SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCES IN THE COMPOSITION OF HENDRIK HOFMEYR’S

SONG CYCLE, *ALLEENSTRYD*

Conroy Alan Cupido, B.Mus, A.C, M.M.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2009

APPROVED:

David Sundquist, Major Professor
Jeffrey Snider, Co-Major Professor and Chair, Division of Vocal Studies
Stephen Austin, Committee Member
James C. Scott, Dean of the College of Music
Michael Monticino, Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse School of Graduate Studies

The poet of this cycle, Sydney Vernon Petersen, was a man who faced great adversity during Apartheid. The title of this cycle, *Alleenstryd*, is an Afrikaans term for ‘a struggle alone.’ Petersen was of mixed heritage or “Coloured” and born in South Africa in 1914. He died in 1987. His most important works in Afrikaans poetry were published between 1948 and 1965. This cycle specifically focuses on the relationship between the poet and his community, the isolation he endured within that community, the depths of despair he felt and how he overcame those obstacles to finally achieve a sense of self-worth.

This group of poems, first published as an anthology by Tafelberg Press in 1979, became the source of inspiration for the composer Hendrik Hofmeyr. The purpose of this research is to identify the significant social, political and musical influences on the composer which contributed to the composition of *Alleenstryd* (1996), especially the significance of his self-imposed exile. Also, the Afrikaans language, a derivative of 17th century Dutch, is a language dear to its speakers but not widely accessible or familiar to most other nations. Hopefully this research will provide more information and make the language, its composers and the story of the dark history surrounding Apartheid and specifically the individuals who excelled through hardship, available to more people.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Hendrik Hofmeyr who has been as always very gracious and generous with his time in order to complete this research. Also a special thanks is owed to my mother, Charmaine La Fleur Cupido, whose love, support and generosity of spirit has been and always will be a beacon of light in my life.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS........................................................................................................iii

LIST OF FIGURES...............................................................................................................vi

CHAPTER 1: Introduction.................................................................................................1

CHAPTER 2: BIOGRAPHY OF HENDRIK HOFMEYR
    2.1. Childhood and Early Influences.................................................................5
    2.2 Musical Philosophy.........................................................................................8
    2.3 The Self-Imposed Exile to Italy (1981-1991).............................................11
    2.4. The Return to South Africa..............................................................13

CHAPTER 3: ALLENSTRYD
    3.1. Origin and Commission.............................................................................16
    3.2. Compositional Process.............................................................................17
    3.3 Kinders van Kain......................................................................................20
    3.4 Die Veles.................................................................................................26
    3.5 Weeklag van die Gewonde......................................................................30
    3.6 Kinderland...............................................................................................32
    3.7 Die Gier van die Bose.............................................................................35
    3.8 Ecce Homo...............................................................................................36

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION.........................................................................................39
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Excerpt from Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, op. 46.................................21
Figure 2: Chord A; based on the Pentatonic scale........................................22
Figure 3: The Octatonic Chord underscoring the word ‘rooi’ (red)..................23
Figure 4: Measures 104 to 111 of Schubert’s Piano Sonata in B flat Major, D. 960 ...25
Figure 5: chord C: c sharp minor chord depicting suffering/experience...........25
Figure 6: Superimposition of major and minor chords m. 36.........................26
Figure 7: The A-Bb trill against an F# Major triad from Strauss’ Salomé mm.357-359...27
Figure 8: The tango accompaniment (mm.1-3).............................................28
Figure 9: Chord D, symbol of evil (m.27 beat 4)............................................29
Figure 10: The hemming in of the note D (mm50-55).....................................31
Figure 11: Use of canonic entries (mm.4-9)..................................................33
Figure 12: Kinderland (mm.9-12)...............................................................34
Figure 13: The ‘evil’chord motif as seen in the arpeggios of the introduction (mm.3-6).36
Figure 14: Martin Schongauer, Ecce Homo, Engraving 15th century..................37
Figure 15: Ecce Homo (mm. 1-5).................................................................38
INTRODUCTION

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives vauntingly; who errr and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best, knows the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

-Theodore Roosevelt

Throughout mankind’s history, many have faced adversity. While faced with this adversity some have failed, some overcame such treacherous hardships sometimes merely surviving and then there are a select few whom while faced with these struggles, not only survived but have produced some of the most profoundly beautiful centerpieces in the literary and music genres. An example of such a work is the Quartet for the End of Time written by French composer Olivier Messiaen in 1940. In 1940 France was at war with Nazi Germany and during June of that year, Messiaen was captured and imprisoned in a notorious prisoner-of-war camp at Görlitz in Silesia.\(^1\) During his imprisonment his fellow prisoners included a cellist, a violinist, and a clarinetist. As a result Messiaen composed this work for these players. The piece was then performed for four thousand prisoners and guards in January of 1941. Anyone who has heard this work before can

---

attest to its magnificent beauty and ability to invoke the deepest emotion in the listener’s heart. It is indelibly a cornerstone of the 20th century musical output.

Seven years after that auspicious first performance of Messiaen’s work, South Africa entered into the darkest period of its history known as Apartheid. Apartheid is an Afrikaans term meaning ‘a state of being separate,’ and was a form of racial segregation inflicted on the Republic of South Africa from the newly formed, right-wing government, following the succession of the British Empire. While segregation occurred during colonization it became the official policy of the government following the general election of 1948. This was enforced from 1948 through 1994. During this time people were divided into distinct racial groups: White, Mixed-Race, Indian and Black. White people maintained all their rights regarding voting, land-ownership and education among other rights and privileges. Black people lost their rights as citizens and were forcibly removed from major cities and reestablished in homelands by tribe and were only allowed back in major metropolitan areas for work purposes at certain times of the day, through the use of a pass or card allowing them access. Coloured people (a term used for people of mixed heritage in South Africa) and Indian people were treated as second class citizens losing certain rights and privileges.

While many countries have a definite sense of national identity, in a country like the United States of America or the Republic of South Africa which are two significant melting pots of ethnicities and cultures, it is hard to establish a sense of personal and national pride or identity. In South Africa this is furthermore exacerbated for people of mixed heritage by laws passed during apartheid like the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages
Act of 1949 prohibiting marriage between persons of different races and the Immorality Act of 1950 which made sexual relations with a person of a different race a criminal offence. As a result it was hard for people who fell into this category to establish a sense of pride in one’s mixed ancestry and being a second class citizen, one was looked down upon by one’s own community for aspiring to be successful or delve into anything socially or professionally that was usually associated with the White community.

The poet of this cycle, Sydney Vernon Petersen, was a man who faced great adversity during Apartheid. The title of this cycle, *Alleenstryd*, is an Afrikaans term for ‘a struggle alone.’ Petersen was of mixed heritage or Coloured and born in South Africa in 1914. He died in 1987. His most important works in Afrikaans poetry were published between 1948 and 1965. His poetry shows the isolation from his community as mentioned previously because of his personal aspirations toward becoming a successful Afrikaans poet. Furthermore he was discriminated against by the white community because of the color of his skin. This cycle specifically focuses on the relationship between the poet and his community, the isolation he endured within that community, the depths of despair he felt and how he overcame those obstacles to finally achieve a sense of self-worth.

This group of poems, first published as an anthology by Tafelberg Press in 1979, became the source of inspiration for the composer Hendrik Hofmeyr. Dr. Hofmeyr never knew the poet and Mr. Petersen unfortunately died before the cycle was composed.

---


3 Information regarding the poet, S.V. Petersen, was provided by Dr. Hendrik Hofmeyr via email, Thursday, April 3, 2008.
Hofmeyr’s parent’s library at home included many volumes of Petersen’s works and he became acquainted with many of the individual poems before the anthology entitled, *Alleenstryd*, was published.\(^4\) My first interaction with Hofmeyr was in 1997 while he was a lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch near Cape Town. I soon became acquainted with his reputation of being a sought after vocal coach and world acclaimed composer and my experiences with him in the years which followed cultivated my opinion of him as one of South Africa’s most prolific composers. For his composition of the opera, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, he won the South African Opera Competition in 1987 as well as the Nederburg Prize for Opera in 1988. Other accolades include first prize in a competition in Italy for music accompanying a short film (1988) and first prize in two major international composition competitions in Belgium and Athens both in 1997. In many biographies in various performance notes and articles written about Hofmeyr, mention is always made of his self-imposed exile as a conscientious objector to Apartheid.\(^5\)

The purpose of this research is to identify the significant social, political and musical influences on the composer which contributed to the composition of *Alleenstryd* (1996), especially the significance of his self-imposed exile. Also, the Afrikaans language, a derivative of 17\(^{th}\) century Dutch, is a language dear to its speakers but not widely accessible or familiar to most other nations. Hopefully this research will provide more information and make the language, its composers and the story of the dark history

---

\(^4\) Hendrik Hofmeyr, interview by author, 27 May 2009.
\(^5\) Information pertaining to the composer was taken from biographical information Dr. Hofmeyr supplied via email, Thursday, April 3, 2008.
surrounding *Apartheid* and specifically the individuals who excelled through hardship, available to more people.
CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY OF HENDRIK HOFMEYR

2.1. Childhood and Early Influences

Hofmeyr was born in Pinelands, a suburb of Cape Town, on 20 November 1957. Today this area is widely integrated, but during the time he grew up there it was deemed a ‘whites only’ neighborhood. “Our contact with members of other race groups was almost non-existent, as there were very few opportunities for social interaction.”

Fortunately his parents were quite liberal and did not support the Apartheid regime. While many of their friends and family supported Apartheid, Hofmeyr, his two brothers and sister were very vocal about their opposition from a very young age and even during their primary school years were called kafferboetjes, an Afrikaans term roughly translated as ‘nigger-brothers.’ He suffered much mental distress because of the social injustices of the system but also because of the color of his skin, he was inadvertently propelled into the role of the oppressor.

Hofmeyr’s elder brother and sister joined the African National Congress, a political party which former president Nelson Mandela headed at the time, but Hofmeyr was not actively involved because a militant faction of the party resorted to violence and he disagreed with this course of resolution. “Instead, I decided to go abroad after my studies in self-imposed exile as a conscientious objector, as I did not wish to serve in the

---

apartheid army and to stay abroad until the political situation had changed.”

Hofmeyr would have had to serve a two-year mandatory service period in the South African Army which all white males were obliged to do after their studies were completed. Hofmeyr’s brother was later jailed because of his political affiliation and almost died in solitary confinement at Polesmoor prison near Cape Town. While this time was grueling for Hofmeyr, being away from his family at the time, it was also a period which brought the Afrikaans community closer together in support of his family.

With an abundance of political stimuli one would expect that this would somehow affect his musical philosophy. Ironically the opposite is quite true. Hofmeyr is a firm believer that music does not convey political ideals; it is at its core a universal medium which appeals to the senses and emotions beyond any agenda.

Ironically, his award winning opera, The Fall of the House of Usher, was rejected from a prominent arts festival in South Africa, the Grahamstown Arts Festival, as it was seen as not relevant enough. According to Hofmeyr, on many occasions this festival has rewarded artists not for the content of their work but rather what ideological message they convey. During his time in Italy, the political powers that be also demanded an ideological message which suited their agenda. The socialists in Italy controlled cultural

---

7 Ibid.  
8 Ibid.
activities and even affected the compositions of Berio, Busotti, Nono and even Boulez.\textsuperscript{9}

As Hofmeyr was not a citizen he could not affiliate or join any political party and align him with prominent figures of state that prospered the way for many of his contemporary composers.

From an early age Hofmeyr was exposed to many classical elements which later affected his style of composition. At home his mother would play the piano and he would listen to music records of Bach, Beethoven and \textit{lieder} especially. He became fascinated with this music and begged his mother to allow him to take piano lessons. At first his mother was hesitant as she did not want to waste money on a passing fad which he would lose interest in during puberty. She made him promise to stick with it until he completed high school.\textsuperscript{10} Hofmeyr started lessons at age seven with Anneline Le Roux and recalls his time at home as strict practicing sessions and not a time for “fiddling around.” As a result he could play the piano, but not improvise or compose. These endeavors only came later with composition assignments in high school.

Hofmeyr attended Oude Molen Primary School from 1964 to 1970 and Nassau High School from 1971 to 1975, both schools located in Cape Town. In high school he took music as a subject and his music teachers included Sona Whiteman, Elizabeth Izatt and Hans van Eck.\textsuperscript{11} The most significant influence was his teacher, Sarie Jacobs, who taught him music history and theory in high school. She was the first to encourage him to

\textsuperscript{9} Hilde Roos. Die musiek van Hendrik Hofmeyr (Translated Title: The music of Hendrik Hofmeyr). \textit{Proceedings of the 26th and 27th Annual Congresses of the Musicological Society of Southern Africa/Verrigtinge van die 26ste en 27ste Jaarlikse Kongresse van die Musikwetenskapvereniging van Suidelike Afrika},16.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.,5.

\textsuperscript{11} James May. ‘Hendrik Hofmeyr at Fifty,’ notes provided by Hofmeyr via email.
compose and to consider music as a viable career option. He still considers her his muse. Hofmeyr dedicated his song ‘Herfs’ (1977) from *Drie Gedigte van Elisabeth Eybers* and later his opera *The Land of Heart’s Desire* (1990) to her.

Hofmeyr was raised in the Dutch Reformed Church but apart from some old chorales he did not find the music particularly interesting. Instead, during high school, he joined the Philharmonia Choir of Cape Town and took part in many performances including works by Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Verdi, Poulenc and Britten. He notes that Bach’s Passions and B minor Mass and Britten’s *War Requiem* had a direct consequence on his writing style. During the year of 1975 he was a senior in high school and still a member of the choir and began working on his *Requiem*. The work was completed in 1993. It was originally scored for orchestra and choir but later he discarded the orchestral part and completed it for *a cappella* choir.

Apart from encouraging Hofmeyr to pursue a music career, Sarie Jacobs also advised him to study musicology at the University of Cape Town (1976-1981). In doing so he could later acquire a job teaching at a university while having enough time to play the piano and compose. At the University of Cape Town he completed a Bachelor in Music (Musicology) but continued his studies in piano with Laura Searle whose lessons he calls “a perpetual revelation, and a wonderful voyage of discovery.” She later encouraged him to pursue a master’s degree in piano performance. He completed the latter degree in one year at the same university in 1981. As part of the requirements for

---

13 Roos, 5.
15 Roos, 6.
the degree he completed a dissertation which dealt with harmonic procedures in Fauré’s chamber works.\textsuperscript{16}

2.2 Musical Philosophy

During his time at the University of Cape Town he only studied one year of composition. This was due to the fact that the main lecturer in composition was an avid proponent of the avant-garde style of composition, a style Hofmeyr later rejected. “I did not see eye to eye with Peter Klatzow, who was then still a rather prescriptive avant-gardist.\textsuperscript{17}” Fortunately for Hofmeyr, Klatzow was on sabbatical half of the year and he continued under the supervision of Prof. James May. At that time he had acquired a broad range of compositional techniques and embraced the idea of expanded tonality. Hofmeyr rejected the avant garde (a style many contemporaries composed in) and atonality after what he calls “a few juvenile attempts between the ages of sixteen and seventeen.” These attempts were influenced by the purchase of his first record, Penderecki’s \textit{The Devils of Loudun}. The qualities which Hofmeyr considers fundamental to his writing include expressiveness, beauty, melody, harmony and tonality. The latter is of extreme importance to him and he sees it as not restricted in the confines of traditional major-minor writing, but an expanded center which would create limitless possibilities for musical expression. According to Hofmeyr avant-garde proponents abandoned tonality,

\begin{itemize}
\item[16] James May, ‘Hendrik Hofmeyr at Fifty.’
\end{itemize}
melody and harmony and rather ‘focused on novelty and structural procedure as the primary criteria in the creation and assessment of music.’

Hofmeyr sees music as a romantic art form and his philosophy echoes Kurt Sach’s definition of romanticism: a term not only applied to music of the romantic period as described traditionally in music history, but rather to music where subjective emotion and passion is accentuated and where supernatural experiences and the quest for an ideal world is experienced. As a result the atonality and ideals of the avant-garde is not able to represent music as he sees it.

I believe that virtually all great music is Romantic in intention, in that it sees music as a form of expression and not merely as a structure of organized sound. To my mind, a tonality failed to provide a alternative to the instinctual and universally comprehensible organization provided by tonality, which in some form is present in virtually every type of music, and is not merely an invention of Western composers, as its detractors would have us believe. Expanded tonality (which can incorporate all the diatonic, artificial and even atonal modes) is an irreplaceable tool for imbuing music with shape and meaning. Allied to this is the primary importance of melody and rhythm, which remains the first level of perception and appreciation for every listener. Harmony is an invaluable adjunct to this, as it can enrich the melodic materials in infinitely varied ways. All the other resources of music represent layers of meaning that enrich our experience, even if not immediately appreciated at first hearing. The composers listed above have all managed to balance all these elements in ways which I find moving and convincing.

While Hofmeyr does not see his music as anti-modernist (since it incorporates many elements used by the modernists) he states that he finds their “self-castrating dogma” restrictive. While audiences have responded well to his more romantic style of writing, he has faced criticism from many critics in music circles whom he calls the “self

---

19 Roos, 24.
20 The composers Hofmeyr refers to appear at the end of section 2.2.
22 Bezuidenhout, 20.
–appointed cultural police”. In 1997 Hofmeyr’s work Raptus for violin and orchestra won first prize in the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium Competition and was performed or broadcasted sixty times either through live performance, radio or television that year.23 During the competition a Belgian violin teacher was asked her opinion about the work by a television commentator to which she scoffed and responded that one could mistake it for something from Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder*. This comment was meant to trivialize the compositional integrity of the work but Hofmeyr was delighted by the comment saying: “If she meant the compositional ethos rather than the actual musical material (as I trust she did, unless her ears are, as the Italians would say "lined with ham"), there is nothing I would like more than to be regarded as a latter-day incarnation of the composer of that supremely beautiful work, created in the 1940s in direct opposition to all the dictates of the cultural police of the time.24”

Hofmeyr lists the following composers as his primary influences: Landini, Gesualdo, Monteverdi, Dowland, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, Wagner, Brahms, Wolf, Strauss, Mahler, Puccini, Fauré, Ravel, Szymanowski, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Britten, Arnold van Wyk and Rautavaara. Of particular interest was the contrapuntal writing of J.S.Bach as this is evident in the canonic writing of the third song of this cycle, ‘Kinderland’.

Hofmeyr also finds inspiration in the traditional African music which is abundant in South Africa; however, he does not perceive himself as a folk or nationalist composer.

---

23 James May, ‘Hendrik Hofmeyr at Fifty.’
24 Bezuidenhout, 20.
“Nationalism is not a notion to which I subscribe, as I have seen first hand its devastating effects. Folk music should not be appropriated for political or nationalist ends.”

2.3 The Self-Imposed Exile to Italy (1981-1991)

As mentioned earlier it was compulsory for all white males to complete a mandatory two-year service period in the South African Defense Force after completing their studies. Hofmeyr decided to leave the country and continue his studies until the political climate had changed and he was free to return without fear of serving a regime with which he disagreed. Although Hofmeyr would have probably been assigned to the Army Orchestra he could not consciously be in a situation where he would have had to kill someone just because they did not agree with him, or the powers that be.

Hofmeyr had intended on furthering his studies in the United Kingdom and was already accepted to do a master’s degree in musicology in Britain, but that year the prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, had decided to end funding for foreign students. While Hofmeyr had funding from South Africa, this suddenly was not sufficient. He ended up in Florence, Italy, at the recommendation of a fellow South-African, Arnold Bosman, pursuing a diploma in piano performance with Alessandro Specchi, the husband and pupil of Maria Tipo. Hofmeyr had always admired her interpretations of Bach and Scarlatti. Although he was not fluent in Italian, after one year of living there he was comfortable enough with the language to set Italian prose to music.

---

25 Ibid.
26 Roos, 10.
28 Roos, 11.
After completing this diploma, Hofmeyr continued to study composition with Ivan Vandor and conducting with Alessandro Pinzauti. Culturally Italy was very different to South Africa and adapting to these changes allowed Hofmeyr the opportunity to broaden his outlook in life which later translated to his writing style.

I arrived in Italy with quite a few Modernist notions still intact, as can be seen in the piano works, *Nag* (Night), *Dans van die Reën* (Dance of the Rain) and the song ‘Winternag’ (Winter night). This gradually changed as I became more and more disillusioned with the effects of Modernism, especially in the field of vocal music. I had always believed in engaging with tradition, but I now turned more decisively to pre-Modernist music as a model, not for imitation, but for further development.29

Hofmeyr’s love of singing further blossomed by his discovery of the vast abundance of Italian vocal music including the operatic masterpieces and songs and as a result he studied voice with Paolo di Napoli. This passion for vocal music can be seen in the works composed during that time including *Tre liriche in stile antico* (1982-84), *Of Innocence and Experience* (1982-85), *Tre canzoni* (1983-85), a cantata *The Death of Cleopatra* (1986) and Hofmeyr’s first opera, *Il principe Barbablù* (1985). The cantata was chosen to represent the Bologna conservatoire at the European conservatory festival, *Rassegna di conservatori europei*, at Rimini in 1986 and the opera was presented in a workshop production in 1986 at Stia as part of the *Festa musicale stiana*.30 These compositions were further influenced by collaborations with singers Hofmeyr coached and accompanied. A singer Hofmeyr considers a great mentor was the teacher, Mafalda Masini, whose classes he accompanied on many occasions. Her insight into the Italian operatic tradition as well as Hofmeyr’s experiences coaching singers working on Verdi,

30 James May, ‘Hendrik Hofmeyr at Fifty.’
Donizetti, Bellini and Strauss lieder formed an amalgamation of elements which he incorporated in his writing. Hofmeyr uses his composition, *Tre liriche in stile antico*, as an example of the fusion of German and Italian styles of writing found in the work.  

2.4. The Return to South Africa

Although Hofmeyr had established a home and several friendships in Italy he knew that the return to South Africa would be inevitable. Ten years after he had initially arrived in Italy, the political climate had evolved in South Africa and the Apartheid regime had begun dismantling. Sarie Jacobs, who had always been a guiding light in Hofmeyr’s life, informed him of a vacancy at the University of Stellenbosch near Cape Town.  

He did not expect to be successful with this application, but in 1992 Hofmeyr was appointed Lecturer in Musicology at Stellenbosch’s music conservatory.

Upon his return to South Africa Hofmeyr faced many obstacles, luckily being recruited to the army was not one of them. Although he was still officially under the obligation to report for compulsory military service, by 1992 the government had abandoned any racial registers from which he could have been called to serve and if he did not notify them they could not do anything about it.

The obstacles which Hofmeyr faced unfortunately were all music related. The public and music world first and foremost knew him as a pianist and he had to prove himself as a composer in their eyes. Also, the transition back home became quite stressful as he not only had lectures to prepare for his new work load but he was commissioned to

---

32 Roos, 17.
write a 3-act ballet on Lewis Carroll’s Alice books, a story that had always fascinated him as a child. This project was halted and usurped by a fellow South-African composer. The entire process caused him much distress and he calls this his “first taste of the nastier side of the local music scene.”33 What he had learned from this experience was that South African audiences were far less exposed to modern music than the Italians and he found that even his music which he considered slightly modern was hard for them to perform and understand. Hofmeyr was determined to find a musical language which would speak to its audience without losing his music integrity. “This strengthened me in my resolve to find a musical language which would be both contemporary and as accessible as possible without sacrificing the aesthetic values of classical music.”34

For Hofmeyr’s opera, The Fall of the House of Usher, he won the South African Opera Competition in 1987 and after its performance at the State Theatre in Pretoria in 1988 he was awarded the Nederburg Prize for Opera.35 Even though this work had been later broadcasted on television and Hofmeyr had won more prestigious competitions overseas much of this recognition was not noted by the audience and music establishment in the Cape. “I was in fact better known as a composer in the North of the country than in my own province, and it took considerable effort to establish myself.” He makes mention of the fact that although he was one of only two composers on staff at the University of Stellenbosch, in the seven years that he was there no interest was shown to perform any of his works with the university symphony orchestra.

33 Hendrik Hofmeyr, interview by author, 27 May 2009.
34 Ibid.
35 James May, ‘Hofmeyr at Fifty.’
When I organized performances of my own works, the reception was always favorable, but it seemed that unless I took the initiative, nothing would happen. This gradually started changing around 1996, with some small commissions from The Foundation for the Creative Arts, but at the time of writing Alleenstryd I still felt very much like a struggling outsider. All this eventually changed with my winning the Queen Elizabeth of Belgium and the Dimitri Mitropoulos Competitions in 1997, which led to an increased public interest in my music and perhaps made it harder for the establishment to continue ignoring it.36

In 1993 Hofmeyr was commissioned for a second time by opera director Angelo Gobbato, to compose the opera *Lumukanda* (1993-5).37 This was his biggest undertaking to that point in his career. Today Hofmeyr is probably the most commissioned composer living in South Africa. Since winning the Queen Elizabeth of Belgium Competition he has had numerous requests for new works. In 1998 he was appointed as a senior lecturer at the South African College of Music and in 2000 he was promoted to associate professor after completing a doctorate in music in composition in 1999.38 To date his works have been performed and broadcasted locally and internationally to great acclaim.

---

37 Roos, 18.
38 James May, ‘Hofmeyr at Fifty.’
3.1. Origin and Commission

At the University of South Africa (UNISA) International String Competition a work of Hofmeyr’s was used as the prescribed set work. Emma Renzi (a famous South African opera singer), who headed the panel that awarded him first prize in the South African Opera Competition in 1987 and Mr. Robert Buning of the Southern African Music Rights Organization (SAMRO) were both present at the UNISA competition. Hofmeyr recalls a conversation between Renzi and her friend, the vocal coach Dawn Brown and Buning where they were “complaining about the unidiomatic vocal writing in certain SA works.” Renzi stated to Buning: “So, Robert, when is SAMRO going to commission Hendrik to write something for voice?” As a result Buning commissioned Hofmeyr to write a work for a master class presented by the late Deon van der Walt, a famous South African tenor.

Hofmeyr was free to decide on his literary source and only the tessitura was prescribed which was for medium voice from (B3 to F4). This resulted in the first setting of Alleenstryd in 1996 in its original medium voice setting. Later he also provided a lower version for the master class. He was also told that the piano accompaniment could be quite challenging. “Participants had to sing two songs from the cycle in the master classes. They could choose Nos. 1 and 4, or 2 and 6. I think the selection was determined

---

by the fact that the piano parts in Nos. 3 and 5 are the most challenging. As it was, the pianists battled with the tango in No. 2.”

Hofmeyr was flown from Cape Town to Pretoria, where the master class was to be presented, to speak about his work. There he met with the tenor, Deon van der Walt and pianist Brenda Rein who were thrilled with the work and conveyed an interest to perform it overseas. As a result SAMRO asked Hofmeyr to prepare a high version for the tenor and consequently published all three versions. Unfortunately to the composer’s knowledge van der Walt never had the opportunity to perform the work before his sudden death in 2005. In 2008 the South African soprano, Erika Eloff, who now resides in London, asked the composer to write an even higher version which would better suite her vocal facilities. The high version was just a tone up from the original medium setting and Eloff wanted one a tone higher than that. In this new setting Alleenstryd was premiered in London at Wigmore Hall on November 17 2008 by Eloff, accompanied by the South-African pianist James Baillieu.

3.2. Compositional Process

In the Grove article on song cycle’s, distinction is made between cycles which use the text and cycles which use musical means to create a cyclical cohesion. Schubert is an example of a composer who used the text in more than one way to create this cyclical connection. Die Schöne Müllerin (1823) is a cycle with a main protagonist and a clear

---

40 Ibid.
narrative through the cycle. *Winterreise* (1827)\(^{42}\) in contrast uses a thematic narrative dealing with the “study of alienation and melancholia, of Romantic consciousness in disintegration”\(^{43}\). Another cycle where the cyclical connection is made not through a central protagonist but by means of a common theme is the cycle, *Winter Words*, by Benjamin Britten. In an article entitled ‘Aspects of Narrativity and Temporality in Britten's *Winter Words'*, the author Annabelle Paetsch follows the way Britten musically connects the theme of “lost innocence through human knowledge”\(^{44}\) throughout the work. Grove also mentions in contrast how Schumann was a clear example of a composer who used musical means to form the cohesion of a cycle. *Dichterliebe* (1840) is an example of a cycle where Schumann uses the diminished 7\(^{th}\) chord as a cohesive device.\(^{45}\)

Hofmeyr’s song cycle, *Alleenstryd*, combines both textual and musical means to create a cohesive cycle. In the cycle there is a prominent theme which follows the psyche of the poet as it drifts from isolation, through despair to a sense of triumph. While Hofmeyr never experienced the type of discrimination endured by the poet, he too has dealt with discrimination in another capacity.

I think the poems speak in a universal way to the oppressed and marginalized in all walks of life. Not only did I identify strongly with what Petersen must have suffered, but I could also apply it to my own position, both as a homosexual in a society, which, at the time when I grew up, was much less accepting than it is.

now of homosexuality, and as an “outsider” (both in Italy and in SA) in the very cliquiey, politicized and fashion-obsessed world of composition.\textsuperscript{46}

Hofmeyr interpreted the progression of this theme into a cycle which according to him can be seen as a group of five songs preceded by an introductory song.\textsuperscript{47} The fourth song, ‘Kinderland’, can be seen as the rest point of the cycle between two volatile poems, ‘Weeklag van die Gewonde’ and ‘Die Gier van die Bose’. The second and sixth song deals with the issues of isolation, debauchery and rejection. The latter, ‘Ecce homo’, describes the poets triumph through acceptance. Hofmeyr uses various musical elements and tools to form a cohesive cycle. These include the use of two main keys, F major (representing joy/innocence) and C sharp minor (representing suffering /experience). Various chords based on the pentatonic scale (which is of significant importance), hexatonic and octatonic scales are used and manipulated throughout the work each with its own unique representation. These devices and their meanings will be further elaborated upon in the discussion of each individual song. Hofmeyr further describes this cohesive process as follows:

I wanted to create a high level of integration without recourse to the Wagnerian idea of the leitmotif as cross-referential element. (Substantial use is made of the latter in two later cycles, \textit{Die stil avontuur} (2004) and \textit{Vier gebede by jaargetye in die Boland} (2004).) The main unifying elements in this work are certain harmonic/scalar compounds such as quar tal compounds and the pentatonic, hexatonic and octatonic scales. All are used as symbols which recur according to the meaning of the text. Some are associated with the idea of innocence and light, and some with the idea of corruption and darkness. The choice of keys is also used as a structural and symbolic device, as explained in the notes to the work.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} Hendrik Hofmeyr, interview by author, 27 May 2009.
\textsuperscript{47} Roos, 65.
\textsuperscript{48} Hendrik Hofmeyr, interview by author, 27 May 2009.
Hofmeyr credits the great German and French art song composers as well as Wagner and the Italian opera composers as major influences to his method of setting text to music. Further influences include the South African composers Arnold van Wyk and Herbert Du Plessis. Hofmeyr finds the textual accents and stresses of the line by the declamation of the text. He states that there is always a fine balance between maintaining the integrity of the language and combining the melodic inspiration: “I tend to declaim the text aloud to find the best scansion, with the most telling inflections, accents and mood, and then I try to translate this into a vocal line which remains faithful to this ideal without being subservient to it. Music and the voice have their own ways of generating meaning, which sometimes have little to do with declamation, and these should always form part of the vocal realization.”

Furthermore the harmonies and vocal line either emerge at the same time or according to Hofmeyr sometimes the latter forms out of the former. The piano part usually evolves after this process is completed.

3.3. ‘Kinders van Kain’ (Children of Cain)

This first song starts with an introduction (consisting of a single measure of piano accompaniment without a time signature) which Hofmeyr uses to depict dawn or primal innocence. The musical materials used utilize the pentatonic scale which according to Hofmeyr is often associated with innocence. Similar references in the literature which have influenced him include the Rhine maiden’s song from the first scene of Wagner’s Das Rheingold and ‘Morning Mood’ from Grieg’s Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, op. 46.

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
The opening chord known as chord A consists of the following notes F-C-G-D-A: all the notes of the pentatonic scale based on a starting pitch of F. The association of
innocence is heightened through its open, transparent structure derived from the primal
interval, the perfect fifth. Chord A serves as the musical and symbolic origin or the
work. Later this chord is transformed into the music material and symbols utilized
throughout the cycle.

Figure 2: Chord A; based on the pentatonic scale with a starting pitch of F.

The vocal line emerges and is based on the notes found in A. The word ‘rooi’
(red) in the fourth full measure of music is underscored by an octatonic chord.
Hofmeyr derived this chord from A by the addition of chromatic notes to the notes
found in A: (F-Cb-G-Db-Ab-Ebb-Bb-Fb). Hofmeyr states that this is a coloristic tool
rather than symbolic: “The scale evokes an inflamed or fiery state for me.” He has
associated the octatonic scale with reference to such emotions before in his works
such as the ballet Vala, the opera Lumukanda and the Stabat mater for choir.

50 Notes provided by Hendrik Hofmeyr via email Thursday, April 3, 2008.
In measure five Hofmeyr uses an isorhythmic figure beginning in the right hand of the piano accompaniment. This figure together with the preceding chord is constructed based on a hexatonic scale centering on the tonalities of F major and c sharp minor. Hofmeyr calls this chord B and can be interpreted as a “contamination” of chord A: (F-C-G#-Db-A-E). In this form it is used to represent humankind. As it appears in the score, G# is written in its enharmonic spelling of Ab. Hofmeyr states that the hexatonic scale-based measure can be seen as a conflation of F major and c sharp minor. What this means is that the two identities of the different tonalities become confused through the musical writing essentially becoming one identity.

As previously mentioned these are keys which play an important role throughout the work symbolizing specific emotions or concepts: F Major (representing

---

52 Ibid
joy/innocence) and c sharp minor (representing suffering /experience). This modulation (or shifting down of four semitones) between these two tonal centers occurs in reference to specific textual references. In measure 14 the music briefly reverts to the pentatonic mode on F underscoring the positive attributes of the word “son” (sun). In measure 17 the music suddenly explodes into c sharp minor underscoring the words “net optelgoed” (mere flotsam/debris) depicting the shift from light to darkness. Hofmeyr calls this man’s ‘fall from grace.’ The plunge in tonality is accompanied by a shift downwards in register as well as an increased level of dissonance. The increased use of semitones to create these dissonances is Hofmeyr’s way of introducing the ‘darker emotions into the world of pentatonicism.’

Hofmeyr identifies Schubert’s piano sonata in B-flat major, D. 960 as an influence in this shift of tonality. At the end of the exposition the tonality shifts from the dominant F Major to c sharp minor in the beginning of the boisterous development section. Other influences include Liszt’s treatment of modulation in ‘Il Penseroso’ from *Années de Pèlerinage, Deuxième Année: Italie* and Wagner’s treatment of harmonies specifically in *Parsifal.*

53 Notes provided by Hendrik Hofmeyr via email Thursday, April 3, 2008.
54 Ibid.
The c sharp minor chord which occurs at the beginning of measure 17 is called chord C by the composer. It is a ‘chromaticized and extended form’\textsuperscript{55} of the opening chord: (Fx-C#-G#-D#-A-E). While the song ends reverting back to the tonality of the opening, the last note in the voice as well as the piano centers on C as a reflection of the text of the final stanza.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
3.4. ‘Die Veles’ (The Many)

The second song tells the tale of man’s ability to continue a course drifting between innocence and corruption, a predominant quality of human nature. A prime example of this is the hypocrisy highlighted in the text of the second stanza “Sing luidkeels Sondae in die kerk, vloek roekeloos Maandae by die werk” (Sing loudly Sunday at church, cuss recklessly Monday at work). Hofmeyr represents musically what the poet regards as the questionable ‘innocence’ of the multitude by superimposing major and minor chords together resulting in what Hofmeyr calls a ‘contaminated innocence.’ This is used again to highlight textual references. Hofmeyr illustrates man’s disregard for the fate of his children “Teel kleingoed by die tros, en stort g’n traan oor wat van hulle word” (Breed children
by the dozen and shed no tears about their hapless fate) by a C# minor triad heard against F Major/minor in the accompaniment in measure 36.

Figure 6: Superimposition of major and minor chords m. 36.

The compositional technique of superimposing these major-minor chords has been used before by Hofmeyr perhaps most overtly in his song, ‘A Cradle Song’ from Of Innocence and Experience (1982-85). He states that it represented an intermediary stage between the innocence of the first song ‘Spring’ and the corruption of the third ‘The Sick Rose.’

Precursors to Hofmeyr who have used this technique include Richard Strauss with the A-Bb trill against an F# Major triad (mm.357-359) in the final scene of Salomé which Hofmeyr says might have been a subconscious influence.

---

Figure 7: The A-Bb trill against an F# Major triad from Strauss’ *Salomé* mm.357-359.

Hofmeyr further characterizes the multitude and its doings by the introduction of a deliberately banal tango in the piano accompaniment. Hofmeyr deliberately juxtaposed this against the caustic commentary of the poet. The opening bars in the left hand of the tango are reminiscent of Bizet’s ‘Habanera’ from *Carmen*. Hofmeyr however notes that he had never been exposed to the tango during his time in Europe.

I did not specifically encounter the tango in Europe, but it has always fascinated me with its combination of opposites (the languid and the steely) and with its suggestion of the sleazy. It seemed the right symbol for a rather sleazy compromise between good and evil. I had incorporated an anachronistic tango in the ballet *Alice*, and have since written another for the song cycle *Of Darkness and the Heart*, as well as 2 instrumental ones.

---

57 Notes provided by Hendrik Hofmeyr via email Thursday, April 3, 2008.
Another symbol introduced in this song is heard at the previously mentioned phrase about man’s hypocritical nature “Sing luidkeels Sondae in die kerk, vloek roekeloos Maandae by die werk.” This symbol is that of evil which is depicted by Chord D, a chord consisting of two tritones a semitone apart: (Eb-A; D-Ab). It can be heard at the end of measure 27. This chord and its symbolic meaning has been used in many of Hofmeyr’s works from The Fall of the House of Usher and onwards. In Hofmeyr’s opera Lumukanda, composed in the preceding years to the composition of Alleenstryd, he uses the chord extensively as symbol for Watamaraka, the Goddess of Evil. Hofmeyr notes that the tritone has been used in music since the Middle Ages and always known as the ’Devil in music’, he includes Liszt’s opening of his piano sonata, ‘Après une Lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata’ as an example and influence.
3.5. ‘Weeklag van die Gewonde’ (Lament of the Wounded)

This song deals with the poet’s reaction to the conflict and attempts made against him for trying to better him and be a successful Afrikaans poet. This reaction manifests itself in his expression of woes and agitation. Hofmeyr illustrates the poet’s agitation by reintroducing the key associated with pain and suffering, c sharp minor and by the rushing accompaniment. Most of the musical material involved is based on the chord C: (Fx-C#-G#-D#-A-E). Hofmeyr breaks this down into four-note segments of this chord which is repeated throughout the song. He calls this repetition ‘relentless uniformity of the harmonic vocabulary’ to depict the poets obsessive pessimism.59

59 Notes provided by Hendrik Hofmeyr via email Thursday, April 3, 2008.
From measure 50 onwards, approaching the climax of the piece, Hofmeyr uses a technique he calls “hemming in of a note.” What this means is that a note, in this case D, is focused on musically by repetition and approaching it from semitones above and below, C# and Eb. Hofmeyr states that it causes a “musical claustrophobia.” He uses this technique to symbolize the despair of which the poet is a prisoner. This ‘hemming in’ is greatly elaborated upon in the substantial postlude.

Figure 10: The hemming in of the note D (mm50-55).

---

60 Hendrik Hofmeyr, interview by author, 27 May 2009.
3.6. ‘Kinderland’ (Land of Childhood)

The fourth song in this cycle invokes nostalgia of a lost state of innocence. It is a resting point between two turbulent songs in the cycle which center on agitation and despair. The sense of nostalgia is produced by the return of the opening pentatonic chord and motive now in a lower registration of the F Major tonality. To achieve the evocation of dawn first heard at the beginning of the cycle, Hofmeyr relies on the “purity of the open fifth, from which both the compound, the melodic line and, later, the accompanying figure, are constructed as well as the spaciousness of the major 9\textsuperscript{th} (used in the first song at “oopgebars” and “die son”), formed here by consecutive leaps of a perfect 5\textsuperscript{th}.”\textsuperscript{61}

As mentioned earlier J.S. Bach was a major influence in Hofmeyr’s writing. This is evident in the song with the canonic entries found between the voice and the piano from measures 4 to 23. Hofmeyr used this baroque technique to great extent in the first song of his work Tre Canzoni which he composed in Italy between 1983 and 1985.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
Another technique Hofmeyr uses to create a sense of nostalgia is allowing the pianist to play a sustained chord in the left hand without letting the notes sound while the right continues with its melody. This results in sympathetic vibrations caused by the depressed strings of the left hand. Hofmeyr equates this to a “vocal line reverberating like
a distant memory in the piano part.\textsuperscript{62} Figure 12 illustrates the annotation of this technique.

Figure 12: (mm.9-12)

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\end{center}

The second part of the song focuses on the poet’s realization of his dreary present situation. This shift in emotion is not as dramatic as the four-semitone plunge from F major to c sharp minor of the first song and instead Hofmeyr utilizes the minor mode to depict this realization. This atmosphere is further complemented by the use of a major seventh pedal (F-E) in the left hand of the accompaniment from measures 27 to 43 while the right hand repeats melodic material associated with chord A. Hofmeyr lists Mahler’s ‘Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen’ from his \textit{Fünf Rückertlieder} as a source of inspiration for this song.

\textsuperscript{62} Notes provided by Hendrik Hofmeyr via email Thursday, April 3, 2008.
3.7. ‘Die Gier van die Bose’ (The Whim of the Evil One)

The psyche of the poet in this devastatingly bitter poem can best be equated to the adage: ‘it’s always darkest before the dawn.’ Unfortunately in this song there is no ‘dawn’ in sight yet. The text which is filled with immense despair provides Hofmeyr with ample material to underscore an equally bitter musical setting. The score, not only in this song but the entire cycle, is abundant with markings from the composer reflecting not only dynamics, tempi and mood but also time to be taken in between songs.

I tend to be quite specific as an aid to understanding my intentions, but this is the only cycle where I have specified the time to be taken between songs, as I feel it contributes to the psychological placing of each song within the greater dramatic narrative.63

Hofmeyr employs two thematic materials heard in previous songs of the cycle, the first being chord D (associated with evil) and chord C (the c sharp minor chord associated with suffering and despair). The clustered tritones which constitute the makeup of the ‘evil’ chord (D) are thrust into rapid sixteenth-note arpeggios in the tumultuous introduction. Later these arpeggio figures are used to underscore the intense emotion found in the text like the first line for example: “Goddelose gedrenkte mensloënaar” (Unrepentant, ungodly backstabbing fiend).

---

Segments of chord C, specifically the ‘hemming-in’ motif of the third song is used as the main motivic material for the vocal line. Here however it is freed from the confines of the diminished third range in which it was used in ‘Weeklag van die Gewonde’. In the first song mans ‘fall from grace’ was depicted by the plunge from F major to c sharp minor (a drop of 4 semitones). This drop of four semitones is used in this song to further emphasize the downward spiral of despair faced by the poet. In doing so Hofmeyr creates a descending circle of fifths from measure 41 to 51 (G# minor- E minor- C – minor- Ab minor/G # minor) and from measure 78 to 87 (F minor- C sharp minor- A minor- F minor- C # minor- A minor).

More musical elements contributing to the desperate defiance of this text is Hofmeyr’s use of a brisk tempo, very strict dynamic markings including frequent crescendos and decrescendos and rhythm. All three elements combine in the twelve-measure introduction which captures an essential line from the poem, “houe wat brul, wat rumoe soos ‘n ritmiese hel wat op loop is” (bellowing blows, that resound like a rhythmic inferno run riot); this specific line being the inspiration for Hofmeyr serving as a spring board for this song. Hofmeyr states that the rhythmic drive also echoes an earlier
piano work based on African rhythms, *Kalunga*, a depiction of the dance of the God of Death and the Underworld.\(^{64}\)

3.8. Ecce Homo (Behold the Man)

Pontius Pilate’s words ‘behold the man’ spoken to an angry mob, presenting a beaten Jesus to them covered in a crown of thorns (John 19:5), is a fitting title for this final song. Like Jesus, the poet has been ridiculed, mocked, vilified and will face his greatest challenge yet only to rise in triumph from it.

Figure 14: Martin Schongauer, *Ecce Homo*, Engraving 15th century\(^{65}\)

Hofmeyr translates this laborious ascent from utter despair to triumph, which the poet faces, musically by continuing from where the previous song ended (on a c # minor chord associated with despair/anguish) and progresses through an upward-modulating

\(^{64}\) Ibid.
\(^{65}\) This image is in the public domain because its copyright has expired.
ostinato. This pattern is established in the first four measures of music as shown in figure 15.

Figure 15: (mm. 1-5)
The rise in tonalities continues from measure 1 through 16 (C# minor, through E minor and G minor to Bb minor) but then suddenly plunges back to E minor at the words “as ek oor die rotse val’ (should I fall o’er stumbling blocks). The ascent then continues and finally resolves on the final C# major chord (a transformation of the c# minor chord), depicting the transformation from despair and suffering to triumph: “en my waggelstap word sterk gespier, en triomfantlik stap ek, regop fier!” (And my plodding gait grows sure and strong, until triumphant I walk upright proud!).  

66 The translations used in the discussion of each song are not always literal but rather poetic as found in the English version in the music; a literal translation will be added as an appendix to the dissertation.
In the late 20th and 21st centuries few composers in South Africa have successfully mastered the art of instilling the foundation of bel canto singing including expressiveness, beauty, melody, harmony and tonality in their composition. Hofmeyr has successfully achieved this by his own personal compositional style and aesthetic which has evolved and continues to evolve due to influences socially, spiritually and musically. His rejection of the avant-garde, a daunting task in the midst of a music world where many colleagues and teachers embraced this style of writing, has allowed him to stay true to the principles he holds dear in producing immensely beautiful, innovative, contemporary music. This aesthetic coupled with his compositional process of finding and delivering the quintessential meaning of the text has allowed the dark yet powerful story of S.V. Petersen’s Alleenstryd to find its place in the oeuvre of contemporary art song literature.
APPENDIX A

TEXT AND LITERAL TRANSLATIONS

PROVIDED BY CHARMAINE LA FLEUR CUPIDO
**Kinders van Kain**

Die dag lê vars nog, oopgebars, rooi soos granaat –
Vol stof en dons tuimel ons teen die daeraad –

Die son kom op die drumpeltop ons gadeslaan:
Net optelgoed wat voor die voet te lore gaan.

---

**Children of Cain**

The day has newly dawned, exploded, blood red as a ripe pomegranate –
Covered in dust and down we tumble towards the daybreak –
The sun creeps over the doorstep to observe our rising:
Just the outcast who summarily go to meet our disappearing.

---

**Die Veles**

Hul leef op skuld tot Vrydagaand, en tot die einde van die maand;
Gaan goed gekleed, soos wie weet wie - trakteer mekaar op simpatie;

Ontspan by voorkeur in die fliek; dans dol op radiomusiek;
Sing luidkeels Sondae in die kerk, vloek roekeloos Maandae by die werk;

Doen siektes op, en word gesond - gaan tog maar môre weer te grond;
Teel kleingoed by die tros, en stort g’n traan oor wat van hulle word!

Die jare gaan, die jare kom; hulle mors die Tien Gebooie om –

---

**The Many**

Exist on credit, week by week, and monthly;
Go well-dressed and heeled, like nobility – regaling on sympathy reciprocally;

Preferential relaxation being the movies; dancing frenetically to radio music;
Singing loudly at church on Sunday, cursing recklessly at work on Monday;

Contract diseases, are cured – just to meet a desperate tomorrow;
Procreate recklessly, ignoring the consequences and sorrow!

The years come and go; the Ten
Trek kort op sestig pensioen, en raak met God en mens versoen.

Commandments are reviled – At sixty, drawing pension, at last with man and God are reconciled.

**Weeklag van die Gewondes**

Hulle wou van my dat ek die vaart van jou, my woord my vriend, bedwing.
Hulle wou dat ek die woestheid tem, die toorn beteuel, die moedswil breek.

Lament of the Wounded

They demanded of me to betray my word, my friend, to repress your impetus.
They expected of me to tame the wildness, to break the willfulness.

Te veel geverg, dat ek, gehurk, dié oomblik nog moet swye ook!
Gaan reisgereed en sterk, my woord, gevleuelde vriend, die einders oor:
Berge, valleie, woestyne, see, snel met die wind saam, noord en suid!

It required too much, that I momentarily cowed, should keep silent!
Travel-ready and strong, go my word, my winged friend, cross horizons:
Mountains, valleys, deserts, seas, speed with the wind, north and south!

Gaan oos en wes by dag en nag, somer en winter, voorjaar en najaar!
Gaan ween by die mensdom my weedom, ween my weeklag, ween my leed!

Go east and west by day and night, in summer and winter, spring and autumn!
Go to humanity and weep over my grief, over my lamentation, weep for my sorrow!

**Kinderland**

Sou daar in my wonderland soms nog kinders kaalvoet klouter opdraand teen die taalbosrand?

Land of Children

Would there still be children in my wonderland, sometimes clambering barefoot uphill against the Rhus\(^67\) verge?

---

\(^{67}\) Rhus is a deciduous shrub or small tree.
Pluk hulle bessies, skilpadbessies
donkerrooies, bruines, geles, nou nog in
my kinderland?
Geur dit nog van peperbossies en renoster
– waar die aarde ooplê teen die
hemelrand?

Hoe verleë dool ons dikwels mymerend
deur die verre strate moeg van stad en
stadskoerant;

Hunkerend tussen die skare, eenling,
eensaam in ons wese, ver van huis en
kinderland!

Would they still pick berries, dark red ones,
brown ones, yellow ones in my
wonderland?
Does the aroma of pepperbushes and
rhinoceros bushes still linger – where the
earth lies under the open sky?
How deprived we often wander, musing,
down the distant road, tired of the city and
the daily newspapers;
Longing for, alone amongst the crowds,
lonely in our innermost being, far from
home and wonderland!

Die Gier van die Bose
Goddelose gedrenkte mensloënaar, ek wat
verbroer met die Bose …
Slaan, slaan teen die vasgeroeste ysterslot
houe wat in donker gedoop is, houe wat
brul, wat rumoer soos ’n ritmiese hel wat
op loop is; wat opjaag, op tot hul bo teen
die hemel vaskrul en die aarde se suile laat
roer!
… hoor die vleuelgeklap van die boaardse
rawe op vloekgebod …!
… die wolke hang laag en swart
gesambreel oor die wraakhok se vloer …!

The Whim of the Evil One
Ungodly drowning misanthrope, I who
fraternize with the evil one…
Beat, beat against the rusted iron lock,
bloows immersed in darkness, blows that
roar, that reverberate like a runaway
rhythmic hell;
that ascend to the heavens where they cling
and shake earth’s pillars!
… hear the beating of the unearthly raven’s
wings on curse command…!
… the clouds hang low and black like an
umbrella over the retribution cage-floor…!
… hongerige gevaartes trap deurmekaar en wydbeekig die speel in onheilige rumoer …!
Slaan, slaan teen die slot, teen die ysterslot, en as die poorthek oop is, laat los die leeus van ’n god!

**Ecce Homo**
Ek soek geen ligstaal op die donker pad, die onbekende pad waarlangs ek nou Met lompe tree voel-voel sukkel soos ’n kind.
Ek soek geen staf om op te leun; En word ek moeg op hierdie lange pad, dan soek ek niemand om my op te hou. As ek oor die rotse val, stuur my g’n troos – al is dit vreemd op eie krag te steun.
Maar daar’s g’neen wat van my trane weet, en niemand hoor my, niemand, dat ek snik!
Net ek alleen wat moeitevol deur sweet van sielesmart en eiestryd verkwik word.
En my waggelstap word sterk gespier, en triomfantlik stap ek, regop … fier!

**Behold the Man**
I do not search for a ray of light upon the dark road, the unknown road upon which I now with clumsy footsteps stumble my way like a child.
I do not search for a staff to lean upon; And if I become tired on this long road, then I do not search for anyone to keep me upright. Should I stumble over the rocks, do not comfort me – though my self-reliance should seem strange.
But there is no one who knows about my tears, and nobody hears me; alone I sob! Only I, alone, perspire as I wrestle my giants of inner grief and conflict in my soul until I am revived.
And my faltering steps become strong and firm and I triumph to walk upright… proud and bold!
APPENDIX B

WORK LIST\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{68} The work list is provided by the composer
Works

Stage

The Fall of the House of Usher (1 act chamber opera, libretto by the composer, after Edgar Allan Poe), lyric soprano, 1-2 tenors, bass-baritone, flute (+ piccolo, alto flute), oboe (+ English horn), clarinet (+ bass clarinet), bassoon, French horn, harp, violin, viola, cello, double bass, 2 percussion, 1987; Vala - A Metaphysical Ballet (scenario by the composer, after William Blake), large orchestra, 1989; The Land of Heart's Desire (1 act chamber opera, libretto by the composer, after William Butler Yeats), soprano leggero, lyric soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, bass, flute (+ piccolo, alto flute), oboe (+ English horn), clarinet (+ bass clarinet), bassoon, French horn, harp, violin, viola, cello, double bass, 2 percussion, 1989; Alice (3 act ballet, scenario by the composer, after Lewis Carroll), large orchestra, 1990-91 (a suite was arranged; also versions of Tango for 3 clarinets, 3 violins, cello, piano 4 hands and violin, viola, cello, piano; versions of some sections for 2 pianos); Lumukanda (3 act opera, libretto by the composer, after Credo Mutwa), 4 sopranos, 3 mezzo-sopranos, alto, 3 tenors, baritone, 2 basses, mixed chorus, large orchestra, 1993-96; Die Laaste Aand (1 act chamber opera, libretto by the composer, after C.L. Leipoldt), lyric soprano, tenor, 2 baritones, 2 basses, flute, oboe (+ English horn), clarinet (+ bass clarinet), bassoon (+ contrabassoon), French horn, string quartet, double bass, percussion, 2001

Orchestral

Immagini da 'Il cielo sopra Berlino', small orchestra (21 players), 1988; Alice, large orchestra, 1996 (suite from ballet); Raptus, violin, orchestra, 1997; Ingoma, 1998 (adaptation of Thula, babana, Uqongqot'hwane; also longer version with 7 additional brass, 1998); Apocalypsis, large orchestra, 1998; Concerto per pianoforte e orchestra, 1999; Concerto per flauto e orchestra, 1999; Simulacrum, large orchestra, 2000; Umculo Wemvula (Rainmusic), 2001; Concerto per violino e flauto, flute, violin, 16 strings, 2002; Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, 2004; Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, 2006; Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra, 2007
**Chamber music**

Wonderland Suite, oboe, piano, 1977; Cavatina, flute, piano, 1980; Partita canonica, clarinet, 1983; Die Lied van Juanita Perreira, cello, piano, 1985; Cadenza, cello, 1994; Incantesimo, flute, 1996 (also version for tenor recorder, 2002); Nelle mani d'Amduscias, violin, 1996; Notturno elegiaco, harp, 1996 (also versions for flute, cello, piano, 1998; violin, cello, piano, 2003); Tango, 3 clarinets, 3 violins, cello, piano 4 hands, 1997 (version of section of Alice; also versions for violin, viola, cello, piano, 2003; for 6 cellos, 2003); First String Quartet, 1998; Ingoma, soprano recorder (+ alto recorder), alto recorder, tenor recorder, bass recorder, 2000 (adaptation of Thula, babana, Uqongqot'hwane); Luamerava, violin, 2000; Marimba, flute, 2000; Scherzetto, alto recorder, 2000; Luanaledi, alto recorder (+ tenor recorder), 2001; Partita, viola, 2001; Il poeta e l'usignolo, flute, guitar, 2004 (also version for flute, harp, 2005); Tango dell'amarezza, cello, double bass, 2004 (also versions for cello, piano, 2005; double bass, piano, 2005); Crucifixus, cello, organ, 2004; Variations on a Chorale, flute, organ, 2005; Second String Quartet, 2006; Sonata for Horn and Piano, 2006; Sonata for flute and piano, 2006 (also version for violin, piano, 2008); Variations on an African Lullaby, 2007; Lachrymae, guitar, 2007; Rapsodia notturna, guitar, piano, 2007; Endymion and the Moon, violin, harp, 2008; Trio, violin, cello, piano, 2008; Sonata for Violin and Piano, 2008

**Choral**

Liederwysgesange (text by Boerneef), mixed chorus, piano, 1983; Sound the Flute! (text by William Blake), mixed chorus, piano, 1985-86; Sweet was the Song (text by John Attey), mixed chorus, 1986 (also version for children's/female chorus, 2001); Care-Charmer Sleep (text by Samuel Daniel), 5 mixed voices, 1987; Missa Sancti Ignatii de Loyola, soprano, 9 mixed voices, orchestra, 1988; Requiem, soprano, alto, tenor, bass, 8 mixed voices, 1975-93; Kersliedjie (text by D.J. Opperman), mixed chorus, orchestra, 1995 (also versions for female/mixed chorus, piano, 2002; female chorus, 2003); Par les sentiers de lumière (text by Lamine Diakhaté), 8 mixed voices, 1996; Iubilate Deo, mixed
chorus, 1997; Die Spokewals (text by Boerneef), 8 mixed voices, 1998 (also version for 8 male voices, 2004); Eden (text by Ida Rousseau), children's/female chorus, 1999; Tu pauperum refugium (texts from the Bible, Latin liturgy), 8/12 children's/female voices, audience, 2000 (also version for 8 mixed voices, audience, 2001); Stabat Mater, 8 mixed voices, 2000; Pie Jesu, mixed chorus, 2001; A sexta autem hora (text from the Bible), 8 mixed voices, 2001; The Eccho (text by Richard Leigh), 6 mixed voices, 2001; How sweet the moonlight (text by William Shakespeare), 8 children's/female voices, 2001; De profundis, male chorus, 2001; Afrika (text by C.M. van den Heever), 6 mixed voices, 2001; My venster is 'n blanke vlak (text by N.P. Van Wyk Louw), soprano, mixed chorus, 2002; Nunc dimittis, mixed chorus, 2002; Hodie Christus natus est, children's/female chorus, 2002 (also versions for children's/female chorus, mixed chorus, 2003; mixed chorus, 2003); Ek wonder of jy soms (text by I.P. Du Plessis), mixed chorus, 2002; Super flumina Babylonis (text from Psalm 137), 6 mixed voices, 2002; Sedoosmusiek (text by Boerneef), mixed chorus, 2003; Die Here is my herder (text from Psalm 23 [Afrikaans translation]), mixed chorus, 2003 (version of Psalm 23); The Healing Prayer (text by Elizabeth Peter-Ross), mixed chorus, audience, 14 strings, 2003 (also shorter version for mixed chorus, audience/congregation, organ, 2003); Sinfonia africana (texts by Eugène N. Marais, D.J. Opperman, C.M. van den Heever), soprano, mixed chorus, orchestra, 2003; A Carol Cantata (texts from the carols Hodie Christus natus est and I Sing of a Maiden, John Attey, D.J. Opperman [English translation]), soprano, mixed chorus, string orchestra, 2004; Die Dans van die Reën (text by Eugène N. Marais), 8 mixed voices, 2004; Winternag (text by Eugène Marais), mixed chorus, 2005; Psalm 103 (text from Psalm 103 [Afrikaans translation]), mixed chorus, 2006; Lawaaimusiek (text by Boerneef), mixed chorus, 2006; By jonasdrif se sekelgat (text by Boerneef), mixed chorus; Batter my heart (text by John Donne), mixed chorus, 2007; The Birth of Orc (text from The Four Zoas by William Blake), 8 mixed voices, 2007; Mabalêl (text by Eugène Marais), 4 equal voices, 2007; Saulus in Damascus (text from Acts of the Apostles) mixed chorus, 2007; Desert Sun (text by the composer, based on Bushman legends), 8 mixed voices, 2007; In lumine tuo (text from Latin liturgy), mixed chorus,
Vocal

Music, when soft voices die... (text by Percy Bysshe Shelley), high/medium voice, piano, 1983 (also version for high/medium voice, violin, viola, cello, 1994); Tre liriche in stilo antico (texts by Giacomo Leopardi, Torquato Tasso, Giuseppe Ungaretti), high voice, piano, 1982-84 (also versions of one section, Quiete, for high voice, violin, piano, 1989; medium voice, cello, piano, 2000; voice, clarinet, piano, 2003; versions of another section, L'infinito, for high voice, violin, piano, 2000; medium voice, cello, piano, 2000; voice, clarinet, piano, 2003; voice, flute, piano, 2003); Drie Gedigte van Elisabeth Eybers, mezzo-soprano/alto, piano, 1977-85; Twee Gedigte van Eugène Marais, high voice, piano, 1978-85; Of Innocence and Experience (text by William Blake), high voice, piano, 1982-85; Tre canzoni (texts by Michelangelo Buonarroti, Giosuè Carducci, Enrico Panzacchi), high/medium voice, piano, 1983-85; Two Songs of Mervyn Peake, high/medium voice, piano, 1985; The Death of Cleopatra (text by William Shakespeare), soprano, flute, alto flute, bass clarinet, French horn, harp, viola, double bass, vibraphone, 1986 (also version for soprano, clarinet, viola, piano, 2004); Alleenstryd (text by S.V. Petersen), voice, piano, 1996; Fragment from 'Prometheus Unbound' (text by Percy Bysshe Shelley), high voice, flute, clarinet, French horn, harp/piano, violin, viola, cello, vibraphone, marimba, 1996; Le bateau ivre (text by Arthur Rimbaud), medium/low voice, flute, French horn, harp, cello, vibraphone (+ tam-tam), 1996; Byzantium (text by William Butler Yeats), soprano/mezzo-soprano/tenor, orchestra, 1997; Of Darkness and the Heart (text by Fiona Zerbst), lyric soprano/mezzo-soprano, orchestra, 1999 (also versions for soprano, piano, 2002; soprano, string quartet, 2005); Ballade van die Bloeddoortige Jagter (text by G.A. Watermeyer), soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, bass, 24 strings, 2000; Gebed om die Gebeente (text by D.J. Opperman), soprano/high mezzo-soprano, flute, cello, piano, 2000; Due sonetti di Petrarca, high
voice, soprano recorder/flute, cello, harpsichord/piano, 2000; Psalm 23, soprano/mezzo-soprano/tenor, cello, 2000 (also choral version as Die Here is my herder); Ainsi qu'on oit le cerf bruire (text from Psalm 42 [translated by Louis Bourgeois]), high voice, flute, cello, piano, 2002 (also version with harpsichord instead of piano, 2004); Oda a la bella desnuda (text by Pablo Neruda), soprano/tenor, cello, 2002; Die stil avontuur (song-cycle, text by Elisabeth Eybers [also version in English translation]), soprano, piano, 2003 (also version for mezzo-soprano, piano, 2004); Vier Gebede by Jaargetye in die Boland (song-cycle, text by N.P. Van Wyk Louw), voice, piano, 2004; Nocturne (text by William Shakespeare), mezzo-soprano, baritone, piano, 2004; en skielik is dit aand (song-cycle, text by Wilhelm Knobel), voice, piano, 2005; Ode to the West Wind (text by Percy Bysshe Shelley), high voice, orchestra, 2006; Nog in my laaste woorde (text by N.P. Van Wyk Louw), voice, piano, 2006; Dover Beach (text by Matthew Arnold), high voice, flute, cello, piano, 2007 PIANO: Nag, 1981-83; Die Dans van die Reën, 1985; Four Pieces from Alice, 2 pianos, 1998 (version of music from the ballet); Chaconne, 1999; The Four-Note Waltz, 2 pianos, 2000; Toccata, 2001; Variations on a Mazurka of Chopin, 2002; Notturno, 2003; Sonata for Two Pianos, 2004; March of the Lilliputians, 2006; Partita africana (Preludio, Umsindo, River of Sorrow, Kalunga), 1999-2006

**Arrangements**

Uqongqot'hwane (Xhosa traditional), mixed chorus, 1995 (also adapted as part of both works entitled Ingoma); Thula, babana (Xhosa traditional), children's/female chorus, 1999 (also adapted as part of both works entitled Ingoma); Ma, daar kom die jong soldaat (Afrikaans traditional), female chorus, 2001; Dubula (Xhosa traditional), mixed chorus, 2003; Three African Songs, contralto, chamber orchestra, 2005
APPENDIX C

DISCOGRAPHY

---

69 Discography is provided by the composer
Discography

- **Immagini da 'Il cielo sopra Berlino'**. Maurizio Dino Ciacci/Orchestra Musica '900 (Concorso Internazionale di Composizione Trento Cinema - La Colonna Sonora/Ricordi: SMRL 6396, 1988)

- **Raptus**. Andrew Haveron, violin; Marc Soustrot/Koninklijke Filharmonie van Vlaanderen (Cyprès: CYP 9306, 1997)


- **Chaconne**. Grethe Nöthling, piano (Muzik Front, 2000)

- **Die Spokewals**: Uqongqot'hwane; Thula, babana. André van der Merwe/Pro Cantu (Pro Cantu, 2000)

- **Incantesimo** (original version). Merryl Neille, flute (University of Pretoria Music Department: CSO502, 2001)

- **Pie Jesu**. Leon Starker/SA College of Music Choir (Pasmae: CDPASMAE001, 2002)

- **A sexta autem hora**. University of Pretoria Camerata (Prospect Tonstudio: GEMA 00122, 2002)

- **Ainsi qu'on oit le cerf bruire; Requiem (excerpts)**. Sanet Allen, Marianne Serfontein, sopranos; Suzanne Erasmus, alto; Stephen Carletti, tenor; Timothy Visser, bass; Marietjie Pauw, flute; Anmari van der Westhuizen, cello; Bennie van Eeden, piano (Sunset Recording Studios/Huguenot Foundation of South Africa, 2002)

- **Concerto per flauto e orchestra; Concerto per pianoforte e orchestra; Ingoma** (second orchestral version). Helen Vosloo, flute; François du Toit, piano; Emmanuel Siffert/National Symphony Orchestra of South Africa (Distell Foundation for the Performing Arts: CDX02/002, 2002)

- **Tu pauperum refugium** (original version). Hennie Loock/Tygerberg Children's Choir, Odawara Children's Choir (Japan), Moram Choir (Israel), Newfoundland Youth Symphony Choir Cape (Tygerberg Children's Choir, 2002)

- **How sweet the moonlight**. André van der Merwe/ Stellenberg Girls Choir (Stellenberg Girls Choir, 2002)
Of Innocence and Experience (sections The sick rose and A cradle song); Twee Gedigte van Eugène Marais (section Winternag); Tre liriche in stile antico (section L’infinito [version for voice, flute, piano]); Oda a la bella desnuda (section 2); Due sonetti di Petrarca (section Zefiro torna). Julia Bronkhorst, soprano; Paula van Delden, flute; Rebecca Smit, cello; Jacco Lamfers, piano (Q DISC: Q 97042, 2003)

- **Sweet was the Song.** Hennie Loock/Tygerberg Children's Choir (Tygerberg Children's Choir 2003)
- **Hodie Christus natus est** (original version). Hennie Loock/Tygerberg Children's Choir, 30th anniversary re-union choir (Tygerberg Children's Choir, 2005)
- **Sinfonia africana for soprano, choir and orchestra.** Lesley Dunner/Sabina Mossolow, soprano, Stellenbosch University Choir, Cape Philharmonic Orchestra (Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, 2005)
- **Uqongqot'hwane; Die Dans van die Reën.** André van der Merwe/Stellenbosch University Choir (Stellenbosch University Choir, 2005)
- **Die Dans van die Reën.** Gérard'd du Toit /KwaZulu-Natal Youth Choir. (KwaZulu-Natal Youth Choir, 2005)
- **Hodie Christus natus est** (version for treble choir), Thula babana. André van der Merwe/Stellenberg Girls Choir (Stellenberg Girls Choir, 2005)
- **Tango dal balletto Alice.** I Grandi Violoncellisti (Cello Classics: CC1019, 2006)
- **Sonata per corno e pianoforte.** Shannon Armer, horn, Sandra Kettle, piano (South African Horn Society, 2006)
- **Pie Jesu.** Johann van der Sandt/ Singkronies Choir (Prospect Tonstudio: Gema 00174, 2006)
- **Super flumina Babylonis.** Johann van der Sandt/University of Pretoria Camerata (Prospect Tonstudio: Gema 00175, 2006)
- **Lieder: Of Innocence and experience;** Tre liriche in stile antico; Tre canzoni; en skielik is dit aand; Die stil avontuur; Vier gebede by jaargetye in die Boland. Zanne Stapelberg, soprano, André Howard, baritone, Hendrik Hofmeyr, piano. (CDExpress, 2007)
APPENDIX D

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND HENDRIK HOMEYR, WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2009

ANSWERED QUESTIONNAIRE
Introduction

1. How did you come to know of S.V. Petersen and specifically his collection of poems which would form this cycle?

My parents had several volumes of his poems at home, which included most of the poems I selected. The anthology published as “Alleenstryd” only appeared later.

2. Did you have any interaction with Mr. Petersen or his family and how did this affect your music writing?

Unfortunately Mr. Petersen was no longer alive at the time I wrote the cycle.

3. The song cycle was commissioned for the late Deon van der Walt (Roos: p.63). Can you explain how this came about and your interaction with the tenor (rehearsals, collaboration, coachings etc.)? Where there any performance practice issues which arouse? The piano part is both beautiful and challenging because of its virtuoso nature, where there any performance practice issues which arise with your collaboration with Ms. Brenda Rein?

The commission to write the piece came as a result of a fortuitous meeting between Mr. Robert Buning (of SAMRO), soprano Emma Renzi and me at the UNISA International String Competition where a work of mine was being performed as setwork. Emma, who had headed the panel that awarded me 1st prize in the SA Opera Competition, and her friend, the vocal coach Dawn Brown, were complaining about the undiomatic vocal writing in certain SA works, and said something to the effect of “So, Robert, when is SAMRO going to commission Hendrik to write something for voice?” And he promptly came up with the commission for the Van der Walt master classes. The choice of poet was left to me, but the range for the (original) medium voice version (B3-F4) was prescribed. I was told that the piano part could be quite challenging (post Grade 8 level). I also made a version for low voice for the master classes. Participants had to sing two songs from the cycle in the master classes. They could choose Nos. 1 & 4, or 2 & 6. I think the selection was determined by the fact that the piano parts in Nos. 3 & 5 are the most challenging. As it was, the pianists battled with the tango in No. 2.

I was flown up to Pretoria to assist in the master classes and to give a talk on the work. Deon and Brenda were apparently quite taken with the piece, and wanted to perform it overseas, so SAMRO asked me to also prepare a high voice version, and published all three versions. Unfortunately, Deon never (to my knowledge) got to perform the work. Last year, London-based soprano Erica Eloff asked me for a “higher” version (the high version was just a tone up from the medium voice version, and she wanted one at one above that), which she premiered at the Wigmore Hall with James Baillieu at piano. Each version entailed certain modifications to the piano part, which could not simply be transposed, especially in the 5th song. I have performed the work myself on a number of
occasions with baritone André Howard, and must admit that the piano part is far from easy!

Biography and Influences

4. You were born in Pinelands, Cape Town in 1957. That area is quite integrated now, how was it during the time you were growing up and did you have any interaction with members outside of your race especially with people of mixed heritage. How would you say that affected you?

Pinelands was a “whites only” area during the time I grew up. I was fortunate enough to grow up in a family that did not agree with apartheid, but even so, our contact with members of other race groups was almost non-existent, as there were very few opportunities for social interaction. This, and all the great injustices of apartheid, was a source of sadness and considerable mental distress to me, as to many others. I also felt oppressed by a system which not only prescribed who I could associate with, but also cast me in the role of oppressor, simply because of the colour of my skin. It was only once I started studying at UCT, where several of my classmates were of mixed race, that I was able to associate more freely with (a limited number of) people of other races. While my elder brother and sister joined the (still banned) ANC, I did not get actively involved, as I did not believe in violence as a solution. Instead, I decided to go abroad after my studies in self-imposed exile as a conscientious objector, as I did not wish to serve in the apartheid army, and to stay abroad until the political situation had changed.

5. How were your parents politically affiliated? Did that affect your beliefs at all? How were you affected during Apartheid by both people suffering because of it and people who were for it?

My parents were liberal, and did not subscribe to apartheid. This, I am sure, had a great influence on my own outlook. One felt impotent in the face of all the injustices of the system, and while I and my siblings used every opportunity to speak out against it (we had, even in primary school, been called “kafferboeties”), there seemed little one could do without going beyond the confines of the law. I decided early on that violence was not an option, and that getting oneself jailed was perhaps more of an ego trip than a real contribution to the cause. Many of our friends and family were supporters of apartheid, which sometimes made things very difficult, but fortunately some thought as we did. My parents became more active in their condemnation of the government when my brother died on hunger strike in solitary confinement in Polsmoor. I was still overseas at that time, which was a very grueling one for my family, but many members of the Afrikaans community came out in support of them.
6. In the past you have said that you don’t believe that music should make a political statement, can you explain this in more detail?

I still feel that art should deal with what is universal in the human condition, extrapolated from a specific experience. Politics are always about ideological generalisation, and are too easily manipulated by the powers that be. There is also the very real danger of turning your beliefs into a way of earning money and/or fame for yourself – what I term ideological prostitution. I think we have seen a great many instances of this in SA, where a great many artists have made highly profitable jumps onto the PC bandwagon. On the other hand, my opera “The Fall of the House of Usher,” which won the SA Opera Competition mentioned above, was turned down by the Grahamstown National Arts Festival because the subject matter was not “relevant” (read PC) enough. The same festival has consistently rewarded artists for the correctness of their ideological position rather than the content of their work. This type of situation is very unhealthy, as it encourages artists to conform to the political agenda of the powers who control the purse strings.

7. In Alleenstryd, there is a prominent theme which follows the psyche of the poet as it drifts from isolation, through despair to a sense of triumph, issues which affected people of mixed heritage quite often, did you have any experiences besides Petersen’s poetry where you were exposed to those issues.

I think the poems speak in a universal way to the oppressed and marginalised in all walks of life. Not only did I identify strongly with what Petersen must have suffered, but I could also apply it to my own position, both as a homosexual in a society, which a tt he t ime w hen I gr ew up, w as much less a ccepting t han it is now o f homosexuality, a nd as a n “outsider” (both in Italy a nd in S A) in t he very c liquey, politicized and fashion-obsessed world of composition.

8. How did your family life affect your musical growth?

My mother played the piano, and would often listen to LPs (mostly Bach, Beethoven and lieder) in the evening after putting us to bed. From an early age I became fascinated by classical music, and begged to be allowed to study piano. I was only allowed to start at age 7, and then time at the piano was meant to be for practicing, not “fiddling around.” So I learnt to play, but not to improvise or compose. That only came later, when I had to do composition assignments in high school.

9. Did you have any religious affiliation while growing up and if so how did the music or liturgy influence your writing style?

I grew up in the Dutch Reformed Church, but found its music not particularly interesting, apart from some of the lovely old chorales. In high school I joined the Philharmonia Choir of Cape Town, and took part in many choral performances,
including works by Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Verdi, Poulenc and Britten. Bach’s Passions and B minor Mass and Britten’s War Requiem probably had the most direct influence on my writing.

10. Can you talk about your first teachers during primary and high school and how they affected you?

My teachers are listed in the attached document. The most important was Sarie Jacobs, who taught me History and Theory in high school, and who first encouraged me to compose, and to consider music as a career option. I still regard her as my “muse.”

11. How did your progress to university and how did you switch from piano to composition?

Sarie had advised me to do Musicology, as this would mean I could one day get a university job, which would leave me enough time for playing and composing, so I did my BMus in Musicology. But piano and composition remained my key interests. My mentor at UCT was Laura Seale, whose piano lessons were a perpetual revelation, and a wonderful voyage of discovery, and she suggested I do a Masters in Piano. I only did one year of Composition, as I did not see eye to eye with Peter Klatzow, who was then still a rather prescriptive avant-gardist. Fortunately he was on sabbatical half of the year, when James May took the classes.

12. Which compositional techniques did you establish in your undergraduate degrees and who were your significant teachers in this regard?

My techniques were quite wide-ranging, but embraced the idea of expanded tonality. I had rejected the avant garde and atonality after a few juvenile attempts at the age of 16-17 (the 1st LP I had bought was of Penderecki’s “The Devils of Loudun”).

13. Can you talk about composers who influenced your writing style, either from South Africa or elsewhere? (These composers can be contemporaries or predecessors)


14. Did any of these composers have a significant influence in the composition of *Alleenstryd*? (More specific questions will be addressed when questions are asked pertaining to each individual song)
Those whose style of text setting I most admire include the great German and French art song composers as well as Wagner and the Italian opera composers. I suppose there are elements of all of these in my vocal writing. And the Afrikaans art songs of Arnold van Wyk and Hubert du Plessis are also close to my heart, and doubtlessly influenced my writing here.

15. Can you talk about the reasons which resulted in your self-imposed exile to Italy?

The only way to avoid military service in those days was to continue studying. I had been accepted to do a MMus in musicology in Britain, but Mrs. Thatcher decided that very year to not subsidise foreign students any more, so my bursaries from UCT were suddenly inadequate. So I decided to go to Italy to study piano with the Alessandro Specchi, the husband and pupil of Maria Tipo, a pianist whose playing of Bach and Scarlatti I greatly admire. After completing the diploma in piano, I went on to study composition and then conducting.

16. While you were in Italy who were your mentors?

For composition, Ivan Vandor; for conducting, Alessandro Pinzauti.

17. How did your writing style change and how did the culture and society affect this?

Italian culture has a very different outlook on life and art to the South African one I grew up in. I had to re-evaluate many of my ideas and opinions, and this was a great exercise in broadening your outlook.

18. During this time you worked with singers in depth, how did this collaboration affect your writing style? Where there any specific opera or Lieder composers that you focused on?

One of my great mentors was the singer Mafalda Masini, who had a wonderful insight into Italian operatic style, and whose singing classes I sometimes accompanied. My own coaching of singers in both opera and lieder also gave me many insights into vocal writing and the use of the voice. I think vocally the most satisfying composers are Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi and Puccini for opera, and Richard Strauss for the lied. I have tried to incorporate elements of their approach to vocality in many of my vocal works, and even attempted a kind of amalgamation of German and Italian style in works such as the *Tre liriche in stile antico*.

19. Can you talk about works which you composed during this time and how your writing style evolved?
I arrived in Italy with quite a few Modernist notions still intact, as can be seen in the piano works, *Nag* (*Night*) and *Dans van n die Reënn*, and the song *Winternag*. This gradually changed as I became more and more disillusioned with the effects of Modernism, especially in the field of vocal music. I had always believed in engaging with tradition, but I now turned more decisively to pre-Modernist music as a model, not for imitation, but for further development. My discovery of the glories of Italian vocal music, operatic and otherwise, was very important in this regard, and the effects can be seen clearly in the songs dating from my first years in Italy (*Tre liriche in stile antico*, *Tre canzoni*, *Of Innocence and Experience*, etc.) and later in my first operas and in the solo cantata *The Death of Cleopatra*.

20. You returned to South Africa in 1991, five years before the composition of *Alleenstryd*. Can you speak about the circumstances surrounding your return? Also, during these five years can you speak about works that you have composed which reinforced certain compositional techniques culminating in the song cycle *Alleenstryd*?

I accepted a lecturing post at the University of Stellenbosch after the dismantling of apartheid had started. Although I was still officially under the obligation to report for compulsory military service, friends had told me that if I did not notify the authorities, they would not come looking for me, as the race register had been scrapped by that time, and the government therefore could not legally call upon men they regarded as “white.” I was halfway through a commission to write a 3-act ballet on Lewis Carroll’s Alice books for CAPAB at the time, so the move was carried out under great pressure, what with having to prepare all the lectures, etc. The ballet project was successfully scuppered by a fellow composer who had been asked to conduct the work, which gave me my first taste of the nastier side of the local music scene. The SA audiences and musicians were far less exposed to modern music than their Italian counterparts, and many found even my moderately modern music difficult to perform and to understand. This strengthened me in my resolve to find a musical language which would be both contemporary and as accessible as possible without sacrificing the aesthetic values of classical music. *The Fall of the House of Usher* had been performed to critical acclaim at the State Theatre in Pretoria in 1989 and had also been broadcast by the SABC, and I had won an international competition in Italy in the same year, but little of this had filtered down to the Cape. I was in fact better known as a composer in the North of the country than in my own province, and it took considerable effort to establish myself. In the 7 years I taught at the University of Stellenbosch, for example, their Symphony Orchestra never expressed interest in performing a work of mine, although I was one of only two composers on the staff. When I organized performances of my own works, the reception was always favourable, but it seemed that unless I took the initiative, nothing would happen. This gradually started changing around 1996, with some
small commissions from The Foundation for the Creative Arts, but at the time of writing *Alleenstryd* I still felt very much like a struggling outsider. All this eventually changed with my winning the Queen Elizabeth of Belgium and the Dimitri Mitropoulos Competitions in 1997, which led to an increased public interest in my music and perhaps made it harder for the establishment to continue ignoring it.

21. You mentioned to Ms. Roos that your music was not *avant garde* but rather an extension of romantic ideals (Roos: p.24). Can you discuss your tonal language in detail and how it evolved, also who influenced you i.e. teachers, other composers?

I believe that virtually all great music is Romantic in intention, in that it sees music as a form of expression, and not merely as a structure of organised sound. To my mind, atonality failed to provide an alternative to the instinctual and universally comprehensible organization provided by tonality, which in some form is present in virtually every type of music, and is not merely an invention of Western composers, as its detractors would have us believe. Expanded tonality (which can incorporate all the diatonic, artificial and even atonal modes) is an irreplaceable tool for imbuing music with shape and meaning. Allied to this is the primary importance of melody and rhythm, which remain the first level of perception and appreciation for every listener. Harmony is an invaluable adjunct to this, as it can enrich the melodic materials in infinitely varied ways. All the other resources of music represent layers of meaning that enrich our experience, even if not immediately appreciated at first hearing. The composers listed above have all managed to balance all these elements in ways which I find moving and convincing. No composition teacher really discussed these things in depth, but James May and Ivan Vandor certainly provided invaluable insights and advice.

22. In the same interview with Ms. Roos you mentioned how Bach’s fugal writing influenced your own writing. Can you please elaborate on your own style when it comes to structure, form, melody and rhythm and how you draw your inspiration for it i.e. other composers, nature, folk music, society etc?

Some of this is answered above and in the attached documentation. Contrapuntal devices fascinate me, and are featured in a great many of my works. My inspiration tends to come from what I wish to convey, and from the ways in which the composers I admire have conveyed their messages. In terms of folk music, I find the rhythmic usage in African music interesting, and have made use of related devices in several works, but I do not regard myself as a folk or nationalist composer. Nationalism is not a notion to which I subscribe, as I have seen first hand its devastating effects. Folk music should not be appropriated for political or nationalist ends.
23. When you have selected a set of poems which you would set to music, what is your compositional process and specifically what was the process with *Alleenstryd*? How do you view the relationship between text and music?

This process is much the same in *Alleenstryd* as elsewhere. I tend to declaim the text aloud to find the best scansion, with the most telling inflections, accents and mood, and then I try to translate this into a vocal line which remains faithful to this ideal without being subservient to it. Music and the voice have their own ways of generating meaning, which sometimes have little to do with declamation, and these should always form part of the vocal realization. To achieve this balance between ideal declamation, expressive vocality and musical sense is the great challenge of text setting. The harmonies often evolve at the same time as the vocal line, or sometimes the latter is born out of the former. The elaboration of the piano part usually comes after this.

24. Can you address your thought process/inspiration of unifying the poems musically as a cycle?

I wanted to create a high level of integration without recourse to the Wagnerian idea of the leitmotif as cross-referential element. (Substantial use is made of the latter in two later cycles, *Die stil a vontuur* and *Vier gebede by jaargetye in die Boland*.) The main unifying elements in this work are certain harmonic/scalar compounds such as quartal compounds and the pentatonic, hexatonic and octatonic scales. All are used as symbols which recur according to the meaning of the text. Some are associated with the idea of innocence and light, and some with the idea of corruption and darkness. The choice of keys is also used as a structural and symbolic device, as explained in the notes to the work.

*Kinders van Kain:*

In the first song you mention the opening chord A (f-c-g-d-a) which utilizes the pentatonic scale. You also use this to describe innocence. Which examples by other composers inspired you to link the pentatonic scale with innocence? Also have you used this scale in your own previous works to symbolize innocence and if so, which works?

There are many examples by other composers, but two that also symbolize dawn or primal innocence are the Rhine maidens’ song from the 1st scene of Wagner’s *Ring*, and “Dawn” from Grieg’s *Peer Gynt*.

25. In this song you also make use of the octatonic chord. Of what significance is this chord to you, besides using it as a color tool for the word ‘rooi’ in the first line of the text? Segments of this chord are used later during the cycle as well.
The scale evokes an inflamed or fiery state for me, and is associated with such states in works such as the ballet Vala, the opera Lumukanda and the Stabat mater for choir.

26. In your notes you mention the isorhythmic figure accompanying the introduction of the human element. Are you referring to measure eight with the entrance of the text 'Vol stof en dons tuimel ons?' Can you elaborate on the development of B in this section which you called a contamination of A (f-c-g#-db-a-e) and specifically how they are seen as an 'amalgam of F major and C sharp minor' the two tonal poles of the piece.

The isorhythmic figure starts in the piano rhythm bar 5, where a color of 11 values is combined with a talea of 4. The hexatonic scale employed can be seen as a conflation of the tonic chords of F major (F-A-C) and C sharp minor (C#-E-G#).

27. As mentioned above again you symbolize innocence with the key of F Major and suffering/experience with the key of C#. Which other compositions/composers in those keys have inspired you to choose those keys to symbolize those emotions? C sharp minor becomes very evident and is used very effectively depicting the darkness in the final stanza. When you refer to the ‘fall from grace’ in this stanza, what specifically are you referring to?

One specifically: Schubert (see end of exposition, beginning of development in 1st movement Bb major Sonata). The fall down 4 semitones from minor to minor later in the work also occurs in Liszt (“Il penseroso”) and Wagner (Parsifal). In this case, the poet’s perception of his own people as “mere flotsam” after the more rosy vision of the first stanzas.

28. Die Veles:

You call this song an ‘account of the multitude’s ability to steer an uncritical middle course between innocence and corruption.’ Was any of your music inspiration derived from any personal experiences or was it purely based on the text?

Mostly based on the text, although much in my own experience has also taught me that people rarely adhere completely to the ideals to which they believe they subscribe.

29. Musically you use superimposed major and minor chords to illustrate the ‘contaminated innocence.’ Have you used this compositional technique before and specifically to symbolize this shift from innocence? Also if so, can you name these examples? What influenced this compositional technique i.e. other composers/mentors?
The only place I have used it overtly, is at the end of “A Cradle Song” in Of Innocence and Experience, where it also represents an intermediary stage between the innocence of the 1st song (“Spring”) and the corruption of the 3rd (“The Sick Rose”). The A-Bb trill against an F# major triad in the final scene of Salome might have been a subconscious influence.

30. In measure 27 you use a chord comprising of two tritones to symbolize evil. What inspired this compositional tool (other composer/works etc?) Also, you mentioned that you use this device in The Fall of the House of Usher and other works; which other works have you used this chord in to symbolize evil?

The tritone has been known as the “Devil in music” since the Middle Ages, and a great many composers have used it as a symbol of evil or the infernal. The opening of Liszt’s “Dante” Sonata is an example. I use the chord extensively as symbol for Watamaraka, the Goddess of Evil, in the opera Lumukanda.

31. This song is set to a tango, which is very reminiscent of the ‘habanera’ in Carmen. Which composers influenced this and were you exposed to a lot of this music during your time in Europe?

I did not specifically encounter the tango in Europe, but it has always fascinated me with its combination of opposites (the languid and the steely) and with its suggestion of the sleazy. It seemed the right symbol for a rather sleazy compromise between good and evil. I had incorporated an anachronistic tango in the ballet Alice, and have since written another for the song cycle Of Darkness and the Heart, as well as 2 instrumental ones.

32. Weeklag van die Gewonde:

In your notes you mentioned the poet’s obsessive state of mind. Was this realization brought upon solely by the text or did you have any interaction with the poet or someone who knew S.V. Petersen to influence you?

It derives purely from my reading of his poems, including a number not used in the cycle. His output contains an unusually large number of obsessively pessimistic works.

33. When you speak of the ‘relentless uniformity of the harmonic vocabulary’ to depict this obsession, are you referring to the repetition of the segments of the C chord throughout the song?

Yes.

34. Can you elaborate on the ‘hemming-in’ of the note d around measure 52 and its use of depicting the poets despair?
The use of minor 2nds on either side of the D, both tending towards it as leading tones, creates a kind of musical claustrophobia.

35. Kinderland:

It is remarkable how the opening motive of the cycle which reflects dawn, repeated here in this opening, clearly conjures the image of dew drops falling in the morning. What was your inspiration for this theme besides the use of the pentatonic scale?

The “purity” of the open fifth, from which both the compound, the melodic line and, later, the accompanying figure, are constructed. And the spaciousness of the major 9th (used in the 1st song at “oopgebars” and “die son”), formed here by consecutive leaps of a perfect 5th.

36. Tell me more about the technique you used in regards to the sympathetic vibrations of the strings in the piano of the left hand, while the right hand plays the melody? Have you used this technique in other pieces before, if so what were they? Also, have you heard other composers do this in their music before?

I used it previously in my 1st piano works, Nag and Dans van die Reën, and more recently in the 4th song of Vier gebede and in the Sonata for Horn and Piano. Others have done so, but I did not know of other instances at the time I 1st used the device.

37. As mentioned previously you spoke of Bach’s influence, was the canonic writing between the voice and piano from measures 4 to 23 an example of this influence?

Yes. The 1st song of Tre canzoni is also largely canonic, portraying the lover pursuing the beloved.

38. Can you explain the notation in the left hand of the piano part from measures 9 to 12?

The lh depresses the keys silently so that the strings are free to vibrate in sympathy with the notes in the rh.

39. You make use of a major seventh pedal in this song. In Schumann’s Dichterliebe, he uses the diminished seventh as a cohesive device. How great was Schumann or Schubert or other pillars of the art song repertory in the composition of this work?

The great composers of art songs were a primary source of inspiration, as they have been throughout my career. Mahler is perhaps the most direct antecedent in this song,
especially in his “withdrawal from the world” mode (see “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen”).

40. Die Gier van die Bose

In the middle the poem, the text ‘soos ‘n ritmiese hel wat op loop is’, seems to be remarkably displayed from the beginning of the song by the striking piano introduction. What was your motivation behind the intense rhythmic patterns of this song?

You hit the nail on the head – the phrase you cite was the inspiration behind the relentless rhythmic drive of the whole, which also echoes an earlier piano work based on African rhythms, Kalunga, a depiction of the dance of the God of Death and the Underworld.

41. In this song you also make use of the circle of fifths from measures 41 -51 and from measures 78- 87. This is another element of traditional baroque form and can especially be found in Bach’s music. Would you consider this piece to have Neo Classical elements?

Not really, the circle in question is really the one where you move down in 4-semitone intervals between minor chords/keys (here G# -E-C-G#) till you get back to the start. It symbolizes the fall from grace into a “bottomless pit.”

42. Ecce Homo

Musically you have clearly portrayed the sense of triumphed which the text refers to by the upward -modulating ostinato and the progression from c sharp minor to the final chord. It is interesting to note that instead of the cycle ending on the opening key of F Major symbolizing innocence, you have decided to end in C sharp major, which is even more of a symbol of overcoming suffering and despair transforming it into triumph. Can you elaborate on this compositional process?

The state the poet arrives at in the end is not a regaining of innocence, but a transformation of suffering (C# minor) into triumph (C# major). This is a time-honoured Romantic device (See Beethoven’s 5th Symphony or Liszt’s Mazeppa). The notes of C# major tonic chord are also contained in the hexatonic scale used in the 1st song, to which the F and C# tonic chords also belong.

43. Throughout this cycle you have been very clear regarding musical markings indicating tempo and other interpretive gestures, even the amount of time to be taken between songs. Have you always showed these markings this elaborately or is this unique to this song cycle?
I tend to be quite specific as an aid to understanding my intentions, but this is the only cycle where I have specified the time to be taken between songs, as I feel it contributes to the psychological placing of each song within the greater dramatic narrative.

44. Is there any extra information that you think is relevant which has not been addressed?
I think you have been very thorough - congratulations!


Hofmeyr, Hendrik. Email to the author. Thursday, April 3, 2008.

_____________. Interview/Email to the author. Wednesday, May 27, 2009.


Music Scores


Discography