

**An analysis of stylistic elements and challenges of technique and
improvisation in three late piano works by
Surendran Reddy (1962–2010)**

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this mini-dissertation, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the master's degree of Western art music (piano performance) at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, has not been submitted by me previously for a degree at another university. I declare that it is my own work and that any contributions to or quotations in this mini-dissertation have been cited and referenced.

Signed:

Mart-Marie Snyman de Klerk



Date: 3 October 2020

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the analyses of the stylistic elements and challenges of technique and improvisation in three late piano works by the South African composer Surendran Reddy. Reddy's personal identity as a crossover artist is apparent in his stylistic approach. The fusion of Western art music, jazz, contemporary and indigenous music from various parts of the world ensued in a distinctive compositional style, which he termed *clazz*.

Three of his shorter late piano compositions, namely *African Funk for Felix* (2005), *Ballad for Thomas* (2005) and *Toccata for John Roos* (2007), contain key characteristics of Reddy's *clazz* style. It also represents the composer's own pianistic virtuosity that renders them challenging to performers.

The technical, stylistic and improvisational difficulties in these three works are investigated through a practice-led approach. The methodologies used to study and perform these works were researched by means of two interviews conducted with two professional South African pianists who have performed these works. The technical difficulties in these compositions are delineated and potential solutions to overcome virtuoso passages through fingering suggestions or recommendations for alternative practising methods are examined. The diverse stylistic influences on these works, such as gospel, rock, funk, soul, pop, jazz and various elements of Western art music, are identified, discussed and explored, with emphasis on the influence of South African jazz on Reddy's conceptualisation of *clazz*. Prescribed improvisation sections are examined in-depth, and potential performance strategies are devised in the form of notated exercises that would hopefully serve as an accessible methodological approach.

KEYWORDS

*clazz*¹

composition

crossover

improvisation

jazz

mbaqanga

piano

practice-led research

stylistic analysis

Surendran Reddy (1962-2010)

Western art music

¹ As a result of Reddy's strong beliefs in human rights and egalitarianism, and his stance against ethnocentrism and racism, he preferred *clazz* to be written in lower case (Lucia 2010b:53).

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Surendran Reddy (1962-2010) made a vast contribution to South African music as a composer, teacher and concert pianist (Lucia 2010b:53). From 1978 until 2010 he composed more than 100 works (Lucia 2020) and he was commissioned to compose works for the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) and University of South Africa (UNISA) competitions.

To understand Reddy's compositional style, some background to his life is required. Living in South Africa during apartheid, Reddy fought against racism and ethnocentrism through music. Apartheid influenced Reddy as a composer resulting in his belief that no music genre should be deemed superior to another. He claimed the following:

While I enjoyed an excellent classical music education in London at the Royal College of Music I ventured later into pop, rock and other musical styles without abandoning my classical roots, and attempted to share the fruits of this Catholic musical perspective with audiences. They were perhaps not ready for pioneering efforts in bridging the gap between jazz and classical, then, and seemed to me sometimes to advocate a kind of 'apartheid in music' (Reddy 2005a).

This led him to create his distinctive compositional style referred to as *clazz*. The name originated from an amalgamation of the words 'classical' and 'jazz'. In reality, *clazz* comprises several musical genres including jazz, pop, Indian, world music, rock, Javanese gamelan music, South African mbaqanga, isicathamiya, and Western art music. Reddy's political and philosophical beliefs are evident in *clazz*. By fusing different musical styles, he exhibited his humanitarianism, deeming all should be treated equally (Reddy 2007:11; Lucia 2010b:53; Van der Merwe 2016:71). In the prologue to his composition *Toccata for John Roos*, commissioned for the 11th International UNISA Piano Competition, he explained the 10 principles of *clazz* as well as the origin of the name (Reddy 2007:12):

i [sic] devised the term 'c1azz' [sic] to describe my musical style, compounding the words classical and jazz, which formerly in music history denoted styles that were kept quite distinct from each other, but in recent years have been moving closer together. in [sic] effect the term *clazz* encompasses for me a fusion of many different styles of music. my [sic] ears are open to all musics [sic] in the world.

This study focuses primarily on Reddy's compositional and improvisational contribution as Van der Merwe (2016) has already written extensively about the most important

biographic details of his life. However, in order to appreciate Reddy's compositional and improvisational influence, an understanding regarding his career as a performer is necessary.

Reddy was a skilful multi-keyboard instrumentalist and the winner of various competitions, including the 1985 SABC Music Prize for keyboard players in both the harpsichord and piano categories (Lucia 2010a:131). He made multiple recordings for the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), and performed with Allen Kwela, Johnny Fourie, Sibongile Khumalo, the Harlem Dance company, and internationally renowned soprano Kiri Te Kanawa (Lucia 2010b:53). Reddy worked as musical director, arranger and performer of the crossover band *Channel 18* and wrote television and radio advertisement jingles (Artsmart 2010; Lucia 2010b:53).

As a crossover performer, he was equally comfortable playing Western art music repertoire (including concertos for piano and orchestra), improvising in jazz and other styles, performing with Florian Schiertz (German tabla player), or making arrangements of pop songs (Lucia 2010b:53). His Beatles medley on the compact disc *Reddy, Steady, Go!* (1993) gained praise from audiences, mainly because of his superb improvisational skills (Boekkooi 1995:17).

Reddy's virtuosity is obvious in his compositional writing and contributes to one of the many challenges a pianist will face when performing his works (Van der Merwe 2016:59). His skills are apparent by looking at the rapid metronome marking (130 per crotchet) of one of his late piano works, *African Funk for Felix* (Reddy 2005b:1). This metronome marking adds to the difficulty of the work that comprises a repeated semiquaver ostinato, complex syncopations and rhythms, changes in time signatures, and technically challenging passages for both hands. At the beginning of 2019 the only recording of Reddy playing this composition available to the public was made during a rehearsal in Konstanz, Germany (Reddy & Schiertz 2005). This recording confirms Reddy's exceptional piano technique as he adheres entirely to the tempo markings of the work. Currently there are additional recordings available on the *African Composers Edition (ACE)* website (Lucia 2020).

In light of the plurality of stylistic influences in Reddy's music, it seems advisable for any performer to be well versed in various genres, regardless of their area of specialisation. In the same way that interpreters or performers must be open-minded about various musical styles and genres, they also need to consider other creative activities which can

have an indirect influence on the performance or interpretation of music such as cooking, art, dancing, tabla-playing or writing. In his 10 principles of clazz Reddy jokingly notes that performers should “learn how to cook” (Reddy 2007:12). According to Van der Merwe (2016:42), Reddy was of the opinion that cooking was a discipline powered by innovativeness and he would have liked performers to use the same creativity and spontaneity when performing his compositions. Just like Surendran Reddy, I have studied both Western art music and jazz piano, and perform in these genres professionally. I am especially interested in his unique piano compositions as it combines these two styles.

In order to hone a comprehensive stylistic interpretation of Reddy’s works, performers should overcome technical difficulties, acquire a practical knowledge regarding the musical influences reflected in Reddy’s compositions, and improvise where directed. Three of Reddy’s short late piano works, namely *African Funk for Felix* (2005), *Ballad for Thomas* (2005) and *Toccata for John Roos* (2007), are used in this study to identify the challenges performers of these work will face and to provide possible solutions for these challenges. In addition to a practice-led research method, I present two interviews with professional South African pianists who have played these works to answer the research question directing this study.

1.2 Study aims and research question

In this mini-dissertation I discuss the following elements in the three late piano works that relate to the performance of Surendran Reddy’s music:

- Overcoming technical complications, particularly virtuoso passages;
- Shedding light on the interpretation of the diverse stylistic influences of South African jazz and world music in these compositions; and
- Delineating the concept of improvisation inherent in the scores of Reddy and devising potential performance strategies in this regard.

This study contributes to the current insufficient academic material available on the works of Reddy and might lead to further research on the subject. The only other late piano work, the *Hammerclazz Sonata*, merits a separate study and is not included, as it would render the scope of the research too broad. This study creates an introduction to Reddy’s late piano compositions by means of analysis and offers practical solutions for technical and musical challenges in his music.

1.3 Research question

How can a pianist overcome the technical, stylistic and improvisational challenges in the three selected late piano works by Surendran Reddy?

Subquestions:

- What are the stylistic features of the three late works and how does Reddy bring them to pianistic realisation?
- What are the pianistic difficulties in the three late piano works and which solutions can be devised to overcome them?
- How can potential performance strategies be devised in terms of the prescribed improvisations within the late piano works?

1.4 Delimitations of the study

This study follows a practice-based research approach and the analyses in this mini-dissertation are only done for performing purposes. The scope of this research does not allow for extensive analytical, theoretical and compositional research. No detailed biographical information is presented, as previous studies cover this area. Due to a lack of available manuscripts and scores,² this study is limited to only the three selected short late piano works by Reddy. Due to a lack of resources interviews are used.

1.5 Research methodology

This study incorporates practice-led research, as the analyses of the three piano works will lead to new understanding of the practice. I involve the physicality of performers' bodies into musical theories as a primary procedure of musical understanding (Doğantan-Dack 2015:170-1). Stylistic elements in works *African Funk for Felix*, *Ballad for Thomas* and *Toccata for John Roos* are analysed through interpretative practice-led research. Johann Mouton (2001:108) defines analysis as identifying manageable motifs, patterns, connections and tendencies. According to Mouton's interpretation the aim of analysis, in this case, would be to understand the various key elements of the music through examination of the link between concepts, variables or phenomenology to conclude if there are any patterns or tendencies that can be recognised or singled out and to establish possible recurring motifs. This study follows Mouton's definition to find connections between the three late piano works.

² When this study was conducted the *Surendran Reddy performing edition* was not yet available. All of Reddy's works were made available on the *African Composers Edition* (Lucia 2020) website in 2020.

This is a qualitative study due to the use of case studies (Flick Von Kardorff & Steinke 2004:5). Creswell (2018:37) defines qualitative research in his book *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches* as follows:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretations of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action.

Creswell (2018:53) describes the five qualitative approaches to inquiry as narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, and case studies. Case study research comprises the analysis of a specific issue by focusing on one or more case that is situated in a confined setting (Creswell 2018:73). I chose case studies, in the form of interviews, as a research design to expand on the limited academic material currently available on the three selected works by Reddy. The interviews involve content analysis through semi-structured interviews with professional South African pianists who have performed the three works in piano competitions. *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* were prescribed improvisation works for the jazz/popular music genre for the SAMRO Overseas Scholarship for Keyboard Players in 2005 (Reddy 2005b). *Toccata for John Roos* was a prescribed work for the 11th Vodacom Unisa International Piano Competition as a virtuoso challenge for the competitors in 2008 (Alcock 2008). The interviews are used as additional sources to practice-led research to analyse the stylistic elements and challenges of technique and improvisation in the selected works.

Research steps

Research the genesis of the three piano works including relevant biographical details of the composer that influenced his compositional style.

Study the notes of the three works and physically practise the compositions on the piano to gain more insight into Reddy's stylistic approach. Formulate personal interpretative observations of the musical character of the works. Gain an understanding regarding the technical, stylistic and improvisational challenges a performer may face by physically practising the works.

Analyse the stylistic elements and musical influences within the three works. For example: *African Funk for Felix* contains a plethora of other stylistic references; South African jazz is expressed in the mbaqanga section (Reddy 2005b:3); the influence of funk music is found in the opening bass line of the work; and a jazz ballad feel can be traced on page 6.

Interview professional pianists who have played the three works to gain insight in and solutions for any technical, stylistic and improvisational challenges. The interviews enable the researcher to garner understanding of performers' methodological approaches to learning and performing the works.

1.6 Chapter outline

The following is an overview of the chapters of this mini-dissertation.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 comprises the introduction and background to this study including the rationale, study aims, research question, literature review, research methodology and delimitations of the study.

Chapter 2

In this chapter the genesis of the three selected late piano works and the way in which influences of various musical styles shaped the identity and music of Reddy are discussed. A short overview of the stylistic musical elements within the harmony, melody, rhythm, texture, form and style of the three selected works is also given.

Chapter 3

This chapter focuses on the challenge of improvisation within Reddy's music and provides constructive ideas to musicians or performers who are not well acquainted with these concepts.

Chapter 4

An investigation into the technical and stylistic challenges is conducted in this chapter and solutions are formulated through practice-led research as well as the interviews.

1.7 Literature review

The primary sources for this study include piano scores, recordings and documents written by Reddy, electronic sources and a few academic sources. To date limited research on the Reddy's music has been conducted and there is only one academic source documenting his life and works. The secondary sources used in this study focuses on improvisation and performance musicology. There are many sources available on both these subjects, but I have limited the literature review to reflect only those issues that are of concern to this study.

1.7.1 Primary sources

Musical scores

The scores used in this study are *African Funk for Felix* (Appendix B), *Ballad for Thomas* (Appendix C) and *Toccata for John Roos* (Appendix D). These works are currently published and distributed through the website *African Composers Edition (ACE)* (Lucia 2020). At the beginning of this study in 2019 only a few scores of Reddy's piano works were available through university libraries and SAMRO. In 2019 Christine Lucia completed the *Reddy Performing Edition* consisting of his complete works. The *Reddy Performing Edition* (Lucia 2020) was made available to the public in 2020. Full scores became available for purchase in July 2020 on the ACE website. According to Heike Asmuss³ many of Reddy's music was in the process of being transcribed since 2019, but apart from the three late piano works, only one other piano score, *Go for it!* (1993), was available through SAMRO at the start of this study (Lucia 2019).

Recordings

There are only two commercial CD recordings of solo piano works by Reddy and in both cases the composer is also the performer. These two albums are entitled *Reddy, Steady, Go! The Ill-tempered Keyboard* (1994) and *Rough n Reddy, The Ill-tempered Keyboard Part 2* (1996). Two recordings of *African Funk for Felix* are currently on the *African Composers Edition* website (Lucia 2020). These recordings are of Reddy himself playing *African Funk for Felix* accompanied by drummer Daniel Schlaeger (Reddy & Schlaeger 2005) and a live recording of Reddy and tabla player Florian

³ Heike Asmuss currently resides in Germany. She was Reddy's life partner (although they had a platonic relationship from 2000) and is currently working together with professor Christine Lucia to recover all manuscripts of Reddy's works (Asmuss 2019; Lucia 2020).

Schiertz recorded during a concert in the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch (Reddy & Schiertz 2005b). For the purpose of this study, a third recording made by Reddy and Schiertz during a rehearsal in Konstanz, Germany, is used. This recording was available for download in 2019 on the previous version of the *African Composers Edition* website (Lucia 2019; Reddy & Schiertz 2005).

YouTube hosts several live video recordings of Reddy performing with the band *Channel 18*, as well as recordings of the composer playing original compositions. Only two recordings of a pianist other than the composer are available for public viewing, namely the performance of *Toccata for John Roos* by Ben Schoeman, made during the 11th Vodacom UNISA International Piano Competition in 2008 and a video recording by Schoeman filmed in 2013 during the Cleveland International Piano Competition in the United States of America (Schoeman 2013; 2020).

Sources written by Reddy

The introductory notes accompanying the published compositions *African Funk for Felix*, *Ballad for Thomas* and *Toccata for John Roos* were written by the composer himself. These preliminary notes and composer's declarations provide the performer with a short biographical summary of Reddy's life, useful information on each specific composition ranging from the 10 principles of jazz to pragmatic explanations regarding the interpretation of the work, and illumination regarding notational characteristics.

Electronic sources

The official Surendran Reddy website www.surendranreddy.com is currently unavailable. The website *African Composers Edition*, written by Christine Lucia (2020), is dedicated to composers of colour, and is the most comprehensive web source to date that contains information on Reddy. It provides biographical descriptions, interviews, letters, texts, poetry, recordings (midi and audio), and manuscripts by Reddy.

Academic sources focusing on Reddy

There are two academic articles on Reddy published after his passing. They are biographical in nature and serve as obituaries. Lucia (2010a:131) writes in memory of Reddy's "progressive musical genius" and describes the composer as a child prodigy who won a scholarship to attend the Royal College of Music in London at age 15. She claims that, after that time, he continued to push the boundaries of the musical world:

He was a mensch, a child, a great artist, a perfectionist, sometimes too big for us to see and sometimes definitely too hot to handle; but he lived ten lives in the short span of 47 years, and we will miss him sorely.

Lucia (2010b:53) paid tribute to Reddy after his passing in Germany due to a long illness:

Reddy was a larger-than-life figure in the South African musical scene. He also had a strong European profile, and his music was performed in a number of countries around the world. Known principally as a performer in his youth, in recent years he was increasingly recognised as an original and highly eclectic composer.

Surendran Reddy, Master of Clazz, written by Carla van der Merwe (2016), was the first academic dissertation attempting to document Reddy's life and works. It is a qualitative study relying mostly on extensive interviews with individuals who personally knew or worked with Reddy. This study offers a thorough view of his life as a versatile performer, composer and pianist.

The first chapter of Van der Merwe's study focuses on an in-depth biography of Reddy as well as a philosophical discussion of the influence of egalitarianism and humanism on his music. This body of work includes a complete list of Reddy's compositions organised by instrument. In contrast with Van der Merwe's study, this study does not provide new insights in Reddy's life and works, but rather refers peripherally to certain biographical details that may shed light on the three selected late piano works.

The second chapter of Van der Merwe's dissertation engages with clazz as musical style. Van der Merwe discusses the influence of different musical styles as well as the impact of the political climate in South Africa on the development of clazz. She focuses on the path leading up to the creation of clazz and the way in which Reddy's compositions slowly began to change towards this musical fusion. She analyses different themes of well-known works quoted in Reddy's two solo piano CDs, and three additional compositions, for example *Nkosi-Sikelel' iAfrica* (the South African national anthem) in *Toccata for Madiba* for solo organ (Van der Merwe 2016:53). This chapter contains a cursory analysis of selected musical excerpts from three works, namely *Toccata for John Roos*, *Toccata for Madiba* and *Go for it!* (Van der Merwe 2016:42). Besides not being detailed theoretical, stylistic or performance-based analyses of these works she does not identify particular technical difficulties in the music. Instead, it is a short overview from which the reader can interpret specific traits of Reddy's compositions to understand his style and the origin of his musical influences. She

focuses on the impact of Reddy's personal life, career and philosophical outlook on his musical style. In conclusion, Van der Merwe (2016:71) states:

This study's main challenge was the extremely segmented documentation available on Reddy's life. By trying to gather sources and attempting a coherent biographical chapter, the writer wished to create the background for Reddy's motivation for inventing *clazz*. The style investigation in Chapter 2 by no means aspires to a theoretical analysis of his compositions and can rather be considered as an introduction for further analysis of his works and style in the future. Though this study encourages further research, it provides a biographical overview and introduction to *clazz*.

My study builds on the groundwork laid in Van der Merwe's dissertation by providing a practice-led analyses of the three selected late piano works in order to identify specific characteristics of *clazz* and to circumscribe pianistic and stylistic difficulties and solutions in Reddy's music.

1.7.2 Secondary sources

Improvisation

The concept of *improvisation* in Reddy's music is also addressed in this study. There are various sections in these works where the composer instructs the performer to improvise and only provides broad harmonic and/or melodic pointers. To understand Reddy's background regarding improvisation it is important to note that he did not receive any formal tuition in this area during his Western art music education. In a podcast called *Conducting Business*, musicologist Professor Clive Brown (2015) from the University of Leeds (UK) considers reasons why spontaneous improvisation is a dying trend in Western art music concerts in the 21st century. In an article with a similarly themed topic, Moore (1992) also discourses on the decline of improvisation in Western art music. Both authors point out that the attitude towards improvisation in the last 150 years have changed due to advances in music education becoming available to the general public; the development of technology such as sound recording; and the convenience of a vast body of classical repertoire. These phenomena possibly resulted in musicians becoming progressively more self-conscious in the performance of idolised works and more inclined to rely intensely on the explanatory guidance of dominant music professionals rather than on their own instinct (Moore 1992:72-73).

J.S. Bach, Handel, Mozart and Beethoven were all famous composers and performers who were often renowned for their improvisational skills before they were recognised for their composition skills (Barnhill 2006). Following this tradition, 19th-century pianists, such as Hummel, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Clara and Robert Schumann, Chopin, Liszt

and Brahms, were likewise known for their accomplished improvisational skills (Moore 1992:62-63). 20th-century composer, pianist and conductor Sergei Rachmaninoff composed his own cadenza to Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody no. 2,⁴ thereby opening up a prospective platform for modern pianists to incorporate their own materials into standard works (Martyn 1990:293). Virtuoso pianist Dinu Lipatti often performed a prelude of his own invention preceding works by Bach, Mozart, Schubert or Chopin (Ainley 2017). These forms of improvisation integrated into performances of standard works of Western art music, can be heard in older recordings, particularly of pianists who received their training within the Late-Romantic sphere. One of the few pianists of the 21st century who improvises in concerts, Gabriela Montero, describes her improvisation as a "double-edged sword" as she is sometimes mistaken for a crossover musician instead of a concert pianist playing Western art music (Brown, Lewin & Wise 2015). In the late 20th century the tradition of improvisation declined with pianists who believed in a stricter adherence to composers' original texts.

It could be argued that inventiveness contribute to, rather than detract from, the success of a pianist's career. Reddy understood and internalised this idea and had a vision of what modern audiences would like, despite his poor health and subsequent death preventing him from bringing this to fruition. The mentioned sources on the art of improvisation are used to delineate the complexities of certain passages in Reddy's music.

Performance musicology

In his article *Musicology and performance* Leech-Wilkinson (2004:1-2) states that the changing nature of musical performances over the years has profound influences on musicology. Sound and the performance of music have always influenced the way in which musicologists write about music. Musicologists usually have one particular performance in mind when they write about a certain composition as they find the information they write about within certain performances (Leech-Wilkinson 2004:13). It can be argued that on the whole musicology is more changed by performance than performance is changed by musicology (Leech-Wilkinson 2004:13).

Musicologists write about new elements that performers bring forth, although they rather ascribe them to theoretical or historical origins than to the performers. According to Leech-Wilkinson (2004:1) and Doğantan-Dack (2015) performance musicology is

⁴ Following Liszt's markings on the score *Cadenza ad Libitum*.

needed as an original examination undertaken in order to achieve innovative knowledge by means of practice. This would provide the researcher with additional information that a theoretical analysis would not necessarily offer.

There are two types of practice-associated research: practice-based and practice-led research. According to Candy (2006), research is practice-based if its main contribution is an innovative artefact, whereas practice-led research leads to original or fresh considerations regarding the practice.

Doğantan-Dack (2015:169-202) is the author of the chapter 'the role of the musical instrument in performance as research: the piano as a research tool' in the book *Artistic practice as research in music: theory, criticism, practice* (2015). Her study is based on interpretative and technical questions related to the performance of artistic music and the performing body using Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 110 as the main focus of her research (Doğantan-Dack 2015:169-170). She explores the relationship between expressed artistic knowledge and analytical thinking. Although practice-based investigation is not widely used as a primary research tool, it has been used to confirm what various researchers had already concluded through score-analysis research (Doğantan-Dack 2015:171).

Scholars implementing practice-based or practice-led research as the principal research method could benefit from original insights and contribute to new academic ideas. Using the piano as a research tool and the human body to arrive at previously non-existent musical meaning, rather than choosing from various pre-determined options assembled from formal theoretical research, could provide the researcher with new information (Doğantan-Dack 2015:172).

Doğantan-Dack's desire to understand why the physical feel of the enactment of the third movement (*Arioso dolente*) in Beethoven's Sonata Op. 110 is dissimilar in comparison to many other cantabile passages from the piano literature drove her to analyse the phenomenon of the two fundamental variables in piano recitals. According to her (Doğantan-Dack 2015:170-171), these fundamentals are the modern piano and the human hand, which the author regards as research tools and viable sources of information when analysing a piece of music. She furthermore stipulates that the term *feel* suggests both a kinaesthetic-tactile response and the associated movement producing this sensation (Doğantan-Dack 2015:170-173).

When only certain abstract parameters, such as pitch and rhythm, are taken into account when analysing a piece of music, the instrument and performer are deemed insignificant (Doğantan-Dack 2015:173). The performer must create art within the physical limitations of the modern piano and the human hands (Doğantan-Dack 2015:175). When performing a work, an artist does not merely think of an abstract sound, but imagines the sound of the specific instrument that the work is intended to be performed on (Doğantan-Dack 2015:172). Dissimilar instruments involve different body movements and expressions that result in different performance identities.

Musicians who perform on smaller instruments that they are able to carry around can always play on the same instrument when performing, thereby resulting in a close relationship with their chosen instrument, in contrast to a pianist who plays on a different piano at almost every performance. The differences in size, shape and sound-producing mechanisms of the instrument leave little room for similarities between for example oboe and piano techniques (Doğantan-Dack 2015:173). Within the context of artistic performance as research, understanding the differences between various musical instruments becomes significant in discerning the methods through which new understanding and information may surface. One might arrive at new insights regarding, for example, Beethoven's music that the players of previous models of keyboard-instruments were not capable of doing (Doğantan-Dack 2015:196).

This does not imply that theoretical analysis should be disregarded. Within practice-based research, elements such as the tempo of the work will have an impact on the movement of the hand. Other elements of theoretical analysis such as the influence of articulation, phrasing, dynamics, fingering, duration of the performance, form, significance of expressive terms, cultural-historical knowledge of the composer, performance tradition, as well as one's own unique comprehension and individual preferences all have an influence on practice-based research (Doğantan-Dack 2015:189).

This study identifies actual pianistic challenges and solutions through learning, studying, playing and performing Reddy's works. For example: Reddy performed *African Funk for Felix* with a drummer or tabla player and by performing these compositions with other instruments, the performer discovers new insights regarding phrasing and dynamics (drums tend to be played loudly that the pianist need to adjust accordingly). Every drummer will interpret the anticipated rhythmic elements of the mbaqanga section of *African Funk for Felix* (Reddy 2005b:3) differently, which will influence the pianist's

interpretation of the mbaqanga, as well as guide the actual body and hand movement of the pianist. All the elements mentioned by Leech-Wilkinson and Doğantan-Dack is considered according to this practice-led research approach.

CHAPTER 2:

STYLISTIC INFLUENCES IN SURENDRAN REDDY'S *AFRICAN FUNK FOR FELIX*, *BALLAD FOR THOMAS* AND *TOCCATA FOR JOHN ROOS*

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the various stylistic influences in Reddy's *African Funk for Felix*, *Ballad for Thomas*, and *Toccata for John Roos* are traced and delineated. By shedding light on the stylistic features that Reddy brought to pianistic realisation, I provide interpretative insights based on a stylistic study of these works. This study is conducted by way of an overview of the stylistic musical elements found within the harmony, melody, rhythm, texture, form and style of the three works.

The structures of the compositions are analysed including the form of the composition, improvisation sections, intros, outros, modulation, development, and specific stylistic structural qualities, for example the cyclic repetition within the mbaqanga section in *African Funk for Felix* (Allen 2001; Bennet 2002:4-8; Berg 2005:3; Harrison 2009:131-132).

Furthermore, examples of Reddy's harmonic vocabulary are given and concepts such as extended jazz chords, harmonic repetition, ostinato, tension versus resolution, modal harmony, accompaniment style, modulation, transitions between different sections, and stylistic harmonic characteristics form part of this discussion (Reddy 2005b; 2005c; 2007).

Stylistic melodic structures and motifs are also delineated with specific focus on stylistic licks,⁵ development of the melody, tension and release, melodic material in the left hand, walking bass patterns, and melodies borrowed or quoted from other compositions (Aebersold 1992:43; Berg 2005:7; Harrison 2009:91; Reddy 2005b; 2005c; 2007).

The use (or sometimes even lack) of dynamic markings in Reddy's works is also investigated. In *African Funk for Felix* Reddy did not include dynamic markings. There are recordings (as discussed in the literature review) that can be used as a reference when studying the work, but if it is performed as a solo piano composition, the

⁵ Slang used in pop, jazz or blues referring to a brief melodic motif made recognisable by repetition. Musicians learn or compose various *licks* to use in their improvisations. It is sometimes repeated over various harmonies to build tension and excitement (Berg 2005: 7; Witmer 2001).

performer might want to adjust the dynamics as there will be no drums to consider (Reddy & Schlaeger 2005; Reddy 2005b).

In addition, certain stylistic rhythmic elements in the works are analysed. Reddy's music is highly syncopated. Rhythm, as Neuhaus (1973) describes in his book *The art of piano playing*, is compared to the pulse of a living organism, and he is adamant that even in a toccata the pulse will vary as the pulse of a healthy person is regular, but increases or decreases under the pressure of psychological or physical experience:

Music is a tonal process and being a process and not an instant, or an arrested state, it takes place in time. The rhythm of a musical composition is frequently – and not without reason – compared to the pulse of a living organism (Neuhaus 1973:30).

Texture is regarded as the joining of musical voices into melodic and accompaniment factors. In his book, *Alfred's essentials of jazz theory*, Berg (2005:3) writes: "... it is texture that provides an aural dimension of depth". The use of voicings⁶ (Levine 1989:42) and texture in the three late piano works are examined in this chapter.

The *Hamlyn Dictionary of Music* describes tone colour as: "The quality of a sound characteristic of a particular instrument or voice" (Isaac & Martin 1982:389). Several ways to experiment with different tone colours in Reddy's music are proposed. Finally, pedal use is examined: although there are pedal markings in *Ballad for Thomas*, there are none in *African Funk for Felix* or *Toccata for John Roos* (Reddy 2005b; 2005c; 2007).

2.2 Stylistic elements of Western art music found in *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas*

The SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts commissioned both *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* as prescribed quick studies for the second and third rounds in the jazz/popular music categories of their Overseas Scholarship Competition for Keyboard Players in 2005 (Reddy 2005b, 2005c). Participants had 24 hours to learn each work (Du Plessis 2019). *Ballad for Thomas* was performed in the second round as a solo piano work and finalists performed *African Funk for Felix* during the third (and final) round as an ensemble work with bass and drums (Du Plessis 2019). In this study the 2005 edition of *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* published by SAMRO are used as sheet music references.

⁶ The pianist voices a chord when comping, for example a three-note voicing consists of the root, third and seventh of each chord (Levine 1989:17). The chord is normally played by the left hand, giving freedom to the right hand to improvise or play the melody (Levine 1989:41). A voicing can contain the root note of the chord or be played rootless. Voicings can also consist of cluster chords.

I interviewed the South African pianist Charl du Plessis to expand my research for this study. Du Plessis is fluent in both Western art music and jazz genres. He won the runner-up prize in the SAMRO Overseas Scholarship for Keyboard Players in 2005 (jazz/popular genre) and received the special prize for the best rendering of a prescribed South African composition (*African Funk for Felix*).

Although these works were prescribed for a jazz competition, the influence of Reddy's education in Western art music is noticeable. The two compositions are mostly notated in the Western art music tradition as seen in Example 2.2.1 and Example 2.2.2, with detailed written-out notation in both the bass and the treble clef.

Example 2.2.1 *African Funk for Felix* by Reddy bars 27-31



Example 2.2.2 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bars 12-13



In Example 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 Reddy use Western art music notation devices similar to those used by Lutoslawski in *Two Studies for Piano no.1* (Example 2.2.3):

- There are detailed dynamic markings in both *Ballad for Thomas* and Lutoslawski's *Two Studies for Piano*, although *African Funk for Felix* does not have any dynamic markings. It is important to note that Reddy states in the preface to *Ballad for Thomas* that the dynamic markings are a mere suggestion (Reddy 2005c).
- The use of Italian expressions, for example *crescendo* in *Ballad for Thomas* (Example 2.2.2) and *sempre legato* in *Two Studies for Piano* (Example 2.2.3).

- Articulation specifications such as the *staccato* markings in *Ballad for Thomas* (Example 2.2.2) and *sempre legato* in *Two Studies for Piano* (Example 2.2.3).
- Scale patterns in the left hand in Example 2.2.1 bar 30 and Example 2.2.3 bar 2-4 in *Two Studies for Piano*.
- The similarity of sudden change in time signature, which can be found throughout *African Funk for Felix*, *Ballad for Thomas* and Lutoslawski's *Two Studies for Piano*.

Although Reddy's music can be compared to other 20th-century composers, Lutoslawski may be regarded as an appropriate example due to similarities stated above.

Example 2.2.3 *Two Studies for Piano, no.1* by Lutoslawski bars 1-4 ⁷



Reddy states in the program notes to *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* that both works have a set structure, as well as preferred chord voicings (*African Funk for Felix*) or favoured harmonic rhythms and syncopations (*Ballad for Thomas*) that the performer should adhere to when improvising. Aspects such as a detailed notated score, the use of unusual time signatures and preferred chord voicings are uncommon in most performed jazz standards where notations are usually reduced to minimum. These standards usually consist of chord symbols and a melody that is called a “lead

⁷ The works of Reddy can be compared to a large number of 20th century composers, and this is just one of many examples.

sheet” according to Witmer (2003). Structure is usually not specified in jazz scores and the length and number of improvisations, interludes, introductions, coda, dynamics, texture and instrumentation are typically established during the rehearsal or within the performance with the aid of aural and visual cues (Witmer & Finley 2003). Most jazz musicians prefer a lead sheet and will ignore a fully notated score, as it is unidiomatic to jazz, unless they play a transcription (Du Plessis 2019).

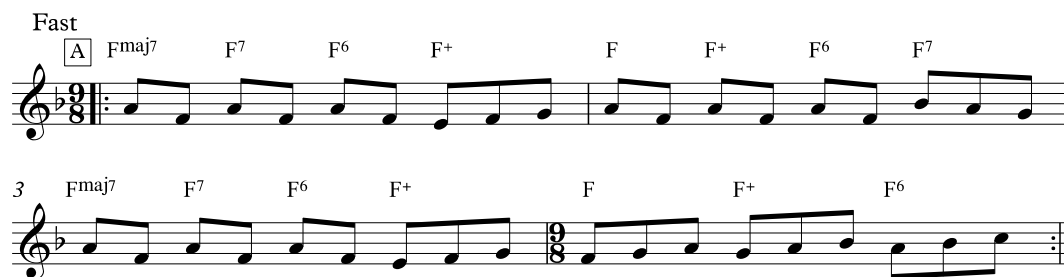
Furthermore, most jazz musicians would rather rely on their own creativity and experience together with cues from other members within the performance to express their personal identity, than follow the composition to the mark as is done in Western art music (Du Plessis 2019, Witmer & Finley 2003).

It is important to note that there are also jazz compositions with uneven time signatures such as *Blue Rondo a la Turk* (9/8 time signature) and *Unsquare Dance* (7/4 time signature) by Dave Brubeck, but the time signature changes are not as constant and frequent as those in Reddy’s or Lutoslawski’s compositions (Dale 1996:154-155, Milkowski 2011:191).

In the following example *Blue Rondo a la Turk* is written as a lead sheet in Example 2.2.4 and written as a realisation of the lead sheet in Example 2.2.5:

Example 2.2.4 *Blue Rondo a la Turk* by Brubeck lead sheet from *The real book*

Fast



3

Example 2.2.5 *Blue Rondo a la Turk* by Brubeck realisation of the lead sheet

Lively

Fmaj7 F7 F6 F+ F F+ F6 F7



3 Fmaj7 F7 F6 F+ F F+ F6



Both Reddy's *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* are written in the style of a jazz transcription, rather than in the style of a lead sheet, thereby falling within the Western art music notation style. However, upon closer inspection the reader will find improvisation sections, as well as chord symbols written by Reddy (Example 2.2.6) included in the scores – this is an uncommon attribute in Western art music.

Example 2.2.6 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bars 28-33

28 D¹³(b9) Gm¹¹ B7(♯9) B¹³(b9)



31 Emaj9 Cmaj9 A♭maj9 A♭13(b9) D♭maj9 G♭maj9 5



During my interview with Du Plessis he revealed that the competition in 2005 received criticism for prescribing the works of Reddy as quick studies. Competitors complained that the works prescribed in earlier years were much easier and written as lead sheets rather than detailed notations for both hands, which gave the performers the opportunity to rely more on their improvisational and arrangement skills rather than their reading skills to successfully interpret the works. Du Plessis (2019) states that during the competition he perceived that most of the competitors' reading skills were subordinate

to their improvisational skills. Both *Ballad for Thomas* and *African Funk for Felix* require impressive reading skills, especially since competitors only had 24 hours to learn each work. There were complaints from competitors that the skills needed to play these works fell slightly more into the classical category than the jazz category. Du Plessis (2019) argues that, when coming from a Western art music background, one's approach to the score is much more thorough and one considers much more detail on the page than one would in a jazz standard or in a composition where improvisation is required. In the latter instance, the main focus falls on departing from the score and trying to infuse one's personal identity through creative arrangement and improvisation (Du Plessis 2019). Another unusual component in this music is pedalling. There are various pedal markings in *Ballad for Thomas*. Jazz standards rarely have pedal markings, as pedal use would depend on the pianist's individual improvisational style, which can differ in every performance. Reddy is very meticulous in his writing and therefore limits the amount of interpretative and improvisational freedom of pianists performing *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas*. This makes these works an interesting choice for a jazz competition, but whether the judges purposely wanted to challenge the players with clazz, is unknown.

2.3 Overview of stylistic influences of jazz and popular music in *African Funk for Felix*

Reddy wrote this work with pedagogical intentions (dedicated to a student of Reddy with the first name of Felix) to illustrate uneven time signatures and modality⁸ (Reddy 2005b:i). In the preface Reddy states that he considered the composition to fall under the genre of clazz (Reddy 2005b:i). *African Funk for Felix* can be performed as a solo or an ensemble work, although there are no written parts for percussion, drums or bass (Appendix B). I have provided reduced drum and bass parts for both *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* that can be used for ensemble playing in chapter 4 (Example 4.1.7; Example 4.1.8; Example 4.2.3 and Example 4.2.4) Here follows an overview the stylistic elements found in *African Funk for Felix*.

2.3.1 An overview of the structural and stylistic components within *African Funk for Felix*

Reddy creates a contrast between the different sections of *African Funk for Felix* through divergent stylistic elements. There are four main sections in *African Funk for Felix* (referred to as section A, B, C₁ and C₂ in Example 2.3.1).

⁸ Modality is a jazz concept invented by George Russell and made commercial by the best-selling record, *King of Blue* by Miles Davis (Boothroyd 2010:47-8).

Section A introduces funk characteristics through the bass line and syncopated right-hand rhythms discussed in section 2.3.2. Modal jazz elements are also present through a slow harmonic rhythm and the use of tertian extensions explained in section 2.3.3.

Section B provides contrast and excitement with faster moving harmonic progressions and a different style of jazz (mbaqanga). The time signature changes from being unpredictable and uneven in section A to being more stable and simpler in section B. The simplicity of the melodic characteristics of the mbaqanga is highlighted in this section. The repetitive harmonic progression of section B is accessible for improvisation if the performer is so inclined. Section B comes to an abrupt end and a repeat of section A follows. The repetition of section A modulates from C minor to A minor. This creates the basic harmonic progression on which section C₁ is based.

Section C₁ is an improvisation section. Although the bass line refers to the funk element in section A, the bass line can be omitted and chords could be played in the left hand instead (whilst improvising with the right hand) when performed without a bass player as done in a 2005-recording by Reddy (Reddy & Schiertz 2005), therefore this section can be regarded as section C₁. It is up to performers to create their original stylistic influence in the improvisation. Although the improvisation section contains similarities to section A, the related elements can be completely disregarded by the improviser and is therefore in contrast with section A and section B.

Section C₂ is a continued-improvisation section with a notated melodic bass line in 5/4 meter. It is in contrast with section C₁. This section has stylistic elements of a jazz ballad because of the expressiveness of the melodic bass line and the tertian extensions in the harmonies.

The composition returns to a recapitulation of section A and section B. This composition is in various ternary forms A₁, B₁, A₂, C₁, C₂, A₃, B₂ (Example 2.2.1).

Example 2.3.1 A diagram of the structure of *African Funk for Felix* by Reddy (see Appendix A)

Bar numbers	Section	Style of music
1-43	A ₁ (p. 1-3)	Funk/jazz
44-61	B ₁ (p. 3-4)	African jazz/mbaqanga
62-81	A ₂ (p. 4-5)	Funk and jazz
82-97	C ₁ (p. 5)	Funk/jazz improvisation section
98-117	C ₂ (p. 6)	Jazz ballad improvisation section

118-134	A ₃ (p. 6-7)	Funk/jazz
135-157	B ₂ (p. 7-9)	African jazz/mbaqanga

2.3.2 Examples of stylistic elements of funk in *African Funk for Felix*

As the title suggests, there are elements of African jazz and funk in this composition. The characteristics of funk music include strong emphasis on the first pulse, prominent syncopated bass lines usually played on an electric bass guitar, and rhythmic patterns that are interlocking and syncopated played by other instruments (Brackett 2001). The groove of funk is based on straight⁹ semiquaver and quaver sections. Elements of funk are present in the opening statement of the left hand in *African Funk for Felix*.

Reddy uses syncopation in this opening bass pattern (Example 2.3.2 and focuses on semiquaver rests to create tension, building a hypnotic, dancing, and repetitive groove. Although he changes the harmonic content of this section every four bars, the rhythmic pattern stays mostly consistent for the first 20 bars. When playing funk, the rhythmic accuracy of the bass line is more important than the melodic function, as the beats are suggested rather than prominently played (Brackett 2001). Reddy states that a quantised and metronome-like precision is needed to interpret this work (Reddy 2005:i). The term *quantised* may refer to quantisation, a term used in music technology when editing the recording process (Reddy also wrote electronic music) (Lucia 2020) and more specific to the software process (within a digital audio workstation such as Logic or Ableton) that changes rhythmic inaccuracies in a performance to accurate rhythms (Childs 2018). It aligns musical notes to a grid that consists of any note value chosen by the editor, thereby getting rid of notes that were played too slow or too fast (Childs 2018). Any form of rhythmic deviation or expression through syncopation, anticipation or *rubato* will disappear and be aligned to the nearest quaver or semiquaver. It can be interpreted that Reddy wishes the performer to play without rhythmic deviation from the composition with precision that is more computer-like than human.

Reddy created the harmonic function of the bass pattern to outline the intended dominant seventh chord. The harmonic content of this section is more jazz influenced than funk, which also brings forth the jazz-funk genre, a 20th-century pop music style (Fulford-Jones 2001) which possibly influenced Reddy. This genre fuses elements of jazz with funk, as Reddy combines jazz harmonies with a funk bass line in the first section of this work.

⁹ Usually referring to quavers or semiquavers (straight eighths) that should not be played in a swing style but played in sternly even subdivisions of the beat (Finlay 2003).

Example 2.3.2 African Funk for Felix by Reddy piano bass line bars 1-2



2.3.3 Examples of stylistic elements of South African jazz with emphasis on mbaqanga in *African Funk for Felix*

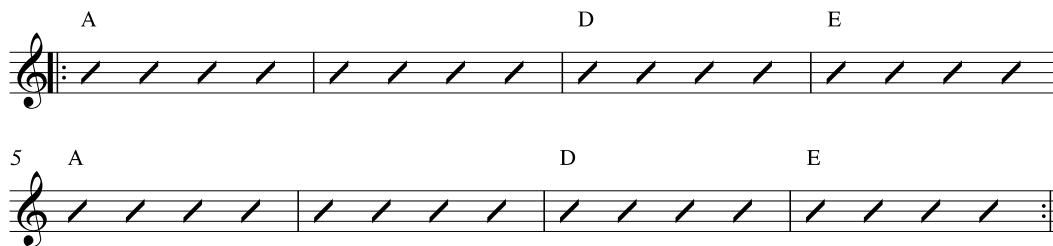
Mbaqanga influences can be found in *African Funk for Felix*, *Toccata for John Roos*, and the organ composition *Toccata for Madiba* (Van der Merwe 2016:58). The mbaqanga section in *African Funk for Felix* is found in bars 44-61 and again in bars 135-157. Although the section between bars 135-150 is mostly a repetition of the one between bars 44-60, it has a different harmonic and rhythmic ending.

Background to the origin of South African jazz could assist the performer with interpreting Reddy's compositions. The first style of mbaqanga was interchangeable with South-African jazz and evolved in the 1940s. The second style (1960s) differed from that of the 1940s by having a straight compelling beat instead of swung beat and contrapuntal melodic lines among different instruments (Allen 2001). Mbaqanga was the predominant popular musical style in South African townships during the 1960s and 1970s. It falls under the Zulu genre of South African music and was developed from sax jive, *Marabi* jazz, big band swing and pennywhistle kwela (Allen 2001). The word mbaqanga is derived from the Zulu word *UMbaqanga* and can be translated as "everyday, quickly made, steamed, cornmeal bread", a traditional staple food in South Africa's rural areas (Copland 2018:109). In a symbolic sense, mbaqanga could be interpreted as the daily sustenance of musicians in their fight against apartheid. Mbaqanga was made popular and introduced in the general world music scene through the 1974 South African musical *Ipi Tombi* and in 1986 when Paul Simon released his solo album *Graceland* (Reddy 2007:13).

Significant musical features of mbaqanga include a strong bass line, repeated harmonic cycle of three or four primary chords (normally a variation of I-IV-I₆-V) that includes improvisation, a driving rhythmic feel, syncopated African rhythms that avoid emphasis on the main beats of the bar, and brief repetitive melodies. Instruments such as guitars, bass guitars, drums, accordions, violins and saxophones or a vocalist were used in mainstream mbaqanga bands (Allen 2001; Reddy 2007:13). An example of cyclic repetition of the chord progression I-IV-V can be found in *Mahlathini and The Mahotella*

Queens: Mbaqanga (Nkabinde 1991). Mahlathini and The Mahotella Queens was a group of female backing vocalists (Nobesuthu Shawe, Hilda Tloubatla and Mildred Mangxola) led by the prominent mbaqanga singer Simon Mahlathini Nkabinde known as the “lion of Soweto” (South Africa History Online 2019). The track mbaqanga was performed and made famous by Mahlathini and The Mahotella Queens and backed by the Makgona Tsohle Band (Nkabinde 1991). I transcribed the basic chord structure of the song in Example 2.3.3.

Example 2.3.3 Mahlathini and The Mahotella Queens: mbaqanga chord progression



Characteristics in *African Funk for Felix* that coincide with typical mbaqanga elements include the use of octaves in the lower register of the piano to create a prominent bass line, the dance-like rhythmic groove, the use of rhythmic anticipation with the emphasis on the offbeat, and the repetitive harmonic progression (Example 2.2.4). This rhythmic concept of implying the main beats, rather than playing them, mimics an African dance movement where the raising of feet into the air is more important than stomping them into the floor (Reddy 2007:13). This is done to excite and create a more lyrical atmosphere (Reddy 2007:13). The beauty of these dances remains in the lightness and rhythmic excitement.

The marking *molto ritmico* in bar 44 (Example 2.3.4) emphasises the significance of the anticipated rhythmic character of this section, where Reddy uses a rhythmic pattern that is played together with both hands in anticipation of the main beat, in contrast to the syncopation used in Example 2.3.5 where the right hand plays on the offbeats after the main beat. The simplicity in the leading melodic voice highlights the harmonic content that adds to the quintessential characteristics of mbaqanga. Reddy (2005b:i) states that the performer is free to improvise throughout this section, which is stylistically keeping true to the original style of mbaqanga (Allen 2001).

Example 2.3.4 African Funk for Felix by Reddy bars 44-48



Example 2.3.5 African Funk for Felix by Reddy bars 21-22

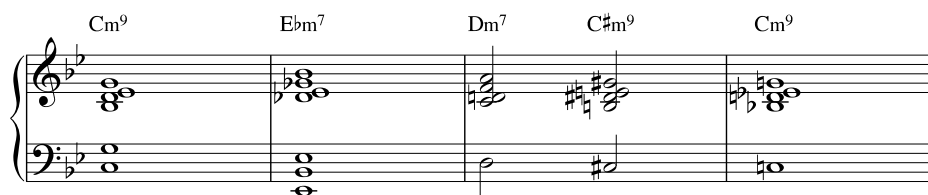


The prominent chord progression in this work can be reduced to I; I⁷; IV; VI; which is based on the typical kwela harmonic structure and closely resembles the mbaqanga performed by *Mahlathini and The Mahotella Queens* (Kubik 2001).

2.3.4 Influence of jazz harmony and modality

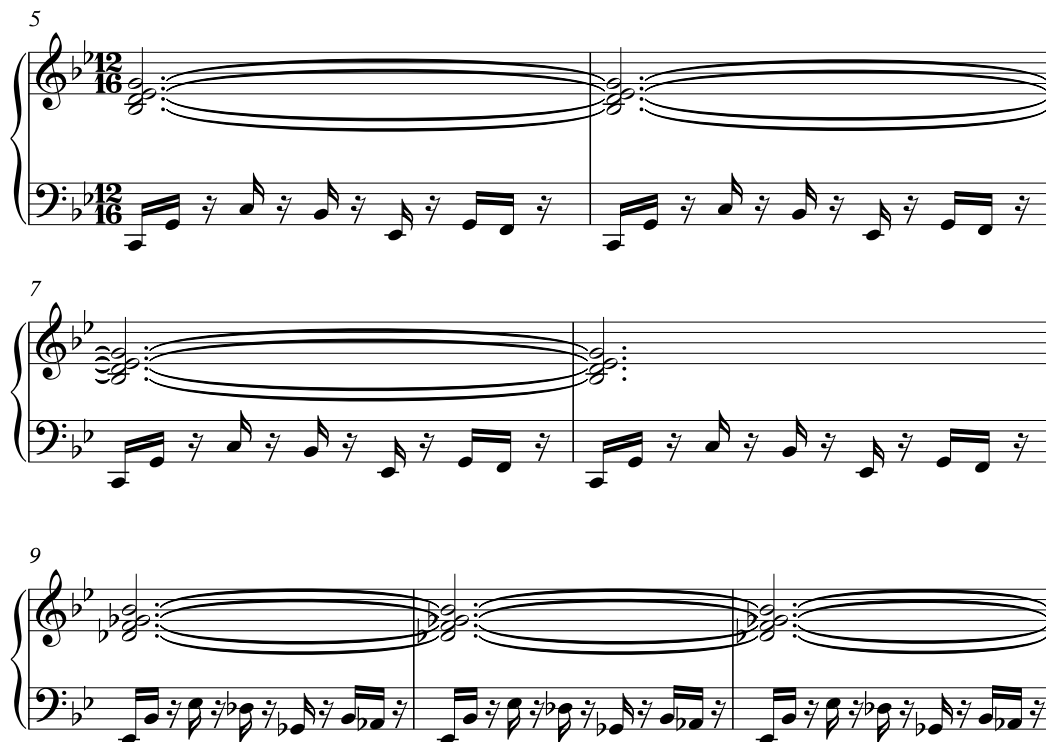
Jazz harmonies are characterised by the use of tertian extensions (tensions). Tension notes create rich harmonic colour contributing to the “jazz” sound of a work (Hojnacki & Mulholland 2013:1). The building blocks of conventional jazz consist of seventh chords. The seventh chord harmonies distinguish jazz from other genres such as folk or rock music and support extensions such as added ninths, elevenths, and thirteenth that portray jazz language (Hojnacki & Mulholland 2013:3). Reddy’s harmonic language embodies characteristics of jazz as he uses tertian extensions to create various harmonic colours (Example 2.3.6). By analysing Reddy’s harmonic language, the performer can find a greater understanding in the interpretation of his compositions. I created a harmonic reduction of the first 12 bars of *African Funk for Felix* to portray an example of the tertian extensions found within the clazz harmonies of this work:

Example 2.3.6 Harmonic reduction of *African Funk for Felix* bars 1-12



Reddy's music expresses characteristics of modal jazz. Modal jazz has expanded since the 1950s and one of the signature characteristics of this style is the limited and slow harmonic progression in comparison to earlier jazz styles such as bebop or swing (Kernfield 2003). Reddy's harmonic rhythm is slow in *African Funk for Felix* and will stay stagnant on one chord for four bars before transitioning to the next chord (Example 2.3.7).

Example 2.3.7 *African Funk for Felix* by Reddy bars 5-11



Improvising over a modal chord progression is attractive to many musicians because it is fairly unchallenging technically in contrast to the fast-changing harmonic progressions of the bop-derived styles. It is, however, artistically challenging, as the static accompaniment requires the soloist to create new, interesting, inspired melodies throughout the improvisation. The harmonic progression in the improvisation section

consists of four chords (Example 2.3.8) that the performer can repeat indefinitely (Reddy 2005b). The F-sharp seventh (with an added sharp ninth) chord is non-diatonic in this harmonic progression, forcing the improviser to move to a new tonal centre. The F-sharp chord does not dissolve to a B-major chord as expected, but instead resolves to the C-minor chord thereby creating tension.

Example 2.3.8 Harmonic reduction of *African Funk for Felix* bars 62-97

5 Cm¹¹ Am¹¹ Cm¹¹ F#7(#⁹)

The image shows a harmonic reduction of four chords in a grand staff. The first chord is Cm¹¹ (C minor 11th), the second is Am¹¹ (A minor 11th), the third is Cm¹¹ (C minor 11th), and the fourth is F#7(#⁹) (F sharp 7th with sharp 9th). The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and various chord voicings.

2.4 Overview of stylistic influences of jazz and popular music in *Ballad for Thomas*

Ballad for Thomas is presumably dedicated to Thomas Walker, a lecturer at King’s College in London where Reddy studied musicology (Lucia 2020). This chapter focuses on the jazz and popular music stylistic influences on *Ballad for Thomas*. The Western art music stylistic influences are discussed in section 2.2. *Ballad for Thomas* is predominantly based on the following theme:

Example 2.4.1 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bars 1-2

Ballad feel

con pedale

The image shows a musical theme in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat. It features a piano (p) dynamic and a 'con pedale' instruction. The notation includes a treble clef, a bass clef, and various rhythmic values and articulations.

This theme is repeated throughout the work in various rhythmic and melodic variations as shown in Example 2.4.2.

Example 2.4.2 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bar 13



*Ballad for Thomas*¹⁰ follows an ABCB form. Section A is performed solo by the piano and serves as a long introduction. The drums and bass accompaniment¹¹ start in section B in bar 19. Section B is a development of section A. Section C (improvisation section) is harmonically based on section B, but the performer is free to improvise over section C. The performers can improvise over section C as many times as they choose. Reddy (2005c:i) states in the program notes that section B should be repeated after the improvisation section. The work ends with a recapitulation of section B, followed by the coda. Example 2.4.3¹² provides a breakdown of the structure of the *Ballad for Thomas*.

Example 2.3.3 A diagram of the structure in *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy

Section A	Section B Development of Section A	Section C Improvisation over the harmonic structure of section B	Section B (repeat)	Coda
Bars 1-18	Bars 19-44	Bars 19-44	Bars 19-41	Bars 45-49

2.4.1 Influence of jazz in *Ballad for Thomas*

The term *ballad* roughly translates to a slow work regardless of the subject matter, form or style (Witmer 2011a). In the preface Reddy (2005c:i) states that the drummer should play with a halftime feel¹³. The halftime feel provides a relaxed atmosphere, which gives this work the characteristic of a ballad. Although *Ballad for Thomas* is jazz influenced, it is not written in a traditional jazz ballad style. It does not portray elements such as a relaxed, soft, intimate character, swing style and a duration of 32 bars – all attributes that are usually associated with a jazz ballad (Witmer 2011a). The first bar is marked *forte* and the general characteristics of the work are dynamic, busy, with highly

¹⁰ Refer to Appendix C for the full score of *Ballad for Thomas*.

¹¹ Refer to chapter 4 for the bass and drums part for *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas*.

¹² The coda sign is missing on the original score, but it would be possible to jump to the coda after bar 41 on the repeat, as this makes the most sense harmonically.

¹³ Refer to chapter 4 (Example 4.2.4) for the drum part and an example of a halftime drum groove.

syncopated rhythms, portraying influences of gospel, soul and funk. *Ballad for Thomas* is a contemporary ballad, a renewal of the traditional jazz ballad, with various time signature changes throughout the work, and influences of different styles of music for example pop music, through textures such as octaves in the left hand (Example 2.4.1 and 2.4.2). There are, however, definitive jazz characteristics such as the constant use of syncopation, jazz-influenced harmonies, and improvisation (Tucker & Jackson 2001). The work is written in the key of B-flat major. The first four bars start with a simple triad, but progress to ninth extended chords and end with a suspended chord:

Example 2.4.4 Harmonic reduction of *Ballad for Thomas* bars 1-4



The harmonic rhythm and language become faster and more complex from bar 30 (Example 2.4.5).

Example 2.4.5 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bars 28-33 (harmonic analyses are part of the score)

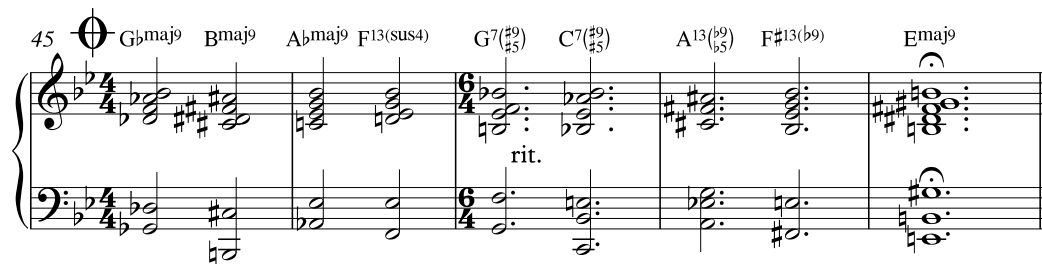


There are various syncopations in bar 28 and 30 (Example 2.4.5). In bar 29 the B seventh (sharp ninth) chord is anticipated, and the bass line in bar 30-33 anticipates the harmonic rhythm. The harmonic language is more intricate than at the beginning of the work with chord alterations and various extensions. In bar 28 and 30 Reddy uses quartal¹⁴ voicings similar to those employed by jazz pianist McCoy Tyner in his

¹⁴ Quartal voicings are based on intervals of a fourth, for example in bar 28 in the right hand (Example 2.3.5) the quartal voicing consists of an augmented fourth interval (F sharp to C) and a perfect fourth interval (C to F natural).

improvisations (Waters 2015). The end of the coda shown in Example 2.4.6 is another illustration of Reddy’s harmonic language filled with tertian extensions. Reddy applies an inverted pedal point to create a smooth transition through the chord progression in Example 2.4.6.

Example 2.3.6 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bars 45-49 (harmonic analysis is included in this example)



45 Gbmaj^9 Bmaj^9 Abmaj^9 F13(sus4) $\text{G7}(\#9)$ $\text{C7}(\#9)$ $\text{A13}(\flat9)$ $\text{F}\#13(\flat9)$ Emaj^9

rit.

2.4.2. Influences of gospel, soul and funk in *Ballad for Thomas*

Although there is no consensus regarding the definition of gospel music, this study refers to the commercial gospel style of music made popular in the 20th century through African American churches in the United States of America. The instrumentation of gospel normally consists of a rhythm section with piano, keyboards or guitar, an accomplished vocalist with an evangelistic tone and a choir singing in three-part harmony, often echoing the soloist. Improvisation is an integral part of gospel (Cowling 2007:i).

Soul music combines various elements from African American jazz, rhythm-and-blues and gospel (Brackett 2014). It is also sometimes used as an umbrella term for African American music between the 1950s and late 1970s. Although these genres are interconnected and share certain similar harmonic, rhythmic and melodic elements, they are distinguishable by the lyrics’ subject matter and the degree to which these qualities are arranged. In the 1950s, soul was used to describe a genre modelled on gospel but with a different emphasis. *I’ve got a woman* by Ray Charles is, for example, based on a gospel song (Brackett 2014). Charles introduced a new concept by recomposing the lyrics and structure of gospel songs and by adding instruments normally used in jazz bands. He is also described as gospel blues artist, referring to the rhythm-and-blues elements present in his music. Gospel blues had a significant influence on the 1960s and 1970s soul genre (Kernodle 2013).

Late 1960s ballads, such as Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell's *If this world were mine* (1968), emerged and began to incorporate elements of more up-tempo songs, such as syncopation. James Brown's influence can be heard in the soul music of the early 1970s, where bass lines became more complex and individual parts became increasingly syncopated. These elements eventually led to the birth of funk (Brackett 2014). Reddy's *Ballad for Thomas* is an up-tempo ballad. Examples of gospel, soul and funk characteristics can be found within the work.

In Example 2.4.7 *a* there are diatonic parallel chords, which is a characteristic of gospel and soul music (Cowling 2007:18). Here the *walk-up* technique is used. The walk-up is a step-wise motion with an interval distance of a tenth between the left and right hand that is commonly used in gospel accompaniment to move from one chord to another (Harrison 2013:14). The octaves in the left hand create a driving gospel or funk feel, together with the syncopation on the offbeats (Harrison 2013:18). The articulation in the left hand contributes to the funk character similar to the way a funk bassist would let a note ring (crotchet) and emphasises the offbeat with a short slap (staccato quaver). Fills are very common in various popular music genres such as gospel, soul, jazz, and blues, as they are based on improvisation, as can be seen at *b* (Example 2.4.7). The ghost notes imitate a vocal glide or guitar bend, which is a common technique used in soul, gospel or blues (Brackett 2014).

The B-flat ninth chord at *c* (Example 2.4.7) on the first beat is an example of a chord found in modern pop/gospel that contains a triad and an added ninth (Cowling 2007:40). The semiquaver notes at *d* (Example 2.3.7), found throughout the work, act as percussive effects to contribute to the rhythmic character. The driving force of the rhythm is prevalent in these semiquavers throughout the work.

Example 2.4.7 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bars 26-27

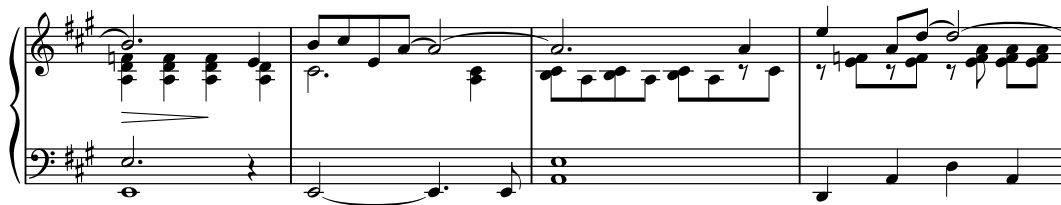


The musical score for Example 2.4.7 consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The right-hand part features a melody with chords and syncopation. The left-hand part features a bass line with octaves and syncopation. Labels 'a', 'b', 'c', and 'd' are placed at specific points in the music.

Du Plessis (2019) attempted to emulate the sound world of Dave Grusin when he performed this work in 2005. In my opinion the piano style of *Heaven Can Wait* (written

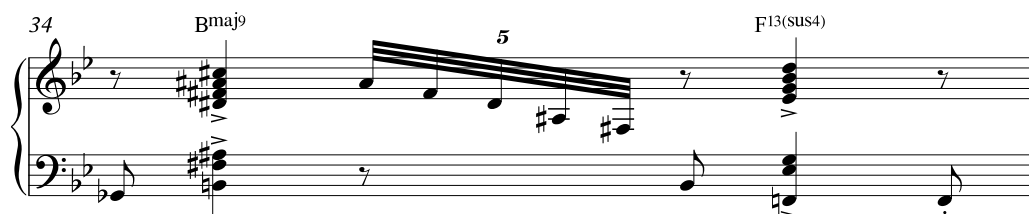
in 1978) by Dave Grusin (2016) is an interesting reference point for *Ballad for Thomas* because of the similar application of the ninth chords (Example 2.4.8). The third bar in Example 2.4.8 contains an A major chord with an added ninth.

Example 2.3.8 *Heaven Can Wait* by Grusin (2016) bar 9-12

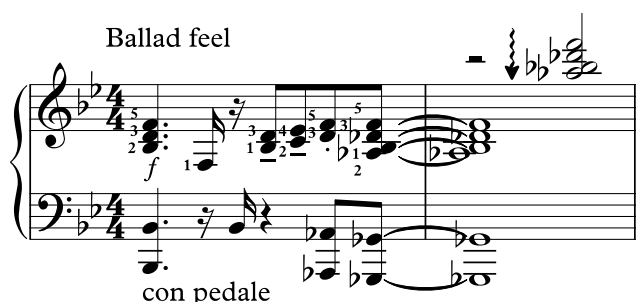


Other similarities between the styles of Reddy and Grusin are the ability to play a ballad with virtuoso runs, using similar voicing styles and harmonies such as suspended fourth chords (see Example 2.3.9), and the rolling of chords (see Example 2.3.10). When listening to the recordings of Grusin, for example *Thanksong* (Grusin 1980), these similarities can be heard.

Example 2.3.9 Sus chord in bar 34 in *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy



Example 2.3.10 Rolled chord in bar 2 in *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy



In *Ballad for Thomas* the bass line is prominent, consisting mostly of root-note octaves with syncopated rhythms and anticipations. The syncopated bass lines interlock with the right-hand chords and melody, creating complex rhythmic patterns that add to the tension in bar 12 (Example 2.4.11). There is a *glissando* in the bass used as an effect to build tension by creating more volume and emphasis on the altered dominant seventh

chord, building on the expectation of a resolution. Reddy takes advantage of the rich harmonic timbre of the piano's bass range and writes melodic bass lines to enable the performer to play *Ballad for Thomas* as a solo piano work.

Example 2.4.11 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bars 12



2.5 Overview of stylistic influences in *Toccata for John Roos*

Toccata for John Roos was one of two prescribed works in the first round of the 11th Vodacom Unisa International Piano Competition in 2008. The candidates were given a choice between two works, and had two months to learn the preferred work (Schoeman 2019). The Toccata by Reddy is dedicated to John Roos (1946-2018), a renowned ambassador of the arts in the South African music industry who served as the head of the UNISA Music Foundation from 1990 until 2012 (Ndlazi 2018).

Toccata for John Roos (see Appendix D) is notated in a Western art music style in extreme detail. The score contains many meticulous markings and instructions to assist the performer in honing an expressive interpretation. Reddy uses three languages (English, Italian and German) in his markings, mixed together in a humorous fashion, and without using capital letters, for example “ein bisschen kitschig (and especially for christine + michael)” (bar 80) or “wie zuvor, (with the hands, i mean)” (bar 90). Some of these markings are not related to exact performance indications but requires an imaginative approach from the performer, such as “still very dancy but with a suggestion of apology” (bar 47). There are also numerous dynamic markings with nuances such as *più forte* or *meno forte*, as well as intensely precise metronome descriptions like 63.333 for a crotchet (Reddy 2007:13). There is no improvisation section in *Toccata for John Roos*.

I interviewed Ben Schoeman (2019), winner of the 11th Vodacom Unisa Vodacom International Piano Competition, who has performed the work numerous times. He describes the sound world of *Toccata for John Roos* as truly South African. To him the character embodies a frenzied city, such as Durban or Johannesburg. He imagines

being in a busy street, messy, with many people and cultural depictions such as a street vendor selling maize, an informal musician or radio playing traditional African music, a beggar asking for money, taxis hooting and the vibrant colours of traditional *shweshwe* dresses. He compares the work to Edgard Varèse's orchestral composition *Amériques*, in which the composer attempted to emulate the atmosphere and sounds of New York City. Both works by Reddy and Varèse are characterised by dissonance, extreme crescendos, complex rhythms, percussive elements, recurring short motives with little development, and fast, virtuoso passages reminiscent of the bustling sounds of a chaotic cosmopolitan city.

2.5.1 Stylistic elements of Western art music in *Toccata for John Roos*

A toccata is described as a composition for a solo keyboard instrument in freeform, intended mainly as a display of manual dexterity (Caldwell 2001). This work is technically very challenging, and usually well received by audiences, and therefore an apt work to present in a competition (Schoeman 2019). Schoeman recounts that he finds the *Toccata for John Roos* to be more of a toccata rhapsody, because there are various "schizophrenic changes of mood". Rhythmic elements in bars 40-80 are reminiscent of the toccata style of the early 20th century, for example the Toccata op. 11 by Prokofiev and *Allegro Barbaro* by Bartók. In these works the composers apply angular percussive alternation between the two hands (see this type of alternation in Reddy's *Toccata for John Roos* in Example 2.5.1).

Reddy uses various impressionistic techniques, such as parallel chords, modes, the ubiquitous use of the whole tone scale, avoidance of traditional harmonic tensions and resolutions, use of extended chords, and adding second intervals to create rich harmonies as seen in Example 2.5.1 (Burkholder, Grout & Palisca 2006:782). These techniques, used in congruence with lyricism, fluidity, and atmospheric setting, contribute to the impressionistic underpinnings in this work.

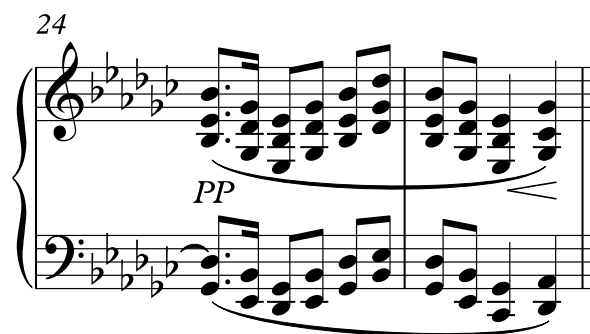
Example 2.5.1 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bar 13-16



The musical score for Example 2.5.1 consists of two systems of music. The first system covers bars 13 and 14. The second system covers bars 15 and 16. The right hand (treble clef) features parallel fifths in bars 13, 14, and 15. In bar 16, the right hand plays a complex chord structure. The left hand (bass clef) features extended chords and a triplet in bar 15. The time signature is 15/16, and the key signature has one sharp (F#).

Reddy uses parallel fifths in the right hand (Example 2.5.1). A similar technique is used by the impressionist composer Claude Debussy in *La Fille aux cheveux de lin* Prelude VIII, Book I in the left hand in Example 2.5.2.¹⁵ Reddy creates a rich harmonic texture through juxtaposing and extending chords. His harmonic language is evident in bar 16 in Example 2.5.1 where Reddy juxtaposes an open D-minor ninth chord and a C-major seventh chord, resulting in an extended D-minor thirteenth chord. He continues to create a C-major (sharp eleventh) chord through juxtaposing an open C-major ninth chord and a G-major seventh chord in bar 16 (Example 2.5.1).

Example 2.5.2 *La Fille aux cheveux de lin* by Debussy bars 24-25



The musical score for Example 2.5.2 shows bars 24 and 25. The right hand (treble clef) plays a hexatonic whole-tone scale in a descending motion. The left hand (bass clef) plays a similar hexatonic whole-tone scale in a descending motion. The time signature is 3/4, and the key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The dynamic marking is *pp* (pianissimo).

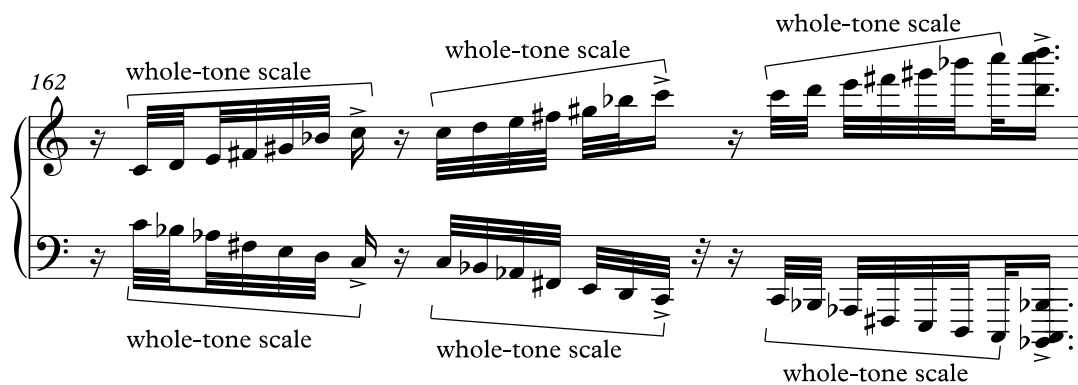
Reddy further uses the hexatonic whole-tone scale in Example 2.5.3 and Example 2.5.4. There is no change except in register when the whole-tone is mirrored as seen in Example 2.5.4 (Persichetti 1961:54). As the whole-tone scale is equidistant in its construction, the perfect fourth and fifth as well as the leading tone are omitted, thereby avoiding a feeling of tonality or modal polarity (Persichetti 1961:55).

¹⁵ *Trois Etudes*, Op. 65 no. 3 by Alexander Scriabin (1911) is similar to *Toccata for John Roos* regarding the use of fifths in the right hand.

Example 2.5.3 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bar 60 and bar 70

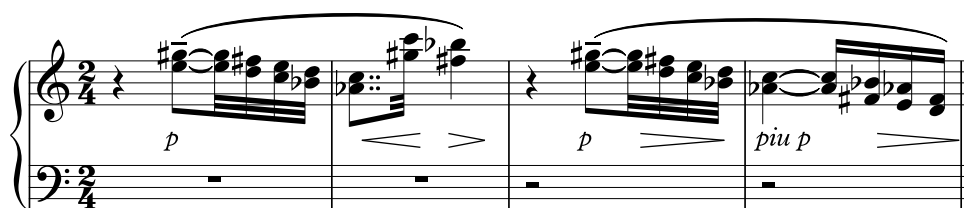


Example 2.5.4 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bar 162



Composers such as Béla Bartók, Alban Berg, Claude Debussy and Paul Hindemith used the whole-tone scale as a composition technique (Persichetti 1961:59). An illustration of the whole-tone scale used in the music of Debussy is shown in Example 2.5.5.

Example 2.5.5 *Voiles: Modéré* by Debussy bar 1-4

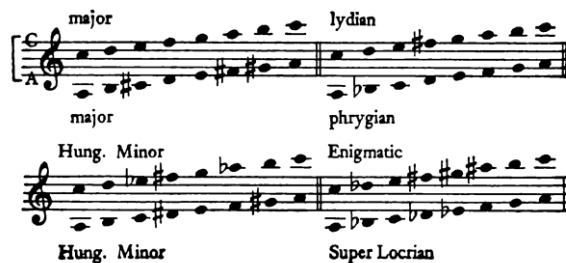


Persichetti (1961:55) explores the concept of using two different scales in combination with each other concurrently as a creative way to create contrast. When using two scales simultaneously, whether synthetic, traditional, intervallic contrasting or identical,

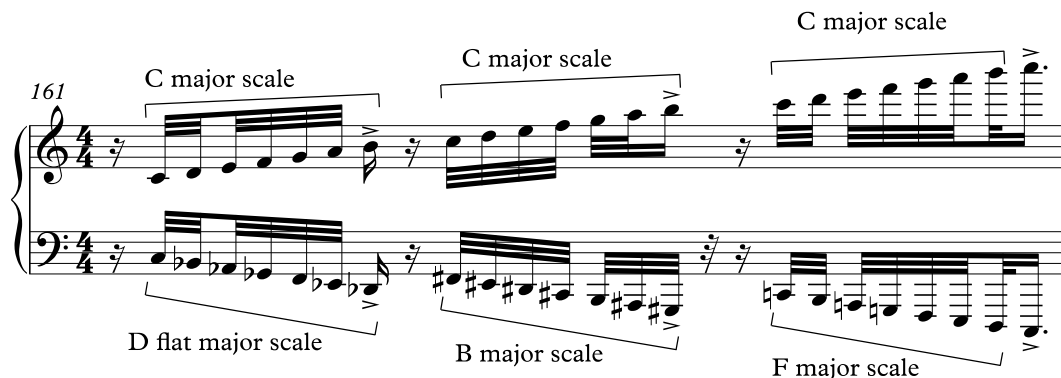
they are polytonal if they form two or more different tonal centres (Persichetti 1961:255) (Example 2.5.6). Reddy uses such polytonality in *Toccata for John Roos* (Example 2.5.7).

Example 2.5.6 Polytonality scales (Persichetti 1961:255)

Ex. 12-11

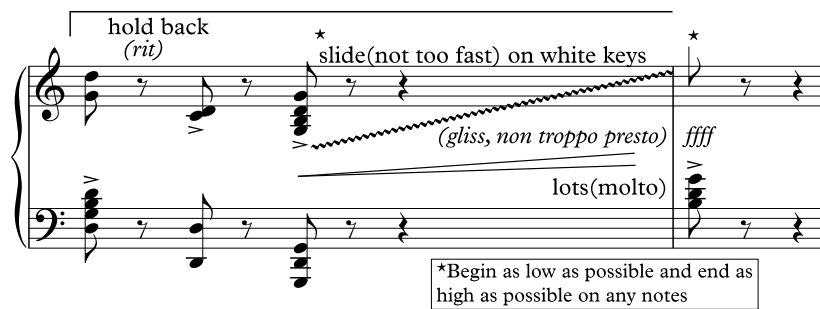


Example 2.4.7 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bar 161

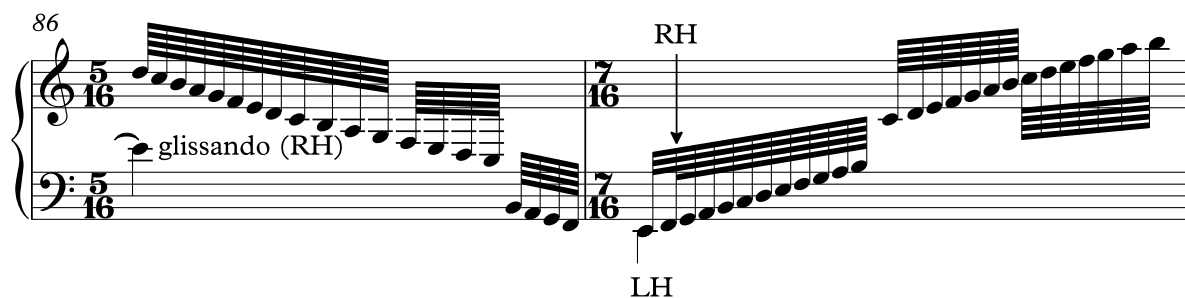


There are various irregular time signatures and time-signature changes in *Toccata for John Roos*. Reddy employs time signatures such as 5/8, 6/16, 10/16, 15/16, 22/16, 21/32, 30/64 (Reddy 2007:14-29). This could be compared to the works of Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882-1961), a pianist and composer who harboured an innovative and improvisatory attitude to composition. His experimental piano work *Sea Song* (1907) can be described as “beatless” in nature and set over 14 irregular bars (Gillies & Pear 2001). There are several similarities between the music of Reddy and Grainger. Both Grainger (Example 2.5.8) and Reddy (Example 2.5.9) often utilise colouristic tools such as glissandi in their music.

Example 2.4.8 *Shepherd's Hey* by Grainger bars 97-98



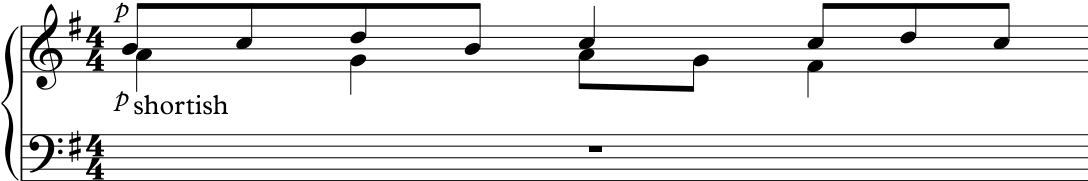
Example 2.4.9 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 86-87



Both Grainger (Example 2.4.10 and Example 2.4.11) and Reddy (Example 2.4.12) are very particular about their metronome and expressive markings that can be found throughout their scores. Grainger's scores contains markings such as "lingeringly", "hammeringly", "harped all the way", "very rough", "clatteringly", etc. (Grainger 1997:4). Reddy's *Toccata for John Roos* also contains very animated markings such as "tentative, but getting more joyous", "dancy", "with increasing excitement", "ein bisschen kitschig (ticklish)", "jazzy and with humour", "playful with a steigerung" to name a few (Reddy 2007:14-28). Both compositions have folk-music influences: Grainger's music contains European folk-music influences, while Reddy draws upon elements from traditional South African music (including mbaqanga) (Grainger 1997:3; Reddy 2007:13).

Example 2.5.10 *Shepherd's Hey* by Grainger bar 1

FAST. (Presto) ♩ = between 96 and 116
shortish (mezzo stacc.)

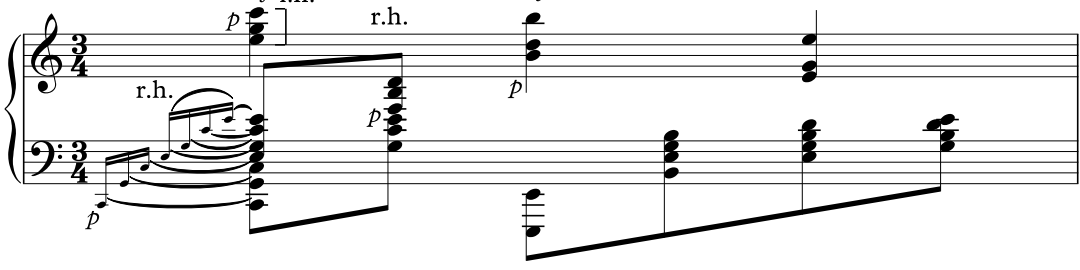


p shortish

No pedal
(senza ped)

Example 2.5.11 *To a Nordic Princess: Bridal Song* by Grainger bar 74

FLOWINGLY ♩ = 69
Top notes very glassy, well to the fore



mf l.h. *mf* *p* r.h. *p*

Ped.

Example 2.4.12 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 122-123

122 ♩ = 79.166... 10 ♩ = 63.333...



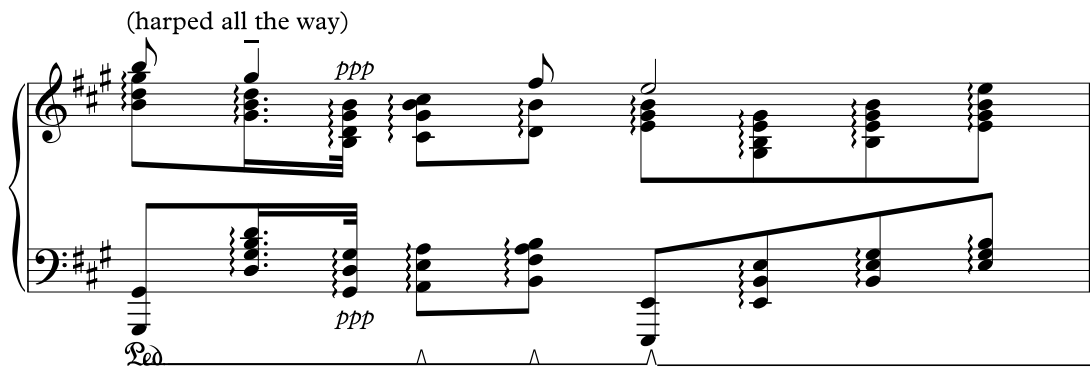
piu mf *meno mf*

3

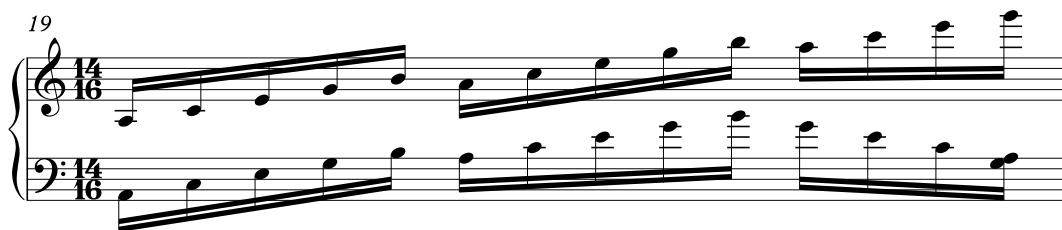
Both Grainger's and Reddy's music encompass virtuosic passages, and although notated differently, these works contain similar arpeggiated flourishes. Example 2.5.13 display the abundant arpeggios Grainger wrote in a harp-like fashion and Example 2.5.14 contains the arpeggiated passages frequently found in Reddy's music.

Example 2.4.13 *Colonial Song* by Grainger bar 57

(harped all the way)



Example 2.4.14 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 19



2.5.2 Stylistic elements of jazz found in *Toccata for John Roos*

Various jazz and traditional African elements are evident in *Toccata for John Roos*. This work requires considerable technical abilities to portray the “dancing”, “jazzy” and “humorous” character specified in Reddy’s expression markings. Reddy’s harmonic language contains jazz-related chords with tertian extensions as shown in Example 2.5.1. The chords in the right hand of Example 2.5.15 are cluster chords with tertian extensions. The harmony implied in bar 53 is a G dominant seventh chord with an added ninth, eleventh and thirteenth. The harmony in bar 54 is an A dominant seventh chord with an added ninth, eleventh and thirteenth. Bar 55 contains an A major altered dominant seventh chord with a flattened ninth, and a sharpened fifth. Bar 56 returns to an A dominant seventh chord with an added ninth, eleventh and thirteenth. The chord in bar 57 is an altered A dominant seventh chord with a sharpened ninth and a flattened thirteenth. This section is based on variations of the dominant seventh chord. The rhythmic syncopation and emphasis on the offbeat is suggestive of contemporary or jazz music.

Example 2.5.15 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 53-57



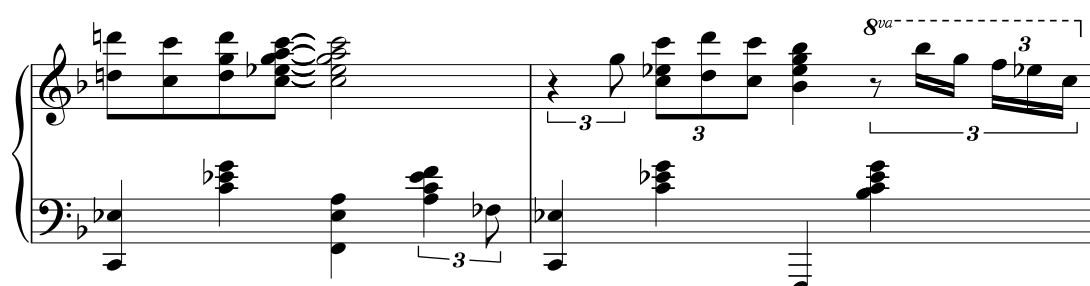
53 *estatico* 8^{va}

54

56 building up gradually bring out the melody lyrically

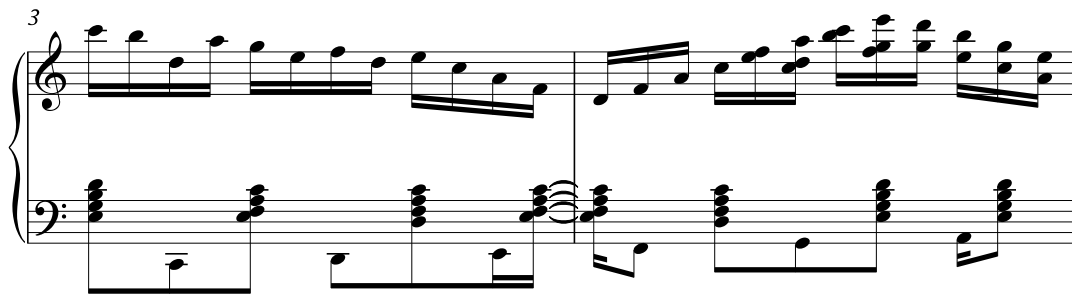
In Example 2.5.16, Reddy uses a variation on a jazz technique called *striding*, derived from ragtime, where the right hand plays a melody and the left hand plays a bass note, octave or a tenth interval on beat one and three, and a chord on beat two and four (Bradford Robinson 2001). Art Tatum uses striding in *I'll Never Be The Same* (Example 2.5.16). As seen in Example 2.5.17 in bar three and four of *Toccata for John Roos*, Reddy places the chord on the strong beat, and the bass note on the weak beat, inverting the original stride pattern. The right hand (Example 2.5.17) plays the melody. Reddy's harmonic vocabulary in Example 2.5.17 consists of seventh chords in the left hand.

Example 2.4.16 *I'll Never Be The Same* piano solo arrangement by Art Tatum (2004:44)



8^{va}

Example 2.4.17 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 3-4



Reddy furthermore incorporates a technique called *walking bass* in Example 2.5.18. Walking bass is a jazz term used to describe the pizzicato line of crotchets played by the double bass in 4/4 swing music, where the performer moves stepwise or in intervals (pitches not limited to the core notes of the harmony), therefore ‘walking’ from one harmony to the next, creating a steady groove¹⁶ (Schuller 2001). Example 2.5.19 provides an illustration of walking bass. The similarities between Example 2.5.18 and 2.5.19 lie in the scale-like pattern, the groove and articulation to imitate an upright bass or a bass guitar.

Example 2.5.18 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bar 10



in walking bass style

Example 2.5.19 Walking bass line from *Autumn Leaves* by Kosma (2005)



The bass line in Example 2.5.18 is a descending A Dorian mode, articulated with the symbol for half-tenuto. Fischer (1995:288) describes half-tenuto as “the tones should sound longer than half of the note value”. This is a stylistic jazz feature mimicking the plucking of strings when playing a double or electric bass.

¹⁶ The rhythmic feel of swing, *bossa nova*, *mbaqanga* or a specific style of music. A persistently repeated pattern created by the rhythm section of a jazz band (drums, bass, guitar and piano). A continuous recurrent energy directed into segments (Berg 2005:5).

Example 2.5.20 consists of rhythmic irregularities and a 'ghost note' between the walking bass (the cross in bar 23). This 'ghost note' can be interpreted as a percussive low sound in the bass, where it is hard for the listener to hear the pitch, but a louder noise is produced on the downbeat. The accent on the 'ghost note' with the slur brings anchoring and substance to the rhythmic effect Reddy creates.

Example 2.5.20 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 22-23



According to Reddy (2007:13), traditional African music is characterised by time signatures with 12 as the numerator as it can be grouped in combinations of twos, threes, fours or sixes. Reddy used a 12/16 time signature in the mbaqanga-inspired section in *Toccata for John Roos* (from bar 132 onwards).

The mbaqanga section (Example 2.5.21) in *Toccata for John Roos* (bars 132-149) is expressive and majestic. It is broader and slower in character than the impetuous toccata-like figurations earlier on. It is eventually followed by a general pause and then by the ebullient and virtuosic last two pages of the work acting as a coda (based on the original thematic material at the opening of the work). The mbaqanga section features typical African jazz elements discussed in section 2.3.3. These include a prominent bass line, syncopation between the hands, percussive effects imitating dancing, seventh chords and a repetitive harmonic progression.

Example 2.4.21 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 132-134

Mbaqanga

Tenative but getting more joyous



The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 132 and 133. The right hand (treble clef) plays a series of chords and melodic fragments, while the left hand (bass clef) plays a rhythmic pattern with some grace notes. A forte (f) dynamic marking is present at the beginning of bar 132. The second system covers bars 134 and 135. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand maintains the rhythmic pattern. A flat (b) is indicated above the first note of bar 134.

2.6 Stylistic overview of clazz in *African Funk for Felix*, *Ballad for Thomas* and *Toccata for John Roos*

There are several shared stylistic elements present throughout Reddy's three late piano works *African Funk for Felix*, *Ballad for Thomas* and *Toccata for John Roos*. All three works are notated in both the Western art music and jazz style and contain improvisation elements. The works also contain detailed notation forms with pedal markings, articulation, dynamics and various expressive markings. *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* contain improvisation sections as well as chord symbols marked in the score, while *Toccata for John Roos* contains singular ghost notes that need to be improvised to emulate sound effects on the lower register of the piano. The works require different levels of technical ability and stylistic interpretation. Similarities found in all three works include irregular time signatures; multiple time-signature changes; frequent use of *glissandos*; occurrence of cluster chords (tertian extensions); influence of jazz in Reddy's harmonic language; melodic bass line patterns; and rhythmic anticipation and syncopation. *African Funk for Felix* and *Toccata for John Roos* include African elements and mbaqanga sections.

However, it should be stated that each of these works contains distinctive stylistic elements. *African Funk for Felix* is the longest of the three works with two mandatory improvisation sections. The left hand contains various melodic material. The work consists of contrasting stylistic elements, ranging from Western art music, funk, jazz, mbaqanga and ballad style characteristics that challenges the performer to adapt swiftly. The most pronounced stylistic challenge of this work is to play the mbaqanga

section rhythmically accurate and stable, which can be overcome by practising with a metronome.

Ballad for Thomas is influenced by Western art music, funk, gospel, soul, jazz and popular music. It is the shortest of the three works in terms of page numbers (it only consists of four pages). The work is influenced less by African jazz and more by American jazz in comparison to the other two works. The leading stylistic challenge of *Ballad for Thomas* is to interpret the ballad characteristic of the work while adhering to rhythmic and melodic accuracy. This can be overcome by closely following the articulation in the score, as well as experimenting with various pedal techniques and familiarising oneself with the music of Dave Grusin as a stylistic reference point.

Toccata for John Roos is technically the most virtuosic, fast and challenging of the three works and arguably the most difficult to learn. The work contains various Western art music, jazz and mbaqanga characteristics that demand a vast understanding of articulation, as well as stylistic consideration to imitate elements such as walking bass and portraying the dance-like character of the work. Familiarising oneself with jazz concepts, mbaqanga characteristics and world-music genres of South Africa can help to overcome the challenges posed by *Toccata for John Roos*.

CHAPTER 3:

IMPROVISATIONAL CHALLENGES IN SURENDRAN REDDY'S *AFRICAN FUNK FOR FELIX AND BALLAD FOR THOMAS*

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the improvisational challenges in *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* are discussed. The discussion does not include the *Toccata for John Roos* as the work does not contain prescribed improvisations, with the exception of a few singular percussive "ghost" notes discussed in chapter 2. *Toccata for John Roos* is an example of Western art music composition within the clazz output of Reddy's works, whereas *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* fall more within the jazz sphere due to improvisatory aspects and the use of chord symbols.

The gradual disappearance of improvisation from Western art music during the 21st century led to it being more commonly associated with jazz (Brown, Lewin & Wise 2015). Chopin often improvised in public and then penned these ideas down to developed large-scale works (Szumowska-Adamowska 2020). A more recent example is the Romanian pianist Dinu Lipatti who is a renowned 20th-century practitioner of Western art music (Ainley 2017). Although predominantly a concert pianist, Lipatti composed a number of works, but also improvised during concerts¹⁷ (Lipatti 1950). Reddy may have taken inspiration from this Romantic improvisation and amalgamated it with his experience as a jazz improviser.

Reddy would, for example, often improvise his own cadenzas when performing classical concertos (Du Plessis 2019). Both *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* require the performer to improvise at specific moments. As these works are considered a mixture between Western art music and jazz, this chapter conveys information on the improvisational challenges aimed to assist pianists trained in Western art music and not at advanced jazz pianists.

The term *improvisation* refers to the performance of a piece of music that is spontaneously composed in real time and not written down (Isaac & Martin 1982:180). Prepared composition presented in the place of improvisation is not considered spontaneous improvisation, because it is possible to hear whether the improvisation was worked out beforehand and not inspired within the moment of performance (Du

¹⁷ Often adding his own preludes to a more familiar work, such as a Mozart sonata (Lipatti 1950).

Plessis 2019). In this chapter I discuss how improvisation can be practised and prepared in a way that may enable pianists to potentially convey a sense of spontaneity during performance.

The aim of improvisation is to communicate and extemporise on the preceding material or contrast by introducing new ideas. Being able to create contrast within the improvisation sections in both work by Reddy, may contribute to demonstrating a pianist's versatility and likely result in a successful performance (Du Plessis 2019). For example, playing bebop melodic fragments in the first improvisation section of *African Funk for Felix* will contrast well with the lyrical and fluent second improvisation section.

A fundamental part of jazz and the improvised tradition is the concept of personal identity¹⁸ (Du Plessis 2019). Personal identity in jazz is emphasised and encouraged through the arrangements, improvisation, innovativeness and creativity of the performer. The search for one's own unique sound translates to the timbre of brass and wind instruments and singers usually spend years perfecting the tone they deem desirable. For pianists, the harmonic language and identifiable improvised melodic lines that set them apart from the sound of contemporaries and older jazz legends enable them to sound unique and thus radiate a personal identity in their playing. The line between the composer and performer is therefore blurred, as most jazz artists perform their own compositions. When performing another composer's music, they often reharmonise and arrange the work to the point where the original artefact is completely transformed. This is not the case in Western art music. The main focus of a Western art music recital is to give an accurate performance of the compositions of chosen composers. The performer does not have the liberty to make changes in rhythmic, harmonic or melodic material unless specifically instructed by the composer's markings in the score. Although the performers of Western art music is restricted by the score and may not make any changes to it, they are still capable of projecting a personal identity within the stylistic confines of the period and can project a strong individual performance whilst adhering to the composer's wishes. The biggest difference between the personal identity of Western art music performers and jazz performers, is the ability of the latter to change, improvise and play more spontaneously by drawing on multiple compositional options from their subconscious mind.

¹⁸ Personal identity is the easy recognition of a performer's musical style within a few measures by listening to the form, content or timbre by those who are not necessarily professionally trained in music, but has been exposed to jazz extensively (Ulanov 1979:245).

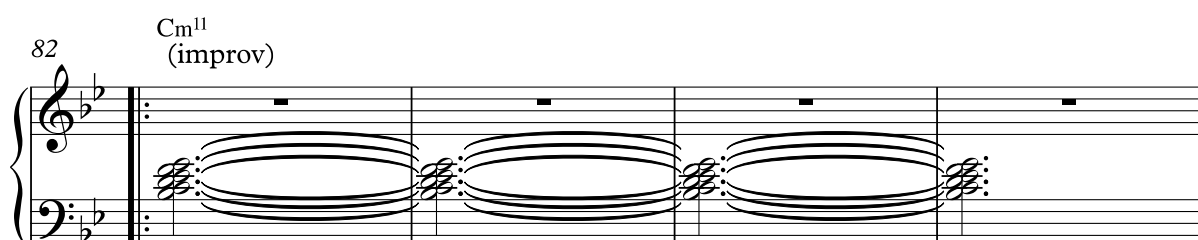
3.2 Approaching the improvisation sections within Reddy's *African Funk for Felix*

3.2.1 How to comp in the first improvisation section bars 82-97

The words “bass to continue pattern- piano to comp using these +sim. voicings +improvise with right hand” is marked by Reddy on the original score in bar 82 (Example 3.1.1 and Appendix A bar 82). This is referred to as the first improvisation section in this chapter. Comping is jazz slang which originated from the terms *accompaniment* or *complementing* (Levine 1989:223). It refers to the act of providing accompaniment through improvising a rhythmically diverse chordal backing for a soloist and highlighting certain chord progressions such as bridges (a short passage that links one section to the next) and turnarounds (a chord pattern at the end of the chorus which leads back to the beginning of the song), as well as intensifying the form of the work (Witmer 2003; Levine 1989:223). Comping provides inspiration and backing for the soloist and fills empty spaces in the solo. The soloist can be seen in the context of another instrument for whom the pianist or guitarist provides accompaniment, or the soloist could be referred to in the context of the right hand of the pianist playing an improvised melodic line while the left hand accompanies with chordal backing.

The markings in bar 82 (Example 3.1.1) signify that Reddy envisioned this work as a possible ensemble work, relying on the bass guitar/ upright bass to continue the rhythmic pattern written in the bass clef in bars 66 (Example 3.1.2 and Appendix B). Reddy advises the pianist to *comp* using the given or similar voicings in bar 82 onward (Example 3.1.1) with the left hand, while playing melodic improvised lines with the right hand. As an introduction to comping, I have devised preparatory exercises consisting of different comping rhythms and various voicings to be practised over the bass line in this chapter. It will be helpful to repeat these exercises as often as needed to feel comfortable with the groove and comping.

Example 3.1.1 *African Funk for Felix* by Reddy solo section bars 82-85



(bass to continue pattern-
piano to comp using these +sim. voicings +improvise with right hand)

It is interesting to note that there is no bass player in the three available recordings of Reddy performing *African Funk for Felix*. The recordings only include piano and drums or tabla. In the recording with drummer Daniel Schlaeger, Reddy does not improvise on the first improvisation section from bar 82 onward, but he comps while Schlaeger takes a drum solo (Reddy & Schlaeger 2005). Reddy only improvises in the second improvisation section starting in bar 98 (Appendix A). In the recording of Reddy performing in Stellenbosch with tabla player Florian Schiertz, Reddy comps with the left hand while playing melodic improvised lines with the right hand, even though there is no bass player to keep the bass pattern (Example 3.1.2) present throughout the improvisation section (Reddy & Schiertz 2005b).

Example 3.1.2 *African Funk for Felix* by Reddy bass pattern bars 66-68



The musical notation shows three measures of music. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The chord is labeled Cm¹¹. The right hand (treble clef) plays sustained chords with a cluster of notes. The left hand (bass clef) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, G4, A4, Bb4, C5, G4, A4, Bb4, C5, G4, A4, Bb4, C5.

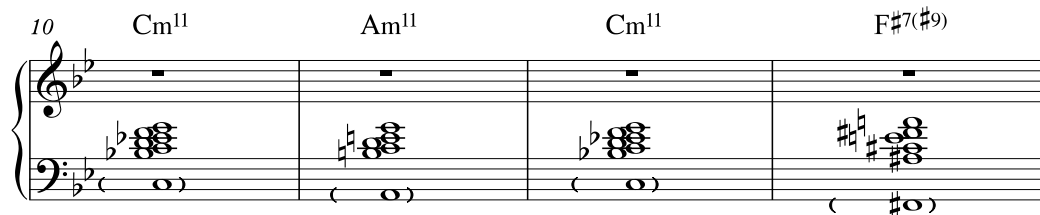
When playing with an ensemble, the pianist's left hand would comp by playing the written-out chords in the first improvisation section in *African Funk for Felix* in any desired improvised rhythms, while the right hand would play improvised melodic lines. The bass player is responsible for the root/bass notes and therefore the left hand of the pianist can focus on harmonic and rhythmic content as accompaniment to the melodic material in the right hand. The balance between the two hands (dynamic and content) should be a significant consideration. If the right hand plays a very intricate melodic phrase consisting of voluminous notes and complicated rhythms, the left hand would play less intricate rhythmic patterns. When the right hand uses pauses or sustained long notes, the left hand could fill in the silence in the solo with complex rhythmic patterns and strategic placement of chords (Levine 1989:223). Comping should never be predictable or not overpower or fail to provide enough support for the improvised melodic line, usually played by the pianist's right hand (Levine 1989:223).

Comping can become stagnant if the performer uses only the cluster chord voicings provided by Reddy in Example 3.1.3. As an alternative, the performer can use rootless voicings (a type of voicing where the root is omitted and replaced with a tension note such as a ninth, eleventh or thirteenth when comping) as shown in Example 3.1.4. To

create variety, other voicings such as quartal (a voicing style combining perfect fourths) or Bud Powell voicings (the combination of the root and seventh by omitting the third and fifth) portrayed in Example 3.1.4 could be used. It is the improviser's responsibility to find creative expression in various voicings, depending on how many times the chord sequence is repeated and which style of comping best suits the melodic material in the left hand.

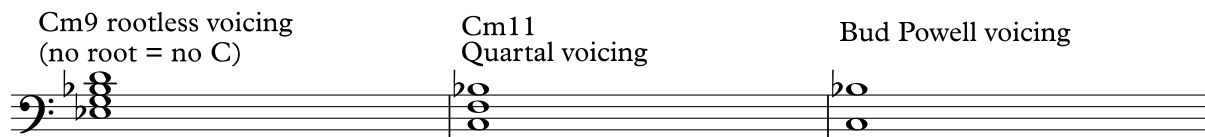
Example 3.1.3 African Funk for Felix harmonic reduction of bars 82-97

(Note: The bottom notes (root notes of each chord) in brackets are not played by the performer, but included in this example to give the reader a sense of the given harmony.)



10 Cm¹¹ Am¹¹ Cm¹¹ F#7(#9)

Example 3.1.4 Rootless, quartal and Bud Powell voicings in a C-minor chord



Cm⁹ rootless voicing (no root = no C) Cm¹¹ Quartal voicing Bud Powell voicing

Exercise no. 1 (Example 3.1.5) is a repetitive comping exercise focused on rhythmic variation, played over the Cmin¹¹ bass line, with Reddy's original voicing seen in Example 3.1.1. The variations take place only in the right hand on top of a stable rhythm in the left hand. Playing this six-note cluster voicing with the right hand is difficult, because the performer has to play both the top F and G with the fifth finger. If this seems too difficult, it is possible to omit the root note (C) as the bass already plays the root note on the first beat of the two-bar phrase.

Example 3.1.5 Comping exercise no. 1 by Snyman



After obtaining comfortable rhythmic accuracy in the exercise (Example 3.1.5), the performer can move on to the next exercise. Example 3.1.6 contains an exercise devised to practise improvising different comping rhythms by using the original voicing in the right hand. The first bar of every two-bar phrase is written out and the second bar should be improvised.

Example 3.2.6 Comping exercise no. 2 by Snyman

improvise a comping rhythm with RH



3 improvise a comping rhythm with RH



5 improvise a comping rhythm with RH



7 improvise a comping rhythm with RH



9 improvise a comping rhythm with RH



When the performers can improvise various comping rhythms in real time, they can create new rhythmic patterns combining voicings from Example 3.1.4 as well as experiment with individual voicings. The next exercise (Example 3.1.7) incorporates numerous voicings and diverse rhythmic patterns. In this exercise, I used syncopating rhythms to create variety. It is important to accentuate the bass line and emphasise the offbeats. When practising comping, it is advisable to use a metronome or drum machine. Performers should start with a slow tempo and gradually increase the tempo.

Example 3.1.7 Comping exercise no. 3 by Snyman with bass-line on Cm¹¹



Cluster chord

Quartal voicings

Minor seventh chord

Quartal voicing

Cluster chords

3

Rootless voicing

5

Rootless voicing

After playing the exercise in Example 3.1.7, it would be beneficial for performers to improvise their own rhythms and experiment with their own voicings over the Cm¹¹ bass-line pattern. Example 3.1.8 incorporates the complete chord progression of the first improvisation section in *African Funk for Felix*. This exercise includes different voicings combined with various rhythmic patterns. Once the performers had practised Example 3.1.8, they can return to the original score (Appendix A) and improvise their own various voicings and rhythmic patterns over bars 82-97.

Example 3.1.8 Comping exercise no. 4 by Snyman over Cm¹¹

System 1 (Measures 1-2): Cm¹¹ Cluster voicings, Quartal voicings, Rootless voicing

System 2 (Measures 3-4): rhythmic motive A

System 3 (Measures 5-6): Am¹¹ Chromatic passing chord

System 4 (Measures 7-8): rhythmic motive A

System 5 (Measures 9-10): Cm¹¹ Quartal voicings, Chromatic passing chord

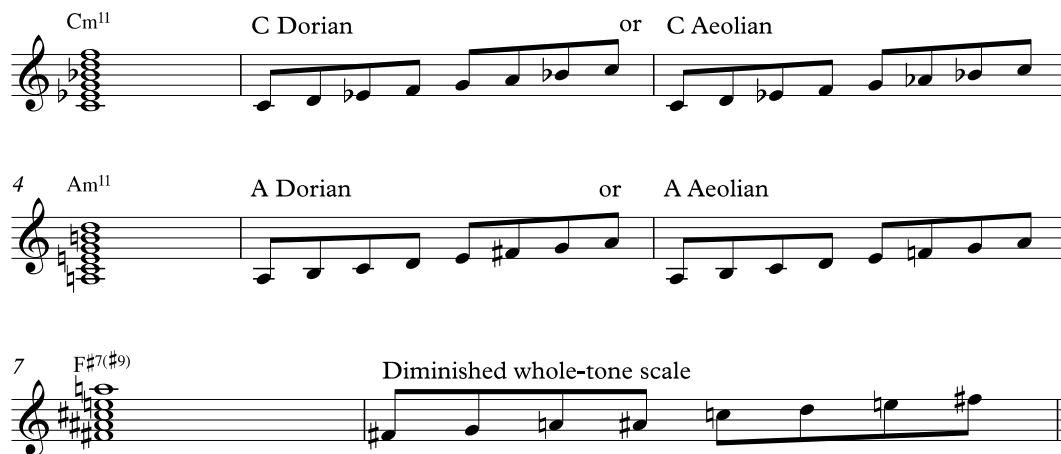


3.2.2 Understanding the chord/scale relationship in *African Funk for Felix*

To make improvisation more accessible, respected jazz educators such as Jamey Aebersold (1992; 1992a), Mark Levine (1989:61-63) and Alan Phillips (1979:6) compiled various educational books to assist beginner improvisers. Within these books modes of the major scale (and later modes of the melodic and harmonic minor scale) are assigned to specific chords, for example: the Dorian mode is assigned to the minor seventh chord. When a performer is required to improvise over a Cm⁷ chord, the notes of the C Dorian mode (or the aeolian mode) will be used to compose a melody in the right hand, while playing a Cm⁷ chord in the left hand. It is easier to improvise melodic material when limited by the choices of notes. Modes of the major scale can be used to assist with the process of learning improvisation. I provide a breakdown of basic modes that I use in my own improvisation of Reddy's *African Funk for Felix* (see Example 3.1.9).

In Example 3.1.9 it will be advantageous for the performer to first play the extended chord with both hands and then the mode accompanying the chord. The performer should memorise these modes to rapidly associate them with the relevant chord symbol and use them to improvise melodies on the given chords.

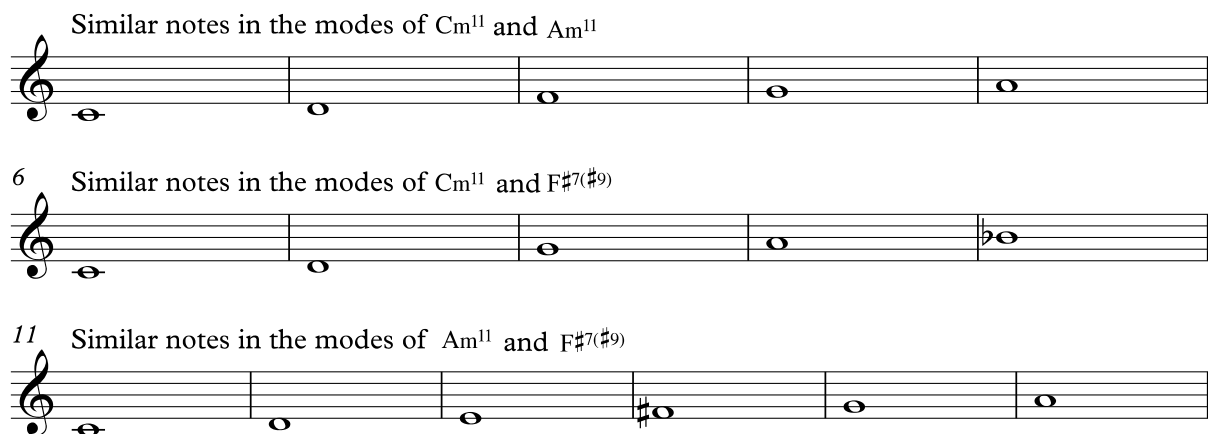
Example 3.1.9 Scales to improvise in the first improvisation section bars 82-97 in *African Funk for Felix*



Cm¹¹ C Dorian or C Aeolian
 4 Am¹¹ A Dorian or A Aeolian
 7 F^{#7(#9)} Diminished whole-tone scale

It is important to note that the four chords in the first improvisation section in *African Funk for Felix* should be regarded as four separate chords, each with their own key signature, and not part of one predominant key. It is beneficial to distinguish between the notes that are similar between the different modes, as shown in Example 3.1.10, to support the learning of the modes.

Example 3.1.10 Similar notes in the modes of the first improvisation section bars 82-97 in *African Funk for Felix*



Similar notes in the modes of Cm¹¹ and Am¹¹
 6 Similar notes in the modes of Cm¹¹ and F^{#7(#9)}
 11 Similar notes in the modes of Am¹¹ and F^{#7(#9)}

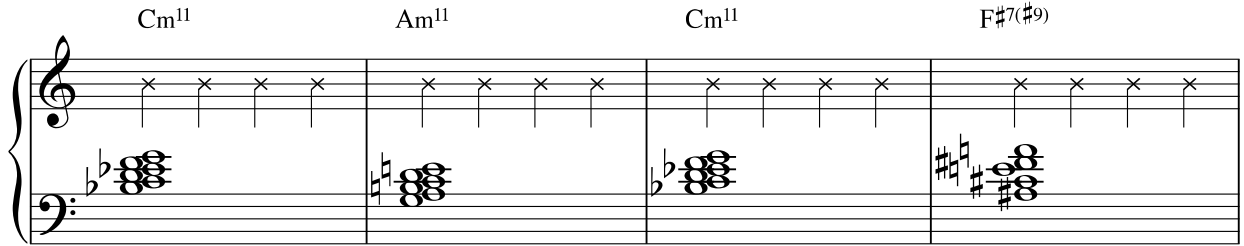
After memorising the various modes, the performer can continue with the following exercises that are focused on practically applying the modes in improvisation. In these exercises the left hand will stay constant, while the right hand will implement the modes starting with an easy exercise containing manageable rhythms that progresses to more difficult exercises with complicated rhythms. This will enable performers to build confidence in their own improvisation skills, while learning how to practically apply the

modes. The improvisation exercises I have devised are based on the rhythmic patterns shown in Example 3.1.11. The first exercise has cluster voicings in the left hand, while the right hand will improvise a melody based on crotchet rhythmic patterns. The second exercise has the same voicings in the left hand, but the right hand will improvise in a quaver rhythmic sequence. The third exercise contains similar left-hand voicings, but the right hand will improvise in semiquaver rhythmic sequence. The fourth exercise holds the same left-hand voicings, but a combination of rhythmic patterns from exercises one to three is used in the right hand.

Example 3.1.11 Rhythmic patterns on which the improvisation exercises are based by Snyman

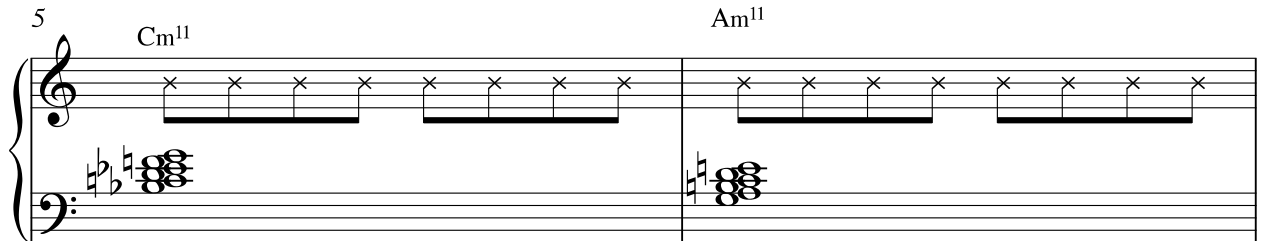
Exercise no.1

Cm¹¹ Am¹¹ Cm¹¹ F#7(#9)

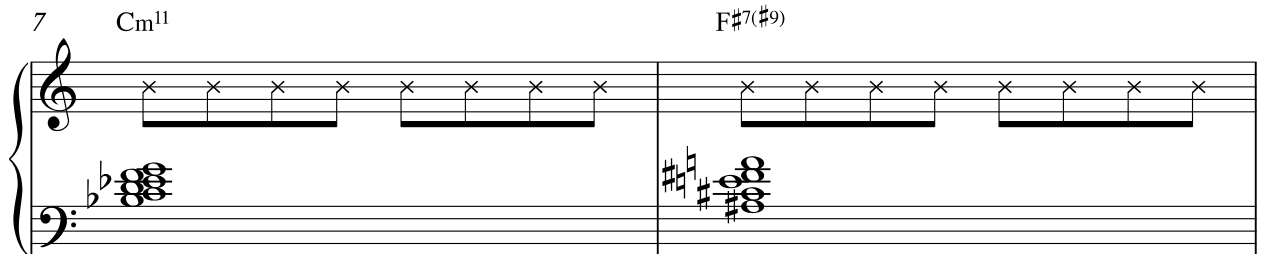


Exercise no.2

5 Cm¹¹ Am¹¹

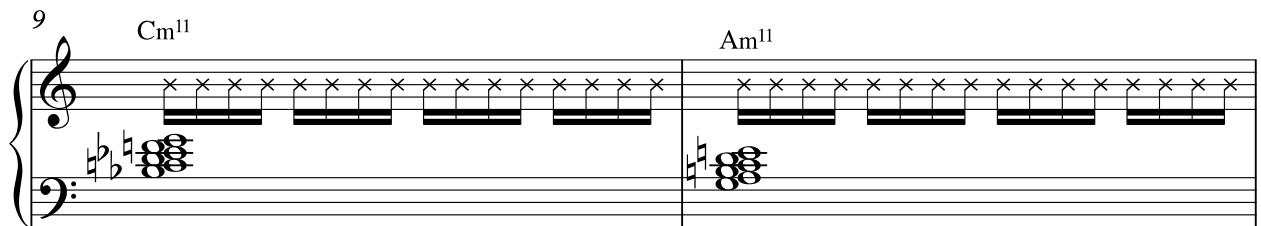


7 Cm¹¹ F#7(#9)



Exercise no.3

9 Cm¹¹ Am¹¹

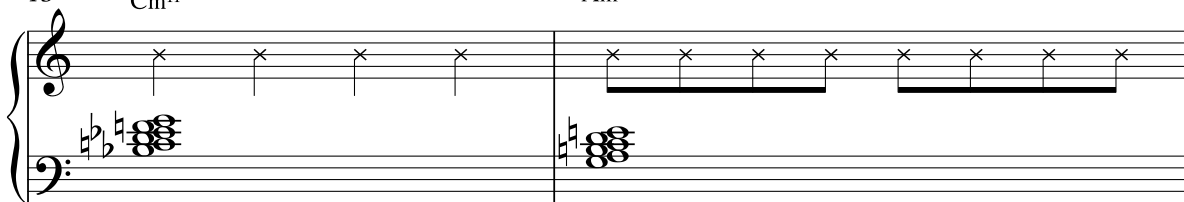


11 Cm¹¹ F#7(#9)

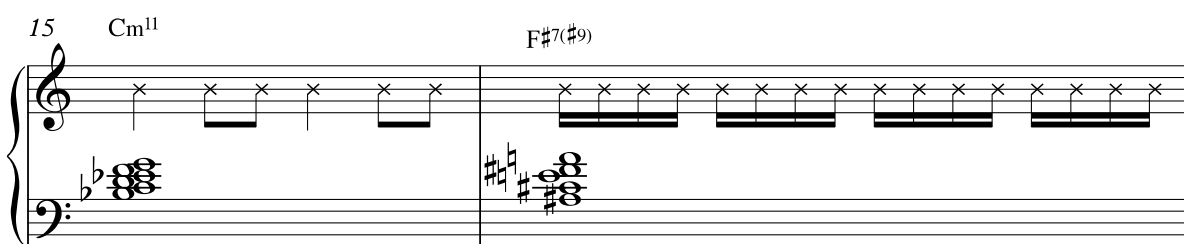


Exercise no.4

13 Cm¹¹ Am¹¹



15 Cm¹¹ F#7(#9)

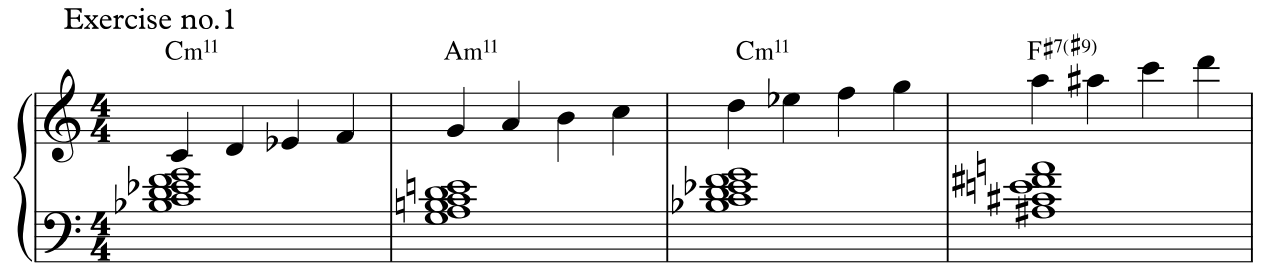


The improvisation exercises gradually increase in difficulty until the performer is comfortable to improvise using various rhythms. These exercises are devised to focus only on the notes of the modes and to limit rhythmic variation. Example 3.1.12 contains the same voicings in the left hand and rhythms in the right hand as Example 3.1.11. Example 3.1.12 is an illustration of how the performer can apply the modes in the right hand in this improvisation exercise. After playing Example 3.1.12 the performer can repeat the left hand, but use the modes in Example 3.1.10 to make up melodies in the right hand. When feeling comfortable with improvising on the first exercise, the performer can continue with the next exercises. By limiting rhythmic variety in these examples through the use of crotchets, quavers and semiquavers, the performer can focus only on producing an interesting melody and not yet on improvising intricate rhythmic patterns. The aims of these exercises are not to learn a sequence, but to practise improvisation using the modes and to spontaneously combine different rhythmic patterns to create a new and distinctive melody. These exercises can also be applied to the second improvisation section in bars 98-117 (Appendix B) of *African Funk for Felix*.

Example 3.1.12 Improvisation exercises by Snyman

Exercise no.1

Cm¹¹ Am¹¹ Cm¹¹ F#7(#9)



Musical notation for Exercise no.1, measures 1-4. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line consists of block chords: Cm¹¹ (measures 1-2), Am¹¹ (measures 3-4), Cm¹¹ (measure 5), and F#7(#9) (measures 6-7). The treble line contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes.

Exercise no.2

5 Cm¹¹ Am¹¹



Musical notation for Exercise no.2, measures 5-6. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line consists of block chords: Cm¹¹ (measures 5-6) and Am¹¹ (measures 7-8). The treble line contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes.

7 Cm¹¹ F#7(#9)



Musical notation for Exercise no.2, measures 7-8. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line consists of block chords: Cm¹¹ (measures 7-8) and F#7(#9) (measures 9-10). The treble line contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes.

Exercise no.3

9 Cm¹¹ Am¹¹



Musical notation for Exercise no.3, measures 9-10. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line consists of block chords: Cm¹¹ (measures 9-10) and Am¹¹ (measures 11-12). The treble line contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes.

11 Cm¹¹ F#7(#9)



Musical notation for Exercise no.3, measures 11-12. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line consists of block chords: Cm¹¹ (measures 11-12) and F#7(#9) (measures 13-14). The treble line contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes.

Exercise no.4



13 Cm¹¹ Am¹¹

15 Cm¹¹ F#7(#9)

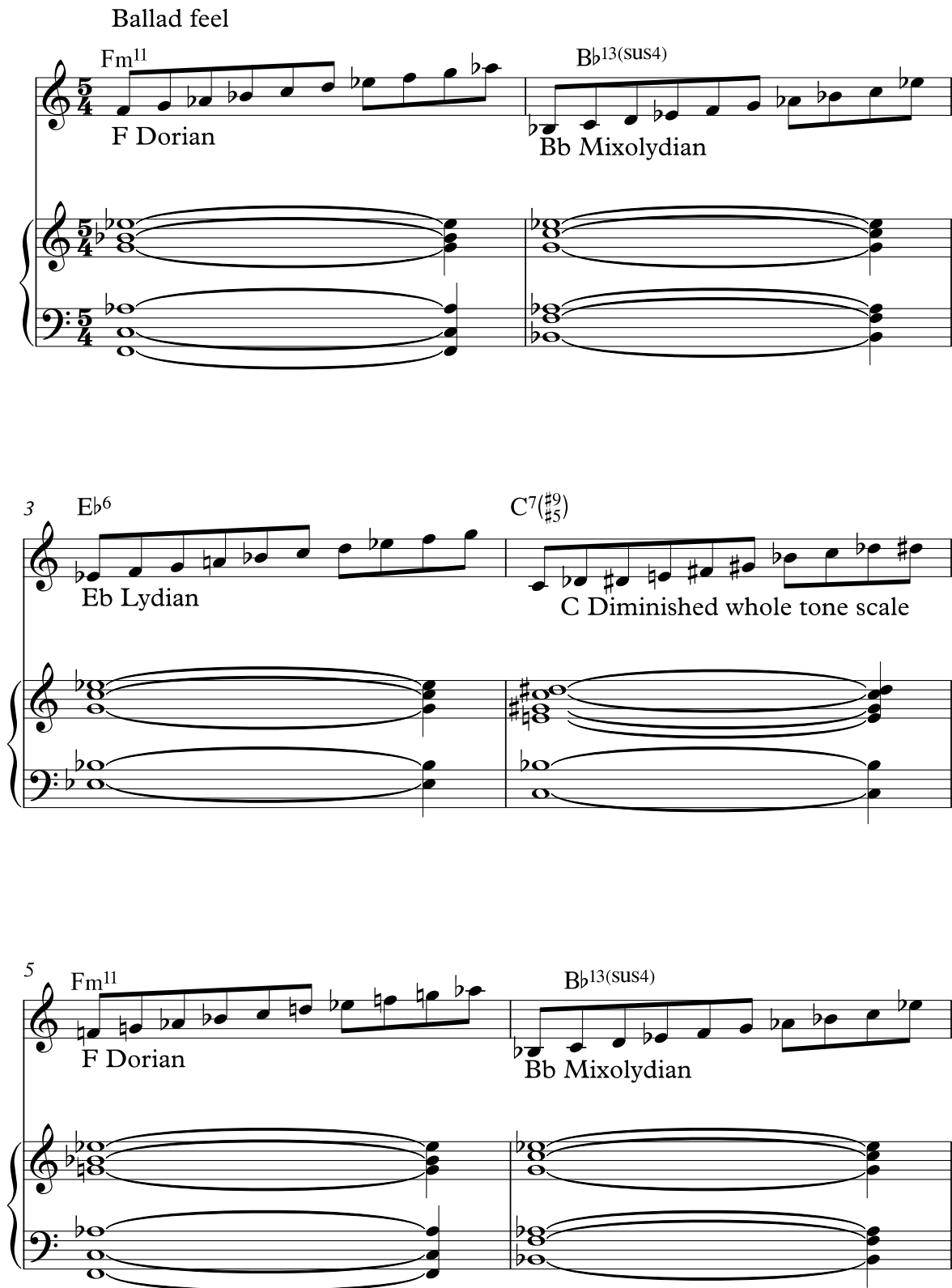
After practising these exercises repeatedly, different comping rhythms can be incorporated for the left hand and the first improvisation section in bars 82-97 can be practised (Appendix A) of *African Funk for Felix*. Example 3.1.14 is a written-out improvisation and comping of both improvisation sections of *African Funk for Felix* that can be used as a reference.

The second improvisation section in bars 98-117 (Appendix B) in *African Funk for Felix* is in contrast with the first. This section comprises a melodic notated left hand pattern in 5/4 meter that provides a ballad character. Improvisation is easier in this section, because the left hand is already stipulated and the performers do not have to devise their own chord voicings. The challenge is to keep a steady 4/5 beat and to use interesting melodies in the right hand when improvising.

The following example contains scales (modes) that could be used in the second improvisation. The objective here is to perform long phrases, while maintaining the left-hand pattern. In Example 3.1.13 I have devised chords and scales that I would use in my own improvisation. The performer should play the harmony once and then play the scales with the right hand. After repeating this exercise a few times, the chords must be played while the performer use the scales to make up a melody with the right hand. This exercise should be repeated a few times until the performer is comfortable with improvising on each chord.

Example 3.1.13 Scales for practising purposes of the second improvisation section in African Funk for Felix (Snyman)

Ballad feel



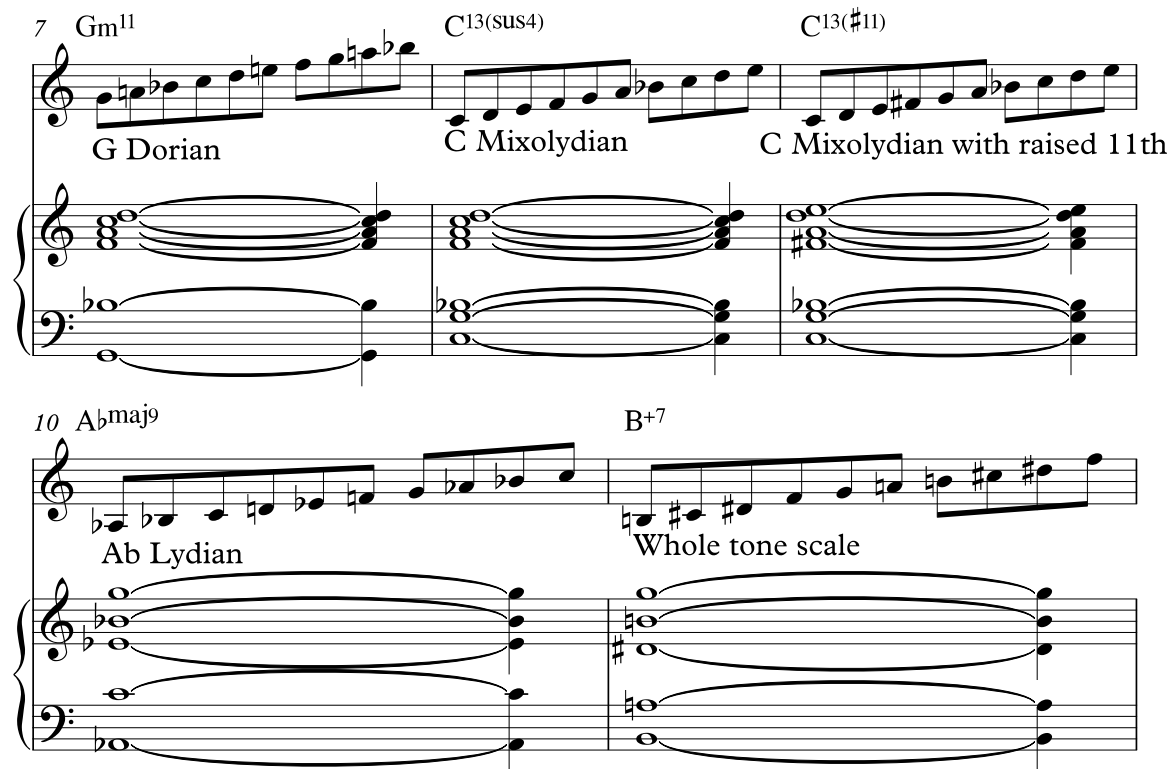
3

Fm¹¹ Bb¹³(sus4)
F Dorian Bb Mixolydian

Eb⁶ C7(#⁹/₅)
Eb Lydian C Diminished whole tone scale

5

Fm¹¹ Bb¹³(sus4)
F Dorian Bb Mixolydian



7 Gm^{11} $C^{13}(sus4)$ $C^{13}(\#11)$
G Dorian C Mixolydian C Mixolydian with raised 11th

10 $A\flat^{maj9}$ B^+7
Ab Lydian Whole tone scale

3.2.3 Constructing an improvisation

When improvising, one of the basic points of departure and exploration would be to play chords on the piano while singing a melody over the chord progression. The scales provided in this chapter to accompany the improvisation sections in *African Funk for Felix* serve as guidelines only, but vocalising is a natural way of exploring possible melodies in accordance with the given harmonies. When the performer is satisfied with a vocal line, the melody can be played on the piano by imitating the voice, while comping with the left hand.

After practising singing over the chord progression for a number of times, the performer can start improvising with the right hand by using the given scales or playing by ear. According to Aebersold (1992a:ix) there are various techniques that can be incorporated to assist in building a good improvisation:

- Playing melodies one hears in one's head;
- Using repetition and sequences;
- Using chord tones on strong beats;
- Experimenting with passing or neighbouring tones which connect two chords;
- Anticipating (playing an anticipated tone as part of the next chord's harmony just before playing the next chord);
- Rests;
- Rhythmic variation;

- Long phrases versus short phrases;
- Using thirds, octaves or playing a melody in unison;
- Motivic development;
- Using the entire register of the piano;
- Using chromatic notes to create tension; and/or
- Shaping the solo by building up towards a climax.

I have written two improvisation exercises, one for each improvisation section in *African Funk for Felix* (Example 3.1.14 and Example 3.1.15). These are only examples to stimulate the imagination and serve as an introduction to improvisation in this work. It could be beneficial for performers to record the bass line of the following exercise and practise Example 3.1.14 with the bass line to sustain a stable groove.

Example 3.1.14 Comping exercise with right hand solo for the first improvisation section by Snyman bars 82-97 in *African Funk for Felix* (the piano plays the above two staves and the bass guitar/double bass plays the lower stave)

Cm¹¹



4 Am¹¹



6



9 Cm¹¹

12 F#7(#9)

14

15

Example 3.1.15 Example of a solo on the second improvisation section by Snyman bars 98-117 of *African Funk for Felix* (piano only)

♩ = 130

Fm¹¹ Motive A Repeat of Motive A

Molto espressivo

Con molto pedale

3 B^b13(sus4) Motive B Motive C E^bmaj⁹ Motive C

6 emphasis on the #9 and #5 C7(#9 #5)

8 pattern built on the C diminished whole tone scale Fm¹¹ repeat of motive A

10

Repeat of Motive A

Motive B

$Bb^{13}(sus4)$

12

Motive B

$Ebmaj9$ Long notes to create contrast

14

$C7(\#9)$
chromatic and emphasis on #5; #9

16

Repetitive pattern based on F Dorian mode

Fm^{11}

18 B \flat 13(sus4)

Repetitive pattern on B \flat Mixolydian mode and G Dorian mode

20 Gm 11

Climax of the solo

22 C13(sus4)

24 C13(#11) A \flat maj9 Sequence

27 B $^{+7}$ /A

3.3 Improvisation in *Ballad for Thomas*

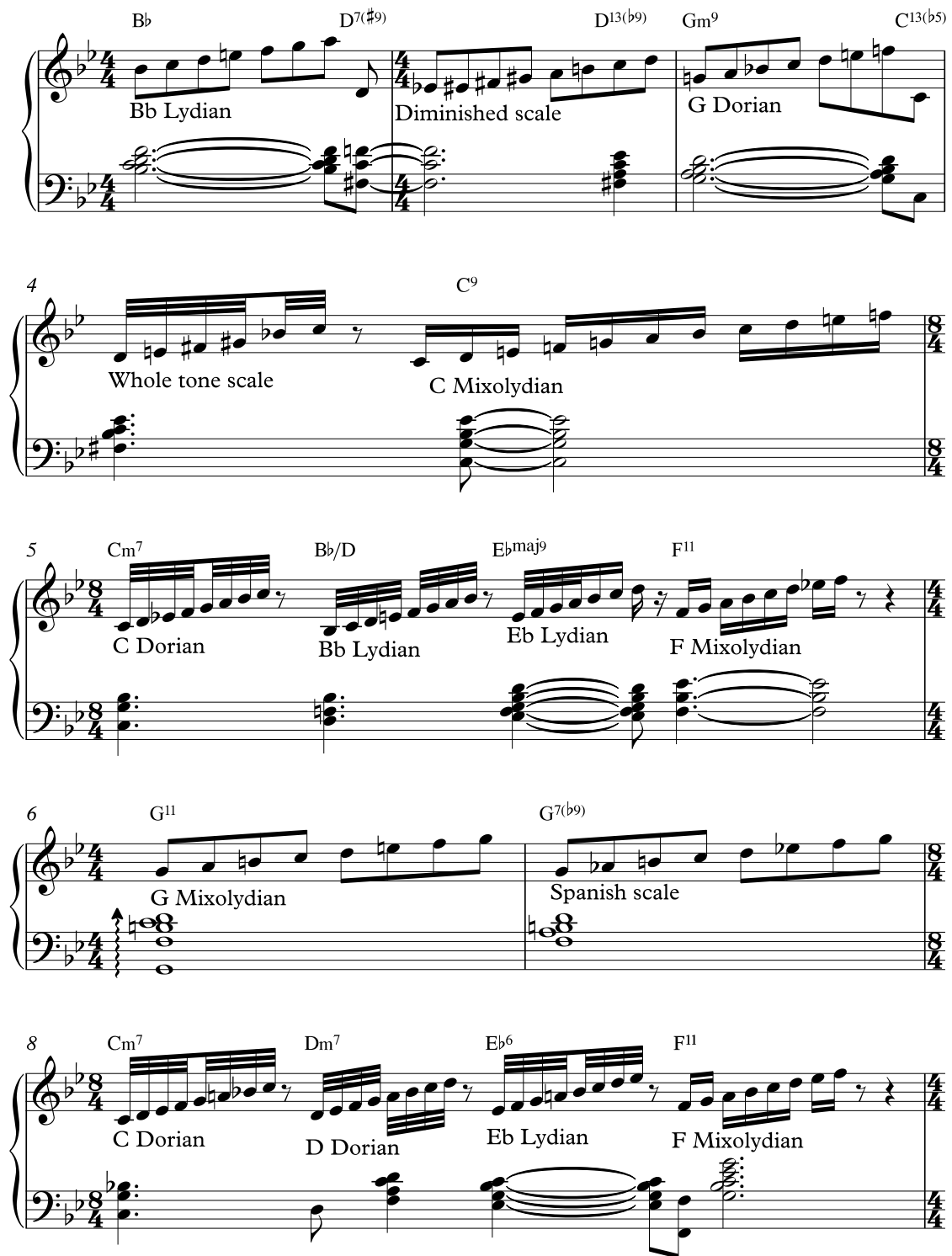
As in *African Funk for Felix*, Reddy provides the opportunity to performers of *Ballad for Thomas* to incorporate their own individual style by inserting an improvisation section (bars 19-44). Performers have the ability to communicate to the audience not only Reddy's music, but also their own identity, emotions and piano technique through spontaneous improvisation. *Ballad for Thomas* can be played as a solo piano work or as an ensemble work with bass and drums (Lucia 2020). This chapter only discuss the improvisation challenges in *Ballad for Thomas* when it is performed as a solo piano work.

The improvisation section in bars 19-44 in *Ballad for Thomas* is challenging for various reasons. The chords are comprehensively altered and extended, and the harmonic rhythm is fast and syncopated, which might leave the performer feeling overwhelmed when practising the chords for the first time. When playing in an ensemble, the pianist only needs to concentrate on chords with the left hand and melodic material with the right hand. However, if the work is performed as a solo piano work, the pianist should also imply the bass notes and keep a stable rhythm with the left hand.

As a starting point for practising improvisation, the performer can use the voicings for the left hand in the exercise I devised (Example 3.2.1). *Jazz piano voicing skills* by Dan Haerle (1994) includes skills regarding the voicing of chords and explains the different methods through comprehensive music examples. The exercises in this source may yield insights into certain performance aspects (such as improvisation) in Reddy's *Ballad for Thomas*. In the improvisation section in *Ballad for Thomas*, a combination of different voicings will make the improvisation interesting. The scale/chord combinations should be memorised before practising improvisation.

I have devised an exercise to assist with practising both voicings in the left hand and the scale/chord relationship. This exercise (Example 3.2.1) uses the original harmonic rhythm of *Ballad for Thomas*. The scales are written in quavers, semiquavers or demisemiquavers, depending on the harmonic rhythm. The aim of this exercise is not to play the scales fast, but to practise the voicings and scales slowly. This will allow the performer the opportunity to improvise fluent melodies over the chord changes by using the notes of the given scales.

Example 3.2.1 Scales and chords for *Ballad for Thomas*



The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4.

- System 1:**
 - Measures 1-2: **B \flat Lydian** (Chord: B \flat)
 - Measures 3-4: **Diminished scale** (Chord: D7(#9))
 - Measures 5-6: **G Dorian** (Chord: D13(b9))
 - Measures 7-8: **G Dorian** (Chord: Gm⁹)
 - Measures 9-10: **G Dorian** (Chord: C13(b5))
- System 2:**
 - Measures 1-4: **Whole tone scale** (Chord: C⁹)
 - Measures 5-8: **C Mixolydian** (Chord: C⁹)
- System 3:**
 - Measures 1-4: **C Dorian** (Chord: Cm⁷)
 - Measures 5-6: **B \flat Lydian** (Chord: B \flat /D)
 - Measures 7-8: **E \flat Lydian** (Chord: E \flat maj⁹)
 - Measures 9-10: **F Mixolydian** (Chord: F¹¹)
- System 4:**
 - Measures 1-4: **G Mixolydian** (Chord: G¹¹)
 - Measures 5-8: **Spanish scale** (Chord: G7(b9))
- System 5:**
 - Measures 1-4: **C Dorian** (Chord: Cm⁷)
 - Measures 5-6: **D Dorian** (Chord: Dm⁷)
 - Measures 7-8: **E \flat Lydian** (Chord: E \flat 6)
 - Measures 9-10: **F Mixolydian** (Chord: F¹¹)

9 $B\flat$ $D7(\sharp 9)$ $D13(\flat 9)$ Gm^{11} $B7(\sharp 9)$ $B13(\flat 9)$

$B\flat$ Lydian Diminished scale G Dorian Diminished scale

13 E $maj9$ C $maj9$ $A\flat$ $maj9$ $A\flat13(\flat 9)$

E Lydian $A\flat$ Lydian Diminished scale

15 $D\flat$ $maj9$ $G\flat$ $maj9$

$D\flat$ Lydian $G\flat$ Lydian

16 B $maj9$ F^{11} $B\flat$ $D7(\sharp 9)$

B Lydian F Mixolydian $B\flat$ Lydian

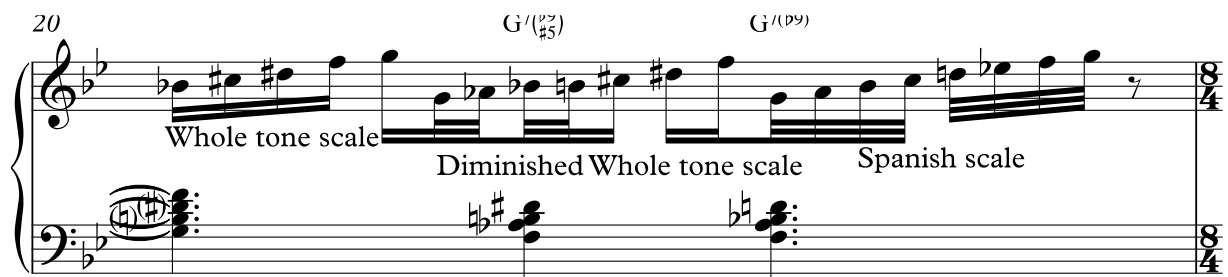
18 $D13(\flat 9)$ Gm^9 $G7(\sharp 5)$

Diminished scale G Dorian

20

G⁷(#5) G⁷(b9)

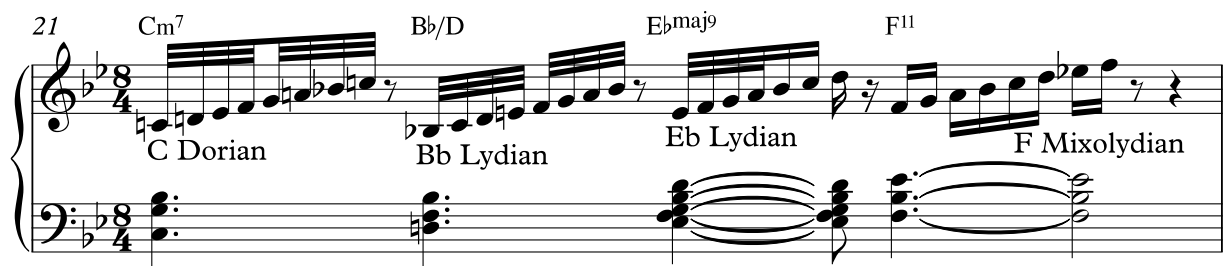
Whole tone scale Diminished Whole tone scale Spanish scale



21

Cm⁷ Bb/D Ebmaj⁹ F¹¹

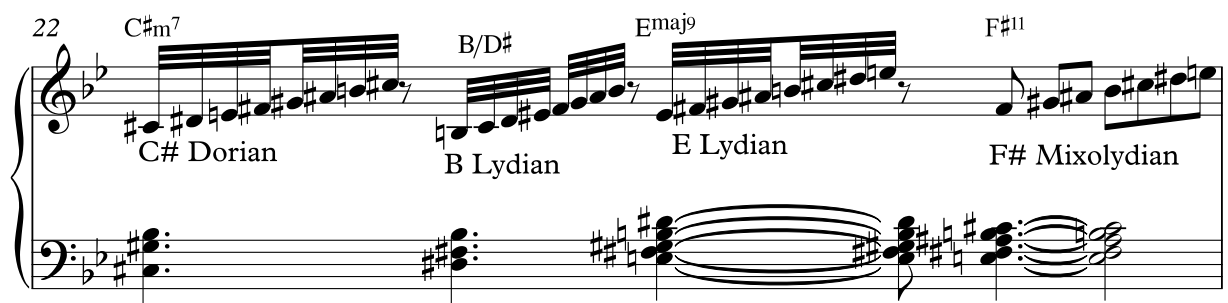
C Dorian Bb Lydian Eb Lydian F Mixolydian



22

C#m⁷ B/D# Emaj⁹ F#¹¹

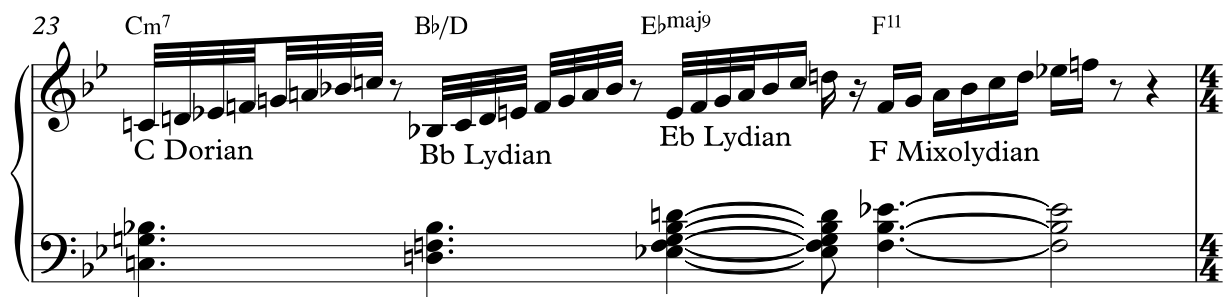
C# Dorian B Lydian E Lydian F# Mixolydian



23

Cm⁷ Bb/D Ebmaj⁹ F¹¹

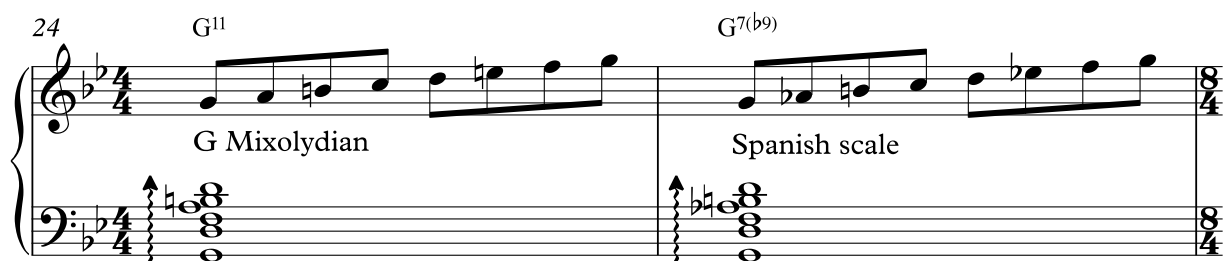
C Dorian Bb Lydian Eb Lydian F Mixolydian



24

G¹¹ G⁷(b9)

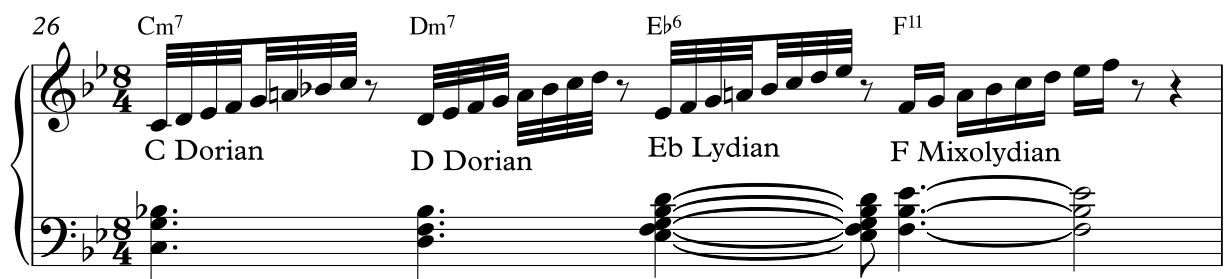
G Mixolydian Spanish scale



26

Cm⁷ Dm⁷ Eb⁶ F¹¹

C Dorian D Dorian Eb Lydian F Mixolydian



After playing Example 3.2.1, performers should improvise melodies over similar left-hand voicings in Example 3.2.1 and as soon as they have achieved this they can experiment with different voicings. The goal is to improvise various voicings and melodic lines in real time. I have devised an example of an improvisation in Example 3.2.2. While playing Example 3.2.2, the performer should incorporate some of his/her own ideas within the solo. For instance, Motive A can be used to develop the melody in the performer's own style. Furthermore, similar block chords or inverted repetitive sequences can be used to enhance the player's own improvised melodies.

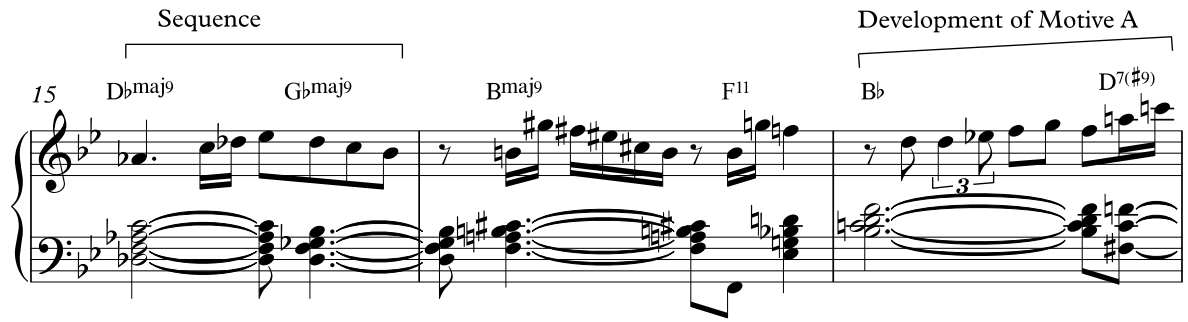
Example 3.2.2 Illustration of a solo by Snyman in *Ballad for Thomas*



The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature is two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):** Labeled "Motive A" and "Development of Motive A". Chords above the staff are Bb, D7(#9), D13(b9), Gm9, C13(b5), and C9. A bracket labeled "Rootless voicings" spans the bass line from measure 1 to 4. Triplet markings are present in measures 1 and 2.
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):** Chords above the staff are Cm7, Bb/D, Ebmaj9, F11, G11, Melodic fill, G7(b9), and Motive A. A bracket labeled "Melodic fill" spans measures 6 and 7.
- System 3 (Measures 8-11):** Labeled "Block chords". Chords above the staff are Cm7, Dm7, Eb6, F11, Bb, D7(#9), and D13(b9). A bracket labeled "Block chords" spans measures 9 and 10.
- System 4 (Measures 11-14):** Labeled "Block chords" and "Sequence". Chords above the staff are Gm11, B7(#9), B13(b9), Emaj9, Cmaj9, Abmaj9, and Ab13(b9). A bracket labeled "Block chords" spans measures 11 and 12. A bracket labeled "Sequence" spans measures 13 and 14.

Sequence Development of Motive A



15 $D^{\flat}maj^9$ $G^{\flat}maj^9$ $Bmaj^9$ F^{11} B^{\flat} $D7(\#9)$



18 $D^{13}(b9)$ Gm^9 $G7(\#5)$ $G7(b9)$ $G7(b9)$

Repetitive sequence



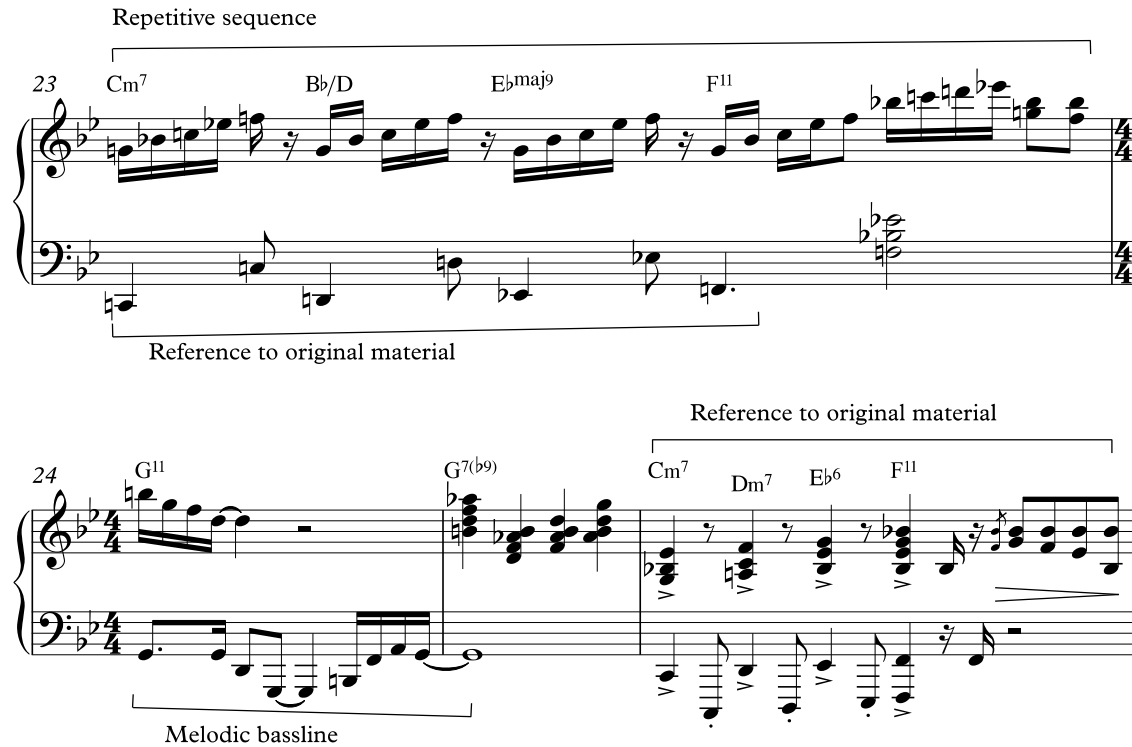
21 Cm^7 B^{\flat}/D $E^{\flat}maj^9$ F^{11} F^{11} F^{11}

Repetitive sequence inverted



22 $C^{\#}m^7$ $B/D^{\#}$ $E^{\flat}maj^9$ $F^{\#11}$ $F^{\#11}$ $F^{\#11}$

Repetitive sequence



Reference to original material

Reference to original material

Melodic bassline

In this chapter I have devised exercises and practising methods to overcome the challenge of improvisation within two of Reddy's late piano works. It is clear that *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* have pedagogical and educational value. Both works can be used to teach jazz improvisation to students trained in the Western art music tradition as it combines technical difficulties and improvisational challenges. Since Reddy guides the performer's approach to improvisation through written-out chords and left-hand patterns, these works are an easier introduction to improvisation for a Western art music performer than, for example, a jazz standard¹⁹ on a lead sheet where there is no written-out left hand. This can be more challenging as the performer has endless possibilities to choose from depending on the style and desired performance.

Further research can be conducted on the improvisation sections within the works of Reddy, as this chapter only serves as a short introduction to jazz improvisation within *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas*. The next chapter engages more specifically with elements of piano technique and performance challenges in *African Funk for Felix*, *Ballad for Thomas* and *Toccata for John Roos*.

¹⁹ A jazz standard refers to a composition that is considered to be an essential part of a jazz musician's repertoire (Witmer 2011b).

CHAPTER 4:

THE REALISATION OF TECHNICAL CHALLENGES IN SURENDRAN REDDY'S PIANO WORKS *AFRICAN FUNK FOR FELIX*, *BALLAD FOR THOMAS* AND *TOCCATA FOR JOHN*

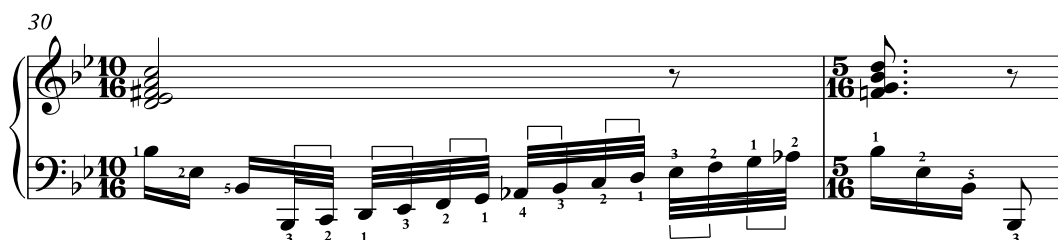
4.1 Overview of technical challenges in *African Funk for Felix*

The main tasks in *African Funk for Felix* are performing technically difficult passages accurately *a tempo*, overcoming rhythmic challenges and playing with an ensemble. In this chapter I have created fingering suggestions for challenging passages based on my own performance of *African Funk for Felix*. I discuss various practising techniques that can be used to overcome other difficulties and I have arranged separate reductions of the piano score of *African Funk for Felix* for a bassist and drummer to assist with ensemble playing. These reductions, or bass and drum parts, are not included in the original piano score of *African Funk for Felix*.

4.1.1 Technically difficult passages

When played at the marked tempo of 130 per crotchet, the E-flat Lydian mode in the left hand is challenging due to the topography of the keyboard in that scale. I have devised possible fingering in Example 4.1.1. Through annotation in the score, I have divided the modal passage into groups of two for purposes of simplified reading and playing. When playing the scale in the left hand, subtle elastic movements in the fingers are required and precaution should be taken when passing the hand over the thumb to keep an even tone (Bascom 2012:85-88).


Example 4.1.1 *African Funk for Felix* bars 30-31



The technical challenge in bar 42 (Example 4.1.2) is to play accurately, due to the jumps in the right hand and the speed at which this section should be performed. Practising these progressions slowly in block-chord format may enable the player to create a kinetical sense of comfort and ingrain these complex movements into the

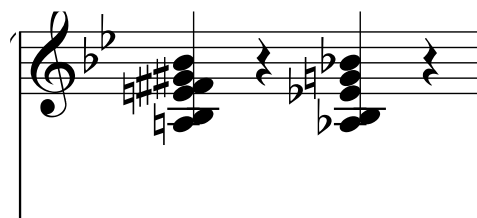
muscle memory. Slow practising is beneficial, because the performer's control over the movements is increased at a slower tempo (Bascom 2012:71-72). By putting a slight accent on the first note of every group, a sense of comfort and anchoring may be created. It is important to abide by the rests in the left hand and not hold the pedal continuously throughout bar 42. There are no pedal markings in the original score. I have formulated pedal, fingering and dynamic markings according to my performance of this section in Example 4.1.2.

Example 4.1.2 African Funk for Felix by Reddy bars 42-43



There are various chords such as those in Example 4.1.3 that will require both bottom notes to be played with the thumb. If the performer experiences discomfort with the larger stretches, the chords should be rolled.

Example 4.1.3 African Funk for Felix reduction of two chords in bar 20 and 21



4.1.2 Overcoming rhythmic difficulties

Du Plessis (2019) comments that his biggest challenge while learning *African Funk for Felix* was rhythmic accuracy due to the continuous change in meter, resulting in difficulty keeping a steady inner pulse while performing. I found bar 24-25 (Example 4.1.4) awkward due to the alternation between the two hands creating rhythmic unevenness. Strategic use of the metronome during practising may help the performer to overcome any rhythmic instability.

Example 4.1.4 African Funk for Felix by Reddy bars 24-25



The mbaqanga section presents complexities regarding syncopation and rhythmic alternation between the hands. To this end, an accent placed on the anticipation as shown in Example 4.1.5 could provide rhythmic clarity and anchoring. I discussed the implications of mbaqanga in this work with Paul Hanmer²⁰ during a masterclass. Hanmer claims that personal experience of and exposure to this dance style within the context of music making in townships could enhance a performer's understanding and effective realisation of mbaqanga in Reddy's music. The snare drum (within the combo involved in playing *African Funk for Felix*) is a significant point of reference to maintain the rhythmic character and stability of this work.

Example 4.1.5 African Funk for Felix by Reddy bars 44-45 (mbaqanga section)



In the second improvisation section in bars 98-117 (Example 4.1.6 and Appendix B), the left hand is technically demanding due to the uneven time signature. The accents are not marked in the original score, but are nonetheless audible in the recording by Reddy and drummer Daniel Schlaeger (Reddy & Schlaeger 2005). When performing this section, the emphasis on the accented notes creates a constant beat, providing support for the right hand to improvise more freely.

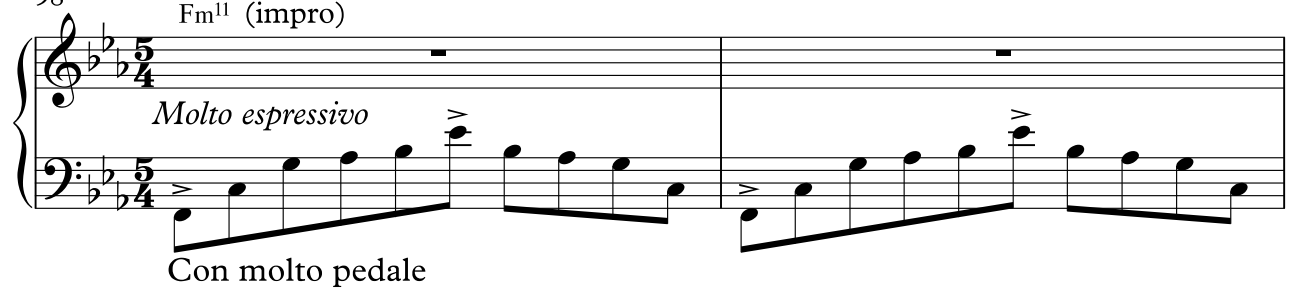
²⁰ Paul Hanmer (1961) is a pianist and composer trained in Western art music and jazz. He has recorded multiple albums and performed with musicians such as Miriam Makeba, McCoy Mrubata and Pops Muhamed (Gouveia 2014).

Example 4.1.6 African Funk for Felix by Reddy bars 98-99

BALLAD FEEL

98 Fm¹¹ (impro)

Molto espressivo



Con molto pedale

4.1.3 Playing with an ensemble

Reddy does not explicitly state whether he composed *African Funk for Felix* for solo piano or ensemble. There is only a piano score available and no separate scores or reductions for bass, drums or other instruments have been published or made available. It could, however, be argued that *African Funk for Felix* was intended to be performed as both a solo piano work and with an ensemble (Lucia 2020). The latter argument is substantiated by the few instances where Reddy does in fact mention bass and drums in the score. The recordings available of Reddy performing *African Funk for Felix* also include a percussionist.

In the preface Reddy (2005b:i) states that the bassist should continue with the funk pattern that occurs in bars 62-81 (Appendix B) of the improvisation section (Appendix B from bar 82 or Example 4.1.7 from bar 82), as it would no longer be possible to maintain this pattern in the piano part. Reddy (2005b:i) also references the bass, expressing his aspiration that the pianist should play the melodic left-hand line in bars 98-117 (Appendix B) while improvising with the right hand. He continues that if this is too foreign for pianists and they prefer to play chords with the left hand, the bass player should play a line similar to the one written for the piano part. In Example 4.1.7 I wrote a sparse bass line in bars 98-117 to contrast with the complex piano line (bars 98-117, Appendix B) to stay true to Reddy's request that the pianist should perform the melodic line in the left hand as written. In the piano score, bar 152 (Appendix B), there is a marking "drum fill", which is a further clue that this is in fact an ensemble work incorporating percussion.

This, however, holds new complexities for the performance of *African Funk for Felix* because there is no bass or drum part. Even if the drummer or bassist is well versed in improvisation and can play from a piano score, it will still be challenging for numerous

reasons. The piano score contains nine pages and constant meter changes with only selective chord symbols making it difficult for the bassist or drummer to follow (they might find it cumbersome to page repeatedly while performing and improvising without chord symbols). A bass is a transposing instrument and sounds one octave lower than notated (Slatford & Shipton 2001). Unfortunately, in several places in the piano score the bass notes are written for piano and notated lower than the bassist's range making reading complex. It is therefore beneficial to create a separate part for each instrument. A written-out score for each individual instrument would secure fewer page turns for ensemble members and provide clarity that could lead to interpretative and improvisational freedom. The bassist can choose when to play in unison with the piano (for example in the mbaqanga section in bar 44, Example 4.1.7) or when to play sparsely (for example in the *ballad* section in bar 98, Example 4.1.7). I reduced the left hand of *African Funk for Felix* for bass through harmonic analysis and created a bass part as shown in Example 4.1.7. The bass part contains chord symbols for the complete composition, even if the chords symbols are not marked on the piano score, to provide bassists with the opportunity to play original melodies if they prefer to deviate from my reduction. I did not include dynamic indications to coincide with the omitted dynamic indications on the original score to give performers a choice to perform their own dynamic interpretations of the work. The bass part is notated in a jazz lead-sheet style with a combination of chord symbols, and written-out bass lines to avoid clashes with the piano. The reduction is aligned to the score of *African Funk for Felix* and not written according to the recorded performances by Reddy as he repeats certain sections at his discretion not notated in the original piano score. The bass chart is shown in Example 4.1.7.

Example 4.1.7 African Funk for Felix bass reduction arranged by Snyman

African Funk for Felix (bass)

Surendran Reddy arr. by Mart-Marie Snyman

Intro



(piano only) etc.

Section A1

Bass in

5 Cm⁹



*Small notes are optional

9 Ebm⁷

Dm⁷ C#m⁹



13 Cm⁹

Abm⁷



18

F#m⁷

Fm¹¹

Bb¹³(b9)

Gm¹¹

C¹³(#11)



25 Abmaj⁷

Abm(maj⁷)

Eb/Bb



30 Bbmaj¹¹(#5)

Eb/Bb

Bbmaj⁹(b13)

Bbmaj¹¹(#5)



35  Fm¹³

Db¹¹



39 Cm⁹

Ebmaj⁷/C Gm⁷(b5)/Eb Amaj⁷/F# Cmaj⁷/A



2

43 **Section B**
Cm⁹ Mbaqanga C C⁷/E F Dm⁷ C/G

47 F⁶/G C Em⁷ F⁶ Dm⁷ C/G

51 F/G E^b E^b/G A^b

54 Fmaj⁷ B^b/E^b C⁷(^{#13}/₉) Fm⁷ E^b/G A^b A^b/B^b C

57 C/E F(add⁹) **To Coda** Dm⁷ C/G \emptyset F/G

60 **Section A2** C⁹

64 Cm¹¹

69 Am¹¹

74 Cm¹¹

78 F^{#7}(^{#9})

82 **Section C: Improvisation** Cm¹¹



The musical score is written for a bass clef instrument. It consists of several staves of music. The first staff (measures 43-46) is marked 'molto ritmico' and features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff (measures 47-50) continues this pattern. The third staff (measures 51-53) shows a change in rhythm to a more steady eighth-note pattern. The fourth staff (measures 54-56) returns to the complex rhythmic pattern. The fifth staff (measures 57-59) concludes with a 'To Coda' section. The sixth staff (measures 60-63) is marked 'Section A2' and features a 12/16 time signature with a steady eighth-note pattern. The seventh staff (measures 64-68) continues this pattern. The eighth staff (measures 69-73) continues the eighth-note pattern. The ninth staff (measures 74-77) continues the eighth-note pattern. The tenth staff (measures 78-81) continues the eighth-note pattern. The eleventh staff (measures 82-85) is marked 'Section C: Improvisation' and features a more complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes.

85 Am^{11}



88 Cm^{11}



91




94 $F\#7(\#9)$



Section D Ballad feel (improv continues)

97 Fm^{11} $Bb^{13}(sus4)$




102 Eb^6 $C7(\#9)$ Fm^{11} $Bb^{13}(sus4)$


molto espressivo



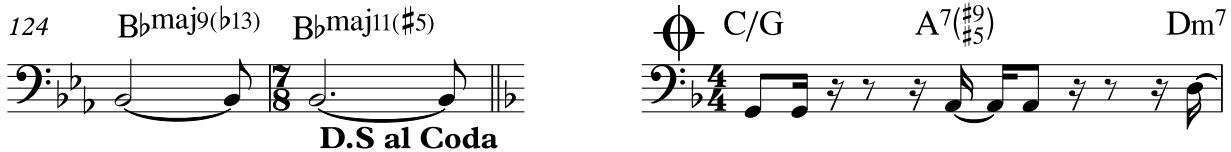
109 Gm^{11} $C^{13}(sus4)$ $C^{13}(\#11)$ $Abmaj9$



116 B^+7 Eb/Bb $Bbmaj11(\#5)$ Eb/Bb




124 $Bbmaj9(b13)$ $Bbmaj11(\#5)$ **CODA** C/G $A7(\#9)$ Dm^7



D.S al Coda

127 C/E F F/G (drum fill) Dm^7



129 C/E F F/G Dm^7 C/E F F/G $Cmaj13$



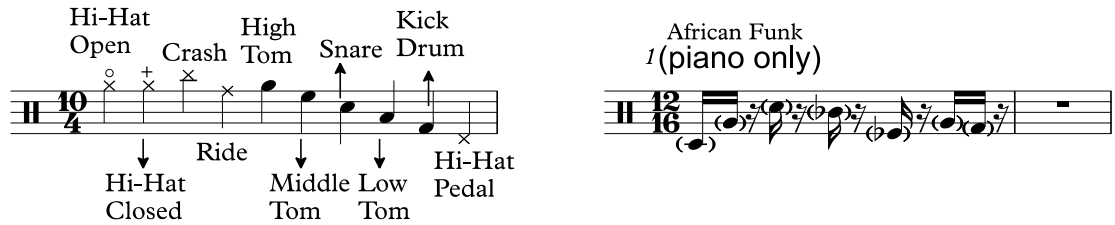
With the assistance of my colleague, percussionist Deo du Plessis, I created a reduction of *African Funk for Felix* (Example 4.1.8) for drum kit. This reduction provides basic patterns for the drummer to perform or use as a basis for improvisation. The metronome indication is according to the original score (Appendix B) but will depend on the performer's interpretation. In correlation with the bass chart, I did not include dynamic indications. The reduction is aligned with the sheet music for *African Funk for Felix* and not a transcription of the recorded performances by Reddy. The drum chart follows is shown in Example 4.1.8.

Example 4.1.8 African Funk for Felix drum kit reduction arranged by Snyman and Deo du Plessis

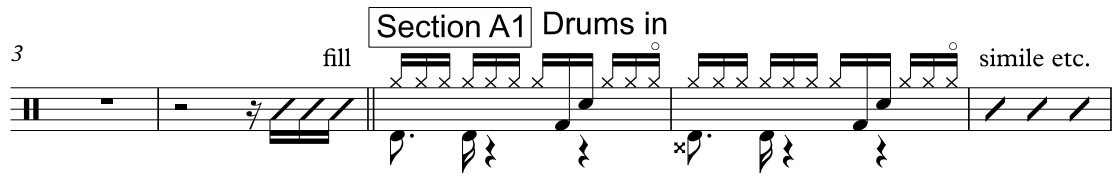
African Funk for Felix (drums)

♩ = 130

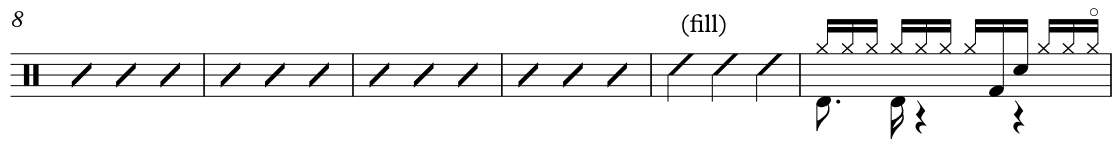
Surendran Reddy arr. by Deo du Plessis and Mart-Marie Snyman



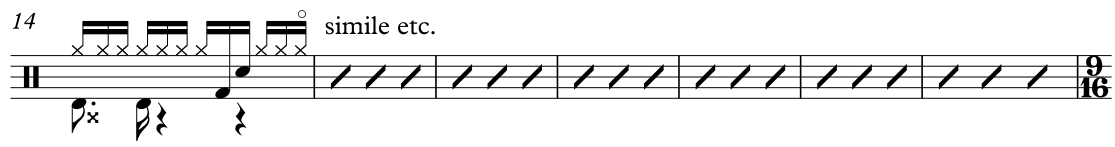
3 Section A1 Drums in fill simile etc.



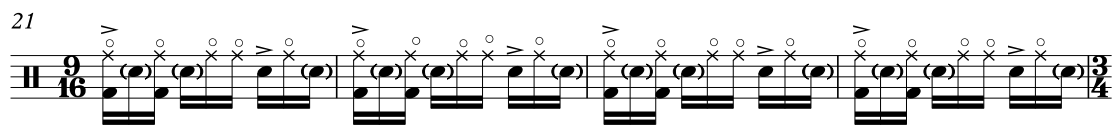
8 (fill)



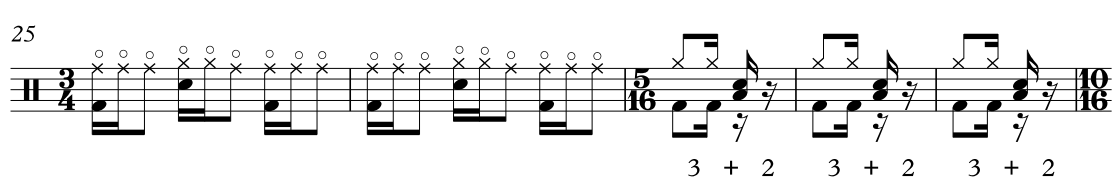
14 simile etc.



21



25



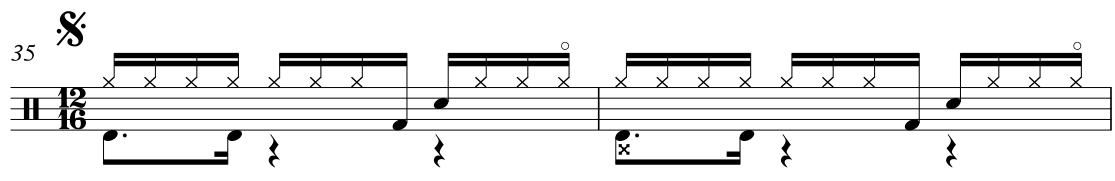
3 + 2 3 + 2 3 + 2

30 (fill)

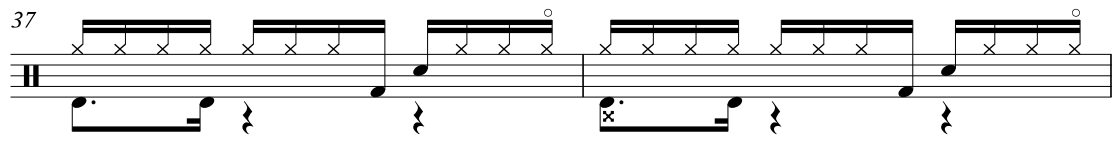


3 + 2 3 + 2 3 + 2 3 + 2 3 + 2 3 + 2 + 2

35



37



2

39

42

Section B

44 Mbaqanga

47 simile etc.

53

56

58

To Coda  simile etc.

Section A2

African Funk
Piano only

62

66

Section C: Improvisation

(improv as needed)

70

simile etc.

repeat until cue from pianist

Section D Ballad
(improv as needed)

74 simile etc.

78 repeat 3 times

83 African Funk

88 (fill)

93 (fill) D.S al Coda

95 fill

97 fill

99 fill

4.2 Overview of technical challenges in *Ballad for Thomas*

This is the shortest and easiest of the three selected late piano works by Reddy. The predominant complexity of this work lies in the improvisation, which is discussed in the previous chapter. Although the challenges in *Ballad for Thomas* are not as severe in comparison to *African Funk for Felix* and *Toccata for John Roos*, there are technically demanding passages, frequent change of meter between even and uneven time signatures, rhythmic difficulties such as recurrent syncopation, anticipation and challenges regarding the pedal use.

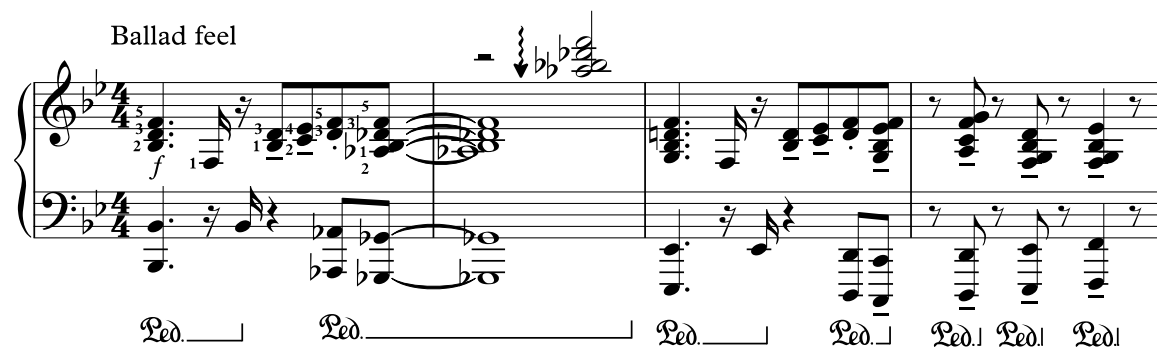
4.2.1 Technical and rhythmic complexities

I have included suggestions in terms of fingering in the first bar of Example 4.2.1. Strict adherence to rests and articulation in this passage will enable effective characterisation. The player may consider slightly accentuating the first and last chords to contribute to delineating the rhythmic underpinnings of this section. The second chord in bar two should be rolled just before the beat, to emphasise the third beat in bar two.

Playing the chords and thirds in bars 1-4 (see also Example 4.2.1) in complete simultaneity, adhering to the articulation, and emphasising the top notes of the chords to stress the melody can be demanding. Neuhaus (1973:129) highlights the importance of the pianist playing chords in a relaxed manner in order to not overstrain. He continues to state that the “purely physical process of orderly and controlled piano playing consist of a constant alternation between effort and rest, tenseness and relaxation” (Neuhaus 1973:129). This will support the ballad character of the work. Another challenge in Example 4.2.1 is the balance between the hands, to not outweigh the melody by playing the octaves too loudly or forcefully. To practise softly, at a moderate tempo, with meticulous accuracy and a gentle tone is advised by Neuhaus (1973:70) for challenges such as overpowering octaves in the left hand.

Example 4.2.1 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bars 1-4

Ballad feel



Red. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

Bars 31-34 (see Example 4.2.2) contain the most virtuosic section of *Ballad for Thomas*. It comprises a combination of anticipations (marked with the symbol * in Example 4.2.2) and syncopations resulting in difficulty maintaining an inner pulse. I added accents to Example 4.2.2 on the offbeats for practice purposes only to help the performer to internalise the rhythm through emphasising the anticipations. The syncopated G-flat major ninth chord in bar 33 (Example 4.2.2) can be rolled if the stretch is too big for the performer's hands. Both the A flat and B flat of the G-flat major ninth chord in the left hand should be played with the thumb. Clarity of articulation and the rhythmic characterisation of the demisemiquaver quintuplets in bars 33-34 (Example 4.2.2) are predominant objectives in this passage. Lateral adjustments of the hands could support this as they share these quintuplets that ought to sound seamless. Directional pacing towards the chords that precede and follow these quintuplets may also enable the pianist to obtain clarity and brilliance.

These figurations become easier when divided between the two hands and a more brilliant execution may ensue. It may be beneficial for the performer to use little motion in the hands, but with adequate support of the forearms when playing this passage, to limit the amount of unnecessary energy thereby achieving agility in the fingers. I provided fingering and pedal indications for the passage in Example 4.2.2.

Example 4.2.2 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bars 31-34

*anticipations

31 E^maj⁹ C^maj⁹ A^bmaj⁹ A^b13(^b9) D^bmaj⁹ syncopation G^bmaj⁹ 5



34 B^maj⁹ 5 F13(^{sus}4) 5

Ped. Ped.

4.2.2 Pedal use in *Ballad for Thomas*

There are a few pedalling indications in *Ballad for Thomas*. The first bar is marked *con pedale* (Reddy 2005c:1) and partial pedal markings only appear from the second page onward (Appendix C). Reddy (2005c:i) merely marked pedal indications where the performer's fingers cannot sustain the notes without the aid of the sustain pedal. He advises performers to use the pedal at their discretion, provided that it is in accordance with the character of a ballad (Reddy 2005c:i). According to Neuhaus (1973:156) the foremost purpose of the sustain pedal is to eliminate the boldness and dryness of the piano. In agreement with the lyrical characteristics of a ballad, the sustain pedal will achieve a rich tonal attribute when used in *Ballad for Thomas*.

Reddy (2005c:i) states that the challenge regarding the sustain pedal is to observe the rests. To abide by the rests in bar 4 (Example 4.2.1) swift individual pedalling of each chord is required. Example 4.2.1 includes pedal markings that may support the pianist in observing the rests. The performer might be confused about the pedal use in bars 31-34 (Example 4.2.2) due to the anticipated harmonic rhythm. Regarding to changes in harmonic rhythm, the sustain pedal is depressed at the start of a harmony, held until a new harmony arrives, then raised and swiftly pressed again to sustain the new harmony (Carreño & Rubinstein 2003:62,78; Neuhaus 1973:158). I wrote suggestions for pedal markings adhering to the harmonic rhythm of bars 31-34. The performer should note that the pedal should be raised on the *staccato* notes in bars 33-34 (Example 4.2.2) to adhere to the articulation indications.

4.2.3 Playing with an ensemble

Ballad for Thomas and *African Funk for Felix* both have similar complexities with regard to ensemble playing (when performed with a rhythm section). As with *African Funk for Felix*, the composer did not provide bass or drum parts for *Ballad for Thomas*. In my opinion, *Ballad for Thomas* is substantial enough to be performed as a solo piano work, as shown by Charl du Plessis (2019), due to the bass lines, harmony and melodic material. It will not sound empty or lacking if it is only performed by a solo pianist. In the preface to *Ballad for Thomas*, Reddy (2005c:i) states that the bass and drums should accompany the work from bar 19 onward (Example 4.2.3). This is the only indication in the score that bass and drums could accompany the work. I have therefore created bass and drum reductions based on the piano score and the chord symbols from bar 19 onward. It is important to note that I have marked the first 18 bars as solo piano (as advised by Reddy (2005c:i)), but the pianist will need to cue the bassist and drummer to join in at bar 19. A cue is necessary because the bassist and drummer's reductions do not have time signatures in the first 18 bars for the piano. Without the changes in time signature notated on their separate scores, it is impossible for them to count and follow the solo piano part. Without a visual cue from the pianist they will start playing at the wrong bar. The cue can be expressed through a non-verbal nod of the pianist's head when playing the last three chords in bar 18 (Appendix C).

The bass and drum scores are merely a guideline, and the successful execution thereof will rely on the bassist being able to improvise a bass line from chord symbols and the drummer being able to improvise from the syncopated rhythms notated in bar 26 (Example 4.2.4) without detailed drum notation such as found in bar 19 (Example 4.2.4). In these scores (Examples 4.2.3 and 4.2.4) both the bassist and the drummer's interpretation will rely on the interpretation and choice of tempo determined by the pianist.

Example 4.2.3 Bass part for *Ballad for Thomas* arranged by Snyman

Ballad for Thomas (bass)

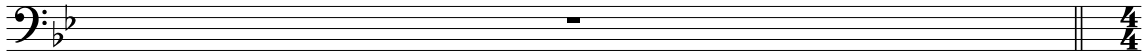
Surendran Reddy arr. by Mart-Marie Snyman

♩ = 132

Section A

Piano only

18 bars TACET (time-signatures vary)



Section A2

Bass in on que

19 Bb D7(#9) D13(b9) Gm⁹ C13(b5) C⁹

23 Cm⁷ Bb/D Ebmaj⁹ F11 G11 G7(b9)

26 Cm⁷ Dm⁷ Eb F11 Bb D7(#9) D13(b9)

29 Gm11 B7(#9) B13(b9) Emaj⁹ Cmaj⁹ Abmaj⁹ Ab13(b9) Dbmaj⁹

33 Gbmaj⁹ Bmaj⁹ F13(sus4) Bb D7(#9) D13(b9)

37 Gm11 G7(#5) G7(b9) G7(b9) Cm⁷ Bb/D Ebmaj⁹ F11

40 C#m⁷ B/D# Emaj⁹ F#11 Cm⁷ Bb/D Ebmaj⁹ F11

42 G11 G7(b9) Cm⁷ Dm⁷ Eb F11

Repeat 3 times then Coda

45 Φ CODA

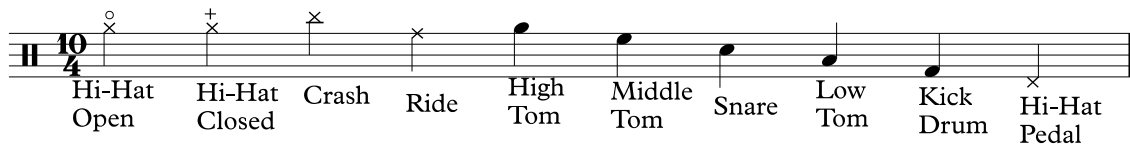
G \flat maj \flat 9 Bmaj \flat 9 A \flat maj \flat 9 F13(sus4) G7(\sharp 9/ \sharp 5) C7(\sharp 9/ \sharp 5) A13(\flat 9/ \flat 5) F \sharp 13(\flat 9) Emaj \flat 9

rit... improvise fill

Example 4.2.4 Drum chart for *Ballad for Thomas* arranged by Snyman

Ballad for Thomas (drums)

Surendran Reddy arr. by Mart-Marie Snyman



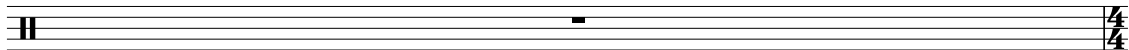
10
4

Hi-Hat Open Hi-Hat Closed Crash Ride High Tom Middle Tom Snare Low Tom Kick Drum Hi-Hat Pedal

♩ = 132

2 Section A

Piano only 18 bars TACET (time-signatures vary)



Pianist will cue bass&drums to start

Section A2

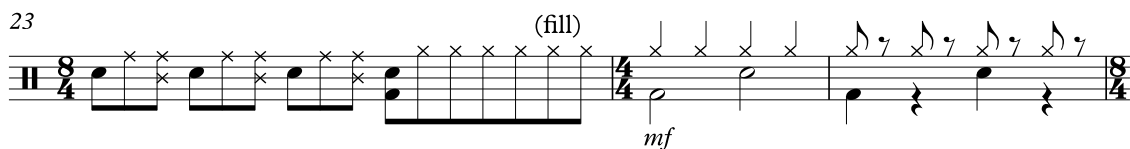
Drums in on que

19 (halftime feel) simile etc.



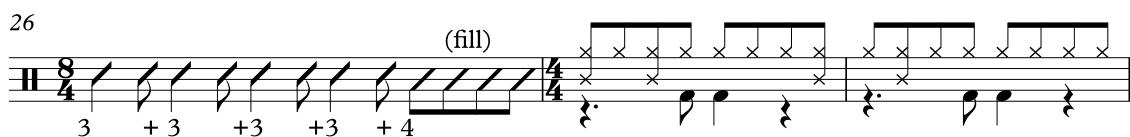
mf

23 (fill)



mf

26 (fill)

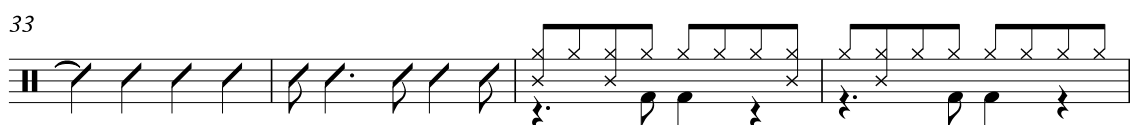


3 +3 +3 +3 +4

29



33



37

Musical notation for measure 37, featuring a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first two measures contain eighth-note chords with 'x' marks above them. The third measure contains eighth notes. The fourth measure contains eighth notes with a fermata over the final note. Below the staff, the sequence of fingerings is indicated as 3 + 3 + 3 + 7.

3 + 3 + 3 + 7

40

Musical notation for measure 40, featuring a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains eighth notes with a fermata over the final note. The second measure contains eighth notes. The third measure contains eighth notes with a fermata over the final note. The fourth measure contains eighth notes with a fermata over the final note. Below the staff, the sequence of fingerings is indicated as 3 + 3 + 3 + 7 3 + 3 + 3 + 7.

3 + 3 + 3 + 7 3 + 3 + 3 + 7

42

Musical notation for measure 42, featuring a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first two measures contain eighth-note chords with 'x' marks above them. The third measure contains eighth notes. The fourth measure contains eighth notes with a fermata over the final note. The fifth measure contains eighth notes with a fermata over the final note. The sixth measure contains eighth notes with a fermata over the final note. The seventh measure contains eighth notes with a fermata over the final note. The eighth measure contains eighth notes with a fermata over the final note. Below the staff, the sequence of fingerings is indicated as 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 4. The text "(fill)" is written above the eighth measure, and "3rd time to Coda" is written below the staff.

(fill)
3 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 4
3rd time to Coda

45

Musical notation for measure 45, featuring a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a fermata over a whole note. The second measure contains a fermata over a whole note. The third measure contains a fermata over a whole note. The fourth measure contains a fermata over a whole note. The fifth measure contains a fermata over a whole note. The sixth measure contains a fermata over a whole note. The seventh measure contains a fermata over a whole note. The eighth measure contains a fermata over a whole note. Below the staff, the text "rit..." is written.

Coda
rit...

4.3 Overview of technical challenges in *Toccata for John Roos*

Toccata for John Roos is a 16-page virtuoso work that requires the performer to play technically difficult passages often coupled to multiple irregular time-signature changes. The toccata demands the player to be very dexterous and to rapidly move across large sections of the keyboard. In this chapter I put stylistic awareness into practice. I interviewed Ben Schoeman as he is the only pianist who's recordings of *Toccata for John Roos* I was able to trace. Schoeman was the overall winner of the 11th Vodacom UNISA International Piano Competition in 2008 where *Toccata for John Roos* was one of the prescribed works and he also performed the work at the Cleveland International Piano Competition (2013) in the United States of America (Schoeman 2019).

The approach Schoeman (2019) used to study the toccata, was to firstly identify various concepts and patterns he found familiar and that recurs throughout the work, for example the arpeggio in bar 31 (Example 4.3.1).

Example 4.3.1 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bar 31



The musical score for Example 4.3.1 shows bars 31 to 39 of the piece. It is written for piano in 11/16 time, marked 'grazioso' and 'mp'. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music features a complex, arpeggiated pattern in both hands, with frequent changes in hand positions and a high level of technical difficulty. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

Schoeman (2019) sub-divided the work into small segments and worked out fingerings for these sections, which he then repeatedly practised until he mastered the mechanical movements. Furthermore, the identification of patterns (and comfortable hand positions that would cover these patterns) within difficult passages may assist the performer during the process of practising and learning the work.

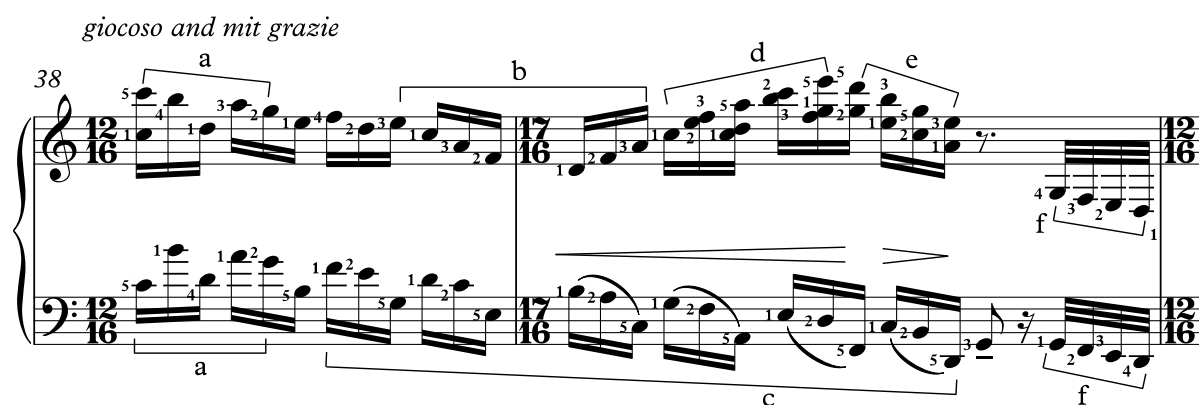
4.3.1 Fingering solutions for difficult passages

This section provides possible fingering solutions to difficult virtuoso passages within the *Toccata for John Roos*. I provided fingering solutions to bars 38-39 (Example 4.3.2) and separated the bars into small fragments marked A to G to highlight hand positions in accordance with theoretical constructs. Section A and F (Example 4.3.2) are played in unison with both hands. I developed fingering for the arpeggio pattern at B to avoid jumps between the keys. If the performer finds arpeggio patterns difficult, a possible

solution is to practise the passage slowly in a relaxed manner, while focusing on evenness, consistency of movement and flexibility (Neuhaus 1973:119). I have provided consistent fingering for the sequences at C (Example 4.3.2). At D (bar 39 Example 4.3.2) the thumb is required to play two notes simultaneously. The challenging pattern at E can be solved by dividing the first two and last two fifths into two groups thereby creating two chords and practising them as such for a secure grip. It will benefit the performer to mentally subdivide the semiquaver passage in bar 39 in groups of two with both hands in coordination. This renders it mechanically easier to perform. The fragment shown in Example 4.3.2 is based on the opening theme of the work, although it contains more complexities in terms of added intervals in the right hand.

Example 4.3.2 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 38-39

giocososo and mit grazie



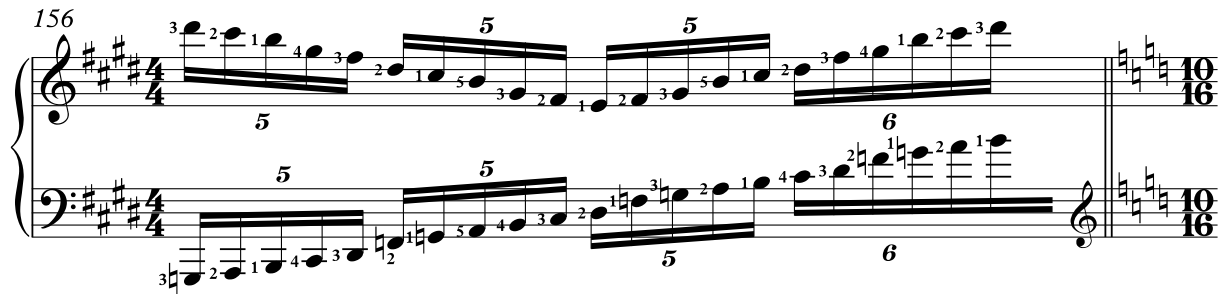
One of the hardest bars in *Toccata for John Roos* is bar 155 in Example 4.3.3 (Schoeman 2019). This requires strategic fingering that would allow speed coupled with clarity and a loud dynamic. The rapid retakes and shifting of the left-hand position is necessary to create continuity and clarity despite the leaps. The right-hand part is more complex as it contains second, third and fourth intervals. Therefore, it should serve as a leading element that practically governs the left hand in terms of rhythm and sonority. I have provided fingering for this passage in Example 4.3.3.

Example 4.3.3 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 155



Unconventional fingering in bar 156 (Example 4.3.4) is needed to achieve agility when performing (Schoeman 2019). The scale in the right hand is B pentatonic, whilst the left hand plays a whole-tone scale. Both hands change position simultaneously as seen in the second beat of bar 156 (Example 4.3.4). This will enable the performer to achieve greater speed.

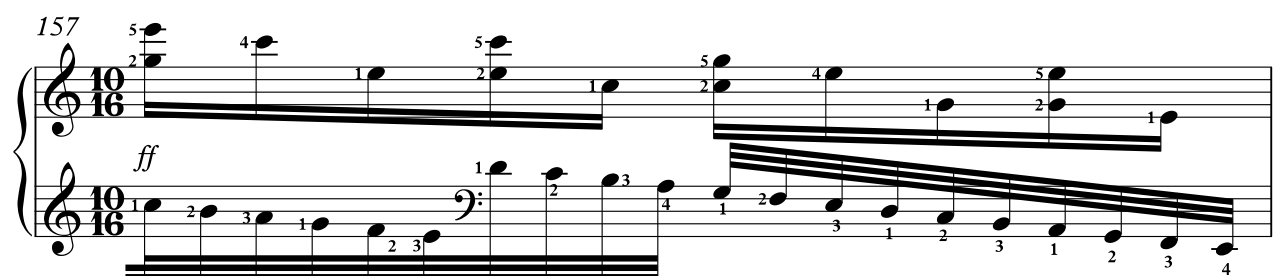
Example 4.3.4 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 156



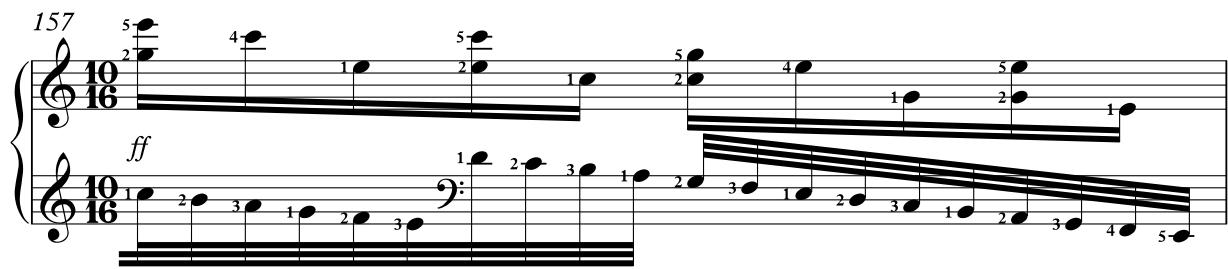
Examples 4.3.4 and 4.3.5 both consist of patterns based on scales. The challenge when playing scales lies in achieving evenness in tone (Bascom 2012:91). Evenness in tone is interrupted when the thumb passes underneath the hand or when the hand rotates over the thumb (Neuhaus 1973:119). When altering hand positions the hand should be turned toward the direction it is playing in. When playing scales, the hand will be in three different positions: straight in correlation to the forearm or bent towards the fifth finger or the thumb (Bascom 2012:92). By monitoring the movement of the hand and adjusting to the difference in tone between the bottom and top registers of the piano, the pianist will achieve evenness in tone (Bascom 2012:91). I have provided two different fingering solutions for bar 157 with regard to the C-major scale in the left hand in Example 4.3.5. Unconventional fingering is needed to group the fingering of the left hand with the change of the right-hand position (Schoeman 2019).

Example 4.3.5 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 157

Fingering solution no. 1



Fingering solution no. 2

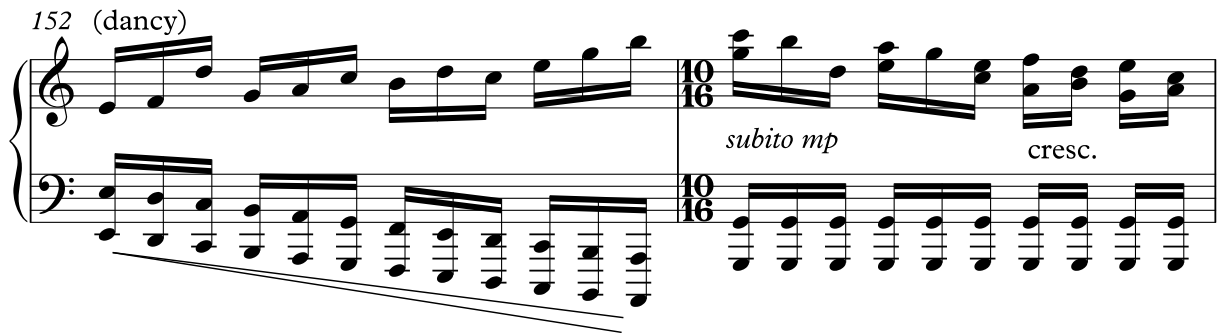


4.3.2 Solutions for octaves and jumps

According to Neuhaus (1973:83-84) the three main technical challenges when playing the piano are playing for an extended period of time, playing fast and playing with a wide range of dynamics. This requires the performer to be mentally aware of movement, engagement or unnecessary tension of the shoulders, arms, hands, etc. (Neuhaus 1973:84). A technically challenging passage, such as the octaves in Example 4.3.6, requires the performer to regulate movement in the upper body to achieve the necessary perseverance and control over dexterity in the fingers, overall speed and expression of dynamics. When performing octaves, the hand moves as a unit, with the thumb and fifth finger kept in a fixed position, while the second, third and fourth fingers need to be kept from accidentally pressing down on a key (Bascom 2012:78-79). Extensive tension when playing octaves can lead to stiffness in the wrist and compromise the accuracy of the performance (Neuhaus 1973:121). Although octaves are usually executed from the shoulder or arm (Bascom 2012:79), in Example 4.3.6 there is no time for the forearm to move due to the extremely fast tempo of the octave downward scale. This passage needs to be played with upward and downward movements of the hand whilst keeping the fingers taut and the wrist and arm stable. When struggling with octaves, Neuhaus (1973:125) suggests practising with the fifth finger separately while holding the thumb in the air above the keys, and vice versa. This secures the balance between stability and relaxation in the wrist and forearm.

Example 4.3.6 Toccata for John Roos by Reddy bars 152-153

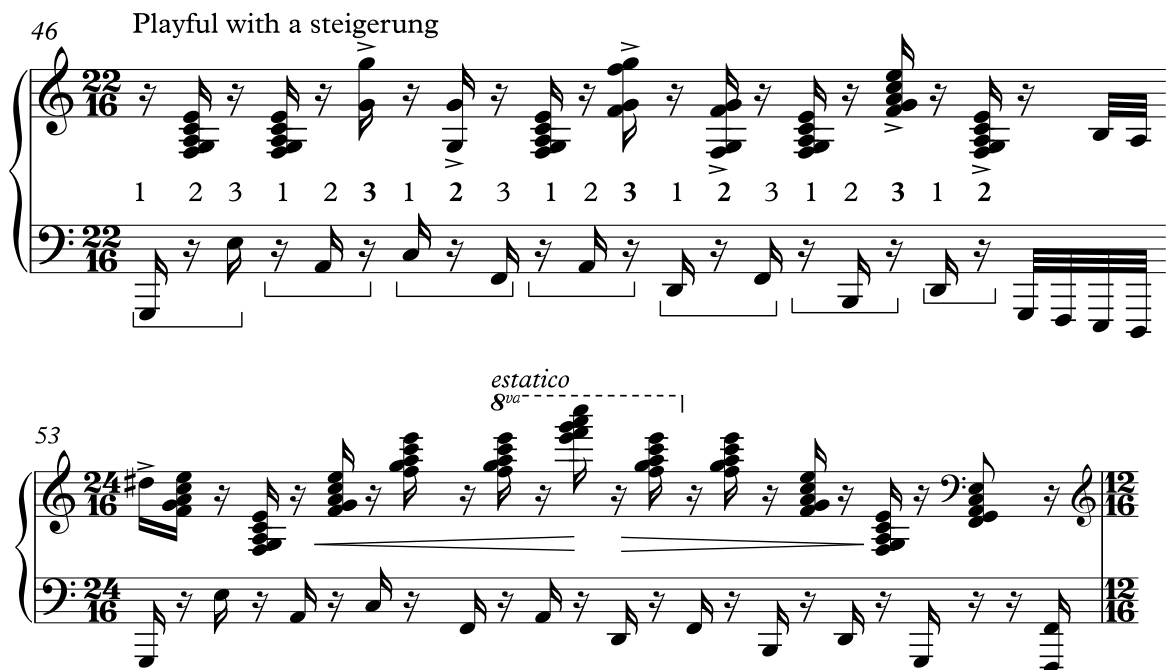
152 (dancy)



To accurately move the hand over a large distance at a high speed the shortest movement from one key to the next should be made, which according to Neuhaus (1973:132) is a curve from one key to the next. The hand moves horizontally over the keyboard and the passage should be executed as naturally as possible (Bascom 2012:84). When confronted with jumps in the right hand that need to be performed accurately at a very fast speed, as shown in bars 46 and 53 (Example 4.3.7), the fingers, particularly the fifth finger, need to lead the movement, and not the arm (Bascom 2012:83). I divided bar 46 (Example 4.3.7) into semiquaver groups of three as a mental way of negotiating and approaching the syncopation of this extremely virtuosic passage.

Example 4.3.7 Toccata for John Roos by Reddy bar 46

46 Playful with a *steigerung*

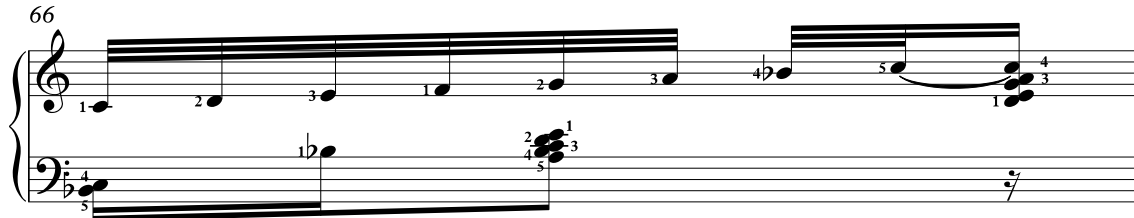


1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2

53 *estatico*
8^{va}

Bar 66 (Example 4.3.8) is challenging to play at a fast tempo. I have suggested conventional fingering to facilitate this passage. When starting this section in bar 61 the performer should be careful not to rush as bar 66 is problematic and requires greater virtuosic dexterity in comparison with the previous bars.

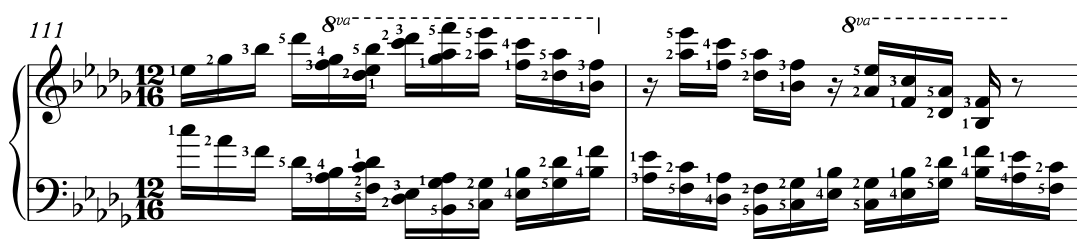
Example 4.3.8 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bar 66



The rapid succession of fifth intervals in bars 111-112 (Example 4.3.9) may hinder a supple performance. The geography of the keyboard also presents challenges here as white and black keys often appear together and thus necessitates the performer to adjust hand positioning.

Schoeman (2019) used the thumb in the left hand at a sideward angle and played with flat fingers to overcome the difficulty presented by the parallel fifths. He suggests a regular plunging motion in the wrist to overcome stiffness. In this example, the composer uses three-semiquaver groups, but mentally regarding the semiquavers in groups of two may benefit the performer as well as influence the choice of fingering as the hand position can only cover two semiquaver intervals at a time. Fingerings to this effect are provided in Example 4.3.9:

Example 4.3.9 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 111-112

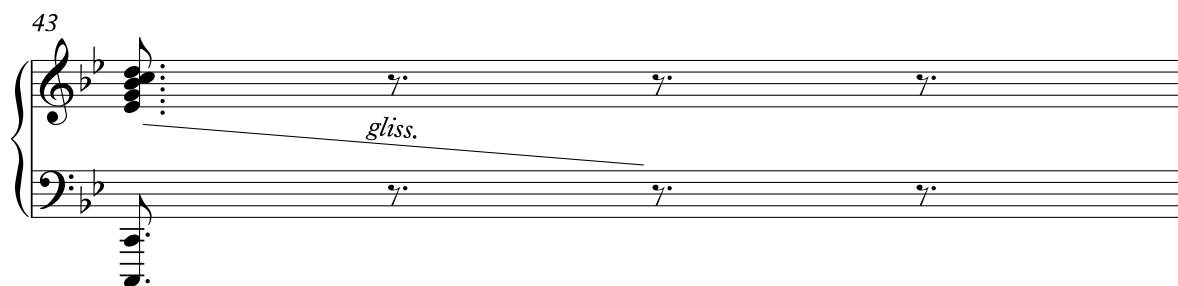


4.4 Conclusion

The main challenges posed by Surendran Reddy's *African Funk for Felix*, *Ballad for Thomas* and *Toccata for John Roos* are playing virtuosic passages at fast tempi, overcoming rhythmic challenges and adapting to frequent meter changes. In this chapter, I have provided potential solutions to these challenges by proposing fingerings for difficult passages; dividing passages into separate groups; stipulating accents (for practising purposes); explaining the use of slow practice and a metronome to overcome rhythmic and technical exertions; and offering insight into the kinaesthetic movement of the hands where necessary. All three works require uncompromised rhythmic accuracy and detailed attention to the score.

One more technical challenge prevalent in all three works is the *glissando* as shown in Examples 4.4.1, 4.4.2 and 4.4.3. The *glissando* requires the hand to work as a unit. There are different ways to play the *glissando* by gliding of the hand and not separate finger strokes (Bascom 2012:85). Although the ends of the fingers must be kept taut to execute a *glissando*, the bottom of the fingers should be elastic (Bascom 2012:85). Glissandi can be executed through the thumb or the back of the hand depending on the performer.

Example 4.4.1 *African Funk for Felix* by Reddy bar 43 *glissando*



Example 4.4.2 *Ballad for Thomas* by Reddy bar 12 *glissando*



Example 4.4.3 *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy bars 86-87 *glissando*

The musical score shows two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both are in 5/16 time. Bar 86 starts with a glissando in the right hand (RH) and a corresponding line in the left hand (LH). Bar 87 continues the glissando in both hands. The right hand is labeled 'RH' and the left hand is labeled 'LH'.

This mini-dissertation discussed the stylistic influences, improvisational challenges and technical difficulties found in three late piano works by Reddy. However, there remains a considerable amount of research to be done to completely comprehend his oeuvre. He was a prolific composer who wrote over 100 compositions, including choral music, electronic music, theatre music, dance music and chamber music (Lucia 2020). He also wrote compositions for solo instruments, including the piano, flute, organ, clarinet, voice, bassoon, Indian tabla as well as for jazz ensemble (Lucia 2020).

His larger works, such as the *Clazzical Sonata no. 3 in C (Hammerclazz Sonata)* for piano, could be analysed from both a Western art music and jazz perspective. The combination of these two angles could potentially make Reddy's crossover music accessible to a larger audience. The *African Composers Edition* website (Lucia 2020) hosts a compilation of the complete works and information regarding Reddy's life. The collection made available by Christine Lucia and Heike Asmuss in 2020, will preserve Reddy's legacy as a valued composer and virtuoso performer and assist with further research. Considering the extensive plurality of styles and musical influences in South Africa, Reddy was a remarkable figure who understood, practised and amalgamated all these fields, resulting in his unique compositional style: clazz.

"If we can achieve harmony between such diverse musical styles, should it be so difficult as people to do the same in terms of our common humanity?"

Surendran Reddy (preface to *African Funk for Felix*)

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²² In 2019 this specific recording of *African Funk for Felix* was available for download on the *African Composers Edition (ACE)* website, but the website was updated in 2020 and this specific recording is no longer available. A recording of *African Funk for Felix* by Reddy and Schiertz of the same year have replaced the original recording on the ACE website, but these two recordings differ greatly regarding the piano improvisation.

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Participants: Two professional pianists who have performed one or more of the three piano compositions by Surendran Reddy (*African Funk for Felix*, *Ballad for Thomas* and *Toccata for John Roos*) in competitions (SAMRO Overseas Music Scholarship, UNISA International Piano Competition and Cleveland International Piano Competition).

Aim of using semi-structured interviews: Interviews are used to expand on the lack of academic material on the three piano works by Surendran Reddy; to document individual experiences of learning, playing and performing the works; and to add to the practice-led research on technical, improvisational, and stylistic challenges and solutions within the three works.

Interview A – Charl du Plessis

There are several reasons for choosing Charl du Plessis as a participant for this research project. He performed both *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* at the SAMRO Overseas Music Competition and won the prize for the best interpretation of a South African composition. No other participants were available or willing to contribute to this research study. Apart from Ben Schoeman, there are no other pianists in South Africa who have performed one or more of the three works.

Transcription of the interview conducted by the researcher with Charl du Plessis on 13 November 2019, 17:30 at 215 Amos Street, Colbyn, Pretoria.

Could you please give me some background regarding when and why you decided to learn *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* by Surendran Reddy?

Both works were prescribed quick studies for the second and third round when I took part in the SAMRO Overseas Music Scholarship in 2005. Ballad for Thomas was the quick study for the second round, and African Funk for Felix the quick study for the third round, which meant that I had very little time to learn the works.

How much time did you have to learn the works?

We had 24 hours to learn each work.

What did you know of Reddy when you started learning this work and how did you find out more about him?

I knew that Reddy played jazz and that he would make up his own cadenzas when playing with an orchestra. He also played in my hometown, Bloemfontein, where in the

middle of the Mozart concerto, he infused it with his own jazz cadenza. Some people loved it and other people hated it. This made me realise that he was quite a controversial figure. If I remember correctly, he also performed with no shoes, which in those days was quite strange.

Was he one of the judges at the SAMRO Overseas Music Scholarship Competition?

He was there, but whether he was a judge I cannot remember. He could have been. I do remember that I was awarded the prize for the best performance of the South African prescribed works.

Did you receive any feedback from him regarding the performance of the composition?

He just said: "Congratulations". What was interesting at the SAMRO competition was that it was a jazz category, and the ability to read music is vital for both works. Many of the other finalists were great jazz pianists, but not good readers, which was to their disadvantage. Some of them only performed the first page of African Funk for Felix with a metronome mark of 130 at 60, because they were still trying to figure out the notes as they only had one day. Reddy brought quite a few important aspects to the competition, as the ability to read, count and improvise was very important from the beginning.

Can you remember anything interesting regarding the performances of the other candidates, maybe something that they interpreted differently than you?

I think my approach to the works was very clinical as I focussed most of my attention on correct reading in order to play an accurate version of the works. Because of the change in time signatures and the jazzy/funky pop African rhythms I wanted to make it sound as comfortable and secure as possible in the short timeframe given. The other contestants (I think I heard two) made incredible mistakes, where again it was obvious that they did not have the ability to quickly grasp this music and correctly read and play it.

Is that something you find with jazz musicians or students in general?

Yes, I think that most musicians' improvisational skills are much more developed than their reading skills. Interestingly, this is often the result of having a classical background as one's approach to the actual score is much more detailed than with jazz standards or in a composition where one improvises. With the latter, the main focus is to depart from the score to infuse your own personal identity with the original score. Reddy's works

already had a strong identity, like in all of his music, and I think to a certain extent it was quite an unfair choice for a jazz competition although it was surely difficult enough. The skills needed to play these works fell slightly more into the classical category of skills than required when playing jazz. Some contestants complained– saying that the works were unfair as it was a jazz competition and not a classical competition.

Did you perform this solo or with a band?

Ballad for Thomas was played solo on the piano in the earlier round, while African Funk for Felix was played with bass and drums. There were no charts for the bassist and the drummer, only the piano score, which meant that for many of the bars there were no chord symbols. This perhaps shows that the work might have been intended more for solo piano than for trio. However, for me it was more difficult to get it together with a trio than to play it on my own.

Did the competition have an influence on the way you learned the work? Did you use a different approach compared to the approach you would normally use to learn a work?

Yes, I think that the focus was more on mastering the score than getting stuck in improvisation, so the rest of the program for the competition I obviously worked with a lot of focus on making my own arrangements. My improvisations were much more extensive and with the Reddy works it was more like a classical quick study. It was almost a cross between sight-reading and a quick study so it definitely was different. Some of the other contestants had an extremely free approach to some of the works. I remember thinking of it as wrong, but in a certain sense, within the category of jazz, I suppose it was passable. However, when one departs from the score it becomes dangerous territory and maybe that is why they did not win.

If you had to learn these works now from scratch, how would you approach it?

I think spending more time on each work would make a big difference.

Would you spend more time practicing technical runs, rhythm grooves or improvisation? Which aspect would be the most time consuming?

I think that when one has too little time, your consideration goes to making quick decisions, for example should it be swung or should it be straight, whatever Reddy wrote. For the competition I assumed it was straight and I stuck with it, whereas if I had more time, I would consider trying both to see which I like more. The idea of being right or wrong in a concert situation is very different than participating in a competition. I

would be freer, but generally my focus when learning a standard or when learning a new classical work is to follow what stands on the page. If I can play what is on the page, then I can depart from it anytime, but I cannot guess and do my own estimation of what I think is on the score without having certainty.

Have you ever played any other works by Surendran Reddy?

Nothing at all and funny enough, in my entire life, I have maybe heard Toccata for Madiba, but I have never experienced any of his works live.

Are there other works or composers that *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* reminds you of?

While I was searching for these scores now I also came across the works for the 2001 SAMRO competition. I participated twice and came second twice. The first time I participated (in 2001) the works were written by a composer from Cape Town named Darryl Andrews, which were much easier and more straightforward jazz lead sheet kind of songs. When I played the Reddy works I had never come across anything like it before playing it. Now, for me it falls into the category of crossover music. Somebody like Dave Brubeck might be an example, because of the similarity of the time signature changes, and the form of the composition being more extended than just a normal 32 bar. Maybe Claude Bolling as well.

Many of Brubeck's works are also written out with a lead sheet for the improvisation section. Perhaps Reddy sometimes forgot that he was one of the few people that played both classical and jazz music when he wrote the works for the competition?

Yes, I think that he, rightly so, wrote what he felt was good for him artistically. I also have experience with another jazz pianist, Paul Hanmer, whom I commissioned to write easy jazz examinations for the UNISA syllabus, and it seems to me that these composers generally find it very difficult to detach from their preconceived ideas. Hanmer, for example, handed me beautiful handwritten copies in pencil, because he has never used a software tool. I think with Reddy it was the same – they are in a groove of writing music and from that point of departure it is what you get. For me this signals having a strong identity that is preferable because if you overthink what would be good for a composition, some of one's own voice could get lost.

What was the reaction of the audience to the performance of *African Funk for Felix*?

They liked it a lot! I think South African compositions in general were welcomed very enthusiastically, because the audience realised that there was a time limit to learn these works. I did not play the works memorised. I know that in some competitions some candidates have the ability to memorise a work in one day, but because of the nature and strangeness of the composition I did not memorise it.

What did you struggle with the most while learning these works?

Two things: rhythm and tempo. There were some rhythmic changes coinciding with pianistic difficulties at that moment, which could have been, jumps, rapid succession of chords or individuality of hands. I practised with a metronome and some of the tempo indications were a bit faster than what I felt comfortable with so I definitely adjusted the tempo slightly to suit my own abilities.

This is the second interview where the metronome marking was not taken as given; did you find the metronome marking to be plausible?

*Definitely. I think any metronome marking is “possible”, but whether it is to my taste or suits my interpretation of the work, that is where I reserve the right for myself to adjust the tempo. I do not think it is possible to make something marked as *allegro adagio*, but I think for some composers, and especially for Reddy who would have had a great pianistic technique; it is possible to play something incredibly fast. However, sometimes that would border on sounding too cartoonish and that is where I would adjust the tempo.*

Did you have any access to recordings of this work?

No. In the 24 hours that I had to learn this work I did not even think of searching for a recording. In 2005 YouTube was nothing like it is today, and it was definitely not fashionable to go online and look for something, so it did not even occur to me. I sat down at the piano and learned the notes.

Regarding clazz, Reddy’s compositional style, did the 10 principles of clazz have any influence on your interpretation of these works? Did you know about the 10 principles of clazz?

No, the only information I had about these works was the notes by the composer at the beginning of each work. Even though I read about clazz in the notes, it provided no instruction on how I should play it on the piano. It is the same as Janacek calling his works marshmallow that would mean nothing to me because I still had to learn the

notes. I understood it was a mixture of classical music and jazz, but the 10 principles were completely unknown to me.

Reddy writes many commentaries regarding what should happen in the works. Did you find all the markings helpful?

Yes. When you learn a new work by a composer you have never played, the more instructions, you have the better. The instructions were helpful in getting an overall musical view of the work. He did not give absurd or nonsensical instructions, rather he provided good suggestions.

In both the improvisation sections of *African Funk for Felix* and *Ballad for Thomas* Reddy writes out the accompaniment for the left-hand line as well as the chord voicings he prefers the performer to use. Did you find this made the improvisation easier or more difficult, because you are more limited in what you can do?

To me it was much more difficult because if you had time to internalise the left-hand pattern, which is not easy or logical all the time, it would have been incredible to improvise over. I do not have a recording, but I think the improvisation would have been very streamlined because of the left hand.

I want to talk about the stylistic features in these works. For instance, for me, when I looked through the works, I found many traditional African music, funk and jazz. I had problems placing the exact style of *Ballad for Thomas*; I found it to be a mixture of gospel, funk, soul and several other genres. Could you please take me through the works and give me your impression of the stylistic elements in these works?

*My initial sound world for *Ballad for Thomas* was definitely a 80s style, which made me think of the piano style of Dave Grusin or *Shack Attack*. I did not want to put a name to what I was learning or what I played, but I had an inner understanding of what Reddy meant. For example in *Ballad for Thomas* I knew that I had to play the notes as rhythmically accurate as possible, and that is the interesting thing about Reddy: I think his ability to write down exactly what he wants to be played is so clear-cut and accurate that it is not necessary for you to reimagine the score in terms of rhythm or feel – he is not a lazy writer. I knew it was a ballad, although it is quite rhythmic, so I did not have this preconceived idea of wanting to know what I am playing before I learned or played it.*

Do you find his method of writing very classical?

For me a score where parts in both hands are completely written out usually falls into the category of extremely classical writing. In my experience of learning jazz transcriptions, a written-out left hand usually is from a classical point of view. The thing that most differentiates his works from other jazz works that I have played in my life, is the unconventional time signature use. It is not the normal scenario where you would have a 4/4 work with one 6/4 bar in the middle or something strange, it was too intricate to be straightforward jazz.

African Funk for Felix is definitely characterised by funk influences, but in your opinion what gives the African feel in the first page?

I think the pattern in the left hand has an obvious African feel to it because of the repetitiveness, and modal sounding landscape. I also think the combination with funk manifests in the actual rhythm and use of offbeats. The African jazz section in African Funk for Felix is much more evident when the mbaqanga starts, which for me created an incredible contrast between the two sections so there is not a monochromatic sound throughout.

How did you go about playing a work that combines jazz, Western art music and African music? How did you, as a performer, interpret all the different styles? Did you use a specific method?

The score as the main source of information is always my point of departure. I do not think that the ability to know what you are playing changes one's entire perception if I am learning a work and I do not know it is baroque but thought it is classical or modern, then things like articulation and ornaments will be performed differently, but in these works I took the score as the ultimate source of having all the information especially regarding the instructions for some of the sections, for example the solo section in African Funk for Felix where it prescribed how the left hand must be used: use voicings, rather than sustain some kind of bassline.

Do you have any advice in case someone struggles with the rhythm of the work – how do you go about to play the groove stylistically correct (in your subjective opinion) and how do you work through rhythmic issues?

When studying any type of music on your own, the only way of checking if you are counting correctly is to use a metronome. The metronome gives a steady beat or stable reference point for rhythm. In most instances what I experience with students, and myself is that the beat changes somewhere, without the performer realising it, and then suddenly he or she is counting in double time or increasing the tempo.

How do you know where to place the accents?

When learning these works for the competition I tried to experiment quickly with placing accents at various places and then I just trusted my intuition. However, time for research would have made a big difference.

Please summarise the challenges that you faced regarding the sound world and improvisation when learning *African Funk for Felix*.

To me the challenges involved making the contrasting sections sound very different from each other, because the mood in these sections changes so bluntly and therefore the quick changes of mind were a challenge as I had to practise to make the changes flow seamlessly into one another (maybe with a beat or two rest).

This is a very personal observation, but when I am not sure what the sound world of a work should be, I always ask myself what if this was a fantasy. Fantasy is such an open concept, which could include any mood, and in the improvisation section I was definitely inclined to think more fantastical than funky or rhythmic.

Do you have any specific ways to resolve technical difficulties, for example in bar 42 and bar 52?

Slowing these sections down would be the first thing that I do, as well as practising with a metronome. Especially where there are seven, eight or nine notes grouped together, I will try to not look in bar 52 what he wants in each of the groups, but rather how the entire bar is interpreted so that I am correct by the time I play the next bar, which starts with an anticipation in the previous bar. Zooming out to see where the rhythmic placements of the beats should happen, even in the Beethoven 3rd piano concerto I currently learning, is important because you as the pianist must orientate yourself as what you see on the page already looks difficult and squashing all the notes into his prescribed tempo sometimes feels very uncomfortable. I see, for example, I have some brackets at bar 30. I always try to see a certain pattern or scale or mode, because it makes much more sense to be able to grasp what I am busy with in terms of the notes than just learn it as an abstract chord or abstract scale.

Do you analyse some of the harmonies in a jazz sense?

Yes, especially when the image on the page and some of the notes are written in a very intellectual way and the spelling of the notes would be double flats or sharps. If it is just a B-major chord, I sometimes tend to write on top B major because to me the actual

execution of the work involves playing the correct notes and the spelling of those notes is irrelevant.

The bass pattern in this work is very melodic and there are many bass runs written for the left hand. Normally if you play with a band you only comp and play chords. Did these patterns get in the way of the bassist? Did you double up on notes? Or how do you play this work with a bassist because it is so bass heavy?

It is so long ago that I have no recollection of what the bass player played.

What would you recommend if you had to arrange this for a band?

I think an electric bass would work to double some of the notes in the pianist's left hand. The more difficult consideration for me in this work would be to determine what the drummer plays in the funky section before the mbaqanga section, with all the time-signature changes. The repetitiveness of a groove is almost absent at some sections, especially from the second page. I found it challenging to play with a drummer because of the absence of any form of rubato when playing with a drummer. A classical pianist would implement rubato with this difficult pianistic writing, for example in bars 27–29 (the jumps in the left hand), the drummer would be accurate rhythm-wise which would force me to jump faster than I would want to. I would prefer to elongate the bar slightly for a more correct note-perfect performance.

I saw in the score that the coda dropout sign is missing. Can you possibly remember where it should be?

I think it was added in later, but I cannot remember where it should be added.

If you were to teach *African Funk for Felix* or *Ballad for Thomas*, especially the improvisation sections, how would you go about devising methods for students to help them improvise?

In African Funk for Felix being able to create two contrasting concepts, and then differentiating the mood of each section would be important. The mood of the second section is, for example, more lyrical and flowing, while playing more bebop licks or runs in the first section would be more appropriate and will also show versatility. I think many pianists have a default way of improvising, which, for various songs in one program, could sound very much alike especially when they have the same set of licks that they use. It is therefore important to create one's own identity. Because this work has such a strong classical influence or component, a classical student could learn it, but I would encourage them to improvise in real time, because sometimes it is possible to hear

when it is a previously worked out improvisation. I usually try to find characteristics and skills that the student already has and further develop those, because it means working with a core ingredient that will always be there rather than planting a seed right from the beginning. The latter takes away any spontaneous or original thoughts that the student already has.

If you were to encourage a student to show their own identity in the improvisation, what would you teach them?

Being able to depart from the left hand which Reddy has written would be a possibility, because the framework also limits the pianist. It is, however, important to consider why Reddy wrote out the left hand. There is a very fine line between respect for what Reddy wrote and showcasing personal identity. Improvisers sometimes like a blank canvas rather than painting by numbers. The left hand dictates the actual texture on the piano and I think that being able to think out of the box and maybe changing the texture of the left hand on the repeat of the solo is something that could make a very big impact. The same goes for the register as jazz pianists do not very often change the register of the left hand. Moving everything up or down on the piano could also be very interesting.

Please elaborate on possible difficulties when improvising on the mbaqanga section?

My reason for not improvising on that section for the competition is the difficulty in sustaining the actual rhythm and groove while improvising over it. If you go off on a tangent with the improvisation, you need a lot of independence between the hands. The left hand has to keep the groove going while your right hand improvises which is very difficult and quite risky. The biggest risk you can run is losing the groove and then it feels like the entire section has lost its pulse.

In *Ballad for Thomas*, what difficulties did you find when improvising?

I found the unconventional chords difficult and the harmonic rhythm quite fast. The difficulty with songs with these fast chord changes is that if a pianist keeps going back to playing the original notes or head it shows a lack of improvisation which forces one to depart. To keep the groove going is also a challenge as well as to not play the groove in a very literate way, but to play a more open rhythmic scenario while still making the correct harmonic changes at the right time. An advanced level of playing and the avoidance of a single philosophy is the key to avoid monotony.

I think that the value of research in this field lies in appreciating the individualistic and distinctive contribution Reddy made in his compositions. Even though they are not

performed regularly it might have suitable doctoral obscurity as I still find both these works highly effective in a concert scenario.

Interview B – Ben Schoeman

There are various reasons for choosing Ben Schoeman as a participant for this research project. He performed *Toccata for John Roos* at the 11th Vodacom UNISA International Piano Competition in 2008, which he was the overall winner of, and he also performed the work at the Cleveland International Piano Competition in the USA in 2013. There are recordings available of both performances. No other participants were available or willing to contribute to this research study. Apart from Charl du Plessis, there are no other pianists in South Africa who have performed one or more of the three works.

Here follows a transcription of the interview conducted by the researcher with Ben Schoeman (who edited his answers slightly afterwards) on 10 October 2019, 13:30 at the University of Pretoria.

Questions:

Could you please give me some background regarding when and why you decided to learn the *Toccata for John Roos* by Surendran Reddy? Every UNISA International Piano Competition commissions two prescribed works by South African composers for the first round of which the candidate has to choose one. As a participant in the 11th Vodacom UNISA International Piano Competition in 2008, my options were works by Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph and Surendran Reddy, and the *Toccata for John Roos* by Reddy grasped my attention immediately because it looked more virtuosic. I thought this would increase my chances in the competition. I was extremely daunted as I realised very quickly that I had chosen the more difficult and longer work. I also did not know whether I would be able to memorise the work in time for the competition. Furthermore, I knew Surendran to some extent because I participated in the SAMRO Overseas Scholarship Competition in 2005 and his works were prescribed for the organ and jazz categories. As a young student at the age of 14, I also attended the 1998 International Organ Competition at UNISA and I thought his work *Toccata for Madiba*, which was prescribed for that event, a marvellous composition, mainly because for me his music is extremely entertaining, in the sense that it is full of humour. I think the humour and the true South African nature of the compositions radiated from these listening experiences, especially because he uses African jazz influenced music that we all know from our childhoods as we heard it live or on radio or television. I thought it was amazing that a classical composer could incorporate such components into his music,

and I was very happily surprised when I found out that one of his works was the prescribed work for the 11th Vodacom UNISA International Piano Competition.

What did you know of Reddy when you started learning this work and how did you find out more about him to give you insight into his work?

There wasn't really much time to gather information about him because we had only two months to learn the prescribed work, and I only started learning it three weeks before the competition. I was working around the clock and it was very difficult, but I did read up on some of the concepts within the work. I discussed some of the concepts with my friends and my very good friend Maria Tretyakova (a wonderful pianist from Moscow, who had also studied jazz at Conservatoire level) talked to me about jazz and influenced my approach to the work. She said that I played the work too softly and too classically. She felt that with jazz, the concept of percussive angularity is more important than playing in a refined way. This opened my eyes to a completely different style of music and I knew that I had to know more about the various aspects of the work. For example: the beginning of the work is not written with accents, but it is self-explanatory that the groups of notes must be played with accents to bring across the rhythm. This opened my mind to jazz. The other aspect I researched was the meaning of mbaqanga. I did not research Reddy and did not know much about his personality. I did, however, read his CV and was fascinated by him. He also was on the jury of the 11th Vodacom UNISA Piano Competition so I was not allowed to talk to him prior to the event. Sadly, he became ill and had to withdraw from the jury after the second round, but he was still there while I played the toccata in the first round.

Did he give you any feedback after the performance?

Not really, but I think he was happy because afterwards he wrote that if I wanted, he could give me more scores. I wish I had the chance to talk more with him, but sadly he became very ill and passed away not long after the competition.

What was the angle, approach, process or method that you followed to learn the work?

First of all I tried to identify various constructs that looked familiar to me, for example a scale, and devise fingerings for it. One of them would for example be a simple arpeggio in bar 31, or I would sit down and work out fingerings for passages. I also identified places where he used articulation, which meant that I could retake and would not have to use conventional fingerings. There is no phrasing on the score, which helped me because I did not have to worry about that. I mostly subdivided the work into sections

tried to get around the mechanical aspect by almost kinaesthetically memorising gestures and playing it repeatedly. Sometimes I repeated just a few bars until it felt comfortable. I worked page by page and I did not move on from a page until I really knew it. I used a lot of repetition because I wanted to achieve technical brilliance, the sort of dance-like qualities in the music.

Regarding jazz concepts within the scores, for example walking bass, did you listen to recordings of walking bass or how did you go about playing in the style of walking bass?

I actually read about walking bass and listened to YouTube recordings to understand how it should sound. Sadly I did not know about Reddy's jazz band Channel 18, otherwise I would have researched them. I, however, used this information in my preparation for later performances.

What are the biggest technical challenges you found in this work and how did you overcome them?

For me page one is almost impossible – especially the second line. I wish he would rewrite that. There are such difficult leaps in the left hand, and I had a slight memory lapse there during the UNISA Competition.

How did you handle that?

I just continued and skipped a couple of bars. I also found the combination of rhythms in that section to be very difficult.

I felt bars 38 and 39 were extremely challenging. I found all the leaps in the work difficult, for example bar 46. I tried to make a mental note regarding the accents, and I knew there were three of them, so I used that to help me mentally. I also realised that in bar 53 one should play unrestrainedly and enthusiastically without worrying too much about the technique that then just came naturally. That was a characteristic solution.

Bar 66 is very difficult, just because of the sheer speed with which it should be played, but I the scale on which is based was familiar to me. It is a fantastic work because one learns new techniques. One has to get across a large section of the keyboard in a very short time and be very agile. Once one masters earlier parts of the work, the really difficult parts follow. I remember that by page 23 I almost felt despondent during rehearsals, and also from bar 111 onwards felt very difficult.

How would you play those fifths in your left hand? Do you divide them into two groups?

I use the thumb at a sideward angle. I play with very flat fingers and a plunging motion in my wrist and forearms to avoid tension and to improve agility.

Did you practise with a metronome?

I did practise some parts with a metronome, but I immediately lost interest when I saw that Reddy wrote 63,333, etcetera and decided to disregard the metronome markings.

In another very difficult part, bar 116–119 I use the right hand as the leading hand. Of course one wants to have independence between the hands because they do not have the same rhythm in terms of his beaming, but I just understood that they are all semiquavers. The interval construct of the left hand by necessity means that it is going to be a different rhythm, but I just understood that the left hand follows the right hand. This also happens on the second last page of the work in bar 157. So, it is a C major scale and I treated it almost as a glissando. In some places there is no allargando written, but I do it because that is where I intuitively feel the music guides me.

One of the most difficult parts is the section with fifths in the left hand. It helps to use quite a firm approach in the right hand in order for the left-hand groupings to respond to each right-hand grouping. I found the passage on the second last page difficult, but I divided it into groups and used the same unconventional fingering every time. I practised it very mechanically because I had a deadline. The fast octaves were also very difficult and the use of wrist action and a flexible wrist helped. Using finger staccato and practising with the thumbs also helped.

Reddy uses a little x in the score, for example on page 27. Could you explain this?

That refers to an improvisational quality where one can play any note, which can be different every time one plays the work. The program notes state that it is a “ghost note”. I saw it as a passing note, which can be anything that fulfils that role.

Have you ever played any other works of Surendran Reddy?

Sadly not.

What was the audience’s reaction to the performance of this work?

I will never forget how at the UNISA competition people literally screamed. It was a moment that gave me tremendous inspiration and it took away the feeling that it was a competition because it felt more like a concert. That is the great thing about jazz: it transcends boundaries because it is not as rigid like a classical competition can be.

Could you please indicate the parts in the work you consider being particularly jazz-like?

The beginning of the work was quite jazzy for me and I played it as such. For example in bar 22 he wrote “jazzy and with humour” and he wrote the notes equal but I do not play them equally thus following my improvisatory understanding of jazz. I also did not play the character of the bass line technically as it was written, but it is also impossible to notate jazz exactly in that way so I interpret it.

How do you make something sound like *mbaqanga*?

You cannot play it classically. You have to be a bit looser (play with rubato) and make it dance in an unrestrained manner.

In jazz, personal identity is very important. Do you think there is space in this work for personal identity?

Definitely. I think it is a necessity. Some passages cannot physically be played exactly as they are written; one should use one’s imagination. I had to personalise a lot of things. I just do what the music asks of me. Reddy’s many markings and articulation indications leave a lot of clues, which makes it easier to hone one’s own interpretation, because one can just draw from what he wrote in the score. For example, “ticklish” - that for me means to start a bit slower. The first time I played it normally, but the second time I played with a different character. I used his markings as an inspiration to create a character that is even more dance-like, but still expressive by using the accents. He also used various articulation symbols and I interpreted some accents to be more aggressive than others, for example the tenuto sign signifying a softer touch. For me the combination of two articulation symbols requires more time, especially if it is an important chord, so I put a little bit of a fermata on those accents.

Please explain your approach to the use of pedals in this work.

I think there are a few passages in the work where the pedal can be used to create a certain atmosphere. I thought it was quite clear in the section on page 23 to create a more fantastical atmosphere, a slightly impressionistic feel. I find it slightly more melancholic. I use the pedal as an expressive tool as well as a colouristic tool. I change it with the harmonies, but I do keep it a bit longer. On the other hand, there are definitely faster passages where I would only use the damper (right) pedal on the accents, for the purpose of extraction of the sound and more overtones.

What is your sound world when you play this work?

My sound world is very South African. It presents a very chaotic city, possibly Johannesburg or Durban. Being on the street, with a very visual cultural feeling to it. Not very clean, some person selling maize, someone making background music, another person begging or just lots of different personalities and hooting of taxis, lots of sound and craziness. There is a wonderful composition called Amériques by Edgard Varese, which sounds like New York City and Reddy would have known the composer's music. He used the same principles to create a work with the bustling sounds of a cosmopolitan city, like those other composers would have done, but he implements it in a South African way by using music popular in the townships, jazzy qualities and percussive qualities. In my experience, jazz musicians play with a very direct action.

Reddy's music reminds me of the music of French composers, for example Poulenc, as well as the music of Prokofiev. I wanted to bring justice to the title of the work, but I find this work to be more a rhapsodic toccata because there are various, almost schizophrenic, mood changes. I spoke to a colleague who told me that Reddy used to change his mood very rapidly. He used to live in his own world and he was a bit of an outsider. These characteristics can be seen across his music.

What is your personal relationship with improvisation?

My mother is a church organist and I understood that improvisation is an important part of the trade, because she needs to improvise introductions and postludes for hymns, or improvise music during the sermon. For this purpose I learned to play the organ because I wanted to become an improviser, but sadly I do not have enough time for it anymore. I have improvised during my career and would make things up in the style of a composer at home, or I would emulate something that I enjoyed, such as a ballet I have seen.

How would you approach the improvisation in *African Funk for Felix* as a Western art music performer?

*I would possibly consider a Latin American style and would use various interesting scales or modes or an exotic scale. I would probably work out an improvisation, because I like to work things out and would probably be too scared to improvise during a concert. Although on second thought in *African Funk for Felix* I might actually improvise on stage, because the repetition would bore me. If I were to teach a student about improvisation, I would refer them to Chopin, Scriabin and Satie or supplementary material to introduce them to almost improvisatory piano music that would give them ideas for their own improvisation or even their overall pianistic development.*

APPENDIX B: AFRICAN FUNK FOR FELIX

SAMRO ARCHIVE OF SOUTH AFRICAN MUSIC



AFRICAN FUNK FOR FELIX
FOR PIANO

SURENDRAN REDDY

COMMISSIONED BY THE SAMRO FOUNDATION 2005 AS A PRESCRIBED
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KEYBOARD PLAYERS 2005

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FULL SCORE

SAMRO ARCHIVE OF SOUTH AFRICAN MUSIC

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Notes by the Composer

Felix, the dedicatee of the piece, is a student of mine. At the time, we were looking at modality and uneven time-signatures, which became the stimuli for composition of this piece.

A quantised sense of rhythm is essential to the interpretation of this sort of music, which I call "clazz" - a seamless fusion of jazz, classical, traditional african and many other styles of world music. If we can achieve harmony between such diverse musical styles, should it be so difficult as people to do the same in terms of our common humanity?

1. The semi-quaver pulse remains constant whenever the time-signature changes.
2. Although I have not made provision for this in the score, you may improvise over the *mbaqanga* section if you wish and if this is permissible within the time-limit.
3. In the improvisation which begins in bar 82, the left hand comprises possible voicings for the comping chords, but not their rhythm. This can, of course, be improvised. The semibreve note-values should have no bearing on the rhythmic realisation of your left-hand accompaniment - they are there merely to show the harmonic content of the comping chords. I prefer such five- and six-voice inversions to the typical three-voice chords of bebop and other pianistic styles within the context of jazz. With such dense harmonies, it is sometimes necessary to share two keys on the piano with the thumb. When this improvisation begins, the bass player should continue with the funky pattern or some equivalent, as this is no longer possible in the piano part.

The number of repetitions of this section should be determined by the time-limit. The same applies to the ensuing ballad section.
4. I very much favour the type of harmonically rich bass-line with the left hand as occurs at bars 98 and following bars. One should then improvise freely and expressively over this accompanimental pattern with the right hand. If this is too foreign to the jazz improviser accustomed to playing comping chords in the left hand, this could be done here, so long as the bass then plays some surrogate pattern for the one I have notated here; however, I prefer the piano left-hand as I have notated it.
5. Note that at bar 118, this should be exactly half the speed of the parallel passage at bar 27. We switch back into the original feel and tempo in bar 126. If the semi-quaver pulse remains constant, as mentioned earlier, all these various tempo-relationships should work out!

African Funk for Felix

Surendran Reddy

Funky feel

$\text{♩} = 130$

Piano

4

7

10

13

16

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2

19

Musical notation for measures 19-20. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Measure 19 features a complex texture with many beamed notes in the treble and a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass. Measure 20 continues this texture with some changes in the treble part.

21

Musical notation for measures 21-22. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has two flats. Measure 21 shows a more rhythmic treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 22 continues with similar rhythmic patterns.

24

Musical notation for measures 24-25. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has two flats. Measure 24 features a treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 25 continues with similar rhythmic patterns.

27

Musical notation for measures 27-31. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has two flats. Measure 27 features a treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 28 has a treble part with a long note and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 29 has a treble part with a long note and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 30 has a treble part with a long note and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 31 has a treble part with a long note and a bass line with eighth notes.

32

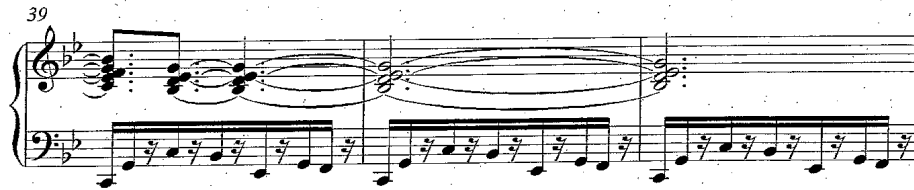
Musical notation for measures 32-35. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has two flats. Measure 32 features a treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 33 has a treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 34 has a treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 35 has a treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes.

36

Musical notation for measures 36-38. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has two flats. Measure 36 features a treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 37 has a treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes. Measure 38 has a treble part with eighth-note chords and a bass line with eighth notes.

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39



42 **mbaqanga**



46



49



52



54



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4

56

59

61

63

66

69

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72



75



78



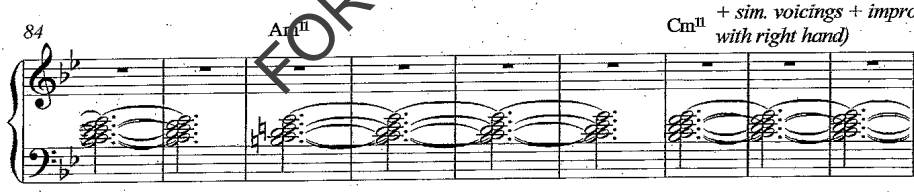
80



Cm¹¹
(impro)

(bass to continue pattern -
piano to comp using these
+ sim. voicings + improvise
with right hand)

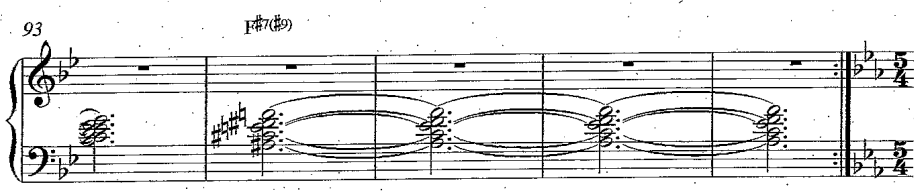
84



Am¹¹

Cm¹¹

93



F#7(b9)

6 **Ballad feel**

98 Fm^{11} (impro) E^b13sus

molto espressivo

101 E^bma^9

con molto pedale

104 $C^7(\#9)$ Fm^{11}

107 E^b13sus

110 Gm^{11} C^13sus

113 $C^13(\#11)$ A^bma^9

The musical score consists of six systems of piano accompaniment. Each system is in 5/4 time and features a bass line with a steady eighth-note pattern. The chords are: Fm^{11} (impro) and E^b13sus (measures 98-100); E^bma^9 (measures 101-103); $C^7(\#9)$ and Fm^{11} (measures 104-106); E^b13sus (measures 107-109); Gm^{11} and C^13sus (measures 110-112); and $C^13(\#11)$ and A^bma^9 (measures 113-115). Performance instructions include *molto espressivo* and *con molto pedale*.

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116 B aug⁷

120

124 (as in the beginning)

127

130

133 *triss.*

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8

Musical score for piano, measures 136-148. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a complex, rhythmic melody in the right hand and a steady accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into six systems, each with a measure number (136, 139, 142, 144, 146, 148) at the beginning of the first staff. A large watermark reading "FOR RESEARCH ONLY!!" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

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150

(drum fill)

153

155

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APPENDIX C: *BALLAD FOR THOMAS*

Doc 452.

SAMRO
MUSIC ARCHIVE

**BALLAD
FOR THOMAS
SURENDRAN REDDY**

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Notes by the Composer

1. I have given pedal indications only in some instances where an essential harmony cannot be sustained by the fingers alone. Where not indicated, the performer should use pedal at his discretion and in accordance with the style of a ballad.
2. It is important that the syncopated harmonic rhythm in bars 31 and the following bars be preserved in the improvisation.
3. In bar 12, note that the slur runs from the b-natural in the right hand and not from the b-flat which is part of the melodic line.
4. The dynamics are merely a suggestion.
5. Play once because of the time-limit, and then improvise over the harmonies from the sign. The theme from sign (or the "head", as it is usually referred to in jazz) should be re-capitulated after the improvisations.
6. The introduction (i.e. everything before the sign) could be played either solo by the piano or accompanied by the rhythm section. If the former, then a short fill from bass and drums before the beginning of the theme would be appropriate.
7. I have notated the piece using a basic quaver pulse, although, strictly speaking, in accordance with the ballad feel, it could be written with the present note-values halved with a basic semi-quaver pulse and two of the present 4/4 bars constituting one 1/4 bar - in other words, half feel for the drummer. I have done this because, in this way, the *Notenbild* ["look of the notes"] is clearer and less complicated.

Ballad for Thomas

Surendran Reddy

Ballad feel
♩ = 132

Piano

f
con pedale
(appropriate to ballad feel
but please observe rests)

5

gliss.

8

p *cresc. with increasing excitement*

10

mp

12

cresc. *f* *gliss.* *mf* *cresc.*

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2

14

Pno

f

pff

17

Pno

p

pff

18

Pno

pff

mf

lyrical and expressive

20

Pno

mf

pff

D13(b9) *Gm9* *C13(b9)* *C9*

23

Pno

mf

pff

Cm7 *B7/D* *E7ma9* *F11* *G11* *G7(b9)*

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26 Cm7 Dm7 Eb F#11 Bb(add 9)

Pno

28 D13(b9) Gm11 B7(#9) B13(b9)

Pno

31 Ema9 Cma9 Abma9 A13(b) Dbma9 Gbma9

Pno

34 Bma9 F13sus Bb(add 9) D7(#9)

Pno

*pedal
simile*

36 D13(b9) Gm9 G7(#5) G7(#b9) G7(b9)

Pno

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4

39 Cm7 B \flat /D E \flat ma⁹ F \sharp 11

Pno

40 C \sharp m7 B/D \sharp Ema⁹ F \sharp 11

Pno

41 Cm7 B \flat /D E \flat ma⁹ F \sharp 11 G \sharp 11 G7(b9)

Pno

44 Cm7 Dm7 E \flat F \sharp 11 al Segno

Pno

46 A \flat ma⁹ F \sharp 13sus G7(\sharp 5 \flat 9) C7(\sharp 5 \flat 9) A \flat 13(\flat 9) F \sharp 13(\flat 9) Ema⁹

Pno

*arpeggiate ad lib
and improvise fill*

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APPENDIX D: TOCCATA FOR JOHN ROOS

for john,
in recognition of all you have done
for music in South Africa,
(+ the rest of the world, of course ...)

tanx :-)
and also in deep gratitude to
hike
+
reiner,
my parents

sergei, francis and aram ilyich.
AND my personal "Dr Beat"

florian schiertz,
+ his wonderful new family:
viriam + na-na-e,
thank u

(and also to all of rabbit's friends and relations)

toccata for john roos

allegro and very dancy

surendran reddy

♩ = 95

Piano

with increasing intensity

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||||||| 14

9

10

(in walking bass style)

12

14

17

cresc.

più f

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Musical score for measures 19-20. The piece is in 14/8 time. Measure 19 features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measure 20 contains three triplets of eighth notes in the right hand, each marked with a '3:5' ratio. The bass line continues with sustained notes.

estatico

Musical score for measures 21-22. The piece is in 10/8 time. Measure 21 starts with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. Measure 22 features a glissando (*gliss.*) in the right hand, indicated by a diagonal line with a wavy top. The bass line consists of chords and moving lines.

jazzy and with humour

Musical score for measures 22-24. The piece is in 7/16 time. Measure 22 is marked *semi legato* and *mf*. Measure 23 includes the instruction *(in walking bass style)*. Measure 24 features a *simile* marking. The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays a walking bass line.

Musical score for measures 25-26. The piece is in 12/16 time. Measure 25 is marked *allargando* and *cresc.*. Measure 26 is marked *a tempo* and *f*. The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays a bass line.

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molto deciso

27 *più f*

grazioso

30 *mp*

33 30/64 30/64

$\text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{)}$
 $\text{♩} = 71.25$

35 32/64 32/64 32/64

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17 |||

(tempo primo) $\text{♩} = 95$ *giocoso and mit grazie*

even more dancy und trotzdem espressivo

41

43

45 playful with a steigerung

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47 *still very dancy*
but with a suggestion of apology

49 *molto espressivo*

51 *a bit jazzy*

53 *estatico*
8^{va}

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54 *mp*

56 *building up gradually* *bring out the melody lyrically*

58 *with increasing excitement*

60

64

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69 *estatico*

r l r l

74

l r l r l
l r l r l

78 *playful and leggierrissimo*

pp
subito f

80 *ein bisschen kitschig*
(and specially for christine + michael) *un poco meno mosso*

pp
cresc.
f

82 *a tempo e deciso*

r l r l
l r l r l

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86 *brillante*

glissando (RH)

RH

LH

88 *like a Hanon exercise* *mit grazie but expansively*

mf

wie zuvor,,
(with the hands,
i mean)

91

più *mf*

96 *molto sostenuto ed espressivo* *(fast bescheiden)*

mf

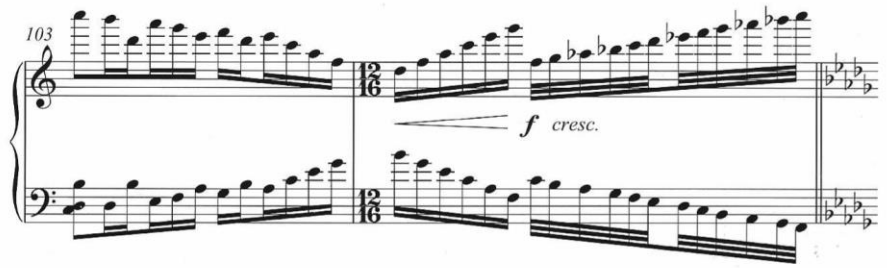
mp (mit extremer leichtigkeit)

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100 *cresc.* *mf*



103 *f cresc.*



105 *più f* *ancora più f* *ff*



108 *moltissimo deciso* *sfz*



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111

blühend *absteigend*

Handwritten fingering numbers: 4 5, 3 2 1, 5 5, 5 3, 2 1, 2 4, 5 3, 2 1, 3 2, 1 2 2, 1 2 1 2 4 4 2, 1 2, 1 2 3 5, 5, 2 1 2 1, 5 4 5 4, 4 5.

114

building up *... and more ...*

meno mf *mf*

116

8va *(... coming down again ...)*

f *cresc.*

118

(etwas durcheinander)

mp *cresc.*

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120 ... building up ...

mf *poco cresc.*

122 $\text{♩} = 79.166 \dots$ $\text{♩} = 63.333 \dots$

più mf *meno mf*

124 $\text{♩} = 79.166 \dots$ $\text{♩} = 63.333 \dots$ $\text{♩} = 95$

meno f *mp*

127 (*etwas triste*) $\text{♩} = 63.333 \dots$

mf

130 $\text{♩} = 95$
building up again

mf

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("mbaqanga")

(... tentative,
but getting more joyous ...)

132

f

(wie weggeworfen)

135

x

138

8va

x

140

poco rit ...

... ein bisschen furioso ...

gliss.

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(playful)

142

mf

144

cresc.

146

più f

149

ff

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151 *triumphant* *(dancy)*

f *subito mp* *cresc.*

154 *more excitement* *estatico*

meno ff

with increasing excitement!

156

5 5 5 6

157

ff

159

22/16 16/16 16/16

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160

mf *cresc.* *f*

8^{va}

Musical score for measures 160-161. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand starts with a melody of eighth notes, marked *mf* and *cresc.*, reaching *f* by the end of the system. The left hand plays a bass line with eighth notes, marked with fingerings 1 and 1. An 8^{va} marking is present above the right hand.

161

mf *cresc.* *f*

Musical score for measures 161-162. The right hand continues the melody, marked *mf* and *cresc.*, reaching *f*. The left hand continues the bass line with eighth notes.

162

più mf *più f*

Musical score for measures 162-163. The right hand melody is marked *più mf* and *più f*. The left hand continues the bass line. Measure 163 ends with a double bar line.

163

meno f *molto cresc.* *fff*

1 3 5 1 3 5

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konstanz,
28.4.2007

Musical score for measures 163-164. The right hand melody is marked *meno f* and *molto cresc.*, reaching *fff*. The left hand continues the bass line with fingerings 1, 3, 5, 1, 3, 5. Measure 164 ends with a double bar line. The score includes the copyright notice © Gurendran Reddy 2007 and the date/location konstanz, 28.4.2007.