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The relationship between Russian icons and Rautavaara's *Ikonit*, Op. 6

by

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A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Magister Musicae (Performing Arts)

in the Department of Music at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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October 2015

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ABSTRACT

This study locates and describes the programmatic meanings in Rautavaara's piano suite, *Ikonit*, Op. 6. It makes use of an interdisciplinary paradigm that borrows perspectives gathered from the 'new musicology'. The various contexts that inform this analysis and interpretation include the composer's biography and style, the Russian Orthodox tradition of iconography and the compositional structure of *Ikonit*. The study constructs a biographically and culturally sensitive interpretation of the suite, which can contribute to better-informed performances and readings of the music. It contributes to English language scholarship on Rautavaara's music.

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KEYWORDS

Byzantine icons
Byzantium
Eastern Orthodox
Finnish piano music
icons
Ikonit, Op. 6
interdisciplinary
the 'new musicology'
piano suite
programme music
Rautavaara
Russian icons
Russian Orthodox Church
twentieth century piano music

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personal statement

In 2006, I studied in Finland as part of the North-South postgraduate exchange programme at the University of Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä is a beautiful university city with a diverse student population. The city is surrounded by lakes and forests and boasts many buildings by the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. Jyväskylä's vibrant culture includes many live music venues, festivals and its own symphony orchestra. Heavy metal and folk music are also particularly popular, forming notable cultural movements or subcultures within Finnish culture.

Finland is renowned for its education system, and it was worthwhile to study at a Finnish tertiary music department that specialises in music education. The South African tertiary system has no comparable institution and there is usually a complete institutional divide between education faculties and music conservatoires. Since the focus of the music department at the University of Jyväskylä is not on performance but on education, the courses introduce students to a wide range of instruments and topics that develops pedagogical thinking skills and prepares a student adequately for a teaching career. I studied Finnish folk music and learned to play the mandolin and even had to play bass guitar in the Popular Band course. Unlike the single music education subject offered at my South African university, the many music education courses in Finland included diversely structured studies on various forms of European traditional music. I also had the opportunity to teach piano to first year music students as part of a piano pedagogy course. The department arranged visits to schools in Jyväskylä, where I experienced first-hand how music is taught in junior and senior schools. I also continued studying piano repertoire and performance techniques with the Russian pianist Aleksandr Bagdasarov.

Apart from my studies at the University of Jyväskylä, I also had the opportunity to enrol for courses at Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu (JAMK University of Applied Sciences). JAMK offers a degree programme in music that can be

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completed in English. Towards the end of my exchange period I participated in a recital of contemporary Finnish and South African art music at JAMK, where I accompanied Afrikaans art songs and performed as a soloist in Hubert du Plessis's 7 *Preludes for Piano*, Op. 18 (1964) and Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph's *Virtuoso 1* (1987).

At JAMK I met pianists who were studying repertoire by the Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara. Therefore when the Jyväskylä Symphony Orchestra played a concert that included Rautavaara in the programme, I attended. This was my first ever encounter with Rautavaara's music, but an encounter in which only one of his compositions, *Cantus Arcticus*, Op. 61, featured on the programme. This concerto for birds and orchestra features birdsong recorded near the Arctic Circle and the wetlands of Liminka and made such an impression on me that I decided to locate and explore the composer's piano music. I found scores of *Pelimannit* (The Fiddlers), *3 Symmestristä Preludia* (3 Symmetrical Preludes), *Seitsemän Preludia* (Seven Preludes), Op. 7, *Etydit* (Etudes), two sonatas and a Partita that has been arranged for piano from an original for guitar. A fellow student at JAMK was studying *Ikonit* Op. 6 (1955), but it was only after my visit to Russia and my newfound awareness of icons, that I obtained the score of this piano suite.

My first interaction with Russian religious icons came about during a tourist visit to St Petersburg and Moscow, as an extramural part of my exchange studies in Finland. Our tour through Russia started in St Petersburg where we visited the Church of the Saviour on the Spilled Blood, which was built where Tsar Alexander II was assassinated in 1881. It is constructed in a traditional Russian architectural style dating from the seventeenth century, and furthermore influenced by the Cathedral of the Intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos on the Moat, in Moscow (commonly known as St Basil's Cathedral). The Church of the Saviour on the Spilled Blood suffered decades of neglect during the twentieth century: it was plundered and vandalised after the Russian Revolution, used as a morgue during the Second World War and thereafter as a warehouse. The damaged interior was restored at an exorbitant cost and reopened in 1997, with

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the result that it rapidly became a popular tourist attraction. The exterior (Image 1) showcases granite plaques that recount the significant events dating from Tsar Alexander II's reign, but it is nevertheless the colourful domes and detailed carvings, mosaics and icons which create the decorated façade that makes this church a landmark in St Petersburg.

This visual sumptuousness is repeated when one enters the church. My eye was drawn to the walls, corners and ceilings, since mosaics fill every conceivable space and no surface is left undecorated. The dome (Image 2) is decorated with mosaics portraying Christ and the apostles and the mosaics on the walls and columns portray other Biblical scenes and saints (Image 3). The entire interior is a visual display of the gospels. Lastly, there is an ornate memorial inside the church on the exact place where Alexander II was assassinated.

The icons and mosaics in the church are exceptionally diverse and include icons painted in the style of various schools of painting, ranging from Byzantine style to more contemporary styles.

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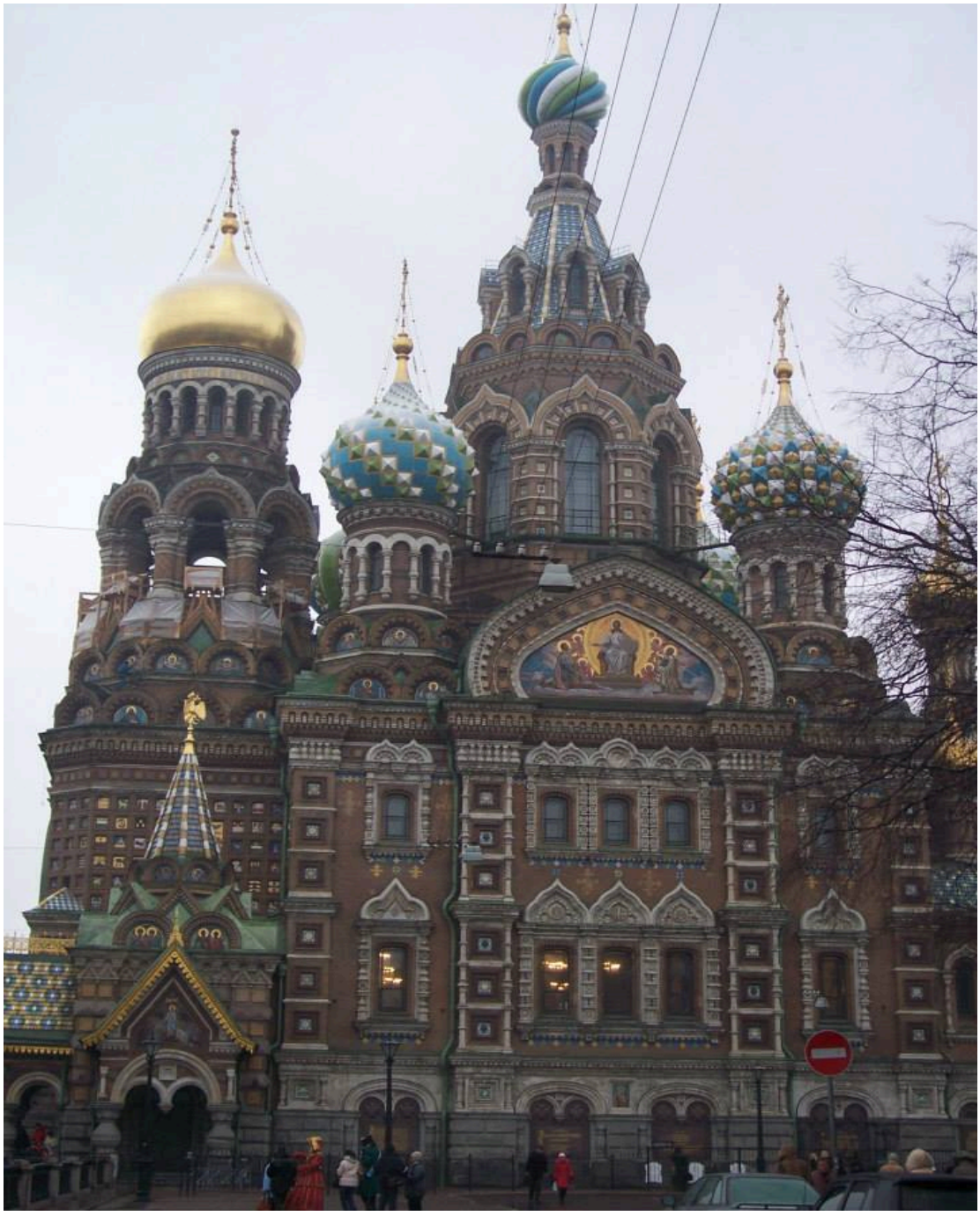

Image 1 Exterior of the Church of the Saviour on the Spilled Blood, St Petersburg, photographed by the author on 2 November 2006

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Image 2 Dome of the Church of the Saviour on the Spilled Blood,
St Petersburg, photographed by the author on 2 November 2006

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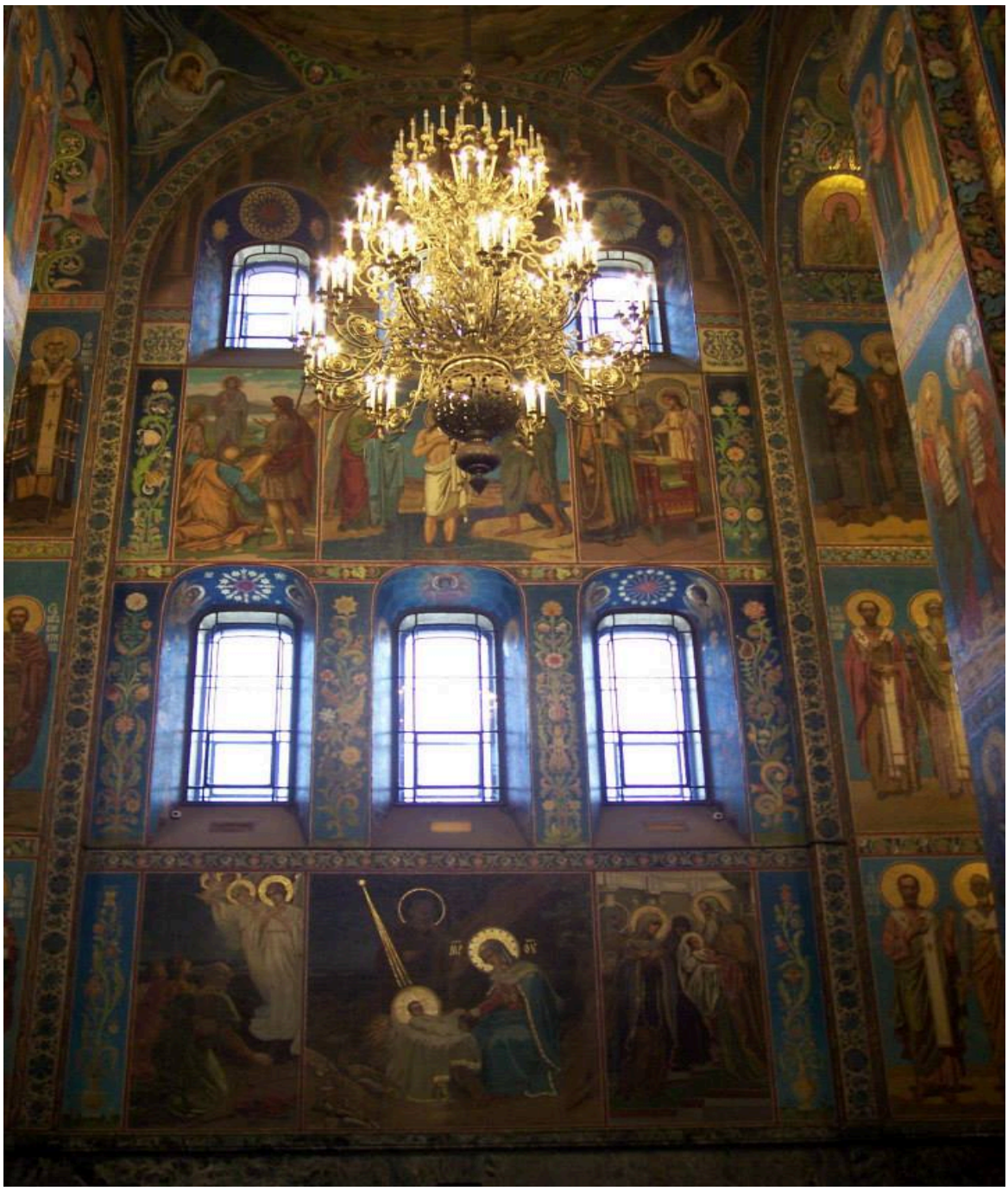

Image 3 Interior of the Church of the Saviour on the Spilled Blood, St Petersburg, photographed by the author on 2 November 2006

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We also visited the Peter and Paul Cathedral in the Peter and Paul Fortress. This Russian Orthodox Cathedral is one of the oldest landmarks in St Petersburg, and it functions as the burial place of most of Russia's rulers since Peter the Great (d. 1725). The Baroque interior features walls with mosaics, paintings of numerous Biblical subjects, as well as a remarkable iconostasis (Image 4). The latter is a partition that separates the nave from the altar, according to Byzantine church tradition. Icons on the iconostasis are placed in a specific order on tiers, and the royal doors and deacon's doors are other prominent features of any iconostasis.

The last cathedral we visited in St Petersburg was the St Isaac's Cathedral. It is the largest Orthodox cathedral in the city, built in the form of a cross with a gold-plated dome of more than a hundred kilograms of pure gold. It is constructed almost exclusively from granite and marble and the multi-coloured components of the cathedral's interior create a spectacular visual effect (Image 5). Every part of the interior, from the floor and walls to the arches and columns, is skilfully decorated with different kinds of marble, gold, bronze, malachite, jasper, lazurite, porphyry and six hundred square meters of mosaics (St. Isaacs's Cathedral, n.d.). Furthermore, the St Isaac's Cathedral has room for fourteen thousand standing worshippers (an Orthodox church never has seats). The lavishness of this decoration, the vastness of the floor space, and the monumentally high ceiling are breath-taking as one enters the cathedral.

At the Hermitage Museum I viewed an icon collection that includes examples spanning from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries; a collection assembled from the various icon painting 'schools', including Novgorod, Moscow, Yaroslav and some Northern schools.

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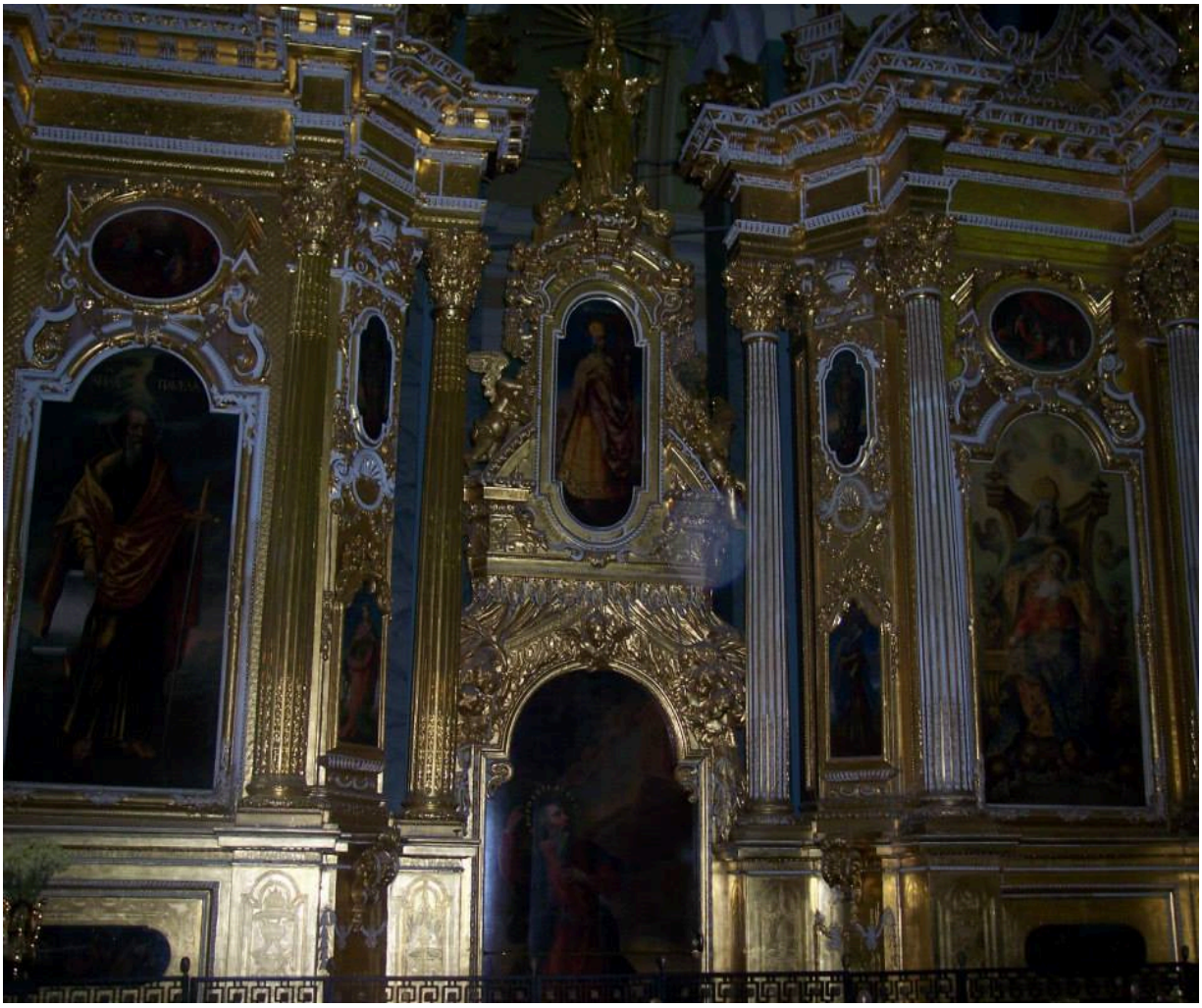

Image 4 Section of the iconostasis of the Peter and Paul Cathedral, St Petersburg, photographed by the author on 2 November 2006

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Image 5 Iconostasis in the St Isaac's Cathedral,
St Petersburg, photographed by the author on 2 November 2006

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We travelled from St Petersburg to Moscow, where visits to the State Tretyakov Gallery and the Kremlin piqued my interest in icons even further. The State Tretyakov Gallery hosts an impressive collection of Russian art, ranging from early Christian icons all the way up to Soviet avant-garde and social realist paintings. Upon entering the Kremlin's numerous cathedrals, I was struck once again by the ornate decorative interior and by the size and number of icons that covered the walls of the various churches. Although the impressive exterior onion-domed architecture is usually the main attraction for visitors to the Kremlin cathedrals, I found the interiors of these buildings even more captivating. Their vast iconographic imagery creates a sacred atmosphere and the religious chronicles portrayed transfixed me.

Ultimately, these experiences led me to an exploration of Rautavaara's *Ikonit*, and to an enduring interest in his collected works and his life. Apart from its academic function and value, this dissertation-topic forms part of that continuing personal discovery.

1.2 Aim of the study

This is an interdisciplinary study that aims to discuss the symbolism of Russian icons, and explore their integration into Rautavaara's piano suite *Ikonit,* Op. 6. Different musical elements of this work's six movements, as well as the programmatic significance of the titles of these movements, are explored to obtain more comprehensive understanding and more inclusive interpretations of the composition within its creative (compositional and performance) and cultural contexts. This study provides an interdisciplinary contextual analysis of *Ikonit,* which it is hoped will contribute to better-informed interpretations and performances. It also provides English-language scholarship on a composer whose work is predominantly examined in Finnish. In that regard, this study aims to contribute towards making Rautavaara's music more accessible to an international audience.

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1.3 Research objectives

The main objective of this research is to examine the conceptual depth and complexity of the relationship between generalised and specific Russian icons and Rautavaara's piano suite *Ikonit*, Op. 6. This research objective entails pinpointing, analysing and describing the connections of musical and visual symbols and narratives that already exist between Rautavaara's compositional vision, and the six religious icons upon which he based *Ikonit*. Once the symbol-based connections between the visual forms (icons) and their musical representations have been determined, the stylistic depiction of these connections in *Ikonit* will be explored and documented. Understanding this complex relationship between visual icons and their musical representations will help determine whether *Ikonit* can be considered narrative or emotionally descriptive programme music. These and other findings will provide an analysis of the contextual meanings contained within *Ikonit.*

1.4 Research methodology

The study's research methodology can be described as textual analysis and criticism, since the research design focuses on analysing the themes and the meanings (contents) of a manuscript (in this case the music's score or 'trace'), as well as themes and meanings contained in the literature surrounding the composer and the score. Admittedly, there are additional contextual and performed meanings to any notated musical composition – meanings constructed during unique performances in unique performance contexts, which have not been extracted directly from the musical score. Although I have performed *Ikonit* as part of the practical requirements for this degree course, this study does not entail a practice-based investigation into any specific performance scenario. Instead, its textual approach recognises that there are meanings for *Ikonit* which Rautavaara himself could not have incorporated directly into the musical score, either because of the inherent limitations of musical notation to capture musical meaning in its totality, or otherwise because of biographical and cultural (Russian Orthodox) contexts that inform the

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composition's meaning but which are not notated in the score.

Considering that a procedure of music-theoretical analysis that simply lists the building blocks of a composition would be insufficient to determine non-notated aspects of a composition's musical meaning, this study of Rautavaara's *Ikonit* regards it as an imperative to perform traditional music analysis along with contextual analysis. My study focuses on the importance and implications of the following integrated concepts within this research methodology: score analysis, contextual criticism, and the construction of meaning. In order to do this, I make use of interdisciplinary perspectives adopted from the 'new musicology'.

My research methodology is therefore not solely textual and theoretical analysis, but a more eclectic and interdisciplinary approach to analysis and criticism. This approach incorporates various perspectives on *Ikonit*, including social contexts (the Russian Orthodox Church and Juilliard in the 1950s where *Ikonit* was composed), historical contexts (Finnish music in the twentieth century and Rautavaara's keen interest in mysticism) and programmatic contexts (the history, style and symbolism of Russian icons).

This investigation is based on a literature study of relevant books, essays and articles on programme music, early Russian art, Byzantine and Russian icons, Finnish piano music, Rautavaara's music and biography, meaning in music, as well as interdisciplinary 'new musicological' studies of art and music. This is supplemented with recordings, reviews and other primary sources including articles written by the composer himself as well as interviews that other scholars have conducted with him.

1.5 Value of the study

Over the past century there has been a dramatic increase in the awareness of Byzantine icons, especially after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s. A considerable amount of literature on iconography and image theory has since been published. Rautavaara's *Ikonit*, although composed

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earlier than this (in 1955), is a topic well suited to this modern interest in icons. Conducting an intercultural study on *Ikonit* in South Africa contributes to the small body of English-language scholarship already published on Rautavaara and his music, as opposed to the much bigger volume of Finnish Rautavaara scholarship. Because this study flows out of a student exchange programme whose aim was to foster intercultural dialogue, this study by a South African of Finnish and Russian culture also opens *Ikonit* up to academic criticism from an outsider, who necessarily has different cultural insights to a Finnish or Russian Orthodox insider.

Coincidentally during the 1980s as well, the difficult process of interpreting meaning in music has taken root as a viable approach within music analysis. Any analysis of *Ikonit* that explores the relationship between Rautavaara's music and Russian icons, contributes to the academic embrace of interdisciplinary research, and proves meaningful and empowering to music scholars working in this new environment and to pianists who might have an interest in Rautavaara's music.

The premiere performance of the orchestrated version of *Ikonit* in 2005, entitled *Before the Icons,* adds further significance to this study. Rautavaara added *Prayers* in between the icons (quite reminiscent of the *Promenades* in Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*) and an *Amen* at the end. *Before the Icons* reminds the listener of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* suite and reflects Rautavaara's keen interest in mysticism.

1.6 Delimitations and overview of the study

The Introduction provides a personal context that sketches the background in which the author first encountered Rautavaara's *Ikonit* and Russian Orthodox iconography. The aim of the study, research objectives, methodology and value of the study are explained in the context of an interdisciplinary and intercultural academic framework. Chapter 2 then constructs a research paradigm within which to conduct this study, by examining how programme music could be analysed and interpreted through the critical lens of the 'new musicology', in

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order to accommodate this study's need for interdisciplinarity.

Chapter 3 provides a biographical overview of Rautavaara's life and music, but within the limited context of the composition being studied. This includes commentary on his mysticism and his fascination with Orthodox icons, an exploration of the background that informs Rautavaara's inspiration for composing *Ikonit*, further explanation of his compositional processes and influences in his views on programme music.

Chapter 4 discusses the religious icon tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church. It outlines a brief history of this religious art form's origins and development, as well as its spread from Byzantium (modern day Turkey) into Russia. This chapter does not provide a comprehensive overview of icon-making, nor does it explore the numerous regional schools of icon-making. Instead, the focus is predominantly on establishing the symbolism and meaning of icons within the Russian Orthodox Church, especially as relates to Rautavaara's immediate cultural and composition contexts.

Chapter 5 offers a musical analysis and interpretation of *Ikonit* in conjunction with circumstantial commentary on the specific icons upon which Rautavaara based this work.

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2. A CONTEXTUAL PARADIGM FOR ANALYSING PROGRAMME MUSIC

2.1 The need for a contextual paradigm

Art historians have determined that painting and sculpture, together with their historical stylistic changes, can only be comprehended fully if studied within social contexts (Ballantine 1984:23). Prominent historical philosophers of art, such as Aristotle and Hegel, also emphasised how art exists in a reciprocal relationship with society and culture. These philosophers studied both sociology and aesthetics and the implication of their theories is therefore important to art and to the connection of art with socio-historical contexts (Ballantine 1984:12)

This view has been explored extensively by musicologists and ethnomusicologists. Ballantine makes the bold statement that 'social structures crystallise in musical structures' and that 'the musical microcosm replicates the social macrocosm' (Ballantine 1984:5). He emphasises the inseparability of music aesthetics and sociology, and maintains that the exclusive analysis of the technical components of music is an inadequate and humanistically impoverished mode of scholarship (Ballantine 1984:xvi).

Ballantine's world-famous anthropologist teacher John Blacking has formulated a similar approach, which claims that music, on its own, has no meaning outside of society, and that extra-musical elements should be taken into account when contemplating the meaning and significance of any type of music (Blacking 1974:10, Reimer & Wright 1992:27-28,252). According to Blacking the meaning of music is 'to involve people in shared experiences within the framework of their cultural experience', and he therefore concludes that any analysis of music should begin with an analysis of the social context within which the music was created (Blacking 1974:28, 37). The influences on this creative process are not always musical, and considering that society ascribes meaning in various social performance contexts, scholars necessarily succumb to factual errors and misrepresented meanings when they study music while ignoring its social contexts (Reimer & Wright 1992:30, Ballantine 1984:17).

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Ethnomusicology embraces the study of meaning – especially within culture and society – along with other more internally referential and structurally concerned components of music. Kerman (1985:15) suggests that when ethnomusicology, theory and musicology 'compete for the intellectual control of territory [...] we will find the most promising fields of study'. This holistic approach encompasses the historical, cultural, social, physical and economic world where each part belongs to the greater whole, and it is therefore imperative that the parts and the whole should both be studied (Ballantine 1984:21-22).

Ballantine (1984:17) adds that studying all these components without accounting for the meaning of music will be ineffective and pointless. Over the last three decades, many music academics like Kofi Agawu, Carolyn Abbate, Leo Treitler and Lawrence Kramer (and Ballantine, for that matter) have been intrigued by a better understanding of social meaning and significance in music (Pearsall & Almén 2006:1). Where previous traditions of music scholarship had created a positivistic understanding that music is autonomous and only reflects back on itself, the 'new musicology' introduced a radical perspective that insisted on repositioning music to demonstrate that it can and does refer to things outside of itself. One of the genres in which this controversial idea becomes self-evident, is the type of instrumental music that was finally called programme music during the nineteenth century.

2.2 Programme music

Even though Liszt only coined the term 'programme music' in the middle of the nineteenth century, the practice of associating instrumental Western art music with a 'programme' dates back as far as 1700, with the composition and performance of Kuhnau's six *Bible Sonatas*. Each of Kuhnau's six sonatas is headed by a biblical story, and their musical forms accordingly correspond with these narratives. Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* concertos (c.1720) are similarly preceded by a textual programme in verse (secular Italian poems), while Raimondi's *Les aventures de Télémaque dans l'isle de Calypso* (1777) uses different musical instruments to represent characters from Fénélon's

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eponymous novel. There are also examples of programme music that depict a narrative within pre-existing and conventional musical forms, such as Dittersdorf's symphonies based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony and 'Lebewohl' Sonata Op. 81a (Scruton 2001:398). Many examples in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries bear testimony to composers' interest in non-musical subjects: Granados derived his *Goyescas,* Op. 11 (1911) from paintings by Goya while Stravinsky's opera *The Rake's Progress* (1951) is based on another extra-musical work, the eponymous series of engravings by Hogarth.

A dispute exists as to whether the term 'programme music' can be extended from narrative depiction to also include emotional depiction and evocation. Whereas this term was originally ascribed to (Romantic) instrumental music containing a narrative or descriptive quality, Niecks (1969:1-6) has broadened its application to include music that evokes any form of extra-musical suggestion, whether it be narrative or emotional. Scruton considers the original restrictive definition more acceptable, since allowing emotional depiction into the sphere of programme music makes this category all embracing to the point where it becomes meaningless, and where it no longer resembles compositional practice in the way that Liszt originally coined this term (Scruton 2001:396).

Although the precise stimuli that inspire a composer often remain indefinable and unquantifiable, studying the 'programme' of a composition may provide additional understanding of the music according to the putative 'intentions' of the composer. Whether the musical programme is borrowed from literature or the visual arts (or anywhere else), whenever one examines this inter-art relationship, one meaning-creating discipline (or art form, or cultural practice) is necessarily used to interpret another. This methodological overlap between disciplines has become more common with the advent of interdisciplinary scholarly approaches in the humanities. Where a work of programme music is adapted from an original that already exists non-musically (for example, a novel, a play or a painting), the study of how the adapted musical work is related to its non-musical original necessarily requires an unrestrictive type of scholarship

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that can easily move between different disciplines.

2.3 Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity involves an approach to scholarship where the conventional boundaries between disciplines have become porous and vague, with the result that the methodologies used in traditional disciplines are enriched by one another, or otherwise new 'interdisciplines' come into existence. Examples of such one-time interdisciplines, which have now become conventional disciplines in their own right, include cultural studies and ethnomusicology (Repko 2011:6).

Repko (2011:16) defines interdisciplinary studies as follow:

> [...] a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline, and draws on the disciplines with the goal of integrating their insights to construct a more comprehensive understanding.

The prefix *inter-* in interdisciplinary studies refers both to a disputed or challenged area between disciplines, and to the integration between these disciplines; resulting, finally in the intellectual advancement that is the outcome of exploring and integrating the interstices between conventional disciplines (Repko 2011:8,24-25). Interdisciplinary scholarship therefore brings aspects and methodologies of more than one discipline together in search of new understandings, and thereby generates valuable criticism that could not have been formulated using the methodologies and insights of more conventional scholarship (Leggio 2002:xviii; Nissani 1997:203). An interdisciplinary approach necessarily then also multiplies and improves our possible insights, and congregates different and otherwise unavailable clusters of knowledge as parts of a bigger whole (Nissani 1997:205,210). It is important to emphasise that interdisciplinary research entails the methodology used to study a research problem, and does not only refer to the unexplored intellectual terrain of the

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problem itself.

The research in this mini-dissertation does not create a new interdiscipline in order to study Rautavaara's *Ikonit*. It does, however, make extensive use of the interdisciplinary perspective and methodologies introduced into music scholarship by the 'new musicology'. At the same time it nevertheless also honours the non-negotiable need for conventional musical analysis, which determines the compositional processes and structures that inform the music itself.

2.4 Analysis and the 'new musicology'

Within conservative music scholarship, music analysis usually denotes a poietic explanation of harmonic and formal structure (from the Greek *poiein*, which means to construct, or make) that is connected with and incorporated into the sub-discipline of 'music theory' (Kerman 1985:17; Taruskin 2009:305). Palisca's definition of 'theory' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* resembles Kerman's view that music theory 'is now understood as principally the study of the structure of music' (Palisca 2001:359). This definition can therefore include a variety of subject matters such as scales, chords, pitch distribution, form and semiology (Kerman 1985:13).

A structurally obsessed 'theory of music' has dominated musicological scholarship for the last century and has furthermore preceded writings in music history or criticism for centuries (McClary 1991:x). The manifestation of modernism in twentieth century Western art music encouraged a positivistic focus on structural music theory and composition (e.g. serialism), thereby consolidating the legitimacy of cataloguing structure as a scholarly interest within academe (Kerman 1985:14).

Kerman surveys how this dominance of structurally concerned music theory is evident in the different approaches used by music analysts and musicologists. Although the concept 'musicology' implies for conservative scholars the

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exclusive study of historical Western art music (dating predominantly from the Common Practice era), the term actually originates from the French word *musicology*, which was defined as research, contemplation and understanding of all the various features and multiple occurrences of 'music' throughout the world (Kerman 1985:11,35-36). Musicologists often view music within its historical, social and economic contexts and therefore study biographical influences and performance practice, while analysts generally focus on the 'inner workings' of music as printed in a composition's score (Kerman 1985:72).

In his iconic article, *How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out,* Kerman (1980:312-313) states that although conventional analysis can 'discern and demonstrate the functional coherence of individual works of art', it often disregards the aesthetic and social value of these works. He rejects the fact that conservative music analysis does not allow for extra-musical interpretations, and substantiates his view by referring to how analysts like Schenker and Tovey use the structural insights garnered from analysis as the means through which to create an unquestionable canon of musical masterpieces (Kerman 1980:313). The importance of this type of analysis lies in the fundamental philosophy thereof: its function is to reveal structural organicism, which is the only characteristic allowed to determine the value of a musical work (Kerman 1980:313-315). Criticism could ultimately never replace analysis, but rather be combined with analytical methodologies to create a multi-dimensional approach to determine aesthetic, political, social and functional value that goes beyond mere 'organicism' (Kerman 1980:331).

Contrary to this conservative approach, aimed at creating an organic canon of Western art music compositions, Kerman's resolve is that musicology should contribute to and culminate in contextually relevant criticism, instead of mere validation. He observes, however, that the only form of criticism that took place within the confines of Anglo-American music departments (during the 1970s and 1980s) was positivistic theoretical analysis, which has left musicians and musicologists with an overwhelming amount of non-evaluative 'facts' and 'figures' about canonic musical compositions (Kerman 1980:319).

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Even though this restrictive musicological approach has been remedied at many international university music departments, it nevertheless remains prevalent at several South African university music departments. Lucia's article *How critical is music theory?* addresses the stagnant nature of music theory in South Africa and how, although this subdiscipline contains many possibilities for criticism (Lucia specifically suggests Marxist and Frankfurt School *critical theory* as a possibility), music theory is often limited to a device of structural analysis and categorisation that has been inherited from the Victorian era's music grade examination (Lucia 2007:181-183). Nevertheless, one must also heed the warnings of authors like Spies (2011:370) and Viljoen (2011:25) that conventional analysis remains necessary and needs to be grounded within the music itself. This then avoids always reducing music to a theoretical framework that enables politically correct and distinctively non-musical sociological commentary.

Kerman's influential article about music analysis also advocates that a form of criticism be developed, although he does not mention Marxist and Frankfurt School critical theory as a possibility. His idea of socially conscious critical engagement seems to be borrowed from ethnomusicology, since he proposed that musicology could begin to evaluate and elucidate music traditions other than only Western art music. He notes however that sophisticated music criticism is not yet (during the 1980s) a scholarly activity on par with the long-developed methodologies used in formalistic music theory, positivistic musicology, or similar critical approaches applied in art and literary criticism. The reluctance to formalise this 'critical' musicology as a sub-discipline, is because the techniques used in structural music analysis are repetitive and reliable, and produce results that can easily be quantified and verified like an experiment (Kerman 1980:320-321; Kerman 1985:17,19). Kerman (1985:123-124) defines criticism as:

> [...] the way of looking at art that tries to take into account the meaning it conveys, the pleasure it initiates, and the value it assumes, for us today. Criticism deals with pieces of music and men listening,

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> with fact and feeling, with the life of the past in the present, with the composer's private image in the public mirror of an audience. At worst criticism is one man's impressionism – like bad art – and at best it is an uneasy dialectic.

Although not the main perspective contained in Kerman's argument, he also mentions how music history is often not viewed within a political, social, intellectual or cultural context (Kerman 1985:42-43). He quotes Frank L. Harrison's essay *American Musicology and the European Tradition*, which states that 'it is the function of all musicology to be in fact ethnomusicology, that is, to take its range of research to include material that is termed "sociological" ' (Kerman 1985:37).

Many other musicologists have come to express the same views as Kerman with regards to music analysis. Ballantine (1984:20) argues against mere theoretical analysis and observes the limitations of this scholarly approach. Cook and Everist (2001) edited a collection of essays that demonstrates how musicologists are moving away from the limiting theoretical approach of music analysis to include academic perspectives like 'meaning', 'quality' and 'significance' (Cook & Everist 2001:xii). One of the contributing authors of this collection, Samson (2001:53), anticipates the possibility that 'analysis as a separate discipline [...] will lose its identity in a mesh of wider critical perspectives, its tools and practices drawn into and absorbed by those wider perspectives'.

Kerman suggests a way for analysis to be redeemed (1985:18):

> Why should analysts concentrate solely on the internal structure of the individual work of art as an autonomous entity, and take no account of such considerable matters as history, communication, affect, texts and programmes, the existence of other works of art, and so much else? [...] The potential of analysis is formidable, if it can only be taken out of the hothouse of theory and brought out into the real world.

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Since Kerman condemned traditional musicology (not only analysis) for its narrow focus, many musicologists have explored the notion that to comprehend music in its entirety it must be studied from different viewpoints that add to the understanding of music (Pearsall & Almén 2006:2-3). Thus the 'new musicology' became the critical antidote and alternative to musical positivism (Cook & Everist 2001:viii,x).

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3. EINOJUHANI RAUTAVAARA: COMPOSER AND MYSTIC

3.1 Rautavaara's musical background

Einojuhani Rautavaara was born in Helsinki on 9 October 1928. His father, Eino Rautavaara, was an opera singer, cantor and church music pedagogue and his mother, Elsa Träskelin, was a medical doctor. Rautavaara attended the Kaisaniemi Elementary School and the Helsingin Normaalilyseo (Helsinki Normal Lyceum). Rautavaara had no formal music education during these years but he recalls painting 'music' on paper with watercolours and displaying the paintings as 'compositions' (Rautavaara 2000). During the Second World War his music education remained insignificant and he only started piano lessons at the late age of seventeen when he went to stay with his maternal aunt in Turku, after his mother's death in 1944. Here, he attended Turun Klassilinen Lyseo (Turku Classical Lyceum) and in 1946 became a student of Arvo Litinen (1893-1966), a lecturer at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. It can be speculated that the devastation experienced as a result of his mother's death, together with the ensuing move away from his childhood home, is relevant to *Ikonit*'s first movement, *The Death of the Mother of God.* This observation is influenced by Rautavaara's decision to dedicate *Ikonit* to his parents.

After matriculating in 1948, Rautavaara studied musicology at the University of Helsinki and composition at the Sibelius Academy of Music. At the University of Helsinki he also attended folk music lectures by Heikki Klementti. These folk music lectures, which explored the influence of modality on Finnish folk music, made a tremendous impact on Rautavaara. At the Sibelius Academy he studied composition with Aarre Merikanto from 1951-1953, and received a Diploma in Composition in 1957. During his years at the Sibelius Academy, Rautavaara was exposed to Bartók's music, and was particularly influenced by the way in which Bartók incorporated Hungarian, Romanian and Bulgarian folk music into his compositions. Consequently, Rautavaara's *Pelimannit*, Op. 1, was inspired by the folk fiddling of Finland's Ostrobothnian region, and each of its five movements emulate Finnish folk dances collected in Samuel Rinda-Nickola's *Album of Tunes*.

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In 1954 Rautavaara won the Thor Johnson Composer's Competition in Cincinnati, with *A Requiem in Our Time*, which also contains clear folk influences and resembles Stravinsky's neo-classical style (White & Christensen 2002:197). Due to the success of this composition, he was awarded the Arnold Bax Composition Medal, and accordingly came to the attention of Sibelius, who offered Rautavaara a scholarship from the Koussevitzky Foundation. This enabled Rautavaara to continue his studies abroad in the United States in 1955. There he studied composition with Vincent Persichetti at Juilliard and also attended summer courses with Roger Sessions and Aaron Copland at Tanglewood. During his American studies, Rautavaara was exposed to contemporary twentieth century music, and Debussy's influence is particularly apparent in this Juilliard period. It was also during this time that Rautavaara completed *Ikonit*, a piano suite with six movements, which, apart from reflecting the new compositional techniques he learnt in the United States, also reflects noticeable influences of the Russian Orthodox religion and mysticism. Ultimately, during this youthful period as a composition student, Rautavaara attempted to merge his Finnish (and Russian) culture with his new American musical environment.

3.2 Rautavaara's inspirational visit to Valamo

Rautavaara recalls that, during his studies at Juilliard and Tanglewood, he remembered a childhood visit to the Orthodox Monastery in Valamo, an archipelago situated in Lake Ladoga near the Russian border in Karelia. He describes the clarity of the Valamo images in the following two extracts:

> The summer before the Winter War in 1939 my parents took me on a tour of eastern Finland, to Karelia – a land which was shortly to vanish for ever. On the islands swimming in the middle of the immense Lake Ladoga there was a monastery – Valamo. One went there in a little ship, early in the morning, so that the ten-year-old boy standing at the prow saw around him only dreary grey morning mist. But then, suddenly, without warning the mist dispersed and most wonderful islands sprang forth. They seemed to be floating in the air, and in the

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> midst of the trees rising on them appeared a dome, many domes, towers which in the sun shone full of colours! And suddenly they began to ring – bells, large and small, high tinklings and deep festive booms. The whole world was all at once full of sound and colour and that one's breath caught in the throat and one no longer understood where one was and what could happen. A world full of towers, sounds, visions! And then after landing black-bearded monks, a strange language, white corridors in the monastery, soaring high arches in the church. Covered with painted saints, kings and angels (Rautavaara 1995:110)

> The exotic world of the monastery had been a shocking experience for me, simply through the very existence of such a different world. I believe that it created the foundation for my later conviction of the existence of different worlds, different realities and modes of consciousness, if nothing else, that experience remained powerfully in the subconscious: the colours, rituals, icons, bells, the choirs singing, the songs of the deacon, even the swishing of the monks' habits in the darkened cloisters outside the door of the guest rooms (Rautavaara 1997).

Past memories play an important role in Rautavaara's work. He frequently refers to memories of this trip to Valamo (Images 6 and 7) that stirred his interest in mysticism and infinity and served as the stimulus for *Ikonit* and *All-Night Vigil* (Stępień 2011:78). This interest in mysticism resonates with Rautavaara's viewpoint on music (as cited in Stępień 2011:73):

> It is my belief that music is great if, at some moment, the listener catches "a glimpse of eternity through the window of time." This, to my mind, is the only true justification for all art. All else is of secondary importance.

Rautavaara's music is not autobiographical, but rather a medium that reveals eternity and infinity (Stępień 2011:73). He claims that his 'philosophy of the

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sacred is nevertheless not an expression of any particular religion; rather [...] a taste for the infinite' (Rautavaara 1995:109).

Image 6 Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Saviour, Valamo Monastery (Description of the Valaam Monastery, n.d)

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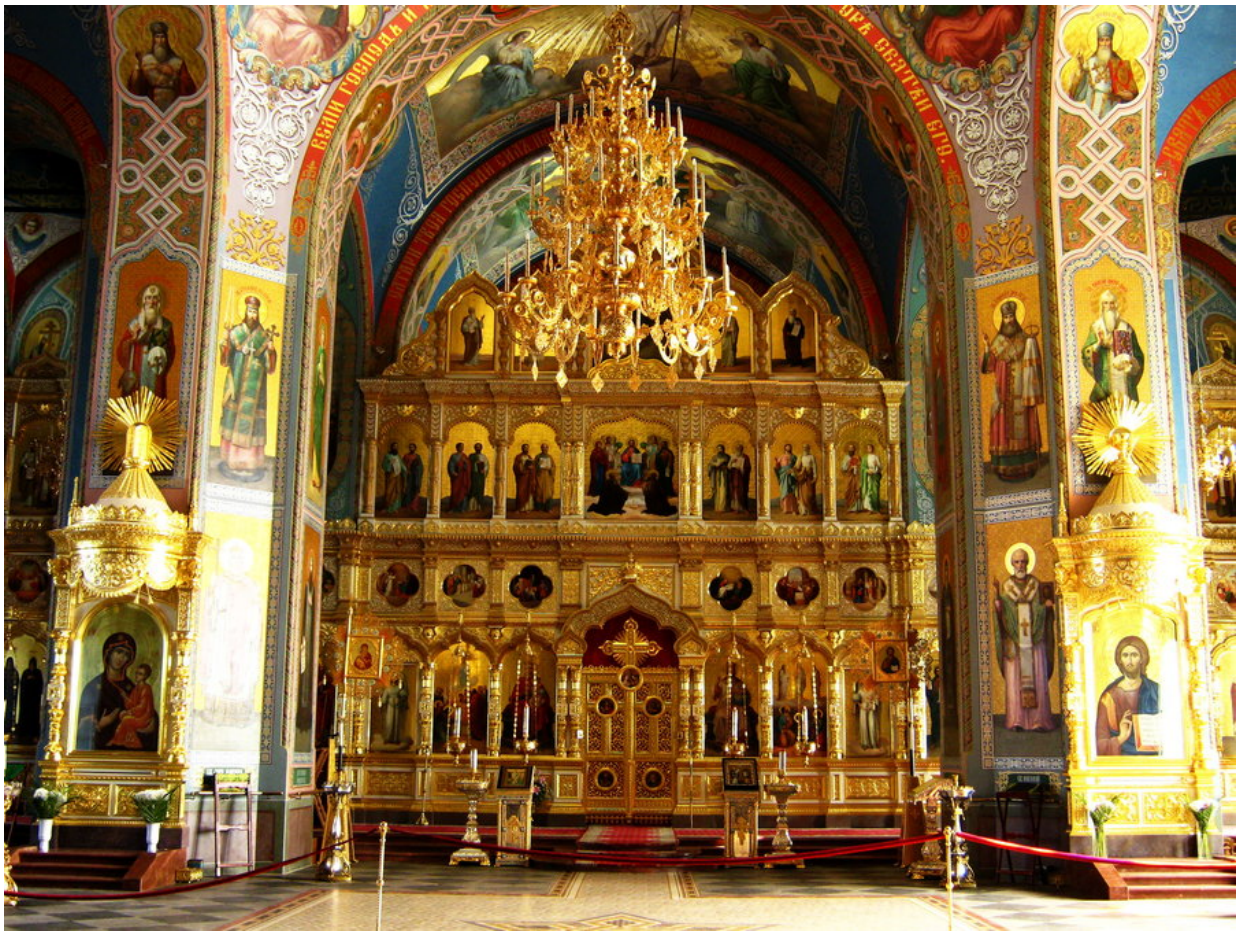

Image 7 Iconostasis of the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Saviour, Valamo Monastery
(Ginger-Xanadu 2011)

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3.3 Icons and *Ikonit*

Rautavaara writes about the process of composing *Ikonit* (Stępień 2011:95):

> Also *Icons* were launched in Vienna. I did not yet know that they were "Icons," since they were only ideas, [from] searching at the keyboard. Some ideas for this suite had been coming in their protoform as early as my last days in the army, when the piano at the soldier's home was at my disposal. The polyharmonic, quarter-note texture was looking for its shape in my mind always when I sat at the piano. It still had not found its form when I was in Vienna, and only revealed itself to me a year later in Manhattan.

After six months in Manhattan, Rautavaara admits to being homesick, not for Finland, but for Europe. In the public library in Manhattan he came across a German art book, *Ikonen,* that evoked vivid memories from his childhood visit to Valamo. Although icons are often considered to be part of the Eastern tradition rather than European tradition, the icons displayed in the book were mostly from the Byzantine tradition from Constantinople, the heir of late Hellenism (Rautavaara 1995:110).

> I am not longing for Helsinki, for home. Not even necessarily for Finland. But the only thing that could comfort and take away this nostalgia, soften this glittering hard surface, must be something European. Some smell, for instance, or sound or colour which is familiar and originates from the East, something which would represent that crazy, noble and sick hybrid, Hellenic – or rather Hellenistic – culture blended with Christianity, smelling of old Jewish religion…And suddenly it is there amidst the art books: *Ikonen* published by Insel Verlag. Open it and there you are with all of Valamo bursting out! The bells and the black beards and the choirs and golden onions. So I took *Icons* along to West 110th Street. *Muttergottes* is already singing in the subway, it is radiating music. It comes out almost immediately at the piano. The next day it is ready and one turns the page: *Zwei Heilige.* Quite clearly from the wall of a tiny

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> countryside church, green background – rustic saints. It comes as if it had been waiting. The third day: the *Black Mother of God of Blakernaja* and so on, the whole suite in almost two weeks. Of course then there remain weeks for finishing touches, specifications, changes and corrections (Stępień 2011:95).

Although the six movements of *Ikonit* each portray a Byzantine icon (or icon archetype) musically and is named after an icon, Rautavaara explains the programme as follows (Rautavaara 1997):

> I did not in any conscious sense 'steep myself' in contemplation of religious traits or dogmas, or in the describing of some spiritual experience; what was being played out there were the same Valamo bells, the incantations and the rustling of cowls and habits, sounds and pictures arranging themselves into their own images [...]

The above citation suggests that despite having been raised in the Lutheran Church, Rautavaara was not overly concerned with capturing the dogmatic content of religious icons in *Ikonit.* The following explanation also makes it clear that he does not belong to any organised religion or church:

> My own background was Lutheran, but I never really worried about different 'creeds'. I fear that my ecumenical relationship to the various churches meant indifference to their dogmas and theology. The archaicism, the strong scent of the atmosphere, matters most. (It would seem that I am somehow more composer than human being, in many senses.) My music, again, has always had its original impetus in some concentrated atmosphere – encountering a poem, a memory, a picture, a situation, nature – any powerfully idiosyncratic and intense phenomenon (Rautavaara 1995:112).

Rautavaara therefore aims to capture an atmosphere in *Ikonit,* and not necessarily create a narrative programme. Of course this does not mean that performances of *Ikonit* cannot have religious connotations, and it also does not preclude scholars from situating and interpreting *Ikonit* within the context of

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Orthodox iconography's dogmas. *A Requiem in Our Time* for brass and percussion was an earlier work from 1953 that already showed Rautavaara borrowing from liturgical traditions. The Orthodox influence in *Ikonit* is not only evident in the suite's programmatic titles, but also in the fact that Rautavaara provides a written programme or interpretation of each icon. The music is a rendition of a synesthetic experience (translating a visual impulse into music, or the other way around) and not a narrative programme. Rautavaara combines two art forms by borrowing structural elements from the visual icon and incorporating them into a musical score (Tarasti 2003:562). This rendition uses a musical language that is neoclassical and influenced by the Russian, French and American avant-garde of the 1950s. This resonates with the visual primitivism, the simplicity and ingenuous nature of icons.

3.4 Rautavaara's career after his return to Finland

After his studies in the United States, Rautavaara lectured as a non-tenured teacher at the Sibelius academy from 1957-1959. While living and working in Finland once again, he travelled to Switzerland in 1957, and to Germany in 1958, to study the composition techniques of the Second Viennese School with Wladimir Vogel and Rudolf Petzold. He soon integrated serialism with his essentially neo-Romantic compositional approach; and as an example, his Symphony No. 3 (1961) is a tribute to Bruckner's symphonic music, and the first completely serial Finnish composition (Rautavaara signs new Boosey & Hawkes contract 2003).

Rautavaara married his first wife, Heidi Suovanen, in 1959. The marriage was dissolved in 1982, and Rautavaara describes the years of his first marriage as unpleasant and meaningless (Matambo 2010:12). He wanted to devote his life exclusively to composition, and never considered marriage or raising children a priority. This difficult period affected his well-being, and his health deteriorated up to a point where he started living in seclusion.

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He worked as a music archivist for the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra from 1959 – 1961. In 1965 he was appointed as the rector of the Käpylä Music Institute in Helsinki, and as a tenured teacher at the Sibelius Academy from 1966 until 1976.

During Rautavaara's apparently meaningless personal turmoil, his musical style nevertheless developed meaningfully into an extreme avant-garde phase, which is clear in his serially organised Symphony No. 3 (1961), Symphony No. 4 *Arabescata* (1962) and his first opera *Kaivos* (The Mine) (1962). The twelve-tone writing and political subject of *Kaivos* compelled the Finnish National Opera to reject this work for performance. A revised version was however aired on national Finnish television in 1963, helping to establish Rautavaara's reputation in his home country.

Towards the end of the 1960s, Rautavaara moved away from a serial approach to composition and re-embraced Romanticism and mysticism. This is clear in the comic opera *Apollo contra Marsyas* (1970), where Rautavaara juxtaposes jazz and popular music against light Viennese classical music. This poly-stylistic approach was significant in the development of his mature style (Staff, n.d.). Many significant compositions date from this second neo-Romantic and mystical period: *Cantus Arcticus* (1972), a concerto for birds and orchestra, his solo piano compositions, Piano Sonata No. 1 *Christus und die Fischer* (1969), Piano Sonata No. 2 *The Fire Sermon* (1970) and *Etydit,* Op. 42 (1969).

Rautavaara was Professor of Composition at the Sibelius Academy from 1976 until 1990, after which he made his living in Helsinki as a freelance composer. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he gained prominence in Europe as a composer. From 1982 Rautavaara's approach incorporated modern and traditional elements in a fusion of diverse styles and cultures. This new phase can be traced back to the premiere performance of Rautavaara's choir-opera *Marjatta Matala Neiti* (Majatta, the Lowly Maiden) at the world conference of the Music Pedagogue Organisation. Sinikka Kiovisto sung the title role and became Rautavaara's wife in 1984. With this marriage, Rautavaara's health and personal

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life improved and was paralleled with a new stylistic approach. The operas *Vincent* (1985-87), *Thomas* (1986) and *Auringon talo* (The House of the Sun) (1990) enjoyed considerable international success.

It was however his mystical Symphony No. 7, titled *Angel of Light* (1994), that established his international reputation. After this, most of his compositions gained international recognition. The late 1990s saw his symphonies and concerti being increasingly commissioned by international orchestras.

More recent works by Rautavaara include the orchestral work *Tapestry of Life* (2007), the percussion concerto *Incantations* (2008), the cello concerto *Towards the Horizon* (2008-9), and *Summer Thoughts* (2008). His *Missa a capella* (2010-11) premiered in the Netherlands in November 2011. *Into the heart of light* (2011) premiered in Finland in September 2012.

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4. ICONS OF THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

4.1 Definition

Regarded as holy images, icons are sacred paintings or religious artefacts used in the liturgical life of the Russian Orthodox Church (Weitzman 1978:7). These images of characters and scenes from the Christian faith are infused with spiritual meaning, and icon painting is therefore revered as an illustrative form of the gospels and an embodiment of the presence of the represented saints. Icon painting is therefore not only an art form, but has visual significance in the church as a medium for expressing symbolic religious ideas (Stuart 1975:26).

The word icon derives from the Greek *eikon,* which means an image, likeness or depiction. The same Greek word *eikon* is used in the Genesis book of the Pentateuch where man is created in the 'likeness' or 'image' of God, and St Paul also uses the word *eikon* in his letter to the Colossians when he refers to Jesus being the 'image' of God (Baggley 1988:1). In the visual arts, the word icon has always referred to sacred pictures of the Orthodox Church tradition, revered as an integral part of the liturgy. They can therefore not be studied as an autonomous art form, but need to be understood within their religious and cultural contexts (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:8). Within their theological context, icons are not 'objects of devotion in themselves but [...] windows into the divine realm' (Cunningham 2002:101). Icons are a means of communicating theological matters to Orthodox worshippers and accordingly their content invites reflection on spiritual as well as aesthetic values (Nes 2004:7; Ouspensky & Lossky 1982:7).

This mostly universalist definition of icons resonates with Rautavaara's viewpoint on music (Stępień 2011:73) (See page 26).

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4.2 Historical background

Providing a detailed history of icon painting is not within the scope of this thesis since this art form developed over the span of one and a half millennia, using many different techniques (icons painted on wood, metal icons, ivories and enamels). Icons were used throughout a large geographical area (including the Byzantine centre in Asia Minor, the Caucasus, Russia, the Balkans, Italy, Egypt and Ethiopia). Iconography was therefore subjected to extremely diverse historical, economic, religious and artistic influences (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:14-15). It is however important to understand how sacred images came to play such an important role within the Orthodox Church.

Christians forbid any graven image of Yahweh according to dogmatic interpretation of the second of the Ten Commandments given to Moses in Exodus 20:4 (ESV): 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth'. This ban on godly images was no longer adhered to by the third century, when Christians used religious symbols not only as theologically meaningful object, but also as everyday decorations (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:7-8).

The earliest example of Christian art decorating a building dates to before A.D. 256 in a baptistery at Dura Europas (in the current Syria). This baptistery shows paintings of Adam and Eve, Christ as the Shepherd and women visiting Christ's tomb. At the same site a Jewish synagogue also displays wall paintings of scenes from the Old Testament. This implies that by the middle of the third century there was a sustained practice of illustrating biblical scenes in this region, and that neither Christians nor Jews considered it to be against the commandment against religious imagery (Cunningham 2002:160).

Another example dating from the third to the fifth century is found in the catacombs outside the Roman city walls. The theme of the wall paintings decorating these catacombs is salvation, resurrection and the afterlife, and the

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imagery includes scenes like Abraham sacrificing Isaac, Moses at the Red Sea, Daniel's friends in the furnace and Lazarus being resurrected (Images 8-10). The art represented here was not just depicting a narrative, but was also symbolic, and conveyed Christian dogma from the Old and New Testament (Cunningham 2002:160-161, Magoulias 1982:42). The argument in favour of revering these images was that the physical matter was not worshiped, but rather that it represented a holy prototype (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:9).

Roman art developed from classical realism to abstraction during the third and fourth centuries, and this probably impacted on the rise of Christian art. This abstract style does not suggest inferior artistic skill, but rather a focus on depicting symbolic ideas rather than realistic images. The porphyry statue of The Portrait of the Four Tetrarchs (Image 11) is an example of art from the end of the third century that portrays a symbolic significance at the cost of realism. This statue can be seen in Venice outside the St Mark's Cathedral. Its abstract and primitive style emphasises the characteristics of military force, unity and strength of these four sculpted Roman emperors (Cunningham 2002:161).

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Image 8 Three children in the furnace, Catacombs of Priscilla, Rome
(The Christian Catacombs, n.d.)

Image 9 Jonah is vomited out, Catacombs of St Marcellinus and St Peter, Rome
(The Christian Catacombs, n.d.)

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Image 10 Noah in the Ark, Catacombs of St Marcellinus and St Peter, Rome
(The Christian Catacombs, n.d.)

Image 11 The Portrait of the Four Tetrarchs, Venice
(Indivisible Enemies 2013)

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A more favourable environment for progress in Christian art came about after A.D. 313, when Emperor Constantine (the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire) and Emperor Licinius signed the Edict of Milan, which ended the oppression of Christians under Emperor Diocletian's rule (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:8; Morris 2005). However, any acceptance of sacred images had to be justified theoretically before it could be accepted according to the restrictions of Christian theology. This was provided in A.D. 325, when the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea determined that, although Christ was God, he was also human through his incarnation and could therefore be depicted in his human form. The embodiment of God within Christ not only made God's depiction possible, but rejecting the image was argued to imply a rejection of Christ's human incarnation (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:8-9). Another motivation for Christian art was the value and effectiveness of religious images for religious instruction along with the belief that observing and meditating on these images would inspire good deeds (Magoulias 1982:42).

In A.D. 330. Emperor Constantine founded Constantinople on the same site as the ancient Greek city Byzantium (subsequently Constantinople and the current Istanbul). This initiated the rise of the Eastern Roman Empire, or Byzantine Empire, before the final official separation of the Western and the Eastern Roman Empires in A.D. 395 (Šnajdar 2011). Constantinople was the capital of the Roman and Byzantine Empires and the later Latin and Ottoman empires. The city was often referred to as 'the second Rome' or 'the new Rome' and was also the wealthiest city in Europe. The Byzantine Empire and Constantinople became significant in the maintenance and advancement of Christianity (Nes 2004:12). The Byzantine Empire is described by byzantologist G. Ostrogorski as follows (as cited in Šnajdar 2011):

> Roman government, Greek culture and Christianity are the key foundations of the Byzantine development. A lack of any of those elements would unhinge the very existence of Byzantium. Only by the congregation of Hellenic culture and Christianity with the Roman

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> statehood could emerge such a historical entity that we call the Byzantine Empire.

Although the earliest existing examples of iconic depictions of saints date from the sixth century, the much earlier writings (almost three centuries earlier) of the 'father of Christian history' Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea confirm the existence of pictures of saints during early Byzantine times. The paintings referred to are icons, and the popularity of this form of representational art increased in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire between the fifth and eighth centuries (Cunningham 2002:163).

Emperor Leo III commenced his crusade against icons in A.D. 726, and announced a decree commanding the confiscation of Christ's image from the Bronze Gate (Chalke) of the Great Palace of Constantinople, which served as the royal residence of the Byzantine emperors. Four years later, in A.D. 730, the emperor announced a new decree banning all icons and instructing the persecution of iconophiles. Leo III probably had support from the aristocracy and a section of the clergy who disapproved of the increasing veneration of sacred images and wanted to avoid the idolatrous customs that proliferated outside of the Christian faith, culture and worldview (Cunningham 2002:26). This period of Iconoclasm, during which all religious art was deliberately destroyed, reached a climax under the eighth century Emperor Constantine V, Leo III's son. Constantine V enforced the iconoclastic policy more aggressively and hoped to destroy all icons in the empire. He was methodical in his approach to eradicate icons and even persecuted monks and monasteries that opposed him by defending the use of icons (Cunningham 2002:27, Magoulias 1982:44-45).

Only a few icons and frescoes survived the Iconoclastic period (711-843). These few examples were preserved in St Catherine's monastery in Sinai, and were therefore outside the reach of the iconoclastic Byzantine emperors. The St Catherine's monastery hosts the largest surviving collection from this time, which consists of 27 icons (Cunningham 2002:164). Some of these icons were

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painted, in the tradition of Antiquity, using egg tempera or encaustic (hot wax painting) on wood. The latter technique was not employed in the post-Iconoclastic period (Hautein-Bartsch 2008:15). A.D. 843 marked the end of the suppression of holy images in the Byzantine Empire and is today still commemorated on the first Sunday of Lent as the 'Triumph of Orthodoxy'. The motivation for the legitimacy and necessity of icons in worship was documented in the *Synodikon*, a document which states that defiance towards images of Christ undermines the incarnation through which God became part of the material world. Henceforward, the significance and veneration of icons and images in Christian worship was permitted in the Byzantine Church (Cunningham 2002:28).

With the end of Iconoclasm in A.D. 843, the Byzantine Empire enjoyed two centuries of military victory and wealth during which trade, art, music, literature and religion thrived. Churches were decorated with mosaics and murals again, icons were painted and manuscripts were illustrated. The newer technique of illustrating Biblical themes (i.e. not the egg tempera or encaustic iconography of Antiquity) was devised and became customary during this period (Cunningham 2002:164). A more visually realistic style that contrasts with the earlier abstract representations is evident in some icons from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The earlier abstract depictions suggested objectivity and serenity often associated with religious art, whereas the newer realistic style of later icons conveyed the chronicles and sentiment of the portrayed characters (Cunningham 2002:169). From 1261 to 1453 the spiritual and cultural revival continued despite the conquest of the Ottoman Turks into Asia Minor, into the Balkans and finally also into Constantinople in 1453 (Cunningham 2002:31).

At the time of the Turkish defeat of Byzantium, Muscovy (the predecessor state that became the Tsardom of Russia) had not only increased in political influence, but had also embraced the philosophy, culture and religion of Byzantium. This came about since the Orthodox Church in Constantinople actively endeavoured to convert the Slavic people beyond the empire. The Orthodox Church's influence advanced and spread into Northern and Eastern Russia but remained linked to

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Byzantium's influence through Byzantine missionaries (especially due to the support they received from the Byzantine Church through trade routes between the Baltic and the Black Sea). This interaction between Russia and Byzantium, and the resulting sense of belonging to the same Orthodox Church, explains the intimate spiritual interrelationship between the new monastic communities in Russia and Byzantium (Baggley 1988:28). Many writings on the origins and customs of the Russian Orthodox Church include the account of Prince Vladimir's delegates to Constantinople: 'Nowhere on this earth is there such beauty' and 'we did not know whether we were in Heaven or on earth', they recalled when describing their experience of the Byzantine liturgy. Having previously been a follower of Slavic paganism, this recollection apparently helped convince Vladimir to accept Orthodox Christianity, which resulted in the Christianisation of Kiev. The admiration for the beauty in the Orthodox liturgy has been an integral part of Russian religious perceptions, ever since Christianity was introduced into Russia (Serafim 1982:203).

The native Russian culture could also easily incorporate the Byzantine customs and traditions into Russian art. Art historians corroborate that the pagan Rus' art was progressive and furthermore not averse to Christianity (Uspensky 1982:147). (Rus' refers to an ancient tribe whose origins and identity are in dispute, or to the region of Kievan Rus' that is in modern day Belarus, Ukraine and the European part of Russia.) This cultural exchange developed a productive collaboration between Byzantine and Russian artists.

The earliest examples of Russian icons are from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and they exhibit some local influences in colour, structure and composition that suggest the regions of Novgorod, Yaroslavl and Vladimir-Suzdal. The art of frescoes and icons thrived throughout Russia, especially in Novgorod and Pskov, and by the thirteenth century Russian icons display a unique transformation with a tangible awareness of the principles of Christianity and a natural integration of local characteristics (Uspensky 1982:149).

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After the Turkish invasion of Constantinople it was foreseeable that the Orthodox centre moved to Moscow, which was soon called the 'third Rome'. The title of Czar (Caesar) indicates the association through Byzantium with the Roman Empire. The Russian tsars were considered guardians and liberators of Orthodoxy (Baggley 1988:30-31). Russia's Christian traditions and the role of icons in the Russian Orthodox Church's liturgical life therefore originated directly from the Byzantine Empire (Nes 2004:12). Consequently the term Byzantine art describes a quality of style and not merely art from the Eastern Roman Empire (Janson, Kerman & Egan 1969:40).

A significant development in the next few centuries was the encounter by Orthodox art, during the reign of Peter the Great (1672-1725), with the various kinds of post-Renaissance Western European art. Peter's extended travels to Europe persuaded him of the need to implement reforms to modernise Russia. Western religious and secular art, with its focus on realism and disapproval of the customs and philosophy of Orthodox iconography, was therefore increasingly considered superior in 'progressive' Russian circles (Baggley 1988:31-32). Russian icon studios started incorporating Western realism, which stimulated the development of Russian secular art, outside and within the Orthodox Church, as well as the rejection of Orthodox customs and traditions. There are therefore two distinguishable styles of art that co-existed in Russia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: traditional Orthodox art and art influenced by the West, which was secular art with religious subjects (Uspensky 1982:155).

By the eighteenth century most patrons of the arts either had been, or were mesmerised by the art of the non-Orthodox world. Although icons were still painted within the Orthodox world well into the twentieth century, they lacked the religious command and quality of the icon traditions from previous eras. These icons are still revered for the sacred subjects they portray, but are often considered the lowliest of Western religious art (Baggley 1988:31-32).

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Since the late twentieth century, in Greece, in several other regions of the Orthodox Church and even in the Western world, there has been a renewed interest in the art of icon painting and the mysticism and devoutness of Orthodoxy.

4.3 The interior and exterior of the Eastern Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church building symbolically represents a perceived dualism of life: heaven and earth, body and soul, human and divine. Many Orthodox dogmas are revealed through the style, size, geometry and colour of the interiors and exteriors of Orthodox Churches (Cunningham 2002:109; Longin 1982:121).

The Orthodox Church building is considered a declaration of faith and not merely a gathering place for worship. A representative of Divine Beauty on earth, the church is a place where 'God dwells with man'. The Russian believers react to both the exterior structure and the interior of icons and frescoes with unique passion and dedication, and the Church therefore becomes an integrated expression of the earthly and heavenly realms (Uspensky 1982:150).

Archaeologist N.V. Pokrovsky writes that 'the form or appearance of the church was subjected to symbolism and theology, the better to create a new and unique art filled with inner purpose' (Longin 1982:121).

Orthodox Church buildings, as opposed to most Western churches, are representative of the relationship between God and man as well as heaven and earth. As places of worship, they become a dwelling where God and man can meet and where man can experience divine revelation (Longin 1982:121).

The architecture of churches in the 1830s and 1840s changed from the established imperial styles and returned to the Byzantine style. This stylistic retrogression is evident in such examples as the monument to the heroes of the Patriotic War of 1812, and the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. The buildings of the Valamo Monastery, designed by M.D. Bykovsky and A.M.

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Gornostaev, also display this change in style, and consequently they made such an enormous impression on Rautavaara during his childhood visit to the monastery (Pitirim 1982:45).

Gold and white are colours with significant religious meanings. The scarceness, dignity and worth of decorative gold, largely the result of its resemblance to and association with light and the sun, gave rise to it being valued as an aesthetic object denoting status and grandeur throughout Christian culture and history. After the legalisation of the Christian Church in the flagging Roman Empire, one of the earliest churches constructed was the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople (A.D. 337). This church had an impressive golden dome, and it subsequently became the model for most Eastern Orthodox churches. However, Byzantine churches never displayed the same amount of gold as Russian Orthodox Churches, in which gold domes have always been a convention. Since the top of the church is considered the 'head of our Lord,' the implicit understanding is that a modest tower would never suffice and that only copious amounts of gold were appropriate, because of gold's associations with value, costliness, distinctiveness, the eternal, dominion, light and most importantly, holiness (Longin 1982:123). This unique appearance now epitomises the cathedrals, monasteries and churches of nearly every Russian town and the visual charm of prominent places like old Moscow is often described by writers with phrases such as 'topped with gold' and 'with walls of white' (Longin 1982:123).

4.4 The Iconostasis

The iconostasis or icon screen divides the altar from the main body of the church. Although the iconostasis was inherited from Byzantine churches, it developed in Russia to a display of doctrinal content and liturgical practice. The iconostasis is subject to a distinct and fixed layout, and will typically consist of five thematic tiers whose displayed icons follow a customary order (Uspensky 1982:153). The iconostasis's festive tier is especially relevant, since three of *Ikonit*'s movements borrow the titles of festival icons portraying a succession of

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events from Christ's life, which have subsequently been incorporated into the Orthodox liturgical calendar as twelve major festivals. These Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church are (Nes 2004:17):

1 The Annunciation
2 The Nativity of Christ
3 The Presentation in the Temple
4 The Baptism of Christ
5 The Raising of Lazarus
6 The Transfiguration
7 The Entry into Jerusalem
8 The Crucifixion
9 The Descent into Hell
10 The Ascension
11 Pentecost
12 The Dormition of The Mother of God

The iconostasis is fitted with three doors: the central Royal doors and the two Deacon doors (also known as the North door and the South door). The Royal doors are for the use of ordained clergy only. The deacons use the Deacon doors to enter and exit the sanctuary during the course of the service. The North door, symbolising Heaven, is decorated with an icon of the Archangel Michael. This door is used to exit the sanctuary. The South door, used to enter the sanctuary, represents man's access to paradise and is decorated with the Archangel Gabriel announcing the coming of Christ. It is also common to see the Deacon doors decorated with icons of sainted deacons, for example Stephen the Protomartyr on the North Door and St Philip or St Lawrence on the South Door (The Icons of the Iconostasis 2011; The Iconostasis 2013).

The arrangement and placing of icons are not restricted to the iconostasis. By the end of the ninth century, the arrangement of church decorations nevertheless adhered to a common order. It is therefore not unusual to see icons of Christ

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Pantocrator adorning the domes of Orthodox Churches and festival icons on the arches (Baggley 1988:90)

4.5 Function of icons within the Eastern Orthodox Church

The West has often shown scepticism towards the veneration of icons in the Orthodox Church and particularly in Russia. Adam Olearius, a German scholar who travelled through Muscovy and Persia between 1633 and 1639, was stunned by some Russian customs involving icons. He recalls that:

> They attribute a power to the pictures as though these could help to bring about something particular. They will dunk a picture into their beer, for example, when they are brewing, in order that the brew may succeed. They are really afraid of them, as though there were actually something divine in them. When they wish to pursue the pleasures of the flesh in the presence of an icon, they first cover it with cloth. […] That the simple common folk ascribe great power to images can also be seen in the fact that when there was a fire, a Russian held up his St Nicholas image to the flames and prayed for it to quench the conflagration. When no help came […], they threw the image impatiently into the fire, saying; If you don't want to help us, you'll have to help yourself (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:6).

These practices continued well into the twentieth century – even into an era when the U.S.S.R. officially promoted atheism. The German diplomat, Hans von Herwarth, writes in his memoirs about an incident during the Second World War:

> We had just taken a village, and were resting in the village street, when suddenly we came under Soviet artillery fire. The thatched farmhouses went up in flames, which were fanned by a strong wind. Soon we were faced by a conflagration which we could no longer combat. When we evacuated the village, we saw the peasants climbing on to the roofs of their still-burning houses, holding up their icons to

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> heaven, and praying in loud voices for the wind to die down and for their houses to be spared (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:6).

Icons have a liturgical meaning and were never envisioned as museum pieces or considered art works, but were created as a practical device of the Orthodox church or home (Longin 1982:121). Icons are expressions of a longstanding custom of meditating on the illustrated themes and events, and were therefore also considered to have implications for man's salvation. Just as theologians interpret Scriptures and perceive various levels of dogma, icons must be viewed with a cognisance of the diversity of meaning and dogma portrayed within a single iconographic subject or individual icon (Baggley 1988:52-53). Scripture is open to many different and possible interpretations; likewise the treasures conveyed in an icon can include a range of interpretations that reveal the spiritual and dogmatic environment of the icon painters (Baggley 1988:53). The semantics of iconography, like the scriptural doctrines of the Church, are part of the Church's divine customs, and function to extend human religious insights and intensify the experiences of worship (Baggley 1988:13).

The past events of Christ and the saints are recreated in the present. The precise regulations for the portrayal of painting icons are comparable to the linguistic constraints and conventions that aim to describe beliefs and doctrines as accurately as possible (Nes 2004:13). This comparison is not made lightly, and icons are seen as holy entities that convey theological concepts and Christian religious meanings in a symbolic language, just as Scripture conveys theological concepts and religious narrative through the written word. Iconography is thus one of various mediums used to communicate the Gospel, and icons have a liturgical function that forms an integral part of the Orthodox Church service (Nes 2004:12-13).

Icons and relics may be infused with heavenly authority, but should never be considered as more than depictions and reminders of the images they signify. All the same, icons, like the martyrs or saints they represent, may be transformed by

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the presence of the Holy Spirit to function as a path of interaction between the earthly and the divine (Cunningham 2002:106).

In Byzantine times, many Christians were illiterate, but could still understand the sacred readings in church and could even comprehend an extremely rhetorical sermon. Byzantine churches emphasised and acknowledged the significance and educational use of pictures in an essentially uneducated society with no access to books. During the Iconoclasm periods, depictions of scenes from the Old and New Testament were preserved because of their primary purpose of instructional use (Cunningham 2002:69,162).

After the Iconoclasm, iconography was not as focused on the symbolism of salvation for Christians who faced persecution, but was more concerned with educating and enlightening illiterate Christians who had been baptised.

To this day there is a clear differentiation in the Orthodox Churches between reverence for God and the adoration that is offered to icons. The icon is therefore not considered as an idol, but a representation that allows a connection between the earthly and the divine. Baggley (1988:24-25) describe icons as 'doors or windows through which we are open to the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, a meeting point of man and God, continuing the work of the Incarnation in a way that combines with the Scriptures to lead man into the Divine Life of the Blessed Trinity'.

Icons are not only used in churches, but also as private sacred images and tokens of awareness of the past in the present (Nes 2004:14). They never strive to rouse the emotions of the religious, but rather direct the human faculties of reason and feeling to transfiguration (Ouspensky & Lossky 1982:39). Like Scripture, icons are intended a point of interaction with the Heavenly world where only purity exists (Ouspensky & Lossky 1982:39).

Architecture and icons, murals and tapestries, the choir and poetic chants, splendidly fashioned garments, the graceful actions of the worshippers, the light

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from candles and icon lamps with the scent of incense are all forms of ritual splendour that combine in reverence to God. This illustrates the synthesis of art forms with religious practice in the liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church (Serafim 1982:203).

4.6 Style of icons within the Eastern Orthodox Church

The form and content of icons are conventional and confined to standard authorised models. Iconographers need to comply to these models without subjective interpretation, in order to portray the accepted teachings of the Church. A part of these iconographic restrictions includes the composition of schematic and abstract forms within a basic structure or template (Nes 2004:12).

Iconographic designs were passed on from master to apprentice within a school of painting and were often collected within guidebooks. The motifs were fixed, and a final work was often the collective effort of a workshop. Despite this seemingly rigid approach, the historical circumstances and regional differences influenced the painters, and had an impact on the development of motifs (Nes 2004:12-13). The personal element of the artist might be subtler than in other art forms but is easily noticed when studied thoroughly, and is furthermore substantiated by the lack of identical icons even on the same subject (Ouspensky & Lossky 1982:43).

Despite the changes of style that have occurred because of history, geographical location, or inevitable subjective artistry, the spiritual essence of icons remains the same because icons adhere to the teachings contained in Scripture (Ouspensky & Lossky 1982:7). Consequently there is a notable consistency in the iconography of some festival icons, as will become evident in the following chapter's analysis of 'The Baptism of Christ' and 'The Dormition of the Theotokos' icons that Rautavaara translated into music for *Ikonit*. These important images originally date from the first centuries of Christianity, and their origins can be traced to where the biblical events depicted in the icons

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occurred. Most of the festivals associated with these icons, and therefore also their imagery, originated in Palestine and Syria. The Church accepted these images as historically accurate, and they were conserved within the Orthodox Church as factual representations equivalent to the writings of the Gospels (Ouspensky & Lossky 1982:37-38).

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5. A STRUCTURAL AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *IKONIT*, OP. 6, AND THE SPECIFIC ICONS THAT INSPIRED ITS COMPOSITION

Various influences are apparent in Rautavaara's *Ikonit*. The most obvious, that of icons that are a staple of Russian Orthodox Church liturgy. There are also notable Russian musical thematic influences, such as can be seen when comparing *Ikonit* to various compositions by Scriabin, Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich. Mussorgsky's piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* also appears to have been influential: not only because it also borrows its programmatic titles from actual works of visual art, but also because Rautavaara's 2005 orchestrated work, *Before the Icons* (the orchestration of *Ikonit*), copies Mussorgsky's orchestrated *Promenades* by adding additional *Prayers* in between the original icon movements. Apart from these local Russian musical influences, which are the result of Finland's close proximity to Russia, more distant and cosmopolitan musical influences on *Ikonit* are Debussy's Piano Preludes and Messiaen's modes of limited transpositions. Matambo (2010:52) even describes *Ikonit* as Rautavaara's 'Orthodox reply' to Messiaen's Roman Catholic piano works *Visions de l'Amen* (1943) and *Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jesus* (1944).

This chapter presents a structural analysis of *Ikonit*'s music, and places this musical analysis within a visual context, through a simultaneously interwoven and comparative analysis of the actual and archetypical Orthodox religious icons that inspired Rautavaara to compose this piano suite. The six icon movements do not create a biblical or religious narrative, and this chapter is therefore not concerned with analysing and interpreting any overarching story that could have been depicted musically in this suite as a whole. However, this does not preclude discussion of the distinct narrative moments portrayed within individual movements and their corresponding icons. The icon movements are also not ordered according to the conventional layout on the iconostasis (screens that display icons and divide the nave and sanctuary) of actual cathedrals and churches. This chapter therefore focuses narrowly on the specific icons represented in *Ikonit*, whereas Chapter 4 presents a much more comprehensive overview and history of icon archetypes and iconography.

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Of the icons that Rautavaara chose to set to music, those with more complex iconography generally have a more intricate musical rendition as regards the development of material, texture, structure and form. It has already been discussed how Rautavaara's musical depiction of icons involved a synesthetic cognitive impulse, in which he literally translated the visual impressions and atmospheres of extremely beautiful icons into similarly evocative musical movements. The following analysis therefore does not identify any extreme organic formal principle that organises *Ikonit*'s structural development as a whole, as one might expect to discover in Schenkerian analyses of similar works (for example, Richard Strauss's orchestral suites). This chapter's analysis aims instead to capture the moods or sensibilities in six distinct moments of 'musical painting'.

The only systematic ordering principle in *Ikonit* is the alternating of feminine and masculine titles:

The Death of the Mother of God (feminine)
Two Village Saints (masculine)
The Black Madonna of Blakernaya (feminine)
The Baptism of Christ (masculine)
The Holy Women at the Sepulchre (feminine)
Archangel Michael Fighting the Antichrist (masculine)

In several of the icon movements it is revealed how musical and visual thematic ideas reflect on and return back to the complexity of the first *feminine* movement (*The Death of the Mother of God*). In this regard, I have already speculated about the enduring biographical impact made on Rautavaara due to his own mother's death during his youth.

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5.1 *Jumalanäidin kuolema* (The Death of the Mother of God)

Image 12 The Dormition of the Theotokos
(The Dormition of the Theotokos, 2012)

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Christ and the Mother of Christ are the two most common figures that occur in icon paintings. Even though they are presented in many different ways, Christ is nevertheless always portrayed as the Incarnate One, the Word made flesh and the Bringer of Salvation, and he is therefore never depicted as an ordinary human being (Baggley 1988:56). The Mother of Christ is seen in numerous depictions with her divine child: holding Him, nursing Him or bestowing Him to God the Father (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:12). Icons of the Virgin and Child always depict her as the God-bearer, or Theotokos (Baggley 1988:56). According to legend, St Luke the Evangelist, painted the first icon of the Mother of God, which is called the Hodegetria (Pointer of the Way). This venerated icon was the talismanic patron of Constantinople until the Ottoman invasion, as it allegedly protected the Byzantine capital from enemy invasions, and Byzantine emperors therefore consulted and implored the icon (like an idol) before going into battle or making important political decisions (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:6). Of all the icons, it was therefore often the icon of the Mother of God with Child that was attributed with healing powers and was also credited with divine intervention in military battles (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:6).

Another general portrayal of the Mother of Christ relates to the depiction of her Dormition, an important event that the Eastern Orthodox Church commemorates annually on 15 August (Gregorian calendar) (Paphiti 2013). Although Mary's death is not described in any of the gospels, the iconic tradition and the liturgical feast commemorating her death find their origins in legendary stories and sermons; particularly Archbishop John of Thessaloniki's sermon dealing specifically with Mary's death (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:26). A further account of Mary's Dormition can be found in the sixth-century Greek text, *Account of St John the Theologian of the Dormition of the Mother of God* (Cloud taxis 2014). All these myths form part of the increased veneration of Mary within the Church of the Roman Empire during the Constantine era. With the influx of pagans into the early Christian church, both Mary and the multitude of saints functioned as familiar substitute figures that could accommodate worshippers who were more accustomed to polytheistic practices (Cloud taxis 2014).

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The term 'dormition' (*koimesis* in Greek and *uspenie* in Russian) means 'to fall asleep,' but in Mary's case it refers to her physical death and ensuing entry into heaven. There are many icons that depict this subject matter. Because the Orthodox Church does not believe in the dogma of Mary's physical ascension, iconographic depictions of the dormition therefore highlight her soul (and not her body) being received into heaven. After the censorship of the various Iconoclastic periods (explained in Chapter 4), the compositional arrangement of the Dormition icons dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries was either maintained with slight alterations, or enhanced with additional scenes (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:26). Therefore, these icons consist of some basic and some more complex iconography.

On the lower central part of the icon (Image 12) is the dead body of the Mother of Christ. Her haloed head rests on a red pillow and her arms are crossed over her chest. The apostles, who have been congregated by angels from their respective missions, surround her. Positioned near her head is Peter, and positioned near her feet is Paul; along with the other apostles, bishops, mourners and angels throughout the rest of the picture. The crosses on their garments identify the bishops and the books they are holding symbolise the importance of teaching the traditions of the Church (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:26). Posture often implies the character of the portrayed person or saint, and the group of mourners who bow down or otherwise face down symbolise admiration, reverence and humility in the face of Mary's magnificence, majesty and splendour (Baggley 1988:83).

The two buildings on either side of the icon frame the group of mourners. One of the buildings represents the house of the disciple John, where Mary spent most of her life after the crucifixion of Jesus, and the other building represents the temple in Jerusalem (Paphiti 2013). The Temple positioned in the background is a significant symbol from the Bible: as meeting place between God and humans, the temple is a prevailing image in the Book of Revelation and a central theme in human redemption (Baggley 1988:35). In general, the depiction of temples during the early Christian era memorialises and preserves the idea of the

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Jerusalem Temple, after its destruction by the Romans in the Siege of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).

Ouspensky and Lossky (1982:40) describe the 'peculiar role' of architecture in the icon:

> While it serves, as does landscape, to denote that the event depicted in the icon is in truth connected historically with a definite place it never contains this event inside itself, but merely serves as a background to it [...] according to the very meaning of the icon, the action is not enclosed in or limited to a particular place [...] and is not limited to a certain time.

Buildings that figure in the background of an icon present one of the few non-naturalistic elements found in iconography, and these structures are therefore often distorted so that their portrayed architecture is not comparable to any of the characteristic buildings found in the Byzantine or Russian worlds (Baggley 1988:82). Icon painters used these 'unrealistic' buildings as part of the visual language of iconography: although they painted the settings of specific biblical events, the distortion of buildings suggests that these events are not strictly limited to the biblical time or space, but that these events rather belong to a spiritual realm that is more enigmatic than the human world of logic and rationality (Baggley 1988:82). There is therefore always a wider significance, in that the events portrayed in an icon are meant to address the inner world of the viewers (Baggley 1988:82). In later icons, however, buildings are painted with more realism, to the detriment of their universalist symbolic implications.

Another method used by icon painters to evade the depiction of a specific historical landscape, was to direct any viewer's thoughts away from their natural environment to the supernatural, with the use of two-dimensional golden or monochrome backgrounds (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:11).

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The legend of how the Jewish priest Jephonias wanted to overturn Mary's deathbed is depicted in the icon's foreground, in front of the red curtain around Mary's deathbed. He was stopped by Archangel Michael, who cut off his hands, and they were subsequently healed after he repented (Paphiti 2013).

The lowest ranks of existence and references to hell are often painted at the bottom of icons, while angels, the Holy Spirit, divinity and heaven are painted at the top of icons. It is symbolic that Jephonias is painted on the lowest part of the Dormition icon, and the semi-circle opening to heaven at the top of icon. There is a strong perception of balance and power between the higher and lower levels of the icons. Diagonal movement in the iconographic design indicates the movement of divine grace from heaven to earth, but also the relation of figures to one another. The level at which characters are painted indicates a certain symbolic position and, therefore, Christ is always painted higher than the apostles (Baggley 1988:79-80).

Jesus stands behind Mary, in the middle part of the icon, against a green aureole. At this point he has obviously descended from heaven, and he has two angels on both sides and a seraph (the highest order of the realm of angels) above him. The infant held by Jesus symbolises the soul of his Mother that he is receiving (Paphiti 2013).

The top part of the icon displays Mary on a throne, taken up to heaven by two angels. The semi-circular opening right at the top of the icon is the opening to heaven, with the flowers suggesting the Garden of Paradise. Against the golden background are the apostles arriving on clouds, along with angels who are also present at Mary's death. The apostles are represented twice in this icon, but in different time frames.

Ever since the Renaissance, Western paintings have focussed to a large extent on demonstrating how external light fell on and illuminated the subject of a portrait. Iconography does not make use of a light and shadow depiction such as *chiaroscuro*, since the religious objects portrayed in icons are thought to be the

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source of light in the picture. This divine light epitomises the mystical and celestial quality thought to be contained in icons, as is evident in the idea that icons illuminate their viewers (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:12).

Post-Renaissance Western art also incorporate lines of perspective that meet at a distant point, with the result that the sizes of objects decreases as one moves further back into a painting's dimensions (Baggley 1988:80). In icons, however, lines of perspective are inverted, and they meet in the icon's foreground, as if to come into the presence of the viewer, who thus becomes part of the picture when contemplating its meaning (Baggley 1988:80-81; Haustein-Bartsch 2008:11). The purpose of this inverse perspective is therefore to create a relationship between the objects or persons in the icon and those who are viewing it (Baggley 1988:81).

There are many other examples with similar iconography (Image 13). This example (c.1500) is more sombre and less embellished with darker colours (Paphiti 2013). The more common Dormition icons (Images 14) include only the lower part of the composition (the death of the Mother of Christ) and omit the assumption of Mary, the angels gathering the apostles, and the open heaven above.

The Dormition icon is a archetypical part of the iconostasis that can be found on the tier displaying all the feast icons. By the tenth century, Byzantine sacred art had developed standard schemes for representing the major feasts and the similarities can be seen on iconostases of many Orthodox Churches (Cunningham 2002:114). The celebration of these feasts is a liturgical representation of the reliving of these key events and provided Orthodox Christians with a sense of constant renewal and effective contribution to the Church (Cunningham 2002:107).

Rautavaara included two of the festival icons in *Ikonit* (*The Dormition of the Mother of God* and *The Baptism of Christ*). He starts the suite with the final festival icon and does not follow any narrative order in the following five icons.

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Image 13 The Dormition of the Theotokos (c.1500) (Russel 2013)

Image 14 Dormition of the Theotokos (Russel 2013)

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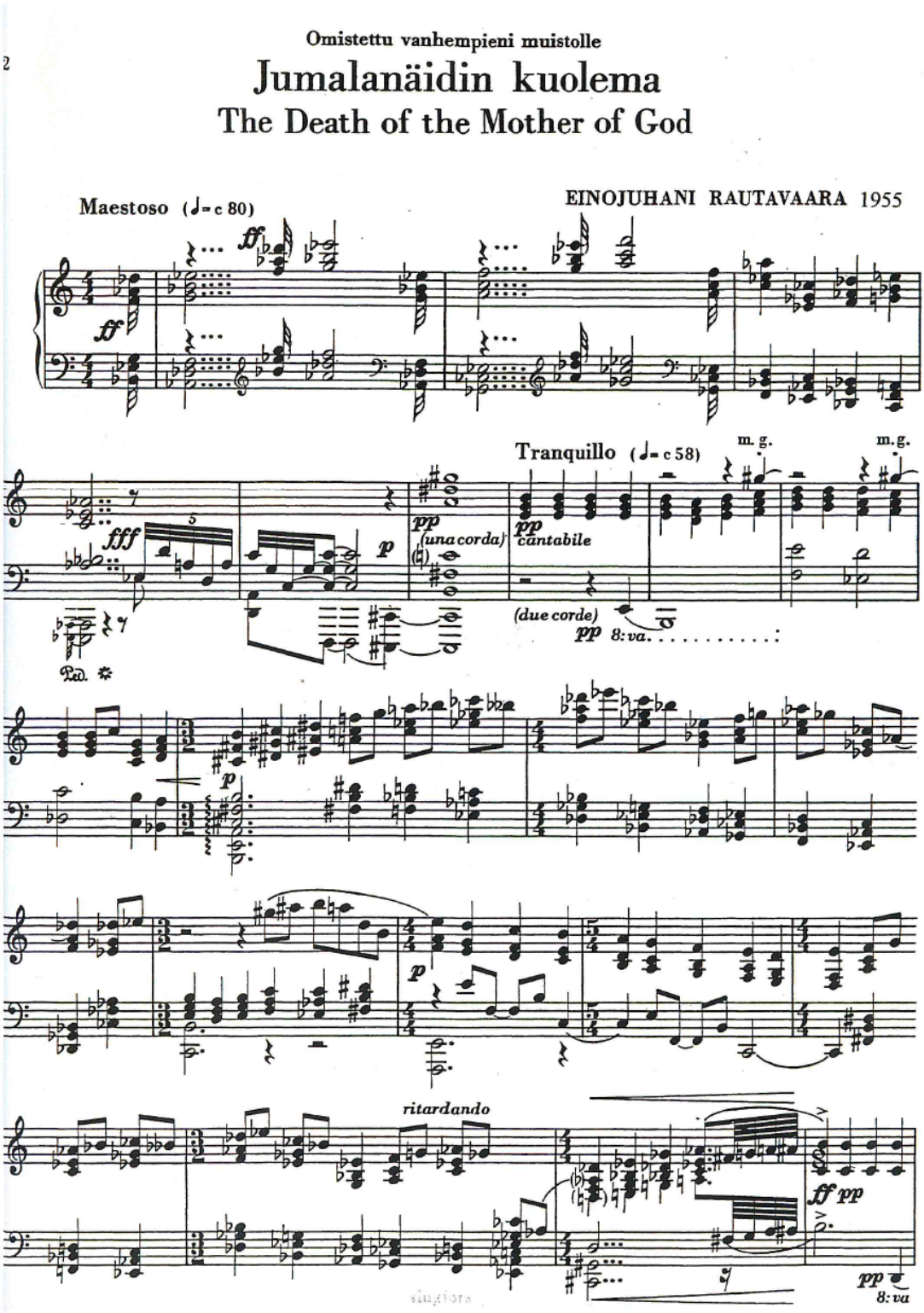
Music Example 1

E. Rautavaara, *Ikonit,* Op. 6, The Death of the Mother of God



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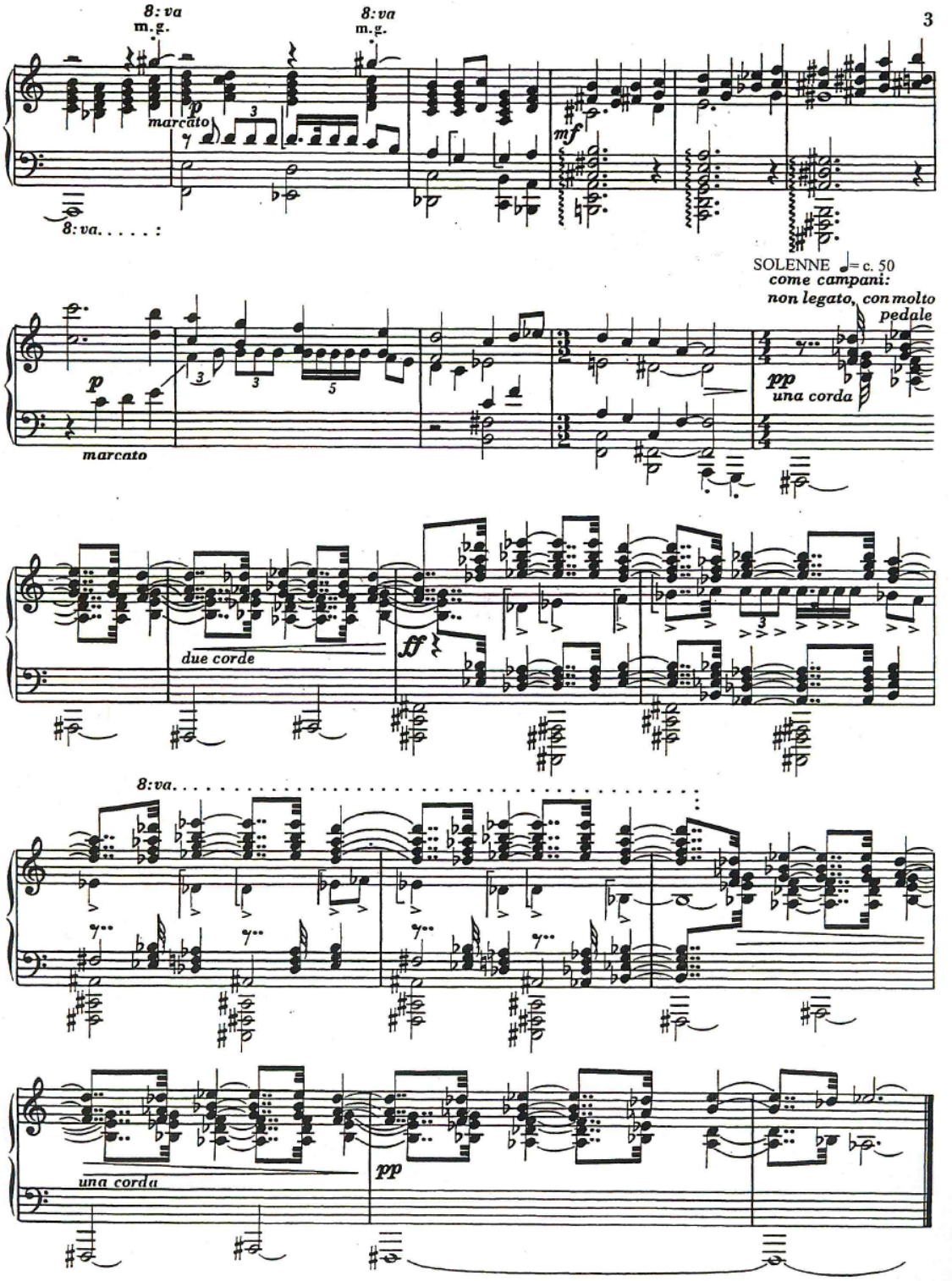
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The visual narrative in the icon of *The Death of the Mother of God* is captured very effectively in the music that Rautavaara uses in this movement of *Ikonit* and by Rautavaara's description in the score (1963:n.p.):

> The first picture is the *The Death of the Mother of God*. The Mother of the Son of Man lies on a purple bed, surrounded by the glorious company of the Apostles. They are no longer fishermen and carpenters but princes of the Church with their glittering vestments weighed down with gold and jewels. A truly Byzantine scene: with the barbaric splendour is mingled a certain decadence, and in the background we seem to hear the solemn clamour of a thousand bells. Beside the bed stands the Son – the Lamb, the Word – holding a tiny creature in His hand: it is the soul that has just left His Mother's body. The air is full of incense and the deep clanging of the bells.

The opening *maestoso* section is a fanfare of the angels beckoning the apostles to witness Mary's dormition. Tarasti (2003:559) suggests that the fast descending figure at the end of this section implies the arrival of death and Mary's soul leaving her body. The *tranquillo* section changes the mood illustrates the chanting of the apostles as a gesture of blessing and veneration, thereby capturing the atmosphere of a memorial service. The ascending melodic phrases enhance the ascension of Mary's soul that was depicted at the end of the previous section with the final chord. The final bell section in which bell sounds increase indicates the heavens opening and the majesty of Jesus receiving Mary's spirit.

The ternary form of the music is suggestive of the three main scenes depicted in the icon: Mary surrounded by the apostles on the lower part of the icon, her soul being received by Jesus in the centre of the icon, and above the heavenly realms with angels beckoning the apostles and heaven opening to receive Mary. Ternary form suggests the framing of an image and creates order and harmony. This technique is used in icons to suggest a sense of inner recollection (Baggley 1988:80).

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The splendid declamatory opening motif consists of a dotted rhythm and whole tone movement in contrary motion between the left and right hand. The first motif consist of a D flat major chord in second inversion moving a whole tone higher to an E flat in the right hand. The left hand plays a similar motif, but starting on an E flat and descending to a D flat. Although major tonalities, the combined chords create a polychordal construction. This motif is echoed in a higher register and reminiscent of the echo of church bells. A sequence of this bell motif is then presented, with the right hand moving higher and the left hand moving lower and another echo following in the higher register. The third time the bell motif moves into a crotchet quasi-cadential figure, it is disrupted by a haunting descending broken chord pattern in short note values that ends on a tonally ambiguous chord in the high register.

A similar four-part cadential gesture is described by McCreless: 'high-register crescendo with an increase in activity, precipitous plunge, low-register crash, and rebound' (2006:12). This specific gesture is extensively and prominently employed in Romantic piano music, jazz and modern art music, but is especially characteristic in Romantic piano repertoire. The build-up in the upper register of the piano is seen in the opening to bar 3, climaxing to a plummet that ends on the low resonant C sharp octave (bar 5), and then rebounding to a final chord in the high registers (bar 6).

Along with many other gestures that originated during the eighteenth and nineteenth century piano repertoire, this gesture continues to be used in twentieth-century music, particularly piano music. An example is found in bars 54-63 of 'Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus', which is the fifteenth movement of Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus.* In spite of the new tonal language, the rhetoric is still the same gesture found in Romantic piano music.

It is significant that Rautavaara chooses a Romantic piano gesture (employed by the strongly influential Messiaen), that is typically used at cadential points at the end of a movement or work, as the opening gesture of *Ikonit*. Thus a gesture that signifies endings is presented instead as a beginning. This may signify that

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Mary's death, although an end to her life on earth, is the beginning of something spiritually bigger (her dormition). This gesture therefore introduces the Orthodox theology of resurrection and life after death at the outset of *Ikonit.* This creative subversion of musical conventions also complements Rautavaara's choice of the last among the festival icons as the first icon he sets to music in his suite.

In spite of the prominent dotted rhythms in the opening bars, the *tranquillo* section is reminiscent of a chorale and is more what one would expect of funeral music than the music of the opening bars. The slower tempo and minor key change the atmosphere immediately. During Rautavaara's visit to the Valamo monastery he was aware of an array of sounds that accompanied the various habits and customs of the monastery. Rautavaara was gripped by the monks in their dark and flowing garments and their 'foreign and abstruse' chanting (Matambo 2010:62). This memory is portrayed with great effect in the *tranquillo* section, seeing as there is a strong suggestion of chanting from bar 8 and this section also uses a variety of diverse sounds.

Bar 8 starts with consonant major and minor triads in uniform rhythm within a small melodic range, and resembles aspects of Lutheran choral traditions and Russian liturgical music. Lutheran chorales were originally sung in unison with no set rhythm, similar to the free rhythm in plainsong. Ever since Vladimir converted Russia to the liturgy of Byzantium, the music in the Russian churches involved monophonic singing without any instrumental accompaniment. Orthodox liturgy is constructed from eight modes (*glas*) that are completely different from Latin church modes of the West. These Eastern modes are not scales, but are various motifs that are used to form melodies (Leikin 2002:32). Chanting has been subjected to many restrictions throughout the Russian Orthodox Church's history. In spite of these restrictions the chanting comprises lavish variations and developments of the melodic material. The end of the nineteenth century showed a renewed interest in the ancient sacred chants of the Russian church (Leikin 2002:33).

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The chanting effect created with the right hand's triads is accompanied by descending intervals of major sevenths (an interval that proves quite prominent throughout this suite) in the left hand.

From bar 11 the chords change from triads to quartal chords (chords consisting of intervals of perfect, augmented and diminished fourths) that create intervals of sevenths. The introduction of the quartal chords sees an ascending line in the melodic contour, moving away from the small range found in the chanting and in the previous descending line of the accompaniment to the chanting. A recurring motif is introduced with quaver notes in the right hand, which increases the lyricism of this section. This creates the effect that the introduction of solemn chanting is not final, but that there is an anticipation and optimism for better prospects despite the funeral setting. The changing time signatures heighten the instability of the expected funeral march in duple time. Furthermore, the fluctuating contour is enigmatic: the ascending lines create an illusion of hope, but are followed by descending contours from bar 13 onwards, with dissonant seventh intervals in the left hand. Just before a conclusion is reached, the earlier lyric motif is introduced once again, and an ascending line crescendos into a triumphant major seventh chord that imitates the chanting introduced at the opening of the *tranquillo* section. It is clear that within this context death is not final, and that the expected emotions of grief will not be the outcome of what was perceived to be funeral music.

The melodic writing of this section ranges from melodies using the Phrygian mode (bars 8-11), whole tone scale (bar 12) and pentatonic scale (bar 22), illustrating how Rautavaara avoids creating any tonal centre, but rather uses a combination of scalar forms to suggest a mystical environment. Modes are often used in Finnish folk music, as well as in Lutheran hymns, and in Rautavaara's case they reveal an interest in nationalism (as portrayed in mainstream nineteenth century Western art music compositions) and in intertextual connections (combining religious texts and Western art music) (Matambo 2010:62). The distinctive dissolution of tonality in Rautavaara's music has a symbolic meaning, and taken together with the uniquely solemn style of the icon

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being portrayed musically, it suggests the most frightening and entropic feature of death: 'destruction, ruin, and decay' (Leikin 2015:7). These modes also show Rautavaara's 'spiritual kinship' with Messiaen, which is something that influenced the development of his emerging compositional style. During Rautavaara's studies at Juilliard, he was exposed to Messiaen's music, and was especially influenced by the modes of limited transpositions that are typical of Messiaen's compositional style. These modes of limited transpositions are suggested briefly in the *tranquillo* section combining whole tone scales (Messiaen's first mode), pentatonic scales and Phrygian modes in bars 12-22 (Matambo 2010:51).

From bar 20 onwards, the material from the opening of the *tranquillo* section is developed. The chant-like music is extended from triads to major seventh chords, and a counter-melody (bar 22) is introduced in the middle voice (between the already-stated material). This counter-melody starts with a triplet figure, reminiscent of the *Funebre* movement of Scriabin's Sonata No. 1, Op. 6 (Music Example 2). Rautavaara develops the triplet figure to a dotted rhythm of semiquavers before he continues the countermelody in crotchets and quavers. It is noteworthy that Scriabin's Sonata No. 1 is also Opus 6 (like *Ikonit*), and Rautavaara's similarity to a Russian composer often also described as a mystic is especially relevant in this context.

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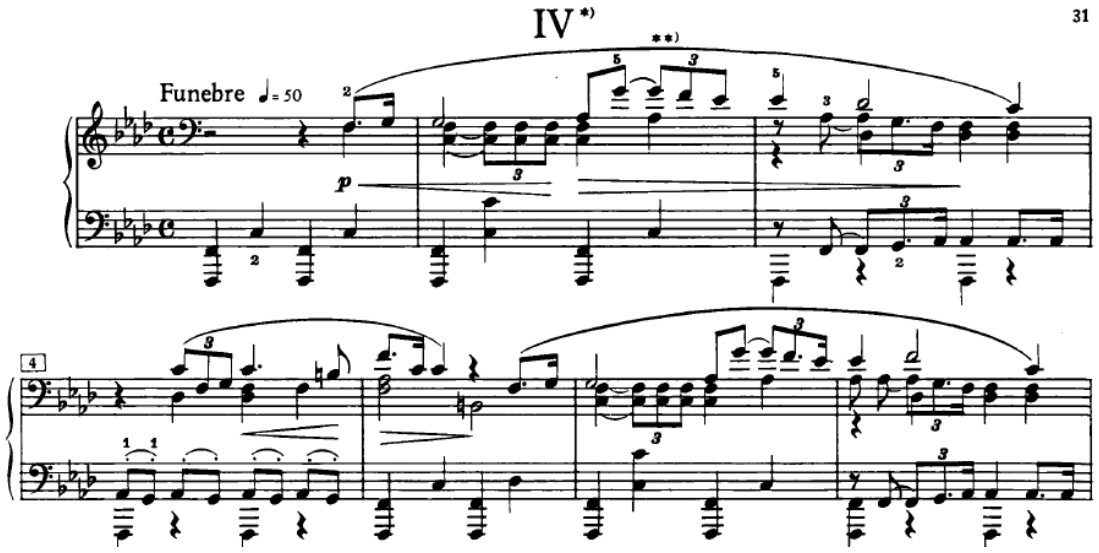
Music Example 2

S. Scriabin, Sonata No. 1, Op. 6, *Funebre* (fourth movement), bars 1-7

The final section of *The Death of the Mother of God* (from bar 31) is an extension of the opening material. Although initially marked *maestoso* and *ff* in bar 1, the same material is now heard *pp* with pedal (*con molto pedale*). The dotted rhythmic figure permeates the whole final section of this movement. This is reminiscent of the dotted rhythms used in many funeral marches:

- Chopin's *Marche funèbre* for piano in C minor, Op. posth. 72 No. 2
- Chopin's *Marche funèbre* (third movement) from Piano Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 35
- Beethoven's *Marcia funebre* (second movement) from the 'Eroica' Symphony
- Beethoven's *Maestoso andante, Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un eroe* (third movement) from Piano Sonata No. 12 in A flat major, Op. 26
- Mahler's *Trauermarsch* (*Funeral March*) (first movement) from Symphony No. 5
- Shostakovich's *Funeral March: Adagio Molto* from String Quartet No. 15 in E flat minor, Op. 144

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As is evident in music examples by Beethoven, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Mahler and Shostakovich, funeral marches are usually characterised by minor tonalities in duple time signatures, an even pace at a slow tempo, a melody within a small range, dotted rhythmical motifs and repeated notes (Leikin 2015:76).

Rautavaara develops this dotted rhythm motif in the same way as it was introduced in the opening bars – in contrary motion. The top part builds in dynamics and melodic range from bars 31 to 36, before the falling contour and decrescendo in the final four bars. This climax is enhanced by the counter melody in the middle part, the same development technique used in the recurring chanting section from bar 20 onwards. In fact, Rautavaara uses a similar counter-melody to the triplet motif that is adapted into a dotted rhythm of semiquavers. The counter-melody is unmistakably major (with the exception of one flattened third used as an auxiliary note). The bass notes added to this dotted rhythm motif and the countermelody have a distinctive bell-like effect.

Ringing of bells, just like chanting, is a fundamental part of the Eastern Orthodox Church's ritual practices. Bells are rung manually with three distinguishable rings: notification rings (generally from the biggest bell in the tower) that announce church services; rotation rings (ringing the bells from smallest to largest) used for special occasions such as funerals; rhythmical celebratory rings (used after the notification rings) used during celebrations and festivals like Easter (Matambo 2010:64). Rautavaara portrays his own memory of the sound of bells as he approached the island of Valamo vividly in the final section of *The Death of the Mother of God*. The day of Rautavaara's visit marked the dedication of a Bishop at the Valamo monastery and to mark this occasion, rotation ringing was employed. At first, the Valamo bells were heard from a distance (*pp*), and increased in loudness and texture as Rautavaara approached the island and heard the sound of more bells in different registers. He describes his arrival (Matambo 2010:66) as follows:

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> I feel that the universe begins to ring and sing. With hundreds of bells, big, small and minuscule, so that the colour transforms into a sound and the sound is full of colour.

Rautavaara describes the sound as a 'solemn clamour of a thousand bells' and depicts this through tied notes that eliminate the metric pulse and creates an elusive spontaneous flowing rhythm (possibly indicating the fading of the bells). The excessive use of pedal that imitates the conglomeration of bell sounds and their echoes blends this section's music into one rich yet dissonant harmony (Matambo 2010:64). The collection of sounds is portrayed in the expanding texture: the single bass notes (bars 31-32) developing into chords (bars 33-36) represent the biggest bells; the higher major chords have the brilliant sounds of the smaller bells first heard in first inversion triads (bars 31-32) that later develop into a thicker texture with a doubled root note (bars 33-36).

The imitation of bells is an obvious influence from Russian religious music (where bells form an integral part). Russian composers who regularly used these religious bell motifs in their compositions include Scriabin and Rachmaninoff: examples include a funeral knell heard in Scriabin's Sonata No. 1 Op. 6, *Funebre* (Music Example 2), and funeral and festive bells in Rachmaninoff's *Études-Tableaux* (Op. 33 No. 3 and 6; Op. 39 No. 7 and 9) and his *Prelude,* Op. 32 no. 4.

The sound of church bells is also considered to be one of the most festive and jovial sounds in Russia. Pre-Revolutionary Russia had an astonishing variety of bells, many of which were given names and obtained provincial or even national fame. Bell-making and bell-ringing thrived especially because other instruments are not permitted in the Orthodox Church, so that many Russian musicians directed their performance ambitions towards bell-ringing as a legitimate form of musical accompaniment (Leikin 2002:35).

This movement ends with the depiction of a fading bell, that is effectively portrayed by decreasing dynamics and the texture then changes from chords to single notes in the final bar.

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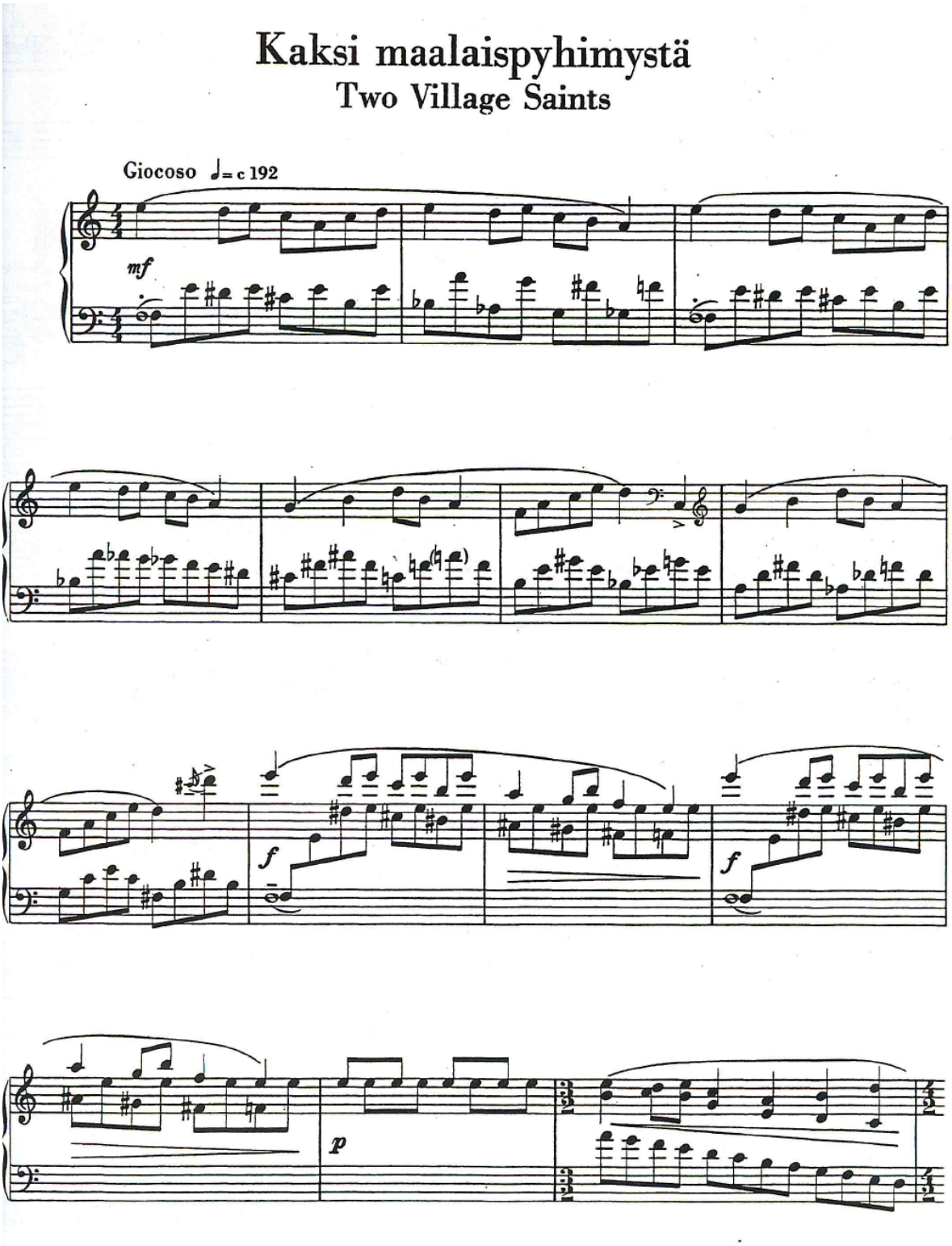
5.2 *Kaksi maalaispyhimystä* (Two Village Saints)

Music Example 3

E. Rautavaara, *Ikonit,* Op. 6, Two Village Saints

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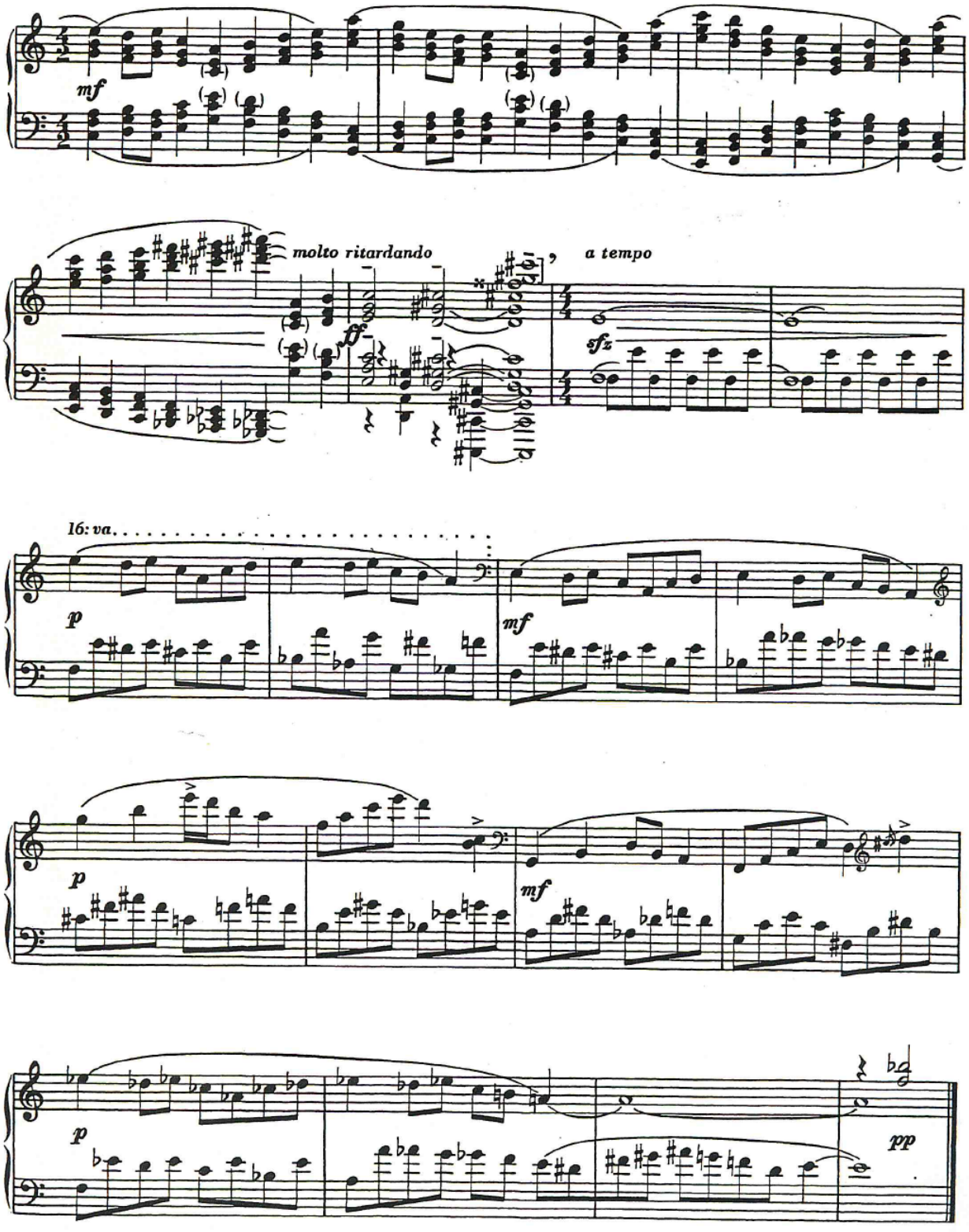
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Rautavaara (1963:n.p.) writes the following of the second icon in the *Ikonit* suite:

> The second picture represents *Two Village Saints.* It is painted on the door of the iconostasis, the old icon cabinet, of some simple village church, where these two nameless saints looked down in solemn joy on shawl-clad country girls and bearded peasants. Standing against their gay green background, how many country weddings they must have watched, how many Easter kisses! The Lord is risen! Let us be joyful!

Since iconostases differ, and the saints used on the Deacon doors are unique to every church, it is not possible to attribute a specific icon(s) to *Two Village Saints*. The obscurity of this icon is enhanced by the alternate translation of Rautavaara's icon as *Two Unknown Saints*. Considering Rautavaara's description of the icon, however, one can presume that his idea and musical depiction is consistent with Image 15. The iconostasis is discussed in Chapter 4 (from page 45).

Image 15 Royal and Deacon Doors in Iconostasis (Garrity 2013)

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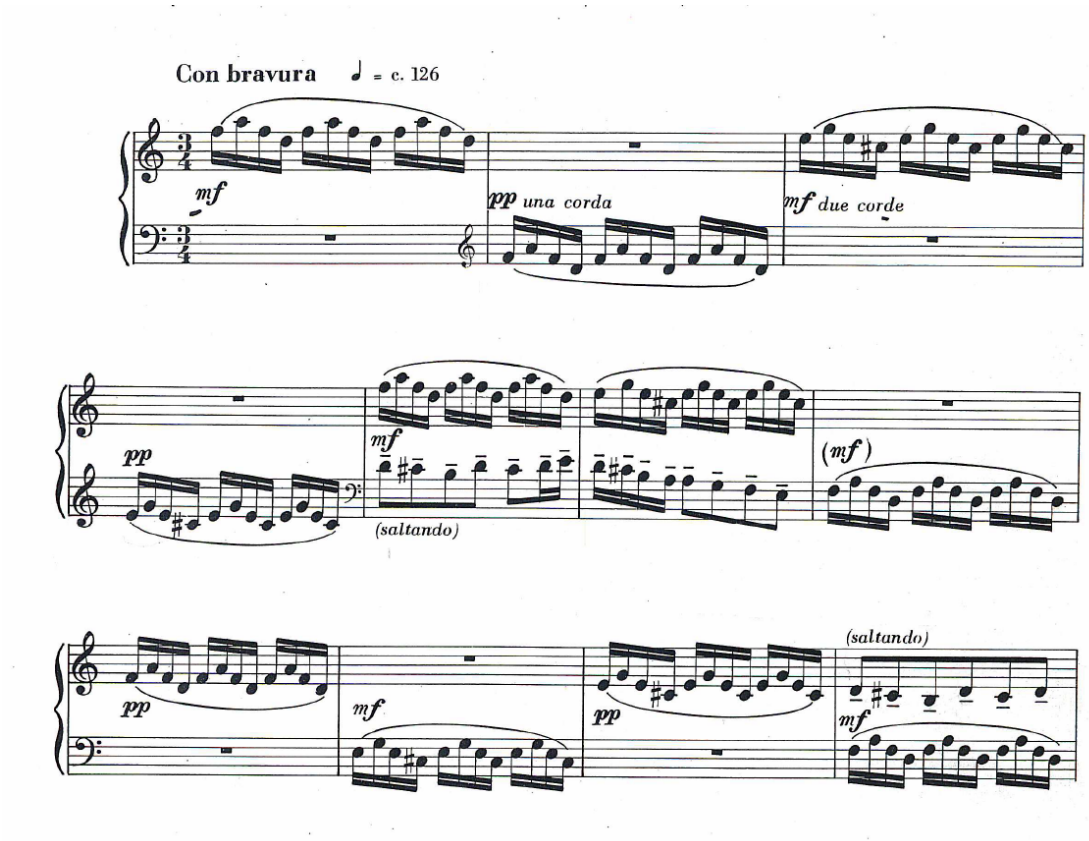
The joyful (country weddings) and rural (simple village church) setting of Rautavaara's description is extended to the music with the *giocoso* tempo indication and the use of an Aeolian folk tune melody.

There are different ways in which the two village saints are represented: The two modal melodies (repeated two-bar Aeolian melody in bars 1-4, and repeated two-bar Mixolydian melody in bars 5-8) in the right hand can be interpreted as their musical representation. Alternatively, the two-part writing between the hands can also be interpreted in this way. This baroque-style polyphony (reminiscent of Bach's two-part inventions) and two-part texture is furthermore similar to *Klockar Samuel Dikström* (fourth movement) from Rautavaara's piano suite *Pelimannit,* Op. 1.

Music Example 4

E. Rautavaara, *Pelimannit*, *Klockar Samuel Dikström* (fourth movement) Op. 1, bars 1- 11



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The folk-like melodies are combined with an unconventional and tonally ambiguous counterpart in the left hand part, which uses dissonant pedal points, descending major seventh intervals, chromatic scales and second inversion major broken chords in a descending chromatic progression. No strict rules of tonal contrapuntal writing are applied, as is evident in the many dissonant intervals found between the two voices. The left hand part of the contrapuntal writing evokes an Alberti bass on 'wrong' notes, an occurrence that Tarasti (2003:559) explains as 'the echoes of the "crazy" scales that Persichetti spoke about in his lectures' during Rautavaara's time at Juilliard. Consequently, traditional conventional contrapuntal style is used in conjunction with modernist and nationalist elements in Rautavaara's music, which results in the 'emergence of [his] distinctive compositional voice' (Matambo 2010:44).

Rautavaara furthers the neo-classical style of *Two Village Saints* by using the contrapuntal technique of imitation. The two-bar modal melodies are presented again from bar 22 onwards: two octaves higher played *piano* with a repetition two octaves lower (with the right hand crossing over the left hand) played *mezzo forte.* These different ranges and dynamic markings underline the composer's independent treatment of melodic voices, and they create the effect of Baroque-like (effectively neo-classical) imitation and terraced dynamics. Music Example 4 illustrates a similar effect in *Pelimannit*. Matambo (2010:44) suggests that the imitation in this case can also be interpreted as 'call and response', which is commonly (and sometimes stereotypically) understood to be a distinctive trait of folk music, and is also a stylistic trait in Rautavaara's music.

The contrasting middle section (from bar 14) starts by harmonising the first few notes of the opening melody with a left hand counterpart that illustrates Rautavaara's symmetrical writing style. This symmetrical writing is used for the entire middle section and is also an essential feature in icon painting.

Rautavaara first used mirror symmetry in *Three Symmetrical Preludes* (1950) and this developed into a stylistic feature and notable compositional device throughout his career (Paul 2008:1). As an example, Rautavaara even celebrated

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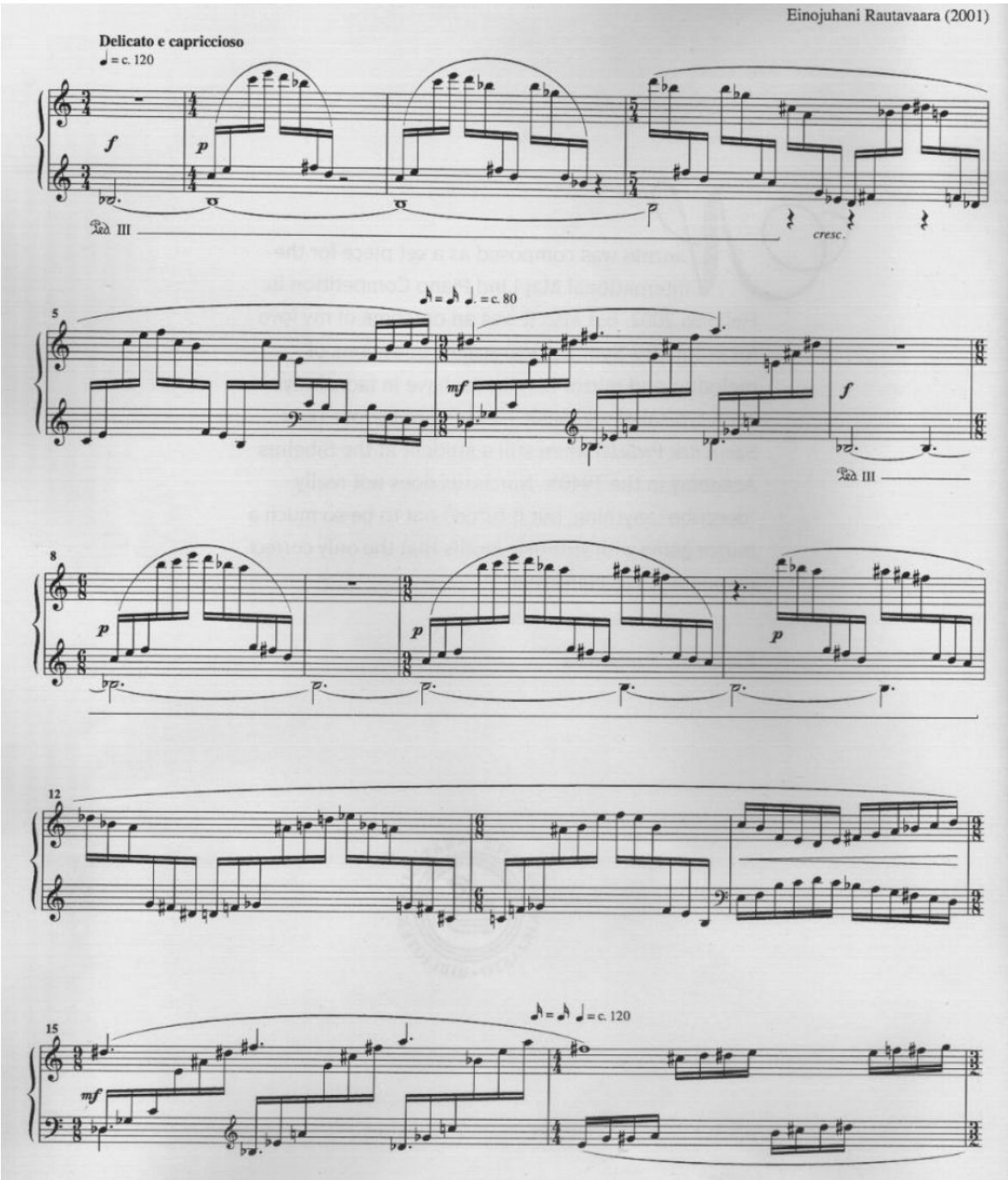
the symmetrical year 2002 with *Narcissus,* a piano piece that is symmetrical in its artistic conception (Music Example 5).

Music Example 5

E. Rautavaara, *Narcissus,* bars 1- 16

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Rautavaara employs the symmetry of space through the visual design of the piano and the relationship of white and black keys. Since this symmetry is based on the visual design of keys, the outcome is a non-transposing technique of pitch symmetry that can occur in both tonal and atonal contexts. This makes it unique to the transposable symmetrical pitch system found in Webern or Bartók's music (Paul 2008:1).

Another notable form of symmetry that Rautavaara employs is the expansion and contraction of intervals (Paul 2008:1). A very brief example of this is seen in the right hand part of bar 14, where the intervals are contracted and then expanded from a fourth interval to a ninth at the end of the bar.

Manipulation of tonality is a common characteristic in Rautavaara's music. The symmetrical section from bar 15 shows the combination of a second inversion C major triad in the right hand with a second inversion F major triad in the left hand. The use of chord structures that are visually similar and in symmetrical inversions is only one aspect of the symmetrical style that Rautavaara incorporates into his music. Using triads and deferring them to their complements (as the example of the C major triad and its complement the F major triad) is another technique apparent in many of his works (Paul 2008:4). Paul (2008:1) suggests the importance of a symmetrical relationship between chords, and in the symmetrical section from bar 15, the tonic-subdominant relationship with C acting as a symmetrical axis is one way that Rautavaara exploits tonal conventions in his music. This symmetry continues to bar 19.

The middle section is ended with another pianistic gesture where the ascending final chords are interjected with low register chords in both hands, creating a gesture where the pianist is once again moving from the highest register to the lowest register of the keyboard. Moreover, to use McCreless's term, the music 'rebounds' to the final resounding chord in the upper register of the keyboard (McCreless 2006:12). Similar to the gesture in *The Death of the Mother of God,* this cadential gesture also ends with a tonally ambiguous chord (bar 19).

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The opening section is repeated to create a ternary structure, just as in *The Death of the Mother of God.* The use of ternary form once again suggests the framing of an image, together with order and harmony as found in icons. The recurring A-section is transformed by using extreme registers of the Aeolian and Mixolydian folk tune melodies. The melodies are first heard two octaves higher and then repeated two octaves lower, with the right hand crossing over the left hand. This has already been discussed as a reference to imitation techniques used in contrapuntal writing.

The final phrase surprises the listener with an unexpected modulation (semitone lower and then back again) of the opening Aeolian melody. The bitonality points to the two represented saints. The piece ends with an unresolved cadence and a final quartal chord that could be regarded as indication of the many weddings and Easter festivals that will still be viewed by the saints in these icons.

This resonates with Persichetti's teaching, and Rautavaara writes about it (as cited in Tarasti 2003:560):

> The sign of Persichetti can be found in the piece *Two Village Saints* of *Icons;* in its two last bars the teacher proposed that I modulate out of the dominant key at the very end. So I did; after having dwelt in the area of A, the music suddenly jumps into the area of A flat, and only quite at the end back to A – as if one were bowing deeply in front of the icon.

Although this icon does not indicate a narrative, the main themes of two saints, simple country life, and celebrations of weddings and church festivals are all portrayed in different aspects of the music. The simplicity of the icon is seen in the simplicity of Rautavaara's use of texture, melody, rhythm and formal structure.

There is once again a strong Russian influence in *Two Village Saints.* A few style features are reminiscent of Shostakovich's piano style. Shostakovich's appealing

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melodies contain large intervals, modal writing, octave displacement, syncopation, modulations and wide registers. He often distorts melodic lines and embellishes unresolved linear figures such as diatonic and chromatic appoggiaturas (Magrath 2011:207). His piano works show symmetrical melodic writing (Prelude in D flat Major, Op. 34 No. 15) as well as irregular and changing meters (Fugue in D flat Major, Op. 34 No. 15) (Magrath 2011:207,213). Additionally, they explore the use of modes, chromaticism, dissonant counterpoint, bitonality and unexpected modulations, in a similar way as *Two Village Saints* explores these stylistic features (Magrath 2011:202).

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5.3 *Blakernajan musta Jumalanäiti* (The Black Madonna of Blakernaya)

Image 16 The Black Madonna of Blakernaya
(Orthodox Christians Celebrate Feastday 2010)

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Blachernae was a district in Constantinople (the capital of the Byzantine Empire) and is still an area in present-day Istanbul. The area has a holy spring associated with the Virgin Mary, and also features a number of notable churches. The Empress of the Byzantine Empire, Pulcheria, built the Church of Saint Mary of Blachernae (*Panagia Blacherniotissa*) in this district in c.450. Her sister-in-law, Empress Eudocia (wife of Theodosius II), went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and brought back many holy relics. Among these were the icon of The Black Madonna, which was placed in the Church of Saint Mary of Blachernae and named after the church. The Venerable Robe of the Mother of God was also preserved in the same church (Translation of the "Blachernae" Icon, 2014).

The icon of The Black Madonna was thought to be invested with miraculous powers that were believed to protect Moscow from the Russian cholera epidemic of 1830 (Translation of the "Blachernae" Icon, 2014.; Church of the Blachernitissa Icon, n.d.).

The icon (Image 16) portrays the praying Madonna with her child and is called Hodegetria, which means 'she who leads the way'. The icon dates back to the seventh century and is painted with an unusual embossed method (Church of the Blachernitissa Icon, n.d.). Academics have contemplated the meaning and significance of the Madonna's praying gesture and the position of Christ. The Madonna is not merely holding her child, but rather presenting Him to the world. Her hand gesture is therefore one of prayer and purity of the Holy Spirit filling her at the Annunciation (the announcement by the angel Gabriel to Mary of her conception of Christ) (DesRochers 2011). A hand lifted towards the heart and not turned to the outside world is a sign of blessing (Baggley 1988:85). This simple gesture of pointing indicates the personage or mystery that is the core of the icon, in this case, the Incarnate Son (Baggley 1988:84).

Europe boasts more than 400 Black Madonnas, all from different sources, materials and social settings. Most Black Madonnas are associated with earth and Egyptian goddesses. Black Madonnas are usually wooden statues and the

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natural maturing of the wood, corroding paint pigments and candle smoke in churches all contribute to the colour of the dark faces (Irvine 2013). Regardless of the many different theories of why some Madonnas are portrayed with dark skins, the colour black is significant in Rautavaara's observation of the icon. He writes (Rautavaara 1963, n.p.):

> Blackened by candle smoke and scarred by centuries of human history, The Black Madonna of Blakernaya stretches out her hands.

Whether the Black Madonna of Blakernaya was originally dark or became darker over the years is therefore irrelevant, her current dark complexion was a distinct stimulus for Rautavaara's musical portrayal through his employment of harmony, texture and timbre (Matambo 2010:57).

Black Madonnas can be traced back to Isis, an ancient Egyptian goddess, who is often painted nursing her son, Horus. She is therefore the initial Pietà figure and a prototype for similar Christian illustrations of the Madonna and Child (White 2013). Mary was a worthy substitute for newly converted Christians familiar with the figure of a mother goddess, so that temples devoted to Isis were sometimes replaced with Christian churches, and many images of goddesses of the earth were replaced by depictions of Mary (Cloud taxis 2014; White 2013). Although Isis is recognised as a strong influence on Byzantine icons of the Black Madonna, there is also a strong Christian influence on the medieval Black Madonna, found in the Biblical inscription that can be seen on many of the icons (Black is Beautiful, 2011):

> I am very dark, but lovely,
> O daughters of Jerusalem,
> like the tents of Kedar,
> like the curtains of Solomon. (Song of Songs 1:5 ESV)

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Image 17 Black Madonna in St Isaac's Cathedral, St Petersburg
Photographed by the author on 2 November 2006

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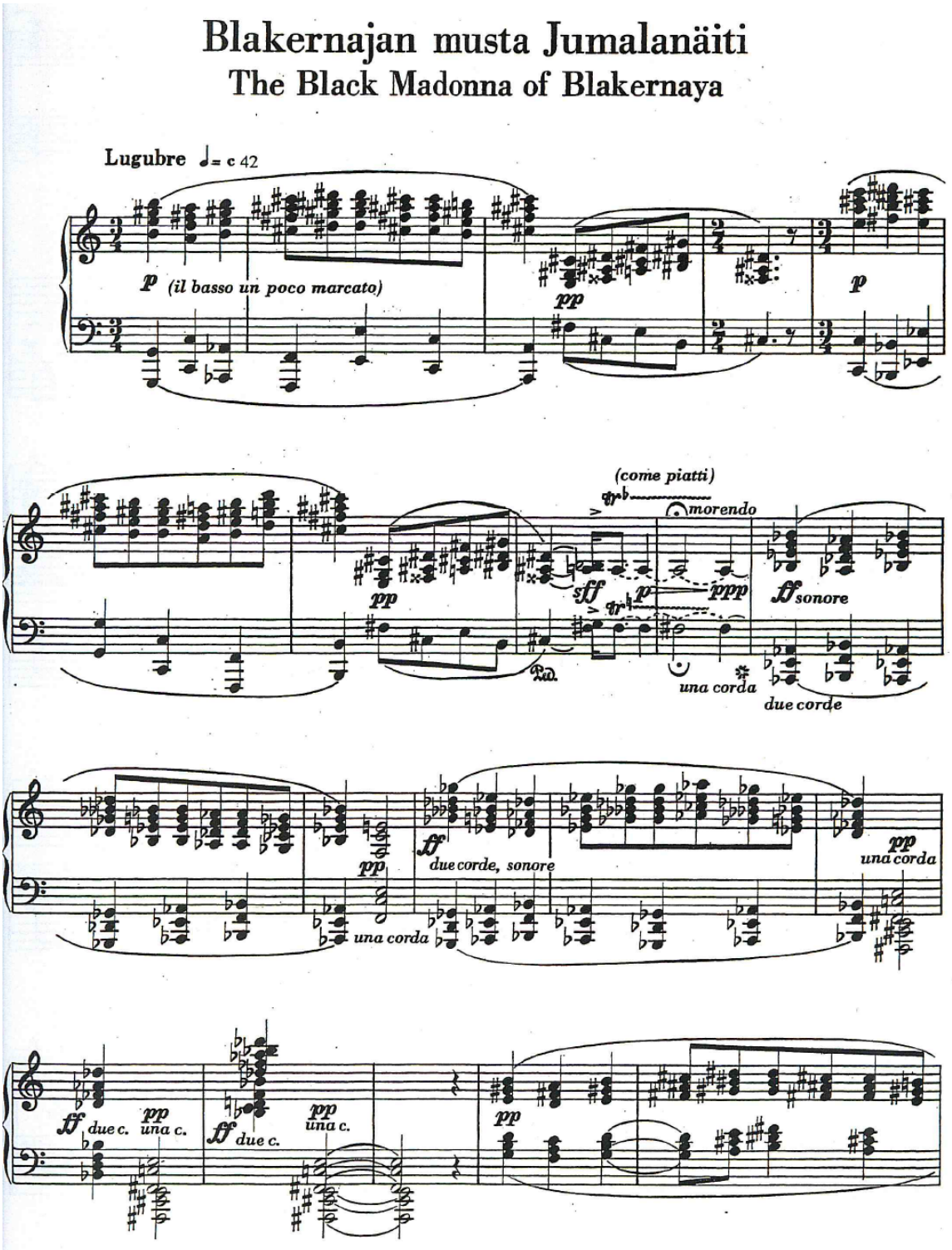
Music Example 6

E. Rautavaara, *Ikonit,* Op. 6, The Black Madonna of Blakernaya

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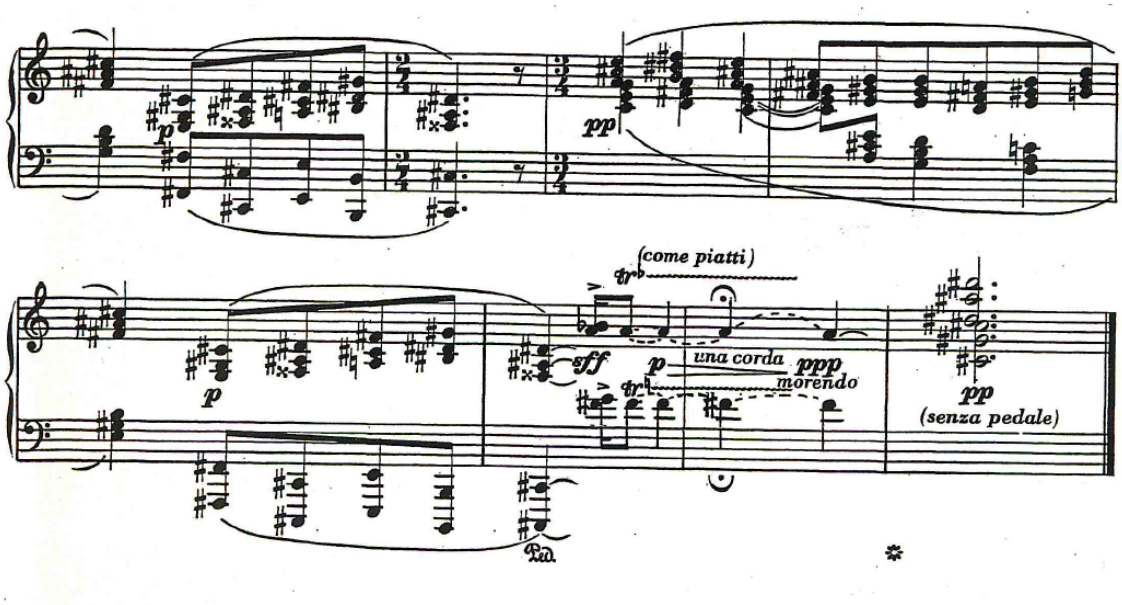
The slow *lugubre* tempo indication (French for mournful or lugubrious) relates to Rautavaara's description of the Black Madonna's eyes (Rautavaara 1963:n.p.):

> They hold no gleam of mercy or of tenderness; they have seen too much, these eyes that gaze so steadfastly from their dark background, too much of Man and of his sorrow.

The sorrowful atmosphere is predicted in the title as the colour black has a connotation with sorrow, angst, mourning and burials in Western cultures (Matambo 2010:57). Rautavaara (as cited in Tarasti 2003:560) emphasises the slow tempo and advises the following for the performance:

> Perhaps it would be worthwhile to emphasise the slowness of the slow movements, in order that the quality of 'sanctity' be foregrounded.

The chant-like whole-tone melody in the opening bars is harmonised with second inversion major triads in parallel motion. Consecutive octaves in the bass line contribute to the homophonic texture and are taken from a scalar structure consisting of semitones and whole tones.

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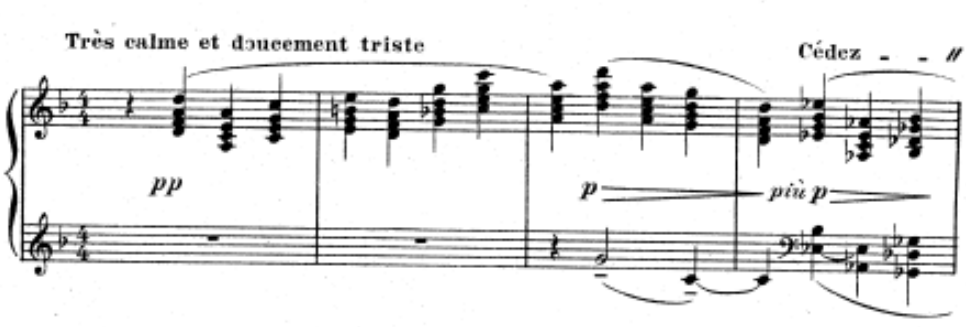
The use of this scale structure together with whole-tone scales reveals another significant Russian influence. The Russian musical variant of nationalism has often demonstrated a keen interest in incorporating the pagan images and myths of old Russia, as is evident in operas such as Glinka's *Ruslan I Ludmila* (which uses whole-tone scales and augmented triads to depict the sorcerer Chernomor), and in programme music such as Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral fantasy *Sadko* (which uses complex octatonic scales to illustrate whimsical pagan creatures) (Leikin 2002:31).

Rautavaara's use of similar non-diatonic scales together with the parallel movement of the chords repudiates any functional harmonic progression and produces a stagnant sense of tonality. Matambo (2010:58) suggests that this is Rautavaara's construal of the fixed gaze in the Black Madonna's eyes.

The whole-tone melody and parallel movement of the first two bars are followed by a short pentatonic cadential phrase (bars 3^2-4) containing more parallel major chords (this time in first inversion). The sound palette employed by Rautavaara is characteristic of Impressionism as typically used by Debussy and Ravel.

Music Example 7
C. Debussy, *Préludes 2e Livre,* Canope, bars 1-4



The similarities between the opening of Debussy's prelude and Rautavaara's movement are evident. Debussy uses a pentatonic melody with root position

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harmonies moving parallel in doubled octaves. Debussy nevertheless avoids augmented and diminished intervals within this parallel movement, resulting in intervals of perfect fourths and fifths. Played in steady and even rhythms, these parallel chords evoke a style similar to the chant-like melodies in *The Death of the Mother of God.*

After the first statement of the parallel chords and the cadential phrase in *The Death of the Mother of God*, the parallel chords are restated at a higher pitch with inversions of the intervals between the chords, creating a symmetrical answer to the first two bars. The cadential phrase is repeated without any changes and followed by a forceful trill that gradually dies away. This evokes a similar device used in the *Andantino* (second movement) of Sibelius's *Kyllikki (Three Lyric Pieces for Piano),* Op. 41 (Music Examples 8 and 9) (Tarasti 2003:560).

In spite of this, Rautavaara (as cited in Bambarger 2000:66) insists that Sibelius had no direct influence on his style of composition:

> While I love the music of Sibelius, I would not say it has been a direct influence on mine – although the evocation of nature is something we have in common [...] But Sibelius was very important to me as a person. Unlike his photos – where he looks like a stern, pompous politician – he was a warm, generous man. It is true that Sibelius means a lot to Finland still. Even businessmen here think he's important.

These trills are not used in the conventional way to embellish a melodic line, as they do not form part of the melodic line, but rather feature as separate gestures. They are also not used to prolong the harmony, and are not part of the harmonic progression.

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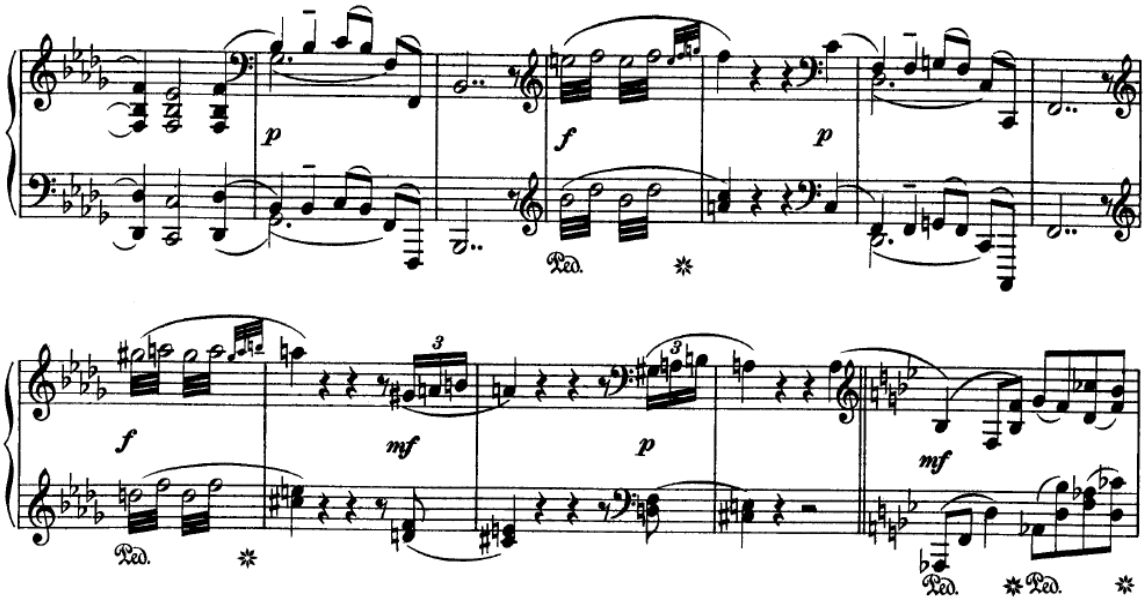
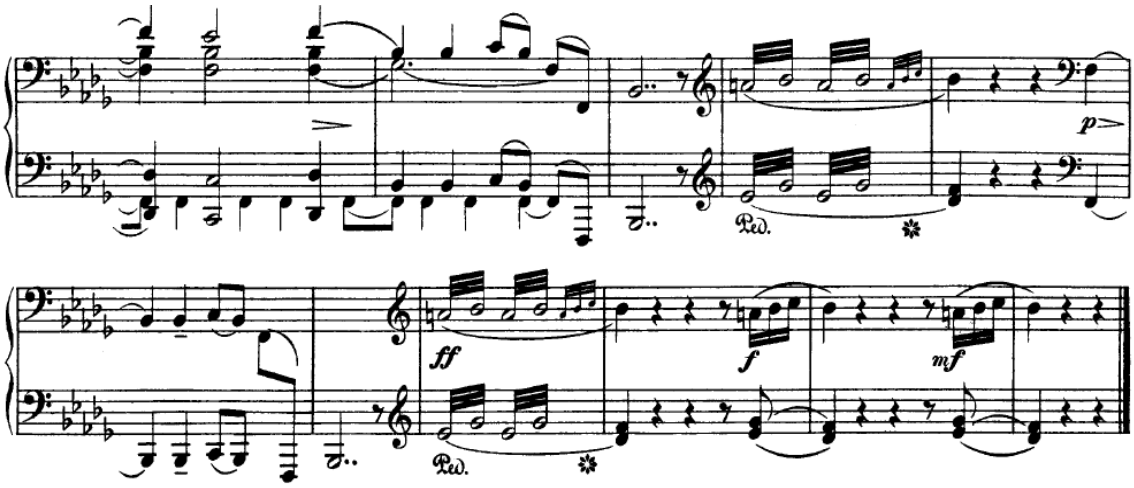
Music Example 8

J. Sibelius, *Kyllikki,* Op. 41, *Andantino* (second movement), bars 14-25

Music Example 9

J. Sibelius, *Kyllikki,* Op. 41, *Andantino* (second movement), bars 69-80

The middle section of *The Black Madonna of Blakernaya* starts when the trill dies away and the opening parallel chords are heard at a lower pitch with added fifths in the left hand part (from bar 10). The cadential phrase is replaced with one *pianissimo* chord. The first four quavers from bar 11 are then inverted to create a

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symmetrical phrase in bar 14 and the *pianissimo* chord is developed into another cadential gesture using chords in the extreme registers of the piano. The visual semantics of gesture (pianist moving from high register to long chords in the low register) and colour (the unique colours of the different chords in different registers of the piano) is evident in this cadential phrase. This gesture is similar to the final gesture used in the middle section of *Two Village Saints.*

From bar 19 onwards Rautavaara harmonises the opening chant-like whole tone melody with third related triads (this time in root position) in parallel movement. The chant-like effect is enhanced by the use of triads, making the parallel fifth movement that is characteristic of Orthodox chanting more apparent. These polychords are similar to chords used by Stravinsky in *Petrushka* and in 'Dance of the Adolescent' from *Le Sacre du printemps.* Stravinsky's Petrushka chord consists of two chords a tritone apart. Rautavaara uses two chords a third apart. As in the opening bars, this whole melody is followed by the same pentatonic cadential phrase with double octaves in the left hand. A small-scale ternary form is created, as the chant-like melody is inverted again to create a symmetrical phrase that is once again followed by the pentatonic cadential phrase and the trill. After the trill dies away, the final *pianissimo* chord in the high register is another polychord, which in this case, is played without the pedal. This final non-resonant chord is a reminder of the Black Madonna's fixed expression and steadfast gaze as described by Rautavaara (1963:n.p.).

Once again in ternary form, Rautavaara uses repetitive phrase structures to create a sense of order and harmony as found in icons:

Section A:

Bars 1-4	Chant-like whole tone melody in parallel chords
	Pentatonic cadential phrase with more parallel major chords
Bars 5-9	Chant-like whole tone melody at a higher pitch, inverted to create the symmetry of bars 1-3[1]
	Pentatonic cadential phrase followed by a trill

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Section B:

Bars 10-12	Chant-like whole tone melody a semitone lower in a lower register, and thicker texture left hand chords
	Pentatonic cadential phrase replaced with a single chord
Bars 13-18	Chant-like whole tone melody at a higher pitch, inverted to create the symmetry of bar 11
	Pentatonic cadential phrase replaced with cadential gesture

Section A:

Bars 19-22	Chant-like whole tone melody in parallel third related triads
	Pentatonic cadential phrase with octaves in the left hand
Bars 23-28	Chant-like whole tone melody at a higher pitch, inverted to create the symmetry of bars 19-21[1]
	Pentatonic cadential phrase followed by a trill
	Final polychord in high register

The ternary form depicts the framing technique used in icons that has been discussed in *The Death of the Mother of God* and *Two Village Saints.*

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5.4 *Kristuksen kaste* (The Baptism of Christ)

Image 18 The Baptism of Christ
(The icons of the feasts 2011)

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> *The Baptism of Christ* is painted in bluish green, gold and red. The river flows straight down from the top of the picture, combed into regular waves like a lock of hair. Naked in its midst stands the thin, ascetic figure of Christ while John the Baptist, clad in animal skins, stretches out a hand from the shore to anoint the head of the Lord's Elect. On the opposite bank three angels bow in stiff reverence; they carry white garments with which to cover those wan limbs. The landscape against which these figures are seen could hardly be more abstract. Water, land and mountains are the merest symbols, like pieces of stage scenery. Above, in the middle of a golden heaven, God the Father is seen, with the dove of the Holy Spirit flying from His mouth and shining down on God the Son – that the mysterious working of the Trinity may be made manifest: the Father loveth the son through the Holy Ghost (Rautavaara 1963:n.p.).

As discussed in the section on *The Death of the Mother of God,* Christ and the Mother of Christ are the two most common figures in icon painting and are presented in many different ways. Like the Mother of God, Christ is seen in numerous depictions: as infant with his mother, in the most important events of his life on earth, in his grave, and mostly as Pantocrator (Ruler of Everything) (Haustein-Bartsch 2008:12-13). A common portrayal is of Christ's Baptism, displayed on the festal tier of the iconostasis because of its association with an annual feast celebrated on 6 January. Since it is an annual feast, this icon is part of the festal tier of the iconostasis. This feast is part of The Festival of Lights, celebrated ever since the first century of the Christian Church, and it is either called the Feast of the Epiphany, or the Feast of the Theophany. It celebrates the coming of Christ to earth, and his early years leading up to his baptism in the Jordan River (Baptism of Christ 2011). The celebrations of the major events in Christ's early life were later separated, but the principal event of The Festival of Light is still the remembrance and celebration of Christ's baptism. Christ's divine identity and his part of the Trinity are established in the gospel narratives at the moment when the Holy Spirit descends, in the form of a dove, on the Incarnate Son immediately after his baptism (Baggley 1988:124; Nes 2004:67). Therefore,

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this important scriptural event is interpreted as an epiphany (revelation) or theophany (in Greek (Θεοφάνεια literally means 'revelation of God'), since it marks the beginning of Christ's public life and his ministry.

The baptism depicted in the icon is described in three of the four acknowledged gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). Matthew 3:13-17 (ESV) describes it as follows:

> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptised by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptised, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

This icon displays the contradictory idea that Christ is revealed as God by submitting himself to becoming a mere human. Although John is the baptiser, he is never central in the composition of baptism icons and always bows in devotion towards Christ. His hands are placed on Christ's forehead, with his face turned down in wonder of the Theophany (Baptism of Christ 2011; Nes 2004:67). His one hand resting on Christ and the other hand pointing towards heaven illustrates Christ as a man and also as God (Windows into Heaven, n.d.).

At the top of the icon is a semi-circular opening to heaven, similar to the Dormition icon. A ray of light shines down, and in the bible narrative the unseen Father's voice is heard saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased' (Matthew 3:17 ESV). The ray of light points to the centre of the icon and signifies the divine purpose of the depicted event (Baggley 1988:94). A medallion encircling a dove breaks the ray of light. The dove is positioned above the Son and symbolises the Holy Spirit descending on Christ (Nes 2004:67). Below the dove, the ray of light splits into three parts signifying the Trinity

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(Windows into Heaven, n.d.). The alignment from Father to Son, unified by the Holy Spirit, creates a central axis on the icon and depicts the connection between heaven and earth created by Christ (Baggley 1988:93-94; Nes 2004:67). Heaven is no longer completely inaccessible, but through Christ, man has more immediate access to the grace and power of God and the Holy Spirit (Baggley 1988:94).

Jesus Christ is central to the composition and faces the viewer. In older Theophany icons Jesus is often naked, but His body is always portrayed as strong and handsome. Christ's hands are not shown in prayer as in much Western art, but in a sign of blessing in answer to John's question 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?' (Matthew 3:14 ESV). With this gesture, Christ also blesses the water of the Jordan River (Baggley 1988:85). The central image of Christ is portrayed as being nearly as wide as the Jordan River, which flows diagonally but does not cover Christ's body. As Christ is baptised the water is sanctified by his immersion and consequently filled with his godly presence, uniting heaven and earth (Nes 2004:67). Christ enters the waters of the world (sinful earth), and when he comes out of the water, he purifies the entire world, lifting up humankind and cleansing them from sin (Windows into Heaven, n.d.). The same symbolism is found in the Church where the water of baptism is the way to a new birth into the life of Christ (Baggley 1988:124).

As in the Dormition icon, the lowest ranks of existence (including references to purgatory) are often painted at the bottom of icons, while various classes of angels, the Holy Spirit, divinity and heaven are painted at the top of the icon. In the river at the lowest part of the composition, there are creatures escaping from Christ's feet. These creatures date back to the pre-Christian beliefs in the gods and spirits of nature, also seen in Roman and Greek art. On the left is the spirit of the Jordan: a man holding a jug with water flowing from it. On the right is Thalassa, the sea goddess of Greek mythology, riding a sea creature (Freudian Hills 2011). Reference is made to both these creatures fleeing from something greater in Psalm 114. This scripture is often read for the Feast of Theophany, 'The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back' (Psalm 114:3 ESV). Greek examples

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of this icon often show fish in the river and signify the purification and freedom experienced by Christians after baptism (Baptism of Christ 2011).

On the left side of the rocky river banks at John the Baptist's feet is a tree with an axe at the root. This evokes John's preaching in Matthew 3:10 (ESV), 'Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire'. This reference to John's teaching indicates that Christ's ministry, and the revelation of the Trinity do not reduce John's role or teachings (Baptism of Christ 2011). It also serves as a reminder to Christians who have been baptised, and who received the Holy Spirit, that they are expected to live a fruitful and meaningful life (Windows into Heaven, n.d.). A tree is often used as a symbol of life in iconography. From Genesis (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life) to Revelation (where the tree of life restores the people) a tree becomes an integral part of the figurative language of Scripture (Baggley 1988:34). The tree represents life and more specifically the life that the faithful will have in Christ.

The mountains around the river are also symbolic in Scripture and in iconography. A mountaintop is often suggestive of a profound spiritual occurrence (Baggley 1988:130). Mountaintops are symbolic of closeness to God and a revelation that is received, and Scripture accordingly describes the numinous experiences of Moses, Elijah and Jesus while standing on a mountain. Moses and Elijah see a vision of God on Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb, and Christ is linked with mountaintops through both his influential 'Sermon on the Mount' (Matthew 5-7) and his transfiguration (ascension) into heaven from the mountain. Climbing a mountain consequently became equivalent to nearing the mystery of God (Baggley 1988:40). This imagery from the Bible is developed in the tradition of iconography, where the distorted depiction of the mountains emphasises the meaning of the image within the universalist visual language of iconography (Baggley 1988:34,83).

Although never mentioned in the New Testament's accounts of the baptism, there are three angels bowing down in worship on the right side of the river. The

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cloths covering their hands indicate them touching something sacred (Freudian Hills 2011).

The themes celebrated during the festival are set out in the liturgical text of the Festal Menaion of the Orthodox Church, and they correspond with the themes portrayed in the icon. The main theme is the humility of Christ (Baggley 1988:124):

> Today Christ has come to be baptised in Jordan; today John touches the head of the Master. The powers of heaven are amazed as they behold the marvellous mystery [...] And we who have been enlightened cry aloud: Glory to God made manifest, who has appeared on earth and brought light to the world.
>
> Wearing the form of a servant, O Christ, thou comest forth to be baptised by a servant in the streams of the Jordan, granting deliverance from the servitude of ancient sin, and sanctifying and enlightening us.

Images of the Jordan River, water, and the Old and New Covenant are also celebrated during this feast (Baggley 1988:124):

> The river Jordan once turned back before the mantle of Elisha, after Elijah had been taken up into heaven, and the waters were divided on this side and on that (2 Kings 2.14); the stream became a dry path before him, forming a true figure of the baptism whereby we pass over the changeful course of life. Christ has appeared in the Jordan to sanctify the waters.

A prominent spiritual theme is that of the demonstration of the Holy Trinity (Baggley 1988:24):

> The Trinity, our God, has today made itself indivisibly manifest to us. For the Father in a loud voice bore clear witness to his Son; the Spirit in the form of a dove came down from the sky while the Son bent his

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> immaculate head before the Forerunner, and by receiving baptism, he delivered us from bondage, in his love for mankind.

The symbolism of human baptism is celebrated according to the renewal and enlightenment it is understood to bring about (Baggley 1988:143):

> Come ye and let us go in spirit to the Jordan, there to see a great sight. For Jesus our Enlightenment approaches and bows his head beneath the hand of a servant [...] The living coal that Isaiah foresaw (Isa 6.6) is kindled in the waters of the Jordan, and he will burn up the whole substance of sin and grant restoration to the broken.

> O World all-shining, sent forth from the Father,
> Thou art come to dispel utterly the dark and evil night
> And the sins of mortal men,
> And by thy baptism to draw up with thee, O blessed Lord,
> Bright sons from the streams of Jordan

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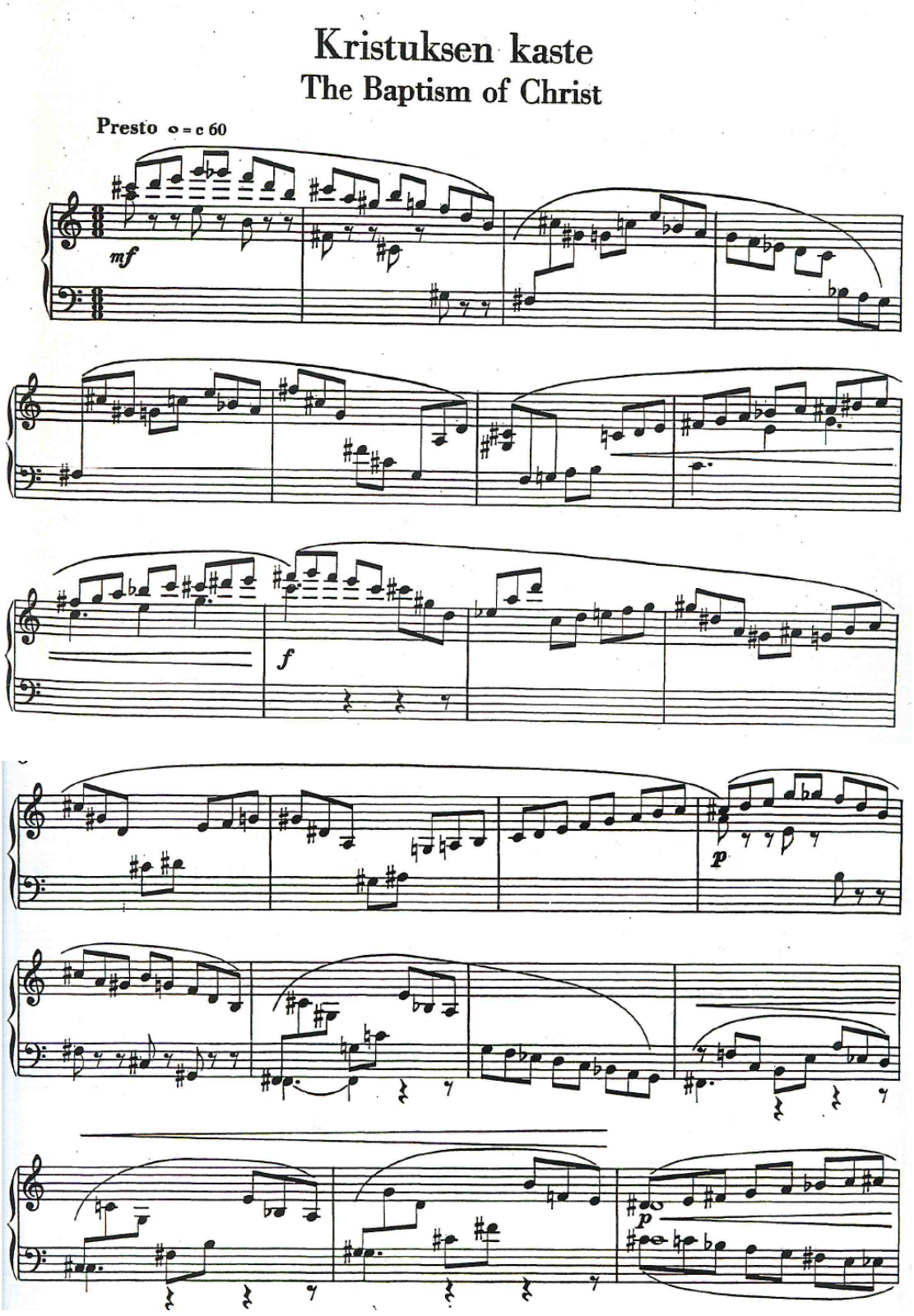
Music Example 10

E. Rautavaara, *Ikonit,* Op. 6, The Baptism of Christ

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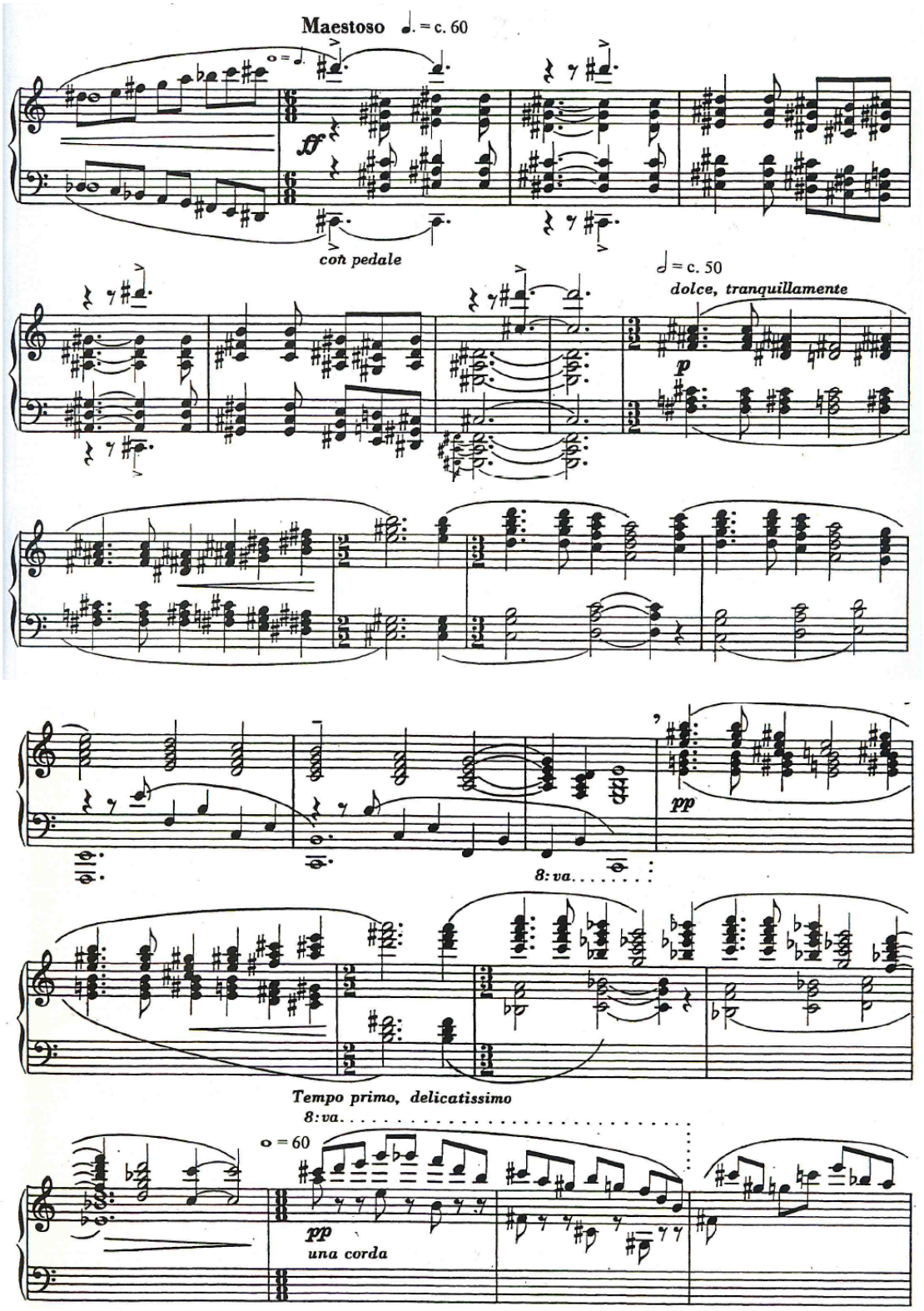

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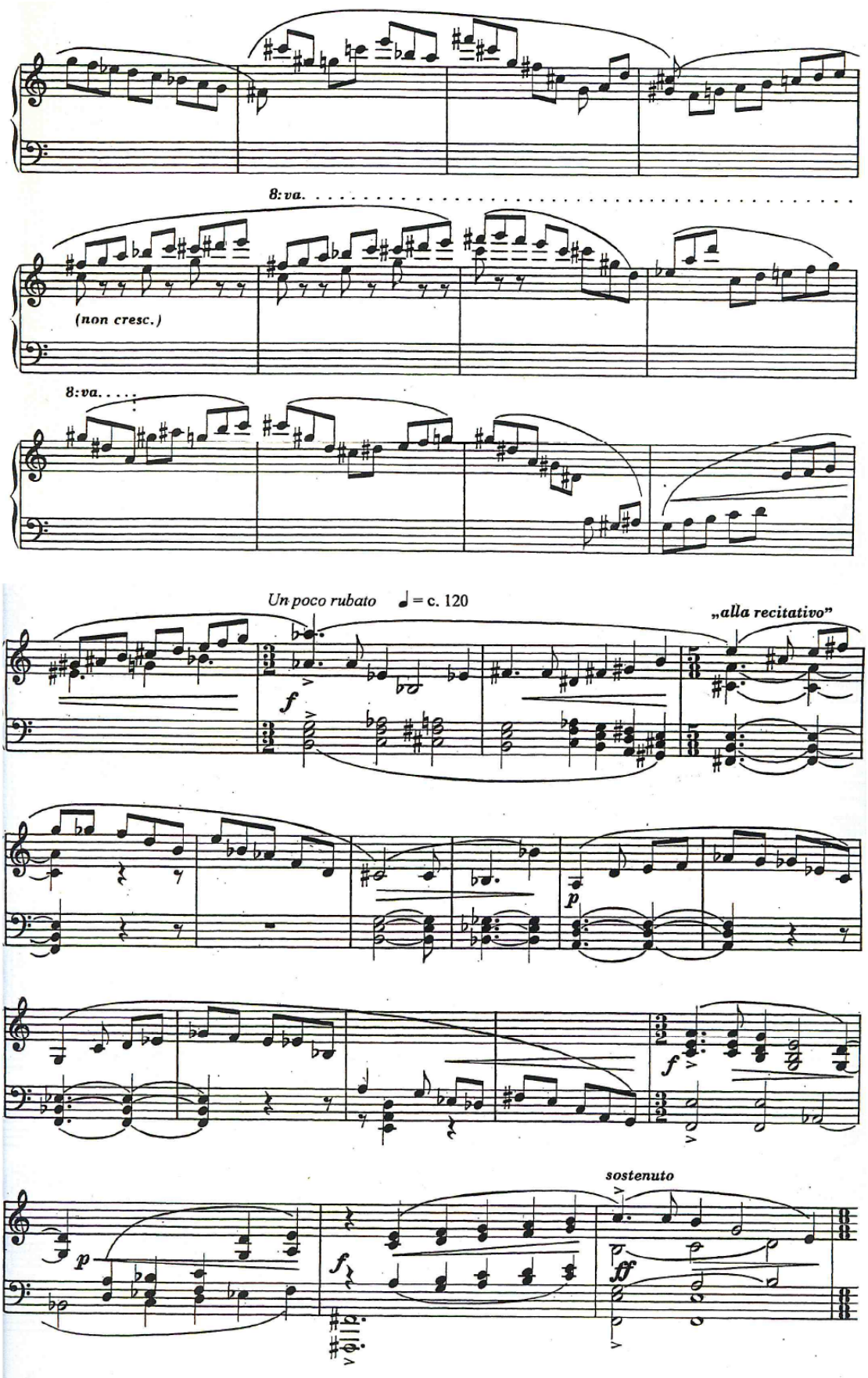
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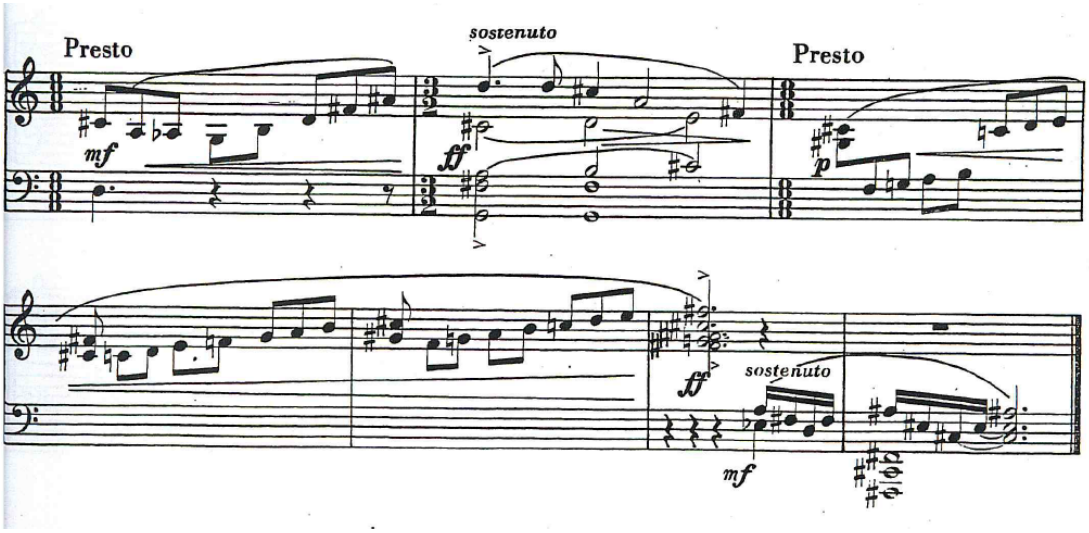
The rich symbolism of the two festival icons portrayed in this suite (*The Death of the Mother of God* and *The Baptism of Christ*) is reflected in the richness of the musical representation. Compared with the musical detail in Rautavaara's second movement, *Two Village Saints,* the music that portrays this more simplistic icon of the saints on the Deacon Doors is composed with sparse textures, repetitive phrases and a simple formal structure.

The first section of *The Baptism of Christ* uses an unusual time signature, and the grouping of three-two-three quavers in each bar is suggestive of the icon: the manifestation of the Trinity (three), Jesus and John as central figures of the Baptism (two), and the revering angels (three). While the right hand plays the uniquely grouped quavers, the single left hand notes outline first a quartal harmony (bars 1-2) and later a major triad (bars 8-9). The tonality is obscure and is based on an octatonic scale that dates back to Rautavaara's time at Juilliard, when his composition teacher Persichetti asked students to construct new scales (Tarasti 2003:560). The opening section climaxes in the scale that starts on C sharp in the left hand part and D sharp in the right hand part (bar 23) and after this major second interval the scale expands symmetrically through alternating semitones and whole tones (bars 23-24).

The *presto* tempo indication of this first section, with the fast moving quavers moving rapidly between the high and low registers of the piano, depicts the

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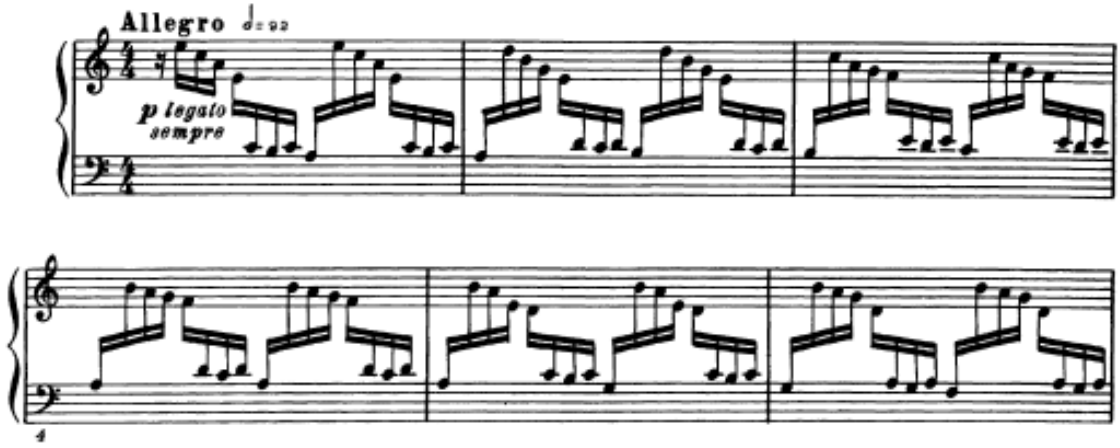
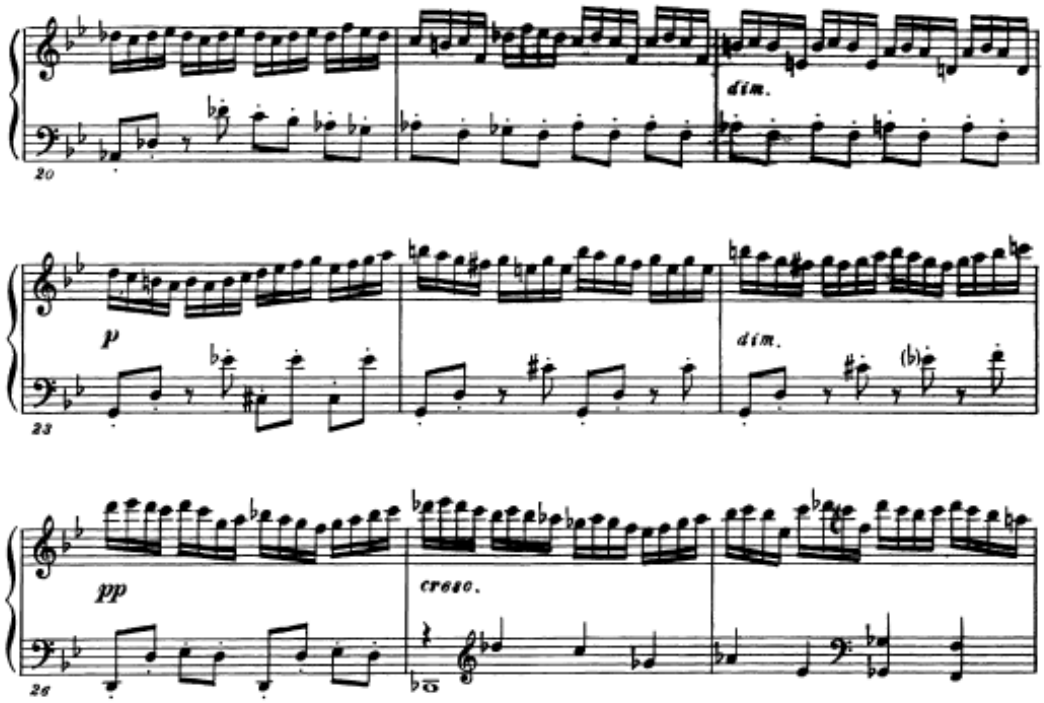
flowing water of the Jordan River where Christ is baptised. Rautavaara (as cited in Matambo 2010:60) describes it thus: 'The geometrically stylised ripples on the water flow like plaited tresses upon and around the ascetic, naked figure of Christ'. The style is prelude-like and is monothematic like Bach's preludes, but also reminiscent of various Shostakovich preludes, e.g. Op. 87 No. 2 and Op. 87 No. 21.

Music Example 11

D. Shostakovich, Preludes and Fugues Op. 87, Prelude No. 2 in a minor, bars 1-6

Music Example 12

D. Shostakovich, Preludes and Fugues Op. 87, Prelude No. 21 in B flat major, bars 20-28

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The slower *maestoso* section reuses musical material from *The Death of the Mother of God,* and forms a stark contrast in texture and dynamics to the opening section. Not only is the *maestoso* indication the same, but the exact declamatory opening motif from *The Death of the Mother of God* is now heard in quartal harmonies (again reminiscent of Debussy) and compound time, with parallel movement between the pianist's two hands. The pedal notes of D sharp in the right hand and C sharp in the left hand are the first degrees of the scales that end the first section (bar 25), and are used to create a bell-like effect in both the high and low registers of the piano. Rautavaara combines the declamatory dotted rhythm motif with bell effects (bars 25-31), just as he did in the final section of *The Death of the Mother of God.* After six bars of the declamatory motif, the atmosphere changes to *dolce tranquillamente* with chant-like material (bar 32). This is similar to the *maestoso* section in *The Death of the Mother of God,* which also features six bars of a declamatory dotted rhythm motif that are followed by a *tranquillo* section of chant-like material.

The use of material from *The Death of the Mother of God* is very significant, as Rautavaara is generally inclined to alter sections of his earlier works and incorporate them into new compositions. This practice becomes apparent early in his career, and dates from a period when he orchestrated the third movement of *Pelimannit* and used it in *A Requiem in Our Time* (Matambo 2010:46). This technique of reusing his own compositions became a central feature of his creative voice and is apparent throughout his career. Stępień (2011:71) describes the development of Rautavaara's aesthetics as nonlinear, since Rautavaara often looked back on previous compositions to orchestrate or renew them. These auto-citations are a manner of reimagining, recreating and reshaping the past, as well as an attempt to 'make works live longer'. The recurring material in the new context of another work becomes a musical topic and a symbol of Rautavaara's style (Stępień 2011:72). The many self-quotations create a system of symbols, and provide stylistic consistency within the different musical contexts ranging from Rautavaara's early works to his late works (Stępień 2011:73). This constant and timeless aesthetic is also similar to the

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symbols and set schemes used in iconography throughout the Orthodox Church history.

Rautavaara's extensive use of intervals of fourths and quartal harmonies (in both the water theme and declamatory motifs) indicates another Russian influence, as this is suggestive of Scriabin's mystic or Prometheus chord (named after Scriabin's *Prometheus: The poem of Fire,* Op. 60). Scriabin's chord consists of an augmented fourth, diminished fourth and two perfect fourths, and reflects his mysticism and keen interest in theosophy. Scriabin (as cited in Morisson 1988:314) explained that the Prometheus chord

> [...] was designed to afford instant apprehension of – that is, to reveal – what was in essence beyond the mind of man to conceptualise. Its preternatural stillness was a gnostic intimation of a hidden otherness.

Rautavaara's use of this mystic chord is a consequence of his own adherence to mysticism, which deems music to be a guide or access point to an alternative reality (Stępień 2011:73). Rautavaara writes (as cited in Stępień 2011:73):

> It is my belief that music is great if, at some moment, the listener catches "a glimpse of eternity through the window of time." This, to my mind, is the only true justification for all art. All else is of secondary importance.

The chant-like section superimposes symmetrically moving major and minor triads in root position (bar 33). In bar 35 the texture of the chanting changes with the occurrence of second inversion chords with doubled fifths in the right hand part. The chanting continues, however, and the seventh intervals (like in bars 9-10, bars 15-16 and bars 22-23 in *The Death of the Mother of God*) are used again in the left hand part (as ascending chords in bars 35-36 and single note bass line in bars 37-39) and are also outlined in the descending quartads in the right hand part (bars 37-38). The chanting section is changed to triple time and, apart from obviously corresponding with religious and mystical connotations to

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the Trinity, this triple meter might even reference or portray the three angels seen worshipping Christ in the icon.

At the end of the chanting section, the opening material is heard again in a higher register (bar 46). This leads up to the final section indicated with *un poco rubato* and *alla recitativo* (bar 62). Melodic and rhythmic material from the earlier sections are combined and developed in a narration style. Tarasti (2003:561) suggests that this is in reference to passion plays.

The sections of the *Baptism of Christ* link with the narrative portrayed in the icon. The opening section of rippling quavers portrays the water of the Jordan as Jesus arrives to be baptised by John. The *maestoso* section bears musical and narrative similarities to *The Death of the Mother of God:* heaven opening up and worship being rendered. In *The Baptism of Christ* the declamatory motif shows heaven opening with the Father's voice and the Holy Spirit descending on Christ. The recurring water theme in a higher register portrays Christ's ritual cleansing of the water, and symbolises the metaphorical cleansing and baptism of humankind through Christ. The final section combines fragments of the rippling quaver water theme, the declamatory motifs and the rhythmic pattern of the chanting chords, and also portrays the holistic event of Christ emerged in water, heavens opening up and angels worshipping. The rising accents in the right hand (C4 in bar 75, C5 in bar 78, D5 in bar 80 to the final F♯5 in bar 84) create the ascending line of the central axis on the icon.

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5.5 *Pyhät naiset haudalla* (The Holy Women at the Sepulchre)

Image 19 Icon of the Myrrh-bearers
(Third Sunday of Pascha, n.d.)

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The icon of the Holy Myrrh-bearers (Image 19) portrays the women disciples arriving at the sepulchre (tomb) of Jesus to anoint his body after the crucifixion. An angel informs them that the tomb is empty, and that Christ has risen from the dead. The Myrrh-bearers (also called Myrophorae) appear in early Christian art as a commonplace icon depicting the resurrection, right through until the seventh century (Icon of the myrrh-bearing woman 2012). By the fifteenth century this icon was often included in the festal tier of the iconostasis (Tradigo 2006:145). The Orthodox Church celebrates the Sunday of the Holy Myrrh-bearers on the third Sunday of Holy Pascha.

The icon of the Holy Myrrh-bearers is a simple and direct representation of accounts about Christ's resurrection as communicated in the gospels. The icon usually portrays two women carrying spices and an angel sitting on a stone (or the stone lid of the sarcophagus), pointing to the linen grave clothes in the empty tomb and announcing the resurrection.

The sepulchre where Jesus was buried belonged to Joseph, a rich member of the Privy Council of Jerusalem, who obtained Christ's body from Pilate and thereafter buried Him in his own tomb, because of a lack of time to prepare another one. Nicodemus, a Pharisee leader, assisted Joseph with the burial, and brought aloes and myrrh to anoint and embalm Christ's body.

The details of the number of women visiting the tomb on the Monday after Christ's crucifixion, along with the details of whether or not they were carrying spices with which to once again treat the dead body, vary in the different gospel accounts of these events. Eastern Orthodoxy combines these differing accounts and concludes that there were eight women, although they are not all depicted in the icon (Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women, n.d.; Icon of the myrrh-bearing woman 2012; Traffic Lights at the Tomb 2014).

These women saw a vision of the angel, whose appearance was so radiant and dazzling that they were frightened. Even the soldiers who were guarding the tomb are said to have run away. In the icon, the angel points to the linen grave

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clothes, which are still intact, reassuring the women that they are looking for someone who is alive among the dead. He then instructs them to go and tell the disciples about Christ's resurrection (Tradigo 2006:145-146).

In other icons of the Holy Myrrh-bearers (Images 20 and 21), an olive tree or branches are seen growing nearby the tomb, symbolising the triumph of life over death (Tradigo 2006:147). The distorted rocky background of the composition indicates that the tomb was in a cave, and beyond the rocks one can see the stony walls of Jerusalem (for example in Images 20 and 22) (Traffic Lights at the Tomb 2014). Just as in the case of the Theophany icon, mountaintops (Images 20-22) are also indicative of a profound spiritual experience in this instance.

Although the iconography is more or less straightforward in depictions of the Holy Myrrh-bearers, a number of visual-thematic variations nevertheless exist. Sometimes the icon depicts the resurrected Christ (Image 22) next to the empty tomb, and in another icon example (Image 21) it portrays eight women, around the empty tomb, without an angel or the resurrected Christ. Ultimately, in spite of the Orthodox Church's streamlining and simplification of the varying gospel narratives into one authoritative account, the various icon depictions of the myrrh-bearers vary just like the gospels vary in the details of this story.

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Image 20 Icon of the Myrrh-bearers
(Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women, n.d.)

Image 21 Icon of the Myrrh-bearers
(Swidler 2015)

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Image 22 Icon of the Myrrh-bearers
(Sermon on the Sunday 2008)

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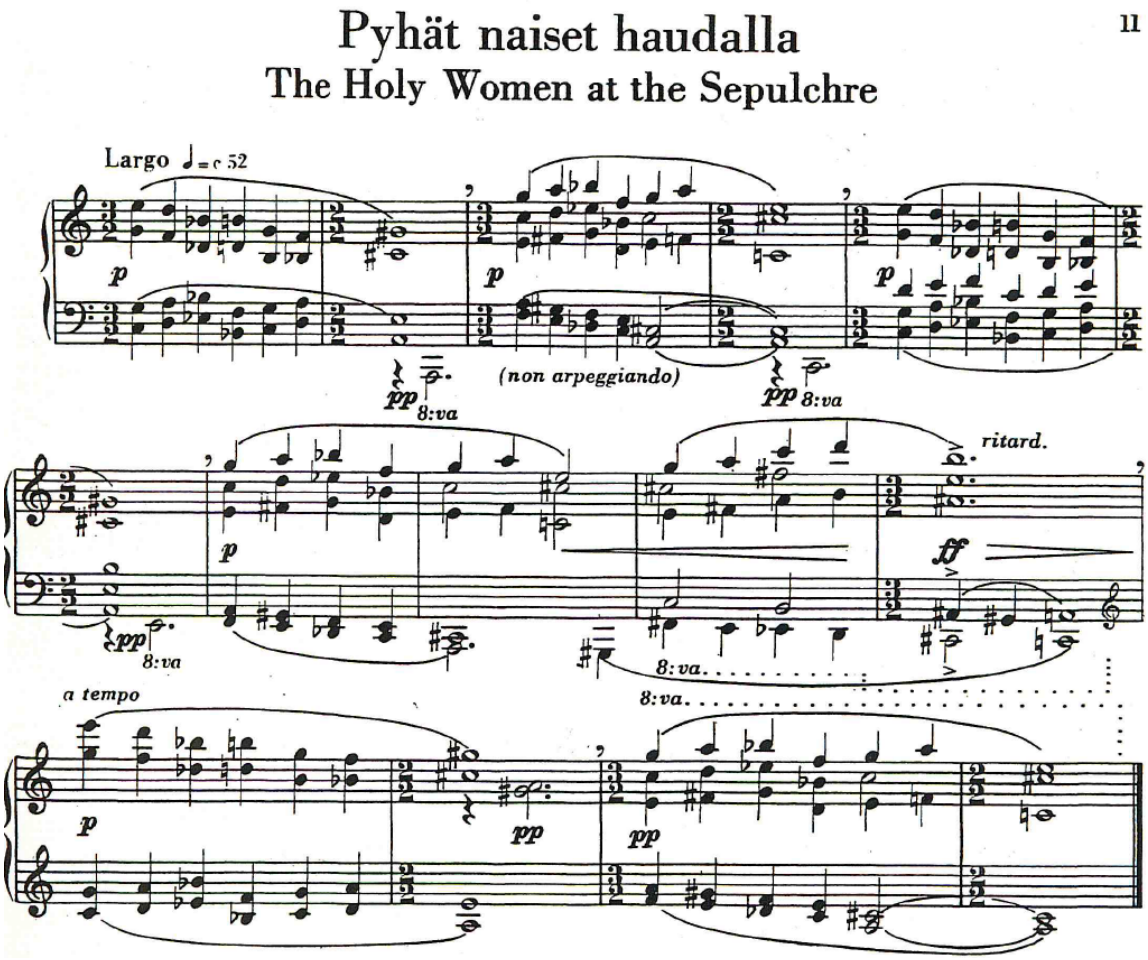
Music Example 13

E. Rautavaara, *Ikonit,* Op. 6, The Holy Women at the Sepulchre

Rautavaara (1963:n.p) writes the following about this icon:

> In a cold-coloured night the Holy Ewes await the maturing of the Lamb and the fulfilment of the Betrothal of Blood. This is their last opportunity to think of Him and know Him as a man. Deep in their hearts they already know the Risen Deity, but they thrust their knowledge aside and continue to mourn; the humanity of their grief has more warmth than their rejoicing. They allow the memory of the passing bell to reverberate softly in their minds: their thoughts are like the soft rise and fall of a gentle melody.

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The first sketch outline of Rautavaara's music for *The Holy Women at the Sepulchre* was a composition exercise that he attempted following a Persichetti lecture about the masking of consecutive fifths (Tarasti 2003:561). The lower parts feature consecutives fifths in counterpoint with sixths in the upper parts.

However, the opening 2-bar phrase is the definitive thematic building block of this entire movement. It consists of six crotchet notes and a final semibreve, and significantly for the symbolism associated with Rautavaara's mysticism, this seven-note phrase structure is heard seven times (7 X 7) in different time signatures and with altered textures and voicings. The symbolism of seven suggests the seven women whose names we know, who are definitely known to have visited Christ's tomb, and also evokes the number seven as a holy number symbolising wholeness, faultlessness and holiness.

The number seven is considered holy due to its symbolic prominence in Scripture: God created the world in seven days, with the Sabbath falling on the seventh day; the Bible can be divided into seven major sections, including the Laws, the Prophets, the Writings in the Old Testament, as well as the Gospels, the Praxapostolos, the Pauline letters and the Revelation in the New Testament; Noah took the animals into the ark in groups of seven and the flood came seven days after Noah entered the ark; Aaron and his sons were consecrated for seven days before starting their priestly duties; Israel marched around Jericho seven times before the walls of the city fell down; Jesus instructs his disciples to forgive seventy times seven; in the book of Revelations there are seven churches, seven angels, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven plagues and seven thunders; the first resurrection of the dead happens when the seventh trumpet sounds.

The first three phrases are written over two bars per phrase (first bar in 3/2 time signature and the final note and bell in a 2/2 bar). The next two phrases, although similarly constructed, are written over two bars each in a 2/2 time signature with the bell-effect resonating for only a crotchet beat before the next phrase. The last two phrases are exact repetitions of the first two phrases, an octave higher. This A-B-A structure (although on a very small scale) represents

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the ternary order and harmony structured into the general visual composition of icons.

Every phrase is followed by a long resonant note that evokes the bell effects first heard in *The Death of the Mother of God.* The last phrase is not followed by a bell and the *pianissimo* sound simply fades away.

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5.6 *Arkkienkeli Mikael kukistaa Antikristuksen* (Archangel Michael Fighting the Antichrist)

Michael is frequently depicted as a warrior in various icons and is the patron saint of warriors and chivalry in the Orthodox Church. Furthermore, Michael is the patron saint of Kiev (Ukraine), preferred patron saint of the Russian tsars and many churches in Russia are dedicated to him (Smith 2010:2). Michael is the principal archangel in charge of the heavenly warriors defending and protecting God's honour. In Hebrew his name means 'he who is like God' (Smith 2010:2). Scripture describes how Michael overthrew Lucifer in a cosmic battle:

> Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him (Revelation 12:7-9 ESV).

> How you are fallen from heaven,
> O Day Star, son of Dawn!
> How you are cut down to the ground,
> you who laid the nations low!
> You said in your heart,
> 'I will ascend to heaven;
> above the stars of God
> I will set my throne on high;
> I will sit on the mount of assembly
> in the far reaches of the north;
> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
> I will make myself like the Most High.'
> But you are brought down to Sheol,
> to the far reaches of the pit (Isaiah 14:12-15 ESV).

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> And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven". (Luke 10:18 ESV).

Michael's ancient hostility towards Lucifer started when both of them were archangels. Lucifer's name means 'son of the morning' or 'light bearer'. Not only did he exceed the other angels in radiance and beauty, but he was also the archangel worshiping continuously in God's presence. Christian dogma describes him as having been prideful and having felt himself entitled to be worshiped. As a result he tried to elevate himself above God, and encouraged other angels to do the same. A war broke out in heaven between Michael and the faithful angels against Lucifer and the angels who followed him (Bartolo-Abela, n.d.). As Michael's side won this war and Michael himself defeated Lucifer and cast him down into hell, Lucifer tried to drag Michael down with him, but was thwarted when God intervened to save Michael (Smith 2010:3).

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Image 23 Icon of St Michael Astride His Fiery Charger Fighting the Antichrist (Terrible Michael 2014)

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The icons of Michael fighting the Antichrist vary in some details and inscriptions. Michael is central to the composition (Image 23), and he is portrayed in battle attire as a warrior and commander of the angelic arm. He is crowned to show his princely status in the heavenly order and even has a rainbow over his head. Michael rides a horse, and both Michael and the horse have wings (a common feature of angels in Western art). Both are painted in shades of red, a colour that symbolises courage (Smith 2010:3-4). Michael strikes the devil with a lance held in one hand and in the other hand he holds a book that can either be the Holy Scriptures, the gospels or the Book of Life (especially because of the apocalyptic reference of this icon). He also holds a cross in some examples and a censer (a container in which incense is burned during a religious ceremony) swinging from a chain, and he has the trumpet of judgment in his mouth (Smith 2010:3-4; Terrible Michael 2014).

Scripture supports this description:

> Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded (Revelation 10:1-3 ESV).

> And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne (Revelation 8:3 ESV).

> And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword (Revelation 6:4 ESV).

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The lower part of the composition shows the fallen Lucifer portrayed as a dragon. He has fallen into the abyss in which there are city towers nearly covered by the flood. This is an Old Testament reference to the flood that destroyed the earth. Some examples show the burning cities of Babylon and Sodom and Gomorrah instead of flooding cities (Smith 2010:4). According to Eastern Orthodox beliefs, Michael was the chief commander for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament, as well as for the predicted destruction of Babylon during the Apocalypse (Terrible Michael 2014).

Christ is positioned in the top right corner, behind an altar surrounded by clouds. Clouds also encircle Michael's boots, and in both cases they clearly represent heaven (Smith 2010:3-4). The altar in the clouds is called *hetimasia* in Greek, which translates to 'preparation of the throne'. Since this icon has apocalyptic references, it can be assumed that the preparation of the throne is for the last judgment (Terrible Michael 2014).

There is a strong resemblance between the iconographic symbolism of this icon and the Icon of Sophia, the Wisdom of God (Image 24), in which wisdom is portrayed with a crown and wings and dressed in red to represent the fire of the Holy Spirit (Smith 2010:5). It is not clear which of these icons influenced the other. The presence of the fire of the Holy Spirit is often implied with a red face, as seen in icons that represent Mary with a red face, as well as an icon with Jesus portrayed as Holy wisdom in the form of a red-faced angel (Terrible Michael 2014).

A book is also a sign of Wisdom in iconography, and symbolises the inner knowledge in Christ that becomes an outwards expression in an open book (Baggley 1988:110).

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Image 24 Icon of Sophia, the Wisdom of God
(They Come in Sevens 2014)

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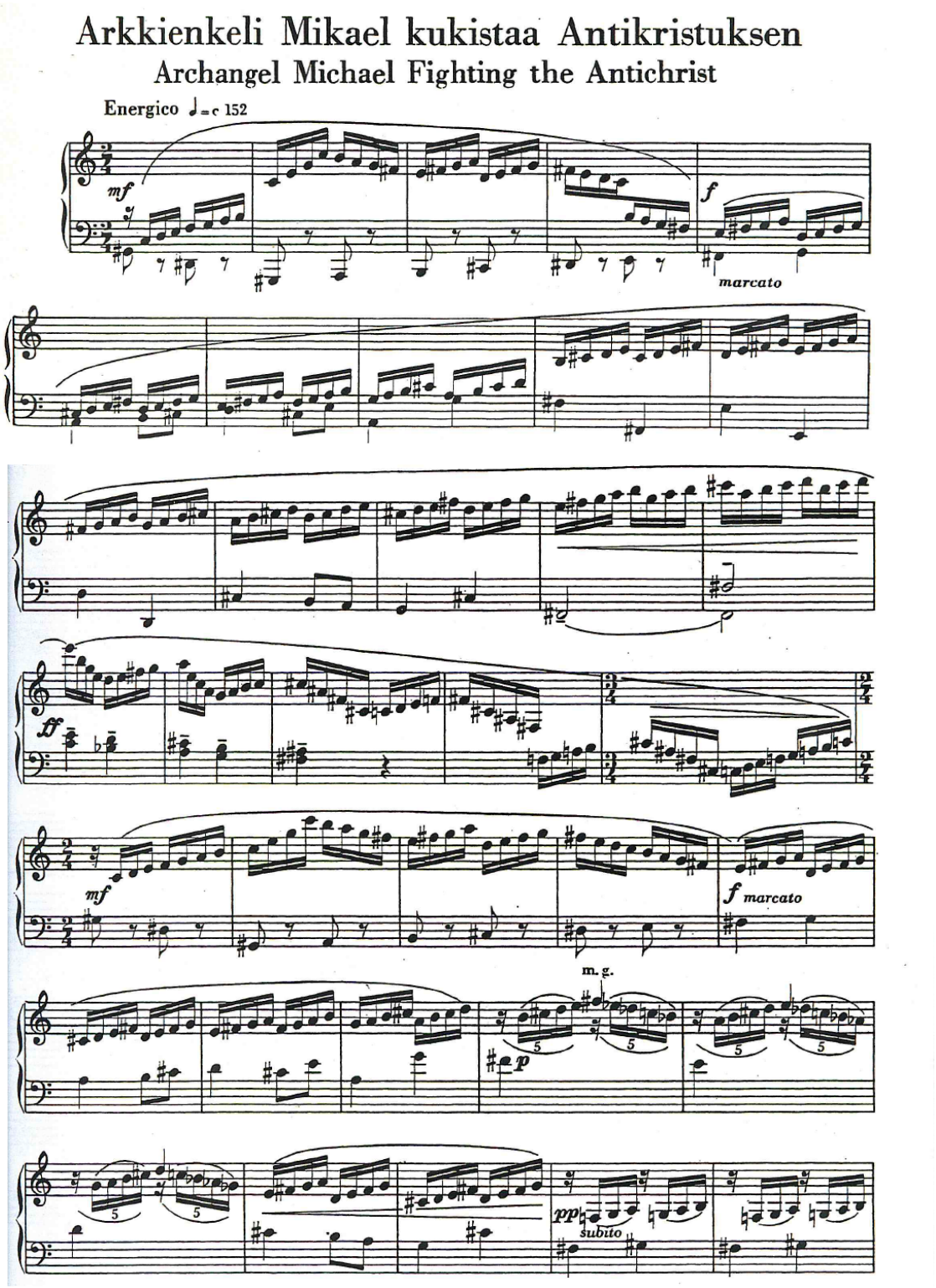
Music Example 14

E. Rautavaara, *Ikonit,* Op. 6, Archangel Michael Fighting the Antichrist

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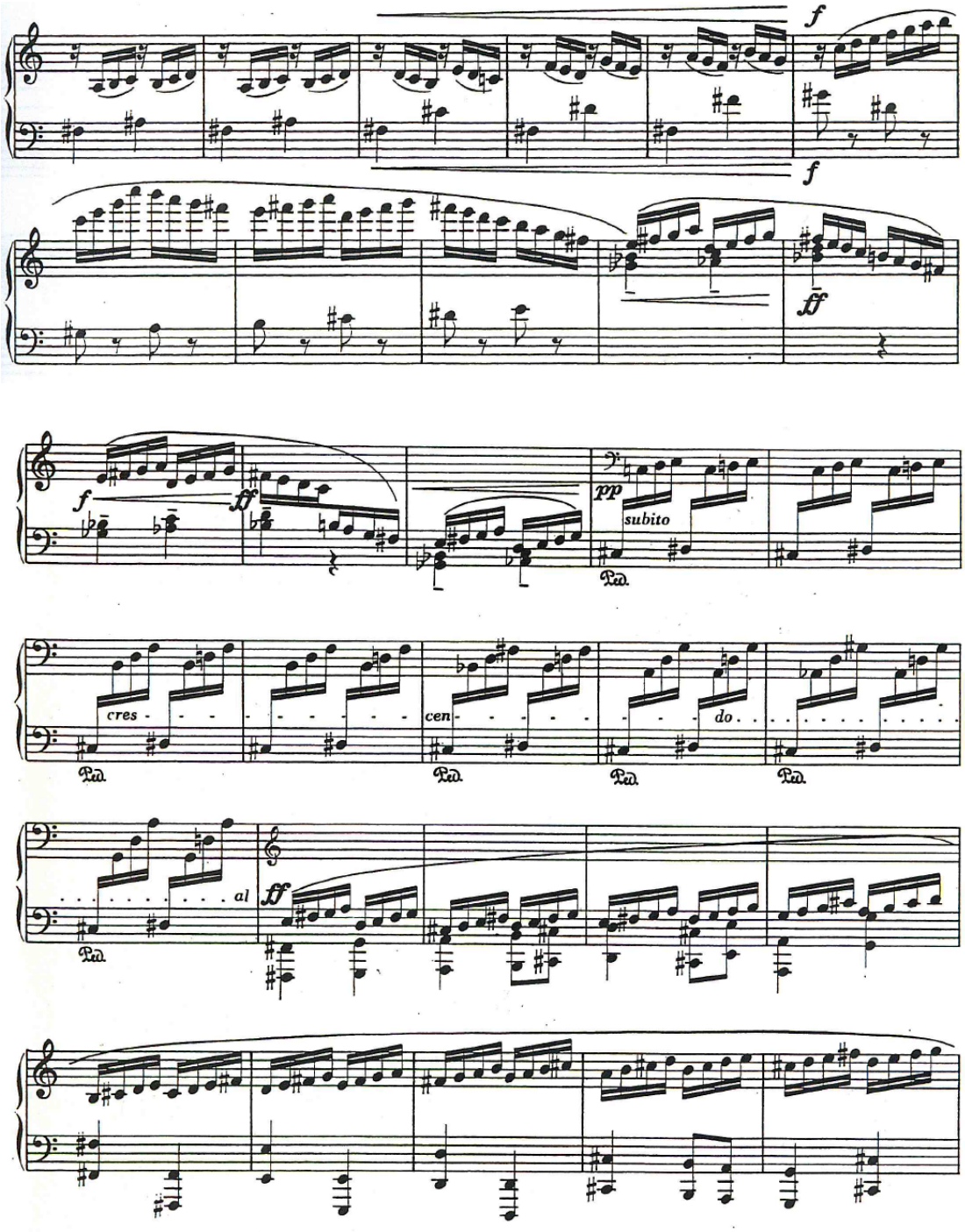
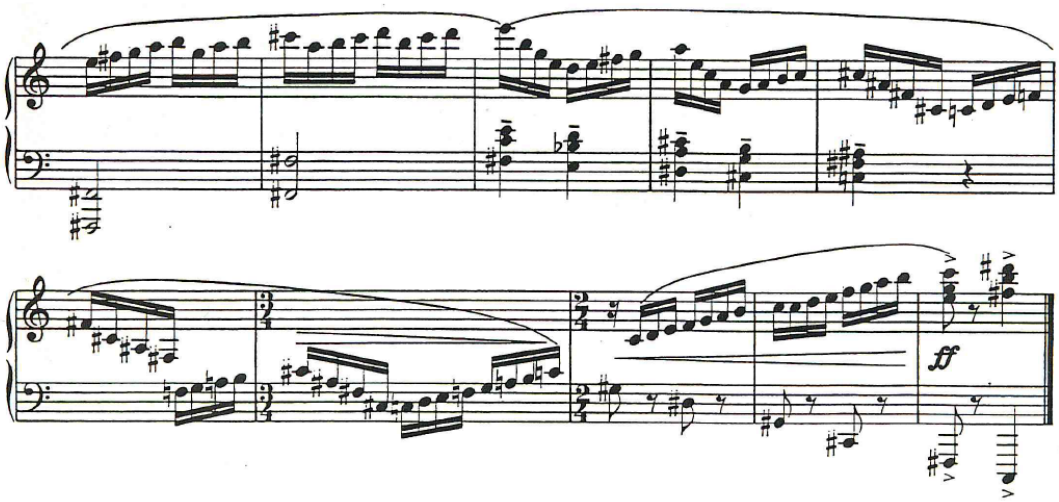

© University of Pretoria

Rautavaara is one of only a few contemporary composers (e.g. Berg, Hindemith, Crumb and Messiaen) who use angelic references in his oeuvre. This reveals his mysticism; and although these mystical angelic features are detectable in his instrumental music, they have an even stronger presence in his vocal works (Stępień 2011:93). This last movement of *Ikonit* (and to a lesser degree the rest of *Ikonit*) is the first of Rautavaara's pieces whose title and content makes explicit reference to angels. Later examples include *Angels and Visitations, Angel of Dusk, Angel of Light* and *Playground for Angels.* Persichetti noticed the mystic undertone of this movement and Rautavaara writes (as cited in Tarasti 2003:561):

> When I showed Persichetti the last piece of the suite, the *Archangel Michael Fights the Antichrist,* he sat for a while in deep thought, and then asked me to play it again. At the end he said that he had first believed that this was a virtuoso piece of the kind that composers used to play "at the art clubs of elderly ladies". Upon hearing it a second time, however, he was convinced that real substance 'was looming behind the show of virtuosity'.

The virtuosic, dramatic and fast-moving *Archangel Michael Fighting the Antichrist* encapsulates the visual atmosphere created in the icon, and is written in a neo-classical style similar to *Two Village Saints.* The use of motoric rhythms is a feature of Baroque toccatas and supports the neo-classical interest of the composer. Rautavaara's newfound sense of belonging to social groups (in

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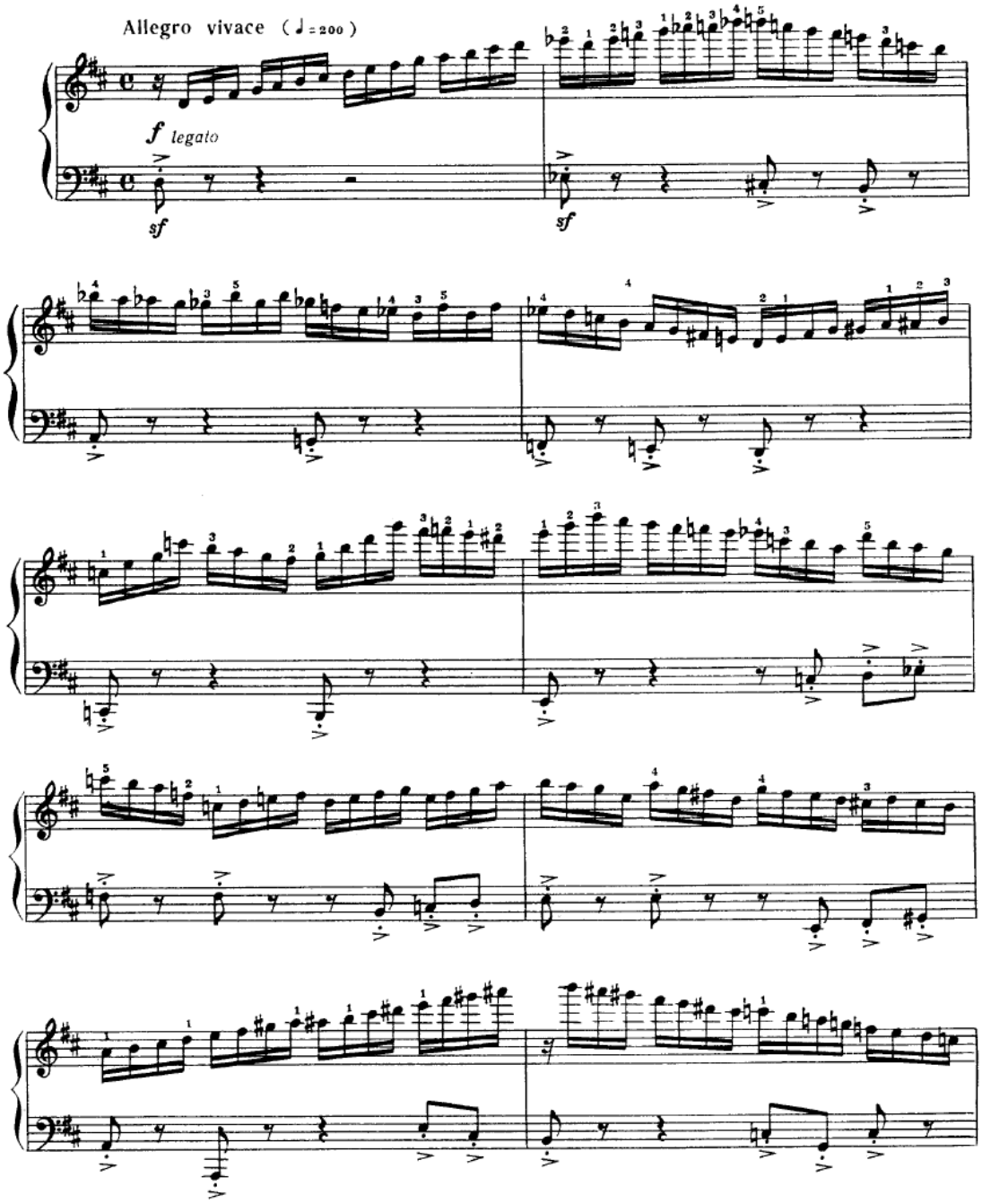
Finland and the USA) is an important biographical facet of the neo-classical period in his compositional output in the sense that no longer being isolated added to his compositional development and exposed him to new contemporaneous styles of Western art music (Matambo 2010:67). Within this neo-classical style, there is still a clear Russian nationalistic influence in that Shostakovich's Prelude Op. 34, no. 5 (Music Example 15) is distinctively similar to *Archangel Michael Fighting the Antichrist.*

Music Example 15

D. Shostakovich *Prelude* Op. 34 no. 5

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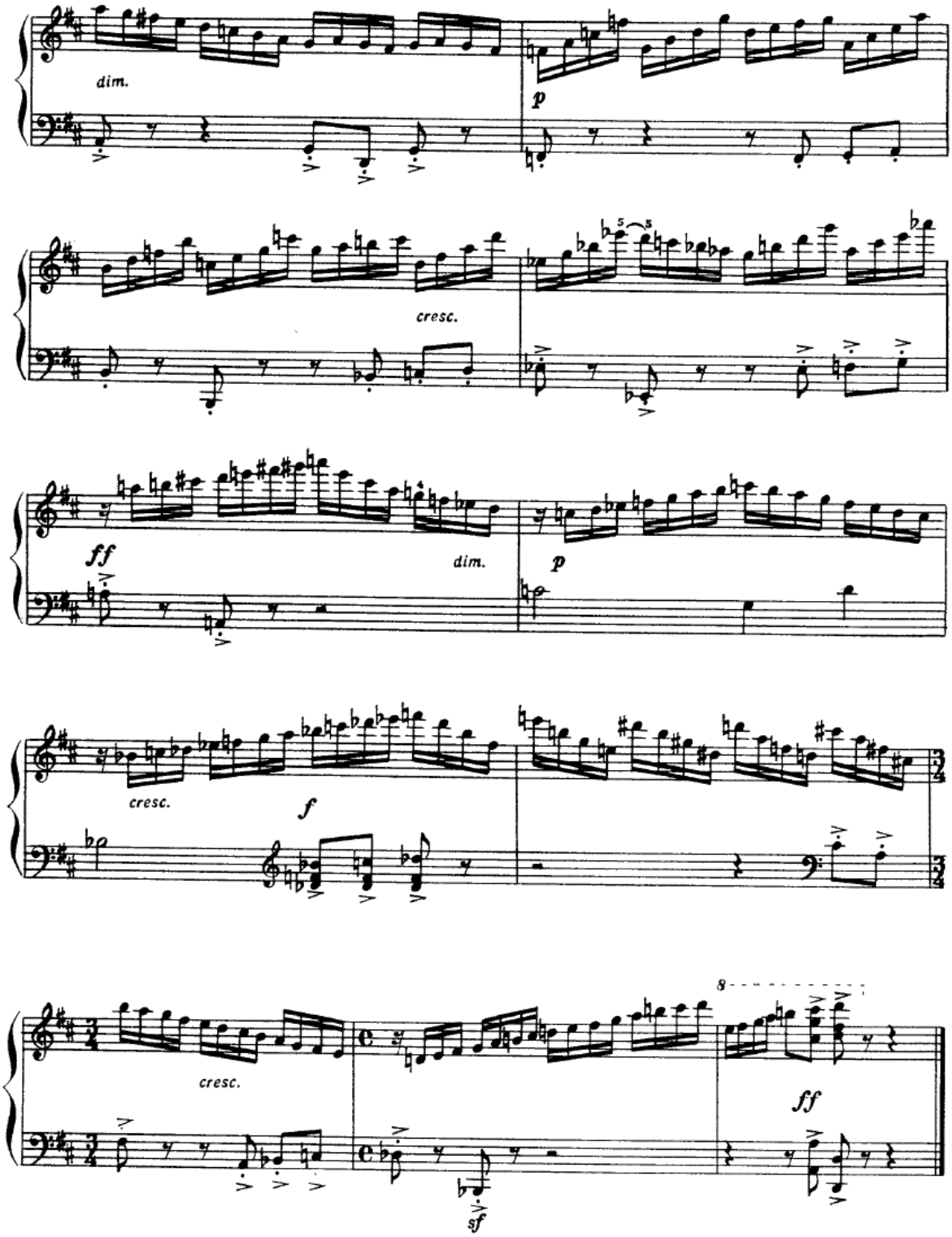
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The contrapuntal writing also strengthens the impression of a neo-classical style. The two voices in the counterpoint are distributed between the hands, and each part contains unique rhythmical features. The top voice consists of semiquavers in regular and irregular groupings similar to a *perpetuum mobile.* The lower voice presents the main melody and consists of longer note values (Stępień 2011:96). Both voices are also distinctive in their motivic structure and their use of modes. Unlike the Orthodox modes used in chanting, Rautavaara incorporates Latin church modes, probably as a direct result of Persichetti's harmony lectures. Persichetti taught about the qualities of modes and the tension that exists between bright and dark modes. He classified modes in order of brightness and his students probably had to compose melodies and harmonies that shift from bright to dark. According to Persichetti the number of flattened notes will influence the darkness of the mode and sharpened notes will contribute to the brightness. Therefore, a Locrian mode (with flattened 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th and 7th degrees) will be the darkest mode, a Dorian mode is neutral and a Lydian mode (with a sharpened 4th degree) is the brightest mode (Stępień 2011:96).

In *Archangel Michael Fighting the Antichrist* similar progressions of modes are used in the different sections. Rautavaara moves away from the ternary structures used in the other movements. No contrasting material is introduced and the form structure consists of four sections that are variations of the harmonic and melodic material of the opening section (A, A1, A2, A3).

Section A starts with Aeolian mode (dark mode) in the right hand and a Lydian mode (bright mode) in the left hand. The following table shows the progression of Section A between the two parts from bright to dark.

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	Bar 1	Bar 3	Bar 6	Bar 16	Bar 17	Bar 18
Top voice	Aeolian (dark)	Dorian (neutral)	Mixolydian (bright)	Dorian (neutral)	Aeolian (dark)	Locrian (dark)
Lower voice	Dorian (neutral)	Dorian (neutral)	Mixolydian (bright)	Whole tone	Whole tone	Ionian (bright)
Progression	Dark		Bright		Dark	Superimposed Dark/Light

The final part of the section creates a strong contrast between dark and bright and is very symbolic in this movement. This succession of modes is also used in the other sections of *Archangel Michael Fighting the Antichrist.*

This contrast between dark and light is further strengthened by the use of register in the different sections. The progression of dark and bright is similar to the progression of the modes. Section A starts in a low register (dark), followed my section A1 in the middle register and then section A2 in the high register (bright), plunging down to the low register (dark) and ending in divergent registers to once again emphasise the contrast between dark and bright (Stępień 2011:96).

The increasing dynamic level further emphasises the musical colour. Section A and A1 starts *mezzo forte*, builds to *forte* in A2 and culminates in *fortissimo* in the final section. The colour nuances between dark and light are portrayed by various elements in the music (shades of modes, register, dynamics) and are similar to the symbolic use of musical colour in *The Black Madonna of Blakernaya.*

Other elements also point to Persichetti: quartal harmonies, polychords, changing time signatures and triads in thirds and triton relations. Some of these elements are already visible in *Pelimannit, Symmetrical Preludes,* and *String Quartet.* With time, Rautavaara did not merely experiment with these elements, but developed them into stylistic features of his work (Stępień 2011:96).

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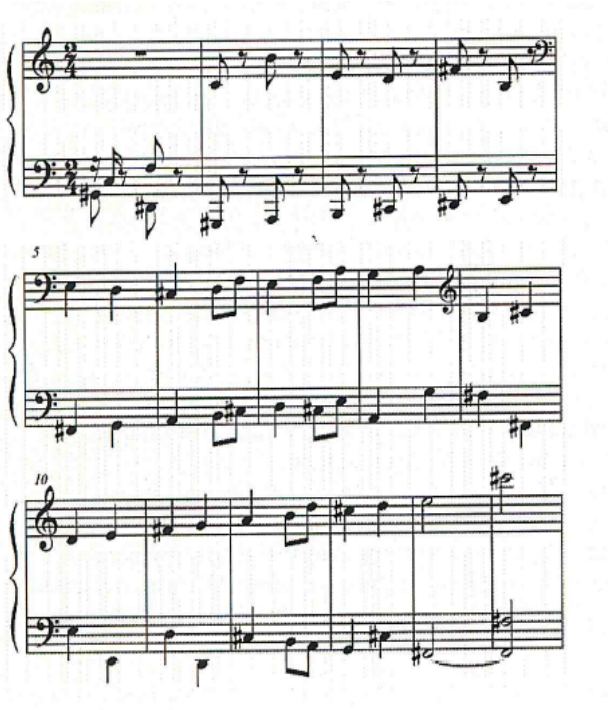
The top melodic line consists mainly of ascending and descending tetrachords and these tetrachords are at times combined to create modes. The line is very ornate and figurative because of the continuous semiquavers that are mainly whole tones or semitones apart. The lower melody uses mainly quaver and crotchet notes that are placed on the downbeats. This, together with the *marcato* indication, indicates the importance of the line (Stępień 2011:96).

If the ornamental line is reduced to the notes on the downbeat (considering the other semiquavers as ornamentation), and the intervals larger than a tritone are considered as intervallic inversions, then an extent of mirror or symmetrical writing becomes prevalent (Stępień 2011:101). Consequently, Eila Tarasti (as cited in Stępień 2011:101) regards the two lines as 'two places from different times, […] viewed as simultaneous, as when all the phases of a saint's life and the places where he dwelt are pictured side by side at the same time'.

Music Example 16

Mirror writing in *Archangel Michael Fighting the Antichrist,* bars 1-15; schema worked out by Stępień (2011:101)

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Although no developing narrative is detectable in the icon, the portrayal of the constant contrast between dark and light evokes the battle between good and evil as seen in the icon of St Michael Astride His Fiery Charger Fighting the Antichrist.

5.7 Insights and interpretation

The analysis above locates the instances where Rautavaara appropriated the religious narratives found in six different Orthodox icons (specific and archetypical), and then demonstrates the synesthetic processes that were involved in reworking these pictures into musical atmospheres. Although Rautavaara (1997) explains the resulting programme rather mystically as 'sounds and pictures arranging themselves into their own images', there are distinct musical narratives that can be identified in movements like *The Death of the Mother of God* and *The Baptism of Christ*. Apart from these narrative programmatic elements, there are also more oblique programmatic features in *Ikonit* that present flashes of narrative that are insufficient to depict a coherent musical story, and are therefore perhaps better regarded as evocative musical symbols: e.g. chanting and bell sounds, the contrapuntal portrayal of two village saints, motifs representing water in the Jordan River, and seven-note phrases repeated seven times to signify seven women at the sepulchre. Then there are musical features that can be considered descriptive on a purely emotional level, in that they help Rautavaara to capture an atmosphere or sentiment, through the use of rhetorical and declamatory gestures, pentatonic and modal scales, and differently textured tone colours, registers and dynamics.

It would not be possible to classify *Ikonit* as either narrative or descriptive programme music, since it contains very effective examples of both types. In this regard, my analysis differs from the composer's stance, which only describes *Ikonit* as descriptive programme music. This conclusion is underscored by the fact that Rautavaara's musical structure provides localised pockets of narrative information and plenty of atmospheric evocations, instead of an overarching organic formal principle (even within single movements) that could provide the

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necessary framework upon which to build more coherent stories for each of the six movements.

Apart from a complex musical programme, another element that positions Rautavaara's *Ikonit* as an intertextual work, referring to texts and contexts outside of itself, is the many Russian musical influences, borrowings or similarities that occur throughout this piano suite, most notably from compositions by Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich, and Scriabin. This Russian influence is strengthened by incorporation of the bell effects and chanting that commonly occur in the rituals of the Russian Orthodox Church. My conventional structural analysis of the music for *Ikonit* identified these and other building blocks that were used to construct the music for this piano suite, but my analysis also incorporated another interdisciplinary contextual level that provides additional meanings that would not be apparent in a positivistic description and interpretation of the music itself.

Lastly, the iconographic tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church provides the final contextual meaning that typifies this piano suite as programmatic. Rautavaara's mysticism and Finnish nationalism both play into and against this predominant Russian cultural influence, because of a cultural interplay that is evident in such facts as that the Valamo monastery initially belonged to Finland (when Rautavaara visited it during his youth) and was subsequently annexed by Russia in the Winter War. Then there are further contexts (for this composition in particular and for Rautavaara's compositional style in general) that reject the overbearing influence of this Russian worldview outright, such as stylistic borrowings from Debussy, Messiaen, and American composition teachers like Persichetti.

Perhaps, though, the most poignant observation one can make about this piano suite, that formed an integral part of Rautavaara's musical apprenticeship, is how the mother and child idea informs the movements with the most captivating music. On the surface this interrelationship denotes the theological importance of Mary's death and Christ's baptism. A different, more psychologically honed

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type of analysis will insist, however, that the death of Rautavaara's mother during his adolescence is integral towards understanding the delicate personal facts that motivated his creative choices in this work. On this interpretation one can ultimately only speculate, but one does know instinctively that the death of a mother during childhood has a life-altering impact.

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6. CONCLUSION

The musical insights that could be included in this conclusion have already been discussed in the preceding section's summary and interpretation. What remains to be stated here is suggesting further possible avenues for Rautavaara and *Ikonit* scholarship, and to present an overall conclusion to this mini-dissertation.

As the final paragraph in Chapter 5 suggests, scholars who are interested in Rautavaara's biography or in psychological analyses of his life and music would find relevant information in this piano suite that features the death of Christ's mother. *Ikonit* cannot be dismissed as youthful folly or irrelevant apprenticeship, since Rautavaara revisited this work five decades after its composition and reworked it into an orchestral suite (*Before the Icons*), much along the lines in which Ravel reworked Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Additional interpretations of *Ikonit*'s meanings could be gathered by analysing the creative decisions that Rautavaara made to orchestrate this work. Presumably, the orchestration will reveal critical insights into the musical programme, on account of the tonal colours used to depict narrative fragments. One would learn a great deal about the development of Rautavaara's own sensibility and intellect when comparing how such an early piano work was adapted for orchestra much later in his compositional life. Stępień (2011) has already provided a brief example of such an analysis in his discussion of *Archangel Michael Fighting the Antichrist*.

The various instances of how Rautavaara used folk, pentatonic and modal melodic material, together with how he linked them with a visual programme that he centred on Russian art, could provide valuable insights to researchers who rightly view Rautavaara as a Finnish national composer. On the one hand, using folk, pentatonic and modal features in his music marks him as a composer who was constructing a distinctively Finnish art music style during the twentieth century. On the other hand, his interest in Russian icons, Russian musical ideas (e.g. bells, chanting) together with his American and European training mark him

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as a more cosmopolitan and international composer. Scholars who are interested in understanding the ways in which nationalism has been incorporated into art music would benefit from observing the ways in which Rautavaara was rooted in Finland, overwhelmed by Russia, and aware of the rest of the world.

Foremost, this mini-dissertation is one of the outcomes of an academic exchange programme intended to foster intercultural understanding between Finland and South Africa. The personal statement in my introduction provides a contextual background that outlines the various educational activities in which I participated during my exchange in Finland. These learning experiences contributed significantly towards shaping my musicianship and my own academic perspectives on music scholarship and education. Practical and theoretical lectures on various types of music (e.g. classical, folk and popular) provided me with critical insights into different contextual ways of thinking about Western art music. In particular, I learned to think about music less restrictively, which in scholarly terms meant not perceiving music analysis as a self-evident positivistic activity. One of the ways to overcome this positivism was to understand that music often overlaps with other disciplines, and my encounter with Orthodox icons and subsequent awareness of Rautavaara's *Ikonit* provided a suitable avenue for this type of academic exploration.

The main objective of this research has been to examine the conceptual depth and complexity of the relationships between generalised and specific Russian icons and Rautavaara's piano suite *Ikonit*, Op. 6. Consequently, my analysis has focused on pinpointing and describing the connections between musical and visual symbols and narratives, although within the bigger religious, historical, cultural and biographical contexts that inform Orthodox icons and Rautavaara's music. Exploring the history of Christian art over an extensive period of time, the development and tradition of iconography within the Byzantine and Russian Orthodox churches, along with Rautavaara's own fascination with mysticism and his youthful and impressionable encounter with icons at the Valamo Monastery, provided concrete contexts within which to understand the programmatic titles used in *Ikonit*. The resulting insights and interpretations, particularly those made

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throughout the musical and pictorial analyses in Chapter 5, would not have been possible without a methodology and conceptual framework that embraced interdisciplinarity.

Investigating the styles and meanings of iconography was valuable in making an evaluative comparison between the relevant visual and musical symbols. Rautavaara's biography provided further information that was necessary to formulate an understanding of how icons intersect with *Ikonit*. Probably the most important conclusion to make from these various threads of research is that cultural insiders will inevitable interpret the music of Rautavaara's *Ikonit* through the visual lens of Orthodox religious icons. Performers and audiences outside of these immediate contexts can enrich their readings of *Ikonit* through immersion into interpretations that exceed merely regarding this composition as something autonomous and non-referential.

This is ultimately the risk that composers take whenever they attach an evocative name or programme to one of their compositions: Performers and audiences can construct meanings that move beyond the confines of musical notation, resulting in aesthetics that are mystical, religious, and social in ways that the composer probably never intended. Admittedly, any composer is entitled to insist on a specific interpretation of his/her music, and scholars and performers would do well to try and understand a composer's ideas about a specific composition. Simultaneously, though, one can accommodate further interpretations of musical meaning that occur in the moments where a composer's notated score has already been released into the wider world, and where performances and their recordings are integrated into social scenarios that construct unanticipated meanings.

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