



AOSIS

# Music, Art and Emotion

Depictions of the Night Inspired by  
Romantic Art Song

Edited by  
**Conroy Cupido**

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Depictions of the Night Inspired  
by Romantic Art Song



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## **Research justification**

This scholarly book focuses on how four artists, namely Marna de Wet, Kevin du Plessis, Jean Lampen and Elna Venter, ascribed meaning to songs of the Romantic era by Franz Schubert, Hector Berlioz, Gabriel Fauré and Richard Strauss. It demonstrates the need for interdisciplinary research on how people ascribe meaning to referentialism in music, including music emotion induction. The target audience for this research includes scholars interested in the creation of visual art, the experiences of artists, art song and their interpretation, the ability of music to evoke emotion in listeners, interdisciplinary research and ways of developing artistic research. In Chapters 1-5, the authors contextualised the main concepts of music and art relevant to this study, and Chapters 6-11 reflect empirical data.

This study aimed to explore the phenomenon of how visual artists ascribe meaning to music during their artistic practice. This was done using a pluralistic methodological approach employing artistic research and phenomenology. As a result, new understandings of the relationship between music, emotion and imagery reflected in the art are revealed. According to Chrysostomou (2004), interdisciplinary research should only be attempted when the disciplines find common ground in their subject matter and when the method adopted for inquiry can extract data from both fields. In music and art, common elements link them both in content and how a method can be utilised. This study not only contributes new knowledge about the experiences of artists and their practice, as well as ascribing meaning to music, but also contributes to the discourse surrounding the innovation and development of artistic research as a method, specifically using a pluralistic approach. In accordance with the Department of Higher Education and Training requirements, this book contains more than 50% original content not published before, and no part of this work has been plagiarised.

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# Abbreviations and acronyms, figures and tables appearing in the text and notes

## List of abbreviations and acronyms

BRECVEMA	(1) Brain Stem Reflex; (2) Rhythmic Entrainment; (3) Evaluative Conditioning; (4) Contagion (Emotional Contagion); (5) Visual Imagery; (6) Episodic Memory; (7) Musical Expectancy; (8) Aesthetic Judgement
GEMS	Geneva Emotional Music Scale
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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Marna de Wet went to school in Potchefstroom and studied at the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, now known as North-West University, where she completed a degree in drama and graphic design. She produced works as part of the following exhibitions: 'Streek' group exhibitions at the Aardklop National Arts Festival from 2006–2010; a solo exhibition in Potchefstroom in 2010; 'Miniatuur', a group exhibition held at the Botanical Garden Gallery of the North-West University in 2012; 'Sehnsucht', a group exhibition curated by Conroy Cupido held at the Botanical Garden Gallery (North-West University), the School for Music (North-West University) and Art Lovers 1932 in Pretoria in 2014. Marna works mostly in oil, and although she is not a conceptual artist, her paintings are very poetic and almost melancholic of nature with deep meaning and depth. She honed her craft by visiting the *Cité Internationale des Arts* in Paris, France, for two months in 2013.

### **Kevin du Plessis**

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Awarded a photography prize by the Embassy of Sweden in Pretoria, Kevin du Plessis has participated in major art competition finalist exhibitions and other

renowned group exhibitions since the beginning of 2014, exhibiting beside names such as William Kentridge, Michael Meyersfeld, Christiaan Diedericks and Gordon Froud. Kevin worked in the visual arts scene for over three years as an assistant curator and studio manager before his appointment as the art director of *Gay Pages Magazine*. His artwork, which varies between digital fine art photography prints, digital illustration and collage making, explores themes such as religion, sexuality and existentialism.

### **Jean Lampen**

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Jean Lampen completed a BAPharm (1981) before started her art education at the reputable school Studio Visio, in Potchefstroom, South Africa. She received training from Barend Grobbelaar (watercolour, sculpture and life drawing), Phillip Badenhorst (oils), Chris Diedericks (printing), George Boys (composition), Carl Jeppe (life drawing) and Emma Willemse (creative thinking). She held her first solo exhibition in 2012 by exhibiting the art she made while staying at the *Cité Internationale des Arts* in Paris, France. Other exhibition highlights include the International Eco-living Exhibition in December 2011 in Mauritius and in South Africa by participating in group exhibitions at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees [Little Karoo National Arts Festival] (KKNK) (2012), Grahamstown Arts Festival (2012), Oliewenhuis Art Gallery (2013), Pretoria Art Museum (2015), Botanical Garden Exhibition (2015) and *'Disappearance'* at the North-West University Art Gallery. Lampen is a part-time lecturer at the School for Graphic Design and the School for Creativity at the North-West University.

### **Elna Venter**

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Born in Pretoria, South Africa, in 1945, Elna Venter pursued her passion for art. She, at the age of 50 years, enrolled at the Johannesburg Art Foundation and a further five years at the Pretoria Open Window Art Academy, South Africa. She has participated in various group exhibitions in South Africa, and held seven solo exhibitions in South Africa and a solo exhibition in England. She is represented in the corporate art collections of Sasol, Telkom, Rand Merchant Bank, the North-West University, and private homes. Before her art studies, she was actively involved with teaching art to children; first from her home and then in a private nursery school. Subsequently, she wrote the two books in the *South African Art Series for Children*.



# Foreword

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## ■ ‘Nagmusiek’

This intriguing research project entailed that four artists were asked to respond to music – German and French songs, specifically – and produce artwork for each of the four songs provided to them by the curator of the project. The notion that music is a universal language comes to mind – whether one agrees with this or not, music can transcend the boundaries of language and, perhaps, even culture. Using music as a prompt to develop artistic outputs begs the question of intuitive ‘understanding’ that the artist senses on an auditory level and what can only be described at a gut level.

In the visual arts, the modernist abstract artist Vasily Kandinsky spoke of the spiritual aspects of art. He related these to music, calling his artworks ‘compositions’ and, more poetically, improvisations. As a result, he wanted to show that there are corollaries between music notes, harmonies, rhythms, and volumes that can be translated into visual equivalents by relying on intuitive associations with musical analogies (notes can be correlated with colours, rhythms, beats can be visualised, and so on). Kandinsky’s works, for example, may have fluid and watery shapes that are juxtaposed by sharp-edged lines and jagged forms to suggest rhythm and flow. Thus, not only do musical elements have visual associations, but also visuals can be musical and find visual embodiment. Although these visual or musical corollaries are not necessarily specific (e.g. yellow does not mean the same thing to different people or in different contexts), a sensitive listener and viewer can sense the musical qualities in his work. In this way, Kandinsky managed to do away with the idea that an abstract artwork must somehow, if one looks closely enough, resemble ‘something’ in the visual world other than purely compositional elements. Like music, it can be enjoyed for its abstract combination of elements into a harmonious (or disharmonious) whole. During the age of symbolism in 19th-century France, the poet Charles Baudelaire famously explored synaesthesia in poems such as ‘Correspondences’ and ‘Harmonie du soir’. In these poems, the imagery that infuses the poems hinges on the notion that one sense, such as seeing, can echo another sense such as inhaling a fragrance so his poems are imbued with multi-layered apprehensions of various

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sense perceptions. These create a rich experience that transcends the written text – a truly poetic conglomeration of an ecstatic infusion of multiple channels of appreciation.

Another example of diverse genres of art that display tangential points between various modes of artistic expression is *ekphrasis*. This usually refers to a visual image (often paintings) that inspires a poet to create a poem in which echoes of the visual work are made to manifest the poem's the imagery, rhythms or metaphors. When reading the poem, thus, the beholder should ideally also peruse the visual artwork to appreciate the dance of inspiration that emerges between the visual and the poetic. Consequently, if we consider the poetic as the bringing together of sometimes disparate elements that transcend ordinary logic, the relationship between different genres of artistic production is, yes, 'poetic' in nature. Such a process is guided by intuition – which some may feel is entirely personal and inaccessibly esoteric. Personal, yes ... esoteric, certainly – but there seems sufficient evidence that when interpreting one art form in terms of another, the product may not necessarily be entirely random. Rather, there appears to be an archetypal, collective unconscious in many instances where artists of different genres engage with other artistic expressions.

While I do not propound that there is any type of rational foundation for this contention, the works produced for '*Nagmusiek*' often display sufficient tangential qualities so that it is perhaps more than a happy coincidence that connections can be made between the visual artworks created for each of the songs provided to the artists. It is well worth remembering, again, that the artists did not understand the texts. The process, an intuitive one, demonstrates the interconnectedness of the arts in fascinating ways.

In this brief consideration, I have not attempted to argue that the visual interpretation of the songs used in this research project gives any 'exact' rendering of the lyrics or the melodies. Still, it is striking how the artists, in various ways, found correspondences in the music and transposed these into their visual language all the while conveying some sense of what the songs mean.

# Music, emotion and imagery

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## ■ Introduction

In 2015, I embarked upon a collaborative project that tasked four visual artists with creating artworks that depicted the elements of music and poetry in art songs by Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904), Robert Schumann (1810-1856), Richard Strauss (1864-1949), Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), Roger Quilter (1877-1953) and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958). Although the artists successfully managed to ascribe meaning on their works from both the music and the text, upon reflection of their process, they mostly battled to verbalise the emotional or symbolic significance of the music without referencing the poetry or text. As a result, the ultimate visual representation was a combination of inspiration derived from emotionally charged language and music that accentuated the emotions painted in the text (Cupido 2016). Katz (1989:180) argued that this could be attributed to the fact that music is non-referential and that music (without the descriptive properties of the text associated with art song) is incapable of describing or symbolising 'the actions, persons, passions, and concepts ordinarily associated with human experience'.

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Certain scholars, philosophers and even musicians, including Katz (1989), Sirman (2009), Eduard Hanslick, Igor Stravinsky and Philodemus, think that music cannot reference anything outside of itself at all (Corcoran 1987:237). In opposition to this belief is the view that music is capable of conveying non-musical ideas and concepts. This 'referentialist position' is shared by 'Plato, Tolstoi, several Romantic 19th-century composers, Wilson Coker, J.W.N. Sullivan', Langer and Cooke (Corcoran 1987:237; Trainor & Trehub 1992:456). During the late 1800s in Germany, this division in philosophic thought resulted in the 'War of the Romantics'. Absolutists, such as Clara Schumann (1819-1896) and Brahms, argued that music was absolute, that it could not represent anything outside of its form and structure, while many progressive thinkers from the *Neudeutsche Schule* (New German School) like Franz Liszt (1811-1886) and Richard Wagner (1813-1883) posited that narrative and visual concepts could be conveyed through music's structural features. Consequently, they advocated for the composition of newer forms of instrumental music like programme music or the symphonic poem to convey these non-musical ideas (Bonds 2006). One of the most prolific western romantic composers in the 19th century who was able to capture non-musical ideas in his music was Franz Schubert (1797-1828).

Born in Vienna in 1797, Schubert had the remarkable gift of painting the images conjured in the text of his Lieder in the melodies, rhythmic devices and harmonies found both in the vocal line and in the piano accompaniment. This musical mastering is evident even to the untrained ear (McKeever 2014:34). While listening to some of his most well-known offerings, one cannot help but hear the repetitive movement of the spinning wheel in '*Gretchen am Spinnrade*' ('Gretchen at the spinning wheel'), Op. 2, D. 118, the movement of the fish in the water in '*Die Forelle*' ['The Trout'], Op. 32, D. 550 or the urgency of the galloping horse simulated by the rapid triplets in '*Erlkönig*' [The Erlking], Op. 1, D. 328. In '*Die schöne Müllerin*' ['The Beautiful Miller Girl'], Op. 25, D. 795, Schubert manages to portray a babbling brook in its many states throughout the 20-pieced song cycle.

Similarly, other composers (Day & Thompson 2019) have also manipulated the acoustic properties of music to imitate non-musical sounds and ideas:

In the fourth movement of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, the music simulates a thunderstorm, with soft tremolo passages in the strings resembling raindrops, and short, powerful strokes from the tympani resembling thunder. In Rossini's *William Tell Overture*, a 'galloping rhythm' is used to imitate the sound of horses galloping. In these ways, composers create acoustic representations of actions and events, and these representations may activate a listener's visual imagination. (p. 76)

The British musicologist and educator Tagg (2013) describes how these composers musically imitated non-musical or natural sounds as sonic anaphones. However, in Western art music, extra-musical association with

musical sounds is not limited to music of the 19th century. Throughout history, composers have used musical symbols to depict 'actions, character and emotion', which is evident as early and even before the Renaissance, when composers 'intended to communicate referential meanings' (Corcoran 1987:238). Plato went as far as to advocate a ban on the Lydian mode 'because of its presumed link to softness and conviviality' (Trainor & Trehub 1992:192). However, certainly, not all music can communicate extra-musical ideas or at least not every composer intends to compose with the intent of portraying such non-musical concepts.

The musicologist Lawrence Kramer, the 19th-century Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick, and other absolutists argue that music can only 'be understood in structural terms' (Trainor & Trehub 1992:11). Kramer asserts that while music may convey discursive meaning, 'these meanings are not extra-musical, but on the contrary are inexplicably bound up with the formal processes and stylistic articulations of musical works' (Kramer 1990:1). In short, music can express musical ideas but not emotion or extra-musical concepts. However, this notion is propelled by only considering the attributes of the music's structural features and does not take into account the experiences of the listener, specifically how they ascribe meaning to what they hear. Can music elicit an emotional response from the listener or mean anything outside of itself, whether that was the intent of the composer?

In his seminal book, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, Meyer (1956) differentiates between two types of musical meaning: absolute meaning, which 'lies exclusively [...] in the perception of the relationships set forth within the musical work of art', and referential meaning, which 'refer to the extra-musical world of concepts, actions, emotional states, and character' (1956:1). Meyer spent much of his career trying to explore how absolute music is disassociated from meaning outside of the musical work itself; however, in much of his later work, he developed a theory that suggests that one cannot separate extra-musical connotation from any musical meaning and that even absolute music may elicit emotional responses from listeners and performers. Furthermore, Meyer (Eitan 2008) suggests that:

[E]xtra-musical connotation is pertinent to musical meaning, and that the musical patterns and processes upon which Meyer's absolutist aesthetics were founded were primarily based outside 'music itself', in the bodily tensions and somatic responses of listeners and performers. (p. 479)

Meyer came to this conclusion by developing a theory that places musical meaning as the product of expectation. When someone listens to a composition, they often expect the music to harmonically or melodically resolve based on what they have heard or their familiarity with a specific musical style. Emotion can be induced in the listener when this resolution does not occur or when it occurs unexpectedly. When this happens, the listener ascribes meaning to

what they have heard. Trainor and Trehub (1992) argue that this is because in music:

[M]eaning arises only from the syntactic interrelation of component sounds, that is, from the tension produced by the creation of melodic and harmonic expectations and the relaxation produced by how they are solved. (p. 456)

They (Trainor & Trehub 1992) further explain how musical expectation ascribes meaning to the listener within the context of a familiar style as follows:

Musical meaning is possible, on this theory, because of style; a given composition falls within a stylistic tradition which supports a musical syntax, a syntax which leads one to expect given sorts of kinetic development in given sorts of situations. If a musical phrase thwarts expectation and works itself out in a novel, unexpected way, then its musical significance is considerable. If a musical phrase perfectly confirms predictions and expectations, then it is trivial. Expectation in music depends on past experience, which makes it a learned skill, and a matter of culture. (p. 29)

Steve Larson, who was a professor of music at the University of Oregon, developed a theory of musical forces that expands upon Meyer's concept of musical meaning being linked to expectation (Larson 2006). Larson's theory on musical forces and the role it plays in musical perception are elaborated upon in Chapter 3. As posited by Meyer (1956), Larson (2006), Etian (2008) and Trainor and Trehub (1992), arguably, all music can create an expectation in the listener when the expected harmonic and melodic resolutions are impeded or frustrated. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that most music could elicit an emotional or somatic response in the listener. Furthermore, Tagg (2013) dismisses the notion of music as an 'illogical concept', as, to be absolute, it would have to be completely independent of, unrelated to and not conditioned by anything outside of itself. He (Tagg 2013) states that this is impossible as music cannot be separated from the traditions to which composers or audiences belonged:

In short, if music called absolute ever had any social connotations if it was ever written or performed in a historical context by certain musicians, if it was ever heard in particular contexts or used in particular ways by a particular audience, if it was ever related to any drama, words or dance, then it cannot be absolute. (pp. 91-93)

In this chapter, so far, music has been described as being able to convey meaning by imitating extra-musical sounds and through the metaphorical associations of its effectual processes of tension and relaxation. Trainor and Trehub (1992:466) further propose that musical meaning can also manifest through the 'acquisition of cultural conventions' and 'when specific pieces become associated with extra-musical events'. An example of cultural acquisition is how organ music is perceived. When listeners hear this music, they often associate the instrument with religious events or occasions. Through the ages, specific compositions have also been associated with extra-musical events, such as a lullaby indicating bedtime or Felix Mendelsohn's (1809-1847) famous march from his suite of incidental music (Op. 61) signalling a wedding

procession, or songs that acquire special meaning for an individual because of its romantic significance.

I would, therefore, like to posit that whether the composer intended to, most music may be able to elicit an emotional response from the listener or, at the very least, an affect, mood or feeling. Furthermore, as evidenced by Trainor and Trehub (1992), Day and Thompson (2019), Corcoran (1987), Tagg (2013) and McKeever (2014), it is possible for composers to acoustically simulate non-musical sounds like bird sounds, babbling brooks and galloping horses in music. The combination of these theories led to the conceptualisation of another collaborative project that explored how visual artists would create artworks inspired by art songs when they were not privy to the meaning of the texts. In essence, the voice would become another instrument added to the orchestra or the piano accompaniment. The vocal timbre, range, and the use of vowels and consonants of the singer should hypothetically be able to convey emotion without the artist understanding the text.

## ■ **'Nagmusiek'**

In 2019, I once again collaborated with artists Kevin du Plessis, Marna de Wet, Jean Lampen and newcomer to the collaboration, Elna Venter. I tasked each artist with creating artwork in their respective media to portray a visual representation of various art songs. Throughout this book, the term 'art song' will be used interchangeably with both the German Lied and the French *mélodie*. The art songs selected for this project were in French and German; this time the artists were not presented with any translations. None of the artists were fluent in these two languages, and consequently, they had to rely solely on the music, without an understanding of the text, to inspire and create a work of art.

A study examining how four visual artists interpreted art songs with musical referential meaning without understanding the text was the purpose of this study. It was also designed to disseminate the tacit knowledge embedded in their artefacts produced by examining their listening experiences during the creative process. This book is a culmination of that project. Torracco (2016) states that an:

Integrative literature review is a distinctive form of research that generates new knowledge about the topic reviewed. It reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated. (p. 404)

This chapter aims to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of ascribing meaning to music during the creative process of four visual artists, and to probe the theories underpinning this process and study. At the end of the chapter, after reviewing, critiquing and synthesising the data from the

literature, I present a model that depicts a new perspective on how artists may ascribe meaning to art songs that they do not understand while creating new artwork. In Chapter 2, I present more information concerning the project itself. Chapter 2 serves as an example of a multi-method approach combining artistic research and phenomenology to best meet the outcomes of this research.

For this project, the selection of the art songs was determined by the theme chosen by Dr Johan Thom, the curator of visual arts, for the Aardklop National Arts Festival held in Potchefstroom, South Africa, in 2019. Dr Thom, a senior lecturer at the University of Pretoria, requested that prospective artists submit proposals for exhibitions incorporating the theme 'Letters to the night'. In his brief to the artists and curators, Dr Thom described how the night had been a source of inspiration for artists through the ages. He wrote:

'Letters to the night'

Come and examine the night with us.

Through centuries the dark fascination of night-time has served as inspiration and metaphor for visual artists. It serves as a metaphor for creativity, fear, love and death. But night also brings hope for whatever tomorrow may hold, or even how love attains completeness under the cover of the veil of nocturnal darkness.

From an evolutionary perspective, the discovery of fire led to a turning point in the existence of man. We would never again be subjected to darkness, and in a poetic sense, we can always take a small fraction of the day into the night. By doing so, we extend the day and expose the secrets of the night.

This year we emphasize a group of visual artists utilising the night as inspiration. Each work of art becomes a letter directed to the unexplored darkness of night-time. (Thom pers. comm., 2019)

The author's role was that of both researcher and curator as this project was accepted for the festival and was entitled '*Nagmusiek*' (Afrikaans for 'night music'). For this project, I selected three orchestral songs and two songs accompanied by piano by Richard Strauss, Franz Schubert, Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) and Hector Berlioz (1803–1869), which used the night as an overarching context in which the stories being told took place. The songs are 'While going to sleep' [*Beim Schlafengehen*] from *Vier letzte Lieder*, Op. posth. No. 3 by Richard Strauss; 'At sunset' [*Im abendrot*], from *Vier letzte Lieder* [*Four last songs*], Op. posth. No. 4 by Richard Strauss; 'The spectre of the rose' [*La spectre de la rose*] from *Les nuits d'été* [*Summer nights*], Op. 7, No. 2 by Hector Berlioz; 'After a dream' [*Après un rêve*], Op. 7, No. 1 by Gabriel Fauré, and 'The Erlking' [*Erlkönig*] Op. 1, D 328. by Franz Schubert. I presented the artists with recordings<sup>1</sup> of these songs and the music served as the inspiration for the works created. These works and an analysis of how the

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1. These recordings are listed in Chapter 2.

artists ascribed referential meaning to the songs during their creative process are presented in Chapters 6–10 of this book.

The artists were not aware of the theme of the festival in 2019 as it was not made public knowledge while they were creating their artworks, and Dr Thom and I corresponded privately about our exhibition. As a result, the artists were able to ascribe musical referential meaning to their work without prior influence, and I was able to investigate how and if aspects of the night, whether metaphorical or literal, transcended the music to their art. While some of the music contains sonic anaphores that suggest non-musical concepts, such as the sound of Larks in Strauss' *'Im Abendrot'* and the galloping sound of the horse in Schubert's *'Erlkönig'*, the primary way in which the artists ascribed meaning to the music was through the emotions that were either perceived or aroused when listening to the songs.

## ■ Music and emotion

This book concerns the complex phenomenon of how music listeners ascribed meaning to music, specifically how emotion is perceived or aroused, and consequently, how four visual artists interpreted the meaning they ascribed in their artworks. The psychologist Ellen Winner (2019:38–40) states that as music is non-sentient (and only sentient beings can experience or express emotions), in order to better understand this phenomenon, one needs to ask the following two questions:

- Do we read emotion into the pure form of music without lyrics?
- And does music make us feel emotions?

Of course, with respect to this study, the lyrics do exist; the artists are simply unaware of their meaning. However, the singer who sings the lyrics is aware of the meaning of the text. Therefore, I argue that the performers are also aware of the intended meaning that the composers wished to convey made explicit through the text, and according to Sirman (2009:7), who strongly refutes the notion of referential meaning in music, music with an accompanying text can, in fact, convey referential or semantic meaning. Accordingly, I would pose another question to further understand this phenomenon: Can a singer convey the meaning of the text of an art song and evoke emotion while the listener is unaware of the meaning of the text?

As mentioned earlier, the singer or rather the voice, would become an extra instrument using timbre, pitch, speed, rhythm, loudness and so forth to convey emotion. Tagg (2013) calls these qualities the prosodic or musical aspects of speech and states that while they:

[A]re all important to the communication of the spoken word, a wordless utterance consisting of only prosodic elements ceases by definition to be speech. It will more likely sound like music. (p. 44)



To the artists (the listeners), the art songs would not exactly be wordless. Rather they would hear words or syllables produced that lack textual meaning, and to evoke emotion, they would ascribe meaning to the musical or prosodic utterances of the singer, as well as the orchestral or piano accompaniment. Tagg describes music as a form of 'interhuman communication' and in addition to these prosodic utterances, 'emotional, gestural, tactile, kinetic and spatial patterns of cognition' can be used to ascribe meaning to what is usually non-verbal sound (2013:44).

When singers convey emotion or meaning in the music they perform, they emote that meaning using vocal colour, dynamics, range and other prosodic elements of speech. The emotion or affect that they wish to convey is intentional. In this study, there are two types of intentional meaning already evident in the music presented to the artists: (1) the meaning as intended by the composer described in the text and supported through motivic and harmonic devices in the orchestra or piano and (2) the intended meaning conveyed to the listener by the singer who understands the emotion and meaning in the text. The aim of this study is not necessarily to compare whether the artists' visualisations correspond to the literal meaning of the art songs or what the composer intended; however, the purpose is rather to explore the artists' process of ascribing musical referential meaning as a result of emotions perceived in or aroused through the music. Notwithstanding, it is interesting to note similarities and differences in their perception of the intended meaning.

To understand how the voice, orchestra or piano could express emotion, one needs to consider whether the listener perceives emotion in the music or feels or is physically aroused by the emotion expressed in the music.

## ■ Perceived and aroused emotions

The philosopher and musicologist, Kivy (1990) argued that music can only represent emotions and called this the cognitivist's perspective and, in opposition, labelled the perspective that music can evoke emotion in a person, the emotivist's position. Cognitivists have claimed that when reporting on emotional response, listeners confute 'cognitive perceptions of expressed emotion for something which they actually feel' (Zentner 2010:117). However, evidence suggests that the likelihood of this happening is scarce as felt emotions differ from perceived emotions, and rarely emulate each other. Although felt and perceived emotions may influence each other, 'these felt emotive states correlate with relatively specific activation patterns in emotive brain sites' (Zentner 2010:117).

Alternatively, Davies (2013:179) proposes that some listening responses to music involve 'emotional contagion'. In other words, instead of emotions being aroused in the listener, one rather emulates or 'mirrors' the emotions expressed in the music. Furthermore, he cites Juslin and Västfjäll (2008), who assert that to

identify emotions, the listener appraises an object (in this case, the music) even when emotional contagion is involved. Furthermore, Davies posits that music is not an emotional object being appraised but rather a perceptual object. In other words, when people listen to sad music, they do not believe that the music itself is sad, but, instead, they appraise the music, and through contagion, reflect in themselves what is expressed through the music (Davies 2013:169-170).

Nonetheless, more recently, researchers agree that music has the ability to both 'express perceived emotions and arouse felt emotions' (Juslin & Lindström 2010:334; Kawakami et al. 2013:407). In other words, a listener could either hear and associate an emotion that the music sounds like, or when listening to music, a listener can feel a physiological reaction based on emotion evoked through the music. Although the difference between felt and perceived emotions has clearly been described as early as Meyer (1956), this differentiation is not always made explicit in many empirical studies (eds. Juslin & Sloboda 2010).

During the course of this project, it became apparent that the artists both perceived emotions in the music, and some reported that they felt a physiological response to the music as well. Furthermore, they stated that the music created a mood, and often, when they described emotions; how the music made them feel. Subsequently, it is important to differentiate between mood, feeling and emotion when trying to understand how listeners ascribe meaning to music. Juslin and Sloboda (eds. 2010:10) define these distinctions as follows:

1. **Affect:** This is used as an umbrella 'term' that covers different active phenomena. Musical affect, thus defined, comprises anything from music preference, mood and emotion to aesthetic and even spiritual experiences.
2. **Emotion:** This term is used to refer to a brief but intense affective reaction that usually involves a number of subcomponents - subjective feeling, physiological arousal, expression, action tendency and regulation - that are more or less synchronised. Emotions focus on the specific object and last minutes to a few hours (e.g. happiness and sadness).
3. **Mood:** The term is used to denote such affective states that are lower in intensity, do not have a clear 'object' and are much longer lasting than emotions (i.e. several hours to days). Moods do not involve a synchronised response in components like expression and physiology (i.e. gloomy).
4. **Feeling:** This term is used to refer to the subjective experience of emotions or moods. Feeling is one of the components of emotion that is typically measured via self-report.
5. **Emotion induction:** This term is used to refer to all instances where music evokes an emotion in a listener - regardless of the nature of the process that evoked the emotion.
6. **Emotional perception:** This term is used to refer to all instances where a listener perceives or recognises emotions in music (e.g. a sad expression) without necessarily feeling an emotion themselves.

As is evident in the terms above, 'affect' could be used as the nomenclature to describe the phenomena associated with meaning-making in this study. However, as Juslin and Sloboda (eds. 2010:11) mentions, the term emotion or the study of emotion is much more recognised in this field. As the researcher, I would have to be aware of how the artists describe their responses to the music. 'Mood', for example, would not suggest the same intensity as an emotion. In the context of this study, 'mood' might, however, refer to the affective state that the entire song could elicit, while smaller sections of the song might arouse emotion. When the artists reflect on their listening experiences, it would also be important for me to differentiate between the perception of mood, feelings perceived emotion and emotions in response to the music. I would identify emotions that were felt or aroused in the artists if they described physiological responses, such as action tendencies (e.g. the motivation to want to dance), gooseflesh or a raised heart rate.

## ■ Identifying emotions in music

Whether emotions are aroused in the listener or perceived in the music, an appraisal of the object (the music) by the listener has to occur for the emotion to be identified. But what are the emotions generally induced by or perceived in music?

Emotion has been described as a scientific construct that comprises 'a set of phenomena of feelings, behaviours and bodily reactions that occur together in everyday life' (eds. Juslin & Sloboda 2010:75). Many scholars (eds. Juslin & Sloboda 2010; Lazarus 1991; Oatley 1992; Winner 2019) refer to basic emotions that are common among all people despite their cultural background. These basic emotions are also hypothesised to possess definite functions that are integral to human survival. The emotions are experienced as idiosyncratic feelings; they often emerge in the formative years of human development; they can be observed by unique patterns of physiological change in the body; these emotions can be inferred from human to human, and they are recognisable through distinct facial and vocal expressions (eds. Juslin & Sloboda 2010:76–77).

Juslin and Sloboda (eds. 2010:77) present five basic emotions and their core-related themes that they adapted from Lazarus (1991) and Oatley (1992), as shown in Table 1.1.

'Basic emotion theory' predicates that all emotions can be derived from the five emotions listed in Table 1.1, and many studies concur that basic emotions can be perceived in music and induced in listeners (Winner 2019:42). One of the main criticisms of 'basic emotion theory' is that it cannot account for the plethora of emotions that can be induced or perceived in music. Basic emotion theorists would retort that the various qualities and properties of these emotions combined with people's 'conscious cognitive appraisals' could produce several other complex emotions (eds. Juslin & Sloboda 2010:77).

**TABLE 1.1:** Five basic emotions and their core-related themes.

Emotion	Core-related theme
Happiness	Making reasonable progress towards a goal
Anger	A demeaning offence against me and mine
Sadness	Having experienced an irrevocable loss
Fear	Facing an immediate, concrete or overwhelming physical danger
Disgust	Taking in or being close to an indigestible object or idea

Source: Juslin and Sloboda (eds. 2010:77).

Alternatively, a dimensional approach exists to describe emotions induced or perceived in music, known as the ‘circumplex model’ (Zentner 2010:102). In 1989, James Russell devised this model to portray feelings representing a mixture of two main dimensions: *valence* and *arousal*. On either side of two axes (*x* and *y*), listeners could identify their emotions with permutations of positive or negative valence (pleasant to unpleasant feelings) and high or low arousal (from stressed or excited to depressed or relaxed), respectively (Winner 2019:55). As described by the psychologist Marcel Zentner (2010:102), any emotional state could be placed within this space and in doing so remove the specificity of the affective experience, that is, placid, calm, serene and contented would be regarded as the same emotion. As a result, not much is learned about the nature of music-evoked emotions through the circumplex model.

Notwithstanding these shortfalls, Marcel Zentner and fellow psychologist Klaus Scherer found that more than 80% of music and emotion studies relied on either basic emotion theory or the circumplex model to describe emotion induced by or perceived in music. The Geneva Emotional Music Scale (GEMS) was developed recent years to capture more nuanced feelings induced by or perceived in *lyric-free music* (Zentner 2010). As a result of empirical research based on 801 questionnaires from festival-goers listening to a variety of musical genres, including classical, jazz, rock and world music, Zentner and Scherer clustered 40 affective states into nine groupings, namely wonder, transcendence, tenderness, nostalgia, peacefulness, power, joyful activation, tension and sadness. Table 1.2 lists the nine groupings of musically induced emotions and their reduced feelings.

As is evident in Table 1.2, only the associated feelings namely ‘happy’ and ‘sad’ relate to the basic emotion theory. The GEMS list of emotions more adequately captures the possibility of ‘aesthetic’ emotions often reported to be induced by or perceived in music. The so-called aesthetic emotions are reported as a reaction to art, nature or even certain important life events that conjure feelings of nostalgia, such as weddings (Winner 2019:57). These emotions are often triggered in conjunction with each other and are usually ‘savoured’ or enjoyed by the listener (Frijda & Sundararajan 2007:229).

**TABLE 1.2:** List of nine groupings of musically induced emotions and the feelings associated with each other.

Emotion	Associated feelings
Wonder	Admiring, amazed, dazzled, happy, moved
Transcendence	Fascinated, feeling of spirituality, feeling of transcendence, inspired, thrilled
Tenderness	Affectionate, in love, softened-up, tender
Nostalgia	Dreamy, melancholic, nostalgic, sentimental
Peacefulness	Calmed, meditative, relaxed, serene, soothed
Power	Energetic, fiery, heroic, strong, triumphant
Joyful activation	Amused, joyful, feel like dancing, animated, stimulated
Tension	Agitated, impatient, irritated, nervous, tense
Sadness	Blue, sad, sorrowful

Source: Zentner (2010:106).

Opposite to aesthetic emotions is utilitarian emotions that help people adapt to situations in everyday life and have been developed by our bodies through evolution. Our bodies trigger fear, for example, to help us to avoid dangerous situations. These emotions are instrumental and purely functional (Zentner 2010).

Later in this book, I explore how emotions were either evoked or perceived from the artists' listening experiences and how they informed their creative process. In a previous research study conducted by the author, participants described how they experienced *Sehnsucht* (a deep longing, yearning, desire or nostalgia) in music and how it informed new artistic creations (Cupido 2016). When nostalgia emerged as a core grouping in Zentner and Scherer's study, they were surprised to observe how many participants reported this overarching emotion. They attributed this to the fact that music serves as a function to remind people of important events that occurred in their lives. The authors point to the importance of memory and imagery in the induction of emotions from music. Zentner (2010) asserts that recent studies, including brain mapping data, illustrate how the idiosyncratic nature associated with nostalgia triggers increased hippocampus and visual cortex activities. This leads one to ask how emotions are induced by music.

## ■ How are emotions induced by music?

During their creative process, the artists identified both perceived emotions (a cognitive awareness of the emotions they thought the art songs conveyed) and aroused emotions (emotions that the music evoked in the artists themselves while listening to the art songs). As mentioned previously, aroused emotions can be identified when there is a physiological response to the music in the listener. According to Salimpoor et al. (2011), ardent pleasure elicited from music is activated in the same place in the brain as pleasure from sexual intercourse and food. As a result, dopamine (commonly referred to as

the ‘feel-good’ drug) is also released from these sites in the brain. One often hears concertgoers or people listening to a recording mention that they just got the chills, or one can see gooseflesh appear on the skin, or as in Zentner’s description of joyful activation, the listener experiences the joy that necessitates the desire in a person to dance. An important finding from the research of Blood and Zatorre (2001) was that musicians experienced the chills and gooseflesh directly from the lyric-free music they listened to and not from the memories that the music elicited.

When Zentner (2010) surprisingly realised that only 25% of his respondents felt the emotion they identified, he deduced that this was because the process whereby aroused emotions are induced is complex and delicate and relies on multiple interrelated factors to be in place. Zentner provides a model (Figure 1.1) adapted from his previous work (Scherer & Zentner 2001), which classifies the factors associated with emotions aroused from music into four main categories:

<p>Experienced emotion = (structural features) × (performance features) × (listener features) × (context features)</p> <p>Where</p> <p>Structural features = <math>\beta_1</math> (segmental features) × <math>\beta_2</math> (suprasegmental features)</p> <p>Performance features = <math>\beta_3</math> (performer skills) × <math>\beta_4</math> (performer state)</p> <p>Listener features = <math>\beta_5</math> (musical expertise) × <math>\beta_6</math> (stable dispositions) × <math>\beta_7</math> (mood state)</p> <p>Context features = <math>\beta_8</math> (location) × <math>\beta_9</math> (sound acoustics) × <math>\beta_{10}</math> (event)</p>
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Source: Zentner (2010:112).  
 Note:  $\beta$  represents a variable.

**FIGURE 1.1:** Zentner’s multiplicative model of musical emotion induction factors: the induction rule model.

Structural features refer to the qualities of the music itself, which include the melody, harmony and rhythm. As it has been posited that in the case of the current study, the singer’s voice would be an extension of the instrumentation, these structural features would also include vocal colour, dynamics, range and other prosodic elements of speech. In the context of this study, performance features refer to the interpretation of art songs by the singer, the pianists and the orchestra. The artists ascribed meaning to the musicians’ interpretation without an understanding of the text. In the early part of the 20th century, psychologist Kate Hevner conducted studies investigating how the structural features of music were associated with emotion. She presented short snippets of music compositions for piano to her participants, and as they listened to various examples, she would alternate features such as the *mode* (major, minor), *tempo* (fast, slow), *harmony* (consonant, dissonant), *rhythm* (inflexible, flowy), *pitch* (high, low) and *melody* (descending, ascending). After the participants were presented with a list of adjectives to describe the music, they were asked to identify which of the emotions were associated with the music that they had heard. Hevner found that while the melodic contours did not necessarily influence the emotions perceived in the music, variations in pitch, harmony, rhythm and tempo had the largest effect on the listener’s

perceived emotions. While slow music in a minor mode was often associated with sadness, fast music in a major mode was associated with happiness (Winner 2019:43–45). Juslin and Lindström (2010:335) present data from various empirical studies that illustrate the structural features of music and their associated emotions.

Zentner's description of performance features relies heavily on the visual aspects of performance (such as stage presence and audience contact) and the identity of the performer (physical appearance, expression and or reputation). In the performance of art songs, the face is one of the most important tools to be utilised by the singer as it could depict the emotion they wish to convey. In this study, as the artists listened to recordings, they were not prompted by visual clues, and as they were not provided with the names of the performers, unless they were able to recognise the voice of the singer, they were not influenced by physical appearance or reputation. As a result, they could only rely on the non-visual interpretive and technical skills of the singer, the pianists and the orchestra (including the conductor) to convey the interpretation, mood and motivation behind the music.

Listener features are 'based on the individual and sociocultural identity of the listener and on the symbolic coding conventions prevalent in a particular culture or subculture' (Zentner 2010:111). The fact that the artists, Elna Venter, Marna de Wet, Jean Lampen and Kevin du Plessis, are all Caucasian, Afrikaans-speaking individuals might suggest that they would share the same rules of interpretation within a certain culture. However, the fact that they vary in age (Elna being in her seventies and Kevin in his twenties, with Jean and Marna somewhere in between) and that they have differing personalities, previous life experiences and taste in music could also suggest that their listening experiences would be different.

Contextual features pertain to aspects of the performance and the listening situation. In the current study, the listeners all listened to the recordings in the comfort of their homes. They were surrounded by personal items that might trigger sensoric or nostalgic events. They listened to the recordings of the songs through loudspeakers and not in a concert hall at a live performance. They all reported that they listened to these songs alone without people around them. Being alone and uninhibited by people surrounding oneself might be conducive to emotional induction from music. While listening to the music, they may have been interrupted by exterior noises or sounds in their homes. Zentner (2010:111) states that 'all these features bear upon the acoustics, the ambience of the location or the behaviour of the audience, and these, in turn, affect listeners' emotional experience'. If all these features come into play, then emotion is likely to be induced; however, in the absence of one or more of these features (if the artist or listener is in a foul mood or there are too many distractions), Zentner posits that the likelihood of emotion induction would be minimal (2010).

## ■ Imagery elicited from musically aroused emotions

So far, I have described the extra-musical sounds often conjuring images, the emotions usually identified and associated with emotion perception and induction and the features enabling emotion induction. I have also presented how the structural elements of music have been associated with emotion. For an artist to make sense of an art song when they do not understand the text, the extra-musical sounds, as well as the perceived and aroused emotions from the music, would, at some point, elicit an image in the minds of the artists. How is this possible, and does an artist see the image immediately upon hearing the music, or do they first identify or feel the emotion?

As discussed, the research by Blood and Zatorre (2001) demonstrated that musicians experienced the feeling of chills as well as a physiological response to the music itself without images being conjured; however, contrary to that study, more research studies exist that confirms that imagery can be derived from music, especially when the music is emotionally charged (Day & Thompson 2019; Eerola 2010; Lindborg & Friberg 2015; Scherer & Zentner 2001; Taruffi et al. 2017; Vuoskoski & Eerola 2011). In fact, visual imagery plays an integral role in the way how music induces affect and emotion in listeners. Visual images often form in the listener's mind and the emotions that are then experienced result from an 'interaction between the music and the images' (Juslin & Västfjäll 2008:559). Psychologists and academics Robina Day and William Thompson conducted a study where they explored the relationship between visual imagery and emotional induction. They investigated the response and time involved in identifying the emotion, physiologically experiencing it and the image conjured through the experience. They conducted three experiments where 49 participants were presented with 30 musical examples.

In the first experiment, they found that participants first identified the emotion associated with the structural properties of the music, then experienced the emotion and then finally images were conjured. In their second experiment, they investigated the role familiarity of the music plays in emotion induction and presented participants with 20 new examples varying in familiarity. They found that music with a higher degree of familiarity conjured images faster in the minds of the participants. This was attributed to the important role that past associations play in the induction of musical emotion. Their third experiment examined how stimuli that varied in processing fluency were processed cognitively by the participants. Processing fluency is the ease with which a person processes information. They found that examples low in fluency were processed more quicker than those high in fluency. They deduced that visual imagery might evoke in



listeners as a cognitive mechanism to make sense of complex stimuli. The researchers (Day & Thompson 2019) ultimately concluded that:

[T]hat emotional states, familiarity, and properties of musical structure combine to create a psychological environment that is conducive to the generation of visual imagery. That imagery, in turn, may amplify or modify an incumbent emotional experience. (p. 75)

Besides processing complex stimuli, there are many reasons why people may experience imagery in response to music. I have mentioned the sonic anaphones Tagg (2013) describes as music's capacity to convey non-musical ideas, such as a babbling brook, horses galloping, birds chirping, and thunder, through acoustical means. People may also conjure visual images as a result of learned associations between visual and audio information often perpetuated in films throughout the last century or 'music-evoked autobiographical memories' (Day & Thompson 2019:76). One of the most comprehensive ways in which the role of visual imagery can be explained in the process of musical emotion induction is through the BRECVEMA framework.

The BRECVEMA framework named after the eight core mechanisms (listed below) that constitute the framework aims to 'investigate and confirm the causal pathways that lead from musical structure to an emotional response' (Day & Thompson 2019:75). In other words, the framework is used to predict how the structural features of music are used to induct emotion through mechanisms in the brain. Juslin et al. (2010:619) describe these emotion-inducing mechanisms as follows:

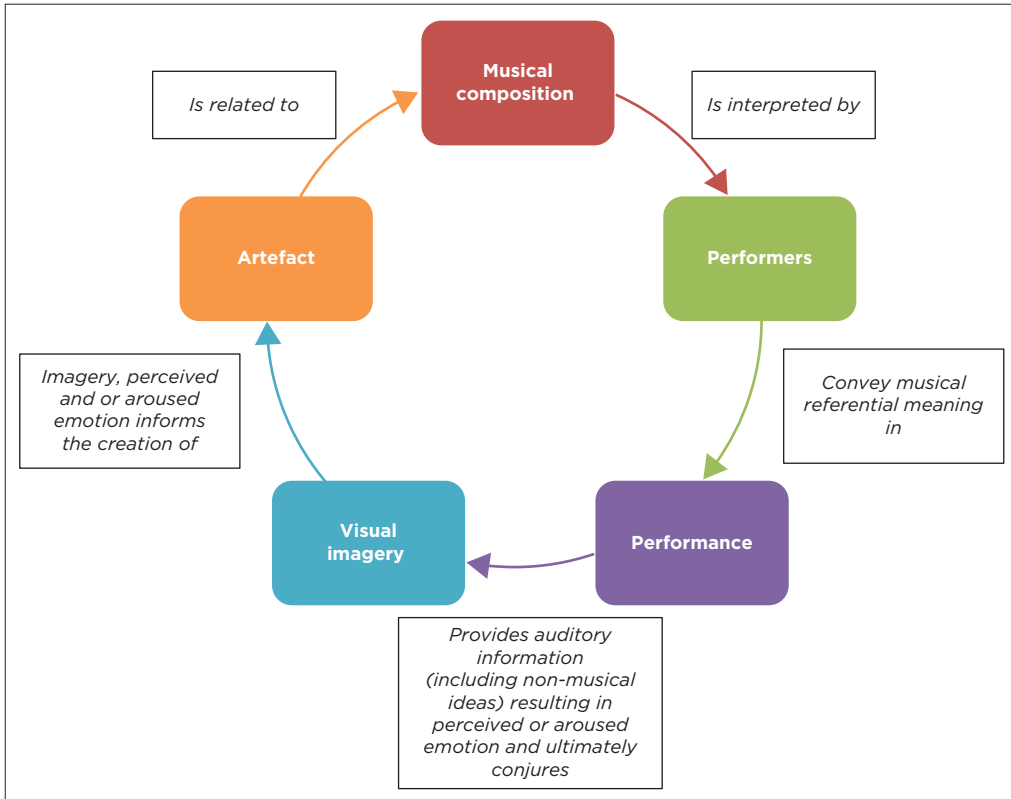
1. *Brain stem reflex*: A hard-wired response to simple acoustic features such as extreme or increasing loudness or speed.
2. *Rhythmic entrainment*: A gradual adjustment of an internal body rhythm (e.g. heart rate) towards an external rhythm in the music.
3. *Evaluative conditioning*: A regular pairing of a piece of music and other positive or negative stimuli leading to a conditioned association.
4. *Contagion*: An internal 'mimicry' of the perceived voice, like an emotional expression of the music.
5. *Visual imagery*: Inner images of an emotional character conjured up by the listener through a metaphorical mapping of the musical structure.
6. *Episodic memory*: A conscious recollection of a particular event from the listener's past, which is triggered by a musical pattern.
7. *Musical expectancy*: A response to the gradual unfolding of the syntactical structure of the music and its stylistically-expected or unexpected continuation.
8. *Aesthetic judgement*: A subjective evaluation of the aesthetic value of the music based on an individual set of weighted criteria.

In this chapter, I have mentioned how the structural features of music may induct emotion, how contagion is involved with emotional transfer (Davies 2013) and how musical expectancy was described in the literature earlier in Meyer's (1956) theories. All other types of pathways leading to emotional induction not mentioned above rely upon mechanisms that are triggered through non-musical means, such as visual imagery and episodic memory (Thompson & Coltheart 2008). As the link between visual imagery and emotion induction is correlation and not causation, imagery is a consequence of emotional induction rather than a result of this phenomenon (Day & Thompson 2019). This would confirm why the musicians in the study by Blood and Zatorre (2001) specified that the emotions they experienced directly resulted from the music itself and not of any imagery that might have been conjured.

Day and Thompson (2019) asserted that their participants experienced a physiological reaction to the music on average two seconds after they identified the emotion, and two–three seconds after a visual image was formed. They attributed this to the fact that early emotional experiences may occur spontaneously as a result of brain stem reflexes triggered through the structural features of the music (e.g. loud vs soft). However, more importantly, a visual image might take longer to develop as its development is linked to the narrative structure of music. These researchers posit that once an image is conjured, it may reinforce or modify an existing emotional state depending on the image.

## ■ Conclusion

I would postulate that emotion can be elicited from music without imagery necessarily being conjured. If imagery is conjured, this process takes slightly longer than the initial response to the structural features that elicit emotion induction in the brain stem. It is possible that imagery can be conjured without a physiological, emotional response to the music, and in this instance, it would be because the listener made a cognitive appraisal of the music. Such an appraisal could identify the perceived emotion or affect reflected in the music, as well as one or more sonic anaphones (fragments of music that acoustically mirror non-musical events). If an image is formed after the initial emotion induction, then the image may intensify or alter the initial emotion felt. Based on the literature mentioned throughout this chapter, I propose the following model representing the process whereby artists may produce an artefact in response to how they ascribe meaning to art song (without an understanding of the text), as seen in Figure 1.2.



Source: Author's own work.

**FIGURE 1.2:** Model representing the process of creating visual art inspired by referential meaning derived from music.

The *musical composition* reflects the composer's referential intent (if any). In the current study, the referential meaning is intentional as the text of the art songs composed reflects the meaning. This composition does not necessarily convey the felt emotions of the composer during the compositional process. In the case of lyric-free music, the composer does not always compose with any referential meaning in mind. Whether the composer intends to convey meaning, the listener is still capable of experiencing emotional induction or perceiving emotion in the music.

When composers write music, whose goal is to explicitly convey emotion or non-musical ideas, I propose the term *intentional affective composition* to describe that process. The *performers* (in the current study), including the singer, pianists, conductor and orchestra, interpret the intentional meaning of the composer. It is possible to do this with musical works that contain lyrics or instrumental works that are programmatic. In the case of lyric-free music, the composer's emotional or referential meaning could be made known using

programme notes. When composers do not write with an intentional affective compositional style, this model could still be used as listeners ascribe meaning to the musical performance independently from the composers intentions.

The *performance* provides the artist or listener with audio information that comprises the music's structural features and the voice's prosodic elements. Together these features could convey non-musical ideas and emotions that the listener could either perceive or feel. When the artists make cognitive appraisals of the music's structural features, this could result in induce emotion in the brain stem (Juslin & Västfjäll 2008).

*Visual imagery* could be conjured even when emotions are not physiologically aroused in listeners. In this instance, images may form from the perception of emotion and also through the identification of sonic anaphones. *Visual imagery* formed as a result of emotion induction could intensify or modify the emotion initially felt (Day & Thompson 2019). The image or images conjured inform the creation and conceptualisation of new artwork. The artwork would then be related to the original composition as the artwork's aesthetic qualities exist as a result of how the referential meaning embedded in the performance of the composition was ascribed by the artists. Referential meaning embedded in the recorded performances or the artworks ultimately produced can also be described as tacit knowledge. In Chapter 2, I examine what tacit knowledge is and how it can be disseminated through artistic research. In later chapters, I explore how the artists made sense of the music's structural features (tacit knowledge) in their creative processes and artefacts.

## ■ Consequences and limitations of this study

The current study does not intend to measure the emotions induced by or the physiological reactions to music. It is also not the aim of this study to infer its findings on a greater population of visual artists but rather to explore how these four artists ascribed meaning to art songs (without an understanding of the text) and how their listening experiences influenced their creative process and the artefacts they produced. While the research of Day and Thompson (2019) explored the relationship between visual imagery and emotion induction, they admit that their study did not examine how this process would evolve as a musical work develops over time. Similarly, most of the other studies in this chapter explored the initial emotional response to shorter examples of music.

What makes this study unique is that it explores the relationship between visual imagery, emotion induction and perception in response to an entire art song (not just a short sample). The artists engaged with the music over an extended period, which may have intensified or modified their initial

emotional response. Although the text was present in the performance of the art songs, the artists had to rely on the prosodic elements of speech to make sense of the effect communicated, as they did not understand the text. They also had to rely on sonic anaphones that they recognised in the music to help conjure visual images. Very few empirical studies employing artistic research exist, which examine interdisciplinary work, specifically, the relationship between art, music and emotion, and this research study, therefore, helps to gain more insights into this phenomenon.

# ‘*Nagmusiek*’: An example of an interdisciplinary study employing artistic research and phenomenology as a multi-method approach

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## ■ Introduction

For the novice researcher, specifically, an arts practitioner newly entering the scientific world of the academy, artistic research may be an ideal way of combining artistic practice and research. However, over the last few decades, many conflicting ideas on the subject have been at the forefront of academic discourse, which is likely attributed to the varied fields and genres that find a home within this area of research. Does practice equate to research? Is it necessary that we not conflate the two concepts? Do my work as an artist-researcher fall under artistic research, practice-based research, practice-led

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research, performative research, performance as research, arts-based research or artistic practice as research? Based on the abundance of terminology mentioned, it is clear why the thought of pursuing artistic research for a novice researcher or any seasoned researcher attempting this kind of research might appear daunting.

Notwithstanding, as with any new paradigm or way in which research is conducted, discourse is needed to codify the elements that constitute a new method. Over the last 10 years, in the area of music specifically, much research has been conducted where artist-researchers can now, more so than ever, assert the attributes of what artistic research entails. This chapter aims to explore the methods that were used to research the phenomenon central to this interdisciplinary project that culminated in a multi-modal art exhibition known as '*Nagmusiek*'. In doing so, in this chapter, I illuminate a clearer understanding how to conduct collaborative research on two disciplines that are closely related, namely art and music. Later in this chapter, I elaborate on why I chose to use the nomenclature, artistic research, as most suited for this specific research undertaking.

To better comprehend what I, or other researchers, may understand as artistic research, it may be prudent to situate what it is that we do in a greater context. Henk Borgdorff expands upon concepts first mentioned by Frayling (1993) that distinguish research about the arts into three categories: 'research on the arts', 'research for the arts' and 'research in the arts' (Borgdorff 2010:46). Borgdorff describes the following categories:

- **Research on the arts:** It 'is common to the research traditions of the humanities and social sciences, which observe a certain theoretical distance when they make art practice their object of study' (Borgdorff 2010). An example of this type of research in music could be a musicological study where the researcher relies on archival material or score analysis to provide new insights or theoretical perspectives. This is evident in Susannah Clark's book, *Analyzing Schubert*, where the author promotes new ways of understanding Schubert's music as opposed to how his music has traditionally been perceived (Clark 2011). In this instance, the analysis of Schubert's harmonies and tonal structures was the object of study.
- **Research for the arts:** Borgdorff (2010:46) describes this category as research that generates new knowledge that can be applied both to artistic practice and in the creation of new artistic artefacts. 'In this case, art practice is not the object of study, but its objective'. An example of this is research that I conducted in 2012 concerning the frequent mistakes classical singers make in Italian lyric diction (Cupido 2012). The purpose of the shared knowledge was to serve as a tool for singers during their practice (when Italian repertoire was being studied) to assist them during their art-making process. As a researcher, the author's objective was to promote excellence in artistic practice.

- **Research *in* the arts:** It happens when ‘artistic practice is not only the result of the research but also its methodological vehicle when the research unfolds in and through the acts of creating and performing’ (Borgdorff 2010:46). This statement by Borgdorff confirms that *artistic practice* is central to the outcomes of this type of research. It is also distinctive of its subject and method. This type of research would therefore disseminate knowledge of the artist’s practice, embedded in both the process of creating art and the artefact stemming from that process. While this type of research is the principal methodological instrument in producing this knowledge, many researchers advocate for multiple ways or approaches (methodological pluralism) to complement the primary artistic method to further collect and or analyse the data derived from the process and the artefact (Borgdorff 2010; Candy & Edmonds 2018; Doğantan-Dack 2012; Hultberg 2013). The employment of a pluralistic methodology is especially beneficial when conducting collaborative research.

## ■ The dissemination of knowledge derived from artistic research

Much of the tension in the discourse regarding ‘research in the arts’ concerns how knowledge stemming from artistic practice is disseminated. This is because knowledge derived from the creative process or the artefact produced is considered tacit. Tacit knowledge has been described as the knowledge embedded and situated within creative processes and artefacts; it is the knowledge that the researcher has not reflected on yet or conceptualised (Borgdorff 2007, 2010; Kjærup 2010; Nowotny 2010). Cecilia Hultberg (currently a professor and chair of research at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm) describes this concept rather as the ‘tacit dimension of knowledge’ or ‘non-verbalized knowledge’ (Hultberg 2013:80) because of its similarity to the ideas of Polanyi (1967) who argued that tacit knowledge encompasses the traditions, the practices passed down through generations, unexpressed values and preconceptions that we now see embedded in artistic practice. As artist-researchers, we need to find ways to articulate and contextualise this knowledge or give voice to the unspoken. The problem remains that not all tacit knowledge embedded in artistic practice may be able to be put into words. In music, for example, words are not always capable of deciphering the implied meaning intrinsic to the sound that is emitted during a performance. What makes this collaborative project innovative is that the artists use imagery to capture their interpretation of the tacit knowledge in music.

However, those who are also criticised equate value to every artistic endeavour, as not all music-making is research worthy. As Huib Schippers maintains, ‘not every rehearsal is a research project, and not all performances



are research outcomes' (2007:35). Artist-researchers, therefore, need to contextualise and find ways of illuminating the novelty and knowledge stemming from their processes and products. It has been my experience that the best way to contextualise my artistic research is through discursive means.

Borgdorff (2010:59) clarifies the reasons why many artist-researchers need to contextualise the outcomes of their research as follows:

- to retrace the research process to shed light on how and to possibly validate the results achieved
- to interpret the findings generated from the data derived from creative processes or artefacts
- to verbalise or conceptualise the unspoken: to understand what is embedded in tacit knowledge through language.

For artist-researchers averse to presenting their outcomes in written text, Borgdorff (2010:58) promotes other ways of discursiveness such as 'an artistic portfolio that maps the line of artistic reasoning, or argumentations coded in scores, scripts, videos or diagrams'. Nonetheless, researchers agree that there are other reasons why some sort of verbalisation is necessary beyond the need to situate the artist-researchers' outcomes within the appropriate environment or to justify their findings to the greater artistic community. One of the reasons is that discourse prevents any ambiguity in the interpretation of the findings (Candy & Edmonds 2018:67). When the outcomes of one's research are presented, the artist-researcher's authentic voice must be heard when interpreting their work. When conducting collaborative artistic research, the issue of conveying an authentic account of the artist's voice (especially when they are not documenting, contextualising or analysing the findings in the written component of the research) becomes imperative.

## ■ The role of the researchers in collaborative artistic research

Mine Doğantan-Dack (2012:6) warns that when artists (specifically in research on live music) are an integral part of any research collaboration, researchers need to find ways to allow their authentic voices to be heard, they need to be 'active agent[s] in the research' rather than informants. When possible, their voices should not be anonymised. I have conducted research where I was interested in various aspects of the performer or artist, be it well-being, musical performance anxiety or their lived experiences (Cupido 2016a, 2018, 2019). In these instances, I was interested in understanding phenomena central to the experiences of artists. In these studies, their identities (where necessary) needed to be anonymised as they shared sensitive experiential data and anonymity was contingent on their informed consent being given to participate. In these cases, they were participants in the studies. Sometimes, artists

provided consent for their names to be used, and in those instances, their identity validated the study significantly. In cases where collaborative studies are undertaken, and the artists' processes or products produce tacit knowledge that is then analysed; the artists' voice must remain authentic; it is imperative that in these instances, the artists are not anonymised unless there is a risk that the experiences shared might bring them discomfort or harm their reputations. I concur with Hultberg (2013) that in this type of research, the artists are more than participants; they are, indeed, co-researchers. The tacit knowledge that they produce is generated as a direct result of the primary methodological vehicle, which is artistic research.

In the past, much discourse on artistic research methods limited the researchers to reflect on their practice (Hultberg 2013):

[T]hat artistic research is a kind of action research that has to be conducted by artists who explore their artistic processes and works of art to reveal a tacit dimension of knowledge. (p. 82)

This, of course, poses a dilemma for researchers conducting interdisciplinary research where the voices of multiple artists across varying possible genres need to be accommodated. In music, the concept of limiting one's research to one's production of tacit knowledge is also problematic, as musicians do not work in silos. Many solo instrumentalists often play in ensembles; singers perform in operas, and soloists often perform with orchestras, where the conductors also contribute to the outcomes of the research. In these instances, researchers need to find ways of documenting multiple voices and sources of tacit knowledge. Many researchers concur that it is difficult to use traditional ways of analysing non-conceptual data and rather advocate for a pluralistic approach to both gather and analyse data stemming from artistic processes and products (Borgdorff 2010; Doğantan-Dack 2012; Frisk & Östersjö 2013; Hultberg 2013; Jullander 2013; Kjørup 2010).

## ■ Methodological pluralism in artistic research

In order to understand how multiple methods could be used to gather and analyse embedded knowledge in creative processes and artefacts, I would first like to explore the primary method (artistic research) before examining possible secondary methods. What is artistic research, and what does it entail? Borgdorff (2010:59) describes artistic research as 'the articulation of the unreflective, non-conceptual content enclosed in aesthetic experiences, enacted in creative practices and embodied in artistic products'. It is also expressed as 'activities [in research] that are methodologically integrated with an artistic creation and cannot be pursued without art-making' (Doğantan-Dack 2012:36). As an artist-researcher, one has to find ways to examine the embedded tacit knowledge in artistic practice, generated through the process of making art and found in the artefact created. In order to achieve this

outcome, Candy and Edmonds (2018) warn that we do not conflate artistic practice with the research itself.

These authors (Candy & Edmonds 2018) describe the practice as follows:

[7]he act of creating something novel with the necessary processes and techniques belonging to a given field, whether art, music, design, engineering or science. In the life of an individual person, it involves conceiving ideas and realizing them in some form as art[e]facts, musical compositions, designs or performances. (p. 64)

Alternatively, they describe research as 'a systematic investigation to establish facts, test theories and reach new knowledge or new understandings [...] research must be disseminated, original and contextualized' (Candy & Edmonds 2018). In both descriptions, the generation of something novel, albeit tacit, is evident. This is arguably the fundamental issue that underpins the reasoning behind proponents of 'practice as research' (Haseman 2006; Tromans 2013). What differentiates the statements as described by Candy and Edmonds is the fact that in artistic practice, the knowledge generated is unreflected, not contextualised within 'relevant environments' (Borgdorff 2010:56) and not disseminated. Artistic research should therefore be seen as combining practice and research in a way that facilitates enough scrutiny of the outcomes and methods employed to empower the artist-researchers to claim that their work is original and that it contributes to new knowledge (Candy & Edmonds 2018:64).

The method employed when combining practice and research should be flexible (Jullander 2013:15). Artist-researchers need to find the most suitable ways of achieving their outcomes without rigidly conforming to one true, accepted way of doing things. In this regard, artistic research as a method remains transformative (albeit with the fundamental, common objective of seeking and disseminating new knowledge through creative processes and products). Artistic research as a method should employ an explorative approach both in regards to method, and in the presentation of the findings, as this kind of research would often be unpredictable, random and require some level of intuition (Borgdorff 2010; Hultberg 2013). Finally, an experimental attitude or approach is considered to be intrinsic to the nature of artistic research (Borgdorff 2010; Coessens, Crispin & Vaes 2014; Frisk & Östersjö 2013; Jullander 2013). During the process of creating something novel or exploring the process of art-making, artist-researchers often delve beyond traditional ways of doing and thinking. Experimentation not only is limited to artistic practices (such as musicians finding new ways of interpreting tempi, phrasing or even ways in which to better collaborate in an ensemble) but can also be employed in how researchers combine artistic practice with concepts, phenomena or theories from the social sciences or the humanities.

An ideal way of gathering and analysing data, and capturing the knowledge derived from one's process is through *critical reflection* (Aho 2013; Candy &

Edmonds 2018; Frisk & Östersjö 2013; Wallrup 2013). Reflection on one's work documents illuminates the essences, insights and new approaches that are embedded in the process. In order to achieve this outcome, the artist-researcher must not merely account for the events that transpired during the process but must provide a critical, rich, experiential description that would elicit insightful new understandings of art-making. Critics often point out the subjectivity of this type of self-reflection; however, self-reflection is not only limited to artistic research but also integral and accepted in certain anthropological and ethnographic studies (Aho 2013; Frisk & Östersjö 2013). Furthermore, the 'myth of the researcher as an objective observer of nature-given facts has been put in doubt many times, also within the hard sciences' (Frisk & Östersjö 2013:46). This is because facts that are considered to be generated objectively are done so still within very specific frameworks (Guba & Lincoln 1994:107). Other sources of data for artistic research in music include an analysis of the score, literature both historical and contemporary, about one's area of focus, recordings of other artists and observation. When data saturation has been achieved, an analysis of the artists' self-reflection, documentation, experiences and the artefact created would then generate reflected knowledge that can be contextualised within the appropriate environment. Only once this is complete the researcher would then be able to unambiguously contribute to new understandings about their process and creative products.

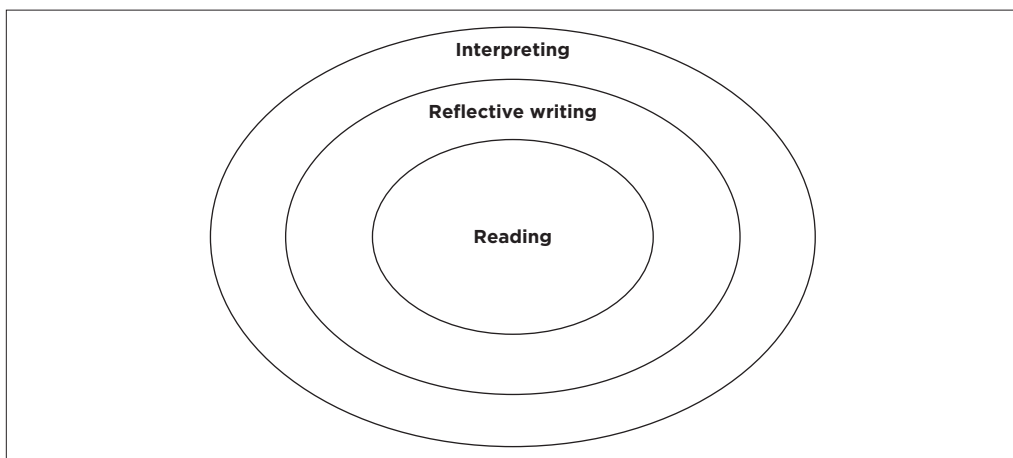
The process described so far has been promoted as an ideal way for artist-researchers, working independently from other artists, to generate new knowledge from their creative practice. Ironically, artists never work alone as the act of contextualising one's work entails situating the knowledge produced within the relevant environments, and these environments encapsulate the aesthetic experiences, norms, and contexts of other artists. Nonetheless, significant contributions to knowledge have been made using this method. An example is the research of pianist Stephen Emmerson, where he traces his process of interpreting Mozart's *Rondo in A minor, K. 511*, on grand piano and fortepiano (Turner & Emmerson 2006). What is interesting in this video is that the embedded knowledge concerning technical challenges, interpretation and performance practice is not only verbalised by Emmerson himself but is also evident to musicians (who have a shared understanding of these musical concepts) in his bodily gestures and the sound emitted from the instrument. When conducting collaborative research, artist-researchers must find ways in which to gather and analyse information (as seen in Emmerson's video) from multiple voices, possibly across various genres.

## ■ Artistic research and phenomenology

The experiences that artists share in a joint project are central to capturing the essence and meaning of multiple voices. By examining artistic experience, we

would illuminate what artists know and do (Coessens et al. 2014:29). Borgdorff (2010:55) emphasises that a prolonged engagement focusing on the artists' experiences during their creative process provides a better understanding and comprehension of the knowledge generated. The insights derived from a prolonged engagement with the artists involved, focusing on experience, are often more beneficial in understanding phenomena than only utilising an explanatory approach (Borgdorff 2010). Borgdorff asserts that artistic research would benefit tremendously by incorporating phenomenological methods in achieving this goal.

One may, therefore, understand the experiences of artists during their creative processes; hermeneutic phenomenological data-capturing methods can be applied to better make sense of these experiences. Phenomenology has been described as the study of phenomena that examines nature and meaning (Finlay 2012; Kafle 2013; Merleau-Ponty 1962). Kafle (2013:183 see also Grbich (2007) and Van Manen (1997) further describes phenomenology as 'an approach to understand[ing] the hidden meanings and the essences of an experience together' and as a way in which the researcher 'questions the way one experiences the world'. I mentioned earlier that the self-reflections that artists can use to document their creativity are subjective. Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the subjective experiences of artists to interpret how they make sense of the world. Researchers generate a deeper understanding of these experiences using the hermeneutic circle to analyse data. This entails reading and rereading texts (generated from reflections, interviews or observations), reflective writing, and rigorously interpreting phenomena (Kafle 2013:195).



Source: Kafle (2013:195).

**FIGURE 2.1:** Hermeneutic circle.

What has been highlighted so far is that artistic researchers are encouraged to use multiple methods to best achieve their desired outcomes. While the aim of this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive list of possible secondary methods, I would like to briefly mention two additional ways of gathering and analysing data derived from the artists' process and products associated with the experience. In previous research studies, I have found interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and narrative autoethnography to be valuable methods when exploring phenomena related to lived experience. IPA could be employed by researchers who wish to explore the intersection between artistic practice and music psychology. As IPA is rooted in phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography, researchers can explore in-depth accounts of their own experiences before searching for commonalities and differences among others. In order to achieve this outcome, researchers are advised to follow the six analytical steps of IPA as described by Smith, Larkin and Flowers (2009), which include the following:

- Read and re-read the transcript to get to know the data.
- Make initial notes to systematically capture observations.
- Develop emerging (prototype) themes for each case.
- Search for connections across emergent themes for each case.
- Move to the next case.
- Look for patterns across cases (Goldspink & Engward 2019:292).

Another way to ensure all the artists' voices are heard when conducting collaborative artistic research is to employ narrative autoethnography. Although this may seem counterintuitive as the artist-researcher documents their own experiences, Doğantan-Dack (2012) demonstrates how other artists' voices can be included in the main narrative. Here, a verbatim account of the other artists' experiences and contributions can be documented as alongside the author's voice part of the findings. This method is also ideal for documenting and disseminating knowledge derived from the highly emotive experience. For this method to be viable, all the researchers involved in the study (whose experiences are being documented) should be actively involved in the act of art-making, as their shared experience is central to understanding what is being investigated. It would not make sense, for example, for voice pathologists to examine the effects of poor vocal hygiene in opera singers and utilise narrative autoethnography as a secondary method, seeing that they do not share the opera singers' experiences (unless the pathologists are also singers and include their accounts of their practice as part of the data). For researchers sharing an experience of making art, utilising this method allows them to contribute to the trustworthiness, and credibility of their study as (Doğantan-Dack 2012):

[7]here is an attempt to balance the details of the subjective experiences and evaluations by reference to the experiences of the others involved in the research processes, and to existing research, to contextualize the personal. (p. 7)

## ■ Trustworthiness, credibility and research paradigms

Positivistic researchers place great emphasis on the validity and reliability of the data produced in research. In recent years, researchers have agreed that this 'positivist belief in a value-free, objective science is a delusion and has already been decisively countered by a subjectivist turn' (Frisk & Östersjö 2013:59). Although researchers advocate for thinking beyond the traditional concepts of validity and reliability, they agree that academic rigour and the need to present a trustworthy and credible account of one's findings are necessary. When employing hermeneutic phenomenology as complimentary to artistic research, one should consider four quality concerns as described by Van Manen (1997, see also Kafle 2013), which include the findings' orientation, strength, richness and depth. As applied to artistic research exploring the meaning of phenomena and experience (Kafle 2013:196; see also Van Manen 1997):

- Orientation would entail how the researchers involve themselves in their respective worlds.
- Strength refers to the 'convincing capacity of the texts' that co-researchers would use to represent their 'core intention of the understanding of the inherent meanings' of the phenomena being investigated.
- Richness refers to the quality of the data that depicts the meanings as perceived by the co-researchers.
- Depth entails how the research text can best present a deeper meaning of the intentions of the co-researchers.

By ensuring that findings relating to experiential data reflect these qualities, artist-researchers can account for the trustworthiness of their work. Alternatively, Frisk and Östersjö (2013) assert that trustworthiness and credibility can also be pursued when artist-researchers make the subjective nature of their practice explicit in their research design. This concept can be applied to all collaborative artistic research, even when the focus of the study does not require phenomenological methods of investigation. In addition to the subjectivity of the researcher's practice made visible in the research design, researchers can exhibit credibility and trustworthiness when they can demonstrate expertise in their fields and employ a pragmatic approach to gathering and analysing data (Frisk & Östersjö 2013). In order to facilitate a pragmatic approach to one's research, researchers must contextualise their research using an appropriate paradigm and (for the sake of credibility) make this explicit in their research design. I would posit that artist-researchers employ either an interpretive or a pragmatic research paradigm when conducting artistic research, especially collaborative or interdisciplinary research.

In research, a paradigm refers to the philosophical assumptions or beliefs that make up the worldview of the researcher (Creswell 2014). In effect,

paradigms could be used as a tool with which to solve a particular research problem. Each paradigm has a unique outlook on the 'axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and rhetoric of research' (Kaushik, Walsh & Lai 2019:1). Pragmatism as a research paradigm embraces a plurality of methods, and pragmatists believe that knowledge is always gained through experience. Pragmatists focus more the research outcomes and on answering the research questions than on the methods employed by the study. Pragmatists have moved beyond the duality of objectivity versus subjectivity, view truth as socially constructed through shared experiences, and focus on solving problems based on the researchers' constructed truth or view of reality (Kaushik et al. 2019:2-4). Goles and Hirschheim (2000) provide the following example that illustrates how various researchers perceive an object based on their worldview:

For a more positivistic researcher, an object with [a] flat surface and four legs would always be a table. For a constructivist, based on their perspective, the same object would be a table if [they were] eating off it, a bench if [they were] sitting on it, and a platform if [they were] standing on it. However, a pragmatist would define the object based on its utility, for instance, the object would be a table if [they] intend to eat off it, a bench if [they] intend to sit on it, and a platform if [they] intend to stand on it. In this example, it is important to notice that the pragmatist would not define the object based on what it is or what it is being used for, but rather based on how it would help the pragmatist achieve their purpose. (p. 261)

As artistic researchers employ multiple methods to achieve their outcomes, and their reality is constructed through the shared experience of other artists in their fields, pragmatism as a research paradigm would suit their goals very well. Similarly, an interpretivist paradigm would be most conducive to achieving the research goals when the researchers attempt to make sense of phenomena in lived experiences. These experiences are embedded in the processes of the researchers and can be explored (as mentioned) using hermeneutic phenomenology, IPA or narrative autoethnography as secondary methods. Interpretivists assume that a single phenomenon can be interpreted in multiple ways. Interpretivists endeavour to gain a deeper and richer understanding of a phenomenon within a specific context; they do not intend to generalise their findings to a broader segment of the population (Creswell 2014; Pham 2018). For artistic researchers, situating or contextualising the tacit knowledge produced from their creative practice within the larger relevant environment is crucial to disseminating that knowledge. While other researchers may find ways in which other research paradigms may suit artistic research, currently, I perceive a pragmatist or interpretivist paradigm as most conducive to conducting this type of research.

## ■ Ethics

While describing the ethical considerations of this study later in this chapter, I first consider a few ethical points central to conducting artistic research.



In many qualitative studies, there is an expectation to ensure that the participants of the study are treated with an ethic of care. This entails protecting their privacy when sensitive information is being shared and ensuring that all the participants are aware of the procedures and potential threats to their well-being during the study. Researchers make possible threats explicit to participants when they obtain their informed consent to take part in the study. Oftentimes, participants are also given aliases to protect their identity (Creswell 2014).

I have mentioned that there is a concerted effort in artistic research for artists to be active agents in collaborative projects. Researchers should strive to ensure that the artists' authentic voice is heard and that they are not anonymised (Doğantan-Dack 2012, 2020). This is problematic when research explores sensitive experiential issues of artists. Artists who research their artistic practice have autonomous control over what they share with the broader community. In collaborative artistic research, it is, therefore, imperative that the researchers who document and disseminate the data do so with the utmost integrity. They must ensure that co-researchers (not involved in written discourse) are informed and have provided their consent to have their identities revealed and that the true intentions of all the researchers involved are communicated to the larger community.

In artistic research that focuses on interpreting phenomena and experiences, the researchers must use rhetoric that best elicits the true meaning and intentions of all the co-researchers (Kafle 2013:196). When research that uses artistic practice (the process and products of artists) to reveal sensitive issues about artists is conducted, the project leader must ensure that the identities of artists are protected if necessary. In instances where the greater community benefits from the knowledge uncovered from these collaborative projects, I would argue that protecting the artists is more important than their identities being revealed. In these instances, we can advocate for artists to be active agents in their work by capturing a truthful account of their experience and implementing the necessary procedures to do so.

## ■ **'Nagmusiek': Combining artistic research and hermeneutic phenomenology**

When embarking upon this research, I was unsure whether the outcomes of this research would be best achieved through artistic research methods or rather suited to another method of enquiry. The desired outcome was to generate new knowledge concerning a particular phenomenon that encompassed two disciplines, namely music and art. I wished to explore how visual artists make sense of referential meaning in music (art song) during their process of creating art. What was central to my study was that I was aiming to

explore a phenomenon that transpired during an artist's process. At first, I considered whether using a practice-led approach would suit the purpose as practice-led research is intended to (Candy & Edmonds 2018):

[G]enerate new understandings about the nature of practice itself [...] [and] where the primary focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice, or to advance knowledge within practice, such research includes the 'process of practice' as an integral part of its method. (p. 65)

A huge distinction that separates practice-led research from either practice-based or artistic research is that the latter method requires the dissemination of the tacit knowledge embedded in an artefact as integral to its methodological approach (Borgdorff 2010; Doğantan-Dack 2012). This clarified that conducting artistic research would be most conducive as I could not achieve the outcomes of this research study without the creation of art (Candy & Edmonds 2018). I would not have fully understood how artists ascribe musical referential meaning during their process without exploring the product of that process, the artworks.

Furthermore, I questioned whether I could achieve a rich and deep understanding of the meaning they ascribed during their process purely through an analysis of their artistic practice. I realised that to gain a deeper understanding, I would have to employ hermeneutic phenomenology as a secondary method. In doing so, I would not only analyse their self-reflection documents and their artworks but also observe their process, and after an initial analysis, follow up with interviews where I used open-ended questions to best elicit rich, in-depth experiential data. This approach added to the findings' orientation, strength, richness and depth, as suggested by Van Manen (1997).

Frisk and Östersjö (2013) assert that researchers can further assure the credibility of their findings by demonstrating their expertise in their respective fields and by making the subjective nature of their practice explicit in the research design. My role as a researcher in this collaborative project was twofold: that of the main researcher (the project leader) and curator. I am a classical singer who has performed professionally in opera, oratorio and have collaborated with pianists, conductors and orchestras in the performance of art songs. The repertoire that I study and perform is mostly from the genres associated with the Western art music tradition. Currently, I am an associate professor in applied singing, singing pedagogy and opera, and this research concerns various aspects relating to classical singers and the music that we sing. This may include issues on the well-being of classical singers, their lived experiences or issues associated with the music we sing, such as performance practice, lyric diction, expressivity and interpretation, to name but a few. '*Nagmusiek*' as a research project concerns the non-musical ideas found in the

music that we sing, specifically art songs, and the way visual artists ascribe referential meaning to it in their creative process and artefacts.

As a researcher in the field of music, I had to gather, analyse and disseminate knowledge derived from the processes and products of four artists. This was carried out after I completed a thorough review of the literature on the main concepts underpinning this book, namely 'referentialism' in music, music's ability to evoke aroused or perceived emotion and the intersection of music and art's intrinsic, aesthetic qualities. I also interrogated the literature to ascertain what interdisciplinary research has been conducted on music and visual art, particularly the art-making process.

As a curator, I had to purposefully assemble an artistic team capable of achieving the desired outcomes of the research. The artists include Marna de Wet, Kevin du Plessis, Jean Lampen and Elna Venter. These artists are my co-researchers as the tacit knowledge produced, embedded in their creative process and artefacts, are integral to the understandings and insights disseminated in this research. More detail regarding their prior work and experience as artists can be seen in the notes on the contributors. They were primarily based in Potchefstroom, a town in the North West province of South Africa (and where I am based at North-West University), and because of their geographical location, it was convenient for me to gather data as I was able to interact with them frequently and observe them in person.

I had worked with most of the artists (besides Elna Venter) previously on another music and art collaborative project where I explored how they made sense of *Sehnsucht* in their creative process and artworks (Cupido 2016b). Since then, we had already established a shared understanding of their attraction to the text of art songs as their primary inspiration when conceptualising their work. However, they were unaware of any theories regarding how music could potentially evoke emotion in listeners. All the artists were unfamiliar with either German or French (the art songs chosen for this project were in these respective languages), and all the artists had very limited musical training. As such, we had a partly shared but also greatly divergent understanding of the problem central to this study. Hultberg (2013) and Kjörup (2010) agree that interdisciplinary collaborative studies have the potential to reveal a much more profound understanding of the research problem when the researchers have a shared and divergent understanding of the problem. The fact that the artists were not partial to any relevant theories was crucial to this project, as a credible understanding of how they made sense of referential meaning in their process was reliant on them not having any preconceived ideas.

As a curator and researcher, I was responsible for conceptualising the research, choosing the art songs for the project and corresponding with the

head of visual arts at the Aardklop National Arts Festival, where the artworks, music and text would be exhibited. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the theme of the exhibitions at the arts festival that year was ‘Letters to the night’. I selected songs by Strauss, Schubert, Fauré and Berlioz to serve as inspiration for the artists to create new works based on how they ascribed musical referential meaning to each song. I selected these songs because of the way the night (as written in the text by the poets and interpreted in the music by the composers) was used as an overarching context in which the stories being told took place. In these songs, the reference to the night was not only literal but also metaphorical.

As the project leader, I convened group meetings at the beginning and the end of the project to explain the procedures and concept, as well as to gather further data.

Excerpt (1) from my letter to the artists:

‘This year, I am going to explore how you ascribe musical meaning to your visual representations when you are not provided with translations and when you solely rely on the music for inspiration. You will each be provided with five songs (and will make five artworks). Everyone will have the same five songs. This will allow me to investigate the different approaches/inspiration you had while producing the same work and how you ascribed musical meaning.’

During our first meeting, I wanted to ascertain to what degree the artists could listen to and interpret art songs when they did not understand the text. It also allowed me to set the artists’ minds at ease as they were concerned about their possible inability to interpret musical ideas. I comforted them in the knowledge that there was no right or wrong response, that every response was valid and that I was not interested in whether they could interpret the literal meaning of the text. As an activity, I allowed them to listen to three song recordings, namely ‘*Die Forelle*’ [‘The Trout’] Op. 32, D 550; ‘*Gretchen am Spinnrade*’ [‘Gretchen at the spinning wheel’] Op. 2, D 118; and Berlioz’s ‘*L’île inconnue*’ [‘The unknown island’] song no. 6 from his cycle, ‘*Les nuits d’été*’ Op. 7.

After listening to each song cycle, I asked the artists to tell me stories or write down any ideas or experiences based on what they heard. Each artist then proceeded to narrate a story or describe an image that was conjured, or an emotion that was stirred when they listened to the song. They did not have the musical vocabulary to use the correct nomenclature when describing the music; however, I extrapolated that they derived the stories, images and emotions from the melody, pitch, tempi, harmonic structure, change in volume and texture, use of instrumentation and rhythmic devices heard in the piano accompaniment. This confirmed McKeever’s (2014) assertion (as described in Chapter 1) that these musical qualities can be heard and distinguished even by the untrained ear.

Now that I was satisfied that the artists would be able to deliver a rich, deep description of how they could ascribe meaning to music, I presented them with recordings of the songs that I had chosen for the project:

**Song 1** *Strauss - Four Last Songs ('Beim Schlafengehen')*, Renée Fleming, (soprano) Münchner Philharmoniker, Christian Thielemann Decca, 2008.

**Song 2** *A Portrait of Kiri Te Kanawa ('Après un rêve')*, Dame Kiri te Kanawa (soprano); Richard Amner (piano), Sony Classical, 1987.

**Song 3** *Strauss - Four Last Songs, etc. ('Im abendrot')*, Jessye Norman (soprano), Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Kurt Masur Philips, 1983.

**Song 4** *Schubert - Lieder ('Erlkönig')*, Ian Bostridge (tenor); Julius Drake (piano), Warner Classics, 1998.

**Song 5** *Berlioz - Les nuits d'été, Op. 7 and Opera Arias ('La spectre de la rose')* Susan Graham (mezzo-soprano), orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Sony BMG Music Entertainment, 1997.

I presented the artists with the songs that were saved on a compact disc without any reference to their titles, as I did not want the artists to have any clues about their meaning. The artists also signed informed consent forms, where they agreed that their identities might be used. They also agreed not to confer with each other during the duration of their process, as their unique experience was not to be influenced by each other. The artists spent five months engaging with the selected songs during their creative process. I asked the artists to document their processes by journaling their reflections on their processes. I also asked them to be very specific about capturing the precise time on the recording when they were inspired by something:

Excerpt (2) from my letter to the artists:

'Each artist will be provided with a journal where you will document every aspect of your process. It will be important that every entry contains the date, song number and your thoughts. Don't be scared to tell me a story or an experience of which the music reminded you. The reason why you should mention the specific times within the song is so that I can go and study the score afterwards and investigate what is happening in the music.'

At the onset of this study, I had to make explicit the way I (as the project leader) would use their data. Ethically, I ensured that when I disseminated their experience, I always strived to honestly capture the essence of the meaning they ascribed during their process.

Excerpt (2) from my letter to the artists:

**‘Who will have access to the data?’**

At the end of the project, your works will be showcased in an exhibition. Attendees at the exhibition will be able to see your works and a book will be published later which will reveal your process and experiences of ascribing musical meaning to your artworks.

**Is there anything else you should know?**

You do not have to share any sensitive experience or story which you do not feel comfortable with being published. You will be able to read my findings before publication and make any changes that you feel are inaccurate.

**Declaration by co-researcher**

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to take part in this visual art and music research study.

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form, and it is written in a language that I understand and with which I am comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been suitably answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I agree to have my name published in the findings and to share my experiences and artworks with the community who chooses to read this research.’

During the creative process, I observed their work on several occasions and asked them questions regarding the images that were evoked initially through the music and which musical features elicited the imagery. After they sent me their reflective journals, I analysed the data to see if their initial emotional response or experience had stayed the same or if it differed. I followed up with questions as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2017:61), best suited to extract data that would ‘lead to a textural description and a structural description of the experiences, and ultimately provide an understanding of the common experiences’ of the co-researchers. This would lead to understanding *what* the artists experienced and *how* they experienced the phenomenon. I asked the following open-ended questions:

- Can you describe what you experienced during your creative process when listening to the selected music?
- What influenced or affected your experience?
- How did you make sense of the music?
- In which ways did the music inspire your creative process?

This ultimately allowed me to answer the main research question that propelled this study:

- How do visual artists ascribe musical referential meaning to art songs during their process of creating art without an understanding of the text?

I also aimed to answer a secondary question:

- What new understandings does this study reveal about the creative process and products of four artists through artistic research and phenomenology?

In collaboration with the artists, I then analysed the aesthetic qualities of their artworks to further make sense of the phenomenon. This was carried out through content analysis exploring the shapes, blending of colours, hues and other visual aspects of the artworks. I then looked for similarities between the structural elements of the artefacts and the music that inspired them. I interpreted my findings within an interpretivist paradigm as I intended to understand a phenomenon within a specific context and not generalise my findings to a bigger population. Once all the experiential data were gathered, I searched for 'significant statements' that 'provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon' (Creswell & Poth 2017:61). This was performed by following the principles of the hermeneutic circle: reading, writing and interpreting findings repeatedly. The statements would then be organised in such a way that I was able to develop themes.

## ■ Significance of this study

Much interdisciplinary research regarding the intersection of music and the visual arts is related to education (Bohannon & McDowell 2010; Chrysostomou 2004; Cosenza 2006; Filipovic & Grujic-Garic 2011; Pavlou & Athanasiou 2014). These studies concern how music and art can be brought together to foster better teaching and learning, especially among children. Chrysostomou (2004) explores the relationship between music education and art while developing a new curriculum in Greece. Cosenza (2006) researches how music and art can be integrated to better facilitate learning music. Bohannon and McDowell (2010) search for connections between music, movement and art with the aim that elementary school teacher candidates can promote the arts in their teaching and learning strategies. Filipovic and Grujic-Garic (2011) examine how music can influence children's artistic expression. Pavlou and Athanasiou (2014) explore ways in which music can be used to foster a better understanding of artworks and images among children. They also mention how emotion can be evoked from music and how this may facilitate a better understanding of art.

To my knowledge, I am only aware of one study that conducts interdisciplinary research between art and music outside the field of education. Tischler et al. (2019) employed an action-based research study to develop

musical and artistic activities that can be used by caregivers of dementia patients. Limited interdisciplinary studies exist that explore the intersection of music and visual art, focusing on the artists' experiences during their creative process. In a research study, 'From Song to Visual Art: Exploring *Sehnsucht* in the lived experiences of visual artists' (Cupido 2016b), I employed IPA to explore the lived experience of four artists as they ascribed meaning to *Sehnsucht* in music while creating art. Although I disseminated an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon, the focus of this study was on lived experience rather than exploring the tacit knowledge embedded in their practice. '*Nagmusiek*' seeks to reveal insights into both experience and embedded tacit knowledge. This study explores how artists make sense of a phenomenon by examining their creative process and products. For this purpose, a pluralistic methodological approach was best suited, and to my knowledge, this study is, therefore, unique in both method and content.

## ■ Conclusion and delimitations

This chapter restates the purpose of this study and the research questions. It serves as an example of showcasing how pluralistic methods of enquiry can acquire knowledge in a transdisciplinary study. As the researcher, I employed artistic research and phenomenology to answer my research questions. Furthermore, the music I research and perform are compositions mostly from the genres of Western art music. As a singer, I am interested in how the music that I perform is understood and interpreted by my audience, and I am also interested in the potential tacit knowledge that may be revealed by exploring phenomena associated with the repertoire. I am aware that other music genres and their way of music-making may have their own outcomes on how artists may ascribe musical meaning. As this research study focused on a phenomenon within a specific context, I was interested in how these four artists make sense of the musical referential meaning derived from art songs primarily from the Romantic period. The songs were chosen from this period as much literature exists on the referential qualities of this music, for example, the art songs of Schubert and Strauss. Poetry, music and art from the Romantic period also share many similar ideals, such as an emphasis on individuality, emotion, imagination, subjectivity and spontaneity (Bonds 2006; Bowie 2009; Burkholder, Grout & Palisca 2019). These ideals (common to music and art) lend themselves to an interdisciplinary investigation of the phenomenon explored in this study: understanding how artists ascribe musical meaning in their creative process. The four artists used mixed media, oil on board, photography, pen and ink watercolour to express their interpretation of the music. In future studies, researchers can explore this phenomenon with other music with its related styles, genres and other art mediums.





# Understanding night music through analysis: Nocturnal features and forces

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## ■ Introduction

My first class in music history was in secondary school on the characteristics of Baroque music, largely adapted from *Music: An Appreciation*, by Roger Kamien. One of the Baroque characteristics is the way in which the contour of melodies supports the meaning of the lyrics, also known as word painting. 'Ev'ry valley shall be exalted', the air for tenor and orchestra from Georg Friederich Händel's oratorio, '*Messiah*', is one of the works that were discussed in depth in Kamien's book. I include a fragment from the vocal melody in Figure 3.1.

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The image shows a musical score for a vocal melody in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The lyrics are: "Ev'ry val-ley, ev'-ry val - ley shall be ex-al-ted, shall be ex-al - ted, shall be ex-al - ted, shall be ex-al - ted, and ev'ry moun-tain and hill made low, the croo- ked, straight, and the rough pla-ces plain, the croo - ked straight, the croo - ked straight, and the rough pla-ces plain, and the rough pla-ces plain." The score is divided into six systems. The first system contains the first line of music with lyrics "Ev'ry val-ley, ev'-ry val - ley shall be ex-al-ted, shall be ex-al -". The second system contains the second line of music with lyrics "ted, shall be ex-al -". The third system contains the third line of music with lyrics "ted, shall be ex-al -". The fourth system contains the fourth line of music with lyrics "ted, shall be ex-al -". The fifth system contains the fifth line of music with lyrics "ted, shall be ex-al -". The sixth system contains the sixth line of music with lyrics "ted, shall be ex-al -".

Source: Original music by Händel (1902:8-10), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission by Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.1:** A fragment from Händel's 'Air: Ev'ry valley shall be exalted' (vocal melody).

There are four exemplary instances of word painting:

- **'Ev'ry valley shall be exalted'**: The concept of exaltation is portrayed by long coloratura passages that gradually rise by ascending sequences. See a) in Figure 3.1.
- **'Ev'ry mountain and hill made low'**: The pitches on the word 'mountain' start on F#5, the word 'hill' starts on D#5 and the word 'low' on F#4 – an octave lower than the first syllable of 'mountain'. See b) in Figure 3.1.
- **'The crooked straight'**: The setting of the word 'crooked' is melismatic with erratic intervals to support the concept of crookedness, and the word 'straight' is syllabic with a stationary tone to support the concept of straightness. See c) in Figure 3.1.
- **'The rough places plain'**: The melismatic tone on the word 'plain' has E5 as the central tone, and the concept of roughness is portrayed through alternating tones D5 and E5 in quavers, resulting in the word 'plain' on stationary E5s in minims. See d) in Figure 3.1.

Soon after the Baroque era was discussed, we ventured into the Romantic era. The focus was on the Lieder of Franz Schubert – more specifically, 'Die Forelle' ['The Trout'] for solo voice and piano. In this song, the rhythmic pattern in the piano accompaniment plays an important role in suggesting the flexing movement of trout in the water. This flexing movement is achieved through gradually ascending broken chords, of which the tones leap upwards and downwards, in the right-hand part of the piano accompaniment (see Figure 3.2).

Source: Original music by Schubert (1895:132), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.2:** A fragment from Schubert's '*Die Forelle*' (mm. 1-8').

The lyrics of the last verse deal with the fisherman who finally catches the trout with his rod. Translation © Richard Wigmore, author of *Schubert: The Complete Song Texts*, published by Schirmer Books, provided courtesy of Oxford Lieder (Wigmore 1988):

<i>er macht das Bächlein tückisch trübe,</i>	cunningly he made the brook cloudy,
<i>und eh ich es gedacht,</i>	and in an instant,
<i>so zuckte seine Rute,</i>	his rod quivered,
<i>das Fischlein zappelt dran,</i>	and the fish struggled on it,

At this point in the Lied, the piano accompaniment significantly changes to repeated block chords, the melody changes from a major key to a minor key, and the initially flowing phrases of the melody line are broken by rests (see Figure 3.3).

Source: Original music by Schubert (1895:133-134), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.3:** Middle section of Schubert's '*Die Forelle*' where the trout is caught.

I learned two important things at the time, not realising that it laid the foundation for my work as a researcher and composer, many years later.<sup>2</sup> Firstly, I learned that listeners understand metaphorically that music moves. Secondly, I realised that composers are capable of conveying non-musical ideas, such as auditory imagery, among listeners through music. In order to clearly understand the remainder of this chapter, it will be beneficial to the reader to critically consider the statement that music *moves*.

## ■ Music moves: Metaphors in music

Arguments that music can convey non-musical ideas are presented in the first chapter of this book. Therefore, I focus on arguments about metaphors in music here. Work on metaphors in music has been a popular topic among linguists and musicologists, especially after the pioneering work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (Meyer 2019). Some scholars consider metaphors in music indispensable when their studies involve listener experiences. When we study metaphors, we realise that they are not merely a matter of language. Lakoff and Johnson (2003:3) assert that '[o]ur ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphoric in nature'.

When one accepts this statement, it will become clear that metaphors are essential in human understanding and an important mechanism for creating new realities (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:195). Here, there are some examples – adapted from Lakoff and Johnson (2003:4, 11) – of how we understand *concepts* through metaphors:

- I need to *put* my ideas into words.
- his speech *carries* much meaning.
- she *won* the argument.
- they *shot down* my ideas.

Critical considerations of the above-mentioned examples will point out that one cannot physically *put* an idea *into* words and a speech cannot *carry* something. Lakoff and Johnson call this conduit metaphor. When we say that someone *won* an argument or *shot down* an idea, we understand arguments and ideas in terms of war. These are all metaphoric understandings.

One of the most basic metaphors in music is that music *moves*. Writings by theorists of the Moving Music Metaphor correlate with the statement by Steve Larson (2012:67) who writes that 'a musical event is conceptualised as an object that moves past the stationary hearer from the front to the back'.

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2. Kamien's writings on these topics and works are still found in newer editions of his book: the section on Handel is in Kamien (2004:184-191) and the section on Schubert is in Kamien (2004:284-292).

Therefore, we experience music as an unfolding of tones in space that extends over time. We say, for example, that the flutes *speed up now*, the music *goes slower here* and we are *coming* to the recapitulation. By saying that, we refer to a particular point in time of the music and subsequently understand temporal change as a particular kind of motion through metaphorical space. Thus, we understand music in metaphoric ways that are similar to the way in which we understand non-musical concepts. In music, typical conventional metaphors would be:

- the leading tone *resolves to* the tonic
- you *swing* the tones for a jazzy *feel*
- that *leap* is difficult to do on a flute
- the sharp *raises* the tone.

Readers who are interested to read further on metaphors in music are invited to pursue an enquiry into this topic by referring to Johnson and Larson's (2003) article, 'Something in the way she moves' – *Metaphors of Musical Motion*.<sup>3</sup> Larson took particular interest in Lakoff and Johnson's work on metaphor when he explored some less-conventional metaphors of music. Larson (2012:75) argued that:

- you can be *pushed* by music,
- you can be *pulled* by music, and or
- you can be *moved* by music.

These three metaphors enabled Larson to develop an analogy (Larson 1993) of Rudolf Arnheim's visual forces into his theory of musical forces. Larson's theory of musical forces is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

## ■ Musical forces and meaning

Larson developed a theory of musical forces, and he discusses it in broad detail in his 2012 monograph, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor and Meaning in Music* (Indiana University Press, United States of America). The work presented by Larson, including recent expansions by other scholars after Larson's death, is more complex than that presented here. However, readers only need to understand the basic principles of the theory to follow my arguments, presented later in this chapter. I briefly discuss these basic principles and concepts relevant to this work below. Readers who are familiar with the theory of musical forces may skip to the next section, 'Analysis'.

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3. This article was later reworked by Johnson and Larson to form the third chapter of Larson's book (see Larson 2012:61-81).

The theory of musical forces suggests that listeners hear all tones as either stable or unstable. Stability is defined as a comparative quality that listeners attribute to points in a musical passage, defined by the pitches and their metrical placements. These are heard as unstable to the degree that they lead us to auralise other (more stable) points and the path that will take the unstable points to the stable points (Larson 2012:100). Unstable tones are governed by three *metaphoric* forces to resolve to stable tones. These forces are called musical magnetism, musical gravity and musical inertia. These forces operate on the tones and the metre of music passages, and I consider it vital to integrate pitch forces (forces that govern pitches) and the rhythmic forces (forces that govern metre and rhythm). Larson (2012:73) claims that similar to the way we experience the physical forces of gravity, magnetism and inertia, we experience them metaphorically as forces that govern the movement in music.

## ■ Musical gravity

I divide musical gravity into pitch gravity and rhythmic gravity. Pitch gravity is defined as the tendency of an unstable tone to *descend* to a stable tone. Some tones may be heard as more stable than others, and musical gravity will ‘pull’ tones down to the most stable platform (Larson 2012:83). For example, in a passage where G is the most stable tone and B a less-stable tone, the C above these notes will be governed by the operation of pitch gravity and has the tendency to descend to the B but with the G as the ultimate goal. Rhythmic gravity is the tendency of a metrically unstable tone to move ‘down’ (regardless of the movement of the pitch) to the most metrically stable point, like an upbeat ‘falling into’ a downbeat (Larson 2012:148–149).

Our experience of musical gravity is analogous to its physical counterpart because it is constantly acting on us but we tend not to be aware of it (Larson 2012:87–88). Larson (2012) suggests that:

[W]e may hypothesise that musical gravity affects the ‘strength’ of melodic pattern completion and the frequencies with which patterns appear in compositions, improvisations, and analyses of music; that its effect is often less striking than that of other forces; that its effect is more significant for notes heard as above a stable platform; and that its effect is clearer in global than in local trajectories. (p. 88)

## ■ Musical magnetism

I divide musical magnetism into pitch magnetism and rhythmic magnetism. Pitch magnetism is defined as the tendency of an unstable tone to descend or ascend to the *closest* stable tone. This tendency becomes stronger as the

unstable tone moves closer to the stable tone (Larson 2012:88). For example, in a passage where G is a stable tone, the F below that G will be governed by pitch magnetism to ascend to the G. If the F moves to F#, the tendency to resolve to the G becomes stronger. Rhythmic magnetism is the tendency of an unstable beat to move ‘forward’ to the next stable beat and the tendency towards the stable beat gets stronger the closer it gets to the stable beat (Larson 2012:147-148).

When we consider musical magnetism and its physical counterpart, we are more likely to observe its influence on the local trajectories, rather than globally. As the pull of actual magnets gets stronger, the closer it gets to the object that it attracts. Therefore, we can argue that the effect of musical magnetism depends on proximity. Some attractions may be stronger or weaker than others, and they might also repel each other. Similarly, some tones have stronger tendencies to resolve than others, and some tones can push other tones away (Larson 2012:95).

## ■ Musical inertia

Musical inertia operates on musical patterns in terms of pitch and rhythm. It is defined as the tendency of a pattern to continue in the same fashion it is internally represented by listeners. The meaning of ‘same’ depends on the representation of that pattern in our musical memory (Larson 2012:96). For example, a pattern of B-A-G in G major will be governed by the operation of musical inertia to continue as C-B-A, D-C-B, E-D-C, F#-E-D and so forth. Similarly, a rhythmic pattern of crotchet-quaver-quaver-crotchet will be governed by the operation of musical inertia to continue with that rhythmic pattern (Larson 2012:145-147).

Inertia is not a physical force but we *experience* it as a force. Larson (2012) suggests that:

[W]e may hypothesise that musical inertia affects the ‘strength’ of melodic pattern completion and the frequencies with which patterns appear, that its effect is stronger than that of other forces, that the perception of musical inertia may be less dependent on learning than is the perception of other musical forces, that inertia tends to carry musical motions beyond the stable positions that serve as goals for other forces, and that it may thus combine with other forces to create smooth motions that tend toward a state of equilibrium with other forces. (p. 100)

## ■ Meaning

The brief explanations of Larson’s musical forces above constitute my methodological approach to the analyses that I present later in this chapter.



I have slightly diverged into this methodological description to elucidate my approach to the analyses for the reader. The goal of the analyses is to discuss how 'the night' is depicted in selected art songs of Franz Schubert (1797-1828), Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), Richard Strauss (1864-1949) and Hector Berlioz (1803-1869). In order to achieve this goal, I ascribe aspects of meaning to my observations in these art songs.

Larson (2012:33) defines 'meaning' as 'something that our minds create when they group things into patterned relations'. Similar to his theory of musical forces, his definition of meaning relies strongly on the work of the perceptual psychologist, Arnheim (1974), who used a bunch of dots and argued that we create meaning through our perception when we perceive the dots as a circle. The topic of meaning in music is a much-debated one that will not be discussed here, and the work of Margolis (1987), Boretz (1989), Cumming (2000), Scruton (1997), Spitzer (2004), Davies (1994), Kramer (2002), Meyer (1956), Almén and Pearsall (eds. 2006), Hatten (1994), Coker (1972), Chapin and Kramer (eds. 2009) and Robinson (1977) might appeal to the interested reader. I believe that learned associations and cultural influences also play a central role in musical meaning; however, it is not within the scope of this chapter to discuss it here. Aksnes (2002), also quoted by Larson, puts listeners central to meaning:

Music simply does not exist independent of experience. Meaning is not something in the music itself, as many musicologists and music philosophers seem to believe, but something that arises through individual subjects' encounters with musical works. (p. 28)

The majority of work on meaning in music is from the perspective of the listener. I believe that Larson's attempt to describe meaning in music is partially one in which he shifts the lens to the music-theoretical aspect of meaning with which composers would work when they compose. Larson does not attempt to provide new or comprehensive literature but rather supports the existing research on meaning in music and indicates how it links with his theory of musical forces. My brief overview of Larson's ideas on meaning might help to elucidate some of my analysis presented here.

A simple example of constructing meaning through musical forces can be illustrated by Larson's comparison (Larson 2012:16-17) of the chromatically descending bass line of 'Dido's lament' from Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with the melody of 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' (see Figure 3.4).

The image shows two musical excerpts. Excerpt (a) is 'Dido's lament' from Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas', featuring a Soprano line and a Bass line. The Soprano line has lyrics: "When I am laid, am laid in earth, may my wrongs create no trouble, no trouble in thy breast,". The Bass line shows a descending semitone pattern. Excerpt (b) is 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star', featuring a single treble clef line with lyrics: "Twin - kle, Twin - kle, lit - tle Star. How I won - der what you are.".

Source: Original music by Larson (2012:5, 16), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.4:** (a) 'Dido's lament' from Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas'; (b) 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'.

Larson (2012) explains the musical meaning of 'Dido's lament', interpreted in terms of musical forces, as follows:

The downward motion of the bass reflects the sadness of death by giving in to gravity; people feeling the weight of sadness are pulled down by it (this is why we speak of feeling *low*, being *depressed*, *down* in the dumps, or *weighed down* by concerns). The slow tempo and the gradual but constant bass descent by half step map easily onto an experience of being pulled slowly and inevitably downward. Although beginning each new repetition of this bass pattern requires an ascent (to get back up to its first note), the primary motion of each gesture is a drooping or sighing one that gives in to gravity. (p. 84)

The descent in 'Dido's lament' takes place in semitones. Although the descent is because of the operation of musical gravity, the semitones are drawn more intensely by magnetism. Although the repeated patterns are governed by musical inertia, the patterns are repeatedly overcome by gravity. According to Larson (2012:97), that gives meaning to the plea, 'Remember me', for the listener. 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star', however, is a reflection of motion within a gravitational field. It starts with a large ascending leap that gets balanced by descending steps. Larson (2012) describes this movement as follows:

To me, this leap suggests a quality of ease because it leaps from the most stable platform (the tonic) to the next-most-stable degree of the scale (the fifth scale degree). That ease, combined with the energy associated with an ascending leap of

this size, suggests a kind of athletic quality that is effortless and secure. [...] And the simple repetition of each note in this melody gives the line a kind of simpleminded momentum that I associate with skipping motions expressive of unconcerned contentment. (p. 83)

After the leap to G at the beginning of 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star', the G gets elaborated by the motion to the upper neighbour note A. The stepwise resolution to more stable tones is heard as giving in to melodic magnetism. Larson (2012:89) writes that it 'gives the motion an ease and security that is enhanced by the simple naiveté of the repeated notes on each degree'. This descent is also governed by melodic gravity and musical inertia. The melody starts purposefully with the ascent; however, according to Larson (2012) the melody:

[A]chieves its purpose quickly and effortlessly. Then a pattern takes over, and the melody ends by following inertia (as well as gravity and magnetism). Such a musical motion may be compared to a physical motion in which an uncomplicated initial impetus sets an object in motion, and in which that object 'takes the past of least resistance' from there on. (p. 97)

Instead of duplicating a large amount of Larson's ideas here or to venture into details about musical meaning, I would rather address the central aim of this chapter by analysing the selected works in terms of the theoretical framework that I present above. Through these analyses, more of Larson's ideas about musical forces and meaning will become clear.

## ■ Analysis

In this section, I provide brief discussions and analyses of the five art songs that were used as part of the '*Nagmusiek*' project. These discussions and analyses aim to provide the reader with a background on the song, an overview of the music, and to highlight musical features that will enable me to achieve my final goal: to discuss how the music contextualises and is referential to, the night. These analyses are thus not meant to be comprehensive – like the valuable sources already available in the literature – because that does not fit the aim of this chapter and would not necessarily contribute towards reaching the goal of this chapter. The art songs discussed in this chapter are all existing poems that were set to music:

- '*Erlkönig*' by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832).
- '*Après un rêve*' by Romain Bussine (1830–1899).
- '*Beim Schlafengehen*' by Hermann Hesse (1877–1962).
- '*Im abendrot*' by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857).
- '*Le spectre de la rose*' by Théophile Gautier (1811–1872).<sup>4</sup>

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4. This song should not be confused with the ballet '*Le spectre de la rose*' that uses music by Carl Maria von Weber's piano piece, *Aufforderung zum Tanz*, orchestrated by Hector Berlioz.

Although the artists who participated in this project did not understand and subsequently did not use the lyrics of the music as a reference,<sup>5</sup> the composers of the music were certainly guided by the text when they composed the music. I highlight some parts that might have influenced the composers when they set the texts to music. Some of the works in the poems point directly to evening or night:

- *'Erlkönig'*: *'nacht'* ['night'], *'nächtlichen'* ['nightly'].
- *'Après un rêve'*: *'nuit'* ['night'].
- *'Beim Schlafengehen'*: *'schlafengehen'* ['going to sleep'], *'nacht'* ['night'].
- *'Im abendrot'*: *'abendrot'* ['sunset'].
- *'Le spectre de la rose'*: *'nuits'* ['nights'].

It is interesting to note that the texts contain many words that are often associated with the night, tiredness and sleeping. Through the lens of metaphors in music, many words indicate some form of descent, recline or gravitation. Another metaphor that is prominent in these texts is the metaphor of death, suggested through words and scenes of the night. Similar to the way we perceive the night to be the end of a day, we can metaphorically speak of a person who reached the evening or night of his or her life: death. The majority of the texts used in this project deal with death. The following words refer to descents, reclining, gravitation or death:

- *'Erlkönig'*: *'spät'* ['late'], *'leise'* ['softly'], *'wiegen'* ['rocking'], *'singen dich ein'* ['sing you to sleep'], *'düstern'* ['darkness'] and *'tot'* ['death'].
- *'Après un rêve'*: *'sommeil'* ['sleep'], *'plus doux'* ['softer'] and *'reviens'* ['return'].
- *'Beim Schlafengehen'*: *'müd'* ['tired'], *'schlummer'* ['slumber'], *'senken'* ['sink'], *'schweben'* ['float'] and *'tief'* ['deep'].
- *'Im abendrot'*: *'ruhen'* ['rest'], *'dunkelt'* ['darkness'], *'stiller'* ['silent'], *'Friede'* ['peace'] and *'Tod'* ['death'].
- *'Le spectre de la rose'*: *'mort'* ['death'], *'sort'* ['fate'], *'plus d'un aurait donné sa vie'* ['many would have given their lives'], *'tombeau'* ['tomb'], *'repose'* ['lie'] and *'ci-gît'* ['here lies'].

In the 18th century, the composition of Lieder emerged as a distinctive German art form that parallels the development of lyric poetry in the literature (McKeever 2014:32). The French *mélodie* followed the German Lieder, developing independently from the Lied, in the 19th century. In the section that follows, I discuss and analyse the five compositions that were used in the '*Nagmusiek*' project.

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5. The artists' lack of a deeper understanding of the works was because of the language of the lyrics and the nature of the project. They cannot speak or understand German and or French, and hence, they were encouraged to work with the recordings of the music and not to translate the lyrics or conduct research on the works.

## ■ 'Erlkönig'

This Lied is through-composed, which was unconventional at the time when strophic settings were preferred by composers (McKeever 2014:32-33). It narrates the story of a father who rides through the night to get his son home; however, the son is seduced to paradise by the Erlking.<sup>6</sup> The Erlking is only visible to the boy, and the father is convinced that the boy only sees a streak of mist (*'Mein Sohn, es ist ein Nebelstreif'*), wind rustling in the leaves (*'In dürrer Blättern säuselt der Wind'*) and old grey willows gleaming (*'Es scheinen die alten Weiden so grau'*). The father, as a rational figure, stands in direct opposition to the irrational Erlking and prompts his son to remain calm (Elliott 2016:141).

The singer has to portray four characters - a narrator (mm. 15<sup>4</sup>-32; 132<sup>4</sup>-147), the father (mm. 36<sup>4</sup>-40; 51<sup>4</sup>-54; 80<sup>4</sup>-85; 105<sup>4</sup>-112), the child (mm. 41<sup>4</sup>-50; 72<sup>4</sup>-79; 97<sup>4</sup>-104; 123<sup>4</sup>-131) and the Erlking (mm. 57<sup>4</sup>-72<sup>2</sup>; 86<sup>4</sup>-96; 116<sup>4</sup>-123<sup>2</sup>) - by rapid switches between registers, contrasting timbres and different keys. The narrator displays his impartiality by singing in the middle of the vocal range and establishes the sombre tone of the text by singing in a minor key (Tarbotton n.d.). The Erlking sings beautiful and alluring melodies in major keys. James Tarbotton (n.d.) writes that the Erlking is 'a metaphor for the personification of death'. As the Erlking becomes increasingly more confident, the keys of his vocal lines rise: firstly, he sings in B $\flat$  major (mm. 57<sup>4</sup>-72<sup>2</sup>), then C major (mm. 86<sup>4</sup>-96) and finally in E $\flat$  major (mm. 116<sup>4</sup>-123<sup>2</sup>). The father's part is also in a major (B $\flat$  major) when he reassures the child at first (mm. 51<sup>4</sup>-54), placing the father evenly with the Erlking. However, in contrast to the rising keys of the Erlking, the father's lines change to a minor for the remainder of the Lied, placing the father in an inferior position to the vibrant major keys of the Erlking. Donald Chittum (1968:32) writes that it is 'as if Schubert wishes to indicate a momentary doubt in the father, which is immediately replaced not only by assurance to the child but to himself as well'. The child, trapped in the middle of the two antagonistic characters, only sings in minor keys, crying out in terror as a response to the enticing lures of the Erlking.<sup>7</sup> The child's voice heightens as his fear for the Erlking increases (see Figure 3.5).

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6. The Erlking is, according to Danish folklore, a sinister elf that lingers in the woods and kills children who stay in the woods too long with a single touch.

7. Chittum (1968:31) writes that Schubert 'apparently used the major mode as indicative of the relief of pain, or the presence of joy or well-being, and used the minor mode as that of sorrow, misery or oppression'.

Source: Original music by Schubert (n.d.:173-175), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.5:** Rising vocal lines of the child's part from Schubert's '*Erlkönig*'.

Elliott (2016:142) believes that the highly differentiated music for each of the characters is employed in a context that borders the style of an *opera scena*. A continuously repeating triplet figure in the accompaniment represents the galloping hooves of the father's horse, similar to the 'spinning wheel' in Schubert's '*Gretchen am Spinnrade*' (Chittum 1968:31; Elliott 2016:142). Schubert (2013), as cited in McKeever (2014), describes the triplet figures in a succinct way:

The emptiness of the octaves is foreboding; the pounding of the triplets is suspenseful; the tone of the minor scale is dark. Two measures in, and Schubert has already set the scene perfectly. (p. 35)<sup>8</sup>

The triplets in the right-hand part create a sense of urgency, and they establish the pitch class G as stable. The motif in the left-hand part of measure 2 starts on the stable G but quickly ascends away from stability, only to be drawn back by musical gravity to the stable G again. There is thus a constant 'struggle' against gravity and between the operation of the musical forces that both push away and pull towards stability, as illustrated in Figure 3.6. Because the patterns are reluctant to give in to gravity, they do not reach proper stability, and this supports the expressive meaning of this Lied.

Source: Original music by Schubert (n.d.:173), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

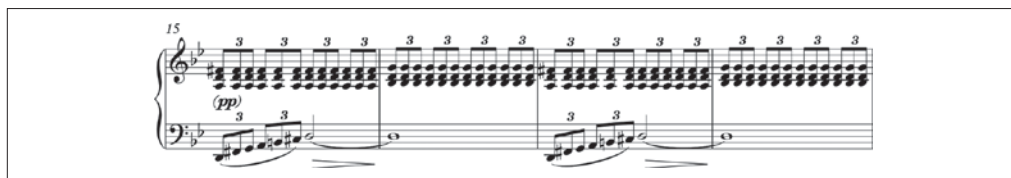
**FIGURE 3.6:** The first three measures of the opening in the piano of Schubert's '*Erlkönig*'.

8. According to Lorraine Gorrell (1993:115), the profound technical demands of the relentlessly pounding octave triplets have high technical demands that even Schubert himself lacked. Apparently, Schubert replaced them with quavers, explaining that '[t]hey are too difficult for me, a virtuoso may play them'. When this Lied was performed at Schubert's concerts, that virtuoso was often Franz Liszt (McKeever 2014:33).

Elliott (2016) writes that the:

[s]ense of struggle against gravity is heightened as the G-Eb boundary of the rising diatonic piano figure is projected into the overall tonal architecture, this minor-sixth boundary being filled in chromatically by the ascending scheme of keys. (p. 142)

Even when the motif in the left-hand part appears to be more stable, the chords in the right-hand part change to put the last note of the motif in an unstable position (see Figure 3.7).



Source: Original music by Schubert (n.d.:173), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.7:** Ascending left-hand motifs in mm. 15-18 in the piano accompaniment of Schubert's 'Erlkönig'.

The horse's figure also experiences musical development: the parts of the narrator, father and child are accompanied by the pounding triplets in the right hand (mm. 1-57, 72-86, 97-145) but the Erlking's parts are accompanied by a dance-like distribution of the triplets between the two hands in mm. 58-71 and smooth arpeggios in mm. 87-96. McKeever (2014) thinks that the:

[H]orse's steady hoof prints have served to ground the song, and the little boy's sense of reality. As they are distorted by the sweet façade of the Erlking, the child is losing touch, the horse, his father, and life itself becoming more distant. (p. 36)

McKeever's reference to 'ground the song' can be interpreted in terms of melodic and metric stability. However, the horse seems to be the only stable character for most of the song.

When the pounding triplets return in measure 112, they are a perfect fifth interval higher and sounding more urgent than before. The Erlking's part also gets accompanied by the repeating triplets for the first time, almost as if he is getting impatient and rapacious, leading him to show his true colours. The Erlking's words are also more terrifying: he claims that he loves the boy ('*Ich liebe dich*'). As soon as the boy informs the father that the Erlking has hurt him ('*Erlkönig hat mir ein Leids getan!*'), the pounding triplets in the home key return - this time with octaves in both hands and sounding more alarming than ever before.



Source: Original music by Schubert (n.d.:175), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.8:** The pounding triplets repeat from m. 131 onwards in the piano accompaniment of Schubert's 'Erkönig'.

This arrival in the home key of G minor in measure 131 is very striking because this key was not heard since mm. 32–40 where it was used to alert the listener of danger. However, the return to G minor does not bring any resolution to the tension. Chittum (1968) describes it very accurately when he writes that:

[A]fter the last series of dialogues the father is unable to speak at all. Thusly, Schubert, with the highest degree of artistry, sets the father's lines so that a bit of dramatic development, which is merely suggested in the text, takes unequivocal form in its musical presentation. (p. 32)

The piano accompaniment abruptly stops and ends in measure 146 with a Neapolitan second (supertonic) chord. The horse's steady gallop ceased, indicating a turning point in the narrative of the song. The  $A\flat$ , being the closest unstable tone to the stable G, is governed by both melodic gravity and magnetism to resolve to G. However, this tension is prolonged when the narrator concludes with a recitative ('in seinen Armen das Kind war tot'). The text of the narrator is in the reflective past tense, indicating that everything already happened and nothing more can be done. It is only after the narrator reveals the death of the boy that Schubert adds a perfect cadence to signal the end (McKeever 2014:37; see Figure 3.9).

Source: Original music by Schubert (n.d.:175), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from the Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.9:** Recitative by the narrator, mm. 146–148 in Schubert's 'Erkönig'.



The final cadence at the end of *'Erlkönig'* is the first point where complete stability is reached. In contradiction with what we initially could expect, giving in to magnetism and reaching stability were not resolving tension but heightening tension, resulting in death. In addition to Schubert's version of Goethe's text, other composers set the poem to music. Vocal settings include those by Corona Schröter, Ludwig von Beethoven (completed by Reinhold Becker), Carl Loewe, Carl Friedrich von Zelter, Louis Spohr, Andreas Romberg, Johann Friedrich Reichardt, Václav Tomášek, Bernhard Klein and Rammstein. The work was also transcribed and orchestrated by composers, such as Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz, Max Reger, Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst and Mark Williams.

### ■ **'Après un rêve'**

This art song – known as a *mélodie* in French – describes a dream in which two lovers departed from the earth and flew 'towards the light' [*'vers la lumière'*]. However, the dreamer wakes up, calling it a 'sad awakening' [*'triste réveil'*] and longs to the 'mysterious night' [*'nuit mystérieuse'*].<sup>9</sup> This is an early song by Gabriel Fauré, composed between 1870 and 1877.<sup>10</sup> Songs for voice and piano were popular at the time as a form of domestic entertainment because many households had a piano (Pearson n.d.). The song can be divided into three sections: mm. 1–16, mm. 17–30<sup>2</sup> and mm. 30<sup>3</sup>–48. The first two verses describe the dream and the third verse describes the awakening of the dreamer who craves to dream again (Pearson n.d.). Similar to the observation by Lauren Cornwell (2015:5), this song starts with relatively simple harmonies – the bass tones in mm. 1–8 follow a descending circle of fifths: C, F, B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , D, G – and increase in complexity throughout the composition. The harmony is described in Pearson (n.d.) as 'broadly functional' and 'organised around the "magnetic" pull from the dominant to the tonic'. Their reference to the magnetic pull is in terms of the analogy with physical magnetic force but in terms of Larson's theory of musical forces, this refers to musical gravity. Nevertheless, both refer to the tonic chord as the ultimate point of stability. I show the first eight measures of this composition in Figure 3.10.

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9. Songs fall under one of the three main areas – together with piano and chamber music – of Fauré's composing activity according to Darázs (2010:2).

10. The opus number (Op. 7 No. 1) is not indicative of the compositional or publication chronology of the song because they were added by Fauré's publisher, Hamelle, in 1896 when Fauré had to catalogue his works when he applied for membership of the Institut de France (Darázs 2010:4). Together with *Hymne* and *Barcarolle*, *'Après un rêve'* forms the *Trois mélodies* cycle. This song was probably influenced by Fauré's teachers, Gounod and Niedermeyer (Darázs 2010:7).

The image shows a musical score for the first eight measures of Fauré's 'Après un rêve'. The score is in 3/4 time, marked 'Andantino' and 'dolce'. The vocal line is in G minor, starting on G4. The piano accompaniment features repeated C minor triads in the left hand and a more active right hand. The lyrics are: 'Dans un som - meil, que charmais ton i - ma - ge. Je rê-vais le bon-heur, ar-dent mi - ra - - - ge.'

Source: Original music by Fauré (2006:1), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.10:** The first eight measures of Fauré's 'Après un rêve'.

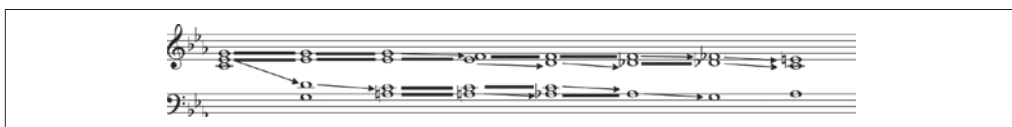
The repeated C minor triads in m. 1 create a stable platform, and the vocal line subtly ascends from G as if it rises 'out of the accompaniment', defying the gravitational pull of the stability that was established by the accompaniment. The vocal part thus frees itself from the gravitational field, right from the start. The F<sup>9</sup> chord in measure 3 provides a rich colouring for the word 'sommeil' [sleep], whereas the chain of dissonances created through the circle of fifths creates shifting instability (Pearson n.d.). The vocal line in mm. 3–6 is centred around the stable C but ends the phrase on the stable G in measure 8. It is as if Fauré explores different levels of stability at the beginning of this song, ending the phrases on the G in measure 8, E $\flat$  in measure 15 and G in measure 23. The first middle C for the voice is heard in measure 26 but on a weak beat – the same is true for the middle Cs in measure 28 and measure 30. In the latter measures (mm. 28–30), the music arrives on C major and not C minor, propelling the listener towards an outburst on the word 'Hélas!' (Pearson n.d.). It is only at the very end of the song (m. 47) where the vocal phrase is ended on a long middle C (stability). There are several ascending and descending lines in the vocal line that support the continuous repel from gravitational and magnetic attractions to stable tones (see Figure 3.11).



Source: Original music by Fauré (2006:2-3), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.11:** Ascending and descending vocal lines in Fauré's 'Après un rêve'.

It is interesting to note that the dreamer's flowing to the 'light' [*vers la lumière*] and 'awakening' [*réveil*] have ascending vocal lines but the 'mysterious night' [*Reviens, ô nuit mystérieuse*] has a descending vocal line. In order to create the context of a sleeping scene, Fauré relied much on gravitation throughout. The majority of the unstable tones give in to melodic gravity and descend slowly - this happens right from the start on a horizontal micro-level in the piano accompaniment.<sup>11</sup> As shown in Figure 3.12, a reduction in the first six measures of the right-hand part of the piano accompaniment was observed, in which there is an evident descend of tones. This descent is because of the tones giving in to gravity, similar to how the singer gets carried away by the sweet memories of the dream.



Source: This is Jaco Meyer's own reduction or interpretation of the music. There is no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.12:** Reduction in the first six measures of Fauré's 'Après un rêve' to show a continuously descending movement in the right-hand part of the piano accompaniment.

Although there are also ascents in the piano accompaniment, it is predominantly descending. The final descent is from measure 42 towards the end, and the vocal line, as well as the piano accompaniment, is heard in

11. Cornwell (2015:2) claims that Fauré's training in counterpoint causes his compositions to be harmonically structured horizontally, rather than vertically.

the lowest registers of their ranges for this song.<sup>12</sup> It is no coincidence that this final descent corresponds to the text '*ô nuit mystérieuse*', with a melismatic line on the word '*mystérieuse*' to support the mysteriousness and sensuality of the night described in this song. Similar to the interwoven piano accompaniment, the vocal line moves mostly stepwise with minimal leaps. Cornwell (2015:5) observed that small intervals were idiomatic of Fauré's compositional style for his songs: she claims that there is only one song in his entire oeuvre that uses a leap larger than an octave. In addition to the small leaps, Fauré uses triplet quavers in the vocal line against two quavers in the piano accompaniment. These triples have been dubbed 'sexy triplets', and in this song, they contribute to a 'floating' expression that is representative of the dream depicted in this song.

The final cadences in C minor in this song explore different possibilities of voice leading. In mm. 7–9 and mm. 22–24, the top voice in the piano accompaniment is D–E $\flat$ , and in mm. 36<sup>3</sup>–35<sup>1</sup>, the top voice is G–G; however, in mm. 46<sup>2</sup>–48, we hear the leading tone (B $\flat$ ) in the top voice. The cadence in mm. 46<sup>2</sup>–48 starts with an ordinary dominant triad, transforming into a dominant seventh chord. The addition of F (with its tendency to resolve to E $\flat$ ) and the B $\flat$  on the top (with its tendency to resolve to C) makes the operation of musical magnetism more prominent again. The operation of musical inertia is weakened in measure 47 when the tonic triad was reached as a point of stability. Because of the vocal and piano parts giving in to all three musical forces, the imaginative listener might wonder whether the singer's demand to receive the delusions of the night again (*'Je t'apelle, ô nuit, rends-moi mensonges'*) was fulfilled.

Source: Original music by Fauré (2006:3), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.13:** The ending of Fauré's '*Après un rêve*'.

## ■ '*Beim Schlafengehen*' and '*Im abendrot*'

Owing to some similarities and comparable differences, I discuss '*Beim Schlafengehen*' and '*Im abendrot*' by Richard Strauss simultaneously in

12. Darázs (2010:6) comments on the vocal ranges in Fauré's songs: 'Except for some virtuoso pieces Fauré's songs have a comfortable range because they are designed to declaim their poem in a very sensitive way'.

this section. Together with two other songs for soprano and orchestra – ‘Frühling’ and ‘September’ – these works form Strauss’s *Vier Letzte Lieder* [Four last songs]. They were composed in 1948, a year before Strauss passed away.<sup>13</sup> Strauss composed over 200 songs of which the *Vier Letzte Lieder* cycle is distinct because of its largely sepulchral poems (Mermelstein 2014). According to Alan Frank (1950), these songs:

[F]orm a final farewell not only through being the last music he wrote but also, in a fuller sense, through the moving quality, at once serene and resigned, of the setting of these essentially valedictory poems. (p. 305)

‘*Beim Schlafengehen*’ starts with a short motif in the contrabasses, and this motif overlaps with the rest of the string instruments when it is repeated in the other instruments. Each string instrument starts on its lowest register. These registers are referred to as ‘dark’ in most textbooks on instruments and orchestration, and that is also the learned association we have with the string instruments performing in those registers<sup>14,15</sup> (see Figure 3.14).

Source: Original music by Strauss (1950:33), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.14:** The introduction of ‘*Beim Schlafengehen*’ by Richard Strauss.

The dissonances between instruments and the evasion of a clear key leave the listener with a vague sense of stability, allowing us to hear the music as ‘floating’. The dissonances are short and vertically spaced far apart, and

13. The original order of the songs is unknown. At the first performance of the cycle, the order was ‘*Beim Schlafengehn*’, *September*, *Frühling* and ‘*Im Abendrot*’. However, Ernst Roth – the dedicatee of ‘*Im Abendrot*’ – changed the order in 1950 when the songs were published by Boosey and Hawkes. The current order is as follows: *Frühling*, *September*, ‘*Beim Schlafengehn*’ and ‘*Im Abendrot*’ (Mermelstein 2014).

14. Alfred Blatter (1997:49) refers to the G string of the violin as ‘rich and dark in tone quality’, the C string of the viola and the violoncello as a ‘dark, thick sound’ (Blatter 1997:56, 61), and the E string of the contrabass as ‘very dark and somber’ (Blatter 1997:67).

15. Schuh and Loewenthal (1950:29) wrote: ‘*Beim Schlafengehn* combines horns, trumpets, trombones and tuba, with the lingering tones of the strings *divisi*, two flutes and two piccolos and celesta’.

therefore, the music does not sound harsh or robustly dissonant but rather serene and mysterious. The opening of *'Im Abendrot'* differs from *'Beim Schlafengehen'* in terms of the clarity of the key and register because the opening of *'Im Abendrot'* is clearly in E $\flat$  major and the instruments are heard in much higher registers. The serene feeling in the opening of *'Im Abendrot'* is achieved in different ways, mostly through long-sustained tones (see Figure 3.15). Schuh and Loewenthal (1950:29) wrote that the 'solemn mood of *"Im Abendrot"* is emphasised by the horn, trumpets, tuba and big drum in addition to the strings "divisi"'.

The image shows a page of a musical score for the reduced opening of 'Im Abendrot' by Richard Strauss. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flauti I&II, Oboi I&II, Corno Inglese, Clarinetti in Sib I&II, Fagotti I&II, Corni I&II in Fa, Corni III&IV in Mib, Trombe I&II in Mib, Tromboni I&II, Tuba, Timpani, Violini I&II, Viole I&II, Violoncelli I&II, and Contrabassi. The music features long-sustained tones across various instruments, with a dynamic marking of *fp* (fortissimo) throughout. The key signature is E-flat major and the time signature is common time (C).

Source: Original music by Strauss (1950:44), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.15:** Reduced opening of *'Im Abendrot'* by Richard Strauss.

Although the opening melody of *'Im Abendrot'* starts in a high register, the constant gravitational pull causes a gradual descent to E $\flat$  (see Figure 3.16). The resolution to an E $\flat$  major chord is avoided at first, and when it appears in measure 4, it is on a weak metrical beat. The pitch and rhythmic forces are thus not cooperating, until measure 20 where the music reaches a point of pitch and metric stability. The song modulates to the dominant in measure 34 where some of the introductory material is heard in B $\flat$  major but the song finally gives in to magnetism and returns to E $\flat$  major in measure 61.



Source: Original music by Strauss (1950:44), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.16:** The opening melody of *'Im Abendrot'* by Richard Strauss.

The material of *'Beim Schlafengehen'* seems to be less susceptible to the operation of gravity because of its prominently ascending material. Let us take the strings section of mm. 32–41 of *'Beim Schlafengehen'* (see Figure 3.17) as an example. Although the material does not give in to the operation of gravity, a gravitational pull is present because of the harmonic context and bass notes – the gravitational pull culminates in mm. 38<sup>3</sup>–41 with a D $\flat$  pedal point in the contrabasses. Within this context, the majority of the material in the other strings ascends but the operation of musical magnetism and musical inertia governs these ascents, while musical gravity establishes the stability. We can think of this in terms of expressive meaning: the sleeper lying in bed (established stability) but their thoughts or dreams ‘ascend’ as the sleeper changes the state from a conscious state to a subconscious state or sleep.

The image displays a musical score for a string section, spanning measures 32 to 41. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for Violini I&II, Violini II, Viole I&II, Violoncelli I&II, and Contrabassi. The second system includes staves for Vi. I, Vi. II, Vle. I&EE, Vcl. I&II, and C.B. The music is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a 3/4 time signature. It features a prominent ascending sequence of triplets in the upper strings, starting with a *p espr.* (piano, expressive) and *solo* marking. The lower strings provide a harmonic foundation with *pp* (pianissimo) dynamics. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *cresc.* (crescendo) and *dim.* (diminuendo), as well as articulation marks like accents and slurs. The overall texture is dense and expressive, characteristic of late Romantic string writing.

Source: Original music by Strauss (1950:38-39), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.17:** String section of mm. 32-41 that shows an ascending sequence.

Both works start *Andante* but they slow down differently as they move towards the end. *'Im abendrot'* slows down by tempo changes such as *'noch ruhiger'*, *'immer langsamer'* and *'sehr langsamer'*, while *'Beim Schlafengehen'* only moves to *'sehr ruhig'*. Because of the extremely slow tempo at the end of *'Im abendrot'*, the harmonic regression ( $I_c - bVI_c - vi - V - I$ ) is apt for the ending. The ending of *'Beim Schlafengehen'*, however, prolongs the tonic triad in  $D_b$  major at the end, with descending broken triads and reduced material towards the end to achieve an unravelling effect at the end.

The way in which the music reaches final stability at the end supports the lyrics. *'Beim Schlafengehen'* ends with the words *'tief und tausendfach zu leben'* [to live deep down and thousandfold] and *'Im abendrot'* ends with the words *'So tief im abendrot. Wie sind wir wandermüde - Ist dies etwa der Tod?'* [so deep in the glow of the evening. How weary we are of wandering - Is this perhaps death?]. Not only do both sets of lyrics suggest a form of descent but



both indicate a scene of finality that is depicted through the unravelling endings and the clear arrival on the tonic chords as a result of continuous gravitational pull.

## ■ **'Le spectre de la rose'**

This song forms part of Hector Berlioz's song cycle<sup>16</sup> *Les nuits d'été* (Op. 7), first composed for voice and piano in 1841, and arranged in 1856 for voice and orchestra (Seol 2017:i).<sup>17</sup> The texts of the cycle were taken from Berlioz's friend and neighbour, Théophile Gautier's *La comédie de la mort* (1838), and each song was dedicated to a different singer (Baldwin 2004).<sup>18</sup> In his dissent from the German Lied, Berlioz wanted to employ an inherently French approach in his songs, which was significantly different from the music of Schubert (Weiler 2005:362). There is speculation that his choice of poems reflects a commentary on his personal life (Kemp 1975:xi) because his *Memoirs* indicate that his marriage with Harriet Smithson floundered. The death of his father and wife, as well as his second marriage with the opera singer Marie Recio, deeply influenced Berlioz's music at that time (Seol 2017:16; Sundstrom 2014:12).

The second song from the cycle that Berlioz orchestrated was *Le spectre de la rose*, which was first performed on 06 February 1855 by the mezzo-soprano, Madame Falconi (Seol 2017:18). Among the audience members was the publisher Jakob Rieter-Biedermann who was ecstatic about the performance and prevailed on Berlioz to also orchestrate the remaining songs of the cycle (Jaffe 2017). The orchestral version of *Le spectre de la rose* was transposed from D major to B major. According to Ian Kemp (1975:xii), this transposition of a minor third lower could be to accommodate Madame Falconi. Sundstrom (2014:46) considered the possibility that Berlioz preferred the orchestral timbre of B major above that of D major, and she consulted his *Treatise on Orchestration*. In the treatise, Berlioz (1858:24) describes the timbre of the violins – as the string section plays a fundamental role in this song – in D major as 'gay' and 'noisy', while B major is described as 'noble', 'sonorous' and 'radiant'.

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16. It is debated in the literature whether this work is a song cycle, meant so that all the songs are performed together as one work, or as a set of songs that were published together as a matter of convenience (Sundstrom 2014:18).

17. Berlioz mostly wrote songs, he wrote about 50 songs in total (Pullinger 2019), of which a large portion has orchestral accompaniment.

18. Gautier's *La comédie de la mort* inspired various French composers, including Georges Bizet, Gabriel Fauré and Henri Duparc (Weiler 2005:361).

Pullinger (2019) describes *Le spectre de la rose* as ‘the masterpiece of the cycle’. He (Pullinger 2019) offers a vivid interpretation of the song:

A rose has died so that his spirit can adorn the dress of a young lady as she attends her first ball. The long, slow flute and clarinet melismas in the introduction plunge us into a heady, perfumed atmosphere. Berlioz writes in long, voluptuous arcs of melody, full of sensual ardour. Mention of ‘*de profundis*’ prompts him to imitate plainchant with a plagal cadence. Harp tremolos – the only time the instrument features in the cycle – represent the rose’s fragrance, tingling, anticipating the erotic rapture of the declaration ‘*J’arrive du paradis*’ as the rose is resigned to its fate. (n.p.)

This song is more complex than the other songs in the cycle with its romantic and dramatic character; this statement is echoed in the writings of Huscher (n.d.) and Seol (2017:72). The soprano melody changes character throughout the song, starting with a lavish melody that unravels into a recitative, builds up into a climax, become reflective and ends in a recitative. Figure 3.18 shows mm. 30–49 of the soprano melody depicting some of the character changes in the melody.

The image shows a musical score for the soprano part of 'Le spectre de la rose' by Berlioz, measures 30-49. The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It shows various tempo and dynamic markings: 'poco rit. rall.', 'a tempo poco animato', 'poco cresc.', 'mf', 'cresc.', 'un poco rall.', 'allargando', 'f', and 'Tempo I.'. The lyrics are: 'O toi qui de ma mort fus cau-se, Sans que tu puis-ses le\_chas-ser, Tou-tes les nuits, mon spec-tre ro-se A ton che-vet\_ viendra dan-ser; Mais ne crains rien, je ne ré-cla-me Ni mes-se ni De Pro-fundis. Ce lé-ger par-fum est mon à-me, Ce lé-ger par-fum est mon à-me, Et j'ar-ri-ve, j'ar ri-ve du pa-ra-dis, j'ar-ri-ve, j'ar-ri-ve du pa-ra-dis.'

Source: Original music by Berlioz (1903:179–182), no copyright on the original music. The figure was compiled by Jaco Meyer, published with permission from Jaco Meyer.

**FIGURE 3.18:** Melody of Berlioz’s ‘*Le spectre de la rose*’, mm. 30–49.

At the beginning of this work, we hear short motifs in the strings that ascend and descend. These motifs are influenced by the operation of musical gravity and musical magnetism after they initially counteracted the forces and reached their turning points: non-chordal (unstable) tones are attracted to stable tones because of the operation of musical magnetism, and musical gravity plays an important role in the descent of the motifs. Musical inertia governs these motifs to continue in the same fashion in which they started, and the ending of this force in measure 30 is already prepared from measure 22 by the

repeated tones in the woodwinds and strings. It is interesting to note that the motifs start to unravel on the words '*tout le soir*' [all night]. Soon after the change in accompaniment (m. 32 onwards), the lyrics include words such as 'death', 'doom', 'haunt' and 'gloom'.

The soft trills in the strings – mm. 9, 12, 13, 19, 20 and 21 – connect the sentences of the first verse, suggesting the trembling eyelids and dreamlike aspects that are experienced by a virgin in a dream (Seol 2017:44). Weiler (2005) focused on the text and cites the work of Annegret Fauser who is of the following opinion:

[7]he alternation of light and dark vowels in the first four lines of the poem are placed to emphasize these very images of innocent virginity and sexual awakening as evoked by the symbol of the rose, who speaks to the dreaming virgin. (p. 363)

According to Leonard and Jones (2017), the 'haunting images of the poem are made more poignant by Berlioz's touches of nostalgic sweetness'. They specifically refer to the string tremolos and the harp parts in mm. 38–45. The harp is meant to suggest paradise on '*J'arrive du paradis*' (Seol 2017:52). This builds up to measure 62<sup>1</sup> with a dramatic end on the dominant (F# major), followed by a simple recitative. In the recitative, the poet kisses his epitaph, and the resolution to the tonic key (B major) is repeated thrice, suggesting the finality of death. Death is the point of arrival in this song, and therefore, the arrival at the tonic chord in mm. 65–66 is dooming and repeated three times. It signifies not only an arrival but also an end: it reiterates that there is no movement – physically or in terms of musical forces – that will follow.

## ■ Conclusion: References to the night

The five art songs discussed above are readily distinguishable in terms of their topics and narratives but they all have a similar underlying context within which the text and music were created: the night. In addition to the texts that refer to the narrative within the context of the night, the composers have created *music* that complements the text and that places the listener in the context of the night. This can be perceived by listeners who understand the lyrics and even by those who do not. For listeners who perceive the music within the context of the night, without understanding the lyrics, we can attribute their understanding to the referential elements in the music. The observations of Leonard and Jones (2017) form a good example of how aspects of the night are perceived without a specific lens of inquiry. They (Leonard & Jones 2017) wrote about Berlioz's song cycle *Les nuits d'été*:

The first song, 'Villanelle', is clearly a 'daylight' song, but it sets up the happiness that will later turn to despair. Images of night appear repeatedly in the interior songs, even though 'summer nights' are not specifically mentioned. In '*Le spectre de la rose*' the ghost of a rose returns nightly to haunt the dreams of a young woman who wore the flower to a ball. (n.p.)

They label *Le spectre de la rose* to be a ‘night-time song’ (Leonard & Jones 2017).

When I refer to how the songs contextualise ‘the night’, it should not be confused with nocturnes. Nocturnes are typically solo piano or instrumental character compositions of the 19th and 20th centuries; this term was first used as a title by John Field in 1812 for his ‘18 Nocturnes’. Field set the standard of these works to be a lyrical melody that is accompanied by pedalled broken chords (Randel 2003:563). A similar term that was employed in the 18th century is *notturmo*, which refers to a work – mostly a vocal work – that is intended to be performed at night (Randel 2003:574). The work presented in this chapter is more inclusive of all composition genres and forms that are evocative of the night.

The key question is what in the music enables listeners to conjure an image of the night when they listen to the five compositions used in this project? Firstly, I draw on the musical features, presented by Juslin and Lindström (2010:335), that evoke certain emotions among listeners, as presented in Table 1.3. Although we cannot rigorously establish a certain emotion to certain scenery – like ‘*Erkönig*’ that depicts fear in contrast with ‘*Beim Schlafengehen*’ that depicts tenderness – the work of Juslin and Lindström offers a good framework for describing the predominant musical features that we find in the five Lieder of this project. For most instances, ‘*Erkönig*’ was the exception because of the rapid changes in the text that are complemented by the piano accompaniment. When we map features onto Juslin and Lindström’s model, the musical features that are evident and shared among the five songs include slow tempo,<sup>19</sup> small tempo variability,<sup>20</sup> major mode, consonant harmony,<sup>21</sup> medium-low sound level,<sup>22</sup> moderate sound level variability, medium-low pitch,<sup>23</sup> little pitch variability, medium pitch range,<sup>24</sup> descending pitches,

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19. ‘*Erkönig*’: Schnell ( $q = 152$ ); ‘*Après un rêve*’: Andantino ( $q = 80-108$ ); ‘*Im Abendrot*’: Andante ( $q = 76-108$ ); ‘*Beim Schlafengehn*’: Andante ( $e = 152-216$ ); *Le spectre de la rose*: Adagio un poco lento e dolce assai ( $e = 96$ ).

20. ‘*Im Abendrot*’ and ‘*Après un rêve*’ have many tempo changes but they are mostly prompts for performers to gradually slow down towards the end of the works. ‘*Im Abendrot*’ starts *Andante* and the tempo indications that follow are *Calando* (m. 43), *Tempo primo* (m. 46), *noch ruhiger* (m. 56), *immer langsamer* (m. 70), *ritardando sehr langsam* (m. 74), *ritardando sehr langsam* (m. 88). ‘*Après un rêve*’ starts on *Adagio un poco lento e dolce assai* and the tempo indications that follow are *poco ritardando* (m. 27), *a tempo* (m. 28), *poco ritardando* (m. 30), *rallentando* (m. 31), *a tempo - poco animato* (m. 32), *un poco rallentando* (m. 47), *allargando* (m. 48), *Tempo I* (m. 49), *un poco ritardando* (m. 61) and *un poco più lento* (m. 63).

21. Where dissonants occur, they are subtle, short and often part of melodic embellishment.

22. The dynamic ranges of the songs are as follows: ‘*Erkönig*’: ppp – fff, ‘*Après un rêve*’: pp – f, ‘*Im Abendrot*’: pp – mf, ‘*Beim Schlafengehn*’: ppp – mf, *Le spectre de la rose*: ppp – f.

23. ‘*Erkönig*’ requires singers to employ the low, medium and high vocal registers. ‘*Après un rêve*’, ‘*Im Abendrot*’, ‘*Beim Schlafengehn*’ and *Le spectre de la rose* require that singers employ lower and medium vocal registers only.

24. The smallest vocal pitch range is ‘*Après un rêve*’ and ‘*Im Abendrot*’ with the range of a compound perfect fourth interval, and the largest vocal pitch range is ‘*Beim Schlafengehn*’ with the range of a compound major sixth interval.

stepwise intervals, falling intonation, lowered singer's formant, legato articulation, small articulation variability, smooth and fluent rhythm, soft-dull timbre, slow attacks, small timing variability, medium contrasts between long and short notes, slow vibrato rate and micro-structural regularity.

I do not advocate for these musical features to be rigidly applied as criteria for music that contextualises the night – they can rather be considered as contributing factors. These features relate, metaphorically, to how we perceive the night. The night is dark (register, timbre and harmony), it is at the end of the day (placement of the movement within the cycle), it is quiet (dynamics), many people stop working and slow down (tempo), people go to sleep (trembling, vibrato, consonance and dissonance), and there is an expectation of the temporariness of the night (beat and cadences). As suggested by the musical elements indicated in brackets – which are mostly superficial analogies – there are musical-metaphoric counterparts of our experience that can be employed to depict visual imagery through music. Subsequently, composers work with the music to become referential. I discuss the most salient referential musical elements and features found in the five songs below.

## ■ Timbre and instrumentation

The musical works that were used for this project are testament to masterful compositional choices that were exercised by skilled composers. Schubert uses the piano for the percussive gallops of the horse in *'Erlkönig'*, while Fauré employs the more sonorous features of the piano in *'Après un rêve'*. The piano would not have sufficed for the long-sustained notes that Strauss wanted in *'Im Abendrot'* or the intertwining motifs in *'Beim Schlafengehen'*. The arranged and orchestrated versions of *'Erlkönig'*, however, have also not been as successful and convincing as the original version with piano accompaniment. Strauss added a celesta to *'Beim Schlafengehen'* but uses it sparingly for the right moment. The first time we hear the celesta in *'Beim Schlafengehen'* is when the soprano sings about the *'gestirnte Nacht'* [starry night] – the sound of the celesta is very appropriate to the text here because of its high-pitched, ringing sound. Few analyses of Berlioz's *Le spectre de la rose* would omit to highlight the eight measures in which the harp is employed. Similar to Strauss, Berlioz waited for just the right moment to add the harp. In this way, the additions of celesta and harp in their songs show the functional approach that these composers followed to create the ideal timbre. Although Berlioz first composed *Le spectre de la rose* for piano, he made some changes to the orchestrated version: a new introduction and the transposition from D major to B major. The leading role of the strings and the efficient orchestration point towards Berlioz's awareness of the importance of tone colour. As pointed out by Sundstrom (2014:46), Berlioz possibly followed his advice (Berlioz 1858:24) for creating the desired tone colour in the orchestral version. The timbre of individual

instruments – the registers, playing techniques and *sordini* – constitutes a greater orchestral timbre, and they possibly contributed, to some extent, towards the compositional frameworks of the composers. Apart from the celesta, none of the orchestral works employed percussion instruments, since percussion instruments would have made the music too eventful for the night. There is little doubt that ample thought went into the timbre and instrumentation of the works discussed here. It becomes clear that both the timbre and the composer's choice of instruments play a fundamental role in the referential aspects of the music.

## ■ Tempo

The tempo indications of four of the songs range from *adagio* to *andantino*, thus ranking among the slower tempi. '*Erlkönig*' is the exception with *schnell* as tempo indication. These slow tempi link with the metaphoric idea that everything slows down at night-time, as well as the darkness that is associated with low energy. The calmness of the night is, therefore, reinforced by these slow tempi that require little energy and that have little attacks. '*Erlkönig*', however, portrays everything but a calm night: it is a nocturnal crisis! This work portrays the 'other side' of the night, that it is not always calm and quiet but that it can be dramatic and shivering. This portrays unusual circumstances, and we can lean towards a more general understanding of the night as calm and slow.

## ■ Mode

Major and minor keys work equally well for songs in the context of the night. There is a common erroneous assumption that a major key is happy and a minor key is sad. However, if we take a simple song like 'My favourite things' from the musical *The Sound of Music*, for example, it is undoubtedly an uplifting song in a minor. There are multiple examples of 'happy' songs in minor modes and 'sad' songs in major modes. Hereby, I do not say that the authors such as Mualem and Lavidor (2015:414–417) or Juslin and Lindström (2010:335) are incorrect when they ascribe certain emotions more assertively to certain modes; however, one must consider the context within which these modes are used. For example, Fauré composed '*Après un rêve*' in a minor and Strauss composed '*Beim Schlafengehen*' in a major but the composers' amalgamation of relevant elements (compositional context) allows these songs to stand equally well in the context of the night. Thus, the narrative of a song or the programmatic aspects can lead a composer in working with the brighter character of major keys or the melancholic character of minor keys. However, the perception of the listener depends strongly on the context within which these keys are applied.

## ■ Dynamics

Similar to the timbres of the instruments, dynamics can be characterised as 'dull' for the softer dynamics and 'bright' for the louder dynamics. A performer would also need to invest more energy into producing loud sounds and less energy into soft sounds. Because of the decline in many activities at night, we associate the night with quietness. Therefore, soft sounds are more appropriate for night music. This is, of course, not the case when you walk past a nightclub or the emergency room of a hospital at night, or even (internally) when you have a terrible dream. This is where the louder range of dynamics comes into play. Again, the narrative and context refer. The night is not static, and that is what we hear in the music too in terms of dynamics. If we take '*Après un rêve*', for example, the dynamic range is *pp-f*. The *f* dynamic is also the loudest we find in the orchestral works discussed; however, *f* in the orchestra is incomparable with *f* in the piano because in *Le spectre de la rose*, the *f* is allocated to the woodwinds that play together with the violas and violoncellos. Because only a few instruments are playing at that time, a louder dynamic is needed to balance the larger structure of the work. The *f* is thus not a sudden loud attack like the *f* on which '*Erlkönig*' starts – there is thus overall a small dynamic variability. '*Erlkönig*' depicts an eventful night – it is not a quiet night, and therefore, we hear the loud gallops of the horse that protrude the quietness of the night. The dynamics gradually increases to the climax (*fff*) where the enticements of the Erlking transform into an adverse affliction of the boy. All the other songs are mostly soft, employing lower dynamic levels, and therefore, they correlate with our metaphoric understanding of the night as mostly quiet and uneventful.

## ■ Beat and rhythm

A continuous, uninterrupted beat is present in all the compositions of this project. The momentum of the works is thus kept up, and there are no abrupt pauses or interjections. The accompaniment of '*Erlkönig*' and '*Après un rêve*' seems to be comparable because of the steadily pulsating chords in the right-hand part and sustained octaves in the left-hand part; however, they are antithetical to one another. This is because the repeated chords in the right-hand part of '*Erlkönig*' have three chords (triplets) per beat at a fast tempo, and the chords in the right-hand part of '*Après un rêve*' have two chords (quavers) per beat at a slower tempo. The chords in '*Erlkönig*' have the purpose to depict the galloping of the horse; however, the chords in '*Après un rêve*' have the purpose to sustain the chord using repetition. Strauss and Berlioz had an advantage by working with the orchestra as an instrument that enabled them to add long-sustained tones to cohere the material. Berlioz made use of repeated tones in *Le spectre de la rose* to create a serious character and to

invest energy into the climactic section. Strauss alternates between two-time signatures in *'Im Abendrot'*, and this change in metre creates a sense of anticipation, metric fluctuation and a sense of floating. Fauré creates a sense of floating using three-against-two rhythmic interactions between the voice and the piano. Both predictable and unpredictable beats and rhythms are thus used. The predictable ones, which give in to the operation of the forces, satisfy listeners' expectations and put them at ease to focus on other elements of the music. The unpredictable ones do not give in to the forces, and the listener is forced to let go of a search for predictable patterns and merely follow the musical path. The ideal way would probably be that the listener gives over to the music to be carried away.

## ■ Intervals

The vocal parts of the art songs comprise an array of intervals. The intervallic content of *'Erlkönig'* forms part of the narrative features of the work: the vocal lines of the Erlking form consonant intervals with the piano accompaniment and the vocal lines of the traumatised child form stark dissonances with the piano accompaniment. This is to depict the luring approach of the Erlking and the fear of the child. We hear softer dissonances in the other four songs. In these songs, the dissonances are mostly part of extended chord tones with goal-directed resolutions or passing tones. The more prominent dissonances at the beginning of *'Beim Schlafengehen'* are effective in creating a muddled context, similar to the haziness of the night that we experience at dusk. Because the night is not translucent and clear like daylight, simple and clear chords might be inapposite. Therefore, soft dissonances fit well in our metaphoric understanding of the vagueness of the night.

## ■ Harmony

The harmonies in the five art songs are overall moderately complex within a tonal structure. None of the composers use unanticipated chords in any of these songs: the chords are mostly well-prepared and lead in a specific direction, mostly meeting the expectations of listeners. A striking feature in all five songs is the perspicuous final cadences that conclude each song. The tonic triad in the songs by Fauré, Strauss and Berlioz is reached and repeated well before the end. From the analyses presented in the section above, we find that these clear points of finality do not only refer to the peak of the night but also to the finality of death, which is a central theme in these songs. It is only at the very end of each Lied where we can convincingly say that the long-anticipated stability has been reached fully. This reach of stability is reiterated using repeated tonic triads at the end of some compositions.



## ■ Musical forces

All three of Larson's musical forces are ubiquitous in all five of the songs. Musical gravity is the most prominent musical force on global and local trajectories, constantly acting on tones to descend to a point of stability. A fascinating aspect of the operation of musical gravity is that it pulls the entire composition down into registers where the listener's sense of stability and instability is slightly distorted because of the vague registers and complex overtone interaction. This fits our metaphoric thinking of lying *down* to go to sleep, often followed by experiencing a distort between reality and the subconscious during the different sleep cycles. We also talk about *nightfall*, associating the night with a descend like something that is drawn downwards by gravity. Musical magnetism operates more on local trajectories to govern the movement of unstable tones to stable tones. However, in most cases, musical magnetism works in tandem with musical gravity, and we experience descents that are governed by both musical forces. Musical inertia also supports musical gravity and musical magnetism by governing continuous descents. This cooperation of musical forces, led by musical gravity, guide listeners to conjure images of the night when they listen to this music. The music is, of course, not left entirely to the operation of these forces: the composer and performer play important roles as agents to oppose or willingly give in to the operation of these forces, as well as amplifying their operation. When the operation of musical forces is opposed by the composer as an agent, the musical force remains. The interference of the composer is merely a matter of adding energy to tones so that they can counteract the operation of musical forces at a point. However, the operation of musical forces immediately takes effect again. This has a discernible impact on the perception of the listener and how the composer composed the music to create the desired context and conjure nocturnal images among listeners by employing the referential features of music to depict the night.

From the discussions and analyses above, we can say that Schubert, Fauré, Strauss and Berlioz surpassed their roles of composers – not only did they write fine music but they also conjured the night through their music. I believe that it is for reasons like this that the term 'art music' was established. The night is mysterious, multifaceted and holds many ambiguities. Although we can write much about the night in music, it is evident from my writings that I avoid setting rigorous criteria or provide scrupulous methods whereby such a context can be created. On this complex craft, we might find some emancipation in the words of Claude Debussy (n.d.):

We should be constantly reminding ourselves that the beauty of a work of art is something that will always remain mysterious; that is to say one can never find out exactly 'how it is done'. At all costs let us preserve this element of magic peculiar to music. By its very nature music is more likely to contain something of the magical than any other art. (n.p.)

# Sublime darkness: Night-time in painting

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## ■ Introduction

In the twilight of early evening, the failing light announces the oncoming darkness – the darkness of night-time. Long shadows peek around darkening corners, foreboding and mysterious. The way we depend on our senses begins to shift. Our sight becomes obscured and less reliable in the twilight, is this why buildings and vehicles seem to stand at odd angles (see de Chirico’s ‘Mystery and melancholy of a street’ [1914], Figure 4.1.)? We hear a child running, her footsteps echo through the emptying streets. She should make her way home and find a place of refuge to shield her from the dangers of the oncoming night. Soon it will be completely dark, and although we know this place in the light of day, the darkness changes the familiar setting to a place of unexpected mysteries and surprise.

Few of us consider the term *night-time* as a neutral scientific description of a period of ambient darkness situated between sunset and sunrise. Instead, a plethora of ideas and experiences fill our thoughts and imaginations.

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Source: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/giorgio-de-chirico/mystery-and-melancholy-of-a-street-1914>. Artwork photograph published in the United States before 01 January, 1923, available in the public domain.

**FIGURE 4.1:** Giorgio de Chirico, *Mistero e melanconia di una strada* [*Mystery and melancholy of a street*], 1914, oil on canvas, 85 cm x 69 cm, private collection.

These ideas and experiences have been central to many attempts of visual artists to convey the importance and influence of night-time. This chapter presents a small selection of artworks to compile a collage of the depiction and presence of night-time in visual art. More specifically, I focus on the depiction of night-time in art created within the paradigm of Romanticism, as specifically guided by the concept of *the sublime*.

Night-time exists in the consciousness and unconsciousness of individuals and societies as a place where our actions, experiences and surroundings seem notably different from what they are during the daytime (Galinier et al. 2010). Our differences in culture, placement in history, religious beliefs and personal experiences mean that night-time can have hugely divergent meanings and significance. In their article *Anthropology of the Night: Cross-disciplinary Investigations*, Galinier et al. (2010:280) set out with the observation that there is ‘an amazing theoretical and methodological gap in research on the nocturnal segment of the 24-hour day-night cycle’. Noting this lack of comparative consideration for the importance that night-time plays in the lives of all individuals and societies, these scholars (Galinier et al. 2010:250) acknowledge the research on the role night-time plays in human experience, that has been carried out in several fields of study – considering such diverse fields as anthropology and law to comparative literature and history. Notwithstanding the apparent variety of information and research about beliefs and representations of the night’s influence on human lives, Galinier et al. (2010:821) see the void for a body of work that combines different approaches to the understanding of night-time from diverse vantage points. Although this chapter in no way attempts to fill this void, it does contribute to a specific aspect of considering the importance and power night-time has had as inspiration for artistic creation, as well as the depiction of night-time’s symbolic value for conveying or eliciting specific or general ideas and emotions.

The question of visual art’s ability to depict, convey or elicit emotion is taken up along with the reference to questions regarding music’s association with emotion in Chapter 1 of this book. As is the case with music, discourse on the interconnectedness of visual art and emotion is not new and also not a topic known for unanimous agreement.

Scherer and Zentner (2001:361) define *emotion* as ‘brief affective states triggered by the appraisal of an event in relation to current goals’. Yet, the understanding of the differing ‘triggers’ at play during these ‘affective states’ introduces complex consideration for not only the ‘appraisal’ of these states but also the influence or nature of ‘current goals’. An array of affective states implies different types of emotions and emotional responses. Differentiation between triggers suggests that individuals not only react differently to certain experiences (triggers) but also consider that some experiences are created or able to elicit different affective states (emotions). Furthermore, the appraisal

of both the trigger (experience) and the affective state (emotion) can differ with regard to the role played by intellectual reflection, subconscious reaction or individual connotations. Similarly, the current goal that directs the aforementioned elements introduces even more opportunities but also intellectual variability in the source of these diverse emotions. Stated more simply, an artistic education, or lack thereof, can influence the viewer or listener's understanding and appreciation of different types of art. Understanding the technical and philosophical approach to a piece of art could therefore influence our appreciation and subsequent emotional reaction to it. Simultaneously, no prior academic knowledge is needed to react to a conscious or unconscious association with an event in our past, which is awakened by experiencing an artwork (cf. Gross & Barrett 2013; Hagtvedt, Patrick & Hagtvedt 2008; Miu, Pițur & Szentágotai-Tătar 2016; Scherer & Zentner 2001; Shiota, Keltner & Mossman 2007).

Just as the discourse on art and emotion continuously presents us with new questions about their relationship, so too does the change in convictions that guide the emotional aims of art creation never cease. Therefore, when art is created with a commitment to elicit an emotional response, the methods and intent in achieving this emotional response differ according to the era and paradigm within which such art is created. As such, it is worth noting that the musical works presented to the artists at the outset of the project discussed in this book stylistically fall within the paradigm of Romanticism. Within this context, Romanticism refers to a specific mindset and period in Western history. Complex and diverse in its reactions, convictions and aims, one theme can be said to epitomise Romanticism: the importance and centrality of emotion (ed. Facos 2018:78). For this reason, this chapter works towards a focus on European painting explicitly situated within this paradigm of Romanticism to highlight the importance and specific attitude towards emotion within so-called 'Romantic art'.

Today, we readily associate notable artists, such as Francisco Goya (1746–1828), Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), William Blake (1757–1827), Théodore Géricault (1791–1824), John Constable (1776–1837) and William Turner (1775–1851) with what we call the Romantic period. However, these artists would not have called themselves 'Romantic artists', indeed, some of them were fervently against being identified as such (Vaughan 1994:10). Yet, the art world has retrospectively agreed that these artists do in fact belong to this perceived artistic collective. As explained by Vaughan (1994:9), the meaning of the word 'Romantic', although widely known and used by the end of the 18th century, was never entirely agreed upon in its meaning and associated ideas. This nomenclature resulted in serious debates in the first half of the 19th century, before becoming seemingly unworthy of deliberation in the latter part of the same century (Vaughan 1994:9). In 1980, John Warrick (cited in Kravitt 1992) defined Romanticism' as follows:

[A] new preoccupation with Nature [...] a turn towards the mystic and supernatural both religious [*and merely spooky*] [...] a fascination with the past [...] [*with*] legends of medieval chivalry [...] [*and*] new attention given to national [...] [*and*] individual identity. (p. 94)

Kravitt (1992:93) prefers a perspective that views Romanticism as a theory, which ‘centres on the artist’s estrangement from society and consequent reaction: to turn within’. From such an approach, the presence of nature, mysticism, supernatural, extreme subjectivism and all other such ‘identifying features’ of Romanticism can be considered as variations in the methods artists would employ to escape reality. Gorodeisky (2016) is but one of the authors who echoes Kravitt (1992) when stating that Romanticism is notoriously challenging to define. Spanning several decades before and after the turn of the 18th to the 19th century, there was a prominent emotional response to the rationality and sterile universality of the Age of Reason. In all their actions, artists who fell in with this current against ‘pure reason’ exalted emotion and the experience of the individual above all things. Facos (2011:78) offers more general features to guide us in our understanding of Romanticism by describing it as being ‘marked by ambiguity, passion, movement, imagination, drama, mystery, and individualism’. Where science attempted to rationalise our existence, Romanticism revelled in its unpredictability, mysteries and indefinable variety of individual emotional experience, changing René Descartes’ (1596–1650) dictum, ‘I think, therefore I am’ to ‘I feel, therefore I am’.

This chapter’s approach of focusing on the importance of emotion in Romanticism warrants a preliminary identification of the themes in the five musical works that were set to guide and inspire the artists who took part in the project. Considering that these works were chosen with a predetermined awareness of certain similarities in musical style, theme, etc., I sought obvious comparisons in the themes embodied in their lyrics. I identify these themes without delving into their more complex characteristics, noting that other chapters provide detailed discussions and analyses of the respective compositions, the composers who created them, the messages and themes relayed by them, and the possible emotional experiences connected to all the aforementioned.

Unsurprisingly, ‘While going to sleep’ [*Beim Schlafengehen*], from *Vier Letzte Lieder*, Op. posth. No. 3 by Richard Strauss), ‘At dusk’ [*Im abendrot*], from *Vier Letzte Lieder* [*Four Last Songs*], Op. posth. No. 4 by Richard Strauss), ‘The spectre of the rose’ [*La spectre de la rose*], from *Les nuits d’été* [*Summer nights*], Op. 7, No. 2 by Hector Berlioz), ‘After a dream’ [*Après un rêve*], Op. 7, No. 1 by Gabriel Fauré] and ‘The Erlking’ [*Erlkönig*], Op. 1, D 328. by Franz Schubert] have a common theme of being set in or referring to *night-time*. This communality reflects Dr Cupido’s purposeful choice of music that aligns with the 2019 Aardklop National Arts Festival theme of ‘Letters to the night’ (see ch. 1). Beyond this overarching theme, I identify additional themes that

present themselves in the lyrics (by which I do not imply that these are the only additional themes encapsulated in the music, but merely the most forthcoming and closely aligned with my investigation). These themes – often emotions or situations that elicit strong emotions – are *subjective experience* (as the lyrics refer to the awareness of feelings of peace, joy, love, desire, yearning and longing for experiences of emotional intoxication, delusion, tragedy, being overwhelmed, adversity, fear, acceptance and death); *an awareness of the spiritual experience* (with events or circumstances that portray elements of the subconscious, dreams, ghosts and the supernatural) and *the power of nature* (as the texts include elements such as darkness, night, stars and the seasons).

Although this list might seem to include very broad and generally inclusive themes and ideas, I see in their positioning and use within the lyrics (and the works of poetry on which some of the lyrics are based) an awareness of a collective experience, an experience defined in the paradigm of Romanticism as *the sublime*.

## ■ The sublime experience

Central to the aesthetic and emotional consciousness of Romanticism are the ideas of *the beautiful* and *the sublime*. Modern-day understanding of the term *sublime* often relates to the experience or perception of something wonderful. Chu (2012:71) explains that the meaning of this term stems from the idea that all visual experiences cannot simply be divided into ‘beautiful’ and the ‘ugly’. This is because certain aesthetic experiences are argued to be able to touch the viewer very deeply without necessarily being either of the aforementioned (Chu 2012:72). In the second half of the 18th century, the word *sublime* was used to describe a much more specific perception of the world, and this meaning can be traced back to its etymological origin in ancient Greece. In the 1st century CE, the Greek scholar now known only as Longinus uses the word *sublime* to describe a rather complex emotional experience – an emotional experience, which, according to Ryan (2001:267) Longinus, is associated with a tremendous loss of freedom.

Many centuries later, this concept is taken up again within philosophical thinking of the 18th and 19th centuries. The most prominent thinker who would define a contemporary understanding of the sublime – as influential to artistic thinking of these centuries – was the British politician and philosopher Edmund Burke (1729–1779).<sup>25</sup> His decisive influence stems from his seminal work examining the sublime experience, called *A Philosophical Enquiry into the*

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25. Burke's *Enquiry* (1757) was still a central text during the 19th century with regard to the idea of the sublime.

*Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, the first edition of which was published in 1757 (Finley 1979:141).<sup>26,27</sup>

In this publication, Burke makes a clear distinction between the beautiful and the sublime. He describes the beautiful as smoothness, smallness, delicacy, gradual variation and mildness of contour, as embodied (according to Burke) in the feminine form. The sublime, however, exists, to Burke's mind, in and as a result of real or imaginary sensory confrontation with fear and terror. It follows that everything that is perceived through the senses and that can lead to terror can, indeed, be considered to be sublime (Finley 1979:142).

Ryan (2001:265) explains how this discourse in the 18th century was not much concerned with painting but rather with a specific experience that impacts *the self*. Ryan (2001:266) further argues that Burke's version of the sublime focuses on the subject's growing awareness of their own sense of limitation and the ultimate value of this perception within social and ethical contexts. Smith (2012) believes that Burke examines the sublime in terms of physiologically related responses to phenomena in nature as a result of self-preservation instinct.

Chianese (1998:437), with reference to Burke's *Enquiry* (1767), states that the sublime is about power – the supernatural power that nature has on human life and consciousness. Burke (cf. Burke 1767:part IV) bases his definition of the sublime on the concept of natural power, which includes surprise and fear. Burke further believes that natural elements must be threatening to bring about a sublime experience. He identifies the power of a bull – as a dangerous animal – as something that is sublime, as opposed to the natural power of a tamed ox, which is not sublime. Thus, he states (cf. Burke 1767:part IV; Chianese 1998:437) that something that can be tamed and controlled by humans cannot be sublime. The sublime, therefore, always contains an element of impending uncertainty.

Sarafianos (2005:59) continues by explaining that Burke places pain at the heart of the sublime experience. He refers to Burke's description of the specific delight derived from the sublime experience as a combination of positive pain and relative pleasure – this is not similar to positive pleasure, which depends on the absence of pain and danger. Burke states that when pain and danger are too close to the subject, it can give no delight but is merely frightening; however, a certain distance between the subject and their pain and danger can lead to delight (Sarafianos 2005:60; Smith 2012). Rabb (2009) describes

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26. Although Burke was the leading figure in the concept of sublime experience in Britain in the 18th century, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was at the same time steering concepts regarding the sublime in continental Europe (cf. Ryan 2001: 266; Sarafianos 2005: 58; Smith 2013). It is also true that Kant sometimes objected to some of Burke's views on the sublime. The most notable of these is his objection to Burke's belief that physiological response as a result of a sublime experience would overshadow the reason.

27. Forthwith, Burke's work, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), will be referred to as the *Enquiry*.



this sublime experience as a sensation of thrill around the danger of confrontation with untamed nature and its overwhelming forces. It follows that the sublime is also humbling, as it contrasts the power of nature with human helplessness (Rabb 2009).

The humbling aspect of the sublime aligns with Burke's further identification of privation as another facet of the sublime experience and divides it into three sections of terror: vacuity, solitude and silence. Like silence, loud sounds that overwhelm the senses can also lead to sublime emotion. Burke also regards grandeur or expanse as characteristics of the sublime. Linked to this regard for grandeur or expanse, infinity (as the extreme point of greatness and vastness) can subsequently also be sublime. That which the eye cannot see the end or boundary of also occurs as a type of infinity. Darkness, which embodies this experience of not being able to see the end or boundary of our surrounding (and also the strain on has on our senses), can, therefore, be indicative of the sublime.

This consideration of darkness, as the embodiment of the sublime facets of grandeur, expanse and infinity, to my mind, is one way of highlighting the helplessness or limitation of human existence. Darkness, as a specific defining element of night-time thus supports my point of departure where a painting set in night-time initialises the awareness of the power of nature over the smallness of humans, inherently becoming a reference to a sublime experience. Vague images, which are eventually linked to darkness because of the effect of placing stress on the senses, also form part of the sublime experience, as it evokes feelings of uncertainty, fear and danger (Chu 2012:71; Finley 1979:143; Smith 2012).

This summary of Burke's argument positions the sublime as a very specific emotional experience, creating a form of delight that is more complex than the joy derived from something pleasant and beautiful or the sadness or fear of experiencing physical pain or sorrow. The sublime defines a sense of captivation that humans experience when viewing or experiencing the overwhelming power of the world around them, heightening their awareness of their own limitations in determining, directing or escaping this helplessness. Through these identified facets – fear and terror, awareness of our limitations, futile attempts at self-preservation, the supernatural power that nature has over humans, surprise, impending uncertainty, being overwhelmed, privation in the form of vacuity, solitude and silence and the vastness of infinity reflect – a bridge materialises between the sublime and the pieces of music presented above.

This chapter continues from this perceived relationship between the themes in the pieces of music and the understanding of the sublime to present a discussion on selected Romantic artworks. In keeping with the central theme of night-time that directs this book, artworks are chosen because of their inclusion or reference to the night and simultaneous reflection of sublime sensibilities. These 'night-time artworks' are grouped into three categories. The creation of these categories serves as a technique to highlight how visual

representation in Romantic art reflects the sensibilities of Romantic music and the underlying consciousness of the sublime experience. To this end, the following sections mirror the themes I identified in Strauss, Berlioz, Fauré and Schubert's music at the end of the previous section. The next section *Alone in the dark* considers the theme of *subjective experience*, placing the experience of the individual (the Romantic self) at the centre of inspiration for visual expression. This is followed by *The spiritual realm*, a section on the theme of *an awareness of the spiritual*. Here, the Romantics' convictions that the world holds more mystery and power than science and logic can account for is depicted in the chosen artworks. Finally, *Night-time everlasting* displays a culmination of the Romantic artist's awareness of the helplessness of humanity against *the power of nature*. Here, 'nature' referred to an all-embracing consciousness of the things humans could not control; from the seasons or overwhelming and unexpected occurrences to eventual death or simply the conclusion of every day with the onset of night-time.

At this point, it is worth noting that Burke did not feel that art and the sublime were necessarily stable mates. He states that the alignment of nature and its forces in capturing it on canvas would be too certain and too definitive. According to Burke, this capture of the appearance of nature causes the uncertainty that is essentially to be linked to the sublime not to be transcended (Chianese 1998:437). Here, indeed, it must be borne in mind that Burke's lifetime preceded many of the works now considered to epitomise the depiction of the sublime experience in painting. Burke would not have seen the depiction of internal reflection of the individual lost in the expanse of nature of Friedrich's 'Wanderer above the Sea of Fog' (*Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer*) of 1818, the torment of impending death and exhilaration of possible salvation in Géricault's 'The Raft of the Medusa' (*Le Radeau de la Méduse*) in 1819, or the frightening awe of Armageddon in *The great day of His wrath*, created between 1851 and 1854 by John Martin (1789–1854). We could argue that Burke's influence on embracing and understanding the sublime lies at the roots of these landmark paintings.

## ■ Alone in the dark

The rising moon casts its subtle rays on the rippling water's face. The evening is cool and quiet, and the ocean breeze is gentle. Two ships rest close to the shore, content in the expectation of a restful night's sleep, undisturbed by the rage of winds and waves. Three figures sit perched on a large bolder. The restful stone lifts them up to the middle of the canvas, placing them at the centre and focus of the image. The soft darkness on the outer edges of the canvas turns into sharp contrast around the silhouettes of the figures, highlighted by the moon on the horizon. The two women and their one male companion do not seem to be engaged in conversation or activity. We see their left sides and backs that are turned to us, as they sit quietly, gazing out onto the night-time ocean, apparently lost in thought.



Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caspar\\_David\\_Friedrich\\_-\\_Mondaufgang\\_am\\_Meer\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caspar_David_Friedrich_-_Mondaufgang_am_Meer_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg). Artwork photograph published in the United States before 01 January, 1923, available in the public domain.

**FIGURE 4.2:** Caspar David Friedrich, *Mondaufgang am Meer* [*Moonrise over the sea*], 1822, oil on canvas, 55 cm × 71 cm, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

The discussion preceding this section might have prepared the reader for frightening scenes of terror, confusion and midnight murders; however, this image by German painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840) is nothing of the sort. Indeed, when considering Romanticism's ideas on *the beautiful*, 'Moonrise over the sea' (1822) (Figure 4.2) seems to align more readily with the soft, safe, pleasurable concepts and emotions associated with the beautiful (Facos 2011:130; Finley 1979:142). Such an interpretation would not be an unfounded understanding of the tranquil seascape that Friedrich presents. The moonlight in the bay is, indeed, beautiful, and the three subjects might be in agreement on this point, inspiring their decision to spend this time of quiet by the water's edge.

It is here where we can take note of the overlapping of *the sublime* and *the beautiful*. The sublime represents an understanding of aesthetic experience differently situated than beholding something truly beautiful or the experience of pure terror. This complexity of its roots allows the sublime to creep into a depiction as peaceful as the one depicted here. We could, for instance, consider the sublime facet of terror situated in vacuity, solitude or silence, often referring to loneliness – an emotion not necessarily connected to being physically alone, but rather subjective isolation – experience possibly heightened through quiet contemplation while regarding the endlessness of the ocean's expanse (Rabb 2009). The ocean's passive surface and the ships' calm resting place for the night do not fool us into forgetting the danger and power, which could awaken at any moment. The seamen on board these vessels and the contemplating individuals on the shore remain aware of this and therefore, know their insignificance within the infinity of nature. Friedrich's positioning of the seated figures, placing their backs towards us – thereby stripping them of identity – allows the viewer to view themselves similarly positioned on an ancient stone with its feet in the water; here we sit, given over to our internal contemplation of our place within this terrifying beauty of a stillness of night-time.

Friedrich's seascape typifies this artist's use and mastery of landscape painting. Landscape painting, when connected to the concepts of the sublime, gradually became more popular among art connoisseurs because of its ability to project the spirit of Romanticism. This genre steadily attained a greater standing in art academies of the 19th century, proving to convey an intensity of emotion and contemplation it was not thought to possess the power to achieve (Brady 2013:81; Chu 2012:71; ed. Eisenman 2011:146). Capturing nature in images proved to be able to simultaneously take the viewer not only outward into the expanse of mountains, oceans and valleys but also inward into our deepest thoughts and emotions.



Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Francisco\\_Jos%C3%A9\\_de\\_Goya\\_y\\_Lucientes\\_-\\_The\\_sleep\\_of\\_reason\\_produces\\_monsters\\_\(No\\_43\)\\_from\\_Los\\_Caprichos\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Francisco_Jos%C3%A9_de_Goya_y_Lucientes_-_The_sleep_of_reason_produces_monsters_(No_43)_from_Los_Caprichos_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg) Artwork photograph published in the United States before 01 January, 1923, available in the public domain.

**FIGURE 4.3:** Francisco Goya, *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos* [*The sleep of reason produces monsters*], 1799, etching, aquatint, drypoint and burin, 29.5 cm × 21 cm, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.

In Francisco Goya's 'The sleep of reason produces monsters' (1799) (Figure 4.3), the subject's setting is not an outwardly naturalistic environment but crosses a barrier between the real and the unreal. The artist has fallen asleep. His slumber is not peaceful but haunted by creatures of the night. Owls and bats circle around him in the air; a mass of flapping wings and ogling eyes, some flying down towards him. A mythical lynx lies in the background, pensively observing the tumultuous scene. The drawing tools on the desk indicate that our subject has fallen asleep while working. The words imprinted on his desk provide an explanation for the frightening beings that haunt him: 'The sleep of reason produces monsters' [*El sueño de la razon produce monstrous*].

It is in the last moments of the 18th century that the Spanish artist Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828), more commonly known as Francisco Goya, presents us with this aquatint print of political and social commentary. Goya's reference to reason does not proclaim scientific centrality to all thinking and experience but uses the concept of *reason* to condemn the corruption and atrocities of the church and government, which he sees around him (ed. Eisenman 2011:99). Although Goya did not identify himself as a Romantic, his emotional reaction to the things he witnessed in his lifetime is brought into visual expression in artworks now central to our understanding of Romanticism (Vaughan 1994:86). As Goya grew older, struggled with his health and lost faith in humanity, he came to epitomise the Romantic notion of seclusion by gradually becoming more reclusive (ed. Eisenman 2011:105; Vaughan 1994:98). The artist left alone with his nightmares in this work became Goya himself, plagued by monsters, not only during night-time but also steadily making their presence permanent in the world around him.

## ■ The spiritual realm

In the late 18th century, the spirit of individualistic, supernatural experience finds depiction in John Henry Fuseli's painting of 1781, 'The Nightmare' (Figure 4.4). Amid the scientific debates on the understanding of nature and natural forces, Fuseli presents a frightening scene; one set outside of the parameters of scientific knowledge. In the foreground, stretched horizontally on the bottom half of the canvas, a woman lies on a bed, her upper body and head sloping off the bed on the right side of the canvas. On top of the woman's chest sits a creature, which has human-like attributes but is clearly not human. It is partly covered in shadow, obscuring the detail of its body, and providing a partial view of its ogre-like face and pointed ears. Considering the bright and detailed depiction of the woman in her white robes, the starkness of the obscured detail of this creature seems to enhance the question of its existence. If it does not present in the light illuminating the woman although it is in full view, does that mean it is not there? In the background, to the left of the goblin sitting on the woman's chest, the head of a black horse protrudes out of the darkness. Its colour blends with the dark surroundings of the background

to such an extent that it seems disembodied. Its head is turned towards the goblin and the woman; however, its lifeless eyes have no pupils to indicate the direction it is looking in (Chu 2012:83; ed. Eisenman 2011:115).

Fuseli's painting inspired disgusted awe and debate when it was exhibited, bringing Fuseli fame and becoming an extremely popular image, copied and parodied many times over. The work has overt imagery connected to many contemporary ideas of nightmares and folktales of otherworldly visitors in the night. The artist provided no specific explanation of the work and its contents, which has added to its intrigue and diverse interpretation. One of the especially shocking aspects of this 18th-century work is the overt reference to the sexual. The dark figure atop the woman – herself seemingly positioned in a sexually receptive position – is identified as an incubus. This mythical creature is a male demon who visits women sleeping alone to engage in sexual activity with them. This creature could, for Fuseli, represent human sexual desire, possibly repressed or overwhelming desire, making us aware of an underlying lust that we cannot always control through logic, but which resides in us as part of that which we cannot explain. This animalistic, sexually driven creature appears at night-time, when the cover of the night can partially hide its activity from the judgement of our logical daytime activities (ed. Eisenman 2011:116).

In 'Witches' Sabbath' of 1798 (Figure 4.5), Goya does not employ animals of the night to represent the monsters that haunt the dreams of those concerned with the state of a country beset by the corrupted rule of church and state (ed. Eisenman 2011:95). The antagonist is identified as an individual. The Devil, in the form of a large goat, sits in the middle of a group of women who encircle him. The quarter moon in the upper left corner looks down at this night-time gathering from a dark, star bespeckled sky.

Satan and the coven of witches populate a barren landscape. The party is set to the foreground of the work and displays not only the goat crowned with a garland of leaves and his ageing servants but also nightmarish figures of infants. One child held up by an old witch on the right is still alive but grotesque in its starved appearance. Another, slightly behind this starved offering, seems to be healthy still but not likely to remain so. To the left, the discarded carcass of a starved child protrudes from the circle of the congregation, with a diagonal stake in the ground of the background, carrying the bodies of three more dead children.

Again, Goya uses frightening images of the night to comment on the state of his country. Having witnessed the atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition along with numerous struggles between opposing forces such as liberal thinkers against the church and monarchy, Goya uses the superstition and actual witch hunts of the era to comment on the inhuman actions of humans. Goya does not encourage superstition using these religious and superstitious references but once again condemns the power



Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John\\_Henry\\_Fuseli\\_-\\_The\\_Nightmare.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_Henry_Fuseli_-_The_Nightmare.JPG). Artwork photograph published in the United States before 01 January, 1923, available in the public domain.

**FIGURE 4.4:** Henry Fuseli, *The nightmare*, 1781, oil on canvas, 101.6 cm × 127 cm, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.





Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Francisco\\_de\\_Goya\\_y\\_Lucientes\\_-\\_Witches\\_Sabbath\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Francisco_de_Goya_y_Lucientes_-_Witches_Sabbath_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg). Artwork photograph published in the United States before 01 January, 1923, available in the public domain.

**FIGURE 4.5:** Francisco Goya, *El aquelarre* [*Witches' sabbath*], 1798, oil on canvas, 43 cm × 30 cm, Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid.

of actions without reason (Vaughan 1994:97). His seeming alignment with the logic of the Enlightenment continues in his critique against outrages of the time; however, he employs a Romanticist approach of creating images of the supernatural to evoke emotion that is encapsulated in facets of the sublime such as overwhelming fear and terror of observing a world over which we have no control.

## ■ Night-time everlasting

Although Delacroix's painting 'Dante and Virgil in Hell' (1822) (Figure 4.6) is found to signal a shift in French narrative painting from neo-Classicism to Romanticism, Delacroix himself rejected being called a 'Romantic' and declared himself a *pur classique* (Vaughan 1994:10). Although the neo-Classical style that dominated the French art scene of the time can be observed in the formal composition of the work, the spirit captured by the highly evocative images of tormented souls propels Delacroix – if against his will – into the ranks of the foremost Romantic visual artists.

A completely dark sky and horizon, broken only by what looks to be the silhouette of a burning city to the upper left side of the canvas, makes up everything that surrounds the group of figures placed in the foreground and dominates the surface of this large painting. We see a small boat, spanning the breadth of the image's surface. It moves through tumultuous water; however, the copping waves and blowing wind are not its only hindrance; the water is populated by the bodies of naked men and women, apparently grasping and fighting to climb aboard while displaying expressions of torment and anguish. The boat is steered by an oarsman to the right of the painting, with his back towards the viewer, and set somewhat behind the two central figures that accompany him on the vessel. These two figures are the focal point of the work – their upright stance accentuated by the horizontal and slightly diagonal placement of the other objects and bodies in the painting. These two men are Dante and Virgil, travelling through Hell.

Delacroix uses the classical text by Virgil as an inspiration of this striking painting, a Romantic preference for a tale set in the past rather than in the present (Chu 2012:214). A dark and frightening world of the spiritual realm is presented to us. The figures, from the main characters standing in the middle, to the boatman who has crossed these waters many times before, to the tortured souls in the water, display different emotional expressions. Virgil seems calm, focusing on the imbalance of Dante, who, in turn, seems bewildered and anxious. Phlegyas, the oarsman, is resolute in his task of transporting these travellers to their destination. The floating figures – seemingly trapped for eternity – show expressions ranging from pain and anguish to helplessness and madness. The artist takes us to Hell, a place of everlasting night, where suffering never ends. The viewer is positioned at a safe distance, not immediately (but



Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eug%C3%A8ne\\_Delacroix\\_-\\_The\\_Barque\\_of\\_Dante.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eug%C3%A8ne_Delacroix_-_The_Barque_of_Dante.jpg), Artwork photograph published in the United States before 01 January, 1923, available in the public domain.

**FIGURE 4.6:** Eugène Delacroix, *Dante et Virgile aux enfers* [*Dante and Virgil in Hell*], 1822, oil on canvas, 189 cm × 246 cm, Louvre, Paris.

perhaps eventually) in danger of Hell's torture. However, the bodies in pain are placed right at the edge of the painting, close enough for the viewer to witness their emotions and perhaps feel the exhilaration of the danger and suffering set just far enough away for us not to be afflicted by it. We might not find the misery beautiful but a strong emotion and awareness of this mythical and religious place of endless night haunt our minds.

Friedrich once again presents us with a landscape in the final artwork for this chapter's discussion. 'The Abbey in the Oakwood' (Figure 4.7), painted between 1809 and 1810, which represents the notable role landscape painting fulfilled in expressing the ideas of Romanticism. Along with 'masters' such as Turner and Gainsborough, Friedrich created landscapes that not only transported the viewer to places they had barely imagined before but also heightened the awareness of the individual to their insignificance within the timelessness of nature – a sublime reminder of our irrelevance (ed. Eisenman 2011:146; Facos 2011:130).

The moon is visible in the right, upper third of the canvas. There is a faint light on the horizon; however, we do not know whether the sun is setting or rising. The twilight seems ominous as skeletal oak trees materialise out of the mist and stretch their naked branches up into the dimly lit, grey sky. Among these ghostly trees, the ruin of a Gothic cathedral is discernible, positioned in the middle of the canvas and drawing the viewer's gaze towards it. Only a single section of wall remains, encapsulating a derelict Gothic window with no glass left in the broken frame. At the feet of the ruin and towering trees, a disorganised graveyard rests in darkness. A group of monks carrying a coffin move amid the neglected gravestones, forming a line in the centre of the bottom third of the painting, apparently heading towards an open grave. Two insignificant candle flames are their only sources of light.

The angle at which the scene is set removes the viewer from feeling part of the landscape, providing instead a vantage point detached from a physical location to positioning the observer as a disembodied presence. Although the figurative depiction of the landscape containing earth, sky, trees, ruins, graves and human presence is naturalistic in its appearance, the scene seems unreal, leading Whittington (2012) to describe it as:

[A] familiar nowhere; various places, moments and impressions [...] combined into images that appear both real and constructed, familiar and disorienting [...]. Instead, the painting depicts a landscape of dreams or even nightmares. (p. 74)

What might at first glance appear to be a simple view of a forgotten ruin evidently carries much more weight than such an interpretation would allow. The timelessness of the scene allows the work's central narrative to transcend the limitation of being set in a specific era. A funeral is taking place, attended only by the few monks discernible in the gloomy forest. This is our first notice of a reference to the mortality of humans. But circling outwards, the graveyard contains the remains of countless bodies having been carried there in the



Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caspar\\_David\\_Friedrich\\_-\\_Abtei\\_im\\_Eichwald\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caspar_David_Friedrich_-_Abtei_im_Eichwald_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg). Artwork photograph published in the United States before 01 January, 1923, available in the public domain.

**FIGURE 4.7:** Caspar David Friedrich, *Abtei im eichwald* [*The abbey in the oakwood*], 1810, oil on canvas, 110 cm × 171 cm, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

same type of procession, all as unidentified and unremarkable as the one we are witnessing. What is more, the gravestones marking their resting places – meant as a marker of their existence – show the signs of deterioration and eventual disappearance as well. Next, this message of the transient importance of humans and their plans, undertakings and achievements becomes applicable to the towering ruin of the ancient cathedral. Having once been a massive edifice of human accomplishment in engineering, cooperation and the power held by certain groups or ideas, even this symbol of power crumbles at the hands of time. We are left, not mourning the death of the unknown person being carried by the monks, the forgotten individuals buried in the graveyard or the decay of a once magnificent building, but the impermanence of our own lives and the influence we have during our brief moment of existence all the while being embraced by the darkness of night-time.

## ■ Conclusion

This chapter discussed a selection of Romantic artworks unified by their visual incorporation or reference to night-time – a theme identified at the outset of this book’s research. Elements of Romanticism further guided the choice of artworks as another link between visual art and the music that steered this study, considering that the musical works ‘While going to sleep’ and ‘At dusk’ by Richard Strauss, ‘The spectre of the rose’ by Hector Berlioz, ‘After a dream’ by Gabriel Fauré and ‘The Erlking’ by Franz Schubert fall within the Romantic period. Furthermore, themes from the texts of these musical pieces were argued to depict specific themes and emotions central to the idea of the sublime.

An understanding of the sublime during Romanticism, as directed by the writing of 18th-century philosopher Edmund Burke, guided the identification of facets that reflect sublime thinking. These selected facets of the sublime were shown to correlate with my identification of three themes present in the chosen music of Strauss, Berlioz, Fauré and Schubert. This comparison aimed to link the texts of the music to the concept of the sublime, establishing an understanding of a unique emotional experience, argued to be brought about by the sublime experience.

The sections preceding this conclusion covered three categories into which the selected artworks from the Romantic period were grouped for discussion. This categorisation does not imply that the elements of Romanticism, night-time and the sublime identified in the chosen works are the exclusive and finite features of these works. The categories served as a showcase for connecting the works of music that guides this research to images from visual art. These sections considered the depiction of internal struggle and reflection of the individual, demons and goblins that crawl out of their holes in midnight hours, longing and memories manifested in dreams, loneliness and solitude in deserted spaces after sunset and fear of the overwhelming helplessness of humans as

signified by darkness. Finally, by viewing these Romantic visualisations of the role that night-time plays in the psyche of the Romantic artist from an understanding of the sublime experience, we are able to identify and understand the important role that emotion played in the creation of these masterpieces. The Romantic artist, turning inwards for knowledge through feeling and denouncing the limits of pure reason for the boundlessness of the mysterious, presents us with work that cannot but show and elicit emotion.

# Contextualising Romanticism as the ideal artistic movement for sourcing emotion-rich songs that promote intentional meaning

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## ■ Introduction

The art songs that inspired this research and that were eventually depicted as art were written by composers associated with the Romantic era in music. In this chapter, I will contextualise some of the characteristics and ideals associated with this time period and events that influenced the Zeitgeist. Furthermore, I will contextualise why the Romantic era in music provided the ideal oeuvre of music to source art songs that convey the emotion-rich

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intentions of their composers. I describe their process as intentional affective composition. As Schubert, Berlioz, Fauré and Strauss composed with the intention to convey emotion and non-musical ideas, the selected songs that are featured in this study comprise richly layered referential materials that facilitate significant meaning-making experiences.

## ■ Romanticism

The term ‘romantic’ is said to have derived from the medieval romance, myths or stories depicting heroic legends and events of the past and ‘connoted something distant, legendary, fantastic, ideal, something far from everyday life’ (Burkholder, Grout & Palisca 2019:587). In Europe, these tales include the conquests of Charlemagne and his 12 knights in France, King Arthur and his knights of the round table in Britain and the numerous Greek and Roman stories depicting mythological heroes such as Achilles, Hercules and Perseus. In Africa, the equivalent would be stories including the tale of Mansa Musa who ruled Mali from 1306 to 1332 and led 72 000 people from Timbuktu to Mecca; Sonni ‘Alī, a 15th-century West African monarch who expanded the Sudanese kingdom of Songhai; and Amenhotep III who was considered one of Egypt’s greatest pharaohs (Adeleke 1996; Aldred 1991; Bell 1972). Although the medieval romance is essentially a European literary creation, tales of these African heroes were known in Europe (De Graft-Johnson 2021), and as a South African artist myself, I could only begin to imagine the rich stories that could be told should these characters have populated the chivalric romances of Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616), Edmund Spenser (1552–1599) and Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533), if these authors had known of them.

Romanticism is traditionally accepted to be an intellectual and artistic movement (encompassing visual arts, music and literature) that emerged in Europe towards the end of the 18th century. German Romanticism particularly emerged as a result of a revolt against Enlightenment ideals concretised in the Age of Reason and as a consequence to the circumstances that followed the French Revolution (Boyd 2016:5). While Enlightenment philosophy embraced order and reason and favoured human subjectivity over individual emotional expression, Romanticists discarded these ideals in favour of heightened emotional expression, the unknown and the irrational (Boyd 2016:6). As a result, the *Sturm und Drang* [Storm and Stress] movement emerged where the aforementioned qualities then laid the foundation for a new ethos developed in the 19th century. During this time, the importance of emotion, individualism, Idealism and imagination developed and characterised the tenets of the Romantic period. The main characteristic of the Romantic artist was to freely express their individualistic emotion. This type of emotional expression was inspired by innovative thought and also frequently made reference to nature, the mystical and the supernatural.

Mysticism, nature and the supernatural were themes that often coalesced in the poetry of many German Romanticists like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (even though he himself found many Romantic aesthetics and ideals problematic). In turn, many composers like Schubert set these poems to music, and in those songs, supernatural characters like the Erlking, Lorelei the witch and Death personified found greater expression through music. Furthermore, many Germans resisted the quickly changing, mechanised, industrialised world, which 'prompted nostalgia for the simple wisdom of the *Volk*, or folk, specifically their seemingly uncomplicated and unspoiled relationship with the natural world' (Boyd 2016:9). Although not a necessary characteristic of Romanticism, an interest in the importance of the artists' relationship with nature is generally accepted to be a feature of Romanticism.

Kravitt (1992:93) warned that the traditional description of what Romanticism entails is essentially flawed as scholars tend to focus on its external features and 'unrelated attributes' such as an 'interest in nature, medieval chivalry, mysticism, [and] remoteness'. His reasoning stemmed from the fact that these attributes do not connect creative outputs of this era sufficiently and limit the true meaning of what Romanticism is at its core. He stated that newer understandings rather place the focus on the artist and their individual expressivity as the essence of what Romanticism truly means (Kravitt 1992).

During the Romantic era, the artists' new sense of self-expression stemmed from various socio-economic factors that saw artists lose subsidies from aristocratic patrons and that they had to find alternative sources of income. Towards the end of the 18th century, the nobles began losing their grip on the 'established order', and power was eventually relinquished to a new class of wealth: people who made their fortunes through commerce and industry (Burkholder et al. 2019:582). As artists no longer had to please their patrons or the public for that matter, their creative outputs could now embody their own 'perceptions, thoughts and feelings' (Kravitt 1992:93). In essence, their disaffection with society caused them to self-reflect and find an inner understanding of being.

Currently, artists once again find themselves in a state of disillusion and disaffection with society as many livelihoods have been decimated because of the effects of lockdowns globally in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Before the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 swept through the world, economists and scholars were abuzz with the possibilities of what the Fourth Industrial Revolution might bring. During troubling times, there is arguably always a prevailing pessimism that dominates the *Zeitgeist*, and society at large often longs for better times, or yearns for what they had or knew before. In recent times and in fact throughout the ages, there has always been an ebb and flow of good and bad economic times, of prosperity and recession. The 20th and

21st centuries, respectively, have seen the effects of the Spanish flu on economies globally followed by the decadence of the 1920s, the great depression of the 1930s, the recessions of the 1980s and 2008 and their respective economic recoveries, and despite the challenges of these transitory times, many artists have proven to be resilient and have adapted their ways of making an income and making art. In the 19th century, besides composing, performing or conducting, Schubert worked as a music teacher and Berlioz and Schumann worked as music critics to supplement their income (Bonds 2006:386). Whether the Romanticists had to find new ways of sustaining themselves financially or modern-day artists fight to survive in a post-COVID world, artists adapt and overcome challenges despite much pessimism. Nonetheless, much art created reflects the pessimism prevalent in society.

Kravitt (1992:100) argued that at its core, Romanticism is a 'pessimistic view of life'. He maintained that Romanticists exist in a world where an oppressive society is constantly suppressing their deepest desires and that their dearest hopes can only be fulfilled in fantasy. He posited that the Romanticist seeks solitude (that eventually leads to sadness) in an attempt to escape the conventions of society. Furthermore, Romanticists yearn for the unattainable that often results in melancholy. He (Kravitt 1992) stated:

The result is a paradox: the Romanticist seeks happiness in a way that leads to despair, even to suicide. In art, pleasure is linked to pain, longing to lamentation, and the search for fulfilment to frustration. For the Romanticist, longing is an end in itself. In romantic love, the object is the pursuit rather than the winning of the fair lady. The romantic Don Juan is such a dreamer. In extreme cases the pursuit becomes frenzied, and the frenzy itself becomes a romantic illness. Insatiable passion for the unattainable permeates the yearning. (p. 101)

When one considers this as the essence of Romanticism, then longing, nostalgia, pleasure in pain, self-expression, a search for the unattainable, along with individuality, Idealism, originality and imagination should manifest as core emotional themes, attributes or literary tropes in the music of Schubert, Strauss, Berlioz and Fauré. This does not mean that all these themes should present together, but rather individually or in conjunction with a few. In the songs used for this research, nostalgia, longing and perhaps even melancholy connect the music of an early Romantic composer like Schubert who composed '*Erkönig*' in 1815 with the lush late Romantic music of Strauss who composed *Die Vier Letzte Lieder* in the mid-20th century. Similarly, these themes also find common ground between the French and German Romantic traditions. In Schubert's '*Erkönig*', a father longs to save the life of his son, while the sinister Erlking yearns to seduce the boy to his death; Strauss's '*Beim Schlafengehen*' and '*Im abendrot*' concern a happy couples' desire for death after the listener is made aware of their nostalgic memories of a blissful, long life shared together; Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*' describes the ardent passion and nostalgia of a rose, a metaphor for a young man, who was plucked

by a woman and adorned her breast during a ball the night before. Fauré's '*Après un rêve*' entails the longing to return to a dream where a lover experienced happiness with their partner. The stories told in these songs occur within the context of the night, and many Romanticists have used the night as a symbol with which they associate a longing for the unattainable, or mystery and a yearning for solace against life's torments that can only be found in death (Kravitt 1992:102). Artists often equated the day or light with reason and the night with the escape from earthly suffering. Other Romantic ideals and attributes that are evident in these songs will also be discussed in later chapters of this book.

I would postulate that the emotions and attributes described in Kravitt (1992) and features like individuality, Idealism and originality are not only prevalent in the music or visual art of the Romantic era. Since the 19th century, many musicians, composers and visual artists resonate with those attributes, and additionally, emotions like nostalgia, longing and melancholy are prevalent in the music and art of many present-day artists. This is evident in the music of Sam Smith, Whitney Houston and Adele in popular culture in songs such as *Dancing with a Stranger* (2020), *Didn't we almost have it all* (1987) and *Someone like you* (2011), respectively. The presence of nuanced emotions like nostalgia and melancholy in the plethora of musical outputs that we see today supports the use of the GEMS (Zentner & Eerola 2010) that is able to capture these emotions in listeners providing a more suitable way of identifying and reporting emotion elicited through music than basic emotion theory or through the use of the circumplex model. Even in the visual art community, Dalley (2018) described how artists, curators and art galleries more frequently provide offerings wrought with nostalgia: that they 'are looking back to the Idealism of the 1960s as a remedy for today's excesses'.

In essence, I posit that Romantic ideals or attributes will always manifest in a post-Enlightenment societal ethos, especially when people experience hardships and yearn for a semblance of the familiar, of previous happiness, or when they suffer painful romantic experiences that might lead to the search for an unattainable love. This is because the pursuit of happiness was one of the chief tenets of the Enlightenment (Zafirovski 2011), and this ideal was not discarded by the Romanticists and has remained engrained in the ethos of enlightened cultures till today. When it comes to finding romantic love, its pursuit and eventual achievement are intrinsically linked to the perception of attaining happiness and well-being in a post-Enlightenment, predominantly Western society (Waldinger & Schulz 2010). In fact, the concept of romantic love that leads to marriage (with companionship as its ultimate goal) only gained traction towards the end of the 18th century (Coontz 2006), coincidentally also coinciding with the emergence of the Romantic movement in the arts. Prior to that, most societies around the world utilised marriage for its political and economic benefits (Coontz 2006). It should come as no

surprise, then why the Romantic characteristics of longing, nostalgia, pleasure in pain, self-expression, individuality, imagination, Idealism, originality and a search for the unattainable is and has been present in music even long after what is traditionally accepted to be the Romantic period in music.

## ■ Romanticism and music

When applied to music, historians and musicologists have voiced many opposing views on the exact start and end of the Romantic era. Generally, the Romantic period in music denotes music composed between 1800 and 1850 or even up until 1900 (Bonds 2006). Burkholder et al. (2019:588) posited that the year 1815 ‘serves as a convenient starting point’ for the Romantic period in music, as this aligns with the political and social events (specifically the consequences of the French Revolution) that occurred during that year, and as a result, those events significantly impacted composers. Alternatively, Guido Adler (1855–1941), a Bohemian-Austrian musicologist, described the early part of the 19th century as a transitional period between the Classical and Romantic periods (often linking Schubert to the first Viennese School alongside Haydn and Mozart). He argued that the true Romantic style only came to fruition in the middle of the century as exemplified in the music of Schumann, Berlioz, Chopin, Liszt and Mendelssohn. Furthermore, he categorised composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries like Wagner and Liszt as modernists or realists (Grove & Sadie 1980). This sentiment is not shared by many other historians who rather argue that the time span from the mid-18th up until the early 20th centuries should be considered as one classic-Romantic period because composers ‘shared conventions of harmony, rhythm, and form but differed in how they treated these conventions’ (Burkholder et al. 2019:587–588). *Die Vier Letzte Lieder* [the *Four Last Songs*] by Richard Strauss (of which two songs, ‘*Beim Schlafengehen*’ and ‘*Im abendrot*’ were used in this study) were composed well into the 20th century (between 1946 and 1948) and even these songs are stylistically considered to be late Romantic (Kravitt 1996).

I concur with the historians who argue for one classic-Romantic period based on their arguments regarding the conventions of form, harmony and rhythm, and in the later 20th century and even today, many composers write music that shares an affinity for the expressive and emotive qualities of the Romantic era. The South African composer, Hendrik Hofmeyr (who has composed operas and many art songs), considers the musical qualities of melody, expressivity, beauty, tonality and harmony to be central to his compositional style. Hofmeyr abandoned the ethos of the avant-gardists during the mid-1970s and stated that emotional subjectivity (central to Romantic ideals) cannot be represented in the atonal writing and other

qualities of Avant-guard music (Cupido 2009). Hofmeyr believed that (Cupido 2009):

Virtually all great music is Romantic in intention, in that it sees music as a form of expression and not merely as a structure of organised sound. To my mind, atonality failed to provide an alternative to the instinctual and universally comprehensible organisation provided by tonality, which in some form is present in virtually every type of music, and is not merely an invention of Western composers, as its detractors would have us believe. Expanded tonality (which can incorporate all the diatonic, artificial and even atonal modes) is an irreplaceable tool for imbuing music with shape and meaning. Allied to this is the primary importance of melody and rhythm, which remains the first level of perception and appreciation for every listener. Harmony is an invaluable adjunct to this, as it can enrich the melodic materials in infinitely varied ways. All the other resources of music represent layers of meaning that enrich our experience, even if not immediately appreciated at first hearing. (pp. 10-11)

Similarly, many composers throughout the 20th century changed their style of writing favouring the type of tonality, melodic arcs and rhythms representative of the Romantic period. In the mid-1970s, around the same time as when Hofmeyr began his studies in Musicology at the University of Cape Town, the Polish composer, Krzysztof Penderecki, abandoned his former style of writing for a new expressive writing style. He focused on melodic writing, drawing on past styles and harmonic practices of the Romantic period as is evident in his Violin Concerto No. 1 (1976-1977) and the opera *Paradise Lost* (1975-1978) (Burkholder et al. 2019). Likewise, George Rochberg, David Del Tredici and Stephen Albert rejected previous compositional styles such as serialism and atonality for more expressive Romantic styles of writing, or arguably an intentional affective compositional style. Over the course of 25 years, the American Pulitzer prize-winning composer, David Del Tredici, composed a series of works based on Lewis Carroll's stories about Alice in Wonderland. He found that the musical language that comprised 12-tone serialism was not capable of conveying the emotion, affects, fantasy or playfulness present in the Alice stories and rather found the musical language he sought to convey these traits in the tonality and other musical features of the Romantic style (Burkholder et al. 2019).

When composers combine contemporary writing styles with musical features of the Romantic era, they are known as neo-Romanticists (Campbell 1994). Penderecki, Rochberg, Del Tredici and Hofmeyr among others found that the sounds and gestures of the Romantic style of writing afforded them the expressive tools to directly connect and communicate with the listener. Notwithstanding, it is possible for a listener to perceive emotion and even have a physiological response to any genre or style of music from any era. What makes the possibility of eliciting affect, feeling, mood or emotion from the music of the Romantic Period special is that most Romantic composers

(with notable exceptions like Brahms) wrote music in various genres with a common ethos: they all intended to appeal to listeners' emotions, to evoke feeling and meaning in the music that they composed. It is for this reason that I chose music from this era to best elicit an emotional response from the artists.

## ■ Intentional affective composition and audience perception

Not all composers write music with the intent of conveying emotion or of having their music represent something extra-musical. This is exemplified by composers like Johannes Brahms and Clara Schumann who believed that music was absolute: it did not represent anything outside of itself (Burkholder et al. 2019). These composers, steadfast in their assertions, were in opposition to Richard Wagner who believed that all music (even instrumental music) must have meaning to be considered art; hence, composers like Wagner wrote to convey a specific emotional intention, and often in the case of Wagner, the intention was reflected in the texts of his operas (Burkholder et al. 2019). Similarly, composers like Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz and Richard Strauss, who were proponents of a new style of instrumental writing, sought to convey their emotional intent and extra-musical narrative in symphonic works known as programme music.

During the mid-19th century, in what is often referred to as the War of the Romantics today, Liszt, Berlioz, Wagner and Strauss moved away from the concept of absolute music and rather sought to incorporate words and extra-musical ideas in their compositions. The text was very important to these composers as it served as a concrete way of conveying their intent. Many composers had writers in their closest circle of friends, and some composers also wrote literature themselves (Bonds 2006). To convey their narrative or affective intent, they used programme notes to tell a story that corresponded with the feeling, mood or emotion evoked through the harmonies, melodies and rhythmic devices of their music, which is most notably exemplified in Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* (which will be explored in further detail in Chapter 7) and in the symphonic or tone poems of Liszt and Strauss.

Both Liszt and Strauss drew on extra-musical sources like poetry and paintings to inspire the narratives they intended to tell through their tone poems. Liszt's tone poems, 'Tasso: lamento e trionfo' ['Symphonic Poem No. 2'], S636 was inspired by a poem by Johann Goethe, his 'Hunnenschlacht' ['Symphonic Poem No.11'], S645 was inspired by Wilhelm von Kaulbach's painting, *The Battle of the Huns*, while Strauss' *Don Quixote* (subtitled 'Fantastic variations on a theme of knightly character'), Op. 35 was inspired by the novel of Miguel de Cervantes. The concept of connecting objects with music was highly imaginative and also corresponded with the Romantic

philosophical outlook of Idealism as idealists believe that ‘objects in the physical world are a reflection of ideas of the mind’ (Bonds 2006:391). This was in stark contrast to the rationalism of the previous age of Enlightenment. For Romantic composers like Liszt, Berlioz and Strauss, the ideas embedded in their music delved beyond reason and embraced spirituality and mysticism (Bonds 2006). The notion of Idealism prevalent in the music of Berlioz, Strauss, Schubert and Fauré also resonates with the current phenomenon explored in this book: ascribing musical referential meaning (ideas of the mind) through visual art (the physical object).

Although programme music is now connoted with the tone poems of Liszt and Strauss and with Berlioz, the concept of extra-musical representation has existed in music as early as the Renaissance. Throughout the ages, examples of such music include William Byrd’s *The Battell* composed between 1588 and 1591, Vivaldi’s *Le quattro stagioni* [‘The Four Seasons’] composed between 1716 and 1717, and Bach’s *Capriccio sopra la lontananza del suo fratello dilettissimo* [‘Capriccio on the departure of a beloved brother’] BWV 992 composed early in his life. In these works, these composers used words/phrases like ‘The Burring of the Dead’, ‘Winter’ and ‘They Picture the Dangers Which May Befall Him’, respectively, to add meaning to individual movements through text that corresponds to the musical material. Understandably fewer examples of programme music can be identified in the Classical Era as composers embraced ‘balance, proportion, clarity and naturalness’ as ideals of their music rather than imagery or overstated emotion (Bonds 2006:314).

When Classical composers wrote music that conveyed extra-musical ideas, it was mostly done so in conjunction with the text. This is evident in Franz Josef Haydn’s (1732–1809) oratorio *Die Schöpfung* where the rolling waves, winds and bird calls can be heard in Raphael and Gabriel’s arias ‘*Rollend in schäumenden Wellen*’ [‘Rolling in foaming billows’] and ‘*Auf starkem Fittiche schwinget sich der Adler stolz*’ [‘On mighty wings the eagle proudly soars aloft’], respectively, through Haydn’s use of melodic and rhythmic motives, ornamentation and instrumentation. He also used the colour afforded by the trumpets, horns and trombones to evoke the light emitted during the creation of the first day. In the early 19th century, Schubert was recognised as a deft composer capable of conveying extra-musical ideas and emotion in his Lieder especially. During the Romantic era, programme music not only flourished but also embraced as composers viewed originality as a principle characteristic of Romanticism and in doing so developed the ability to express non-musical ideas and emotion through uniquely, distinctive intentional affective compositional techniques.

In Romantic music, mood, affect, feeling and emotion were elevated by soaring melodic arcs that ranged from simple to complex; orchestras became larger, which in turn allowed composers to utilise more colours in their



instrumentation; harmonies also became increasingly chromatic. Composers like Liszt, Wagner and Berlioz also used thematic material that was repeated and altered, thus representing the varied emotion or moods of a central character or subject (Burkholder et al. 2019:724). Composers were idolised in the Romantic era, often seen as divine or national treasures; Haydn and Beethoven both received state funerals (Bonds 2006:391). Composers more frequently used autobiographical material in their compositions; in fact, Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* was first called *Episode in the life of an artist* representing his own lived experience, and Strauss' *Vier Letzte Lieder* represents the end of a long and happy life he spent with his wife, the soprano Pauline de Ahna (Bonds 2006; Cameron-Mickens 2005). As a result, their intention of conveying meaning and emotion to their audience is enhanced by their desire to convey their personal stories through music.

During the Romantic period, audiences also adapted their ways of listening to and appreciating music. Classical composers like Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) wrote his operas with an intended audience in mind. While the humour and spoken dialogue of a *Singspiel* like *Die Zauberflöte* K. 620 ('The Magic Flute') were accessible to the middle class, the Roman history told in the *opera seria*, *La Clemenza di Tito* K. 621 (The Clemency of Titus) appealed to the nobility. Classical audiences felt free to express their appreciation and gratitude through applause when they saw fit, and composers like Mozart often found their responses predictable. Mozart once corresponded to his father that the audience reacted the way he anticipated: in response to his use of a crescendo in an orchestral work. He apparently remarked, 'What a fuss the oxen here make of this trick' (Bonds 2006:401).

In the Romantic era, composers did not have to please an intended audience anymore. As many composers lost financial support from the aristocracy after the French Revolution, they were free to compose music that expressed their own meaning. Their works were imaginative, not always conforming to previous styles, and they did not have to take their audience into account. Consequently, audiences took ownership of their ability to interpret and understand the music. They developed strict rules of etiquette when listening to music during concerts, like not applauding in between the movements of a symphony or between the individual songs of a song cycle. This was done in an effort to appreciate the musical work as a whole and not to disrupt the mood or feeling created by the musicians. Schubert's '*Erlkönig*' does not form part of a song cycle; however, it can be performed as a set of songs written by the composer or as part of a group of songs by a variety of composers that highlight the night or the supernatural as unifying thematic elements. Audiences should be able to express their appreciation for a rousing rendition of the song immediately afterwards, without fear of breaking the rules of etiquette.

## ■ Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the characteristics and ideals that made the songs selected for this research ideal to elicit meaning-making experiences. While some consider the essence of Romanticism to evoke a pessimistic worldview, longing, nostalgia, pleasure in pain, self-expression, individuality, imagination, Idealism, originality and a search for the unattainable emerged as common attributes of this movement. In the following chapters, these characteristics appear either as central themes in the music of Schubert, Berlioz, Fauré and Strauss or they resonate with the pathos embedded within the composers' intent to convey meaning and emotion.



# ‘Who’s riding so late, in the night and wind?’: Exploring how four artists ascribe meaning to Schubert’s ‘*Erlkönig*’

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## ■ Introduction

I would posit that when a singer presents a successful, nuanced performance of Schubert’s ‘*Erlkönig*’, Op. 1, D 328, in recital, he or she can overcome three daunting challenges. Notwithstanding many other performance pitfalls that singing this Lied might present, three challenges for me as a singer include delivering a technically sound performance singing a Lied that encompasses a range of an octave and a fifth while making sure that the German text is clearly enunciated and secondly that the expressive qualities of the four characters (the Erlking, boy, father and narrator) are conveyed to the audience

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'Who's riding so late, in the night and wind?'

through variation in vocal timbre, use of the language (playing with consonants, colouring vowels), dynamic variation and non-verbal communication when on stage. Finally, the fifth character (the horse implied by rhythmic and melodic motifs in the piano accompaniment) is ever present, and both singer and pianist have to present a symbiotic collaboration that is developed through rehearsal and communication.

Whether there are people in the audience that recognise the Lied and understand the meaning of the text or people who might hear it for the first time and do not understand its meaning, as a performer, I always endeavour to elicit an emotional reaction from the audience in response to what I am singing. One of the outcomes of this research is for singers like myself to understand how listeners perceive emotion and non-musical ideas in the music that we sing. In this chapter, I explore how four visual artists, namely Marna de Wet, Kevin du Plessis, Jean Lampen and Elna Venter, make sense of emotion and referential meaning in Schubert's '*Erlkönig*' and how they conveyed their understanding of referential meaning in their artworks.

All the artists listened to Ian Bostridge and Julius Drake's rendition of the Lied recorded in 1998 and distributed by Warner Classics. They listened to the Lied without an understanding of the German text and had to rely on the musical features of the accompaniment and the prosodic elements of the voice to ascribe meaning to the music. In Chapter 3, Dr Jaco Meyer provided an in-depth annotation of each song, highlighting the musical forces associated with the depiction of the night. While I will not provide such a description in this chapter or the chapters that follow again, I will explore the musical forces and other features as identified by the artists in their listening experiences and reference Meyer's analysis, as well as other sources on the music and interpretation. Finally, I will present the artists' visual representations of '*Erlkönig*' and analyse their process of ascribing meaning to the music that eventually culminated in a creative artefact. In Chapter 11, through a cross-case analysis, I will explore how the meaning ascribed by the artists, as a result of the music, relates to the literature presented in Chapter 1.

## ■ Schubert and the German Lied

Schubert's '*Erlkönig*' is the quintessential example of the German Lied's ability to combine the elements of music and poetry in such a way that it showcases the emotions expressed by the characters, the images conjured through the music and the intention of the composer as is evidenced through the referential properties of the text. A common theme that emerged in the 19th century German Lied was how people could be transformed through the 'greater forces of nature and society', and in these

instances, nature stood as a ‘metaphor for experience’ (Burkholder, Grout & Palisca 2019:590).

Traditionally, German composers favoured setting the strophic, shorter form of poetry to music such as the lyric poems of the ancient Greeks. This was ideal for compositions that focused on an individual expression of emotion or point of view (Burkholder et al. 2019). Towards the end of the 18th century, German poets found a new way of expressing emotion and points of view from multiple perspectives. The ballad, popular in England and Scotland, provided them with the ideal vehicle to use dialogue to do so. Ballads often conveyed romantic or supernatural stories, and composers found greater ways of expanding the mood and emotion in these stories through innovative compositional techniques (Burkholder et al. 2019). A consequence was the rise in prominence of the piano accompaniment that now often played the pivotal role of depicting a character or object of significance in addition to characters presented in the vocal line. Schubert often used rhythmic, melodic and harmonic devices to portray extra-musical ideas and emotion in his piano accompaniments. In essence, the piano accompaniment was now capable of depicting emotion and imagery through musical means alone, which in turn served to either accentuate the text or present an alternative viewpoint or narrative. This is especially evident in Schubert’s lieder, as he:

[S]trove to make music the equal of words, not merely their frame. Through melody, accompaniment, harmony and form, he sought to embody the person speaking, the characters described, the scene, the situation, and the emotions expressed. (Burkholder et al. 2019:591)

In addition to Schubert’s use of textures, sonorous melodies and purposeful harmonic variation, he also used form to elicit emotion. Depending on the simplicity, or rather the individuality of expression or viewpoint, he would use a strophic form where the music is the same for each verse of the Lied as in *Heidenröslein* D 257 [‘Little rose on the heath’]; when the emotion presented is heightened in a following verse as in the Lied, *Du Bist die Ruh* [‘You are rest and gentle peace’] D 776, Op. 59 No. 3, Schubert uses a modified strophic form to change the melody, harmony and rhythms in the proceeding verse.

In the Lied ‘*Erlkönig*’ Op. 1, D 328, Schubert uses a through-composed (each stanza of the poem has new musical material) form of writing to depict the nuanced emotional range and narrative of the characters; this form also benefits the momentum of dramatic events occurring, propelled by the dialogue of the characters (as in a ballad). Studies concerning how Schubert has matched the emotion and non-musical ideas or imagery of the text to his writing have been conducted by Malin (2006), Eerola (2010), Clark (2011), Vuoskoski and Eerola (2012), Spitzer (2013), Parsons (2004) and McKeever (2014). In several ways, these scholars described his success in showcasing emotion and depicting non-musical ideas.

'Who's riding so late, in the night and wind?'

**TABLE 6.1:** 'Erlkönig' by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

<b>'Erlkönig'</b>	<b>The Erlking</b>
<i>Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind? Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind: Er hat den Knaben wohl in dem Arm, Er fasst ihn sicher, er hält ihn warm.</i>	Who rides so late through the night and wind? It is the father with his child. He has the boy in his arms; he holds him safely; he keeps him warm.
<i>'Mein Sohn, was birgst du so bang dein Gesicht?'</i>	'My son, why do you hide your face in fear?'
<i>'Siehst, Vater, du den Erlkönig nicht? Den Erlenkönig mit Kron' und Schweif?'</i>	'Father, can you not see the Erlking? The Erlking with his crown and tail?'
<i>'Mein Sohn, es ist ein Nebelstreif.'</i>	'My son, it is a streak of mist.'
<i>'Du liebes Kind, komm, geh mit mir! Gar schöne Spiele spiel' ich mit dir; Manch' bunte Blumen sind an dem Strand, Meine Mutter hat manch gülden Gewand.'</i>	'Sweet child, come with me. I'll play wonderful games with you. Many a pretty flower grows on the shore; my mother has many a golden robe.'
<i>'Mein Vater, mein Vater, und hörest du nicht, Was Erlenkönig mir leise verspricht?'</i>	'Father, father, do you not hear what the Erlking softly promises me?'
<i>'Sei ruhig, bleibe ruhig, mein Kind: In dürren Blättern säuselt der Wind'</i>	'Calm, be calm, my child: the wind is rustling in the withered leaves.'
<i>'Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir gehn? Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön; Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen Rein Und wiegen und tanzen und singen dich ein.'</i>	'Won't you come with me, my fine lad? My daughters shall wait upon you; my daughters lead the nightly dance, and will rock you, and dance, and sing you to sleep.'
<i>'Mein Vater, mein Vater, und siehst du nicht dort Erlkönigs Töchter am düstern Ort?'</i>	'Father, father, can you not see Erlking's daughters there in the darkness?'
<i>'Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh es genau: Es scheinen die alten Weiden so grau.'</i>	'My son, my son, I can see clearly: it is the old grey willows gleaming.'
<i>'Ich liebe dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt; Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch ich Gewalt.'</i>	'I love you, your fair form allures me, and if you don't come willingly, I'll use force.'
<i>'Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt fasst er mich an! Erlkönig hat mir ein Leids getan!'</i>	'Father, father, now he's seizing me! The Erlking has hurt me!'
<i>Dem Vater grauset, er reitet geschwind, Er hält in Armen das ächzende Kind, Erreicht den Hof mit Mühe und Not: In seinen Armen das Kind war tot.</i>	The father shudders, he rides swiftly, he holds the moaning child in his arms; with one last effort he reaches home; the child lay dead in his arms.

Source: Goethe and Wigmore (n.d.).

## ■ 'Erlkönig' and emotion

In Schubert's lied, 'Erlkönig', the heightened emotions and rich narrative of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749–1842) ballad coalesce to facilitate an extraordinary expression of drama through music. Goethe's contribution to the Lied genre is widely recognised, and his poems have most frequently been set to music by many prominent German composers (Parsons 2004). 'Erlkönig' is a supernatural tale that describes a father desperately riding through the

woods late at night, attempting to save his son's life. As the son is becoming weaker in his father's arms, a malevolent spirit (described as the Erlking) tries to seduce the boy to his death. As the father races with urgency to get his son to a particular destination, the boy sees the Erlking and fearfully describes his interaction with his father. Upon arrival however, the boy is dead in his father's arms, having succumbed to the allurements of the Erlking. Goethe's poem evokes themes indicative of the Romantic era that entail how hidden threats often present in nature or the supernatural, and often disguised, overcome those most vulnerable and are invisible to those meant to protect them. Consequently, the power of nature and of the supernatural is highlighted. The American musicologist and historian, Richard Taruskin (2006), describes these themes as follows:

The father thinks he 'sees perfectly' and is in control of things. He is powerless, however, against the spirits, who flaunt their ascendancy by taking the child. Thus the romantically nostalgic or neoprimitivist themes of hidden reality, invisible truth, the superiority of nature over culture are clothed in the imagery and diction of folklore to lend them supreme authority. (p. 129)

Apart from the themes mentioned by Taruskin (2006) and notwithstanding shorter bursts of other emotions, not surprisingly, fear has been described as the prevailing emotion evoked or perceived in listeners by this song (Eerola 2010; Spitzer 2020). Fear is recognised as one of the basic emotions experienced by all human beings, in all cultures. Juslin and Sloboda (2010:77) described the experience of fear as 'facing an immediate, concrete, or overwhelming physical danger'. In Schubert's *'Erlkönig'*, fear is evident in the father's pleas for his son to remain calm and hidden within his desire to save his son. Fear is also palpable in the boy's outcries to his father: *'Mein Vater, mein Vater, und siehst du nicht dort Erlkönigs Töchter am düstern Ort?'* [My father, my father, and don't you see there Erlking's daughters in the gloomy place?]. In this phrase (mm. 97-104), the melodic line rises and the chromaticism increases as the boy's fear intensifies. McKeever (2014), citing Kapilow (2011:41-69), described how Schubert uses harmony to intensify the heightened emotion of fear while highlighting the themes that Taruskin (2006) mentioned:

As the child's fear heightens, so does his voice. He cries out in the fourth stanza, *'Mein Vater, Mein Vater'*, his voice shrieking out an Eb that grinds against the piano's recurring D. The growth of this wrenching tension is the perfect musical equivalent of the intensification of the child's panic. As the young boy succumbs further to his illusions, the father forces himself deeper into denial. His attempt to redirect the child's thoughts is mirrored in his redirection of the child's music, pushing into the remote key of B minor on the way to a G major cadence [...]. But just as the moments of major-key sonority seem too stark and sudden when sung by the Erlking, here they seem too fleeting. The 'goodness' is an illusion. (p. 35)



'Who's riding so late, in the night and wind?'

What is evident in McKeever's description is Schubert's ability to link music with text and to use harmony in a way that conveys emotion and subtext. In this instance, the true (although hidden at first) intention of the Erlking is revealed in conjunction with the ultimate truth that the father must accept: that his fight to save his son would be in vain. Schubert's manipulation of the melody also clearly evokes emotion and conjures non-musical ideas. Firstly, the chromatic rise in pitch in various phrases not only conveys the fear instilled in the child but in the final stanza also depicts the father's urgency and struggle to get his child to safety: '*Dem Vater grauset, er reitet geschwind, er hält in Armen das ächzende Kind, Erreicht den Hof mit Müh und Not; In seinen Armen das Kind war tot*' ['It horrifies the father, he swiftly rides on, he holds the groaning child in his arms, reaches the farm with great difficulty; In his arms, the child was dead'].

From measures 132–140, the pitch rises chromatically in the voice and the right-hand of the piano accompaniment; suddenly in measures 141 and 142, the chromatic rise in pitch/harmonic rhythm is accelerated in the left hand of the piano, musically pre-empting the narrator's description of the father's struggle. Fast tempo, small tempo variability and ascending pitch are musical structural features associated with happiness, anger and fear (Juslin & Lindström 2010:335). I would posit that without knowing the meaning of the text, the prosodic elements alone presented by a singer capable of conveying the required emotion would concretise fear as the main emotion present in the song, in conjunction with the associated musical structural features listed.

From the opening measures of the Lied, a sense of urgency is conveyed in the music, heard in the quickly repeated triplets, representing the galloping horse (McKeever 2014). Schubert's galloping horse motif is altered through rhythmic variation as he introduces the menacing, seductive Erlking. In measure 57, the Erlking is heard for the first time, tempting the boy to come and play games with him: '*Du liebes Kind, komm, geh mit mir! Gar schöne Spiele spiel' ich mit dir; Manch' bunte Blumen sind an dem Strand, Meine Mutter hat manch gülden Gewand*' ['You dear child, come, go with me! Very lovely games I'll play with you; some colourful flowers are on the beach, my mother has some golden robes']. Here, illustrated in Example 1, Schubert reassigns the galloping horse motif previously played in the right hand of the piano alone, now to be played by both right and left hands, where the left plays the root of the chord prominently on the beat 'and the right-hand finishing off the remaining two notes of each of the triplets, creating a waltz-like effect' (McKeever 2014:36).

Source: Schubert (n.d.:172).<sup>28</sup>

**FIGURE 6.1:** Measures 57–63 of Schubert's *'Erlkönig'* denoting the Erlking's entrance.

By creating a 'waltz-like effect' as McKeever (2014) describes, Schubert hides the potential harmful intent of the Erlking, by creating a playful mood. Both the change in rhythm to a smoother sound and the transition in key to the major mode (B $\flat$  major) heard when the Erlking enters a link to the musical structural features associated with happiness (Juslin & Lindström 2010:335). The seemingly harmless façade of the Erlking is further accentuated by the descending intervals of the voice line on *'liebes Kind'* and *'geh mit mir'*, conveying the Erlking's words in a calming manner as if to pacify the child.

From measure 86 (see example 2), Schubert once again transforms the horses gallop, this time manifesting as flowing arpeggios, once again accentuating the allurement of the Erlking: *'Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir gehn? Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön; Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen Reihn, Und wiegen und tanzen und singen dich ein, Sie wiegen und tanzen und singen dich ein'* [Do you, fine boy, want to go with me? My daughters shall wait on you finely; My daughters lead the nightly dance, and rock and dance and sing you to sleep, they rock and dance and sing you to sleep].

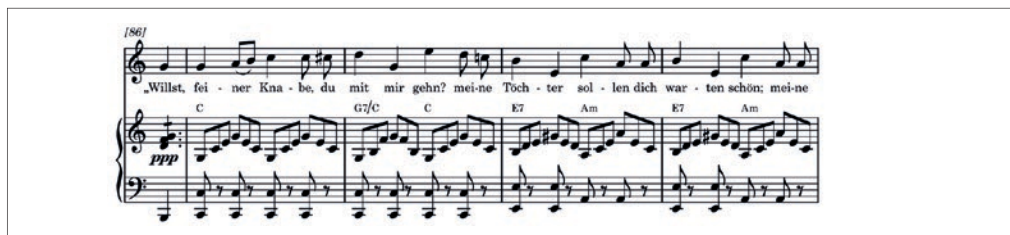
28. The two musical examples used in this chapter are in the public domain and may be used as needed. Source: <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en>

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'Who's riding so late, in the night and wind?'



Source: Schubert (n.d.:173).<sup>29</sup>

**FIGURE 6.2:** Measures 86–90 of Schubert's 'Erlkönig' denoting the Erlking's second entrance.

In these measures, the shift in the right hand of the accompaniment from the repetitive triplet motif to the flowy arpeggios once again announces the presence of the Erlking, and the melodic transformation highlights his seduction more fervently and diverts the listener from the structural features associated with fear. Byrne and Bodley (2016:230) referenced Schubert's use of a 'passing note motif' (comprising the notes C-C#-D) seen ascending in the vocal line in measure 87 and descending in measure 88. They asserted that this motif alludes to the demonic, supernatural quality of the Erlking, lurking in the music yet hidden from the child (and the listener). Moreover, the movement of the arpeggios creates a dance-like feel that references the boy's hallucination (McKeever 2014):

The horse's steady hoof prints have served to ground the song, and the little boy's sense of reality. As they are distorted by the sweet façade of the Erlking, the child is losing touch, the horse, his father, and life itself becoming more distant. (p. 36)

At this point, only taking the verbal dialogue of the Erlking into consideration, the listener has no reason to suspect that the Erlking is not just a playful forest spirit conjured by the imagination of a sick child; however, from the beginning, the piano accompaniment and prosodic elements of the narrator, the father and son's voice emote fear and urgency, alerting the listener that all is not well. It is only once the boy cries out in fear to his father and the Erlking responds with '*Ich liebe dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt; und bist du nicht willig, so brauch' ich Gewalt*' [I love you, your beautiful form excites me; and if you're not willing, then I will use force] that the Erlking's true pernicious intentions are confirmed in the text.

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The fear experienced by the child is musically heightened once again through the rising chromatic melodic vocal line: *‘Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt fasst er mich an! Erbkönig hat mir ein Leids getan!’* [My father, my father, he’s touching me now! Erlking has done me harm!]. The ascending line or rise in pitch, as well as the dominant seventh chord that underpins *‘Mein Vater, mein Vater’*, again confirms the structural features that are purported to be associated with fear and anger (Juslin & Lindström 2010:335). If the listener understands the text, then this last line could elicit the listener to question whether the entire episode is in fact a hallucination, or indeed a supernatural battle for survival occurring between a malevolent spirit and a child. Suddenly, the listener’s own reality is questioned as the supernatural forces that occupy the child’s imagination now permeate into *their* world. I would postulate that at this point when such a realisation is made, when all the forces of musical and textual reference coalesce, fear could credibly transcend from the listener’s perception of the music to a physiological fearful response in the listeners themselves. The question remains whether such a response could be evoked without an understanding of the text.

## ■ Inspiring visual art through meaning derived from Schubert’s *‘Erlkönig’*

### ■ Marna de Wet

Marna had previously produced paintings that were visual representations of art songs. On those occasions, she was instantly drawn to the referential nature of the text, which prompted the imagery portrayed in her paintings. During this study, she described her experiences of creating art from music as challenging and complex, as she did not have an understanding of the text of the art songs. She also described the text in her opinion to be a confirmation of the composers’ intent. She expressed that without knowing what the text meant she focused on the emotion or ‘feeling’ sensed when listening to the music (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). Table 6.2 presents how Marna de Wet journals her process of ascribing meaning to the music while listening to Schubert’s *‘Erlkönig’*.

**TABLE 6.2:** How Marna de Wet ascribed referential meaning to Schubert’s *‘Erlkönig’*.

Journaling	Descriptive words	Images conjured
Piano repeats a tune that sounds as if a story is being told. There is an urgency, it sounds like a man who is racing through a wood or forest in the night.	Urgency, racing	A wood or forest in the night
The music becomes light and beguiling. Is someone being taken for a ride? Perhaps the child is scared of the dark and his father tries to console him. Or he is protecting his child. Something possibly happens to the father?	Light, beguiling, scared, dark, console, protecting	Someone being taken for a ride

Table 6.2 continues on the next page→

'Who's riding so late, in the night and wind?'

**TABLE 6.2 (cont.):** How Marna de Wet ascribed referential meaning to Schubert's *'Erlkönig'*.

Journaling	Descriptive words	Images conjured
The music changes again and it sounds as if a family is doing something together. Are they having a picnic or catching fish by a river? The father teaches his son something about life.	Family, together, teaches about life	Having a picnic, catching fish by a river, father and son
A bang! Something happens, perhaps with the father or the son? The father dies and the son is no longer a child.	Bang!, dies, son is no longer a child	The father dies, interaction between father and son
It all happens at the home where he grew up. The father is the king of the home and the home is like a fortress that protects you against the elements of life. I want eagerly to depict a house with character, one in which there is lived.	Home, father is king, home, fortress, protects, elements of life, lived	The home, the home as fortress, the home that protects against the elements of life, a house with character, home that exudes life

Source: Interview with Marna de Wet in 2019, published with permission granted by Marna de Wet.

As is evident in Table 6.2, Marna experienced Schubert's introduction (which includes repetition of the melody in the left hand in conjunction with the repeated triplets in the right) as an expectation: a story that will unfold with an arc that should resolve. This expectation corresponds with Larson's theory of musical forces, specifically musical magnetism, where the ascending pitches in measure 15 that navigate from unstable tones need to resolve to stable tones, which eventually occurs when the verse ends in g minor as it began. Marna interpreted the rapid, repeating triplets in the right hand as urgent. Marna perceived this feeling of urgency in the music before an image of 'a man who is racing through a wood or forest in the night' is conjured.

In her description, it is clear that Marna is able to hear the beginning and end of the various verses of Schubert's ballad when she points out 'the music changes' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). In the second verse, she identifies the dialogue between a father and son. When reporting on the singer's performance, she described Ian Bostridge's varied use of colour in his voice, as she associated the father with the darker colour and lower register and the son with the higher register and lighter voice colour (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). The prosodic elements of pitch variation and intonation combined with the singer's change in vocal colour coalesce in a manner that informed how Marna ascribes meaning to the music. She made sense of these elements as a child being consoled or protected by his father.

In verse three, upon the entrance of the Erlking, Marna associated the change in mode from minor to major, the falling pitches on *'liebes kind'* and *'geh mit mehr'* and the brightness in the singer's voice with a happy event. Her association correlates with the musical structural features usually associated with happiness (Juslin & Lindström 2010:335). Furthermore, the musical gravity that occurs when every unstable tone resolves to a stable tone at the end of almost every melodic motif further instils a feeling of content. The happy



Source: Artwork by Marna de Wet, published with permission from Marna de Wet.

**FIGURE 6.3:** Marna de Wet, *Home [Tuis]*, 2019, oil on board, 46.5 cm x 40 cm.

'Who's riding so late, in the night and wind?'

event that was visualised by Marna was of a family, having a picnic together. Because of her prior identification of a father and his son, she interpreted the music as the father teaching his son something about life. Marna never identified the Erlking as a potential threat, and consequently, the way in which Marna made sense of the music affirms Taruskin's description of 'hidden reality' and 'invisible truth' as the main themes of this song (Taruskin 2006:129).

At the beginning of the fourth stanza, Marna observed the sudden *forte*, repetitive triplet motif as a bang! The fear expressed in the voice of the singer, as well as the structural features of the music such as the rapid changes in sound level, the sudden high pitch ('*Mein vater*') and the staccato articulation of the triplets, was evident to Marna, and she made sense of this as the death of the father and the consequence being that the son suddenly and out of necessity became a man and head of the home.

From this song, Marna only perceived emotions and reported that she never felt any emotional response. While she perceived urgency as the initial feeling and fear as the initial emotion when she first listened to the song, as the images were conjured and the stories evolved in her meaning-making of the music, the emotion and ultimate imagery later also evolved into something completely different. Blood and Zatorre (2001), Juslin et al. (2010) and Day and Thompson (2019) each confirmed that emotion can be elicited or perceived before imagery is conjured in the mind of the listener. Those authors also conceded that more research is needed on the experiences of listeners over an extended period. As Marna engaged with this Lied over the course of a few weeks, her experience would differ from the participants in the aforementioned studies. While Marna did in fact perceive fear (a basic emotion) when listening to the song initially, and the fear and urgency she perceived, together with various other structural elements of the music conjured images of a man racing in a forest at night, a ride, a picnic and a family gathering, her prolonged engagement with the music resulted in one main story and emotion being conveyed through imagery.

The emotions and imagery conjured after Marna's initial listening specifically derived from the introduction, verses one, two, four and five were in fact very similar to the story and emotions intended by the poet and the composer. To make sense of the musical stimuli and the images evoked, Marna depicted a home that served as a fortress, to protect the family, especially the son. The home was the place where its occupants experienced many challenges, and as a result, the home shows wear, or as Marna states 'has character and has been lived in'. To this end, she associates pride with the song, because its occupants would take pride in a home that still stands even though its occupants have endured many challenges in life. I would

posit that although she perceived fear after her initial listening to the song, the emotion of pride evolved from the images (and visual stories) that she conjured over a prolonged engagement with the music, not as a result of the music itself. Blood and Zatorre (2001) postulated that the emotions elicited in their participants were a result of the music and not of the images evoked, and this is similar to Marna's initial response where she perceived urgency and fear in the music.

The identification of pride as an emotion associated with this song would then stem from the way in which Marna could cognitively make sense of the images (the stories being told) as a whole stemming from her initial perceptions. This phenomenon affirms Day and Thompson's postulation that visual imagery may be evoked in listeners as a cognitive mechanism to make sense of complex stimuli (Day & Thompson 2019:75), and in Marna's case, the image and complete story of pride in one's home that served to protect the family developed in conjunction with her perceived narrative structure of the images and emotions elicited by the music. Marna associated pride as the ultimate association with this song, not because she perceived it in the music, neither was it physiologically evoked in her, but rather because pride was a cognitive appraisal of complex stimuli after a prolonged engagement with the music, and this is how she made sense of the images, musical stimuli and stories elicited.

## ■ Jean Lampen

Jean employed a different approach than the other artists during her process of ascribing meaning to the five art songs. While all the artists listened to the songs individually and ascribed meaning to each song independently of each other, Jean and Elna Venter listened to all five songs first and identified common themes, emotions and feelings before listening to each song individually, in further detail. I would attribute this to the fact that artists generally strive to present a collection of works that are cohesive and thematically interconnected. Although Jean and Elna both identified emotions or feelings common to all the songs, respectively, Elna had an individualistic approach in the way that she made sense of each song, whereas Jean sort to find a visual way of uniting each work. As her process is relevant to all five songs that will be discussed in this chapter and those that follow, I will describe how she made sense of the music as a whole here and refer to it in the following chapters.

## □ Thematic unity

After receiving the recordings of the music, Jean proceeded to listen to all five works at the same time, and in doing so, she perceived emotions; in some



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instances, she reported that emotions were also evoked in her physiologically. The overarching feelings/emotions she reported as perceived or felt were fear, being threatened and sadness. Following the identification of these affective states, images were then elicited through the combination of listening to the music and experiencing the emotions or feelings. According to Jean, the following images were conjured initially in response to all five songs (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019):

- Being alone in a city.
- Being sad about a relationship.
- Sitting and writing to someone.
- Writing about death or love.
- Lots of empty chairs.

Next, she wanted to find a visual means of conveying these emotions and in doing so, to tell a story and communicate how she made sense of both the emotions elicited/perceived and of the music. From the initial images elicited, she found a way in unifying the stories being told through the music and the emotion through a central image/character that was conjured in response to the music as well as the feelings of fear, sadness and being threatened: this image was that of a wolf, howling to the moon at night (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019). At this point in her process, Jean considered the symbolic meaning of wolves, she stated:

'The wolf is a symbol of guardianship, ritual, loyalty, and spirit. Wolves have the ability to make quick and firm emotional attachments, and often need to trust their own instincts. Thus they teach us to do the same, to trust our hearts and minds, and have control over our own lives. Even in the bible it tells us of a time yet to come, when 'the wolf shall feed with the lamb', thus again the juxtaposition of the wolf and the lamb.' (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019)

Once Jean identified the wolf as a central character in each song, she started visualising the different ways in which the music prompted the wolf to appear or manifest, namely as a wolf in sheep's clothing, the howling wolf, wearing a mask, with its tail between the legs, the wolf standing over the dying/sleeping lamb, the wolf happy in its own world – not hearing or listening even possibly dead and the crying wolf (symbolised by paint flowing like tears). Jean wanted to manipulate the depiction of the wolf and its interaction with sheep to make sense of the meaning she ascribed to the music and to present these stories to the viewer.

As Jean listened to each song, she realised that although she could not understand the text, each song was in fact a poem eventually set to music. This inspired Jean deeply and she proceeded to use the image of writing paper as a unifying concept throughout each of her works. She stated:

'Because the songs are poetry set to music, I decided that the poetry would have been written by hand on paper therefore I want to use "pages" with words to symbolize this. It also serves as binding factor in the series of works.' (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019)

## □ The Wolf as representative of Schubert's 'Erlkönig'

Once Jean listened to all the songs, she visualised a wolf as the central figure to convey the meaning she ascribed to the music. After listening to 'Erlkönig' for the first time, Jean perceived fear as the dominant emotion in the music; however, she also described that she experienced a physiological response to the music at various places throughout the song. She identified specific places in music that either aroused emotion in her or solicited a specific feeling in response to the voice and piano accompaniment.

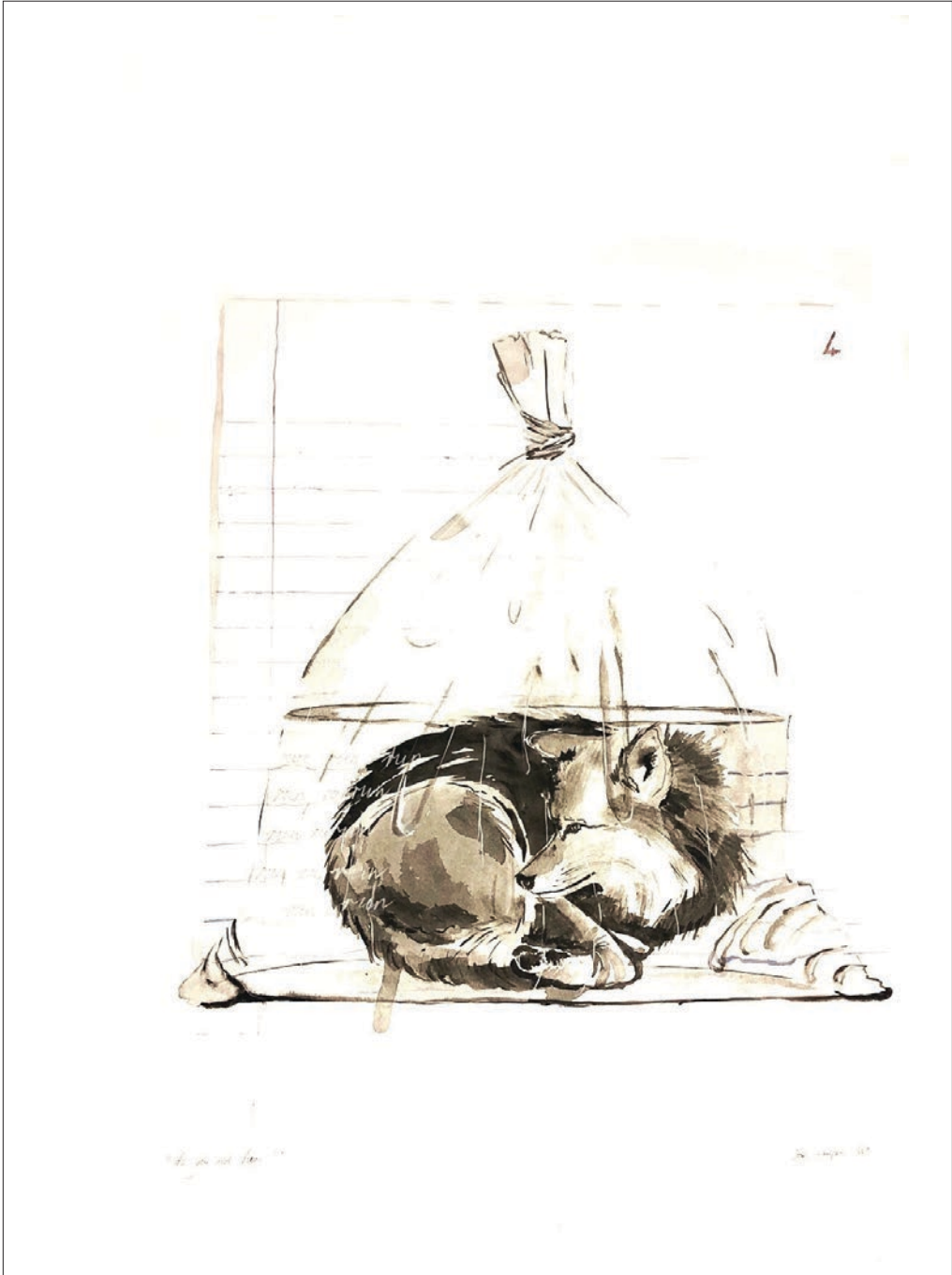
**TABLE 6.3:** How Jean Lampen ascribed referential meaning to Schubert's 'Erlkönig'.

Music excerpt	Emotions/meaning ascribed	Music structural features
Piano Introduction (first 20 seconds of music)	Running and searching, distressed, fearful	Fast tempo, loud repetitive triplets in the right hand of the piano accompaniment, left-hand motive
Verse three: The Erlking's first entrance (around 1'30" of the recording)	More satisfied, less distressed	Change to major mode, descending melodic contour, altered rhythmic pattern heard in piano
Beginning of Verse four (Son's response, 'Mein Vater, Mein Vater', around 1'57")	Fear	Sudden tempo change (becomes faster), pitch and colour of the voice, repetitive right-hand triplet returns loudly
Verse five: The Erlking's next entrance (around 2'20")	Calling, restless, questioning and searching	Flowing major arpeggios in the accompaniment, ascending pitch of the singer towards the end of a phrase, singer's use of articulation
Verse six: ('Mein Vater', around 2'36")	Crying out in fear	Octave triplets return in right hand, High pitch of the voice, increased vibrato in the voice
Final recitative (last three measures including the previous measure)	Finding peace, resolving issues	The repetitive octave triplets diminuendo and stop on the c minor chord, the voice is alone and emits acceptance, resolving the harmonic progression of the final three chords

Source: Interview with Jean Lampen in 2019, published with permission granted by Jean Lampen.

What is evident from Jean's journaling and reflection is that fear or a feeling of being distressed was evoked through the following music structural features: the rapid, repetitive triplets in the piano accompaniment, the sudden change in volume to a louder dynamic level, the sudden change to a higher pitch in the singer's voice and an increase in vibrato in the voice. Upon the Erlking's first entrance, Jean identified a sense of satisfaction (perhaps indicative of the satisfaction portrayed by Ian Bostridge in the knowledge that he will conquer his prey) and an overall reduction in her perception of being distressed; this was elicited by the change in mode from minor to major, the descending melodic contour of the singer's voice and the change in rhythm. During the Erlking's second entrance (verse five), Jean associated the rise in pitch at the end of each phrase of the singer's line and Bostridge's use of short, pointed articulation with a sense of 'searching, calling, questioning and restlessness' (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019).

'Who's riding so late, in the night and wind?'



Source: Artwork by Jean Lampen, published with permission from Jean Lampen.

**FIGURE 6.4:** Jean Lampen, *do you not hear?*, 2019, pen and ink watercolour, 74 cm x 54 cm.

After hearing the final three measures, Jean described the music as ‘finding peace’ or ‘resolving issues’ and reported that this response was because of three features: the slowing down of the left-hand repetitive notes to a single chord, the perceived idea of acceptance portrayed in the voice as a result of his vocal colour, pitch and subdued articulation and lastly the resolution of the final three chords C# – D – G minor. Her response to the music structural features is in accordance with the responses to music postulated by Juslin and Lindström (2010:335). To make sense, Jean’s overall perception of someone calling out in fear, and not being heard or helped, she visualised a wolf submerged (with its ears covered) in a bag of water that is tied. The wolf is in a vulnerable, foetal position. The tied bag reflects a feeling of helplessness. The ultimate, inevitable surrender of power to an external force is the essence of Jean’s final meaning-making of the song. This phenomenon is congruent with Taruskin’s Romantic notions on the superiority of nature being a theme implicit in Schubert’s song (2006:129).

## ■ Elna Venter

Elna states that the art she creates is influenced by ‘the still life’ as this to her is a representation of the ‘lifeless world’ (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). Besides objects that Elna finds, she also takes photographs and incorporates visual images by other artists in her own work. To Elna, these objects are the way she makes sense of phenomena and also her way of communicating ideas: ‘the object is not only my subject; it is also my instrument for communication’ (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019).

Elna too listened to all of the songs first and identified melancholy as a common emotion throughout all the songs, while she also either perceived longing, loss, farewell and acceptance as feelings in the various songs. Regarding her process for this project, Elna writes the following:

‘The process for this project started by listening to all the songs provided. Although I couldn’t understand the words, the overall emotion I identified was *melancholy*. Through listening more carefully and weaving together my own story, I sensed *longing, loss, farewell* and *acceptance*. Slowly and patiently the elements for each individual mixed media illustration found their place. I discovered that music, even without understanding the words, is also an instrument of communication.’ (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

Although Elna did not understand the meaning of Goethe’s text, her interpretation of the music, as conveyed through the piano accompaniment and the expressivity and prosodic elements of the singer’s voice, is extremely similar to Goethe’s narrative. From her journaling (Table 6.4), I have extrapolated the music’s structural features, highly emotive words and images elicited, which pertain to how Elna made sense of the music. She documents:

‘As I listen to the song in detail I am immediately anxious and restless as if there is a nearing misfortune on the way. At first I hear a single instrument (that perhaps also

‘Who’s riding so late, in the night and wind?’

refers to loneliness), the piano’s sounds are rhythmically repetitive and rushed and, in my mind, create the feeling of an urgent movement towards somewhere. And the scene is set in the dark.’ (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

### Initial imagery evoked:

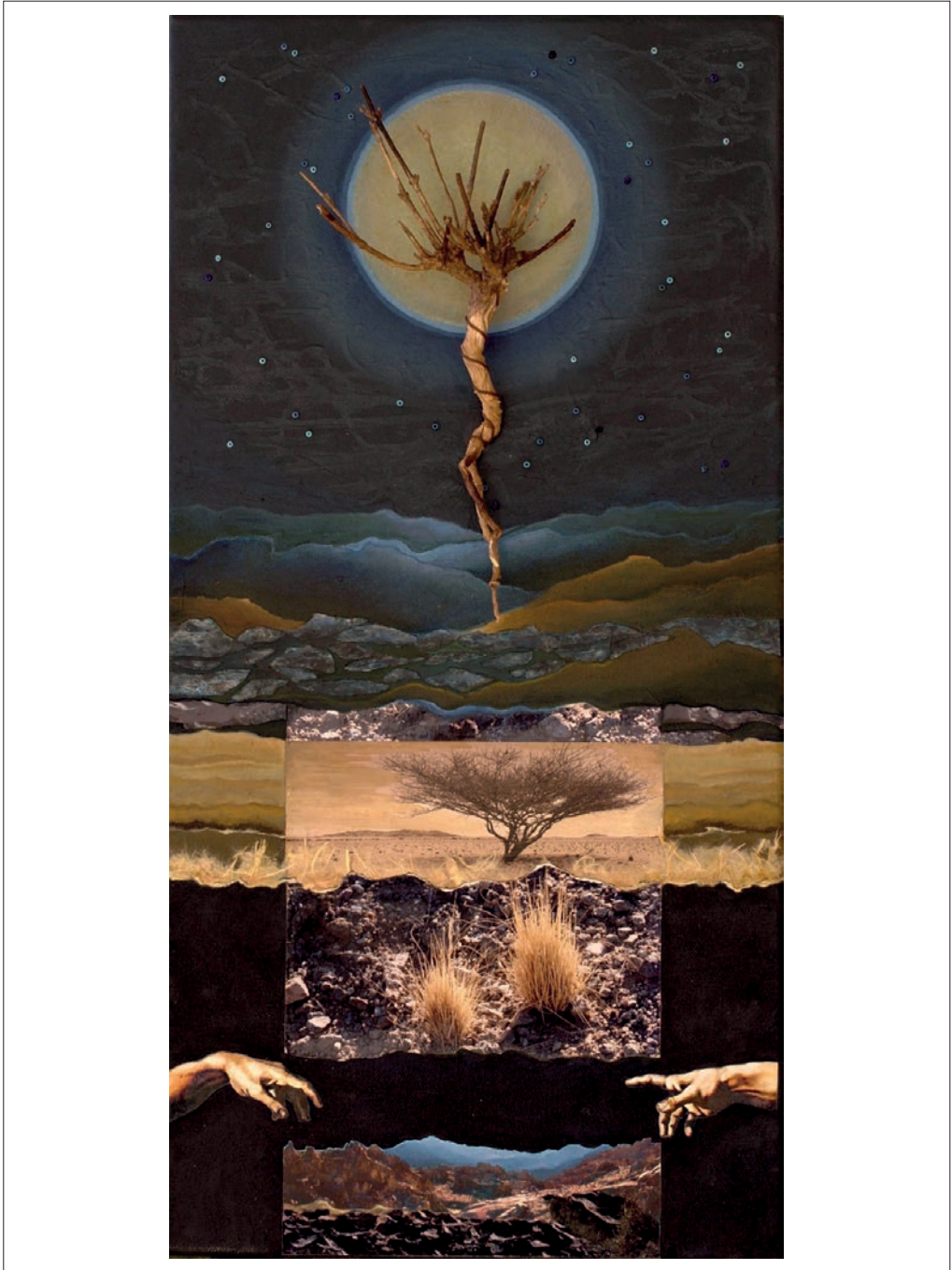
It has immediate connection with the sound of an approaching train that I hear every night when I lie in my bed. First softly and from far away and then (depending on which way the wind blows) louder and closer, but the rhythm stays the same as well as the speed and the knowledge that the train is on its way somewhere.

The piano’s repetitive rhythm is the carrier of a story similar to the content of the poem ‘Repos Ailleurs’ (‘The rest is elsewhere’ by Totius). In the poem one sees a person at night through a train’s window a little tent under a tree in the veld and one desires to be there. The person in the tent again longs to be in the passing train. This poem is one of my favourites since I can identify with a moving train as well as a tent under a tree because we camp often at inhospitable places in Southern Africa. And surely also with the yearning for the rest that is elsewhere. (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

**TABLE 6.4:** How Elna Venter ascribed referential meaning to Schubert’s ‘*Erkönig*’.

Journaling	Music structural features	Emotive description	Imagery evoked
Up to 0’22” the introduction consists only of piano playing, urgent, anxious, repetitive.	Repetitive piano triplets, rhythm.	Urgent, anxious.	Create the feeling of an urgent movement towards somewhere. And the scene is set in the dark.  It has immediate connection with the sound of an approaching train that I hear every night when I lie in my bed.
Singing begins at 0’23” It sounds like one man singing more than one character. My interpretation is that there are four roles: a narrator, an authoritative figure (father), a seducer and a vulnerable figure (son). The part up to 0’50” is the narrator as introduction.	Use of colour/ timbre in the singer’s voice and prosodic elements of speech.	Authority, seduction, vulnerability.	A father, son, a seducer and a narrator.
0’57” then the characters start speaking in pitches with the support of the piano e.g. 1’22” authoritative voice (father who sounds consoling), 1’32” seductive voice (someone who does not sound sincere), 2’38” vulnerable voice (son who sounds pleading).	Pitch and other prosodic elements of speech like intonation, stress as well as the use of colour/timbre by the singer. Piano accompaniment.	Authority, consolation, seduction (does not sound sincere), vulnerability, pleading.	Interaction between central characters. Threat of a son, protective father.
3’34” up to the end the narrator ends the story.  3’57” conspicuous purposeful dramatic silence seconds before the last word and piano note.	Silence, resolving cadence.		

Source: Interview with Elna Venter in 2019, published with permission granted by Elna Venter.



Source: Artwork by Elna Venter, published with permission from Elna Venter.

**FIGURE 6.5:** Elna Venter, *There in the darkness? [Daar waar dit donker is?]*, 2019, mixed media, 25 cm × 50 cm.

‘Who’s riding so late, in the night and wind?’

When Elna first listened to the song in detail, the repetitive piano triplets in the introduction immediately evoked a sense of urgency and anxiety. This then elicited a visual image of a train approaching at night as she would lay awake and listen to it in bed. The prosodic elements of Ian Bostridge’s voice (pitch, intonation, stress, rhythm) and his use of timbre or vocal colour by manipulating the resonance cavities (mouth and pharynx) were most significant in eliciting meaning-making for Elna. She instantly recognised four distinct characters as portrayed by the singer: a father, son, a seducer and a narrator. She associated the father with authority and consolation, the son with vulnerability, the seducer as a threat and the narrator as a means to propel the story. Elna reported that when she listened to the song in its entirety, she felt anger towards the father for not being able to save his son, but the resolution that the final chords provided prompted her to forgive the character that she developed from the music.

The imagery in her artwork that Elna used to make sense of the music was set in the dark (at night), where two hands (inspired by Michelangelo’s ‘Creation of Adam’) represent a father and son, separated and unable to come together. The hands reaching out to each other are placed in front of a landscape scene, desolate and barren: the trees and vegetation depicted show no signs of life. This alludes to the inevitable death that awaits the both.

## ■ Kevin du Plessis

Kevin also listened to the songs as a whole, trying to uncover an overall feeling before listening to them individually. After he made sense of the music and the emotion it evoked, he used photography and specifically the use of light to convey his interpretation. About his process he stated:

‘Expressing feeling in any form of art is an act of magical realism. It weaves into tangible reality that which we are unable to define by means of logic. These works express the complexities of love as interpreted from layers of sound and their perceived meanings within songs sung in foreign languages. Capturing light through photographing human figures enveloped in flowing fabric is meant to visually represent not only the elusive miracle that is music, but also the storms of emotion we carry around in our chests. These works speak of the *longing, pain, excitement, tenderness and passion of the lovers of the world.*’ (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019)

**TABLE 6.5:** How Kevin du Plessis ascribed referential meaning to Schubert’s ‘Erlkönig’.

Journaling	Music structural features	Emotive description
Song is fast. Intense. Rushed. Serious. A sense of urgency. Passionate. Is he trying to win someone over? Or is it more of an almost villainous sound?	Tempo, character/colour of the singer’s voice	Intense, rushed, urgent, passionate
Definite conviction, trying to convince. Lots of self-confidence.	Prosodic elements of the voice, use of vocal colour.	Convincing, self-confident

Table 6.5 continues on the next page→

**TABLE 6.5 (cont.):** How Kevin du Plessis ascribed referential meaning to Schubert's *'Erlkönig'*.

Journaling	Music structural features	Emotive description
Then there are verses that seem optimistic and rhythmic.	(Referring to the Erlking's verses three and five) rhythm, vocal colour.	Optimistic
Is he angry? Complaining? Planning a sort of up rise, opposition, revenge?	Sudden increase in dynamic level ( <i>'Mein Vater'</i> ), Pitch, increased vibrato.	Anger, uprising, vengeance.
Towards the end the vocals go slow again. Is it the final say, or blow? Is the truth ugly and unfair?	tempo	Acceptance of fate

Source: Interview with Kevin du Plessis in 2019, published with permission granted by Kevin du Plessis.

Tempo, rhythm, the prosodic elements of the singer's voice and his use of colour significantly influenced how Kevin made sense of the music. Kevin's interpretation of the Erlking's verses (three and five most notably) was that the music seemed optimistic. The meaning that he ascribed to those verses derived from the rhythmic change of the piano accompaniment. On both occasions, the accompaniment eased up from the urgency evoked by the repetitive triplets and morphed into something either more playful (m. 58) or flowing (m. 87). The change to the major mode also disguises the impending and concealed threat of the Erlking, which explains why Kevin would experience those sections of music as optimistic. Considering Zentner's (2010:106) groupings on musically induced emotions, I would argue that in this instance, optimism as experienced by Kevin could be included under either 'wonder' or 'joyful activation'.

To best determine in which category this associated feeling would reside, one would have to consider the musical context of how the feeling was evoked. In Kevin's case, both were connected to the rhythm and the change in mode. In verse three, I would posit that his experience of optimism could be associated with 'joyful activation' as the rhythmic structure of the piano accompaniment, previously described as 'waltz-like' (McKeever 2014:36), is congruent with the music structural features associated with happiness (Juslin & Lindström 2010:335) as well as Zentner's (2010:106) associated feelings of 'joyful' or 'feel like dancing'.

I would argue though that the optimism Kevin perceived in verse five is slightly different, however nuanced, and rather resonates with Zentner's description of 'wonder'. The structural features of the music such as the flowing arpeggios in the accompaniment, as well as the semi-tone, harmonic movement in the vocal line (C-C#-D ... D-C#-C), lend themselves to Zentner's description of the associated feelings of wonder, namely admiration, amazement and happiness, to be dazzled and to be moved (Zentner 2010). In certain instances, associated feelings like happiness or joy could manifest in more than one musically induced emotion such as wonder or joyful activation. This would then also clarify how Kevin made sense of the Erlking's music, experiencing it as optimistic. To best ascertain the emotion connected with that music, these findings show that it is necessary to consider the musical context or, more specifically, the music structural features.



'Who's riding so late, in the night and wind?'



Source: Artwork by Kevin du Plessis, published with permission from Kevin du Plessis.

**FIGURE 6.6:** Kevin du Plessis, *Spellbound*, 2019, digital art photography, 21 cm x 29.7 cm, edition size: 5.

The main theme and image that was elicited from Kevin after a long engagement with the music were that of someone struggling, yet unable to break free from an invisible or supernatural force. He stated: 'I interpreted this song as being spellbound by some sort of force that is working against what is in the singer's heart, trying to break free. Fighting against it, but remaining bound somehow' (Du Plessis 2019). In his art, he uses the image of a person entangled, dazzled and spellbound trying to break free what seems to be fabric made of light. After a prolonged engagement with the music, I would postulate that Kevin's ultimate meaning-making of his emotional response to the music and the imagery that it elicited aligns with Zentner's description of wonder (Zentner 2010:106).

## ■ Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the individual meaning-making processes of each artist. The findings suggest an emotional response to the music structural features of Schubert's '*Erlkönig*', derived from the piano accompaniment as performed by Julius Drake, as well as the prosodic elements and nuanced vocal colour employed by Ian Bostridge. The final images that they were inspired to depict were elicited from a cognitive appraisal of how the artists made sense of the various emotions perceived or experienced and the visual imagery evoked. The emotions or feelings perceived in the music by the artists include fear, urgency, anxiety, consolation, searching or calling out, seduction, optimism, vulnerability, authority, vengeance, passion and acceptance. Elna Venter and Jean Lampen were the only artists that reported a physiological response to this song, which they reported as anger and fear, respectively. In Chapter 11 of this book, I will conduct a cross-analysis of their processes and analyse the findings of all the artists in conjunction with the literature reviewed.



# Depicting loss, longing and desire in Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*'

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## ■ Introduction

When conceptualising this study, I was instantly drawn to the expressive qualities of both Hector Berlioz and Gabriel Fauré's music, specifically their outputs for voice. Although quite different in compositional style, the songs of these composers are capable of eliciting stories, evoking emotion and, in their unique way, painting images of the text that they set to music. As the researcher and curator of this multi-disciplinary study, I wanted to explore how the artists ascribed meaning to the music. I also wanted to investigate in which ways their experience might differ from their process of ascribing meaning to the three other German Lieder that were assigned to them, as the development of the French Art song or *mélodie* is quite different from that of its German counterpart. In this chapter, I will explore how the artists individually ascribed meaning to Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*' from his song cycle, *Les nuits d'été* [*Summer nights*] Op.7, and in the following chapter, to Fauré's '*Après un rêve*'

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['After a dream'] Op.7, no.1 from his *Trois melodies*. Consequently, much of the literature discussed in this chapter also pertains to Chapter 8. The ways in which the artists ascribed meaning to these songs can largely be attributed to their response to musical forces that govern the songs as described by Jaco Meyer in Chapter 3. In Chapter 11, I will conduct a cross-case analysis of the various ways in which they made sense of the music and how it relates to the literature discussed in Chapter 1.

While the Romantic Lied reached its peak in Germany during the mid-19th century as posited by Guido Adler (Burkholder, Grout & Palisca 2019:588), the *mélodie* in France only began to develop just prior to that. This could be attributed to the relationship between lyric poetry (poetry suitable for music composition) and music in those respective countries. In Germany, old and new outpourings of lyric poetry had inspired composers of the Classical Era like Mozart (1756-1791), Haydn (1732-1809) and Beethoven (1770-1827) to compose Art songs as early as the mid-18th century, and the emotion-rich, Romantic lyric poetry of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Joseph von Eichendorff (1758-1857) and Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) inspired Schubert, Schumann and Strauss during the height of the Romantic period and beyond. Porter (1983:138) asserted that in France, Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300-1377) was the 'last great French poet to compose verse and its musical setting simultaneously'. He argued that while Pierre de Ronsard was prolific as a poet in 16th century France and wrote some of his works with the intention of having them set to music, 'he no longer understood the demands of musical composition on prosody' (Porter 1983). Music that exemplified the relationship between text and music in France from the Renaissance onwards was limited to the genres of opera and popular song. Porter (1983) further stated:

French Romantic poetry, despite the occasional 'musicality' of its alliteration and assonance, was purely literary in its conception and did not lend itself to association with a musical rhythmic structure. This absence of suitable indigenous lyric texts inhibited the development of the French Art song. (p. 138)

The relationship between poetry and music in France changed significantly during the 19th century starting with Hector Berlioz's (1803-1869) *Les nuits d'été*, composed between 1834 and 1841. Not only was this the first French song cycle to be composed but it was also the first cycle whose texts were written by a French poet, namely Théophile Gautier (1811-1872). When Berlioz orchestrated the songs in 1856, he also instituted a new genre: the orchestral song (Bonds 2006; Porter 1983). By adding the colours of the orchestra and replacing the piano accompaniment, Berlioz allowed for a wider palette of emotion to be expressed through the music, alongside the voice.

Following Berlioz, French composers like Jules Massenet (1842-1912), Charles Gounod (1818-1893), Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), Claude Debussy (1862-1918), Henri Duparc (1848-1933) and Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

significantly added to the output of *mélodie* and developed it to new forms of expression. These composers drew on the literary works of Victor Hugo (1802–1885), Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869) and Paul Verlaine (1844–1896) among others. While Berlioz is firmly entrenched as a prolific Romantic composer whose music exudes emotion and expressivity in its most unbridled form, Gabriel Fauré pre-empted the techniques used by Impressionistic composers like Debussy, employing more restraint, yet conveying mood and emotion albeit through less visceral means.

## ■ *Mélodie*, meaning and emotion

The difference in emotional expressivity and compositional style between Berlioz and most other French *mélodie* composers stems from two important points. (1) He was their senior by many years, and music compositional styles inevitably evolve over time and (2) Berlioz was greatly inspired by Romantic literature, whereas Fauré and Duparc, for example, were inspired by poets such as Baudelaire, Verlaine and other Parnassians<sup>30</sup> who reacted against Romantic rhetoric and preferred a return to Classicism (Hodam 1968a:38). In much French lyric poetry of the late 19th century, mood and emotion were subtly conveyed through imagery as ‘nuanced sensations’ (Hodam 1968a). For many singers who interpret these songs, the meaning is not always evident immediately. Hodam (1968b) asserted that this has more to do with the elusive nature of the poetry than the music itself. She (Hodam 1968b) wrote:

The projection of mood in the French *mélodie* often seems elusive to the young singer. Much of this difficulty stems more from the complexity and elusiveness of the poetry rather than the music itself [...] The lack of comprehension is due largely to the abstract and esoteric quality of much of French poetry. The meaning is deliberately obscure and ambiguous; the poetic emotions are evoked through a succession of fleeting, unrelated images. In modern poetry the range of imagery is increasingly wide and the thread of thought a tenuous one. The singer therefore is forced to cease his searching for a literal meaning and a logical progression of ideas and come to understand that the poetic mood is realized through the sum of these images. (p. 21)

Consequently, in his middle to later outputs, Fauré echoes the mood of poems by Verlaine, Baudelaire, and others in his music through subtle yet effective, nuanced music structural features present in his melodies, harmonies (modal chromaticism) and rhythms. In contrast, the Romantic nature of Théophile Gautier’s six poems that comprise Berlioz’s *Les nuits d’été* song cycle and depict the ‘love, desire and longing’ (Huscher n.d.) are musically expressed through Berlioz’s exuberant use of melody, chromaticism, tonal relations

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30. Parnassians are described as ‘19th-century French poets who stressed restraint, objectivity, technical perfection, and precise description as a reaction against the emotionalism and verbal imprecision of the Romantics’ (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica 2010).

and his use of instrumentation and orchestral colour (Rushton 2001). Notwithstanding, the achingly beautiful melodies and orchestral story-telling features are far more restrained in *Les nuits d'été* than in his other outputs. The difference in musical style in the two French songs presented to the artists is also less apparent as Fauré's '*Après un rêve*' composed between 1870 and 1877 still reflects his earlier compositional style where he was greatly influenced by Gounod, specifically his Romantic and expressive use of melody (Copland 1924). Nonetheless, there are significant differences between the songs, most notably the vocal range demanded by the singer, the instrumentation (piano in contrast to the orchestral accompaniment) and the use of rhythm and harmony. These musical features and writing styles will be explored in further detail later in this chapter and the next.

Despite the changes in French musical style from the Baroque dances of Lully, the Romantic programme music of Berlioz to the Impressionist songs of Debussy, Hodam (1968a) postulated that there has always been a noticeable correlation between the musical structural features and aesthetics of French music and French visual art. She (Hodam 1968a) wrote:

The pictorial element has been one of the most enduring qualities in French music [...]. One can link together the stateliness and formality of Poussin and Lully, the graceful decoration of the *stile galant* of Watteau, Boucher, Frogonard and Rameau. The emotionalism of Berlioz and the romantic vehemence of Delacroix have an accord that one might not at first realize. The irony and the depiction of the music hall by Toulouse Lautrec seem to visualize those elements found in Chabrier, Satie and Poulenc. One critic has said to Chabrier: 'Chabrier's position in music might well be likened to that of Toulouse Lautrec in art. Not only were the two contemporaries, but both worked in very similar fashion, producing brightly coloured, swiftly impetuous creations - deftly animated, always kaleidoscopic and ostensibly gay but concealing a wistful pathos underneath'. Surely a singer cannot fully comprehend the dreamlike, half-melancholy languor of the 'scenes' of Fauré and Debussy in their settings of the *Fêtes Galantes* of Verlaine without being aware of the landscapes of the *Fêtes Galantes* of Watteau and his lyrical portraits of the *Commedia dell'Arte* characters [...]. Of Fauré, Gerard Souzay once wrote that there are those who have eyes to see *Les Nymphéas* of Monet but no ear at all to hear *Mirages* of Fauré. (p. 38)

When Hodam compared the Galant style of Lully's music to the *Fête galante* or courtship festivities depicted in Watteau's paintings, she compared the aesthetic similarities between the music's structural features that resonate with the elegance of the aristocracy parading in ball gowns in scenic garden or park settings. Similarly, Berlioz's passion and individualism in musical language echo the visual aesthetics of Eugène Delacroix's 'The Death of Sardanapalus' (1827-1828), for example, their use of vivid, striking colours to evoke emotion. When Hodam compared Fauré's setting of '*Mandoline*', a setting of a poem from Paul Verlaine's '*Fêtes Galantes*', from his '*Cinq mélodies "de Venise"*', Op. 58, she alluded to his return in musical style to the qualities prevalent in Classicism, namely simplicity and elegance. Here, it is also clear

how Verlaine's literary work is interconnected to both Watteau's painting and Fauré's song.

Across these genres, the aesthetic qualities such as the simplicity, elegance and form that characterised Classicism and the subjective, individualistic expressivity of Romanticism, which are all embedded as tacit knowledge in the music and art, are concretised and made explicit in literature. This is especially true of French music and literature where emotion is conveyed through the marriage of text and music, as Hodam (1968b) posited:

[F]rom all the characteristics of French vocal music, three distinguishing elements seem to go to the heart of the French art song: the fusion of word and tone, the 'French rhythm', and the emotional introspection. (p. 35)

Hodam further asserted that there are two main emotional attitudes that can be traced especially in the French music of the 19th century (including Fauré and Berlioz), which are sensuousness and voluptuousness.

The purpose of this study was to eliminate the referential nature of the text (the vehicle of making meaning explicit in the songs) and to explore how four visual artists make sense solely of the music's structural features including the expressive elements of the singer's voice. This would be especially challenging with French repertoire because of the interconnectedness of word and tone, and arguably since the mid- to late-19th century, those who interpret or understand the meaning in French *mélodie* do so with particular reverence to the text. Nonetheless, perhaps because of societal conditioning, there is an apparent sensuality when one hears the French language being spoken or sung, without the listener having to understand its meaning. In the next sections, I shall explore how the artists ascribed meaning to Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*' from his song cycle, *Les nuits d'été* Op. 7.

## ■ Berlioz, his writing style and emotion

Hector Berlioz was born in a rural province of southern France and was considered an outsider in his native land for most of his life as a result of 'Parisian musical politics' (Bonds 2006:424). In fact, his music was embraced more in Germany throughout his career, and it was this country's Romantic literature that he relished and often set to music. Berlioz embodied the Romantic ideals of individualism and Idealism in his emotional heightened expressive writing. His compositional style was idiosyncratic, and it set him apart from his peers. While other composers draw from the techniques of their predecessors, Berlioz's writing was original as is evident in the rhythms he employed and his inclination to subvert traditional harmonic resolutions and phrase structures (Rushton 2001). Berlioz imbued his arching melodies with passion and emotion and did so by altering traditional four- or eight-measure phrases and resolving the climaxes of his melodies by unconventional harmonic means (Rushton 2001).



In 1827, Berlioz attended a performance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and was instantly enamoured by the actress Harriet Smithson who portrayed the tragic role of Ophelia. He pursued her for several years, before she finally relented and married him in 1833 (Rushton 2001). Since their initial meeting, their relationship was extremely tumultuous, and their marriage only lasted for seven years. His initial unrequited love, longing to be with her, and their poor relationship deeply affected Berlioz, and consequently, Ms. Smithson became the inspiration for his *Symphonie fantastique* Op. 14 that premiered in December of 1830 (Rushton 2001). Unrequited love, longing and various other facets of love also became themes common to many of his works including the song cycle, *Les nuits d'été*.

Berlioz draws on his own lived experience extensively and made those experiences explicit in his instrumental works. His *Symphonie fantastique* is a programme symphony where one can trace the emotional trajectory of his experience from beginning to end. He makes this explicit by programme notes. Berlioz was noted in saying that '[a]t concerts where this symphony is to be performed, it is essential that this programme be distributed in advance to provide an overview of the dramatic structure of this work' (Bonds 2006:419). The symphony moves from a joyous first movement, which depicts the young musicians' first love interest, to a dark finale, labelled 'Dream of a witches' Sabbath' that depicts the image of the musicians' beloved dancing demonically at his funeral. In this work, Berlioz expanded the sound of the orchestra more than most before him, and this afforded him the opportunity to use various instrumental colours to illustrate his emotional intention and conjure imagery (Bonds 2006; Burkholder et al. 2019; Rushton 2001).

To help his listeners understand the feelings and experiences that inspired the symphony and convey his emotional intent, he originally entitled it *Episode in the Life of an Artist: Fantasy Symphony in Five Movements* and provided it with an autobiographical novel. This programme symphony is in essence a musical drama whose words are not spoken or sung. Berlioz himself has previously stated that (Kallen 2013):

[T]he program should be regarded in the same way as the spoken words of an opera, serving to introduce the musical numbers by describing the situation that evokes the particular mood and expressive character of each. (p. 72)

This sentiment also transcends to his vocal works like the song cycle *Les nuits d'été* or one of his operas *Les Troyens* where the orchestral accompaniment does not merely support the vocal line, but in fact adds to the emotion in its own right through musical structural features and the mood, affect or imagery it elicits.

In his *Symphonie fantastique*, the musical structural features, the use of instrumental colour as gained by over 90 instruments in the orchestra and

dramatic story-telling through the use of programme notes coalesce to evoke explicit, heightened emotion through very individualised means. In the first movement of the symphony entitled '*Réveries – Passions*' [Reveries – Passions], Berlioz introduces an *idée fixe*, a short motivic idea or *leitmotif*, where the melody represents his beloved, the actress Harriet Smithson. The concept of a leitmotif is possibly most well-known among classical musicians because of Wagner's use of this device particularly in his opera cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Throughout the *Symphonie fantastique*, the melody is transformed through rhythm, harmony and the use of instrumentation to depict the various qualities Berlioz attributed to his beloved, as well as his consequential emotional state that resulted (Bonds 2006; Holoman 1989; Rushton 2001). Berlioz received much attention for his use of prose in his program notes, which he felt detracted from the attention deserving of his music (Bonds 2006:419). Consequently, he revised his programme notes in 1855, 10 years after the first version was published, and it is quite notable that his prose is significantly more reserved. Notwithstanding, the music still retained all the emotional impact intended by the composer even without the expanded textual reference.

In the following excerpts taken from his own memoirs and translated by Michel Austin, the differences in the textual description can be seen here demonstrated in movements one and two. The use of prose in both movements is limited in the 1855 version: Berlioz uses less imagery and also describes his own emotional state to a lesser degree (however, the wording used to describe his emotional state is still provocative and effective). While he shortens the description of the first movement first presented in the 1845 version, in his later version he presents the narrative as 'an opium-inspired dream that is part of an unsuccessful suicide attempt' (Bonds 2006:419).

In the 1845 version (Berlioz n.d.):

### **Part one**

#### **Daydreams, passions**

The author imagines that a young musician, afflicted by the sickness of spirit which a famous writer has called the vagueness of passions (*le vague des passions*), sees for the first time a woman who unites all the charms of the ideal person his imagination was dreaming of and **falls desperately in love with her**. By a strange anomaly, the beloved image never presents itself to the artist's mind without being associated with a musical idea, in which he recognises a certain quality of **passion**, but endowed with the nobility and shyness which he credits to the **object of his love**.

This **melodic image** and its model keep haunting him ceaselessly like a double *idée fixe*. This explains the constant recurrence in all the movements of the symphony of the melody which launches the first allegro. The transitions from this state of **dreamy melancholy**, interrupted by occasional upsurges of **aimless joy**, to **delirious passion**, with its **outbursts of fury** and **jealousy**, its returns of **tenderness**, its tears, its **religious consolations** – all this forms the subject of the first movement.

### **Part two**

#### **A ball**

The artist finds himself in the most diverse situations in life, in the **tumult of a festive party**, in the peaceful contemplation of the **beautiful sights of nature**, yet everywhere, whether in **town or in the countryside**, the beloved image keeps **haunting** him and throws his spirit into **confusion**. (n.p.)

In the 1855 Version (Berlioz n.d.):

A young musician of **morbid sensitivity** and **ardent imagination** poisons himself with opium in a moment of despair caused by **frustrated love**. The dose of narcotic, while too weak to cause his death, plunges him into a heavy sleep accompanied by the strangest of visions, in which his **experiences, feelings and memories are translated in his feverish brain into musical thoughts and images**. His beloved becomes for him a **melody** and like an *idée fixe* which he meets and hears everywhere.

### **Part one**

#### **Daydreams, passions**

He remembers first the **uneasiness of spirit**, the **indefinable passion**, the **melancholy**, the **aimless joys** he felt even before seeing his beloved; then the **explosive love** she suddenly inspired in him, his delirious anguish, his fits of **jealous fury**, his returns of **tenderness**, his religious consolations.

### **Part two**

#### **A ball**

He meets again his beloved in a **ball** during a **glittering fête**. (n.p.)

In Berlioz's description, the Romantic characteristics of Idealism (objects in the physical world reflecting the ideas of the mind; Bonds 2006:391), imagination and the incorporation of nature are represented in both versions. While the prose is reduced and much more restrained in the narrative description, the intent of the composer to make emotions like melancholy, love, joy, passion, jealousy, fury and tenderness explicit as attributes of his music is clear. In fact, the emotional intensity of the music is unaltered also reiterating that whether the descriptive properties of the accompanying text exist or not, the emotion intended by the composer in this instance remains constant in the meaning of the music. It is then for the listener to perceive or feel what the composer intended. In the second movement, Berlioz uses the image of a ball to introduce the intimate and tragic nature of his relationship with his beloved, and the toil that this takes on his psyche and emotions. Similarly, Berlioz uses the setting of a ball to detail the emotions and the relationship between two characters in the second song '*Le spectre de la rose*' of his cycle *Les nuits d'été*.

## ■ **Les nuits d'été Op. 7**

Like many other French Romantic composers, Berlioz was closely acquainted with several painters and poets, including the poet Théophile Gautier. Gautier

was also Berlioz's neighbour, and in 1840, he consented to Berlioz setting six of his poems to music from his collection entitled *La comédie de la mort* ['The comedy of death'] (Holoman 1989:275). Berlioz completed the musical settings (later presented as a cycle) entitled *Les nuits d'été* [*Summer nights*] in 1841 for mezzo-soprano or tenor and piano. Although the title does not thematically unite the songs in any way, Holoman (1989) attributed the name of the cycle as a result of Berlioz's affinity towards Shakespeare. What does unite the cycle is the authorship of the poetry by a single author, and the themes of 'love, desire and longing' (Huscher n.d.) are prevalent throughout the six songs. In the second song, the theme of death is introduced through the story of a dead man who now lives as a rose, adorned on the breast of his former lover. The poetry also reveals that his lover is also the cause of his death. The activities that take place in this song occur in the context of the night as its backdrop. In the third, fourth and fifth songs of the cycle, death is described as the catalyst for much lamenting, suffering and longing for a lost love.

Berlioz first orchestrated the fourth song '*Absence*' in 1843 and later orchestrated the remaining songs including '*La spectre de la rose*' ['The ghost of the rose'] in 1856 (Dickinson 1972; Holoman 1989). The orchestration of these songs first accompanied by piano marked the invention of a new genre, namely the orchestral song, again highlighting Berlioz's individualistic and idiosyncratic compositional style and ability to harness emotion. The assortment of colours of the orchestra no doubt afforded the composer the means to convey emotion beyond the scope of the piano accompaniment, and this tradition later continued with many other composers including Strauss, Wagner, Ravel and Vaughn Williams among others.

Berlioz orchestrated '*Le spectre de la rose*' with the mezzo-soprano Anna Bockholtz-Falconi in mind (Holoman 1989). This updated version orchestrated for strings, woodwinds and horns is also the only song in the cycle where Berlioz employs the use of the harp with strategic effect and emotive consequence. The orchestrated version of this song has been previously described as follows (Huscher n.d.):

The second song, '*Le spectre de la rose*' (with a new introduction Berlioz added in the orchestral version), is more complex, beginning with a sumptuous melody that changes character as it goes, disintegrating into recitative at one point, and later soaring in a thrilling climax. The song is brilliantly scored, with shimmering string trills and a gentle, strumming harp, appearing for the only time in the cycle, to announce paradise. (n.p.)

The song is musically through-composed, and it also 'balances a cantabile start with a fanciful arioso in three dimensions' (Dickinson 1972:110). According to Dickinson, the imagery conjured in the text is 'matched' by Berlioz's contrasting use of arching melodies and recitative, instrumental colour and 'devised tremors' in the strings, woodwinds and harp, as well as the subversion

of traditional resolutions (Dickinson 1972:112). In Chapter 3 of this book, Dr Jaco Meyer provides a comprehensive analysis of the musical forces as described by Larson (2006, 2012) that govern this song.

**TABLE 7.1:** '*Le spectre de la rose*' by Théophile Gautier.

<b>'Le spectre de la rose'</b>	<b>'The Ghost of the Rose'</b>
<i>Soulève ta paupière close</i>	Open your closed eyelids
<i>Qu'effleure un songe virginal;</i>	Touched by a virginal dream!
<i>Je suis le spectre d'une rose</i>	I am the ghost of a rose
<i>Que tu portais hier au bal.</i>	That you wore yesterday at the ball.
<i>Tu me pris, encore emperlée</i>	You took me, still pearly
<i>Des pleurs d'argent, de l'arrosoir,</i>	With silver tears, from the watering can,
<i>Et parmi la fête étoilée</i>	And in the starlit party,
<i>Tu me promenas tout le soir.</i>	You carried me all evening.
<i>Ô toi qui de ma mort fus cause,</i>	O you who caused my death
<i>Sans que tu puisses le chasser,</i>	Without being able to chase it away
<i>Toutes les nuits mon spectre rose</i>	Every night my rose-coloured spectre
<i>À ton chevet viendra danser.</i>	Will dance by your bedside.
<i>Mais ne crains rien, je ne réclame</i>	But fear not, I claim neither
<i>Ni messe ni De profundis:</i>	Mass nor De profundis:
<i>Ce léger parfum est mon âme,</i>	This light scent is my soul
<i>Et j'arrive du paradis.</i>	And I come from Paradise
<i>Mon destin fut digne d'envie:</i>	My destiny is enviable
<i>Et pour avoir un sort si beau,</i>	And to have a fate so beautiful
<i>Plus d'un aurait donné sa vie,</i>	More than one would have given his life;
<i>Car sur ton sein j'ai mon tombeau,</i>	For on your breast I have my tomb,
<i>Et sur l'albâtre où je repose</i>	And on the alabaster on which I repose
<i>Un poète avec un baiser</i>	A poet with a kiss
<i>Écrivit: Ci-gît une rose,</i>	Wrote, 'Here lies a rose
<i>Que tous les rois vont jalouser.</i>	Of which all kings will be jealous.'

Source: Ezust (n.d.).

When one listens to the music in conjunction with the text, many correlations can be made between the musical structural features, instrumentation, the musical magnetism and musical gravity (as described in ch. 3) and how they serve to illustrate meaning in the text. What is most noticeable is the way Berlioz builds tension that culminates in ecstasy alongside the text 'this light scent is my soul and I come from Paradise' through the use of tremolos in the strings and the harp (only used in this song) resulting in the climax (m. 61) in F# major, the dominant of the key of piece. The harp in this

instance is Berlioz's representation of paradise (Seol 2017). In the following section, I shall explore how the four artists ascribed meaning to Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*' after multiple listenings of a recording of the work performed by the mezzo-soprano, Susan Graham and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House under the baton of John Nelson. This version was recorded in 1997.

## ■ Inspiring visual art through meaning derived from Berlioz's '*La spectre de la rose*'

### ■ Marna de Wet

**TABLE 7.2:** Marna de Wet ascribes musical meaning to Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*'.

Raw data from journaling	Music structural features	Imagery conjured
There is an intro that builds up to a climax with singing and orchestra. It makes me think of clouds that move away in front of the moon and expose something.	Measures 1–28: Instrumentation: flute, clarinet, muted solo cello and muted strings.  Rhythm and melody: Fragmented arpeggios in the first and second violins.  Key: B major  Tempo variation, increase in vocal dynamic and pitch. Arpeggio motif and orchestral richness increase from measure 28.	Clouds moving away in front of the moon exposing something.
The rhythm changes and I get the feeling of a night landscape with mountains and valleys. A woman who is attracted to the night, she surrenders herself to the night. 4'18"–4'26" a climax, a rising from the night or nature. A feeling of making known 'reveal'. She rises from the depths and becomes like a mountain, something big and mighty, something that stands in your way.	Measures 28–50:  Rhythm and melody: fragmented arpeggios return in measure 28.  Tempo change at measure 32.  Rhythmic change and use of diminished sevenths from measures 37–40.  Rise in pitch in the vocal line, increase in vocal dramatic intensity. Tremolos in the upper strings and harp from measures 42–50. Use of tempo markings from 47–50.	Night, landscape, mountains, nature.  A woman who is attracted to the night, she surrenders herself to the night.  She rises from the depths and becomes like a mountain, something big and mighty, something that stands in your way.

Source: Interview with Marna de Wet in 2019, published with permission granted by Marna de Wet.

Marna reported that she did not feel any emotional response physiologically from the music but instead the musical structural features and the prosodic elements of the voice led her to perceive a feeling of exposure: that something was being revealed. In the introduction, the tempo is marked as *adagio un poco lento e dolce assai* [slowly and very sweet], and the melodic fragmented arpeggios in the violin and viola are less frequent. The voice enters in the

anacrusis to measure 10, and the tempo marking is reemphasised as very sweet and calm/peaceful. The voice remains in the low to middle range as the exposition of the story unfolds. From the upbeat to measure 22, Marna noticed the increase in pitch and dramatic intensity of the voice. She also noticed the increase in the rhythm of repetitive quavers in the lower strings, as well as the increase in the arpeggio motive in the violins and violas.

The musical forces that govern this section so far, namely the upward trajectory and intensity of the music, align with Larson's theory of musical inertia (Larson 2006, 2012), where a musical pattern repeats itself until a resolution is reached that in turn serves to induce perceived meaning by the listener. The rise in pitch, increase in the intensity of the volume in the singer's voice, and the repetitive rhythmic and melodic structures aptly underlay Gautier's text 'and in the starlit party, you carried me all evening'. In these phrases, 'starlit' reflects the upwards gaze of the protagonist and 'carried' conjures images of a particular uplifting type of movement. To Marna, these features coalesced to induce the image of exposure or revelation: clouds moving away, revealing the moon. As Meyer also mentions in Chapter 3, the musical structures dissipate around measure 28 in conjunction with the textual reference to the night '*tout le soir*'. On more than one occasion, Marna also indicates that the music prompted her to visualise an image that takes place within the night as the setting.

From measure 28, Marna noticed the change in rhythm and melody and associated it with the 'feeling of a night landscape and mountains' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). This can be attributed to the return of the fragmented arpeggios in the lower strings, moving in a downward trajectory. The way that she ascribed meaning to these musical features resonates with Larson's theory on musical gravity (Larson 2006, 2012) where a listener can ascribe meaning to music when unstable tones descend in pitch towards a stable tone or when pitches on unstable beats move downwards. In this instance, the rhythms are not repetitive as in the previous measures, and the melodic fragments move down in pitch finally resolving to F# major in measure 31.

Musical gravity also plays a significant role in how Marna ascribed meaning to measures 37–40. Berlioz's use of diminished sevenths in this passage is indicative of his tendency to subvert traditional expectations of resolution. Rushton (2001) described Berlioz's chromatic practice, specifically his 'fondness for the diminished seventh as passing sonority' as follows:

An extreme instance is the slide over an octave of diminished sevenths in '*Le spectre de la rose*' (mm. 37–40). The effect [...] is the obliteration of the tonic; the new key is established by right of possession, not organically, and can sound even remote even if it is not new at all. (p. 39)

Here, Marna interpreted the music through visual imagery as ‘a woman who is attracted to the night, she surrenders herself to the night’ (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). From measures 37–40, the use of diminished sevenths cascading down finally resolves to D minor in the last beat of measure 41. In his *Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst* (1806), Christian Schubart associates D minor with melancholy and womanliness. In *La spectre de la rose*, Berlioz uses the key of D minor underscoring the text ‘But fear not, I claim neither Mass nor *De profundis*’, illustrating the ‘rose’s’ willing surrender to his fate.

The climax of the music was most apparent to Marna, echoing the haunting sentiment of ‘Rose’, that he will happily linger on her breast even after death as he arrives from paradise: ‘this light scent is my soul and I come from paradise’. Again, musical inertia played a role in the way in which Marna ascribed meaning through Berlioz’s repetitive use of tremolos in the strings and harp, the ascension in pitch, the rise in volume in the voice and accompaniment (which Marna ascribed as a rise from the night or from nature) and the tempi markings of *un poco rallentando* [gradually getting slower a little] and *allargando* [broadening] that delays the resolution and perpetuates the feeling of expectation even further. Finally, the musical inertia resolves in F# major in measure 62. As she ascribed meaning to the musical climax, Marna wrote:

[A] climax, a rising from the night or nature. A feeling of making known, “reveal”. She rises from the depths and becomes like a mountain, something big and mighty, something that stands in your way.’ (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019)

The images that Marna visualised were not a result of a physiological emotional response to the music. Rather, she made a cognitive appraisal of a few important moments in the music resulting from various musical forces such as musical gravity and musical inertia (Larson 2006, 2012). Berlioz’s use of melody, rhythm (especially the trajectory from the slow, sweet introduction progressing to the passionate tremolos of the climax) and the performer Susan Graham’s prosodic elements of her voice like the rise in pitch and her nuanced use of dramatic intensity all contributed to the coalescence of these musical forces. Marna’s prolonged engagement with the music amplified her initial feeling of something being exposed, a phenomenon that correlates with the finding of Day and Thompson (2019:75). Of her final artwork, Marna stated that she was inspired to depict ‘an image of a mountain that is also a woman who does not want to be known, or does not want to be seen, and a deep valley and dark night’ (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019).





Source: Artwork by Marna de Wet, published with permission from Marna de Wet.

**FIGURE 7.1:** Marna de Wet, *Bare [Ontbloot]*, 2019, oil on board, 53 cm x 40 cm.

## Jean Lampen

Jean's process of using the images of wolves and sheep as unifying elements throughout her works has been described in the previous chapter. After listening to Graham's version of this song, she described 'getting gooseflesh' when listening to the music and added her admiration of the dreamy, soft nature of the music (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019). From her journal, it was evident that there were three major musical events that evoked emotion and imagery in Jean. These three occurrences correspond with the musical moments described in Marna's process and the music's structural features and overall forces that governed them. Unlike Marna though, Jean perceived emotion in the music and she also experienced a physiological response to the music as well. The imagery that was elicited in Jean was conjured after her emotional response. Jean used word associations to describe emotions, feelings or affect elicited from the music at specific points while listening to the song.

**TABLE 7.3:** Jean Lampen ascribes musical meaning to Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*'.

Music extract	English translation	Word/emotive associations
Measures 22–28: ' <i>Et parmi la fête étoilée, tu me promenas tout le soir.</i> '	And in the starlit party, You carried me all evening.	Dreamy, soft then more dramatic, scared, serious, ominous
Measures 28–41: ' <i>Sans que tu puisses le chasser, Toutes les nuits mon spectre rose. À ton chevet viendra danser. Mais ne crains rien, je ne réclame Ni messe ni De profundis.</i> '	Without being able to chase it away every night my rose-coloured spectre will dance by your bedside. But fear not, I claim neither Mass nor <i>De profundis</i> .	Rhythm, structure, wanting to dance
Measures 42–44: ' <i>Ce léger parfum est mon âme</i> '	This light scent is my soul And I come from Paradise.	Soft talk, sad, farewell Final greeting
Measures 45–50: ' <i>Et j'arrive du paradis.</i> '		

Source: Interview with Jean Lampen in 2019, published with permission granted by Jean Lampen.

As previously mentioned, the musical forces that precipitated how Jean ascribed meaning to the music correspond to the music that elicited meaning-making for Marna. While Marna conjured imagery from the feeling of 'exposure' she perceived, derived from the musical structural features and prosodic elements of the voice, in Jean, the same musical features and forces evoked affective states either perceived or felt. She ascribed the three distinct sections in the music as illustrated in Table 7.3 as follows:

**Measures 22–28:** The first time the singer's line raises in pitch and dynamic, and the orchestral accompaniment becomes rhythmically, melodically and harmonically richer, Jean perceived fear, seriousness and an ominous feeling.

**Measures 28 to 41:** Jean ascribed meaning to the staccato semiquavers articulated by the upper strings from measure 28, as well as, the contrast between the strong beats of the

singer's line (*Mais ne crains rien*) and the off-beat 3-note grouping in the upper strings as a dance that has structure similar to a waltz.

**Measures 42–50:** Jean ascribed the entire growth and pinnacle of the musical climax as a sad farewell and final greeting.

Jean's initial response to the music was that it was dreamy and soft, and three musical moments elicited fear, sadness and wanting to dance. According to Zentner (2010:106), these associated feelings correspond with the four nuanced, musically induced emotions, such as tenderness, nostalgia, sadness and joyful activation, while the same reported feelings only correspond with two basic emotions, namely sadness and fear (eds. Juslin & Sloboda 2010:77).

In her artwork, Jean made sense of the emotions she felt or perceived, and the initial images conjured slightly thereafter (a farewell and a final greeting) as an image depicting a slain lamb, with a kiss on its breast, below a wolf in a coat hovering above. While tacit knowledge embedded in this image will be examined in further detail in Chapter 11, the similarities between the ghostly rose of Berlioz's song and the lamb in Jean's work and between the womanly figure and the wolf are evident. Both relationships convey the imbalance of power between their respective characters. The woman and the wolf both remain alive, whereas their existence had fatal consequences for the lives of the rose and the lamb, respectively. It is also striking to note that without an understanding of the text, Jean depicted a kiss on the breast of the lamb (in the form of a pink X) in response to her feeling of the music emoting a sense of farewell or greeting. Gautier ends his text with a similar sentiment: 'And on the alabaster on which I repose, a poet with a kiss wrote, "Here lies a rose of which all kings will be jealous"'.

## ■ Elna Venter

As Table 7.4 illustrates, Elna identified the same musical moments that elicited emotional and meaning-making responses from both Marna and Jean, such as the rhythmic change from measures 28–41, the musical climax from measures 44–50 and the final, soft passages of the song.

**TABLE 7.4:** Elna Venter ascribes musical meaning to Berlioz's *'Le spectre de la rose'*.

Raw data from journaling	Musical features	Meaning derived from music
Around 2'45" the rhythm is waltz-like but at 3:09 that tempo and atmosphere changes almost wobbling	Rhythm, tempo	Waltz, atmosphere becomes wobbly
Around 4'31" it feels like a hymn of praise ... around 5'09" the mood changes again with the audible woodwind instrument	Increase in volume and harmonic rhythm, use instrumentation, musical inertia	Hymn of praise
From around 5'55" the music and singing fades and ends sorrowfully and very, very soft so that I feel defenceless	Musical gravity, decrease in volume, use of instrumentation	Sorrow, defenceless

Source: Interview with Elna Venter in 2019, published with permission granted by Elna Venter.



Source: Artwork by Jean Lampen, published with permission from Jean Lampen.

**FIGURE 7.2:** Jean Lampen, *my destiny was worthy of envy*, 2019, pen and ink watercolour, 74 cm × 54 cm.

After listening to the song for the first time, Elna immediately ascribed meaning to the song as an exclamation of admiration and beauty: the dichotomy between an object and its admirer. She also interpreted the ending (like Jean) to be sad, a farewell or, more specifically, a loss (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). She compared her process of not understanding the text, yet being able to make sense of the 'wordless sounds' as beautiful, to a flower that portrays beauty without the need to articulate its beauty. Those who gaze upon it, especially once in bloom, know that it is beautiful: its beauty is evident. In her journal, Elna wrote:

'This song is dedicated to the *beauty* of something that *brings forth all levels of admiration* from mankind. And yet the *pain languishes at the end of the song* as if *something has been taken away*. Visual beauty is without sound. Think of a flower that unfolds wordlessly from a meagre bud into a ravishing ornament. The flower itself can't speak or sing, but the beauty of the visual elements, the balance, harmony, form and colours can bring forth a spiritual emotion inside a person. This emotion is first shared with other people when it is converted into sounds and words. *Not everyone will experience the same feelings*, because everyone's perception originates with personal experience.' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

Needless to say, the evaluation of beauty within an object is subjective, defined by the person's own enculturation of what beauty means to them. As Elna affirms, what she ascribed as beauty in the music conjured images based on her personal experience of what beauty means of a flower where the visual elements of balance, harmony, form and colour correspond to the aesthetics of the music. The features described by Elna as the listener correspond to the ways in which Zentner (2010:111) described how a listener would ascribe meaning 'based on the individual and sociocultural identity of the listener and on the symbolic coding conventions prevalent in a particular culture or subculture'. Furthermore, how Elna matched the visual elements of her art with the music's structural features (i.e. balance, harmony, form and colour) resonates with how music, art and literature have been interconnected, especially in France, over the last few hundred years (Hodam 1968a:38).

Elna listened to Fauré's '*Après un rêve*' first (song 2), as this was the order that I as the curator presented the songs to the artists. When listening to Berlioz's work (song 5), Elna immediately sensed a similarity in how mood, affect or emotion was elicited, as opposed to how she ascribed meaning from the German songs. To this end, the form of both artworks depicting the respective songs is identical as this was the way that Elna represented those similarities. Elna also noted many differences in the characteristics of the music. While Elna's experience of ascribing meaning to Fauré's song will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the most noticeable difference evident to Elna was the inward expression of emotion in Fauré's song in contrast to Berlioz's exuberant outpouring of emotion:

'I deliberately used the same format and object element in the illustrations of song 2 and song 5 because there is a correspondence for me between them. Where song 2 turns inward to an interior (little tortoise pulling back into its shell), song 5 opens up like a flower that embraces the exterior (aloe that opens for sunshine, insects and birds). This thought of an expansive beauty is further strengthened in song 5 by the self-confidence that the orchestra and singing communicate. The orchestra does not merely accompany the voice; it also independently communicates a message.' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

Elna ascribed meaning to Berlioz's music mainly because of the rise in pitch and the increase in the dramatic intensity of the voice and musical inertia (Larson 2006, 2012) that was created by means of the repetitive harmonic, rhythmic and melodic patterns that she heard in the orchestra, especially from measures 42–50 (the musical climax). Elna made sense of Berlioz's use of the orchestra and voice, namely the increase in instrumentation, dynamics and rhythmic harmony and the rise in pitch as an expansion, that she depicted visually as a flower bud opening up. She also found meaning in the orchestra alone, which she describes as a mechanism capable of telling a story independent of the voice.

After a prolonged engagement with the music, Berlioz's song reminded Elna of the text from a pop song '*Klein Tambotieboom*' [*Little Tambotie tree*] by an Afrikaans, South African band, *Die Heuwels Fantasties*, who sing '*as die donker my kom haal en die Here my nie soek nie, as die osoonlaag vergaan en in 'n kandelaar van sterre val, begrawe my hard op Klein Tambotieboom en strooi my as oor die bosveldhorison*' [When the darkness comes to fetch me and the Lord does not seek me, when the ozone layer perishes and falls into a candlestick of stars, bury my heart on Little Tambotie Tree and scatter my ashes over the bushveld horizon] (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). The similarity between these songs (although completely divergent in style) was that both evoked imagery and memories of nostalgia; Elna experienced nostalgia as the music evoked a sentimental feeling and joy that she also experienced when looking at the stars at night:

'There are few experiences as delightful as looking up at the Milky Way on a moonless night in a remote place – our earth's own star system – and look at the boisterous confetti of stars. Just like a flower the night unfolds wordlessly and soundlessly in a beauty of stars.' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

In her artwork depicting Berlioz's song, Elna uses mixed media to depict a flower bud opening up, surrounded by a flame-singed piece of cloth. The colour grey features prominently around the flower and represents the musical features that elicited imagery of the night in Elna. What is most noticeable is the proximity of the effects of the flame on the cloth to the flower, representing the vulnerability, defenselessness and possible loss of the flower.

Depicting loss, longing and desire in Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*'



Source: Artwork by Elna Venter, published with permission from Elna Venter.

**FIGURE 7.3:** Elna Venter, *Brushed by a virginal dream* [*Aangeraak deur 'n maagd'like droom*], 2019, mixed media, 35 cm x 35 cm.

## ■ Kevin du Plessis

When Kevin listened to the music, he ascribed meaning in response to Berlioz's use of instrumentation, the variation in dynamics, tempo and contour in the melodic line (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019). As Jaco Meyer describes in Chapter 3, the ascending and descending musical lines, especially in the beginning of the song, are capable of much meaning-making in the listener through the forces of musical gravity and musical magnetism (Larson 2006, 2012). Table 7.5 describes Kevin's experience.

**TABLE 7.5:** Kevin du Plessis ascribes musical meaning to Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la Rose*'.

Raw data from journaling	Musical features	Ascribed meaning
Peaceful intro: Almost like watching something float in the wind, Vocals are gentle.	Instrumentation, fragmented melodic motif	Floating in the wind, gentle
Around 1'44" the song rises up. There is strength, resolve, intensity, passion.	Measures 17–28: Rise in pitch in both orchestra and voice	Rising up, strength, resolve, intensity, passion
Around 2'48" it slows back down. Strings and flute build up some tension... perhaps passion?	Musical gravity: descent in melodic line, rhythmic change from measures 32–42.	Questioning, tension, passion
It goes between louder and subtler. Like a back and forth. I pick up a sense of internal struggle with up and down, unpacking a complex love relationship perhaps?	Changes in volume, musical magnetism, rise in pitch and harmonic rhythm in the climax.	Internal struggle, unpacking a complex romantic relationship.
5'55" Almost a dead silence. Is this a silent cry of passion, contrasting the upbeat passionate moments with deep feeling?	Soft dynamic level, prosodic elements of the voice	Death, silent cry of passion, deep feeling

Source: Interview with Kevin du Plessis in 2019, published with permission granted by Kevin du Plessis.

The musical forces and the images they elicited coalesced in Kevin making sense of the music as the ebb and flow of the struggles one might experience in a complex, romantic relationship. Kevin's meaning-making corresponds with Berlioz's complex style of writing for this song, particularly his varied use of melody and orchestration (Huscher n.d.). Furthermore, Kevin's constant use of the words passion and internal struggle resonate with the intended meaning Berlioz wanted to convey in this song, also echoing the volatile relationships that informed his life, including his marriage to Harriet Smithson. Phillip Huscher affirms it, the programme annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, who asserted (Huscher n.d.):

These pieces don't betray Berlioz's new infatuation with Marie, for they were probably written before the fact, but the attraction of Gautier's texts does suggest unrest in his marriage to Harriet Smithson, and the sense of a great love that has gone cold. (n.p.)

In fact, the evening described in this song and Berlioz's ball scene (second movement in his *Symphonie fantastique*) reminisce the turbulent relationship that either ended in death (as in '*La spectre de la rose*') or in the near suicide attempt of the protagonist of his autobiographical programme symphony.





Source: Artwork by Kevin du Plessis (2019), published with permission from Kevin du Plessis.

**FIGURE 7.4:** Kevin du Plessis, *Intertwined*, 2019, digital art photography, 21 cm × 29.7 cm, edition size: 5.

Ultimately Kevin named the artwork (Figure 7.4) representing Berlioz's song, *Intertwined*, both textually and visually representative of the love and inner turmoil of two people involved in a romantic relationship:

'In the end I interpreted this song as a dance of passion. Something that picks you up in excitement yet settles deep in the soul. It is new love; it is romantic.' (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019)

## ■ Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored how four artists ascribed meaning to Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*'. I presented experiential data from their creative process and also the artworks that resulted from the meaning they ascribed from the music without an understanding of the text. The artists ascribed meaning through the emotions they either perceived or felt because of the music's intrinsic features, the musical forces that govern the compositions and the images that the music evoked. The artists' interpretation and final artworks were informed by their final cognitive appraisals of the emotions perceived or felt, as well as the initial images elicited from the music's structural features or the prosodic elements of the voice. Kevin and Marna both perceived emotions in response to specific moments of Berlioz's song; however, Jean and Elna perceived emotion and experienced a physiological response to the music.

As a response to a prolonged engagement with Berlioz's '*Le spectre de la rose*', Elna, Marna and Jean all ascribed meaning to the same musical moments in the song, most notably the musical climax from measures 42–50. The ascending melodic line, 'devised tremors' (Dickinson 1972:112) or tremolos in the harp and strings and the increase in dynamics and harmonic rhythm all coalesce in what Seol (2017) described as Berlioz's representation of paradise. These elements also constitute what Larson (2006, 2012) described as musical inertia, a force that is capable of eliciting meaning from music because of the meaning listeners derive when they hear repetition in patterns of pitch and rhythm that eventually climax or dissipate. The musical inertia prompted Marna to perceive a sense of exposure or something that is being revealed. Jean perceived this to be fear, while Elna ascribed its meaning as an exclamation of admiration and beauty. In measures 37–42, the rhythm and instrumentation caused a physiological emotional response in Jean as she reported the feeling of wanting to dance. This is described as a musically induced emotion by Zentner (2010:106), specifically joyful activation.

Another musical force that elicited a response from Berlioz's song was musical gravity, which resulted in all four artists ascribing meaning. As described by Larson (2012:87–88), musical gravity occurs when unstable tones descend in pitch towards a stable tone and also when a metrically unstable tone moves downwards, regardless of pitch stability. Marna ascribed

the feeling perceived resulting from the musical gravity, specifically in the last measures of the song as a woman who is attracted to the night and ultimately surrenders herself to it. Jean reported that she both perceived and felt sadness in response to these musical moments, and after a prolonged engagement with the music, she also reported feelings of tenderness and nostalgia. Similarly, Elna also perceived and felt sadness and ascribed these moments as a farewell or loss. The feeling of loss corresponds directly with Gautier's final image in his poem of the rose, now deceased and resting upon a woman's breast as its tomb.

Also similar to Jean, after a prolonged engagement with the music, Elna reported feelings of nostalgia. Throughout Gautier's poem, the deep admiration (also identified by Elna) felt by the rose for his lover implies a reminiscence or nostalgia about their time spent together and the feelings they shared. Kevin ascribed meaning to the music, both in response to the moments that were governed by musical gravity and because of musical magnetism: when unstable tones ascend and descend in pitch to the next stable tone and when unstable beats move forward to the nearest stable beat (Larson 2012:147-148). Kevin perceived the music as passionate and ascribed the musical magnetism inherent to the music as a complex, tumultuous romantic relationship. This in no doubt largely resonates with Berlioz's romantic history and confirms the emotional intent that Berlioz wished to portray in the song. In the following chapter, I shall explore how the artists ascribed meaning to Fauré's '*Après un rêve*'.

# ‘Return O mysterious night!’: Exploring the meaning artists ascribe to Fauré’s ‘*Après un rêve*’

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## ■ Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the characteristics of the French *mélodie* and the role that Berlioz played in representing emotion in musical referential meaning. In this chapter, I will explore how four artists ascribed meaning to Fauré’s ‘*Après un rêve*’ [‘After a dream’] Op. 7, No. 1, from his *Trois mélodies*. Various musical features and forces coalesce to elicit meaning from the artists, and Larson’s theories (2006, 2012) on musical forces are discussed in detail in Chapter 3. I will also present the artworks that represent a visual depiction of how the artists made sense of the referential meaning in ‘*Après un rêve*’ without an understanding of the text.

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## ■ Gabriel Fauré and '*Après un rêve*' ['After a dream']

As mentioned in Chapter 7, although Berlioz's orchestration of '*Les nuits d'été*' was much smaller than his usual extravagant settings for which he was known, the subtle and restrained orchestration did not prevent him from successfully emoting the themes of love, longing, and desire inherent to that cycle (Huscher n.d.). In stark contrast, Gabriel Fauré did not promote the outpouring of 'emotional display' and 'musical depiction' in his writing; he rather composed preferring 'sonorous form' to overt expression (Burkholder, Grout & Palisca 2019:734). As Burkholder et al. (2019) further described: 'the music sounds more lyric than epic or dramatic [...] It is economical, simple and reserved rather than profuse, complex or grandiloquent'. Nonetheless, as I posited in Chapter 1, a listener should be able to ascribe meaning to music or perceive or feel the emotion in response to music, whether the composer's intended meaning is subtly implied or non-existent at all.

Considering his approach to music composition, especially in his later style of writing, Fauré is considered as a bridge between the end of Romanticism and the style of modernism that is associated with the early 20th century. In this regard, his writing is often seen as radical (Burkholder et al. 2019). Fauré is often viewed as a composer who considers the texts of his songs subordinate to the music, and while doing so, his segmental musical devices and subtle rhythms and tones often evoke nostalgia (Porter 1983:139). Helen Hodam described the qualities and characteristics of a French song that more adequately describe Fauré's writing style than that of Berlioz or even Gounod. These include (Hodam 1968:20):

- an attachment to the chant and the modes;
- French declamation and rhythm;
- a fondness for folk music;
- love of the dance and use of dance forms and rhythms;
- inherent Classicism and feeling for refined detail;
- a sense of fantasy together with a fascination for the exotic and the oriental;
- emotional restraint and introspection; and
- ironic wit and satire.

While Fauré also composed a Requiem, two operas and much piano and chamber music, he was primarily known for his *mélodie* oeuvre, which was indicative of the qualities described above. Like Berlioz, Fauré also set poems from Gautier's *La comédie de la mort* to music; however, later in life, he was largely inspired by the poetry of Paul Verlaine. This could be attributed to the fact that Verlaine's writing style resonated with the compositional style of

Fauré, especially regarding his restrained presentation of mood and emotion, and how these elements were depicted. In the literature, their complimentary styles of writing are explained as follows (Burkholder et al. 2019):

Verlaine's poems focused on suggesting moods through imagery and the sound of the language rather than through direct statement: known as symbolism. Fauré's approach is similarly indirect. In his 6th song, *Avant que tu ne t'en ailles* (NAWM 164) each poetic image is set to a melodic phrase in its own tonal world, a declamatory fragment joined to the other phrases by the subtle motivic echoes. Although they are not modal, the melodies have qualities that reflect Fauré's training in Gregorian chant, moving mostly by step or skip in a gentle arc while avoiding the leading tone and clear harmonic implications. (pp. 734–735)

In France during the 1880s, symbolist poets like Verlaine 'sought to loosen the ties of naturalism and realism by relying on dreamlike images and the subjective experiences of the emotions, rather than the objective reality of the outer world' (Lewis 2009:1). Symbolist poets, artists and composers intended to depict affect or emotion in indirect ways vastly in contrast to the exuberant outpourings of a romantic composer like Berlioz. Fauré was fond of using techniques associated with the Gregorian chant in his writing, most notably moving by step or small intervals while avoiding the leading note. In his song, *'Après un rêve'*, Fauré also employs small steps (often whole steps or half steps that were introduced by enharmonic notes) in his melody so that when a larger interval is used, it leaves a lasting impression upon the listener and highlights the underlying text. In Chapter 3, Jaco Meyer provides an analysis of this song and highlights how musical gravity results as a significant force that both elicits mood and connotes meaning to the night, which provides the setting for the action to unfold in this song.

*'Après un rêve'* is the first song from his *Trois Mélodies* Op. 7 and was composed between 1870 and 1877 (Cornwell 2015). Fauré set Romain Bussine's poem (inspired by an anonymous Italian poem; Johnson & Stokes 2000:163) to music where the poet describes a protagonist<sup>31</sup> who dreams most ardently about a lover. In their dream, they are intoxicated by the revelries that this union bestows; however, upon awakening and realising that it was a dream, they desperately yearn for the night to return to bring back their delusion.

This is one of Fauré's earlier compositions, and Bussine's text is a far cry from the segmented images conjured by the poetry of Verlaine of which Fauré later found an affinity. If compared to Verlaine's *La lune blanche* ['The white moon'] from his *La Bonne Chanson*, which Fauré set to music almost 10 years later in 1894, the themes of love and 'dreaming in the moonlight' (Taylor 2020:14)

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31. Bussine never ascribes gender to the protagonist and as such, both the protagonist and the object of their affection can be interpreted as any gender.

**TABLE 8.1:** '*Après un rêve*' by Romain Bussine and translated by Richard Stokes.

<b>'Après un rêve'</b>	<b>'After a dream'</b>
<i>Dans un sommeil que charmait ton image</i>	In sleep made sweet by a vision of you
<i>Je rêvais le bonheur, ardent mirage,</i>	I dreamed of happiness, fervent illusion,
<i>Tes yeux étaient plus doux, ta voix pure et sonore,</i>	Your eyes were softer, your voice pure and ringing,
<i>Tu rayonnais comme un ciel éclairé par l'aurore;</i>	You shone like a sky that was lit by the dawn;
<i>Tu m'appelais et je quittais la terre</i>	You called me and I departed the earth
<i>Pour m'enfuir avec toi vers la lumière,</i>	To flee with you toward the light,
<i>Les cieux pour nous entr'ouvraient leurs nues,</i>	The heavens parted their clouds for us,
<i>Splendeurs inconnues, lueurs divines entrevues.</i>	We glimpsed unknown splendours, celestial fires.
<i>Hélas! hélas, triste réveil des songes,</i>	Alas, alas, sad awakening from dreams!
<i>Je t'appelle, ô nuit, rends-moi tes mensonges;</i>	I summon you, O night, give me back your delusions;
<i>Reviens, reviens, radieuse,</i>	Return, return in radiance,
<i>Reviens, ô nuit mystérieuse!</i>	Return, O mysterious night!

Source: Johnson and Stokes (2000:176).

correspond with Bussine's poem, yet each poem, respectively, evokes these themes through story-telling in stark contrast with each other.

Verlaine's story unfolds as a series of fragmented images, and these themes are established in single lines of the poem that stand apart from the main four stanzas (Johnson & Stokes 2000):

O my beloved.

The pool reflects,

Deep mirror,

The silhouette

Of the black willow

Where the wind is weeping... (p. 167)

Bussine's poem conveys love as an illusion in a far more narrative, story-like manner, where the protagonist describes in detail what has happened and how they feel about it. Even though Fauré did not favour depicting strong emotion and visual imagery in his music, '*Après un rêve*' manages to convey much more dramatic and emotive intensity musically than his setting of Verlaine's poem. In his *La lune blanche*, musically there are many similarities to '*Après un rêve*', such as how Fauré uses melody. In the introduction of both songs, Fauré employs an ascending vocal line that moves away from the main tessitura of the song, which Eero Tarasti (1995:445) described as a way in which Fauré symbolised the occurrence of a dream taking place: in other words, a transcendence into another realm of reality. The night-time setting in

which the dream takes place is alluded to in the accompaniment of *La lune blanche* through Fauré's use of arpeggios in the piano accompaniment (Taylor 2020:14). As Jaco Meyer described in Chapter 3, the sense of night-time in 'Après un rêve' can be attributed to the musical force of gravity that is generated by the stepwise descending melodic line and the use of the lower registers in both piano and voice.

Although Fauré briefly employs an ascending melodic line in the upper register in conjunction with an increase in dynamic intensity to depict the beloved ('*Ô bien aimée*') in *La lune blanche*, the song never moves beyond a melancholic and nostalgic affective state and never quite delivers the emotional intensity that 'Après un rêve' manages to do. I would posit that this is so because the former song never builds inertia quite as emphatically as in the latter (in both music and text). The musical inertia that builds in the description of Bussine's dream climaxes upon the awakening of the protagonist ('Alas, alas, sad awakening from dreams') realising that the love they experienced was not real, and shortly thereafter, tension mounts in the music once again, much quicker, as the protagonist utters 'Return, return in radiance, return, O mysterious night!'. The elements that govern the musical inertia include the increased momentum of tempo, volume, pitch and harmonic rhythm culminating in an arrival point that elicits meaning-making in the listener.

Tarasti (1995) explained that in 'Après un rêve', the inertia or forward movement is propelled by Fauré's use of sequential fifths in his harmonic passages:

As a rule, such a sequential passage in fifths functions as a transition and thus represents the impression of movement, a feeling that one is going towards something. As a contrast, moments of stagnation occur. In the semiotic sense, there are two kinds of movement: either so-called disengagement [*débrayage*], which means moving a distance from the centre of the narration, or engagement [*embrayage*], a return towards that centre. (p. 440)

He asserted that in 'Après un rêve', there are places where the music moves forward, but musical moments also occur that halt inertia or 'stagnates' (Tarasti 1995). He described that in the semiotic sense, two types of movement occur when the object described either moves away from the centre of activity [*débrayage*] or returns to the centre of activity [*embrayage*]. In 'Après un rêve', Tarasti's description of *débrayage* is musically conveyed by the movement of the melody away from the main *tessitura* (depicting the dream) in conjunction with the sequential circle of fifths in the harmony of the piano accompaniment. These musical forces relate to both Meyer's (1956) theory of how tension and expectation in music lead to meaning-making and Larson's (2006, 2012) theory of musical inertia (where a musical pattern repeats itself until a resolution is reached that in turn elicits meaning-making). While his descriptions of both *débrayage* and *embrayage* exist as



phenomena in 'Après un rêve', the occurrence of *débrayage* is much more emphatic in the song, whereas his *La lune blanche* mostly employs movement towards the centre of the narration that results in its subtle and restrained emotive depiction of melancholy and nostalgia. The manner in which the melody also disengages away from the narration, especially in the last stanza of 'Après un rêve', musically supports the awakening from the dream, in contrast to the first two stanzas that depict the sensuousness of the dream itself. Bussine compares the night (when dreams traditionally occur) to a lie about the existence of love, and realising this truth, the protagonist calls on the night to return.

After examining twelve vocal and ten instrumental recordings of 'Après un rêve', Tarasti (1995) found that there were eight consistent factors that determine how listeners could ascribe meaning to the song. These include the structure of the work (comprising musical and textual elements), the 'phenomenal qualities' of the voice including 'softness/hardness, lightness/gravity', how the singer emotes meaning enunciating individual words, the varied ways in which the musician (both singer and instrumentalist) employs vibrato, tempo, dynamics and *glissandi* and the way the musician phrases or breathes (Tarasti 1995:451-455).

For this research, the four artists were tasked with listening to Kiri te Kanawa and Richard Amner's version of this song, recorded in 1987. Tarasti stated that of all the renditions he examined, Dame Kiri's version of this song illustrated how meaning was able to be conveyed without a listener needing to understand the text. As an artistic choice, she relied on the instrumental quality of her voice to convey meaning instead of focusing on the recitation of the poem (Tarasti 1995). By employing a slower tempo (allowing for nuanced detail), effective use of vibrato, long phrases and *glissandi* in descending lines, her 'voice attempts to create a perfect illusion of immateriality' (Tarasti 1995:456). These features also coalesced in how Marna, Jean, Elna and Kevin made sense of Fauré's 'Après un rêve'.

## ■ Inspiring visual art through meaning derived from Fauré's 'Après un rêve'

### ■ Marna de Wet

Marna described her initial response to the music as follows:

'After listening to the music for the first time, the *piano rhythm* immediately caught my attention. It made me think of a *deep longing for a place or person*. The piano accompaniment feels like something that *bobs about on the sea or water*. Something or *someone lost on water*. There is a *feeling of urgency, a distress call, come and fetch me, or take me away*. To me it *sounds like a dream taking her away, or in a dream she goes away and gets lost.*' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019)

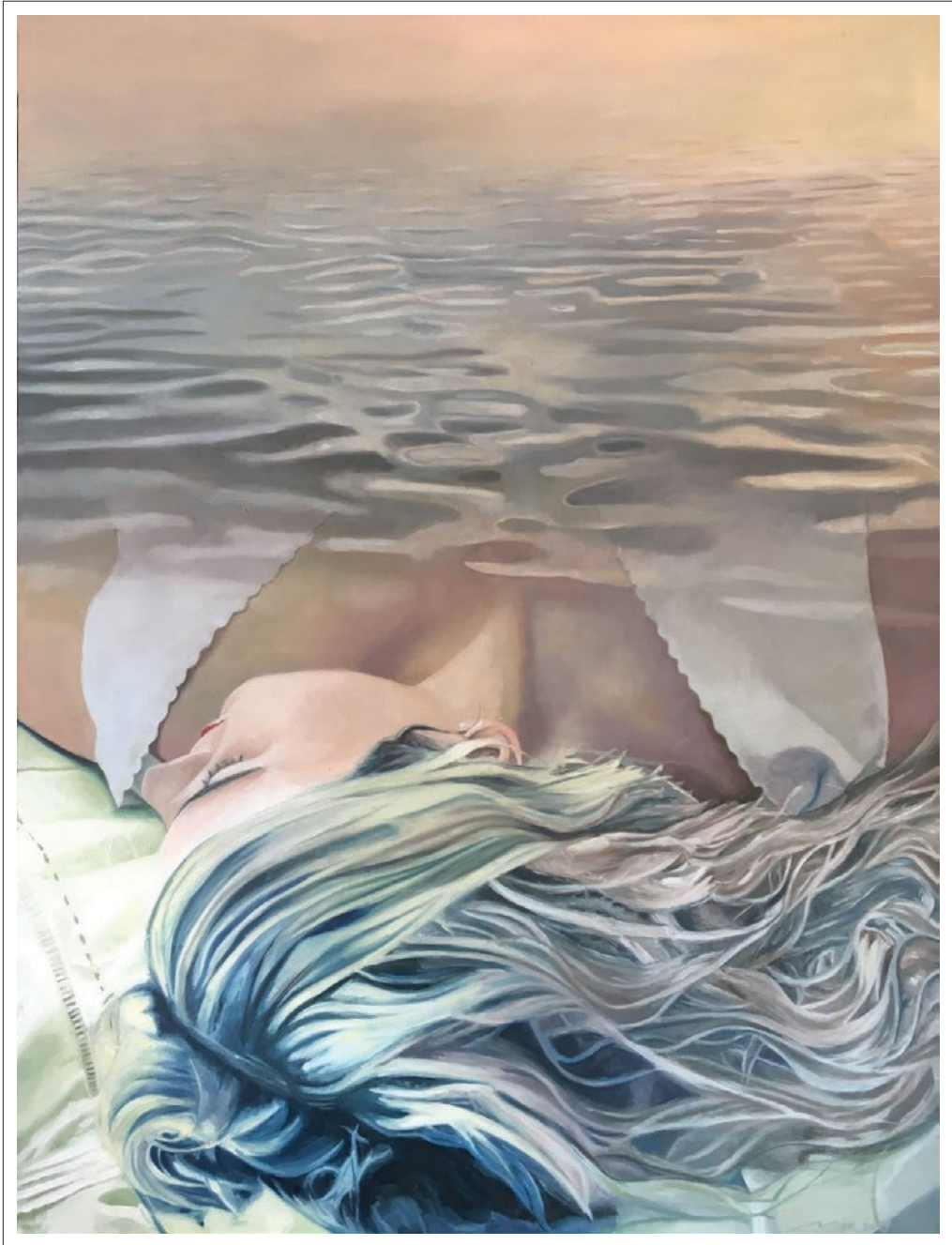
**TABLE 8.2:** Marna de Wet ascribes musical meaning to Fauré's '*Après un rêve*'.

Data from journaling	Musical features	Emotion/affect ascribed	Imagery evoked
1'05"-1'26" sounds as if she is lost, or drifts in under the water where it is restful and calm. Then she feels safe there, in the dream under the water.	Measure 17: Voice ascends away from the main tessitura; easures 19-23: dissonance created by the circle of fifths Bb, Eb, Ab, D and settling on G.	Lost, drifting, restful, calm, safe, dreamy.	Under water, dream under the water.
1'54 to the end: She beckons the dream to take her away, to swallow her so that she can sink away in him 'the dream' and disappear. The water becomes an emotion. I eagerly want to depict an image of a woman with water like a blanket over her. The water 'piano rhythm' enfolds her.	Measure 31: Melody disengages from the main <i>tessitura</i> , then returns; vibrato in the voice and dynamic intensity increases. Measures 39-42: The melodic line is stable and repeats the tonic (C), then ascends away from the main tessitura as the volume increases. Measures 42-48: The descending line delves into the lowest register of the singer's voice and the melody searches for the tonic. The tonic is finally reached in measure 47.	Beckoning, swallow her, sink away.	Dream takes her away, water becomes emotion, woman with water like a blanket over her.

Source: Interview with Marna de Wet in 2019, published with permission granted by Marna de Wet.

After listening to Fauré's '*Après un rêve*', Marna ascribed meaning to the piano accompaniment (that juxtaposes the repetitive quaver chords in the right hand with the low tones in the left hand) as someone searching/longing for a place or person. The repetitive right-hand figuration conjured the image of something bobbing on the surface of the ocean. Musically, the way she ascribed the meaning matches Fauré's dissonant use of the circle of fifths in the first and second stanzas of music as they search for a stable tone (the G in mm. 8 and 23, respectively). As Meyer described in Chapter 3, the way Marna ascribed meaning can be attributed to musical gravity and musical magnetism (Larson 2006, 2012). The image of water that Marna conjured is the way that she made sense of the repetitive right-hand chords: in this instance, it manifested as a sonic anaphone depicting something bobbing on the water. This initial image remained with Marna and informed the way in which she ultimately ascribed meaning to the entire song.

Marna had a strong reaction to the disengagement of the vocal line away from the main tessitura and, as a result, made sense of this occurrence as a dream taking place, which itself corresponds to the textual meaning of the song. This phenomenon affirms Tarasti's (1995:445) semiotic analysis of how *débrayage* (moving away from the central place of where the narrated activity takes place) might evoke meaning as a dream taking place. In this instance whether Fauré favoured depicting textual references explicitly in his music or whether he intended to do so is irrelevant, as the musical forces that governed his writing successfully allowed for the textual reference to be conveyed to



Source: Artwork by Marna de Wet, published with permission from Marna de Wet.

**FIGURE 8.1:** Marna de Wet, *The dream [Die droom]*, 2019, oil on board, 53 cm × 40 cm.

the listener through the music. Marna also responded to the ascending and descending lines of the melody and ascribed meaning to this as finding solace in something, sinking away or disappearing into something.

After the initial image of the ocean was evoked, the image of water remained and played a central role in her final cognitive appraisal of the feelings and other images she perceived from the music. In her interview, she stated that she perceived the music to be passionate, and she equated the water (associated with the piano accompaniment) as the feeling of passion that allures and envelopes the women (her central protagonist) (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). After initially listening to the music, Marna only perceived emotion in response to the music; however, after a prolonged engagement with this song, she also felt a physiological response to Fauré's *mélodie*. Ultimately, she made sense of the music, associated feelings and imagery as a woman covered by the waves of the ocean like a blanket.

## ■ Jean Lampen

**TABLE 8.3:** Jean Lampen ascribes musical meaning to Fauré's '*Après un rêve*'.

Musical features	Affective word associations
Measures 1–15: consistent repetitive rhythm in the right hand of the piano. Rise in Pitch of the voice away from the centre. Ascending and descending melodic lines, harmonic rhythm.	Fast rhythm, raining, excitement, running
Measure 16: Dominant (G) seventh chord including suspended notes from the previous Eb harmony. Slight <i>sforzando</i> by the pianist on the first pulse of the measure also emphasising the low register of the piano. The beginning of the measure starts loudly and decrescendos towards the C minor chord in the next measure.	Turning slower, heavier
Upbeat to measure 29 ('Hélas!') to measure 42 (1): Rise away from the main tessitura. Descending triplet figures that waver around the G in measures 36 and 37.	Fleeing away
Measures 42(2)–48: descending pitches in both the voice and the piano. Melisma on 'mystérieuse'.	More ominous, serious

Source: Interview with Jean Lampen in 2019, published with permission granted by Jean Lampen.

Jean reported that after listening to the song for the first time, she perceived the feeling of sadness in the music. Later, while she would listen to the song over an extended period, she would also feel sad herself. Jean ascribed the repetitive rhythm of the quaver chords that comprise the right hand of the piano accompaniment as rain falling. This could also be attributed to the sonic anaphora created by the music and not necessarily an image that was induced after an emotion was evoked. As described by Tarasti (1995), the *débrayage*, evident musically in the vocal line of the first few measures, also evoked meaning-making in Jean. Unlike Marna, Jean did not ascribe this as a dream but rather with the feeling of excitement and the image of running in the rain. In this instance, the perception of emotion precipitated the visual image.



Source: Artwork by Jean Lampen, published with permission from Jean Lampen.

**FIGURE 8.2:** Jean Lampen, *To flee with you toward the light*, 2019, pen and ink watercolour, 74 cm x 54 cm.

Overall, the musical inertia generated by the upwards trajectory of the vocal lines (mm. 2,3,17,18, 30[3]-41), the increase in dynamics, vibrato in the voice and harmonic rhythm elicited feelings of excitement and images of running or fleeing away. In contrast, the musical gravity derived from the downwards trajectory of the lines in the piano and voice in the last measures of the song especially, as well as the sound of the lower registers of the piano and voice (prosodic elements), caused Jean to ascribe meaning to the music as ominous, heavy and serious. Ultimately, all Jean's initial and consequent emotions, as well as the initial images first conjured, coalesced in her portrayal of the characters that she initially identified to depict her interpretation. In her work, Jean depicted the image of a wolf, hunched, with a sad facial expression below smaller wolves and sheep that flee away from it. Hovering right above the image is an ominous wolf's hand that alludes to the intervention of another force.

## ■ Elna Venter

After listening to '*Après un rêve*' for the first time, Elna recollected how this song made her feel:

The fact that there is only a single musical instrument (piano) together with a single voice, as well as the manner in which the two components produce the melody, suggests *shyness* and an *interior* to me. The piano is merely a soothing support for the singing as if it respects the voice. The *rhythm* of the music instrument stays the same through the whole song. The piano accompaniment is not in competition with the voice but softly corroborates what the voice is saying. The *singing sounds like an intimate longing for something that must be cherished*, something that is *brittle and precious*. (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

Elna's initial response suggested that the *embrayage* qualities of movement (towards the centre of narration) as described by Tarasti (1995) mostly informed her meaning-making process. The same musical features that she identified also resonate with the musical gravity (Larson 2006, 2012) that largely plays a role in this song. To this end, she associated the music with shyness and vulnerability and ascribed meaning specifically to the qualities of the singing as 'an intimate longing for something that must be cherished' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). She described how the music suggests movement towards an interior, and as such, she reported how this made her want to protect that which is vulnerable, brittle or precious to her.

She instantly thought of her family (that which is precious and vulnerable to her) and the haven that her home could provide for them. This in turn led her to reflect on two different writings: firstly, a description of the perils

(sadness, regret, doubt and despair) that may befall our children by the author Amoda Maa (2017); and secondly, how the poet Pieter Smit describes, in his poem 'Om stil te word' ['To become quiet'], how he would protect that which is sacred to him: 'ek wens ek kon 'n kraaltjie om jou bou, om jou van ver en leë paadjies weg te hou' ['I wish I could build a fortress around you, to keep you away from distant and empty paths'] (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). But Elna lamented that it is not always possible to protect one's family; later in life, the togetherness that one experiences with them also passes, and inevitably, this is a universal truth that everyone must accept:

'But that family-belonging-together has passed long ago already in the *unavoidable truth of the life cycle* and while longing for the past is a reality, these memories are now stored in the stone jugs of my memory.' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

While Elna also ascribed meaning to the ascending vocal line [*débrayage*] of the introduction, unlike Jean and Marna, she did not ascribe meaning because of its functioning as a sonic anaphone, which, based on his preference for non-depictive writing (Burkholder et al. 2019:734), I would argue was never Fauré's intent. Instead, the same rhythmic, chordal figuration (right-hand accompaniment) that comprises the entire song led her to ascribe its meaning as mundane, followed by the image of the monotony of everyday life in a household. Elna ascribed meaning in this song primarily because of the melodic vocal line, the prosodic elements of the voice and the emotive qualities and expression of Kiri te Kanawa's singing. Similar to Jean, she also ascribed meaning to measure 16 (purely piano accompaniment) because of the properties explained in Table 8.4, and while Jean ascribed its meaning as heavy, Elna perceived a sense of longing in the music.

Other feelings and meanings that Elna associated with the music attributed to the *débrayage* and *embrayage* (Tarasti 1995); the musical gravity (Larson 2006, 2012) and the harmonic changes included the emphasis on a sense of longing, the feeling of asking a question and of sadness. It was interesting to note that when the musical features of risen pitch in the vocal line and the use of decrescendo coalesced, Elna ascribed this as particularly sad. Most notably is the way in which she ascribed meaning to the last few measures of music. As she ascribed most of the song as a sense of longing or searching, the final downward gravitas of the music and ultimate tonic resolution led Elna to ascribe its meaning as 'acceptance' because an 'illusion is broken and the truth has broken through' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). This corresponds completely with Tarasti's (1995) semiotic analysis of the awakening process

**TABLE 8.4:** Elna Venter ascribes musical meaning to Fauré's '*Après un rêve*'.

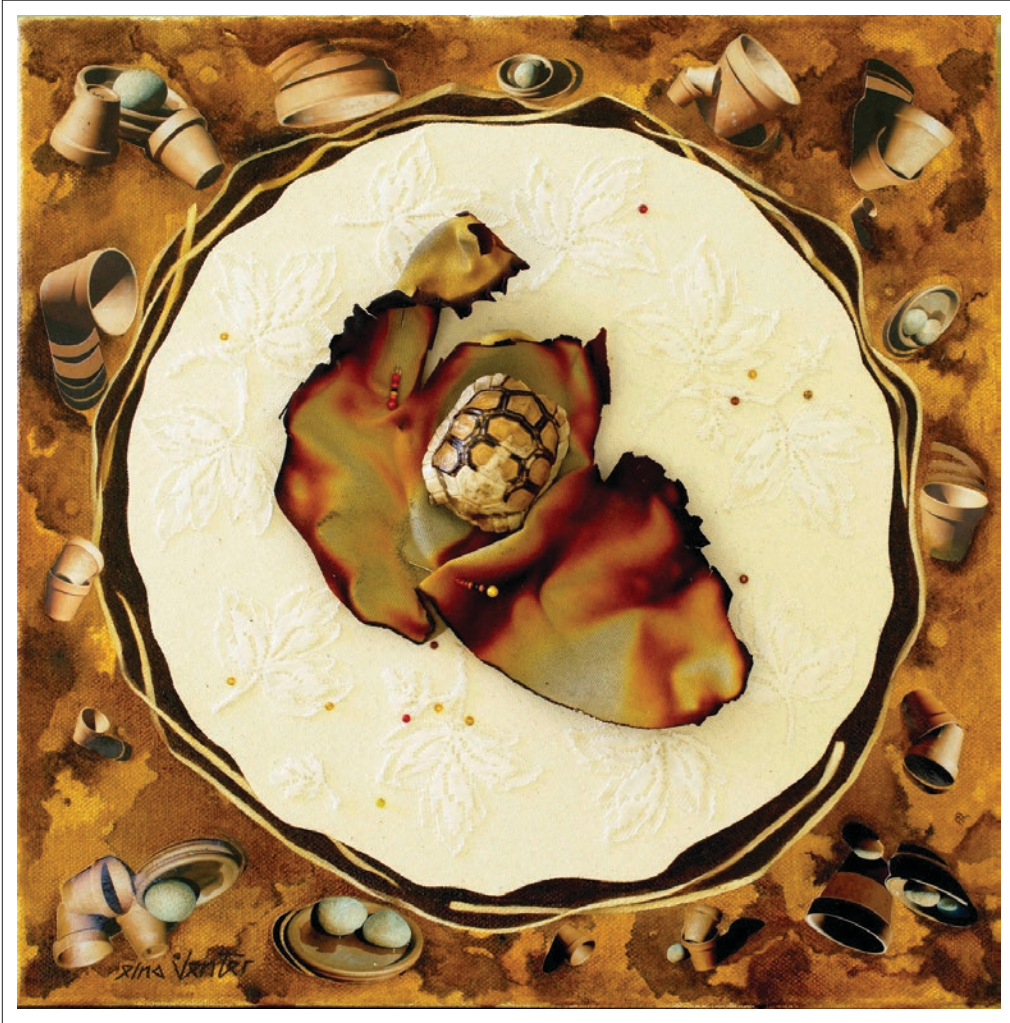
Data from journal	Musical features	Emotive association	Meaning ascribed/ imagery conjured
In the introduction for the first four seconds, the piano plays a rhythm that is maintained throughout the whole song. Does this perhaps signify everyday ('mundane') monotony like the routine of a household? Even though the rhythm stays the same, the pitches change in harmony with the pitches of the singing.	Introduction: Repetitive quaver rhythm of chords in the right hand.  Prosodic elements of the voice (rise and fall of pitch); harmonic changes.	Mundane life, monotony	Routine activity in a household
Singing is the important component of this song. Initially, the voice is introductory, then narrative.	Meaning-making mainly from the voice/ melodic vocal line.		
... 0'45" tender ...	Measures 12-15: Singer's tender caress of the words 'tu rayonnais'. Descending musical gravity and <i>embrayage</i> .		
0'56" longing ...	Measure 16: Dominant (G) seventh chord including suspended notes from the previous Eb harmony. Slight <i>sforzando</i> by the pianist on the first pulse of the measure also emphasising the low register of the piano. The beginning of the measure starts loudly and decrescendos towards the C minor chord in the next measure.		
and at a stage between 1'00" up to 1:24, it sounds as if the voice asks a question.	'Measures 17-23 (second stanza)': <i>Débrayage</i> (move of vocal line away from the centre. Ascent and descent of triplets around G on 'lumière'.		
At 1'50" it feels to me as if there is an angry longing for something that must be heard ...	Measures 28(3)-33(1): C major harmony instead of C minor used that leads up to the vocal exclamation 'Hélas!'		
2'29" the voice is very sad ...	Colour of voice, emotion in sound 'reviens, reviens, radieuse'. Decrescendo in voice while ascending in pitch.		
2'38" eventually acceptance because the illusion is broken and the truth has broken through.	Measures 42(3)-48: Musical gravity, <i>embrayage</i> , lower register of voice, final resolution of the tonic.		

Source: Interview with Elna Venter in 2019, published with permission granted by Elna Venter.

from the dream (the lie) and the uncovering of truth (the awakening), which he describes as follows:

In other words, the 'dream' state of the beginning has remained hidden, as a secret. What happens in the awakening is really the uncovering of the truth, after which the 'night' represented by the 'dream' seems to be a mere lie, albeit a pleasant one, which is asked to return. (p. 445)





Source: Artwork by Elna Venter, published with permission from Elna Venter.

**FIGURE 8.3:** Elna Venter, *I dream of happiness, fervent illusion* [*Ek droom van geluk, vurige illusie*], 2019, mixed media, 35 cm x 35 cm.

Because Elna perceived the style of writing between Fauré's 'Après un rêve' and Berlioz's 'Le spectre de la rose' to be similar, she also used similar elements in her artworks. While she identified that the subtlety and restraint in the French songs were different from the emotional exuberance of Strauss and Schubert's music, she also noted the nuanced difference in each French song. To Elna, the outward movement in Berlioz's song derived from musical inertia and *débrayage* suggested an expansive, unfolding flower; the musical gravity and *embrayage* of Fauré's song elicited a feeling of retreat or movement towards the interior. As a result, Elna depicted the song through mixed media as 'a little tortoise that pulls its head in, sleepily and not suddenly' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019).

## ■ Kevin du Plessis

In his journal, Kevin did not identify specific moments in the music that elicited a certain response as he felt that the way in which emotion was evoked in this song was simple, less complex than the other songs. He stated that it was easier to ascribe meaning while listening to the song in its entirety. In individual sessions, I asked him about the music and together we ascertained which musical features or forces elicited meaning-making responses. After his initial listening of the song and engaging with the music over an extended time, he stated:

'The music starts off rather plainly with only vocals and piano. I felt the singer had a sense of composure. Again my mind goes to *feelings and emotions connected to the past and remembering*. Strong *self-awareness, longing and understanding the pains of the heart*. Sense of *lamenting for something beautiful*. In my artwork I have the model almost like she's *waking up from a deep dream of remembrance*, trying to break through layers of emotions and memories.' (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019)

Although brief, the way in which Kevin documented his meaning-making resonates with the processes of the other artists. He was immediately aware of the simplicity of the song that evoked feelings of nostalgia and deep longing. He also made reference to the awakening moment or understanding phenomenon that Elna referred to as well as the feeling of lamenting for something beautiful. In my discussion with Kevin, he described that the most significant musical features that elicited meaning were the rise in pitch in the vocal line, the harmonic variation and the mood created by both the harmony and the chordal piano accompaniment. He also responded to the emotion that he described as emanating from the singer's voice. Kevin finally described how the descent of the vocal line and the lower registers of the piano made him think of the night, specifically the sensuality associated with the night.



Source: Artwork by Kevin du Plessis, published with permission from Kevin du Plessis.

**FIGURE 8.4:** Kevin du Plessis, *Evocation*, 2019, digital art photography, 21 cm × 29.7 cm, edition size: 5.

Similar to Marna, Kevin also ascribed meaning to the song as a dream; however, while Marna's protagonist in her work sunk into the emotion of the song, Kevin's protagonist was a woman awakening from a 'dream of remembrance' (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019). I would posit that while the elements of musical gravity and *embrayage* highly influenced Elna's portrayal of interior movement in her art, Kevin resonated most with the awakening of the dream as depicted in his art because of his connection to the moments of *débrayage* conveyed in the music through the ascending vocal line and the sequential circle of fifths in the accompaniment. Also, Kevin made sense of the music as 'understanding the pains of the heart', which further connects to Tarasti's (1995) theory of recognising hidden truths. In his artwork, the movement of the woman's face clearly emerges from the gauze as if awakening from a dream. Her eyes and facial expression reveal the pain associated with romantic love as Kevin described. Most of the image is consumed by the gauze that is representative of the dream, from which she emerges. The bareness of her skin below the gauze adds to the sensuality of the overhaul feeling portrayed.

## ■ Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored how four visual artists, namely Marna de Wet, Jean Lampen, Elna Venter and Kevin du Plessis, ascribed meaning to Fauré's 'Après un rêve'. The artists ascribed meaning through the emotions they either perceived or felt as a result of the music's intrinsic musical features, including the prosodic elements of Dame Kiri te Kanawa's voice, the musical forces that govern the compositions and the images that the music evoked. The artists' interpretation and final artworks were informed by their final cognitive appraisals of the perceived or felt emotions elicited and the images evoked from the music.

Although Fauré did not aspire to depict overt emotional displays in his music (Burkholder et al. 2019:734), his music as performed by Kiri te Kanawa and Richard Amner successfully evoked emotion, mood and themes inherent to Bussine's poem in the artists. These include themes of the various aspects of love, 'dreaming in the moonlight' (Taylor 2020:14) and awakening or the uncovering of truth (Tarasti 1995:445). The ways in which the music elicited meaning in the artists include the *débrayage* of the melodic line (Tarasti 1995:440), musical gravity and musical magnetism (Larson 2006, 2012), and for Elna, Jean and Marna, the chordal, repetitive motif of the right hand in the accompaniment manifested as a sonic anaphone also elicited meaning.

Marna ascribed meaning to the repetitive chordal piano accompaniment as something bobbing on water; Jean ascribed the same musical feature as rain falling, and Elna ascribed its meaning as the monotony or mundaneness of everyday life in a household. Marna ascribed meaning to the disengagement of the melodic vocal line from the main as someone searching or longing for a place or person. Elna described her process of meaning-making in response to this song, as deeply owing to the prosodic elements (especially the rise and fall in pitch) of the voice and the singer's ability to convey emotion in the tone of her sound. Elna and Kevin also ascribed the rise and fall of the melodic line (musical magnetism) as a sense of longing and searching. Jean initially perceived sadness in the music, and after listening to the song over an extended period, she would also feel sad herself. She reported these feelings in response to the music that was governed by musical gravity. Marna ascribed the music governed by the forces of musical gravity and magnetism as finding solace in something, sinking away or disappearing into something. Elna ascribed these moments of the song as vulnerability or shyness. Both Kevin and Elna ascribed the beginning of the last stanza as an awakening, and the final descending passages of music governed by musical gravity and magnetism as the acceptance of truth confirming the semiotic analysis by Tarasti (1995).

In the next two chapters, I will explore how these four artists ascribed meaning to two songs from Richard Strauss' *Four last songs*. In the final chapter, I will explore how the ways in which the artists made sense of the music, including the images that were conjured, relate to the literature discussed in Chapter 1.

# Catapulting the soul into ‘the enchanted circle of the night’: Exploring how four artists ascribe meaning to Strauss’ ‘*Beim Schlafengehen*’

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## ■ Introduction

In this chapter, I explore how four visual artists, namely Marna de Wet, Jeans Lampen, Elna Venter and Kevin du Plessis, ascribe meaning to Richard Strauss’ ‘*Beim Schlafengehen*’ and in Chapter 10 to ‘*Im Abendrot*’, the penultimate and final song, respectively, from his *Vier Letzte Lieder* [Four last songs] op. posth. The phenomenon of ascribing meaning to music is complex, and the artists informed the production of visual artworks through the meaning derived from the emotions they either perceived or felt in response to the music and from

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the visual images that the music evoked. While I explore their creative processes in this chapter, I also present the artworks (visual representations of '*Beim Schlafengehen*') as artefacts in which tacit knowledge is embedded, reflecting the phenomenon of ascribing meaning to music. The literature on Strauss, his writing style and the *Four last songs* discussed in the chapter also pertain to the empirical data reflecting how the four artists made sense of '*Im abendrot*', presented in the next chapter. In the last chapter of this book, I will examine how the ways in which they ascribed meaning relate to literature on music and emotion.

In Chapter 5, I discussed the various perspectives on what period in time constituted the Romantic era in music. While some view the mid-19th century as the height of Romanticism in music (Bonds 2006), I concur with those who articulate the span from the mid-18th century up until the early 20th century to be considered as one classic-Romantic period. This is because composers across this timeframe 'shared conventions of harmony, rhythm, and form but differed in how they treated these conventions' (Burkholder, Grout & Palisca 2019:587-588). In the latter half of the 20th century and even until today, composers like Penderecki, Rochberg, Del Tredici, Bernstein, Jake Heggie and Hendrik Hofmeyr, among others, rely on Romantic styles of writing to best convey emotion and meaning in their music (Burkholder et al. 2019; Campbell 1994; Cupido 2009). Richard Strauss (1864-1949) is a composer who is viewed as equally belonging to both the 19th and 20th centuries.

## ■ Richard Strauss, emotion and instrumentation

As Fauré was seen as bridging the art song styles of the late Romantic and Modern eras in France, Strauss can be seen as exemplary of such a link in Germany albeit that their writing styles and ethos in composition were vastly different. In Strauss' earlier compositions, the influence of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert is apparent, and later, his writing style developed, which was greatly influenced by Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz and Bruckner (Burkholder et al. 2019:728). Strauss championed the genres of opera, symphonic poems, art song and the orchestral song as vehicles for the vast capacity he had to express emotion.

Like Berlioz, Strauss also drew from lived experience to portray emotion and meaning in wordless music, especially in the symphonic or tone poem. Such an example is how he captured the emotions he felt in response to his married life. Strauss shared an extraordinary love with his wife, the soprano Pauline de Ahna (1862-1950), and he portrayed the emotions and images of domestic bliss in his *Symphony domestica* (1902-1903). Also, his symphonic poem, '*Ein Heldenleben*' Op. 40 ['A hero's life', 1897-98], is considered to be

autobiographical, and here, he uses motivic ideas and instrumentation to portray characters such as the hero, the hero's 'adversaries' and the hero's 'companion' (Burkholder et al. 2019:729).

In other symphonic poems, Strauss drew on literary works that served as the subject matter portrayed in his music: '*Also sprach Zarathustra*' Op. 30 ['Thus spoke Zarathustra'] is loosely based on a treatise by Friedrich Nietzsche, '*Don Juan*' Op. 20 is inspired by a play by Nicholas Lenau, and *Don Quixote* Op. 35 [subtitled 'Fantastic variations on a theme of knightly character'] depicts the exploits of the title character as written by Cervantes. In these symphonic poems, Strauss makes use of musical ideas – including melody, rhythm and harmony – and instrumentation to intentionally and explicitly convey meaning, extra-musical ideas and emotion. In doing so, he embraces Idealism, one of the main epithets of Romanticism: reflecting the ideas of the mind in objects, in this case, reflecting those ideas in music (Bonds 2006:391).

Two composers featured in this research, namely Berlioz and Strauss, left an indelible mark on the development and understanding of instrumentation and orchestration. In 1844, Berlioz first published the *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* [*Treatise on instrumentation and orchestration*] where he described the technical aspects and unique properties (such as tone colour and range) of instruments and specifically how they can be used to create a larger palette for emotional expressivity in the orchestra (Berlioz & Strauss 1948). One example of how Berlioz describes the association between specific instrumental colour and the depiction of emotion is evident in his description of the choice of the flute used to convey emotion in Gluck's *Orfeo* (Berlioz & Strauss 1948):

[I]f one desires to give an expression of desolation to a sad melody, combined with a feeling of humility and resignation, the weak medium tones of the flute, especially in C# minor and D minor, will certainly produce the intended effect. As far as I know, only one master knew how to avail himself of this pale tone colour, Gluck. When listening to the D minor melody of the pantomime in the Elysian-Fields scene in *Orfeo*, one is immediately convinced that only a flute could play this melody appropriately [...]. Moreover, Gluck's melody is conceived in such a way that the flute can follow every impulse of this eternal grief, still imbued with the passions of earthly life. (p. 228)

It is apparent that Berlioz intentionally used the tonal colour provided by various instruments to convey mood, emotion or poetic ideas. Similarly, Strauss also revered the extended palette afforded by the use of specific orchestral instrumental colour. In 1905, Strauss was asked to expand upon Berlioz's treatise, and in doing so, he added several new instruments, not only increasing the orchestra's size but also its ability to convey non-musical ideas (Hollis 2009):

By the end of the nineteenth-century and into the twentieth-century, works often featured massive orchestrations with huge brass sections as well as triple or quadruple woodwind sections. Instead of a means to simply increase the sound,



Strauss viewed the larger orchestra as a means to a more varied tonal palette, a more intense harmonic expressiveness, and the chance for a richer background to solo instruments. The larger orchestra, which exploited the more highly developed instruments, was also able to satisfy composers' desire for a more descriptive means to depict characters, ideals, and emotions. (pp. 7-8)

As mentioned in previous chapters, neo-Romanticists like Penderecki, Rochberg, Del Tredici and Hofmeyr, among others, rejected avant-garde means of musical writing as they found that the Romantic treatment of melody, harmony and rhythm was essential in conveying meaning in their music (Campbell 1994; Cupido 2009). The ways in which composers use these facets of musical structure to best convey meaning and emotion are exemplified in Strauss' orchestral songs. Strauss combined dramatic, impassioned writing and lyricism in his vocal lines while astutely supporting the voice through richly textured orchestral accompaniment. By understanding tonal colour, Strauss effectively used instrumentation in combination with melody, harmony and rhythm to convey poetic ideas, mood and emotion (Hollis 2009):

One of Strauss's trademarks as a composer is his use of melody, harmony, rhythm, and instrumental colouring to portray extra-musical ideas. The selection of instrumentation is critical in giving these compositional elements a particular colour or in producing special effects. The timbre of an instrument enhances the poetry by establishing or depicting a change in character, thought, or mood. Instrumental timbre can also be used to clarify voice leading as well as clarify sections of a piece. Specific expressive qualities or characteristics render one instrument more appropriate than another for creating special effects or for evoking certain moods or feelings. (p. 8)

## ■ ***Vier Letzte Lieder* [Four last songs]** **Op. posth.**

The quintessential trademark of Strauss' compositional techniques as expressed by Deborah Hollis (2009) coalesces in what is arguably Strauss' finest example of the orchestral song genre, his *Four last songs*. The songs '*Frühling*' ['Spring'], '*September*', '*Beim Schlafengehen*' ['While going to sleep'] and '*Im abendrot*' ['At sunset'] comprise this group of songs composed for soprano and orchestra between 1946 and 1948, 1 year prior to Strauss' death, and the sentiments expressed in these songs convey that 'of a person who faces death without regret' (Cameron-Mickens 2005:31). The songs were published posthumously in 1950 as a unit, and in the same year, its premier performance was delivered by Kirsten Flagstad, accompanied by the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler and the Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall in London (Burkholder et al. 2019).

In these songs, Strauss' love of nature comes to the fore, and he uses the seasons as a metaphor for the various stages in one's life, especially as

experienced by a couple in love. Strauss was first intrigued by Joseph von Eichendorff's poem, '*Im Abendrot*', because its subject matter deeply resonated with him and reminded him of his relationship with his wife; subsequently, he set this poem to music first in May of 1948 (Jackson 1992). The three remaining poems that comprise the song cycle were penned by Herman Hesse. Before its premiere, Ernst Roth, the chief editor of Boosey & Hawkes and close friend of Strauss, determined that a suitable progression of the songs as a cycle would be '*Frühling*', '*September*', '*Beim Schlafengehen*' and, finally, '*Im Abendrot*'. The latter two songs represent the earlier stages of one's life together with one's partner, and the latter two songs depict the end, as well as the ultimate acceptance of death, or to put it otherwise 'a logical progression from the descent to sleep and to the final transformation' (Cameron-Mickens 2005:85).

To capture themes of death, love, acceptance, and tranquillity prevalent in the songs, Strauss employed melody, harmony, rhythms and tonal colour derived from a vast selection of instruments in the orchestra. He scored the songs for piccolo, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets in B $\flat$  and A, bass clarinet, three bassoons (the third doubling on contrabassoon), four horns in F (also E $\flat$  and D), three trumpets in C, E $\flat$  and F, three trombones, tuba, timpani, harp, celesta and strings (Strauss 1950). In addition to the colours afforded by the orchestra, the poetic ideas made explicit in the text are propelled through the arching, undulating melodies and melismas of the vocal line.

A melisma, or group of notes expressively sung together on one syllable, is often associated with the technically demanding *coloratura* and *fioritura* passages of Baroque, classical, or *bel canto* music. However, Strauss did not employ melismas in such a virtuoso display of rapid, quick-firing bravura. Instead, his melismas extended syllables from two or more words of poetry over the course of three to six measures, employing 'unusual melodic contours, acrobatic vocal leaps, and sweeping melodic climaxes' and extensively featured 'agogic stress and syncopations' (Cameron-Mickens 2005:abstract).

While syncopation is a commonly understood musical feature, agogic accents are not as frequently prevalent in music discourse. In the literature, agogic accents are described as accents 'created by duration rather than by loudness or metrical position' (Randel 2003:26). Agogic accents and syncopations are rhythmic features that also coalesce to form a musical phenomenon prevalent in the first three songs of Strauss's '*Four Last Songs*' ['*Beim Schlafengehen*'] known as '*Schwung*'. In her doctoral thesis, Vertrelle Cameron-Mickens described '*schwung*' as a 'salient feature in Strauss's melismas that creates dramatic, sweeping phrases' and she further asserted that '[m]elodies containing "*schwung*" are often sustained in the high tessitura above G $\sharp$ 5 through use of agogic accent' (Cameron-Mickens 2005:3).

By employing this device, Strauss was able to musically convey heightened emotional meaning explicit in the poetry, through the expressively sung melodic lines. This is because the buoyancy and energy associated with *Schwung* are capable of soliciting an 'ecstatic type of vocal delivery' (Petersen 1986:47). In the *Four last songs*, the melismatic passages that employ *Schwung* form part of the final cadential material of '*Frühling*', 'September' and '*Beim Schlafengehen*' (Cameron-Mickens 2005:4). Susan Wanless (1984) also affirmed Strauss' propensity for using melismas in a fashion that assists in word painting. Wanless (1984) stated that:

[G]enerally the melismatic sections are those where he wishes to give emphasis to the vocal line and there are extensive passages where he treats the words in a highly expansive way, usually to word paint. (p. 43)

In Chapter 3, Jaco Meyer described the forces that govern music and how they play a role in eliciting meaning among listeners. *Musical inertia* (musical patterns that repeat until a resolution is reached), *musical magnetism* (unstable tones that ascend and descend in pitch to the next stable tone and unstable beats that move forward to the nearest stable beat) and *musical gravity* (unstable tones that descend in pitch towards a stable tone and metrically unstable tones that moves downwards, regardless of pitch stability) have played significant roles in how people – including the artists in this study – attribute meaning to music (Larson 2006, 2012). Furthermore, Meyer has also accounted for how musical gravity conjures connections and associations to the night. Cameron-Mickens (2005) and Hollis (2009) reiterated how Strauss utilised the female lower register in the *Four last songs* to convey meaning associated with the night. Cameron-Mickens (2005) stated that:

Strauss exploits the low-middle vocal range from C4 to C5 to convey poetic ideas representing descent into sleep or transitions from day to night [...] this technique of word painting captures the mood and emphasizes the poetry. (p. 5)

## ■ Pauline de Ahna

When one considers whether a composer intentionally decides to convey non-musical ideas in their writing, one is often led to explore their sources of inspiration. For Hector Berlioz, his tumultuous relationships, especially his relationship with the actress Harriet Smithson, provided the source of emotion and extra-musical ideas that he made explicit in his works such as *Symphonie fantastique* Op. 14 and the song cycle, *Les nuits d'été* [*Summer nights*] Op. 7 (Bonds 2006). Similarly, Strauss' wife, the German operatic soprano Pauline de Ahna (1863–1950), was the source of inspiration for many of his *Lieder*, some of which he later orchestrated for her; however, their relationship was far from the tumultuous anguish that Berlioz experienced. As mentioned previously, the domestic bliss Strauss experienced with his wife was reflected

in his symphonic poem, *Symphony domestica* Op. 53. In his wife, Strauss not only found the source of inspiration for several of his songs but also found an interpreter for his songs, and the timbre and prosodic elements of her unique sound became a vehicle for the emotion he wanted to convey. Norman Del Mar confirmed that in Pauline de Ahna, 'Strauss had found not only his life partner, but his ideal interpreter in one person, and during the next years the songs poured from his pen' (Del Mar 1986:22).

On their wedding day, 10 September 1894, Strauss presented his wife with four love songs, '*Vier Lieder*', Op. 27 that depicted his intense deep love for her. Later in September 1897, he orchestrated two of these songs, '*Cäcilie*' and '*Morgen!*' for her to sing (Hollis 2009:7). Although none of the songs that comprise the *Four last songs* were explicitly dedicated to Pauline, these songs convey the happiness of a loving couple who share significant life experiences and are at peace with the fact that death is approaching. In these songs, Strauss also conveyed his love of nature (Cameron-Mickens 2005):

*Vier Letzte Lieder* expresses many of the sentiments Strauss experienced in his relationship with his wife, Pauline de Ahna, his love of nature, and a peaceful acceptance of death. He ended his musical life as it had begun, composing lieder that reflected his impressions of life, love, and nature. (p. 1)

For this study, I tasked the artists to present visual representations of how they made sense of two songs from Strauss' *Four last songs*, '*Beim Schlafengehen*' and '*Im abendrot*', without an understanding of the text. The ways in which they ascribed meaning to these songs were derived from the emotions and extra-musical ideas they perceived in the music.

## ■ '*Beim Schlafengehen*' ['While going to sleep']

The third song in Strauss' *Four last songs* sees the poem by Herman Hesse (1877-1962) set to music.

In the third volume of his series of books concerning Richard Strauss, Norman Del Mar posited the similarities between the lives of Hesse and Strauss (cited in Del Mar 1986). The poem was penned during the First World War when both men suffered severe personal distress: Hesse had witnessed his wife's declining mental health and Strauss suffered both personally and professionally because of the Nazi regime (Del Mar 1986:463). Both men sought an ultimate escape from their worldly woes and death (represented by the night) provided this for them (Cameron-Mickens 2005):

They shared a weariness of the soul expressed in the desire to depart from sorrows by taking refuge in the night and transformation into death. The poetry speaks of the desire for sleep and a release from worldly care. (p. 35)

**TABLE 9.1:** The poem *'Beim Schlafengehen'* [*'While going to sleep'*] by Herman Hesse and translated by Emily Ezust.

<b>'Beim Schlafengehen'</b>	<b>'While going to sleep'</b>
<i>Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,</i>	Now that the day has made me so tired,
<i>Soll mein sehnlisches Verlangen</i>	my dearest longings shall
<i>Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht</i>	be accepted kindly by the starry night
<i>Wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.</i>	like a weary child.
<i>Hände, laßt von allem Tun,</i>	Hands, cease your activity,
<i>Stirn vergiß du alles Denken,</i>	head, forget all of your thoughts;
<i>Alle meine Sinne nun</i>	all my senses now
<i>Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.</i>	will sink into slumber.
<i>Und die Seele unbewacht</i>	And my soul, unobserved,
<i>Will in freien Flügen schweben,</i>	will float about on untrammelled wings
<i>Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht</i>	in the enchanted circle of the night,
<i>Tief und tausendfach zu leben.</i>	living a thousandfold more deeply.

Source: Ezust (n.d.), reprinted with permission from the LiederNet Archive.

Jackson (1992) confirmed that:

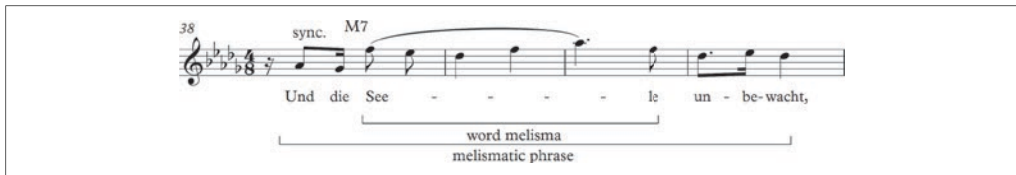
[I]n the first two stanzas of *'Beim Schlafengehen'*, the narrator expresses a wish to die; the third stanza describes the flight of the soul into the realm of death, represented by the night sky. (p. 99)

The representation of the night as death is a common theme inherent to Romantic music, literature and visual art as Romantics often yearned for solace, not found within the confounds of life (or daytime); the night (death) provided the ultimate escape from their suffering (Kravitt 1992:102). Hesse described this longing most adeptly in the final stanza of his poem as he stated 'And my soul, unobserved, will float about on untrammelled wings in the enchanted circle of the night, living a thousandfold more deeply' (Ezust n.d.).

*'Beim Schlafengehen'* can be divided into three sections (Wanless 1984): an introduction beginning in the lower registers of the strings followed by the voice where the singer describes their weary soul and longing for death (the starry night); the second stanza (also included as part of the first section) conveys the desire to stop all activity and surrender to the eternal slumber. The second part of the song features an orchestral interlude with a prominent violin solo. I would posit that this interlude can be interpreted as a peaceful acceptance of the end of one's life as the thematic material pre-empts the textual message conveyed in the third section. In the third section, the singer conveys the desire for their soul to soar above into the night (in essence longing for death) escaping all earthly woes. The escape or flight from these earthly woes is evident in the text of the third section of this song and is musically introduced to the listener through Strauss's use of melismas that

contain wide intervallic leaps of sixths and sevenths all contributing to the phenomenon of *Schwung*.

The first melisma is introduced in measure 38 (Figure 9.1), and here, Strauss musically word paints the upward trajectory of the soul [*die Seele*] through the rise in pitch in the melodic contour of the melisma. The rise in pitch on ‘*Seele*’ is accompanied by an exuberant crescendo in the orchestra, propelled by ascending scale passages in cellos and ascending triplet figurations in the upper strings.



Source: Original music by Strauss (1950:38–39). The figure was compiled by Conroy Cupido, published with permission from Conroy Cupido.

**FIGURE 9.1:** ‘*Beim Schlafengehen*’: ‘*Und die Seele unbewacht*’ (mm. 38–41).

Cameron-Mickens (2005:72) called what I describe as the third section of music as the second, incorporating the orchestral interlude into the first section. My preference to keep the interlude separate as a section stems from the transitory link it provides, connecting the first and third sections. In my opinion, it belongs to neither, but rather musically affirms the emotion and mood generated in the first section and melodically introduces the listener to the idea of the ascending soul. Cameron-Mickens (2005) further described the harmonies that underpin these measures and indicated how longer note values together with the rise in pitch and the harmonies coalesce to represent the soul ascending from the human body into the night:

The second section begins with the melisma ‘*Und die Seele unbewacht*’ and exhibits a soaring quality with an ascending M7 interval from G $\flat$  (4)<sup>32</sup> to F (5), seen in measure 38, which conveys the liberation of the soul in its ascent to the heavens. Quarter-note values in 4/8 time contribute to the sustained nature of this phrase. A gradual ascent to the climax on A $\flat$  (5), beat 1 of measure 40, is followed by a soaring contour that outlines the D $\flat$  triad in measures 40–41. (p. 72)

Subsequent, successive melismas occur from measures 42–58 (Figure 9.2), and in the first part, the rising and falling melodic contour especially emphasise the words ‘*freien*’ [freely], ‘*flügen*’ [to fly] and ‘*schweben*’ [soar] that affirm how ‘melismas paint the text with movement symbolic of the soul’s release from its earthly body’ (Cameron-Mickens 2005:74). Strauss also delineated each successive melisma by disrupting the musical inertia created through the repetitive patterns of each melisma by clearly indicating sudden drops in

32. The numbers 4 and 5 next to the names of each note indicate their pitch or octave designation in American Standard Pitch Notation.

volume (*subito pianissimo*) in measures 49, 53 and 57 before the next pattern or melisma begins. In doing so, Strauss introduced many moments where the listener could potentially make meaning of the music by the way each melisma starts, stops and restarts.

Source: Original music by Strauss (1950:39–42). The figure was compiled by Conroy Cupido, published with permission from Conroy Cupido.

**FIGURE 9.2:** Successive melismas in 'Beim Schlafengehen' (mm. 42–58).

In measure 52, the melody in the vocal line plummets down a major ninth from an E $\flat$  (5) to D $\flat$  (4) representing the night ('*der Nacht*'). Although Strauss employed upward moving melismas and intervals to indicate the trajectory of the soul towards the night, the concept of the night in itself is represented through a downward melodic drop. The actual descent is emphasised even more as Strauss preceded the drop with a major seventh leap that moves upwards and finishes the melisma on the word '*Zauberkreis*' [magic circle]. Strauss also used musical gravity to musically bring meaning to the idea of 'living a thousandfold more deeply' in the 'enchanted circle of the night', emphasising that only in death can true peace be found. He wrote the melisma on the word '*tief*' [deep] in a descending line and in the lower register of the female voice, where a singer would be able to add beauty and colour and evoke meaning through the use of the chest register and the prosodic elements of the voice, such as pitch, volume, the length of the sound and the quality or timbre of the voice.

Strauss concluded this song with a cadential melisma as he did in the first two songs. The syncopated rhythms that precede the large interval leaps in measures 53 and 56 induce the phenomenon of *Schwung* in the music, which further affords the listener potential meaning-making moments. Cameron-Mickens (2005) described these musical features and recounted how Strauss borrowed motivic material from the second song, *September*, reaffirming the idea of impending death:

Consistent with his approach to the cadence in the first two songs in *Vier Letzte Lieder*, Strauss concludes '*Beim Schlafengehen*' with yet another cadential melisma. The word melisma on '*tief*' (deep) is derived from the 'death of the garden motive'

first heard in *September*. This is the only example of a motivic use common to two different songs in this cycle. The melisma is placed in the lower range where the singer can colour the voice with rich tone quality. Strauss again relies upon the interval of a M7 to elevate the voice to the upper tessitura and the conclusion of '*Beim Schlafengehen*'. (p. 76)

For the purposes of this study, I presented the four artists with a recording of Renée Fleming singing '*Beim Schlafengehen*' under the baton of Christian Thielemann and the Münchner Philharmoniker performed in 2008. In the following section, I will present data articulating how the artists made sense of the music without an understanding of the text.

## ■ Inspiring visual art through meaning derived from Strauss' '*Beim Schlafengehen*'

### ■ Marna de Wet

In her journal, Marna accounted for how she made sense of the music as follows:

'The first time that I listened to the music my feeling was that it begins dramatically with violins which makes me think of a veil being lifted. Something is exposed or shown. I get a feeling of longing, happiness and passion. A longing for the night perhaps? The music is epic and makes me think of two lovers at the end of a film who ride away or sail away and then 'The End' appears. After I listened a number of times again, it made me think of sleep, dreaming, a bed, the moon, stars, dark, light, soft, and rest, an ode to the night I wrote down. The music becomes more restful at the end like someone falling asleep or drowsing off. There is a pause in the music and then the dramatic ending, there the night swallows her and she sleeps.' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019)

After conducting an interview with Marna where I sought to examine the phenomenon of how she ascribed meaning to the music without an understanding of the text, I probed concerning specific moments in the music that elicited meaning-making. Besides the ways in which Marna described how she made sense of the music in her journal, she also identified three distinct places in the music that elicited meaning-making and described it as follows:

1. (1'57" of the recording: the beginning of the orchestral interlude and violin solo): The violins repeat the start as if the night answers on what she said or asked. Come crawl into me and become lost in me.
2. (3'17" of the recording: the voice enters '*und die Seele unbewacht*' followed by successive melismas): She answers.
3. (5'20" of the recording: the orchestral postlude): She falls asleep.

Besides the initial emotions and feelings of longing, happiness and passion that Marna perceived in the music that led to imagery of the night, a bed and two lovers driving away at the end of a movie, Marna also made sense of the



music as 'soft, safe, enfolded and snug' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). While she initially only perceived emotion in response to the music, after a prolonged engagement she also felt a physiological response to the music that resulted in feelings of nostalgia. The image that Marna wanted to present in her painting was that of a bed that is often used, something comfortable where lovers long to go after a hard day of work, to either experience passion with each other or to rest.

**TABLE 9.2:** The emotions perceived and imagery evoked in Marna de Wet's meaning-making process.

Emotions/feelings perceived	Imagery evoked
Longing, happiness and passion	A veil being lifted, something exposed, a longing for the night, lovers riding away (at the end of a movie)
Being sleepy, tranquillity, being safe, encapsulated, snug	sleep, dreaming, a bed, the moon, stars, dark, light, soft and rest, an ode to the night, a woman being swallowed by the night, a comfortable bed that is constantly used (for passion and rest)

Source: Interview with Marna de Wet in 2019, published with permission granted by Marna de Wet.

In Figure 9.3, the texture of the blanket is tangible, and the unmade bed and colour palette also contribute to the safety, tranquillity and lived-in feeling that she wished to convey. If one would continue the lines of the sides of the bed, it would resolve in a vanishing point that has an upward trajectory. Similarly, the shape of the headboard also draws attention upwards. The visual imagery, therefore, correlates with the upward trajectory or the soul as depicted in the melismas of Strauss' final stanza of *'Beim Schlafengehen'*.

## ■ Jean Lampen

In previous chapters, I described how Jean ascribed meaning to all five songs, finding similarities and differences and visualising the wolf and sheep as the chosen characters that would convey the emotion she both perceived and felt in response to the music. Initially, after listening to *'Beim Schlafengehen'*, Jean made sense of the music as sad and threatening. Three distinct sections also stood out for Jean (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019):

1. The introduction and the first two stanzas of the song, which she described as 'slow, the orchestra sounds threatening' and the music also being 'dark, deep, serious'.
2. The solo violin section, which she ascribed as sad and lonely.
3. The voice entering again (*melismas*), which she described as more dramatic.

After a longer engagement with the music while listening to it over and over, the emotions and feelings that Jean initially perceived were intensified. She then began to make meaning of the music through the imagery evoked and her cognitive appraisals of how the imagery coalesced with the emotions evoked. Jean once again described the first section of the song as sad and ominous, and as the dynamics intensified and the orchestra sound 'swelled',



Source: Artwork by Marna de Wet, published with permission from Marna de Wet.

**FIGURE 9.3:** Marna de Wet, *Sluimer* [*Sluimer*], 2019, oil on board, 50 cm × 40 cm.

she perceived the music as more threatening (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019). The image that came to mind was of a solitary wolf, feeling sad and threatened. Similar to Marna, the orchestral interlude and solo violin also served as a vehicle for meaning-making.

Jean identified 1'58" in the recording (the beginning of the interlude) as a meaning-making moment and made sense of the music as an 'echo of a story'; she found the music extremely compelling and visualised a 'crying woman' overwrought with loneliness (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019). She then identified the melismas in the music and ascribed them as a call or cry from somebody who longs to be comforted. Finally, she identified the orchestral postlude and made sense of the music as conveying the image of someone being alone again. She described the music as an 'orchestral echo of a feeling of sadness' (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019).

The image Jean conjured that captured the emotion and imagery described above was of a solitary wolf in human clothes, looking upwards towards a hand from which blood is dripping. Once again the upward trajectory of the melismas of the third stanza of music and the musical inertia caused by the repetition of these melismas can visually be seen in the upward gaze of the wolf.

**TABLE 9.3:** The emotions and imagery evoked in Jean Lampen's meaning-making process.

Emotions/Feelings perceived and felt	Imagery conjured
Sad, threatening, ominous, dark, serious, lonely	A sad, lonely, solitary wolf, a crying woman overwrought with loneliness, someone longing to be comforted

Source: Interview with Jean Lampen in 2019, published with permission granted by Jean Lampen.

## ■ Elna Venter

After listening to the *'Beim Schlafengehen'* for the first time, Elna journaled the following listening experience:

'The song sounded like a dialogue between music and the singing voice from the first time that I listened to it as if the music is one person and the singing another. The song also reminded me of Madonna's song *This used to be my (our) playground* in which the loss of something beautiful is depicted. Thus, for me, it is about two women (sisters in a photo frame) who have a deep longing for their shared past, the house in which they grew up, the terrain where they played together and that a split came that needed to be thrashed out or resolved. This work took me back to my own past where my sister and I grew up on a farm and were nurtured by parents and family. Not only did this physical place disappear but also the togetherness and our lives drifted apart.' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

**TABLE 9.4:** The emotions and imagery evoked in Elna Venter's initial meaning-making process.

Emotions/Feelings initially aroused	Imagery conjured
Loss of something beautiful, deep longing for a shared past	Dialogue between two women (sisters) who grew up together and then separated

Source: Interview with Elna Venter in 2019, published with permission granted by Elna Venter.



Source: Artwork by Jean Lampen, published with permission from Jean Lampen.

**FIGURE 9.4:** Jean Lampen, *In the magic circle of the night*, 2019, pen and ink watercolour, 74 cm x 54 cm.

After a prolonged engagement with the music, Elna ascribed meaning in detail to specific points in the recorded song as seen in Table 9.5.

**TABLE 9.5:** Elna Venter ascribes meaning to Strauss' '*Beim Schlafengehen*'.

Identified moment in recording/musical features	Ascribed meaning
Orchestral introduction (first four measures)	Music (first person) begins as if dark message is brought.
0'25" (m. 5, 'Now that the day has made me so tired') Voice enters parallel to the descending first violin melodic line (musical gravity).	Singing (second person) falls in on the same pitch as if agreeing and aware of message [...] my soul also restless [...] asks rebuking [...] what happened, where you were?
0'58" (m. 11): F major chord in the strings followed by a syncopated vocal entrance on 'the starry night'.	Other music instrument that sounds as if it nods, agreeing with the singing.
1'58"-3'14" (mm. 24-38): Orchestral interlude and solo violin marked ' <i>sehr ruhig</i> ' [very peaceful]; syncopation and agogic stress in strings.	Violin (first person) reserved and explains her side of the matter, what happened [...] how she felt violated [...] requests mitigation and forgiveness.
3'36-4'07" (mm. 42-49): Successive melismas in vocal line; syncopation, agogic stress, <i>subito pianissimo</i> , musical inertia created.	Singing (second person) echoes melody of the violin, in other words understands, but more forcefully, at this stage the stronger person.
4'12'-4'45" (mm. 50-56): Syncopated entrance of celesta and woodwinds; descending melodic line, major seventh leap upwards followed by major ninth drop down on 'the night'. Musical gravity and chest voice colour.	New sound in music (first person) as if relieved that she is being accepted.
4'46" to end (mm. 56-70): Renée Fleming, purposefully changes Strauss' score, breaks up melisma on ' <i>tausendfach</i> ' [a thousandfold] repeating the word. Syncopation, agogic accents and <i>Schwung</i> created on measures 53 and 56. In the final measures the melody, harmonies and rhythms become more peaceful towards the final cadence.	Singing and music grow and come together: there is a togetherness between two sisters. The music and singing exult together to celebrate reunification, variety of sounds and instruments.

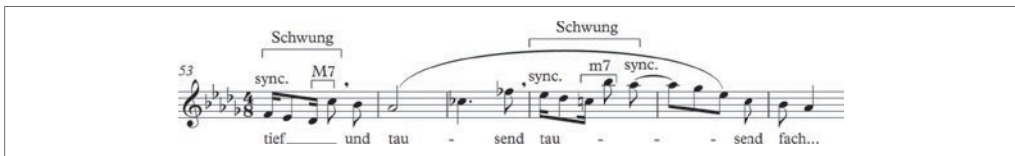
Source: Interview with Elna Venter in 2019, published with permission granted by Elna Venter.

Elna's prolonged engagement with the music evidences how various musical features resulted in meaning-making moments. The syncopated rhythms presented in the lower strings of the opening measures were repeated as a pattern in the upper strings, resulting in musical inertia. Also, darker colours emanating from the lower registers of the strings coalesced with the musical inertia, culminating in Elna's feeling that a dark message was being delivered. A few measures later, the descending vocal line that enters parallel to the melody in the violins prompted Elna to ascribe the presence of a second person. Instantly, the song became a dialogue between two people for her, which she later ascribed as sisters.

Throughout the song, Strauss' use of syncopated rhythms and agogic stress elicited meaning for Elna. This phenomenon was intensified during the successive melismas sung by Fleming from measures 42-49. Notably, this specific meaning-making occurrence started with the melismas that begin on '*Will in freien Flügen schweben*' ['will soar, flying freely'] and not when the voice enters after the orchestral interlude on '*Und die Seele unbewacht*' ['and my soul unobserved']. This could be attributed to the various musical features that coalesce in measures 42-49 including four successive melismas, strong syncopated rhythms, sudden soft dynamic markings (*subito pianissimo*) and the musical inertia (resulting from the repeated patters) that drives

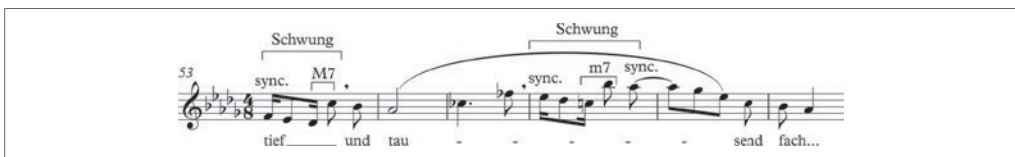
this section. On two occasions, Elna identified two musical moments that correlate directly with the poem's reference to the night: 'the starry night' and the soul's ascension to the night (death and transfiguration).

In the first instance, this was achieved through the isolation of the orchestra resulting from a delayed, syncopated entry in the voice; the second instance was evoked through musical gravity, when the voice suddenly dropped a major ninth in pitch. Renée Fleming artistically adapts Strauss' score to facilitate better breath control, which in turn also provides an opportunity for meaning-making. In measures 55 and 56, she sings 'tausend, tausendfach' (see Figure 9.5) restating 'tausend' and observing the breath at the end of measure 55, instead of propelling the [a] of 'tausendfach' across measures 54-58 (see Figure 9.6). This artistic choice has also been employed before by singers like Jessye Norman and Lucia Popp, while other sopranos like Kiri te Kanawa and Elizabeth Schwarzkopf have made similar allowances, instead of repeating the word 'tief' and beginning 'tausendfach' in measure 56. This allowance afforded Fleming, and the other sopranos, the necessary breath control and stamina to carry the emotional intensity into measures 56 and 57 that created the *Schwung* phenomenon and elicited meaning for Elna. It was at this point that Elna ascribed the pinnacle of her story: the reunion or 'togetherness' of the estranged sisters.



Source: Original music by Strauss (1950:54-58). The figure was compiled by Conroy Cupido, published with permission by Conroy Cupido.

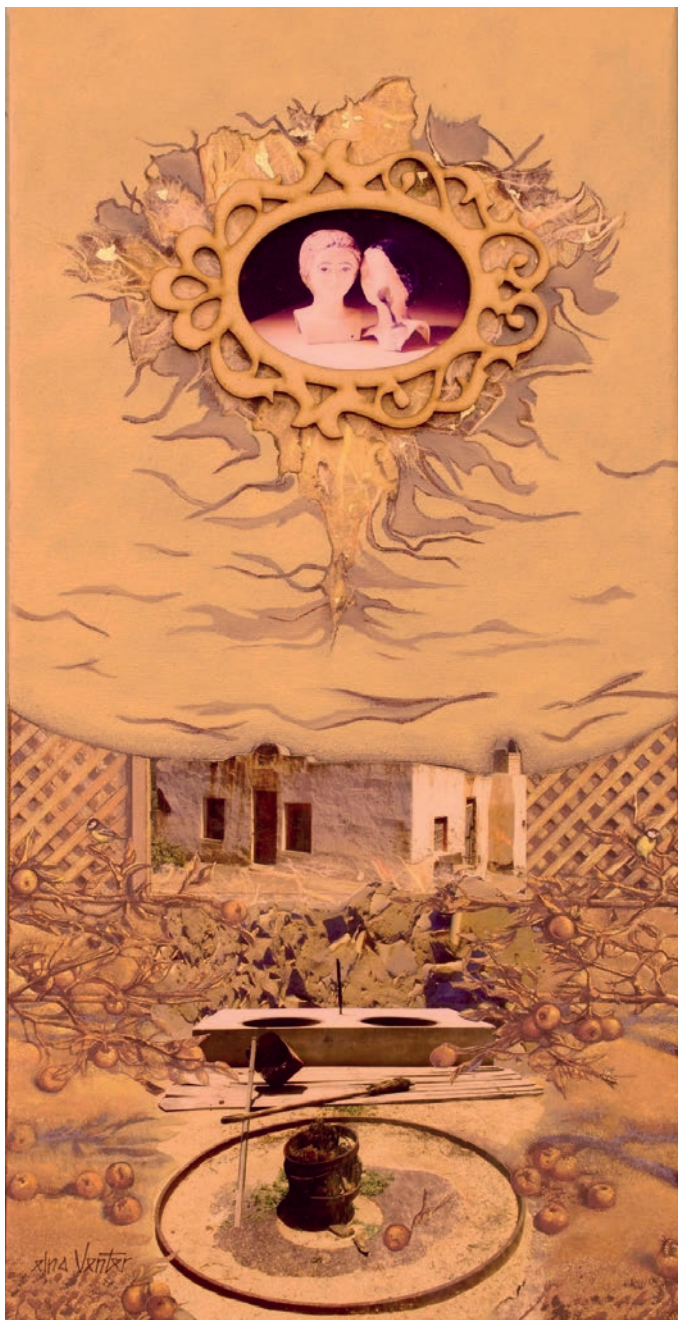
**FIGURE 9.5:** Renée Fleming's interpretation of the melisma 'tausend, tausendfach' in measures 54-58 of 'Beim Schlafengehen'.



Source: Original music by Strauss (1950:54-58). The figure was compiled by Conroy Cupido, published with permission by Conroy Cupido.

**FIGURE 9.6:** Strauss' original setting of the melisma on 'tausendfach' (mm. 54-58).

Elna also likened the feeling or emotions she felt to feelings she feels when listening to the song, 'This used to be my playground' by Madonna. Madonna's song references a longing for a beautiful relationship that is now lost. Madonna's song also mentions that life is short (implying that death is inevitable) and calls for a hopeful, reunion of the two characters. Elna also drew from her own lived experiences, especially regarding her own relationship



Source: Artwork by Elna Venter, published with permission by Elna Venter.

**FIGURE 9.7:** Elna Venter, *Arduous desire [Gretige verlange]*, 2019, mixed media, 25 cm x 50 cm.

with her sister, and these experiences informed her meaning-making process and the emotions and images that were evoked from the music. Elna ultimately ascribed meaning to *'Beim Schlafengehen'* as a dialogue between two sisters who were estranged and sought to forgive each other and reunite as family. This is evident in the tacit knowledge that is found in her artefact.

In Elna's artwork, the house represented the longing experienced by both sisters for the shared happiness that they once knew before they were estranged. Once again the ascending trajectory of the successive melismas from measure 42 is evident in the detailed paintwork that moves up from the house leading to the image of the two sisters in the photo frame who are then reunited (as Elna ascribed in response to the final *Schwung* occurring on *'tausendfach'*). In the image, the grey areas of paint surrounding the sisters allude to the loss of something beautiful and the sisters' longing for happier times, and the flecks of gold in the grey areas connote the happiness and togetherness that they experience after their reunion. Elna's interpretation of the musical features inherent to the song strongly relates to the idea that one can achieve solace, repose or what one has longed for after a critical barrier is overcome. In Elna's case, the barrier was the struggle and resolution of the sisters' differences (the successive melismas) that resulted in their reunion, allowing them to forgive and embrace each other again; and in Hesse's poem, the barrier is death, from whence one can attain eternal solace after the transfiguration of the soul.

## ■ Kevin du Plessis

When Kevin listened to *'Beim Schlafengehen'*, he immediately made sense of the music as nostalgic and experienced a sense of longing. Both the orchestral interlude that included the violin solo and the successive melismas in the voice (section three) served to elicit intense meaning-making moments for Kevin. He also reported that upon completion of listening to the song for the first time, he was left with a feeling of positivity.

**TABLE 9.6:** Kevin du Plessis ascribes meaning to Strauss' *'Beim Schlafengehen'*.

Music/Music features that evoked meaning	Ascribed meaning
Introduction: musical inertia of violins, lower register colour of strings	The song starts off with a feeling of nostalgia, perhaps looking back on memories, longing.
Musical gravity of vocal line, prosodic elements of the voice.	When the singing starts I interpreted the sounds as passionate and deep but not morbid. Perhaps a feeling of searching for answers to questions of the heart.
Orchestral Interlude (Violin solo), latter part introduces melodic material (melismas) of the third section of the song.	Violins bring a sense of progression and understanding.
Melismas in the vocal line, syncopation and agogic stress, <i>Schwung</i> .	Vocals gives a sense of strong feelings and confidence in own emotion. Self-understanding in later stronger vocal performance.
Orchestral postlude.	The song ends of in what I feel is an optimistic ending.

Source: Interview with Kevin du Plessis in 2019, published with permission granted by Kevin du Plessis.



Strauss' use of colour, afforded by the lower strings in the introduction and the musical inertia generated by the repetition of melodic and rhythmic patterns, also elicited meaning-making for Kevin. He ascribed meaning to those first few measures as nostalgic and described it as a longing for someone or something, or a person reflecting on past memories. Fleming's vocal colour and interpretation of the music and text, in conjunction with the ascending and descending melodic contours of the vocal and instrumental melodic lines, resulted in Kevin ascribing its meaning as 'searching for answers to questions of the heart'. Kevin reacted strongly to the harmonic, melodic and rhythmic progression that he identified in the latter part of the violin solo (the melismas) and ascribed this as 'understanding'. His interpretation of understanding that later concretised as self-understanding was reaffirmed in his meaning-making of the successive melismas in the vocal line from measures 42-58. What he described as 'confidence in one's own emotions' was elicited by the strong syncopations, agogic stress and *Schwung* he heard in the voice (Kevin de Plessis pers. comm., 2019). Kevin made sense of the peaceful nature of the postlude as a feeling of optimism.

After a long engagement with the music, Kevin's final appraisal of the song resonated with Strauss' intended meaning as he likened the song to someone wanting to join a lover who has passed on in heaven. Kevin stated:

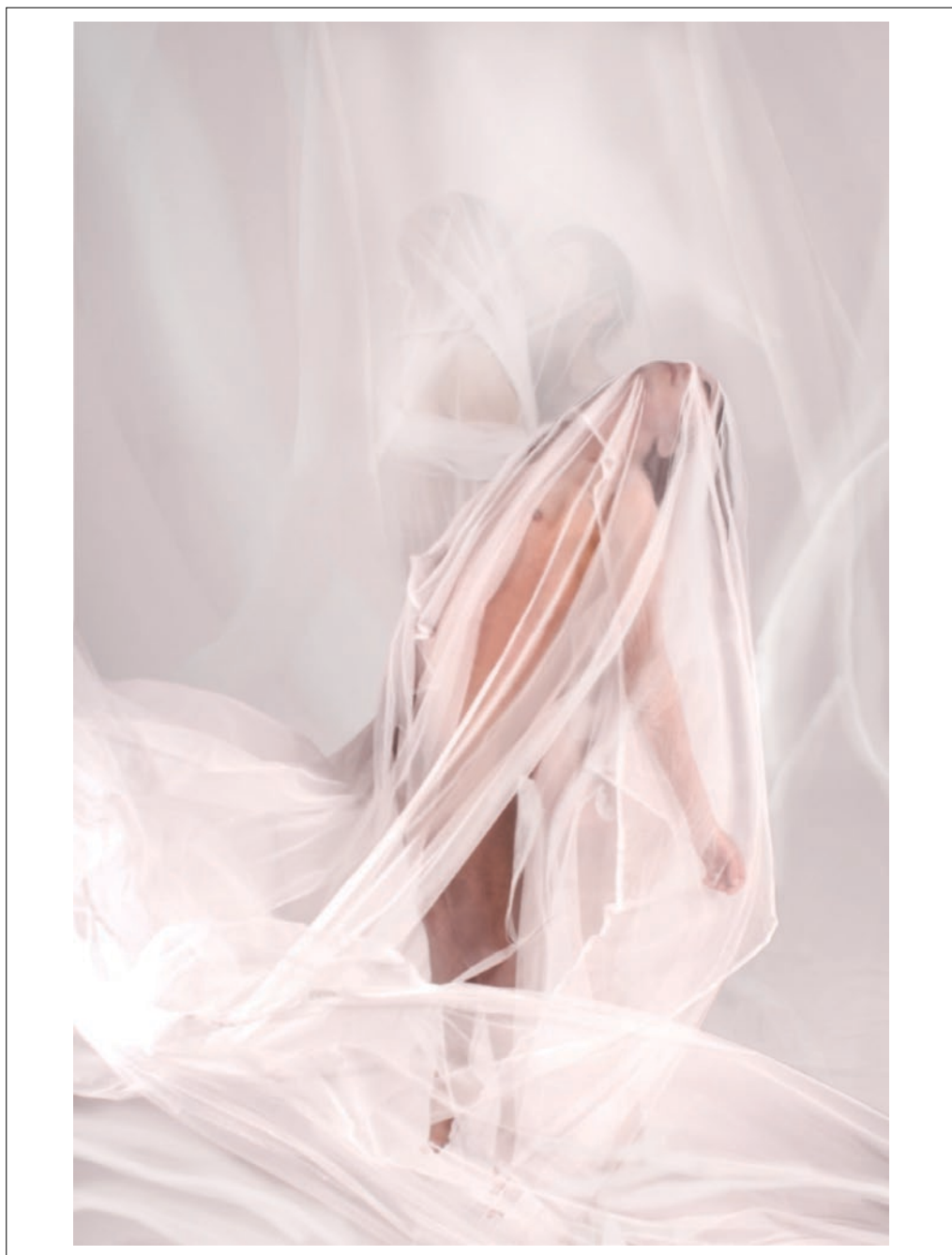
'Overall the song does have a sense of slowness, being tired, longing, thinking back. I interpreted the song as someone who sings about love that has passed on and wanting to ascend to the heavens to rejoin a lover.' (Kevin de Plessis pers. comm., 2019)

This was represented in the final artefact that he created representing this song where the image of ascension can directly be attributed to the ascending vocal line of the successive melismas and the musical inertia that governed those measures of music (Figure 9.8). Furthermore, the body language of the main figure in the image suggests a resignation or acceptance of fate: the figure wants to ascend. The material used in the image suggests a veil that separates the two lovers, and in the image, behind the veil, the reunion of the two embracing lovers can be seen. Kevin's depiction of the veil resonates with Hesse's analogy of the night (or death) that serves as a veil between life on earth and the happiness that awaits the soul after death.

**TABLE 9.7:** The emotions and imagery evoked in Kevin du Plessis' meaning-making process.

Emotions/feelings initially aroused	Imagery conjured
Longing, nostalgia, being tired, thinking back, searching	A person looking back at past, a person singing about a lover who has passed and wants to rejoin that person, to ascend to the heavens

Source: Interview with Kevin du Plessis in 2019, published with permission granted by Kevin du Plessis.



Source: Artwork by Kevin du Plessis, published with permission from Kevin du Plessis.

**FIGURE 9.8:** Kevin du Plessis, *Ascension*, 2019, digital art photography, 21 cm × 29.7 cm, edition size: 5.

## ■ Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, I explored how four artists ascribed meaning to Strauss' Lied, '*Beim Schlafengehen*', the third song from his '*Four Last Songs*'. Many congruent moments of meaning-making emerged for the four artists during the course of ascribing meaning to this Lied. Most notably, these moments were linked to three distinct musical sections within Strauss' Lied: the first being the orchestral introduction, the second being the orchestral interlude featuring the violin solo and finally the melismas that propelled the voice in the latter part of the Lied with intense emotion and meaning.

Strauss scored the beginning of '*Beim Schlafengehen*' in the lower registers of the strings, with a syncopated melody emanating in the double basses and celli, which is then echoed in the violins and violas. When the voice enters in the last beat of measure five, it does so seamlessly, in conjunction with an already descending melody presented by the violins and violas. The musical inertia (Larson 2006, 2012) is generated by the initial syncopated, melodic and rhythmic patterns, the dark colour of the instruments and the low pitch, as well as the entry of vocal line sung by Renée Fleming, and the musical gravity is generated by the descending melodic line all coalesced to form meaning-making moments for all the artists. While Fleming sings with a skilfully crafted vocal technique, the colour of her voice has been described as lending itself more towards the '*oscura*' ['darkness'] than the '*chiara*' ['brightness'] of its overall *chiaroscuro* (Cameron-Mickens 2005:151). For a singer, a balanced *chiaroscuro* (or resonance colour) is an essential component of good vocal technique, and voices that promote richness in tone, like Fleming's, often have the potential to elicit meaning among listeners owing only to their unique colour or timbre and the prosodic elements of singer's voice. Strauss was very much aware of this phenomenon, which is why he was inspired to write a plethora of songs for his wife, Pauline de Ahna, whose voice became the ideal vehicle for the emotion he wished to convey (Del Mar 1986).

Kevin and Marna both ascribed emotion to the entry of the voice as nostalgic, a longing for, or reminiscence of something beautiful. Marna's description of the music as an uncovering or lifting of a veil coincides with the rise in pitch from the depths of the strings and the inertia generated by the repeated melodic and rhythmic patterns. Elna also responded to the colour evoked by the low pitch of the double basses and celli and the dark, rich colour of Fleming's voice, ascribing it as a dark message being delivered, and she also made sense of the music as a loss of something once cherished or loved. For Kevin, Elna and Marna, the longing or nostalgia experienced in this song was never sad, and it was often associated with feelings of happiness and even passion.

In contrast, Jean experienced the introduction of this song as dark, serious and ominous. Her overall feeling that she attributed to this song was that of sadness and isolation. It is interesting to observe how similar musical features elicited similar responses in Elna, Marna and Kevin, yet a vastly different meaning-making response in Jean. Although the musical features that elicit emotional responses according to Juslin and Lindström (2010:335) sometimes overlap (i.e. slow tempi can be linked with both sadness and tenderness, and staccato articulation is associated with happiness, fear and anger), I would posit that the way Jean made sense of the music, in contrast to the other artists, more likely stems from either of the two other significant emotion-inducing factors: firstly, Jean's stable disposition or state of mood, components in what Zentner (2010:112) described as listener features in his multiplicative model of musical emotion induction factors, could manifest in a remarkably subjective and unique meaning-making experience; and secondly, when emotion is inducted in the listener through the eight core mechanisms as described in the BRECVEMA framework (Day & Thompson 2019; Juslin et al. 2010), I would posit that both evaluative conditioning and aesthetic judgement might induce greater subjective emotional responses and meaning-making in listeners when their past lived experiences negatively impact emotions derived from music like nostalgia. In Chapter 8, I will more closely examine the various ways in which the artists made sense of the emotion evoked through the music and how this relates to the literature in Chapter 1.

The orchestral interlude that features Strauss' achingly beautiful violin solo, beginning in measure 24, served as another meaning-making moment for all four artists. The artists made sense of the interlude as an affirmation of a story that was told in the first section of music and, thereafter, understanding events that might have transpired previously, which left them questioning. After perceiving nostalgia, longing, happiness and passion in the music, the images that Marna conjured were of the night, where the night was not only a temporal reference but also served as an active agent in the drama. Marna made sense of the music as someone longing for the night and when she listened to the interlude, the night answered: 'come crawl into me and become lost in me' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). In Romantic music, the night has often been likened to death, where the soul transfigures and finds solace, or the night is often the place where dreams occur and the dreamer can find refuge from their earthly worries. In this case, the night is the seducer and provides comfort and even pleasure for the protagonist in Marna's meaning-making.

The artists also responded to the melody in the violin in measures 32–38. This melody is later repeated as melismas in the vocal line of the final section of the song. Kevin made sense of the interlude as a progression of action and as an understanding of something in question, while Elna ascribed the violin

solo as a second female character in dialogue with the voice presenting 'her' side of the story. At this point, the music also elicited intense imagery for Jean. The images that were evoked were of a lonely woman, crying (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019). This particular orchestral interlude features a syncopated melodic melody in the violin that comprises many large intervals, especially recurring major seventh leaps and agogic stress. Strauss makes use of the major seventh interval leap several times during the course of '*Beim Schlafengehen*', especially in the successive melismas of the final section of the Lied. When this interval is used in the vocal line, it catapults the voice into the upper register inducing the *Schwung* phenomenon, which in turn evokes meaning-making moments in the listener. Alternatively, when the vocal line plummets by a major seventh, Strauss uses this descending drop to word paint '*der nacht*' [the night] in measures 51 and 52, for example (Cameron-Mickens 2005). The interlude begins with the marking '*sehr ruhig*' [very peaceful], and through dynamic increases, and the repetition of melodic motives or patterns, musical inertia is generated, resolving before the entry of the voice in measure 38 where the inertia then dissipates and the process of building inertia repeats.

In the final section of '*Beim Schlafengehen*', Strauss sets the following words to music: 'And my soul, unobserved, will float about on untrammelled wings in the enchanted circle of the night, living a thousandfold more deeply' (Ezust n.d.). The upward trajectory of the melodic, successive melismas musically paints the motion of the soul, from its earthly body towards heaven (Cameron-Mickens 2005). Strauss highlights this melodic contour on the words '*freien*' [freely], '*flügen*' [to fly] and '*schweben*' [soar] and further creates *Schwung* through the use of agogic stress, syncopation and major seventh ascending leaps on the words '*tiefe*' [deep] and '*tausendfach*' [thousandfold]. *Schwung* has been highlighted for its ability to evoke intense, emotional meaning-making moments among listeners (Cameron-Mickens 2005; Petersen 1986; Wanless 1984). All of the artists responded strongly to all the features that comprise this section of music and their artworks all reflect the upward trajectory of the music and the emotion that this evoked. Arguably, the crux of Strauss' musical story-telling is to reinforce the notion that when one lives a thousandfold more deeply in the enchanted circle of the night, one finds solace, comfort, peace and happiness in death, which cannot be attained in life. The artists all responded deeply to this meaning-making moment and mostly ascribed similar sentiments to the intended meaning of the composer.

Marna ascribed the arcing melody and voice as a woman answering the night's beckoning call while Jean responded to the music as a call for comfort. Both Elna and Kevin noted that the dramatic and emotional intensity of the music was stronger than the preceding violin solo. Elna ascribed the music as a stronger, more forceful sister answering her sister (the violin solo) and

initiating a mitigation after years of discord. Kevin too ascribed the music as a profound self-understanding that one achieves after much inner turmoil. Besides *Schwung*, the musical force that governs this section of music is musical inertia (Larson 2006, 2012), driven by the repetitive patterns generated by the ascending melodic lines and the use of dynamics (*crescendi* interrupted by *subito pianissimi* and then repeated). The final ten measures of music instilled feelings of calm, tranquillity, longing, optimism and peace in Marna, Elna and Kevin resonating with Strauss's intended meaning. Jean ascribed meaning to the final measures of music as a reinforcement of the sadness that was evoked in her, from the beginning of the song. In the next chapter, I will explore how the artists made sense of the final song in Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, 'Im abendrot'.



# In the night, we shall find eternal rest: Exploring how four artists ascribe meaning to Strauss' *'Im Abendrot'*

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## ■ Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored how four visual artists, namely Marna de Wet, Jean Lampen, Elna Venter and Kevin du Plessis, ascribed meaning to Richard Strauss' *'Beim Schlafengehen'*. In this chapter, I investigate their creative process and the artefacts produced as a result of ascribing meaning to *'Im Abendrot'*, final song from Strauss' *Vier Letzte Lieder* [*Four Last Songs*] Op. posth. In Chapter 3, Dr Jaco Meyer provided an in-depth annotation of the songs featured in this study, specifically how Larson's (2006, 2012) theory of musical forces may conjure or suggest imagery of the night. These musical forces include musical inertia, musical magnetism and musical gravity. A full description of these forces can be found in Chapter 3. In this chapter, I will explore how these

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forces coalesce with other musical features to elicit meaning during the creative process and listening experiences of the four artists.

## ■ *'Im abendrot'* ['At dusk']

Towards the latter part of 1946, an 82-year-old Richard Strauss became acquainted and fascinated with a collection of poetry entitled *Frühling und Liebe* ['Spring and Love'] by Joseph von Eichendorff (1758–1857). One of the poems, *'Im abendrot'* (often translated either as 'At sunset', 'At dusk' or 'In the twilight') describes an elderly couple who spent their lives happily together despite many adversities and crises, and both now face the inevitability of death.

**TABLE 10.1:** The poem *'Im abendrot'* by Joseph von Eichendorff and translated by Emily Ezust.

<b>'Im abendrot'</b>	<b>'At dusk'</b>
<i>Wir sind durch Not und Freude Gegangen Hand in Hand, Vom Wandern ruhn wir beide Nun überm stillen Land.</i>	Through adversity and joy We've gone hand in hand; We rest now from our wanderings Upon this quiet land.
<i>Rings sich die Thäler neigen, Es dunkelt schon die Luft, Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen Nachträumend in den Duft.</i>	Around us slope the valleys, The skies grow dark; Two larks alone are just climbing, As if after a dream, into the scented air.
<i>Tritt her, und laß sie schwirren, Bald ist es Schlafenszeit, Daß wir uns nicht verirren In dieser Einsamkeit.</i>	Come here and let them whirl past, For it will soon be time to rest; We do not wish to get lost In this solitude.
<i>O weiter stiller Friede! So tief im abendrot, Wie sind wir wandermüde - Ist das etwa der Tod?</i>	O wide, quiet peace, So deep in the red dusk... How weary we are of our travels - Is this perhaps - Death?

Source: Ezust (n.d.), reprinted with permission from the LiederNet Archive.

The intertwined lives and experiences of the elderly couple resonated with Strauss as they reflected his own life with his beloved wife, Pauline de Ahna, and how they also, after a blissful marriage, faced death together. Cameron-Mickens (2005:31) and Wanless (1984:11) both described how Strauss personalised Eichendorff's poem in his musical setting as an indication of the intimate connection he felt towards the elderly couple portrayed. Cameron-Mickens and Wanless posited that by omitting the word *'beide'* in the third line of the text, Strauss highlighted the preceding personal pronoun, *'wir'*, emphasising the connection to himself and Pauline. Furthermore, in the final line of the poem, Strauss changes *'Ist das etwa der Tod?'* [Is that perhaps death?] to the more personal *'Ist dies etwa der Tod?'* [Is this perhaps death?], again emphasising his own personal reckoning with death (Cameron-Mickens 2005:31; Parson 1991:12). In her thesis, Laurel Parson (1991) described the significance of this subtle change in word usage:

This ostensibly minor replacement produces a significant change in perspective: in the original version, the word *das* puts death at a distance – the poet muses

philosophically on what the experience of death might be like, but the event remains in the future. In contrast, the word *dies* in Strauss' version puts death immediately at hand: the speaker and his companion hover at the very moment of metamorphosis. (p. 12)

In Chapter 3, Jaco Meyer described how Strauss created an atmosphere of serenity and calm through the use of long-sustained tones and instrumental colour. The striking harmonic colour of the opening E<sub>b</sub> major chord of '*Im Abendrot*', which Strauss scored for the higher register of the instruments, instantly suggests feelings of wonder and transcendence, and the mood evoked by the instrumentation has also been described as 'solemn' (Schuh & Loewenthal 1950:29). Furthermore, Meyer highlighted the dichotomy of musical forces that govern this song and that present possible meaning-making moments for listeners: in the bass musical gravity occurs as a result of the gravitational pull in voice leading of the lower instruments, while musical magnetism and musical inertia are created in the ascending lines of the upper strings especially. The musical inertia generated by the repetition in the pattern of the ascending lines adeptly captures the images portrayed in von Eichendorff's poem. Parson described how the poetry 'suggests a gradual linear movement rising away from the earth to the air, from physical to ethereal existence, that is followed by the individual' (Parson 1991:5). Ultimately, it is musical gravity (the gradual decrease in motion and dynamic level and the descending melodic line in the bass that results in harmonic stability) than connotes the acceptance of death as inevitable, and Strauss himself expressed this idea musically in the postlude of '*Im Abendrot*' by quoting from his tone poem, *Tod und Verklarung* [Death and Transfiguration] (Parson 1991:15; Wanless 1984:11).

'*Im Abendrot*' can be divided into three distinct musical sections, namely the orchestral prelude (mm. 1 to 21), the vocal section (mm. 22-76) and the orchestral postlude (mm. 76-97). Of the four songs that comprise the *Four Last Songs*, the orchestral sections of '*Im Abendrot*' are by far much longer in duration than any other instrumental sections in the other songs. When listening to the song, the length of the postlude is further extended through Strauss' use of tempo markings (m. 70 *immer langsamer*, mm. 74-75 and 88-89 *ritardando, sehr langsam*) causing a decrease in tempo and emotional momentum and in turn symbolises life slowing down and one's ultimate death. Parson (1991:17-18) ascribed the duration of the orchestral sections in comparison with the vocal section as 'the poem's image of the individual human being, small and almost completely alone in the vast landscape which surrounds him'.

In '*Beim Schlafengehen*', Strauss depicted the 'ascending soul' musically by the rising, successive melismas of the vocal line in the third section of music. In '*Im Abendrot*', Strauss also musically expressed his belief in the continued existence of the soul: that the soul exists beyond death and that through a spiritual metamorphosis, one's spirit is able to live perpetually in

solace transcending the burdens and woes of earthly life. These ideas are musically depicted in the postlude of the song by his use of instrumentation and the association of sound with imagery and meaning. Parson (1991) described the imagery and the meaning intended by Strauss in the postlude (and the ability of the music to convey these ideas without the text) as follows:

Strauss' setting of '*Im Abendrot*' extends of course beyond the final words of the text: the cessation of language does not signify the end of life. The composer's belief in the continued existence of the soul following death is represented musically by the return of the larks - signifying the two souls of the travellers - in the final measures of the song, with the texturally conspicuous piccolo trills from m. 89 to m. 96. (p. 21)

In his poem, von Eichendorff likened the ever-approaching night-time to death, which inevitably awaits everyone. Parsons (1991:35) asserted that Strauss also musically paints the darkness or night through the cessation of motion and motivic structures throughout the Lied as exemplified in measures 50-52 and later in measures 61-64 and 65-66. While the night may often be associated with fear or terror, in the context of both '*Beim Schlafengehen*' and '*Im Abendrot*', it provides the final destination where the soul is transfigured beyond its physical existence.

For the purposes of this study, I presented the four artists with a recording of Jessye Norman singing '*Im Abendrot*' accompanied by the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig under the baton of Kurt Masur. In the following section, I will explore how they ascribed meaning to Norman's rendition of this song.

## ■ Inspiring visual art through meaning derived from Strauss' '*Im Abendrot*'

### ■ Marna de Wet

After a prolonged engagement listening to '*Im Abendrot*', Marna ascribed meaning to the Lied as follows:

'Before the singing begins the music feels big and wide. I get a feeling as if I'm floating over a desert or desolate landscape, perhaps a saltpan or valley. Two people or perhaps just one that looks like a speck walking in the big landscape through the desolation. Wind from ahead, they are struggling. The music is heavy and slow, makes me think of a fantasy movie like '*Game of Thrones*'. Majestic, sad, moving, deep and serious. I get the feeling of perseverance, like someone climbing down a mountain or walking through a desert, challenging. The flutes at the end sound like Buddha bells indicating an everlasting peace, that place

you reach [...] Nirvana. The last part, from 5'30" to 6'20", feels to me like the sun coming out from behind the clouds after a heavy storm. Everything becomes restful and calm and the repetition of Nirvana at the end.' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019)

**TABLE 10.2:** The ways in which Marna de Wet ascribed meaning to Strauss' *'Im Abendrot'*.

<b>Musical attributes</b>	<b>Emotions/Mood ascribed</b>	<b>Imagery evoked</b>
Music feels expansive: sustained notes of introduction; high register of the instruments; heaviness, slow tempo; instrumentation (flutes)	Majestic, expansive, desolation, sad, moving, deep, serious, perseverance, everlasting peace, nirvana, restful, calm	Floating over a desert or desolate landscape, perhaps a saltpan or valley; big landscape; someone climbing down a mountain or walking through a desert; sun coming out from behind the clouds after a heavy storm

Source: Interview with Marna de Wet in 2019, published with permission granted by Marna de Wet.

From Marna's description, it is clear that the vast, majestic and expansive quality of the first orchestral section provided a meaning-making moment for her. Similarly, the last orchestral section evoked the same meaning as what Strauss intended. Marna ascribed that section of music as calm and restful, and she associated his choice of instrumentation (the flutes symbolising the larks/elderly couple) with everlasting peace because of the sound, articulation and colour of the flute and her association of that sound with Buddha bells. The Nirvana she describes directly ties with Strauss' intention of musically portraying the metamorphosis or transfiguration from one's physical human existence whereby the soul then exists in perpetual peace.

The images that were initially evoked in Marna after listening to the music were that of a vast, desolate landscape. This corroborates and visually manifests Parson's metaphor that the positioning of large orchestral sections at either ends of the Lied represents the 'poem's image of the individual human being, small and almost completely alone in the vast landscape which surrounds him' (Parson 1991:17-18). Marna eventually made sense of the music, the emotions and images elicited as 'an open landscape' that 'depicts the feeling of epic humanness' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019) and she portrayed this in her visual representation of *'Im Abendrot'* (Figure 10.1) The artwork speaks to the vast, expansive feeling she felt when she first heard the orchestral introduction. The landscape is almost barren and the skies foretell an impending storm or the night approaching. I would posit that Marna's depiction can be attributed to Strauss' intention to musically paint the night as a transitory time and place, where after death, the Soul then exists in its eternally peaceful state. Marna likened this to Nirvana.

In the night, we shall find eternal rest



Source: Artwork by Marna de Wet, published with permission from Marna de Wet.

**FIGURE 10.1:** Marna de Wet, *Silent [Stil]*, 2019, oil on board, 53 cm × 40 cm.

## ■ Jean Lampen

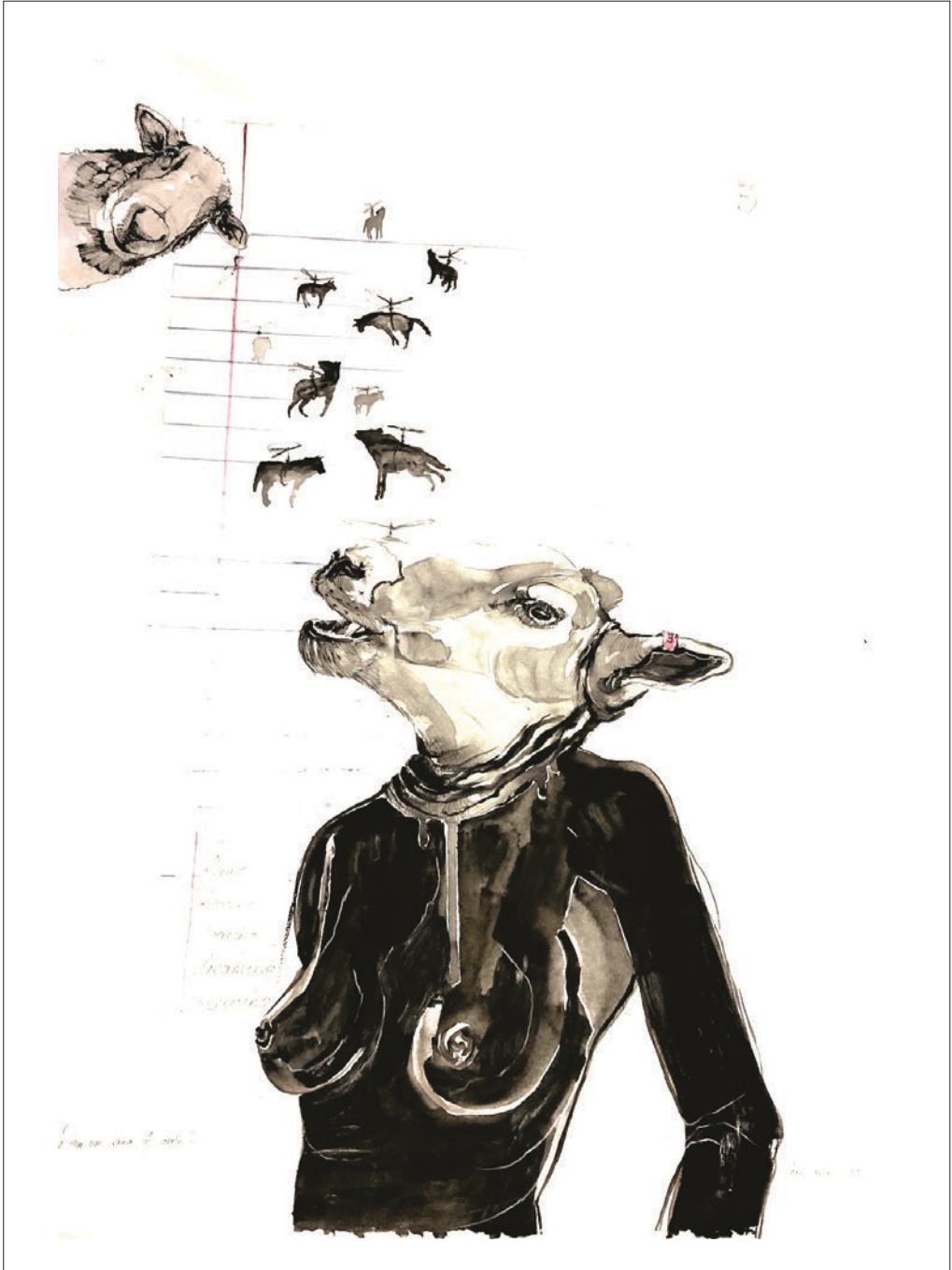
Although Jean quickly identified three distinct musical sections after her initial listening experience, most of her meaning-making moments were ascribed resulting from the middle vocal section after she further engaged with the music over an extended period. Initially, Jean ascribed the orchestral prelude as 'big and epic' making reference to its expansive quality; she remarked that the music sounded like the music she would hear in epic movies and that it sounded easy and calm (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019).

In the vocal section of the Lied, the following three moments evoked significant meaning-making experiences for Jean. From measures 40–44, Jean instantly recognised the sonic anaphones heard in the flutes as birdsong. In these measures, the ascending line in the flutes/piccolos is texturised by trills that evoke the unique birdlike calls. Consequently, images of birds were conjured, and Jean then cognitively made sense of both the images conjured and the ascending line as an upward movement. In her visual representation (Figure 10.2), this is represented by the ascending shadows of little wolves, rising towards the heavens away from the vulnerable sheep. Musically, the ascending line in conjunction with the trilling flutes deftly conveys the imagery made explicit in the text, which translates as 'two larks alone are just climbing, as if after a dream, into the scented air' (Ezust n.d.). Jean also connoted the rise in the melodic line with the image of dreaming, and she included this word written on her artefact as part of the overall artwork.

Jean identified measures 50–56 as her second significant meaning-making experience. It is at this point that Strauss uses various musical techniques to paint the meaning associated with von Eichendorff's text, translated as 'we do not wish to get lost in this solitude'. The musical features that coalesced in these measures resulted in Jean ascribing the music as becoming darker, lonely and more serious. In measure 50, the melody of the solo violin that emanated in the preceding measures halts on a sustained B $\flat$ , suspended from the previous measure and its solitary sound emphasises the solitude or loneliness of which von Eichendorff speaks. Furthermore, immediately following the sustained B $\flat$ , the music switches to the minor mode, and a prominent descending, chromatic line can be heard in the flutes and violins that generate musical gravity. Finally, the emotion that Norman brings to the words '*in dieser Einsamkeit*' emitted the emotion made explicit in the text, through her sudden decrease in the dynamic level and the colour of her voice and the nuanced articulation of the words, which in turn conveyed the feeling of loneliness to Jean without her understanding what the text in itself meant (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019).

Finally, the third moment that inspired Jean to ascribe meaning to the music was from measures 61–76. During this section, Strauss musically paints the weariness felt by the couple portrayed in the poem, and he also confronts death; the text translates as ‘So deep in the red dusk [...] How weary we are of our travels – is this perhaps – Death?’ (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019). The music is characterised by long, sustained notes in the vocal line where meaning is rendered to the word ‘*tief*’ [deep] through the use of syncopation and agogic stress. This is immediately followed by a descending arpeggio in the strings, generating musical gravity, and the music then also switches to the minor mode highlighting the meaning inherent to the word ‘*wandermüde*’ [weary of roaming/travelling] or in fact the weariness of life’s meandering journey. As Jessye Norman sings ‘*Ist dies etwa der Tod?*’, one hears how Strauss slows down this poignant moment; by inserting rests between ‘*dies*’, ‘*etwa*’ and ‘*der*’, he consequently depicts the deep contemplation of this momentous occasion. Motion and tempo are further decreased through tempo markings indicating ‘*immer langsamer*’ in measure 70 and ‘*ritardando*’, ‘*sehr langsam*’ in measure 74. Furthermore, the entire section is also characterised by the ever-decreasing level of dynamics. Jean ascribed these aspects as serene and calm and also ascribed sadness to the music (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019). The final passages of music and the emotions that it evoked, conjured images of ‘grass slowly moving in the wind with touches of birds flying in the air’ (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019).

As previously mentioned, the ascending piccolo and flute trills are visually in her artwork as flying wolves; the propellers suggest that they do not have a say in their retreat from the sheep below. The central protagonist of the artwork is the sheep, whose womanly attributes strikingly come to the fore. The image evokes the loneliness and isolation of the woman that Jean ascribed to the music, and one questions whether the sheep does not actually desire the company of the wolves (who are forcibly removed from her), in an attempt to mitigate her loneliness. The upward, longing gaze of the female sheep desires the presence of the wolves, despite the danger that exists as a result of their inherent character. I would posit that the image is a metaphor for the emotional vulnerability and potential hurt that one could experience when pursuing a relationship; the alternative often is to make peace with one’s loneliness. The acceptance that one might not experience romantic love again can potentially be liberating. Jean’s artwork resonates with the theme of Strauss’ Lied: the acceptance of an ultimate truth ... the inevitability of death.



Source: Artwork by Jean Lampen, published with permission from Jean Lampen.

**FIGURE 10.2:** Jean Lampen, *This our sense of death?*, 2019, pen and ink watercolour, 74 cm × 54 cm.



## ■ Elna Venter

When Elna first listened to Strauss' *'Im Abendrot'*, she also compared it to the expansive music that she associates with film scores. She stated:

'The music begins as if in an *Out of Africa* landscape scene [...] big and wide. This is the only one of the songs where the voice of the singer is also a music instrument to me, just like all the other instruments in the orchestra. The orchestra determines the melody, atmosphere, movement and the singing's contribution is to convert certain parts of the melody into words. It doesn't sound like a conversation, rather a unanimous slightly melancholy harmony.' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

It became clear that the orchestral prelude and postlude played a more significant role in the way in which Elna ascribed meaning to the music, confirming Parson's (1991) description of the significance of these instrumental sections within the greater context of the meaning conveyed in the song. Here, Elna noted that unlike the other songs assigned to the artists, the voice became more like another instrument in the orchestra instead of a featured soloist that provided meaning independently from the accompanying instruments. I would attribute this to the nature of Jessye Norman's calm and serene portrayal of peace, tranquillity and the acceptance of death in her recording of this Lied. The vocal presentation presents in stark contrast to the angst and exuberance of the ascending, successive melismas of *'Beim Schlafengehen'* for example. Elna perceived the orchestra and the voice to be working in harmony, conveying melancholy.

After listening to the orchestral prelude, Elna ascribed it as jubilant and points out how it differs from what she ascribed as the melancholy of the vocal section and the postlude. The features that evoke this differentiation in the way Elna ascribed meaning to the music include the burst of sound of the opening E $\flat$  major chord played by the instruments in their higher registers. The long-sustained notes elicited a feeling of wide, expansiveness that she equated to the soundtrack of the film, *Out of Africa*, and the images that were conjured immediately were of an African landscape as depicted in the film.

Elna made special mention of the violins in the prelude that helped in her making sense of the music as jubilant. She especially noted the rhythm and the way the melodic line ascends and descends. In the prelude, the melody of the violins is characterised by their dotted rhythmic patterns that alternate with suspended long notes that produce agogic stress. The melody also meanders chromatically from one unstable tone to a stable tone, repeating this pattern and in doing so generating musical magnetism as described by Larson (2006, 2012) and Meyer in Chapter 3. The coalescing of the major mode, the long, sustained notes, the instrumentation, the rhythmic features and the musical magnetism resulted in what Elna ascribed as jubilant.

After listening to *'Beim Schlafengehen'*, Elna ascribed meaning to the relationship between the presentation of the melody and melismas in the solo violin and the voice, respectively, as a tumultuous dialogue between two estranged sisters, who sought to resolve past disagreements. In contrast, Elna ascribed meaning to the vocal section in *'Im Abendrot'* as harmonious, peaceful and tranquil: 'the orchestra and voice are of one mind'. She also immediately identified the sonic anaphones of trilling flutes in measures 40–44 as birds fluttering around:

'I hear what sounds like fluttering (leaves that flutter to the ground, birds that hop around in the branches). The imagery that this sonic anaphone generated made such a strong impression that Elna incorporated the image of birds in her final visual representation of the Lied.' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

The next significant meaning-making moment that transpired occurred when Elna heard the shift from the major E $\flat$  harmony to the minor mode in measure 50. Elna ascribed it as follows: 'the violins sound mournful and tender, the orchestra and singing are in harmony, the atmosphere of the song changes to sombreness, it becomes darker and the notes longer and lower' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). At this moment, Elna recognised the sombre, tender and even mournful emotion that Strauss arguably intended to paint while setting the words *'Daß wir uns nicht verirren in dieser Einsamkeit'* ['We do not wish to get lost in this solitude'] to music. The other musical features that contributed to Elna's ascription of meaning included the descending chromatic lines of the flutes and violins in measures 51 and 52, which resulted in musical gravity, as well as the colour and other prosodic elements of Norman's voice on *'dieser Einsamkeit'*. Elna described this moment specifically as the music becoming darker and sombre.

Finally, Elna ascribed meaning to the postlude as melancholic and lonely and pointed out a sense of finality. She asserted that:

'[U]p to the end of the song the orchestra I feel melancholy, it feels to me like the conclusion of something. With the fluttering of a flute the birds fly away one for one on 8'54", 9'05", 9'30" and 9'36" [...] and only quiet loneliness remains.' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

In this section, the decrease in motion resulting from the tempi markings, the resolution of the final harmonies and the meaning that Elna ascribed to the birds flying away one by one all contributed to her final appraisal of melancholy, loneliness and the finality or conclusion of something significant. I would posit that this directly correlates to Strauss' portrayal of the loneliness that often accompanies the acceptance of death. For Strauss however, this was a happy moment as he could spend his last moments with his wife, although despite writing *'Im Abendrot'* a year before his passing, he must have known that should he pass first, he would be leaving Pauline alone. She consequently died a few months after his death in May of 1950, two years and one week after he completed *'Im Abendrot'*.

**TABLE 10.3:** The ways in which Elna Venter ascribed meaning to Strauss' *'Im Abendrot'*.

<b>Musical attributes</b>	<b>Emotions/mood ascribed</b>
Orchestral Prelude is expansive, like a film score (Out of Africa); the orchestra and voice harmoniously produce sound, not in competition with one another; specific instrumentation (violins sound jubilant, flutes sound like birds); dotted rhythm and ascending/descending lines (musical magnetism); agogic stress; sudden shift to minor mode; descending melodic lines (musical gravity); lower notes of the orchestra; emotion perceived through the colour and prosodic elements of the singer's voice	Jubilant, sombreness, melancholy, loneliness, finality (conclusion of something), moving, in awe, inspired, feeling of transcendence

Source: Interview with Elna Venter in 2019, published with permission granted by Elna Venter.

In her final appraisal of both the musical features and the emotions that they evoked, imagery was conjured of a dead tree, from which birds can be seen leaving the tree in search of a new dwelling. Elna engaged with both concepts of acceptance and death in her image, which directly correlates with the meaning of the Lied. The feeling that Elna wanted to convey in this image was that of peace and not tumult. She stated:

'I wanted to convey the feeling of movement, gripping rhythm, something that moves back and forth like trees in the wind or underwater scenes [...] peaceful, not tempestuous. In my artwork, the kelp can also be seen as a dead tree in accordance with the imagery of dead branches in the bottom half of the artwork. Necrosis is further suggested by the birds abandoning the tree and the leaves that desperately cling to the branches for the last time before they fall tranquilly to the ground. Although melancholy, acceptance is reached. In my work, found objects play an important part [...] [I/]t just felt right that the kelp tree should stand in a pot (rusted tin which in itself is something that died off).' (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019)

## ■ Kevin du Plessis

Similar to the other artists, Kevin was immediately struck by the opening chord of the Lied, which he described as theatrical yet soothing. He compared the orchestral prelude with 'an intricately beautiful, sad landscape' that was wrought with deep emotion (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019). The landscape scene was the first image to be conjured as a result of the music and perceived emotion elicited. This image was further developed and grew in detail the longer Kevin engaged with the music, and he consequently ascribed more detail and meaning to how the landscape interacted with other images elicited from the music. He stated: 'I visualised a camera panning over a landscape before coming back indoors to focus on a single person who was sitting looking out on the landscape, searching, looking, longing' (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019).



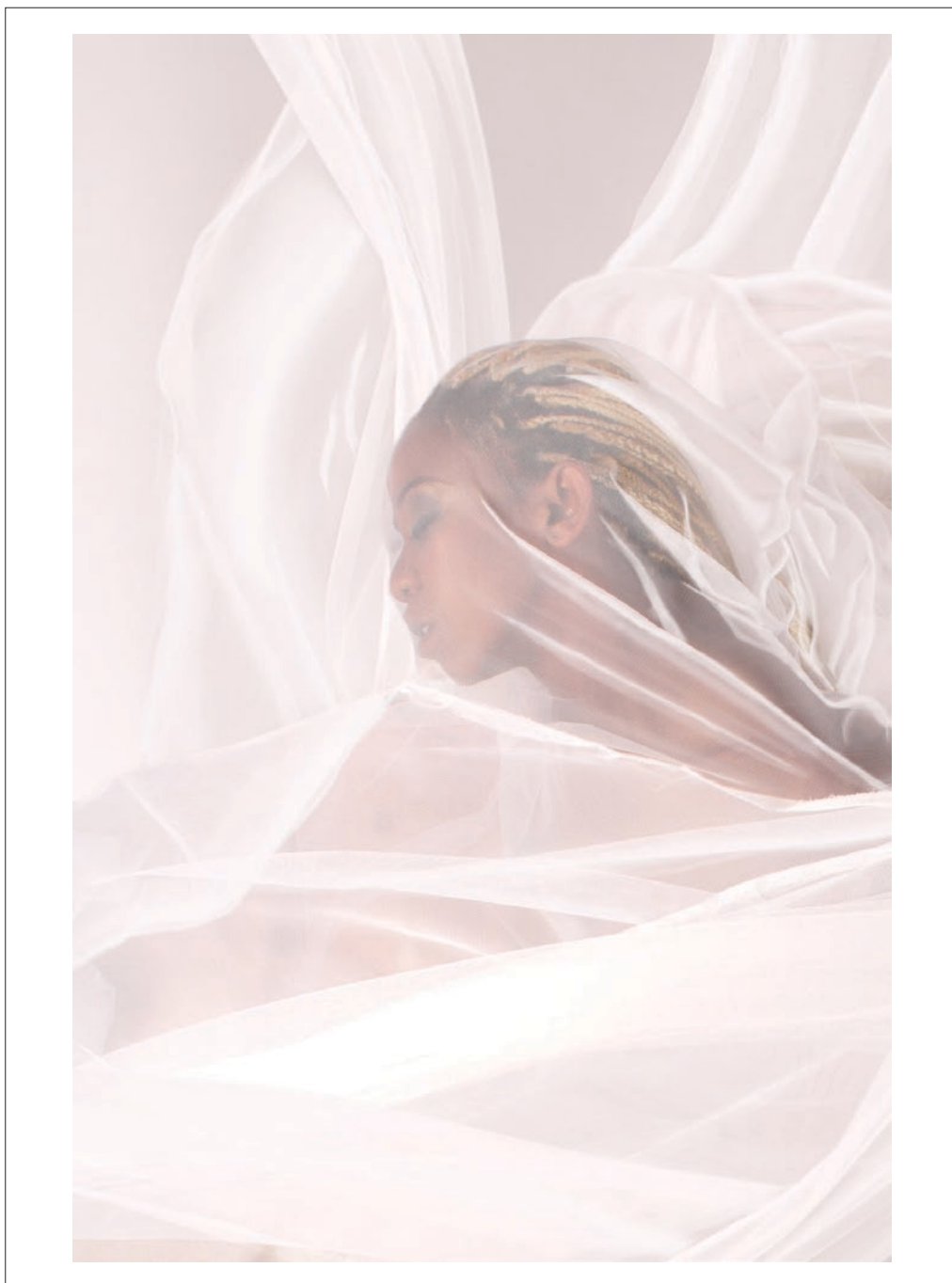
Source: Artwork by Elna Venter, published with permission by Elna Venter.

**FIGURE 10.3:** Elna Venter, *Larks still soar rapt in the twilight perfume* [*Lewerike styg in die geur van die nag in op*], 2019, mixed media, 25 cm × 50 cm.

When the voice entered, he was struck by the sustained, elongated note values, and he ascribed this as the music trying to 'capture more than what the words have to say'. Kevin described how he felt the emotion in the singer's voice without the need to articulate words that made sense: the meaning came from the colour and deep emotion conveyed through the sound alone. Kevin described the singing as delicate, well considered and soft, 'as if the singer is explaining something' (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019). Of course, when singers perform, they tell stories and mostly explain the narrative inherent to these stories. Sometimes as noted in Chapters 7 and 8, many French Art songs are devoid of a clear narrative to be sung, owing to the 'abstract and esoteric quality of much of French poetry' (Hodam 1968:21). In these instances, the mood or atmosphere of the poem is created through a series of images described in the poetry and the music similarly paints these images to evoke meaning and emotion. Notwithstanding, Kevin's description speaks of the quality of the vocal sound and its implied meaning of how the message is being conveyed. The soft, gentle, sustained vocal line connotes the care and emotional capacity required when conveying a sensitive message.

Another significant meaning-making device for Kevin was the way in which Strauss portrayed the two larks throughout the work as sonic anaphones heard in the flutes and piccolos. I have previously mentioned how the two birds served as a metaphor for the loving couple in von Eichendorff's poem, who face the prospect of death together. Kevin first ascribed these bird sounds (flutes) first heard from measures 40-44 as optimistic. Later when he heard them in the orchestral postlude, he ascribed meaning to them as nostalgia or a longing of something beautiful: 'the flute sounds are almost like a reminder of a long lost memory, of something beautiful' (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019). Kevin's ascription of meaning as a result of the final passages of music directly correlates with the couple in von Eichendorff's poem (as well as Strauss and his wife) and how they would have reminisced on their happy, shared lived experiences in the hours, days or months prior to their impending deaths.

Ultimately, Kevin wanted to convey this in his artwork (Image 4), and as he describes, he 'chose to interpret the song as a lamentation, of loneliness, or remembering something that was lost and is now out of reach' (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019). In his artefact, the woman is enveloped in material that reminds one of the death shrouds or burial sheets of old. Nonetheless, the woman is at peace, and the upwards movement of the material seems to suggest a connection to a non-earthly realm.



Source: Artwork by Kevin du Plessis, published with permission from Kevin du Plessis.

**FIGURE 10.4:** Kevin du Plessis, *Envelopment*, 2019, digital art photography, 21 cm × 29.7 cm, edition size: 5.

## ■ Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, I described how the artists made sense of the meaning they derived from listening to Strauss' *'Im Abendrot'* without an understanding of the text. I also presented the creative artefacts derived from that process. In their final appraisals, the artists made sense of *'Im Abendrot'* as music emanating jubilation, loneliness, melancholy, sadness and acceptance. In his poem, von Eichendorff described the lived experiences of a happy, elderly couple who finally face and accept death together. I would posit that because Strauss so intensely connected with the protagonists of the poem (Cameron-Mickens 2005; Parson 1991; Wanless 1984), his personal inference reflects his own life and his feelings of adoration towards his wife, musically layered the meaning of the Lied espoused in the text with extra-musical meaning: the loneliness, sadness and melancholy perceived and felt in the music by the artists. I argue that despite the happiness and joy that Strauss no doubt shared with Pauline, his wife, the music reveals his inner sadness and melancholy that would await either spouse once the other had passed.

In the third stanza of von Eichendorff's poem, the narrator describes two larks whirring away and mentions that soon those larks too will rest (eternally) and that they (the couple) should not be caught up in the loneliness that accompanies death *'daß wir uns nicht verirren in dieser Einsamkeit'*. Von Eichendorff's poem is generally comforting and reassuring, and the theme of accepting death is conveyed without melancholy. Similarly, Strauss' setting begins with an exuberant E♭ major chord, in the higher registers of the instruments, followed by sustained notes, syncopated rhythms and agogic stress that elicited feeling of jubilation from the artists. Marna ascribed it as majestic, Jean as epic and Kevin as soothing. When this Lied is traditionally performed in a concert hall, the facial expressivity of the singer plays an intrinsic role in the way in which the audience experiences the meaning of the music.

Zentner (2010:112) asserted that performer features (that include the facial expressions of singers) are one of the main induction factors that elicit an emotional response from listeners. I would posit that when Strauss conceived the meaning he wanted to convey in his setting of *'Im Abendrot'*, he knew that the melancholy, loneliness and sadness that often accompanied death could be presented in the extra-musical nuances of the melody, harmony and rhythm. These musical features would then juxtapose the expressive delivery of the singer, such as his wife Pauline, whose words and face would emphasise reassurance, comfort and ultimately the acceptance of death. The artists listening to a recording of this Lied did not see those demonstrative visual cues inherent to the emotion induction mechanisms of live music performances, and therefore, it is plausible that they only responded to the melancholy, sadness and loneliness that was

conveyed through the music alone (which includes the prosodic elements of the voice). These musical features included the colour or quality of Jessye Norman's voice as she would emulate feelings of loneliness and sadness while singing '*in dieser Einsamkeit*' for example; furthermore, melancholy or sadness was also elicited when the music changed to the minor mode or when the descending melodic line and its resolution generated musical gravity.

Nonetheless, the various emotional attributes of the Lied are skilfully conveyed to the listener through the composer's use of instrumentation (orchestral colour), sustained melodies that are often syncopated, changes in mode from minor to major and adept changes in tempo. These musical features coalesced in either musical inertia, musical magnetism or musical gravity (Larson 2006, 2012) that in turn resulted in meaning-making moments for the artists. All the artists described the orchestral introduction as epic, majestic or more specifically that it sounded like score music from films or adapted TV series like *Out of Africa* or *Game of Thrones*. Arguably Richard Strauss' musical language as heard in *the Four Last Songs* no doubt influenced neo-romantic composers and film composers like John Barry, Ennio Morricone, John Williams and Hans Zimmer. Because the artists, through their lived experience, connote the music of John Barry with scenes from *Out of Africa*, for example, the musical language inherent in such films now conjure images of vast landscapes among many people who have watched such films.

This was particularly apparent in Marna's artwork where she depicted a landscape; however, it was not the lush, green farmlands that one would expect to see in *Out of Africa*, or the adapted TV series *Game of Thrones*' Highgarden, or the Kingdom of Mountain and Vale in the fictitious continent of Westeros. Instead, the landscape was desolate and barren and the sky was grey, either depicting the impending night or a storm. I would posit that this was because the melancholy and sadness that Marna ascribed to the music informed her choice of colours and vegetation in her image. Marna equated the landscape that she painted to 'the feeling of epic humanness' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). To Marna, 'epic humanness' encapsulates the myriad of emotions and experiences that we as human beings must endure and that form part of the human condition. Although Marna perceived sadness, loneliness and melancholy in the song, she ascribed the end of the song as nirvana stating, 'the last part feels to me like the sun coming out from behind the clouds after a heavy storm' (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019). I would argue that the image of the sun coming out after a heavy storm reflects the joy that exists after a tumultuous experience, such as the transfiguration of the body where the soul then exists in eternal peace. The music, therefore, without an understanding of the text, elicited the meaning of the Lied in Marna, the peaceful acceptance of death.



Elna and Kevin ascribed similar meaning to the song. Kevin described what he felt in response to the music as an ‘understanding of the pains of the heart’ and ascribed the music as ‘a sense of lamenting for something beautiful’ (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019). Here, he connects to von Eichendorff’s and other Romantics’ description of the desire that man experiences when longing for solace or peace: something that can only be attained after death. Elna too connected with the intended meaning of the Lied, the acceptance of death as she stated: ‘it feels to me as if there is an angry longing for something that must be heard [...] The voice is very sad [...] Eventually, there is acceptance, because the illusion is broken, and the truth has broken through’ (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). From their statements, it became clear that without an understanding of the text, the music evoked a strong sense of longing and eventually acceptance. The artists ascribed longing to the music when they heard repetitive, syncopated melodic patterns that generated musical inertia, and they ascribed the reduction in tempo, harmonic motion and resolution of several cadences in the postlude as acceptance. For Elna, the trilling lark sounds in the piccolo and flute towards the end of the Lied evoked a sense of acceptance. In her artwork, Venter, therefore, painted birds flying away from a dead tree in search of a new dwelling.

In fact, all the artists responded to the sonic anaphones created by the piccolo and flutes, depicting two larks (a metaphor for the elderly couple depicted in the poem), and they all noted how the colour of the instrument made them feel sad or lonely. Strauss himself noted the immense effect that instrumental colour commands in the induction of emotion among listeners (Berlioz & Strauss 1948; Hollis 2009). Strauss was indeed successful in evoking feelings of desolation, sadness and loneliness in the four artists through his use of the flutes’ instrumental colour, as he himself asserted that the flute affords ‘the expression of desolation to a sad melody, combined with a feeling of humility and resignation’ (Berlioz & Strauss 1948:228).

It is apparent why Strauss’ *Four Last Songs* remain a constant favourite in the Western art musical canon. Besides the sheer beauty of the music and text, the songs have the potential to elicit rich, deep emotional reactions in listeners. When the four artists who partook in this study listened to the two latter songs of the cycle, they perceived and felt similar emotions from the same musical features and forces. In the previous chapter, I described how all the artists strongly responded to the musical inertia that was generated through syncopation, agogic stress and the repetitive upward trajectory of the successive melismas that occurred in the vocal line of the last section of ‘*Beim Schlafengehen*’. The upward trajectory was evident in all of their artworks and Kevin du Plessis even named his work ascension. The way that the artists made sense of this musical feature and the inertia that governed it corresponds with the intended meaning of the song: the desire of man to let their soul ascend to the ‘magic circle of the night’ (heaven) to finally attain eternal peace and solace.

In the fourth song of the cycle, *'Im Abendrot'*, the poet and the composer convey that by accepting the inevitability of death, joy and peace can be found in the afterlife. It is not something to fear. Strauss resonated with the sentiments of the poem and infused deeply personal emotion in his musical setting. Although the artists all responded to the joyful outburst that characterised the opening measures of the introduction, they predominantly ascribed feelings of loneliness, sadness and melancholy to the music. This was achieved although changes in mode from minor to major, musical gravity and Strauss' adept ability to utilise colour from the various instruments in the orchestra and the voice in his pursuit of conveying emotion through music. In both instances, the night served as a time and place for transfiguration, a place where the soul ascends to experience eternal solace. It also symbolises death; however, death is not the end, but rather the beginning of something new, something better. In the following chapter, I will explore how the ways in which the artists made sense of the five art songs mentioned in this book relate to the literature discussed in Chapter 1.



# Conclusion: How four visual artists made sense of referentialism in music during their creative processes and in their artworks

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## ■ Introduction

This research explored how four artists, namely Marna de Wet, Kevin du Plessis, Jean Lampen and Elna Venter, ascribed meaning to songs of the Romantic era by Franz Schubert, Hector Berlioz, Gabriel Fauré and Richard Strauss. Although there are 133 years that separate the years in which Schubert's *'Erlkönig'* and Strauss' *'Beim Schlafengehen'* were composed, in Chapter 5, I described why both these songs, and the remaining three are all deemed Romantic. In essence, these works composed between the mid-18th

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up until the early 20th centuries can be considered as one classic-Romantic period since Schubert, Berlioz, Fauré (his earlier style) and Richard Strauss 'shared conventions of harmony, rhythm, and form but differed in how they treated these conventions' (Burkholder, Grout & Palisca 2019:587–588).

The purpose of this study was to explore how each of the visual artists ascribed musical referential meaning to art songs without an understanding of the text, to examine how they made sense of their listening experiences during their creative process and to disseminate the tacit knowledge embedded in the artefacts produced. As noted in Chapter 2, to achieve these objectives, I employed a pluralistic method of inquiry that combined artistic research and phenomenology. From the data, it emerged that without an understanding of the text, the artists responded to the music's structural features and the prosodic elements of the singers' voices to ascribe meaning. During their creative process and listening experiences, they ascribed meaning to the songs by identifying the perceived and or felt emotions and other affects that the music evoked. They also identified sonic anaphones (how music can imitate non-musical or natural sounds) in the music.

Several authors have written about how composers have manipulated the acoustic properties of music to simulate non-musical sounds and ideas (Burkholder et al. 2019; Cameron-Mickens 2005; Day & Thompson 2019; Del Mar 1986; Hollis 2009; McKeever 2014; Petersen 1986; Tagg 2013; Trainor & Trehub 1992). Similarly, much literature exists on how music evokes emotional and visual responses in listeners (Blood & Zatorre 2001; Davies 2010, 2013; Day & Thompson 2019; Cook & Dibben 2011; Eerola 2010; Gabrielsson 2002; Gabrielsson & Lindström 2010; Juslin 2005; Juslin et al. 2010; Juslin & Lindström 2010; eds. Juslin & Sloboda 2010; Juslin & Västfjäll 2008; Scherer & Zentner 2001; Vuoskoski & Eerola 2011, 2012; Winner 2019).

What makes this study unique is firstly its interdisciplinary approach: it explores the phenomena of music emotional induction and the way in which the meaning derived from the referential nature of music can be visualised. Exploring the imagery elicited from music and emotion adds depth and insight to how the phenomenon of ascribing meaning to music can be understood. Furthermore, the aforementioned studies researched the initial emotional response to music, whereas the artists featured in this study engaged with each art song over an extended period. Consequently, their experience was either intensified or modified, and the final product (the artwork) resulted from cognitive appraisals of complex, multi-dimensional information that comprises how they made sense of the music, perceived and/or felt emotions and imagery derived from a prolonged engagement. Their experience confirms Henk Borgdorff's views that exploring an artistic process or phenomenon over a prolonged engagement provides a better understanding and comprehension of the knowledge generated (2010:55).

In Chapters 6 through 10, the various ways in which the four artists made sense of each art song were presented. The songs included Schubert's 'Erlkönig' ['The Erlking'], Op. 1, D 328, Berlioz's 'La spectre de la rose' ['The ghost of the rose'], from *Les nuits d'été* [*Summer nights*], Op. 7, Fauré's 'Après un rêve' ['After a dream'], Op. 7, No. 1 and the final two songs from Strauss' *Vier Letzte Lieder* [*Four Last Songs*], Op. posth., 'Beim Schlafengehen' ['While going to sleep'] and 'Im abendrot' ['At dusk']. The artists were all unfamiliar with these German and French songs, did not speak those languages and had to ascribe meaning to them without an understanding of the text. After I conducted cross-case analyses of how the artists ascribed meaning to each song, respectively, all the artists often ascribed similar and sometimes identical feelings or emotions to the songs. In many instances, the same musical structural features or forces elicited meaning-making and imagery.

In Chapter 3, Jaco Meyer presented a rich annotation of the musical forces that enable meaning-making according to Larson (2006, 2012). The musical forces known as *inertia* (where a musical pattern repeats itself until a resolution is reached), *gravity* (when unstable tones descend in pitch towards a stable tone, or when pitches on unstable beats move downwards) and *magnetism* (when unstable tones ascend and descend in pitch to the next stable tone and when unstable beats move forward to the nearest stable beat) played a significant role in the meaning-making process of the four artists. Similarly, the instrumental colour, harmonic colour, various other musical structural features and the prosodic elements of the singers' voices (pitch, length of sounds, dynamic variation and vocal quality or colour) all coalesced to facilitate meaning-making among the artists. In the following sections, I will present cross-case analyses of how the four artists ascribed meaning to each song, respectively, compare these findings to the literature and finally provide recommendations for further research.

## ■ Eliciting emotion and imagery from art songs without an understanding of the text

The artists spent a period of 5 months listening to the music, conceptualising and producing their work before it was exhibited at the Aardklop National Arts Festival in 2019. During the exhibition, patrons were able to view the artworks while listening to recordings of the songs that inspired them and read the poetry that the composers set to music. The poems were presented in English, and as the researcher and the curator, I commissioned Dr Philip van der Merwe and Mr Naldo Oberholzer<sup>33</sup> to translate the original German and French to Afrikaans, respectively.

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33. Both Dr van der Merwe and Mr Oberholzer were affiliated with North-West University in Potchefstroom while this research was conducted.

One of the objectives of the Aardklop National Arts Festival is to promote art creation and artistic discourse in Afrikaans. Many, if not most of the patrons that attend the festival, are also Afrikaans mother tongue speakers. By providing translations of the poetry in both English and Afrikaans, it was my intention to foster a better appreciation of the poetry when patrons could read it in their own language. Scholars have discussed how appreciation and meaning can be promoted when a message is received in the mother tongue of the listener. Nida (2001) described this concept as dynamic equivalence. After the artists completed this project, I sat down with them and let them listen to the songs one last time: this time I recited the poetry in Afrikaans. Afrikaans is also their first language. Immediately, they began to beam with excitement as they realised that the meaning they ascribed from the music without an understanding of the German and French texts resonated with the poetry.

## ■ Making emotion explicit

Evidently, two of the artists, Jean Lampen and Elna Venter expressed a desire to name their artworks after phrases from the translated poems. To them, these phrases captured the essence of their experience and conveyed their intended meaning. To me, this reflected the desire of the artists to make referential intent explicit by means of words (speech) or text. By naming their works, Jean and Elna experienced a catharsis in uniting their experience and their art through text. Alternatively, Marna and Kevin chose words like 'ascension', 'evocation', 'the bed' or 'silent', words that rather reflected their final cognitive appraisal of their experience, to name their artworks. Baldwin and Moses (2014) stated that:

Emotions, like words, have an intentional, referential quality. They tend to be *about* things: One usually feels sad, ecstatic, disgusted, or fearful about something, be it an object, event, action or outcome. Accurately interpreting others' emotional displays thus depends critically on understanding this 'aboutness' relation and being able to identify the relevant thing in any given instance. (p. 144)

In both instances, the artists needed to be sure that the observer understood what the meaning or emotion was that they intended to convey. In my opinion, words often lack the ability to convey the full emotional capacity of meaning, and as Hans Christian Andersen is said to have uttered: 'when words fail, music speaks' (Baker n.d.). During the exhibition, patrons were able to appreciate the artworks in conjunction with the musical input of the recordings and naming their works afforded the artists the platform to facilitate a better understanding of their creative process. As the researcher, I chose art songs from the Romantic era as the composers of these songs intended to convey referential meaning through the music's structural features, in addition to the meaning that is made explicit in the text.

The artists listened to all the songs in one sitting before engaging with them individually. They all proceeded to document the feelings or emotions

that the songs elicited from their initial listening experience. Marna perceived nostalgia and melancholy as the overarching emotions in response to all five songs. Jean perceived and felt feelings of sadness, melancholy and loneliness. After listening to the music for the first time, she perceived those feelings and then pictured images of being alone in a city, sitting and writing to someone, writing about death or love, and she also pictured several empty chairs. Elna reported that all the songs elicited the perception of melancholy in the music. She also perceived longing, loss, farewell and acceptance emanating from the various songs. When Kevin first listened to all five songs, he reported that the music evoked longing, pain, excitement and tenderness and that some of the songs conveyed passion shared between lovers.

### ■ The Night (*'Nagmusiek'*)

It is evident that all four artists shared similar meaning-making experiences in response to the songs, and how they made sense of the music resonates with the symbolism inherent in each song: *the night*. I chose these songs because the actions and emotions that present in these songs occur in the greater context of the night. The night served as the time when a fearful father raced to save his terrified son from the Erlking. The night served as the setting for a ball in which the ghost of a rose longed for the passion shared between himself and the woman whose breast he now adorns. The night serves as the time and place for dreams to occur, dreams that beckon and yearn for the unattainable. But the night is more than just its temporality. The night serves as a metaphor for death, for which the protagonists of the final two songs yearn. In Romantic literature, the night is associated with longing for the unattainable, with mystery and with yearning for solace against life's torments that can only be found in death (Kravitt 1992:102). The meaning derived from the artists' initial response to the music confirms that the composers were successful in conveying ideas and concepts associated with the night, through the music's structural features, the way the vocal line was written and the musical forces that govern these songs. Once, the artists began to listen to each individual song over a prolonged period, their initial responses either intensified or modified, and more nuanced emotions were evoked and images conjured.

### ■ Schubert's *'Erlkönig'*

After listening to Schubert's *'Erlkönig'* for the first time, all the artists perceived fear in the music. The triplet figures in the piano introduction and the ascending left-hand motif evoked feelings that they described as anxious, urgent, racing, distressed and Jean immediately visualised someone running in fear. The feelings that they described resonate with Juslin and Sloboda's (2010:77) description of fear: when one faces an 'immediate, concrete, or overwhelming physical danger'. Fear is a basic emotion that most sentient beings experience.



It is a utilitarian emotion that helps people to survive by avoiding dangerous situations (Zentner 2010).

While Marna, Kevin and Elna only perceived fear in the music, after a prolonged engagement with the music Jean also felt the emotion. However, cognitively, she knew that she was never in physical danger. This illustrates music's potential to evoke physiological responses from the same emotion one could experience in other contexts; however, when listening to music, the reaction to utilitarian emotions, for example, could elicit a different somatic response. In this instance, Jean felt fear in response to the music but her body did not trigger a flight or fight response as it would in a life-threatening situation.

Based on the music's structural features that the artists reported to have elicited the perception of fear, the fast tempo, minor mode, low sound level, large sound level variability, rapid changes in sound level, high pitch, ascending pitch, wide pitch range, large pitch contrasts, jerky rhythms, soft timbre, pauses, soft attacks and fast vibrato rate of the singer's voice correspond with the musical structural features usually associated with fear (Juslin & Lindström 2010:335). Furthermore, the prosodic elements of Ian Bostridge's voice, especially pitch variation, dynamic change and vocal timbre, played a significant role in the artist's meaning-making process. Elna could hear four distinct characters as the singer changed his vocal quality. The artists ascribed meaning to parts of the music governed by musical gravity especially towards the end of the song. In these instances, they made sense of the music as consolation, resolving issues and the acceptance of fate. The finality that accompanies the feeling of resolution and acceptance was musically further supported by the resolving cadential material and the prosodic elements of the voice. In his seminal research, Meyer (1956) posited that the occurrence of an expected musical resolution can significantly contribute to meaning-making.

Besides fear, the artists also perceived other emotions or feelings from the music like seduction, a state of being convincing, optimism and self-confidence. These feelings were aroused in response to the music of the Erlking himself. Here, the artists responded to the prosodic elements of the voice, the change to the major mode and the change in rhythm in the piano accompaniment. While Juslin and Lindström's (2010) list of musical features do not account for feelings such as seduction or optimism, they do mention that there are several other nuanced feelings and emotions that can be evoked through music. The feelings that the artists described mostly resonate with Zentner's description of joyful activation from the GEMS (2010:106) of nuanced feelings induced by or perceived in lyric-free music. I would argue that even though the artists did not understand the German text, the added meaning that was afforded by the prosodic elements of the singer's voice allowed them to identify such nuanced affects like seduction, optimism or self-confidence.

The music elicited images of darkness in both Elna and Marna. Some of the images that were conjured include an approaching train, a wood at night and someone being trapped and unable to escape. All of these images relate to the fear that was perceived in the music, and fear is associated with extremely high, negative levels of valence (Winner 2019). Kevin reported images being conjured of someone struggling, someone who was unable to break free from an invisible or supernatural force. While these images also relate to fear, he reported that they were only conjured after he engaged with the music for a long time. This supports findings by Day and Thompson (2019) that images form quicker when the music is more familiar to the listener. Although the music was unfamiliar to all the artists, this phenomenon was especially true in Kevin's case. I would also argue that the music evoked imagery more quickly for the other artists because the songs are especially emotionally charged. Although music does not always elicit imagery, several scholars assert that when music is emotionally charged, it frequently evokes imagery (Day & Thompson 2019; Eerola 2010; Lindborg & Friberg 2015; Scherer & Zentner 2001; Taruffi et al. 2017; Vuoskoski & Eerola 2012).

Marna's process elicited an interesting response in the way she ultimately made sense of the song. Because the images and feelings that were elicited from the Erlking's music derived from her perception of happiness in the music, the images that she conjured were of a happy family in their home. The family was proud of this home, and the home served to protect them from the threat that she initially perceived in the music. After a prolonged engagement with the music, her final interpretation of the song was that it symbolised pride. Pride in this instance was not an emotion that was derived from the music's structural features but rather of her cognitive appraisal of the various feelings evoked in the music and the images conjured. Her experience supports Juslin and Västfjäll's (2008:559) view that visual imagery can play an integral role in the way music and emotion is ultimately perceived. In this instance, the imagery evoked modified the initial meaning-making response from the music completely.

## ■ Berlioz's '*La spectre de la rose*'

Overall, the artists perceived a feeling of exposure or revelation, a feeling of a farewell, nostalgia, pain, loss, passion and angst in response to Berlioz's '*La spectre de la rose*'. They also ascribed parts of the music as soft, dreamy, sentimental, intense and sad. Jean reported that she felt like she wanted to dance in response to measures 28–41. Elna described the climax of the song (mm. 44–50) as a hymn of praise and an exclamation of admiration and beauty. While all the artists perceived emotions in the music, only Elna and Jean experienced a physiological response to the music as well. Unlike other studies where respondents reported one emotion to a short segment of lyric-free music (Blood & Zatorre 2001; Day & Thompson 2019; Zentner 2010), the

four artists reported several feelings associated with nuanced emotions that derive from musical induction according to the GEMS. The feelings they reported associate with the emotions of wonder, tenderness, nostalgia, peacefulness, power, joyful activation, tension and sadness (Zentner 2010).

It is unsurprising that a song like '*Le spectre de la rose*' would elicit such a variety of emotional responses as it is not only emotionally charged, in addition, the story features rich, varied descriptions of feelings, places and objects. Gautier's poem begins with the expression of an awakening from a dream; the protagonist (the ghost of the rose) then recalls the turbulent, passionate affair shared with the woman upon whom he now lays, as if her breast were his tomb. Berlioz's music is charged with emotion, but more specifically he was able to convey intentional meaning that supported the explicit meaning of the text through the use of instrumentation (both colour and dynamic variation), rhythmic variation, tempo variation, the descent and rise in pitch and the prosodic elements of Susan Graham's voice. The artists' experiences confirm that Berlioz successfully conveyed intentional meaning through the music, beyond what is made explicit in the text. Furthermore, the findings support the theory that music can convey non-musical ideas and concepts and that it can indeed be referential (Corcoran 1987; Day & Thompson 2019; Tagg 2013; Trainor & Trehub 1992).

The detail of the imagery conjured during their listening experiences can be attributed to the musical inertia and musical gravity, as described by Larson (2006, 2012), that governed the song. The repetitive patterns (inertia) that resulted from the rise in pitch in the vocal line and orchestra and the increasing dynamic levels, as well as the tremolos of the strings, elicited images of clouds moving away in front of the moon exposing something in Marna's experience, a flower bud opening surrounded by flames in Elna's experience and the inner struggle and passion of a pair of lovers in Kevin's experience. The descending vocal lines that resolved (gravity), sometimes unexpectedly in the lower registers of the voice and the instruments, conjured images of the night, the stars, a moonless night, a slain lamb and the pain felt by lovers. In their final artworks, Marna depicted the imagery derived from the music and the emotions she perceived as the exposed naked back of a woman, protruding from a dark landscape; Jean depicted a slain lamb with a kiss on its breast (above it hovers the wolf implicit in its death); Elna depicted a rose whose life is threatened by encroaching flames; and Kevin depicted a couple whose embrace and body language emote the turbulence and passion of their relationship. Elna's rose, the kiss on Jean's lamb and Kevin's passionate lovers also correlate with textual descriptions of images found in Gautier's poem.

## ■ Fauré's '*Après un rêve*'

After a prolonged engagement with the music, the artists ascribed similar meanings in response to the music. Overall, all the artists derived meaning

from the music's structural features and the prosodic elements of the voice as nostalgic and reported that the music elicited feelings of deep longing. Marna stated that the music sounded like a dream and described how the music of the third verse evoked a feeling of urgency: that it sounded like a distress call. This can especially be attributed to the rise in pitch, dynamic level and intensity of the voice. In other contexts, a rise in the pitch and dynamic levels of the accompaniment and the singer's voice can often lead to the induction of happiness or joyful activation. In this instance, Fauré's use of the minor mode and the distinct vocal timbre of the singer lead Marna to ascribe meaning to the song as urgent, nostalgic and distressing. While Juslin and Lindström (2010:335) do not denote these specific effects in their table of musically induced emotions, Marna's listening experience suggests that when certain structural features usually associated with fear and sadness combine, that it can elicit feelings of distress and longing.

Jean and Elna reported the sadness that they perceived in response to the music, and Kevin described the music as a sense of lamenting for something beautiful. The findings suggest that the feelings of sadness, melancholy, longing and nostalgia that the artists perceived in response to the music derived from the use of the minor mode, the musical gravity that governed especially the final part of the song, and most notably the prosodic elements of Dame Kiri te Kanawa's voice. Winner (2019) confirmed how the prosodic elements of speech, in conjunction with the use of the minor mode, can elicit sadness in a listener:

One clear finding from research is that certain structural features in music mirror how emotions are conveyed by the prosodic features of speech, such as speed, pitch level, and loudness. When we are sad we speak more slowly, more softly, and in a lower register. Thus when music is slow and soft and low, we perceive it as sad. Other emotional properties (like the link between the minor mode and sadness, the major mode and happiness) may be learned, but as I pointed out, I do not believe this matter has been fully resolved. Research has also shown that people agree on which basic emotions are expressed by music even in a culturally unfamiliar form. This cannot help but soften the sadness. (pp. 238–239)

As Winner (2019) suggests, the four artists may have ascribed sadness, melancholy and nostalgia as common emotions as they share a cultural identity; however, she asserted that research also confirms the induction of emotion in response to expected musical features despite cultural conditioning. Kevin, Jean, Marna and Elna reported that they perceived sadness, melancholy and nostalgia in the music, while Marna and Jean indicated that after a prolonged engagement with the music, they felt those emotions as well. Davies (2010:179) argued that in some instances, listeners may perceive emotion in response to music when they mirror the emotion evoked by the music's structural features. He asserted that 'emotional contagion' is more of an appropriate description of emotional induction since the music cannot be an emotional object that the listener appraises (music cannot feel emotion itself and therefore emote that affect). Instead, it is a perceptual object.

He described the difference in somatic response to musically induced emotions, asserting that when one perceives or feels fear in response to music, the listener does not perceive the music to be a threat (Davies 2010). His argument resonated with how the artists perceived fear as a common emotion in response to Schubert's '*Erlkönig*'. Consequently, fear was not aroused in Jean because she found the music to be a threat.

Emotional contagion may be attributed to the way in which all four artists perceived the music to be sad, nostalgic and melancholic and evoke a sense of deep longing. However, the data suggest that the process of inducing aroused emotions involves more than emotional contagion as all four artists were exposed to the same musical structural features over an extended period: all the artists perceived the same feelings, but only two felt these feelings as well. Furthermore, contagion or mimicry is only one of eight core mechanisms that account for music emotion induction according to the BRECVEMA framework (Juslin et al. 2010:619).

Zentner (2010:112) asserted that the arousal of feelings that one might first perceive in music is complex, and the induction of aroused feelings occurs in response to the structural features of the music, the features of the performance, the listener's features and the context in which a person listens to the music. When the artists listened to the recording of '*Après un rêve*', the only differences in the induction process, as described by Zentner (2010:112), were their own intrinsic characteristics as people (listener features) and the space in which they listened to the song (context features). The data suggest that after a prolonged engagement with the same music (when the structural and performance features are the same), emotion may be aroused in some listeners depending on their musical expertise, their stable disposition or mood state and the environment in which they find themselves (Zentner 2010).

After listening to '*Après un rêve*', Marna and Jean never felt sad because the music made them feel bad since the music is not the emotional object but rather a perceptual object (Davies 2010). Winner (2019) confirmed that the music is not the emotional object of the sadness that is aroused and also asserted that in addition, listeners may also feel emotions other than the initially perceived emotions:

Yet when we hear sadness in music and thus feel sad ourselves, there is no object to our sadness. Nothing bad has happened to make us feel sad [...] They do not always directly mirror in themselves what they hear in the music because they can also distinguish what they hear from what they feel. For instance, people can hear music as sad yet report feeling nostalgic or dreamy. But I have suggested that the emotions we feel from music feel somewhat different from emotions that have objects and that are evoked outside of music. We know that the sadness that Elgar's cello concerto evokes is caused by the performance of music, and not by an actual tragedy. (p. 239)

Jean and Marna both reported that the music also triggered memories that made them nostalgic and sad (De Wet 2019; Venter 2019). In a previous study,

I found that because of Marna's disposition, the memories and imagery that the music elicited often evoked nostalgia and melancholy (Cupido 2016:13). In the BRECVEMA framework, episodic memory ('a conscious recollection of a particular event from the listener's past which is triggered by a musical pattern') and evaluative conditioning ('a regular pairing of a piece of music and other positive or negative stimuli leading to a conditioned association') constitute two of the eight core mechanisms involved in music emotion induction (Juslin et al. 2010). The way in which the emotions that Marna and Jean reported were induced corresponds with several of the eight core mechanisms, but in this instance most noticeably with episodic memory. Similarly, after a prolonged engagement with the music, they associated the structural features – especially the minor mode and the prosodic elements of the voice – with the emotions triggered earlier by their memories as well as how these features independently induced emotions. As time progressed, evaluative conditioning played a greater role in the intensification or modification from the perception of emotion to the arousal of felt emotions.

As the listener, they first perceived sadness, melancholy and nostalgia in response to the music's structural features. However, I argue that they themselves also became the emotional object of their own aroused feelings. In this instance, music that was perceived to be sad and nostalgic facilitated the arousal of the same feelings in response to memories of the listeners' past experiences. The data suggest that one's mood state or disposition may make one more susceptible to emotional arousal. Similarly, people who have a tendency to recall nostalgic or melancholic events more frequently may also elicit felt emotional responses from music.

The final imagery that the artists conjured in response to the music and their elicited emotions can mostly be attributed to the prosodic elements of the voice (especially the rise in pitch), as well as the musical gravity inherent to the song. The qualities that entail musical gravity are reflected in Jean and Elna's final artworks. Jean visualised a wolf, hunched and vulnerable, its body position illustrating the exertion of an external force. Elna presented a tortoise retreating back into its shell in a sleepy, slow fashion. Although musical gravity also influenced the images conjured in Marna and Kevin, the images that were reflected in their artworks resulted predominantly from the rise in pitch away from the main tessitura of the song as well as the longing they identified in the vocal quality of the singer's voice. The way that both Kevin and Marna made sense of '*Après un rêve*' directly corresponds with the explicit meaning in the text: both artists conjured images of dreaming, specifically awakening from a dream and longing for something beautiful that was lost.

## ■ Strauss' '*Beim Schlafengehen*'

After a prolonged engagement listening to Strauss' '*Beim Schlafengehen*', overall the artists, respectively, reported that the song elicited the following

perceived emotions: longing, happiness, passion, sadness, loneliness, wonder and hopelessness. After listening to the song repeatedly, emotions were also physiologically aroused in Marna, Jean and Elna. Marna, Kevin and Elna described the music to be nostalgic and that sensed a deep longing for something beautiful. Kevin and Elna especially responded to the musical resolution of the music's structural features in the final section of the song.

Elna indicated that the music sounded as if conflicting issues had been resolved and Kevin reported that the music emoted a sense of self-understanding. The self-understanding that Kevin described was elicited through the successive melismatic patterns of the singing in the final section of the song and the images that the melismas conjured (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019). Here, as described by Larson (2006), in conjunction, with the prosodic elements of the voice, musical inertia elicited meaning-making moments and imagery. Kevin pictured a lover who wanted to reunite with a deceased partner. The lover then had a better understanding of self, of what would provide them with meaning, happiness and purpose. Winner (2019:241) asserted that when one is greatly moved by visual art (and by extension imagery), then 'an area of the brain known to be associated with introspection, the default mode network, is activated'. She further argued that visual art has the potential to foster self-understanding in ourselves. The self-understanding that Kevin perceived in the music was ascribed as a result of imagery, the musical structural features and the prosodic elements of the music. In this instance, three core mechanisms as described in the BRECVEMA framework played a significant role in the way in which he ascribed meaning, namely, brain stem reflex, visual imagery and musical expectancy (Juslin et al. 2010:619).

The musical inertia that governed the successive melismas in the music also significantly elicited meaning for all the artists and the upward trajectory of the music (painting the ascension of the soul to Heaven in Hesse's poem) can be seen visually in aspects of their artworks. Moreover, the large intervallic leaps, agogic stress and syncopated rhythms that were presented during the melismatic passages also generated the phenomenon of *Schwung* as described in Chapter 9. *Schwung* in the melismas elicited considerable meaning-making moments as reported by the four artists. The ways in which the artists ascribed meaning to the music confirm the research that asserts the ability of musical phrases containing *Schwung* to evoke emotion in the listener (Cameron-Mickens 2005; Del Mar 1986; Petersen 1986; Wanless 1984). The emotions and associated feelings that Marna, Kevin, Jean and Elna experienced in response to the music were wonder, happiness, longing and nostalgia, and together with the music, these emotions elicited the most imagery (Marna de Wet pers. comm., 2019; Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019; Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). Zentner (2010) confirmed that nostalgia has proven to trigger increased activity in the hippocampus and the visual cortex.

Although all the artists were exposed to the same musical structural features including the prosodic elements of the voice, Jean made sense of the music in a slightly different way. While she also stated that the song evoked a sense of longing, to Jean, the successive melismas sung by Renée Fleming sounded like a woman longing to be comforted (Jean Lampen pers. comm., 2019). This image conjured by Jean in conjunction with the musical gravity that governed the introductory and final passages of the song played a significant role in Jean's final cognitive appraisal of the song. Overall, these factors triggered perceived and aroused emotions of sadness and loneliness.

Once again, I would attribute this to Jean's natural disposition and mood state (Zentner 2010:112) and her propensity to recall melancholic or nostalgic events. The latter characteristic denotes the significant role that episodic memory and visual imagery (Juslin et al. 2010:619) play in Jean's emotion induction process. In a previous study, Jean reported that when she engages with nostalgia or longing, and these emotions are elicited from the music in a romantic context, that she does not regard it as 'feel-good' music (Cupido 2016:10). In fact, based on her past experience, Jean regards romantic love to be 'naïve' and 'too sentimental' (Cupido 2016). Zentner (2010:106) described both melancholy and sentimentality to be associated with feelings of nostalgia. I would posit that when nostalgia (about romantic love) is evoked in Jean through music, she is naturally drawn to the melancholy of the emotion and cognitively rejects the sentimentality that the music could elicit. In this instance, Jean conditioned her association of nostalgia perceived in the music to be melancholic, consequently highlighting the role that evaluative conditioning plays in her emotion induction in addition to episodic memory and visual imagery (Juslin et al. 2010:619).

## ■ Strauss' '*Im abendrot*'

After their initial listening experience, all the artists reported that the music sounded majestic, as if it was scored for an epic film or television series like *Out of Africa* or *Game of Thrones*. Their response was elicited by the harmonic colour of the opening chord, the dynamic level and the high pitch of the instruments. The associated feelings that the artists describe in response to the opening measures relate to the musically induced emotions of wonder, transcendence and power (Zentner 2010:106). As early as measure 6 of '*Im abendrot*', Strauss introduces chords in the minor mode as well as dissonant harmonies, while the melody continues with an expansive feeling, dominated by syncopated rhythms. Many of the musical structural features that the artists responded to in these passages of the introduction correspond with selected musical features associated with fear, sadness and tenderness like slow tempo, minor mode, dissonance, small intervals (e.g. minor second), legato articulation, high pitch, medium-low sound level and small sound level variability (Juslin & Lindström 2010:335).



The images that the artists conjured, in response to the majestic nature of the opening measures and the sadness and melancholy that the following phrases evoked, were of desolate, barren, sad landscapes. Arguably music associated with a movie such as *Out of Africa* would conjure vast, green, lush landscapes and in such an instance the artists' meaning-making would highlight the prevalence of evaluative conditioning and visual imagery as the main mechanisms that would conjure both emotion and imagery (Juslin et al. 2010:619). However, the data suggest that their reaction to the acoustic features of the music (brain stem reflex) influenced how their ultimate cognitive appraisal of the music realised in addition to the emotion derived from the initial core mechanisms: the vast landscapes that could have been lush and green were transformed to present as sad, barren or desolate.

In several of the artworks, the artists used landscapes to illustrate meaning derived from the music as sad, fearful, nostalgic, expansive, desolate, dreamy and melancholic. Elna depicted a dark landscape as a backdrop to her interpretation of Schubert's '*Erkönig*', where she perceived fear and later felt anger in response to the music. Marna depicted the ocean in response to Fauré's '*Après un rêve*' where she responded to the perception of distress and longing in the music. She also depicted a dark landscape emanating down from the exposed back of a woman in response to the meaning that she ascribed to Berlioz's '*La spectre de la rose*'. Finally, Marna also depicted a barren, desolation landscape in response to her perception and aroused feelings of sadness, peacefulness and tranquillity in Strauss' '*Im abendrot*'. The depictions of landscape in art can be traced back to the 16th century (Nelson 2009). In the 18th century, Edmund Burke challenged the notion of beauty in art and suggested that visual experiences can include more than just what is designated as either beautiful or ugly and suggested the inclusion of the sublime as an aesthetic category (Chu 2003; Nelson 2009). In Chapter 4, Willem Venter described the sublime experience in greater detail. Burke argued that aesthetic landscapes depicting the sublime were often induced by 'fear', 'anxiety' and 'terror' and that (Nelson 2009):

Experiences of the sublime were often greater in intensity than experiences of beauty because powerful human emotions could be evoked by pain or fear [...] These experiences often involved encounters with darkness, vastness, and emptiness amidst mountains, deserts, or the sea. (pp. 156-157)

The ways in which the artists used landscapes to infuse emotions like fear and sadness in a visual form largely resonate with how Nelson (2009) described Edmund Burke's philosophy on aesthetic landscapes and the sublime and the spirit of Romanticism. As Nelson also links the darkness to the sublime experience, so too is darkness represented in the work of the artists. These visual representations can be attributed to how they ascribed meaning to the music when they referred to darkness or the night.

The artists also, respectively, described the emotions and feelings evoked through the music as nostalgic, peaceful tranquil, moving, sombre, melancholic and sad. Elna felt in awe of the music and stated that it aroused a feeling of transcendence (Elna Venter pers. comm., 2019). Kevin described the music as ‘a lamentation of loneliness or remembering something that was lost and is now out of reach’ (Kevin du Plessis pers. comm., 2019). They attributed how they made sense of the music to the qualities that correspond with Larson’s (2006, 2012) theory of musical gravity, as well as the colour of Jessye Norman’s voice and the efficacy of her interpretive nuances. The artists also identified the sonic anaphones in the music. This resulted from Strauss’ use of flutes and the piccolo in acoustically simulating the two Larks described in von Eichendorff’s poem. Combined with the meaning they derived from the prosodic elements of the voice, the artists also described this moment as happy, inspiring or optimistic. Most notably, all the artists responded to the intentional meaning that Strauss wanted to convey in this song. The meanings they ascribed resonated with the peaceful acceptance of death that is articulated in von Eichendorff’s poem.

## ■ Conclusion and recommendations

The purpose of this interdisciplinary study was to explore the phenomenon of how visual artists ascribe meaning to music (art songs) without an understanding of the text and consequently to examine how they make sense of the music during their artistic process of creating art. The aims of the research were achieved using a pluralistic methodological approach employing artistic research and phenomenology. In Chapters 1–5, the authors presented music, emotion and art that served to contextualise the main concepts. In Chapters 6–11, I presented empirical evidence that answered the main research question that propelled this study:

- How do visual artists ascribe musical referential meaning to art songs during their process of creating art without an understanding of the text?

I also answered a secondary question:

- What new understandings do this study reveal about the creative process and products of four artists through artistic research and phenomenology?

By answering these questions, I presented new understandings on the relationship between music, emotion and the imagery represented in art. The findings that emerged in this study pertain to how four artists ascribed meaning to music. It was not my intention to infer any of the findings on a broader cohort of artists. Instead, this research revealed new insights that could apply to other artists through further exploration and study.

Furthermore, the research confirmed and added to the existing literature on music emotion induction:

- Specifically, the findings support the theory that music can convey non-musical ideas and concepts and that it can indeed be referential.
- Also that musically induced emotions do not necessarily evoke the same somatic response to the same emotion in other contexts (e.g. the artists did not experience a fight or flight response when felt or perceived fear).
- This study offers new insights that can be explored in further research: that a prolonged engagement with a musical composition can alter the initial emotion perceived and induce physiological emotional responses to music that were not present during the initial music listening experience.
- That the familiarity of music acquired after a prolonged engagement can evoke positive emotions (even when sadness or melancholy is perceived), can conjure imagery and influence the final cognitive appraisal of the ways in which meaning is ascribed.
- That episodic memory and evaluative conditioning can play a significant role in meaning-making.
- That the singing voice can convey complex emotions through its prosodic qualities.

In many instances, the emotions and images that were evoked in the artists corresponded to the explicit themes and images referenced in the text. Aesthetic emotions as captured in the GEMS (Zentner 2010:106) like nostalgia, wonder, transcendence, tension, sadness, joyful activation, peacefulness, power and their associated feelings were most evoked in the artists. Some of these emotions overlap with what researchers describe as basic emotions (eds. Juslin & Sloboda 2010; Lazarus 1991; Oatley 1992). Many studies that focus on emotion induction from lyric-free music used short samples of music to elicit meaning (Blood & Zatorre 2001; Day & Thompson 2019). During this study, the artists listened to entire art songs, and several emotions, feelings and imagery were evoked from each song. They also listened to the songs repeatedly, over a long period, and as a result, the emotions that they perceived either intensified or were modified. In some instances, Kevin only conjured imagery after a prolonged engagement with the music. These findings confirmed that familiarity with music affords the listener the opportunity to conjure images faster as they become more acquainted with the music (Day & Thompson 2019:75).

When the artists listened to a song repeatedly over a longer period, the initial emotion that they perceived was later aroused physiologically in some. When a basic emotion like fear was aroused, the artists did not have a somatic response like one would in a life-threatening situation. The findings confirm Winner's (2019) assertions that one's cognitive response to musically induced emotions is different than when the same emotion is elicited in other contexts.

Much research has been written on emotion induction in response to lyric-free music; however, the findings of this study indicate that the human singing voice has the potential to add more nuanced, richer depth to emotion inductive experiences (even without an understanding of the text). In Chapter 1, I posed the question whether a singer could potentially convey the meaning of the text of an art song and evoke emotion while the listener was unaware of the meaning of the text? The findings show that this is indeed possible. In fact, some of the effects or ideas directly deriving from the voice were much more nuanced and included the feeling of seduction, loneliness, self-confidence, self-understanding, optimism and acceptance.

After a long engagement with the music, the initial emotion perceived by some of the artists, in response to the music, were altered when they tried to make sense of the imagery conjured in their final cognitive appraisal of the music. In such an instance, I would argue that this process is then a cognitive response and not an emotional response, although the perceived emotion did play a role in the artists final meaning-making process. The data indicated that when selected musical features associated with fear and sadness combine with the prosodic elements of the voice, the artists ascribed meaning to the music as distressing or emanating longing. Although the artists ascribed meaning to the music in very similar ways, the data also suggested that when we listen to the same music performed by the same performer, the same emotions can be aroused in some and only perceived by others. I would attribute this to the listener's mood state and disposition as well as the significant role that episodic memory and evaluative conditioning plays in their emotion induction process.

The data reflected that brain stem reflexes, musical expectancy and visual imagery played a significant role in the initial induction of emotion, and over an extended period evaluative conditioning, visual imagery and episodic memory greatly affected the modification or intensification of the initial emotions induced in the artists. I would argue that when music elicits memories that evoke emotion in the listener, the listener becomes their own emotional object, especially when emotions like sadness, melancholy and nostalgia are evoked. Furthermore, through evaluative conditioning listeners may be able to cognitively adapt the way in which they perceive or feel emotions: In Jean's case when nostalgia is induced (when it is associated with romantic love), it is always a melancholic feeling instead of a happy or sentimental feeling.

This research also provided valuable insights to classical singers about their craft. The research highlights that they have the potential to convey the emotion intended by the composer and made it explicit in the text, without the listener needing to understand the text. I do not suggest that the singer not endeavour to strive for clear and understandable diction and articulation. The antithesis is actually quite true as the artists in this study demonstrated

that they found considerable meaning-making moments in the ways consonants were articulated for example. When the artists listened to the songs much meaning was derived from the acoustical properties of how the vowels and consonants were enunciated. Rather, I argue that singers can augment or enrich their performance by utilising a variety of vocal colour; also that the way they enunciate vowels and consonants provides unending potential for meaning-making. The findings revealed the need for further research to quantify or measure the significance of each of the eight core mechanisms that comprise the BRECVEMA framework and how they develop from person to person when listening to the same piece of music over an extended period. The research also revealed the potential of music to facilitate self-understanding, transcendence, optimism, hope and other positive emotions. This is of particular interest to scholars engaged in interdisciplinary research on music, well-being and positive psychology.

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Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research has made significant contributions to the scientific community, as this kind of research promotes the understanding of complex phenomena by providing rich, in-depth new insights from multiple perspectives. In this research the phenomenon of ascribing meaning to music, specifically music emotion induction, was explored through the process of making visual art. This scholarly book focuses on how four artists, Marna de Wet, Kevin du Plessis, Jean Lampen and Elna Venter ascribed meaning to songs of the Romantic era by Franz Schubert, Hector Berlioz, Gabriel Fauré and Richard Strauss without an understanding of the French and German Text. Besides empirical data, several original artworks are also included in this book that represent art songs sung by Ian Bostridge, Kiri te Kanawa, Renée Fleming, Susan Graham and Jessye Norman. The target audience for this research includes scholars interested in the creation of visual art, the experiences of artists, art song and its interpretation, the ability of music to evoke emotion in listeners, interdisciplinary research and ways of developing artistic research. This study not only contributes new knowledge about the experiences of artists and their practice, as well as ascribing meaning to music, but it also contributes to the discourse surrounding the innovation and development of artistic research as a method, specifically using a pluralistic approach.

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The authors offer a clear synthesized thesis that, although scholarly rigorous, unfolds like a ‘novel,’ the reader eagerly awaiting the reveal of each artist’s artwork and how that specific visual representation of the music came to fruition. *Music, Art & Emotion* is a seminal book on the subject of creativity between the visual and performing arts. The book discovers the inextricable link between the mysticism of music and the power it holds to evoke an emotional response in the listener. This study provides helpful insight as a “how to” guide in undertaking an interdisciplinary study between the visual and performing arts. We all have to pay attention, and this book guides and offers a roadmap for peers and scholars to develop their paying-attention techniques.

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