

**The Development of the Passacaglia for Organ through German and
South African Composers**



by

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

Since the 19th century, the passacaglia has been associated with a musical form that includes a set of ground-bass or ostinato variations, however, its beginnings can be traced back to Spain in the early 17th century where it was termed *pasacalle*. The meaning of the term *pasacalle* (later *passacaglia*) is a combination of two Spanish words, *pasar* which translates as 'to pass' and *calle*, which translates as 'street'. When it emerged in France and Italy, the term initially alluded to the ritornellos improvised between songs. It is in Italy that the term *passacaglia* was established, initially as *passacaglio* which, at the time, referred to a single statement of a chord scheme and *passacagli*, the plural of it which referred to a succession or collection of multiple statements. However, these terms, including the feminine term *passacaglia*, and its other spelling variations, were utilised with minimal distinction throughout the century.¹

It was in Germany, towards the end of the 17th century, that the passacaglia started to be linked to solo organ music, with organists being influenced by the traditions of cantus-firmus improvisation and ground-bass divisions in their creation of majestic ostinato compositions shaped by brilliant figurations. It was the composers Dietrich Buxtehude and Johann Pachelbel who introduced their own bass formulae which were treated as rigorous ostinatos during the first part of their composition/s. The bass progressions have a thematic significance as they employed various techniques from chorale improvisation as opposed to the traditional formulae of the time. The

¹ Alexander Silbiger, "Passacaglia," in *Grove Music Online*, 2001, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000021024>.

passacaglias which are now composed for the organ present active passage work and contrapuntal density, diminishing the sense of dance that had previously been held by the genre, contributing to an increase in the tension of the relationship with the origin of this genre.²

The fate of late Baroque music at the time existed between the Italian and French styles, with the Italian style contributing harmonic sources of tonality and the French style contributing colouristic and programmatic trends in instrumental music. The German style being the intermediary between the two styles was characterised by its marked proclivity for a solid harmonic and contrapuntal texture.³ Johann Sebastian Bach, belonging to the German style, conducts the mediation through a fusion of national styles in his various works, which represent the culmination of the development of instrumental music in the late Baroque period.⁴ He finds his creative inspiration for the passacaglia genre through the influence of preceding composers of the genre such as Dietrich Buxtehude and André Raison and further establishes a model for the genre itself.

This model, which Bach had established, provides a template for the 19th-, 20th- and 21st-century composers who seek to return to composing passacaglias for the organ and to adapt the template to their own compositional language. It is due to this model that the ostinato bass theme, which is stated at the beginning of the work as a single line in the low register, becomes the defining feature of their passacaglias too.⁵ The idea of incorporating variations above the ostinato bass or through decorative devices

² Silbiger, "Passacaglia".

³ Manfred F. Bukofzer, "Fusion of National Styles: Bach," in *Music in the Baroque Era: from Monteverdi to Bach* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), 260.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁵ Silbiger, "Passacaglia".

on the theme itself is an additional feature which is central to the genre. Lastly, the association with Bach and the organ contributes to a mood of *gravitas* that has led composers of the later centuries to also utilise a similar slowish tempo.

Research Question

How do post-Baroque German and South African composers develop their compositional contribution to the passacaglia as a genre, and does Bach's model contribute to their idea/s of the genre?

This research analyses the compositional methods used by both German and South African composers to build on Bach's Passacaglia. It will investigate how and/or if composers have used Bach's composition as a model for their own and it will determine if Bach's Passacaglia is a referential composition when composing or contributing to the passacaglia genre.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation is based on a theoretical framework which seeks to evaluate how selected organ music composers (through the musical genres which proceed that of the Baroque period) develop the passacaglia by applying contrasting compositional techniques and harmonies. Furthermore, it evaluates and explores how and/or if the selected composers use Bach's Passacaglia as a model for their own. In its exploratory nature of analysing scores, conducting interviews and most importantly listening to recordings of the work, the dissertation will seek to compare how the selected organ music composers redefine the passacaglia genre.

Research Methodology

The research initially presents existing literature on Johann Sebastian Bach's Passacaglia to identify characteristics which define the genre for the organ. This is followed by a further analysis of both scores and literature on selected passacaglias for the organ by the German composers, Josef Rheinberger and Max Reger, both composers of the romantic style. In addition to these German composers, two South African composers of the modern style, namely John Joubert and Theo van Wyk, have been selected for having composed a passacaglia for the organ. These composers were selected as they represent compositional output for the genre across the centuries, providing contrast through their individual compositional styles. Furthermore, the following merits need to be noted: Rheinberger proves to be the first German composer to attempt composing a passacaglia after Bach; Reger proves the influence of Bach through his many transcriptions of Bach's works; Joubert – who was born in South Africa and spent most of his developmental years in the country before embarking to the United Kingdom – presents his output as an identical structure (passacaglia and fugue) to Bach; while Van Wyk is a living South African composer who has contributed the most recent addition to the genre. Each chapter will present brief biographical information on these composers and the features of their passacaglias as compositions that connect to the passacaglia of Bach.

The supporting evidence to demonstrate Bach's influence on each composer is extracted from compositional patterns, dedications, and other compositions that allude to a general musical influence by Bach. Gaps in the literature concerning the respective passacaglias are addressed through analytical study of the works, as well as interviews, especially in the case of the 21st-century passacaglia output of Van Wyk. The results are presented in the respective chapter.

Chapter Outline

Chapter two contains a literature review and a brief discussion detailing the limitations found after engaging in this process. Chapter three focuses on Bach's contribution to the passacaglia genre and how his output creates a template for subsequent composers. Chapters four and five will examine the German composers Josef Rheinberger and Max Reger, who used Bach's Passacaglia as a model and incorporated similar techniques into their Romantic expression. Chapters six and seven will focus on South African composers who have contributed to the passacaglia genre and how their output uses techniques built upon Bach's model. The two composers discussed will be John Joubert and Theo van Wyk. Lastly, all conclusions are reflected in Chapter eight.

Rationale

Bach's passacaglia is used as the foundation of this research due to his successful attempt at defining the genre. Bach's influence extends to musicians in Europe, particularly Germany, through concert life, performance practice, musical instruction, and the cultivation of taste during a period when his works experienced a resurgence in the 19th and 20th centuries.⁶ Rheinberger and Reger both have their origin in Germany during the 19th century and are considered notable composers of the passacaglia for organ during that period. South African tertiary institutions experienced the influence of European schools and thinking through the leadership of music departments between the first half of the 19th century and the late 20th century which tended to be of European descent and training.⁷ Both Joubert and Van Wyk received

⁶ Friedrich Blume and Piero Weiss, "Bach in the Romantic Era" *The Musical Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (1964): 290, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/741017>.

⁷ Socrates Paxinos, "Musicology in South Africa" *Acta Musicologica* 58, no. 1 (1986): 10, <https://doi.org/10.2307/932936>.

their musical training during that period and would have been influenced by Bach's music. This is evidenced by their composition of a passacaglia for organ.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Johann Sebastian Bach: Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, BWV 582

According to Hermann Keller, Bach's composition of the passacaglia creates nuances between the chaconne and passacaglia. Keller claims that Bach refers to the passacaglia as being developed above a ground bass which is clearly stated and remains constant, in comparison to the chaconne which has a bass that is felt.⁸ David Rumsey supports Keller's suggestions by highlighting that unlike the preceding passacaglia composers such as Dietrich Buxtehude, Johann Pachelbel, and Johann Kaspar Kerll, who used thematic modulation, Bach moved away from this practice and applied unique features which included monolithic naturality, such as the use of an eight-bar subject as opposed to the four-bar subject, the use of the Neapolitan Sixth chord and the merging of the passacaglia with a fugue. The indication of Bach moving away from the compositional practices undertaken by his predecessors is seen in the conjunction of a passacaglia with a fugue which both retain a common theme throughout – this contrasts with the standard prelude and fugue format, where each is presented as separate 'movements' with distinguishable themes in each.⁹

In Bach's Passacaglia, the ostinato presented at the beginning of the work repeats itself 21 times – this excludes the fugue which is written in four-voiced counterpoint. The late French organist, Marie-Claire Alain, suggested dividing the 21 variations into groups of three, contributing to a debate on crucifixion and redemption, each with specific melodic symbolism and choral extracts from Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*. The fugue

⁸ Hermann Keller and Helen Hewitt, *The Organ Works of Bach: A Contribution to Their History, Form, Interpretation and Performance* (New York: C. F. Peters Corporation, 1967), 123.

⁹ David Rumsey, "The Symbols of the Bach Passacaglia", *Articles – Baroque*, 1992, <http://www.davidrumsey.ch/baroque.php>.

concludes chaotically by incorporating long descending groups of notes with various durations depending on the voice, ultimately suggesting crucifixion.¹⁰

Richard Jones, in his book *The Creative Development of Johann Sebastian Bach*, provides a contrasting opinion to that of Alain. Jones suggests that the 20 variations (excluding the ground bass theme) can be grouped into five phases which build up to a climax (apart from the fourth phase). Jones sets the fourth phase apart from the other phases for acting as a light episode with the indication of playing manuals only and progressively reducing the texture from three parts to two parts and finally, one part. This occurrence counters the build-up of tension in the work and creates an interim reversal of that build-up. Furthermore, Jones suggests that the last variation in each phase portrays an overtly climatic character, light relief where necessary or built-up tensions which lead from one variation to the other and ultimately demonstrate that the texture, the accompanying material and the subject undergo variation.¹¹

Though catalogued as a work for organ, Joel Speerstra in his book, *Bach and the Pedal Clavichord, An Organist's Guide*,¹² questions whether the German Baroque composers of the time intended for the passacaglias to emulate the original tradition of the genre as guitar variations. He later states that using the clavichord is an appropriate choice to imitate the intensity and emotional intimacy present in the world of the solo guitar.

¹⁰ Patrick Saint-Dizier, *Musical Rhetoric: Foundations and Annotation Schemes* (London: ISTE, 2014).

¹¹ Richard Douglas Jones, *The Creative Development of Johann Sebastian Bach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 176.

¹² Joel Speerstra, *Bach and the Pedal Clavichord An Organist's Guide* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 131 – 132.

Christoph Wolff, in his book *Bach: Essays on his Life and Music*,¹³ focuses on the architecture of Bach's Passacaglia. Through his analytical observations, he divides the work into seven sections and ultimately discovers symmetry in his observations based on the number of variations grouped into each of the sections.

Later German and South African passacaglias

Josef Rheinberger: Sonata No. 8 in E Minor, Op. 132

Being a highly distinguished organ composer, particularly in modern music, Josef Rheinberger represented the former day's Pachelbels and Buxtehudes in that modern period.¹⁴ Rheinberger had a notebook titled, *Sammlung von Orgelstücken Verschiedenen Inhalts* which contained 50 organ compositional arrangements by various preceding composers of his time, and of those, 14 were compositional arrangements of works by Bach which suggests the latter's influence on Rheinberger. Apart from the Organ Sonata No. 8, there are also other organ sonatas by Rheinberger that demonstrate influences of Bach. These include: the opening of Organ Sonata No. 1 (First movement, bars 1–4) which features strong connections to the opening of Bach's Prelude in E Minor, BWV 548 (bars 1–5); Organ Sonata No. 11 (First movement, bars 209–212) which features rhythmic similarities to Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565 (bars 4–11); Organ Sonata No. 10 (First movement, bars 8–15) which features similarities of tonality, melodic shape and the feeling of rhythm and movement to the Allemande from Bach's French Suite in B Minor, BWV 814 (bars 1–11); lastly, the opening subject of Organ Sonata No. 13 (Fourth movement, bars 1–

¹³ Christoph Wolff, *Bach: Essays on his life and Music* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 308 – 312.

¹⁴ John Alexander Fuller-Maitland, *Masters of German Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 174.

8) which begins with a similar melodic contour to that of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D ('Dorian'), BWV 538, (Fugue, bars 1–10).¹⁵

The passacaglia of Rheinberger is found in the fourth and final movement of his Organ Sonata No. 8 in E Minor, Op. 132. The third movement ends on a secondary dominant chord, leading into the fourth movement that begins with a traditional ground-bass theme which presents possibilities in simple and natural harmonic variation. Within the first eight bars of the passacaglia, Rheinberger invokes a modulation from the minor key to relative major keys – this is seen specifically in the second bar where the notes E–A and D–B suggest harmonies of both D and G major.¹⁶ Throughout this movement, Rheinberger refrains from transposing the two-phrase theme in each of the 24 variations which all end with an E minor cadence. In concluding the movement and also the sonata, Rheinberger inserts the *adagio* opening passage from the beginning of the first movement of the sonata, which creates a formal unification with the opening.¹⁷

Max Reger: Passacaglias Op. 16, Op. 33, Op. 63, and Op. 127

During Max Reger's studies with Hugo Riemann, his knowledge of the organ works of Bach and Brahms increased. Riemann's influence led him to enrol at the conservatory at Wiesbaden in 1890, which initiated Reger's systematic study of Bach's keyboard works.¹⁸ Bach's influence on Reger is identified in his passacaglias for organ which all

¹⁵ G. Fredrick Guzasky, "The Organ Sonatas of Josef Gabriel Rheinberger: Variety in Formal Approach," (DMus Dissertation, Boston University, 1997), <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/organ-sonatas-josef-gabriel-rheinberger-variety/docview/304331496/se-2>, 2024, 15 – 22.

¹⁶ Harvey Grace, *The Organ Works of Rheinberger* (London: Novello and Co., Ltd, 1925), 36.

¹⁷ Warren Roy Canfield, "A Study of the Organ Works of Josef Gabriel Rheinberger," (Doctoral diss., University of Miami, 1995), 76 -77, <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/study-organ-works-josef-gabriel-rheinberger/docview/304199189/se-2>.

¹⁸ John Williamson, "Reger, (Johann Baptist Joseph) Max(imilian)," *Grove Music Online*, 2001, <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000023064>.

demonstrate a similarity to the opening of Bach's Passacaglia by having an impassivity, an unaccompanied opening subject (in the pedal) and an opening subject presented in two phrases within a single idea. However, Reger's themes appear to be longer than those of Bach. However, Reger's themes appear to be longer than those of Bach due to its simpler harmonic language, particularly in the centre of the theme.¹⁹ Additionally, Reger's Organ Suite in E Minor, Op. 16 contains an inscription of the work being dedicated to the memory of Bach. In the second movement of this suite, Reger fashions the work entirely in an ornamental chorale prelude style similar to Bach in *Das Orgelbüchlein*.²⁰

Martin Weyer's book, *Die Orgelwerke Max Regers*²¹ is not only a guiding tool to advise organists who intend to perform the various works of Reger, but it also includes brief analytical observations of the various organ compositions by Reger, in particular the passacaglias which are either found in his suites or sonatas for organ, or as stand-alone works.

John Joubert: Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, Op. 35

In 1963, Joubert completed his Passacaglia and Fugue, Op. 35 for organ. Just like Bach's output of the genre, Joubert uses the same format by having a fugue following the passacaglia. The passacaglia is set in the key of C minor, and after announcing the ostinato in the pedal part, this basso ostinato (ground bass) recurs as a group of continuous variations with the theme appearing occasionally in the upper voices,

¹⁹ Daniel Harrison, "Max Reger Introduces Atonal Expressionism," *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (2004): 676, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600982>.

²⁰ Walter Frisch, "Reger's Historicist Modernism," *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (2004): 740 - 741, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdh024>.

²¹ Martin Weyer, *Die Orgelwerke Max Regers: ein Handbuch für Organisten* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1989), 9 – 324.

similar to Bach.²² In his research study, *Analysis of Contrapuntal Style in South African Instrumental Works*, Roger Buczynski dedicates a chapter to Joubert's Passacaglia and Fugue. Buczynski suggests that this work, with a theme which is based on ten chromatic pitches could form part of a chromaticised scale of C – however, the inclusion of the D-sharp does not endorse it belonging to a fully chromaticised scale of C minor.²³

Similarly, in Bach's fugue, the subject begins on the tonic (C) and ends on the dominant (G). Joubert also divides the fugue into three sections which can be labelled as: statement – digression – restatement. Joubert's fugue presents elements of traditional Baroque, as well as subsequent compositional elements. Examples of Baroque elements include his use of imitation in original and inverted forms, invertible counterpoint, pedal point, and stretto techniques in the composition.²⁴

Theodore van Wyk: An Eclectic Passacaglia

No literature currently exists on the composer or his composition, *An Eclectic Passacaglia*; however, the interview in Appendix B provides the required information.

Limitations

German compositions

Possibly owing to its popularity, Bach's Passacaglia is the topic of a substantial amount of literature in English, which is easily accessible. However, there is substantially less literature available on the works of Reger and Rheinberger, especially in English. The literature found on the Rheinberger passacaglia fails to provide a detailed analysis of

²² Buczynski, Roger Andrew, "Analysis of Contrapuntal Style in South African Instrumental Works" (Masters diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1984), 214.

²³ Buczynski, Roger Andrew, "Analysis of Contrapuntal Style in South African Instrumental Works" (Masters diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1984), 7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 222 - 223.

each variation but rather refers to selected variations which demonstrate key features of the work. *The Organ Sonatas of Rheinberger* by Harvey Grace is a popular referenced resource, but it serves more to provide guidance to organists in performing the organ sonatas rather than providing the required variation analysis. The literature on Reger's passacaglias was scant and discovered in digitally archived journals, which have been digitised by the publishers and are unlisted on an existing Max Reger website.

South African compositions

A single dissertation has been written on Joubert's passacaglia, which explores the motifs and its development throughout the work. Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia* presents a void in the literature because of its publication in July 2023. As a result, I was led to conduct interviews and/or analysis on the works to see how (or if) they connect to Bach's Passacaglia.

Chapter Three: Bach and the Passacaglia

This chapter intends to present and collate various interpretations of Bach's Passacaglia in order to identify aspects which stand out and which may have influenced the later composers.

Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor (BWV 582) is suggested by Joel Speerstra to have had its compositional beginnings between the period of 1708 and 1712.²⁵ In 1708, Bach found himself in Weimar, a city where music featured high in cultural life, as is evident by the well-known musicians who worked there, such as M. Vulpius, J.H. Schein, and J.G. Walther.²⁶ Bach's stylistic models included those of the North German school, among others Dietrich Buxtehude, Johann Adam Reincken, Nicolaus Bruhns, Vincent Lübeck, and Georg Böhm.²⁷ Although they contributed richly to the genre in late seventeenth-century Germany, their works do not equate to the scale and power found in that of Bach's Passacaglia.²⁸

The composition as a whole consists of two parts, the variations (passacaglia) and a fugue, both of which are preceded by the theme presented in an unaccompanied form – a feature which had never been presented in passacaglias or chaconnes written for keyboard before Bach. This feature was unique for its time and represented an innovative construction of a melodic subject.²⁹ The combination of the passacaglia with a fugue may bring about thoughts of likeness to the standard Prelude and Fugue

²⁵ Joel Speerstra, *Bach and the Pedal Clavichord An Organist's Guide* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 129.

²⁶ Peter Williams, "Weimar 1708–17," in *J. S. Bach: A Life in Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 71.

²⁷ Christoph Wolff and Walter Emery, *Bach, Johann Sebastian* (Oxford University Press, 2024). <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-6002278195>.

²⁸ Richard D.P. Jones, "The Concerto and Other Genres," in *The Creative Development of Johann Sebastian Bach Volume 1: 1695-1717: Music to Delight the Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 174.

²⁹ Wolff, "The Architecture of the Passacaglia," 307.

format; however, here the passacaglia and fugue present themselves as joined to one another, with the same theme being present in both movements – which is not a practice in the traditional Prelude and Fugue form.³⁰

Christoph Wolff's analysis³¹ of the variations creates a clear structure of the variations of the passacaglia by coupling variations to list them in sections, thus creating a template detailing the compositional occurrences in this passacaglia. Wolff further suggests symmetry in the work, as seen below:

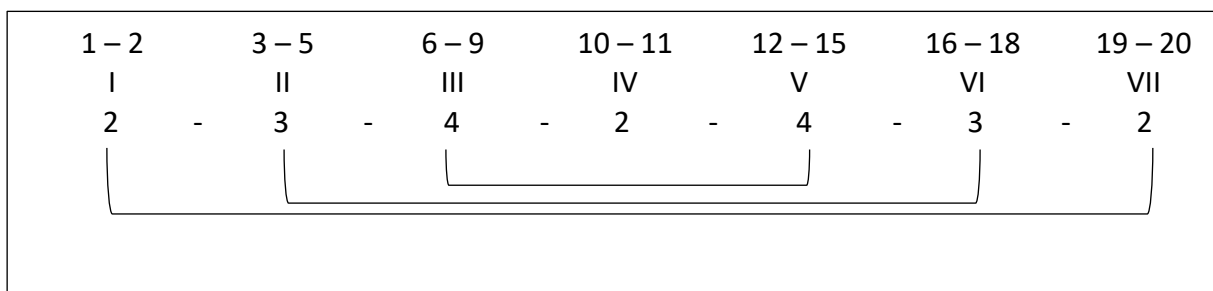


Figure 1: Wolff's illustration of the symmetry present in Bach's Passacaglia³²

Section 1: Variations 1 – 2

Here, a clear connection to Buxtehude's Passacaglia in D Minor (BuxWV 161) can be seen. Bach draws on the opening bars of Buxtehude's Passacaglia as a model, through the similar use of *sinco patio legatura*, in which a syncopation creates dissonance which resolves on an upbeat. Bach's dissonances thus do not resolve together but, instead, at different moments.³³ In addition, there is a consistent sequential motivic formation in the three upper parts – which feature above the theme

³⁰ David Rumsey, "The Symbols of the Passacaglia," 2018, www.davidrumsey.ch/Passacaglia.pdf.

³¹ Wolff, "The Architecture of the Passacaglia," 312.

³² Wolff, "The Architecture of the Passacaglia," 312.

³³ Filippo Mariottini, "The Passacaglia by Johann Sebastian Bach Interpretation Perspectives: How the Bach Score can Lead to such Different Musical Results," Masters diss., (Kungl. Musikhögskolan i Stockholm, 2018), 6, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:1258071>.

in the bass (pedal) – which present differentiated and uninterrupted rhythmic-melodic sequences. The nuances in these variations lie in the register. In the first variation the upper register covers the second octave above middle C and the second variation covers the first octave above middle C.³⁴

Section 2: Variation 3 – 5

In the third variation, a *transitus* is characterised by the feature of passing notes as the main figure, appearing gradually in different voices.³⁵ These passing notes are logically developed into a series of rhythmic-melodic motifs (quavers) which feature above the theme in the bass.³⁶ Furthermore, this variation utilises ascending and descending suspensions which are alternately combined in the top voices in conjunction with utilising figures of dissonance and displacement to increase the tension.³⁷



Figure 2: Rhythmic motif in the fourth variation of Bach's Passacaglia

In variation four, through a sustained linear motion reinterpreted in complimentary patterns, the introduction of the new rhythmic grouping (figure 2) contributes to the invigorating energy of the work.

³⁴ Wolff, "The Architecture of the Passacaglia", 308.

³⁵ Mariottini, "The Passacaglia by Johann Sebastian Bach Interpretation Perspectives: How the Bach Score can Lead to such Different Musical Results", 6.

³⁶ Wolff, "The Architecture of the Passacaglia", 308.

³⁷ Se Ra Son, "Figures of Musica Poetica in the Passacaglias of Dieterich Buxtehude and J. S. Bach", DMA diss., (University of Cincinnati, 2012), 25, <http://ezproxy.uct.ac.za/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/figures-i-musica-poetica-passacaglias-dieterich/docview/1317095157/se-2>.

Variation five preserves the rhythmic model of the previous variation with changes in the melodic progressions through the use of larger intervals of descending leaps of semiquavers in octaves, thirds or fourths. The pedal ostinato is transferred into the motivic work of the upper parts through corresponding diminished rhythm patterns.³⁸

Section 3: Variation 6 – 9

In this section, beginning at variation six, a change in the style of the work is seen. The motivic material develops uniformly and constantly rhythmically, however varying in its melodic direction. This section's rhythmic design presents complimentary patterns that base itself on a steady and uninterrupted flow of semiquavers.³⁹ In variation eight, the sequential upbeat motifs continue with pairs of voices ascending and descending step-wise however, with contrasting directions. Unmentioned in the literature analysed is also the presence of a Neapolitan Sixth chord in bar 70 (figure 3). The demure occurrence of the Neapolitan chord here is unlike the second, which appears more pronounced later in the work.



Figure 3: Bar 70 with the Neapolitan Sixth chord identified in Bach's Passacaglia

³⁸ Wolff, "The Architecture of the Passacaglia", 308.

³⁹ Ibid, 308–309.

Concluding this section, variation nine also incorporates the sequential upbeat motifs which now rise and fall in a melodic disjunct motion (thirds). The theme in the bass acts as a propelling musical device for the entry of the climaxed succeeding variations. Furthermore, the theme in the bass is now adjusted to the motivic pattern created by the upper voices by use of corresponding rhythmic diminution.⁴⁰

Section 4: Variation 10 – 11

The two variations in this section form the two central variations of the work linked in double counterpoint. The flowing semiquaver-note line serves in one instance as an upper counterpoint to the theme in the bass and in another instance as a lower counterpart to the theme which is then placed and presented triumphantly in the soprano. Thus, through these two instances, a mirror symmetry is created where the two halves of the entire work are both defined and joined. In variation ten, in a four-part texture, the theme functions as a bass support for the chordal strokes of the alto and tenor lines as it is stressed one last time in this register until its reoccurrence in variation 16. Variation 11 presents the theme in its original appearance; however, the soprano line serves as an introduction to the second half of the work without a break. This variation with its two-part texture indicates that, from here on, the four-part writing that featured in the preceding variations (which may also be referred to as the first half of the work) will no longer serve as a rule in the succeeding variations.⁴¹

Section 5: Variation 12 – 15

Throughout this section, the theme, after being stated in the soprano part, migrates its way downwards through the lower voices but does not feature in the pedal region

⁴⁰ Wolff, "The Architecture of the Passacaglia", 309.

⁴¹ Ibid, 309.

throughout the section. The variations in this section base themselves on three elements: First, the descent of the theme from the top to the bottom voices; secondly, a decrease in part texture from four parts to a single line; and thirdly, a progressively embellishing dissolution of the theme.⁴² In variation 12, the theme presents ornamentation of the melodic passage with various embellishments while a dense texture, incorporating a descending step-wise pattern in the three lower voices, provides support to the theme in the soprano voice.⁴³ In variation 13, the texture is reduced to three-part with the theme being concealed in the alto voice. The reduction of the texture continues into variations 14 and 15. Variation 14 displays a two-part texture with the theme in the lower parts. Variation 15, however, consists of a single part with the theme being formed by pointed semiquavers leaping, in intervals of thirds, fifths, sixths and octaves, on beats three and one, alternating between the soprano and bass registers.⁴⁴

Section 6: Variation 16 – 18

The variations in this section find themselves in a dualism of vertical and linear harmony principles. The vertical principle found in variation 16 (which shows a likeness to variation two with a quaver rest preceding each chord) fashions itself as *acciaccatura*-like, successive ‘clusters’ of six-part chords, whereas the linear principle is found in variation 17 in an ensuing three-part setting with a *concertato* duo of the upper parts in a triplet motion. Both principles, chordal writing impeded by syncopation and fluent melodic writing in sixths and tenths, are combined in variation 18. The pedal,

⁴² Ibid, 309.

⁴³ Son, “Figures of Musica Poetica in the Passacaglias of Dieterich Buxtehude and J.S. Bach”, 28.

⁴⁴ Wolff, “The Architecture of the Passacaglia”, 310.

which has been relaying the theme, indicates the conclusion of a thorough motivic adaptation similar to the concluding variations for sections two and three.⁴⁵

Section 7: Variation 19 – 20

The final variations of the passacaglia present two settings which contain identical motivic material in four and five voices corresponding with the arrangement in the first group of variations. These two settings are based on a syncopated chordal structure which is enhanced by circular and sequential semiquaver elaboration. The theme is now presented more strongly in the pedal without any motivic adaptations. Variation 19, with its upbeat beginning, distributes the semiquaver motion over the upper and lower manual parts. The final variation, also with an upbeat beginning, combines the outer and inner manual parts in a complementary manner, which then expands the texture to five parts in a final climactic sonority to introduce the fugue.⁴⁶

Bach scholar, Richard D.P. Jones alternatively suggests that the variations may be grouped into five sections which each (excluding the fourth) build up to a climax. The last variations in each of the sections (variations 8, 12, and 19–20) overtly contribute to a climatic character; variations 9, 11, and 13–15 contribute a character of light relief; and the remaining variations build the tension which leads from one to the other.⁴⁷

The Fugue (in four voices), which follows the Passacaglia, shows clear signs of the two movements being connected. This encourages brief mention of it alongside the Passacaglia.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 312.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 312.

⁴⁷ Richard D. P. Jones, "The Concerto and Other Genres", in *The Creative Development of Johann Sebastian Bach Volume 1: 1695-1717: Music to Delight the Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 176.



Figure 4: Fugue counter-subject (BWV 582)

The Fugue retains the key as per the convention of Bach's music where a succeeding fugue is attached. These would include Preludes and Fugues, Toccatas and Fugues and Fantasias and Fugues. However, even with this similarity in mind, the fact remains that the Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor cannot be placed in the same categorical form as Bach's other compositions with fugues attached. Clear instances exist in the work to prove this notion true: the first note of the fugue is contained in the last chord of the final variation of the Passacaglia; the subject of the Fugue is an exact extraction of the first half of the Passacaglia theme; furthermore, the first counter subject is constructed from the melodic material found in the second half of the Passacaglia theme.⁴⁸

To avoid a feeling of strictness and redundancy, Bach avoids twenty statements of the theme as done in the Passacaglia and introduces the counter-subject of quavers immediately at the initial entry of the fugue theme instead of as a fugal answer. However, the occurrence of the fugal answer incorporates a second counter-subject of running semiquaver notes (figure 5).



This Fugue cannot be considered as a double fugue, but is rather a fugue with one subject and two counter-subjects which accompany the subject in each of its successive entries, creating three contrasting musical ideas at three contrasting tempi.⁴⁹ The moving semiquaver pattern of the concluding bars lead up to the dramatic climax in bar 285 which presents the second occurrence of the Neapolitan Sixth chord in the entire work. The succeeding seven and a half bars conclude the Fugue.⁵⁰

Theme	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	1	2		3			4	5			6		7	Wolff							
	First Half										Second Half										
	1		2			3			4		5					Jones					
1										2					3					Rumsey	

Table 1: Table detailing contrasting views on the variation grouping in Bach's Passacaglia

⁴⁹ David Mulbury, "Bach's 'Passacaglia' in C Minor: Notes Regarding Its Background, Essence, and Performance — Part II" *Bach* 3, no. 3 (1972): 14–15, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41639861>.

⁵⁰ Wei-Chun Liao, "A Study of Musical Rhetoric in J. S. Bach's Organ Fugues BWV 546, 552.2, 577, and 582", DMA diss. (University of Cincinnati, 2015), 64, <http://ezproxy.uct.ac.za/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/study-musical-rhetoric-j-s-bachs-organ-fugues-bwv/docview/1729486708/se-2>.

Chapter Four: Rheinberger and the Passacaglia

Josef Rheinberger's contribution to the Passacaglia genre lies in the fourth and final movement of the Organ Sonata No. 8 in E Minor, Op. 132. The three movements which precede the passacaglia are the first movement, Praeludium, which features an *adagio* introduction in E minor which ends on a dominant chord followed by a fugue; the second movement, titled Intermezzo, in E major; and the third movement, Scherzo, in A minor. The third movement possesses a vigour that emulates the scherzo found in Beethoven's symphonies by intensifying the melodic and rhythmic action to a climax before the coda.⁵¹ After the enharmonic changes, which take the movement back to A minor, the pedal A in bars 177 and 178 is followed by two linking chords (the second being a dominant seventh of E minor) to the entry of the soft passacaglia theme in the fourth movement.⁵² Rheinberger presents a cyclic design for this sonata, which was common in the Romantic period, through his use of the opening theme of the first movement as a coda in the final movement. Furthermore, Rheinberger now changes the standing of the passacaglia from a monumental introduction to a fugue, as done by Bach, to a monumental climax of a sonata, in this sonata.

The theme of Rheinberger's passacaglia (figure 6) displays rhythmical similarities to Bach's Passacaglia. This rhythmical connection is seen strongly in the first six bars of Rheinberger's passacaglia. In addition to its connections with the preceding passacaglias, this passacaglia theme, in its simplicity and natural harmonic variety,

⁵¹ G. Fredrick Guzasky, "The Organ Sonatas of Josef Gabriel Rheinberger: Variety in Formal Approach" (DMus Diss., Boston University, 1997), 120. <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/organ-sonatas-josef-gabriel-rheinberger-variety/docview/304331496/se-2?accountid=14500>.

⁵² Felix Aprahamian, "The Organ Sonata of Josef Rheinberger", *The Organ* 93, no. 367 (Feb. 2014): 35.

first modulates to its relative major in bar two. Additionally, the notes E–A and D–B suggest D and G major harmonies.⁵³



Figure 6: The theme of Rheinberger's Passacaglia

Rheinberger's various organ sonatas contain several examples which support the influence of Bach in his organ compositional output. This is seen in the first four opening bars of Sonata No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 27 which has identical features to the first five opening bars of Bach's Prelude in E Minor, BWV 548. Sonata No. 11 in D Minor, Op. 148 (first movement, bars 209–212) has triplet figures similar to those found in bars 4–11 of the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565. Sonata No. 10 in B Minor, Op. 246 shares a key, melodic shape and rhythmical movement with the Allemande of Bach's French Suite No. 3 in B Minor, BWV 814. Lastly, the first subject of the fugal fourth movement of the Organ Sonata No. 13 in G \flat major, Op. 161 shares a similar melodic contour in addition to evoking the nobility and melancholy of the Toccata and Fugue in D ('Dorian'), BWV 538.⁵⁴

Variation three displays a strong likeness to the first variation of Bach's Passacaglia (figure 7). Furthermore, both composers present a syncopated manual in answer to the subject in the bass and retain a common rhythmical motif throughout (figure 8); Bach, however, ties the first two quavers and the quaver and crotchet which follows

⁵³ Harvey Grace, "No. 8 in E Minor, Op. 32," in *The Organ Works of Rheinberger* (London: Novello, 1925), 36.

⁵⁴ G. Fredrick Guzasky, "The Organ Sonatas of Josef Gabriel Rheinberger: Variety in Formal Approach" (DMus Diss., Boston University, 1997), 18–22. <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/organ-sonatas-josef-gabriel-rheinberger-variety/docview/304331496/se-2?accountid=14500>.

thereafter and Rheinberger too ties the first two quavers but differs by not having a tie between the quaver and crotchet thereafter.

The image shows two musical excerpts. The top excerpt is for Rheinberger's Passacaglia Variation three, in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a complex texture with multiple voices in both hands, including sixteenth-note patterns and ties. The bottom excerpt is for Bach's Passacaglia Variation one, in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb). It features a more straightforward texture with a prominent bass line and a treble line with sixteenth-note patterns.

Rheinberger's Passacaglia Variation three

Bach's Passacaglia Variation one

Figure 7: Excerpts of Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation three and Bach's Passacaglia variation one

The image shows two rhythmic motifs. The top motif is for Bach's Passacaglia variation one, consisting of a quarter note, a beamed eighth note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The bottom motif is for Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation three, consisting of a quarter note, a beamed eighth note, a quarter note, and a quarter note, with a tie between the first two notes.

Bach's Passacaglia variation one: rhythmical motif

Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation three: rhythmical motif

Figure 8: Rhythmical motifs in Rheinberger and Bach's passacaglias

Variation five shows similarities to variation ten of Bach’s Passacaglia. In both these variations (figure 9), the composers have a part in the manuals that occasionally have rhythmical values that match the pedal part as it accompanies a moving line. In the Rheinberger variation, the moving line is represented as a triplet pattern (1:3), and in the Bach variation it is expressed as a semiquaver pattern (1:4).

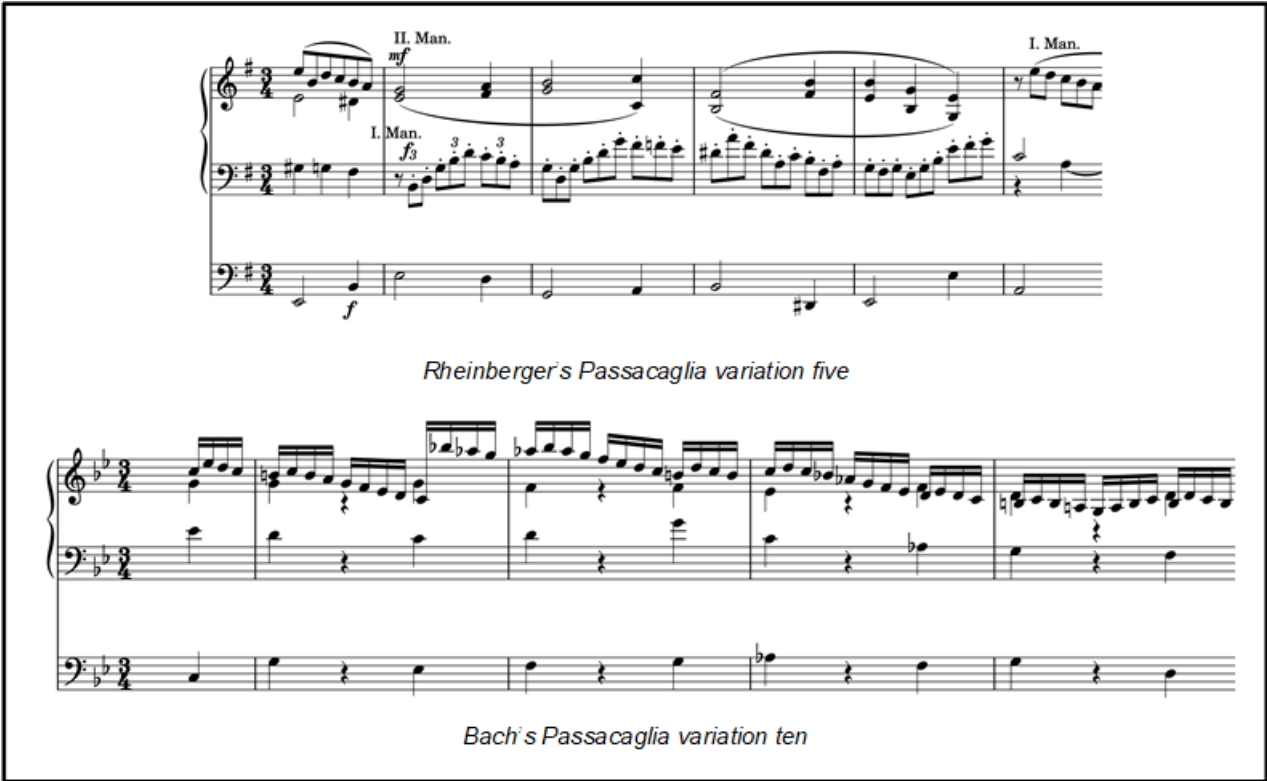


Figure 9: Excerpts from Rheinberger’s Passacaglia variation five and Bach’s Passacaglia variation ten

Variation seven shows similarities to variation 11 of Bach’s Passacaglia, where both variations have a reduction in the texture and the theme appearing in the upper voice of the manuals (figure 10). However, Rheinberger includes a brief embellishment within the upper voice of his variation.

The image contains two musical excerpts. The top excerpt is for Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation seven, featuring two manuals (I. Man. and II. Man.) and a pedal line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The bottom excerpt is for Bach's Passacaglia variation 11, featuring a single manual and a pedal line. The key signature is two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 3/4.

Figure 10: Excerpts from Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation seven and Bach's Passacaglia variation 11

The image shows the musical score for Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation eight. It features a single manual (I. Man.) and a pedal line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes a triplet in the right hand and a forte (f) dynamic marking in the left hand.

Figure 11: Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation eight

After a brief absence of the pedal throughout variation seven, variation eight brings back the pedal in C major (figure 11). This variation is the only instance throughout the passacaglia where a variation moves into a different key. However, Rheinberger cadences the variation in E minor in keeping with the preceding variations and the rest which follow thereafter.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Warren Roy Canfield, "A Study of the Organ Works of Josef Gabriel Rheinberger" (DMA Diss., University of Miami, 1995), 76.

Variation 11 displays similarities to variation four of Bach’s Passacaglia through the use of rhythm (table 2). Table 2 illustrates the two rhythmic motifs as used by both composers use and one rhythmic motif, which differs on the last beat of the motif.







Rheinberger, Variation 11	Bach, Variation 4
	
	
	

Table 2: Rhythmic motif comparison between Rheinberger’s Passacaglia variation 11 and Bach’s Passacaglia variation four

Variations 17 to 19 present themselves as an intermezzo after several busy variations with semiquaver patterns. This intermezzo retains the theme throughout, but extends the rhythmic values in each variation in the manuals without the pedal (figure 12).

The image displays three musical excerpts from Rheinberger's Passacaglia, each with a right-hand and left-hand staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

- Excerpt 17:** Shows a complex, flowing right-hand melody with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes.
- Excerpt 18:** Features a right-hand melody marked *legatissimo* (legatissimo) and *p* (piano). The left hand has a more active role with eighth-note patterns.
- Excerpt 19:** Shows a right-hand melody with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. The left hand has a more active role with eighth-note patterns.

Figure 12: Excerpts of Rheinberger's Passacaglia variations 17, 18 and 19 and his rhythmic treatment of the theme in the manuals

The triplet motif in variation 21 is similar to that in variation 17 of Bach's Passacaglia (figure 13). In Rheinberger's Passacaglia, he uses a three-voiced structure in the manuals, whereas Bach uses a two-voiced structure in the manuals. Ultimately, both composers retain the passacaglia theme in the pedal.

Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation 21

Bach's Passacaglia variation 17

Figure 13: The triplet motif in Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation 21 and Bach's Passacaglia variation 17

Rheinberger's variation 22 (figure 14) draws another likeness to variation 11 (figure 5) of Bach's Passacaglia. Rheinberger presents this variation in three voices with the theme in the upper voice in the manuals in a rolling triplet semiquaver pattern serving as an accompaniment without the pedal; Bach, however, too, excludes the pedal and has his theme in the upper voice of the manuals, but within two voices.

Figure 14: Rheinberger's Passacaglia variation 22

In variation 23 (figure 15), Rheinberger harmonises the theme, which creates grandiosity in conjunction with the dynamics. This grandiosity continues into variation 24 (figure 15), which returns the theme to the pedal, with the manuals presenting an answer to the pedal with matching chords in both hands.



Figure 15: Rheinberger's Passacaglia variations 23 and 24

The passacaglia movement concludes with a recall of motifs from the first movement of the sonata. The connection between the Passacaglia and Introduction movements is made stronger with a brief recall and extraction of the Introduction's opening quartad; however, it is without the F \sharp in bar 120 before the entry of variation 15 (figure 16). Furthermore, just as Bach had connected a fugue to his passacaglia by reusing the passacaglia theme as the theme for the fugue too, Rheinberger does likewise through the connection of an earlier movement (Introduction) as the conclusion of his passacaglia.

The image displays two musical excerpts. The top excerpt, labeled "Rheinberger's Passacaglia bar 120", shows a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains a series of chords, while the bass staff features a continuous, rhythmic pattern of chords. The bottom excerpt, labeled "The opening bars of Rheinberger's Introduction from Sonata No. 8", shows a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The treble staff features a complex, rhythmic pattern of chords, while the bass staff features a continuous, rhythmic pattern of chords. Both excerpts are in E minor and 3/4 time.

Figure 16: A comparison between Rheinberger's Passacaglia bar 120 and the Introduction movement of Sonata No. 8 in E Minor

In addition to specific variations having similar features to those of Bach, Rheinberger's Passacaglia structure can also be seen as having two separate halves. Variation 12 possesses the notion of it being the end of the first section of the movement not only because of its relative position to 24, but also for further reasons. The theme ceases to be in the pedal throughout variation 13 until its re-entry in variation 14, which is marked with a fortissimo. The variations preceding variation 12 also carry a continuous pattern of quavers, eventually becoming demisemiquavers combined with quavers, which act as a decoration above the theme in variation ten. Variation 11 introduces a semiquaver pattern, which propels the music in conjunction with a *forte* dynamic marking and a V^7 at the start of the variation. These two variations (10 and 11) act as a prelude in conjunction with variation 12 to bring in variation 13, which now has a thinner texture. The successive variations of variation 12 present syncopated motifs

and majestic and virtuosic flourishes, ultimately providing a drive towards the end of the passacaglia movement.

Variation	Dynamic	Theme Position
1	<i>p</i>	Pedal
2	<i>mf</i>	Pedal
3	<i>f</i>	Pedal
4	<i>mf</i>	Pedal
5	<i>mf / f</i>	Pedal
6	<i>f</i>	Pedal
7	<i>f</i>	Manual – Soprano
8	<i>f</i>	Manual – Soprano
9	<i>ff</i>	Pedal
10	<i>mf</i>	Manual – Alto
11	<i>f</i>	Pedal
12	<i>f</i>	Pedal
13	<i>f</i>	Manual – Tenor
14	<i>ff</i>	Pedal
15	<i>ff</i>	Pedal
16	<i>ff</i>	Pedal
17	<i>mf</i>	
18	<i>p</i>	Manual – Tenor
19	<i>pp</i>	Manual – Bass
20	<i>ff</i>	Pedal
21	<i>ff</i>	Pedal
22	<i>f</i>	Manual – Soprano
23	<i>ff</i>	Manual – Soprano
24	<i>ff</i>	Pedal

Table 3: Table detailing dynamic and theme position in Rheinberger's Passacaglia

Chapter Five: Reger and the Passacaglia

The reception history of Max Reger's music establishes an automatic association with his name and the organ.⁵⁶ The influence of Bach on Reger is evident in his compositional output and confirmed in the periodical *Die Musik* by his response to being questioned about the meaning of Bach to him by sharing his view that Bach is the beginning and end of all music.⁵⁷ One can assume that it is this influence that encouraged Reger to explore the compositions of Bach through transcribing several of his keyboard works for the organ, in addition to transcribing Bach's organ and chamber works for either piano solo or piano duet, four hands. Lastly, Reger's composition of five passacaglias for the organ can be seen as tangible proof of Bach's influence on his compositional style. This influence presents itself in a late-Romantic period where Reger's chromatic style, with functions of diatonicism which include harmonic progression and phrase structure, remains operative.⁵⁸

Suite in E Minor, Op. 16 (Movement IV – Passacaglia)

After his studies with German musicologist and theorist, Hugo Riemann, Reger completed the composition of his Suite No. 1, Op. 16, in 1895 with the inscription '*Den Manen Johann Sebastian Bachs*' (To the Memory of Johann Sebastian Bach).⁵⁹ The suite's concluding movement took the form of a passacaglia. After Reger's completion of Op. 16, he reported the passacaglia to Riemann, taking great pride in having not disappointed his former teacher for including a passacaglia in his suite. He compared

⁵⁶ Christopher S. Anderson, "Max Reger" in *Twentieth-Century Organ Music* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 78.

⁵⁷ Christopher S. Anderson, "On Johann Sebastian Bach" in *Selected Writing of Max Reger* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 81–82.

⁵⁸ Walter Frisch, "The Music of Max Reger" *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (2004): 629.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600980>.

⁵⁹ Walter Frisch, "Reger's Historicist Modernism" *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (2004): 740,
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600985>.

his passacaglia with its 32 variations (the final version having 29 variations) on the theme to Bach's Passacaglia with its 21 variations on the theme. Reger's passacaglia theme is stylistically and rhythmically very reminiscent of Bach's Passacaglia. However, the theme stands out from Bach's in relation to the tension which is present in the irregular seven-bar structure of the theme. Through Reger's use of the Baroque form, he created an opportunity for the contrapuntal voices to increase in freedom and virtuosity above the constant ostinato bass.⁶⁰

Reger's suite does not solely suggest links to Bach, but also to Rheinberger's Organ Sonata No. 8 in E Minor, Op. 132 (1882). The two works not only share similarities in tonality but they are also closely linked in structure: Both have first movements which contain an Introduction and Fugue, a second or slow movement titled 'Intermezzo' and a passacaglia finale. Other similarities include both introductions beginning on a tonic pedal point, followed by dissonant chromatic chords and scalar flourishes (figure 17);

The opening bars of Reger's Introduction, Op. 16

The opening bars of Rheinberger's Introduction, Op. 132

The image contains two musical score excerpts. The top excerpt is for Reger's Introduction, Op. 16, showing the first few bars of the introduction in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a right-hand part with chords and a left-hand part with a constant bass line. The bottom excerpt is for Rheinberger's Introduction, Op. 132, also in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp. It shows a similar structure with a right-hand part of chords and a left-hand part of a constant bass line. Both excerpts are marked with 'ff' (fortissimo).

Figure 17: Excerpts of the Introductions of Reger' Op. 16 and Rheinberger's Op. 132

⁶⁰ Susanne Popp, "Den Manen Bachs – Orgelsuite op. 16" in *Max Reger: Werk Statt Leben: Biographie* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2017), 90.

the principal fugue themes being close in shape and the material from the introduction being brought back at the conclusion of the passacaglia.⁶¹

In variation one, Reger introduces the music with a more pseudo-polyphonic style, similar to Rheinberger's variation one (figure 18), as opposed to the homophonic style that Bach would have employed.

The image displays two musical excerpts side-by-side. The top excerpt is for Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation one, featuring a treble and bass staff with a piano (pp) dynamic marking. The bottom excerpt is for Rheinberger's Passacaglia, Op. 132 variation one, also in treble and bass staves with a piano (p) dynamic marking. Both pieces are in 3/4 time and G major.

Figure 18: The pseudo-polyphonic treatment in Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation one and Rheinberger's Passacaglia, Op. 132 variation one

The influence of Bach in the variations is evident in variation ten of Reger's Passacaglia. Here, Reger rhythmically inverts the rhythms found in the manuals of Bach's fourth variation of the passacaglia (figure 19).

⁶¹ Walter Frisch, "Reger's Bach and Historicist Modernism" *Nineteenth Century Music* 25, no. 2/3 (2001), 303. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/regers-bach-historicist-modernism/docview/200279047/se-2?accountid=14500>
https://uct.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=27UCT_INST&vid=27UCT_INST:27UCT&?genre=article&issn=01482076&title=Reger%2527s+Bach+and+Historicist+Modernism&volume=25&issue=2%252F3&date=Fall+2001%252F2002&atitle=Reger%2527s+Bach+and+Historicist+Modernism&spage=296&sid=ProQ%253Aiimpft&author=Frisch.

The image shows two musical excerpts. The top excerpt is Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation ten, in 3/4 time, marked *marcato*. It features a complex, rhythmic melody in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The bottom excerpt is Bach's Passacaglia variation four, in 3/4 time, featuring a more melodic right hand and a simple eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand.

Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation ten

Bach's Passacaglia variation four

Figure 19: Rhythmic inversion in Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation ten and Bach's Passacaglia variation four

Reger's Passacaglia variation 22 shares characteristics similar to those of Bach's Passacaglia variation 11 (figure 20). In both cases, the theme is presented in the upper voice of the manuals, accompanied by a moving pattern that omits the pedal, thus creating a variation with a two-part texture.

The image shows two musical excerpts. The top excerpt is Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation 22, in 3/4 time, marked *f a tempo*. It features a melodic right hand and a complex, moving accompaniment in the left hand. The bottom excerpt is Bach's Passacaglia variation 11, in 3/4 time, featuring a melodic right hand and a simple eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand.

Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation 22

Bach's Passacaglia variation 11

Figure 20: Excerpts of Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation 22 and Bach's Passacaglia variation 11 having textural similarities.

The pedal part of Reger's Passacaglia variation 27 resembles the pedal part of Bach's Passacaglia variation 18 (figure 21). In both works, the composers present the theme in the pedal and include a preceding unaccented non-chordal note.

Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation 27

Bach's Passacaglia variation 18

Figure 21: Excerpts from Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation 27, and Bach's Passacaglia variation 18 which shares similar thematic treatment in the pedal

Rheinberger's influence returns in variation 29 of Reger's Passacaglia through the use of a majestic chordal variation to mark the end of the movement (figure 22). Though Rheinberger's ending does not use a variation but rather brings back the motifs of the first movement, at the end of the flourishes he ends with a majestic progression of chords.

The image displays two musical excerpts. The first excerpt, titled "Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 variation 29", consists of three staves. The top two staves are for the right hand, with the first staff marked "I. Man." and "Volles Werk", and the second staff marked "I. Man." and "+32 Volles Werk". The bottom staff is for the left hand. The music is in 3/4 time and E minor. The second excerpt, titled "The closing bars of Rheinberger's Passacaglia, Op. 132", consists of two staves. The top staff is for the right hand, marked "riten.", and the bottom staff is for the left hand. The music is in 3/4 time and E minor.

Figure 22: The final variation of Reger's Passacaglia, Op. 16 and the final bars of Rheinberger's Passacaglia, Op. 132

Introduction, Passacaglia & Fugue in E Minor, Op. 127

In 1913, after almost ten years had passed since his last composition for organ (Four Preludes and Fugues, Op. 85), Reger completed the Introduction, Passacaglia & Fugue, Op. 127. In addition to being characterised by a simple and transparent structure, Op. 127 represents the significant development Reger had gained in his

When considering similar traits to the passacaglias of Bach and Rheinberger, Reger too structures a passacaglia which can be divided into two sections. The first of the two sections is found between the theme and the 13th variation. Within this section a development is seen from a resting state to a climax between the 8th and the 10th variations as suggested by the dynamic indications (Theme – 7th variation: *ppp*; 8th – 13th variation: *f – pp*). The second section, beginning at variation 14, returns to a pianississimo dynamic, similar to the start of the first section. The chordal structure of the variation is characterised as a ‘resting point’, which also supports the suggestion of the beginning of the second section.⁶⁶

Reger connects the theme of the fugue with the passacaglia theme (figure 24) – a feature which has been identified with Bach’s Passacaglia. In Reger’s fugal theme, he changes the gestures to be more graceful and chamber music-like and ultimately relates the chromaticism (marked as ‘a’ in Figure 24) more clearly to E minor.⁶⁷

Passacaglia:

Fugue:

Figure 24: Weyer's identification of the links between Reger's Passacaglia and Fugue, Op. 127⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Haupt, “Max Regers symphonisches Orgelschaffen – Introduction, Passacaglia und Fuge, p. 127”, 230

⁶⁷ Weyer, “Die großen Spätwerke”, 118.

⁶⁸ Weyer, “Die großen Spätwerke”, 118.

In the subject entry of every passacaglia composed by Reger, there is a link to the subject entry of Bach's Passacaglia. In each of the five passacaglias by Reger, he presents and retains an impassive, unaccompanied bass opening still presented as two phrases within a single idea (figure 25).⁶⁹

Bach, Passacaglia in C Minor, BWV 582	
Reger, Passacaglia from <i>Suite for Organ in E Minor</i> , Op. 16	
Reger, Passacaglia in D Minor	
Reger, Passacaglia in F Minor from <i>Monologe</i> , Op. 63	
Reger, Passacaglia (in F# Minor) from <i>Organ Sonata No. 1</i> , Op. 33	
Reger, Passacaglia in E Minor, Op. 127	

Figure 25: Comparison of entries between Bach's Passacaglia and Reger's Passacaglia

⁶⁹ Harrison, "Max Reger Introduces Atonal Expressionism," 676.

Other Passacaglias by Reger

Introduction and Passacaglia in D Minor

Completed in 1899, the Introduction and Passacaglia in D Minor has a design which is similar to Bach's Passacaglia through the incorporation of gradual rhythmic acceleration and textural thickening in the variations as it achieves an intensification and climax. These similarities to Bach's Passacaglia are seen in the first four variations that follow the same rhythmic acceleration pattern as Bach: from quavers to triplets to semiquavers. The first two variations present two contrapuntal lines above the theme which is in the pedal. Variation three then introduces the triplet rhythms in a three-voiced contrapuntal texture which moves in occasional intervals of thirds and sixths while the theme remains in the pedal and variation four then introduces the semiquavers and retains a three-voice texture (now thinner) and the theme in the pedal. However, from variation five onwards, Reger detaches from the passacaglia design of Bach and begins utilising alternating chord patterns, arpeggiated chords and scalar flourishes.⁷⁰

Organ Sonata No. 1, Op. 33 (Movement III – Passacaglia)

The composition of this work began in February 1899 and was sent to Karl Straube, an organist who not only premiered several organ works of Reger, but who also had responded with comments. In the original manuscripts of the sonata's third movement, Reger renames the movement from Ciacona to Passacaglia and make substantial alterations to bars 75–88 by rewriting the two variations found within those bars.⁷¹ The theme of this passacaglia discreetly encompasses references to the theme of the first

⁷⁰ Don Michael Bedford, "Healey Willan's Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue: English style with German overtones, with three recitals of selected works by L. Vierne, J.S. Bach, F. Mendelssohn, W. Piston, V. Persichetti, and others" (DMA diss., University of North Texas, 1998), 43 – 45.

⁷¹ Sonata in F sharp Minor op. 33 for organ, "Reger-Werkausgabe" https://www.reger-werkausgabe.de/mri_work_00034.html.

and second movement (figure 3), each of these themes contains the interval collection: 2+5+2+2+3+2 (figure 26).

Bar 14 of the first movement of Op. 33

Bar 22 of the second movement of Op. 33

Passacaglia theme of the third movement of Op. 33

Figure 26: The link of Op. 33's Passacaglia theme to themes present in preceding movements⁷²

Monologe – 12 Stücke für Orgel, Op. 63

Composed in 1902, Reger's *Monologe*, Op. 63, which is set out as twelve pieces for the organ as the title suggests, is divided into three 'hefte' (translated as notebooks). In the second notebook (numbers five to eight) pieces titled *Introduktion*, *Passacaglia*, *Ave Maria* and *Fantasie* are found. Once again, Reger pairs a passacaglia with a preceding introduction movement similar to the Introduction and Passacaglia in D Minor. Furthermore, the connection between the two movements is made stronger by them being the only movements with similar keys of F minor (*Ave Maria* being in A major and *Fantasie* being in C major). The passacaglia movement contains 19 variations and begins with a pianississimo that incrementally crescendos to a

⁷² Martin Weyer, "Max Regers Orgelsonaten", in *Die Deutsche Orgelsonate von Mendelssohn bis Reger* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1969), 153.

fortissimo over the six successive variations which follow the theme – a feature he has used since the composition of Op. 16, and which Rheinberger had also included in his Op. 132.⁷³ In conjunction with the rhythmic movement in the first seven variations, starting from a minim and crotchet to semiquavers, Reger maintains a linear pseudo-polyphony in the early variations, as opposed to Bach who would commence more homophonically. From the eighth variation, Reger continues with the semiquaver movement and returns to a pianissimo with a diminuendo which starts within the seventh variation.⁷⁴ Though Reger attempts to establish his creative output towards the Passacaglia genre, traces of Bach's influence still exist. Such an example can be seen in the 11th variation, where Reger utilises triplet figures similar to Bach's Passacaglia variation 17, both occurring in manuals with the theme in the pedal.

⁷³ Martin Weyer, "Die Sammlungen freier Stücke" in *Die Orgelwerke: Max Reger* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel, 1989), 164.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

Chapter Six: Joubert and the Passacaglia

John Joubert was born in Cape Town in 1927 to a father who did clerical work as a profession and a mother who was a piano teacher. Joubert's mother studied the piano under tutelage of Harriet Cohen at the South African College of Music (SACM) while it was under the direction of the English composer, William Henry Bell.⁷⁵ It is his mother's exposure to music which would encourage and expose Joubert to discover his musical abilities. While completing his schooling at Bishops Diocesan College ("Bishops"), an Anglican school for boys in Cape Town, Joubert received his music theoretical education from Dr Claude Brown. After completing school, Joubert confidently decided to become a composer and followed in his mother's footsteps by studying composition with Bell at the South African College of Music. During his studies at the SACM, a competitive scholarship for a two-year study period in the United Kingdom caught the Joubert's attention and was awarded to him at the discretion of the director of the SACM at that time, Dr Eric Chisholm. This led Joubert to the Royal Academy of Music, London, to study composition under Theodore Holland and Howard Ferguson.⁷⁶

Joubert's enrolment at Bishops, with its strong connection to the Anglican Church, suggests an influence of church music on Joubert, as seen in his organ compositions, which vary from preludes and reflections to chorale preludes on hymn tunes, in addition to the Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, Op. 35. In their publication in celebration of Joubert's 90th birthday, Novello Publications, who have been responsible for publishing

⁷⁵ Stephanus Miller, "‘Nothing's straightforward, I'm afraid': An Interview with John Joubert at his Home at 63 School Road, Birmingham, 12 January 2001" *South African Society for Research in Music* 39, no. 1 (2019): 240.

⁷⁶ Niël Geldenhuys, "John Joubert as a personification: personalia" *Musicus* 35, no. 2 (2007): 123.

the works of Joubert, provided a catalogue of his of sacred choral music, most of which were linked to Anglican Church Music.

When comparing Joubert's Passacaglia with Bach's Passacaglia, Joubert composes his Passacaglia in C minor and retains the standard Baroque conventions of setting the work in triple time and at a slow tempo through the indication of *andante con moto* at the start of the passacaglia. In his analysis of Joubert's Passacaglia and Fugue, Roger Buczynski⁷⁷ divides the passacaglia into five sections based on the development of the motif and dynamics (table four). Joubert's use of dynamics can be seen as a link to Rheinberger, who also uses dynamics as an indication of the beginning or end of a section.

Section	A			B				C	D		E				
Variation	Theme	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Coda
Dynamic	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>mp</i>	<i>mf - f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>cresc.</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>pp</i>
No. of Parts	1	3	3	4	4	4	5	1 & 3	3	3	4	5	5	5	5

Table 4: Buczynski's table detailing the divisions of Joubert's Passacaglia

Section A

The theme of the passacaglia (figure 27) consists of ten pitches, which are based on a partial chromatic scale.



Figure 27: The Passacaglia theme of Op. 35

⁷⁷ Roger Andrew Buczynski, "Analysis of Contrapuntal Style in South African Instrumental Works," (Masters diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1983).

When regarding D \sharp and E \flat as two separate degrees, it changes the pitch count to eleven pitches, which is suggested to be derived from 12 pitches that would form part of a fully chromatic scale on C. However, the inclusion of D-sharp rules out the suggestion that the theme is based on the C minor chromatic scale.⁷⁸ The eight bar theme with its four elided phrases, suggests a succession of chords through each of the eight bars in a structure as follows (with the alterations relating to the key of C minor):

$$\begin{array}{cccc}
 \text{c:} & \text{I}^7 - \text{III} - \text{III}^7 - \text{V} - \text{VI}^7 - \text{VII} - \text{V} - \text{II} - \text{I}^7 \\
 & \# & \#\# & \#\# & \flat \# \\
 & 7 & 2\ 3 & 4\ 7 & 2\ 7
 \end{array}$$

The theme's melodic line is structured using ascending major sevenths in bars 1, 2, and 5 and descending fifths in bars 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8. The theme's climax occurs in bar 5 on the G, which presents itself as a tonic accent. Furthermore, the ostinato incorporates a consistent rhythm of a crotchet followed by a minim.

In variation one, Joubert maintains the theme in its original form in the pedal within a three-part contrapuntal structure. The second variation has rhythmical similarities to variation four of Bach's Passacaglia (figure 28). In addition to the rhythmical similarities, both variations utilise an anapaest norm, which sees the third note of the motif as the most important. Furthermore, the two variations also make use of imitative counterpoint between the voices.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 7.

Joubert, Passacaglia variation two

Bach, Passacaglia variation four

Figure 28: Two excerpts of Joubert and Bach's passacaglias with rhythmical similarities.

Section B

The rhythm (figure 29) is a defining characteristic of this section. In variation three, the arpeggiated chordal structure suggests the beginning of the second section. These arpeggiated chordal patterns alternate between the treble and bass staves of the manual parts, and the rhythmically accentuated dyads that maintain an interval distance of a fourth throughout the variation alternate with the arpeggiated chordal patterns (figure 29). The chord succession in this variation furthermore stresses the relationship of a third between the manual staves as seen in the starting pitches of each bar. This relationship is detailed as follows:

	b. 25	b. 26	b. 27	b. 28	b. 29	b. 30	b. 31	b. 32
RH	A \flat	B	C	E \flat (D \sharp)	E	E \flat	E \flat	E \flat
LH	C	G	E	B	A \flat (G \sharp)	G	G	G

Table 5: Starting pitches of Joubert's Passacaglia bars 25–32 displaying the interval relationship of a third.

In variation four, there is an overlapping of the previous variation's motivic material and the new motivic material. The new motivic material has a varied inversion in the upper and lower staves of the manual parts, which is derived from the previous variation's arpeggiated chordal patterns. The patterns in the manual staves therefore move in contrary motion with each other.⁷⁹ Variation five continues to utilise the rhythmical aspects of the motifs found in variation three. However, the rhythm motif (figure 29) makes a harmonic change to its prior occurrences, and the motif is now harmonically inverted but it remains treated as dyads (figure 29). Variation six (figure 29) retains the rhythmic pattern at the start of the variation but it is now presented as a pedal point through a quartad, which promotes a textural thickening of parts.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.



The rhythm which appears throughout Section B



The opening bars of variation three



Variation five with the inverted dyad rhythms



Variation six with its pedal point

Figure 29: The rhythmical motif present in Joubert's Passacaglia variations three, five and six.

Section C

Section C consists primarily of variation seven (figure 30), which presents itself as the end of the first half of the passacaglia. As mentioned previously, Bach utilises the Neapolitan Sixth chord to indicate the end of the first half of his passacaglia, however, Joubert recalls the theme in the manuals to create this indication. The theme is characterised by octave displacement combined with the remaining material to emphasise motoric semiquaver movement. There is also a diminution of the theme's note values with an unchanged placement of the first and second beats. Throughout this section, there is an accentuation of a predominately monolinear progression between the two staves. The contrapuntal structure of this variation comprises the frequent use of perfect fifths and minor seconds as elements which contribute to conjunct/disjunct motion. Lastly, the tonic accent on G^b''' indicates the climax of this variation.⁸¹



Figure 30: Variation seven with the theme identified

⁸¹ Ibid., 18 – 19.

Section D

Variation eight brings back the theme in the pedal in its original form, which supports the suggestion of the passacaglia being divided into two halves and variation eight therefore being the beginning of the second half of the work. Above the theme is a semiquaver broken minor third motif that ascends chromatically.

Variation nine presents an announcement of the theme in the manuals, expressed using double octaves and a further thematic elaboration through scalic patterns on the first beat of each bar. The second and third beats of the bar are sustained through double octave trills which relate to the sustained pitches in variation eight. The ascending minor third pattern in the pedal part of the variation is also a derivative of the previous variation.⁸²

Section E

Variation ten brings back the theme in the pedal in its original form. The manual parts stress the contrapuntal demi-semiquaver scale patterns derived from variations one and two in diminution. Throughout this variation, there is an extensive use of imitation with the first occurrence imitating either a fourth or second below the top voice at a crotchet beat's distance.

Variation 11 presents a final motif to be utilised in the remaining variations of the passacaglia. This syncopated motif (figure 31) with its three-part chordal structure incorporates the perfect fifth and major second intervals as constituent elements. In addition, the variation emphasises a textural five-part contrapuntal organisation with the top stave presenting alternating three-part vertical and horizontal linear structures

⁸² *Ibid.*, 21–22.

and the two bottom staves using a single contrapuntal strand each.⁸³ The organisation and contrapuntal texture used in variation eleven continue into variation twelve.

In variation 13 the syncopated motif (figure 31) is now transferred to the middle stage using fourth and fifths as constituent chordal elements. The tonic, subdominant and dominant degrees of the C minor scale function as a triple pedal point over three bars. The final three bars of the variation present an overlapping of motives previously used in the passacaglia with the theme in the bass which combines to create a two-part counterpoint.



Figure 31: Variation 11 with the syncopated motif in the upper stage

The last six bars of the passacaglia act as a coda. The middle stage maintains a sustained triple pedal point and the pedal stage has an announcement of the first two notes of the theme – C₁ and B₁^b. The B₁^b sustains to the end to create a pedal point which is a common compositional device to conclude a contrapuntal movement.⁸⁴

Following the passacaglia, Joubert includes a fugue with extensive use of contrapuntal devices such as imitation in original and inverted forms, invertible counterpoint, pedal

⁸³ Ibid., 24–26.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 28.

points and stretto.⁸⁵ In addition to the use of contrapuntal devices, Joubert bases the first subject of the fugue on the passacaglia theme (figure 32).



Figure 32: Fugue subject from Joubert's Fugue, Op. 35

In addition to this, Joubert recalls the passacaglia theme in bars 159–176 (figure 33), thus strengthening the suggestion of having been influenced by Bach's Passacaglia. However, Joubert's fugue contains chromatic alteration and instances of stressing chromaticism within the sequential scale passages.



Figure 33: Excerpt of bars 159–176 in Joubert's Fugue, Op. 35 with the theme from the Passacaglia

⁸⁵ Ibid., 223.

Chapter Seven: Van Wyk and the Passacaglia

Born in Kimberley in 1974, Theodore (also known as Theo) van Wyk is currently an associate professor in organ studies and musicology at the University of Pretoria. He was raised in the New Apostolic Church, which contributed to his musical foundation. During his academic career, Van Wyk was first under the organ tutelage of Dr Ernst Conradie and Professor Deon Lamprecht at the Odeion School of Music (UFS), before learning with Professor Wim Viljoen at the University of Pretoria.⁸⁶ Van Wyk was the first South African and first person of colour to receive a Doctor of Music degree in organ performance at the University of Pretoria. His thesis was titled, '*Die Harmonische Seelenlust* by Georg Friedrich Kauffmann (1679–1735): a critical study of his registration indications'.⁸⁷

Van Wyk titled his passacaglia *An Eclectic Passacaglia*. The word 'eclectic' is defined as borrowing from diverse sources.⁸⁸ Van Wyk's passacaglia thus holds to the title by having a diversity of stylistic influences that contribute to shaping this work and drawing inspiration from various composers, stated to be from the early-Baroque period to contemporaries of the 21st century period. Van Wyk finds inspiration from various composers, most significantly Bach. He refers to Bach as a 'centre point' of compositions before him and which he translated into his own unique voice, and compositions directly after Bach which find his influence. Another composer whom Van Wyk holds in high regard, is Marcel Dupré whose 79 Chorales, Op. 28 served as basis for his compositional output especially when writing in an improvisatory fashion. Then

⁸⁶ The Conversation, "Theo van Wyk" <https://theconversation.com/profiles/theo-van-wyk-382388>.

⁸⁷ Theodore Justin van Wyk, "Martin Luther and the Pipe Organ: His True Sentiments Affirmed" *Vir Die Musiekleier* 37, no. 44 (2017): 127, <http://hdl.handle.net/10394/30697>.

⁸⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "eclectic (adj. & n.)" June 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9279450158>.

there is also Maurice Duruflé, particularly valued for his suggestions of registrational combinations on the organ in his works; and Henk Temmingh, a composition tutor of Van Wyk, whom he has included in his strive to promote the wider range of South African organ compositions in his performing career.⁸⁹

Van Wyk structures the theme in the traditional four-bar phrasing and begins the theme on a dominant to tonic progression, similar to Rheinberger and Reger (Op. 33, Op. 63 and Introduction and Passacaglia in D Minor).

In the first variation (figure 34), Van Wyk uses the notes A and D in a dyad as a pedal point throughout the variation to set the tonality of D minor. While having the theme in the pedal, he creates a countermelody. Through the use of extended chords, particularly the eleventh chord, in addition to the seventh chord, Van Wyk creates a dissonance to the already solemn variation.

Figure 34: Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia* variation one

⁸⁹ Theodore van Wyk in discussion with Mikyle Adams, Microsoft Teams, November 20, 2024.

The second variation (figure 35) displays a clear connection to the first variation of Rheinberger's Passacaglia, Op. 132. Both variations are written in two voices in the manuals and use rhythmical imitation between voices. In addition to this, Van Wyk draws a connection to Reger's Passacaglia in E Minor, Op. 127 by writing his variations one and two in two voices and then adding a third voice in the third variation.



Figure 35: Variation two of Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia*

In variation four (figure 36), Van Wyk moves away from a specific influence and instead employs his own design for this variation, which he states to be modal in its harmonic structure with the intention to reaffirm the theme in the key it sounds in.⁹⁰ The D Aeolian mode is suggested from bars 32³–33 with the presence and indication of a C \sharp . This is followed by the Phrygian mode from bars 34–35² with the presence of the E \flat and, lastly, an arrival to the harmonic minor from bars 34 to the end of the variation.



Figure 36: Variation four with notes which suggest modes being identified

⁹⁰Theodore van Wyk (composer of *An Eclectic Passacaglia*) in discussion with Mikyle Adams, Microsoft Teams, November 20, 2024.

In variation five (figure 37), the influence present is that of Henk Temmingh, a composer who had dedicated works to Van Wyk and from whom Van Wyk had received private composition and improvisation lessons before his (Temmingh's) retirement from the University of Pretoria. Temmingh's *Variations for Organ*, a piece which was dedicated to Van Wyk, has influences in this variation. This variation shows strong rhythmical similarities to Temmingh's fifth variation (figure 37). The pedal notes are mostly syncopated in both, and the manuals have exact rhythmical patterns. However, Van Wyk retains the passacaglia theme in the pedal as opposed to Temmingh, who has the theme in the manuals – specifically the upper voice.

(top voice *non-legato*)
 (Gt.) *f*

f

Van Wyk's 'An Eclectic Passacaglia' variation five

f legato

Temmingh's 'Variations for Organ' variation six

Figure 37: Excerpts from Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia* and Temmingh's *Variations for Organ* displaying rhythmical similarities.

In variation six (figure 38), Van Wyk illustrates the variation as being in an improvisational style with non-chordal notes and having a jazz foundation in how he

shifts the accent in the theme.⁹¹ However, there is also a strong resemblance to the tenth variation of Bach's *Passacaglia* (figure 38) in which the upper voice of the manuals has the semiquaver rhythmical pattern, the middle and lower voices of the manuals act as an accompaniment, while the pedal carries the theme, with each having a crotchet rest between two notes.

Van Wyk's 'An Eclectic Passacaglia' variation six

Bach's Passacaglia in C Minor variation ten

Figure 38: Excerpts from Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia* and Bach's *Passacaglia* displaying rhythmical similarities

In the seventh variation, Van Wyk draws influence from French composer and organist, Maurice Duruflé, through his combinational use of the strings in the manuals with a 4' flute or, in the case of *An Eclectic Passacaglia*, a choral bass in the pedal (figure 39). This variation finds its likeness in registration and pedal register to Duruflé's choral variations movement of his *Adagio, Prélude et Choral Variations on the theme 'Veni*

⁹¹ Theodore van Wyk (composer of *An Eclectic Passacaglia*) in discussion with Mikyle Adams, Microsoft Teams, November 20, 2024.

Creator, specifically the fourth variation in which Duruflé stipulates the use of strings in the manuals and a 4' flute for the pedal which carries the theme.⁹²

Van Wyk's 'An Eclectic Passacaglia' variation seven

Duruflé's 'Choral Variations on the theme "Veni Creator"' variation three

Figure 39: Excerpts from Van Wyk's Passacaglia variation seven and Duruflé's Op. 4 displaying a similar treatment of the theme in the pedal

In the eighth variation, Van Wyk draws influence from the French Romantic school (figure 40). The toccata figuration on which Van Wyk bases this variation is similar to composers of this school such as Duruflé (e.g. Toccata, Op. 5), Marcel Dupré (e.g. *Cortège et Litanie*, Op. 19) and Camille Saint-Saëns (e.g. Fantaisie No. 1). In using this figuration, Van Wyk attempts to create a bell-like sound similar to the French Romantic composers who utilise the concept as well, but in contrasting rhythmical patterns that do not ultimately interfere with the harmonic balance in the pedal.⁹³

⁹² Maurice Duruflé, "Choral Verié" in *Prélude, Adagio et Choral Verié sur le thème du Veni Creator, Op. 4 pour Orgue* (Editions Durand, 1931), 30.

⁹³ Theodore van Wyk (composer of *An Eclectic Passacaglia*) in discussion with Mikyle Adams, Microsoft Teams, November 20, 2024.

However, Van Wyk retains the theme in the pedal part and has the manuals acting as an accompaniment to that, similar to Duruflé who uses his figuration as an introduction to a later expansion of the figuration, which will have a melodic line in the pedal. In contrast, Saint-Saëns incorporates a melodic line in his use of the figuration, and Dupré presents the figuration in the concluding bars of the work, which can be seen as a coda.

The image contains four musical score excerpts, each with a title below it:

- Van Wyk's An Eclectic Passacaglia variation eight:** Shows a piano score with three staves. The top staff has a 'Sw.' (Swell) marking and 'mp' dynamic. The middle staff has a 'Gr.' (Grave) marking and 'mf a tempo' dynamic. The bottom staff is labeled '16'+8'(+8' Reed)' and 'mf legato'. The music consists of block chords in the upper registers and a simple melodic line in the bass.
- Duruflé's Toccata, Op. 5, 'Animato' section:** Shows a piano score with three staves. The music is highly rhythmic and complex, with many accidentals. The bottom staff ends with a 'fff' dynamic marking.
- Saint-Saëns Fantaisie No. 1:** Shows a piano score with three staves. The top staff has 'm.d.' (mezzo-dolce) and '(simile)' markings. The middle staff has 'p' (piano) dynamic. The bottom staff has 'm.g.' (mezzo-grave) dynamic. The music features block chords in the upper registers and a melodic line in the bass.
- Dupré's Cortège et Litanie, Op. 19:** Shows a piano score with three staves. The top staff has '(Full)' and 'fff' (fortissimo) markings. The music is highly rhythmic and complex, with many accidentals. The bottom staff has a simple melodic line.

Figure 40: The 'bell-like' feature in Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia* variation eight, Duruflé's *Toccata* 'Animato' section, Saint-Saëns' *Fantaisie No. 1* and Dupré's *Cortège et Litanie*, Op. 19

In variation nine (figure 41), Van Wyk employs invigoration from Dupré's *Variations sur un Noël* (figure 41); however, he writes it for both hands instead of having it in the upper voice.⁹⁴ This triplet pattern is also seen in Bach's *Passacaglia* in variation 17 (figure 41), where he also has the triplet rhythm pattern mostly in both hands in the variation over the theme in the pedal.

The figure contains three musical excerpts, each with a title below it:

- Top excerpt:** Van Wyk's 'An Eclectic Passacaglia' variation nine. It features a piano score with a treble clef staff (labeled 'Ch.' and 'Ch. : 8'+2' Flutes') and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a complex melodic line with triplet markings (3) and a 'mf' dynamic. The bass staff has a 'mf legato' marking and a '16'+8'+4'' annotation.
- Middle excerpt:** Dupré's 'Variations sur un Noël' variation five. It shows a piano score with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff has a 'pp' dynamic and features a prominent triplet pattern in the upper voice.
- Bottom excerpt:** Bach's 'Passacaglia in C minor' variation 17. It consists of a piano score with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff has a triplet pattern, and the bass staff has a steady, rhythmic accompaniment.

Figure 41: Excerpts from Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia* variation nine, Dupré's *Variations sur un Noël* variation five, and Bach's *Passacaglia* variation 17, which utilise similar triplet patterns

⁹⁴ Theodore van Wyk (composer of *An Eclectic Passacaglia*) in discussion with Mikyle Adams, Microsoft Teams, November 20, 2024.

Figure 42: Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia* variation ten

In variation ten (figure 42), Van Wyk intends to expose the theme through imitation. The variation uses polyrhythms (3:2) in the middle voices, while the outer voices carry the theme in what he describes as a canon.⁹⁵

Variation 11 shows similarities to Reger's *Passacaglia in D Minor* (figure 43). Van Wyk uses the alternating of manuals as a device to create an echo effect over the theme, which is now broken up into smaller note values while still maintaining the harmonic momentum and melodic aspect of the passacaglia.

Figure 43: Excerpts of Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia* variation 11 and Reger's *Passacaglia in D Minor* variation six

⁹⁵ Theodore van Wyk (composer of *An Eclectic Passacaglia*) in discussion with Mikyle Adams, Microsoft Teams, December 04, 2024.

Van Wyk also draws inspiration from Franz Schmidt, a contemporary of Rheinberger, who used this figuration in his compositions.⁹⁶

In the subsequent three variations (12, 13 and 14), Van Wyk employs his unique creative mark. In variation 12, the passacaglia theme is written as octaves in the upper voices of the manuals and is marked to be played as a solo through the use of appropriate stops. Once again, Van Wyk emphasises the importance of the theme while everything else is featured as a decoration. The pedal has a chromatic scale from the lowest D (D₁) on the pedal board to the highest. In variation 13, the tempo is not influenced, but rather, the rhythmical complexity is juxtaposed with demisemi-quavers, semi-quavers, and quavers in the manuals while the theme is returned in the pedal. In variation 14, Van Wyk, through the influence of Louis Vierne, presents brilliant figurations that are chordal-based but broken up into arpeggios.⁹⁷

In the final variation of *An Eclectic Passacaglia*, Van Wyk draws on the style of Reger's passacaglia compositions, particularly of those found in the Organ Suite No. 1, Op. 16 and the Organ Sonata No. 1, Op. 33. After remaining in the minor key for 14 variations, Van Wyk too changes to the key of D major. Furthermore, to emphasise the arrival to end of the work throughout the last variation Van Wyk stipulates *largamente* in the variations preceding bar. The theme has also modulated to D major, and the top notes in the pedal part give emphasis to what the theme is. Van Wyk describes the ending of this variation as a relief after all the strenuous harmonies.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Theodore van Wyk (composer of *An Eclectic Passacaglia*) in discussion with Mikyle Adams, Microsoft Teams, November 20, 2024.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Theodore van Wyk (composer of *An Eclectic Passacaglia*) in discussion with Mikyle Adams, Microsoft Teams, December 04, 2024.

Though Van Wyk provides instances of compositional influence in his interview on *An Eclectic Passacaglia*, additional similarities or links to composers explored in the chapters preceding this chapter have been found (table 6). Due to the nature of this work, which derives its variations from previous styles, the findings investigated independently thus enhance those of that which were presented by Van Wyk in the interview.

Variation	Dynamic (Theme)	Influencing material
1	<i>pp</i>	OWN
2	<i>p</i>	Rheinberger, Passacaglia, Op. 132: V. 1 Reger, Op. 127: V. 1
3	<i>p</i>	OWN
4	<i>mf</i>	OWN
5	<i>f</i>	Temmingh, <i>Variations for Organ</i> : V. 6
6	<i>mf/p</i>	Bach, Passacaglia: V. 10
7	<i>pp/p</i>	Durufle, <i>Veni Creator</i> : V.3
8	<i>mp/mf</i>	Durufle, Toccata: <i>animato</i> section Dupre Op. 26: mvmt 4 Dupre, <i>Cortege et Litanie</i> Saint-Saens – Fantasia in E-flat
9	<i>mf</i>	Dupre, <i>Variations sur un Noël</i> , V. 5 Bach, Passacaglia: V.17
10	<i>p</i>	OWN
11	<i>ff</i>	Reger, Passacaglia in D Minor: V.6
12	<i>ff</i>	OWN
13	<i>ff</i>	OWN
14	<i>ff</i>	OWN
15	<i>fff</i>	Reger, Suite, Op. 16 (bars 113–154 goes into E major, however Reger ends the piece on an E major chord) Reger, Op. 33 does an exact transition to F# major in the last variation

Table 6: Table detailing the dynamic of themes and influencing material in the variations of Van Wyk's *An Eclectic Passacaglia*

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The evidence presented in this dissertation suggests that Bach's influence does exist in each of the succeeding composers' contributions, as they built upon his contributions to the genre. This can be seen in the structure and presentation of the various passacaglia themes, the instance of rhythmical similarities between variations of Bach and subsequent composers and the choice to maintain the use of a minor key. However, the evidence also shows how composers find influence from preceding composers who have contributed to the genre. Reger is found to have structured his passacaglia similarly to Rheinberger's through adding an introduction movement; Joubert uses dynamics similarly to Rheinberger and to some extent, Reger; and Van Wyk uses various composers' contributions to the passacaglia genre and other works as an influence when composing his passacaglia. Ultimately, the composers maintain the core principles of the passacaglia while evolving with the developments in composition and instruments that have occurred over the centuries in which each composer lived. For example, Rheinberger incorporated dynamics which was made possible by the organ becoming capable of creating crescendos and decrescendos and receiving new stops which contributed towards a variation in sound and timbre.

Rheinberger proved to be the first composer who attempted to compose a passacaglia for the organ after Bach. Therefore, Bach's Passacaglia would have served as a template in Rheinberger's compositional process, as he too combined compositional enhancements which the organ was capable of in the Romantic era. In the broader musical context of Reger, strong suggestions indicate that he was influenced by Bach, as evidenced by the various transcriptions of chamber and organ works for piano. This notion is further bolstered by the dedication of his first passacaglia, from his Organ

Suite in E Minor, Op. 16, to the memory of Bach, alongside the structural addition of a fugue following the passacaglia. Reger's structural design of the passacaglia, which includes an introductory movement preceding the passacaglia, reflects the influence of Rheinberger, reinforcing the conclusion of being inspired by earlier composers of the passacaglia.

It is my strong belief that Joubert's Passacaglia would have been based on Bach's Passacaglia as seen in his choice of key, rhythmical links in variations and structure of the work itself as a passacaglia and fugue. Though Van Wyk provides insight into his compositional process and various influences for specific variations, there too are traces of earlier composers that have been identified. He also uses the ostinato bass in a similar format to the earlier composers highlighted in the preceding chapters, but he combines the influences of the past as the title dictates. Ultimately, the title of Van Wyk's Passacaglia fits the findings of this study well in the sense that each composer undertakes an eclectic approach to composing their passacaglias while still retaining the essential treatment of the ostinato throughout their passacaglias.

Though this study has investigated passacaglias for organ, the genre has been utilised in chamber music by several composers, such as Johannes Brahms, who employs a passacaglia in the final movement of his Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 98, which does not show the influence of Bach's Passacaglia, but rather that of the final movement of his cantata, *Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich*, BWV 150. In the 20th century, Benjamin Britten and Paul Hindemith may be considered composers who made notable use of the passacaglia. Britten uses the passacaglia to support accompanying material of importance, as seen in his Cello Symphony, Op. 68 and the 'Chacony' in

his String Quartet No. 2, Op. 36.⁹⁹ However, the 'Dirge' from Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Op.31, allocates the ground bass to the singer combined with a fugal accompaniment by the strings and horn, thus suggesting the influence of Bach's Passacaglia through the inclusion of a fugue. Hindemith defines the second movement of his song cycle, *Das Marienleben*, Op.27, as a passacaglia. This passacaglia theme, which strongly resembles Bach's Passacaglia, is featured in the piano accompaniment and later featured and ornamented in the singer's part. Additionally, Hindemith structures and names the third movement of his *Nobilissima Visione* as a passacaglia, where he employs contrapuntal elements in soft passages and homophonic textures in the dynamic climaxes.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Darrell Handel, "Britten's Use of the Passacaglia", *Tempo*, no. 94 (1970): 2, Handel, Darrell. "Britten's Use of the Passacaglia". *Tempo*, no. 94 (1970): 2–6. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/943210>.

¹⁰⁰ Saul B. Podolsky, "The Theme and Variations from Brahms to the Present", Masters diss., (Boston University, 1951), 62.

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Appendix A: Passacaglia Themes

Bach, Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, BWV 582



Rheinberger, Sonata No. 8 in E Minor, Op. 132: Movement IV (Passacaglia)



Reger, Suite No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 16: Movement IV (Passacaglia)



Reger, Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue in E Minor, Op. 127



Joubert, Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, Op. 32



Van Wyk, *An Eclectic Passacaglia*



Appendix B: Interview Transcripts

Date of Interview: 20 November 2024 at 18h30

Location: Conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams

Interviewer: Mikyle Adams (MA)

Interviewee: Associate Professor Theo van Wyk (TVW)

Interview Objective: Understanding the composer's creative process when composing a passacaglia for organ

Consent: The interviewee consented to be recorded and transcribed for internal use

MA Thank you. OK, let's get down to business.

OK so I just need to get your consent to record this.

TVW You are welcome to.

MA For transcription and please also don't forget to sign the participation.

TVW Yes, I will send that tomorrow as soon as I get to the office, I will scan that for you, and then I will send it to you as soon as I can.

MA OK. Thank you.

How do you define a passacaglia?

TVW Well, it's when I hear the word passacaglia I normally think of. Of course, an ostinato baseline that is repeated in its original form right through the piece

and two other characteristics that normally stood out to me when I was studying this is that it's always in a minor key and always in triple metre. Those are the things that you know if you look at passacaglias from different style periods.

Those are the three things that actually characterise the passacaglia, as far as I'm concerned.

MA OK. So with your passacaglia, you title it an Eclectic Passacaglia...

TVW An eclectic.

MA Why eclectic? Why do you use that title? An eclectic

TVW The title in itself, Mikyle sort of reflects a diverse stylistic influences that shaped the piece. You know each variation that I wrote almost draws inspiration from a specific composer, from a specific style period. And in that way sort of develop a tapestry of musical language within one piece. So I think the term eclectic would highlight this sort of blend. You know anything from the early Baroque with from Buxtehude to the romantic and obviously contemporary idioms. So eclectic in that way is an all-compassing title that as I said has been influenced by different style periods and by different composers.

MA OK. And what was your inspiration to compose this passacaglia?

TVW Well, as you know and I think I posted it on our WhatsApp group is that there was a call for composers in 2023, if I'm not mistaken, could have been earlier, but I think 2023 by Richard McVeigh, who is the Managing Director of Beauty in Sound. He's the guy with the biggest following in terms of organ on

YouTube with hundreds of thousands of followers. And he sent out a call for composers for new compositions, brand new conversations that were going to be published in a book form, and I thought, you know, I always had this idea in the back of my mind. I've played most of the staple repertoire when it comes to passacaglias, and I thought I would one day, you know, try to put something together that would encompass all of these stylistic periods, as I said, and composers. And I thought this was the perfect vehicle or platform for me to start writing something and then you know, I put this together and thank goodness out of a few 100 entries internationally, my collective basically was included in the 19 that won, and in fact, it's the final piece of the whole book and publication.

MA OK, so I I've actually, so I've obviously had a look at the passacaglia and I've also made my own notes. So you spoke about each variation being, or rather drawing on a specific style or preceding style. If I could say. Could we talk about could we go through each variation and speak about those?

TVW Yeah, sure. Look, obviously not everyone is influenced. Sometimes most of them well like most of it, some of them are my own obviously, but most of them were influenced. So I have the book in front of me. I don't know if you've seen this book - that's the Veni Creator. Yeah.

MA Yes.

TVW So yeah, so the theme itself, as you know, it's in a four-bar, an eight-bar phrasing with four bars each with an upbeat and obviously ending in the actual dominant or tonic that it's written in. Most composers start with the tonic and then goes down to the subdominant or the dominant. I start with a dominant

and go to the tonic - like with Bach. So the first one for me is sort of just a setting of, you know, almost homophonic in a sense, setting the tone for how the bass line will actually be utilised, not necessarily harmonically, but this is also the first one is almost setting a tone. The second one I think here the influence of Reger is quite evident if you know the D minor passacaglia.

MA Sorry, sorry to interrupt you. We are now, before we were talking about the, were we talking about the theme or the first variation.

TVW Yeah. The first variation, yeah. Because you know the tradition in the passacaglia is to state the theme on its own.

MA OK.

TVW Not like a chaconne where everything starts immediately.

MA Yes.

TVW And so the second variation where in bar 17. That's clearly the influence of Reger. If you know the style, even in a way, I think almost. Karg-Elert in a way. In his chaconnes if I think about the figuration that's been used there. The third one I think here.

MA Sorry to interrupt you. So you don't you wouldn't perhaps know of which Reger specifically?

TVW No, I think I play a lot of Reger to know that I wrote almost in the style of Reger and in fact the bars from about 24/25 actually has traces of the passacaglia in the Reger *Introduction and Passacaglia*. Where the three voices moving in, you know, quavers semiquavers. But I can't pinpoint

necessarily one, but I know this isn't a style of the German Romantic tradition of using almost intertwined harmonies above the theme itself.

So the next one I think here this is my own. I don't know it's sort of my own figuration that I'm using here. I don't see necessarily any specific influence here especially in the use of the harmony, which is almost modal, but almost also goes to a reaffirmation of the theme in the key that it's actually sounding in, so that one I don't necessarily know that there is specific composer. The one from 40. I would say that would be Henk Temmingh, Henk Temmingh enjoys that type of figuration in his organ works.

Well, some of these chorale preludes have this type of figuration and this is the way he would improvise in when he was still organist in the Gereformeerde Kerk, based on the chaconne - I've heard him a few times doing that. Then the next one is sort of almost like there's nothing that or nobody really that influenced me, but this is almost like an improvisation with some non-chordal notes, as you see almost in a jazz foundation where I shift the accent in the theme. As you can see not in longer notes, but rather the affirmation of comping chords in the left hand with the sort of improvisational style in the right hand, but I don't interfere with the momentum, so to speak, of the actual theme. The one where the swell strings come in, I think that is more Duruflé for me. If you know Duruflé, he likes the combination of strings with a 4' flute or choral bass in the pedal. And here, obviously, I take the pedal more as a solo in the alto range rather than as a bass harmonic foundation. You'll see in the left hand that functions actually as the bass then. So I interrupt the whole idea of a passacaglia as the harmonic foundation here. That's more French in a way. It's almost also in a modal style in which Duruflé used to

compose. If you think of his *Variations on Veni Creator* slow movement, that would be something that he would use in terms of registration as well.

Then the one with the staccato - that's a typical toccata figuration. As you know from the French Romantic school, and I think if you know Dupré, he would normally compose in a style like this almost, in a, shall we call it a bell theme almost like an echo that starts but not interfering with the actual harmonic balance that you want in the pedal. That's and this specifically I wrote for two manuals to get that idea of an echo without actually duplicating the right hand's chord in the left hand here and there it happens, but not always. I think the harmonic language is important there for me.

Then this next one is almost in a Dupré style where you have the triplets in both hands. If you know his *Variations on a Noël*, you'll know that some of the invigoration in the right hand in that variation has something similar, but I combine it in both hands. Also obviously founded on the harmonic principle of the actual passacaglia theme, and that's important for me that I don't digress that the focus should be on the theme itself and then the figurations whatever comes, should not interfere necessarily with that movement itself and I use a gap registration.

The next one is sort of a polyrhythm as you can see. But also, there is a canon in the top voice and the lower voice. Having triplets in the right hand and then quavers in the left hand and that gives sort of a polyrhythmic way with having a canon in the top in a lower voice, which I think. So also sort of draws attention to the theme in the passacaglia itself.

Then the next one. I would say that's also almost in the do you know, the Schmidt [Franz], the German composer also wrote some - he's a Romantic composer. He wrote a few organ works and this one I think the figurations I played as it a prelude in D minor or passacaglia I can't remember, but this is definitely Schmidt who was a contemporary figure of Rheinberger and Karg-Elert and I think these echoes with these, you know, almost stumping bass and the bomb pum pum pum type of thing still maintaining the harmonic momentum and melodic aspect of the passacaglia with the echoes between great and swell there.

Then the next one. I actually don't know where I got this from, but I like the idea of having the solo in the right hand or the theme in the right hand with chromatic passages almost creating a sense of you know, intensity right through the whole thing, because as you've noticed that this thing builds up actually dynamically. And this is almost like the beginning of the chaos starting, you know, I use the extensive, shall I say, range of the pedal board from the lowest D to the highest D in chromatic patterns with the theme in the right hand with comping chords in the left hand and then suddenly the without the tempo being influenced the actual rhythmic complexity increases now with the 32 notes, still with a theme following in the pedals, I actually juxtaposed 32 note values with sixteens and then with quavers was as well as sort of a tension driven and then released tension driven and then released. So it's a combination of rhythmic patterns without influencing the tempo and the momentum that's still focused in the pedal. And then from bar 113, I think that that is a typical French Romantic pattern, if you know what I mean in terms of 32nds [demisemi-quavers]. And then this is almost Duruflé/Dupré. And in some

aspects some Vierne that I feel that I was influenced by with these brilliant figurations, which is mostly a chordal-based but also broken up arpeggios. And once again the passacaglia theme was a guiding force in terms of almost making it modal. You'll see very little accidentals in that specific one that actually underscores the harmonic language of the theme.

And then lastly in the style of Reger, the last variation I actually turned to the major. Where you had the strife in D minor all the time and suddenly voila, there's a D major and enforcing that with top notes in the pedal - emphasising what the theme is especially in the major chords and then ending in a typical sub-dominant - dominant and then tonic In D major, a sort of relief after all of these strenuous harmonies and so forth. That's why I use the indication there. Obviously full organ with largamente that it becomes a little bit more allargando and broadly and you'll see that the notes in the right and the left hand actually emphasise some of the theme in different.

Shall I say disguises almost?

Yeah, and I'm glad that it received the approval of the adjudicators for BIS.

Dr Andrea Kayser-Mitas, who it is dedicated to will perform the premiere next year as part of a creative output in the Chapel [University of Pretoria]. She's quite capable of doing that and I realised it's a difficult piece - it's not sight-reading material. I don't play my own pieces in public as you know, Mikyle. So I write it for somebody that I know would be able to handle that and she'll be going overseas sometime to play it there as well. And Richard McVeigh, who made the call for composers from BIS will also record that for his YouTube channel.

MA OK.

TVW And Rafael Vogel Attila Vogel from Juilliard will perform this in Germany in March next year, so I'm happy that it's gaining traction and I've had some people asking me in terms of, you know, emailing, emailing me in terms of how I would approach certain, you know, variations, what registration I would suggest. So I'm glad that it's being played.

MA Well, hopefully, the thesis/the dissertation will be published after the performance so there would be some sort of reference to it.

TVW Which will be great, absolutely.

MA OK, so I think that covers the question, the 4th question.

TVW Yeah.

MA So as I mentioned earlier, my research focus focuses on passacaglias, but also looking at how we go, how some composers and passacaglias go back-to-Bach and use Bach as a model.

TVW Yeah.

MA What are your thoughts on the Bach passacaglia and on Bach as a composer for the organ?

TVW Well, there's no better person, dead or alive, that could obviously bring the organ to what we know it is today, Max Reger himself said that Bach is the father of us all, and I think Bach is sort of a centre point, so that whatever came before him, he imaged made it his own unique voice and actually directly influenced what happened afterwards, even into the 21st century.

And this passacaglia when I played it, I remember I played it for my first or second year when I studied with Deon Lamprecht and I was absolutely amazed by what this guy could do, remember he was only influenced by Buxtehude because he knew the chaconne by Buxtehude in C minor. Obviously, he knew the D minor passacaglia, but I think he took the actual genre to another level that has not been surpassed ever since, you know, and a lot of articles and research has been done about the actual theological impact or symbolism behind the passacaglia in its 21 variations, and how Bach actually intricately makes the theme a fugal theme later and obviously then develop it into a full-fledged fugue in the style of the Baroque. And it's interesting that we don't have an actual handwritten manuscript of Bach writing the passacaglia, but we know the people that copied this didn't write passacaglia and fugue but only passacaglia in C minor because they saw the fugal theme as part of the passacaglia, which in Bach's hand obviously became something more of a, shall we call it a masterpiece? That just enforces the grandeur and the intricacy, and the fact that he used the C minor for this, you know, which was relatively a new key from the modal system into the key signature system in Bach's time. Because remember he was a young man when he wrote this. We know that he wasn't older than 25. This is a piece that comes from we know, even though perhaps the early Weimar period and perhaps the Mühlhausen period. So he was very much influenced by the Northern German influences of the time, as you know, like Böhm and Pachelbel and Buxtehude, of course, and Lübeck and these guys. But he took it to another level. And I don't think it's ever been surpassed, you know, in terms of its profound nature, the innovative effects that he has. You know

there's one copier that we play it these days, or some people played with 8' and 2' flutes or like Liszt started it with a soft Vox Celeste in the beginning and then have a grand ending towards the end. But we know that Bach's idea of registration was mostly focused on his contemporary, which was from Central Germany and the sort of registration technique that were used. There is one engraver that we know comes from Bach's time that says Passacaglia in Organo Pleno which means that this was played all the time on a full organ, but with different manuals in what we call the Werkprinzip concept. So I think yes, Bach here demonstrates shall we call it an unmatched mastery of counterpoint? And, I mean, I played it two or three years ago, and every time I played, it's like something new that you discover all the time with its beautiful harmony. It is at ease. It's absolutely wonderful. Counterpoint and polyphony and the development of the theme which he moves into different ways that has not been done before that. So it is a piece which I think is one of the best written organ music pieces ever written for the instrument.

MA OK, so now we're going to speak about you and your background because it was quite difficult to get if I could say, accredited Literature on your background.

TVW Which is not a bad thing, Mikyle.

MA Yeah. So your composition education - where and how did you get that?

TVW Actually, I didn't study composition. I think the organ as an instrument guided me in that direction. I like Jacobus Kloppers always says that even Richard Behrens I don't see myself as a composer necessarily. I see myself as an arranger of melodies or notes. Sometimes the chorale preludes or the pieces I

write, as you know, especially the chorale preludes I used to write them for my students or even for me to, you know, use here and there before service or during a service or even to master a certain technique that I had trouble with that I couldn't learn with Bach.

You know, I used to write these small little trios for myself. I remember as a young, relatively young guy, also with my latest publication, which you know of is the 18 chorale preludes called *Lockdown-Büchlein* and that title comes from Barry Smith. He suggested that because during cover time we had many discussions about that, and all of those pieces are based on melodies from my own church. As you know, the New Apostolic Church, but also it almost mirrors what the *Orgelbüchlein* does where Bach once students to master a certain technique by repeating that same figuration right through.

Also, with the 79 chorale preludes, you know on chorales by Marcel Dupre, you would see that as an introduction to Bach. And similarly, I think my compositional output was firstly based on that, a more personal use of improvisation written down but also more pedagogical way of helping students with a certain technique, especially if there's an ostinato pattern or, you know, based on popular melody.

But about 10/15 years ago I started writing concert organ music or organ music geared for recitals. Not necessarily that it's some of them are focused on chorales, but most of them are like the *Eclectic Passacaglia* - it's original. And the fact of the matter is we have a lack of quality internationally recognised organ music from South African composers, and I'm happy to say that over the past 10 - 15 years I've commissioned quite a few, as you know, Mikyle. For that to actually, you know, be broadened I commission organ

composers like Henk Temmingh, Neil Pauw, Niel van der Watt, Lance, Phillip, Alexander Johnson, even lady composers, like my students, Shade Jansen or you know, what's her name? Helena de Villiers, to write specifically for the concert use and that's why internationally, when I do play these recitals, I do it exclusively based on South African compositions. OK, I'll add a Bach here and there, but I think 80% of my programmes are South African Concert organ works and so in filling that dove, I thought to myself, I should also try it and fill that gap in a way. So I have a few unpublished works which I've sent to international publishers in the last two years, and it looks very good. I've spoken to Lorenz Corporation that's very keen. My other works have been published by Tim Knight. As you know now BIS has published the Eclectic Passacaglia. MorningStar publications from the United States have asked me to write something specifically so the people become aware of South African organ music. When, you know, we attend symposia/conferences and present. And in our recitals, people attend and want to know more about this. That's how Henk Temmingh, for instance, I commissioned him in 2013 to write the *Variations for Organ* and in fact, it forms now part of some of the internationally recognised exam repertoire so filling that I think as a composer or a rearranger of notes I try to fill that gap not only for religious or theological function but also for the concert organ works that which you know. You know we don't always have much of and I think the ones we can really boast about, numbers to about 20 - 25 that I would, you know, be comfortable in playing on an international stage.

So when I came to Pretoria, just before Professor Temmingh retired, I started private classes with him in terms of composition and improvisation. And that

has really helped me in broadening my perception around organ composition in developing themes and how you approach what is the South African ideology.

Is there such a thing? Do I have to use African themes in the concept? Do I have to use a chorale to make it more theological?

So these are all questions and I don't think one can actually finally find your voice. Yes, you have specific phrases like with Henk Temmingh he openly talks about serialism in his early days, but then he moves into a more simplistic, you know, way of improvisation and even composition. Although some of his works, as you know are not sight-reading material, but he is a type of guy like Jacobus Kloppers and even Carl van Wyk (who's now currently in the States). You know, people who are actual organists writing for the instrument because there's always a danger where you find a pianist sitting in front of a piano writing for the organ, and then it's idiosyncratically or idiomatically not playable in the organ. So I do get a lot of requests, you know, like Lance Phillip wrote the *Vivian*, a tone poem for me some years ago he revised it. And I had to help him to say this is not going to work in terms of registration or swell box use or legato and so forth. So I think there's a growing need for that and interest like guys like Miles Warrington, Altus Hendricks, you know Arthur Feeder from Stellenbosch wanting to write for the organ a little bit more. And I hope that that repertoire stash will grow exponentially in the coming year and I mean a young guy like you relatively you shouldn't be scared to put pen to paper because you know those ideas that come you need to write them down before they disappear into oblivion. Who knows? There might be a masterpiece that comes out of that, that, that.

MA Yeah. OK. And then the last question. About your organ education, and how did you get your organ education?

TVW I'm from the New Apostolic Church and, you know, music is quite big in our church, especially with orchestral, organ and choral music and I think that's where it started. My father was a choir conductor himself. My mother was a soloist in a choir. So I've been exposed to music, good quality music and Western art music from since I opened my eyes, being exposed to all the masterpieces. Similar to you, what you probably have experienced Mikyle, and you know, the organist in our congregation noticed that I had a keen interest because I started with a recorder. I went to the violin, I played piano a little bit and as soon as I could reach the pedals.

So obviously I was by my uncle, Leonard Carlo. He asked me if I wanted lessons, so we started lessons. And you know, I developed faster than what he anticipated and then my father contacted the then cathedral organist of St Cyprian's Cathedral in Kimberley, Peter Black, that has historic three-manual Walker organ from 1934. And I became an organ scholar in the Anglican church and that sort of moulded what I knew and currently know in terms of accompaniment, as you know, in the Anglican church, and even the Catholic Church accompanying, psalms and chants is an art in itself. And you know that honed the skills in terms of that, but also playing exams through Royal Schools and Unisa. And then eventually I got a bursary to study at Bloemfontein. And I started initially my first year with Dr Erns Conradie, the late Dr Erns Conradie, and he laid a good foundation.

Then he retired and I had to go to Professor Deon Lamprecht, who was a, you know, came from the School of Stephanus Zondagh, who himself was a

student of Marcel Dupré and very technical, very technical, good music development and repertoire build. You know, Deon Lamprecht didn't, believe in the traditional four pieces per year. He gave me twelve and we worked through twelve of them and that set a standard, and then in 1997 I got a bursary to do my honours with Wim Viljoen, did an audition and I did my honours. And then in 2005, obviously after my honours, my master's and doctorate in 2005 with Wim Viljoen and the rest is history, as they say.

MA OK. And now you are a professor?

TVW Associate Professor of Musicology of music. Yes, with organ as one of the [inaudible]

MA OK. I think that's it.

TVW Oh, you're welcome to always WhatsApp me or send a voice note - whatever you want to do.

MA Yes, if I have any more questions I'll get back to you within the week. Yeah, so thank you so much.

Transcript

Date of Interview: 04 December 2024 at 18h30

Location: Conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams

Interviewer: Mikyle Adams (MA)

Interviewee: Associate Professor Theo van Wyk (TVW)

Interview Objective: Follow up of findings in the Eclectic Passacaglia

Consent: The interviewee consented to be recorded and transcribed for internal use

MA So I had a look at the transcript and the score, but some things were not aligning. So I what I did was, I then continued to look through things and also found some things that I thought was linked to things that I knew.

TVW Yeah.

MA So I actually have it - I made a document. Let me see if I can share this. OK, I think it's going to be a bit complex, so I'll just, I'll just speak about it.

TVW OK.

MA So the first the first, I think the first one I picked up was a variation two.

TVW Hmm.

MA I thought that it had more of a connection to Rheinberger and his first variation in his passacaglia.

TVW Yeah. You want me to elaborate on that?

MA OK.

TVW I think my first variation, well not variation, you have the one where there's a pedal solo in the *Eclectic Passacaglia* and then there's sort of a homophonic way of creating the theme with the solo on the right hand and then bar 17 there's the next variation and that coupled to the third variation. And if you look at the passacaglia of Reger, he starts it off with this one from 17 almost in the two-voiced version and then slowly but surely adds a third voice, which I actually do from bar 24, especially with the rhythmic figuration of a quaver plus followed by two semiquavers. So what Reger did in his passacaglia. He combines these two aspects in his first variation, which I sort of detached the first one from 17 is just a two-voice, then I add the third voice in the next variation, but with the figuration of a semiquaver or a quaver followed by two semiquavers or vice versa.

So it's actually basically a combination and I agree that it has a Rheinberger tendency to it. But I think in the harmonic language it leans more towards Reger rather than Rheinberger.

MA OK, yes.

TVW If that makes sense you could draw a parallel between Rheinberger and that variation - I totally agree with you, especially in that you're referring to the one from *Sonata No. 8 in E minor*, yes.

MA Yes, that's also part of this research because I've now, after having gone through all the passacaglias and now come to this one I've now been able to do the conclusion that each composer holds on or is sort of inspired by

predecessors and ultimately, though, all those that all those preceding composers would have all started looking at Bach.

TVW Of course, as a foundation, yes.

MA Rheinberger would have most likely looked at Bach and then Reger obviously looked at Rheinberger and Bach. John Joubert, I can't confirm, but I can see that there is some sort of connection to Bach and then now with yours it's not only in the variations, but it's also in the title that also gives some sort of a contribution to that conclusion.

TVW Indication? Absolutely. But be that as it may, bear in mind from about 17 right until you know 32 - that's influenced by the German Romantic approach, which would include Rheinberger, Schmidt, Reger and Karg-Elert as a whole.

MA And the one from 17 that is Reger, the *Passacaglia in E Minor*?

TVW Yes. Yeah.

Because, but what he does is he adds in that variation of the first one, he adds a third voice to it. But I keep it two-voiced, and then the very next variation I bring in the quaver plus semiquaver variation, but then in three voices almost like building a slow crescendo because the very next variation I add more voices, as you can see, even double pedals.

So it's not only in the registration that I asked for dynamic variation, but also in the amount of voices and the, shall we call it the doubling of voices to affirm the theme like I do in that variation after the in bar 33 where the pedal actually just affirms the top note almost. So that's not only in terms of very registration indication, but also the amount of voices and the rhythmic tempo that's mixed with that.

MA I think that the main thing that I was trying to get with the findings was obviously getting examples as well to match what I was actually saying in my...

TVW Sure, but certainly from the second - third variation in mind. You could make it a combination of Reger and Rheinberger certainly.

MA Yeah, OK. The fifth one is from bar 40. You mentioned Henk Temmingh, so that one was ok, but that one was a bit challenging because his music is obviously not.

TWV Yeah, published.

MA Yes. So. I think that's one of the challenging to...

TVW Yeah, I can send you the sheet music because that comes from the variations that he wrote for me in 2013, that figuration, that's a typical way of how he improvised, as I said and sort of codified version in my in his style almost. But with my theme enclosed or added to that. So I can send you the sheet music of the variation that is not published.

MA OK. Yes, thank you.

TVW And you'll find if you see the figuration, you'll see it in Henk Temmingh's *Variations for Organ* that he wrote for me.

MA OK. Thank you so much for that. Then the next one is with variation seven, which is bar 56. I think you mentioned it to Duruflé, and I looked for that theme mentioned, what you mentioned about the theme taken up an octave, and I found that there's a connection to variation three of the Veni Creator.

TVW That's the one I mentioned. Yeah, Veni Creator. Yeah, it was typical of the French Romantic, even Impressionist new classic style to have the variation or the melody in the pedal at 4' level accompanied by strings was a very common accommodation. Even Vierne and Widor used it quite extensively in their symphonies and other organ works.

MA The next one, variation eight at 64 C well no 64, sorry, you mentioned that was a toccata figuration by Dupre and so I looked in his music.

TVW You would find a similar pattern in Vierne *24 Freestyle Organ Works*. I can't remember the work now, but you'll find it. As I said, you'll find it in very and in Vierne and Widor specifically, but also in Dupre because that's almost like what they call a bell type of figuration.

MA So I found that in his toccata, the animato section that there was some connection.

TVW Yes, some elements of that. Yes, I agree with that.

MA Variation nine: I think you mentioned that was on *Variation on a Noel* and variation five of that.

TVW Yeah, sort of. The triplet movement in semiquavers. Yeah, that is typical of the French or Dupre's style of improvisation. Although he uses the left hand in that *Variation of the Noel* more to affirm the harmonic language or the harmonic base here, I use it as a bicinium almost in the two hands with the melody in the or the theme in the pedals on one manual.

MA Variation ten.

TVW I had no specific composing in mind when doing this. I think for me, what stood out here is the exposition of the theme in what you call it, in imitation in the top in the lower bot, lower voices and then sort of have a polyrhythm as you could see with triplets and quavers in the middle voices, so to speak. So, it's almost like a canon, a small little canon between the top and the small, the lower voice, so I don't have any specific composer or style in mind there.

MA Variation 11: I know you mentioned Schmidt. I don't think he's his music is also quite accessible.

TVW No, it's not. I remember playing a piece by him, can't remember which one it is, but this also is typical of the French style of having echoes and broken passages or the theme broken up in in little, smaller note values. And then the echo idea between manuals and you know a sort of an echo effect between swell and great. I do find that it is basically a French and a German romantic type of approach here, both from both countries.

MA Because I found an example something similar in Reger's *Passacaglia in D Minor*, the sixth variation.

TVW OK, if you find something to find something like that I then I must have subconsciously had something like that in mind when doing it, but I think it is a is a. It's something that you find in both German and French romantic music.

MA OK.

TVW With the theme broken and with echo effects in the manuals.

MA Yeah, the ones 12th, 13th and 14th - there was nothing.

TVW There's nothing really that I had in mind or a composer that I had in mind with that, Mikyle. I think it was more the acceleration of the theme. No, not the theme of the figurations. Using smaller note values for it to become a little bit more shall I say a little bit more, busier towards a climax before you get the D major? Almost you know, with a largamente coming in. I think adding the 32' notes just gives the rhythmical pulse a little bit more you know a bigger punch as opposed to what I did earlier because obviously this would require a little bit more movement and a little bit more technical prowess from the composer and of course the organ almost at full volume. So, like the German romantic composers starting soft, this is actually sort of moving to the climax and employing all the sonic resources of the organ, as it were. That's why in these parts I'm not very specific in terms of what registers should be used - I only indicate dynamics – that I leave up to the performer.

MA Then the last variation: I wrote in my notes Reger Suite. Especially the bars 133 to 154 which goes into E major eventually it ends on an E major chord

TVW Yes.

MA Op.33 does an exact transition to F# major in the last variation, which is similar.

TVW That could be true. I think the idea is premised on the Reger concept of starting the theme in a minor and then converting it. Mostly most of his last variations into a major. I think it happens in the Introduction and Passacaglia as well, where he moves from D minor to D major. In fact, it could be also in the F# minor passacaglia that he uses something similar, but I think that's also a German romantic concept. Where moving from minor to D major as almost

as a release after all these variations that the pieces ended in a major rather than a minor.

MA Yeah, I don't. Yeah. I think Op. 33 is the F# minor. I think I was supposed to put in a comma there or semicolon.

It does the exact transition to F# major in the last variation, which is similar.

TWV Yes. Yeah. If you look at the *Passacaglia in D Minor*. Also, you'll see the last variation he goes directly from the dominant right directly into D major.

TWV You know, and also slowing the rhythmic pulse whereas the previous one was just arpeggios in the last version or the last variation of the D minor passacaglia, it becomes a little bit more allargando and broad and largamente, which I used as an indication for the last variation for my passacaglia. So, I think that concept of going from D minor to or from a minor to a major as a as a Reger concept that I might have had in mind. Probably when writing this and the theme that I chose, actually lends itself to just naturally modulate from the minor directly to the major to the parallel major instead of me going to something like F major to assert the major which, you know, D minor is the relative of F major. But in this case, it's a direct use of the theme in a major context. That's why you also see that the key signature changes, whereas Reger doesn't do that.

MA OK, I think that was everything I needed clarity on.

TWV OK, I'll send you Henk's variation now that you can have a look at that. Otherwise, make a comparison. I was very fascinated by his use of that

specific rhythm, but you'll see that he uses the theme in the right hand on the top melody. I break up the theme in the pedal.

MA OK, so as promised it was going to be short.

TVW OK. No, thank you, Mikyle. All of the best with your final preparations there.

MA Thank you so much. Bye.

TVW A pleasure. Bye.

Appendix C: Ethics Clearance, Consent Forms & Interview Questions



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1 July 2024

HDC REF: 5/2024

Dear Mikyle

MMus Project title: The Development of the Passacaglia

Thank you for your ethics application dated 28 June 2024. It is my pleasure to inform you that the above-mentioned study has been formally approved.

The completed forms should be submitted to Sheila Taylor for record keeping.

Approval is granted for 3 years.

Please submit a brief progress report if the study continues beyond the approval time frame.

The on-going ethical conduct remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

Please quote the reference number in all your ethics related correspondences.

Yours sincerely

Signed by candidate

Associate Professor Anri Herbst

Ethics representative
Higher Degrees Committee
FREC Committee member
IFHREC Committee member

Information sheet

I, Mikyle Adams, have received approval from the Higher Degrees Committee (South African College of Music, Faculty of Humanities) UCT [5/2024] to undertake a research project entitled:

The Development of the Passacaglia

The objectives of this study are:

- Draw a comparison to the passacaglia of Bach
- Investigate what is unique about each composer's output
- Investigate passacaglias composed by South African composers

This information will be obtained by analysis, research and interview.

Participation and confidentiality

Participation in the study is voluntary and a participant may choose to withdraw from the project at any time. A decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of the on-going relationship that a participant may have with the researcher or other staff members at the University of Cape Town, either now or in the future.

All the information that a participant supplies during the research period will be held in confidence. Collected data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only investigators will have access to this information. After the study, the data will be archived and stored in the possession of the principal researcher(s).

If you want any information regarding your rights as a research participant, or complaints regarding this research study, you may contact Associate Professor Bodhisattva Kar (bodhisattva.kar@uct.ac.za), Chair of the Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town, which is an independent committee established to help protect the rights of research participants.

Statement of understanding and consent to participate in the study

I declare that

- I read this consent form and the information it contains, and have had the opportunity to ask questions;
- I understand the nature, purpose and the procedures of this study;
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research.
- I understand that extracts from my interview may be quoted
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project;
- I understand that my decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of the on-going professional relationship that I may have with the research team or the University of Cape Town either now, or in the future;
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage;
- I give permission for my interview with the researcher(s) to be audio-visually recorded and the contents thereof to be used in this study;
- I agree to participate in this research project conducted by researcher(s) listed below;

Name	Signature	Date
Participant:	Prof Theo van Wyk	Signed by candidate 10 December 2024
Researcher	Mikyle Adams	Signed by candidate 24 June 2024
Guardian (where applicable)		