



COPYRIGHT AND USE OF THIS THESIS

This thesis must be used in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Reproduction of material protected by copyright may be an infringement of copyright and copyright owners may be entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.

Section 51 (2) of the Copyright Act permits an authorized officer of a university library or archives to provide a copy (by communication or otherwise) of an unpublished thesis kept in the library or archives, to a person who satisfies the authorized officer that he or she requires the reproduction for the purposes of research or study.

The Copyright Act grants the creator of a work a number of moral rights, specifically the right of attribution, the right against false attribution and the right of integrity.

You may infringe the author's moral rights if you:

- fail to acknowledge the author of this thesis if you quote sections from the work
- attribute this thesis to another author
- subject this thesis to derogatory treatment which may prejudice the author's reputation

For further information contact the University's Director of Copyright Services

sydney.edu.au/copyright

**“The Study of Narratology and its Impact on Programmatic Music –
with specific practice in writing for the piano”**

Natalie Katherine Matias

BMus in Composition, The New Zealand School of Music, Victoria University,
2011

BMus Studies (Hons), The Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney,
2012

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Masters
of Music (Composition)

The Conservatorium of Music
University of Sydney
2014

I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institutions for the award of a degree.

Signed:

Date:

Abstract:

This dissertation aims to provide analysis of aspects of the phenomenology that has influenced the set of my four piano compositions in this folio. The study assesses narrative stimulants as a basis for writing the works, aspects of morphology and narratology and the application of the appropriate narrative spurs to these works. The folio includes purely absolute to programmatic music, thereby exploring the realms of “descriptive” and “narrative music”.

Composition Folio:

Suite No 1., Notes from Underground, Zodiac Suites and Magic Tales.

Keywords: *Suite No 1; Notes From Underground; The Zodiac; Magic Tales, Narratology.*

Acknowledgements:

I would like to acknowledge my supervisors Dr. Rosalind Page and Dr. James Wierzbicki. I would also like to give a massive thanks to my pianist and mentor Natalie Sheludiakova, and my recording producer Dr. Dave Lisick.

And I would also like to thank my friends Tony Lee and Denis Fortuyanov.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1-5
• Music and Emotion	6-9
• Discussion of the Compositions	10
• Alternate Studies	11-12
• External influences	13-17
• Discussion on Narrative Morphology	18-20
• Thoughts in Musical Narratology	21-25
• Closing Thoughts	26-28
2. <i>Suite No. 1</i>	29
• Movement One	30-37
• Movement Two	38-40
• Movement Three	41-42
3. <i>Notes from Underground</i>	43-45
• Discussion of Music	46-47
• Movement One	47-48
• Movement Two – “Frustration”	49-51
• Movement Three and Four	52-53
• Movement Five	54
• Movement Six – “Indecision”	55-56
• 1.II.	57-58
• Movement Seven – “Acceptance”	58

4. <i>The Zodiac Suites</i>	59-60
• Impressions of the Zodiac	60-61
• Movement 1 – “Fire” (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius)	62-66
• Movement 2 – “Water” (Pisces, Scorpio, Cancer)	67-68
• Movement 3 – “Air” (Aquarius, Libra, Gemini)	69-70
• Movement 4 – “Earth” (Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn)	71-73
5. <i>Magic Tales</i>	74-76
• Discussion of music and its adaptation of the text	77-79
1. “The Introduction”	
• 2. “Vasilisa the Fair”	80-83
• 3. “Baba Yaga”	84-87
• 4. “The Black Magician Tsar”	88-91
• 5. “The Tsar Maiden”	92-93
• 6. “The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf”	94-96
• 7. “Coda”	97-98
6. Conclusion	99-100
7. Bibliography	101-102

Introduction

Music is unlike any other form of art. In a programmatic sense, like painting or sculpture, music also contains a narrative, whether intentional or simply based on the individual listening experience. Music is “an art that exists in time,”¹ ever-changing and with the ability to conjure an impression for the listener that is purely subjective. As Lanier writes:

Music, then, being free from the weight and burden of realism, its whole modus being different from that of imitative and plastic art.²

Music parallels the literary or spoken narrative form. However, whilst the spoken word possesses descriptive qualities and enables the discussion of plot; music, through semiotics and performance interaction, can only strive to suggest narrative. This study will look at the structure of narrative, termed as narratology, believed to have developed out of Russian formalist theory, which I will go on to later discuss in two chapters based on Narrative Morphology and its relevance, also, to Musical Narratology. Programmatic music has been one of the preferred means to convey a narrative, in which literary references co-exists with musical practice. Programme music is a musical product that is developed through its correlation with a literary text that in turn impacts the format and structure of the composition. It is the study of narratology and programme music that has impacted on my compositional interests – in finding the means to translate the particular literary narrative text into the musical score, and in understanding the function of narrative in music. As Benson notes:

Music has been opened up for examination in all its textuality, its entanglement in the language that we cannot but use as we listen, respond, and disseminate.³

People wish to illustrate their experience of music through spoken language, but music

¹ Halsey Stevens, forward to *Form in Music*, by Wallace Berry (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1966), xi.

² Sidney Lanier, *Music and Poetry* (New York: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1969), 16.

³ Stephen Benson, "For Want of a Better Term?: Polyphony and the Value of Music in Bakhtin and Kundera," *Narrative* 11, no. 3 (October 2003): 292.

requires both the reflection of aesthetic perception and analysis. It is not enough to suggest that a particular work makes me “feel sad” or “want to dance”; one must also understand how the composer has constructed the piece in order to understand the composer’s musical intentions. I focused on piano music, as I wanted to be able to trace my compositional development throughout the process of writing four works. I believed that this would create a consistency in my studies, working with the same musician throughout the project and I also believed that it would be beneficial to myself to explore writing for the piano, which is an expansive compositional instrument. This dissertation aims to expand on musical language, through the aid of musical narrative, to absorb literature and to assess pre-existing compositional styles (predominantly through a study of the Russian piano school). I wish to explore how narrative can impact compositional writing by practicing via my own compositions. So, how do we convey meaning in music? What are the pre-existing norms that have allowed music to possess such narrative insight and values, and how have I interpreted or embedded this thought within my own work? As Philip Ball argues:

Aaron Copland makes the insightful suggestion that the greatness of a composition follows in inverse relation to our ability to say what it is about. ... All this has left musicians themselves uncertain of what manner of art they are engaged in, and what, if anything, can be said with or about it. ‘Is there meaning in music?’ Copland asked.⁴

Through the compositions present within this folio, I seek to understand pre-determined notions regarding musical syntax and how it is manipulated. As a result, I redefine the use of narrative constructs. This could even be described as a form of ekphrasis, especially in regards to programmatic music and the ideas of narratology. As Richard Walsh says:

Narrative and music are temporal forms not because they persist in time but because they are articulated in time; that is, they give structure to the flux of experience. In turn, rhythm is our most basic experience of temporal structure.⁵

⁴ Philip Ball, *The Music Instinct: How music works and why we can't do without it* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 381.

⁵ Richard Walsh, "The Common Basis of Narrative and Music: Somatic, Social, and Affective Foundations," *Story Worlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* 3 (2011): 56.

The music sets out to re-tell the story of pre-existing art forms; achieved through the act of taking the written and spoken language, and adapting the ideas from the literary source into a musical metaphor and form. This highlights my own compositional interests as I look at adapting literary texts into musical works. I have specifically chosen to work with the piano. The four works are *Suite No. 1*, *Notes from Underground*, *The Zodiac Suites* and *Magic Tales*. Three of the four works presented are programmatic. The first piece, *Suite No. 1*, which I regard as the foundation of the folio, is, however, an absolute work. Rather than using traditional conventions and devices to conjure places or other texts and atmospheres, my own work, to some extent, expands on the idea of human emotion, developing abstract material in a seemingly structureless format, based on the ways in which I interpret and present narrative. Within this dissertation, I focus on the development of programmatic music. In doing so, I consider how music can be redefined by focusing on compositional manipulation, understating how to capture the aesthetic of any particular “emotions,” or spurs, within the music in order to delineate the “veneer” of narrative in a musical setting. As Jean-Jacques Nattiez illustrates:

[B]ecause of necessity the task of linking these phantoms of characters to suggestions of action will fall to me, the listener: it is not within the semiological possibilities of music to link a subject to a predicate. This is why a good number of ‘narrative’ approaches to music, ... seem to me to retreat into metaphorical illusion: ... when, in the discourse of music, it is only a question of a play of forms and the reactions which they provoke?⁶

I personally believe that nostalgia plays a big part in the way that one experiences a musical work – some listeners are able to visualise specific images when listening to a particular passage of a piece, building a visual narrative in the “mind’s eye”. However, one’s personal preference is a purely subjective experience. Is it too extreme to assume that most works evoke a feeling of nostalgia? One can assume that the composer is imparting a portion of his or her figurative “surroundings” into his or her own written compositional experience – all

⁶ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115, no. 2 (28 Jan 2009): 244.

linked to the memory and the composers' ability to meditate and reflect on the work.⁷ Also, multiple exposures to a musical work may alter the listeners' experience or perception. I have often observed listeners' commentary on hearing new details when listening to a work over and over again – for instance, “every time I listen to the work, I hear something new”. This prompts a reimagining, or deeper understanding, and appreciation for what the audience is listening to. Music is not static. It is difficult as a listener to remember a musical work that is ever-changing. Music is full of sonorities and “musical color”. Motifs or themes are easy to grasp (when they are repetitive). However, more complex works apply different techniques and pass through a number of cells or ideas. Music is not as easy to grasp as a painting or sculpture that is, arguably, in its definitive fixed state from the first time that the viewer lays eyes on it. It can be a far more difficult task for the average listener to put into words what it is that they are listening to than to comment on a painting.

What I am trying to do is to access my surroundings and to understand what it is that is influencing my creative process and feeding into my writing. I am also trying to discover how I, as a writer, engage with past compositional traditions and apply these to my own works. I aim to create new forms from old, whilst assessing narrative means in a reconstructed form. As Wilson Coker in *Music and Meaning* notes:

Discursive meaning and knowledge, in contrast, is secondhand, indirect, derivative by means of thought. Whereas we become acquainted with things by feeling, we know things discursively by noticing, analyzing, and using our wits to think. Discursive knowledge includes whatever is significant about other selves and their mental states, historical facts (events, places, times, persons, and the like) and scientific knowledge (hypothetical constructions and theories involving inference and abstraction)⁸

As a product of my studies, this dissertation assesses the compositions that I have written – where I step away from the creative aspect of writing the music and instead, take on a

⁷ Marcel Zentner, "Homer's Prophecy: An Essay on Music's Primary Emotions," *Music Analysis* 29, no. 1/3, Special Issue on Music and Emotion (March-October 2010): 107.

⁸ Wilson Coker, *Music and Meaning: A Theoretical Introduction to Musical Aesthetics* (New York. London: The Free Press. Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1973), 8.

new role as analyst; assessing my music from an analytical perspective whilst also imparting my own personal insight into the discussion.

Music and Emotion

I wish to acknowledge that the study of music and emotion, which has the potential to be a very large study, is one that is too large for the scope of this dissertation. However, it is important in the context of my studies and I will touch on it within this chapter.

In *The Common Basis of Narrative and Music*, Walsh argues that social behavior is the “foundations shared by narrative and music, and their importance within the context of pre-linguistic communicative behavior.”⁹ The foundation of music lies in pre-linguistic communication, that is, in the ability to communicate; suggesting an emotive state or objective. Before the ability to communicate with spoken language, communication came through gestures or noises. To reference Walsh once more:

[W]hat is necessary is just that they [the listener] capture the temporal unfolding of a formal pattern in the music—regardless of whether the meaning attributed to the pattern is articulated in technical, literal language or fanciful metaphor. In other words the subjective response completes the realisation of the music by assimilating its temporal unfolding of formal conflict and hierarchy in terms of a particularised negotiation of values.¹⁰

Regardless of notation, “metaphor” or the ability to articulate the impact of music, it can be argued that the significance of sound is purely subjective to the individual, and it is only the potential of the work that can be “realized.” Music can be connected with dance, thereby prompting physical movement or a non-physical vocalization, both being expressions from the listener. Music has the ability to make us dance, and to interpret and translate audible qualities into movement. The impression of the movement is based on what we, as listeners, are hearing and, as a result, “feeling.” It is at this point of communication that one is not passively translating through spoken language their “feelings” about the music but, rather, physically enacting an expression. As Lanier states:

⁹ Walsh, “The Common Basis of Narrative and Music,” 50.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 52.

The principle of being of every song is that intellectual impressions can be advantageously combined with musical impressions, in addressing the spirit of man.¹¹

Music is a culturally constructed means of expression. Expression, at the core, is a tool of communication. Throughout its history, composers have devised what can be referred to as “musical grammar”, the “harmonic language” with which we, through cultural construct, associate emotion. The simplest example of this would be the use of the major chord that has so typically been used to represent the “happy” human emotion; likewise the $\frac{3}{4}$ tempo works to indicate and conjure the dance or waltz movement. As Nattiez says:

Any perception of music triggers off the establishment of a link between the work and the experience of the listener. If one feels that music tells a story which is left untold to us, it is perhaps because, semantically speaking, music is capable of various forms of imitation, and that, among them, it is possible for it to imitate the outward appearance of a literary narrative.¹²

The combination of tempi and modality has led to compositional constructs such the mazurka, scherzo, waltz, ballade, and fantasia. As Zentner says:

While iconic coding also plays an important role (e.g. with respect to tempo and rising or falling contours), suprasegmental features seem to carry emotional information primarily through symbolic coding by means of historically evolved, sociocultural conventionalisation. Thus, the minor mode came to symbolise a sad mood during the seventeenth century.¹³

By this premise, we can understand that intentionally devised sound has, over time, been awarded recognition for its ability to be relative to “emotions”. Listening practices have become commonplace, and the listener expects to hear a certain musical “grammar”, especially in programmatic music. Even particular instruments conjure certain natural elements – for instance, wind or rain, or even animals. An example that comes to mind is Hanns Eisler’s *Regen* (1929). In this piece, the instrumentation is delineated and orchestrated appropriately, and in complete memetic synchronicity with the visual documentary, the music captures an almost diegetic representation of a rainstorm taking place in the Netherlands. However, the extra-diegetic soundtrack for *Regen* could just as easily be

¹¹ Lanier, *Music and Poetry*, 9.

¹² Nattiez, "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?" 251.

¹³ Zentner, "Homer's Prophecy: An Essay on Music's Primary Emotions," 111.

listened to as a stand-alone musical product, full of audible colour and imagery. In Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, op.67 (1936), solo instruments over the entire breadth of the orchestra are used as direct representatives and voices of various animals – for example, the oboe gives voice to the duck, the flute represents the bird, the clarinet portrays the cat, and the French horns represent the wolf. *Peter and the Wolf* takes an educational stance. Commissioned originally for a children's theatre, it is a work that is easily accessible to the younger listener – the narrative and the characters are introduced one-by-one until the ending, where the orchestration features full instrumental sonority. Structurally consisting of individual leitmotifs that are attributed to the main characters, the audible journey is one that the listeners of all ages can easily follow in their imagination. The narrative is, of course, further prompted by the element of the spoken narrator and, as a result, there is interplay between the two narrative genres. The narrator speaks, and then it is the music's turn to replicate or translate the spoken word into a musical adaptation.

One of the earliest mentions of music and emotion is present in a text from Homer's *Iliad* where there is a description of the Sirens and their powerful music that lures sailors to their deaths.¹⁴ This is, of course, only a description of music; yet it illustrates music as having the ability to heavily affect the listener and, in Homer's case, music is a powerful and dangerous force – having the ability to force man against his own will, resulting in potential ruin or death. As Walsh says:

It may be true that listeners who project a story onto music, even in the absence of accompanying paratextual cues, do so without warrant from the music itself; but that does not mean that they do it quite arbitrarily and without cause.¹⁵

It is of interest to assess how listeners perceive music. This has the potential to prompt an evaluation of audience perception and question if music actually has a relationship to

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 102.

¹⁵ Walsh, "The Common Basis of Narrative and Music," 50.

emotions. In assessments carried out by Zentner, people were asked to vocalise their own opinions of what emotions they believe the music conjures, these then being divided into written descriptive categories. In some instances, music has been placed within the groupings of “sublimity”, “vitality” and “unease”.¹⁶ The findings relate to the impact of cultural spurs; the surroundings and expectations that the listener is pre-conditioned to expect. One could ask if this detracts from the “mystery” of writing a musical work. To some degree, music has always had the effect of manipulating or stirring the “emotions” or senses. What is so interesting about concert hall music is that different composers have brought their own narrative aesthetic into their writing, making the “listening experience” unique.

¹⁶ Zentner, "Homer's Prophecy: An Essay on Music's Primary Emotions," 106.

Discussion of the Compositions

Returning to my own composition folio, all four works were individually created to reflect developments in my compositional style. The works progressively followed one after the other, and it took me two years to write all four works. I also found that it was necessary to take breaks before commencing the new works in order to reflect on the previous pieces, thereby editing the works from a fresh perspective. In order to achieve differentiation across the four works, I needed to find separate driving forces; four narrative spurs that would be translated through the music. This is why I felt it was important to have the appropriate narratives, or programmatic texts, from which to draw reference.

I will go further into the creative aspects of the works later in this dissertation – assessing predominantly the narrative influences, and presenting a discussion of the four piano works. An analysis of the individual works is also included, in order to elucidate their individual construction. I will also briefly touch on semiotics, the symbolism within the phenomenological practice of composition, and how it is perceived in “designer languages”¹⁷ – finding the common similarities across different compositional genres whether it be film, story, play or concert-hall piece. Following on the previous discussion on emotions, I will acknowledge “triggers” – musical gestures that are applied in the compositional language, which in themselves become “symbols” that enable the listener to associate with a specific emotive metaphor. I will discuss how I have applied these within my four programmatic works.

¹⁷ Andrew S. Gibbons et al., *Design Languages*. In M. Driscoll, M. D. Merrill, J. van Merriënboer and J. M. Spector (Eds.), *Handbook for research for educational communications and technology* (3rd ed.) (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2008), 634.

Alternate Studies

I would initially like to discuss my own alternative studies. While writing the solo works, I also devised another topic entitled “Towards an Aesthetic of Visualisation: Comparing Approaches to Writing for the Battle Scene.”¹⁸ This separate paper was highly beneficial as it created a structural balance and presented continuity based around my work process. The intention of that particular experiment was to conduct a cross-comparative analytical study of different compositional media or genres. The genres that I assigned to the study were ballet and film. Specifically, I considered Sergei Prokofiev’s *Alexander Nevsky* (film, 1938) against his *Romeo and Juliet* (ballet, op. 64, 1935). The purpose of conducting such a study came from an analytical standpoint. I wanted to develop an approach to assessing a composer who had written across different compositional media or genres. My initial hypothesis was that one can generally assume that a composer has a specific compositional voice, a written style or compositional aesthetic. For instance, one should be able to discern a work written by Beethoven, and not confuse that work with one by Rachmaninoff. Likewise, it should be possible to recognise the stylistic differences in Enrique Granados’ works, and not confuse his musical or compositional voice with that of Arnold Schoenberg’s. As a result, my research sought to study and focus specifically on individual composers, with the aim of being able to find correlations in their compositional language across different genres. What came out of that study, which I believe is significant, are the relationships that go into the music making of programmatic music – the diverse ways in which programmatic genres influence and impact on composers’ compositional styles when writing for the needs of a particular genre or narrative source. It is this concept that has prompted my research

¹⁸ Natalie Matias. “‘Towards an Esthetic of Visualisation’: Comparing the Approaches to Writing for the Battle Scene.” (Paper presented at the Music and the Moving Image conference, New York, New York University, June 2, 2014).

approaches in considering narrative in composition, and which leads to the next obvious consideration of external influences.

External influences

External influences are highly significant when creating a work. It is those influences and collaborative processes that enable, in most circumstances, the work to reach its full creative capacity. Whether that cross-collaborative relationship is between instrumentalists, producers, directors, or dancers, it is an element that bears weight in the creation of any compositional work. As Philip Ball writes:

It was in the nineteenth century, when composers started to believe music had an intrinsic potential to express raw emotion without the mediation of agreed conventions, that they and their audiences lost sight of the strictly conventional assignation of meaning and started to think that music produced immediate imaginative suggestion.¹⁹

Programmatic composition, in, a sense, is a perverse expression – especially if we are to suggest that the music acts as a representation of a written language text. Zentner discusses the impact of music and sounds in film, assessing how these audible elements are used to derive and induce an impact on the listener. Zentner notes:

Fearful reactions in such films [thrillers and horror films] are prevalently caused by learned associations, not by the nature of the sounds themselves. Because music and narrative are so interwoven, it is difficult to tell whether the music acts as producer, amplifier or neither. Thus, although these emotions are occasionally elicited by the music in itself, it is far more common for them to arise from conditioning (fear) or a violation of taste or attitude (anger), as in ‘I really hate this kind of music’.²⁰

It is important to consider how listeners are conditioned to hear music (especially programmatic music), and to understand how this act of listening is a cultural norm. This means that, depending on the culture of the listener, we are all cultured in what to “accept” musically and, as a result, we accept these suppositions whether we are trained listeners or untrained novices. Zentner discusses how fear is either attributed or derived within music. This implies that in cases of, for example, film, music can either support the images’ narrative or further drive the narrative (thereby enhancing the scene), or even allude to a

¹⁹ Ball, *The Music Instinct*, 398.

²⁰ Zentner, "Homer's Prophecy: An Essay on Music's Primary Emotions," 109.

greater depth that is likely not present in the action or spoken language. The music might even prompt a “foreboding effect”. This comes from the listeners’ familiarisation with the musical or programmatic practice. The listener is pre-conditioned to expect compositional practices and styles.²¹ As Zentner says:

Listener features are based on the individual and sociocultural identity of the listener and on the symbolic coding conventions prevalent in a particular culture or subculture. ... These various factors can be organised into the two basic categories of musical expertise (including culturally constructed understandings of musical meaning) and stable dispositions (such as personality traits).²²

Based on cultural foundations, music can potentially represent a play, book, poetry or anything spoken to the same extent as the narrative’s original structural language. Calvin S.

Brown notes:

Program music has never existed in a pure state—has never set out to represent its object, regardless of how the result may sound. As far as concreteness and abstraction are concerned, the two arts have started from opposite extremes and have both ultimately taken a middle ground of compromise.²³

Programmatic music is an audible expression, a temporal construct that has been worked on and developed throughout the ages. The earliest examples were the spoken choruses in ancient Greek plays such as Aristophanes’ *The Wasps*. Examples extend through Beethoven’s *Pastoral* symphony, Camille Saint-Saëns’ *Danse Macabre*, Op. 40 (1874) and *The Carnival of the Animals* (1886) to Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *The Lark Ascending* and *Sinfonia Antartica*.

One can even observe today the need to discuss music – to give insight to listeners, to enable the audience members to have something to grasp; thereby allowing their visual-mental imagery to construct a vision of the unfolding narrative as they audibly become enveloped in the music. It is interesting to discuss music in the setting of literature, by defining the

²¹ Claudia Bullerjahn, and Markus Gildnering, "An Empirical Investigation of Effects of Film Music Using Qualitative Content Analysis," *Psychomusicology* 13 (1994): 101.

²² Zentner, "Homer's Prophecy: An Essay on Music's Primary Emotions," 111.

²³ Calvin S Brown, *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1948), 270.

differences in the structure and approaches to background compositional influence. As Brown notes in *Music and Literature* (1948), there are differences in the approach to programmatic writing which Brown lists under “Descriptive Music” and “Narrative Music”.²⁴ Regarding Beethoven’s *Pastoral Symphony* (1808), Brown states, “it is clear that Beethoven went into the composition of descriptive music with several reservations. The music was not to rival painting, but was to describe or represent the feelings which the landscape produces.”²⁵ Until now, I have mainly focused on the translation of the spoken word into music. Beethoven created sound as a prescriptive feeling in order to conjure up a mental picture (another form of translation). From Brown’s description, descriptive music puts forward a written idea; presenting imagery in the listener’s “mind’s eye”. In the case of Beethoven’s *Pastoral Symphony*, written titles and subtitles inform the listener of the setting, while the music forms the impression or feeling of the settings atmosphere for the listener. Narrative music constructs itself around an unfolding narrative, with the music flowing from one idea into the next based on the sequences of events to come out of the written text. Overall, this shapes the structure of the composer’s work. Abstract musical ideas begin to flow, and the listener is eased and even influenced by what they are listening to. Early theorists of the “moving image” also saw the importance of music and its potential influence in supporting narrative, where directors sought to represent montages or narrative montages – forming a fluid narrative. Imagine that one is replacing titles and subtitles, as found in programme music, for images. A film will not reach its full expressive potential aligned with no sound, sound is once again employed to aid narrative stimulus, heightening the overall experience of the product. Bringing us to a similar theory applicable to the use of music in

²⁴ *ibid.*, xx, xxi.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 246.

film, Russian film director and film theorist Sergei Eisenstein, in *A Statement*²⁶, addresses the alignment of contrasting elements. As Douglas Kahn states:

The 'Statement' posed this relationship through the metaphor of music: "Only the contrapuntal use of sound vis-à-vis the visual fragment of montage will open up new possibilities for the development and perfection of montage".²⁷

Counterpoint refers to the placement of juxtaposing elements. In compositional terms, there are a number of tools set in place in order to create "dissonance". An audible struggle engages the listener, whether this be in overlapping of complex polyrhythms or in the larger act of assigning different temperaments to movements of an entire work. Counterpoint results in "shock value" – an emotive perception. Audience response is purely subjective, and no two listeners will be affected the same way. Eisenstein's suggestions about film and counterpoint can be linked to traditions, not only of film, but also of narrative text and musical composition. Cinema Studies is a reasonably new field of study, and it is interesting to consider how others approach the field; in particular, to assess what is relevant to the construct of the idea. The study of film is important in assessing montage. It is appropriate that it should be mentioned – especially when considering how two antithetical products are united to form one abstract structure. As Sergei Eisenstein explains:

In the moving image (cinema) we have, so to speak, a synthesis of two counterpoints – the spatial counterpoint of graphic art, and the temporal counterpoint of music. Within cinema, and characterising it, occurs what may be described as: visual counterpoint.²⁸

This represents a more recent theorisation within academic thought, and outlines the core and integral moment where visual meets audible in film. A conflict of perception and approach, two separate mediums are aligned and are brought together – this is where we perceive "counterpoint". Counterpoint is relevant to thought on compositional theory, especially when considering how constructs, especially relevant to narrative and descriptive music, force

²⁶ S. M. Eisenstein, V. I. Pudovkin, and G. V. Alexandrov, "A Statement on the Sound-Film," in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed and trans. Jay Leyda (London: Dobson, 1951), 257.

²⁷ Douglas Kahn, "Eisenstein and Cartoon Sound," *SoundCulture* (2004): 2, accessed March 21, 2014, <http://tmckosky.asp.radford.edu/thea180/SergieCarSound.htm>.

²⁸ Sergei Eisenstein, "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form," in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed and trans. Jay Leyda (London: Dobson, 1951), 6.

musical works to include conflicting elements often present in the form of mood or temperament.

Discussion on Narrative Morphology

Another important aspect of theorisation are the approaches to narrative construct and structure. These are defined in linguistics as morphology – the definition and assessment of structure. This assessment, or sub-branch, of Russian theorist thought has influenced my own study. The study of Russian folktales or, more specifically, fairy and magical tales, present an in-depth exploration that considers many layers of narrative interaction. By this, I refer to the structural constructs that are imbedded within the written text, and how this manifests itself in the unfolding narrative plot of the written musical composition. For this particular study, I will be discussing the ideas of formalist theorist Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp. What is significant in terms of narrative construct or the notion of morphology is the idea of development, which is similar in construct to the way that musical structures and themes are developed. In the decomposition of the folktale, repetitions within the uniformity of the texts are noticeable. There are varying developments across the formula of morphology. Sequences that the core figures must pass through and transcend are relatively similar to the treatment found in programmatic music, which in musical terminology would be described as motifs or themes. The assessment would be to discover how certain outcomes are reached and how key figures evolve within the text. As Propp writes:

[F]unctions must be defined independently of the characters who are supposed to fulfill them. In following the enumeration of the functions, one becomes convinced that they must also be defined independently of how and in what manner they are fulfilled. ... This phenomenon may be termed the assimilation of the means of fulfillment of functions.²⁹

So, in order to begin the process of development and the quest for transcendence, there must be levels or elements of interaction. Propp describes morphology as “a description of a tale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and

²⁹ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (University of Texas Press, 1 Jun 1968), 66.

to the whole.”³⁰ This essentially accounts for the consistent and constant set of variables that appear within the narrative text. What is fascinating about Propp’s writing is his outline of “schemes” or “compositional schemes”. He also presents a devised analytical approach within his thinking that sets out to deconstruct the narrative text, as well as to assess underlying compositional devices that are present throughout different folktale texts. In the act of “decomposing” the plot and assigning ciphers to recurring functions throughout the text, one can begin to chart the events and outline the entire plot in an analytical pictorial chart (utilising semiotics). This opens up avenues of thought for all types of analytical cross-comparative study. What is clearly highlighted is a sense of repetition, and how almost every plot shares similar “schemes” within the narrative. Scheme would refer to a number of variables in the plot that come together to form the structure of the narrative, such as points of tension or climax. The introduction of the characters, the development of the character through struggle, the main characters objective met with other characters that he or she meets along the way, which could be, for example, a love interest or the meeting of a villain. In folktales there is also a heavy element of magic and magical expectation, even present in the form of talking animals. If one were to map these stories, it would be very easy to trace these developments and elements throughout different folktales, which in turn creates a consistency throughout the many tales and a sense of validity in its cultural practice. As Propp writes, “one must also keep in mind that just as elements are assimilated within a tale, whole genres are also assimilated and intermingled.”³¹

Propp, essentially, wants to define within his writing the method or approach for understanding what it is that goes into a written text – by contextualising apparent data that is noticeable amongst a set of different Russian folktales. As a result, we have a retrospective

³⁰ *ibid.*, 19.

³¹ *ibid.*, 100.

study, whereby writers are building their narrative upon a preexisting formula – applying pre-determined functions and fitting within a certain narrative practice. I personally agree with Propp’s analytical methodology, given its significant findings relative to the folktale genre. It is also highly relevant to my fourth piano work, *Magic Tales* – a story that has narrative features similar to those discussed in Propp’s writing.

Thoughts on Musical Narratology

“[N]arrative? In what sense can music be understood as narrative? and under what circumstances is such an understanding justifiable?”³²

Narrative morphology highlights the breakdown and analysis of a particular field of “traditional” folktales by seeking the common qualities across the breadth of works within the genre. Musical Narratology and Narrative Morphology overlap in theoretical thought. Musical Narratology seeks to understand the place of narrative in music, through comprehension of what the music is implying and considering whether music can be perceived as narrative. Matthew McDonald, in “Silent Narration?” discusses the impact of composers being influenced by literary or filmic narrative. As he states:

Consider, for example, a piece whose organisational features were derived, consciously or unconsciously, from the narrative structure of a literary or filmic narrative. If the concepts and terminology of structuralist narrative theory would enlighten aspects of the source narrative, then these would seem to be helpful in describing the quality of the music’s structure as well; the concept of narrative would clearly be relevant to this composer’s music.³³

Narrative is placed on music, thereby informing the structure of the musical work. In programmatic music, there must be a literary source to accompany the musical work. Otherwise, the work is absolute – a stand-alone product devoid of any external treatment. Whilst a narrative literary text has the ability to “convey plot,” music can only suggest – playing with the listeners’ visualisation and, perhaps, prompting an emotive state from the listener. Then there is the process of creating a standard formula, and following the process in creating a literary work. For example, if a composer were to adapt their musical works to follow a similar literary to the structure (as presented in Propp’s writing), it would be obvious to see where the structure of the music comes from (noting the connection with the

³² Matthew McDonald, “Silent Narration? Elements of Narrative in Ives’s the Unanswered Question,” *19th-Century Music* 27, no. 3 (Spring 2004): 264.

³³ *ibid.*, 266.

texts). As stated by Thompson and Thompson, the view regarding formulaic structure is that the works become static and that this is perceived in a negative light:

[T]he popular view that the imitation of life is done in literature via the story, the paraphrasable content, is wrong. This imitation involves many diverse means such as the choice of compositional units, choice of tropes, their progression and interaction. The literary work is by no means limited to what is written on a page. In his mature years Shklovsky stresses the concept of action: he sees literature not as a static imitation of an equally static world but as a process.³⁴

While it might be fine for a particular literary style to follow a strict “static” structure, it is not always preferable for other forms to rigorously reflect narrative in this way. Music references “audible semiotics” – calling the listener to pay attention to “triggers” or sounds that they are familiar with from their own everyday experiences. Like slang and colloquialism, music, too, can become out-of-date or out-of-fashion. If we look at the Elizabethan English in Shakespearean plays, this language is no longer employed within an everyday contemporary setting. Likewise music changes by adapting to the current trends of its particular context. However, like the Shakespearean plays, there is still demand for “older” music as a form of entertainment. This is important to note as slang, or trends in sound, represent how composers might apply mimetic features or “metaphors” belonging to a historical time or ethnographic setting; thereby allowing listeners to relate to a feature of that particular style of music. As Claudia Gorbman, in *Unheard Melodies*, states in relation to film music:

Properties of instrumentation, rhythm, melody, and harmony form a veritable language. We all know what ‘Indian music,’ battle music, and romance music sound like in the movies; ... As for cinematic codes: music is codified by the filmic context itself, and assumes meaning by virtue of its placement in the film.³⁵

I think the statement, “we all know what the music sounds like,” by virtue of “just knowing,” is interesting – being in accord, as listeners, to accept particular arrangements of sounds as “a

³⁴ Ewa A Thompson and Ewa M Thompson, "Viktor Borisovich Shklovsky, or Fish Turned Ichthyologist," *Books Abroad* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1973): 80.

³⁵ Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; and London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 3.

norm”. However, it is also interesting to note how particular sounds lose relevance. For instance, particular modes or scales that would have been used in the past to delineate “Chinese” or “Middle Eastern” sounds are now perceived as cliché and dated. As Nattiez states:

‘[M]usical elements’ of human language. Music and language have in common the fact that they are constituted of sound objects. In language as in music, there are rhythms and accents, durations of notes and syllables, ... In language, with the exception of tone languages, the vowels do not have fixed pitches, but rather a linking together of syllables created from the intonation contours (the prosodemes) to which certain phoneticians. ... Music is capable of imitating the intonation contour of a narrative.³⁶

There is a connection between music and the spoken word, which is not that different in construct terms — for example, ideas of inflection, pause, climax, caesura, etc. As Jordan and Kafalenos write:

Perceiving what he terms a “profound analogy ... between categories of language and those of narrative,” Todorov draws a correlation between the elements of a narrative and the parts of a sentence: characters correspond to nouns, their attributes to adjectives, and their actions to verbs.³⁷

It is difficult for me to underpin the ideas of imitation. However, from my study of his works, I would state that Prokofiev, as a composer, has a heavy dialect or compositional rhetoric, which he implies in the language of his compositions. There is a sense of satire or irony found within the tonal language of his music – an imitation of language and gestures, or presentation of language. I find works such as the ballet, *Cinderella* Op. 87 (1944), and *The Clown (Le Chout)* Op. 21 (1915 and 1921), highly comical, threatening, vastly complex and full of audible layers. I would suggest that Prokofiev is one of the best composers when it comes to “translating” the spoken word into a musical experience. Of course, it falls to the listener to “fill in the gaps” as to what that conversation potentially is.

³⁶ Nattiez, “Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?” 251.

³⁷ Roland Jordan and Emma Kafalenos, “The Double Trajectory: Ambiguity in Brahms and Henry James,” *19th-Century Music* 13, no. 2 (Autumn 1989): 137.

My examples of Prokofiev's music come from cases of ballet music, where dance and music must interact to inform narrative and sub-context. In the instance of ballet music, narrative influences the plot and structure, which is bound together with the music. The music presents a platform from which the dancers interact with.

An example from the ballet *The Clown* is in reference to the opening scene (The Buffoon and his wife), which is a comment on peasant culture. The main character or protagonist is depicted as lazy and stupid, a buffoon. He beats his wife. The music shifts articulating the violence of the scene, how he has beaten her to death. He continues to beat her with an enchanted whip and magically his wife comes back to life and the music shifts once again to a happy joyous gesture and the wife is once again in love with her husband, referencing a "cultural norm". The irony being that the wife loves the husband even more because he has beaten her, or beaten her back to life.

The music is sporadic, it clashes, and changes in musical material are quick leaving the listener unsettled. It has a quirky manner. It does not so much construct or develop the narrative but rather it is highly effective in developing the atmosphere of the scene, it enforces character temperament and even possesses mimetic qualities, such as the beating that the buffoon gives his wife.

In Prokofiev's *Cinderella* some of the most satiric writing is applied to the Ugly Sisters, whose dances and music provide an element of comic relief. Such as Act 1 no. 2, Pas de Châle (*Allegretto*) that is the Shawl Dance, where the two ugly sisters fight over a shawl. The music is fast incorporating a mixture of arco and pizzicato strings articulating the mischief and trouble that the sisters bring with them. Then there is a contrast in the instrumentation, which is high placed woodwind and strings (dainty in sound) contrasted with low sounding (bulky, unbalanced and clumsy) brass instruments that Prokofiev writes into the

arrangement. It not only causes contrast between the dainty and clumsy characteristics of the two sisters but also brings a sense of ridicule into the music, which is cleverly executed in the compositional work. Unfortunately I cannot go into greater depth about the music and its function with the visual counterpart, the dance. My more recent research is however devoted to comparative analysis and is perfect for the exercise of analysis of works for multimedia.

There is also a level of musical familiarity in composers' works — not actually voicing narrative, but rather imbedding a cultural rhetoric into their musical language. As Nattiez writes:

The composer is a being immersed in his or her culture. With the specific means of music and without necessarily trying to 'relate something', the composer can aim to present to us, in music, an attitude which it is then the responsibility of historical and cultural exegesis to interpret.³⁸

There is a level of cultural heritage imparted on the aesthetic of the music. If the literature of a particular culture impacts on the music, then it is also of interest to observe the extent that music is referencing or closely following the written text. I feel that the best term for the discussion of narrative in music comes from Gregory Karl, who in *Structuralism and Musical Plot* explores the term "simulation". Metaphor is implied, which is, in effect, an ascribed simulation. As Karl states:

Of course, the interaction described above is only a simulation of dramatic dialogue, and in fact there is no need to ascribe specific meanings to the voices. The function of the passage is fulfilled merely by its structural similarity to a dramatic dialogue, and it is this similarity which is exploited in accomplishing a crucial structural goal.³⁹

This may be ending this discussion on a negative point, yet it still remains worthy to note how sounds are interpreted and understood – either perceived individually or understood by a collective audience or listener – and thus represents, through music, a further development of the spoken language.

³⁸ Nattiez, "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?" 257.

³⁹ Gregory Karl, "Structuralism and Musical Plot," *Music Theory Spectrum* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 23 – 24.

Closing Thoughts

In a sense, every piece of music creates its own form out of its individual conform.⁴⁰

The significance of narrative presentation and compositional faculty is that, in a general sense, a musical work will likely be divided into a number of different movements in musical form. Sometimes the music will flow from one source into the next – referencing initial ideas – and at other times the material will be, to some extent, jarring and unnerving to the listener. As it flows from one idea to the next, an unfolding narrative will develop; one that is, in many ways, unpredictable. In poetry, folk tales and children’s tales, there are often themes of repetition, and this can be represented in musical form as a compositional restatement of motifs or reoccurring themes. In contrast, in an unfolding text such as Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, as adapted into ballet form by Prokofiev (1935), the narrative of the play is always unfolding and, in any particular act, the music is ever-changing and unpredictable to the listener. The music takes on the role of the narrator, a substitute for the written text of the play. As Ball states:

Some attempts to convey musical experience draw analogies with non-narrative *visual* art forms. Stravinsky claimed that ‘One could not better define the sensation produced by music than by saying that it is identical with that evoked by the contemplation of the interplay of architectural forms.’ ... But Debussy does not write architectural music – he paints with it, offering impressionistic sketches of flowing water, shimmering moonlight, soft rain. Even here, however, we risk trying to project music on to another form of sensory input, to imply that it wants to be visual.⁴¹

From observation, it is expected that music can, and does, take on the role of storyteller from the perspective of an audible journey. We, as listeners, freely accept this – whether we are trained or untrained listeners. As an example from personal experience, I remember presenting my first suite in concert to an audience, and after the concert I had one listener recite programmatic elements that he could “hear”, or perceive, within the music. All the time I was slightly amused as these were programmatic elements that I had not even

⁴⁰ Berry, *Form in Music*. xi. Foreword by Halsey Stevens.

⁴¹ Ball, *The Music Instinct*, 401 – 402.

considered or attempted to impart when writing the work. Yet, to this particular listener, it was apparently evident that the works referenced programmatic matters.

I believe that the most important element to consider is collaboration. The specific collaboration that I will be discussing is the collaboration between narrative text and how that text is translated into musical form. What I have aspired to do in my compositional study is to create a set of solo works for the piano that explore compositional narrative. There are four separate works in the study. The four works were written separately during the course of my studies, and each represents a development in my compositional style whilst writing specifically for the piano. The pianistic compositional project came about as an exercise to work with a particular pianist with the intention of writing a set of works that would then be recorded. As a result, I approached the Sydney Conservatorium pianist and lecturer Natalia Sheludiakova. Sheludiakova and I had a number of consultations during which we discussed aspects of the piano and composition. I found that I was most drawn to Russian influences, classical literature and concert hall music. While composing the works, the most common composers who I drew inspiration from were Alexander Scriabin, Sergei Prokofiev, Modest Mussorgsky, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Igor Stravinsky. I was attracted to different aspects of these composers' writing. For Stravinsky and Mussorgsky, I was particularly interested in their piano transcriptions, especially the *Firebird* (1910) and *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874). I was interested in how the composers re-imagined the larger orchestral works for the piano reduction. In some instances, their works attempt to capture "orchestral sounds" by using the piano to imitate other instrumental families. My interest in Rachmaninoff was also prompted by ideas of voicing, but in this case I was interested in four-hand transcriptions and piano works. Some of these pieces included the *Symphonic Dances* (1940), (for four hands) and *Suite for Piano Suite No.1, Op. 5.* (1890-1893). Scriabin and Prokofiev were also of

interest to me because of their tonal language. Whereas Scriabin's expressions employ "musical color", Prokofiev exerts a specific narrative quality within his writing.

Overall, it was very important, from my own perspective, to be able to write compositions in which the pianist has the ability to place his or her own influence and interpretation onto the work. I have always been of the opinion that once a work is composed, it is up to the musician to breathe life into the work and to make the work their own. As a result, different performers will bring something new to their interpretation of the work. I will now discuss the four works individually.

Suite No. 1

The initial work in my folio is seeking to stay independent of narrative, allowing the listener to place their own intrinsic perception on their experience of the work. As Ball says:

The information is inherent in the non-randomness of the relationships between elements. We can perceive that information, but there is no meaning in it beyond that which music itself creates. ... [I]nformation is not necessarily ‘about’ something, at least in a linguistic and semantic sense. It is a thing in itself.⁴²

The overall esthetic, or mood, of the work is defined through the many layers of ever changing and unwinding motifs. The work is divided up into three movements, consisting of cells of musical ideas. The chordal introduction presents a play between registeral depth and overlapping clusters, thereby creating audible tone “colors”. The work is divided into three small movements, each passing through four states of temperament – static, transcendent, meditative, and virtuosic. These temperaments are followed by a shift into an ambiguous world of fast gestures, juxtaposed against moments of pause. The work comprises of counterpoint, contrasting ideas, color, rhythm and temporal counterpoint, which has been noted earlier in this dissertation with reference to Eisenstein’s filmic theorisation as it relates to music.

⁴² *ibid.*, 402.

Suite for Piano
Suite No. 1

Movement One

Suite No. 1

N.K. MATIAS
Ed. Natalia Sheludiakova

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Suite No. 1. It consists of two systems of piano and grand staves. The first system covers measures 1 through 6, and the second system covers measures 7 through 11. The tempo is marked 'Andante e rubato'. The dynamics are *pp* (pianissimo) at the start, *poco cresc.* (poco crescendo) in measure 6, *mp* (mezzo-piano) at the start of measure 7, and *mf* (mezzo-forte) at the start of measure 11. The score includes various musical notations such as arpeggiated chords, triplets, and complex voicings across the piano and grand staves.

Example 1. mm. 1-11. *Suite No. 1*.

The opening articulation, shown in Example 1, is marked *Andante (Rubato)*, signifying freeness in metric flow. The opening chord is arpeggiated voicing E-flat, A-flat, C, D, A and D, voiced across the C4 and 5 ranges at a *pianissimo* dynamic. My aim is to suggest a transcendent feel. The voicing is ambiguous and thus, from the first audible entrance, sets the listener on an unpredictable journey. This sense of the intangible is also established through the pianistic phrasing, which is ever-changing. As there is no consistency in how the musical flow is developed, there are no repetitive or predictable passages. Rather, the introduction strives to captivate the listener's attention. The opening also establishes moments of tension and release. At measures 10 to 11, the dynamic has risen to a *mezzo forte* dynamic. The quality of the length in notes suggests a call within the call-and-answer phrase. The call consists of a minim, crotchet, followed by a crotchet to a minim. This is closely followed by descending crotchet chords in measures 12-13, thereby creating a musical dialectic.

Suite No. 1 © 2013 N.K. MATIAS

Example 2. mm. 21-36. *Suite No. 1.*

Tension is developed through repetition. There is a development in musical flow at mm. 22-24, with phrasing over three ascending chords and repetition of the chords with slight harmonic development – shown in Example 2. mm. 22-24, where the left-hand passes through and repeats B - C dim, creating a dialectic of dissonance and resolution, while the right-hand in the top voice states chords E-flat 5 - E-flat 5/7 - E 6/b5. The development is also heightened by the marking *Poco cresc.* This equates to a climax or release at m. 25. The dynamic at m. 25 is *fortissimo* – the loudest dynamic in the opening movement. The chords fall chromatically in *legato* fashion. By m. 27, there is a written *ritenuto* with the chords extending into minims and then dotted crotchets. This allows the descending passage to pull

back and to fade away, until m. 36 where the bass clef voices a D with *fermata* placed above the note.

Example 3. mm. 37-49. *Suite No. 1*.

Measures 37-91, as partly shown example 3, mark the invention of new material. This new section still belongs in the grouping of movement one, and acts as a variation to the opening material. The ideas developed represent small musical cells, consisting of A - G - F to D - E - F - B-flat, featured around D minor - B-flat at measures 37-39, found in Example 3, unfolding through flourishes – a balance between the left and right-hand. The difficulty is in the interplay of these different and ever-developing modules, and how the two voicings come together to make one unison sound. For example, mm. 39, 44, 46 and 48. These are all different musical cells, and the left and right-hand voicing changes and overlaps simultaneously. The contrapuntal movement has the effect of creating a delicate, fast, and beautiful musical colour with an ever-playful temperament. By mm. 50-61 there is a chordal interjection. This acts to counter the lyrical interwoven runs, to disperse the sound and to reintroduce (or familiarise) the listener with the introductory chordal passage. The chords are harmonically different and deconstructed, creating a reflective and transcendent effect. This chordal passage acts simultaneously as a lull period and also as a bridge. However, it is not a bridging passage as normally perceived. The chordal section aids to pull back the tension so

that the music can then shift into a climactic state. This is a high point of the lyrical interwoven lines. At its most prominent point at mm. 65-90, the musical sound is thickest due to the consistency of the left and the right-hands interconnecting interjections with each other. In terms of development and built-in tension, from mm. 65-90 there is a rising in step formation. For example, the A on the off beat of the quaver at m. 65, and then the rise of the downbeat B-flat semi-quaver at m. 69, indicate a development through ascending musical voicing. In an abstract sense, there is an extension of the contrapuntal chords now extended into the lyrical interwoven runs. These runs contain juxtaposing tuplets – the most prominent and repeated ones being the quintuplet semi-quavers placed over triplet crotchets.



Example 4. mm. 87-91. *Suite No. 1*.

By mm. 87-90, the lyrical interwoven cell or motif has reached its overall capacity and, as a result, must come to an end. Up until this point, the musical cells in the left and right hand acted within themselves contrapuntally. However, at this pinnacle point at m. 87 – despite the juxtaposing rhythmic qualities the demi-semi quaver duplets over the quavers – both lines are harmonically descending, and thus form a harmonic continuity in their voicings. Overall, it possesses what can be described as a musical release.

The image shows a musical score for Example 5, measures 92-98, from Suite No. 1. The score is written for piano in 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system (measures 92-94) begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 62. The music features a complex, swirling melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings including *pp*, *poco cresc.*, *mp*, and *cresc.*. The second system (measures 95-98) continues this melodic development, reaching a peak of *f* before concluding with a *pp* marking. The score is characterized by intricate voicings and a sense of continuous motion.

Example 5. mm. 92-98. *Suite No. 1.*

Variation three, Example 5 – mm. 92-98 – presents a similar theme of musical release and takes its stance following the previous ascending pattern. This variation is another climactic point within itself. Variation three represents a swirl or breath motion, suggestive of inhaling and exhaling. The voicing interchanges between the left and right-hand in descending motion – with the movement pulling in and then stepping out again within the triplet pulse. An example of this is at m. 92 in the right-hand, where the top voice sings A-flat, B-flat to B. The difficulty of this section lies in the ever-changing chords and the lack of repetition and tangible harmonic qualities. This aids the overall intangible quality of the work.

Example 6. mm. 99-120. *Suite No. 1*.

There is another chordal section at m. 99, Example 6, similar in relation to the introduction of the work and also comparable to the musical lull at mm. 50-61. This is also significant within the overall arching shape of the first movement, as this is also a meditative portion of music. This is a calm passage that is strategically placed before the climax in the first movement from mm. 121-130. Overall, within this first movement, there is complete interplay and contrast between the meditative organic state and the fast virtuosic state. It is the overall interplay of the two that is important, as these cannot exist without each other – generating a counterpoint of dynamic intercessions.

Example 7. mm. 121-122. *Suite No. 1*.

As a result at m. 121, Example 7, there is an *accelerando* in the music – the directive marking is “delicate” and “rippling”. The musical material consists of ascending arpeggios,

and these musical runs possess accents in the same musical style as the lyrical runs at mm. 71-90.

Example 8. mm. 121-133. *Suite No. 1*.

At m. 123, Example 8, the second beat of the measure is a portion of music which features descending broken chords. This is a musical release in tension, but also a virtuosic outburst. In addition to this fast movement, there is the development and addition of semiquaver steps imbedded in the musical flow layered within the triplets at mm. 126-128. This creates a rhythmic dissonance in the evolution of the movement. Measure 131 marks the abrupt ending of the octave running passage. In addition, the chord is shifted back into the higher piano register in order to create a jarring effect on the listeners' ears. At m. 134, there is an introduction of a new musical idea. Returning to the flowing and meditative state, this portion of music is fixed in the lower to mid-piano range, possessing ascending and

descending musical waves of sound. The overall arc of the music is overlapping and possesses dovetailing and interchanges between the left and right-hand. At m. 161, the music returns to a similar set of chords as originally stated at m. 131. These chords, once again, act to shift the musical colour and break the musical tension. By m. 170, the phase in the music suggests meandering and reflection. This pushes towards a conclusion of the musical idea, which occurs at mm. 196-201. This ending of the movement is transcendent and is established through repetition notes F-sharp - G-sharp - A-sharp, at mm. 193-194, repeated at mm. 195-198, voicing F-sharp - G-sharp - A-sharp and resolving to C, as shown in example 9.



Example 9. mm. 190-198. *Suite No. 1*.

Movement Two

Movement 2
Misterioso $\text{♩} = 100-120$

199

6

201

Example 10. mm. 199-202. *Suite No. 1.*

The second movement, as it can be seen in Example 10, mm. 199 onwards, is a thicker and more virtuosic passage. The second movement introduces a new micro cell consisting of ascending arpeggios voicing D minor 7th in the lower voice with F sharpened 6th interplayed in the top voice in a fast repetitive motion, creating a virtuosic passage. The only variant in its repetition over five measures is that it is positioned across different registers. The repetition of the themes and the alternating register give varying degrees of tension. One might conjure a visualisation of objects caught and manipulated by such forces as the wind, assessing new depths of the earth. Measure 207 shifts suddenly to a musical bridge. From mm. 202-211, the voices are interwoven. Despite the repetition, the speed at which the parts must be voiced presents a difficult and highly virtuosic passage.

209

7

212

Example 11. mm. 209-215. *Suite No. 1*.

By m. 211, Example 11, the musical flow feels as though it might lose control and break. In order to contain the movement and not lose consistency, I have introduced a unison passage at mm. 212-217. This passage is voiced with semiquavers, *legato* and, in an arc shape, developing arpeggios. The register of this musical cell makes the tonal colour dark and murky, and the *piano* dynamic marking makes it difficult to assess which notes are being voiced. In a manner befitting the overall drive of the work, at mm. 218-247 there is a shift in mood. This returns to a meditative state, as the virtuosic element has reached its breaking point and then juxtaposed by a moment of musical pause. In order to give the listener a sense of audible familiarity, this lull section references similar meandering lines and chords to those established in the first movement. However, this is soon concluded as the listener is thrown at m. 248 into the virtuosic bridge section (as previously stated at m. 207); followed by ascending and descending scale patterns in repetitive motion that continues until m. 279. From mm. 280-313, the tension is once again broken – shifting between elements derived and stated in the first and second movement. From mm. 305-313, the voicing is staggered and ascends upwards in a repetitive state. As a result, this suggests ideas of transcendence.

300

dim.

305

morendo

dim.

Example 12. mm. 300-310. *Suite No. 1.*

Movement Three

Movement 3
♩ = 69

311 *p* *f* *mf*

316 *p* *mf*

324 *ppp* *pp*

Example 13. mm. 311-332. *Suite No. 1*.

Movement Three is like no other in the work. It is, by far, the shortest movement and pushes away as an independent statement; a microcosm within itself. From mm. 311 onwards, there is a complete harmonic adaptation of the previous material. The previous sections stay closely within the realms of *legato* phrasing, however the third movement shifts to grace notes – changing the colouring and the overall approach and performance interaction. Thus, this section plays with audible shapes and colours as no tangible theme is readily accessible to the listeners' ear. However, suddenly out of the depths of the bass of the piano, comes a reintroduction of sustained chords – barely audible at a *pianissimo* dynamic, occurring at mm. 340-357. The work soon ends with the grace notes from mm. 358-362. This is an ambiguous ending – the grace notes or flourishes are weak by comparison to the chords and slowly die away. As an overall reflection, the work crosses the boundaries of meditative and virtuosic between Movements One and Two. Movement Three strives to be different from the first two movements, not only in duration, but also in musical content. The shaping of

Movement Three almost makes it an extended coda; however, it is an independent section within itself.

Notes from Underground

The author of these Notes, and the Notes themselves, are both, of course, imaginary. All the same, if we take into consideration the conditions that have shaped our society, people like the writer not only may, but must, exist in that society. I have tried to present to the public in a more striking form than is usual a character belonging to the very recent past, a representative figure from a generation still surviving.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky⁴³

Notes from Underground (the piano suite) is a musical adaption of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's (1864) novel of the same name. It tracks the stages of self-loathing, and captures the temperament of the unnamed protagonist. The work takes on a descriptive quality, as Brown terms, "descriptive music". The approach that I took while writing this work was not to present the whole narrative outlay of the plot from start to finish (as found within the text). Rather, I attempted to capture the different temperaments of the unnamed protagonist. The temporal shift in his nature is evocative, and it is translated in my music through a series of small movements that are tightly constructed – presented as a set of preludes that come together to form the larger work. As Brown says:

The participants require much more accurate delineation than do general scenes or moods, ... like Busoni's riddle as to how a poor but contented man is to be musically delineated. ... Thereafter the composer must depict a series of actions involving his characters and objects in their progressive relationships.⁴⁴

The problem of description – devising the narrative spur from which to reference – was, in the beginning, a difficult task. The pianistic suite does not follow chronologically, nor dramatically, the novel. Instead, the work reflects on temporal qualities found within the novel, and attempts to capture the feeling of the written text. Coker notes that:

Among the uses a composer may make of a given musical phrase he composes is to inform us about the character of the phrase itself or what it points to. He may use the musical phrase to exhibit a set of qualities. ... Inasmuch as the given phrase is used evaluatively the composer strives to entice the listener to adopt an appraisive attitude toward the phrase so as to like it and be attracted or to be repulsed by it, say.⁴⁵

⁴³ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground* (Penguin Books translated by Jessie Coulson, 1864), 1.

⁴⁴ Brown, *Music and Literature*, 257.

⁴⁵ Coker, *Music and Meaning*, 5–6.

How one presents or references mood or atmosphere within a work is a compositional challenge. Dostoyevsky's novel presents a character, the narrator or protagonist, as a completely multi-dimensional persona. The text presents an inner-conflict, and a constant dialogue that the protagonist has with himself. I have related the movements of the musical work to different moments within the novel. The musical work reflects and, in its own way, attempts to musically represent and relate to those passages of text. In order to encapsulate the mental instability of the protagonist, the material is fluctuating and does not conform to the normal musical conventions and traditions of form, rhythm or harmony. Like human thought in general, the structure is not supposed to be completely tangible or predictable. However, for the sake of performance and study, I have divided the temperaments into sections that I have loosely defined as "preludes". I have divided what was written in a stream of consciousness into small fragments. My genre uses material freely, acting as an imprint of an internal dialogue or thought process. The resulting Fantasia, or set of suites, is a multi-sectional work. There is a deliberate lack of repetition, defying traditional forms such as sonata in the literal sense. However, it is a collection of ideas interdependent of each other combined to format the whole structure of the work. The work is a sensory, aesthetic experience; a body of abstract preludes.

How, then, is literary narrative intention derived, or represented within the musical work? It is an intentional trait within my compositional style to play with juxtaposing qualities in sound. In an attempt to strive for balance, I have a tendency to incorporate into my works moments of high tension and virtuosity – to expose the opposite extremes of pause meditative and complete silence. I believe that finding this balance is important; allowing the listener to either be completely enveloped by the silence, or overwhelmed in the fast periods that attack the listener like a natural force.

Notes from Underground, the piano suite, sets out to capture a narrative based on temperaments. The human mind, thought and mood is an altering force and, as a result, the thought of structure is immeasurable and unpredictable. The nature of Dostoyevsky's protagonist reveals a twisted mind full of dark caverns of thought. There are many sides to the protagonist's temperament and moments of internal conflict. Conflict is driven by how the protagonist sees himself in the world, and how he deals with the people around him. The music is austere in nature, developed throughout the many movements of this work. In addition all are interconnected by the notion of trying to articulate through music the protagonist's temperament. In order to capture the fluctuating temperaments of the work, a great deal of continuity between the converse sections is required. As a reflection of this, one can assess the positioning of the movements – assessing the bell curve of tension and the selection of temperament as reflected and grown throughout the different movements or preludes. The most jarring and climactic point within the movements arises in the second movement entitled "Frustration". This musical outburst is encapsulated in a very fast passage spanning one single page. It is indicative of a temperamental outburst, with frustration meeting anger. Its relation in the setting of the entire work could be criticised as it appears very early on within the work, and is not set in the middle or the later part of the work (where a listener might usually expect a climax to be placed). Thus, this acts to play with the audience's perception. The narrative journey is unpredictable and, as a result, the tangible sense of being on this narrative journey is lost. The listener must sit through the unexpected. The act of placing the works in an unpredictable order enables the piece to relate to the mental fixations of the protagonist.

Discussion of Music

Notes From Underground – “A Collection of Esthetically Tied Preludes”.

The first movement of this work is entitled: 1. This is because the overall mood is indicative of narrative. The introduction establishes a musical setting, audibly constructing the ground wherein the rest of the narrative plot follows. During the course of preparing to write the work, I was greatly influenced by Scriabin – especially with compositional detailing such as musical “colouring” and structure in voicing, relative to works such as *Piano Sonata No 4*, Op. 30, (1904); *Vers La Flamme*, Op. 72 (1914); *2 Poèmes*, Op.32 (1903) and Op.71 (1914); and *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire*, Op. 60 (1911). These are all works possessing introspective reflection and show pianism in its most heightened degree of existence. To consider an extract from Dostoyevsky’s *Notes*:

I am a sick man. ... I am an angry man. I am an unattractive man. I think there is something wrong with my liver. ... I’m besides extremely superstitious, if only having such respect for medicine. (I am well educated enough not to be superstitious, but superstitious I am.) ... I can’t of course explain who my spite is directed against in this matter; I know perfectly well that I can’t ‘score off’ the doctors in any way by not consulting them; ... All the same, if I don’t have treatment, it is out of spite. Is my liver out of order? – let it get worse!⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 3.

Notes From Underground

(A Collection of Esthetically Tied Preludes)

N.K. MATIAS

Ed. Natalia Sheludjakova

1.
Andante angoscioso e rubato

mp p poco mf

7 mp mf

12 p

Example 1. mm. 1-17. *Notes from Underground*

Movement One

The first movement from mm. 1-47 is labeled *Andante angoscioso (rubato)*. There are three layers of musical colouring voiced in the opening – the middle and bottom layers consisting of chord clusters, and the top voice introducing the initial theme, as seen in Example 1. mm. 1-16. *Notes from Underground*. The introduction consists of a call and answer theme. The weight of the opening motif is placed on the downbeat. Already the lower chords have been established and set up the special “colouring” and awareness of the discontented disposition of the work. Subverting the downbeat within the top voice also shifts the listener’s attention, and establishes an almost organic process in the development of the opening of the work. Repeated notes establish an audible echo, a musical and temporal reflection, which occurs at mm. 18, 22 and in the final three bars of the movement mm. 45-47, containing grace note G-

sharp to cluster chord D, F-sharp, G. Added tension is created by repeating the material three times, with the dynamic marking *Piano morendo*.

Movement Two – “Frustration”

My head was full of fumes. Something seemed to be hovering over me, nagging at me, rousing and disturbing me. Anger and misery seethed up in me again, seeking an outlet. Suddenly, beside me, I saw two eyes, open, regarding me with curiosity and fixed attention. Their look was coldly indifferent, sullen, like something utterly alien; it irked me. A resentful feeling arose in my mind and swept through my body with something like the unpleasant sensation of going into a damp and musty cellar.⁴⁷

2. Frustration

48 ♩ - 112 m.d.

54

59

Example 2a. mm. 48 -62. Notes from *Underground*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 102.

Example 2b. mm. 63 -69. *Notes from Underground*

There is a complete change in temperament, as found in Examples 2a and 2b. The dynamic shifts to fortissimo. The tempo has also changed to $\text{♩} = 112$. The opening of this movement is C, voiced in octaves and articulated on the down beat of the bar. This is followed by grace-note arpeggiated chords, musically shifting to the top voice of two dotted sustained minims – allowing the introduction to resonate and have a profound stance. At measure 63, there is a real sense that the climax is met, with a fist clash in the second beat of the bar. The relevance of this chord is that not only is it a massive dramatic gesture, but also aids in propelling the pianist straight into the difficult descending arpeggiated run that follows in measure 64. This run builds up until it can no longer sustain itself, and the climax is reached at mm. 68-69 when the left and right-hand changes from single notes to octaves. This heightens the overall tension, and then abruptly ends on the first beat of measure 69, as found in example 3.



Example 3. mm. 68-69. *Notes from Underground*

It is fair to question why this profound and highly climactic point occurs so early on within the work, and this is simply because it breaks the conventions of where one might usually expect to encounter such a movement. As we are not strictly following the outline of the novel – but rather tracking temperament – it seemed appropriate to place “Frustration” towards the opening of the work as a way to track the overall development of the protagonist’s temperament.

Movement Three and Four

3. Subdued Resentment

70 ♩ - 112

79

87

Example 4. Movement. 3. mm. 70-93. *Notes from Underground*

4.

106 ♩ - 112

111

116

Example 5. Movement. 4. mm. 106-119. *Notes from Underground*

Movement Three – mm. 70-105 – is entitled “Subdued Resentment”, as found in Example 4. Measures 106-135 is the fourth movement, shown in Example 5. There is a shift to a *piano* dynamic, and also in the narrative drive. These two movements are more reflective. As a result, there are registral contrasts between Movement Three (which is heavily set in the lower bass) and Movement Four, which can be described as sickly and is voiced high up in the pianistic register. In Movement Three, the theme is clearly voiced in the right-hand, but in Movement Four, the musical voicing and colour is voiced amongst the two hands. As a result, this must be played with equal weight in order to pianistically reflect the full temperament of the movement. In contrast, the third movement can be described, with reference to the bass voice, as deep and lethargic. In Movement Four, the opening is rigidly voiced. However, by mm. 113-129, the voicing in both left and right-hand becomes independent of each other, and the bass voice contains a more flowing sinuous line. At measure 130, there is a complete division between the low and high registers playing block chords. All falling on the down beat, this contrasts to the previous material, and overall creates a discordant effect.

Movement Five

5. Reminiscence

The image shows a musical score for the movement '5. Reminiscence' from 'Notes from Underground'. It consists of four systems of piano music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system starts at measure 136 with a mezzo-forte (mp) dynamic. The second system starts at measure 144 with a pianissimo (pp) dynamic. The third system starts at measure 150 with a mezzo-forte (mp) dynamic. The fourth system starts at measure 157 with a piano (poco) dynamic. The score features various musical notations including slurs, ties, and triplets.

Example 6. Movement. 5. mm. 136-163. *Notes from Underground*

This movement presents a desolate passage entitled “Reminiscence”, as seen in Example 6. There is an interplay between the treble and bass line, and the voicing is echoed between the two hands. There are prominent moments where the music breaks away from the middle ground, and shifts, almost at random, into higher and lower voice ranges. This enables the sound to stick out for a brief period before folding back into the prominent middle ground texture. Moments of this passage echo other instrumental sounds (as found in measure 158), which resembles that of a trumpet or bugle call. There is repetition of this call theme and it is developed in a playful yet distorted manner, represented over again in variations which, as an echoed event, is reminiscent of itself and thus befitting of its title.

Movement Six – “Indecision”

It was a long time, however, before I consented to recognize that truth. I awoke in the morning, after some hours of leaden sleep, to an immediate realization of the whole of the previous day’s happenings, and was astounded by my *sentimentality* with Liza and all yesterday’s ‘horrors and miseries’. ... ‘And what possessed me to give her my address? What if she comes? However, let her come; perhaps it doesn’t matter ...’⁴⁸

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece titled "6. Indecision". The score is in 3/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 120. It consists of two systems of music. The first system starts at measure 189 and ends at measure 198. The second system starts at measure 198 and ends at measure 204. The music is written for piano with a treble and bass clef. The first system features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system features a more complex texture with repeated chords in the bass and a melody in the right hand. The dynamic marking is *mp* (mezzo-piano) and there is a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking in the second system.

Example 7. Movement. 6. mm. 189-204. *Notes from Underground*

As seen in Example 7, there are themes of repetition – trying to express in musical material an idea of indecision. The first three beats in the right-hand m. 189 represents the inflection of a question – voicing C, B-flat, E-flat, with the E-flat sustained. This question is then reflected and, like a call-and-answer phrase, the answer comes at measure 191-194. Starting in the bass clef and shifting the voice into the lower treble clef, this, in itself, presents ambiguous inflection, thus presenting a non-resolution that then escalates throughout the movement. As the repeated ideas grow, the material is dynamically heightened at mm. 195-206, where a point of frustration is reached. An internal and tormented dialogue of repeated quaver chords sung in a *forte* dynamic, it clashes and is audibly crude to listen to in measures 207 to 212. At mm. 213-216, we have a passage of enlightenment – another question (which resembles an imitation of the Chopin first Ballad’s opening), an homage statement. This then

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 124.

leads into an overlapping, dovetailed passage consisting of overarching shapes that are quick in development; voicing D, A, C rising, and E, D descending (at measures 217-223), where the arc shape is taken over by a repeated C. These repeat themselves by developing and ascending to higher octaves. This brings to mind the thought of transcendence and reflection through the act of repetition.

1. II.

1. II
Tempo prima

230

mp *p* *poco* *mf*

236

mp *mf*

Example 8. mm. 230-240. *Notes from Underground*

The next movement, as shown in Example 8, is unusually titled “1. II”. What this signifies is the recapitulation of the introductory theme. However, in the restatement of the motif, the ending has been altered in order to signify that this is not the ending of the work. Its function is to bring back a sense of audible familiarisation. However, I did not wish to have the work conclude on this particular thought. Given the nature of the text, there is closure in the narrative – yet not as a reader would normally perceive closure from a novel. The ending of the literary text is unresolved, and thus reintroducing the initial theme of “distraction” – alluding to fulfillment and clarity – which does not come naturally in the text and thus, is not reflected in the music. The section that is altered is measures 241 to 245, as found in Example 9, where the bass chords are now spelt differently and the top voice is centered around D. In contrast to the original statement (at the beginning, mm. 1-27), the repetitive notes ended on a B.

241

p

Example 9. mm. 241-245. *Notes from Underground*

The musical tone then shifts back into another manipulated past movement that is entitled “Resentment II”. This movement, like its precursor, possesses heavy bass textures. However, it really is a bridge driving to the final virtuosic and climactic statement from measures 280 to 282, with interplay between the left and right-hand, which is a fast and final outburst.

Movement Seven – Acceptance

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the piece "Acceptance". The first system is labeled "286 Lento" and shows the beginning of the movement with complex chordal textures in both hands. The second system starts at measure 293 and continues the dense, layered harmonic structure. The third system begins at measure 301 and concludes the movement with sustained chords and intricate interplay between the left and right hands. The notation includes various accidentals, ties, and dynamic markings, all set against a background of complex, overlapping chords.

Example 10. Movement. 7. mm. 286-309. *Notes from Underground*

Movement Seven is in fact a coda entitled “Acceptance”, shown in Example 10. It by no means reflects a victory and, as an ending, holds many unanswered and ambiguous questions reflected in the chords and their interplay. This creates a vast array of musical colour. The ending pulls back from any virtuosic elements, which I believe is fitting of the narrative text. The voicing is situated in the mid to upper-piano range, and thus enters into an otherworldly ether – a compact statement or question that exists within itself, devoid of any other external source.

The Zodiac Suites

The third solo work is *The Zodiac Suites*. The Zodiac Star Signs attribute different characteristics (or traits) assigned to the months of the calendar year. I have written a work comprising four movements. These movements are entitled Earth, Air, Water, and Fire (from the Elements). I have endeavoured to create movements that capture the temperaments of the Zodiac, as an abstract representation. Firstly, it assesses the temperaments attributed to the star signs, and then devises a musical “story” to represent their respective emotional states.

As Brown states:

Conversely, the general course of instrumental music has been from pure formal abstraction, through formal patterns designed at the same time to represent states of mind and feeling, to the illustration of objects and stories.⁴⁹

As a result, I have approached *The Zodiac Suites* as a representational work. However, is it possible to truly capture feeling in music, or is music purely subjective? Brown also writes:

An aesthetically mature listener does not simply abandon himself to a Bach fugue, or really to any music written before the nineteenth century: he listens to it attentively, and it involves his intellect at least as much as his emotions. The art of by-passing the intellect and making the appeal directly to the affective part of the listener’s mind is a recent development known, in its extreme forms, as impressionism.⁵⁰

The piece takes on an impressionistic standpoint, thereby allowing for the listener to be enveloped in the work. *The Zodiac Suites* are four miniature movements combined to make one large piece. Consistently, there is an upward trajectory ostinato, arpeggiated chord found throughout the work. This is representational of a limitless continuation. All of the movements are linked in this way, despite the varying moods and different tonal shifts throughout the work. *The Zodiac Suites* give a description of human qualities, energies and ambitions. These movements attempt to capture the zodiac aesthetic descriptions, whilst also presenting a contemplative mood expressed in *The Zodiac Suites* as a contrasting colour world. The pianist is free to interpret the work, as the tonality found within the piece is

⁴⁹ Brown, *Music and Literature*, 268.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 253.

ambiguous and full of changeable qualities. “Aries” opens with doubled chords that shift through a modulation of major and minor keys, broken up by ascending arpeggios. “Aries” is the only movement to apply direct repetition. The coda of the work acts to bring together all the musical ideas established throughout the entire work as a whole. It is not a standard recapitulation voicing the initial theme – instead, the coda brings together virtuosic elements derived throughout a number of the movements in order to build a climactic and highly invigorating ending.

Impressions of the Zodiac

How can one interpret the symbolism of the Zodiac placed within the four elements – Earth, Air, Water and Fire? If one looks into the study of the elements, they will discover that the Zodiac is closely intertwined, and that the symbolism is all interconnected.

“Fire” encompasses Aries, Leo and Sagittarius.

“Water”: Pisces, Scorpio and Cancer.

“Air”: Aquarius, Libra and Gemini.

“Earth”: Capricorn, Virgo and Taurus.

“Fire” is one of the most temperamental symbols – impulsive and mystical, it is capable of being both helpful and destructive. I have attempted to provide a contrast of aesthetic temperaments in the four movements of the work, focusing on the virtuosic but also on periods of rest and pause. This is comparable to the black-figure, Exekias amphora, which shows a moment of pause or lull period during the Trojan War where Achilles and Ajax play checkers (circa 540 BC). This staging of the players presents them in an ordinary setting. Despite the viewer knowing their mythological context, we are now given access to a perceived and private state that represents them outside of their heroic status and instead taking part in ordinary activities. “Water” presents an essence of the unknown – something

that is everywhere, yet which in itself is contradictory, appearing as the second movement in the work. “Air” is the third movement, which is mysterious and introspective. The last movement is “Earth” – a movement where recapitulating themes found throughout the work are re-imagined, encompassing all of the elements in one final climactic setting bringing the work to an end.

The Zodiac Suites

Movement One – “Fire” (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius)

Zodiac Suites

NK MATIAS
Ed. Naraia Sheludjakova

Fire (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius)
Rubato ♩ = 90

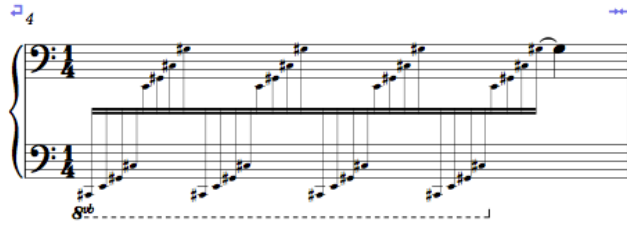
4

6

(N^o)

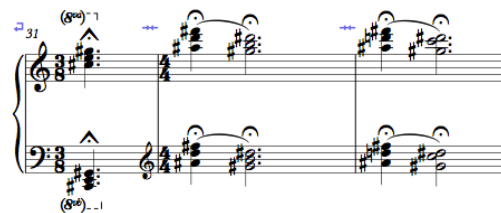
Example 1. Movement 1. mm. 1-7. *The Zodiac Suites*

The opening motif, as found in Example 1, comprises of ascending and deciding chords (cell one) alternating between the major and minor modes. This shift is primarily established in order to give a vast range of musical colour and audible contrast. The work starts low in the pianistic register, and that the left and right-hand both voice the same chords, although octaves apart, creating an effect of depth in the harmonic texture. The first three measures (1-3) articulate the main theme consisting of six minims, with one entire phrase over the six notes. Presenting *legato* and open space feel or approach to the performance of this passage, as a sound it should be majestic.



Example 2. Movement 1. m. 4. *The Zodiac Suites*

Measure four presents a disruption to this idea, as seen in Example 2. The C-sharp minor arpeggio (cell two). Cell two acts to disrupt the balance in established introductory chords. However, the material still relates to the chords in broken fashion, a further extension of the idea. Also, arpeggio runs at a repetitive and fast speed introduce and play with new audible colour, thereby establishing a wide palette of sound in the first movement. As the movement continues, the two prominent ideas – cells one and two – are developed and extended. One of the prominent tools that I use to extend the cell is through the extension of harmonic phrasing, and also through registral shift – thereby accenting the cell across different registers across the range of the keyboard. The material provided at mm. 31-32. Represents a moment of enlightenment and resolution, as seen in Example 3.



Example 3. Movement 1. mm. 31-33. *The Zodiac Suites*

By measure 40, the introductory material has reached a natural point of closure, and this makes way for new material to be developed. We are still within the first movement – “Fire” – but we are now approaching different ideas within the Zodiac, and how they incorporated, and fed into, the elements. In order to bring a new facet of the elements, or star signs, into the work, I wanted to look at cross-rhythmic elements – juxtaposing two opposing ideas one

on top of the other. From measures 43-50, the left and right-hand are rhythmically in juxtaposition of each other. In addition, both hands possess foreground material and, as a result, there must be an even distribution in the performance of this passage.

Example 4. Movement 1. mm. 45-53. *The Zodiac Suites*

From mm. 45-50, Example 4, the descending *ostinato* figure in the left hand (similar to that of the alberti bass figure), descends down a semi tone step, while the right-hand possesses descending arpeggiated runs. The descending figure is then broken, or interrupted briefly, for one measure (m. 48), where overlapping and broken chords are voiced in demi-semiquavers at fast speed; providing extra colour within the musical texture. Measures 55-83 presents more reflective material for the “Fire” movement. This section is self-contained and temperamentally darker.

Example 5. Movement 1. mm. 67-69. *The Zodiac Suites*

At m. 67, broken chords are introduced and present an adaptation of the opening material. However, these chords are broken and rhythmically dispersed, giving a spontaneous element to the music.



Example 6. Movement 1. mm. 79-89. *The Zodiac Suites*

Measures 84-92, Example 6, presents a sudden musical shift, with each half measure chromatically descending voicing F, E, D, D-flat. The cells comprise duplets followed by triplets (in the right-hand), and juxtaposed rhythmically by the left-hand, voicing semiquavers. The left-hand possesses the same harmonic language as the right-hand, creating a synchronous sound. The ambiguity of the sounds lies in the harmonic language and how it passes through different modalities.



Example 7. Movement 1. m. 84. *The Zodiac Suites*

This rhythmic pattern is then repeated until measure 92, which is juxtaposed with octaves and block chords from measure 93 – 105. At m. 106 – 107, there is a brief restatement of the descending ostinato pattern, which eventually dies away, returning to the block chords and coming to a close at m. 116 on a D-flat.

Movement 2 – “Water” (Pisces, Scorpio, Cancer)



Example 9. Movement 2. mm. 117-121. *The Zodiac Suites*

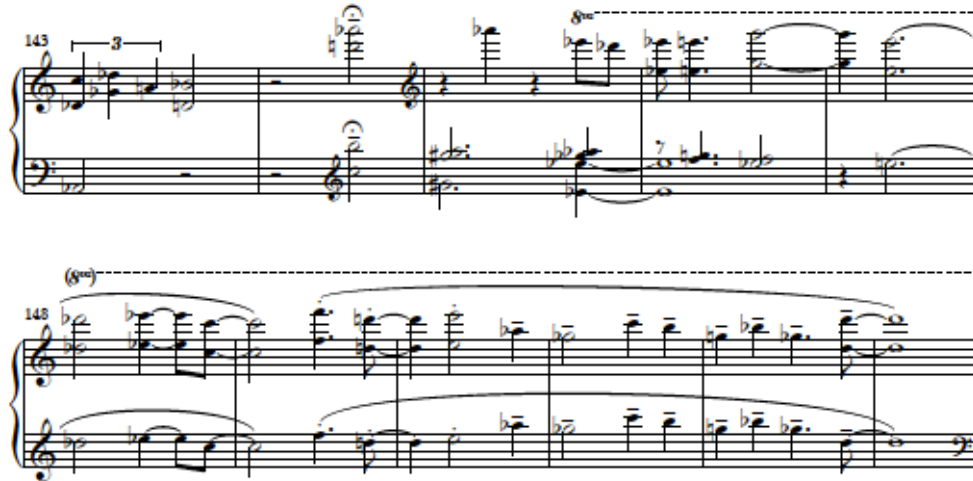
Aesthetically, I wanted to capture the depth and weight of the element – all-encompassing and not necessarily safe. The opening of the movement is in the mid register, with the left and right-hands almost overlapping, as shown in Example 9. The left-hand is also assigned to have the notes of the voiced chords linger in order to create a murky color, deliberately mimicking the ripples of waves. The key motif is in the opening three measures (117-119), voicing A-flat, E, G and A. This theme is prominent throughout the movement; the material is recycled and built upon as the tension of the movement grows.

By measures 128-130, the voicing between both hands acts to build tension. Earlier in the movement, note spacing was sporadic and laid out across the page. At m. 128, tension has grown. Both the left and right-hand possess succinct voices, with descending minor chromatic passing chords. This section voices D-flat, F minor, E minor, E-flat minor, D minor/ major 7th, E augmented, A-flat major 7th/ E-flat, F-sharp minor, A, D, E-flat minor.



Example 10. Movement 2. mm. 128-130. *The Zodiac Suites*

By measure 144, the climax has dropped away, thereby leaving a deconstructed representation of the original theme. By m. 148, the melodic theme is placed across the register with singular notes across three octaves, in order to give a hollow skeletal sound.



Example 11. Movement 2. mm. 143-153. *The Zodiac Suites*

At mm. 154-156, an ambiguous scale appears, voicing D, A, B, C, D, D-sharp, G-sharp landing on A minor, E-flat to D-flat. The ending acts as a question that is then rounded off with the return to the D-flat (similar to the ending of the first movement, “Fire”), by ending on the D-flat at m. 159.



Example 12. Movement 2. mm. 154-161. *The Zodiac Suites*

Movement 3 – “Air” (Aquarius, Libra, Gemini)



Example 13. Movement 3. mm. 162-165. *The Zodiac Suites*

“Air” is mystical. In order to represent this musically, I have chosen to create singular melodic lines that are interwoven or interplayed between the two hands in an arc shape, in order to audibly characterise wind movements, or flow. The development of this section is slow and reflective. The climax of this moment occurs at m. 189. The section is “bell” like, similar to the resonance of chimes. The sound is also indicative of the hitting of a metallic object, as the chords assigned possess a harmonic layering, which create a blurred effect establishing what sounds like a microtonal passage, somewhat like the overtones achieved when a percussive instrument is struck.



Example 14. Movement 3. mm. 189-191. *The Zodiac Suites*

By measure 192, the chords are replaced by harmonic lines that are overlapped between the hands – signifying the sound traveling and dying away. This is followed at m. 196 by a recapitulation of the “bell” sound. Once again, this is brought to an end at m. 199, which represents the dying sound, rhythmically spreading apart the notes in order to give the notion of the sound spreading and thinning away into longer held chords (as found in measures 204-210).

200

205 (rit.)

Example 15. Movement 3. mm. 200-210. *The Zodiac Suites*

Movement 4 – “Earth” (Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn)

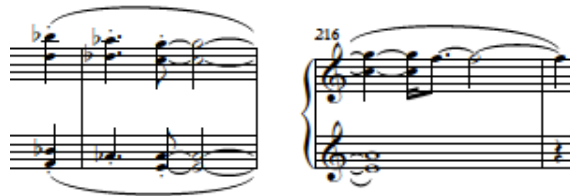
Example 16. Movement 4. mm. 211-220. *The Zodiac Suites*

I wanted to portray “Earth” as a solid movement through which all the elements could exist – the water, the air, and the fire. The ending is an eruption of all of these forces in their most dramatic sense – like the eruption of a volcano, a tsunami, or even a great wind all taking place on the earth. This is why I chose to put “Earth” as the last movement. Whilst all of the other movements portray the elements in a more tranquil light, “Earth” captures their more abrasive qualities and makes for a lively and climactic ending. In order to capture the notion of stability, the opening of the movement is slow. The initial gesture at m. 211 is irrational; a foreboding element of what is to occur in the movement. Measures 213-242 are a slower and contemplative passage built on repetition, and subtle development of the theme every time that it is repeated. This passage of music would be similar to, for example, the way that the climax is presented in Stravinsky’s “Adoration of the Earth, Dance of the Earth” from *Le Sacre Du Printemps* or *The Rite of Spring* (1913). The introductory material is soft and slow in development. Of course, Stravinsky’s extract delves less in the softer passage and breaks directly into the climax. I find that my own “Earth” movement as found in (mm. 213-214) has semblance to Stravinsky’s extract – my material voices chords B-flat 7, G-flat 9th (no 3rd, 7th), G minor 11th, leaving the phrase unresolved.



Example 17. Movement 4. mm. 213-214. *The Zodiac Suites*

It is subsequently restated with a development that then rounds off the phrase, mm. 214-216, voicing, B-flat, D-flat with no 3rd, A-flat augmented major 7th, resolving on F.



Example 18. Movement 4. mm. 214-216. *The Zodiac Suites*


The restatement of the chords is always voiced in a different way with slightly different voicing or augmentations, creating distinctive audible “colours” to a repetitive and predictable motif. The opening motif is then extended at mm. 229-242, with the arc shape in the musical material featuring prominently in the upper register of the keyboard range.



Example 19. Movement 4. mm. 241-246. *The Zodiac Suites*

At measures 243-253, there is an eruption of musical sound, thereby shifting into an aggressive and wild passage. The juxtaposition between the percussive semiquaver pulse to

the sustained quaver is then followed by a two-hand unison running passage across the keyboard. This is broken up by the jutting percussive element. However, this does not last. There is a pause from measures 254-270, based in the keyboard's lower register, allowing for a pause before the ending's eruption. At m. 271, where material from the first movement "Fire" is recycled, there is one more lull passage in order to comfort the listener from mm. 288-307 – reflecting back on the softer passages of the "Earth" movement. Once again, this is interrupted by the official coda from mm. 308-333, carrying material from both the "Earth" movement and from the "Fire" movement. The work is then ended with a fist clash as a final epic gesture.



Example 20. Movement 4. mm. 327-333. *The Zodiac Suites*

Magic Tales

The fourth and final work is entitled *Magic Tales* and is a work consisting of miniatures taken from a Russian magic tales, folk tales and fairy tales. This type of programmatic work fits within the “Narrative Music” description. As Brown writes:

Here we have all the characteristics of narrative music. The verbal program gives the main course of the action, which the music is to represent, and the music itself is divided into what may properly be called paragraphs – i.e., into sections, which are determined, not by musical considerations, but by the episodes of the plot. ... Even the subject-matter is typical. Fighting, pursuit, flight, dancing, and other actions involving definite types of physical motion have always been favorite subjects of the narrative composers simply because music can represent motions with some accuracy.⁵¹

Compositionally, I have approached this study by finding relative comparisons between works such as Modest Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874) and Prokofiev’s *Tales of an Old Grandmother* (1918). I aimed to capture the magic portrayed in Prokofiev’s works, whilst also following a narrative construct similar to Mussorgsky’s *Pictures*, where the composer’s music steps in and out of the narrative world of the paintings. Similarly to Mussorgsky – who also within *Pictures at an Exhibition* has the Baba Yaga movement, *The Little Hut On Chickens' Legs XV* – I have incorporated a number of works that reference the witch Baba Yaga, a villainous character that is often mentioned across the folk tale tradition. The seven miniatures are “The Introduction”, “Vasilisa the Fair”, “Baba Yaga”, “The Black Magician Tsar”, “The Tsar Maiden”, “The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf”, and “The Coda”. The musical work delivers the text, highlighting narrative developments within the text and unfolding the plot through a compositional musical setting. There are other external influences that bear significance and are important to mention with relation to the significance of this text. The attempt to notate these magical stories is by no means the first attempt. As a result, I will mention two previous representations of one of the

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 258.

texts delivered in different art forms that are not language-based. This can be seen in *The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf*, from Ivan Yakovlevich Bilibin's *Illustrations of the Magic Tale* (1899) and Igor Stravinsky's ballet *The Firebird* (1910). Similar adaptations of literary texts into musical scores can be seen in examples such as Rimsky Korsakov's adaptation of *Thousand and One Nights* and the mammoth orchestral work *Scheherazade* op. 35 (1888).

Another point of interest is in the study of the piano itself. The piano is an extremely versatile instrument that gives way for many types of expressive writing. The piano is the best instrument with which to represent an entire orchestra. For example, the piano reductions of Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet* (1937) – released for piano as *Romeo and Juliet: Ten Pieces for Piano* Op. 75 – Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* (1892), and *Swan Lake* (1876). As seen over and over in practice, there are written transcriptions of whole orchestral works for, often, single or double piano. As I am particularly fond of pianistic reductions of larger orchestral works, it is interesting to imagine the voicing and experiment with the orchestration from the perspective of only studying the piano reduction. When a composer – such as myself – is attempting to write a pianistic work or studying a pianistic work that not only exists in that medium, but also in a much bigger form such as the orchestra, it is important to grasp how different instrumental sonorities are imbedded into the compositional piano text. Another potential study could be to assess how piano reductions are manipulated and adapted for the larger medium – the orchestra. The study itself would be to assess patterns in the pianistic score, assessing the manipulations of the compositional language. One such experiment could be in the assessment of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874). First would be the study of the stand-alone piano work; second would be the study of Mussorgsky's orchestration, and then a third study of Maurice Ravel's orchestral

arrangement of *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1922), in order to grasp the differences in approach to the orchestration, assessing subjective preference in orchestration across the different composers' writing. However, most importantly, would be an assessment of the piano part – extracting it and assessing it as the definitive product, evaluating how the pianistic voicing is manipulated, and how it is representative of orchestral voicing. My own study is not based on assessing pianistic voicing – namely because I am not a pianist, and the application of this study can only be fully relevant and realised by those who have already or are trying to master the instrument itself. As a result, it would be a discussion of how performers reflect the musical text – bringing the musical score to life.

Discussion of Music and its adaptation of the text

1. “The Introduction.”

1. Introduction
Andante misterioso ♩ = 90

The image shows a musical score for the Introduction of Magic Tales, measures 1-12. The score is written for piano in 4/4 time, marked 'Andante misterioso' with a tempo of ♩ = 90. The key signature is ambiguous, starting with a G. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-6) features a repeated G in the right hand and left-hand chords in the left hand. The second system (measures 7-9) includes triplets in both hands. The third system (measures 10-12) continues the melodic and harmonic development. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'p' and '8va'.

Example 1. “The Introduction.” mm. 1-12. *Magic Tales*

Like the “Promenade” from Mussorgsky’s *Pictures* (1874), the “Introduction” from *Magic Tales* sets the mood for the entire work. Key themes established in the introduction appear throughout the work; unifying the work as a whole, whilst also developing the audible narrative based on recapitulating themes that will become familiar to the listener as the work progresses on its linear journey. The opening descriptive marking is *Andante misterioso*, sounding a repeated G. The initial key of the opening is ambiguous, compounded in measures 3 when the top voice is accompanied by left-hand chords shifting the key, singing G minor, A-flat major 7th, resulting on G major on the fourth beat of the bar. As this theme returns throughout the work, and is a prominent gesture, I will refer to it as Theme A.

From measures 6-8, the texture of the passage is thickened, with quaver triplets in the top voice against crotchet to quaver chords in the bass voice. The top voice in measures 7 pushes towards the octave F, reaching a climax within the material. This ultimately returns back to a G in measure 9 in order to end the introductory idea. Measure 10-12 functions as a bridge passage. In keeping with the opening material, the initial arpeggiated chords in measures 19 are set within the G minor range, shifting to D7 and F-sharp minor in m. 11 and resolving on an A in m. 12.



Example 2. “The Introduction.” mm. 13-18. *Magic Tales*

The second prominent idea to be established in the introduction can be considered as the development section. This passage ranges from mm. 13-45. There are two prominent voices – the first is the ascending arpeggio that is shared across the left and right-hands, and the top voice is held by the left hand, voicing G-flat, E-flat, D, E-flat, and so on. The climax of this material is reached at measure 28 where the bass material is substituted for block chords and the top voice is heightened by repetitive octave quavers, building a sense of intensity at this point of the music.

Note that from mm. 28-32 the lower voicing possess a progressive decline in the tension of the music, voicing F-sharp aug 7 (m. 28), F-sharp minor, G minor (m. 29), B-flat, A-flat, E-flat, D (m. 30), D-flat, C, B, B-flat (m. 31), and A (m. 32). The resolution of the climax appears at mm. 33-38. Both the left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) voice thick cluster

chords that are then followed by syncopated open notes signifying a point of resolution; juxtaposing thick audible clusters against singular and clean sounding notes. This can be found in m. 33, in the LH bass, a low octave G is sounded, resonating as the lower voice is followed by the mid to lower voice singing chords B, A, A-flat 5, while the upper middle RH voice sings, B-flat 5, F-sharp 5 and B. This sequence of chords is then followed by the point of resolution where the RH top voice sings an E-flat. This acts as a moment of transcendence, as the singular note audibly pushes away from the mid voice cluster chords that are featured within the mid to lower mid pianistic register. At measure 46, there is a recapitulation of Theme A, contributing to the idea of a miniature coda for this particular movement, sounding on the G ending at m. 55, the broken chords across the LH and RH voice chords G minor with resolution to F-sharp.

Example 3. "The Introduction." mm. 44-55. *Magic Tales*

2. “Vasilisa the Fair”

Vasilisa had walked all through the night, and now she walked all through the day. Late in the evening she came to the baba yaga’s hut. Round the hut was a fence made of bones. Skulls with empty eyeholes looked down from the stakes. The gate was made from the bones of people’s legs, the bolts were thumbs and fingers, and the lock was a mouth with sharp teeth.⁵²

Example 4. “Vasilisa the Fair.” mm. 56-71. *Magic Tales*

This work shifts into a more beautiful and meandering narrative that is more in tune with conveying the virtues of “Vasilisa the Fair”. As shown in Example 4, the melodic material is divided amongst the top voice, playing chords against the bottom voice that possesses a meandering melodic line. As seen in the introduction of this particular passage, the voicing is primarily in the mid C4 register, which consists of block chords that are over-layered with a meandering passing tone line. The material is highly melodic however; the theme is not easy to grasp when listening to this particular movement, with the opening four chords at mm. 56-57 in the RH voice, D minor, B minor, A-flat 7/ sharpened 9th to D-flat major 7th. From measures 62-70, I have tried to capture the idea of the journey that Vasilisa must take

⁵² Robert Chandler et la., trans., *Russian Magic Tales: From Pushkin to Platonov* (Penguin Classics, 2012), 40.

through the woods in order to reach the Baba Yaga’s house. This passage consists of chromatic voicing within the left and right-hand, individually possessing its own dissonant chromatic line. At measure 67, there is a deconstruction of the musical idea. This is derived through rhythmic juxtaposition, placing triplets, in the RH, against descending quavers, in the LH, with an overall downwards trajectory in the melodic material.

41

Example 5. “Vasilisa the Fair.” mm. 68-86. *Magic Tales*

As found in Example 5, mm. 71-75 presents a recapitulation in melodic material, reintroducing the key theme, Theme A, from the “Introduction”. The setting of the material is now in E major, passing through E minor, again providing audible dissonance. The re-entry of the theme is recognisable. The differences appear in the offsetting of material,

placing some of the phrase across different registers while the key change is also a prominent difference in this restatement.

From measures 76-101, we enter into what would be described as the development section within the movement, and featuring new material specifically developed for this movement alone. This section resonates with the trial that Vasilisa must go through when encountering the Baba Yaga, who makes her pass through a number of tasks in order to keep her life. The melodic line of this passage is hidden within a structure of developing chords. The top voice is the most prominent, however, there are many inversions of the same chordal material and the entire musical colour comes from the voicing of the chords. The initial melody starts on A melodic minor (m. 76), reaching its climax at m. 80 with the repetition of the C octave in the RH. From mm. 76-88, there is a recognised arc in the material ascending until the top voiced notes at m. 80, with a definite downwards movement from mm. 82-88 ending on B in the bass. There is then a condensed repetition of theme B, with a much thinner layering of chordal material starting on the raised 7th belonging to the G-sharp minor. Not only is the key change recognizable, but also there is a drop in dynamics. From measures 100, there is a recapitulation of the development material found in the “Introduction”. This material clearly references m. 10, that follows into m. 102, possessing a clear restatement of Theme A from the “Introduction” – the only difference being in the change of the key signature, now sitting between E major/minor. By measure 109, there is a recapitulation of the opening theme from this movement, the Vasilisa Theme. The idea is extended with thicker harmonic layering. With the addition of a new top voice, the material remains in its original key, with extended coda from mm. 115-117. The resolution of harmonic material within this movement is never reaffirming. Despite Vasilisa’s victory over her stepmother and the Baba Yaga, the female

protagonist has still suffered from her experience and, as a result, the ending is uncertain in temperament.

3. “Baba Yaga”

Yaga crawled down into the storeroom. She got out her copper mortar and rolled it along the ground. She found her pestle and her broom. She got into the mortar – and off she went, crashing and rumbling. Yaga hurtled on in her mortar, spurring it on with her pestle, sweeping up her tracks with her broom. The little girl felt the earth start to shake. She put her ear to the ground and listened: Yaga was catching up with her. She was very close indeed.⁵³

3. Baba Yaga
staccato

118

122

126 legato

Example 6. “Baba Yaga.” mm. 118-130. *Magic Tales*

The “Baba Yaga” movement, as shown in Example 6, is a lively, personifying the Baba Yaga – particularly when she is in pursuit of victims. The work is featured around D minor and plays with a core repetitive theme, voiced in unison. At m. 122, the material is extended, incorporating block chords that descend chromatically. These chords fall on the downbeat, which is audibly off-putting to the listener. At m. 126 – where there is a shift in material and temperament – marked with a *legato* voiced in D minor, this then lands on a semibreve F minor 6 and D minor 7th at m. 127, thereby giving the material continuity. As the semibreve in the left-hand is sustained across mm. 128-129, the right-hand reintroduces the A-D-A theme as a form of reference of echo. At measures 137-138, we have a moment of transcendence, with the top voice repeating A, in exact repetition as found in the opening of the work in m. 12 (a musical cell that is found through out the work).

⁵³ *ibid.*, 184 — 185.

Example 7. “Baba Yaga.” mm. 139-147. *Magic Tales*

Leading on to the development of the movement, there is a sudden shift returning in to D minor. The top voice contains the A-D-A theme while the left-hand voices a running bass across the A-D-A in semiquavers (from mm. 139-150), as found in Example 7. This running passage begins to reach its closure at m. 144, when minims are introduced. The left-hand still possesses the D minor tonic running bass, while the top voice (or right-hand) voices B diminished minor, (B minor 6, returning to B diminished minor and settling on G-flat (mm. 144-145). The juxtaposing keys aid in creating dissonance, the core bass (left-hand movement) is repetitive and is familiar to the listener. As a result, the dissonance of the chords interjects new audible “colours” into this particular movement, bringing the notion of the witch’s chase to an end.

Example 8. “Baba Yaga.” mm. 152-168. *Magic Tales*

There is a sudden shift in material at measures 151. The musical “colour” is in technical contrast as the LH is voiced with semiquavers, placed against the RH (voicing sustained semibreves). The chords within this segment voice C aug 9/ B-flat (m. 151), B-flat (m. 152), B-flat (m. 153), D major (m. 154) C minor (m. 155), to D and ending at m. 157 on D minor 6th, which is voiced as a broken chord. New material can be found from mm. 158-177 identifying the Yaga’s treatment of her victims (who she uses as slaves). The passage is slow, comprised of minims slowly developing, there is use of repetition and the crotchets in the lower bass register are offset. As the texture begins to thicken, ornamentation is also added into the layering of the section as found in mm. 165-167 – playing with a range of colours across the breadth of the keyboards registers. Tension is then released at mm. 178-179, as the RH material is then shifted from chords into semiquaver singular notes that eventually lead into a recapitulation of the “Vasilisa” theme (which is voiced in B-flat minor). The significance of the “Vasilisa” theme is to find a theme that symbolises the heroines that cross the path of the Yaga, and how their virtuous personas aid them in ultimately escaping the witch. The ending of the movement comes from mm. 190-206. Firstly, there is a statement of fifths voicing C and G followed by call and answer, dotted crotchet chords singing, D, B-flat minor/A-flat, resolution to B minor/ F-sharp, answered by

singular semiquavers singing repetitive F-sharp to D, which is an inverted and extended reference to the Baba Yaga theme itself, as found in the opening of the movement – for example, m. 118. At measures 194-196, the call and answer theme is extended to chords, F-sharp, D minor to B-flat, resolving to A-sharp followed by F. The last call and answer theme appears from mm. 197-199, voicing E7, F minor 6, and E, and answered by semiquavers B to E. As the material declines and slows down through the expansion of the chords, the chords are now extended into dotted minims from mm. 200-206. These chords voice D minor, E, C minor/B-flat, E-flat/G, B-flat aug, with the last two mentioned chords being repeated in measures 205 and 206. The chords are full of musical “colour” and provide an ambiguity to the ending of this movement.

Example 9. “Baba Yaga.” mm. 186-206. *Magic Tales*

4. “The Black Magician Tsar”

Once there was a tsar, a tsar who always did as he pleased ... He had a wife and a daughter and many servants, and he was a black magician. One day he had a feast prepared for all his people ... When everyone was present and the feast had begun, the tsar said, ‘Whoever can hide from my sight, to him I will give the hand of my daughter. I will give him half my tsardom, and after my death he shall sit on my throne.’ The guests fell silent; they were all rather scared. But after a while, some daring young fellow said, ‘Tsar master of us all, I can hide from your Highness.’ ‘Very well, young man, you go away and hide. Tomorrow I’ll look for you. And if I find you, it’s off with your head.’⁵⁴

4. The Black Magician Tsar
♩ = 116

207

210

Example 10. “The Black Magician Tsar.” mm. 207-212. *Magic Tales*

I wanted to create an energetic opening for this particular movement that would capture the listeners’ attention. It is a much darker passage. I believed that the contrapuntal chromatic beginning would present a powerful opening statement, appearing from mm. 207-219, Example 10.

219

223

Example 11. “The Black Magician Tsar.” mm. 219-226. *Magic Tales*

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 134.

From measures 220-237, Example 11, there is a thicker and lush theme that is derived from overlapping cluster chords; creating what can be described as a “wash of sound”. This is the material that I have used in order to capture both the Tsar and magic. At m. 220, the material consists of the LH voicing a broken G chord, which is overlapped by the RH voicing an F-sharp chord. The theme that is present in the top voice (as found from measure 222 onwards) is complicated by the fact that it is voiced and integrated within the same register of the lower bass voice. The theme through repetition and expansion is developed, and suddenly ended, at mm. 236-238 with the voicing of G to G minor. The top voice is overlapped and set amongst the ascending G major line in the bass voice, creating an almost contrapuntal movement – the RH’s direction aims downwards, as the LH’s direction moves upwards. This is then followed by the recapitulation of the introductory material from Theme A, now having shifted into the A-sharp, as well as also featuring chords B-flat, B major 7th, F, B-flat minor. Theme A is then repeated in a kind of bridge passage, having shifted key into G-sharp at m. 247, which serves to connect the previous passage to the new material in m. 255.



Example 12. “The Black Magician Tsar.” PP 255-259. *Magic Tales*

This new section begins in the LH voicing broken chords, F-sharp minor, C-sharp, F-sharp minor to D-flat aug 7th, recapturing the idea of the meandering melodic line. The material reaches a passage of unison at m. 260, and the intensity of the material is heightened – the voicing has not only developed across a number of registers, but has now shifted from quavers into semiquavers, all pushing into a downwards trajectory. This can be described as a unison call, slightly hysterical in characteristic, and very chromatic. From mm. 264-268, the RH possesses a broken ascending and descending chordal line, while the LH derives

tension through syncopated chords that fall both on the down beats and off beats of the bar to create rhythmic dissonance. This also gives the musical illusion of the music intensifying in speed, reaching its complete climax (or release of tension) at mm. 269-271; with a unison D-sharp diminished semiquaver musical decline in both hands, voiced with octaves. This is closely followed by a recapitulation of Theme A in measures 272 voiced in F-sharp. The affect of this material from the “Introduction” being recycled in this section acts as a complete drop in sound, as the preceding material begins to feel as though it is losing control. The only way to stop this section is to completely change the material to something that the listener is familiar with, and also drop the intensity of the movement.

Example 13. “The Black Magician Tsar.” mm. 278-286. *Magic Tales*

The most interesting material of this movement, in my own opinion, appears from m. 280 onwards (see Example 13). This material consists of ascending and descending arpeggiated chords, derived of repeated chords spread across the register of the keyboard. Thus creating a unique musical colour, and for myself, personifies the notion of magic as a musical metaphor – as noted in measure 281, when the ascending chords voice C minor, D-flat sus 4, C minor, D-flat sus four, C minor etc. This is then followed in m. 282 with descending chords voicing B minor, E aug, B minor to E aug, etc. In m. 284, note the demi-semiquaver repetition of the

A. This reminds the listener of the material found within the introduction of the work; signifying the ideals of transcendence, and alluding to how each protagonist must go throughout their journey and transcend as a person in order to survive. The ending of this movement comes at mm. 303-327, once again possessing an ambiguous quality consisting of block chords bringing the movement to an end.

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of five systems of staves. The first system (mm. 301-304) features a complex texture with a long melodic line in the right hand and a more active bass line. The second system (mm. 305-308) shows a shift in texture with block chords in the right hand and a steady bass line. The third system (mm. 309-314) contains a dense, intricate passage with rapid sixteenth-note runs in both hands. The fourth system (mm. 315-320) is characterized by a series of block chords in the right hand over a simple bass line. The fifth system (mm. 321-327) concludes with a final series of block chords in the right hand and a simple bass line.

Example 14. “The Black Magician Tsar.” mm. 301-327. *Magic Tales*

5. “The Tsar Maiden”

He wanted to look at the Tsar Maiden. He wanted to see how she slept at noon – Marya the Fair, Marya of the Long Tress of Hair. ... She was beautiful beyond all measure. ... The young man’s ardent heart caught fire.⁵⁵

5. The Tsar Maiden
328 *Largo di molto* $\text{♩} = 50$

331

334

Example 15. “The Tsar Maiden.” mm. 328-335. *Magic Tales*

“The Tsar Maiden” opens with the expressive marking *Largo di molto*. The melodic line is dispersed amongst the left-hand and right-hand’s voicing. The right-hand, in this case, is the mid voice, possessing repeated C to D semiquavers, which is adapted through to different notes as the material is developed. The left-hand possesses the harmonic changes, bringing different colours to the movement. The left-hand also possesses elements of the top voice, as it jumps from the lower chords to then voice the highest notes in the movement (above the right-hand) as found in measures 328-333. Measure 334 onwards plays with descending running arpeggios. In m. 334, the demi-semiquavers voice D major, F-sharp minor, G aug major 7th to B minor. This material is then followed by a passage of resolution in m. 335, voicing chords B-flat, C-sharp minor, to F-sharp, D minor in m. 337, and followed by the higher resolution of A in m. 339. From measures 334 onwards, the descending running arpeggios become a prominent feature of the movement; passing through a number of

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 102.

different melodic clusters that create a wide variety of musical colours. These are all soft in tonal nature, ending the work from mm. 352-358. The ending of this particular movement is once again delayed and the repeated D in the right hand suggests that the key is featured around D minor in the middle voice, while the left hand, possessing offset notes, interplays between the top and bottom voices.

The musical score consists of three systems of piano music. The first system, starting at measure 349, features a right hand with a complex, fast-moving melodic line and a left hand with a simple accompaniment. The second system, starting at measure 353, shows the right hand continuing its melodic line and the left hand with a more active accompaniment. The third system, starting at measure 355, shows the right hand with a more melodic line and the left hand with a simple accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

Example 16. "The Tsar Maiden." mm. 349-358. *Magic Tales*

6. “The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf”

In the small hours something glimmered in the distance. A light was flying through the air, straight towards him. The whole garden grew bright as day. It was the Firebird. She perched on the tree and began to peck at the golden apples. Ivan Tsarevich crept along the ground, leapt into the air and grabbed her by the tail. But, no matter how hard he gripped, it was not enough. The Firebird pulled and pulled – and away she flew, leaving one tail feather behind in his hand.⁵⁶

“The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf” follows the story of Ivan Tsarevich – the youngest of three Princes. His father, the Tsar, is distressed due to the theft of apples from his favorite golden tree. Ivan discovers that the thief is a firebird. In his quest to retrieve the firebird for his father, Ivan meets a magical gray wolf and, together, the two are sent on many journeys and quests to not only retrieve the firebird, but also a fair maiden (Yelena the Beautiful) and a magical horse. Ivan is sent on a massive quest (and is even decapitated by his two older brothers), but is magically brought back by the gray wolf. Once Ivan is brought back to life, he goes to his father who banishes his older brothers, proclaims Ivan as his successor and marries Yelena the Beautiful.⁵⁷

6. The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf

$\text{♩} = 112$

359

363

Example 17. “The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf.” mm. 359-365.
Magic Tales

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 121.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 120–130.

Referencing material from the fourth work (“The Black Magic Tsar”), “The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich” begins with dissonant low chords sounding E-flat and A-flat, followed with descending arpeggiated chords, repeated across the register of the keyboard range (see Example 17). The segment opens with chords shifting from B minor to E augmented minor at m. 361, carrying this idea through until m. 374.

Example 18. “The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf.” mm. 374-379.
Magic Tales

Measure 374 is comprised of a singular melodic theme that is divided between the LH and the RH, which causes tension as it passes in and out of different key signatures and registers. There is also a lot of repetition within this passage, beginning in G minor and ending on G in m. 398.

Example 19. “The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf.” mm. 397-399.
Magic Tales

Measure 397, Example 19, represents the furthest development of Theme A from the “Introduction” of the *Magic Tales* work. Opening on G, the speed is elevated by the use of semiquavers. The biggest difference, of this work, can be found in the inclusion of ascending arpeggios in measures 399, 405, 408-410 (all resolving to G major), whilst in-between the LH and RH shift the static repetitive semiquaver pulse by chromatically shifting the notes; creating dissonance whilst the G major arpeggios create resolution. This passage of resolve concludes at mm. 412-448, where a new turbulent passage is introduced; shifting to G minor and staying relatively within key, playing with variations of the material prominently within the LH. This chromatic passage is thick, once again playing with ascending and descending chordal arpeggios. The RH holds the top voice, which is also thick in texture as the melodic line is voiced within thick chords.

Example 20. “The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf.” mm. 412-419.
Magic Tales

On ending the turbulent passage, the material from m. 395 is reintroduced from mm. 449-461; now opening and resolving on B. Like its previous restatement, this passage once again possesses dissonant moments that are resolved through the use of the ascending arpeggiated line; providing a sense of a victorious and harmonious resolution to this specific piece.

7. “Coda”

The image shows three staves of musical notation for the '7. Coda' section, measures 462, 463, and 464. Each staff consists of a treble clef and a bass clef. The music is written in a 12/8 time signature. The right hand (RH) plays a series of ascending chords, while the left hand (LH) plays a series of descending chords. The chords in the RH are: C-sharp minor (m. 462), G-sharp minor (m. 463), D-flat 7 (m. 464), and G minor (m. 465). The chords in the LH are: E minor (m. 462), F augmented minor (m. 463), C to D-flat 7 (m. 464), and E augmented minor (m. 465). The notation includes a 'Coda' symbol at the end of the section.

Example 21. “Coda.” mm. 462-464. *Magic Tales*

The “Coda” is the shortest segment within the entire work. It acts to not only conclude the work, but to also give a sense of audibly personifying magic within the work. This is achieved through the ascending chordal arpeggios as originally found in the 4th movement of “The Black Magician Tsar”. Recycling the ascending arpeggios acts as the “sound of magic”. In m. 462, the arpeggios shift between C-sharp to E minor. Measure 463 voices G-sharp minor to F augmented minor. Measure 464 voices D-flat 7 to G aug, then C to D-flat 7, ending on m. 465 with G minor and E augmented minor. The material then shifts into sustained minim chords in the RH top voice, singing A-flat augmented minor to C-sharp minor resolution (m. 466) and the A-flat no 3 6/flattened 5 to A-flat no 3 5/6. There is then a shift in material from mm. 468-472. I have written a “trill-like” demi-semiquaver in the right-hand, while the bass under the trill voices chords provide different harmonic colours within this portion of the musical text. As found in m. 468 while the RH is static, the tonal colours in the LH change from A minor to F major 7 and so on. The LH also plays with chromatic chords in a decline. In m. 470, the RH shifts to G-sharp to A, whilst the LH also changes both rhythmic and harmonic tension. This is followed by m. 471 and 472, where the

RH is more developed in passing note movement while the LH, in chords, chromatically passes down the scale. I have chosen to also pay homage to Ravel's *Gaspard de Nuit* (1908). This reference features at measure 427 very briefly, voicing B-flat to A augmented major 7th. I believed that this was a suitable addition, as its reference is not subtle to anyone who is familiar with the work, and it presents a clear visualisation – giving the “Coda” a positive and reaffirming perspective. From mm. 473-477, arpeggiated chords are aligned to once more reference the ambiguous qualities of the magic folk tales, aligning dissonant, yet melodious chords; voicing B aug (left-hand) against A-flat (right-hand) in m. 473. Then, in m. 474, the LH shifts to G-sharp minor 7 and C-sharp major in the RH, shifting in m. 475 to E minor, then at m. 476 to an open G in the RH, m. 477 LH G major and RH G-sharp diminished. The work at m. 478 ends on a repetitive B, voicing a moment of transcendence and resolution, as shown in Example 22.

Example 22. “Coda.” mm. 471-478. *Magic Tales*

Conclusion

The work from this folio has set out to approach and apply narrative from an abstract and new perspective, whilst also continuing on from previous epistemological values of programmatic writing, collaboration, narratology and morphology. The first of the works, *Suite No. 1*, is an absolute work allowing myself, as the composer, the absolute freedom when it came to approaching the written work. This gave me the freedom to explore my own compositional voice, to establish tools of writing and a starting point from which to grow. The second work, *Notes From Underground*, took its inspiration from the novel (albeit in an abstract sense). The approach was a conceptual one, as I decided to write a work that tracked the protagonist's temperament. This was the point where I reflected on the creative process and the act of collaboration, and decided that the best approach for my writing was to incorporate the literature that I was reading at the time. *The Zodiac Suites* also focused on a temperamental quality, and the works aimed to give narrative representation of the Star Signs. The fourth (and final work) *Magic Tales*, a Narrative Suite, attempts to follow and represent the plot of a fairy tale literary source. I feel that I have created a varied and tempestuous set of solo works, with my overall approach ranging from one extreme of absolute writing to fully programmatic musical texts.

I found the approaches of understanding the influence of narrative construct (or narratology) interesting, especially when considering the ways in which such texts have been abstracted. The act of breaking down and assessing, analysis or decomposition (which is a passive action as opposed to the active creativity of the work) means that one can assess the syntax or grammar of not only musical language but language, across boundless mediums. The discovery is not unique, but it is logical, and in the analysis of any medium the assessor will

discover “rules” in grammar that are present across the written media (the phenomenology of the written text).

I can only provide a basic description of my own music, and how it functions to facilitate and present the literary narrative. However, the interpretation of the music from a listener’s perspective is subjective, and it is also up to the performer to interpret the work. From personal experience – having had the first work performed three times by different performers – each musician will approach the work differently and impart their own interpretation, or musicality, onto the work. The work is not static; it is a linear product existing in a particular moment. No performance from the same person will be exact (likewise in the act of listening), which is, in essence, the advantage of live performance and interpretation. One can only hope that the musician performing the works is also concerned with narrative, in order to present an emotive connection that they wish to communicate to the listener, and to take the listener on a “journey”. This paper has set out to highlight some of the influences and reasonings behind the compositions that I have written, whilst also conducting further research into narratology, audience perception, and how this knowledge may be applied to gain a specific audience response. I aimed to devise works that allowed for performer interaction and interpretation – the importance being that any performer will bring their own individual aesthetic into the work, as well as bringing a new interpretation to the pieces each time they are performed.

Bibliography

Ball, Philip. *The Music Instinct: How Music Works and Why We Can't Do without It*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Baroni, Mario. "The Concept of Musical Grammar," *Music Analysis* 2, no. 2 (1983): 175-208.

Benson, Stephen. "For Want of a Better Term? Polyphony and the Value of Music in Bakhtin and Kundera," *Narrative* 11, no. 3 (2003): 292-311.

Berry, Wallace. *Form in Music: An Examination of Traditional Techniques of Musical Form and Their Applications in Historical and Contemporary Styles*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1986.

Brown, Calvin S. *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts*. Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1948.

Bullerjahn, Claudia and Giildenring, Markus. "An Empirical Investigation of Effects of Film Music Using Qualitative Content Analysis," *Psychomusicology* 13, no. 1-2 (1994): 99-118.

Burke, Marina. "Eisenstein and the Challenge of Sound," *Kinema: A journal for film and audiovisual media* (2007).

Carter, Chandler. "The Rake's Progress and Stravinsky's Return: The Composer's Evolving Approach to Setting text," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63, no. 3 (2010): 553-640.

Coker, Wilson. *Music and Meaning: A Theoretical Introduction to Musical Aesthetics*. New York: The Free Press, 1972.

Cook, Nicholas. *Music: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Dayan, Peter. *Music Writing Literature: from Sand via Debussy to Derrida*. UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006.

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. *Notes from Underground*. Edition by Jessie Coulson. Australia: Penguin Books, 1972.

Eisenstein, Sergei, "A Dialectic Approach To Film Form," in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. Jay Leyda (London: Dobson, 1951), 45-63.

Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov, "A Statement on the Sound-Film," in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. Jay Leyda (London: Dobson, 1951), 257-260.

Foltz, Jonathan. "The Laws of Comparison: H. D. and Cinematic Formalism." *Modernism/modernity* 18, no. 1 (2011): 1-25.

Gibbons, Andrew S. et al. "Design Languages." In *Handbook for Research for Educational Communications and Technology*, edited by M. Driscoll et al, 633-645. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2008.

Gorbman, Claudia. *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Gorman, David. "Viktor Shklovsky at 115," *Minnesota Review* 70 (2008): 133-221.

- Jordan, Roland and Kafalenos, Emma. "The Double Trajectory: Ambiguity in Brahms and Henry James," *19th-Century Music* 13, no. 2 (1989): 129-44.
- Kahn, Douglas. "Eisenstein and Cartoon Sound." SoundCulture. Last modified 2004. Accessed 03/21/2014.
http://www.soundculture.org/texts/kahn_eisenstein.html/
- Karl, Gregory. "Structuralism and Musical Plot." *Music Theory Spectrum*, 19, no. 1 (1997): 13-34.
- Kepley, Vance. "Pudovkin and the Continuity Style: Problems of Space and Narration," *Discourse* 17, no. 3 (1995): 85-100.
- Lanier, Sidney. *Music and Poetry*. New York: Greenwood Press Publishers (1969).
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. "The Structural Study of Myth," *The Journal of American Folklore* 68, no. 270 (1955): 428-444.
- Matias, Natalie. "Towards an Esthetic of Visualisation: Comparing the Approaches to Writing for the Battle Scene." Paper presented at the Musical and the Moving Image conference, New York University, New York, June 2, 2014.
- McDonald, Matthew. "Silent Narration? Elements of Narrative in Ives's the Unanswered Question," *19th-Century Music* 27, no. 3 (2004): 263-286.
- McClary, Susan. "The Impromptu That Trod on a Loaf: Or How Music Tells Stories," *Narrative* 5, no. 1 (1997): 20-35.
- Micznik, Vera. "Music and Narrative Revisited: Degrees of Narrativity in Beethoven and Mahler," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 126 (2001): 193-249.
- Nattiez, Jean-Jacques. "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?" *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115, no. 2 (2009): 240-57.
- Newcomb, Anthony. "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies," *19th-Century Music* 11, no. 2 (1987): 164-174.
- Prince, Gerald. *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative*. Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1982.
- Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968.
- Pushkin, Aleksander et al. *Russian Magic Tales: From Pushkin to Platonov*. Edited by Robert Chandler. London: Penguin Classics, 2012.
- Vitouch, Oliver. "When Your Ear Sets the Stage: Musical Context Effects in Film Perception," *Psychology of Music* 29 (2001): 70-83.
- Thompson, Ewa A. et al. "Viktor Borisovich Shklovsky, or Fish Turned Ichthyologist," *Books Abroad* 47, no. 1 (1973): 79-82.
- Walsh, Richard. "The Common Basis of Narrative and Music: Somatic, Social, and Affective Foundations," *StoryWorlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* 3 (2011): 49-71.
- Zentner, Marcel. "Homer's Prophecy: An Essay on Music's Primary Emotions," *Music Analysis* 29, no. 1/3, (2010): 102-125.