

# A PERFORMANCE GUIDE FOR WOLFGANG PLAGGE'S MUSIC FOR HORN

by

CARRIE D. STRICKLAND

(Under the Direction of Jean Martin-Williams)

## ABSTRACT

Wolfgang Plagge is an eminent Norwegian composer and pianist who, in recent years, developed a special interest in composing works for horn. Most of these compositions were commissioned by the Norwegian hornist Frøydis Ree Wekre, who has performed and promoted these works internationally, particularly in Norway and the United States. In addition to Prof. Wekre's efforts, other hornists, including Karl Kramer and Javier Bonet, have promoted Plagge's works. Even with this interest, no definitive source of information on these works exists. This apparent lack of information, combined with hornists' interest in new music, suggests a need for this study. The guide is intended as a resource for hornists looking to include a variety of recent works in their repertoire; it consists of performance considerations, relevant theoretical issues, interviews with performers as well as the composer, and information regarding available recordings.

INDEX WORDS: Plagge, Wekre, Bonet, Kramer, Horn, Performance

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## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my mother, Carole Strickland, who has always supported me throughout my musical career. I would also like to dedicate this paper to the memory of my father, Johnnie W. Strickland, who also supported my musical endeavors. Thank you for encouraging my love of music. Without both of you, none of this would have been possible.

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First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the assistance and artistry of Wolfgang Plagge, Frøydis Ree Wekre, Javier Bonet, and Karl Kramer. Mr. Plagge has written a wealth of quality music. It was truly a pleasure to meet with the composer and discuss his works and ideals for the horn. Frøydis Ree Wekre has been a source of inspiration for me for quite some time; I have had the great fortune of studying with her on two different occasions. She is a great example of a horn performer and pedagogue; it makes sense that her artistry would serve as a source of inspiration for composers and performers alike. In addition, I appreciate Javier Bonet and Karl Kramer participating in interviews for this study. Prof. Wekre, Mr. Bonet, and Mr. Kramer have all promoted Mr. Plagge's works and graciously agreed to be included in this study.

This project was funded by the U. S.-Norway Fulbright Foundation. The staff, including Jean Nesland Olsen, Tove Lain Knudsen, Cathrine Schrumpf, and Grete Spinks, was vital in making my stay in Oslo, Norway a pleasant one. The experience of being a Fulbrighter was invaluable; I hope this document represents Senator William J. Fulbright's ideals of cultural exchange in a positive manner. Living abroad and working with international artists was an enriching experience.

I wish to thank my committee members, Leonard V. Ball, Jr., David Haas, Fred Mills, and David Zerkel for your guidance in completing this document. I owe a special thanks to Knox Summerour for assisting with the formatting of musical examples. In addition, I appreciate Susan Thomas' help with Spanish to English translations of messages from Mr. Bonet.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES .....	ix
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	1
Results of the Study.....	2
2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....	9
3 <i>A LITANY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY</i> , OP. 39 .....	11
Performance Considerations.....	11
Relevant Theoretical Issues.....	12
Available Recordings .....	15
4 <i>MONOCEROS</i> , OP. 51 .....	17
Performance Considerations.....	17
Relevant Theoretical Issues.....	18
5 SONATA II, OP. 67.....	22
Performance Considerations.....	22
Relevant Theoretical Issues.....	25
6 SONATA FOR HORN AND PIANO, OP. 88 .....	30
Performance Considerations.....	30



Relevant Theoretical Issues.....	31
Available Recordings .....	36
7 <i>RAGA</i> , OP. 106 .....	38
Performance Considerations.....	38
Relevant Theoretical Issues.....	39
8 SONATA IV, OP. 115 .....	45
Performance Considerations.....	45
Relevant Theoretical Issues.....	47
9 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REVIEWS .....	53
10 CONCLUSION.....	56
REFERENCES .....	59
APPENDICES	
A CHANT USED IN <i>A LITANY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY</i> AND SONATA IV.....	62
B ACOUSTIC AND OCTATONIC COLLECTION INTERACTION.....	64

## LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

	Page
Example 1.1: Octave Designation.....	7
Example 3.1: <i>A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> , mvt. I, meas. 1-3 .....	13
Example 3.2: <i>A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> , modern notation of chant .....	14
Example 4.1: <i>Monoceros</i> , meas. 1 .....	19
Example 4.2: <i>Monoceros</i> , meas. 9 .....	19
Example 4.3: <i>Monoceros</i> , meas. 17-26.....	20
Example 5.1: Sonata II, mvt. 3, meas. 81-86.....	26
Example 5.2: Sonata II, mvt. 2, meas. 1-4.....	27
Example 5.3: Sonata II, mvt. 2, meas. 53-71 .....	27-28
Example 6.1: Sonata, Op. 88, mvt. I, meas. 1-5 .....	31
Example 6.2: Sonata, Op. 88, mvt. III, meas. 1-9.....	34-35
Example 7.1: <i>Raga</i> , meas. 20.....	41
Example 7.2: <i>Raga</i> , meas. 79.....	42
Example 8.1: Sonata IV, mvt. I, meas. 1-9.....	47-48
Example 8.2: Sonata IV, mvt. I, modern notation of <i>Veni Creator</i> .....	49
Example 8.3: Sonata IV, mvt. II, modern notation of <i>Summi Triumphum Regis</i> .....	50
Example 8.4: Sonata IV, mvt. II, meas. 1-5.....	50
Example 8.5: Sonata IV, mvt. II, meas. 7-9.....	51

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Wolfgang Plagge (*b.* 1960) is an eminent Norwegian composer and pianist who, in recent years, developed a special interest in composing works for horn. Most of these compositions were commissioned by the Norwegian hornist Frøydis Ree Wekre, who has performed and promoted these works internationally, particularly in Norway and the United States. In addition to Prof. Wekre's efforts, other hornists, including Karl Kramer and Javier Bonet, have promoted Plagge's works through commissioning and recording his compositions. *Raga*, Op. 106 was written for Norwegian hornist Karl Kramer; he has toured throughout Norway and the United States with Plagge as the pianist. Javier Bonet recorded *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Op. 39 on Verso Records. Even with this interest, no definitive source of information on these works exists; furthermore, there are very few sources regarding Norwegian composers and, consequently, Plagge. This apparent lack of information, combined with hornists' interest in new music, suggests a need for this study. Therefore, a performance guide for Plagge's music for horn will provide a source of analytical and historical material for the performer and may result in the addition of these works to the standard repertoire.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The guide is intended as a resource for hornists looking to include a variety of recent works in their repertoire. Plagge's works for unaccompanied horn, horn and piano, and two horns and piano are discussed. The performance guide consists of factual information (i.e., date of composition, length of composition, publisher information, and recordings available at the

time of the study), performance considerations and relevant theoretical points for each work, and an annotated bibliography of reviews. The composer's and hornists' interviews provided an invaluable source for the study and their views on the works have been included in the performance considerations. The theoretical issues, or analysis, discussed in relation to each work is not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, the analysis is intended to show the most important points for each work and draw the performers' attention to those elements that, in the opinion of the composer as well as the author, directly affect the performance of the works.

### **Results of the Study**

The works in this study are extremely complex compositions which immediately appeal to educated musicians as well as the general audience member. The works are musically demanding as well as extremely difficult in regards to technique for the hornist. Despite these challenges, the hornists included in this study agree that there are aspects which create interest and resonate with the performer and audience alike. Mr. Plagge achieves this goal through a high level of craft. He creates clearly contemporary compositions through "post-tonal" techniques including pitch-class manipulation and referential collections. In addition, Mr. Plagge has engaged in extensive study of Medieval sources of Scandinavia and often incorporates material from these sources in his compositions. He possesses the unique ability to synthesize these elements in a compositional method securely situated in a contemporary style while providing interest for both performers and audiences. Due to the complexity of Mr. Plagge's style of composition, several issues, including tonality, post-tonal techniques, and analytical approaches, must be examined and defined.

Prof. Wekre and John Dressler describe Mr. Plagge's music as being quite tonal.<sup>1</sup> For most people, this indicates functional tonality; however, it was discovered in the course of this study that "tonal" can have a very different meaning for different performers and composers. For instance, when Prof. Wekre was asked for her definition of "tonal," she described it in terms of traditional treatment of melodic and harmonic interaction:

For me, tonal is where I get some sense of tonality, there is a tonic somewhere. There are melodies and/or themes. There are interesting harmony changes. The music is based on a tradition in the melodic sense. There is tension but also release.<sup>2</sup>

However, Mr. Bonet described tonality as having particular tensions reflected through predictable melodic and harmonic movement:

Personally, I think one can consider music to be tonal, or with a certain tonality, when there are certain structural tensions reflected in it, that make it identifiable in some way with harmonic positions predominant to melodic movement or phrasing spreading out in a natural or seemingly natural way. These tensions apparently do not have, in my view, to be necessarily under any kind of rules, but rather even the composer him/herself can create his/her own codes and norms. Enough repetition of these guidelines allows the ear to be able to anticipate the musical discourse, so that the music can be considered in a certain way to be tonal. It remains clear that I am speaking of harmonic guidelines and norms, not of those that organize isolated sounds in serial form. We should finish this form of the traditional definition of tonality in its running streams of major, minor, and derivatives, establishing very diverse tonalities, or tonal musics. In a certain way we will be able to say that 'tonal' could be music with an interval harmonic organization that is logical or predictable, rather than structures that are chaotic, aleatoric or governed by serial or mathematical norms.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Kramer has a different view of "tonality" than that of Mr. Bonet or Prof. Wekre and describes tonality as being based on principles of hierarchy established in the common practice period:

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Dressler is Professor of Horn and Musicology at Murray State University and recording reviews editor for the *Horn Call*. "Recording Reviews" *Horn Call* 28, no. 2 (1998): 77-85.

<sup>2</sup> Frøydis Ree Wekre, interview by author, 21 November 2003, tape recording, Norwegian State Academy of Music, Oslo, Norway.

<sup>3</sup> This is taken from personal correspondence with Javier Bonet. This Spanish-English translation is by Dr. Susan Thomas, Assistant Professor of Musicology at the University of Georgia.

I am thinking of tonality as a system based on principles of the common practice period, where there is a hierarchy as opposed to systems of randomness or mathematically derived systems in arrangement of melodic lines and harmony. I don't think the term tonality is limited to music in the traditional major and minor modes. For example, Schoenberg only abandoned tonality in *Pierrot Lunaire* through neither aleatoric nor mathematical devices, rather through systematically avoiding to create tonal centres on a case to case basis giving each step of the chromatic scale equal importance-leading later on to his theories of dodecaphony. Berg would use his teacher's theories but always arrange his series to give greater gravity to certain notes, thus not completely abandoning tonality. Also, if certain notes or chords carry more importance than others, that would be my wide definition of tonality. And, placing Bartok, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Stravinsky safely in this category for at least ninety-five percent of their output. I see in Wolfgang's music for horn one element of 'tonality'-in the last movement of *Sonata*, Op. 88 where he presents a twelve-tone series. This series can however not shake its affinity for g-minor; so, tonality wins.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Kramer's assertion concerning the dodecaphonic nature of the Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 88 identifies an interesting effect in Mr. Plagge's music. While the basic idea is somewhat accurate, it was discovered that the apparent series is not complete and therefore cannot generate a matrix. This instance is somewhat of a special circumstance in Mr. Plagge's works. Mr. Plagge feels that it would be dishonest to compose in a language that is not second nature to the composer. He further describes his view and his use of atonal language:

I have been toying with different techniques of atonal writing from twelve-tone to aleatoric writing. But, it is not my first language so really to prevail in that language would be dishonest for me.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the instance of the apparent dodecaphonic writing is unique among Mr. Plagge's compositions. Its use in Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 88 is discussed at length in Chapter 6. While Prof. Wekre and Mr. Bonet's definitions of tonality are rather broad, Mr. Kramer's is more specific. For Mr. Plagge and the purpose of this study, however, the term "tonal" implies functional harmony. Therefore, describing twentieth century music which is clearly not atonal, but also does not use functional harmony, is quite a challenge.

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<sup>4</sup> This is taken from personal correspondence with Karl Kramer.

<sup>5</sup> Wolfgang Plagge, interview by author, 20 December 2003, tape recording, Norwegian State Academy of Music, Oslo, Norway.

For the purpose of this study, the term “post-tonal” refers to works which do not fit in the category of tonal or, more specifically, common practice theory. Essentially, Joseph Straus asserts that post-tonal music can be divided into three categories: free atonal music, twelve-tone music, and centric music.<sup>6</sup> The category of centric music is quite large and the theory regarding analysis of this music is actually in its infancy. In his 1973 text *The Structure of Atonal Music*, Allen Forte established a means of approaching “free atonal” music through the use of pitch-class set analysis. Joseph Straus further codified Forte’s work in his 1990 text *Post-tonal Theory*. It is the latter, more recent, text that will serve as a theoretical basis for this study. Through a careful analysis, one will discover that functional tonality is not employed in Mr. Plagge’s music. The works in this study fall in the category of centric music and are clearly not tonal but are, more specifically, post-tonal. Wolfgang Plagge employs several compositional techniques, including the use of referential collections and straight forward pitch-class set manipulation, common to other twentieth century composers. These techniques are not functionally tonal but yield an effect which can be perceived as tonal.

Just as key relationships govern works in tonal music, post-tonal works are governed by particular elements. Often, these elements include pitch-class set manipulation and referential collections. According to Straus, a pitch-class is a group of pitches with the same name. For example, any pitch named A is a member of pitch-class A. This approach also assumes enharmonic equivalence. In tonal music, enharmonic pitches (e.g., B-flat, A-sharp) have different functions both melodically and harmonically. However, these distinctions are largely ignored in post-tonal music, and these pitches are functionally equivalent. A pitch-class set is also an unordered collection of pitch-classes. Pitch-class sets serve as the basic building blocks of post-tonal music. One can think of the pitch-class set as the material from which register,

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Straus, *Post-tonal Theory* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 2000), vii.

rhythm, and order is removed and what remains is the basic pitch-class identity.<sup>7</sup> Straus describes the many ways in which contemporary composers can unify their compositions:

A composer can unify a composition by using a pitch-class set, or a small number of different pitch-class sets, as a basic structural unit. At the same time, he or she can create a varied musical surface by transforming that basic unit in different ways.<sup>8</sup>

Often, the pitch-class sets are manipulated through many of the same techniques used in tonal music including transposition and inversion. For the purpose of this guide, pitch-class sets will be expressed in prime form. Prime form considers all of the members of the set class, selects the one with the “most normal” form, and uses that to name the set class as a whole. This optimal form, or prime form, begins with 0 and is most packed to the left.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, in this guide, prime form will be expressed by the pitch-classes being listed within brackets with no commas separating the pitch-classes.

Although some twentieth century music seems to evoke tonality, composers are most often achieving this through non-tonal means. In addition to the manipulation of pitch-class sets, works can also be centric and consist of referential collections. Straus describes the compositional techniques used by twentieth century composers in their compositions:

In the absence of functional harmony and traditional voice leading, composers use a variety of contextual means of reinforcement. In the most general sense, notes that are stated frequently, sustained at length, placed in a registral extreme, played loudly, and rhythmically or metrically stressed tend to have priority over notes that do not have those attributes...A sense of centricity often emerges from the use of stable, referential collections. Composers often use large sets as sources of pitch material. By drawing all or most of the smaller sets from a single large referential set, composers can unify entire sections of music...By changing the large referential set and/or the pitch or pitch-class center, the composer can create a sense of large-scale movement from one harmonic area to another.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This and the previous seven sentences come from the following source. Joseph Straus, *Post-tonal Theory*, 1-30.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>9</sup> This and the previous two sentences come from the following source. Ibid, 49.

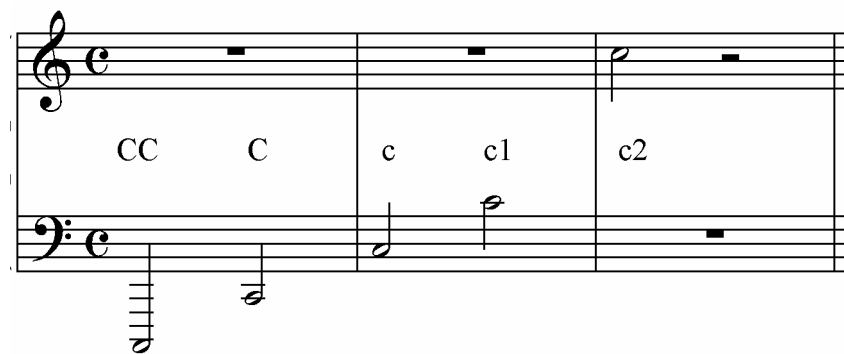
<sup>10</sup> This and the previous sentence come from the following source. Ibid, 114-116.



Wolfgang Plagge seems to create this effect most often through referential collections including octatonic, whole-tone and acoustic collections. Octatonic collections consist of alternating half-step and whole-step intervals and are identified by the numerically lowest pitch-class half-step that defines them; they will be labeled as OCT<sub>01</sub>, OCT<sub>12</sub>, OCT<sub>23</sub>. These collections are often associated with the music of Stravinsky and Bartok. Whole-tone collections are labeled either as WT<sub>0</sub>, which contains pitch-class C, or WT<sub>1</sub>, which contains pitch-class C-sharp.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, acoustic collections are a combination of octatonic and whole-tone collections. Therefore, acoustic collections often provide composers with a tool of connecting large sections of music governed by octatonic and whole-tone collections.

In this guide, the author assumes the same system of labeling pitches as Joseph Straus in *Post-tonal Theory*. Due to octave and enharmonic equivalence, twelve pitch classes remain. Straus' system labels individual pitches in the chromatic octave starting on pitch-class C using the integers 0-11, respectively.<sup>12</sup> Regarding musical notation and octave designation, the following system will be used.

Example 1.1, octave designation.



Pitches within each octave take the designation of the C below. Also, for the purpose of the study, sounding pitch is assumed unless otherwise stated. In the relevant theoretical issues

<sup>11</sup> This and the previous two sentences come from the following source. Straus, *Post-tonal Theory*, 120-123.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 4.

section of each chapter, the techniques of analysis by Joseph Straus, as presented in *Post-tonal Theory*, are assumed. These discussions, or analyses, are not intended to be complete; they present an overall view of each work and consist of points which, in the opinion of the author, could affect the performance of the work discussed. Often, these points were discovered through conversation with the composer himself.

The guide will concentrate on *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Op.39; *Monoceros*, Op. 51; Sonata II, Op. 67; Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 88; *Raga*, Op. 106; and Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 115. Chapter 2 contains biographical information on Wolfgang Plagge. Chapters 3 through 8 presents the aforementioned works in chronological order and each contain two parts: performance considerations for the individual work and relevant theoretical points of that particular work. Several chapters contain an additional section concerning recordings that are available at the time of the study. The performance considerations consist of historical sources used in the compositions and any issues which are not included in the analytical discussions. Chapter 9 is an annotated bibliography of reviews. Furthermore, Chapter 10 synthesizes all points mentioned for the works and serve as a synopsis of Mr. Plagge's writing style. For the convenience of the reader, Appendix A consists of the original chants used in *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* and Sonata IV, and Appendix B is an example of collection interaction from Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 88.

## CHAPTER 2

### Biographical Information

Wolfgang Plagge was born in 1960 to Dutch parents in Oslo, Norway. He began playing the piano and composing at age four. Karl Kramer has described his first awareness of Mr.

Plagge as a composer:

Well, I have sort of known about him for...forever. He was quite famous in Norway, even in the '60's, as a kid...not that I was around in the 60's. But, I remember the first time I really heard about him I saw a black and white television show where he was playing the piano. He was probably around 8 or 9 at the time and playing the piano and being interviewed. Of course, he sounded really amazing for a little kid. Then, the interviewer asked him what he would like to do when he grew up. Of course, he said "play music." And, the interviewer asked him, "what kind of music?" And, he said, "my own." I think that was my first awareness of him. He was a bit of a *wunderkind*.<sup>13</sup>

Mr. Plagge was ten when he won his first international performance competition, and one year later he won the Young Pianists' Competition in Oslo. In 1972, he made his recital debut in Oslo where HM King Olav V was in attendance. In 1986, he graduated with distinction from the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, Germany.<sup>14</sup> During his studies in Hamburg, Germany he was influenced, of course, by all of the composition teachers and especially Lygati and Schnittke.<sup>15</sup> He won several prizes in the years that followed, including the Levin Prize in 1987.<sup>16</sup> Mr. Plagge is an active international pianist and performs with major orchestras in Norway and abroad. He had his first work published at age twelve and has continued to compose in a variety of genres,

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<sup>13</sup> Karl Kramer, interview by author, 20 November 2003, tape recording, U.S.-Norway Fulbright Office, Oslo, Norway.

<sup>14</sup> This and the previous two sentences are from the following source. MIC-Norway, "Norwegian Music Information Center" <<http://www.mic.no>> 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Wolfgang Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>16</sup> Mr. Robert Levin was an eminent Norwegian pianist. The prestigious prize is awarded to Norwegian pianists who share Mr. Levin's pedagogical and performance ideals.

including liturgical music, chamber music, piano works, vocal and symphonic works, and works for various wind instruments.

Mr. Plagge has identified specific influences on his compositional style and resulting music: twentieth century composers, the concept of time in composition, and the Medieval and pre-Medieval music of Scandinavia and, more specifically, Norway. He states that composers such as Stravinsky and Prokofiev have had a direct influence on his writing. This is most evident in *Sonata II*, Op. 67. In addition, he has a unique interest in the Medieval music of Norway and has engaged in research of chant from the medieval period. He often incorporates elements of this music in his own works and, as a result, in several of the works for horn including the first and fourth sonata.<sup>17</sup> The concept of time has been an influence in much of his writing, especially in the violin sonata, although not as much in his works for horn. The influence of Lygety and Carter can be seen in his manipulation of time.<sup>18</sup>

Through his collaboration with Frøydis Ree Wekre, which began in the late 1980s, he developed a special interest in works for the horn. Prof. Wekre commissioned his first work for horn, *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Sonata for Horn and Piano*, Op. 39. Since that time, Mr. Plagge has continued to compose works for horn in a variety of genres, including works for horn and piano and various chamber works; these works include three additional sonatas, *Monoceros* for unaccompanied horn, and *Raga* for two horns and piano as well as other works not included in this study. Several of his works have become part of the standard repertoire. One such work is *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* which has been featured as a required work in several international wind competitions.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Plagge, interview by author, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> The concept of time and the influence of Lygety and Carter are explained in Mr. Plagge's quote on page twenty-nine. The compositional techniques Plagge uses to alter audiences' perception of time are discussed in chapter five.

<sup>19</sup> MIC-Norway, <<http://www.mic.no>>, 2003.

## CHAPTER 3

### *A LITANY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, OP. 39*

The first sonata, *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, was composed in 1989 and later revised and copyrighted in 1993. The work is published by the Musikk-Husets Forlag A/S in Oslo, Norway. It consists of two movements and is approximately thirteen minutes in length and was premiered by Frøydis Ree Wekre and Barbara Pritchard in Banff, Alberta, Canada. Currently, two recordings are available: one by Frøydis Ree Wekre (available at the Norwegian Music Information Center) and the other by Javier Bonet (available on Verso Records).

#### **Performance Considerations**

Frøydis Ree Wekre commissioned the work in 1989; this was the beginning of what has become a rather interesting musical collaboration. Professor Wekre's first awareness of Mr. Plagge as a composer was in 1988 when she attended a concert in which Mr. Plagge performed one of his piano sonatas. Prof. Wekre, like Javier Bonet, believes there is an inherent quality in Plagge's music that speaks to an audience. It was this feature of his composition that prompted her to commission *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Professor Wekre describes Plagge's music in the following way:

He is so rooted in tradition that music has harmony, rhythm, and melodies. I think his music is very personal and serious...he is the storyteller. His form is very strong. I think he is very clear. It is based on the old form of what a sonata is.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, Karl Kramer describes Mr. Plagge as, "definitely a traditionalist, who has not abandoned the foundation of Western music, which was definitely going against the mainstream

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<sup>20</sup> This and the previous three sentences come from the following source. Frøydis Ree Wekre, interview by author.

when he was growing up and studying.”<sup>21</sup> It is this traditionalist trait that becomes prevalent throughout *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. The use of a clear sonata structure in the first movement as well as inclusion of chant in the second movement demonstrates this connection with traditional forms. Mr. Plagge describes his goals for the first sonata, “I was mostly looking for formal and linear qualities.”<sup>22</sup>

*A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* is one of the first works in which Mr. Plagge includes chant.

Mr. Plagge admits to a deep and long lasting interest in Medieval music:

I have spent maybe twenty years now studying medieval music and pre-medieval music. You can see it in the music. So, that has been one of my big events in life actually discovering the qualities of very early medieval music in Scandinavia. That has been one of the really big inspirational sources for me... chant has a specific way of dealing with matter. It is extremely quiet and also extremely intense. So, you have those two very strange and opposite values... The first sonata was very early in my study of this so I used one of the most common chant songs in all of Europe.<sup>23</sup>

The chant that he uses in the first sonata is *Libera nos, Domine*. It is primarily found in the horn part in the second movement. This chant affects much of the material in the movement and should be considered as a major influence in the composition of this movement.

There are three misprints in the first movement. The first misprint is five measures before rehearsal five, in the piano score; the horn line is missing a tie from this measure to the following measure. Also, three measures before rehearsal eight, an f-sharp<sup>1</sup> is notated as a quarter note in the horn line; it should be an eighth note. The third misprint occurs in the horn part, one measure after rehearsal nine; the written e-natural in the horn should actually be a written f-natural.

### **Relevant Theoretical Issues**

Mr. Plagge’s use of a strong formal structure in both movements of the work indicates a high level of craftsmanship. The first movement is a clear sonata form and is highly virtuosic for

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<sup>21</sup> Karl Kramer, interview by author.

<sup>22</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

both the hornist and pianist. In regards to performance considerations, rhythm and range can be quite a challenge for the hornist throughout the entire work. It exploits a wide range and difficult rhythms in primarily compound and composite meters. The range, consisting of three octaves from a written c-sharp to a written c-sharp<sup>3</sup>, demands excellent flexibility. The section from rehearsal five to rehearsal seven is particularly difficult rhythmically. For instance, from rehearsal six to rehearsal seven Plagge has written triplets against duple rhythms in a 7/8 meter. Furthermore, the intricate melodic material is exchanged between the hornist and pianist which makes accurate ensemble performance challenging.

In the first movement, all of this movement's melodic material is based on [013] and transpositions of this trichord. This is evident in the first three and a half measures.

Example 3.1: *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, mvt. I, meas. 1-3, transposition of [013]

Allegro Lamentoso ♩ = 120-126

Piano

*p*

[013] T8

2

*poco*

Consequently, octatonic collections are also present. Joseph Straus has characterized this sort of occurrence that “in post-tonal music...octatonic collections frequently emerge as by-products of

transpositional schemes involving minor thirds and tritones.”<sup>24</sup> In *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, the octatonic collections are certainly a by-product of the melodic minor third material and should not be seen as governing the movement. Furthermore, diatonic collections including B minor and D major occur at the exposition and development; these collections can be seen as a tonal center for each of the sections. On the other hand, these collections are established through the interval of a fifth and major/minor third in vertical sonorities. These collections, like the octatonic collections, are a by-product of the transpositional properties of the melodic minor third or [013] trichord and should not be seen as governing sections of the movement.

In the second movement, Mr. Plagge’s interest in Medieval music is seen in his use of the chant *Libera nos, Domine*. This chant can be found in the Liber Usualis and is the chant used for All Saints Day in the Roman Catholic liturgy. The following is a modern notation of the chant; the original notation of the chant is provided in figure one of Appendix A.

Example 3.2: *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, modern notation of chant for All Saints Day.



<sup>24</sup> Joseph Straus, *Post-tonal Theory*, 122.



The most interesting aspect of Plagge's use of chant is his apparent separation of the chant from his own original material. Mr. Plagge describes this at some length:

So, the material itself is never touched. But, the bigger sections of the piece move around in their own rights and own way. It is difficult to think of them as completely apart, of course, but they are moving in two different spheres.<sup>25</sup>

This becomes an important influence due to the effect the chant has on phrasing. The melodic phrasing of the horn lines in the second movement should relate to the phrasing of the original chant and, more importantly, the apparent phrasing of the chant in its original form. The long phrases that result from the original chant can be problematic for the hornist. Mr. Plagge indicates the end of phrases clearly through either rests or breath marks. Also, he describes the overall form of the movement as being an ABA form. The B-natural in the piano in the initial measures acts as an ostinato bell. This is followed by the chant, which is first presented in small pieces, but eventually connected. Another reinforcement of the form is the introduction of a disguised *dies irae* in the B section at rehearsal number five. The *dies irae* supplies another historical source yet is in contrast to the chant used as the melodic material in the A section.

### **Available Recordings**

*Sonata for Horn and Piano*, Op. 39, Frøydis Ree Wekre, horn. Wolfgang Plagge, piano. NRK, 1991.

The recording by Frøydis Ree Wekre is housed at the Norwegian Music Information Center in Oslo, Norway. Professor Wekre's recording was of a live broadcast aired on the national Norwegian Radio in 1991. Due to guidelines of the national Norwegian Radio, the recording cannot be copied but is housed at the Norwegian Music Information Center and is available for patrons' use at the center. Prof. Wekre remains faithful to the composer's wishes in the composition, including dynamics, rhythm and phrasing. The recording reflects Prof. Wekre's

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<sup>25</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

level of artistry. Additionally, this recording includes the corrections of the misprinted notes and rhythms.

*A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Javier Bonet, horn. Anibal Banados, piano. Verso #2003, 2001.

The recording by Javier Bonet is widely available and consists of twentieth century sonatas by various composers. Several months before making the recording, Mr. Bonet heard *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* by Wolfgang Plagge at a competition in Munich, Germany at which he was a judge.<sup>26</sup> The sonata was performed by contestant Sebastian Posch, who studied as an exchange student with Prof. Wekre, and is currently employed with the Berlin Staatsoper. When Mr. Bonet was negotiating the CD contents with the recording company and the pianist, he decided he wanted to record only contemporary music and he wanted to include Plagge's sonata. As a result, when it came time to give a title to the recording, he discovered all of the works were very intense and decided that the name of Plagge's sonata, *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, was an ideal title for the recording. According to Mr. Bonet, "If you know the piece, the work is about Berlin and why the wall was there and why the wall divided. And, it is a piece for the next century...to have more peace and less walls."<sup>27</sup> The recording was reviewed by Barry Kilpatrick for *American Record Guide*. He stated that Mr. Plagge's sonata is "inspired by the Berlin Wall and the tragedy and absurdity it represented; the work is dramatic and evocative."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Javier Bonet, interview by author, 8 September 2003, St. Petersburg Russia, tape recording, St. Petersburg Conservatory, St. Petersburg, Russia.

<sup>27</sup> This and the previous two sentences are from the following source. Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> This and the previous sentence are taken from the following source. Barry Kilpatrick, "A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *American Record Guide* 65, no. 2 (2002): 203-204.

## CHAPTER 4

### ***MONOCEROS, OP. 51***

This work was written in 1990 for Frøydis Ree Wekre and is published by Mr. Plagge's publishing label, 2L. Written for unaccompanied horn, it consists of a single movement and is approximately three and one half minutes in length. Frøydis Ree Wekre premiered the work in Gothenburg soon after it was written in April 1990. One year later, Mr. Plagge revised the work. Currently, there is no recording available of this work; however, Prof. Wekre will be including the work on her upcoming CD scheduled for release in late 2004.

#### **Performance Considerations**

*Monoceros* is a very personal composition for both Mr. Plagge and Prof. Wekre. Completed after the 1990 Oslo Philharmonic Principal Horn audition, the work was a gift for Prof. Wekre. She describes the situation:

The *Monoceros* was very specifically something he came up with for me after I did the audition for the Philharmonic where they did not take me. And, he felt really bad about that...so did I by the way. But, this is life you know. And, he played with me at that occasion as an accompanist. We played his first sonata as my chosen piece. He just kind of came at the door the next day with this piece [*Monoceros*]...kind of like flowers. Then, he revised it one year later and made it longer.<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Plagge also described the situation surrounding this work as a frustrated reaction regarding what happened at the audition. When asked about this reaction and the apparent connection to the title *Monoceros* [unicorn], Mr. Plagge stated the following:

She came in and played with zest and then was forced to gallop out. So, also, the whole situation of discussing something...there is the *espressivo* level and the who cares [level] all the time. It is quite personal. So, I had this specific feeling, might be wrong of course,

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<sup>29</sup> Wekre, interview by author.

that the whole thing was decided in advance. It was not decided on what happened on that audition. That was my very different distant feeling. So, I think it was right also.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, it is important to realize that Mr. Plagge has a very vivid vision of the *Monoceros*, or unicorn, and the connection of this legend with the character of the work. Prof. Wekre summarized her impressions of the work as follows:

It is more tonal and rhythmic. It is like an outburst. You have to ask him about it but he has a clear picture...I think he thought of me as the *Monoceros*. There is a legend about the *Monoceros*....it goes away. Anyway, it is a beautiful name because it is the horse with one horn and it is a piece for horn. It is an intense piece and at the end it just sort of goes away....goodbye. It is not like the other pieces...<sup>31</sup>

When asked about the composition, Mr. Plagge emphasized its relationship to the myth of the unicorn:

It is the unicorn. It is the solo horn. It is actually playing around with words again. Of course, there is a horse in the piece...[the galloping]. Of course, it is a horse that you never see but you feel it. It is about a very beautiful animal that can never be grasped. The last section is about the animal disappearing. I have a very vivid vision of the white horse with the spear in the forehead galloping out of sight. Even the beginning, this duel information...[it is] a piece for solo horn or the unicorn which is one horn. That is playing with the word.<sup>32</sup>

Again, there are layers to the composition, and these layers can be seen through the uses of motives and their contrasts.

### **Relevant Theoretical Issues**

Two motives, are the driving force of the piece. Mr. Plagge describes the two basic motives, or “symptoms,” and the lamenting of the description of the unicorn in the following statement:

Of course, in this specific piece, there were two specific symptoms more than themes...[the opening four notes and then the motion from 8-11] So, in order to place those two elements together I had to introduce both of them without any kind of comment. So, that is why they are put together without any kind of preparation between

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<sup>30</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>31</sup> Wekre, interview by author.

<sup>32</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

them...they are put next to each other. Then, there is the lamenting around...well, trying to describe the horse as an animal. Those two elements start to intersect and those sections are physically identical but they have a different job to fill.<sup>33</sup>

The first motive is presented immediately in the first measure and consists of four notes.

Example 4.1 *Monoceros*, meas. 1, the introduction of the first motive.



However, in the beginning, the four note motive is juxtaposed with the second motive in the work. The second motive consists of, first, a descending triplet followed by an ascending triplet.

Example 4.2: *Monoceros*, meas. 9, second motive.



This motive provides the basis of the galloping idea later in the work. Of course, the galloping idea has a strong programmatic connection for Mr. Plagge. Essentially, it represents Prof. Wekre leaving after the conclusion of the audition.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the initial four-note motive provides the material that is most often juxtaposed with the lamenting material that represents the unicorn. This is the aspect which Mr. Plagge described as being a discussion between the motives; “There is the *espressivo* level and the ‘who cares’ there all the time.”<sup>35</sup> In essence, the first motive, including any material derived from the motive, represents his disgust with the situation surrounding the audition while the

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<sup>33</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>34</sup> This and the previous sentence are from the following source. Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

lamenting, or *espressivo* level, characterizes the beauty of the unicorn. These two motives become quite apparent in measures seventeen to twenty-four.

Example 4.3: *Monoceros*, meas. 17-24, juxtaposition of four note motive, lamenting motive and disgust motive.

The image displays musical notation for measures 17-24 of the piece *Monoceros*. The notation is organized into two staves. The first staff, starting at measure 17, contains the 'Based on Four Note Motive' (measures 17-20) and the 'Lamenting-cant.' (measures 21-24). The second staff, starting at measure 22, contains the 'Material' (measures 22-23) and the 'Disgust Motive' (measures 24-25). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p*, *mp*, and *mf*.

Furthermore, in measure seventeen to twenty, the four note motive introduced in the first measure is present in an altered form. It is immediately juxtaposed with the lamenting motive consisting of measures twenty-one to twenty-three. Finally, the disgust motive of two sixteenth notes, which is derived from the four-note motive, is present in measure twenty-three to twenty-four.

With the previously discussed motives in mind, the performer should approach the piece so as to connect these motives logically. When considering form, which is, of course, a major concern of Mr. Plagge, the work can be seen as a rondo form. Mr. Plagge describes the form of the piece:

So, you have this A B A C A B A form. It is a kind of rondo but the end goes out in a different direction. It is roughly a quite predictable form I guess. It sounds very improvised because those elements are short.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

Like many of the unaccompanied works in the horn repertoire, it is essential to understand the roles of the motives, the programmatic elements of the work, as well as the intentions of the composer.

## CHAPTER 5

### SONATA II, OP. 67

This work was written in 1992 and later revised in 2001. Published by Mr. Plagge's label, 2L, it consists of three movements and is approximately fourteen minutes in length. Prof. Wekre first performed the work in Banff in 1992. She later performed the work with Mr. Plagge at the International Horn Symposium in Manchester, United Kingdom in July 1992. There was no commercial recording of the original version of the work. Thus far, no recording of the revised edition exists.

#### Performance Considerations

This work is the fourth composition Mr. Plagge has written for Frøydis Ree Wekre. She describes the work as, “very happy in a way. It has a very twisted scherzo...it is a little bit of an ironic waltz. And, the fast movement is kind of happy-go-lucky.”<sup>37</sup> Karl Kramer recalls the revisions the work underwent and describes the work as having a much lighter character than most of Mr. Plagge's other compositions. For instance, Mr. Kramer remembers Plagge saying the written  $b^2$  at the end of the first movement “was really mostly for fun.” Interestingly, according to Mr. Kramer, the parts of the sonata that largely remained unaltered, or merely copied out again, had significant changes in articulations, dynamics and other “cosmetic” aspects. When Mr. Kramer asked Mr. Plagge about these changes, he discovered that the composer considers these elements as suggestions for the performer; in fact, he suggested that other solutions might suit the character of the music as well.<sup>38</sup> However, during the course of this

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<sup>37</sup> Wekre, interview with author.

<sup>38</sup> This and the previous four sentences come from the following source. Kramer, interview by author.



study, later compositions were found to be rather precise regarding such markings in the score. Among these markings, breath marks become an important issue in the works which include Medieval material because they affect the overall phrasing in the movements of the works. When asked about these types of revisions in the interview, Mr. Plagge responded by stating that he ultimately forgets about the earlier versions and actually postpones printing the works until he experiences the effect of the composition in performance. He asserted that Sonata II needed revisions concerning form; consequently, the revised version consists of substantial differences. The first movement was “so elaborate and sounded out of proportion to the rest of the piece.”<sup>39</sup> Mr. Plagge described several reasons for these revisions:

Being that active for that long of a period was a bit obnoxious. That actually happened with the first movement because it had so much to say all the time. The points were actually destroyed because there was too much going on all the time. As long as phrases are short, peoples’ experience of time movement changes. You can influence peoples’ perception of time if your first approach to a piece is very active...very physical, everything tends to go fast and you manage to do a lot of things in a short amount of time. This means that something that feels like it is going on for ten minutes actually is going on for much shorter... It is difficult to describe but there is a connection of activity of phrase and the overall length of a movement or piece. That is what really disturbed me in the first version. As long as the pieces tend to contradict themselves with short breathless motives and extremely stretched long form, then it is going to sound elaborate.<sup>40</sup>

The result is one in which the form has been reshaped into a strong sonata form; furthermore, it resulted in a work that is two minutes shorter than originally written. In regards to form, Sonata II is more closely associated with the techniques used in *A Litany of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* rather than Sonata, Op. 88, to be covered later in this document.

The concept of time, or manipulation of the perception of time, in musical compositions is one of Mr. Plagge’s many interests. This composition represents Mr. Plagge’s only intentional

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<sup>39</sup> This and the previous two sentences come from the following source. Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

use of manipulation of time in any of the compositions for horn. Mr. Plagge described his approach to the manipulation of time and the compositional technique involved:

Again, it brings me back to Lygeti. He was one of the people who made time come under scrutiny because he was always talking about different speeds of time flow. You can use music in three or four layers each with their own time. For me, it is perhaps not that complicated. I am interested in using time as a dramatic motion as well. You can use it in different ways... you can try to manipulate people's perception of time. I think that is what Carter's most specific aim is. I wrote a sonata for violin which has two movements like the first horn sonata. The first movement is very fast and the second movement is very slow. Then, I wanted to try to manipulate people's perception of time so they should have the feeling that those movements are more or less equally long but they are not. Of course, the slow movement is much longer.<sup>41</sup>

Mr. Plagge believes that if you can manipulate people's speed of breathing that you can actually manipulate their perception of time. At slow tempi, elongating phrases to mask breathing is one technique that he employs in manipulating the audiences' perception of time. This is the technique that he uses in the violin sonata; however, in the second movement of Sonata II, the manipulation occurs through a rhythmic shift rather than through elongated phrases.

This concentration on controlling the perception of time occurs at the micro level as a rhythmic shift in the piano part. It is begun purposefully as a joke but eventually "backfires," according to Mr. Plagge, creating a rather interesting rhythmic effect. The rhythmic shift affects the synchronization between the horn and piano. Like the approach to the apparent separation of chant in the first and fourth sonatas, this aspect of Sonata II must be approached in layers both harmonically and rhythmically.<sup>42</sup> The instruments should be perceived as layers and ultimately working independently. For the performer, the challenging aspect is the elongated phrases created by the manipulation of time. The hornists' perception of time and rhythm can also be altered. Mr. Plagge bemusedly noted that even the most accomplished hornists with whom he has

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<sup>41</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>42</sup> This and the previous two sentences are from the following source. Ibid.

performed often fail to enter correctly in measure ninety-seven.<sup>43</sup> In the author's opinion, it is not clear why this would occur with accomplished performers. There are constant eighth notes in the piano leading to the horn entrance in measure ninety-seven. One possible explanation would be a simple counting mistake on the part of the performers that Mr. Plagge describes. In the author's experience, a skillful performer's perception should not be altered so dramatically that they would enter incorrectly for any reason other than a counting mistake. However, it is possible that the performer's perception of time could be altered. The performer should be aware that Mr. Plagge stated that hornists often entered one beat late when their perception of time was affected.

### **Relevant Theoretical Issues**

This work originally carried a subtitle of "Ode to Hindemith," which was intended as a joke. However, Mr. Plagge eventually removed this subtitle because it was largely misunderstood. Many began looking for Hindemith characteristics in the work; however, as Mr. Plagge explained during the interview, it is actually aspects of Prokofiev's writing that are present in the work.<sup>44</sup> As pointed out in the biographical information, Mr. Plagge studied at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, Germany. It was there that Mr. Plagge learned of Hindemith's dislike of Prokofiev's music; so, with Mr. Plagge's rather unusual sense of humor, he subtitled Sonata II "Ode to Hindemith" and attempted to compose in a manner reminiscent of Prokofiev. He even included a quote from the fourth movement of Prokofiev's *Symphony No. 5* in the third movement from measures eighty-one to eighty-four.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>44</sup> This and the previous two sentences are from the following source. Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> This and the previous sentence are from the following source. Ibid.

Example 5.1 *Sonata II*, mvt. 3, meas. 81-86, quote of Prokofiev's *Sym. No. 5*

The musical score for Example 5.1 consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 81-86) features a bass staff and a grand staff (treble and bass). The bass staff begins with measure 81, marked with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It includes a *chiuso* marking and a *p* (piano) dynamic. The grand staff includes a treble staff with a *6* (sixteenth notes) marking and a *p* dynamic, and a bass staff with a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. The second system (measures 84-86) features a treble staff and a grand staff. The treble staff begins with measure 84, marked with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It includes an *aperto* marking and a *p* dynamic. The grand staff includes a treble staff with a *15<sup>ma</sup>* (fifteenth notes) marking and a *p* dynamic, and a bass staff with a *ff* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

This is the only direct quote Mr. Plagge uses in the work; however, the character of many themes, even from the first and second movement, reflect Mr. Plagge's attempt at composing in the style of Prokofiev.

In the second movement, Mr. Plagge explores the concept of time and the manipulation of time. This involves the composer's ability to manipulate an audiences' perception of time as the composition progresses. In this movement, Mr. Plagge literally manipulates the rhythm and shifts the rhythm over time. This technique can become very complicated; however, Mr. Plagge's attempt in this movement is a rather straight forward approach of shifting rhythm. The following example presents the first four measures.

Example 5.2 Sonata II, mvt. 2, meas. 1-4, original rhythmic material.

Con eleganza (TIME COLLISION)

These four measures provide the rhythmic basis for the movement. It is this material that is used to manipulate the audiences' perception of time. The right hand of the piano should play the second beat in each bar. Beginning in measure fifty-three, the original pattern is introduced. However, this is the point in the composition that the rhythmic shift begins; again, the right hand should play the second beat in each bar. The synchronization between the horn and piano is altered, resulting in a change of the audience's perception of time. Example 5.3 shows measures fifty-three through seventy-one.

Example 5.3 Sonata II, mvt. 2, meas. 53-71, resultant rhythmic shift.

The musical score is for a piano piece, measures 58-71. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 58-61) shows a right hand with a complex melodic line and a left hand with a simple bass line. The second system (measures 62-65) includes dynamic markings like 'p' and '8va' in the right hand. The third system (measures 66-71) features a first ending with a 'pp' marking and a second ending with a 'pp sub.' marking, both leading to a 'FINE' ending. The left hand has a 'fp' marking in measure 66.

A shift, first delayed by an eighth note in measure fifty-five, then a sixteenth note in measure fifty-six, begins back to beat two in measure fifty-seven. From this point, the right hand advances ahead of the left hand. The pattern is immediately shifted yet again. If one follows the right hand of the piano and assumes that each entrance should be on beat two, then the rhythmic shift becomes apparent. According to Mr. Plagge, these measures are,

out of sync all the way especially in this section [measure 53-71]; they can not even manage to finish at the same time. This problem which is typical for inexperienced musicians is that one thinks that the other is jumping and then they shift. You can see the

right hand of the pianist getting faster and faster. It should be on the twos all the way. This hand is getting ahead of the other hand. This hand actually is getting completely out of sync. It jumps one whole section. The whole rhythmical shift and section gets out of sync and that means that if you just stick to your horn part you will not notice but if you start listening to what the pianist is doing then you are going to get [lost].<sup>46</sup>

Harmonically, the work exploits one use of layers. Mr. Plagge describes the harmonic language as the following, “There are two different layers. If you look at it in terms of tonality, of course, the piano and horn are on two different levels because the piano sticks to one key and the horn sticks to E-major...tritones are all over the place.”<sup>47</sup> This is interesting because, although it is not a focus of the work, this is the first instance of this type of harmonic usage in his horn works. Each instrument works independently harmonically and often consists of different governing collections. This technique is later exploited to a much higher degree in *Raga* and *Sonata IV*, which exude links to Norwegian folk music through the use of the tritone and this apparent separation of roles for the horn and piano.

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<sup>46</sup> This and the previous sentence are from the following source. Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 6

### SONATA FOR HORN AND PIANO, OP. 88

Written in 1995, the Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 88 is Plagge's third sonata for horn. Published by Mr. Plagge's label 2L, it consists of three movements and is approximately twenty-seven minutes in length. Frøydis Ree Wekre has recorded the work with Mr. Plagge on Crystal Records; the recording is widely available. Furthermore, she premiered the work with Mr. Plagge at the University Aula in Oslo, Norway.

#### Performance Considerations

This work is actually the fourth work Mr. Plagge composed for Prof. Wekre. She premiered the work and, subsequently, has produced the only commercial recording of this work. Prof. Wekre describes the third sonata "as incredibly introvert." She characterized the third movement, in part, as a spoof of twelve-tone composition:

The last movement of the third sonata is where he makes fun of the twelve tone composers because he goes right into their technique and rules and he still manages to sound tonal...Of course, this is possible...lots of fifths, fourths and land in the same pitch every time...G...G is the tone.<sup>48</sup>

Unlike the first sonata, the form is not as important here as the harmonic language employed in the work. While clear formal structures are usually present in Mr. Plagge's works and, formal structures do exist in the third sonata, his goals in this work center on harmonic language. Therefore, it is his use of referential collections, the interactions of those referential collections, and centricity that become the main focus of the first movement; furthermore, in the third movement, he deceives the listener by presenting the material linearly and therefore creating the

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<sup>48</sup> This and the previous sentence come from the following source. Wekre, interview by author.



effect of a dodecaphonic harmonic language when it is actually an incomplete twelve-tone series and securely centric on G. The one exception to this is the second movement. In this movement, he uses basic trichords, even manipulating the same trichord, within the structure of a *siciliano*. Therefore, the formal structure and the influence of the Sicilian dance are main concerns of the movement.

### Relevant Theoretical Issues

Mr. Plagge unifies the work, both the first movement and the work as a whole, with the material presented in the horn in the first five measures. The theme recurs throughout the work and is the unifying element for the movement.

Example 6.1: *Sonata*, Op. 88, mvt. I, meas. 1-5, opening theme of the sonata.

The musical score for Horn in C, measures 1-5, is presented in two staves. The first staff contains measures 1 through 5. It begins with the tempo marking 'Tranquilo' and a quarter note equal to 60 (♩ = 60). The dynamics are marked *p* (piano) and *dolce* (sweetly). A trichord of three eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) is highlighted in measures 1, 3, and 5. A slur covers measures 1-5, and a crescendo hairpin is present in measure 5. The second staff shows measures 4-5, with a trichord highlighted in measure 4 and a decrescendo hairpin leading to a piano (*pp*) dynamic in measure 5.

Overall, the movement is a loose rondo form, which would explain why the horn statement would keep recurring throughout. The statement appears twice in its original form, once in transposition, and once in augmentation at the end of the movement for a total of four statements. The original statement occurs first at measure one and then at rehearsal four. The original form either outlines an octatonic collection or leads to an octatonic collection.

Mr. Plagge uses referential collections, including OCT<sub>12</sub>, OCT<sub>23</sub>, and acoustic collections, and creates a strong sense of centricity surrounding E throughout the first movement. The OCT<sub>12</sub> collection, established in the first five measures in the statement of the primary theme

in the horn, is the prevailing collection, especially when each statement of the theme returns. OCT<sub>23</sub> is used in the contrasting sections, although the OCT<sub>12</sub> collection is sometimes used in combination with OCT<sub>23</sub> in these sections. The acoustic collections are used as connecting material between these two octatonic collections, and, also, to connect large sections that are governed by trichord manipulation to the octatonic collections. This is an efficient tool in connecting large sections of the work due to shared characteristics of the acoustic, octatonic, diatonic, and whole tone collections. These collections interact efficiently due to the presence of similar half-step and whole-step intervals and common subsets. It is, therefore, relatively simple to shift between collections. The most obvious example of this occurs in the section from rehearsal eleven to rehearsal twelve; this is included as Figure 2.1 in Appendix B. In this section, the acoustic collection connects a previous section of trichord manipulation with a moment of OCT<sub>23</sub> eleven bars after rehearsal eleven. Then, the acoustic collection returns and connects to the OCT<sub>12</sub> at rehearsal twelve. There are two instances where the whole tone collection acts in a similar fashion to the acoustic collection. It is the use of these collections that provides the effect of a tonal work. It is also reminiscent of Stravinsky's use of octatonic collections creating a largely diatonic sound through a post-tonal approach. Josef Strauss describes this effect in his discussion of centricity in his textbook *Post-tonal Theory*.<sup>49</sup>

The *Sonata for Horn and Piano*, Op. 88 exhibits the effect of sounding tonal, first, through the use of octatonic collections and, second, through centricity. There seems to be centricity surrounding E in the opening five measures. The D can be considered a lower neighbor to the E; furthermore, the G-sharp strongly influences the tonal sound of the opening measures because it creates an interval of a major third which most would relate to tonal harmony. Also, the continuous return to E and the rhythmic and metric placement of E on a strong beat

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<sup>49</sup> Straus, *Post-tonal Theory*, 112.

reinforces the centricity. The richness of triads contained in the octatonic collection, often creates a sense of tonal principles. The centricity of E continues at rehearsal four. Again, the D is a lower neighbor; however, the importance of the G-sharp is reinforced by the melodic descent, through an acoustic collection, which ends on that tone. However, at rehearsal eight, the centricity shifts to C-sharp. The B at rehearsal eight is a lower neighbor to the C-sharp. At this point, there is a downward stepwise sequence from C-sharp to E. So, there is a third relationship between E, G-sharp, and C-sharp. Consequently, all of these tones reinforce the OCT<sub>12</sub> collection. At rehearsal eleven, there is the use of an acoustic collection containing E which leads to an F-sharp fifteen measures after rehearsal eleven then back to a centricity surrounding E at rehearsal twelve. So, at a background level, the F-sharp could be considered an upper neighbor to E. This would also correspond to Plagge's treatment of added notes in collections as neighbor tones.

The second movement is labeled with the term *siciliano*; clearly, this term is used to evoke the idea of a *siciliana*, or dance. *Siciliano* refers to an aria or instrumental movement from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries that was usually characterized by a slow 6/8 or 12/8 meter. Additionally, the phrase lengths usually consisted of one or two bar phrases. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the form is most closely associated with "pastoral scenes and melancholy emotions...and commonly considered a form of slow gigue."<sup>50</sup> In the second movement, these central ideas are employed including the slow 6/8 meter and two bar phrases. At times, the melodic phrase can be longer than two bars and even include an eighth-note upbeat; however, the fundamental two bar idea remains throughout the movement.

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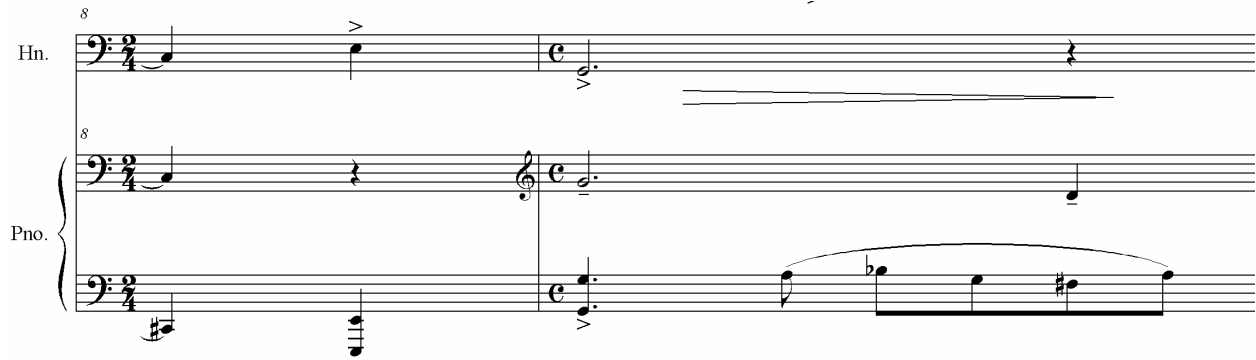
<sup>50</sup> This and the previous sentence are taken from the following source. Meredith Ellis Little, *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed. Stanley Sadie, Vol. 23, 2001.

The third movement, at first glance, would appear to be written in a very different harmonic language than the first two movements. The initial melodic material in the horn is presented in such a way that it could be perceived as twelve-tone or dodecaphonic in nature. Also, the material in the piano is linear in nature and reinforces the horn line. Mr. Plagge found the harmonic language especially effective: “What is really interesting is in the third movement; there I tried to write a dodecaphonic series on purpose which cannot get rid of its g minor.”<sup>51</sup> Upon close analysis, it is apparent that the G-sharp, a necessity for it to be dodecaphonic, is missing from the presentation of the apparent tone row. Linearly, it is presented in such a way that it gives the effect of being atonal, or more precisely, dodecaphonic. Due to the missing G-sharp, it is not dodecaphonic because there are only eleven pitches present. If you divide the first statement into three sections {(G,D,B-flat), (F-sharp,E-flat,B),(F,C,A)}, it is the same pitch class set, [037], that is being manipulated.

Example 6.2: *Sonata*, Op. 88, mvt. III, meas. 1-9, presentation of apparent row

The musical score for Example 6.2 shows the first nine measures of the third movement of Sonata, Op. 88. The Horn part is in treble clef, 2/4 time, marked 'Determinato' and 'ff' with a tempo of 120. The Piano part is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs), 2/4 time, marked 'f'. The music features a complex, atonal melodic line in the horn and a supporting piano accompaniment.

<sup>51</sup> Plagge, interview by author.



This linear presentation is then continued in the piano in measure nine. The effect is one in which the piece, aurally, is apparently dodecaphonic; but, in fact, it has a tonal center of G and is not dodecaphonic after all. In the closing measures, the material from the first movement returns. The apparent centricity on E also returns; although, as in the end of the first movement, closure is presented in a subset of tones that can fit either in OCT<sub>23</sub> or an acoustic collection from B-A. There is an apparent ambiguity in the closure of the work; no clear harmonic resolution is reached except through the repetition of the tones E and G-sharp in the horn part reinforcing the E's importance as a tonal center.

Through the use of post-tonal techniques, Plagge managed to create a piece which sounds quite tonal. He achieved this by using the inherent interaction between referential collections and subsets of those collections in the form of trichords and frames them in a loose rondo form. The strong centricity surrounding E, combined with the use of octatonic and acoustic collections, provides a tonal center for the first movement. Clearly, the horn and piano are of equal importance in both the presentation of prominent trichords and referential collections. However, it is the centricity on E in the first movement and G in the third movement that creates a third relationship and provides an ambiguous closure to the movement and, consequently, the work in a mirror image. Furthermore, at its most basic level, there is an ABA structure to the work as a whole rather than within one movement.

## Available Recordings

*Songs of the Wolf*, Frøydis Ree Wekre, horn. Wolfgang Plagge, piano. Crystal Records 678, 1996.

This recording by Frøydis Ree Wekre is widely available and consists of works written for her. It includes works by Madsen, Clearfield, Berge, Friedman, and Plagge.<sup>52</sup> The recording was reviewed in *The Horn Call* in February 1998. In this review, John Dressler describes the third sonata as a challenge for the player due to the interpretation of short motives rather than long melodic phrases. Furthermore, Dr. Dressler describes the piece as tonal in design.<sup>53</sup> This is certainly the effect; however, it is the result of post-tonal techniques employed by the composer rather than tonal hierarchy. Therefore, due to his characterization, it should be concluded that the view of Dr. Dressler parallels that of Prof. Wekre described in the introduction. Overall, this review of the recording is highly favorable. Another review of this recording was written by Stephen Hicken. While he has somewhat favorable views of Prof. Wekre's talents as a horn player, he believes the pieces on the recording are nothing more than "undergraduate horn recital fodder." Madsen's *Sonata for Horn and Piano* is his preferred work although he does assert that Plagge's sonata "rounds out the program in pleasant, if predictable, fashion."<sup>54</sup> It should be stated that many of the works, including Plagge's third sonata, have become standard works in the horn repertoire in recent years. In the author's experience, it is because of this recording that many use this work with their students and perform the work themselves. Many purchase Prof. Wekre's recording for other pieces that are considered part of the standard repertoire, especially the works by Trygve Madsen. Consequently, they discover Plagge's *Sonata for Horn*, Op. 88.

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<sup>52</sup> Wolfgang Plagge, "Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 88" on *Songs of the Wolf*, Crystal Records 678 (1996).

<sup>53</sup> This and the previous sentence are taken from the following source. John Dressler, "Recording Reviews" *Horn Call* 28, no. 2 (1998): 77-85.

<sup>54</sup> This and the previous sentence are taken from the following source. Stephen Hicken, "The Newest Music" *American Record Guide* 60, no. 4 (1997): 248.

Prof. Wekre stated the following about this work in her interview: “I know Gail Williams has been using the third sonata with her students. I think she has also used number one.”<sup>55</sup> Gail Williams, Professor of Horn at Northwestern University, is one of the most respected teachers and soloists of this era. When asked about Mr. Plagge’s work, Prof. Williams states that she has performed *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* and Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 88. Prof. Williams further describes her reaction to the works:

I find them very exciting to perform. They not only extend the horn technique but allow very lyrical playing as well. Also, I would probably limit these works to upper level students. I find the compositions to be challenging and [one] needs excellent basics to perform Plagge’s sonatas with ease.<sup>56</sup>

So, this is an example of two prominent hornists performing, teaching, and even promoting Mr. Plagge’s works.

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<sup>55</sup> Wekre, interview by author.

<sup>56</sup> This and the previous sentence are taken from personal correspondence with Gail Williams.

## CHAPTER 7

### ***RAGA*, OP. 106**

*Raga* was written for a tour undertaken by Karl Kramer and Wolfgang Plagge during the fall of 2000; it was for this occasion that *Raga* was written. The work is available via Mr. Plagge's publishing label, 2L. It consists of one movement and is approximately five and one-half minutes in length. The premiere was performed by Karl Kramer, Jean Martin-Williams, and Wolfgang Plagge at the University of Georgia in 2000. Currently, there are no recordings available of the work; however, Frøydis Ree Wekre, with Jan-Olav Martinsen and Wolfgang Plagge, will be including *Raga* in Wekre's upcoming CD scheduled for release in late 2004.

#### **Performance Considerations**

*Raga*, for two horns and piano, is reminiscent of Verne Reynolds' *Calls for Two Horns*, which is written for two unaccompanied horns. In Reynolds' *Calls for Two Horns*, the horns begin offstage on opposite sides and must react to aural cues due to being some distance apart. This section is largely a call and response structure and is not metered. During a transition, the hornists move on stage. Once onstage, the hornists are again at opposite sides. During the metered section played onstage, the hornists often communicate via eye contact rather than upon reacting to aural cues and, consequently, are able to coordinate intricate rhythms. There is only one measure in the work where the hornists "meet" and play in unison pitch and rhythm; then, the hornists separate again and eventually end offstage in the same manner in which the piece began. Some of these same ideas can be seen in *Raga*; however, Mr. Plagge uses the ideas in his own unique way. Mr. Plagge describes his goals in composing the work:



The idea of the Raga is Indian in form. You have two soloists that have two quite different ideas and then come together. They are starting very far apart in both music and also in direction and at the end everyone is playing in the same rhythm.<sup>57</sup>

In *Raga*, the piano is a unifying element in the work both harmonically and rhythmically. The two horns are independent voices layered over the constant rhythm of the piano. Furthermore, Mr. Plagge instructs that the horn players should stand as far apart as possible and facing each other; as a result, the first hornist's bell faces towards the audience while the second hornist's bell is facing away from the audience.<sup>58</sup> Karl Kramer recalled his first impression of *Raga*:

Structurally, I found it quite surprisingly different, which is the whole idea...again it is quite clear structurally with the seven bar phrases over the ostinato piano part...improvised horn parts doing their own thing through most of the piece....it is a very clear cohesive structure but I was not expecting anything quite like that. It is based on the Indian Raga. The piano taking the role of the tablas, I guess, binding it all together. You have two voices that are sort of exchanging solos on top of it.<sup>59</sup>

*Raga*, like many of Mr. Plagge's works, centers on form. Instead of concentrating on formal models, such as sonata form or the *siciliano*, the form of *Raga* is one that is driven by rhythmic motives. The three voices start independently and eventually are connected in measure seventy-nine by the same sixteenth rhythmic motive; from this point, the horns work as a pair with similar rhythmic material and the piano has contrasting material. The texture of the work consists of layered voices, consequently, there are some interesting uses of dissonances and referential collections, especially whole tone collections, which separate the voices and reinforce the concentration on rhythmic motives and texture.

### **Relevant Theoretical Issues**

The work is loosely based on the Indian Raga. The New Harvard Dictionary defines Raga as the following:

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<sup>57</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Kramer, interview by author.

[Raga is a] mode in Indian music. Besides the designation of a particular scale, a raga includes other modal prescriptions such as pitch ranking, characteristic ascent and descent patterns, motives, use of ornaments, performance time, and emotional character.<sup>60</sup>

In an Indian Raga, the players gradually play faster so eventually they play similar or identical rhythms; the ragas can continue for an undetermined amount of time. In essence, they are soloists working in completely different spheres from each other.<sup>61</sup> Regula Qureshi provided a more detailed description of ragas in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*:

The basic structure of typical ensembles is common to both (Hindustani and Karnatak music): in addition to a drone there are three separate and independent roles, assigned to three classes of medium. The primary melodic material is carried by a singer, a plucked string instrument or a reed instrument. Antiphonal or accompanying melodic material is sometimes provided by a bowed instrument or a second reed instrument. Drums provide an independent rhythmic stratum, from simple configurative cyclic patterns to complex virtuoso passages. Rhythmic and melodic parts in ensemble are held together on a third-level, provided by idiophones or hand-clapping or both, marking out the time cycles. This threefold melodic, rhythmic and metric distinction of role is not only common to both South Asian styles but is relevant for non-classical ensembles as well.<sup>62</sup>

These same structural ideas exist in *Raga*. Mr. Plagge asserts that he was attempting to put improvisation into a formal structure:

So...I was trying to experiment by trying to make people start on quite different levels and try to force them together without using any kind of force. They kind of float together and in the end they are playing exactly the same rhythm.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, the piece should be seen as three different layers interacting in different ways but primarily through rhythmic motives that unify the work. Mr. Plagge asserts that the individual lines are linked only in the sixteenth note motives which occur throughout the work; this motive

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<sup>60</sup> Don Michael Randel, ed. *New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986).

<sup>61</sup> This and the previous sentences are from the following source. Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>62</sup> Regula Qureshi, 'India', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, Vol. 12, 2001.

<sup>63</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

ties the layers together. These motives close each section of the piece.<sup>64</sup> The first example of this occurs in measure twenty and is present in the first horn.

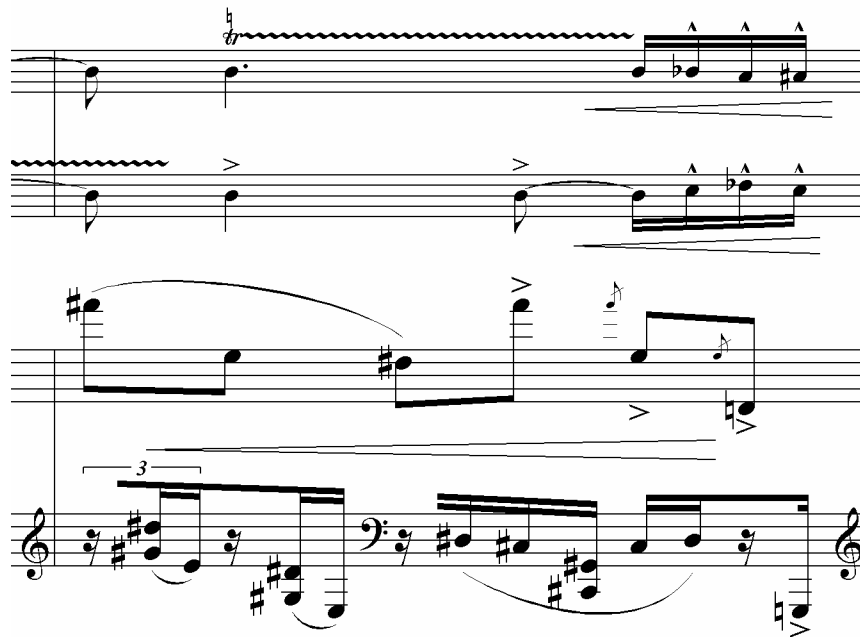
Example 7.1: *Raga*, meas. 19-22, first occurrence of unifying rhythmic motive.

The image displays a musical score for measures 19 through 22. The top section features two staves for Horns: Hn. 1 (treble clef) and Hn. 2 (treble clef). Hn. 1 begins in measure 19 with a sixteenth-note motif (G4, A4, B4, A4, G4) and continues with various notes and rests. Hn. 2 remains silent throughout these measures. The bottom section is for the Piano (Pno.), consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs). The piano part starts in measure 19 with a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring a prominent sixteenth-note fragment (F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4) that is repeated and varied across the measures. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4.

The most important instance of this sixteenth note fragment is in bar seventy-nine. This is the arrival point where both hornists and the piano play the same rhythm.

<sup>64</sup> This and the previous sentence are taken from the previous source. Plagge, interview by author.

Example 7.2: *Raga*, meas. 79, unison occurrence of rhythmic motive



It is at this point that the horns become one entity working in contrast to the piano. This texture continues to measure ninety-five, where the piano resumes the material it had in the beginning of the work and, in essence, brings closure to the work.

Throughout the work, the piano is the unifying element between the horns; although the horns begin far apart in both material and harmonic language, the piano serves as the instrument that brings all voices together. Of course, this is achieved largely through rhythmic devices; however, there are some interesting harmonic ideas occurring. Throughout the work, the piano uses whole tone referential collections. In the other works in this study, there have been only short uses of whole tone collections and those instances were usually employed to connect sections which contained more important referential collections, most notably the governing collections. Therefore, those whole tone collections did not warrant mention. However, in *Raga*,  $WT_0$  and  $WT_1$  are used as the governing collections of the piano material. When asked about this, Mr. Plagge described his reasoning in the following manner:

So, when I was trying to experiment [I was] trying to make people start on quite different levels and try to force them together without using any kind of force...So, in order to do that, I also had to find a kind of tonal center and also because those two soloists are playing so different music. They are crashing around all of the time. They have quite harsh dissonances in there because they are on different levels, in the beginning anyway. So, trying to do some kind of diatonic figures in the piano would be quite pointless. So, the whole tone setting was the only possible way of gluing it together. The piano most of the time keeps so subdued. It never tries to overpower the horns. Only in the end where it starts giving away all the downbeats...the horns have the downbeats...there the piano also starts leaving its whole tone pattern and goes into semi-tones.<sup>65</sup>

Measure seventy-nine to eighty is also the moment of departure for the piano which was previously discussed in regards to rhythm. These semi-tone chords occur throughout the piano until measure ninety-five at which point the whole tone collection returns from the beginning of the work. Mr. Plagge describes the end of the work as follows:

Well, it ends in some kind of C but we have this G-flat and tritone thing which is of course exactly [halfway] between the C's which is that whole pattern going again. The piano is just a quote from the first entrance of the first horn.<sup>66</sup>

Raga should be approached as a somewhat controlled improvisation with the horns being two solo voices above the unifying element of the piano. During the initial entrances of the first horn when the concert E is present, intonation issues between the horn and piano arise and the E should be played a little sharp. This is a by-product of the interaction of the dissonances in the horn parts and the whole tone collection in the piano. But, it is also a by-product of the tritone relationship in the material and the whole tone collection. Interestingly, Mr. Plagge asserts that this is an inherent link to Norwegian folk music. The mere presence of the tritone is reminiscent of Norwegian folk music but also of Eivind Groven's work in studying this folk music. He studied the issue of overtones that are generated by a particular chord but removes the fundamental therefore creating striking dissonances.<sup>67</sup> One can therefore conclude, while the

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<sup>65</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> This and the previous three sentences come from the previous source. Ibid.

Indian Raga is associated with folk music and religious music of India, Plagge's *Raga* reflects this same characteristic in its apparent association to Norwegian folk music through the presence of tritones and striking dissonances that are exploited for the duration of the work.

## CHAPTER 8

### SONATA IV, OP. 115

Sonata IV was written in 2002 and is published by Mr. Plagge's publishing label, 2L. It consists of two movements and is approximately twelve minutes in length. Frøydis Ree Wekre, with pianist Kari Tikkala, premiered the work at the International Horn Symposium in Lahti, Finland in 2002. Prof. Wekre and Mr. Plagge will be including Sonata IV on her upcoming CD scheduled for release in late 2004.

#### **Performance Considerations**

This work represents Mr. Plagge's most recent work for the horn and is the largest departure from standard formal models. The work represents his return to Medieval source material through the use of chant in both the first and second movements of the work. The form of the movements often reflects the Medieval source material. Karl Kramer describes the fourth sonata in the following manner:

In a way, from number one to number four, there is almost a full circle that happens with his return to medieval material and liturgical material and yet they are very different. It seems like he has more confidence in form in number four. He feels confident to abandon a more traditional structure. He writes a much less dense piano part.<sup>68</sup>

There is an interesting effect that is a result of the departure from standard form. Due to the material existing as a sequence, or possibly even a fragment, the overall effect is that the composition as a whole sounds rather incomplete. Many, including Prof. Wekre, felt upon first encountering the work that it needed a third movement.<sup>69</sup> To this Mr. Plagge responded,

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<sup>68</sup> Kramer, interview by author.

<sup>69</sup> Wekre, interview by author.

...This is a fragment and that is the reason why the whole sonata sounds like a fragment. It's definitely one of the most 'incomplete' pieces I have been writing because it is like a torso...it lacks a beginning and it lacks an end. ... I had a long hard battle with myself putting a [third movement]... even putting a movement in front of the first movement. I managed to let go because I think the whole piece would have suffered.<sup>70</sup>

As a result, it is imperative that performers understand the form of the original chant because, for Mr. Plagge, it affects everything from overall form to melodic phrasing.

According to the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Christian chant came to Norway from several directions:

Christianity, introduced in the tenth century, brought Gregorian chant to Norway. The celebration of the life of King Olav (*d* 1030), the national saint, created a new liturgy and brought pilgrims and church music from central Europe. Olav's cathedral (begun 1075) in Nidaros (now Trondheim) was an important center; the archbishopric of Nidaros, established in 1152/3, comprised Norway, Iceland, Greenland, Faeroe Islands, the Orkneys, and the Western Isles of Scotland.<sup>71</sup>

Unlike what most would assume, early music in Norway was not influenced by Rome but through the introduction of music from Russia, England, and Ireland. Norway had little contact with Rome until c. 1152 when the archbishopric of Nidaros was established. As such, music from pre-1150 is closely associated with both sacred and secular music from particularly England and Ireland. Consequently, as music developed in Norway and Roman influences were felt, the earlier musical influences still existed in the liturgy; additionally, national chants were allowed in the liturgy to venerate local saints including St. Olav. According to Mr. Plagge, the chants included in Sonata IV, from the Nidaros Book of Sequences (c. 1519), actually date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries and can be linked directly to early music from Norway as well as to England and Ireland.<sup>72</sup> Wolfgang Plagge describes how this is evident in Sonata IV:

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<sup>70</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>71</sup> Arvid O. Vollsnes, 'Norway', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, Vol. 18, 2001.

<sup>72</sup> This and the previous four lines are from the following source. Plagge, interview by author.



If you look at the first three notes in the piano, it is the same pattern as the first three notes in the *Raga* by the way. But, here it is a mirror. It is partly Medieval, of course whole tone, and partly folk music.<sup>73</sup>

These connections, especially the folk music, can be seen in the whole tone nature of the material as well as the presence of the tritone.

### Relevant Theoretical Issues

The most striking differences in this work from the other works in this study are an apparent difference in writing for the instruments, and the extensive use of Medieval source material. Interestingly, the writing for the individual instruments and the use of Medieval source material are closely associated. Karl Kramer describes the work in the following statement, “I would definitely say the fourth is more manageable...just even range wise he does not feel the need to go all the way. Stamina is also less of a challenge.” Mr. Kramer also described the piano writing as less dense.<sup>74</sup> However, it retains its virtuosity through the intricate counterpoint which is introduced from the very beginning of the work. The following is the pattern introduced in the first nine measures.

Example 8.1: Sonata IV, mvt. I, meas. 1-9, recurring piano material.

VENI CREATOR - Allegro molto

Horn in C

Piano

*mp con eleganza*

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> This and the previous line are from the following source. Kramer, interview by author.



The material introduced in the piano in these measures is that of Mr. Plagge. This is important to remember due to the composer's intentions of keeping the Medieval source material separate from his own material. When asked about this idea of separating the chant material from his original material, Mr. Plagge described it as being a necessity because "once the parts start to blend then it is difficult to tell who is doing what; so, it is important to keep them physically separated."<sup>75</sup> Also, he further described this idea of separation by relating it to a site he visited in the Norwegian town of Hamar:

Have you been to this old ruin in Hamar? It is really fascinating. It is an old church put into a huge triangle glass house. This is strange...who does that...puts a glass house around a bunch of stones? But, it is marvelous because those two styles in no way intersect. They are two different beings and they emerge as something quite new which is what I want to do in my music. So, I use the old fragments and build a completely new house around it so that the old material is not absorbed. It is allowed to be there.<sup>76</sup>

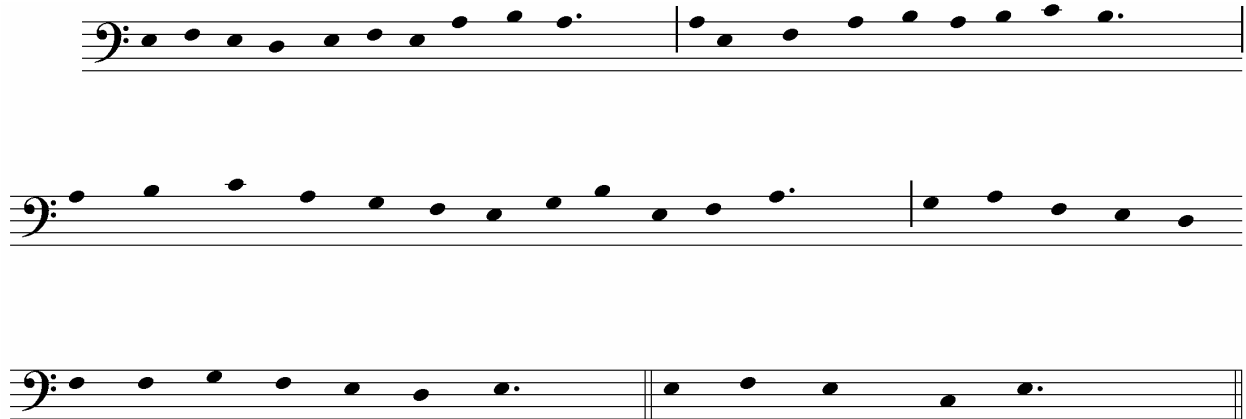
Often, this is achieved by having his original material in one instrument while the chant material is in the other. In the first movement of Sonata IV, Mr. Plagge's original material is present in the piano while the chant, *Veni Creator*, is presented in the horn. Example 8.2 shows the chant in modern notation.

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<sup>75</sup> Plagge, interview by author.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Example 8.2: Sonata IV, mvt. I, modern notation *Veni Creator*.



In the first eighty-two measures, the horn introduces the chant in its entirety. The phrasing of the horn part should follow that of the original chant. The entrances of each phrase of the chant follow a short interlude in the piano. The horn phrases should be regarded as long phrases and be as connected as much as possible to match the phrasing of the original chant. *Veni Creator* actually dates from c. 800 and most likely originated in France. However, the specific Nordic version used here is generally thought to be dated c. 1150.<sup>77</sup>

In the second movement, the same approach should be taken as in the first movement. The chant, *Summi Triumphum Regis*, is much older than *Veni Creator*; it dates from c. 1080-1100. However, the earliest examples of this particular chant only existed as text. The melody of the chant had to be recreated from new German, Italian, and Swiss sources.<sup>78</sup> Example 8.3 shows a modern notation of the chant.

<sup>77</sup> This is taken from personal correspondence with Mr. Plagge.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

Example 8.3: Sonata IV, mvt. II, modern notation of *Summi Triumphum Regis*

(1) Sum-mi tri-um-phum re-gis pro-se-qua-mur lau-de. (2a) Qui ce-li (b) Qui se-se  
qui ter-re re-git scep-tra in-fer-ni iu-re do-mi-to.  
pro no-bis red-i-men-dis per-ma-gnum de-dit pre-ci-um.  
(3a) Huic no-men ex-tat con-ve-ni-ens i-di-thun. (b) Nam tran-si-  
li-vit o-mnes stre-nu-e mon-tes col-li-cu-los-que be-thel.

Like the first movement, Mr. Plagge's original material exists primarily in the piano, while the horn presents the Medieval material. Example 8.4 gives the first four measures, illustrating the first phrase of the chant in the horn.

Example 8.4: Sonata IV, mvt. II, meas. 1-4, first phrase of chant in horn.

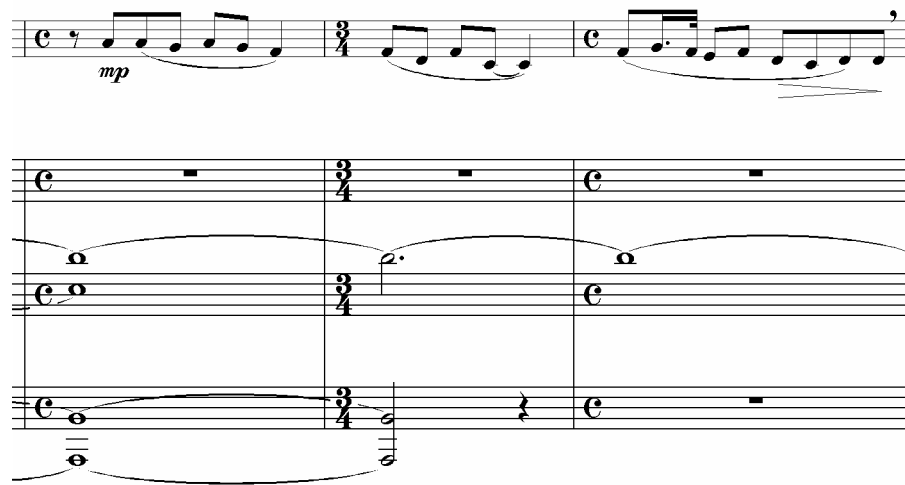
Horn in C: Molto liberamente, parlando e semplice, p

Piano: pp pesante

The following entrance of the horn in measure seven coincides with the next phrase of the chant. However, the breath mark in measure nine should be taken implicitly for it coincides with the phrasing of the original chant.

The second phrase should be compared to measures seven through nine in the horn part. These phrases are identical and are a clear example of how the chant influences the phrasing and overall form in the work.

Example 8.5: Sonata IV, mvt. II, meas. 7-9, horn part which matches second phrase of chant.



Unlike *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Sonata IV closely reflects the melodic form of the chant and cannot be related to sonata form or any other standard formal model. This work should be seen as being driven by the melodic material and, consequently, the incomplete nature of chants. It is developed not through formal structure but through the separation of the Medieval melodic material from original material and the implications this separation has for the roles of the instruments. When the chant is present, it is always in its original form and does not interact with Mr. Plagge's original material. The inclusion of Medieval material in this manner is quite innovative and unique in horn music. The only other standard work for horn using this idea is *En Foret* by Eugene Bozza. Unlike Mr. Plagge, Bozza simply quotes the chant for programmatic purposes and does not base the composition on the Medieval material. Mr. Plagge uses the Medieval material as the basis of the composition and does not alter the original chant in any

manner. As a result, Sonata IV exemplifies his goal of creating a completely new and original composition while including extant Medieval material.

## CHAPTER 9

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REVIEWS

**Anderson, Martin.** “For the Record.” *Listen to Norway* 7, no. 1 (1999).

While highly favorable, the only topic of discussion in this review is Prof. Wekre’s performance. It praises her technique, musicianship, and choice of repertoire. However, it does not discuss any of the works included in the recording; therefore, it is not necessarily helpful in gaining a perspective on the works.

**Dressler, John.** “Recording Reviews.” *Horn Call* 28, no. 2 (1998): 77-85.

This is a review of Frøydis Ree Wekre’s recording *Songs of the Wolf* which was recorded in 1996. Wolfgang Plagge’s *Sonata*, Op. 88 is included on this recording. Mr. Dressler discusses at length each of the works on the recording, including Trygve Madsen’s *Sonata*, Op. 24 and *Dream of the Rhinoceros*, Sigurd Berge’s *Horn-lokk*, Andrea Clearfield’s *Songs of the Wolf*, Stanley Friedman’s *Topanga Variations*, and Wolfgang Plagge’s *Sonata*, Op. 88. Mr. Dressler mentions the interpretation of small motives rather than long lines in Plagge’s work. Also, he describes the work as being tonal in design. This issue has been discussed at length in the introduction and with regards to specific features of the work in chapter 6. Overall, the review is highly favorable.

**Hicken, Stephen D.** “The Newest Music.” *American Record Guide* 60, no. 4 (1997): 248.

While Mr. Hicken’s review of Prof. Wekre’s playing is somewhat favorable, he does not have a favorable opinion of most of the works included on the recording. The only work he seems to value is Madsen’s *Sonata*, Op. 24.

**Jakeman, Richard. “Cry Wolf.” *The Horn Magazine*, Winter (1997): 37-38.**

This is a very short review. It does not have the detail of some of the other reviews listed here. Practically no information other than a listing of the work is provided for Mr. Plagge’s *Sonata*, Op. 88. Interestingly, the review is rather favorable with the exception of the thoughts presented on Madsen’s two works. In contrast to Mr. Hicken’s favorable opinion of Madsen’s works, Mr. Jakeman is apparently not convinced about the effectiveness of the works and Madsen’s use of the horn in the works.

**Kilpatrick, Barry. “A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” *American Record Guide* 65, no. 2 (2002): 203-204.**

Javier Bonet’s recording was reviewed by Barry Kilpatrick for *American Record Guide*. He discusses at length each of the works including Kirchener’s *Three Poems*, Burkhard’s *Romance*, Egea’s *Horn Sonata*, Cosma’s *Sonatine*, Mahle’s *Sonatina*, and Plagge’s *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Also, Mr. Kilpatrick characterizes Mr. Bonet’s playing as “expressive and robust.” He described Mr. Plagge’s sonata as inspired by the tragedy and absurdity that the Berlin Wall represented; the work is dramatic and evocative. Overall, the review is favorable.

**Kirzinger, Robert. “Songs of the Wolf.” *Fanfare*, May/June (1997): 316-317.**

Mr. Kirzinger’s review is a very positive one. It seems that he is pleasantly surprised at these works and surprised at their rather conservative nature. He discusses Prof. Wekre’s playing and each of the works. Mr. Plagge’s sonata is compared to Madsen’s sonata. Mr. Kirzinger asserts that the work uses tonally oriented language and motivic development processes. Like other authors, the short phrases are discussed in relation to the long lines of Mr. Madsen’s work.



**Mayer, Catherine. “Songs of the Wolf.” *Penn Sounds*, Winter (1998): 15.**

*Penn Sounds* is the Pennsylvania Composer’s Newsletter. Mayer’s review is highly favorable and discusses Prof. Wekre’s background and playing as well as the works on the recording. She describes Mr. Plagge’s sonata as a mature work that evidently shows Prof. Wekre’s influence as this work, at the time of the recording, was the most recent of several works written for Prof. Wekre by the composer. She describes the opening of the work and the unaccompanied solo work at the beginning of the first movement. She also states that hornists should look forward to additional compositions by Mr. Plagge.

**Selvik, Espen. “Markant Hornspill.” *Bedre Korps* April, no. 2 (1997).**

This publication is currently published under another title. It is now *Musikkorpsavisa* and is a publication for all Norwegian band programs. Throughout Norway, there is extensive support for band programs not only in schools but also in the military and communities. The article reviews Prof. Wekre’s recording “Songs of the Wolf.” Each of the works are briefly discussed; however, the review was not as favorable as other reviews listed here. The author expressed mixed feelings concerning the quality of the work but did not elaborate as to why he felt this way.

**“Impressions.” *In Tune* 3, (1997).**

Most of the works included on Prof. Wekre’s recording are discussed here. The author of this review is not listed; however, the review praises Prof. Wekre’s performance and many of the works. It makes special mention of Mr. Plagge and his study with György Ligeti; in addition, the author asserts that this connection is not apparent in Mr. Plagge’s rather conservative approach. The author of this review also states that the work is tonal and quite lyrical throughout.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

The works in this study show Mr. Plagge's diverse interests through his novel approach to combining Medieval sources with his original material to strong formal structures and the use of progressive harmonic language. First and foremost, his extensive study of Medieval chant of Europe, and particularly Norway, plays a huge role in *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* and Sonata IV. Both of these works use chants as the basis for material; however, the unique use of these chants rests in his apparent separation of the chant material and his own original material. This aspect of his writing can be perceived as producing discrete stylistic layers in these works. It was discovered during the course of the study that this layered way of thinking finds its way into many of the compositions and consequently other aspects of his works. At times, the layers can be seen in the orchestration, or treatment of the instruments, in the work. In *Monoceros*, however, the layers can be seen in the juxtaposition of motives. Then, in *Raga*, this layered approach can be seen in the instrumentation and separation of the roles of the horns and piano as well as the layered harmonic language. In *Raga*, the piano part completely consists of a whole-tone collection while the horn parts consist of dissonances. This layered approach is one element that makes his works extremely complex.

An evolution in his style of writing can be seen in his treatment of formal structures. The first sonata, *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, as well as Sonata II are both securely structured in standard classical forms. The Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 88 consists of a sonata form in the first movement as well as a siciliana in the second movement. Often, these forms serve as a clear

structure for a rather progressive harmonic language. The harmonic language often consists of pitch-class set manipulations, namely through transposition, as well as referential collections which govern the works. While his treatment of form and subsequent use of standard formal models in his early works connect him to classical composers, the progressive, or post-tonal, treatment of harmonic language establishes Mr. Plagge as a contemporary composer. Over the course of these works, however, his use of form changes. For example, in *Raga*, the form relates to that of the Indian raga. It is essentially improvisation which achieves structure through the use of rhythmic motives rather than formal models. His use of Medieval material connects *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* and Sonata IV. However, there is a major difference in the treatment of the chant in regards to formal structure. In *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, the chant is placed in a very clear sonata form. In Sonata IV, the chant actually governs the overall structure of the work. Consequently, this work is seemingly the most incomplete work he has written; however, once the composer's intentions are known, the structure becomes quite clear.

The composer stated that he seems to be “going backwards in form and forwards in regards to harmonic language.”<sup>79</sup> This statement is an apt observation of his use of form and harmonic language. The works in this study begin with standard formal models and progress to more “free” forms, or forms that are governed by something other than a classical model. Likewise, harmonically, the compositions in the study begin in a somewhat conservative use of post-tonal techniques with clear centric qualities, and progress to the use of referential collections combined with striking dissonances. If one were to compare *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* and *Raga*, for example, one would see the clear differences in form and harmonic language. These two works represent the extremes in Mr. Plagge's compositions for horn.

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<sup>79</sup> Plagge, interview with author.

Fortunately, hornists have a wealth of compositions written by Mr. Plagge. There is an incredible level of craft in Mr. Plagge's compositional techniques; he includes strong formal structures, varied harmonic language, and manipulation of the concept of time throughout his works. Also, his obvious knowledge of classical forms, study of composers such as Stravinsky and Prokofiev, and interest in Medieval music all contribute to the overall impact of the compositions.

Prof. Wekre has stated that, "he is a storyteller."<sup>80</sup> This aspect of his compositional style speaks even to the most general audience member. Mr. Bonet best described this quality in Mr. Plagge's compositions:

In my opinion, the most interesting thing in Wolfgang Plagge is that he's a modern composer of our time but it is always musical. There is always some message...he is always saying something to the audience or to the player. There are not always just effects for more or less no purpose but there are always titles, etc. He is always thinking of a message when he writes music and then you can hear it when you play. It is always interesting...sometimes, you have new contemporary pieces that are difficult but not interesting...interesting for players because it's high but not for the public and not in a musical sense.<sup>81</sup>

Like Mr. Bonet, the author feels that Mr. Plagge requires much from the player both in technique and musicianship. However, it is not difficult simply for the sake of difficulty. Everything has a specific purpose; musical qualities such as phrasing outweigh the technical concerns of the player in the composition. It is this quality of Mr. Plagge's compositions that should ensure their inclusion in hornists' standard repertoire. Mr. Plagge's ability to convey a message to an audience through progressive contemporary compositional techniques while providing interest for the general audience member is truly a skill comparable to that of Stravinsky and Prokofiev.

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<sup>80</sup> Wekre, interview with author.

<sup>81</sup> Bonet, interview with author.

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## APPENDIX A

### CHANTS USED IN *A LITANY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY* AND SONATA IV

**Figure 1.1**

All Saints Day Gregorian Chant: used in *A Litany for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

**K** Yri- e, e-lé- i-son. Chríste, e-lé- i-son. Ký-ri- e,  
e-lé- i-son. Chríste, áudi nos. Chríste, exáudi nos.

Pá-ter de caé- lis, Dé-us, mi-se-ré-re nóbis.  
Fíli Redémptor mún-di, Dé-us, mi-se-ré-re nóbis.  
Spí-ri- tus Sán-cte, Dé-us, mi-se-ré-re nóbis.  
Sáncta Trínitas, ú-nus Dé-us, mi-se-ré-re nóbis.

Sáncta Ma-rí- a, óra pro nóbis.  
Sáncta Dé- i Gé-nitrix, óra pro nóbis.  
Sáncta Vírgo vírginum, óra pro nóbis.  
Sáncte Mícha-el, óra pro nóbis.  
Sáncte Gábri-el, óra pro nóbis.  
Sáncte Rápha-el, óra pro nóbis.

Omnes sáncti Ange-li et Archánge-li, orá-te pro nóbis.  
Omnes sáncti beatórum Spírituum ór-dines, orá-te pro nóbis.  
Sáncte Joánn-es Baptísta, óra pro nóbis.  
Sáncte Jóseph, óra pro nóbis.  
Omnes sáncti Patriárchae et Prophé-tae, orá-te pro nóbis.

Sáncte Pé- tre, óra pro nóbis.



**Figure 1.2**

Veni Creator from Nidaros Book of Sequences: used in *Sonata IV*



**Figure 1.3**

Summi Triumphum Regis from Nidaros Book of Sequences: used in *Sonata IV*



## APPENDIX B

### ACOUSTIC AND OCTATONIC COLLECTION INTERACTION

Figure 2.1

Rehearsal eleven to rehearsal twelve in *Sonata for Horn and Piano*, Op. 88

11 *Poco Meno Allegro* ♩ = 120

Horn (in C)

Piano

*pp*

*p* *tranquilo*

Hn.

Pno.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled '11', shows the Horn (in C) and Piano parts. The Piano part is marked 'pp' and the Horn part is marked 'p' and 'tranquilo'. The second system, labeled '6', shows the Horn and Piano parts continuing. The Piano part is marked 'Pno.' and the Horn part is marked 'Hn.'. The score is in 4/4 time, marked 'Poco Meno Allegro' with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

11

Hn.

Pno.

Measures 11-14. Horn (Hn.) plays a melodic line in the bass clef. Piano (Pno.) has a complex accompaniment with multiple voices in both treble and bass clefs, featuring many beamed sixteenth notes and slurs.

15

Hn.

Pno.

Measures 15-19. Horn (Hn.) has a few notes in measure 15 and then rests. Piano (Pno.) continues with a complex accompaniment, including some rests in the bass line and active lines in the treble.

20

Hn.

Pno.

Measures 20-23. Horn (Hn.) is silent. Piano (Pno.) features a driving accompaniment with continuous sixteenth-note patterns in the treble and block chords in the bass.

24

Hn.

Pno.

The musical score for measures 24-28 shows the Horn (Hn.) part as five whole rests in the bass clef. The Piano (Pno.) part is written in treble and bass clefs. In the treble clef, the melody begins at measure 24 with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a sharp sign. In the bass clef, the accompaniment consists of chords and rests, with a descending eighth-note line appearing in the final measure of the system.