

**Baroque influences in nineteenth and twentieth century
piano repertoire: a study of interpretative issues**

Xu Wen

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ABSTRACT

The exegesis investigates ways in which major piano works of the 19th and 20th centuries reflect elements of baroque tradition and considers the implications for performance. After the baroque period, from the 18th century to the present, many composers have continued to explore baroque forms, textures and expressive devices. Thus, by investigating the nature of such stylistic linkages, the performer can enter the works at a deeper structural and expressive level.

DECLARATION

This submission contains no material which has been accepted for award on any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my exegesis, when deposited in the University of Adelaide Library being available for loan and photocopy.

Xu Wen

November 2007

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1. Introduction:

The aim of my research has been to investigate some of the ways in which major piano works of the 19th and 20th centuries reflect elements of baroque tradition and to consider the implications for performance. After the baroque period, from the 18th century to the present, many composers have continued to explore baroque forms, textures and expressive devices. Thus, the musical spirit of the baroque period has been a significant factor in the development of piano repertoire.

The specific performance issues vary depending upon the works being approached. In performing original works from the baroque period, it is important to consider current understandings regarding historical performance practice within the context of one's own personal interpretative ideas. We also need to consider the nature and development of the instrument itself. The piano directly influences musical composition, conditions it and even inspires it, both by its capacities and by its limitations. Thus, the instrument creates musical style, marking out its stages of development. From the classical period to the present time, the mechanism and construction of the piano have changed dramatically with consequent effects on tone and sonority.

For the modern performer, there are many issues that need to be considered in interpreting not only baroque compositions themselves but also those later works that were inspired by them. Is it necessary for the pianist to emphasize the stylistic purity of the baroque models? Or should the references to earlier styles be put into a wider interpretative context?

What insights can be drawn from the way in which a composer utilizes such historical references and what part do they play in the work as a whole?

My research reflected upon the following questions:

1. What features of my chosen repertoire were related in some way to 18th century forms and practices?
2. To what extent do baroque approaches to musical symbolism contribute to the expressive language of the music being performed?
3. What effect does this understanding have on the way a performer might approach the works?

This exegesis is divided into two contexts for each piece:

1. A discussion of my repertoire and the ways in which it relates to the research area.
2. A reflective commentary on the issues addressed in the repertoire.

The repertoire of my two recitals represents five broad categories:

1. Original works from the baroque period - (selection from Bach's Inventions and Sinfonias).
2. Baroque works composed originally for another instrument and transcribed for solo piano – (most notably Busoni's arrangement for piano of Bach's Chaconne in D minor for solo violin).
3. Works that are loosely based upon baroque compositions but are transformed into fresh and distinctive compositions – (such as Liszt's Variations on a Theme by Bach (*Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*) and Brahms's Variations and Fugue on a theme of Handel Op. 24).

4. Works that re-interpret baroque forms – (such as Shostakovich's Preludes and Fugues).
5. Large scale works by a variety of 19th and 20th century composers that reflect their own artistic personality while at the same time being influenced by particular elements of the baroque tradition – (Examples include the late sonata Op.110 of Beethoven and works such as Cesar Franck's Prelude Choral and Fugue).

2. DISCUSSION OF WORKS

▪ **J.S. Bach: Inventions No.8 BWV 779 and No.9 BWV 780** **Sinfonias No.8 BWV 794 and No.9 BWV 795**

Why did I choose these seemingly simple pieces to open my first recital? Because they demonstrate many important elements of baroque keyboard style and enabled me to experience something of the spirit of baroque expression. They required me to consider important technical, musical, expressive and intellectual issues that would form a background to my subsequent investigations. Of particular importance were fingering, articulation, voice balancing and ornamentation.

The Invention No.8 in F major is a relatively straightforward piece, but it is a good study for the imitative style of playing. It can also be used as an excellent study for the development of a non-legato touch. This is an important ingredient in the performance of 18th century music and it helps the player to achieve a level of clarity similar to what is possible on the harpsichord, the instrument for which this work was probably written. It should be played with humour and joy. The primary theme contains two different motivic elements and my intention was to treat each differently – the ascending quaver figure a crisp non-legato and the semiquavers something closer to a legato. So clarity of touch should be a distinguishing feature of the performance.

The Invention No.9 in F minor includes some markings by Bach that indicate how to approach articulation and phrasing. I consulted and compared two editions: the first was the urtext edition published by Henle Verlag (see Example 1). The Henle edition was prepared by Rudolf Steglich and followed Bach's fair copy in the division

of the parts on the two staves.¹ The second was the Allans Publishing edition (see Example 2). This is typical of many of the editions from the first half of the 20th century and presents a personal interpretation of Bach's text.²

Example 1: Bach: Invention No.9 BWV 780, bars 1 to 3 (Henle Urtext edition)



Example 2: Bach: Invention No.9 BWV 780, bars 1 to 3 (Allans Publishing edition)



There are many obvious differences between the two editions. The Allans edition has many markings that do not occur in the original, though in some cases, they do not actually undermine its intention. It provides detailed suggestions that represent only one of many possible approaches. The Henle edition, on the other hand, gives Bach's original text. It is unusual in that it includes many articulation markings that indicate Bach's preferred performance style. Bach rarely included such markings in his compositions. When they are absent, the player needs to develop their own personal interpretation of the music, within the context of the known performance conventions of the time.

¹ Johann Sebastian Bach. *Invention and Sinfonien*. (München: G. Henle Verlag, 1978).

² Johann Sebastian Bach. *Inventions: Two and Three part Complete*. (Sydney: Allans Publishing, n.d.).

Now, turning to the Sinfonia No.8, this work is again spirited and joyous. It has a lively rhythm and in particular presents a confident gesture expressed by the intervals themselves. I prefer a non-legato touch – perhaps because of the energetic spirit of the piece and in order to avoid thickness in the contrapuntal texture. I try to achieve a light, clear touch throughout. For bars 7 to 10 (see Example 3), the change of texture from three parts to two and the increased chromaticism prompted me to approach it in a somewhat contrasting style.

Example 3: Bach: Sinfonia No.8 BWV 794, bars 7 to 10

The image shows a musical score for Example 3, which is a section of Bach's Sinfonia No. 8, BWV 794, specifically bars 7 to 10. The score is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system covers bars 7 and 8, and the second system covers bars 9 and 10. The music is in G major and 3/4 time. The notation includes various note values (eighth and sixteenth notes), slurs, and fingerings. A red vertical line is positioned on the right side of the score.

The Sinfonia No.9 in F minor, on the other hand, requires the performer to concentrate on a more profound level of expression. I identified two different thematic elements in this piece. Firstly, we notice the three-note motive of the right hand which, according to Bach's own markings, must be played legato. The expressive gesture projected by means of the slurred descending second always implies a level of emotional intensity. So how can one approach these notes? Should we emphasize the first note or the second note? I prefer to give a little extra intensity

to the second note, resolving smoothly and softly onto the third. This helps to reinforce the relationship between dissonance and consonance. It is interesting to note that the bass line is very similar to that found in the *Crucifixus* from the B minor Mass (see Example 10 on page 15), used also in Liszt's *Variations on a Theme by Bach - Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* (see Example 9 on page 14). The musical symbolism of the descending chromatic base line appears in different contexts but always with the same expressive intent.

A second important element of this piece is the clashing dissonances that are used throughout. This requires the player to pay careful attention to chord voicings so as to produce an effective relationship between discords and resolutions. The weeping motifs are deeply moving, reminding one of some of the most intense scenes from Bach's passions. The following is taken from *the Passion according to St. Matthew* (see Example 4).

Example 4: Bach: *The passion of our Lord according to St. Matthew* BWV 244, No.33 Duo e Core, bars 25 to 29

The image displays a musical score for Example 4, consisting of vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features two vocal staves at the top, both with lyrics: "- ken, Moon and stars Have for grief the night for -". Below the vocal staves are five staves for the piano accompaniment, including a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and three individual staves. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, and the piano part shows a descending chromatic line in the bass register.

Heinrich Neuhaus, the great Russian pianist and teacher, had this to say:

“Bach used the key of F minor to express intense religious fervour: think of the three-part Invention in F minor, for instance, the F minor prelude and fugue out of the first book, the first movement of the F minor Sonata for violin and piano, the last aria *Oh, Zerfliess* from the *Passion according to St. John*. Subsequently F minor became the best vehicle for expressing more earthly human passion.”³

This piece stands alone in the set of Sinfonias on account of the seriousness of its expressions and the complexity of its harmony.

³ Heinrich Neuhaus. Translated by K.A. Leibovitch. *The Art of Piano Playing*. (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd, 1978). p.189.

▪ **J.S. Bach arr. Ferruccio Busoni: Chaconne from the Partita in D minor**

Bach originally composed this great work in 1720 as the final movement of the *Partita in D minor for violin* BWV1004. Busoni was a composer, pianist, editor and arranger, and was closely associated with the music of J.S. Bach. He arranged several of Bach's works for the piano, including the famous *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor* (originally for organ) and the Chaconne from *the Partita in D minor for violin*. Busoni transcribed the Chaconne for solo piano in 1892. Bach's original composition contained many features of texture and style that were characteristic of the 18th century. It utilises dance rhythms and explores a few small, important motives throughout the work. As explained further below, the music expands its lines of movement to great lengths while also delighting in imitation. The violin's techniques and sounds are translated into pianistic figures, some of which are also influenced by organ sonority. The multiple blind octave technique Busoni developed for this and other transcriptions and the extension of Brahmsian and Lisztian texture drew an organ-like richness from the piano. Busoni succeeded to manage the skilful use of all the piano's resources to give this work a wholly new personality.

The Chaconne is a special type of continuous theme and variations where a fairly short subject (normally 4 measures) is relentlessly repeated and varied. The subject or theme occurs either as a repeating melodic bass line or as a harmonic progression. It is a slow dance in simple triple metre, often in a minor key, using the rhythm of a Sarabande, with an agogic accent on the second beat.⁴

⁴Larry, Solomon. "Bach's Chaconne in D minor for solo violin-An Application through analysis"
Music Theory and performance. 2002.
<<http://solomonsmusic.net/bachacon.htm>> (6 July 2007).

Busoni gives very clear indications of the performance style he is looking for in this work. He does this by the inclusion of specific verbal tempo markings and through his frequent indications of dynamics and articulation during the course of the work.

The examples discussed below represent different approaches to sonority and texture.

Example 5 represents a typically pianistic figure which contains an expressive right hand melody supported by a sonorous bass and delicate accompanying chords. The touch should be expressed as a gentle cantabile, within the context of a relaxed musical flow.

Example 5: Bach arr. Busoni: Chaconne from the Partita in D minor, bars 78 to 81

By contrast, example 6 calls for a grand sound that is reminiscent of Bach's organ music. There is little connection to the original violin model. It requires rich tones with generous and imaginative use of the pedal (see Example 6).

Example 6: Bach arr. Busoni: Chaconne from the Partita in D minor, bars 130 to 137

The musical score for Example 6 is presented in two systems. The first system, marked 'Tempo I' and 'ff molto tenuto', shows a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand. The second system continues the accompaniment, featuring a triplet in the right hand and a sixteenth-note pattern in the left hand.

Example 7 remains very close to the original violin style. It imitates the effect achieved when the bow moves from the lower strings to the upper strings, causing the sound of the note on the upper string to resonate more freely and allowing the outer voices to be heard clearly. This section should be approached with a light, well balanced staccato touch that imitates the typical bowing patterns of the original violin Partita.

Example 7: Bach arr. Busoni: Chaconne from the Partita in D minor, bars 94 to 97

The musical score for Example 7 is presented in two systems. The first system is marked 'tranquillo sehr weich' and 'p subito', showing a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand. The second system, marked 'II Ped.', continues the accompaniment with a staccato touch, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

▪ **Franz Liszt: Variations on a Theme by Bach - *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen***

The Variations on a Theme by Bach - *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* date from 1862, when Liszt was 51 years old. They were published in 1864. This work is one of his most moving masterpieces, written on the death of his daughter - Blandine Olliver. This work is an interesting one for the pianist to investigate. The variations are in fact a passacaglia, leading into a fantasy on its chromatic ground bass and concluded by a chorale. The theme of this work is based on a chromatic ostinato that Bach used in the first movement of his cantata BWV12 - *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*. It was subsequently used in the *Crucifixus* of the B minor Mass. Stirred by the psychological implications of this title (“weeping, lamentation, worry, apprehension”), Liszt produced a superb example of programme music at its most emotional and least pictorial. He includes quotes from the Bach works to create a narrative of sorts through symbolism.

Firstly, to understand the spirit of the work, a good starting point for the performer is to study the texts set by Bach in the original cantata (see Example 8 on next page). They will point the performer to the emotional journey that is followed as the piece unfolds.

Example 8: J.S. Bach: Cantata BWV12, bars 17 to 22

The image shows a musical score for Example 8: J.S. Bach: Cantata BWV12, bars 17 to 22. The score is for a full orchestra and a four-part vocal choir. The tempo is marked "Lento". The instruments are Violino I, Violino II, Viola I, Viola II, Fagotto, Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso, and Continuo. The vocal parts have lyrics: Soprano: Wei - nen, Kla - gen; Alto: Kla - gen, Za - ; Tenore: Sor - gen, Wei - nen; Basso: Za - gen, Sor - gen. The instrumental parts are written in G minor, 3/2 time, and feature a prominent appoggiatura in the vocal entries.

The key emotions in the texts are the suffering, pain and torment of the true believer, which can be summarised as sorrow and anguish. This is contrasted with the refuge, comfort and strength that can be found in God's presence – resolution, clarity and even triumph. These emotions are translated into musical figures and treated with almost austere concentration. The "sorrow and anguish" of the text is expressed by the use of dissonance. Bach applied the appoggiaturas to the staggered vocal entries of the opening chorale (in the Cantata). Liszt also uses appoggiaturas in the same manner as Bach as a means of expressing the deep sadness of the opening. So the player should pay careful attention to the shaping of the appoggiaturas, dealing with the falling seconds in the manner of a sorrowful sigh (see Example 9).

Example 9: Liszt: Variations on a Theme by Bach, figure 1, bars 1 to 10

(1) *Andante*

(12 min. 30)

The musical score consists of two systems of grand staves. The first system contains bars 1 through 6, and the second system contains bars 7 through 10. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked '(1) Andante' and the duration is '(12 min. 30)'. The score includes dynamic markings: *ff*, *pesante*, *sf*, and *ff*. Performance instructions include 'Red.' (ritardando) and asterisks (*) indicating specific performance points. The notation features complex textures with multiple voices in both hands, including a prominent ground bass in the left hand.

As mentioned above, the theme of the variations is presented as a direct quote of the vocal lines and ground bass from the opening of the Bach Cantata, which is found also in the *Crucifixus* (see Examples 8 on previous page & 10 on next page).

Example 10: J.S. Bach: Mass in B Minor, *Crucifixus*, bars 1 to 5

No. 16.

Flauto trav. I.
Flauto trav. II.
Violino I.
Violino II.
Viola,
SOPRANO II.
ALTO.
TENORE.
BASSO.
Continuo.
(V. Cello e C.B.)

fi - xus,
Cru-ci - fi - xus,
Cru-ci - fi - xus,
Cru-ci - fi - xus,
Cru-ci - fi - xus,
Cru-ci - fi - xus,
Cru-ci - fi - xus,
Cru-ci - fi - xus,

However, the staggered vocal entries of the chorus are presented as a single unified melodic line without the sustained polyphonic layering (see Example 11). The

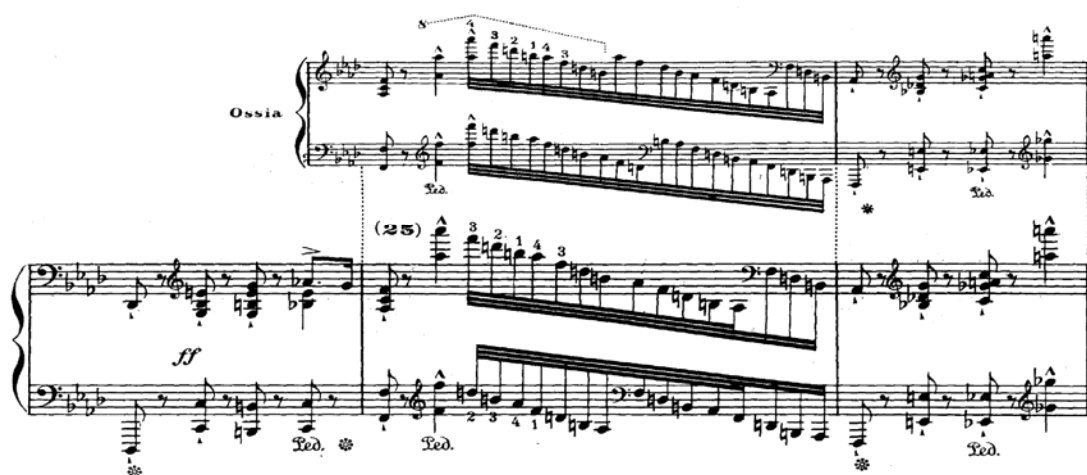
result is a melody which contains all the movement from within the choral parts, but does not contain their resultant harmony. Furthermore, this melody is placed over the ground bass during the statement of the theme and leads seamlessly into the first variation. According to this structure, the object for the performer should be to clearly communicate the independence of each part by paying close attention to the marked articulation.

Example 11: Liszt: Variations on a Theme by Bach, figure 2, bars 20 to 25



The work builds in intensity over the ground bass and finally reaches a climax between figures 24 and 25. For this climax, Liszt used characteristically flamboyant gestures that produced greater strength, bigger sound and a wider dynamic range (see Example 12).

Example 12: Liszt: Variations on a Theme by Bach, figure 25, bars 201 to 203



At figure 26, the passacaglia concludes and Liszt begins to explore the emotions more freely. Initially this is expressed through the use of *suspirando* and chromatic harmonies, and in a more subdued manner. After a contemplative “recitative” section at figure 27, the work begins to build in emotional intensity through further exploration of *suspirando* at figure 28 and with chromatic sighing harmonies over pedal points at figure 29. In terms of the emotional journey of the work, I regard these sections as a low point – that is to say they are expressive and intimate rather than virtuosic and exciting. However, the performer should convey an inner sadness and grief with the timbral effects at their disposal.

Following a brief cadenza at figure 33, Liszt quotes a full chorale from J.S. Bach’s Cantata BWV12. It begins in standard 4- part harmony. We could assume that Liszt intended that the chorale should be the main climax of the work. It is worth noting that this climax is a point of repose. Liszt was deeply religious and the text of the chorale clearly constitutes a statement of faith despite his anguish (see Example 13).

Example 13: Liszt: Variations on a Theme by Bach, figure 34, bars 330 to 337

The image shows a musical score for a chorale. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system is for the vocal line, and the bottom system is for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked *Lento*. The lyrics are in German and French. The piano part includes markings for *dolce*, *dim.*, *p*, and *ff*. There are several *Ped.* (pedal) markings throughout the piano part. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Choral
 (34) *Lento* Gott thut das ist wohl - ge - than, da - hei will ich ver - blei - ben. Es
 Tout ce que Dieu fait est bien fait. Cet - te cer - ti - tude me suf - fit Pour
 mag - mich auf die rau - he Bahn Noth, Tod und E - lend
 a - pla - nir l'a - pre che - min sur ie - quel me poussent

The placement of the chorale at the end of the work creates an echo of the structure of the Cantata. Clearly Liszt intended that his variations should have many parallels to Bach's Cantata, and that the religious message in Bach's work should be present in the Variations. The text "that which God does is done well" expresses his belief that God does all things for good reasons even if we cannot always understand why. According to this, I think it should be expressed with a mood of poise. The anguish is replaced by confidence and firmly stated clarity. The chorale needs to achieve a singing line with diaphanous sound and purity of colour.

▪ Johannes Brahms: Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Handel Op.24

The Variations and Fugue on a theme of Handel Op.24 were composed in 1861 and published in 1862. The theme, which is very simple in terms of its melodic, rhythmic and harmonic style, can be found in Handel's *Suite de Pieces pour le Clavecin* (second volume, 1733) where it takes the form of an Aria with five variations. Many of Brahms's variations explore 18th century elements of form, style or texture. For example, Variations 6 and 16 are in the canonic style, Variation 22 captures "the musical box" sound of the *Couperin* era while Variation 19 is a *Siciliana*. Similar references to earlier practice occur throughout the work. Other variations are characteristically romantic in their approach, such as Variations 11 and 12, with rich, warm keyboard sonorities. In addition, Brahms was aware of the elements of song and all the technical and harmonic devices of the romantic period. The pianist needs to ponder how to combine convincingly the different stylistic elements in performance.

Given the mix of classical and romantic features in the work as a whole, the player has a number of choices with regard to approaching the theme itself. Should the trills be started from the upper note or from the main note and should we emphasize the main note or not (see Example 14)? In general, trills in the baroque period are begun on the auxiliary note, in order to create a dissonance which then resolves onto the principal note. In this instance, I prefer to play the trills starting lightly from main note in order to emphasize the ascending melodic contour.

In the same way, it is possible to approach the articulation of this theme legato (closer to a 19th century approach) or with some non-legato elements (as would

probably have been done in the baroque period). If we play this theme only in a legato manner, then it will lean towards a more romantic style. Given that the theme of this work comes from Handel's *Aria*, I prefer an approach that is not too romantic and therefore chose to slightly separate the semiquavers and play legato over longer notes. I think this way gives the theme a clear melodic outline while also creating a quality of musical tone consistent with what we know about baroque style.

Example 14: Brahms: The Variations and Fugue on a theme of Handel Op.24, *Aria*, bars 1 to 6



The repeats of the *Aria* and many of the variations benefit from a change of emphasis, bringing out now the upper, now the inner line, so exposing some of intricate motivic connections between theme and variations. With regard to the theme, I prefer to play it quite simply, with a softer dynamic for the repeated sections.

When I considered what kind of tempo to set for the theme, I took the view that the tempo is not only for the theme itself, but that it also has implications for the composition as a whole. Tempo is a central means of connecting and uniting the complete work. I investigated three pianists' recordings⁵ and found that their tempo

⁵ Claudio, Arrau. piano. *Variationen und Fugue uber ein Thema von Handel Op.24*. Compact LP Disc. Phillips, 1978.
 Katchen, Julius. piano. Brahms, Johannes, 1833-1897 Works for solo piano. Compact Disc. Decca 430 053-2, 1990.
 Solomon. piano. *Solomon*. Compact Disc. Phillips 456 973-2, 1999.

ranged from crotchet = 69 to crotchet = 76. I found that crotchet = 74 served as a good basic tempo that allowed me to express the music and deliver the whole work.

A large set of variations presents the performer with problems of structure. The individual sections need to be given their own distinctive character but not at the expense of overall structural cohesion. If we look at a sonata, by way of contrast, the sequence of movements is what gives the listener an initial sense of overall architecture. In an extended set of variations, a similar effect can be achieved by carefully considering how the variations might be combined into larger units, so generating an integrated sense of structure. Brahms himself gave some helpful indications of how this might be done. He did so by marking pauses and in some cases, tempo changes. These markings need to be carefully noted. There are five variations where tempo changes have been marked:

- Variation 2 “*animato*”
- Variation 7 “*con vivacita*”
- Variation 9 “*poco sostenuto*”
- Variation 13 “*Largamente, ma non piu*”
- Variation 17 “*Piu mosso*”.

If Brahms did not signal tempo changes, we need to consider whether or not he intended the same tempo to be used throughout. The two recordings that I investigated showed interesting differences in this regard. For instance, when beginning Variation 2, Julius Katchen maintained the same tempo without noticeable *rubato*. He played it with a long line and more sustained sound. Solomon played it in a more romantic way, with more *rubato* and with more chromatic colouring. In

Variation 3, Julius Katchen continues in the same tempo as mentioned above and adopts a more legato style and a more singing upper line than Solomon. I regard these parts as one structural unit and prefer to play them in a united tempo.

The following table (see Table 1) shows the grouping of variations according to the composer's deliberately marked pause points. It also shows the points of climax and repose.

Table 1: Brahms: The Variations and Fugue on a theme of Handel Op.24, structure table

↑ = Active climax point ↓ = Point of repose

| |
|---------------------------------|
| Aria |
| Var 1 |
| Var 2 |
| Var 3 |
| Var 4 ↑ |
| Var 5 |
| Var 6 pause point |
| Var 7 ↑ |
| Var 8 ↑ pause point |
| Var 9 pause point |
| Var 10 |
| Var 11 |
| Var 12 |
| Var 13 ↓ |
| Var 14 ↑ |
| Var 15 ↑ pause point |
| Var 16 |
| Var 17 |
| Var 18 |
| Var 19 |
| Var 20 ↓ |
| Var 21 ↓ pause point |
| Var 22 |
| Var 23 |
| Var 24 |
| Var 25 ↑ pause point |
| Fugue |

Another way of emphasizing the larger structure is to plan carefully the points of climax and repose. Variations 4, 14, 15 and 25 are high points of this work while Variations 13, 20 and 21 have peaceful emotions. I try to make the most of these to provide a balance with the more active sections surrounding them.

This work adopted many of the musical resources of baroque period within the context of a large scale romantic approach. Players such as Solomon choose to emphasise the romantic elements, using rich sonorities and frequent *Rubato*. However, Julius Katchen tends to create the sense in a more classical way, with clear, crisp articulation and tight rhythmic control.

In short, there is a variety of different approaches that can be adopted in this work; all of them are equally good. No matter what choice one makes, it is important to understand and recognize the baroque references as they formed such an important part of Brahms's thinking.

▪ **Dmitri Shostakovich: Prelude and Fugue in D minor Op.87, No.24**

Shostakovich composed the Preludes and Fugues Op.87 in 1950-1951. The set was inspired by Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier*. It was an unexpected outcome of attending the 200th anniversary of Bach's death that took place in Leipzig in July 1950. Tatiana Nikolayeva won the Bach competition and was known as an authoritative performer for the Preludes and Fugues Op.87. She gave the following comments regarding the work 'The Op.87 begins with the identical notes with which Bach began the first book of the '48', and various of Shostakovich's pieces likewise transform Bach's material.'⁶ However, Shostakovich succeeded in creating a wholly new personality for the Prelude and Fugue. This set may represent the 20th century's most significant contribution to the neo-baroque piano repertoire. The D Minor Prelude uses the sarabande rhythm, a feature it shares with the theme of Bach's *Chaconne*. The relationship between dissonance and resolution was used by Shostakovich as an expressive device in much the same way as Bach employed it in his *Sinfonia* 9. It is largely through this use of dissonance that the dark, intense character of the prelude is communicated. The subject of the fugue emerges from the prelude's coda and then grows into a double fugue. The piece combines baroque forms with modern tonality. In addition, it covers a remarkably wide range of mood and expression.

The Prelude challenges the performer to achieve quite a wide dynamic range while at the same time maintaining the effective voicing of the dissonant harmonies.

⁶ Nikolayeva, Tatiana. piano. *Shostakovich 24 Preludes and fugues, Op.87*. Compact Disc. Hyperion CDA66441/3, 1991.

For instance, the fortissimo of the opening theme requires an effective balance between the top line and the bass line. The middle voices contribute to the dissonance and need to move clearly and smoothly to their resolution. The bass notes provide the foundation for both the harmony and the sonority and need to ring clearly. It is largely through the player's treatment of dissonance that the emotional intensity of the prelude is communicated.

Unlike Bach, who provided the performer with little more than the notes themselves, Shostakovich included various performance instructions in his scores. There are, however many decisions still to be made. One concerns the articulation of the fugue's opening subject. Should we play it in a slurred style or with some separation between the notes? Actually, there are no slurs marked in the score. He marked it "*tenuto*" which presented a range of possibilities from essentially legato to distinctly separate. I prefer to play this theme legato with a little pedal, aiming for a very quiet spirit.

By contrast, the passage commencing at bar 112 contains very clear articulation marking (see Example 15). The slurred pairs of notes are related to the musical spirit that this figure often expresses in the music of Bach, as seen in Fugue 21 from the *Well-tempered Clavier* Part II (see Example 16).

Example 15: Shostakovich: Preludes and Fugues of Op.87, No.24, Fugue, bars 106 to118

The musical score for Example 15 consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the piece with a more complex texture. Performance markings include *accelerando poco* and *pp* (pianissimo) in the first system, and *a poco* in the second system.

Example 16: Bach: *Well-tempered Clavier* Part II No.21 BWV 890, Fugue, bars 1 to 6

The musical score for Example 16 consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the piece with a more complex texture. Performance markings include *1*, *3 2 2*, *4 2 2*, and *1 2 3* in the first system, and *5 5* and *5* in the second system.

The full impact of this fugue is only experienced when the player maintains complete dynamic control throughout the developing movement. We need to ensure that the long journey is properly planned, especially the long *accelerando* and the *crescendo* towards the main climax point. The main climax point comes in bar 261 and is marked “*Maestoso*”. There is no doubt as to Shostakovich’s intentions which produce a huge sound with brilliant and sustained sonority (see Example 17).

Example 17: Shostakovich: Preludes and Fugues of Op.87, No.24, Fugue, bars 258 to 262

The musical score for Example 17 consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the piece with a more complex texture. Performance markings include *rit.*, *cresc.*, *tenuto*, and *fff* (fortissimo) in the first system, and *Maestoso (d. = 56)* in the second system.

The entrance of the Fugue is presented pianissimo and the end is fortissimo. Controlling and expressing pianissimo and fortissimo and all the levels in between are a big challenge in this piece.

Pianissimo is used from the beginning and extended until bar 106. Although it should be played in a very soft manner, it is still necessary to achieve expressive intensity and clarity of voicing. This requires the player to pay careful attention to the expressive integrity of each voice of the texture. Furthermore, this emotion should be planned and conserved for a long journey. At the end, the challenge is to achieve a real fortissimo that still achieves quality and balance between parts and registers.

▪ **Cesar Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue in B minor M 21**

The Prelude, Chorale and Fugue in B minor was written in the summer of 1884 and was played by Mlle Marie Poitevin to whom it was also dedicated. The first performance was given at the Société Nationale on January 24, 1885. Franck was a composer, organist and pianist, one of the most prominent composers of organ music after J.S. Bach. The influence of Bach can be clearly seen in his later piano works.

Franck was a great organist and a Bach devotee, was not only enchanted but also creatively stirred, confiding to his pupils his wish to “enrich” the French pianistic repertoire with substantial works. Franck had a great interest in 18th baroque music. His Prelude, Chorale and Fugue express not only the religious tone that permeates much of Franck's music but also his own love of Bach.

The Prelude, Chorale and Fugue employs the cyclic form. The cyclic form is a technique of musical construction that involves multiple sections or movements in which musical material occurs in more than one movement as a unifying device. There are four main motives which form the basis of the work.

The first motif occurs in the opening and is a slightly altered version of the B-A-C-H theme. The theme is based upon the old German system of key spellings, with the lettering running from A through H, rather than A through G as we use today. Our modern B-flat is the old B, and the modern B is denoted H. This allows one to spell the name B-A-C-H as follows (see Example 18):

Example 18: Bach: B-A-C-H theme



Franck used a slightly altered version of the theme in the opening of the prelude but its origin is clear (see Example 19). Liszt also employed it in his *Fantasia and fugue on the theme B-A-C-H* in 1855.

Example 19: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Prelude, bars 1 to 3

The musical score is titled "Prélude" and "Moderato". It is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The score consists of three systems of music. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a descending arpeggiated figure with accents (^) and fingerings (1, 2). The left hand has a steady bass line with fingerings (1, 2). The second system continues the arpeggiated figure with chromatic alterations and includes a fermata. The third system concludes with a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a fermata over the final notes. The score includes various musical notations such as accents, fingerings, and a crescendo marking.

The motive consists of a series of falling appoggiaturas and is used in all three sections, resulting in a high level of chromaticism. The opening of the Prelude is particularly difficult to play. The challenge is to balance the right hand theme with the pedal notes in the bass and with the delicate accompanying harmonies. The opening should have a little freedom and a feeling for the long musical line. I try to loosen the arm and keep the melodic line in mind. The pedaling is an important means of connecting the long phrasing well but I also need to listen carefully in order to keep the harmonic changes clear. The arpeggio figures should be flexible and not rushed.

The second motif occurs with the octave chords “*mf a capriccio*” in bar 8 (see Example 20).

Example 20: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Prelude, bars 7 to 10

The musical score for Example 20 consists of two systems of music. The first system (bars 7-8) shows a descending eighth-note motif in the right hand, starting on G4 and moving down to D4. The left hand has a 4-measure rest. The second system (bars 9-10) features a series of octave chords in the right hand, starting on G4 and moving down to D4. The left hand has a 7-measure rest. Dynamics include 'dim.' and 'mf a capriccio'.

This motive creates a strong expressive gesture, with the relationship between dissonant and consonant chords arising directly from the opening theme. For this motif, the first notes need to have a little extra intensity, then be slurred descending through the remaining notes of the group. This figure comes in a register that is sometimes difficult to voice clearly and it is necessary to emphasize the fingertips at the top of the chords. The expression is personal and intense.

The third motif came from the ‘bell motif’ in Wagner’s *parsifal* and appears in the Chorale at bar 68. Its contour is reminiscent of the opening BACH theme (see Example 21).⁷

⁷ Leon Vallas. Translated by Hubert Foss. *Cesar Franck*. (London: Harrap, 1951). p.184.

Example 21: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Choral, bars 67 to 70

67 4 3 *) 5 2 4 3 5 3

dim. *pp* *m.g. sempre* 2

The arpeggios that accompany the melody shimmer, their spread providing a big challenge, both in timing and in balance. I think the top notes should glisten while the bass notes are sustained by the pedal. The effect reminds us of an organ in a very resonant acoustic. The spread of the arpeggio requires some rhythmic flexibility and a very relaxed physical approach. I was not always successful in this passage and felt uncomfortable as a result. This motif subsequently appears as a big climax at the end of the work, where it requires brightness, intensity and clarity (see Example 22).

Example 22: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Fugue, bars 367 to 372

367 *molto rit.* *ff* *a tempo vivo* *fff sempre*

370

The last motif first appears in bar 5 in the left hand (see Example 23). It is later used in imperfect inversion as an introduction to the choral theme (see Example 24). I seek to achieve legato in both hands, with a richly singing right hand.

Example 23: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Prelude, bar 5



Example 24: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Choral, bars 58 to 60



There is no absolute or obvious separation between these three movements. For example, the end of the prelude is connected directly to the opening of the choral through the sustained pause. The note F-sharp should be sustained clearly while the key changes from B Minor to E flat Major. After concluding on a B minor chord, Franck then moves to a B 7th chord. The B 7th chord can also be expressed as C flat 7th, which is the German 6th chord of E flat Major (see Example 25). The performer should listen carefully to ensure that the changing harmonies have their optimal effect. I would like to lessen the pedaling and achieve very clean pedal changes in this opening melody line, attaining a limpid, simple and reverent cantabile.

Example 25: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Choral & Fugue, bars 55 to 58

55

p *dim.* *pp* *cresc.*

Choral

58 *Poco più lento*

molto cantabile, non troppo do

The ending of the choral is followed by a quaver triplet figure which accompanies an exploration of a short melodic fragment. This is followed by a *Molto Vivo* running quaver section, which outlines an F# 7 flat 9 chord (Dominant 7th with added flat 9). This establishes a strong cadence and firm tonal center prior to the commencement of the fugue.

In the following sections, I turn to discuss the interpretative ideas of the fugue. The fugue commences with the marking *Tempo 1* in bar 157. After an initial statement of the subject, it is answered at the 5th along with the counter-subject. After a 3 bar episode, the subject again appears with the counter-subject in a 3 part texture (see Example 26). There is a fourth statement of the subject (starting on the 5th), while a 3-part texture is maintained. A fourth part soon appears, and a 4-part texture is maintained for 4 bars. At this point the movement ceases to follow conventional fugal form. It develops through running quavers with a chromatic and sometimes syncopated accompaniment. This builds to a fortissimo statement of the subject, followed by a development of the quavers from the end of the subject.

Example 26: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Choral & Fugue, bars 157 to 170

Fugue
Tempo 1^o *)

At bar 217, marked “*tranquillo*”, the subject is twice presented in inversion (see Example 27). The performer should create a feeling of intensity as the subject rises instead of falls, an effect that is heightened by a dynamic increase.

Example 27: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Fugue, bars 215 to 223

This figure then takes on the role of a counter melody to subsequent statements of the subject. After the 2/4 at bar 265, the triplet figure becomes arpeggiated and builds in intensity. A major climax is reached with “*fff*” recapitulation over a syncopated F# pedal (see Example 28). The tension is released at “*come una Cadenza*”, and the work reaches a close.

Example 28: Franck: Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, Fugue, bars 278 to 286

The musical score for Example 28 is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 278-280) shows a triplet figure in the right hand and a syncopated F# pedal in the left hand, marked *fff*. The second system (bars 281-283) continues the arpeggiated triplet figure. The third system (bars 284-286) concludes with a cadenza-like passage marked *ff* and *come una cadenza*.

It is significant that Franck chose to start the Fugue in a more traditional form and then move away to a more “developmental” approach. It produces dramatic intensity and expression. And it also creates the effect of allowing the fugue to more easily connect to the work as a whole.

Overall, the thematic inter-relationships, the links between movements, the flexible approach to form and the references to past practice combine to make this a highly individual and demanding composition.

• Ludwig van Beethoven: Sonata in A-flat major Op.110

Beethoven's Op.110 sonata was composed during 1821 to 1822. It links to my principal research theme through the baroque-inspired form and expressive devices explored in the Recitative, Arioso and Fugue. The work was an important focal point for my investigation.

When studying Beethoven's Op.110 sonata, we see a somewhat unusual element in the first movement. Most of Beethoven's sonatas are quite dramatic and many of the movements depend on the dynamic development of small themes and motives. In this work, however, Beethoven's approach was lyrical rather than dramatic. Long cantabile themes reduced the importance of the development as a source of dramatic impact. Instead, Beethoven passed the principal subject through three different key centres somewhat in the style of Schubert.

The movement presents some interesting issues relating to sound, particularly when one compares the modern piano's sonority with that of the early piano. We could refer to the LP of Badura-Skoda, Paul "Deux sonatas pour le piano forte oeuvres 110 & 111".⁸ Generally speaking, the modern piano suits this piece quite well because it can create lovely warm, sustained sounds. But in some places, such as bars 20 to 23, the register of the melody makes it difficult to achieve an expressive legato (see Example 29). Even on Beethoven's piano, that particular register was rather thin and lacking clear projection. Beethoven, however, did not worry too much about his instrument. Perhaps he had never really considered whether or not the instrument could achieve the effect that he had in mind. In playing it on the modern piano, we

⁸Paul, Badura-Skoda. Piano. *Deux sonatas pour le piano forte oeuvres 110 & 111*. Compact LP Disc. Asress, 1980.

need try to give these notes warmth and intensity. Different issues occur elsewhere in the movement.

Example 29: Beethoven: Sonata in A- flat major Op.110, *Moderato Cantabile molto espressivo*, bars 20 to 23

In bar 13 (see Example 30): The close left hand chords make it difficult achieve good balance and clarity of texture. We also have to be careful about the thick chords between bars 25 and 30.

Example 30: Beethoven: Sonata in A- flat major Op.110, *Moderato Cantabile molto espressivo*, bars 12 to 13

The second movement has a distinctive character, being a lively, almost violent fast movement. It is generally the third movement of a sonata that uses the dance element (often in the style of a moderately paced minuet, sometimes as a livelier scherzo). The second movement of Op.110 is very short and takes the place of the minuet. It has the rhythmic characteristics of a Gavotte, with a simple ternary structure.

The finale comprises a slow recitative and *Arioso dolente*, a fugue, a return of the *Arioso* lament, and a second fugue that builds to an affirmative conclusion. It is a distinctive structure that combines a slow movement (*Arioso*) and a final allegro

(fugue). Beethoven's approach to the recitative, aria and fugue is essentially baroque in spirit. It is quite complex from a structural point of view, with a unique mix of contrasting styles and expressions.

There are two particular elements of the recitative and Arioso that specifically refer back to baroque practice and which enhance one's understanding of the work. It is fascinating to observe how Beethoven was influenced by Bach. We can see this clearly in the *Arioso dolente* of the third movement which bears a distinct resemblance to the opening melody used in *Arioso No.58 of Bach's St. John Passion* (see Examples 31 & 32). We can observe that the two pieces are remarkably similar. Since we know that Beethoven knew the work, it is reasonable to think that he may have noted the similarity also. The two tunes are so similar that we can see them as being related. To understand the spirit of the Arioso, a good starting point for the performer is to study the texts set by Bach in the original *Arioso*. They will point the performer to the emotional expression that is followed as the piece unfolds.

NR.58 ARIE (ALTO)
No. 58 Aria (ALTO)

Es ist vollbracht!
The end has come,

O Trost für die gekränkten Seelen!
O rest for stricken spirits;

Die Trauernacht
This dreary night

Läßt mich die letzte Stunde zählen.
Lets me count to the final hour.

Der Held aus Juda siegt mit Macht
Our hero battles on with might

Und schließt den Kampf.
And ends the fight.

Es ist vollbracht!
The end has come.

Example 31: Bach: St. John's Passion, *Arioso* No.58, bars 1 to 2

Example 32: Beethoven: Sonata in A- flat major Op.110, *Arioso dolente*, bars 8 to 11

The second element stemming from the baroque tradition is the effect of “bebung” in bar 5 of this movement (see Example 33). *Bebung* produces intense emotion. It is an effect easily produced on the clavichord – a type of subtle vibrato, achieved by wiggling a depressed key. Beethoven seemed to transfer the intimate expressiveness of this effect to the fortepiano.

Example 33: Beethoven: Sonata in A- flat major Op.110, *Adagio*, bar 5

The image shows the first five bars of the Adagio movement. The right hand (treble clef) features a complex texture with sixteenth-note patterns and slurs. The left hand (bass clef) has a steady accompaniment. Performance instructions include 'Adagio', 'ritar - dando', 'cantabile', 'tutte le corde' (for the first part), 'dimin.' (diminuendo), and 'una corda' (one string). The bass line is marked 'sempre tenuto' (always held).

The two fugues pose many challenges of structure and part playing and they each have a different role to play in the expressive journey of the work. There is no marking of pedaling at the beginning of the subject in the 1st fugue. The sound is pure and clear. But when the second fugue appears, Beethoven marked it *una corda* and continues it for 28 bars. There are no dynamic indications at all for the first 24 bars (see Example 34).

Example 34: Beethoven: Sonata in A- flat major Op.110, *L' istesso tempo della Fuga poi a poi di nuovo vivente*, bars 137 to 159

The image shows a four-system musical score for the section 'L'istesso tempo della Fuga poi a poi di nuovo vivente'. The right hand (treble clef) contains the main melodic line with various ornaments and slurs. The left hand (bass clef) provides a rhythmic accompaniment. Performance instructions include 'L'istesso tempo della Fuga poi a poi di nuovo vivente', 'Nach und nach wieder auflebend', 'sempre una corda', and 'L'inversione della Fuga. Die Umkehrung der Fuge'. The score includes bar numbers 137, 143, 149, and 155.

At bar 169 to 171, the combination of augmentation and diminution creates a complex contrapuntal texture. Four bars after the *Meno allegro* in bar 172, the music begins its acceleration back into the original tempo (see example 35).

Example 35: Beethoven: Sonata in A- flat major Op.110, *Meno allegro. Etwas langsamer*, bars 168 to 173

The musical score for Example 35 consists of three systems of piano music. The first system (bars 165-171) begins with the instruction "poi a poi tutte le corde" and "Meno Allegro. Etwas langsamer". It features a complex contrapuntal texture with various ornaments and fingerings. The second system (bars 170-172) includes markings such as "m.d.", "cresc.", and "poi a poi". The third system (bars 173) is marked "tempo primo" and "più moto", with the instruction "wieder geschwinder" at the beginning. The score concludes with a fortissimo ("sf") dynamic marking.

I think this indicates that Beethoven wanted to finish in the original tempo, with the augmented theme accelerating towards it. He marked his manuscript with the words: “Little by little coming back to life” in bar 172 and this shows he wanted energy to return very gradually. The important point to note is that the changes take place only gradually. This was Beethoven’s innovation. Time after time on the score he repeated similar instructions to ensure that the process continues without sudden

shifts: “Little by little coming back to life”; “little by little raise the soft pedal”; “Little by little faster again”.

The Recitative in bar 4 is clearly inspired by baroque vocal works and presents challenges of expression and sonority (see Example 36).

Example 36: Beethoven: Sonata in A- flat major Op.110, *Recitativo più adagio*, bar 4

In bar 4, each note in the recitative should be intensified in terms of finger tip voicing while keeping a good tonal balance between both hands. We have to pay attention to the pedal markings as Beethoven called for the sustaining pedal at the beginning of the bar. The 7th is an important chord that some players choose to sustain throughout the recitative, making a half change part way through. Others prefer to hold the pedal through to the next harmony change. I prefer to hold the pedal until the next harmony, because this makes the 7th chord sound continuous. Beethoven’s pedal marks are often difficult to interpret and do not always suit the modern piano. There are also some differences from one edition to another.

In bar 11 of the Arioso (see Example 37); we need to pay attention to the chords of the left hand because these can not be played clearly on the modern piano. Beethoven’s piano was less thick in this register, allowing the melody line to be heard expressively over the left hand accompaniment.

Example 37: Beethoven: Sonata in A- flat major Op.110, *Adagio ma non troppo*, bars 11 to 13

Musical score for Example 37, bars 11 to 13. The right hand features a melodic line with ornaments (45) and a fermata in bar 13. The left hand has a complex arpeggiated accompaniment with fingerings (5, 4, 3, 4) and dynamics (p, p cresc.).

In bar 131 of the Arioso (see Example 38); the sustaining pedal again plays a very important role. The diminuendo of the rising arpeggio is assisted by some flutter pedalling to reduce the sound to pianissimo in preparation for the commencement of the second fugue.

Example 38: Beethoven: Sonata in A- flat major Op.110, *L'istesso tempo di Arioso*, bars 131 to 136

Musical score for Example 38, bars 131 to 136. The score is split into two systems. The first system (bars 131-133) shows the right hand with a melodic line and the left hand with a dense arpeggiated texture. The second system (bars 134-136) shows the right hand with a melodic line and the left hand with a dense arpeggiated texture. Dynamics include 'una corda', 'cresc.', and 'dimin.'. A star symbol is present at the end of bar 136.

3. Conclusion:

I think that the thoughtful musician considers many elements when preparing repertoire for performance. Technical groundwork is supplemented by a study of form, historical style, performance traditions and expressive content. Each work is approached on its own terms in an effort to understand what makes it distinctive, together with ways in which its character can be projected confidently and clearly.

For these major piano works influenced by baroque musical elements, it is important that pianists are aware of the baroque references and use them to develop their interpretation. Furthermore, they should consider how to treat the references to symbolism, structure, texture and expression within the spirit of the composer's individual personality and musical style.

The great works from the piano repertoire can be approached in many different ways and different players bring out different elements depending upon their own experience and artistic understanding. However, composers who utilize elements from the past in their music presumably do so deliberately and with a clear purpose. By investigating the nature of such stylistic linkages, the performer can enter the works at a deeper structural and expressive level than might otherwise be the case. This process helps in the development of a personal artistic view.

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APPENDIX

Recital programs

Recital One ¹

J.S. Bach: Inventions No.8 BWV 779

No.9 BWV 780

Sinfonias No.8 BWV 794

No.9 BWV 795

Ludwig van Beethoven: Sonata in A-flat major Op.110

1. Moderato cantabile molto espressivo

2. Allegro molto

3. Adagio, ma non troppo- Fuga. Allegro, ma non troppo

Dmitri Shostakovich: Prelude and Fugue in D minor Op.87, No.24

1. Prelude

2. Fugue

Cesar Franck: Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue M 21

1. Prelude

2. Choral

3. Fugue

Recital Two ^{1 1}

Johannes Brahms: Variations and Fugue on a theme of Handel Op.24

Ferruccio Busoni: Bach-Busoni Chaconne from the Partita in D minor

Franz Liszt: Variations on a Theme by Bach -“*Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*”

¹ Recorded by Silver Moon, Elder Hall, Adelaide on 4th April 2007

^{1 1} Recorded by Silver Moon, Elder Hall, Adelaide on 20th June 2007

**Music CDs are included with the print copy
held in the University of Adelaide Library.**