Ronald Stevenson, composer-pianist: an exegetical critique from a pianistic perspective

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Ronald Stevenson,
Composer-Pianist:
An Exegetical Critique
from a Pianistic Perspective

Submitted in partial fulfilment of Doctor of Philosophy
Performing Arts (Music)
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2013
Performance Component (Mark Gasser, solo piano):
(ii) ‘Passacaglia on DSCH’ Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, 26th June, 2012
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ABSTRACT

*Ronald Stevenson, Composer-Pianist: An Exegetical Critique from a Pianistic Perspective*

This exegetical critique makes a conceptual summation of Ronald Stevenson’s life’s work for the piano and his contributions as a composer-pianist. Chapters one and two provide a profile of Stevenson as a pianist, examining the aesthetic and musical concerns that defined his long career, as well as precedents and antecedents of his pianism. Of particular interest are the ways that Stevenson coalesces aspects of the ‘grand manner’ and his obsession with a pianistic *bel canto* style. Chapter three examines Stevenson’s remarkable output in terms of piano transcriptions. His conceptualization of this as ‘capturing the essence’ of the original composer is used to mount a defense of this erstwhile unfashionable genre, examining the ways that Stevenson’s output blurs the line between transcription and composition. Chapter four offers a detailed examination of the art of pedalling in Stevenson’s own work, particularly the use of the sostenuto pedal, and the ways that he exploited more complex forms of combination pedalling in his compositions and transcriptions.

Chapter five examines the ways that Stevenson’s works abound with socio-political referencing and historical allusions, with particular attention to the *Passacaglia on DSCH*—a work that constituted such a political provocative act that it resulted in a police raid. Chapter six further interrogates aspects of the *Passacaglia*, its embodiment of the miniature and the monumental, and the ways that it personifies the culmination and summation of Stevenson as both a pianist and composer.
On Sgurr Dugh of the Two Hills
a voice came to my ear singing
Patrick Mor and his music mourning
all the children of mankind;
and an evening on the Garsven
there was another music that came,
‘Maol Donn’ and its theme of love-fullness
breaking the hearts of lovely tunes.

~ Sorley MacLean, 1939
(from From Wood to Ridge’)

Pàdraig Mór ‘s cheòl ag caoinneadh
Uile chlann a’ chinne doanna.
Agus feasgar air a’ ghàrsbheinn
Bha ceòl eile ann a thàining,
Maol donn agus ùrlar såth-ghaoil
A’ bristeadh cridhe nam fonn àlainn.

~ Somhairle MacGill-eain, 1939
(from O Choille gu Bearradh)
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Préambule

In the words of Patrick Stanford:

He [Ronald Stevenson, b. 1928] is not so much 'larger than life' as the incarnation of musical life itself. His creativity seems to know no bounds; his range of interests around and beyond music itself not only an inspiration but—as it should be—an example to all narrow minded composers and academics, though he may well be lost on many of them. His knowledge of music is encyclopaedic and he has throughout his long life—he was born in 1928—shunned celebrity and maintained a particular interest in similarly highly gifted musicians who have done likewise.  


I first became acquainted with Ronald Stevenson when I was an undergraduate piano student at the Birmingham Conservatoire in the early 1990’s. I was introduced by my piano teacher and his wife, John and Joan Humphreys. Joan was the dedicatee of Stevenson’s transcription of the ‘Adagio’ from Gustav Mahler’s (1860–1911) unfinished Tenth Symphony (1910, trans. Stevenson

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During my initial meeting with Stevenson, he kindly inscribed one of his works, ‘spelling’ out my own name by means of musical cryptography⁴ (as shown in Figure 1). I found this Schumannesque⁵ way of thinking to be fascinating. In conversation, he would leap with lightning-like infectious enthusiasm from art to poetry, composition, languages, politics—both old and new—pianism, architecture, economics, and philosophy. Ateş Orga (b. 1944) highlights that many characteristics of Stevenson’s personality seem incongruous to the modern age (see Figure 2):

Figure 2. Ronald Stevenson in the late 1950s in West Linton. Photographer Helmut Petzsch, reprinted with kind permission, The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, Exception to Copyright, Section ss 40, 103C, Research or Study.

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³ Stevenson’s transcription of the Adagio from Gustav Mahler’s (1860–1911) Tenth Symphony (1910) is dedicated to Joan Humphreys. She recounts, ‘I always loved Mahler’s music—when [Simon] Rattle (b. 1955) took over the CBSO [City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra: founded 1920] I heard even more music by him and I think my enthusiasm may have affected Ronald. He wrote these words on my copy of the transcription of the Adagio: ‘For dearest Joan, whose love of Mahler was the fons et origo of my work on this transcription. Ronald, West Linton, 27th March 2002. . . .’ ‘Here is a letter he sent a day later: ‘Dear Joan, it was a big pleasure to present to you my Mahler transcription. It is seldom that a dedication convinces that it is apposite: in this case I am sure it is. I don’t know anyone else who has taken this music so much to heart’ (Joan Humphreys, pers. comm., 26 February 2012).

⁴ Stevenson utilizes the alto clef (\(\text{\textbf{Alto clef}}\)) to substitute the ‘shape’ of the letter ‘K,’ whilst the noted ‘C♯’ could be an alternative spelling of Mark (i.e., Març).

⁵ Schumann’s Carnival Op. 9: Scènes mignonnes sur quatre notes (1834–35) is based on the musical letters that form the German pronunciation of the town ‘Asch,’ now known as Aš, situated in the Karlovy Vary Region (modern day Czech Republic). In standard German nomenclature A, S, C, H (A, E♭, C, B) are the only ‘musical’ letters in Schumann’s own name (i.e., Schumann).
From what he composes and how he plays, his manner and appearance (down to eagle pendant and quill pen), one might be forgiven for thinking of Ronald as a man born out of his time, fifty years, even a century, too late. If a handsome, clean-shaven, right-profile from 1945, dark hair swept back, has him cutting a Samuel Barber (1910–1981) pose, photographs taken by Anne Fischer in South Africa in 1963, soulfully penetrating, languid-eyed, replete with broad-brimmed hat, winged collar, pencil moustache and goatee, remind strongly of [Ignacy Jan] Paderewski (1860–1941) the young [Ferruccio] Busoni (1866–1924).  

Stevenson is both a deeply modest man and an authentic, multi-faceted artist—like Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882–1961) and Ferruccio Busoni before him—composer, writer, pianist, educator and academic. He has a natural intellectual enquiry of mind and curiosity in all matters creative. He is particularly well-informed across a multiplicity of disciplines and is one of the most erudite people I know. Harry Winstanley once humorously remarked that Stevenson ‘is as ready to quote Harpo Marx (1888–1964) as Karl [Marx] (1818–1883)’. Similarly, Chris Waldon recognizes his magnetism to creative individuals and his untiring generosity of spirit in encouraging others:

I have met few modern composers who are so adored and admired by their friends; and yet Ronald never quite seems to notice. It reminds me much of reports of Busoni, who was lionized, idolized, indeed-ized in every which way, yet—to judge by his letters—retained a certain objectivity about his own exploits, and remained genuinely, even at times intensely interested in what others were doing: slow to chide and swift to bless.

In the twentieth century, Stevenson’s piano music is unparalleled in its breadth, volume, diversity of subject matter, and artistic scope. Because the composer, the pianist, and even the very instrument itself are so uniquely intertwined, the principal purpose of this thesis is to examine his body of work for the piano from a pianistic perspective. Two substantial works have been written about Stevenson: Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography by Malcolm MacDonald (b. 1948) and Ronald Stevenson: The Man and his Music, A Symposium, edited by Stevenson scholar, Colin Scott-
Sutherland (b. 1930). Whilst there is an abundance of published reviews on Stevenson’s recordings and performances, additional academic literature on Stevenson is scant, relying primarily on these two works.

For this reason, I strongly believe that a new study of Stevenson’s works is warranted, and particularly a study of his piano works—which constitute at least forty percent of his entire output. This project has the explicit support of The Ronald Stevenson Society (founded Edinburgh, 1995), as well as the composer’s wife, Marjorie Stevenson (née Spedding, b. 1932), whom Stevenson constantly acknowledges as his ‘greatest supporter’. Married since 1952, the Stevensons have recently had the good fortune to celebrate their Diamond wedding anniversary (August 2012).

This study can neither strive to be exhaustive nor all-inclusive. Rather, it aims to provide a critical summary of his life’s body of work as a composer-pianist and his eight-decade relationship with the instrument. The thesis explores Stevenson’s core artistic ideal that humanity can tangibly be reflected in art. Ambitiously, this exegetical expedition aspires towards the noble aesthetic of Sir Richard Attenborough (b.1923), who stated, whilst making his career-defining biopic, *Gandhi* (1983), that such a significant overview of a lifetime can never be completely incontrovertible:

> No man’s life can be encompassed in one telling. There is no way to give each year its allotted weight, to include each event, each person who helped to shape a lifetime. What can be done is to be faithful in spirit to the record and to try to find one’s way to the heart of the man . . . .

This thesis is an in-depth evaluation of how Stevenson strove not simply to reflect the artistic, social, and political currents of the age, but also, paradoxically, to transcend and transform

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13 Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson (née Spedding b. 1932), *pers. comm.*, 8 January 2012.

14 The life of Mohandas Karamchand ['Mahatma'] Gandhi (1869–1948).

them. It explores the parallels between the initial act of composition (‘scription’) and its relationship to transcription, paraphrase and the ‘twilight realm’ of re-composition, and the complex connection between the miniature and the monumental, as well as Stevenson’s desire to emulate the human voice in all creative output.

The performance component of this study comprises two rare recitals of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963). The first was the New South Wales première of the work at the Jørn Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House, 20th June, 2012. The second was a week later on 26 June at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, and this performance is available online. The latter was the first Western Australian performance in three decades, with this monumental work having been heard only once before in Australia, with Stevenson himself as soloist in 1982 at the University of Western Australia. This seemed an extremely apt choice of repertoire, as understanding Stevenson’s *Magnum Opus* proved of pivotal importance throughout the fascinating journey of this exegetical investigation. This is principally because the *Passacaglia on DSCH* both contextualizes and encapsulates—more than any other singular work of Stevenson’s—his unique ‘larger-than-life’ contribution to the instrument. It cannot be underestimated that upon completion of the work and presenting it to Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975), Stevenson pronounced, ‘I have put into it everything I know about the piano’. As a result, any performance of this elemental *tour de force* defines whoever attempts to traverse its course on the concert platform, not least because of its

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16 Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), 26 June 2012. This performance is available on Youtube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jFuKZTqnjY.

17 Australian Première of *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963): Ronald Stevenson [solo piano], Octagon Theatre, University of Western Australia, 9 September 1982.

very nature—an elemental work of the most astonishing transcendental scope.

Mark Gasser, Perth, Western Australia, 21 June 2013
Chapter One: Stevenson as Composer-Performer and Historical Precedents

1.1 Composer-Performers and the Musical Establishment’s Endemic Suspicion of a Poly-Faceted Disposition

In early 2008, *Ronald Stevenson: The Man and his Music*, was released by Toccata Press, coinciding with the composer’s 80th birthday year. In a review of the symposium, Patric Standford distinguished Stevenson’s extraordinary skills as a pianist as being on par with his compositional prowess:

I cannot help describing Ronald Stevenson as a monumental musical personality…. he is without doubt among the greatest British pianists of our time . . . and, as Lord Menuhin (1916–1999) writes in his succinct foreword to this superb symposium—one of the most original minds in the world of the composition of music. 19

In conjunction with Stevenson’s commercial recordings,20 *Ronald Stevenson: The Man and his Music* is a crucial point of departure, acting as a catalyst for this exegetical investigation of Stevenson’s abilities as a pianist. Its many and various contributors persistently assert Stevenson as a complex, multifarious, poly-faceted, eclectic composer-pianist, who has been influenced by many musical and literary antecedents. These include John Ruskin (1819–1900), William Blake (1757–1827), Hugh MacDiarmid (1892–1978), and, most notably, Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924) and Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882–1961). All contributors acknowledge these influences, stating that he metamorphically ‘coalesces’ and ‘absorbs’ methodologies and techniques as both concert pianist and composer, utilizing such hybrid-terminology as *Graingeresque*, *Busonian* and even, on occasion, *Stevensonian*.21 However, there is astonishingly little research as to how he did so with tangible

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20 For details of all commercial releases by Ronald Stevenson as pianist, see: Appendix One: XII Commercial Recordings.
illustration. Stevenson’s biographer, Malcolm MacDonald (b.1948) wrote that he did not have enough specialist insight to make a thorough assessment of his pianism. He said, ‘I have had neither the space nor expert knowledge to include any thorough consideration of Stevenson as a pianist, though his performing activities are second only in importance to his composing’.22

Performing his own work and giving those whom he chooses to champion a wider public awareness, are Stevenson’s primary goals. Furthermore, beyond the discrete spheres of performing and composing, Stevenson is perceivably a true Renaissance man, being also an insightful scholarly author across many fields, an educationalist and even, on occasion, a philosopher. According to Glenn Riddle, Percy Grainger can similarly be celebrated as an analogous polymath who ‘alongside performing, conducting, and composing careers,’ like Stevenson, ‘pursued a keen interest in music education,’23 not to mention that they both were ardent ethnomusicologists and collectors of folk songs. In Grainger’s case, the multifaceted ingredients of his nature were something he discernibly relished, imaginatively giving some explanation to his ‘five selves’ in a unique publicity photograph from 1933 (Figure 3). In the same way, one has only to explore the extent of Stevenson’s own writings on music and other subjects,24 as well as his prolific correspondence, to appreciate the eclecticism of his interests, tastes and friendships. The correspondence consists of thousands of letters to many playwrights, musicians, actors, artists, political figures, as well as to religious leaders, poets, radio producers, and dancers: from individuals as diverse as Cosme McMoon (1901–1980)—the long-suffering accompanist of the infamous amateur soprano, Florence Foster Jenkins (1868–


24 See the Bibliography: Books by Ronald Stevenson and Periodicals by Ronald Stevenson.
1944)—to William Temple (1881–1944), the Archbishop of Canterbury, and even the great Finnish master, Jean Sibelius (1865–1957).\(^{25}\)

Correspondingly, Kenneth Hamilton notes that Stevenson’s predecessor, Ferruccio Busoni, also a prolific letter writer, was ‘almost as eloquent verbally as musically’.\(^{27}\) Looking towards direct opinions of Stevenson from contemporary equivalents, the reclusive English composer-pianist—of Parsee, Spanish, and Sicilian origin—Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji (1892–1988) commented on Stevenson’s writing ability, that ‘he is as intelligent and perceptive as they are made...extraordinary in a professional writer on music!’\(^{28}\) Similarly, Percy Grainger was so taken with Stevenson’s flair for the written word that he asked for their lengthy correspondence that it be sent to the Grainger

\(^{25}\) See Appendix Two: Catalogue of Complete Musicological Correspondence of Ronald Stevenson.

\(^{26}\) Reprinted with kind permission, Grainger Museum (founded 1938) University of Melbourne.


Museum in Melbourne for the permanent archive. In 1959, Grainger requested that all of Stevenson’s articles be sent to the Grainger Museum in Melbourne: ‘You are a magnificent worder—your complete articles (now or in a near future) ought to make an impressive collection’.\(^{29}\) This statement proved prophetic: the correspondence between the two men (1957–1961) was recently published by Toccata Press as *Comrades in Art: The Correspondence of Ronald Stevenson and Percy Grainger* (2011).\(^{30}\)

Stevenson, pontificating on the largely forgotten works of Maurice Emmanuel (1862–1938), whose students included two giants of the twentieth century, Henri Dutilleux (1916–2013) and Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992), notes the problems of increasing specialization: ‘Why is Emmanuel’s music almost unknown? Surely because he gained eminence as a musicologist and therefore, in this age of specialization, could not possibly be considered as a composer. Busoni’s was a similar fate: he was a great pianist, *ergo* he could not be a composer’.\(^{31}\) Stevenson, saw his *raison d’être* in writing this article as aiming to make others aware of Emmanuel’s music and, with any luck, rejuvenate performances and recordings:

> In writing this article, I have not taken down some books and music from the shelf, blown off the dust and replaced them. What I have written will serve a useful purpose if it encourages somebody to perform Emmanuel’s music. Is it too much to hope that we may translate him from Limbo?\(^{32}\)

In the same way, he sees his own wide variety of interests as being a crucial part of his individualism and sees his eclecticism as augmenting all aspects of his respective career(s).\(^{33}\)

Nonetheless, Stevenson is all too aware today’s artistic environment increasingly demands specialism, both in performance as well as in composition. The ‘musical establishment’ is not only


\(^{30}\) Teresa Balough, ed. *Introduction to Comrades in Art*.


apprehensive but ‘downright mistrustful of all rounders’. Concerning those who may perhaps criticize his own poly-faceted career(s), he tersely refers to the adage of legendary conductor Bruno Walter (1876–1962): ‘a musician who is only a musician is only half a musician’. Stevenson’s aptitude is essential to ascertain in understanding both his aesthetic stance and his complex *modus operandi*: not merely as a pianist and a composer who is part of an extensive tradition, but as a unique, multi-faceted artistic personality.

1.2 Parallels with Past Composer-Performers, the Importance of ‘Thinking like a Composer,’ and ‘Crafting an Orchestral Sonority’

Dedicating time to both performance and composition is inherently demanding—augmented especially in Stevenson’s case, as one has to consider his immense output. Nearly a quarter of a century ago, MacDonald commented that Stevenson’s *œuvre* was even then becoming unparalleled in its magnitude, surpassing the output of some of the most prolific composers of the twentieth century—many of whom had steered clear of active concert careers:

Indeed, he [Stevenson] must count by now as one of the most prolific composers of our century, rapidly approaching the unquantifiable work-totals of such comparably inventive figures as Heitor Villa-Lobos and Darius Milhaud. Neither of whom had pursued a parallel career as an instrumental virtuoso, as Stevenson had done.

Stevenson often remarked upon the phenomenon that numerous virtuoso composer compatriots of preceding generations shied away from the concert platform mid-way through their careers. This is often because, to explore new possibilities to the maximum, a composer must have a respectable working knowledge of the instrument for which he is writing. In evaluating the respective careers of

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36 See Appendix One: Catalogue of Complete Works, Transcriptions and Recordings for Piano.
Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) and Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943), Stevenson takes the argument a step further, claiming that there is a direct correlation between the relative amount of time each composer spent on the concert platform and how idiomatic their writing is:

Could it be that Brahms’ notoriously awkward piano writing might have been more grateful if he’d had to play it in public? Might he have realised that the added tension and excitement of public performance demanded some pruning of textures? Compare the piano writing of Rachmaninoff before and after he embarked on his virtuoso career (which he did late, in his forties): the earlier work is sprawling; the later, pianistically organised. Rachmaninoff himself admitted this in an interview he gave to the American music magazine *Étude* in 1923.39

Stevenson notes that both Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813–1888)—one of the most celebrated virtuosi of his age—and Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji surprisingly relinquished their concert careers prematurely: ‘Sorabji’s public performances and one single broadcast recital—now legendary—were abandoned very early. Sorabji and Alkan could boil their alchemical cauldrons of diabolical pianistic improbabilities in solitude’.40 However, unlike Sorabji—who never played in public after 1936 until his death at the age of ninety-eight (1988)—Stevenson sees performance as a critical component in the ‘hard wiring of the psyche of the composer-pianist.’41 This view is reiterated by Australian composer-pianist, Larry Sitsky (b. 1934). Sitsky believes that if a composer does not perform, it will have an inverse effect upon the spontaneity of the composition: ‘without this communion with a live audience, music-making all too easily becomes over-intellectualized, sterile and arid’.42 This standpoint seems logical, as music is not a dry cerebral exercise, but is meant to be heard: the written score is an artistic conduit: a means of expression to channel and communicate the composer-pianist’s aural intent to another.

One of the preeminent pianists of our time, Marc-André Hamelin (b.1961), who premiered Stevenson’s monumental *Festin D’ Alkan* (1988–97) at the Blackheath Concert Hall’s *Pianofest* in

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40 Ronald Stevenson, Stevenson on the Continental Traditions: Szymanowski at the Piano, 102.

41 Stevenson, pers. comm., c. 1997.

1998,\textsuperscript{43} identifies the importance of ‘thinking as a composer’ whilst performing. He steadfastly believes that all pianists should at least attempt composing, as it can only purify and facilitate a better appreciation of their art form:

I don’t understand how anybody who is onstage interpreting a piece of music can do so without having at least tried their hand at composition. To my mind, only by having tried to think as a composer can you successfully re-create the composer’s thought when studying the work. The mechanics of putting one’s abstract thought into a system of absolute proportions is actually quite scientific. For example, rhythm is all notated mathematics. One also has to be cognitive of the way each composer has used and understood the system of proportions that is musical notation. It all has to be taken into consideration.\textsuperscript{44}

In a similar fashion, Stevenson is steadfast in his belief that ‘the specialist, non-composing pianist plays with immense skill, but he plays the music ‘from the outside’.\textsuperscript{45} He highlights this phenomenon whilst appraising the substantial abilities of Danish composer-pianist Gunnar Johansen (1906–1991), who, like Sitsky, was a fellow ‘Busonian,’ academic, educationalist, and former Egon Petri (1881–1962) student: ‘Johansen plays as a composer in music other than his own. Many pianists, who do not compose, often play brilliantly though without conveying the music’s structure’.\textsuperscript{46} But precisely what is it that is so extraordinary in the creative mind of a composer-pianist? Ateş Orga once astutely wrote concerning Stevenson’s predecessors that essentially the ‘creative instinct,’ i.e., the composition, and the ‘re-creative act,’ i.e., the performance, are essentially symbiotic, and that Stevenson has used this artistic standpoint as a paradigm for his own lifelong creativity:


\textsuperscript{44} Peter Burwasser, Marc-André Hamelin: “Don’t Call Me A Virtuoso!,” Fanfare Magazine (4 March 1997), 62.


The Golden Age romantics in whom the creative instinct and re-creative act were as one—the Rachmaninoffs, Medtners and Godowskys of this world, successors to the transcendentalism of Liszt, Thalberg and Alkan—are the composer-pianists whose vision, spiritual aspiration and humanitarian, altruistic example have been his life-model.  

Stevenson discloses that hearing a performance by Mark Hambourg (1879–1960) was an epiphany in his own development as a pianist-composer, making him aware of the orchestral sonorities of which the instrument is potentially capable. This new sound-world would become a lifelong fascination. However, like the young Ferruccio Busoni hearing the ageing Franz Liszt perform, when Stevenson heard Mark Hambourg, he noted that Hambourg was well past his prime:

He was old and past it. He played fistfuls of wrong notes. But he also produced an almost orchestral sonority which I heard from no other pianist and which reminded me of descriptions of Anton Rubinstein’s playing—I mean Anton, not Artur [Rubinstein 1887–1982]. Mark was an easy target for critics. Yet Busoni declared him ‘the most naturally gifted pianist’ he had ever heard.

Stevenson’s description of summoning an ‘orchestral sonority’ bears an arresting similarity to the expressions of fellow composer-pianist, Leopold Godowsky (1870–1938). Godowsky sees this as an important key to those aspiring to perform his own work, with parallels to Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) and Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849): ‘My piano music is like an orchestra, with different independent voices played by different instruments. It requires tonal discrimination . . . many voices like Johann Sebastian Bach and . . . genuine piano quality (like Chopin). If you bear this in mind, you have the key to their interpretation’.  

Stevenson reiterates this belief, acknowledging that he has always had ‘a fascination with

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'making the piano sound as unlike a piano as possible'. As for Mark Hambourg’s ‘fistfuls of wrong notes,’ if one is to consider parallels with preceding composer-pianists, Hamilton observes that, when Irish composer Charles Stanford (1852–1924) heard a performance of Brahms’ Piano Concerto No. 2 in B♭ major Op. 83 (1878–1881)—with Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) himself as soloist—the accuracy of the playing certainly seemed to be of secondary importance:

When Charles Stanford heard Brahms smash his way through his own Second Piano Concerto, he remarked that Brahms ‘took it for granted that the public knew he had written the right notes, and did not worry himself over such little trifles as hitting the wrong ones.’ ‘The wrong notes did not really matter’, claimed Stanford, ‘they did not disturb his hearers any more than himself.’

This relates closely to an anecdote quoted by Hamilton that ‘has been passed down through pupils of Busoni pupils’. Hamilton heard the story himself from his piano teacher—none other than Ronald Stevenson: ‘Faced with grumbling from the young Egon Petri [1881–1962] about [Eugène] d’Albert’s [1864–1932] unacceptable splashiness, Busoni retorted, ‘If you put as much conviction into your right notes as d’Albert does into his wrong ones, then you’d have cause to criticize.’

Egon Petri is best remembered as one of the greatest pianists and pedagogues of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, although Petri trained in composition in his formative years—studying with Hermann Kretzschmar (1848–1924) and Felix Draeseke (1835–1913) at the Dresdner Hochschule für Musik—he by no means considered himself a composer akin to his piano teacher Ferruccio Busoni or Eugène d’Albert before him. David Murray comments upon the phenomenon

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51 Stevenson, pers. comm., West Linton, Scotland, c. 1996.
53 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 99. (Hamilton footnotes, ‘This story has been passed down by pupils of Busoni and was told to me by Ronald Stevenson’). The current author in conversation also verifies this same story with both Ken Hamilton and Ronald Stevenson, Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham, 1998, whilst performing the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963). Hamilton also dedicated his 1996 ‘Cambridge Music Handbook: ‘Lisz, Sonata in B Minor,’ ‘For my Piano Teachers Alexa Maxwell and Ronald Stevenson and in Memory of Lawrence Glover,’ The author has also heard Stevenson repeat this anecdote on many occasions, most recently in a telephone conversation 13 September 2011.
54 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 99.
that, whilst not all great pianists can compose, those who have pursued both paths have been lauded as the finest, almost without exception:

Almost every composer since Mozart has played the piano, but not many pianists can compose. From those who could, nearly all the great piano-music has come: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Schumann, Frédéric Chopin, Franz Liszt, Johannes Brahms, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Béla Bartók were all excellent pianists.\(^{56}\)

Naturally, there will always be exceptions to any rule. It may come as a surprise that Hector Berlioz (1803–1869) had no formal instruction as a pianist.\(^{57}\) Even more unusual, Joaquín Rodrigo (1901–1999), despite never having played the guitar and almost wholly devoid of sight since early childhood, somehow managed to write his hauntingly evocative Concierto de Aranjuez (1939) that is justifiably hailed as one of the crowning pinnacles of the Spanish guitar repertoire. However, it is frequently overlooked that Rodrigo was nevertheless a virtuoso pianist of an exceedingly high calibre.\(^{58}\)

Murray also surveys the understandable correlation between composer-pianists and composer-violinists, singling out Niccoli Paganini (1782–1840), Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931), Jens Hubay (1858–1937) and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, as being particularly noteworthy, ascertaining that they all had ‘a deep practical knowledge of their instrument’.\(^{59}\) Not surprisingly, Mozart is the only composer to make both the list of composer-pianists and composer-violinists. Murray also proposes that a composer-pianist ‘can try things on that non-pianist composers wouldn’t dare, nor could imagine’.\(^{60}\)


\(^{57}\) ‘He [Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)] was no virtuoso, but played guitar and flute; exceptionally for his time, he was not a pianist’. Julian Rushton, *Louis-Hector Berlioz* (Oxford Bibliographies Online) http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199757824/obo-9780199757824-0032.xml.


\(^{59}\) Graham Wade, Liner Notes, *Rodrigo*.

Stevenson describes the piano as being his ‘voice in music’. For him, the instrument is the personification of Romanticism itself: ‘The piano is the Romantic Instrument *par excellence*. It still is. Art is Romantic when it suggests a reality larger than itself. That is why the piano is the Romantic instrument: it suggests the orchestra. It is the only instrument that can’.

Stevenson’s career as a pianist is certainly not of ‘secondary importance,’ as suggested by MacDonald at the opening of this chapter. To understand him as an artist, one must ascertain and understand his pianistic motives, as well as the distinguished lineage in which he is embedded. The symbiotic facets of his artistic consciousness, as both composer and pianist, are fused on an elemental level: sharing the same creative heart. Similarly, his programming and championing of neglected repertoire (often supporting the work of fellow composer-pianists) are equally as extraordinary and warrant supplementary examination. Also merited is a direct survey of his pianism, which traces its footprints back much further than we might imagine.

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Chapter Two: A Critical Appraisal of Stevenson’s Pianism

2.1 Early Pianistic Influences from the ‘Sunset of the Great Romantic School of Pianism’. 64

Stevenson often speaks of a ‘reservoir of technique’ 65 that he has constantly drawn from throughout his long pianistic career. The reservoir grew exponentially with copious amounts of practice in his formative years:

In my youth on a free day I did as much as fourteen hours a day of piano practice. That is too much. Four daily hours are enough. But all that work stood me in good stead and has helped me to preserve my piano technique intact, even through vicissitudes of ill-health. Rather like learning to ride a bicycle: do it when young and the ability lasts a lifetime, and may be picked up even after periods of inactivity. 66

He says that he was ‘always an avid collector, compiler and inventor of piano exercises based on actual music, not abstract ‘gymnastic’ exercises such as Hanon’s’. 67 He felt that he learnt ‘virtually nothing’ 68 from his composition teacher, Richard Hall (1903–1982), who, according to MacDonald, was ‘the éminence grise for the ‘Manchester School’, with protégés such as Alexander Goehr (b. 1963), Harrison Birtwistle (b. 1934), and Peter Maxwell Davies (b. 1934), amongst his most promising students. Richard Hall was strongly influenced by the concurrence of ‘slabs of sound’ frequently compared to those used by Edgard Varèse (1883–1965), Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992), and Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971).

In Stevenson’s view, these were ‘desolate and severe’. 69 Additionally, unlike Goehr, Birtwistle, and Maxwell Davies, Stevenson was the only student who was also a performer of a high

65 Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.
67 67 From the Newsletter of the Ronald Stevenson Society, Spring 1996.
calibre and was ‘naturally attracted to composer-performers of the past’. Accordingly, Ferruccio Busoni became for him ‘in effect, a musical self-education more profound and far-reaching than any education his formal teachers could provide’. By his own admission, the most influential authority on his pianism was Busoni’s monumental *Klavierübung in Zehn Büchern* (1818–1925)—which is essentially a single volume piano and composition tutorial in ten books. Stevenson copied it out ‘meticulously by hand’. He regards Busoni’s *Klavierübung in Zehn Büchern* as the best exercises—that along with Bach’s *Inventions and Sinfonias* bwv 772–801 (c. 1723) and *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, bwv 846–893 (1722 and 1742)—helped him refine his skills and technical prowess as a composer as well as a pianist:

> The Busoni *Klavierübung* I regard as the best exercises [sic]. I wrote them out from public library copies when they were out-of-print just after World War II. I also practised the Bach Inventions and the ‘forty-eight’ in my youth (and later). At eighteen I could play the two-part Inventions and Book One of the ‘fourty-eight’ [sic.], transposing each one into all the tonalities. Can’t do it now!

Absorbing the *Inventions and Sinfonias* bwv 772–801 (c. 1723) seemed valid for the young Stevenson, as Bach had personally highlighted their intrinsic worth not simply for developing a sound keyboard foundation but also to support an interest in writing for the instrument:

> [An] honest method, by which the amateurs of the keyboard—especially, however, those desirous of learning—are shown a clear way not only (i) to learn to play cleanly in two parts, but also, after further progress, (ii) to handle three obligate parts correctly and well; and along with this not only to obtain good inventions [ideas] but to develop the same well; above all, however, to achieve a *cantabile* style in playing and at the same time acquire a strong foretaste of composition.

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75 Johann Sebastian Bach’s Preface to the first edition of the *Inventions and Sinfonias* bwv.772–801 (composed c. 1723).
In combination with the Busoni *Klavierübung* (1818–1925), this material was the ideal anvil upon which Stevenson forged his pianistic identity. The *Klavierübung* consists of a multitude of exercises showing how exhaustively to master every plausible incarnation of piano figuration. It contains études by Cramer, Liszt-Paganini, Schubert, Mendelssohn-Liszt, Auber-Liszt, Schubert-Liszt—as well as many of Busoni own transcriptions and exercises. Stevenson’s meticulous copying of all ten volumes of the *Klavierübung* may seem somewhat futile, especially by today’s standards—not least because of the gargantuan volume of material replicated—which today could be downloaded from the *Petrucci: International Music Score Library Project* (IMSLP) in a matter of seconds. Nonetheless, Stevenson sees this youthful diligence as being ‘immeasurably fruitful’ and recalls that Bach duplicated complete bodies of the works of others by hand to assimilate compositional techniques, figuration, and idiosyncratic instrumentation. Like Bach, he had done this ‘to learn his craft’. Quintessentially, Stevenson absorbed particles of pianistic and compositional dexterity in the initial copying, inevitably enhancing his prowess and understanding of the keyboard through the corporal practice of the material.

Surprisingly, Stevenson’s prime pianistic inspiration (to whom he has steadfastly remained a devotee) is neither Ferruccio Busoni nor Percy Grainger, but the Polish pianist, composer, diplomat, politician (and onetime Prime Minister of the Second Republic of Poland [January–December 1919]), Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941). Stevenson has constantly championed Paderewski’s compositions throughout his performing career, often in unmitigated isolation. He offers the same homage to the works of Busoni. This is evident in his selection by the *Société Paderewski* to perform

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76 Bach, Preface to the first edition of the *Inventions and Sinfonias*.

77 The *Klavierübung* is available freely at the ‘Petrucci: International Music Score Library Project’ (IMSLP) see Ferruccio Busoni ‘Klavierübung in Zehn Büchern’ http://imslp.org/wiki/Klavierubung_in_10_Buechern_(Busoni,_Ferruccio).

78 Stevenson also spent many hours as a student in the Henry Watson music library (founded. 1902) ‘to learn his craft’ copying out other works by Bach, Godowsky and Busoni by hand including the latter’s monumental *Piano Concerto in C major*, Op. 39, Bw. 247 (1904). (Stevenson, pers. comm., c. 1998.)
at the fortieth anniversary of the Polish master’s death at Vevey in Switzerland (1981). Stevenson has also written many articles about Paderewski, the most notable being The Paderewski Paradox for the Klavar / Société Paderewski (1992), which is regularly cited in scholarly discourse.

Stevenson studied piano at the Royal Manchester College of Music (founded 1893) with Iso Elinson (1907–1964), who, according to Sutherland, had been a student of Felix Blumenfeld (1863–1931) in Moscow, as later was Vladimir Horowitz (1903–1989) in Kiev, Stevenson claims that Paderewski had a greater influence upon him than Elinson did. In recollecting why the influence of Paderewski has been so enduring, he contends: ‘My first love in recordings of pianists was Paderewski; and I am constant to that love. The first and last tenet of pianistic faith must be belief in beautiful tone. Paderewski had that more than anybody, whatever criticisms may be leveled at him’. Currently, Paderewski is the focus of considerable criticism because his playing had, according to Hamilton, an ‘astonishing amount of arpeggiation and asynchronization’. Commenting on the asynchronization in particular—where the left and right-hand are, by design, not always played together to emulate a ‘singing tone’—Stevenson shrewdly highlights the modern misunderstanding of the practice in academia. He notes that ‘Percy Scholes (1877–1958), the compiler and first editor of the reputable Oxford Companion to Music, thought that Paderewski couldn’t hear his manual non-synchronization in old age!’

Stevenson’s use of arpeggiation and asynchronization can clearly be heard throughout much of his commercially recorded material, across all periods and styles. Significantly, whilst the extent of his use of arpeggiation and asynchronization varies throughout his recorded material, it is omnipresent in every instance of a recording of his own work (see Table 1):

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82 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 29.
Table 1. Instances of Arpeggiation and Asynchronization in the Recordings of Ronald Stevenson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Arpeggiation And Asynchronization</th>
<th>Recording</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. S. Bach (1685–1750), arr. F. Busoni (1866–1924)</td>
<td>Partita in D minor bwv 1004: Chaconne</td>
<td>considerable arpeggiation, considerable asynchronization.</td>
<td>APR5630 (76' • ADD) and Altarus AIR-CD-9043 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Bush (1900–1995)</td>
<td>'The Minstrel’s Lay' from Wat Tyler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Prélude &amp; étude en arpèges, bv. 297</td>
<td>some arpeggiation, some asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9041 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Tanzwalzer bv. 288 (1922 version)</td>
<td>some asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9041 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Zehn Variationen über I Präludium von Chopin bv. 213a</td>
<td>considerable arpeggiation, considerable asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9041 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Fantasia Contrappuntistica bv. 256b</td>
<td>some arpeggiation, some asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9044 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Fuge über das Volkslied 'O du mein lieber Augustin,' for piano, 4 hands, bv. 226 (with Joseph Banowetz)</td>
<td>some arpeggiation, some asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9044 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Improvisation, Chorale 'Wie wohl ist mir, o Freund der Seele,' bwv 517</td>
<td>A small amount of arpeggiation, some asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9044 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)</td>
<td>Nocturne in C minor Op. 48, No. 1 Love Walked In</td>
<td>some arpeggiation, some asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9043 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Gershwin (1898–1937) / arr. Grainger</td>
<td>Love Walked In</td>
<td>some arpeggiation, some asynchronization.</td>
<td>APR5630 (76' • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Label</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christoph von Gluck (1714–1787) / Charles–Valentin Alkan (1813–1888)</td>
<td>The man I love</td>
<td>considerable arpeggiation, considerable asynchronization.</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gavotte d’Orphee</td>
<td>some arpeggiation, some asynchronization.</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882–1961)</td>
<td>Rosenkavalier-Ramble</td>
<td>considerable arpeggiation, considerable asynchronization.</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scotch Strathspey and Reel, arr. Stevenson, Hill Song No. 1</td>
<td>considerable arpeggiation, &amp; asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9040 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fantasy in F Minor for a Mechanical Organ KV 608 with Joseph Banowetz (piano)</td>
<td>‘Du bist die Ruh’ D. 776 Some asynchronization.</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fantasiettina sul nome illustre dell’egregio poeta Christopher</td>
<td>considerable arpeggiation and asynchronization</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9043 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Stevenson (b. 1928)</td>
<td>Passacaglia on DSCH</td>
<td>considerable arpeggiation, considerable asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9091(2) APR 5650 (75’ • ADD: recorded 1974 South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Grimes Fantasy</td>
<td>considerable arpeggiation, considerable asynchronization.</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD) and Altarus AIR-CD-9042 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recitative and Air on DSCH</td>
<td>considerable arpeggiation, considerable asynchronization.</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9091 (2 • DDD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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84 1. ‘Willie’s gane to Melville Castle’ 2. ‘Weaving song’ 3. ‘Skye Soat Song’ 4. ‘This is no my plaid’ 5. ‘Turn ye to me’ 6. ‘Drowned Fair Mary’ 7. ‘Lizzie Lindsay’ 8. ‘The women are a’ gane’ 9. ‘My faithful fond one’ 10. ‘Bonnie George’ Campbell’ 11. ‘O’er the moor’ 12. ‘Gin i were where Gowrie’
Stevenson’s views align with those of Sigismond Thalberg (1812–1871) regarding arpeggiation and asynchronization. Thalberg discusses the associated problems at length in the preface to his L’Art du Chant appliqué au Piano, Op. 70 (1853–64). Thalberg’s significant Op. 70 is a relatively forgotten volume of twenty-two études, which envelops the art of bel canto pianism. Thalberg sees the practice of asynchronization as a serious art in itself that must never become too explicit, nor exaggerated in execution. He cautions against it, as it can all too easily descend into distastefulness:

Avoid absolutely that ridiculous and tasteless manner, playing the melody notes at an exaggeratedly long interval after those of the accompaniment, and thus from the beginning to the end of the piece giving the impression of a continuous syncopation. With a melody that moves along in slow tempo and in notes of a longer duration, it is certainly of good effect, particularly at the beginning of each bar or at the beginning of each section of the melody, if one lets the singing part come in after the bass, however only with an almost imperceptible delay.

Figure 4. An Excerpt from Chopin’s Nocturne in C minor Op. 48, No. 1 (1841), with an Analysis of Stylistic Idiosyncrasies in Stevenson’s Pianism. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1923), AIR-CD-9043, #3, 0:00-0:23, bars 1-5.

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86 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 160.
If one listens to Stevenson’s recording of Chopin’s Nocturne in C minor Op. 48, No. 1 (1841) (as shown in Figure 4, AIR-CD-9043, track #3, 0:00-0:23, bars 1-5), his arpeggiation is extremely understated (Figure 4, highlighted in green). This explains one of his favourite markings, pochissimo arpeggiato, which has been added in this instance, as it most succinctly defines this subtle component of his pianism. His displacement and asynchronization (Figure 4, highlighted in red) is clear. Even more subtle, however, is his cleverly understated rubato that is nearly always self-contained within each individual bar, yet in time with the overall pulse (highlighted in blue in Figure 4).

All of these components clearly demonstrate salient traces of aspects of pianism from a bygone era. Peres Da Costa (b. 1964) defines the latter as ‘metric rubato’ and distinguishes that most, if not all, of these collective facets of pianism could be considered to be at least one hundred years out of date:

Metric rubato is a term I have coined to describe the old bel canto type of tempo rubato commonly described as the rhythmic alteration of melody notes while essentially preserving the metric regularity of the accompaniment. This expressive device and other forms of rhythmic alteration continued to be used in piano playing around the turn of the twentieth century. Early recordings reveal that many pianists, in some cases entirely contrary to twenty-first century conventions, displace single melody notes or multiple adjacent melody notes within a bar by lengthening or shortening them. In some cases larger scale displacement occurs from one bar to the next.

Taylor astutely observes that the emulation and assimilation of rudiments of this late nineteenth-century style of pianism—adopted by Stevenson, particularly from Paderewski—are incongruous to the modern age:

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87 Stevenson, pers. comm., 27 August 2011.

To be a disciple of Paderewski in our present streamlined era might appear on the surface to be anachronistic, even obscurantist. Ronald has thoroughly assimilated the salient characteristics of Paderewski’s playing—his histrionic use of timing and gesture, the rolling of chords, ‘breaking’ between the hands so that the bass is heard before the treble and the aristocratic ‘posato’ is coupled with extensive use of the una corda pedal in cantabile passages. This is not only evident from his performances of the Polish master’s own compositions, but also from his declamatory approach to such works as the Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23 of Frédéric Chopin or Franz Liszt’s Polonaise No. 2 in E major, and throughout the performance of Romantic repertoire in general.89

Stevenson also very much acknowledges the pianism of Alfred Cortot (1877–1962) as having a strong influence on him in his youth. However, Cortot’s later recordings are infamously inaccurate, described by Marc-André Hamelin (b. 1961) as ‘almost painfully mistake-ridden’.90 Nonetheless, they are still, to Hamelin, as they are to Stevenson,91 an inspiration, as ‘Cortot's playing was so poetic. It should be an inspiration for today's students’.92 Above all, Stevenson speaks of being highly influenced by ‘the lyricism of Cortot,’93 and often performs Cortot’s solo adaptation of Johann Sebastian Bach’s Harpsichord Concerto No. S in F minor, BWV 1056 (c. 1738, trans. Cortot c. 1937). David Hackbridge Johnson recollects a performance by Stevenson of Cortot’s transcription of BWV 1056, stating that it was ‘a radiant example of singing tone at the piano—his left-hand perfectly capturing the memory of the pizzicati in Bach's original.’94 Nonetheless, whilst strongly influenced by Cortot’s multihued tonal colours, Stevenson admires even more ‘the almost feline loveliness of Leff Pouishhoff’s (1891–1959) Chopin playing’.95

However, one has to ask the question, is tone control—let alone producing a singing tone—even attainable? In his preface to L’Art du Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano (1975–1988),

89 Harold Taylor, Stevenson’s Pianism, 207.
90 Burwasser, ‘Don’t Call Me a Virtuoso’, 61.
91 Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.
93 Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.
Stevenson explains his methodology of creating a singing tone:

To Thalberg’s preface I add a further comment. He wrote ‘for simple tender melodies the keyboard should be kneaded, as it where, with a boneless hand and finger of velvet: the keys must be felt rather than struck’. I add that the fleshy tip should stroke the key with a downward pressure, drawn towards the body.\(^96\)

This is elementary to Stevenson’s own playing—a technique that the current author has also assumed directly from Stevenson\(^97\)—essentially revolving around the whole approach to piano playing being based on the ‘touch’ of a pianist. In essence, this is straightforward physics: by pulling towards the body, energy is deliberately exhausted in a horizontal movement (as shown in Figure 5), \((\alpha)\) to lessen the vertical energy \((\beta)\) used to move the hammers. The piano keyboard is surprisingly not horizontal \((\delta^\circ)\) and is inclined towards the fall of the instrument. Furthermore, the keys themselves can be depressed down further on the edges \((\lambda)\) than they can towards the fall of the instrument \((\text{towards } \varepsilon \text{ due to } \delta^\circ)\). As a result, there is substantially more control attainable at \(\lambda\), as it can be depressed further here than towards \(\varepsilon\). Using this ‘brushing’ technique towards the body—in combination with gently bouncing the dampers off the strings through expert use of the pedals—a very fine gradation can be achieved.

By pulling finger towards the body energy is deliberately wasted in horizontal movement \((\alpha)\) to facilitate greater control of vertical movement \((\beta)\).

Angle of Key \((\delta^\circ)\) facilitates greater control of key when drawn towards body: akin to a ‘seesaw’ as the key can be depressed further at \((\lambda)\) than at \((\varepsilon)\).

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97 These concepts have been absorbed by the current author from Ronald Stevenson whilst working with him on a variety of repertoire at the Ronald Stevenson Society Annual Summer School throughout the early nineteen-nineties.
This approach is similar to that of Vladimir Horowitz (1903-1989), who saw the principal challenge of the pianist as being able to make ‘a percussive instrument a singing instrument.’ He advocated Stevenson’s concept of ‘singing with the fingers:’

Teachers should stress this aspect in their instruction, but it seems that very few of them actually do—the few who try, are not always understood by their students. One way in which I obtain a singing quality is by using the damper pedal frequently; but you don’t hear it. When in changing from one chord to the next the damper pedal remains depressed long enough so that there is an overlapping of the two harmonies for a moment, a singing quality, the result of the legato pedalling is produced.

Whilst, unhappily, ‘touch’ is seldom used in reference to pianists in academic circles; however, Stevenson frequently contends that the original Italian word for keyboard tastiera, has its entomological root in ‘to touch’ or ‘to feel’. He notes that the phenomenon—that could best be called a ‘white-noise’ in the piano sound—is a combination of action-noise and the physical striking of the keys from a height, which can easily be eliminated by ‘pressing’ as opposed to ‘hitting’ the keys:

Try it on the closed piano-lid with the right pedal engaged. No sound should be heard. Now hit it with a finger, right pedal engaged. Hear the percussive noise, like sonal fog! When there is no extraneous sound, the tone is pure. My teacher the late Iso Elinson taught me that. His teacher in Moscow was Blumenfeld, who also taught Horowitz. In filmed recitals of Horowitz he is seen clearly to have the same touch-technique. It is indeed a part of technique which is often overlooked (or underheard!) in the modern fashion for superficial digital brilliancy.

Dynamic range and control are also intimately related to tone and are essential components of any accomplished pianist’s arsenal of effects. Ateş Orga singles out Stevenson as exceeding the prowess of the great Argentinean pianist, Martha Argerich (b. 1941), as far as dynamics and tone are concerned. However, he also notes that Stevenson’s pianism is not to everyone’s tastes. He quotes a

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99 Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves*.
100 Stevenson, *pers. comm.*, c. 1993
‘lukewarm’ review of Stevenson as composer-pianist playing his own music—the London première of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) and the *Prelude, Fugue and Fantasy on themes from Busoni’s ‘Doktor Faust’* 102 (1959) by Max Harrison in the *Musical Times* (1969):

I first heard him play a decade later—two recitals at the Purcell Room, including the London première of the *Passacaglia* (4 March 1969) and the *Prelude, Fugue and Fantasy on themes from Busoni’s ‘Doktor Faust’* (11 March, 1969). A lukewarm Max Harrison (*Musical Times*, May 1969) thought his twentieth-century repertoire ‘more sharply characterised’ than his classical, but ‘remained unconvinced about the unusual range of tone colour it is claimed that Stevenson commands’. My own abiding memory of the occasion was a performance of Chopin’s *Third Scherzo* crowned by a slowly accelerating coda the sheer groundswell and Brucknerian symphonicism of which I’ve never heard since from anyone either in concert or on disc (though Argerich has come close). It was an astonishing insight. 103

However, whilst certainly not the predilection of everyone, his rich tone and use of arpeggiation and asynchronization have consciously been assimilated from previous antecedents.

This can clearly be felt in a critique of Stevenson’s account of Edvard Grieg’s *Den Bergtekne Op. 32* (1877–78) in 2004, of which David Hackbridge Johnson writes, ‘Grieg’s noble melodies were carved out of the piano by a master sculptor, the rolling chords and deep basses conjured up the bleakest forests’. 104

In particular reference to Stevenson’s absorption of elements of Paderewski’s stylistic traits, Taylor sheds light on Stevenson’s conscious justification for doing so:

To be a disciple of Paderewski, Ronald has argued that he is not behind the times but ahead of them: he believes that those very aspects of Paderewski’s art which modern pianism rejects are part and parcel of the lost tradition of nineteenth-century piano-playing which the musicologists have yet to rediscover. 105

102 See AIR-CD-9091 (2 • DDD), AIR-CD-9042 (• DDD), and APR5630 (76’ • ADD) for Stevenson’s recordings of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) and the *Prelude, Fugue and Fantasy on Themes from Busoni’s ‘Doktor Faust’* (1959).


It therefore seems significant to ask whether Stevenson’s pianism as a whole embodies a vital link with the past which could otherwise become irrevocably erased.

\[ 2.2 \text{ Stevenson’s Pianism: a ‘Radical Break’ from the Past or the Present?} \]

There is ample evidence to support the surprising view that Stevenson is not ‘behind the times,’ but instead ‘ahead of them’. Stevenson points out that the practices of many musicians of the past are not just closer temporally to much of the repertoire performed but reflect a freedom of expression that has been stifled throughout the twentieth century:

> The further back we go, the freer is the performance: in rubato; in the liberal use of the arpeggio; in the quasi-improvisational independence of the two hands from a rigid synchronization. Indeed, these historic interpretations have a plasticity which has all but disappeared from music-making today. All the points just listed are considered by academic critics as cardinal sins. They fancy they are advocating ‘historicity’: they are not being ‘historic’ enough. And we have the gramophone to prove it.\(^{106}\)

Stevenson is correct in arguing that these stylistic elements have all but vanished. However, this may reflect the way music is listened to, especially in our gargantuan, acoustically optimized, modern performing spaces that could not have been imagined by the designers of the original instruments. Hackbridge Johnson postulates that the production of a ‘singing’ tone on period-instruments was ‘easier to cultivate on pianos built during that period’, with smaller venues that allowed pianists to adopt a more intimate ‘singing’ approach to the piano.\(^{107}\) He draws a parallel between period performances and jazz, with the modern piano being purposefully ‘bright and percussive’ merely to fill the huge auditoriums, as opposed to the smaller intimacy of the modestly sized jazz club. She claims, ‘examples of the shift from melodically conceived piano playing to percussive playing can also be seen in jazz; there is a stark contrast between the rich sonorities of Fats Waller or the velvety tone of Art Tatum and the aggressive pounding that passes for much


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contemporary jazz’.\(^{109}\)

The sound a pianist produces depends as much on posture and appropriately engaging the entire body as anything else. The current author, having worked with Stevenson on a variety of repertoire for over two decades, can confirm that he places great importance on posture and what he, like Paderewski, calls ‘appropriate motion’.\(^{110}\) Polish composer-pianist, Zygmunt Stojowski (1870–1946), who was a student of Paderewski, tells us of the importance the Polish master placed of engaging the whole body whilst eradicating superfluous motion:

\[\text{[Paderewski] believed in the elimination of every unnecessary movement, yet he wished the whole body free and supple. Motions should be as carefully studied as other technical points. It is true he often made large movements of arm, but they are all thought out and have a dramatic significance. He may lift the finger off a vehement staccato note by quick up- arm motion, in a flash of vigorous enthusiasm; but the next instant his hand is in quiet position for the following phrase.}\(^{111}\]

This economy of movement has integrated itself into Stevenson’s pianism. Taylor sees it as an essential part of the Lisztian tradition:

He is fundamentally the sort of pianist who could play all his passagework with a coin balanced on the back of the hand, as some teachers of the ‘old school’ used to advocate. The lack of ‘break’ at the wrist arises because Ronald subtends a ‘one-piece’ arm with no acute angle or ‘break’ at the elbow. He also uses the arm in one piece for massive chords, rotary movements and shaking octaves ‘out of his sleeve’ in the time-honoured Lisztian manner.\(^{112}\)

Taylor’s theory can be validated by evidence. Identification of this trait of Stevenson’s pianism as being a part of the Lisztian tradition can tangibly be proven to be accurate. In an interview with musicologist Joseph Horowitz (b. 1948) in the early nineteen-eighties, the elderly Claudio Arrau (1903–1991) used the superb metaphor of a singing tone being produced by envisaging the entire arm including forearm, wrist and fingers as a single entity: ‘becoming a sort of

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\(^{111}\) Brower, *Talks With Master Pianists*, 8.

\(^{112}\) Harold Taylor, *Stevenson’s Pianism*, 209.
This same technique was absorbed by Arrau from his own teacher Martin Krause (1853 – 1918), who learnt this firsthand from Franz Liszt:

Joseph Horowitz: Is there a certain type of piano sound that you wish to produce?

Claudio Arrau: The sound one produces without hitting the piano . . . . this means the body must be relaxed, and one must use the weight of the entire upper part of the body. You have to develop a feeling for the arm as a unity, not divided into hand, wrist, forearm, and elbow. The arm should become a sort of snake. It is important for instance, never to think of the action of the fingers as independent from the arm. That shouldn’t exist.¹¹⁴

Stevenson’s ‘lack of break’ and ‘one piece arm,’ described by Taylor, are emblematic of the romantic approach to pianism and are synonymous with Arrau’s example. Along with his adherence to Thalberg’s philosophy in L’Art du Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano, Op. 70, to ‘cultivate freedom from stiffness in the forearm, wrist, etc.’¹¹⁵ (as discussed above), this approach reveals that this and many other aspects of Stevenson’s pianism, date back to at least the middle of the nineteenth century, and, in all likelihood, to much earlier times.

### 2.3 The Significance of Inner Voices, Performance as Transcription, and the Rationalization of the Composer-Pianist Refiguring the Work of Others in Performance

In 1992, Stevenson released an album, poetically entitled Cathedrals in Sound (AIR-CD-9043). This well-respected recording will be used as a case study in evaluating his pianism in performing the works of others.¹¹⁶ The delectably eclectic repertoire is a veritable smörgåsbord of piano works from the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see Table 2):

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¹¹⁴ Joseph Horowitz, Conversations with Arrau, 1982, 100.
¹¹⁵ Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 159.
Table 2. Contents of ‘Cathedrals in Sound,’ Ronald Stevenson, Solo Piano, AIR-CD-9043, Altarus Records (1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Franz Liszt (1811–1886)</td>
<td><em>Weihnachtsbaum</em>: S186/R71: VI. Carillon (Chimes) (1873–76)</td>
<td>02:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>——</td>
<td><em>Nocturne in C minor</em>, Op. 48, No. 1 (1841)</td>
<td>06:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>‘Fantasia and Fugue’</td>
<td>08:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>‘Chorale and Fugue’</td>
<td>05:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Ronald Stevenson (b. 1928)</td>
<td><em>Heroic Song for Hugh MacDiarmid</em> (1967)</td>
<td>05:42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Franz Liszt (1811–1886)</td>
<td><em>Weihnachtsbaum</em>, S186/R71, IX. Abendglocken (Evening Bells) (1873–76)</td>
<td>05:07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6. Ronald Stevenson voicing in his recording of Frederic Chopin’s *Prelude in C Minor* (complete) Op. 28, No. 18 (1835–39) (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1923), Altarus AIR CD 9043, #2 (1992) bars 1–13, 0:00-1:25.

A further aspect of the late-romantic style adopted by Stevenson—heard in early gramophone performances and piano rolls of pianists from the twilight of the romantic age—is his attention to internal melodies in a given texture, magisterially summoned to the forefront in performance. This is particularly evident in his insightful reading of Chopin’s masterpiece in miniature—his thirteen bar Prelude in C Minor, Op. 28, No. 18 (AIR-CD-9043, #2, 0:00-1:25). Stevenson pursues the primary melodic line (as shown in Figure 6, highlighted in red, bars 1-8, 0:00-0:35) for the first eight bars. At the recurrence of the ‘B’ section from bars nine to eleven, he surprisingly summons forth an ‘inner voice’ that is not marked by Chopin (as shown in Figure 6, highlighted in blue, 0:36-1:09), but which is nonetheless musically absorbing.

However, one must be prudent in giving unnecessary prominence to inconsequential melodies when that prominence is not artistically merited. Arrau once acerbically said that both Józef Hofmann (1876–1957) and his pupil, Shura Cherkassky (1909–1995) would bring out inner voices purely to startle, with little justifiable artistic worth:

> You know, Hofmann and his pupil Shura Cherkassky, and others—at a certain moment they discovered inner voices. As if nobody had ever noticed them before. . . . I always got so angry when I heard Hofmann or Shura bringing out so-called inner voices that didn’t have much importance. I thought, why are they doing it? Just to amaze. Just to attract attention.

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In the instance of Stevenson’s recording of *Prelude in C Minor*, Op. 28, No. 18, whilst the composer did not stipulate the accentuation of this particular voice, it is still sound musical judgment to do so. Otherwise, the same line of music would be performed unerringly the same way, twice. This adds both interest and variety. Hopefully, most composers would leave a range of possible

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117 *Cathedrals in Sound*, Ronald Stevenson (piano), Altarus AIR CD 9043 (1• DDD), 1992, compact disc. For details of all commercial releases by Ronald Stevenson as pianist, see Appendix One: XII Commercial Recordings.

interpretational outcomes to the judgment of the individual performer. Coincidentally, Arrau’s recording of the Prelude in C Minor Op. 28, No. 18 from the Concertgebouw in April 1973\textsuperscript{119} brings out the identical inner voice (0:38-1:12), perhaps exhibiting a distant genealogical link to Stevenson, as they are both arguably from a similar pianistic ‘stable’. Nonetheless, Stevenson is even more aware than Arrau—as both a composer and a pianist—that no matter how descriptive and meticulous one endeavors to communicate intentions, musical notation is, in its very quintessence, flawed. He is a strong advocate of Ferruccio Busoni’s philosophy on the subject: whilst notation is an inventive way of capturing a composer’s thoughts on paper, it remains critical for the interpreter to liberate the rigidity of the composer’s instructions as corporeal music:

Notation, the writing out of compositions, is primarily an ingenious expedient for catching an inspiration, with the purpose of exploiting it later…. It is for the interpreter to resolve the rigidity of the signs into the primitive emotion. But the lawgivers require the interpreter to reproduce the rigidity of the signs; they consider his reproduction the nearer to perfection, the more closely it clings to the signs....What the composer’s inspiration necessarily loses through notation, his interpreter should restore by his own. To the lawgivers, the signs themselves are the most important matter, and are continually growing in their estimation; the new art of music is derived from the old signs and these now stand for musical art itself.\textsuperscript{120}

Busoni’s brusque remarks concerning the ‘lawgivers’ of the early twentieth century are synonymous with those whom Stevenson often dismissively refers to as ‘the urtext crowd’—a phrase ‘on-loan’ from his friend and colleague, the great Cuban pianist, Jorge Bolet (1914–1990).\textsuperscript{121} Peres Da Costa (b.1964), similarly observes that if the urtext is followed \textit{ad absurdum}, whilst the ‘notes and rests are meticulously accurate...the performance is completely neutral’.\textsuperscript{122} In Stevenson’s case, Taylor notes that he could never be accused of overly restrained good taste or exalting the letter of the urtext to the expense of the music:


\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Ferruccio Busoni, Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music}, translated from the German by T. H. Baker (New York, G. Schirmer, 1911), 15.

\textsuperscript{121} Harold Taylor, \textit{Stevenson’s Pianism}, 207.

\textsuperscript{122} Peres Da Costa, Introduction to \textit{Off the Record}: xxvii.
Ronald could never be accused of lapsing into good taste, nor has ever belonged to that impotent body of musicians succinctly dismissed by George Bolet as ‘the urtext crowd,’ who exalt the letter at the expense of the spirit—if they are able to decide what the letter should be in the first place. I remember a performance given by Ronald of the D Minor Fantasy of Mozart K\textsuperscript{V} 397, which had a real ring of truth—not simply ‘with ornamentation,’ but with subtle melodic, rhythmic and even harmonic alterations such as Mozart himself might have improvised in performance. Certainly, Mozart could have not done any better in the little comic-opera finale, where with one single, masterly change of register, a duet was born and Zerlina and Don Giovanni danced momentarily before us.\footnote{123}

Stevenson is certainly aware of the dichotomy in maintaining equilibrium between ‘observing the letter’ and having the artistic intuition to ‘read between the lines’. This is nowhere more apparent than in the following:

I applaud these words of Wanda Landowska (1878–1959): ‘Sobriety has for its aim the objective presentation of the text without any personal involvement. But is not this tone of indigent indifference another roundabout way of being subjective? Simplicity can be that of a brute who only sees and plays what is written’. With Landowska, I want more daring use of free time (rubato) and welcome creative deviations from the text which make a performance approach the improvisational atmosphere of all true music-making.\footnote{124}

Stevenson advises the pianist who ‘just plays the notes’ to resist his magnum opus, the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963). In the following notice of admonitory forewarning he provides an unexpected insight into the demands he places upon himself as performer:

I would go further and say that the technical problems of the work [Passacaglia on DSCH]—and particularly problems of endurance—are such as to put it beyond the reach of what I call the ‘bureaucratic’ type of pianist who plays the notes and nothing else. I know there are passages in the work, coming after, say, half an hour’s taxing performance, which would prove problematic for any pianist in the world. In this way, the work is a challenge to the performer. It is also a challenge to the listener.\footnote{125}

Nevertheless, whilst a large amount of artistic lack of restriction is all well and good in his own composition, how can he justify modifying the work of others that he performs in recital? To explore this issue further, it is essential to look at some previously unpublished examples in his own hand.

\footnote{123}{Harold Taylor, Stevenson’s Pianism, 211.}
\footnote{124}{Stevenson, ‘Passacaglia on DSCH,’ The Listener (1969), reproduced in Walton (ed.) Song in Gold Pavilions, 3.}
\footnote{125}{‘Passacaglia on DSCH,’ The Listener (1969), reproduced in Walton (ed.) Song in Gold Pavilions, 4.}
These adaptations were used in his 1992 recording (AIR-CD-9043, #12) of the Bach-Busoni Chaconne in D minor (1893),\textsuperscript{126} reproduced here with the kind permission of Ronald Stevenson.

\textbf{Figure 7.} An Excerpt from Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (KIV B 45, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685-1750) Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin, bwv 1004 (composed c. 1717–1723) (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel), bars 41–46.

\textbf{Figure 8.} An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s ‘re-writing’ (unpublished, dated 1989) of KIV B 45, transcribed Ferruccio Busoni (1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685-1750) Chaconne in D Minor for Solo Violin, bwv 1004 (composed c. 1717–1723), AIR-CD-9043, #12, 2:19-2:28, bars 41-46.

\textsuperscript{126} Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (KIV B 45, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s Chaconne in D Minor for Solo Violin, bwv 1004 (composed c. 1717–1723).
If one compares an excerpt from the Bach-Busoni *Chaconne in D minor* bwv 1004 (as shown in Figure 7, bars 41-46) with Stevenson’s ‘re-writing’ for his own ‘performing copy’ (as shown in Figure 8, bars 41-46) (AIR-CD-9043, #12, 2:19-2:28), there is no ‘audible’ deviation whatsoever. This particular passage is a notoriously treacherous stretch of pianistic water to traverse safely, as it is very easy to capsize whilst negotiating the rapid octave passagework in the left-hand, marked *leggiero ma marcato*. To make matters even worse, it has the dynamic marking *piano*, which requires considerable pianistic control to navigate.

Stevenson’s revision shows the significance he places on fingering, which makes his figuration genuinely innovative, especially with the original left-hand octaves at times being swapped between the two hands. It also includes additional ‘fingering ossias’ to take into consideration pianists with smaller hands. Nonetheless, all the pitches, harmony and rhythms remain faithful to the original, allowing the voices to ‘sing’ as initially intended. For want of a more complex terminology, his re-figuration simply makes the music work better in live performance. This is a master stroke of complex re-figuration for the use of a practitioner, a procedure carried out by most composer-pianists of the past, including Franz Liszt, Ferruccio Busoni, and Percy Grainger, among others.

As an allusion to the virtuoso violin acrobatics of Bach’s original writing, Stevenson resorts to a much-loved ‘Busoni fingering,’ where all five fingers are engaged with alacrity in rapid

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‘His [Franz Liszt’s] performance commenced with *Handel’s Fugue No. 4 in E Minor*, hwv.429, which was played by Liszt with an avoidance of everything approaching to meretricious ornament, and indeed scarcely any additions, except a multitude of ingeniously contrived and appropriate harmonies, casting a glow of colour over the beauties of the composition, and infusing into it a spirit which from no other hand it ever before received’.

128 Similarly, Busoni reworks Franz Liszt’s ‘1er Grande Étude de Paganini in G minor’ (1851) in the tenth book of his monumental *Klavierübung in Zehn Büchern* (1818-1925).

129 See Percy Grainger’s re-figuration of Liszt’s *Rhapsody No. 12 in C# minor S.233 / 12* (1847), as noted by Riddle, *Percy Grainger: Piano Pedagogue*, 21.

130 Stevenson, *pers. comm.*, 16 September 2011.
succession—delivered with sensational flair and panache in his recording (as shown in Figure 9 with Stevenson's fingering added in red, AIR-CD-9043, #12, 3:49-3:51).

![Figure 9](image_url)

Figure 9. An Excerpt from Ferruccio Busoni’s Transcription (KIV 845, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685-1750) Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin, bwv 1004 (Composed c. 1717–1723) (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel), AIR-CD-9043, #12, 3:49-3:51, bars 73-74.

A far more radical example of Stevenson’s rewriting and performing skills can be found later at bars 110-115 (AIR-CD-9043, #12, 5:34-5:48). If one compares Busoni’s original transcription (Figure 10) and the ‘rewrite’ (in Figure 11), Stevenson variorum is substantially more virtuosic, which, he claims, ‘improves the orchestration’.  

![Figure 10](image_url)

Figure 10. An Excerpt from Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (KIV 845, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685-1750) Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin, bwv 1004 (Composed c. 1717–1723) (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel), bars 110-113.

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131 Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.
This is essentially accomplished by adding a supplementary ‘third’ hand or part, which is pianistically achievable with two hands. At an initial glance, the principal part appears to be the highest on the manuscript page, because of Stevenson separating the ‘three hands’ for ease of reading. In fact, this is the middle voice, as the pyrotechnics of the right hand are continuously required to traverse the left. Stevenson specified exactly which vocal register he is emulating: *contralto dux* (Figure 11, highlighted in red), *quasi Soprano*, combo highlighted in green) and *quasi contralto e tenore* (Figure 11, highlighted in blue). Here he cleverly doubles the principal melody as an octave for musical reinforcement in his ‘crescendo poco a poco: animando il tempo (corale)’.

**Figure 11.** An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s reworking of Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (1893) *KIV* 45, of Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685-1750) *Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin*, BWV 1004 (Composed c. 1717–1723), AIR CD 9043, #12, 5:34-5:48, bars 110-115.
Whilst Stevenson’s treatment of the Bach-Busoni Chaconne in D minor BWV 1004 could be seen as a ‘transcription of a transcription’, a more accurate description might be a ‘performing edition’. Stevenson demonstrates parallels with Percy Grainger: performing editions were the foundation of Grainger’s early reputation. His most celebrated modification is to Edvard Grieg’s Piano Concerto in A Minor Op. 16 (1868). Grainger’s editions—like Stevenson’s reworking of the Bach-Busoni Chaconne—provide ‘detailed notes on pedalling, fingering and tone production,’ in particular, extensive use of the sostenuto pedal. Glenn Riddle recounts that Grieg not only approved of Grainger’s additions but also actually worked on Piano Concerto in A Minor Op. 16 (1868) with him: ‘The two worked together on the Piano Concerto in A Minor Op. 16 in the summer of 1907, with the intention of undertaking a European tour, with Grieg conducting, Grainger as soloist. Unfortunately, Grieg, already in ill-health, died shortly thereafter’. Stevenson’s desire to create performing editions of his own was inspired by Busoni’s Breitkopf & Härtel performing editions of Johann Sebastian Bach and Franz Liszt, amongst others, as well as Grainger’s pioneering work for G. Schirmer, Inc. and Edition Peters. As discussed above, Sorabji dedicated Villa Tasca, Mezzogiorno Siciliano . . . . KSS100 (1979–1980) to Stevenson, as he was so overwhelmed by Stevenson’s performing edition of the Fantasiettina sul nome illustre dell’egregio poeta Christopher Grieve ossia Hugh M’Diarmid (1961, performing edition, Stevenson

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132 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 81.


134 Riddle, Percy Grainger: Piano Pedagogue, 3.

135 Riddle, Percy Grainger, 6.


Stevenson, pers. comm., 11 September 2011.
1987)—the first piece of Sorabji’s published in half a century. Stevenson’s list of performing editions of the works of others is wide-ranging. It includes works by composers as diverse as Eugène d'Albert (1864–1932), Havergal Brian (1876–1972), and William (Brocklesby) Wordsworth (1908–1988), among others (see Table 3).

However, one must take into account that performing editions are predominantly edited and prepared by a concert practitioner, rather than a composer. For example, the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven have been edited by both Artur Schnabel (1882–1951)—for the Alfred Masterwork Edition—and Claudio Arrau—for the Peters Urtext Edition. Similarly, more recently, Peter Donohoe (b. 1953) edited the complete solo piano music of Rachmaninoff for Boosey and Hawkes with ‘introductions and additional performance notes,’ in the early 1990’s. It therefore seems logical to assume that Stevenson’s skills as a pianist—with an inside working knowledge of the repertoire—were the predominant driving force behind such ventures.

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<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Havergal Brian (1876–1972)</td>
<td>March from Turandot</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(transcr. Malcolm MacDonald (b. 1948))</td>
<td>‘Polonaise’ from Sonatina ad usum infantis</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alistair Hinton (b.1950)</td>
<td>Scottish Ballad, performing edition</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis George Scott (1880–1958)</td>
<td>Border Riding Rhythm</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
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Bernard van Dieren (1887–1936)  
1988

1988

Nonetheless, as with most composer-pianists, Stevenson’s performing editions occasionally pass through a ‘no-man’s land,’ on the disputed borders of edition and transcription. As an experienced pedagogue of students of all ages and abilities, Stevenson was in an ideal position to create editions of the music of others for a wide variety of pianistic standards. This revolved principally around those with smaller hands, in particular, children. Riddle notes that Grainger occasionally provides *ossias* for smaller hands.142 Stevenson was asked by Grainger’s widow, Ella (née Ström, 1889–1979), ‘to compile a volume of Percy’s works for children’. That work resulted in *The Young Pianist’s Grainger* (1967). These vary among between ‘arrangement,’ ‘abridgment,’ and ‘simplified edition’.

However, it is not easy to discern the definite distinctions between arrangements, abridgments, and simplified editions. Whilst unquestionably dubious, one can ascertain that, overall, the practices of creating performing editions of the work of others, as well as the re-figuration and rewriting of passagework in concert performance and recording, seem to be a vital nutrient in the lifeblood of the composer-pianist. In Stevenson’s case, the illustrations discussed positively verify David Murray’s comment that a composer-pianist ‘can try things on that non-pianist composers wouldn’t dare, nor could imagine.’143 In summary, the rationalization of the composer-pianist undertaking such practices in the first instance is to re-contextualize and re-affirm the *true urtext:* the composer’s original intention.

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143 David Murray, ‘The Composer-Pianists,’ 6
2.4 Mitigating Criticism of Stevenson’s Use of the Sostenuto in the Work of Others

The sostenuto pedal was invented in 1844 by Jean Louis Boisselot. As a performing pianist, Stevenson is so attuned to using the sostenuto pedal in the works of others that he will instinctively utilize its possibilities in works that often predate its invention. In Cathedrals in Sound (AIR-CD-9043, 1992), the sostenuto pedal is employed in Frédéric Chopin’s Nocturne in C minor Op. 48, No. 1 (1841), Claude Debussy’s La Cathédrale Engloutie (1910) and the Busoni transcription of Bach’s Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin, bwv 1004 (1893). Whilst there are no indications for the use of the sostenuto pedal in all three instances, we can be certain that Busoni would have approved. Hamilton notes that there is little of Busoni’s legendary use of the sostenuto pedal preserved for posterity because of the recording technologies of the day being too crude to discover the intricacies of his capability. Hamilton notes that Busoni would, nonetheless, like Stevenson, use it in music from all stylistic periods: ‘In Busoni’s recordings, because the technology of the day did not allow him to use his normal approach to pedalling, we hear little of his subtleties in that regard, especially his fondness for the middle pedal, which he used extensively and with magisterial disregard for the vintage of the music.’

In the Bach-Busoni Chaconne in D Minor bwv 1004 (recorded Stevenson, AIR CD 9043, #12, 0:00-0:14), Stevenson even uses the Ped III in place of the sustaining pedal from the first four and a half bars to announce the initial theme. This is an ingenious use of the device as it creates a purer tonal colour than the sustaining pedal that Stevenson employs halfway through bar five, in the normal fashion. This works because of selected dampers being raised with the Ped III, producing much less sympathetic vibration than with the sustaining pedal—that raises all of the dampers. The

145 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 174.
146 Shown to the current author whilst working with Ronald Stevenson on Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (KIV 8 45, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin, bwv 1004 (composed c. 1717–1723) in West Linton, Scotland, c. 1995.
Ped III is used again in bar eight—to powerfully split the melody between the hands (AIR CD 9043, #12, 0:25-0:27)—before employing it sequentially from bar thirteen onwards (Figure 12, AIR CD 9043, #12, 0:40-0:47).

Figure 12. An Excerpt from Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (Kiv B 45, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685-1750) *Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin*, bwv 1004 (composed c. 1717–1723). (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel), bars 1-15.
Figure 13. An Excerpt from Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (KIV B45, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685-1750) Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin, bwv 1004 (composed c. 1717–1723). (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel), AIR CD 9043, #12, 8:07-8:59, bars 156–180.
Perhaps Stevenson’s most insightful use of the Ped III is from bars 157-177, wherein a single deployment is maintained for an astonishing page and a half of music. If one inspects the score in detail (see Figure 13, AIR CD 9043, #12, 8:07-8:59), Busoni is demanding the pianistically impossible: he wishes for there to be two diametrically divergent textures—*staccato* and *legato*—necessitating three, if not four hands, to realistically achieve. By holding the bass A-natural octave (Figure 13, highlighted in red)\(^{147}\) in the Ped III, it is now possible to play *legato* and yet, still observe the *staccato* passagework (Figure 13, highlighted in blue).

In making use of such practices, Stevenson as a performer-composer is improving, refining, illuminating and expounding on Ferruccio Busoni’s original ambition. The term ‘original’ can safely be used here, as this is unquestionably the technique Busoni must have employed in his own performances, as it is impossible to achieve what he desires without the aid of the Ped III. Rather than opening himself to accusations of abuse, Stevenson notes that no critic has ever noticed that he changed the figuration or that he was employing the *sostenuto* throughout *Cathedrals in Sound*.\(^{148}\) Nevertheless, pedalling—in particular the use of the *sostenuto*—is such an intrinsic part of his work that the subject rightly deserves an entire chapter (see Chapter Four: Stevenson and the Pedal), where his work as composer and transcriber is directly addressed.

### 2.5 Championing of Neglected Repertoire and the Utilization of Period Instruments

Having performed on five continents, Stevenson can never be accused, unlike Alkan and Sorabji, of disregarding the concert platform. He has managed to preserve a successful reputation both as a

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\(^{147}\) Shown to the current author whilst he was working with Ronald Stevenson on Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (KIV B 45, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin*.

\(^{148}\) Stevenson sees it as ‘improving the orchestration of the pianism’ yet the use of the sostenuto, whilst first showcased in 1844, was not patented by Steinway & Sons until 1874 – a quarter of a century after Chopin’s death. The *Erard* and ‘*Pleyel et Cie’* (Pleyel & Sons, founded 1807) piano preferred by Chopin had no *sostenuto* and there is no evidence that Chopin composed with the device in mind. Paradoxically, Stevenson notes that whilst ‘purists certainly wouldn’t approve’ such practices of a quasi-improvisatory re-figuration are ‘closer to Chopin’s time than our own’ Stevenson, *pers. comm.*, c. 1993.
pianist and as a composer throughout his long career. As with most composer-pianists, he was regularly requested to perform his own piano works. The Ronald Stevenson Society (founded Edinburgh, 1995) lists some of his most significant career highlights as a composer-pianist in specific reference to his own music:

Première landmarks as a composer-pianist have included: his Passacaglia on DSCH, Cape Town (1963), the song cycle Border Boyhood with Peter Pears, Aldeburgh (1971), the Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Scottish National Orchestra and Sir Alexander Gibson, Edinburgh (1966), his Piano Concerto No. 2 with the New Philharmonia Orchestra and Norman Del Mar, London Promenade Concerts, Royal Albert Hall (1972).149

It is hardly surprising that Stevenson’s career-defining work as a composer-pianist is the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963)—a work that he has performed twenty-four times over three decades.150 He has also recorded the work on two occasions: once in 1964, on a ten-foot Petrof concert grand, in Cape Town University’s Hiddingh Hall—strictly limited to two hundred pressings151—and again two and a half decades later for the Altarus record label in 1990, on a Bösendorfer Imperial Concert Grand.152 The distinguished pianist and pedagogue, Harold Taylor, has heard Stevenson perform the Passacaglia on DSCH on numerous occasions and is intimately familiar with both recordings, as he is among very few people who possess a copy of the limited edition Cape Town recording.153 Taylor cites some of the herculean demands required in a performance of this epic work: an expansive dynamic scope; a wide palette of tonal colours; unremitting attentiveness; and an extensive knowledge of the diverse

149 Other highlights as a composer—not directly associated to the piano include: ‘In 1992 Sir Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999), who commissioned Stevenson’s Violin Concerto (The Gypsy), conducted its world première with Hu Kun (violin) and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in Glasgow. His most recent commission was for a Cello Concerto in memoriam Jacqueline du Pré (1945–1987), commissioned by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, which received its première in Glasgow in 1995, with Moray Welsh as soloist,’ The Ronald Stevenson Society website, Edinburgh: http://www.ronaldstevensonsociety.org.uk.

150 Stevenson, pers. comm., 17 September 2011.


152 Stevenson plays Stevenson, Ronald Stevenson (piano), Passacaglia on DSCH (1963), Prelude, Fugue and Fantasy on themes from Busoni’s ‘Doktor Faust’ (1959), Recitativo and Air on DSCH (1974) Altarus AIR-CD-9091 (2), 1999, compact disc. For details of all commercial releases by Ronald Stevenson as pianist, see Appendix One: XII Commercial Recordings.

styles and forms that the *Passacaglia on DSCH* contains within its monumental structure:

Consider some of the requirements: uninterrupted concentration for one-and-a-quarter hours; an enormous dynamic range; the ability to control gradations of tone over very long spans, without which the interpretation can never match the size of the work; a sense of climax, together with the rare quality of a feeling for narrative; an orchestral range of tone colour. Above all, the performer must have the breadth of culture and emotional response to encompass a myriad of styles—from Schubertian charm to Shostakovichian irony, from polonaise to pibroch, from coolly classical to wildly romantic, the list is endless. He must create a whole world, ‘without the benefit of Mahler's orchestra. Those of us who have heard this world warmed into life by Ronald’s incandescent playing can never have any doubts about his pianistic stature—he is a giant’.  

Whilst collating a substantial portion of the academic writing of Stevenson for the volume *Song in Gold Pavilions: Ronald Stevenson on Music*, Chris Walton inspects in detail the extraordinary nature of his performing sympathies. He highlights that his scholastic interests relate directly to those who have influenced him as both performers and composers:

The topics to which Stevenson turns his attention as a writer have a close correlation to those that have inspired him as composer and performer. No one who has heard him, either live or recorded, could deny that he was a pianist of the first order (the past tense is appropriate merely because he has since retired from the podium). But while others have been content to travel the world performing the great workhorses of the repertoire, Stevenson has devoted his prime energies instead to the zebras, giraffes and Shetland ponies. No standard renderings of Beethoven-Liszt-Brahms for him. Instead, he has invested his energies in promoting the work of Ferruccio Busoni, Alan Bush, Percy Grainger, Ignaz Paderewski, Edvard Grieg, Charles-Valentin Alkan, Henry Purcell, Carl Nielsen, Scott Joplin, Kaikhosru Sorabji, Czesław Marek, Herman Sandby and Sparre Olsen and others—with, of course, the occasional Mozart, Bach and Schubert added for balance. Several once-lost causes, such as Marek, are now no longer lost, since Stevenson first sought and found them.

Whilst Stevenson has been directly responsible in facilitating many renaissances, arguably the most noticeable are of his two vital influences Ferruccio Busoni and Percy Grainger.  

*The Ronald Stevenson Society website* notes that, in championing the work of Busoni alone between 1970 and 1980, Stevenson gave twenty-six BBC radio programmes of Busoni's music and in

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154 Harold Taylor, *Stevenson’s Pianism*, 211.
155 ‘He [Stevenson] stills plays the piano every day.’ (Marjorie Stevenson ([née Spedding b. 1932], *pers. comm.*, 21 February 2012).
1974 he scripted, introduced and performed as piano soloist in a Busoni TV documentary on BBC2—a film of one and a half hours. Similarly, if one examines Stevenson’s prolific correspondence—now safely housed for posterity in the Stevenson archives of the National Library of Scotland—we find that the astonishing list of composers he has advocated in recital is even larger.

Considering the diversity of Stevenson’s performing interests, compiled by the author from the correspondence archives, it is a vast understatement on Ateş Orga’s behalf when he makes the observation, ‘From the beginning, his repertory, like his programming, eschewed the merely routine.’

With such a breadth of interests, Stevenson’s repertoire could be an entire study in itself—unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this exegesis. In spite of this, it seems logical to converge on one composer whom Stevenson performed in public: Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji (1892-1988). There is much to be learned about Stevenson and his work from the extraordinary events surrounding Stevenson’s performances. His combined skills as a composer-pianist so impressed Sorabji that he eventually relinquished his ban on all public performances of his own music—a ban upheld for over forty years.

It is well-documented that Sorabji was an infamously reticent and, at times, ‘obstinate person’—often humorously nicknamed the ‘Howard Hughes of Classical Music’. Whilst Sorabji and

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163 One only has to read Sorabji’s own words on the many discrepancies in his biographical material:
Stevenson had corresponded since as early as 1958, they did not meet face-to-face until 1980. This was for a British Broadcasting Corporation documentary at Sorabji’s home—curiously enough, called The Eye—in the picturesque village of Corfe Castle in Dorset. Sorabji had the now legendary signage to greet infrequent guests on his gate: ‘Visitors Unwelcome’. The composer-pianist Alistair Hinton (b.1950)—a friend of Sorabji, Stevenson and the current author—recounts that whilst the crew where setting up the considerable amount of equipment needed for filming, Stevenson played the piano. Sorabji was extremely impressed with Stevenson’s playing of the Chopin’s F-sharp Minor Impromptu Op. 36. No. 2 (1839):

Stevenson sat down and played the F-sharp Impromptu of Chopin. K’ [Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji] was in mid-conversation with me and the technician was asking questions, then . . . suddenly K interrupted the middle of these two conversations, grabbed my sleeve and said, ‘My God! Isn’t he a wonderful pianist!’ He was very taken with Stevenson’s playing. So it started off on that footing and Stevenson got into his ease very easily’. Sorabji upheld his performance ban for many years—despite repeated appeals from many distinguished pianists, including John Ogdon (1937–1989) of whom Sorabji reputedly jibed, ‘He’s too fat to play the piano!’ Nonetheless, Stevenson remained undeterred and encouraged as many

‘TO THOSE WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, IF ANY, AND OTHERS WHO MIND ANYBODY’S BUSINESS BUT THEIR OWN’ [Sorabji’s block typeface]. ‘Dates and places of birth relating to myself given in various works of reference are invariably false...certain lexographical canaille, one egregious and notorious specimen particularly, enraged at my complete success in defeating and frustrating their impudent impertinent and presumptuous nosings and pryings into what doesn’t concern them, and actuated, no doubt, by the mean malice of the base-born for their betters, have thought, as they would say, to take it out of me by suggesting that my name isn’t really my name . . . . Insects that are merely noisome like to think that they can also sting.’


164 See Appendix Two: Catalogue of Complete Musicological Correspondence of Ronald Stevenson, 24: Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, 61 letters and postcards, 1958-1986, of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji to Ronald Stevenson, etc.


168 When Ogdon applied to Sorabji for permission to perform it for a BBC broadcast in 1961, the irascible composer refused, snapping, ‘He’s too fat to play the piano’. Adrian Corleonis, Sorabji’s ‘Fantasiettina
pianists as he could to explore Sorabji’s work. On 1 December 1959, Stevenson arranged for John Ogdon—then only twenty-two years old—to give a private reading of Sorabji’s most famous composition, the gargantuan Opus Clavicembalisticum, kss50 (1930), published J. Curwen and Sons Ltd, 1931. That piece has an astounding running time of approximately 285 minutes.\(^{169}\) This performance was at Stevenson’s home, Townfoot House in West Linton. Not only was it the first performance since 1936, but it was also the only occasion when the work’s dedicatee, Hugh MacDiarmid—the nom de plume of Stevenson’s friend, Christopher Grieve Murray (1892–1978)—ever heard it performed (as shown in Figure 14).\(^{170}\)

![Figure 14](image)

**Figure 14.** John Ogdon (left), Hugh MacDiarmid (centre) and Ronald Stevenson (right) pictured in 1959 at John Ogdon’s private reading of Sorabji’s *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, kss50 (1930), taken at Townfoot House, West Linton, Scotland. Photographer Helmut Petzsch. Reprinted with kind permission The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh.

Sorabji ultimately conceded allowing Stevenson and Ogdon to perform and record his work. Later he even dedicated a significant work of approximately fifty-two minutes’ duration to


\(^{170}\) The Sorabji Archive [Curator: Alistair Hinton] kss50 *Opus Clavicembalisticum*. 

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Stevenson: Villa Tasca: mezzogiorno siciliano—evocazione nostalgica e memoria tanta cara e preziosa del giardino meraviglioso, splendido, tropicale, kss100 (1979–1980). Stevenson’s performances of Sorabji’s work certainly gave the music a wider public airing. He performed the Trois fêtes galantes de Verlaine (kss37, 1924) for voice and piano, which are settings of the work of the French Symbolist poet, Paul-Marie Verlaine (1844–1896). This also included a broadcast on 15 December 1986 with Christine Cairns (soprano) on BBC Radio Scotland (FM: 92.8-94.7 MHz, founded 1978).

More noteworthy are his numerous performances of the preposterously titled Fantasiettina sul nome illustre dell’egregio poeta Christopher Grieve ossia Hugh M’Diarmid—Tiny Little Fantasy on the Illustrious Name of the Distinguished Poet Christopher Grieve, i.e. Hugh MacDiarmid (1961).

Stevenson’s performances of the Fantasiettina (Table 4) consist of twelve performances, a commercial recording, two broadcasts, in six countries, on three continents.

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As with most things in relation to Sorabji, nothing was ever quite so clear-cut, nor straightforward—which is recounted in detail by Adrian Corleonis, who narrates how Stevenson performing Sorabji’s work eventuated, as a result of Stevenson making a performing edition of Sorabji’s ‘Fantasiettina sul nome illustre dell’egregio poeta Christopher Grieve ossia Hugh M’Diarmid’—Tiny Little Fantasy on the Illustrious Name of the Distinguished Poet Christopher Grieve, i.e. Hugh MacDiarmid’ (1961): ‘The manuscript of Sorabji’s Fantasiettina sul nome illustre dell’egregio poeta Christopher Grieve ossia Hugh M’Diarmid’—Tiny Little Fantasy on the Illustrious Name of the Distinguished Poet Christopher Grieve, i.e. Hugh MacDiarmid’ (1961) was loaned to Stevenson in August 1962, from which he made a copy.

After its return to Sorabji it disappeared and Stevenson’s copy became the only source extant, from which, in 1987 Bardic Edition published the work as a ‘Performing Edition by Ronald Stevenson’ with Stevenson’s exercises for mastering some of its steeper demands. Though playing but three minutes, the four pages of published score contain the typical Sorabjian hurdles of five- and six-voiced chords, scorrevole runs in cross-rhythm, and the alternation of cataclysmic tumult (‘quasi una eruzione volcanica’) with mystical muttering spreading over three staves. Its première was given by Michael Habermann on 19 November 1979, in Roanoke, VA. Stevenson has also performed and recorded it. Returning the compliment, Sorabji dedicated ‘Villa Tasca: Mezzogiorno Siciliano for Piano’ to Stevenson in 1980’.


173 See also Altarus AIR CD 9043 (1• DDD), Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji (1892–1988), ‘Fantasiettina sul nome illustre dell’egregio poeta Christopher Grieve ossia Hugh M’Diarmid’ (1961), track eleven, ‘Cathedrals in
Table 4. Ronald Stevenson’s Performances between 1981 and 2004 of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji’s *Fantasiettina sul nome illustre dell’egregio poeta Christopher Grieve ossia Hugh M’Diarmid* (1961)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>VENUE</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/09/1982</td>
<td>Octagon Theatre, University of Western Australia, Perth</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/03/1985</td>
<td>Convocation Hall, McMaster University, Hamilton</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/03/1985</td>
<td>College, State University of New York, Fredonia, New York</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/11/1987</td>
<td>Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/01/1988</td>
<td>Kelso Music Club, Kelso, Scottish Borders</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/08/1988</td>
<td>Richard Demarco Gallery, Blackfriars Street, Edinburgh</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/09/1988</td>
<td>Barrfields Pavilion, Largs Viking Festival, North Ayrshire</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>21/09/2004</td>
<td>Nordwest Radio, Bremen, 88.3 FM (D) ‘Der Kauz von Corfe Castle: Aus dem Nachlaß von Kaikhosru Sorabji’ (Broadcast, Germany)</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this one instance alone, Stevenson incontestably demonstrates his faithfulness to a fellow composer-pianist whose work he has championed for over two and half decades. On a larger scale, Ateş Orga notes that if one inspects a publicity brochure from the mid-1960s for ‘Ronald Stevenson: Pianist,’ the breadth of repertoire on offer at the time was as unquestionably as voluminous as it was diverse:174

Nine mainstream concertos, eight in minor keys, by Bach (D minor), Mozart (D minor), Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin (E minor), Liszt (No. 1), Grieg and Paderewski. A cross-section of ‘modern works’ for piano and orchestra by Busoni, Vlad, Tagliapietra, Bartók (No. 3) and Szymanowski, together with his own *Faust Triptych*. The complete Bach ‘48’ and Chopin studies. A selection of Beethoven sonatas. New works by Soviet, British, America, Israeli, Polish and Scandinavian composers. Music by Schoenberg, Gershwin, Busoni and Grainger. And four lecture-recitals - on Busoni, Grainger, 'Modern Music' and 'The Contemporary Composer and Folk Music.' 175

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The inclusion of the complete *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, both volumes of Chopin *Études* as well as the monolithic Busoni *Piano Concerto in C major*, is an extraordinary repertoire, by anyone’s standard, especially considering that Stevenson would still have his own colossal eighty-minute *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) in his repertoire. It is interesting to note that he includes only one of his own works, with emblematic modesty—his *Faust Triptych* (1959):

I. Prelude: Largo – Presto – Cadenza (Andante Tranquillo) Largo  
II. Fugue: – tempo giusto  
III. Fantasy: Adagio – ’l’istesso tempo

The memorization of the complete *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier bwv 846–893* would have been considered an esoteric inclusion, as a whole, more often than not restricted to the realm of a specialist.\(^{176}\)

If one evaluates a single recital of Stevenson’s (as shown in Figure 15) for the *Kintyre Music Society* in Western Scotland in 1965, the breadth and miscellany of repertoire is equally as remarkable:\(^{177}\)

The fact that Stevenson includes several of his own transcriptions and his *Simple Variations on Purcell’s ‘New Scotch Tune’* (1964, revised 1975\(^{178}\)) seems to be a true throwback to the recitals of the great composer-pianists of bygone eras, sitting alongside repertoire ranging from the customary to the obscure. Hamilton notes that in the nineteenth century, it was certainly expected for a composer-pianist to include some of their own work. This gradually subsided and fell out of favour as the twentieth century advanced:

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\(^{176}\) Stevenson saw a vital part of his preparation for composing and performing the *Passacaglia on DSCH* as being ‘memorizing the 48 Preludes and Fugues at the piano’. (*Das Wohltemperierte Klavier, bwv 846–893* [1722 and 1742]) Stevenson, ‘*Passacaglia on DSCH*’, *The Listener* (1969), reproduced in Walton (ed.) *Song in Gold Pavilions*, 3.


Well into the twentieth century pianists would regularly include their own compositions in their programs—Paderewski’s Sonata in Eb Minor or Minuet [José] Hofmann’s (1876–1957) *Kaleidoscope* [Moriz] Rosenthal’s (1862–1946) *Papillion*’s—but the balance had well and truly shifted from the heyday of Liszt and Thalberg, when an entire concert could regularly be formed from the pianist’s own output.\(^{180}\)

In Stevenson’s recital, he incorporated Henry Purcell’s *Suite in G Major*, Z.660 (date unknown, published 1696), as well as two of his own *Three Grounds on Henry Purcell* (1955–58), and his *Queen’s Dolour* Z.670 (date unknown, trans. Stevenson 1959),\(^{181}\) all of which blur the line between transcription and recomposition (discussed at length in chapter 3.6). Intriguingly, the transcriptions

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\(^{179}\) Scott-Sutherland, *Stevenson’s Recital Programmes*, 300 (*Reproduced with kind permission, Toccata Press*)

\(^{180}\) Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 60.

\(^{181}\) The Original Purcell is in A Minor, Z. 670 (composition date unknown).
are from original harpsichord works but they were heard on this occasion on Stevenson’s spinet, which approximates the original Purcell instrumentation.

Stevenson was the owner of the spinet, crafted by the fêted instrument builder and principal figure in the early-music revival, Eugène-Arnold Dolmetsch (1858–1940)—founder of the Dolmetsch Early Music Festival (1925), a festival that still occurs annually in Haslemere in Surrey, England. Stevenson was so enamored with his spinet that on his month-long sea-voyage to South Africa (1963), he journeyed with his instrument as hand luggage:

My luggage included a small spinet, which was actually a miniature harpsichord, made by Dolmetsch and decorated, most beautifully, by the original Dolmetsch’s widow, Mable Dolmetsch (1874–1963). I was intrigued by it, because Busoni had got Dolmetsch to make him a harpsichord.

The repeat of the Mozart D Minor Fantasy, KV 397 (1782) either side of the interval is fascinating. Even in contemporary times, whilst there are many superb ‘early-keyboard’ practitioners, it is hard to imagine a single artist, early specialist, or otherwise who would

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‘[Eugène-Arnold] Dolmetsch (1858–1940)] was a French-born musician and instrument maker who led the first great revival of early music in England. He learned to build pianos from his father and organs from his grandfather, although he grew up as a violin player and studied with [Henri] Vieuxtemps [1820–1881] at the Brussels Conservatory [Het Koninklijk Conservatorium, founded 1813]. After falling in love with some seventeenth-century British suites he began to wonder what the violin would have sounded like in Bach’s day. Encouraged by Sir George Grove [1820–1900], he found period instruments and repaired them in order to recreate the sounds of the past. As a result he played music that no one had heard as originally intended for over one-hundred-and-fifty years. He began to put on period concerts with his family, even going so far as to dress in period clothing. In 1925 he founded the International Dolmetsch Early Music Festival, a chamber music festival held annually at Haslemere in Surrey, England. Thanks to the efforts of Dolmetsch, the performance of pre-Bach music entered into the mainstream’.

183 Stevenson corresponded with Mable Dolmetsch (1874–1963) extensively concerning the spinet and the early music revival in general, see, Appendix Two: Catalogue of Complete Musicological Correspondence of Ronald Stevenson, 31 Miscellaneous British Musicians, Mable Dolmetsch, ‘sixteen letters between 1957 and 1959.’


contemplate performing the same work, to the same audience, twice—on a period instrument before the interval and the modern concert piano in immediate succession. Stevenson seems to share a receptiveness with Malcolm Bilson (b. 1935), who was at the forefront of the so-called ‘period instrument movement’ from the early 1970’s onwards. Bilson recently stated that he doesn’t even like the word fortepiano, as it suggests that only one unambiguous instrument exists when, in fact, a multitude of diverse instruments are utilized beyond the generic label:

I don’t even like the word fortepiano. Fortunately, we now have wonderful pianos (replicas and originals) from all the important periods of piano building Walter, Stein, Graf, Broadwood, Érard, Pleyel etc. I like to think of myself and many of us who do ‘this thing’ as pianists who play many types of pianos, as opposed to those who play a single type."186

Bilson is perhaps unintentionally adhering to and advocating an axiom of Ferruccio Busoni’s which is often quoted by Stevenson:187

From [Johann Sebastian] Bach I learnt to recognize the truth that Good and Great Universal Music remains the same through whatever medium it is sounded. But also the second truth that different mediums [sic.] each have a different language [their own*].188

Although Stevenson’s spinet performances could hardly be considered truly ‘authentic’ by today’s standards, he is nonetheless demonstrating a sincere responsiveness to informing an audience, which surely must have been extraordinary for the time. Malcolm Bilson notes that even today, there is an enormous discrepancy between the quantity of recordings utilizing period instruments in the orchestral repertoire as opposed to keyboard music:

If today you want to buy a recording of the complete Beethoven symphonies189 you will find about 60% on modern orchestras, 40% period orchestras. If you want to buy Beethoven piano sonatas,190 on the other hand, is 1% period-pianos too high?191

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187 Malcolm Bilson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.

188 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 80, Originally from Busoni, Sketch of a New Aesthetic, 80 (*Malcolm MacDonald’s addition).

It is also notable that Stevenson embarks and brings to an end the recital with Purcell as ‘baroque-bookends,’ has the Viennese standards as the innermost episode, with the Beethoven Sonata in F Sharp Major, Op. 78 (1809) and the two performances of the Mozart D Minor Fantasia, KV 397 (1782) straddling the interval. In the second-half, the Three Chopin Écossaises Op. 72 (1826) are followed by the more atypical and infrequently heard repertoire of Paderewski—the Cracovienne Fantastique Op. 14 No. 6 (1884), Chants du Voyageur Op. 8 No. 3 (1883), and the Étude in B♭ minor Op. 3 (1901–03)—and then three of the Mazurkas Op. 50 (1926–31) by Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937). The recital is concluded with three of the Melodie Ludowe (1945) by Witold Lutoslawski (1913–1994), a selection of Grieg’s Slåtter (1902–1903), Grainger’s diabolically virtuosic Scotch Strathspey and Reel (1901–1911), and Stevenson’s own Simple Variations on Purcell’s ‘New Scotch Tune’ (1964, rev 1975).

The inclusion of the Chants du Voyageur Op. 8 No. 3 (1883) is perhaps the key to understanding Stevenson’s programme design, as he wishes for his audience to embark on a journey of melody with him that spans the entire gamut of keyboard literature—from the Purcell Suite in G, Z.660, to contemporary music penned by his own hand. Similarly, the journey traverses vast geographical distances, encompassing folk-inspired idioms and regional dance variations from Poland, Scandinavia, Central Europe, the British Isles, and even Australia. Colin Scott-Sutherland recounts that after Stevenson had completed this musical circumnavigation of the globe and they were ‘alone together in the hall’ he gave a ‘magisterial performance’ of Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (KV 845, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin, BWV 1004 (composed c. 1717–1723). Perhaps above all, this acts as a testimony to Stevenson’s strong

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190 Beethoven’s thirty-two piano sonatas were written between 1795 and 1822.
192 Colin Scott-Sutherland, Stevenson’s Recital Programmes, 299.
desire to communicate: he will often have an insatiable yearning to trek even further afield on his voyage, with his audience as traveling companions, even after they have already disembarked at journey’s end.

2.6 Stevenson as Composer-Performer: A Critical Appraisal

Appraising any artist’s performing ability in the written word is, in many ways ineffectual, owing principally to the very subjectivity of its ephemeral nature. If any conclusions can be drawn concerning Stevenson’s pianism—what can one ascertain? Scott-Sutherland said of Stevenson that ‘generalization or pigeon-holing of his versatile spirit is virtually impossible’. Whilst researching for this exegetical critique, the current author found evidence of what appears to be a one-page lecture recital programme from Stevenson’s visit to Western Australia (1982), evidently housed in the concert archive of the State Library of Western Australia. However, searching for the catalogued item with the custodian of the archives, it turned out that a box, which ought to have contained several hundred items, was virtually empty and the contents of Stevenson’s lecture recital have been lost:

After further investigation, it has been found that the University of Western Australia Music Society has regrettably kept no records either and Stevenson, understandably, cannot recollect which pianists he was emulating, as it was such a long time in the past. One could guess that his list would almost certainly have included Paderewski, Grainger, Godowsky, and Busoni, but this is purely speculative. However, it is important to take into account that Stevenson was consciously thinking of how pianists of the past played—at a time when practically nobody else was interested nor cared—in the early 1990’s. His re-writes in performance are certainly testament to a bygone era that Sutherland sees as ‘shafts of light, illuminating the darkest corners,’ as he likewise rekindles the use of arpeggiation and asynchronization, bringing it out of the shadows. Pianistically, he has immersed himself in the principal currents of the piano repertoire from all continents—as well as its less significant tributaries—exploring its uncharted backwaters and sources far more than most have.

On a personal level, Stevenson is always good-humored company and could never be accused of taking himself too seriously. Taylor gives an account of Stevenson ‘on a less rewarding

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194 Australian Premiere of Passacaglia on DSCH (1963): Ronald Stevenson [solo piano], Octagon Theatre, University of Western Australia, 9 September 1982. Stevenson also gave a lecture-recital [solo piano], for the ‘University of Western Australia Music Society’ entitled, ‘Four Great Pianists of the Past and How They Played?,’ Octagon Theatre, 6 September 1982, as well as a recital with fellow composer-pianist, Roger Smalley [two pianos], Octagon Theatre, 23 September 1982. University of Western Australia / State Library of Western Australia (Concert Programme Archive).

In a recent email from the Custodian of the Archives (Steven Howell), State Library of Western Australia to the author, ‘I found the appropriate envelope, which was supposed to contain about five-hundred items from PR8065, but found it almost empty. The collection of ephemera has changed from cataloguing and listing to just putting items in boxes in broad categories, so material relating to theatres is found in EPH/THE, but they were not supposed to place already catalogued material in it. However, I did find some of PR8065 in EPH/THE, but not the item you were looking for. The ephemera person has not been able to find it either and has no knowledge of why so many items are missing from this particular collection’.


195 Stevenson, pers. comm., 27 July 2012.

occasion’. He ‘had just discovered the delights of [Antonio] Soler’s (1729–1783) *Fandango* [in D Major, s.46 c. 1770] that he insisted on sharing with his audience without proper preparation, punctuating the performance with shouts of ‘Olé!’ whenever the going got tough’.\(^{197}\) This is an undeniable throwback to the turn of the twentieth century, instantaneously redolent of the great—though admittedly somewhat peculiar—Vladimir de Pachmann (1848–1933), who would often give a ‘running commentary’ whilst performing, earning him the comical epithet ‘*Chopinzee*’.\(^{198}\) De Pachmann’s idiosyncrasies, eccentric platform manner, and questionable skills as a raconteur, nonetheless veneered a remarkable music intellect. Stevenson’s shouts of ‘Olé’ underline an unadulterated delight in communication, which is, after all, the primal aim of any performer. He also shares a comradeship with the fellow composer, whether it be Henry Purcell, Scott Joplin, or Herman Sandby (1881–1965).

The current author, having had the privilege to hear him perform for over twenty years, notes that despite his extraordinary gifts as a pianist, it is as much his instantaneously observable humility that makes him so appealing to audiences of all shapes and sizes. Concerning the breadth and scale of Stevenson’s recital programs, Ateş Orga notes that he has always made ‘herculean demands on himself and expects no less from his interpreters’.\(^{199}\) However, it logically follows that the greatest interpretation is fundamentally concerned with an artist sharing their own inner voice that must, above all, have something to say. In this respect, as a composer-performer in the transcendental tradition of his great predecessors—who in all probability date back to the earliest *clavicembalists*\(^ {200}\)—Stevenson is a visionary.

\(^{197}\) Harold Taylor, *Stevenson’s Pianism*, 207.


\(^{200}\) This matter is discussed at length in Chapter Three: Stevenson and Transcription.
Chapter Three: Stevenson and Transcription

3.1 Defining Transcription, Historical Precedents and the Fons et Origo of Transcription as an Art Form

For many instrumentalists, other than pianists, the term ‘transcription’ is often distinguished as an undeviating copy, such as transferring lute tablature to modern guitar notation—whilst an instrumental ‘arrangement’ is seen incongruously as more resourceful, imaginative and inventive. Conversely, in the tradition of virtuoso composer-keyboard players—such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Alkan, Busoni, Godowsky, and Grainger—piano transcription has paradoxically been viewed as ‘an encapsulation’ of the original work of art that is ‘varied’ in order to make it work idiomatically in a new instrumental medium. This approach is akin to translating the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926) from German to English, or Molière (aka. Jean-Baptiste Poquelin [1622–1673]) from French into Russian—and still making it ‘work’ as poetry.

In Jack Hibberd’s first volume of poetry, Le Vin Des Amants (1977), which consists of ‘versions’ of poems by Charles Pierre Baudelaire (1821–1867), Hibberd wryly notes that ‘the Germans have a saying: “faithful translations are like boiled strawberries.”201 What he means by this is that if the language is translated too literally, its meaning and emotional intensity are lost—if too much freedom is used, the form and structure of the poem are compromised and poetic integrity is lost. Similarly, in a letter to Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), dated 28 October 1365, from his friend, the ‘Father of Humanism,’ Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374), these complex issues are addressed:

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An imitator must see to it that what he writes is similar, but not the very same; and the similarity, moreover, should be not like that of a painting or statue to the person represented, but rather like that of a son to a father, where there is often great difference in the features and members, and yet after all there is a shadowy something—akin to what our painters call one’s air.  

Comparing the term ‘transcription’ with ‘arrangement’ also proves easier said than done. On the ambiguity of the interchangeability between the two terms, Solee Lee-Clark notes that ‘the word arrangement might be applied to any piece of music based on or incorporating pre-existing material,’ or the ‘transference of a composition from one medium to another or elaboration—or simplification—of a piece, with or without a change of medium’. The key sensibility is that ‘in either case, some degree of recomposition is usually involved’. Nevertheless, in a pianistic connotation, the term ‘piano arrangement’ has negative implications, frequently seen as synonymous with reduction—in every sense of the word. An obvious example is that of a ‘piano reduction’ (or arrangement) of the orchestral parts of an instrumental concerto or opera for pedagogical practices.

No such negativity is disguised when Marc-André Roberge discusses transcription in the particular cases of ‘Liszt, Godowsky, Busoni, Grainger, Sorabji, and Stevenson’. He notes that, for all of them, transcribing was ‘as fundamental as composition’. Roberge seems conscious that, by utilizing musical structures previously designed by others, there is the jeopardy of being wrongly branded as ‘contractors’ rather than ‘architects’. His counterargument, however, is simple—transcriptions are not constructed by ‘mere artisans, but by highly gifted creative minds, who impose the stamp of their own style on the models they choose to build upon’ similar to the ‘Renaissance composers who, in their parody masses, made use of motives from works by others’.

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203 Solee Lee-Clark, Franz Liszt’s Pianistic Approach to Franz Schubert’s Songs, 26.


205 Roberge, The Busoni Network and the Art of Creative Transcription, 74.

206 Roberge, The Busoni Network and the Art of Creative Transcription, 74.
Stevenson contends that ‘Ernest Newman (1868–1959) held that masterpieces of transcription are comparable to the work of great commentators, such as Giovanni Andrea Scarazzini (1837–1901) on the Divina Commedia (1308–1321), John Conington (1825–1869) on Virgil (70 BCE–19 BCE), Montague Summers (1880–1948) on the Restoration Dramatists’.²⁰⁷ In spite of this poetic philosophy, not all transcription is exceptional. Stevenson notes that in the nineteenth century, it ‘sometimes degenerates into the cheap arrangement—or more aptly derangement . . . . unfortunately this brought the whole thing into undeserved odium’. However, despite some ‘bad-press’, he certainly sees a nourishing permanence and validity to the art-form that has, after all, been kept alive ‘from Johann Sebastian Bach to Arnold Schoenberg’.²⁰⁸ Only too sentient of criticism, he notes:

Twentieth century masters of transcription have all spoken out against irrational criticism and calumny. Godowsky wrote: ‘Why should musicians be denied the privileges of comment, criticism, dissertation, discussion and display of imaginative faculties when transcribing, arranging, or paraphrasing a standard work! Why should literary men alone enjoy all the prerogatives!’²⁰⁹

In essence, Stevenson’s own characterization of transcription is in all probability the most succinct—‘the art of re-working a composition in a performing medium different from the original’.²¹⁰

Barry Ould (b. 1958) wrote of transcription—as short a time ago as 2002—that, ‘its foundation can be traced back to Liszt, the acknowledged Father of the form’.²¹¹ However, this assertion is very much mistaken on numerous accounts. Although Liszt was unarguably a master transcriber, the sources of the keyboard transcription can be traced back much further to some of the very earliest extant repertoire. Furthermore, Liszt could never be seen, even apprehensively, as the recognized ‘Father of the form’, as he was transcribing at the very Zenith of the Genus, not its
infancy. Solee Lee-Clark argues that the art of transcribing dates back at least as far as the late Middle Ages in Western Europe:

The practice of arranging music began as early as the fourteenth century....The arranging of vocal polyphony, both sacred and secular, for keyboard instruments or lute was very popular from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries. These arrangements were literal transcriptions of vocal music or florid elaboration of the melodies.  

This notion is recapitulated by Stevenson, who repeatedly cites Giulio Caccini’s (1551–1618), solo madrigal, *Amarilli Mia Bella* (1602). This was written whilst William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was still very much alive—it premièred the same year as the first performance of *Twelfth Night* in London (1602). Stevenson tells us that ‘the following year (1603), Peter Philips (1560–1628) transcribed it for virginals—a transcription far more free than any of Liszt’s transcriptions of Bach’.  

Lee-Clark notes that as the field evolved throughout the Baroque and Classical eras ‘many keyboard concertos by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) are arrangements of [Antonio] Vivaldi’s (1678–1741) violin concertos, and George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) recycled much of his own music’. It is also worth noting that ‘several piano concertos by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) are also based on other composers’ music. Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) arranged his *Violin Concerto in D Major* Op. 61 (1806) as a piano concerto (Opus 61a) and his Second Symphony [*Symphony No. 2 in D major*, Op. 36 (1801–1802)] as a Piano Trio [that bears the same opus number, Op. 36]’.

However, the art form was becoming worryingly close to extinction by the mid-twentieth century. This view is verified by Benjamin Britten (1913–1976), who wrote to Stevenson—praising and encouraging his isolated interest in the art-form—‘transcription is a very serious form which has been much neglected recently’. Consequently, if one considers the uninterrupted chain of

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212 Solee Lee-Clark, *Franz Liszt’s Pianistic Approach to Franz Schubert’s Songs*, 18.
214 Solee Lee-Clark, *Franz Liszt’s Pianistic Approach to Franz Schubert’s Songs*, 18.
succession of Phillips, Purcell, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt, Alkan, Busoni, Grainger, and Sorabji, it seems evident that Stevenson was one of very few transcribers of any gravity for keyboard in the latter half of the twentieth century—in a tradition dating back to, at least, the late fourteenth century.

3.2 An Unparalleled Contribution to the Genre of Transcription

Ronald Stevenson has been described by Malcolm MacDonald as ‘the most dedicated exponent who has ever lived of that particular variational art form we call transcription, or arrangement, notwithstanding his great exemplars, Busoni, Liszt, and even Bach’. On completion of his transcription of the *Six Solo Violin Sonatas*, Op.27 of Eugène Ysaÿe between 1981 and 1982—a monumental achievement in itself—Stevenson proudly wrote in the score that ‘this is the proof of what I have learnt from Bach, Busoni and Godowsky’. MacDonald notes that transcription is not only a much-maligned sub-genre of composition, but there had been a stigma attached to it for at least a century. Ateş Orga writes that Stevenson’s transcriptions are not only voluminous but also constitute a significant percentage of his entire output. He sees them as being as inventive as they are varied, sharing influences from past composer-pianists of all stylistic periods:

Stevenson’s transcriptions are as serious as they are many—and they constitute nearly forty percent of his output. They are brilliant studies in paraphrase, inventive re-castings that sample freely from all periods and styles in music, deriving inspiration as much from the Classical example of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as from the pianism of the great keyboard eagles of the nineteenth and twentieth. In them the voice, the strength, and the soul of the modern concert grand find expressive celebration.

In recent years, interest in piano transcription has, nonetheless, improved considerably. Similarly, there is also a renewed enthusiasm for composers who were once seen as the height of the unfashionable, especially those who transcribed the works of others. Most noticeably, these are

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217 MacDonald, *Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography*, 80. MacDonald notes ‘since the [Eugène Ysaÿe] sonatas total seventeen movements in all—this was tantamount to composing the Bach-Busoni Chaconne in D minor [Ferruccio Busoni’s transcription (KIV B 45, 1893) of Johann Sebastian Bach’s Chaconne in D minor for Solo Violin, bwv 1004, composed c. 1717–1723] seventeen times over!’’, 81.
Ferruccio Busoni, Leopold Godowsky, Percy Aldridge Grainger and Ronald Stevenson. Of all the aforementioned composers, Stevenson is undoubtedly the most prolific—having transcribed works from a vast array of composers that, quite literally, encompasses the entire spectrum of western art music.²¹⁹ It is truly astonishing that Stevenson’s source materials range from the Elizabethan John Bull (1562–1628) to the work of living contemporaries. However, the number of transcriptions from the Baroque period seems to be disproportionately high, warranting supplementary exploration.

3.3 Transcribing the Baroque: An Unfair Prejudice?

An exegetical study such as this inevitably asks the question: ‘If Stevenson is the most prolific transcriber who is the most prolifically transcribed?’ It would be of little revelation to most that it is Johann Sebastian Bach. Stevenson observes that, ‘his transcribers include Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, Franz Liszt, Charles-Valentin Alkan, Johannes Brahms, Ferruccio Busoni, Leopold Godowsky, Percy Aldridge Grainger, Arnold Schoenberg, Andrés Segovia, Leopold Stokowski, Igor Stravinsky, and Sir William Walton’. He further notes that ‘this list does not include composers of transcriptions [only] for piano, but also for other media; and it does not include the number of jazz-transcribers, whose number is legion’.220

Stevenson has a fascination with transcribing his precursors, most of whom were transcribers themselves. He has transcribed a great deal from the Baroque and Renaissance periods from the Elizabethan John Bull, to later composers such as Henry Purcell and Johann Sebastian Bach. In regard to Purcell, Stevenson will repeatedly quote the words of Anglo-Scots composer and critic, Cecil Gray (1895–1951), from The History of Music (1947). Gray rightfully recognized him as a composer of the highest rank, writing: ‘in England during the seventeenth century there is only one composer who need concern us here, namely Henry Purcell; indeed, he is the only Englishman of any period who is accepted as a composer of the first rank by the rest of the world’.221

In the mid-twentieth century, Stevenson transcribed the work of his fifteenth-century counterpart in writing his Three Grounds on Henry Purcell (trans. 1955–1958), which will be used in this instance as a case study to reveal salient facets of Stevenson’s transcribing. He describes the Three Grounds on Henry Purcell as ‘freely transcribed’ with radically tailored versions transliterated

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‘for violin (1958) and for guitar (1958).’ Stevenson was under no illusion about reticence in some academic circles, not just in transcribing Baroque music in the first instance but in particular the work of Henry Purcell. He sees the principal reason for this as being that, ‘Purcell belongs to the "early music" cult more than Bach does, and musicological attitudes against transcribing Purcell are that much more critical’. Stevenson quotes: Thurston Dart (1921–1971) in The Interpretation of Music (1967), which has some of the unforgiving words for transcribers:

> To link one’s own name to the composer’s with a hyphen is to pimp on his capital; to efface his style with one’s own is to erase his original inscriptions; to flout the help of the scholar is to debase the composer’s coinage [ah, that’s the crux of it! RS]; to issue one’s own music falsely bearing the name of a man long dead is to mint counterfeit money.  

Being critically aware of such animosity, it is essential to ascertain how responsive Stevenson was to the original Purcell and his rationale for undertaking such a challenge in the first instance. This is discussed here in detail for the first time.

### 3.4 The First of Three Grounds on Henry Purcell: Ground in C Minor (trans. 1955)—a Cross-Fertilization on Artistic Ideals, a Preference for the Tenor Register and the Importance of False Relations

Intriguingly, before a single note of his Three Grounds on Henry Purcell (1955–58) is played, Stevenson asks the pianist to read a fragment from Landowska on Music (1963) to illuminate his puzzling tempo marking ‘Andante Quasi Fado’. MacDonald notes that he similarly ‘includes pages of [John] Ruskin’s (1819–1900) prose—On the Surpassing Excellence Of Mountains (1884)—in the solo horn part of Bergstimmung (1986) and enjoins the player to read them before performance . . .

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225 The Fado is a Portuguese dance. Landowska recounts being able to see the piano-movers ‘dancing in the wings’ (out of line of sight of the audience but in her own) whilst she was playing a recital: see Wanda Landowska, Landowska on Music, collected, edited, and translated by Denise Restout, assisted by Robert Hawkins. New York, Stein and Day, 1964, 301 – 302.
attempting to include an attitude of mindfulness, of the spiritual realities for which his musical notation, however precise is only a symbol. Stevenson will repeatedly invite the performer to explore literary or visual allusions as a cross-fertilization of artistic ideals that are at the nucleus of his creativity.

In the first of the Three Grounds on Henry Purcell—the Ground in C minor (1955)—a counter melody built upon Purcell’s original, but in inversion, surfaces in bar seventeen in the alto register of the piano (Figure 16, highlighted in red). Four measures later, this counter melody disappears from view, later resurfacing in the richer sonorities of the tenor (bar twenty-one), with the orchestral allusion quasi tromba (as seen in Figure 17, highlighted in blue). Here he evokes the richer heaviness of the trumpets by dividing the counter melody between the strongest digits, the thumbs of both the left and right hands.

![Figure 16](image)

**Figure 16.** An Excerpt from the First Ground on Henry Purcell, *Ground in C Minor* (1955), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, 1995, bars 17-18.

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Stevenson’s work like Ferruccio Busoni’s often exhibits a marked preference for the tenor register. Stevenson recalled that, as a child, he would often cross his hands to bring out a singing tone in the tenor register.\textsuperscript{227} Harold Taylor notes that Stevenson ‘finds deep satisfaction in recordings by [Enrico] Caruso (1873–1921) and [John] McCormack (1884–1945)’ as opposed to a pianist such as Vladimir Horowitz (1903–1989), who ‘preferred the soprano register’ and subsequently finds a strong ‘masculinity’ in Stevenson’s playing.\textsuperscript{228}

David Hackbridge Johnson substantiates Stevenson’s preference for the tenor register in an account of hearing him perform two of his own transcriptions: one of Erik Chisholm’s (1904–1965) very last works—Hert’s Sang (1962/3,\textsuperscript{7} trans. Stevenson c. 2004)\textsuperscript{229}—and Bernard van Dieren’s (1887–1936) Weep You No More, Sad Fountains (anon. sixteenth century, trans. Van Dieren, 1925,

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure17}
\caption{An Excerpt from the First Ground on Henry Purcell, \textit{Ground in C Minor} (1955), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, 1995, bars 21-22.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{227} Stevenson, \textit{pers. comm.}, 16 September 2011.

\textsuperscript{228} Harold Taylor, \textit{Stevenson’s Pianism}, 208.

\textsuperscript{229} In a recent email to the author from Dr. Morag Chisholm (daughter of Erik Chisholm, 1904–1965): ‘Herts Sang as you will know is one of the \textit{Poems of Love} song series that my Dad and Lillias Scott worked on and sang together when they were ‘a-courting’ in 1962/63. They married in Cape Town in 1963 and my Dad died 1965. The songs are really beautiful, almost one of the last things he wrote. The ECT [Erik Chisholm Trust, established in 2001] published them in a special edition last year and they have been sung quite often in concerts and are on the CD, Songs for a Year and a Day. Ronald presented the transcription to me as a gift several years ago at one of the Ronald Stevenson Society Summer Schools, with hopes that he would find time to do all seven . . . sadly he did not do this’. Dated, 8\textsuperscript{th} August 2012. If seems most likely Dr. Chisholm was presented the transcription by Stevenson at the Ronald Stevenson Society Summer School, The Cathedral of the Isles, Millport, Isle of Great Cumbrae, Scotland, when Stevenson performed the work in 2004, as in Hackbridge-Johnson’s account.
trans. Stevenson, 1951). He saw the importance placed on the middle registers of the instrument as giving him an awareness of continuity with past masters:

The first was based on Hert’s Song, a song by Erik Chisholm. The second transcription was of one of Bernard van Dieren’s best-known songs, Weep You No More, Sad Fountains. The transcriptions shared a similar approach in that the vocal parts were often given to the sonorous middle register of the piano while the surrounding bass and treble created a halo of harmony. The subtlety of the true composer-pianist was revealed in the transcriptions and they also enshrined a sense of continuity with past masters.230

When the present author gave the broadcast première of the Three Grounds on Henry Purcell (1955–1958),231 Stevenson said that one should take into account the aphorism of Gillies Whittaker (1876–1944), who believed that the false relations in Henry Purcell’s music are ‘as abundant as blackberries in Autumn’.232 These are actually Purcell’s own amalgamation of the Italianate vogue of the avant-garde seconda prattica of Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643). Stevenson even writes out the conception of his part, writing so that overzealous performers cannot mistake Purcell’s delectable clashes as ‘errors’. He does this (as shown in Figure 18), using the clefs of a vocal quartet, leaving no uncertainty to his intelligent design as well as displaying a profound deference for the original stylism of his baroque counterpart.


232 In 1934, Stevenson would only have been seven years old—presumably, he read this material at a later date. Gillies Whittaker, ‘Henry Purcell’, The Musical Times, October 1934: http://www.jstor.org/pss/918455.

3.5 Second of *Three Grounds on Henry Purcell, Ground in E♭ Minor* (trans. 1957): Auxiliary Melodies and Transposition

In the footnotes to his transcription of Purcell’s *Hornpipe in D minor* (1995), written to commemorate the Purcell’s tercentenary (1695–1995), Stevenson notes that this, like many of the works he has transcribed, is already a transcription of a transcription: ‘The by now démodé bias against the art of transcription should disappear vis-à-vis the case of Purcell himself, for his *D minor Hornpipe* was a harpsichord arrangement of a dance from his theatre music to *The Married Beau* (1693)’.233 This is also the case with the second of the *Three Grounds*, the *Ground in E♭ Minor* (1957). The original source material is the hauntingly beautiful *St Cecilia’s Ode* (Z.328, 1683), written by Purcell in an exceptionally cold winter, when the River Thames froze over, permitting a ‘frost-fair’ on the ice (1683). Purcell arranged this for Harpsichord in *Musick’s Handmade: Part Two* (1689). In

Stevenson’s performance notes he argues that, ‘both the original St Cecilia’s Ode (1683) as well as Purcell’s own harpsichord transcription (1689) are both in the key of E minor’ although he has transposed his transcription for ‘pianistic reasons’. However, what is his raison d’être? How is E♭ minor deemed to be more pianistic than E minor?

From a practitioner’s perspective, the six ‘black keys’ unquestionably make it physically easier to play, especially the ground bass—with its poised, graceful leaping of tenths—that delightfully contrasts the melancholic simplicity of Purcell’s original ‘vocal line,’ kept wholly in the right-hand (as shown in Figure 19 in red) throughout the transcription. Similarly, one of Franz Schubert’s (1797–1828) most fêted piano works, his G♭ Major Impromptu D899 No. 3 (1827), was initially transposed into G major by early publishers who, misguidedly thought that it would have a wider appeal, augmented commercial value and would be less taxing for the hands of the recreational amateur.

Stevenson rightly observes that the G♭ Major Impromptu is in fact ‘more problematical’ in G major, although ‘easier for the amateur to read’. This is first and foremost due to the black keys being both elevated from the white keys and geographically further back on the instrument. The melodic lines are easier to sound in the instance of both Schubert’s G♭ Major Impromptu and Stevenson’s Purcell transcription. This is due to G♭ major / E♭ minor having a more relaxed ‘open hand’ position that, with the fingers extended in a less rigid fashion is, as Stevenson accurately observes, significantly more ‘pianistic’ (as shown in Figure 20). This is probably the reason why all twenty pieces of the Vingt regards sur l’enfant-Jésus (1944) by Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) spiral

\[\text{\textsuperscript{234}}\text{As the ‘black keys’ are raised from the key-bed they obviously offer a far stronger tactile geography on the keyboard, than the uniformity of the ‘white notes’. A blind pianist will find it difficult to play in C major and many musically illiterate pianists will, almost without exception, prefer keys with many sharps and flats. Cecil Adams notes that Irving Berlin (1888–1989), ‘played almost entirely in the key of F♯, allowing him to stay on the black keys as much as possible. This wasn’t unheard-of for a self-taught musician, since it’s easier for untrained fingers to play the black keys (which are elevated and widely spaced) without hitting wrong notes’. In a 1962 interview, Berlin said, ‘The black keys are right there, under your fingers. The key of C is for people who study music’. http://www.straightdope.com/columns.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{235}}\text{Stevenson, pers., comm., c. 1995.}\]
around the key of F# major. Similarly, in Stevenson’s case this subtle change could only have been founded as a result of Stevenson’s skills as a performer.

Figure 19. An Excerpt from the Second Ground on Henry Purcell, Ground in E♭ Minor (1957) published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, 1995, bars 1-4.

Figure 20. Comparative Hand Position (current author’s diagram): G♭ Major, has a more fluid shape (Left) whilst in G Major, the fingers are more angular (Right).
As the *Ground in E♭ Minor* (1957) continues, the music gently but effectively unfolds and the transcribing becomes freer as it increases in intricacy. The vocal line begins to meander, sporadically wandering into the registration of the bass clef (as shown in Figure 21, highlighted in red). Later Stevenson masterfully superimposes a third internal voice—entirely of his own composition—as a counter melody (Figure 21, highlighted in red). This equals Purcell’s in beauty, weaving between the original melody and the omnipresent ground bass like the threads of a sonic tapestry that not only hold the work together, but also create an aural image.

![Figure 21](An Excerpt from the Second Ground on Henry Purcell, *Ground in E♭ Minor* (1957) published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, 1995, bars 7-10.)

In *The Art of Piano Transcription as Critical Commentary* (1992), David Colton highlights the ingenuity of Stevenson adding additional voices of his own. In the *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27* (1923) of Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931),\(^{236}\) reworked by Stevenson as six piano sonatas (1981–1982), he


<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Original Sonata</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. 1</td>
<td>G minor, ‘Joseph Szigeti’</td>
<td>G minor, ‘Jacques Thibaud’</td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Grave</td>
<td></td>
<td>1) Obsession; Prelude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Fugato</td>
<td></td>
<td>2) Malinconia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Allegretto poco scherzoso</td>
<td></td>
<td>3) Danse des Ombres; Sarabande</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Finale; Con brio</td>
<td></td>
<td>4) Les furies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No. 2    | A minor, ‘Joseph Szigeti’ | A minor, ‘Jacques Thibaud’ |
| 1) Grave |                | 1) Obsession; Prelude |
| 2) Fugato|                | 2) Malinconia    |
| 3) Allegretto poco scherzoso |            | 3) Danse des Ombres; Sarabande |
| 4) Finale; Con brio |            | 4) Les furies |

| No. 3    | D minor, ‘Georges Enesco’ | D minor, ‘Fritz Kriesler’ |
| 1) Lento molto sostenuto |                | 1) Allemanda |
| 2) Allegro in tempo giusto e con bravura |            | 2) Sarabande |
| 3) Finale |                | 3) Finale |

| No. 4    | E minor, ‘Fritz Kriesler’ |
| 1) Lento molto sostenuto |                |
| 2) Allemanda |                |
| 3) Finale |                |

| No. 5    | G major, ‘Mathieu Crickboom’ | E major, ‘Manuel Quiroga’ |
| 1) L’Aurore |                | ‘Allegro giusto non troppo vivo’ |
| 2) Danse rustique |            | (single movement) |

| No. 6    | E major, ‘Manuel Quiroga’ |
| 1) L’Aurore |                |
| 2) Danse rustique |            |

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notes that an additional fugal voice is added in the second movement of the *First Sonata in G Minor* Op. 27—dedicated by Eugène Ysaÿe to Joseph Szigeti (1892–1973):

The most notable act of commentary contained in these transcriptions occurs in the second movement of the first sonata, in which Stevenson has added a third part to Ysaÿe’s two-voice fugue. It is as if Stevenson approved of the fugal concept but found Ysaÿe’s application of this concept to be in need of further development. ²³⁷

Similarly, in the instance of the *Ground in E♭ Minor* (1957), the additional voice certainly gives the aural semblance of there being more than two hands at work. Likewise, the ingenious creative interplay of the four parts substantiates MacDonald’s assurance of proclaiming Stevenson a master transcriber. Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) regarded transcription as an art form with suspicion—contending that it is ‘artistically justified only when the arranger’s artistic effort is greater than the original composer’s’. ²³⁸ This view is echoed in Stevenson’s own words concerning the most superlative transcribing: ‘The work of the transcriber can sometimes be more creative than the material upon which it is based’. ²³⁹

However, is Stevenson distorting the original too much? Ivo Pogorelić (b. 1958) once eloquently said that he would ‘never hurt or harm a composer—people tell me I alter things, deal in distortion for, no doubt, vainglorious reasons, but that’s precisely what I do not do—to be frank, my aim is to clarify and refine, to enliven and vivify what is there’. Pogorelić continues with an enlightening analogy to the visual arts, as he elucidates a poetic line of reflection: ‘You know, when the Sistine Chapel was refurbished, revealed in all its first glory, the response was negative. People were disturbed by the brilliance and revelation disclosed and assumed some form of trick or artifice was involved’. ²⁴⁰ With the inclusion of additional voices, Stevenson is certainly aiming for a similar

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²³⁹ Stevenson, *Western Music*, 84.

vitality in his transcription, which is often as audacious as it is subtle: aiming to illuminate, revive and vivify the original Purcell.

3.6 Third of Three Grounds on Henry Purcell, Ground in C Minor (trans. 1957): ‘An Original Respect’

Concerning modern performance-practices in Baroque music, it was previously noted (in Chapter 2.5) that Stevenson would regularly perform on his Spinet. Most musicians would be of the same opinion that, whilst it is straightforward to cite historical treatises ad infinitum, there is no substitute for actually performing. It may come as a revelation to some that Liszt owned many instruments including Beethoven’s Broadwood and Mozart’s spinet.241 Hamilton notes of Beethoven’s fortepiano that ‘it was more a visual symbol of Liszt’s musical inheritance rather than an instrument for regular performance—to make the point clearer, Beethoven’s death mask was also on display’.242 However, this is pure speculation on Hamilton’s part—he acknowledges that Liszt would have been justifiably proud of his musical heritage. And it seems logical to assume that he at least played privately on the instruments—even merely out of deference for such gigantic musical antecedents as Mozart and Beethoven, especially as they took ‘pride of place’ in his ‘official music room’.243

Busoni asked ‘Dolmetsch to make him a harpsichord,’244 which, like Stevenson, he used.

When Eric Chisholm (1904–1965), the then Head of Music at Cape Town University in 1963, met Stevenson’s ship upon his arrival in South Africa to undertake his very unusual appointment—both in terms of academic workload and title—as ‘Head of Composition’ and ‘Head of Piano,’ Stevenson recounts:

241 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 211.
242 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 211.
243 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 211.
244 Walton, A Scot in ‘Emergent Africa,’ 24.
Erik Chisholm met us off the ship. It was a wonderful voyage.... Erik said, 'What's that you've got? That's a keyboard instrument, isn't it?' I said, 'Yes, it's a spinet'. He said, 'You're playing that tonight in the opera'. I played it in Don Giovanni every evening for a fortnight. He really got on with things. I got to know Don Giovanni very well.245

Stevenson candidly acknowledges that Purcell’s keyboard music is incomparable on a harpsichord as opposed to the modern instrument:

Purcell’s harpsichord Suites and Lessons are his shortest works. They provide ideal teaching and sight-reading material for tyro keyboard players. In their Urtext, most musicians would agree that they sound best on a spinet or small harpsichord.246

In the last of the Three Grounds on Henry Purcell, the Ground in C Minor (1957), he notes the paradox that his doubling of registration would have been approved on a period instrument such as an organ or harpsichord, yet is still frowned upon when writing or transcribing for the modern piano:

Doubling of registration has been added in III, following an interpretation of harpsichord / organ registration. No organist would be criticized, but rather praised, for exercising judicious innovation in performing with a tasteful variety of registration (8 foot, 4 foot &c): so this small freedom from choice should surely be granted to pianoforte performance in transcription.

This can manifestly be seen (highlighted in red in Figure 23), wherein the subtlety and quiet complexity of the part writing is neither over-written, nor detracting to the listener. It is wholly pianistic, and even ‘clavichordistic’—fluent in conception, indicative of an exceptionally refined, subtle understanding of keyboard figuration, lending itself to performance on either the harpsichord or modern concert instrument.


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<th>VOLUME ONE</th>
<th>Trans.</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Maude Valérie White, (1855–1937)</td>
<td><em>So we’ll go no more a-roving</em></td>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Frank Bridge(1879–1941)</td>
<td><em>Go not, Happy Day</em></td>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<th>VOLUME TWO</th>
<th>Trans.</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Ivor Novello (1893–1951)</td>
<td><em>We’ll Gather Lilacs</em></td>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><em>Fly Home Little Heart</em></td>
<td>c. 1980’</td>
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<tr>
<th>VOLUME THREE</th>
<th>Trans.</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>10. Stephen Foster (1826–1864)</td>
<td><em>Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair</em></td>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td><em>Come where my love lies dreaming</em></td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td><em>Beautiful Dreamer</em></td>
<td>1980</td>
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3.7 *L’Art Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano* (1975–1988) and the Significance of ‘Singing with your Fingers’

Stevenson’s *L’Art du Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano* (1975–1988) is a significant three-volume body of work, devoted to the memory of his father. It is a ‘collection of Victorian and Edwardian songs transcribed for solo piano’. The three volumes are as follows, with possible future volumes still planned (as shown in Table 5):

*L’Art du Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano* (1975–1988) will be used as a case study—in particular, *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair* (1854) by Stephen Foster (1826–1864) from Volume

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Three. This work will be scrutinized in considerable detail, hopefully revealing key rudiments of Stevenson’s transcribing.

The curious title is based on Sigismond Thalberg’s *L’Art du Chant appliqué au Piano*, Op. 70 (1853–64), which is itself a ‘cycle of twenty-two études in the art of bel canto playing.’²⁴⁸ According to Stevenson, it is ‘a series of transcriptions entitled *L’Art du Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano*—paying tribute to Thalberg’s series of transcriptions whose title I have appropriated, adding the word “Nouveau”.’²⁴⁹

Ateş Orga sees Thalberg’s infrequently performed Op 70 as being of ‘seminal importance’ in the nineteenth century for exploring the art of bel canto in pianism, just as Stevenson’s is in the twentieth century.²⁵⁰ Stevenson’s principal aim is to ‘sing with his fingers,’²⁵¹ emulating the human voice (discussed at length in relation to Stevenson’s own piano tone in *Chapter 2.1 Early Pianistic Influences from the ‘Sunset of the Great Romantic School of Pianism’*). According to Hamilton, ‘Thalberg’s [piano] course appears to be the best,’ although he appends that his ‘remarks’ in the extensive preamble ‘are noteworthy, and yet already forgotten’.²⁵² However, Thalberg’s earlier work is not the genesis of Stevenson’s desire to ‘sing with his fingers’. Stevenson frequently cites his own father’s singing as being the single biggest influence in his early pianism and explains further that he wishes to emulate the human voice in all his creative output:

> The human voice—that is what is lacking in the twentieth century. Even when composers these days write for the human voice they often treat it most inhumanly. I want to direct speech of the human voice—even in instrumental music.²⁵³

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²⁴⁸ Scott-Sutherland, *Ronald Stevenson at Seventy*, 1.


With a proclamation such as this, it is little wonder that his ‘earliest surviving compositions are concentrated in the fields of song and piano music’. Furthermore, the original source material in at least fifty-eight percent of his vast output of transcriptions is originally from vocal repertoire. That Stevenson sees vocal-emulation as ‘lacking’ in the twentieth century is, in all likelihood, due to the practice being deliberated as old-fashioned and outmoded. Hamilton notes that the model certainly is no new phenomenon, and is far older than most presuppose:

A preoccupation with a ‘noble singing melody’ was shared by many pianists, John Field (1782–1837) and Chopin among them, long before Leschetizky (1830–1915) was born. ‘Cantabile’ playing was a goal of Johann Sebastian Bach and an important part of Mozart’s arsenal of effects. On the other hand, it is vital to bear in mind that, in the instances of Bach and Mozart, the concern is with ‘a singer’s style of rhetorical delivery’ and did not come to full fruition until the nineteenth century. For Chopin, Thalberg, Liszt and their pupils, the renowned singers of Italian opera became the role models for emulation at the keyboard. Thalberg advocated: ‘Listen to good singers, and learn to sing yourself’. Similarly, Stevenson wallows in listening to some of the earliest-recorded singers, of whom he ‘never tires,’ melancholically contending that there is ‘no other opportunity of hearing such singing at present’. Hamilton correctly observes that in the nineteenth century there was an ‘enormous emphasis’ placed on the ‘requisite requirements in tone production and rubato,’ all of which are core elements of Stevenson’s own pianism (see Chapter

254 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 10.
255 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 140.
256 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 140.
258 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 140.
2.1). In Chopin’s case, ‘pauses for breath’ were ‘added to his own pupils’ scores’\(^{261}\) in emulation of singers.

The current author has witnessed a similar practice first-hand, whilst working on the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) with Stevenson, who added ‘breathe in’ and ‘out’ over the course of various phrases (as shown in Figure 24). These pencil additions in his own hand act as a modern counterpart to the *Nocturnes* of Chopin and Field that were ‘directly inspired by the bel canto operas of Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835) and Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)’.\(^{262}\) Stevenson even goes so far as to contend that, ‘The art of singing is the same on every instrument: Bel canto is my main interest in piano playing’.\(^{263}\) In fact, this is a reiteration, almost *verbatim*, from Thalberg’s preface to his own *L’Art du Chant appliqué au Piano* (1853–64): ‘The art of fine singing always remains the same no matter what instrument it is practiced on’.\(^{264}\)

![Figure 24. Ronald Stevenson’s Pencil Additions to the Current Author’s ‘Working Copy’ of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 36-39.](image)

*Bel canto* itself has a multiplicity of denotations and is a problematical topic of discussion. Historically, it can purely refer to a ‘lost art or tradition’ whilst modern characterizations can include one or more of the following—development of an unblemished legato, elegance of phrase construction, a deep-seated mastery of breath control, and both a nimbleness and flexibility of vocal

\(^{261}\) Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 140.


\(^{264}\) Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 159.
technique—all gravitating towards the fundamental importance of ornamentation and stylized vocal development.

Whilst emulating the voice was predominantly a nineteenth-century practice, Stevenson ‘feels strongly’ that his aspiration to emulate the voice is an ‘aesthetic shared between two circles of composers’ who were ‘satellites round Busoni and Delius’. These include ‘Peter Warlock (1894–1930), Bernard van Dieren (1887–1936)—a sort of [James] Boswell (1740–1795) to Busoni’s [Samuel] Johnson (1709–1784)—and Sorabji’. Stevenson emphasizes that they were ‘circles, not a conscious school’—‘to whose aesthetic’ he ‘can subscribe’. Significantly he sees it as ‘an on-going aesthetic because it presents an extension of a tradition that is essentially humanitarian and which is rooted in the voice’. Although Sorabji was the only composer Stevenson personally knew, it is imperative for him to feel connected with others to break his comparative artistic solitude and aesthetic isolation.

In Thalberg’s preface to L’Art du Chant appliqué au Piano, Op 70, he argues that ‘the melody, and not the harmony, has proved itself to be triumphal throughout the ages’. No doubt he would endorse Stevenson’s work, as his entire œuvre, according to Stevenson scholar Colin Scott-Sutherland, is ‘steeped in that most unfashionable of commodities today—melody’.

Pertaining to the underlying sentimentality of Stevenson’s own song settings, MacDonald notes that ‘cynicism is wholly out of place here,’ which could likewise be said of L’Art du Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano. Nonetheless, Stevenson recognizes that we live in a far more pessimistic age. In relation to Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864)—transcribed by Stevenson in an, as yet,

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266 Stevenson, pers. comm., 6 September 2011.
267 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 159.
269 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 92.
unpublished volume of *L’Art du Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano*—he acerbically writes ‘Meyerbeer: to many young musicians the name might as well be a liquor label’. 270

In Thalberg’s Op. 70, the composer expressly asks for the melody to be ‘intoned clearly and distinctly, and must separate itself from the accompaniment in the same way as a human voice from a gentle orchestral accompaniment’. 271 Hamilton remarks that, ‘Thalberg always prints the melodic line—as Liszt occasionally did, and Grainger would do frequently—in larger notes’. 272 Stevenson will do this intermittently, as in his Carlyle Suite (1995) (shown in Figure 25) but does not do so in his *L’Art du Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano*, preferring instead to accent in the normal fashion.

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**Figure 25.** An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s *Carlyle Suite: I Aubade—‘Here is Dawning, Another Blue Day’* (1995), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 1-3.

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One far more important axiom of Thalberg’s that Stevenson does follow in *L’Art Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano* (1975-1988) is that the melody in the upper notes can be played in ‘very close arpeggio’. This is unequivocally evident in his transcription of Stephen Foster’s (1826–1864) popular parlor-song, *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair* (1854, trans. Stevenson 1980)—with the Mendelssohnian sub-title ‘song without words’ (as shown in Figure 26). The original song proved so popular in 1941, with an unprecedented quantity of ‘wireless’ airplay in Stevenson’s mid-teens, that *Time Magazine* reported ‘So often had BMI’s Jeannie [sic.] with the Light Brown Hair been played that she was widely reported to have turned grey’.

![Figure 26. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s transcription of Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair by Stephen Foster (1826–1864, comp. 1854 trans. Stevenson 1980), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 5-8.](image)

The song itself dates from 1854, the halcyon days of *bel canto*—alluding to the great singers of the past with the imitation of the vocal *fioritura*, with the rapid crossing of hands. There is also a tribute to one of the great pianists of the Golden Age of Pianism, Vladimir de Pachmann (1848–1933), in the marking ‘gossamer-like, alla Pachmann’ (as shown in Figure 27), as well as the strong influence of Percy Grainger with the unpretentious Anglicization of the markings in the score.

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275 On the whole, Stevenson tends to Anglicise more in transcriptions of English language works, using predominantly the traditional Italian markings in others, as he speaks Italian fluently.
At times, Stevenson’s transcriptions can be a melting pot of musical citation, allusion and artistic cross-referencing, occasionally becoming a veritable cauldron. Taking into consideration that Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair (1854) is formerly a parlor song, that was typically undemanding, being reserved principally for the domestic market of the amateur middle-classes, Stevenson’s allusion to the high art of bel canto, as well as the reference to Pachmann, is an audacious move. However, Stevenson even highlights a preexisting allusion to Mozart’s ‘Coronation’ Piano Concerto No. 26 in D major, KV 537 (1788) (as shown in Figure 28)—which he draws attention to with his alberti bass—certainly written during the pinnacle of classical art music.

Similarly, Stevenson will, on occasion, cross-reference between composers on a far larger scale in L’Art Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano. In his transcription of Ivor Novello’s (1893–1951) perennially popular, We’ll Gather Lilacs (Novello 1945, trans. Stevenson 1980), the entire accompaniment motif acts as a passing salute, not only to Ivor Novello, but also to Sergei Rachmaninoff’s (1873–1943) earlier Lilacs Op. 21, No. 5, 1902 (as shown in Figure 29). This was seen by Scott-Sutherland as ‘a quiet demonstration of his wide and catholic knowledge and interests’.  

Furthermore, his practice of amalgamating divergent styles, social boundaries, and musical periods—from the parlor-song to high-art—not only affirms Stevenson’s egalitarianism and

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Scott-Sutherland, Envoi: What now?, 281.
unreserved lack of pretentiousness, but once again tangibly demonstrates the deep influence of Grainger.

**Figure 28.** An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s transcription of *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair* by Stephen Foster (1826–1864, comp. 1854 trans. Stevenson 1980), with an allusion to Mozart *Piano Concerto No. 26 in D Major* KV 537 (1788), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 19-22.
Figure 29. Absorption of Rachmaninoff’s *Lilacs*, Op. 21, No. 5 (1902) into Stevenson’s Ivor Novello Transcription of *We’ll Gather Lilacs* (Ivor Novello 1945, trans. Stevenson 1980), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 1-2.

Stevenson acknowledges and embraces the fact that ‘the presence of other composers can be felt’ throughout *L’Art Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano*. He describes the verse of Novello’s *Fly Home Little Heart* (from *King’s Rhapsody* 1949, trans. Stevenson 1980) as being ‘an arpeggio study with a Delian bird motif thrown in’—which surely is a reference to Frederick Delius’ (1862–1934) tone poem, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* (1912). He also describes the verse as ‘a Grangeresque study in sonority’.

Whilst such a diverse eclecticism could fragment Stevenson, and dilute his essential creative goals, conversely it is a central aspect of his complex creative persona that paradoxically defines him. He astutely notes himself ‘[William] Shakespeare built his plays on borrowed themes, and Molière

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277 Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.

said: ‘Je pren[s mon bien partout] ou je le trouve’ ['I take my good everywhere I find it']. It is this very eclecticism that helps him divulge his primary aim: to capture the essence of a composer in transcribing. However, in evaluating his skillfulness as a transcriber, it is essential to examine his re-working in considerable detail.

3.8 The Art of Transcription: Transcribing the Impossible, Pruning and Grafting of Textures and Capturing the Essence of the Original Composer

One of most intriguing and ambitious of Stevenson’s transcriptions is an oddity in Mozart’s late catalogue, the Fantasia in F Minor for Mechanical Clock kv 608 (1790). Deliberately crafted by Mozart as unachievable for human hands to perform, the Viennese master seemed frustrated by the inherent limitations of the Flötenuhr. In corresponding with Constanze Mozart (1762–1842) on 3 October 1790, he writes:

I had made up my mind to write the Adagio for the clockmaker right away and slip a few ducats in my dear wife’s hands; I did start—but unfortunately, because I hate the job, I wasn’t able to finish it. I write some every day—but have to postpone as I get bored—and surely, if there wasn’t such an important reason to force myself, I would certainly leave off;—yes, if it were a large clock, and the thing would sound like a true organ, then it might be fun; but as it is, the work consists solely of little pipes, which sound high-pitched and too childish for my taste.

Despite Mozart’s reticence he, in due course, completed the commission from Josef Count Deym von Střítež (1752–1804), albeit with reluctance. Stevenson’s ominous self-imposed challenge as a transcriber was to rework for a single pianist what Mozart had deliberately made impossible. In researching this late composition of Mozart, Sjoerd J. Schaper notes:

Because the Fantasias weren’t devised for human execution, they are very difficult even for four hands to play. It is hard to avoid dragging at places, and a general sense of strain seems inevitable.

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279 Scott-Sutherland, Stevenson’s Recital Programmes, 303-304.
282 Schaper, Mechanical Mozart.
283 Schaper, Mechanical Mozart.
Stevenson’s point of departure was painstakingly to pore over the Busoni two-piano version of the *Fantasia in F Minor for Mechanical Clock KIV B91* (trans. Busoni 1922), a work that Stevenson is meticulously familiar with and has performed and recorded on numerous occasions.\(^{284}\) If the two are compared side-by-side, the macrostructure—i.e., the harmonic outline—remains integral in both versions (both highlighted in green in Figure 30). However, the figuration—i.e., the microstructure—in Stevenson’s complex passagework has been sandwiched between the hands as double thirds and is expansively refigured (highlighted in blue in Figure 30).

This clearly demonstrates a masterful working insight into virtuoso piano technique and is not entirely dissimilar to a figurative design utilized by Vladimir Horowitz in his fêted *Carmen Fantasy* (1947, revised 1965). The current author obtained a rare handwritten copy of the unpublished Horowitz score from Ronald Stevenson, meticulously edited by Arnold Schalker. ‘Deception’ is implied in Horowitz’s case, as the great virtuoso dupes the listener into thinking they are hearing a third internal hand playing superhumanly impossible double-thirds (see Figure 31). Ironically, the legendary double-thirds are not really double-thirds at all—the omission of an E-natural that should appear in the left-hand with the G-natural makes it far easier to play. This has remained unnoticed by pianists and critics alike for decades due to it being virtually undetectable to human ears. Horowitz, like a master magician is taking advantage of speed of execution and cunning figuration.

\(^{284}\) *Ferruccio Busoni: Music for Two Pianos and Piano Duet*, Joseph Banowetz and Ronald Stevenson (two pianos) Altarus Records, AIR-CD-9044, 1994, compact disc. For details of all commercial releases by Ronald Stevenson as pianist, see: *Appendix One: XII Commercial Recordings*. 
Figure 30. Comparison between excerpt(s) from Busoni’s and Stevenson’s transcriptions of Mozart’s Fantasia in F Minor for Mechanical Clock KV 608 (trans. Busoni 1922, [top] (Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1923), reprinted: Wiesbaden, 1949), trans. Stevenson 1952 (bottom), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 1-5.
Nevertheless, in Stevenson’s case—whilst he is in the same transcendent Lisztian tradition as Horowitz—there is no trickery or artifice involved: here the double thirds are certainly intact. This is realizable because of ingenious fingering (highlighted in the first blue section of Figure 30)—in particular the astute shift from the fifth to the fourth finger in the right hand (on the third beat of the first bar) and the elegant slide that immediately follows (resulting in the unusual pattern 5/4, 2 4, 2 3, 2 in the right-hand). Correspondingly, the pedalling is equally as imaginative, with the half-pedalling reinforcing the harmony of Mozart’s original across the bar-line. Busoni’s two piano version, with the octaves communally shared between the two instruments (as shown in Figure 30, highlighted in yellow) is reduced (in Stevenson’s case) to flawlessly executable double thirds. This does not diminish the musical outcome; rather, it balances the overall texture and maintains Mozart’s ‘classical’ line in relation to the smaller musical force of a single piano, without the sound becoming overtly romantic, nor stylistically compromised.

In the Fuga Stevenson’s transcribing visually resembles the clean contrapuntal lines of Bach more than Mozart. Stevenson’s solo transcription (highlighted in green in Figure 32) has absorbed almost all of the notes of Busoni’s two piano version (highlighted in red in Figure 32), with an occasional pruning of extraneous material for clarity of texture (highlighted in blue in Figure 32). Even then, this material is often the doubling of a voice, and non-essential, ensuring the
transcription does become too figuratively chaotic, nor inelegant in performance. This self-control and skilled judgment on Stevenson’s account adheres to Busoni’s axiom that dogmatically holding fast to the letter should on no account be to the disbursement of the music when transcribing. As Malcolm MacDonald argues: ‘A doctrinaire adherence to the text will inevitably result in a weakening of the musical idea; in the hands of a master-transcriber, like Liszt, Busoni, or Stevenson, the music’s macro-structure may remain more or less intact, but its microstructure may undergo extensive recomposition’.  


285 Busoni, Sketch of a New Aesthetic, 84.

286 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 81.
In his solo transcription of the *Adagio* from Mozart’s *Piano Concerto no. 20 in D Minor* KV 466 (1785, trans. Stevenson 1961), Stevenson grafts rather than prunes textures. However, for what purpose does he do so? Here he is faithful to both Mozart’s original solo piano writing (highlighted in blue in Figure 32, as well as the orchestral material, both of which are absorbed (highlighted in red in Figure 32) into the new, innovative solo texture. Whilst this is first-rate transcribing, it is the inclusion of additional ornamental material (highlighted in green in Figure 32), in which Stevenson shows his expert knowledge of figuration, by having it scored over four staves. Upon closer examination, the additional material is actually more Mozart than it is Stevenson, as it is a ‘written out’ account of Mozart’s identifiable ornamental figuration, used throughout the movement (as shown in figure 34, highlighted in red).

![Figure 33. Stevenson’s Solo Transcription of Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor KV 466 (1785, trans. Stevenson 1961), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 154-155.](image-url)
In Stevenson’s Cadenzas to Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor KV 466 (1785), used by the performing soloist with orchestra, Kadenzen für Mozart’s Klavier Konzert in D moll KV 466 (1952), he appends a reference from the ‘Commendatore Scene,’ found in the final act of Don Giovanni KV 527 (1787). MacDonald notes that Stevenson would later use this same theme in his Twentieth Century Music Diary (1953–59) ‘as a twelve note tone-row derived from the Statue Scene’. Whilst he is not using it serially in this case, Stevenson is well aware that D minor is Mozart’s most ‘demonic’ key, as it is the key of Don Giovanni’s demise (‘Don Giovanni! a cenar teco m’invitasti’—‘Don Giovanni! You invited me to dine with you’), the Requiem KV 626 (1791), and the Queen of the Night’s second aria (Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen—‘Hell’s vengeance boils in my heart’) from Die Zauberflöte, KV 620 (1791).

Stevenson realized that the ominous tone of Don Giovanni flawlessly complements the environ of Mozart’s darkest piano concerto (as shown in Figure 35, highlighted in red). In this curious cross-pollination between different works by the same composer, Stevenson is trying to capture the essence of Mozart in his entirety, rather than merely writing a cadenza.

Another facet of Stevenson’s transcribing that deserves exploration is his change of figuration, even when self-transcribing. One clear example can be seen in his transcription of his own original composition, the *Fugue on a fragment of Chopin* (1949), written to commemorate the centenary of Chopin’s death (1849–1949). When the solo piano version (1949) and the two piano arrangement (1953) are compared side by side (as shown in Figure 36), it is apparent that Stevenson has, once again, severed some material (the descending thirds as shown in Figure 36 highlighted in yellow) to make way for new material (the ascending double thirds, as shown in Figure 36).

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The marking *relato* (highlighted on blue in Figure 36 in the two-piano version) is a nonsensical word and obviously a misprint, as it should read *velato* (as seen in the solo version) that MacDonald rightly notes to mean ‘veiled’. This ‘veiling’ is accomplished in the pedalling, which is much more defined in the two piano version (highlighted in green in Figure 36). The quasi-orchestral texture is heightened by the insertion of rests, which are now possible in the second piano part. In bar 41 of the same work, the modifications between the two accounts are more far-reaching. With the superior forces of two instruments at his control, Stevenson splits the original melody at the top of the sixths in the right-hand between chords in the two piano version, whilst the material in the right-hand of bar 42 is doubled between the hands (highlighted in red and purple respectively in Figure 37).

Other material is doubled in octaves (highlighted in blue in Figure 37), whilst additional imaginative material is added (highlighted in green in Figure 37). In bar 43 of the two piano version of the *Fugue on a Fragment of Chopin*, the left-hand trill is a very unusual figuration (as shown in Figure 38), which is closely interrelated to that used by Johannes Brahms in his *Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor*, Op. 15 (1858) (as shown in Figure 39 in red), absorbed, yet again, from a forerunner and made identifiably Stevenson’s own.

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Figure 37. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s *Fugue on a Fragment of Chopin*—original solo version (1949) and his own two piano version (1953), both versions published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 41-42 (both examples).

Figure 38. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s *Fugue on a fragment of Chopin* (Two Piano Version, 1953) published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 43–44.
An amalgamation of an inclusive style can be seen even more directly in his quasi-Godowskian Étudette d’après Karsakov et Chopin—Spectre d’Alkan (1987) that begins for the left-hand alone (as shown in Figure 40). Stevenson adroitly transcribes Rachmaninoff’s earlier transcription of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s (1844–1908) Flight of the Bumblebee from The Tale of Tsar Saltan (1899–1900), that is ingeniously internalized within the solo left-hand (highlighted in blue in Figure 40). This is later superimposed above Chopin’s Étude in A Minor, Op. 25, No. 2 (1837) with the two pieces inventively performed simultaneously. Korsakov’s Bumble Bee can unmistakably be heard in the left hand (see Figure 41, highlighted in red) against Chopin’s Étude in A Minor, Op. 25, No. 2 in the right-hand (see Figure 41, highlighted in blue).
It is worthy of note that if one looks at Carl Czerny’s premeditated parody of Chopin (as shown in Figure 41, Op. 365, No. 19, bars 1-2)—although later Czerny uses both hands moving out in contrary motion (as opposed to Chopin’s single-hand virtuosity), it is as much a ‘Hommage de Reconnaissance’ to another composer, as anything else. In the same manner MacDonald notes that Stevenson’s works proliferate with such homages:

‘Homages’ abound in Stevenson’s music: overt ones to Chopin and Hindemith (and to Sibelius)… If it was his instinct to use whatever came to hand, it was also his instinct to salute figures he admired, to build bridges, to celebrate other’s achievements.290

It is also important to remember that, as well as offering acts of homage, Stevenson sees transcription as a new commentary on a pre-existing work (as previously discussed in Chapter 3.1). This is nowhere more apparent than in an article he wrote for The Listener in 1971. Whilst discussing Godowsky’s transcription of the Cradle Song—Schlafe, schlafe, holder süßer Knabe, D 498 Op. 98, No. 2 by Franz Schubert (1816, trans. Godowsky 1927), Stevenson perceptively delineates Godowsky’s aesthetic outlook concerning the art-form, traits of which he unambiguously shares:

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290 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 16.
His [Godowsky’s] declared aim here was ‘to transplant the song from voice to piano; to comment and interpret it, in the manner of free variations’. Godowsky hoped that, to listeners who are open-minded, his Schubert transcriptions would proclaim his veneration for the composer and his immortal songs.\textsuperscript{291}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Comparison of Études by Frederic Chopin (Op. 25 No. 2, 1837, bars 1-2), Carl Czerny (Op. 365, No. 19, 1836, bars 1-2) and Ronald Stevenson Étudette d’après Karsakov et Chopin (Spectre d’Alkan), 1987, published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 53-55.}
\end{figure}

However, Colin Scott-Sutherland reasons that ‘he [Stevenson] voices his concern not only to translate, born of his enthusiasm to communicate and his desire to make all music more accessible,\textsuperscript{291}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
but also to transfigure\textsuperscript{292} which in many ways succinctly defines Stevenson’s masterly contribution to the genre.

Stevenson once said that his friend and former duo partner, Sir Peter Piers (1910–1986), once suggested a programme title to him, \textit{The Transcendental Tradition}.\textsuperscript{293} When the recital eventually materialized, Stevenson decisively included some of his own Purcell transcriptions, seeing both himself and Purcell as part of a living tradition:

I saw immediately how its three words suggested everything about the art of transcription. For that’s what transcription is, or rather should be: the transcendental tradition. An art based on tradition, but going beyond it; an art both old and new at the same time.\textsuperscript{294}

Stevenson as transcriber is undoubtedly a part of this transcendental tradition—an ancient practice that illustrates and re-vivifies a pre-existing text through a highly intelligent, personalized illumination. This not only results in a unique stylized commentary on a compatriot but also paradoxically, through artistic metamorphosis, it becomes part of him, and is indeed ‘both old and new at the same time’.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{292} Scott-Sutherland, \textit{Envoi: What now}? 282.
  \item \textsuperscript{293} Scott-Sutherland, \textit{Stevenson’s Recital Programmes}, 300.
  \item \textsuperscript{294} Scott-Sutherland, \textit{Stevenson’s Recital Programmes}, 300.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Chapter Four: Stevenson and the Pedal

4.1 Stevenson and ‘The Soul of the Piano’

The American virtuoso, Joseph Banowetz (b. 1936)—one of the founding patrons of The Ronald Stevenson Society in 1995—has been an indefatigable champion of Stevenson’s music in recital and recording, for many decades. In his highly regarded publication, *The Pianist’s Guide to Pedalling* (1985), he notes the difficulty of academic inquiry into pedalling:

> Pedalling, admittedly, is one of the most difficult aspects of piano playing to discuss from the printed page alone: and few would deny that, to paraphrase an old expression, one performance is worth a thousand words. The pedal is a highly personal part of any piano performance, and no two players will use exactly the same pedalling, nor will the same performer use identical pedalling from performance to performance.

Stevenson wrote in 1995 that ‘A lot of younger pianists show little curiosity about what lies beyond the ‘normal’ repertoire, what I find missing in their playing is beautiful tone, and pedalling’. Whilst Stevenson’s position on the pedal was discussed at length in chapter two from the aspect of ‘Stevenson as performer,’ it seems warranted to survey Stevenson’s use of the pedals ‘as composer’—especially as, like Rubenstein, he sees the pedals as ‘the soul of the piano’ of which Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943) said:

> I have never heard the virtuoso piece *Islamey* Op. 18 (1869) by Mily Balakirev (1837–1910) as [Anton] Rubinstein (1829–1894) played it, and his interpretation of Schumann’s little fantasy *The Bird as Prophet* [*Vogel als Prophet*, *Waldszenen*, Op. 82, No. 7, 1848–49] was inimitable in poetic refinement: to describe the diminuendo of the pianissimo at the end of the "fluttering away of the little bird" would be hopelessly inadequate. Inimitable, too, was the soul-stirring imagery in the *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16 (1838) the last (G minor) passage of which I have never heard anyone play in the same manner. One of Rubinstein’s greatest secrets was his use of the pedal. He himself very happily expressed his ideas on the subject when he said, "The pedal is the soul of the piano”. No pianist should ever forget this.

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However, as Banowetz rightly points out, visually dictating pedalling in a musical score is an
imprecise art at the best of times, with a considerable element of discretion left to the pianist.
Ultimately, good pedalling can come only from performing experience, wherein ‘the ear alone,
rather than a set of printed directions, must always be the final guide for an artistic performance’.299
Stevenson, arguably has more punctilious pedal markings than practically any other composer,
notwithstanding Pierre Boulez (b. 1925), Iannis Xenakis (1922–2001), Ferruccio Busoni and Franz
Liszt. Stevenson’s *modus operandi* in exploiting the expressive powers of the pedals is principally
drawn from two composer-pianists: Ferruccio Busoni and his former student Percy Grainger.

MacDonald notes that Stevenson’s own transcription of Ruggero Leoncavallo’s (1857–1919)
*La Mattinata* (comp. 1902, trans. Stevenson 1981) faithfully follows Leoncavallo’s pedalling, in what
was the first song expressly composed for The Gramophone Company (1904), which eventually
became *His Master’s Voice* (1909):

[Stevenson] faithfully transmits Leoncavallo’s pedalling as heard in his 1904 phonographic
recording of the song with [Enrico] Caruso (1873–1921), includes a silvery filigree cadenza
marked ‘*con delicatezza paderewskiana*,’ and climaxes in a ‘*perorazione alla Jussi Björling*
[Swedish tenor] (1911–1960),’ with a downward white key glissando imitating an Italian
tenor’s vocal swoop.300

Busoni wrote more expansively than anyone on the use of the piano pedals—nowhere more
so than in his influential, yet hugely extended, supplement to his edition of *Das Wohltemperierte
Klavier* (BWV 846-893, KIV B250), which Stevenson has studied in detail. This incorporates a version
of his treatise *On the Transcription of Bach’s Organ Works for the Pianoforte*, wherein he surveys the
use of all three pedals, including the seldom utilized ‘middle’ or *sostenuto* pedal, that Stevenson sees
as ‘seminaly important in composing for the piano’.301 However, it is ironic that, whilst exploring
Stevenson’s use of the pedals, one has to start with examples in his writing where the feet are not

301 Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.
used at all: otherwise known as the curiously entitled art of ‘finger pedalling,’ which is, in essence, an elegant alias for straightforward ‘legato-fingering’.

4.2 ‘Finger Pedalling’: from Simple Examples to the ‘Greatest Flights of Sonic Fancy’

Glenn Carruthers notes that Percy Grainger (1882–1961) saw the instruction of ‘finger pedalling’ as fundamental in his own pedagogy. Both his pupils, Laurence Dilsner (1911–1989) and Alma Brock-Smith (1908–2009) agree that Grainger ‘did not believe that the damper pedal should be used in place of legato fingering’. It is surprising how often Grainger told Dilsner that ‘if he [Grainger] were to again teach beginners, he would insist on six months of concentrated organ study before starting the piano. This would encourage meticulous legato fingering without having to rely on the damper pedal.’

Stephen Hough (b. 1961) describes ‘finger pedalling’ as ‘holding notes down to form a melody whilst the other voices move independently’. Hough gives a simple illustration in the initial bars of Mozart’s Sonata in C Major, KV 545 (1788) (as shown in Figure 42), noting that this remains the foundation upon which more advanced techniques are constructed:

These are the simplest examples. In a more advanced stage of playing we can create not just harmonic foundations, but inner melodies—counterpoint underpinning or weaving around the principal voice, everything working together in unity but with total independence. Again, like the use of the left and right pedals, the possibilities of finger-pedal are limitless. From whole passages to a single note, it can liberate lines, clarify textures, and enable our foot pedalling to be free to undertake the greatest flights of sonic fancy.


304 Stephen Hough, ‘A Different Depression’.
Carruthers has meticulously noted every instance of ‘no pedal’ and ‘no pedal until marked’ in Grainger’s entire output. He tells us that ‘these occur at the outset of Shepherd’s Hey (1911), Molly on the Shore (1918), Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter (1918), Spoon River (1922), and Jutish Medley (1928).’ This may have been due to Busoni’s influence on Grainger, who said in his preface to Das Wohltemperierte Klavier (BWV 846–893, KIV B250) that ‘the disuse of the pedal is often its best use...a saying not only applicable to Bach, but to piano playing in general’. In the same treatise, he also recommends that ‘wherever possible sustain the tone with the hands rather than with the pedal’. Furthermore, Carruthers notes that, in Grainger’s case, ‘The marking ‘no pedal’ occurs internally in Shepherd’s Hey (bar 53), The Gum-Suckers March (1916, bar 154), Molly on the Shore (bars 55, 175, and 1, 79), Spoon River (bar 84), and Eastern Intermezzo (1922) (bar 98), and the player is admonished “no pedal” six times in the course of Scotch Strathspey and Reel (1939).’

In an unequivocal comparison, Stevenson’s use of the marking Senza Pedale in the Passacaglia on DSCH alone is more recurrent than in Grainger’s entire body of piano works, and occurs an astonishing 137 times across his voluminous published music. Stevenson will even add additional ‘senza ped’ to his own working copies—as in the current author’s copy of the Passacaglia
on DSCH (as seen in Figure 43), that he added in pencil on no less than twelve occasions throughout its one-hundred-and-ninety-one pages.

![Figure 43. Ronald Stevenson’s Pencil Additions to the Current Author’s ’Working Copy’ of the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bar 479.](image)

Stevenson’s largest work for piano in the last fifteen years is his Le Festin d’Alkan (1988–1997). Whilst the work was commissioned in 1988, it was not completed until 1997. The title of this monumental three-movement work is, in itself, a paraphrase. However, it is not a musical paraphrase, but instead a literary one, of Le Festin d’Esopo (Aesop’s Feast) Op. 39 No. 12 (1861) by Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813–1888). Ateş Orga notes that Le Festin d’Alkan (1988–97) is a ‘concerto sans orchestra that has clear parallels that can be drawn with musical predecessors with direct similarities, not just to works by Alkan, but more surprisingly, Schumann’. This is most likely as a result of the rapid toccata-like passages, use of musical cryptography and form—analogous with the Études Symphoniques, Op. 13 (1834–1837) and more strikingly to Orga the Troisième Grande Sonate, Op. 14 Concert sans Orchestra in F Minor (1835–36).  

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308 The first movement is a concerto for solo piano sans orchestra [cf. Alkan’s three-movement Concerto without orchestra, Op. 39, Nos. 8–10: likewise Schumann’s earlier F Minor Sonata – Concert sans orchestra], the piano texture distinguishing between ‘solo’ and ‘tutti’. Orga, The Piano Music, 123.
Stevenson’s work is light years away from the opening bars of Mozart’s *Sonata in C Major* K545 (1788). Whilst the Mozart *Sonata* has a crystalline simplicity and beauty of melodic inventiveness, Stevenson’s use of ‘finger pedalling’ (as shown in Figure 44) is ingenious in design and is almost inconceivably delivered with no sustaining power whatsoever, other than the fingers. It is no surprise that the première was left in the safe hands of one of the world’s greatest pianists, Marc-André Hamelin, at the Blackheath Concert Halls *Pianofest* in 1998.\(^{309}\) Marked *Senza Ped*, the two central parts move in unison with a seamless legato, whilst the thirds of the two peripheral voices replicate themselves in reflection, ‘*mezzo staccato,*’ as shadowy inversions of each other, like the two faces of Janus, looking inwards. Resultantly Stevenson, like a complacent sorcerer’s apprentice, summons a dark orchestral texture that is both brooding and unquiet with its stark, almost Bartókian angularity, yet Bachian clarity. The four parts ingeniously overlap in a multifarious figuration that is only just possible for ten fingers to effectuate and is truly one of the most startlingly complex uses of ‘finger pedalling’ in the entire piano repertoire.

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4.3 Senza Pedale: the Silent Depression in Pianism

Whilst finger-pedalling holds on to the keys without using the pedals, i.e., raising the individual dampers of the keys depressed, Stevenson will on occasion silently depress multiple notes to exploit the effect of sympathetic vibration, but only for a specific scale or mode. His original composition, *Heroic Sang for Hugh MacDiarmid* (1967), is a typical example. Stevenson asks the pianist to ‘depress silently all white keys’ with the left forearm, which resultantly sounds when the right-hand notes are struck (as shown in Figure 45, highlighted in blue). A lesser composer would almost certainly have employed the black notes of the piano for a comparable effect, or simply held the sustaining pedal down. Stevenson has realized that, as there are obviously more white notes on the piano than black—both tones, semitones and more importantly sympathetic-overtones—the resultant sympathetic-reverberation would be far purer in its modality without the pedal.

![Figure 45. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s Heroic Sang for Hugh MacDiarmid (1967), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 1-5.](image)

This illustrates not simply the strong influence of Percy Grainger and Busoni (both of whom would silently depress notes using the middle pedal (as shown in Grainger’s *Concert Transcription of the Main Themes from Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor*, Op 18 (1900–1901, trans. Grainger 1946, Figure 46), but also an even greater influence of Grainger’s close friend, the American pioneer of the *avant-garde*, Henry Cowell (1897–1965).
Figure 46. Percy Grainger’s Concert Transcription of Main Themes from Sergei Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor Op. 18 (1900-1901, trans. Grainger 1946).

There are striking similarities between Stevenson’s Heroic Sang for Hugh MacDiarmid and Henry Cowell’s remarkable Exultation (1919), as both works share a foundation of pentatonism, forearm clusters and exuberant, flamboyant techniques. However, whilst Cowell necessitates the performer to pound the black notes of the piano with elbows, forearms and fists (as shown in Figure 47) in a high-spirited clangorous romp, Stevenson’s ‘silent depression’ is in fact the exact opposite. This may be far more revelatory than one may initially suppose, illustrating a major aspect of Stevenson’s own compositional psyche in absorbing traits of another composer and retrogradely inverting an entire design.

EXULTATION

4.4 Silent Depression and the Sustaining Pedal

When Stevenson combines silent depression with sustain-pedalling the effects can be truly remarkable. In his *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963), there is unarguably the single most complex combination of pedalling and silent-depression in the entire gamut of music for keyboard, *per se*. The pianist is instructed to silently depress a chord with the ‘fingers on tips of keys’ (highlighted in red, Figure 48) and then *glissandi* over the top of the silently depressed notes, with the right pedal held down (highlighted in brown, Figure 48) to produce a startling *non cromatico glissandi* (non-chromatic *glissandi*) that is quite simply unique. In addition, he then asks the pianist to silently depress an additional chord (highlighted in blue, Figure 48) and release the sustaining pedal—in accordance with his very specific pedal markings (highlighted in green, Figure 48). The ‘silent notes’ resultantly sound sympathetically—producing an ethereal, ghost-like timbre.

As if this were not impressive enough, upon the sixth repetition of the figuration (highlighted in purple, Figure 48), the pianist is then instructed to simultaneously play the additional line with the left-hand thumb, whilst maintaining the silently depressed chord, ‘with knuckles pressed against the piano lid’. All this is done with the same hand—whilst *still* producing the non-chromatic *glissandi* with the right—all of which is executed as the non-highlighted notes (see Figure 48) —are performed in the normal fashion. This is a masterstroke of amalgamated figuration, ingenious techniques, silent-depression and pedalling. It is no wonder that the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) is increasingly hailed as the modern counterpart of the crowning pinnacles of the piano repertoire, alongside Beethoven’s *Große Sonate für das Hammerklavier* (Piano Sonata No. 29 in B♭ major, Op. 106, 1817–1818), *The Goldberg Variations*, bwv 988 (published 1741) of Johann Sebastian Bach and Franz Liszt’s *Piano Sonata in B minor* s.178 (published 1854), *Die Kunst der Fuge* (The Art-of-Fugue) bwv 1080 (c. 1740+), as well as the *Diabelli Variations*, Op. 120 (1819–23) by Beethoven.310

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When the present author performed the work for Stevenson’s seventieth birthday, Christopher Morley wrote contended that the Passacaglia on DSCH should be added to this list.⁴¹¹

Nonetheless, no matter how ingenious the pedalling is, the piano is in itself a decaying instrument, i.e., when the notes are struck, the volume cannot be increased. It has long been the dream of composer-pianists to crescendo without repeating notes, for example, as a vocalist can. Such a case in point is the ‘crescendo-impossibile’ in the closing bars of Liszt’s greatest work for

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piano, his *B Minor Sonata* (Figure 49, bars 755-760)—to which Morley draws parallels with the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963).\(^{312}\) Whilst Liszt’s ‘crescendo-impossibile’ is attainable only by physical gesture as a quasi-spiritual climax, Stevenson aspires to bring to fruition his predecessor’s aspiration in live performance, in the scenario of a radio broadcast. He cleverly adds the non-compulsory instruction in his *Heroic Sang for Hugh MacDiarmid* (1967) (Figure 45, highlighted in green), ‘*Questo cresc./dim. per controllo elettronico a transmissione radiofonica,*’\(^{313}\) as well as ‘in radio performance the < > may be obtained by electronic volume control’ in the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (Figure 48, highlighted in yellow). The idea of artificially amplifying the piano’s harmonics—especially in real-time over the analogue airwaves—would surely have seemed radical in 1967 (*Heroic Sang for Hugh MacDiarmid*), and even more so in 1963 (*Passacaglia on DSCH*) at the dawn of the Space-Age.

![Figure 49. Concluding bars of Liszt’s *Sonata in B Minor* s.178 (1854) (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1854), Plate 8877, bars 755-760.](image)

Whilst it is an interesting idea, it does seem a little passé and one-dimensional from our present ‘information-age,’ with the twenty-first century composer having a myriad of state-of-the-art digital tools at his or her disposal to manipulate the sound of an acoustic piano. Nonetheless, the philosophy itself shows, perhaps more than anything, a communion-of-spirit with Henry Cowell’s pioneering outlook, as well as that of Robert Schumann, who once said ‘rather than repeat the same

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\(^{312}\) Christopher Morley, ‘Illusions and Allusions in Birthday Tribute’.

\(^{313}\) ‘*Questo cresc / dim. per controllo elettronico a transmissione radiofonica*’ ‘In radio performance this cresce / dim. is achieved by electronic volume control,’ *Heroic Sang for Hugh MacDiarmid* (1967) (Edinburgh: The Ronald Stevenson Society), bars 3-5.
forms for centuries, we should be intent on creating new ones instead’.  

4.5 Flutter Pedalling and the ‘Wind over the Grave’

Publishers all too often will omit a composer-pianist’s more unusual pedal markings, either because of laziness or ignorance as to their actual importance (as discussed in the case of Busoni and the Pedal in Chapter 2.4). Stevenson is certainly no exception to this treatment by publishers, at least until the foundation of The Ronald Stevenson Society in 1995, with typesetter Archie McLellan meticulously reproducing the finest of details from Stevenson’s manuscripts. If one compares the Oxford University Press impression of the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963) with the same passage from The Ronald Stevenson Society: Composer’s Facsimile Edition (as shown in Figure 50, bars 393-395), one can see that the marking ‘Ped. vibrato (flutter-pedal)’ is nonexistent in the Oxford University Press version.

Figure 50. Comparison between excerpt(s) from Ronald Stevenson’s Passacaglia on DSCH (1963) Oxford University Press edition (top) (1964) and the Composer’s Facsimile Edition (bottom), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 393-395.

Whilst this would almost certainly remain unnoticed to a musicologist, to a performer it is a fundamentally important avenue to gain insight into what sound and mood Stevenson is trying to evoke. Banowetz describes the practice of flutter pedalling as:

The fluttering motion of the dampers should be as rapid as possible in order to avoid audible blocks or chops in the sound. At no time should the pedal hit as it is raised or be depressed completely. The fluttering motion of the dampers should be as rapid as possible in order to avoid audible blocks or chops in the sound.\textsuperscript{315}

Nonetheless, whilst this is a very precise, technical account of how flutter pedalling actually works, it essentially, ‘will give needed resonance and colour, without creating lumps of pedalled sound,’ as well as being used for ‘rapid reduction in sonority’. However, flutter-pedalling is very often misconstrued by audiences, music critics and even pianists. When the current author heard Murray McLachlan give a superb performance of the \textit{Passacaglia on DSCH} at Chetham’s School of Music in 1996, a critic thought that McLachlan was so fatigued towards the end that he was ‘physically shaking’ in the \textit{poco a poco crescendo, grande, gigantesco} (bars 2202-2249). In fact, McLachlan was flutter pedalling. A similar \textit{faux pas} of Albert Lavignac (1846–1916)—who taught harmony to Henri Casadesus (1879–1947), Vincent d’Indy (1851–1931), and Claude Debussy (1862–1918) amongst others at the \textit{Conservatoire de Paris} —was noted whilst he heard Sigismond Thalberg (1812–1871) play:

As a young man, Lavignac had heard Thalberg play in the \textit{Salle Erard} in Paris, and initially he thought the performer a bundle of nerves owing to the shaking of his foot on the sustaining pedal. However, Thalberg was not afraid, but he used the pedal admirably with very brief touches brilliantly distributed just at the required moment and with such frequent repetition that at first, a little naively, I had thought it trembling… Attention once drawn to the subject, I have never neglected to observe the way in which great pianists use the pedal on every occasion.\textsuperscript{316}

Banowetz gives a superb illustration of the practice that Albert Lavignac was a bystander to in the fourth movement of Chopin’s \textit{Piano Sonata No. 2 in B♭ minor}, Op. 35 (1837–1839) (as shown in

\textsuperscript{315} Banowetz, \textit{The Pianist’s Guide to Pedalling}, 79.

\textsuperscript{316} Hamilton, \textit{After the Golden Age}, 172. (Hamilton footnotes ‘Quoted from Rowland, \textit{History of Piano Pedalling}, 115–16.)
Figure 51). Banowetz sees the pedalling as helpful in clarifying the mood that Chopin is trying to establish. This is because the ‘light irregular blurring produces the macabre ‘wind over the grave’ effect’—least of all as this movement follows the well-known marche funèbre, and is marked sotto voce e legato. This bears a conspicuous resemblance to Stevenson’s marking in the Passacaglia on DSCH, molto sotto voce, misterioso and legatissimo (as shown in Figure 50, bars 393-395), which can hardly be coincidental. The vibrato pedalling enhances the seamlessness of the legatissimo texture—especially with the highly unusual sliding of every finger from the black notes to the white in the scalic writing—whilst the omnipresence of the DSCH (D, E♭, C, B) in the ground-bass remains in stasis with the lowermost digits—exhibiting discrete echoes of Chopin’s ‘wind over the grave’ writing.

![Figure 51](image)

**Figure 51.** Flutter-Pedalling in the Fourth Movement of Chopin’s Piano Sonata No. 2 in B♭ Minor, Op. 35 (1837–1839). (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, ca. 1840), Plate 6329, bars 1-3.

4.6 An Unparalleled use of the Sostenuto Pedal / Ped III

Stevenson’s use of the sostenuto pedal is so varied and all-encompassing in his writing that he utilizes every effect possible, as set out in Busoni’s Klavierübung in Zehn Büchern (1818–1925, Breitkopf & Härtel). Having studied it in detail in his youth (as discussed in Chapter 2.1), Stevenson built upon its uncompromising foundations to climb higher and discover new musical applications. In the Klavierübung, there is even an étude for the Pedal III (see Figure 52). Antony Beaumont notes

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that the piece was written on four staves for ease of reading, yet was intended to be included in Busoni’s unfinished Opera, *Doktor Faust* KV 303 (1925):

This piece is written on 4 staves, two for the *Hauptsime* [primary part] and two for the *Liegende Töne* [held notes]. Busoni finished it on 13 November 1923 in Paris. It is dedicated to Leonhard Tauber, who was his host while he was in Paris. The music was intended for the moment of Faust’s death at the end of the final scene of his unfinished opera *Doktor Faust*.³¹⁹

![Figure 52](image)


Busoni’s toil was to Stevenson ‘an immediate Joycean epiphany: the realization of an overwhelming affinity with the creator of this questing and visionary music, an affinity that he admits has exceeded any other in his life’.³²⁰ Stevenson also draws attention to the influence of Grainger in relation to the Ped III: ‘Grainger was the only Busoni pupil who developed fully his master’s technique of middle-pedalling’.³²¹ This is substantiated by Glen Carruthers, who writes:


The *fons et origo* of Grainger’s use of the middle pedal was Section Four of the First Appendix, to Volume One, of the Busoni edition of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* (BWV 846-893, KIV B250) ‘On the Transcription of Bach’s Organ-works for the Pianoforte’. In the summer of 1903 Grainger studied Bach-Busoni transcriptions with Busoni in Berlin, and the use of the middle pedal would certainly be an integral part of those lessons.

Grainger himself said ‘in the near future a pianist not availing himself of the advantages of this truly wonderful American invention [the Ped III] will be as much out of date as the dodo’. Unfortunately, as is the intrinsic peril that comes with all prophesy, Grainger’s optimistic divination of the future has yet to be fulfilled as only a small number of pianists at the present time are familiar with the middle-pedal, and too many young pianists do not know how to use it at all.

Whilst Stevenson exploits the middle-pedal more than any other composer-pianist in the twentieth century, rather than present copious examples of its use—speckled throughout his vast body of original work, fantasies and transcriptions—it seems prudent to show how wide-ranging his approach can be within the restricted margins of a solitary work. His *Peter Grimes Fantasy* (1971) is a comparatively short (c. six-and-a-half-minute) *Operatic-Piano-Fantasy* in the Lisztian tradition, based on themes from *Peter Grimes: an Opera in Three Acts and a Prologue*, Op. 33 (1945) by Benjamin Britten. This seems an ideal case study, because of the wide-ranging application of the Ped III that is representative of Stevenson’s use of it as a whole. The piece was commissioned by BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) Television and premièred on BBC2 with Stevenson as soloist in 1972. It is dedicated ‘To my young comrade-in-art, Graham Johnson (b. 1950)’. When Stevenson played his composition to Benjamin Britten, he was so impressed by the Peter Grimes Fantasy that he arranged for his own publisher, Boosey and Hawkes, to release the work (1972). As Boosey and Hawkes had sole possession of the copyright to Peter Grimes, this avoided any unreasonably complicated legal issues.

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324 Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 175.
The first time the Ped III is visible in the *Peter Grimes Fantasy* is at bars 23-28 Figure 53, highlighted in blue. The writing here is instantaneously redolent of Liszt and the great operatic-fantasies and transcriptions of the nineteenth century, with its rhapsodic arpeggiation and virtuoso figuration. Conversely, it is surprising to learn that Liszt was not aware of the Ped III until the last few years of his life. Hamilton notes that ‘the Steinway’s middle pedal was introduced to Liszt in 1883, only three years before the composer’s death’. However, he does add that, even though Liszt ‘did not mark sostenuto pedal on his score, Liszt praised it and gave suggestions for its use in some of his works’. In the illustration of the *Peter Grimes Fantasy*, the Ped III is initially exploited in a similar mode as a pipe organist would the pedal-board. Arthur Briskier (1902–1976), in *Piano Transcriptions of Bach’s Music during the Romantic Era*, writes of the importance of the Ped III:

> The sustaining third pedal of the modern grand piano permits the holding of the bass as long as indicated for the organ. The exceedingly deep sound of the piano bass gives an organ like background, while the two hands continue to play on the keyboard. There is no interference with changing harmonies and no confusion. The most faithful transcription, note for note, would remain incomplete if the musical interpretation were not considered simultaneously.\(^{326}\)

\(^{325}\) Lee-Clark, *Franz Liszt’s Pianistic Approach to Franz Schubert’s Songs*, 107.

Hamilton comments that this ‘organ’ quality in particular was what attracted Busoni to the device in the first instance ‘because it allowed the pianist to approximate certain organ effects ‘which can be obtained only by the combined action of the three pedals’. Stevenson notes too that César Franck may have been better facilitated with a pedal board whilst writing for the piano and would have surely embraced the sostenuto pedal:

His few, late, great piano works sound like piano transcriptions from the organ. Two hands are expected to do what they can only do ideally with the addition of a pedal board.

Stevenson correspondingly accentuates the illusion of César Franck’s ‘three hands’ in his Peter Grimes Fantasy by preparing the octave to be held in the Ped III in advance (as shown in Figure

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328 Stevenson, Szymanowski at the Piano, reproduced in Walton (ed.), Song in Gold Pavilions, 102.
53, on the fourth beat of bar 23) and then employing the sostenuto over the bar-line. Moreover, he additionally brings out the poignant philosophizing of Grimes—the central protagonist and anti-hero from Crabbe’s epic prose-poem—as he eloquently introduces Grimes’ soliloquy *What Harbour Shelters Peace?* (from Act One) with the left-hand thumb, in the tenor register. If the Ped III were omitted, this passage could have easily been composed and in print in the mid- to late-nineteenth century.

![Musical notation](image)

**Figure 54.** An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s *Peter Grimes Fantasy* (1971) based on themes from the Opera, *Peter Grimes* (1945), by Benjamin Britten (1913–1976). (London: Boosey and Hawkes), bars 96-98.
However, as the *Peter Grimes Fantasy* evolves in line with Britten’s opera, Stevenson uses the Ped III to summon a far darker, overtly threatening, quasi-orchestral texture, which is determinedly entrenched in the twentieth century. His powerful cadenza *molto agitato, demente,* from the concluding act of *Peter Grimes* (Act Three) is reminiscent of the Shakespearian ‘Mad Scene’. The *ffff* chord at bar 97—comparable to the loudest dynamic in the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (bar 2,239)—is representative of the ‘mob’ from the Opera (as shown in Figure 54, highlighted in red). This is held by the Ped III, as the seething populace of Crabbe’s illusory ‘Borough’ mercilessly hunts the anguished Grimes down in the fog. As his self-torture to some extent abates, Grimes regains lucidity and comes to terms with the only destiny that can await him, his own suicide. The Ped III now portrays and represents the ominous fog-horn (see Figure 55, ‘*quasi corno du nebbia,*’ bar 99).

![Figure 55](image)


As the work progresses, Stevenson uses the Ped III to facilitate a figuration without which it would be impossible for human hands to reproduce (as shown in Figure 56, bars 109-110). His ingenious fingering—with the sliding of the right-hand fifth finger and the left-hand thumb—makes the ‘*legato e tre corde (Senza Pedale)*’ possible. In spite of this inventiveness, the most memorable use of the Ped III comes in the closing pages of the *Peter Grimes Fantasy,* where Stevenson uses the
device to silently prepare a chord in the right-hand, as well as sustaining one already struck in the left—to raise the dampers, so that the pianist can pluck the notes directly on the strings *pizzicato a corde* (as shown in Figure 57, bars 113-118).

![Figure 56](image)

*Figure 56. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s Peter Grimes Fantasy (1971) based on themes from the Opera, Peter Grimes (1945), by Benjamin Britten (1913–1976). (London: Boosey and Hawkes), bars 109-110.*

![Figure 57](image)

*Figure 57. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s Peter Grimes Fantasy (1971) based on themes from the Opera, Peter Grimes (1945), by Benjamin Britten (1913–1976). (London: Boosey and Hawkes), bars 113-118.*

Stevenson states that the *pizzicati* strings are ‘not some kind of Cageian gimmick, but represents the morning stars coming out just before dawn’. 329 Here, the influence of Henry Cowell can undoubtedly be felt once more, as in the *Heroic Sang for Hugh MacDiarmid* (1967) that has been

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329 Stevenson, pers. comm., whilst the author was working on the *Peter Grimes Fantasy* (1971) with Stevenson at the Ronald Stevenson Society Summer School, Garvald House, Peeblesshire, 1993.
previously discussed. An even stronger influence is from Grainger, who would frequently silently depress notes for use in the middle pedal in advance, as in the final bars of his Children’s March (1919). This is substantiated by Carruthers:

The sostenuto pedal is also used to sustain notes that have been depressed silently, either to allow harmonics generated by previous pitches to ring freely or to allow for harmonics to be generated by subsequently ‘sounded’ pitches. Examples of the latter use occur at the beginning of Eastern Intermezzo (1922) and of the ‘free setting’ of Brahms’s Cradle-Song (Schott / Schirmer, 1923), as well as in bars 140-143 of Jutish Medley (1928).\(^{330}\)

Grainger would surely have applauded this breaking of new ground. From a theosophical point of view, it is noteworthy that Stevenson—as a true partisan of the middle-pedal—uses it at all of the pivotally important moments in the fantasy. Firstly, he uses it to represent the philosophizing of Grimes; then the Angry Mob; later, taking on a more ethereal persona of the non-human fog-horn; and finally the celestial form of the ‘the morning stars coming out just before dawn,’\(^{331}\) which is essentially the path that Peter, as protagonist, takes in the Opera. These facets of Grimes’ nature are outlined in miniature in his first soliloquy in Act I. It is one where he philosophizes, to the incredulousness of the villagers, who see him as either insane or inebriated:

**Peter:** Now the Great Bear and Pleiades where earth moves,
Are drawing up the clouds of human grief,
Breathing solemnity in the deep night. Who can decipher,
In storm or starlight, The written character of a friendly fate—
As the sky turns, the world for us to change?

But if the horoscope’s bewildering, Like a flashing turmoil of a shoal of herring, Who can turn skies back and begin again?

**Chorus:** He’s mad or drunk! Why’s that man here?


\(^{331}\) Stevenson, pers. comm., at the Ronald Stevenson Society Summer School, Garvald House, Peebleshire, 1993.
4.7 Intricate Combination Pedalling

Stevenson is at his most interesting when he unites the many diverse pedal techniques that he has absorbed over his lengthy performing career. He will sometimes combine the Ped III with the very unusual, yet specific pedal marking, to ‘half pedal’,\textsuperscript{332} as shown in his transcription of Sergei Rachmaninoff’s \textit{In the Silence of the Secret Night}, Op. 4, No. 3 (trans. Stevenson 1982, as shown highlighted in red, bars 3-5, Figure 58). This shows a strong influence from Grainger, for as Hamilton notes, ‘half-pedalling is rarely marked, with the major exception of Percy Grainger’s scores,’\textsuperscript{333} with Stevenson being practically the only other composer-pianist to do so consistently. Banowetz writes of Grainger that his ‘ideas on pedalling still prove to be extremely advanced’\textsuperscript{334} and Grainger himself believed “that the "properly equipped" pianist should master, not only each pedal individually, but "the joint use of all three pedals and their interplay with each other".”\textsuperscript{335} This aesthetic is strongly shared and advocated by Stevenson. Grainger even went so far as to write a ‘left-foot study’ of which Stevenson is very much aware and which he uses in his own teaching.\textsuperscript{336}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure58.png}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{332} An art in itself wherein the pedal only briefly brushes the dampers against the strings and only half deadens the sound—most pianists of advanced ability will be expected to half-pedal.

\textsuperscript{333} Hamilton, \textit{After the Golden Age}, 170.


\textsuperscript{336} Stevenson, \textit{pers. comm.}, at the Ronald Stevenson Society Summer School, Garvald House, Peeblesshire, 1993.
Carruthers argues that a ‘pianist can master playing all three pedals at once, requiring the left-foot to be “slewed round so that the toe of the foot faces the damper pedal and the heel of the foot faces away from the player, to his left”\textsuperscript{337} (as shown in Figure 59).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{left_foot_study.png}
\caption{Grainger’s Left-foot Study, Introduction to H. Balfour Gardiner’s Prelude (De Profundis), later published by G. Schirmer, 1923 as a Guide to Virtuosity, Exception to Copyright, Section ss 40, 103C, Research or Study.\textsuperscript{338}}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ronald_stevenson_transcription.png}
\caption{Ronald Stevenson’s Transcription of Ivor Novello’s Fly Home Little Heart (from King’s Rhapsody 1949, trans. Stevenson, 1980), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 17-19.}
\end{figure}

Similarly, Stevenson’s employment of the pedals ‘simultaneously yet independently’\textsuperscript{339} is prevalent throughout his œuvre. A typical example can be found in his transcription of Ivor Novello’s Fly Home Little Heart (from King’s Rhapsody 1949, trans. Stevenson 1980). Here, he combines finger-pedalling


\textsuperscript{338} Riddle, \textit{Percy Grainger: Piano Pedagogue}, 11 *Reproduced with kind permission, Glenn Riddle.

\textsuperscript{339} Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.
with sustain pedalling (as shown in Figure 59, highlighted in green, bars 17-19) to bring out the melody *sontuoso e caldo in tono*, that is shared between both hands. Once again, Stevenson exploits the possibility of the *sostenuto* sustaining a single note (Figure 59, highlighted in blue, bars 18-19), although here he combines it with the sustaining pedal, marked independently (Figure 59, highlighted in red, bars 18-19). Both hands leap around between melody and the delicate accompaniment figures in the highest register (Figure 59, highlighted in yellow, bars 17-19). It is precisely this combination of incisive figuration and meticulous pedal markings that consistently produces a subtle quasi-orchestral texture, emblematic of Stevenson’s writing.

In order thoroughly to evaluate pedalling in Stevenson’s composition it is logical to delve even deeper and study in detail the workings of the feet to fully appreciate his comprehensive methodology. One of Stevenson’s finest transcriptions for piano dates from 1981, his reworking of Leopold Stokowski’s (1882–1977) transcription of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Komm, süßer Tod, komm selge Ruh, bwv 478*—originally part of the *Sixty-Nine Sacred Songs* edited by Georg Christian Schemelli (1678–1762) into the *Musicalisches Gesangbuch* (1736). Once again, the Bach-Stokowski-Stevenson *Komm, süßer Tod* is a transcription of a transcription of a transcription! To acknowledge this fact, Stevenson aspired not just to emulate the religious austerity of Bach’s original music—as heard in the churches and cathedrals of Europe of the eighteenth century—but also Stokowski’s lush, quasi-Hollywood, symphonic texture heard on the ‘silver-screen’ in the twentieth century.

The opening bars look deceptively simple. However, Stevenson has internalized the principal theme by alternately swapping the melody between the two hands to give the aural illusion, yet again, of ‘three hands’ (as shown in Figure 61 with the right-hand in red and the left-hand blue, bars 1-2—discussed at length in Chapter 2.3).

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340 *sontuoso e caldo in tono* (‘a rich and warm tone’).

341 Stevenson, *pers. comm.*, 16 September 2011.
The Stokowski-Stevenson transcription of Bach’s *Komm, süßer Tod*, depends as much on the feet as the hands to make it work. Nonetheless, to the listener the parts remain eloquently static, although the effect requires considerable physical movement on the pianist’s behalf, mainly due to the complex pedalling. By taking the *una corda* and the *sostenuto* with the left-foot simultaneously and using the regular sustaining pedal with the right-foot, the aural effect of ‘three hands’ is further exaggerated. Like a sophisticated illusion created by a master conjurer, the audience is blissfully unaware of the tremendous skill needed to create it—the pianist has to have as equal a mastery of pedal technique as they would digital dexterity on the keyboard. The intricacy of the ‘pedidexterity’ (a word the current author has coined—as opposed to ambidexterity ‘of using the hands equally’) can clearly be seen in the outline of the pedalling demanded of the pianist (as shown in Figure 62, bars 1-2), which is virtually balletic in design.


This is both a sophisticated and complex orchestral allusion and illusion, delivered with lightning shifts of registration at what is perceived by the listener to be a slow tempo (quaver = 63) and a very quiet dynamic range (ppp–p). In fewer than two whole bars, there are at least eight changes of pedal and six changes of registration. This sheds light on the enigmatic phrase of Harold Taylor—one of Stevenson’s oldest colleagues and supporters—‘Ronald Stevenson is as much at home with three pedals, six fingers,342 and three hands’.343

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342 Stevenson will often take two notes with the thumb—resultantly six notes are achievable with a single hand.

343 Harold Taylor, Stevenson’s Pianism, 209.
4.8 An ‘Imprecise Practice’ and an Overall Evaluation of Stevenson’s Use of the Pedals in Composition and Transcription

As already discussed, a great deal of pedalling has to be left to the discretion of the pianist otherwise one runs the risk of there being too much information for the pianist to absorb from the written score. If one evaluates two very unlikely comparisons—Iannis Xenakis’ notoriously impenetrable Herma: Musique Symbolique pour piano (see Figure 63) and Percy Grainger’s One More Day, My John (see Figure 64)—it would be a surprise to many that Grainger’s overloaded score is significantly less playable than that of Xenakis. The latter at least has intelligently omitted all pedalling, and, whilst Xenakis maintains his trademark meticulous dynamic markings, he seems aware that this is already approaching the limit of performable information. In comparison, Grainger preposterously specifying which voicing he requires (in addition to his already detailed pedalling) is unrealistic to read—let alone perform—and whilst interesting, is completely unviable.

![Figure 63](image1.png)  
*Figure 63. An Excerpt from Herma: Musique Symbolique Pour Piano, 1961, by Iannis Xenakis (1922–2001). (London: Boosey & Hawkes), page 10, bars 1-2.*

![Figure 64](image2.png)  
*Figure 64. An Excerpt from Percy Grainger’s One More Day, My John (1911). (London: Schott and Company, 1921), bars 12-14.*

In contrast, it is clear that Stevenson’s pedal markings are more intelligently conceived and
thoughtfully designed with his performer very much in mind. It is also worthy of note that, whilst laying claim to the most detailed pedal markings, Stevenson can, on rare occasion, also have the vaguest. One such example can be found as in his transcription of The Ploughboy from the Opera The Farmer (1787, trans. Stevenson 1948) by William Shield (1748–1829) (as shown in Figure 65), with the marking *molto ped, ma discreto*—trusting the performer’s own judgment to realise his vision.

![Figure 65. Stevenson’s Transcription of The Ploughboy from the opera, The Farmer (1787) by William Shield (1748–1829), for ‘Ben Britten and Peter Pears,’ bars 1-5 (1787, trans. Stevenson 1948), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 1-5.](image)

This brief evaluation shows that Stevenson has unquestionably built upon the practices of Frédéric Chopin, Franz Liszt, Sigismond Thalberg, Ferruccio Busoni, Henry Cowell and Percy Grainger—with his vast body of work containing some of the most innovative uses of the pedals in the entire repertoire. If the pedals are indeed ‘the soul of the piano,’\(^ {344}\) it follows that they are at the creative heart of Stevenson’s output. Nonetheless, he is as much a performer as he is a composer—clearly demonstrating a leap of faith in entrusting the interpreter to use their individual discretion and discernment when navigating his work on the concert platform. Inevitably, he realizes, in tandem with Banowetz, that ‘the ear alone, rather than a set of printed directions, must always be the final guide for an artistic performance’.\(^ {345}\)


Chapter Five: Stevenson’s Relationship to Socialism, Politics and Nationalism

5.1 Proletarian Roots and Upholding Steadfast Principles

Stevenson has never forgotten his inconspicuous working-class roots—being almost wholly marooned as a British contemporary composer with a proletarian background—rather than a product of the more affluent middle classes. He sees this as accounting for the inherent struggle in his music:

I have had to struggle for my music. I am sure it is a class thing. I don’t meet British musicians from the working class, really from the proletariat, at all. They don’t exist in Britain, not in concert music at any rate; you always meet people from comfortable backgrounds. My childhood was spent to some extent in the Depression years—I was born in 1928—and I remember both my parents being out of work. My father was a railway worker and my mother was a cotton-weaver. 346

Whilst writing biographical entries on British composers for the highly respected Italian Encyclopedia, L’Encyclopædia dello Spettacolo, Stevenson sent out ‘a postcard questionnaire’ to various colleagues. He discovered that he was the only contemporary British composer of any consequence who had working-class roots:

The most interesting fact I discovered was that not one contemporary British composer of national renown had a truly working-class origin. When one considers the numerous proletarian poets and playwrights who have made meteoric appearances in recent years, this circumstance regarding music seems all the stranger. 347

Ateş Orga writes of him that ‘he's a man of the people, passionately remembering his Lancashire/Celtic ‘working class origins’—his father was a fireman on the railways, his mother a mill-worker, his grandmother a child truck-pusher in the South Wales coalfield, his grandfather a bargee on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal’. 348 His grandmother is ‘commented on in the first of her grandson’s Cambrian Cantos for harp’ (1965) 349 (as shown in Figure 66), with the second written in recollection

of a ‘childhood holiday in Wales,’ emblematic of a generally happy and untroubled childhood, despite occasional hardship.

Genealogical heredity and a sense of identity are crucial to Stevenson, as in the title Cambrian Canto’s, which is not an allusion to the Cambrian Period of the Paleozoic Era, but instead the Latinization of the Welsh word Cymru for Wales—Cambria, where the United Kingdom’s Cambrian rocks are most open to the elements. It is, in a sense, an apt metaphor for the bedrock of Stevenson’s own Celtic genesis. Anderson notes that ‘there is another aspect to Stevenson’s music that is coming increasingly to the fore, which is that it is espousing an explicitly Celtic aesthetic.’ In this respect, Stevenson sees clear parallels between himself and Frederick Delius,

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351 Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.


Arnold Bax, and E. J. Moeran (1894–1950) and notes the importance of being constant to his heredity:

I think that is very important. Delius had that, Bax had that, so strongly that he actually learned Irish Gaelic, and E. J. Moeran had it. It’s new because it’s largely unexplored, it’s *terra incognita*. I don’t think that makes me a throwback, because it’s loyalty to principles again, loyalty to roots.\(^{354}\)

However, whilst Stevenson argues that, ‘I was not ever involved in politics,’ he comments that in his youth, he was surrounded by grassroots socialism as war loomed:

I was aware of the serious mien of these plain men. They seemed to know far more than politicians were saying, about what was going to happen; they knew war was coming—I heard Phrases bandied about—the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), [Adolf] Hitler (1889-1945), [Benito] Mussolini (1983–1945).\(^{355}\)

Many years afterwards, this ‘glimpse of a war vision’ found its way into his *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963), when he wholly comprehended the horror of war and its ‘superhuman inhumanities’\(^{356}\) with the image of the Nazi Swastika being beaten by the Soviet Hammer into a Sickle (as shown in Figure 67).

![Glimpse of a War-Vision](image)

**Figure 67.** ‘Glimpse of a War-Vision’ from Ronald Stevenson’s *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963). (London: Oxford University Press), bars 920-925.

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The barbarous, serrated four-pronged swastika-motive can unmistakably be felt in the left-hand of bars 920-925:

The idea of the hammer, is of course, inherent in the mechanism of the piano; and though music is (mercifully) powerless to paint a swastika, it can certainly suggest the mechanistic devilry and brutality of which the crooked cross is but a symbol.³⁵⁷

Orga adds that Stevenson ‘scribbled’ on the margin of the manuscript⁴³⁸ ‘Is this UGLY enough??’³⁵⁹ and inscribes ‘In memoriam the 25.M,’³⁶⁰ i.e., the unprecedented twenty-five million Soviet men, women and children who perished throughout the horrific course of the Second World War (1939–1945).

In spite of this, the inscription never made it into the final copy. When the current author inquired as to the omission, Stevenson said it was a result of not wishing to detract from the last of the triple fugues that is expressly marked ‘in memoriam the six million Jews’³⁶¹ (bars 1,904-1,915, as shown in Figure 68). He makes use of Grainger’s bunched fingering here (3,3,3,3,3 in the left-hand) and has the poignant marking ‘con somma forza with all your power’.³⁶²

The music in the ‘glimpse of a war vision’ is unquestionably ugly—with its plethora of compounded minor-seconds. Nonetheless, Stevenson’s aesthetic bears an arresting similarity to the British First World War poet, Wilfred Owen (1893–1918), who would often take advantage of knowingly shocking language as a means of transportation for his poetry’s underlying humanity. It is also important that Stevenson cites the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) as being bandied about as he eavesdropped as a child.

³⁵⁷ Rapoport, Liner Notes, Stevenson plays Stevenson.
³⁵⁸ The manuscript of the Passacaglia on DSCH is now in the National Library of Scotland.
³⁶¹ Stevenson, pers. comm., c. 1998.
³⁶² ‘Con somma forza’ in the autograph facsimile edition of the Passacaglia on DSCH, the Ronald Stevenson Society, 156, ‘Con somma forza’ (Oxford University Press, edition: bar 1,907).
Parallels can certainly be drawn between the ‘glimpse of a war vision’ (Passacaglia on DSCH, 1963) and the visual arts, particularly with fellow pacifist, the Spanish painter and sculptor Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) and his iconic Guernica (1937) wherein the mood of Guernica is best described as unadulterated outrage concerning the civilian casualties of war. The diableria meccanistica, and brutalità as Stevenson’s writing (as shown in Figure 70). The ‘glimpse of a war vision’ eventually abates and liquefies into an eloquent chorale, with the Russian word ‘Мир’ (Peace) figuratively marked in the score (as shown in Figure 69, highlighted in red, bar 692).

Figure 68. Final Fugue expressly marked ‘In memoriam the six million’ from Ronald Stevenson’s Passacaglia on DSCH. (London: Oxford University Press), bars 1,904-1,915.
In effect this is Stevenson’s particularized cry for humanitarian harmony as Picasso’s *Guernica* was ‘his outcry for peace’.  

As he was a lifelong pacifist, Stevenson’s musical account of the hideousness of war has ancillary consequence. MacDonald notes that, when asked to do his national service immediately

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364 Reprinted with kind permission, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, ssMadrid.
following the Second World War in 1947, Stevenson declared himself a conscientious objector and was incarcerated as a result:

In 1947 he graduated from the Royal Manchester College of Music [founded 1893] with special distinction, and soon faced his call up charge for National Service. As a Conscientious Objector, he refused—and went to prison instead...writing one of his most visionary early piano pieces, the Chorale Prelude for Jean Sibelius (1947–48) in Wormwood Scrubs.  

In this extraordinarily trying time, it is astonishing that Stevenson managed to put pen to paper and accomplished the writing of not only the Chorale Prelude for Jean Sibelius (1947–48) but also his four-voice chorale of On another’s sorrow (1948) by William Blake (1757–1827). Jamie Reid Baxter notes the consequence of the text ‘which enunciates solidarity with all creatures in their suffering’:

Can I see another’s woe—and not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another’s grief—and not seek for kind relief?

However, Stevenson's socialist leanings had a supplementary consequence for him as an established composer-performer. He was one of the extraordinarily few artists to journey freely behind the ‘Iron Curtain’ and even attended the Fourth Congress of Soviet Composers (1968) in Moscow, as Orga explains:

As a mature individual, through such Marxist 'comrades-in-art' (one of his favourite soubriquets) as Alan Bush (1900–1995), Bernard Stevens (1916–1983), and the Scottish Nationalist poet Hugh MacDiarmid (1892–1978), he culturally embraced the Cold War Communist bloc—going to East Berlin in 1963, touring East Germany in 1966 (a trip traversing the emotional gamut from playing Liszt’s piano in Weimar to visiting Buchenwald).

Stevenson’s visit to Buchenwald Concentration Camp, in close proximity to Weimar, allowed him to see first-hand the gruesomeness of ‘the systematic state-sponsored killing of six million Jewish men, women, and children and millions of others by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during World War II’. A usually articulate Stevenson, emotively said, ‘For this I have no words’.

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366 Jamie Reid Baxter, ‘The Choral Music’.
5.2 A Pacifist Fighting an Oppressive Regime in South Africa

With such unwavering beliefs and staunch humanistic ideologies—that as a direct result of his pacifism, he was even incarcerated for upholding—it seems somewhat inconsistent that Stevenson decided to move to South Africa in 1963, especially considering the immeasurable social, economic and political inequality of the Apartheid system.370 This was devised by the all-White, ultra-right-wing Afrikaner-Nasionale Party and the clandestine, all-male Afrikaner Broederbond. It is even more out of the ordinary, as Stevenson ‘has always championed individual freedoms,’ and resultantly deserves investigative study. Stevenson was introduced to Erik Chisholm (1904–1965), the Head of Music at the University of Cape Town (founded. 1829), by his friend the Scottish poet, Hugh MacDiarmid—the nom de plume of Christopher Murray Grieve (1892–1978). Stevenson remarks that Chisholm visited his home, Townfoot House in West Linton, to essentially ‘head-hunt’ him for the unusual appointment of joint Head of Piano and Head of Composition at the University of Cape Town:

Erik Chisholm came here, though I wasn't in at the time. My wife, Marjorie, was in, and she said to him when he put forward this proposition of our going to South Africa: ‘Oh, Ronald won't thank you for that. It's a fascist country’.

His views on Apartheid are incontrovertibly apposing, yet unexpectedly, he thought a new horizon would be appealing:

I thought it could be something new and it doesn't mean to say that I agree with South African apartheid if I go there; there are others who don't agree with it either—I think that's the correct pronunciation, isn't it? Aparthate. [sic.] With hate in it. H-A-T-E.371

Whilst many of Stevenson’s compositions have nationalistic, humanistic, and political undertones, he emphatically states that he ‘was never a member of any political party, and had no

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intention of being’. He saw politics as too time-consuming for composer colleagues who were ‘very involved,’ such as his friend Alan Bush, who was a highly-committed socialist with far-left ideologies. He does, however, acknowledge the consequence of ‘attending the meetings of any organization that’s prepared to show interest in the arts’. As a result, Stevenson has spoken ‘on the platform of numerous national left-wing parties including the Scottish National Party and also to the Music Group of the British Communist Party’. Of the latter, he notes that his presentation was disparaging of communism and considers it more significant to communicate via his compositions:

I spoke very critically of communism, and I was very heavily criticized by everybody present. But I am a musician and I don’t want to be involved in politics. If I have something to communicate to people, I think it’s best to do it in music.  

In South Africa, Stevenson was criticized at the première of the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963), not directly for being a communist, but for having overt ‘communist sympathies’. Communism was a hazardous political ideology to sympathize with in 1963—only a handful of years since McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare had swept through the United States—especially in South Africa under the eye of one of the most oppressive, uncompromisingly militant administrations in the world:

I wrote a programme note on my Passacaglia that included a quotation from [Vladimir] Lenin (1870–1924). ‘The three necessities of mankind: peace, bread and the land’. I don’t like slogans very much, they may save your breath, but they also economize on thought. But I used that in my Passacaglia in a passage which has the speech rhythm of ‘peace, bread and the land’ again and again. That was in the programme and I think the audience were talking about this. Some of them said: ‘That’s communist, you know’.

Stevenson’s ‘Symphonic Variations’ on the popular Bolshevik slogan ‘Peace Bread and the Land’ of 1917 (as shown in bars 976-982, Figure 71) resulted in unnerving mutterings by the listeners.

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373 Walton, A Scot in ‘Emergent Africa,’ 5.
Figure 71. Variations on ‘Мир, хлеб и земля’ (‘Peace, Bread and the Land’) from Ronald Stevenson’s *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963). (London: Oxford University Press), bars 976-982.

A later segment, where the pianist uses ‘direct contact of the hand to the strings,’ marked ‘to emergent Africa,’ (as shown in Figure 72, bars 1,191-1,197) had a far deeper and potentially perilous connotation. In an increasingly volatile political climate this ultimately resulted in a *Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie* (South African Police, 1913–1994) raid of the University of Cape Town:

That probably meant more to the South African representatives, government representatives, or the police, or whoever it was, than ‘peace, bread and the land’. … The very next day, there was a police invasion of Erik Chisholm’s study. And they emptied the drawers, emptied everything, trying to search for incriminating evidence, because he had been to Russia and indeed he had at least one volume of Scottish folk songs published in the Soviet Union. But Erik Chisholm was not particularly political at that time. Perhaps that could be said about myself too.

However, the raiding of the University by the police was perceptibly not a result of the music *per se* but the proposition *behind* the notes. This has ceaselessly been the fear of oppressive regimes

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374 The *Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie* (South African Police, 1913–1994) were promptly disbanded in the post-apartheid era, replaced by the ‘South African Police Service’—the current post-apartheid era law-enforcement agency in South Africa (1994).

as, say, for example, Nazism with the infamous line, ‘Wenn ich Kultur höre... entsichere ich meinen Browning!’ ('Whenever I hear [the word] 'culture' . . . I remove the safety [catch] from my Browning!') Nevertheless, Stevenson notes that on the afternoon of the première of the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963), he added his Lament for the Children, dedicated to child victims of Nazism. He notes that it was no accident that this was conceived in the suppressive atmosphere of South Africa:

I composed a new section of two pages based on the seventeenth-century Scottish pibroch Lament for the Children composed by Patrick Mor MacCrimmon (1595–1670) as a lament for seven of his eight sons who died within a year. I recast this melody thinking of ‘the child victims of Nazism’ [as shown in Figure 73]. It is no coincidence that this was sparked off in South Africa.377

![Image](https://example.com/figure73.png)

**Figure 73.** ‘Lament for the Children’ from Ronald Stevenson’s Passacaglia on DSCH. (London: Oxford University Press), bars 723-727.

Whilst such practices certainly have strong political undercurrents, by far the most radical composition from Stevenson’s days in South Africa is a setting he made of a previously unpublished miniature, his African Twi-Tune (1964). This piece is, astonishingly, a setting of the now-defunct ultra-right-wing national anthem of South Africa Die Stem van Suid-Afrika (1921). This was not only a

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376 This is often erroneously ascribed to Hermann Wilhelm Göring (1893–1946), and an assortment of high-ranking Nazis: including Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945), Ernst Kaltenbrunner (1903–1946), Oskar Dirlewanger (1895–1945), Odilo Globocnik (1904–1945), Reinhard Heydrich (1904–1942) and Heinrich Himmler (1900–1945).

In fact, it ‘was a common Nazi cliché, that was varied and drawn on by a number of notorious Nazi officials, with the line formerly originating in the 1933 play, Schlageter,’ by Hanns Johst (1890–1978)’. Maximilian Forte, Zero Anthropology, http://zeroanthropology.net/2010/08/05/when-i-hear-the-word-culture, August 2010.

377 Colin Scott-Sutherland, Stevenson and the Child, 323. Sutherland footnotes ‘Letter to Author’ (Sutherland) dated 16th September, 1982.
bizarre choice of source material but could even also have proved potentially life threatening, as it has an extremely chequered history.

5.3 Re-Contextualization of the Ultra-Right Wing Die Stem van Suid-Afrika (1921) in the African Twi-Tune (1964) and Aesthetic Parallels with Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 (1824)

The fiercely pro-Afrikaner text of Die Stem van Suid-Afrika (1921) was initially an Afrikaans poem written by C. J. Langenhoven (1873–1932), which was set to music by Reverend Marthinus Lourens de Villiers (1885–1977) in 1921. As South Africa slowly moved towards democratic freedom, the work became progressively synonymous with tyranny and struggle, so much so, that it ultimately became unviable to perform in public at any international event.

James A. Brown succinctly assessed the state of affairs stating that ‘Die Stem van Suid-Afrika’ was an emotive hymn for the riders of the wagons, but it had the sound of a dirge in the lives of the black millions’. This issue came to a head for the duration of a rugby union test match in 1992, when the wholly white spectator crowd in New Zealand were asked ‘to stand for a minute’s silence, for victims of township violence in South Africa, but the majority of the crowd replied by singing ‘Die Stem’ [van Suid-Afrika]’. As the official voice of the African National Congress (founded 1912) Sakumzi J. Macozoma (b. 1957) responded, saying he was ‘very saddened by the obvious rejection of reconciliation, especially in the sporting arena, which significant elements of the white population seem to be showing’. Stephanus Muller notes that the singing of Die Stem van Suid-Afrika (1921) was actively encouraged by the Conservative party members, the Transvaal Rugby Football Union

(founded. 1889) president and even the South African Rugby Football Union executive member and business tycoon, Louis Luyt (b. 1932).382

All anthems reflect a sense of national identity by their implicit design. Whilst unarguably, there must have been a tangible solidarity amongst the white supporters at the Springbok / All Black test, it ended up alienating, fragmenting, and tarnishing the country’s already poor international image in the subsequent media frenzy. The state of affairs deteriorated to such an extent that in the 1992 Barcelona Summer Olympics, the South African teams who partook had a nonaligned ‘doctored Olympic flag’383—and no anthem at all, using as an alternative, the Ode an die Freude (1824) from Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 (1824).384 However, even then, not everyone approved. The Hungarian-born experimental physicist, Professor Nicholas Kurti (1908–1998) wrote the following in a narrow-minded, intolerant letter to the New York Times in 1991:

I trust that the choice of Beethoven’s ‘Ode to Joy’ as the South African Olympic team’s anthem (‘Topics of the Times,’ 14th November 1991) followed consultation with the European Community, of which the ‘Ode to Joy’ is the official anthem. I know of only two cases of shared anthems: (1) between 1871 and 1918, Britain and Germany used the same music for ‘God Save the Queen/ King’ [anon. c 1745] and ‘Heil Dir im Siegerkranz’ [‘Hail to Thee in Victor’s Crown’] (2) In 1919–38, Haydn’s music for ‘Gott Erhalte Franz den Kaiser’ [‘God Save Emperor Francis,’ 1797]—the most beautiful anthem ever composed—was shared by the Weimar Republic, followed by Hitler’s Third Reich, and by Austria. While there is some justification for those two cases, dynastic in the first, politico-cultural in the other, the European Community and the South African Olympic team have nothing in common.385

382 Stephanus Muller, Exploring The Aesthetic of Reconciliation, 1-2.

‘Large numbers of the seventy thousand white Springbok supporters came to Ellis Park bearing old South African flags. Outside the stadium, right-wing Conservative Party members distributed flags and leaflets encouraging the singing of Die Stem [van Suid-Afrika], while inside the stadium groups of supporters were, according to Shaun Johnson of The Star, already chanting ‘fok die ANC, fok die ANC’ [fuck the African National Congress]. When the crowd was asked for a few moments’ silence immediately prior to the game, they rose almost as one to sing Die Stem van Suid-Afrika. Adding insult to injury, the then Transvaal Rugby Football Union president and South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU) executive member, Louis Luyt, approved the playing of the anthem over the public address system in an official expression of solidarity with the crowd.


384 Rob Nixon, Apartheid on the Run.

Stevenson would not only be the first to disagree fervently with the above letter by Professor Kurti, but in response would no doubt have quoted a favorite dictum by the American popular singer and civil rights activist, Paul Robeson (1898–1976): ‘there are many nations, but there is only one race—the human race’.\footnote{386}

The origins of Stevenson’s *African Twi-Tune* (1964) can be traced back to a student named Alex Moses, who came to Stevenson, ‘for piano lessons, though he could not afford to pay’.\footnote{387} The work is dedicated to him with the simple inscription ‘To A.M. [Alex Moses] in the present and ‘S.A. [South Africa] in the future’ (as shown in Figure 74, highlighted in red).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig74.png}
\caption{Ronald Stevenson’s *African Twi-Tune* (1964) dedicated to ‘A.M. [Alex Moses] in the Present; S.A. [South Africa] in the Future,’ unpublished manuscript, reproduced courtesy of Ronald Stevenson, bars 1-2.}
\end{figure}

\addcontentsline{toc}{section}{Notes}
\footnote{386}{Jamie Reid Baxter, ‘The Choral Music,’ in *Ronald Stevenson: The Man and his Music* (London, Toccata Press, 2005), 199 (Baxter states that Stevenson quotes this in a radio interview in 1979, BBC Radio 3, FM 90.2 MHz - 92.6 MHz, United Kingdom)}

\footnote{387}{Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson (née Spedding b. 1932), *pers. comm.*, 18 January 2012.}

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Marjorie Stevenson tells of Alex Moses:

He was a member of the minority coloured section of the community in South Africa. He graduated from Cape Town University (founded. 1829), was a school teacher, and married man with two children. Coloured people at that time were only allowed to teach in schools designated for coloured or black students. Their salaries were a pittance.

The Stevensons later arranged for Moses to relocate to the United Kingdom, lending a hand in finding him a suitable teaching appointment, with his family later joining him. Marjorie Stevenson tells us that the idea of the twi-tune was based on the design of Percy Grainger:

He [Alex Moses] went on to study law. Passionate about music and homesick for South Africa, he was ecstatic when Ronald wrote the *African Twi-Tune* (1964). The *Twi-Tune* title is from Grainger, who uses the term for combining a folk tune with one of his own.\(^{388}\)

Stevenson wrote supplementary Graingeresque ‘twi-tunes’, such as his *Scots-Swedish Twi-Tune* fifteen years afterwards in 1979, described by MacDonald as a miniature that ‘entwines the tune of *The Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond* (trad. C. 1841) and the Swedish folk tune *Ack Värmeland, du Sköna* [from the musical ‘Vermlandsflickan’ (*The Värmlandian Girl*, 1846) by Anders Fryxell (1795–1881)], with intriguing harmonic consequences for them both’.\(^{389}\) This seems to be as much about camaraderie and friendship as anything else. MacDonald sheds some background light on the occasion in the following:

[The *Scots-Swedish Twi-Tune* (1979)] bears a dedication to ‘my very dear friends Harry, Anna, Oscar and Leonora’. . . . Harry Winstanley (a connoisseur of Gershwin and Godowsky), his Swedish wife (thus the combination of Scots and Swedish melodies). . . . This is an act of music-making that is also a gesture of friendship.\(^{390}\)

Whilst both ‘twi-tunes’ have obvious parallels, the consequence of the *African Twi-Tune* is politically far more significant. Stevenson’s disgust at the injustice of enforced racial segregation gave him the desire to take it upon himself to audaciously unite the South African National Anthem,

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\(^{388}\) Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson, *pers. comm.*, 18 January 2012.


Die Stem van Suid-Afrika, not with a melody of his own, but with a supplementary Anthem, the Bantu National Anthem (1904) (as shown in complete form in Figure 75).

Figure 75. Complete Manuscript of Ronald Stevenson’s African Twi Tune (1964) written in South Africa, unpublished manuscript. Reproduced courtesy of Ronald Stevenson, bars 1-49.
Here both anthems are played in their entirety—simultaneously. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* defines the Bantu peoples as being almost the entire populace of the southern African continent:

...the approximately 85 million million speakers of the more than 500 distinct languages of the Bantu subgroup of the Niger-Congo language family, occupying almost the entire southern projection of the African continent. The classification is primarily linguistic, for the cultural patterns of Bantu speakers are extremely diverse; the linguistic connection, however, has given rise to considerable speculation concerning a possible common area of origin of the Bantu peoples, the linguistic evidence pointing strongly to the region of the present-day Cameroon-Nigeria border.\(^{391}\)

It is also notable that the term *Bantustan* was ‘designated by the white-dominated government of South Africa as pseudo-national homelands for the country’s black African (classified by the government as Bantu) population during the mid-to late twentieth century’ and was a ‘major administrative device for the exclusion of blacks from the South African political system under the policy of apartheid, or racial segregation’.\(^{392}\) The melody of the *Bantu National Anthem* (1904) was written by Mankayi Enouch Sontmga (1873-1905) in 1904 and ‘became well known throughout a large part of Africa,’ with the words translated into scores of African languages, as well as being ‘officially adopted by Tanganyika as its National Anthem on the achievement of independence in 1961’.\(^{393}\)

In his *African Twi-Tune*, it seems most plausible that Stevenson dedicated it to Moses by initials alone, in all likelihood (one assumes) to safeguard him—as resetting a national anthem is perilous at the best of times, but uniting it with another has dangerous political undertones. This was exceedingly dangerous at the height of Apartheid in 1964, especially considering that there was

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even a ban on ‘racially-integrated music groups’ at the time. One has to wonder what the authorities would have made of a ‘racially integrated’ anthem?

Stevenson notes that Grainger similarly once ‘wrote a satire of the Norwegian national anthem (Sønner av Norge, 1819) in his incidental music to Gunnar Heiberg’s (1857–1929) play Folkeraadet (The People’s Parliament), that created a riot in the Christiana Theatre in 1897.’ One must keep in mind that Breyten Breytenbach (b. 1939) was imprisoned for seven years in 1975 with the charge of ‘high treason’. This was due to Breytenbach not only being a committed vocal opponent to the Apartheid system but also for marrying a woman of Vietnamese origin—a criminal offence under the preposterous Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the equally ludicrous Immorality Act (1950).

It is both ironic and prophetic of Stevenson’s work that the present National Anthem of South Africa is an amalgamation of Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika and Die Stem van Suid-Afrika, in a free country that was after all, Stevenson’s optimistic expectation for ‘S. A in the future’. The multilanguage verses are in isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans and English. The final lines of the new anthem are: ‘sound the call to come together, united we shall stand, let us live and strive for freedom, in South Africa our land’. Stevenson shows an empathy in his African Twi-Tune for

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397 Mike Smith, Opening Pandora’s Apartheid Box.
398 Mike Smith, Opening Pandora’s Apartheid Box.

‘A proclamation issued by the then State President, Nelson Mandela, on 20 April 1994 in terms of the provisions of Section 248 (1) together with Section 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 200 of 1993, stated that the Republic of South Africa would have two national anthems. They were Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika and The Call of South Africa (Die Stem van Suid-Afrika). In terms of Section 4 of the Constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, and following a proclamation in the Government Gazette No. 18341 (dated 10 October 1997), a shortened, combined version of Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika and The Call of South Africa is now the national anthem of South Africa. It is the only neo-modal national anthem in the world, by virtue of being the only one
Friedrich Schiller’s (1759–1805) brotherly amalgamation of all mankind, ‘Ode an die Freude,’ which similarly celebrates truly universal individual and collective freedoms. Nonetheless, Stevenson was very homesick for Scotland when he was in South Africa and his music acquired an increasingly Celtic aesthetic from 1963 onwards.\footnote{Stevenson, pers. comm., c. 1994.}

**5.4 Nationalism: a McBartók or Mac Dvořák and the Move towards a Gàidhlig Aesthetic in the Footsteps of Grainger**

It is ironic that it was Stevenson’s time in Cape Town that fueled an ever increasing fascination for Scottish music. This was partly due to the influence of Erik Chisholm (1904–1965), as well as his correspondence with the Scottish Nationalist poet, Hugh MacDiarmid (1892–1978):

> I composed a lot of songs there. The idea of addressing myself to Scottish song I think was probably the influence of Erik Chisholm—though in the aesthetic, not in the actual music. At that time, he was collecting and arranging Scottish folk songs from books in South Africa, and having them published in the Soviet Union. Being in South Africa, I felt the need to keep contact with Scotland, particularly with MacDiarmid. We corresponded, and I set many of his poems to music.\footnote{Walton, A Scot in ‘Emergent Africa,’ 8.}

McDonald notes that, whilst Scottish classical music had ‘suffered a long decline since the Renaissance, when the masses and motets of the Canon of Scone, Robert Calver (1487–1566), attained a peak of polyphonic genius fully comparable with the greatest of his European contemporaries.’\footnote{MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 32.} There were, nonetheless ‘a long line of decent sub-Romantic composers from Hammish McCunn (1868–1916) to George McIlwham (b. 1926)’. However, they only had a ‘modicum that starts in one key and finishes in another.

The lyrics employ the five most populous of South Africa’s eleven official languages - *isiXhosa* [first stanza, first two lines], *isiZulu* [first stanza, last two lines], *sesotho* [second stanza], *Afrikaans* [third stanza] and *English* [final stanza]. *Nkosi Sekelel’ iAfrika* was composed in 1897 by Enoch Sontonga, a Methodist schoolteacher. It was originally sung as a church hymn but later became an act of political defiance against the apartheid Government. *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika/The Call of South Africa* was written by C.J. Langenhoven (1918). ‘Die Stem’ was the co-national anthem with *God Save the King/Queen* [anon. c 1745] from 1936 to 1957, when it became the sole national anthem until 1994 [The official end of Apartheid]. The *South African Government* under Nelson Mandela adopted both songs as national anthems from 1994 until they were merged in 1997 to form the current anthem’.
of BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation, founded 1927] airtime and manifested a patina of Scots local colouring’.  

These words are exceedingly apt, as a patina is only the mere surface—a superficial pseudo-Scottish, dermal sheen. However, in following the epidermical annology further still, what of the subcutaneous stratum? Stevenson recollects ‘an occasion in the early 1960’s when television and radio gave some prominence to an address by the then head of BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation, founded 1927) Music in Scotland, Watson Forbes (1909–1997), in which he lamented that Scotland’s composers had yet to come to terms with the wonderful heritage of folk-music. He called for a ‘Mac Dvořák’ to create a national musical language’. Similarly, MacDonald notes that ‘what Scotland really lacked, I was sure was a ‘McBartók, who from the rich heritage of our folk music might fashion a truly twentieth-century, yet fundamentally Scots, idiom that could enrich the main stream of European music in our time’.

Parallels are often drawn between Stevenson and Bartók, who could without difficulty be seen as a ‘McBartók’ or ‘Mac Dvořák’. John Ogdon (1937–1989), noted that, ‘John K. Boulton, writing in the Halle Magazine, found Ronald’s monumental Passacaglia on DSCH (1963) close in idiom to Béla Bartók (1881–1945), and I often feel this to be very true—also for instance, in his A Wheen Tunes for Bairns tae Spiel (1964)’. This is no idle commentary, as Ogdon was intimately familiar with Stevenson’s work, as well as the entire œuvre of Béla Bartók, and gave the British première of the Passacaglia on DSCH at the 1966 Aldeburgh Festival (established 1948) as well as the

403 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 1.
404 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 1.
405 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 2.
407 ‘The first broadcast performance was given by John Ogdon, 22 May 1966 on the ‘BBC ‘Third Programme’ (now BBC Radio 3, FM 90.2 MHz - 92.6 MHz, United Kingdom), the British première was at the Aldeburgh Festival [founded 1948] on 14th June 1966’. Preface to the Oxford University Press edition of the Passacaglia on DSCH.
broadcast première—later recording the work for EMI (Electrical and Musical Industries Ltd., founded. 1931).

However, in his folk music settings, Stevenson was influenced more by Percy Grainger than by Bartók. Marc-André Hamelin (b. 1961) sees Percy Grainger’s work as being on par with the work of Bartók, despite his unconventional behavior: ‘His folk-song settings are cloaked in flesh and blood. Grainger’s achievements in collecting and setting folk songs are at least as important as what Bartók did, even though he was a true eccentric.’

Stevenson acknowledges the direct influence of both Percy Grainger and Zoltán Kodály in his work in the preface to his volume of *Scottish Folk Music Settings for Piano* (1961–1980). Stevenson believes the best treatment of a folk melody is for it ‘not to be harmonized,’ yet there feasibly are only two achievable ways of harmonization:

The purer way is to use only harmony derived from the notes of the melody. This is the method used by Kodály. It is like allowing a plant to grow in its own kind of soil. The other way is to use harmony notes, which are not in the melody. This is the method used by Percy Grainger who did not restrict himself to the Kodály concept but harmonized the melody freely and chromatically. This is a kind of replanting or transplanting. I am interested in both ways.

As well as a lack of understanding about how effectively to set folk music, Stevenson sees that there is also a deficiency of serious amalgamation with classical composition because of ‘much British music criticism’ being ‘uncomfortable with folk content in concert music’. However, the cause of the predicament might be a lack of confidence in *Scottishness* itself and a distinct national identity as a whole. Stevenson is saddened that ‘Scotland tends to forget her own people—they even forgot Robert Louis Stevenson—there is no monument to him in Edinburgh, the city of his
He also will often quote ‘Hugh MacDiarmid’s *obiter dictum* that ‘Scotland is the most backward country in Western Europe, aesthetically speaking’—and MacDiarmid is a Nationalist at that’.  

Stevenson makes no reservations about his quasi-militant treatment of Gàidhlig folk music and is astounded at the ignorance surrounding this rich heritage of music:

I do invade music literature to find material, particularly in the folk music field. I think that a great deal still remains to be done. It's amazing to think that Scottish Gàidhlig music is unknown territory to many people.  

He uses the example of ‘Polish góral music, relative to Polish Lowland music,’ that is ‘as little known as, for example, Scottish Gàidhlig music (the great bagpipe music, the piobaireachd) relative to Lowland Scottish music’. He continues:

The musics of the Polish and the Scottish Highlands are complex and ‘weird’ and totally new to the outsider. The received parameters of ‘nice,’ ‘jolly,’ easy folk music simply do not apply. Both of these Highland musics warrant a great deal of study. Nearly all the musicologists I know are more innocent than infants about these questions.

But what is the *piobaireachd*? Essentially, *piobaireachd* is an Anglicization of the great music or ‘*Ceòl Mòr*’. This is incorporated into the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (bars 723-757, ‘*Lament for the Children*’ 1963, as shown earlier in Figure 73 (see Chapter 5.2). Orga describes the primary characteristics of the Ceòl Mòr in the *Passacaglia on DSCH* as being a demonstrable absorption of Gàidhlig music, which contains a sophisticated assortment of stylized colours and an array of atmospheres and...

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haunting drones with major-minor clashes—redolent of the pipe-tuning used by George McIlwham (b. 1926):

Its stylization of drones, frequent minor/major third (F / F♯) clashes suggestive of pipe tuning, and expressive translation of the ‘warbler’ or grace-notes typical of good Pibroch playing, tell something of the extent of Stevenson’s perception of his model. A tableau of atmosphere and sadness, of ghostly shadow, of intentionally acid dialect.\(^{417}\)

It is surprising that the Bòrd na Gàidhlig (Gaelic Language Board) was only established by the Scottish Parliament to recognize Gàidhlig as a language as recently as 2005. The Act was passed by the Parliament on 21 April 2005 and received Royal Assent on 1 June. The purpose of this act was ‘to establish a body having functions exercisable with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language,’\(^{418}\) even though it has been spoken since at least the fourth century.\(^{419}\) It was introduced by early settlers from Ireland, and may even, in all possibility, predate the Roman occupation of England in AD 43.\(^{420}\) Robert Dunbar notes that successive censuses have shown a ‘relatively sharp decline’ in the number of Gàidhlig speakers in Scotland.\(^{421}\)

The weightiness of attention to the Gàidhlig language in the United Kingdom was noted too by Stevenson, as early as the late 1960’s, who—whilst was on holiday in the Hebridean Archipelago—decided to ‘carry out an experiment’ with a transistor radio:

\(^{417}\) Orga, The Piano Music, 64 (Orga footnotes: Reflections after a Première, Musica Viva, Cape Town, December 1963).


\(^{421}\) ‘The 1891 census, for example, revealed that Gàidhlig is certainly critically endangered as a language: there were 254,415 Gaelic speakers in Scotland, representing 6.75% of the total population. By 1981, the number had fallen to 79,307, representing 1.64% of the Scottish population, and numbers and percentages of Gaelic-speakers have continued to fall since then: in 1991, there were 65,978 Gaelic speakers, representing 1.37% of the population, and by 2001, the number was 58,562, or 1.21% of the population’. Robert Dunbar, The Challenges of a Small Language: Gaelic in Scotland, with a Note on Gaelic in Canada (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, 2 April, 2005), http://www.sciencessociales.uottawa.ca/crfpp/pdf/debat/Dunbar.pdf.
What broadcasts, I asked myself, were immediately relevant to the Gàidhlig-speaking community? This restricted my listening to Radio 4 (Scotland) [FM: 92.8-94.7 MHz, founded 1978] and, reduced to basics, meant: how much Gàidhlig music was broadcast in the week’s music? Damned little. Precisely one hour and twenty-five minutes out of a total of one-hundred-and-nineteen hours of broadcasting time.⁴²²

Stevenson observes that the Gàidhlig indigenous music was seldom treated with respect, noting that, ‘far too many songs are accompanied on the piano when they would be better unaccompanied,’ often with ‘third-rate piano accompaniments . . . gauchely played, by a non-BBC pianist, Honky-tonk kings of the céilidhs’. Stevenson notes that Scotland’s vast hidden wealth of indigenous music needs careful handling, as it can easily degenerate into ‘tasteless arrangements of good tunes—like wholesome food execrably cooked’.

Stevenson will often let a melody speak for itself by leaving it unaccompanied—as in the opening bars of his fifteen minute A Rosary of Variations (1980) on the Irish Folk Mass of Seán Ó Riada (1831–1971) (as shown in Figure 76, bars 1-7). Here he makes an astute decision not to bastardize an already unflawed melody, using the pedal instead to contour the vocal line—as a potter would draw clay—rather than risk musical sacrilege. He argues against the use of ‘technicolor scoring,’ which consist of clichéd, incessant ‘flute arabesques and other aberrations erasing a simple tune’. He succinctly concludes that such treatment of Gàidhlig music is, ‘The Rape of Euterpe—Caledonian style’.⁴²³

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Figure 76. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s *A Rosary of Variations* (1980), based on themes from an *Irish Folk Mass* by Seán Ó Riada (1831–1971), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 1-7.

MacDonald contends that it was throughout the course of his ‘Hebridean forays that Stevenson really began to study the Great Music (*Ceòl Mòr*) of the highland bagpipe at first hand, talking and listening to pipers in their crofts,’**424** which ‘impressed him far more than the efforts of any contemporary Scots ‘classical’ composer of his acquaintance’**425**. In this ‘hands on’ qualitative ethnographical study, Stevenson has a considerable amount in common with Percy Grainger whom, he tells us, astonishingly even learnt all of the Scandinavian languages as well as the notoriously complex Gàidhlig language itself:

He [Percy Grainger] even learnt the Scots Gàidhlig language—Grainger, of course, knew all the Scandinavian languages. He didn’t know them academically, and would make mistakes in grammar, but he said that he wanted to learn how the peasants—at that time they were called peasants—spoke the Norwegian languages. That’s the language he wanted. He didn’t want ‘correct’ language. He said, ‘I don’t even speak English in the correct manner’.**426**

Stevenson saw the ‘genuine’ Gàidhlig folk singing encountered on his ethnomusicological forays as being incomparable to the sanitized radio illustrations, wryly stating that he ‘felt like Brillat-
Savarin (1755–1826), when he was once offered grapes for dinner, and who reputedly replied, ‘Non, merci, je ne prends pas mon vin en pilules’ (‘No thank you, I don’t take my wine in pill form’).  

The influence of the warbling vocal lamentation of true Gàidhlig folk singing has distinct echoes of the melodious chanter reed of the Great Highland Bagpipes (a’ phiob mhòr) and can undoubtedly be felt in the filigree writing of the Marche Funèbre in Stevenson’s Keening Sang for a Maker.  

427 Stevenson, Gaelic Music, Song in Gold Pavilions, 81.
Maker (1958–59). This melody floats above the melancholic whine of the tenor and bass drones, which are held in stasis in the chordal accompaniment (as shown in Figure 77, bars 143-145).

An even more direct evocation of the ‘a’ phiob mhòr’ can be found in Figure 78 (bars 175–185), wherein the drone of the pipes is silently held in the Ped III, in an effect that has an eerie unquietness in its sympathetically reverberated design. Stevenson sees such coalescing of folk idioms as indispensable for the outlook of western art music as a whole at present, envisaging it as being ‘like a worked mine—Europe is tired’. 428

Figure 79. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s Keening Sang for a Maker (1958–59) published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bars 110–115.

Bartók’s interest in ethnomusicography, with his intensive reconnaissance tours of the Carpathian Basin—collecting folk music from Hungary, Slovenia, Romani, and Bulgaria as well as later ‘Moldavia,

Wallachia, and Algeria’—is well documented. Slightly lesser known (outside of academic circles) are the efforts of Percy Grainger who ‘made several extended trips around the British Isles, as well as in Denmark and Norway, collecting and transcribing folksongs, such that he would get the locals—often quite elderly—to sing for him.’

Stevenson’s *Three Scottish Ballads* (1973) contain an almost Bartókian dissonance and angularity. He notes that ‘there is nothing pretty or comfortable about Border ballads’. He declares that his version of *Scottish Ballad No.1: Lord Randal* (‘Allegro moderato; Strong, stark and steady’)—dedicated to Ailie Munro from the *School of Scottish Studies* at Edinburgh University—was played to him by Munro on ‘a tape she made of a folk singer’s rendering,’ that, in the footsteps of Bartók and Grainger, he ‘tried to capture on the piano’.

If one inspects a further excerpt from the *Keening Sang for a Maker* (1958–59) (as shown in Figure 79, highlighted in red, bars 110–115), it could quite easily have been written by Bartók with its terse, acerbic parallelism and right-hand pentatonicism combined with the biting bitonality of the left. However, here there is also a distinctly Scottish flavour, reflecting a perceptive remark that Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999) once made to Stevenson likening the concert violinist to ‘a domesticated animal’ when compared with the ‘Scots fiddler,’ noting that ‘the kennel dog always has a yen for his friend the prairie dog.’

On a truly gargantuan canvas, the piercing wildness of Stevenson’s Celtic aesthetic can be plainly felt in the opening bars of his recently premièred epic, *In Praise of Ben Doran* (2009) which was premièred by the *BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra* (2009) and is scored for orchestra, chorus, chamber orchestra and chamber choir. It has a duration of three-quarters of an hour and was forty-five years in the pipeline, having first been conceived by Stevenson at the suggestion of Hugh Wallachia, and Algeria’—is well documented. Slightly lesser known (outside of academic circles) are the efforts of Percy Grainger who ‘made several extended trips around the British Isles, as well as in Denmark and Norway, collecting and transcribing folksongs, such that he would get the locals—often quite elderly—to sing for him.’

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MacDiarmid (1892–1978) whilst ‘presenting a score of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* to Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975) at the 1962 Edinburgh Festival (as shown in Figure 80). Robert Dawson describes how the opening of *In Praise of Ben Doran* (2009) has a piercing Gàidhlig bitonality, which begins with a solitary melody that—like the ùrlar of traditional pipe-music—is sung in two different keys:

The opening few bars—a simple unaccompanied melody—are the basic raw material, of what would be called the ùrlar in pipe music. But they are sung in two different, conflicting keys by a boy and a girl, in a harsh dissonance; it is not until the final, blazing climax that they come back together, now sung by two adult voices, in triumphant unison.⁴³³

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⁴³⁴ Reprinted with kind permission, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, ssMadrid.
Stevenson once said concerning the hard-to-penetrable pseudo-esotericism of the music of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji (1892–1988) that this may be due to a lack of writing in any particular ‘vernacular’.

In an excerpt from ‘The Company I’ve Kept: A Three-Way Conversation’ discussing the work of Sorabji between Stevenson, Hugh MacDiarmid and John Ogdon, Owen acknowledges Sorabji’s response to Stevenson’s comments:

[Stevenson:] His musical speech does not know the vernacular. Yet I recall that some of the profoundest statements have been uttered in the vernacular: even Christ spoke a dialect....

[Sorabji:] Don’t be silly! What vernacular? And whose?’ followed by a response to the statement concerning Christ, ‘Christ did not. He spoke Aramaic. This was not a dialect!435


Stevenson once said ‘I am convinced that a people’s culture cannot get beyond nationalism until it has realised it—Scotland hasn’t’. Nonetheless, whilst he willfully writes from a Scottish aesthetic, he also acknowledges that all great art aspires to transcend nationalism moving towards a Beethovenian universality. This is nowhere more evident than in his statement that, ‘I think that all great art aspires beyond nationalism, as an exploration of occult regions of experience’437 and warrents further academic inquiry.


437 Orga, The Piano Music, 60.
5.5 Beyond Nationalism: Towards a World Music

If one looks at Stevenson’s two prime compositional influences, Ferruccio Busoni and Percy Grainger, it is fascinating to examine Stevenson’s remark that Busoni was ‘a moral idealist who had expounded the principles of Marxism to German workers on street-corners in Leipzig, and whose pacifism led him to voluntary exile in Switzerland during the First World War’.\textsuperscript{438} Percy Grainger likewise was equally as egalitarian believing in the ‘true democratization of music, and of making music in all its many varieties, accessible to all’\textsuperscript{439}

Stevenson’s ‘politicizing’ in many of his piano compositions—working in symbiosis with his sympathy for communist ideologies—seems to be more concerned with a humanist approach than anything else. It has already been mentioned that it was the ‘decimation’ of the twenty-five million lost in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in World War II, that inspired him to write the variations on Peace, Bread and the Land (1917) in his Passacaglia on DSCH (1963).

In retrospect, it is fundamental to make note of the fact that he now believes he was ‘very young and naïve . . . . I was, what, thirty-two, thirty-three?’\textsuperscript{440} when he wrote the Passacaglia on DSCH and was certainly not responsive to the failings of communism. He notes that his view of the Soviet Union was similar to that ‘held by [the philosopher] Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) [and poet] Hugh MacDiarmid and many other people with far greater minds than mine,’ in the 1920’s and early 1930’s, as ‘a kind of experimental theatre for a new society’\textsuperscript{441}

Concerning communism he currently concedes that ‘I am now prepared to believe that the rot set in with [Vladimir] Lenin (1870–1924), not just with [Joseph] Stalin (1878–1953); I am now very interested in [Aleksandr] Solzhenitsyn’s (1918–2008) ideas about the Soviet Union’\textsuperscript{442}

MacDonald sees the key to understanding this facet of Stevenson’s creative psyche as a quasi-

\textsuperscript{438} MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 20.
\textsuperscript{439} Riddle, Percy Grainger: Piano Pedagogue, 30.
\textsuperscript{440} Anderson, A Composer Loyal to His Principles, reproduced in Walton (ed.), Song in Gold Pavilions, 15.
\textsuperscript{441} Anderson, A Composer Loyal to His Principles, in Walton, 15.
\textsuperscript{442} Anderson, A Composer Loyal to His Principles, in Walton, 14.
Beethovenian model, which aspires to ‘reunite ethical idealism with artistic creation’. Stevenson sees this multilayered artistic purpose as being observable in his own music as a result of him being ‘a natural contrapunctist, I always think contrapuntally—in many voices. It’s a symbol of what society should or might be’.

Stevenson’s consideration of ‘world music’ is also of great consequence. He delights in his concept that the diverse musics of the world can both enhance and complement each other. Jamie Reid Baxter (b. 1954) notes that he has been the ‘author of Japanese haiku settings, a piano concert subtitled The Continents, [Piano Concerto No. 2, 1970–72], arrangements of folk music from all over the globe, and an indefatigable ethnomusicologist, who has incorporated elements of Indian, African, Irish, North American, Norwegian, Australian, and gypsy music into his own musical language.

Like Grainger and Bartók before him, he sourced a large amount of his material first-hand in the field by encountering people, forming bonds and absorbing styles. Of the gamut of modes and genres integrated into the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963), he notes that they were all absorbed experientially rather than academically:

The content of the music refers to different national intonations: a pibroch; a Russian revolutionary march; a Spanish fandango; African drumming; and the severe German fugal style of Bach. These have all been absorbed experientially: I mean by getting out among people, not by incarcerated contemplation of a sheet of paper or a spool of tape. I absorbed the pibroch from the performance of Highland pipers heard in Scottish crofts; the Russian revolutionary march, from the movement of crowd scenes in Eisenstein films; Spanish dancing, from observations made at Las Palmas; the African drumming, from a performance of a tribal virtuoso in the location of Nyanga, just outside Cape Town; the Bachian fugue style, from analysing, practising and memorizing the Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues at the piano.

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443 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 3.
Stevenson credits the *fons et origo* of his desire to unite different musics as being ‘his time in South Africa’ where the ‘European-based staff . . . thought it was a waste of time to study African music’. Conversely, it was his interest in the music of the vast African continent, with its distinct regional idiosyncrasies, as well as an acute homesickness for Scotland, that helped him aesthetically move towards ‘the idea of finding coalescent points in the music of different peoples’.

Of the multitudinous musics of the world, he notes that their individual primary characteristics effectively sum up the collective attributes of all mankind: ‘African music is primarily rhythmic and physical; Asian is primarily melodic and spiritual; and European is primarily harmonic and polyphonic, emotional and intellectual’. He poetically concludes that if ‘the sum of the physical, the spiritual, the emotional and intellectual, is the whole being of an individual’s life, so the sum of the world’s music is the complete music of mankind’.

This maxim aspires to transcend political ideology and dogma. Stevenson has done this throughout his long career by amalgamating and combining disparate musics—that unexpectedly cross-fertilize each other: this is, in essence, at the very core of his creative intellect.

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Chapter Six: Stevenson and Architectonic Forms: from the Miniature to the Monumental

6.1 From the Miniature to the Monumental: Background

A favourite poetic Stanza of Stevenson’s, which perfectly links the miniature with the monumental is:

‘To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.’

~ William Blake (1757–1827)
(from Auguries of Innocence, 1803)\(^{450}\)

As Stevenson has written hundreds of miniatures, as well as some of the largest extant works in the entire piano repertoire, a substantial amount of Stevenson’s music is paradoxically built upon minuscule motifs and cryptograms. The Passacaglia on DSCH (1963) is the most obvious example—described by Ateş Orga as ‘arguably the most concentrated example of motif development in the history of music’.\(^{451}\) It is also the longest uninterrupted, non-repetitive piece of music for any solo instrument in history—repeatedly hailed as Stevenson’s greatest work.

Stevenson once said concerning his Passacaglia on DSCH: ‘My main interest in music is in the epic. This is an epic age, it seems to me, and only epic forms can fully express its aspirations’.\(^{452}\) Yet, paradoxically, Stevenson also seems to challenge himself when he says that it is ‘harder to write a miniature than an epic’.\(^{453}\) How are both these statements reconcilable? Stevenson clarifies that,

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\(^{451}\) Orga, The Piano Music, 81.

\(^{452}\) Orga, The Piano Music, 68.

\(^{453}\) Stevenson, pers. comm., 6 September 2011.
whilst his larger-than-life work is ‘rooted in reality,’ it ‘embraces romanticism as a part of reality, the part of us that strives after the heroic,’ that can also be ‘a previsioning of things as they shall be.’\textsuperscript{454} (see Chapter 5.3).\textsuperscript{455} His own definition of romanticism is, in itself, unusual, in that he differentiates it as ‘not the false romanticism that hankers after the past,’ but instead that which ‘transforms or develops it’. He clarifies further, taking a quasi-Beethovenian stance—that he sees the individual human figures of ‘Che Guevara [1928–1967], Yuri Gagarin [1934–1968] and Neil Armstrong [1930–2012]’ as ‘bigger romantic figures than any in the nineteenth century.’\textsuperscript{456}

With specific reference to the passage in the \textit{Passacaglia on DSCH} with the expressive marking ‘with a Gagarinesque sense of space,’ \textit{(con un senso di spazio quasi Gagarinesco)—as shown in Figure 81, highlighted in red, bar 2,178} Stevenson continues ascertaining that whilst ‘music can’t tell anything about Gagarin,’ it certainly can express ‘the sphere of reason’. This demonstrates Stevenson’s intellectual ability to cross-fertilize ideas and ideals across an exceptionally wide array of disciplines—herein citing the work of the multifaceted, all-round genius and ‘father of biogeochemistry’—Vladimir Vernadsky (1863–1945).\textsuperscript{457} He notes that Vernadsky’s philosophical ‘noösphere’, is ‘expanding to outer space,’ affirming that, ‘music can certainly express the emotion behind this’.\textsuperscript{458} In a similar vein to Verdansky’s noösphere, MacDonald incisively remarks that ‘a Gagarinesque’ sense of space is indeed ‘the widest horizon of all,’\textsuperscript{459} which correlates with the conviction that Stevenson’s ‘art is often enshrined in the miniature—though miniature only in the


\textsuperscript{455} See ‘Chapter 5.3: Re-Contextualization the Ultra-Right Wing ‘Die Stem van Suid-Afrika’ (1921) in the \textit{African Twi-Tune}’ (1964).


\textsuperscript{457} ‘Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky,’ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, Edith Cowan University Library, Australia: \url{http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/626269/Vladimir-Ivanovich-Vernadsky}.


\textsuperscript{459} MacDonald, \textit{Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography}, 60.
sense that a simple kernel concentrates both seed and essence of a larger idea.  

Figure 81. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) ‘con un senso di spazio quasi Gagarinesco’. (London: Oxford University Press), bars 2,178-2,179.

As previously discussed, many of Stevenson’s shorter works—some ‘no more than a page in length’—share the same creative goal as his more significant ones. These are often subtly yet inextricably, allied. One useful example is the extraordinary ‘drumming,’—directly on the strings of the piano with the palms of the hands—in the ‘emergent Africa’ section of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) (see Chapter 5.2, Figure 72). This, in turn, is interrelated—philosophically more than anything—with the *African Twi-Tune* (1964), poignantly dedicated to ‘A.M. [Alex Moses] in the present,’ and ‘S.A. [South Africa] in the Future’.

Colin Scott-Sutherland perceptively identifies Stevenson’s miniatures as representing ‘a kind of distillation of his expression’. This is insightful commentary, as distillation is synonymous with compacting and condensing, refining and concentrating. It seems logical that, as an artistic intention becomes smaller, it may concentrate rather than dilute its artistic intensity—and may even become stronger. These factors all append to the overall monumentality of form of the *Passacaglia on DSCH*, built upon a multitude of smaller forms—discussed in depth below.

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461 Colin Scott-Sutherland, ‘Some Stevenson Miniatures’, 329.

462 Colin Scott-Sutherland, ‘Some Stevenson Miniatures’, 329.
6.2 Motivic Development, the Re-evaluation of Existing Works that Utilize the DSCH Motif and Aesthetic Memes

A comprehension of Stevenson’s treatment of motif development and the relationship between the miniature and the monumental is imperative in considering his compositional process, and the closely related use of cryptography and his Schumannesque intrigue with cipher—all of which abound in his œuvre. These can be seen as the creative building blocks of his innovative designs. An example is the thorny, quasi-nucleotide, dodecaphonic tone-row of his fiendishly complex Motus Perpetuus (?) Temporibus Fatalibus (1988), which is likened by Stevenson to a solitary strand of ‘compositional DNA’.\footnote{Deoxyribonucleic acid (C\textsubscript{232}N\textsubscript{92}O\textsubscript{139}P\textsubscript{22}) is constituted of Hydrogen (\textsubscript{1}H), Oxygen (\textsubscript{8}O), Nitrogen (\textsubscript{7}N), Carbon (\textsubscript{6}C), and Phosphorus (\textsubscript{15}P) on a molecular level. Stevenson similarly intertwines acoustic monograms of predecessors into his twelve-note theme. These include Ferruccio Busoni, Dmitri Shostakovich, Johann Sebastian Bach, and Arnold Schoenberg (as shown in Figure 82, Motus Perpetuus (?) Temporibus Fatalibus, 1988, bar 1).}

The parallels between the two models are striking. Like the double helix strand, all of the individual monograms act as individual ancillary motifs, capable of innumerable permutations within the dodecaphonic strand as a whole. If one considers the maxim that DNA is the foundation of all life. If one pursues the seed analogy further, Stevenson is ostensibly following Busoni’s model, which implies going against the genetic instructions—prophetically entailing radical motivic gene splicing—rather than natural organic growth:

The motive in a composition with program bears within itself the same natural necessity; but it must, even in its earliest phase of development, renounce its own proper mode of growth to mould or, rather, twist itself to fit the needs of the program. Thus turned aside, at the outset, from the path traced by nature, it finally arrives at a wholly unexpected climax, whither it has been led, not by its own organization, but by the way laid down in the program, or the action, or the philosophical idea.\footnote{Stevenson, pers. comm., c. 1995.}
Stevenson’s own far-reaching treatment of motifs—especially the DSCH (D, E♭, C, B) motif, which appears in the Passacaglia on DSCH in every conceivable guise—certainly has much in common with Ludwig van Beethoven’s ingenious practices, the idée fixe of Hector Berlioz (1803–1869), Franz Liszt’s thematic transformation, and Richard Wagner’s elaborate use of leitmotifs—all of which logically resulted in Arnold Schoenberg’s exploration into dodecaphony.

Stevenson notes that in Beethoven’s case, it is ‘the force and rhythmic impact of a Beethoven motif that provides the propulsive power, driving the music through its course from first note to last,’ and which is likewise the unambiguous driving force behind the omnipresent, indefatigable ground-bass in the Passacaglia on DSCH, which laboriously took Stevenson ‘a year-and-

465 Reprinted with kind permission, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, ssMadrid.

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a-quarter to complete’. Comparing the arduous nature of their respective toils, Stevenson observes that it is the ‘very dynamism of Beethoven’ that resulted in each completed work, with the selfsame dynamism facilitating the process in the first instance:

His [Beethoven’s] laborious method of composition, began with an initial motif and ended in a massive symphonic structure built from the motif. It was a method of composition that only an exceptional willpower could pursue, and thus it is not surprising that the willpower necessary to its prosecution should be expressed through and through by the finished work.468

Stevenson’s ground bass is intelligent in the straightforwardness, yet ingeniousness, of its design (as shown in Figure 83), with the indissoluble links of the endless replication being highlighted in red and blue, bars 1-19. It is composed of an eight bar phrase wherein the concluding D♮ of the eighth bar is simultaneously the primary note of the repetition. Like an omnipresent motivic chain, it resembles an acoustic version of M.C Escher’s (1898–1972) cyclical, geometrically-impossible drawings. Escher’s most celebrated work depicting infinity is arguably his Waterfall (1961) (as shown in Figure 84), which was first published in the same year that Stevenson commenced working on the Passacaglia on DSCH.469

467 Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.
469 See Official M. C. Escher Website, published by the M.C. Escher Foundation, http://www.mcescher.com
Figure 83. An Excerpt from Ronald Stevenson’s *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963). (London: Oxford University Press), bars 1-19.
Figure 84. C. Escher’s (1898–1972) lithograph print Waterfall (first published in October 1961) Original Source Wikipedia, Public Domain, Exception to Copyright, Section ss 40, 103C, Research or Study.470

An even more persuasive analogy may be the ancient representation of the Ouroboros, ‘the emblematic serpent of ancient Egypt and Greece, represented with its tail in its mouth continually devouring and being reborn from itself,’471 that subsequently became a critical motif for Celtic ethnicity and culture as a whole in the Cencrastus.472 The Encyclopædia Britannica’s definition of this ancient antediluvian icon (as shown in Figure 85) could equally be applied to Stevenson’s management of the D, E♭ C, B motif in the Passacaglia on DSCH—‘Gnostic and alchemical,’ as well as

470 Reprinted with kind permission, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, ssMadrid.
472 ‘The Cencrastus, the Celtic snake, its tail in its mouth, the completeness of the circle (total variation).’ MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 56.
‘expressing the unity of all things, material and spiritual, that never disappear but perpetually change form in an eternal cycle of destruction and re-creation’. 473

![Image of Serpiente Alquimica](image.jpg)


However, Stevenson’s primal aim is to communicate. The *Passacaglia on DSCH* has also been described as ‘a single piece of argument, one enormous arch, like the *Sydney Harbour Bridge* (built 1923–1932),’ 475 and ‘a monumental, indeed monolithic, unity out of the greatest possible diversity of material and background: a landmark not only of Stevenson’s creative development, but in the history of the piano’. 476 Stevenson himself said of the piece, ‘demonstrably the work has a more varied range of rhythmic and melodic intonations, harmonic and contrapuntal structures, piano

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technique and complexes of form than any other single movement in piano literature.'\(^{477}\) He also repeatedly stresses that his principal wish is to communicate with all people, likeminded or otherwise:

I’m a composer who wishes to identify himself with his own people and to communicate with likeminded people and to try and win over perhaps some unlikeminded . . . . The fact that the great mass of people couldn’t care less about whether I communicate with them or not doesn’t deter me: it only makes me more determined.\(^ {478}\)

Stevenson astutely observes that if one compares the analogous views of the ‘musically untutored mind’ and that of the musically educated ‘academic’ analyst, they will both, to all intents and purposes, reach the same conclusion when listening to a Beethoven Symphony. The same argument could be applied to the Passacaglia on DSCH:

What the musically untutored but responsive mind perceives in Beethoven—the phenomenal, almost daemonic rhythmic motivation—is only the synthesis of what the trained musician analyses as thematic, motivic development. The fact that the word ‘motivation’ can be understood as a technical term of music, and also as a non-technical expression immediately comprehensible to the intelligent layman, indicates that, in the case of Beethoven’s motivation, the technical analysis and the non-technical general impression amount to very much the same thing.\(^ {479}\)

Ateş Orga notes that Stevenson’s use of motivic development is so endemic in his piano music that through its use he has ‘suggested the symphonic, imagined the orchestral, essayed the abstract, the descriptive, the worldly; he has dreamt dreams miniature and monumental,’ from which the title of this chapter is unapologetically appropriated.\(^ {480}\) However, whilst the Passacaglia on DSCH includes a set of ‘Symphonic Variations’ (as shown in Figure 71, Chapter 5.2), it is often noticed that Stevenson has never fashioned a Symphony. In this respect, Stevenson bears similarities


to Chopin and Delius, whom, he notes, are too often considered ‘composers of limited range’ simply because they were not symphonists:

The reason for this malapropism is that both of them were not symphonists. The symphony is often regarded as the apex of music. I do not accept this. If I did, I should have to relegate much pre-1750 music to the rank of inferiority. Bach alone explodes the idea. The concept of the symphony’s hegemony is something I regard as a lingering nineteenth century fallacy of progress in art. Oscar Wilde wrote: ‘There is no progress in art; all beautiful things belong to the same age’.

However, the observation that Stevenson has never written a Symphony is not entirely accurate. His very recent Sinfonia Elegiaca (2010) is an orchestral re-working of material from both the Passacaglia on DSCH and the Recitative and Air on DSCH. Both were originally for solo piano and orchestrated at the suggestion of the composer’s wife, Marjorie Stevenson. The Sinfonia Elegiaca is so new that it appears in no previous literature with reference to Stevenson and deserves scholarly attention. The four movements are as follows:

First movement: Recitative and Air (from the 1974 solo piano work of the same name)
Second movement: Lament for the Children (from the Passacaglia on DSCH, bars 723-757)
Third movement: Tribute to Bach (from Passacaglia on DSCH, bars 1,460-1,494)
Fourth movement: Adagissimo Barocco from the Passacaglia on DSCH, bars 2,160-2,249)

The standard orchestration also includes three keyboard instruments—celesta, piano, and (optional) organ:

Woodwinds: 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons
Brass: 4 Horns, 2 Trumpets, 2 Trombones
Percussion: 1 Side Drum, 1 Timpani, Gong
Percussion: 1 Side Drum, 1 Timpani, Gong, 1 Harp
Celesta, Piano
Organ (optional)
Strings: 5 first Violins, 5 second Violins, 4 Violas, 3 Cellos, 2 Double Basses.

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481 Ronald Stevenson, ‘Delius’s Sources,’ Tempo Magazine, No. 151 (December 1984), reproduced in Walton (ed.) Song in Gold Pavilions, 36.
482 Ronald Stevenson, ‘Delius’s Sources,’ in Walton, 36.
483 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 117.
All four movements are allied by the proposition of lamentation—hence the title *Sinfonia Elegiaca*. They are also all hewn from identical source material—the ‘DSCH’ motif. In the case of the first movement, which is a reworking of the original solo piano composition *Recitative and Air on DSCH* (1974), Stevenson notes that it was commissioned by the Union of Soviet Composers for, what would have been, Dmitri Shostakovich’s (1906–1975) seventieth birthday:

In 1973 the Secretary to the Union of Soviet Composers invited me, among a list of international composers, to write a piece in homage to Shostakovich for his 70th birthday in 1976. He died in 1975, so the volume of tributes became an *in memoriam*...it was already an elegy composed before the event on the composer’s death.⁴⁸⁵

The *Recitative and Air* is poetically described by David Hackbridge Johnson as ‘a satellite’—presumably to its massively larger planetary-giant—the *Passacaglia on DSCH*.⁴⁸⁶ Stevenson states that it was astonishingly written in its entirety ‘on a four hour train journey’⁴⁸⁷ and that ‘it is a strictly serial piece, its melody composed exclusively—not on the twelve notes of the Schoenbergian model—but on four notes (Shostakovich’s own musical monogram): D, E♭ (=S), C and B (=H),’ which contains ‘twenty-four permutations of these four notes, mirroring the habit of repeating a phrase in bereavement’.⁴⁸⁸

Stevenson’s self-imposed constraint—in keeping the right-hand melody purely to the D, E♭, C and B—is extraordinarily restrictive. Whilst he states that there are twenty-four permutations of the DSCH motif in the *Recitative and Air on DSCH*, there are, in fact, only twenty-four possible permutations, all of which appear in this miniature masterpiece. The achievable permutations of the DSCH motif can be worked out mathematically using a straightforward algorithmic formulae (as shown in Figure 86) and clearly visualized in a simple tree diagram (as shown in Figure 87).

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⁴⁸⁸ Preface to the *Recitative and Air on DSCH* (1974), original solo piano version.
Stevenson notes that ‘the arithmetic basis is secondary to its emotion, which is one of controlled grief’. This relates closely to the idiom of the mourners in the *Keening Sang for Maker* (1958–59) (as discussed in Chapter 5.4), with the DSCH acting as a persistently recurring litany, as invocation of supplication.

![Figure 86. Current Author’s Algorithmic Formulae of All Possible Permutations of ‘D, Eb C, B’ (DSCH)](image)

Whilst all twenty-four permutations do, indeed, appear in the work, Stevenson notes that, ‘it is sometimes serial, but not rigidly so’, meaning that he will allow for notes to be repeated, as well as the inclusion of additional partial repetitions of the D, Eb, C, B melodic cells (as shown in Figure 88, with additional added material highlighted in blue, and the overall principal motif[s] highlighted in red, bars 1-9). Nonetheless, the fact that the right-hand melody is absolutely restricted to the D, Eb, C, B, and yet is still hauntingly beautiful as a piece of music, is an astonishing achievement.

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489 Preface to the *Recitative and Air on DSCH* (1974), original solo piano version.

490 Preface to the *Recitative and Air on DSCH* (1974), original solo piano version.
Figure 87. The Current Author’s Tree Diagram of all Possible Permutations of DSCH (D, E♭, C, B).
In the second movement of the *Sinfonia Elegiaca*, the warbling of the Gàidhlig Great Highland Bagpipes is appropriately evoked by its far-removed orchestral progeny, the *Cor Anglais* (as seen in Figure 89, highlighted in red). The drone is held motionless between the two bassoons,
whilst the two flutes, clarinets and horns enhance the grief-stricken unquietness with the subtle dissonances of the minor seconds from the original Passacaglia on DSCH, with the harp later subtly intensifying this Celtic standpoint, within a symphonic context.

The third movement of the Sinfonia Elegiaca is a re-working of the ‘Adagio: tribute to Bach’ from the Passacaglia on DSCH, which is described by Stevenson as ‘a Pietà-like meditation after tragedy’. The original ‘Tribute to Bach’ from the Passacaglia on DSCH is founded upon the famous opening motif of Bach’s Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565 (as shown in Figure 90, highlighted in red). However, it is ironic that since 1981 the provenance of the most recognized work ever written for organ is being seriously questioned as being the work of Johann Sebastian Bach at all, which would make an absorbing study in itself. When the current author quizzed Stevenson concerning the legitimacy of the authorship of the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565, he replied that, whilst he

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was most attentive to the scholarly nature of the inquiry, ‘Mark Twain [1835–1910] suggested that Shakespeare wasn’t written by Shakespeare, but by someone else of the same name. Whilst he was interested in the ‘Shakespeare alternative-authorship question’ and the various ‘theories’—both in relation to bwv 565 by musicologists and the ‘Anti-Stratfordian arguments by literary theorists’—his tribute was to ‘Johann Sebastian Bach, and Bach alone’. 

![Figure 90](image)

**Figure 90.** An Excerpt from *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* bwv 565, spuriously attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), bars 1-3.

In Stevenson’s ‘*Tribute to Bach*’, he uses only the immediately recognizable melodic motif, with its stylized ornament and descending scale, as an allusion to his great predecessor. However, he answers the phrase in a very different way to the original (as shown in Figure 91, with the motif highlighted in red and the all-pervading Ground-Bass highlighted in blue, bars 1,460-1,464).
When the current author worked on the *Passacaglia on DSCH* with Stevenson in the late 1990’s, his pencil additions in the score shed fascinating light on his current re-working. He has humorously written (whilst slightly hard to decipher) ‘espressivo—not an express train’ (highlighted in blue)—curtailing the author’s (then) youthful enthusiasm for bravura, reiterated with his instruction ‘not brilliantly’ (highlighted in blue) desiring a significantly more dignified, languid approach than was first presented to him.

Stevenson has also curiously written the word ‘Jesus’—highlighted in red in tiny script. However, whilst this motif may be representational of Bach or ‘Bach with an allusion to Christ,’ or even a tribute to ‘Bach’s religious austerity in his music,’ —it is of more consequence that Stevenson requests the performer to treat his eloquent motif with veneration and respect. This amplifies the significance of his description a decade later in the orchestral re-working of the same material,
describing it as a ‘Pietà’-like meditation after tragedy$^{496}$—especially as it is immediately preceded by the frenetic virtuosity of the ‘central-études’ in the original Passacaglia on DSCH.

The ‘Pietà’ is the traditional image favored by painters and sculptors throughout the ages of the lifeless Christ being cradled by the Virgin Mary—the most celebrated illustration of which is the Renaissance masterwork of Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564), carved between 1498–1499, currently located in St Peter’s Basilica, Rome (as shown in Figure 93). Notwithstanding religion, Michelangelo’s Pietà has more in common with the Passacaglia on DSCH and the Sinfonia Elegiaca, than initially perceptible.

\[ \text{Figure 93. Michelangelo Buonarroti’s (1475–1564) Pietà (1498–99), Sistine Chapel, St Peter’s Basilica, Vatican City, Original Source Wikipedia, Public Domain, Exception to Copyright, Section ss 40, 103C, Research or Study.} \]

All three works are concerned with the subject of loss—in Michelangelo’s case a mother’s loss of a child, which relates closely to a father’s loss in the earlier lament for the children, based

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$^{496}$ Ronald Stevenson, Preface to the Sinfonia Elegiaca (Edinburgh: Ronald Stevenson Society, 2010).
upon ‘Patrick Mor MacCrimmon’s mourning for ‘seven of his eight sons who died within a year’\(^497\) (as discussed in Chapter 5.2). Furthermore, whilst Michelangelo’s work is carved from a gigantic block of Carrara marble, the work of Stevenson’s anvil is forged from the all-encompassing DSCH motif, united and strengthened by the BACH (B♭, A, C, B) cryptogram. This easily fuses together like a superior bimetallic alloy—as they share the same initial interval of a minor second, reflecting outwards from each other—and their two remaining ‘letters’ are identical.

The fourth movement of the *Sinfonia Elegiaca* reworks the massive crescendo gigantesco of the *Passacaglia on DSCH*: from the ‘Adagissimo Barocco’ (bar. 2,160) until the final note (bar. 2,249). Whilst this whole work is an orchestration of piano pieces, Stevenson sees that, paradoxically, the piano itself can help him with orchestration, as he has always written for it orchestrally in the first instance (as discussed in 1). In relation to subsequent re-orchestration, Stevenson notes: ‘I have always conceived the piano as an orchestra. It has all the possibilities for you, there, laid out in front of you, and it has helped me a tremendous lot with orchestration. Orchestration is a life study. And I am very interested in colour’\(^498\).

Stevenson is living testament to this ‘life-study,’ still re-working, adapting and reevaluating his own craft and music, now in the middle of his eighth decade. It is remarkable that he will interweave new motivic ideas (as shown in Figure 94, highlighted in red) in the first-violins, which are not present in the original *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963), whilst the harp and piano share equally the principal material (highlighted in yellow) in a masterful re-figuration of the original source.

\(^{497}\) Scott-Sutherland, *Stevenson and the Child*, 323 (Sutherland footnotes ‘Letter to author dated 16\(^{th}\) September, 1982’).

Figure 94. The Fourth Movement of Stevenson’s *Sinfonia Elegiaca*: ‘Adagissimo Barocco’ (2010), published by The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, bar 44, originally from the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) Bar 2,203.

However, rather than seeing his re-working as a dry, intellectual work-out, Stevenson’s rationale in revisiting the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) half-a-century after writing it is clearly to hear the fruits of his labor performed. It is even worthy of minor note that Stevenson is so sensitive to the needs of each individual performer that when the flautist has to change instruments within the same bar (highlighted in blue in Figure 94), he reassuringly writes ‘take piccolo, remember it’s slow!’

To the best of the current writer’s knowledge, this selfsame section has the almost illogically contradictory tempo marking—excluding those familiar with the ingenious pacing of the work—*lento con moto* (highlighted in green in Figure 94).

Stevenson himself describes this re-worked passage as ‘a long slow gigantic crescendo, like an avalanche of disaster approaching, building up the motive of fear that finally subsides, assuaged

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by a chorale for peace on clarinets, bassoons, divisi strings and organ pedal’. He attentively contoured the crescendo gigantesco in his own performances and two recordings with masterful prowess, yet in his re-working he affixes weight to the orchestral sound by the use of divisi strings, making the orchestral force seem substantially broader than it already is. He notes that as a child—whilst listening to a recording of Edward Elgar conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in his Serenade for Strings in E Minor, Op. 20 (1892)—he realized that clever use of divisi strings could make an orchestra sound ‘bigger’ than it actually was:

Certain passages in the Larghetto were so intense that I could have sworn that brass instruments were added to the score—an impression I also received from an old [Sergei] Koussevitzky [1874–1951] recording of Grieg’s Last Spring [from Deux mélodies élégiaques, Op. 34, 1880]. Further hearing revealed that there was no brass support, but that Elgar, like Grieg, could make a string orchestra suggest a larger ensemble by a cunning use of divisi and the sonority of open strings.\(^\text{500}\)

This is surely the fons et origo of his system of divisi strings in the Sinfonia Elegiaca (2010) with the orchestra superceding the original piano of the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963), which here only makes a brief, though crucial, appearance half-way through the last of the four movements, reinforcing his original motivic treatment of the DSCH.

It is fruitful to compare Stevenson’s Passacaglia on DSCH with Grainger’s most intricate work for piano, his Rosenkavalier Ramble (1920–27), which was based on the final love-duet (Ist ein Traum / Spür’ nur dich) from Richard Strauss’ (1864–1949) Opera, Der Rosenkavalier, Op. 59 (1911). It was, sadly ‘his mother’s suicide (Rose Grainger, Née Grant 1861–1922) that drove Grainger to complete the most elaborate of all his piano paraphrases, with her name obliquely enshrined in the title\(^\text{501}\) (as shown in Figure 95, with the inscription, ‘Yule-gift to the memory of my beloved mother,’ December 1927, bars 1-3). In Stevenson’s case, he takes dedications to their logical extreme, such as in his


\(^{501}\) Barry Peter Ould, Liner Notes, Percy Grainger: Rambles and Reflections, Piers Lane, piano, Hyperion Records [CDH55454], 2002, compact disc.
Passacaglia on DSCH, by enshrining friends and people he admires—not just in the title, as Grainger had done before him—but literally in the music itself—as a cryptographic motif.

Figure 95. Grainger’s Fantasie über das schluss-duett (‘Ist ein Traum / Spür nur dich,’) aus der Opera Der Rosenkavalier, Op. 59 (1911) von Richard Strauss (1864–1949), re-composed Grainger (1920–1927), bars 1–3.

Nevertheless, whilst motifs are of great consequence to Stevenson, they really are, in essence, only a compositional ‘means to an end’. He once incisively acknowledged that ‘music of limited range is that which postulates cross-note puzzles, the misconception of music as a blueprint or computerized game of spot-the-motif or as an IQ test in identifying permutations or palindromes’. It is imperative to note that in the recent Sinfonia Elegiaca, the dedication in The Lament for the Children, is no longer to ‘child victims of Nazism’ (as noted in Chapter 5.2, see Figure 73, originally found in the Passacaglia on DSCH) but has now grown to be universal. It has

503 Ronald Stevenson, ‘Delius’s Sources’, 37.
504 Scott-Sutherland, Stevenson and the Child, 323 (Sutherland footnotes ‘Letter to himself dated 16th September, 1982).
been dedicated simply to ‘child victims of War’—i.e., all children who have died, in all War. This change therefore is as much an aesthetic development of motif, in all senses of the word, as a musical one.

Utilizing a twenty-first century terminology, it can be stated that, at his most succinct, Stevenson astutely uses his material to act as a philosophical or aesthetic meme. It replicates, mutates and evolves beyond its initial conception—capable of not only carrying but also transforming cultural ideas, symbols and practices. Consider, for instance, the miniature African Twi-Tune (1964) (as evaluated in Chapter 4.3), or the modesty of physical scale of the Recitative and Air (1974) to the truly monumental Passacaglia on DSCH (1963). Stevenson’s œuvre demonstrates that a compositional idea can simultaneously spawn elemental results of the most condensed or epic proportions.

Whilst Stevenson’s use of motivic development as the initial creative sparks and microcosmic building-blocks of his creative life force is beguiling, equally as spellbinding at the opposite end of the spectrum is his conception of structural design on a macrocosmic scale. Here he utilizes traditional and expanded architectonic forms that, in any evaluation of his piano works, are of seminal importance—and deserve detailed study.

### 6.3 Combining Amalgamated Forms, Conceptual Designs, and Golden Sections in the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963)

Stevenson notes the incongruousness of the opposing individual aesthetical stances concerning form taken by his principal influences, Ferruccio Busoni and Percy Grainger:

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506 ‘We need a name for the new replicator, a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation. ‘Mimeme’ comes from a suitable Greek root, but I want a monosyllable that sounds a bit like ‘gene’. I hope my classicist friends will forgive me if I abbreviate mimeme to meme. If it is any consolation, it could alternatively be thought of as being related to ‘memory,’ or to the French word même [sic.]. It should be pronounced to rhyme with ‘cream’.’ Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 192.
I remember he [Grainger] took particular exception to Busoni’s concept of music itself as an architectonic structure. Grainger, having come from the wide open spaces of Australia, felt that the nature of music was not like an architecture edifice, but rather like a ribbon rolled along the floor that gradually describes a single line.  

Stevenson adds that he ‘doesn’t see why the nature of music shouldn’t include both these concepts’. He notes too that it is ‘a difference of view determined by geographic and cultural background—Grainger as an Australian had a ‘great wide open spaces’ idea of music whilst European musicians, living with urban architecture, and writing music in terms of the acoustic of cathedrals and concert halls, have inevitably thought of music as architectonic’.  

Regarding his Passacaglia in DSCH, he adds that he hopes it ‘coalesces both concepts: music as flow, and music as architecture’. The flow of the work is obviously achieved as a result of the previously discussed motivic-chain in the ground bass, but what of the architecture? The overall form of the work is immense, but like the notion of cryptographic motifs being correlated to DNA (as previously discussed, see Figure 97, in Chapter 6.2), so the larger structure can be broken down into smaller internalized forms. Colin Scott-Sutherland notes that Stevenson has a convincing hypothesis that each period of musical history reaches its apogee in a precise musical form, all of which can be found in the Passacaglia on DSCH:

Stevenson has expressed the theory that each period in history is encapsulated in a specific form—the age of reason in Bach and his contemporaries (such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz [1646–1716], Benedict de Spinoza [1632–1677] and René Descartes [1596–1650]—and even Carl Linnaeus [1707–1778] in fugue and counterpoint, the age of the enlightenment in sonata-form reaching its apogee in the Eroica [Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 in E♭ major, Op. 55, 1806]. In the twentieth century variation techniques culminate in the dodecaphonic procedures of the Second Viennese School [Zweite Wiener Schule]—which procedures carry with them their own strict rules.

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510 Scott-Sutherland, Envoi What now?, 285. (In conversation with the author [Sutherland]).
If one examines Stevenson’s own diagrammatic plan of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (as shown in Figure 96), all of the above-mentioned forms can indeed be found in the overall gargantuan structure: sonata-form, in the *Pars Prima*, ‘variation techniques’ throughout the work, ‘fugue and counterpoint’ and the ‘dodecaphonic procedures’ in the triple fugue.

**PASSACAGLIA on DSCH**

**PLAN OF WORK**

- Sonata allegro
- Waltz in rondo-form
- Episode
- Suite (Prelude, Sarabande, Jig, Sarabande, Minuet, Jig, Gavotte, Polonaise)
- Pibroch (Lament for the Children)
- Episode: *arabesque variations*
- Nocturne

- Reverie-Fantasy
- Fanfare — Forebodings: Alarm — Glimpse of a War-Vision
- Variations on “Peace, Bread & the Land” (1917)
- Symphonic March

**PARS ALTERA**

- Episode
- Fandango
- Pedal-point: “To emergent Africa”
- Central Episode: études
- Variations in C minor

**PARS TERTIA**

- Adagio: tribute to Bach
- Triple Fugue over ground-bass:
  - Subj. I: andamento
  - Subj. II: B A C H
  - Subj. III: Dies Irae
- Final variations on theme derived from ground (adagissimo barocco)


Stevenson even combines some of the aforementioned conceptual designs—most obviously in the principal subject of the first of the *Triple fugues*, where Schoenbergenian serialism is absorbed

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\(^{511}\) From the title page of the *Passacaglia on DSCH*, reprinted with kind permission. (London, Oxford University Press.)
into the Bachian model, through the terse dodecaphonically designed subject (as shown in Figure 97, bars 1,494-1,506).

Figure 97. ‘Dodecaphonic Subject’ of the ‘First Fugue’ from the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963). (London: Oxford University Press), bars 1,494-1,506.

Sutherland states that: ‘Seán Ó Riada [1931–1971] suggested that the trajectory of sonata form, or ‘first movement form’ was that of the ascent towards the ‘Golden Section’ point, its nature angular and aspiring, and contrasts that with the Cencrastus, the Celtic snake, its tail in its mouth, the completeness of the circle (total variation).’\(^{512}\) This immediately relates to the previously discussed ancient Ouroboros and Theodoros Pelecanos’ Serpiente alquimica (see Figure 85 in chapter 6.2). However, whilst this relates to Grainger’s ‘ribbon form,’ what of other ancient architectural models:

\(^{512}\) From the title page of the Passacaglia on DSCH, reprinted with kind permission. (London: Oxford University Press).
is the arithmetic conception of the ‘Golden Section’ evident in the structure of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* when taken as a whole?

If one partitions the work into its three ancillary, though unbroken, sections—Pars Prima, Pars Altera and Pars Tertia—it is instantly noticeable that Pars Tertia operates as the incisive moment in the Golden Section of the architectural design of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* as a whole. It skilfully shifts the centre of musical gravity towards the climax of the work (as shown in Figure 98). Furthermore, there is also a smaller, though equally as essential, golden section occurring within the three fugues themselves, wherein the three subjects eventually syndicate and ‘are heard in contrapuntal combination within the ground’\(^ {513} \) in the Third Fugue: *Dies Irae*, when all the themes eventually combine (highlighted in red in Figure 98). Anderson describes that as ‘that mediaeval reminder of God’s wrath, in memory of the six million Jews slaughtered by the Nazis’\(^ {514} \).

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\[
\frac{a + b}{a} = \frac{a}{b} \equiv \varphi,
\]

Figure 98. Golden Sections Contained Within the Architectonic Structure of the Passacaglia on DSCH
6.4 The Absorption of Miniature Fundamentals from Ferruccio Busoni’s *Klavierübung in Zehn Büchern* (1818–1925) into Stevenson’s Monumental *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963)

If one reflects purely upon the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963), the absorption of miniature figurational elements from Ferruccio Busoni’s *Klavierübung in Zehn Büchern* can unmistakably be felt in Stevenson’s most monumental work. This is perhaps best explained by Busoni’s adage that ‘the acquirement of a technique is nothing else than the fitting of a given difficulty to one’s own capacities,’ which, in Stevenson’s case, has been the ‘absorbed acquirement of a technique’ as both a composer and performer. Surprisingly, there has been no previous ‘cross-referencing’ between both works in existent scholarly endeavour. If one examines Figure 99, these are the only two instances of such a figuration of which the current author is aware—with the scalic chordal passages being facilitated with the ‘passing under’ of the right-hand thumb and second fingers (*Klavierübung*, Zweites Buch: Von Tonleitern abgeleitete Formen, bars 5-10, and the *Passacaglia on DSCH*, bars 1, 144-1, 151). Whilst Stevenson’s is far more intricate, the correlation is perceptible. Similarly, if one compares the figuration of the examples in Figure 100 (highlighted in red, *Passacaglia on DSCH*, bar 1, 797) Stevenson has absorbed Busoni’s mechanistic étude (highlighted in blue, *Klavierübung: Siebentes Buch, Acht Etüden nach Cramer, No. 5, Répétition: Allegrissimo*, bar 23), which has subsequently ‘grown’ to become tangible music.

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Figure 99. Excerpt from Ferruccio Busoni’s *Klavierübung* (1818–1925) Zweites Buch: Von Tonleitern abgeleitete Formen, bars 5-10. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1925), and Ronald Stevenson’s *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963). (London: Oxford University Press), bars 1, 144-1, 151.
As for the examples in Figure 101, although the semblance is not as conspicuous, it seems too much of a coincidence that Stevenson marks trillo in the score of his Passacaglia on DSCH (bars 400-402) and the étude in Busoni’s Klavierübung (Fünftes Buch: Triller, Nach Gounod, Andante con moto, bars 2-3) is similarly entitled ‘Trillo’. Similarly, in Figure 102, Stevenson has once again dramatically enhanced the figuration, with it being far more complex, with many supplementary textural layers, in comparison to Busoni’s that is für die linke Hand allein (for left hand alone) (Klavierübung, Zehntes Buch: Etüden nach Paganini-Liszt, Étude No.1 ‘Tremolo’ [in G minor], Non troppo Lento, bar 6).

Ferrucio Busoni’s Klavierübung (1818–1925) Zehntes Buch: Etüden nach Paganini-Liszt, Etude No.1 ”Tremolo” (in G minor), Non troppo Lento, bar 6.

Ronald Stevenson’s Passacaglia on DSCH bars 113-114.

Figure 102. Excerpt(s) from Ferruccio Busoni’s Klavierübung (1818–1925) Zehntes Buch: Etüden nach Paganini-Liszt, Etude No.1 ”Tremolo’ (in G minor), Non troppo Lento, bar 6. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1925) and Ronald Stevenson’s Passacaglia on DSCH (1963). (London: Oxford University Press), bars 113-114
Ronald Stevenson’s *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) bars 428-431


Stevenson did not just absorb pianistic figurations from Busoni, but experientially he selected from a multitude of sources (as discussed in Chapter 5.5). Frédéric Chopin’s *Étude in E minor* Op. 25 No. 5 (1829–32)—the so called ‘wrong note étude’—is just one example: echoes of this work can clearly be felt in bars 428-431 of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (as shown in Figure 103).

In essence, Stevenson has not only absorbed elements of Chopin’s *Études* (1829–32, published 1837) and Busoni’s *Klavierübung* (1818–1925, pub. 1925) just as a pianist (discussed at length in chapter two), but also as a composer. These brief examples prove beyond doubt that distilled elements of these works—which have been seminally important throughout his life as a composer-pianist—were absorbed and have subsequently evolved through conscious and subconscious artistic metamorphosis, becoming something that is very much his own.
6.5 Architectonic Forms: Comparisons with the *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, KSS50 (1930) of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji (1892–1988) and Visualizing the Intelligent Design of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963)

Stevenson notes that ‘there is a parallel between the creative careers of Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937) and Leopold Godowsky (1870–1938): both began by writing monumental, polyphonic piano works; and both later embraced a highly individual quasi-oriental Impressionism, an art of transcendental arabesque,’⁵¹⁶ that equally could apply to Stevenson’s own writing. Superficial comparisons are often made between his works and those of Sorabji—in particular, the extremely lengthy, twelve-movement, *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, KSS50 (1930, published J. Curwen and Sons Ltd, 1931), merely because both works are divided into pars prima, pars altera and pars tertia and are of an extraordinary duration. However, both works are inspired in respect to the later by Busoni’s *Piano Concerto in C major*, Op. 39, BV. 247 (1904) that has he same internal devisions of pars prima, pars altera and pars tertia.

Both works are also inspired to some extent by Busoni’s *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* KIV256 (1910-22), Stevenson now believes that this is where the similarity ends.⁵¹⁷ He also considers that the importance of Sorabji as a composer of note has not only been ‘exaggerated’⁵¹⁸ but also that ‘his music promised rather more than it delivered’.⁵¹⁹ Sean Owen—whilst researching *Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji: An Oral Biography*—found that Stevenson in telephone conversation was very critical of fundamental elements of Sorabji’s writing. Stevenson noted that, whilst he did have some admiration for his ability to create ‘organic forms,’ he nonetheless saw his fugal subject choice and pianistic orchestration as defective:

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⁵¹⁷ Stevenson, pers. comm., 5 August 2011.


He was indeed critical of Sorabji’s compositions, referring to his fugal writing, in particular his choice of fugue subjects, and his orchestration, as flawed. He did however express great admiration for Sorabji’s capacity as a composer of piano fantasias, stating that in the realm of organic form Sorabji is unrivalled.\footnote{S. V. Owen, \textit{Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji: An Oral Biography} (Southampton: University of Southampton), 2006. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. http://search.proquest.com.library.ecu.edu.au}

Whilst Sorabji’s \textit{Opus Clavicembalisticum}, kss50 (1930) is certainly lengthy, it is important to remember that in the case of Stevenson’s own 80 minute \textit{Passacaglia on DSCH} (1963), he sees the duration as being ‘the least interesting thing about it’.\footnote{Walton, \textit{A Scot in ‘Emergent Africa,}’ 8.} Busoni rightly contended that ‘architecture has its fundamental form, growth from below upward,’\footnote{Busoni, \textit{Sketch of a New Aesthetic}, 2.} and in Stevenson’s commercial recording, \textit{Cathedrals in Sound} (1992)\footnote{\textit{Cathedrals in Sound}, Ronald Stevenson (piano), Altarus AIR CD 9043 (1• DDD), 1992. For details of all commercial releases by Ronald Stevenson as pianist, see: \textit{Appendix One: XII Commercial Recordings}.} it is intriguing that all of the collective works chosen by Stevenson are thematically linked through the correlation struck between music and architecture (see Chapter 2). Busoni even went so far as to draw an ‘architectural diagram’—\textit{Architektonischer: Zeichnung in Form einer Gebäudefassade}—of his \textit{Fantasia contrapuntistica} Kiv256 (1910-1922). This in itself is based on one of the most significant Medieval structures in the whole of Europe—the \textit{Palais des Papes} (c. 1232-1364)—located in Avignon in Southern France (as shown in Figure 104 and Figure 105).
Figure 104. Façade of the *Palais Neuf, Palais des Papes*, Avignon, France (constructed c. 1232-1364), Original Source Wikipedia, Public Domain, Exception to Copyright, Section ss 40, 103C, Research or Study, Inspirational source of Ferruccio Busoni’s Architectural Diagram *Architektonischer: Zeichnung in the Form einer Gebäudefassade / Architectural Drawing in Form of a Building Front*, of the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*  footer 256 (1910-22), below. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1922). 524

Figure 105. Ferruccio Busoni’s Architectural Diagram *Architektonischer: Zeichnung in the Form einer Gebäudefassade / Architectural Drawing in form of a building front* of the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*  footer 256 (1910-22). (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1921), Exception to Copyright, Section ss 40, 103C, Research or Study.

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Busoni’s outline of this Gothic architectural masterpiece was also an inspiration for both Stevenson in the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) and Sorabji in his *Opus Clavicembalisticum,* KSS50 (1930).^525^ However, if Stevenson does not see his own work as having many similarities with *Opus Clavicembalisticum,* we need to ask, what is his own architectonic plan that, in its literal definition is ‘employed to fulfill both practical and expressive requirements, and thus serve both utilitarian and aesthetic ends’?^526^

Ferruccio Busoni’s architectural realization of his *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* KIV256 (1910-1922)—which appears in the opening plate of the first-edition of the two-piano version (as shown in Figure 106)—is in itself only a vastly simplified model of the actual *Palais des Papes* (c. 1232-1364). In order to reach any tangible conclusion in comparing the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica’s* KIV256 architectonic construction with that of the *Passacaglia on DSCH,* it is logical to create a similar two-dimensional image of the structure of the latter in order to fully evaluate any possible similarities.

If one examines the current author’s hypothetical rendering (as shown in Figure 106), the resultant correlation is striking.

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^525^ ‘As well as the *Architektonischer: Zeichnung in Form einer Gebäudessenschaft*—of his *Fantasia contrappuntistica* (1910-22) Busoni also designed a quasi-Egyptian structure on the title page of the monumental *Piano Concerto in C major,* Op. 39, av. 247 (1904),’ in an email from Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson (née Spedding b. 1932) to the author, 21 February 2012.

^526^ ‘Architecture,’ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, Edith Cowan University Library, Australia: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/32876/architecture:

‘Although these two ends may be distinguished, they cannot be separated, and the relative weight given to each can vary widely. Because every society—whether highly developed or less so, settled or nomadic—has a spatial relationship to the natural world and to other societies, the structures they produce reveal much about their environment (including climate and weather), history, ceremonies, and artistic sensibility, as well as many aspects of daily life. The characteristics that distinguish a work of architecture from other man-made structures are (1) the suitability of the work to use by human beings in general and the adaptability of it to particular human activities 2) the stability and permanence of the work’s construction, and (3) the communication of experience and ideas through its form. All these conditions must be met in architecture. The second is a constant, while the first and third vary in relative importance according to the social function of buildings. If the function is chiefly utilitarian, as in a factory, communication is of less importance. If the function is chiefly expressive, as in a monumental tomb, utility is a minor concern. In some buildings, such as churches and city halls, utility and communication may be of equal importance’.
Plan of Busoni's *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*

Plan des Werkes

**A. Analytischer:**

1. Choral-Variationen (Einleitung — Choral und Variationen — Übergang)

**B. Architektonischer:**

Plan of Stevenson's 'Passacaglia on DSCH'

*PASSACAGLIA on DSCH*

*PLAN OF WORK*

**PARS PRIMA**

**PARS ALTERA**

**PARS TERTIA**

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*Figure 106.* Current Author's Diagram of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) and Busoni's *Architektonischer: Zeichnung* of the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* KV256 (1910-22). (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1922), Exception to Copyright, Section ss 40, 103C, Research or Study.
It is immediately evident that Stevenson’s design is grander and substantially more complex than Busoni’s. Yet, whilst both works contain fugues acting as a golden section in the last third of their respective works, Stevenson substantially larger structure ingeniously supports its own colossal weight by the four *episodes* (represented using Doric columns\(^{527}\) in the current author’s artistic rendering, as shown in Figure 106), which counter-balance the triple fugue. This not only provides structural integrity, but also helps facilitate the overall monumentality of the design. Stevenson has clearly used the Busoni model as a point of departure, as even the layout of his title page—*Plan of Work* and Busoni’s *Plan des Workes*—seems just too explicit in its intention to be coincidental.

The Canadian musicologist, Paul Rapoport (b. 1948), once intriguingly wrote that, ‘the *Passacaglia on DSCH* is *inter alia* a creative response to Busoni just as Ferruccio Busoni *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* is a creative response to Bach’.\(^{528}\) Stevenson himself said of the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* that it is ‘a visionary completion of Bach’s incomplete fugue from The Art of Fugue’\(^{529}\) [Die Kunst der Fuge, bwv 1080 (c. 1740+)], which extends the ‘Bachian language to the twentieth century’.\(^{530}\) Yet whilst this helps to clarify aspects of the overall monumentality of the *Passacaglia on DSCH*, with clear parallels to the largest gothic structure in Europe, what of the minutiae and in particular the DSCH motif?

\(^{527}\) Four single Doric columns (\(\text{\(\|\|\|\|\|\)}\)) are used to represent the four ‘episodes’ in the current author’s Theoretical Diagram of the *Passacaglia on DSCH* (1963) as shown in Figure 106.

\(^{528}\) Paul Rapoport, Liner Notes, *Stevenson plays Stevenson*, Ronald Stevenson (piano), Altarus AIR-CD-9091 (2), 1999, compact disc. For details of all commercial releases by Ronald Stevenson as pianist, see: Appendix One: XII Commercial Recordings.


\(^{530}\) Ferruccio Busoni: ‘Music for Two Pianos and Piano Duet.’
Malcolm MacDonald gives the most powerful allegory of all, describing Stevenson’s treatment of the DSCH motif as ‘the atomic nucleus whose splitting releases the power of the sun’ and, as previously ascertained, the DSCH in the ground bass ingeniously works as a motivic chain, like self-perpetuating strands of DNA. Nonetheless, concerning the complex link between the ‘macrocosm’ and ‘microcosm’ it is essential to understand that both spheres are coupled etymologically by the same root—with kosmos variously denoting ‘order,’ ‘harmony,’ ‘the world,’ and even ‘Universe’.

The argument has, therefore, come full-circle in returning to William Blake’s ‘To see a World in a Grain of Sand...’ and the Beethovenian universality of Stevenson’s senso di spazio quasi Gagarinesco, as discussed in the opening lines of this chapter: ‘the widest space of all’.

The structural design of the Passacaglia on DSCH works only because of the approach in which the ‘building blocks’ are assembled within both the microcosm and macrocosm—with sound judgment and ingenuity. As celebrated Canadian architect, Arthur Erickson (1924–2009) once said—bearing a striking similarity to Stevenson’s conceptualization of forms, both large and small in the Passacaglia on DSCH—it is what a space contains that is of greater consequence than the architectonic form, for that alone is what truly arouses emotion:

Space has always been the spiritual dimension of architecture. It is not the physical statement of the structure so much as what it contains that moves us.

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531 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 45.
534 MacDonald, Ronald Stevenson: A Musical Biography, 60.
Chapter Seven: CONCLUSIONS: Evaluation of Exegesis

7.1 Ronald Stevenson and the Piano—an Eight-Decade Relationship

The objective of this exegetical study is to provide positive material for future scholarly endeavour—as well as acting as testament to Stevenson’s life body of work and his eight-decade love affair with the piano. Critics and academics concur that Stevenson as a composer-pianist is an insightful and, in many ways, incomparable performer. However, until now there has been no thorough examination of his performing capability and how he tangibly absorbed rudiments of the great pianists from the ‘Sunset of the Golden Age’, with corporeal illustrations and elucidatory commentary in relation to historical antecedents. Astonishingly, this distinguished lineage travels back through Busoni, Liszt, Beethoven, and Bach, with the fons et origo lying ultimately with the early clavicembalists.

Stevenson’s rationale of ‘thinking like a composer’ whilst performing was imperative to assess, especially as for many composer-pianists predating the advent of piano rolls and recorded sound, their own performing all too swiftly became for the most part forgotten or steeped in myth. Recordings of Stevenson observably do exist—with the exception of his early reading of the Passacaglia on DSCH (South Africa, 1964) and a live recital entitled The Transcendental Tradition\(^{536}\) from the University of British Columbia in 1976 for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Surprisingly, however, he recorded commercially only late in life.\(^{537}\) This was exclusively for Altarus Records, when he was already into his 60’s.\(^{538}\) Therefore, an assessment of Stevenson’s early pianism, especially in his formative years proved critical, more than ever, whilst Stevenson is still with us in order to separate fact from fiction.

\(^{536}\) Stevenson writes that his friend and former duo-partner, Sir Peter Piers (1910–1986) once suggested the programme title to him. See Scott-Sutherland, Stevenson’s Recital Programmes, 300.

\(^{537}\) Passacaglia on DSCH Ronald Stevenson (piano) rec. 1964, Cape Town, South Africa, APR 5650 (•ADD) and ‘The Transcendental Tradition’: Schubert/Liszt, Chopin/Godowsky, Gluck/Alkan, Strauss/Grainger, Stevenson [‘Peter Grimes Fantasy,’ ‘Prelude, Fugue and Fantasy on themes from Busoni’s Doktor Faust’] Bach/Busoni. (Live recording: Recital Hall, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 21 April 1976, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), APR 5630 (•ADD).

\(^{538}\) For details of all commercial releases by Ronald Stevenson as pianist, see: Appendix One: XII Commercial Recordings.
Stevenson’s rewriting, refiguring and alteration in performing editions are arguably of secondary importance to his own composition. Nonetheless, the quasi-improvisatory character of rewriting—located somewhere in the ‘twilight realm’ between interpretation and transcription—is a gravely neglected subgenre, of which prior knowledge (outside of the respective well-documented territories of Jazz and some aspects of early-music) is scant to nonexistent. This omission begs for intensive future investigation—especially as it is close to the uncharted core of music as a performing art itself and is, in many ways, the creative heart of the art-form. Additionally, attesting to Stevenson’s personal absorption of elemental aspects of Busoni’s monumental ten-volume Klavierübung in Zehn Büchern (1818–1925) into his own pianism (many years later subconsciously revivified in the Passacaglia on DSCH (1963)—was a laborious undertaking, yet important to substantiate.

With regard to Stevenson and transcription, this study is the first to map topographically the terrain of his unparalleled contribution to this much-maligned art form in any detail, aiming to ascertain his reasoning in sustaining an ancient practice that was imprudently seen, until very recently, as being out-of-date and even passé. Assessing this philosophy in the first instance, with concrete illustration, proved an essential task that has been desperately called for and will, once again, act as a stepping stone for scholarly investigation upon which future researchers can tread, as a point of departure.

Similarly, assigning an entire chapter to Stevenson’s use of the pedal throughout his own voluminous body of composition (in particular, his devotion to the Sostenuto [Ped III]), is elemental in understanding his œuvre, of which there is, a priori, no preceding inquiry. Furthermore, with the exceptions of Stevenson’s distinguished colleagues, Joseph Banowitz, Glen Carruthers, and Glenn Riddle (in explicit relation to Grainger’s pioneering utilization of the device), there is very...
little investigation into its use in pianism in relation to specific composer-pianists per se. This inquiry has proven fruitful as, once again, only a practitioner is fully proficient in understanding and appraising both the subtleties and complexities of its application (as they are often practically integrated into the structural fabric of Stevenson’s compositional design). Additionally, how this neglected aspect of pianism in Stevenson’s composition was absorbed and built upon from musical forebears—in particular, Percy Grainger and Ferruccio Busoni—was a key aspect of study.

Superficially, exploring Stevenson’s political ideologies would seem a contentious debate—especially considering that he claims to have never been concerned with politics, nor ever affiliated with any political party or organisation. Nonetheless, the study proved exceedingly worthwhile, as there are significant political and humanitarian undertones, which underpin much of Stevenson’s work. This was a fascinating field of study and has never been undertaken so specifically or directly: aiming to divulge the motivational heart of him as a composer-pianist. Similarly, it was important to evaluate the nationalistic aspects of his œuvre, especially as to how humanity is tangibly reflected in his art, striving towards a Beethovenian universality. This was found nowhere more so than in the first evaluation of his temporally miniature (though politically gargantuan) African Twi-Tune. This was contextualized in both the troubled times in which it was spawned and the anticipated future of a free South Africa that Stevenson prophetically hoped for—which was ultimately, for the large part, achieved in his own lifetime.

Linking the miniature to the monumental was also important, as, whilst there have been studies into this facet of Stevenson’s psyche before (with superb work by Ateş Orga, Paul Rapoport, Malcolm MacDonald, Martin Anderson, and Colin Scott Sutherland), far-reaching statements are often made with reference to Stevenson elsewhere, that are corroborated neither with tangible illustration nor justification. This is especially true in the case of the complex link between the microcosm and macrocosm and how they interrelate in his writing for the piano. Envisaging an ‘Architectonic Model’ for the Passacaglia on DSCH was an interesting exercise that divulged aspects of form upon which future researchers can build. Nonetheless, as the Stevensons said in a recent
email to the author, their only reservation to such modeling (which they nonetheless found fascinating)—was the following:

Music by its very nature cannot be grounded, it’s like the air we breathe, it envelops us and soars as we hear and experience it, like the Goldberg Variations, [BWV 988, published 1741]. Unlike the Fantasia Contrappuntistica [1910-22], the Passacaglia [on DSCH, 1963] has historic references, that evoke visual images, some of them apocalyptic, some grounded, some cosmic. It has the Beethovenian struggle both Promethean and pianistic.542

It is reassuring to note that all of the above aspects concerning the Passacaglia on DSCH—the pivotal case study of this entire exegesis—were arrived upon autonomously, without premeditation, nor prompting from the Stevensons. Hopefully, this study provides insight and inspiration to others.

Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this study to examine every work in corresponding detail because of the sheer volume of music. Instead, the aim was to capture the essence of Stevenson and his eighty-year connection with the instrument, without (to borrow a phrase from Richard Dawkins, b.1941) unintentionally ‘unweaving the rainbow,’543 nor dissipating or trivializing his uniquely imaginative aspirations.

As one can never perceive Stevenson as a stringently ‘modern’ composer, this study has largely steered clear of contextualizing Stevenson’s accomplishments against the backdrop of contemporary equivalents, as well as more recent topical developments. This is because the task itself would prove unrewarding and meaningless. Stevenson has virtually nothing in common, for instance, with Jean-Henri-Alphonse Barraqué (1928–1973), Pierre Boulez (b. 1925), Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007), Frederic Rzewski (b. 1938), or Brian Ferneyhough (b. 1943). With the exceptions of Michael Finnissy (b. 1946) and Larry Sitsky (b. 1934) (with whom there is a distinct shared responsiveness to the Busonian composer-pianist traditions), Stevenson is far closer in intellectual equipoise and stylistic aptitude to Franz Liszt, Leopold Godowsky, Ferruccio Busoni, Percy Grainger, and even Ludwig van Beethoven, as well as the shadowy, mostly forgotten ethereal

542 Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson, pers. comm., 10 April 2012.
twilight figures from ‘the Sunset of the Romantic Age’. He could, as a result, be disparagingly observed as out-of-date or even obsolete. Nonetheless, Stevenson notes on the subject:

Well, we have to be very careful about musical fashion. If I talk about a return to the past, I don’t mean it to sound retrograde. Was it [Giuseppe] Verdi (1813–1901) who said that if we had to return to [Giovanni Pierluigi da] Palestrina (c. 1525/1526–1594) it would be a step forward?  

Naturally, only time will attest to Stevenson’s significance and endurance as a composer. However, interest in his music is steadily rising, with an ever-increasing catalogue of recordings and performance, by some of the world’s foremost practitioners. As Chris Walton notes ‘if there is one thing that I learnt from my years as a music librarian, it is that music of quality will sooner or later claim its own destiny’.  

Stevenson may forever prove perplexing to some, principally because of the complexity of his creative nature, which seems repeatedly to embrace the diametrically opposing. Perhaps the key to understanding Stevenson as a whole is contained in an astute observation in his *Western Music: An Introduction* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1971) regarding the creative power of opposites:

> The essence of man’s thinking is contained in the law of the unity and conflict of opposites. Opposites imply contradiction and contradiction implies relative unity and absolute conflict. It is conflict, which makes history move by impelling change. It is this law that transforms the old into the new.

Whilst this author is under no circumstances accusing Stevenson of plagiarism, this concise platitude is also a philosophical and literary paraphrase (or even transcription!) of the dialectics of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), which clearly define Stevenson’s Marxist leanings. If one reads Friedrich Engels’ *Preparatory Materials for Anti-Dühring* (1878), the resemblance to Stevenson’s train of thought is strikingly similar:

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The true, natural, historical, and dialectical negation is (formally) the moving source of all development—the division into opposites, their struggle and resolution, and what is more, on the basis of experience gained, the original point is achieved again (partly in history, fully in thought), but at a higher stage.\(^\text{547}\)

Nonetheless, this ‘first law of opposites’ remains his creative raison d’être, both in performing, as well as writing for the piano in uniting dodecaphony and tonality, asceticism and the exuberant, the inconsequential and the imperative, the miniature and the monumental. This is accomplished in everything he inspirationally writes, whether it be ingeniously re-working and refiguring preexisting material, transcribing the works of predecessors and acquaintances, or in forging his own gargantuan output of extraordinarily original and diverse compositions. If one had to describe the essential core of his creative essence Stevenson consistently arises to something new through an ingenious amalgamation of separate, distinct fundamentals—whether it be dissimilar works, figurations, compositional techniques or even political or artistic philosophies, both to concomitantly assimilate and hyper-extrapolate.

In a recent telephone conversation, Stevenson entertainingly quipped that in his ripened old age, he is ‘happy being a major-minor composer,’\(^\text{548}\) a comment which can be understood on a few levels. This, one increasingly has to doubt—with the current author hoping that the journey of this epigrammatic exegesis has, at the very least, demonstrated that this profoundly self-effacing man is incontestably in the lineage of many of Western Music’s most fêted historical precedents. His work will, like theirs, incontestably persevere, not least because of its far-reaching allure, and unashamed humanity. Logically, therefore, in consideration of Stevenson as both a visionary composer and virtuoso pianist of the highest calibre, he is anything but a ‘major-minor’ composer—except that he ‘never gave up on tonality.’\(^\text{549}\) Above all, his music can tangibly act as a vehicle for political and moral goodness in the wider musical firmament.


\(^{548}\) Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.

\(^{549}\) Stevenson, pers. comm., 16 September 2011.
Appendix One: Catalogue of Complete Piano Works, Transcriptions, and Recordings of Ronald Stevenson\(^{550}\)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Sonatina No. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Allegro moderato</td>
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<td></td>
<td>II. Andante</td>
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<td></td>
<td>III. Presto</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Night Piece</td>
<td>1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nocturne in D♭</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burlesque Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retrospect</td>
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<td>18 Variations on a Bach Chorale</td>
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<td>* Vox Stellarum</td>
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<td>* Sonatina No. 2</td>
<td>1947</td>
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<td>1. Adagietto</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Finale: Allegro con moto</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Sonatina No. 3</td>
<td>1948</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. In modo di marcia lenta</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Scherzo: Allegro vivace</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Veloce, leggiero e fantastico</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Chorale Prelude for Jean Sibelius</td>
<td>1948</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Fugue on a Fragment of Chopin</td>
<td>1948(^{551})</td>
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</tbody>
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\(^{550}\) These appendices have been adapted from Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’ in *Ronald Stevenson: The Man and his Music* (ed.) Colin Scott-Sutherland (London: Toccata Press, 2005), with the very kind support and permission of Martin Anderson.

\(^{551}\) A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.
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<td><strong>Fantasy on Doktor Faust</strong></td>
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<td><em>The Ploughboy</em></td>
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<td><strong>Andante Sereno</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fugue on ‘Clavis Astartis Magica’</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Waltzes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nocturne after John Field</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Variations on a Theme of Pizzetti</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1955&lt;sup&gt;554&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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</tbody>
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A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.


<sup>554</sup> Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’ in *Ronald Stevenson: The Man and his Music*, ed. Colin Scott-Sutherland (London: Toccata Press, 2005), 394. ‘The theme is the Sarabande from Peseta’s incidental music to D’Annunzio’s drama *La Pisanella* (1913), but the two sets of variations are otherwise entirely different’.
Memoriam Bernard van Dieren

10. Motivo: Largo drammatico–Agitato volente (Cavalcata notturna) [based on BACH]

11. Allegro moderato (7 variations on the note-row in the Statue Scene of Don Giovanni)

12. Allegro moderato (7 variations on a theme from Berlioz’s Damnation of Faust)

13. Allegro molto (fugue on a subject from Busoni’s Arlecchino)

14. Lento assai (on the 12-note theme from Liszt’s Faust Symphony)

15. Lento

16. Andante

*Prelude, Fugue and Fantasy on Busoni’s ‘Faust’*

I. Prelude: Largo–Presto–Cadenza (Andante Tranquillo) Largo
II. Fugue: tempo giusto
III. Fantasy: Adagio–l’istesso tempo–Tempo di minuetto–largamente

*Six Pensées sur les Préludes de Chopin, Op. 28*

Pensée 1: ‘a juxtaposition of the C Major and C minor Preludes Op. 28’

Pensée 2: ‘combines Prelude 2 with Prelude 9 and the Étude Op. 25 No. 11 (Winter Wind)’.

Pensée 3: ‘combines Preludes 7 and 10’.

Pensée 4: ‘combines the three (so-called) Raindrop Preludes (Op. 28) nos. 6, 15, and 4, keeping the original keys of B minor, D♭ major, and E minor, as a study in tritonal’.

Pensée 5: ‘combines Prelude 22 (transposed to E♭ minor) with Prelude 14, and the finale of the Sonata in B♭ minor also with Prelude 14’.

Pensée 6: ‘is a more orchestra-like version of Pensée 1’.

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* A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.

556 From the composer’s notes (Edinburgh: Ronald Stevenson Society).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Barren Fig: Blues Ecossaise</th>
<th>1960–63</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passacaglia on DSCH</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pars Prima:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonata Allegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waltz in rondo-form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suite (Prelude, Sarabande, Jig, Sarabande, Minuet, Jig, Gavotte, Polonaise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pibroch (Lament for the Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episode: Arabesque Variations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nocturne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pars altera:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reverie-Fantasy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fanfare–Forebodings: Alarm–Glimpse of a War-Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variations on ‘Peace, Bread &amp; the Land’ (1917)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symphonic March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fandango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedal-point: ‘To emergent Africa’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Episode: études</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variations in C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pars tertia:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Adagio:</strong> Tribute to Bach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triple Fugue over Ground Bass–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject I: <em>Andante</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject II: <em>B A C H</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject III: Dies Irae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Variations (<em>Adagissimo barocco</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Wheen Tunes for Bairns tae Spiel: Four Scottish Pieces for Piano</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. ‘Croon’</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2. ‘Drone’</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3. ‘Reel’</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4. ‘Spiel’</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simple Variations on Purcell’s ‘New Scotch Tune’</strong></td>
<td>1964, rev. 1975 (^{558})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{557}\) Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’ in *Ronald Stevenson: The Man and his Music*, ed. Colin Scott-Sutherland (London: Toccata Press, 2005), ‘Dated ‘West Linton 24 December 1960–18 May 1962’ A telegram from Ronald Stevenson to John Ogdon of 1 April 1962 announces the completion of the work in a fair copy. The original version lacked the section ‘Lament for the Children’ and the passages in ‘To Emergent Africa’ that are played on the strings; both were added on the day of the first performance. (1963) *Cumna na Cloinne (Lament for the Children)* is a paraphrase of a seventeenth-century pibroch ùrlar by Patrick Mor MacCrimmon, was originally a separate piece’. 395
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>A Scottish Triptych</em></td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘Keening Sang for a Makar: In Memoriam Francis George Scott’</td>
<td>(1967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Heroic Sang for Hugh MacDiarmid</td>
<td>(1967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ‘Chorale Pibroch for Sorley MacLean’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Valse Charlot and Valse Garbo: Two Children’s Pieces for Solo Piano*</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’e Gowden lyric</td>
<td>c. 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chime for Busoni’s Centenary</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Canonic Caprice on Johann Strauss’ The Bat (Die Fledermaus 1874)</em></td>
<td>1966–1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Three Scots Fairytales</em></td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘What the Fairy Piper told me’ (... March time)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ‘What the Fairy Harper told me’ (...Andante)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ‘What the Fairy Fiddler told me’ (... Jig time)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fughetta on a Theme by Dukas*</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rondo</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Two Melodies on Grounds of Glazunov</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Studies for Left-hand alone on Preludes by Rachmaninoff</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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558 Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘The 1975 revision, undertaken at the instigation of Louis Kentner, entailed the addition of three variations in more virtuosic style and the renaming of the work Little Jazz Set on Purcell’s Scotch Tune’, 396.

A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.

559 Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘Commissioned by the BBC in honour of Hugh MacDiarmid’s 75th birthday’, 396.


561 ‘Theme from L’Apprenti Sorcier’ (1897), 397.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Minuet for Anna Katharina</em></td>
<td>c. 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mockingbird Fugetta</em></td>
<td>c. 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Peter Grimes Fantasy</em></td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Little Hebridean Suite</em></td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘Sheep on Shore’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ‘Sun on Sea’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ‘Stones and Sands’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hebridean Aeolian Harp</em></td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study for piano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Three Scottish Ballads</em></td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘Lord Randal Allegro moderato; Strong, stark and steady</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ‘The Dowie Dens of Yarrow’ Andante sostenuto</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ‘Newhaven Fishwife’s Cry’ Moderato sostenuto–Allegro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Promenade Pastorale</em></td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Recitative and Air on DSCH: In memoriam Shostakovich</em></td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kleine Doppelfuge</em></td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Praeludium und Dopplefuge’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Doubles on Rubbra’s ‘Cradle Hymn’: A Christmas Offering for Keyboard</em></td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eileen O’Malley’s Jig &amp; Air (or, The Pirate Queen’s Jig &amp; Air)</em></td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Quick jig (Allegro alla giga)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Slow air (Aria–adagio)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Valsette et Musette Mignonettes: Occasional Waltz</em></td>
<td>1975</td>
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</tbody>
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* A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Composed/Marked</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Book of Canons for Alan Bush on his 75th Birthday</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude for Alan Bush on his 75th Birthday</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude on a Theme of Busoni</td>
<td>c. 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ojala el nombre Casals resonase en las calles!</td>
<td>Music for cobla (Catalan street band) 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Sonatina No. 4 Sonatina serenissima (In memoriam Benjamin Britten)</td>
<td>I. Barcaroletta (<em>Andante con moto</em>) II. Fughetta (<em>Molto moderato, intimo</em>) III. Chorale (Lento) IV. Carol (Allegretto) 1973–77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variations on a Theme by Manfred Gordon (Tema Ebraico)</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Prelude and Chorale (An Easter Offering)</td>
<td>Andante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorale: On Another’s Sorrow</td>
<td>c. 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norse Elegy for Ella Nygaard</td>
<td>Lento ma con moto, con passione repressa 1976–1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorale and Fugue in Reverse on Two Themes by Robert and Clara Schumann</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Morning Stars Sang Together (Meditation on a Morgenstern Song)</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Barra Flying Toccata</td>
<td>‘A scolding match from the Isle of Barra, Hebrides’ 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyrical Fugue on a Theme of York Bowen</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostinato macabre on the name Leopold Godowsky (For left-hand only)</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude for the Left-hand</td>
<td>c. 1980</td>
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* A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preludette on the name George Gershwin</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*A Rosary of Variations on Seán Ó Riada’s Irish Folk Mass</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming Tune for Rachel(^6^6^4)</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Twi-tunes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Scots-Swedish Twi-tune No. 1</td>
<td>1979–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Santa Lucia and the Star Boys - Italo-Swedish Twi-tune No. 2</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Scots-Swedish Twi-Tune No. 3</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Sneaky on Sixth. Rag-Blues</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Water of Tyne</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dulas Courtly Dances</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragmaster</td>
<td>1980–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melody</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ein kleines Triptychon, ‘In Memoriam Czeslaw Marek’</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Prelude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mazurka alla fuga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chorale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Symphonic Elegy for Liszt</td>
<td>1986</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piccolo Niccolò Paganinesco</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlem (125th Street) Walkabout</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Ricordanza di San Romerio (A Pilgrimage for Piano)</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitette: Hommage à Guex-Joris</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Sonatina No. 5: A Threepenny Homage to Kurt Weill (^6^6^4)</td>
<td>1987–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6^6^4\) Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘A single-page miniature; Rachel is Stevenson’s second granddaughter’, 400.

* A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Motus Perpetuus (?) Temporibus Fatalibus’</td>
<td>1987–88</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Song without Words</strong></td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dodecaphonic Bonfire (Falò Dodecafonico)</strong></td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variations-Study after Chopin’s C minor Waltz</strong></td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beltane Bonfire</strong></td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fugue for Alan Bush at 90</strong></td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘A Carlyle Suite</strong></td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Aubade—‘Here is dawning/Another blue day’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Variations—Study in historical styles on Frederick the Great’s Theme [as used by Bach in <em>A Musical Offering</em>, 1747]: Maestoso barocco—Allegro rococo—Allegro ardente, romantico—Modéré impressionistico—Recitative and March—Calmo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Jane Carlyle’s Wit (scherzo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Serenade (referring to the Aubade)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Le festin d’Alkan</strong></td>
<td>1988–97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Petit concert en forme d’études: Concerto for solo piano, without orchestra’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Free composition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Free transcription (of Alkan’s <em>Barcarolle in G minor, Chants</em>, Book III, Op. 65, No. 6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Free multiple variations</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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‘Fugue, Variations & Epilogue on a theme by Arnold Bax*** (1883–1953)

Based on a theme from Bax’s Symphony No.2

1. Tema Locriano: *Moderato pensoso*
2. Intermezzo-Notturno: *Lento ma con moto* (omaggio a John Field)—*Marcia funèbre—Allegro quasi feroce*
3. Epilogue: Andante *cantabile* (inversion of theme)

‘Nine Haiku’566***

1. *Dedication* (Kikaku, 1661–1707)
   ‘To you I present this branch of the flow’ring plum: take it with my dreams’
2. *The Fly* (Issa, 1763–1823)
   ‘Do not harm the fly: just look how he wrings his hands, how he wrings his feet’
3. *Gone Away* (Ransetsu, 1654–1707)
   ‘The house is locked up: around a paper lantern the bats are dancing’
4. *Nocturne* (Bashô, 1644–1694)
   ‘Amid the vast calm, alone drilling holes in rocks: the cry of the crickets’
5. *Master and Pupil* (Bashô and Kikaku)
   ‘Kikaku made this haiku: Dragonfly: pull off its wings: Red pepper’ He took it to Bashô the Master who said it was well done. But would be better thus: Red pepper: put wings on it: Dragonfly’
6. *Spring* (Kikaku)
   ‘Thou shalt, thou shalt not: when the cherry is in bloom, what does it matter?’
7. *Curfew* (Issa)
   ‘At my life’s evening a bell tolls: I know, and taste the coolness of dusk’
8. *Hiroshima* (Keith Bosley)
   ‘Man grew a mushroom in the darkness of his heart and poisoned the world’
9. *Epilogue* (Bashô)
   ‘The summer meadows: here, dreaming their lives away, the heroes we loved’

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*A* A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.


566 The *Nine Haiku* were originally set for voice and piano (1971).
## II. Transcriptions, Arrangements and Realizations for Solo Piano

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anon., <em>Sumer is icumen in</em> as No. 1 of Two Eclogues</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johann Sebastian Bach, (1685–1750) <em>Preludio con Fuga</em> in A minor, bwv 551</td>
<td>1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agustín Barrios Mangoré (1885–1944) <em>Romanza quasi cello</em></td>
<td>c. 1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study*

567 The works included in The Ronald Stevenson Society publication of *L’Art Nouveau du Chant appliqué au Piano* vary considerably with those listed in ‘Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’ in Ronald Stevenson: The Man and his Music, ed. Colin Scott-Sutherland (London, Toccata Press, 2005), because of the final inclusions being undecided by the composer as Toccata Classics went to print. The correct list of works is as follows:

*L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano Vol. 1*

No. 2: Maud Valérie White, ‘So we’ll go no more a-roving’ (1980)
No. 3: Meyerbeer, ‘Plus blanche que la plus blanche hermine’ from Les Huguenots (1975)
No. 4: Rachmaninoff, ‘In the Silent Night’ (1982)
No. 5: Bridge, ‘Go not, Happy Day’ (1980)

*L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano Vol. 2*

No. 6: Novello, ‘We’ll Gather Lilacs’ (1980)
No. 7: Novello, ‘Fly Home Little Heart’ (1980)
No. 8: Coleridge-Taylor, Demand et Réponse, from Petite Suite de Concert (1981)
No. 9: Romberg, ‘Will You Remember’ (Sweethearts), from Maytime (1988)

*L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano Vol. 3*

No. 10: Foster, ‘Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair’ (1980)
No. 11: Foster, ‘Come where my love lies dreaming’ (1980)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805)</td>
<td>Minuet from String Quintet in E, Op. 13, No. 5 (G275), transcribed as <em>Menuetto Celebre del Boccherini in forma d’uno studio polifonico</em></td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minuet from String Quintet in A Op. 13, No. 5 (G275), for both left and right-hand (alone)</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)</td>
<td>‘Edward,’ No. 1, duet for alto, tenor and piano, of the <em>Balladen und Romanzen</em>, Op. 75</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Bridge (1879–1941)</td>
<td>‘Go Not, Happy Day’ (transcribed as No. 5 of <em>L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano</em>)</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bull (1562–1628)</td>
<td><em>Pavan, Galliard and Jig</em>: ‘Three Elizabethan Pieces from the Virginals Book’</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Burns (1759–1796)</td>
<td><em>Auld Lang Syne</em>, transcribed as No. 1 of <em>Songs for a Burns Supper</em></td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ae fond kiss</em>, transcribed as No. 2 of <em>Songs for a Burns Supper</em></td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferruccio Busoni, (1866–1924)</td>
<td>Polonaise from the <em>Sonatina ad usum infantis</em></td>
<td>c. 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three Marches from <em>Turandot</em></td>
<td>1948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>María Teresa Carreño, (1853–1917)</td>
<td>A Little Waltz</td>
<td>c. 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo Casals, (1876–1973)</td>
<td>O Vos Omnes</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>Sant Mari de Canigo</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>Song of the Birds</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>Tres Estofas de amor</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Chisholm, (1904–1965)</td>
<td>Hert’s Sang</td>
<td>c. 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>*Three Contrapuntal Studies on Chopin Waltzes ***</td>
<td>c. 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>1. Waltz in A♭, Op. 34/1, for right-hand alone</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>2. Waltz in A♭, Op. 42, for left-hand alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>3. Nos. 1 and 2 combined for two hands</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>A Little Chopin Notebook ‘Prelude No. 2 as a canon/ Étude Op. 25, No. 1—for young pianists, based on Chopin’s own method for beginners’</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>‘Eléanore’ (transcribed as No. 1 of L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano)</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Delius (1862–1934)</td>
<td><em>Brigg Fair, arranged as No. 2 of Eight Children’s Pieces, Op. 73</em></td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>‘Intermezzo’ from <em>Brigg Fair, arranged as No. 7 of Eight Children’s Pieces</em></td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>‘La Calinda’ from <em>Koanga, arranged as No. 3 of Eight Children’s Pieces</em></td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>‘Late Swallows’ (Eric Fenby’s title of his string-orchestral arrangement of the slow movement of Delius’ String Quartet), arranged as No. 6 of Eight Children’s Pieces</td>
<td>1962</td>
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<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>‘Love’s Philosophy,’ No. 2 of <em>3 Songs</em> (1891)</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td><em>On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring, ‘The Cuckoo,’ No. 5 of Eight Children’s Pieces</em></td>
<td>1962</td>
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<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>‘Serenade’ from <em>Hassan, arranged as No. 4 of Eight Children’s Pieces, Op. 73</em></td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td><em>Song of the High Hills, arranged as No. 8 of Eight Children’s Pieces, Op. 73 (1962)</em></td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>‘Wiegenlied der Ewigkeit’ (‘Eternity’s Cradle-song’) from <em>A Mass of Life</em></td>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Field (1782–1837)</td>
<td><em>Reverie-Nocturne</em></td>
<td>1965</td>
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<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td><em>‘Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming’ (transcribed as No. 11 of L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano)</em></td>
<td>1980</td>
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*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist/Musician</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Gounod (1818–1893)</td>
<td>‘Mephistopheles’ Serenade’ from <em>Faust</em></td>
<td>(date unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ella Grainger (née Ström) (1889–1979)</td>
<td><em>Love at First Sight</em>; ‘For Ella on May Day’</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td><em>Poetry, Song and Picture Book</em></td>
<td>c. 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td><em>Green Bushes</em></td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td><em>The Young Pianist’s Grainger</em> (^{568})</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{568}\) Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘The Young Person’s Grainger is an album containing:

- *Country Gardens* Simplified edition by Percy Grainger
- *Shepherd’s Hey* Simplified edition by Percy Grainger
- *Molly on the Shore* Abridged by Ronald Stevenson
- *Mock Morris* Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
- *Beautiful Fresh Flower* Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
- *Australian Up-Country Song* Edited by Ronald Stevenson
- *Irish Tune from Country Derry* Edited by Ronald Stevenson
- *Walking Tune* Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
- *Hill Song No. 1* Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
- *To a Nordic Princess* Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
- *One More Day my John* Edited by Ronald Stevenson
- *Spoon River* Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
- *Blithe Bells* Easy version by Percy Grainger
- *Over the Hills and Far Away* Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
- *Now o now I needs must part* Freely set for piano by Percy Grainger

Stevenson also supplied an introductory note on Percy Grainger and notes on the music (both dated 8 July 1966), 438.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer/Author</th>
<th>Title Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>–––,</td>
<td><em>Harlem Walkabout</em></td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–––,</td>
<td>‘Northern March’ from <em>Youthful Suite</em></td>
<td>1983</td>
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<tr>
<td>–––,</td>
<td><em>The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart</em></td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–––,</td>
<td><em>Three Scottish Folk-Songs</em></td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1’. *Will ye gang to the Hielands, Leezie Lindsay?’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2’. <em>Mo Nighean Dubh</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3’. <em>O gin I were where Gadie Rins</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)</td>
<td><em>‘Den Bergtekne</em></td>
<td>1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franz Xaver Gruber (1787–1863)</td>
<td><em>Stille Nacht</em></td>
<td>1965</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Christopher Handy (1873–1958)</td>
<td><em>St Louis Blues, transcribed as No. 1 of Children’s Anthology of Blues and Ragtime</em></td>
<td>c. 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–––,</td>
<td>*St Louis Blues, ‘in canonic form’</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947)</td>
<td><em>Si Mes vers Avaient des Ailes!</em></td>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir (Herbert) Hamilton Harty (1879–1941)</td>
<td>‘<em>My Làgan Love</em>’</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Joplin (ca. 1867/1868?–1917)</td>
<td><em>Maple Leaf Rag, transcribed as No. 1 of Children’s Anthology of Blues and Ragtime</em></td>
<td>c. 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yrjö Henrik Kilpinen (1892–1959)</td>
<td><em>‘Kehtolaulu’ (‘Lullaby’), Songs to Poems by V. A. Koskenniemi, Op. 23, No. 4, transcribed as No. 3 of Four Songs of Yrjö Kilpinen</em></td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–––,</td>
<td>*‘Kesäyö’ (<em>Summer Night’), Songs to Poems by V. A. Koskenniemi, Op. 23, No. 3, transcribed as No. 2 of Four Songs of Kilpinen</em></td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–––,</td>
<td>*‘Der Zugvogel’ (<em>The Migrating Bird’), Tunturilauluja, Op. 53, No. 3, transcribed as No. 1 of Four Songs of Yrjö Kilpinen</em></td>
<td>1970</td>
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</tbody>
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*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer/Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>——</td>
<td>‘Vöglein Schwermut’ (‘Little Bird’s Despair’), Lieder um den Tod, Op. 62, No. 1, transcribed as No. 4 of Four Songs of Yrjö Kilpinen</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)</td>
<td>*Symphony No. 10: Adagio</td>
<td>1987^569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864)</td>
<td>‘Plus blanche que la plus blanche ermine’ from Les Huguenots (transcribed as No. 3 of L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano)</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rory Dall Morrison (1660–1730)</td>
<td>Rory Dall Morrison’s Harp Book, realizations:  1’.Oran do lain Breac MacLeod (Song for John MacLeod of Dunvegan)’  2’.Feill nan Crann (Fair Harp Key or Lament for the Lost Harp Key)’  3’.A’cheud di-luain de’n raithe (The First Monday of the Quarter)’</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.

^569 1987 is the date that appears on the Ronald Stevenson Society printed edition, which is dedicated ‘to Joan from the transcriber.’ However, this date may be incorrect. Stevenson’s transcription of the Adagio from Gustav Mahler’s (1860–1911) Tenth Symphony (1910) is dedicated to Joan Humphreys. She recounts, ‘I always loved Mahler’s music—when [Simon] Rattle (b. 1955) took over the CBSO [City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra] I heard even more music by him and I think my enthusiasm may have affected Ronald. Here are the words he wrote on my copy of the transcription of the Adagio: ‘for dearest Joan, whose love of Mahler was the fons et origo of my work on this transcription. Ronald, West Linton, 27th March 2002.

And here is a letter he sent a day later: ‘Dear Joan, it was a big pleasure to present to you my Mahler transcription. It is seldom that a dedication convinces that it is apposite: in this case, I am sure it is. I don’t know anyone else who has taken this music so much to heart’. It seems that 2002 is a much more likely date for completion, or it may have been revised 2002, especially as a copy was sent to Joan Humphreys as soon as it was finished.

Joan Humphreys, pers. comm., 26 February 2012.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)</th>
<th>‘Einleitungen’ from the Larghetto of the Piano Concerto No. in C minor, KV 491 (date unknown)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>‘Fantasy in F minor’ for Mechanical Organ, k608</td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>Three cadenzas for Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, KV 466 (date unknown)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>‘Romance’ (Second Movement of Piano Concerto in D minor, Mozart, KV 466, 1785)</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Nielsen (1865–1931)</td>
<td>Commotio</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivor Novello (1893–1951)</td>
<td>‘We’ll Gather Lilacs,’ transcribed with Rachmaninoff, Lilacs, as accompaniment (transcribed as No. 6 of L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano)</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>‘Fly Home Little Heart’ (transcribed as No. 7 of L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano)</td>
<td>(1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turlough O’Carolan (1670–1738)</td>
<td>Carolan’s Dream</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>Carolan’s Maggot</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>Carolan’s Quarrel with the Landlady</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———,</td>
<td>Lord Inchiquin</td>
<td>1975</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ignacy Jan Paderewski</td>
<td>‘Dans la forêt’ from <em>Four Songs</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘L’amour fatal’ from <em>Four Songs</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                  | *Suite from Manru*  
1. ‘Introduction and Gypsy March’  
2. ‘Gypsy Song’  
3. ‘Lullaby’  
4. ‘Cracovienne’                  | 1961 |
| Henry Purcell                    | *Ground in C minor*                                                               | 1955 |
|                                  | *Ground in E minor, transcribed as ‘Ground in E♭ minor’                          | 1957 |
|                                  | *Ground in D minor*                                                               | 1958 |
|                                  | *The Queen’s Dolour—A Farewell:  
‘harmonised realisation from treble and bass lines only’ | 1959 |
|                                  | *Toccata*                                                                        | 1955 |
|                                  | *Hornpipe***  
(to commemorate Purcell’s tercentenary)                                         | 1995 |
| Sergei Rachmaninoff              | Prelude in E♭, Op. 23, No. 6 (transcribed for left-hand)                          | 1982 |
|                                  | *‘In the Silence of the Secret Night,’ Op. 4, No. 3. (transcribed as No. 4 of L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano) | 1982 |
|                                  | *‘Lilacs,’ transcribed as accompaniment to Novello, ‘We’ll Gather Lilacs’*        | 1980 |
|                                  | ‘Spring Waters’                                                                  | 1986 |
|                                  | Eighteenth Variation from the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*; two versions—concert and simplified | c. 1980 |

*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>‘Will You Remember (Sweethearts)’ from Maytime, transcribed as No. 2 of Deux Esquisses Exquises en formes des canons’</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Schubert (1797–1828)</td>
<td>8 Ecossaises D529</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>Sechs Ländler in B♭, d374, realised as Ländler für Klavier (^{570})</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>‘Ay waukin, O’ (Scottish Lyrics, 1922) transcribed as No. 2 of Nine Songs of Francis George Scott</td>
<td>1963; revised 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>‘Border Riding Rhythm,’ unpublished manuscript George Scott, son of composer (date unknown)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>‘Crowdieknowe,’ (Scottish Lyrics, 1934) transcribed as No. 7 Nine Songs of Francis George Scott</td>
<td>1963 revised 1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>‘Deil’s Dance’ (a combination of two Intuitions for piano), transcribed as No. 9 of Nine Songs of Francis George Scott (date unknown)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

\(^{570}\) Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’: ‘the Schubert MS has only the melody line’, 441.

*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musician</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Shield (1748–1829)</td>
<td><em>The Ploughboy</em>, as No. 2 of Two Eclogues</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oley Speaks (1874–1948)</td>
<td>Sylvia (1914)</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savourna Stevenson (b. 1961)</td>
<td>Nocturne-Lullaby for Clàirseach</td>
<td>c. 1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Tauber (1891–1948)</td>
<td>‘My Heart and I,’ transcribed as Tauberiana; ‘For Anne Scott in mutual love of Richard of the singing heart’</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.*

571 Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘No. 1 is a transcription of Sumer is icumen in from 1951’, 442.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer/Creator</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)</td>
<td>‘Love Theme’ from <em>Romeo and Juliet</em></td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>Main theme of the <em>Allegro non troppo</em> (first movement) of Symphony No. 6 (1970)</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernard van Dieren (1887–1936)</td>
<td>String Quartet No. 5, ‘transcribed as a piano sonata (which B. v. D. never composed)*&lt;sup&gt;572&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>‘Spring Song of the Birds’ (text: King James I)</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>‘Weep you no more, Sad Fountains’</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) / Franz Liszt (1811–1886)</td>
<td><em>Rigoletto</em> paraphrase, as <em>Rigolet Rag</em></td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)</td>
<td><em>Bachianas Brasileiras</em> No. 5</td>
<td>(date unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>Prelude No. 3 (from the <em>Twelve Preludes</em> for guitar)</td>
<td>(before 1970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Wagner (1813–1883) / Paul Wittgenstein (1887–1961)</td>
<td>Quintet from <em>Die Meistersinger</em>, ‘elaborated for left-hand alone’ (Stevenson)&lt;sup&gt;573&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Vincent Wallace (1812–1865)</td>
<td>‘In Happy Moments Day by Day,’ transcribed for left-hand alone</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>‘Scenes that are Brightest,’ transcribed for left-hand alone</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maude Valérie White (1855–1937)</td>
<td>‘So We’ll Go No More a-Roving’ (transcribed as No. 2 of <em>L’Art Nouveau du Chant Appliqué au Piano</em>)</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*<sup>572</sup> Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’, 442.
*<sup>573</sup> Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’, 442.

*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.*
Sonata No. 2, A minor, ‘Jacques Thibaud’
1) Obsession; Prelude
2) Malinconia
3) Danse des Ombres; Sarabande
4) Les furies

Sonata No. 3, D minor, ‘Georges Enesco’
1) Lento molto sostenuto
2) Allegro in tempo giusto e con bravura

Sonata No. 4, E minor, ‘Fritz Kriesler’
1) Allemanda
2) Sarabande
3) Finale

Sonata No. 5, G major, ‘Mathieu Crickboom’
1) L’Aurore
2) Danse rustique

Sonata No. 6, E major, ‘Manuel Quiroga’
‘Allegro giusto non troppo vivo’ (single movement)

III. Original Works for two Pianos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fantasy\textsuperscript{574}</th>
<th>1946</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Fugue on a Fragment of Chopin\textsuperscript{575}</td>
<td>1953 (rev 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano Concerto No. 1, Faust Triptych\textsuperscript{576}</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamboree for Grainger</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{574} Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘Originally for piano and strings, transcribed for two pianos 30 September 1946’, 390.

\textsuperscript{575} Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘Principal version is for solo piano’, 390.

\textsuperscript{576} Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. Transcription for two pianos – an expanded version of the Prelude, Fugue and Fantasy on Busoni’s ‘Faust’, 390.
### IV. Transcriptions for Two Pianos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Burns (1759–1796)</td>
<td><em>Auld Lang Syne</em></td>
<td>(date unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)</td>
<td>Gallop from <em>William Tell,</em> ‘arranged for child pianists’</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### V. Folksong Arrangements for Solo Piano

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folksong Arrangement</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Skye Boat Song</em> (after the arrangement by Percy Grainger 1900)*577</td>
<td>(date unknown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scottish Folk-music Settings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folksong Setting</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘Lang Hae We Paいたed Been’</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ‘Waly, Waly’</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ‘A Rosebud by my Early Walk’</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ‘John Anderson, my Jo’</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ‘From an Old Pibroch’</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ‘Ca’ the Yowes’</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ‘Hielan’ Lament’</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ‘The Birks o’ Aberfeldy’</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ‘Jock o Hazeldean’</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. ‘Hard is My Fate’</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. ‘Wo Betyd thy Wearie Bodie’</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. ‘The Queen’s Maries’</td>
<td>(unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. ‘Willy’s Drooned in Yarrow (Willy’s Rare)’</td>
<td>(unknown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten Airs from the Abbotsford Collection</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘Brown Robin’ (<em>Moderato</em>)</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ‘The Cruel Sister’ (<em>Andante</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ‘Clerk Colvin’ (<em>Allegretto</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ‘John the Scot’ (<em>Allegro stoico</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ‘Lady Elspat’ (<em>Andante</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ‘Erlington’ (<em>Moderato</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ‘Hobbie Noble’ (<em>Allegro</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ‘Jamie Telfer’ (<em>Andante</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. ‘Outlaw Murray’ (Allegro)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. ‘The Laidly Worm’ (Lento con moto)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clapping Song from South Uist</th>
<th>‘arranged for easy piano’ (Allegro)</th>
<th>1968</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Irish Folk-Song Suite</th>
<th>1. ‘The Mantle so green’ (Andante)</th>
<th>1965</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. ‘Luvlie Willie’ (Andante con moto)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. ‘.Gra’geal mo chroi’ (Allegro corrente)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. ‘Mary from Dungloe’ (Slow)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Chinese Folk-Song Suite</th>
<th>1. ‘The Washer-woman and the Flower-girl’ (Con moto tranquillo)</th>
<th>1965</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. ‘A Song for New Year’s Day’ (Andante)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. ‘War-widow’s Lament’ (Lento)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. ‘Beautiful Fresh Flower’ (Allegretto)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. ‘Song of the Crab-fisher’ (Allegro con spirito)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Ghanaian Folk-Song Suite</th>
<th>1. ‘Song of Valour’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. ‘Consolation’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. ‘Leopard Dance’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘South Uist (Hebridean) Folk-Song Suite</th>
<th>1. ‘Sailing Song’ (Lively, jolly, robust)</th>
<th>1969</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. ‘A Witching Song for the Milking’ (Allegretto)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. ‘A Little Mouth Music’ (Allegro alla danza)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. ‘Waulking Song’ (Moderato)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. ‘Spinning Song’ (Allegro corrente)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. ‘A Tired Mother’s Lullaby’ (Andante stanco)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. ‘The Child Christ’s Lullaby’ (Andante semplice)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian Log-Book (Australian Folk-Song Suite)</th>
<th>1. 'Bound for South Australia (Capstan and Halyard Shanties)’ (Slow)</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. ‘Waltzing Mathilde’ (Brisk)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. ‘Ned Kelly’s Ballad’ (Moderately quick)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Le Clerc de Tremolo</th>
<th>(Breton Folksong)</th>
<th>1983/84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Meng Chiang Nyu’s Lament</strong></th>
<th>Chinese Ballad; No. 2 of the <em>Songs of Ancient China</em> for voice and piano</th>
<th>1983/84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Poor Irish Boy</strong></td>
<td>Irish Folk-tune notated by G. F. Handel in Dublin in 1742</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fenesta Vascia</strong></td>
<td>Neapolitan folksong(^{579})</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VI. Folksong Arrangements for Piano Duet (4 Hands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>“Irish Folk-Song Suite”(^{580})</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Chinese Folk-song Suite”(^{581})</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘A Song for New Year’s Day’ (<em>Andante</em>)</td>
<td>2. ‘Song of the Crab-fisher’ (<em>Allegro con spirito</em>)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### VII. Folksong Arrangements for Two Pianos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>‘Bonnie Dundee’</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Clapping Song from South Uist’</strong></td>
<td>exists also in an arrangement ‘for easy piano’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Coulter’s Candy’</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Flow Gently, Sweet Afton’</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Jock o Hazeldean’</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{581}\) A digitized copy of this work was produced as a direct result of this exegetical study.

\(^{581}\) Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘These two pieces also exist as Nos. 2 and 5 in the solo-piano version of the *Chinese Folk-song Suite*, 451.
**VIII. Cadenzas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composers</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)</td>
<td>Three cadenzas for the Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, KV 466 (1785) (before 1961)</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——</td>
<td>Cadenza for the Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, KV 491 (1986)</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IX. Performing Editions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composers</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Havergal Brian (1876–1972) transcr. Malcolm MacDonald (b. 1948)</td>
<td>March from Turandot</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924)</td>
<td>‘Polonaise’ from Sonatina ad usum infantis</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>582</sup> Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’, 452.


<sup>584</sup> Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘The Young Person’s Grainger is an album containing:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Three Scotch Folksongs</em> (from <em>Songs of the North</em>) published Edition Peters</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis George Scott (1880–1958)</td>
<td><em>Border Riding Rhythm</em> (date unknown)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Country Gardens** Simplified edition by Percy Grainger
**Shepherd’s Hey** Simplified edition by Percy Grainger
**Molly on the Shore** Abridged by Ronald Stevenson
**Mock Morris** Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
**Beautiful Fresh Flower** Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
**Australian Up-Country Song** Edited by Ronald Stevenson
**Irish Tune from Country Derry** Edited by Ronald Stevenson
**Walking Tune** Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
**Hill Song No. 1** Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
**To a Nordic Princess** Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
**One More Day my John** Edited by Ronald Stevenson
**Spoon River** Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
**Blithe Bells** Easy version by Percy Grainger
**Over the Hills and Far Away** Easy arrangement by Ronald Stevenson
**Now a now I needs must part** Freely set for piano by Percy Grainger

Stevenson also supplied an introductory note on Percy Grainger and notes on the music (both dated 8 July 1966), 438.
### X. Works for Piano and Orchestra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Piano Concerto No. 1, *Faust Triptych* | I. *Largo–Allegro*  
II. *Fuga: Andante pensoso, tempo giusto*  
III. *Adagio–Tempo di minuetto–Allegretto vivo–Cadenza–Vivace–Adagio*  
2 (II = picc.) 2 (II = cor angl.) 22/4230/timp./perc. (2: trgl., cym., susp. cym.tam-t., tubular bells, sd, bd, glsp.)/strings | 1960 |
| Simple Variations on Purcell’s ‘New Scotch Tune’ | Expansion of the 1964 version for solo piano | 1967 |
| Piano Concerto No. 2, *The Continents* | *Allegro moderato–Moderato–Allegro con urgenza–Allegretto–Poco lento–Andante con moto–Allegro–Blues–Allegro ma non troppo, quasi di marcia–Allegro ritmico e commodo–Rag–Molto moderato*  

### XI. Transcriptions for Orchestra and Instrumental Ensemble

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
transcribed for chamber orchestra | c. 1980 |
| John Bull, (1562–1628) | *Spanish Pavan, as ‘Pavan for chamber orchestra’* | 1955 |
| Bernard van Dieren, (1887–1936) | ‘*Weep you no more, Sad Fountains,*’  
transcribed as a ‘*Consolation for small orchestra*’ Op. 24 | 1951 |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Arrangement/Details</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Delius, (1862–1934)</td>
<td><em>Dance Rhapsody</em> No. 1, (Excerpts)</td>
<td>arranged for oboe, bassoon, violin and piano duet</td>
<td>(c. 1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Gershwin, (1898–1937)</td>
<td>‘Summertime,’ from <em>Porgy and Bess</em>,</td>
<td>transcribed for flute, clarinet, bassoon, solo violin and string quartet</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percy Aldridge Grainger, (1882–1961)</td>
<td><em>Over the Hills and Far Away</em> (Children’s March),</td>
<td>‘arranged for oboe, bassoon, violin and piano 3-some’</td>
<td>(c. 1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Stevenson, (b. 1928)</td>
<td>Waltz in A major</td>
<td>1111/0000/timp/piano/strings</td>
<td>c. 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Fantasy</em> (or <em>Fantasia</em>)</td>
<td>piano, strings (Exists also in an arrangement for two pianos)</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 <em>Variations on a Bach Chorale</em></td>
<td>strings (Exists also in a version for solo piano)</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Berceuse Symphonique</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Introduzione</em>: Andante–Largamente–Tranquillo–Doppio movimento</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3222/4231/harp/timp./perc. (tgl., BD, cyms., susp. cyms., tubular bells)/strings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Waltzes</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2+1222/4321/timp./perc. (tgl., SD, BD, tamburino picc.)/strings</td>
<td><em>Moderato fantastico–Tempo di valse, elegantemente–Fanfare–Energico–Ritmico</em> (Exists also in a version for solo piano)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Jamboree for Grainger</em></td>
<td>1960, orch. 1961</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (II = picc.)222 (alto sax. Ad lib.)</td>
<td>4230/timp./perc.(tgl., cym., xyl.)/harp/piano/strings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keening Sang for a Makar: In Memoriam Francis George Scott

1963

Scots Dance Toccata

1965

Young Scotland Suite

1976

Recitative and Air: In Memoriam Shostakovich

1980

Sinfonia Elegiaca (for Symphony Orchestra)

2010

586 Martin Anderson, ‘Appendix Seven’. ‘Exists also in versions for: string quartet, violin and piano, viola and piano, cello and piano, bassoon and piano, solo piano’, 382.

587 ‘This work is based on sections of my Passacaglia on DSCH (1963) for piano and my Recitative and Air on DSCH (1974) for piano. The Union of Soviet Composers for Shostakovich’s Seventieth Birthday commissioned the Recitative and Air. Because of his premature death, it was subsequently published as an In Memoriam volume. Lament for the Children is a traditionally famous pibroch melody. Pibroch is the classical variation form of music for the Scottish Highland Bagpipe. It is played here by the Cor Anglais and is dedicated to the child victims of war. Adagio: Tribute to Bach is a ‘Pieta’-like meditation after tragedy. Adagissimo Barocco: a long slow gigantic crescendo, like an avalanche of disaster approaching, building up the motive of fear which finally subsides, assuaged by a chorale for peace on clarinets, bassoons, divisi strings and organ pedal’. (Composer’s note, orchestral score, The Ronald Stevenson Society, Edinburgh, 2010.)

### III. Adagio

IV. Epilogo: Adagissimo barocco

Woodwinds: 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons  
Brass: 4 Horns, 2 Trumpets, 2 Trombones, Percussion: 1  
Side Drum, 1 Timpani, Gong, 1 Harp, Celesta, Piano, Organ  
(optional) Strings: 5 first Violins, 5 second Violins, 4 Violas,  
3 Cellos, 2 Double Basses.

### XII. Commercial Recordings by Ronald Stevenson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), arr. Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924),</td>
<td>Partita in D minor bwv 1004 <em>Chaconne</em></td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD) and Altarus AIR-CD-9043 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>––,</td>
<td><em>Prélude &amp; étude en arpèges</em>, bv. 297</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9041 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>––,</td>
<td><em>Tanzwalzer</em> bv. 288 (1922 version)</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9041 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>––,</td>
<td>Toccata bv. 287</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9041 (• DDD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>––,</td>
<td>4. <em>Preludio</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>––,</td>
<td>5. <em>Fantasia,</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>––,</td>
<td>6. <em>Chiacona</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>––,</td>
<td><em>Zehn Variationen über ein Präludium von Chopin</em> bv. 213a</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9041 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Work Description</td>
<td>Record Label</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>—</strong></td>
<td><em>Fantasia Contrappuntistica</em>&lt;br&gt;KIV 256 / BV. 256b&lt;br&gt;(two piano version with Joseph Banowetz)</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9044 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>—</strong></td>
<td><em>Finnländische Volksweisen</em>,&lt;br&gt;Op. 27, BV. 227</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9044 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>—</strong></td>
<td><em>Fuge über das Volkslied ‘O du mein lieber Augustin,’</em>&lt;br&gt;for piano, 4 hands, BV. 226&lt;br&gt;(with Joseph Banowetz)</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9044 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>—</strong></td>
<td><em>Improvisation on the Bach Chorale ‘Wie wohl ist mir, o Freund der Seele,’</em>&lt;br&gt;(after BWV 517), BV. 271&lt;br&gt;for 2 pianos with Joseph Banowetz</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9044 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ronald Center,</strong>&lt;br&gt;(1913–1973)</td>
<td><em>Donna Nobis Pacem</em></td>
<td>Altarus AIR-2-9100 (LP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>—</strong></td>
<td><em>Piano Sonata</em></td>
<td>Altarus AIR-2-9100 (LP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frédéric Chopin,</strong>&lt;br&gt;(1810–1849)</td>
<td><em>Nocturne in C minor</em>&lt;br&gt;Op. 48, No. 1</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9043 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>—</strong></td>
<td><em>Prelude in C minor</em>,&lt;br&gt;Op. 20, No. 15</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9043 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frédéric Chopin,</strong>&lt;br&gt;(1810–1849) / <strong>Leopold Godowsky</strong>&lt;br&gt;(1870–1938),</td>
<td>53 Studies on Chopin Études—&lt;br&gt;No. 18a, Op. 10 No. 9&lt;br&gt;(3rd version for left-hand alone)</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Claude Debussy,</strong>&lt;br&gt;(1862–1918)</td>
<td><em>Préludes, Book 1</em>: No. 10,&lt;br&gt;<em>La Cathédrale Engloutie</em></td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9043 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>George Gershwin,</strong>&lt;br&gt;(1898–1937) / <strong>arr. Percy Aldridge Grainger</strong>&lt;br&gt;(1882–1961),</td>
<td><em>Love Walked In</em></td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Work Description</td>
<td>Catalog Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The man I love</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christoph von Gluck, (1714–1787) / Charles–Valentin Alkan (1813–1888),</td>
<td>Gavotte d'Orphée</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percy Aldridge Grainger, (1882–1961)</td>
<td>Rosenkavalier-Ramble</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scotch Strathspey and Reel</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9040 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>arr. Stevenson, Hill Song No. 1</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9040 (• DDD)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>arr. Stevenson, Three Scotch Folk Songs: 1. ‘Will ye gang to the Hielands’ 2. ‘Leezie Lindsay Mo Ninghean Dhu’ 3. ‘Gin I were where Gadie rins’</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9040 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, (1756–1791), arr. Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924),</td>
<td>Fantasy in F Minor for a Mechanical Organ kv 608 with Joseph Banowetz (piano)</td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9044 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Schubert (1797–1828) / Franz Liszt (1811–1886),</td>
<td>‘Du bist die Ruh’ D776</td>
<td>APR5630 (76’ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer/Arrangement</td>
<td>Work/Composition</td>
<td>Label/Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ronald Stevenson,</td>
<td><em>Heroic Song for Hugh MacDiarmid</em></td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9043</td>
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<tr>
<td>——,</td>
<td><em>Passacaglia on DSCH</em></td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9091(2) APR 5650 (75′ • ADD: 1974 South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——,</td>
<td><em>Peter Grimes Fantasy</em></td>
<td>APR5630 (76′ • ADD) and Altarus AIR-CD-9042 (• DDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——,</td>
<td><em>Prelude, Fugue and Fantasy on Themes from Busoni’s ‘Faust’</em></td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9091 (2 • DDD) AIR-CD-9042 (• DDD) APR5630 (76′ • ADD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——,</td>
<td><em>Recitative and Air on DSCH</em></td>
<td>Altarus AIR-CD-9091 (2 • DDD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>588</sup> 1. ‘Willie’s gone to Melville Castle’  
2. ‘Weaving song’  
3. ‘Skye boat song’  
4. ‘This is no my plaid’  
5. ‘Turn ye to me’  
6. ‘Drowned Fair Mary’  
7. ‘Lizzie Lindsay’  
8. ‘The women are a’ gane’  
9. ‘My faithful fond one’  
10. ‘Bonnie George’ Campbell  
11. ‘O’er the moor’  
12. ‘Gin I were where Gowrie’
Appendix Two:
Copy of the Catalogue of Complete Musicological Correspondence of Ronald Stevenson in the National Library of Scotland, National Library of Scotland Manuscripts Division

1. Benjamin Britten, Peter Piers, Rosamund Strode, 1965-1982
2. Alan Bush, 1961-95
3-5. Ferruccio Busoni
6-10. Edward Gordon Craig
11. Maurice Emmanuel
12-13. Lawrence Glover
14. Manfred Gordon
15. Percy Grainger
16. Robin Lorimer
17. Otto Luening
18. Czesław Marek
19. Yehudi Menuhin
20. John Ogdon
21-22. Ignacy Paderewski
23. Norman Scwires
24. Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji
25. Bernard Stevens
26. Joseph Szigeti
27. Scottish composers, artists, musicologists, etc.
28. Scottish poets, writers and others
29. British composers, conductors and radio producers
30. British pianists, singers and other musicians
31. Miscellaneous British musicians
32. Worldwide composers and musicians
33. Writers
34. Miscellaneous letters

589 ‘Musicological and literary correspondence, 1947-97, of Ronald Stevenson (b. 1928), composer and pianist. A large part of the correspondence collected here reflects Stevenson’s interest in the composer Ferruccio Busoni (1855-1924), which caused him to approach correspondents worldwide who had been in any way connected with Busoni. It also covers compositions, performances, publications and recordings of Stevenson and his correspondents from musical and literary circles, as well as personal matters and friendships. An index to personal names has been compiled, and can be found at the end of this inventory’.

Donated by Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson (née Spedding b. 1932) to the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland in 1998.

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1. **Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears, Rosamund Strode 1965-1982**


   - Seven Letters, 1971-1975, of Benjamin Britten to Ronald Stevenson
   - Two Christmas cards, 1972 and undated, signed by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, to Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson
   - Thirty-six Letters, 1965-1982, of Peter Pears to Ronald Stevenson
   - Three Letters, 1975, of Rosamund Strode to Ronald Stevenson
   - Papers and photographs relating to Benjamin Britten’s death [4th December 1976] and funeral, and a poster for a memorial concert in Aberdeen


   Letters from Alan Dudley Bush composer and friend of Ronald Stevenson:

   - Three letters, 1965 (1) and 1979 (2), of Nancy Bush to Ronald Stevenson
   - Letter, 1982, of Alan Bush to Marjorie Stevenson
   - Three drafts, 1961-1963, of letters of Ronald Stevenson to Alan Bush
   - Letter, 1982, of Ken Thomas to Ronald Stevenson
   - Letter, 1995, of Miller & Co. Solicitors to Ronald Stevenson, concerning Alan Bush’s will
   - Letter, 1994, incomplete, of Rachel O’Higgins to Ronald Stevenson

   Photocopies of manuscript scores of Alan Bush’s *Piano Sonata in G* (Op. 113)
and Song Poem and Dance Poem (Op. 109)

Enclosures to Bush’s letters include:

Letter, 1927, of Randall Swingler to Alan Bush
Two letters, 1964 and 1991 (photocopy), of Ronald Stevenson to Alan Bush
Letter, 1966, of Ronald Stevenson to the Observer (published 3 April, 1966)
Letter, 1965, of the Performing Rights Society to Ronald Stevenson
Typescripts of Bush’s articles “The structure and expression of modern music” (published 1948), “Problems of Soviet musical theory” (draft with corrections), an article concerning his work The Ballad of Freedom’s Soldier, and a book review
Typescript draft of sleeve notes by Ronald Stevenson for a recording of Alan Bush’s Variations, Nocturne & Finals of an English Sea-Song
Press cuttings, 1966
Record of performances of Alan Bush’s works, 1935-56, compiled by himself
Typescripts of article on, and obituary of, Alan Bush, by Ronald Stevenson

Ferruccio Busoni (1855–1924)

Letters and papers concerning Ronald Stevenson’s research on Ferruccio Busoni (1855-1924), composer, including correspondence with Busoni’s friends and relatives.

3. Ferruccio Busoni, letters, 1896–1924


Letter, 1920, of Ferruccio Busoni to Maurice Emmanuel. This letter was given to Ronald Stevenson by Frank, Maurice Emmanuel’s son.

Three letters, 1921, of Ferruccio Busoni to William Temple. These letters were bought by Ronald Stevenson.

Copies of letters of Busoni to:

Bösendorfer & Co., (6) 1897-1909 and undated
Eugène-Arnold Dolmetsch, (1) 1901
Bernard van Dieren, (2) 1913 and 1921
Edvard Grieg, (3) 1896-1897
Jean Sibelius, (1) 1912
Melchior Lechter, (1) 1924
Ettore Cosomati, (1) 1921


Letters of Busoni’s widow, Gerda Busoni to Ronald Stevenson. Part of these letters are also addressed to Marjorie Stevenson. Because of Gerda Busoni’s failing eyesight, the letters were usually written by others, mostly by her amanuensis Astrid Stein and by Gerda’s sister Helmi Sjöstrand (1864-1957). Many have personal additions by Helmi Sjöstrand and Astrid Stein.

Letter, 1949, of Sir Edward Dent to Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1949, of Ludovica Hainisch to Ronald Stevenson

Fifty letters, postcards and telegraphs, 1949-1956, of Gerda Busoni to Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1957, of Helmi Sjöstrand to Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson

Letter, 1950, of Helmi Sjöstrand to Marjorie Stevenson

Seven letters, 1956-65, of Astrid Stein to Ronald Stevenson. With a photograph of Astrid Stein

Letter, 1955, of Brita Wellstrom to Ronald Stevenson

Six letters, 1950-53, of Gerda Busoni and Helmi Sjöstrand to Marjorie Stevenson

Letter, 1955, of the director of the Stadttheater Zürich, to Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1955, of the editor of the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, to Ronald Stevenson
5. **Letters by various correspondents concerning Ronald Stevenson’s research on Ferruccio Busoni**

Letters and postcards to Ronald Stevenson by:

- Guido Guerrini, (7) 1954-1957
- Luigi Dallapiccola, (3) 1955-1968
- Gisella Selden-Goth, (10) 1955-1959
- Yvonne Casella, (3) 1955
- Wladimir Vogel, (1) 1955
- Volkmar Andreae, (1) 1955
- Birgitte Slotte, (1) 1954
- Roberto Wis, (6) 1955-1958, with a copy of a manuscript score of
  Ylmari Krohn
- Business card of Napoleone Fanti
- Vittorio Moschini, (1) 1956
- Roman Vlad, (8) 1955-1960
- Isidore Philippe, (1) 1955 or 1956
- Augusto Anzoletti, (15) 1955-1965
- Antonio Anzoletti, (2) 1965
- Guido Agosti, (6) 1964-1970, with a photograph of Agosti dated 1913
- Hilda Tagliapietra, (25) 1955-1979
- Friedrich Schnapp, (1) 1957, with drafts of Ronald Stevenson’s letter to
  Schnapp in English and Astrid Stein’s translation into German
- Breitkopf & Härtel, (2) 1965-1966
- D. Richard Bowen, (1) 1965
- Gottfried Glöckner, (1) 1984
- Carol Walden, New England Conservatory of Music, (2) 1966, with a letter,
  1957, of Carol Walden to M. Gordon
- Daniell Revenaugh, (1) 1965

**Edward Gordon Craig (1872–1966)**

Correspondence, 1953-1964, between Ronald Stevenson and Edward Gordon Craig: theatre director, designer and wood-engraver


Letters and postcards, 1953-1955, of Edward Gordon Craig to Ronald Stevenson, with 3 photographs and 4 small printed pictures of animals Included.
7. **Edward Gordon Craig, letters, 1956-1958**

Letters and postcards, 1956-1958, of Edward Gordon Craig to Ronald Stevenson. With the following enclosures:

- Typescript draft of a talk of Ronald Stevenson on Edward Gordon Craig, annotated by Gordon Craig, and a letter with remarks on Stevenson’s draft by Sir John Gielgud

- Press cutting, 1957, concerning Edward Gordon Craig

- Four photographs of Edward Gordon Craig

- Two playing cards

- Small greetings card, hand painted by Edward Gordon Craig, on the birth of Ronald Stevenson’s son Gordon

- Seven small printed pictures of wildlife

- Letter, 1958, of Kenneth Ireland, Pitlochry Festival Theatre, to Ronald Stevenson

- Handbill concerning Kenneth Ireland and the Eighth Pitlochry Festival, 1958

- Letter, 1958, of Edward Gordon Craig to Gordon Stevenson


- Letter, 1958, of Dorothy Nevile Lees to Ronald Stevenson

8. **Edward Gordon Craig, letters, 1959-1964**


- Four press cuttings, 1966, concerning Edward Gordon Craig’s death
Letter, 1995, of the Folio Society to Ronald Stevenson, concerning delays in its plans to publish a biography of Edward Gordon Craig

9. **Letters to Edward Gordon Craig, 1953-1954**

Photocopies of letters and accompanying papers, 1953-1954, of Ronald Stevenson to Edward Gordon Craig

10. **Letters to Edward Gordon Craig, 1955-1964**

Photocopies of letters and accompanying papers, 1955-1964, of Ronald Stevenson to Gordon Craig.

Leaflet, 1996?, of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France

11. **Family of Maurice Emmanuel (1862–1938)**

Letters of A. M. Emmanuel, widow of Maurice Emmanuel: French composer, and of Frank Emmanuel, his son, to Ronald Stevenson, comprising:

Thirteen letters and postcards, 1956-1969, of A. M. Emmanuel to Ronald Stevenson

Draft of letter, 1956, English and French versions, of Ronald Stevenson to A. M. Emmanuel

Two photocopies of newspaper article, 1955, from Le Monde, about Maurice Emmanuel

Handbill and programme of a concert, May 1957, dedicated to works of Maurice Emmanuel

Press cutting, 1958?, concerning a performance of works by Olivier Messiaen and Hector Berlioz

Invitation, November 1959, to a radio concert of music of Maurice Emmanuel and others

Fifteen letters and postcards, 1956-1976, of Frank Emmanuel to Ronald Stevenson
Transcripts of letters, 1929 and 1931, of Olivier Messiaen to Maurice Emmanuel

Transcript of letter, 1917, of Charles Tournemire to Maurice Emmanuel

Typescript of article, 1957, entitled “Vicissitudes posthumes d’un musicien français”

Letter, 1957, by William Glock of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, to Ronald Stevenson

Press cutting, March 1958, from Le Monde, relating to Maurice Emmanuel’s opera *Salamine*

Invitation card, March 1958, to a performance of *Salamine*, with a programme note on the work by Fred Goldbeck

Invitation card, April 1958, to a concert of music by Maurice Emmanuel and others

Photograph of Maurice Emmanuel

Programme proposal to the BBC for chamber music of Maurice Emmanuel

Invitation card, May 1963, to a concert of works of Maurice Emmanuel

Press cutting, 1962, from *Les Lettres françaises*, relating to Maurice Emmanuel

Press cutting, May 1963, of an article by Frank Emmanuel on his father, published in a local newspaper

**Lawrence Glover (1931–1988)**

Correspondence between Lawrence Glover: Irish composer and pianist and Ronald Stevenson, and related papers

**12. Letters of and to Lawrence Glover**

Twenty-four letters, 1979-1988, of Lawrence Glover to Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1988, of Mabel Glover to Ronald Stevenson
Concert programme, October 1988, entitled “Jamboree for Lawrence”

Typescript of “Excerpt from a biography written during the composer’s lifetime”, with typescript of “Intermezzo Valhallanesco” by Ronald Stevenson

Forty-nine letters, 1974-1987, of Ronald Stevenson to Lawrence Glover

Undated card of Ronald Stevenson to Mabel Glover

13. **Papers relating to the correspondence of Lawrence Glover and Ronald Stevenson**

“A canonic puzzle” by Lawrence Glover (two versions)


Catalogue of an exhibition in honour of Ronald Stevenson’s 50th birthday, 1978

Concert programmes of piano recitals by Ronald Stevenson, 1981-1985, partly in photocopy

Concert programme of “Jamboree for Lawrence”, 1988, with typescript of the eulogy on Lawrence Glover given by Robert Inglis on the occasion

Manuscript scores, mostly fragments, of Ronald Stevenson

Photocopies of manuscript scores, mostly of Lawrence Glover

Photocopies of newspaper articles by Ronald Stevenson and others


Letters of Professor Manfred Gordon—research chemist and friend of Ronald Stevenson, and his wife Blanche:

Thirty-three letters, 1956-1988, of Manfred Gordon to Ronald Stevenson

Two letters, 1987 and 1988, of Manfred and Blanche Gordon to Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson

Three letters, 1972-1997, of Blanche Gordon to Ronald and Marjorie Stevenson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draft letter, 1997, of Ronald Stevenson to Blanche Gordon</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>15. Percy Grainger (1882–1961) and Ella Grainger (1889–1979)</strong></td>
<td>Letters of Percy Aldridge Grainger—Australian composer and his wife Ella to Ronald Stevenson:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighteen letters, 1957-1960, of Percy Grainger to Ronald Stevenson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixty-two letters, 1960-1970, of Ella Grainger to Ronald Stevenson, some of them written on photographs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter of the State of New York Department of Health, 1964, and a photocopy of it, of “No record certification” following the search for a death certificate of Augusta Cottlow</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Two photocopies of death certificate of Augusta Cottlow Gerst</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Photographs and negatives of Percy Grainger and related persons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press cuttings, 1918-1970 and undated, concerning Percy Grainger and his work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Concert programme, January 1965, of a performance of works by Percy Grainger and others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Front cover of published version of Percy Grainger’s Youthful Suite for Orchestra, 1949, with explanatory notes by Grainger on the back</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offprint of Robin Lorimer’s article “Studies in Pibroch : 1. The ‘4:6:4:1 (or 2)’ metre in pibroch reconsidered in terms of Joseph MacDonald’s ‘Antient rule’”,</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Typescript of Robin Lorimer’s article “Studies in Pibroch : 3. The Commutative metres used in pibroch”, with annotations by Lorimer

Three postcards, 1990-1992, of Robin Lorimer to Ronald Stevenson

Undated draft of a letter of Ronald Stevenson to Robin Lorimer

Typescript of extract of translation of Shakespeare’s Macbeth into Scots by Robin Lorimer

17. Otto Luening (1900–1996)

Letters and related papers of American composer Otto Luening:

Eleven letters, 1985-1996, of Otto Luening to Ronald Stevenson

Photocopy of letter, 1985, of Walter Hartley to Otto Luening

Two drafts of letters, 1987, of Ronald Stevenson to Otto Luening

Photocopy of letter, 1987, of Ronald Stevenson to Otto Luening

Draft of letter, 1997, of Ronald Stevenson to Catherine Luening

Letter, 1997, of Catherine Luening to Ronald Stevenson

Photocopy of letter, 1995, of Taylor Joynson Garrett, solicitors, to B.P. Ould from Bardic Edition concerning a dispute between Ould and Luening

Photograph, 1985, of Otto Luening, his wife Catherine, and Ronald Stevenson


Programme notes of a concert, 1986, of works of Otto Luening
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<th>18.</th>
<th><strong>Czesław Marek (1891–1985)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letters and related papers concerning the Polish composer, pianist and piano pedagogue Czesław Marek:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter, 1983, of Albert Wullschleger to Ronald Stevenson</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Photocopy of letter in German, 1983, and English draft of it, of Ronald Stevenson to Czesław Marek</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Three letters, 1983-1984, of Czesław Marek to Ronald Stevenson</td>
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<td>Copy of letter, 1984, of Czesław Marek to Martin Anderson</td>
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<td>Draft of letter, 1985, of Ronald Stevenson to Günther Birkner</td>
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<td>Letter, 1985, of Günther Birkner to Ronald Stevenson</td>
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<td>Photocopies of two newspaper articles concerning Marek’s 80th birthday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concert poster, programme, programme notes and photocopy of newspaper review of a piano recital by Ronald Stevenson on 16 September 1983 to mark Czesław Marek’s 92nd birthday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three newspaper reviews, 1985, one of them a photocopy, of a piano recital of works of Polish composers given by Ronald Stevenson in April 1985</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notice of Czesław Marek’s death, 17 July 1985</td>
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<td>Two newspaper obituaries, July 1985, of Czesław Marek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correspondence between Ronald Stevenson and violinist and conductor Sir Yehudi Menuhin:</td>
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</table>
Postcard showing photograph of Menuhin in 1935

Seven letters, 1958-1996, of Yehudi Menuhin to Ronald Stevenson

Letter of recommendation, 1968, of Yehudi Menuhin for Ronald Stevenson

Four drafts of letters, 1974-1992, of Ronald Stevenson to Yehudi Menuhin

Letter, 1992, of Deirdre Daly, assistant to Yehudi Menuhin, to Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1992, of Harry Watson, music teacher in Motherwell, to Ronald Stevenson

Six photographs of students at a music workshop held in Motherwell on 20 May 1992, with Yehudi Menuhin and Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1992, of Diana Menuhin to Ronald Stevenson

Copy of fax, 1992, of Vera Lamport to Yehudi Menuhin, of Menuhin’s article “The state and culture”

Letter, 1992, of Fred Edwards to Ronald Stevenson

Copy of letter, 1992, of Yehudi Menuhin to Colin Scott-Sutherland


Letters of John Ogdon—English pianist and composer, and his father Howard Ogdon:

Four letters, 1959-1961, of Howard Ogdon to Ronald Stevenson

Eighty-eight letters and postcards, 1958-1986 and undated, of John Ogdon to Ronald Stevenson

Three letters, 1965, of John Ogdon to Marjorie Stevenson
Ignacy Paderewski (1860–1941)

Papers and correspondence concerning Ignacy Jan Paderewski: Polish composer, pianist and politician

21. Ignacy Paderewski

A folder containing mostly photographs and articles concerning Ignacy Paderewski:

Two photographs of Paderewski, one of them with an inscription by John Tilstone Ellis to Ronald Stevenson on the back

Postcard of photograph of Paderewski

Postcard (with photograph of Paderewski), 1997, of Mary McCarthy to Ronald Stevenson

Two copies of a photograph showing Adam Zamoyski’s biography of Paderewski and a section from a balustrade from Paderewski’s villa Riond-Bosson near Morges in Switzerland, which Stevenson salvaged from rubble from the house in 1981

Quotation from Henry Finck’s Success in Music, concerning Paderewski, copied out by hand by Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1986, of Albert Wullschleger to the Committee of the Société Paderewski

Concert programme, 1981, of a piano recital by Ronald Stevenson

Offprints, 1992, of James H. Phillips’s article “Paderewski’s return to Poland”, and James H. Phillips’s review of Ronald Stevenson’s book The Paderewski Paradox

Photocopy of article “A conversation on music with Paderewski”, a transcript of an interview conducted by the American composer Daniel Gregory Mason, from The Century Magazine
<p>| | |</p>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Ignacy Paderewski</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Correspondence concerning Paderewski</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Four letters, 1983-1984, of Werner Fuchss to Ronald Stevenson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Christmas card, 1989, of André Guex-Joris to Ronald Stevenson</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two letters, 1990 and 1991, of Michael Magnus Osborn to Ronald Stevenson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|   | Letters of and about Norman Scwires—friend of Ronald Stevenson: |
|   | Seven letters and postcards, 1958-1959, of Norman Scwires to Ronald Stevenson |
|   | Three photographs, one used as a postcard, of Norman Scwires |
|   | Draft of letter, 1959, of Norman Scwires to the editor of the *New Statesman* |
|   | Letter, 1958, of Ronald Stevenson to Norman Scwires |
|   | Essay on Merlin (from Arthurian legend) by Norman Scwires |
|   | Four letters, 1960, of friends of Ronald Stevenson concerning the death of Norman Scwires |

|24. | Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji (1892-1988) |
|   | Letters of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji: composer of Parsee-Spanish- Sicilian origin, and of his friend Frank Holliday, and related letters and papers, mostly in photocopy |
|   | Sixty-one letters and postcards, 1958-1986, of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji to Ronald Stevenson |
|   | Nine copies of letters, 1961- 1966, of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji to various newspaper editors and the BBS, with newspaper cutting of a published letter |
Two letters, 1961, of Frank Holliday to Ronald Stevenson

Copy of a letter, 1962, of Ronald Stevenson to the editor of The Times

Copy of Clinton Gray-Fisk’s article “Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji”, reprinted from the Musical Times together with the article “Splendour upon splendour: on hearing Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji play” by Frank Holliday. With a printed letter of Frank Holliday and others to Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, asking him to make his music more widely available through recordings.

Copy of a letter, 1926, of Christopher Murray Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid) to Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

Copies of eight letters, 1922-1934, of Francis George Scott to Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

Copy of a letter, 1934, of Gerda Busoni to Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

Copy of two letters, 1941, of Compton Mackenzie to Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

Copy of a letter, 1958, of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji to the Homosexual Law Reform Society

Draft copies of “Addition to the chapter ‘Music and Sex’” by Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

Photocopy of article “Kaikhosru Sorabji and his first Organ Symphony” by Alistair Hinton

Letter, 1962, of Kulgin Duval to Ronald Stevenson


Letters of Dr. Bernard George Stevens: composer and teacher, and his wife Bertha Stevens

Seventy-five letters, 1961-1982, of Bernard Stevens to Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1994, of Bertha Stevens to Ronald Stevenson

Letters of the Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti and associated enclosed papers:

- Three press cuttings, 1958-1959, of letters of Ronald Stevenson and others published in the *Musical Times*
- Letter, 1959, of Mr. Glock, Controller, Music at the BBC, to Ronald Stevenson
- Offprint of cover text of a recording by Szigeti of works of Busoni
- Typescript of “En écoutant la sonate de Busoni” by Igor Markevitch
- Typescript copy of a letter, 1909, of Ferruccio Busoni to Isidore Philippe
- Copy of article “The unaccompanied sonatas and partitas of Bach” by Joseph Szigeti, published in *Showcase, Music Clubs Magazine*, 1963, p. 6-8
- Copy of letter, 1947, of Julius Gold to Wanda Szigeti
- Letter, 1966, of Wanda Szigeti to Ronald Stevenson
- Letter, 1966, of Grigori Kogan to Joseph Szigeti
- Letter, 1969, of Veronica Halász to Ronald Stevenson
- Press cutting from *Die Welt*, on the occasion of Szigeti’s 75th birthday

**Miscellaneous correspondence**

The final eight folders contain letters of various persons, who have been roughly grouped together by their artistic profession and geographical origins.
27. **Scottish composers, artists, musicologists, etc.**

Letters and postcards to Ronald Stevenson of the following:

- John Bellany, (5) 1989-1995
- Valentina Bold, (3) 1990-1992
- Margaret Fay Shaw Campbell, (6) 1984-1996, with a photocopy of an obituary, 1996, of her husband, John Lorne Campbell of Canna, published in *The Scotsman*
- Francis Collinson, (19) 1973-1984
- Victoria Crowe, (2) 1995-1996
- Angus MacPherson, (1) 1965
- Lieutenant-Colonel Ian McRae, (1) 1960
- John Maxwell, (1) 1960
- Sandy Moffat, (5) 1966-1978
- Benno Schotz, (6) 1967-1974
- John Sinclair, (4) 1961-1963
- Judy Steel, (2) 1994-1995

28. **Scottish poets, writers and others**

Six letters, 1964-1988, of Alan Bold to Ronald Stevenson; with a copy of Alan Bold’s poem “For Ronald Stevenson” and invitation card, 1988, of Waterstone’s Booksellers to a booklaunch of Alan Bold’s book *MacDiarmid*

- Letter, 1995, of George Bruce to Ronald Stevenson

- Two letters and a postcard, 1978-1983, of Tom Fleming to Ronald Stevenson; with a typescript copy of Tom Fleming’s poem “Leaving Iona”

- Three letters, 1977-1992, of Duncan Glen to Ronald Stevenson

- Two letters, 1979 and 1980, of Ronald Green to Ronald Stevenson; with a photograph of Ronald Green, a programme of his funeral mass, and a letter, 1986, of Anne Rochford to Ronald Stevenson
Letters and papers concerning Christopher Murray Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid), consisting of:

Two letters, 1966 and 1967, of Christopher Murray Grieve to the Performing Rights Society;

Invitation card, programme and photograph of a concert, 1977, on the occasion of [Hugh] MacDiarmid’s 85th birthday, at which works of Stevenson and others were performed;

Five further invitations and programmes of events celebrating Hugh MacDiarmid;

Letter, 1966, of the Performing Rights Society to Ronald Stevenson;

Copy of a drawing of Christopher Murray Grieve by Barbara Niven;

Two photographs of Christopher Murray Grieve’s house and gravestone;

Two photographs taken at a party at Christopher Murray Grieve’s house

Two letters, 1995 and 1996, of Deirdre Grieve to Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1978, of Valda Grieve to Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1990, of Dr. Richard Swigg to Ronald Stevenson concerning Hugh MacDiarmid

Three letters, 1972-1976, of John Guthrie to Ronald Stevenson

Two letters, 1968-1969, of Margaret B.S. Kay

Four letters, 1960-1966, of Compton Mackenzie to Ronald Stevenson

Letters and papers of, and concerning, Sorley MacLean, comprising:

Six letters and a postcard, 1970-1991, of Sorley MacLean to Ronald Stevenson; with photocopies of two of the letters

Invitation card and programme of a combined book launch of *Critical Essays* by Sorley MacLean and his 75th birthday party; with a card containing notes on the occasion of Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1982, of Joy Hendry, editor of Chapman, to Ronald Stevenson
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Letter and postcard, 1982 and 1984, of Richard Connolly (b. 1927)

Two letters, 1983 and 1991, of David Dorward (b. 1933)

Letter, 1987, of Michael Finnissy (b. 1946)


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Postcard, 1988, of Frank Spedding (1929–2001)


30. British pianists, singers and other musicians

Correspondence addressed to Ronald Stevenson


Two letters, 1954 and 1956, of Herbert Fryer [pianist and composer] (1877–1957)

Three letters, 1959, of Julius Isserlis [pianist] (1888–1968)


Letter, 1983, of Brian Rayner-Cooke [baritone] (b. 1945)

Postcard, 1968, of John Shirley-Quirk [bass-baritone] (b. 1931)


31. Miscellaneous British Musicians

Correspondence addressed to Ronald Stevenson

Two cards, 1994-1996, and an undated letter of John Amis [British broadcaster, classical music critic] (b. 1922)


Sixteen Letters, 1957-1959, of Mabel Dolmetsch, with two newspaper cuttings

Undated letter, original and photocopy, of Cosmo McMoon (1901–1980) [accompanist of amateur soprano Florence Foster Jenkins (1868–1944)]


### 32. Worldwide composers and musicians

Correspondence addressed to Ronald Stevenson

Letter, 1970, of Leo Brouwer [Cuban composer, conductor, and guitarist] (b. 1939)


Two letters, 1982 and 1996, of Richard Chang

Eleven letters and a greetings card, 1982-1993, of Shou-Ping Chiu. With papers, 1982, concerning Shou-Ping Chiu’s [former student of Ronald Stevenson] application for a visa for the United Kingdom

Three letters, 1992-1996, of Richard Chang and Shou-Ping Chiu

Four letters, 1964, of Ram Da-Oz. With a photograph of Ram Da-Oz [Israeli composer] (b. 1929)

Three letters and a Christmas card, 1994-1996, of Fou Ts’ong [Chinese pianist] (b. 1934). With papers concerning the nomination of Wei Jingsheng [Chinese human rights activist] (b. 1950) to the Nobel Peace Prize

Four letters, 1964-1971, of Wilhelm Gertz [piano manufacturer]

Letter, 1964, of Julius Gold (1884–1969) [musicologist and violinist]
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### 33. Writers

Correspondence addressed to Ronald Stevenson

- Fourteen letters and cards, 1975-1995, of Keith Bosley [British poet and language expert] (b. 1937). With photocopies and typescripts of poetry of Bosley and others


### 34. Miscellaneous letters

Correspondence addressed to Ronald Stevenson:

- Letter, 1971, of Michael Anderson, Reid Music Library

- Three letters, 1969-1994, of Louis Ballard

- Two letters, 1987 and 1990, of Lou Barron. With 2 photocopies of newspaper articles

- Letter, 1994, of Henry C. Campbell. With a photocopy of Stevenson’s reply

- Christmas card, 1990, of Lionel Carley

- Two letters, 1954, of J.&W. Chester Ltd.

- Letters, 1993, of David Cox

- Letter, 1980, of Patrick Crotty
Postcard, 1983, of Lewis Foreman

Undated letter of Dorothea Fraser-May

Letter, 1966, of Arthur Geddes. With a draft copy of his work Presenting Tagore in Sound and Sight (Edinburgh : 1961), with annotations and offprint of related article in the Scotsman

Letter, 1972, by John Gray, Senior Talks Producer at the BBC. With photocopies of poems by his father, Sir Alexander Gray

Two letters, 1997, of Stanley Roger Green. With a copy of a reply, 1997, of Stevenson

Letter (Certificate of character), 1959, of Lord Guthrie, Judge of the Court of Session in Scotland, for Ronald Stevenson

Two letters, 1994 and undated, of Maurice Kahn

Letter, 1980, of John H. Lawson

Letter, 1994, of Ludmilla Lazar

Undated Christmas card of Yvonne Lefébure and Fred Goldbeck

Letter, 1993, by Dr. Paul Lewis. With a copy of Stevenson’s reply

Four letters, 1980-1988, of John Lindsay. With a letter, 1988, of Monica Watson to John Lindsay

Letter, 1974, of Muriel Murdoch

Two letters, 1954, of the editor of Musical Opinion

Letter, 1976, of Reg Nettel

Letter, 1964, of Charles Oxtoby, South African Broadcasting Corporation

Two postcards, 1987 and 1996, of Arnold Schalker

Photocopy of page from music magazine, sent to Stevenson by Ronald Smith, 1996

Postcard, 1964, of Niel Solomon
Copy of letter, 1989, of Stevenson to the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China

Card, 1956, of Jill Vlasto. With a letter, 1956, of Jill Vlasto to Professor E.J. Dent

Letter, 1988, of Monica Watson

Letter, 1978, of Elizabeth Weigand

Postcard, 1968?, of Terence White-Gervais

Letter, 1980, by an unidentified correspondent (“Marie”), concerning Seán Ó Riada and the possibility of a recital by Stevenson in Cork

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<td>RUT, Josef</td>
<td><em>Czech composer</em></td>
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<td><em>Dutch pianist and composer</em></td>
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<td>SCHNAPP, Friedrich</td>
<td><em>German musicologist and Head of German Broadcasting in Hamburg, friend of Busoni</em></td>
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<td>SCHNEERSON, Grigori</td>
<td><em>Soviet musicologist</em></td>
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<td>24, 28</td>
<td>SCOTT, George, son of Francis George Scott</td>
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<td>SCOTT, Heather</td>
<td><em>wife of Tom Scott, Scottish poet</em></td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>SCOTT, Lillias Forbes</td>
<td><em>daughter of Francis George Scott (married firstly Professor Erik Chisholm, secondly John Forbes, clarinetist)</em></td>
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<td>SCWIRES, Norman</td>
<td><em>Edinburgh teacher and eccentric, friend of RS</em></td>
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<td>SELDEN-GOTH, Gisella</td>
<td><em>musicologist and composer, pupil and biographer of Busoni</em></td>
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<td>SINCLAIR, John</td>
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<td>SITSKY, Larry</td>
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<td>SJÖSTRAND, Helmi</td>
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<td>SLONIMSKY, Nicholas</td>
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<td>SPEDDING, Frank</td>
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<td>SPENCER, Robert</td>
<td>English lutenist and one of the dedicatees of ‘Ballatis of Luve’</td>
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<td>STEEL, Judy</td>
<td>Scottish patron of the arts and friend of RS</td>
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<td>STRODE, Rosamond</td>
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<td>TAGLIAPIETRA, Hilda</td>
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<td>18, 21</td>
<td><em>Ronald Stevenson Society, friend of Czeslaw Marek</em></td>
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Books by Ronald Stevenson


Periodical Articles by Ronald Stevenson


Works about Ronald Stevenson


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590 This is the first commercial issue for Stevenson’s famous 1964 recording of his Passacaglia on DSCH - a master-work of the last century. The recording was issued in a limited edition of 100 2LP sets. Unsurprisingly copies are famously scarce. Rob Barnett, Music Web International: http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2009/june09/stevenson_APR.htm.
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