A Portfolio of Compositions

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Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music at Stellenbosch University

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the work contained in this portfolio is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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Chris van Rhyn

March 2010
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A note on my notation of string parts

String harmonics were notated on sounding pitch in the score, with realisations, where needed, appearing as a reference above or beneath the stave. Solid slurs in string parts indicate phrasing. Where specific bowing is indicated, dotted slurs are used to distinguish it from the phrasing indications. The exception to this is the string trio arrangements of *Glasblaser* and *Glasprater*, where solid slurs indicate bowing.
In Paradisum for SATB choir

This piece explores the notion of “paradise” being a token of joy as well as fear and uncertainty. The road to paradise may be paved with pain and anxiety and the joy of paradise may lie in the retreat to a state of unconsciousness, rather than the popular idea of elaborate feasts and gold-paved streets.

The words are as follows:

In paradisum deducant te Angeli; in tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Ierusalem. Chorus angelorum te suscipiat, et cum Lazaro quondam paupere aeternam habeas requiem.

May angels lead you into Paradise; upon your arrival, may the martyrs receive you and lead you to the holy city of Jerusalem. May the ranks of angels receive you, and with Lazarus, the poor man, may you have eternal rest.

(In Paradisum, 2008: online)
In Paradisum

Chris van Rhyn

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{Soprano} \\
\text{Alto} \\
\text{Tenor} \\
\text{Bass}
\end{array} \]

\( \frac{1}{4} \) = c.55 con rubato (bars 1-11)

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{In para\-di\-sum, in para\-di\-sum} \\
\text{In para\-di\-sum, in para\-di\-sum} \\
\text{In para\-di\-sum, in para\-di\-sum}
\end{array} \]
Subito

Paradisum, in paradisum, in paradisum

Tempo giusto

Paradisum, in paradisum, in paradisum

Paradisum, in paradisum, in paradisum
sci pi ant te mar ty-res, in tu o su sci pi ant te mar tyres,
in tu o su te mar tyres in tu o su sci pi ant te mar tyres,
in tu o ad ven tu su sci pi ant te mar ty-res,

mar ty-res, mar ty-res per du cant te in ci vi ta tem
mar ty-res, mar ty-res per du cant te in ci vi ta tem
mar ty-res, mar ty-res et per du cant te in ci vi ta tem,
mar ty-res, mar ty-res et per du cant te in ci vi ta tem,

poco accelerando

poco accelerando
per du cant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem,

et per du cant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem,
te susceptat, et cum Lazaro quondam pauperae aeternam

ha be as requiem. In paradisum, in
**Droom** – A song cycle for mezzo soprano and piano

The text represents a nonsensical dream sequence. The music becomes more abstract as the dreamer moves into the deeper stages of the sleeping cycle and the dreams become more vivid, eventually revealing its meaning in the words “ek het my wonde aan jou woorde bly tel” (*I kept measuring my wounds to the effect of your words*).

Unity in the work is created by the use of a single octatonic scale in the vocal line throughout (although enharmonic equivalents were employed where needed):

![Octatonic Scale](image)

The accompaniment consists of conventional chords in unconventional progressions and combinations, with more added notes in the accompaniment of each song signifying my aspiration to abstraction.

String trio and soprano arrangements were created for a performance by the Chamber Music Company (UK) and the soprano Hanli Stapela. The endings of the voice and piano versions of *Kuspad* and *Glasblaser* were changed in hindsight to create a more balanced effect in the cycle as a whole – these changes had not been made by the time the string trio version of *Glasblaser* had been performed and I have therefore left the string trio score of *Glasblaser* unchanged.

The text, by Lou-Ann Stone, is as follows:

**Kuspad**

Op die rug
van ’n swart kameel
jaag ons windvlae na
met wit lappe, flitslig,
bedags die ontsaglike son.
Geanker in net die wind
se rustelose rondwaai.

Sy

Die stoepkamer
se lig brand,
haar hare vleg
vanself
en soms knip sy haar oë
met ‘n stomp skêr
wanneer niemand kyk nie.

Glasblaser

fakkels in die tuin
sonder gras, net glas:
geblaas deur my binneste,
swel en bars na my buitenste

Glasprater

Die fakkels
in jou hande
bly brand soos
glas in jou mond:
ek het my wonde
aan jou woorde bly tel.

(Stone, 2008)

Coastal road

On the back
of a black camel
we chase squalls
with white cloths, torch light,
during the day the imposing sun.
Anchored in just the wind’s
restless jerking.

She

The porch room’s
light is on,
her hair braids
by itself
and sometimes she blinks, cutting her eyes
with blunt scissors
when no one is looking.

Glass-blower

torches in the garden
without grass, just glass:
blown from within myself,
swells and bursts to my exterior

Glass-talker

The torches
in your hands
keep burning like
glass in your mouth:
I kept measuring my wounds
to the effect of your words.

(The English translations are by the composer and have been approved by the poet.)
Kuspad

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Mezzo-Soprano

Piano

Largo \( \dot{=} \text{c.55} \)

\[ \text{Mezzo} \]

\[ \text{Pno.} \]

Allegro \( \dot{=} \text{c.140} \)

\[ \text{Mezzo} \]

\[ \text{Pno.} \]

\[ \text{(pedal)} \]

Op die rug van 'n

rubato

a tempo

\[ \text{Pno.} \]
Mezzo

13
swart ka-meel jaag ons wind-vlae na-

13

Pno.

8\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{6}b-1}

16
met wit lap-pe, flits-lig, be-dags die ont-

16

8\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{6}b-1}

16

Mezzo

sag li-ke son. Ge-an-ker in

16

Pno.

8\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{6}b-1}

16
Mezzo

net die wind se rusteloos rond swaai.

Pno.

subito p
**Sy**

Largo $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{c.60}}$

**Mezzo-Soprano**

**Piano**

((pedal))

Mezzo

Pno.

Pno.

Die stoep-ka-mer-se
Mezzo

14

lig brand,

haar

re vleg

Pno.

14

mf

f

rubato

Mezzo

17

van-self en soms knip sy haar oë met 'n

a tempo

Pno.

17

pf

a tempo

Mezzo

20

stomp skêr

wan-neer nie-mand kyk nie.

Pno.

20

mf

p

rubato

Mezzo

20

mf

p

rubato

Pno.
Glasblaser

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Mezzo-Soprano  

Piano

Andante $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{c.r}}=76$

Mezzo

Pno.

4

tuin

rubato

4

son-der gras,

$8\text{ma}$

7

rubato

a tempo

7

Mezzo

Pno.
Glasprater

Chris van Rhyn

Allegro $\frac{\cdot}{\cdot} \approx c.140$

Mezzo-Soprano

Piano

(pp)

(pedal)

Mezzo

Pno.

Larghetto $\frac{\cdot}{\cdot} \approx c.65$

Die

(fak kels in jou hande)

(bly brand)

(rubato soos)

rubato

rubato
Mezzo

glas in jou mond:

Pno.

a tempo

Pno.

a tempo

Pno.

rit.

Mezzo

Aan jou woor-

de bly tel-

Mezzo

Allegro \( \frac{\text{c.140}}{\text{bpm}} \)

Pno.

pp
Glasblaser

Chris van Rhyn

Andante \( \text{\textit{d}} = \text{c.76} \)

Soprano

Violin

Cello

Piano

\( fak\text{-}kels \text{\textit{in}} \text{\textit{die}} \)

\( alla\text{\textit{punta}} \)

\( \text{legato} \)

\( \text{pedal} \)

\( \text{son\text{-}der\ gras,} \)

\( \text{espressivo} \)

\( \text{arco} \)

\( \text{mf} \)

\( \text{p} \)

\( \text{mp} \)

26
Glasprater

Allegro \( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \text{c.120} \)

Soprano

Violin

Cello

Piano

\( \text{keep vibrato to a minimum} \)

\( \text{pizz.} \)

\( \text{p} \)

\( \text{p} \)

Larghetto \( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \text{c.65} \)

\( \text{Die fak- kels in jou} \)

\( \text{(vibrato)} \)

\( \text{rit.} \)

\( \text{arco} \)

\( \text{legato} \)

\( \text{p} \)

30
Sop. han de bly brand soos glas in jou mond:

Vln. alla punta

Vc.

Pno.

ek het my won de aan jou woor de bly tel

*S*
Allegro \( \approx c.120 \)

Larghetto \( \approx c.65 \)

Keep vibrato to a minimum

Stellenbosch University http://scholar.sun.ac.za
Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

perdendosi

porto (senza vibrato)

perdendosi

Stellenbosch University http://scholar.sun.ac.za
**Het Hom!** for tenor saxophone

This piece is an account of three different stages of my life. Each stage is represented by a different hexachord, gradually moving from one into the next. When in a new stage, the new hexachord may have some pitches in common with the previous one (or the next, or both), signifying characteristics (or unresolved issues) that have remained.

The title *Het Hom!* (Got Him!) nostalgically refers to the childhood game of “catch” or to the continuous aspiration to a higher level of personal growth.

The hexachords are as follows (although enharmonic equivalents were employed where needed):

![Hexachords](image-url)
het hom!

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[sten tenor saxophone]

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[x senza vibrato]

[* don't tongue]
[$ The player should strive towards legato phrasing, as indicated by the dotted line, although a short break (as indicated by the solid line) is necessary to avoid squeaking here.]
The Beauty in Sorrow for string quartet

The three movements of this string quartet are based on three paintings by Vladimir Tretchikoff. Tretchikoff (who was born in Petropavlovsk, Russia, in 1913 and died in Cape Town in 2006) is said to be “the only artist who managed to achieve ubiquity amongst the popular masses” (2010: online). The following quote from the official Tretchikoff website (2010: online), represents an artistic philosophy which the present writer is always striving towards, although it’s not necessarily achieved in this work:

Unbeknown to many, Tretchikoff was the first artist to make and sell reproductions of his work, making it affordable and accessible to all. At the time, art critics objected, saying he was devaluing and commercialising art. To which he responded, "Why should my art only be available to the rich and famous? I want everyone to enjoy my art."

This string quartet is based on three Tretchikoff paintings with a common, universally relevant and timeless theme: the beauty in sorrow. The paintings are:

Rainy Day (First Movement)
Weeping Rose (Second Movement)

Resurrection (Third Movement)

(Gallery, 2008: online)
This piece is programmatic in the sense that imagined movement is depicted: the rain falling, the rose falling from the glass and the divorce of the spirit from the body. In some instances different parts of the music can be seen as a camera focusing on different parts of the picture, zooming in and out. Colours that are common to more than one painting are represented by motifs that occur in all of the corresponding movements. These “colours” are melodic fragments derived from different combinations of conventional chords (representing beauty and sorrow), resulting in a more abstract sound.

The first part of the second movement is a fugue.
First Movement
Based on Tretchikoff's 'Rainy Day'

Chris van Rhyn

\[ \text{\textit{\textit{flautando}}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{\textit{pizz.}}} \]
see p. 1 for realization
Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

see p.1 for realisation

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

process of refinement

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

passage of time

Vln. I
Second Movement
Based on Tretchikoff’s 'Weeping Rose'

Chris van Rhyn

Vln. II

Vln. I

Viola

Cello

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Second Movement}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Based on Tretchikoff's 'Weeping Rose'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Chris van Rhyn}} \)
Third Movement
Based on Tretchikoff's 'Resurrection'

Chris van Rhyn

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

arco

arco

arco

arco

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55
Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

58

61

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

perdendosi

perdendosi

perdendosi

perdendosi
**Symphonata** for orchestra

The structure of this work resembles a Baroque *sonata da chiesa*: the second movement is contrapuntal and is structured like a Baroque invention; the third movement is a sarabande (containing quotes from a sarabande by Handel) and the fourth movement is a gigue.

All the melodic and harmonic material has been derived from three heptatonic scales which were all harmonised and transposed to all twelve tones. This provided for a rather large compositional palette while still achieving a sense of pitch coherency in the work as a whole. The untransposed, harmonised versions of the heptatonic scales are as follows (again, enharmonic equivalents were also used in the work):

```
\begin{music}
\Mstart
\Ch1 \M1 \A4 \G3 \F3
\Ch2 \M2 \F3 \E3 \D3 \C3
\Ch3 \M3 \D3 \C3 \B3 \A3 \G3
\end{music}
```

For practical reasons (i.e. increasing the chances of future performances) instruments that are rarer in amateur orchestras (e.g. the cor anglais, bass clarinet, contrabassoon, euphonium and harp) were not used in the orchestration. The second flute player doubles on the piccolo and the percussion was limited to two players.
First Movement

Chris van Rhyn
Second Movement

Chris van Rhyn
Stellenbosch University http://scholar.sun.ac.za
Third Movement

Chris van Rhyn
Fourth Movement

Chris van Rhyn
References


