

INVENTION THROUGH SYNTHESIS: FORMER COMPOSERS OBSERVED IN
FRANK MARTIN'S *HUIT PRÉLUDES POUR LE PIANO*

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Preface

Frank Martin (1890-1974) gained a considerable recognition as an internationally renowned musician and one of the most celebrated composers of Switzerland during his lifetime.¹ Nevertheless, Martin's compositions face challenge in continuing the legacy, as his outputs struggle to make strong stance in the stream of major concert venues in America, with an exception of *Petite Symphony Concertante, Op.54* (1944). Besides plausible political or financial factors one may point out, I suggest the followings as reasons.

1. Martin's ensemble pieces with unusually creative orchestrations embody inevitable difficulties due to unique instrumentations.² As a result, recruiting and arranging the rehearsals and performances are highly inconvenient. Nevertheless, it was the uniqueness in timbre and texture that contribute largely to the success of *Petite Symphony Concertante* as the orchestral version failed to receive as much recognition (Cooke).³

¹ The awards and acknowledgements Martin has received include the Association of Swiss Musician's composition prize in 1947, North Rhine-Westphalia's Great Art Prize in 1953, the Philadelphia Prize for the best contemporary composition in 1959, the Grand Prix des Semaines Musicales Internationales de Paris in 1964, the Mozart Medal of Vienna in 1965, the Grand Prix National de Disque in 1969 (Bruhn 15), and honoray doctorates by the University of Geneva in 1949 (Martin 6), University of Lausanne in 1960, and the Mozart Medaille Vienna in 1965 (Hines 153)

.Bruhn, Siglind. *Frank Martin's Musical Reflections on Death*. New York: Pendragon Press, 2011.
.Martin, Donna Sherrell. "The Piano Music of Frank Martin: Solo and Orchestra." MM diss., University of Cincinnati, 1978.
.Hines,Stephan. *The Orchestra Composers' Point of View*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.

² Martin's creative and original instrumentation is best exemplified by *Sonata da Chiesa* for viola d'amore and organ (1938), *Petite Symphony Concertante* (1944) and *Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments* (1948).

³ Cooke, Mervyn. "Late Starter. Mervyn Cook Concludes His Survey of Frank Martin's Creative Life." *The Musical Times* 134, no. 1802 (Apr., 1993).

2. One may question the substantiality of his compositions in comparison to the repertoires by his contemporaries such as Bartok, Prokofiev, Scriabin, Webern, and Richard Strauss just to name a few. One may attempt to reach at a subjective conclusion, however not enough research or analytical study has been done to serve as a criteria.
3. Student performers are not given incentives to learn and perform Martin's pieces.
4. Considerably little number of overall compositional output results in scarce performances of his compositions, making it harder for Martin's music to be exposed to musicians, scholars and audiences.
5. Martin's unique and complex musical language demands in depth analysis.

It is said history proves what works will survive as a "perfection" that surpasses its contemporaries. However, lack of accessibilities/ effectiveness and complicated musical language that demands extra effort do not suffice as a reason to discard Martin's compositions that are uniquely retrospective and highly individual.

In addition, the world of standard repertoire by great masters is constantly challenged as the perception of the history by generations is constantly evolving. In other words, universal consent granted by the reception of history can be an illusion, and one cannot invalidate the substantiality of a work that has not yet been discussed in depth. In his own essay,⁴ Frank Martin

⁴ Bruhn, Siglind. *Frank Martin's Musical Reflections on Death*. New York: Pendragon Press, 2011.

disputes the “idolatry” of works of great masters in the past by discussing the absence of an absolute in Art.

The quality of perfection is conferred onto it in retrospect by universal consent; it is not real...A work that is called perfect is one that has become a model, a standard by which one measures other works (Bruhn 14).

Frank Martin’s *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* was written for Dinu Lipatti in year 1948 (Frank Martin, 90).⁵ The inspiration came after Martin heard Lipatti performing in London, and the dedication was much appreciated by the pianist. The set of preludes was initially intended to include 12 preludes, however Martin decided that eight preludes had fully sufficed his musical intentions. Lipatti took the thoroughness of the composition seriously, and suggested that it will take two years for him to learn the piece before he presents to the public. Unfortunately the preludes remained discrete to the public for a while due to Lipatti’s unexpected death from leukemia in 1950.⁶ In 1966, Frank Martin recorded the preludes himself (Donna Sherrell Martin, 56).⁷

Even though Martin’s musical language in this set of preludes is not as complicated or pedantic as Schoenberg’s dodecaphony, the pieces are becoming obsolete in academia and concert venues. Martin presents the Preludes as being colorful, rhythmic and motivically organic with an exceptional level of

⁵Martin, Frank. *A propos de... Commentaires de Frank Martin sur ses oeuvres*. Neuchâtel: A la Baconnière, 1984.

⁶ Collins, Geraline T. *The Eight Preludes for Piano of Frank Martin a lecture recital, together with three recitals of selected works of J.S. Bach, L.V. Beethoven, J. Brahms, F. Chopin, I. Albeniz, R. Schumann, A Scriabin, F. Liszt and K. Szymanowski*. Denton, North Texas State University. 1980.

⁷ Martin, Donna Sherrell. “The Piano Music of Frank Martin: Solo and Orchestra.” MM diss., University of Cincinnati, 1978.

accessibility. In fact, Martin was appreciated as a composer who “while refraining from any compromise with the tastes of a wider audience, never alienated listeners with abstractions that did not speak to their sense (Bruhn, 13).”^s

In addition to five aforementioned reasons, another reason for *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* to not have made its way to the mainstream is found in the nature of his piano writing; the preludes are written organically in motif and harmony, yet not idiomatic to piano playing. Hence, awkward passages for hand positions and finger movements are often found. In addition, convoluted harmonic and motivic writing demands the learning process that encompasses multi-levels: theoretical analysis, practicing with appropriate techniques and making interpretive decisions for an effective delivery.

The goal of this paper is to thoroughly discuss Frank Martin’s *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* in order to present his compositional competency, strong individuality in musical language, and artistic mastery in the piece, using two methods: research and analysis. Research will attempt to discover influences from preceding era that were acquired through cultural, educational and career backgrounds. Discovering Martin’s intense educational backgrounds, and open musical allegiances to the past through sophisticatedly coherent and systematic writings may provide supportive arguments to how the piece holds its substantiality. Biographic research is not the main focus of the paper; yet will be briefly mentioned in relations to Martin’s musical interests.

^s Bruhn, Siglind. *Frank Martin’s Musical Reflections on Death*. New York: Pendragon Press, 2011.

By choosing to write a set of preludes, Martin contributes to the evolution of the genre, which had gone through a significant change in stance through the 19th century. It is important to trace back to the previous era to thoroughly comprehend Martin's point of departure in writing a set of preludes. Therefore, a history of the genre preludes will be briefly introduced.

Analysis will demonstrate the unique balance between the past and Martin's invention in *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* through musical excerpts. Martin's tributes to former composers through certain motifs and compositional techniques will be discussed in depth. Analysis on harmony, motif, and overall structure will be used to draw interpretative suggestions for artistic decisions in performance.

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Chapter 1.

Biographical, Cultural and Educational Influences Contributing to Frank Martin's Musical Style

Frank Martin was born on September 15, 1890 in Geneva, Switzerland as the tenth child of a Calvinist minister. There was not an established musician in the family, however he was brought up with much exposure to music and his avid interest in music led to his studying music in the Geneva Conservatoire at the age of sixteen with Lauber, Huber and Klose particularly distinguished by German romanticism (Cooke).¹ His education received in Geneva was aligned with the conventional curriculum of German traditions, surprisingly, excluding French music.² In her dissertation "The Piano Music of Frank Martin: Solo and Orchestral," Donna Sherrell Martin suggests that Martin's unique language which never departs from the conventional is partly the result of his conservative religious and cultural backgrounds in Suisse Romande, a place with stronger conservatism (Donna Sherrell Martin, 8) and Geneva (Donna Sherrell Martin, 10). She also points out the regional influence of Geneva by quoting Skulsky as following (Donna Sherrell Martin, 9).

This city (Geneva), situated on the French border, possesses some of the characteristics of France;... but the spirit of its inhabitants differs from that of French in its greater severity and remoteness and a certain

¹ Cooke, Mervyn. "Frank Martin's Early Development." *The Musical Times* 131, no. 1771 (Sep.,

² Cooke, Mervyn. "Late Starter. Frank Martin Found Himself Late in Life." *The musical Times* 134, No.1801 (Mar., 1993).

reserve in its appreciations...; this form protestant tradition manifests itself in extremely conservative ways of thinking.³

During the early period, St. Mathew's passion left very strong impression on Martin at the Cathedral of Geneva under the direction of Otto Barlan (Donna Sherrell Martin, 11–12), and the techniques of counterpoint and chromaticism of Bach sunk into Martin as the typical traits of Martin's mature writing. Musical manifestation of such affinity to Bach is well testified by Yehudi Menuhin as he states as following (Bruhn, 14).

When I play the *Polyptyque* by Frank Martin, I feel the same responsibility, the same exaltation as when I play Bach's *Chaconne*.

Martin's educational background also includes mathematics and science before he devoted entirely to music later. As he developed a close friendship with Ernest Ansermet in 1915, Martin came to be much exposed to contemporary reperotires and French music of Debussy and Ravel⁴. After many years of friendship with Martin, Ansermet testifies Martin's music as following (Bruhn, 14).

Martin excels in nuances of orchestral colour and his musical palette is perfectly suited to giving life to impalpable concepts and fantasy. But he is equally capable of expressing a tragic vehemence and of

³ Abraham Skulsky, "Frank Martin– A Clear Understanding of His Ideals of Expression," *Musical America* 69 (August 1949):8.

⁴ Friendship with Ernest Ansermet is well proved in Ansermet's "Correspondance from 1934-1968."

showing an epic quality necessary to the construction of immense choral and religious works.⁵

Upon departing Geneva, Martin's interest to modern music blossomed in other cities including Zurich, Rome and particularly in Paris. Martin became deeply fascinated by rhythmic experimentations at the Emile Jaques-Dalcroze Institute (Donna Sherrell Martin, 14), while directing and performing in the *Société de Musique de Chambre*. In 1933, Martin founded and directed the *Technicum Moderne de Musique in Geneva*, and became the president of the Swiss Musician's Union (Donna Sherrill Martin, 6). The exposure to Claude Debussy's and Arnold Schoenberg's music, and exercising their compositional techniques during this period created a turning point for Martin as the major influences on his musical language (Donna Sherrell Martin, 18).

Concerning the technique of Schoenberg's dodecaphony, Donna Sherrill Martin concludes that Frank Martin's attempt to experiment with Schoenberg's technique was to find his own way of employing the system without losing the sense of hierarchy which tonality creates. Schoenberg's system provided freedom from conventions of the past to Martin but he never abandoned his fondness of chromaticism "in the manner of Bach," tonality and "functional dissonances (Donna Sherrell Martin, 19)." Concerning Schoenberg's dodecaphonic technique, Frank Martin states "dodecaphonic rows are legitimate and interesting only as an extension, not as an annulment of tonality (Buhn, 18)."⁶

⁵ Ansermet, Ernest. "Frank Martin," Larousse Encyclopedia of music, New York: World, 1971.

⁶ Bruhn cites Martin's stance on dodecaphonic technique, well evidenced in Martin's "*Langage Musical Contemporain*," and "*A Propos du Langage Musical Contemporain*."

Martin's acquaintance to César Franck's luscious romanticism, Ravel's textural lucidity, Stravinsky's additive rhythm, Greek meters, polyrhythm of far east, Bulgarian additive rhythm, Honegger's non-functional chords, and Bartók's rhythm/ structural scheme all contribute to development of his mature style (Cooke).⁷

⁷ Cooke, Mervyn. "Frank Martin's Early Development." *The Musical Times* 131, no. 1771 (Sep., 1990).

Chapter 2

Frank Martin's Synthesizing of the Past and the Present

While living through the era of creativity and originality with progressive ideas, Frank Martin acknowledged the public's need that there is always a demand for "originality and perfection," thus finding his own way to amalgamate the new and what had been granted as "perfection of masters" from earlier eras.

In his own essay "The Need for Contemporary Music,"⁸ Martin suggests that people's keenness with the past derives from innately seeking "stability" that is found in the music that had already been introduced and accepted. While acknowledging the need of the listeners, he justifies his attempt to invent the new language as following (Bruhn, 234).

I am no iconoclast; I have unlimited admiration for the works of the great masters. That is where we find the fullest, richest, and the most fertile nourishment for our spirits. But there is one condition: that we preserve the vitamins of these victuals. Masterworks, particularly those in music, are abused if they contain no element of discovery for listeners.

The most distinguishing example of Martin's synthesis of conventional elements into his own creativity is seen in his harmonic schemes. Martin uses consecutive harmonies in root positions that are not functional in conventional

⁸ The essay presented in the book "Frank Martin's Musical Reflections on Death" by Siglind Bruhn was translated by the author with permission of Maria Martin. Bruhn cites the source as following (233).

Originally published in *Lettres* III/1 (Geneva, 1943) and reprinted in *Un Compositeur médite sur son art*, 147-151.

standards. Harmonic rows create the colors that are similar to Debussy's, with distinct separations among the voices. Bruhn describes Martin's harmony usage as "primary sonic forms" with bass lines that do not harmonically align with the surrounding chords, thus creating the sense of constant forward movement (Bruhn, 16).

Martin's melodies sometimes present themselves in a long lyricism, but the pitches are not arranged diatonically but rather chromatically on octatonic scales. These melodic lines are not necessarily confined within surrounding harmonies, but rather create constant tensions against harmonic progressions. The bass line has a strong horizontal independency with a similar result as well. Justifying his technique of non-functional harmonic progressions with independent bass lines in highly polyphonic texture, Martin states as following (Bruhn, 16).

Harmony moves in time, as does melody. Like melody it is dependent on the temporal dimension, i.e., on rhythm. No Chord has any significance outside of its position in a harmonic progression, and frequently there is more polymelody in a sequence of homophonic chords conceived as harmonies... It changes only once the various melodies and the one assuming the function of the bass line are woven together to engender some harmonic sense which in turn endows the melodies with signification and sustains them.⁹

Mature works of Martin also exhibit features such as intense rhythm, solid and clear structure, organic unity, enhanced sensitivity, congenial diversity in

⁹ Bruhn's citation as following.

Translated from Frank Martin, "Defense de l'harmonie," *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 83 (1943): 10; reprinted in *Un Compositeur médite sur son art. Écrits et pensées recueillis par sa femme* (Neuchâtel: À la Baconnière, 1977), 78-82 [82].

the style, dexterity and constant tension between vertical and horizontal dimensions, employed into his music in both explicit and subtle ways (Cooke).¹⁰ In addition, Martin never follows the rule of 12 tone technique strictly in his mature works, while showing a clear intention of recognizing the technique.

¹⁰ Cooke, Mervyn. "Late Starter. Mervyn Cook Concludes His Survey of Frank Martin's Creative Life." *The Musical Times* 134, no. 1802 (Apr., 1993).

Chapter 3

Preludes and Influences of Former Composers

The earliest preludes are found to be works for the organ in 1448 with the function of introducing a vocal piece in the same mode or key. The most notable repertoire in keyboard literature is undoubtedly J.S. Bach's Well-Tempered Klavier composed in 1722 (Book 1) and 1742 (Book 2), being followed by a number of composers who wrote preludes for the keyboard instruments.

In 19th century, composers such as Mendelssohn (Op.35), Hummel (Op.67), Liszt (Prelude and Fugue on B–A–C–H), Franck (Prelude, *chorale et fugue* for piano), and Brahms (two Preludes and Fugues for Organ) followed with a tribute to J.S. Bach as an intention to continue the legacy within their individual musical languages. Chopin's Preludes (Op. 28) defined a new era of preludes as they presented themselves as a genre for increased virtuosity and artistry with substantial length, becoming an inspiration for the ones by Alkan (Op.31), Heller (Op.81), Busoni (Op.37), and Cui (Op.64). Preludes became a cyclic genre in an organic structure with recurring harmonies and motifs, without any reservation of seeking various shades of deep personal feeling. It was a revolutionary idea for the composers to emancipate the role of the Preludes and to celebrate the nature of "preparatory" state instead of only to anticipate what is to follow. Preludes by Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Shostakovich, Szymanowski,

Gershwin, Messiaen, Ginastera, and Martinu followed in 20th century with even more enhanced virtuosity and substantiality as a major genre for concert venues.¹¹

While the role of the prelude had departed completely from the ones of J.S. Bach, composers continued to demonstrate the influence of J.S. Bach in their compositional craftsmanship in structure, harmony, and motif. Martin's *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* follows the trend of celebrating the genre's emancipated status with strong individuality. Its lineage to J.S. Bach is not only implied but is the skeleton of the entire cycle as a fundamental basis for the cyclic motif and harmonic progression that pervades throughout the preludes, thus achieving an overall organicism of a single cycle. Martin's tribute to J.S. Bach is apparent in different levels.

1. The B–A–C–H motif constantly recurs in both audible and inaudible ways throughout the eight preludes.
2. Martin uses deviations of BACH motif in the length of 3 or 5 notes within a preserved contour.
3. No.6 is written in pseudo invention. The prelude is actually closer to two part canon within the structural scheme of an invention [Example 1].
4. Martin's chromaticism resembles closely to that of J.S. Bach.

A strong homage to J. S. Bach by using the BACH motif also creates a strong lineage to other composers who had previously done the same. On the

¹¹ Ferfuson, Howard. "Prelude." Grove Music Online. <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/43302?print=true>> (Accessed 29 July 2011).

other hand, considering his strong religious background, one can safely assume that Martin was giving a religious testimony through the motif.



Frank Martin "8 Préludes für Klavier" © Copyright 1949 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien/UE 11973- used by permission of European American Music Distributors Corporations, sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Universal Edition, Wien
 Example 1. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.6, mm. 1-2.

The influences of other former composers are strongly suggested in the preludes: for instance, Chopin and Berg in No.3, Stravinsky in No. 4, Schoenberg in No.6, Debussy in No.7, and Rachmaninoff in the opening of No.8. Prelude No. 3 immediately recalls prelude No. 2 from Chopin's Op.28 (example 2 and 3).



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 Example 2. Frédéric Chopin, Op.28, No.2. mm. 1-5.



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Example 3. Frank Martin, *Húit Préludes*, No. 3, mm. 1–4.

While Martin gives a clear homage to Chopin through textural similarities, he takes the Prelude into another emotional level. Chopin prelude's chromatic tension does not lead into a complete outburst of agony; on the other hand Martin provides the moment of emotional outpouring as the chromatic melody reaches into the higher register. In addition, an intricate web of polyphony reminds oneself of Berg's complex polyphony.

No.4 resembles metric ambiguity of Stravinsky's, and No. 6 presents itself with an illusion of dodecaphony of Schoenberg. The opening of No.7 creates timelessness by colorful chords in the softest dynamic (*ppp*) (example 4) and opens the door into the ambience of the intimate yet determinant inner voice that follows in measure 17 (example 28). The sparse chords in even pulse that create colorful moments open another realm of sensuality for the audience, reminding oneself of Debussy's music. Martin adored Debussy's ideology of sounds painting as a medium to develop music without impositions of rules from the past. Beyond the logic of conventional harmony and form, ambiguous harmony in a free form (structural manifestation of a removed frame) allowed Martin to express what was beyond earthly inspirations: his *Les Quatre Éléments* serves as a

good example.¹² In addition, fluctuating tempo and irregular pulse of Debussy, well demonstrated in his *Prélude à L'après midi d'un faune* serves as a fundamental character of Martin's prelude No.4.



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 Example 4. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 7, mm. 1-7.

Preceding to this set of Preludes, Charles Ives had exercised the idea of repeating an exact same melody in different combinations of layers in his first movement of Piano Trio. The same idea is shown in the two middle sections of No.7, as the left hand of the second middle section is a verbatim repetition of the first middle section with right hand elaborations in octatonic (example 33).

Bursting energy in sweeping motion from lower register to higher register in the opening of No.8 is very similar to the style of Rachmaninoff. Bearing the shallowest level of emotional engagement, No.8 immediately explores into

¹² In his own essay, Martin expresses his "deference to Debussy" by not naming this symphonic etudes "*Images*," even though he thought it was more suited to be called "*Images*." Martin also testifies of the inspirations for this piece as having come from deeply personal and spiritual contemplations that are beyond humanly or religious terms (Hines, 157-62).

Hines, Stephan. *The Orchestra Composers' Point of View*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.

various styles of other influences such as Martinu and Stravinsky with vibrant rhythms and misplacement of accents.

Chapter 4

Frank Martin's Piano Writing

Frank Martin was a well-trained pianist, performing as a keyboardist and harpsichordist often in his ensemble *Société de Musique Chambre*. Having studied the piano since the age of 10, Martin had a substantial level of experience in piano literature and technique. Overall traits of Martin's piano writing observed in *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* are as following.

1. Symphonic texture.

The preludes are highly polyphonic in a grand range of register and dynamics. Often, Bass lines are located far from the rest of the voices, and the high voices can be located far higher from lower voices. Bass line, in particular, plays a very significant role by often appearing outside the harmonic context.¹³ Pedal markings are carefully given to signify the predominance of certain voices requiring a performer to thoroughly understand the independence and hierarchy of the voices. The best example is seen in the opening of No.7 with open 5th descending bass with pedal markings that emphasizes the descent of the low voice.

¹³ Discussing the role of Bass in Martin's mature style, Cooke writes "a distinctively independent construction of bass lines to create constant dissonances underneath essentially triadic progressions,"

Cooke, Mervyn. "Late Starter. Mervyn Cook Concludes His Survey of Frank Martin's Creative Life." *The Musical Times* 134, no.1802 (Apr., 1993).

2. Lack of diatonic melodies.¹⁴

All of his melodies are based on octatonic scales. Octatonic scale allows one to remove the sense of tonal center and employ an interval of tritone most naturally. Tritone divides an octave equally, thus removing a clear sense of tonal hierarchy.

3. Melodies based on a motif (B–A–C–H).¹⁵

The longest and most luscious melodies are given in prelude No.3, yet they are only romanticized form of B–A–C–H motifs. The motif does not go through late Beethoven's or Brahms' process of motivic development.

4. Triadic progressions in root positions.

Conventional harmonic resolutions are seldom given, yet the role of functional dissonances is still preserved to create the moment of tension and moving forward. Harmonic movement is based on the scale of whole tone or octatonic.

5. Awkward writing.

Unlike composers such as Chopin, Liszt and Rachmaninoff whose compositions are highly idiomatic to piano playing, Martin presents his piano preludes with a clear intention to achieve motivic coherence and

¹⁴ Cooke points out that *le vin herbé* (1938/ 1940-41) demonstrates lack of memorable melodic invention as one of Martin's mature style traits .

Cooke, Mervyn. "Late Starter. Mervyn Cook Concludes His Survey of Frank Martin's Creative Life." *The Musical Times* 134, no. 1802 (Apr., 1993).

¹⁵ Interestingly, Martin had presented himself as a romantic lyricist in the beginning of his career. Gradually his melodies become chromatic and motivic as his style matures.

Cooke, Mervyn. "Frank Martin's Early Development." *The Musical Times* 131, no. 1771 (Sep., 1990).

uncompromised sophistication of textural web. As the preludes do not accommodate to more natural ways of piano playing, one is often to face hand crossing, large leaps, and intervals that demand uneasy stretch.

6. Carefully designed climaxes and grand range of the register.

The climaxes are signaled and executed by registral contrasts. Martin alludes to an arrival on culmination not only by loudest dynamic or a thicker texture, but also by the extremity of the piano registers. Overall structure and registral movements demonstrate a relevant correlation.

7. Sonic effect.

Martin writes immediate sonic effects that are often temporary, and exist independently from the harmonic and textural context. Dramatic effects are also executed by extreme dynamics, articulations, silence, and abrupt changes in color.

8. The motif B–A–C–H and chromaticism.

The BACH motif produces many variants by altering the intervals within the preserved contour. The BACH motif also appears in inversion, rhythmic diminution and augmentation.

9. Detailed pedal markings.

Pedal markings are given so that a performer can comprehend the independence of each voice and prioritize layers to decide which line needs to be projected more strongly as a primary voice [Example 7.1–3]. Often a performer is to make an artistic decision regarding *una corda* (for instance, in passages that is marked *dolce*), as Martin does not provide specific indications for the soft pedal.

10. Touch.

The preludes were written for Dinu Lipatti with Martin specifically praising his sensitive touch on the keyboard (Donna Sherrel Martin 54).¹⁶ Such statement provides an insight to the esthetical dimensions of the preludes; they are intended to present the palette of colors and a wide array of sonic experiences rather than focusing solely on his compositional language and pitch arrangements. Hence, the performer is to make thoughtful decisions on the tone and color.

11. Obscure tonality and the tonal center.

Octatonic scale and an interval of tritone pervade throughout the preludes in melody, harmony and the motif. Nevertheless, each prelude ends with a strongly suggested tonal center.

12. Orchestral dynamics.

Dynamic levels are not confined to the concept of percussive effects of the keyboard. Rather, one is required to gain an imagination of the grandeur of orchestral dynamic. The polyphonic texture demands an execution of multi-layered dynamics as well as carefully voiced climaxes, especially when the climax takes place with voices distanced far from one another in the register.

¹⁶ After hearing Dinu Lipatti in 1948 in London, Martin has written as following.

*pour promener vos dix doigts d'enchanteur
j'aurais voulu douze jardins magiques.
Alas' ils ne sont que huit, et peu feeriques.
c'est qu'au cours d'un travail plein de lenteur
la Muse, trop souvent, m'a fait la nique*

Martin, Frank. *A propos de-- : Commentaires de Frank Martin sur Ses Oeuvres*. Neuchâtel : Baconnière, c1984.

Chapter 5

1. *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* as a Single Cycle- Motif and Harmonic Slide

As one studies Martin's *Huit Préludes pour le Piano*, it is crucial to understand Martin's view on the set of preludes as a single cycle. While acknowledging difficulty in achieving an organic structure in a longer composition, Martin speaks of his attempt to present the series of musical moments within a spectrum of a single continuum, as following (Hines, 163–4).

In music, in poetry, in every art that unfolds within a time continuum, the ideal is then—I repeat— that each element should flow from what has receded and call for what will follow...a musical phrase is heard as a whole, not as a succession of notes or of intervals or as a succession of chords...This continuity, which makes a musical work seem to us a single movement, is usually realized only in short pieces; in the largest forms it is extremely rare. At all events, it presents itself to the composer also as an ideal, which he tries to approach, as a limit towards which he can strive rather than as an end which he must attain.¹⁷

While viewing the music framed in an inevitable flow of time which constitutes a single spectrum (“whole”), Martin also points out an importance of acknowledging the nature of diverse constituents (Hines, 164).

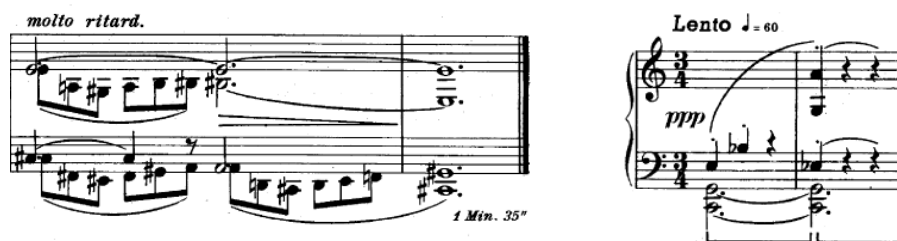
¹⁷ In the same essay, Martin analyzes the way a listener perceives a musical presentation as a whole; momentary sonic, visual or “olfactory” experiences compile to create a time continuum, however we perceive the continuum as a whole, not as a collection of individual moments.

Hines, Stephan. *The Orchestra Composers' Point of View*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.

Having initially intended to write a set of 12 preludes, Martin concluded that his musical inspirations have sufficed with a set of eight preludes.¹⁸ By such statement, it is safely assumed that the composer exercised diverse musical inspirations throughout the span of the eight preludes, viewing the process as an ongoing presentation of multiple ideas.

Motivically, all eight preludes are held together tightly by pervasive B–A–C–H motif and its variants. However, the intervallic relationships among the four notes in the motif are stricter in No.1 and 2. In addition, the appearance of the motif becomes less frequent and less explicit as the preludes progress from No.1 to No. 8.

The “harmonic slide” executes progressing from one triad to another one in parallel motion with one preserved common tone (pivot note). The harmonic slide is used to make a smooth transition into the next segment as one can see in a transition between No.6 and 7; prelude No.6 ends in C# minor chord, and it slides down to C Major chord to open prelude No.7. Such harmonic slide not only provides a sense of resolution but also an illusion of abruptly emerging into the world that is surreal (example 5).



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Example 5. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, Transition from Prelude No.6 to No.7.

¹⁸ The number 12 bears historical significance, as it signifies the influence of J.S. Bach, Chopin, Schoenberg and the entire system of diatonicism with 12 keys.

2. *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* as a Single Cycle- Program

Martin's narrative vocal/ chorale compositions that were composed during the same decade exhibit strikingly similar musical traits and compositional techniques to the piano preludes. Developing a mature style, Martin demonstrated a skill of sensitive text setting, and gained a reputation as composer who not only arranges texts effectively, but also finds the most expressive way of composing the music that is in accordance to the literature (Cooke).¹⁹

In *In terra pax* (1944), frequent usage of ascending and descending motions, dynamic and registral contrast and extremity of dynamics are used to musically paint the specifics of the plot. Bruhn proposes examples of symbolic timbre and gesture (Bruhn, 112-3).²⁰

Martin composed a masterful choral work, *Golgotha* (1945-48), almost during the same time as he composed his piano preludes using similar idea of exhausting the BACH motif (also referred as the "cross motif") and its variants produced by transposition or inversion. With a highly religious program with strong reference to Christianity, Martin achieves an organic unity by the BACH motif that signifies a "reclining cross (Bruhn, 129)." At the climax, Martin inverts the contour of the BACH motif; "as a cyclically recurring motif that gains ever greater presence as the narrative approaches the crucifixion, he uses a

¹⁹ Cooke, Mervyn. "Late Starter. Mervyn Cook Concludes His Survey of Frank Martin's Creative Life." *The Musical Times* 134, no. 1802 (Apr., 1993).

²⁰ Bruhn lists musical painting of the plot as following

1. *pp-ff* crescendo by a big drum is to portray earth quake.
2. Bells with repeated reverberations signify God's authority.
3. Trumpets accompany kings.
4. Rapid Crescendo followed by an abrupt silence portrays a broken seal

contour in which the four note chromatic cluster is rearranged so that a central descending minor third links two rising whole steps (Bruhn, 129).” As *Golgotha* is an exceptionally religious composition, which was written around the same time as the piano preludes, one can deduce the level of programmatic influence considering the similarities found in the way Martin uses BACH motif as a cyclically recurring idea.

Five years prior to composing the preludes, Martin was commissioned to write a cycle of six songs, *Sechs Monologe aus 'Jedermann.'* Bruhn points out that Martin “chose the passages underlying the six segments of his cycle in such a way that they would trace the title character’s “psychological and spiritual evolution (Bruhn, 75).”²¹ Using a term “musical psychogram,” Bruhn argues that Martin used a collection of little pieces in a cycle to portray a protagonist’s gradual spiritual growth (Bruhn, 92).

So far as instrumental compositions are concerned, it is worth noting Martin’s affinity to writing “Ballades,” a genre that implies narrative elements in a simpler architecture. He wrote six Ballades: for saxophone (1938), flute (1939), piano (1939), Trombone (1939), cell (1949) and viola (1972). The ballades display melodies in longer phrases (Cooke).²² Although Martin intends his instrumental music to only “evoke” certain sentiments as he did not “believe in music expressing precise sentiments, whatever they may be,” unless it is associated with texts (Hines, 164), one can deduce a linearly coherent “psychogram” of the *Huit Préludes* as following.

²¹ The quote is taken from Martin’s essay in 1944 (Bruhn 75).

²² Cooke, Mervyn. “Late Starter. Mervyn Cook Concludes His Survey of Frank Martin’s Creative Life.” *The Musical Times* 134, no. 1802 (Apr., 1993).

1. Prelude No.1

Grand orchestral opening introduces BACH motif. The BACH motif makes grandioso entrance into the music with accents in note values that are held for significant durations. BACH motif presents itself with a confident bearing however, lands in a completely wrong key, thus signaling the departure of its journey.

2. Prelude No.2

The BACH motif is presented more melodically in a melancholic state. Presenting the BACH motif less explicitly in the beginning, the prelude goes through rhythmic and metric modifications of the motif until it becomes more audible towards the end. The BACH motif refuses to linger on the climax and abruptly ends the prelude with a question.

3. Prelude No.3

The introverted but deeply devastated side of the BACH motif is introduced to arrive at the culmination point with the greatest infliction.

4. Prelude No.4

The BACH motif is completely helpless, out of control and has lost its clear consciousness (lack of clear meter and melody). The pulse loses its constant frame but gains an increasing momentum into No.5

5. Prelude No.5

Relentless momentum reaches at the dramatic outburst of urgent outcry. The 16th notes run endlessly while the BACH motif hides inaudibly within the texture. Intense emotional engagements as seen in previous preludes are not observed in No.5. However, the *candeza* allows a moment of complete freedom.

6. Prelude No.6

Two voices sing with clear consciousness (in clarity in meter and well planned pseudo 12 tone pitch arrangement). The voices are calm yet have not lost their dramatic characters from No.5 completely. The local climax takes place in the upper register.

7. Prelude No.7

The BACH motif enters the world that surpasses humanly turmoil. The motif sings with the most convoluted and sophisticated language that transcends the words of human world (No. 7 is composed most thoroughly with highly systematic and consistent planning of pitch arrangements).

8. Prelude No.8

The intense journey of the BACH motif up to No.7 is immediately compensated by carelessly celebratory beginning. The BACH motif is definitely in a different state from where it began its journey in.

3. *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* as a Single Cycle- Architecture

The tonal schemes of the preludes show arch form-like symmetries in various levels. Each prelude ends with a clear tonal center, and the tonal scheme divides the preludes into three parts.²³

²³ Geraldine Collins defines tonal centers of each prelude by the harmonies of the beginning in his *The Eight preludes for piano of Frank Martin a lecture recital, together with three recitals of selected works of J.S. Bach, L.v. Beethoven, J. Brahms, F. Chopin, I. Albéniz, R. Schumann, A. Scriabin, F. Liszt, and K. Szymanowski* (p.23). Viewing the set of preludes as a cycle, I put more significance to the ending

Part I

Prelude No.1-2: D#M-> Bm

Part II

Prelude No.3-5: open 5th on G#-> open 5th on C#-> open 5th on G#

Part III

Prelude No. 6-8: C# m-> C M-> C# M

Prelude 3, 4, and 5 clearly construct symmetry on chords built on open 5th. Prelude 6, 7 and 8 also create an arch around the centered C Major. The first tonal centers of the three parts, D#M-G#-C#m also create a symmetry of an identical interval, the perfect 4th. Most interestingly, the very first chord of prelude No.1 is C# minor whereas the last chord of the last prelude is in C# Major (example 6.1-2).



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Example 6.1. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 1, m. 1.

tonality of each prelude, while taking the beginning as a continuum of temporal dimension from the preceding preludes.

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 Example 6.2. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.8, Ending.

Chapter 6.

Analytical Details of Preludes

The entire cycle of eight preludes can be divided into three parts, and each division is united by tonal and narrative relationships.

1. Part I: Prelude No.1 and No.2

Although prelude No.1 starts with C# minor chord, it ends in D# major. The prelude is in three parts, A–B–A'. There are three distinctive voices in the A section. All voices outline the contour of BACH motif. The outer two voices also progress in a chromatic descent, and the pedal markings imply that the most important lines are the accented chords of outer voices. The middle voice embodies an altered BACH melody (example 7.1); in mm. 1–4, Martin hides the last note (A#) of the motif as a passing tone, and ends the phrase by a raised pitch (C#) as if the phrase raises a question with a signal of forth coming long journey.

In the A section, same harmonic sequence (minor triad -> diminished 7th -> major 7th built on the root half step down) is repeated three times in the tonal center of C–F–Bb, the circle of fifth (example 7.1–3). In the harmonic sequence of three chords, Martin uses harmonic slide to move from one chord to another using different pivot notes (table 1).

Table 1. Harmonic Slide in Prelude No.1, mm. 1–3.

m. 1	m. 2	m. 3	
E	E	E	Pivot note
C#	C# Pivot note	C	Bass descending
G#	G	G Pivot note	
	B	B Pivot tone -> A# Passing tone-> C# = BACH	



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 Example 7.1. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, Harmonic Sequence in Prelude No.1,

mm. 1–3.



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 Example 7.2. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, Harmonic Sequence in Prelude No.1,

mm. 5–7.



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 Example 7.3. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, Harmonic Sequence in Prelude No.1,

mm. 15–17.

The BACH motif naturally embodies intervals of half step and major / minor 3rds. Martin takes a full advantage, altering the intervals within the octatonic scales (that also embody intervals of half step and the major / minor 3rds) to create diverse and longer melodies within the skeleton of the BACH motif. In *plus amine* (m.9), cantabile melody in the middle voice is in an octatonic scale. However, the two notes (G and Bb) in the melody in mm. 10–11 do not belong to the octatonic scale, and come as expressive dissonances (example 8). The rest of notes in melody belong to an octatonic scale, F–F#–G#–A–B–C#–D–E.



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Example 8. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.1, mm. 9–11.

As the opening A section consists of three sequences of same harmonic progression in a circle of fifths, the entrance of the B section comes as a surprise as it break the routine. In the last measure of the A section (m. 17), Martin carefully ends the last harmonic sequence in Bb Major with the middle voice melody ending in a raised pitch B, which tonally conflicts with the surrounding Bb Major chord (example 9.1).

Martin intends to anticipate the entrance of E minor in the beginning of the B section by the last note of the previous measure, B, which functions as the dominant (example 9.1–2). On the other hand, an interval of tritone from the Bb Major chord also provides a sense of discomfort and surprise. It is an incredible way of transiting into a new section by both utilizing and obscuring a conventional harmonic expectation simultaneously. In addition, Martin again employs his harmonic slide with the pivot note (table 2).

Table 2. Harmonic Slide from the Last Chord of the A Section to the First Chord of B Section in Prelude No. 1.

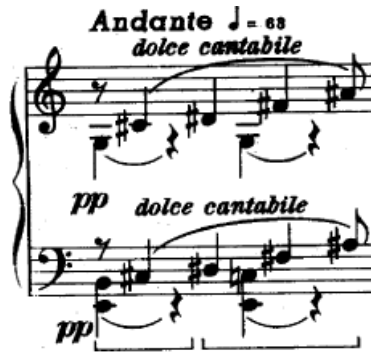
Bb Major chord with B in the middle voice (mm. 17)	E minor triad (mm. 18)	
B	B Pivot note	
Bb		
D	E	Parallel motion up
F	G	Parallel motion up



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Example 9.1. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.1, Last System of the A Section,

mm. 13–17.



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 Example 9.2. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.1, Beginning of the B Section, m. 18.

The B section is in four voices; two voices in chordal progressions, one voice with melody and another voice in syncopated rhythm. By its tempo marking *Andante*, Martin instructs more fluent movement than the opening *Grave*, with forward direction towards the climax. The first part of the B section ends as the four voices reach at the climax in the higher register. The second part of the B section (starting in m. 27) is a reminiscence of the opening melody in a timeless space, slowly building up the energy into the very end of the prelude. The melodies and harmonies are built on the scales of octatonic or whole tone.

The overall architecture of prelude No.1 depends largely on registral contrasts. Martin uses registral contrast not only to create dramatic effects, but also to design the structural scheme that effectively serves the drama; starting in the lower register, the prelude arrives at the culmination (m. 26) in the high register, then comes back down.

The A' section (mm. 40–43) is an abridged version of the A section (m. 1–17). In the beginning of the prelude (m.3), the last note of BACH motif (G#–G–B–A#) is placed on a metrically weaker beat and is immediately replaced by C# as

the last note of the motif. The raised contour to C# results in a phrase that refuses to close (example 10.1).

When A' comes back in m. 40, Martin does not obscure the last note of the BACH motif, and removes the altered raised pitch (example 10.2). By comparing two examples, example 10.1 and example 10.2, one can see another major change in A' (mm. 40–43); the first note of middle voice shifts to the downbeat of the measure, with pedal markings that emphasize middle voice's BACH motif rather than the attack of the chords.

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Example 10.1. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, G#-G-B-A#-C# in an Altered BACH

Contour in No. 1, mm. 1–4.

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Example 10.2. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, E#-E-G#-G Outlining BACH Motif

in No.1, mm. 40–43.

In the duration of only four measures, this short reprise of the grand opening picks up the same pattern, however with different chordal progressions in the outer voices: A# minor-> C# minor-> A Major 7th (E missing)-> D# major. While the bass in the A section chromatically outlines descent, it now is in a bigger leap of an ascending contour, making a declamatory ending in D# major.

The beginning of prelude No.2 in B minor is tritone apart from the last chord of Prelude No.1. The first four notes of prelude No. 2 seem somewhat arbitrarily chosen; in fact, it actually follows the harmonic progression of the last four bars of No.1 (A#m-> C#m-> A Major 7th with suggestive E -> D#M).

In the beginning, the BACH motif is passive presented by being intricately planted in the left hand lower voice (A#-A-C-B), and in the metrically shifted melody of the right hand (C#-C-E-Eb).

↘ ↘ ↘ ↘

↗ ↗ ↗ ↗

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Example 11. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, Passively Embedded BACH Motif in

the Beginning of Prelude No.2.

The BACH motif gradually shifts its metric placement so that the initial melody shapes into more noticeable motif till the climax in m. 49. The progress of rhythmic/ metric modifications of the BACH motif divides the prelude into 4 sections.

Section A- mm. 1–20

Section A'- mm. 21–28: transposed up a whole step, in a thicker texture.

Section A''- mm. 29–38: rapid modulation and rhythmic alterations start taking places in m. 33 to modify metric placement of the BACH motif.

Section A'''- mm. 39–end: complete transformation of the melody has already taken place. In m. 44, the first note of the BACH motif is on the stronger beat, announcing the beginning of the climax.

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Example 12. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, Prelude No.2 mm. 30–end.

According to the markings given by the composer, the climax of the entire prelude takes place just four measures before its end. In m. 50, the culminated energy quickly dissolves as the prelude ends in a solemn B minor triad in the low register. The prelude does not allow enough time for the energy to dissipate over

the last three bars, however Martin gives an indication of *Retardando*. A performer is to decide how much *Retardando* is to be taken for gradual tempo transition into No.3 with a proper resolution of the tension (example 12).

2. Part II: Prelude No.3, 4 and 5

The beginning of prelude No. 3 immediately recalls Chopin’s Op. 28, No.2 in the left hand accompaniment and the melodic phrase that quickly repeats in transposition. While Chopin’s Op. 28, No.2 is marked *Lento*, Martin gives the tempo marking *Tranquillo ma con moto*, suggesting forward momentum into an emotional outburst in m. 29.

No. 3 demonstrates the strongest manifestation of Martin’s craftsmanship of octatonic scales into a melody. Martin uses two types of octatonic scales. The two octatonic scales starting on C are as following (table 3).

Table 3. Two Types of Octatonic Scales in Prelude No.3.

Type 1: C–D–D#–F–F#–G#–A–B –C–D	Type 2: C–C#–D#–E–F#–G–A–A#–C
---------------------------------	-------------------------------

Prelude No.3 is in 3 Parts: A–A’–B. In the A section (mm. 1–17), octatonic type 1 is predominantly used. Any pitch out of octatonic type 1 is to be taken as a “dissonance,” quickly resolving into the pitch that belongs to the scale. Example 13 shows the “dissonance” E in m. 13, quickly resolving into D#. One can observed the same technique when melody repeats the same in transposition in m. 13.



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Example 13. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.3, mm. 5–6 and m. 13 with

“Dissonances.”

In the A' section (m. 18–30), melody is in octatonic type 2. Same technique to treat “dissonance” is observed in measure 21 as E# (outside of octatonic type 2) is quickly resolved to F#. In the middle of the A' section, the prelude reaches at its culmination with the widest distance between the bass and upper voice and the greatest emotional infliction is portrayed by chromatic melody in octatonic type 2. The last section (m. 31) starts in *subito piano* in *dolce*, yet with an expressive melody that reminisces intense moments in preceding two sections. The last five measures of *Recit. ad lib.* begin with the melody in octatonic type 2 in the right hand, and the left hand joins with melody in octatonic type 1 three measures before the ending (example 14). In contrast to No. 2, Martin allows enough time for the energy to dissipate and calm down through “*Recitative ad lib.*”



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Example 14. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 3, Octatonic Type 1 and 2 in the

Last Five Measures.

The BACH motif is most intricately embedded in prelude No.3; the right hand melody lingers within the circular contour of the BACH motif, while the left hand moving notes outline the motif (example 15).



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Example 15. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.3, BACH Motif in the Left Hand

Part in m. 9.

The beginning of No.3 is tonally ambiguous, and the ending does not give a clear tonal center. However, held D# in the right hand and low G# in the left hand make G# triad with open 5th (example 14). The last note G# is picked up by the first chord of the next prelude as the 5th of C# triad (example 16).



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Example 16. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, Beginning of No.4, mm. 1–2.

No. 4 provides clear demonstrations of Martin’s typical non-functional harmonic sequences in root positions. While moving in their root positions, the four chords in the first measure immediately outline the contour of the BACH motif (example 16).

The most interesting trait of Prelude No.4 is found in its metric ambiguity. There is no meter marking given by the composer. Rather, bar lines are given to define the frames of phrases. As the triadic melody starts varying itself in contour and rhythm, phrase length varies accordingly (Tupper, 128).²⁴ The pulse of 8th note stays stably, however Martin refuses to provide a sense of consistency in phrase length. It is similar to metric variations of Stravinsky, yet Martin does not provide specific meter markings for each bar. It is Martin’s inventive way of synchronizing meter into the continuously changing melodic line. The triadic melody in a circular motion is more effectively carried out without being confined to the meter. Prelude No. 4 is in three sections.

²⁴ Tupper, Janet Eloise. “Stylistic Analysis of Selected Works by Frank Martin.” Ph.D diss., Indiana University, 1964.

A (begins in C#m triad: m. 1–9)

A' (begins in F# minor triad: m. 10–25)

A'' (begins in A minor triad: m. 26–end)

As the music progresses, texture gets thicker, registral range becomes larger and the intensity increases with bigger dynamics. As is in prelude No.3, registral expansion is to enhance the effect of dramatic climax. All three sections start with an essentially same melodic idea in transposition. While the first chords of the each section does not relate in any consistent manner, the arrival of A minor triad (with pitch E on top) as the first chord of the last section (after the climax) is carefully prepared by unison B in m. 25 (example 17).²⁵

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, likely a prelude. It consists of two staves, a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 3/4. The score is divided into two main sections. The first section, marked 'cresc.', features a melodic line in the right hand with a circular, descending motion, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The second section, marked 'ff', continues the melodic idea with increased intensity and complexity, featuring more dense chordal textures and a wider registral range. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

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Example 17. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.5, mm. 23–25.

The A' section presents further development of the formerly introduced circular melody. While materials were rather passive in the A section, the A' section allows the material to fully expand. The two voices (right hand triadic

²⁵ Pitch B serves as temporary dominant to anticipate an arrival of E (the 5th of A minor triad), as well as harmonically sliding down to A minor triad.

melody and left hand single line) expand the texture in mm. 21–25 by doubling the number of pitches in unison with rhythmic augmentation.

Lack of meter also allows Martin to freely manipulate the sense of time and space. Relentless momentum up to the climax stops at the m. 23 as the BACH motif reiterates itself three times with rhythmic variations, thus creating a moment of paused time (example 17). The alternating major and minor thirds from octatonic produce altered BACH motifs in mm. 23–25 (example 19).



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 Example 18. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.4, Texture Expansion in mm. 21–22



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 Example 19. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.4, BACH Motif in mm. 23–25.

When the initial melody comes back in the beginning of the A'', rhythm is more justified as though it compensates the instability of the preceding sections. The theme is in a stronger voice in *ff*, and it does not attempt to develop or signify anything volatile. The melodic material does not pursue exploring to higher register, but the motif closes itself in a descending motion. The last five measures of the prelude is the most fascinating example of Martin creating a space where two opposing ideas coexist. Thematic materials in the right hand are rhythmically augmented, while left hand three-note figure comes back sooner and sooner. The three-note left hand figure contradicts what right hand pursues; while right hand attempts to close in peace, left hand signals an urgency giving premonition to the beginning of relentless prelude No.5. *Senza retardando* indicates that decreasing momentum is already inscribed by rhythmic augmentation, thus a performer should attempt to end the piece without compensating with the level of energy or tempo so that the music can continue straight into No.5. The prelude ends in C# minor (example 20).

The image shows a musical score for the final eight measures of Frank Martin's "Huit Préludes, No. 4". The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system shows the right hand with a descending melodic line and the left hand with a rhythmic three-note figure. The second system continues this contrast, with the right hand playing a more complex melodic phrase and the left hand maintaining the three-note figure. Performance markings include "sempre marc.", "poco", "senza riten. très sourd", and "pp". The piece ends with a double bar line and the tempo marking "1 Min. 10''".

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 Example 20. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 4, Last Eight Measures.

Prelude No.5 picks up where No.4 leaves off, dynamically and tonally (C# as the first note). No. 5 is the most virtuosic and pianistic prelude with a brilliant cadenza. Registral contrasts of intensely somber bass and bright top voice as observed in preceding preludes are also used. However, relentless motoric movements of 16th triplets in prelude No.5 sweeps entire register of piano in up and down motion to create sonic manifestation of explosion, speed and brilliance. The prelude lacks a lyrical melody, as it is driven by triplet figures that outline harmonies in a constant motoric movement (example 21).



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Example 21. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 5, mm. 1–3.

Prelude No. 5 draws a clear contrast to No.3 where the BACH motif appears within long phrases of lyrical melody. Nevertheless, No.5 is the most honest portrayal of a protagonist who cannot appropriately verbalize, yet expresses emotion with no reservation. As the prelude progresses, texture gradually expands within the fantasy-like free composed form, gearing towards the cadenza with increasing energy and *accelerando*. After the metrically free and explosive cadenza which emits the long-built tension through sparkling trills in the high register, momentum finds its own pace by coming back down to the

lower register (example 22) and finally resumes the firm subdivision in three in *Tempo I* for the last four measures (example 23). Subdivision in three makes a smooth transition into No.6. The prelude ends in G# with open 5th.

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system shows a treble clef and a bass clef. The tempo is marked *accelerando*. The second system begins with a repeat sign and a fermata over the first measure, followed by a section marked *Molto vivace* and *ff très éclatant mit Glanz*. The third system continues the *Molto vivace* section and concludes with a section marked *riten.* and *Tempo I*.

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 Example 22. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 5, Cadenza.

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Example 23. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 5, Last Four Measures.

3. Part III: Prelude No. 6, 7 and 8

Prelude No. 6 is composed in pseudo 12 tone row, however Martin leaves out D and B so that the 12 tone row is incomplete; thus Martin simulates Schoenberg's dodecaphony without completely following the rule (example 24). Other composers, contemporary to Martin, who adopted Schoenberg's technique independently include Ernst Krenek and Luigi Dallapiccola (Griffiths, 131).²⁶

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Example 24. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, Beginning of Prelude No.6 in Pseudo Dodecaphony.²⁷

²⁶ Griffiths, Paul. *Modern Music: A concise History*. New York: Thoames and Hudson, 1994.

²⁷ The first 10 notes in the right hand part complete the row, without D and B.

By the texture of two independent voices, the prelude resembles Bach's two part inventions. In fact, it is closer to being a canon between two voices, repeating the initial statement in transpositions; the second voice makes an entrance in the perfect 4th up (m.1).

This prelude is in two parts: A (measure 1-11)–A' (measure 12- end). Unlike prelude No.3, which introduces the two types of octatonic scales on a common note, prelude No.6 prominently uses a single type of octatonic scale (the one that starts with half step interval up) on different pitches (example 25 and 26).²⁸



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Example 25. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 6, mm. 7–8.



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Example 26. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 6, mm. 14–15.

²⁸ Melodies in mm. 7–8 and 14–15 are built on octatonic. Scale of C–Db–Eb–E–Gb–Ab–A–B in m. 7, scale of F–Gb–Ab–A–B–C–Db–Eb–E in m. 8, scale of G–G#–A#–B–C#–D–E–F in m. 14, and scale of C–C#–D#–E–F#–G–A–A# in m. 15. All four examples are built on octatonic scales that start with half step up.



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Example 27. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 6, Four Octatonic Built Melodies in the Last Three Measures.²⁹

The final chord ends in clear C# minor, harmonically sliding to the opening of Prelude No.7 in C major (example 5).

Table 4. Harmonic Slide between Prelude No.6 and No.7.

Last chord of No.6	First chord of No.7
G#	G
E	E Pivot note
C#	C

Overall, Prelude No.6 calms down the energy of No.5 by solidifying the tempo in a clearer texture so that it can make a smooth transition to highly spiritual and solemn ambience of No.7. The harmonic slide in C major is almost

²⁹ The four melodic phrases in Example 27 are also built on an octatonic scale starting with half step up.

surreal, considering that the entire cycle of the eight preludes begins with C# minor (beginning of No.1), and ends in C# major (very end of No.8). The key of C major is the furthest from the tonal center of C# where the entire set of preludes is framed within.

No. 7 is in a symmetrical arch form: A–B–B'–A with clear distinctions between the sections. The first 16 measures create a colorful ambience with upper two voices in union and staccato, as if one paints lines of raindrops in the air. The low open 5th bass in chromatic descent moves from C to A. Descending lines in upper voices alternate between an octatonic scale and a chromatic scale (example 4). Similar manner of alternating between octatonic and chromatic scales is also observed in the transition of B section (m. 34–40), which is based on the opening materials. The influence of Debussy is immediately noticed in the beginning as the music not only provides a sonic experience but also stimulates our multiple senses of open imagination. Harmonies do not drive functionally, but exist in the moment as if coloring the air.

The beginning of the B section (m. 17) immediately introduces all 12 tones. In contrast to the beginning of No.6, where the transparent texture “deceitfully” presents homage to Schoenberg’s 12 tone row with an incomplete row, Martin executes 12 tone technique more strictly in a veil of romantic texture (example 28).

Example 28 demonstrates the first phrase of the B section (m.17) that introduces two 12 tone rows: the first row including first 6 chords and B in the 7th chords (on the 3rd quaver of m.18), and the second row from the chord on the 3rd quaver of m. 18 (thus B overlaps in both rows) till the end of the phrase. Another

phrase that follows in mm. 20–23 is an identical statement to the phrase in mm. 17–20 in transposition.



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 Example 28. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.7, mm. 17–20.

Transition from the first two phrases of section B into *Piu espressivo* (m.21) takes place without modulation, but with Martin's harmonic sliding with open fifth without a pivot note) in m. 23 (C# and F#-> Bb and Eb) (example 29). In *Piu espressivo*, left hand is strictly composed of pitches within an octatonic scale of C–C#–D#–E–F#–G–A–A#–C (example 30).



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 Example 29. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.7, Harmonic Slide in mm. 23–24.

While left hand bass part continues horizontally within its own octatonic frame, it creates a complete presentation of twelve tones with the pitches in the right hand within the two measures, mm. 24–25 (example 30). An exact same order of identical pitch arrangement is repeated in the length of one measure (m. 26), one measure (m. 27) and two measures (m. 28–29) (example 30).

↘

Più espressivo

↗

↗

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Example 30. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.7, mm. 24–29.³⁰

Martin's harmonic slide takes place most magically in mm. 32–33 and 33–34 to enter *Animando poco a poco* (example 31), which is a transition based on the materials from the very beginning into *Con moto* (m. 41).

³⁰ Exactly identical pitch arrangement repeats 4 times from mm. 24 to 29.

Table 5. Harmonic Slide in No.7, mm. 32–33.

Last chord of measure 32	First chord of measure 33
Fb	E Pivot note
Ab	G
Db	C

Table 6. Harmonic Slide in No.7, mm. 33–34.

Last chord of measure 33	First chord of measure 34
Eb	D # Pivot note
G	F#
C	B



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Example 31. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.7, mm. 32–34.

Con moto (m. 41) contains constant repetitions of a single measure that includes all 12 tones, yet the last note of the row is metrically shifted into the first

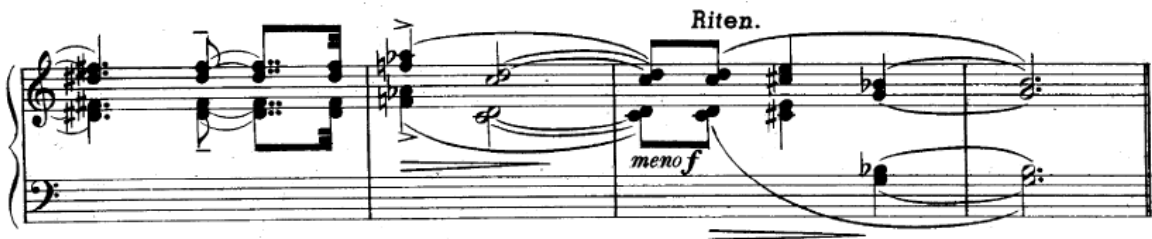
quaver of the next measure. The entrance of the left hand signifies the beginning of each row (example 32.1).



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 Example 32.1. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.7, Metrically Shifted 12 Tone Rows

in *Con moto*.

From m. 41–49, Martin successfully achieves a gradual melodic modification so that the music agitatedly progresses into the local climax *ff* in m. 49, where repeated circular energy finally soars. The climax is followed by a 12 tone row that are presented in the span of 4 measures (instead of 1 measure), thus allowing a longer time is given to dissipate the energy and move into the next section (example 32.2).



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 Example 32.2. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.7, 12 Pitches Doubled in the

span of the Last Four Measures of *Con moto*.

The B' section begins with five measures of metrically ambiguous transition into an exact verbatim of the B section in the left hand with right hand elaborations of octatonic scales. Martin's instruction that reads "*la main gauche toujours bien en dehors*" specifies the left hand as a primary voice throughout the B' section (example 33).

m. 17, Beginning of the section B



m. 59, section B'



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Example 33. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.7, Beginnings of the Section B

(m. 17) and B' (m. 59).

When the opening A returns, it is with extra four measures in the end that executes harmonic slide from F# dominant 7th chord to C major. It is not only a demonstration of Martin's typical harmonic slide, but it also shows his way of manipulating expectations of listeners who would expect F# dominant to resolve into 5th scale down, B major. With a surprise, it resolves into C major (example 34).

Table 7. Harmonic Slide at the End of Prelude No.7.

F# Dominant 7 th chord	C major chord
E	E Pivot note
C#	C
A#	G
F#	



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Example 34. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.7, Last Four Measures.

The opening of the last prelude quickly resumes the energy and liveliness by the sweeping ascending motion of 32nd notes into the theme that gallops with its dotted rhythm, staccato and accents. Such beginning recalls the style of Rachmaninoff, however the prelude is a juxtaposition of various styles in the form of rondo. The prelude compensates the emotional heavy weight of No.7 by its playful and light character. Martin decides to embed the BACH motif in less obvious manners so the music serves the character more than imbricating the motif. The first six notes from No.6 return in the left hand part in m. 10 in a

completely contrasting character (example 35). For such reasons, No. 8 appears to be the most accessible and effective prelude.



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Example 35. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No.8, m. 10.³¹

As the prelude progresses from No.1 to No.8, the BACH motif dissolves, and the length of prelude becomes longer. While tonal and theatrical relationships can divide the cycle into three parts, one can also divide the cycle into two parts by metric changes. The preludes start with even numbered and stable meter gradually losing its metric solidity, and regains the consistency in 4, then in 3 towards the end.

Part I (in 4 -> 2 -> ambiguous meter)

Prelude 1- in 4

Prelude 2- in 2

Prelude 3- half time, 2/2

Prelude 4- metric ambiguity

³¹ First six notes of from No.6 returns in prelude No.8, left hand part in m. 10.

Part II (in 4 -> 3 in subdivisions of 3)

Prelude 5- 12/16: in 4 with 3 subdivision of 16th note ³²

Prelude 6- 12/8: in 4 with 3 subdivision of 8th note

Prelude 7- ¾: in 3 of quarter note

Prelude 8- 18/16: in 3 with subdivision of 16th note

Regarding the meter in prelude 8, Tupper writes “according to a footnote on the score the performer is directed to think of the meter as 3 over a dotted quarter note with fifth-six beat to the minute, rather than six dotted eighth note unites with 132 beats to the minute (Tupper, 130).”³³ This statement corroborates the point that No. 8 is in 3, not in 6. Tupper also points out mm. 76–80 in prelude No.8 where Martin gives an illusion of 3+3+2 or 3+2+2 compound meter (example 36).



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Example 36. Frank Martin, *Huit Préludes*, No. 8, mm. 76–80.

³² Tupper states “4/4 with a preponderance of triplet subdivision of the beat unit” is “one of his favorite rhythmic techniques (129).”

³³ Tupper, Janet Eloise. “Stylistic Analysis of Selected Works by Frank Martin.” Ph.D diss., Indiana University, 1964.

Chapter 7

1. Interpretational Challenges and Suggestions

In order to decide whether the set of preludes should be considered as a single cycle, one needs to speculate several angles: extra-musical implications flowing from one to another in a single coherent thread, tonal linkage, and unifying melodic or harmonic motifs. Martin's *Huit Préludes pour le Piano* meet all the conditions above. Consistently dissolving the BACH motif also suggests that the cycle is the journey of Martin himself with a personal agenda of breaking through the legacy of BACH by surpassing the greatest composer of the past. The following is a summarized scheme of the three major divisions.

- a. No.1-2: Grand introduction of the BACH motif is followed by the motif transformation into a personal and emotional state.
- b. No. 3-5: After the most dramatic and personal outcry, music picks up the energy to culminate with brilliance
- c. No. 6-8: BACH goes through the most religious and self-reflective state to gain energy to face the world. The BACH motif returns in the most casual and careless way.

Although the individual prelude is capable of presenting itself as an independent and sufficiently effective entity, presenting the set of eight preludes in a given order provides the multi-dimensions of Martin's tonal, architectural and theatrical craftsmanship.

While clear homages to former composers are given in the preludes, Martin also demonstrates his intention to use the references to the earlier composers' style to further serve his musical intentions and surpass them.

For instance, No. 3 presents a level of emotional outburst that is far beyond what Chopin had attempted in his Op.28, No.2. No. 6 is a tribute to Bach's invention, however it only simulates the surface of the genre by substituting Bach's modulation with transpositions in the octatonic scales. No. 6 shows a tribute to Schoenberg by employing quasi-12 tone row in the beginning, only to show that Martin has intentionally avoided using all 12 tones. The beginning of No.8 is said to be an imitation of Rachmaninoff's piano writing, however it immediately drifts away from Rachmaninoff style. Thus, this set of preludes provides a realization that Martin attempts to go further from the former composers' achievements.

Dynamic, articulation, and tempo markings need to be considered not only pianistically but also orchestrally. Martin provides indications that designate sonic experiences beyond what piano can produce. Keyboard writings of the masters had always been with symphonic/ chamber music implications, however Martin's symphonic implication surpasses the level of hinting.

The example is instantly apparent in the very opening of prelude No.1. The chords are not to be hit percussively, but rather to imitate the sound of string instruments' long and deep bow strokes. Martin makes his intention clear by providing pedal markings on the chords. The ending of prelude No.5 is to simulate short but resonant sound of a percussion; the rhythmic placement of the notes and articulations serve more important roles than the actual pitches.

When presenting the eight preludes in one cycle, timings between the numbers are to be carefully decided to enhance the effective delivery of transitions. As discussed in chapter 5 and 6, each prelude holds tight relations to the following preludes harmonically, motivically and tonally. The timings between the preludes have to be within the silently continuing spectrum of tonality and pulse.

The narrative aspect of each prelude can also decide how much time is to be given to let the energy/ tension dissipate before a new prelude begins so that the audience can have enough time to digest what has already happened, and to anticipate what is about to happen. For instance, one needs enough time to shift the ambience between No.2 and 3, and between No.5 and 6. Prelude No.3 immediately opens the door to the most introspective and personal side of Martin, where as No. 2 ends carelessly and casually. On the other hand, Prelude No. 5 reaches at the peak of brilliance and outburst of energy, which demands considerable amount of time to calm down before No. 6 begins. On the other hand, No. 6 is to be immediately followed by No. 7 for Martin's harmonic slide to be effective.

2. Conclusion

Within the inevitable flow of musical evolution, composers always attempt to be uniquely creative. Martin makes his stance in the world of 20th century composers by various ways of synthesis: synthesizing the old and the current to create the future through processes of fusion and simple combinations. Martin achieves the level of sophistication and artistry that calls for an elaborate attention to comprehend his revolutionary yet a highly accessible musical language.

The *Húit Préludes pour le Piano* exists as a multi-dimension work. Martin's strong statement to his lineage is very strongly given, however tonal, harmonic, motivic, extra-musical and metric schemes that assemble the preludes as a single cycle demonstrate Martin as a highly individual and competent composer, while allowing a performer to personify the music through processes of analyzing, comprehending, interpreting and ultimately performance.

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