THE SYMBOLISM OF DEATH IN ARNOLD VAN WYK'S FIVE ELEGIES: AN APPLICATION OF WILLIAM KIMMEL'S THEORY CONCERNING THE PHRYGIAN INFLECTION

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ABSTRACT

Arnold van Wyk (1916 - 1983) frequently referred to the extramusical concepts of the elegiac, and of mournfulness, introspection and death when describing the intended content of his works. The import of these concepts seems to have been a constant element spanning his entire oeuvre.

In this dissertation, William Kimmel's theory concerning the *Phrygian Inflection and the Appearance of Death in Music* is applied to Van Wyk's *Five Elegies for String Quartet*. Kimmel's theory is applied to the following parameters of each of the *Five Elegies*: melody, harmony and structure. In addition, the elements of rhythm, pulse, texture and timbre are investigated. Since Van Wyk often linked the concepts of death and protest, an interpretation of the work as *music of protest* is included in the final chapter of the study.

It is concluded that Kimmel's theory has substantial--although not conclusive--validity in terms of the work under study. It is moreover possible to trace the inflection's presence through the parameters of pulse, rhythm, texture and timbre. In the absence of specific indications by the composer of the substance of the intended protest, observations in this regard are of a speculative nature.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Music in the University of Natal, Durban. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

[Signature]

...day of FEBRUARY, 1991.
PREFACE

This study was initially conceived as a purely formal analysis of Van Wyk's *Five Elegies for String Quartet*. However, since Van Wyk frequently referred to the intended extramusical qualities of *death* and *protest* when discussing this work, it was decided to further explore this level of meaning. In order to elucidate possible structural allusions to the concept of 'death', Van Wyk's *Five Elegies for String Quartet* was analysed mainly in terms of William Kimmel's study *The Phrygian Inflection and the Appearance of Death in Music*. This study is therefore an examination of van Wyk's *Five Elegies for String Quartet* in terms of the composer's observations, as well as an exploration of possible meaning which does not draw exclusively on verifiable sources of information.

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Martin Smith
February 1991
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"I am not a great composer for ultimately, I can write only mournful music"

ARNOLD VAN WYK
1916 - 1983
It seems to be generally accepted that music has meaning and that this meaning can be communicated to performers and listeners. Exactly how this meaning is constituted and communicated has however frequently been a point of debate.

Broadly speaking, there appear to be two schools of thought regarding the nature of the meaning in music. One holds that musical meaning operates only on a purely musical level, i.e., that music can express only intramusical meaning. The other contends that, in addition to intramusical meaning, music has the power to convey extramusical meaning, and that it can somehow refer to the realm of concepts, ideas, actions, events, feelings, moods or emotional states.

The problem raised by these opposing views was clearly articulated by Hanslick in 1854 in his study *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, and ever since many composers have declared their adherence to one or the other stance. For example, Igor Stravinsky (1882 - 1971) said that:
"Music is by its very nature essentially powerless to express anything at all...Expression has never been an inherent property of music."
(Stravinsky, 1936: 53)

Heinz Werner Henze (b. 1926) is explicitly against viewing music in this way when he writes:

"Music is as far from being abstract as is a language, a death, a love. The mere fact that it is endlessly invented, wrested from the material, that through it something is snatched from fleeting time as it rushes by, that something is preserved, that in the concretisation of time a longing is expressed and fulfilled -- all this prohibits the use of the word 'abstract'.'
(Henze, quoted by Crofton, 1988: 50)

However, to regard Henze as 'referentialist' and therefore in diametrical opposition to Stravinsky who can be seen as 'absolutist', is not entirely accurate; although the 'absolutist' generally excludes referential meaning, the 'referentialist' usually holds that in addition to absolute meaning, music has the facility to communicate the extramusical. That is, although the 'absolutist' denies the existence of referential meaning, the 'referentialist' does not generally deny the existence or validity of abstract or absolute meaning. It is thus erroneous to interpret these two groups as though they constitute two diametrically opposing ideas, and use this as a starting point for a dialectic argument; they are not necessarily mutually exclusive opposites.
This dissertation assumes the widest possible 'referentialist' position and—accepting the hypothesis that musical meaning can operate on several different levels simultaneously—attempts to elucidate ways in which the concepts of 'death' and 'protest' may be related to the work under study.

Although a fairly substantial body of research has been conducted on Arnold van Wyk's music over the past approximately 25 years, none seems to have dealt specifically with determining the referential meaning present in his works. In academic works, Van Wyk has been hailed repeatedly as a composer of considerable stature in terms of South African musical achievement and has even been called: "hierdie mees vooraanstaande Suid-Afrikaanse komponis [wat na verwagting] nog werke van wêreldformaat sal lewer" (Geldenhuys, 1983: 172); "...South Africa's most distinguished composer...writing music of world standing". ¹ However, all of these laudatory conclusions were based on research which dealt exclusively with various technical aspects of the compositional procedures Van Wyk followed. In contrast, this dissertation suggests that Van Wyk's music—in addition to exemplifying commendable technical craftsmanship—possesses greatness as result of the referential meaning which it communicates.

¹. Unless otherwise attributed, all translations are by the present writer.
to the perceptive listener.

In the seventh and final chapter of his thesis, "’n Stylkritiese Studie van die Musiek van Arnold van Wyk" ("A Style-critical Study of the Music of Arnold van Wyk") Hendrik Temmingh, after giving a synopsis of the stylistic and technical characteristics of Van Wyk’s music, makes a statement that could be an allusion to the referential quality of his music when he concludes:

"Van Wyk is ’n uiterstaande komponis wat pertinent nie serieel ingestel is nie, maar eerder sterk reaksionêr teenoor ekstremsitiese gebruikte van die reekslegmike staan, daardeur vashou aan die ou tonalitélideeë (sic) en as gevolg daarvan waarskynlik sy bestendig groeiende oeuvre in aanmerking geneem--juis ’n komponis is ‘wat iets te sê het’." (Temmingh, 1965: 140)

"Van Wyk is a composer who possesses a high degree of skilled craftsmanship and who is pertinently not serially-orientated. Instead, he reacts strongly against the extremist practices of serial techniques as result of which he supports the old idea of tonality. The probable result of this—when one views his steadily growing oeuvre—is that he is indeed a composer who has ‘something to say’.

However, it is not necessarily true either that a composer has ‘something to say’ when he supports tonality nor that a ‘steadily growing oeuvre’ proportionately increases the validity of that which he or she communicates. Temmingh concedes that a composer, apart from technical expertise, communicates ‘something’ to the listener and performer,
but he does not tell us what this 'something' may possibly entail, or how it may be constituted. Earlier on in the same study Temmingh refers to the "ideele eenheidsfaktor...naamlik die weemoedige en elegiese" (p. 49) "ideal unifying factor...namely the mournful and the elegiac" (p. 49) when writing about the Five Elegies for String Quartet but in his study, structural allusions to these concepts are not investigated.

Jolena Geldenhuys concludes her thesis on the variation techniques employed in Van Wyk's vocal music as follows:

"Van Wyk se werke uit sy latere periode toon, soos by ander uitgelese komponiste die geval is, 'n verdieping. Veral die vokale werke uit die sewentigerjare en in besonder die Missa, hou geweldige belofte vir die toekoms in. Met die nodige inspirasie en aanmoediging kan verwag word dat hierdie mees vooraanstaande komponis nog werke van wêreldformaat sal lever."

"Van Wyk's works dating from his later creative period display—as is the case with other choice composers—a deepening or ennoblement. Works dating from the 1970's and especially the Missa show immense promise for the future. With the necessary inspiration and encouragement it can be expected that Van Wyk—South Africa's most distinguished composer—will continue writing music of world standing."

When Geldenhuys says that Van Wyk's works of his later creative period display a 'deepening' or 'ennoblement', she is presumably also referring to an aspect of his music regarding referential meaning, rather than a mere in-
creasing of the composer's technical command, for, clearly, technical command or a formidable facility at compositional variation technique alone, cannot be seen to cause this elevation in a composer's creativity. However, she abstains from elucidating possible referential qualities of Van Wyk's music which may contribute to an understanding of his music other than the 'objective' or the 'theoretical'.

Thus, although both Temmingh and Geldenhuys accept the idea that there is something communicated in Van Wyk's music other than that which is readily theoretically verifiable, speculation to what this may be is absent.

A discussion of meaning in music would seem to require an approach which draws on more than the 'theoretically verifiable' or the 'objective' sources of information. The fallacy of the purely 'objective' approach for the study of man was noted by Joseph Wood Krutch in the following statement:

"Perhaps we have been deluded by the fact that the methods employed for the study of man have been for the most part those originally devised for the study of machines or the study of rats, and are capable, therefore, of detecting and measuring only those characteristics which the three do have in common." (Krutch, 1954: 32 - 33)
Beverly Lewis Parker writes:

"...it is necessary to keep in mind that speculation and subjective enquiry are necessary humanistic studies. The more a composer or other artist draws on his entire being, the deeper and more meaningful his art will be. We recognize this when we criticize art as 'shallow', 'dry' or 'merely intellectual'. What we are saying in such criticism is that the artist has drawn on only a restricted portion of himself. Surely, then, we cannot expect to understand truly meaningful art if we engage no more than our intellect. Studies of music that exclude the subjective are often no more valid than those that are entirely subjective."

(Parker, 1989: 533)

It would thus seem that meaningful enquiry in the humanities—to which music should surely be acknowledged to belong—would depend on both the 'objective' and the 'subjective', and that overemphasis of either could seriously impede the overall validity of conclusions arrived at.

Employing an approach which embraces both the 'objective' and the 'subjective' is not an unproblematic task, since by its nature the 'subjective' is not as easily verifiable as the 'objective'. Writings about purely technical aspects of a composer's oeuvre are infinitely more verifiable than those probing the extramusical meaning of compositions. Furthermore, the use of language to describe extramusical meaning can have a limiting effect for various reasons. The sound possibilities available to composers are virtually limitless. The musicologist on
the other hand, does not have a limitless scope of verbal expression to employ when he or she is writing about music. Shostakovich addresses exactly this problem when he writes:

"Die Musik kann vernichtende und düstere Dramatik und Glücksrausch, Trauer und Ekstase, heisse Wut und kalten Zorn, Melancholie und ausgelassene Fröhlichkeit und nicht nur alle diese Gefühle, sondern auch ihre feinsten Schattierungen ausdrücken, die Übergänge zwischen ihnen, die sich nicht durch Worte wiedergeben lassen und weder der Malerei noch der Bildhauerei zugänglich sind."

(Shostakovich, Record Sleeve, Melodia eurodisc: 76639XK)

"Music can express utterly destructive and dark dramatic content and euphoric happiness, mournfulness and ecstasy, enraged anger and calculated wrath, melancholy and abundant cheerfulness, and not only all these feelings in their finest shades but also transitions between them, which is not accessible by words and which neither painting nor sculpture can express to a similar degree."

Language is in itself limiting in that it is not a true account of reality or phenomena. As Stern and Degenaar write:

"Language is taken to be the metaphorical, and therefore inexact, approximate intimation of our being in the world."

(Stern, 1981: 189)
"Since language consists of arbitrary signs we should not expect language to give us a referentially true account of things as they are...words do not designate things but rather intimate them. Words are metaphors for things."
(Degenaar, 1986: 15)

Similarly then, when we say "this music is expressive of mourning" we are in fact saying that this music (in itself a metaphor) is a metaphoric expression of a metaphor for mourning. 'Music', the word made up of three consonants and two vowels, has no real reference to the phenomenon we normally experience as 'music'. We may thus be able to intuitively sense a referential meaning in a musical work, but find ourselves at a considerably disadvantaged position when we discover the inherent limitations in the use of language to describe this meaning, as compared to the gamut of emotive, affective, symbolic or connotative expression available to composers.

Over and above this intrinsic limitation of language, it is also necessary to point out that language has been subjected to considerable abuse in recent times. It is quite conceivable that concepts such as, for example 'death' and 'protest' have lost some of their original impact. Richard Hoggart writes:
"I wonder whether in any previous period so many words were being used, as we might say, inorganically — not because the writers had something to say about their experience, but on behalf of the particular concern of others; when so much language was used not as exploration but as persuasion and manipulation; when so much prose had its eye only slightly on the object and almost wholly on the audience, when so many words were proclaimed, if you listened to them carefully within their contexts, not 'I touch and illuminate experience' but 'this will roll them in the aisles'.

More important: in such circumstances it becomes difficult to write decently about any thoughts and feelings. It would be very easy to compile a blacklist of words which are not usable until they have been redefined by each writer within each particular context. Not the old words we are all used to laughing about — 'tragedy' for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The process goes on quickly and becomes more sophisticated all the time. The newer men have quieter voices. So words like 'sincere', 'creative', 'vital', 'homely' and 'love' go out of decent use... that is why we say, a writer finds his tools going blunt in his hands." (Hoggart, 1963: 79 - 80)

Let us consider the use of "death" in colloquial South African English. Phrases such as 'I nearly died' and 'I prayed for death' are often used when the speaker is not referring to any real possibility of imminent death, but merely to describe a response of surprise or exasperation. 'It's to die for' has been employed to mean that something is wonderful and 'I just died and went to heaven' was used in an American television soap-opera where the speaker wanted to indicate that something tasted very good. In shops and supermarkets it is not uncommon to find that products have 'shelf-lives' and 'expiry dates'. In this instance, manufacturers wish to communicate the length of time during which a product remains edible or tasteful;
to imply that food may have a 'shelf-life' (and by implication 'shelf-death') is demonstrably untrue.

These examples can be seen to underscore Hoggart's dictum when he says that as result of such practices, a writer --writing about death and its possible manifestations in music--may find 'his tools going blunt in his hands.' When death is employed in contexts where it can mean surprise, exasperation, delight, hard work, the effects of tasting something good or the length of time during which a consumer product remains edible, it may indeed become difficult to write decently about it, for a meaning of triteness and flippancy may already have been imputed into the meaning of the word and concept.

In another, more intentional way, death and especially the deliberate infliction of death is frequently accorded euphemistic treatment. In the following examples, once more, it becomes progressively clear how we may have been conditioned to employ substitute words and phrases when referring to certain types of death. In the everyday, people do not generally 'die', but rather 'pass away', 'are taken', 'depart this life', come to an untimely end' or 'launch into eternity'. In order to gain the comfortable distance that is required by the consumers of animals, we have ostensibly been conditioned to speak of veal, beef, pork and mutton rather
than calves, cows, pigs and sheep. And the place where their killing is carried out—often under genocidal conditions—is referred to, smartly as abattoir rather than the more archaic 'slaughter-house' with its concomitant associations of agony and death. Similarly, when this activity takes place as 'leisure' or 'sport', it is sometimes referred to as 'hunting' or 'culling' with their conjuring overtones of sportsmanship and necessity.

Where the intentional or institutionalized infliction of death by humanity on humanity is concerned, examples of a more disturbing nature can be cited. Where states and governments still punish individuals by killing them in order to redeem the crimes they have committed, this is also referred to as 'execution' or sometimes, 'paying the highest price'. 'Execution' can be seen to convey an image of clinical accomplishment and hence, is possibly employed to create a measure of distance between the 'executioner' and the 'executed'. To refer to 'paying the highest price' when the infliction of death is concerned is a rather startling and obvious euphemism.

Military fraternities the world over would have us believe that their calling in life, which involves the highly specialized craft of killing and the abundant infliction of death, generally entails the 'neutralization',
'liquidation' and 'elimination' of 'enemies' or the 'servicing of targets', and not the large-scale shooting and killing of people. It does not seem to be conceivable to a militarist that the 'enemy' may comprise people and that they may be killed, slain, or indeed, murdered. Instead, these descriptions are generally and compulsively employed to describe the acts of the 'enemy'. The associative meanings of 'neutralize', 'liquidate', 'eliminate' or 'servicing of targets' can in this case hardly be reconciled with that of 'intentionally putting to death' and yet, the former group of expressions is freely and universally applied to convey the more realistic, and therefore perhaps less-acceptable meaning of the latter.

In addition, when reviewing military statistics, it becomes apparent that wars are not fought by people against people, but that 'gains' and 'losses' are frequently expressed in terms only remotely connected to the taking of human life.

Gil Elliot writes that

"This lack of historical focus on those who get themselves killed is to be found also in the campaign and other histories of the two world wars. Many of these are remarkable for an almost total absence of human beings. They describe the struggles of the tanks, guns, battalions, supplies, barbed wire and divisions. The phrase 'hideous carnage'--compulsively used
to denote the effects of battle—curiously underscores the absence of the human image by mingling its meaty favours with the smell of cordite, the shapes of twisted metal, the messes of mud and masonry. The dead take their place, along with burnt-out tanks and empty petrol cans, among the waste material of history."

(Elliot, 1972: 2)

Thus, two possible widespread phenomena transpire with regard to alteration in meaning of the word 'death':

1. In everyday usage it is employed to denote various trivial meanings. In this process it is robbed of its real meaning.

2. Wherever people intentionally inflict death, they resort to techniques and misleading descriptions to suppress and conceal the true nature of their acts.

In this study, 'death' is taken to mean "the permanent end of all functions of life in an organism" (Mcleod, 1984: 286). It is seen to be a phenomenon, event or concept with gargantuan implications for all human life. As such, it must be conceivable that the dynamics of death may make its presence felt in works by writers, sculptors, painters and composers. Varying attitudes to death and its implications may be reflected differently in works of art. This may be dependent on the specific dispositions of their creators. When composers write
works and unambiguously state that the content of such works are meant to refer to 'death' or the 'dead', it follows that listeners may find the workings of, or allusions to death in such works.

Arnold van Wyk (1916 - 1983) frequently refers to extramusical ideas or concepts when he discusses his compositions. The most salient of these concepts have been those of the elegiac, mournfulness, introspection, loss, sadness and the evanescence of life. These concepts may be legitimately translated with the import, meaning or manifestation of death in the musical work (These references by the composer are dealt with extensively in the following chapter).

The present study concerns itself primarily with the following questions:

1. To which degree is William Kimmel's theory regarding the Phrygian Inflection and the Appearance of Death in Music corroborated by an analysis of Arnold van Wyk's Five Elegies for String Quartet?

2. In what other possible ways may the referential meaning of death be seen to manifest itself in the composition under study?
3. How can Van Wyk's statement that this music should be seen, moreover, as "music of protest" (Van Wyk, SABC: 1983) be interpreted in view of the information gained?

In this dissertation, Nattiez's Tripartite Conception of Musical Semiology is referred to (Nattiez, 1989: 21 - 75). This conception holds that the meaning of the 'symbol' or 'sign' in music can be investigated on the following three different, though interdependent levels: the Poietic, the Neutral and the Esthesic.

The Poietic or Encoding level involves the meaning that the sign or symbol holds for the composer. On the Neutral or Material level, (niveau neutre) the musical work is viewed as a self-sufficient structural entity, and may be described objectively. That is, its various parameters of melody, harmony, structure, etc. may be described in a way that can be agreed upon by all who possess the necessary musical training and knowledge. The Esthesic level is that on which the listener experiences the signified. Depending on factors such as the Poietic content, the structural nature of the composition and the disposition of the listener, the meaning the work holds for the listener may approximate to a varying degree that which it holds for the composer.
Nattiez's *Tripartite Conception* can be graphically illustrated as follows:

![Diagram of Nattiez's Tripartite Conception]

On Nattiez's Poietic level, information is investigated that pertains to the possible import death may have had for Van Wyk during the composition of the relevant work. On the Neutral level, William Kimmel's theory of the *Phrygian Inflection and the Appearance of Death in Music* (Kimmel, 1980: 42 - 76) is accepted as having validity in tonal and prototonal music, and is applied to the work in question. On the Esthesic level, the writer probes further possible allusions to death in this work and finally attempts interpretation of these allusions.
Arnoldus Christiaan van Wyk was born on 26 April 1916 on a farm near Calivinia in the North-Western Cape. Although he displayed an early ability and interest in music, formal tuition commenced only when he entered the Stellenbosch Boys' School at the age of twelve. Reflecting on the limitations imposed by difficult financial circumstances, he commented:

"Ek meen my twee broers en vier susters...het almal op hul manier [musikale] talent gehad. Talent wat weens armoede en moeilike omstandighede nooit tot uiting gekom het nie...ek was maar net gelukkiger as hulle."
(Van Wyk, SABC: 1970)

"I think my two brothers and four sisters all had [musical] talent--talent which never developed as result of poverty and difficult circumstances; I was merely luckier than them."

An important event during his childhood was his meeting with Freda and Harry Baron of De Rust. Here the young Van Wyk first encountered the music of Beethoven and Brahms, as well as that of others:
"Ek het by my susters gaan vakansie hou, en so het ek kennis gemaak met Harry Baron, en met Freda, sy vrou. Die Barons, met ’n groot liefde vir musiek het ’n mooi plateversameling gehad. En so het dit gebeur dat ek vir die eerste keer groot werke van Beethoven gehoor het. Toe ek nog maar so twaalf, dertien was, het ek reeds meesterstukke soos die 5e en 9e Simfonieë, die Strykkwartet in a mineur, die 3e en 5e Klavierkonserte goed genoeg geken om groot dele daarvan te kon sing, of fluit of op die klavier te speel. Ek het natuurlik musiek van baie ander komponiste ook gehoor...maar as ek nou daaroor nadink, was dit veral die musiek van Beethoven wat my laat besluit het om komponis te pro­beer word."

(Van Wyk, SABC: 1970)

"I visited my sisters one holiday and got acquainted with Harry Baron and his wife, Freda. The Barons had a great love for music and a good record collection. It so happened that I heard the great works of Beetho­ven for the first time. When I was only twelve, thirteen years old, I already knew masterpieces such as the 5th and 9th Symphonies, the Violin Concerto, the String Quartet in a minor, the 3rd and 5th Piano Concertos well enough to be able to sing, whistle or play at the piano large parts of these compositions. Naturally I also encountered the music of other com­posers, but when I think back now, it was especially the music of Beethoven which prompted me to try and become a composer."

When he was only sixteen years old, the death of his mother, followed six weeks later unexpectedly by that of his eldest sister, must have been a shattering experience for the young Van Wyk. Upon matriculating in 1934, Van Wyk enrolled at the Music Conservatoire at the University of Stellenbosch. However, by this stage the world-wide depression had resulted in serious financial problems for the Van Wyk family, and the young Van Wyk was forced to earn a living by taking up a position in a Cape Town
insurance firm. These difficult circumstances prompted Professor William Henry Bell (1873 - 1946) of the College of Music in Cape Town to intercede on Van Wyk’s behalf. Bell’s efforts culminated in a scholarship from the Curtis Institute of Philadelphia. Unfortunately Van Wyk could not accept this bursary as result of a proviso stipulating that he had to provide his own living expenses, which he was unable to do at the time. In 1936, a small bursary from a certain Morris Friedland enabled him to resume his studies at the Conservatoire in Stellenbosch under Professor Maria Fismer and Alan Graham.

A scholarship awarded by the (British) Performing Rights Society in 1938 enabled Van Wyk to further his studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London. There he studied piano with Harold Craxton and composition with Theodore Holland. Acknowledging Holland’s expertise in 1972, Van Wyk also criticized an aspect of his former teacher:

“My leermeester daar was Theodore Holland. Hy was ’n leerling van Max Bruch. Ek het baie van hom geleer...maar hy het uit ’n baie gegoede familie gekom...en ek dink vir Theodore Holland...was musiek ook baiekeer ’n ding wat mens gedoen het omdat jy verfynd is; dit was nie...’n lewenstaak nie.”

(Van Wyk, SABC: 1972)
"My teacher there was Theodore Holland. He was a pupil of Max Bruch. I learnt a lot from him... but he came from a very wealthy family... and I think for Theodore Holland music was frequently something one did because of one’s degree of refinement, and not because it was a life-task."

This instruction in composition was the first he ever received; until this point Van Wyk was wholly self-taught. During his student years he was awarded numerous prizes, which included a medal from the Worshipful Company of Musicians in 1941, awarded tri-annually to the most advanced student at the Academy. In 1945 his progress was officially recognized by the Royal Academy when he was elected Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music. During these years (1938 - 1946) Van Wyk worked in the newly-founded Afrikaans section of the BBC Overseas Service as composer, pianist, translator and newsreader. He also met Howard Ferguson (b. 1908) who was to play an important role, both as a teacher and as a friend, throughout the years.

Upon his return to South Africa in 1946, he freelanced as a pianist and composer until 1949 when he was appointed Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town. In 1961 he accepted a similar position at the Conservatoire of the University of Stellenbosch where he remained until his retirement in 1978. In 1972 and 1981 he received Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Cape Town and Stellen-
bosch, respectively. Following a heart-attack in 1982, Van Wyk was hospitalized on different occasions for treatment. He died at the Jan S. Marais Clinic, Cape Town, on Friday 27 May 1983.

2. VAN WYK'S CREATIVE OUTPUT: AN OVERVIEW WITH REFERENCE TO THE ELEMENTS OF DEATH AND PROTEST

Arnold van Wyk's ability as composer was first recognized in South Africa as early as 1938, when he was commissioned to write a commemorative cantata for the unveiling of the Voortrekker Monument. This work, as well as all his other early works with the exception of the song-cycle *Vier Neemoedige Liedjies* (Four Sad Little Songs) were later withdrawn.

During his stay in London (1938-1946), the *Five Elegies for String Quartet* and *Three Improvisations for Piano Duet* were the first substantial works to be completed. The *Five Elegies* were first performed in London at a wartime National Gallery Concert. The *Saudade for Violin and Orchestra*, the middle movement of an originally planned *Violin Concerto*, was first performed at a Promenade Concert conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. The featured soloist was Olive Zorian. In 1943 Van Wyk completed his *First Symphony*. Sir Henry Wood conducted the first performance of the work in a BBC broadcast during the same
year. During this time, Van Wyk established relations with the publishing house Boosey and Hawkes. In addition to the inclusion of his music in their Wigmore Hall Concerts of New Music, Boosey and Hawkes published the *Five Elegies for String Quartet*, *Three Improvisations on Dutch Folk Tunes for Piano Duet*, the *First String Quartet*, the song cycle *Van Liefde en Verlatenheid*, the *Pastorale e Capriccio* for Piano Solo and the *Four Piano Pieces*. *Vier Weemoedige Liedjies* was published in Amsterdam by Heuwekemeijer in 1948.

Upon returning to South Africa in 1946, Van Wyk continued working on the *Christmas Cantata*, a work he had started on when still in London. This work, the first of numerous commissions by the SABC, was first performed on Easter Day 1948 under the direction of Edgar Cree. In 1947 his *First String Quartet* was completed and the work was given its first performance by the *De Groote String Quartet* during the same year. It was also subsequently performed in the early 1950's in Brussels at a festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music. In 1951 he composed an orchestral *Rhapsody* (now withdrawn) which was followed by his *Second Symphony (Sinfonia Ricercata)*. In 1953 he completed the song-cycle *Van Liefde en Verlatenheid* and the first performance of the work took place at the University of Cape Town's Music Festival in the same year. The performers were Noreen
Berry and the composer.

The next major work, *Night Music*, has become known as the most important of his piano works. After the first performance given by the composer for the SABC in 1956, he felt that the work needed revision, and the definitive version of *Night Music* was not completed until 1959. In 1960, *Primavera*, a symphonic suite, followed. This work is based on a 13th century Minnelied by the German poet Neidhart von Reuental (c. 1190 - 1246). During this time he arranged Schubert's *Fantasy in F minor* (originally for piano duet) for piano and orchestra (1961) and completed the *Duo Concertante per Viola e Piano* (1962). *Masquerades* was completed in 1964. This work consists of a set of variations for orchestra in which the variations are composed in the style of eight well-known composers.

In 1965 Van Wyk completed the symphonic suite *Vier Gebede by Jaargetye in die Boland* after poems from N P van Wyk Louw's *Die Halwe Kring*. Another significant work dating from this time is the *Petronius Songs*, a setting of five Latin poems by the 1st century poet Petronius Arbiter.

Until the late 1960's Van Wyk wrote predominantly instrumental music. From this point onwards however, he displayed an increasing preference for vocal music, and more specifically, for the medium of unaccompanied voices.
"Ek was hoofsaaklik 'n instrumentale komponis en ek het eintlik min vir die stem geskryf, maar op die oomblik is ek behep met mense wat bymekaar kom en sing. Op die oomblik is dit die ding wat my die meeste roer; mense wat sing sonder instrumente. Miskien het dit te doen met hoe die wêreld nou gaan."
(Van Wyk, 1983: SABC)

"I used to be a predominantly instrumental composer and wrote relatively little for voice, but at the moment I am absolutely pre-occupied with people coming together and singing. At the moment I am deeply moved by unaccompanied voices. Perhaps it has something to do with the present state of the world."

During the last fifteen years or so of his life Van Wyk wrote only three purely instrumental works. They are Ricordanza (1974) for piano solo, Quasi Variazioni (1974) for piano and orchestra and a set of solo piano pieces entitled Tristia (1972).

In 1979 he completed the mass, Missa in illo Tempore, a large scale work for unaccompanied double chorus and boys' voices. This work was originally conceived in 1945 and serves as a personal expression of the composer’s reaction to the state of the world in that time. Van Wyk’s last work is a setting of poems by Boerneef for unaccompanied choir entitled Aanspraak virrie Latenstyd (Sayings for the close of Life) on which he had worked between 1981 and 1983.
Arnold van Wyk was an extremely self-critical and meticulous composer. This is evident from the fact that he often either revised works after their first performances, sometimes spending years on these revisions before a definitive form of a composition was arrived at, or discarded them altogether. He did not compose easily, and he frequently doubted his ability as composer:

"Ek het nog maar altyd min geskryf. Ek moet ook sê dat ek nog altyd met groot moeite geskryf het. Niets het nog ooit vir my maklik gebeur nie. Ek raak baie maklik ontmoedig. Baiekeer dink ek my musiek is min of meer Romanties en tradisioneel... en watter mark is daar nou eintlik daarvoor?"

(Van Wyk, 1972: SABC)

"I have always written very little. I also have to say that I have always written with great difficulty. Nothing has ever happened easily. I get discouraged easily. I often think my music is more or less Romantic and traditional... and what market does it ultimately have?"

Van Wyk's idiom which "combines a basically tonal framework with harmony that is continually inflected" (Ferguson, 1987:8) could seem to be almost anachronistic, especially viewed against the backdrop of the many hybrid developments in music in the present century. When questioned about whether he thought a composer could still say something new or individual by making use of traditional methods, Van Wyk replied:
"I do not know whether it is still possible. I know that in my case, I have to believe that it is. Otherwise I would not be able to carry on. I have to believe that by using traditional methods one can still say something. In this regard I would like to cite the cases of composers such as Fauré and Sibelius, and two other people still writing today, Britten and Shostakovich -- who can still write a C major chord and make it sound different...I have to believe that it is still possible. I do not know whether it is, but I have to believe that it is."
(Van Wyk, 1972: SABC)

Van Wyk’s music is firmly based on the tenets of tonality and remained so from 1939 to 1983. Many of his compositions were created through an evolutionary process; the original idea for a work completed in the 1970’s was for example, first noted down in 1945, as in the case of his Missa in illo Tempore, and indeed, numerous examples can be cited where he drew on sketches or themes dating from his student years in London. It is therefore not possible to outline certain distinct chronological stylistic periods in his work, each with its own concomitant characteristics. Van Wyk preferred to speak of ‘tydtydperke’ (time periods) as opposed to ‘styltydperke’ (stylistic

Arnold van Wyk viewed himself as being an ‘instinctive musician’ and in view of this, he preferred to refrain from stating possible influences or sources of inspiration which may have contributed to his musical idiom:

"Ek is 'n instinktiewe musikus, en dit beteken o.a. dat ek dinge doen sonder om altyd 'n logiese rede te kan gee, waarom. Dit beteken ook dat as ek die eien-skappe van my werke moes opsom, of...moes rekenskap gee van invloede en besieling, ek die belangrikste dinge waarskynlik sou weglaat. En as so 'n opsomming buite my vermoë lê, sou ek nog slegter vaar as ek moes sê wat daartoe bygedra het om hierdie werke te maak wat hulle is."

(Van Wyk, 1970: SABC)

"I am an instinctive musician, and that means, inter alia, that I do things without always being able to give a logical explanation. This also means, that if I had to summarize the most important characteristics of my works...or had to account for the most important influences and sources of inspiration, I could easily omit some of the most influential. And if such an account does not lie within my ability, I could fare even worse when attempting to state the factors which contributed to making these works what they are."

However, on a later occasion Van Wyk did point to Bach, Mozart, Schubert and especially Beethoven as being composers for which he had a particular reverence (Van Wyk, 1972: SABC).
For Van Wyk, Beethoven exemplified a figure who could---even in the most adverse of conditions---continue working and communicating:

"Ek kan Beethoven nie inboet nie...die besieling wat daar te vind is in Beethoven se sketsboeke en die aanskouing van die verskriklike stryd wat selfs so begenadigde kunstenaar moes voer voordat hy kon sê wat hy wou en moes...die besieling ook van 'n man wat op sy stervbed en met sy hele wêreld in duie om hom heen, die vrolike slotbeweging van die B mol Strykkwartet op. 130 kon skryf."

(Van Wyk, 1972: SABC)

"I cannot do without Beethoven...the inspiration which there is to be found in Beethoven's sketch books and in observing the horrible battle that even such a formidable composer had to go through before he could say what he wanted to say, and what he had to say...the inspiration also, of a man who could on his death-bed, with his entire world shattered around him, write the cheerful final movement of the String Quartet in B flat, op. 130."

In the same year, Van Wyk articulated his view on the compositional process as follows and thus accounted for the fact that he constantly revised his works:

"Die werk wat jy skryf bestaan eintlik alreeds. Hy bestaan in 'n idële wêreld, of in 'n ander wêreld. Die ingewing, wanneer jy die eerste ingewing kry, is die werk eintlik al klaar. Maar jy kan, omdat jy menslik is...nie daardie ding vasvat nie. Die komposisieproses bestaan dan daaruit dat jy probeer terugwerk na daardie eerste oomblik van sekerheid...maar dit 'n flits en dan is dit weg. Ek dink nie jy kom ooit weer by daardie eerste oomblik, by daardie eerste oomblik van sekerheid nie...Ek het hom nog nie in een werk bereik nie. Ek is nie met een werk wat ek geskryf het, absoluut tevrede nie."
"The work that one writes actually exists already. It exists in an ideal world, or in another world. When one experiences the first intuition or suggestion for a new work, in an ideal manner, the work is already complete. But because one is human, one cannot ever fully grasp it. The compositional process then entails working back to that first brief and fleeting moment of certainty. However, I have never achieved it. I am not completely satisfied with any of the works I have written. There is always something in a work that bothers me, that could have been better. That is the reason why I am constantly revising my works..."

Underlying binding elements which pervade a substantial part of Van Wyk’s work have been those of the elegiac, mournfulness, loss, sadness and the evanescence of life. Van Wyk’s concern with these ideas links him to many late 19th-century and early 20th-century composers who were concerned with the extramusical concepts of death, retrospection, nostalgia and melancholy. These composers include Johannes Brahms, Richard Strauss, Anton Bruckner, Gustav Mahler, Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan-Williams and Benjamin Britten. Van Wyk’s concern with the elegiac is equally evident in his vocal as well as his instrumental works. These elements can be traced to the very first works he composed and remained constant throughout his creative career. In 1972, whilst working on the final movement of a *Piano Concerto* he said:
"...Ek dink daar's 'n neerslagtige grondtoon in my werk en ek wil 'n bietjie wegkom daarvan, maar ek skryf nie maklik 'jolly' eindbewegings nie..."
(Van Wyk, 1972: SABC)

"...I think there is an undertone of gloom in my work and I would like to get away from it, but I do not easily write 'jolly' final movements..."

This 'undertone of gloom' is traceable through his entire oeuvre. Of his song cycles, *Vier Weemoedige Liedjies* and *Van Liefde en Verlatenheid* and of his choral works *Aanspraak virrie latenstyd* and *Missa in illo Tempore* serve as examples of this tendency. A selection of some of the texts Van Wyk set to music can further illuminate this point.

In *Vier Weemoedige Liedjies* the composer employs two texts each by the poets W.E.G. Louw and I.D. du Plessis:

**Vaalvalk - W.E.G. Louw**

"Wit is die wêreld van ouydse wee
en 'n treurige wals is die vroemôresee;
dou oor die duine, geen windjie wat waai,
et 'n vaalvalk wat sing soos hy draai, soos hy draai..."
(Louw, 1988: 20)

In *Vaalvalk* reference is made to a quiet and bygone world.
In metaphor, a 'sad waltz' reflects the nature of early morning. Quietness and lifelessness is depicted by reference to dew on dunes and the absence of even the slightest breeze. The only form of life in this poem is that of a grey-hawk which keeps on circling overhead and which may function as a symbol for death.

*Eerste Winterdag* - W.E.G. Louw

"Na al die motreëns is dit donker; vaal dryf die wolke in die lug; vaal die yl motreëns wat heeldag stuiwe; laag-dwarrelend die blarevlug -- Stil sleep die ure en stuif die motreëns buite; die druppels tril droewig teen die ruite; drup-drup eentonig op gewel en dak en hang swaar-blink aan die kale amandeltak."

(Louw, 1988: 3)

In *Eerste Winterdag* the poet describes a first Winter’s day which may be seen as a symbol for the shift between joy and sorrow. ‘Sunshine’ is replaced by ‘darkness’, grey clouds and drizzle are accompanied with low-whirling leaves. The hours drag on quietly and drops of rain vibrate against the windows. Monotonous drops of rain on the roof underscore the generally grey atmosphere and are observed where they hang heavily on a bare almond-twig.

*Van Liefde en Verlatenheid* (Of Love and Forsakenness) is based entirely on five poems by Eugene Nielen Marais, the South African writer, poet and anthropologist who commit-
ted suicide after repeated unsuccessful attempts to cure himself of morphine-addiction. In these poems, too, a predominantly elegiac quality is evident. *Diep Rivier* especially, is demonstrative of a powerful allusion to death. In this poem, death is metaphorically and poignantly equated with a 'deep river' in whose embrace all pain and suffering will cease:

*Diep Rivier* - Eugene N. Marais

"O Diep Rivier, O Donker Stroom
Hoe lank het ek gewag, hoe lank gedroom
Die lem van liefde wroegend in my hart?
- in jou omhelsing eindig al my smart;
Blus uit, O Diep Rivier, die vlam van haat;
Die groot verlangen wat my nooit verlaat.
Ek sien van ver die glans van staal en goud,
Ek hoor die sag gedruis van waters diep en koud;
Ek hoor jou stem as fluistering in 'n droom,
Kom snel, O Diep Rivier, O Donker Stroom."
(Marais, 1972:56)

*Aanspraak virrie Latenstyd* (1973 - 1982) (Sayings for the Close of Life) is an acapella choral work and consists of six settings of poems by Boerneef (I.W. v.d. Merwe). A general mood of sadness pervades these poems. This mood is especially intense in the fifth and sixth movements, *Doer bo teen die rant* and *Magoed issit waar wat oompie Dourie sé* with their references to mournfulness, yearning and bitterness.
Doer bo teen die rant - I.W. v.d. Merwe

"Doer bo teen die rant
staan 'n bos geplant
dis 'n Sederbergsebos
dis 'n wonderbossiebos
laat trek van die ding
met kruie geming
vir die sit en verlang
wat die ouderdom bring"
(Boerneef, 1959: 60)

High up against a ridge of the Sederberg, the poet observes a solitary bush with magical qualities; if one draws its leaves, mixed with herba, it alleviates the yearning hours which old age brings.

Magoed issit waar wat oompie Dourie sê

"Magoed issit waar wat oompie Dourie sê
hy sê die Oubaas was haastag oppie Sadragaand
hy wou die wêreld klaarkry darie einste aand
en daarom is Swartrugseberg so skurf
so klowerag so klibsteenrotserag
magoed issit waar wat oompie Dourie sê
jou oom is oneerbierag en 'n heiding
hyt geen respekte vir 'n Christenmens
luister na hierie liedjie wat ek sing
soos ouنجê my geleer het om te sing
Swartrugseberg is Bitterberg
vergeet die dag en datum nooit
hy moor die dier verniel die mens
vergeet die dag en datum nooit
daarom die baie rotsaltare
daarom die baie klippilare
gedinkstene van baie jare
van mens en dier se swaarkryjare
op hierie baie bitter Bitterberg"
(Boerneef, 1967:34)
This poem is written in an Afrikaans dialect, spoken by some of the so-called coloured people living in the Western-Cape. A child asks its mother about an explanation it has heard from Uncle Dourie about the countenance of Swartrugseberg. According to Uncle Dourie, God created Swartrugseberg in a hurry, late one Saturday evening. This is the reason for its roughness and imperfection. The mother replies that Uncle Dourie is a blasphemous person; a heathen, and that he has no respect for a Christian. She tells her child to listen to a song she 'mistress' once taught her: Swartrugseberg is Bittermountain. Nobody forgets the day he or she encounters this mountain for it wrecks the life of man and beast. This accounts for the many rocky pillars and commemorative stones found on the mountain—commemorative objects of all the hardship man and beast have suffered on this "bitter Bittermountain". The mountain becomes a metaphor for the lives of the suffering and oppressed people in South Africa and the world.

*Missae* *in illo Tempore* (A Mass in that time) was commissioned by the *Festival Committee, Stellenbosch 300* to celebrate the Tercentenary of Stellenbosch in 1979. The setting of this work is for Double Choir, Boys' Choir and Soloists. In a letter to the Festival Committee, Van Wyk partly motivated his choice for a mass as follows:
"...en soos sake op die oomblik in ons land en oor die hele wêreld staan moet daar miskien nie te luidruchtig feesgevier word nie."
(Van Wyk, quoted by Viljoen, 1981: p. 8)

"...and in view of the present state of affairs of the world and South Africa, we should perhaps not be celebrating too boisterously."

In the programme notes which accompanied the first performance of the work given on 14 October 1979, "E.D." (pseudonym of Van Wyk) in conjunction with the composer offered valuable insight into the form and intended content of the work:

"The three central movements were composed during the past two years or so, but Van Wyk worked sporadically at the Kyrie during the 50's and 60's, and the theme for the Agnus Dei was noted down as early as 1945, towards the end of the Second World War -- in London, where Van Wyk lived and worked from 1938 to 1946. The text of the Agnus Dei ends with a prayer for peace; the text of the Kyrie is a prayer for Divine Mercy. It would therefore appear to be more than mere coincidence that these should be the movements that were worked at before the others. And that the composer should have chosen in illo tempore ('in that time') as 'appellation' for the Mass appears to be highly significant as well. The sketches for the Mass show that Van Wyk considered other appellations as well: 'Mass for the poor' and 'Mass in a time of Tribulation', amongst others. These appellations are cited here because, in the opinion of the composer, they give an indication of the content and character [of the work:] 'of the Poor' because it stresses the simplicity and artlessness of many parts of the Mass and the fact that it is sung without accompaniment; 'in a time of Tribulation' because it suits the more intensely passionate parts of the work...This appellation is also in line with in illo tempore, which can be seen to have a bearing upon the composer's reaction to the state of the world in 1945 and today."
(E.D., Van Wyk, 1979: 3)
Van Wyk's mass can thus be seen as an appeal for peace and a form of protest against the 'state of affairs in the world and South Africa.' The intended extra-musical or referential meaning is unambiguously present.

References by the composer to the intended expression of 'mournfulness', 'the elegiac' and 'protest' are also evident to a striking degree in his instrumental works. From the *Five Elegies for String Quartet* (1941) to the *Duo Concertante* (1962) we find in Van Wyk's comments recurring references to these extramusical concepts.

In the *Five Elegies* Van Wyk sought to give expression to 'loss' and 'the evanescence of life' (Van Wyk, 1983: SABC) and in the *Elegia*, of the *Duo Concertante*, he attempted to portray 'sadness, bitterness and despair' (Van Wyk, 1962: 4).

Composed between these two works, the *Saudade for Violin and Orchestra* of 1940 and the *Drie Improvisasies op Nederlands Volkswysies* can serve as further examples of this tendency. The word *saudade* is derived from the Portuguese adjective *saudoso* which means "yearning, longing, sorrowful, deeply missed, late-lamented" (Lamb, 1982: 718). Stegmann writes that: "...ook die lyding wat Nederland moes verduur het Arnold van Wyk aangegryp. Dit het aanleiding gegee tot die *Drie Improvisasies*..." (Stegmann,
1947: 45) "...Van Wyk was also moved by the suffering of the occupied Netherlands. This inspired the Three Improvisations..."

Further examples include the First String Quartet (1946) and Night Music (1959). When questioned on possible reasons accounting for the fact that the First String Quartet is not often performed in South Africa, Van Wyk commented:

"...do you know that Mahler, who had a great following in Vienna, was not appreciated for a long time because his music was too pessimistic. Perhaps the same reason can be applied to the String Quartet. It ends in absolute pessimism and perhaps people do not like to hear those kinds of things."

Of Night Music Van Wyk wrote:

"I am less eager to write about the 'meaning' of the work. Mendelssohn spoke the truest word about 'poetic' illustration: words cannot explain music because they are too definite: the particular power of music is that it says different things to different people; programmatic elucidation limits this power. It is therefore with hesitation and reluctance that I speak of my intention to give a comprehensive portrayal of 'night' in this work - to speak of its beauty, mystery and fearfulness, and to show night as the
prototype of love, sleep and death. It is best to consider the work as essentially elegiac - as a song of mourning. But my mourning is not always done under a willow tree in the moon's pale gleam - I also rebel against the hardness of life and I remember the good things that are no more."

(Van Wyk, HAUM record sleeve: 10961)

In this quotation we are confronted with a curious contradiction; at the outset the composer seems extremely cautious about the validity of specifying a referential meaning, but he then concludes by presenting us with a very detailed account of his intended extramusical meaning. We find another example of a similar kind of contradiction by the composer when he speaks of his *First Symphony:*

"Dis 'n abstrakte stuk... 'n protessimfonie, ek weet nie wat my daartoe geïnspireer het nie... ek wou dit maar net skryf."

(Van Wyk, SABC: 1983)

"It is an abstract work... a symphony of protest. I do not know what served as inspiration... I simply felt the need to write it."

Van Wyk made another direct reference to the concept of protest when discussing the *Five Elegies for String Quartet:*

"Ek onthou toe hulle uitgekom het, het die koersante gesê: 'Five Elegies would suggest lenten fare' maar dis nie net hartseermusiek nie, dis ook protesmusiek."

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"I remember that when they first appeared the newspapers commented: 'Five Elegies would suggest Lenten fare.' But it isn't only sad music, it is also music of protest. One can also view it that way. There is protest in the music, it is not only lamentation... it's not that sort of music..."

In the final part of a television programme on Van Wyk which was broadcast by SABC television in 1983 shortly after Van Wyk's death, Van Wyk plays the final movement of the piano work Tristia, entitled Rondo Desolato.

He introduces this, possibly his final performance of one of his own works by saying:

"...maar ek waarsku jou, die stuk waarmee hy eindig---die onderdeel se naam is Rondo Desolato, ek dink nie ek hoef dit te vertaal nie---is waarskynlik die hartsêerste ding wat ek ooit geskryf het. Hy eindig ook net sommer so. Hy eindig nie, dis net 'n ding wat aangaan."

"...but I have to warn you, the part with which it ends is called Rondo Desolato--I do not think it is necessary to translate it—and it is probably the saddest piece of music I have ever written. It also just ends without any further ado. It doesn't end, it is something which just carries on..."

Finally, possibly the strongest, most direct and moving statement by the composer on the presence of the 'elegiac' in his music is also to be found in this last interview,
shortly before his own death:

"Ek is nie 'n groot komponis nie want ek kan eintlik net weemoedige musiek skryf. As jy my vra watter werk ek die liefste sou wou gaskryf het, dan sal ek vir jou 'n werk noem soos die Vierde Beethoven Klavierkonsert of die Vioolconcerto. As ek daardie sereniteit kon ontkek, maar ek kan nie. Ek kan eintlik net hartseer musiek skryf..."
(Van Wyk, SABC: 1983)

"I am not a great composer, for ultimately I can write only mournful music. If you ask me which work I would have most wanted to compose, I would mention works such as the Fourth Piano Concerto by Beethoven, or the Violin Concerto. If I could discover that kind of serenity. But I can't. I can really write only mournful music."

Thus, there are numerous references by the composer which indicate the intended the extra-musical meaning of 'death' and 'protest'. These references all serve as evidence concerning the Poietic level of meaning. Elucidating further concomitant structural gestures in which 'death' may be seen to function within the musical work, forms the main focus of the remainder of this study.
CHAPTER THREE

KIMMEL'S PHRYGIAN INFLUENCE AND THE APPEARANCE OF DEATH IN MUSIC AND OTHER POSSIBLE GESTURES OF DEATH

Possible structural allusions to sorrow and death in music have been isolated and described by various writers:

"In music from the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century a motif is found which is not the particular property of any composer any more than the scale or the common chord. It is in fact nothing else but a fragment of the chromatic scale; more accurately, a progression of descending semi-tones within the compass of the perfect fourth. There is something fascinating in this motif even in its barest state. It requires neither ornamentation, nor rhythmic variety, nor harmony to convey a feeling of profound sadness and even to suggest a hidden meaning."

(Müller-Hartman, 1945: 199)

Albert Schweitzer (1875 - 1965) also recognized a similar extramusical meaning in this intervallic phenomenon when he wrote the following on the theme from Bach's Jesu der du meine Seele:

"The bitter death and the distress of soul are depicted by Bach in a theme based upon the familiar chromatic sequence."

(Schweitzer, 1911, quoted by Müller-Hartman, 1945: 200)
In her study *The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament*, Ellen Rosand describes the same configuration as conveying the extramusical meaning of *grief* or *lament*. Rosand bases her study primarily on music of the seventeenth century and traces the appearance of the descending tetrachord and its conveyance of the meaning of sorrow in the works of composers such as Monteverdi, Cavalli and Bach. She writes that:
"For many reasons, the descending tetrachord ostinato offered an ideal solution to this dramatic and musical problem: for setting the lament apart from its context and at the same time maintaining its intense emotional power. Whatever the loss of spontaneity such patterning entailed, it was more than compensated for by the intrinsic affective implications of the tetrachord ostinato."
(Rosand, 1979:356)

She concludes her study by quoting the opening measures of the Lament from Bach’s Capriccio in B-flat major (on the departure of his dearly Beloved Brother) and says that:

"Here in a keyboard work based on the descending tetrachord ostinato, without text, the lament affect is projected by a purely musical figure: the pattern itself declares its precise iconographic significance, an emblem of lament."
(Rosand, 1979: 359)

J.S. Bach: Capriccio in B-flat (1704) (Ist ein allgemeines Lamento der Freunde, Bach-Gesellschaft XXXVI, p. 192):
Possibly the most detailed and extensive exposition of the descending tetrachord and its meaning of death and sorrow is to be found in William Kimmel's *The Phrygian Inflection and the Appearance of Death in Music*, published in 1980 in *College Music Symposium* (Vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 42 - 76).  

In this article, Kimmel formulates several possible musical manifestations of death which are deduced primarily from the descending tetrachord as it is constituted in the Phrygian mode. Since a substantial part of the present study deals with Phrygian configurations and their significance in death-oriented settings, it is necessary to deal extensively with Kimmel's theory. In formulating these manifestations of death in music, he applies the implications of Phrygian configurations to the parameters of Melody, Harmony and Structure. Except for a single reference to the dactylic death rhythm, his study does not include the parameters of pulse, rhythm, texture or timbre. Possible allusions to death within these parameters are given at the end of this chapter with references to Van Wyk's oeuvre.

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1. In each of the quotations by Kimmel that follow, this study is referred to. In subsequent quotations therefore, only page numbers are given.
Kimmel sets out by quoting from the works of two philosophers:

"...As the extreme possibility of Dasein, death is capable of the greatest lighting-up of being and its truth."

- Martin Heidegger

"It would appear, perhaps... that all works of art could be defined through their rapport with the categories of Death, and that before this omnipresence of Death, the customary definitions of Classicism, the Baroque, Romanticism, archaism, realism, the picturesque, etc., etc., could be revised. If these statements are no longer original, at least they permit us to affirm again that precisely all great works find their best analyses under the double point of view of a landscape of Death and of a symbol of artistic creation at the core of the adventure and thus, in the double implication that every work is essentially haunted by death and that the analytical route indicated in this Preface is perhaps the best."

- Michel Guiomar

According to Kimmel the significance of these quotations when applied to the creative act is as follows:

"The implications of Heidegger's statement are that since death is the matrix, omnipresent boundary, and ultimate possibility and goal of Dasein (the human mode of being in the world), and since life is always and at all times a being-toward-death, only he who lives continually and consciously in the understanding of this truth grasps the innermost meaning of the being he encounters and the truth of his own existence in its 'authenticity'." (Kimmel, 1980: 42)
Kimmel interprets Guiomar's statement as follows:

"a. that the creative act arises as a response to a conscious or unconscious awareness of death as the original, ultimate, and everpresent adversary.

b. that creative activity and the art work are human modes of transcendence through which both the self and its world are wrought and sustained.

c. that the work is a dynamic field in which the dialectics of life and death (being and non-being) are perpetually at play, and finally,

d. that the most illuminating analysis is that which discloses the ubiquitous presence of this adversary in the work of art." (p. 43)

Kimmel argues that since music is first and foremost a structure of tonal relations, it follows that "death must be analyzed in terms of its manner of appearance within structures" (p. 44). According to him one of these "structural appearances" of death is:

"A small but important group of interrelated melodic and harmonic configurations which, because of a common derivation, constitute a family." (p. 44)

Kimmel labels this group of melodic and harmonic configurations the Phrygian Inflection. He motivates his terminology as follows:

"I am coining the term 'Phrygian Inflection' to refer to a cluster of melodic, harmonic and structural configurations which, singly or in combination, produce musical gestures universally recognized by composers, at least during the period of tonal and
prototonal musio, as appropriate and adequate gestures in contexts of death: death as an ontological power, death as fact or event (physical, ritual, symbolic, psychological), or death as existential problem - having to die, fearing or longing for death and so forth. I use the term 'Phrygian' because it is the most familiar label for the tetrachord consisting of two tones and a semitone, the latter at the bottom, and I use the term 'Inflection' in the sense of a characteristic inflection of the voice that corresponds to an intended meaning, such as that which announces a question in speech."

(p.44)

Kimmel, unlike Müller-Hartman, for example, believes that this intervallic structure refers to death not only where the topic of death is expressed unambiguously for example, by direct reference of title or text, but holds that:

"...wherever these configurations occur prominently, they disclose the presence and workings of death in the musical being. The line of reasoning is that if composers intentionally used them in explicitly death-oriented contexts, they could hardly have been unmindful of their implications when resorted to in purely abstract instrumental works."

(pp. 44 - 45)

Kimmel furthermore proposes the idea that the Phrygian Inflection is in itself an expression of death rather than a result of conventioning or conditioning:
"I...suggest that these configurations and gestures have this characteristic power not through convention and usage but because of the nature of tonality as such. They are ontological before they are psychological or symbolical entities, inherent in the being of music itself."
(p. 45)

However, it may be more feasible to suggest that the referential meaning of the inflection is a combination of ontological leanings and of convention; that because of its application in countless musical death-related settings, we have connoted a stronger or more definite meaning to a possible inherent possibility or tendency. If, as Kimmel suggests, the *Phrygian Inflection* is 'inherent in the being of music itself', this relationship would be obscure, hence, difficult to describe and impossible to prove. However, in the same way that psychologists would refer to both heredity and conditioning when, for example, describing a personality structure, it seems more feasible to suggest that this sound phenomenon has gained its extramusical meaning through a similar procedure, i.e. through both *inherency* and through repeated usage, or *conditioning*. 
THE PHRYGIAN INFLECTION AND ITS DERIVATIONS:

The Phrygian mode of E, F, G, A, B, C, D, is an exact inversion of the major mode. The major mode consists of two major tetrachords which embrace a central Phrygian tetrachord:

The Phrygian mode consists of two Phrygian tetrachords which embrace a central major tetrachord:

In the first example, the major third predominates and in the second, the minor.
Kimmel writes:

"It will be noted that the natural minor mode (Aeolian) contains the Phrygian as its upper tetrachord while the lower has the semitone between two whole tones." (p. 45)

When the second degree (Neapolitan inflection) of the natural minor mode is lowered, (or that of the Aeolian mode) the original form of the Phrygian mode results:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
& 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\
7 & 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 0 \\
6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\end{array}
\]

According to Kimmel:

"Two additional subordinate Phrygian tetrachords occur, one in the major mode descending from 3 - 7 and one in the minor mode descending from 5 - 2. If as I intend, a case is made for the identification of death with Phrygian configurations, then the associations in Baroque theory and criticism of the major and minor modes with the polarities of life and death (joy and sorrow) was not merely subjective. Furthermore, the dialectical rather than mutually exclusive relationship between life and death is borne out by the presence of each tetrachord type at the center of its opposite mode."

(p. 46)
There are various types of descending Phrygian tetrachords which can occur in 1. diatonic, 2. chromatic, 3. gapped, 4. diminished and 5. augmented forms:

According to Kimmel:

"The diminished form occurs modally only with the insertion of a leading tone. The augmented form is actually a Lydian tetrachord and is without the critical semitone. It is included here merely to complete the classification of tetrachord types and because, due to the presence of the tritone, it serves also in contexts of death."
(p.48)

Kimmel relates the Phrygian Inflection and its allusion to death in music as follows:

"It is the position of the semitone in the tetrachords that gives to each its distinctive character and quality. As a dissonant interval it possesses greater energy and intensity and consequently internal momentum which in melodic progression accelerates in the direction of the second tone, and as the terminal interval of a melodic gesture it creates an unmistakable sense of partial or ultimate arrival, termination or finali-
ty. In the ascent through the major form of the tetra-
chord the arrival is felt as an active and successful
attainment of a melodic goal. In the descent through
the Phrygian form with decreasing melodic energy the
arrival is felt as a passive yielding to the gravita-
tional pull of the lower tone and cessation of melodic
energy. The implications of these two opposite mani-
festations of melodic energy for the dialectics of
life and death in music are obvious."
(p. 46)

"The prime locus for this characteristic Phrygian
melodic inflection is the tones fa-mi. The same
quality is reflected but with less ultimacy in the
upper tetrachord ti-do. In whatever context it occurs
I shall refer to it in what follows as the fa-mi
inflection. The dramatic tension lies in the upper
tone, the finality or ultimacy of its resolution in
the lower."
(pp. 46 - 47)

Kimmel applies this principle to three different para-
ters, namely that of melody, harmony and structure, in
the following ways:

1. Melodic Configurations:

"The diatonic and chromatic forms of the tetrachord
will be immediately recognized as the basis of Baroque
chaconne ostinato basses and of hundreds of Baroque
lament arias. Its best known examples are Monteverdi’s
Amor: Lamento della ninfa, Dido’s Lament in Purcell’s
Dido and Aeneas and the Crucifixus from Bach’s Mass in
b minor (first used in his Cantata BWV 12 for the text
Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen)."
(p. 47)
He also cites examples such as Cassandra's *Lament* in Cavalli's *La Didone* and speculates whether it could possibly be held "that all chaconnes on these Phrygian basses, such as Purcell's *London Chaconne*, are lamentations or reflections on death whose overriding presence permeates the works." (p.47)

The appearance of the descending tetrachord, that is, without repetition, is according to Kimmel, far more common. He cites J.S. Bach's *Komm süsser Tod*, where he says the composer "invokes death in a succession of two Phrygian tetrachords, one diatonic and the other diminished." (p. 48):
The next example Kimmel cites is of particular interest for the purpose of the present study in that the descending tetrachord is preceded by a dactylic rhythm, a rhythm which used to be one of the characteristics of early Elegies (von Wilpert, 1969: 201):

Josquin des Prez, *Nymphes des bois*, measures 111-117

Kimmel refers to the "symmetrical cut of the first three measures, an early appearance of a familiar dactylic death rhythm" (p. 49). He continues his discussion of the melodic use of the descending tetrachord in death-related settings by referring to examples in the works of Bach.
Schubert, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, Wagner, Wolf; Wagner, Mahler and Schoenberg, and shows that this configuration features in some way, in many instances where death is unambiguously implied.

According to Kimmel

"...the melodic descent of death-oriented gestures is not always confined to the tetrachord. Longer and shorter melodic descents that terminate in the half-step carry with them the Phrygian quality. One may then by extension speak of descending melodic gestures also as Phrygian octaves, sevenths, sixths, fifths or thirds."
(pp. 53 - 54)

He supports this idea by citing two examples from Schubert and Bach:

"The first from Schubert's *Die Krähe*, is of an octave descent which by means of a lowered second degree encompasses the Phrygian octave:

![](image1)

"The second, from the final chorus of the *Passion according to St. Matthew* is the long melodic descent encompassing a ninth during the course of which the
intensity of anguish with which it begins at the peak of the dominant ninth chord is gradually transformed into quiet resignation with which it terminates. Notice also the rhythmic articulation of the melody which liberates itself from the control of the triple meter:

( pp. 54 - 55 )

J. S. Bach, *Matthäuspassion*, final chorus, measures 75-80

---

He particularly draws attention to the semitones in the spiral figure concluding the passage in the bass:

"The crucial semitone, the crux of the **Phrygian Inflection**, occurs in all three modes (Phrygian, major and minor) at the following points: 4 - 3, flat 8 - 5, 8 - 7, flat 3 - 2 and with the Neapolitan alteration at lowered 2 - 1. I have maintained that wherever this semitone occurs as the terminus of a melodic gesture, it carries with it a quality closely akin to that of the Phrygian tetrachord. All of the above semitones might therefore for convenience be referred to as the *fa-mi* inflection, as suggested in the section on derivations."

(p. 55)
He supports this death-conjuring gesture by citing the following two examples. The first is from Don Giovanni where Donna Anna discovers the corpse of her father. ("This fa-mi inflection haunts the entire score of Don Giovanni." p. 55):

"The second famous example is the Fate motive of Wagner's Ring, a Phrygian cadence built upon a powerful fa-mi bass.": (p. 55)

A more recent and explicit example of this configuration is evident in the Dirge from Benjamin Britten's Serenade Opus 31, where the tenor solo enunciates several repeated fa-mi inflections throughout the course of the movement on the pitches a-flat to g.
Kimmel alludes to the possible extramusical qualities of the pitches e and b in the tonal system when he writes:

"The discussion thusfar has considered the Phrygian melodic descent from larger to smaller spans --octave to tetrachord to the smallest fa-mi terminus inflection. The descent gains in intensity as it approaches the terminal crux. One is thus led to question this terminal note itself, the role played by the mediant note of a major key, that of the note e in the tonal system, and by analogy the note b of the upper Phrygian tetrachord. These...observations are admittedly speculative, since far more careful investigation is needed to make a strong case here for a thanatology of music."

(pp. 55 - 56)

Kimmel views the dualistic role of the third degree of the scale as follows:

"The ambiguity and instability of the third scale degree is well known both from tuning theory and from musical practice. Its facility as a pivotal tone in oscillations between the major and minor keys suggests that this point possesses a 'vulnerability', that is, it represents an unclear dividing line between two reciprocal regions of the tonal system and hence in terms of this article between regions of relative light and shadow, of the relative dominance of the powers of life and death. It is in the works of Schubert and Mahler, composers much of whose music is recognized as being death haunted, that this tonal ambiguity is most prevalent. It is too familiar to require examples here. However, the ambivalence of the tone mi requires further examination. It is apparent in the contrasting qualities it possesses, as the terminus of the central Phrygian tetrachord in the scale on the one hand and as the chord third of the major tonic triad on the other."

(p. 56)
Kimmel refers to the so-called love-death syndrome, and calls it the intimate, almost symbiotic, relationship between two powers; the roles of the tone mi in the tonal system seem to confirm it" (p. 56). However, as this aspect is beyond the scope of the present study, it is not necessary to deal with its possible implications presently.

It is furthermore, according to Kimmel, significant to note

"...the frequency with which the mediant appears as the final, inconclusive melodic tone in works whose dramatic or poetic substance implies a passing over into a 'beyond'." (p. 58)

As examples of this phenomenon, he mentions the following works: The Crucifixus from Bach's Mass in b-minor, the requiems of Berlioz, Verdi, Faure and Britten, Strauss's Lieder Allerseelen, Heimkehr, Im Abendrot, Mahler's Kindertotenlieder and Vaughan Williams' Symphony in e-minor.

Two more significant examples of this tendency are given:
"...where the single tone e (or by analogy b) has the power to articulate the uttermost of ecstasy or of terror. The first is the long orchestral crescendo on the unison e, gradually reinforced through multiple octave doublings in the last song of Mahler's Lied von der Erde (cue 57 - 58)... the parallel case on the analogous note b of the musical system is the horrendous pair of orchestral unison crescendo's immediately following the murder of Marie in Berg's Wozzeck (Act III, cue 110)."

(p. 59)

However, he emphasizes the tentative, suggestive and speculative character of the above reflections upon the significance of the mediant tone and of the note e in the tonal system.

(p. 59)

As a final example of the possible melodic configurations in which death possibly manifests itself, Kimmel discusses the 'Descending Spiral':

\[ \text{Music notation image} \]
He motivates his reasoning as follows:

"It is not unrelated to the Phrygian tetrachord, for in its most common form, the spiral of fourths, it provides the most common counterpoint, especially in the bass, to the descending Phrygian tetrachord and scale. One recognizes in the first four notes the first phrase of the Romanesca Bass. This spiral occurs in both its diatonic and chromatic forms. It transforms the linear harmonic descent by thirds into a spiral descent." (pp. 59 - 60)

Kimmel holds that this spiral has a similar significance to the 'spiral-gestalt' of life and death...generation-growth-decay-death-rebirth or regeneration." (p. 60)

"The ascending clockwise spiral is associated with creative power, growth and life, the descending counter clockwise spiral with decay, deconstruction, and death." (p. 60)

Thus, the musical turn figure, \( \odot \), could be construed to signify a 'transitional or transformational implication', and, according to Kimmel, there are "numerous examples where composers employed it with this connotation." (p. 60)

"In Baroque Figurenlehre, this figure, called Kyklosis was recommended for texts implying a turning or returning or changing of course." (p. 60)
He lists examples of works by Bach to illustrate this point, but concedes that one "cannot, of course interpret every occurrence of an ornamental turn in this manner" (p. 60).

Kimmel concludes this discussion on melodic configurations by saying that descending spirals need not necessarily signify death if they are not moving in intervals of fourths, but holds that "there are other non-quartal descending spirals that often occur in contexts of death, spirals of descending thirds, fifths, sixths and even octaves, or of mixed intervals" (p. 63). It would thus seem that the spiral in itself is a more important signifier of the possible allusions to death, rather than the quality of the intervals involved.

2. Harmonic Configurations:

Kimmel writes that:

"Harmonization of the descending Phrygian pattern gave rise to a variety of cadence types belonging to the 'vocabulary' of the 'Phrygian Inflection'. The earliest were the modal cadences in both natural and altered forms. Subsequent elaborations of this cadence formula as a death symbol were given by Arnold Schering (Schering, 1941: 132) in his studies on musical symbolism." (p. 64)
Examples of Phrygian cadences:

According to Kimmel:

"By the eighteenth century the most dramatic of these death-announcing gestures were those cadences employing the augmented-sixth chords and the Neapolitan sixth on the penultimate melodic notes."

(pp. 64 - 65)
To illustrate this, Kimmel uses this example from *The Marriage of Figaro* which he describes as

"...the critical turning point...where the Countess faces the crisis of her own necessary downgoing in humiliation (symbolic death). The bass articulates the full tetrachord."

(p. 65)

Mozart, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, No. 19, measures 23-26

He cites two further examples where this cadence appears in similar circumstances, "but without the accompanying melodic descent" (p. 65), where lamentations are unambiguously expressed:
Mozart: *Die Zauberflöte*, No 17, mm. 5 - 7:

Mozart: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, No 10, mm. 1 - 4:

In the next point Kimmel makes regarding harmonic configurations, he uses the Second Movement of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto no 3*, which consists of the following single measure:
Kimmel writes that the

"Adagio consists solely of a Phrygian cadence. If the case being made for the death implications of the Phrygian Inflection is valid, then the great body of Baroque middle slow movements, which almost invariably close with a Phrygian cadence that is not a half-cadence to the key of the following movement, are 'meditations on death' between two life-affirming Allegro's. Bach considered the cadence by itself sufficient to communicate to its hearers the customary substance of a medial Adagio, as Wagner knew that the same cadence, his Fate motive, was fully adequate to embody its fatalistic implications."
(p. 66)

He develops this idea further:

"...Not only in cadences, but in many non-cadential progressions, the Neapolitan chord carries death-oriented connotations, as in the first two measures of the soprano lament arias of Bach's Cantata no 21, mm. 8 - 10:
(pp. 66 - 67)

"...and at the climax of Schubert's Die böse Farbe, to the impassionate outcry 'Would that my tears might bleach all the green pale.'":
(pp. 66 - 67)
Kimmel concludes this section as follows:

"From the above examples one recognizes that the chords on the lowered sixth and second scale degrees are the critical harmonic carriers of the Phrygian Inflection and of its implications for death. The former, with its gravitation towards the dominant, is the most dramatically intense; the latter, with its tonic orientation, is more grave, heavy and ineluctable. The fa-mi inflection in its voice leading as the positive character of the perfect cadence springs from the reciprocal counter-inflection ti-do --two different types of finality. Their implications for a musical thanatology remains to be investigated. Let us note merely that the sense of termination or finality in tonal music has been accomplished most often by a movement toward the subdominant pole, and also that in many of the Bach cantatas where the text is about death the first harmonic progressions is from tonic to subdominant."

(p. 68)
3. Structural Configurations:

Kimmel writes that:

"...if what has been said above is at all convincing, it follows that what has been called the Phrygian Inflection must operate similarly in larger structural and formal units."
(p. 68)

He continues:

"If it can organize a phrase, it can also organize a period or even a larger formal segment. A sonata movement whose second key area is that of the lowered sixth might be said to articulate the gapped form of the tetrachord which is completed by the dominant preparation for the recapitulation."
(p. 70)

As examples of this phenomenon, Kimmel refers to passages in *Don Giovanni*

"A dramatic example is that of Don Giovanni's first encounter with the statue in the graveyard (no 22 in the opera). At the moment the Don addresses the statue the tonal center drops abruptly from E-major to C-major and then to B. The same progression is repeated immediately after the statue's 'Si!'"
(p. 70)

and the Berlioz *Requiem:*
The concluding fifty measures of Berlioz' *Requiem* from 'Et lux perpetua' are constructed on an extended three-fold tetrachord structure, the first two descending from G to D, the last from C to G with the Neapolitan inflection. Through an unusual series of cadences from the triads of each tone of the tetrachord, the Phrygian character of final descent is intensified. Thus IV - I, iii - I, flat-II - I, flat II - I, V - I.

(p. 70)

In conclusion Kimmel once again probes the possible extramusical significance of the e and b modes:

"I do not intend to enter the highly problematic area of key qualities. One might ... maintain that a composer who is sensitive to the tonal system as a whole and to its development from the archetypal scales mentioned, at the beginning of this article origins still preserved in the notational system, such a composer might, in spite of the radical relativization of keys, still preserve an intuitive sense of the special character of the tone e (and correspondingly b of the upper Phrygian tetrachord)."

(p. 71)

Thus Kimmel arrives at the point where, having substantiated his coining of the term Phrygian Inflection and its relationship to death gestures in music, he is ostensibly in the position to categorize the appearance of this inflection under the following headings and subheadings:
1. Melodic Configurations

a. The descending Phrygian tetrachord in its various forms.
b. All other melodic descents whose terminus is the Phrygian half-step.
c. The fa-mi inflection.
d. The single tone mi in a prominent or conspicuous position.
e. The descending spiral.

2. Harmonic Configurations

a. Phrygian cadences, natural or with major third in the cadence chord.
b. Cadences containing the chords of the augmented sixth.
c. Cadences entailing the Neapolitan sixth chord.
d. Plagal cadences.
e. The mediant function.

3. Structural Configurations

a. The descending Phrygian tetrachord as harmonic bass.
b. Successions of tonal centers that articulate the fa-mi inflection: this includes keys of the lowered sixth and fifth scale steps and of the lowered first and second scale steps.
c. The role of the mediant key.
d. The E and B modes as such.
e. The descending spiral bass as harmonic, formal structure.

In the following chapters Kimmel's theory concerning the Phrygian Inflection is applied to Arnold van Wyk's Five Elegies for String Quartet. However, it must be acknowledged that composers may have additional gestures of death which may be operative in the parameters of rhythm,
pulse, timbre and texture.

The dactylic rhythm is briefly mentioned by Kimmel and this rhythmic characteristic is evident in many works which allude to the referential idea of the elegiac and death. This rhythm, \( \frac{\text{V}}{\text{V}} \), has become a characteristic of numerous funeral marches:

L. van Beethoven, *Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un eroe* from piano sonata Op. 26:
L. van Beethoven, Marcia funebre: Adagio assai from the
Symphony No. 3, Op. 55:

2 Flauti

2 Obol

2 Clarinetti in B

2 Fagotti

1,2 in C

3 Corni

3, in Es

2 Trombe in C

Timpani in C-G

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabasso
F. Chopin, *Marche funèbre* from piano sonata, Op. 35:

In the second movement of Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, *Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras* ("Behold, all flesh is as the grass"), a following dactylic rhythm is sounded incessantly in triplets in the tympani:
According to David B. Greene, the fanfare opening of Mahler's *Fifth Symphony* may be seen as an expression of "looking into the face of death" (Greene, 1984: 45). Here, too, it is the dactylic rhythm which is forcefully stated in the opening measures:

The fact that the dactylic rhythm has been described as having the same connotation in early elegies (Von Wilpert, 1969: 201), lends further credence to its ostensible extramusical significance in contexts of death.

A way in which the concept of death may be illustrated through the parameter of pulse may include a visible weakening or extinguishing of the basic pulse unit. The possible parallel in this case may be that a similar process is frequently evident where the state of life changes into one of death.

Through the parameter of timbre, it seems to be feasible to suggest that composers frequently tend to write in
darker timbral colours where concomitant structural allusions to death are made. The cited examples by Beethoven in which the dactylic rhythm appears, may serve to illustrate this tendency. In addition, consideration of the instrumentation of works such as Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* underscores this tendency; in these works where death is unambiguously referred to by way of title or text, both composers tend to favour the lower and darker timbral qualities of instruments. It does not seem possible to outline definite textural changes which tend to accompany these coloristic changes. Indeed, it seems that composers may, according to individual preference, write either in transparent or opaque textural settings when depicting death. In the case of Arnold van Wyk, it becomes evident that he frequently favours a more transparent texture, often coupled with darker tone colours, wherever explicit reference to configurations of the Phrygian Inflection are made in the *Five Elegies*. As there seems to be a correlation between transparent textures and appearances of the of the Phrygian Inflection, it is suggested that Van Wyk frequently prefers casting his material in a transparent texture where death is implied or alluded to.

Van Wyk describes his *Rondo desolato* for piano solo as "...probably the saddest piece of music I have ever writ-
ten. It...ends without any further ado. It doesn't end, it is something which just carries on..." (Van Wyk, 1983: SABC). In the final fourteen measures of this movement, the texture changes markedly from one of opaqueness to one of transparency:

More pertinent examples can be found in Van Wyk's settings of poetry with a decidedly elegiac character: In Vier Weemoedige Liedjies, towards the end of the songs Vaalvalk, Berste Winterdag and Koud is die Wind this characteristic is evident to a similar degree:
Vaalvalk:

dou oor die dui - ne, geen wind-jie wat waai,

net 'n vaal-valk wat sing soos hy draai, soos hy draai...

Berste Winterdag:

tonig, een-tonig op ge-wel en dak en hang swaar-blink aan die

ka-te a-mandl-tak, dim. e rit.
In the last example cited above, it is also important to note that the song cycle is concluded with a reference to the gapped form of the descending Phrygian tetrachord in the vocal part. Other Phrygian and Lydian configurations
are found to a similar degree in the above works by Van Wyk. In the example of *Vaalvalk* cited above, the *fa-mi* inflection is evident in the third last measure in the piano's lower voice. In *Eerste Winterdag*, the descending tritone (g-sharp - d) together with the *fa-mi* inflection (d-sharp - d) are heard in the closing measures. In the example of *Koud is die Wind*, the descending Phrygian tetrachord and the e mode are of significance in terms of Kimmel's *Phrygian Inflection*. A final Phrygian cadence closes *Van Liefde en Verlatenheid* where death is depicted as the "darkest stream":

In her study *Arnold van Wyk (1916 - ) se Vokale Musik: 'n Stylstudie met Spesiale Verwysing na Variasietegnieke*, Jolena Geldenhuys observes that in his vocal music, Van Wyk frequently resorts to intervals with intended symbolic significance. According to Geldenhuys, Van Wyk employs the interval of the diminished fifth (or augmented fourth)
in his settings of texts where direct reference to the elegiac, death or the dead is made:

"Van Wyk gebruik soms die verminderde kwint om wroeging, haat, somberheid en verlangen na die dood uit te druk en te beklemtoon."
(Geldenhuys, 1983: 25)

"Van Wyk sometimes employs the diminished fifth to portray and accentuate torment, hate, sombreness and the longing for death."

In her discussion of Van Wyk's melodic writing in the Mass, Geldenhuys writes:

"Teksgedeeltes wat handel oor sondeskuld, wroeging en die dood word in Missa in illo tempore met behulp van die verminderde kwint (tritone) uitgebeeld."
(Geldenhuys, 1983: 130)

"Those parts of the text that deal with the burden of sin, torment and death are portrayed in Missa in illo tempore by way of the diminished fifth (tritone)."

Further references by Geldenhuys to this characteristic in Van Wyk's vocal music, where the tritone has similar symbolic import, and which moreover seems to have remained a constant feature through his entire vocal oeuvre, are found in the same study (pp. 34, 39, 119, 136 - 140, 144 - 149, 154, 158 - 159, 161 and 171 - 172).
It may then be feasibly argued that the interval of the tritone may well carry similar extramusical import in Van
Wyk's instrumental works, especially where he unambiguously states that their content is meant to convey mournfulness, death and the elegiac.

Thus, the importance of the interval of the tritone in prominent melodic, harmonic or structural position is investigated in addition to Kimmel's phrygian configurations. This characteristic as a possible signifier of death is briefly mentioned by Kimmel, but is not included in his summary of the Phrygian Inflection:

"The augmented form of the descending tetrachord is actually a Lydian tetrachord and is without the critical semitone. It is included here...because...it serves also in the contexts of death."
(Kimmel, 1980: 46)

Thus, in addition to the various melodic, harmonic and structural configurations described by Kimmel as having connotations of death, the presence of the dactylic rhythm, the constitution of pulse, the relationship between opaque and transparent textures and the presence of dark timbral colours are considered as possible signifiers of death in the Five Elegies.
Arnold van Wyk arrived in London on 23 September 1938. Upon his arrival he could not have known that he was going to witness, at close hand, a large part of the Second World War. Although England declared war on Germany in September 1939, war came to London only on 7 September 1940 when German aircraft started bombing the city. This bombing began Hitler's Blitzkrieg, this time directed at the British Isles and with the singular aim of subjecting the country to Nazism in the shortest possible time. Understandably this event, followed by repeated attacks had disastrous consequences for the inhabitants of the city. For artists, writers and composers, the outbreak of the war heralded the beginning of a period in which they were initially sometimes openly regarded as superfluous. However, by 1940 public support for the arts had once again gained momentum:
"...there was a revival of interest in the arts. This arose spontaneously and simply, because people felt that music, the ballet, poetry and painting were concerned with a seriousness of living and dying with which they had themselves suddenly been confronted...there was something deeply touching about this interest in the arts..."  
(Spender, quoted by Hewison, 1977:50)

Although there may have been a revival of interest in the arts, some artists felt that they could not create new works against the backdrop of encroaching totalitarianism. George Orwell wrote:

"The autonomous individual is going to be stamped out of existence...the literature of liberalism is coming to an end and the literature of totalitarianism has not yet appeared and is barely imaginable. As for the writer, he is sitting on a melting iceberg; he is merely an anachronism, a hangover from the bourgeois age, as surely doomed as the hippopotamus...from now onwards the all-important fact for the creative writer is going to be that this is not a writer's world."  
(Orwell, quoted by Hewison, 1977: 4)

Harold Nicholson wrote:

"Night after night, night after night, the bombardment of London continues. It is like the Conciergerie, since every morning one is pleased to see one's friends appearing again. I am nerveless, and yet I am conscious that when I hear a motor in the empty streets I tauten myself lest it be a bomb screaming towards me. Underneath, the fibres of one's nerve-resistance must be sapped."  
(Nicholson, quoted by Hewison, 1977:31)
The population was frequently forced to spend nights in bomb-shelters. During one of these nights, the sculptor Henry Moore noted down the following:

"Figures showing faces lit-up rest of bodies in silhouette. Figures lying against platform with great bales of paper above also making beds/ Perambulators with bundles/ Dramatic, dismal lit, masses of reclining figures fading to perspective point - scribbles and scratches, chaotic foreground. Chains hanging from old crane. Sick woman in bath chair. Bearded Jews blanketed sleeping in deck chairs. Lascars Tunnel (bundles of old clothes that are people). (entrance to Tilbury) Men with shawls to keep off draughts, women wearing handkerchiefs on heads. Muck and rubbish and chaotic untidiness around." (Moore, quoted by Hewison, 1977: 40)

It is against the background of these appalling conditions, that Arnold van Wyk wrote his Five Elegies for String Quartet between September 1940 and June 1941, at the height of Hitler's Blitzkrieg. Indeed the work was "partly composed in bomb-shelters" (Hartman, 1981: 60).

Although the work was completed in 1941, opportunity for performance only materialized in 1942 when the Five Elegies was premiered at a National Gallery Concert which was organized by Myra Hess. In Van Wyk's personal collection of newspaper clippings, there do not seem to be press reviews of this first performance. There is however, a press review of a later performance given by the Griller Quartet on 29 January 1944 in the Wigmore Hall:
"Arnold van Wyk's Five Elegies are sombre, as their title would suggest. But within a single mood he achieves fine shades of feelings, rising from the truly elegiac viola soliloquy of the third to the amiable allegretto of the fourth."

(Music critic, The Times: 1 February 1944: page unknown)

In 1947, Howard Ferguson wrote the following in a short introductory article to the work:

"The title alone might suggest a set of five separate pieces cast in a uniformly grey mood. Such an impression would be false, however, for the work is essentially a single whole, and it covers an unexpectedly wide emotional range. This is perhaps less surprising when one considers how different are one's reactions at different times to the thought of impermanence and decay. (It may be worth remembering, in this connection, that the work was written in wartime London, at the height of the Blitz) Indeed, the Elegies contain all the variety, in themselves and between one another, that one would expect in a work lasting eighteen or nineteen minutes. But this diversity is always unified by an underlying elegiac mood."

(Ferguson, 1947: 16)

Of another performance which took place at the Royal Academy on 10 May 1948, the music critic of The Times concluded:

"However, the outstanding tribute to his [Theodore Holland] gifts came in the Five Elegies for String Quartet by his pupil Arnold van Wyk, a distinguished work which confirmed an earlier favourable impression by achieving its ends with absolute certainty of touch."

(Music Critic of The Times, 13 May 1948: page unknown)
In the analyses that follow of each of the *Five Elegies* conclusions with regard to the presence of allusions to death are made only once the formal organization is described and the melodic, harmonic, structural, rhythmic, timbral and textural configurations are considered.

One of the elements unifying the *Five Elegies* is Van Wyk's re-use of the basic formal plan of *Elegy I* in *Elegies II, IV* and *V*. This basic formal plan is as follows:

First Theme
Bridge Passage
Second Theme
Bridge Passage
Variation, contraction, extension and combination of First and Second Themes
Coda

*Elegy III*, on the other hand, is monothematic. Thus, the third and central *Elegy* is given prominence not only because it is cast as the central movement of the work, but also by the contrast between its structure and the structure of the other movements. The structural contrast is paralleled by other contrasts in that the movement has a distinctly improvisational character and its simplicity, which is due in a large part to the fact that the movement is cast almost wholly for solo viola.
ELEGY I
This movement, which is marked *Molto lento, assai expressivo e con tristezza,* \( \text{\"}\text{\textmu}\text{\textmu}\text{\textmu} = \text{c.} \ 42. \) is cast in a symmetrical form in e minor.

The specific breakdown of formal components including tonal centres are as follows:

First Theme \( \text{mm.} \ 1 - 5 \)  
(e minor)

Bridge Passage \( \text{mm.} \ 5^2 - 8^3 \)  
(e minor)

Second Theme \( \text{mm.} \ 9 - 11 \)  
(e minor)

Link \( \text{m.} \ 12^2 - 12^3 \)  
(e minor)

First and Second Theme \( \text{mm.} \ 13^1 - 18^3 \)  
(f-sharp minor)

Second Theme \( \text{mm.} \ 18 - 21^1 \)  
(f-sharp minor)
Bridge Passage  m. 21^2 - 21^4
(f-sharp minor)

First Theme  mm. 22 - 29
(f-sharp minor)

Second Theme  mm. 30 - 32
(B-flat major)

Bridge Passage  mm. 33 - 46
(B-flat major, E-flat major, D major and C-sharp major)

Second Theme  mm. 47 - 49
(C major)

Bridge Passage  m. 50
(C major)

First Theme  mm. 51 - 54
(e minor)

Bridge Passage  m. 55
(e minor)

Second Theme and First Theme  mm. 56 - 73
(e minor)
CODA
(e minor)

mm. 74 – 81

Second Theme
(e minor)

mm. 74 – 77¹

Bridge Passage
(e minor)

mm. 77² – 4

First Theme
(fragmented)
(e minor)

mm. 78 – 81

A remarkable formal symmetry transpires when these components are arranged graphically:

First Theme:

Second Theme:

Bridge Passage:
The additive form of the movement and its modulations, which move primarily through keys a second apart contribute to the flexible character of the movement.

This effect is increased by the fact that the two principal themes are closely related and by the modal character which is inflected through substantial sections of this movement, both horizontally and vertically. The First and Second Themes can be seen to be related to each other since the germinal interval of a third is prominently evident in both:

First Theme:

Second Theme:

In addition, the interval of the tritone appears prominently in both themes:

First Theme:
Second Theme:

\[ \text{The interval of the third is also prominently evident in the first and subsequent Bridge Passages. These devices can be seen to function as underlying unifying elements of the movement.} \]

The composer frequently inflects a modal character to some of his tonalities by raising the fourth scale degree, thus creating the Lydian mode with its characteristic interval of the augmented fourth: For example, at m. 9, a case can also be made for the tonal centre to be C Lydian. Similar examples of this kind of modal writing can be found at:

- m. 13 - raised fourth degree of implied A major: d-sharp.
- m. 18 - implied raised fourth degree, harmony of D major with g-sharp.
- m. 27 - raised fourth degree of implied A major: d-sharp.
- m. 47 - raised fourth degree of C major: f-sharp.
- m. 56 - implied raised fourth degree, harmony of G major with C-sharp.
m. 74 - implied raised fourth degree, harmony of C major with f-sharp.

I. MELODIC CONFIGURATIONS

The movement includes many examples of the melodic configurations discussed by Kimmel and others as connotative of death. These include the descending Phrygian tetrachord, other melodic descents with Phrygian half-step termini, motives with the fa-mi inflection, the use of the tone mi and of the tritone in prominent positions and the descending spiral.

a. The Descending Phrygian tetrachord

The opening motive commences on the interval of the minor third and progresses in an ascending stepwise figure to the interval of a minor sixth. It returns to the interval of a minor third through a similarly constructed descending figure. The only difference in this descent is the alteration of the interval of the perfect fifth which appears as a diminished fifth, or tritone, at the end of the phrase. This alteration may be seen to add stress to the phrase, and in addition, the following descending Phrygian tetrachord commences at this point if the B-flat is viewed as an A-sharp:
Between mm. 13 and 16, a similar procedure is evident:

Further examples of the descending Phrygian tetrachord include the following:

m. 14, Second Violin:

mm. 45 - 47, First Violin:
mm. 49 - 51, First Violin:

mm. 27 - 28 and m. 31, 'Cello:

mm. 56 - 57, 'Cello:

mm. 67 - 68, 'Cello:
b. Other melodic descents with Phrygian half-step termini

In addition to the examples cited above which terminate with the Phrygian half-step, the following examples can be noted:
mm. 36 - 37, First Violin and 'Cello:

mm. 46 - 47, First Violin, Viola and 'Cello:

mm. 58 - 59, Viola:
c. The *fa-mi* inflection

The *fa-mi* inflection occurs at the following points:

**mm. 4 - 5, Viola and *Cello:**

![Musical staff for mm. 4 - 5, Viola and *Cello.*]

**mm. 8 - 9, *Cello:**

![Musical staff for mm. 8 - 9, *Cello.*]

**m. 23, First and Second Violins:**

![Musical staff for m. 23, First and Second Violins.*]
mm. 25 - 31, 'Cello:

mm. 41 - 42, First Violin and 'Cello:
d. The tone \( mi \) in prominent position

A striking example of this melodic configuration is evident in the First Theme in that it both commences and terminates at the level of the tone \( mi \):

Further stress is added by the articulation marking, which renders \( mi \) slightly elongated. This feature is similarly evident in the subsequent statements of the First Theme.

The tone \( mi \) is also strongly evident in the first and subsequent statements of the Second Theme:
Although this statement of the First Theme is admittedly in e minor, the tonal centre of C Lydian is strongly suggested.

Possibly the most striking example of the tone mi in a prominent position can be found at mm. 47 - 49. The tonal centre here may be seen to be C Lydian and the note e is repeatedly stated through all four voices:
At the close of the movement, mi appears in the bass line, first in the major and then in the minor form:

The following spirals are evident:

mm. 3 - 5, Viola and 'Cello:

mm. 7 - 8, 'Cello:
The following two examples do not, strictly speaking, contain descending spirals. However, they are included here because of the obvious Phrygian implications which are discernible in their descending leaps:

mm. 25 - 27, 'Cello:

\[\text{Music notation image}\]

mm. 39 - 41, 'Cello:

\[\text{Music notation image}\]

f. The tritone in prominent melodic position

The interval of the tritone is prominently evident in thematic material of *Elegy I*. 
First Theme, mm. 3 - 5, Viola and Cello:

Second Theme, mm. 9 - 10, Viola:

This characteristic is equally in evidence in the subsequent statements of both themes.

II. Harmonic Configurations

The influence of the numerous Phrygian melodic configurations in this movement can also be traced harmonically. Phrygian implications are strongly evident at most of the important cadence points. There is only a single example of the mediant function. The harmonic tritone is employed prominently, the frequency of its usage approximates the
degree to which the interval appears melodically. The fact that the Phrygian inflection and the tritone are cast in a slow tristezza tempo, through which many clearly-articulated dactylic rhythms are heard, has the effect of strengthening their affective implications for the listener. Moreover, in this movement Van Wyk employs substantially the lower and darker registers of all four instruments, especially those of the Viola and Cello, and the accumulative effect of these characteristics certainly enhances the mournful and introspective qualities embodied in Elegy I.

a. Phrygian cadences

Phrygian cadences occur at the following points:

mm. 5 - 6, Viola and Cello:
mm. 8 - 9, 'Cello and Viola:

m. 15:

m. 17:
mm. 27 - 28:

\[ \text{Musical notation image} \]

mm. 28 - 30:

\[ \text{Musical notation image} \]

m. 30:

\[ \text{Musical notation image} \]
mm. 66\(^3\) - 68\(^4\):

\[\text{MIDI notation image}\]

mm. 71\(^3\) - 73\(^1\):

\[\text{MIDI notation image}\]

mm. 79\(^3\) - 81:

\[\text{MIDI notation image}\]
b. Cadences containing the chords of the augmented sixth, Neapolitan sixth and plagal cadences

Cadences containing these chords are evident at the following points:

mm. 273 - 281:
At mm. 29\textsuperscript{3} - 30\textsuperscript{1}, the Neapolitan function of the penultimate chord is clearly evident with the modulation from f-sharp minor to B flat major:

\begin{equation}
\begin{align*}
\text{C major:} & \quad \text{B flat major:} \\
\text{D major:} & \quad \text{G major:}
\end{align*}
\end{equation}

At mm. 46\textsuperscript{3} - 47\textsuperscript{1}, the following Neapolitan cadence announces the forceful restatement of the Second Theme. Phrygian implications are patently clear through four voices:

\begin{equation}
\begin{align*}
\text{E major:} & \quad \text{F major:} \\
\text{A major:} & \quad \text{B flat major:}
\end{align*}
\end{equation}

The penultimate chord above is admittedly not the Neapolitan sixth, but when this chord is respelled, its Neapolitan character is unmistakable:
Similarly, the Neapolitan sixth is clearly present in the final cadence of this movement:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{\textit{c. The mediant function}}} \\
\text{This harmonic function is singularly evident in the key change from C-Lydian to e-minor at mm. 49 - 51:}
\end{array}
\]
d. The tritone in prominent harmonic position

As noted earlier, the tritone is prominent horizontally in the Second Theme. It is however also prominently deployed vertically when this theme is stated at mm. 9 - 11:
At the modulation from e minor (or implied C Lydian) to f sharp minor, the cadence chord as well as the chord of resolution articulate the interval of the tritone, both horizontally and vertically:

mm. 11 - 13:

In subsequent statements of the Second Theme, this characteristic is equally evident:

mm. 30 - 33:
mm. 47 - 49:

mm. 74 - 77:

III. Structural Configurations

Phrygian and tritone implications also permeate the greater structural plan of *Elegy*. There are examples of the descending Phrygian tetrachord as harmonic bass and successions of sections that articulate the tritone relationship. The movement with e as a tonic, which, according to Kimmel, may well carry an important overall allusion to death since composers may still intuitively sense the
affective implications of this mode despite the radical relativization of keys which has taken place over the course of roughly three-hundred years.

a. Descending Phrygian Tetrachord as Harmonic Bass:

In the following examples the descending Phrygian tetrachord appears as the harmonic bass for phrases:

mm. 26 - 27:

\[\text{MIDI notation of the descending Phrygian tetrachord as harmonic bass.}\]

m. 31:

\[\text{MIDI notation of the descending Phrygian tetrachord as harmonic bass.}\]

mm. 58\(^1\) - 57\(^1\):

\[\text{MIDI notation of the descending Phrygian tetrachord as harmonic bass.}\]
b. Successions of tonal centres that articulate the fa-mi inflection

From mm. 39 - 47, the succession of the following tonal centres articulate the following three fa-mi inflections:

c. The role of the mediant key

Except for the modulation from C Lydian to e minor as noted under c. of Harmonic configurations, the mediant key does not seem to have any other prominence.
d. The \( e \) and \( b \) modes

*Elegy I* is in the key of e-minor which is frequently inflected with the C-Lydian mode.

e. The descending spiral

Apart from the descending spirals which are noted under e. of Melodic configurations, this characteristic is not present as harmonic, formal structure.

f. Successions of sections that articulate the tritone relationship

Although the interval of the tritone appears prominently, both in melodic and harmonic positions, it does not seem to play an important role in the succession of tonal centres. There is however, one example where a tritone progression is evident between formal sections. After the statement of the Second Theme at mm. 9 - 12 in the C Lydian mode, the tonal centre shifts to that of f-sharp minor in the next formal section in which a combined statement of the two themes are heard:
mm. 12 - 13:

Rhythm and Pulse

The dactylic rhythm

The presence of the dactylic rhythm is pervasive in *Elegy I*. It is clearly audible in the thematic material:

First Theme:

Second Theme:
In the central Bridge Passage (mm. 33 - 46) it appears repeatedly in all four instruments, clearly reinforced by the composer's insertion of accent markings:
The tempo indications in *Elegy I* seem to underscore the arch- or cyclical form of the movement:
At the outset, the pulse is slow (\( \text{\textquoteright} = \text{c. 42} \) (Molto lento)) and it gradually increases through mm. 22 - 30, (Poco piu mosso - tempo secondo) and Ancora piu mosso at m. 30. At m. 38 the pulse is further increased gradually (poco a poco piu mosso) which leads to the culmination in m. 47 (appasionato e molto pesante).

At m. 49, a *ritardando* announces the beginning of the gradual cessation of pulse. Tempo secondo is indicated at m. 51. At m. 67, a *poco rit.* precedes the return of the original tempo, tempo primo at m. 68. A slight revival of pulse is evident at m. 74 (Tempo poco ravvivando), but at m. 78 it returns once again to Tempo primo and this indication seems to be further decelerated by the insertion of duplet figures in the Second Violin (mm. 79 - 80) which has the effect of a written-out *ritardando*:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\frac{1}{2} \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \\
\frac{1}{2} \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \\
\frac{1}{2} \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \\
\end{array}
\]
Thus, a powerful allusion to death may be operative in the constitution of the growing tempo of the pulse and in its gradual cessation: This may be seen to parallel the cycle of generation-growth-decay and death.

V. Timbre and Texture

The cycle of generation-growth-decay and death may also be seen to be operative within these parameters. It is possible to discern the following three stages in the parameters of timbre, texture and level of intensity:

Timbre:

From mm. 1 - 38 the lower darker timbral qualities of the Viola and 'Cello predominate. The violins are frequently cast in their lower registers. Between mm. 39 and 46 employment of the higher ranges of all four instruments is evident. Between mm. 47 - 81 there is a gradual return to the lower ranges of all four instruments.

Texture:

Between mm. 1 - 38 the texture employed is predominantly transparent. From mm. 38 - 49 the texture becomes increasingly opaque and between mm. 50 - 81, a more transparent texture is once again in evidence.
Levels of intensity:

Between mm. 1 - 38 the level of intensity hovers predominantly between very soft to moderately loud. From mm. 38 - 49, dynamic indications are given at the loud to very loud level. From mm. 51 - 58 these levels return to being predominantly soft to very soft.

The cyclical formal structure of Elegy I is thus also evident within the parameters of timbre, texture and levels of intensity.

Conclusion:

The indication *molto lento, assai espressivo e con tristezza* sets the mournful tone of the first elegy. The movement sets out with the statement of the First Theme in the lower and darker registers of the Viola and 'Cello. Both instruments rumin ate quietly together through the opening measures (mm. 1 - 5) in which the melodic material appears mainly over the articulation of the dactylic rhythm. There is ascent and descent in the melodic line and in the first descent, which commences in m.3, the descending Phrygian tetrachord is clearly articulated by both instruments. It is also interesting to note that, to a marked degree, many of the characteristics of the entire Elegy are encapsulated in these opening measures.
Apart from the Phrygian implications and the dactylic rhythm and the dark timbral qualities employed in a slow tempo, this first opening statement is cast in an arch-form similar to that which is evident when the movement is viewed as a whole; it commences with small intervallic distances which are gradually enlarged until the interval of the perfect fifth is reached in m.3. Thereafter, these gradually diminish until the interval of the minor third is once again arrived at in m. 5. In the recording made by the Hungarian String Quartet in 1963 under Van Wyk's guidance, it is also evident that a similar surge and cessation can be gleaned through the level of intensity although this obviously happens within the mezzo-piano context. Thus, it is possible to construe the cycle of generation-growth-decay and death through this first and brief statement of the First Theme. A similar cycle is operative through the movement as a whole; through the parameters of rhythm, pulse, timbre, texture, range and level of intensity it is possible to articulate these successive stages through the following sections: generation and growth from mm. 1 through 49\(^1\) and decay and death from mm. 49\(^2\) to the end of the movement. This may be seen as another factor which fosters unity and cohesiveness through this movement as the particular is reflected in the whole and similarly, it is possible to discern the whole in the particular.
The thematic materials employed in *Elegy I* could be construed to carry important possible allusions to *death* in that the descending Phrygian tetrachord appears in the First Theme and the interval of the tritone is prominent in both the First and Second Themes. There are numerous possible configurations of Kimmel's *Phrygian Inflection* which can be traced through the parameters of melody, harmony and structure.

Of the Melodic Configurations, the descending Phrygian tetrachord, the *fa-mi* inflection, the single tone *mi* in prominent position and the interval of the tritone are especially in strong evidence. Other melodic descents with Phrygian half-step termini are largely absent.

Of the Harmonic Configurations, Phrygian cadences appear more frequently than those containing the chords of the augmented sixth, Neapolitan sixth and plagal cadences. The tritone is prominently deployed harmonically which is largely the result of the inflection of the Lydian mode.

Of the Structural Configurations, the descending Phrygian tetrachord, successions of tonal centres that articulate the *fa-mi* inflection and the *e* mode are all present to a substantial degree. The role of the mediant key and the descending spiral bass as possible conveyors of *death* are largely absent.
The presence of the dactylic death rhythm is pervasive, and the cycle of generation-growth-decay and death may have an important allusion to death within the parameter of pulse. Moreover, this cycle is also strongly evident within the parameters of timbre, texture and levels of intensity when the movement is viewed in its entirety.
ELEGY II

Howard Ferguson's statement that the *Five Elegies* "covers an unexpectedly wide emotional range" (Ferguson, 1947: 16) is perhaps best illustrated when one compares the character and content of the second *Elegy* with those of the remaining four movements. It clearly stands out in that the harsh and angry qualities of this *Allegro feroce* movement are in stark contrast with the largely lyrical and introspective material employed in *Elegies I, III, IV* and *V*. This movement can perhaps best be viewed as an emotional expression of anger in which the composer protests against the inhumane situation with which he and many others had suddenly been confronted. However, although the character of *Elegy II* is clearly different from those of the other movements, Phrygian and especially Lydian configurations of the descending tetrachord still play a part of substantial structural importance throughout this movement. It would seem that in this *Elegy* Van Wyk favours the descending tritone to the descending Phrygian tetrachord because of its harsher and more dissonant qualities, qualities which may have seemed to him to be well-suited to expressing emotions of anger, ferocity and resentment.

Although, broadly speaking, the formal organization of *Elegy II* (*Allegro feroce, \( \text{c. 116} \)) resembles that of
the first elegy, it is different in that its formal components are not as symmetrical, and in that it has three themes as opposed to the two themes of the first elegy.

The formal analysis including tonal emphases are as follows:

First Theme mm. 82 - 85  
(C Lydian to m. 87, A Lydian from m. 88)

Bridge Passage mm. 96 - 99  
(A Lydian)

Second Theme mm. 100 - 107  
(d minor with A-flat major)

Bridge Passage m. 108  
(A-flat major)

First Theme with fragmented Second Theme mm. 109 - 120  
(e minor, e Phrygian)

Bridge Passage mm. 121 - 122  
(f minor)
Fragmented First Theme mm. 123 - 124\(^3\) (e Phrygian)

Third Theme mm. 124\(^4\) - 128 (e minor with g-sharp minor and f minor)

Second Theme mm. 129 - 137\(^3\) (e minor with C major and E-flat major, d phrygian)

Third Theme mm. 137\(^4\) - 141 (g minor/ G major with a-flat minor)

Second Theme mm. 142 - 147 (g minor/ G major with E-flat major, A-flat major, D-flat major)

Bridge Passage mm. 148 - 151 (g minor/ G major with b-flat minor)

First and Second Theme mm. 152 - 156 (C Lydian and f-sharp minor)

Coda mm. 157 - 165 (f-sharp minor and F-sharp major)
Bridge Passage \( \text{mm. 157 - 160}^3 \)  
(f-sharp minor)

Third Theme \( \text{mm. 160}^4 - 165 \)  
(f-sharp minor and F-sharp major)

A graphic representation of these components is as follows:

- **First Theme**:

- **Second Theme**:

- **Third Theme**:

- **Bridge Passage**: 

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The First Theme strongly articulates the interval of the augmented fourth, or the descending Lydian tetrachord:

![Musical notation for the First Theme]

The Second Theme has a more lyrical quality and is related to the First Theme in that its opening figure is an inversion in augmentation of that of the First Theme:

![Musical notation for the Second Theme]

The Third Theme resembles the First Theme in its rhythmic drive and it is always presented in a bi- or polytonal setting. Moreover, the tone mi is given prominence and is continually inflected:

![Musical notation for the Third Theme]
The Lydian mode pervades *Elegy II* to a substantial degree. It commences in C-Lydian and ends in f-sharp minor/ F-sharp major. The interval of the tritone is thus articulated structurally and in addition as well as being prominently evident in the First Theme of the movement.

I. Melodic Configurations

a. Descending Phrygian tetrachord

In *Elegy II* the descending Lydian tetrachord is given prominence over the Phrygian tetrachord. It is described by Kimmel (p. 46) as a possible conveyor of the extramusical meaning of death, and its validity in this context has been supported by Geldenhuys in her study of Van Wyk’s vocal music. Thus, both the Phrygian and Lydian forms are investigated here.

In addition, there are numerous examples of other melodic descents with the Phrygian half-step terminus and the single tone *mi* in prominent position. The descending spiral is largely absent and the tritone is employed melodically in a prominent position throughout the movement.
The descending Lydian tetrachord appears prominently at the following points:

mm. 82 - 85, First Violin:

mm. 88 - 89, First Violin:

mm. 108 - 109, First Violin, Second Violin and Viola:
mm. 152 - 153, First Violin:

The descending Phrygian tetrachord is heard in the 'Cello at mm. 109 - 111:

It also appears at mm. 151 - 152 where the 'Cello sounds the descending Phrygian mode of c prior to the restatement of the First and Second Themes at m. 152:
b. Other melodic descents with Phrygian half-step termini

These include the following:

mm. 104 - 108, 'Cello:

mm. 110 - 111, Viola and 'Cello:

mm. 134 - 138, 'Cello:
c. The fa-mi inflection:

This inflection is evident at:

mm. 82 - 84, First Violin and Viola:

mm. 88, 90, 92 First Violin:

mm. 100 - 102, Viola and Second Violin:
mm. 113 - 115, First Violin and Second Violin:

mm. 116 - 117, Cello:

m. 123, Cello:
mm. 130 - 137, all four instruments:
mm. 142 - 151, all four instruments:
d. The single tone $mi$ in prominent position

The tone $mi$ is given prominence especially in the Third Theme. It is continually inflected and appears alternatively in the major and minor forms. At mm. 124 - 129 it is prominently deployed through three different keys simultaneously: $e$ minor/$E$ major, $g$-sharp minor/$G$-sharp major and $f$ minor/$F$ major. It is important to note, however, that this theme terminates on the minor inflection of $mi$: 
A similar procedure is evident where this theme appears at mm. 137 – 141. At this statement the following keys are juxtaposed: g minor/G major and a-flat minor /A-flat major:

With the last appearance of this theme at the end of the movement (mm. 160⁴ – 165) the keys of f-sharp minor/F-sharp major and g minor/G major are juxtaposed and the tone mi is given similar prominence. It is moreover important to note that the movement ends with the tone mi in the upper voice, that there is no cadence in the last six measures and that this procedure may indeed, to paraphrase Kimmel, "imply a passing over into a beyond" (p. 58).
This instability of the tone \textit{mi} in this movement is also evident at mm. 136 - 137. In this example, the fifth of the chord of E-flat major (b-flat) becomes the third of the chord of g minor. It is however immediately inflected to a major third, i.e. b-natural:
The tone *mi* is furthermore prominent in statements of the Second Theme in that this theme commences on it in a durational value which is substantially longer than those that succeed it. This characteristic is especially evident where the Second Theme appears at mm. 142 - 147:
e. The tritone in prominent melodic position

The interval of the tritone, employed both melodically and harmonically, is perhaps one of the most important gestures of death in this movement:

It pervades the First Theme:

mm. 82 - 85, First Violin:

\[ \text{Music notation} \]

mm. 88 - 89, First Violin:
Where the First and Second Themes are heard together in the violins (mm. 152 - 155), the tritone also appears in the Second Theme:

At mm. 118 - 120 it is articulated by the Second Violin and Viola, both melodically and harmonically:
II. Harmonic Configurations

In *Elegy II* there are numerous examples of Phrygian cadences, and the mediant function is employed to a substantially larger degree than in *Elegy I*. In addition, there are many examples in which the harmonic tritone appears prominently.

a. Phrygian cadences:

Phrygian cadences occur at the following points:

mm. 87 - 88:

mm. 104 - 111:
mm. 110 - 111:

mm. 122 - 123:

mm. 134 - 135:
mm. 151 - 152:

b. Cadences containing the chords of the augmented sixth, Neapolitan sixth and plagal cadences

Possibly due to the lengthy passages in which pedal points occur, these types of cadences are largely absent.

c. The mediant function

The mediant function is operative in statements of the Third Theme. For example, at mm. 124-128, the tonic key (e minor) is here heard simultaneously with the mediant key, (g-sharp minor/G-sharp major):
At m. 132, e-minor in the 'Cello is fleetingly juxtaposed with g-minor in the First Violin:

From mm 148 - 151, b-flat minor in the upper voices is juxtaposed with g-minor in the 'Cello:
d. The tritone in prominent harmonic position

The tritone in this position pervades this movement to a significant degree:

mm. 82 - 85:
m. 88:
mm. 90 - 100:
mm. 106 - 120:
mm. 146 - 155:

Poco allarg.

Subito, poco a poco cresc.

a tempo

ff
III. Structural Configurations

Phrygian and tritone implications are also found within the structural plan of this movement. The descending Phrygian tetrachord appears at an important cadence point between two formal sections, the fa-mi inflection is heard during successions of tonal centres, and there is a singular example where the role of the mediant key plays an important structural role. The e mode is briefly employed from mm. 129 - 134 where continual inflection between the major and minor modes occur. There is one example of where the tritone progression is employed with the modulation at mm. 155 - 156 from C Lydian to f-sharp minor. However, the descending spiral is absent from the movement.
a. The Descending Phrygian Tetrachord as Harmonic Bass

This device is singularly evident at mm. 152 - 153 where it precedes the forceful re-statement of the First and Second Themes:

It is important to note that a similar device is employed in *Elegy I* at mm. 46² - 47¹ where the descending Phrygian tetrachord announces the restatement of the Second Theme.

b. Successions of tonal centres that articulate the *fa-mi* inflection

At mm. 122 - 123, the tonal centre shifts from *f* minor to E major where a Bridge Passage precedes a restatement of the First Theme:
There are no further examples of this kind of progression between formal sections. However, at both statements of the Third Theme, fa-mi inflections may be construed to function vertically: at mm. 124\textsuperscript{4} - 129\textsuperscript{1}, e minor in the 'Cello is juxtaposed with f minor in the Viola and at mm. 160\textsuperscript{4} - 165, f-sharp minor in the 'Cello is juxtaposed with g minor in the Viola.

c. The role of the mediant key

The role of the mediant key is discernible between mm. 129 - 137 where the tonal centre shifts from e minor to g minor with the successive presentations of the Second and Third Themes.

d. The e and b modes

The e mode is employed from mm. 129 - 134 with the first
introduction of the Third Theme. Continual inflection between the e major and minor modes is evident here and the vulnerability and duality of the tone mi at this point, has important significance in terms of the Phrygian Inflection.

e. Successions of sections that articulate the tritone relationship

With the modulation that occurs at mm. 155 - 156 from C Lydian to f-sharp minor, the 'Cello articulates the following tritone progression:
IV. Rhythm and Pulse

The dactylic rhythm

The following dactylic rhythm pervades the entire movement:

\[ \text{\textit{Elegy II} can therefore perhaps best be seen as a \textit{Dance of Death}: it has relentless rhythmic drive, and the tempo indication \textit{Allegro feroce} may underscore the 'fierce' and 'cruel' qualities evoked by the material.} \]

At only two points in this movement is the pulse and rhythm momentarily retarded (m. 122 and m. 151). At m. 121 the General Pause measure is succeeded by one measure which consists of two groups of heavily-articulated quarter-notes in triplet groupings. A \textit{ritenuto} indication appears at the second group:
Even during this momentary retardation of pulse, there are two consecutive and heavily-articulated pronouncements of the dactylic rhythm:

\[ \frac{1}{3} \quad \frac{1}{3} \quad \frac{1}{3} \quad \frac{1}{3} \]

At m. 151, this is equally true:
There is no cessation of rhythm or pulse in the closing measures of this movement. The indication *senza ritard* at the penultimate measure, together with the absence of any cadence in the final ten measures (mm. 156 - 165) contribute to a remarkably abrupt ending. By way of suggestion, the functions of life may be seen to be extinguished instantly, in an interrupted and unexpected manner.

V. Timbre and Texture

In contrast to the arch-shape which is discernible through these parameters in *Elegy I*, in *Elegy II* sections frequently succeed each other at highly contrasted timbral, textural and dynamic levels. *Crescendo's* and especially *decrescendo's* take place within a remarkably short time span: At mm. 88 a *subito pianissimo* immediately succeeds the first *forte* statement of the First Theme (mm. 82 - 87). A *crescendo* at mm. 90 - 91 leads back to a *forte* statement of the same theme in m. 92. At m. 94 the *forte-piano* whole-notes in the violins are the beginning of another *crescendo* which, over two measures, drops to the dynamic level of *ppp*. Similarly, at mm. 98 - 99, the violins have a *subito forte dim. molto* indication which drops to *ppp* level over two measures. Within these quiet surroundings the Viola announces the lyrical Second Theme at m. 100.
Dynamic surges frequently accompany a concomitant extension of range in the four instruments. This procedure often leads to passages where the texture becomes more opaque, as the *sempre crescendo* at mm. 111 - 112. From mm. 115 - 120 the dynamic surge is accompanied by sudden and substantial upward melodic leaps, first in the First Violin and 'Cello and later (m. 118) in the Second Violin.

The obviously harsh and perhaps even protesting qualities which are evoked in this passage seem ineluctable. A similar procedure is evident in the passage mm. 146 - 152, where a crescendo accompanies a similar densening of texture which culminates with the restatement of the First and Second Themes.

Conclusion

Possibly the two most salient allusions to death in *Elegy II* are the manifestation in its various configurations of the descending Lydian tetrachord and the dactylic rhythm. In addition, with the exception of the *descending spiral* and the *descending Spiral Bass* the configurations of the *Phrygian Inflection* are all significantly present as possible allusions to death.
In the entire elegy there seems to be a constant interplay between the fierce or cruel qualities of the First and Third Themes (allegro feroce and molto feroce, respectively) and the Second Theme (con morbidezza and ominoso) which is announced by the Viola at mm. 100, 129 and 142. It is noted that Van Wyk’s use of the term ominoso is unusual in that it is not a standard Italian expression. However, it seems feasible to suggest that this word is employed here to mean 'ominously’. The Viola is thus given prominence and moreover, employed in material with a morbid and ominous character.

These two moods of ‘ferocity’ and ‘morbidity’ are juxtaposed only once; at mm. 152 - 155 the First and Second Themes appear simultaneously at a ff level. The Coda commences shortly afterwards at m. 157 and the movement closes in relative uncertainty: ambiguity is induced by the superimposition of g minor on a f-sharp minor context. There is an absence of cadence and an indication of senza ritard upholds the relentless dactylic rhythm unto the end. The ending does not seem to be either particularly ‘cruel’ or ‘morbid’ but rather an ambiguous mixture of the two qualities. The abrupt ending though, may reflect a sudden ‘clipping’ of the functions of musical life-giving elements, and may hence allude to termination or death.
ELEGY III

Elegy III is perhaps the most obviously elegiac of the five. It is cast for Viola Solo (save for a few interjections by the 'Cello in the closing measures) and has a freely improvisational character, partly due to an absence of time-signature, an irregular pulse and the indication Adagio. Senza tempo e parlante.

A monothematic formal organization is evident in this movement. The opening melodic cell (mm. 1 - 3) provides the germinal idea which is developed in inversion (mm. 4 - 6) and diminution (mm. 14 - 15) (mm. 26 - 27).

mm. 1 - 3:

\[ \text{Staff notation for mm. 1-3} \]

mm. 4 - 6:

\[ \text{Staff notation for mm. 4-6} \]

165
It is difficult to ascertain the function of the key-signature consisting of $f$-sharp as every occurrence of the note $f$ through the course of this movement appears as an $f$-natural. The $f$-sharp therefore does not point in any way to having leading note function and might have been omitted altogether. One may speculate that the key-signature could indicate the Mixo-Lydian mode on $G$, and this may well hold true for the first approximately 16 measures, but from measure 16 to the end of the movement
the tonal centre gradually becomes c-Phrygian with the appearance of E-flat (m. 16), B-flat (m. 16), D-flat (m. 21) and finally A-flat (m. 23) where the elegy ends on the note c.

Successions of possible implied tonal centres and/or harmonic progressions may be demonstrated as follows:
As this elegy consists of only 29 measures, references to the *Phrygian Inflection* are understandably limited. The various subdivisions are therefore not employed here. Instead, the various configurations of the *Phrygian Inflection* are dealt with without interruption.

I. Melodic Configurations

Of the melodic configurations described by Kimmel, the descending Phrygian tetrachord, initially implied and later on stated unambiguously; the tone *mi* in a prominent position and descending melodic spirals are all evident to a marked degree in this movement.

Two distinct references to the descending Phrygian tetrachord appear in the closing measures of the movement. These appearances are especially eloquent since they are sounded in the Viola's lower, expressive register and the appearance of the terminus note is in each case strongly reinforced by the 'Cello. This, coupled with the composer's indication *estinto* (extinct) is one of the most markedly expressive examples of this melodic configuration to be found in the entire *Five Elegies*. Another contributing factor to a 'sense of arrival' or 'finality' at this point derives from the arch-like melodic contour evident in the movement. This arch is also present in the composer's dynamic indications; the movement starts
softly, gradually builds up to a *forte appassionato* level and subsides again 'into nothing' at the end. Thus the cycle of generation-growth-decay and death is clearly operative within the parameters of *Elegy III*, and the descending Phrygian tetrachord is extremely important to the closing of the cycle.

The descending Phrygian tetrachord may be implied at mm. 14 - 15 and mm. 18 - 19:

**mm. 14 - 15:**

![Music notation for mm. 14 - 15](image)

**mm. 18 - 19:**

![Music notation for mm. 18 - 19](image)
At mm. 23 - 25, however, its presence is indisputable:

Although the interval of the descending fourth is absent at mm. 27 - 28, it is certainly implied by the articulation of the Phrygian descent to $c$:

The tone $mi$ is prominent at:

m. 14:

m. 18:
The following descending spirals are discernible:
II. Harmonic Configurations

The following two Phrygian cadences occur at mm. 24 - 25 and mm. 27 - 28:

Stress is added to the Phrygian qualities of both these cadences by the composer's insertion of stroke indications on the two notes immediately preceding the terminus note.
in both these examples. In the first instance, the stress markings are accompanied by a *ritardando* indication which further underscores the implications of the Phrygian cadence.

As result of the lack of a specific harmonic structure from mm. 1 - 24, it is impossible to determine the exact nature of cadences. However, Plagal cadences may be implied at:

mm. 18 - 19:

mm. 20 - 21:
mm. 24 - 25:

The tritone is evident harmonically in the interval g (Cello) to d-flat (viola) at mm. 26 - 27:

Structural configurations of the Phrygian Inflection are not in evidence.
IV. Rhythm and Pulse

The dactylic rhythm is not as explicit and pervasive in this elegy as it is in the first two. However, there are two fleeting references to it; both at the beginning and end of the movement:

mm. 2 - 3:

The pulse measure in this elegy is irregular: dashed measurelines indicate frequently changing measure lengths. This possibly adds to the improvisational character of the movement. A growing and cessation of pulse is evident: The elegy commences Adagio. Senza tempo e parlante. At m. 10 a poco agitato commences which accelerates further
at m. 14 with the *piu appassionato*. At m. 18 a further *appassionato* sustains this tempo until m. 22 when the *piu lento* announces the beginning of the gradual deceleration. A *ritardando* at m. 24 precedes the *assai lento* at m. 27 which restores the original tempo. If the final indication *estinto* is applied to pulse—in addition to level of intensity—the above-described indications can be seen to carry an important life-death meaning, namely the cycle of generation-growth-decay and death. This idea seems to be supported by the fact that a similar arch is also discernible in the parameters of range and dynamic indications which is dealt with in the next section.

V. Timbre and Texture

Van Wyk expressed his affinity towards the Viola on numerous occasions. In a letter to the writer of 13 March 1982 he wrote:

"Ek hou besonder baie van die altviool...en ek het 'n besondere voorliefde vir die hoër registers van die instrument."
(Van Wyk, 1982: 1)

"I have a particular reverence for the viola...and I particularly like the higher registers of the instrument."

In 1962 he equated the instrument's timbral qualities with 'pessimism and introspection' (Van Wyk, 1962: 12).
Viewed against the background of this information, his casting of the central *Elegy III* for Viola Solo does certainly not seem co-incidental. Although the range of the instrument is exploited substantially through three octaves, deployment of the higher registers predominate.

A broad contour or arch in both the parameters of range and level of intensity is evident. The movement commences in the middle register and with the indication *piano lusingando*. Although descending figures appear, (mm. 1-6) the upper limits of range are increasingly expanded until, at m. 17 the Viola sounds:

![Musical notation image]

A gradual descent is visible through mm. 18 - 25. Graphically, this can be expressed as follows:
The final descent through the last approximately six measures may be seen to underline the implications of the Phrygian Inflection: only in these measures is the lowest C-string of the Viola employed extensively. This procedure may be seen as being suggestive of 'a sense of arrival', 'finality' or 'termination' and the composer's indication estinto in the final measure may support this idea.

Conclusion

The most important possible gestures of death in this movement is its casting for Viola Solo, the presence of the Descending Phrygian tetrachord and the arch- or cyclical form of generation-growth-decay and death which may be
discerned within the parameters of range, pulse and timbre.
ELEGY IV

The indication Allegretto, poco scherzando ed amabile (c. 96) which means Moderately fast, somewhat light-hearted and pleasantly seems to be a curious indication to apply to an Elegy.

Howard Ferguson writes

"...with Elegy Four the mood lightens for the first time...later, however, more serious thoughts intervene; and these eventually succeed in imposing themselves." (Ferguson, 1947: 28)

This may be so, but it could also be suggested that the 'mood lightens' in a tongue-in-cheek-fashion and that we may have here an example of parody.
The movement is in a minor, and it has two themes which are linked with a Bridge Passage. The First Theme is cast predominantly in $5_4$, and it has a light-hearted character:

The Second Theme, first heard in the Second Violin at m. 177, has a descending chromatic character. It is accompanied by the dynamic indication piano sotto voce e più diminuendo:
The formal and harmonic plan of the movement is as follows:

First Theme mm. 166 - 169
(a minor)

Bridge Passage mm. 170 - 176
(a minor)

Second Theme mm. 177 - 180
(d minor)

Bridge Passage mm. 181 - 191
(d minor)

First Theme and Second Theme mm. 192 - 201
(a minor and g minor)

Bridge Passage mm. 202
(g minor)

Second Theme mm. 203 - 219
(e minor, a minor and A major)

First Theme mm. 220 - 222
(e minor and D-flat major)
Coda

**mm. 223 - 231**

(Material from
Second Theme)
(a minor)

Graphic illustration:

![Graphic Illustration]

First Theme

Second Theme

Bridge Passage

**I. Melodic Configurations**

Numerous Phrygian configurations of the descending tetra-
chord appear in this movement. There are also examples of
the descending Lydian tetrachord but these are many fewer in number than the Phrygian examples. In addition, there are configurations of the other melodic descents with Phrygian half-step termini and examples of the single tone mi in a prominent position. The descending spiral on the other hand, does not appear in this movement. The fact that the descending Phrygian tetrachord appears frequently in statements of the seemingly light-hearted First Theme may underscore the notion that Van Wyk's scherzando indication is meant in parody.

a. Descending Phrygian Tetrachord

This configuration is evident in melodic position at the following points:

mm. 168 - 169, First Violin:

\[ \text{\includegraphics{music_score}} \]

mm. 170 - 171, Cello:

\[ \text{\includegraphics{music_score}} \]
mm. 173 - 175, First Violin:

[Musical notation image]

mm. 176 - 177, Cello:

[Musical notation image]

mm. 183 - 184, Second Violin:

[Musical notation image]

mm. 202 - 203, First Violin:

[Musical notation image]
mm. 219 - 221, First Violin:

mm. 184 - 185, Cello:

mm. 212 - 213, Cello:
b. Other melodic descents with Phrygian half-step termini

In the opening measures of the movement, the Second Violin plays the following descending figure which hovers around the note $e$:

The following passages in the 'Cello illustrate this configuration:

mm. 174 - 179, 'Cello:
At mm. 192 - 193 and mm. 223 - 224 this characteristic is discernible in the First Violin:

mm. 192 - 193:

mm. 223 - 224:

d. The single tone mi in prominent position

The tone mi is largely absent in statements of the First Theme. It is however prominently deployed in both major and minor inflections in the Viola at the statement of the Second Theme in the Second Violin at m. 177 - 178:
At mm. 203 - 204 this is evident to a similar degree:
e. The tritone in prominent melodic position

It appears prominently in this position at the following points:

mm. 168 - 169, Second Violin and Viola:

[Music notation]

mm. 173 - 174, First Violin:

[Music notation]
mm. 181 - 182, Second Violin:

II. Harmonic Configurations

a. Phrygian Cadences

Examples of Phrygian cadences permeate *Elegy IV*. These are particularly effective in terms of their extra-musical connotations where they are preceded by complete statements of the descending Phrygian mode (mm. 184 - 185 and mm. 212 - 213). In addition, there are examples of cadences containing the Neapolitan sixth and plagal cadences, and a singular example of the tritone in a prominent harmonic position. However, the mediant function does not play an important role in this movement.

Phrygian cadences can be construed at the following points:
mm. 176⁵ - 177¹:

mm. 184⁴ - 185₂:

*d(Phrygian)*

mm. 200 - 201:
In addition to illustrating a half-cadence to the dominant, the following example contains additional implications of the descending Phrygian tetrachord:

b. Cadences containing the chords of the augmented sixth, Neapolitan sixth and plagal cadences

The first Phrygian cadence mentioned under a. in the previous section also illustrates a cadence containing the Neapolitan sixth. Unlike a proper Neapolitan sixth,
however it appears in root position. Cadences containing the chord of the Augmented sixth are not in evidence in this movement. However, the following Plagal cadences can be seen as important configurations of the *Phrygian Inflection* in that they contain strong implications of the descending Phrygian tetrachord and possibly, descending spirals of fourths:

**mm. 180 - 181:**

![Staff notation for mm. 180 - 181](image)

**mm. 229 - 230:**

![Staff notation for mm. 229 - 230](image)
c. The mediant function

As seems to be the case in the first three elegies, the mediant function does not seem to be of particular significance in this movement.

d. The tritone in prominent harmonic position

The tritone appears prominently from mm. 206^5 - 208. It is of importance to note here, that this Lydian tetra-chord is derived from the second degree of the Phrygian mode:
III. Structural Configurations

Of the various structural configurations mentioned by Kimmel, the descending Phrygian tetrachord as harmonic bass and the e mode are present in the movement, but the descending spiral bass and successions of tonal centres that articulate the tritone relationship are not evident.

a. Descending Phrygian tetrachord as Harmonic Bass

This characteristic is evident in the following 'Cello passages:

mm. 170 - 171:
mm. 171 - 172:

mm. 176 - 177:

mm. 184 - 185:

mm. 212 - 213:
Neither the successions of tonal centres that articulate the fa-mi inflection, nor the role of the mediant key are of significance in terms of the Phrygian Inflection.

d. The e and b modes

The e mode is employed between mm. 203 - 213. Although both the major and minor inflections of this mode occur (Viola, mm. 203 - 204) it is the Phrygian mode which predominates. E is sustained through a repetitive motoric rhythm in the 'Cello for the duration of nine measures.

IV. Rhythm and Pulse

Elegy IV is predominantly cast in $\frac{5}{4}$. The pulse measure is briefly altered at mm. 188 ($\frac{6}{4}$), 198 ($\frac{7}{4}$) and 202 ($\frac{2}{4}$). When compared to the preceding movements, the pulse remains constant; there is only one ritenuto indication which precedes the re-instatement of the Second Theme at m. 203. An important gesture of death may be found in the dactylic rhythm which is pervasive in a substantial part of the movement. First, it is referred to only fleetingly,
but at mm. 177 - 180, with the introduction of the Second Theme, its presence becomes pervasive and ineluctable:

At the extended second statement of the Second Theme which commences at m. 203, in addition to this rhythm appearing
in the upper voices, the 'Cello sustains this rhythmic pattern relentlessly through eight measures:

m. 203 - 210:
A final reference to this rhythm occurs at the end of the movement (mm. 226 - 228) where the 'Cello sustains it for two measures at pp level:

V. Timbre and Texture

The First Theme has the indication Allegretto, poco scherzando ed amabile. In addition, it is played at a piano level and in a leggero type of articulation. This 'lightness' in timbre is further evident in the texture in that the voices are cast in a transparent manner. The scherzando and leggero character of the theme is further enhanced with the inclusion of grace notes in the First Violin:
At m. 177, with the introduction of the Second Theme, this character of 'lightness' and 'playfulness' changes dramatically. The lower timbral ranges of the lower three instruments are employed and the Second Theme is heard in the lowest register of the Second Violin. The texture becomes less transparent and the dactyllic rhythm is introduced. These devices, in conjunction with the appearance of figures that articulate the Phrygian half-step terminus, can be seen as a shift from relative 'light' to that of 'darkness', or by analogy, from 'life' to 'death', in terms of the Phrygian Inflection:

A similar procedure takes place with the restatement of this theme at m. 203.

This dramatic and stark contrast between the mood and character of the thematic material of the two themes is thus also reflected in the parameters of timbre and texture. Throughout this movement it seems thus possible to
discern areas of 'lightness' in strong relief to areas of 'darkness' with the appearance of the First and Second Themes respectively. In the passage from mm. 192 - 201, material from both themes are employed, and these two entities may be seen to be briefly super-imposed. As a result of the dominance of the Second Theme (or material from this theme) from m. 203 until the end of the movement, one may conclude that this symbolises the eventual victory of death over life. This idea can be supported by the following gestures which are evident in the Coda (mm. 223 - 231): The dynamic level is pp and at mm. 226 - 227 the First Violin and Viola have several fa-mi inflections which terminate on the note e. These appear over the articulation of the dactylic rhythm in the 'Cello. Fa-mi inflections are also evident in the Violins in the following measures, mm. 228 - 231:
A Plagal cadence at mm. 229⁵ – 230¹ closes the movement, and finally, the composer's indication estinto unambiguously indicates a sense of finality, arrival or termination.

Conclusion

The most striking feature of the dynamics of life and death in this movement may be found in the stark contrast between the thematic material of the First and Second Themes. The Phrygian Inflection appears more frequently in episodes of the Second Theme than that of the First Theme. Of these, the Descending Phrygian Tetrachord, Melodic Descents with Phrygian half-step termini, the tone mi in prominent position and the presence of Phrygian Cadences are the most important and consistent characteristics which appear predominantly in statements of the
Second Theme.

This contrast between thematic material is moreover, concomitantly evident in the parameters of Rhythm, Texture and Timbre. In statements of the Second Theme, the presence of the dactylic death rhythm, a more opaque texture and the employment of the lower and darker timbral qualities of all four instruments, at substantially reduced dynamic levels, take precedence.

Ferguson’s statement that an initial 'mood of lightness' is succeeded by 'more serious thoughts' which 'eventually succeed in imposing themselves' is thus directly supported by evidence gleaned in terms of the Phrygian Inflection and an investigation of the parameters of rhythm, timbre and texture. Thus, by way of analogy, the powers of 'life' are contrasted with those of 'death' and after a struggle for supremacy, it is the powers of death which eventually triumph in Elegy IV.
ELEGY V

Elegy V, which has the indication Allegro; appassionato e sempre in tempo giusto ( \( \dot{\text{}} = \text{c. } 144 \)), is written in the e mode. It has the following two themes:

First Theme:

Second Theme:
The formal structure, including tonal areas, is as follows:

First Theme       mm. 232 - 251
(E major)

Bridge Passage   mm. 252 - 266
(E major)

Second Theme     mm. 267 - 270
(E major)

Bridge Passage   m. 270
(A major)

First Theme       mm. 271 - 298
(extended)
(A major, G-flat major, B-flat major, E-flat major, a minor, a-sharp minor, a minor, D major)

Bridge Passage   mm. 299 - 313
(G major)

Second Theme     mm. 314 - 317
(G major, C major, E major)
First Theme mm. 317\(^2\) - 343
(C major, E major, d-sharp minor, C-sharp major, C major/minor)

Second Theme mm. 344 - 349
(c minor)

Bridge Passage mm. 350 - 351
(C major)

Coda
First Theme mm. 352 - 368
(fragmented)
(E major)

As is the case with the first elegy, it is possible to discern an arch-structure in the succession of formal components. Although this arch is not as symmetrical as the one found in *Elegy I*, it can also be seen to have a cyclical nature; the last three formal components form an exact retrograde to the first three:
I. Melodic Configurations

In this elegy there are references to both the descending Lydian and Phrygian tetrachords. In addition, other melodic descents with Phrygian half-step termini, the fa-mi inflection, the single tone mi in prominent position and the tritone are all present to a substantial degree.
The descending spiral, on the other hand, does not appear. In *Elegy V* Van Wyk gradually transforms his melodic material which initially appears in brightly-set surroundings in major keys to its casting in a progressively more Phrygian mould. Wherever these melodic changes occur throughout the movement, concomitant changes are evident through the parameters of range, level of intensity, texture and timbre. In the final measures of the movement (mm. 344 - 368), the melodic material of both themes is presented fragmentarily where the composer slowly and deliberately extinguishes such other life-giving elements of the composition as harmony, pulse, and rhythm.

a. The Descending Phrygian Tetrachord

The descending Phrygian and Lydian tetrachord appear in the following melodic configurations:

At mm. 252 - 254, the descending Lydian and Phrygian tetrachords appear in quick succession in the First and Second Violins:
At mm. 257 - 258, the descending Lydian tetrachord is heard first in the Viola after which it appears in the First Violin at mm. 264 - 265:

Viola, mm. 257 - 258:

First Violin, mm. 264 - 265:

mm. 260 - 265:
In the passage from mm. 289 - 290 the following two descending Phrygian tetrachords are heard in the Viola and Cello:

Viola:

\[ \text{Viola:} \]

\[ \text{\cell}: \]

\[ \text{Cello:} \]

\[ \text{\cell}: \]

\[ \text{mm. 289 - 290:} \]
At mm. 295 - 296 it appears in the Viola:

At mm. 309 - 312, a descending minor tetrachord is immediately followed by a descending Phrygian tetrachord in the First Violin:

Final references to the descending Phrygian tetrachord are found with the last statement of the Second Theme at mm. 344 - 348:
b. Other melodic descents with Phrygian half-step terminus

In addition to the above examples of Phrygian tetrachords which terminate with descending half-steps, the following melodic descents also end with the Phrygian half-step:

mm. 252 - 253, Second Violin:

In addition to illustrating a Phrygian half-step terminus, the above example contains elements of both the descending Phrygian and Lydian tetrachords in that it contains three descending half-steps spanning the intervals c-sharp, c-natural to g-sharp, g-natural.
Further examples include the following:

m. 274, First Violin:

m. 327 - 328, First and Second Violins:

mm. 337 - 338, First and Second Violins:
mm. 342 - 344, Second Violin:

```
\(\text{\textbackslash{}#3\#3\#3}\)  
\(\text{\textbackslash{}#2\#2\#2}\)  
```

mm. 339 - 344, Viola:

```
\(\text{\textbackslash{}#2\#2\#2}\)  
\(\text{\textbackslash{}#2\#2\#2}\)  
```

c. The \textit{fa-mi} inflection

This characteristic is evident at:

mm. 246 - 249, First Violin:

```
\(\text{\textbackslash{}#3\#3\#3}\)  
\(\text{\textbackslash{}#2\#2\#2}\)  
```
In the passage from mm. 275 - 282, several *fa-mi* inflections appear:
At mm. 284 and 286 this inflection is heard repeatedly in the First and Second Violins:

mm. 308 - 309, Second Violin:

At mm. 321 - 322 reference to it is made in the First Violin. Similar references follow in the Second Violin at mm. 229 - 332:

mm. 320 - 325:
mm. 229 - 332:

The final appearance of the fa-mi inflection coincides with the final cadence of the work at mm. 360 - 362 in the Second Violin:

mm. 360 - 362, Second Violin:

d. The single tone mi in prominent position.

The tone mi is prominent in both the First and Second Themes:

First Theme:
Second Theme:

Between mm. 287 - 292 the tone mi is repeatedly stated through the modulations between a-minor and a-sharp minor:
At the modulation to D major shortly hereafter at m. 295, the Viola articulates both the major and minor inflections of mi through two measures:

A similar procedure is evident at mm. 326 - 327 (g-sharp/g-natural in E major) and at mm. 337 - 339 (e-sharp in C-sharp major followed by e-flat in c minor).

The tritone in prominent melodic position

The tritone appears prominently in melodic structures at the following points:

mm. 257 - 259, Second Violin:

In addition, the above example can also be seen to illustrate a gapped form of the descending Lydian tetrachord.
II. Harmonic Configurations

Explicit Phrygian cadences as well as cadences with definite Phrygian implications are evident in this movement. These cadences frequently appear at the end of formal sections, thus underlining their function and effect in terms of the Phrygian Inflection. The mediant function does not fulfil an important role in this movement, but the tritone appears here once again, at first obliquely (mm. 237 - 238 and mm. 247 - 248), but later on forcefully at mm. 328 - 329 and mm. 338 - 339.

However, the most eloquent example of a cadential progression which underscores the implications of death in this movement is to be found in the extended Phrygian cadence which closes the work (from mm. 360 - mm. 382). This cadence occurs at the point where both melodic and rhythmic functions cease, and it is highlighted by the composer's dynamic indications; the cadence chord has the indication *poco sforzando* immediately followed by a *dimi-*
nuendo marking which diminishes the level of intensity to a pianissimo level over the course of two measures. The progression $f$-natural to $e$ appears in the upper voice in the Second Violin and the allusion to finality and death in this procedure is also effectively reflected through the parameters of melody and timbre. Thus, the influence of the **Phrygian Inflection** at this point can be traced through the parameters of harmony, melody, level of intensity, and pulse and rhythm.

a. Phrygian cadences

**mm. 274 - 275:**

Although the bass movement consists of an ascending semitone progression in the above example, it is included
here because of the Phrygian descents which appear in two of the top voices (f-sharp to f-natural and e-flat to d-natural).

Between mm. 227 - 229 the following Phrygian cadences occur:

\[\text{mm. 228 - 229:}\]

\[\text{mm. 288 - 295:}\]
With the last appearance of the Second Theme in the Viola between mm. 339 - 344, the following Phrygian cadences are implied over the pedal point on c in the Cello:
A final Phrygian cadence closes the work at mm. 358 - 369:

b. Cadences containing the chords of the augmented sixth, Neapolitan sixth and plagal cadences

Apart from the indicated cadences noted in the foregoing section --some of which may be construed to contain the
chord of the Neapolitan sixth (see mm. 339 - 344)—no further examples of these types of cadences can be cited here. This is probably partly a result of the extended passages which are written over pedal-points (see mm. 132 - 254 over e, mm. 263 - 269 over e, mm. 270 - 274 over a and mm. 299 - 305 over g).

In terms of the Phrygian Inflection it is however important to note that cadences with Phrygian implications are frequently evident at the end or introduction of formal components; at the introduction of the Bridge Passage (mm. 252 - 254) both the First and Second Violins descend to g-sharp within the range of the tetrachord, articulating the following descending half-steps:

Where the First Theme is restated in G-flat major at m. 275, it is preceded by the following progression in A-major with resultant descending Phrygian half-steps.
through three voices:

At the transition between mm. 326 - 330, before the following restatement of the Second Theme, the Phrygian descent from E major/e minor to d sharp minor is evident:
A similar progression is employed at mm. 336 - 338 where the tonal centre shifts from c-sharp major to c minor.

c. The tritone in prominent harmonic position

In this configuration, the interval of the tritone is employed with varying importance; it is first heard at mm. 237 - 238 between the Second Violin and Cello:

A similar procedure is evident at mm. 247 - 248. This interval is not as directly referred to in statements of the Second Theme.

Two further articulations of the tritone in harmonic position are found at mm. 328 - 329 and mm. 338 - 339 where it is heard, strongly articulated within a fortissimo context:

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III. Structural Configurations

Although the descending Phrygian tetrachord is not present as an *Harmonic bass* in this movement, there are two explicit examples of successions of tonal centres that articulate the *fa-mi* inflection. The descending spiral bass as well as successions that articulate the tritone relationship are not of importance. Two examples can be shown of where the mediant function plays an important structural role: at mm. 317 - 327 and mm. 344 - 351. *Elegy V*, as is the case with *Elegy I*, is written in the *e* mode. However speculative the significance of this may be, it has to be conceded that the skillful way in which Van Wyk employs various configurations of the *Phrygian Inflection* both in the first and final movements of the work certainly corroborates Kimmel’s tentative theory concerning the significance of the *e* mode in contexts concerning death.

The Descending Phrygian tetrachord is not present as *Harmonic bass* in this movement.

a. Successions of tonal centres that articulate the *fa-mi* inflection

There are two examples of this type of progression. The first example occurs at mm. 326 - 330 where the tonal
centre shifts from E major to d-sharp minor:

In a similar procedure at mm. 336 - 339 the tonal centre shifts from C-sharp major to c minor.

b. The role of the mediant key

The role of the mediant key can be seen to be of importance between mm. 317 - 327 in that E major is here superimposed on a recurrent c-natural in the bass. A more pertinent example is evident at mm. 344 - 351 with the modulation from c minor to e minor/E major:
c. *Elegy V* is—as is the case with *Elegy I*—in the *e* mode.

**IV. Rhythm and Pulse**

Although the dactylic rhythm is absent from *Elegy V*, an important allusion to death, termination and finality may be found in the parameter of pulse. With only a few exceptions, (mm. 275 - 283) (mm. 287 - 292) (mm. 313 - 325), the 'Cello enunciates the quarter-note pulse unit throughout the entire movement. Towards the end of the movement, between mm. 344 - 351, the pulse strength is
first reduced by means of \textit{ppp} and \textit{pp} indications and at m. 352 it is finally extinguished when the 'Cello sustains the note \textit{e} until the end of the movement in the following irregular and vague references to the basic pulse unit:

\begin{music}
\begin{musicframe}
\begin{musicnote}
\mbox{\textit{ppp} sempre}
\end{musicnote}
\end{musicframe}
\end{music}

This resolution of pulse is also evident in the First Violin from m. 352 until the end of the movement; reference to the basic pulse unit is avoided by the phrasing which articulate groups of three- and four quarter-note units:

\begin{music}
\begin{musicframe}
\begin{musicnote}
\mbox{\textit{ppp} sempre}
\end{musicnote}
\end{musicframe}
\end{music}
At m. 364 this vague configuration of pulse is extinguished in both the First Violin and the Cello when both instruments sustain the note e at a ppp level until the close of the movement. When the sound stops at m. 367, the composer stresses the importance of the subsequent silence by the fermata indication in the final measure. Thus, the pulse unit is first weakened and finally demonstrably extinguished and may hence have a powerful allusion to death.

V. Timbre and Texture

As are the first and third elegies, Elegy V is shaped in an archlike formal structure which may be seen to be operative through various parameters. Within the parameters of timbre and texture, this is constituted as follows. The movement commences at pp and ppp dynamic levels; the texture is transparent and the First Theme is introduced by the Second Violin in its middle range. At m. 242 the First Violin restates this theme in the same register. After brief fluctuations in levels of intensity (mm. 252 - 254) (mm. 256 - 258), the Second Theme is introduced at m. 267 at a forte level. This statement gradually leads to the ff at m. 270 at which point the texture becomes more opaque. After the ff cadence at m. 274, which is heard through six voices, the First Theme is introduced at a pp level. The lower and darker timbres
of all four instruments are employed and the texture undergoes a transformation to one of transparency. This material gradually increases in level of intensity, and through the sounding of progressively higher registers, culminate in the passage mm. 283 - 292. In this passage, the four instruments play in high registers, at high levels of intensity and the texture is condensed and opaque. This is followed in m. 229 by a brief cessation of these elements before a similar surge through the parameters of timbre, range and level of intensity leads to two more ff climaxes at m. 326 and m. 337. In each of these instances it is important to note that both climaxations are dramatically contrasted with subsequent lyrical statements of the First Theme in low registers and at reduced dynamic levels (mm. 327 - 339). From mm. 339 to the end of the movement the dynamic level gradually decreases, the ranges of the Second Violin and Viola remain predominantly low and the texture becomes increasingly more transparent and is finally resolved in the final measures when the First Violin and 'Cello sound the note e in unison at the octave for approximately four measures at a ppp level (mm 365 - 368).

It may thus be possible to discern the cycle of generation-growth-decay and death within the parameters of timbre and texture.
Conclusion

In addition to the various possible melodic, harmonic, structural, rhythmic and timbral allusions thusfar referred to, the following general and speculative observations may be made regarding possible allusions to death in *Elegy V.*

Contrast through various parameters initially plays an important structural role. This is not readily evident at the outset of the movement as the thematic material of both themes are cast in complementary homogeneous surroundings. Until m. 274, increase and decrease in levels of intensity, range and density of texture occur gradually.

At mm. 275 however, the first dramatic contrast is evident. A sudden drop through the parameters of level of intensity, pitch, textural density and timbre occurs when the First Theme is heard in a transformed guise. Similar contrasts occur where the First Theme is heard at mm. 328 and 339. The contrast in each of these cases has a profound effect on the character and mood of the music. Material of a bright, rhythmically enunciated character is directly followed by that with a darker, more sombre and introspective quality. In each of these instances the First Theme is suddenly inflected in a manner that may be
seen to articulate the sudden shift between that of certainty and uncertainty, light and darkness or life and death.

This idea may be further supported by the fact that this theme is progressively cast in a more Phrygian mould with each of its appearances where it articulates this contrast. At the beginning of the movement it is cast in E major over a bright pedal point in the 'Cello. At m. 275, after the ff climax in A major, it is heard in G-flat major, pp subito, e quasi senza espressione. At mm. 329 and 339 similar contrasts occur and at the inflected appearance of the First Theme here, the opening descending interval of the theme is altered from a major second to that of the Phrygian half-step. This Phrygian descent is further noticeable in the shifts that occur between tonal centres. At m. 329 the tonal centre shifts from E major to d-sharp minor and at m. 339 from C-sharp major to c minor.

In addition to poignantly illustrating the possible contrasts between life and death, the procedure followed here can be seen to underscore the implications of the Phrygian Inflection. From m. 339 to the end of the movement the dynamics of Death can be seen to be operative through several different parameters. At m. 339 the First Theme is heard pp for the last time in a shortened state-
ment which articulates the Phrygian descent. During the subsequent last statement of the Second Theme (m. 344) the Viola sounds the complete Descending Phrygian tetrachord at m. 345.

Where the Coda commences at m. 352, reference to the First Theme is made by way of fragmented interjections. The incessantly-articulated pulse in the 'Cello ceases at m. 352 and further sense of pulse is weakened in that the First Violin articulates an irregularly-grouped quarter note pattern on e. In the two outer voices the dynamic level drops to ppp sempre. A final accented Phrygian cadence resolves onto the interval of the open fifth at mm. 360 - 362. Explicit harmonic function ceases at m. 365 when only the note e is sounded by the First Violin and 'Cello. The elegy ends at a ppp level with an added diminuendo indication. Four beats of silence with a fermata indication stresses the subsequent silence.

Thus, death is arrived at after a process in which the life-giving elements have been demonstrably weakened and finally dissolved. Van Wyk concludes the work with a final reference: London, Sept. 1940 - June 1941.
Kimmel's theory regarding the "Phrygian Inflection and the Appearance of Death in Music" is substantially corroborated by an analysis of the *Five Elegies*. Configurations of the Phrygian Inflection pervade the entire composition through its various Melodic, Harmonic and Structural parameters.

Howard Ferguson writes:

"Van Wyk's very distinctive idiom combines a basically tonally framework with harmony that is continually inflected. It sometimes has a modal flavour and often juxtaposes the major and minor forms of chords or uses both simultaneously."

(Ferguson, 1987:6)

Based on the findings of this study, it may be suggested that in the *Five Elegies*, it is largely the appearance of the Phrygian Inflection and its various derivations which contribute towards this 'very distinctive idiom.' Moreover, as is indicated in the previous chapter, it seems possible to trace the inflection's influence through the parameters of rhythm, pulse, timbre and texture. In addition, the cycle of generation-growth-decay and death may be gleaned through these parameters especially in *Elegies I, III, IV and V*. A similar cycle may also
be construed in the successions of tonal centres employed in each of the successive five movements: Both the First and Fifth Elegies have $e$ as tonal centre. The successive tonal centres of the five movements may suggest an ascending spiral of generation and growth through Elegies I, II and III and a descending spiral of decay and death through the descent of Elegies IV and V:

Succession of tonal centres:

\[\text{\textbackslash \textbackslash} \]

This cyclical element may be construed as being an important underlying device which fosters unity in the entire composition: It can be traced within movements through the parameters of rhythm, pulse, timbre and texture especially in Elegies I, III, IV and V, and is equally evident in the succession of tonal centres when the Five Elegies are viewed as a whole. It may thus be possible to discern an ascending clockwise spiral of generation and growth through the succession of tonal centres of the first three movements and a descending anti-clockwise spiral of decay and death through the descent in tonal
centres of the fourth and fifth movements. This phenomenon may provide a partial response to Kimmel's request for considerations of possible ways in which the *Phrygian Inflection* may be seen to function within entire works.

However, although it is possible to establish a multitude of Phrygian configurations as they appear through the various parameters in the entire *Five Elegies*, the question can be posed whether it can be accepted-unreservedly and without qualification—that the *Phrygian Inflection* is expressive of death in the musical work and proven, beyond doubt, that this statement holds true for every occurrence of the inflection in prototonal and tonal music. The rigorous answer to this question must be 'no', for, although it certainly seems possible to argue a strong case for the validity of this idea, it seems equally possible that examples in prototonal and tonal music may be marshalled where configurations of the inflection appear and where concomitant evidence of the intended extramusical meaning of death may be absent on the poietic and/or esthesic levels of information. Kimmel concludes his article regarding the extramusical significance of the *Phrygian Inflection* by conceding that:

"These devices are not to be construed to constitute a 'vocabulary' with univocal connotations. Not every isolated or passing occurrence necessarily announces some aspect of death...Yet whenever death is implied in a work these are among the gestures in which it is most apt to be embodied." (p. 75)
Thus, although analysis of the *Five Elegies* corroborates Kimmel's theory, it does not necessarily follow that every occurrence of the inflection—regardless of where it occurs—signifies the presence of death in the musical work. It should therefore be kept in mind that although the *Phrygian Inflection* may frequently be employed by composers in death-related settings—and experienced as an eloquent and effective symbol for death by the listener—it is also conceivable, that a composer may write configurations of the inflection, without having the intention of expressing this extramusical phenomenon.

In view of the findings of the present study, it may be suggested that evidence on both the poietic and esthesic levels of such a composition may be accordingly absent.

Although Arnold van Wyk's *Five Elegies for String Quartet* directly supports Kimmel's theory regarding the *Phrygian Inflection* and evidence can be gleaned on the poietic and esthesic levels of Nattiez's semiological model, it obviously cannot be construed that every single appearance of the *Phrygian Inflection* in every composition written within the Western tonal tradition, can be interpreted in this way. If the idea is accepted that the *Phrygian Inflection* has substantial—although not conclusive—validity as a sign or symbol for death, its implications in terms of Arnold van Wyk's *Five Elegies for String Quartet*
seem ineluctable. Findings on the neutral level of Nattiez’s semiological model are, moreover, substantially strengthened by an investigation of the poietic level of information.

The sign’s presence on the level of experience, or the esthesic level, is perhaps the most difficult to pinpoint, since listeners’ experiences are undoubtedly considerably influenced by factors such as personal disposition and preference, coupled with the quality or the context of the performance of a work. The extent to which the Phrygian Inflection may signify the presence of death through the Five Elegies to the listener, has been discussed at the end of each of the respective analyses in the previous chapter.

Thus, the information gleaned at the poietic, the neutral and the esthesic levels of Nattiez’s tripartite conception of musical semiology can be seen to support the thesis that Van Wyk’s work contain numerous possible structural allusions to the extramusical concept under study. Yet, it also seems necessary to point out that a systematic method regarding a Semiotic of Music, which could moreover be seen to have universal validity, has not been formulated to date. Wendy Steiner writes:
"It is tempting to embrace semiotics as a new gospel whose mere application will turn art theory from a chaos of speculation into a systematic field of study. But the replacement of order by chaos can backfire, and the application of semiotics to the arts threatens to reveal a murkiness in the neat categories of the theory quite in keeping with the 'unclear thinking of art'."
(Steiner, 1981:3)

Similarly, Henry Orlov outlines some of the problems which have not been resolved in the application of semiotics to music:

"If music is to be considered a sign system, then it is a very strange one: an icon which has nothing in common with the object it presents; an abstract language which does not allow for a prior definition of its alphabet and vocabulary, and operates with an indefinite, virtually infinite number of unique elements; a text which cannot be decomposed into standard interchangeable items...The reason for this strangeness is that the reality so symbolized is that of preverbal experience --the reality of immediate mental, emotional, and sensuous life in the human being...The way it defines experience, the type of relation between the musical signifier and significate, is akin to that of an ideogram. Music can be said to be the audible ideogram of experience. This is so far the nearest conceivable approximation that can be made to it in terms of semiotics."
(Orlov, 1981:136 - 137)

In 1989, Nattiez perhaps best summarized the problems facing a systematised formulation of a Semiotic of Music as follows:
"Semiotics does not exist. For two closely related reasons: the investigations which, since the nineteenth century, have claimed to be semiological take their inspiration from diverse orientations and have an extremely varied scientific past; as yet nobody seems to have put forward a sufficiently coherent paradigm for analysis, or a corpus of universally accepted methods, which would enable one to talk of a single semiological science."
(Nattiez, 1989: 21)

In the same article Nattiez discusses several of the current developments in music semiology, points to some of their distinctive leanings and respective advantages and limitations and concludes by saying:

"Music semiology is not, by nature, different from any other type of analysis, because there is always a gap between an analysis and its object. Analysis, and semiology with it, belong to the great family of models; it simulates the workings of the fact under examination, it does not reproduce it. To expect that analysis is the equivalent of the way in which one experiences one's relation to music is quite simply to misunderstand its objectives. Analysis aims at a superior knowledge of the object: in no way is it a substitute... Does music semiology exist? Pure semiology: no. In 1975 I proposed nothing other than the *Fondements d'une sémiologie de la musique*: These foundations are twofold: The interpretant is the root of the symbolic operation; a symbolic form necessarily has three dimensions: the poietic, the immanent [or neutral] and the esthesic. I would not be involved in the construction of a music semiology if I did not believe fundamentally in these two propositions. But one day some crafty interpretant will perhaps come and overturn the tripartite conception to which I adhere. And like interpretants, the discussion goes on *ad infinitum.*"
(Nattiez, 1989: 57 - 58)

The approach followed in this study illuminated a certain way of approaching creative activity: Humanity is *homo*
significans, maker and reader of signs. Music may be viewed as a system of signs consisting of two components: the signifier and the signified. Since the signified cannot be seen to be identical with reality--and moreover depends on the metaphoric and approximate medium of language for its description--music may be treated as a self-enclosed system of communication. The sign may manifest itself on the three different levels of Nattiez's model, and the nature of its description is, to a large extent, dependent upon the disposition of its interpretant. Meaning cannot be said to be immanent in a sign, but substantially depends on the sign's position in a set of relationships.

In this study, therefore, an attempt was made to elucidate a certain aspect of meaning dependent on both the theoretically-verifiable sources of information as well as subjective extrapolation.

Kimmel writes that "...the mark of the educated ear is not only its capacity to explain theoretically the succession of events it encounters, but to grasp and understand their import. And this, in the last analysis, is the function of criticism" (p. 76). It was attempted in this study to illuminate one such possible level of the 'understanding of an import' of Van Wyk's composition.
Finally, consideration is given to Van Wyk's statement that the *Five Elegies for String Quartet* should be seen as "music of protest" (Van Wyk, SABC, 1983). The observations and ideas that follow are of a tentative and speculative nature and while it is inferred that they are valid, equally, it is accepted that they are partly informed and influenced by a subjective, and therefore variable level of experience.

The *Five Elegies for String Quartet* was conceived by Arnold van Wyk against the background of wartime London and at the height of Hitler's *Blitzkrieg*. The work was composed partly in bomb-shelters during air-raids on the city. According to the composer, he sought to give expression to 'the evanescence of life', 'mourning' and 'death'. As such, it seems feasible to suggest that Van Wyk felt himself to be expressing an emotional response to the life-threatening situation with which he and millions of others across Europe had suddenly been confronted. One may thus conjecture that Van Wyk mourns the large-scale infliction of death which surrounds him and that he is protesting against man's inhumanity to man; a characteristic of human behaviour which has been exemplified in wars throughout recorded history. This idea may be strengthened by the fact that during this time, Van Wyk also started working on the *Agnus Dei* and the *Kyrie* of what was later to become his *Missa in illo Tempore*, for
the *Agnus Dei* ends with a prayer for peace while the *Kyrie* is a prayer for Divine Mercy. In 1979, Van Wyk wrote that his *Mass* could be seen as "having a bearing upon the state of the world in 1945 and today" (Van Wyk, 1979:3). In addition, in 1979 he partly motivated his choice for completing this work for the tercentenary celebrations of Stellenbosch by pointing out that "in view of the present state of affairs of our country and of the world, we should perhaps not be celebrating too boisterously" (Van Wyk, quoted by Viljoen, 1981: 8). In 1947, Stegmann—ostensibly sanctioned by the composer—to do so—writes "Van Wyk was also moved by the suffering of the occupied Netherlands; this inspired the *Three Improvisations*" (1947:45). In a letter to Anton Hartman (then Head of Music, SABC) dated 22 December 1958, Van Wyk writes: "Ek wil nie melodramaties wees nie, maar moet jou sê dat ek baie dae inniglik verlang na die rus van die dood...dis 'n allervreeslike wêreld waarin ons woon" (Van Wyk, 1958:2)(a). "I do not want to sound melodramatic, but have to tell you that I frequently experience a profound longing for the tranquillity of death...it is a horrifying world we live in."

These statements by Van Wyk may well indicate the nature of his intended protest. If it is taken that the "present state of affairs of our country and the world" and the "horrifying world we live in" point to the world in a
sociological sense, it may be argued that Van Wyk had an acute sense of the social injustices of the world and of South Africa. Van Wyk experienced the large-scale infliction of death, the tyranny of oppression and the threat of encroaching totalitarianism at first hand during the years 1938 to 1946 in London. Upon his return to South Africa he may well have reacted against the official entrenchment of a government policy which was entirely based on the atavistic principle of race and which relegated the majority of South Africa’s citizens to the status of migrant labourers "as there could be no place for [them] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour" (Verwoerd, quoted by Lelyveld, 1986: 18). Viewed in this way, Van Wyk’s ongoing references pertaining to the concept of ‘protest’ could be seen as being directed against oppression and suffering inflicted by human beings upon human beings; throughout the world, and more specifically, in the country where he lived between 1946 and 1983.

In addition, there are indications that Van Wyk, the composer, often found himself in a precarious position in his relationship with the country’s state-controlled broadcasting corporation. On the one hand, he was dependent upon this corporation for commissions and in order to have his music performed and broadcast, and as such, incurring the wrath of the organisation may well
have meant an end to this much-needed support. On the other hand, he frequently did not agree with the *modus operandi* of the corporation and the official arts policy as administered by the government of the day. In a letter to Anton Hartman in 1973, he voiced his objections to the exclusive nature of the current establishment and the practice of censorship as follows:

"Uit die aard van die geleentheid moes jy seker praat van hoeveel Afrikaners daar vandag in sleutelposisies sit, maar ek het gedink (en ek dink dit nog) dat die dae verby is dat ons mekaar gelukwens oor die toestand van sake. Ons behoort nou te vra of dit goed is dat X --of hy nou Afrikaner, Suid-Afrikaner of wat oor al-- sit waar hy sit. Wat help dit byvoorbeeld dat iemand soos...die hoof van die Publikasieraad is? Jy sal seker sê ek is onnadenkend maar ek wil tog vir jou sê dat die dade van daardie raad (miskien sy bestaan, selfs) baie prominent voorkom onder die dinge wat my as mens en as kunstenaar bitter ongelukkig maak."

(Van Wyk, 1973:1)

"As result of the nature of the occasion you were probably compelled to speak about how many Afrikaners presently occupy key positions, but I thought (and I still do) that the days are past when we congratulated each other on this state of affairs. We should now ask ourselves whether it is acceptable that X, whether Afrikaner, South African or whoever, occupies certain positions. Of what possible advantage can it be that...is the head of the Censorship Board? You will probably say that I am being thoughtless, but I have to tell you that the acts of that board (possibly, even its existence) feature prominently among the things that make me bitterly unhappy, both as a human being and as an artist."

As early as 1958, in a letter addressed to the head of the
“South Africa has produced more composers during the past two decades than what could have been reasonably expected from such a pitiful country... South Africa is so aware of its backward position where the creative arts are concerned that it discovers ‘painters’ who can hardly manipulate the brush, ‘authors’ who have not mastered the correct use of language and ‘composers’ who have only just progressed beyond the elementary theory class. To this last group you have awarded prizes and will probably do so again in the future.”

In 1957, ostensibly upon being invited to address a meeting of the FAK (freely translated as the Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies) which was to be held in Stellenbosch, Van Wyk declined, and motivated this as follows:

“...op die oomblik is Stellenbosch en Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings nie die dinge wat die naaste aan my hart lê nie -- ek is dus bevrees dat my toespraak teleur mag stel, nie alleen oor die onkunde wat ek aan die dag mag lê nie, maar ook omdat ek seer-sekerlik genoodsaak sal voel om ’n paar bitter dinge te sê.”

(Van Wyk, 1957: 1)(a)
"at the moment, Stellenbosch and Afrikaans Cultural Societies are not the things closest to my heart. For this reason my speech would probably disappoint -- not only as result of the ignorance I may display, but also as result of the fact that I shall most certainly feel compelled to say a few bitter things. So, rather not."

One may thus deduce that Van Wyk frequently expressed a fairly specific protest against the ideological implications, not only of being dependent on the South African Broadcasting Corporation, but also against the exclusive nature of current Afrikaner ideology with which he may have been expected to identify. In addition, it seems that during this time the SABC adhered to the practice of commissioning works on condition that renumeration be withheld until "after the score has been approved by us" (quoted by Van Wyk, 1958:2)(c). To this, Van Wyk replied:

"Ek moet ook ten sterkste protes aanteken teen die woorde 'nadat die partituur deur ons...bevredigend gevind is'...Ek is óf die opdrag waardig...óf u weerhoud die aanbod. Maar sulke woorde is kwetsend en beledigend."
(Van Wyk, 1958:2)(c)

"I have to protest in the strongest possible terms against the words 'after the score...has been approved by us'...Either I am worthy of the commission...or you withhold it. But such words are offensive and insulting."

Indeed, at times he avowed a distinct contempt for this institution: In the same year, he wrote: "...ek gaan
voortaan leer om sonder die SAUK klaar te kom" (Van Wyk, 1958:1) "...in future, I am going to learn to cope without the SABC..." and described it as an organization "for which respect has become an impossibility" ("..n organisasie waarvoor mens onmoontlik nog respek kan hê" (Van Wyk, 1958:1)(c).

However, since Van Wyk was largely dependent on the SABC for public exposure, he may have refrained from voicing these grievances publicly. From a perusal of Van Wyk's correspondence with Anton Hartman (presently housed at the South African Centre for Information on the Arts, Pretoria), as well as consideration of the quotations previously given, it is possible to infer an inner struggle of conscience. This writer wishes to argue that that which Van Wyk expresses as protest in his correspondence defines an element of protest he identifies in his music.

It can be argued that through his correspondence Van Wyk voices his perceived alienation which possibly resulted from living and working in a country where his music was not rightfully appreciated. Nine years after his death this situation appears to be unchanged since South African symphony orchestras do not, as a rule, perform his symphonic works; much of his music remains in manuscript form (or is currently out of print) and recordings of his works are virtually unobtainable. In the absence of
public recognition and approval by various Performing Arts Councils and the SABC, Van Wyk protested against misdirected policies, narrow-minded deterrents to his creativity and his perceived isolation in South Africa. An additional compounding factor may be the fact that his music possesses an "undertone of gloom" (Van Wyk, SABC: 1972), and "the fact that certain people do not like to hear those kinds of things" (Van Wyk, SABC, 1983).

It may be suggested that the quality of Van Wyk’s oeuvre did not reflect the quality of official social values of the society in which he lived. For, if we are to interpret the concepts of ‘death’ and ‘protest’ in terms of the socio-political conditions surrounding the composer, and view his own statements pertaining to these intended extramusical qualities as having bearing upon the “state of our country and the world”, it can be argued that in his music, and especially in a work such as the Five Elegies for String Quartet Arnold van Wyk indicts not only the social circumstances in which the work was composed, but also the very society in which he lived and worked from 1946 to 1983. As such, the work may be seen to possess universal as well as particular significance as seems to be the case with all works of art of an enduring quality.
The 'protest' embodied in the work in terms of this interpretation could therefore well serve as a reminder or a warning to a society which from 1946 to 1983 persistently ignored the dignity and humanity of the majority of its members and may thus contribute, to paraphrase Christopher Ballantine, to the realisation that a happy and liberated life for all human beings has not been realised in the present social order (Ballantine, 1974: 15).
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