An Anthology of Existence: Explorations into the Life and Works of Christopher Langford James (1952-2008).

By

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Declaration

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December 2017.

To Claire de Kock
"I will not forget one line of this, not one day, I swear."

Abstract

The Christopher James Collection (CJC) in the Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS) at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, consists of over 100 boxes containing material ranging from hand-written manuscript scores, personal correspondences and diary entries. James was born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and studied composition at the University of Pretoria before doing a Doctorate of Musical Arts (DMA) at the University of Cincinnati on a Fullbright bursary. As a composer, James's style conflated traditional European musical textures with southern African instrumentation, rhythms and harmonies. His compositions include works such as *Four portraits for pianoforte in four movements* (1982), *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* (1985), *Images of Africa* (1987) and *Paradise Regained* (1999). James was also the original orchestrator of Mzilikazi Khumalo's musical epic *uShaka KaSenzangakhona.*

James's music has not received significant attention from performers or musicologists, both during his life and posthumously. Because of this, the archive has become the main source of information in writing the untold story of James's life. This projects is thus the first exploration into James's life and music, explorations done through the lenses of archive theory, life-writing/(auto)-biographical theory and musicology. Discussions of selections of James's music are found within the narrative of his life, a narrative which is structured around the location where James lived during a point in his life's chronology. The selection criteria for which works have been selected for discussion is informed by the archive: namely the presence of recordings, frequency of the work appearing in letters and diary entries, and works being mentioned by interview participants.

This dissertation thus aims not only to present critical discussions of James's music as read through his life story, but also to explore the possibilities and limitations of the "life-and-works study" paradigm, and experiment with a structural framework which integrates musicological discussions with narrative ones. This work also probes the post-colonial problematic of location, place and ideas of "home" through structural devices.

Opsomming

Die Christopher James Versameling (CJC) in die Dokumentasie Sentrum van Musiek (DOMUS) by Stellenbosch Universiteit, Suid Afrika, bestaan uit meer as 100 bokse wat diverse materiaal bevat insluitend handgeskrewe komposisies, persoonlike korrespondensie en dagboek inskrywings. James is gebore in Rhodesia (nou Zimbabwe), en studeer komposisie by die Universiteit van Pretoria voordat hy inskryf vir sy Doktorsgraad in Musiek (DMA) by die Universiteit van Cincinnati op ‘n Fullbright beurs. As ‘n komponis kombineer James Europese musikale teksture met suiderlike-Afrika instrumentasie, ritmes en harmonieë. Sy komposisies sluit werke in soos *Four portraits for pianoforte in four movements* (1982), *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* (1985), *Images of Africa* (1987) en *Paradise Regained* (1999). James is ook die oorspronklike orkestreerder van Mzilikazi Khumalo se musikale werk *uShaka KaSenzangakhona.*

Gedurende James se leeftyd en ook postuum verkry sy musiek nie aansienlike aandag van uitvoerders of musikoloë nie. As gevolg hiervan, is die argief versameling by DOMUS die hoof bron van informasie vir die skryf van die onvertelde storie van James se lewe. Hierdie projek is dus eerstens ‘n verkenning van James se lewe en musiek deur die lense van argief teorie, lewensbeskrywing/auto-biografiese teorie en musikologie. Binne dié raamwerk word uitreksels uit James se musiek bespreek as deel van die skep van ‘n narratief van sy lewe. Die narratief word gestruktureer rondom die plekke waar James geleef het op bepaalde tye in sy lewenskronologie. Die seleksie kriteria waarvolgens werke gekies is vir bespreking is bepaal deur die argief: dit wil sê die beskikbaarheid van opnames, die hoeveelheid keer wat ‘n werk opgeroep is in briewe en dagboek inskrywings, en werke wat genoem word deur mense met wie onderhoude gevoer is.

Hierdie proefskrif onderneem dus om nie slegs kritiese besprekings van James se musiek soos gelees deur die lens van sy lewensstorie te bevat nie, maar ook om die moontlikhede en beperkinge te ondersoek van die “lewe-en-werk studie” paradigma. As sodanig eksperimenteer die werk met ‘n strukturele raamwerk wat musikologiese besprekings integreer met verskillende narratiewe. Verder ondersoek hierdie proefskrif post-koloniale kwesies en problematiek wat heers rondom die konsepte van ligging, plek en “tuiste” deur die gebruik van strukturele hulpmiddels en metodes.

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I stand staring at the paintings. I am in the home of Islay and Meyer Ernst, his sister and brother-in-law. I am thoroughly aware that this building was the final home of a man who had many homes, and none. These walls had housed the reality, the physical presence, of a man who up until that point had been more concept than human for me. The concept is focusing into something more real, more material.

Islay and Meyer's house is in Ballito, South Africa, a small coastal town in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, 54km away from Durban. The Ernsts have converted their house into a guesthouse, and kindly allowed myself and my supervisor to stay there while conducting fieldwork in the area. Islay was a nurse and is now a real estate agent; Meyer is a medical doctor and a painter.

Meyer's paintings hang in the house's main room, many of which are large-scale landscape depictions of Ballito's natural beauty. But my eye strays to a smaller painting, to the side, near the front door, less on display than his other works. The painting depicts a man sitting in a chair in a large black coat, painted from his right-hand side so that few of his facial features are discernable. The painting is more romanticized impression than realistic portrait, evoking the mood of the person rather than exact detail of his physiognomy. This mood is communicated well and I recognise the subject immediately. He is my subject: Christopher Langford James.

A few days after my encounter with the Ernst portrait, I ask James's ex-wife about James the Romantic. Her response is: "Yes, but I think an African Romantic…".[1] The romanticized James of Ernst's portrait is gradually given substance in this and other interviews. James is described as a lover of nature, of poetry and art. He is described as deeply spiritual, and a man who communicated through his art.

I realise that I am dealing with a myth.

[1] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.

Figure 1: Portrait of Chris James by Meyer Ernst.

Theoretical frameworks and considerations

In the narrativisation of a life, it would make sense to start at the beginning, namely at the birth of the subject. But, as Jacques Derrida urges in *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression:* "Let us not begin at the beginning".[2] Before the construction of the narrative can be begin, it is prudent to outline the aims of such a study, as well as to engage with theoretical considerations concerning the process of narrativising the particular life at the centre of my study, that of Christopher James.

The central aim of this thesis is to present a critical life and works study (the first ever) of Rhodesian-born composer Christopher Langford James. The thesis aims to explore the narrative of James's life constructed through the material found in the Christopher James Collection (hereafter called the CJC) housed in the University of Stellenbosch's music archive: the Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS). James composed nearly 100 works during his approximately 40 years of compositional activity, and the scope of this project does not allow for each of these works to be discussed. This thesis will therefore focus on only a handful of compositions, the selection criteria of which are predicated themes which emerge from within the narrative.

My work is based on an exploration of the CJC, which began in 2013. To date, little research has been done on the life or music of Christopher James.[3] Most of the extant research is not dedicated to James or his music, but forms part of larger projects. Penelope Clough's master's dissertation, *Trends in contemporary South African music: the younger generation of South African composers*[4] (1984), and Ian Smith's master's dissertation, *An investigation of selected flute compositions by composers resident in South Africa*[5] (1986), are cases in point. Both dissertations provide brief discussions of

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[2] J Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 1.
[3] During my doctoral research, I presented two conference papers on James: "Setting Out In Search of Christopher Langford James (1952 – 2008)" (which provided a basic outline of James's life), and "Analysis, Meaning and Make-believe: Entry Points to *Four Portraits* and the life of Christopher Langford James", which was co-authored with researcher and pianist Mareli Stolp.
[4] PJ Clough, *Trends in Contemporary South African Music: The Younger Generation of South African Composer,* M.Mus dissertation, University of Witwatersrand, 1984, pp. 39-45; see also PJ Clough, "A Survey of the Younger Generation of South African Composers", in P Klatzow (ed), *Composers in South Africa Today.* Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 213-214.
[5] IWR Smith, *An Investigation of Selected Flute Compositions by Composers Resident in South Africa,* M.Mus dissertation, University of Natal, 1986, pp. 28-29.

selected James pieces, with Clough's work discussing *Gymnastics* (1982) and *Four Portraits* for pianoforte in four movements (1980-1982) and Smith's project discussing *Molecular Synthesis* (1977). Because of the more general scope of these projects, rather than a specific focus on Christopher James, neither of these studies goes into great detail regarding Christopher James's life, nor do they present in-depth discussions of his works. As a musicologist himself, James did not publish prolifically, and of what little he did publish, only one article was on his music, only eight pages long with extensive musical examples.[6] Although it is interesting to read the composer expounding on his own works, the article barely provides more insight than programme notes.

A research project that investigates a work of James's in more depth is Philip Antoni Schonken's master's thesis, which discusses James's role in orchestrating Mzilikazi Khumalo's epic *UShaka KaSenzangakhona* from 1993 to 1994.[7] This research does not engage with James's own compositions – although it quantitatively shows that James's role in the project went beyond the role of orchestrator – and does not engage with James's biography. The only publication of biographical bent on James, is the obituary written by Stefans Grové and Michael Levy.[8]

My project therefore relies heavily on the archive, as well as on interviews with those family members and musicians and scholars who knew James. Because of this reliance on the archive, in particular, considerations around archival theory are engaged with and will be discussed later in this chapter. Secondary literature – also discussed later in this chapter – is used to theorise the construction of narrative through the archive, as well as understanding the complexities involved in reading and interpreting life in scholarly work.

The CJC was collected in 2010, two years after James's death, by researcher and then Head of DOMUS, Stephanus Muller, archivist Santie de Jongh and post-graduate student Annemie Stimie Behr. The collection was gathered into 106 boxes and

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[6] C James, "The Composer Introduces: Four Compositions", *Ars Nova,* vol. 14, 1982, pp. 25-32.
[7] PA Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* M.Mus dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2012.
[8] S Grové & M Levy, "In Memorium. Christopher Langford James (20.12.1952 – 4.2.2008)", *Musicus,* vol. 36, no. 2, 2008, pp. 73-75.

transported from James's final home in Ballito to DOMUS in Stellenbosch. The archive was sorted and ordered largely by Marjorie James, Christopher's mother, often in a manner contrary to standard archival practice.[9] Even considering this, Marjorie's involvement in the formation of the collection, as well as her involvement in the maintenance of her son's legacy on the whole, cannot be underestimated. At her own expense and on her own photocopier, Marjorie James made approximately 7,000 copies of her son's scores, letters, diaries, photographs and notebooks that were donated to DOMUS.

Added to the CJC have been interviews with family members, friends and colleagues of Christopher James. The first of these interviews was conducted by Stephanus Muller, who interviewed Marjorie James during the collection of the archive in 2010. These conversations between Muller and James, recorded over a few days, clock in at six hours and 49 minutes in total, an impressive feat considering that at the time Marjorie was 86 years old. During 2015 to 2017 I conducted further interviews, and from 10 to 14 August 2015 I travelled with Muller to Durban, Ballito, Pietermaritzburg and Pretoria for that purpose. These interviews were held with family members Marjorie James (who, despite being 91 years old, spoke about her son for just under four hours), as well as Christopher's daughter Melissa, his ex-wife Tina and his sister and brother-in-law Islay and Meyer Ernst. Also interviewed were friends and colleagues Christopher Ballantine, David Smith, Étienne van Rensburg and George King. In 2016 I conducted additional interviews with pianist, Liezl-Maret Jacobs as well as composer and close friend John Simon. Interviews in 2017 were held with composer Michael Blake and Stephen Allen (who counted among Christopher's closest friends), and I undertook correspondence with Christopher's half-brother, Ted James. All of these interviews were recorded and archived in the CJC. I found all of the participants to be generous with their time, perspectives and information. All provided me with a wealth of information, were open to being contacted after the scheduled interview for further questions and support, and most donated further documents to the CJC. The largest such donation was when Melissa James donated eight large crates of material towards the end of 2015.

[9] For example, the liberal use of staples on documents, as well as the organising of works by name rather than by paper size.

Participants were selected based on their proximity to Christopher James, and the potential insights that could be provided into either his life or his music. James's life was one of increasing isolation, and he was a man with few friends and colleagues. In addition, because his music has rarely been performed, there are few performers who can provide insight into the more performative aspects of his music. Thus the list of interview participants should not be viewed as a sample, but rather as a relatively conclusive list of candidates who could provide perspectives on Christopher James.

Missing from the narrative are those who studied with James in Cincinnati. Aside from James and his wife Tina, there were three other South Africans who studied at the College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) at the same time as James, and all three were approached to participate. Ruth Goveia and Anton Nel both declined, stating that it had been too long since they had last spoken with James, and could therefore not offer anything to the study. Malcolm Nay initially agreed to a meeting with me, but unfortunately this did not materialise.

In 2016 I contacted Anthony Lis, a musicology lecturer at South Dakota State University, who had been a student at CCM with James, and whose name is mentioned in correspondence between James and his doctoral composition lecturer Scott Huston. Lis was very kind to share some of his memories with me, as well as to use Facebook to acquire further memories of James from other former CCM students. The responses he received were humorous anecdotal memories from 30 years previously, and, while not necessarily providing substantive information on James, did reflect that he was a well-liked man who had sadly lost contact with many of his old friends.

Decisions about which James compositions to discuss in this dissertation were informed largely by archival material and discussions in interviews. Preference was given to works which had been performed and/or recorded, or which were regularly mentioned in James's diaries and correspondences. In addition to this, works which provided insights into the reciprocal relationship between James's compositions and life narrative were also given preference. To highlight this inter-relational aspect, analytical and critical discussions of James's music do not stand as exclusive sections, but are rather integrated into the narrative discussion of James's life. More detail is

afforded to certain works based on their importance within the James oeuvre, or those which speak to aspects of James's character, beliefs or life events.

The biography and music of Christopher James – and how these two are intertwined – will be read in this dissertation through the dual theoretical frameworks of archival theory and biographical theory. The remainder of this chapter will focus on a critical engagement with these theories, and how they inform the work in the pages that follow. Section 1 will focus on definitional issues within biographical scholarship, as well as considerations on subject and structure. In Section 2 the focus will shift to the archive and archival considerations. Section 3 will focus on the interpretation of text and the life, and how these interpretations intertwine.

Section 1: Biographical Considerations

Section 1.1: Considerations around the subject

> Whenever somebody asks me about my work, and I tell them about the unknown Rhodesian-born South African composer Christopher James, I always get asked the same question:
>
> Why him?

It is of course a very good question, and one which biographers and scholars should engage with. Why him? Why her? Why Chris James? I imagine for those writing about renowned figures, from politicians to artists, this question is easier to answer, although no less important to ask. But why would one write about Christopher James, a seemingly insignificant composer whose memory, perhaps, "…should belong to those billions of existences which are destined to pass away without a trace"?[10]

Perhaps it is this supposed obscurity that makes Christopher James the ideal biographical candidate. In *Flush,* Virginia Woolf (herself a biographer), writes: "The

[10] M Foucault, *Power, Truth, Strategy,* M Morris & P Patton (eds), Sydney, Feral Publications, 1979, p. 79.

life of Lily Wilson [Elizabeth Barrett Browning's maid] is extremely obscure, and thus cries aloud for the services of a biographer".[11] Woolf writes this with the implication that such a biographer would answer the obscure person's cry for attention, thereby rendering a kind of "service" much like doing the obscure subject a favour.[12] In the case of Christopher James, this crying out for some sort of scholarly attention was one indulged in by the subject himself, and in letters to his daughter Melissa he spoke about how an appreciation of his music would only happen posthumously. The expectation for posthumous biographical attention has also been evident in my interviews with Chris James's family members and colleagues.

Perhaps because his music has slipped into obscurity, or was never that well known to begin with, Chris James may seem unimportant within South African music. But his position is hardly of the kind of insignificance invited by my comparison with Lily Wilson. He won composition competitions (both local and international), he held a doctorate in composition from one of the leading universities in the world, and was awarded a Fulbright scholarship. He single-handedly orchestrated the first version of Khumalo's *uShaka,* a work which received great acclaim both musically and politically. His oeuvre contains pieces of notable technical facility, and the conception of ambitious large-scale works. All of this does indicate that Chris James might merit scholarly attention.

Historically, the voices of the marginalised have found expression in biographical forms.[13] Among others, the voices of women, African Americans during slavery, and homosexuals were excluded from the traditional literary canon, forcing them to express their experiences through alternative literary avenues such as letters and diaries which, like their authors, fell outside of the accepted norm.[14] Marlene Kadar's description of

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[11] V Woolf, *Flush: A Biography,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1933, p. 176.
[12] This perspective is one that is not shared with other authors, as shall be seen later in this chapter.
[13] M Kadar, "Coming to Terms: Life Writing – from Genre to Critical Practice", in M Kadar (ed), *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice,* Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992, pp. 3-16; L Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994; SB Mintz, "Strangers Within: On Reading Disability Memoir", *Life Writing,* vol. 9, no. 4, 2012, pp. 435-443; M Rhiel & D Suchoff, "Introduction", in M Rhiel & D Suchoff (eds), *The Seductions of Biography,* New York, Routledge, 1996, pp. 1-5.
[14] J D'Emilio, "Reading the Silences in a Gay Life: The Case of Bayard Rustin", in M Rhiel & D Suchoff (eds), *The Seductions of Biography,*. New York, Routledge, 1996, pp. 59-68; JL Decker, "Reconstructing Enterprise: Madam Walker, Black Womanhood, and the Transformation of the American Culture of Success", in M Rhiel & D Suchoff (eds), *The Seductions of Biography.* New York,

life writing as "the site of the other"[15] seems an apposite placement of the biographical enterprise. With the "New Biography", the early twentieth century returned to the traditional view held by Samuel Johnson that all lives are deserving of biography.[16] But was Chris James this kind of figure? In certain respects, the answer has to be "no". He was white, male, heterosexual and bilingual (and therefore was able to manoeuvre through English and Afrikaans spaces during Apartheid and post-Apartheid South Africa). On the other hand: he was a composer of art music in a country where this was not a particularly historically prestigious or socially important creative vocation among South African composers he was not exactly a leading figure and then there is the issue of his mental health. In important ways, I wish to argue, Chris James was exactly the kind of "other" that is well served by the biographical enterprise.

Section 1.2: Considerations around terminology

Definitions and terminology need to be considered within biographical scholarship, as many different terms are used, often with subtle differences in focus and denotation. The two most prominent terms used are "life writing" and "auto/biography".[17] Because the narrativisation of a life – be it from the person living it, or another – has a historical tradition of being open to those who find themselves outside of political, social and literary norms, both terms aim to be as open and inclusive as possible.

The term "life writing" has allowed for more types of writing about lives (i.e. letters, diaries, etc.) to be included within its borders, as opposed to the binary definitions of "biography" – the narrativisation of a person's life by another – and "autobiography" – the first person narrativisation of life.[18] "Life writing" is a term that is intentionally

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Routledge, 1996, pp. 99-111; M Kadar, "Whose Life Is It Anyway? Out of the Bathtub and into the Narrative", in M Kadar (ed), *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice,* Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992, pp. 152-161; Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice;* L Stanley, *The auto/biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992; J Williamson, "'I Peel Myself out of My Own Skin': Reading *Don't: A Woman's Word",* in M Kadar (ed), *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice,* Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992, pp. 133-151; JF Yellin, "*Incidents* in the Life of Harriet Jacobs", in M Rhiel & D Suchoff (eds), *The Seductions of Biography,* New York, Routledge, 1996, pp. 137-146;

[15] Kadar, "Whose Life Is It Anyway? Out of the Bathtub and into the Narrative", p. 153.

[16] Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice.*

[17] This has also been rendered as "(auto)biography".

[18] B Caine, *Biography and History,* Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2010, p. 66.

broad,[19] and Marlene Kadar writes that "life writing, put simply, is a less exclusive genre of personal kinds of writing that includes *both* biography and autobiography, but also the less 'objective', more 'personal', genres such as letters and diaries."[20] Kadar suggests that the term "life writing" allows for the academy to engage with what Caine terms "the biographical turn"[21] in the Humanities, as both a genre of literature, and a critical practice. Kadar also theorises that the definition of "life writing" is never fixed, but rather fluid and malleable.[22]

In spite of life writing's definitional openness, some scholars have felt that the term is still restrictive, and believe the term "auto/biography" to be a more inclusive term.[23] Some scholars have moved away from the term "life writing" due to the implication that it is "biased against nonnarrative, oral, and nonverbal accounts."[24] "Auto/biography" also engages with the notion that one cannot separate "autobiography" and "biography", that there is always a semblance of the autobiographical within the biographical. This term thus challenges not only the binary definition of "biography" and "autobiography", but also challenges the existence of objectivity within the biographical enterprise.[25]

The nature of this particular project is such that it could easily adopt either term. My reservations in doing so, concern what I see as an assumption of chronological trajectory and a sense of integrated whole embedded in both terms and their conventional uses. Working predominantly from an archive, my overwhelming impression of my project is of fashioning this coherence, and of struggling with the fragmentary character of the "facts". Biographical scholars have written on this fragmentary status of a life and the creation of a narrative from it. Liz Stanley argues that biography should less be viewed as a microscope and more as a kaleidoscope,[26] and Lucasta Miller writes that "[p]atchwork, rather than photographic likeness, is all

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[19] Ibid.
[20] Kadar, "Coming to Terms: Life Writing – from Genre to Critical Practice" p. 4. Emphasis is Kadar's.
[21] Caine, *Biography and History*, p. 1.
[22] Kadar, "Coming to Terms: Life Writing – from Genre to Critical Practice".
[23] JL Coullie & S Meyer, "Introduction", in JL Coullie; S Meyer; TH Ngwenya, & T Olver (eds), *Selves in Question: Interviews on Southern African Auto/biography,* Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, pp. 1-115.
[24] Coullie & Meyer, "Introduction", p. 8.
[25] Caine, *Biography and History*; Coullie & Meyer, "Introduction".
[26] Stanley, *The auto/biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography*.

the biographer can truly hope to achieve."[27] Catherine Peters states that "[t]he biographer has to create something half-way between a vivid but distorted portrait of the subject and an integrated but indistinct figure in a landscape."[28]

It might be prudent in this thesis to make use of two terms that engage with the fragmentary nature of the archive and the often accidental nature of life. The first, taken up in the title of this dissertation, is taken from Michel Foucault. In his essay, "The Life of Infamous Men" in *Power, Truth, Strategy* (1979), Foucault describes the essay not as historiography, but as an "anthology of existences."[29] I am drawn to this acknowledgement of the precariousness of causality and teleology. The second term is used by Roland Barthes in his book *Sade Fourier Loyola* (1971), as Barthes engages with his three subjects by detailing the fragmentary understanding he has of their lives. Barthes describes his subjects as "dispersed, somewhat like the ashes we strew into the wind after death".[30] Barthes writes of his desire for his own life to be written as a "biographeme", a way of looking at a person's life through seemingly insignificant fragmentary insights:[31]

> were I a writer, and dead, how I would love it if my life, through the pains of some friendly and detached biographer, were to reduce itself to a few details, a few preferences, a few inflections, let us say: to 'biographemes' … or even a film, in the old style, in which there is no dialogue and the flow of images … is intercut, like the relief of hiccoughs, by the barely written darkness of the intertitles, the casual eruption of *another* signifier: Sade's white muff, Fourier's flowerpots, Ignatius's Spanish eyes.[32]

It is these two terms, "anthology of existence" and "biographeme", that provide me with a terminological framework for this project on Christopher James, and its intersections with the archive. Although I remain beholden to chronology in this dissertation, I find in both terms a justification also to explore the non-linear,

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[27] L Miller, "Stuff with Raw Edges", in M Bostridge (ed), *Lives For Sale: Biographer's Tales,* London, Continuum, 2004, p. 145.
[28] C Peters, "Secondary Lives: Biography in Context", in J Batchelor (ed), *The Art of Literary Biography,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995, pp. 46-47.
[29] Foucault, *Power, Truth, Strategy*, p. 76.
[30] R Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola,* trans. R Miller (1976), Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971, p. 8.
[31] D Powers, "Beyond the Death of the Author: Summertime and J.M. Coetzee's Afterlives", *Life Writing,* vol. 13 no. 3, 2016, pp. 323-334.
[32] Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola*, pp. 8-9.

incomplete characteristics of life, memory, identity and the archive.[33] I am also aware of the disjunct that is presented through the engagement with the fragmentary: that while I desire to engage with the fragmentary nature of life and the archive, I also have set out on a project to write and thus in a sense "smoothen out" the life of Christopher James. This project thus engages with the fragmentary while simultaneously attempting to tell a story in non-fragmentary way.

Section 1.3: Structural Considerations

The traditional structural approach to biography – the "life-and-works" model that documents a life in chronological order – has been challenged within scholarship for a number of decades.[34] Jolanta T. Pekacz argues that the attempt to reconstruct a life in chronology provides the reader with a false sense of neatness within the life, and an illusionary sense of coherence and totality.[35]

Within the genre of the literary biography, authors have utilised creative ways to narrativise their subjects' lives in ways that do not shackle the reader to chronology, but still allow for clarity and understanding of the subject. Hermione Lee's *Virginia Woolf*[36] and David Attwell's *J.M. Coetzee and the Life of Writing: Face to Face with Time*[37] are both structured thematically rather than chronologically. Each chapter engages with a theme of the subject's life (i.e. "Houses"; "Paternal"; "Maternal"; "Siblings" – [Lee]; or "Karoo"; "Mother"; "Father" – [Attwell]) and explores how the events within the subject's life are represented within their work. In *Flaubert's Parrot*, Julian Barnes employs a similar tool, going a step further from the traditional "neat" biography by writing about a fictional biographer who is working on the biography of French author Gustave Flaubert.[38] Within the context of narrativising the life of a South African composer, a similar method is utilised by Stephanus Muller in

[33] However, when speaking about the general scholarship and research in this area, I have used the terms "biographical enterprise", "biographical scholarship" or "life narrativisation".
[34] JT Pekacz, "Introduction", in JT Pekacz (ed), *Musical Biography: Towards New Paradigms.* England, Ashgate, 2006, pp. 1-16.
[35] JT Pekacz, "Memory, History and Meaning: Musical Biography and its Discontents", *Journal of Musicological Research,* vol. 23 no. 1, 2004, pp. 39-80; see also M Gillies, *Writing Lives: Literary Biography,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
[36] H Lee, *Virginia Woolf,* New York, A.A. Knopf, 1997.
[37] D Attwell, *J.M. Coetzee and the Life of Writing: Face to Face with Time,* United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 2015.
[38] J Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot,* London, Picador, 1984.

Nagmusiek, where the fictional biographer Werner Ansbach is created as a method of exploring the life of Arnold van Wyk.[39] Through this structural device, Muller presents van Wyk's narrative as "a life recreated in biography"[40] allowing him to probe further areas on the construction of biography.

This dissertation has been structured in a way that highlights the theme of place, although it still retains a sense of chronology. This privileging of place derives from the inconsistent answers received from interviewees about a singular location that James called "home". Edward Said writes:

> To me, nothing more painful and paradoxically sought after characterizes my life than the many displacements from countries, cities, abodes, languages, environments that have kept me in motion all these years.[41]

Using place as a hermeneutic and philosophical strategy for exploring a life is a technique used in both life-writing and musicology. Chris Walton uses the lens of place to discuss the life of Richard Wagner, exploring Wagner's view of place and his position therein.[42] In adopting a structure foregrounding place, I hope to locate Chris James's work and life in his temporary places of abode, while also showing that all and none of these locales were ever truly home to him. I believe this speaks to something important, if not essential, to the position of the white South African composer of art music. Breyten Breytenbach speaks about "The Middle World", a space beyond exile, which is "inhabited by the bums of the Global Village, … the position of being neither here nor there",[43] which "[o]f itself implies the acceptance and practice of multiple identities".[44] J.M. Coetzee writes about the navigation of these multiple identities among white South Africans, describing them as "no longer European, not yet African."[45] In relocating this focus to music, Stephanus Muller writes that South

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[39] S Muller, *Nagmusiek,* Johannesburg, Fourthwall, 2014.
[40] JM Pistorius, "Reviewed Work(s): Nagmusiek [Night Music] by Stephanus Muller", *Fontes Artis Musicae,* vol. 62 no.2, April-June 2015, p. 130
[41] EW.Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir,* London, Granta Books, 1999, p. 217.
[42] C Walton, *Richard Wagner's Zurich: The Muse of Place,* Rochester, Camden House, 2007.
[43] B Breytenbach & M Sienaert, "Reflections on Identity: Breyten Breytenbach interviewed by Marilet Sienaert", in JL Coullie; S Meyer; TH Ngwenya, & T Olver (eds), *Selves in Question: Interviews on Southern African Auto/biography,* Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, p. 270.
[44] Ibid.
[45] JM Coetzee, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa,* Yale University Press, New Haven, 1988, p. 11.

African art music is "geographically peripheral and ideologically pinned down as an extension of Europe or exotic Other."[46] If South African art music – and thus by extension South African art music composers – are located in European musical traditions despite their South African locale, then the issue of place becomes a relevant one to explore, especially in a composer such as James whose national identity is fragmented between the descriptors British, Rhodesian and South African.

Section 1.4: Objectivity in the biographical paradigm

Biography has a history of preference for objectivity that stands somewhat at odds with the more recent disenchantment (and disengagement) with the possibility of objectivity. As has been stated earlier, the term "auto/biography" has been used in part to acknowledge the presence of an author's voice in telling the story of their subject, breaking away from the idea of the author's voice as being something distant, absent and unseen.

It is a perspective intensified by postmodernist views of the impossibility of objectivity,[47] a view that "there is no secure external vantage point from which one can see clearly and objectively, can 'realize' the subject."[48] This concept of biography as "inescapably subjective"[49] dates back to Virginia Woolf, who wrote that "[the biographer] chooses; he synthesizes, in short, he has ceased to be the chronicler; he has become an artist."[50] In this regard, the biographer has been compared to a portrait painter by scholars such as Hermione Lee, who compares biography to portraiture as opposed to the perception thereof as a kind of autopsy,[51] and William S. McFeely, who wrote that as a biographer his words "have to achieve just the right hue, have to travel from note cards to the contours of the narrative".[52] This move from fact-finding to

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[46] S Muller, *Sounding Margins: Musical Representations of White South Africa,* DPhil Dissertation, University of Oxford, 2000, p. 15.
[47] C Howells, "Sartre's Existential Biographies: Search for a Method", in P France & W St Clair (eds), *Mapping Lives: The Uses of Biography,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 267-282.
[48] M Gerber, "Introduction", in M Rhiel & D Suchoff (eds), *The Seductions of Biography,* New York, Routledge, 1996, p. 175.
[49] M Seymour, "Shaping the Truth", in P France & W St Clair (eds), *Mapping Lives: The Uses of Biography,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 264.
[50] V Woolf, "The New Biography", in *Collected Essays,* vol. 4, London, Hogarth Press, 1967, p. 231.
[51] H Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction,* New York, Oxford University Press, 2009.
[52] WS McFeely, "Why Biography?", in M Rhiel & D Suchoff (eds), *The Seductions of Biography,* New York, Routledge, 1996, p. xii.

artistry is based largely on the idea that "[t]ruth, in this sense, is always something of a floating currency; and the exchange rates alter through history".[53] Rather than seeking to pin down a single "truth" of a subject, an author should therefore accept and engage with the fact that his/her voice inflects biographical writing[54] with truths external to those of the subject. I do not regard the role of the biographer as presenting a singular, definitive "explanation" (to use Barthes's term) of the subject, but rather as providing perspectives on the subject with the understanding that " '[d]oing biography' in any of its sub-forms is intimately connected with the biographer's own autobiography".[55] A mechanism for engaging with this understanding is the use of self-reflexive tools to expose the author's subjective voice.

Section 1.5: The Power of the Author

When constructing a narrative of a life, the author is afforded power. This power can be viewed as entailing benefits for the subject: the author is giving the life and work of a person attention which has previously been denied, - as is the case in this study - or is reinterpreting previously discussed work, extending its shelf-life. However, the very nature of biography is voyeuristic: it is looking very intensely at someone, a person who often cannot return the gaze. It is an assessment of a life, entails judgments of decisions and manifests in the complete disintegration of the privacy of the subject. Journalist, Janet Malcolm is particularly scathing in her expression of this aspect of the biographical enterprise:

> The biographer at work, indeed, is like the professional burglar, breaking into a house, rifling through certain drawers that he has good reason to think contain the jewelry and money, and triumphantly bearing his loot away. The voyeurism and busybodyism that impel writers and readers of biography alike are obscured by an apparatus of scholarship designed to give the enterprise an appearance of banklike blandness and solidity. The biographer is portrayed almost as a kind of benefactor. He is seen as sacrificing years of

[53] R Holmes, "Biography: Inventing the Truth", in J Batchelor (ed), *The Art of Literary Biography,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 18.
[54] Seymour, "Shaping the Truth"; Marcus *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice*; Kadar "Coming to Terms: Life Writing – from Genre to Critical Practice"; Kadar "Whose Life Is It Anyway? Out of the Bathtub and into the Narrative"; P France & W St Clair, "Introduction", in P France & W St Clair (eds), *Mapping Lives: The Uses of Biography.* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 1-5.
[55] Stanley, *The auto/biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography*, pp. 162-163.

> his life to his task, tirelessly sitting in archives and libraries and patiently conducting interviews with witnesses. There is no length he will not go to, and the more his book reflects his industry the more the reader believes that he is having an elevating literary experience, rather than simply listening to backstairs gossip and reading other people's mail. The transgressive nature of biography is rarely acknowledged, but it is the only explanation for biography's status as a popular genre. The reader's amazing tolerance (which he would extend to no novel written half as badly as most biographies) makes sense only when seen as a kind of collusion between him and the biographer in an excitingly forbidden undertaking: tiptoeing down the corridor together, to stand in front of the bedroom door and peep through the keyhole.[56]

The voyeurism of which Malcolm writes has led to many authors expressing great reluctance to allow their lives to be placed under a microscope. Henry James memorably expresses this in his novella *The Aspern Papers* (1888), Byron insisted that his memoirs be burned and Thomas Hardy destroyed documents pertaining to his life in 1919, and set up an intricate ruse whereby he would write his own biography pretending to be his second wife.[57] Chris James himself wrote about biography in a letter to his mother:

> Regarding the writing of a BIOGRAPHY, I have no real desire to do so. If I live long enough I may write some MEMOIRS and shall probably glean a lot of information from your letters.[58]

David Attwell writes:

> All good writers dread biography, of course, even when it is not contemptuous. Biography is one of the ways in which the present generation puts the previous one firmly in the past.[59]

Attwell writes about his biographical work on J.M. Coetzee, stating that he is unsure whether his work constitutes a form of devotion or a form of betrayal of his subject.[60]

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[56] J Malcolm, *The Silent Woman: Sylvia Plath & Ted Hughes,* New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1994, p. 9.
[57] H Lee, *Body Parts: Essays on Life-Writing,* Great Britain, Pimlico, 2005.
[58] Letter from Christopher James to Marjorie James, 22 February 2002.
[59] Attwell, *J.M. Coetzee and the Life of Writing: Face to Face with Time,* p. 22.
[60] Ibid.

Reflecting on this, it seems that the biographer is both intruder and devotee, an author who, in order to represent their subject accurately, is forced – or at least strongly encouraged – to violate their subject's privacy.

Another effect of the biographical invasion of privacy described by Malcolm, is the question of ownership of life. Ted Hughes, husband of Sylvia Plath, wrote in *The Guardian* on 20 April 1989 that he hoped that "each of us owns the facts of his or her own life."[61] Hermione Lee also discusses this in her book *Body Parts: Essays on Life-Writing*, questioning whether it is the author, the subject, or the family members who have ownership over the life of the subject.[62] While such a question is impossible to answer definitively in one way or another, keeping it in mind as an unresolved concern is essential.

It is a fair assertion to argue that no single author can adequately cover every aspect of a person's life in a single publication. Julian Barnes describes biography as akin to a net, which can either be considered "a meshed instrument designed to catch fish"[63] or "a collection of holes tied together by string."[64] Barnes continues:

> You can do the same with biography. The trawling net fills, then the biographer hauls it in, sorts, throws back, stores, fillets and sells. Yet consider what he doesn't catch: there is always more of that.[65]

This fragmentary nature of the biography, or the biographeme, is the source of the biographer's power. The biographer selects areas on which to focus, and areas over which to glide or ignore altogether. These decisions are also informed by the author's subjectivity: experiences in the archive, in real life, through reading. The power to make autonomous decisions about the subject exerts an ownership over the life of the subject which is unavoidable

[61] T Hughes, "The Place Where Sylvia Plath Should Rest in Peace", *The Guardian* 20 April 1989, p. 22.
[62] H Lee, *Body Parts: Essays on Life-Writing,* Great Britain, Pimlico, 2005.
[63] Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot,* p. 38.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.

Section 2: The Archive

It was raining that day, the day I first met Chris James. I drove from my home in Cape Town to Stellenbosch University to meet with Prof. Stephanus Muller about potentially pursuing a doctoral degree in musicology under his supervision.

My first reaction upon entering DOMUS was that it was not what I imagined. When I thought of an archive, I imagined hooded figures reading ancient parchment by candlelight. This room seemed fairly ordinary.

That was when I met Chris, and that was when I began to understand the power of the archive. Stacked on shelves taller than myself, were the 106 boxes, which made up the Christopher James Collection. Muller randomly selected one box, and showed me the contents thereof: in this instance pencil-written sketch material. I began to realize the importance of the presence of these documents, how the fact that they had been held by this man, and now I was holding them, meant that in a sense they were a portal between myself and him. Between the living and the dead. The history and ontology of Chris James, in fact his very DNA, could be found on these pages.

Like most of South Africa, I had not heard of Christopher James. When Muller told me that he had had some form of mental disorder, my ears pricked up. I suddenly became interested, suddenly this man was interesting. I had only a few weeks previously lost a close friend to suicide, and it somehow, somewhat tenuously, seemed serendipitous.

I agreed to the project.

I write this nearly four years later, and I am still ashamed that my initial interest in Chris was his illness.

This initial encounter with the archive reflects a view of both my subject and the archive that lacks nuance. But in this lack of nuance, it begins to expose the seductive power of working with and in archives. Already in this first encounter, the archive was changing my behaviour, exerting an agency that Amitav Ghosh articulates beautifully:

"While I was busy reading the archives, I found the archives were reading me."[66] To consider an archive as an objective site for the creation of objective historiography, is a mistaken assumption. In her doctoral dissertation *Ethnography and the Archive: Power and Politics in Five South African Music Archives,* Lizabé Lambrechts writes about the ambiguity of understanding the archive as an institution for storing physically tangible documents *and* as presenting "broad metaphorical ideas"[67] of complex power relations. Sarah Nuttall describes an archive as "a repository of documents from which one is supposed to produce the story of what happened."[68] The idea of defining the archive, as well as understanding the power relations it engenders, is a central concern of archival theory. Jacques Derrida probes both the definition of an archive, as well as the power relations present in the creation and maintenance thereof:

> The archons are first of all the documents' guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives.[69]

Thus, according to Derrida, archives are not sites of objective information consisting of that which is stored within an archive. What is deemed achievable (and what not) is the result of subjective intervention by a number of forces: archivists, institutions, politics and researchers. Furthermore, *how* these archives are read, provides researchers power to decide what forms part of the record, and what does not. Achille Mbembe writes that "[t]he archive is, therefore, not a piece of data, but a status."[70]

When using the archive as a source of information, it is therefore important to challenge the idea of archival objectivity, as well as to engage with the power presented to the researcher who is constructing a narrative (and in many ways an identity) through the archive. It is thus necessary to:

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[66] D Ghosh, "National Narratives and the Politics of Miscegenation", in A Burton (ed), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and The Writing of History,* Durham, Duke University Press, 2005, p. 30.
[67] L Lambrechts, *Ethnography and the Archive: Power and Politics in Five South African Music Archives,* PhD dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2012, p. 15.
[68] S Nuttall, "Literature and the Archive: The Biography of Texts", in V Harris, J Taylor, M Pickover, G Reid & R Saleg (eds), *Refiguring The Archive,* Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 2002, p. 297.
[69] Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, p. 2.
[70] A Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits", in C Hamilton; V Harris; J Taylor; M Pickover; G Reid & R Saleg (eds), *Refiguring The Archive,* Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 2002, p. 20.

> engage the idea of the taken-for-granted, often implicit, 'archive' that is the foundation of the production of knowledge in the present, the basis for the identities of the present and for the possible imaginings of community in the future.[71]

Ghosh argues that the use of introspective texts about encountering the archive helps not only to decentre ideas of archival objectivity, but in the process engages with the researcher's own subjectivity, voice and perspective.[72] Antoinette Burton writes:

> the claim to objectivity associated with the traditional archive poses a challenge which must be met in part by telling stories about its provenance, its histories, its effect on its users, and above all, its power to shape all the narratives which are to be 'found' there. What follows, in other words, are not merely histories or genealogies of archives or 'the archive' but, rather, self-conscious ethnographies of one of the chief investigative foundations of History as a discipline.[73]

My first encounter with the archive spoke to a sense of sharedness between Chris and myself because we were handling the same documents, just at different points in history, in what Jeff Sahadeo calls "contact zones".[74] This "contact zone" places the archive and the documents therein as the site of contact between two worlds: mine (based in the present and among the living), and Chris's (based in the past and among the dead). Mbembe speaks about death in the archive, and how an archive is used to trace and maintain a person's existence to a particular site, and thus the archiving process can be seen as akin to the burial of a body.[75] He argues that the writing of history

> involves manipulating archives. Following tracks, putting back together scraps and debris, and reassembling remains, is to be implicated in a ritual which results in the resuscitation of life, in bringing the dead back to life by reintegrating them in the cycle

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[71] C Hamilton, V Harris & G Reid, "Introduction", in C Hamilton; V Harris; J Taylor; M Pickover; G Reid & R Saleg (eds), *Refiguring The Archive,* Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 2002, p. 9.
[72] This view is also taken by ML Brownstein, "'Catastrophic Encounters': Postmodern Biography as Witness to History", in M Rhiel & D Suchoff (eds), *The Seductions of Biography,* New York, Routledge, 1996, pp. 185-199.
[73] A Burton, "Introduction", in A Burton (ed), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and The Writing of History,* Durham, Duke University Press, 2005, p. 6.
[74] J Sahadeo, "'Without the Past There Is No Future': Archives, History, and Authority in Uzbekistan", in A Burton (ed), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and The Writing of History,* Durham, Duke University Press, 2005, p. 54.
[75] Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits".

> of time, in such a way that they find, in a text, in an artifact or in a monument, a place to inhabit, from where they may continue to express themselves.[76]

In being brought back to life in this manner, Mbembe continues, the subject, the "spectre" of the archive, loses the ability to speak independently and now requires representation through "another…some sign, or some object which, not belonging to anyone in particular, now belongs to all".[77] Peter Fritzsche makes a similar argument, stating that a "lived life creates physical effects"[78] and that "it is not so much about what the dead leave behind as it is what the living end up recalling."[79] Working with an archive is therefore not only a process of a constant negotiation with objectivity, but also with writing *about* and not just *from* the archive. In this understanding the researcher cannot but acknowledge his/her power to represent the subject, to relocate them forward in chronology, and to monopolise the ways in which the subject is read and interpreted.

In one sense, of course, in the CJC the spectre of which Mbembe speaks is Chris James, whose archive and documents rest in this collection. But, in the archive as in his life, the CJC houses a second spectre: his mother, Marjorie. Her presence in both the archive and the narrative – and thus in the life – of Chris James is simultaneously over-bearing and loving. During her son's life, Marjorie was the self-proclaimed quintessential over-protective mother, managing her son's musical, medical and financial affairs well into his adulthood and up until his death. Theirs was an incredibly close but fraught relationship, alternating between unconditional loyalty and affection and destructive anger and frustration.

Marjorie's presence in the archive follows this same pattern of being both oppressive and invaluable. As has been mentioned, in 2010 and 2015 respectively, she gave comprehensive, in-depth interviews with a collective time of over ten hours. These interviews spanned Chris's entire life story. In addition to the length of these interviews, her memory for detail and dates was astounding, and there was little to no

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[76] Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits", p. 25.
[77] Ibid.
[78] P Fritzsche, "The Archive and the Case of the German Nation", in A Burton (ed), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and The Writing of History,* Durham, Duke University Press, 2005, p. 184.
[79] Ibid.

variation between the information she provided in 2010 and 2015. In retelling the James narrative, the interviews with Marjorie are indispensible. In the archive, Marjorie's presence is equally overwhelming. The archive was ordered to Marjorie's specifications, often not taking the longevity of the manuscripts into account. She was determined to maintain control of her son's legacy, even once it had been handed over to a fully functional music archive. This exertion of control found expression most demonstrably in Marjorie's excessive copying of documents. In my explorations of this archive I regularly found the same letter photocopied multiple times and distributed amongst multiple boxes as well as finding three identical copies of the same work in a single box. Although it is clear from the crates of material donated by Melissa James that Chris shared his mother's almost compulsive need to hoard documents,[80] the amount of copying which Marjorie did herself, and the excessive copying of documents already in the collection, has made the archive more challenging to navigate.

In *Archive Fever,* Derrida speaks about the "death drive" within archival practice. Derrida extends this from Sigmund Freud's theory of the destruction drive: the desire amongst people to destroy everything in their lives, including (and at times especially) the location of a record of their existence: the archive.[81] Derrida argues from there that the process of archiving is thus done as a defense against the death drive, and this intense desire to hoard, collect and preserve documents, while simultaneously destroying everything, is what Derrida calls the archive fever. In reading the James archive through Derrida's lens of the death drive, Marjorie's desire to preserve her son's memory can be described as a kind of archive fever. By preserving these documents, by making multiple copies and ensuring they are stored in multiple places within the archive, Marjorie has in a way attempted to blunt the finality of Chris's death, either to prolong his life by not allowing him to die completely, or by ensuring a simple resurrection from within the archive.

[80] Within these crates are books which date back to the 1700s, and family photographs as early as the 1800s.
[81] Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,* p. 12

Section 2.1: The Archive and Biographic paradigm

The relationship between archive and biographical scholarship is one of symbiosis: the biographer uses the archive as a source of information to construct a biographical narrative, and the production of biographical scholarship is a mechanism for opening up the archive. In his own encounters with these scholarly connections, Stephanus Muller writes:

> I found myself in the dual role of archivist and biographer, of neutral observer and interpreter, of list maker and listless and somewhat desperate grappler with a history always bursting out of the narrative constraints I devise.[82]

Archival theory and biographical scholarship share many disciplinary priorities, including concerns regarding definitions of terminology, engagement with the fragmentary, as well as constituting mechanisms for the "resurrection" of a subject. Both the archive and biography feature a figure desirous of anonymity – the archivist and the author respectively – who exerts a power relationship over the subject through selection of what artifacts/themes are relevant or useful (a distinction which is informed by the archivist's/biographer's subjectivity), and these are then used to determine the "record".

In the notion of objective biography, the voice of the author is meant to be absent or only very discreetly present, and in objective history/historiography, the voice of the archive is meant to be silent or at the very most comfortingly supportive. This dissertation entails constructing a reading of Christopher James's life and music through his archive, and I hold that in this endeavour neither the voice of the author nor the voice of the archive can be silence(d). In addition to being a mechanism for opening up the archive, the intervention of the biographical onto the archival can be considered as the "external force" that Mbembe describes to resuscitate the subject. Sarah Nuttall speaks about biography and the archive's role in resuscitating life:

[82] Muller, *Nagmusiek,* p. 385.

> Both biography and archive exist via the orders of death (excision, limitation) and of life (fecundity, imagination). Both are part of a specific operation that consists of dealing with what life has left behind … If both inhabit an intimacy with a world that is dead, both engage in a certain ritual of resurrection; at an articulation aimed at driving back the dead, at inserting them into time.[83]

Lambrechts argues that the presence of music within an archive challenges the notion of the archive as the final resting place for artifacts.[84] In opening the archive, in encouraging performers to perform and record the works, by encouraging researchers critically to engage with the archive, a musical work is given a new life on the stage and in the academy. In this respect I see the research presented here as contributing in a particular way to the theorizations that have been offered on the interactions between biography and archive. Chris James's music is neither an artifact, nor is it dead. Music has a temporality all of its own that makes the intervention of the biographer into the archive of a forgotten or neglected composer, a demonstrably future-oriented activity.

Section 3: Narrative and Text

Section 3.1: The Death of the Author

Roland Barthes writes that discussions around the relationship between the author and his/her works

> still consists for the most part in saying that Baudelaire's work is the failure of Baudelaire the man, Van Gogh's his madness, Tchaikovsky his vice. The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or the woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* 'confiding' in us.[85]

Over-simplifying the relationship between life and works, as Barthes points out, is a common vice of studies devoted to artists. In this respect, the desire to "explain" a

[83] Nuttall, "Literature and the Archive: The Biography of Texts", p. 299.
[84] Lambrechts, *Ethnography and the Archive: Power and Politics in Five South African Music Archives,* p. 58
[85] R Barthes, *Image, Music, Text,* trans. S Heath (1977), New York, Hill and Wang, 1977, p. 143. Italics are Barthes's.

work of art through a single characteristic of its creator is constructed as some kind of allegorical confession. This dissertation will not attempt to "explain" Chris James in any way, but rather to read and interpret him through reading and interpreting the archive. A critical reading does not suppose itself to be definitive, and to read James's work through his life narrative is therefore not to provide an "explanation" for his compositions, but to provide an interpretation informed by the biographical narrative.

Barthes's "Death of the Author" (1977) does not necessarily imply that the author's life (the biographical subject, in other words) plays no part in the interpretation of the work. Rather, Barthes is arguing against the hagiographic positioning of the author as Author-God,[86] a position held by the author in supremacy over the reader and the text. Barthes speaks to the liveliness of the text, and its power for interpretation:

> We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash … The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.[87]

In biographical practice, the importance of placing the text in a position of dominance – or at least removing it from a position of subservience to the Author-God – is highlighted by J.M. Coetzee in his semi-autobiographical work *Summertime*.[88] This book intersperses factual descriptions of Coetzee within the fictional narrative of biographer Vincent, who is writing the biography after Coetzee's death. Coetzee's decision to write himself as being deceased in the story can be read as an extension of the "death of the author" argument made by Barthes, where, in this case, within the narrative the author is literally and simultaneously fictitiously dead, leaving the interpretation of the life and text to the reader.[89] The book also highlights the pitfalls of focusing entirely on the life (i.e. Author-God) at the expense of the text. Powers writes:

> the autotextual traces in *Summertime* support the idea that the writer's identity is constituted equally by his work, a consideration that highlights the problem with

[86] Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, p. 146.
[87] Ibid.
[88] JM Coetzee, *Summertime: Scenes from Provincial Life,* London, Harvill Secker, 2009.
[89] Powers, "Beyond the Death of the Author: Summertime and J.M. Coetzee's Afterlives".

> Vincent's aim of producing a biography of Coetzee that focuses on the man to the exclusion of his work.[90]

Barthes further argues that the location of the unlocking of text is not situated within the author, but rather with the reader:

> Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations with dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author … a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination.[91]

In this project, Chris James will not be expelled from the readings of his work, but will become part of what Barthes terms the "multi-dimensional space" from which a text is created. As with Lee, Attwell, Barnes and other literary biographers, this dissertation does not defer to the authority of the works' creator, but rather seeks to explore the relationship between the construct of the life, and the reading of the works.

Section 3.2: Representations of Illness

A considerable amount of research exists on the link between mental illness and creativity.[92] This research has been primarily medically and psychologically focused, and is not of primary interest from a musicological perspective. In this dissertation I am not speaking to the scientific justification of making or assuming this link, but rather to how Christopher James, a composer who was diagnosed with a form of

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[90] Powers, "Beyond the Death of the Author: Summertime and J.M. Coetzee's Afterlives", p. 323.
[91] Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, p. 148.
[92] NC Andreasen, "Schizophrenia: The Fundamental Questions", *Brain Research Reviews,* vol. 31 no. 2-3, 2000, pp. 106-112.; N Barrantes-Vidal, "Creativity and Madness Revisited from Current Psychological Perspectives", *Journal of Consciousness Studies,* vol.11 no.3-4, 2004, pp. 58-78; WA Frosch,"Moods, Madness and Music. I. Major Affective Disease and Musical Creativity", *Comprehensive Psychology,* vol. 28, no.4, 1987, pp. 315-322; N Hasenfus, & P Magaro, "Creativity and Schizophrenia: An Equality of Empirical Constructs", *The British Journal of Psychiatry,* vol. 129 no.4, 1976, pp. 346-349; KR Jamison, *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament,* New York, The Free Press, 1993; RR Monroe, *Creative Brainstorms: The Relationship Between Madness and Genius,* New York, Irvington Publishers, 1992; M Neihart,"Creativity, The Arts, and Madness", *Roeper Review,* vol. 21 no.1, 1998, pp. 47-50; A Rothenberg, *Creativity and Madness: New Findings and Old Stereotypes,* Baltimore, Md., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990; P Sandblom, *Creativity and Disease: How Illness Affects Literature, Art and Music,* New York, Marion Boyars, 1996; RW Weisberg, "Genius and Madness? A Quasi-Experimental Test of the Hypothesis That Manic-Depression Increases Creativity", *Psychological Science,* vol. 5 no. 6, 1994, pp. 361-367.

mental illness, was perceived, and how he is still perceived today. My focus is thus on the one hand concerned with the perception of James as a "tortured artist" and how this trope was applied to James, and on the other hand on how to represent him in my writing in a manner that is both ethical and does not limit him to exoticised interpretations of the mentally ill.

In conversation with people who knew Chris, I discovered a penchant to ascribe every characteristic of the man and every decision that he took, as framed or informed by his mental illness. Mary Elene Wood discusses the pitfalls of such one-dimensional interpretations of people with mental illness in her book *Life Writing and Schizophrenia: Encounters at the Edge of Meaning.* Wood discusses how coherence is an important part of expression, and that those with mental illnesses which are associated with incoherence (such as schizophrenia) are thus denied the ability to express themselves: "At the centre of the discussion of these stories is the question, 'How do those living with schizophrenia write about their lives given that the diagnosis defines them as unable to tell a coherent story?'"[93] Wood argues further that if a person with schizophrenia is able to tell their story in a coherent way, or creates something noteworthy, they are restricted to being read only through the lens of schizophrenia at the expense of other interpretations. Regarding a fair and ethical approach to the work of people who suffer from mental illness, Wood examines the literary output of New Zealand author Janet Frame, who herself had spent a period of eight years in and out of institutions. Wood writes: "According to her autobiographical writings, this latter reading of her 'condition' gave her work a certain charisma, but it also limited expectations of her as a writer and restricted interpretations of her work".[94]

This singular interpretation that reduces creative work to instances of mental illness, has concerned me throughout the duration of this project. Of course James's illness was part of him, and therefore in some way also part of his music. There is, for example, archival evidence that James's work *Four portraits* is in some way linked to mental illness. James was also quite open about his mental illness, and it would be wrong to assume that he would object to any acknowledgement of this part of his

[93] ME Wood, *Life Writing and Schizophrenia: Encounters at the Edge of Meaning,* Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2013, p. 2.
[94] Wood, *Life Writing and Schizophrenia: Encounters at the Edge of Meaning,* p. 174.

identity as being indelicate or insensitive. The trope of the "tortured genius" is hardly original. It is ascribed to many artists (Vincent van Gogh, Robert Schumann, Syd Barrett, Kurt Cobain, Billy Corgan) whose art remains contextualized by a collective knowledge of their various mental illnesses. In conversations I have had with people who did not know Chris but only know of him, I have observed how his life seems to change from being ordinary to extraordinary at the mention of his illness, as this opens up avenues of interpretation and fascination. Ironically, as Wood has argued, in opening up these alleyways to more sympathetic and informed understandings, mental illness simultaneously closes other avenues of interpretation and understanding. My own initial interest in Chris, back in 2013, was sparked by what I now consider an exoticisation of mental illness.

Ethical discussions relating specifically to the narrativisation of lives affected with mental illness have much in common with the ethical considerations pertaining to the biographical enterprise as a whole. The depiction of a person with mental illness – or physical illness for that matter – is to mark them as what Couser terms a "vulnerable subject".[95] Couser argues that this creates a double vulnerability: that the subject was vulnerable during their life, and now through biography is vulnerable within a narrative.

Sophie Tamas, in her paper "Autoethnography, ethics and making your baby cry", reflects on her daughter Ruth's reaction when reading her PhD. Tamas's PhD is about spousal abuse, and reflects her own experience at being abused by her ex-husband (who also happens to be Ruth's father). When Ruth reads her mother's doctoral thesis, and reads about her father abusing her mother, she is obviously emotional. Tamas writes:

> but arguing that I didn't hurt people on purpose would be a cop-out. I love Ruthy, I knew it would make her cry, and I wrote it anyway.[96]

The justification for exploring this vulnerability is that the positives outweigh the negatives: that more good will result for the subject – even if the subject is deceased –

[95] GT Couser, *Vulnerable Subjects: Ethics and Life Writing,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2004.
[96] S Tamas, "Autoethnography, Ethics, and Making Your Baby Cry", *Cultural Studies, Critical Methodologies,* vol. 11 no. 3, 2011, p. 261.

than bad. That in order to create a narrative that represents any subject in a thorough and balanced way, the subject will in some way be exposed. That is how I have justified reading private documents in the archive, speaking at conferences and writing about sensitive aspects of the life of a man I did not ever meet. While I am exposing arguably some of the most private aspects of my subject, I do so with the intent to create new interest amongst performers and musicologists in the life and music of Christopher James. Such intent does not elide the fact that such desires are not entirely innocent, as I am not pursuing this research for selfless reasons. As much as I hope that my work on James results in musical exposure for Chris, it is not the only – or even primary – reason for undertaking doctoral research.

The balance required in dealing with Chris's illness lies somewhere between an acknowledgement of the existence of his illness, and the acknowledgement of the problems pertaining to its representation. This balance also requires an acknowledgement of other aspects of his life, which at times were more prevalent than his illness. Couser writes: "It is a matter not just of responsibility but of responsiveness. The challenge is to enact or communicate this on the page".[97] He thus argues that while a singular system of ethical guidelines cannot necessarily be drawn or always adhered to in a practice as diverse as life writing,[98] authors are encouraged to be reflexive about their role in their subjects' lives, and regularly to be critical of their writing in order to protect the vulnerability of the subject. Nuttall writes:

> The documents have to be written, both those that were not intended to be written (that were intended to remain private) as well as those that formed part of a conscious project of writing the story of the self … The biographer must break up the surface of a life, which would make it a story with a beginning and an ending, and without abolishing these, he or she must decontextualize the fragments in order to recontextualise them. A construction must be made.[99]

[97] Couser, *Vulnerable Subjects: Ethics and Life Writing,* p. 22.
[98] Couser uses the term "life writing".
[99] Nuttall, "Literature and the Archive: The Biography of Texts", p. 297.

Section 3.3: Myth

In exploring how myth has informed how Christopher James was understood by himself and by others, one needs to understand how the themes which have emerged about his life are based to some degree in factuality. These myths include those of the "African romantic", the "special child" and most prevalent, the "tortured artist".

The term "myth" is usually associated with ancient stories (be it Roman, Norse, Greek etc.) of the supernatural, which – for the most part – are usually fictional. In this dissertation, this term is *not* used to denote a story rooted in the fictional, but rather an interpretation of memory based on factual events. Ruth Finnegan argues that: "It is too simple to dismiss such images as 'fantasy', for they have their reality in people's lived experience".[100] Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson take this argument a step further, by arguing that seeking truth or untruth within myths is unproductive, that "[t]he key step … is not the crude weighing of 'myth' against 'reality'."[101] Further, Samuel and Thompson argue that although the term "myth" has an association of fiction which, when encountered, devalues it:[102] "[t]o call such stories myths is not to deny their roots in real incidents and real social conflicts".[103] It is also important to take into account that memory – like biography and the archive – is not objective, but constitutes "a battlefield",[104] or an "exercise in selective amnesia".[105]

Besides the information provided by the archive, this project relies heavily on the accounts provided in interviews from James's friends, family and colleagues. Critically engaging with these stories can be productive.[106] Alistair Thomson argues that we use the construction of our memories as a mechanism with which to understand our past and our present.[107] When a scholar therefore receives information from a family member about their subject, the scholar must be aware that, although the memories are

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[100] R Finnegan, "Family Myths, Memories and Interviewing", in R Perks & A Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader,* Second Edition, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 180.
[101] R Samuel & P Thompson, "Introduction", in R Samuel & P Thompson (eds), *The Myths We Live By,* London, Routledge, 1990, p. 14.
[102] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction", p. 4
[103] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction", p. 19.
[104] A Thomson, "The Anzac legend: Exploring national myth and memory in Australia", in R Samuel & P Thompson (eds), *The Myths We Live By,* London, Routledge, 1990, p. 73.
[105] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction", p. 7.
[106] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction".
[107] Thomson, "The Anzac legend: Exploring national myth and memory in Australia", p. 78.

likely linked to actual events and experiences, they can be presented and told in a way that endeavours to understand and interpret the person who they are speaking about. The importance of the subjectivity or fragility of memory, and the use of myths to help us understand ourselves and those around us, is emphasized by Ruth Finnegan, who writes that "[m]yths and images … affect family and individual memories, and shape the ways they represent the past, even their own experiences".[108] This is of particular importance when discussing an individual like Christopher James, whose illness made him not only a difficult person to be around at times, but also the target of stigma. If memory is an act of "selecting, ordering and simplifying a construction of coherent narrative whose logic works to draw the life story towards the fable",[109] told in the present to make sense of the past, what is remembered about Christopher James and relayed to the researcher must be viewed through the lens of being in itself a method for understanding this very complex man. By understanding that myth plays a role in these mechanisms of understanding, we are able to attain a deeper understanding of the subject.[110] Jean Peneff writes:

> The mythical element in life stories is the pre-established framework within which individuals explain their personal history: the mental construct which, starting from the memory of individual facts which would otherwise appear incoherent and arbitrary, goes on to arrange and interpret them and so turn them into biographical events.[111]

Luisa Passerini describes myth and history as being two poles, the first involving stories that are more metaphoric and the other, stories with a clearer grounding in analytical fact.[112] Oral history, Passerini argues, moves between these two poles, often distorting their mutual exclusivity, and thus has the ability to link the mythical to biographical frameworks of individual lives.[113] Yet myth-making is not only a tool used by one person to understand another, it is also a tool for understanding ourselves,

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[108] Finnegan, "Family Myths, Memories and Interviewing", p. 179.
[109] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction", p. 8.
[110] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction".
[111] J Peneff, "Myths in life stories", in R Samuel & P Thompson (eds), *The Myths We Live By,* London, Routledge, 1990, p. 36.
[112] L Passerini, "Mythbiography in oral history", in R Samuel & P Thompson (eds), *The Myths We Live By,* London, Routledge, 1990, p. 49.
[113] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction".

a marker for our own self-identity.[114] Thus, if myth-making is an interpretive framework used *internally* and *externally* to understand a person, it can be seen as productive for the biographical scholar to analyse life stories through the lens of myth.[115] "Any life story, written or oral, more or less dramatically, is in one sense a personal mythology".[116]

Those historical figures involved in creative endeavours are arguably the most susceptible to interpretation through myth, in particular through attempts to read and understand their work. Mythical tropes in music have been explored by Christopher Wiley, whose research explores the integration of biography and musicology, and how myths around composers shape our understanding of their lives.[117] He writes about the use of "novelized narrative characteristic[s]"[118] in musical biographies, such as the

> familiar mythic themes: pilgrimages, contests, displays of phenomenal artistic feats, accounts of insuppressible children driven to secrecy and transgression in pursuit of their destinies, prophetic or laudatory comments received from leading musical authorities, and so forth.[119]

Wiley's research on composer biographies is important because of its consideration of the reciprocity of work and life, and its reflection of just the kinds of writing, myths and tropes that result from these entanglements. Other writers have discussed how composers maneuvered mythological speculation to their favour. Richard Taruskin, for example, has discussed how Wagner used his late exposure to music – as opposition to the early exposure to music of composers such as Mozart and Beethoven – as a mechanism to accentuate the notion of his genius.[120] It thus suffices to show the use of "alternative strategies … within biography in order to explain the relative greatness …

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[114] Finnegan, "Family Myths, Memories and Interviewing"; Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction".
[115] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction".
[116] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction" p. 10.
[117] CM Wiley, *Re-Writing Composers' Lives: Critical Historiography and Musical Biography,* PhD Dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2008.
[118] Wiley, *Re-Writing Composers' Lives: Critical Historiography and Musical Biography,* p. 20.
[119] Wiley, *Re-Writing Composers' Lives: Critical Historiography and Musical Biography* p. 36.
[120] R Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music: Volume 3-The Nineteenth Century,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.

in relation to the composer's life" is an occurrence within music biography and the would-be researcher should be aware of this.[121]

Conclusion

This dissertation is the first full-length exploration of Christopher James's life and music, and this unique positioning has influenced certain decisions about its writing. Some of these decisions are musicological, such as the casting of musical readings in narrative form to introduce a largely unperformed oeuvre. Others were informed by a reading of the theories that informed this project. The act of writing a person's life has certain simultaneous outcomes: it has historically been a productive mechanism for the expression of the work and experiences of those outside of the centres of knowledge and power, while it simultaneously forces subjects into a position of exposure. This imparts to the author a position of power, especially in the case of a project such as this, where a subject's life and works are being explored for the first time, and thus the author sets the tone for future scholarship. In narrating such a life, the author must be aware of these power dynamics and of his/her power over a subject's life.

Regarding considerations of terminology and structure, it has been shown that there is debate within current scholarship on the merits of the terms "life-writing" and "auto/biography". Each term signifies a particular understanding about the nature and outcome of its enterprise. While I have integrated two further terms – namely "biographeme" and "anthology of existence" to speak to the fragmentary nature of telling the story of a life – this project is not beholden to any of these terms, but rather positions itself as being aware of the strengths and pitfalls of each. Considerations of structural decisions are also important, as has been seen in the books of Attwell, Lee, Barnes and Muller, among others. An author can reimagine a life through creative decisions within the structure of his/her work. This dissertation therefore aims to probe the "life-and-works" paradigm by engaging with the author's own subjectivity, and questioning the post-colonial issue of place and the concept of "home" through structural mechanisms.

[121] CM Wiley, "Biography and the New Musicology", in T Marković & V Mikić (eds), *(Auto)Biography as a Musicological Discourse,* Belgrade, University of Arts in Belgrade, 2010, pp. 3-27.

The archive, much like biography, is a site of subjectivity and power dynamics, and it would be a mistake to rely so heavily on the archive without taking these issues into account. This project aims to use both the life story and the archive to read and interpret the music of Christopher James, but with these subjective readings there are also considerations which are expanded on in the body of the work. In dealing with a subject who suffered from mental illness, I have actively chosen not to read mental illness into every creative decision, but simultaneously not to ignore it, because mental illness – as much as anything else – was a part of who Christopher James was, and of the context that informed his creative decisions.

While there exist many examples of life documentation of performers and composers within musicology, there still appears to be some reluctance on the part of musicologists to engage with the biographical paradigm.[122] It can thus be seen that musicologists engage with the biographical paradigm in a practical rather than theoretical way – that is to say that they "do" biography rather than theorise about it. Even without theorising about it, the process of writing a biography is, of course, an engagement with form. While this kind of practical engagement is important, musicology's minimal *critical* engagement with biography is problematic. Wiley writes:

> … the ideologies of musical biography themselves remained largely unexplored, and in consequence, musicology may have unwittingly absorbed wholesale many of the tendencies and preoccupations that have accumulated within the genre in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[123]

This project therefore not only presents the first complete documentation of the life of Christopher James, but positions itself in a relatively small but growing field of musicological thought which aims to interrogate questions concerning biographical narrative and memory.[124] This work probes the autobiographical within the biographical through reflexive passages, and speaks to the inter-relational nature of

[122] J Oliver, *Appropriating Biography for Critical Musicology: A Psychobiographical Case Study of Maurice Ravel's 'L'Enfant et les sortilèges'*. MA dissertation, University of York, 2013.
[123] Wiley, "Biography and the New Musicology", p. 3
[124] Ibid.

James's life and his works through a structure that intentionally allows narrative passages to move into analytical sections.

Derrida argues that "To write is to forget."[125] The archive is for Derrida a site of opposites, a place of both destruction and preservation, of forgetting and memory. When a person's memory is documented and stored, it grants society permission to forget that person. *The Loss Library,* written by South Africa author Ivan Vladislavić and published in a book of unfinished short stories, tells of a fictional library for lost or forgotten information. Sadly, if such a library were to exist, the music of Christopher James would be catalogued therein. Of his nearly 100 works few have been performed during and after his lifetime, and even fewer have been recorded. In trying to store Chris James's work in an archive for future generations, we have in a way allowed ourselves to forget him, and allowed him to linger in the loss library, moving him further from what Zuleiga Adams terms the "psychic archive", a space of collective memory.

This research project aims to address this forgetting. *Pace* Derrida, I write to remember what I never knew.

[125] Z Adams, *Demitrios Tsafendas: Race, Madness and the Archive.* PhD dissertation, University of the Western Cape, 2011, p. 4.

Chapter I: Rhodesia, 1952 – 1973

Section I: Family

> It was his way of being in the world, and it's a world he wanted to be in! He wanted to be more in it than he was ever given space to be.[126]

Christopher Langford James was born on 20 December 1952 in Rhodesia. His parents owned Chisawana Farm[127] – a commercial farm 90 miles and seven rivers south of Rhodesia's capital, Salisbury. Christopher's father, Tom Hareshaw (T.H.) James was born in London on 23 June 1907. His plan had been to move to Canada, as he had family connections with The Canadian Transatlantic Trade, but in 1926, aged 19, he received an apprenticeship on a tobacco farm in Rhodesia. Aside from farming, T.H. was politically active, and sat on many committees as a member of the liberal United Federal Party (UFP). In an interview with the author, his widow, Marjorie James spoke about a racially integrated meeting held at the James farm in 1958 by the UFP's leader Edgar Whitehead:

> My husband knew a lot of them [members of the UFP] because he was very very keen on politics. And I was too, very keen about what was going on. And Edgar was actually a friend of his before he went over to the States … He had meetings all over the country on this [idea of] 'Build a Nation'. We had the first ever integrated political meeting on the farm. Our neighbours did boycott, but we had the Africans from all over. And Edgar came along and spoke to everybody.

Chris's mother was born Marjorie McCallum – although as a child she was known as Bob – on 23 December 1924 in Durban, South Africa. Her mother, Gladys McCullum, had moved to Rhodesia, and in 1944 Marjorie went to visit her. Marjorie fell in love with Rhodesia, and got a job as a book-keeper. The company she was working for was doing the books for T.H.'s farm, which is how they met in 1950. On 16 January 1952 they were married, and just under a year later their first child, Christopher Langford,

[126] Interview with Christopher Ballantine, 10 August 2015.
[127] Letter from Ted James, 9 February 2017.

was born on 20 December 1952. Less than a year and a half after that, on 4 May 1954, their second and last child, Islay Frances, was born.

Figure 2: Christopher James's christening, 17 May 1953.

As conventional as this four-person family unit seems, both T.H. and Marjorie had had children previously with other people. Marjorie had previously been married, and had

given birth to a daughter, Kathleen, on 19 December 1947. Sadly, less than two years later, Kathleen died on 10 August 1949. She had polio of the neck, and had suffocated. According to Marjorie, the utter devastation of Kathleen's death ended her marriage with her first husband, who turned to alcohol to assuage his pain. To lose one's first child is an incredibly traumatic experience, and Marjorie admits that it affected the way in which she raised Chris and Islay. Having a half-sister whom he never met seemed to affect Chris too, and in a letter he wrote to his mother on 6 February 2000 he compared the platonic relationship he had with Pamela van Schaik – a person with whom he had previously collaborated – as being "calming", going on to state she was "rather like the elder sister (Kathleen) which I never had!".[128]

The story of T.H.'s other children is fraught in a different way, considering the historical context. T.H. married a young black woman, Verina[129] Kruwakumire, and had two children with her: Tom (named after his father, 1942-2000) and Ted (born in 1944). They were married under "traditional customary law"[130] at a time when interracial marriages were illegal in Rhodesia. T.H. paid for Tom's and Ted's education at St John's boarding school, and although he acknowledged his two interracial children, Marjorie disapproved and they were kept separate from T.H.'s white children. Chris was always angry about this separation,[131] and wrote in a letter to his father on 12 April 2000:

> I really quite honestly think you should feel absolutely NO GUILT WHATSOEVER about your first MIXED MARRIAGE. Both Tom and Ted have turned out fine. What you <u>should</u> feel GUILTY about is the <u>fact</u> that you did not take the trouble to <u>write</u> to your sons … I really do think it is your <u>fatherly duty</u> to spent time with him [Ted] before you pass away … I expect you to do the <u>HONOURABLE</u> thing and just <u>NOT</u> sweep everything under the CARPET. This may be your last opportunity for seeing Ted and I personally know that in many ways he was your <u>FAVOURITE</u> son.[132]

[128] Letter from Chris James to Marjorie James, 6 February 2000.
[129] In a letter to his father dated 11 March 1999, Chris refers to her as "Edwina". This could have been her sister, but it is also likely that Chris got her name wrong.
[130] Letter from Ted James, 9 February 2017.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Capitalisation and underlining are James's. In this letter James also confirms Marjorie's displeasure with him meeting Ted, stating that Marjorie has accused him of "imposing" Ted on the family.

With the birth of Chris and Islay, T.H. and Marjorie established a conventional family unit. Chris was a sickly baby, and suffered from a stomach illness. This illness, most likely Pyloric Stenosis, manifested itself in regular vomiting. Because of fears that he might choke on his own vomit – fears no doubt exacerbated by Kathleen's death – T.H. and Marjorie monitored Chris constantly, taking it in shifts to sleep, until Chris was strong enough to turn over by himself. Marjorie also describes Islay's birth as "very difficult",[133] causing Marjorie to go into general hospital immediately after giving birth, while T.H. took Islay back to the farm. When Marjorie was discharged from hospital and returned to the farm, Chris came running to her saying:

> Mummy Mummy, we've got a baby. Daddy and I have got a baby, do you want to come and see? Look at our beautiful baby. It's Daddy and my baby, but you can look at her, she's a little girl, you can pick her up.[134]

These early familial interactions set the tone for the way Chris interacted with his family for the rest of his life. His relationship with each of his parents was difficult. T.H. had wanted a son who took more of an interest in the farm, and who arguably exhibited more traditionally male characteristics. But his son was a lot more interested in his schoolwork, and particularly in music, and did not enjoy the more earthy pursuits of the farm:

> As a child, he was reticent. Definitely. He did not like to get his hands or anything like that dirty. So he would never ever mix with children that were going to play with soil. So he was always very very fussy there.[135]

His relationship with his father was further strained by T.H.'s approach to raising children. T.H. treated Chris like a man from an early age, which manifested both positively and negatively. Marjorie describes their relationship as close, but in a strange way, and recalls that conversations between Chris and his father were very "gentlemanly" and not intended for the ladies. Yet T.H. was not affectionate with his son, which for the sensitive young Chris was damaging. In an interview with the author, Chris's ex-wife Tina relays an incident that devastated him into his adulthood.

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[133] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.

When Chris was sent to boarding school at the age of five, his father did not hug him, but shook his hand, saying that Chris was now a man. Tina says: "This was devastating for Chris, but this was what these colonial people did. You shook your child's hand and then sent them off to boarding school."[136] This was in direct contrast with T.H.'s relationship with Islay, who was always willing to be involved in farm activities and with whom T.H.'s colonial background of typical masculine and feminine roles, permitted a more physically affectionate relationship.

Chris was undoubtedly much closer to his mother and similarities between Chris as an infant, and his deceased half-sister Kathleen, can be seen. Marjorie noted her awareness that Kathleen, like Chris, showed signs of intelligence at an early age. In addition, Chris was also a sickly infant, and his birthday is only one day after hers. Marjorie has admitted that Kathleen's death affected the way in which she raised Chris:

> Chris always accused me of being over-protective, and my husband said I was. And I said 'Well if I am, I am. I am me. How do you change me? I don't wish to change'. I had lost a child at 20 months, and it's a very very traumatic thing. And of course you're always nervous, or at least I was, we don't have a repeat of it. And, well I'm afraid it does affect you.[137]

In an interview on 11 August 2015, the author asked Marjorie about her relationship with her son, and the closeness between the two of them. She felt that they were very close, saying:

> I think it goes back to his childhood. He had a bit of a problem with his tummy, when he was born. Regurgitation. So it was a matter of watching this child almost 24 hours a day, to see that he didn't regurgitate and then swallow his own vomit and choke to death … When he was in the pram, before Islay, he was always beside me. I'd be working on accountancy and I'd have the pram beside me. That's when I used to play music for him. We had an old gramophone and some old records, light classics and what have you, and he loved it. I'd feed him, wind him, put him down and get a record going, and I could

[136] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[137] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.

> work. He always had an hour or so of music played to him … He loved it. As soon as he was able to wind this gramophone, he did!

A mother-son relationship formed on such a bond is one that no doubt caused friction, especially with a woman who has admitted to being over-protective, and a son who was more gentle, emotional and fragile:

> Marc Röntsch: Did you and he always get on?
> Marjorie James: Of course we got on, very well indeed. But, to get on very well indeed you had [Marjorie makes her fists collide, implying friction].
> MR: So you guys did fight?
> MJ: Oh yes! [laughs] Arguments. Chris was always apologising, he had a shorter wick than mine. He was such a nice, gentle person. He wouldn't go shouting at you. Not that we shouted at each other.[138]

Marjorie's over-protectiveness became a problem in the relationship from early in her son's life, and would continue to create conflict after Chris had divorced and moved back to his mother's house:

> He always said to me: 'Stop fussing. You fuss too much'. Well maybe I did fuss. Well of course, I can't deny that I didn't fuss, I did. And I shouldn't have, but, you automatically do. We didn't always agree with each other, then we'd have an argument. Except, we didn't argue when we played chess, no no.[139]

Chris's relationship with his sister Islay can be considered to be a typical older brother-younger sister relationship, where Chris felt very protective of her, which, much like the relationship with his mother, was to remain consistent throughout his life. During a number of interviews, this state of affairs was affirmed:

> He was always a serious person, right from tiny. Very very serious really. Now that I look back I can see it more than I could when I was younger. And MOST protective of his sister. Extremely protective. He used to run around tidying up after her. Of course

[138] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[139] Ibid.

> she was very untidy because why should she do anything, because her brother did it for her. They were very very close indeed.[140]
>
> [Chris was] particularly protective of his sister. All the way through, right up until he died, he was protective of her.[141]
>
> That was the rest of his life with Islay, running around her. The only time I have ever known him to biff anyone, was he biffed one of the boys because they were rude to Islay. [Makes punch gesture]. They were protective of each other.[142]
>
> He had very precise opinions on his sister.[143]

Perhaps the siblings saw in each other the relationship they wanted to have with their parents? Islay was able to have an affectionate relationship with her father, which Chris desperately coveted. Marjorie, on the other hand, admired Chris for his intelligence and talent, whereas Islay felt that Marjorie thought she was inferior.[144] Islay, one could conjecture, might have desired the relationship that Chris had with Marjorie, and Chris the relationship that Islay had with T.H.

The familial context is interesting to keep in mind when considering the composer Chris became, in no small way because each of his family members had music dedicated to them. More so than dedications, aspects of Chris's cultural, moral, religious and ethical characteristics – undoubtedly influenced and formed through his relationship with his family – are expressed through his music, as will be seen later in this dissertation. Although the Jameses belonged to a more liberal political camp when it came to race relations, in many ways they were a traditional, conservative family. Their roots are very clearly colonial English, and the conventional familial unit to which they espoused was no doubt threatened by the looming, but never discussed, presence of T.H.'s illegitimate, non-white[145] family. In this conventional Christian

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[140] Interview between Stephanus Muller and Marjorie James, 2010.
[141] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Interview with Tina James, 2015.
[144] This is something that Islay has often said in conversations with the author.
[145] The term "non-white" has been considered to be an offensive and contentious term, but in this context the use of the term is deliberate, because that is how they were seen: they were considered inferior due to being *not* white.

family model, the eldest male is usually considered to be the favoured child. This is especially relevant to a farming family, as the eldest male is traditionally the one who inherits the farm, and continues his family's legacy. In this sense Chris was both the typical and atypical eldest son. He was doted on by his mother, but from an early age it was clear that he was a less than ideal inheritor of the James farming estate. And yet, as a colonial white child born within wedlock to two Christian white people, Chris was an important part of T.H.'s and Marjorie's hopes of an ideal, conventional family. Importantly, for Marjorie especially, Chris was also the child who lived. Although he was a sickly baby – and illness would be something he fought throughout his life, in one form or another – he had survived.

Chris's dual roles as both eldest son, and the son who survived, intersect in the perception of him as being in some way special. As already noted, Marjorie made special mention of Chris's intelligence as a young child (comparing it to that of Kathleen), and the perception of Chris within the family as being particularly musically gifted is a theme that can be traced from childhood through to his death, and lives on within his family posthumously.

Was this perception of Chris as a specially talented musical youngster warranted? Certainly, from an early age Chris showed a strong interest in music. It seems that his musicality came from his mother's side of the family. His maternal grandmother was an amateur pianist with a skill for improvisation and sight-reading, which she felt was a disadvantage because it allowed her never to memorise music. In an interview with Stephanus Muller in 2010, Marjorie tells the story of a particularly interesting visit that her mother paid to the James farm.[146] During this trip, dated either 1956 or 1957, there was a visiting pianist from the United Kingdom (UK) touring Rhodesia. Marjorie's mother wanted to make the trip to Salisbury to hear this pianist perform, and decided to take Chris, who at that stage was four or five years old, along. During the interval, they noticed that Chris had disappeared. He had gone on stage and spoken with the pianist, and this pianist suggested that Chris take up music lessons.[147]

[146] It is worth noting that in an extensive interview with the author in 2015, at the age of 91, Marjorie told this same story with remarkable consistency to her previous interview in 2010..
[147] What is also of interest here is that, when relaying this story to Stephanus Muller in 2010, Marjorie begins to cry. This is the only time in the over 10 hours of interviews with Marjorie that she becomes emotional.

In both of her interviews, Marjorie also makes mention of Chris's musical interests from an early age:

> He took things seriously. And the one thing, I suppose, that governed his life this age [indicates 'small' with her hand], was music. And as soon as he started learning, everything in his life, nothing else mattered. Which made him difficult.
>
> He made his own funny kind of instrument, what did he like to call it? ... He had a battery box, an old-fashioned battery box. Somehow or other, he put kinds of wires and bits of string, and he made his music on it.

This is a common thread that emerges throughout the interviews conducted with those who were close to Chris. Tina James, in describing her time with Chris in the United States in in the 1980s, relays her experiences sight-seeing with Chris in "…this clapped out Datsun with a hole in the floor…but his mind was always on the music, so he wasn't a great person to travel with…". Yet, while in his later life his mind may have "..always been on the music" (and this is not surprising considering it was his career), it is unclear whether he was as infatuated by music from a young age as his family remembers. His letters home from his boarding school, Ruzawi, make little mention of his progress in music, but regularly mention his academic work, meticulously noting his class rankings in different subjects.

The story that emerges from Chris's family is one of a boy who was so passionate about music that he listened to records in the pram as a sickly infant, made his own musical instrument, and persuaded visiting pianists of his gift. This interpretation ties in with the myth of "the artist" who from a young age is obsessed with his craft and constitutes, perhaps, too easy a description of a complex personality and musical development. For example, Marjorie's story of Chris making his own musical instrument seems unlikely, yet what is more telling than its unlikeliness, is the way in which Marjorie saw her son. Wiley writes: "One key function of the childhood myths retold in biographies was to provide early indications of the adult whom the subject was to become."[148] To Marjorie, stories such as these, regardless of how implausible,

[148] Wiley, *Re-Writing Composers' Lives: Critical Historiography and Musical Biography,* p. 45

reflect an undeniable, natural musical gift present in her son. The mythologising of an artist's early life is by no means unique to Chris James, as seen in Christopher Wiley's research mentioned earlier.

I became aware during my research that the "artist myth" and the way it was attached to Chris James, helped to justify behaviour that would perhaps have been more difficult to accept had Chris not been "an artist". This interpretation, a kind of mythologising of Chris as "special", as an "artist", as the "perennial musician from a young age", was assigned to him from an early age. It would become an identity construct from which he never entirely escaped, and as can often be seen within the workings of personal mythology, an identity construct to which he also ascribed.

Section II: The Farm.

Figure 3: Christopher James, 1955/1956.

The farm formed part of Chris's identity throughout his life. In a letter he wrote to Natalie Huston (the wife of his composition lecturer in Cincinnati, Scott Huston) on 11 February 1992 to send condolences for her husband's recent death, Chris described himself as "[b]eing a farmer's son" in relation to the drought in South Africa at the

time. This identity with the farm and farming narrative as an identity construct even permeated Chris's music. Chris composed *Music for rainy days* for two pianos between August and October 2003 as "A prayer for humankind to receive sufficient rain during the 21st century."[149]

An argument could be made that the farm was always his home.

> I think what comes to mind, to me, home to him was always, at the beginning of *Paradise Regained* he has those like bird sounds, and I think that, to him, was always a sort of calling back to the farm. I think he always had this great longing for that farm, and the peace … So the farm was home to him.[150]

> Certainly from my time with him, when I was married to him, outdoors was important … He liked peaceful places, he liked gardens, he hated built-up places, and I think even his roots as a young child: the farm, the land. Being outdoors, not having a lot of people around.[151]

One event cuts through the Romantic idyllic view of the farm. Marjorie James recalls a severe fire on the farm, when Chris was around four years old (considering his birthday is in December, the date for the event could be 1956 or 1957). T.H. was in Lusaka and Marjorie had stayed behind to look after the farm. One night one of the farm labourers ran to the farmhouse yelling "Moto! Moto!"[152] When Marjorie ran out of the farm house she saw that the thatch-roofed storerooms were ablaze. These storerooms contained, amongst others, farming tools, flammable items such as engines, petrol, oxygen and acetylene canisters, shotguns and ammunition, and fertiliser. Marjorie and a farm labourer ran to empty the storeroom that contained the engines and canisters of oxygen, fuel and acetylene.

> While we were getting this stuff out of there…I stepped back because a bit of burning thatch came down. I stepped back onto something soft, I thought I was stepping onto a snake. It was Chris. 'Mummy, my Daddy won't like it if you are here. Come'. I picked

[149] Programme notes, *Music For rainy days.*
[150] Interview with Melissa James, 13 August 2015.
[151] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[152] "Fire! Fire!"

> him up and out we went. There was Islay standing on the step screaming her head off. It had a very serious effect on Chris, this fire.[153]

Section III: "To be a pilgrim", stories from a colonial boarding school in Africa.

> I am trying very hard at my rugger. Mr. Curtis says that I may be in the under 11½ team against St John's school. On Thursday afternoon after tea, Ruzawi played Peterhouse rugger. Ruzawi beat Peterhouse 3 goals and a penalty which adds up to 18 points to Peterhouse nought points.[154]

The names Christopher Langford James, Thomas Hareshaw James, Marjorie James, Islay James, Rhodesia and Salisbury – all names that have appeared in the previous pages, constitute some kind of index of Britishness. But they also speak to an idea of Britishness that, at this point in history, is starting to wane.

The colonial English boarding school was a bastion of English colonial ideology. As can be seen from the quote beginning this section (Chris was 11 at the time), the language and culture of the boarding schools which he attended were decidedly English, even if they were situated in Southern Africa. Even though geographically Chris lived in Africa, culturally he grew up in a version of England that harkened back to a different place and a previous era.[155]

At the age of five, Chris James was sent to boarding school, and the reason for him being sent so early was to counteract the isolation of the farm by giving him an opportunity to interact with other children.[156] In addition to this, his parents felt he was intellectually advanced for his age, and consulted a paediatrician who confirmed that Chris was ready for school. The boarding school was 120 miles north of the farm, and according to Marjorie, her son was excited to go to boarding school because he was under the impression that he would be allowed to play the piano. Upon his arrival to

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[153] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[154] Letter from Chris James to his parents, 31 May 1964.
[155] Finnegan, "Family Myths, Memories and Interviewing"; DM Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape and the Problem of Belonging,* Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2010.
[156] Interview with Marjorie James, 2010.

the school he was told that he was too young to learn to play, and that he needed to learn to read first.

It is important to note that in the initial interview with Marjorie James conducted in 2010 by Stephanus Muller, Marjorie had claimed that Chris was already able to read by the time he arrived at school, but this fact was then unbeknownst to her. She claimed "apparently he picked up the reading while being read to". This was one of the few things which she did not repeat in 2015 when I interviewed her, and paired with the unlikeliness of one learning to read by being read to, should be viewed with some scepticism. That having been said, what this does show was that Marjorie believed that Chris was special and very intelligent.

There is also a disconnect between the way his family viewed him, and the way he behaved at boarding school. His mother described him as "a very, very serious child, and always a serious person all the way through." Marjorie tells the story of sending Chris and Islay to a fancy-dress party as Peter Pan and Wendy at around the age of ten. Chris was unhappy about his costume, claiming that Peter Pan was a made-up story that made no sense, and that he felt ridiculous. Another anecdote from the same interview involves a James family holiday in a hotel. After putting the children to bed, T.H. and Marjorie went for a drink in the hotel bar. When they returned, Chris was dressed and had taken Islay out of her cot and dressed her, and was planning on leaving. From these stories it is clear that in many ways Chris was a very serious child.

At boarding school this seriousness sometimes gave way to mischievousness. In school he was given the nickname "Tiki" (after Tiki the Clown), as well as "Liberace" (because of his piano playing). He was also known for collecting insects and putting them in the girls' beds. This side of Chris is a valuable check on the construct of him as devoted to music, serious and inward-looking. As has been mentioned earlier, Marjorie had said that Chris did not partake in farm activities because he did not like to get dirty; yet at school he was willing to dig through dirt to find insects to use for pranks. In an interview with Tina James, she says:

> He wasn't a light person. He wasn't the one to tell jokes, if he told jokes they flopped … He did [have a sense of humour] but he wasn't the funny clown.[157]

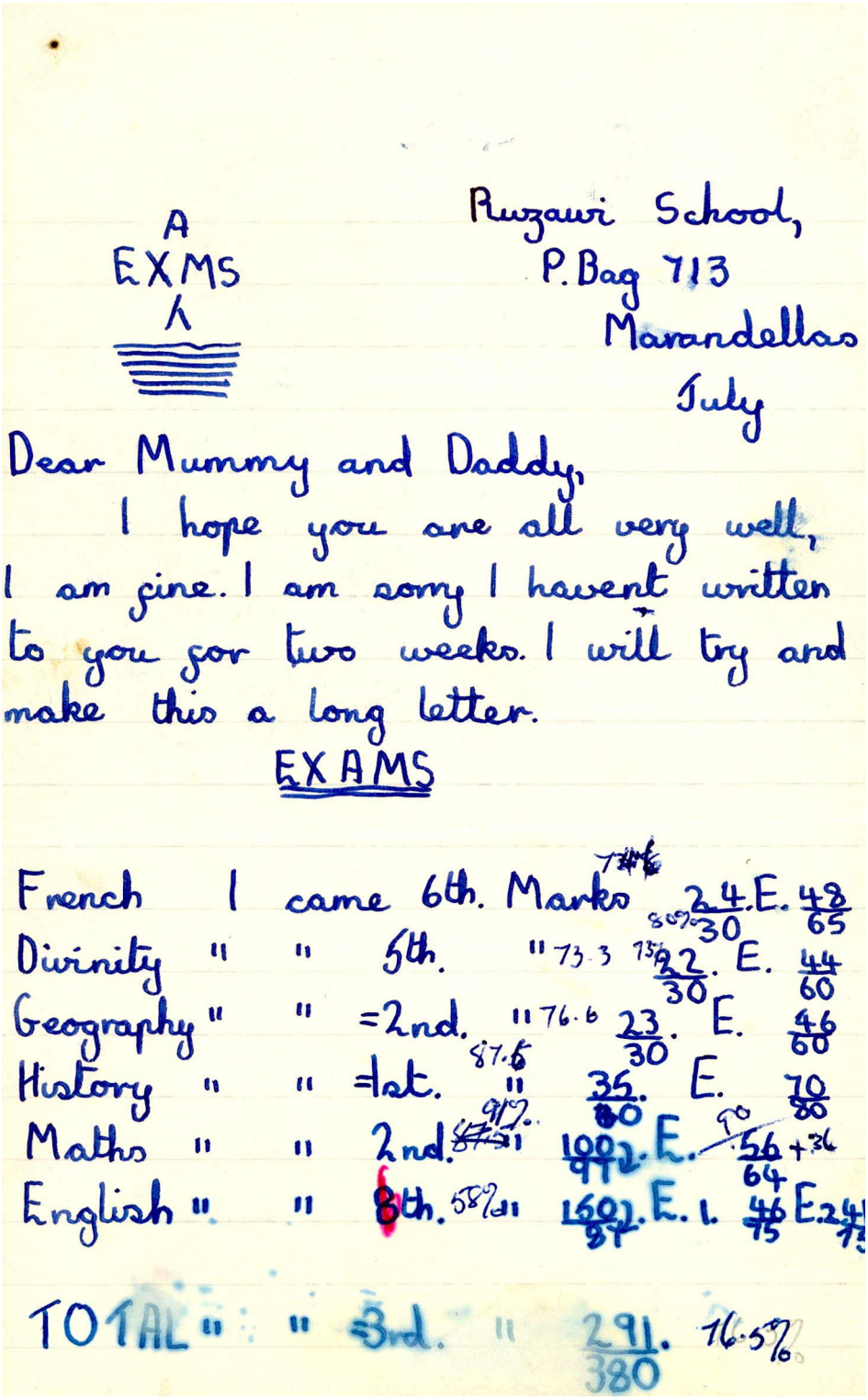
Of course, Tina James was speaking of Chris as an adult, whereas the stories Marjorie relates give insights into the kind of boy Chris was. The divergence suggests perhaps a natural progression from silliness to maturity, but does also show that, from his earliest years, Chris had a sense of humour and a social inclination to interact through humour. The boyish naughtiness in him never left him. Tina James goes on to say:

> Chris was very likable, he had a very boyish quality … I think people were very forgiving, so when things went belly up with his health for example, people were much more forgiving because he had that character. My parents really liked him. They always did. They always said "Thank God he had that smile, that twinkle in the eye and was naughty, because when he got into troubles that got him out of it.

At the age of seven, Chris moved from Lilfordia to Ruzawi School, a private school in the Marandellas (now Marondera) area. At Ruzawi he was unable to start piano lessons because his birthday was in December, and he was thus at the bottom of the list. He then only started piano, as well as music theory, in his second year at Ruzawi, when he was eight years old. Chris was angry at the fact that he had started so late, and that his classmates were a year ahead of him musically, but he eventually caught up with them.

As a boarder, it was common to write letters home to one's family. These letters have been preserved and are held in the Christopher James Collection (CJC) in the Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS) at Stellenbosch University. The language – terms like "Mum and Daddy", and "rugger" (a British colloquialism meaning "rugby") – locate the culture of the school within a traditional colonial British discourse. What is also interesting in these letters is what Chris chooses to report back to his parents: that is to say, what he wants them to know in order to impress them. A wide array of aspects of school life are covered, including academic results (not unsurprising, considering most parents would want to know their child's marks), sporting results, music and social interactions. Chris regularly notes where in the class he ranks academically, for each subject, as can be seen from Figure 4:

[157] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.



A
EXMS
Λ

Ruzawi School,
P. Bag 713
Marandellas
July

Dear Mummy and Daddy,
I hope you are all very well, I am fine. I am sorry I havent written to you for two weeks. I will try and make this a long letter.

EXAMS

French I came 6th. Marks 24/30 E. 48/65
Divinity " " 5th. " 73.3 22/30 E. 44/60
Geography " " =2nd. " 76.6 23/30 E. 46/60
History " " =1st. " 35/80 E. 70/80
Maths " " 2nd. " 100/91 E. 56/64 + 36
English " " 8th. " 160/87 E. 46/75 E. 24/73

TOTAL " " =3rd. " 291/380 76.5%

Figure 4: Letter from Chris James to his parents.

I asked interviewees whether Chris was competitive, as this would explain this need to rank oneself. All answered in the negative to this question, with the exception of Marjorie, who said:

> Oh yes, definitely … when he first started playing [music] he wanted to go in for the exam. They left his name out, the drama I had! In the end the music mistress got John Hodgson from Peterhouse to come along and give him an examination. And I said 'Chris it doesn't matter, you can do the next one'. and he said 'Yes it does matter! It does. I want to know. It's a measure, am I keeping up with what I want to keep up with? It's a measure.'[158]

Again this speaks to the impression and understanding that Marjorie (and probably T.H.) had of their son: a gifted child, particularly in music. Marjorie makes special mention of the fact that even though Chris started music a year later than his peers, he caught up with and surpassed them. It is interesting in this quote how, in being questioned about Chris's academic competitiveness, Marjorie describes how he desired to be measured *musically.* Marjorie also blames his early primary school misbehaviour on his frustration at not being able to begin music lessons.

The importance of music in Chris's life is a perspective Marjorie seemingly developed to understand her son, but from his Ruzawi letters an argument can be made that at this point in his life, music was not all that important to him. The letters spend very little time on music, but report back most prominently on academics and sport. If Chris were musically focused from an early age, would these letters not contain more detail on his musical ventures, and less on his academic, sporting and social ones? The discrepancy suggests how Marjorie and Chris's family interpreted him, using the construct of musical artistry as a lens for understanding a person who was, by all accounts, not very easy to understand.

In 1966 Chris went to Peterhouse High School, another private colonial boarding school, also in the Marandellas area. At this point the James family was financially in trouble, yet still elected to send Chris to a private school, even though it would mean the family would have to "scrape along somehow or other".[159] The reason for this decision was so that Chris could take lessons with the renowned music pedagogue

[158] This quote is taken from the 2015 interview with Marjorie James, but the concept of Chris needing to "measure" himself is something which she had mentioned in the 2010 interview with Stephanus Muller. "He wanted to do the music exams. Now that I look back, probably he wanted to measure himself."
[159] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.

John Hodgson, who had previously examined him when his name was left off the exam roster at Ruzawi. At Peterhouse, Chris continued with piano and theory, and also played the clarinet and the organ. Hodgson clearly made an impression on Chris, as Chris dedicated his Concerto for Piano and Orchestra no.2 to him.

As much as Hodgson had impacted on Chris's life, it seems that Hodgson did not feel the same way about his student, and Peterhouse remained unaware of Chris's musical achievements after he had left. The music Chris had written for Hodgson was deemed by the pedagogue as being "beyond me".[160] Marjorie felt he was a lazy teacher, and T.H. believed him to be jealous of Chris's musical abilities.[161]

It was during his high school years, at the age of 14, that Chris began to suffer from insomnia. At around the same time, he became concerned for his mental health, and from boarding school telephoned his parents, requesting to see a psychiatrist.[162] Chris's parents decided to contact the rector of Peterhouse, whom they knew personally. The school's way of addressing Chris's insomnia was to encourage him to do more sports so that he would be more tired at the end of the day to help him sleep.[163] The rector's response to Chris's desire to see a psychiatrist was: "Chris is the last person in the wide world who needs a psychiatrist".[164] When Chris returned home from boarding school over the school holidays, Marjorie took him to a general medical practitioner who blamed his insomnia, as well as his bad acne, on puberty.[165] This would the first of many instances throughout Chris's life where his mental illness was either misunderstood or misdiagnosed.

Chris continued with high school, and achieved well, especially considering his insomnia. Marjorie states that the only thing that did not suffer as a result of his insomnia was his music.[166] He received his Grade 8 in piano from the Royal Schools of Music in the year 1968 at the age of 16, and spent his final year at Peterhouse working on repertoire. Peterhouse followed the British schooling system, so the academic year

[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Interview with Marjorie James, 2010.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.

ended mid-year, and Chris matriculated from Peterhouse in the middle of 1970. He intended to enrol at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, in 1971 to study for a B.Mus (having been accepted at Rhodes and at The University of Cape Town). His decision to attend Rhodes was due to it being closer to home than Cape Town, and because his teacher John Hodgson had a contact at Rhodes. But T.H. and Marjorie were concerned about his plans to study music in South Africa:

> We were a bit concerned that he was going, at the age of eighteen, into a strange country. As I say, he was very naïve, we were worried about that because his head was in the clouds. There was no two ways about that. All he thought about was the music.[167]

During the months between his matriculation and the beginning of the 1971 academic year in South Africa, Chris returned from boarding school to his parents' home. At this point the James family were no longer farming, but were running their own business. Chris's insomnia was now exacerbated by over-activity, and he soon experienced his first nervous breakdown at the age of 17.[168] He began to see a psychiatrist in Bulawayo, who placed him on a week of sleep therapy; thereafter he returned home and was heavily medicated. The doctor recommended that in order for Chris to have a chance to stabilise, he not attend University in 1971.

> He had the breakdown and he couldn't go. And so then, he went into accountancy. Which he did pretty well in, considering he didn't like it.[169]

The move from music to charted accountancy seems an odd one to make, and one may at this point wonder why Chris did not simply wait until he was more stable and then begin his B.Mus as planned, just one year later. In 1971, Chris went to see Mrs. J.M. Galloway, a vocational psychologist, who advised that Chris treat music as a part-time activity, and not pursue it as a career:

> Music, which has always been one of Christopher's strongest pre-occupations, may well continue to delight him. He would be best advised, however, to look on this as a spare-

[167] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[168] It is interesting to note that in the author's interview with Tina James on 13 August 2015, she notes that lack of sleep and over-activity were tell-tale signs that Chris was going to have a breakdown.
[169] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.

> time pleasure, to be indulged in for its own sake: in that way it can exert a therapeutic influence, soothing the hurts and easing the stresses of everyday living. It must never be allowed to become itself stressful, competitive or over-demanding.[170]

Chris then moved to Salisbury, where he became an article clerk in accountancy, while Islay studied nursing. His piano, which was originally his maternal grandmother's instrument, was sent with him to Salisbury. During his time in Salisbury, Chris was teaching a few piano students and taking lessons himself. He was struggling because his accountancy studies were taking up too much time, taking time away from the "preoccupation" which was supposed to be only for "spare-time pleasure". Shortly after his 21st birthday (1973), he told his parents that he would be leaving chartered accountancy and had every intention to begin studying music in 1974. He was told that he was doing well in this new vocation, and that he had the potential to become a partner, whereas if he left his accountancy course he would not be able to return. This did not seem to deter Chris, as he had no intention of returning to accountancy, and never did.

At this point in the narrative, there is a necessity to consider the origin of much of the information provided, and this reflection will be equally relevant in the next chapter in which Chris and Marjorie's trip to South Africa is described. Most of the information relayed above was told either to myself or to Stephanus Muller by Marjorie James in her two interviews. Where possible, I have tried to back up her stories through archival explorations, yet as mentioned earlier, one of the problems of this project is the lack of sources of information that could be used in triangulating interviews. In retelling James's early life, the main source of information is Marjorie, because at the time of writing she was the only person alive who could recount Chris's early years. Her husband, Chris's father, had died over a decade before this project began, and Islay was herself a child, and in her interview with me tended – understandably – to speak about her brother as an adult. The only person who could provide me with detailed descriptions of Christopher James's early life was Marjorie.

This position is problematic for a number of reasons, the most obvious being the precarity of relying on a single source of information for the construction of a

[170] Mrs JM Galloway vocation report on Chris James, 17 September 1971.

narrative. While Marjorie James's level of recall was astounding in her interviews, and while there was little to no discrepancy between her two interviews chronologically spaced half a decade apart, one should not assume that consistency is the same as accuracy. As Wiley suggests: "By way of legitimizing their subjects, biographers have often insisted upon their extraordinary musical abilities, reinforcing their claims by recounting suitably illustrative stories."[171] While I do not claim that Marjorie was being intentionally untruthful (or necessarily untruthful at all), it is important to consider that claims regarding Chris's youthful musical precociousness, emanate from a single source (his mother), and that this source is also the only one we can call upon for a large span of his early life.

The second issue is perhaps a more subtle one, but no less important because of it. Part of the goal of this dissertation is to give voice to a man who, during his life, was denied a voice. Through the interventions in the archive, as Mbembe states, a project such as this one becomes the catalyst through which the spectre of the voiceless subject is given expression. Yet the mechanism use to achieve that expression relies heavily on the account of his mother, a person who, as has been mentioned earlier, had an over-bearing presence in his life, and then posthumously in his archive. An absence of Chris's voice characterizes these early years of his story where, as was the case in real life, his voice is silenced, or drowned out, by the voice of his mother.

This is where my project speaks in a particular way to the concept of the biographeme. The subjective narrations of a mother, fragmented and ossified in oft-repeated tropes, become the story of the biographical subject. These fragments and partial retellings relate to us something about how Chris was perceived by his mother precisely in their distance from rigorous proof and triangulated truth. Writing with and through the fragments of memories cannot be avoided in probing towards an understanding of the composer as a young man.

[171] Wiley, *Re-Writing Composers' Lives: Critical Historiography and Musical Biography,* p. 53

Chapter II: Pretoria, South Africa 1974 – 1983

This is what has confused me since I began my enquiry of Christopher James in 2013. Why did this culturally British man, with the name Christopher Langford James, born in Salisbury, elect to study music at what was considered a bastion of Afrikanerdom? And not only that, how did he successfully navigate this space, as a man who was culturally English?

These questions have no doubt been fuelled by my own experience. In studying Chris James, I moved from my home in Cape Town, and the liberal English university where I did my undergraduate degree and master's, to a traditionally Afrikaans university in a more conservative town. My experience in this sense mirrors Chris James's. We are both, to paraphrase Sting: "aliens, legal aliens, we are Englishmen in Afrikanerdom"[172]

Section IV: Pretoria Pilgrimage.

> Now where was he going to go? I mean he was two and a half years [older than the first years], this was the beginning of the year, 1974. And my secretary … she had a daughter at Tukkies and a son, and she thought it was definitely the Garden of Eden.[173]

[172] Paraphrased from Sting's song "Englishman in New York" 1987.
[173] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.

Figure 5: Christopher James – date unknown. Source: http://www.cancersupportballito.org.za/pages/MUSIC.php

When Chris decided to study music late in 1973, he had no particular university in mind, but knew it would have to be in South Africa. The Jameses were unsure if Chris could study music in Rhodesia, and due to his mental health it was inadvisable for him to live overseas alone. Marjorie and Chris planned an extensive trip to South Africa by car, where they would drive to all of the major universities. The trip would begin at the University of Pretoria, then move to Wits (the University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg), from where they would go to Bloemfontein. They were unsure whether Bloemfontein had a music department, but it was on the way. They would then drive south all the way to Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town, and continue along the east coast of South Africa to Rhodes University. This would give them a good idea of what the universities in South Africa were like, and they would then be able to gauge if any of them could enrol Chris in 1974.

Marjorie was reticent about Pretoria as a destination for higher learning due to the language barrier, but she was assured by her secretary that it was a bilingual institution. Yet, when she and Chris arrived in Pretoria, they found this not to be the case:

> Chris didn't know one word, he couldn't even say 'Hello' in Afrikaans. And anyway, down we go, we get to Pretoria. We've got a map, but they were changing the roads. Eventually we found this - this was the next day - found this wretched University, which was huge! To me it was huge. I'm driving around now, and we're looking for entrances. And all we can see are notices saying 'Ingang' … And I said to Chris 'You know it's an 'in gang', it's a gangway, it's what you walk through. If they can go in, so can we!'[174]

Sadly, much of the significance of this quotation is lost in translation, or rather lost in transcription. In the recorded interview Marjorie pronounces the Afrikaans word "ingang" (meaning "entrance") as "in gang". This intentional Anglicisation – repeated in her 2015 interview – shows how out of place, how alien, she and Chris initially felt in Pretoria.

This sense of being Othered by their language continued as they began to search for the music department. In asking people for directions, the Jameses were answered in Afrikaans, with one individual telling them that, because they were English, they were obviously looking for Wits rather than the University of Pretoria. Fortunately, Chris saw someone carrying a clarinet[175] case, and they decided to follow this person, who would no doubt lead them to the music department.

Upon arriving at the music department, the secretary immediately recognised Chris as "the student from Rhodesia".[176] Marjorie said they "stuck out like sore thumbs"[177] because they not only spoke no Afrikaans, but they were formally dressed: Chris in a suit and Marjorie in a hat and gloves. The secretary, a Mrs. Fourie, handed Chris his audition forms, which she also translated for him as they were in Afrikaans.

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[174] Interview between Stephanus Muller and Marjorie James, 2010.
[175] Ibid. In the 2015 interview with the author Marjorie remembers it as a flute case.
[176] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[177] Ibid.

Chris and Marjorie were then introduced to Professor J.P. Malan, the head of the department at the time, who informed them that Chris would have to play an audition in order to be accepted. Lectures were due to start the following day, so Chris would have to take his audition on the very same day he arrived. Although this meant organizing a separate audition, Malan was happy to make an exception.

When Malan asked to see Chris's audition programme, Chris informed him that he not only did not have a programme, but had not practised piano in some months. Chris informed Malan that he would be able to audition that day if he could have some time practicing on one of the university's pianos, which he was allowed to do, and Malan agreed to move Chris's audition from 10:00 that day to 13:00 to give him a chance to practise. While Chris practised, Marjorie went to the cafeteria and nervously waited for him.

> I used to smoke, a box went like that. [clicks fingers] … eventually Chris settled, so I went up to the little tea room, and I ordered tea. And I'm drinking tea and tea and tea and tea, it's coming out of my ears.[178]

When it was time for Chris's audition, Marjorie waited outside the audition room and listened. The students were to have aural tests done that day, and so the Musaion (name for the Music Department at the University of Pretoria) was full of students. Marjorie mentions how out of place she felt, listening to her son play his entrance audition while she was surrounded by young students, all speaking a language completely foreign to her:

> Eventually the room fills with students. As if, any moment now, somebody will come and eat me up, or do something to me, I don't know what was going on. And Chris was in there. And I'm trying to listen to what I can't hear, and what I don't understand anyway.[179]

[178] Ibid.
[179] Marjorie James interview with the author, 2015.

To make matters worse, it seemed to Marjorie that Chris's audition did not go well. He stopped playing in the middle of his first two pieces, only managing to complete his third.

> And then he starts playing. Stops! He knows you go through whether you made a mistake or not, he knows! All the other students are looking at the door. Then the second piece starts, goes on a little, stop. By this time I was going grey. I nearly started pulling it out. The third piece, I'll never forget it was one of Debussy's, and it went all the way through.[180]

When his audition was finished, Chris came out of the audition room flanked by Malan and Stefanus Zondagh, who was patting him on the back. Marjorie was so certain that Chris's audition had been unsuccessful that she immediately reassured him that they would continue looking for a place for him at other universities. She was surprised to be informed that Chris had been accepted to begin his studies in music at the University of Pretoria for 1974.

Chris's university audition is one of those fragments of his life story that depend entirely on Marjorie's remembering and retelling. It is conspicuous for what she remembers: his exoticism as being "the student from Rhodesia", the fact that he and Marjorie so obviously stood out in their formal attire, and especially the fact that the audition panel saw great potential in Chris even after a somewhat botched audition. All of these recollections speak to a trope of Otherness, or of specialness. This does not mean that the story is untrue, but there is no way of corroborating Marjorie's testimony. None of the audition panel are alive, and the only good friend that Chris had at the University of Pretoria is Stephen Allen, who arrived a year later.

What could be corroborated, both by Tina James and by an article written by Grové and Levy, was the fact that the University of Pretoria was an Afrikaans institution.[181] During the audition, the panel had discussed with Chris the issue of language, as all of the lectures were to be in Afrikaans. Chris was given three months to learn Afrikaans, and was granted permission to bring a tape recorder to lectures and record the lectures,

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[180] Ibid.
[181] Grové & Levy, "In Memorium. Christopher Langford James (20.12.1952 – 4.2.2008)", p. 73.

translating them in his own time. Chris was given a day to find a place to live, and procure all academic and personal necessities. He and Marjorie went to buy a dictionary and a tape recorder, and Chris began his studies in music at the University of Pretoria on the second day of the first semester, 1974.

Neither Chris, nor Marjorie, seemed to have been concerned about a situation which, to many, would seem tenuous at best. The entire plan hinged on the presumption that Chris would be able to master Afrikaans in three months, also finding the time during his studies to translate his lecture notes for every one of his courses. Chris seemed to be set on this plan, even though he would not have had the same difficulties at the English Universities in South Africa, like Wits, UCT or Rhodes, which they were going to visit as part of their itinerary. He seemed determined to study at the University of Pretoria, saying he "liked the feel"[182] of the university, because it "had tradition."[183]

Marjorie felt that the language barrier was going to be an advantage, rather than a hindrance. She felt that not speaking the language would constrain Chris's social life, forcing him to devote more time to his studies. In addition to this, the fact that Chris would spend so much more time listening to the lectures than the other students while translating them, was in Marjorie's opinion an academic advantage. To understand his eagerness to remain in Pretoria, one must also consider the situation Chris was in. He had made the bold and irreversible decision to break his chartered accountancy articles, and he couldn't be sure that another university in South Africa would accept him at such short notice.

> He decided, they accepted him, he told them about his nervous breakdown. They accepted him whether he could speak Afrikaans or not. He felt that he didn't want to waste any more time … there was no question.[184]

> he couldn't speak Afrikaans, and I think he found himself so privileged to be at the University of Pretoria, because he studied financial accounting before, which he absolutely hated. So I think for him he saw it as such a privilege to be here [Pretoria],

[182] Interview with Marjorie James and Stephanus Muller, 2010.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.

> that he was going to get every ounce out of what he got here, and that was certainly the way he used to talk to me about it.[185]

Chris thrived at the University of Pretoria, and made Pretoria his home. He would spend the majority of the rest of his life in this city, where he would study, compose, establish a career, meet his wife and start a family. One of the panel members of Chris's audition was his future composition lecturer, Stefans Grové, who co-wrote (with Michael Levy) a memorial article after Chris's death. In this article, Grové remembers the obstacles faced by Chris during his first years in Pretoria:

> But here [the University of Pretoria] he met the first of a serious number of obstacles which he had to overcome in his life – he was accepted on the condition that he should master Afrikaans within three months … He tape recorded his lectures and with the help of others translated these into English. In a very short time he became fluent in Afrikaans. This linguistic gift manifested itself later when, as a graduate student, he attended my course in the church cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach and undertook a study of German on his own.[186]

While Marjorie had felt uncomfortable in Pretoria around people speaking Afrikaans, Chris clearly did not. His comfort with Afrikaans even extends to his compositions, with titles and texts showing that he was determined to assimilate: *Psalm nr.1* vir 4 stemmige manskoor (1978), *Liewe Vader* (1979), *Toccatina/Tokkatina* (1999), *Drie Psalms* (2003), as well as an arrangement of the hymn *Amazing Grace* (1981) in both English and Afrikaans.

Although Chris went to study music specifically to do composition,[187] he only began his composition studies in his third year of his B.Mus, which according to the regulations at the time was the earliest a student could begin composition study.[188] He therefore had to wait two years until he could begin composition in earnest, but launched himself with vigour into his other subjects, taking piano lessons with Philip Levy and organ lessons with Stefanus Zondagh. During his first year he immersed himself in his studies and Pretoria life, living in a residential hotel and performing on

[185] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[186] Grové & Levy, "In Memorium. Christopher Langford James (20.12.1952 – 4.2.2008)", p. 73.
[187] Interview with Marjorie James, 2010.
[188] Grové & Levy, "In Memorium. Christopher Langford James (20.12.1952 – 4.2.2008)", p. 74.

Sundays in his Methodist church. Chris also successfully mastered Afrikaans, although the other students used to tease him because he spoke Afrikaans like a professor, no doubt because he learned the language from his taped lectures.[189] Chris's formal Afrikaans – a speech habit only broken when he moved to the residence Sonop in his second year – poetically aligns itself with what must have been other students' first impressions of him: sitting quietly in his suit waiting for his audition, next to his mother in her hat and gloves. An older student, steeped in an English colonial tradition of formality.

At the end of his first year, Chris began to prepare repertoire to enter the Pretorium Trust Bursary Competition for the following year (1975). Upon returning to Rhodesia for the Christmas vacation, he was practising assiduously, and was described by Marjorie as "high".[190] He had returned early to Pretoria to enter the competition, and at the end of January 1975, had his second nervous breakdown. Marjorie received a phone call from the residential hotel in which Chris was staying, informing her that her son was unwell. She travelled from Rhodesia to Pretoria and found that Chris had been admitted to Denmar, a private psychiatric facility in Pretoria. This would be the first of many admissions throughout his life to Denmar.

Marjorie felt that Denmar was "not the correct place"[191] and that "he wasn't well, far from it".[192] The medication which he had been given at Denmar had affected his legs, and so he was struggling to walk. Marjorie remembers her son as "being like a broken person."[193] She decided to discharge Chris from Denmar and have him see a different specialist. After his discharge, Chris was overactive, claustrophobic and struggling to sleep, which would later become indicators of an impending nervous breakdown. Through Islay, who was studying nursing in Cape Town at the time, and Professor Socrates Paxinos, to whom Chris had become acquainted through his performances in church, a specialist was found. Paxinos arranged for Chris to see a psychiatrist at Weskoppies, a government hospital in Pretoria, which had a special ward for nervous disorders. The psychiatrist at Weskoppies was in contact with Jacques Malan at the

[189] Interview with Marjorie James, 2010.
[190] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015. This "high" is not in reference to drugs but rather to a manic stage within a manic depressive episode.
[191] Interview with Marjorie James, 2010.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.

Music Department, and told Marjorie that she could return to Rhodesia. Chris would be medicated and it was projected that he would be able to return to university soon, although it was recommended that he leave the residential hotel and live in Sonop men's residence. This suggestion was eventually arranged through the intervention of Malan and Professor van Wyk of the Psychology Department at the University of Pretoria.[194]

In her 2015 interview, Marjorie James explained that one of the contributing factors to this breakdown was that Philip Levy expected Chris to perform his repertoire for the Pretorium Trust Bursary Competition from memory. She recalls:

> He had been encouraged by Levy at the university to go in for the Pretorium Trust … Levy was all on this everything by memory. John Hodgson wasn't … my mother wasn't either. Rather get the piece of paper and do it. Why stick it all here [points to her head] when you can get other things going? So he had, he'd put all this in his head.[195]

In her 2015 interview, Marjorie also mentions that Chris had been conned out of money just before his breakdown. This is entirely possible, as this did happen to him again later in life. However, this was not relayed in any other interviews, including Marjorie's interview with Stephanus Muller in 2010. Considering the incredible consistency between her interviews of 2010 and 2015 (this even includes language choices) the fact that this financial con appears in one interview and not the other is cause for some scepticism. It is possible that this did in fact happen, but it is also possible that Marjorie had conflated different events.

The decision to relocate to Sonop seemed to have been a wise one, and Chris spent the next four years (1975 to 1979) in this famous Tukkies residence. Sonop, described by Tina James as "the archetypal Afrikaans theology students' res"[196] was established on 3 June 1916.[197] The residence was steeped in tradition and an Afrikaans culture that was, arguably, more conservative than that which Chris was used to. Yet, in this environment, Christopher Langford James, the English-speaking Rhodesian,

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[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[197] http://www.sonop.org.za/en/timeline.html

flourished. These were four happy years, and years of mental stability for Chris. It was here that he learned to speak a more colloquial Afrikaans, and after meals the students would ask him to perform on the piano, harkening back to his boarding school days in Rhodesia.[198]

In 1976, as a third year student, Chris was finally allowed to begin his composition studies with Stefans Grové.[199] Although 1976 saw him formally begin composition, he had composed works before this time, including *The Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis,* started in 1970. From 1976, however, Chris's composition output markedly increases. He had a close and fond relationship with Grové, who became the second of Chris's three musical father figures (the first being John Hodgson, the third being his composition lecturer in Cincinnati, Professor Scott Huston):

> Grové was like Huston, he viewed them as father figures in his life, and he was always very thankful to Grové for everything he learnt from him.[200]

The father figure, real and constructed, seems to have been important to Chris. Each of these musical father figures received from Chris a dedication in one of his large-scale works: he dedicated his 1982 orchestral work *Gymnastics* to Grové, his percussion ensemble work *Winter's Dream* (1985) to Huston, and as has been previously mentioned, his 2002 Concerto for Piano and Orchestra no.2 to Hodgson. To his own father he dedicated his Doctoral of Musical Arts (DMA) composition *Images from Africa* (1987), but this dedication is shared with his mother, reading as "Dedicated to the composer's parents". Marjorie receives her own dedication in his 1976/1977 smaller- scale work, *Song cycle of William Butler Yeats poetry.* Considering that Chris utilised these dedications as vehicles for expressing gratitude,[201] the presence of dedications for Hodgson, Grové and Huston on the one hand, and the lack of dedications to T.H., is telling.

South African composer Etiénne van Rensburg who had, like Chris, studied composition at the University of Pretoria under Grové, knew Chris through their

[198] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[199] Grové & Levy, "In Memoriam. Christopher Langford James (20.12.1952 – 4.2.2008)", p. 74.
[200] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[201] Interview with Christopher Ballantine, 10 August 2015.

mutual involvement in Obelisk Music, a music society aimed at promoting young South African composers, especially those who were pushing musical boundaries.[202] Chris had also been one of the examiners for Van Rensburg's PhD thesis, which the latter had done under the supervision of Grové, and which Chris had failed:

> That was a very sore thing … and I don't know the ins and outs of it, but I know that Chris spent an awful lot of time … wringing his hands … losing sleep over it.[203]

In my interview with him, Van Rensburg discussed the relationship that both he and Chris had with Grové. Van Rensburg spoke about a letter of recommendation that Grové had written for him, which had said that Van Rensburg was one of the two finest young South African composers of the time. When Chris was shown this letter, his response was that he must have been the other one.

It is not surprising that Chris's music and compositional style owes much to Grové, with a preference for regularly changing meters constituting perhaps the most obvious influence. Chris wrote an article on Grové in 1992, in which he writes:

> The rhythmic momentum of *Concertato Overture* is primarily achieved by the continuous implementation of changing metric patterns which apply the principle of additive rhythm. Additive rhythm combinations are a common feature of much of African indigenous music.[204]

For Chris, regular metric changes had the effect of Africanising what could otherwise be considered Western art music, and it was almost certainly a technique learnt from Grové during his student years in Pretoria. This compositional trait can be seen throughout Chris's work: from pieces such as his master's composition *Four Portraits* (1982), to *A song cycle of James Wright poetry* (1984), *Winter's Dream* (1985) and *Solar Eclipse* (2002). But this fascination with fast changing metres also predates his more mature compositional efforts, as can be seen in his 1977 experiments with this

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[202] "Poor Pretoria, we really were pushing boundaries in those days." – interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[203] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[204] C James, "An Examination of Compositional Methods in Stefans Grové's *Concerto Overture `Five Salutations', an Orchestral Study on Two Zulu Themes", South African Music Studies Journal,* vol. 12, 1992, p. 111.

technique in *Molecular Synthesis* for solo flute. An advanced approach to rhythmical complexity in general – not just regular metric changes – is a compositional characteristic of Grové. In his essay on his former composition mentor, Étienne van Rensburg writes:

> He [Grové] remarked that the two of us [Van Rensburg and Grové] seemed to be the only composers in South Africa who were unafraid of rhythm.[205]

During his time as an undergraduate, Chris focused his compositional goals understandably on smaller-scale works. The most noteworthy of these is his *Three Preludes* for piano (1977), and other compositions of this period include the previously mentioned *Molecular Synthesis* for solo flute and *Song cycle of William Butler Yeats poetry*, *Idyll* (1976) for wind quintet, as well as work with a clearly sacred leaning, including *Heilige Nag* (1977) and *Psalm 150* for organ and five-part choir, "Praise Ye The Lord" (1977).

Three Preludes is dedicated to his good friend and pianist Stephen Allen. The first prelude, titled "Apology for Nausea", is a *Largo* at 42 beats per minute. In bars 1-6, James explores an atmospheric texture through the use of cluster chords which last the duration of the bar, a technique he would later use in *Four Portraits.* The piano dynamic and lower register of bars 1-2 is interrupted in bar 3 with sudden chordal spikes in the higher register, written at *forte* with a crescendo into the large *fortississimo* cluster in bar 4, as can be seen in Figure 6:

[205] E Van Rensburg, "Inside Out", in S Muller. & C Walton (eds), *A Composer in Africa: Essays on the Life and Works of Stefans Grové,* Stellenbosch, Sun Press, 2006, p. 48.

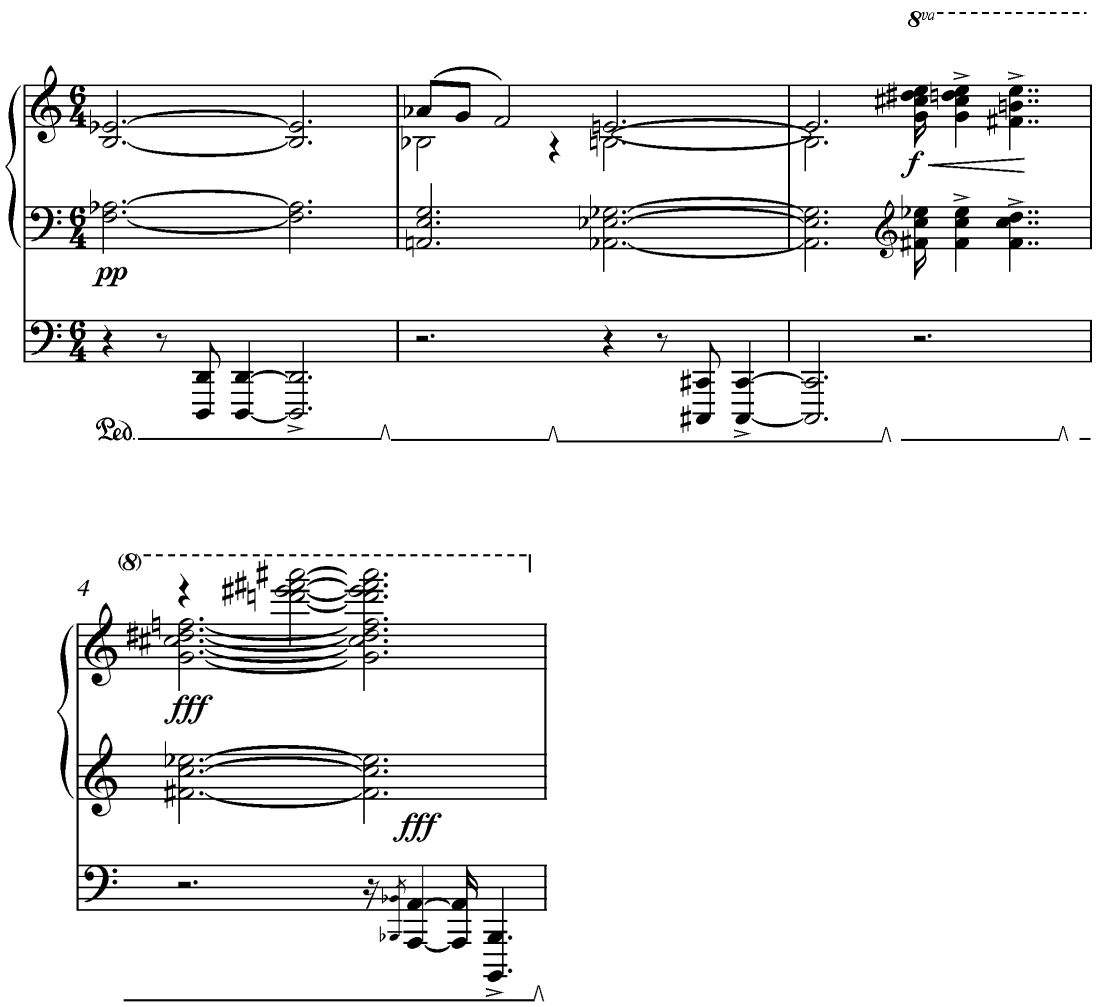

Figure 6: Bars 1-4 of "Apology for Nausea".

At the *cantabile* at bar 7, James juxtaposes the thick texture of bars 1-6 with a gentle melody in the right hand, which dies out into silence, and the reintroduction of dense cluster chords at *forte* in bar 9 is all the more jarring because it comes out of this silence.

The B section begins at bar 13, where James brings the tempo up to 168 beats per minute and moves the time signature to 11/8. Throughout this section, James explores various groupings within the time signatures of 11/16, 8/16 and 7/16, and the fast semi-quaver movement with irregular accents gives this section an agitated feeling. The climax of the B section is at bar 26 (Figure 7) where the register and dynamic is suddenly raised, and the continuous flowing texture of the previous bars is juxtaposed with precise rhythmic stabs. After descending and then ascending chordal runs in both

hands, the prelude ends on a thick chord covering the full range of the piano at *fortississimo*.

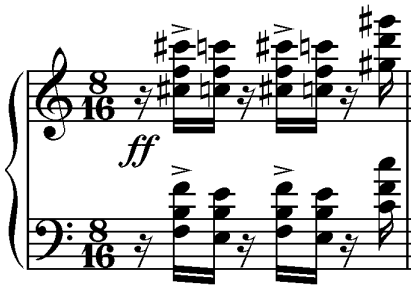

Figure 7: Bar 26 of "Apology for Nausea".

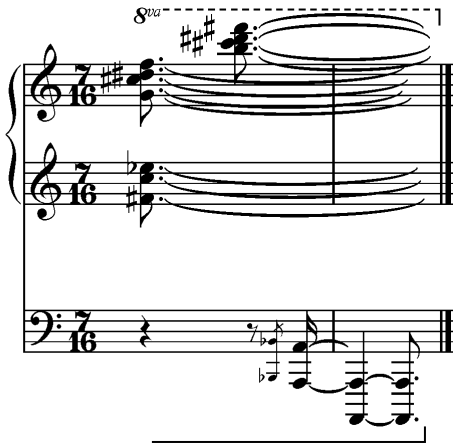

Figure 8: Bars 32-33 of "Apology for Nausea".

"Apology for Nausea" is in many ways a study in musical juxtaposition, which is found within both the micro and macro-structural elements of the prelude. Within a bar James juxtaposes different rhythmic devices, dynamic and register ranges and textures, and looking at the prelude as a whole, the A and B sections are themselves juxtapositions.

The sombre imagery of the second prelude's title, "Requiescat in Pace…G.G.", is achieved through the repetition of four chords. The first two chords are consonant – F minor and C minor in first inversion – giving the illusion of harmonic peacefulness. In the second bar, James uses bitonality, stacking chords in a mixture of major and minor third intervals, first using an A flat ninth with a raised fifth (with the E natural-B flat tritone making this chord quite dissonant), and then an F sharp ninth chord. The use of

both bitonality and intervallic chordal construction are seen regularly throughout James's later works. The rhythmic consistency of these chords - each lasting a minim in 4/4 time - accentuates the *andante* feel.

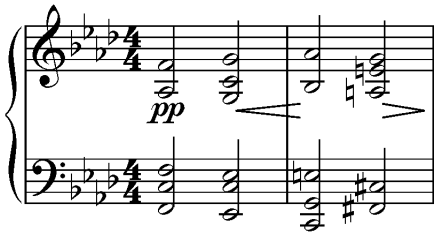

Figure 9: Bars 1-2 of "Requiescat in Pace…G.G.".

These four chords are repeated with some melodic decorations up until the *poco piu mosso* at bar 10. James makes use of a ninth chord on G as a pivot chord to modulate from F minor to C minor. At the *cantabile e poco rubato* at bar 14 (Figure 10), he then introduces a melodic theme with a jazz inflection (the syncopated rhythm and use of triplets).

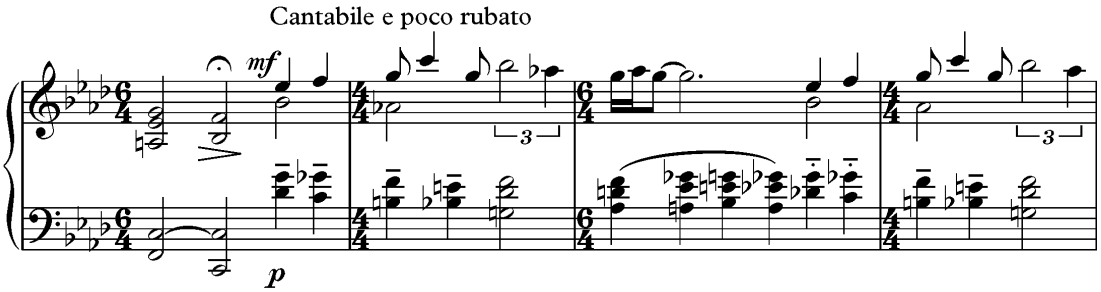

Figure 10: Bars 14-17 of "Requiescat in Pace…G.G.".

This brief *cantabile* section ends at bar 18, with the final B natural in the left hand used as a pivot into the next section, *meno mosso*, in E major. In this section, the right hand plays accompaniment chords while the left hand plays the melody, with the sudden change of mood to the major further accentuating the lightness of the jazz motif. This lightness is brief, as James reintroduces the dark opening four chords at bar 25, adding melodic variation. After an ascending and descending arpeggiated figure in the left hand accompanied by gentle chords in the high register of the right hand, the prelude ends on an F minor chord, darkened by the use of the lower register in both hands.

Unlike the first and second prelude, "Rumba Toccata" maintains a consistent mood. James indicates the prelude is to be played *vivace* at 160 beats per minute, written in 4/4 time but grouped in 3+3+2 quavers. This gives the music a Latin swing feeling, as the accent on the seventh quaver acts as a kind of upbeat into the next bar. Bars 1-7 is written entirely in the bass clef, and at bar 8 the right hand plays a descending motif into the bass clef, with the music returning to its original 3+3+2 rhythm.

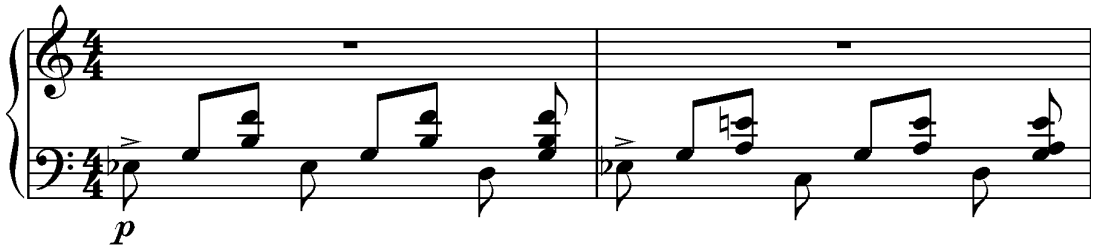

Figure 11: Bars 1-2 of "Rumba Toccata".

This rhythmic figure is used throughout the movement, with James using dynamics and texture gradually to increase tension, which is then released in a descending run before returning to the opening sequence. The prelude ends with four bars of loud chords accentuating the 3+3+2 rhythm, with the final chord using the low and high register of each stave, with the middle registers kept empty.

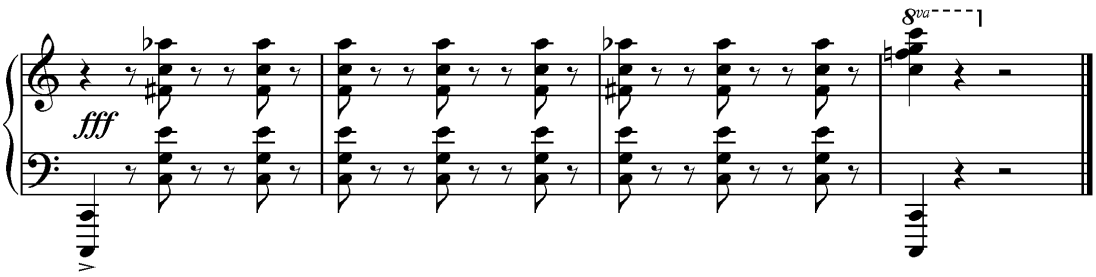

Figure 12: Bars 76-79 of "Rumba Toccata".

Although it is a student work, these three preludes are good pieces and show a young composer in development. The pieces are well proportioned and balanced, with James exploring musical ideas without ever being overly repetitive, a problem that some of his later music, like *Four Portraits*, suffers from. These preludes also provide an insight into how certain compositional characteristics that would become typical of James's work, were developing. At this early stage it can already be seen that James has an affinity towards adventurous rhythm, and rhythmic rather than harmonic

constructions. In comparison to later works, he makes relatively little use of time signature changes, which would become a staple of his compositional language. His harmonic approach indicates an understanding of dissonance and non-conventional musical language, as well as intervallic approaches to chordal construction. His use of dynamics and the piano register is wide, and he varies his texture from whisper-like melodies that disintegrate to grow into thick, abrasive chordal densities.

On Saturday 24 June 1978, Christopher Langford James graduated. He received his "Diploma in Musiek (Kerkmusiek)" (Diploma in Music – Church Music) as well as his "Graad van Baccalaureus in Musiek" (Degree of Baccalaureas in Music). He received his degree in composition, and next to his name was an asterisk, denoting that he had graduated with distinction. The farm boy turned accountant had received his first degree in music, and that in composition. He would continue his studies in composition at the University of Pretoria under Grové as an Honours and master's student.

GRAAD VAN BACCALAUREUS IN BEELDENDE KUNSTE

Bormann Linde Ortrud (Inligtingsontwerp)
Botha Petro Maria (Skilderkuns)

Conradie Martha Louisa (Skilderkuns)

De Klerk Johanna Catharina (Inligtingsontwerp)
De Villiers Francois Pierre (Inligtingsontwerp)
Du Toit Suzanne Jeanne (Beeldhoukuns)

Ferreira Martha Maria Marthina (Inligtingsontwerp)

Gradwell Margaret Louise (Skilderkuns)

Jahn Johanna Elizabeth Henriette (Inligtingsontwerp)
Jooste Margaritha Isabella (Skilderkuns)

Korving Sonia (Inligtingsontwerp)

Raath Ydie Louise (Skilderkuns)
Rabie Karen (Inligtingsontwerp)
Romanos Agatha (Inligtingsontwerp)

Savage Elizabeth Lynn (Inligtingsontwerp)
Schnell Lizette (Beeldhoukuns)
Steyn Anita (Skilderkuns)
Steyn Lesley Helene (Inligtingsontwerp)
Stockwell Johan Francois (Inligtingsontwerp)

Taljaard Riëtte (Inligtingsontwerp)
Ten Krooden Lynette (Skilderkuns)

Van Dyk Anna Margaretha (Skilderkuns)

GRAAD VAN BACCALAUREUS IN LETTERE EN WYSBEGEERTE (EDUCATIONIS) (KUNS)

De Jong Annalie

Ludick Cornelia Rosina

Nieuwoudt Marlene

GRAAD VAN BACCALAUREUS IN LETTERE EN WYSBEGEERTE IN SPRAAKHEELKUNDE EN OUDIOLOGIE

Alant Erna
*Alberts Elizabeth

Bosman Frouwien Reina

Geldenhuys Susanna Hermina

Joubert Gerda

Klop Joyce Margaret Esmé
Kok Mariëtte Cecilia

Mentz Elizabeth Johanna
Meyer Susara Jacomina

Parsons Kathryn Clare

Rauch Stephanie Blanche
Rautenbach Catherina Wilhelmina
Rokitta Annemarie

Schoonraad Suzanne Marié

Ungerer Anna Magdalena

Van Wyk Magdalena Elizabeth
Van Zyl Antoinette
Van Zyl Marleen
Venter Anette

Weich Anna Maria

Zikmann Andrea Carol

GRAAD VAN BACCALAUREUS IN MUSIEK

Bekker Susanna (Kerkmusiek)

Cilliers Maria Margaretha Hanosius (Uitvoerende Kuns)
Crous Iris (Komposisie)

Daffue René (Uitvoerende Kuns)
De Beer Johanna Cornelia (Musiekwetenskap)

Engelbrecht Johanna Etresia (Musiekwetenskap)
Engelbrecht Marthie (Uitvoerende Kuns)

Gouws Daphne Elenor (Musiekwetenskap)

*James Christopher Langford (Komposisie)

Nel Esther Wilhelmina (Komposisie)

Roux Maryna Magdalena (Kerkmusiek)

Smit Hildegardt Karin (Uitvoerende Kuns)
Snyman Christien Monica (Musiekwetenskap)
Steyn Adriaan Hermanus (Kerkmusiek)
Strauss Elizabeth (Komposisie)

Van den Berg Magdaléne Wilhelmien (Musiekwetenskap)
Van Rooyen Esther (Uitvoerende Kuns)
Van Zijl Lilooet Gisela Joubert (Uitvoerende Kuns)
Venter Jacoba Hendrika (Musiekwetenskap)
Venter Ria Cornelia (Uitvoerende Kuns)
Vivier Elizabeth May (Uitvoerende Kuns)

*Langs naam: graad met lof
Besondere studierigtings word tussen hakies aangedui

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Figure 13: Excerpt from University of Pretoria Graduation Ceremony programme.

I may have never met him, but I know so much about this man. After all, I did just write, largely from memory, the story of his first twenty-six years. I have spoken with his friends and family, and what little writing exists, either about him or by him, I have read more than once. I've even written conference papers about him, probing the idea of how I know him.

I have considered theoretical frameworks that could shed light on his existence. I have flirted with Foucault, danced with Derrida (who would never let me lead, no matter how much I begged). I have considered whether "auto/biography" or "life-writing" are better for defining my research, I have engaged with biographical projects, expressed through written or alternative media, good and bad. I have corresponded with Couser about ethical treatment of research into people with disabilities, and considered the mythical definitions inherent in the identity construction of artists and the insensitively monikered madness. I have even made the hallowed trip to the post-colonial titans of Said and Bhabha.

And even though I call him 'Chris', I don't really know this man.

And this has something to do with his music. With how little of it has been recorded, so that I am unable to experience it aurally. How can I claim to know this man, if I cannot hear his music?

Chapter III: Harmony in Disjunction

Section V: *Gymnastics* and *Four Portraits*

Up until 1978, Chris's compositions had been more exercises in composition than noteworthy contributions to an oeuvre. There are of course exceptions, namely his *Three Preludes* for piano, which although short, show signs of a composer with promise. The fact that it was recorded, is indicative of Chris's pride in this work.

From 1978 to 1987, Chris's compositional voice grew from that of a student, to that of a young composer with a more distinct voice. He reached the apex of his confidence, and composed works of skill and importance within his oeuvre, including *Four Portraits* (1982), *Gymnastics* (1982), *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* (1985) *Sèrènade Cèleste* (1987) and *Images from Africa* (1987). Although works like *Four Portraits* still show a young composer trying things out and finding his voice, the more mature works of the period arguably finds him at his most bold, willing to experiment with larger-scale works and grandiose projects. This is also a period of the most concentrated creative production.

In this period he was also awarded two further degrees in composition from the University of Pretoria, as well as a prestigious scholarship that allowed him to move to Cincinnati in order to embark on a Doctorate of Musical Arts (DMA). He was offered a position at a university, followed by another one, which was later retracted. He also met and married the woman who gave him his only child. By the end of this period, his marriage disintegrates and a downward spiral commences.

The same year that Chris was awarded his B.Mus degree (1978), he was offered a job teaching musicology at the University of South Africa (UNISA).[206] This institution differs from other South African tertiary institutions in that all the course work is done via correspondence, which means that lecturers engage less personally with their

[206] Clough's *Trends in Contemporary South African Music: The Younger Generation of South African Composers* states that James was appointed as a lecturer at UNISA in 1979, but archival evidence shows that it was in late 1978.

students than at other universities. Chris found this aspect of the job unsatisfactory, writing in a letter to Natalie Huston that "I am still in the employment of the University of South Africa teaching music through the post, which of course is highly frustrating."[207]

UNISA also differed from other South African music departments in that it did not (and still does not) have a student orchestra or student chamber groups. This is important, because composers who work in South African universities often have the advantage of getting opportunities to have their music performed. A survey of well-known South African Western art music composers shows that many, if not most, important composers of the time worked as lecturers at South African universities. In a country with comparatively small artistic infrastructure for Western classical performance, this institutional support has been essential historically in the creation of a South African Western art music repertory, and although UNISA provided Chris with a salary, it was unable to provide him with a possibility for his music to be performed. In this regard, although UNISA was by all accounts a particularly sympathetic employer when considering Chris's health problems,[208] he seems to have regarded it as a stop-gap until such time as he could find a job at a more mainstream (for want of a better term) tertiary music department.

In 1979 Chris enrolled for his Honours in Composition at the University of Pretoria, once again under the tutelage of Grové. Musically this was not a particularly exciting year for him. He composed mostly works of lesser importance, much of it sacred music. He revised *The Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis,* started (but never completed) *Liewe Vader* and composed *God's Grandeur* for unaccompanied choir. In terms of secular music, he composed *Shakespeare's Sonnet (CXVI)* for soprano and organ, and his only non-vocal work of the year was his *2 wedding marches* for organ, composed for the wedding of his friend Stephen Allen.

Personally, however, 1979 was a very significant year, as he met his future wife, Augustina Scheffer. Augustina, or Tina, was a music student, only three years Chris's

[207] Letter from Chris James to Mrs Scott Huston, 11 February 1992.
[208] "Throughout all of this, honestly, UNISA should be commended" – Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.

junior, who already held a B.Sc (Hons) degree. She originally began studying music as a hobby, but then decided to obtain her B.Mus through UNISA because it allowed her to work while she was completing her music degree. Chris conducted a Harmony and Counterpoint tutorial for his students living in the area, which he held at his flat in Pretoria every few weeks. Tina was one of these "motley collection of women"[209] who took his class, and has described him as an excellent teacher, who was well-liked by his students. Although they met in 1979, their courtship did not begin until 1981.

Of the music he composed as a post-graduate student in Pretoria (1979-1982) only *Gymnastics* has been recorded. This work, along with his solo piano piece *Four Portraits,* his choral cycle for unaccompanied choir on four poems by Gerald Manley Hopkins (later titled *God's Grandeur*) and his chamber piece *Moonshine,* constitute his composition portfolio for his master's degree. Penelope Clough has written about both *Gymnastics* and *Four Portraits,*[210] but like almost all research done on Chris James up until the present, hers is nothing more than a brief look at these two works. In her discussion of *Gymnastics*, she points to Gershwin as a primary influence, and says that Chris regarded this work as "his most important work to date".[211]

Whether or not *Gymnastics* in fact was James's most important work to date is a matter of opinion, but what can be stated with certainty is that it was his most ambitious composition to date. *Gymnastics* sees James's first forays into orchestral writing, an idiom in which he would be successful with later works such as *Paradise Regained* and, more controversially, in the case of *uShaka KaSenzangakhona.* As has been stated earlier, *Gymnastics* was dedicated to Stefans Grové and was completed as part of his master's portfolio in composition at the University of Pretoria, which was supervised by Grové. James's programme notes are minimal, but despite their brevity they are revealing and personal:

[209] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[210] Clough, *Trends in Contemporary South African Music: The Younger Generation of South African Composers*, see also Clough, "A Survey of the Younger Generation of South African Composers".
[211] Clough "A Survey of the Younger Generation of South African Composers", p. 213.

> The inspiration of this work lies in ballet and modern dance. Musically it is heavily influenced by a personal application of the jazz idiom. It is essentially a joyful and exuberant work composed during a particularly happy period in my life.[212]

It was also composed during his courtship with Tina, which would not only explain the happiness in Chris's life at the time, but also the dance influence, as Tina was a dancer. Thus one could see this work as Chris's musical expression of his courtship, engagement and early marriage to Tina.

Unlike most of James's other compositions which begin softly and build up gradually, the first movement of *Gymnastics,* labelled *Allegro molto,* begins loudly and triumphantly (see Figure 14). With a cymbal and timpani roll, the strings play a fast run in bar 1 that propels the music into the second bar, where the first theme is played in the brass and lower woodwind, followed by the upper woodwinds playing a quick *staccato* response to the rhythmic and texturally dense first theme.[213] At bar 6, James introduces his second theme in the strings. As with the previous theme, the character of rhythmic and articulation precision is noteworthy, and this paired with the change in time signature delivers a rhythmic complexity and thematic rhythmic construction seen throughout James's oeuvre.

[212] Christopher James, *Gymnastics* programme notes.
[213] It is also interesting to note that in this work, unlike any other of James's works that I have looked at, the instruments are written in Italian on the score. In other works, James's instructions regarding tempo, dynamics etc. are in Italian, but instruments are written in the score in English. This could have been a requirement of his Masters portfolio, or a convention which as a student he thought he should follow but later dropped in adulthood. All musical examples reproduced here indicate the instruments in English.

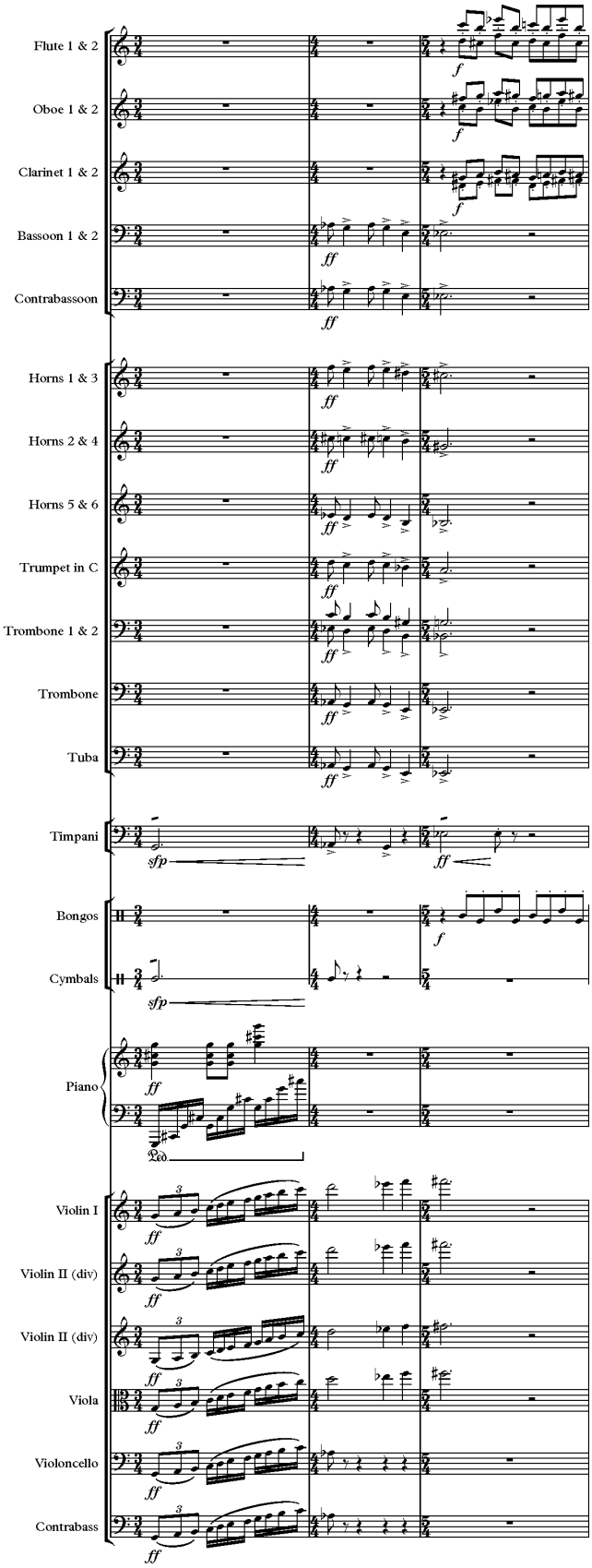

Figure 14: Bars 1-3 of the first movement of *Gymnastics.* (Theme 1).

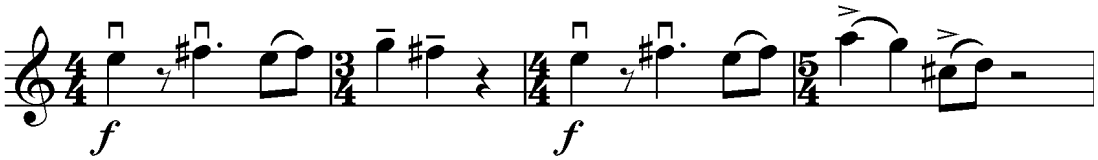

Figure 15: Bars 8-11 of the first movement of *Gymnastics* (Theme 2).

At bar 8 the thick orchestral texture is reduced, and the theme is stated in the strings, thereafter James begins to move material around the orchestra. After the strings play the above theme, the woodwinds respond, and at bar 16 flutes, clarinets and bassoons play a variation of the second theme. At bar 22 the texture and dynamic suddenly rises as full strings, percussion and brass are reintroduced; all at either *forte* or *fortissimo.* While it is a common trait in James's compositional language to increase dynamic levels and texture at emotional peaks, he usually does this gradually, whereas here the sudden increase is in stark contrast with the fairly sparse texture of the previous few bars. James introduces a third theme at bar 26 in the piccolo, flutes, oboes, trumpets and violins:

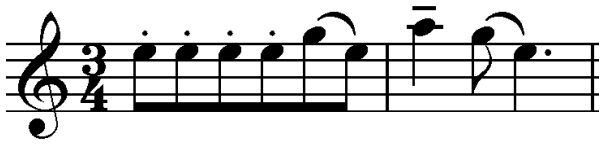

Figure 16: Bars 26-27 of the first movement of *Gymnastics* (Theme 3).

As in the previous two themes, the careful attention paid to the articulation is noteworthy, and the alternation between *staccato* and *legato* within a bar is a musical characteristic which James would utilise regularly in *Paradise Regained.* After the statement of this theme James makes a sudden textural change, having the entire orchestra save the clarinet, bass clarinet and bassoon fall away, with the oboe and trumpet playing solos. He continues this thinner texture, and again uses select sections of the orchestra to create pockets of orchestral timbre. At bar 39 the flutes play material developed from theme 3, which is then played by the first violins at bar 44.

James introduces a variation of theme 1 at bar 53 in the second violins, using the same rhythmic construction but varying the melodic content. At bar 57 the first and second

horns play a variation of theme 2, once again rhythmically (as opposed to melodically) linked to its original version. James then combines the two at bar 59, with the first and third horns and first trombone playing the alteration of theme 2 while strings play the alteration of theme 1. At bar 65 James increases the dynamic to *fortissimo* and has the full orchestra playing, ending the section at bars 69-70 with the entire orchestra playing four crotchets and then two quavers.

In the next section of this movement, James again thins out the texture, moving the music into the instruments with higher registers: flutes, clarinets, harp, violins and violas. Marked *piano,* the calmness of this material is heightened by the loud triumphant ending of the previous section. The texture becomes even more sparse at bar 80, with just violins, viola and celli playing. The celli play a driving melody against the *pizzicato* syncopated stabs of the violins and violas. James gradually begins to raise the dynamics, and slowly increases the texture through adding instruments. This does not build to an emotional peak, but is rather a slight increase in tension, which is then broken at bar 102 by the strings playing an augmented and more lyrical version of the second theme (Figure 17). After a gentle connecting passage played by flutes and harp, the brass enters at bar 114 with a driving rhythm at *fortissimo,* which is answered in the next bar by oboes, clarinets and bassoon. This call and response ends at bar 120 with a timpani roll and then silence.

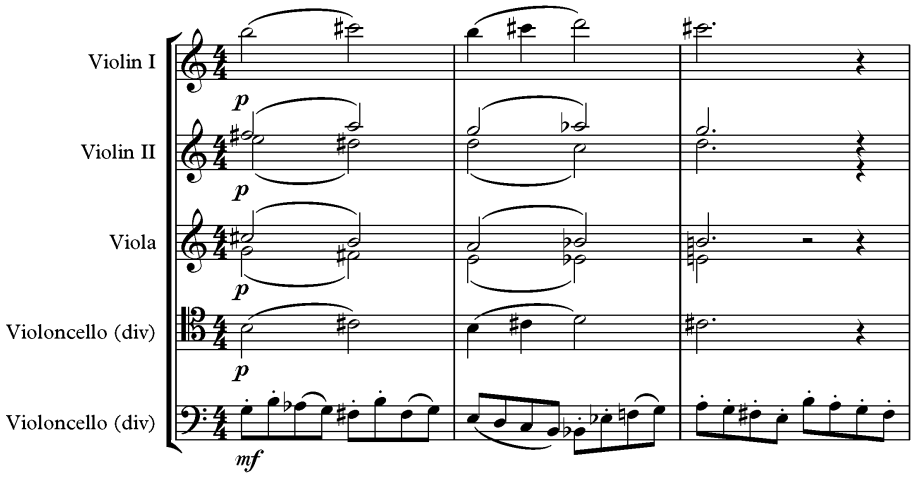

Figure 17: Bars 102-104 of the first movement of *Gymnastics.*

The final section of this movement begins at bar 121, with the strings playing driving quaver runs, alternating between *staccato* and *legato*. The addition of double bass at bar 125 increases the dynamic and tension. James continues to build to bar 145 where the full woodwind and strings play a variation on theme 1. As the music builds in the strings, James begins to add previous themes in the other instruments. At bar 150 trumpets play the second theme, which is doubled in the clarinets at bar 156. James continues to build intensity by adding instruments, and by pushing violins and flutes into their upper register. This movement concludes with the full orchestra playing five crotchets and then two quavers in bars 168 and 169.

The density, speed and dynamic of the first movement are radically contrasted in the second movement. Marked *Lento espressivo,* James begins with the oboe playing a lyrical but syncopated melody, accompanied by cor anglais, clarinet and bassoon playing *piano.* At the upbeat to bar 11 this melody is moved to the flute and transposed up a perfect fifth. From the *Piu mosso* at bar 15, James begins to score solo material for alternating woodwind instruments. These solos often overlap to create an ethereal texture, a technique he would also explore further in *Paradise Regained.* This continues until the *Piu mosso* at bar 36, where flutes, oboes and strings play lyrical material marked *fff appassionata* against a dissonant, chorale-like accompaniment in the trumpets and trombones:

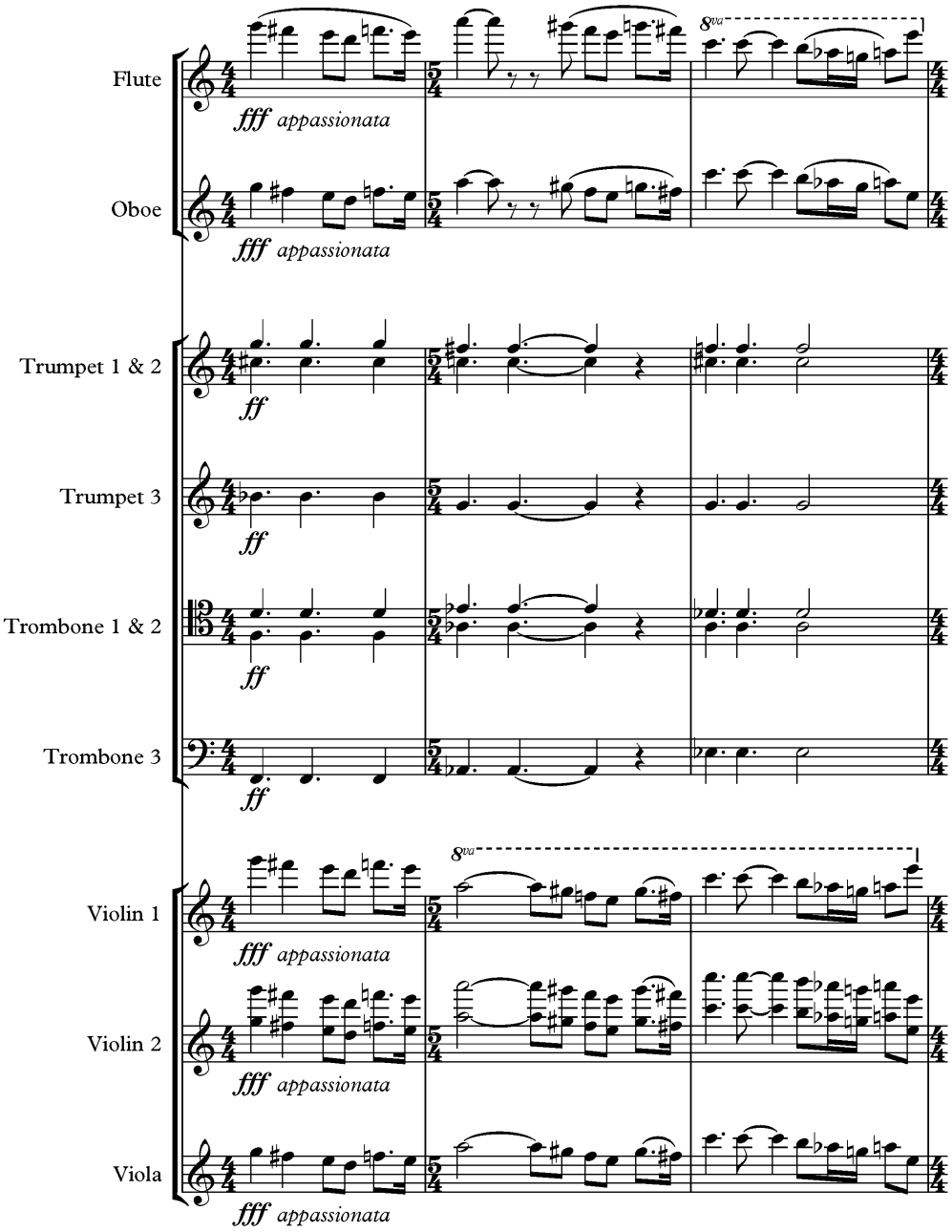

Figure 18: Bars 36-42 of the second movement of *Gymnastics*.

This texture fades away and at bar 43, James returns to the use of interweaving solo material in the woodwinds. At the *Meno mosso* at bar 68, the solo is played on first horn while strings play long notes held through the bar. A *diminuendo* and *rallentando* bring this movement to an end, with just alto flute and strings playing a C ninth chord.

James continues the use of interweaving solos in the woodwinds in the third movement, *Andante*. For bars 1-16 of this movement, the strings play a driving

rhythmic theme, supporting various woodwind solos. The horns play *forte* chordal stabs in the rests (occurring every two bars – see Figure 19 below) of the string theme.

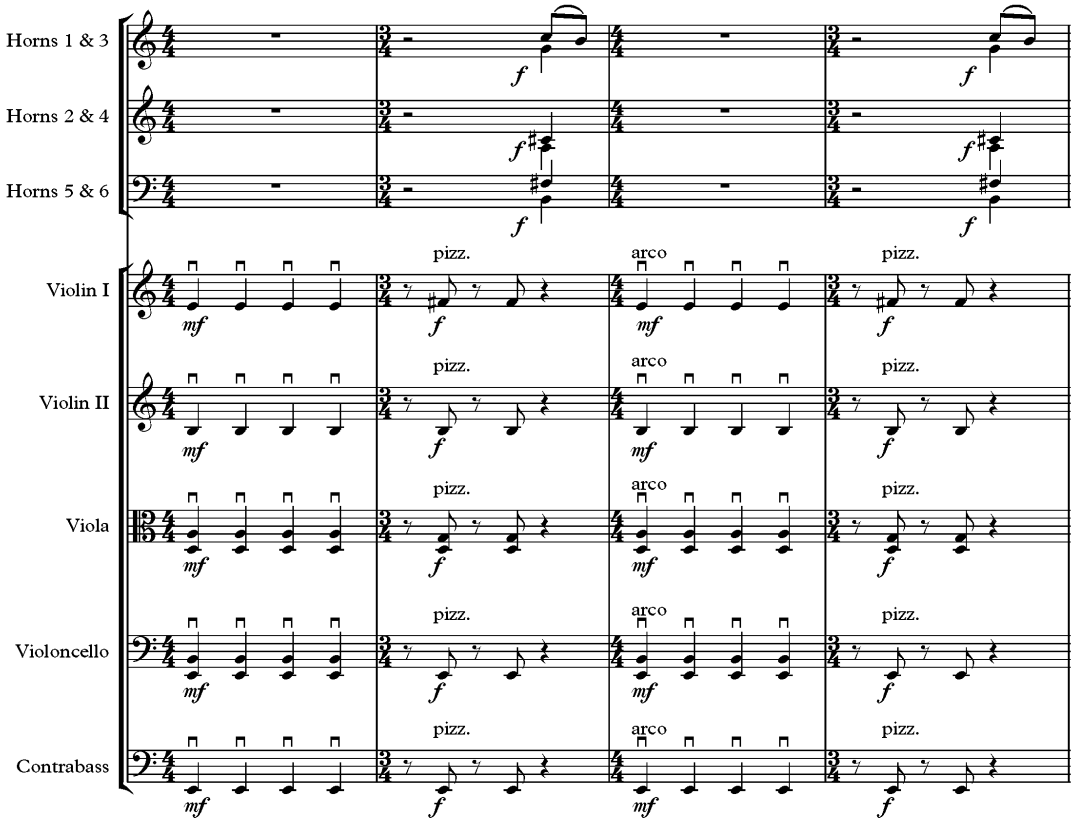

Figure 19: String theme in bars 1-16 of the third movement of *Gymnastics*.

Thereafter woodwinds and brass briefly fall away, and the first violins play a melody with a syncopated *pizzicato* accompaniment from the other strings. At bar 21 this melody is moved to clarinet and bassoon, and is altered to become rhythmically more complex. This does not last long and at bar 25, the music returns to the violin refrain from the beginning of the movement, with woodwinds again presenting alternating solos. After a brief four-bar return of the first violins melody, James returns the music to woodwind solos over a string accompaniment; however, the accompaniment is altered from being rhythmic and driving, to being more atmospheric, with long notes held through the bar.

From bar 43, James divides the music into seven-bar patterns, moving between the sections of the orchestra. For the first four bars of these patterns, the first violins play a fast *staccato* melody and the remainder of the strings play a syncopated

accompaniment. This is then echoed in the woodwinds for a single bar followed by brass playing harmonised crotchets for the remaining two bars of the phrase.

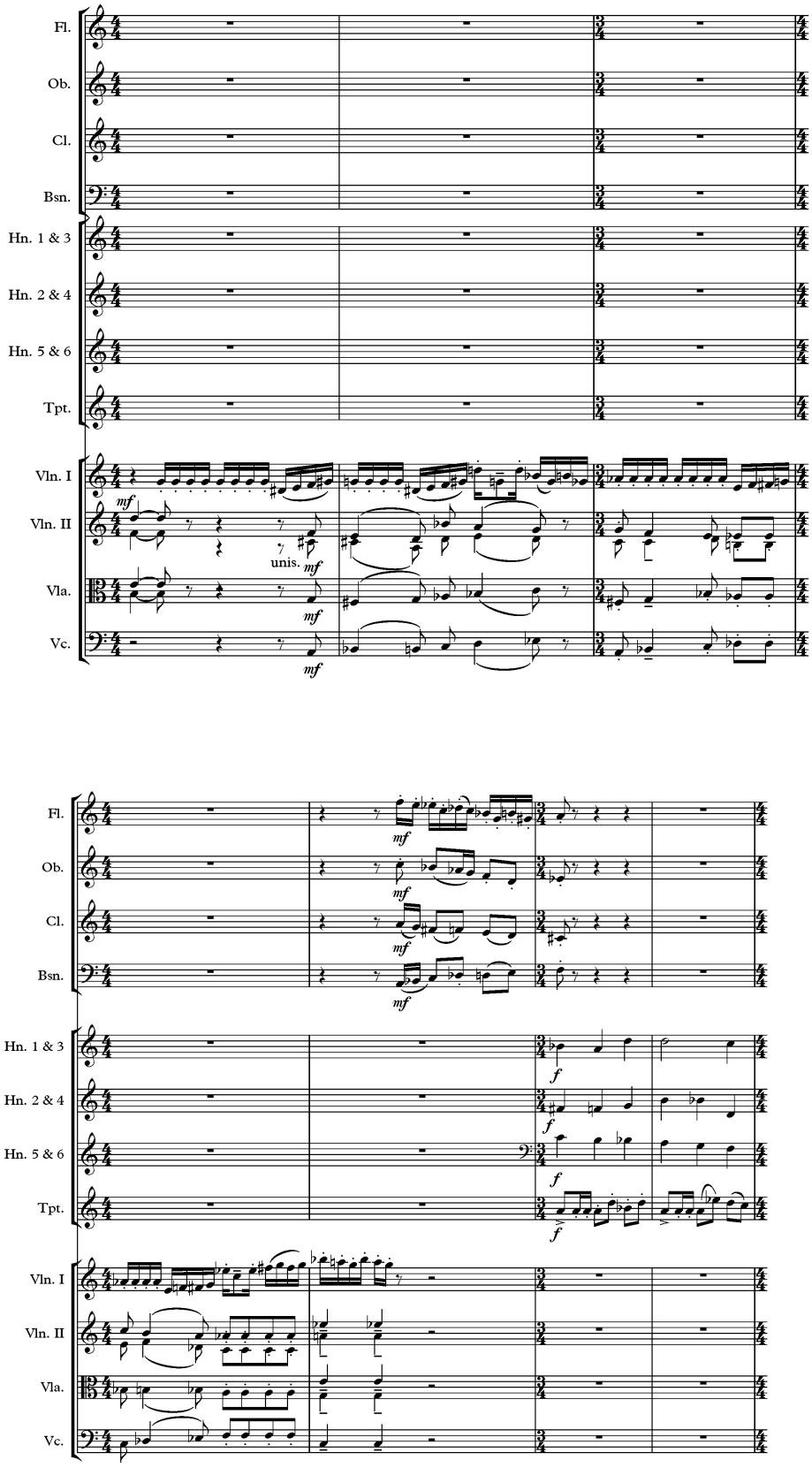

Figure 20: Seven-bar phrase at bar 43 of the third movement of *Gymnastics*.

James's self-proclaimed jazz influence can be seen in the second violins, viola and cello parts in the above example. The syncopated rhythm is reminiscent of a piano's chordal pattern (comping) within the jazz idiom. James continues isolating alternating individual sections of the orchestra, and slowly begins to merge them. By bar 80, he has returned to his original texture: woodwind solos accompanied by strings, and in this case an energetic rhythmic pattern is played by the strings. As the movement comes to a close, the rhythmic patterns in the strings become more driving, using smaller rhythmic values, until in the final four bars, the first and second violins are playing semi-quavers, while violas, celli and contrabasses play quavers. In the final bar the entire orchestra (except bassoons, violas, celli and contrabasses) play the same semi-quaver pattern ending on a quaver beat followed by rests.

A six-bar flute solo opens the final movement, *Allegro spiritoso,* followed by a three bar response from the full orchestra. Thereafter James moves the solo to the clarinets for three bars, followed again by the full orchestra for another three. This alternation between minimal and dense textures is seen throughout this work and throughout James's oeuvre, and the juxtaposition here of the extremes of the textural spectrum is interesting. At bar 28, for nine bars, James utilises just the woodwinds and a single percussionist, followed by flutes and clarinets playing the same solo a seventh apart accompanied by *pizzicato* strings. James returns to the thick texture at bar 50, moving the time signature to 4/8 and writing the same rhythm for the entire orchestra:

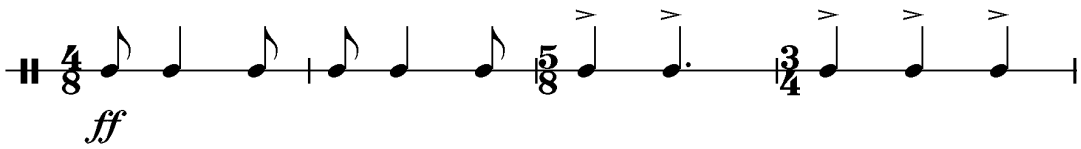

Figure 21: Rhythm at bars 50-53 of the fourth movement of *Gymnastics.*

James's continued explorations of alternating pockets of various instrumental timbres with thick full orchestral statements continues throughout the movement, and at points James returns to the use of interweaving solo material seen in the previous movement. After gradually stripping down the orchestra to just bassoon, cello and contrabass at bar 234, James introduces the full orchestra, ending on an *ffff.*

In many ways, *Gymnastics* is a precursor to James's most successful orchestral composition: *Paradise Regained.* The rhythmic drive and textural approaches to the orchestra are similar, and the techniques with which he seems to be experimenting in *Gymnastics* – such as the almost constant juxtaposition of density in the fourth movement – are approached with more nuance in *Paradise Regained.* James's approach to jazz, one that is more indebted to white American composers such as Gershwin and Berlin than of African-American jazz greats such as Ellington and Parker, is similar in both works and is discussed in more detail in the section on *Paradise Regained* later in this dissertation. Although this is a student work, and James's explorations of orchestral techniques are self-consciously deliberate, it is still a coherent and fine work, especially when it is considered that this was his first orchestral composition. This work seems more refined, with a better musical direction and more evidence of idiomatic understanding than *Four Portraits* – a work composed for the same purpose (a master's degree composition portfolio) and for an instrument with which James was familiar. The presence of a coherent, albeit slightly inexperienced, compositional voice in this work therefore makes the lack of such a voice in *Four Portraits* more confusing. Writing about this work in 2005, James states:

> Because the 'Four Portraits' are so difficult and inaccessible to most audiences, think twice about learning them. Should you learn them, you may well have a nervous breakdown afterwards![214]

Four Portraits for pianoforte in four movements was composed in 1980 and completed on 1 January 1981 as part of James's composition portfolio for his master's degree. The work was originally entitled *Suite Schizophrenia* and according to his sister Islay, James was asked by the University of Pretoria to change the title to something considered to be more appropriate.[215] In the programme notes – which are understandably extensive considering this work was composed for academic purposes – James describes this work as being "a study in multi-faceted personalities and each movement reveals a predominant temperament."

[214] E-mail from Chris James to Chantie Snibbe, 22 January 2005.
[215] It should be noted that there is no archival evidence of this request, but James's close friend and fellow UP student Stephen Allen has stated that this was a highly likely occurrence.

Stephen Allen – who premiered many of James's piano compositions, including *Four Portraits* – described working with James as simultaneously a "nightmare" and "great fun".[216] James would often only finish a composition that Allen was required to premiere on the day of the performance, and Allen described the composition of *Four Portraits* as follows: "I was studying that work while he was writing it … every day he would give me a couple of pages, and so we'd go on".[217] Allen recalls performing *Four Portraits* – which in his interview with me he referred to as *Suite Schizophrenia* – for a composition competition at Wits.[218] He described *Four Portraits* as "a great work, and I think a lot of it was depicting in a way, I think a lot of how Chris reacted in life".[219]

In his programme notes, James makes clear his intention that *Four Portraits* was intended musically to explore a range of emotional temperaments, and the work's original title shows that James had originally intended the work to be linked to the mental illness with which he had been diagnosed.[220] It can thus be argued that – as Allen states – this work is a kind of autobiography in sound, with James aiming to express through music his experiences of mental illness.

My own decision to focus on this particular work was informed by what Wood describes as the perceived "charisma" around the work, which is linked to mental illness. In August 2015, my supervisor Stephanus Muller and I spent a week conducting interviews with family, friends and colleagues of Christopher James, which involved us travelling to Durban, Ballito, Pietermaritzburg, and Pretoria. In conceptualising the questions I would ask while I was still safely ensconced in my office in Stellenbosch, I felt it wise to approach delicately the issue of James's mental illness, as I was certain that this would be a sensitive topic. Yet for the participants this was not a sensitive topic at all, but a theme to which most participants gravitated without my probing.

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[216] Interview with Stephen Allen, 16 March 2017.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Stephen Allen remembers little more than that it was at Wits.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Stephen Allen has stated that at the time that James was working on this piece, the diagnosis which had been given was schizophrenia. But Allen expressed his doubts and believes James's symptoms were more indicative of bipolar disorder.

Because of the willingness of participants to discuss James's mental illness, this became a theme of the week-long fieldwork trip. This culminated when, on our last day in Pretoria, Muller and I visited Weskoppies, a government-run psychiatric institution where James had been hospitalised. It was a Friday afternoon, and, with no other people around, we were able to explore the grounds without restriction or supervision. As we walked through the empty corridors of the old administration building, I realised that this institution, with its feeling of abandonment through the dual impact of its eerie silence and dilapidation, had at some point housed James's physicality and person. With the looming spectres of mental illness and Weskoppies over my work, a work with the original title of *Suite Schizophrenia* seemed like an important work to discuss as a mechanism for engaging with James's mental illness.

Figure 22: Weskoppies, 15 August 2015. Photograph by Stephanus Muller.

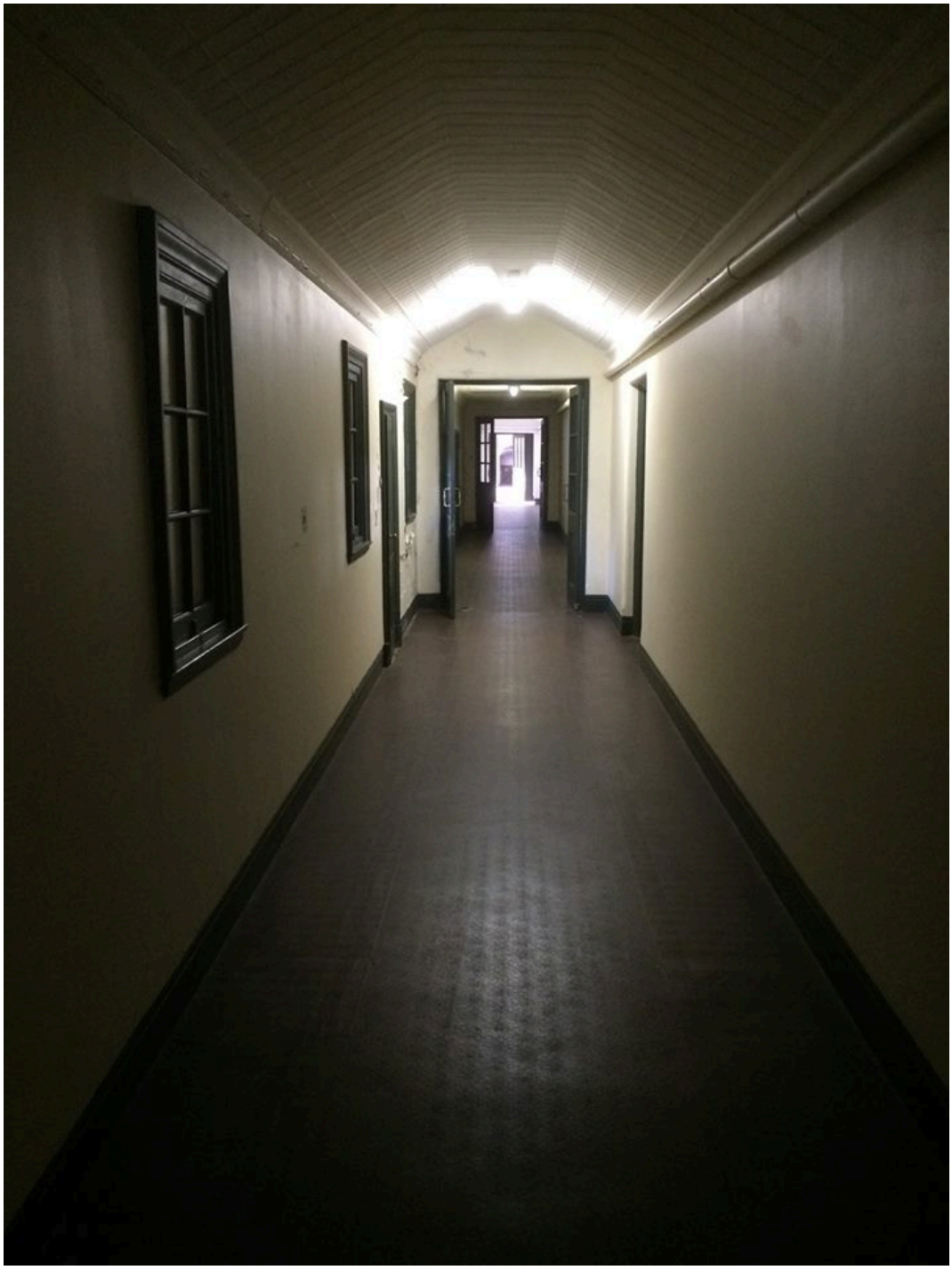

Figure 23: Weskoppies, 15 August 2015. Photograph by Stephanus Muller.

Figure 24: Weskoppies, 15 August 2015. Photograph by Stephanus Muller.

When viewed within the chronology of James's life events, this work seems ill-suited to such explorations. It was composed at a time of relative mental stability for James, and one might well consider works composed closer to times of instability to be better suited to the purpose I have outlined. Apart from considerations of his mental state, this work was composed at a time when James was still a student, and must thus be

viewed within the context of a composer still in training, and not that of an established or experienced composer. Yet this is the only piece in James's oeuvre that engages so explicitly with the composer's mental illness, making it an important work in the context of biographical scholarship.

The first portrait, *Largo calmato – molto doloroso e sospirando*, begins with a 13-bar introduction, which James in his programme notes indicates is "suggestive of birth". Bars 1-7 of the introduction feature thick cluster chords, which at the slow tempo of 50 beats per minute impart to this introduction a sonorous and introspective feeling. James writes each chord to be the full length of each bar, theoretically meaning that the regular time signature changes should be clearly audible. In practice, however, it sounds as if the work is written in a free style. The BACH theme (B flat, A, C, B – spelling out the name "Bach" in German) is written in the lowest note of the right-hand chord, but due to the thickness of these chords is not audible:

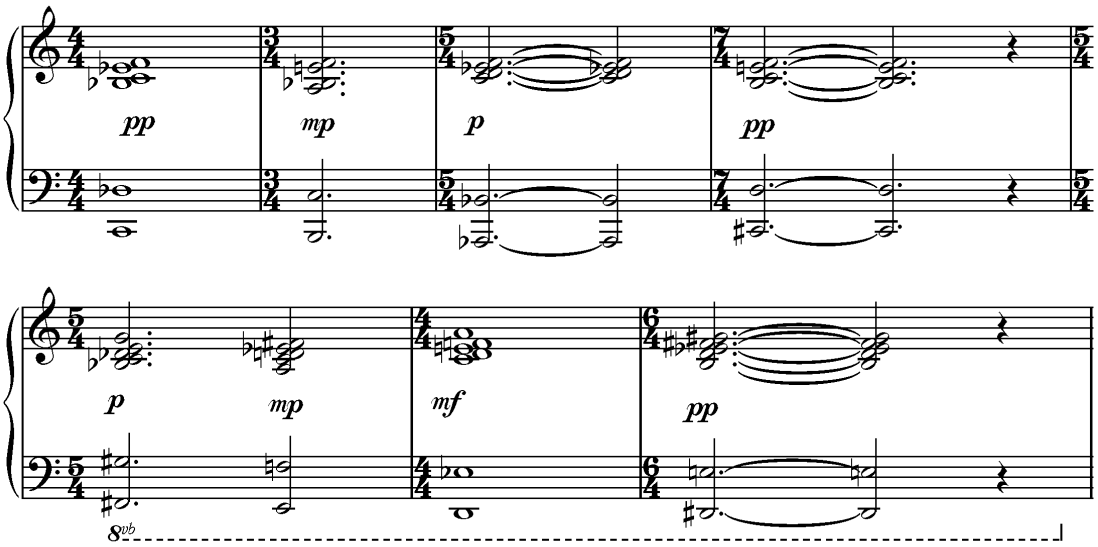

Figure 25: Bars 1-7 of the first portrait of *Four Portraits*.

From bar 8 James begins to build intensity, shortening the length of the notes as well as slowly moving up in register to propel the music forward. He also indicates that the *sostenuto* pedal be used from bars 8-12, building to bar 13, the final bar of the introduction, which is left empty with the instruction "Allow the sound to die away to a

ppp level". James uses this technique throughout the suite, building up momentum and then leaving a bar empty to allow the sound to fade away.

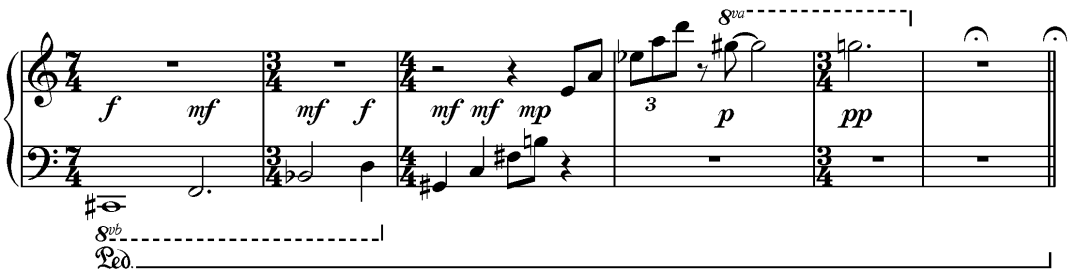

Figure 26: Bars 8-13 of the first portrait of *Four Portraits.*

James's notion of this opening section being reminiscent of birth reflects a romanticised perception of birth, one that could be considered more spiritual than realistic. Five years after this piece was completed, James was severely traumatised by witnessing the birth of his daughter Melissa, a trauma which his family believe induced a severe nervous breakdown in 1986.

In bar 14 James introduces the two main musical characteristics of this portrait: intervallically constructed sonorities and the use of semitonal melodic movement. The left hand plays a chord constructed in fourths from C sharp, and the right hand plays an A flat-G, derived from "The first two notes of the BACH motif (a sighing semitone figure)".[221] The left hand then moves up a second in bar 15 while the right hand remains constant.

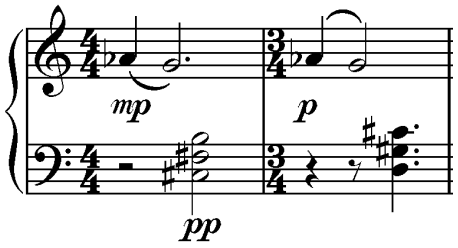

Figure 27: Bars 14-15 of the first portrait of *Four Portraits.*

[221] Programme notes for *Four Portraits* – Christopher James.

James makes extensive use of these two intervals throughout this first portrait, in both his chordal construction, as well as melodic material (see Figure 28). For the composer, the semitonal, sighing motif is representative of "extreme sadness and despondency",[222] and it is used in various forms and inversions.

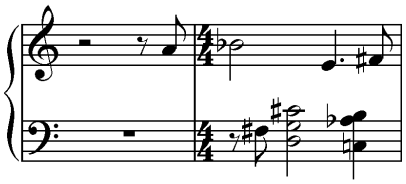

Figure 28: Bars 17-18 of the first portrait of *Four Portraits.*

As the movement continues, James gradually begins to thicken the texture, and continues to change the time signature in every bar. At bar 35 James moves to three staves adding an extra bass stave that leads into the climax at bar 36 where the texture is at its thickest, with the upper two staves featuring five note chords. This section ends at bar 37 as the introduction section did, with James instructing his pianist to allow the sound to die away to a *pianissimo* level.

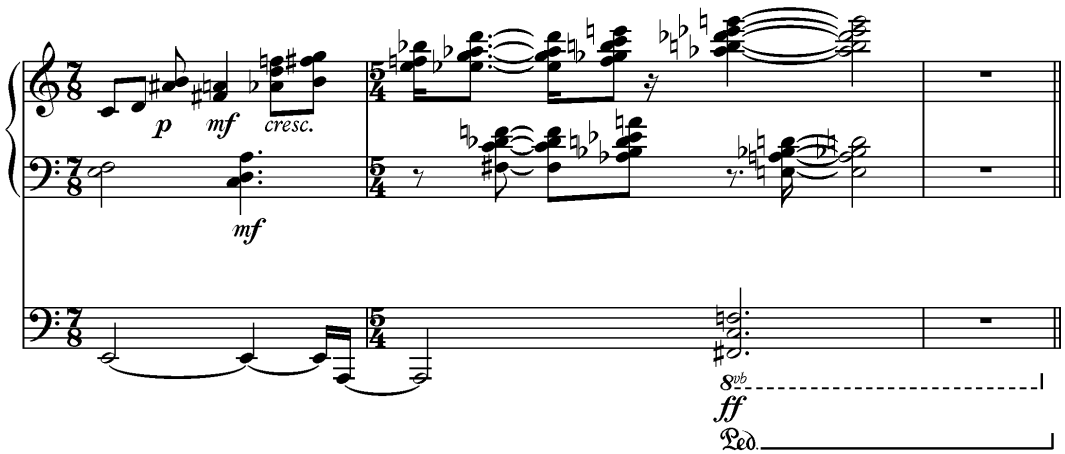

Figure 29: Bars 35-37 of the first portrait of *Four Portraits.*

The final section of this portrait begins at bar 38 with James continuing to utilise the thick texture of the previous bars – writing at this point in four staves – as well as using

[222] Programme notes for *Four Portraits* – Christopher James.

the full range of the piano. The outer staves contain held chords on both extremes of the piano's range, while the inner two voices play variations on semitonal melodic material and chords constructed in fourths. As James begins to fill the middle voices with denser material, the dynamic begins to increase. This section reaches its peak at bar 49, with the inner voices playing dense, frenetic chordal material *fortissimo*, with the outer voices playing even thicker chords at extreme registers.

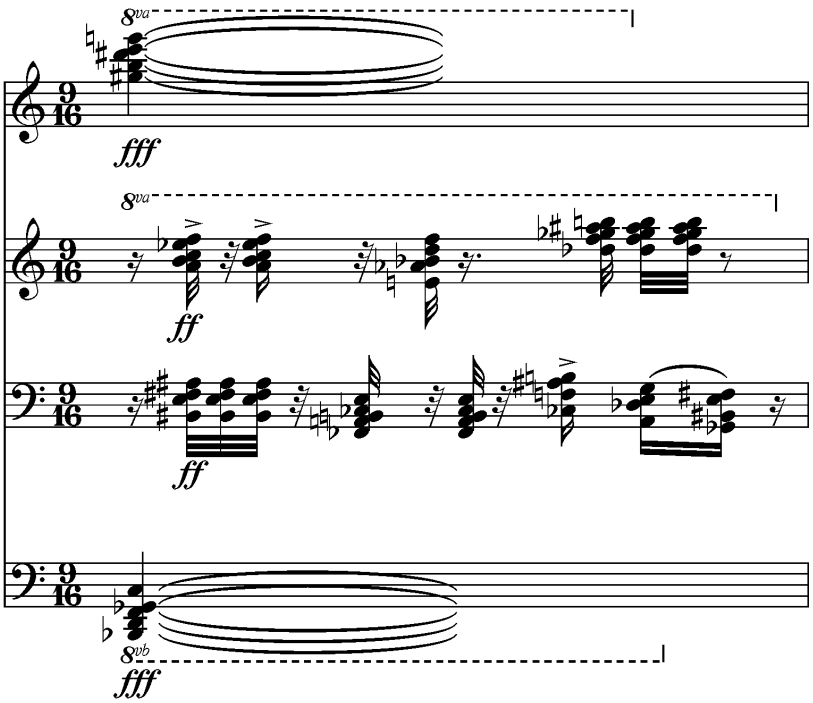

Figure 30: Bar 49 of the first portrait of *Four Portraits.*

From bar 50 James begins to reduce the tension of the piece, gradually scaling the dynamics and the texture down, but still maintaining a full use of register and harmonically dissonant chords. He also slows the rhythm down by using longer note values in the middle voices. The portrait ends with a F sharp-G semitonal movement notated in the upper bass clef, and a chord built in fourths in the lower treble clef. The outer voices are sustaining chords from three bars earlier, and from the *piano* dynamic James ends the work by instructing the performer to allow the sound to die to a *pianississississimo* (*pppp*) level.

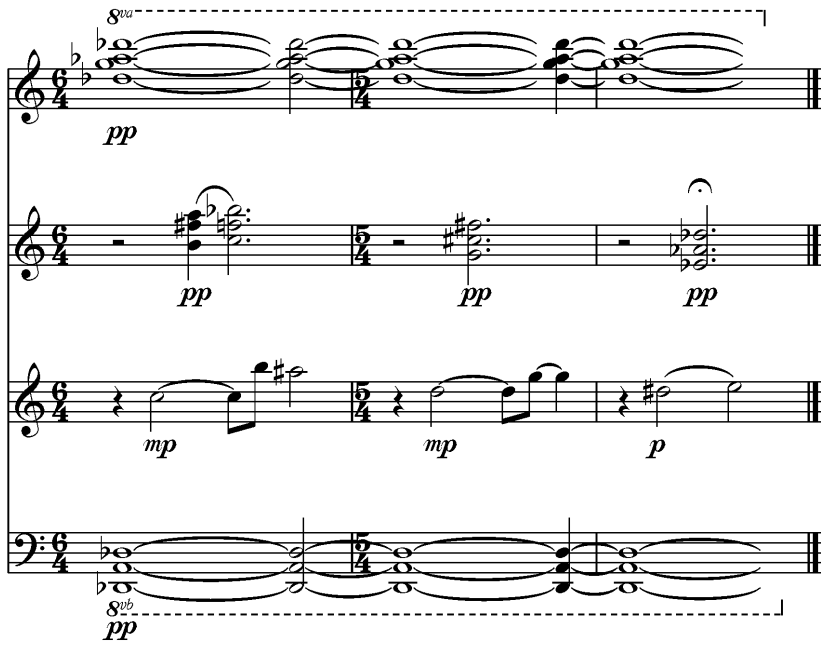

Figure 31: Bars 57-59 of the first portrait of *Four Portraits.*

The second portrait is musically different from the first, displaying a joyful and light-hearted temperament. Marked as *Molto giocoso e vivacissimo* and three times faster than the first portrait at 150 beats per minute, James indicates in the programme notes that "[t]he structural element underlying the composition of this movement may be found in the opening four bars. Seven essential intervals are used in the opening motif and these are exploited throughout the course of the movement." These seven intervals – semi-tone, tone, minor 3rd, major 3rd, perfect 4th, diminished 5th and minor 6th – provide the harmonic scaffolding for this entire portrait.

The thick texture of the previous portrait is contrasted in the opening of the second portrait with a single-note motif played in the middle register of the piano. The light mood is accentuated with the use of grace notes, and the triple time of bars 1-2 gives this piece a minuet dance-like movement. The texture begins to thicken at bar 21, where James begins to use alternating intervals in both hands, and alternating this texture with single-note motifs in the left-hand, utilising a specific combination of slur and *staccato*, a technique utilised in *Gymnastics* and one which he would use and explore in more detail in *Paradise Regained.*

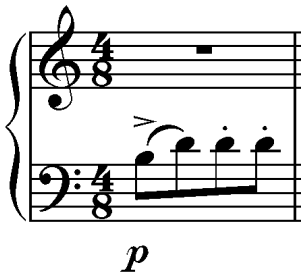

Figure 32: Bar 31 of the second portrait of *Four Portraits.*

At bar 41 James begins to use alternating intervals in quavers (see Figure 33), with the *sostenuto* pedal used to blur the texture, thereafter once again alternating between a thicker chordal texture and single notes. From bar 83 until the end of the section at bar 112, James employs the alternating intervals, thickening the texture and changing the intervals to three, four and then eventually five note chords (see Figure 34). The constant use of the *sostenuto* pedal makes the increased thickness of the texture murky, and at bar 111 James ends the section with two empty bars, allowing the sound to sustain through the bar, amplified by the use of the *sostenuto* pedal.

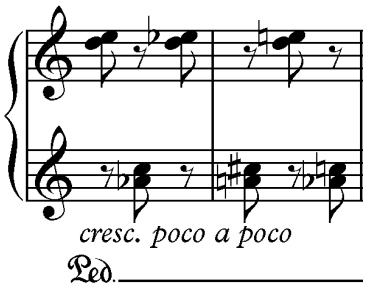

Figure 33: The use of alternating intervals at bar 83 of the second portrait of *Four Portraits.*

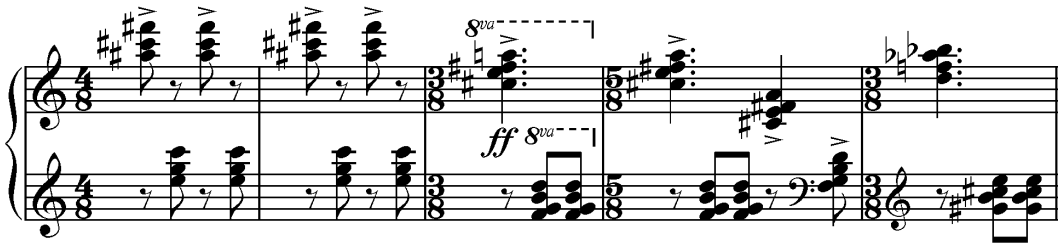

Figure 34: Bars 101-105 of the second portrait of *Four Portraits.*

The next section begins with single-note motifs moving between the hands, with occasional intervals occurring. James once again begins slowly to increase the texture building to the return of the alternating intervals at bar 142, marked “Teasingly”. Here the harmony is dissonant with prominent use of seconds. Similar to the previous section, the texture thickens at bar 159, with chord clusters becoming denser. At bar 164 James begins to use triadic harmony, but in each chord adds a second degree interval to retain some dissonance. This macro-structural alternation between thin and thicker textures is a feature of this work, and a technique James uses in this portrait as well as in the fourth. The final four bars of this section (bars 233-236) are marked *fortississimo* and feature large ten-note chords:

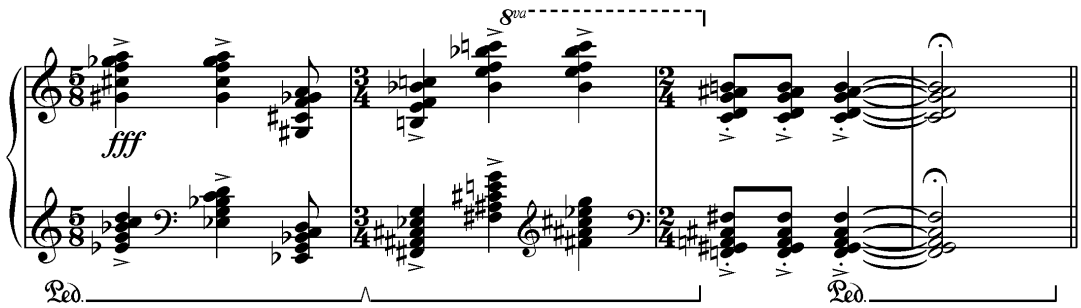

Figure 35: Bars 233-236 of the second portrait of *Four Portraits.*

The rolling arpeggiated figures of the third portrait are pre-empted in the transition between the second and third portraits. The use of the *sostenuto* pedal to sustain the individual notes of each arpeggio results in an ambient texture. For the first time, James uses regular dynamic shifts, sometimes within a bar. From bar 246-250, three-note chords built in fourths in the left hand are combined with quaver motifs in the right hand. James also utilises the rhythmic complexity of scoring each hand in a different time signature, with the various time signatures eventually syncing up at the end of the bar (for example, at bar 251 the left hand is written in 10/4, and the right hand is written in 3/8, 3/4, 4/4 and 3/8). The transition ends with a sweeping arpeggiated motif at *pianissimo* with a *crescendo* into the *mezzo-forte* of the first bar of the third portrait.

For the third and "most romantic"[223] of the portraits, James brings the tempo back down to 50 beats per minute. Indicated as *Molto appassionato*, this movement is divided into four sections, with the first and third featuring contrapuntal writing and quicker rhythmic devices, and the second and fourth sections – both indicated as "like a chorale" – featuring static chords written in crotchets. This juxtaposition of contrapuntal, improvisatory sections with more rigid chorale-like sections could signify the two types of love expressed by this portrait: human love (eros), which is more erratic and represented musically by the improvisatory sections, and the love of God (agape),[224] which is purer and represented by the chorale sections.

Section 1 (bars 257-267)[225] begins with dissonant chords in the right hand, followed in bar 258 by the left hand playing a single-note countermelody. Rhythmically, the two ideas interweave, and at bar 259 James uses a three against two rhythm between the hands. In the first and third sections of the piece, sonorities are created by what seems a random stacking of intervals, and dynamic shifts are often sudden. The climax of section 1 occurs at bar 265, where the texture is at its thickest with dense chords in both hands, played *fortissimo*. A *rallantando* and a dynamic drop to *mezzo-piano* and then *piano* lead into the next section.

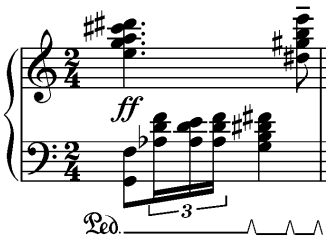

Figure 36: Bar 265 of the third portrait of *Four Portraits*.

In section two (bars 268-275) the music moves from the higher register of the right hand to the lower register, with both hands eventually ending up being scored in the bass clef at bar 270. Throughout this section (and the fourth section) the left hand plays perfect fifths against dissonant chords in the right hand. The contrast here is

[223] Programme notes for *Four Portraits* – Christopher James.
[224] Ibid.
[225] James begins numbering the third portrait from bar 257, whereas he numbers the fourth portrait from bar 1. This arguably shows James's desire for a musical continuation from the second to the third portrait.

noteworthy – consonant material in the left-hand juxtaposed against the dissonant material not only of the right hand at this specific juncture, but in effect sounding against the dissonance of the suite as a whole. An arpeggiated figure, played *poco accelerando* with a *crescendo* from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* propels this stagnant section into section 3 (bars 276-295).

In many ways the third section is a repeat of the first, but it expands on the density of the texture and complexity of the rhythmic ideas. The musical material gradually becomes thicker leading up to its climax at bar 293 (see Figure 37), followed immediately by James bringing down the dynamics quite drastically as well as using longer rhythmic values to slow the music down. Section 4 begins at bar 296, with similar characteristics to the second section. The portrait ends at bar 301 on a chord based on the notes E, B, C sharp, D sharp, E and G sharp (see Figure 38).

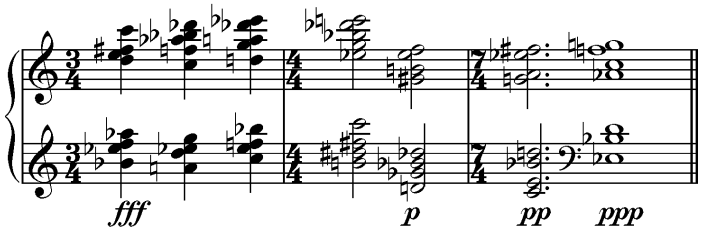

Figure 37: Bars 293-295 of the third portrait of *Four Portraits.*

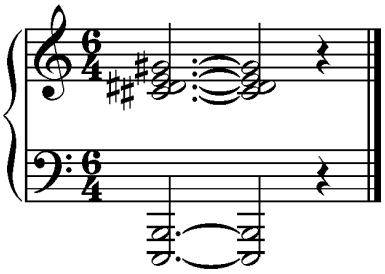

Figure 38: Bar 301 of the third portrait of *Four Portraits.*

In the fourth portrait James "combines elements from the three previous movements",[226] and like the third portrait, the fourth is also divided into four sections.

[226] Programme notes for *Four Portraits* – Christopher James.

In the first section James states the "allegro furioso temperament",[227] and then in each of the following sections this temperament is juxtaposed with temperaments from the previous three portraits. James writes that "The fourth portrait thus represents an amalgamation of the four temperaments".[228]

The *Allegro furioso* temperament identified by James is musically represented by quick, rhythmically complex chordal stabs (see Figure 39). As this section continues, James gradually thickens the texture by using denser chords, with the section ending on a single syncopated chord with the dynamic marking of *ffff* (see Figure 40). At bar 52, the final bar of the opening section, James instructs the pianist to "Allow the sound to die away to a pp level".

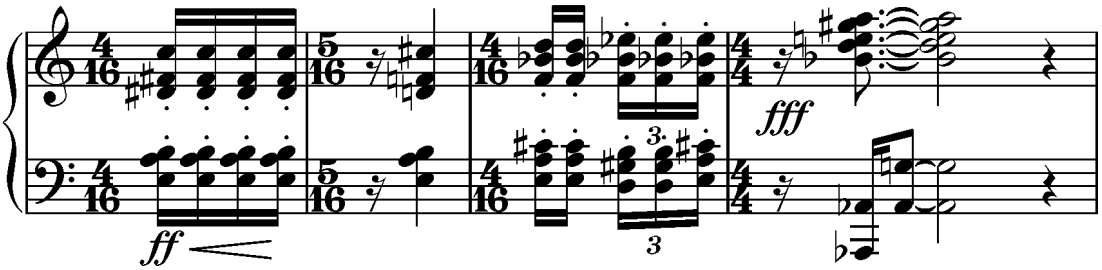

Figure 39: Bars 1-4 of the fourth portrait of *Four Portraits.*

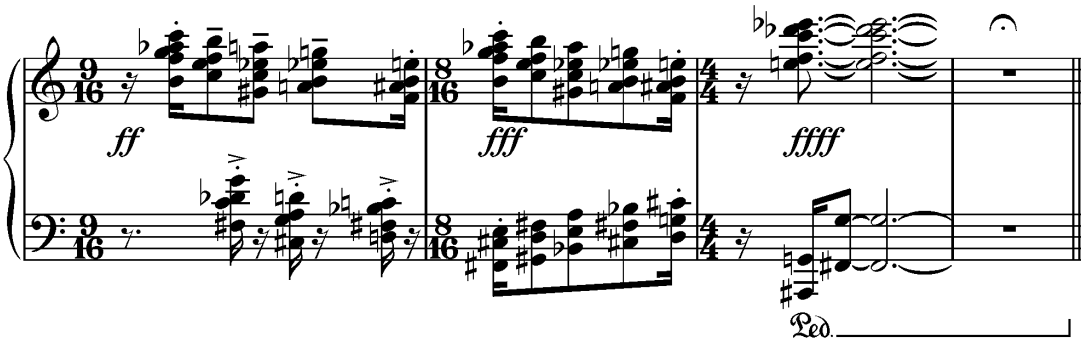

Figure 40: Bars 49-52 of the fourth portrait of *Four Portraits.*

In the second section of the fourth portrait, James juxtaposes the rhythmically complex chordal constructs of Figure 39 in the left hand, with the dissonant chords of the third portrait in the right hand. The composer indicates that the right hand – which is playing

[227] Ibid.
[228] Programme notes for *Four Portraits* – Christopher James.

the temperament from the third portrait – is to be played "as legato as possible", as a contrast to the *staccato* demi-semi quaver rhythms played in the left hand. The rhythmic complexity is heightened by James scoring the left and right hands in different time signatures, with the bar line occurring when the time signatures come together. This can be seen in bar 56 where the right hand is scored in 3/4, and the left hand in 9/32, 6/32, and then back to 9/32, which is equal to 24 demi-semi quavers, which in crotchets is represented as 3/4 (see Figure 41).

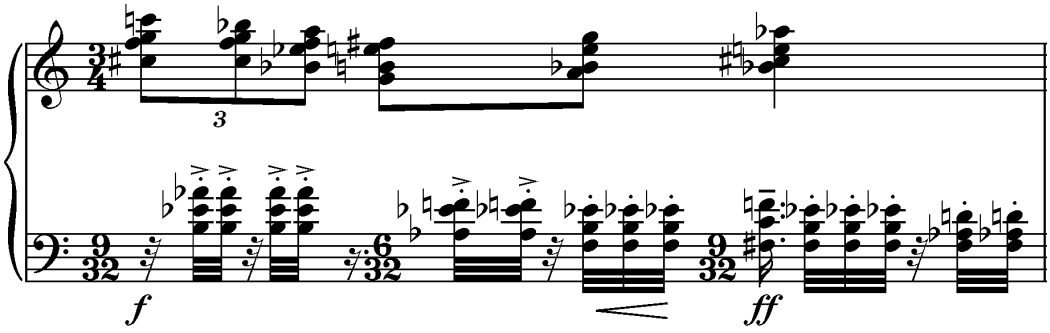

Figure 41: Bar 56 of the fourth portrait of *Four Portraits.*

This section ends with rhythmically stagnant chords reminiscent of the chorale sections of the third portrait, before speeding up to *scherzando* and the opening quaver theme of the second portrait at bar 68 in the left hand. This quaver theme is played against five note chords in dotted minims in the right hand. At bar 74, the quaver theme from the second portrait is moved to the right hand, transformed into triplets in the 2/4 time signature. The left-hand plays the fast semi-quaver chords from the fourth portrait, and as previously is scored in varying time signatures which differ from the right hand. After a descending arpeggiated figure, the temperament of the second portrait is moved to the left hand at bar 87, with the temperament of the fourth portrait being played in the right hand in the following bar. The intensity begins to build, with James raising the dynamics to *fortissimo* at bar 101 and thickening the right hand texture, building to bar 102 where the music is split into four staves, and the dynamic suddenly drops to *piano*.

For the remainder of the piece, the two outer voices sound the temperament of the fourth portrait, with fast, rhythmically complex chords in varying time signatures. The

dense chords of the opening of the piece return to the middle treble clef voice, while the semitonal sigh motif of the first portrait is played in the upper bass clef.

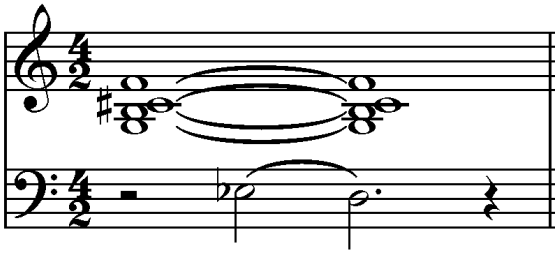

Figure 42: Inner staves of bar 102 of the fourth portrait of *Four Portraits.*

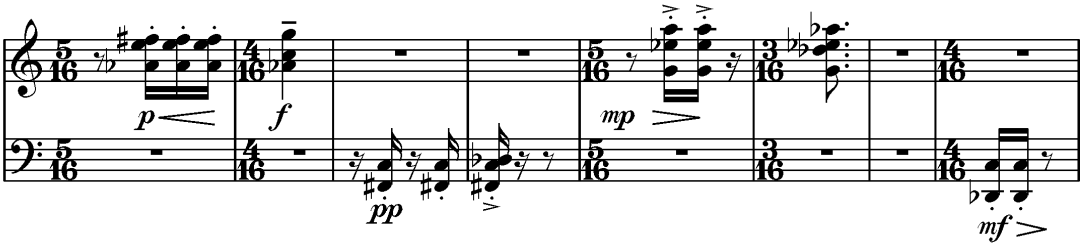

Figure 43: Outer staves of bar 102 of the fourth portrait of *Four Portraits.*

As the piece moves towards its end, the upper treble clef chords get progressively higher in register, while the lower bass clef material remains in the lower register. Dynamics vary throughout this final section, and between staves within a single bar. The section ends suddenly, with a *decrescendo* into *pppp*. After this James adds another four bars, written in four part harmony, restating the BACH theme with which the piece began. The final chord is scored *pianississimo* with the instruction: "Allow the sound to die away to complete silence."

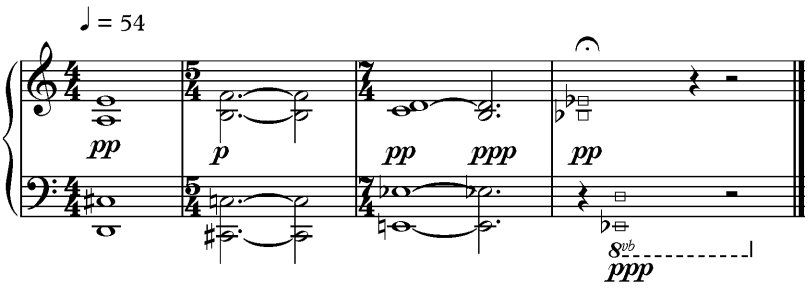

Figure 44: The final four bars of *Four Portraits.*

Four Portraits is a work of incredible complexity, with the use of dense chords making it impossible to determine harmonic function due to extensive dissonance. This complexity is also prominent in James's rhythmic devices, from his use of various time signatures (which at times even vary between the hands), to the use of difficult rhythmic motifs. This work can also be seen as a meeting point between traditional musical constructions such as the Baroque juxtaposition of quasi-improvisatory and chorale sections in the third portrait, and more daring twentieth-century musical characteristics.

An argument could be made that the complexity of this work is due to the fact that at the time of composition James was still a student, but an advanced student aiming to write an impressive work for a post-graduate portfolio. Yet the composer's inexperience is still visible: while James will often increase the register, texture and dynamics to build into climaxes, he makes use of extreme dynamic markings such as *ffff* and *pppp*, a habit which Huston would later discourage in a letter dated 3 January 1987: "You will note that I object violently to more than three or four fff – please, not seven or even eight; I know the effect you want, and you will get it with no more than fff."

After my visit to Weskoppies, I conceived of a project where *Four Portraits* – a work so intrinsically linked to James's mental health – would be performed in Weskoppies where he had at times been hospitalised. In addition to generating interest in James's music and opening up the archive, I had hoped that this project would be a way metaphorically to release James from Weskoppies and the narrow interpretive lens of mental illness, rather than imprison him there. In selecting a performer, I chose Mareli Stolp, a former student of Muller's and a pianist interested in both South African piano repertoire and site-specific performance.

I approached Stolp in early 2016 with the idea for the project, and we decided that in addition to the Weskoppies performance, we would present a paper on *Four Portraits* at the annual South African Society for Research in Music conference, which was held in Bloemfontein in August of that year. Our initial goal for the paper was a multi-faceted discussion of the work from the perspective of a performer (Stolp) and a researcher (myself), with Stolp then performing either the work in its entirety, or

selections from the work. Her involvement allowed me to be more sensitive to the pianistic aspects of this piece, as well as generate a working recording from which I could listen to the piece and become aurally more familiar with it.

In an e-mail dated 6 June 2016, Stolp wrote:

> I'm really, really struggling with Chris's piece. And while I'm not easily daunted by technical difficulties I'm increasingly thinking that the technical problems present in these pieces are somehow – for lack of a better word – unnecessary. Simply put: there are too many notes. Far too many of the chords are just so thick, that to read them is an extremely complicated task; playing them in his specified tempi is impossible; tone colour and shaping of the chords cannot be discerned within such a thick texture, because balancing so many notes within a chord is just not doable; the aural quality is so incredibly thick, that getting the notes 'into the ears' and 'into the fingers' is turning out to be a Sisyphean task.

Stolp informed me that sections such as the climax of the first portrait, as well as much of the third portrait, were unplayable at James's tempi. She identified the fourth portrait in particular as being unplayable at "his tempo, and as accurately as he notated it"[229] stating that the rhythmic construction of this portrait was so complex that she felt that it may have been written " 'for a system', rather than 'for a human' ".[230] In our joint paper in Bloemfontein in August, Stolp elaborated on these issues:

> It was immediately apparent to me that these works posed significant technical challenges: the writing was extremely thick, with many (if not most) of the chords spread out over all ten fingers and covering a very wide range. In addition, these chords were consistently written in fast tempo, to be played in quick succession. This is not an insurmountable technical issue per se – there are many examples from the literature where thick chords are to be played in fast tempi. However, composers usually make allowances for the capabilities of the hand by *not* composing ten note chords, which allow for very little flexibility in the hand. I began to realise that there could really be no strategy for playing these chords in the tempo indicated by the composer, no technical trick or practise method, no alternative fingering to enable accurate execution. Another

[229] E-mail correspondence from Mareli Stolp, 6 June 2016.
[230] Ibid.

> immediate issue was James's approach to rhythm. In the fourth movement, the right hand executes a lyrical melodic line with the indication *appassionato*; this is combined in the left hand with material that shifts between unusual time signatures such as for example eight demi-semi-quavers, to nine demi-semi-quavers in the following bar, to six demi-semi-quavers in the bar after that, in a tempo of 100 crotchet beats per minute. The relationship between right and left hand is meticulously worked out – it seemed clear to me that the left-hand rhythmic structure was not created merely for effect, but that the composer's intention was that the material should be executed absolutely accurately. Then as now I doubt whether any performer could execute these passages with the accuracy and precision the composer seemingly insists on.[231]

If an established performer assesses a work to be unplayable, it is usually indicative of the composer being ignorant about the technical demands of the instrument, or the physical capabilities of a performer. Considering that this work is the work of a student, this is not an unlikely explanation. On the other hand, James was himself an accomplished pianist, and he would have had insight into the technical difficulties he was demanding of the performer.[232] In addition to this, his previous works for piano, such as *Three Preludes* (1977), are not only playable but are idiomatically pianistic. Considering that James had a good understanding of the capabilities of the piano and pianists, Stolp and I began to explore the notion of this piece being *intentionally* unplayable.

If this interpretation of intentional unplayability is to be considered, the salient consideration is: "Why did James want to send an artefact from his pen into the world *which was in fact written to be unplayable?*"[233] Considering that James struggled with mental illness and that, through its original title, this work is conceptually tied to mental illness, Stolp and I presented an interpretation that James created this work as intentionally unplayable to express his experience of living with mental illness. That is to say: just as one can never fully master or even, in a sense, comprehend this work, one can never fully comprehend or master schizophrenia. If the

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[231] M Röntsch & M Stolp, "Analysis, Meaning and Make-believe: Entry Points to Four Portraits and the life of Christopher Langford James", Unpublished paper presented at *The Tenth Annual Conference of the South African Society for Research in Music,* Bloemfontein, South Africa, 5-27 August 2016.
[232] And it is evident from the quoted e-mail he sent to Chante Snibbe, that he was aware of these challenges.
[233] Röntsch & Stolp, "Analysis, Meaning and Make-believe: Entry Points to Four Portraits and the life of Christopher Langford James".

work is to be read as intentionally unplayable, then this creates an interesting philosophical paradox around the work: if we were to be able to hear this work, we would both have a greater understanding and misunderstanding of Christopher James's conceptual intentions. To hear this work, therefore, is to betray James.

Our paper was followed by robust conversation, with the general response being a kind of desperation to hear this music, in at least some form, be it through programmes such as Sibelius and MIDI triggering, or through Stolp performing only the playable sections. Upon further exploration of the archive, I found that our "intentionally unplayable" hypothesis was unlikely. In a letter to his parents dated 19 June 1999, James wrote: "You may remember how excellently he [Stephen Allen] interpreted the piano Suite Schizophrenia a few years ago." I was uncertain whether by "interpreted" James meant performed, or had simply read through and given James advice. In early 2017 I interviewed Stephen Allen via Skype, and was able to ask him directly about the performance of this work. He confirmed – as stated earlier – that he had performed the work at Wits for a piano competition. When I asked him about the unplayable sections and how he managed to perform them, Allen responded as follows:

> Stephen Allen: That work … you think it's just about basically unplayable. These were the sort of things that Chris did in his piano writing. He used to stretch my capabilities to the limit. He always used to say to me 'But Steve, you can do it'. Admittedly in that suite if I think back on it, there are a lot of demands, it's quite a task for a pianist to get around.
> Marc Röntsch: How did you get around that?
> SA: Splitting hands, playing intervals as best I could where and when applicable. It was a difficult work to perform … I used to sometimes say to Chris, 'You're bloody mad. You can't play this, it's impossible!' and he would say 'Steve, you can do it.' Then I would say 'Well I am going to do it like this, it's about the only way I can do it.' And he would say 'But remember, in this context it's got to be like this, or at that tempo.' We got our way around it.
> MR: So he was quite open to you as a performer giving him feedback?
> SA: Yes, what a lot of people don't know is that we were very close. He would sit with me sometimes when I was practising, and go through his works.

Allen describes a working relationship between composer and performer, one where the notation is open to negotiation, allowing the work to be performed. What seems odd is that James did not incorporate Allen's edits and suggestions into his final score, housed in the CJC. This means that the score as an artifact distributed to potential performers is still unplayable, despite the suggestions made by Allen. Future performers have no way of knowing that James was flexible about aspects of this work, and by simply revising the score to include these suggestions, James would have had a playable, albeit complex work. James did not often revisit works to revise them, moving decisively from one composition to another. According to Tina James, "Once a work was done, that was it". This also explained why James did not promote his work or make parts of larger works:[234] for him the composition was finished, and he had another piece he wanted to start on.

In *Four Portraits* we see many musical characteristics present in later James works. His use of rhythmic rather than melodic motifs in works such as *Paradise Regained,* is already prevalent in *Four Portraits,* especially in the final portrait. His complex approach to harmony, his use of density to create tension, as well as his quick dynamic shifts would become part of his compositional language. Thus, as an insight into James the composer in formation, *Four Portraits* is an invaluable work. Musically, one cannot help judging it as being lacking in direction and interest. This work features little musical substance, and seems overly repetitive of uninteresting ideas. Its complexity, even the moments that are playable, seems entirely unnecessary, and could arguably be considered to be masking poor compositional technique.

Section VI: For Tina

A few weeks before I conducted interviews with Chris's family and colleagues in August 2015, I devoted time to looking through the non-musical documents held in the CJC. Much of the research on biographical study tells of the tenuous relationship between a prospective author and the family member or members of the "subject",[235] especially if the subject is deceased. I was aware that this project required me to ask of

[234] Interview with John Simon, 22 November 2016.
[235] The most telling example of this would be Janet Malcolm's *The Silent Woman.*

my participants personal and potentially uncomfortable details, and further asked them to trust that I would do Chris's legacy and memory justice. This is particularly difficult when the subject has been forgotten by history, as has happened to Chris. "You're angels sent from God", Chris's sister Islay said to me and Stephanus Muller as we left her home after our interview with her and her husband Meyer.

With this pressure and tension in mind,[236] I was eager to impress. I wanted to show the participants that I was a willing candidate for this project, that they could rely on me to shine the right kind of light on Chris, to write the right kind of story. It made sense to me that, if I was going to impress my interviewees, I had better know my subject thoroughly, and so I went to the archive.

This was of course not my first encounter with the CJC. I had been digitising the music since 2013, and had compiled a work list. I was aware that Chris was very particular about the dedications of his pieces, and had seen the name "Tina" in these dedications. She has the second highest number of dedications, with Chris having dedicated three works to her (considering that he only dedicated one to his mother, and one to both his parents, three is a high number). His daughter Melissa has the highest number of dedications: seven.

As I was hunting through the archive, eagerly acquainting myself with this man before my imminent meetings with his family, I found a composition that had not been part of my work list. Unlike Chris's other works, which follow a Western notation system according to which each instrument is scored out and given its own stave, this piece was in the form of a jazz lead sheet, not unlike what can be seen in the *Real Book* or James Aebersold series. The piece was simply entitled *For Tina*, and features lyrics, a melody and chords. It was written for her as "A Valentine's Wish" on 13 February 1984. When I brought it up in my interview with her, she had no idea of its existence.

[236] It is worth noting that my concerns in the context of this particular project were misplaced. The James family members were incredibly warm and open, and all were willing to help in whatever way they could.

Chris and Tina met in 1979, in one of his Harmony and Counterpoint tutorials. Tina cannot remember exactly how their relationship developed from a lecturer-student relationship to a romantic entanglement:

> I was his student for several years, and studied B.Mus through UNISA. And I don't really know how it happened, to be quite honest … I was living in Jo'burg, went on a date, and it sort of happened after that.

It is not entirely clear exactly when they started dating, although in an e-mail correspondence with the author, Tina estimated that they started dating in the latter half of 1981. Their courtship was brief, and they were engaged at the end of January 1982. On 12 June 1982, they were married.

1982 was an eventful year for Chris. He got engaged and married to Tina, submitted his master's dissertation and graduated from the University of Pretoria, and received a Fulbright Scholarship. In terms of his compositional output, 1982 was equally productive. He completed *Four Portraits* (begun in 1980) and started and completed *Gymnastics.* It is clear from his programme notes for *Gymnastics* that this was a good year.[237]

Yet, while life was certainly "joyful and exuberant" for Chris, his family had doubts about his marriage.

> Let's go back to when they were going to get engaged. Ok, now you're getting engaged, and the two of them are standing together. And I turn round to Chris, and my husband was there. And said 'Christopher, have you told Tina all the facts of your mental condition?' or whatever it was. He didn't want to use words that became hurtful, so one had to say the same thing, well I suppose they call it 'pussy-footing'. 'Tina, unless Christopher tells you everything. I am not going to tell you anything. Christopher will tell you, and you must make up your mind, whether you really and truly can carry that kind of responsibility, that you will be taking on.' Oh no, she knows all about it, Chris has told her. And she's done psychology at the university, and she understands

[237] See p. 78.

> everything … Well, that worried me, because if you understand everything, to me, you don't understand anything.[238]

In the interview conducted with Tina, she mentions seeing a psychiatrist with Chris twice: once during their time in Cincinnati, when Chris was having difficulties with his workload and limited finances; and once when they completed a questionnaire together. The therapist in question felt that Tina was too domineering and aggressive for Chris, a belief widely shared by the James family and described by Tina as follows:

> That psychiatrist, bless his dear heart I think he's dead now. He was very weird, he had this room with black and purple stuff, and you sat in this dark room with his Egyptian statues, and he put both of us through a questionnaire. And he said to me 'You are probably too domineering for Chris'. Or too aggressive, or something like that. Now the one thing that happens with Chris … certain things get stuck … That was one of the things that stuck. 'You are too domineering and you are the cause of my problems.' So it is in actual fact a recurring thing, you'll find it, it's not just him mentioning it, I think it came from his Mom and Dad as well.

In a letter written to Natalie Huston on 13 March 1992, Chris says: "I'm afraid that my ex-wife and I were in some respects too similar. She is very much a career-orientated person and is far too domineering for me." Tina's conviction that Chris's parents shared this belief, was confirmed by Marjorie: "My husband always said Tina married Chris, that's saying quite a lot." When the author asked Marjorie about the aspect of dominance, Marjorie said: "Yes, she [Tina] is a person who likes her own way."

Marjorie has also blamed Tina for the marital difficulties she and Chris had had (although it should be stated that Marjorie admits on multiple occasions that she is biased). Marjorie felt that the reason that Tina and Chris left Cincinnati as early as they did was because Tina was unhappy and wanted to return to South Africa, so that she could pursue her own career goals. Tina was also blamed for the major breakdown that Chris had after Melissa's birth, because she insisted that Chris be present for the birth. In our interview, Marjorie also claimed that Tina had "got him to apply for a job at Wits" which proved to be quite destructive for Chris.

[238] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.

In the interview between Tina and the author, Tina identifies financial difficulties as the primary reason for leaving Cincinnati, which seems a more likely explanation:

> MR: What precipitated that early leaving?
> TJ: I think it was financial. When we left the country, the Rand at that stage was standing at 93 cents to the dollar. And by the first year it had dropped to 43 cents … we were young, we didn't have much stuff. We sold the car, we sold the grand piano. I was allowed to work in the US because they made a mess up with my visa … and I still continued indexing the abstracts for the CSR here, so we had income from that point of view. But you know, we were poor. You know what it's like, living in an overseas country and then half our money disappeared in the process. Chris wasn't getting anything from UNISA [he had been granted study leave, so he was still employed by UNISA but was not receiving a salary].

It also seems unlikely that Tina would have forced Chris to apply for a job at Wits, but rather that moving from UNISA to Wits would have been a wise career move from Chris's point of view. Composers had more opportunities to have their works performed at universities such as Wits because of the continuous presence of a student body with student ensembles. The application to Wits also followed after UNISA had denied Chris a promotion because his DMA was in composition rather than musicology. While Tina may certainly have encouraged Chris, it seems reasonable that the move from UNISA to Wits was one which Chris himself had wanted to make. The choice was probably more a reflection of his own agency and independence, rather than a sign of submission to Tina.

Marjorie certainly had an idea of what kind of woman Chris should have married, and Tina did not fit this mould. She felt that as a husband Chris was "bullied a lot and rebelled a lot" and that he needed a wife who was gentler and more supportive of his career. The idea that Tina was riding his coat-tails, using her marriage as a way to gain kudos, speaks of the over-inflated regard in which Chris was held by his mother. Although he was doing well as a composer with potential, he was never really an established and renowned artist. Tina spoke with much insight about psychological forces at play in her marriage with Chris:

> He married his mother. I mean if you look at Marjorie and you look at me, we are very much peas in a pod … I think in Chris's life if you have to look at psychological themes, the strong female is one that runs through his mother and me. And in times of crisis … if things go belly up, Tina or my mother are going to haul me out of here. So we are the ones who often got a lot of the aggression and anger.

This insight goes some way to explain the tensions between Tina and Marjorie, who were in a sense competitors, strong matriarchs to whom Chris turned for help when things were at their worst. Both relationships also entailed much tenderness, and an incredible closeness. It is not hard to imagine that Marjorie, who had always been the person looking after Chris, the one who came to Pretoria with him for his audition, the one who came to visit him in hospital after his second breakdown, would feel uneasy about another woman taking her place in Chris's life.

Chris married Tina in mid-1982 and just over a year later, relocated with his wife to Cincinnati, USA, to begin his doctoral studies in composition with Prof. Scott Huston.

Chapter IV: Cincinnati, United States of America: 1983-1985

Melissa James: He did stay here [Pretoria] for a very long time, I don't know why, I don't know why he actually did. He shouldn't have.

Stephanus Muller: Where do you think he should have gone? You didn't feel that this was his place?

MJ: Actually, if I think back on it, why did he stick around here? He shouldn't have. I think he should've stayed in Cincinnati. I think, I just have a feeling, that it would have taken him further. [239]

Figure 45: Christopher James in America, exact date unknown.

[239] Interview with Melissa James, 13 August 2015.

Section VII: "America, the open-sesame."[240]

In August/September 1983[241] Chris and Tina arrived in Cincinnati. The time spent in America was one of incredible growth for Chris as a composer, but circumstances also put some strain on his marriage. As mentioned in the previous section, financial issues created tensions. Tina also describes the community within Cincinnati as being unfriendly, and says that they had more in common with the other African visitors than they did with the local community. Chris was also under a lot of pressure from his studies, which was partly of his own doing. As with his time in Pretoria, Chris was incredibly grateful to be in Cincinnati and saw it as an amazing opportunity, and so wanted to absorb as much as possible while there. This experimentation, while certainly beneficial to his growth as a composer, was time-consuming.

In addition to this, Chris felt that as a Fulbright scholar he had something to prove. He perceived that his classmates were jealous of him, as his *Sèrènade Cèleste* (1983) was performed by The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in 1985, a privilege not extended to many students. Work pressure intensified towards the end of his first year, as he had accepted a position as a Teacher's Assistant in order to earn extra money. Chris nearly suffered a serious nervous breakdown at the end of his first year (1984) and Chris and Tina had been in counselling because they were having marital problems. Chris was given sleep therapy before he completely destabilized, but during this period of mental instability, Chris confessed to Tina that he was in love with one of his classmates and would give her his Hifi set. Although this was "devastating"[242] for Tina to hear at the time, in her 2015 interview with the author she stated that with hindsight she felt this declaration emanated from psychosis, and was not based in reality. In addition to the difficulty of Chris's "confession", Tina was further discomforted by one counsellor's assessment of Chris as having a thought disorder:[243]

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[240] S Rushie, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet: A Novel,* London, Vintage, 2000, p. 59.
[241] Tina is unsure of the exact date.
[242] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[243] A thought disorder is defined as: "Any disturbance of thinking that affects language, communication, or thought content: the hallmark feature of schizophrenia. Manifestations range from simple blocking and mild circumstantiality to profound loosening of associations, incoherence, and delusions; characterized by a failure to follow semantic and syntactic rules which is inconsistent with the person's education, intelligence or cultural background." BJ Sadock & VA Sadock (eds), *Kaplan & Sadock's*

> Which of course being newly married and sitting in a strange country with no money was not what I wanted to hear … But he made it through and he did well.[244]

After the worst of the situation had passed, T.H. visited Chris and Tina in America because the family was worried about the couple. Tina describes this visit as being helpful, and the issue of infidelity blew over. But the near breakdown revealed a pattern that would persist throughout Chris's life: an external stressor would often lead to mental problems. Despite the marital concerns and Chris's mental health problems, both Tina and Chris flourished as musicians in Cincinnati. Tina was studying music through UNISA, and took piano lessons at the Conservatory and the couple were able to be part of a vibrant musical community:

> There were 4-5 performances per night. Cincinnati was very much a hub as well, there was a lot of old money in the city. So all these musicians would be coming through. Philip Glass was there, so we went to a lecture of Philip Glass's … It was an amazing experience, and of course all these people we met from different countries. Our neighbour on the one side was an Egyptian, the neighbour on the other side was a couple, they were chemical engineers from India.

In addition to non-American friends within the community, Chris and Tina were also part of a small community of South African musicians studying in Cincinnati at the time. Tina got on well with Malcolm Nay, as well as Anton Nel, whom she fondly remembers "chowing [eating] all her bobotie." Tina also mentioned Ruth Goveia, who had performed some of Chris's piano music while in Cincinnati.

Of his three musical father-figures, Chris seems to have been closest to Scott Huston (affectionately called "Doc" by his students). The correspondence between the two, of which documentation exists between 1986 and 1988, speaks of warmth and affection. Discussions about Chris's compositions for his DMA portfolio are book-ended with kind words of encouragement as well as personal anecdotes about marriage, fatherhood, Christianity and university employment. It is clear that the respect between

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Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry. vol. 1. Seventh Edition. Philadelphia, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2000, pp. 687-688.

[244] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.

teacher and pupil was mutual, and Chris took Huston's suggestions about his music seriously. It can be said that Hodgson introduced Chris to music as a vocation, Grové introduced Chris to composition as a vocation, but Huston introduced Chris to his own voice as a composer.

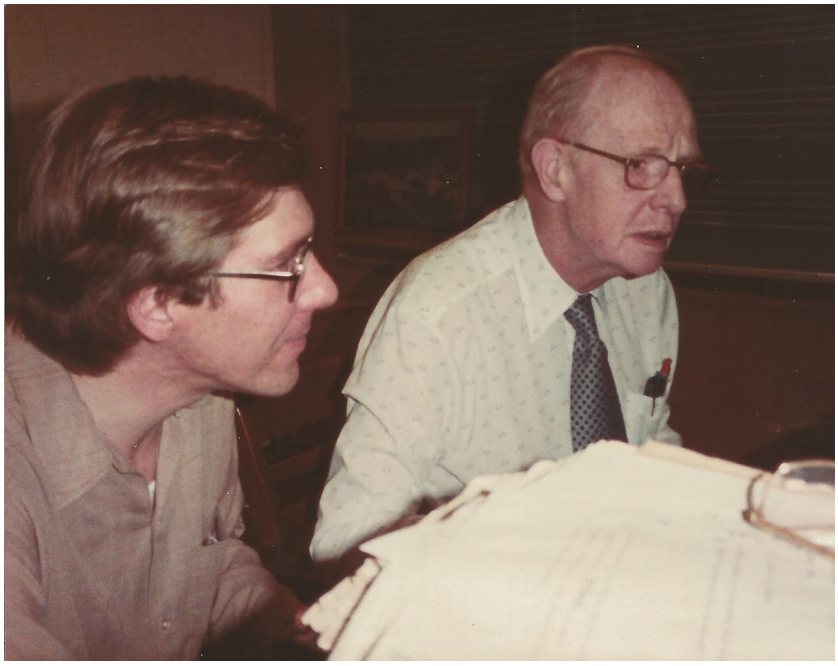


Figure 46: Photograph of Chris James with his composition mentor Scott Huston. Photograph kindly sent to the author by Tina James.

Thomas Scott Huston was born in Tacoma, Washington in 1916, and studied composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, completing his PhD in 1952.[245] Huston lectured in composition at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati from 1952 until his retirement at the age of 70 in 1987.[246] He had a passion for teaching, describing himself as possessing "Stubbornness, a sense of humour and a temper".[247] His love for his students, despite this self-described crustiness, is evident not only in the letters between him and Chris. On 21 December 1986, Chris received a letter from Mary Lazarus, requesting him to sign a petition to "request that Doc be given the rank of Distinguished Professor of Music with part-time instructor privileges." The University of Cincinnati required that

[245] DZ Kushner, "A Profile of Scott Huston", *Music Journal,* vol. 30, no.7, 1972, p. 27.
[246] Found in the New York Times Obituaries, 8 March 1991. http://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/08/obituaries/scott-s-huston-composer-74.html
[247] R Cooklis, "Love and the Crusty Composer, Scott Huston: A CCM Gem for 34 Years", *The Cincinnati Enquirer,* 16 November 1986, p. 149.

all lecturers retire after their 70th birthday, which for Huston was in 1986, meaning that at the end of the academic year of 1987 he would be forced to retire. In a letter to Chris dated 1 November 1986, Huston described his consternation at this state of affairs:

> for I am being forcibly ejected from my position, having passed seventy, at the peak of my knowledge and experience, and out, out, out! Professor Emeritus, Bah! But don't worry – I shall still be your adviser. And don't worry about me, I shall continue to compose in two diverse directions, one for money, the other for art for art's sake.

In signing Lazarus's petition, Chris wrote of Huston:

> Now, as this wonderfully live and articulate professor reaches his seventieth year, he is being forced to retire because of university policy … Please, do not deny the present and the future students of C.C.M. the teachings of Professor Huston.

On 1 March 1991 Scott Huston passed away. Chris would only hear about this nearly a year later, sending a letter to Huston's wife Natalie on 11 February 1992, expressing his condolences. In this letter he also describes Huston as "the best composition teacher I ever had" and says that his weekly composition lectures with Huston were "the highlight of my week!". It is unsurprising that Chris and Huston got along well. Besides a mutual respect, as well as a mutual passion for composition, both men embraced similar religious values. Huston, like Chris, strongly identified with Christian ideology and belief. In the article by Ray Cooklis on Huston for *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, Huston makes special mention of his love for his students and his religion:

> I love them. I am a Christian. I'm a hard teacher, but I am willing to give them the benefit of the doubt.

This religious ideology extended to Huston's views on family, which aligned with Chris's own convictions. In the letter to Chris dated 1 November 1986, Huston writes on the joys of family, in response to hearing the news that Chris had become a father:

> But someday you will look back as I do on successful rearing of five [children], with three happily married Christians, each rearing their own as Natalie and I did – with the rod at times, but also with love and care and frankness and openness.

This idyllic Christian family registered as a positive ideal with Chris, perhaps more so because of his awareness of the presence of his illegitimate half-brothers. This desire for a "happy Christian family" was one that Chris aspired towards, making the breaking up of his own family all the more painful for him.

Looking at the titles of their compositions, it seems that, musically, Huston and Chris aimed to express similar aspects of life and humanity. Ostensibly these two composers were wanting to comment on the human experience, as well as on their own experience of humanity, through their music. The sentiments expressed in Huston's titles such as *Beyond Barriers* (1965), *Three Personalities* (1966), *Three Humors* (1967) and *The Human Condition* (1981) can also be seen in the titles of Chris's works such as *Gymnastics* (1982), *Four Portraits* (1982), *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* (1985) and *Midnight of the soul* (1989).

Chris would only receive his DMA diploma in 1988, even though his dissertation was completed in late 1987. He and Tina returned to South Africa in September 1985, and Chris completed his portfolio through correspondence while continuing his work at UNISA. The delay from completion to graduation was caused by Chris's dissertation being lost in the mail, and the difficulties of conducting final arrangements and administration via the post.

Chris had initially applied for study leave from UNISA for August 1983 until April 1984, and then applied for a further year of leave extending until the end of June 1985. He had applied for this leave of absence to complete two projects, the first being a research project on the orchestral music of Dutch composer Henk Badings, whom Chris met on a trip to Holland in August 1983. The second project was his full-time study towards the completion of his DMA in Composition at the University of Cincinnati. The first of these projects was never completed, although Chris had made some headway on this research; his composition studies at Cincinnati were all-consuming.

His first two years in Cincinnati allowed Chris not only to have regular, one-on-one composition lessons with Huston, but also gave him the opportunity to immerse himself in a wide array of coursework. It seems that his tastes in music were varied, a fact to which interviews attest, as well as from his LP collection in the CJC, which varies from Herbert von Karajan conducting Beethoven, to Afro Jazz, to the Bee Gees. His course selection reflected this diverse musical taste, as he took courses such as "The Baroque Era", "Jazz Arranging", "Harpsichord" and "Introduction to Electronic Music".

In terms of his composition dissertation, his conceptual framework changed over the course of the four years he actively pursued his DMA (by 1988 he had completed the work, and was just finalizing administrative issues). Chris's composition dissertation started out as a work in three movements for chamber orchestra and two soloists. The philosophic framework around the composition was, from conception to completion, based on ideas of social justice and reconciliation. The work would involve the setting of seven poems, which would be both in English and in languages native to Africa, as Chris outwardly aimed to integrate African and European musical elements.[248] By June 1986 this conceptual framework had expanded. In a letter to Huston dated 4 June 1986, Chris discusses the expansion of the instrumentation, as within the first movement he had already extended the orchestra, added a third percussionist and a third soloist. In addition to this, he was strongly considering using two choirs: one black and one white, as he saw this as "necessary as my expressive and aesthetic needs are now only fully emerging." Huston advised against the use of these choirs, concerned that it would make the work difficult to perform in the USA, as well as expressing concerns about the creation of "Apartheid on stage."[249]

Huston also was concerned with the integration of Western and African musical elements, writing to Chris on 17 June 1986:

> Also, be careful of attempting to integrate both African and Western idiomatic strains into your own music, unless you are able to control both by putting the African elements

[248] Interview with David Smith, 10 August 2015.
[249] Letter from Scott Huston to Chris James, 27 July 1986.

> into two or three poems, and omitting those traits from the Western idioms. Don't try to mix them, for therein lies certain disaster! ... experience has told me that it has never worked, no matter who the composer happens to be.

Chris seems to have taken on this advice, stating in a letter to Huston dated 25 June 1986 that he would limit the use of African melody and rhythms to the choral section of the second movement. At this point in the work's conception, the second movement utilised two poems (namely Canaan Banana's "Liberating Love" and "Black and White" by M.G.), with Chris wanting to add one or two more African poems to this movement. The decision to end the movement with his setting of "Black and White" was intended to heighten the drama of an already highly dramatic movement.[250] The drama was further intensified by the use of socio-politically themed poetry, as well as the use of African musical elements and singing in multiple languages. This second movement is preceded by a first movement containing three poems, and succeeded by a third movement containing three poems, including the poem "Ukuthula" (Peace) by B.W. Vilikazi, which would be sung by a black choir in Zulu.

The conceptualisation of the work would continue to evolve. In a letter written to Huston at the end of 1986, Chris seemed adamant that aspects of the work's conception were too ambitious. He decided to restrict himself to eight poems, which would only be sung in English, although he still utilised African musical elements in the second movement. On 7 May 1987 Chris wrote to Huston, informing him that the work was completed, and would be known as *Images from Africa*, with the subtitle "Songs of love and lamentation". He also speaks of his musical quoting of "Die Stem" (the then official South African national anthem) and "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" (the unofficial anthem of the Apartheid opposition), which would be played instrumentally and blended over one another as a sign of reconciliation. The use of the two anthems, and the manner in which he uses the anthems in *Images from Africa*, will be discussed in comparison to his use of these same anthems in *Paradise Regained*, a piece he composed ten years later.

It is important to remember that *Images from Africa* was composed in South Africa, not in the USA, as Chris and Tina returned to South Africa in September 1985, with

[250] At one point in their correspondence, Huston lambasts Chris for using seven f's in his dynamic range.

Chris briefly visiting Cincinnati in February 1986 to complete examinations for his DMA. Chris's return from Cincinnati to South Africa was viewed as a mistake by his family, as his career would have had more potential had he remained in the USA. In her interview quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Melissa James said she wished he had stayed in Cincinnati, and Islay and Marjorie James both expressed opinions that not only was the return to South Africa a mistake, but that it was Tina who insisted on returning.

The tension of his imminent return to South Africa is expressed in *Songs of lamentation and remonstration,* a song cycle of five songs, written for baritone, piano and clarinet in B flat. The texts selected for the song cycle are from four black American poets, all of whom used their work to express their political views of black upliftment. The best known of these four poets is Langston Hughes (1902-1967), a poet, playwright and author, and leading intellectual and artistic contributor to the socio-political movement for African American cultural expression in the 1920s, known as the Harlem Renaissance.[251] James selected two of Hughes's poems: "Words Like Freedom", the first of the songs in the cycle, and "Where? When? Which?", the third. The second song in the cycle is a setting of "From The Dark Tower" by another leading member of the Harlem Renaissance, Countee Cullen (1903-1946). For the final two songs, James sets Robert Hayden's (1913-1980) "Full Moon" and Claude McKay's (1889-1948) "The Pagan Isms".

All five poems express longing for racial equality, written by prominent black American poets and intellectuals. In the programme notes, James writes:

> the poems are an illuminating commentary on some of the social evils and injustices which the poets have experienced. Not only should we be aware of the plight of our fellow citizens, but it is hoped that we ought also to actively participate in the nurture of an understanding society in which harmonious racial attitudes prevail. Only when mankind can accept and appreciate the differences between us all will a climate for fostering tolerance, growth, humility and love occur.

[251] F Berry, *Before and Beyond Harlem. Langston Hughes: A Biography,* New York, Citadel Press, 1983, p. 108.

Songs of lamentation and remonstration was completed in October 1985, a few months after Chris and Tina returned to South Africa from Cincinnati. Although there is no archival evidence indicating when James began to compose this work, it is fair to assume that he began the conceptualisation of it – at least the philosophical framework if not the actual musical composition – while still in America. The latter half of 1985 was a busy time for James. He arrived back in Pretoria on Friday 28 June and was back at work at UNISA that Monday. It is thus unlikely that he would have completed a work of this length in its entirety between the end of June and October 1985, especially considering the challenges of returning to South Africa, acclimatising, returning to work, looking for a new place to live, and continuing with his DMA composition via correspondence.

Whether or not the actual composing of the work happened in America or South Africa, *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* could be considered as being conceptually linked to James's time in America. In addition to his selection of texts, two years after the completion of *Songs of lamentation and remonstration,* James gave his DMA composition *Images from Africa* the subtitle "Songs of love and lamentation". The similarity of these two titles is indicative of the fact that James saw the two compositions as being linked to his time in America, and both explore the same themes.

While it is likely that this work began its conceptual journey in America, James's expression of racial unity does not limit itself to an American context, but is more transnational. In a letter written to Huston about *Images from Africa* on 7 May 1987 – two years after the completion of *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* – James writes:

> My decision to end off the work in this manner is indicative of my hope in a peaceful and unified South Africa where all people are working together for the common good. In fact the work as a whole has far broader implications than simply the black-white conflict here. It is symbolic of my hope that all nations, colours, creeds and ethnic backgrounds can work together and co-exist providing that we all humbly respect one another's differences.

Recontextualising this composition into a South African historico-political context provides interesting interpretive angles. The Cincinnati that Tina and Chris left in 1985 was a multi-racial and multi-national hub,[252] a complete contrast to the South Africa to which they were returning. As the seams of Apartheid began to unravel, the South African government increased its repression and military control, while international sanctions and pressure mounted.[253] On 21 July 1985 – less than a month after Chris and Tina returned – then South African president P.W. Botha declared a partial State of Emergency, further increasing the oppression of voices of opposition.[254]

Viewed in this light, *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* can be read as James reacting to the racial and political landscape from which he had escaped to Cincinnati, and to which he was now returning. In this reading, the harmonic tension characterising the work is a stark reminder not only of racial tensions – be they South African, American, Zimbabwean or global – but also of the tension James felt in returning to Pretoria in arguably the darkest days of Apartheid.

The lamentation of his return can be heard in the first song of the cycle: "Words Like Freedom". It begins in 3/2 but like many of James's compositions, alternates between multiple time signatures, such as 3/2, 5/4, 4/4 and 3/4. Marked *Andante piangevole*, with a crotchet equalling 92 beats per minute, the song begins with a descending piano accompaniment, echoed a bar later by the clarinet, and the baritone enters on the final beat of bar 3.

[252] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[253] N Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid,* Oxford, Blackwell, 1994, p. 121.
[254] http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/partial-state-emergency-july-1985.

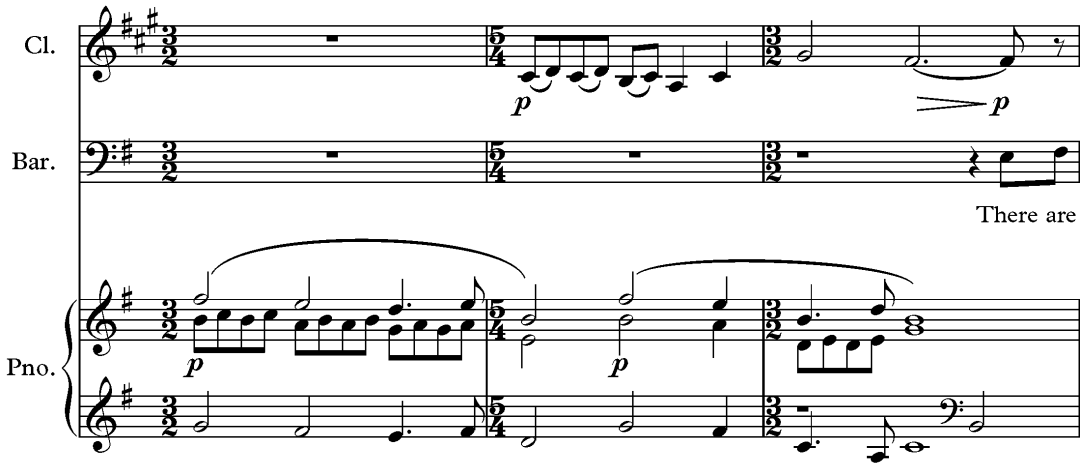


Figure 47: Bars1-3 of "Words Like Freedom".

The key signature of one sharp indicates either G major or E minor, but in this piece the music moves between major and minor, and at times the distinction is difficult or impossible to make. The melody in the baritone is tuneful and simple to sing, and the song displays James's skill at text-setting, with the natural rhythm of the poem enhanced by the music.[255] The clarinet and the voice are seldom heard together, with the clarinet playing in the gaps between vocal phrases, as if providing a kind of melodic afterthought. In this song the clarinet seems superfluous, an unnecessary addition, as it serves little musical function. In contrast, the piano accompaniment is well considered, pianistic and complements the baritone well.

"Words Like Freedom" is not a rhythmically challenging work, despite James's frequent time signature changes. In a work like *Paradise Regained*, James alters time signatures in order to explore different rhythmic groupings, especially prevalent in time signatures, which are measured in quavers. In this song, however, the time signature changes do not serve this function, but rather diffuse the certainty of where the strong beat of each bar is located. These time signature changes also serve the text, affording James the rhythmic suppleness within bars to set the text comfortably, without it sounding overly angular.

James's approach to sonorities in this song is not so much harmonic or functional as it is intervallically conceptualized, as in the case of *Four Portraits*. This intervallic

[255] It is interesting to note that others have set this poem to music, varying from choral pieces to delta blues.

approach is more horizontally conceived (i.e. resulting from material distributed between the different hands of the piano part, or between the different instruments) than it is vertical (i.e. realised in deliberate harmonic support of the melody). James constructs his chords either in fourths (see Figure 48) or makes use of seventh chords, but omits either the third or fifth degree of the chord (see Figure 49).

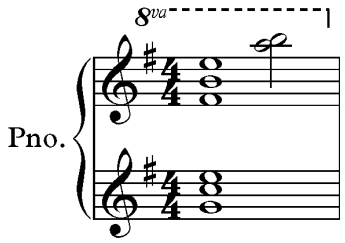


Figure 48: Bar 10 of "Words Like Freedom".

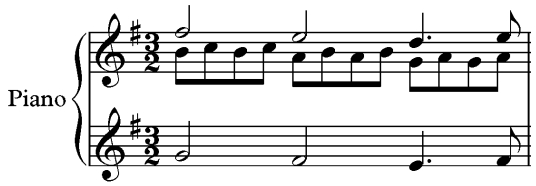


Figure 49: Bar 1 of "Words Like Freedom".

James's use of dissonance in this song is controlled, and in comparison to later songs in this cycle, the harmonic language here is generally quite consonant. Similar to other James compositions (his piano compositions such as *Three Preludes* for piano and *Four Portraits* as well as other works such as *Gymnastics* and *Sèrènade Cèleste*) James engineers the rapid onset of emotional peaks in the music with sudden dissonance and dynamic extremes. In "Words Like Freedom", this emotional spike arrives as the baritone sings the words "that almost make me cry" (See Figure 50). This sudden dissonance is short-lived, and the dynamic drops back to *piano* in the next bar, gradually lowering to *pianississimo* by the end of the song.

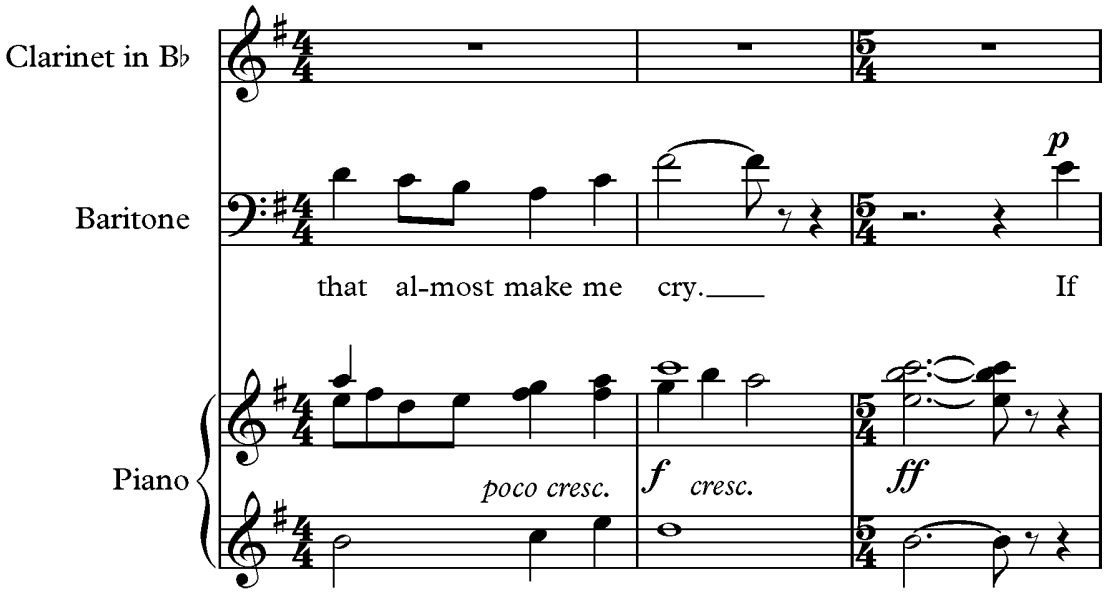


Figure 50: Bars 18-20 of "Words Like Freedom".

"Full Moon" is notably slower than "Words Like Freedom", indicated as *Adagio*. Bars 1-9 are calm, remaining in the *piano* dynamic range. Although the time signature moves between 4/4 and 5/4, rhythmic stability is achieved by the piano playing on each crotchet beat. James's use of harmony in these nine bars is not overly dissonant, with occasional moments of bitonality, and as with the previous song shows a tendency towards vertical sevenths in the piano part. Unlike "Words Like Freedom", this song is written without a key signature, with the clarinet part not yet transposed, indicating that James is not bound to a single key signature, but is rather employing a more chromatic approach. The clarinet begins in bar 1 with a theme echoed in the following bar by the baritone (see Figure 51), which is then repeated in bar 4 in the clarinet and then developed in bar 7 (see Figure 52), leading into the *Piu mosso* section which starts at bar 10.

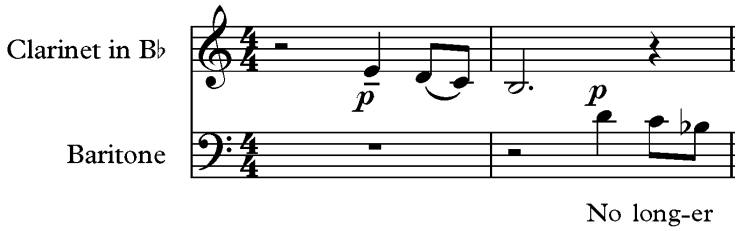


Figure 51: Bars 1-2 of "Full Moon".

Figure 52: Bars 7-10 of "Full Moon".

At the *Piu mosso* the mood of the work moves from serenity to freneticism. Sudden spikes of loud dissonant chords contrast against the calm tapestry established in the beginning of the song. The harmony used in the first few bars (see Figure 53) of the *Piu mosso* are no more dissonant than the opening section, but sound more aggressive due to the sudden rise in dynamic and register. This is amplified by the shrill *forte* run on the clarinet.

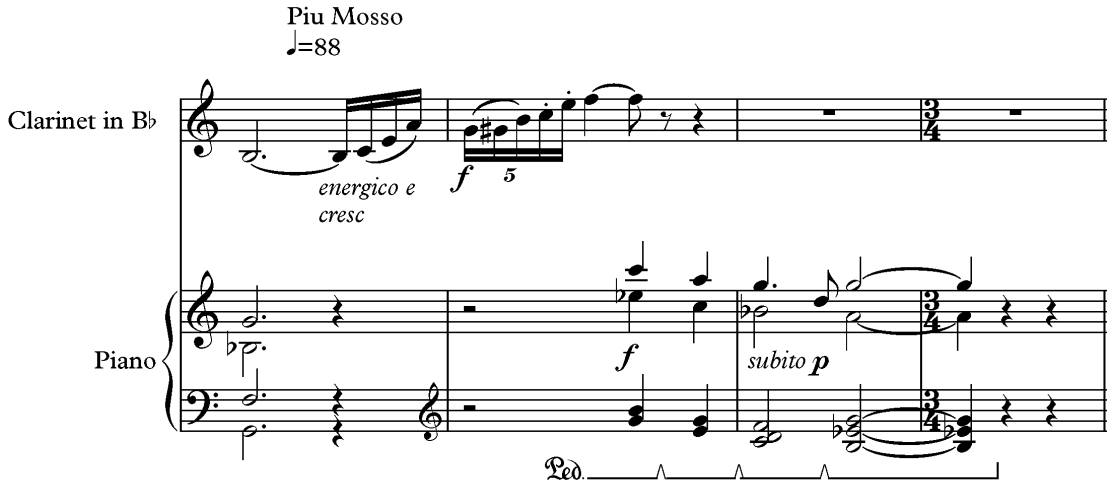


Figure 53: Bars 10–13 of "Full Moon".

At bar 17, James brings the tempo down to 72 beats per minute, marking this section as *Poco meno mosso*. From here his use of harmony becomes more dissonant, employing further bitonal approaches, as well as minor seconds within his chords.

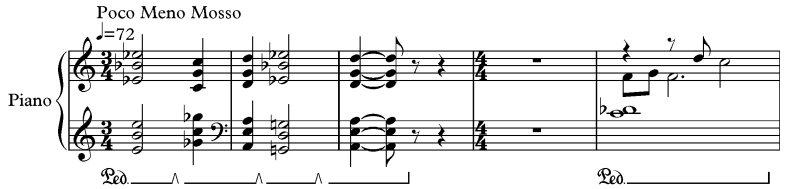


Figure 54: Bars 17–21 of "Full Moon".

When the baritone sings "Some I love who are dead" (bar 22), James shifts the timbre of the music to reflect the mournfulness of the text, bringing the dynamic down to *piano* and harmonically treating the text with triadic broken chords in the piano accompaniment. The clarinet complements the vocal part by playing contrapuntal countermelodic material. At bar 25 the harmonic rhythm increases, as the intensity of the poem grows ("planted seeds, trimmed their hair, pierced their ears for gold hoop earrings"). This build in intensity is short lived, and the dynamic returns to *piano* at bar 28, and remains there until bar 34, where James once again increases the tempo to 84 beats per minute. Here James returns to the angular dissonance of the first *Piu mosso* section (bar 10). Cluster chords, as well as dissonant chords built intervallically are a feature, with the dynamic suddenly shifting to *forte* (see Figure 56). The music builds, reaching its peak of rhythmic, harmonic and dynamic intensity at bar 44. Immediately after this peak, the music calms down, with the dynamic dropping to *pianissimo* at bar 46. The song ends in the calm manner in which it began, with James adding a G to the perfect fifth interval on D, scored in the lower register of the piano (See Figure 57).

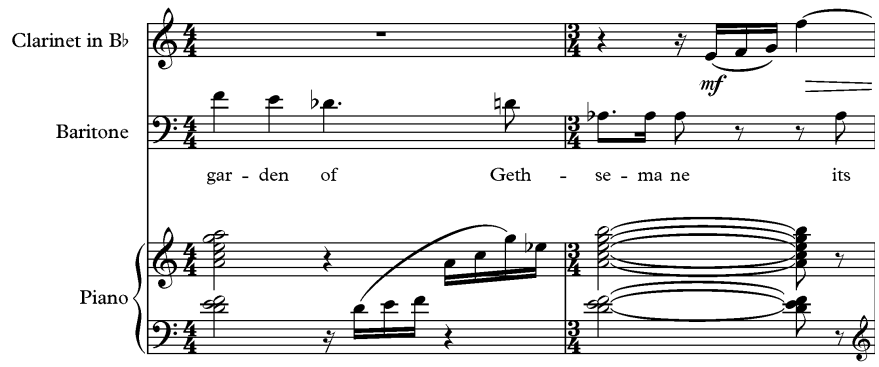
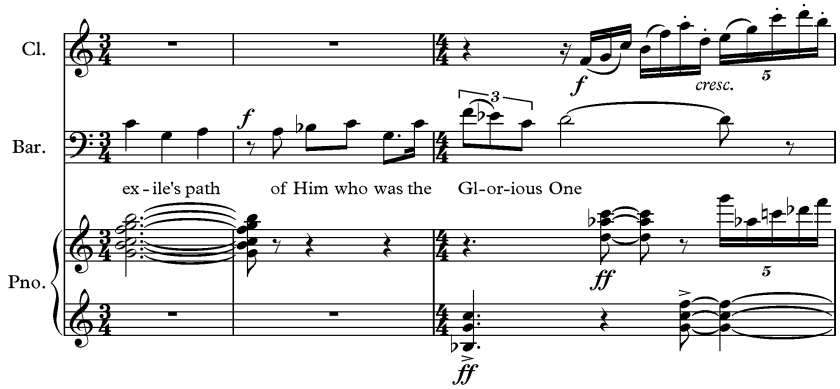


Figure 55: Bars 35-36 of "Full Moon".



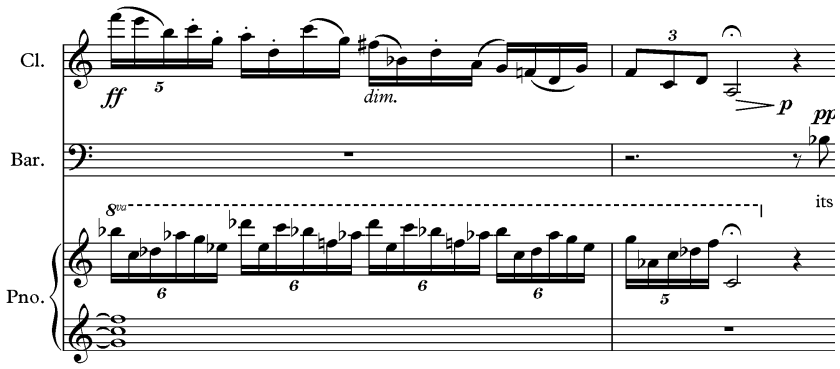


Figure 56: Bars 42-46 of "Full Moon".

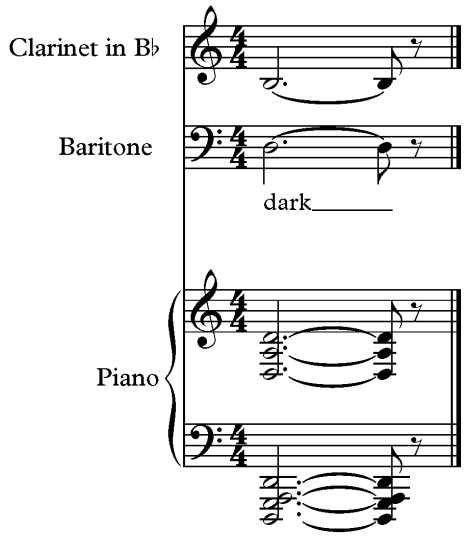


Figure 57: Final bar of "Full Moon".

In "Full Moon", James explores two basic musical moods: a mournful calmness and a frenetic chaos. In reading the score and listening to the work, it feels as if the over-arching mood of the work is the former, with the chaotic *Piu mosso* sections (bars 10-21 and bars 34-46) treated as interruptions. This approach may have something to do with the way the poem is structured: seven stanzas of three lines each.[256] James's musical mood changes line up with stanza changes, with stanzas 1, 3, 4 and 7 being mournful in mood, and stanzas 2, 5 and 6 being chaotic. The most plausible interpretation as to why James chose to structure the musical mood in this way was that he felt it was reflective of the text: that he felt certain stanzas evoked a mood of chaotic anger and frustration, whereas others did not.

[256] This is the way James reproduced the poem in his programme notes of the work.

Full Moon

Robert Hayden

No longer throne of a goddess to whom we pray,
no longer the bubble house of childhood's
tumbling Mother Goose man,

The emphatic moon ascends -
the brilliant challenger of rocket experts,
the white hope of communications men.

Some I love who are dead
were watchers of the moon and knew its lore;
planted seeds, trimmed their hair,

Pierced their ears for gold hoop earrings
as it waxed or waned.
It shines tonight upon their graves.

And burned in the garden of Gethsemane,
its light made holy by the dazzling tears
with which it mingled.

And spread its radiance on the exile's path
of Him who was The Glorious One,
its light made holy by His holiness.

Already a mooted goal and tomorrow perhaps
an arms base, a livid sector,
the full moon dominates the dark.

Figure 58: Reproduction of Robert Hayden's "Full Moon" in the score of Chris James's *Songs of lamentation and remonstration.*

The third song, using the second Langston Hughes text "Where? When? Which?" is not unlike "Full Moon": it is also an *Adagio* (specifically *Adagio lamentoso*) and has no key signature. However, unlike "Full Moon", James makes use of a wider range of time signatures, alternating between 5/4 and 6/4 in the opening section, and then from the *Piu mosso* section at bar 11, changing time signature in almost every bar, including 3/4, 4/4 and 7/4.

This song – as well as the fifth song, "The Pagan Isms" – veers towards clusters of dissonant sound rather than steady musical forward motion. The piano starts the work with a broken chord composed of fourths, and in the second bar plays a dissonant broken chord with clashing minor second intervals (B flat-B, and E-F). As in previous

songs, the clarinet pre-empts the vocal part a bar before the baritone enters, sounding the first three notes of the melody that the baritone is about to sing. At the *Piu mosso* (bar 11) James brings the tempo up to 69 beats per minute, and moves the left-hand of the piano into the treble clef, pushing into the upper-middle range of the piano, accentuating the dissonant chords that occur at bars 13-14 (see Figure 59). At bar 13 James accentuates the baritone's text ("And the wind blows") by adding a musical imagining of wind in the piano:

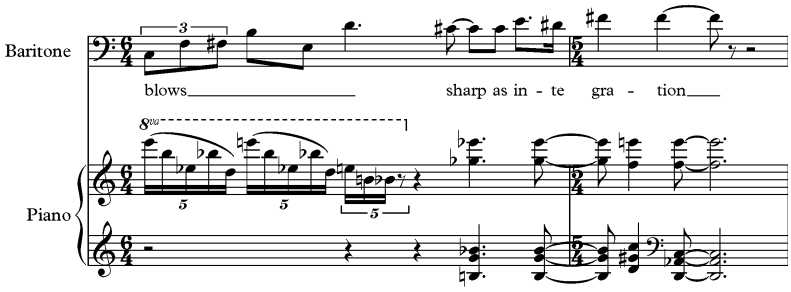


Figure 59: Bars 13-14 of "Where? When? Which?".

James maintains the tense atmosphere of this song through continued use of dissonance within sonorities, a wide range of dynamics used at times in quick succession, and textural shifts from density to silence. The three ensemble members rarely sound together in this song, with James rather opting for one to play alone for a few beats and then for a second to join. In addition to the extensive use of intervallically conceived chord clusters (see Figure 60), James also alternates between major and minor chords. At bar 19, James scores a B minor arpeggio in the right hand of the piano, while the left hand plays a figure which, due to its oscillation between A sharp and A natural over an F sharp pedal, moves between F sharp major and F sharp minor (see Figure 61).

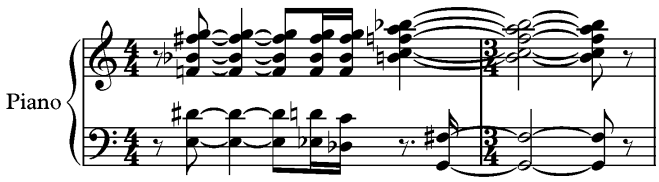


Figure 60: Bars 33-34 of "Where? When? Which?".

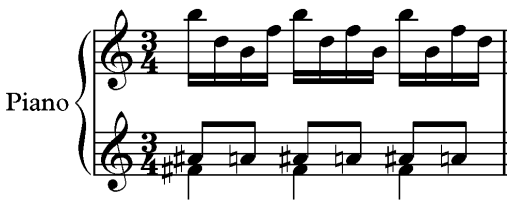


Figure 61: Bar 19 of "Where? When? Which?".

The word "Apartheid" – used twice in this poem – sticks out when considering that the author of the text was not South African, and that the composer was. James's musical treatment of the word varies: its first appearance in bar 16 is contemplative, the second, in the final bar of the work, is painful and aggressive, pushed into the higher register of the baritone. James gives the pianist clear instructions on how the piece should end, writing in the score: "The final sound of the piano must be sustained briefly and the pedal must be raised as soon as the sound reaches a dynamic of 1 forte. i.e. the effect of the ending ought to be sudden."

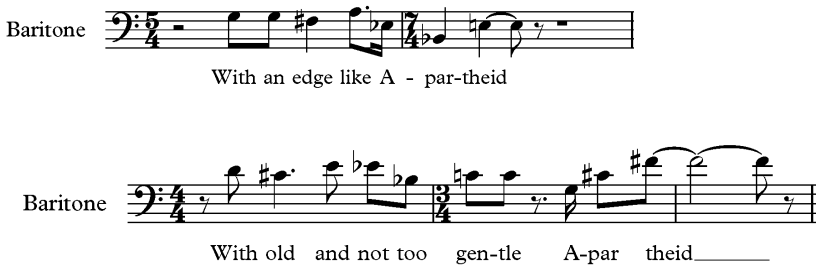


Figure 62: Bar 15-16 and 35-37 of "Where? When? Which?"

James's setting of this poem can be read as a composition of musical discomfort: harmonic dissonances, sound clusters, texture and dynamic variations make the song angular and create tense listening. James is responding to the discomfort of the sentiments expressed in the poem, but he also seems to be doing more, heightening Hughes's discomfort with racial inequality with discomfort of his own. There is a sense that the song does not stand simply as musical servitude to the text, but that James is using music to add his voice to that of Hughes.

The sensitivity with which James musically supports and augments the text is best seen in the fourth song of this cycle: "From The Dark Tower". James indicates this song as *Largo con molto espressivo* with the tempo set at 54 beats per minute. The time signature changes are fairly frequent, moving mainly between 3/4 and 4/4, with occasional instances of 5/4 and 6/4. It is rhythmically a simpler song than "Where? When? Which?", with interlocking rhythms between the two hands in the piano part. The syncopation in the vocal part is also less jarring than in the previous song, and seems to adhere more easily to the natural rhythm of the text.

"From The Dark Tower" is a sombre and mournful song, a mood which James maintains throughout the work. The key of B minor is retained throughout the song, and the harmony is not conceived intervallically, but rather around the pitch class of E, which is present in every bar of the right-hand part of the piano (see Figure 63). Although James's chordal usage is constructed around triads and quartads, his harmonic language is still non-conventional, similar in sound to the harmonic language of French composers such as Alkan and to an extent Debussy. Despite the non-conventional chordal construction, this work does not sound dissonant. The baritone melody, which spans the full baritone range, makes use of the minor pentatonic scale (see Figure 64) and the song ends with the baritone singing a lower auxiliary decoration over a B ninth chord.

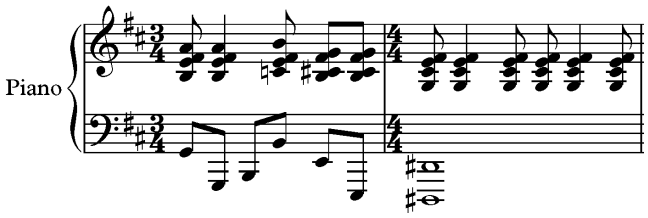


Figure 63: Bars 10-11 of "From The Dark Tower".

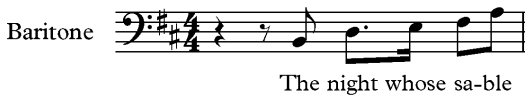


Figure 64: Bar 22 of "From The Dark Tower".

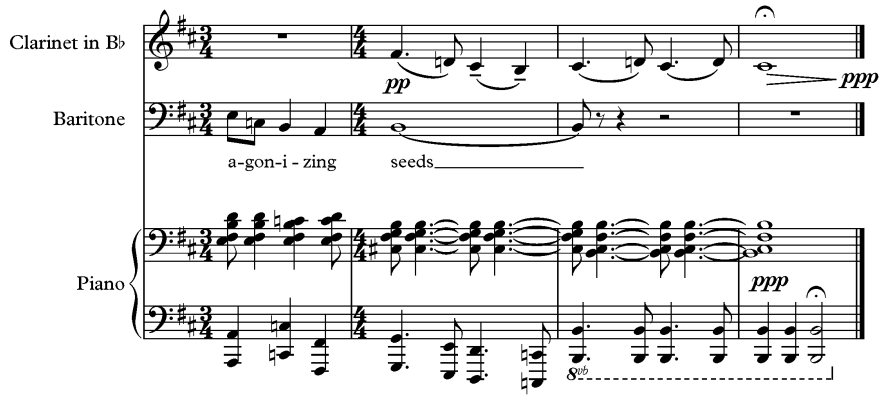


Figure 65: Bars 33-36 of "From The Dark Tower".

The solemn mood of this song is also expressed through James's use of register, dynamics and texture. He favours the softer dynamics for this song, and unlike previous songs the piano part is scored in the middle-to-lower register of the piano, adding to the melancholia. The clarinet continues to weave in between the vocal melody, but also supports it, playing countermelodies that accentuate the vocal part well.

The final song of the cycle, "The Pagan Isms", features two sections. The first 18 bars returns to the use of dissonance that occurred in "When? Where? Which?", with loud dissonant piano spikes in the extreme ranges of the piano (see Figure 66). The clarinet plays loud and shrill material, while James also makes use of regular time signature changes which, paired with the dissonance and instrumental aggression, makes this section angular and musically unstable. At bar 19, *Molto meno mosso*, James drops the tempo from 84 beats per minute to 60 beats per minute. This section – which lasts until the end of the work – is more sombre and tranquil, but the dissonance persists. James still changes time signatures, but not as regularly as in the first section, and the loud dynamics of the first section give way to a consistent *piano* dynamic in the second.

James's harmonic language in this song is daring, and often it is not possible to construct triadic chords from his material. His extensive use of fourths, sevenths and ninths is present in this song, and some chords feature minor seconds. James's chromatic usage is extensive; he mixes sharp and flat signs within a bar and even within a beat, making the music challenging to read and obscuring scale and chordal

patterns. The piano part of the second section, scored in the middle-to-higher register, is calm and soothing, and the use of the sustain pedal adds to this, allowing notes to blur into one another. The persistence of a dissonant harmonic language supporting this texture, results in a sinister undertone colouring the musical tranquillity. The song – and the cycle – ends in 5/4 with a *rallantando* followed by a *pianississimo* chord made up of the notes G, G sharp, A flat and A (see Figure 67).

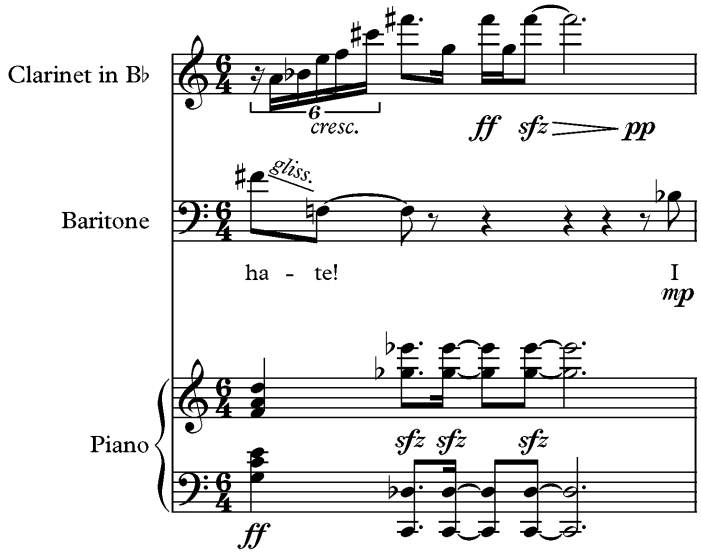


Figure 66: Bar 11 of "The Pagan Isms".

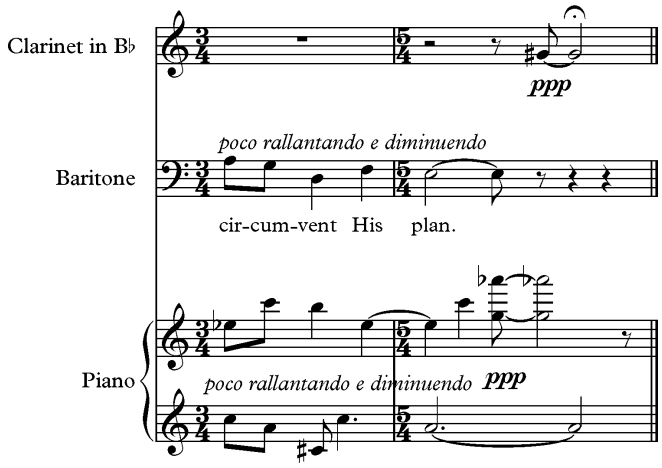


Figure 67: Bars 47-48 of "The Pagan Isms".

Understanding the binary timbral construct of this song requires an understanding of James's philosophical perspectives, especially around race (already discussed) and religion. McKay wrote "The Pagan Isms" in two stanzas, and James moves to the calmer *Molto meno mosso* section at the end of the last line of the first stanza ("and haunt me when I sleep"). The final stanza of the poem speaks to turning to God for peace, a peace which transcends the reality of racial suffering. James was a deeply religious man, and this concept of religious transcendence would have resonated with him. It thus makes sense that he would cease the musical asymmetry of the previous stanza (which at that point in the poem makes sense, with McKay using terms like "roar" "crash" and "schisms") and allow the music to breathe, giving clarity and a sense of purity to the message of the text. James's desire for racial unity – which is further discussed as a kind of racial homogeneity in the section on *Paradise Regained* – is mirrored in this poem with the line "Where black nor white can follow to betray". The musical ending of the cycle, setting the text "no man can violate or circumvent His plan", provides a spiritual and optimistic perspective on the evil of racial oppression.

Songs of lamentation and remonstration shows James's versatility in creating music that is at times melodically and harmonically rich in a nineteenth-century tradition, and at other times dissonant and modern. The intervallic nature of the chordal construction in this song cycle – coupled with the prominence of non-conventional intervals in chordal contexts such as seconds, fourths, sevenths and ninths – is a good example of his exploration of dissonance and alternative approaches to chordal construction. James favours slower tempi, with none of the songs in this cycle being scored faster than *Andante*. Within these slower tempi, he makes regular use of time signature alterations, yet unlike some of his other works, his rhythmic usage is not complex.

All of these musical characteristics – the dissonant intervallic chords, the changing of time signatures, the slow tempi, the extremes in dynamics, register and texture, plus the awkward interjections of the clarinet – can be understood as James's musical responses to the emotional and political messages of his chosen texts. There is enough evidence in these settings that James tries to work with the text and its meanings, and not against it. *Songs of lamentation and remonstration,* much like *Paradise Regained,* is a musical engagement with the problematic of race relations. Whereas *Paradise Regained* attempts to capture musically the optimism of mid-to-late 1990s South

African politics and the "rainbow nation", *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* expresses the bleakness of 1980s race relations globally and in South Africa in particular. Yet, in his choice and setting of the final poem, James opens the door for some optimism.

All five poems James selected for *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* share a historical, geographical and thematic link, which I would argue is indicative of James's selecting poetry based on its themes rather than its propensity for being set to music. Tina James has said of Chris that: "He'd read a piece of poetry and he'd say 'I want to set this to music.'" This prioritisation of poetic thematics over musical aesthetics – at least at the conception of a work – is an interesting insight into not only the way James conceived of his compositions for voice, but also in how he interprets poetry and how he shapes the music around the themes inherent in the poetry. While James would use the baritone voice in other text settings for small ensemble,[257] the pairing of African American struggle poetry with the timbre of the baritone voice creates a sonic landscape reminiscent of negro slave spirituals,[258] especially those performed by Paul Robeson (1898-1976),[259] a singer whose voice Langston Hughes described as being "truly racial".[260] The use of this voice as a musical signifier of African-American musical tropes[261] can be seen either as James adhering to and perpetuating in music a kind of sonic stereotyping of the African American voice, or it can be read as a tool to heighten the philosophical and aesthetic direction of the work. This musical tapestry linked to slavery and black suffering,[262] when reflected back onto the music, deepens the historical reference of these poems. Much like the tension created through the dissonant harmony, one could argue that the tension introduced by linking this song cycle to slavery makes the musical representation of racial discrimination more of a universal (rather than an American or South African) problem.

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[257] Namely *La Vase Brisé* (1990), *Hymn 1 Corrinthians Ch 13 vs 1-8* (1977), and *There is no greater love than this that a man should lay down his life for his friend, Selected verses from St John, Chapter 15* (n.d.).
[258] This is especially present in the opening song "Words Like Freedom".
[259] J Nazel, *Paul Robeson: Biography of a Proud Man,* Los Angeles, Holloway House Publishing Co., 1980, p. 10.
[260] L Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain", *The Nation,*11 March 2012, accessed on 18 November 2016, https://www.thenation.com/article/negro-artist-and-racial-mountain/
[261] MA Floyd Jr, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History From Africa To The United States,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 8.
[262] Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History From Africa To The United States*, p. 6.

In addition to this, the juxtaposition of a voice that at times reminds the listener of African American slave songs, sung against a stylized "high art" Western art music accompaniment, would fit in with James's ethical views on racial integration.[263] This musico-racial integration can even be considered a musical representation of James himself – at once both African and European. Thus the cycle can be interpreted as a combination of heightened musical tension reflective of a difficult subject in a volatile moment in history, as well as the juxtaposition of the African American voice with white European musical modernism.

Within the context of James's oeuvre, *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* holds an important position. It addresses the reality of racial tensions within South Africa, and displays James's ability to articulate through composition not only his own fears of South Africa's future, but also the sorrow of racial discrimination. Apart from the politically important fact that James was composing music to address socio-political concerns, the work also shows James as a composer experimenting and developing. His harmonic language is daring, and his use of dissonance is considered and intellectually framed. Not everything in this experimental approach is convincing. The clarinet part seems superfluous, and one can imagine this work being performed without it, and not being any the worse for it. *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* also sees James beginning his experimentation with juxtaposing a more dissonant approach to harmony with more lyrical writing, using this to good effect in working towards a musical expression of pain.

The return to South Africa saw Chris's compositional career decline, and it is quite possible that had he remained in the USA he would have had more opportunities. Whether Tina had insisted on their returning as Marjorie has suggested, however, is questionable. Tina explained in her interview with the author that the reasons for returning were mainly financial. She goes on to say:

> We were poor … Chris wasn't getting anything from UNISA … so it was a financial consideration. We always thought we weren't ever going to stay here [South Africa], then I fell pregnant.

[263] Although it should be noted that Paul Robeson did this himself during his singing career, performing canonic Western classical repertoire and slave songs in the same programme.

The decision to return to and remain in South Africa was in fact closely connected to Chris and his circumstances. He had applied for two years of study leave from UNISA, which had at that point run out, so he would have been contractually obligated to return. In addition to this, it seems he felt that Africa was his home. In a letter to Huston on 4 June 1986 he writes that he and Tina had, for the foreseeable future, "decided to settle here and try to do something to improve the situation". This sense of temporary settling, of making the best of a bad situation, is later articulated as a real sense of loyalty towards Africa. Chris writes to Huston on 17 February 1988, saying: "Besides I think I will find it difficult to settle in the USA permanently. My roots are too strongly African." On 10 January 1989 Chris wrote to Brian Delay, requesting that his name be removed from a mailing list of potential jobs in the USA.

This awakening within Chris of an African consciousness, is reflected in the music he composed after his time in the USA. If one looks at the titles of his compositions both pre- and post-DMA, *Images from Africa* is only his first obviously African-inspired work. It is followed throughout his career by works displaying a concern with Africa, such as *African Safari* (1990), *Grahamstown Buzz* (1991), *Fantasy on two Venda children's songs* for bass recorder (1992), Concerto for two marimbas and chamber orchestra (1994), *Three songs* for tenor, flute and piano on Suzanne Jonker's poetry (1995), *Paradise Regained* (1997), *Adulations* (2005) and in his orchestration of Mzilikazi Khumalo's *uShaka KaSenzangakhona.*

On 30 July 1986 Melissa James was born.[264] In the various interviews conducted throughout my research, one constant opinion was that Chris was an incredibly loving father:

> Chris was besotted with this child. (Islay Ernst)
>
> Very, very caring, very caring indeed. And very protective. Very concerned, and as far as he was concerned, Melissa was first in his life. (Marjorie James)

[264] Had she been born a boy, she would have been named Sebastian.

> Despite all the ups and downs, his daughter was always his princess, she was very much the focal point of his life. (Tina James)

This deep love and affection for his daughter can be seen within both his musical oeuvre and his archive. Chris dedicated seven of his compositions to Melissa, with some pieces containing these dedications within their title such as *For Melissa, a Christmas gift* (1998) and *Melissa a birthday present for your 14th birthday* (2000). While these may seem like trifles, one shouldn't underestimate the importance Chris placed on dedications, which he used to communicate and to express love and gratitude. Christopher Ballantine has stated that the way Chris would thank him for his support was through dedications, and Islay, in her interview with the author, speaks of the fact that Chris kept the dedication of his last composition, *Symphony No.1* "The Redemption", a secret. In a way, his dedications were the mechanisms of communicating important things for a man who, as his life developed, found it increasingly difficult to do so.

30 July 1986 was the moment in time when Chris's life was truly at its best. He was married, he had a child he loved, a secure job at a university, and was working on a doctorate in composition with a mentor whom he respected and who in turn respected him. Little did he know that his life was more than half over at that point, and he was also unaware that his life would take a sharp decline from that point on. Three days after Melissa's birth, while Tina was still in the maternity ward, Chris suffered his most severe nervous breakdown to date, and one that he arguably never fully recovered from.

Chapter V: Privately open, publicly exposed

WAYS TO AVOID TAKING ONE'S LIFE

1. Go for a walk (of at least 20 minutes)
2. Take a bath/shower
3. Take an early night
4. Do someone a good [illegible]
5. Do something different, eg see a show/film you would not normally see)
6. Plan a holiday
7. Read a book that you've been intending to read
8. Visit a friend – bring him/her a small gift
9. Kiss a cat
10. Pat a dog
11. Phone a friend
12. Go to a concert
13. Vacuum the Apartment
14. Wash the dishes
15. Play an instrument
16. Attend a sports match
17. Do the weekly ironing
18. Go for a swim
19. Go out to a restaurant with a friend
20. Play a game with a friend (family member)
21. Attend a church service
22. Visit someone LONELIER than yourself
23. Go to a dance
24. Make love to your spouse, lover, partner
25. PRAY
26. As a last resort, smoke a cigarette, pipe and CALM Down
27. Write a letter to a colleague/friend/family member living in a different town/city
28. Buy some flowers for yourself, partner, friend or neighbour.[265]

[265] From a notebook of Chris's, 2003.

Mental illness constituted an indelible presence in Chris's life, and the subject of Chris's mental illness was discussed in interviews that the author conducted throughout the period of study (2015-2017). There were some discrepancies between the participants regarding Chris's precise diagnosis. Marjorie James, in her interview with Stephanus Muller in 2010, and her interview with the author in 2015, stated that Chris had bipolar disorder, which he had self-diagnosed in his early high school years. Melissa James stated that she prefers not to give her father's condition a label. Tina James described Chris as having both bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, and that Chris's condition was complex, and not simply a case of extreme highs and extreme lows. This lack of concrete diagnosis is also evident in Chris's letters, in which he described his illness as "not schizophrenic but…bi-polar disorder (manic depression),"[266] and as a "schizo-affective bipolar disorder".[267]

What is known as an absolute certainty, was that Chris did have "nervous breakdowns"[268] and that he had spent time in psychiatric hospitals in Pretoria, having been admitted to both Denmar and Weskoppies. In examining Chris's diaries in the CJC, it is evident that he was meticulous about noting his visits to Denmar, as well as how he was feeling in the days leading up to his hospitalisation. An example of this can be seen in his diary from 2003. On 20 February he notes that he rested the entire day, and on 22 February he mentions that he rested all of the morning. The following day he says he rested, and then at 18:00 "Admitted myself to Denmar." Three days later, on 26 February, he notes that he was discharged. This pattern is seen throughout his diaries of this time.

Even though there has been a difference of opinion regarding how to label Chris's condition (or whether it should, in fact, be labelled) there is an openness about the fact that he had a mental disorder. In my interviews with the family in 2015, I attempted to approach the subject of Chris's illness with sensitivity and delicacy, and I was surprised by how willing his family was to speak openly about his illness. In almost every interview, the participant introduced the issue of Chris's illness before I could.

[266] Letter to Marjorie James, 25 February 1999.
[267] Letter to Susan, 25 June 2006.
[268] The term "nervous breakdown" is not a medical one, and is used somewhat as a stop-gap in this thesis to indicate a form of a psychotic break. Without more detailed medical records, no better term can be used.

This openness was not insensitive; it was loving and affectionate, but also honest. During his own life, Chris had also been very honest about his condition, in spite of the fact that there was definitely stigma attached to it. This openness and awareness of his condition can be seen in his private and intimate relationships, as well as in his public persona.

In his private life, it is evident in his letters, as well as in the way his family spoke of his illness. In a letter he wrote to Huston, dated 3 December 1986, he speaks quite candidly, saying: "I've actually just had a serious nervous breakdown from which I am still recovering". He showed similar candour in a letter to David Smith on 4 December 1996: "Thereafter I suffered a major nervous breakdown and have still not recovered fully after *UShaka*". This honesty was also present in his letters of a more professional nature. On 20 April 2003 he wrote to his friend Christopher Ballantine, and after appealing for a position at the University of KwaZulu Natal where Ballantine was a professor, continued: "Regarding the schizo-affective illness I suffer from, I have made an almost complete recovery from my last major breakdown (in 1995 and 1996)."

Even in his most public forms of communication, his compositions, he declared his vulnerability. Titles such as *Four Portraits* (in its original title of *Suite Schizophrenia*), as well as *Three Tranquilisers* for piano, expose Chris's illness to the world. The title page of *Paradise Regained,* reads as follows:

> The work was created under difficult personal (particularly mental health) circumstances and is a tribute to South Africans of all races and creeds for their resilience in the face of misfortune.

Family members confirmed this openness. Islay states that "he knew it, he understood his disease", while Melissa James stated: "He was quite honest, he knew if he wasn't feeling well, he was very good at that. He would admit himself to Denmar…So he knew when he was, shaky, shall we say." Christopher Ballantine, reminiscing about his first encounter with Chris at an Ethnomusicology Symposium, spoke of Chris's extreme shyness, describing him as "so ill at ease. So much like a kind of a wilting wall flower" and that "one just wanted to go out and give him a hug, [and say] 'It's alright Chris, it's alright.'" When the author probed Ballantine about whether this was

a sign of mental illness or just extreme shyness, Ballantine responded saying: "it felt to me like it had been somatised, like he'd developed a stoop by that stage"[269]

This openness with regards to his illness was not particularly advantageous with respect to Chris's career. In 1986 he applied for (and got offered a position at) the University of the Witwaterstand (Wits). This move was of course to his benefit, as an academic and as a composer. Chris spoke of his frustration at teaching music "through the post"[270] and how the job was "not bad but not really fulfilling since one works so much in isolation".[271] As a composer, this would also be an opportunity to have more of his works performed, as the lack of performances afforded to his music frustrated him.[272] After Wits offered him the position, they requested medical records. Tina reflects back on this:[273]

> I still remember it very well, because Chris said to me 'What do I do?' and I said to Chris, 'You've got to play honest, you can't tell these people that there's nothing wrong.' So I still remember him filling out the form and putting down that he had schizophrenia, and within a day a telegram arrived, saying 'Job withdrawn'.[274]

His openness about his mental disorder also made it difficult for Chris to get his music performed, because his illness had an "isolating"[275] effect on him. This isolation, paired with the isolation of working at UNISA, lead to Chris becoming a marginal figure within South African music. Christopher Ballantine expands on this:

> He was very seldom performed, out of all proportion in my view to what should've been the case. There were other composers who were getting a lot of performances, his contemporaries, his peers, where he wasn't … I suspect that his own personal manner was not one that ever helped him. It's not the manner that gets you on in the world, being that kind of retiring and thin-skinned, it's not what works in the world. And then of course the mental illness … that of course made it impossible.[276]

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[269] Interview with Christopher Ballantine, 10 August 2015.
[270] Letter to Natalie Huston, 11 February 1992.
[271] Letter to Scott Huston, 1 November 1987.
[272] Ibid.
[273] The telegrams from Wits which make the official job offer and then later withdrawal are in the CJC.
[274] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Interview with Christopher Ballantine, 10 August 2015.

This view was echoed by Tina, who said:

> In that way, his illness would have isolated him as well. Because he had periods where he was socially totally inactive, or sitting in a hospital. And the world goes on, and it goes on fast.[277]

Three things were important to Chris above all others: his music, his faith and his daughter. As his illness removed him further from what Christopher Ballantine has termed the "cabals"[278] of South African composition, it also impacted on his relationship with his daughter. He would obsess over this for the remainder of his life. His brother-in-law, Meyer Ernst, reflects on his relationship with Chris by saying: "It wasn't difficult. All he did was talk about Melissa, and I listened."[279] Tina recalls:

> Chris was two people, he was the loving father who could look after Melissa and he was this crazy guy who could not look after himself. That part also scared Melissa, so when she was about five, we actually went into therapy … 'You've got a sick Daddy and an OK Daddy'. Melissa had to learn from a very early age when her Dad was OK, because I wasn't always there to help, and Granny wasn't always around. It was against the advice of the psychologist, who said minimise contact, and I just felt, for my daughter's sake, some Dad is better than no Dad. No matter what anybody said at the time, when he was OK, he had access to her.[280]

The issue of access to Melissa was another issue which would occupy Chris throughout his life. Being denied access to his daughter without some form of supervision, while completely understandable from Tina's perspective, damaged Chris. The CJC contains many letters from Chris to Melissa, varying in content from displays extreme affection to life lessons. When asked about the intensity of Chris's feelings towards her, Melissa answered:

> Yes, he was demanding, I do think so, in that regard. But I think that was also coming from the fact that he was denied access … He became more desperate and demanding

[277] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[278] Interview with Christopher Ballantine, 10 August 2015.
[279] Interview with Meyer Ernst, 11 August 2015.
[280] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.

> because he had been blocked. That actually made it worse … What you resist persists. He did arrive at my primary school, it was a bit awkward. But I think, it's kind of not surprising, if you look back, in hindsight. It's a father's need.[281]

Thus began a difficult cycle in Chris's life: being denied access to Melissa made him act out, and intensified his need to be with her. But this reaction to his lack of access became in and of itself further evidence of the fact that he was unstable, and so justified continued denial of access.

In 1986 Chris had his most severe breakdown, the fourth that we are aware of. The first was in 1969, the second in 1975 and there was a near-breakdown in 1984. It is unclear how these were treated; we are aware, however, that he was put on sleep therapy in 1969, and was given medication after both his 1969 and 1975 breakdowns, as well as receiving in counselling in 1984. The period leading up to his 1986 breakdown, the period in which Tina was pregnant with Melissa and the Jameses had returned to South Africa, was described by Tina as "probably one of the most stable periods in our lives together. It was a really happy, peaceful, it was just a really, really, nice period". This happiness can be seen in a letter that Tina wrote to Chris on 15 January 1986, while he was in Cincinnati sitting oral examinations for his DMA. She writes:

> I am missing you a lot, and it catches me at the strangest times … then I have a little cry and tell myself not to be so silly … Chrissie, space is running out – I will be willing you to do well in your exams. Just keep your head and remember all you have achieved in the past two years. It should inspire you. Please watch your diet and your sleep, you can't afford to break down at this stage of the game.

Chris was a Fulbright scholar who was doing well academically, he was working with a composer whom he admired and got on well with, he was relatively healthy, he had a job, was married, was about to become a father, and was composing works ever more ambitious and mature. Opinions vary on the external factors that caused the 1986 breakdown. Marjorie felt that Chris's workload – his having to support Tina during the last few weeks of her pregnancy, lecturing at UNISA and working on his DMA – was a major contributing factor to his breakdown. Curiously, Marjorie also believes that

[281] Interview with Melissa James, 13 August 2015.

Chris being present for the birth of his daughter, was the main external factor which caused the breakdown:

> She [Tina] insisted that he was at the birth. We didn't know about that, otherwise we would have been horrified. He was the very last person to put through that. He was far too sensitive. He was the completely wrong character, everything. Because his imagination … would just go. Well it did. He then couldn't sleep at all because of the agony he said he'd seen. That was child birth, he couldn't believe.[282]

Meyer Ernst, Chris's brother-in-law and himself a doctor, believes that the birth did have an effect on Chris, but it was less the literal and physical reality of childbirth (as stated by Marjorie) than the significance of the event that affected Chris:

> It was not the blood, or the agony. Probably the reality of that, but also the deep, deep thing in giving birth … the greatness of all this. Maybe it was the concept of that.[283]

Chris was sensitive in all sorts of ways, or as Christopher Ballantine described him, "thin-skinned". Melissa James also spoke of her father's deep sensitivity to witnessing pain in others:

> He would watch the news, I wish he didn't, but he did watch the news, the world news. And he would weep. It was hard to see that. It just showed how much he cared. And I'd tell him to put it off, and he couldn't. He would be so upset, and he would tell me that. 'Oh Melissa, look what they're doing'…He was deeply affected by it … He couldn't handle it.[284]

It is plausible to consider that a combination of an intense workload, the physicality of child birth as well as the significance of being responsible for an entirely vulnerable infant, were external factors that contributed to the 1986 breakdown that manifested almost immediately after the birth, within the first three days. This was Chris's most severe breakdown, from which he took the longest to recover. Tina speaks of her experience of it:

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[282] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[283] Interview with Meyer Ernst, 11 August 2015.
[284] Interview with Melissa James, 13 August 2015.

> It was instantaneous. It was in three days after Melissa was born, it was like serious disintegration. I had this crazy husband and I had this very young baby … It's so many years later, but it was exceptionally traumatic. Things had been pretty stable … In the period I knew him, and before we got married, he was pretty stable. He was on medication … Chris was a little on the edge but then creative people are, so no big deal. But this was like, bonfires in the lounge, getting woken up every hour with Beethoven blasting. 'How can you sleep? I'm not asleep.' It was horrendous. It eventually got to the point where there was no way I could've raised the child in that kind of environment. So it was a very, very difficult time.[285]

Tina eventually had to have Chris committed, as his medication wasn't having an ameliorative effect. The only place she could take him was Weskoppies, which she did not want to do:

> When Melissa was born, I had to have him admitted, because it was just, nothing, no medication was working. And he had to go to Weskoppies for observation. Now, you don't want to go to Weskoppies, it's a government hospital, it was horrible even 30 years ago, but there was nobody else, nothing available.[286]

Chris was hospitalised in Weskoppies between September and November 1986.[287] This period in Weskoppies was understandably very difficult for him. He broke out of the institution, jumping over a 2-3m high wall and breaking his arm in the process. Weskoppies telephoned Tina to inform her that her husband was missing, and later that day the Military Hospital telephoned her to inform her that there was a man wandering around who said she was his wife. Chris had managed to enter the military firing range near Weskoppies, where he had been found. When Tina collected him, his clothes were ripped, his arm was broken and he was sunburnt. Yet he was in high spirits. He told her that he had had a great day, talking to the soldiers, and lying on the mountain with sand running through his fingers to pay penance for the sins of his forefathers.[288] Because he had broken out, when Chris returned to Weskoppies he was admitted as an involuntary patient in the high-security ward. During this period, he became fascinated with

[285] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Correspondence with Tina James.
[288] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.

Dante's *Inferno* and used burnt matches to scribble composition ideas on the wall of his room.[289]

In correspondence with Tina James, it became clear that this period was extremely traumatic for her. She was a new mother and had to witness her husband in a full psychotic break being admitted to a government-run psychiatric hospital. Describing this time as "[s]till devastating to relate all these 30 years later,"[290] Tina describes how she had to sign off on Chris receiving electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) treatment, as he was not responding to any other form of treatment. This treatment seems to have helped, but at some considerable cost. Throughout Chris's life he was angry and upset that this treatment had been used.[291]

> His life was very tragic, and he knew it, he understood his disease. He hated what the family had put him through with the shock therapy.[292]
>
> I am still trying to do my job as best I can and I am gradually recovering from the negative effects from the shock treatment which I was coerced into receiving. I don't think you will ever realise just how damaging shock treatment can be.[293]
>
> I have received 23 shocks to date.[294]

Although there is much speculation about Chris's illness, and differences of opinion among his family, what has been consistently related is that this breakdown in 1986 was more severe than his previous ones, and was one from which he never fully recovered.

> There was significant improvement thereafter but again, he never recovered fully to where he was in 1985 before Melissa was born. 1985 was a very productive and very stable period in Chris's life. He was looking forward to Melissa's birth.[295]

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[289] The matches would have been used because as a high security patient he would not have been allowed a pen or pencil.
[290] Correspondence with Tina James, 2016.
[291] Interview with Islay Ernst, 11 August 2015.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Letter from Chris James to Marjorie James, 29 October 1988.
[294] Letter from Chris James to Marjorie James, 29 November 1999.
[295] Correspondence with Tina James, 2016.

> He had this nervous breakdown after Melissa was born, and I don't think he ever really got better.[296]

After Chris's admission to Weskoppies, he attempted to reduce his workload, amongst other things scaling back the grand conceptualisation of *Images from Africa* as discussed in Chapter IV. Tina speaks of a divide within Chris's life: in the period before his 1986 breakdown he was a person who, although "on edge", was for the most part medicated and stable. The period thereafter saw a change in Chris, and although he did stabilise and eventually return to work, he never made a full recovery.

Even without a formal diagnosis, it is possible through the interviews with his family, to make certain general statements about Chris's condition. As has been mentioned earlier, an inability to sleep and excessive work load (as manifested during his breakdown in 1975) usually precipitated trouble. Chris would also obsess about things, and return to them constantly. The idea of Tina being "domineering" was something which "got stuck" in his discourse. Meyer Ernst, Islay Ernst and Melissa James all confirmed this obsessive tendency, ranging from topics like the divorce, access to Melissa and the issue with *uShaka* (see Chapter VI). Chris was also prone to making long phone calls,[297] often late at night. These phone calls were so regular that Chris racked up large telephone bills,[298] and at one stage was denied Melissa's cellphone number.[299] Christopher Ballantine remarked on these phone calls, saying:

> He used to phone a lot … Chris was kind-of on his own, he had lots of time, and he would phone up wanting to talk about all sorts of things. The discussions were very slow … he would phone and it was sometimes not quite clear why he had phoned. One had to sort of tease it out of him, so the telephone calls became hard work in a way. We used to have these phone calls, and I was always trying to be supportive towards him, which I did very gladly. I felt a lot of affection for Chris.[300]

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[296] Interview with Islay Ernst, 11 August 2015.
[297] Interview with Christopher Ballantine, 10 August 2015.
[298] Chris was aware of the inconvenience of these phone calls. In his diary of 2002, on Sunday 12 May he writes: "Last phone call to Melissa – for a while!"
[299] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.
[300] Interview with Christopher Ballantine, 10 August 2015.

After the 1986 breakdown, Chris also began to suffer from delusions, often of a religious kind, such as his joy at atoning for the sins of his forefathers after breaking out of Weskoppies. Islay, Meyer and Tina have all also confirmed that Chris could on occasion be delusional. He would go through periods thinking he was Robert Schumann, and that Tina was his wife Clara.

In July 1988, Tina filed for divorce. The divorce devastated Chris, and was something about which he was angry for the rest of his life. In a letter to his mother on 6 November 2001, Chris wrote: "I've been through probably the most tragic divorce in the history of music". Chris's diaries from 1988 show that he attended divorce therapy from May until at least the end of that year. He also hoped to mend his marriage, but stated in a letter to Natalie Huston:

> My divorce has brought me tremendous sadness because I had hoped that after the second ear operation in January 1988[301] that our marriage would improve … I had hoped for reconciliation but that was not to be.

Chris's Christian religious background would have contributed to the difficulty he had in coming to terms with his divorce, difficulty that would have been enhanced by the fact that the people he looked up to – his parents, Scott Huston – were Christians who had been married for decades without divorce. He must have felt that he was letting them down by being unable to save his marriage. He wrote: "I still find it hard to believe that I am a divorced man."[302] The divorce also affected the amount of time he could spend with Melissa, as he and Tina had joint custody of her and Chris could only see his daughter on alternate weekends.[303] His divorce became something that he would speak about constantly:

> He hated the fact that he got divorced. He hated Tina for the divorce. (Islay Ernst)

[301] In 1986 Chris was diagnosed as having otosclerosis, which made him hard of hearing and can be understood to be the reason for his soft speaking voice. In his letter to Huston dated 17 February 1988, Chris explains that he went for two ear operations, one in January 1987 on the right ear, and the other operation on his left ear in January 1988.
[302] Letter from Chris James to Mike, Pam and the Children, n.d.
[303] Letter to Heather Tracy, 8 September 1989.

> You couldn't develop much relationship, because Chris never asked me how I was. He would never ask other people how they were really. He would only talk about Melissa and Tina. And if he had John [Simon], or one of his friends who could understand his kind of music, he would talk about it. (Islay Ernst)

> The divorce affected him deeply, and he spoke about it a lot to the extent that one would get tired of hearing about it … you'd hope that he would let go, but he never did, up until the day he died it was something that just, in terms of his spiritual life… [the sentence trails off] (Melissa James)

> It was incredibly difficult for him. He never recovered from that. It was something that he felt that he, I think, had failed. Especially in terms of his spiritual aspect of his life, he questioned it a lot. I felt his pain. And I think it was so difficult for him, because communication was something that he just didn't have. He tried to communicate with my mother and she blocked him. She didn't want to. And I think that was even harder, because if you're trying to understand where you went wrong, and you don't have communication…how do you actually ever resolve it in yourself? ... I understand his anger towards her. (Melissa James)

In letters to family and friends, Chris expounded on various causes for the divorce, ranging from the fact that Tina was agnostic,[304] his mental health,[305] his deafness,[306] his belief that Tina had been unfaithful[307] and was "experiencing the seven-year itch"[308] and that Tina had grown "tired of living with a composer.".[309] This statement points to a mythologised idea of the composer being difficult to live with, and also demonstrates how James had adopted and internalised the mythologised view of the composer. However, in discussing the divorce with Tina, a very different perspective emerges:

> Stephanus Muller: You made the decision to divorce?
> Tina James: Yes.
> SM: And Chris didn't want this?

[304] Letter from Chris James to Mike, Pam and the Children, n.d.
[305] Letter from Chris James to Linda and Richard, 22 April 1988.
[306] Letter from Chris James to Tony Lis, 11 January 1989.
[307] Letter from Chris James to Linda and Richard, 22 April 1988, although he expressed this later in letters to his parents.
[308] Letter from Chris James to Linda and Richard, 22 April 1988.
[309] Letter from Chris James to Cathy, 19 January 1989.

> TJ: Not at all. He tried to kill me in a psychotic mood. He made a fire in our lounge, he'd thrown plates at me. He'd be calm and tell me how much he loved me, and 20 minutes later I'd get a plate thrown at me.
>
> It explained just how bad things really got, it was a very bad psychosis. And it was impossible to raise a small child in that environment, and that was the decision I had to make. So basically, he hadn't taken his medication, he'd put his fist through a door. I was bathing Mel, and I basically said 'Chris, this cannot happen anymore' and I took my bag and I left. It was as quiet as that, in the hopes that maybe he would go for treatment. Normally when anybody gets to that stage, it's very difficult to go for treatment until there's total disintegration. So I'd hoped that by doing something like that maybe he'd go for help. It was devastating for his parents, what they saw, for me, my parents.

In her interview with the author and Stephanus Muller in 2015, Tina went to great lengths to explain that Chris was not a violent person, and that one had to separate Chris from his psychosis. When asked about violence in their relationship, Tina answered emphatically "But again, is that Chris the person? No. If you ask me to describe Chris the person, that's not who Chris was. But this is a chemical imbalance." Tina emphasized that psychotic disorders such as Chris's are not straightforward:

> It's never as definite as that. He'd be sitting around the table with all of us. You'll think he's a bit odd, because the medication did affect him. But he'd have a quite normal conversation with the two of you and then turn to me and he'll say I'm Clara Schumann. It's so complex. He'd be fine talking to Melissa, and he would be gentle and loving with her, and he'd take absolute care, and he'd talk the biggest load of garbage to me.[310]

What emerges from these interviews, was that there was a definite disjunct between Chris's character, and the effect that his psychosis had on his actions. In interviews, the gentleness of Chris's nature was unanimously expressed. Thus, as Tina stated, the violence in their relationship was a result of a psychotic break: "He was a really sick man, and not his fault. But it didn't make it any easier to live with him." But how does this disjunct between the man and his illness affect an understanding of his creative work? To ascribe every *creative* decision or characteristic of his compositions as related in some way to his psychosis, seems as problematic as ignoring it altogether.

[310] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.

The specter of mental illness creates a tension in my work with which I have been grappling for the duration of this project, namely the position of Chris's mental illness within his life and work. While illness – be it mental or physical – can be an analytical lens through which works of art can be read, to ascribe every creative decision to illness is an unethical and un-nuanced approach. To ignore the obvious presence of Chris's mental illness within his life narrative, on the other hand, would be to ascribe to a philosophical approach to life-writing akin to a Victorian biographical ideal: to avert one's attention away from aspects of the subject's life which seem unsavoury or distasteful.[311] My attempt within this project to resolve this tension finds expression in a simultaneous awareness of the presence of illness in Chris's life and the propensity to mythologise those with mental illness. Where appropriate, I have documented Chris's illness; however, when reading his music, I have found other avenues of exploration which I have expanded on, not from fear of connecting mental illness with creativity, but because these avenues are either more interesting and rewarding, or because the archive and interviews point to them as issues of importance.

Although Chris and Tina divorced in 1988, she remained part of his life beyond her role as the mother of his daughter. Chris relied on the two matriarchs in his life, Marjorie and Tina, in many ways until his death. Because he had few friends, and was reluctant to expose the severity of his breakdowns to colleagues,[312] he relied on either Tina or Marjorie to support him in times of need. This support ranged from taking him to Denmar, ensuring he was taking his medication, or feeding his pets. Because they assumed this role with Chris, Marjorie and Tina were also often targets for his aggression, and were blamed for being too domineering or controlling. Tina continued to fulfil this role for Chris until 2005, when she told him she could do so no more.

After the divorce, with the dissolution of his family, Chris began to cling more and more to Melissa. His grip on Melissa, as well as his grip on his music, became his way of being in the world, of holding on to reality. Sadly, as time went by, these grounding forces began to slip away from him.

[311] CN Parke, *Biography: Writing Lives,* London, Routledge, 1996, p. 20.
[312] Interview with Marianna Feenstra, 2016.

Chapter VI: Pretoria, South Africa 1988-1995.

Why did the situation with *uShaka* hit him so hard? (Marc Röntsch)

Because he was such a basically ethical, honest person, and he thought that it was dishonest. But he did actually sell his rights down the line, I don't understand the legal part of it, but from what I understand from Granny [Marjorie James] and everybody else, he got a percentage of the work … I think Chris's name is never mentioned in any of this. I didn't understand all the debates, but he just felt that it was innately unfair, and he had an enormous sense of fairness about a lot of things he did in his life. (Tina James)

Just, couldn't let it go. It was frustrating … he was deeply bothered by it … It's strange but the word that comes to mind is maybe 'rape' of the scores. (Melissa James)

All they were doing was destroying, completely destroying, what he'd done. As they carried on their destruction, he was taking it worse and worse. He made himself very, very ill, because he then went into a terrible, terrible depression. He now felt that his music was absolutely useless, he did burn some. What he burnt I don't know. But he burnt some music, and we managed to save a lot. He never got over it. He reckoned that they completely and utterly destroyed his [music]. (Marjorie James)

There was a sense that he's not where the centres of power are, and one emblematic aspect of that was what happened to his work on *uShaka.* (Christopher Ballantine)

Section VIII: 1988-1992. Chasm Between Events.

The period in Chris's life from his divorce until he began working on *uShaka* (mid-1988 to 1993) was a period of relative uneventfulness in his personal life. His health was recovering, and he and Tina were sharing custody of Melissa. He had settled into his job at UNISA, and was living in Pretoria.

Chris worked on three larger-scale pieces during the year 1988,[313] all during July, the month he and Tina got divorced. He composed *Three jazzy interludes* for piano, dedicated to Malcolm Nay, which won the ATKV Composition Prize for Piano Work in 1988. The other two works were both dedicated to Tina. On 2 July he began work on *This dark ceiling without a star,* a septet for soprano, clarinet in A, clarinet in B flat, and two percussionists, on the poetry of Sylvia Plath. Chris completed this four-movement work on 23 September of that year. In addition to these works, he also made sketches on 16, 19 and 27 July of *Sèrènade Cèleste,* which he would continue to revise between December 2002 and January 2003.

If one considers the fact that it was Tina who wanted the divorce, while Chris wanted reconciliation, and when one considers that Chris used his compositions and specifically his dedications as vehicles for communication, the compositions dedicated to Tina during this time assume the air of desperate pleas for reconciliation. The first movement of *This dark ceiling without a star* is a setting of the poem "Event", in which Plath speaks of the difficulties of marriage, and the presence of an infant.[314] The latter two poems: "Child" (3rd movement) and "By Candlelight" (4th movement), are taken from Plath's *Winter Trees* poetry collection. These poems deal with the themes of children, parental lack of confidence, as well as the parental role as imperfect protector.[315] This selection of poetry shows that Chris was using *This dark ceiling without a star* as an outlet to express his pain and anguish at the dissolution of his family, and his doubts of his abilities as a father in light of this dissolution.

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[313] He also composed *Easter Fanfare* for organ and trumpet in 1988, and towards the end of the year composed *Three Anthems* for unaccompanied choir. These works are, however, smaller in scale.
[314] D Middlebrook, "The Poetry of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes: Call and Response", in J Gill, (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath.* United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 166.
[315] Middlebrook, "The Poetry of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes: Call and Response", p. 168.

It seems that with *Sèrènade Cèleste* Chris attempted to create a musical snapshot of his tumultuous relationship with Tina. In a letter to his parents dated 9 September 1999, Chris wrote that the second movement – which was performed in Cincinnati with Tina sitting next to him – was composed during their first year of marriage, and the first and third movements were composed in the first year after their divorce. *Sèrènade Cèleste* is composed for string orchestra with an approximate length of 17 minutes and 30 seconds. James indicates two recommended ensembles for the work: one larger string ensemble, and one smaller.

Structurally, the first movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste* is an A-B-A form, with two *Adagio sostenuto* sections bookending the *Allegro* B section. The work opens with a lyrical melody in the first violins, supported by contrapuntal polyphonic writing in the violas and celli. This opening *Adagio sostenuto* section makes extensive use of chromaticism, and like *Four Portraits,* juxtaposes twentieth-century sonorities with eighteenth century formal constructions.

From Rehearsal Mark 1 (bar 8) James gradually begins to fill out the texture, adding the second violins, then at Rehearsal Mark 2 (bar 11) and Rehearsal Mark 3 (bar 14) adding the third and fourth violins and second celli. As the texture begins to thicken, James gradually pushes the first violins into the higher register, and within the first 14 bars of this piece, the first violins have covered the full range of their instrument. As has been noted before, this is a recurring technique used by James: simultaneously thickening texture and raising register in order to heighten emotional impact.

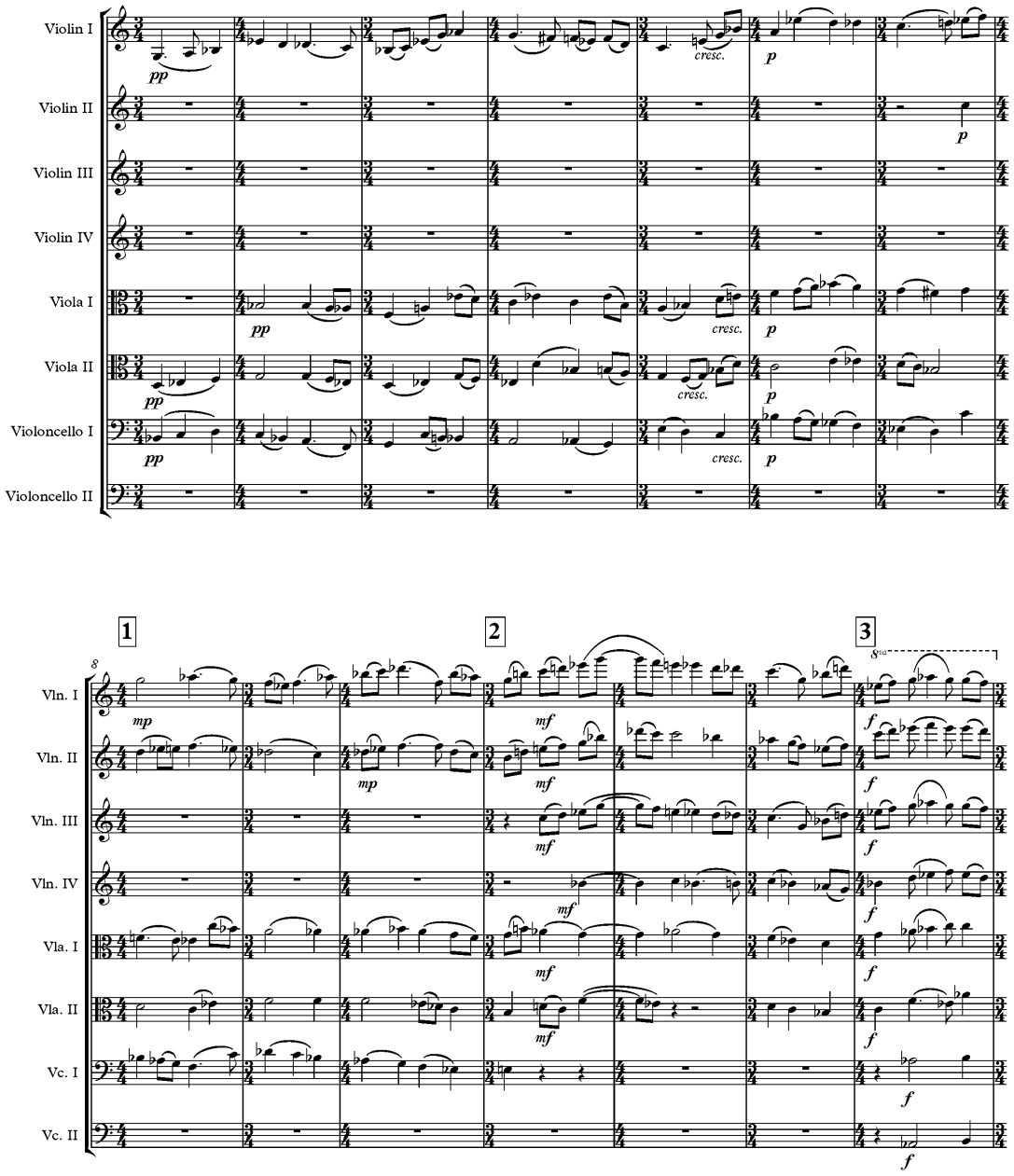


Figure 68: Bars 1-14 of the first movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste.*

The music continues to build, reaching a peak at bar 23 with all instruments marked *fortississimo*. The held notes slowly fade to *pianississimo* and at Rehearsal Mark 5 (bar 24) the *Allegro* section begins. Here James ramps up the tempo from 56 beats per minute to 152, and introduces the double bass.

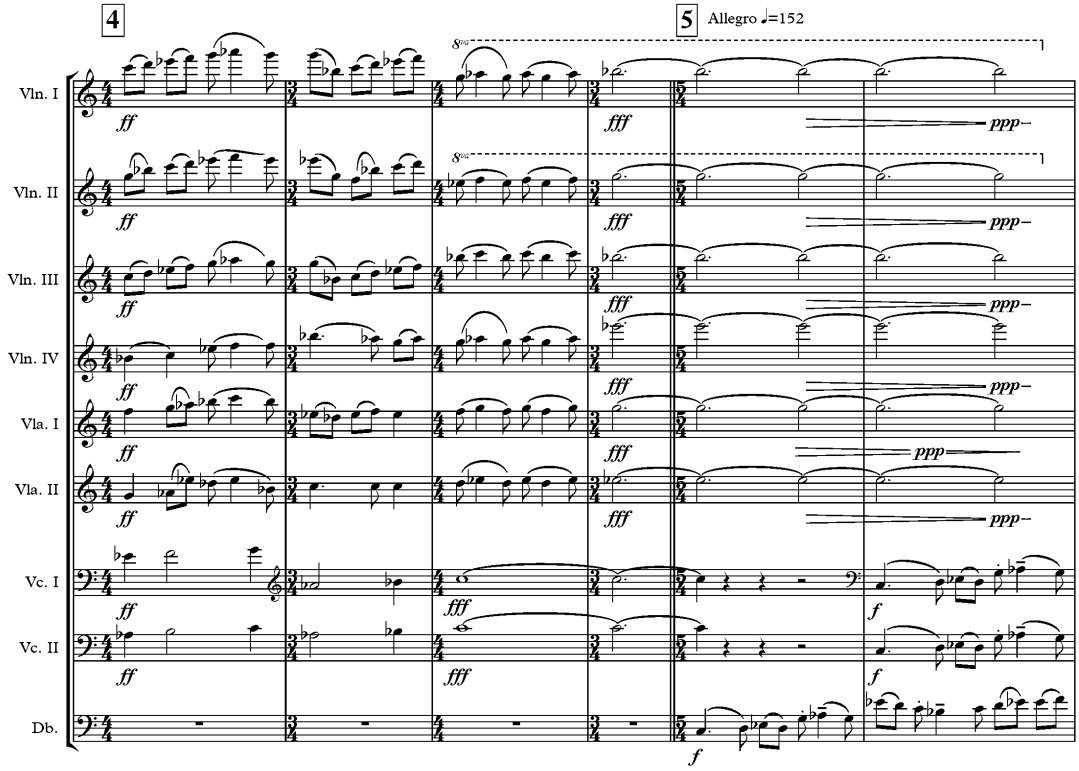


Figure 69: Bars 20-25 of the first movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste.*

At the *Allegro* section, James begins a canon based on a theme stated by the double bass in bar 24 (see Figure 69),which is linked to the theme played by the first violins in the opening bar of the movement, as well as the cello melody in Figure 70. James moves the theme up through the instrument groups of the orchestra from bar 25 to 29, as can be seen in the following example:

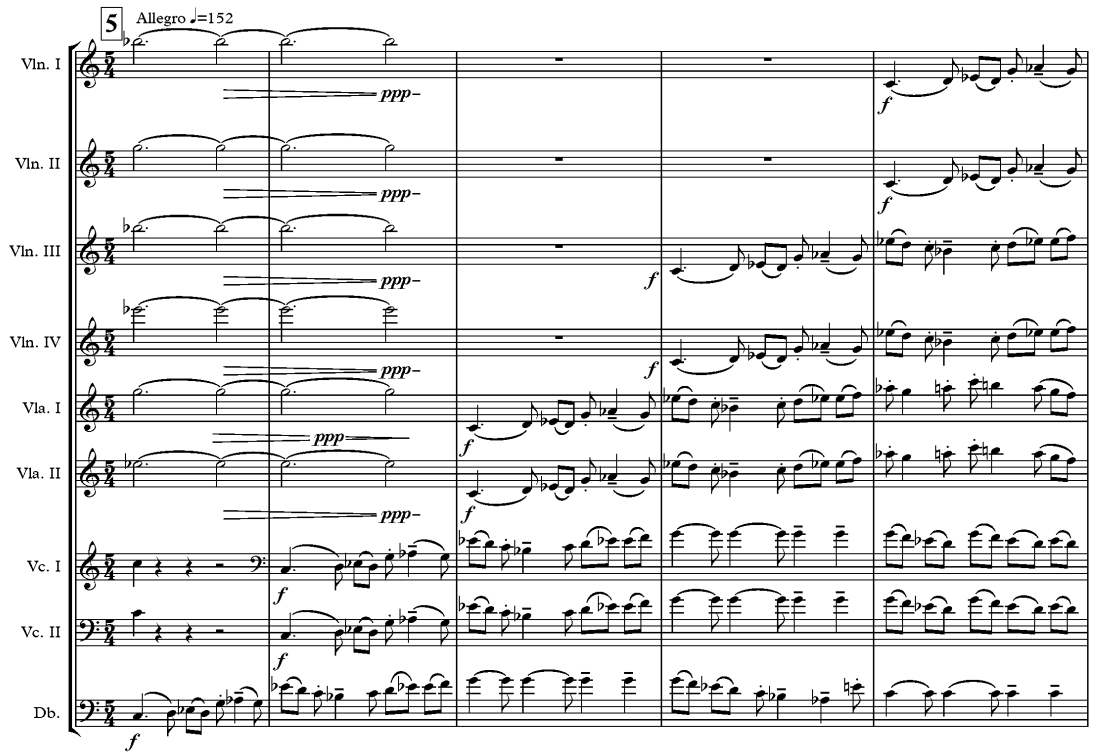


Figure 70: Bars 25-29 of the first movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste.*

At bar 30, the second entry of the canon happens on C, and then on E flat and G, spelling a C minor tonality. The tempo at Rehearsal Mark 17 (bar 79) is returned to 56 beats per minute. Here James uses material reminiscent of the opening section, once again scored in three voices, with the violins playing the same theme transposed an octave higher. James once again begins to build intensity through thickening of texture, raising of register and dynamic crescendo, reaching the climax of the movement at Rehearsal Mark 20 (bar 92) where the violins and violas hold notes at *fortissimo* while cello II and double bass reintroduce the opening theme, this time moved to A flat. After a final *crescendo*, the movement ends on a C major chord.

Whereas the first movement can be considered to be structured around melodic material, the second movement – *Adagio ma con moto* – is more atmospheric than melodic. It is also unlike the first movement in that it remains at a single tempo, which, when paired with the instrumentation, gives this movement an intimacy and tenderness, appropriate considering it was the first of the three movements to be composed, and was dedicated to Tina in the first year of their marriage.

The movement begins with thirteen bars of introduction, with James using a thinner texture focused on the violins, with only a single cello part and the two viola parts at no point playing simultaneously. At Rehearsal Mark 25 (bar 14) the violins *decrescendo* to *pianississimo* and the cello plays the melody.

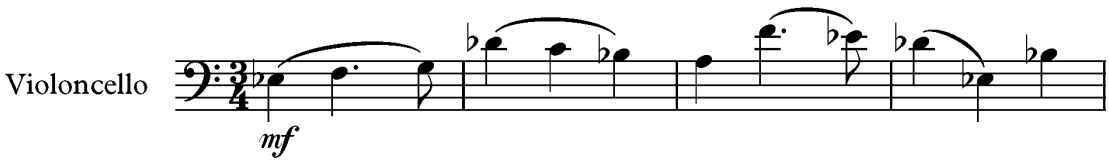
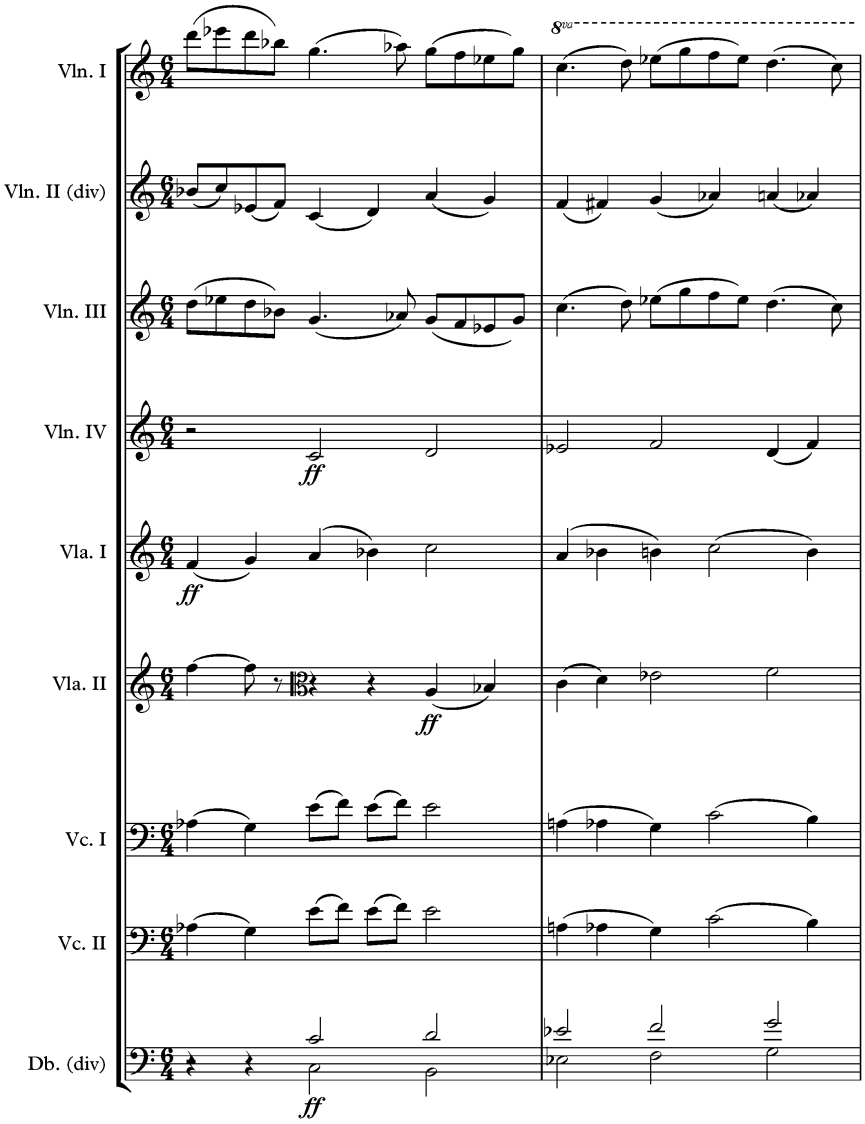
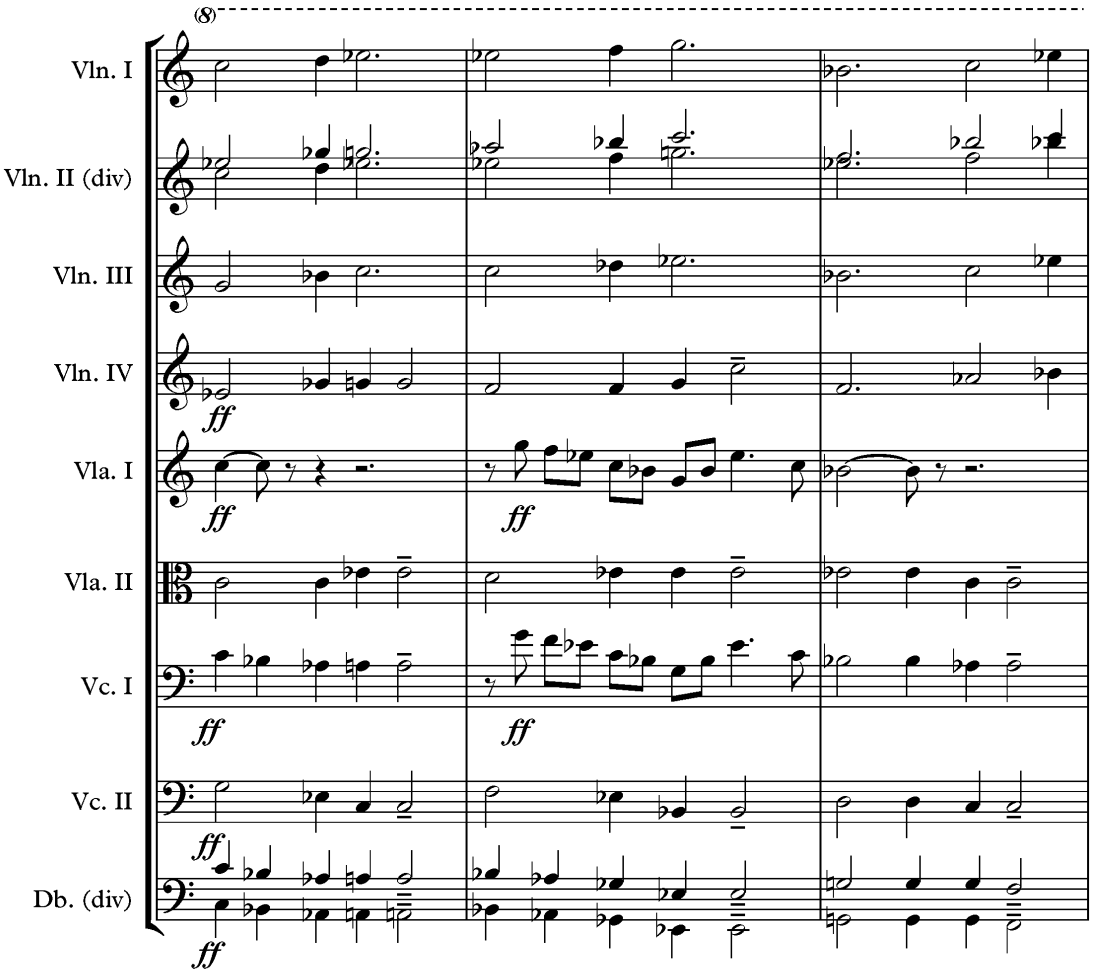


Figure 71: Cello melody in bars 14-17 of the second movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste.*

This melody is then played by different instruments at different points, either as in above or transposed to B flat. After a C seventh chord with an added A flat in the viola I, the ensemble *descrescendos* to *pianissimo* and at Rehearsal Mark 27 (bar 29) the cello once again plays the melody, which is then echoed in violin IV, and then throughout the ensemble. This continues, with James gradually increasing the texture and dynamic, which builds to a *fortissimo* E flat seventh chord (which resolves to an E flat ninth chord when viola II moves from a G to an F). Once again James indicates that the chord should *decrescendo* but this time only down to *forte.* During this decrescendo the double bass and cello play material in octaves. This gives the music a darker timbre because of the low register. From this point in the music, James relies less on melodic material and more on an atmospheric aesthetic. Through increases in dynamics and texture James allows the music to move through atmospheric explorations, while no discernible or repeated melody is played. At Rehearsal Mark 45 (bar 110) James moves from a fairly thin texture to a suddenly dense texture, dividing the double basses into octaves. This sudden increase in texture, and the sudden appearance of the lower bass register makes this section striking. James continues with this texture until the penultimate bar, indicating a pause before the final C major chord.





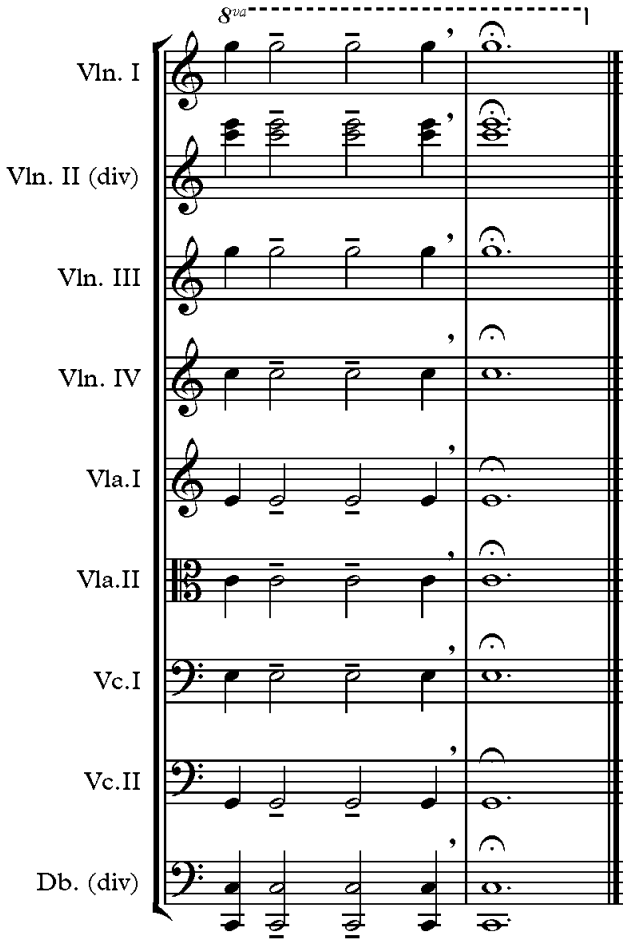
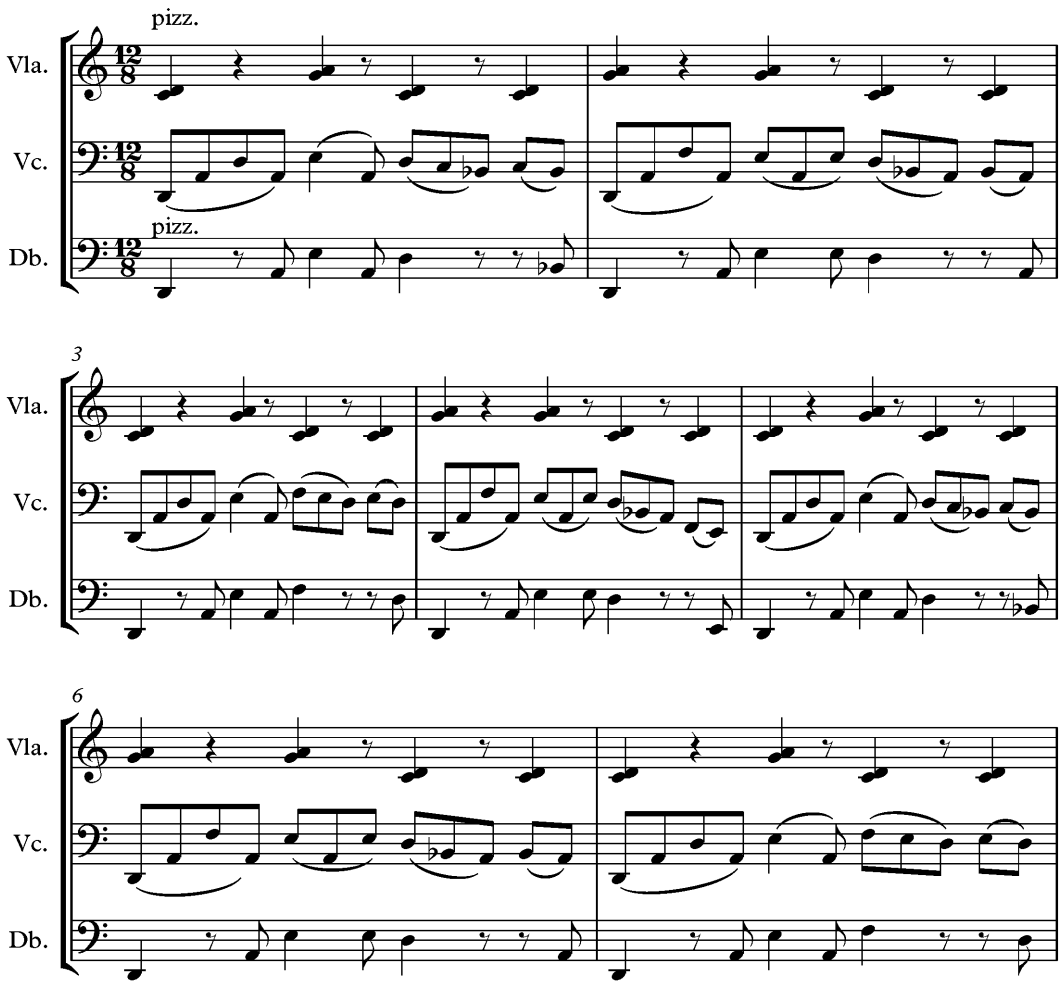


Figure 72: Bars 110-116 of the second movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste.*

The atmospheric *adagio* of the second movement is contrasted with the thematic *Allegro vivace* of the third movement, which begins with a repeated four-bar phrase in the celli, and is supported with rhythmic *pizzicato* material in the violas and double bass. Although there is no key signature, the presence of D minor arpeggios, and the B flat pitch classes indicates that this section is in D minor (although the seventh is not raised, indicating that James is either using a melodic or natural minor). This strong minor tonality, plus the use of lower strings (and the lower register of the double basses), gives this section a darkness in timbre, and the major second double stops played in the viola add a dissonance to this darkness.

As in most of James's compositions, his use of rhythm is noteworthy. Although in previous works such as *Four Portraits,* and in subsequent works such as *Paradise Regained*, James makes regular use of alternating time signatures, in this movement he

remains in 12/8 for the entire first section. The music does, however, explore unusual quaver groupings within 12/8. The only instrument which James writes in a consistent grouping is the cello, in the unconventional 4+3+3+2 grouping:



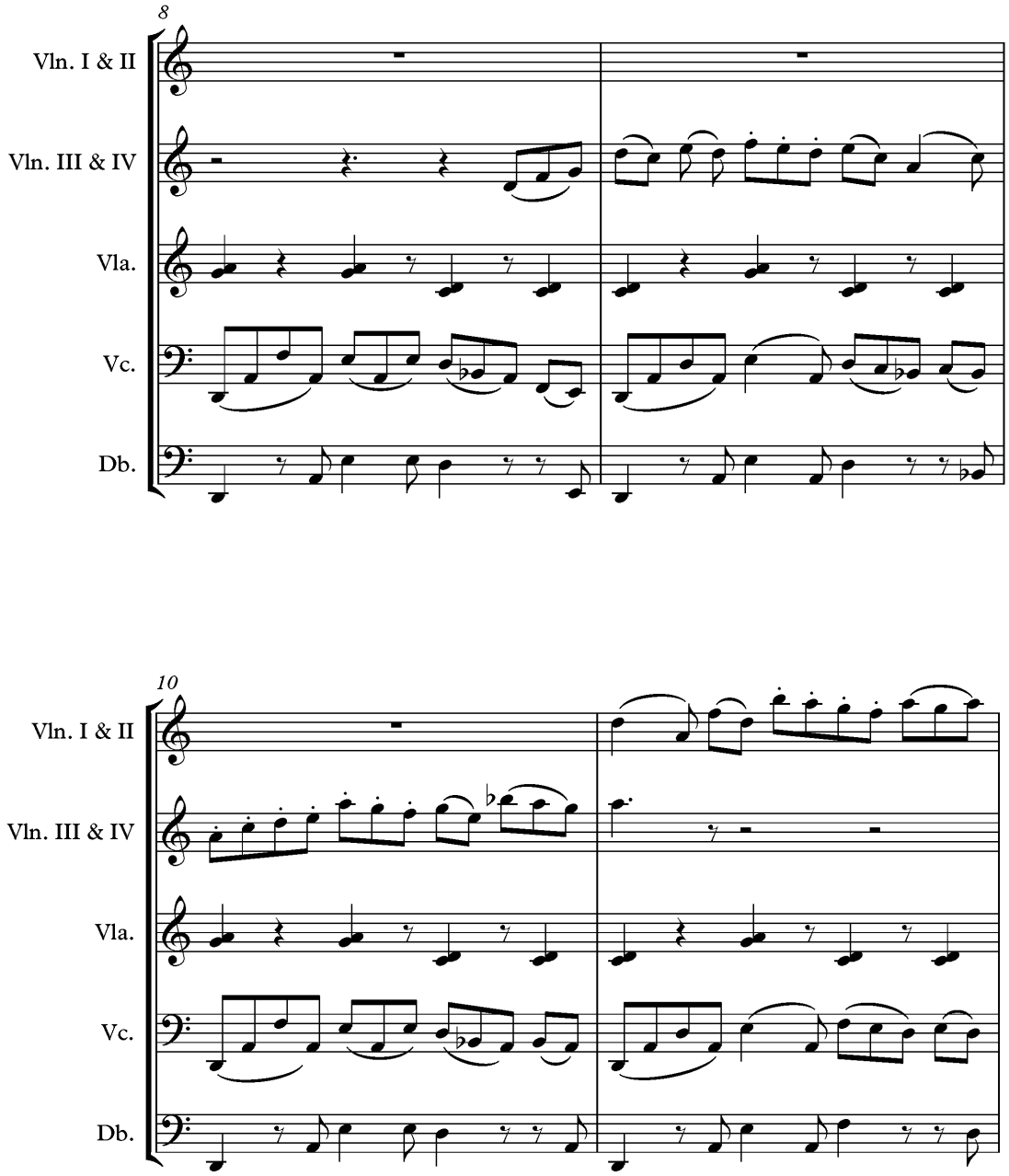


Figure 73: Bars 1-11 of the third movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste.*

From bar 25, James divides the violas into three parts, playing the same rhythm, creating a denser texture. The section ends at bar 47 with the violins and violas playing the same 4+3+3+2 rhythm as the celli.

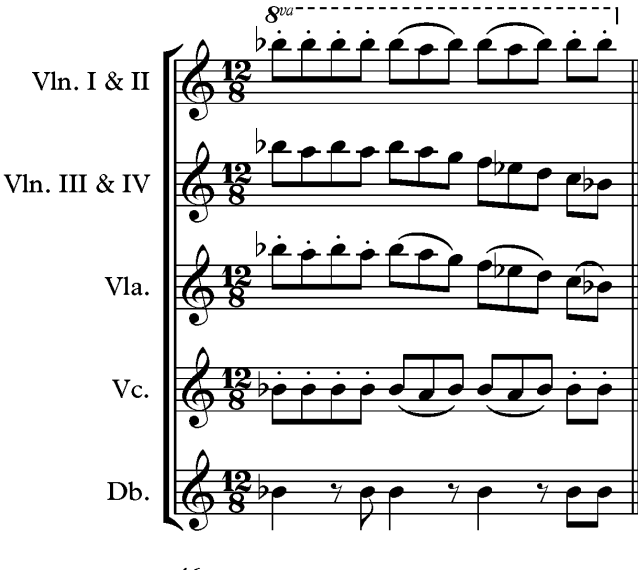


Figure 74: Bar 47 of the third movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste.*

The mood created shifts drastically at Rehearsal Mark 58 (bar 49), with the tempo being brought down to *Adagio con moto.* The bounce of the 12/8 meter is replaced with alternations between 4/4 and 3/4, creating a feeling of larger-scale groupings of seven beats over two bars. The result of this is that every second bar feels clipped, creating a rhythmic imbalance. All the instruments are playing largely the same rhythmic devices, with minimal polyphonic writing, and the tonal D minor of the previous section is abandoned for a consciously chromatically constructed harmonic approach. The result is that this section is dense and dissonant, and the shift from the quick 12/8 into this slower thicker section is striking. Keeping the texture uniform throughout this section, James uses *crescendi* and *diminuendi* to vary the sonic landscape, but the extreme variation in dynamic visible in other works is absent here. This section ends at bar 79 with a gradual diminuendo into two cluster chords played *pianississimo.*

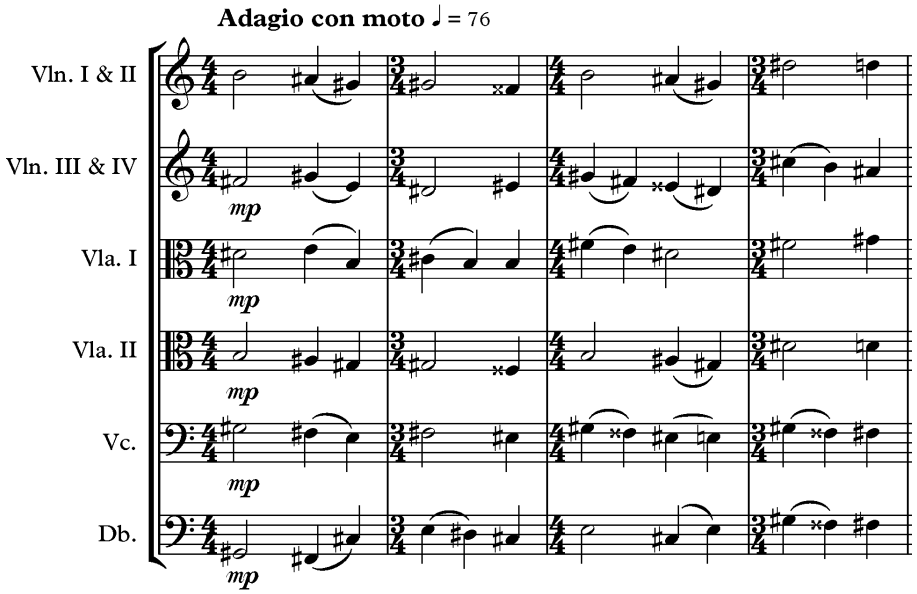


Figure 75: Bars 49-52 of the third movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste.*

At Rehearsal Mark 62 (bar 80) James returns to the original sonic landscape, moving from the chromatic tonal language back into D minor, and bringing the tempo back up to *Allegro spiritoso.* The lighter mood is also returned to with the use of 9/8 and 7/8. It can thus be seen that the dissonant previous section was a detour from the movement's general mood of light-heartedness. Yet this seems incongruous with the circumstances around this movement's composition, namely that it was composed shortly after James's divorce.

James starts this section with just violas and double bass, and gradually introduces celli, then violins III and IV, and then finally at bar 95 violins I and II. James makes minimal use of violins in this section, and at no point do the two groups of violins play simultaneously. At Rehearsal Mark 72 (bar 137) James indicates a gradual *crescendo* pushing the music forward into the *Presto* at Rehearsal Mark 74 (bar 149). Here the entire ensemble plays the same rhythm in 4/4, creating a thick texture. This lift in dynamic and texture is matched in the harmony, which moves into D major for the *Presto* section. This move from D minor to D major is striking and gives the music a feeling of upliftment. In the final four bars of the piece, James once again uses a *crescendo,* while simultaneously pushing the violins into their upper register, ending on a tremoloed D major chord with an added B and E, played *fortississimo.*

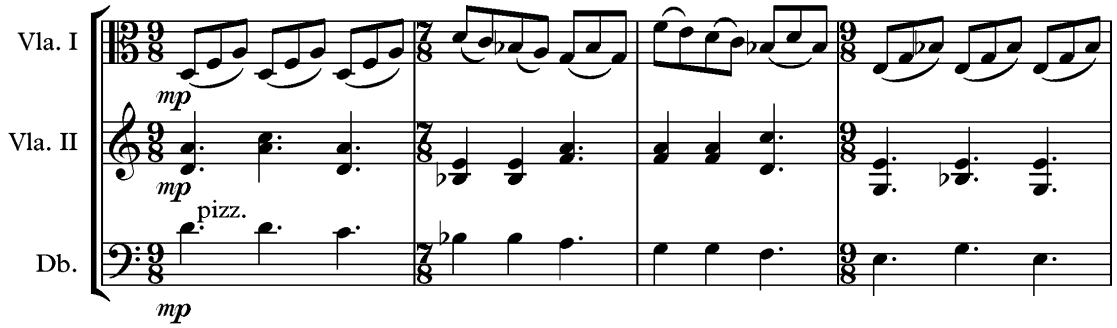


Figure 76: Bars 80-83 of the third movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste*

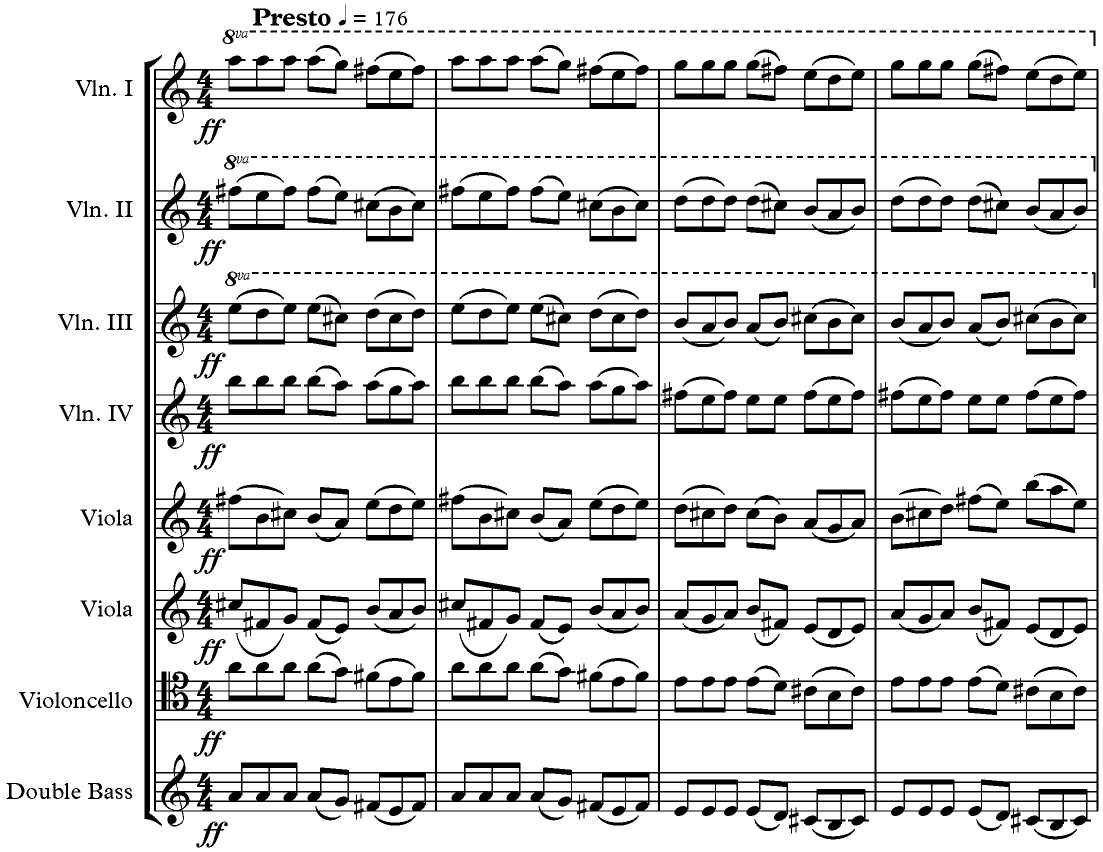


Figure 77: Bars 149-152 of the third movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste*

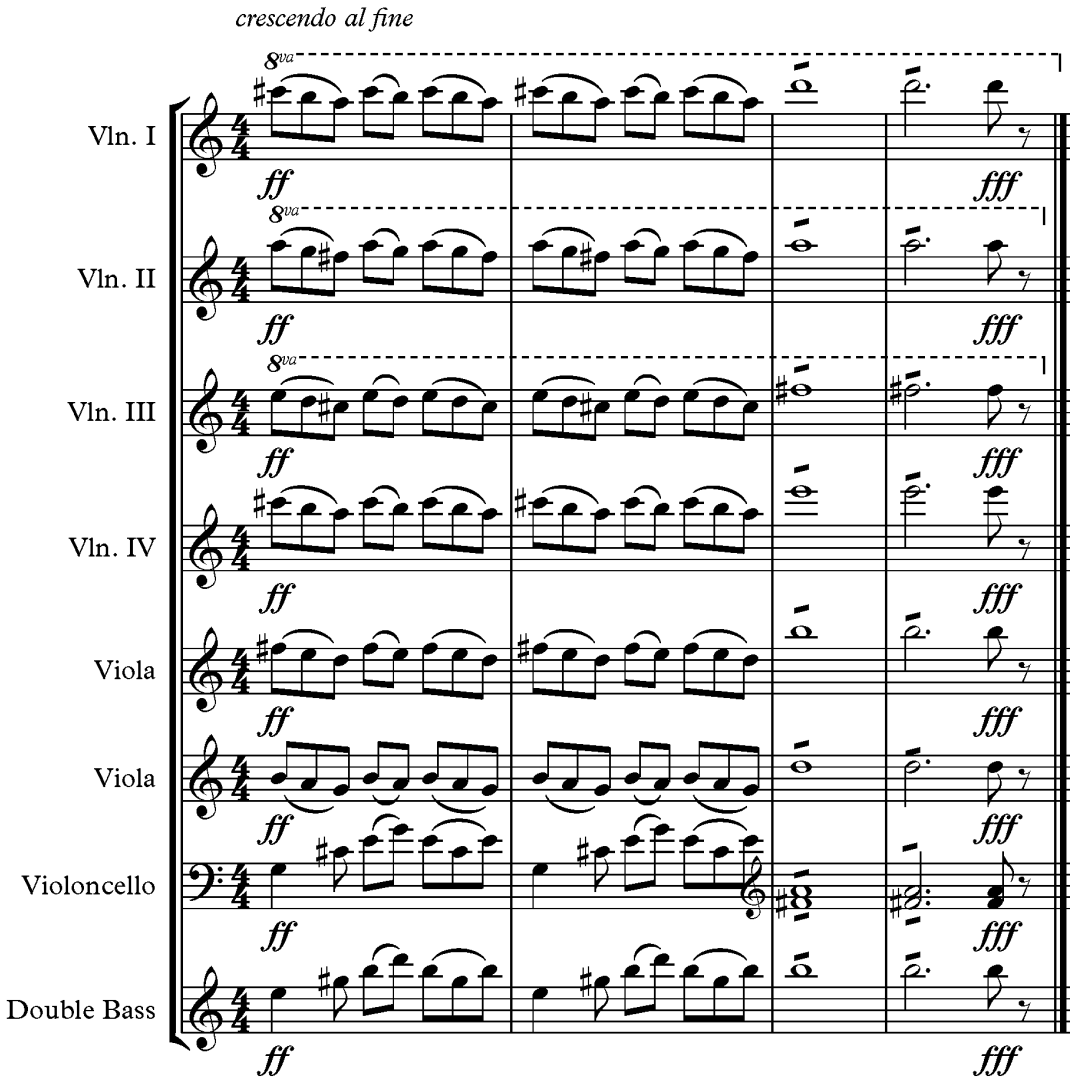


Figure 78: Bars 168-171 of the third movement of *Sèrènade Cèleste.*

Chris seems to have spent the lion's share of 1989 composing *Midnight of the soul: A fantasy ballet* for wind instruments and percussion. This work was commissioned by Total South Africa Pty Ltd., and was dedicated to Dr. Gustav Joyce, the ear, nose and throat doctor in Pretoria who operated on Chris's ears to cure his otosclerosis in 1987 and 1988. The large scale and ambition of this work of 24 minutes, dominated Chris's composition time in 1989, and the only other work he composed was a piece for a flute, oboe, acoustic bass, guitar, two percussionists and clarinet entitled *Reveries,* which he began at the end of 1989,[316] but never completed. It seems that Chris moved from the unfinished *Reveries* to another piece entitled *Grahamstown Buzz,* which he completed on 8 January 1991, and wrote for Andrew Tracy's ensemble of double ten-

[316] *Midnight of the soul* was completed in October 1989.

pan, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, piano, electric organ, guitar, bass and percussion. He also set a text by Sully Prudhomme to music entitled *La Valse Brisé*, and his final composition of the year was *African Safari* for keyboard instruments.

In 1991, Chris composed *Like a rainbow you shone out,* a song cycle of Lola Watter poetry, dedicated to Christopher Ballantine. This work was entered for the Olympia Composition Prize in Athens in 1992. He was also commissioned to compose a work for the Roodepoort International Eistedford 1991, for which he composed *Pesalome (Psalm 23)* for two sopranos and two altos. Aside from these smaller works, Chris composed his first concerto, for piano and orchestra, dedicated to Jennifer Anne Suter, for Stephen Allen to perform.[317]

This period of Chris's compositional development shows how he was experimenting with non-conventional instrumentation and combinations. The already mentioned *Grahamstown Buzz* is a case in point, but also *La Valse Brisé* (alto, flute, oboe, harp, cello and percussion), *Hymn to intellectual beauty* (soprano, tenor, violin, cello, harp and percussion) and the previously discussed *This dark ceiling without a star.* It is also evident in the instrumentation of his Concerto for piano and orchestra, where he requires alto and tenor saxophone as well as contrabassoon.

Two further interesting events occurred during Chris's life in this period. The first was his application to do a post-doctoral research project with Andrew Tracey at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. Chris was researching Northern-Sotho music, explaining his desire to work with Tracey at ILAM (The International Library of African Music), but it seems the plan did not come to fruition.[318] The second was his involvement in the previously mentioned Olympia Composition Prize, which was held at the Athens Goethe-Institut on 6 June 1992. Chris entered this competition as a British citizen, which he was legally allowed to do as he had a British passport from his paternal side. But this decision to present himself as British was odd for a man who claimed his roots to be "strongly African", although it might have been a pragmatic decision considering

[317] In her interview with the author, Marjorie spoke about a woman called Jenny whom Chris had dated, and to whom he had dedicated a composition to (Marjorie remembers it as a quartet, not a concerto). Chris had given her the original score of this work, but she has sadly since passed away.
[318] Letter to Andrew Tracey, 15 May 1989.

the fact that South Africa was only gradually emerging from a period of cultural sanctions against the Apartheid government.

In 1993, Chris's compositional output grinds to a halt, with no new pieces being written or revisions of any of his older works. This is because 1993 was consumed by Chris's involvement in the African epic *uShaka KaSenzangakhona.*

Section IX: The Epic *uShaka*

It is not clear how Chris initially became involved in the orchestration of *uShaka*. He was approached early in 1993, sending a quote to Mzilikazi Khumalo on 25 January 1993 indicating that the orchestration had been discussed. In its original form, *uShaka* was composed by Mzilikazi Khumalo for mixed choir and soloists, based on a poem by Themba Msimang.[319] In Marc Geelhoed's article on *uShaka,* Khumalo explains the motivation of enlisting Chris to do the orchestration of *UShaka*, stating that he had to "find white orchestrators to help".[320] because "South African musicians learnt Western music from missionaries, but the more advanced and costly side of music education remained out of reach."[321]

Khumalo had worked in the African Languages Department at the University of the Witwatersrand until his retirement in 1998, working his way up through the ranks from language assistant to Professor, and he is now an Emeritus Professor.[322] It is possible that this is how he got to know Chris, as the latter had received help from the African Languages Department at UNISA while composing *Images from Africa*.[323] Chris's desire to integrate African and Western musical traditions may also have contributed to his being selected for the project.

It is not surprising that Chris would have been drawn to a project such as this one. To work with a black composer in 1993 in a supportive rather than dominant function

[319] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 8.
[320] M Geelhoed, "Ravinia: Ushaka [American Premier]", *American Record Guide,* vol. 69 no. 5, 2006, p. 45.
[321] Ibid.
[322] NG Mugovhani, "An Interview with Mzilikazi Khumalo", *South African Music Studies,* vol. 28, 2008, p. 155.
[323] Correspondence between Chris James and Scott Huston, 4 June 1986.

would have allowed him to participate in his own way in the transition South Africa was undergoing politically. This project also resonated with Chris's compositional direction as well as his personal beliefs: an African poem in isiZulu, composed for voices by a black composer, and orchestrated and performed by white, classically-trained musicians. This act of mixing African and Western musics and cultures aligned with Chris's belief in reconciliation and integration, and with the project getting underway as the sun was setting on Apartheid, it is not surprising that he agreed to it.

Before Chris put pen to paper, he spent a great deal of time listening to tapes and researching Zulu language phonetics. While working on *Images from Africa*, Chris had recognised that it would be important for him to understand language inflections to set his chosen Zulu poems to music. He had also been warned by Huston while composing *Images from Africa* that the integration of African and European musical characteristics had, up until that point at least, not been successfully done.[324] Clearly the use of Zulu poetry in *Images from Africa* was an issue for Huston, who expressed relief when Chris assured him it would be "phonetic".[325] Thus Chris was no doubt aware of the need to be sensitive to the inflections of the language, and in preparation for working on *uShaka,* Chris spent time listening to David Rycroft tapes to familiarise himself with Zulu.[326] In this way he invested a great deal of time in the project even before commencing the orchestration proper, but also understood that "orchestration" in this case meant more: "Since this will include providing a suitable harmonic and contrapuntal framework to the work it will take me some considerable time."[327]

uShaka KaSenzangakhona is divided into four parts, each detailing a period of the Zulu King, Shaka's, life. In January 1993, Khumalo requested that Chris first orchestrate Part IV, "The Death of King Shaka". Chris agreed to this, providing Khumalo with a quote of R1,500 for the orchestration, estimating that he would be able to complete it by June of that year, but requesting some flexibility depending on how busy he would be at UNISA.[328] In a letter dated 7 January 1993, Chris expressed his reluctance to begin orchestrating the first three movements until such time as he had seen or heard

[324] See Chapter IV.
[325] Letter from Huston to Chris, 27 July 1986: "You have set my mind at ease regarding the use of language: 'twill be phonetically!'"
[326] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[327] Correspondence between Chris and Khumalo, 25 January 1993.
[328] Letter from Chris to Khumalo, 7 January 1993.

the music and until Khumalo had heard and approved of his orchestration of the fourth movement. This reluctance seems to have been short-lived, as on 25 January 1993 Chris sent Khumalo a letter, providing a quote for orchestration of all four movements, an amount totalling R5,800.

Aside from the issue of time, which was problematic because Chris had to put all of his other compositional work on hold, he faced other challenges in orchestrating the work. As he acknowledged, the work required him to provide harmonic and contrapuntal frameworks to the music. These were often not obvious, but rather implied in Khumalo's tonic sol-fah notation. But Chris was also required to do a considerable amount of composing in order to make *uShaka* function and flow. Khumalo and Chris agreed that he would be required to compose passages that would link sections of vocal score, but no further guidelines were ever agreed upon.[329] These sections of original material ended up being quite substantial, and Antoni Schonken calculates that these linking passages added up to the equivalent of 217 additional bars of material.[330] In addition to this, Chris had to navigate the difficulties of transitioning from rhythmically free sections to rhythmically strict sections, and described the work's rhythmic issues as at times being "nearly impossible to notate in Western musical terms, in order for a Western orchestra to understand or count it".[331] This required regular consultations with Khumalo, which made the process even more time consuming and stressful:

> It was a tremendous amount of work, all I can say about that is that it took him a mighty long time. He listened to dozens and dozens of tapes…he spent hours and hours listening … Eventually he got cracking and wrote some and then Khumalo would come over … and Khumalo would pass his opinion … and eventually Khumalo put him under pressure, they wanted to perform this in June 1993.[332]

[329] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona*, p. 16.
[330] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 13.
[331] *uShaka* premier programme notes.
[332] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.

The performance that Marjorie mentions, took place on 13 June 1993 at the Wits Great Hall in Johannesburg.[333] Conducted by Richard Cock and Mzilikazi Khumalo, Part IV of *uShaka KaSenzangakhona* was preceded by a programme of Mozart, Gluck, Händel and Mendelssohn. Whether Chris was "put under pressure" by Khumalo as Marjorie James says, is debatable. When he had agreed to it, he had said the job would be done by June, but had requested some leeway. Thus, while scheduling the premiere for June might have been considered risky, and naturally did put pressure on Chris to finish, it is doubtful that this took the form of active pressure from Khumalo. Robert Maxym, a choral conductor who knew Khumalo, was invited to a performance of Part IV to monitor the progress of the orchestration and consider future conceptualisation.[334]

Chris then agreed to orchestrate the other three movements of *uShaka,* the premiere of which was originally set for June 1994, but Chris was not ready in time for this date, and so it was postponed to November. The premiere took place on 25 November 1994 at the Johannesburg City Hall, performed by the Transvaal Philharmonic Orchestra, Soweto Songsters, Bonisudumo Choristers, Daveyton Adult Choir and the Cenestra Male Choir, with the programme indicating they would be conducted by Khabi Mngoma. For the rehearsals leading up to this premiere, Robert Maxym was engaged to "oversee the rehearsals and provide assistance in whichever way he could, relying on his experience as a conductor of over twenty-five world premières to guide the artists where possible".[335] Schonken writes at length about the issues that occurred during these rehearsals, acquiring information from his own correspondence with Maxym. According to Maxym, problems regarding transportation of choir members, and type-setting of the orchestration led to challenges in rehearsals, which caused Mngoma to hand over the baton, rather graciously it seems, to Maxym.[336]

After the premiere, Maxym expressed his dissatisfaction with Chris's orchestration, opining that the orchestra was taking too passive a role, and that he was "honour-bound to communicate these reservations to Mzilikazi, especially since [he] thought

[333] This performance was the premiere of Part IV: *Ukukhothama* (The Death of uShaka). The work in its entirety was premiered on 25 November 1994 (Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona*, p. 9).
[334] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 33
[335] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 34
[336] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 34-35

his work deserved better treatment".[337] After approaching Khumalo with these concerns, Khumalo requested Maxym to make revisions to the work:

> According to Maxym, Khumalo simply asked 'out of the blue': 'Robert, could you write this type of orchestration?' To this Maxym answered: 'Why yes, I could.' So, by his account, Maxym became involved with revising the orchestration of *UShaka*.[338]

It seems that these revisions were intended to be done with the cooperation of Chris, but he decided to opt out. This decision, which was potentially a damning one, was taken for two reasons. First, time was an issue, as expressed in a letter from Chris to Maxym on 25 April 1995:

> I have been unable to do much more work on the revisions to USHAKA but would like to show you what I have already produced. I have however made quite a lot of progress on the vibraphone piece and am enjoying working on it immensely. It is extremely challenging to write for an instrument that one does not play oneself.

The vibraphone piece in question would later become his Concerto for two marimbas and chamber orchestra, which was commissioned by SAMRO, and was occupying most of Chris's compositional time. The second reason for his decision to leave the *uShaka* project was his health. In a letter to David Smith dated 4 December 1996, Chris speaks about suffering from a "major nervous breakdown" after the completion of the project because of "the tremendous pressure to finish the project according to a deadline". He goes on to say that "[i]f I had not suffered tremendous melancholia after the first performance I would have liked to revise the work myself". Marjorie James puts it as follows:

> Then on the scene came Maxym … Then Maxym talked Khumalo into getting it more Westernised, so it would appeal to a greater public, and it would make more money … Maxym wanted him [Chris] to participate, and he did for a few weeks, and then he said no, he wasn't having anything to do with it, because all they were doing was destroying, completely destroying, what he had done.[339]

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[337] Maxym in Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona*, p. 35
[338] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 35.
[339] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.

Chris suffered a nervous breakdown after his involvement in *uShaka,* and would spend the rest of his life being angry about the lack of recognition he received, and for the Westernisation of the piece:

> He talked a lot about that, that was just a major blow in his life. And we talked about it from a number of points of view. He was very bitter about the way that his own involvement of it got completely cut off, excised, how the piece had become taken over by Robert Maxym. And Hollywoodised in the process.[340]

Chris also spoke to David Smith about what he saw as the weaknesses in his orchestration, and about his dissatisfaction with the alteration or removal of the African elements which he had painstakingly worked to retain in the music.

In 2013, Antoni Schonken presented, in the form of a master's dissertation using quantitative methods, his findings on authorship and ownership of *uShaka*,[341] which Schonken labels "A Work In Crisis".[342] Schonken's research shows that the roles of composer and orchestrator are murky in *uShaka*, as well as detailing the unfair split of royalties as extension of this distortion. There are four conclusions that can be drawn from Schonken's analysis that are relevant to this thesis, especially when considering how destructive the involvement with *uShaka* was with regard to Chris's personal life. The first is a quantification of exactly how much Chris contributed to the work, and whether, considering his contribution, he should still be considered an orchestrator. Schonken found that Chris composed a total of 217 bars worth of original material for *uShaka,* measuring a little below one-fifth of the total length of the work.[343] Schonken also finds that, as orchestrator, Chris contributed 57.88% of "the fundamental musical material",[344] describing this as "significantly more than can be expected of an orchestrator".[345] In conclusion, Schonken finds that this contribution should have

[340] Interview with Christopher Ballantine, 10 August 2015.
[341] Schonken did a considerable amount of mathematical legwork that allows me to draw conclusions from his hard work and use them in my own research. I am thus indebted to Schonken for this contribution to my study and the Chris James story.
[342] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona*, p. 59.
[343] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 32
[344] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 63
[345] Ibid.

"elevate[d] James from the position of orchestrator to a position of composer next to that of Khumalo."[346]

The second conclusion enabled by Schonken's work is the finding that Maxym's contribution was insufficient to be defined as an orchestration, and was more appropriately considered a revision:

> a re-orchestration should not be a reframing of an existing orchestration, but a new conceptualisation of the original composition for orchestra. An orchestration based on an existing orchestration is just a revision thereof. For that reason, this thesis refers to James's work as the orchestration, and that of Maxym as the revision.[347]

Schonken finds that not only did Maxym only revise the work rather than re-orchestrate it, but that this revision utilised much of the material which Chris had contributed, either through his own orchestration or through his own original compositional input. Schonken finds that Maxym utilised the same harmonic frameworks as Chris,[348] a framework which Chris had worked very hard to find through a multi-dimensional understanding of the work and the language. At a quantitative level, Schonken finds that "66.67% or more of the material and structures employed were strongly related to or taken without alteration from the James orchestration".[349]

It could be argued, of course, that re-using Chris's frameworks and material would be ethical if he were acknowledged, both publicly and financially. Sadly, this was not the case. Financially, Chris was not adequately rewarded for his work, having signed a contract which split the orchestration royalties in a 2:1 ratio in favour of Maxym. This meant that although Chris contributed significantly to the work, and his contribution was re-used by Maxym, he was awarded only 33.3% of the royalties, half of what Maxym earned.[350] In a footnote in his dissertation, Schonken writes: "It is unusual that

[346] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona*, p. 32
[347] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 12-13.
[348] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 41
[349] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona,* p. 45.
[350] Letter from Robert Maxym to Chris James, dated 22 April 1995.

Maxym proposed such a division before the completion of his revision and that James accepted it without viewing the revision in its entirety".[351]

Chris was also denied public acknowledgement of his role, even as orchestrator. His name was omitted from the programme of a performance of *uShaka* in the Durban City Hall on 13 November 2008 (around 10 months after his passing), leading not only to a backstage argument between Maxym and Islay,[352] but also causing Marjorie James to write a letter to SAMRO. In response to this, Noelene Kotze e-mailed the KZNPO on behalf of SAMRO, saying:

> Kindly bring it to the attention of the person responsible for compiling the programmes that Chris James and Robert Maxym should both be acknowledged for the above work, as they are both rightsholders for the orchestral arrangement of the work.[353]

While this was corrected in the form of a public apology by KZNPO Bongani Tembe during the 2008 performance, Maxym has still not acknowledged the extent to which he utilised Chris's orchestration, and insisted that his version used "only between five and ten percent of the material from the James orchestration",[354] but also that *his* orchestration was the official and final version of the work.[355]

As can be seen in the opening quotes to this chapter, the effects of these events on Chris were extreme. It resulted in a complete loss of confidence, and an obsession with the injustice of his lack of recognition. It also precipitated the most severe nervous breakdown since 1986, and his way of dealing with it was washing his hands of the entire fiasco. In an e-mail Chris sent to his good friend, composer John Simon, Chris described his view of *uShaka* as "a dead duck".[356] He goes on to write:

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[351] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona*, p. 49.
[352] Interview with Islay Ernst, 11 August 2015.
[353] E-mail from Noelene Kotze to the KZNPO, 22 September 2009.
[354] Schonken, *Authorship and Ownership of UShaka KaSenzangakhona* p. 37.
[355] E-mail from David Smith to Islay Ernst, 13 November 2008.

> Now the wretched conductor wants to do a type of brass-band arrangement of sections of uShaka, obviously to be played by police bands etc. He needs my permission to do this, so I gave it to him, because it might bring some money into the kitty. (He refers to this project as a money-spinner!) He is so besotted by uShaka, I simply cannot believe it! He continues to flog a dead horse!

The e-mail was sent on 14 January 2008, three weeks before Chris's death.

Chapter VII: Pretoria, South Africa 1996-2004.

"All night he will pursue but his approach
Darkness defends between till morning watch"[357]

"He looked and saw a spacious plain whereon
Were tents of various hue. By some were herds
Of cattle grazing, others whence the sound
Of instruments that made melodious chime
Was heard of harp and organ and who moved
Their stops and chords was seen: his Volant touch
Instinct through all proportions low and high
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue"[358]

"O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awak'n'd in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compar'd
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing, all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,"[359]

[357] J Milton, *Paradise Lost.* W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 2005, Book 12. 206-207.
[358] J Milton, *Paradise Lost.* Book 11. 556-563.
[359] J Milton, *Paradise Regained.* Alcuin Press, Campden, 1932, First Book, 196-204.

Section X: *Paradise Regained*

The year 1996 was not a good one for Chris. Maxym had begun his revision of *uShaka*, now without Chris's involvement. In his letter to David Smith at the end of 1996 (4 December), he mentions that he had still not recovered from the nervous breakdown brought on by his involvement in *uShaka.* Compositionally the year was also unproductive. He had been commissioned by SAMRO to compose a work for vibraphone and orchestra on 20 January 1994, and the deadline was set as 31 December 1994 before being extended to 30 June 1996. For the first part of 1996, it seems that he was working only on this project.

The next year was different, as 1997 was the year he began work on arguably his best known work: *Paradise Regained.* Considering the title, the era in which it was created, its dedication to "Dr. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and all other subsequent presidents of South Africa", as well as the actual music itself, it is not difficult to interpret what Chris was communicating. This work was meant as a celebration of South African reconciliation after Apartheid, and of a bright future for the country.

In Michael Green's review of the performance of *Paradise Regained* on 15 November 2007, he wrote glibly: "This dedication must be as about politically correct as one can get." It is of course easy to view it as part of a scramble in the 1990s for white South African composers to position themselves on the side of reconciliation.[360] For Chris this expression was not done to garner official favour – his concern with these themes long predates the 1990s – but rather as an outward and musical expression of something that he valued, sought, treasured, lost and was denied: reconciliation. Resolution.

Paradise Regained is approximately 26 minutes in length, and is a symphonic tone poem for orchestra and optional choir. It was composed between 1997 and 1999 and, as stated in Chapter V, was created under difficult mental health conditions, as Chris was still recovering from the nervous breakdown induced by *uShaka* while composing *Paradise Regained*. One reviewer wrote: "Mr. James's pilgrimage, as exposed in

[360] TM Pooley,"'Never the twain shall meet': Africanist Art Music and the end of apartheid". *South African Music Studies.* vol. 30/31, 2010/2011, p. 61.

Paradise Regained sums up much of the common journey experienced by many white people in South Africa over the last ten years".[361] Christopher Ballantine attended a rehearsal of the piece in 2004, and wrote to Bongani Tembe:

> But the real discovery of the morning, I think, was Christopher James's 'Madiba' piece, which had never been heard before. Everyone, orchestral musicians included, found the excerpt extremely moving. Its culminating treatment of 'Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika' is simply the best there is; the movement as a whole reveals tremendous commitment, clarity, accessibility and brilliance.

Ballantine goes on to suggest that Nelson Mandela himself attend the performance of the work, and had that happened, I can only imagine how happy that would have made Chris.

Paradise Regained consists of seven movements and four interpolations. The final movement, entitled "Epilogue" was revised and extended in January and February of 2002, with final revisions to the work occurring in May and June of 2004. The title of the work is taken from John Milton's poem *Paradise Regained* (1671), a continuation in theme of his arguably more famous work: *Paradise Lost* (1667). It seems that James's use of the Milton work extends no further than its title. On the cover page, James writes: "The title of this work is the same as the English poet John Milton's work, however the musical piece bears very little resemblance to the poetic work." It can thus be surmised that the musical material that is used in this work indicates that the title is meant to refer to South Africa's overthrowing of Apartheid, an act of regaining the South African paradise.

The titles of the seven movements continue on the theme of paradise: "I. Paradise – The Garden of Eden", "II. Dance of Life", "III. Dance of Eternal Life", "IV. Gardens of Eden", "V. – Dance of Ecstasy", "VI. – Finale" and "VII – Epilogue". The four interpolations, acting as brief musical connective tissue, are placed after the first, second, third and sixth movements. The work is indicated to be played through in its entirety without interruption, and thus each movement is not easily discernible without

[361] This document is in the CJC, but it does not have an author name or date.

the score. One result of this is a consistency of tone and aesthetic, achieved without the musical material being repetitive.

The utopian mood invoked by the title of the work and the titles of the movements, is continued in its dedication. James writes on the work's cover page:

> The work was created under difficult personal (particularly mental health) circumstances and is a tribute to South Africans of all races and creeds for their resilience in the face of misfortune.
> The work is affectionately dedicated to President N R Mandela and to all successive President's [sic] of this country.

In one way, *Paradise Regained* is therefore not only a dedication to the struggle and victory of South Africans over Apartheid, but a cathartic introspection by the composer, taking stock of how he overcame his own "difficult personal circumstances". With regard to its political theme, this work is linked programmatically to *Images from Africa,* in which James expresses his longing for racial reconciliation. On 22 April 1988, James wrote to his friends Linda and Richard, saying: "my doctoral dissertation's three themes are love, lamentation and hope and it is essentially about reconciliation."[362]

The theme of reconciliation is not only programmatic, but is expressed quite clearly in the musical material. As with *Images from Africa,* as well as works such as *Three jazzy interludes* for piano (1988) and *Gymnastics* (1982), *Paradise Regained* endeavours to use Western classical musical material alongside African and jazz musical elements. Although at times this integration is subtle, in the Finale of the work James opts to make his intentions as clear as possible through musical quotation, citing the themes "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika", "Die Stem",[363] "God Save The Queen", bebop alto saxophonist Charlie Parker's "Ornithology" and "Anthropology", jazz pianist and band leader Duke Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood", as well as two hymns: "All People That On Earth Do Dwell" and "O Sacred Head Now Wounded". James reflects his

[362] The theme of lamentation is something which James also explores in another work of the same time period, *Songs of lamentation and remonstration.*
[363] An idea he had attempted in *Images from Africa.*

desire for racial integration and reconciliation by playing selections of these themes simultaneously in a fugal compositional style.

In the Epilogue of the work after the Fourth Interpolation, James introduces a new South African National Anthem. In a letter James wrote to a Mrs. van der Walt of UNISA Press on 24 July 2001, he makes it clear that this anthem is "merely a suggestion" and that his intentions were not to have his anthem replace the current one. This letter calls into question James's expectations from *Paradise Regained*. In letters to John Simon and his family, James spoke regularly about how much financial remuneration he expected from Mandela for the work, an amount he estimated to be in the millions. Although James makes it clear that his intention was not to compose a replacement South African anthem but rather an alternative, James clearly allowed for the possibility (and arguably even the expectation) that his anthem would have some official use.

The work is scored for three flutes (with one doubling on piccolo and alto flute); two oboes; one cor anglais (which should double as a third oboe); two clarinets (B flat and A); one bass clarinet (which should double as a third clarinet); two bassoons; four horns; two trumpets; two trombones; one bass trombone; one tuba; timpani and three percussionists; celesta; harp and strings. An alto saxophone and optional SATB choir is used only for the Finale movement. James's use of instrumentation indicates an experienced composer revelling in an understanding of what each instrument can achieve sonically, as well as the effects of different instrument combinations and orchestral techniques.

The general mood set by this piece is one of naïve and almost childlike optimism, traits of character that were consistently ascribed to James by family members and friends. This is achieved musically through the use of a tapestry of sounds, which are more often atmospheric than thematic. The use of instruments such as the glockenspiel add to the childlike innocence of this work. What is achieved from this careful use of soundscaping and instrumentation is a musical atmosphere evocative of a mood of optimism, rather than structurally conceived, with musical material at this point of the work being used to add to the atmosphere, rather than towards the directedness of thematic development.

The work also reflects the political mood of South Africa at the time. The years following the 1994 elections that ended Apartheid were ones where the ideologies like "reconciliation" and "rainbow nation" were liberally used to maintain order and promote political and racial unity in a historically fractured country. This composition is historically of this time, and I would argue is a musical representation of this brief period of political optimism in South African history. It is worth noting that although the corruption and inefficiency within the government turned the political tides away from optimism towards pessimism and lack of confidence in government, James maintained his starry-eyed optimism and belief in the good of people. This is seen when nearly a decade after he composed *Paradise Regained,* he dedicated another work – *Adulations* (2005) – to Nelson Mandela.

Up until the middle of the sixth movement (bar 47), *Paradise Regained* is written without a key signature. The lack of key signature in this instance is not indicative of C major/A minor, but rather an easier way for a performer to read chromatic music where multiple accidentals are used. In the copy of the hand-written score housed in the CJC, James has written all parts in C, including transposing instruments such as clarinet, horn, etc. It is reasonable to assume that when parts were made for performance, these parts were transposed.[364] Harmonically, this is not dissonant music, in spite of unconventional harmonic language and chord sequences. In the final two movements, the use of more adventurous sonorities yields to more conventional, almost simplistic use of harmony. James tends to assert his harmony through instruments in the lower register playing harmonically transparent musical material (such as the prominent use of open fifth intervals, resulting in chords with the third degree omitted), while the instruments in the upper register tend to be more chromatic.

The timbre and texture of the work oscillates between episodically atmospheric and thematic. When the texture is more atmospheric (Movements I, IV and the first half of VI) James writes interlocking solo parts, often unrelated, which are moved around the orchestra, with one part melting, as it were, into another. The effect of this kind of sonic tapestry tends to be ethereal, dreamy and contributes to a sense of a child-like

[364] All reproduction of parts found in this section have been kept to the original score and written in C.

imagination in which anything is possible. In Movements II, III, V, the second half of VI and VII, the music is built around thematic material that is altered and developed. These themes tend to be based on rhythmic rather than melodic material, with very precise and punctilious requirements of articulation. Although James does make melodic alterations to his themes, these variations remain recognisable through being rhythmically and articulately related to the original versions.

As a composer, James had a firm grasp of rhythmic development originating from his early composition lectures with Stefans Grové as an undergraduate at the University of Pretoria. James's rhythmic usage in *Paradise Regained* consists largely of the use of syncopated rhythms and triplets, both characteristics of jazz. The use of triplet figures is more frequent in Movements II and III, both of which explore multiple time signatures grouped in threes. As a student at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, James was further exposed to the sonic possibilities of an extensive percussion ensemble, which culminated in his 1985 composition *Winter's Dream* for three percussionists, dedicated to Scott Huston and performed by the Cincinnati Percussion Ensemble. This understanding of and exposure to the effect of percussion ensembles is evident throughout *Paradise Regained,* with James using percussion instruments both for timbral effects (especially in the more atmospheric movements) as well as for rhythmic explorations. Sometimes both uses are employed in close proximity, for example in Movement IV, where James begins the section by using glockenspiel, vibraphone and marimba to give the music a feeling of enchantedness, evoking the Garden of Eden. At the *Poco piu mosso* (bar 13), the three percussionists move to unpitched percussion, playing bongos, tom-toms and congas respectively. This alters the texture from a child-like etherealness to a more rhythmic sound. In Movement III, James's use of percussion grounds the music in a time signature by playing on the beat, and in turn accentuates the complexity of the rhythm. This can be seen in both his use of wood blocks underneath Theme 1 in bars 1-4 (see Figure 79) and in his use of bass drum and cymbal when Theme 3 is sounded (see Figure 80).

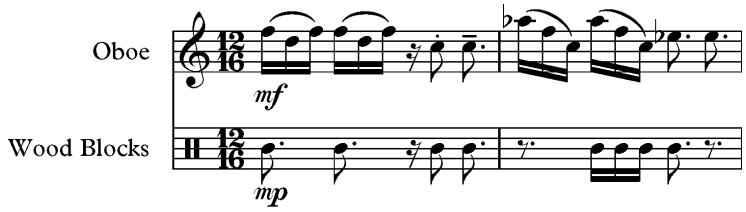


Figure 79: Bars 1-2 of *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life".

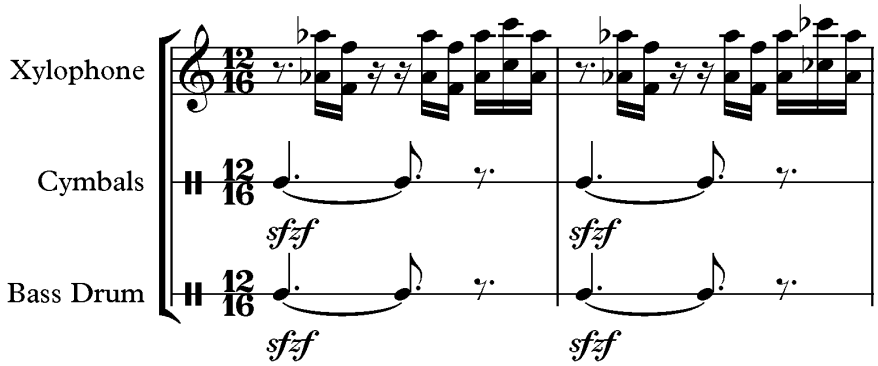


Figure 80: Bars 8-9 of *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life".

The first movement is indicated as *Adagio e poco rubato con Molto espressione*, with the beats per minute being indicated as one crotchet to equal 60 beats per minute. The time signature is 6/4 and, unlike the later movements, does not change throughout the movement. In spite of this consistent use of a single time signature throughout the movement, the 6/4 time is not felt until Rehearsal Mark 5 (bar 25). The slow tempo, combined with the fact that the instruments never start phrases on the beat, veil the time signature, and allow the rhythmic feel of this section to be more fluid than rhythmically structured.

Texturally, this movement is musically atmospheric, and the upper woodwinds are used to emulate bird calls with flutter tonguing, and when paired with the empty glass bottle, the timbre seems calculated to evoke the pastoral connotation of the Garden of Eden, placing the listener within this garden, listening to the birds and insects call and hum. The music is meditative, and the intertwining of solo material characteristic of the entire movement imparts to the music a sense of a free, quasi-improvisatory character.

An example of the rhythmic and textural characteristics of this opening movement can be seen below (Figure 81). These include the use of intertwining solo material, and the rhythmic ambiguity achieved through phrases being placed on quaver beats..

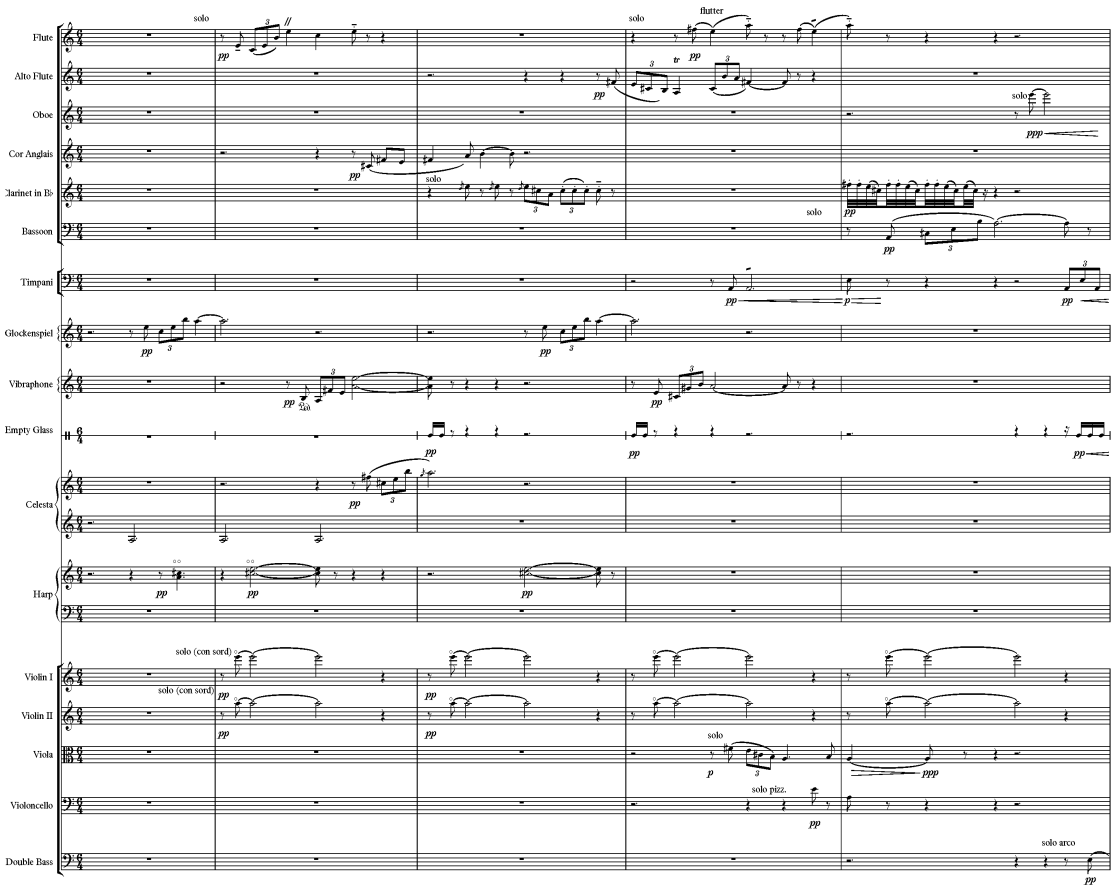


Figure 81: Bars 1-5 of *Paradise Regained* – I. "Paradise – The Garden of Eden".

In these five bars there is an emergence of two rhythmically linked themes. The first is played in bars 1-2 on the glockenspiel, and is then moved to flute, vibraphone (transposed down a perfect fifth) and celesta (transposed up a whole tone), before it is repeated on the glockenspiel in bars 3-4. James also places this theme on different beats within each bar, with the glockenspiel playing the theme on the upbeat to beat 5 of bar 1, the flute playing the theme on the upbeat to beat 2 of bar 2, the vibraphone playing the theme on the upbeat to beat 3 in bar 2, and the celesta playing the theme on the upbeat to beat 6 in bar 2. Moving this theme through the instruments and placing it on different upbeats within the bar, helps to create a rhythmically murky texture and allows this theme and its transpositions to blend into one another. The second theme is

sounded in the alto flute as an upbeat to bar 4, and is then echoed in the viola as an upbeat to beat 4 of the same bar. While the emergence of these two musical themes may signal a musical direction that leans towards developing ideas around either of the themes, James does not reuse either of these melodic ideas throughout the remainder of the movement. The ideas are therefore not extrapolated into thematic writing, but rather form singular tiles within a grander musical mosaic.

Dynamically, the music utilises a full dynamic range; however, James favours the softer dynamics for this movement and so manages to avoid foregrounding the dissonance resulting from a clash of multiple soloists playing seemingly disconnected parts. Dynamic markings are mostly indicated as *piano* and *pianissimo*, and even at times *pianississimo*. It is only at Rehearsal Mark 5 (bar 25) that the dynamic shifts to *mezzo-forte*. The dynamic builds to its climax at bar 33, with a *decrescendo* oboe melody in descending triplets leading to Rehearsal Mark 7 (bar 34), at which point the dynamic returns to its original serene quietness where it remains until the end of the movement.

James's use of harmony is calculated and playful, toying with functional harmony to decentre expectations through the creation of ambiguity. The musical aesthetic in the movement varies between ambiguous functional passages, tonal clarity and chromatic exploration. As the movement draws to a close, James gradually begins to thin out his use of the third degree of the scale, ending with a chord that does not feature a third degree at all. This results in the prevalence of an open fifth (A-E). The final chord, although constructed entirely out of a single interval, does not sound bland or colourless as one might expect, but, informed by what has preceded it, provides sufficient finality to indicate to the listener that the section has finished. At the same time it allows (along with the three held crotchets in the bass clarinet at bar 54) sufficient openness to allow the movement to continue into the first interpolation.

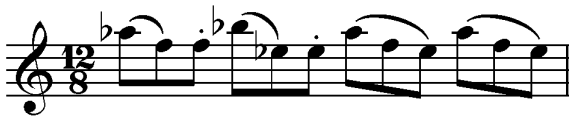
The first interpolation, marked *Lento e molto rubato*, is musically distinguishable from the movement that precedes it. Only nine bars in length, it is slower than the first movement, to be played at 54 crotchet beats per minute with the marking *Quasi improvisatore.* The texture has been stripped down to just woodwinds, and, as in the previous movement, James uses intersecting thematic material that weaves through the

woodwinds, rather than create a chorale-like woodwind sound. Harmonically, this section is entirely chromatic, with moments of controlled and intentional dissonance. The interpolation starts in 6/4 time, but from bar 3 the time signature changes at each bar, moving from 6/4 to 4/4, then to alternating 6/4 and 5/4 bars until bar 8 where the piece moves from 7/4 to 8/4 in its final bar. The interpolation ends in a similar way as it begins, with three crotchets played on the first flute rhythmically emulating the three-crotchet motif in the bass clarinet that led into the interpolation at bar 54. The three-crotchet motif in the flute, sounding the notes E flat, F and G flat, act like the recoil of a slingshot, which is released as the second movement begins.

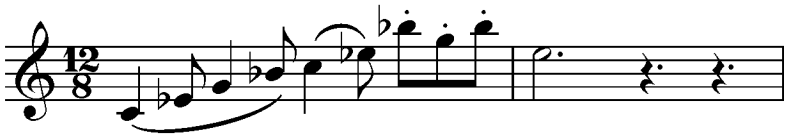
The sombre mood created by the suspended flute at the end of the first interpolation is immediately contrasted in the second movement. "Dance of Life" begins energetically, marked *Vivace*. This movement varies considerably from the previous movement and interpolation. It is almost twice as fast as the previous movement, with a dotted crotchet beat played at 104 beats per minute. Rhythmically, this movement explores compound time signatures which are played in triplets, with the movement remaining mostly in 12/8, with brief explorations of 9/8 (bars 10-13) and 15/8 (bars 33-38). The rhythmic devices used are in many ways similar to the previous movement, favouring syncopated rhythms and a triple metre achieved through the use of time signatures divided into groups of dotted crotchets, or three quavers. Unlike the previous movement, the time signature is always clearly communicated through the lower register instruments (such as double bass, bassoon, tuba and cello), which play material on the beat that clearly delineates the triplet-based movement.

Unlike the motivic tapestry created in the first movement, "Dance of Life" is largely based on three themes, and typical of James's thematic writing in this work, are linked through rhythmic motifs and articulation indications.

Theme 1:



Theme 2:



Theme 3:

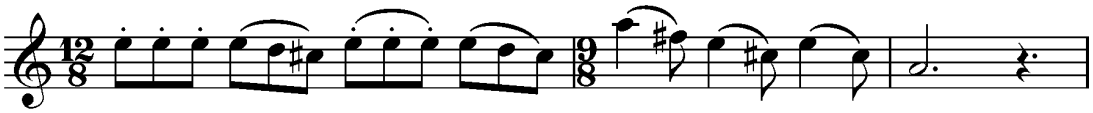


Figure 82: *Paradise Regained* – "II. Dance of Life". Three main themes.

These themes are passed through the orchestra, and in developing them James further explores the rhythmic possibilities and effects of the triplet-based compound time signature.

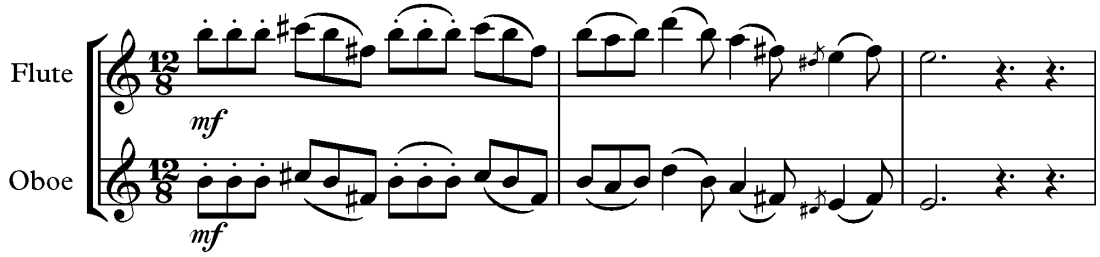


Figure 83: Bars 21-23 of *Paradise Regained* – "II. Dance of Life".

At bar 22 he alters the theme, keeping it in 12/8, and exploring a combination of triplet and crotchet-quaver rhythmic effects. This gives the music a bouncy, almost swung feeling.

Considering its rhythmic directionality, it is not surprising that the movement is also less harmonically ambiguous than the previous movement, with the lower register instruments playing material that not only solidifies the time signature and rhythmic thrust, but also provides a clear harmonic basis. This is not the same as saying that

harmonic usage is conventional, as this foundational clarity is complicated with the upper instruments playing, at times, highly chromatic motifs. Chromaticism within the movement is not only related to this material in the higher registers, but also applies to the tonal design of the movement. James uses chords such as F minor and major, F sharp major, A and A flat major, D and D flat major, B major and minor, B flat major, E flat major alternating with a seventh chord on E, and D major alternating with a D diminished seventh. The recognisability of these chordal structures and tonal areas as diatonic, does not imply their normal functional usage, but rather indicates that the music unfolds in a diatonic rather than chromatic tonal environment.

The movement ends on the chord B, F sharp, C sharp, E, A played in marimba, celesta, harp and violins I and II. This chord imparts to the movement a qualified finality, allowing for seamless musical transition into the second interpolation, linked as with the first movement into the first interpolation, with a clarinet solo.

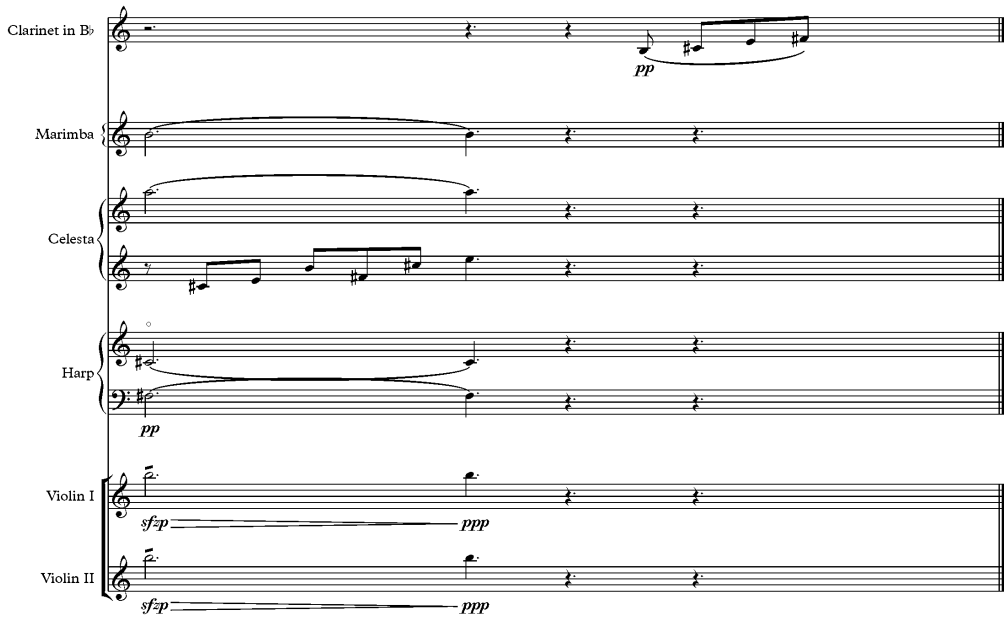


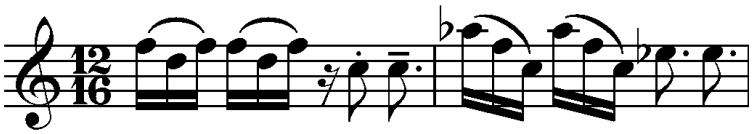
Figure 84: Bar 38 of *Paradise Regained* – II "Dance of Life".

The second interpolation is much like the first, with James stripping the texture down to just woodwinds. As with previous movements, this interpolation features extensive use of triplets, with time signature changes in almost every bar. As with the first movement and first interpolation, highly chromatic passages are interspersed between the instruments, allowing each passage to blend into the next. The harmony is

chromatic and more dissonant than previously. Unlike previous sections of this work, this interpolation ends on alto flute and bass clarinet playing a B and F respectively, both notes held under a fermata. At the end of the interpolation the musical movement comes to a stop for the first time in the work.

The third movement, "Dance of Eternal Life", is characterized by complex rhythmic explorations. James utilises compound time signatures played in triplets such as 12/16, 9/16, 15/16 and 6/16, with the only non-triple time signature – 8/16, being grouped in a 3+3+2 style to accentuate a triplet movement which is cut short by one note on the last beat (i.e. as opposed to 3+3+3). James also briefly moves to 10/16 (grouped as 3+3+2+2) at Rehearsal Mark 33 (bar 58), but this is for two bars only before the time signature returns to 9/16. As with the second movement, this third movement makes use of themes most noticeable for their rhythmic vitality, with stylized grouping and articulation marks working to heighten the rhythmic complexity and drive of the music. The use of more adventurous chromatic harmonies, angular rhythms, and the percussion parts, places this into a Stravinsky-like sound world.

Theme 1:



Theme 2:

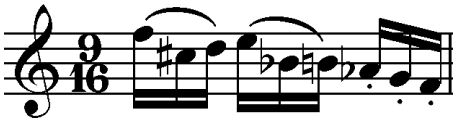
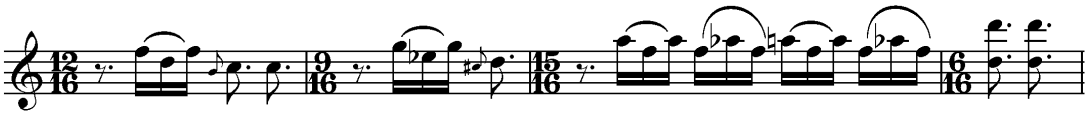


Figure 85: *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life". Themes 1 and 2.

At Rehearsal Mark 24 (bar 12), the piccolo and clarinets play Theme 4, which is then varied four bars later, with the clarinets being replaced by flutes.

Theme 4:



Variation 1:

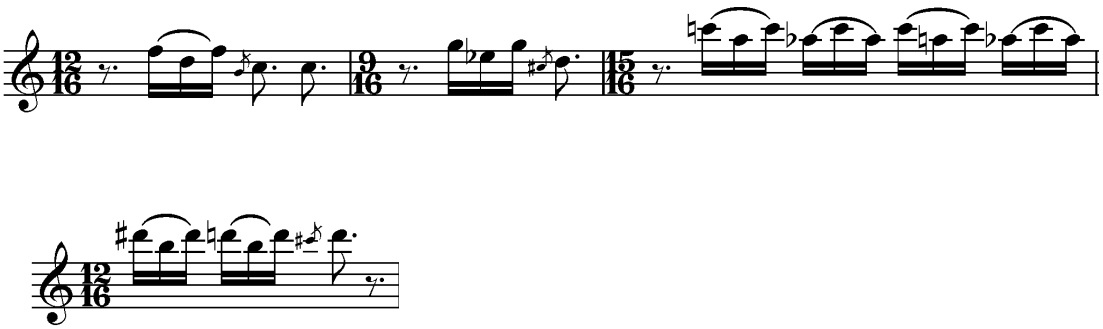


Figure 86: *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life". Theme 4 and Variations.

James continues rhythmically to develop thematic material at Rehearsal Mark 26 (bar 22), where the piccolo, oboe and marimba play a variation on Theme 1:

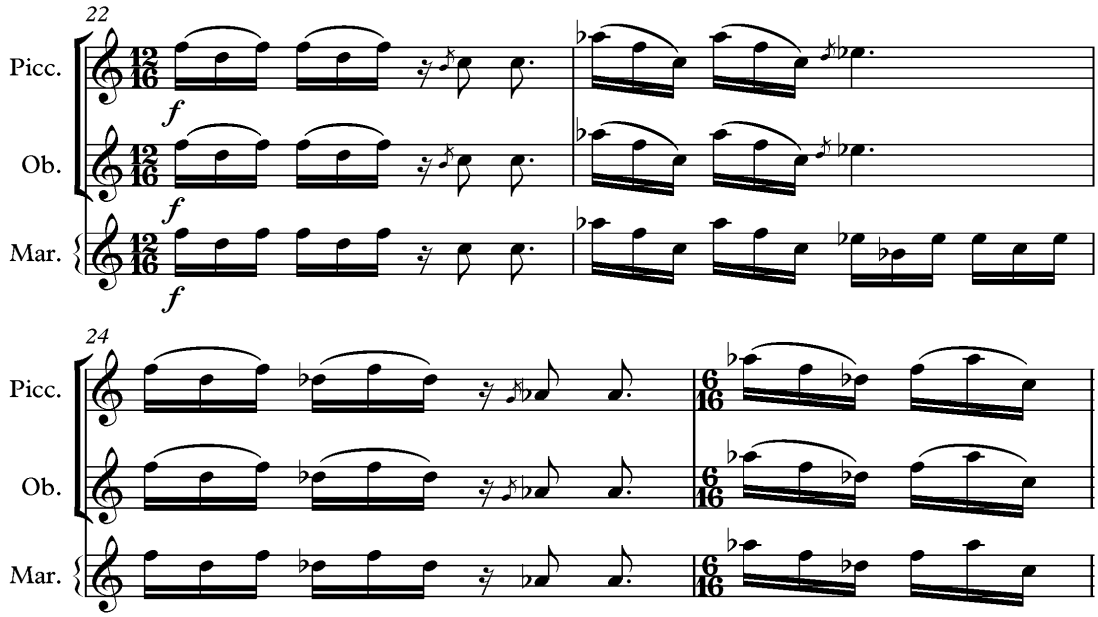


Figure 87: *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life". Variation of Theme 1.

At bar 34, James breaks the triplet semiquaver motion by using the time signature 8/16, grouped as 3+3+2, and after two bars as 3+2+3 to further accentuate the single missing beat in the triplet:

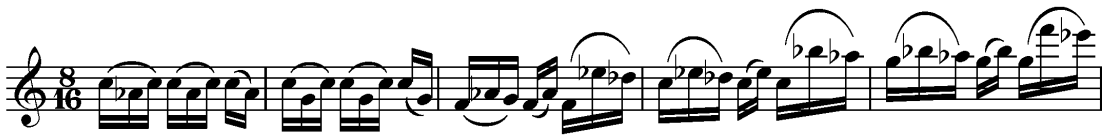


Figure 88: Bars 34-38 of *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life".

After an explosive *fortissimo* ending of this section on a chord built on the notes F, C, A natural and A flat, E natural and E flat and G, a snaking theme moves gradually up through the woodwinds, heavily based on the Variation of Theme 1. The gradual increase in pitch pushes the movement into the next section, with the sounding of Theme 5.

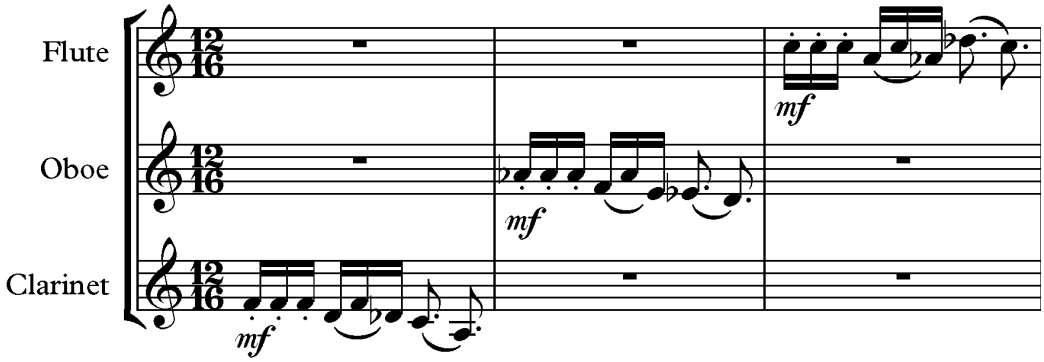


Figure 89: Bars 45-47 of *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life".

Figure 90: *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life". Theme 5.

This theme is only sounded for two bars before it is interrupted by an 8/16 two-bar phrase built on the rhythmic grouping 3+3+2, before it returns, rhythmically identical but melodically varied. Harmonically, this theme is played over an A flat chord, chromatically embellished. Theme 5 is then developed in the flute and first violin at bar 52, making use of the chromatic scale for melodic content. Underneath this, the oboes, trumpets and second violin play material that rhythmically dovetails, further accentuating the rhythmic complexity.

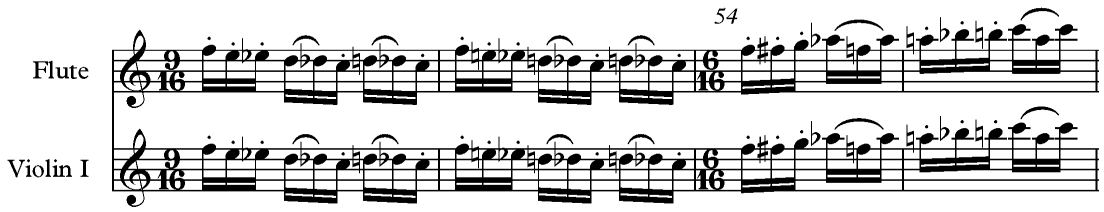


Figure 91: *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life". Variation of Theme 5.

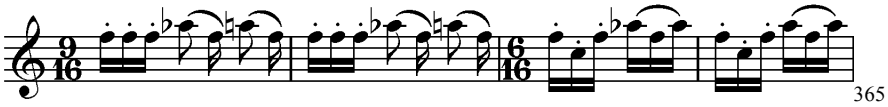


Figure 92: *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life". Dovetailing underneath the Variation of Theme 5.

After a brief restatement of the development of Theme 5, the movement ends on a F major chord, with the penultimate chord marked *fortissimo* with a *crescendo* into the *fortississimo* in the final bar. The loud and triumphant nature of this ending is darkened with the use of chromaticism in the first and second violins, implying a harmonic movement that goes from F diminished seventh, to F minor and then ending finally on F major. Although the movement seems to be largely written in F minor, James inflects this stability with chromatic tensions. As in previous movements, the lower register instruments play material that grounds the music in a key (the chordal progressions of this movement are primarily played by the strings, which from their entry at Rehearsal Mark 24 (bar 12) up to Rehearsal Mark 30 (bar 45) are primarily playing long, held notes), while the other instruments provide more chromatic colour.

Unlike the previous two interpolations, the third does not just use woodwinds, but introduces the first and second violin and viola. Labelled *Adagio semplice e dolce* with a crotchet equalling 72 beats per minute, James utilises trios throughout the interpolation, varying the instruments in each trio. The first and second flutes and clarinet are used until bar 8, when the composer changes to a trio of cor anglais and two clarinets followed by the first and second violins and viola (bars 13-17), the first and second oboes and cor anglais (bar 18-21) and the first and second flutes and alto flute (bar 22-26).

[365] It is uncertain whether these last two A's are natural or flat. This could be an error in the score, and it would make sense that the A's are actually played as A flat, considering it is a repeated bar. The example has been reproduced as it is written in the score.

This interpolation also differs from the previous two in its texture, which due to the contrary motion, closely spaced harmonies, polyphony, and the use of "clean" or "pure" sounding instruments (like the flute) provides this interpolation with the air of a hymn, introducing a moment of religiousness, purity, innocence and peace. In constructing sonorities, James favours intervals on either side of the octave (sevenths and ninths). The result of this is that there are no simple triads used until the last bar, with the chordal content consisting primarily of seventh, ninth, augmented and diminished chords, giving this section harmonic colour and depth. The appearance of a chord on D with the third omitted, is striking in its sudden consonance, and the interpolation ends with the harp spelling out an open fifth on D in crotchets under fermatas, allowing the chord to linger in suspense before dissolving.

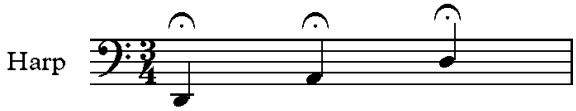


Figure 93: Bar 26 of *Paradise Regained* – Third Interpolation.

This three-note hanging harp motif leads into the fourth movement, "The Gardens of Eden". The title, plus the childlike and magical timbre achieved through the use of the perfect fifth in the strings and the presence of the celesta in the opening bar, links this movement to the first. Unlike the previous two movements where James makes regular use of time signature changes, this movement is mostly in 3/2 with only a single time signature change to 12/8 at Rehearsal Mark 42 (bar 13). Although James still makes use of complex rhythmic ideas, the ethereal mood of the music dominates. The harmonic language is simple, and the movement seems most concerned with the timbral integration of African musical procedures such as interlocking percussion parts and call and response. James ends the movement with an *accelerando*, accentuated by semi-quaver runs in the first violin and triplet runs in the flute and piccolo, pushing the music into the next movement.

Marked *Allegro spiritoso*, "Dance of Ecstasy" is a rhythmic and vibrant movement. For the first 42 bars of this movement, James makes extensive use of a single theme, developing and varying it both rhythmically and melodically, and moving it into

different parts of the orchestra. This theme (see Figure 94), first stated in the trumpet part played with wow-wow mutes, is a rhythmically vibrant figure, defined by meticulous attention to articulation. When paired with the dotted crotchet material in 12/8 in the double bass, the theme has a march-like quality, accentuated in bar 10 with the introduction of a snare drum. The theme is in E major, and the harmony supporting it in the horns and lower strings moves between the chords E major and A major.

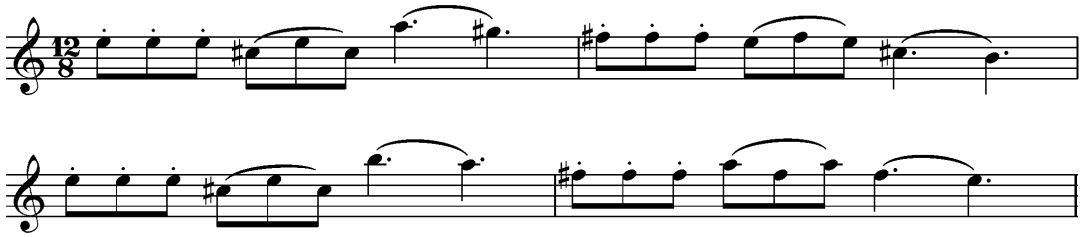


Figure 94: *Paradise Regained* – "V. Dance of Ecstasy" Main theme.

At Rehearsal Mark 46 (bar 5) the time signature changes to 9/8, and the theme moves from the trumpet to the oboe, altered to fit the new time signature. Although this variation is altered, starting a tone higher than the theme, the harmony underneath it – this time played in brass as opposed to the strings – remains unchanged.

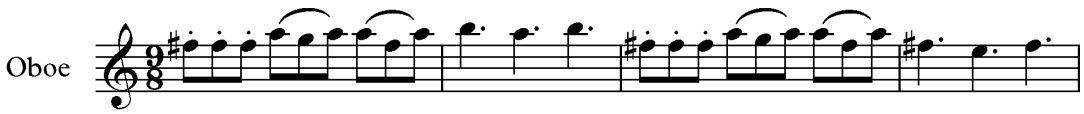


Figure 95: Variation of Theme at bars 5-8 of *Paradise Regained* – "V. Dance of Ecstasy".

At Rehearsal Mark 47 (bar 9) the time signature returns to 12/8, and the theme returns to the trumpet. At this point the theme is played a major third higher than in its original form, and lasts only two bars. This variation, as with the previous one, is played over similar harmonic material, with the C sharp-B movement in the first bar of this variation transposed down an octave in order to accommodate the comfortable range of the trumpet.

The trumpets are interrupted by the flutes and xylophone at Rehearsal Mark 48 (bar 11), who usurp it. From bars 11-14, James alternates between the time signatures 15/8 and 9/8, and thus this variation is altered to fit with these meter changes.

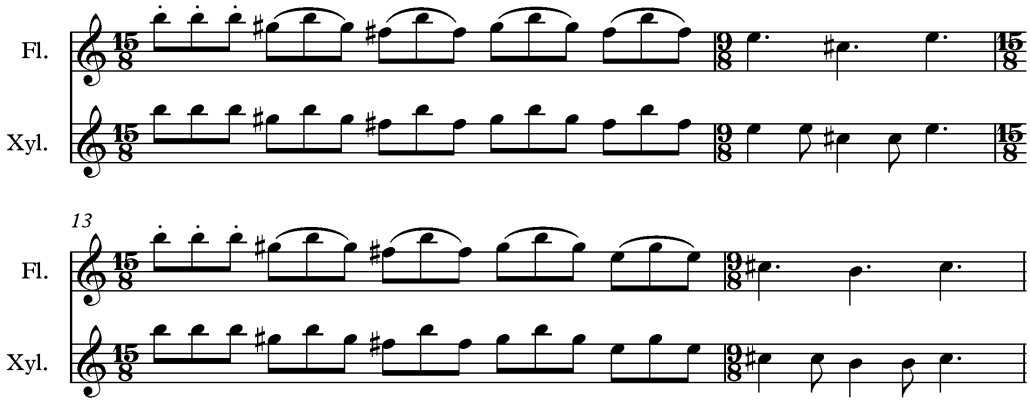


Figure 96: Bars 11-14 of *Paradise Regained* – "V. Dance of Ecstasy".

James once again changes time signatures in the next section, this time to 8/8 at Rehearsal Mark 49 (bar 15). This section is a linking section, and James uses a descending scale in a 3+3+2 grouping, melodically built on a descending E major scale starting at different degrees. As with the call and response of the previous movement, James moves this pattern around the orchestra, with the different timbres and registers being accented. It is first played by the xylophone and the first and second violins, then by marimba, the second violin and viola, then by piccolo, flutes, oboes, clarinet and xylophone, and then finally at bar 18 by flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons and marimba.

The theme reappears in the trumpet at bar 21, played a major third higher over harmonically similar material, with a new variation of the theme emerging in the clarinets at Rehearsal Mark 51 (bar 23), grouped in four groups of three quavers, the first group being *staccato* and the subsequent three groups being *legato*.

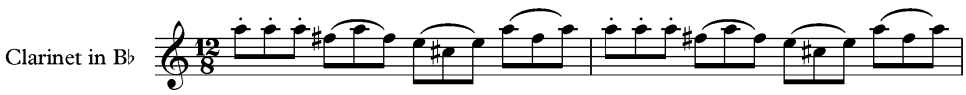


Figure 97: Variation of the theme at Bar 23 of *Paradise Regained* – "V. Dance of Ecstasy".

The theme in its original form returns at Rehearsal Mark 54 (bar 31). The texture here is grander compared to its original appearance, with the theme being played not only by the trumpets (as in its original form), but also by clarinets and the first and second violins. Harmonically, this section features an A major to E ninth chord movement, with the A major chord occupying the first nine quavers of each bar, and the ninth chord based on E being played over the last three. This harmonic rhythm is accented by horns, trombones, tuba and double bass. A final variation of the theme is stated, and a linking section based in E major propels the music to a new and dramatic *Poco piu mosso* section at Rehearsal Mark 57 (bar 43).

The move into this section is jolting, partly because of the large crash of the bass drum and cymbal on beat 1 of bar 43, and partly because of the semitone harmonic movement from an E major scalar passage to a ninth chord on F at bar 43. From here until the end of the work, the time signature changes on each bar, moving between 4/4, 5/4, 3/4, 8/4 and 6/4. These time signature changes are accented, as in previous movements, by percussion crashes on the first beat of each bar, as well as by thematic material based around varying groupings, with each grouping variation alluding to time signature changes. For the last four bars from Rehearsal Mark 58 (bar 49) to the end, the music is propelled forward by fast arpeggio runs before it ends firmly on an A major chord marked *fortissimo*.

Arguably the most programmatically interesting of the movements are the last two: the Finale because of its extensive use of musical quotation, and the Epilogue, which consists of a proposed new South African National Anthem. The Finale movement begins with four bars of atmospheric orchestral writing, and the interspersing of solo material. At Rehearsal Mark 60 (bar 5), *Poco piu mosso*, the music remains atmospheric but begins to gain some forward momentum. The percussion instruments – crotales, small bells and glass bottle half filled with water – provide a texture that is both atmospheric while retaining rhythmic solidity. This momentum is also achieved through the repeated phrase in the bassoon, built up mainly of triplets, accenting beats one and four of each bar by having a rest on the previous quaver beat, as can be seen below.

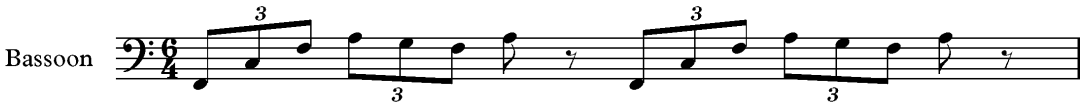


Figure 98: *Paradise Regained* – "VI. Finale" – Repeated bassoon theme.

Harmonically, James uses triadic material with functional clarity, with no chromatic inflections to deter from a sense of progression and in this way contributes to a sense of gathering momentum involving a gradually denser texture, faster rhythmic motifs and increasing dynamic volume. This builds to Rehearsal Mark 63 (bar 21), where James uses his first musical quotation: "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika". Marked at *Andante sostenuto* in D minor, the horns and trombones give this politically important melody its due deference in terms of stateliness and solemnity.

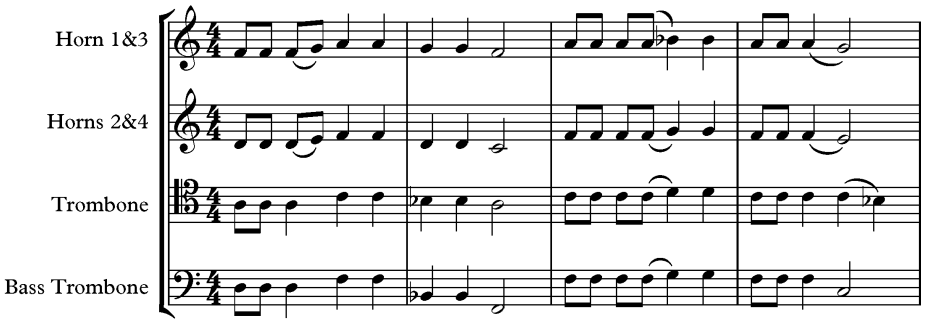


Figure 99: *Paradise Regained* – "VI. Finale" – Brass playing "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika".

In the fourth bar of this solo, James has the oboe play "Die Stem", juxtaposing the two anthems: one historically associated with Apartheid, and the other with the struggle against Apartheid (see Figure 100).

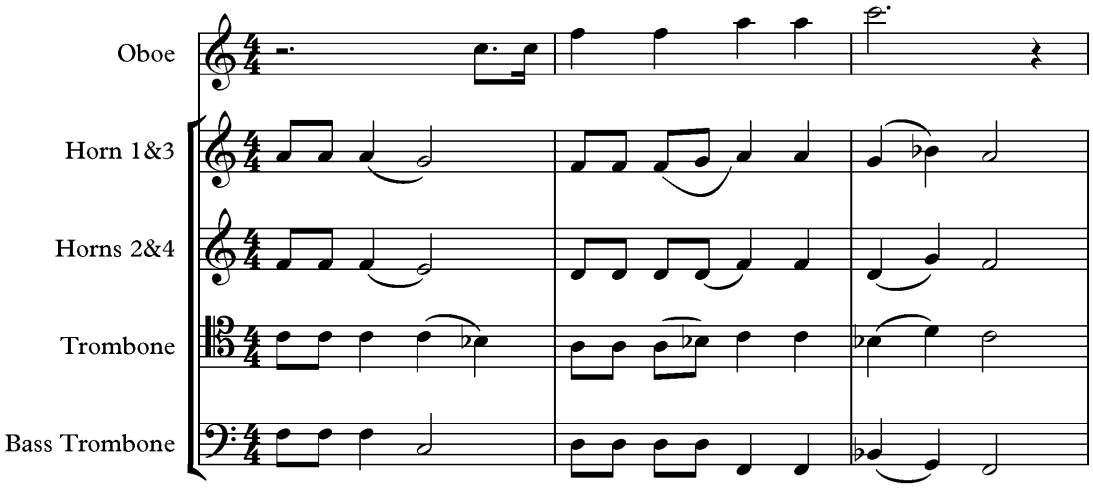


Figure 100: *Paradise Regained* – "VI. Finale" – Juxtaposition of "Die Stem" and "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika".

In addition to this, James also has the clarinet quote the last line of the Afrikaans verse of the "Die Stem" ("Waar die kranse antwoord gee") at bar 37 (see Figure 101).

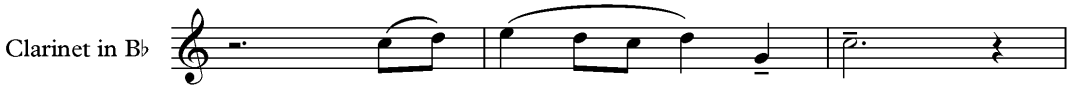


Figure 101: *Paradise Regained* – "VI. Finale" – Appearance of "Die Stem".

In contrast to James's sparing use of "Die Stem", his use of "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" is extensive. While the flute and first violin play interspersed solos, the clarinets and bassoons play the last line of "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" ("Thina, lusapho lwayo").

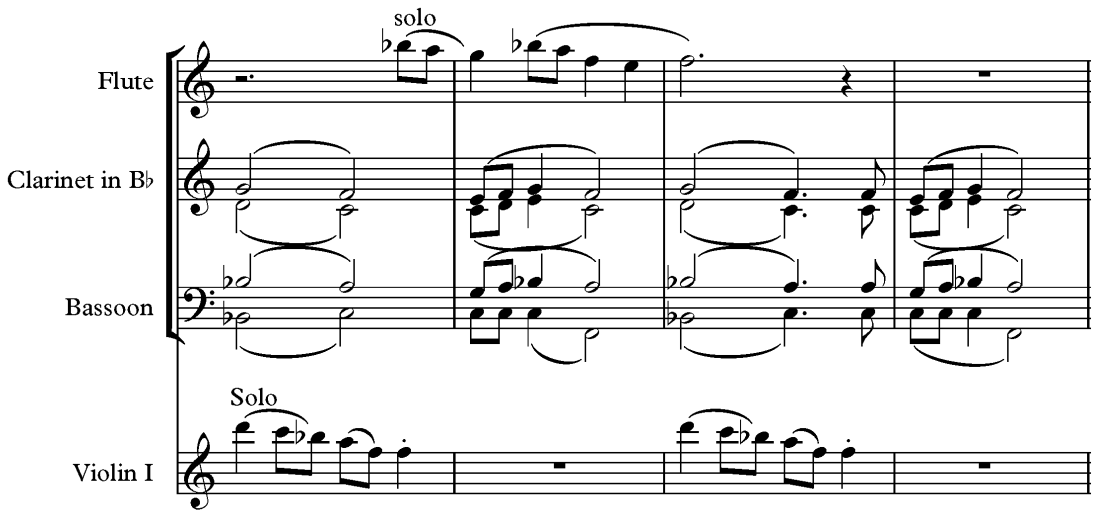
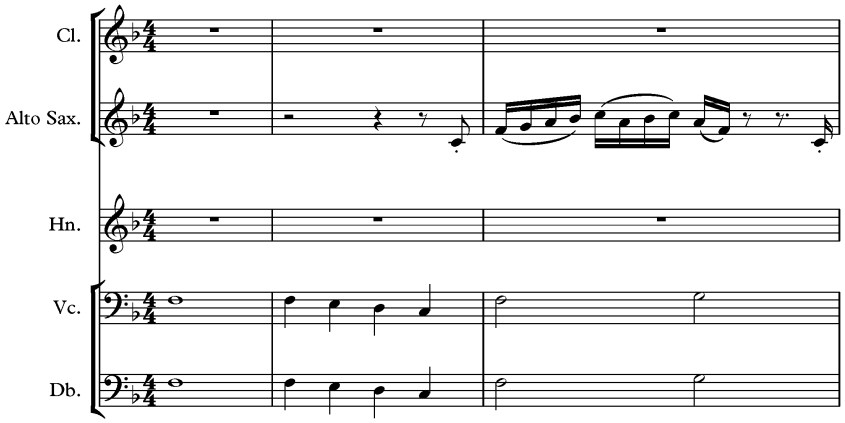
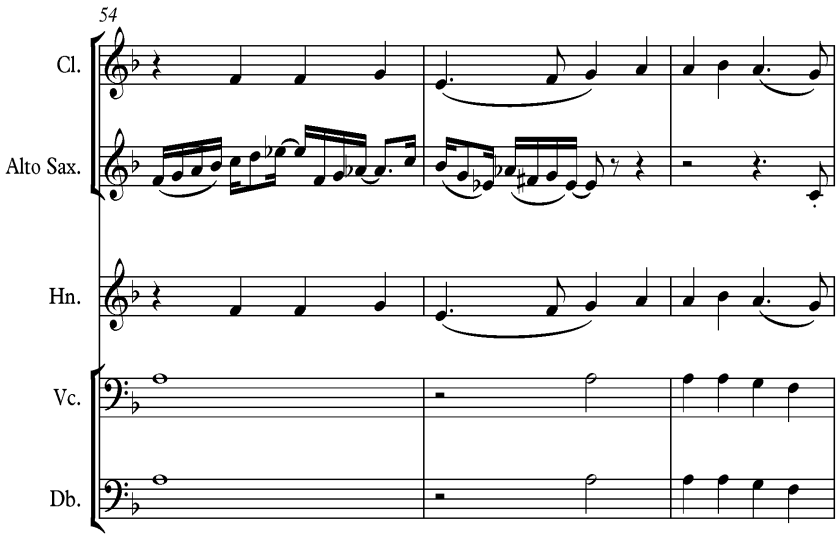


Figure 102: Bars 27-30 of *Paradise Regained* – "VI. Finale".

James continues his use of "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" at Rehearsal Mark 65 (bar 31), moving the theme to strings and in the process changing the timbre of the music from stately and solemn to nostalgic and expressive. With a snare drum and timpani roll as a pickup into bar 41, James introduces the English verse of the anthem played on the flutes, piccolo and violin I. The lower brass fanfare underneath it, combined with the percussion roll that preceded it, imparts to this section of "Die Stem" a high sense of drama. James closes off this section of the movement (the only section in which he quotes the "Die Stem") with further interspersed solo material, none of which is derived from the anthems he has used before.

From bar 51 (two bars before Rehearsal Mark 68), James introduces his next two musical quotes almost simultaneously: the cello and double bass play "All People That On Earth Do Dwell" while the trumpets play "O Sacred Head Now Wounded". Three bars later at the pickup into bar 54 James adds the alto saxophone playing Charlie Parker's "Ornithology", and then in the next bar he adds the British National Anthem "God Save The Queen" in the horns and clarinet. While the interesting interlocking of different themes is cerebrally impressive, it does not musically achieve the same effect, due largely to the orchestration. James assigns "Ornithology" to only a single instrument, which is drowned out by the rest of the orchestra. The sound achieved is therefore less of a pastiche of well-known musical phrases, but rather a semi-controlled fugue which sounds messy in spite of James's well-considered construction.





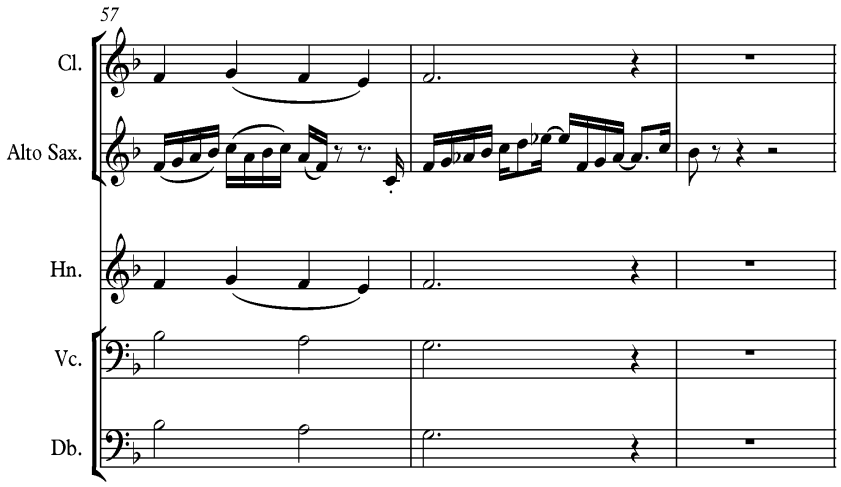


Figure 103: Bars 51-59 of *Paradise Regained* – "VI. Finale".

This continues until Rehearsal Mark 70 (bar 68) where James has the first violin and oboe play Duke Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood", while clarinets and alto saxophone play Charlie Parker's "Anthropology" in a bop style (Figure 104).

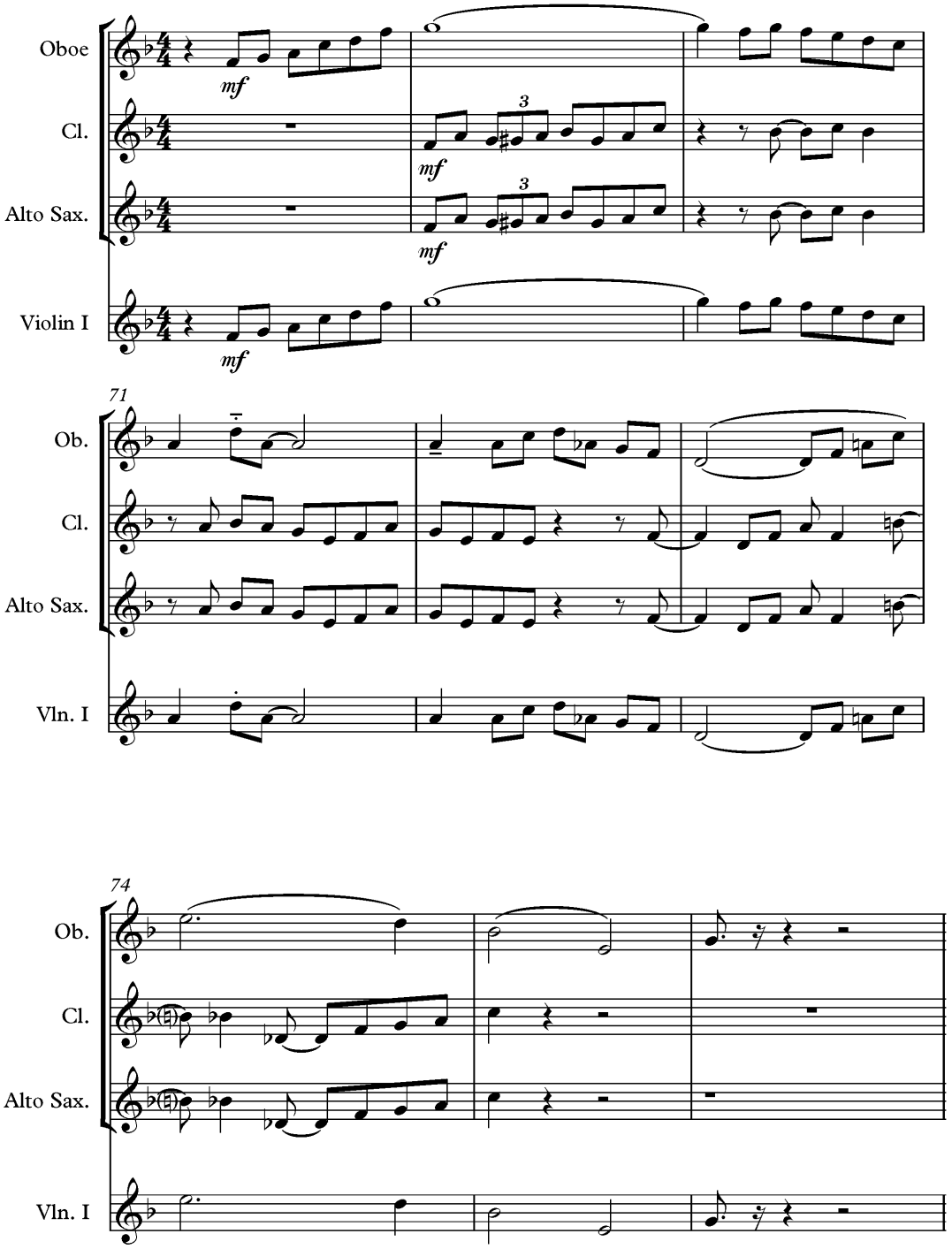


Figure 104: Bars 68-76 of *Paradise Regained* – "VI . Finale"

James continues to use these two themes, and at the pickup into Rehearsal Mark 71, he has the violins and cello also play the Ellington theme, giving the music a sweeping character that moves straight into the final interpolation.

The Epilogue presents a very different musical landscape from earlier movements. The fact that this movement was added to the work two years after its composition is unsurprising and in many ways its audible difference gives this movement the sense that it was tacked on rather than skilfully linked. The most obvious way in which this movement stands out is the inclusion of an SATB choir singing a new anthem, with the melody and text written by James. The music is diatonic and clearly in G major, remaining in 4/4 for the entire duration of the movement. There are far fewer intricate rhythmic interventions, with the brass parts often doubling the choral parts. The homophonic chordal approach is also somewhat conventional, making this movement the most accessible of the entire symphonic poem. The texture of the music is as one would expect of an anthem: musically serious and ceremonial. While the orchestral application is stylistically accurate to anthem approach, James's use of text and how he sets it, is unfortunately not. In the previously mentioned letter to Mrs. van der Walt, James mentioned that "the words are intentionally simple in order to appeal to children; the music is also simple and thus easily memorable."

I would argue that James's choice of text – in this case one he wrote himself – and his setting thereof, results in an anthem that is disjointed and lopsided, and thus in no way either simple or easily memorable. Included below is the text that James wrote for this work.

South Africa,[366] *thou promised land of peace*
Protect and guide your children of grace
Bring hope, peace, true joy, and happiness
Thus may God's blessings dwell on us all

South Africa, thou beauty radiates across the seas,
great mountains and skies.
For the sun which shines upon our country
Provides us with growth, warmth and comfort

South Africa, thou promised land of peace
Forgive your children for lack of grace

[366] James indicates that the use of the words "South Africa" can be supplanted by "Azania".

Teach us to respect each other by giving
Each other dignity.

South Africa, though nature's elements
Fierce and tempestuous against thee rally
Thy honour and thy glory shall triumph
For fortunate and favour shall thee find

South Africa, thou guiding light of hope
Protect your sisters of Africa.
Strengthen your brothers with fortitude
And supply your leaders with wisdom

Almighty God, we ask for your guidance
In this era of need and hope
Now gently lead us by your holiness
Along new fresh paths of tenderness

By writing James's words out in the form of the text of an anthem (namely divided into stanzas of four lines each) the difficulties become clear. The syllabic count of each line is not consistent, which makes this text inappropriate for setting. To make the words fit into a melody to be sung – especially one intended to be easy to sing – James has had to use rhythmically awkward settings. The use of unnecessarily long words, grammatical errors (one cannot "give" dignity), as well as enjambment, not only have the effect of being challenging to set, but also of making these words hard to remember. This is obviously problematic for a piece of music that an entire country is meant to sing from memory.

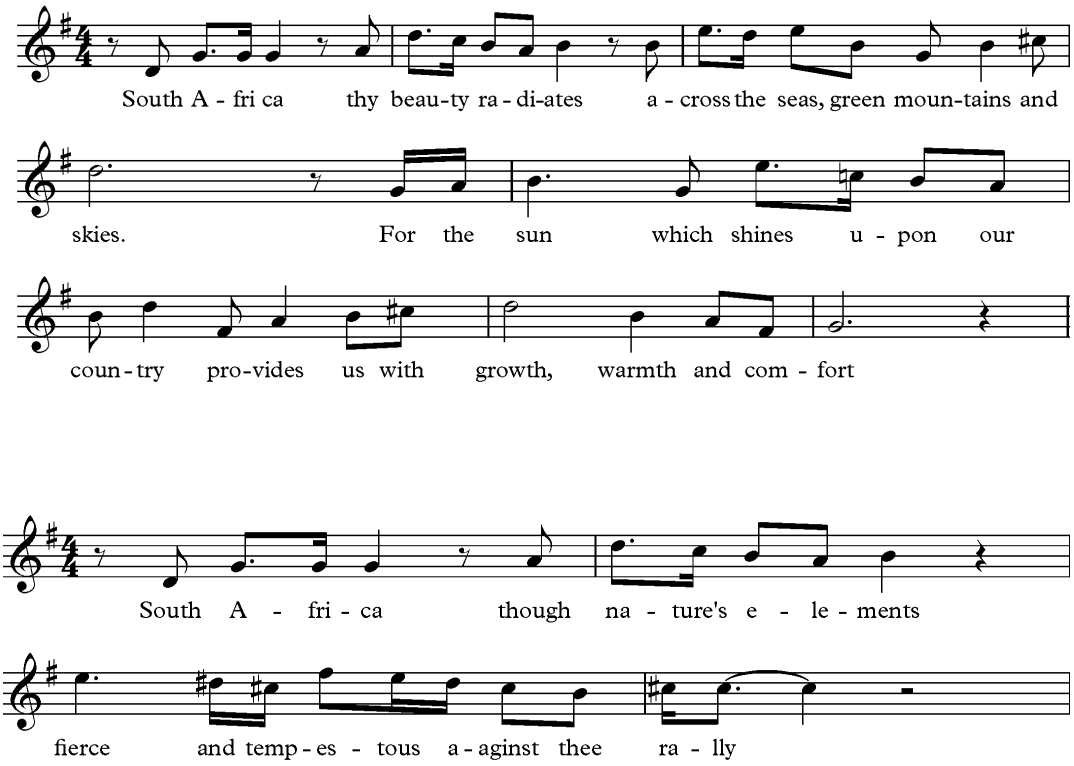


Figure 105: Bars 108-115 and bars 104-106 of *Paradise Regained* – "VII. Epilogue".

The uneven syllabic balance, combined with the awkward use of syncopation, makes the music hard to sing for amateurs. If, as has been seen, James set out with the intention of writing an anthem that could be sung by children and amateurs, this anthem must surely be viewed as a failure, or at least short of his goal.

The shortcomings of the text that bleed into the music manifest additionally in the way the work ends. Because James's text does not seem to build to an emotional climax – as one might expect from a text expressing patriotism – the music does not either. Instead of a grand ending, this movement (and thus the work as a whole) fades out rather than ending triumphantly. This is not necessarily indicative of bad symphonic composition, but in the context of the work as a whole and the psychological and emotional function expected of the anthem, seems in retrospect to be a poor musical decision.

I have spent considerable time providing an engagement with *Paradise Regained*, as I regard this as work as one of James's most important. Within the context of this

dissertation, it allows a taking stock of the musical significance of James's contribution, not only because it is a large and ambitious work created by a mature composer, but because it manifests what is best and least convincing about James's music. In *Paradise Regained*, three distinct compositional traits invite comment. These are his use of harmonic ambiguity, his references to jazz and his interest in African music.

James's use of harmony displays a deep understanding of functional harmony, so much so that the composer displays his harmonic fluency by playing with the harmony, implying harmonies and simultaneously disguising them. James makes use of harmonic ambiguity through two techniques: harmonic decentring (making the function of a chord unclear through the addition of a single note) and chord stacking (placing two chords on top of each other). In the first movement, he begins with the use of an open fifth on A (A and E) in the violins, while the celesta plays an A major chord. While this may be clearly indicative of a harmonic content that signals the chord of A major, because of the open key signature, and because James has instruments play material with pitch classes of F sharp and C sharp but not G natural or G sharp, this A major chord could either be viewed as the tonic of A major, or the dominant of D major. This tonal ambiguity continues until Rehearsal Mark 2 (bar 12) when the oboe and first violin play a G natural, theoretically locating this work in D major.

In the first movement, bar 10, James adds a B to a D major chord, blurring the function of the chord, as it could either be considered a D major chord with an added sixth (D, F sharp, A, B), or B minor seventh chord (B, D, F sharp, A). James does the same thing at Rehearsal Mark 7 (bar 34) of this movement, by adding the sixth degree (F sharp) to an A major chord, creating a similar ambiguity between an A major with an added sixth (A, C sharp, E, F sharp) and a minor/major seventh chord on F sharp (F sharp, A, C sharp, E). In bar 52 of Movement III, James alternates between using a major and minor third (A/A flat) over bass material implying an F-based harmony, once again through the use of open fifths (F-C).

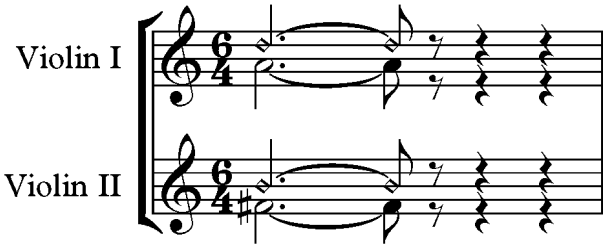


Figure 106: Bar 10 of *Paradise Regained* – "I. The Garden of Eden".

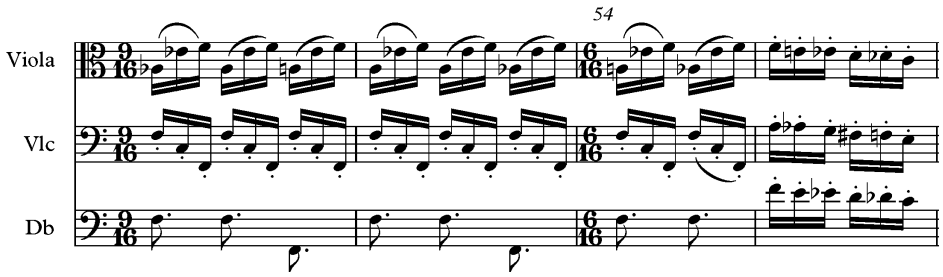


Figure 107: Bars 52-55 of *Paradise Regained* – "III. Dance of Eternal Life".

In addition to instances of harmonic ambiguity through the addition of pitches to create multi-functional quartads, James also uses bitonality through the placing of two chords on top of one another. This can be seen at Rehearsal Mark 19 (bar 33) of the second movement, where he expands on the major/minor tonal ambiguity of the first movement by placing a D major chord in the brass section, while the woodwinds play a B minor chord. Similarly, in the third movement, James uses chord stacking in the strings, combining E major and an augmented chord on D with an added fourth (bar 15) and B major and an open fifth built on C sharp (bar 19).

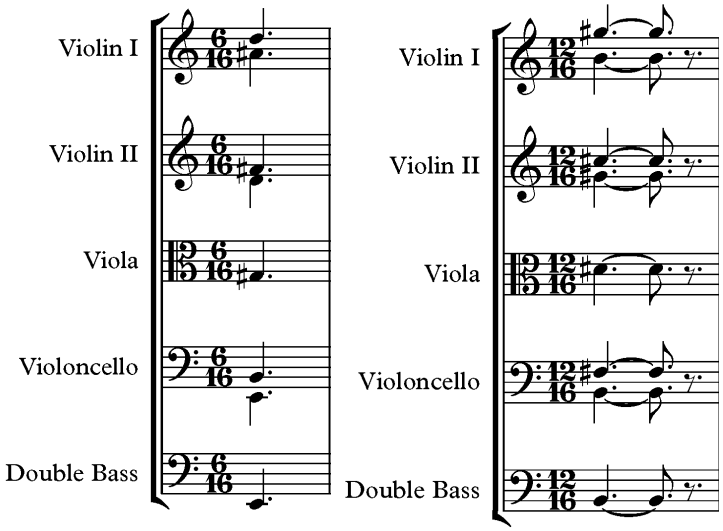


Figure 108: Bars 15-19 of *Paradise Regained* –" III. Dance of Eternal Life".

Here we see James's ambiguous use of harmony questioning the boundary between chords, a concept he extends in Movement IV. At Rehearsal Mark 42 (bar 13), *Poco piu mosso*, James stacks four chords atop one another: D major with an added sixth/B minor seventh in the harp, celesta, tuba and trombones, and A minor with an added sixth/F sharp half diminished seventh in the horns. Each of these binary chord stacks is related (sharing pitch class components), and are then complicated by further stacking of added binaries. James thus allows subtle chordal tensions to call into question the function of chords and to blur the lines between chord identities.

When asked about James's taste in music, most interview participants described him as a person who had diverse musical tastes. His collection of LP's was donated to the CJC by Melissa James at the end of 2015, and the cataloguing of this collection indicates this to be accurate, but with a strong prevalence towards orchestral music. Among the jazz music in James's collection is South African jazz such as Sipho "Hot Stix" Mabuse and Mahlatini and the Mahotella Queens, as well as more mainstream American jazz such as Count Basie and his Orchestra and Charlie Parker. James clearly listened to and enjoyed jazz as a general musical idiom.

When Tina James spoke of her time with Chris in Cincinnati, she spoke of Chris's desire to try everything, ranging from harpsichord to electronic music, as well as jazz. Chris had done a big band jazz arrangement of Charlie Parker's *Yardbird Suite* (1946), however Tina has said that Chris "struggled" with this arrangement, and "could not get into the genre".[367] It seems that although Chris had engaged with the jazz idiom in other compositions (*Gymnastics, Three jazzy interludes*), and enjoyed the music, his approach to the genre was not stylistically idiomatic.

The most obvious example of James's use of jazz in *Paradise Regained* is in the Epilogue, where he quotes Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington. Both instances are musically problematic. Parker's "Ornithology", played at Rehearsal Mark 68 (bar 53) is inaudible, being scored only for saxophone in a busy orchestral texture. Although James scores "Anthropology" for alto saxophone and clarinets, it is also barely audible. James's approach to the Ellington quote is also not idiomatically practical. The best

[367] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.

known version of "In a sentimental mood" is played on the 1963 album *Duke Ellington & John Coltrane,* with Coltrane playing the theme in a swung style with *rubato* on top of Duke Ellington's shimmering piano accompaniment. When the rhythm is played in a more precise manner and is not swung (as can be expected from an orchestra, and as is heard on the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra (KZNPO) recording of this work), this theme sounds very similar to George Gershwin's "Someone to watch over me". The result, not aided by the very straight way in which the orchestra plays (as can only be expected from a group of musicians trained in classical music with the goal of playing as uniformly as possible) is music that sounds too straight, and suggests a composer who does not fully grasp the idiom.

The musical link to Gershwin – as well as the American orchestral jazz sound in general – is also evident in other places in the work. The oboe solo at bar 36 of the first movement is similar to Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with its use of syncopation, grace notes and triplets.

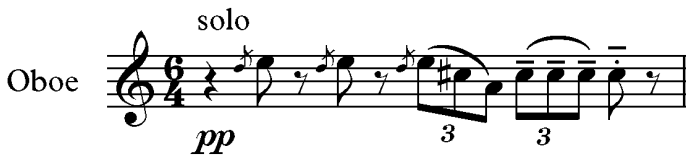


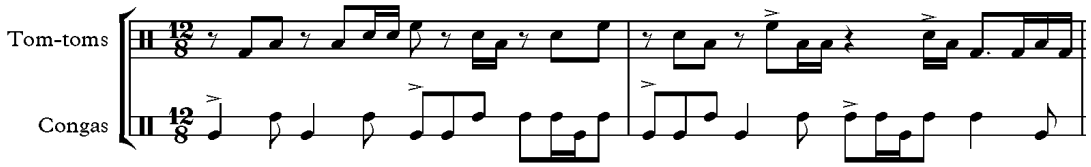
Figure 109: Bar 36 of *Paradise Regained* – "I. Paradise – The Garden of Eden".

James's quotation of Parker and Ellington, a rhythmic approach that is stylistically linked to jazz, and orchestral timbres akin to the American twentieth-century orchestra jazz sound, as well as instances of jazz-derived harmony such as the use of the blues scale in the third movement, is evidence that he attempted to engage with and integrate the jazz idiom into *Paradise Regained.* In listening to this work and reading through the score, I must agree with Tina James's observation that Chris, certainly in this work, did not "get into the genre". James's use and application of jazz music leans heavily towards a white, American orchestral jazz sound, even when he is quoting directly from Parker and Ellington – both prominent figures in African-American jazz. His voice as a Western classical music composer is arguably too prominent, and the result musically is that this work sounds like a Western classical composer trying – but not entirely succeeding – to utilise the jazz idiom within his approach.

For a work that is programmatically linked so strongly to South African politics, James uses surprisingly few musical elements which, broadly, could be considered African. However, when James does use African musical traits, it is not done in a stereotypical manner, or in a manner that characterizes African music and/or culture as exotic. This is unsurprising considering James's research into African and particularly South African music, giving him a more refined sense of the idiomatic characteristics of the genre.

James's use of the perfect fifth interval could be seen as an African musical trait, or could be part of James's harmonic language, as a mechanism for shadowing the major/minor characteristic of a chord. His use of African percussion instruments like the marimba and kalimba does provide an African timbre to the work; however, his use of the instruments is subtle, and James does not use these instruments in a quintessentially "tribalist" manner as is often the case with Western classical use of African music. His subtle approach to these instruments allows the instruments to blend into and integrate with the orchestra to form a homogenous sound.

It is not just the employment of African percussion instruments that gives this work a subtle African timbre, but also James's use of interlocking percussion parts. A trait associated with African music and particularly the amadinda music of Uganda, the use of interlocking rhythms allows for complex rhythmic ideas to be played by each percussionist, and uniformity is achieved by ensuring that when one percussionist has a rest, the other is playing.[368] James makes particularly skilful use of this technique in the fourth movement, with the tom-toms and congas interlocking.



[368] G Kubik, *Theory of African Music,* vol. 2, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010, p. 42.

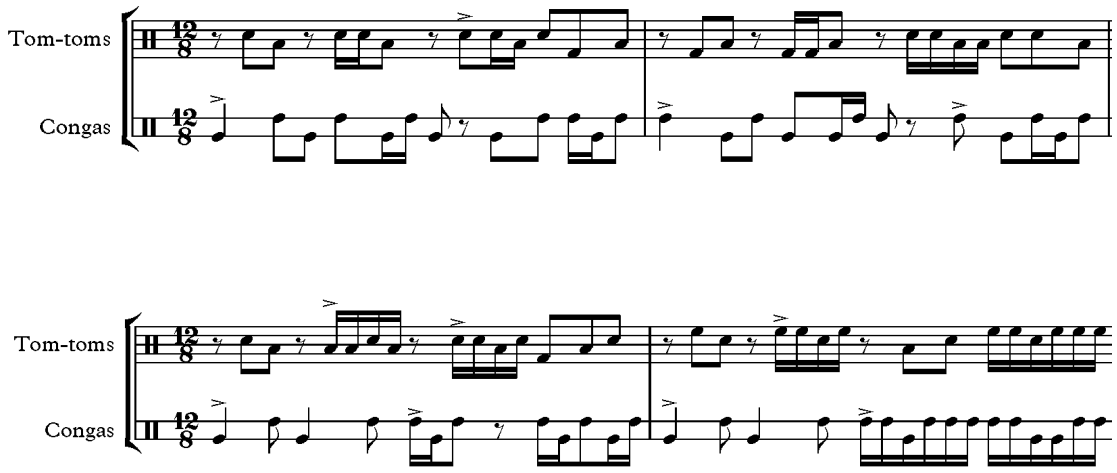
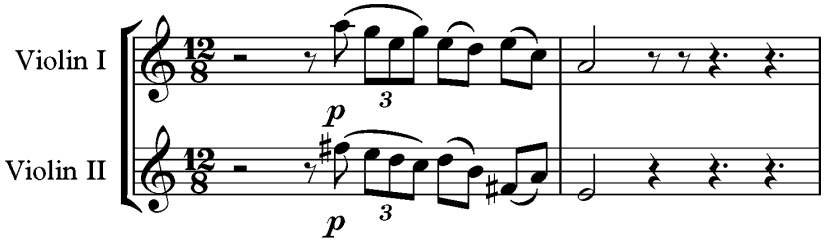


Figure 110: *Paradise Regained* – "IV. The Garden of Eden". Interlocking percussion parts.

The other musical trait that James uses which can be considered African – but is also found in the music of African-American slaves and that led to its implementation in blues and jazz – is the use of call and response. Used at the string *tutti* of bar 13 of the fourth movement, the first and second violins play a phrase, which is then answered (although not identically) in the clarinets. The response is played by a different woodwind instrument, moving from clarinets, to oboes, to flutes, to bassoon. Moving the response up the woodwind section and then dropping the register from flute to bassoon, creates diversity in the response, which is juxtaposed against the consistency of the violins' call. This call and response effect is particularly audible from bars 16-18, where the celesta is no longer playing, drawing the ear to the interaction between the violins and woodwinds.

Call:



Response:

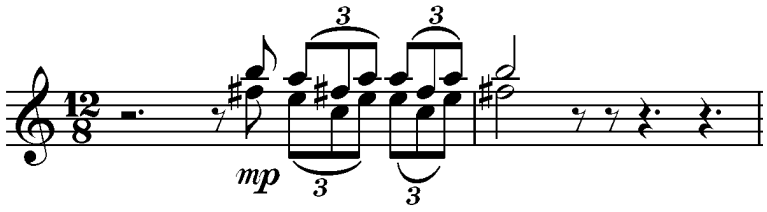


Figure 111: *Paradise Regained* – "IV. The Garden of Eden". Call and response themes.

James's decision to score these African musical techniques for non-African instruments, is indicative of his careful consideration of the use of African materials. This is particularly applicable in his use of interlocking percussion, as the stereotypical Western exoticist view of African music is a driving, tribalist percussion sound. In using these instruments James is displaying a nuanced and respectful approach to African music, giving it space within the orchestra without orientalising it.

Paradise Regained is not only an important work musically, but also biographically. The programmatic link of this work to a utopian space is straightforward, visible in the title of the work and movements. As a religious man, James had a strong vision of a utopian space, one which he articulates in a notebook of thoughts and letters.

HEAVEN

Chris James

> Everything is pure. Trees, flowers, herbs flourish. The seas are extremely clear without any oil pollution. All types of fish flourish. The animals on the land are at peace and do not fight with one another. Animals no longer prey on one another. They all eat herbs or grass and vegetables.
> There are no fires, only [illegible] and clouds which surround the sky. All men and women live at peace with one another – there are no more broken hearts. There is eternal joy and bliss. Children are taught about the birds, animals, trees and plants. Mankind has no more anger or tears. Every newborn child knows who their father and mother are and they are cared for by their parents.
> There is no more of the negative emotions such as hatred, deceit, envy, jealousy, sexual betrayal or weakness. Perhaps there is no sexual activity in heaven at all because

> mankind has been elevated to a higher sphere where sexual contact is no longer necessary.
> There is no evil, there is no wrath or fear. The angels sing the best music and the orchestras play the best music.
> Every living creature has a home. There is no need for money and food is plentiful. There are no fences or gates or cages. Every living thing has freedom of movement. There are no hospitals or places for the sick because there is no sickness. There are no plagues. There is no violence whatsoever.
> There are no cars in heaven, no robots or hooters, simply peace and pure music. There are no libraries in heaven or books because there is no need for history. Mankind (resurrected) has forgotten the history and so has the eternal sacred being who created the heavens and earth.
> There are no weapons and the weather is pleasant all the time.

Reading this undated description, one cannot help but think of it as quite simplistic and childlike, a mood which is broken with the mention of the fairly adult idea of "sexual betrayal". This archival fragment provides insight into James's childlike notions of utopia, where paradise is expressed as a space of perpetual safety for all, characterized by the dissolution of boundaries as diverse as dietary requirements of animals, weather, economics and even time.

Considering the musical characteristics of *Paradise Regained* in the light of this fragment, it seems reasonable to surmise that James is using this work musically to imagine and represent his image of paradise. James's use of timbral effects that seem nostalgic, magical and childlike seem to point to the idea of this paradise being a place of pure innocence and safety. It also reflects the idealism of the post-Apartheid South African "rainbow nation", and so can be seen as a reflection not only of James's heavenly paradise but of a desired South African political paradise. What has also been shown through the analysis is that James blurs and at times completely distorts the musical boundaries between different chords, rhythms and instrumentations. This musical stretching of borders speaks to James's utopian, idealist view of the dissolution of boundaries between people, animals, time and space.

If we reflect the life – seen through the archive – onto the music, we arrive at an interpretation of *Paradise Regained* that views this work as Chris expressing musically

his desire for an idyllic safe and boundless space. Yet in pivoting backwards, in re-examining James's life through this interpretation, it is possible to detect a very real desire for homogeneity. While this may reflect the politics of the time, it also speaks to James's position within white South African normativity. While previous discussions in this dissertation have demonstrated how James was marked by his mental illness, the musical assumption of white normativity as an evident basis for expressing utopian desires, could only have been made by someone decidedly embedded in such normativity. Given the difficult racial histories of both his place of birth and his place of residence, the desire to push for homogeneity shows a kind of uncritical white liberalism that can only benefit from an understanding of equality (a blurring of boundaries of individual indiscernibility, if you will) based on white normativity, rather than engage in an acknowledgement of racial pain and the intractability of inequality. While this behaviour is not an indicator of racism – and we know from Chris's reaction to the way his parents treated his half brothers that he was not racist – it does show a willingness to ignore the pain of others under the thin veil of rainbow nationhood.

Paradise Regained also provides, at a stretch, insights into James's concepts of home. If – as has been suggested – *Paradise Regained* is a musical representation of utopia, was this utopia modelled for Chris on a physical location? The programmatic elements of the work point quite clearly to this paradise being South Africa, but there is also another possibility. In interviews, Islay, Melissa and Marjorie all made special mention of the opening section of *Paradise Regained*, and Islay has not only said it is her favourite of Chris's pieces, but also that she had chosen that work to play at his funeral. Marjorie spoke of her son's love of animals – and his propensity to give kittens as gifts – and particularly of the link birds and bird songs provided with his love of animals and music.

> We lived on a farm, and we had this huge big converted pianola, made in New York actually. It really held its tune marvellously, dreadful looking thing, huge big box, and thick. He started practising and what have you, and then he realised that the birds were gathering. So he decided, fine, he would now tune in to the birds and call them all. So he listened to the birds, tune in, and the birds liked it. So they gathered, and they used to

> have their side of the chorus, and then he'd have his side of the chorus, and this could go on for some time.[369]

Chris's love for animals is seen in his description of heaven, and it is thus not surprising that, in musically imagining such a place, he would aim to recreate bird sounds. Yet the use of bird sounds, and the call and response in this work, can be read as Chris musically reimagining his childhood on his parents' farm in Rhodesia, surrounded by nature. This expression of the idyllic farming lifestyle in this work calls into question whether the physical location of paradise is South Africa, as the programme suggests. In *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape and the Problem of Belonging,* David McDermott Hughes argues that white Zimbabweans, after ZANU-PF came into power in 1980, constructed their identity in terms of land forms and nature, as a method of self-isolation from the remainder of the population (approximately 95%). While James's isolation as a composer and as a person does not manifest along racial lines – as his relationship with Ted as well as musicians such as Mzilikhazi Khumalo and Joseph Segoati indicate – it does show that attachment to the land is a part of Chris's identity as a white Zimbabwean and self-proclaimed farmer's son.

Yet while one could read in this work the expression of the composer's love for his Rhodesian childhood through a nostalgic, idyllic musical expression of "The Garden of Eden", the music also suggests links to England and The United States of America. The use of "God Save The Queen" directly after "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika", enmeshed in a dearth of quoted material relating to Rhodesian/Zimbabwean politics, as well as the additional presence of American orchestral techniques and American white jazz (an aesthetic which is not assuaged by the use of Parker and Ellington), suggests that James's utopia could not be finitely located to a single geographical space. James's utopia is therefore a no-space, or an un-space, a space where all beings are indiscernible, while simultaneously having no fixed place. It is not unlike Breyten Breytenbach's "Middle World",[370] and similarly finds James exploring and accepting

[369] Interview with Marjorie James, 11 August 2015.
[370] Breytenbach & Sienaert, "Reflections on Identity: Breyten Breytenbach interviewed by Marilet Sienaert" p. 270

multiple identities: Rhodesian (and in this case seemingly actively *not* Zimbabwean), South African, English and American.

I stated earlier in this section that Movements VI and VII are arguably the most programmatically interesting of the seven movements. The use of musical quotations, and the fugal interweaving of these quotations, are pivotal in this programmatic agenda. In some instances, the music quoted by James aligns with the general theme of reconciliation within the work. The simultaneous quoting of "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" and "Die Stem" – two anthems historically steeped in opposition and already joined in the official South African National Anthem – speaks to a desire for racial union among black and white South Africans. Yet the second section of quotations features musical material that is philosophically unlinked to the theme of reconciliation. Combining "God Save The Queen" and "Ornithology" seems a strange choice musically to represent equality, because these two pieces do not constitute opposite ends of a historico-political spectrum as is the case with "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" and "Die Stem". If James was seeking a representation of equality within all musical genres (as he does in his arrangement of The Beatles' "Yesterday" which will be discussed later) then surely the combination of jazz/popular music and Western Classical music would be a better choice than combining the British national anthem with Charlie Parker? At Rehearsal Mark 70 (bar 68) James then combines two jazz standards, in a sense uniting two musical texts that are philosophically linked through being from the same genre and approximate time period. In this regard James's selection of musical material for quotation seems poorly considered, even arbitrary.

As has been pointed out, both *Images from Africa* and *Paradise Regained* make use of direct quotes of "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" and "Die Stem". Before considering how James's musical settings of these anthems compare with one another, a consideration should be given to the time periods in which both settings were conceived. In my discussion of *Paradise Regained* I spoke at length about the positive and reconciliatory political scene in South Africa at the time of its composition, and how in many ways this work reflects political optimism. *Images from Africa* was composed between 1985 and 1987, and as has been mentioned in the discussion on *Songs of lamentation and remonstration,* this was a politically turbulent time for South Africa. It is also worth noting that at the time of the composition of *Paradise Regained,* both "Nkosi Sikelel'

iAfrika" and "Die Stem" were part of the official South African national anthem despite the association that "Die Stem" has with Apartheid – a political compromise no doubt done to promote unity between black and white South Africans. However, at the time of the composition of *Images from Africa,* only "Die Stem" was acknowledged as the official national anthem, and "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" was not recognised as a national anthem but rather as the (prohibited) anthem of the resistance movement.

This distinction is important in understanding the symbolic aspects of each anthem at the time of each of James's compositions. In the 1980s, the pairing of the official Apartheid anthem with the anthem of the resistance movement made a very particular point about racial integration. In the programme notes for the work, James wrote:

> In the final maestoso section of the third movement two African anthems have been combined to depict the integration of different cultures and emphasize the symbolic and philosophic content of the last poem. The microcosmic political and social problems of Southern Africa may be equated to the barriers of cultural, religious and ethnic differences thoughout (sic) the entire world. These prejudices will only be overcome when human beings learn to love, respect and understand one another in a climate of tolerance and humility.

In post-1994 South Africa, the musical symbolism of integrating the two was less brazen, considering an integration of sorts had been attempted in the new anthem.[371] James did not see that any controversy of pairing the anthems in the 1980s would have faded after the end of Apartheid. Writing to his friend Cameron MacMillan on 29 July 2004 – ten years after the end of Apartheid – James stated:

> My doctoral dissertation remains a particularly controversial work, ~~particularly~~ [sic] especially in South African circles, and consequently I do not desire a performance of this work (except perhaps the third movement) during my lifetime.

Considering the different representational work done by the anthems at the different times of composition of *Images from Africa* and *Paradise Regained*, it is unsurprising

[371] Although Christopher Ballantine has argued that this attempted integration falls somewhat short of the mark. C Ballantine, "On Being Undone by Music: Thoughts Towards a South African Future Worth Having", *South African Music Studies,* vol. 34/35, 2015, p. 516.

that his treatment and integration of these anthems differs. In *Paradise Regained* his use of the anthems is briefer, giving way to James's use of other musical quotations in the *Finale* movement. In *Images from Africa* James makes a greater use of the anthems, allowing these quotations to push the work to its ending. James's setting of "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" in *Paradise Regained* is in F major in 4/4 time throughout, whereas in *Images from Africa* it is in 6/8 time and James uses different keys, including E major and B major. In *Paradise Regained,* James sets "Die Stem" in C major, beginning the phrase with a dotted rhythm, whereas in *Images from Africa* it is in F sharp major, and James begins the phrase with a quadtuplet, as can be seen in the musical example below.

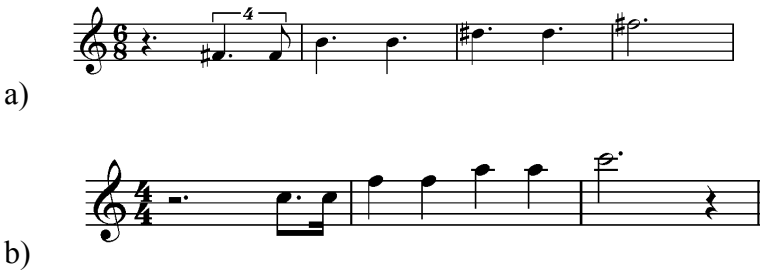


Figure 112: James's setting of "Die Stem" in a) *Images from Africa* and b) *Paradise Regained.*

The main difference between James's two settings is the degree to which he interweaves each anthem, and the mood which is achieved through how James accompanies these settings. In *Paradise Regained,* James's setting prioritises "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika", which is moved from the horns (where it has a stately character) to the strings where it evokes a sweeping Romanticism. "Die Stem" is only briefly used, with its opening phrase played as an oboe solo and its closing phrase played as a clarinet solo. In this way, "Die Stem" seems more of an afterthought, a kind of pastoral echo against the orchestra's expansive use of "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika". In contrast, the anthems in *Images from Africa* receive more equal attention, and the two themes are moved around the orchestra, sometimes played on their own and sometimes interlocking. In this instance, the two anthems represent two equal voices, speaking separately and together.

It is also in the accompaniment where contrasts in the treatment of the anthems between the two works can be seen. The use of interlocking solo material – particularly

in the woodwinds – as accompaniment to "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" in *Paradise Regained* gives the music a magical and whimsical flavour, one that is not overly dramatic. In *Images from Africa,* the anthem is accompanied by bassoon, double bass and celli playing a repeated fourteen-bar phrase (Figure 113), and the percussion section that becomes progressively denser in texture as the piece moves towards its end.

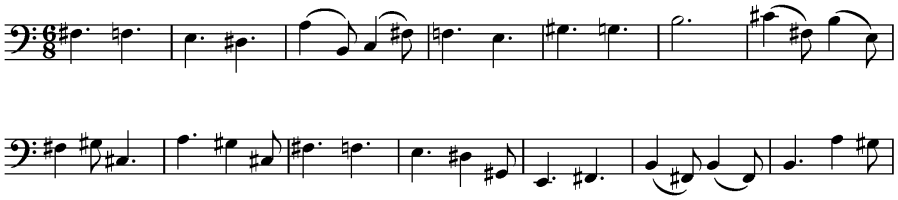


Figure 113: Repeated fourteen-bar phrase as accompaniment to the anthems in *Images from Africa.*

The use of this descending countertheme, scored in the lower register instruments, gives the music a darker character, especially when paired with the driving tom-tom figures which alternate between 3+3 and 2+2+2 rhythmic groupings. Here James's reconciliatory attempt is darker, reflective of the political scene in which it was conceived. The varying use of tone colour in the two works, as well as the prominence of "Die Stem" in *Images from Africa* and its minimal role in *Paradise Regained,* shows that James was sensitive to the political atmosphere of his surroundings. It can thus be seen that these two works, through their varying use of similar core musical material, each reflect a kind of snap-shot of a moment in South African cultural and political feeling.

James's suggested new national anthem in *Paradise Regained* is aurally conspicuous due to its uniform texture, straight 4/4 meter and conventional harmonic content. Its inclusion in the piece seems peculiar, and although James successfully connects it to the Finale with the fourth interpolation, it feels tacked on to the ending. In *Paradise Regained* as a whole, James demonstrates an expert and original orchestral approach, from ambient orchestral sounds, to thematic development throughout the instruments, to the contrapuntal interweaving of the quotations in the Finale. In this Epilogue, however, the composer's interesting orchestral voice flounders in favour of a more artisanal approach to orchestration in support of the anthem. This is an unfortunate aesthetic decision, ending a vibrantly orchestrated work with a bland setting.

Much like the use of quotations in the previous movement, James's anthem also seems philosophically poorly thought out. His suggested new South African national anthem is entirely European – from the use of a traditional European musical landscape to an English text. While scholars such as Christopher Ballantine have argued that the current South African national anthem is "an embarrassment: a crude, simplistic juxtaposition of two nationalist songs",[372] in comparison to James's anthem the current compromise is more diverse in its representation of South Africans of different languages, in spite of its patchwork mentality. James's anthem not only is in English, but it is a form of older English with its use of words such as "thou" and "thee". The English usage associates the text simultaneously with the poetry of Shakespeare and the religious language in the Bible. Although probably done to link this text to old poetic beauty and religiousness – two well-known passions of James's – what it does is further entrench an imperialist mood, more reminiscent of South Africa's difficult colonial relationship with Britain than a vision towards a united future of reconciliation.

As with James's almost naïve desire for homogeneity based in an uncritical acceptance of white normativity, this use of a European sounding anthem for an African country is a sign of white privilege. The fact that he dedicated to Nelson Mandela a new national anthem that sounds entirely European, and presumably unintentionally connected this anthem to British imperialism, is not only indicative of a lack of critical consideration but a sign of white liberal obliviousness. When the anthem is paired with, at times, poor appropriation of jazz – a music steeped in its own history of black pride – James's approach in this piece to unity and reconciliation moves from being naïve to being problematic.

While the anthem and the Finale are problematic in this way, this work as a whole deserves its prominent place in the James oeuvre. Due to a number of factors, it has received more acclaim in South Africa than any of his other compositions. Its instrumentation is sufficiently conventional that most local orchestras would be able to perform it, and it is musically accessible enough that most concert-attending audiences

[372] C Ballantine, "On Being Undone by Music: Thoughts Towards a South African Future Worth Having", *South African Music Studies,* vol. 34/35, 2015, p. 516.

would not struggle to enjoy it. The first five movements show James to be a composer familiar with orchestral capabilities, and comfortable enough in the genre to express musically his deeply felt desires for unity and reconciliation.

This work also acts as a historical snapshot of a country's political landscape. While some two decades after its inception *Paradise Regained* seems politically dated, it does aptly capture the political mood of hope, optimism, idealism and reconciliation of post-1994 South Africa. Composed at a time when James had already begun to experience isolation as a composer due to lack of engagement with other South African composers,[373] one cannot help but feel that the work would have profited from the kind of reflective consideration prompted by collegial or peer engagement. Had James been a part of a vibrant and active community of performers, composers or scholars who valued his music, he might have revised its more problematic aspects. Because it lends itself so readily to being interpreted not only aesthetically, but also with regard to James's philosophical leanings and character, *Paradise Regained* can be understood as a kind of biographematic fragment that speaks of a life as an intentionally self-contained "work".

Paradise Regained was performed by the KZNPO on 11 November 2004. Shortly before this performance, Chris was diagnosed with leukemia, and admitted to hospital, although he does not make notes of this in his diary.[374] The fact that he was in hospital before the performance, is confirmed by a diary entry on 11 November 2004: "Readmitted to hospital."

> He was diagnosed with this terrible leukemia, but he had a concert on … and he had to be on stage. So we put him into hospital, but he's got this bad leukemia … we thought Chris was going to die. It came to Thursday night, the concert and we said 'This is no good, we're taking Chris.' So we wrapped him up in a blanket, put him in a wheelchair, and off we go to the concert so he could hear his piece. We managed to get him on stage to take a bow … The next day they started treatment. We held back the treatment so that Chris could be acknowledged.[375]

[373] With the only exception being John Simon.
[374] This is unusual because Chris was meticulous about making notes, especially about doctor appointments and hospitalisations.
[375] Interview with Islay Ernst, 11 August 2015.

There is a beauty in the poetry of this, in the brief respite from anguish, an emotion Chris knew only too well, to receive something he had craved and long been denied: recognition for his music. Three years later he would go into remission, and shortly thereafter he would die.

Section XI: Early Retirement.

While working on *Paradise Regained*, Chris took early retirement from UNISA. During my research this struck me as odd. Every person I had interviewed had spoken about how well UNISA had treated Chris, including George King who was Head of Department at UNISA, and who spoke fondly of Chris, whose works he had also performed.[376] At this point in his life, although Chris and Tina had been divorced for a decade, Tina was still involved in Chris's life, specifically helping him when his health was not good. During one of Chris's episodes of instability, Tina went to see acting Head of Department Douglas Reid, as she was concerned about Chris's functionality at UNISA. Reid informed Tina that UNISA was experiencing retrenchments, and that Chris was on the list for retrenchment. Tina requested that instead of Chris being retrenched he be medically boarded, which meant that he would receive 70 per cent of his salary through an insurance agency, which would ensure that he was financially taken care of. Chris was never made aware of Tina's role in these discussions. Considering Chris's medical history, it was unlikely that he would have received a post at a different university,[377] so that Tina's actions ostensibly guaranteed him a financially secure future.

After Chris's retirement from UNISA, his compositional productivity increased, which is both expected and rather odd. It is expected because, once retired from UNISA, he was able to spend all of his time composing, which allowed him to compose more. What is surprising is that, even while he was very ill with leukemia in 2004, he was still able to compose.

[376] Interview with George King, 14 August 2015.
[377] He had tried at UKZN a few years later, unsuccessfully.

In 1999, Chris remained in Pretoria, and set about revising many of his works, as well as completing *Paradise Regained.* That year he also began work on his opera *Cosmic Horizons,* based on William Blake's vision of the fall and redemption of humankind. With this work, we see the continuation of two of Chris's favourite themes: the concern with redemption, conceptually linked to his idealism of reconciliation, as well as an attachment to Romantic poetry. After hearing *Paradise Regained* and reading its dedication, it would be fair to assume that Chris had finally "come home" to South Africa. The politics of the time aligned with his beliefs of equality and fairness, he held an academic position and was living in South Africa, and his daughter, sister and mother were all living in South Africa. Yet with *Cosmic Horizons*, Chris reaffirms his British roots, dedicating this work to "His Royal Highness Prince Edward." This challenges any notion that Chris's national identity can be squarely understood as having evolved into becoming South African, and calls into question the colonial influence on his identity.

His national identity was further shaken on a visit to the farm of his childhood with his half-brothers, Tom and Ted, in "around 2000".[378] The farm had been destroyed and "the land returned to virgin bush, save for the bougainvillea bush with its red and purple flowers that were in bloom."[379] Melissa James described this visit as "devastating"[380] for him, and according to Ted James "He cried bitterly when I pointed out the bedroom I lived in that became his bedroom."[381] When considered alongside interview evidence of James's love of nature and the farm, this encounter further reflects the longing Chris had to return to the farm, a tangible representation of an idyllic childhood. For many white Zimbabweans the farm attacks that occurred during the war further entrenched a nostalgic idealism about farm living.[382]

2001 was a difficult year for Chris. His father died of a heart attack at the age of 94. In addition to this, James fell prey to a financial scam which caused him not only monetary difficulties, but a great deal of embarrassment. Chris wrote a letter to his mother on 6 November 2001, describing in detail exactly what happened. He was

[378] Letter from Ted James, 9 February 2017.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Interview with Melissa James, 13 August 2015.
[381] Letter from Ted James, 9 February 2017.
[382] Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape and the Problem of Belonging.*

approached by one of his neighbours with a business proposition. The neighbour had learned of seven crates of imported coffee in Johannesburg, which would be released from customs for a fee of R85,000. If this amount could be paid, the neighbour assured Chris that he had a distributor lined up who would pay him R895,000 for the coffee, meaning that if Chris could put up the R85,000, he would receive half of the R810,000 profit. Chris withdrew this amount from his home loan account on 17 October 2001, and was assured by the neighbour that he would receive his payout within a week. The man asked James for two further loans, promising to repay him from his profit in the coffee bean deal: the first was R153,000 on 26 October 2001 for a car loan, and the second was an amount of R50,000 to help his father set up a small pizza business.

On Monday 5 November 2001 Chris was alerted to the fact that the man had been lying about the existence of the coffee, and was advised to involve the police. Chris was able to get his money back from the car loan, but was unable to recover the rest. Because Chris had borrowed the money out of his bond, and because he was already retired from UNISA, this placed him in a financially difficult position, and resulted in his mother placing him under financial curatorship. Chris was victim to this financial scam in part due to his own naivety, and also due to his desire at the time to gain full custody of Melissa by her 16th birthday. This is a recurring theme in his letters to his parents of this time, and reflects his desperation to gain full custody. A mixture of this desperation and an idealistic belief in humanity had made Chris an easy victim.

From after *Cosmic Horizons* up until his leukemia diagnosis, Chris's increased output not only resulted in more works, but these compositions became grander in scale. While he still composed smaller works, such as *Three Tranquilisers* for piano (2004) and *Music for rainy days* (2003), he also composed three concerti: Concerto for organ and percussion (2001), Concerto for piano and orchestra no. 2 (2002) and Concerto for violoncello and orchestra (2004). He composed his first two of four string quartets one after the other in 2003, the first of these dedicated to Apartheid struggle heroes Steve Biko, David Webster, Chris Hani and Martin Trump, and the second to Dr. Adele Potgieter, the psychiatrist who had treated him at Denmar. He also composed a ballet, his second since *Midnight of the soul.* Entitled *Solar Eclipse*, this ballet of just shy of half an hour, was dedicated to Melissa and based on a story written by his good friend Pamela van Schaik.

Completed in April 2004, James dedicated his *Three Tranquilisers* for piano to his old friend Stephen Allen. The three tranquilisers are presented in a particular order on the cover sheet and in the score, but James indicates that: "These three pieces for piano may be performed in any order, to be determined by the pianist." The only recording which exists of this work was performed at a University of Kwa-Zulu Natal lunchtime concert in 2006, with pianist Lizel-Maret Jacobs rearranging the order of the work by moving the first tranquiliser to the end. For this discussion, I will discuss the tranquilisers in the order in which they appear in the score.

Due to the aleatoric nature of this work, the movements do not move musically from one to the other as in the case of a work such as *Paradise Regained*. Instead, each tranquiliser ends with a finality, as each piece could be the final movement of the work. The first tranquiliser, *Poco moderato e molto sostenuto,* uses a repeated 3+5 rhythmic pattern in quavers in 4/4, which lasts until bar 15. Written in C minor, the harmonic language throughout this tranquiliser is consonant, making use of minor seventh and fifth chords,[383] with each bar being repeated. This repetitiveness, paired with the consistent rhythmic, textural and dynamic properties of these opening fifteen bars allows the music to drift in a kind of non-directed timelessness.

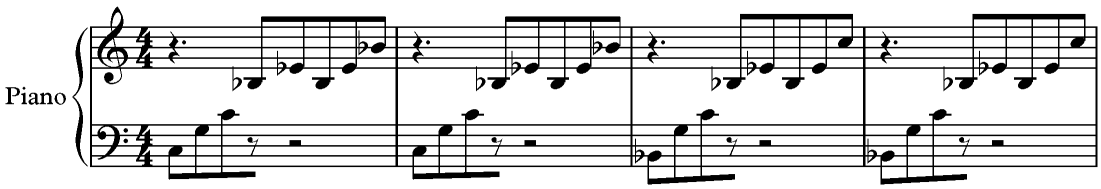


Figure 114: Bars 1-4 of the first tranquiliser of *Three Tranquilisers.*

At bar 15 the time signature changes to 6/8 and the rhythmic pattern moves to a 3+3 pattern. Two bars later James changes the texture, moving both hands into the bass clef, with the left-hand playing octaves held through the bar, while the right hand spells out arpeggiated figures based largely on root-fifth patterns.

[383] Chords that do not have a third, and are constructed only from the root and the fifth.

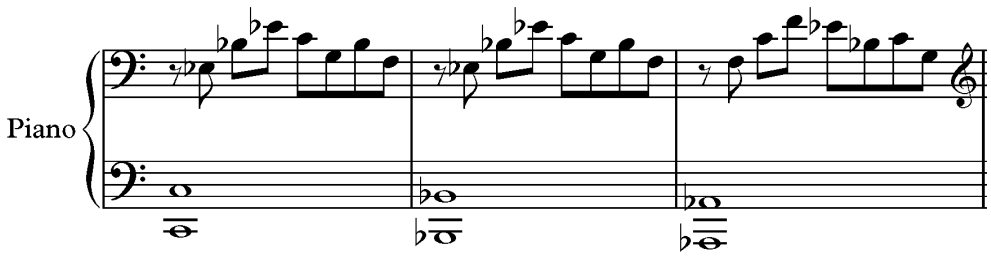


Figure 115: Bars 17-19 of the first tranquiliser of *Three Tranquilisers.*

This opening section climaxes at bar 22, with the dynamic moved to *forte.* The second section begins at bar 25, where James changes the time signature to 3/4 and uses a repeated complex rhythmic pattern in the left hand, which is countered by the right hand playing material which is rhythmically more simple and as before spells out fifth chords. As in the previous section, each bar is repeated, creating a series of two-bar phrases.

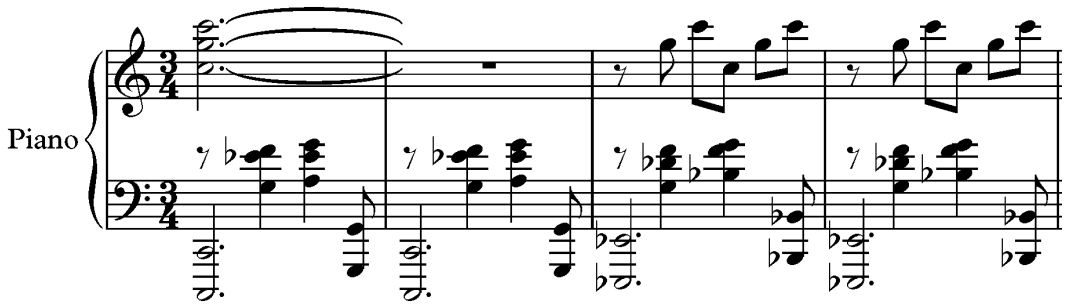


Figure 116: Bars 25-28 of the first tranquiliser of *Three Tranquilisers.*

This pattern continues until the beginning of the third section at bar 41. Here James changes the time signature to 9/8, with the left hand playing 3+3+3 quaver patterns spelling out fifth chords, with the same fifth chord being played as the held chords in the upper register of the right hand. Unlike previous sections, James no longer repeats bars verbatim, but the pattern continues throughout the section. James also uses a large range of the piano register, meaning that although the texture and rhythm is constant throughout this section, the varying register gives this section a sense of being less repetitive than previous sections. After two bars of emptiness at bars 53-54, with the pedal engaged to allow the sonority of the previous bar to ring through, James returns to the opening section. The piece ends with a driving *fortissimo* on a perfect fifth interval on C, in the upper register of the piano.

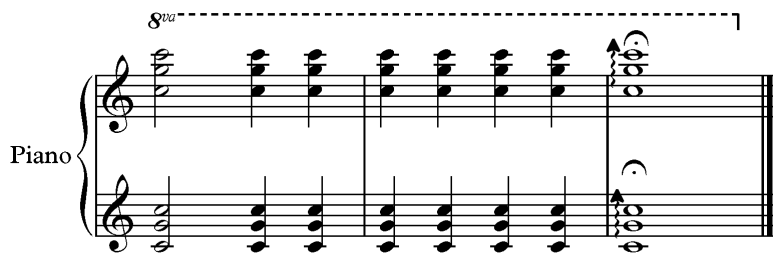


Figure 117: Final three bars of the first tranquiliser of *Three Tranquilisers.*

James marks the second tranquiliser as *Moderato,* with an additional instruction "(Not too fast)". In 6/8 with a 3+3 rhythmic pattern shared between the two hands and the opening indicated as *piano,* it is easy to see why Jacobs in her 2006 performance of the work chose this piece as the opening movement. As in the previous movement, James uses fifth chords in arpeggios for the opening section, which ends at bar 20. The dynamic of this opening section remains largely constant, only changing at bar 16 with a *crescendo* into a *forte* at bar 17. The second section begins at bar 21, indicated as *Poco piu mosso.* James changes to 9/8 and, as in the previous movement, uses a repeated rhythmic pattern, except here it is 3+2+2+2. James also utilises a repeating melodic pattern, where the phrase is first moved up an octave, then down a seventh, then up an octave again, giving the melody a sense of constant ascension, as can be seen in the example below.

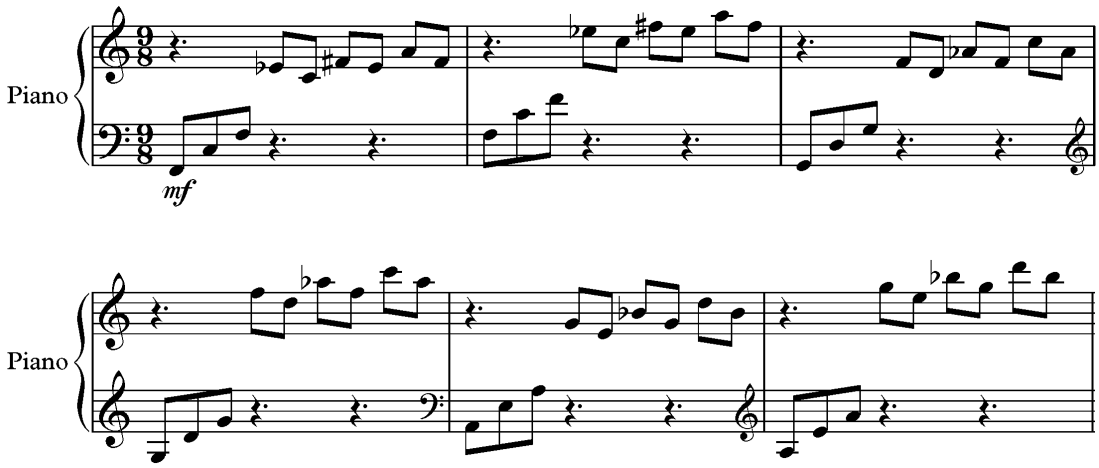


Figure 118: Bars 21-26 of the second tranquiliser of *Three Tranquilisers.*

After a descending passage, the third section begins at bar 33. Here James brings the dynamic down to *piano,* with the left hand playing an ascending line ending on a

fermata, with James indicating *espressivo.* Only five bars later the section ends, with the instruction "Hold sonority for approximately 5 seconds". Thereafter James returns to the opening section and similarly to the previous piece, ends on F dominant seventh chords labelled *fortissimo.*

The third piece is more varied in harmonic approach and texture. Marked *Adagio con molto piangevolle e molto rubato,* in the opening section James alternates held chords and melodic material between the two hands, making use of the full register of the piano. After a held B flat minor chord marked *pianissimo* under a fermata at bar 16, the second section begins. James returns to two-bar rhythmic patterns, with the first bar containing two groups of 5:2 rhythmic figures and the second, moving to 3/4 containing three groups of triplets, giving a macro-rhythmic structure of 5+5+3+3+3. This rhythmic pattern is played in the right-hand while the left-hand plays dissonant chords that accentuate this rhythmic complexity. After a final section starting at bar 39, which returns to an alternation of melodic and chordal material between the hands, this piece ends quietly on a B flat minor chord under a fermata.

Chris's diaries from 2002 to 2007 are held in the CJC. For the most part, they do not contain much intimate personal content, but constitute a chronicle of his day-to-day activities. Throughout these diaries, there are two regular notations: "Admitted to DENMA" and "Discharged from DENMAR". Although Chris would not have another severe nervous breakdown for the rest of his life, he still struggled with his condition.

In 2004, shortly after being diagnosed with leukemia, Chris moved to Ballito, to live with his sister, brother-in-law and mother. Because of his poor financial decisions Marjorie had placed him under financial curatorship. As a man in his fifties, he was now not only living with his mother, but was forced to go to her to request money. The effect this kind of regressive dependence had on Chris was profound.

"And it was despicable, and it broke Chris."[384]

"He did lose agency as it [life] went on."[385]

[384] Interview with Islay Ernst, 11 August 2015.

Chapter VIII: Ballito: 2005 – 2008

Section XII: Finality

This should not be the final chapter, right?
On 20 December 2004 Chris turned 52, there's still a lot of life left to talk about, surely.
But the column is empty.
The compositions are still present.
It is unwinding.

For any person in their fifties to live as a dependent with their mother would be problematic. When one also considers the difficult relationship between Chris and Marjorie, and the fact that Chris was under financial curatorship, the difficulties are amplified. Marjorie was faced with a difficult situation. She had to watch her son recover from leukemia, only for her daughter also to be diagnosed with cancer shortly after Chris went into remission.[386] In my interview with Marjorie, I saw a glimpse of the difficulty she had experienced in dealing with this. She tells me how Chris would regularly say "They can do it when I'm dead", when referring to the creation of parts from his full scores. In a moment of exasperation, Marjorie says, "Chris PLEASE!", as if he is in the room with us.

While Marjorie certainly experienced much anguish, ,there is no doubt that living with her was something with which Chris struggled. Islay and Meyer Ernst spoke about their experience living with Chris and Marjorie, and the severity and regularity of their fights:

> I hated it when they fought downstairs, I hated it. I couldn't bear it. I used to go down there and scream at both of them, I couldn't bear it, it was very unsettling for me as well.[387]

[385] Interview with Melissa James, 13 August 2015.
[386] Interview with Islay Ernst, 11 August 2015.
[387] Ibid.

But as much anger as there was between Marjorie and Chris, there was also an incredible amount of love and affection. Marjorie had always "plugged for Chris"[388] and as much as she may have been an over-protective dominant matriarch in Chris's life, she had also been his protector for its entirety. Islay spoke of how, after fights, he would apologise and kiss her feet at her bed:

> The last few years of his life he hated living with his mother. He hated his illness. He was really quite down about it. Then he got the leukemia … which they still suspect might be from the medication … You're sitting with stuff in your head and his music and things he wanted to do, and he couldn't do them. So, eventually his quality of life by his own admission was pretty grotty.

Although he was recovering from cancer and still dealing with his psychosis with regular visits to Denmar, Chris still managed to compose. His first composition in Ballito was his String Quartet no. 3 in four movements, depicting seven moods of the sea (2005). Considering that Chris had lived in landlocked Pretoria since 1974, it is unsurprising – especially considering his Romantic leanings – that moving to a coastal town would inspire him to write about the sea. This would not be his only piece inspired by his surroundings, and between December 2006 and January 2007 he composed a solo piano piece entitled *Moonlit waters and cloudy, cloudy skies.* The piece was dedicated to Meyer Ernst, and inspired not only by Chris's natural surroundings, but by Meyer's landscape paintings.

As with his first two string quartets, he composed his fourth string quartet immediately after completing his third. This was entitled String Quartet no. 4, "Nirvana" (2005). Little mention is made of James's four string quartets in his letters and diaries in the archive, and it strikes one as surprising that he only looked to the string quartet idiom – a popular one in Western art music which lends itself to convenient performance – after he had turned 50. It is also surprising because, as has been seen in works such as *Sèrènade Cèleste,* James was able to compose interesting and idiomatic music for strings, and thus one would expect him to engage more with string writing, seeing as he was demonstrably good at it.

[388] Interview with Tina James, 13 August 2015.

A precursory glance at the titles and dedications of James's four string quartets reveal in each an aspect of James's personality. The first reflects his moralistic sympathies to the anti-Apartheid struggle by dedicating it to four men who had died in the struggle. Dedicating his second string quartet to his psychiatrist reflects the medical issues he struggled with.[389] His love of nature is shown in his third string quartet, which musically depicts the ocean.

All three of these characteristics of James and their portrayal in music have been discussed – some in greater detail and some in passing – in this dissertation. Yet the theme of the fourth string quartet – that of spirituality – has not received much attention in this work, especially when one considers how important James's spirituality was to him. All of the interview participants I spoke to not only mentioned the strong sense of spirituality that James felt in his life, but also that this spirituality was one that did not only manifest in Christianity, and that in terms of religious aspects James was quite open minded.

Chris James's fourth and final string quartet, "Nirvana" was composed in June and July of 2005, and consists of three movements: "I. Eternal Peace." "II. Eternal Joy." and "III. Eternal Rest." The first movement, marked *Moderato semplice,* features a constant rhythmic device: four quavers grouped under a slur. The rhythmic effect of this grouping, namely the accentuating of beats 1 and 3 (and in the case of the 3/2 bars, beat 5 too) is accented by the cello, which throughout the piece plays crotchets accentuating these strong beats. For the first 36 bars of this movement, James employs a macro-rhythmic structure of two 4/4 bars and one 3/2 bar. When paired with the rhythmic effect of the quaver grouping and crotchets in the cello, this provides a macro-rhythmic theme of 2+2+3, as can be seen below.

[389] This was also not the first time James dedicated works to medical professionals, with *Midnight of the soul* being dedicated to the ear, nose and throat doctor who had operated on his ears in 1987 and 1988.

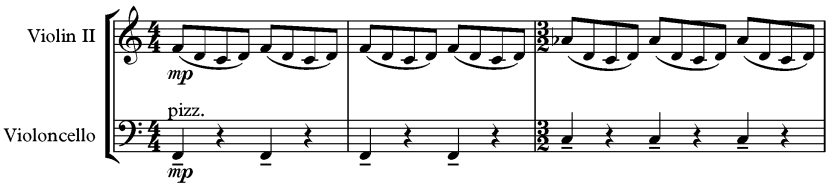
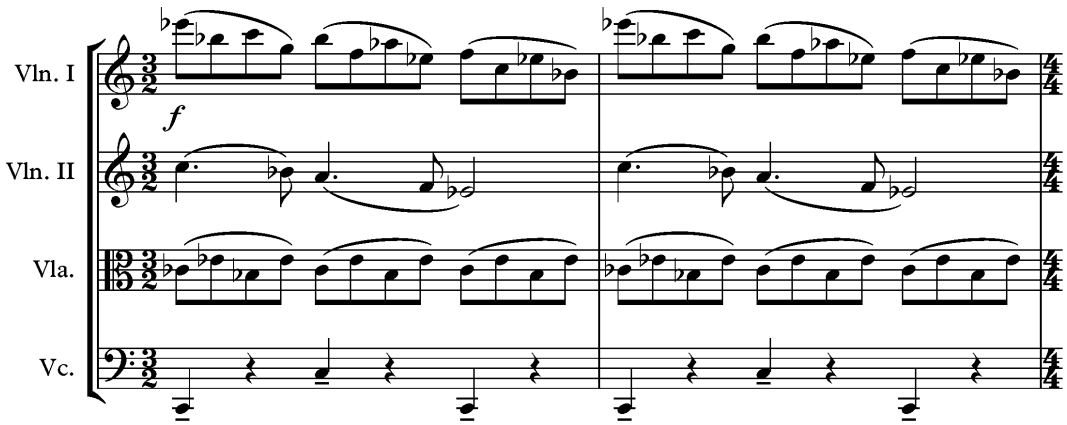


Figure 119: Bars 1-3 of the first movement of String Quartet No. 4. "Nirvana"

Violin I and the viola only enter at bar 13, with violin I taking over the rhythmic motif of violin II (but with different pitch classes) and viola playing complex syncopated rhythms on a repeated C. Violin II re-enters at bar 23 with a new melodic idea, but one that (as with the material being played by the rest of the quartet) underlines the 2+2+3 construction principle of the movement. This only lasts for two bars (one bar of 4/4 and one of 3/2) before violin II returns to its opening rhythmic motif and violin I falls away.

At bar 37 the macro-rhythmic structure changes, and up until the end of bar 72 James's new macro-rhythmic structure is two bars of 3/2 and one bar of 4/4. Thus the accents change from being 2+2+3 to being 3+3+2, as can be seen in the musical example below.



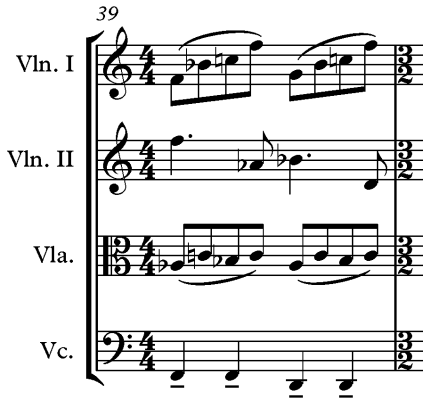


Figure 120: Bars 37-39 of the first movement of String Quartet No. 4. "Nirvana"

Unlike in the first section (bars 1-36), this second section (bars 37-72) does not see the rhythmic devices moving between the instruments, but is played on the same instrument throughout. This makes this second section sound repetitive, due to the lack of changes in rhythm, dynamic or texture, and with the key remaining centred in F minor. This was circumvented in the first section through varying texture and rhythmic elements by experimenting with different instrumental combinations within the quartet, and moving rhythmic themes between the instruments.

At bar 72 James returns to the 2+2+3 macro-rhythmic form, moving the driving quavers to violin II and restating the complex rhythmic patterns on C in the viola. Here Violin I enters with a new theme marked by its use of *glissandi*.

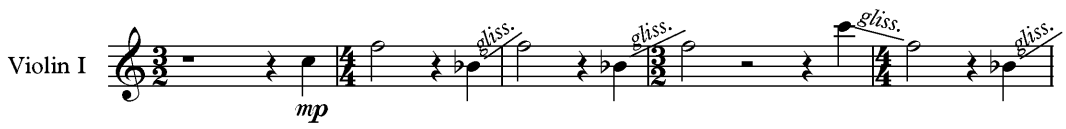


Figure 121: New theme at bar 78 of the first movement of String Quartet No. 4. "Nirvana"

After a brief return to the 3+3+2 rhythmic device at bar 109, the piece ends on a *tierce de Picardie* with the final F major chord held for four bars. The second movement of this work is one of the only examples in the James oeuvre that I have found that remains in a single time signature for its entire duration. Much like the first movement, there is in the second movement a larger rhythmic construction, although it is contained within each bar rather than spreading over a three bar pattern as in the

previous movement. “Eternal Joy” is written in 5/4 and James’s articulation indicates a rhythmic sub-division of 3+2, which remains constant throughout the movement. Similarly to the first movement, at least one instrument is almost constantly playing quaver patterns, thus giving the music a forward rhythmic drive.

Harmonically this movement begins unambiguously in G major. The quavers in the viola part, when paired with the long note in the cello, spell out conventional triadic chords, and when violin II enters at bar 6 with the quaver movement, this consonance continues.

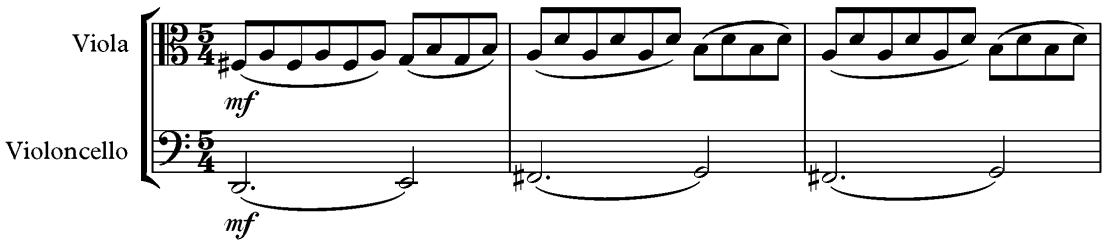


Figure 122: Bars 1-3 of the second movement of String Quartet No. 4. “Nirvana”

James’s harmonic use of chromaticism in violin I at bars 17, 19 and 20 is interesting (see example below). While one could argue that this chromaticism is really the use of chromatic passing notes, another possibility that James’s well-documented love of jazz and desire to integrate it in his music is present here. It could be argued that the C sharp in bar 17 is a raised fourth/flattened fifth in the key of G major, indicating the use of a G blues, and the F natural (flattened seventh) in bars 19-20 displays the use of G bebop dominant (a regular major scale but with both the flattened and regular seventh, so in G major it would include both F natural and F sharp). While this inclusion of jazz scales is typical of James’s compositional style, it seems an unlikely place to use it, and the use of a B natural in bar 17 dislocates the music from a G blues sound (the minor third being an integral part of the sound of a blues scale).

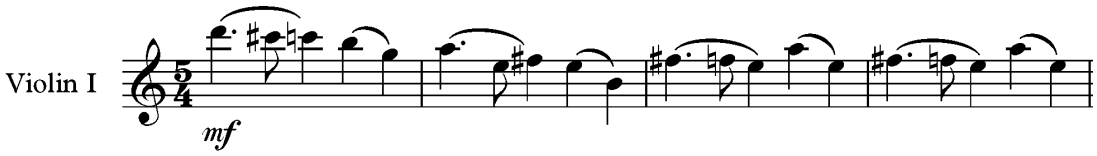


Figure 123: Bars 17-20 of the second movement of String Quartet No. 4. “Nirvana”

From bar 28 James modulates to B flat major, and gradually increases the chromaticism, moving to A flat major at bar 43. The parts interweave with one another, and the variation of slur and staccato re-enforce the 3+2 rhythmic shape. James slowly increases the dynamic, with *fortissimo* tremolo in violins I and II and viola at bar 72. At bar 85, the dynamic drops to *piano* and two bars later the music modulates abruptly to D major. James begins to move against the macro-rhythmic structure of this movement, scoring the violin II part in a 2+3 grouping, playing against the 3+2 grouping of the rest of the instruments. This does not last long, as at bar 93 violin II falls away and the music returns to G major as in the beginning. As the movement ends, James makes the texture denser by having violins I and II play the same motif a fourth apart, with the movement ending on a *fortissimo* G major chord.

Rhythmic consistency characterizes this string quartet. In the first two movements, the repeated quaver motifs give the music a forward trajectory, as well as a consistency. The third and final movement, "Eternal Rest", exemplifies this musical consistency. It is about half the length of the first and second movements, and at the indicated *Andante con moto* the repeated crotchets are almost hypnotic. Unlike other works, James uses almost no textural or dynamic shifts, and the 4/4 time signature remains constant. This final string quartet ends quietly on a C major chord, with the music reflecting a comfort and calmness. The piece does illustrate that where James has a directional extra-musical idea – nirvana, eternity – he has the musical and compositional means to express this and that misjudgements in this regard (such as the last two movements in *Paradise Regained*) may have their origin in a naïve or undeveloped world view more than in the musical deficiencies that result. In the fourth string quartet, a consonance dominated diatonicism, perpetual rhythmic motion with undulating and shifting heavy/light metric phrase structure provide concrete musical realizations of what timelessness and peace could sound like.

Chris ended 2005 by composing *Rhapsody on a theme from Sergei Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto* for solo violin and small orchestra. The piece was dedicated to Hristo Kardjiev, but Chris withdrew the piece, and writing to Kardjiev states: "The decision to withdraw the piece is my own decision and there are several reasons for

doing so, although I am not going to go into them".[390] Chris also revised his Concerto for two marimbas and chamber orchestra in 2007.

Chris's last works were two orchestral compositions. From July to the end of August 2005 he composed *Adulations!* dedicated to "Nelson Mandela. In appreciation, affection and respect for your dignity". His final composition was his first and only symphony, *Symphony no.1*. "The Redemption". In Chapter IV I mentioned that Islay commented on the fact that Chris kept the dedication of this work a secret.

> He had a thing about, he had to finish it … He wouldn't tell us the name and he wouldn't tell us who he dedicated to … Normally he would always say … This one was top secret, nobody knew. And the day after he died, I opened the manuscript. Redemption, dedicated to Almighty God. To me, I just fell apart, I just sobbed, this is just incredible.[391]

While this may have been Chris's final composition, when he died he was working on an arrangement, and he had brought the manuscript with him to hospital on the weekend that he died.

Chris's death, much like his life, was painful and tragic. At the time, his sister Islay had also been diagnosed with cancer, a diagnosis which they kept from him for three months in order not to upset him. The December before he died he had gone into remission, enabling him to fly to Cape Town for Melissa's graduation from the University of Cape Town in December 2007. Yet during this visit he found that he was getting tired regularly.

On Friday, 1 February 2008, Chris was in his room in the house in Ballito and he felt ill. Meyer Ernst, a qualified doctor, took blood tests and the diagnosis was bad. After some persuasion to leave his work,[392] Meyer took him to hospital. On the Saturday Chris looked well, so Islay decided to take Marjorie to visit him in hospital the following day, as that Monday (4 February) he was meant to start chemotherapy. They also phoned Melissa, who was living in Cape Town at the time, to inform her that her

[390] Letter dated 17 March 2007.
[391] Interview with Islay Ernst, 11 August 2015.
[392] Interview with Marjorie James, 2010.

father was ill. Considering that he had beaten cancer before, they advised her to wait a while before she came to visit, as it might not have been too serious. In Islay's words: "I didn't think Chris was going to die."

When they arrived, Chris was looking well: he was busy composing and was making plans to move in with his girlfriend, Meg Hewlett. He was looking so well that Marjorie was concerned that his blood tests had gotten mixed up with someone else's. On Monday, 4 February, Islay went to visit Chris after her own radiation at noon. She found Chris shivering, complaining about being cold. According to Islay the nurses did not respond to Chris's complaints because they thought he was having a psychotic episode. Islay then tried to get hold of Chris's haematologist, but was unable to do so. As the day progressed Chris got worse: he was incontinent and gasping for breath. Eventually Islay telephoned her oncologist, requesting him to examine Chris. Islay also telephoned Meyer and instructed her to bring Marjorie to the hospital. "I still didn't think Chris was going to die."[393] Chris then went for a scan and it was found that he had multiple emboli on his lungs. He was gasping for air, and according to Islay he was crying, saying "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Chris died in Islay's arms, struggling to breathe, on Monday 4 February 2008, World Cancer Day.

[393] Interview with Islay Ernst, 11 August 2015.

Section XIII: "That's Chris James."

I have spoken at some length about the difficulties of this project to contribute to the understanding of the conceptual difficulties of the biographical enterprise. This project presents a second difficulty, and that is the difficulty of the archive.

When this project began, there were 106 boxes in the CJC, and since then more material has been donated. While researchers and archivists are always grateful for material, getting to grips with an archive of this size is a challenge, and because of its size, selection criteria are needed. The limits of biography are present in the limits of the archive: within the space of one PhD project one simply cannot speak to everything, explore everything, read everything or know everything.

So I began to pick and choose, and in the theoretical chapter I spoke to my selection criteria, and a decision I made early on in this project to focus on James's original compositions, which were already completed, and not arrangements/orchestrations or incomplete works. Although *uShaka* was labelled an orchestration – and of course Schonken has argued that James's role went beyond that of arranger/orchestrator and was more that of co-composer – my focus on *uShaka* has not been on the score per se, but rather on the undeniable impact it had had on Chris's life.

Because of my decision to focus only on original compositions, I ignored *Variations on Yesterday: A study in pastiche,* a theme and variations that Chris wrote on the renowned Beatles song "Yesterday". Chris's love of The Beatles has been established through interviews and through his LP collection in the CJC. Even though it was one of the few James works which was recorded, I still overlooked it and did not even include it in my extensive work list. When I first listened to it, I thought that the opening statement of the theme was reminiscent of a lounge pianist playing popular tunes as background music in a restaurant. It wasn't important, it wasn't *his* work so it wouldn't be useful in a study aimed at understanding *his* life and *his* music.

I'm not sure why I eventually decided to listen to it in its entirety, but I do remember that it was in my second year. Perhaps I wanted to hear the piece because, like Chris, I am also a fan of The Beatles. Upon listening to the work in full, I felt that although this

was not an original James composition, there was a lot of James in the fabric of the work. Composed as a study in pastiche in 1983, the work begins with a two bar introduction (as in the original Beatles recording) with the theme being stated at bar 3 in F major.

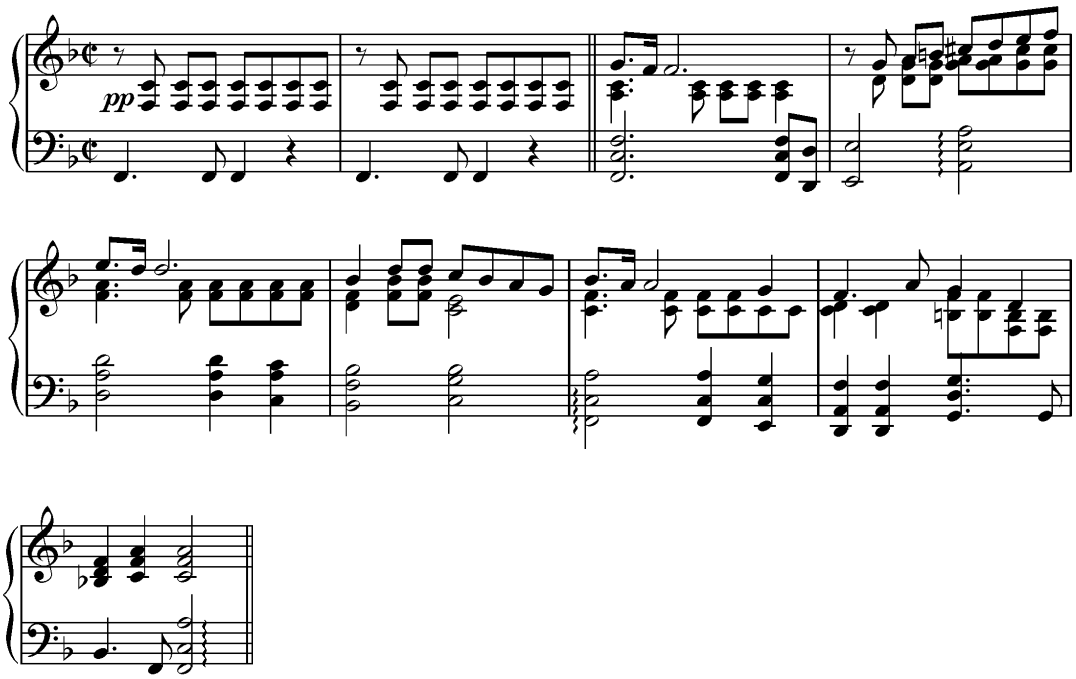


Figure 124: Bars 1-9 of *Variations on Yesterday: A study in pastiche.*

In bar 10 James states the second half of the theme, based on the chorus of "Yesterday". James moves the music forward through a more driving left-hand sequence based on semi-quaver note values, giving this second half of the theme a more fluid atmosphere.

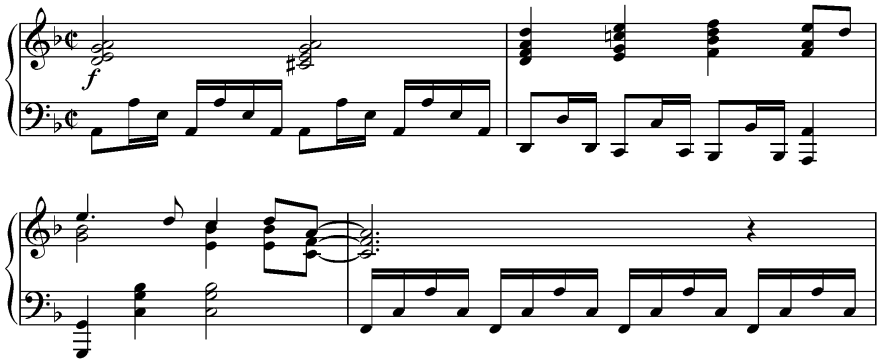


Figure 125: Bars 10-13 of *Variations on Yesterday: A study in pastiche.*

From bar 21, James presents variations of the theme, each of which is based on compositional characteristics of a particular composer. The variations are presented largely in chronological order according to when each composer lived, starting with J.S. Bach and ending with Oliver Messiaen. The "Variation I à la J.S. Bach" starts at bar 21 and is marked *Adagio sostenuto.* This variation consists of polyphonic contrapuntal writing, while maintaining a consonant harmonic relationship to F major/ D minor.

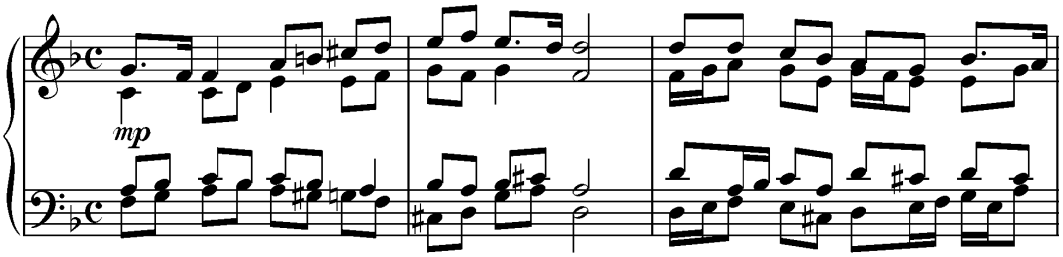


Figure 126: Bars 21-24 of *Variations on Yesterday: A study in pastiche.*

After twelve bars, this first variation comes to an end with a suspended F major chord under a fermata. At bar 33 James begins the second variation: "Variation 2 à la W.A. Mozart" marked *Adagio cantabile.* James moves the time signature to 2/4, and uses a constant semi-quaver motif in the left-hand, with melodic decoration in the right, as can be seen in the following example.

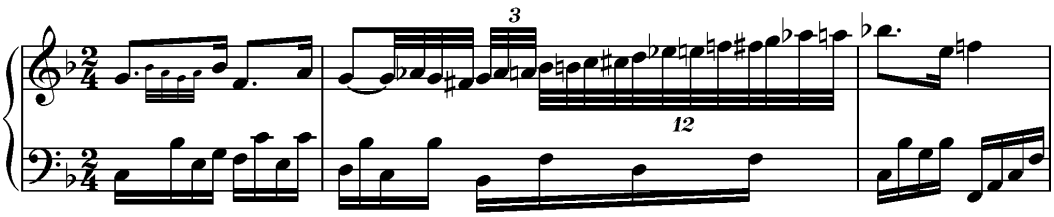


Figure 127: Bars 42-44 of *Variations on Yesterday: A study in pastiche.*

At bar 58 James introduces the brief "Variation 3 à la L.Beethoven". Here James brings the tempo up to *Allegro con brio* and changes the key to F minor. Lasting only nineteen bars, James counters the calmness of the Mozartian variation with the sudden modulation, and use of accented octaves in the left hand. He alternates semi-quaver

runs between the hands before suddenly ending at bar 76 on F minor. James then turns to early Romantic pianism with his "Variation 4 à la R.Schumann", and then a delicate lyricism with light left-hand accompaniment in 3/4 for "Variation 5 à la F.Chopin". For "Variation 6 à la J.Brahms", James moves the time signature to 6/8 and the key signature to A flat minor, making use of a harmonic language that is more daring, with more regular chromaticism than in previous variations, where the chromaticism was either used for scale runs or for polyphonic voice leading. The variation lasts only fourteen bars, and at bar 122 "Variation 7 à la F.Liszt" begins. Here the melody is picked out among rolling sextuplet figures, with a three octave F chromatic scale played in the middle of the variation to display the virtuosic pianism of Liszt's oeuvre.

For "Variation 8 à la C. Debussy", James begins with a delicate right-hand melody against sonorous chords in the left-hand. As James begins to thicken the texture he moves the music up through the piano's register, and at bar 154 this variation peaks with a quick descending sextuplet figure. The variation ends with a chord highly reminiscent of the opening chord of Debussy's *Clair de lune.*

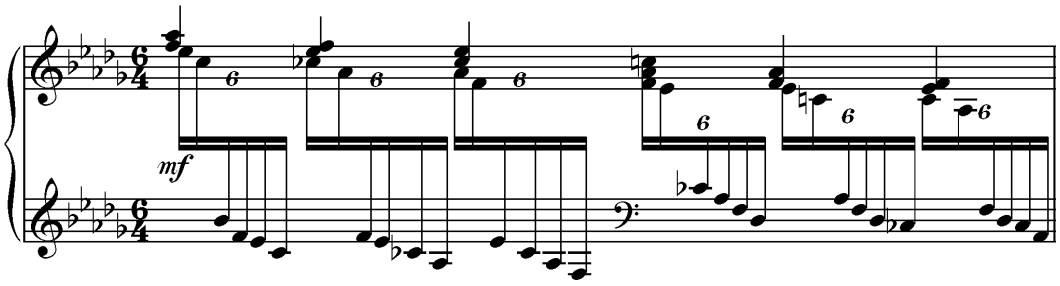


Figure 128: Bar 154 of *Variations on Yesterday: A study in pastiche.*

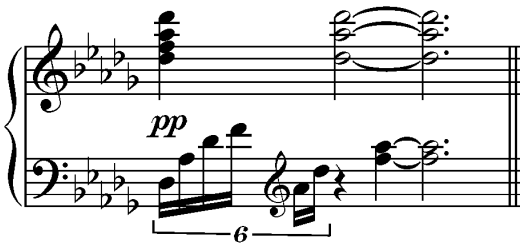


Figure 129: Final bar of "Variation 8 à la C. Debussy" from *Variations on Yesterday: A study in pastiche.*

The "Variation 9 à la G. Gershwin" is the least convincing of the twelve variations, with the dotted rhythms being poor substitutes for a swing feel, and the use of grace notes feeling forced and unnatural. This is in direct contrast with "Variation 10 à la B. Bartók", where James's rhythmic flare is utilised through the use of interesting rhythmic devices and regular time signature changes, which when paired with the constant changing quaver patterns in the left-hand give this variation the feeling of a Hungarian dance. The final composer that James emulates is Oliver Messiaen, and in the 11th variation makes use of twentieth-century harmonic approaches to dissonance, and using a slower tempo allows for this dissonance to resonate, made more apparent by the wide dynamic range used.

Stephen Allen, to whom the work is dedicated, said the following about the last variation:

> I premiered that work at UNISA, in the great hall at UNISA while he was still in Cincinnati. It was a great work, stylistically, what he did. In the last variation, you can just hear that's Chris James. It just comes through as a photograph, that's just Chris James.

The final variation is in 4/4, with James grouping each bar into a 3+3+2 feel, with the left-hand accentuating this. The result of this rhythmic feel is that the variation sounds like "a tempestuous rumba in a twentieth-century style."[394] Chordal material is alternated between the hands, and the harmonic language is non-diatonic but not overly dissonant. Dynamically, James allows this variation more flexibility, moving it between the dynamic ranges of the piano. James ends the work with a driving right-hand pattern in the higher register of the piano while the left hand plays chords built on root-fifth construction.

[394] Programme notes for D.M.A Recital of Christopher James. Watson Hall, Cincinnati. 23 April 1985.

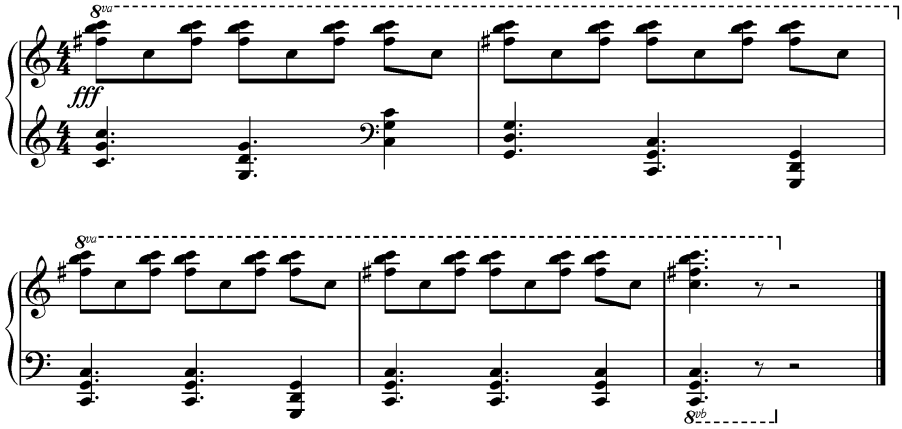


Figure 130: Final five bars of *Variations on Yesterday: A study in pastiche.*

It is not his idiomatic pianistic writing or his fluency in mimicry that strikes me about this work, but rather the juxtaposition of "high art" with pop music. Together, the pantheon of pianism and a simplistic pop tune not only behave as equals, but have a back and forth, as if peers, bouncing off one-another, taking it in turns to be in the limelight. Sometimes the theme is almost inaudible over the pianistic exploration, sometimes the high art gives way and allows the theme centre stage.

This piece is autobiographical in a different way from a piece like *Four Portraits,* as it tells the listener something about Chris's ethics and politics, which reflect in his person. The music speaks to an idea of equality, of reconciliation. Of a breaking down of barriers between "high art" and popular music. This then is extended into a concept around humanity and fairness, of equality in art and in people. To Chris, there is space for all art, and all people.

But this juxtaposition is also a reflection of his biography. His music and his national identity speak to a juxtaposition of European and African heritages (and in colonial terms, the former being representative of "high culture" and the latter being "heathen culture").[395] His illness forced him into an oscillation between gentleness and anger, of balance and imbalance. To me, he is both mythical – an African Romantic – and real, the subject of a material archive. I identify with this: the biographer as advocate and traitor, servant and voyeur.

[395] This is of course not the first time Chris had juxtaposed colonially considered "high" and "low" musics. As mentioned in Chapter IV, Chris juxtaposed the official and unofficial South African anthems in *Images from Africa.*

Conclusion

In these pages I have aimed to introduce the reader to a man I never met, but now know intimately. It has been my goal to open his life up as an interpretive lens for a musical repertory that has (mostly) not been heard, and to interrogate the life-and-works biographematic paradigm as read through an archive.

As the author of this project, I have found myself at times struggling with the reality of my subject – or rather the reality of his existence. As much as his life was laid out in front of me, open and fragmentary in the archive, I needed constantly to remind myself that my subject was *more* than my subject; he was real. I have reflected on this tension of subject and reality throughout the pages of this text, attempting to negotiate between the philosophical and ethical problematic of such a scholarly endeavour.

Archival fragments often forced me to realise the reality of existence, as opposed to subject construction. Encountering the photograph reproduced on page 58, where Chris's clothes, glasses and hair style reminded me so much of my own father in his youth, was one such moment. Such artefacts confronted me with the realization that my subject was a father, a brother, a friend. He was a person, and his existence operated in a reality outside of the scholarly detachment required for researching a biographical subject.

It was said about Charles Alkan that "It was necessary for him to die in order to suspect his existence."[396] I felt a discomforting resonance with the sentiment expressed in this sentence. Perhaps the evidence of Christopher James's reality was not his life, but his death. Yet where does this place his family, his friends, his music and his archive? Are they not also and more glaringly evidence of his existence? I have attempted in these pages to marshal all available strands of James's reality into an anthology of his existence.

[396] J Kregor, "Reviewed Work: Charles Valentin Alkan: His Life and His Music by William Alexander Eddie", *Notes,* vol. 64, no. 4, June 2008, p. 731.

This dissertation represents the first attempt at an opening up an assessment of Chris James's creative contribution as a composer. Ten works were selected to be discussed, based on varying criteria such as the existence of recordings and narrative-archival significance. From these works one can begin to define James's compositional style, a project to which future studies will add more thorough explorations of his oeuvre. The most notable aspect of James's composition voice is his approach to rhythm,[397] which is hardly surprising considering that his composition mentors were both composers with a strongly defined approach to rhythm. Links between James's themes and their variations are often more rhythmically marked than harmonically or melodically, and his use of specific groupings and articulations do not only accentuate particular rhythmic structures, but impart a strong sense of identity and character to the music. James makes use of compound and uncommon time signatures, and makes regular use of time signature alternation. As in String Quartet No. 4. "Nirvana", micro-structural rhythmic devices form part of macro-structural rhythmic ideas.

James's music also explores juxtaposition in various forms. At times, he places traditional Western art musical techniques alongside an experimental twentieth-century musical aesthetic. His use of African musical elements within a Western art music setting is subtle – at least within the works discussed – and does not exoticise African music but rather displays a nuanced understanding of cultural and musical difference. His use of jazz was less successful, and in all the works discussed in which he tried to integrate the jazz idiom, it was somewhat laboured.

Harmonically, James writes in a broadly diatonic style that freely explores dissonance. He tends to construct chords based on interval sets rather than triadically, with a particular penchant for building chords consisting of fourths. His approach to instrumentation is not particularly imaginative and colourful, but he had a real affinity for string writing and is able at times to create compelling atmospheric timbres in his orchestration. His instrumentation of smaller ensembles displays less nuance, with the clarinet part of *Songs of lamentation and remonstration* and the flute part of *Song cycle of James Wright poetry* being largely incidental to the musical logic. The instrumentation of works such as *Hymn to intellectual beauty, La Vase Brisé,* and *This*

[397] Interview with John Simon, 22 November 2016.

dark ceiling without a star indicate a prioritisation of an abstract artistic aesthetic over performable strategy, as these pieces are difficult to perform because of the challenge of meeting the instrumentation requirements.

James's use of dynamic, register and textural extremes add emotion and drama to his music, and he often uses extremes of all three of these in concert to manufacture emotional climaxes or retreats. Sometimes, the music becomes overly complex and burdened by a desire to push the limits – emotionally and musically – of expression. In extreme cases, such as *Four Portraits,* this results in music that is unplayable in its current form. Whether these miscalculations could be attributed to times when James was unwell, or to the fact that his works were often not performed and he therefore did not have the opportunity to interact closely with performing musicians, remains open to question.

There was certainly a lack of engagement with James's music while the composer was still alive (a sad state of affairs that has not changed posthumously). As James became older, he was more and more isolated, pushed to the margins of South African music due in large part to his illness. James's final years were spent in a tourist town in Kwa-Zulu Natal, isolated from performers who could play his music, and composers and musicologists who could engage with it. Works such as *Four Portraits* and *Paradise Regained* – especially the final two movements – could have benefitted from reception in a vibrant but critical musical community, and Chris clearly was open to the suggestions and critiques of performers. Mary Elene Wood speaks about the perceived "charisma" in the works of those with mental illness, because the consumer is under the impression that the illness will make the work interesting in some way. In the case of James it is less the "charisma" of the illness in the work that strikes one as significant, than the deleterious effects of the isolation caused by the illness.

The first book I read in preparation for this project was Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot,* a book which in many ways achieves that which my own dissertation set out to accomplish: writing the life of a person while simultaneously engaging with their work and questioning the methodological constructs within biography. In the theoretical framework chapter I quoted Barnes, who described a biographer as a kind of fisher, whose net at once both captures and omits. At this final stage in this document, I

cannot help but wonder what I was unable to haul into the boat, and what treasures slipped through my net.

There are many compositions within the James output which I wish I either could have discussed, or could have discussed in more detail. While I do not think it is an interesting work musically, Chris's *Song cycle of James Wright poetry* provides an interesting insight into James's association of innocence, nature and the colonial state that was Rhodesia. It will be important in future studies of this composer to give greater attention to the string works of James: the four string quartets and a more thorough analysis of *Sèrènade Cèleste*, which is undoubtedly one of his more successful works. Critically reading James's music is, however, not a simple matter. Much of the music remains unperformed, and although reading the scores and theoretical analysis provide some way into the music, it is a particularly difficult task to get to grips with a significant oeuvre that has had so little of a reception, including performances. In a way, therefore, this project points towards future ones where performances and recordings of work constitute a crucial part of the musicological project. The music of Chris James can sustain many such forays of integrated music research.

This research uncovered a great many themes within the narrative of James's life that are deserving of further exploration. This dissertation was able to provide only a precursory discussion on the interactions between identity and myth, and how this impacted James's self and external identity construct. There is also – as there is in the research on any South African-based Western art music practitioner – ample opportunity for post-colonial and settler colonial interpretation, as well as a discussion of the role performed by culture and music composition (if at all) in the imaginary of English white liberalism in pre- and post-Apartheid South Africa. Place has been a structural concern throughout this project. I asked all my interviewees: "For Chris, where was home?" Mistakenly I had assumed that "home" had to be a singular, physical space. "Home" is a metaphoric construct, and while it is a cliché, "home" sounds in many different ways in the music of Chris James. Whenever James makes a reference musically to Rhodesia and the farm, it is to nature and natural beauty. This is true for *Music for rainy days* – the prayer for the end of drought – and in *Song cycle of James Wright poetry.* In this regard it is unsurprising that Chris gravitated to the poetry

of James Wright, as the latter's literary style reflects what Elizabeth Dodd has called a "biocentric aesthetic",[398] with which Chris, as a lover of nature and poetry, a self-proclaimed "farmer's son",[399] no doubt identified. James makes this connection clear in the programme notes to *A song cycle of James Wright poetry*, writing:

> The unifying theme in this cycle of three poems … is the glorification of nature. The first two poems represent images of the beauty of nature whilst the third poem examines the loss of a youth spent with nature. The poetry struck me with a great sense of nostalgia, since my childhood was spent on a farm in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

When James's musical gaze turned towards South Africa, it was not just politically themed, but always centred around the theme of political reconciliation. This can be seen in *Songs of lamentation and remonstration, Images from Africa,* and the two pieces dedicated to Nelson Mandela – a man who Stephen Allen stated that Chris viewed as a messianic-type figure.

James's "home", ultimately, is the pluriversal world of the natural beauty of his childhood Rhodesian farm, the high-stakes energy of political reconciliation in South Africa, the British colonial traditions and accents of his family, the American sense of optimism and aesthetic possibility of his student years. In all of these spaces, Christopher James was at home; and home, for him, was all of these places. What they have in common, is a kind of nostalgia and idealism that seemed to find the present less alluring than the past or the future. Perhaps it was this alienation from the contemporary world, where he lived with difficulty, that makes Christopher James, ultimately, an African Romantic.

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[398] E Dodd, "Green Places: James Wright's Development of a Biocentric Aesthetic", *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment.* vol.13 no.2, 2006, p. 19.
[399] Letter to Natalie Huston, 11 February 1992.

What food did he like?

Pretty plain food.

What kind of weather did he like?

I don't think the humidity in Ballito suited him.

What music did he listen to most of the time?

He was very good at that. Beatles.

Did he introduce you to music as a teenager?

He always bought me CD's and played me records. Like The Beatles. Lionel Ritchie. I love Lionel Ritchie because of that. And we would listen to them…

Was he cool in that sense? When you were a teenager was he very with it?

He was very with it! He was very with it in terms of what was happening in the music scene. He listened to the radio, and he got irritated, because it was so, what was the word he used? He couldn't stand that it was so repetitive! He hated that! So he'd listen to it and kind've appreciate it, but he'd get a bit tired of the repetition. I wouldn't say he was completely with it.

He didn't ever look down on other music?

No not at all. He was very open, he bought all kinds of different CD's. Kylie Minogue, he bought me. So he was, I'd say, progressive in that regard.

What was the most treasured book he had?

Again, he always had the Bible with him … He never forced it on you. I never felt that.

Did he always have a book at his bedside?

He wasn't one of those people who always had his nose in a book. He did study certain things.

What did he smell like?

Old Spice.

What are you most proud of, of what he did or what he was?

There's a lot. I think courage.

Funniest incident that you can remember with him?

[Laughs] We went for a walk on the beach in Ballito. It's not placid ocean, the waves are big and sometimes it gets very choppy. He was wearing his smartish pants and his shirt, but it wasn't a long-sleeved shirt, in Summer he'd wear a short-sleeved shirt. Just like yours, but not patterned. Like I said he was quite plain, he wouldn't wear reds, or deep colours. He had one shirt that was a soft greeny-yellow, he had a few that were checked, but it was pretty plain. Anyway, he was wearing that and he had his glasses on, or was it his watch? Anyway and he was standing and looking at the ocean and he went a bit close to where the waves break, and the next thing this wave came over him, it went over his head and knocked him flat down. I was so worried, I got such a fright! He was there and the next thing he was gone! He got up and he was soaked, I think he lost his glasses so he was searching for his glasses in the water, in the foam. That was so pivotal of him. He was ditsy at times. The way he lost his balance.

What do you wish he did that he never did?

Maybe stay in Cincinnati, stick it out there. Be firmer.

What did you dislike about him?

I think his inability to let go of the past. Which he knew, he knew that about himself. Couldn't let go.

What was your worst memory of him?

There was a time when he wasn't well, and he came to the house. He was very angry, and he was shouting. And it was scary, but I could calm him down, so I just got him to sit outside and settle. I understand it now. It was frightening because I was so young, to see him so angry, to see his rage. But thinking back on it now, it was right, his anger was not misplaced.

In what respect are you most like him?

Kind.

When you see him, in your memory, at his happiest. Where is he?

He used to enjoy walking. There's a nature reserve here, Fairy Glen Nature Reserve, we used to walk, and he taught me how to, in the blades of grass you pull it out, and you suck on the sweetness. We would walk there and he taught me how to do that. And then of course in front of his piano.[400]

[400] Interview with Melissa James, 13 August 2015.

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Addenda

Addendum A: Christopher James Work List

Opera

Title: Cosmic Horizons
Instrumentation: 1 piccolo (doubling: flute and alto flute), 2 flutes, 2 oboes (1 doubling cor anglais), 2 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, Timpani, 5 percussion: I - glockenspiel, small african drum, marimba, maracas, 3 bottles (one empty, one half, one a third) II - vibraphone, 2 congas, temple blocks, 3 glasses (as mvt 1), III - marimba, wood blocks, 3 tom-toms, crotales, suspended cymbals (medium), clashed cymbals, thunder stick, gong, iv - xlophone, chimes, castanets, bongos, tambourine V - wood blocks, tom-tom, snare drum, triangle, bass drum, suspended cymbal (large), celesta, harp, piano, strings.
Composition Date: 1999 - 2001 (completed 1 March 2001).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: His Royal Highness Prince Edward.
Duration: Approximately 82 minutes.
General remarks:. A masque/opera, based on the romantic poet William Blake's vision of the fall and redemption of mankind, text selected from a wide variety of Blake's poems, reorganised into a new unity by Pamela van Schaik. Excerpts arranged for piano and voice, completed 28 February 2003.

Ballet

Title: Midnight of the Soul. A Fantasy Ballet for Wind Instruments and Percussion
Instrumentation: 1 flute (doubling on piccolo), 1 oboe (doubling on cor anglais), 1 clarinet in B flat, 1 alto saxophone in E flat, 1 tenor saxophone in B flat, 1 bassoon, 1 contrabassoon, 2 horns in F, 2 trumpets in C, 2 tenor trombones, 1 tuba, 3 percussionists: I - marimba, xylophone, Chinese temple blocks, maracas, 2 conga drums, bass drum, suspended cymbal (small), thunder sheet II - vibraphone, glockenspiel, claves, small woodblocks, tambourine, 4 bongos, a set of rototoms, suspended cymbal (large), clashed cymbals, III - timpani, chimes, crotales, snare drum, 4 tom-toms, tam-tam, clashed cymbals, suspended cymbals (medium).
Composition Date: October 1989.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Dr. Gustav Joyce.
Duration: Approximately 24 minutes.
General remarks: Commissioned by Total South Africa Pty Ltd.

Title: Solar eclipse
Instrumentation: 4 flutes (1 doubling on piccolo, 1 doubling on alto flute), 3 oboes (1 doubling on cor anglais), 3 clarinets (1 doubling on bass clarinet), 1 alto saxophone, 1 tenor saxophone, 2 bassoons, 1 double bassoon, 4 horns in F, 2 trumpets in C, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 tuba. timpani. 3 percussionists I - marimba, xylophone, single-headed African drum, claves, empty bottle, 4 bongos, tambourine, castanets,

triangle II - vibraphone, empty glass, 3 congas, chimes, snare drum, crotales, temple blocks, clashed cymbals, bass drum, suspended cymbal, III - marimba, glockenspiel, wood blocks, tom-toms, suspended cymbals, tam-tam, thunder mat, wind machine), Celesta, 2 harps, strings.
Composition Date: 2001 - 2002 (completed March 2002).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Melissa A James.
Duration: Approximately 28-29 minutes.
General remarks: Ballet for symphony orchestra on a story by Pamela van Schaik. Also arranged for solo piano.

Orchestral Works

Title: Gymnastics
Instrumentation: 3 flutes (alternating piccolo and alto flute), 2 oboes, cor anglais, 1 clarinet in D, 2 clarinets in B flat, 1 bass clarinet (alternating clarinet in B flat), 2 bassoons, double bassoon, 6 horns in F, 3 trumpets in C, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, suspended cymbal, tambourine, side drum, bongos, chinese blocks, xylophone, piano, harp, strings.
Composition Date: May 1982. Briefly revised in 1984.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Stefans Grove.
Duration: Approximately 24 minutes.
General remarks: Orchestral suite in four movements. Also arranged for two pianos.

Title: Images from Africa
Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 alternating with piccolo, 1 alternating with alto flute), 2 oboes, cor anglais, 1 clarinet in E flat, 3 clarinets in B flat (1 alternating with bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 6 horns in F, 3 trumpets in C, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 tuba, timpani, 5 percussionists I - marimba, glockenspiel, antique cymbals, Chinese tom-tom II – 4 bongos, 4 tom-toms, triangle, small woodblocks III - vibraphone, marimba, 2 conga drums, large woodblocks, IV - xylophone, triangle, bass drum, snare drum, clashed cymbals V - claves, suspended cymbals, clashed cymbals, tam-tam, thunder sheet, 1 guitar, 1 harp, celesta, 3 soloists (soprano, tenor, baritone) 1 choir, strings.
Composition Date: 1985 – 1987.
Composition place: Cincinnati.
Dedicated to: the composer's parents.
Duration: Approximately 38 minutes.
General remarks: Sketch A ballet in three acts. In fulfillment of requirements for Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) 1987 in the division of composition, history and theory of the College-Conservatory of Music Division of Graduate Studies and Research of the University of Cincinnati.

Title: Paradise Regained
Instrumentation: 3 flutes (one doubling piccolo and alto flute), 2 oboes, 1 cor anglais (doubling on as oboe), 2 clarinets (in B flat and A), 1 bass clarinet (also doubling as a clarinet), 1 alto saxophone in E flat (for finale only), 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, 1 bass trombone, tuba, timpani, three percussionists I -

glockenspiel, 4 bongos, crotales, xylophone, marimba, triangle, treble kalimba, II - vibraphone, 4 tom-toms, suspended cymbal, snare drum, triangle, small bells, wood blocks, clashed cymbal, tam-tam III - empty glass, marimba, 2 congas, empty bottle, Chinese temple blocks, bass drum, glass (half filled with water), djembe, celesta, harp, strings.
Composition Date: 1997 - 1999. Completed April 1999. Revised and extended Jan-Feb 2002. Edited and parts prepped May 2004 - March 2004.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Dr. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and all other subsequent presidents of South Africa.
Duration: Approximately 26 minutes.
General remarks: A symphonic poem for orchestra (and optional choir). Finale features borrowed material including South African national anthem.

Title: Adulations
Instrumentation: 6 horns in F, 4 trumpets in C, 3 trombones, 2 bass trombones, timpani, 3 percussionists: I - xylophone, marimba, 3 tom-toms, 4 bongos, maracas, chimes (tubular bells), triangle II - vibraphone, djembe, small woodblock, tambourine, cluster cymbals III – 3 congas, large woodblocks, Chinese temple blocks, snare drum, bass drum, suspended cymbal, tom-tom.
Composition Date: Sketches 11/07/2005. Second page 14/07/2005. July - August 2005. completed date: 30 August 2005.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Nelson Mandela. In appreciation, affection and respect for your dignity.
Duration: 12 minutes.
General remarks: Also arranged for piano and trumpet in November 2005.

Title: Symphony No,1 The Redemption
Instrumentation: 1 piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 1 cor anglais, 2 clarinets in B flat, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 tuba, 1 timpani, 4 percussionists, 1 celesta, 1 harp, strings.
Composition Date: 27/07/2007.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: The Mercy, Glory and Majesty of God.
Duration: 32 minutes, 10 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Concerti

Title: Concerto for Two Marimbas and Chamber Orchestra
Instrumentation: flute, oboe, clarinet in B flat, bassoon, horn I in F, horn II in F, trumpet in C, tenor trombone, percussion, marimba I, marimba II, harp, strings.
Composition Date: 1994. Revised 2007.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Jon Wishnuff.
Duration: 13 minutes 14 seconds.
General remarks: SAMRO commission. This was the Concerto for Vibraphone and Orchestra which was restructured for this instrumentation.

Title: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No.1
Instrumentation: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 4 horns (F, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, 1 bass trombone, 3 percussions I - marimba, xylophone, tambourine, wood blocks, crotales, chimes, triangle, clashed cymbals, II - vibraphone, maracas, Chinese temple blocks, 3 congas, castanets, rototoms (tuning E, F sharp, G sharp, B, C sharp, E) III - timpani, 4 tom-toms, suspended cymbal, 4 bongos, triangle, tambourine, snare drum, bass drum, piano, harp, strings.
Composition Date: 1991. Revised 1999. Revision completed July 1999.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Jennifer Anne Suter. For Stephen John Allen to perform.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Concerto for Organ and Percussion
Instrumentation: percussion: I - glockenspiel, marimba, South African drum, woodblocks. empty glass II - vibraphone, 2 congas, temple blocks, triangle, empty bottle, III - marimba, 4 bongos, Chinese tom-tom, tambourine, castanets, IV- xylophone, maracas, 3 tom-toms, crotales, snare drum, V - chimes, wood blocks, clashed cymbals, suspended cymbal bass drum, gong.
Composition Date: March - June 2001.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: The memory of Stephanus C. Zondagh, for Eddie Davey to perform.
Duration: 21-22 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No.2
Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling as piccolo and alto flute), 3 oboes (1 doubling as cor anglais), 3 clarinets (1 doubling as bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 1 double bassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, tuba, percussion: timpani, I - marimba, vibraphone, 3 congas, 3 tom-toms, wood blocks, chimes, empty glass. II - Marimba, xylophone, 4 bongos, Chinese temple blocks, crotales, suspended cymbal, clashed cymbals, III - djembe, bass drum, castanets, triangle, tambourine, snare drum, suspended cymbal, piano, strings.
Composition Date: Began April 2002, completed 22 October 2002.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: John C Hodgson to be performed by Malcolm Nay.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra
Instrumentation: 3 flutes (one alternating with piccolo), 2 oboes (1 alternating with cor anglais), 2 clarinets (1 alternating with bass clarinet), 2 bassoons (1 alternating with contrabassoon), 4 horns in F, 2 trumpets in C, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, timpani, 2 percussionists: I - marimba, xylophone, djembe, temple blocks, 2 congas, triangles, crotales, bass drum, II - marimba, vibraphone, djembe, tambourine, wood blocks, suspended cymbal, 3 bongos, solo violoncello, strings.
Composition Date: 2004. 3rd mvt completed 05/05/2004. Whole work completed 9/12/2004.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.

Dedicated to: Mary E Rörich.
Duration: 28 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Rhapsody on a Theme from Sergei Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto
Instrumentation: Solo violin, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns. celesta, harp, strings.
Composition Date: November - December 2005.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Hristo Kardjienv.
Duration: Approximately 16 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Concertino for Vibraphone and Chamber Orchestra
Instrumentation: flute (alternating with alto flute), oboe (alternating with cor anglais), clarinet (alternating with bass clarinet), bassoon (alternating with contrabassoon), 2 horns, 1 trumpet, 1 trombone, 1 percussionist (woodblocks, 3 congas, claves, triangle, 4 bongos, tom-toms, snare drums, suspended cymbal, tambourine, chines temple blocks, empty bottle), vibraphone, strings.
Composition Date: 9/11/2006.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Jon Wishnuff.
Duration: 13 minutes, 28 seconds.
General remarks: Commissioned for SAMRO. On 28 August SAMRO wrote to James extending the completion date to 30 June 1996, initial commission dated 20 January 1994 and due date for completion 31 December 1994. Was commissioned by SAMRO for the performance by Jon Wishnuff.

Brass or Wind Ensemble

Title: Idyll
Instrumentation: Wind Quintet - flute, oboe, clarinet in B flat, Horn in F, Bassoon
Composition Date: 1976
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa
Dedicated to: Not applicable
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Nocturne: Scherzo and Extra Gavanza for Woodwind Quintet
Instrumentation: flute, oboe, clarinet in B flat, horn in F, bassoon.
Composition Date: 1983
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Neil Geldenhuys
Duration: 8 minutes 45 seconds
General remarks: This work was included in James's D.M.A. recital in Cincinnati.

Percussion Ensemble

Title: Winter's Dream
Instrumentation: 3 percussionists. I - vibraphone, small wood blocks, marimba, 4 bongos II- glockenspiel, claves, large wood blocks, xylophone, chinese tom-tom III - crotales, triangle, snare drum, 4 tom-toms, suspended cymbal, tam-tam, bass drum, timpani.
Composition Date: March 1985.
Composition place: Cincinnati, United States of America.
Dedicated to: Dr. Scott Huston.
Duration: 5 minutes 40 seconds.
General remarks: This work was included in James's D.M.A. recital in Cincinnati, and won the Roodepoort International Eistedford 1985 Composer's Competition.

String Ensemble

Title: Sèrènade Cèleste
Instrumentation: violin I, violin II, violin III, violin IV, viola I, viola II, violioncello I, violoncello II, double bass.
Composition Date: June 1983, revised 1985. Earliest sketch is 21/3/1983. More sketches 16/7/1988 and 19/7/1988 and 27/7/1988. Some scores say 1983 - 1988. Revised again January 2003. (23 Dec 2002 - 9 Jan 2003).
Composition place: Cincinnati, United States of America and Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Augustina James (composer's wife).
Duration: 17 minutes, 30 seconds.
General remarks: The second movement was composed in Cincinnati, and the first and third in Pretoria.

Contemporary Ensemble

Title: Reveries
Instrumentation: flute, oboe, acoustic bass, guitar, 2 percussions, clarinets.
Composition Date: 14/12/89 and 14/12/90 (both dates on page 1).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: Appears to be incomplete.

Title: Grahamstown Buzz
Instrumentation: double ten-pan, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, piano, electric organ, guitar, bass guitar, percussion (3 congas, 4 bongos, claves, maracas, gong, suspended cymbal, tambourine).
Composition Date: 1990. Completed 8/1/1991 (revised 1992).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Andrew Tracey.
Duration: 12 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Lovely, Lovely Lady
Instrumentation: tenor, small combo (marimba, soprano saxophone, piano, organ, guitar, bass guitar, percussion [cowbells, congas, bongos and drum kit]).
Composition Date: 30/4/92.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Approximately 5 minutes.
General remarks: Composed for Christopher Ballantine's ensemble.

Title: Model City
Instrumentation: voice, synth, lead guitar, rhythm guitar, piano, bass guitar.
Composition Date: ND.
Composition place: Not available.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: Lyrics E Mare and C James.

Chamber Works

Title: Trio on "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden"
Instrumentation: oboe, clarinet and bassoon.
Composition Date: SAMRO received 8/11/1977.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Moonshine
Instrumentation: soprano, flute and harp.
Composition Date: 1981.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Aubrey Walton.
Duration: 3 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Song Cycle of James Wright Poetry
Instrumentation: soprano, flute and piano.
Composition Date: 1984.
Composition place: Cincinnati, United States of America.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: 6 minutes
General remarks: This work was included in James's D.M.A. recital in Cincinnati.

Title: Dialogue for Violin and Cello
Instrumentation: violin and cello.
Composition Date: February 1985.
Composition place: Cincinnati, United States of America.
Dedicated to: Composed especially for Wessl and Regina Beukes.

Duration: 6 minutes.
General remarks: This work was included in James's D.M.A. recital in Cincinnati.

Title: Songs of Lamentation and Remonstration
Instrumentation: baritone, piano and clarinet in B flat.
Composition Date: October 1985.
Composition place: Cincinnati, United States of America and Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Anthony R Turner.
Duration: 12 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: This Dark Ceiling Without A Star
Instrumentation: soprano, clarinet in A, clarinet in B flat, percussion I - 1 marimba, vibraphone, crotales, suspended cymbal, percussion II - claves, large wooden blocks, 3 Toms, Chinese Tom, T Drum, snare drum, bass drum.
Composition Date: Began 2/7/1988. Completed 23/9/88.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: A.G. James.
Duration: 18 minutes.
General remarks: A septet in four movements on a poem by Sylvia Plath.

Title: La Vase Brisé
Instrumentation: baritone, alto flute, oboe (cor anglais), harp, cello and percussion.
Composition Date: 1990.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: 4 minutes.
General remarks: Text by Sully Prudhomme.

Title: Like A Rainbow You Shone Out
Instrumentation: tenor, flute, violin, viola, cello.
Composition Date: 1991. Completed 25/3/91.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Christopher Ballantine.
Duration: 8 minutes, 30 seconds.
General remarks: A Song Cycle of Lola Watter poetry. James entered this work for the Olympia Composition Prize.

Title: Hymn to Intellectual Beauty
Instrumentation: soprano, tenor, violin, cello, harp and percussion (glockenspiel, vibraphone, marimba, crotales, claves, small woodblocks, 4 bongos, 4 Tom-toms, Suspended cymbal).
Composition Date: 1992.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Alan and Grazia Weinberg.
Duration: 17 minutes.
General remarks: Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Title: Three Songs for Tenor, Flute and Piano on Suzanne Jonker's Poetry
Instrumentation: tenor, flute and Piano.

Composition Date: 24/7/95.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: 5 minutes, 20 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Missa Sancti Bernardi
Instrumentation: Three percussionists (I empty bottle, marimba, vibraphone, xylophone, crotales, empty glass, glockenspiel, II - 2 Congas, woodblocks, suspended cymbal, claves, tambourine, Chinese tom-tom III - 4 tom-toms, 4 Bongos, Timpani, Tom-tom, snare drum, gong), choir and organ.
Composition Date: December 1997.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Michael Ranto and the Saint Bernard Mizeki Church Choir.
General remarks: Set to texts in the Tswana language.

Title: For Melissa A Christmas Gift 1998
Instrumentation: flute, tenor and harp.
Composition Date: 18/12/1998 (completed).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Melissa.
Duration: 1 minute, 40 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Three Short Pieces for Clarinet in A, Piano and one Percussionist
Instrumentation: clarinet in A, piano, percussion (2 congas, 3 bongos, crotales, marimba, vibraphone, castanets).
Composition Date: 18/09/1999 completed October 1999.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Robert Pickup.
Duration: 5 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Trio for Violin, Bassoon and Piano
Instrumentation: violin, bassoon and piano.
Composition Date: Completed 15 August 2000.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Retha Cilliers.
Duration: 8 minutes, 30 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: String Quartet No.1
Instrumentation: String quartet.
Composition Date: January - April 2003.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: The memories of Steve Biko, David Webster, Chris Hani and Martin Trump.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: For the Soweto String Quartet to perform.

Title: String Quartet No.2
Instrumentation: String quartet.
Composition Date: April - July 2003.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Dr. Adele Potgieter.
Duration: 27 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Mandarin of Light, O Rising Star
Instrumentation: oboe, tenor, piano.
Composition Date: July - September 2003.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Melissa A James.
Duration: 8 minutes.
General remarks: Song cycle of poems by Don Maclennan.

Title: String Quartet No.3 in Four Movements Depicting Seven Moods of the Sea
Instrumentation: String Quartet.
Composition Date: November 2004 - May 2005.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa, or Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Christiaan W. Dreyer.
Duration: 20 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: String Quartet No.4 Nirvana
Instrumentation: String Quartet.
Composition Date: June - July 2005.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Denise Sutton.
Duration: 16 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Songs of Innocence - William Blake
Instrumentation: violin, tenor and piano.
Composition Date: 7/11/2005 completed 17/01/2006.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Melissa A James.
Duration: 15 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: A John Keats Song For Melissa
Instrumentation: Flute, Tenor, Piano.
Composition Date: ND.
Composition place: Not available.
Dedicated to: Melissa, the composer's daughter.
Duration: 6 minutes, 23 seconds.
General remarks: The score is not dated, which is unusual in this collection.

Piano Duo

Title: Silver Linings Pianoforte duets for Teachers and Young Children
Instrumentation: 2 pianos.
Composition Date: Began 7/9/95 ended 17/12/95.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: M. Wepener.
Durarion: 6 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Seven Escapisms. Seven Easy Duets for Amateurs and Connoisseurs
Instrumentation: Two pianos.
Composition Date: 2003.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Pamela van Schaik.
Duration: 13-14 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Music for Rainy Days
Instrumentation: Two Pianos.
Composition Date: August - October 2003.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Jill Richards and Michael Blake.
Duration: 21 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Six Miniatures. Duets for young people
Instrumentation: Two pianos.
Composition Date: 13/9/2006 - 12/10/2006.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Julie Morris.
Duration: Approximately 10 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Solo Instrument with Accompaniment

Title: Easter Fanfare
Instrumentation: organ and trumpet.
Composition Date: 26/03/88.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Stephen.
General remarks: None.

Title: Sonatina for oboe and pianoforte
Instrumentation: oboe and piano.
Composition Date: 23 December 2000.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Cobus Malan.

Duration: Approximately 11 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Two Aphorisms for Violin and Piano in Two Movements
Instrumentation: violin and piano.
Composition Date: 7/7/2005 - 17/10/2005.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Ralica Cherneva.
Duration: 6 minutes, 40 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Dance Suite for Solo Flute and Piano
Instrumentation: flute and piano.
Composition Date: 12/8/2006.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Evelien Ballantine.
Duration: 14 minutes, 47 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Two Short Pieces for Oboe and Pianoforte
Instrumentation: oboe and pianoforte
Composition Date: ND.
Composition place: Not available.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
General remarks: None.

Solo Instrumental Works

Title: Three Short Pieces for Pianoforte
Instrumentation: pianoforte.
Composition Date: 1976.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: 8 minutes, 30 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Three Bagatelles for Harp
Instrumentation: harp.
Composition Date: May 1977.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Kobie Odendaal.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Molecular Synthesis
Instrumentation: flute.
Composition Date: June 1977, revised also 1977.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.

Duration: 3 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Three Short Pieces for Piano
Instrumentation: piano or flute.
Composition Date: June 1977.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Hildegardt Smit.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Three Preludes for Pianoforte
Instrumentation: Piano.
Composition Date: 1977.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Stephen Allen.
Duration: 5 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: 2 Wedding Marches for the Organ
Instrumentation: organ.
Composition Date: November 1979.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Stephen and Madelaine Allen on their wedding.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Sérénade pour Désirée
Instrumentation: piano.
Composition Date: 1981.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: 3 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Sunbeams A Suite of Piano Pieces for Young Children Op. 33
Instrumentation: piano.
Composition Date: 13/10/1981 (revised 1999).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Melissa James.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Four Portraits for Pianoforte in Four Movements
Instrumentation: Piano.
Composition Date: 1980/1 January 1981/ 1982.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: J C Coetzee.
Duration: 19 minutes.
General remarks: Original Title: “Suite Schizophrenia”.

Title: Dance Impressions
Instrumentation: Harp.
Composition Date: 6/1/83.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Augustina.
Duration: 5 minutes.
General remarks: This work was included in James's D.M.A. recital in Cincinnati and was commissioned by Harp Society of South Africa.

Title: For Islay, Harp Solo
Instrumentation: harp.
Composition Date: January 1983.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Islay (composer's sister). "Dedicated to my beloved sister Islay" "A piece for solo harp on her wedding day".
Duration: 2 minutes, 30 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Three Etudes for Pianoforte
Instrumentation: piano.
Composition Date: August 1984.
Composition place: Cincinnati, United States of America.
Dedicated to: Augustina (for reliable technique).
Duration: 6 minutes, 30 seconds.
General remarks: Selected to be performed at The Best of the Cincinnati Composers' Guild Concert (held 22 February 1986). The last 2 movements were included in James's D.M.A. recital in Cincinnati.

Title: Three Jazzy Interludes for Pianoforte
Instrumentation: piano.
Composition Date: July 1988.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa .
Dedicated to: Malcolm Nay.
Duration: 6 minutes, 30 seconds.
General remarks: Won the ATKV Composition Prize for Piano work.

Title: African Safari
Instrumentation: keyboard instruments.
Composition Date: Began 29 September 1990 - completed 15 December 1990.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Shelayne Hendey.
Duration: 12 minutes, 10 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Fantasy on Two Venda Children's Songs for Bass Recorder
Instrumentation: bass recorder.
Composition Date: 3/4/92 (began), 17/4/92 (completed).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.

Duration: 4 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Transformations for Solo Flute
Instrumentation: flute.
Composition Date: 1995.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Elke Koppers.
Duration: 5 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Twenty Four Fanfares for Organ
Instrumentation: organ
Composition Date: 29/06/98 - 31/12/98.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Eddie Davey.
Duration: 24 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Toccatina/Tokkatina for Pianoforte
Instrumentation: piano.
Composition Date: Revised 16/04/99 (no original date).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: Part of the Unisa Grade 3 Examination Album.

Title: Prelude, Meditation and Toccata for Organ
Instrumentation: organ.
Composition Date: Completed September 2001.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Wim Viljoen.
Duration: 10 minutes, 30 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Three Tranquilisers for Pianoforte
Instrumentation: piano.
Composition Date: April 2004. Completed 15/4/2004.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Stephen J Allen.
Duration: 12 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: From Infinity to Eternity
Instrumentation: Solo violin and/or solo viola.
Composition Date: 12/9/2004 - 5/10/2004.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Professor Walter Mony.
Duration: 13-14 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Soliloquay
Instrumentation: double bass.
Composition Date: 27/01/2006 - 4/02/2006.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Simon Milliken.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Moonlit waters and cloudy, cloudy skies
Instrumentation: piano.
Composition Date: Began 28/12/2006 completed 17/01/2007.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Meyer H Ernst.
Duration: 6 minutes, 39 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Organ Fugue
Instrumentation: organ.
Composition Date: ND
Composition place: Not available.
Dedicated to: Stefanus Zondagh.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: The score is not dated, which is unusual for this collection.

Sacred Choral Works

Title: The Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis
Instrumentation: organ and full choir (S.A.T.B.).
Composition Date: SAMRO received: 8/11/1977 (just Magnificat). Chris James signs it off as "1970-1971 and 1979".
Composition place: Rhodesia and Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Approximately 3 minutes
General remarks: None.

Title: Two Anthems for Unaccompanied Choir
Instrumentation: S.A.T.B.
Composition Date: 1977 revised 1984.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Heilige Nag
Instrumentation: Four Part Choir.
Composition Date: 1977 (SAMRO received it 8/11/1977).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.

Duration: Not available.
General remarks: Based on a poem by Elizabeth Eybers.

Title: Hymn 1 Corinthians Ch 13 vs 1-8
Instrumentation: baritone soloist, choir, piano.
Composition Date: SAMRO received 8/11/1977.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Psalm 150 for Organ and Five-Part Choir "Praise Ye The Lord"
Instrumentation: organ, S.A.T.B.
Composition Date: Received SAMRO 8/11/1977.
Composition place: Not available.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: The score is not dated, which is unusual for this collection.

Title: Psalm No.1 vir 4 stemmige manskoor
Instrumentation: 4 voice male choir.
Composition Date: December 1978 (completed).
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks:None.

Title: Psalm 121 for Organ and four-part choir
Instrumentation: S.A.T.B., organ.
Composition Date: December 1978.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: God's Grandeur
Instrumentation: Unaccompanied Choir.
Composition Date: Revised version December 1987. Original: 16/5/1979.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: George T King (revised edition). Arsit de Swardt (original – hand writing is illegible).
Duration: 16 minutes, 15 seconds.
General remarks: Based on the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, some copies say "By Isaac A Forward".

Title: Three Anthems for Unaccompanied Choir
Instrumentation: S.A.T.B.
Composition Date: 9/12/88, completed 28/12/88.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.

Duration: 9 minutes, 45 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: Pesalome (Psalm 23)
Instrumentation: two sopranos, two altos.
Composition Date: sketches - 25/5/91 - 15/6/91.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration Not available.
General remarks: Commissioned by the Roodepoort International Eistedford 1991.

Title: Three Psalms for Mixed Choir and Organ
Instrumentation: S.A.T.B., organ.
Composition Date: November 2003 - January 2004.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: The Mercy and Glory of God.
Duration: 10 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Drie Psalms
Instrumentation: gemengde koor en orrel.
Composition Date: November - December 2003. 18/12/2003.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: tot die genade en eer van God.
Duration: 3 minutes, 40 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Title: There is no greater love than this that a man should lay down his life for his friend, Selected verses from St John, Chapter 15
Instrumentation: baritone solo, S.A.T.B.
Composition Date: ND.
Composition place: Not available.
Dedicated to: the Grace, Mercy and Glory of God.
Duration: 4 minutes, 51 seconds.
General remarks: None.

Solo Vocal Music

Title: Song Cycle of William Butler Yeats Poetry
Instrumentation: soprano and piano.
Composition Date: Multiple dates. 06/03/99 06/05/99. SAMRO received 8/11/1977. Front cover pages indicate 1976.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Composer's Mother Marjorie James.
Duration: 15 minutes.
General remarks: None.

Title: Liewe Vader
Instrumentation: piano and solo voice.

Composition Date: N.D.
Composition place: Not available.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: Incomplete.

Title: Shakespeare's Sonnet (CXVI)
Instrumentation: soprano and organ.
Composition Date: November 1979.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Stephen and Madelaine Allen on their wedding.
Duration: Not applicable.
General remarks: None.

Title: Melissa A Birthday Present for your 14th Birthday
Instrumentation: soprano and piano.
Composition Date: 2000.
Composition place: Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Melissa James.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.

Title: Illuminations
Instrumentation: mezzo-soprano and piano.
Composition Date: September 2002.
Composition place:Pretoria, South Africa.
Dedicated to: Pamela van Schaik.
Duration: 4 minutes 30 seconds-5 minutes.
General remarks: Song cycle of Pamela van Schaik's poetry.

Title: A Tribute to John. A John Keats Song Cycle
Instrumentation: tenor and piano.
Composition Date: Began 20/I/2007.
Composition place: Ballito, South Africa.
Dedicated to: David John Simon.
Duration: 12 minutes, 52 seconds.
General remarks: Primarily sketch material.

Misc.

Title: Short Service for Morning Worship
Instrumentation: Not available.
Composition Date: 1984 (SAMRO received 1985/10/17).
Composition place: Cincinnati, United States of America.
Dedicated to: Not applicable.
Duration: Not available.
General remarks: None.