

*The life and career of South African pianist and teacher Lionel
Bowman (1919-2006)*

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Let your true light shine, always.

Bernard Shaw, Love Oupa Lionel

How do I begin to thank you, for this inspiring note that you gave me on 7 July 2006, and for everything you have done for me? You taught me about music, playing piano and above all, you taught me about life. You have given me a great gift for which I shall always be eternally grateful. My comfort is that your words are forever echoing in my head. This is clear to me: that your spirit is always here with me and that there's one more angel that I know by name. This dissertation serves as a tribute to your memory. It is about you and dedicated to you.

Thank you, Oupa Lionel.

John

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ABSTRACT

This study proposes a detailed historic account of the life and career of Lionel Bowman as a concert pianist and teacher. The role and relevance of criticism in music have also been included and documented with specific reference to Bowman's playing. In order to do this, a survey of the available relevant literature such as Bowman's journal and notebook, published articles, newspaper articles and reviews on the subject were comprehensively examined. Available recorded materials such as compact discs with Bowman's live performances have been incorporated in the study.

Apart from a detailed biographical account of Bowman's life and career, as an orientation to the historic account, attention is given to how Bowman's teaching style initiated and its development into a unique and personal method which resulted in the publication of *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing* by Wallace Tate (2000). The success of this method supported by commentary from several pianists, who experienced Bowman's method first hand, has been incorporated in the study.

Light is also shed on Bowman's human side including the past and present situation of the arts in South Africa in order for artists in general to learn from it and facilitate new growth and vision of the future of the Arts and Cultural field. Bowman's final legacy and information about his death, including commentaries from people who knew him as a pianist, teacher and friend has also been documented.

The study ends with a concluding chapter summarising the whole study and sheds light on future possible studies on related topics.

OPSOMMING

Die studie stel 'n in-diepte historiese ondersoek van die lewe en werk van Lionel Bowman as konsertpianis en onderwyser voor. Die rol en relevansie van musiekkritiek, met spesifieke verwysing na Bowman se spel, word ook aangespreek. Relevante literatuur, soos Bowman se dagboek en persoonlike notas, gepubliseerde artikels, koerantberigte en resensies is deeglik ondersoek. Beskikbare laserskyfopnames van regstreekse uitvoerings is ook in die studie ingesluit.

Afgesien van die in-diepte biografiese verslag van Bowman se lewe en werk, wat as 'n riglyn tot die historiese ondersoek dien, word daar ook aandag geskenk aan sy onderrigtegniek. Dit het uiteindelik tot 'n unieke en persoonlike metode ontwikkel, soos vervat in *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing* deur Wallace Tate (2000). 'n Bespreking van die sukses van die metode, ondersteun deur kommentaar van verskeie pianiste met eerste-handse ervaring van Bowman se tegniek, vorm ook deel van die studie.

Daar word ook aandag gegee aan die persoonlike kant van Bowman se lewe, met spesifieke verwysing na die vroeëre en huidige stand van die kunste in Suid-Afrika. Dit het ten doel om kunstenaars in die algemeen van die situasie in die kuns- en kultuurarena bewus te maak, en derhalwe nuwe groei en toekomsvisie te bevorder. Bowman se nalatenskap en inligting oor sy dood, insluitend kommentaar van mense wat hom as pianis, onderwyser en vriend geken het, is ook gedokumenteer.

Die studie sluit af met 'n samevattende hoofstuk en voorstelle vir verdere moontlike studies oor verwante onderwerpe.

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KEYWORDS

- Lionel Bowman
- Piano
- Teacher
- *The Magic Touch*
- Criticism
- *Lionel Bowman-Beethoven Piano Competition*



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation

Sports and politics are the two factors that receive the most recognition in South Africa. Many of our so called ‘heroes’ have either been involved in politics or some sort of popular sport. It is saddening that even in this day and age, the field of Arts and Culture in South Africa is still suppressed.

Shortly after enrolling for a BMus degree at the University of Pretoria, the writer rapidly became aware of the amount of knowledge he still had to gain in the broad field of music. This resulted in his reading of many books available in the University of Pretoria’s music library on the great pianists of the world. The so-called “stories” behind any figure who has gained success in any field, whether it be Arts, Sciences or Sports, usually have elements of fascination and intrigue. Yet over the years, the writer became aware that there is little information written on South African pianists.

South African pianists such as Elsie Hall (1877-1976), Adolf Hallis (1896-1987), Lamar Crowson (1926-1998), Steven de Groote (1953-1989), Marc Raubenheimer (1952-1983) and Lionel Bowman (1919-2006) had successful international careers. Petronel Malan (b.1973) and Anton Nel (b.1961) are currently still active in the international piano scene. The writer was fortunate to have met Lionel Bowman and to have developed a personal and professional relationship with him.

When Bowman turned sixty, Hubert van der Spuy wrote an article in *Musicus* (1980:30-35) highlighting his life and achievements. For his eightieth birthday, Ella Fourie wrote a more anecdotal article in three parts which was a tribute to him. This was also published in *Musicus* (2000a:140-143; 2000b:47-52; 2001:103-110). The current mini-dissertation will be a more detailed historic account of Bowman’s life and career as a pianist and teacher.

In December 2005, the idea of writing a Master’s dissertation on Lionel Bowman originated. Bowman was indeed moved and excited by the idea and mentioned that such a task had not been done before. In 2006, much time was spent with Bowman,

in his apartment in Sea Point, Cape Town. During this time the writer had piano lessons, listened to Bowman reminiscing about his fruitful life, attended concerts with Bowman and watched many music videos with him. One of the music videos that Bowman enjoyed watching was *Great Pianists of the Twentieth Century* and his reason for this was: “You see, I was part of that world. But now it’s gone! That’s how life works”.

During the times spent with Bowman, his knowledge of piano playing, music, arts, literature and sports was highlighted. His teaching methods were simple and practical and because of this, the results achieved were immediate.

Lionel Bowman’s life and all his experiences sounded fascinating. A record of his life and achievements is essential because Bowman was one of South Africa’s first and foremost pianists and teachers whose reputation reached international levels. He lived a long and adventurous life and performed in many parts of the world (Fourie 2000a:140). He taught and coached pianists not just from South Africa but also from Australia, England and America (see Chapters 4 and 5).

As will be seen in this study, Bowman played an important role in the Arts and Cultural field in South Africa. It is the hope of the writer that, by providing an addition to the limited information available on South African pianists, other South African music students and performers may be stimulated to do the same, and to also take pride in what South African musicians contribute globally and thus conduct similar studies no matter what the instrument or the field of music it may be.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The primary objective of the study is to give an overview of Bowman’s life and career as a pianist and teacher. The study also aims to provide evidence that Bowman played a substantial role in the increasing awareness and recognition of the arts in South Africa. This study positions Bowman as an important figure concerning the field of Arts and Culture in South Africa. The writer considers this to be of great importance. Throughout his career, Bowman collected many newspaper articles and programmes regarding himself. The writer has access to all of these. The newspaper

articles will be examined and scrutinized in order to conduct an important part of this study.

The secondary objective of the study is to focus on the development of Bowman's teaching style and ideas which evolved into a unique and personal method. The motivation behind Bowman's method and its success with reference to several commentaries and accounts from pianists and friends who were present in his master-classes and experienced Bowman's method first hand, especially in Australia, will be brought to the fore. The study will also indicate how his method resulted in a book called *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing*, which was published in 2000. A review of the book by Wessel van Wyk (2001:132) stating how and why it represents an important addition to the "rather limited body of documents dealing with the intricacies of pianism" will be included and commented upon in this study.

1.3 Main research questions

Bowman was one of the "lucky musicians" (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5) who had the opportunity to exhibit their talents to many audiences in South Africa and abroad. The study aims to highlight the fact that Bowman was one of the South Africans who dedicated their lives to what they believed in and loved, thus showing to many that South Africa has more to offer than just "rugby and golf players" as Bowman once said (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2). In order to conduct this study, the following research questions will be answered:

- Who was Lionel Bowman?
- How did he become a successful concert pianist?
- How is criticism in music relevant, especially regarding performing artists?
- How did Bowman's teaching method emerge?
- What makes his teaching method different to the already existing methods?
- Can Lionel Bowman be considered an ambassador for South Africa with regards to the field of Arts and Culture especially concerning classical music?

1.4 Research methodology

The study will focus on:

- Literature study (including the newspaper articles Lionel Bowman kept throughout his life on himself)
- Recorded materials (compact discs, tapes and videos)
- Interviews (especially those conducted by Bowman over the years)

A thorough study of the available literature and newspaper articles and critiques on Bowman will be collected and scrutinized. The research methodology for this study will be similar to the ideas followed by Harold Schonberg's book titled *The Great Pianists* (1978), David Dubal's *The world of the concert pianist* (1985) and Joseph Horowitz's *Arrau on Music and Performance* (1982) which are clearly highlighted in Chapter 3.

A comprehensive search of the internet was done to ensure that no existing material on the subject was overseen. The search included the use of the "International University Library" research tool.

1.5 Delimitation of the study

The scope of this study will be confined specifically to an historic account of Lionel Bowman's life and career as a performing pianist and teacher. The research will result in confirming that Bowman played a substantial role in the awareness of the arts, especially classical music in South Africa.

1.6 Discussion of contents

The present chapter, Chapter 1, serves as an introduction to the entire study. Its purpose is to outline and provide information on the overall structure of the study.

Chapter 2 focuses on Bowman's life from birth until his retirement. In this chapter, Bowman's whole career as concert pianist will be mapped out.

Because many of the sources used have been based on Bowman's newspaper criticisms and reviews, it is considered necessary to include a section containing the role and validity of music criticism in Chapter 3. The influence of music criticism will also be highlighted with specific reference to Harold Schonberg and George Bernard Shaw whom Bowman met (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5). Chapter 3 also includes an examination of Bowman's predominantly performed repertoire which leads to a thorough assessment of the available newspaper reviews on Bowman's piano playing with reference to specific works and composers.

Chapter 4 focuses on Bowman's teaching method and how it resulted in the publication of *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing*.

In Chapter 5, Bowman's humanity is highlighted and evidence as to how Bowman played a role and why he may be considered to have played a role in the awareness and recognition of the South African arts and culture field particularly pertaining to classical music in South Africa and abroad is provided. This chapter also includes information on Bowman's death with commentaries and accounts of those who knew him as a pianist, teacher and friend.

The concluding chapter summarises the entire study, while also condensing the findings of this dissertation.

Sources consulted consist of books, published articles and unpublished theses. The writer has also included the conversations he had with Bowman as part of the sources and newspaper articles which Bowman collected throughout his life and which he left for Ella Fourie when he died. Many of them do not contain sufficient referencing information. Therefore, if there are any queries regarding the missing referencing details with the newspaper articles, they will be available for inspection.

Recorded interviews that Bowman made with various people linked to his life have been listed under Audio tape recorded interviews with and for Lionel Bowman. Bowman made these for the person who wished to document his life after his death.

Fourie is currently in possession of these tapes and these are also available for inspection should any queries arise.

The discography includes three of Bowman's live recordings that were used for the study. These recordings were not made for commercial use. The discography also includes other recorded material such as videos and digital video disc that were consulted and used for this study.

The study ends with Appendix A and Appendix B. Appendix A includes a list of all the winners of the *Lionel Bowman-Beethoven Piano Competition* from 2000 to 2008 while Appendix B includes three physical recordings of Bowman's which have been mentioned in the discography.

Notes

As mentioned earlier, many of the newspaper articles and reviews used for this study were collected by Bowman throughout his life (see Sources). The Harvard referencing method has been applied for this study: however, many of the newspaper sources do not contain sufficient information for referencing. Due to financial and time restraint, it was impossible for the writer to fly down to Cape Town and search for many of the articles in the National Archives. The ones that contain virtually no information for full referencing have, however, been omitted in the reference section but were used where necessary in the study, especially in Chapter 3, Sections 3.5 - 3.12 and Chapter 5, Section 5.2. Because of the missing dates on many of the newspaper cuttings, it was impossible to correlate specific reviews and critiques to the available programmes of Bowman's concerts. For referencing purposes throughout the study, if the required information from the source is missing or only certain parts of it are present, whatever else is available from the source has been included. Besides the missing page numbers, the only available referencing information on some of the sources contains the reporter's names, initials or just a pseudonym, such as: MINIM, ALLEGRO, MUSIC-LOVER, A.S., P.S., D.S., B.M., A.M., N.C., D.L.S., J.N.F. and M.B.C. Many of them contain only a heading or just the name of the newspaper. Therefore, should any queries arise regarding the missing referencing details pertaining to these sources, they are available for inspection. Only selected newspaper reviews and articles, that proved to be substantial, have been used for this study. In order to clarify this, below are selected examples that appear in the study used to explain some of the referencing methods used for sources with missing referencing information:

- (*The Rambler: Talk of the Day*): For this specific article, only the pseudonym of the critic and the name of the article are available.
- (*The Western Australian* 1980): the author's name and the page number are missing.
- (Silvestri: Julie Andrews sang in his supporting programme)¹: The name of the newspaper, page number and the publication date are missing.
- (1956: Composer's new sonata saved by pianist as car catches fire): The name of the author and newspaper are missing.

¹ Silvestri did, however, work for *The Cape Argus* but because the name of the newspaper is missing in this case, the writer avoided merely assuming that this article was also published in *The Cape Argus*.

- (*Cape Times* Correspondent 1964): The author's name and page number are missing.
- (*Salisbury Herald* 27 March): The year of publication and the author are missing.
- (Cohn 1972): The name of the newspapers and the page numbers are missing.
- (*Eikestadnuus* 1999:17): The author's name is missing.
- (Odendaal 2006): The name of the newspaper and page numbers are missing.
- (Daily News Reporter: Conductor condemns orchestra hand-over): The author's name and the publication date are missing.
- (Dalny: Music in South Africa): The name, publication date and page number of the newspaper are missing.
- (*Musicus* 2007:148): The author of the last part of this article is unknown.

As will also be seen, some newspaper articles indicate the name of the newspaper they were published in as *The Cape Argus*, and some just simply state *The Argus*.

Some of the interviews were recorded on tape by Bowman and for him. Other interviews were done by the writer with people who knew Bowman, but were not recorded on tape. Below are selected examples from the study explaining how they have been indicated:

- (Bowman and Quayle 1990: Recorded interview): Recorded interview about Bowman done by Bowman with Quayle.
- (Bowman with Poole and Murray 1990: Recorded interview): Recorded interview about Bowman done by Bowman with both Poole and Murray.
- (Hall 1991: Tape for Bowman): A tape recorded by Hall for Bowman about himself, in his absence.
- (Fourie 2008: Interview): Unrecorded interview about Bowman done by the writer with Fourie.

Some of the recorded interviews do not have dates and below is an example of how this has been handled in the study:

- (Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview).

The conversations indicated in the references are the ones the writer had with Bowman in Cape Town and have been indicated as follows:

- (Bowman and Ntsepe 2006)

The two Digital video discs that have been used in this study, have been numbered 1 and 2 respectively. Below is an example of how their referencing has been handled:

- (2004:DVD.1)

The same principle applies to the videos used for the study.

Regarding the *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing*, the only information available on this publication is as follows:

- Tate, W. 2000. *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing by Wallace Tate in association with Lionel Bowman*. Western Australia.

Malan is the author and editor of the following article:

- Malan, J. 1979: Bowman, Lionel. *South African Music Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 1. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Furthermore, the birth and death dates of several people mentioned in the study could not be ascertained, therefore, all dates, except in Chapter 2, Section 2.1, have been omitted in order to maintain consistency.

In order to avoid misquoting, [sic] has been used to indicate errors such as grammar, spelling and sentence construction in the used quotations.

CHAPTER 2: AN OVERVIEW OF THE LIFE AND CAREER OF BOWMAN AS A PIANIST AND TEACHER

2.1 Introduction

In the world of music, exceptional talents often come from simple or unimposing backgrounds. Drive, obsession and ambition, the primary ingredients of talent, usually assist the really talented to succeed in their goals, regardless of their backgrounds.

According to Norman Lebrecht (2004: DVD.1), many of the great artists throughout history have been “outsiders”. Lebrecht says that Ludwig von Beethoven (1770-1827) was an outsider from Flemish stock, Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was an outsider born on prostitute’s row in Hamburg and Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was an outsider from Hungary.

We have a similar situation in South Africa regarding some of our most successful and well-known musicians. Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983) was born on a farm near Calvinia in the north-west Cape (Ferguson 1987:1); Hubert Lawrence du Plessis (b.1922) on the farm of Groenrivier in the Malmesbury district (Aitchison 1987:33); Stefans Grové (b.1922) in Bethlehem in the Orange Free State (Rörich 1987:77) and James Stephen Mzilikazi Khumalo (b.1932) on the Salvation Army farm called KwaNgwelu in Natal (Avorgbedor 2001:580). These are just a few examples.

It is believed that the lack of resources in these towns resulted in people having to find ways to stimulate themselves, hence being creative in the process. This helped them invent new ideas which influenced their artistry as well. About Lionel Bowman, Percy Baneshik (1954:4) metaphorically writes: “It sounds incongruous, but remember, we dig the finest gold in places just as tiny and outwardly unlikely-looking”. Ironically Bowman was born near Kimberley, a famous South African diamond mining town, and he became a prominent South African pianist.

2.2 Childhood and youth

Lionel Charles Bowman was born on 11 June 1919 in Koffiefontein, a small village in the Orange Free State which Bowman described as being “smaller even than Oakham” (Despoja 1980:26). He was born into a Jewish family and was the youngest of five children (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Fourie 2000a:140). Bowman arrived so prematurely that for the first few weeks of his life, his cradle was a cardboard shoe box (Cohn 2006). His father was a sweeper for a hairdresser in Soho (London) before immigrating to South Africa and his mother, Rachel, was a refugee from Lithuania (Despoja 1980:26). It is not clear when exactly the Bowman family moved to Cape Town. Van der Spuy (1980:30) states that Bowman’s family moved when Lionel was eight months old, but in Fourie’s articles, we read that Bowman’s family moved to Cape Town when he was a year old (Fourie 2000a:140; Fourie 2007:146). *The Rambler*, however, simply states that Bowman’s family “left for Cape Town at an early age” (*The Rambler*: Talk of the Day).

In Cape Town, Bowman’s parents ran a boarding house. In the boarding house, Bowman and his brother Harold’s duties included waking up early in the morning to slice fresh loaves of bread for the boarders’ breakfast toast and also to help with washing up afterwards. Both the brothers slept in the servants’ quarters which were “frigid” in winter and “like an oven” in summer (Cohn 2006).

The Bowman’s boarding house had an old upright piano. Lionel showed an interest in music from an early age and loved to play by ear (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Fuchs 2007:1; Fourie 2007:146). His natural flair for the piano and perfect pitch enabled him to pick tunes by ear and play them on the piano before he had formal training. It is interesting to note that throughout the history of music, talented musicians showed an interest in music very early in their lives. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was the most prominent example. Others include Johann Sebastian Bach, Mozart’s sister Nannerl and Liszt to name but a few. People in other art fields who have shown similar characteristics are Goethe, Heine and Rodin.

Later, Bowman earned money by playing for weddings and dances at the boarding house and around Cape Town (Bowman with Poole and Murray 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000a:141). Bowman was the only one of his family to pursue a music career (Fourie 2000a:140; Fourie 2007:146).

On Bowman's eighth birthday their neighbour who was a piano teacher, offered to give him piano lessons as a birthday gift (Fourie 2000a:141).² After only a few months tuition, Bowman participated at the Cape Town Eisteddfod in the under nine age group (Van der Spuy 1980:30). According to Fourie (2000a:141), this marked his first public performance. He played the *Two-part Invention* in F Major by J S Bach (Fourie 2000a:141). Elsie Hall was the adjudicator and instantly recognised his talent. She awarded Bowman the first prize which enabled him to study at the South African College of Music (Silvestri: A. Julie Andrews sang in his supporting programme; Van der Spuy 1980:30; Bowman and Smith 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000a:141).³

He later studied full time at the South African Collage of Music at the University of Cape Town where he did "...a little bit of history, harmony and counterpoint" (Fourie 2000a:142). While studying at the South African College of Music⁴, Bowman performed in public concerts regularly (Fourie 2000a:141). Bowman was a fast learner and therefore learning new repertoire was an easy task for him (Shifrin 1981:2): "I used to sight-read and learn very quickly and I would perform pieces immediately".

Bowman did not like practising the piano (Chait 1999:31). When he was older, he admitted that he was lazy and did not pay attention to musical detail early in his career because learning notes was "second nature" to him. He did many UNISA examinations and passed all of them with honours (Van der Spuy 1980:30). He was also awarded many bursaries and scholarships (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Fourie 2000a:141-142). However, Bowman mentioned that in his reports, all the examiners remarked on his fast playing of fast pieces. He realised when he was much older and more experienced that the examiners had said this because his playing lacked control when he was younger (Fourie 2000a:141).

Bowman's first important concert was in 1933. He appeared as the boy Mozart in a production by Florence Montgomery called *Mozart Tableaux*. This took place at the Cape Town City Hall. For this production, Bowman performed the second movement

² Bowman stated that his mother paid about five shillings a month for his piano lessons (Yutar 1999a & b).

³ Bowman hated school. He would rather focus on music than do his homework (Bowman and Schach 1991: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000a:142). He left school without writing his final matriculation examination (Leonard Schach 1991 and 1992: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:47).

⁴ He studied piano with Helen Bell who was the wife of the well-known founder of the College of Music, Professor William Henry Bell (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Bowman and Smith 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000a:142).

from the Mozart *Piano Concerto* in D Minor K. 466 with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra (Bowman and Bothner 1990: Recorded interview). According to Van der Spuy (1980:30), *The Cape Times* of 1933-06-09 stated that: “Lionel Bowman was excellent as the boy Mozart: his playing was wonderfully good”. This opened many career opportunities for Bowman. It also started a keen interest in theatre (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Bowman and Bothner 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000a:141).

According to Fourie (2000a:142), Bowman started his broadcasting career at the age of fourteen. However, Baneshik (1954:4) mentions that at the age of eight, Bowman made countless appearances in the *Children’s Corner*, hosted by Gladys Dickson⁵ who was called “Auntie Lex” for this show (Baneshik 1954:4). However, the validity of Baneshik’s statements raises questions because Bowman only started formal piano training when he was eight (see Page 12) and it is unlikely that he started broadcasting right from the beginning of his music education.

When Bowman was about fifteen, his father replied to a newspaper advertisement from an English Concert Party called *Samples*. The advertisement required the service of a male pianist who could play jazz and tour with their company for about five weeks. Bowman was given the job⁶ (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Fourie 2000a:142).

The company travelled in an enclosed truck with an upright piano, costumes, curtains and props. Bowman was responsible for the accompaniment of the singers and dancers, as well as solo playing and assisting with stage preparations and ticket sales. He also had some acting roles in the production. The highlight of this tour was a fortnight appearance on a bandstand in Happy Valley in Port Elizabeth (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Fourie 2000a:142).

During this time, Bowman met Lilian Isaacson. She introduced him to the art of painting and also took him to his first symphony concert. In this concert, he heard Beethoven’s *Leonora Overture No. 3* (Fourie 2000a:142).⁷

⁵ In 1950, Dickson became Head of English Programmes for the SABC (Baneshik 1954:4).

⁶ He was paid about six to seven pounds per week (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Fourie 2000a:142).

⁷ On 26 January 2006 the writer went to a symphony concert at the Cape Town City Hall with Bowman. One of the works performed was the *Symphony No. 40* in G Minor, K. 550 by Mozart. During the concert, Bowman mentioned that Isaacson had told him that this particular symphony by Mozart and the *Symphony No. 5* in C Minor, Op. 67 by Beethoven “are the two perfect symphonies”.

All of Bowman's piano lessons were financed by scholarships from the age of eight until he became a professional pianist at the age of nineteen (Despoja 1980:26; Van der Spuy 1980:30).

At the age of sixteen, Bowman passed the UNISA Grade 8 examination with high honours and was invited to compete in Pretoria for the 1936 Overseas Scholarship. Leo Quayle⁸ won the first prize (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Quayle 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000a:143). In those days, the Overseas Scholarship was awarded after a competition for excellence of performance in the Grade 8 examination and not for the Licentiate examination as at present (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Bowman and Smith 1990: Recorded interview; Bowman and Leo Quayle 1990: Recorded interview). The next year, Bowman entered for the UNISA Performers Licentiate and was invited to compete in the Overseas Scholarship Competition. This time he was awarded the first prize.⁹ The scholarship enabled Bowman to further his studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Bowman and Quayle 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000a:143).

2.3 London years as a student

In December 1937, Bowman left South Africa and went to England. He began his studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London in January of 1938 where he was admitted into the second semester of the first year course (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Bowman and Smith 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:47; Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview).

Bowman studied piano with Vivian Langridge before the war and after the war he was guided by Maria Donska who was a pupil of Schnabel's, and Desiree Ewan, who was a pupil of Tobias Matthay. Ernest Reid and Sir Henry Wood, founder of the well-known Promenade Concerts, were his conducting teachers. Other instruments that were studied by Bowman were the voice, cello, with Cedric Sharpe as his teacher, clarinet with Reginald Kell and the French horn with Aubrey Brain (Van der Spuy

⁸ Quayle became a noted South African conductor and a life-long friend of Bowman's (Bowman and Quayle 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000a:143).

⁹ The results were announced on the Jewish fasting day called *Yom Kippur*. This is considered the holiest day of the year according to Jewish customs (Fourie 2000a:143).

1980:30; Fourie 2000b:47; Bowman and Smith 1990: Recorded interview; Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview).¹⁰

Van der Spuy (1980:30) states that one does not associate the above mentioned instruments with the pianist and teacher Lionel Bowman. Bowman did, however, acknowledge: “I learned with jolly good teachers, but was hopeless at it” (Van der Spuy 1980:30).

He had harmony lessons with the composer Harry Farjeon (Van der Spuy 1980:30; Fourie 2000b:47; Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview).¹¹ While he was still a student, he conducted the first movement of the Brahms F Major *Symphony*, Mendelssohn’s *Hebrides Overture*, parts of the Brahms E Minor *Symphony* and Beethoven’s *Fifth Piano Concerto*. In 1939, he was awarded a medal for the conducting course (Fourie 2000b:47). Because of his conducting, Bowman paid little attention to the piano. It was only after the principal of the Academy¹² threatened to ask UNISA to withdraw his scholarship that he began to work seriously (Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview; Bowman and Fourie 1991: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:47).

Bowman won various medals for piano playing, sight-reading and aural training. In 1940, while he was completing his third year at the Academy, he was awarded the most prestigious prizes. He received the Matthew Phillimore Prize for his interpretation of the Brahms *Paganini Variations* and the Roller Memorial Prize for his interpretation of the Beethoven *Sonata* Op. 111. He was also awarded the Chappell Gold Medal which was the highest award for pianists. Bowman was one of “about ten” competitors selected to perform that year (Bowman and Townley: Recorded Interview). This was the first time that he was awarded a gold medal for his piano playing at the Royal Academy. When he was older, he admitted that prior to winning the gold medal, he had not won first prizes for anything at the Academy because he lacked discipline when he was still a student (Bowman and Smith 1990:

¹⁰ He was also keen on dancing and had ballet lessons with Miriam Kirsch. Bowman formed a partnership with Zoë Randall who became a well-known actress in South Africa. They danced trios with Patricia Hussey and they were always awarded the first prize at Eisteddfods (Yutar 1999a & b; Bowman with Poole and Murray 1990: Recorded interview; Bowman and Schach 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000a:142-143). In 2006 Bowman was asked by the writer about his interest in ballet. In responding, Bowman simply took his shoes and socks off and remarked, “See, I have a natural ballerina’s point”. He earned his first “income” as a dancer because visitors at the boarding house sometimes paid him “sixpence for a performance”.

¹¹ Bowman admitted that he did not do well in harmony and Farjeon often complained that he wrote consecutive fifths in his four-part harmony exercises. But Bowman would remark that “Beethoven also did” (Bowman and Fourie 1991: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:47).

¹² Stanley Marchant.

Recorded interview; Bowman and Van der Merwe 1990: Recorded interview; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

Before Liberace was even heard of, Bowman wore tails to play *Tangos* and *Rumbas* in the London Coliseum when the opportunity came about (Despoja 1980:26). He also played jazz at night-clubs in order to earn extra money. (Despoja 1980:26; *The Western Australian* 1980; Van der Spuy 1980:31; Bowman and Smith 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:48). One of the expenses he had to pay for himself was his rented piano (*The Western Australian* 1980).

He was chosen on two occasions to appear as soloist with the main orchestra of the Academy. The first time he performed the *Fifth Piano Concerto* by Saint-Saëns. After this, Bowman never performed this work again (Van der Spuy 1980:30-31; Bowman and Smith 1990: Recorded interview; Bowman and Fourie 1991: Recorded interview; Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:48). On the second occasion, Bowman performed the first movement of the *Fifth Piano Concerto* by Beethoven. According to Van der Spuy (1980:31&34), the latter performance marked the beginning of his recognition as a Beethoven specialist.

In 1940, Bowman received both the ARCM and LRAM Performers Diplomas. He was forced to return to South Africa because the Second World War had begun and the fall of Dunkirk occurred (Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview; Van der Spuy 1980:31; Chait 1999:31; Fourie 2000b:48).

2.4 Back to South Africa

Back in South Africa Bowman concentrated on teaching and performing. At this stage he was well established as a performer, but teaching was a new experience for him. Soon after his arrival in Cape Town, Bowman was asked to deputise for Colin Taylor at the South African College of Music. From 1940, he held a teaching position for four years at the South African College of Music. Later Bowman had to give up teaching because of his busy performing schedule (Van der Spuy 1980:31; Fourie 2000b:48; Fuchs 2007:1). He did, however, accept a few private students such as

Neil Solomon. During this period, Bowman lived with his parents in Cape Town¹³ (Van der Spuy 1980:31).

Bowman was internationally known for his interpretation of Beethoven compositions (*The Star* 1966; *Jewish Chronicle* 1976; Odendaal 1979: *Beeld*; Malan 1979:223; *The Cape Times* 1980; Mears 1980:137; Van der Spuy 1980:31; Bowman and Cohn 1990: Recorded Interview; Bowman and Tidboald 1990: Recorded interview; Yutar 1999a & b; *Eikestadnuus* 1999; Fourie 2000b:48; Fuchs 2007:2). On 16 January 1941, Bowman performed Beethoven's *Fourth Piano Concerto* in Cape Town, which happened to be his favourite of Beethoven's five *Piano Concertos* (Van der Spuy 1980:31; Fourie 2000b: 48; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

Bowman performed concertos with conductors such as (ordered chronologically): Sir Adrian Boult, Sir Malcom Sargent, Hugo Rignold, Meyer Fredman, Enrique Jorda, Henry Krips, Edgar Cree, Sir Charles Groves, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Alexander Gibson, David Tidboald, John Hopkins, Peter Erös, Pierino Gamba, Peter Perret and Eric Rycroft. He also became the first South African pianist to present all the Beethoven *Piano Concertos* in a cycle and this feat he repeated five times with orchestras and sometimes with a second piano accompanying him (*Jewish Chronicle* 1976; Bowman and Cohn 1990: Recorded interview; Bowman and Tidboald 1990: Recorded interview; Bowman and Fourie 1991: Recorded interview; Bowman and Quayle 1990: Recorded interview; Yutar 1999a & b; Fourie 2000b:48; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006; Fuchs 2007:1). Many engagements followed throughout the country and also in the then Northern and Southern Rhodesia, the Congo, Zambia, Uganda and Mozambique (Van der Spuy 1980:31).

Bowman was loved by the public and his concerts were well attended. On one occasion, he received the votes for a plebiscite concert for his rendering of Liszt's *Hungarian Fantasy* at the City Hall.¹⁴ He also scored huge successes with the *Warsaw Concerto* by Richard Addinsell and the *Cornish Rhapsody* by Hurbert Bath (Van der Spuy 1980:31; Fourie 2000b:49).

¹³ They first lived in the Surf Crest Hotel and later in High Level Road in Sea Point (Van der Spuy 1980:31).

¹⁴ His popularity is substantiated by the following example; when he performed the Tchaikovsky *Piano Concerto* in B flat Major in Cape Town, police on horseback had to control the crowds. As a precaution, the hall had to be locked and even Bowman was locked out. When he performed the same *Concerto* in Durban, the public queued for tickets almost right around the City Hall (Van der Spuy 1980:31; Fourie 2000b:49).

In 1941, the Greek Royal Family was exiled because of the German occupation of Greece. The South African government invited the Royal Family to stay in South Africa where they lived in Cape Town for some time. Bowman was asked to give a concert in aid of the Royal Family Fund. Through this, Bowman befriended Princess Eugenie, the daughter of Prince George of Greece, and Princess Marie Bonaparte. He maintained contact with Eugenie for several years and saw her for the last time in London, just prior to the wedding of Queen Elizabeth II (Fourie 2000b:49).

In 1944, Noël Coward was brought to South Africa to raise funds for the Red Cross. Bowman was amongst the first South African artists who were engaged by the South African Consolidated Theatres to share concerts with this well-known figure. Bowman toured as joint artist with Coward to various cities such as Johannesburg, Durban, Bloemfontein, and Kimberley. Bowman would give a recital in the first half and Coward did the second half. If an orchestra was available, Bowman would play the *Hungarian Fantasy* by Liszt.¹⁵ Because of the war, few overseas artists toured South Africa, and therefore many performing opportunities were offered to Bowman (Van der Spuy 1980:31; Bowman and Schach 1992: Recorded interview; Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:49).

During the forties, performers had to take it upon themselves to arrange concerts if they wanted to tour the country. Only overseas artists and the best local artists received contracts. The SABC commissioned artists to play specific works on these occasions.¹⁶ Bowman was contracted by the SABC to give concerts in Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Grahamstown. Through the SABC, Bowman gave the first South African performance of Prokofiev's *Third Piano Concerto* and Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* (Van der Spuy 1980:31; Fourie 2000b:48). One can clearly see that Bowman's performances of the Prokofiev *Third Piano Concerto* and Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* were a resounding success. He received excellent reviews for both the concerts (see Chapter 3, Section 3.12).

¹⁵ General Smuts attended one of their concerts and smoked a cigarette and conversed with a friend while Bowman was performing. This distracted Bowman, causing him to perspire. At the end of the concert, Smuts approached Bowman and told him that he should consider putting on make-up for future concerts (Bowman and Schach 1992: Recorded interview; Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).

¹⁶ Gladys Dickson together with Rene Caprara, the head of SABC, were in charge of these concerts (Van der Spuy 1980:31; Fourie 2000b:48).



2.5 London after the war

Bowman once had an interview with a newspaper reporter writing under the pseudonym *The Rambler*. The date of the interview as well as the name of the newspaper it was published in, are unknown. In this interview, Bowman speaks about how his career flourished when he moved back to England. He is quoted four times saying that his success was due to “Luck, Just Luck” (*The Rambler*: Talk of the Day). He considered himself “a rather fortunate pianist who lived in the right place at the right time” (Fourie: 2001:110). The situations where Bowman was “in the right place at the right time” had a major influence on his career. Some of these instances and the effects they had on Bowman’s career are mentioned hereafter.

Before Bowman returned to England¹⁷ in 1946, George Aschman who was the editor of *The Cape Times* asked Bowman to write monthly articles about the music scene in England, particularly in London. He was offered a press pass as an official music critic (Bowman and Fourie 1999; Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:49). Through this pass, Bowman received free tickets to many concerts. The first concert that he attended as a music critic was by Gerald Moore and Elizabeth Schumann doing a *Lieder* recital at Kingsway Hall (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview). After this, Bowman submitted only a few reports to *The Cape Times* but continued to attend concerts and shows with the privileges of a press pass without any pressure of writing reviews and reports (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:49).¹⁸

One evening Bowman attended a play in the Garrick Theatre and saw Pearl Aschman whom he knew through George Aschman. He told her that he was struggling to get concerts and that he had had no reply from any agent.¹⁹ She organised an audition for him with the impresario Harold Fielding who had been a “wonderful child violinist” (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).

¹⁷ After the war, Bowman returned to England by a ship called *Carnarvon Castle*. Eve Gettleson, Tempest Ellis and other actors and dancers were with him on this ship. This was the first passenger ship that sailed for England after the war (Van der Spuy 1980:31-32; Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview; Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:49).

¹⁸ He attended many “memorable concerts” by great pianists such as: Artur Rubenstein (19 September 1942), Artur Schnabel (series of recitals which started on 16 May 1947 and later on 22nd, 24th, 26th and 29th September and on 19 October playing the Grieg *Concerto*), Vladimir Horowitz (13 & 19 October 1951, Festival Hall) and Claudio Arrau (25 September 1964, playing Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 3.*) to name but a few (Bowman’s notebook).

¹⁹ Bowman’s repertoire was now much more extensive and he knew more concertos. However, he was in London for a few months and had not had any concert engagements (Van der Spuy 1980:32).

Fielding had engaged the famous tenor Benjamino Gigli for a British tour but due to problems with his voice, an artist was needed to fill some of his programmes. Fielding asked Bowman to fill the role and he contracted Bowman for six concerts, two of them joint recitals with Gigli. This was an excellent opportunity for Bowman because all of Gigli's concerts were sold out. Richard Tauber, who was also a famous tenor, was in the audience at their Birmingham concert. He was to start a tour for Fielding in April 1947. He liked Bowman's playing and asked Fielding to send Bowman on tour with him (*The Rambler*: Talk of the Day; Silvestri: Julie Andrews sang in his supporting programme; *The Western Australian* 1980; Despoja 1980:26; Van der Spuy 1980:32; Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:49-50). Bowman never accompanied these singers but did many joint recitals with them (Chait 1999:31).

When Bowman did an audition for the BBC, Walter Goehr, who was the conductor of the BBC Theatre Orchestra and the father of the well-known British composer Alexander Goehr, passed the control room and heard Bowman playing the Schubert *Impromptu* in B flat Major. Goehr went into the studio while Bowman was playing and asked him whether he had the Grieg *Piano Concerto* in his repertoire. Bowman's audition was successful and this led to Bowman's first engagement with the BBC Theatre Orchestra (Van der Spuy 1980:32; Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:49).

Bowman gave numerous concerts for a series called *Music for the Millions*. He shared the stage with classical and show business artists such as Peter Dawson, Anne Ziegler, Webster Booth, Alfredo Campoli, The Western Brothers, Chico Marx, Julie Andrews and Gracie Field to name but a few (Silvestri: Julie Andrews sang in his supporting programme; Van der Spuy 1980:32; Fourie 2000b:51).

Bowman met interesting and famous personalities while he was living in London. Many of these people catalysed the success of his career immensely. An example of one such person was Friedelinde Wagner.²⁰ Bowman met her through his friend Leonard Schach, who became a well-known South African play director. Schach and

²⁰ Friedelinde was the granddaughter of Richard Wagner. Bowman remarked that "she looked exactly like her grandfather". Friedelinde hated her family and Adolf Hitler and in protest, she wrote a book which is titled *The Royal Family of Bayreuth* (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).

Bowman had known each other since childhood and used to play duets together.²¹ Friedelinde invited Bowman and Schach to the first performance of Daniel Barenboim, who was then ten years old, at the Wigmore Hall. Bowman became good friends with Friedelinde (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).²²

Later, Raymond Marriott, who was a close friend of Bowman's, arranged for Bowman to meet George Bernard Shaw. Marriott had mentioned to Shaw that Bowman was a promising young pianist. While they were at Shaw's home, Bowman was unexpectedly requested by the aged playwright to play the piano for them. Shaw had an old upright piano. Bowman knew that Shaw had been a respected and influential music critic before he became a famous playwright.²³ Bowman played a Mozart *Sonata* but because of nerves, he did not play well (*The Western Australian*: 1980; Fourie 2000b:51; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

As was his custom, after the visit Bowman wrote a letter to thank Shaw. Shaw replied by sending one of his famous postcards. The exact words written by Shaw on this postcard are unclear to the writer. Most of the sources consulted state that Shaw's words were: "Let your own light shine" (Silvestri: Julie Andrews sang in his supporting programme; Despoja 1980:26; *The Western Australian* 1980; Fourie 2000b:51). However, in July 2006, Bowman gave the writer two of his compact discs, listed under the discography and appendix. On the cover, Bowman simply stated: "Let your true light shine always. Bernard Shaw. Love, Oupa Lionel. 06 July 2006" (Bowman and Ntsepe 2006; Fourie 2007: 148).

When Bowman received the postcard from Shaw, he did not understand what Shaw's words meant. It was only when he grew older and had more life experience that Bowman realised that Shaw's words paralleled William Shakespeare's in *Hamlet* and simply meant, "to thine own self be true" (Fourie 2000b: 51; Bowman and Ntsepe: 2006).

²¹ Schach also used to turn pages for Bowman and his duo partner Glyn Townley. Bowman states that Schach was also a "very good amateur pianist" (Bowman and Schach 1991 & 1992: Recorded interview; Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).

²² Many years later, Bowman visited Israel and had free master-classes with Daniel Barenboim's father who ran a music school in Tel Aviv. Bowman remarked that Barenboim's father was not a good teacher but was riding on his son's fame (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).

²³ There are three volumes of published books called *SHAW'S MUSIC: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*. See Chapter 3, Section 3.1 for more information on Shaw.

Bowman also met Katherine Goodson who was a British pianist²⁴ (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b: 51). Later Goodson introduced Bowman to Mrs Carson-Roberts who was the wife of the British ambassador to China. After this meeting, Bowman often played for Mrs Carson-Roberts's soirees. He also performed at the Proms Concerts and the Royal Festival Hall (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:51).

In the late 1940s, Bowman started to include works by South African composers such as Hubert du Plessis and Arnold van Wyk in his programmes (see Section 3.4 for more information on Bowman's repertoire). After one of his BBC broadcasts of the du Plessis *Piano Sonata*, Bowman was invited by Jan Bouws, a principal of a school in Amsterdam, to give his first European concert in Hilversum in the Netherlands. Bouws loved South Africans and even learned the Afrikaans language. After this, Bowman appeared in Paris, Brussels, Basle, Geneva, Zürich and Rome (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:51).

In 1948, Bowman performed the Rachmaninoff *Second Piano Concerto* in a joint recital with Ginette Niveu. He also travelled on the *Queen Mary* to the United States of America where he was engaged by the radio station WQXR, headed by Abram Chasins. Chasin was also the composer of the piano piece called *Rush Hour in Hong-Kong* which Bowman included in some of his recitals (see Section 3.4). Bowman's commitments included a "coast to coast" broadcast of South African compositions. This was sponsored by the South African Bureau of Information in New York (Van der Spuy 1980:32; Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:51, Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

In 1949, Bowman toured the British Isles as joint-recitalist with Paul Robeson. Thousands of people attended their concert at the Royal Albert Hall and their two performances at the Harringay Arena (Fourie 2000b:51). There is a photo signed by both Robeson and Bowman for sale on the internet (view Hyperlink <http://www.historyforsale.com>). It was during this period when Leonard Schach and Friedelinde

²⁴ Goodson had studied under Theodor Leschetizky in Vienna for four years (Cooke 1999:143). She received master-classes from Brahms on his *Piano Concerto* in D Minor. Bowman attended her last concert in London where Goodson performed the Brahms *Piano Concerto* in D Minor with Sir Thomas Beecham (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).

Wagner introduced Bowman to Gina Bachauer. Bachauer was a pianist from Greece.²⁵

Schach also invited Bowman, Bachauer and Freidlinde Wagner to an all-Beethoven recital given by Julius Katchen at the Royal Festival Hall. This is where Bowman was introduced to Katchen. Bachauer later introduced Bowman to the Papaionnou family. The family had attachments to the Conservatorium in Athens in Greece. Bachauer was instrumental in arranging Bowman's first performance in Athens where he performed Beethoven's *Second Piano Concerto* and his second concert there was an all-Beethoven recital. Bowman returned to Greece on several occasions for more concert engagements (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

After his successful concerts in Great Britain, America, and France, Bowman returned for a concert tour in South Africa in February 1950. He made ten broadcasts for the SABC in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. For these broadcasts, Bowman performed the five Beethoven *Piano Concertos*, solo items by Scarlatti, Haydn, Chopin, Schubert and Schumann. He also included a work by John Joubert called *Rhapsody Evocations*. According to Van der Spuy (1980:33), Joubert dedicated this work to Bowman. However, after much research, the writer fails to find support for Van der Spuy's statement. Joubert did, however, dedicate a work to Bowman and will be mentioned later in this chapter. On his way to South Africa, Bowman gave concerts in Mombasa, Congo, the then Northern Rhodesia and many other African countries (Van der Spuy 1980:33).

According to one article (*The Cape Times* 1952), in 1952 Bowman became the first South African pianist to appear on television. He was the soloist in a play called *The Shadow of the Vine* by Beverley Nichols. Bowman remarked that he had to work under difficult situations for the rehearsals and the performance. For extra safety, Bowman was given a television set on a stand above the piano on which he could see the entire performance. Bowman stated that:

²⁵ According to Bowman (1991 & 1992: Recorded interview; 1999: Recorded interview), during the war, Bachauer escaped from Greece to Cairo and later on landed up in England. Her teachers included Alfred Cortot and Sergey Rachmaninoff (Schonberg 1978:424). She became well-known and married Alex Sherman. Bowman heard some of her concerts with the New London Symphony Orchestra at the Cambridge Theatre. This orchestra was managed by her husband Alex Sherman (Bowman and Schach 1991 & 1992: Recorded interview; Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).

Seeing myself on the screen as I played was fascinating but distracting, and it required a great deal of control and concentration to avoid looking too often. Powerful arc lamps close to me made the piano keys simmer [sic] with a terrible glare. At times the camera was only a foot away from my eyes and hands. It was the most exhausting appearance I have ever made (*The Cape Times* 1952).

After this, Bowman had many other appearances on television. Two concerts were arranged for Bowman by Fielding in Nairobi in 1950. Because of the success of these concerts, other concert tours were arranged in 1952, 1954 and 1956 to various African countries and throughout Europe (Fourie 2000b:52). Van der Spuy (1980:33) includes 1958 as part of this tour. The exact years are therefore, unclear.

During 1956, Bowman appeared twice at the Wigmore Hall in the *London Pianoforte Series*. At his concert of 1 December 1956, he gave the world première of John Joubert's *Piano Sonata* Op. 24. Joubert dedicated this work to Bowman and was also present at the Wigmore Hall for this occasion (Hull staff: 1956; Van der Spuy 1980:33; Fourie 2000b:52).²⁶

Bowman's concert career continued for many years and apart from the countries already mentioned, he performed in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Turkey and Australia (Fourie 2000b:52). The writer agrees with Van der Spuy (1980:32) concerning the impossibility of documenting all of Bowman's concerts during this period:

This all meant that Bowman became established and received more and more engagements for recitals and concertos. It is impossible to list or comment on all his early performances.

Bowman also signed a contract and recorded under the EMI recording label. He performed in numerous inaugural concerts. A detailed table of these concerts has been included. D/? has been used where the exact day is unknown. (Refer to Table 1 on page 25).

²⁶ Before Bowman flew to London for his performance at the Wigmore Hall on 1 December, the only existing copy of the manuscript of Joubert's *Piano Sonata* was nearly destroyed in a fire without it ever being heard. Bowman was driving to Port Elizabeth for the weekend to visit his cousin Dr. H. Goldblatt. With him was the 'new *Sonata*' which he had planned to practise whilst still in Port Elizabeth. Near Berry's Corner Bowman's car caught fire but before much damage could be done, attendants at a nearby service petrol station extinguished the fire. Bowman proclaimed that: "As soon as I saw the flames, I grabbed the manuscript and my coat and jumped out" (1956: Composer's new sonata saved by pianist as car catches fire).

During his career, Bowman received many valuable gifts and memoirs from friends, colleagues, students and admirers. One such gift is an historical conductor's baton that belonged to Franz Liszt. Liszt gave the baton to the pianist Ignace Moscheles in 1852 after a performance of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* in Weimar. When Moscheles died, his son Felix, a painter, inherited this baton. Felix Moscheles in turn gave it to the pianist Mark Hambourg. Hambourg died and his daughter inherited the baton which she then gave to Bowman (Van der Spuy 1980:34).

Table 1: Bowman's Special Concerts

Date	Occasion of the Special Concert	Place and City
14 August 1958	Opening of the Broadway Theatre.	Heerengracht - Cape Town
06 September 1960	Opening of the Second series of Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the South African College of Music.	Hiddingh Hall - Cape Town
15 August 1963	First performance given on the new Cape Town City Hall piano.	City Hall - Cape Town
D/? December 1963	First concert given under the auspices of the Cape Performing Arts Board.	Hofmeyr Theatre - Cape Town
01 September 1964	First performance on Cape Performing Arts Board's new Steinway concert grand.	Hofmeyr Theatre - Cape Town
19 May 1978	Opening of the new Conservatorium of the University of Stellenbosch.	University of Stellenbosch - Stellenbosch
28 June 1981	Opening of the Eileen Joyce Studio.	University of Western Australia - Perth

(J.T.:1963; Van der Spuy 1980:34; Bowman and Cohn 1991: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:52)

Bowman's "luck" led him to meet and work with many other famous personalities. He was grateful for this and shared many a stories while mentioning the names of

Somerset Maugham, Richard Burton, Nijinsky and Mae West. He also met and worked with several well-known musicians. These included Francis Poulenc, Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, Moura Limpany, Ingrid Haebler, Alicia de Larrocha²⁷, Rosalyn Tureck, Terence Judd, David Helfgott, Clifford Curzon and Angela Hewitt (*The Cape Times* 1986; Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:51; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

The word “luck” has a positive connotation attached to it. This does not, however, mean that Bowman’s career never experienced its downfalls. Common to the lives of many artists in any field, Bowman also had negative experiences throughout his career. On 29 January 1947, Bowman had his first London appearance at the Wigmore Hall. The following day it was reported in *The Daily Express* that: “His rendering of the Mozart C Major Sonata (K. 330) summarised his playing: rare delicacy; confident power; and clarity - but a tendency to over-speed” (Van der Spuy 1980:32; Fourie 2000b:50).²⁸

Bowman also gave his first all-Beethoven recital in the Wigmore Hall. For this recital, he performed four *Sonatas*: Op. 13, Op. 31 No 2, Op. 57 and Op. 109. A few days after this concert, Bowman received two contrasting reviews for his performance. *The Times* proclaimed him as: “A potential great Beethoven player” (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview). However, *The Daily Telegraph* stated that:

The distinguished South African pianist Lionel Bowman gave an all-Beethoven recital in the Wigmore Hall. The only distinction that I could hear in his playing is that it was completely superficial from beginning to end (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:50).

Bowman proclaimed this to be the “worst press review” he had ever received in his whole performing career (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:50).²⁹

²⁷ Bowman met de Larrocha in New York. He was present when Marc Raubenheimer played the second piano for her when she was preparing for a performance of the Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 1* (Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

²⁸ The rest of the programme consisted of the Beethoven *Sonata* in E Major Op. 109, Chopin’s *Andante Spianato and Grande polonaise*, and works by Schubert and Debussy (Van der Spuy 1980:32).

²⁹ In later years Bowman discovered that Andrew Porter, a South African who had moved to London, had written the review. According to Bowman, Porter later became well known when he became the head of the *Opera Magazine* (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).

It seems, though that the negative experiences were in the minority. In 1964, the Royal Academy of Music elected Bowman a Fellow. Bowman was one of ten people chosen for this honour.³⁰ This is the highest honorary award given by the Royal Academy to ex-students for their distinguished services and achievements in music (*Cape Times* Correspondent 1964; *The Natal Mercury* 1964; *The Star Johannesburg* 1964; Van der Spuy 1980:34; Fourie 2000b:52).

It is clear therefore, that apart from being “just lucky”, Bowman achieved success and recognition for also being talented. *The Rambler* acknowledges this by ending his interview with Bowman with the words, “Talent, Just talent” (*The Rambler: Talk of the day*).

2.6 Two-piano concerts

Bowman’s first ‘official’ piano duo partner was John Juritz. They performed regularly when they were both in their teens but later they lost contact (Bowman and Juritz 1990: Recorded interview). Yet, throughout his busy solo career, Bowman gave many concerts with his duo partner and good friend Glyn Townley.³¹ On 14 June 1939, Bowman and Townley had their first duo recital at the Royal Academy of Music in the Dux Hall. For this concert, they performed the following works:

- *Waltz* from *Suite No. 1*, Op. 15 by Anton Arensky.
- *Polonaise* also by Arensky.
- *Jamaican Rumba From San Domingo* by Arthur Benjamin.
- *Polka* by Lennox Berkeley.

³⁰ The English female composer Phyllis Tate was among the ten ex-students chosen (Van der Spuy 1980:34).

³¹ Bowman and Townley first met at the Royal Academy of Music when Bowman arrived there in 1938. Townley, who is currently living in Durban, had been at the Royal Academy of Music before Bowman. He was known as Glyn Townley Williams but Dorothy Hess, a piano teacher, advised him to shorten his name to in order to make it easier for the public to remember him. Townley had heard about Bowman being a Scholarship winner from South Africa and when Bowman arrived at the Academy, Townley went to congratulate him and welcome his fellow South African. Another well known South African who was at the Academy then was Arnold van Wyk. The three of them befriended each other (Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview).

On 15 July 1940, Bowman and Townley did their first broadcast for the BBC. Amongst the works that were performed by the duo was a première performance of a *Tango* by Norman Demuth³² (Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview).

In March 1941, Townley moved back to South Africa. Bowman was already back in South Africa at that time (see Section 2.4). That same year the duo performed for a Sunday's Symphony Concert in Cape Town. They performed a Bach *Concerto for Two Pianos* and after the interval, a whole set of one of the Arensky *Suites*. They received good press reviews for this concert. When Bowman had performances in Durban or Townley had performances in Cape Town, at least one duo recital would also be arranged. However, it became impractical for them to continue their duo partnership. Their duo concerts discontinued for a period of twenty-two years (Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview).

Another collaboration was formed when Bowman and the South African pianist Bertha Feinhols performed the Mozart *Concerto for Two Pianos* in E flat Major, K. 365 with the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra on 29 January 1942, at the Cape Town City Hall. For this concert, an undated article (1942) states that (Berger 2001:95):

...It was a delightful performance. The two soloists were admirably matched in musical feeling and interpretation and their playing of the elaboration ornamentation was carried out with ease and grace. They were given a warm reception and were recalled several times.

In 1968, CAPAB approached Bowman and Townley to do a piano duo tour around the Cape consisting of four concerts and two broadcasts for the SABC. These concerts took place in July of the same year and happened to be their last public concerts as a duo. Their concerts were held at the following venues:

- Parow Civic Centre.
- Fish Hoek Town Hall.
- National Art Gallery, Cape Town.
- Conservatorium in Stellenbosch.

Works by Bach, Saint-Saëns, Rosenbloom, Poulenc and Arensky were performed for these concerts (Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview). Other documented two-

³² Norman Demuth was a lecturer at the Academy during that time (Bowman and Townley: Recorded interview).

piano works that Bowman performed include: Bach *Concerto for Two Pianos* in C Major and the one in C Minor and Poulenc *Concerto for Two Pianos*.

2.7 Years at the University of Stellenbosch

According to Fourie (2001:103), many people have wondered why a prominent pianist such as Bowman, who achieved so much success and recognition, especially in England, pursued a teaching career in South Africa. One of the answers to this question was highlighted in an interview done with Bowman in 1980. In this interview, Bowman states that forty is a “dangerous age” in an artist’s life. According to Bowman (Despoja 1980:26), the great become greater and the lesser talents lose audiences to any “wunderkind” around. Bowman goes on to say that it was a sensible time for him to change his lifestyle.

In 1958, Bowman was appointed senior lecturer in piano at the University of Stellenbosch. He had been offered teaching jobs in England which he handled poorly due to his flourishing performing career and his lack of experience in teaching. Yet it was difficult for him to earn a regular income through being solely a performing artist. Ironically, he was to take the place of Leo Quayle who became professor and Head of the Department of Music at the University of the Orange Free State. Initially Bowman was reluctant to take up the position when he was approached. This was due to several concert engagements including an appearance at the Proms which he was contracted for. Bowman did, however, accept the position after negotiating for a higher salary. He settled in Stellenbosch and became one of South Africa’s most successful and prominent piano teachers (*Rand Daily Mail* Johannesburg 1958; Van der Spuy 1980:33; Bowman and Quayle 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2001:103).

Bowman’s formal career as a piano teacher started in July 1958 after briefly returning from England. He arrived in Cape Town by ship before the second semester of Stellenbosch University commenced (Fourie 2001:103-104).

The political and cultural views of Stellenbosch were entirely new for Bowman. He had spent many years in London which was one of the great cities of the world with a vibrant and cosmopolitan cultural life. He took up Afrikaans lessons because most of

his students were Afrikaans-speaking. In comparison to London, Bowman's move to a small South African town was a shock to him. Stellenbosch and its University were dominated by the Afrikaner culture and traditions. Bowman had never worked amongst Afrikaners, therefore he associated all Afrikaans speaking people with the apartheid regime which he abhorred. Bowman's background contradicted the attitudes and mentalities of many of his students and colleagues concerning social issues. Bowman believed that he may have been the first Jew to be appointed for a lectureship at the University of Stellenbosch. The fact that he was Jewish made things more difficult for him. He could, for example, not understand why he had to apply for vacation leave on Jewish Holidays. Because of this, Bowman felt an outcast (Bowman and Quayle 1990: Recorded and interview; Fourie 2001:104-105; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

Bowman started to focus more on the way he taught the piano. He was once quoted in a newspaper interview saying that: "There are thousands of people in this country who teach the piano. I want to teach young people to perform" (*The Natal Daily News* 1958). He took a keen interest in his students and their development, not just as pianists, but also as human beings.

Bowman found it taxing to teach for long hours and also practise in order to keep his own piano playing progressing. This resulted in constant pain and a condition described by Dr T. Sarkin as *inter-metacarpal ligament strain*³³ (Bowman and Sarkin 1990: Recorded interview).

Bowman also started having emotional depression. Something which added to his distress was the poor standard of piano playing that he initially encountered at the Stellenbosch Conservatorium.³⁴ He was accustomed to the extremely high standards of the Royal Academy of Music in London where the standard repertoire was regularly performed by the students. He did however, come to realise that the poor standards of playing were not necessarily due to the students' lack of ability but often

³³ According to Bowman (1990: Recorded interview), Dr. Sarkin helped him prolong his performing career. Sarkin explains that *inter-metacarpal ligament strain* is caused by the over stretching of the fingers. In Bowman's case, this condition was caused by playing works with stretches that were too big for his hands. Bowman played many concerts with partly bandaged fingers. This aided Bowman to not over-stretch his fingers while performing and therefore minimised the pain (Bowman and Sarkin 1990: Recorded interview).

³⁴ A scandal among the piano staff of the Stellenbosch Conservatorium emerged in one of Bowman's first experiences as an examiner. A piano student who was regarded as one of the best at the Conservatorium had performed Beethoven's *Sonata* in C Major, Op. 53. Bowman's co-examiners insisted that the student be awarded 95% to which Bowman objected. According to Bowman, 95% is close to being perfect and proclaimed that "there is no perfection in piano playing" (Bowman and Van der Merwe 1990: Recorded interview; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006). Bowman then went to the piano to demonstrate the faults he had heard in the student's playing. The mark was then reduced to 80% which Bowman still considered to be too high (Bowman and Van der Merwe 1990: Recorded interview).

rooted in musically deprived backgrounds (Fourie 2001:105; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

Bowman was shocked when he noticed that students did not attend concerts. He was despondent about the fact that only a few of his students attended his own or other concerts because of the strict rules of the University of Stellenbosch which the students had to abide by. Students living in the hostels had to clock in at 19:30 in the evenings. Even when Victoria de los Angeles, the world famous singer, visited South Africa, Bowman had to force the students to attend and had to justify this to the dean of the University. During Bowman's study years in London, it was compulsory for the students to attend concerts (Fourie 2001:106; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

A few years later Bowman started a series of public "interpretasie klasse" at the Stellenbosch Conservatorium.³⁵ Many of Bowman's colleagues also attended. Later on the classes were stopped since some of Bowman's colleagues complained that the students were becoming confused because of his suggestions (Fourie 2001:107).

As time progressed, Bowman maintained a routine of teaching joined with regular concert appearances in South Africa, England and Europe. In 1969, however, Bowman reached what he called "the turning point" of his life. He was the first South African pianist to be asked to perform in Helsinki, Finland. While Bowman was there, he became engulfed by the loneliness of being a concert pianist, which in his case did not come with the "perks of being a world famous pianist". This led to a great depression and therefore he decided to stop performing in Europe (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview).

2.8 Bowman's promotion to Associate Professor

After ten years of teaching as a senior lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch, Bowman was asked to apply for an Associate Professorship.

In the meeting of the selection committee, the validity of what Bowman had included in his curriculum vitae was queried, especially the part about the medals he had been

³⁵ The master-classes were initially conducted in Afrikaans but Professor Kempen stated that South Africa was a bilingual country and Bowman was entitled to speak English (Fourie 2001:107).

awarded at the Royal Academy. Physical proof of these medals and certificates was required. Bowman felt humiliated by this and was reluctant to accept the promotion.

Bowman was promoted to Associate Professor despite the fact that he did not have any formal academic qualifications and the stated minimum requirement for this position was a doctorate (Bowman and Smith 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2001:108; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006). He was promoted because of his achievements and reputation as a pianist, accompanied by his dedication and success as a teacher (Fourie 2001:108).³⁶

According to Fourie, Bowman's teaching career in Stellenbosch lasted for a period of twenty-six years. But Chait claims that it lasted twenty-five years which is confirmed by Bowman in his journal (Bowman 1983; Journal; Chait 1999:31; Fourie 2001:109). After an evaluation of the relevant dates, the writer agrees with Chait's calculations. Bowman worked and shared his ideas on music and performing with many students, colleagues and musicians. In 1992 Bowman served on the jury for the *SABC Prize* and the *UNISA International Piano Competition*. In 1994, UNISA awarded Bowman an Honorary Licentiate (Fourie 2007:147). Chapters 4 and 5 will provide more information on Bowman as a teacher and his work during his retirement years including how he overcame his mental breakdown.

2.9 Summary

The present chapter aimed at answering the following research questions as seen in Chapter 1:

- Who was Lionel Bowman?
- How did he become a successful concert pianist?

In answering these questions, a detailed historic account of the life of Lionel Bowman was mapped out by giving accounts from his childhood and youth which eventually led to Bowman being awarded a scholarship to further his studies at the Royal

³⁶ Although Bowman was reluctant to accept the promotion, he later became thankful that he eventually did because the title was accompanied by "many perks" including a pension fund (Bowman and Smith 1990: Recorded interview; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006). He constantly joked that he was probably the first and only South African professor without a matriculation qualification.

Academy in London. When the Second World War began, Bowman returned to South Africa and maintained a busy concert schedule. Ambition led him to return to London and pursue a career as a concert pianist abroad. From Chapter 2, it is clear that Bowman was one of South Africa's leading concert pianists. The current chapter also highlighted how Bowman became a successful concert pianist and later settled in Stellenbosch where he taught for twenty-five years but was forced by a mental break down to retire and move back to Cape Town.

The president of the Richard Wagner Society of South Africa, Herbert Glöckner (2008a: Interview) described Bowman as a “star as a pianist”. According to Glöckner, even though Bowman was a gifted musician, he remained “humble and modest”. Glöckner says that it was just not in Bowman's nature to put on “airs and graces” but he simply thought he was “smiled upon by fate and circumstances and he was fortunate enough to live at the right time”. Yet, he was highly esteemed and respected as eminent artist by students, colleagues and audiences.

CHAPTER 3: ASPECTS OF MUSIC CRITICISM WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO BOWMAN'S PIANO PLAYING

3.1 Introduction

When one reads the cover notes of the *Great Pianists of the Twentieth Century* compact discs, or compact discs of newcomers to the music scene, it is clear that the opinions of critics play a big role. Critics have played major parts in the moulding and breaking of many a career.

Harold Schonberg, chief critic of *The New York Times* from 1960 to 1981, was a prominent conservative voice (Sadie 2001:696). He was an expert in the history of piano performances, who favoured strong virtuoso personalities and became a thoroughly schooled representation of mainstream audience tastes. Nowadays, music criticism has become more extensive through the increase in media such as newspapers, magazines, radio and more recently in television, all of which can feature reviews of performances, new music and new recordings (Beard & Gloag 2005:44).

Bernard Shaw (Laurance 1981c:766) once said that:

Musical criticism can never be high enough, but the proportion of musically unqualified reporters praising every performance and enjoying unlimited free tickets is much smaller, if not practically extinct.

It has been mentioned that Bowman met and played for Shaw (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5). As far as can be ascertained, Shaw never wrote any criticisms for any of Bowman's performances in England or elsewhere. Yet, Shaw's words to Bowman greatly influenced him and became one of the mottos he lived by. It is clear that Shaw's opinion was highly regarded in the music world. Schonberg also uses many of Shaw's reviews in *The Great Pianists* for pianists such as (ordered according to the page numbers they appear in): Sir Charles Hallé (Schonberg 1978:221), Clara Wieck Schumann (p.229), Arabella Goddard (p.239), Sophie Menter (p.247), Ignacy Jan Paderewski (p.288), Authur de Greef (p.302), Joseph Slivinski (p.309), Vladimir de Pachmann (p.313), Leopold Godowsky (p.319), Vassily Sapellnikoff (p.325), Annette Essipoff (p.332), Ilona Eibenschütz (p.336) and Isaac Albéniz (p.342), because of Shaw's critical and insightful judgments accompanied by his great musical

knowledge. According to Laurance (1981a:7), Shaw's extraordinary musical knowledge resulted from an exposure to music almost from infancy. Laurance goes on to say that Eric Blom described Shaw as "one of the most brilliant critics of music who have ever worked in London, or indeed elsewhere" (Laurance 1981a:12).

Music criticism is defined as the elucidation and interpretation, based on the experience of an informed listener, of a work of performance (Randel 1986:212). Beard & Gloag (2005:42) extend this definition by saying that it is the activity of reviewing concerts and recordings by a professional journalist in which evaluation and judgements are made. Randel (1986:212) states that its primary aim is the clarification of the individual work or performance as heard, rather than the detection of structural or other features common to several works.³⁷

Much of the evaluation of Bowman's pianistic ability and his musical style can be seen in the ample number of newspaper reviews and criticisms Bowman kept throughout his career. They provide a clear yet contradictory picture. In order to clarify the importance of these sources, it is necessary to put the role and value of the music critic and music criticism into perspective. Harold Schonberg (1978:11) wrote that: "...once a pianist in the days before recording removed his hands from the keys, the sound was gone forever". It is, therefore, important to use this source of information as a crucial element in order to substantiate and provide a clear picture of Bowman's playing in concerts.

Schonberg (1978:11-12) emphasises the importance of the documentation of critiques in saying that even if Clementi, Dreyschock, Henselt, Chopin or Alkan, for instance, died before the development of the phonograph, a large amount of both physical and documentary evidence survives to give us a reasonably accurate and sometimes even a quite vivid idea of their playing. Biography, criticism, anecdotes, letters, hearsay from reliable sources and written music itself all play an important role in the assessment. The more popular the virtuoso, the more was written about him or her - in feuilletons, in letters, in reviews, in articles of various kinds, in books, in unpublished manuscripts, etcetera. Schonberg goes on to say that on the whole, most of this information about any given artist builds up to a fairly consistent body of opinion and when one finds a particular report in very sharp variance with all the others, "one

³⁷ There are two types of criticisms (Randel 1986:212). The first type is based on writing about (often termed reviewing) recent performances and works. Criticism of the second type aims to report the critic's judgement of quality for readers or listeners who may wish to use it as a guide. This study will focus on the first type only.

automatically looks for the particular bit of prejudice on the part of the writer. Generally it can be found” (Schonberg 1978:12-13). Therefore, it is necessary to mention that Schonberg’s statement raises a critical question of subjectivity and objectivity on the critics’ part.

Renowned soloists such as Horowitz, Heifetz, Casals and Rubenstein enjoyed prestige in their respective arts. They became cultural icons, appearing on the covers of news magazines without appearing to be mere entertainers courting popular acclaim. This vigorous performing culture, with its multiple performances of a limited repertory, had an impact on the style of criticism (Sadie 2001:695).

To this day, people who miss certain concerts often rely on the integrity of the criticisms to judge if the concert was a success or not. Schonberg (1978:11-12) also points this out in his book. Criticisms are often contradictory and can even create a lively debate, as illustrated by the examples below.

The Cape Times (Elizabeth & Edgecombe 1976:8) published an article called ‘Music critic criticized’. The dangers of biased views which so often have damaging results are clearly noted in the article. Elizabeth Rollo, a concert attendee, criticises the judgment of Rodney Edgecombe, who was the critic for *The Cape Times* at the time. Since it also involves Lionel Bowman, it is necessary to quote the entire article as it clearly demonstrates contradicting ideas and opinions. Sections 3.5 - 3.12 will shed more light concerning the contradictory ideas regarding Bowman’s playing and performances. The publication reads as follows:

In a review printed on October 4, your music critic says he is “uncertain of what measure to apply in an appraisal of Friday night’s concert”. He then proceeds to slate the UCT Orchestra (the bulk of whose members are students) in such harsh terms that one feels his yardstick is possibly the Concertgebouw Orchestra or the New York Philharmonic. Unlike Mr Edgecome [sic], I did not find the sound made by this orchestra “disagreeable”. On the contrary, to my ears, it was for the most part pleasing and contributed, with the pianist, Lionel Bowman, to a worthwhile and enjoyable performance. I find it astonishing that he can say “This (i.e. the fact that the sound was disagreeable) would not have mattered if their programme had comprised music of a trivial nature”. On what score would an evening spent listening to amateurs performing the music of Johann Strauss and Franz Léhar [sic] have been preferable? Surely Beethoven played less that perfectly is more rewarding for both the player and listener that “the Blue Danube”, especially as the object of this series is to give students experience in playing great works. I

wonder whether your critic considers that, as University drama students are unlikely to be able to match the performances of Laurence Olivier or John Gielgud, they should avoid playing in Shakespeare or Greek tragedy and confine themselves to light comedies! Mr Edgecombe's references to "such a band as this" and Beethoven being "palm-courterised" are hardly encouraging to students who are after all not yet professional players. The agreeableness of the sound was all the more creditable when all one considers the cramped conditions under which they are playing on the small Hidding Hall platform. Within the space of a month, the UCT Orchestra, with Lionel Bowman and Peter Carter as soloists and Michael Brimer conducting, will have performed Beethoven's five piano concertos and his violin concerto - a valuable project which I think is worthy of something better than the destructive criticism which last Friday's concert received from your critic.

(Rodney Edgecombe replies: I apologize if my observations were uncharitable - they were kept as general as possible to avoid invidious specification. Some performers such as Nigel Fish were good, though, and I regret omitting mention of them. However, I do feel that blemished Strauss is a better alternative than disfigured Beethoven. The analogy with the drama school does not hold because students can at least articulate words. Some UCT musicians on the other hand could barely play their notes.) - Arts Editor, Cape Times.

A similar incident occurred in an article titled *Music Criticism* written by Wynberg. The date and name of the newspaper are unknown. The article reads as follows:

Sir, Ray Alfred's letter about Lionel Bowman's recital published in *The Argus* of Friday surely cannot be the letter of an honest music-lover and should not cast a doubt on the fairness of your music critic. I heard that evening's recital and I fully agree with your music critic. Constructive criticism should be taken objectively and at its full value. I am not only expressing my view but that of many other musicians who heard the recital. I do not know your music critic. MUSIC-LOVER

The above mentioned articles are just two vivid examples pointing out the seriousness of reviews and criticisms in music. It has been noted that most of the material written on Bowman is newspaper articles with personal interviews, reviews and criticisms. Reviews have long played a vital role in music. Before technology, the main source of information about performers and new works was based on newspaper reviews and criticism. It is important to use this material because it is documented material that obviously Bowman kept and approved of. As mentioned in Chapter1, Section 1.1, there are articles written in *Musicus* which have also been used extensively for this study.

3.2 Bowman's thoughts on music criticism

Silvestri stated in an article without a date, that Newman once said that no music critic who thinks about his work can feel anything but depression after twenty years of it. Bowman was asked to comment on Newman's views and to share his own thoughts on the subject of music criticism and he remarked (Silvestri):

I feel that any music critic who manages to survive 20 years is very lucky. I was asked twice to write for a newspaper. Before one concert, the producer threatened to break every bone in my body if I gave it a bad review. After the second occasion, I was sitting... on a verandah [sic]... A man appeared, holding a woman by the arm, and waving a gun. He shouted something about my review... I made up my mind then to make the concert platform my career.

Bowman goes on to say that the environment also plays a huge role in criticism. An unsatisfactory moment during a performance may in London be accepted with humour, whereas in Cape Town, for instance, the result can be very damaging to the performer.³⁸ However, in 1977 when Vladimir Ashkenazy visited South Africa for concert tours, he also gave a recital to inaugurate the new open air theatre at Oude Libertas in Stellenbosch and Bowman was asked by *The Cape Times* to write a review of this concert (Bowman 1977:9). In order to examine and get the full scope of Bowman's reviewing style, the writer has decided to quote the whole review. The review reads as follows:

Open air theatre's dry acoustics.

STELLENBOSCH Farmers' Winery gave the Cape, and lovers of music, a wonderful Christmas present when they invited Ashkenazy, the world famous pianist, to open their new open air theatre at Oude Libertas, Stellenbosch, last Friday. It was a real gala occasion on a perfect summer evening. The complex is outstanding, in a wonderful setting, and the seats have been cleverly designed in concrete, but cushions are provided and they are very comfortable. The lighting has been well thought out and the gardens on the stage are most attractive and should be even more beautiful once the trees have grown taller. The only disappointment (and this was commented upon by every musician I spoke to, irrespective of where they were sitting) is the dryness of the acoustics. For future concerts perhaps this can be modified, either by

³⁸ Bowman told a story of the great pianist Cutner Solomon who was living in London during Bowman's London years. Solomon made a "terrible mess" of the Chopin *Etude* in F Major, Op 10. No. 8, and at the end of the etude, Solomon played a wrong note - G. Immediately after that he corrected it by playing the correct note - F. He then turned and gave a "furtive little smile" and the audience "shrieked with laughter". Bowman went on to say that he believed that if Solomon had played like that in Cape Town for instance, the press would have simply remarked that "Solomon has no technique" (Silvestri: Julie Andrews sang in his supporting programme).

screens, or a canopy, or some other arrangement to give the piano tone more resonance, warmth and power. The whole evening, including the orchids for the ladies (flown from Thailand) [sic] the sumptuous supper, was magnificently organized, a great credit to all concerned.

Programme

Ashkenazy played the same programme as at his recital in Cape Town, Beethoven, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and once again one marvelled at his economy of movement at the keyboard, his control over ornamentation and light figuration, and his enormous concentration. There were some fascinating interpretative ideas in the Chopin works, but there's no doubt that in the Rachmaninoff pieces he really is on home ground and they were outstandingly played especially as the style and idiom seem to suit his personality best. LIONEL BOWMAN

It is clear from this review that Bowman was a critic who researched before writing a review. An interesting observation is made, in that Bowman also tried to get a well rounded view from all concerned (such as other audience members) as well. It is also interesting to note that Bowman firstly pointed out all the positive aspects of the occasion and then the negative, but gives advice and suggestions for improvements. It is, however, also interesting that Bowman, who was regarded as a Beethoven specialist (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4) does not mention anything about Ashkenazy's Beethoven playing.

3.3 The role of music critics

The importance of music criticism and the influence of music critics are highlighted in Chapter 3. Sections 3.5 - 3.12 focus on newspaper articles that were collected by Bowman throughout his career, in order to summarise Bowman's playing. As can be expected, there will be numerous contradictory opinions which will also be commented upon. In a few instances, available live recordings will also be used in order to formulate opinions about Bowman's playing. Similar principles, followed by Joseph Horowitz and Schonberg will be applied in the above mentioned sections. Joseph Horowitz (1982:43) states that: "Arrau's earliest German reviews are informative".

Joseph Horowitz (1982) uses and quotes many reviews in his book written on the performances of Arrau in concert. It is clear that Horowitz (1982:251) believes that

good and bad reviews give the reader a clear picture of Arrau's playing. Many books that have been written about performing artists include a discussion of their discography if available. Some of them include some prominent concert programmes paralleled by their specific newspaper reviews and criticisms. There are, however, certain conflicting ideas in this regard. For instance, Joseph Horowitz concludes his book on Arrau with a chapter titled *Arrau on Records*. But he states in this chapter that fixed recordings are mostly misleading in creating permanent impressions of a given interpretation. Horowitz (1982:251-252) mentions that recordings also foster different impressions to those in live concerts because of the "gadgetry used in the studio". Joseph Horowitz believes that this has caused a big gap between live concerts and studio recordings. Joseph Horowitz (1982:251-252) states his concerns regarding the "double standard" of this issue:

In Carnegie Hall, wrong or vague notes are to be expected; on disc, precision and clarity are the rule. Generally, the studio standard is enforced less by the artist than by producers and engineers. Microphones are positioned to insure maximum definition; tapes are edited to insure maximum accuracy. Too often, the spontaneity and urgency of a concert performance are less successfully fabricated.

Many reviews on Vladimir Horowitz have stated that in order to experience the maximum "spell and electricity" of his performances, one had to hear him live. However, not all pianists make their careers as performing artists on stage. Conversely to Horowitz, there was also a great pianist such as Glenn Gould. He left the concert stage at the age of thirty-two never to return to it, but he continued to record prolifically (Dubal 1985:178). Gould (2003:DVD.2) believed that one is in total control in the recording studio. He even edited many of his own recordings himself. Another great pianist, Alfred Brendel, seems to have a more rounded opinion concerning this matter. Brendel (1990:200-201) believes that concert performances, live recordings and studio recordings are all important because they all serve different functions but he says that there should be more live recordings made. Brendel states that (1990:205):

In pleading for live recordings here, I do not by any means wish to turn my back on the studio. I have spent innumerable interesting and some happy hours in it, owe it much essential experience, and shall continue with certain reservations. But in future I should like to place more frequent live recordings next to them.

In addition to the newspaper criticisms, it is thus necessary to use Bowman's available recorded materials. Schonberg applied the same method in *The Great Pianists* and his reasons for using recorded materials are (Schonberg 1978:13):

...They help give evidence of the actual practice of pianists who flourished in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They do not, of course, supply all of the answers, but in many cases they are usually suggestive and articulate documents.

Neville Cohn was an accompanist and technician for the SABC from 1968 to 1977. He was also a music critic for the *Cape Argus* and wrote reviews on a number of Bowman's concerts. According to Cohn, the following characteristics were evident in Bowman's studio recordings (Bowman and Cohn 1991: Recorded interview):

- Integrity in approach.
- Sincerity towards reproducing the music.
- Respect for the score.

Cohn ends by stating that the only splices the recording technicians had to make with Bowman's recordings were the spaces between the movements (of a *Sonata* for example). Cohn also states that Bowman broadcasted from memory because he believed that recording a work was "like a proper performance" (Bowman and Cohn 1991: Recorded interview).

3.4 Bowman's repertoire

In 1970, a written interview was published by *The Cape Times* after Bowman's performance of the *Piano Concerto* in D minor K. 467 by Mozart. The aim of the article was to highlight Bowman's success as a prominent South African pianist while also capturing his views on the state of the arts at the time. While researching, the writer came across an error in the article concerning Bowman's *Concerto* repertoire. The reporter (*The Cape Times* 1970:7) claims that: "Mr. Bowman has given hundreds of performances and his repertoire now includes over 50 concertos".

It has already been mentioned that one cannot always rely on newspaper articles for factual information. Mostly, the question of subjectivity and objectivity plays a role. Bowman gave many concerts throughout his performing career. However, the reporter

makes an incorrect statement in saying that Bowman had fifty *Concertos* in his repertoire. He may have performed *Concertos* fifty or more times with orchestras but there is no evidence of Bowman having played fifty different *Concertos*. Bowman's repertoire of solo works, *Concertos* and other works with piano and orchestra, listed in Table 2, verifies this fact.

The table has been compiled after a thorough study of newspaper articles and concert programmes. This is not to say that these are the only works that Bowman learned and performed since starting his piano lessons and throughout his whole performing career. But the *Concertos* that are listed in the table are, however, the only ones that Bowman had in his repertoire. The solo works are the ones that mostly occurred in his programmes throughout his performing career. Some of the repertoire performed has been mentioned in the recorded interviews but only documented works from Bowman's programmes and newspaper reviews have been included in the table.

For this table, the names of the relevant composers will be arranged in alphabetical order. Works where the catalogue number is not stated in the programmes or newspaper articles will be indicated as C/?. If the relevant number of the work is unknown, this will be indicated as N/?. Keys and or catalogue numbers of works that do not require their mentioning have been omitted. (Refer to Table 2 on page 43).

It has been stated that Bowman also performed the Beethoven *Sonata* Op. 111 and the Brahms *Paganini Variations* Op. 35 (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3). The exact set which Bowman performed is unknown because physical record of the programme could not be ascertained. He also performed the *Warsaw Concerto*, the *Cornish Rhapsody* as already mentioned (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4). It is known to the writer that Bowman also performed the Schumann *Toccata* Op. 7, the Franck *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue* and *Rush Hour in Hong-Kong* by Abram Chasins. Clearly Bowman had a vast and varied solo repertoire. Apart from the above mentioned works, Bowman also performed a *Rhapsody* by Dennis Matthews³⁹ and included works by many other

³⁹ Dennis Matthews was a good friend of Bowman's before and during the war at the Royal Academy of Music.

Table 2: Bowman's Repertoire List

Composers	Works	Composers	Works	Composers	Works	Composers	Works
Albeniz	Cordoba Seguidillas	Brahms continued...	Intermezzo Op. 116, N/?, E Major Scherzo Op. 4 Concerto Op. 15, No. 1 Concerto Op. 83, No. 2	Du Plessis	Sonata No. 1 for Piano	Prokofiev	Concerto Op. 26, No. 3
J.S. Bach	Fantasia BWV. 906 Concerto, F Minor			Franck	Variations Symphonique	Rachmaninoff	Prelude Op. 23, No. 5 Prelude Op. 23, No. 6 Concerto Op. 18, No. 2
Bach-Busoni	Chaconne	Chopin	Etude Op. 10, No. 3 Etude Op. 10, No. 12 Etude Op. 25, No. 1 Ballade Op. 23, No. 1 Ballade Op. 47, No. 3 Waltz Op. 64, No. 2 Waltz in E Minor Grand Waltz Brilliante Op. 18 Impromptu Op. 29 Fantaisie-Impromptu Op. 66 Sonata Op. 58, No. 3 Scherzo Op. 31, No. 2 Scherzo Op. 39, No. 3 Nocturne Op. 15, No. 2 Nocturne Op. 27, No. 2 Nocturne C/?, N/?, B Major Andante Spianato and Grand Polonaise Op. 61 Barcarolle Op. 60 Prelude Op. 28 No. 5 Mazurka Op. 24 No. 4	Grieg	Concerto Op. 16	Ravel	Sonatine
J.C. Bach	Sonata, No. 2, Op. 17			Handel	Suite No. 5	Saint-Saëns	Concerto Op. 22, No. 2 Concerto Op. 103, No. 5
Beethoven	Für Elise Op. 129 Andante FAVORI Rondo a Capriccio, Op. 129 Rondo Op. 51, No. 1 32 Variations, G.191 Sonata Op. 13 Sonata Op. 14, No. 1 Sonata Op. 14, No. 2 Sonata Op. 27, No. 2 Sonata Op. 28 Sonata Op. 31, No. 2 Sonata Op. 49, No. 2 Sonata Op. 57 Sonata Op. 79 Sonata Op. 81a Sonata Op. 90 Sonata Op 109 Concerto Op. 15, No. 1 Concerto Op. 19, No. 2 Concerto Op. 37, No. 3 Concerto Op. 58, No. 4 Concerto Op. 73, No. 5			Haydn	Sonata C/?, N/? F Major Variations, F Minor Concerto, D Major	Scarlatti-Tausig	Pastorale e Capriccio
				Joubert	Sonata in one Movement Op. 24 Rhapsody, Evocations	Schubert	Impromptu Op. 90, No. 4 Impromptu Op. 142, No. 3 Landler Op. 171 Sonata Op. 120 Sonata Op. 164
		Clementi	Sonatina Op. 36	Liszt	Etude de Concert, No. 3 Concerto No. 1 Hungarian Fantasy	Schubert-van Wyk	Duo for two pianos transcribed for solo piano and orchestra
		Debussy	Two arabesques Estampes (1903) Images Set. 1: Reflets dans l'eau Prelude Book. 1, No.10 Prelude Book. 2, No.12	Mendelssohn	Rondo Capriccioso Op. 14 Concerto Op. 25, No. 1	Schumann	Arabesque Op. 18 Papillons Op. 2 Carnival Op. 9 Kinderscenen Op. 15 Concerto Op. 54
Berkeley	Six Preludes (1948)			Mozart	Sonata K. 330 Sonata K. 332 Sonata K. 570 Adagio K. 540 Fantasia K. 397 Fantasia K. 475 Rondo K. 485 Concerto K. 414 Concerto K. 466 Concerto K. 467 Concerto K. 488 Concerto K. 491 Rondo K. 386	Schumann-Liszt	Widmung
Brahms	Two Rhapsodies Op. 79 Capriccio C/?, N/?, D Minor	De Falla	Nights in the Gardens of Spain			Tchaikovsky	Concerto Op. 23, No. 1
		Dohnany	Rhapsody, Op. 11, No. 3			von Weber	Sonata Op. 39, No. 2

composers such as Bach's *Two-part Invention* in F Major (although there is no record of this - see Chapter 2, Section 2.2)⁴⁰, Scarlatti⁴¹, John Field and Francis Poulenc. These works are not, though, specified in programmes. Bowman also accompanied works such as Schubert's *Winterreise*, Franck's *Violin Sonata* in A Major, Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, Brahms' *Violin Sonata* in D Minor and some Mozart and Beethoven *Violin Sonatas*.

Judging from the available programmes, Bowman repeated many works in his recitals. This seems to be a common trend among many performing artists. They usually learn works and increase their repertoire whilst young, therefore making it easier to relearn these works later. Like many other pianists, Bowman did this because of his busy teaching schedule.

3.5 Bowman plays Chopin

Judging from his programmes, Bowman always included works by Chopin in his recitals except in his all-Beethoven performances. Examining the available criticisms regarding Bowman's Chopin playing, they all refer to the following:

- Pedalling
- Ease
- Grace
- *rubato*

The available criticisms on Bowman's Chopin playing, mostly mention his artistic use of pedalling which, according to Banowetz (1992:179), is essential in Chopin playing. Nevill Cohn (1973:13) described Bowman's pedalling as being "exemplary". Bowman performed Chopin works with "relaxed ease and grace" avoiding excessive *rubato* (Gie 1973:6). MINIM (referencing information missing), in particular, compliments Bowman on his use of *rubato* and it becomes clear that MINIM feels

⁴⁰ Bowman stopped including Bach in his recitals in 1942. The reason for this was that once when he was mentally preparing to perform a Bach *Suite* for the BBC, Elsie Hall walked by and asked him what he was about to perform. When Bowman then told her, Hall simply remarked (Bowman and Slobedman): "Very dangerous to play Bach before you play yourself in"!

⁴¹ Bowman included Scarlatti *Sonatas* in many of his solo recitals but in the available programmes, only their keys are stated. Because of the lack of their catalogue numbers, it is impossible to ascertain the specific *Sonatas* which he performed.

strongly about the *rubato* factor in Chopin playing. In the review, MINIM states that excessive *rubato* ruins Chopin playing. This opinion is also shared by many great pianists such as Badura-Skoda, who pointed this out in his master-classes in 2007 that were attended by the writer in Weimar. However, a substantial number of the examined reviews also state that Bowman's Chopin playing was "flawlessly correct though lacking in warmth".

It is clear that Bowman was against the over-sentimentalised way of playing Chopin. It seems as if Bowman's approach to Chopin playing may be compared to that of Busoni's which is stated in *The Great Pianists* (Schonberg 1978:346):

He was entirely without the big rubatos, accelerandos, diminuendos and sentimentality. Even the tiny Preludes he played in a monumental and nonsentimental [sic] manner that many critics thought entirely without charm.

According to Jonathan Summers (2004:2), this manner of Chopin playing was often criticized as being too "intellectual and disciplined, eliminating every hint of waywardness, of improvisation, of tenderness".

Bowman admitted that he avoided listening to recordings throughout his performing career. He said that he was negatively influenced by recordings since he tried to copy them. He did, however, attend the concerts of many great musicians, particularly pianists. One can only wonder whether these great musicians did influence Bowman's interpretations and conceptions of works. It might have been a conscious or even a sub-conscious influence. Bowman could not have heard Busoni perform live, but it is possible that Busoni's recordings of Chopin's works could have been included in some of the recordings he had listened to prior to him stopping listening to any recordings.

3.6 Bowman plays Schumann

Schumann is one of the frequent composers that occur in Bowman's concerts. Judging from the newspaper reviews, the following traits become evident in his Schumann playing:

- Technique
- Poetic powers
- Flawlessness
- Tempos

Most of the examined reviews comment on Bowman's "fine technical equipment" which according to Hans Kramer (1972) seems to have come to the fore especially in the more brilliant sections. It is clear that Bowman had a sound understanding of the works of Schumann and his "poetic powers" were always evident, particularly in the slow sections and slow movements. Although Bowman's performances were mostly praised for their flawlessness (also seen in Section 3.5), wrong notes did seem to occur at times (T.A.: referencing information missing).

Almost all the available critiques comment on Bowman's choice of tempos, which seems to have been usually too fast. This, according to the reviews, sometimes made his Schumann performances mechanical because he made one focus more on speed than on the sound. According to A.S. (1966:14), Bowman's "main drawback of his piano style was the hard tone that seemed to creep into anything that is played over a mezzo-forte volume". A.S. and Floris Stander (1966) are in agreement in saying that Bowman's harsh and overly accented tone seemed to have broken the flow of the lines which, according to the above mentioned, often resulted in "soulless" performances. Stander does, however, comment on Bowman's "...hoë graad van musikaliteit en vaardigheid..." [high degree of musicality and dexterity].

3.7 Bowman plays Grieg

The only documented work that Bowman performed by Grieg was the *Piano Concerto* in A Minor (see Table 2). In 1947, Bowman's performance of the Grieg *Piano Concerto* at the Grand Pavilion was compared to that of Benno Moiseiwitsch and Mark Hambourg by Dr. R. D. Chalke. The following traits were pointed out:

- Musical intelligence
- Finger-work
- Poetic approach

- Strength
- Speed

Bowman's musical intelligence was frequently commented upon. His brilliant finger-work enabled him to render "clean and faultless performances". Bowman's poetic approach, which was also evident in the performances of the slow sections and movements of Schumann piano works, was often mentioned for his Grieg *Piano Concerto* performances as well. It is interesting to note that in his 1964 performance of the Grieg *Piano Concerto*, P.S. (1964:3) and D.S. (1964) comment on Bowman's bandaged finger. D.S. (1964) states that this, however, "...did not seem to interfere with his strength and speed maintenance". Another characteristic of Bowman noted, and evident in his Chopin playing, was his avoidance of over-sentimentalizing. However, B.M. (referencing information missing) states that:

Smooth and polished execution was, as always, a feature of his playing, but it failed to rouse enthusiasm. Over-much use of the soft pedal in piano passages - noticeable, too, in the slow movement of his Beethoven Concerto last Thursday - clouded the crystal-line quality inherent in Grieg's music and made it too sentimental. It detracted from, instead of enhancing the singing tone one looks for in the slow movement.

B.M. was referring to Bowman's performance of Beethoven's *Second Piano Concerto* in which he stated that: "If too, the soft pedal was a trifle evident in the slow movement, depth of sentiment was wholly satisfying".

B.M.'s statement raises several questions because it is contradictory to what has been mentioned before. Firstly, B.M. states that Bowman's playing was "always smooth and polished". But it has already been observed in Section 3.6 about Bowman's Schumann playing that A.S. and Stander remarked on Bowman's harsh and accented tone which disturbed the musical line. The other question is that of sentimentality. P.S. (1964:3) states that even though Bowman had a hand injury, his playing was convincing and was not sentimental but according to B.M., Bowman's Grieg was "too sentimental", clearly contradicting what has been said about Bowman thus far (see Section 3.5). But as seen, according to B.M., for the performance of the above mentioned Beethoven, Bowman's use of the "soft pedal" seems to have added to the "depth of sentiment". It is clear that B.M. did not favour the use of the *una corda* maybe because it alters the sound which may be characterised as sentimental by some listeners.

3.8 Bowman plays Tchaikovsky

According to the few available reviews, Bowman performed Tchaikovsky's *First Piano Concerto* on several occasions, to great acclaim. The following traits are apparent in his rendering of the above mentioned *Concerto*:

- Detail
- Artistry
- Octave passages
- Speed
- Contrast
- Ease

Bowman seems to have paid careful attention to detail and his “superb artistry” came to the fore. Bowman’s “fantastic octave passages” seems to have always been executed at a “great speed” which contrasted the “sweet slow sections” (P.G.F.: referencing information missing). His cadenzas were rendered with “consummate ease”. In 1962, N.C. stated that Bowman had the “muscle power to build up the concerto’s many tempestuous climaxes to impressive volumes of sonorous sounds”. Another common feature that is highlighted is “the unaffected *rubato* of certain passages”. This statement has been made in most of Bowman’s reviews thus far. N.C. (1962) states that: “Considering its many technical pitfalls, he hit a few wrong notes and had the muscle power to build up its many tempestuous climaxes to impressive volumes of sonorous sounds”. It is interesting to note that T.A. (referencing information missing) also mentioned Bowman’s playing of wrong notes at places (see Section 3.6). It is, however, clear from the reviews that Tchaikovsky’s *First Piano Concerto* suited Bowman well. It was a vehicle for him which aided in highlighting his temperament and sound technical equipment.

3.9 Bowman plays Rachmaninoff

Rachmaninoff is one of the least encountered composers in Bowman’s repertoire. He did perform the two *Preludes* by Rachmaninoff (see Table 2), but evidently in one recital only. He did, however, perform the *Second Piano Concerto* on several

occasions. In 1964, Noel Storr stated that Bowman was at his best in this highly romantic work. The following traits are apparent:

- Tone
- Control
- Clarity
- Balance
- Bass notes
- Staccato passages
- Concentration
- Emotion
- Tempos
- Technique
- Climaxes

Storr (1964) stated that Bowman exacted a “resonant tone from the piano” coupled with “crisp control and balance”. A.S. (1964) commented on Bowman’s “powerful bass notes” and his “solid treatment of the rapid staccato passages”. A.S. (1964) goes on to say that Bowman “kept his head at all times (but nowhere was his interpretation unemotional) and did not choose tempi that were too fast to be played with clarity”. The part about Bowman’s choice of tempos in this *Concerto* is of particular interest. Thus far, it has been evident that Bowman’s choice of fast tempos has been criticized by many critics, proving the statement about the remarks he received for his UNISA examinations to be true (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2). From A.S.’s (1964) review, one wonders if Bowman chose fast tempos because his natural technique made everything easy for him to play but maybe he found Rachmaninoff’s works harder because of his small hands (see Chapter 4). According to D.L.S. (referencing information missing), Bowman’s technique was “always his servant” and because of this, he achieved “brilliant climaxes”.

Baton states that in Bowman’s interpretations of this *Concerto*, though expressively treated, the many “tender and moving melodies lacked in flexible tone and nuance”. D.L.S. also comments that Bowman did not always maintain tension in the quiet passages and “he could not muster the sheer muscle to give power as well as polish the third movement [sic]”.

There is a live recorded tape of Bowman performing the first movement of Rachmaninoff's *Second Piano Concerto*. Only about three quarters of the movement is on the tape though. The year, location and orchestra are, however, unknown as Bowman failed to mark them on the tape.

Bowman's tolling bell effect is immediately heard with the opening chords of the *Concerto*. His strong rhythmic sense is evident in this recording. One can clearly detect Bowman's unaffected playing accompanied by his secure finger work. The writer agrees with Baton in saying that the melodies lacked in flexibility of tone and nuance. Bowman once mentioned that one of his highlights was hearing Rachmaninoff himself play his own *Second Piano Concerto* in London. Bowman praised Rachmaninoff's performance and loved Rachmaninoff's piano playing. From this, one can only assume that maybe Bowman followed a similar conception to the one he had heard when Rachmaninoff performed the *Second Piano Concerto* in London.

3.10 Bowman plays Mozart

In 1999, Bowman remarked that: "Beethoven and Mozart are my great loves. Of course I have played works of other composers but those two remain my all-time favourites" (Yutar 1999a).

Mozart is one composer seen in many of Bowman's concert programmes. As has already been observed, it is difficult to judge one's playing only from newspaper reviews as many contradictions become evident. In addition to the reviews, Bowman's live recordings of the Mozart *Piano Concertos* in D Minor (K. 466) and A Major (K. 488) (see Discography and Appendix B) will be used for the evaluation of his Mozart playing.

From the reviews on Bowman's Mozart playing, the following characteristics are prominent:

- Relaxed manner
- Rhythmic control

- Style
- Tone
- Clarity
- Interpretations
- Accuracy
- Professionalism
- Technical control
- Clear articulation
- Cantabile lines

Bowman's relaxed manner was always commented upon which was also described as "consummate ease" in his Chopin playing (see Section 3.5). Bowman was praised for his "solid understanding of the style" and his "purity of tone and clarity". His Mozart rendering seems to have always been "unaffected", a trait also seen in his Chopin (see Section 3.5), Grieg (see Section 3.7) and Rachmaninoff (see Section 3.9) interpretations. Bowman's "notational accuracy" and his professionalism were always evident.

Stewart Young (1973) unites the above mentioned adjectives regarding Bowman's playing in saying that Bowman's tempos in his Mozart playing provided an ideal framework for a disciplined degree of rhythmic freedom which never disturbed the fundamental approach of the work being played. Young (1973) and Cohn (1972) are in agreement in saying that when Bowman played a Mozart *Concerto*, one was always aware of the "true collaboration" of the soloist and conductor.

In 1970, 1976 and 1981, Antoinette Silvestri wrote reviews for Bowman's Mozart *Concerto* performances. Examining these reviews, the main theme that seems to occur throughout is Bowman's ability to "let the beauty of the notes speak for themselves while giving the musical importance of each phrase its proper place" in the context of the work being played. Young (1973) states that Bowman's *cantabile* lines "transcended the limitations of keys and hammers with artless ease". Above all, Cohn (1972) mentions Bowman's "integrity in the interpretations he offered". Silvestri (1981) solidifies Cohn's statement in saying that Bowman gave an "honest account" in his interpretations.

It is interesting to note that most of the negative criticisms Bowman received for his Mozart playing were from John Benzon. Benzon (1975) once stated that:

Mr. Bowman gave a bright, forthright and attractive performance of the work. One does not look to Mr. Bowman for extreme delicacy of interpretation rather his forte is in the affirmative qualities which suited the outside movements well, particularly the finale. This approach fitted the slow movement less easily, and it had a tendency to heaviness.

In contrast to Benzon (1975), Shirley Gie (1972) commented that Bowman needed to be more assertive in his Mozart playing. In 1971, after Bowman's performance of the Mozart D Minor *Piano Concerto*, *The Daily News* (Gamba releases his magnetism) commented that:

Far less effective was Bowman's performance. Bowman is a fluent and competent pianist and gets round the notes efficiently enough, but shows little of the insight needed to produce more than a routine playing. His playing was unsure and cool. The Romance was beautiful but the finale lacked fire – even within the Mozartian limits.

As can be seen, this clearly contradicts with what Benzon (1975) stated. Benzon (1975) says that Bowman's sound quality and touch did not suit Mozart's second movements but worked well for the fast movements, while the exact opposite can be observed from *The Daily News* (1971). It is not quite clear, however, where Gie's (1972) comment lies in the above mentioned "equation".

After Bowman's performance of Mozart's C Minor *Piano Concerto*, Steward Young (1973) remarked that:

I believe that Mozart himself favoured the performing approach referred to in such terms as "classical restrained". This beautifully thought out interpretation spoke authentically and left one vividly reminded of the towering greatness of the work.

Benzon (1976) however, goes on to say that he found an "imperturbable unevenness" in Bowman's Mozart playing. It is possible that Benzon might have heard Bowman on his "off days". But one wonders how it is possible for Bowman to play "imperturbably uneven" (Benzon 1976), if his "solid technique" is what seems to be a common factor in most of the critiques mentioned thus far.

After listening to Bowman's live recordings of Mozart *Piano Concertos* in D Minor (K. 466) and A Major (K. 488), Bowman's impeccable tone quality is clearly

revealed. He creates a singing quality when executing ornamentation and light figuration.

It is of interest to note that comparing Bowman's approach to Mozart with that of the "younger" pianists such as Mitsuku Uchida and Andras Schiff, Bowman plays everything mostly non-legato whereas Uchida and Schiff have a more legato approach.

Noel Storr (referencing details not available) once said that it is usually in the last movements where Bowman seemed to be "snatching at the wrong notes now and then". After listening to the two available live recordings, the writer agrees with Storr. Fourie (2008: Interview) says that Bowman's playing sometimes lacked tension and became too relaxed. She attributes this to Bowman's experimental years while trying to understand how his hands worked in developing his method of piano playing (see Chapter 4).

3.11 Bowman plays Beethoven

Bowman once commented in an interview that: "If you love Beethoven - as a symbol, not sentimentally like a fool - he will love you back" (Despoja 1980: 26).

Bowman performed works of Beethoven more than he did those of any other composer. Judging from all the available reviews, Bowman's Beethoven performances arouse contradictory reactions from his audience including the music critics. Bowman loved the works of Beethoven and he had fixed artistic ideas and views about interpreting Beethoven.⁴²

When examining the reviews of Bowman's Beethoven playing, the following features are prominent:

- Clean
- Passage work
- Articulation

⁴² In 1971, Bowman had the opportunity to play on Beethoven's pianos in Bonn and he described it as "a wonderful feeling" (Bowman's notebook).

- Phrasing
- Dynamic detail
- Tone
- Rhythmic stability
- Colouring
- Technical equipment

According to Ruth Thackeray (1972) on Bowman's Beethoven interpretations, "nothing could be construed as interfering with what Beethoven wrote, so that one could listen to and enjoy the music itself without any distraction". "Clean passage work" and "articulate phrasing" coupled with "obvious attention to dynamic detail" (Thackeray 1972), seem to be prominent in his Beethoven playing. These traits were also evident in his Schumann, Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and Mozart interpretations (see Sections 3.6 - 3.10). Bowman's "beautifully produced tone" especially in slow sections and slow movements, supported by rhythmic stability and a "fine sense of colouring" with strong technical equipment (also mentioned in Sections 3.5 - 3.10), were regularly mentioned.

When Bowman gave an all-Beethoven recital at the Wigmore Hall, the critic (referencing information missing) called him "...one of those rare artists whose technique can be taken for granted... and whose whole aim is faithful interpretation from the first bar". According to that critic, Bowman had the "undoubted temperament for Beethoven and a remarkable maturity, which resulted in most of the depth, drama, and poetry being realised". Once again Bowman's hard tone was pointed out "especially in the strenuous passages". The reporter ended the review by saying:

These were small points, however, in some exquisitely balanced and sensitive playing that stamped him as one likely to develop into a highly significant Beethoven interpreter.

Judging from the reviews, it is clear that Bowman's conception of Beethoven changed drastically over the years. Initially, Bowman's Beethoven playing was criticized for his tendency to rush, lacking in communicating, dullness, lack of subtlety, lightweight-ness, restrained manner and tendencies when his fingers seemed to merely brush over the keys without any meaning. Rodney Edgecome (1976) criticized Bowman's slow movements for "seeming complacent rather than searching". In 1966,

The Star described Bowman as being a pianist of “strange idiosyncrasies and occasional blind spots coupled with abrupt phrase endings”. John Benzon (referencing information missing) criticized Bowman for his unclear sense of phrasing and states that Bowman’s execution of slow movements would benefit from a softer piano attack. After Bowman’s performance of Beethoven’s *Second Piano Concerto*, Dora Sowden (1965) remarked that: “Lionel Bowman played it as if he was on the side of the ‘shallows’”.

In 1947, C.G.F. from *Musical Opinions* stated that: “Slickness and superficiality are indeed, the chief characteristics of Mr. Bowman’s piano playing”. After one of Bowman’s performances of Beethoven’s *Fifth Piano Concerto*, Rhys Lewis (referencing information missing) stated:

Mr. Bowman’s playing was again constantly at pains to show us exactly what Beethoven wrote but not at all to open our ears to what he meant by it. In short, for all the close attention to the score, it was as soulless and prosaic as a Czerny study.

The term “superficiality” seems often to be used about Bowman’s Beethoven playing when he was still growing as a person and artist (also see Chapter 2, Section 2.5). One can’t help but wonder if there is some validity to the above mentioned press reports regarding Bowman’s Beethoven playing.

When J.N.F. (referencing information missing) heard one of Bowman’s performances of Beethoven’s *Third Piano Concerto*, he stated in his review that he had formed the impression that Bowman was “a pianist better suited to Mozart than Beethoven”. B.M. (referencing information missing) and Baton (referencing information missing) also commented on Bowman’s performing mannerisms. He would often “poise his left hand high in the air” which seemed to be visually “distracting and quite unnecessary as adjuncts to interpretation”.

It is, however, clear that Bowman developed into a deeper and more introspective artist. Most of the later reviews comment on Bowman’s artistry and maturity, especially in his second movements. After Bowman’s performance of Beethoven’s *First Piano Concerto*, B.M. (referencing information missing) once stated that:

Sensitive touch and phrasing in the first movement replaced the erstwhile “cut-glass” brilliance in finger-work which before had so often detracted from his artistry.

Baton agreed with B.M. after one of Bowman’s performance, of the *Fourth Piano Concerto* in saying that:

His performance of the concerto evidenced a growing maturity in his musicianship. His sense of dynamics, accent, touch and tonal gradation has been sharpened and his playing is both interesting and individualistic.

When Bowman performed the *Third Piano Concerto* by Beethoven, B.M. once again remarked that:

Bowman has shown a fresh development. Most striking in his playing last night was the liquid quality of touch which has replaced the cut-glass brilliance of former years.

After listening to Bowman’s 1981 live recording of Beethoven’s *First Piano Concerto* (see Discography and Appendix B), once again his clear singing tone is immediately heard. His sense of colouring and clear articulation is also evident. It can, however, be detected that Bowman was rooted in a school that desired much pedalling in Beethoven.

Hans Kramer (1972) remarked on Bowman’s “pure approach to the music”, an opinion which he shares with Cohn. Cohn (Bowman and Cohn 1991: recorded interview) clearly remembers Bowman’s interpretations of the Beethoven *Sonatas* Op. 14 no.1 and Op. 109. He remarks on Bowman’s integrity and his approach and sincerity towards reproducing the music. Cohn reinforces the phrase that Bowman had “respect for the score”.

3.12 An overview of Bowman’s piano playing

Bowman stated that he grew into a deeper artist later in his life. Bowman had a great affinity for the compositions of Beethoven. Therefore, it makes sense that his interpretations of Beethoven works paralleled the different stages of his own life.

Judging from the reviews, the reasons for the evolving of Bowman's Beethoven playing can be understood.

In 1991, Cohn stated that Bowman had a wide repertoire with a touch that is more suited to Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms (Bowman and Cohn 1991: Recorded interview). However, after one of Bowman's recitals, the music critic ALLEGRO (referencing information missing) commented that:

Nevertheless, the Schumann and Chopin which he included in his programme, if at times somewhat lacking in warmth, was flawlessly correct. Brahms is obviously not Mr. Bowman's forte and his performance of the B Minor and the G Minor Rhapsodies was disappointing. He took them at too great a speed and thus much of their charm was lost. Speed was also the fault of a group of Chopin which followed although they were marked by brilliant technique.

Unfortunately, the above mentioned review regarding Bowman's Brahms playing is the only one available. Therefore there is not enough evidence to question ALLEGRO's statement because it has been noted that opinions may sharply contradict another.

Bowman also performed works by impressionist composers such as Debussy and Ravel (see Table 2). Judging from the available reviews concerning Bowman's interpretations of Debussy and Ravel works, his solid technique enabled him to perform these works with ease and to provide the required colouring of the tone and sound. However, harshness of tone seemed to have been prevalent at times (*The music critic*; A.M.; M.B.C.) (The referencing information missing for the three mentioned sources).

On 26 September 1940, Bowman had his first concert with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra as a professional pianist where he performed the Liszt *First Piano Concerto*.⁴³ The pianist who was to perform for the concert fell ill and Bowman was asked to substitute for him. Because of his ability as a fast learner, Bowman learned this *Concerto* in approximately six days (Van der Spuy 1980:31; Bowman and Juritz 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2000b:48). Beatrix Marx, who was a well-known newspaper critic, wrote a good review about Bowman's performance saying:

⁴³ According to Van der Spuy (1980:31) and Fourie (2000b:48), this was Bowman's first performance with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra but the research evidence proves this to be incorrect. In Chapter 2, Section 2.2, it is stated that Bowman performed the second movement of Mozart's D Minor *Piano Concerto*, K. 466 with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra.

Lionel Bowman scored a well deserved success in a fresh, rhythmical performance of Liszt's Concerto for Piano in E flat ... Bowman had to return three or four times. *The Cape Times*. September 1940 (American Tour Programme 1948; Van der Spuy 1980:31).

In 1948, when Bowman gave the South African première of the Prokofiev *Third Piano Concerto* the press remarked that:

He was more than brilliant. He played this devilish work (the Prokofiev Third Piano Concerto) with effortlessness, exhorting from that invalid piano remarkable effects and even a true, sonorous fortissimo ... I predict for him a great, possibly a very great, future in the musical world. *Cornet di Falsetto, Trek* (American Tour programme 1948).

In the same year, he gave a performance of Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*. For this performance, the following impressions were highlighted:

In De Falla's 'Nights in a Spanish Garden', Lionel Bowman demonstrated a spontaneous feeling for his rhythmical intricacies, his tonal expressionism and wild temperament. The technical side seemed to have presented no difficulties. *Trek Cape Town* (American Tour programme 1948).

When Bowman began his performing career in the 1940s there was a "Horowitz air" in the piano world (Shifrin 1981:2). Horowitz changed the whole concept of piano playing and showmanship. Everyone tried to "play like Horowitz". Bowman's "basic talent", as he called it, at that time was "...speed, accuracy and virtuosity". He claimed to have been a "glitter pianist" (Shifrin 1981:2). Bowman said that he grew into a deeper type of artist only in his later years (Shifrin 1981:2):

I was a very late developer. In the past fifteen years, my best pieces have been the sad, reflective ones. I could no more play the Tchaikovsky today than fly, irrespective of damaged hands or arms!

Fourie (2001:110) states Bowman's thoughts which he mentioned in an interview with her by saying:

He [Bowman] admits that he did not really work hard, and did not know how to work before he was about forty years old. Until then, he had had difficulty understanding himself, and in a certain sense lived rather aimlessly. His whole education had been 'haphazard' and he considers it 'something of a miracle' that, despite this, he had a good career. His

career was always coloured by some ‘awful disasters’ as well as wonderful successes ... He always tried to maintain a certain standard in his playing and in his teaching, without trying to over-excel. This to his mind may be the reason why he survived as a pianist, as a teacher and as a person.

Bowman’s statement is a common one amongst many artists. It is interesting to note that even Horowitz stated that he went through a period of artistic development as he grew older. His views are similar to those of Bowman’s. According to Howard Taubman (1953:5), Horowitz experienced a significant change that perfectly illustrated his artistic development which took place in his practice procedures over the years. When Horowitz was younger, he concentrated all his energies on the brilliant, difficult virtuoso works. On 12 January 1928, Horowitz performed the Tchaikovsky *Piano Concerto No.1* at Carnegie Hall with the New York Philharmonic with Sir Thomas Beecham conducting. According to Taubman (1953:5):

His steel-like fingers roared over the keys with dazzling precision and speed. He tossed off a passage in octaves with such recklessness and accuracy that experts could scarcely credit their ears. And at the end he was travelling so swiftly that he finished ahead of the orchestra.

After this, Horowitz nodded and with detachment remarked: “I was playing for myself” (Taubman 1953:5). Later he “lavished his deepest thoughts on the delicate, little song-full measures” that the “unwary and unreflecting pianist” might regard as too easy to detain anyone. “It is how you phrase and colour these passages that lays bare the heart and mind of the artist”.

According to Horowitz (Taubman 1953:6), one “must be able to play the most difficult pages in Beethoven before your control is so sure that you can make ... simple pages sing as they must sing”. Horowitz’s aim was to make every phrase “...sing just as in Toscanini’s⁴⁴” (Taubman 1953:6). Horowitz goes on to say that the power is not the product of an accidental, trancelike state in the performer but it is compounded of many factors such as: “natural equipment, capacity for work, self-analysis, integrity and personality” (Taubman 1953:6).

Like many pianists of that time, Bowman was also influenced by Horowitz’s piano playing. The phrase “sing just as in Toscanini” is of particular interest because

⁴⁴ Toscanini was one of the world’s foremost conductors. Later, Horowitz became Toscanini’s son-in-law when he married his daughter, Wanda Toscanini.

according to Fourie (2008: Interview), during her piano lessons with Bowman, he always emphasised that: “You must fall in love with sound. Sound is the most important aspect of piano playing!”

Bowman was an instinctive artist (Slobedman: Recorded interview). He was never a listener but a performer. Eric Slobedman states that initially, Bowman lacked confidence and was a nervous performer but later he became more assertive. A very interesting statement by Slobedman is that when Bowman was in his thirties, his enjoyment for playing the piano stopped. He overcame this phase when he started his technique of “relearning” his piano pieces instead of the mechanic repetition he used to do when he practised (see Chapter 4). Bowman started enjoying the music because he constantly discovered new ideas and revived old ones. He was always well prepared and professional in rehearsals and concerts. One could clearly see the respect he received from the conductor and orchestra members (Bowman and Slobedman: Recorded interview). Cohn says that Bowman was a “musically honest musician” (Bowman and Cohn 1991: Recorded interview).

Fourie (2001:110) once wrote the following about Bowman:

He does not consider himself to be ‘a really deep musician’ ... Ambition always drove him. He loves music, not for music itself, but for his own sake. He never felt the need to collect records and to spend long hours listening to the great pianists although he was advised by others to do so. He found his playing became artificial as he tried to imitate their playing. He realised though that he only played his best when his instincts took over. He admits that it could be expected that he, as a trained musician, should have followed the conventional lines, but he never did, he never fitted into a conventional setup.

Examining Bowman’s reviews, certain traits of his playing are mentioned by almost all the critics. In a case like this, it would be obvious to assume that although art is subjective, there are, however, some common factors found in most of the available reviews. Bowman was mostly praised for his:

- Clarity of articulation
- Rhythmic control
- Understanding of the different style periods, particularly, the classical period
- Exemplary pedalling especially in his Chopin playing
- Good ensemble playing when performing with the orchestra

- Artistry which developed even more with age
- Sincerity and honesty in his interpretations
- Fine technical equipment which many described as “cut-glass brilliance” but later developed into a beautiful singing tone as Bowman grew and matured as an artist and human being

Beard & Gloag (2005:43) state that:

The reviewer has before him one of the most important works by the master whose pre-eminence as an instrumental composer it is doubtful that anybody would now dispute; he is utterly permeated by the subject of the present review, and may nobody take it amiss if he exceeds the limits of conventional appraisals and strives to put into words all the profound sensations that this composition has given rise to within him.

Sections 3.5 - 3.12 merely gave a general picture of Bowman’s playing according to reviews. It is clear that Bowman regarded the opinions of the press and critics to have had substance because he kept a record of their opinions about him throughout his whole life.

3.13 Summary

Chapter 3 aimed at providing answers to the following research question:

- How is criticism in music relevant, especially regarding performing artists?

The present chapter also provided evidence that music criticism plays a vital role in the building or breaking down of any performing artist because of their being constantly under the scrutiny of the press and critics. This chapter also highlighted that because the art of music is subjective, views are almost always contradictory because when it comes to art, the question of taste also plays a role in one’s judgement.

CHAPTER 4: AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF BOWMAN'S TEACHING METHOD AND *THE MAGIC TOUCH*

4.1 The development of Bowman's method

During the years at Stellenbosch, Bowman gained much experience in teaching different types of students. He also learned much about piano technique, especially from the students who struggled with it. He gradually developed a unique teaching method which concentrates on basic principles and techniques associated with hand and arm movements. He sums up his method by saying that (Despoja 1980:26; Bowman and Van der Merwe 1990: Recorded interview; Fourie 2001:109; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006):

...It's so simple people can't believe it. If you can play a scale and chords, you can play anything in the repertoire. Because my method - called - experiments makes you comfortable. ... And being comfortable banishes fear. ... And if you feel secure you can play even the most difficult work. There's no question about it! It works.

Bowman claimed that his method makes students feel better while they are playing because the method makes them feel more confident (Fourie 2001:109). It has been mentioned in Chapter 2, Section 2.7 that Bowman's hands suffered from *intermetacarpal ligament strain*.⁴⁵ According to Thelma Shifrin (1981:2), Bowman's piano playing and teaching were largely influenced by the physical pain he had suffered throughout his concert career. Bowman is quoted saying that he never understood why the pains occurred. Because of his small hands and limited stretch, when he played works with big hand stretches such as the Rachmaninoff *Second Piano Concerto*, his hands went into spasm. This eventually led Bowman to analyse his own movements at the piano and to develop a "new way of playing the piano" as he described it. This experience also coloured his teaching method. Bowman believed that once a pianist learned what the hand can do, he or she would be able to play

⁴⁵ During one of his concerts, Bowman had pains in his hands while performing the first movement of Beethoven's *Fifth Piano Concerto*. He was quickly taken to a doctor who gave him a strong injection to numb the pain. Bowman returned and continued with the rest of his performance (Bowman with Poole and Murray 1990: Recorded interview). A similar incident occurred in Johannesburg during a recital. He described the recital as "an agony" (*Salisbury Herald* 27 March). The pain caused by a muscle in his little finger had forced him to cut short his rehearsal with the SABC Orchestra. On the actual evening, however, "he gave the performance of his life" (*Salisbury Herald* 27 March).

anything. This also supports his strong views that every young pianist should study elementary anatomy – how the hands, arms and shoulders work, and also the co-ordination between them. He claimed that: “So many talents are ruined by muscular distortions” (Shifrin 1981:2).

Bowman claimed to have discovered how to learn properly only when he was in his late forties (see Chapter 3, Section 3.12). Because of his ability to learn quickly and to sight-read well (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2 & Chapter 3, Section 3.12), he never learned in slow motion. Bowman often mentioned that he had no proper training and that he mostly learned and taught by “trial and error”. This situation may also be traced back to the first few years in his piano training. Before he went to study full time at the College of Music in Cape Town he had several piano teachers.⁴⁶ Thus it is possible that he had no continuous build up of constructive techniques and learning skills. This often is the case with talented youngsters who are not taught by the best teacher right from the beginning. They usually develop their own habits, driven by enthusiasm. One of his first “really talented” students was Ella Fourie (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview). Bowman admitted that, at the beginning of his teaching career, he did not know what to do, especially with talented students. He claimed to be “totally at a loss quite often” (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview). He was despondent and frustrated by the situation. Combined with his physical problems, it is natural that he tried to find a way out and started experimenting.

His method is based on learning everything in slow motion and releasing the piano keys when the sound becomes audible, while analysing where the faults lie, coupled with co-ordinating everything muscularly. In one interview (*The West Australian* 1980), Bowman mentioned that when he went on stage with pieces he had learned “the new way”, he did not experience any spasms. With pieces from his old repertoire, however, there were moments where he experienced spasms again (Despoja 1980:26). Bowman believed that the equipment, meaning technique, has to come first, and the artistry can follow later (*The West Australian* 1980).

Bowman also learnt to conserve energy on the day of a performance for the performance itself. When he was younger, he often “played himself out” at the

⁴⁶ Besides Mrs Bell, Bowman’s other piano teachers included Mrs Pertz, Miss Nella Raider and Mrs Doris Lardener.

rehearsals and had no energy or stamina left for the actual performance. This often caused strain on his hands. He later learnt to hold back during rehearsals both with orchestras and for recitals. On the day of the performance, he did not practise much (Shifrin 1981:2; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

Bowman was, however, against calling his teaching ideas a method and once retorted (Despoja 1980:26):

But my method - only I don't call it a method because that sounds RIGID (he pronounces "rigid" with a frisson of distaste) - gives you the means to play. And if you are an artist, my flexible method - which I call 'experiments' will ensure that no matter what size your hands are, the muscles and tendons won't be ruined by bad finger posture as mine almost were by the age of forty. But of course, 'experiments' in fingering are only a means to an end, and that end is artistry which I call 'colouring of sound'.

4.2 Bowman goes to Australia

Many pianists went to Bowman for advice when they struggled to grasp a certain technical aspect of a piece. When Professor Michael Brimer of the College of Music at the University of Cape Town was preparing to fly to the University of Western Australia in Perth in order to give performances of all the Beethoven *Sonatas*, he experienced problems with his left hand (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview). Brimer telephoned Bowman to seek advice on eliminating the pains. Bowman suggested that Brimer should play for him in order to observe Brimer's physical movements when playing the piano. Bowman detected the problem and helped him overcome it almost immediately. Later Brimer left South Africa and immigrated to Australia (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2001:109).

Some time after the above mentioned episode, Bowman was asked by the University of Stellenbosch to travel to Japan in order to view their *Suzuki* teaching methods first hand. Hearing about this, Brimer asked Bowman to visit Perth and Adelaide before flying to Japan. In one of their conversations, Brimer mentioned to Professor David Tunley, a lecturer at the School of Music at the University of Western Australia, that Bowman had developed a "unique teaching method that works". At Tunley's request,

Bowman agreed to demonstrate the method for him and some colleagues⁴⁷. They were all impressed by Bowman's method (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2001:109).

When Bowman arrived in Adelaide, the success of his method preceded him. Bowman was asked by the prominent pianist Clemens Leske to demonstrate his method. As in Perth, Bowman's demonstration had a great impact on all who were present. This led to an invitation to present master-classes and concerts in Perth and Adelaide the following year. The success of these engagements resulted in further visits to Australia. Attending one of the workshops, Wallace Tate, former Federal director of the Australian Music Examination Board, asked to have private lessons with Bowman. After a few lessons, Tate undertook to write a book explaining Bowman's teaching method (Bowman and Fourie 1999:Recorded interview; Fourie 2001:109; Cohn 2006). Initially Bowman was against the idea of his method being published in a book and explained that (Bowman and Cohn 1991: Recorded interview):

All piano teaching methods[sic] of[sic] books have one snag! There's a lot of information. There's [sic] some very good ones. But when you see a hand photographed, you see a still photograph and piano playing is never still! The hand is moving all the time somewhere.

However, the book titled *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing* was eventually published in 2000 (Fourie 2001:109-110). In 2001, a demonstration video (Video.2) accompanying the book was made at the Music Department of the University of Pretoria, where selected exercises from the book are demonstrated by Bowman and the pianist Wessel van Wyk⁴⁸.

4.3 A review of *The Magic Touch*

In 2001, a review by Wessel van Wyk (2001:132) of *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing* was published. The review also gives a basic outline of the book. Van Wyk says that the book represents an

⁴⁷ The colleagues included Sir Frank Callaway who was the Head of the School of Music at the time (Bowman and Fourie 1999: Recorded interview; Fourie 2001:109).

⁴⁸ Van Wyk is a well known South African pianist who had master-classes with Bowman. He is currently a senior lecturer in the Department of Music of the University of Pretoria.

important addition to the “rather limited body of documents dealing with the intricacies of pianism”. According to Van Wyk, the method illustrated in the book will help to avoid and eliminate defective muscular habits during practising and performing. Van Wyk shares similar views with Rachelle van der Merwe, one of Bowman’s last pupils at the University of Stellenbosch, that Bowman’s “system” will provide the pianist with a therapeutic remedy against unnatural muscular exertion and fatigue (Bowman and Van der Merwe 1990: Recorded interview; Van Wyk 2001:132). Contrary to most manuals on piano technique, the book commences with the workings of the larger levers as primary focus with the fingers being merely extensions of the arms. Van Wyk goes on to say that the novelty of the approach pertains to the flexing or stretching of hands and fingers between the playing of notes to conjure a sure sense of muscular freedom. Rotation exercises towards the fifth finger ‘open up’ the crossing of the “radius and ulna” temporarily in order to relax the arm (Van Wyk 2001:132).

A series of exercises move from the basic elements of playing single notes with very relevant information on weight transference. These include simple five-note patterns to the execution of octaves, chords and more dexterous passages. All the exercises are illustrated by drawings in the book, as well as a video (Video.2) to clarify “over detailed descriptions” (Van Wyk 2001:132).

Van Wyk (2001:132) says that the chapter dealing with the execution of scales and arpeggios is “extremely helpful” because it provides a sure remedy for the “passing under” of the thumb. Bowman’s suggestions in the same chapter provide a sound basis for agility in fast passage works. The final chapters provide the application of Bowman’s technical principles to examples from the standard piano repertoire. Advice regarding sectional practising habits with intentional hesitations allows the pianist to control and check the co-ordination of muscles. Standardised devices such as *cantabile*, *tremolo* and two-note slur execution including fingering, are discussed in “highly original ways”.

Cara Hall (1991: Tape for Bowman) mentions that Irene Jackson supports Bowman’s views. She says that when Bowman was in Australia assisting a student, “what was a dry succession of notes, so quickly changed into warm music when you [Bowman] pointed out the harmony behind it all” (Hall 1991: Tape for Bowman). To conclude the review, Van Wyk (2001:132) states that:

Although pianists and piano teachers might frown upon the reputability of a single, and in this case, a very personal and unique approach, the contents of the document could certainly prove most stimulating and thought provoking. I have already applied some of the ideas to my own teaching methods with seemingly positive results. No matter how different the anatomy, personality or musical prowess, this publication should encourage the pianist to believe that success is within reach for everyone.

It is interesting to note that *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing* follows the same principles and procedures as those in Gyorgy Sandor's book titled *On Piano Playing* (1981). Sandor also treats fingers as mere extensions of the arms and body and eliminates defective muscular habits during practising and performing. Bowman's beginning principles in *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing* may be applied in conjunction with beginners' tutor books. Sandor's methods are more for the advanced pianist though. However, for the advanced pianist, the use of Bowman and Sandor's books in conjunction may prove to be valuable.

4.4 Australian Tours

According to *The Cape Times* (1980), Bowman became the first South African professor of music to receive an invitation to give master-classes at an overseas institution. This was made possible by the funding of the Australian Council. On this occasion, Bowman toured Australia for seven weeks. These tours consisted of:

- Master-classes to selected students and teachers
- Solo recitals
- Performances with orchestra.

During the first two weeks, Bowman was the resident musician at the University of Western Australia in Perth. Here he gave master-classes confined to works by Beethoven and later gave an all-Beethoven recital at this University. In the first week, Bowman also gave lectures on interpretation and technique, which were not confined to Beethoven only (*The Cape Times* 1980; Lionel Bowman impresses Australians 1980).

On 27 June 1980, Bowman flew to Adelaide to give public master-classes at the Elder Conservatorium. Here Bowman coached selected students on all the five Beethoven *Piano Concertos*. Bowman also gave an all-Beethoven recital. On 13 July 1980, he performed Beethoven's *Fourth Piano Concerto* with the Elder Conservatorium Orchestra. On 16 July 1980, Bowman performed the Mozart C Minor *Piano Concerto* K. 491 with the Orchestra of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (*The Cape Times* 1980: Bowman master-classes; Lionel Bowman impresses Australians 1980).

Bowman was also invited by the renowned conductor John Hopkins, who was the Head of the Victoria College of Arts, to give master-classes and a public demonstration-cum-lecture. Bowman also visited Melbourne and Sydney (Lionel Bowman impresses Australians 1980).

It is of interest to note that Bowman gained the impression that music students in South Africa worked much harder than their Australian counterparts, and that the standard of South Africa's best students then was indeed higher (Lionel Bowman impresses Australians 1981). However, it must be pointed out that Bowman did not necessarily work with the best students in Australia, since his tour did not include some of the best piano institutions.

It has already been mentioned that many who attended Bowman's master-classes in Australia were impressed by his knowledge and enthusiasm for music and teaching the piano⁴⁹. As a result of these master-classes, two teachers from Perth and a student came to South Africa to have lessons with Bowman. Cara Hall, a friend of Bowman's who shared the same teacher with him at the Royal Academy, sums up Bowman's master-classes by saying (Hall 1991: Tape for Bowman):

I was absolutely amazed at the analysis you had made. You had covered every angle of performance. Every situation of position, attack, movement, muscular response, tone, the lot. And in the master-classes, one could hear the difference, as these points were explained to each student according to the difficulty encountered and he or she was repositioned by you and the passage or the work was replayed. You're a hands-on teacher Lionel, in the truest sense! And as I said, the depth of your analysis was amazing and it was an inspiration to see you at work... The purely physical side is only the first step to the foundation.

⁴⁹ According to Despoja (1980:26), Bowman's aim was to take on the "mystique" of piano playing and put the knowledge of anatomy into it.

As a teacher, you have a wonderful perception and go straight to the heart of the problem, whatever it is - better fingering, or phrasing, or musical line or total conception! Your exercises seem to do something from inside the hands. I think that that preparation, action and release is absolutely basic to it all!

Hall also points out that Bowman's piano technique of "correct position, preparation, playing and immediate relaxation and observing it, fingers, wrists, arms, shoulders, joints" helped her hand even in her old age. She ends by saying that while she had done Bowman's exercises regularly, something unexplainable was happening inside her hands that made her play with ease and flexibility which resulted in absolute control.⁵⁰

4.5 Summary

Fourie (2001:110) once mentioned that:

Teaching [for Bowman] came through experience. For Lionel the most important aspect of teaching is to teach students how to teach themselves. He maintains that talented musicians usually play instinctively. They do not really need excellent teaching because playing comes to them naturally. Though he did study with some excellent teachers, they never taught him how to cope with difficult passages or how to correct movements or other mistakes. The reason for this, he thinks, might be that playing came very easily for him.

The current chapter aimed at focusing on the Secondary Objective of this study as seen in Chapter 1, Section 1.2, while answering the following research questions:

- How did Bowman's teaching method emerge?
- What makes his teaching method different to the already existing methods?

Chapter 4 focused on the development of Bowman's ideas and style of teaching which evolved into a unique and personal teaching method. The motivation for Bowman's method and its success with reference to several commentaries and accounts from pianists, students and friends were brought to the fore. A review by

⁵⁰ Once, a medical doctor attended one of Bowman's master-classes. At the end of the classes, the astonished doctor proclaimed that Bowman did not know what he was doing medically but that he was "doing it all absolutely right" (Hall 1991:Tape for Bowman).

Van Wyk of *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing* also shed light into the method.

Herbert Glöckner described Bowman as being “an absolutely formidable teacher who could sum up a player’s strengths and weaknesses in a moment as he had a brain and memory which was till the end in shining order” (Glöckner 2008a:Interview).

In 2006, just after Bowman’s death, Wallace Tate summed up Bowman’s skill as a piano teacher in an interview by saying that Bowman had a phenomenal ability to instantly identify musical and technical problems in the playing of students and professionals alike. Tate also says that Bowman’s ensuing instruction usually resulted in “complete, seemingly magical transformation” of the students’ performances. Tate concludes by saying that (Cohn 2006): “Teaching of this calibre is indeed rare ... the legacy of this remarkable man is huge”.

The writer, Somerset Maugham, once said to Bowman: “It is the duty of anybody born with talent of any kind to stretch that talent to the uttermost” (*The West Australian* 1980). Judging from the accounts given in this chapter, it is clear that Bowman did exactly that.

CHAPTER 5: BOWMAN'S HUMANITY AND ROLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Apart from Bowman's ability as a pianist and teacher, there is a side of his that is necessary to comment on. Many people who knew him, at one stage or another, became aware of the "human being" behind the musician.

5.1 Bowman's humanity

When one pages through the books titled *Famous Musicians of Jewish Origin* by Gdal Saleski (1949) and *Great Jews In Music* by Darryl Lyman (1986), there are incessant lists of Jewish composers, conductors, violinists, cellists, pianists, singers and other musicians who made it to the top. The love of numerous Jews for music, which bears its roots from a deep and ancient heritage and tradition, becomes evident. Bowman shared this trait, which is so intrinsic in most of the Jewish communities. Being a Jew himself, Bowman often referred to this characteristic of Jewish people with pride. Even though Bowman was not religious, he was, however, very aware of being Jewish.

He had a strong sense of caring and giving, and he was always prepared to help wherever he could. Bowman paid full attention to most people that he engaged with, to the point that when he reminisced or told stories about these people, his impeccable memory allowed him to remember specific names, dates, times, weather and even the clothes they were wearing. He was proud of being Jewish, yet he was not afraid to criticize Jewish conduct when he deemed it necessary. For instance, where many Jewish people confine their generosity to other Jews only, Bowman broke through this barrier by helping people of other religions, sexual preference, race or colour. Fourie (2008: Interview) states that she experienced this part of Bowman's character while she was still his student at the University of Stellenbosch. He would often stop the piano lessons and remarked that "today we shall talk about life". Fourie (2008: Interview) says that: "as a student, I became aware of his kindness. The sensitive human behind the harsh teacher always rose to the fore".

Bowman also had a strong sense of responsibility, which he attributed to being Jewish (Fourie 2008: Interview). He cared for his mother and his sister to the end of their lives. He made a point of visiting them on a regular basis and he wanted them to have the very best they could afford to make their last years as comfortable as possible (Fourie 2008: Interview).

He felt a strong sense of responsibility towards music and the perseverance of classical music in South Africa (see Section 5.2). This responsibility included the future of the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra but more prominently, attending concerts by local and international artists. Many who knew Bowman can testify that he was “not available” on Thursday evenings and his reason was simply: “because I have to go to the Symphony concert”. Even when he was feeling ill, this sense of responsibility took over and he had to attend concerts, even when he had to travel for some distance (Fourie 2008: Interview).

The same responsibility applied to invitations. Especially in his later years, he often complained of not being well enough, but “I simply have to go because I was invited” (Fourie 2008: Interview).

Bowman certainly experienced being an “outsider” as Lebrecht (2004: DVD.1) puts it especially during his years at the University of Stellenbosch. He often felt humiliated because “there was very little space for being Jewish” in the strong Afrikaans culture of Stellenbosch (Fourie 2008: Interview). As, seen in Chapter 2, Section 2.7, this created confusion and unhappiness on many occasions.

Paul Johnson (2001:2) commented that:

What are we on earth for? ... No people has ever insisted more firmly than the Jews that history has a purpose and humanity a destiny. At a very early stage in their collective existence they believed they had detected a divine scheme for the human race, of which their own society was to be a pilot. The Jews, therefore, stand right at the centre of the perennial attempt to give human life the dignity of a purpose (Johnson: 2001:2)

Those who knew Bowman will agree that his life was an example of striving for “human dignity and purpose” as Johnson (2001:2) puts it so clearly. Bowman applied this principle, not only to himself, but to his friends, students, and especially to the

needy and the poor, regardless of religions, sexual preference, race or colour, as mentioned before.

5.2 Ambassador for South Africa

After all, musical education to many people is just as important as education in other fields (Bowman 1974).

As for most young South African musicians, it was important for Bowman to go abroad. As seen with Bowman thus far, this does not necessarily mean that South Africa cannot recognise accomplishment until the stamp of European approval has been set on it. According to Baneshik (1954:4), this merely means that the “yardsticks” are all abroad, and it is necessary for the artist to journey overseas to measure his standards against them. Moreover, the bigger markets are abroad and hence the bigger material rewards.

Baneshik goes on by saying that we export our gold quite happily, without being any less aware of its intrinsic preciousness. And we never get that treasure back! But occasionally we get back some of the “artistic gold” shipped abroad; and this is true of Bowman. Baneshik (1954:4) refers to Bowman as:

A spiritual gold mined in our own soil, refined in our own refineries and shipped abroad to assume its proper place in the world-wide commerce of the arts.

Bowman’s views on this were very clear when he responded that:

A South African coming back to play here periodically as I do, must go on getting better and better so that his home audiences may notice his advance. Otherwise he may as well give up (Baneshik 1954:4).

Baneshik (1954:4) also stated that: “The great artistic quandary in South Africa is: How to regard its home-grown talent? We either patronise or over praise”. According to Baneshik, there are people who deplore this attitude of South Africans towards the home product. Baneshik continues by saying that “a prophet is without honour in his own land”. It is interesting to note that Fourie quotes the same expression forty-seven years later (Baneshik 1954:4; Fourie 2001:109). Both authors refer to Bowman but

focus on different aspects of his life. Baneshik was trying to prove the saying to be false regarding Bowman's career as a performing artist. Fourie, however, gives the quotation in order to highlight the fact that Bowman's teaching method captured the attention of Australians first, before achieving prominence in South Africa (Baneshik 1954:4; Fourie 2001:109).

Bowman played a big role in the awareness of the arts in South Africa. There are numerous articles where he expressed his concerns about the situation of the arts in South Africa. He stated his opinions about any matter that needed to be addressed whenever the opportunity arose. Many of Bowman's concerns are still at present relevant for South Africa. Bowman (*The Daily Dispatch* 1956: S.A. Concert Pianist Wants State Aid For The Arts) once asserted that:

The only way for South African music to develop is if it is supported by South African musicians. The South African artist, whether a painter, musician or poet, did not exist in the eyes of overseas people because he never had money to show to the rest of the world what he could do ... How can a child develop in a cultural atmosphere if he or she has no cultural background.

Bowman supported the orchestras particularly in Cape Town and Durban. In 1958, the Durban Civic Orchestra was invited to attend the Third World Music Concourse at Kerkrade in Holland and also to give three concerts at the International Exposition in Belgium. When Bowman performed the Beethoven's *Second Piano Concerto* and Rachmaninoff's *Second Piano Concert* in one concert, he agreed to pay all his own expenses in order to give the maximum amount possible to the fund-raisers who were aiming to raise £16,000 (Concert For Orchestra Tour Funds).

When the Durban Symphony Orchestra was handed over to NAPAC, Bowman emphasized that: "An orchestra is a public amenity, just like parks and beaches. They do not pay but are kept up all the same ... It is essential for a fair sized city to have at least two symphony seasons a year" (*Daily News* Reporter: Conductor condemns orchestra hand-over).

In 1974, Silvestri wrote an article in *The Cape Argus* pleading for funds for the running of orchestras. The writer is, however, not in possession of this article. When Bowman read Silvestri's article, in supporting and strengthening her views, he wrote his own views which were published. He (Bowman 1974) affirmed that:

Silvestri's dynamic article needs every support the public and your paper can give. It is quite true that the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra gives performances undreamed of ... simply because there are more outstanding players and the policy of bringing visiting conductors constantly is beginning to give the concerts an air of excitement and a standard which many overseas orchestras don't have. We can't compete with some great orchestras of the world, but we probably could give them a good run for their money if, as Mrs Silvestri suggests, the government stepped in and subsidised the orchestra. The Durban and Cape Town orchestras could do wonders with more money for first class players and first class equipment.

Bowman concluded by saying that if the Cape Town Orchestra received Government subsidy and travelled overseas, perhaps they, too, could help the world to know that "we have something other than rugby and golf players to offer" (Bowman 1974).

When Bowman was unhappy with the condition of a piano he had to perform on, he always expressed his views. When he once performed in the Civic Centre Auditorium, he was dissatisfied with the state of the piano and reported that (Auditorium Piano Disgusts Visiting Artists): "It is the worst piano in any recital I have ever performed on in the whole of the Republic". It was important for Bowman to state this because it is the duty of every management attached to any performing venue to make sure that the instrument being used to perform on is always in good condition.

However, Bowman did not just complain and only point out the negative issues of the art situations in South Africa. When he saw a positive change, he also spoke out. An example of this is noted here when Bowman stated: "The great interest in music has freed musicians from fear of unemployment and from economic stress. South Africa's music has progressed 50 years in ten, and if anything, we are short of musicians" (Rex Dalny: Music in South Africa).

He was one of the first white South African classical music artists to perform for a non-white audience when he gave recitals in Blantyre, Lusaka, Kitwe, Ndola, Mufulira, Chingola and Bancroft. Bowman (D.S.: Pianist Found No Hostility in N.R) remarked that:

The halls, very lovely theatres, were almost full. There was no boycott. Non-Whites are not yet madly keen on Western music, but I've been asked to come back next year and give lecture-recitals so that more appreciation can reach the young.

Herbert Glöckner (2008a: Interview) described Bowman as “A national institution in the music world of South Africa, a living legend, taking interest in music matters right to the end of his long and productive life, in spite of all his physical infirmities”. Because Bowman was also an educator, one of his greatest passions lay in the development of the careers of young musicians. In 1981, Bowman stated that unless something was done for musicians, they will never develop. He pointed out that no concert artist can learn his job in a practising room but only on a stage. Bowman was calling out for State sponsorship in order for organisations such as CAPAB and PACT to engage more young musicians (Shifrin 1981:2). On one of his tours to Salisbury (then in Rhodesia), Bowman stated that they should invest in starting up their own orchestra. He stated that many cities in the world were known for their orchestras and Salisbury was no different to them. Bowman remarked that the “nucleus of the orchestra” would teach the children of Salisbury and help build up musicians other than pianists. He went on to say that “By hearing the various instruments, some Rhodesian children might be inspired to play them” (Evening Standard Reporter: Orchestra is a must for city - Bowman).

One of the most important contributions of Bowman to South African music was when he went to Australia. According to *The Cape Argus* (Education Reporter 1981), this resulted in South Africa’s first form of cultural exchange for South African music students. Nowadays, this trend is very common in South Africa. South African music teachers giving master-classes overseas is no longer uncommon. According to *The Cape Argus* (Education Reporter 1981), Bowman was the first South African musician to do so.⁵¹

In 1983, Bowman had a nervous breakdown which convinced him to retire. He settled in his apartment in Sea Point, Cape Town and maintained an active social life. He also became a respected member of the Richard Wagner Society of South Africa. Bowman lived an energetic and vibrant life filled with performing and teaching but after his retirement, it may be said that he redirected his energies and focus on helping others in any way he could, right until the end of his long life. He dedicated his time to charity and became involved with fundraising projects for the Cape Town

⁵¹ The validity of whether Bowman was the first South African musician to do so cannot be proven. But according to *The Cape Argus* (Education Reporter 1981), Angelo Campana was the first foreign music student to study full-time at the University of Stellenbosch. One can, however, simply say that Bowman was one of the South African musicians who promoted and publicised this trend, therefore making other South African institutions aware of it.

Symphony Orchestra which has since been renamed the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to this, he became involved with the Red Cross and assisted with their fund raising projects (Fourie 2001:108-109; Fourie 2007:147).

In 1999, Bowman celebrated his eightieth birthday. That year, two gala concerts were given in his honour. The first concert was initiated by Gustavo Romero, a celebrated pianist from the United States of America and a close friend of Bowman's. He had master-classes with Bowman on several occasions and refers to Bowman as his "artistic father". Romero performed Bowman's favourite Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 4* with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by David de Villiers who is an ex-student of Bowman's and was then the Head of Conducting at the Folkwang University in Essen, Germany. Caroline van Niekerk, who is also an ex-pupil of Bowman's and a Professor at the University of Pretoria, was the guest speaker for this occasion (Yutar:1999; Chisholm 1999:8; Chait 1999:31; *Eikestadnuus* 1999:17; Fourie 2001:108). Ella Fourie organised a second gala concert at the University of Pretoria in the Musaion.⁵² At the time, the department had seven of Bowman's ex-students on its staff. Romero gave an all-Chopin recital (*Eikestadnuus* 1999:17; Fourie 2001:108).

It has been mentioned that one of Bowman's passions lay in the development of young musicians. He once expressed that playing Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Chopin, is like "bread and butter for any pianist" (Video.1). Therefore, Bowman used the occasion of his eightieth birthday to start a fundraising project for an annual *Lionel Bowman-Beethoven Piano Competition*. He managed to raise R90 000 which was distributed in equal shares to the music departments of the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Pretoria. The first annual *Lionel Bowman-Beethoven Piano Competition* was held at all the above mentioned institutions in 2000. Bowman was the adjudicator for all of them (Chait 1999:31; *Eikestadnuus* 1999:17; Fourie 2001:108) but the University of Pretoria was the only one where Bowman remained the sole adjudicator for all the annual competitions until his death. In October 2006, Bowman came to Pretoria to adjudicate the *Lionel Bowman-Beethoven Piano Competition*. He was not well but insisted to many of his friends that he wanted to come and that it would be the last time he would be able to do so (Fourie 2007:148).

⁵² Bowman had asked Fourie to accompany him as his partner for the first gala concert in Cape Town but due to family commitments, she could not attend the concert and thus decided to arrange a second concert in Pretoria (Fourie 2008: Interview).

The *Lionel Bowman-Beethoven Piano Competition* may be considered as Bowman's final legacy to the South African music world.⁵³

After an interview with Bowman, Fourie (2001:110) mentioned that:

Looking back on his life as an artist and as a teacher, Lionel paints a picture of a complex and, by his own admission, a volatile personality whose actions were often emotional and impulsive instead of rational and intellectual. To those who have known him over the years, loved him and even crossed swords with him, these insights may provide a better and more meaningful understanding of a man who has made a deep impression on the South African music scene and was one of the first South African musicians to make an impact on foreign shores.

Fourie (2001:110) then goes on to say that:

Lionel feels that there is a certain part of him that never experienced satisfaction - was never fulfilled. Yet, today he is at peace with himself. For him, he says, wisdom came with age.

5.3 Information on Lionel Bowman's death

My future is dying, yours is living! (Bowman and Ntsepe 2006).

Bowman always suffered from ill health and had to take painkillers and sleeping tablets from when he was in his twenties. This at times hampered his piano playing (Fourie 2001:105 & 110; Bowman and Ntsepe 2006). On Saturday 14 October 2006, after he had adjudicated the *Lionel Bowman-Beethoven Piano Competition* at the University of Pretoria, Bowman suddenly fell ill at Fourie's home in Centurion and was taken to the nearby Unitas Hospital. His condition deteriorated and he fell into a coma which resulted in his death on 17 October 2006.

Thys Odendaal (2006) described Bowman as one of the eccentric characters who attracted attention when he was still at the University of Stellenbosch's campus. Odendaal remarked that despite being an internationally renowned pianist and teacher, Bowman was also down to earth and very approachable. He was not just a

⁵³ See Appendix A for a list containing the names of the *Lionel Bowman-Beethoven Piano Competition* winners from 2000 to 2008.

classical musician but an artist in the broadest sense. Bowman was a great lover of theatre (as also seen in Chapter 2, Section 2.2). He did not just attend classical concerts but also theatre productions, operas, ballets and art exhibitions (Odendaal 2006).

Herbert Glöckner, who described Bowman as a “truly wonderful friend”, commented on his unique personality. Glöckner says that Bowman still stands out vividly because of his strong presence that was felt in Cape Town, but he was also in daily contact with many people all over South Africa and the rest of the world. Glöckner highlights Bowman’s warmth, generosity and helpful nature to others and says that he was most caring for everybody who appeared to have a problem or to be in need. According to Glöckner, love, goodness and consideration for others flowed from Bowman in an unequalled way. He ends by saying that (Glöckner 2008a: Interview):

On the other hand he was most amusing, he loved to laugh and he was an outstanding story teller, preferably funny ones including the ones where he had botched up and was not necessarily the hero. His life was certainly most interesting and exciting. It was I think one can say: A big success. I am not saying that his life was always easy, that he did not have his fair share of problems, difficulties, terrible disasters, depressions and even a nervous breakdown. But then, being very emotional, having an incredible intuition and of course a natural talent, helped him with his career. He eventually became a convincing pianist when he found out that not imitating great and famous artists made his playing so unique, but daring to be himself. And thus he also developed his outstanding personality ... We who had the good luck to know him owe him a lot. We sure won’t forget him.

Bowman once said that (Fourie 2001:110): “The nice thing about teaching is that you become friends and keep in touch. Some of your students become lifelong friends; some become your best friends”. Bowman referred to his piano students as his children. He had a personal relationship with them and kept in contact with most of them throughout his life.

Ella Fourie and Caroline van Niekerk are just two examples of the above mentioned. Fourie considers it a privilege to have been a student of Bowman’s. She was the one who held his hand when he died in hospital. Their relationship spread over a period of forty-seven years. As her friendship with Bowman developed over the years, he started referring to her as his “adopted little daughter” and became a loving father figure in Fourie’s life. She remembers him for his “remarkable qualities” as a teacher

and a human being. According to Fourie, Bowman had a demanding personality which was clearly evident in his teaching. He expected work of a high standard from his students⁵⁴ and his “volatile temperament” made it difficult for them. Students had to be prepared for his “mood changes” from one lesson to the next. Despite this all, Bowman retained his enthusiasm and inspired his students to work harder. With age, Bowman “mellowed” and his kind, generous and humble nature took over. Bowman gave occasional lessons to many of Fourie’s students without accepting payment from them. This is a trait which was experienced personally by the writer.⁵⁵ Bowman even refused fees for his lessons to famous pianists such as Gustavo Romero, David Nettle and Graham Johnson, to name but a few (Fourie 2007:147-148). In expressing her gratitude, Fourie states:

Thank you Papa Lionel for your love, understanding and support of so many years. We who knew and loved you, feel the silence of your absence, but we are enriched by the kindness, the humour and vitality of your wonderful spirit that we so admired to the end.

We miss you, but we will always love you.
Ella

It has been mentioned in Section 5.2, that when Bowman turned eighty, Caroline van Niekerk was asked to be the guest speaker for the occasion. In her speech, she pointed out that Bowman was an “un-judgmental” being. When she was still a student of Bowman’s at the Stellenbosch Conservatorium, she did not like the piano and when she mentioned it to Bowman, initially he was shocked and remarked that the piano “is the king of instruments” but later he accepted it even though his views were different to hers. Bowman was positive about people and regarded his friends very highly. Van Niekerk went on to say that even though she was Bowman’s “worst pupil” at that stage, he was not only interested in her performing abilities but cared for her as an individual. When his students did their practical examinations, Bowman “never made a fuss and listened through the keyhole” when they played. He expected his students to “go off and do it” (Van Niekerk 2008: Interview). In looking back, she says:

I am sure that if I had phoned him at an ungodly hour, said I had a serious problem and could he please lend me R10 000 or more or come and fetch me at midnight at the airport, he would have done so! He became a feature of our whole family’s life and I really miss him.

⁵⁴ The writer also experienced Bowman expectations of high standards and quality work while having lessons with him in Sea Point, Cape Town. Bowman stressed the importance of hard work and would often quote the following from Shakespeare’s *King Lear*: Nothing comes from nothing! (Bowman and Ntsepe 2006)

⁵⁵ Bowman embarked on a project to raised funds for the writer for him to be able to further his music studies.

On 20 October 2006, a service for Lionel Bowman's cremation was held in Johannesburg at the Braamfontein Cemetery. This was a "non-religious service" in accordance with Bowman's wishes, and was unusual for a Jew to wish to be cremated. At the service, Ilan Mosselson mentioned that Bowman was not a religious man yet through his actions, he qualified as a "holy man". Niel Bowman, Mosselson and Ella Fourie made their commentaries before a recording of Jessie Norman singing *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde* by Wagner was played. It was Bowman's wish that *Liebestod* should be played at his funeral service (Cohn 2006). It is somewhat ironic that in an interview, Bowman once mentioned that (Despoja 1980:26):

One of the great moments of discovery for me was hearing *Tristan and Isolde* for the first time. Flagstad and Melchior before the war. I nearly died. As a young fella from South Africa I had never heard anything like that.

Several memorial concerts were held for Bowman. The writer performed in three of them, namely:

- A morning recital on 28 October 2006 at the Third Franschoek Spring Festival where the chairlady of the festival, Shirley Parkfelt, commemorated Bowman before the concert.
- A performance of Liszt's *Second Piano Concerto* with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra which was coincidentally held exactly a month after Bowman's death.
- A recital in Durban for the Jewish Club on 9 January 2007 for the Friends of Music run by Vera Dubin, who was also a good friend of Bowman's.

A memorial party which was requested and paid for by Bowman and also stipulated in his will, was held (Glöckner 2008b: Interview):

- A memorial party on 12 November 2006 at the Old Townhouse, Greenmarket Square in Cape Town.

For the party held on 12 November 2006, the programme included commentaries by Glöckner and Fourie, including Parkfelt and Ruth Allen from the Friends of Orchestral Music in Cape Town. Performances by Peter Klatzow, Brad Liebl, who was accompanied by Adrian More, and also the Amici Quartet, followed. This was

concluded by an excerpt from a compact disc by Bowman playing Schumann's *Arabesque*.

On 22 November 2006, a memorial concert for Bowman was held in the Musaeon at the University of Pretoria where Wessel van Wyk and Malcolm Nay performed some of Bowman's best loved works by Bach, Scarlatti, Schubert, Chopin, Liszt and Franck.

On 17 October 2007, a year after Bowman's death, another memorial concert was held at the University of Stellenbosch's Endler Hall. The "special guest" appearance was made by David Nettle who performed Mozart's *Fantasy* in D minor, K. 379, a work that was prominent in many of Bowman's recitals. Works by composers such as Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy and Ravel were performed. Works by South African composers such as Arnold van Wyk and Hendrik Hofmeyr also featured on the programme. Hofmeyr's *River of Sorrow*, which was performed, was commissioned in 2005 by Bowman for the South African pianist, Sylvia Jen, a student of Ella Fourie's. Bowman's recording of the Exposition of the first movement of the Schubert *Sonata* in A Major D. 664, Op. 120 was also played at this memorial concert.

On 9 June 2007, a ceremony was held at the University of Stellenbosch's Botanical Gardens, situated opposite an old house where Bowman gave piano lessons for twenty-five years. University colleagues, pupils and friends were present to pay their final respects to Bowman. Brad Liebl, the well-known bass-baritone, opened the ceremony with an old Baptist hymn entitled *At the River*. Glöckner then paid tribute to Bowman's life and work. After this, Liebl sang *Zach renu* which is a Hebrew prayer meaning "inscribe us in the Book of Life, oh Lord and Giver of Life". To conclude, Glöckner unveiled a plaque which had been fixed to one of the benches underneath the trees where Bowman's ashes had been placed while Liebl sang the Gregorian chant entitled *In paradisum*. The English translation of the text simply means: "may angels escort you into paradise" (*Musicus* 2007:148). Lionel Bowman's plaque on a bench in the Stellenbosch Botanical Gardens reads:

***In loving memory of our artistic father Prof. Lionel Charles Bowman,
1919-2006***

*First internationally renowned South African pianist, teacher and friend
'I have children all over this world'*

5.4 Summary

Chapter 5 has provided answers to the final research question which was stated in Chapter 1 is as follows:

- Can Lionel Bowman be considered ambassador for South Africa with regards to the field of Arts and Culture especially concerning classical music in South Africa?

The main objective (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2) of this study has been met and answering the above mentioned research question proved to be essential because it aided in providing evidence that Lionel Bowman maybe considered ambassador for South Africa. It is clear that he may be regarded as one of the key contributors to the field of Arts and Culture in South Africa, particularly in classical music. Furthermore, he was also one of the South African artists who aided in South African classical musicians being recognised abroad.

The first chapter provided an overview of the research.

In Chapter 2, an historical account of Bowman's life from his early years, including his years in London until his teaching years his Stellenbosch including his retirement were highlighted. The following was found:

Lionel Bowman spent his childhood in Cape Town where he received his basic musical education at the South African College of Music. A UNISA overseas scholarship enabled him to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He received awards as a pianist and as a conductor. Bowman returned to South Africa and was soon engaged as a concert pianist while teaching at the South African College of Music. Later Bowman resigned due to the increasing pressure of broadcasting and concert commitments. During the war years, he gave the South African premiers of some important works in the piano repertoire.

In 1946, Bowman went back to London and was soon engaged to appear for BBC's radio and television broadcasts as well as appearances in the Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall, and Royal Festival Hall, including the Promenade Concerts. He performed in all the major cities of Britain, including Scotland, Wales and Ireland, as well as in Belgium, France, Holland, Italy, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Turkey, Greece, Israel, United States of America and Australia. Bowman also performed in most Southern and Central African countries. He was the first South African pianist to perform all Beethoven *Piano Concertos* in a cycle, a feat he did five times. He also introduced works of South African composers such as Hubert du Plessis, Arnold van Wyk and John Joubert to audiences in Britain, Europe and the United States of America.

Throughout his career, Bowman received several distinguished awards including his recognition in the *Groves Dictionary of Music* (1980) as a Beethoven interpreter of renown.

At the age of sixty-four, Bowman retired and settled in his apartment in Sea Point, Cape Town, which was to be his home until his death. During his retirement,

Bowman maintained a busy social schedule, keeping regular contact with many friends and acquaintances that he had met over the years. Until his death, Bowman continued to travel, and to present regular master-classes at various Universities in South Africa and to various pianists from abroad.

In the third chapter, the role and influence of music criticism were highlighted. Bowman's repertoire was discussed including an examination of his playing according to music reviews and critiques.

The development of Bowman's teaching method which resulted in the publication of *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing* by Wallace Tate in 2000 was mapped out in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 provided insight into Bowman's human characteristics. Insight on the role he played in the development and recognition of classical music in South Africa are stated. Chapter 5 also highlights Bowman's final legacy to the South African music world. Information on Bowman's death is also supplied in this chapter.

From this study, it is clear that Lionel Bowman dedicated his life to music and lived his life in serving others with his remarkable talents.

This study was delimited to an historic account of Lionel Bowman's life and career as a performing pianist and teacher and also confirmed that Bowman played a substantial role in the awareness of the arts, especially classical music, in South Africa. Future studies for related topics are possible, especially concerning a thorough examination of Bowman's teaching method with specific reference to *The Magic Touch: For pianists and teachers. A workable practical guide to piano playing*.

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**Winners of the *Lionel Bowman-Beethoven Piano Competition* from
2000 to 2008**

The University of Pretoria:

- Swart, I. 2000
- Nöthling, G. 2001
- Bonney, M. 2002
- Bredell, I and Rabie, J. 2003
- Ge, P and Richter, J. 2004
- Bester, J. 2005
- Wu, S. 2006
- Bushakevitz, A. 2007
- First prize not awarded. 2008

The University of Stellenbosch:

- Chanell, T, Napier, J and Van Niekerk, A. 2000
- Dias, J and Fourie, D. 2001
- Riedel, S. 2002
- Hollins, B and Vos, M. 2003
- Willians, B. 2004
- Pereira, A. 2005
- Kleynhans, C and Kruger, E. 2006
- Ribeiro, B. 2007
- Crathorne, P and Prins, M. 2008

The University of Cape Town:

- Quickfall, J and Walters, C. 2000
- Rooi, P. 2001



- Du toit, M. 2002
- Lombard, B. 2003
- Alkema, T. 2004
- Lombard, B. 2005
- Burgess, B. 2006
- Claassen, C. 2007
- Jardim, J. 2008

1. Beethoven, L. *Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15*. (Total playing time: 36:08). Soloist: Lionel Bowman. Conducted by Eric Rycroft with the University of Stellenbosch Orchestra:

- Track 1: Allegro con brio (14:39)
- Track 2: Largo (12:13)
- Track 3: Allegro scherzando (09:05)

2. Mozart, W.A. *Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466*. & *Piano Concerto No. 23 in A major, K488*. (Total playing time: 60:25). Soloist: Lionel Bowman. Conducted by Pierre de Groot with CAPAB Orchestra:

- Track 1: Allegro (15:22)
- Track 2: Romanze (09:52)
- Track 3: Rondo: Allegro assai (07:57)
- Track 4: Allegro (11:29)
- Track 5: Andante (07:18)
- Track 6: Presto (08:23)

