compositions. He advised me to write out parts for specific instruments as well, which is what I then started to do. The results of this new *modus operandi* are evident in the recordings I made after *Trains to Taung*; including *Window to Elsewhere* (1998), *playola* (2000), *Naivasha* (2002), and *Water + Lights* (2004), amongst others.

I feel truly grateful to Weale for many reasons. His advice led me to write full arrangements of my pieces which nevertheless still accommodated improvised performances by designated soloists in the bands I subsequently put together – most often bands that were specially assembled to record the albums mentioned earlier or to perform material from these same albums at festivals, club gigs and some theatres.

Additionally, Robert Pickup remains, to this day, a special associate and colleague who has furthermore requested, inspired or commissioned me to create several key works such as a *Clarinet Quintet* (2007) – for various Clarinets & String Quartet; *Estampie D'Mkhukhu* (2012) for solo Bass Clarinet; *The Game-reserve Effect* (2010 -11) for Clarinet in A & Violoncello; *7 Winter Episodes* (2013/4) for solo Bass Horn & Orchestra; and *for Bongi* (2018) for Bass Clarinet & Piano.

Robert Pickup is also the person I continually bear in mind when writing music for any instruments of the Clarinet family, as well as for Woodwinds in general, or indeed even for the Tuba, since he introduced me to tubist Anne Jelle Visser early in 2008 [who then requested several pieces for the chamber group he and his fellow tubist colleague, Sérgio Carolino, had started]. This was at a time when I was invited to Zurich for the premiere performance of my *Clarinet Quintet*, which took place at a chamber concert held in the foyer of the Zurich Opera.

The music on *Trains to Taung* has led to a certain amount of discussion amongst some listeners regarding my own musical and social background. People have debated as to whether or not I was the son of a church minister, or else grew up as a devout Muslim, or that I perhaps spent much of my time in the historically “black” neighbourhoods of Cape Town such as kwa-Langa, Gugulethu or Nyanga. The debate arose because that particular recording seemed to reflect strong influences from any or all of these scenarios.

Of course, many other people who heard the album knew exactly where I came from and knew about my classical training, my journeymanship in the “cover” bands led by the late Taliep Petersen, guitarist Darryl Andrews, as well as electric bassists Alan Rissik and Les Goode. Some people were aware of my close working relationship with saxophonist McCoy Mrubata, drummers Kevin Gibson, Ian Herman and Barry van Zyl, bassists Victor Masondo and Peter Sklair, keyboard-player Don Laka, singer Cecil Mitchell, etc. as well as my open admiration for bands such as Sakhile, Bayete and Tananas and the recordings I had made with the late Miriam Makeba and Chikapa Ray Phiri; also with ‘unofficial language’, Wired to The Floor, Jennifer Ferguson and Tony Cox.

⁸ David B. Coplan & Óscar Gutiérrez, *Last Night at the Bassline*, 2017.

In the cover bands I worked with, I used to do what all my colleagues in these bands were doing to learn and remember repertoire; transcribe “by ear” and then rehearse with the whole band. Later, when I joined “909” [a cover band named after the “909” model of drum-box developed and built by the Japanese company, Roland] I learned to extend that skill by notating my transcriptions and then playing from these self-made keyboard parts. All the instrumentalists in that band likewise played from their own notated transcriptions and, from that time onward it became rarer for me to do any kind of performance work without a set of self-made parts to read from or refer to. I had thus reverted to performing from musical notation.

Even later, when I became involved almost exclusively in improvisational music performance, I never quite abandoned the notion of having notated keyboard or piano parts to hand, as a reference or guide.

Since about 1990, I have led a life that has increasingly left pop music behind and instead embraced working with improvising musicians; those who wish to explore South African folk idioms in their compositional and performance output, as well as others who have a deep love of jazz music.

At the same time, I have re-entered the realm of classical music and music-making; often through writing arrangements of my own music, which would incorporate classically trained players, as well as in response to commissions to compose [for particular musicians or groups of musicians] fully notated pieces of music – such as the works in this PhD portfolio. Yet, there are many circumstantial factors that feed into my composing, and exert an influence on my creativity.

A major step in this particular direction came during 2002 when composer, Michael Blake, asked me to contribute to The Bow Project. This commission brought me into close contact with the [then intact and very active] Sontonga Quartet.

Several further requests for, and commissions of, new works followed on from there. Two such works constitute the major portion of the portfolio to which these reflexive commentaries refer.

2. THE BOW PROJECT

A set of two pieces written for Phase II of The Bow Project

- 1) *uNtsiki* for String Quartet and Soprano Voice
- 2) *Ntwazana* for String Quartet

Composed: December 2002 – March 2003 in Johannesburg, South Africa

Duration: ± 15 minutes

2.1 Introduction

On the advice of Gwen Ansell⁹ and Jonathan de Vries¹⁰, composer Michael Blake¹¹ got in touch with me during 2002 to gauge my interest in becoming involved with The Bow Project¹², which he had just launched at the National Arts Festival (Grahamstown, South Africa) of that year, together with fellow composer Theo Herbst¹³.

In December 2002, after several meetings with Michael Blake, I agreed to contribute to Phase II of this project, which was to be presented – in performances, talks and related workshops – at the National Arts Festival of 2003.

At one of these meetings with Michael Blake, I was also introduced to Marc Uys¹⁴, who was then leader of the Sontonga Quartet¹⁵. This ensemble was chosen to present the works which would result from composers fulfilling the required tasks set by The Bow Project.

⁹ Gwen Ansell is freelance writer/editor; media trainer; music industry writer and researcher; science fiction/ fantasy reviewer (<https://za.linkedin.com/in/gwen-ansell-a35a8519>). A former Louis Armstrong Visiting Professor at the Center for Jazz Studies, Columbia University, she is the author of *Soweto Blues: Jazz, Politics and Popular Music in South Africa* and the textbook *Introduction to Journalism*, as well as various book chapters and journal articles. (<https://sigswenjazz.wordpress.com/about/>)

¹⁰ Jonathan de Vries was, at the time (2002-3), treasurer of NewMusicSA (<https://www.newmusicsa.org.za/>), a composers' collective initiated by Michael Blake and based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

¹¹ Michael Blake was born in South Africa in 1951. He is a composer and performer of African contemporary classical music (Blake 2021).

¹² Michael Blake's – The Bow Project

(<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2989/18121004.2016.1267950?journalCode=rmaa20>)

¹³ Theo Herbst holds a BMus degree from Stellenbosch University (1986) and a MMus in Composition) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (1988). He continued his composition studies with Erhard Karkoschka and Ulrich Süsses at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Stuttgart, graduating in 1993. (https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/72244/SouthAfrica_Program_Digital.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y#:~:text=Theo%20Herbst%20holds%20a%20BMus,in%20Stuttgart%2C%20graduating%20in%201993).

¹⁴ Marc Uys is a South African-born violinist and sometime leader of the now disbanded Sontonga Quartet, in which capacity I met him in Johannesburg, in 2002. Today, Marc is the executive director of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, which recently merged with The Princeton Festival. (<https://www.broadwayworld.com/bwwclassical/article/Princeton-Symphony-Orchestra-Appoints-Marc-Uys-as-New-Executive-Director-20150603>).

¹⁵ Made up of violinists, Marc Uys and Waldo Alexander, violist, Xandi van Dijk, and cellist, Brian Choveaux – later replaced by Eddie McLean - the Sontonga Quartet was formed in 2002 and active until 2006. The quartet was immediately engaged to tour internationally with “Confessions of Zeno”, a multimedia collaboration with the renowned Handspring Puppet Company, the internationally acclaimed artist William Kentridge, and Kevin Volans, one of South Africa's most lauded composers. The quartet established itself as one of the finest exponents of both the classical and contemporary repertoire in South Africa. In its first 4 years, it gave world premières of works by more than a dozen composers including Kevin Volans, Philip Miller and Paul Hanmer, as well as South African premières of works by Arvo Pärt, Péter Louis van Dijk and Henryk Górecki. (<https://soundcloud.com/sontonga-quartet>)

Their involvement was thus crucial to The Bow Project; the quartet stood at the far end of the over-arching “bow” which sought to connect “monochord-and-voice” music-making with “string-quartet-and-voice” performance practise.

The Bow Project was well conceived, and I remain truly grateful to have been invited to participate in it.

2.2 The Three Tasks

The Bow Project set a three-fold task for each contributing composer:

- i) To make a transcription of a chosen recorded performance by the late Nofinishi Dywili who was, by the time these “field recordings” were made, already a legendary composer and exponent of the Uhadi¹⁶ and Umrhumbe/Umrhubhe¹⁷ musical bows, as well as “keeper of the flame” in terms of the special vocal traditions¹⁸ of Ngqoko village [next to Lady Frere in the Eastern Cape] where she had resided her whole life.
- ii) Each composer had to then adapt his or her transcription to enable performance by a Vocalist¹⁹ [reproducing or paraphrasing Nofinishi Dywili’s original vocal delivery] to the accompaniment of a String Quartet – whose members would thus provide a “substitute” for the mostly non-vocal elements of each transcribed piece. This meant that the sounds of the musical bow used in each transcribed piece would be “transferred” from a single string struck “*col legno battuto*” [in the case of the Uhadi] or stroked “*arco*” fashion [by means of a bow-stick charged with pine resin – in the case of the Umrhumbe/Umrhubhe] onto the 16 strings of the Sontonga Quartet. This process was therefore neither simple nor humdrum, and it had already produced unique results in the hands of several participating composers. *uNtisiki* is the title I have given to the piece that resulted from my interpretation of this task.

¹⁶ A large hunting bow, held in “reverse position” by the left hand of the player – who is always a woman. This is the classic single-stringed musical bow, equipped with a gourd resonator held at the player’s breast. It is made to sound by means of its single bowstring being struck- literally “*col legno*”- by a bow-stick of medium length. A “moveable doh” is created by pinching the steel wire string, or else releasing it; creating a choice of two fundamentals, both rich in overtones, and generally a whole tone apart. [The South American version of this musical bow, likewise equipped with a gourd resonator strapped to the nadir of the outer curve of the instrument, is known as the Berimbau].

¹⁷ A smaller musical bow without resonator. This single-stringed bow is also supported by the player’s left hand, with its opposite point held at the player’s mouth. Sound is generated by drawing a shorter bow-stick (charged with pine resin) in “*arco*” fashion across the bowstring, which is made of steel wire. The resonance of the player’s own mouth and throat are harnessed to amplify both the sound of the vibrating string as well as her whistled accompaniment – which picks out patterns from amongst the upper harmonics of the instrument. Because of the performer’s opened mouth, no words are sung to this bow’s sound. [Instead, as explained above, the performer whistles].

¹⁸ These include “standard” vocal techniques; used for singing traditional isiXhosa texts to the accompaniment of the Uhadi. Additionally there is the specialized variant of “throat-singing” which is unique to Ngqoko village. So site-specific is this set of techniques that its collective stylistic moniker “Umnqokolo” even absorbs the place-name “Ngqoko” at its core.

¹⁹ Operatically trained South African singers who are also fluent in at least one of the Nguni languages, isiXhosa especially; this combination of attributes has proven to be extremely commonplace, particularly in recent years. The career paths of Lwazi Ncube, Pumeza Matshikiza and Pretty Yende – amongst those of many others, who have graced opera stages around the world with their singing and acting skills – bear witness to this fact.

Note: Both Lwazi Ncube and Pumeza Mutshikiza were participant vocalist-performers of The Bow Project repertoire – from 2002 until 2009.

- iii) The final task involved each composer writing a brand new piece for String Quartet alone: a “commentary” on each composer’s “adaptation” for Voice and String Quartet [see exercise ii)]. My take on this task yielded the piece *Ntwazana*.

This final task afforded composers the chance to reflect once more on the first two exercises – and to then allow their imagination free reign in the ensuing composition process, which would yield each “commentary” piece.

The “Bow” [of The Bow Project] thereby comes to reference not only a bow-stick or a specially shaped and carved Violin or Viola bow, strung with horse-hair and charged with rosin. “Bow” also references a conceptual bridge linking one set of musical practices with another. It thus makes possible powerful – and somehow very obvious – connections between the music traditions of Ngqoko village in the rural Eastern Cape and Western Art Music practise, in a deeply respectful way, and across time and space, in spite of a myriad of possible cultural disconnects or misapprehensions which might bedevil attempts at such an exchange.

The Bow Project furthermore helps prove that human beings, no matter who they may be or where they may come from, love to get together to hear their favourite stories, their customs and their views expressed in beautiful songs to the accompaniment of [stringed] instruments played by master-musicians. It moreover proves that this universal need has existed for a very long time.

And herein lies the special magic, and lasting value of this project: its ability to always demonstrate the deepest of connections between people, as well as the universality of their experiences.

Through The Bow Project I could “re-visit” the Ngqoko village experience of 1996, which I shared with [my then band leader] Pops Mohamed²⁰ and researcher Brett Pyper²¹; during which time [arranged to facilitate a Pops Mohamed/Umgqokolo Singers collaborative performance at the National Arts Festival of that year] we were also fortunate to be welcomed as guests into Nofinishi Dywili’s home. When she also performed several songs for us, I was of course unaware that this would be one of the last times I would have this profound honour; nor that I was in the presence of the central figure around whom The Bow Project was to be focused.

I also had the privilege [later, in 2002-3] to work with both Khanya Ceza [who is originally from Peddie village, located “just across the river” from Ngqoko village] and McCoy Mrubata, towards gaining a better understanding of both the music and the text of my chosen “source materials” for The Bow Project. Both Ceza and Mrubata were exceedingly generous with their time and expertise, and both expressed how glad each of them felt to have been asked to assist me with my investigations.

²⁰ Pops Mohamed (1949 -) is a South African multi-instrumentalist and producer, who is based in Johannesburg. His enduring interest in traditional music – of both Southern African and Global origin - has seen him perform and collaborate with a broad range of musicians from all over the world. (<https://www.musicinafrica.net/directory/pops-mohamed>)

²¹ Brett Pyper is Associate Professor and Head of the Wits School of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. A cultural practitioner, arts administrator, festival director, music researcher and academic, he began his career as a facilitator of developmental music projects during the transition from apartheid, before taking up a Fulbright scholarship to study in the US, where he was based for six years (1998 – 2004). (<https://www.thefestivalacademy.eu/media/1055-brett-pyper-bio-joburg.pdf>)

I have placed “source materials” in inverted commas since, to me, living breathing musical performances by virtuosi such as the late Nofinishi Dywili can never truly be reduced to such dry and non-descriptive terms. I remember saying to some of my fellow composer-participants in The Bow Project at Grahamstown in 2003 that I could never really regard the recordings of Nofinishi Dywili’s performances merely as “source materials” – nor even as “found objects” – as certain of these composers chose to describe them. I instead remember saying that, even without knowing the full story of my own ancestry, I felt that Dywili could well have been my own grandmother or great-aunt, and that therefore this music – in which she had spent an entire lifetime of immersion, gracing its core repertoire with her own compositions, and having performed these iconic examples of it with such virtuosic flair – constituted an essential part of my own cultural heritage.

[As Marc Uys said to me, at the National Arts Festival of 2003; “...Madosini is the von Karajan of the Uhadi. Let it be remembered that this is so...” (Pers. comm. June 2003). I cannot ever forget his words, nor how absolutely necessary and uplifting they were for me to hear at the time; and I suspect will evermore remain so.] He was talking about stature, and respect, uniqueness and culture, and belonging; all at once. I could likewise remain mindful of his remarks when referring to the late Nofinishi Dywili, as well as to Mantombi Matotiyana.

2.3 Commentary on uNtsiki and Ntwazana

Notes about interpretation of both compositions for The Bow Project

The score of *uNtsiki* bears hardly any instructions or guidelines for the performers. Beyond a few accents, short slurs and a single instruction for the Violoncello to be played *pizzicato al fine* at bar 77, there are not many guidelines given to the Quartet. There are hardly any dynamic markings, let alone a bare minimum of directions for certain passages to be played either *arco* or *sul ponticello*. The members of the Sontonga Quartet [and, several years later, the Nightingale String Quartet] were thus left to make their own performance choices out of these somewhat meagre offerings in the score. For the Vocalists involved in this project, the *uNtsiki* score was even less revealing. All of the first performers of these pieces have my admiration for the interpretive choices they made.

I describe both *uNtsiki* and *Ntwazana* primarily from the point-of-view of the String parts, since I am most familiar with the Sontonga Quartet’s interpretations of both pieces; which received numerous performances from this ensemble, often sans Voice, over the course of several years.

2.3.1 uNtsiki

I selected *uNtsiki*²² from the source recordings provided, since it really struck me as highly unusual and beautiful.

I then noticed another track labelled *Tsiki* – so I transcribed that as well; since I thought these titles must surely be thematically, if not musically, closely related.

The first piece, *uNtsiki*, is sung to the accompaniment of the Uhadi.

²² Shortened [also Ntsiki or Tsiki] version of Nontsikelelo, a girl’s/woman’s name which means “blessings” or “gifts from life” in isiXhosa.

The second transcription I prepared is of a very different piece of music, which was composed and performed [also by the late Nofinishi Dywili] using the Umrhubhe/Umrhumbe; and it features the whistled tones – described earlier in footnote number 17 – which reinforce some of the rich overtones emanating from this much smaller bow, in performance.

I nevertheless decided to use both pieces in my work, since I had transcribed them both, and had decided that they were equally compelling and richly endowed with material that I would wish to explore further for this project.

uNtsiki is in a very swift 13/8 meter.

The Quartet plays *col legno* in the beginning, producing an exact “rhythmic replicant” of the recorded performance of Nofinishi Dywili’s *ostinato* bassline on Uhadi, which underpins her delivery of this song’s Vocal melody.

I used low D and open C in the Violoncello to reflect the “moveable doh” bassline pattern of the Uhadi. [Dywili’s performance used low stopped C and open B \flat notes on her – amply proportioned – Uhadi. I therefore modulated the entire transcription up a whole tone, to enable both root notes to be readily playable on the Violoncello.]

The music shifts from a D pedal-point [held for eight beats] to C [held for five beats] and back again – throughout the first section of the piece.

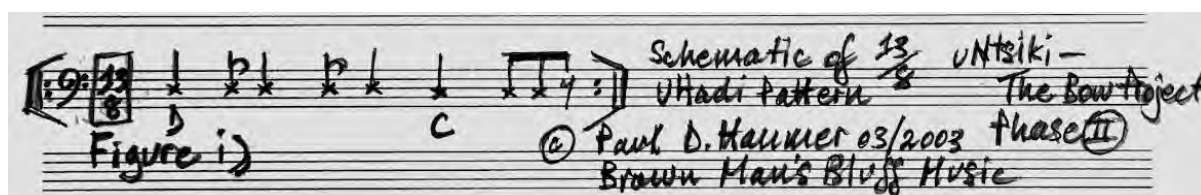


Figure 2.3.1.i) Schematic of *uNtsiki* Uhadi Pattern in 13/8

The second transcription, based on the piece entitled *Tsiki*, carries no text [since it was rendered on the Umrhubhe/Umrhumbe, which disallows for any simultaneous singing by the performer] and is in quintuple meter, rendered in 10/8 – as required in those sections where it is referenced – in my score.

I used the whistled elements of Nofinishi’s performance here to fashion a Vocal melody which also then follows the *uNtsiki* text – but with the scansion adapted to “work” comfortably across a 10/8 – rather than 13/8 – metrical framework.

The same alternating bass notes [in this case D held over a duration of six beats; followed by C held over a duration of four beats] underpin this section of the piece.

There are brief excursions to other tonal centres, but the music essentially expresses a “home modality” of D minor.

Besides a series of soloistic runs for the 1st Violin, there are also two *obbligato* passages for the Viola, with which the piece ends.

The part for Violoncello, being fairly muscular and acrobatic, is prominent throughout. When writing for the String Quartet, I decided at times to draw focus toward instruments other than the 1st Violin, which tends to get a lot of attention from composers and listeners alike.

Notwithstanding its role of reflecting the Uhadi's breathtaking bassline in Nofinishi's performance, the Violoncello part demands a fair degree of skill, not least because the pace of *uNtsiki* is relentless and unforgiving. Here is an excerpt of the Violoncello part, taken from the second stanza of the song. The time signature is 13/8:



Example 2.3.1.1. *uNtsiki*, b. 25 – 28. Violoncello.

The music is reliant on the sound of open fifth intervals from all four instruments of the Quartet. It moves along really swiftly in this odd-metred groove, and expresses both a modality and special melodic turn that are uniquely of the rural Eastern Cape. Several features – such as this usage of open fifth intervals, as well as parallel perfect fourth intervals – clearly demonstrate an affinity with Xhosa musical idioms. Yet these elements are not specifically highlighted in the ensuing text, since the intention is to describe this music from a much broader set of stylistic and cultural vantage-points than just this particular one.

The Sontonga Quartet chose to interpret the [x] note-heads as instructions to play these selected pitches *col legno battuto* – an approach that is perfectly suited to the character of this piece.

The Set Up is there to attune the members of the ensemble [including the Vocalist, who is asked to clap the basic rhythm of Dywili's original Uhadi pattern in 13/8 along with the Strings] to the fairly swift tempo, and to establish the special groove of this piece, right from the outset.

The *col legno battuto* approach creates a sound-world very much akin to that of the Uhadi itself so that, when the 2nd Violin plays its invented pattern [from bar 3 onward] in *arco* fashion, it sounds as if a Violin has just joined a group of Uhadi bow-players:

UNTSIKI
For String Quartet and Soprano Voice

SET UP^I

HANDCLAPS

A musical score for the 'SET UP' section of *uNtsiki*, measures 1-4. It features five staves: Soprano Voice (vox), Violin I (vln. I), Violin II (vln. II), Viola (vln.), and Violoncello (v.c.). The Soprano Voice part is marked 'HANDCLAPS' and shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The string parts (vln. I, vln. II, vln., v.c.) show a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Example 2.3.1.2. *uNtsiki*, b. 1 – 4. Soprano Voice & Str. Quartet.

By the time the Viola [whose entry is two bars later] joins in, it now sounds as if two String players have joined the Uhadi bows.

When the Violoncello enters [at bar 7] with what starts out as a fairly accurate rendition of Dywili's Uhadi bow part – as per the transcription prepared – the texture still contains elements of Uhadi sound; but now it becomes clear [to the listener] that what is in fact being heard is a String Quartet, the “lowest voice” of which has just joined in.

Example 2.3.1.3. *uNtsiki*, b. 5 – 8. Soprano Voice & Str. Quartet.

The Voice enters [at bar 12] with Vocalisations that are the equivalent of “fa la la...” rural Eastern Cape-style. This is literally what Dywili was doing: just getting into the spirit of the piece and “warming up her Voice”, in preparation for the actual song to begin.

The 1st Violin copies the Voice part exactly. The 2nd Violin provides a lower harmony. The Viola provides a second harmony, with embellishments [in bars 14 to 15].

After eight bars of Vocalisation, there is a “Break” [at bar 21]. This is a “Break” for the Viola, which now usurps responsibility for the groove. This is an alternative and Alto register rendition of the Uhadi/Violoncello role, at this point in the piece:

Example 2.3.1.4. *uNtsiki*, b. 21 – 24. Soprano Voice & Str. Quartet.

After four bars of the “Break”, the Voice enters [with a pick-up in the fourth bar] with the song, *uNtsiki*, [at bar 25].

But after delivering only a short line of text:

Ndiyayi thwala lentombi [*I'm taking this girl*], Dywili soon reverts to “fa la la’s” once more, in the form of “Aye he-he ma” and “Ho ho-iyoma” vocalise-style phrases.

[The song *uNtsiki* was written and performed for the purpose of wishing a young woman - newly betrothed to a young man from another village - well in joining her new husband’s family, and for her new life as a married woman.]

An Interlude – mainly for the 2nd Violin and Viola – follows [at bar 33] which continues until Letter B, where the major portion of the text is delivered.

The material for the 2nd Violin in the Interlude is similar to the material it played in the Set Up [at bar 3 – bar 6].

The Viola is in some sense echoing the 2nd Violin part – one beat later, thus canonically – but then, for the remaining five beats of each bar, it performs lines which relate to its material in the “Break” [bar 21 to bar 24] earlier in the piece.

As the sections marked [A] presented the first Vocal lines of *uNtsiki*, so section [B] presents the second group of phrases, with additional lines of text:

“Ntombazan’ uzakulal’ebhedini hamba”.

[*Girl you’re going to sleep in the bed, Go.*]

And:

*[“Ntombazan’ uzabuthwal’ ubunzima hamba”. Third Phrase Only]

[*Girl you’re going to endure hardship, Go.*]

This text is presented four times, in two 2-bar phrases, with the second phrase [of each pair] ending on a ‘sighing’ A to G figure:

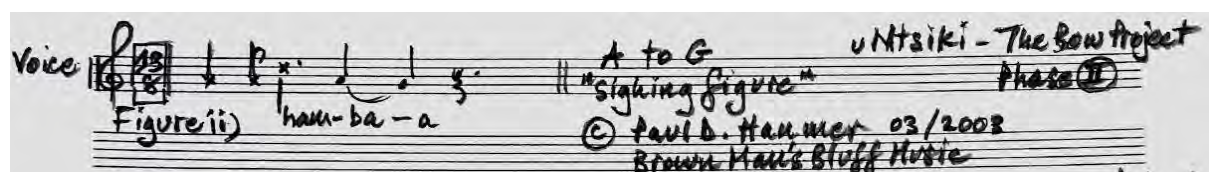


Figure 2.3.1.ii) ‘sighing’ A to G Figure: Voice.

Rather than on a single D- note:

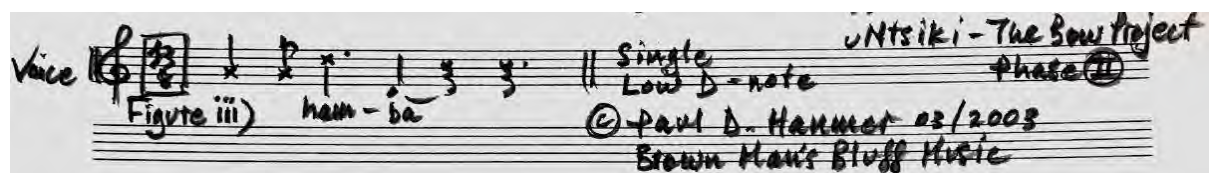


Figure 2.3.1.iii) D octave Figure: Voice.

These eight bars are underpinned by Violoncello lines which are similar to those in the last four bars of the Set Up. [Please refer: bars 9 - 12]

The 1st Violin plays an embellishment around the Vocal line. This part is marked *sul ponticello* and, in practise, this approach brings another element of “Uhadi-as-ancestor-of-the-Violin-family” to the sound of the ensemble. This impression is enhanced yet further, by the re-introduction [at bar 41] of the Viola’s *col legno battuto* figures, which were first heard in the Set Up:

Example 2.3.1.5. *uNtsiki*, b. 41 – 44. Soprano Voice & Str. Quartet.

[Note: topmost stave shows ‘*ossia*’ of the Vocal part]

In a four-bar Tag, the 2nd Violin is brought in, echoing the 1st Violin’s “chicken wire” line at the lower octave. The 1st Violin then answers with two of its original phrases, at the original pitch-range of its *obbligato* delivery.

At bar 49 the 1st Violin establishes a new groove in 10/8 to introduce material from the second transcription [originally performed on the Umrhumbe/Umrubhe, and entitled *Tsiki*] which I prepared from the selection of “source materials” made available to composers.

The bar-length is now three quavers shorter [than the 13/8 of *uNtsiki*] although these 10-beats-to-a-bar are delivered in the same sequence of *gruppetti* as the first 10 beats of a typical 13/8 bar viz:

Figure 2.3.1.iv) *uNtsiki*. Rhythm-scheme in 10/8

The basic “moveable doh” remains alternated between D and C – [as for the original Uhadi-derived materials of *uNtsiki*].

The Vocal line at letter [C], as well as the lines for the 1st Violin and Viola, are all derived from the whistled lines in Dywili’s recorded performance of *Tsiki*.

C

53

vox
ya - yi-i-i thwa - la len - tom - bi. ndi - ya - yi-i-i thwa - la len - tom - bi. ndi-

vln. I

vln. II

vla.

v/c.

Example 2.3.1.6. *uNtsiki*, b.53 – 56. Soprano Voice & Str. Quartet.

Interlude II follows, at bar 61. It is longer than Interlude I and, although its first four bars serve a similar purpose – i.e. that of an Introduction to the next eight bars of singing – its second group of four bars [bars 65 to 68] shows a Transformation of the Vocal line first encountered at Letter [C].

This transformation is brought about on three different levels:

- i) Melodic variation
- ii) Metrical modulation
- iii) Harmonic modulation

i) The ‘melodic cell’ [at bar 65] as transposed downward by a perfect fifth [in bar 66] and then returns to [open] A for the 1st Violin [in bar 67]. However, by this stage, the music has already undergone a harmonic change.

ii) Through the use of ‘internal triplet’ *gruppetti*, there are now fifteen quavers to a bar [instead of the usual ten] and therefore the lines, for the 2nd Violin and Viola, [from the middle of bar 65 into bar 66] consist of more notes than usual, albeit within the usual number of beats.

In bars 67 and 68 however, the usual 10/8 *gruppetti* are once more restored.

iii) The metrical modulation just described is an ‘outward’ indication of an ‘internal’ harmonic change. The presence of B \flat notes – which appear in bar 65 – prepare our ears for the appearance [in bar 66] of chords G minor, C dominant seventh and F major ninth, which is itself a ‘hinge-chord’ to the E minor eleventh chords in bars 67 and 68. Thus, the note F \sharp – the second degree of E minor – is already ‘in our ears’ ahead of the D major chord at Letter [D].

[Please see example 2.3.1.7. overleaf]:

Example 2.3.1.7. *uNtsiki*, b. 65 – 68. Soprano Voice- tacet & Str. Quartet.

At this point, the music is centred on two parallel major chords, a tone apart [as opposed to alternating D minor and C major sonorities].

The appearance of F# does not affect the Vocal delivery of the first three phrases of Letter [D]; the reason being that all three phrases are based on Dywili's whistled lines [given to the 1st Violin at bars 54 to 57] which do not use the third degree of the D chord.

The fourth Vocal phrase of Letter [D] is however, unique. It is here reproduced in its original form – as it appeared in the *uNtsiki* transcription – transposed up by a whole tone. This phrase is unlike any other encountered in Dywili's performances of either *uNtsiki* or *Tsiki*. It uses F#, [as well as E# - as an *appoggiatura* to F#], and a very unusual rhythm-scheme to deliver a short melody to a short text, both of which occur only this one time:

[Siya vuy'inene kulo'mmango ntwazana hamba]

[*Young girl we're very happy in this region, Go*]

Example 2.3.1.8. *uNtsiki*, b. 73 – b. 76. Soprano Voice & Str. Quartet.

The whole piece pauses here. It is a highly dramatised moment. [The faithful transcription of this phrase was the result of long periods of listening to the recording, as well as long periods of discussion and debate with Mrubata and Ceza. We discussed rhythm, scansion and the most likely or logical meaning of each of Dywili's phrases – which were sometimes difficult to

comprehend with absolute clarity – for some hours; before settling on the version of the text, and its corresponding melodic phrases, which appear here in this score.]

From the ‘*a Tempo*’ indication at bar 77, a D minor tonality is re-established, although a slightly modified harmonic pattern emerges:

[[: D minor 7th / / C 6/3 A minor 11th :]]

This is essentially still the usual [[: D minor / / C / :]] chord movement, albeit now supported by a slightly different bassline from the Violoncello.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the downbeat of each bar – from now on – falls on a chord of the minor seventh, with the minor seventh degree, or C, given to the 1st Violin.

From this point, the Violins of the Quartet chose to play their parts *sul ponticello a punta d’arco*. Furthermore, it sounds as if they may well have used mutes. By adopting this approach here, they achieved a veiled sound, very rich in overtones and thus the perfect foil for the Viola *obbligato* section – which was performed in *normale* fashion, with each semiquaver being individually bowed – starting at bar 82. These *obbligato* figures are counterparts to the “chicken-wire” figurations presented by the 1st Violin at Letter [B].

In the Tag section, the 1st Violin takes up the same line it played at Letter [C]. This alternates with the closing Vocal phrases, in which echoes of material previously heard in sections [C] and [D] may also be discerned.

The Viola joins the general texture of the Quartet – matching the *sul ponticello* of the Violins for four bars – after which it once more takes up the *obbligato* figures, played *normale* with each note individually bowed, with which phrases this piece ends:

Example 2.3.1.9. *uNtsiki*, b. 89 – 92. Soprano Voice [handclaps, as for the beginning] & Str. Quartet.

Full text of uNtsiki with McCoy Mrubata's translation to English, as well as his remarks regarding interpretation

Mrubata has, much more recently, provided some useful background information. These new insights help to place both the song and its purpose in an appropriate social context.

Ndiyayi thwala lentombi.

I'm taking this girl

Aye he-he ma, etc.

Falalala, etc.

Ntombazan' uzakulal' ebhedini hamba.

Girl you're going to sleep in the bed, Go.

Ntombazan' uzakulal' ebhedini hamba.

Girl you're going to sleep in the bed, Go.

Ntombazan' uzabuthwal' ubunzima hamba.

Girl you're going to endure hardship, Go.

Uzakulala ebhedini hamba.

You're going to sleep in the bed, Go.

Hamba. Hamba. Ho-iyi hamba.

Go. Go. Ho-iyi, Go.

Ndiyayi thwala lentombi.

I'm taking this girl.

Ndiyayi thwala lentombi.

I'm taking this girl.

Intombazana. Intombazana. Intombazana.

Girl. Girl. Girl.

Siya vuy'inene kulo'mmango ntwazana hamba.

Young girl we're very happy in this region, Go.

Iyo ntwazana. 'ntombazana. 'ntombazana. 'ntombazana.

[Ntwazana and Ntombazana both mean Girl, young girl/ young lady.]

Uzakulal' ebhedini hamba.

You're going to sleep in the bed, Go.

Explanation

This song is about a girl called Ntsiki. This moniker is both a shortened and affectionate version of Nontsikelelo.

A man is taking a girl to his homestead with a view to marrying her.

Ndiyayi. *I am*. Thwala - also means *to carry* or *to lift something up*.

In the villages, boys and girl children normally sleep on the floor. Once a girl is married, she and her husband would then share a bed at his family's homestead.

Hamba. "Go", or go away, but in this case "Go".

Siya vuy'inene kulo'mmango ntwazana hamba - Kulo. *In this*. U-mmango *is a region near the mountains/ foothills, usually far from other areas*. Musically, this line was given special treatment by Nofinishi Dywili, and it only occurs once in her recorded version of the song. I have likewise given it special treatment in my own version of *uNtsiki*.

To summarise: Ntsiki's community has given their blessing for this betrothal to take place.

(McCoy Mrubata, email to author, December 13, 2021).

2.3.2 Ntwazana

*Ntwazana*²³, on the other hand, is a much more reflective piece and, therefore, the perfect foil for the relative ebullience of *uNtsiki*.

It starts with a slow statement – marked Letter [A] – which is performed largely on the open strings of the Violoncello. After four bars the Viola joins the Violoncello, in unison at the upper octave; and the Violins accompany the other two instruments with sustains on open A and open D strings.

Then in bar 11, at Letter [B], the Violins sing a plaintive melody based on alternating D minor and C major tonalities.

The musical score for Example 2.3.2.1, *Ntwazana*, measures 9-12, Str. Quartet, is presented for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The score begins in 9/8 time and transitions to 6/8 time at measure 10, and finally to 7/4 time at measure 11. A box labeled 'B' with a superscript 'I' is placed above the Violin I staff at the start of measure 11. The Violins play a plaintive melody based on alternating D minor and C major tonalities. The Viola and Violoncello play a sustained melody in unison at the upper octave. Dynamics include 'mp.' (mezzo-piano).

Example 2.3.2.1. *Ntwazana*, b. 9 – 12. Str. Quartet.

²³ I was assured, by Khanya Ceza, that this word meant "the best girl in the village" so I chose it as the title for the "commentary piece" I wrote. [It is dedicated to my wife Angela Northover.]

Letter [A] repeats at bar 18, and there is a short Tag [at bar 26] based on D minor, A minor and, briefly, G minor; with the music coming to rest on C major, at bar 29.

At Letter [C] – marked *più allegro* – we hear a rendering of the “whistled harmonics” derived from the Umrhumbe/Umrhubhe accompaniment figures of *Tsiki*. [These derivations were already encountered in bars 53 to 60 of the Vocal part of *uNtsiki*].

The key-centre is now A minor, alternating with G major, and the top line in the texture is ‘sung’ by the 2nd Violin. This is accompanied by a counter-line in the Viola; and a simple Bass figure in the Violoncello, which provides alternating A and G anchor-points for each bar.

Example 2.3.2.2. *Ntwazana*, b. 29 – 32.

From bar 33, the 2nd Violin plays its line an octave lower, while the top line in the texture is taken by the 1st Violin now “singing” an invented melody, supported by the other members of the Quartet.

This melody lasts for eight bars, ending in a two-bar “Tag”, with both Violins playing *tremolando* [in bar 41].

At bar 43 this melody repeats; with a new melodic turn taken after just three bars. F# is now introduced into the ‘note-menu’ and the 2nd Violin doubles the 1st Violin’s melody at the unison. Also, here at bar 46, the Viola part gains a new level of intricacy.

From the anacrusis to bar 48, the 1st Violin plays in a higher register; so that its melody is now doubled at the lower octave by the 2nd Violin. The last phrase of this melody [in bar 49] is virtually identical to the phrase [in bar 39] which marked the end of section [C]. This time the 1st Violin stays in this higher register, while still ending its phrase on a B note, which is the ninth degree of A minor.

The whole texture calms down in bar 50.

At bar 51, there is a “Tag” section – with the upper Strings now playing two bars of *tremolando* – over open-stringed *pizzicatos* from the Violoncello.

This Second Tag re-establishes a tonality of C major, in which key the plaintive melody first heard in the Violins at bar 11 is repeated:

B II

53

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

Example 2.3.2.3. *Ntwazana*, b. 53 – 56.

A reprise of the Uhadi patterns of *uNtsiki* then follows at Letter D, in a brief *sforzando* interlude in 13/8.

The piece then re-enters the atmosphere, in 7/4, with which it started, at Letter E:

E

65

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mp.

mf.

Example 2.3.2.4. *Ntwazana*, b. 65 – 68.

After eight bars of slow unison lines, the Viola enters with a fragmentary four-note figure over a slow reprise of the Violoncello's opening statement:

A III

73

lento:

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

pp.

smorz.

Example 2.3.2.5. *Ntwazana*, b.73 – 76.

This four-note fragment is played in parallel fourths by the 2nd Violin and Viola a few times, over short melodic hints and, finally, quietly held notes on open strings of the 1st Violin and Violoncello. The piece ends thus, with the figure in parallel fourths still quietly repeating.

2.4 The Bow Project in Performance

Here is a brief account of The Bow Project in performance at the National Arts Festival, the Atrium at WITS University Johannesburg, and other venues during 2003.

The format of these performances followed the same basic framework each time:

Either Madosini or Mantombi Matotiyana would sing – accompanying herself on the Uhadi – one of the “source material” songs of Nofinishi Dywili.

This would be followed by Pumeza Matshikiza or Lwazi Ncube singing the same song [in the appropriate composer’s transcribed and adapted version of it] to the accompaniment of the Sontonga Quartet.

Hereafter, the Sontonga Quartet performed that same composer’s “commentary piece”.

This three-fold performance mode was repeated a few times – to embrace the work done by each of several participating composers - in this same order:

- i) Source material [solo performance by Madosini or Mantombi Matotiyana]
- ii) Transcription and adaptation [performed by Pumeza Matshikiza or Lwazi Ncube with the Sontonga Quartet]
- iii) Commentary piece [performed by the Sontonga Quartet]

In this way, concert-length programmes were created – presenting both the source materials used, and the two works subsequently created by each composer in turn – by repeating this ‘presentation formula’ several times in succession.

These concerts were special events; generally packed ‘to the rafters’ with a diverse range of listeners, from any- and everywhere and all usually transfixed by what they heard and saw there.

My involvement with The Bow Project was to have many positive consequences over and above the experiences already noted here. For one thing, it introduced me to several other composers – whose musical approaches were all so varied – and their work. It furthermore saw a close working relationship develop with the members of The Sontonga Quartet, who soon asked me to write a piece especially for them. This turned out to be a String Quartet in four movements, which was completed and first performed in 2005, and is dedicated to the members of that quartet. As soon as he heard about what I was writing for the Sontonga Quartet, Robert Pickup approached me to write a Clarinet Quintet. Before too long, further requests for other chamber works followed.

I am therefore grateful for the chance to have been involved with The Bow Project and to have made so many connections which turned out to be crucial for the future direction of my ongoing musical journey.

It also makes complete sense that *uNtsiki* and *Ntwazana* share portfolio space here with *Requiem for The 1st Peoples* and *Symphony – From the Old World* since, in fundamental ways, these more recent works are beyond doubt the musical progeny of this much earlier set of pieces.

3. REQUIEM FOR THE 1ST PEOPLES

Composed: 2016-2017 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Duration: ±50 minutes.

3.1 Instrumentation

- 1 Flute
- 2 Basset horns in F
- 1 Contrabassoon
- 2 Horns in F
- 1 Trumpet in C

[All Percussion, including Timpani, to be shared between two players]

- 1 Suspended Finger-Cymbal
- 2 Small Basket/Egg Shakers
- 1 *Udu* (Igbo water vessel) Drum
- 1 Mounted Tambourine
- 1 Set of Small Bells [tied around the player's ankle]
- 1 Tambour/Bodhran
- 1 Wood Block
- 1 Splash Cymbal – suspended
- 1 Ride Cymbal – suspended
- 4 Timpani – [32”; 28”; 25”; 23”]

- 1 Harp

Voices:

- 1 Soprano soloist
- 1 Baritone soloist

Choir SATB - 16 voices [4 per part]

Strings:

- 1 Violin – solo
- 6 Violas – divisi a 2
- 4 Violoncelli – divisi a 2
- 2 Contrabassi

The first performance of this Requiem mass took place on Wednesday, 31 January 2018 at 7.30 pm at St Francis of Assisi Anglican Church, Parkview, Johannesburg, under the auspices of the Johannesburg International Mozart Festival (JIMF) of 2018²⁴.

It was performed by the Chanticleer Singers²⁵ and the Apple Green Orchestra²⁶, conducted by Tim Roberts²⁷ together with featured soloists Philip Cox²⁸ (trumpet), Magdalene Minnaar²⁹ (soprano) and Aubrey Lodewyk³⁰ (baritone). The work was paired with Gabriel Fauré's Requiem for this concert.

²⁴ The Johannesburg International Mozart Festival (JIMF) takes place annually in Johannesburg on and around the 27th of January, the anniversary of Mozart's birth. Founded in 2009, the JIMF is a week-long series of symphony and choral concerts, chamber and solo recitals and interdisciplinary events which focus on the promotion of young artists, contemporary music, and social integration. Conductor Richard Cock co-directs the JIMF together with the festival's founder and artistic director, the pianist and pedagogue Florian Uhlig.

²⁵ Chanticleer Singers was formed in 1980 and is regarded as South Africa's leading chamber choir. Its repertoire is wide and extremely varied, and includes both serious and light music ranging from Renaissance to contemporary. Although generally concentrating on a *capella* music, the Choir has also appeared with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Transvaal Chamber Orchestra, the CAPAB Orchestra and the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra. A number of South African composers have written works specifically for them. (JIMF Programme 2014)

²⁶ The Apple Green Orchestra is a Johannesburg-based chamber ensemble founded and led by Tim Roberts. (JIMF Programme 2018)

²⁷ Tim Roberts studied oboe at Royal Academy of Music in London. Soon after graduating, he moved to South Africa where he took up positions with various orchestras as an oboist. Having started as a chorister at a young age in the UK, he maintains a strong interest in choral music and regularly appears as conductor of the Johannesburg Bach Choir as well as leading performances with the Apple Green Orchestra. (JIMF Programme 2018)

²⁸ Philip Cox is a cross-genre instrumentalist in South Africa. He studied the trumpet at the Birmingham Conservatoire with the Late John Wilbraham and Andy Culshaw. In his postgraduate year, he studied with David Mason and Michael Laird at the Royal Academy of Music. He has enjoyed an unbroken 21 years as a professional trumpeter playing in the UK, as a session player and in the pit for opera, ballet and West End theatre. In 2001 Philip relocated to Johannesburg, South Africa where he works as a commercial and classical trumpeter. Philip has toured with, amongst others, Katherine Jenkins, Il Divo, Helmut Lotti, Andrea Bocelli, Josh Groban and was a soloist for the world premiere of Paul Hanmer's *Nachtroep*, a Triple Concerto for Piano, Violin, Trumpet & Strings, in the final concert of the Johannesburg International Mozart Festival of 2012. (JIMF programme 2018)

²⁹ Magdalene Minnaar is well known as an operatic soprano who has performed in several operas, concerts, oratorios and cross-genre productions. She has also collaborated with Josh Groban and Arno Carstens and has sung the female lead in Cape Town Opera's international touring production of Kern and Hammerstein's *Show Boat*. She also played the role of Christine in Pieter Toerien's production of Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*. (JIMF Programme 2018)

³⁰ Baritone, Aubrey Lodewyk is one of South Africa's most vocally versatile classical performers. He started singing at a young age and studied for a Vocal Art diploma at TUT in 2003 under Eric Miller. After graduating, Aubrey joined the Cape Town Opera Studio in 2006 and studied for a post-graduate diploma in music performance at UCT under Dr Nellie du Toit. There he sang Gullielmo in *Così fan tutte* and understudied Schaunard in *La Bohème* for Cape Town Opera. In 2008 he was appointed as junior staff soloist for CTO and sang the role of Balintulo in the opera *Poet and Prophetess* in Sweden and Cape Town as well as Albert in *Werther*. Aubrey toured with the CTO in a production of *Porgy and Bess* singing the role of Jake in Berlin, Oslo, Cardiff, Israel, London and Scotland. Since then Aubrey has sang the roles of Germano in *La scala di seta* by Rossini, a production which was staged by the Wagnerian Society in Cape Town and the role of Marcello in *La Bohème* for Opera Africa at the State Theatre and the Johannesburg Theatre. He also appeared as Dancairo in *Carmen*, Nelson Mandela in the *Mandela Trilogy*, Dr Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*, Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly* and Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*. (JIMF Programme 2018)

3.2 Introduction

Towards the end of 2014, Phillip Cox recorded his album *Top Drawer*³¹, the title track of which he commissioned me to write. The piece is a showcase for high Trumpet in E♭ and also features an *obligato* part for Oboe, which in this case was performed by Tim Roberts.

A handwritten musical score for the piece 'Top Drawer'. The score is written on multiple staves. The top staff is for Guitar (Guit.), followed by Piano (Puo.), then C/bass (C/b.), then Solo Trpt. in E♭ (Trpt.), and finally a section for Violins (Vlus.) and Violas (Vla.). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are also handwritten annotations like 'Groove' and 'A II' in boxes. The score is written in a clear, legible hand.

Figure 3.2.1

Top Drawer - Excerpt of score; b. 48 – 52. [Guitar, Piano, C/bass, Trpt. & Strings; Percussion not shown]

I believe that, on the strength of this commission, Cox and Roberts then decided to ask me to write a Requiem mass, which Roberts would conduct, and which would feature Cox as *obligato* [Trumpet] soloist.

On 26 February 2016 the real work began with a special meeting between Roberts, Cox and myself. At this meeting, the full scope of this new commission was laid out in detail for the first time, after which I felt enabled to go ahead with choosing suitable texts and planning the appropriate musical setting required by each text.

³¹ *Top Drawer* is Phillip Cox's debut album, which was nominated for a Libera Award by the American Association of Independent Music in 2015.

By Monday 19 December 2016, I had selected the texts and written the appropriate music for nine sections of the work, leaving only the setting of the ‘Kyrie Eleison’ to be done. I completed the latter by the end of January 2017.

We then waited a full year for a suitable platform, venue and public performance date to be made available to us. All of these, as well as a suitable rehearsal space, were generously provided by the JIMF of 2018.

To honour the commission, I had to consider firstly the instrumental and vocal resources which would be placed at our disposal. We also had to consider the parameters [of scale, budget and physical space in the performance venue] within which we had to work. Additionally, I had to ensure that I honoured certain of Tim’s and Philip’s specific wishes, as will be shown here.

It was agreed, firstly, that I would write for Chamber Orchestra, which at its core would have a string ensemble similar to that required for performance of Fauré’s *Requiem*³² (1890), with which my Requiem would be paired in concert and, secondly, that *obbligato* parts for Trumpet would be included to highlight Philip’s special role. Thirdly, I wanted to include a pair of Bass Horns in the band in deference to the instrumentation of W.A. Mozart’s *Requiem* [unfinished by the time of his death in December 1791, and completed in 1792 by his student Franz Xaver Süssmayr.]

Fourthly, Philip and Tim suggested that a Contrabassoon be included and I wanted to include a Flute to “counter-balance” these darker Woodwind tone colours. Fifthly, I also chose to include a pair of Horns – to create both a Brass Section (together with the Trumpet) – as well as a good blend with the Woodwind Section.

Then it was agreed to include parts for Soprano and Baritone soli, with Philip and Tim suggesting Magdalene Minnaar and Aubrey Lodewyk for these roles; which suited me well, as they are both highly skilled, enthusiastic and wonderful to work with. It also meant I could select specific sections of the work which would feature each of these voices: either severally or together at times.

It was likewise decided to include a 16-voice SATB choir, with four voices to a part. This would also serve the Fauré *Requiem* perfectly, and the Chanticleer Singers were already “to hand” so-to-speak. [Even though this choir has a larger membership, it was deemed appropriate to limit ourselves to 16 choristers in total.]

3.3 Underlying purpose and meaning of this Requiem Mass

I wanted to write a Requiem dealing with loss – on both personal as well as general levels. I wanted to deal with the loss of both my parents as well as the loss of most traces of our distant forebears: therefore the “1st Peoples” of this work’s title.

In the 2018 JIMF Programme Booklet, I elaborated on this idea of loss: “...The themes of the work are [...] as simple as they are scary: our headlong rush toward oblivion, even as we destroy all the best in ourselves and our planet to get there...” This is all coupled with moral

³² Gabriel Fauré composed his *Requiem in D minor*, Op. 48, between 1887 and 1890.

and spiritual bankruptcy as well as habitat loss, climate change and other forms of calamity with which we are faced.

I make reference to the Strandlopers [literally “beachcombers” in English], who were certainly our distant ancestors, in Section B of the ‘Responsorium’ movement of this Requiem. This section carries a broad range of references and, given South Africa’s history, has resonance across more levels than the Requiem Mass settings composed by Mozart or Faure. It is in this sense a secular mass much in the vein of later twentieth century masses, but has deeper spiritual significance, given the multi-layered meanings that unfold within the understanding of first peoples.

My reference to the Strandlopers is tangential and not obvious, in that a single 10-bar segment of music, without singing or text, is devoted to them. Numerous footprints of these people dating back to circa 100 000 BCE have fairly recently been found in the Churchhaven area, on the shores of the Langebaan lagoon. They would have lived near to the shoreline of that lagoon and subsisted largely on fish and shellfish caught or recovered by hand from its shallow and bountiful waters.

The reference to them is sub-titled ‘Harmonie des Infants’, which title embraces an 18th century term for the basic eight-part wind section [consisting of a pair each of Flutes, Oboes, Horns and Bassoons and collectively called the “harmonie”] of a typical orchestra of the classical era. The “harmonie” were often called upon to perform privately as a complete instrumental unit and, since the Wind section I have written for is rather small, I chose to use a diminutive form in providing a title for it here. So it becomes a “Harmonie for (or of) Children” which in my opinion is all the more fitting since, historically, people of colour [both in South Africa and elsewhere in the world] have all too often been looked upon as somehow backward, ill-developed and immature – no matter how old such individuals might be.

Michael Lewis Wilson writes about the Strandlopers:

...the name “Strandlopers” was originally applied to a small band of Khoisan people³³, the Goringhaicona, who [were described as having] lived on the shore of Table Bay [shoreline of Cape Town and surrounding coastal area heading northwards towards Langebaan Lagoon/Saldanha Bay] during the 17th century and whose way of life was typical of neither the Khoikhoi herders nor the San hunter-gatherers. The name “Strandloper” is thus shown

³³ I feel bound to mention both the Khoi and the San, as they are surely our first peoples of Southern Africa. Their presence here predates that of any other human group or tribe; however, the average present-day South African citizen is very far from the Khoi and the San.

Evidence of the lives they must have led exists through the rock paintings they have left behind throughout a vast range of Southern African localities, and through the distinctive high cheekbones, as well as the so-called “peppercorn” hair-type, that they have bequeathed to multitudes of their living descendants; who are Southern Africans of every possible hue and heritage.

Sadly, these first peoples [I include here various pejoratively or derisively termed peoples, such as the Nama, the Basters, the Herero, the Karrentjiemense and the Strandlopers] have all been steadily ostracised, brutalised, wantonly exterminated, and pushed to the margins of society and the sub-continent’s most barren lands by European and African colonialist policies alike. This has gone on for multiple generations.

Decimated and in ruins, they [our first peoples] are a sad reflection of our dereliction and neglect and the relentless way in which humankind tramples forward in pursuit of carbon, steel, monetary gain, and the fourth industrial revolution. They are thus swept up in the unstoppable landslide of destroyed natural resources and lost languages, values and customs – which marks our collective “progress” up to this point: against all the better judgement and good advice still available in the world. The world has left these, our first peoples, as a rapidly fading shadow barely visible on the radar of our modern-day way of living.

to be misleading [...] and therefore correctly applicable only to the Goringhaicona, who were given that name and [who then] applied it to themselves... (Wilson 1990).

3.4 Overall working plan

I started by examining the texts used by Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1420-1497) in his *Requiem* mass of 1461, also gaining from listening to the generally sober and decidedly modest nature of his vocal melodies and contrapuntal turns. I chose to listen to the Ockeghem *Requiem* in particular since I had a really good recording of it, with informative liner notes. Furthermore, it is really beautiful and a very early choral work – one of the earliest extant works of its kind to have actually been notated. In addition, it exhibits qualities that no contemporary work can possibly mimic or match, such as an atmosphere of genuinely pious reflection and a serenity [of melodic line and vocal texture] that seems to literally evade both space and time.

I also looked at the texts which W.A. Mozart selected for his *Requiem* mass setting.

The texts selected by each of these composers furthermore drew attention to which texts each of them chose to omit from each of their final settings of the Roman Catholic Requiem mass.

This process [of scrutinizing these texts] showed me that I would have to source additional texts to cover certain themes not fully addressed by these ancient Latin ones, and this led me to author the texts I used for the ‘Vers Consolationis’, the ‘Consolatory Postlude’ and the original English text of the ‘Epistola’, vestiges of which remain in the first “chorus” of the latter: “How can we hold up our heads in this madness, of hopeless devastation and suffering?”

Furthermore I decided to introduce other languages [in addition to the standard Latin and ancient Greek Requiem texts] that are indigenous to Southern Africa. Therefore the ‘Epistola’ text is largely delivered in seTswana, which is widely spoken here in Gauteng Province where I reside. Within the ‘Kyrié Eleïson’ section I introduce a short text in French, since South Africa is also home to a growing population of people from other, mostly Francophone, African countries; and furthermore, the end of ‘Vers Consolationis’ has a short [and admittedly imperfect] section of text in isiZulu. I enlisted the help of my daughters with regard to the short texts in French and wrote the isiZulu text without external help.

3.5 General comment about the music

The musical procedures used in my Requiem are mostly tonal and diatonic, although I do make use of certain extended harmonic structures; which probably derive from my abiding interest in jazz-inflected idioms, also collective improvisation in small-group contexts, as well as various forms of popular music.

In addition to these elements, I also reference the early church modes, the open fifth intervals of organum, the modal language of much folk music originating from the Eastern Cape Province and the Wesleyan hymns of my childhood. In the writing of this music I have furthermore referenced the stylistic idioms of J.S. Bach to such an extent that a close friend has remarked that certain segments of my Requiem sound, not like actual composition, but rather like “a para-phrasing of existing works”. I can only conclude that this friend was making his remarks specifically about sections within the ‘Sanctus’, ‘Agnus Dei’, and ‘Responsorium’ movements of my work; where the strong bassline movements and the harmonic idiom, as well

as the *obbligato* roles assigned to various members of the Woodwind section, and *clarino*-style Trumpet – are all very much “hallmarks of the Baroque”.

Having both performed [as a fledgling pianist] and heard countless times the wonderful music of J.S. Bach, I furthermore heard [both in performance at St. George’s Cathedral and at home on vinyl recordings] the *B minor Mass* and the *St. Matthew’s Passion* enough times to form the powerful impression that this is what religious music ought to sound like. So, it seems to me that, many years later, I am still deeply influenced by the melodic, contrapuntal and harmonic language of Bach. In addition, I owned recordings of Bach’s keyboard suites and toccatas as performed by the great harpsichordists Wanda Landowska, Igor Kipnis and Trevor Pinnock. My late father also introduced me to some of the early recordings made by Frans Bruggen, Gustav Leonhart and various other authoritative and renowned Baroque music specialists; all of which served to further deepen my admiration for Bach’s music.

For the ‘Introit’, ‘Graduale’, ‘Sanctus’, ‘Agnus Dei’, ‘Communio’ and ‘Responsorium’ sections, I have used the standard traditional Latin version of each text. I have on occasion repeated and/or re-ordered sections of the given text as I saw fit to do, to draw a greater degree of attention to certain phrases or words, or else to allow a musical line more “room” to develop. But I have otherwise left these texts unaltered in any fundamental way.

The ‘Kyrie Eleison’ text is the standard traditional Greek one – with the insertion of a few lines of French text which I felt appropriately expressed my own mood at the time of writing the music of this section [early January of 2017] and the helplessness I have sometimes experienced; where I have, quite literally, been brought to the edge of some real or metaphorical precipice and thus “face to face with the void”; rendered in French thus: “*vis a vis de Rien.*”

Furthermore, I felt the need to express a growing and general sense of alarm at how we are neglecting our people and planet on so many levels.

The text of the ‘Epistola’ section, as I explain later in this commentary, is in my own words. This text, originally in English, was then translated into seTswana and sung in that language by the Baritone soloist, Aubrey Lodewyk, for whom this translation was specifically requested. [I found out that Aubrey hails from Hammanskraal and grew up being fluent in seTswana, English and Afrikaans]. The translation into seTswana was made by my late friend, Mpho Molefe, who grew up in that same area of the North-West Province in South Africa.

I felt that I could write an open letter too, [as the Apostle Paul had done] and address it to my fellow citizens since it dealt with key themes of a universal nature that were becoming ever more timeous and urgent as our collective life-experience continued to move us inexorably toward an increasingly perilous-seeming future.

The texts of both the ‘Vers Consolationis’ and the ‘Consolatory Postlude’ were likewise written by me. I deal with both of these sections [and the reasons for their inclusion in this Requiem] in more detail as this commentary unfolds. It should suffice to note here that both of the sections just mentioned deal with very personal themes and forms of loss, and the texts of both are, for the most part, written in English.

3.6 Commentary on each section

3.6.1 Introit

At the invitation of Philip Cox and Tim Roberts, I went to listen to Rexleigh Bunyard's³⁴ Requiem in a concert performance at the Linder Auditorium in Parktown, Johannesburg. This must have occurred sometime during 2016. Both Cox and Roberts were involved in the performance of Bunyard's work, and I believe they wanted me to hear a new Requiem mass setting written by a fellow South African composer, since they had recently asked me to embark on just such a work. The Linder Auditorium is easily accessed and is the performance venue which has for many years hosted concerts involving, but not restricted to, the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra. I was thus familiar with both the venue as well as many of the musicians involved in that particular performance of Bunyard's Requiem.

I realised that my own work opens in a very similar way; with the sound of a tiny suspended Cymbal. For my part, I chose this sound as a vivid reminder of the verger at St. George's Anglican Cathedral in Cape Town, who signalled the start of the Sunday morning service by swinging his censer [charged of course with incense] and thus emitting both clouds of fragrant smoke and tiny metallic sounds from the censer itself and the chain it was suspended from. Thus, on his journey down the nave of the cathedral, from the altar all the way to the far (West) end, the verger would ensure that the entire congregation was appropriately and entirely prepared, and purified, by this all-encompassing intake of sight, sound, smoke-borne fragrance and the powerful and comforting sense of being participants in a timeless and unchanging ritual.

My late father often took our family to this cathedral to hear the sung mass performed on a certain Sunday once each month over the course of many years, under the musical directorship of Barry Smith³⁵.

This is where – and how – I came to hear Faure's *Requiem*, the *B minor Mass* and *St. Matthew's Passion* of J.S. Bach, as well as many other liturgical works, for the first time in 'live' performance. Besides the Methodist hymns which I grew up listening to, and later also singing, as a young member of the Salt River Methodist Church congregation, these performances at the Anglican cathedral formed an important part of my musical background, tastes and points of reference.

³⁴ Pianist and composer, Rexleigh Bunyard was born in 1958 and her *Requiem for the Living* was premiered on in August 2016 at Johannesburg's Linder Auditorium. She was my senior by several years at the University of Cape Town, where I enrolled for BMus studies in 1980.

³⁵ Barry Smith (1939 -) is a South African organist, choral and orchestral conductor, author and musicologist (Marx 2011). Born in Port Elizabeth, he later taught at the University of Cape Town for many years. In 1964, Smith founded the St. George's Singers [based at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town], which he directed until 2015 (Cape Times 2015).

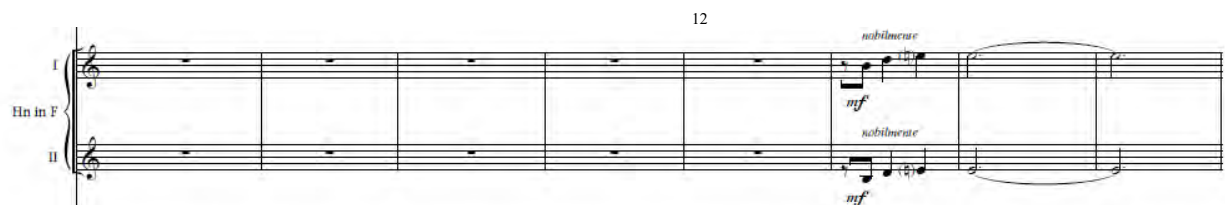
Following the initial sound [of the suspended Finger Cymbal being struck by a small metal beater] in my Requiem, I hint at future vocal phrases during the course of an “Instrumental preamble”, which is at first based on a simple four-bar pattern for the Timpani.

This anchors the musical discourse firmly on the fundamental pitch of E, and forms a rhythmic fulcrum for this initial section of the ‘Introit’:



Example 3.6.1.1. ‘Introit’, b. 1 – 5.

This four-bar pattern is repeated six times. The first “vocal hint” appears, in the Horns, at bar 13:



Example 3.6.1.2. ‘Introit’, b. 8 – 15.

This short “vocal hint” phrase is repeated [from bar 16] after which the leading Basset Horn shows this three-note motif evolving into a slightly longer melodic phrase, whose underlying harmonic palette is likewise expanded:



Example 3.6.1.3. ‘Introit’, b. 16 – 22. Basset Horn 1 in F.

The underlying harmonic rhythm is likewise “stretched”: with certain harmonies now sounding across two beats, rather than just one.

[For further details of this expanded harmonic palette, please refer to b. 20 - 22 of the full score, a copy of which is included with this portfolio.]

The Flute then re-introduces the first “vocal hint” phrase, starting at bar 25:



Example 3.6.1.4. ‘Introit’, b. 23 – 27. Fl.

With the Timpani now falling silent, the Shakers are assigned their rhythmic motif [with a few modifications to the original entry for Timpani] at bar 26:



Example 3.6.1.5. 'Introit', b. 26 – 29. Perc.

And the reason for the Timpani falling silent at exactly this point is because the harmony is no longer rooted on an E pedal-point.

The next entry for Timpanum is at bar 40, and the largest drum will have been tuned down to E \flat specifically for this entry.

The music then turns to A minor at bar 45, preparing the way for the first vocal entry, in that key, at bar 46. The texture of the instrumental accompaniment becomes very spare at this point, sounding just an open fifth interval [a reminder of organum] voiced for solo Violin, Violoncelli and single Timpanum.

It is at this point - after the long and slow 'Instrumental preamble'- that the Bass voices of the Choir, out of the depths of their register, utter the first sung text to be heard in this Requiem:



Example 3.6.1.6. 'Introit', b. 45 – 50. Bass voices.

This musical imagining of “eternal light” [or “lux perpetua” in the Latin text, which may at first not have been much more than a tentative and faint glow] emerging out of the depth of the firmament and which gradually gains in both strength and brightness, is depicted as such as the Introit proceeds.

The Vocal melodies are simple, each generally making use of only a few notes spanning a narrow compass; and I imagined the earliest Christians gathered together in the most rudimentary of structures, expressing their new-found faith in chants employing only the simplest of musical means, when fashioning this 'Introit'.

Harmonically and melodically, the texture gradually encompasses more notes and more elaborate configuration as this movement develops. Here is an excerpt [bars 72 to 76] showing greater overall complexity in the vocal writing than is evident in earlier, more modestly configured, examples:

72

I solo
S
gli altri
A
T
1. 2
B
3. 4

ad te om-nis ca-ro ve-ni-et. Re-qui-em ae-ter-nam.

ca-ro ve-ni-et. Re-qui-em ae-ter-nam.

am ca-ro ve-ni-et. Re-qui-em ae-ter-nam.

am ad te om-nis ca-ro ve-ni-et. Re-qui-em ae-ter-nam.

1. 2
B
3. 4

ca-ro ve-ni-et. Re-qui-em ae-ter-nam.

ad te om-nis ca-ro ve-ni-et. Re-qui-em ae-ter-nam.

Example 3.6.1.7. 'Introit', b. 72 – 76. Choir.

At bar 77, the Strings then lead the Voices and Winds through a re-iteration of these same musical elements; [cf. b. 46 – 49; also b. 72 – 76].

Then, at the *Animé* indication [which appears at b. 85] the Woodwinds lead an instrumental 'Tag', which introduces a new melodic/rhythmic motif; shown here [from b. 86 and ending half-way through b. 91]:

[Not shown in this excerpt is the Trumpet, which doubles the Flute at the lower octave].

86

Fl.
I
B-hn in F
II
C. Bn.

f

Example 3.6.1.8. 'Introit', b. 86 – 91. W/winds.

The Choir ends with melodic material similar to the opening [at bar 93], but now pitched up a perfect fifth, to E minor. This movement ends with an element of ambiguity, being rooted on both D and A fundamental pitches, with soft chords from Winds, Harp and Strings to the sound of the Timpani [pitched at A and E], which hint at the rhythmic underpinning of the Opening. Shown in the next musical example are the closing seven bars of the Introit:

The musical score for Example 3.6.1.9, 'Introit', measures 98-104, is a full orchestral score. It begins at measure 98. The Flute (Fl.) part starts with a *p* dynamic. The B-flat Horn in F (B-hn in F) and Cor Anglais (C. En.) parts also start with a *p* dynamic. The Horn in F (Hn in F) and Trumpet (C. Tpt.) parts start with a *p* dynamic. The Percussion (Perc.) part includes a 'Finger symbol' instruction. The Timpani (Timp.) part starts with a *pp* dynamic. The Harp (Hp.) part starts with a *mp* dynamic. The Violin (Vln.) part starts with a *pp* dynamic. The Viola (Vla.) part starts with a *pp* dynamic. The Violoncello (Vlc.) part starts with a *pp* dynamic. The Double Bass (D.B.) part starts with a *pp* dynamic. The score includes various dynamics such as *p*, *pp*, *mp*, and *ppp*, and performance instructions like 'Finger symbol' and 'lv.'

Example 3.6.1.9. 'Introit', b. 98 – 104. Full score.

The final harmony is based on an A major ninth, with the entire chord voicing sounded over a low pedal D from the Contrabassoon. Thus, the music falls silent over a fundamental pitch that is set lower than the E pedal-point of the opening, yet still expressing [in the open fifth sound of D and A fundamental pitches] the associations with organum that I mentioned earlier in this commentary; specifically the open fifth interval voiced for solo Violin, Violoncelli and Timpanum at bar 45.

3.6.2 Kyrié Eleïson

The ‘Kyrié Eleïson’ is generally a soft and gentle entreaty – both in terms of its mood [a plea for mercy, delivered in this ancient piece of simple Greek text, understood throughout Christendom for the past two millennia], as well as its usual hushed delivery, either in concert performance or during active worship.

In this Requiem setting, however, the delivery of this same text takes on a somewhat hysterical, even desperate, aspect. It is set in the key of F# minor, which is particularly hard and fairly remote for the Wind players to handle. There are many rapid changes of tonality – often by stepwise chromatic shifts – in the score, and the parts for the Vocalists and the Brass players in particular are fairly tricky to negotiate. This aspect of the movement contributes to its prevailing unsettled – and unsettling – qualities, and it was a deliberate choice on my part to set this specific text in this particular way.

The reason for the overall stridency of this section is my own sense of the urgency inherent in this plea for mercy; and the fervent hope that this plea should not go unheeded. I believe that we should collectively be in a perpetual state of pleading for mercy; for the way we continue to pursue a sure path toward the destruction of all that we know – and don’t yet know – of our precious habitat, and for the ways in which we continue to ignore the collective wisdom and knowledge of first peoples across the globe.

This sense of anxiety is inherent in the melodies and harmonies of the opening choral statement, which are angular and even astringent, exhibiting “sharp corners” and barely guarded precipices, and the dynamic called for is generally rather loud.

The sheer number and variety of accidentals used points to the constantly shifting tone-colours that occur at this juncture in the score. Yet this plethora of accidentals is simultaneously indicative of the almost total absence of a secure tonal centre across these same bars.

The following excerpt shows all Voices and Instrumental accompaniment for the first Choral entry:

109

B-hn in F II

C. Bn.

Hn in F I

Hn in F II

C. Tpt.

Timp.

S

A

T

B

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

D.B.

Ky - ri - e E - le - i - i - son Chri - i - ste

Ky - ri - e E - le - i - i - son Chri - i - ste

Ky - ri - e E - le - i - i - son Chri - i - ste

Ky - ri - e E - le - i - i - son Chri - i - ste

A

fermo

f

fermo

f

fermo

Example 3.6.2.1. 'Kyrie Eleison', b. 109 – 113. [Basset Horn in F II, Contrabassoon, Horns in F, Choir SATB & Strings.]

After this rousing start comes a quieter utterance from the Choir, where the notion of being left alone “face-to-face with The Void” is explored. Here the roll from a single Timpanum dies away “to nothing”, in anticipation of the Vocal expression of exactly this sense of “nothingness”:

122

Timp. *tr* *PPP* *(al niente)*

S pau - vre - de nous vis a vis de Rien

A pau - vre - de nous vis a vis de Rien

T de - but i - ci main - te - nant vis a vis de Rien

B **TABLEAU** de - but i - ci main - te - nant vis a vis de Rien

Example 3.6.2.2. ‘Kyrie Eleison’, b. 122 – 126. Timpani & Choir.

The original text is re-introduced in a new and gentle Eb minor melodic guise, with the Trumpet now engaged in antiphonal exchanges with the Voices.

This is shown in the following example, where the “droning” tonic pedal part in the Bass voices, with its chant-like qualities – supporting pentatonic and hexatonic lines from the other Voices and the Trumpet above them – is a deliberate representation of an Anglican church service incantation of the Gloria Patri doxology:

132

C Tpt. *mp*

Timp.

S Chri - i - sté E - le - i - son Chri - i - sté E - le - i - son

A Chri - i - sté E - le - i - son

T Chri - i - sté E - le - i - son

B *(droning ...)* Ky - ri - é E - le - - - i - son

Example 3.6.2.3. ‘Kyrie Eleison’, b. 132 – 135. Trpt, Timpani & Choir.

The following excerpt from the score shows the end of this slow section in E \flat minor and the start of the Coda section, which is in the key [F \sharp minor] of the Set Up. The solo for *obbligato* Trumpet, which starts at this point, thus marks a return to the harmonic and melodic material of the opening – performed *Maestoso* and without Voices this time.

The musical score excerpt shows measures 137 to 140. The key signature changes from E \flat minor to F \sharp minor. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), B-flat Horn in F (B-flat in F), C. Bassoon (C. Bn.), Horn in F (Hn in F), C. Trumpet (C. Trpt.), Timpani (Timp.), Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Double Bass (D.B.). The Coda section begins with a solo C. Trumpet part. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, *mp*, and *fermo*. The lyrics for the choir are: "Chri - i - ste E - le - i - son", "Chri - i - ste E - le - i - son", "E - le - i - son", and "E - le - i - son".

Example 3.6.2.4. 'Kyrie Eleison', b. 137 – 140. Winds, Timpani, Choir & Strings.

After this swift fusillade of notes from the Trumpet, which showcases the sense of anxiety that pervades much of this movement, the Choir brings this section of the work to a close, using the original text and melodic material of the opening. Likewise, this final utterance is robust, and is delivered at a *forte* dynamic level.

3.6.3 Epistola

Rather than following the standard procedure of setting one of the Apostle Paul's Epistolae, I decided to write my own text for this movement. The Apostle Paul's letters in the New Testament section of the Holy Bible were written to members and leaders of the Early Church, urging them to stay faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Initially, I was going to address this letter to my late parents, but later realised that the themes I raised could well address a wider need; so I instead decided to write an appeal to the mythical ancestors of all humanity: Adam/Adamo and Eve/Efa/Hawa.

These are the two figures who many Christians, Muslims and Jews believe to have been the first humans; whose presence is furthermore noted in a variety of origin myths such as those of the Ancient Greeks, the earliest Hindus, the Ancient Aztecs and Mayans, many Native American, Aboriginal and African peoples, and in similar tales from Ancient China and India.

My late friend, Mpho Molefe, translated this text into seTswana, which both transformed the original text, and ensured that it could potentially reach a far wider audience. [For reference please see my original English text and corresponding translation into seTswana by Mpho Molefe below].

Epistola translation (English to seTswana)

My greetings to Thee O Great Mother,

Ditumediso go lona bo Mmago-rona

Whom I should call Eve (Hawa)

Ke bitse mmang Efa.

I pray that Thou hear (me) O Great Father,

Ke rapela gore O Nkutlwe, Rre O mogolo.

We need Thy strength O Adam (Adamo)

Re tlhoka matla a Gago Adamo.

(O) Then the waters rose, and the sun beat down,

Gwa ba Gwa tlhatlogo metsi, letsats la besa,

And we saw great piles of the dead –

Gape Ra bona dithothobolo tsa baswi.

Left for the vultures, out in the open, O my God!

Di saletse manong mo lebaleng, O Rara!

**How can we hold up our heads in this madness?*

Re ka emisa ditlhogo tsa rona jeng mo

**This hopeless devastation and suffering?*

Yago tlhoka Tshepo tshenyo le bodimo dibe?

In the midst of this tide of souls in flight,

Mo gareng ga memoya e tshwenyegileng e esiyang

From each and every side?

Go tswa Matlhakoreng O-tlhe?

What will we do, O we miss Thee

Re tlile go diraeng, O! Rea go tlhoka,

Great Mother and Great Father.

Mmagorona le Rre.

We would be steadfast, but we falter/stumble.

Le tshwanela go tiya, jela re a teka-teka

We would be strong, yet we waver and fall.

Re tshwanetse go tiya, jela re a teka teka re be re wa.

Help us please, we beg of Thou?

Re thuse tlhe, re ya go rapela?

**These 2 lines of text remained in English after all*

[End of Epistola Text]³⁶

After a solemn introduction from solo Harp, a steady groove in 12/8 meter is established by the Udu drum. Soon, this drum pattern is joined by the Violas, which play a simple interlocking figure expressing firstly C open, then D minor, in a two-bar sequence. This dual-root movement by whole-step identifies two ‘nodal centres’ from amongst the available notes of the hexatonic scale used here. [This generates an atmosphere of the rural Eastern Cape, vast tracts of which are as yet undeveloped, thus rendering them probably similar to the original landscape that existed prior to orally recorded history.] Over this texture, the opening lines of text are sung, with occasional interjections from the Winds and Harp.

³⁶ Epistola – Original text, in English – Paul D. Hanmer.
Text, translation into seTswana – Joseph Mpho Molefe.

Three bars of this Udu drum groove - with interlocking Viola figures – are shown. A short phrase for Winds joins this texture at bar 163, where it functions as a lead-in for the solo Baritone Voice, which enters at letter A with the Epistola text:

162

Fl.

B-hn in F

I

II

C. Bsn.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

Bar. solo

Di - tu - me - di - so go lo - na bo

A Letter begins: Phrase I

Viola

I

II

Example 3.6.3.1. 'Epistola', b. 162 – 166. Winds, Perc. Baritone & Violas.

A slowly descending chromatic series of Bass notes then appears, underpinning the harmonic armature which supports the delivery of Section B i) of this text, to the accompaniment of the entire ensemble:

**How can we hold up our heads in this madness?*

Re ka emisa ditlhogo tsa rona jeng mo?

**This hopeless devastation and suffering?*

Yago tlhoka Tshepo tshenyo le bodimo dibe?

In the midst of this tide of souls in flight,

Mo gareng ga memoya e tshwenyegileng e esiyang

From each and every side?

Go tswa Matlhakoreng O-tlhe?

185

Hp.

Bar. solo

king O Ra - ra How can we hold up our

B ①

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

D.B.

189

Hp.

Bar. solo

heads in this mad - - - ness? This hope-less de - va - sta - tion and su - file - ring?

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

D.B.

Example 3.6.3.2. 'Epistola', b. 182 – 191. Section B i) with chromatic bassline & harmonies: Harp, Baritone & Strings.

A return to the introductory instrumental material – in the form of the Udu drum pattern together with the interlocking Viola figure, now supported by sustained chords from the Winds and the rest of the Strings – signals a short solo passage for *obbligato* Trumpet:

Example 3.6.3.3. 'Epistola', b. 202 – 205. Full score.

After this, the music of the B section returns, with the Baritone singing the final section of the Epistola text:

*What will we do, O we miss Thee,
Re tlile go diraeng, O! Rea go tlhoka,
Great Mother and Great Father.
Mmagorona le Rre.*

We would be steadfast, but we falter/stumble.

Le tshwanela go tiya, jela re a teka-teka

We would be strong, yet we waver and fall.

Re tshwanetse go tiya, jela re a teka teka re be re wa.

Help us please, we beg of Thee?

Re thuse tlhe, re ya go rapela?

In closing, a quiet resigned plea from the Baritone soloist is accompanied by fragmented ideas from the ensemble. This atmosphere dissolves gradually to a final chord, rooted on E pedal as for the introduction, with the Harp once more taking a prominent role in the closing bars. The next example shows this fragmentation of texture, and the slow figure in contrary motion for the Harp, leading up to the final chord:

235

Hp.

Bar. solo

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

D.B.

mf

f

p

mp

f

rall...

Example 3.6.3.4. 'Epistola', b. 235 – 237. Harp, Baritone & Strings.

Living in the time of Covid-19 has brought back ideas of the Great Plagues mentioned in the Bible's Old Testament, along with other pandemics such as the Black Death (1346-1353 AD) that caused millions of deaths and much suffering across large parts of those regions presently known as North Africa, Europe and Asia.

People currently speak in equivalent terms of the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918, which wreaked havoc almost exactly 100 years ago, causing nearly 500 000 deaths in South Africa alone, and an estimated 50 million deaths worldwide.

Thus, the message and associated imagery of the Epistola text seem to be more pertinent at present than ever before. Not even in the relatively recent time [2016/17] during which it was

3.6.4 Graduale

The text is quite dark and, even though it speaks of courage, the solo Voice is required to dip into the lowest part of its register in order to deliver the first phrase. The Graduale text opens with the words; “Si ambulem in medio umbre mortis...” which phrase translates as “Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...” in the usual florid King James English translation that I grew up with.

Here, as a first musical example, is an extract from the score showing this first vocal entry, where the Soprano soloist is called upon to sing a low C_b, as well as several other low notes all clustered around middle C:

[illegible]

52

The choice of this low *tessitura* was deliberately made to show a certain vulnerability in the Soprano soloist's own approach to this imagined situation: that of being at the threshold of "the valley of the shadow of death." The question possibly arises as to how the soloist, at this point, would deal with tone production, the really slow, soft and exposed vocal delivery in this extremely low *tessitura*, coupled with the need to nevertheless produce an expressive and musically satisfying utterance.

Later in the course of delivering the rest of this text, as she herself gains courage, the soloist's Voice likewise leaves this lower *tessitura* behind and even soars a little, as is demonstrated in the next musical excerpt. At first the soloist sings: "quoniam tu mecum es" or, very simply translated into English thus: "because, or since, you are with me". However, special attention is drawn to where the words "quoniam tu mecum es" are sung for the second time, now requiring that the soloist deliver her line both an octave higher as well as in a more extended – as well as properly respectful – form, in order to accommodate the addition of the final word "Domine". This phrase, now in its complete version, is typically translated into English as "since Thou art with me, Lord".



Example 3.6.4.2. 'Graduale', b. 256 – 259. Soprano.

After this phrase, the music is brought back to the 'first Idea' or 'Introduction' once more: See excerpt [bars 260 - 263] for Harp, Voices and Strings – where the D major tonality of the opening is re-established, and the original lines for Harp now appear in the Violas. The Soprano voice sings a high A-note in the home key to end off her phrase, in a serene reflection of her faith and courage having been firmly restored by the reassuring presence of God.

The Choir then repeats the Soloist's last text, in this "new" context of D major, and in simpler melodic lines: [please refer to Example 3.4.3. below, b. 261 – 263; Choir].

What follows is a brief overview of the ways in which the Choir is called on to participate in this section of the Requiem:

The Choir is used sparingly to sing short phrases in response to the soloist's longer lines. In three out of the five places in this 'Graduale' score where required, the Choir is asked to sing a single word. For their first entry [please refer to b. 252 in the full score], the Choristers echo the Soprano soloist's last word "mortis" or "death". Their second entry [please refer to Example 20, b. 260] requires the Sopranos and Altos to sing "Domine" together with the solo Voice; after which they repeat the soloist's last line of text "non timebo mala quoniam tu mecum es" or "I shall fear no evil, since Thou art with me".

[Please refer to Example 3.6.4.3., b. 261 – 262, overleaf]:

260

Hp.

Sop. soli

S.

A.

T.

B.

1st idea as SET UP

VERSET

Vln.

I.

Vla.

II.

I.

Vlc.

II.

D.B.

pizz.

Example 3.6.4.3. 'Graduale', b. 260 – 263. Harp, Voices & Strings.

This leads directly to the Verset with the soloist presenting new material, without involving the Choir, at bar 263.

At bar 265 the texture of the Set Up returns.

Then a wordless though entirely recognisable re-iteration of the second idea [Please refer to the full score, b. 247 – 250] arises from within the orchestral texture, as a reminder of the “*valley of the shadow of death*” episode; leading directly to the ending, on two bars of D major.

The piece thus ends without any singing, as gently as it began, once more employing the full instrumental ensemble.

3.6.5 Vers Consolationis

To a sparse Harp accompaniment, the Choir here delivers this text in crab-like harmonic progressions and slowly expanding intervallic accretions. This music literally came to me out of a dream. I wrote the Vocal parts without the crutch of the piano as a reference tool. And yet I somehow knew that the Choir would find their pitches, and their way, into this music without too much difficulty, as indeed turned out to be the case. All of which is a bit strange, in the best possible way.

I used certain “anchor-tones” in the construction of this piece; one or two voices would be sustained, and the other voices would move “against” these held tones. Then these moving parts would stop, in a new place; and would themselves become new anchor-points for further melodic tentacles to branch out from. This is how ‘Vers Consolationis’ took shape; in mostly step-wise melodic shifts, and “crab-like harmonic progressions”.

VERS CONSOLATIONIS

♩ = 52 mmm . . . SET UP [A] I

273

Hp.

S

A

T

B

How still they

How still they lay a-

Deep How still they keep

280

S

Will the mor-ning come that they might wa - ken keep safe - - ly

I solo

A

sleep when will the mor-ning come that they might wa - ken oh keep safe - - ly

gli altri

sleep when will the mor-ning come that they might wa - ken keep safe - - ly

T

sleep when mor - - ning kee - p

B

that they might wa - a-ken, oh keep do keep them safe - - - ly oh wake them

Example 3.6.5.1. ‘Vers Consolationis’, b. 273 – 284. Harp & Voices.

At the beginning, the Harp provides three anchor-tones, in support of the Voices. Then, for the next 20 bars [b. 275 - 295], it falls silent; until required to provide first a B anchor-tone, and then an F minor anchor-chord over a C pedal-point.

These are just “throat-clearing” events for the Harp [until bar 301, where it has an eight-bar solo Interlude] before the Vocal Coda begins.

As this Requiem was written with my late parents in mind, I sometimes felt the need to write my own texts. [It felt too personal to resort to using any existing text, particularly for this section of the work, for example.] So this term, ‘Vers Consolationis’, literally means “Verse or Rhyme of Consolation” in classic old-style Latin; yet the text is itself written entirely in English.

To offer consolation requires emotional, psychological and often physical closeness. This degree of closeness – of mourners consoling each other – is mirrored here in the closely intertwining lines of the music.

After a passage of slowly overlapping Vocal entries [starting at bar 309], with each melodic strand singing/handling/intoning a slightly different text, the piece draws to a quiet close, with the Harp sounding the final harmonic shape – a B major sixth over an A fundamental – over softly sustained Voices almost whispering their final “Amen”.

① Giusto ②

309

Hp.

S

I miss you so We miss you so We do miss you so I miss you so I

A

E - - - ter - - - nal rest E - - - ter - - - nal peace

T

now Re-qui - em Re-qui - em Re-qui - em Rest in

B

313 ③ ④

Hp.

S

do miss you so we miss you so we do miss you so

A

E - - - ter - - - nal sleep E - - - ter - - -

T

peace be at peace rest in peace be at

B

Re - - - qui - - - em

Example 3.6.5.2. ‘Vers Consolationis’, b. 309 – 315. Harp & Voices.

3.6.6 Consolatory Postlude

For a long time this section was rather more awkwardly entitled ‘Follow-up to Consolatory Rhyme’.

This ‘Postlude’ speaks of a really impossible hope at the start the movement and then, as the text develops, it progresses toward an intensely felt acceptance of the reality and inevitability of death. And the “really impossible hope” I speak of is the agonised wish that the newly deceased might still be alive; that the mourning, sorrow and grief might all be completely premature after all, and that the person may yet recover from their supposedly temporary slumber or torpor, and return to us once more, as a living, breathing human being. [This is an all too common and understandable form of denial amongst the deeply grief-stricken.]

The ‘Consolatory Postlude’ thus shares a similar “trajectory of realisation” with that of the ‘Vers Consolationis’ and is therefore paired with it, both in sentiment and in fact.

Musically, this section unfolds at a relatively quick tempo and is definitely not sombre in mood and texture. It therefore stands as a lively counterfoil to the slow tempi of most other sections of this Requiem, and is furthermore deliberately placed at the halfway point of the entire work.

It calls for the most basic of Percussion: simple Handclaps, as well as the festive and archaic sound of the Tambourine³⁷, to accompany the Voices and the other instruments.

This movement displays a strong element of spontaneity, as if an ordinary community just got together to sing (at a funeral) a piece of music that everyone knows by heart.

Communal music-making forms a crucial and entirely unselfconscious element of most traditional African lifestyles and culture. Collaborative music-making moreover impacts on every aspect of such a community’s day-to-day functioning and existence.

This scenario is therefore markedly different to the way in which music functions within other, perhaps largely Westernised societies; where the activity of music-making has increasingly become the virtually exclusive preserve of the skilled specialist, thereby leading to the exclusion of the average member of any given society or community from active participation in its joys and its extraordinary powers of connectivity.

3.6.7 Sanctus

After a short introduction by the Strings, the Soprano solo enters with the “Sanctus” melody in antiphonal exchange with the Basset Horns. [This way of supporting the vocal line follows a precedent set by W.A. Mozart who in his operas, for example *Idomeneo* (1781), wrote such carefully crafted dovetailed exchanges between the Vocal parts and variously introduced Wind instruments in his arias, particularly those which feature high female Voices³⁸. This primary melody, which is four bars long, has its first two bars sung by the Soprano soloist, while the next two bars take the form of an answering statement for the Sopranos and Altos of the Choir.

³⁷ The true origins of the Tambourine are unknown, though reference to its use appears in historical writings as early as 1700 BCE. It has been used since ancient times by musicians in West Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, Greece and India (Wisconsin Public Radio 2018).

³⁸ Ilia, who has lost her father, turns to *Idomeneo* to be her adoptive father – in an aria [‘Se il padre perdei’ from Act II] which features no less than four *obbligato* Winds: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon and Horn.

The following excerpts show these details, starting with the String introduction below:

373

B. Horn in F
Hrn in F
Hp
Sop. solo
Vln.
Vla.
Vlc.
D. B.

$\text{♩} = 68$
SET UP

dolce
mf
mp
mf
mf
mf
pizz.
arco
pizz.

Sanctus : tu - s Da : mi - ni - s

A ①

Example 3.6.7.1.a) Sanctus, b. 373 – 375. Winds, Harp, Soprano & Strings.

Example 3.6.7.1.b) ‘Sanctus’, b. 376 – 379. Winds, Harp & Voices – no strings

The Horns then enter with a two-bar Tag-phrase, at bar 379. The opening melodic phrase is then reprised, with the Soprano soloist singing all four bars of it, and providing her own Tag-phrase in the form of a miniature *coloratura* passage of two bars’ duration. The following excerpt [bars 381 to 386] shows the Soprano solo line only. [These six bars now have the Voice accompanied by the full String section, in addition to the Bass Horns and Harp.] The text is now extended too, taking in another line of the Verse: “Pleni sunt, caeli et terra Gloria tua” or “Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory”:

Example 3.6.7.2. ‘Sanctus’, b. 380 – 387. Soprano.

The Choir then repeats this new line of text, which ends as the Strings again play a Set-Up of two bars' duration. After this second Set-Up and a short transition passage, the contrasting 'Benedictus' section with Choir follows, as is shown in the following excerpts:

395

The musical score for 'Sanctus' at measure 395 features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a string section. The vocal parts are singing the text 'Be - ne - - - dic - tus Be - ne - dic-tus qui ve-nit'. The string section consists of Violins I & II, Violas I & II, Cellos I & II, and Double Bass. A rehearsal mark 'B ①' is placed below the vocal parts.

Example 3.6.7.3.a) 'Sanctus', b. 394 – 396. Choir & Strings.

S
A
T
B

i - in no - mi - ne sanc - te Do - mi - ne Be - ne - - - dic - tus

B II

Vln.
I
Vla.
II
I
Vlc.
II
D.B.

Example 3.6.7.3.b) ‘Sanctus’, b. 397 – 400. Choir & Strings.

A section which partially evokes the solemn tones of the Russian Orthodox Church service follows, featuring imitative Brass passages and overlapping entries of the various sections of the Choir. As a note of caution; I did not literally go and listen to any Russian Orthodox Church music, and then compose this section of the ‘Sanctus’. I simply chose what I felt to be an appropriately evocative metaphor to describe it, which is why the heading “Russian Orthodox” vibe, for this section appears in quotation marks in my score. It is purely a representative idea about the general atmosphere of this section, and the particular way in which I have chosen to use the lower Voices of the Choir to express this idea.

The text, at this point, furthermore struck me as being of a different character to the texts preceding it; lending itself to a somewhat more robust style of delivery in my view, particularly in terms of syllabic rhythm and the placement of accents. I therefore chose a different approach to the word-setting, over the course of these brief eight bars.

405

The musical score for measures 405-410 features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "Ho - sa - nna - a in ex - cel - sis De - o Ho - sa - nna - a in ex - cel - sis Ho - sa - nna i - in ex - cel - sis De - o i - in ex - cel - sis Ho - sa - nna i - in ex - cel - sis De - o in ex - cel - sis Ho -". The melody is characterized by a "Russian Orthodox" style, with a mix of major and minor intervals and a slow, solemn tempo. The Soprano part starts with a long note on 'Ho' and a melisma on 'a'. The Alto and Tenor parts have more active lines with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Bass part provides a steady accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes.

S Ho - sa - nna - a in ex - cel - sis De - o Ho - sa - nna - a in ex - cel - sis Ho -

A - sa - nna i - in ex - cel - sis De - o Ho - sa - nna - a in ex - cel - sis Ho -

T sa - nna i - in ex - cel - sis De - o i - in ex - cel - sis Ho -

B sa - nna i - in ex - cel - sis De - o in ex - cel - sis Ho -

“Russian Orthodox” vibe

C ①

After a short reprise of the ‘Sanctus’ material, the piece ends with Harp over softly held chords from the Winds and the Strings. The key-centre has by now shifted to B major, whereas the piece started in D major [a lower chromatic third relationship], and maintained that tonality throughout most of its duration.

The key-centre of Db major used in this movement is very dark, yet the Strings sound sweet in this key. The primary reasons for this special sound quality are provided here: In general, for the Strings, the tone-colour of any given scale-notes of Db major, particularly if performed *molto legato ed espressivo* as directed here, would be somewhat more mellow than that of their sharp or natural equivalents in another key; since a greater ‘speaking length’ of string is set vibrating to provide any given scale-tone in this key than for the equivalent scale-tone in D major or E major or C major, to cite examples drawn from several neighbouring tonalities.

[There is a trade-off though, for the special mellowness of this section. It does mean that the timpanist be afforded a few extra moments to re-tune his / her instruments in preparation for the ‘Communio’, which follows directly after it.]

62

The only member of the Woodwind employed is the Contrabassoon, and there is no part for either Vocal soloist.

The nine bars of the “Prefix for Strings” [b. 420 - 428] lead to a tonic six-four chord at bar 429, over which chord the Contrabassoon’s “signature line” first appears.

This line at first arpeggiates the six-four chord, later modifying it to a secondary dominant seventh chord [by the last-minute inclusion of a flattened seventh degree] at the end of bar 429:

425

C. Bn.

Timp.

Vln.

I

Vla

II

I

Vlc.

II

D.B.

con sordino

molto legato ed espressivo

pp

pizz.

arco

Example 3.6.8.1. ‘Agnus Dei’, b. 425 – 429. C/bsn, Timpani & Strings.

The flattened seventh degree [See last note C \flat for C/bsn. in bar 429] leads directly to a chord of the subdominant major in first inversion, over which harmony the ‘Agnus Dei’ text begins, at bar 430:

430

S
A
T
B

Ag - - - nus De - e - i qui tol - lis pec-ca - ta mun - di pec-ca - ta mu - ndi Do-na e - tis

Ag - - - nu - us De - e - i - i qui tol - lis pec-ca - ta mun - di pec-ca - ta mu - ndi Do-na e - tis

Ag - - - nus De - e - i - i qui tol - lis pec-ca - ta mun - di pec-ca - ta mu - ndi Do-na e - tis

Ag - - - nu - s De - e - i - i - qui tol - lis pec-ca - ta mun - di

A ①

Vln.
I
II
Vla
Vlc.
I
II
D.B.

Example 3.6.8.2. ‘Agnus Dei’, b. 430 – 434. Choir & Strings.

An irregular phrase-length of 11 bars [including the Contrabassoon’s “signature line”, which appears in the eleventh bar] is now retained for a second repeat of the text.

After the third repeat of the refrain – in a wordless embellished version for *obbligato* Trumpet – the last six bars of the introduction are reprised. The reason for the third repeat of the ‘Agnus Dei’ phrase being in wordless form is that invariably the text is repeated thrice and, since most church-goers are familiar with this practice, I thought to somehow subvert expectation by having the Trumpet “sing” this third repeat instead. Additionally, it gave me the chance to write another soloistic phrase for the Trumpet. This really suited me, since bearing in mind the proviso of writing various *obbligato* passages for this noble instrument was an essential consideration while composing this Requiem.

The Choir enters over the final four bars of this segment and, replicating the melody of the upper Viola part, sings the end of the usual “Agnus Dei” text for the third, and final, time.

By adding the word “sempiternam” to this Vocal phrase, I have intensified this last appeal to now read “Dona eis Requiem sempiternam” or “Grant us Rest, even unto Eternity.”

The final appearance of the Contrabassoon’s signature line leads the piece toward closure with a wordless “Amen” voiced as a plagal cadence for hushed Brass and Strings, resolving onto the tonic chord of D \flat major.

[See bars 460 to 465 – demonstrating use of “sempiternam” and wordless plagal cadence ending]. Strings are not shown in this excerpt:

The musical score for 'Agnus Dei', bars 460-465, is presented. The score includes parts for C. Bsn., Hrn in F, C. Tpt., Timp., S (Soprano), A (Alto), T (Tenor), and B (Bass). The lyrics are 'Do - - na e - is Re - qui - em sem - pi - te - er - nam'. The score features a 'solo' section for the Soprano and 'tutti' for the rest of the choir. The music is marked 'allarg.' and includes dynamic markings 'ppp' and 'pp'.

Example 3.6.8.3. ‘Agnus Dei’, b. 460 – 465. C/bsn, Brass, Timpani & Choir.

3.6.9 Communio

This short movement is highly animated, even though the designated tempo ($\text{♩} = 72$) is certainly not brisk.

The key factors that contribute to its innate rhythmic vitality lie instead in observance of the deliberately placed accents and through careful attention given to the articulations marked in all the parts.

The “Set Up” of the ‘Communio’ section, showing the parts for Brass and Timpani:

466
SET UP
Con spirito ma leggiero $\text{♩} = 72$
Hn in F I
Hn in F II
C Tpt.
Timp.
f p mf
Start of text

Example 3.6.9.1. ‘Communio’, b. 466 – 470. Brass & Timpani.

A précis of the essential rhythm-scheme of this movement follows, showing a typical four-bar phrase length which is made up of four shorter ‘rhythmic cells’ of one bar-length each:

Figure 2 Communio — showing Rhythmic Patterns used: typical 4-Bar phrase-length
470
Vocal Rhythm
Instr. Rhythm
Schematic of Rhythm-Scheme in the COMMUNIO Section (IX) of "Requiem for the 1st Peoples"
(C) PAUL D. HANMER 2024 [b. 470-473]

Figure 3.6.9.1. ‘Communio’ – underlying Rhythm-Scheme.

The time-signature remains in 4/4 throughout the piece, except that it “expands” to six-four for the fourth bar of the ‘Verset’ [see bar 485] to allow a chord of the dominant seventh on E to sound for two beats before a return to the A major tonality of the piece [at bar 486].

Besides the ‘Set Up’ scored for Brass, Timpani and Violoncelli, there are three further ‘Instrumental Phrases’ interspersed with the Choir’s delivery of different sections of the text.

An example of the first such Instrumental “Break”, scored for Timpani and Strings, and starting at the end of the Verset. Only the Strings are shown here:

INSTRUMENTAL “Break”
Smart casual

480

Example 3.6.9.2. ‘Communio’, b. 478 – 481. Strings.

In a further “nod” to the Baroque/early classical era, three Timpani [tuned to tonic (A), dominant (E) and sub-dominant (D) notes] are called for, as would have served in the orchestral ensembles of those periods. In most instances though, the “dominant” chord is in fact E minor [except for the E dominant seventh chord in the ‘Set Up’ – at bar 469 – which also appears in bar 485].

There is a sense of jubilation in the vocal delivery which, in my opinion, perfectly matches the themes of eternal light and salvation described in the text.

I chose simple chord movements [based on root notes A, E, D, G and C], which would readily favour the sounding of open strings on all instruments in the String section, to vibrant and sonorous effect, at various points in the musical discourse. Even where double stops do occur, they most often incorporate at least one note which would be played on an open string, as a matter of course, by the players.

The following excerpt demonstrates some instances of sonorous writing for Strings:

474

The musical score is for a string ensemble, specifically measures 474 to 477. It is written for Violins I and II, Violas I and II, Violoncellos I and II, and Double Basses. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music features various string techniques including double stops and open strings. The first measure (474) shows a double stop in Violin I (open E and C#) and in Viola I (open A and D). The second measure (475) shows open D, E, and A strings in the Double Basses. The third measure (476) shows a double stop in Violin I (open E and C#) and in Viola I (open A and D). The fourth measure (477) shows a double stop in Violin I (open E and C#) and in Viola I (open A and D).

Example 3.6.9.3. 'Communio', b. 474 – 477. Strings.

Note the open E notes for Violin in bar 474, including the double stop [open E with C#] on beat 4, as well as the double stopped A's in the third beat, which incorporate the open A string. Furthermore, the last double stop on the last quaver of the last bar [b. 477] of the excerpt, uses both open E and open A strings.

Likewise, note the use of open A and open D notes for Viola I in the first bar [b. 474] of this excerpt. For the Violoncelli, there are ample opportunities to use open A, D and G strings; examples of which occur in the same 4-bar passage cited above.

In bar 475, note the use of open D, E and A strings of the Double Bases.

Usage is made of Baroque-style *clarino* register motifs from the Trumpet and the Horns.

The following excerpt shows an example of such usage:

INSTRUMENTAL TAG

Example 3.6.9.4. 'Communio', b. 494 – 497. Brass & Timpani.

The Timpani generally play together with – or in antiphonal exchanges with – the Brass, although they do also interact similarly with the String group and the Choir at times. This further relates to Baroque and especially to pre-Baroque liturgical music performance practise, with Choirs often placed at opposite sides of a church, for example, thus maximising the antiphonal effect of pitting one group 'against' the other. Much African music-making is also reliant on such careful placement of different groups of singers, the better to enjoy the clearly audible antiphonal effects achieved by such deliberately worked out spatial considerations.

The “dynamic palette” deployed here is not extravagantly varied: a loud phrase followed by a soft one, perhaps then succeeded by one at a *mezzoforte* dynamic. This feature, together with short phrase-lengths and the dramatic use of accenting, serves to further highlight the “call-and-response” nature of this movement, which is certainly also an important feature of much South African music-making.

The following excerpt demonstrates all of these features, as they apply to the Choir:

475

Example 3.6.9.5. 'Communio', b. 475 – 477. Choir.

3.6.10 Responsorium

The structure of the ‘Responsorium’ is the most complex of all ten sections of this Requiem, and I felt it useful to plot this structure onto plain paper before proceeding with the composition of any of the music for it. I combined elements that could relate this final section back to the music of the ‘Introit’, with elements that would reflect some of the rich vocal traditions which are uniquely South African. These local traditions have themselves been informed by the Wesleyan hymns first introduced to the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal regions of the country by British settlers and conquistadors, from circa 1820 onwards. These Anglican and Methodist hymns, often displaying a prominent Lutheran lineage, in turn reflect the influence of composers such as Heinrich Schütz, G.F. Händel and J.S. Bach on much of this ecclesiastical repertoire.

The ‘Responsorium’ incorporates use of the “static pedal ground-bass” device, derived from early isiXhosa folk music idioms; the harmonic structures which underpin much South African popular and gospel music repertoire; and the “point-of-contact” of these idioms with religious and secular music from the German high baroque era. All of these elements have furthermore been pertinent to my own particular musical trajectory.

I make liberal usage of the superposition of “4-against-3” rhythms; notably in the four-bar sections of the ‘Responsorium’ marked [C], where this rhythmic effect occurs in the basslines [shared between Violoncelli, Contrabass and Contrabassoon] as well as in the Percussion parts-which underpin these same passages. These “4-against-3” rhythms also appear in the ninth and tenth bars of each 12-bar phrase of the “great Chorale” melody, whose appearances [marked D in the score] constitute the musical climaxes of this movement, as well as of this entire work. Further commentary on – and explanatory diagrams of – this rhythmic superposition appear later in this text.

Below is a representation of the “4-against-3” rhythm, as used here. This rhythm pattern is a decidedly non-Western one, yet its usage is common in much South African music:

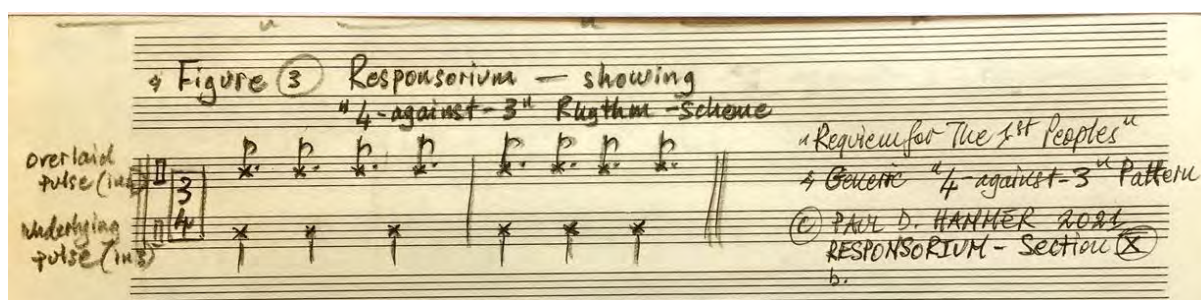


Figure 3.6.10.1. ‘Responsorium’. “4-against-3” Rhythm-Scheme.

A single Timpanum [tuned to G] sets up the ‘Responsorium’ with a thudding pedal-point. This references the ‘Introit’, the opening atmosphere of which is likewise underpinned by a rhythmic pattern for the Timpani.

Various instruments then slowly enter, building a fluttering texture, until an arpeggiated Harp figure introduces a simple modal announcement from the Horns:

Example 3.6.10.1. ‘Responsorium’, b. 514 – 518. [A] motif in the Horns; Timpani & Harp.

This signals the first “Declamation” from the Baritone soloist. As with the ‘Epistola’ movement, the nature of this soloist’s part – here once again located in a high tessitura – serves to invest his pronouncements with a special sense of drama. [See the start of “Declamation I” in the next musical example, where bar 525 shows key signatures, as well as new pedal settings for the Harp.]:

Example 3.6.10.2. ‘Responsorium’, b. 525 – 529. Timpani, Harp & Baritone.

The [C] section introduces a gentle “4-against-3” setting for the Soprano soloist; after which she also sings a “Declamation”, accompanied by the Horns playing their [A] motif. The

following example shows this [C] section, along with the Vocal line, and the cross-rhythm effect in the accompaniment:

Repeat C

535

FL *meagre dolce*

B-hn in F I

B-hn in F II

C. Bn.

Hrn in F I

Hrn in F II

C Tpt.

Perc.

Hp.

V

Quan - di ce - li mi - ven - di sunt, et ie - ra - Dum ve - ne - ri - ju - di - ca - ri - ne - ca - lum

Example 3.6.10.3. 'Responsorium', b. 535 – 539. Winds, Percussion, Harp & Solo Voice.

An instrumental interlude at [B] follows. [See bars 561 to 566 – W/Wind only]:

B Strandlopers
@ Churchaven - circa 100 000 B.C.E.
"Harmonie des Enfants"

561

FL *mf*

B-hn in F I *mf*

B-hn in F II *mf*

C. Bn.

Example 3.6.10.4. 'Responsorium', b. 561 – 566. Woodwinds.

Written mainly for the Woodwinds to the accompaniment of Shakers and lower Violoncelli, this I; IV; V section leads to the principal theme at [D], which is like a chorale setting by J.S. Bach – mixed with strong elements of Marabi³⁹ and Mbaqanga⁴⁰:

601

Perc. *mp*

S Tre-mens fac - tus sum e - go ti - me - o dum dis - cus-si-o ve - ne - rit a - a - - tque

A Tre-mens fac - tus sum -go et ti - dum dis - cus-si-o ve - ne - rit a - a - - tque

T Tre - mens fac - tus sum e - go et ti - i-me - o dum di - is - cus - si - o - o ve - ne - rit a - a - tque

B dum di - is - cuss - i - o - o ve - ne - rit a - a - tque - e

Full [D] ①

Vln. *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *mf*

D.B. *mf*

Example 3.6.10.5. 'Responsorium', b. 601 – 606. Perc, Choir & Strings.

After short reprises of the [A] and [C] material, the [D] section returns twice more, and the “chorale” ends over an extended B \flat pedal section.

The final resolution to E \flat , at bar 648, coincides with the start of the nebulous floating coda which ends the whole work in short fragmentary phrases and long held tones from the orchestra: an instrumental interpretation of *lux perpetua*. It should be noted that here the instrumental texture slowly keeps shifting internally; but that externally there is no significant melodic nor harmonic progression through these final bars. Thus, a virtually static sonic tableau is the result:

³⁹ Marabi – Syncretic black urban music of the 1920's and 1930's, based on cyclical use of the I – IV – V chord structure and originally [incorporating] a simple (organ/percussion) instrumentation (Ansell 2004, 328).

⁴⁰ Mbaqanga – This [isiZulu] term means, literally, “maize bread” but in the 1950's [was] the most widely used term for commercial African jazz and for music with strong, recognisable jazz influences, such as improvised instrumental breaks (Ibid, 328).

Example 3.6.10.6. 'Responsorium', b. 651 – 654. Harp & Strings.

The lower Strings (Violas and Violoncelli) are here “tethered” by simple open-stringed utterances, or else by means of simple harmonics based on open strings. The entire texture is anchored on low B \flat pedal-tones from the Harp and Contrabass.

This final section also reflects my admiration for Gustav Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde*⁴¹, with particular reference to the final movement of that work, ‘Der Abschied’ where the slow-moving passagework is likewise textural rather than developmental – arpeggiated rather than melodic – and the note-menu is likewise drawn from the pentatonic notes of C-major sixth even as the entire instrumental texture is here ‘kept aloft’ over a B \flat fundamental tone.

So in this sense I have tried to create an almost weightless atmosphere that is pulsating, but that is nevertheless entirely static, for all its internal activity. The Flute, Basset Horns and Harp play simple four- or five-note melodic “cells” which keep repeating and overlapping; mere ripples on the surface of a perpetual and non-progressive state of illumination, bliss and the “ever after”.

⁴¹ Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911) completed *Das Lied von der Erde* – a “symphony for alto and tenor soli and large orchestra” – in September of 1908 at his summer composing retreat in Toblach. Each of its six song-movements is set to a different text drawn from Hans Bethge’s “Chinesischen Flöte” collection of ancient Chinese poetry, in German translation (Philharmonia PH 217 1962).

3.7 Addendum addressing Mbaqanga and Marabi usage⁴²

The term ‘Mbaqanga’ has come to embrace descriptions of both the rhythm and note order of the basslines that underpin the harmonic structure of a representative piece of music.

Additionally, the harmonic structure of much of the music which is termed ‘Mbaqanga’ is likely to be based on repetitions of the typical chord sequence of classic ‘Marabi’, viz. I – IV – V in a major key. This structural unit is commonly two – or else four – bars long, and much of this repertoire is in 4/4 meter.

What follows is a schematic representation of what I refer to as “Type I Mbaqanga”, which has equal – and single – durations occupied by Chord I and Chord IV. These are followed by single durations taken up by each of the closing harmonic elements – Chord I six-four followed by Chord V – thus completing one full cycle of this progression.

[|: I / IV / || I 6/4 / V /:] as is the case with Feya Faku’s song *Mena-Katarina*, for example.

The full “Type I Mbaqanga” harmonic pattern is set out in Figure 3.7.1. overleaf:

⁴² The commentary in this section is gleaned from my own personal experience as a performing artist.

MENA-KATARINA

MAMANGA
(STRAIGHT 8TH)
♩ = 110

FEYA FAKU

110

© Feya Faku Music

Figure 3.7.1. Edited version of Feya Faku’s “Mena-Katarina”: showing introductory bassline and Section A only; excerpt drawn from his “Le Ngoma Feya Faku Songbook” collection of songs.

I refer to an alternative form of Mbaqanga as “Type II Mbaqanga”, which has the following harmonic pattern:

[I: I / I / || IV / I 6/4 V :] as in the case of a representative song such as McCoy Mrubata’s *Face The Music*.

FACE THE MUSIC
 McCoy Mrubata © Kokoko Music

count-in: 1 2 3

UNISON

INTRO

[A]

Exposition of McCoy Mrubata's

FACE THE MUSIC

[Example of Mbaqanga – so-called “Type II”]

The BASSLINE is suggested –

To go together with the THABELA BEAT on drums which works well with this song.

P.S. Hunkler 19/01/22

Figure 3.7.2. A lead-sheet with suggested bassline for McCoy Mrubata’s *Face The Music*.

I choose *Face The Music* as an example of “Type II Mbaqanga” which simply has the first harmony [the chord of the tonic major, or Chord I] sounding for double the duration occupied by either Chord IV or Chord V in the basic harmonic structural unit. So, a more accurate schematic representation of the underlying harmonic rhythm of this song could be the following: [I: I / I / || IV / I 6/4 V :] rather than simply [I – IV – V], which has been the standard way of depicting this structural unit in written texts for some time.

[The “Type II Mbaqanga” format also applies to the ‘Responsorium’ of my *Requiem*, in those sections marked [D] in the score.]

Since the third [I 6/4] and the fourth [V] harmonic steps in these cycles are both rooted on the dominant [i.e. V] note, it will be seen that the over-simplified ‘three-step schematic’ [I-IV-V] generally, and misleadingly, used to encapsulate both of these progressions/structures in written texts could lead to confusion; since a ‘four-step harmonic cycle’ cannot adequately be represented by a ‘three-step schematic’, in my personal view.

It is often the case that the ‘four-step harmonic cycle’ of Mbaqanga pieces becomes expanded to embrace eight smaller ‘harmonic steps’, thus:

[I: I / I 6/3 // IV / II m // I 6/4 / V sus // I 6/4 / V7 //:] for example, where the second and fourth harmonies are more the result of bass notes changing than of any fundamental change made by means of re-voicing the chords, in each case:

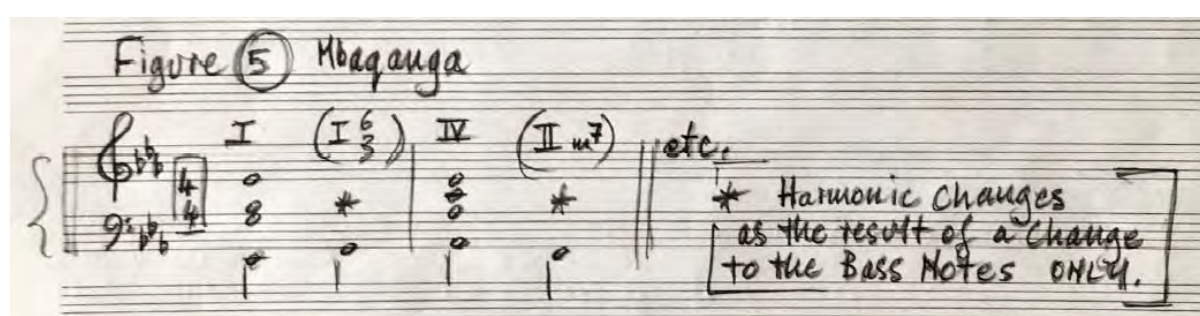


Figure 3.7.3. Passing Harmonic changes in Mbaqanga – as a result of bassline movement only.

Furthermore, the second half of the progression [“Type I Mbaqanga” in this case] is then expressed over a dominant pedal-point of two bars’ duration. There can be much variation applied to what happens harmonically over this second half of the cycle, which becomes a dynamic “cadential pivot-point” signalling a return to Chord I and a renewal of the cycle. Improvising musicians are therefore always searching out ever more inventive and invigorating ways of expressing themselves at these pivot-points, when performing and/or recording Mbaqanga music.

*Here, in what I have described as the “Great Chorale” [marked D] of the ‘Responsorium’, the “Type II Mbaqanga” elements outlined earlier with reference to Mrubata’s *Face the Music* are all present; albeit expressed in 3/4 meter in this case:

[I: I // I 6/3 // IV // II m / V7:]

The way I have “evened out” the harmonic movement in the last bar from [II m / V7] to

[x¹ x¹] – i.e. assigning equal durations to each harmony – led me to sub-divide each bar still further; into four equal parts, thus yielding [VII dim VI m V 6/3 II7] for the tenth bar of each “Great Chorale” cycle, for example; literally “four harmonic changes in the time of three” beats. Each harmonic change thus has a duration of ¾ of a beat:

Figure (4) a) Responsorium — showing Vocal Rhythms used in Sections [D] — “the Great Chorale”

Choir

571 3/4

Li-be-ra me Do-mi-ne de-e mor-te ac-ter-na etc →

Figure (4) b) Responsorium — showing Vocal Rhythms used in Bars (9) and (10) of Sections [D] — “the Great Chorale”

overlaid pulse

609 3/4

Qua-do ce-li no-ven-di sunt et te rra... etc.

underlying pulse

Requiem for The 1st Peoples

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b. 571 — 574 RESPONSORIUM

b. 609 — 612 Section (X)

Figure 3.7.4.a) Vocal rhythms used in Sections marked D of ‘Responsorium’. [Straightforward rhythm in 3]

Figure 3.7.4.b) Vocal rhythms: bars 9 & 10 of Sections marked D of ‘Responsorium’. [4-against-3 rhythm]

For the last two bars of this 12-bar cycle, the harmonic rhythm is once more restored; to one harmonic change per beat. But the hastening rate of melodic and harmonic change in bars 9 and 10 signals the syncope effect, of “4-against-3”, that I particularly draw attention to here.

3.8 Texts for Kyrié Eleïson, Epistola, Vers Consolationis and Consolatory Postlude

Kyrié Eleïson

[Copyright of text in French only: (2017) Paul D. Hanmer, Brown Man’s Bluff Music].

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

Kyrié Eleïson, Christé Eleïson, Kyrié Eleïson

As we stand here now, wretched and afraid,

Pauvre de nous debut ici maintenant

Face to face with the void,

Vis a vis de rien

Have pity on us [Lord].

Aïe pitié de nous.

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Kyrié Eleïson, Christé Eleïson, Kyrié Eleïson.

Epistola

Copyright in both English & seTswana texts: the Estate of the late Joseph Mpho Molefe (2016)

My greetings to Thee O Great Mother,

Ditumediso go lona bo Mmago-rona

Whom I should call Eve (Hawa)

Ke bitse mmang Efa.

I pray that Thou hear (me) O Great Father,

Ke rapela gore O Nkutlwe, Rre O mogolo.

We need Thy strength O Adam (Adamo)

Re tlhoka matla a Gago Adamo.

(O) Then the waters rose, and the sun beat down,

Gwa ba Gwa tlhatlogo metsi, letsats la besa,

And we saw great piles of the dead –

Gape Ra bona dithothobolo tsa baswi.

Left for the vultures, out in the open, O my God!

Di saletse manong mo lebaleng, O Rara!

**How can we hold up our heads in this madness?*

Re ka emisa ditlhogo tsa rona jeng mo

**This hopeless devastation and suffering?*

Yago tlhoka Tshepo tshenyo le bodimo dibe?

In the midst of this tide of souls in flight,

Mo gareng ga memoya e tshwenyegileng e esiyang

From each and every side?

Go tswa Matlhakoreng O-tlhe?

What will we do, O we miss Thee

Re tlile go diraeng, O! Rea go tlhoka,

Great Mother and Great Father.

Mmagorona le Rre.

We would be steadfast, but we falter/stumble.

Le tshwanela go tiya, jela re a teka-teka

We would be strong, yet we waver and fall.

Re tshwanetse go tiya, jela re a teka teka re be re wa.

Help us please, we beg of Thee?

Re thuse tlhe, re ya go rapela?

*[These 2 lines of text remained in English after all]

Vers Consolationis

Copyright Paul D. Hanmer. Brown Man's Bluff Music (2016)

How still they sleep

How still they keep

How still they lay, asleep.

When will the morning come, that they might waken?

Oh keep them safely

Oh look at them, now innocently still asleep.

Oh wake them now. Ooh-

Please let them see the new day.

Do let them greet the bright new day.

Such a beautiful day, a brand new day;

It's time to waken now.

How I wish that they could see

This beautiful day.

How I wish that they would see

This day.

Sleep now, Requiem.

I miss you so

We miss you so, we do.

Eternal rest. Eternal peace.

We do miss you so.

We miss you so, we do.

Eternal sleep. Requiem, Rest in Peace.

Be at peace, Rest in peace. Om.

Sala O Sala Kahle [Stay, or be, at peace]

Sleep peacefully, ugogo wami [my grandmother]

Sleep peacefully, umkhulu wami [my grandfather]

Amen.

Consolatory Postlude

Copyright Paul D. Hanmer (2016) Brown Man's Bluff Music.

Hark! (Wait) But! (Hush) can't you see she's sleeping?

So wait, give her a chance; see she's gently sleeping?

Hark! (Wait) But! (Hush) can't you see she's at peace?

Let her rest a while longer.

You'll see, you'll find; She will awake in her own sweet time.

We think she's mad. Can't she see it's bad?

We know she's sad, can't she see it's bad?

We have to stay. Someone has to say.

We have to stay. Somebody has to pray.

Wait! (Hark) Hush! (But) can it be that we're too late?

I think it's clear. No she knows it's near.

I think she sees. Help us with her please?

It's very clear, that it's drawing near.

I think she sees. Get down on y/our knees.

4. SYMPHONY- From THE OLD WORLD - A symphony in four movements

- 1) Opening movement – *Adagio espressivo*
- 2) Barcarolle Nouvelle – *Moderato Giusto*
- 3) A MSG FROM MPHO – *Piangevole*
- 4) Eb Allegro – ... *ma non troppo*

Composed: February 2019 – January 2021 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Duration: ± 35 minutes

4.1 Instrumentation

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
1 cor Anglais
2 Clarinets in Bb
1 Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoons
1 Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in Bb
2 Tenor Trombones;
1 Bass Trombone
1 Tuba

4 Timpani

[Percussion: to be distributed amongst up to three players]

1 Triangle
Hi-Hat Cymbals – 1 pair
1 Ride Cymbal – large, suspended
1 Metal Hubcap – mounted
1 Tam-Tam
1 pair of Claves – large
1 Wood Block – deep
1 set of Temple Blocks
1 Tambourine
1 Tambour/Bodhran
1 Timbale – mounted
1 pair of Bongos – high + low; mounted
1 Field Drum
2 Floor Toms
1 Bass Drum

1 Harp
1 Male Voice – *Sprechgesang*

Strings: 12 – 10 – 8 – 6 – 4

4.2 Rationale for instrumentation

As this Symphony draws on a tradition that had its genesis in the Classical Period, especially with composers from the First Viennese School such as Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791) and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827), and developed at the hands of Romantic period symphonists such as Hector Berlioz (1803 – 1869), Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897), Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886), Anton Bruckner (1824 – 1896), Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911) and Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949), the instrumentation follows the basic configuration of the traditional Classical-Romantic period symphony orchestra.

The Percussion section, however, calls for a broader range of instruments, more reflective of the increasing exoticism of the late twentieth-century, thereby allowing the traditional symphonic sound world to be infused with elements drawn from a broader expressive and cultural domain.

Instruments such as the Claves, Metal Hubcap, Hi-Hat Cymbals, Bongos and Floor Toms are called for. Some of these, for example Claves, Timbale and Bongos, emanate from Salsa and other South American music traditions. Others like the Hi-Hat Cymbals, Ride Cymbal and Floor Toms are derived from the jazz Drumkit. Yet others, such as the Metal Hubcap, are products of my own imagination. As many hubcaps are made out of plastic today, a metal one is specified.

A male voice singing in Sprechgesang style [an early twentieth-century type of vocal delivery first encountered in notated form in the scores of Arnold Schoenberg (1874 – 1951) and Leoš Janáček (1854 – 1928)] joins the instrumentation for the third movement and adds to the sonic tapestry. By means of this special effect, I had the idea to re-invoke the sound of my late friend Mpho Molefe's⁴³ speaking voice, on occasion combining it with plosive sounds from the Percussion and held tones from the Woodwind section, the better to mimic his vocal delivery, particularly with regard to its special timbre.

4.3 Introduction

Even though I had not necessarily thought of writing a symphony, taking up the suggestion that I do so prompted me to explore fresh ways of giving expression to my musical and artistic impulses.

My PhD supervisor at Rhodes University, Jeffrey Brukman, persuaded me – along with at least one external examiner of my Master's degree portfolio – that writing a symphony would stretch my composing capabilities in completely new ways. This has certainly proven to be the case.

Two of the more recent large-scale works that had I composed – viz. *7 Winter Episodes* (2013 – 2014) for Basses and Orchestra and *Requiem for the 1st Peoples* (2016 – 2017) for solo Soprano, solo Baritone, Choir and Chamber Orchestra – each consist of a series of fairly short, discrete sections of music. For this symphony, it was clear that I should attempt to create longer

⁴³ Mpho Molefe – full name Joseph Mpho Molefe (1960 – 2019) – was a professional driver and I knew him in that capacity for over 30 years, during which period we developed a strong friendship.

musical structures which, given the encouragement of the examiners of my Masters portfolio, I felt confident to do.

Before I began writing, there were three significant challenges I had to confront.

First, I had the whole weight of historical and musical achievement which lay “at my back” to deal with: this meant giving due consideration to the output of the iconic symphonists from the First Viennese School; through to composers of the Romantic period, who were dealing with an orchestral sound which was still evolving, writing symphonies that became larger in scale with ever-expanding formal structures. I next considered twentieth-century symphonists such as Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975), Witold Lutosławski (1913 – 1994) and Jean Sibelius (1865 – 1957), who were still working towards evolving the ideal of the symphony, even though each of them had such contrasting individual approaches to the art of composition. I also looked at the situation of several even more recently active composers, who certainly had ample skills to write symphonies, yet chose to focus their energies on the creation of large-scale works in completely contrasted genres.

In other words, I was plagued by the question: “Should I even bother to venture down this path, in 2019/2020?”

Second, I had to feel at ease within myself that I had something of value to add to this vast and daunting canon and, furthermore, that I possessed sufficient endurance, technical skill, imagination and the “architectural vision” necessary to create the longer structural elements required by this musical form.

Thirdly, over the last eight years I have regularly listened to the *Fifth Symphony* by Belgian composer, Luc Brewaeys (1959-2015), which was completed, published and first performed in 1993. In this virtuosic work, what particularly stands out is the sonic result of what he wrote for a very large Percussion section, and how improvised it all sounds – even though this work is fully notated. It is scored for truly gigantic forces – two full orchestras with two conductors, plus an entire electronics array operated by a sound engineer. Brewaeys’s symphony remains vibrant and has lost none of its freshness and sense of jubilation even though it was composed almost three decades ago. In addition to really appreciating this work, I am also in awe of the technical and imaginative mastery and absolute self-confidence required to conceive of and then notate it.

While I am aware that there are various compositional techniques and systems – such as serialism, micro-tonality, pointillism, atonality and [the harnessing of] elements of chance – which several composers have employed to write perfectly viable symphonies and other large-scale orchestral works, I decided that, in this particular compositional endeavour, I would instead follow some existing tonal and harmonic guidelines. I felt that writing a symphony – which is reliant on harmonic procedures maintained over the extended timespans needed to give the unfolding of its large-scale structural arguments some degree of cogency – would best suit my artistic sensibility.

I am of the opinion that there is still ample room – in the world at large, and in the desires and musical tastes of potential listeners out there – for a fresh musical discourse which is nevertheless predominantly reliant on the twelve semitones. It is from this standpoint that I operate as a musician.

In addition, I believe my lifelong immersion in South African society and its music brings something new to this symphonic format, and helps yield a positive answer to the question: why take up the challenge of writing yet another large-scale orchestral work for the concert-hall?

The fact that I have absorbed styles and idioms of musical expression that exist nowhere else in the world furthermore gives me the confidence to call my new work *Symphony – from The Old World*⁴⁴ and in this way “throw down a musical gauntlet”.

Once I moved to the compositional stage I had to consider:

- a) Thematic material
- b) The timbres required for best expressing this material
- c) The instrumental combinations needed to create these timbres

I also wanted to involve the various instruments at my disposal in ways that would both highlight different groups/choirs, as well as draw attention to individual colourists within the band. There are thus important themes given to the cor Anglais, the Clarinets and lead Trumpet; elaborate and prominently foregrounded bassline passages for the Bassoons and Contrabassoon; and places where the entire Viola section, the Harp and the Tuba are specially featured. Furthermore, I recall reading about one of Debussy’s singular comments – made to, and noted by, Charles Koechlin – “I agree! Our percussion in Europe is an art of barbarians.”⁴⁵ I wished to expunge such notions, if possible, by paying particular attention to the creation of musically interesting parts for the Percussion players.

As is the case with *Requiem for the 1st Peoples*, this symphony is almost entirely dedicated to the memory of people I have lost along the way. For instance, I have dedicated an entire movement to the memory of Mpho Molefe, the translator of the ‘Epistola’ section of my Requiem into seTswana – one of the main languages spoken in South Africa.⁴⁶

Within the closing movement there is a large section devoted to the memory of Paul Grendon, (a.k.a. ‘Smith’s Paul’) the life partner of a close friend.⁴⁷

Two of the movements of this symphony are suffused with recognisably South African elements – in terms of their thematic content and their overall musical character – namely the second and fourth movements. These, therefore, exist in some contrast to the first and third movements, which reflect sound-worlds and compositional processes that are to a large degree informed by western art music procedures.

⁴⁴ An obverse to **Antonín Dvořák’s** Symphony No. 9 in E minor, “From the New World”, Op. 95, B. 178, popularly known as the New World Symphony.

⁴⁵ Roger Nichols, **Debussy** Remembered, 1992, p 102.

⁴⁶ **Molefe** translated the text of the “Epistola” section of the “Requiem” into seTswana, which is widely spoken in the North West Province of South Africa, specifically the part that shares a border with Botswana. A majority of the inhabitants of Gauteng Province (where I reside) are fluent in this language as well.

⁴⁷ **Paul Grendon** (1954 – 2019) was a photographer and the life partner of my friend, Tina Smith.

4.4 Discussion of each movement

This symphony does not follow the standard classical period structural framework, and none of the movements adheres to any of the standard formal designs such as Sonata form, Rondo form, Minuet and Trio or Scherzo and Trio form, etc. Such similarities to both Rondo form and Sonata form as are noted here are rather the result of observations made “after the fact” when the composition process had long come to an end; and I could, for the first time, attempt a true and thorough formal appraisal of what I had written – in part-fulfilment of this PhD submission.

4.4.1 Opening Movement

The ‘Opening Movement’ is the longest of the four movements. Structurally, it is through-composed. Five or six clearly-defined, though contrasted, themes may be identified, as they appear at various stages, during the unfolding of its 150 generally slow-paced bars. It ends with a Tuba solo dedicated to the memory of my late father.

After a slow introduction with sustained chords in the Strings, Harp and heavy Brass supporting short phrases from lower Woodwinds and Violins, the first theme, a slow waltz, appears at bar 17:

The image shows a musical score for strings, measures 16-21. The score is for five parts: Violin I (VI. I), Violin II (VI. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. Above the staves, there is a box labeled 'A' with the text 'Waltz' and 'Tempo giusto ma grazioso ♩ = 62'. The measure numbers 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 are indicated on the left. The dynamics are marked as *pp* (pianissimo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The string parts are marked with 'unis.' (unison) and 'pizz.' (pizzicato). The Viola and Violoncello parts are marked with 'arco' (arco). The Contrabass part is marked with 'pizz.' and 'arco'.

Example 4.4.1.1. ‘Opening Movement’, b. 16 – 21. Strings.

The first phrase of this theme is stated by the first Violins. From bar 28, first the Flutes and then the Oboes join the Violins for a second phrase:

Example 4.4.1.2. 'Opening Movement', b. 28 – 32. Flutes & Oboes.

From bar 33, this second phrase continues – mainly in the Strings, with textural support from the Winds – and draws to a close at bar 39.

At bar 40, there is a statement [more declamatory than melodic in character] for the “Horns + Harmonie” which ends at bar 47.

Thereafter, starting at bar 48, a transition occurs, which is initiated by a rhythmic figure for a single Timpanum, tuned to C:

Figure 4.4.1.1. 'Opening Movement, b. 48 – 49. Rhythmic figure for Timpanum.

This rhythmic figure re-appears later in this 'Opening Movement', in varied form and quoted by other instruments; notably at bar 78 in the 'Nobilmente I' section, by the Trumpets:

Figure 4.4.1.2. 'Opening Movement', b. 78 – 79. Trumpet I.

And in bars 121 and 122 of the “Slow Barges” section, stated by the lower Woodwinds:

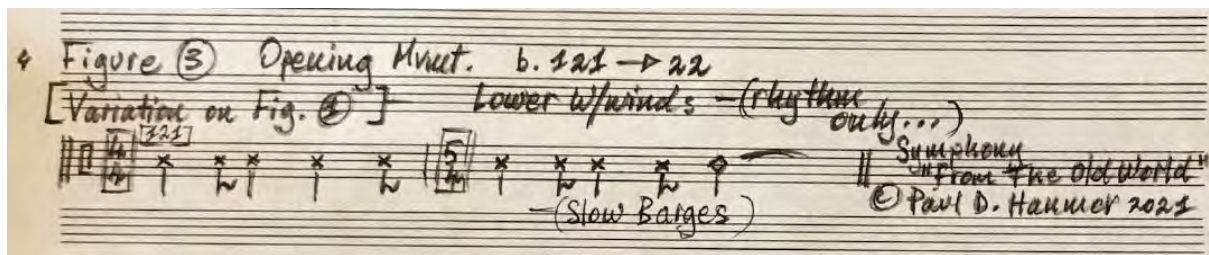


Figure 4.4.1.3. ‘Opening Movement’, b. 121 – 122, Lower W/winds. [Rhythmic Variation on Figure 1 material]

At bar 54 there are repeated rhythmic A \flat stabs sounding from the bass registers of the orchestra. The Tambour plays an insistent pattern in 5/4 rhythm:

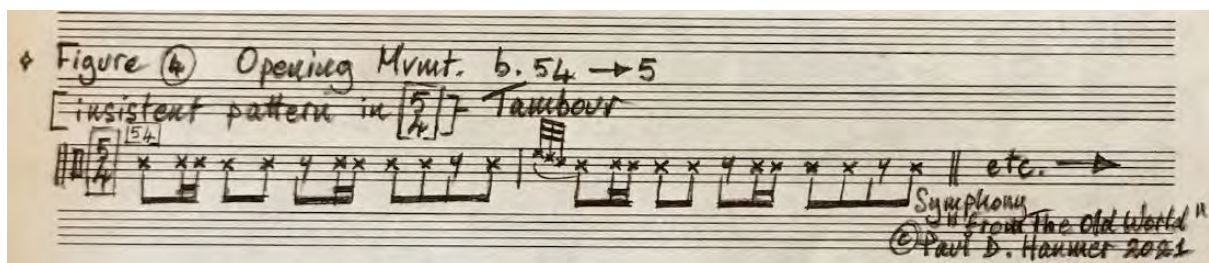


Figure 4.4.1.4. ‘Opening Movement’, B. 54 – 55, Tambour.

The still rhythmically insistent bass register figures re-appear ten bars later, by now rooted on E, at Letter D. Here the Strings play the beginnings of a slow theme in 5/4, which is abandoned after just three bars, giving way to a short motif for the Flutes:

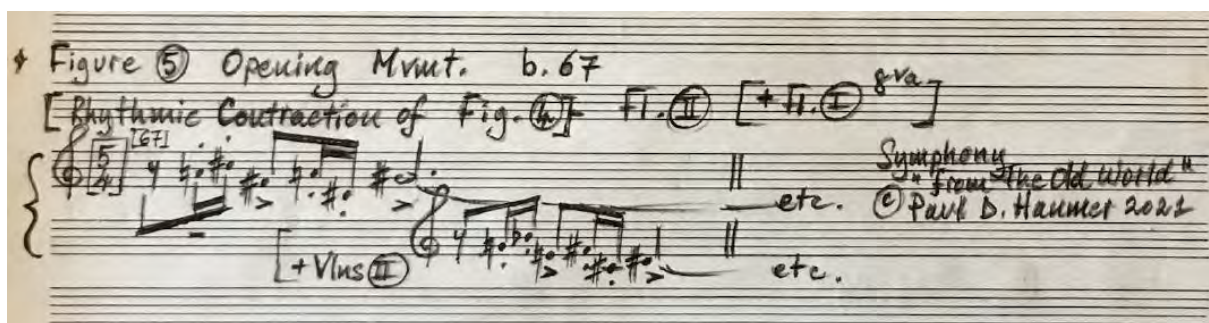


Figure 4.4.1.5. ‘Opening Movement’, b. 67. Fl. II & Vlns. II.

This is a rhythmically truncated echo of the Tambour pattern at Figure 4. This new motif is then rapidly passed from the Flutes to the Violins and then to the lower Strings.

This second theme in 5/4 signals the start of a short episode, which primarily features the Percussion section – although the entire orchestra simultaneously engages in the swapping of short motivic fragments, such as those described above.

The Harp starts a repetitive, on-the-beat figure at bar 68, which is also abandoned after three bars:

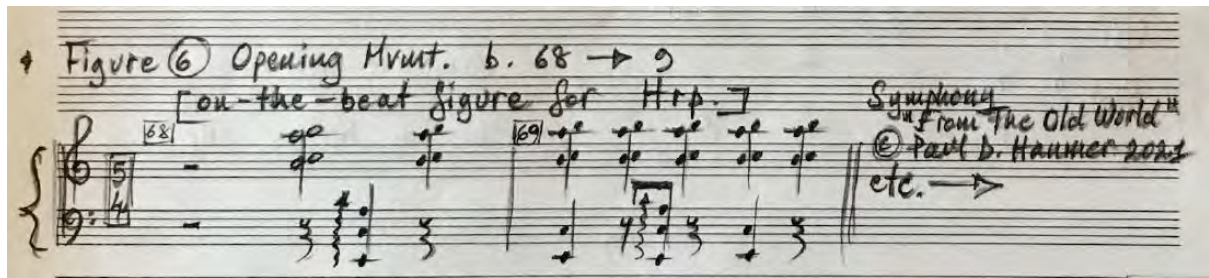


Figure 4.4.1.6. 'Opening Movement', b. 68 – 69. Harp.

There is a transition [bar 72 to bar 77] and a metrical shift through sextuplet figures leading into a 9/8 section at bar 78, which is a noble theme for the Brass. This is supported by legato Strings and rhythmic interjections from the Woodwinds. Yet, the Percussion play a simplistic, though crass, pattern over this third theme – in a way mocking the seriousness of it all:

78

Example 4.4.1.3. 'Opening Movement'. b.78 – 83. W/winds, Brass & Perc.

These rhythms [refer to Figure 4.4.1.7.] form the backbone of the next section which is entitled “Slow Barges”:

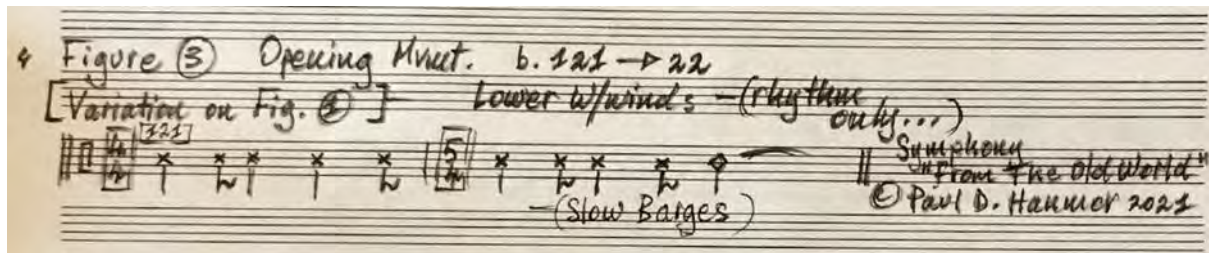


Figure 4.4.1.7. ‘Opening Movement’, b. 121 – 122. Lower W/winds: rhythm only.

At bar 133, a fifth theme [related in character to the very first theme in slow waltz time] enters in the Violoncelli and Violas:

Example 4.4.1.4. ‘Opening Movement’. b.133 – 136. Timps, Perc, Harp & Lower Strings.

But it soon peters out over Bass Clarinet, Woodblock and Harp – which instruments then support the slow passage for solo Tuba at bar 143 with which this movement ends, on a quietly held chord for the entire band.

Example 4.4.1.5. ‘Opening Movement’. B. 143 – 148. Hrns, Tuba, Perc, Hrp & C/b. [start of Tuba Solo]

Just before this chord appears, the Bass Clarinet has a last stab at the rhythmic motif which underpins the whole “Slow Barges” section of this movement. [As for Figure 3]

As for any specific connection that may exist between the Tuba and my dad, there is none. This theme was written on the fourth anniversary of his passing – on 31st May 2019. Anne Jelle Visser, a wonderful tubist based in Zurich, would be my first choice of interpreter for this solo as well as for the rest of the Tuba parts in this symphony.

4.4.2 Barcarolle Nouvelle

In 2015, I wrote sketches to be used as a possible vehicle for vocalist Khanya Ceza⁴⁸ to explore; to the accompaniment of a fairly large ensemble, with Reeds, Brass, Double Bass, Drumkit and Percussion. [Ceza and I have over the course of some years made several plans to record together; which plans have yet to materialise, much to our mutual regret].

⁴⁸ I first met **Khanya Ceza** in the mid-1990s when he came to live in Johannesburg to seek work as a musician. He comes from Peddie Village in the Eastern Cape and found both shelter and work through McCoy Mrubata, who became his guardian at that time. Vocalist Suthukazi Arosa later employed Ceza as her musical director/bandleader and vocal arranger, which provided a decent living. I brought Ceza and his beautiful song, *Sombawo*, to the attention of singer Gloria Bosman, who recorded it for her debut album, *Tranquillity* (1999). In that same year, Khanya and I collaborated with Swedish folkloric singer and songwriter, Eva Rune, to write and record music for a project called *The Opened Door*, which combined folk music from the Eastern Cape with Swedish folk music elements and the piano, as well as the percussion of Veli Shabangu (who for many years was the drummer for the late Lucky Dube) in a fusion which never saw the light of day.

These ideas languished unexplored until I looked at them afresh in the first months of 2019. Having by that time decided that I should like to build this second movement from some of these sketch materials, I immediately re-assigned some of my original Vocal ideas for Ceza to the cor Anglais and Oboe. This process yielded the primary thematic material for ‘Barcarolle Nouvelle’.

I also decided to preserve some of the original background material [from those sketches of 2015] which I had written out for Reeds and Brass – and which I have here reassigned to the Horns – as well as the original basslines which, by means of certain off-beat accents and tied-off notes, provide propulsive impetus to the music. These features – the chordal Horn interjections and the rhythmic character of the basslines in particular – also evoke certain characteristics of the big-band arrangements of McCoy Mrubata⁴⁹, with whose work I am very familiar. [For an aural reference to the sound of ‘Barcarolle Nouvelle’, please refer to McCoy Mrubata’s song ‘The Poet’ from his 1997 album, *Tears of Joy*. In this piece the same exchanges between two major keys a whole tone apart may be heard; as well as interjections from the Winds, similar in character to those that occur in this movement of my symphony].

‘Barcarolle Nouvelle’ revisits this same dual root-note structural device explored in the ‘Epistola’ section of *Requiem for The 1st Peoples* (2016-17); whereas here it is presented in compound quadruple time, rather than in the compound triple meter of the earlier example referred to: 12/8 rather than 9/8.

This pattern, which has its roots in old Xhosa folk music traditions from the rural Eastern Cape, sets up two bars of E major followed by two bars of D major as a four-bar unit. This basic unit has then been repeated to create longer musical structures. The key element of this format is this pair of alternating parallel major chords spaced a whole tone apart.

I also use irregular note groupings [generally 4-against-3], in the lead voice of the cor Anglais, as well as in the Double Basses and Bassoons. This type of “rhythmic substitution” is a device frequently used by many of the jazz players I have worked with, and I decided to incorporate it here as well, without undue deliberation.

The Percussion section is, at times, required to evoke the “sound menu” of a Drumkit; so that one, two and sometimes three players together are called on to generate the same atmosphere and sound-world as that which might have been produced by a drummer “driving” a big-band, circa 1960, in any of the big jazz performing centres of South Africa: Johannesburg, East London, or Cape Town, playing a mid-tempo 12/8 piece with a Vocal lead-line. Similarly, with other non-percussive elements of ‘Barcarolle Nouvelle’, certain lines and interjections from other sections of the orchestra – in particular the Reeds and Brass – might also provoke a

⁴⁹ **McCoy Mrubata** hails from Cape Town’s Langa township in South Africa. He grew up listening to the hymns of the Zion Church, the chants and rhythms of traditional healers and the brassy jive of the Merry Macs band who rehearsed opposite his home (<https://mccoymrubata.com/biography/>). He studied flute informally under Langa musicians such as Madoda Gxabeka, Winston ‘Mankunku’ Ngozi, the Ngcukana brothers (Ezra and Duke), Blackie Tempi and Robert Sithole. In 1987, he was spotted by bandleader Sipho Hotstix Mabuse, who helped him make Johannesburg his home, which is when I met him. Over the years, McCoy and I have collaborated on several projects. I was a member of his bands, Cape to Cairo and McCoy & Friends. In the mid-1990s, he made the first of a series of albums as a leader for the independent Sheer Sound label, *Tears of Joy*. I contributed to most of his subsequent albums, including *Phosa Ngasemva*, *Hoelykit*, *Face the Music* and *Icamagu Livumile*, as well as the compilation CD – *Best of the Early Years* and *Brasskap Sessions Volume 1*. A recording of our 2009 duo performance at the Alte Kirche Boswil, Switzerland for the Kulak Jazz Festival was released on CD in 2011 by the Stiftung Künstlerhaus Boswil. We have subsequently continued to perform and record together; most recently I was brought in as a sideman on his latest album recording – *Quiet Please* – in December 2020.

comparison being drawn with aspects of big-band style writing. I have not tried to convert the symphony orchestra into a big band, but am rather describing aspects of my approach to the organisation and instrumental treatment of certain of the thematic materials used in this movement.

The sounding result of my score should disparage neither the symphony orchestra nor the big-band format. After all, what I imagined achieving is not the literal re-conjuring of an authentic big-band sound, but rather a tangential aural reference to one.

In purely structural terms, this second movement displays some similarities with Rondo form.

After a short flourish from the Strings, three slow chords introduce a slow 12/8 rhythm in the Double Bases, with simple chordal accompaniment from the Horns and Woodwinds:

1

Horn in F

2

4

Large suspended
Ride cymbal

with wire brush

stick brush

Introduction i)
A tempo ♩ = 58
Moderato Giusto

8

8

12/8

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

mp *mf* *mp* *p*

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

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

pizz. *mp* *p*

Example 4.4.2.1. 'Barcarolle Nouvelle'. b.1 – 6. Horns, Cymbal, Strings.

This texture establishes the four-bar patterns [on alternating E major and D major, as described earlier], which underpin the entire exposition of this movement, including the first statement of its primary theme, by the cor Anglais – at Letter [A]:

A
1st phrase

The musical score is for measures 12 through 15 of the 'Barcarolle Nouvelle'. It features woodwinds (FL, Ob., C.a., I. in B♭, Bsn) and strings (Bsn). The score is in 3/4 time and E major. The woodwinds play a four-bar pattern on alternating E major and D major chords. The strings provide a rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *f*. The woodwinds are marked with *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. The strings are marked with *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. The woodwinds are marked with *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. The strings are marked with *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. The woodwinds are marked with *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. The strings are marked with *mf*, *mp*, and *p*.

Example 4.4.2.2. 'Barcarolle Nouvelle'. b.12 – 15. W/winds.

An answering phrase follows at bar 17:

16

C.a.

Bsn 2

Large Ride cymbal

Temple blocks

A
2nd phrase

da.

Vl. I

Vl. II

Vla

Vlc.

mp

Example 4.4.2.3. 'Barcarolle Nouvelle'. b.16 – 19. cor Anglais, Perc. & Strings.

This leads to a four-bar conclusion, in E major, at once leading to an F# pedal-point [at bar 25] where the lead Trumpet, Oboe, Strings and lead Trombone all have a chance to paraphrase this thematic material:

The image displays a musical score for wind instruments, measures 24 through 27. The score is written for a full wind section, including Flutes (Fl.), Oboes (Ob.), Clarinets in B-flat (Cl in Bb), Bassoons (Bsn), Horns in F (Hrn in F), and Trumpets in B-flat (Tpt in Bb). The key signature is E major, and the time signature is 9/8. The score begins at measure 24, marked with a '24' and a '9/8' time signature. The first four measures (24-27) show a four-bar conclusion in E major, leading to an F# pedal-point at bar 25. The lead Trumpet, Oboe, Strings, and lead Trombone all have a chance to paraphrase this thematic material. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte), and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The notation is in standard musical notation, with staves for each instrument and a common staff for the strings (not shown in this excerpt). The score is numbered 24 at the beginning and 9/8 at the top right.

Example 4.4.2.4. 'Barcarolle Nouvelle'. b.24 – 27. Winds. [Strings not shown.]

Several rhythmically propulsive “big-band style” chords, in the low Brass at bar 33, announce a return to E major:

Example 4.4.2.5.a) ‘Barcarolle Nouvelle’. b.33 – 34. Lower Brass & Perc.

Letter [J], starting two bars later, marks the start of a 4-bar interlude for the Strings:

Example 4.4.2.5.b) ‘Barcarolle Nouvelle’. b.33 – 37. Strings.

This interlude leads to a variation of the theme being presented – in altered harmonic guise, and once again rooted on F# - starting at bar 39:

B II
F# pedal
Variations on A

Example 4.4.2.6. 'Barcarolle Nouvelle'. b.38 – 41. W/winds.

Three bars of “big-band style” rhythmically displaced chords and passagework occur [bars 42 to 44] leading back to the serenity of the 4-bar pattern [two bars of E major to two bars of D] of the opening [Introduction (ii)] at bar 45, or Letter K:

Big-band style

K E major re-established
Introduction ii) (double basses)

Example 4.4.2.7. 'Barcarolle Nouvelle'. b.42 – 46. W/winds & upper Brass.

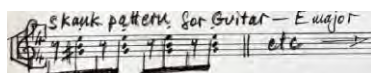
Here the Double Basses have a soloistic passage of four bars, leading to the Recapitulation at bar 49 [A II], with the cor Anglais once more stating the primary theme, albeit now in a varied and more ornamented form:

Example 4.4.2.8. 'Barcarolle Nouvelle'. b.47 – 51. W/winds & Upper Brass.

This Recapitulation lasts for eight bars [until bar 56], with Flutes and Trumpets providing a reggae-style “skank”⁵⁰ accompaniment over sustained Strings and quiet chordal accompaniment from combined Horns, Trombones and Tuba. The Ride Cymbal is once again a key stabilising element and provides a rhythmically steady underpinning for the entire band. The Bassoons once again participate in laying down a solid bassline, supporting the upper voicings.

After a short reprise of the Introduction, this movement ends with a final cor Anglais phrase sounded over a static orchestral texture in E-major.

⁵⁰ Skank – in reggae music; the off-beat chordal accompaniment, generally provided by the rhythm guitar is known as “skank” and the action of it – as well as the rhythmic impulse thus created - is known as “skanking”:



4.4.3 A MSG From MPHO

Just as ‘Barcarolle Nouvelle’ represents the working out of some ideas for Voice – in that instance, the singing Voice of Khanya Ceza – so ‘A MSG From MPHO’ represents the “reconstruction of a remembered Voice” – in this instance, the speaking Voice of the late Mpho Molefe.

This movement calls for a half-sung, half-spoken Voice which I have at times paired with groups of other pitched instruments. I transcribed a Voice message left for me by my erstwhile friend Mpho; from my cell phone onto manuscript paper. I notated the relative pitch of each syllable, as well as the rhythm of his spoken delivery.⁵¹ I then supported this Vocal line by means of various sounds mostly drawn from the lower Woodwinds and the Brass. This “halo” of added timbres both supported the Voice and endowed it with broader sonic dimension by providing a greater range of simultaneously sounding tones and upper harmonics. At certain points [such as in bar 19] added emphasis was given to the fricative “r” sounds in “broe-r” by means of *flutterzunge* notes from the 2nd Bassoon:

17

Bsn

Tpt in Bb

Tnb

Hi-hats

Tam tam

Bass drum

Hp.

Vox Sprechgesang

(th) Hi-i-i Ga-zi It's me-c-c. M-pho-u-u It's me my br-oe-r So you can con-tact me at-ta this num-bu, please?

A II Harp motif

4/4

5/4

Example 4.4.3.1. ‘A MSG From MPHO’, b. 17 – 22. Winds, Perc, Hrp & Voice. [Showing Bsn. II and Sprechgesang]

⁵¹ Basically, Mpho was sharing his new contact details with me – after nearly 30 years of having had the same cell phone number. And it was to be the last message I ever received from him, until a heart attack took him on 09 June 2019.

This kind of Vocal delivery [employing “Sprechstimme” or “Sprechgesang”] and my attempts at creating musical discourse from transcribed speech tones and rhythms, embrace a set of techniques that hark back to Leos Janáček’s and also Arnold Schoenberg’s pioneering work in a similar vein during the early years of the last century. Even though these techniques were being harnessed to create such epic dramatic effects 120 years ago, for me their usage here still carries with it a profound sense of novelty and revolutionary edginess.

The pitch selection and the various timbres used in this movement stems more from an imaginative impulse, rather than a logical or deliberately worked out system of selectivity.

The Bassoons seemed a suitable choice of “colouristic enhancement” for the Sprechgesang sound. The human Voice is, after all, a type of Wind instrument; one that shares some similarities with the Bassoon, for example.

Instead of a pair of vocal cords stretched across the path of an exhaled airstream, the Bassoon has a pair of vibrating cane reeds held [by the player’s lips] across the path of an exhaled airstream. So, the means of tone production in human beings and the whole family of double-reed instruments is very similar. Bassoons are, furthermore, capable of producing many of the same tone colours, in the same registers, as those produced by the human Voice. And it seemed likewise suitable to mix in other Woodwind colours with the Bassoons from time to time. [In any case, it occurs to me that my friend’s voice had the sound quality of a rare species of Woodwind instrument.]

For the most part, I chose to leave the Harp out of the actual Vocal accompaniment texture, instead preserving it’s usage for the interludes between phrases of Sprechgesang delivery.

The formal structure of this movement is bound up with the requirements of the Sprechgesang Vocal delivery, and is furthermore dependent on the fact that the text to be delivered has been sub-divided into a number of shorter segments. Interspersed with these discreet sections of text are episodes of purely instrumental discourse. These features provide a strong sense that this third movement exhibits aspects of Rondo form, from an overall perspective; since its structure [at least over the initial two thirds of its duration] is made up of alternations of these clearly contrasted [Vocal or else non-Vocal] episodes.

A succession of four sustained, and largely Wind-based, sonorities leads into a slow Percussion groove in compound time, over which the Oboe and cor Anglais play a short rhythmic motif which is taken up and passed along through the different registers of the String choir. With a pickup in bar 5, the first Clarinet repeats a modified version of this motif several times, over open intervals in the Bassoons:

Example 4.4.3.2. 'A MSG From MPHO', b. 5 – 8. W/winds & Horns.

The Harp enters at bar 9 with the signature motif of this entire movement:

Example 4.4.3.3. A MSG From MPHO, b. 9 – 12. Harp & Strings.

This motif is constructed out of two arpeggiated chords, each of which is twice repeated; the first being derived from a B dominant seventh chord, the second being an E major seventh with a sharpened fourth degree. These Harp figures are supported by *pizzicato* Strings. They underpin short phrases from the Woodwinds and Brass before the Sprechgesang Voice enters for the first time at bar 17, intoning the actual text – see Example 4.3.3. – of Mpho Molefe’s message to me.

17

Bsn

Tpt in Bb

Trb

Hi-hats

Tam tam

Bass drum

Hrp

Vox Sprechgesang

(Bk) Hh-1-1- Ga-zi h's me-e-o Mpho-n-a It's me my be-er So you can con-tact me at-ta this num-ba, please?

A tempo

A II Harp motif

Example 4.4.3.4. 'A MSG From MPHO', b. 17 – 22. Winds, Perc, Hrp & Sprechgesang.

The Harp Motif returns at bar 22 for a few bars, until the next vocal delivery [B (ii)] at bar 25.

In this section we hear as Mpho corrects himself by repeating the numbers he has just been trying to call out, and the music likewise exhibits several pauses... finishing on a *fermata* for everyone [at bar 32].

28

Example 4.4.3.5. 'A MSG From MPH0', b. 28 – 33. Brass, Perc, Harp & Sprechgesang.

The original Harp Motif returns at bar 33, and I have given the Voice a few haltingly delivered words, presenting the entirely mythical, though compelling, idea that Mpho's message gradually trailed off into silence.

At Letter Q, after 36 bars, the essential content of the text has been delivered. The musical discourse becomes more liberated from utilizing just those textures and thematic materials previously heard up until this point.

The Harp Motif has meanwhile already started to Transform [by means of the exploration of different key-centres] starting at bar 37. This Transformation leads to a sonorous passage for Strings [bar 40 to bar 50] over which the Trumpets play a few plangent lines, from bar 41 to bar 45.

The Harp Motif returns – in altered form – at bar 46:

The musical score for Example 4.4.3.6, 'A MSG From MPHO', bars 45-49, shows the Harp and String sections. The Harp part begins at bar 45 with a motif of eighth notes. The string section enters at bar 46 with a bassline in parallel fifths. The Harp part continues with a new figure at bar 46, marked 'A IV Hrp.' and 'unis.'. The string section continues with the bassline in parallel fifths, marked 'sempre pizz.' and 'ff'.

Example 4.4.3.6. 'A MSG From MPHO', b. 45 – 49. Harp & Str.

Thereafter, the orchestra “changes gear” and the Harp introduces a new figure, at Letter C, over a Bassline in parallel fifths [starting at bar 56] heard in the Violoncelli and Double Bases.

By the time this bassline in fifths appears, the intense slow melody [established in the Horns and Strings at bar 40] has been abandoned. The Harp’s “signature motif”, established at bar 9, is likewise nowhere to be heard. Instead, here it has a simple two-bar figure, in crotchets and even quavers, which hints at a C dominant seventh quality.

At this point, I wanted to evoke a certain “modal world”. [Golaud and the Dark Forests of Allemonde from Debussy’s *Pelleas et Melisande* have obliquely been referenced to achieve this effect]. The bassline in parallel fifths establishes – through a four-bar sequence – a contrasting though harmonious-sounding tonality of D minor, although the progression also expresses elements of C minor, F minor and Bb major; all ‘*en passant*’.

57

1
Tpt in B \flat

2

Field drum

Suspended Ride cymbal

Bass drum

Hrp.

f

pp *pp* \leftarrow *p* *mf* *pp*

p

R Theme for Trumpets

Vlc.

Cb.

Example 4.4.3.7. 'A MSG From MPHO', b. 57 – 61. Trpts, Perc, Hrp, V/c & C/b.

The Trumpets again have a prominent theme [starting at bar 60, shown in Example 4.4.3.7.] after which the Strings enter with a lush passage [at bar 68] which supports a short Motif from the Flutes [bar 68 to 69] as well as a final utterance from the Voice:

The musical score for Example 4.4.3.8, 'A MSG From MPHO', bars 68-72, features several instruments. The Flutes (1 and 2) play a prominent theme starting at bar 60. The Strings enter with a lush passage at bar 68. The Voice Sprechgesang part includes the lyrics: 'Ga-zi It's Me-e-e Me-e-e M-pho Hi Ga-zi it's Me'. A 'Viola passage' is indicated above the Harp part.

Example 4.4.3.8. 'A MSG From MPHO', b. 68 – 72. Winds, Perc, Harp, Sprechgesang.

A short passage featuring the Violas [bar 72 to 75] leads to a Final Section – a Fanfare which 'sweeps up' the entire orchestra [except for the Percussion section] in a burst of passagework over the last five bars, led once more by the Trumpets, this time doubled by the Flutes.

Text for Baritone Voice – A MSG From MPHO [A message from Mpho]

[text for Baritone Voice: Sprechgesang style.]

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(eh) Hi Gazi. ['Gazi'- shortened from the isiZulu 'Umhlangazi'- means, literally 'of my own blood' and, in this case, refers to either a close friend or else a family member.]

It's me, Mpho.

It's me my broer. ['broer' is Afrikaans for 'brother' or, as in this case, 'dear friend'.]

So you can contact me

at-ta this number, please?

Zero seven 3

Two seven 5

(eh – eh) two seven 5,

5 seven double zero.

Zero seven 3,

Two seven 5,

5 seven double zero.

Gazi. It's me. Me. Mpho.

Hi Gazi, it's Me.

4.4.4 Eb Allegro

In the final movement I once again revisit the classic I - IV – I 6/4 - V progression that is so characteristic of much South African music – including much of my own. In fact, the key of Eb major also recurs many times in much of what I have written.⁵²

I consider this key-centre for this movement, and the basic chord progressions that appear in it, to be iconic⁵³ – and not yet exhausted – in that there are still valid ideas which can be expressed through these well-used means. As with the *Requiem for The 1st Peoples*, Mbaqanga and Marabi elements are referenced here, and brought via the symphony orchestra to the concert-hall setting.

Even though all sections of the orchestra are specially featured at various stages of this *finale*, a special word regarding the String section seems appropriate here:

As a section, the Strings could approach this movement much as they would a Baroque or classical piece of music. This would [in my view] produce the most successful outcome, since my models – when writing these parts for the Strings in particular – were the Brandenburg concerti of J. S. Bach as well as the orchestral music of Mendelssohn and, to a certain extent, W.A. Mozart. Although the harmonic language used here is sometimes an augmentation of that used by these composers, and though the rhythmic syntax is markedly different; nevertheless the deft phrasing and dance-like approach required for the correct interpretation of a typical classical era *Allegro ma non troppo* movement should prove idiomatically successful both for the music and for the players themselves.

⁵² Ref. the 'Responsorium' section of *Requiem for the 1st Peoples*.

⁵³ The reason this key-centre of Eb is iconic is that so many classics of the South African Jazz Songbook have been written in it. And the reason this is so, is that many of these composers were – or are – themselves players of wind instruments such as the alto Saxophone, whose “home key” is Eb major [concert]. Composer-players of the Flugelhorn, Trumpet or tenor Saxophone – which are all instruments in Bb [concert] - have found themselves likewise drawn to the same key since, for them, it is the [transposed equivalent] key of F major; just one step away from C major, in the Cycle of Fourths.

Structure of this fourth Movement

The Eb Allegro movement shares many similarities with classic sonata form, and I noticed these characteristics long after completing the process of composing it. Nevertheless, what follows is not a “proof of sonata form”, but rather a setting out of the various sections that occur as this movement unfolds.

The ends of certain sections [such as the end of the First Subject and also the end of the Development section] are indicated – or rather Demarcated – by short rhythmic utterances which I have termed “Breaks”.

A short semiquaver run in the second Violins launches this finale into the longest of these “Breaks”, which features six accented chords delivered over the course of six beats. It is scored for Clarinets, Bassoons, Percussion and Strings:

The musical score for strings (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass) shows a 'Break' section. The tempo is 'Allegro ma non troppo' in 4/4 time. The score includes a 'Pick-up Bar' and a 'Break' section. The strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, with dynamic markings of *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score includes a 3/4 time signature change and a 4/4 time signature change.

Example 4.4.4.1. ‘Eb Allegro’, b. 1 – 4. Strings only.

This initial “Break” is primarily rhythmic in character, and involves a six-step modulation [out of Ab minor] to a G dominant seventh chord, out of which sonority a pick-up phrase [again in the 2nd Violins] leads directly into the First Subject [A] at bar 5. This is a five-bar statement for the Strings:

5

VI. I

VI. II

Vla

Vlc.

Cb.

Example 4.4.4.2. 'Eb Allegro', b. 5 – 8. Strings.

A further pick-up phrase at bar 10 leads to a Paraphrase of [A] at bar 11.

This is followed by a second Phrase [initiated by the Violas at bar 16] and then a third Phrase leading to the second "Break" at bar 25:

21

3rd phrase

2/4

4/4

ii) Break Bar

VI. I

VI. II

Vla

Vlc.

Cb.

Example 4.4.4.3. 'Eb Allegro', b. 21 – 25. Strings.

The Second Subject [B] is thus introduced at bar 26.

This Second Subject is essentially a four-chord harmonic sequence - [I I 6/3 IV V7] – with each harmony lasting for a duration of two beats, covering a total phrase-length of two bars.

Such thematic or melodic materials as may be heard here are really in themselves expressions of the possibilities implicit in the harmonic structure which supports them. And since the cadential procedures – and the harmonic material in each “Break” – all explore avoidance, and then ultimate acceptance, of the B \flat pedal-point required to return to the “home key” of E \flat major, I have persisted in describing this movement from a harmonic point-of-view as well as from the premise that it exhibits certain salient features of true Sonata Form.

To further amplify this notion, I wish to point out that the E \flat Major of the Second Subject [B] is the sometimes hard-won “Tonal Destination-point” of this entire movement. Therefore, this basic [I I 6/3 IV V7] progression is “savoured” by being stated several times over, virtually unchanged, over the course of 16 bars.

The primary interest in Section [B] lies in the bassline, which is at once both rhythmically propulsive and melodic in character. It is exchanged between the Bassoons and the Double Basses - initially with 5 bars given to the Bassoons followed by 3 bars for the Double Basses; or else 2 bars given to the Bassoons followed by 2 bars for Double Basses.

[The exchange, between these two instrumental groups, will be seen to occur by means of even a cursory glance at bars 26 to 33 of this movement.]

Each 2-bar bassline phrase of Section [B] often starts with a semiquaver pickup, leading to a falling octave interval on chord I. The underlying “Type II Mbaqanga” structure is shown here:



Figure 4.4.4.1. Underlying Structure: Mbaqanga-influenced Basslines, Section [B]

The elaborate quasi-Baroque figurations for Bassoons and Double Basses are an echo of the way a skilled electric bassist might spontaneously elaborate on just such Mbaqanga-style basslines – imbuing them with much lyricism, invention and variation – without ever relinquishing the propulsive and harmonic role intrinsic to such basslines:

V B II
Groove I, IV, V (16 bars)

26

Ob.

Bsn.

Hrn in F

Tpt in B \flat

Example 4.4.4.4.a) ‘Eb Allegro’, b. 26 – 31. W/winds & Hrns.

The Violins mostly play rhythmic repeats of a descant B \flat – which is a primary “anchor-tone” for this final movement. The String section, taken as a whole, also delineates the harmonies flowing through the third, starting at bar 30, and fourth repeats of the basic two-bar cycle of [B]:

26

Bongos

Claves

Bass drum

V B II
Groove I, IV, V (16 bars)

Vl. I

Vl. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

Example 4.4.4.4.b) ‘Eb Allegro’, b. 26 – 31. Perc & Str.

Having just stated that the above-mentioned progression is repeated “virtually unchanged...” I feel compelled to add that already the third and fourth repeats [bars 30 to 33] of this two-bar cycle represent a “harmonic paraphrase” of the basic [I I 6/3 IV V7] progression referred to.

Here are two representations of what happens harmonically, over those four bars:

[|: I / / / | *IV (no chord) IVm bVII sus bVII/bVI || I 6/4 / VIm / | IIm I 6/3 V sus / :]

Or, expressed in a different way:

[|: Eb / / / | *Ab (no chord) Abm Db sus Db/Cb || Eb/Bb / Cm / | Fm Eb/G Bb sus / :]

Figure 4.4.4.2. Schematic of Harmonic Paraphrase, ‘Eb Allegro’, b. 30 -33.

*Note that the sounding of the Ab bass note on the downbeat of bar 30 leads the listener to expect the sound of Ab major, which does not actually occur. Instead, the very next beat – while remaining rooted on Ab – expresses very clearly the harmony of Ab minor. In this way the listener’s attention is subverted [for just a moment] to allow him/her to accommodate the chord substitution which has just occurred at this point in the music.

There are “subsidiary thematic hints” from the Horns, the Trombones, the Clarinet and Flute, as well as from the Trumpets, from time to time. However, most of the primary interest lies in the basslines.

The Percussion instruments used are also essential, as they hold the steady pulse- throughout sections [A] and [B] – that is crucial for imparting clarity and overall cohesion to the linear interplay, sustained textures, rhythmic *ostinati* and repeated descant pedal Bb tones- from the Violins- that occur here in the Exposition.

For the last 2-bar cycle of [B] the Bassoons and Double Basses play their bassline together in octave unison, leading to a section called “All Brass”, which follows [at bar 42, shown in Example 4.4.4.5. overleaf].

This is an Interlude which focuses on the Wind choirs of the orchestra. It offers an “aural respite” from the sound of the Strings, as well as from the Mbaqanga-influenced rhythm underlying the [B] section. In terms of its sound and character, it relates strongly to certain loud, attention-seeking and dramatic gestures written for big-band. Frankly, this notion is completely in line with its purpose here:

42

Example 4.4.4.5. 'Eb Allegro', b. 42 – 46. Brass.

Example 4.4.4.5. 'Eb Allegro', b. 42 – 46. Brass.

Thematically and texturally unrelated to any of the other music in this 'Eb Allegro' movement, this "All Brass" section is a short fanfare which forms a Link [via pedal-points on C, and then A] to "Smith's Paul" [or Section C] at bar 53.

[Section C is demarcated by Rehearsal Letter [X] in the typeset version of the score.]

Section C forms the Development Section of this movement. It takes the basic Mbaqanga rhythm of Section B, and gives this over to the Bassoons and Contrabassoon, once again in the form of melodic yet motoric basslines. At the same time it offers a fresh look at what could alternatively be performed in this same Mbaqanga-based manner; even though the harmonic structure selected for such treatment might exclude the classic Marabi chord changes.

So that here, instead of the $[I: I \quad I \ 6/3 \quad IV \quad V \ 7:]$ sequence expressed earlier as idea [B], or the Second Subject, the harmonic sequence is now based on D minor and has the following structure:

$[I: VIIIm / III7 / | IVmajor+11 / Vm \quad I7 || VIIIm / III7 / | bVIIImajor+11 / bIIIm9 \ bV7 \text{ altered} :]$

Or, expressed in a different way;

$[I: Dm / \ G7 / | Ab \ major+11 / \ Bbm \ Eb7 || Dm / \ G7 / | Db \ major+11 / \ Em \quad A7 \text{ altered} :]$

Figure 4.4.4.3. Schematic of Harmonic Sequence: Section [C] of 'Eb Allegro', b. 53 - 56.

The Horns here function as a four-voiced Choir, tracing the shifting harmonies through each four-bar cycle of the "Smith's Paul" chord sequence. Each Horn has its own individual "Breathing Cycle" – which was carefully worked out to best phrase each instrument's

55

Bsn

C. Bsn

Hrn in F

Tpt in B \flat 1

Suspended cymbal

Bass drum

solo

mit ausdrück noch etwas wie aus (der Ferne ...)

After four repeats of this cycle – over which there is a solo passage for Trumpet – a truncated fifth repeat leads into another “Break Bar”. This is immediately followed by a short reprise of the Second Subject [B (ii)] at bar 72. The Recapitulation immediately follows [at bar 76] with the Strings once more at the forefront of the proceedings:

74

Z A I
Recap

Violin I (VI. I) and Violin II (VI. II) parts show intricate melodic lines with triplets and sixteenth-note runs. The Viola (Vla.) part has a melodic line with a long note in measure 75. The Violoncello (Vlc.) and Contrabasso (Cb.) parts provide a rhythmic foundation with sixteenth-note patterns and longer notes. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and accents.

116

Example 4.4.4.8. 'Eb Allegro', b. 88 – 92. Lower W/winds, Brass, Perc & Str.

Fine

This chord marks the end, not only of this movement, but of the entire symphony as well. Such an ending is, frankly, a “throw-back” to the classical era, not least because of this neatly rounded-out “tonal journey” back to E \flat major.

After this resounding E \flat major chord from the combined Winds and lower Strings, on the downbeat of bar 91, there is the appearance of a halo of ethereal sounds from the upper Strings; an imperfect scatter of smaller aftershocks, in which fall-out from the harmonic series of a distant key - could it be D major? Or even B minor? - might be faintly discerned. In the final bars, this imperfectly arrayed series of non-essential sounds is deposited into the atmosphere surrounding that final E \flat blast.

So this raises the notion that perhaps this resounding ending, to a piece supposedly displaying prominent elements of classic Sonata Form, is perhaps not as definitive as it would seem.

What follows is a “personal conclusion” rather than a commentary on the Symphony itself. It also follows a back story; tracing my working methods, thoughts and conclusions over the course of the past 36 months.

I made many preliminary sketches over the course of a two-year period; 2019 – 2020.

*Piano-style double-stave sketches. Then larger ones, spread over eight, nine or eleven staves, providing expanded views of the same material, with ample space to accommodate ideas for the Woodwinds, the Brass choir, the Harp, Percussion and the String group. Additionally, there are sketches I made for more than these four movements, dating from early 2019 onward. I find that the process of planning and writing a new work has, for me, always “thrown out” more material than I end up using in the final versions of the piece or pieces concerned.

Furthermore, I felt the need to try out several alternative or substitute versions of the same passages of music. For example, with regard to the E \flat Allegro movement, where the overall string texture is extremely motoric and convoluted, I produced three and sometimes four additional sketches of a particular phrase; each time coming up with solutions that involve perhaps different middle parts, or a slightly altered bassline, or even revised melodic material.

This process and the work it entailed are not visible nor apparent in my final version of the score, yet they have indeed taken place.

For ‘A MSG From MPH O’ I also had parts for two Bass Clarinets until very recently. I decided to do without the upper part some time during March of 2021; and I am still not certain that this was the correct decision to have made.

I also wrote substantial portions of three additional movements, and thought through the idea of including a “stand-alone movement for large orchestra” [written specifically for submission to the “Witold Lutoslawski @ 100” competition ahead of the 25 January 2013 deadline] entitled *Manga Manga-ung* as a possible fifth movement for this symphony.

So, there has been a lot of writing going on, besides what went into preparing the material [for four movements] presented as my symphony in full score.

What has been really tricky to achieve has been a sense of sufficient distance from my writing-table; which has of course become essential, in order to successfully attempt to write this reflexive commentary. After deep immersion in the composition process over such an extended

period of time, it has been a challenge to find a way of then “turning around” to actually study what it is I had made, and to then offer sensible commentary about all of it.

I find that the process of composition is really hard; it is mentally and physically taxing, and it demands vigilance on many levels over extended periods of time too. Awareness of instrumental texture, the relative submersion or exposure afforded certain tone-colours in terms of their relative ‘aural placement’, the behaviour of various accompaniment figures, the need to give various players and whole sections of the band occasional periods of rest; as well as the need to offer the listener something fresh to latch onto from time to time. All of these aspects needed to be attended to, with as alert a sense of focus as could be mustered.

Also required have been periods of reflection as well as consultation with various texts; scores of Haydn or Mahler symphonies for example, as well as frequent forays into the pages of Samuel Adler’s wonderful volume *The Study of Orchestration*. These periods were alternated with periods of rest; an element crucial to the sustaining of the high levels of attention and concentration over the extended period of time required to complete this task.

I have given thought to possible orchestras and possible conductors too; people who might be open to rehearsing and performing this symphony. This exercise has also served to motivate me to finish the work. Sometimes it works to not think too hard about practicalities. At other times it seems imperative to give some thought to only the practical aspects of a piece. However, the more aspects I think about, and the greater the range of my thinking processes, the better it is for the music. That is my opinion.

Sometimes, I find that too much attention focused on the finer details of a particular work can hamper the forward momentum of actually writing the music. But, at other times, this need to focus on details becomes a welcome break from one type of activity and one mode of engagement with the work in question.

I am suspicious of my own assertions that there are two movements of this symphony that exhibit Rondo Form. I remain sceptical too, of my conclusion that the ‘E♭ Allegro’ finale displays ample evidence of adherence to the principles of classic Sonata Form. Perhaps these questions will be best answered at a future time, by people better equipped – and from the position of a more favourable sense of perspective – to provide considered and thorough analysis.

A big set-back has been the fact of only rarely having been afforded the chance to hear my pieces for orchestra in rehearsal and performance enough times to actually learn from these experiences and to perhaps advance from there. I heard my *Requiem* in performance once. At least I heard 7 *Winter Episodes* in performance four times within a week. But that was in 2014; which by now is eight years ago. Perhaps this is one reason it has taken me a long time to finalize this Symphony, since I am often merely imagining the sounding result of what I have written, without necessarily having an opportunity of also hearing it performed.

The demons, demi-gods and dislocations I am dealing with may be of some interest too... since writing orchestral music in the period from 2019 to 2021 was never going to be straight-forward for me.

5. IN CLOSING

Having more than 30 years ago set out on a musical “journey of discovery” in search of South Africa, it might be fair - at this stage - to ask whether I have found this fabled destination.

All the components of my musical constitution – from my early classical training; my journeymanship with pop cover bands; my experiences with bandleaders [such as the late Chikapa Ray Phiri, Tony Cox, McCoy Mrubata and Gilberto Gil] who have performed and recorded their own music; to later leading my own bands; and writing solo, chamber and larger ensemble works to commission – these experiences have all played a major role in my ongoing search. Added to these experiences I should mention still others which have been informed by a strong sense of rootedness in local idioms such as Mbaqanga and Marabi.

I have continually tried to fashion a coherent and cohesive synthesis out of these diverse influences; and I believe this to be evident in the body of work which I have been creating since 1988, right up until a recently completed song cycle, commissioned by the Cape Chamber Music Collective and performed several times in mid-February of 2022.

Some features of this synthesis are to be found, for example, in the composite use of orchestral Percussion – where several players are simultaneously called upon to represent a Drumkit; or in the use of the entire Wind section of the orchestra to conjure up the sound-world of a Big-Band; or in those basslines – written for Bassoons and Double Basses for example – which are stylistically derived from the Mbaqanga-styled performance idioms of various master players of the Electric Bass.

The four works in this portfolio seek to demonstrate the range of interests and influences I have accumulated, both as a performing and recording artist and as a composer. The fact that this range is diverse and so rich has ultimately been a blessing; I believe it furthermore demonstrates that the South Africa I come from is at once culturally well-endowed, colourful and truly exceptional when viewed as a whole.

It is also a fact that I find all of it to be endlessly fascinating, enriching and furthermore, a wellspring which has continually nourished my creative spirit.

6. RECORDINGS

- Tutl records – the bow project – CD release of 2010 FKT044 (FKT044 © 2010)

www.tutl.com

Kristian Blak, www.composers.fo

Note:

- The recorded version of *uNtsiki* is without voice and was captured at a live radio broadcast performance by the Sontonga Quartet, in Slovenia sometime during 2005.
- The recording of *Ntwazana* was made at Grahamstown in 2009 by Corinne Cooper, of a performance by the Nightingale String Quartet.
- The recording of *Requiem for The 1st Peoples* was made at its premiere performance on 31 January 2018 by Philip Cox.
- The recording of *Symphony – from The Old World* is a digital realization of the typeset score; both were prepared by Hertzog Booyse in 2021. This digital recording is in lieu of a live performance recording, as such performances have been suspended due to Covid-19.

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8. APPENDIX

8.1 Typesetting acknowledgements

The digital typesetting of my pieces for The Bow Project – *uNtsiki* and *Ntwazana* – was completed by Keziah Ferguson.

The digital typesetting of *Requiem for The 1st Peoples* and *Symphony – from The Old World* were completed by Hertzog Booyse, who also carefully nursed the [hugely complex] midi files from which the mp3 ‘digital playback’ audio version of my symphony was prepared.

9. PORTFOLIO OF WORKS

Herewith the scores for:

- *uNtsiki* and *Ntwazana* – pieces for The Bow Project, Phase 2
- *Requiem for The 1st Peoples*
- *Symphony – from The Old World*
- *Symphony – from The Old World* – excerpts from the composer's Autograph Score, consisting of eight pages of A MSG From MPHO, and sixteen pages of the E♭ Allegro finale.