POLYSTYLISM AND MOTIVIC CONNECTIONS IN LERA AUERBACH’S

24 PRELUDES FOR PIANO, OP. 41

by

Meily J. Mendez

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A Document Submitted to the Faculty of the

FRED FOX SCHOOL OF MUSIC

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

In the Graduate College of

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2016
As members of the Doctoral Document Committee, we certify that we have read the document prepared by Meily J. Mendez, titled *Polystylistic and Motivic Connections in Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41* and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the document requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

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SIGNED: Meily J. Mendez
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to my major professor Dr. John Milbauer for his guidance and support throughout my graduate career. He has been a driving force and inspiration to me to be a skillful pianist, a stronger collaborator, and a more sensitive musician.

I am also grateful to Dr. Lisa Zdechlik who has been an immeasurable help in her guidance through the doctoral document process, as well as in her brilliant mentoring in the art of piano pedagogy.

Many thanks to the rest of my committee for their assistance, advice, and support through my graduate career: Professor Tannis Gibson, Dr. Donald Hamann, and Dr. Shelly Cooper.

This doctoral document would not have been possible without the artistic expertise and kind generosity of composer and pianist Lera Auerbach. She has been an intense inspiration and it is an honor to be writing about her and her music.


I have been very lucky to have wonderful colleagues and fellow musicians to work alongside and each one has contributed to my growth and confidence.

Mr. David McGuiggan has been my rock throughout my studies. I am extremely grateful for his patience, support, and encouragement of my many musical endeavors.

My family has been a tower of strength for me and they have been my strongest supporters. I am grateful to them for all they have done throughout my life to help me nurture my music. Thank you, Mrs. May L. Mendez, Dr. David J. Mendez, and Dr. Alexander J. Mendez.
DEDICATION

To Mrs. May L. Mendez and Dr. David J. Mendez

Water is the mother of tea, a teapot its father, and fire the teacher.
~Chinese Proverb
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ABSTRACT

Russian-born American composer, Lera Auerbach (b. 1973), is a pianist and composer with a growing reputation. She has written nearly a dozen works for solo piano in addition to ballets, operas, chamber works, and other solo instrumentations. Her solo piano work 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41 (1998) is the first of three prelude sets she has written; op. 41 is scored for solo piano, op. 46 is composed for violin and piano, and op. 47 is written for cello and piano. Throughout her works, Auerbach’s compositional language is intuitively polystylistic, tonally centered, and couched in traditional forms. In her 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41, Auerbach creates a polystylistic and motivically cohesive large-scale work of the individual preludes.

In this document, three aspects of the 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41 are discussed in two parts: form, most significant polystylistic influences, and most prominent motivic connections. The first part of the document investigates two aspects: the form of each prelude and several polystylistic influences. Auerbach uses form to give each short prelude structure; ABA and Arch forms are most often used. Each of the preludes demonstrates different polystylistic elements; she refers to various genres such as the ricercar and chorale prelude as well as various techniques including stretto and additive rhythms. Additionally, Auerbach pays polystylistic homage to different composers including Bartók, Debussy, Mussorgsky, Purcell, Ravel and others. The second part of the document demonstrates several of the underlying motivic connections that unify the collection. The cohesion is created through self-referencing motivic connections that are best heard when the set of twenty-four is performed in its entirety. Auerbach’s series of polystylistic miniatures is also an organically unified large-scale work.
INTRODUCTION

Russian-born American composer and pianist Lera Auerbach (b. 1973) has received numerous awards including the prestigious Hindemith Prize, the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship, the Deutschlandfunk’s Förderpreis, and the ECHO Klassik award. Her compositional language is intuitively polystylistic, tonally centered, and couched in traditional forms. In her 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41 Auerbach creates a polystylistic and motivically cohesive large-scale work of the individual preludes.

In spite of her growing fame, few scholarly works have been written about Auerbach. Although Auerbach is in demand as a composer and pianist, to date there are only two scholarly articles on her musical compositions. The first is a doctoral treatise by Kimberly Hain: Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, Op. 46: Unity and Musical Narrative.\(^1\) Hain’s treatise is focused on a different set of Auerbach’s preludes than is covered in this document.\(^2\) However, her analysis is particularly useful in providing evidence that Auerbach unifies her prelude sets. Hain’s analysis looks at three unifying elements: direct quotation, two half-step motives, and musical narrative. The second scholarly article on compositions of Auerbach is a master’s thesis titled Lera Auerbach: Die drei Zyklen à 24 Präludien, Op. 41, 46 und 47 written in 2011 by Florentine Gallwas at the University of Hamburg.\(^3\) Unfortunately, Gallwas’ thesis is currently unavailable. This document seeks to further the analysis begun by Hain and to

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\(^1\) Kimberly Hain, “Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, op. 46: Unity and Musical Narrative” (DMA Doctoral Treatise, Florida State University, 2010).

\(^2\) Auerbach wrote three sets of twenty-four preludes: op. 41 is for solo piano, op. 46 is for violin and piano, and op. 47 is for cello and piano.

provide literature on Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41. The analysis will explore three aspects of this work in two parts:

1. Form and polystylistic features

2. Unifying motivic connections

Auerbach uses a variety of effects, such as striking colors and viscerally demonstrative gestures that lead reviewers to draw comparisons to other composers including Bach, Debussy, and Bartók. Each of the preludes demonstrates different polystylistic elements, and the cycle is both a series of miniatures and an organically cohesive large-scale work. The cohesion is created through self-referencing motivic connections that are best heard when the set of twenty-four is performed in its entirety.

Although there are few scholarly articles on Auerbach’s works, many reviews of her compositions and performances substantiate the description of her music as polystylistic. Joshua Kosman from the San Francisco Gate Chronicle reviewed Auerbach’s performance in early 2014 and described Auerbach’s compositions as follows:

Her music is steeped in the sounds of Bach, Liszt, Scriabin and Shostakovich, but not much after that. It spills forth in fervent waves of tonal harmony and aggressive but sinuous melody.

The only reason Auerbach doesn't come off like a throwback - or rather, the reason her unapologetic neo-Romanticism doesn't chafe - is that her music is so skillfully constructed and so rich in imaginative beauty.4

This quote distinctly presents Auerbach as a polystylistic composer. In a review by Daniel Hathaway of her performance at the Mixon Master’s Series, Hathaway quotes Auerbach’s own descriptions of her preludes. Hathaway writes, “They are ‘throwaway

ideas’ of ‘fragile beauty’ that ‘disappear quickly.’ She liked the idea of arranging a series of evanescent miniatures into a grand form — a plan she also followed with the other two sets.” Hathaway also mentions Auerbach’s hints of “classical forms and procedures” in her preludes.

The history of the prelude collection is invaluably examined in Eric Gilbert Beuerman’s doctoral document, *The Evolution of the Twenty-Four Prelude Set for Piano*. Beuerman follows the history of the prelude set and categorizes more than forty sets; he then analyzes four of them in particular. He classifies the sets into those with twenty-four or twenty-five preludes, noting that sets that include the additional prelude are often cyclical as the first and last share the same key. Although the preludes are an integrated cyclical set, the individual prelude can be performed as a stand-alone composition.

“Often, the preludes in these [cyclical] sets seem to be independent preludes, capable of existing and being understood independent of the set. However, when seen as part of a set, other relationships and meanings may emerge.” In creating cyclicism between the first and twenty-fifth preludes by sharing material, composers imply that these sets should be performed in their entirety. In the case of Auerbach’s set of 24 *Preludes for Piano*, op. 41, she creates the cyclicism without resorting to an additional twenty-fifth prelude by quoting the first prelude in the opening material of the twenty-fourth prelude. This juxtaposition of material is adeptly woven together and the conjoined motives return several times over the course of the last prelude.

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The polystylistism and unification found in the 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41 will be demonstrated through an analysis of form, polystylistism, and motivic connections. The examination of form aids in the discussion of both polystylistism and motivic connections. Only the most significant polystylistic examples and motivic connections for each prelude will be examined, not only in consideration of the scope and length of the document, but also out of respect for Auerbach. The composer herself is reluctant to analyze her own works: “…I stay away from analyzing my own music and compose mostly intuitively.” Furthermore, by limiting the discussion, performers will find their own elements of polystylistism and motivic connections in the course of their studies of this work.

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7 Lera Auerbach, email interview with author, April 5, 2013.
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

1.1 Brief History of Preludes

The prelude originated as an instrumental improvisatory genre, and its roots date back to the Renaissance era in both the sacred and secular music worlds.\(^8\) In the sacred tradition, an organist would improvise a prelude to establish the tonic and mode for the choir. In the secular lute tradition, the improvisation simultaneously aids the performer in tuning the instrument and in limbering up their fingers. Although preludes were improvised, a few didactic written examples have survived that demonstrate the period expectations of the genre.\(^9\) The prelude genre served as an introduction to other pieces, and by the Baroque period it preceded two particular works: the fugue, a contrapuntal work, and the suite, from the French tradition of a collection of dance pieces.

The sacred prelude was strongly influenced by the polyphonic imitative counterpoint developed in choral compositions. A number of imitative examples can be found among the works of French and German organists of the Baroque Era.\(^10\) German composer and organist Dietrich Buxtehude wrote many polyphonic choral works that influenced his keyboard compositions. Of particular note are his imitative multi-sectional preludes (for example, Prelude in F major, BuxWV 145).

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\(^10\) Ibid., 863.
Alongside the sacred organ tradition, the French secular lutenists and keyboardists of the seventeenth century significantly developed the genre. By 1620, didactic examples of polyphonic preludial fantasias, both unmeasured and semi-measured, can be found for solo lute, viol, and harpsichord. The French also used a prelude before the dance suites, and this practice was transferred into the *sonata da camera* genre of the Italian composers.

The prelude’s height of development came in the Baroque period with the encyclopedic approach of Johann Sebastian Bach. He composed two books of twenty-four paired preludes and fugues, his *Well-Tempered Clavier* (abbreviated to *WTC*).\(^\text{11}\) The sequence of keys in J.S. Bach’s *WTC* is arranged in parallel major/minor relationships ascending chromatically, opening with C, then Cm, C♯, C♭m, etc. to encompass all twenty-four keys. Each of the preludes develops a particular motivic idea and is followed by a fugue in the same (or enharmonic) key.

Preludes flourished in the sacred tradition during the Classical era, but few secular preludes of discernible significance were written during this period. Of interest is Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Two Preludes through All the Major Keys for Piano or Organ*, opus 39 written during his teenage years in Bonn, Germany, in 1789 and published in 1803. Although not a significant work, Beethoven’s op. 39 was possibly written during his study with Christian Gottlob Neefe, who acquainted him with Bach’s *WTC*.\(^\text{12}\) In this case, Beethoven’s work reflects the historical significance of the prelude as a didactic form.


As time progressed, the prelude genre retained an important role in the salon as an introduction, calling audience members to their seats, setting the mood, and warming up the performer for the body of the program. It was an expected component of a performance, even in informal gatherings. “…In the early nineteenth century it was actually poor taste, especially in the informal atmosphere of the private gathering, to begin with the main work itself. To improvise a prelude before performing a written composition was therefore a necessity for pianists.”\textsuperscript{13} The genre set the stage for the coming works and was integral to the performance.

The prelude genre garnered appreciation from late Classical era and early Romantic era composers, who wrote sets of individual pieces, each with a particular character and expressive quality. Among the many who composed preludes were Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Muzio Clementi, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, and Ignaz Moscheles. In the Romantic era, J. S. Bach’s body of work was rediscovered by Felix Mendelssohn and Louis Spohr, and these compositions influenced prominent composers. Felix Mendelssohn wrote \textit{Six Preludes and Fugues for Piano} op. 35 in 1832-1837. Franz Liszt’s \textit{Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H} was written in 1855. Frédéric Chopin, while in Majorca, Spain, studied Bach’s \textit{WTC} and wrote his own set of twenty-four preludes, his opus 28.

Chopin became one of the first composers to emancipate the prelude from its previous pedagogical and interdependent role into a stand-alone work of virtuosity and lyricism that could also function as a component of a larger set. His op. 28 approaches the

\footnote{\textsuperscript{13} Ling-Mei Lin, “Collections of Piano Preludes in the Classical and Early Romantic Eras (circa 1770 to circa 1839): A Historical and Stylistic Study” (DMA Diss. University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1997), vii.}
sequence of keys in a different manner than the WTC of Bach. Instead of ascending chromatically through the parallel major and minor keys, Chopin followed the circle of fifths of relative major and minor keys. In doing so, he reinforced the idea of the relatedness of the keys and, subsequently, of the preludes themselves.

Since Chopin, the prelude genre has had a storied and extensive history, assimilating and adapting the character of varied international styles. A large number of distinguished composers have written sets of independent preludes in their personal unique voice. Aleksandr Scriabin (1872-1915), a great admirer of Chopin, wrote twenty-four preludes over the course of 1888-1896 in the same manner as Chopin. Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) eventually published a prelude for each of the twenty-four keys. Although he did not follow a key sequence, Claude Debussy (1862-1918) also wrote a set of twenty-four preludes, divided into two books of twelve preludes each (1909-10, 1912-13). George Gershwin (1898-1937) published three jazz-influenced

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preludes in 1926, although he had initially planned for twenty-four.\textsuperscript{18} A nineteen-year-old Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) wrote eight Debussy-esque preludes in 1928-29. In 1947-48, Frank Martin wrote eight preludes based on a personal approach to Schoenberg’s dodecaphony.\textsuperscript{19} One of the most recent to add to the list is composer Lera Auerbach, who continues the lineage of the prelude. She wrote three sets of preludes, op. 41, 46, and 47; of these, the \textit{24 Preludes for Piano}, op. 41 is the focus of this document.

\section*{1.2 Brief Biography of Lera Auerbach}

Lera Auerbach (b. 1973) is a multi-faceted artist. She is a composer in high demand and a formidable pianist. Additionally, she is a well-known writer and poet in Russia, a librettist for her own operas, and a visual artist who sketches, paints, and sculpts.

She was born in the city of Chelyabinsk, USSR, located to the east of the Ural mountain range near the Siberian border. Her musical training began with her mother, a piano teacher, and she composed her first composition at age four.\textsuperscript{20} In 1991, at the age of seventeen, she was chosen to participate in a cultural tour of the United States alongside a German violinist. After performing at a Colorado convention for clock and watchmakers, Auerbach was approached by an audience member who suggested that she visit the

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\textsuperscript{19} Jooeun Pak, “Invention through Synthesis: Former Composers Observed in Frank Martin’s \textit{Huit préludes pour le piano}” (DMA Diss. From the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University, August 2014).
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Aspen Music Festival four hours away. She was granted permission to visit the next day, and while there she observed a master class, toured the campus, and subsequently fell in love with the freedom she witnessed in the United States.

Auerbach saw the United States as an opportunity, and her handlers were nervously aware of her interest. Her retinue traveled to the last stop, New York City, which is where she would ultimately make the choice: return to the USSR or stay in the United States. Ilya Lehman, a violin teacher and former acquaintance of her mother, met her in New York City and was delighted by her playing. He arranged an impromptu audition for her at the Manhattan School of Music, and she was immediately accepted for the coming school year. Emboldened by this opportunity, she gathered her belongings when her handlers were distracted and left. She made her way to Lehman’s home where she phoned her family and defected with their blessing. She was one of the last artists to defect from the Soviet Union.21

Auerbach began her piano and composition studies at the Manhattan School of Music and then transferred to The Juilliard School where she studied with Joseph Kalichstein and received a bachelor of music in piano performance. She continued her studies at The Juilliard School and earned a master of music in composition under the tutelage of Milton Babbitt and Robert Beaser. After her studies at The Juilliard School, she traveled to Germany for her postgraduate piano studies at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover, studying with Einar Steen-Nøkelberg. Germany has

become her second home and the German music publishing company Hans Sikorski Music Publishing Group publishes all of her music.

Since the end of her studies, Auerbach has become a much sought-after composer and pianist. In 2000, Auerbach was requested by the International Brahms Society to serve the first of two artist residencies at the Baden-Baden home of Johannes Brahms, and in 2001 she was invited by Gidon Kremer to be a guest artist at the Lockenhaus Festival, where sixteen of her works were performed. In 2002, she gave her Carnegie Hall debut. In 2003, violinist Vadim Gluzman and pianist Angela Yoffe recorded Lera Auerbach: 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano; T’filah; Postlude, the first all-Auerbach program for the recording label Bis. Their recording was well received, and since then Bis has continued to release approximately one album a year of Auerbach’s music, including one recorded by Auerbach herself in 2006: Lera Auerbach Plays Her Preludes and Dreams.\(^\text{22}\)

Auerbach continues to appear regularly as a soloist, performing her own works as well as traditional repertoire. Additionally, she has composed for a large number of the world’s virtuosos and symphonies. These include commissions for Gidon Kremer, Vadim Gluzman, Philippe Quint, David Finckel and Wu Han, Hamburg Ballet, Kremerata Baltica, Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa, and others. Her works have been performed at international festivals including Aspen Music Festival, Ravinia Music Festival, Tucson Chamber Music Festival, Caramoor Music Festival, Stresa Festival, Schwetzingen

\(^{22}\) Lera Auerbach, Preludes and Dreams, Lera Auerbach, piano, Cedille Records, BIS CD 1242 Digital, 2006.
Festival, Moscow Autumn Festival, and Lockenhaus Festival. In 2005, she was awarded the prestigious Hindemith Prize by the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival in Germany, the Deutschlandfunk’s Förderpreis, and the Bremer Musikfest Prize. She was selected as a Young Global Leader in 2007 by the World Economic Forum and in 2014 as a Cultural Leader on the topic of borderless creativity.

The international recognition that Auerbach has gained can also be attributed to her writing—both in English and in her native Russian. Concurrent with her music studies in New York City, she also studied comparative literature at Columbia University. Since then she has become a noted poet in Russia. In 1996, she was named Poet of the Year by the International Pushkin Society and awarded the poetry prize of the Novoye Russkoye Slovo, the largest Russian-language newspaper in the West. She was the first artist-recipient of the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans in 1998. She was president of the jury for the 2000 International Pushkin Poetry Competition and was invited to serve on the selection panel for the 2002 Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans. Her literary works include five volumes of poetry and prose, two novels, and numerous contributions to Russian-language literary newspapers and magazines. In early 2015, she published her first book in English, a collection of aphorisms on a large variety of topics that also includes color plates of her own artwork.

Auerbach continues the tradition of pianist-composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with a compositional style that takes advantage of her intimate

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familiarity with the instrument and its literature. Because of this, she unreservedly blends
the knowledge of the repertoire with her personal voice. “She is less concerned with
transmitting the old into the present than with expressing the present while remaining
conscious of the past.” 25 In an age of specialization, Auerbach is devoted to balancing her
work as a composer and as a performer. She has performed and studied music by a large
number of composers including Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt, Mussorgsky,
Shostakovich, Debussy, and Prokofiev to name a few. Her compositional output includes
operas, concerti, solo works, small ensemble collaborative works, ballets, etc. Her
compositions explore a myriad of pitch and timbre options, harmonic relationships,
motivic cells, and traditional forms for the piano. Her writing is strongly idiomatic for the
pianist, and she utilizes the entirety of the keyboard. Cluster chords, tonal chords in non-
functional progressions, as well as returning melodic and harmonic motives are found
throughout her works for solo piano.

Auerbach’s compositional style employs an intuitive polystylistic approach. Many
reviewers have labeled her music as Neo-Romantic, Russian, and even old-fashioned
while also touting her music as inventive and emotionally rich. Her music has been
compared to a variety of composers: Gesualdo, Bach, Chopin, Shostakovich,

25 Axel Brüggemann, liner notes for *Lera Auerbach Plays her Preludes and Dreams*, Lera
Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and even Björk. When asked of her thoughts on being labeled a polystylistic composer, she replied:

I prefer to stay away from definitions and labels. I do not have a problem with my music being characterized as polystylistic. To me, it means ultimate freedom, extending the boundaries of any given style or form, transcending the cages of other isms.

\[1.3\] Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41

Written in 1998, Auerbach’s 24 preludes for Piano, op. 41 is dedicated to Tom and Vivian Waldeck who co-commissioned the work with the Caramoor International Music Festival. It was premiered in 1999 at the Caramoor International Music Festival, performed by the composer herself. Auerbach’s catalogue includes eleven works for solo piano. She has written a pair of piano sonatas, the Chorale, Fugue, and Postlude for Piano, op. 31, Ludwig’s Nightmare, and several other works. Auerbach composed an additional two prelude sets after the solo piano set; one set of twenty-four preludes for violin and piano and another twenty-four for cello and piano. These two additional sets are among the very few prelude sets ever written for instruments other than solo piano.\[28\] 

\[26\] Many reviewers of Auerbach’s music and performances compare her to a variety of composers. For example, in his review “Lera Auerbach review: A Romantic original” for the San Francisco Gate, Joshua Kosman mentions Bach, Liszt, Scriabin, Chopin, and Shostakovich. In an email interview with the author on September 17, 2012, Auerbach wrote the following: “At some point a friend of mine, for fun, compiled a list of composers mentioned as influences by critics in reviews of my work during the last 10 years or so. These ranged from Gesualdo to Björk. I think he collected over 150 names and then gave up. Ultimately, it is irrelevant.”

\[27\] Lera Auerbach, email interview with author, September 17, 2012.

\[28\] Hain, “Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, op. 46...”, 11.
Auerbach’s polystylism is intertwined in her intimate performer’s knowledge of the rich history of classical music repertoire. Her harmonic language fluidly consists of chromaticism, modality, bitonality, and minimalism. Throughout her preludes, she juxtaposes thick and sparse textures, extreme registers, rapid dynamic shifts, obsessive ostinati, and chromatic and folk-like tunes.

Auerbach’s set follows Chopin’s precedent of the circle of 5ths as a key scheme. This creates a strong harmonic sequence to the collection that supports the idea that Auerbach’s twenty-four preludes are an integrated set. Each prelude is relatively short in length, ranging from one half of a page (Prelude no. 11 in B major, *Misterioso*) to six pages (Prelude no. 24 in D minor, *Grandioso*). When her twenty-four preludes are performed in sequence, they become a significant work creating a kaleidoscopic soundscape with returning motives, quotations, and allusions to other preludes. This internal integration constructs an overarching network of connections.

The special character of the pieces lies in regarding familiar things from an unexpected perspective and discovering that these things are not what they may seem to be at first glance. The context and order of the Preludes are very important for their comprehension.²⁹

In order to give form and cohesion to her polystylistic compositional language, she uses quotations, allusions, and stylistic references to other preludes in the set. The cyclicism is also found within the singular preludes as well; many preludes are structured with a codetta at the end that returns to fragments of previous material, bringing the solitary prelude full circle. In referring to the prelude set, Auerbach wrote in the liner notes of her CD, “The challenge was not only to write a meaningful and complete prelude

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that may be only a minute long, but also for this short piece to be an organic part of a larger composition with its own form.”\textsuperscript{30, 31} Although this quote is found in the liner notes for her CD recordings of her \textit{24 Preludes for Violin and Piano}, op. 46 and \textit{24 Preludes for Cello and Piano}, op. 47, it also applies to her first set of preludes, her \textit{24 Preludes for Piano}, op. 41. The return of material within the small structure as well as throughout the larger collective work unifies the polystylism and develops many of the musical ideas in different contexts.


\textsuperscript{31} Lera Auerbach, \textit{24 Preludes for Violin and Piano; T'filah; Postlude}, Vadim Gluzman, violin; Angela Yoffe, piano, Cedille Records, BIS 1242 Digital, Compact Disk, 2003.
CHAPTER 2: FORM & POLYSTYLISTM OF 24 PRELUDES FOR PIANO, OP. 41

2.1 Polystylistm

Polystylistism is the contrast or absorption of disparate stylistic elements to create unique musical amalgamations of style for expressive means through quotation or allusion. The concept of polystylistism has been a part of the compositional world since the Renaissance era. At that time, quotations and imitation of others’ works and styles were the ultimate compliments. Quodlibets, musical works that compiled several popular tunes and set them together as though they were trios or quartets, were a specialty of Jacob Obrecht in the late 1400s. J. S. Bach included a quodlibet as the last variation in his Goldberg Variations, as well as Stile Antico elements, as homage to historical sacred works. Ludwig van Beethoven similarly incorporates Baroque fugal elements into his late piano sonatas, for example the fugal section in the last movement of his Piano Sonata in E Major, op. 109.

Alfred Schnittke, the heir apparent to Shostakovich, experimented with what he would later term Polystylistism in his first symphony (1969-72), which contains fragments of works by Josef Haydn, Beethoven, and Chopin, jazz-like sections, and improvisational elements. Schnittke coined the term Polystylistism in 1971 in his article, “Polystylistic Tendencies in Modern Music.” He discusses the “subtle ways of using elements of another’s style,” through stylistic allusion, outright quotation or paraphrase of another period’s style or the voice of a specific composer. He was fascinated with the juxtaposition of “high” and “low” music that was thrown into sharp relief in film music, a

genre that was a primary source of income for the composer. He desired to bring "the mud" of life into his serious works. Schnittke thought of polystylism as a polyphony of styles, an intimately-woven stylistic tapestry.\(^{33}\) His later polystylistic works would continue this trend, but with more subtle references to a variety of sources.

Auerbach intuitively integrates different gradations of references within her own compositional language. Regarding polystylism, Auerbach says:

> Alfred Schnittke was one of the composers who brought me into contact with Polystylism. Polystylism means the freedom to play with all musical eras and meanings in order to achieve your goal, and there are no limits to what you can do. We now have more information about musical traditions than ever before. There is no reason not to associate with or to leave it in its cage. I can draw from all sources, which I love, and integrate them into my own musical language.\(^{34}\)

She approaches each work open to whatever comes to her. In responding to what inspires her music, she responds: “I do not know. Life, time, paintings, books… I do not have a model for composing and never had. It’s just something that happens.”\(^{35}\) The 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41 encompasses a variety of influences in a musical stream of consciousness.


\(^{35}\) Lera Auerbach, email interview with author, September 17, 2012.
2.2 *Form and Polystylism in the Twenty-Four Preludes*

The polystylistic tendency has always existed in concealed form in music, and continues to do so because music that is stylistically sterile would be dead.

~ Alfred Schnittke

### 2.2.1 Prelude no. 1 in C major, Moderato

**Form**

The first prelude has three distinct sections: an A section, a B section, and a codetta of fragments. Within the A section, there are two contrasting phrases, both of which begin with C major chords in both hands five octaves apart (indicated in Figure 1 in musical notation above and below; also see Musical Example 1). This opening chord rings through the entirety of each phrase. The B section moves to a new tonal center of F with a descending chromatic melody. The codetta stitches together fragmented motives from the A section’s first phrase and the B section to bring the prelude to a close with the return of the distanced C major chords. In doing so, the prelude begins and ends with the assigned tonality of C major. The form for this prelude is demonstrated in Figure 1 with placement of the C major chord indicated.

![Diagram of form](Figure 1. Diagram of form, Lera Auerbach, Prelude no. 1 in C major, Moderato, op. 41.)

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**Polystylism**

The first prelude uses the tonal center of C major since it is first in the circle of fifths. It opens with a C major chord quietly establishing the expected key and tonal center (see Musical Example 1). This opening chord is placed in extreme registers at C₀ and C₆ and bears similarity to the opening of Debussy’s *La Cathédrale Engloutie* (see Musical Example 2).

Musical Example 1. Auerbach, Prelude no. 1 in C major, op. 41, mm. 1-4.³⁷

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Musical Example 2. Claude Debussy, Prelude no. 10, Bk. 1, *La Cathédrale Engloutie*, mm. 1-3.³⁸

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³⁷ All excerpts from Lera Auerbach’s *24 Preludes for Piano*, op. 41 are with reproduced with the permission of G. Schirmer, Inc.:

The C major chord is given time to ring and decay, rather like a bell, and it occurs a total of three times over the course of the short prelude. Sets of three occur frequently throughout the 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41.

The B section features descending semi-chromatic motion in the higher registers over an accompaniment of an open fifth drone bass on F. The drone bass grounds the semi-chromaticism of the primarily step-wise melodic line (see Musical Example 3). This strong F tonal center also acts as a contrasting harmonic center sandwiched between the opening C tonal center and the codetta’s return to C. The semi-chromatic step-wise melodic line bears a similarity of contour to Henry Purcell’s Dido et Aeneus, recitative “Thy hand, Belinda” before Dido’s famous lament, “When I am laid in Earth” which uses a chromatic descending melody (see Musical Example 4).

The ending of Prelude no. 1 is a codetta of fragments, and the last section references modal harmony in its use of a Phrygian chord progression: IV♭II7 I. The chromatic modal twist, the♭II7, presents the necessary increase in tension for an expectation of a resolution. The cadence subsequently resolves to C major, the tonal center of Prelude no. 1. There is an additional twist of chromaticism at the end after the third and final C major chords: a major 7th melodic interval from A♭ to G7 ends the prelude. The A♭ (an enharmonic respelling of G♯) and the G7 both anticipate the next prelude. These two notes present the leading tone and the seventh scale degree of the next prelude’s Aeolian opening material and foreshadow the next prelude in the set.

39 “Bell peals are very important to Russian music.” Anatole Leitkin, The Performing Style of Alexander Scriabin (United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2011), 53.
Musical Example 3. Auerbach, Prelude no. 1 in C major, op. 41, mm. 9-11 (circles added by author).

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Musical Example 4. Henry Purcell, melody from the recitative "Thy Hand, Belinda" from Dido et Aeneas, mm. 1-9, vocal line (circles added by author).\(^{40}\)

Musical Example 5. Auerbach, Prelude no. 1 in C major, op. 41, mm. 15-20.

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2.2.2 *Prelude no. 2 in A minor, Presto*

*Form*

The second prelude has a structure similar to Prelude no. 1 (see Figure 2): an A section (mm. 1-11), a B section (mm. 12-15), and a codetta that returns to previous material (mm. 16-22). The material modified for the codetta is primarily from the A section.

![Diagram of form](image)

**Figure 2.** Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 2 in A minor, Presto, op. 41.

*Polystylism*

Unlike the chordal nature of Prelude no. 1, Auerbach employs a linear horizontal motion to develop tension and resolution in Prelude no. 2 in A minor. There is a modal coloration to the A section of the prelude as rapid ascending RH one-octave scales begin to change, commencing the scale on a different and higher note with each repetition (see Musical Example 6). The scale continues through the white keys and by doing so the internal structure of whole and half steps is modified each time. While the first scale is an A natural minor scale (also known as the Aeolian mode), the movement to the next note creates a B Locrian mode, the next is C Ionian, and then D Dorian. Within the rapid 32\textsuperscript{nd} note scales of the RH, the first note of each scale is accented and notated to be held through the scale that follows it. Transferring the scale up from one note to the next above the pedal tone pulls the scale away from its tonal center and causes an increase in tension.
The next phrase, labeled as a', is very similar to the first phrase in that there are rapid scales in one hand and a harmonic interval in the other. However, resembling the usual practice of Classical Era variations, the material is flipped from one hand to the other; in the second phrase, the LH performs the rapid scales, and the RH has the harmonic function (see Musical Example 7).

Musical Example 6. Auerbach, Prelude no. 2 in A minor, op. 41, mm. 1-4.

Musical Example 7. Auerbach, Prelude no. 2 in A minor, op. 41, mm. 6-9.
Additionally, there is continuity in their roles; the a' phrase resumes the stepwise momentum in the harmonic vertical motion of the RH while the LH remains stationary. With each subsequent measure, pitches are added to the upper register chord in a stepwise fashion to create progressively dissonant clusters, reminiscent of Henry Cowell’s cluster chord notation in his composition, *The Tides of Manaunaun* (1917) from his *Three Irish Legends*. In Auerbach’s Prelude no. 2, she hearkens back to this work in her version of block notation in the a' phrase (see Musical Examples 7 and 8); she also includes parenthetical indications of specific pitches for each block.

Musical Example 8. Henry Cowell, *The Tides of Manaunaun* from *Three Irish Legends*, mm. 22-23.\(^1\)

The increasing clustering dilutes the original centering on the A tonal center, and the weakening of the A tonal center allows E to become the new central tone. Although the use of linear motion is prevalent in this prelude, there is still an element of traditional tertian harmonic relationships. The two tonal centers mimic the functional harmonic relationship of I and V of the key of A.

2.2.3  *Prelude no. 3 in G major, Moderato*

**Form**

The third prelude is semi-measured. Instead of a time signature and bar lines to delineate meter, the bar lines indicate phrasing. Although the phrases are delineated by bar lines, there is a melding of phrase elements over the course of the prelude. The sections are presented in Figure 3.

![Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 3 in G major, Moderato, op. 41.](image)

These six phrases appear to be a fluid version of Bartók’s arch form as found in his Second Piano Concerto and his Fourth and Fifth string quartets. Other composers who have used this form include Samuel Barber and Dmitri Shostakovich. An arch form usually has the following design: A B C B A. There are a few significant differences in Prelude no. 3; the first A section consists of two smaller sections and there is an intertwining of motivic material between phrases, as indicated in lowercase letters in Figure 3. Without the strict bar line placement, the motives and phrases can lengthen and fuse, developing a variety of musical ideas with hypnotizing effects.

**Polystylism**

The piece begins with an inverted pedal point on a repeating G₅ (see Musical Example 9). This pedal tone highlights the tonal center, G. It is altered slightly at the end of the C section, but returns to the tonal center once more in the next measure. Pedal tones have a basis in organ practice and have been used by Orlando de Lassus, J.S. Bach, Johannes Brahms, and many others. Auerbach’s inverted pedal acts as a hypnotic beat.
throughout the prelude. Placed at G₃, it is barely above the thematic phrase material and with its quiet dynamic the inverted pedal blends in and out of the background.

Musical Example 9. Auerbach, Prelude no. 3 in G major, op. 41, m. 1 (box and motive label added by author).

\[ \text{Moderato } \frac{\text{d} = 60}{\text{p}} \]

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Repeating notes in the top of the texture have precedents in the output of Chopin and Schumann. Chopin’s Prelude in B minor, op. 24 no. 6 has a repeating note in the top of the texture and it changes with the harmony. As seen in Musical Example 10, Chopin inverts the usual textural arrangement of material; the melody is featured in the bass, the harmony above, and the repeating notes in the top. When compared with the excerpt from Auerbach’s third prelude, it is clear that the approach is quite different regarding the function of the repeating notes.

Musical Example 10. Frédéric Chopin, Prelude in B minor, op. 28, no. 6, mm. 1-4.\(^{42}\)

\[ \text{Lento assai} \]

Ernő Dohnányi employs an inverted pedal point in *Sphärenmusik* (*Music of the Spheres*) from his *Winterreigen*, op. 13. The pedal point appears in the middle of the texture of the *Meno adagio* section as a series of pianissimo G♯₄ eighth notes that blends with the quiet harmonic motion (see Musical Example 11). Auerbach similarly uses quiet G₃ quarter notes in Prelude no. 3; however, melody and harmony create a fortissimo foreground that drowns out the inverted pedal point. The fortissimo chords die away and the inverted pedal point can then again be heard, doggedly continuing the tonic through the majority of the prelude.

Musical Example 11. Ernő Dohnányi, *Sphärenmusik*, op. 13, no. 5 from *Winterreigen*, op. 13 mm. 25-27.⁴³

The first theme, the second motive, is placed in the middle of the texture of Auerbach’s Prelude no. 3, and it is made up of major seventh intervals beneath the inverted pedal point in m. 2 (see Musical Example 12). This theme returns three times over the course of the prelude in differing states of length and rhythmic motion, a nod to the sets of three found in Preludes no. 1 and 2. The contour of this theme is similar to the Gregorian plainchant setting of the *Dies irae* (see Musical Example 13), which is also referenced by Hector Berlioz in his *Symphonie Fantastique*, by Franz Liszt in his

Totentanz, and by many others. The fragment of the Dies irae in conjunction with the major 7th intervals heighten the dissonance.

Musical Example 12. Auerbach, Prelude no. 3 in G major, op. 41, m. 2, first theme (A section, b+a' subsection, boxes and motive labels added by author).

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The approach to this first theme, like the second theme of Prelude no. 1, is that of an additive approach, where the material is extended with each repetition. In Prelude no. 3, the returns are not exact repetitions of previous material; instead, the material changes and morphs, similar to the thematic transformation of Liszt and Berlioz where there is an organic and free movement away from original material. Auerbach uses the Dies irae reference as a jumping off point to proceed into original material.
2.2.4 Prelude no. 4 in E minor, Allegro appassionato

Form

Prelude no. 4 is in a five-part ABCBA arch form. As demonstrated by Figure 4, there is an introductory A section; a B section with a Chopinesque melody reminiscent of marimba rolls; and an appassionato C section that utilizes the introductory material as an accompaniment before returning to altered B and A sections. The introductory material is a rapid cascade of bass notes juxtaposed with the elongated melodic line of the C section. Setting the two disparate parts in simultaneous motion creates a momentum through the middle section that is wildly different from the surrounding lyrical B sections.

![Diagram of form](image)

Figure 4. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 4 in E minor, Allegro appassionato, op. 41.

Polystylistism

The lyrical and Chopinesque Nostalgico B section quietly contrasts with the forte chromatic introduction. The LH’s Alberti bass chord progression is strongly influenced by Chopin’s Prelude in E minor, op. 28 no. 4 with minute changes to the harmonic motion (see Musical Examples 14 and 15). Although there is a strong allusion in harmony between the two preludes, one of the biggest differences between the two preludes is the inversion of the harmonic progression. Because of the differences in inversion, the chromatic motion occurs in different places in the accompaniment texture. Chopin employs a harmonic progression in a first inversion block-chord accompaniment. The use of first inversion for his progression places the chromatic motion in the top and bottom of the chord construction. In contrast, Auerbach changes the style and position,
opting for a root position Alberti bass accompaniment; the chromaticism subsequently moves within the bottom two voices.

Musical Example 14. Auerbach, Prelude no. 4 in E minor, op. 41, mm. 2-6.

![Musical Example 14](image)

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Musical Example 15. Chopin, Prelude in E minor, op. 28 no. 4, mm. 1-4.44

![Musical Example 15](image)

Over this harmonic Chopinesque progression is a melody made up of constant 32nd notes. The repeated notes are played quietly, similar to the rolling treatment that percussionists use to extend a tone.45 By rolling the note in the manner of percussionists, the instrument may then perform longer durations without experiencing the natural decay of sound. The quality of timbre alters slightly with this approach, as well as giving the melody a soft rumbling consistency. The marimba-like rolling thickens the texture of this prelude, especially in comparison to the previous multi-layered prelude, Prelude no. 3.


45 For further reading, the following doctoral document has been informative:

Auerbach approaches the prolongation of the melody in a manner different from that of Chopin: Chopin gives the illusion of melodic continuation through the repetition of chords in the accompaniment, while Auerbach features a percussion-like technique of rolling the notes of the melody itself.

The repeating notes also evoke Schumann’s *Carnaval*, op. 9, the “Reconnaissance” (no. 14). Schumann uses rapid repeated notes to parallel the melody an octave above (see Musical Example 16). With the repeated notes in the inner voice, “Reconnaissance” is less dependent on the repeated notes to define the melody, unlike Auerbach’s Prelude no. 4.


2.2.5 *Prelude no. 5 in D major, Andantino*

*Form*

Shorter than the previous prelude, Prelude no. 5 has an AA' coda form (see Figure 5). It opens with two voices in the first A section, and then, with the return of material in the A' section, an additional voice is added in the middle with a louder dynamic that emphasizes the new inner melody. The accompaniment is a two-measure-long ostinato

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pattern that proceeds to alter the first measure with each repetition. The two-measure ostinato has an additive-rhythmic approach, adding or subtracting a note or two and thus molding an ambiguous shifting meter. The melody in the other hand is far more stable than the seemingly ever-changing ostinato; it is four measures in length and it is repeated twice within each A section. The coda, constructed from fragments of the accompanying material, introduces a tolling fourth voice in the lowest register.

![Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 5 in D major, Andantino sognando, op. 41.](image)

**Polystylism**

There are two polystylistic aspects entwined in the accompaniment of this prelude; the use of an ostinato and within it the application of additive rhythms. Ostinatos have a varied history from the works of J. S. Bach to Igor Stravinsky. Additive rhythms are more recent and best known through the works of Igor Stravinsky, Bela Bartók, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich. The ostinato sets up expectations of recurrences, yet the additive rhythm approach undermines those same expectations through a variety of metric or pitch content changes.
As mentioned earlier, the first measure of the ostinato adds or subtracts one or two notes. This changes the time signature of the first measure of the two-measure ostinato during the A section. The second measure of the pattern is always the same, which only heightens the metric imbalance of the mercurial first measure of each recurrence. There are five occurrences of the ostinato, with an xyzyx arch form pattern.\textsuperscript{47} The first occurrence of the two-measure ostinato returns at the end of the A section, coming full circle. Conversely, the A' section uses a similar ostinato, though this iteration of the ostinato has a fixed first measure of an $\frac{11}{8}$ time signature; the changes that take place are now in the pitch arrangement at the end of the first measure, all the while retaining the exact same second measure. Using small changes and leaving the meter stable allows the double melodic material of the A' section to take center stage.

Another example of polystylism is found in the primary melody’s opening measure, which bears a striking similarity in contour to the opening measures of Serge Rachmaninoff’s theme from Variations on a Theme of Corelli, op. 42 (see Musical Examples 17 and 18). The theme is based on La Folia, which is also used by many others, for example, Handel in his Sarabande from Keyboard Suite in D minor, HWV 437. The similarity between Rachmaninoff’s work and Auerbach’s Prelude no. 5 is in the contour and rhythm. The motive based on La Folia reappears throughout Auerbach’s prelude.

\textsuperscript{47}If relabeled, this form is clearly Bartók’s Arch form, ABCBA, a form used by several preludes and to be discussed in the next chapter as well.
2.2.6 Prelude no. 6 in A minor, Corale

Form

Disregarding the short introduction and ending few measures, the chorale prelude no. 6 has a three-part form: Additive, “Chorale” Quote, and Subtractive (see Figure 6). It begins with a 1.5 measure introduction before the additive polyphonic section of mm. 2-18. The “Chorale” fragment quote is given in mm. 19-26, with the melodic notes written in the middle of the texture. The fragment ends and mm. 27-33 thins the texture by

subtracting each voice. The last four measures return to the opening texture and material, bringing the prelude full circle.

As indicated by the character marking of Corale, Auerbach references the chorale prelude genre. Early in the Reformation, chorales were sung by the congregation during the liturgy and the melodies were often borrowed from secular song. Because of this, the melodies often displayed melodic and structural simplicity. Over time, the instrumental chorale prelude genre developed, influenced by the polyphonic vocal chorales. The instrumental version may have been used to introduce the choir’s performance of the same chorale. Other composers who have written chorale preludes include Dieterich Buxtehude, J.S. Bach, Johannes Brahms, and Max Reger.

In Auerbach’s polyphonic Corale, each of the four voices performs the short four-note subject. Each new note is agglomerated to the chordal structure in a vertical additive approach (see Musical Example 19 for a reduction of the additive approach). This thickens the texture with each new note. Additionally, the composer noted that the performer should hum at a “barely audible” level to add a “human quality” to the timbre. The performer should hum B or the melodic notes at their discretion.

There are two types of chorale preludes: the first is based on a true reproduction of the original chorale tune, and the second is based on a suggestion or fragment of the chorale melody. The latter type assumes the congregation is well versed in the chorale in question. In the case of Auerbach’s Prelude no. 6, she follows the latter type of chorale
prelude, using a fragment of a melody\(^{49}\) and placing it in the middle of the texture in the middle section. The “chorale” fragment makes its appearance after the transition of mm. 17-18. Auerbach places letters in the score to indicate which notes are to be played “with emphasis” (see Musical Example 20 for a portion of this section). The melody quote begins in the RH in m. 19 with G, F, E and the LH finishes with E\(^\flat\), D\(^\flat\), C, B, C, D\(^\flat\).

Musical Example 19. Auerbach, Prelude no. 6 in B minor, op. 41, mm. 1-6 (author reduction to demonstrate the vertical additive approach).

Musical Example 20. Auerbach, Prelude no. 6 in B minor, op. 41, mm. 20-22.

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In order to end the prelude, the initial process is reversed to a subtractive motion instead of an additive motion and the thick texture disintegrates (see Musical Example 21 for a reduction of the subtractive ending). The introductory material returns in m. 33 to become the finale, bringing the prelude full circle.

Musical Example 21. Auerbach, Prelude no. 6 in B minor, mm. 29-36 (author's reduction to demonstrate vertical subtractive approach).

\(^{49}\) The fragment used is from a previous prelude and will be discussed in the motivic connections of Auerbach’s work.
2.2.7  Prelude no. 7 in A major, Andante

**Form**

The form is in three parts, ABA' (see Figure 7). The opening Andante section with its single measure-long RH ostinato returns in a shortened version at the end; the Allegro is a contrasting section with its own separate ostinato and a slow moving bass melody that descends into the lowest registers of the piano. The melody of the shortened return of the Andante retains the low register placement of the Allegro B section. The returning melodic material of the A' section is three octaves below the original, further accentuating the differences of A and A'.

![Figure 7. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 7 in A major, Andante, op. 41.](image)

**Polystylism**

This prelude is a study in ostinatos and short repeating cells. The two ostinatos are in contrasting sections, both performed by the RH. The Andante sections that frame the prelude use an ostinato that is one measure long (see Musical Example 22). This ostinato begins as both a rhythmic and harmonic repeating cell; however, as the section progresses, the pitch content changes, inching upward to a higher register. The rhythm stays constant, despite the pitch changes. In contrast, the Allegro B section uses an unchanging consistent ostinato that is one beat long. An example of another work with a short ostinato is Maurice Ravel’s *Bolero*, which is based on a one-measure-long ostinato.
Musical Example 22. Auerbach, Prelude no. 7 in A major, op. 41, mm. 1-3.

Andante

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2.2.8 Prelude no. 8 in F♯ minor, Presto

Form

The overall form of Prelude no. 8 falls into an A B codetta structure (see Figure 8). The A section has two smaller sections, a and a', and the codetta is built on fragments from these smaller sections. Both of the two main sections, A and B, begin with tetrachord scales; however, over the course of the B section, the scales are modified to include larger intervals.

Figure 8. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 8 in F♯ minor, Presto, op. 41.

Polystylism

The eighth prelude is a study in scales similar to that of Claude Debussy’s Étude pour les huit droigts (see Musical Examples 23 and 24). These preludes share a similar initial arrangement of eight fingers – four notes for the LH and four for the RH. By splitting the scale into two parts, one for each hand, the two tetrachords are clearly identifiable. Auerbach inflects a Dorian mode quality to the F♯ tonality by using a D♯ in
the second tetrachord. Over the course of Auerbach’s Prelude no. 8, the F♯ minor first tetrachord is the most stable over the course of the A section and codetta.

Musical Example 23. Auerbach, Prelude no. 8 in F♯ minor, op. 41, m. 1.

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Musical Example 24. Debussy, Étude pour les huit droigts, book 1, no. 6, mm. 1-2. 50

2.2.9  Prelude no. 9 in E major, Allegro ma non troppo

Form

This particular prelude has an ABA coda form, with three primary parts followed by a small coda (see Figure 9). The ninth prelude has a theme of sets of three; disregarding the coda, there are three groups of measures in each of the three primary parts equaling a body of nine groups of measures in the ninth prelude. The A section consists of three groups: 2.5 measures; 2.5 measures of similar material with roles reversed; and then a set of 2 measures. The B section similarly has a set of three one-measure-long patterns. The A' section returns to the opening material but modifies the

time signatures so instead of a half measure of $\frac{1}{4}$, it is written as a $\frac{3}{4}$ measure. In doing so, there are three measures for each of the three groupings for the A’ section: 3 measures; 3 measures with role reversal; and 3 fragmentary measures. A grand pause stops the motion before a coda of alternating hands.

![Diagram of form](image)

Figure 9. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 9 in E major, Allegretto, op. 41

**Polystylism**

The A section begins with a strong rhythmic alternation between the hands, generating a jazz-like syncopated rhythm (see Musical Example 25). The opening alternation of hands is similar to J.S. Bach’s Two-Part Invention in E major (see Musical Example 26). A further link to Bach’s Two-Part Inventions is found in the canonic relationship between the two hands of subject and countersubject where the roles and the subsequent material are passed from one hand to the other. This weaving of two voices can be found in the piano works of many composers from Bach to Scriabin.

The accompaniment of the B section appears as an arpeggiated figure (see Musical Example 27). This accompaniment is similar in structure to Dmitri Shostakovich’s Prelude no. 12 from his 24 Preludes for piano solo, op. 34 (see Musical Example 28). Both display an arpeggiated accompaniment with a rhythmic eighth note melody. The A’ section begins in m. 11 with the material in different registers, and the section ends in m. 19 with an abrupt silence before a fragmentary codetta. Grand pauses have been employed by a multitude of composers from Mozart to Bernstein. The grand pause clears the sound away, as though to allow the fragments in the codetta to be heard out of context as isolated musical ideas, like fragments of memory.
Musical Example 25. Auerbach, Prelude no. 9 in E major, op. 41, mm. 1-2.

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Musical Example 27. Auerbach, Prelude no. 9 in E major, mm. 8-10.

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2.2.10 Prelude no. 10 in C♯ minor, Largo

*Form*

Only fourteen measures long, this prelude has a straightforward binary form: an A section (mm. 1-8) and a B section (mm. 9-14). As indicated, the two sections have contrasting material. The first section resembles a trio sonata with its three parts. The second part is far thinner in texture with only a doubled melody line in parallel octaves.

Figure 10. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 10 in C♯ minor, Largo, op. 41.

*Polystylism*

The trio sonata is a Baroque genre, with a trio of voices: the basso continuo and two upper voices often in canon. Other composers who wrote trio sonatas include Henry Purcell, J.S. Bach, Arcangelo Corelli, Dietrich Buxtehude, Antonio Vivaldi, and George Frederick Handel. The example from Handel’s *Trio Sonata for Two Violins and Basso Continuo*, op. 2, no. 2, demonstrates the two primary voices in canon over an accompanying third voice (see Musical Example 29).

Prelude no. 10 from the *24 Preludes for Piano*, op. 41 has a similar arrangement of voices. The basso continuo enters first with its ostinato pattern. The two upper voices enter in canonic style (see Musical Example 30). The canon has only two entrances before the section ends, just long enough to allow each voice an entrance. An *ad libitum* transition follows, similar to a solo cadenza.

The bass line is reminiscent of the dotted rhythms of French overtures, as featured in J. S. Bach’s Ouvertüre nach Französischer Art, BWV 831 in the second volume of his *Clavier-Übung* and his Ouverture from the Partita in D major, BWV 828 in the first
volume of his *Clavier-Übung*. The highly dramatic bass line is created through dotted rhythms with driving triplet 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes that race to the beat. This bass pattern is also found in Rodion Shchedrin’s *Sonata for Piano* (1962) in the second movement’s fourth and fifth variations (see Musical Example 31). The rapid 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes embellish and emphasize each beat, resolutely and insistently providing the pulse beneath the more variable canon.

Musical Example 29. George Frederick Handel, *Trio Sonata for Two Violins and Basso Continuo*, op. 2 no. 2, mm. 1-4.\textsuperscript{53}

Musical Example 30. Auerbach, Prelude no. 10 in C\textsuperscript{♯} minor, op. 41, mm. 2-3.

Musical Example 31. Rodion Shchedrin, Sonata for Piano (1962, his first sonata for piano), mvt. II, var. V, mm. 1-2.54

Var. V

2.2.11 Prelude no. 11 in B major, Misterioso

Form

The shortest of the preludes with a mere seventeen notes, Prelude no. 11 is unmeasured, through-composed, and to be performed *ad libitum* (with liberty).

Polystylism

This prelude features the harmonic series of the fundamental tone of B (see Musical Example 32 for an excerpt). The harmonic series is the basis for all of traditional western harmony and refers to the interrelationships of frequencies that underlie sonority. As an example on the piano, if a C₂ is struck while the sustain pedal is depressed, the strings with closely related frequencies will sympathetically vibrate at lower amplitudes.

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The overtones add to the sound quality, fullness, and timbre of the instrument.\textsuperscript{55} The seventeen notes of Prelude no. 11 match the harmonic series of B. The only change is the last note of the prelude, a C, which is placed an octave above the expected register at C\textsuperscript{7}.

Musical Example 32. Auerbach, Prelude no. 11 in B major, op. 41, the fundamental tone and four of the overtones.

![Misterioso](image)

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\textit{2.2.12 Prelude no. 12 in G\textsuperscript{\#} minor, Allegro}

\textit{Form}

The twelfth prelude has one of the more complex forms; it employs a multi-sectional construction that reflects aspects of the harmonic structure (further discussed in \textit{Polystylism} of Prelude no. 12): Introduction, A, B, transition, C, transition, and coda (see Figure 11). The two introductory measures return as the material for the two transitions at m. 13 and 20. This creates another set of three found in the collection of preludes, and it acts as a unifying aspect for the prelude.

![Diagram of form](image)

\textit{Polystylism}

Prelude no. 12 is the middle point of the 24 preludes. The introduction is a polytonal ostinato of a $G\#$ minor third in the LH and a C minor third in the RH that becomes accompaniment and transitional material (see Musical Example 33). The *brutale* contrary motion and rotation of hands are similar to Dohnányi’s Toccata from his *Humoresques*, op. 17. The Toccata by Dohnányi includes a number of different patterns, including the contrary motion rotation seen in mm. 58-63 (see Musical Example 34). Auerbach uses the rapid contrary motion pattern in her twelfth prelude to set up the momentum needed beneath the slower melodic line. Dohnányi’s melody also moves slowly, using whole note octaves to contrast with the rapid pattern in the middle voices.

The first two measures of Prelude no. 12 by Auerbach set forth two separate and distinct centers – $G\#$ minor and C minor. This bitonality of $G\#$ minor and C minor is continued through the prelude. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart deliberately ends in four keys simultaneously in his *A Musical Joke*, though Auerbach’s prelude is no joke. Other composers who have used bitonality include Igor Stravinsky (e.g. *Petruchka*, *Rite of Spring*), Serge Prokofiev (*Sarcasms*, op. 17, 3rd mvt.), Béla Bartók (Fourteen Bagatelles, op. 6), and Darius Milhaud (*Saudades do Brasil*).

Musical Example 33. Auerbach, Prelude no. 12 in $G\#$ minor, op. 41, mm. 3-4

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The bitonal relationship can be seen as an application of a mirroring technique used by Bartók. The minor third interval used for each hand sits on either side of an interval of a ninth to give registral distinction. The minor thirds perfectly mirror one another in a contrasting rotating motion (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Visual representation of Prelude no. 12, introduction and transition sections material reduced from a separation of an interval of a ninth to an interval of a second, demonstrating mirror symmetry.

The bitonality carries through the entire prelude. After the opening clash of G♯ minor and C minor through the A section, measures of G♯ minor and G major alternate in the B section. The opening bitonal ostinato returns as a transition to the C section, which is placed at a higher register. This section is the first time the G♯ minor chord changes to a different chord; it becomes D♯ major, which is the dominant of the G♯ minor tonality. Simultaneously, the RH and LH interlock with the RH arpeggiating a B diminished chord, the vii° of C minor, and the LH outlining a D♯ major triad, the V of G♯ minor. The material of the coda returns to the duality of G♯ minor (primary tonic) vs. G major (dominant of the secondary tonic) before ending with the G♯m/Cm polychord. The

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56 Dohnányi, Complete Rhapsodies (1999).
bitonality expresses an overall functional harmony of tonic and dominant relationships over the course of the prelude (see Table 1).

Table 1. Chart of bitonal harmony of Auerbach’s Prelude no. 12, op. 41.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Intro 1-2</th>
<th>A 3-6</th>
<th>B 7-12</th>
<th>Transition 13-14</th>
<th>C 15-20</th>
<th>Transition 21-22</th>
<th>Coda 23-24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cm</td>
<td>Cm</td>
<td>Cm</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Cm</td>
<td>B°</td>
<td>Cm</td>
<td>G-Cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonality</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>vii°</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>V-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G♯m</td>
<td>G♯m</td>
<td>G♯m</td>
<td>G♯m</td>
<td>G♯m</td>
<td>D♯</td>
<td>G♯m</td>
<td>G♯m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonality</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.13 Prelude no. 13 in F♯ major, Andante

Form

Prelude no. 13 is relatively short and in binary form (see Figure 13). The first section is built on a two-measure ostinato. The B section uses a small two-note idea to create a new ostinato that is interrupted by a grand pause and contrasting mirrored material. The B section material returns once more to end the prelude.

Figure 13. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 13 in F♯ major, Andante, op. 41.

Polystylism

The thirteenth prelude begins the second half of the twenty-four preludes in what appears to be the wrong key. It uses the same key signature as B major and G♯ minor; yet, there is a clear relationship of C♯ and F♯ in a V–I motion. Despite the strong F♯ tonality, there is an obvious lack of leading tone (E♯); the prelude is in F♯ Mixolydian instead of an expected F♯ major. The leading tone is lowered consistently throughout this short prelude. Another mode that is identical to the Mixolydian mode is the third klezmer mode, the
Adonoy Moloch mode, which is used for a lighter mood.\textsuperscript{58} Prelude no. 13 by Auerbach has a considerably lighter mood than its predecessor, the *brutale* twelfth prelude.

The thirteenth prelude starts with a two-measure ostinato, with the melody entering in the second measure (see Musical Example 35). This ostinato is reminiscent of Modest Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition, Promenade*, and uses the same initial published time signature of $\frac{5}{4}$ (see Musical Example 36).

Musical Example 35. Auerbach, Prelude no. 13 in $F^\#$ major, op, 41, mm. 1-2.

Musical Example 36. Modest Mussorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition, Promenade*, mm. 5-6.\textsuperscript{59}

2.2.14 *Prelude no. 14 in $E^\flat$ minor, Allegretto*

*Form*

The form of Prelude no. 14 is an AA’ structure (see Figure 14). The initial A section sets up a short two-part ostinato that has an anacrustic motion. A transition

\textsuperscript{58} For more, please see the following Masters thesis on Klezmer Music.

between the two A sections alters the rhythmic structure of the ostinato. Removing the anacrustic motion causes the four-beat ostinato to come to rest on beat four rather than halfway through the previously-established beat three. This creates a sense of finality rather than the expectation of motion present in the original rhythmic pattern. The transition then moves to a shortened return of the A material, labeled A'.

![Figure 14. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 14 in E♭ minor, Allegretto, op. 41.](image)

Polystylism

The ostinato is built on an anacrustic motion, with a tonal center of E♭ minor. Because of the anacrustic motion, there is a groovy jazz-like sense to the prelude’s ostinato. D♮ is a central note in the melodic material and the leading tone to the tonal center (see Musical Example 37). Unlike Prelude no. 13’s lack of leading tone motion, Prelude no. 14 confronts the tonal center and its leading tone.

Musical Example 37. Auerbach, Prelude no. 14 in E♭ minor, op. 41, mm. 1-3.

![Musical Example 37. Auerbach, Prelude no. 14 in E♭ minor, op. 41, mm. 1-3.](image)

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2.2.15 Prelude no. 15 in $D\flat$ major, Moderato

Form

Two types of historical ricercar are juxtaposed in Prelude no. 15: the polyphonic and the homophonic. Using three imitative voices, the fifteenth prelude begins with a polyphonic ricercar, a genre from the 16th century that became the Baroque fugue. After a transition and grand pause, the second section pays homage to the homophonic sectional ricercar (see Figure 15).

![Diagram of Form](image)

Figure 15. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 15 in $D\flat$ major, Moderato, op. 41.

Polystylistism

The subject of Prelude no. 15 bears a similarity to Bach’s subject in his Fugue in $D\sharp$ minor from book 1 of the WTC (see Musical Examples 38 and 39). Both Auerbach’s Prelude no. 15 and Bach’s Fugue in $D\sharp$ minor use three voices that encompass the bass, soprano, and tenor/alto ranges. This is representative of yet another set of three found in the twenty-four preludes. The numerology also plays a part: three divides into fifteen a total of five times. There are five entrances of the subject, although the last two statements are only partial and in the same octave.

Musical Example 38. Auerbach, Prelude no. 15 in $D\flat$ major, op. 41, mm. 1-4.

![Musical Example](image)

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Musical Example 39. Bach, Fugue in D♯ minor, Well-Tempered Clavier book 1, mm. 1-6.\textsuperscript{50}

2.2.16 Prelude no. 16 in B♭ minor, Moderato – Allegro ma non troppo

Form

The sixteenth prelude, in three primary sections, includes harmonic thirds as an introduction and tertian harmony as the basis for the melodic material. The number three has a special significance. The introduction consists of a series of half note harmonic thirds. The harmonic thirds can be paired into stepwise relationships despite their registral displacement. When paired, there are three pairs of harmonic thirds, continuing the numerological theme of threes.

The A sections have two voices – the arpeggiated figure and the harmonic intervals. In the first A section, the arpeggiated chords in the RH are contrasted with the droning low B♭ octaves of the LH. In m. 11, the arpeggiation changes its pattern, heralding the new section, and the roles are flipped for the A' section. The RH takes on the harmonic intervals and the LH arpeggiates (see Figure 16). The transition in mm. 22-23 abandons the arpeggiation and instead references the fourth prelude with an Alberti bass pattern. The transition marks the change to the A'' section (beginning in m. 24) and the initial but evolved roles of RH and LH. The changes in the returning patterns create

variety over the course of the prelude. The arpeggiation figure fragments and disintegrates as the ending nears.

![Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 16 in B♭ minor, Moderato – Allegro ma non troppo, op. 41](image)

**Polystylism**

The harmonic progression and its arpeggiation lend a distinctive Chopinesque sonority (see Musical Example 40). There is a compelling resemblance to Chopin’s *Étude in C minor*, Op. 25 no. 12 (see Musical Example 41). The progression mimics a similar harmonic rhythm of approximately one chord per measure. Additionally, the harmonies of Auerbach’s mm. 2-5 mimic Chopin’s first four measures, emphasizing the tonal center of each of these works. Chopin’s first four measures cover the following chords: i iiø7 iv i; Auerbach’s prelude outlines the following: i iiø7 V7 i. The arpeggiation of the harmonies of Chopin’s *Étude in C minor* spans three octaves, twice the range of Auerbach’s arpeggios. However, the similarities are striking when heard.

Another resemblance can be found in the approach to rapid arpeggiation in string technique. Examples of similar arpeggiations are in the Finale of the Violin Sonata in E♭ Major, op. 18 by Richard Strauss and the recapitulation of the first movement of the Violin Concerto in E minor, op. 64 by Felix Mendelssohn. The resemblance stems from the repeated top and bottom notes of the arpeggios (see Musical Example 40).
Musical Example 40. Auerbach, Prelude no. 16 in B♭ minor, op 41, mm. 2-3.

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Musical Example 41. Chopin, Étude in C minor, op. 25 no. 12, (“Ocean”), mm. 1-2.61

2.2.17 Prelude no. 17 in A♭ major, Adagio tragico

Form

The seventeenth prelude is a short sectional prelude with three through-composed parts (see Figure 17). The first section opens the prelude with a tonic A♭ harmonic series, a portion of which becomes part of the accompaniment to a brief melody. The second section uses a half step from the harmonic series as a basis for its hypnotizing melodic motive; the minimalistic melody is complemented by an inverted A♭ major chord played in a lower register. The last section uses the upper registers to form an A♭ major chord.

Figure 17. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 17 in A♭ major, Adagio tragico, op. 41.

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61 Chopin, Complete Preludes (1895, 1998).
Polystylism

Since antiquity, rhetoric and music have had a natural analogous relationship and the influence of rhetoric can be found in Prelude no. 17. Rhetoric and music share the common thread of progressing through time; because of this, comparisons have been made throughout history. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, rhetorical terms were appropriated into musical composition by German composers.

Although musico-rhetorical analogies occurred sporadically in the music theory of the medieval period, they began to play a more extensive role only in the sixteenth century, when musicians appropriated rhetoric, by then a central element in the humanistic education of the time, as a model for the teaching of musical compositions… this peculiarly German moment, roughly the years 1550-1800, when rhetoric and music came closest together, has left a permanent stamp on Western music theory…

Dispositio is one of the five traditional parts of rhetoric and part of the conceptual core. Dispositio determines the linear ordering of ideas or topics, and it has its own taxonomy for organization: exordium, the introduction; narratio, the statement of facts; propositio, statement of what is to be discussed or contested; confirmatio, proof of arguments; and so forth. Even though the literal applications of rhetoric to music are debatable, certain constructions and figures may exhibit a rhetorical influence.

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The rhetorical presentation of the \textit{exordium}\textsuperscript{64} is the introduction of coming content and the purpose of the work. In an oblique way, the application to music would present the statement of melody or a short harmonic progression that presents a firm “argument” for the key. For example, Bach’s \textit{WTC} book 1, Prelude no. 1 in C major begins with the following progression: I, ii, V, and I. This is a strong cadential progression with a relentless C in the bottom voice, stating and establishing the key. Auerbach’s Prelude no. 17 opens with the harmonic series of A\textsubscript{♭}, the fundamental tone and seven of the overtones. In doing so, the tonal center is solidified (see Musical Example 42).

Additionally, Auerbach includes a note at the bottom of the page, “Sostenuto Pedal also may be used to allow low A\textsubscript{♭} to ring throughout the prelude.” The intrigue of being able to selectively sustain on the piano has been part of the piano’s evolution.\textsuperscript{65} In order to hold notes in some kind of fashion, Auerbach indicates the use of the middle pedal.\textsuperscript{66} The sostenuto pedal allows a low A\textsubscript{♭1} pitch to resonate through the ending. With each re-sounding of this low A\textsubscript{♭}, the tonic is emphasized.

Musical Example 42. Auerbach, Prelude no. 17 in A\textsubscript{♭} major, op. 41, mm. 1-3.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example42.png}
\caption{Auerbach, Prelude no. 17 in A\textsubscript{♭} major, op. 41, mm. 1-3.}
\end{figure}

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\textsuperscript{64} For further reading, the following book details the rhetorical practice in music: Dietrich Bartel, \textit{Musica Poetica: Musical-Rhetorical figures in German Baroque} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

\textsuperscript{65} For further reading, the following book explains the history of the pedals: David Rowland, \textit{A History of Pianoforte Pedaling} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

\textsuperscript{66} “Das Sostenuto Pedal kann auch dazu verwendet warden, dass das tiefe A\textsubscript{♭} während des ganzen Präludiums weiter klingt. / Sostenuto Pedal also may be used to allow low A\textsubscript{♭} to ring throughout the prelude.” Bottom of page 39 of score.
2.2.18 Prelude no. 18 in F minor, Grave

Form

Prelude no. 18, like Prelude no. 17, is a three-sectioned through-composed work (see Figure 18). The eighteenth prelude stands at the three-quarter mark and is one of the more self-referential preludes of Auerbach’s set. Section A references Prelude no. 6. A fragment from Prelude no. 4 becomes a sequential motive in section B. Section C quotes the B section of Prelude no. 1. The three parts of the body of the prelude correspond to the three quotes from other preludes. Pervading the entirety of the prelude is a polystylistic ostinato that binds the disparate references together. The semi-additive ostinato includes a descending chromatic bassline, found in the lowest notes. The material of the introduction and coda are unique to the Prelude no. 18.

Figure 18. Diagram of form, Auerbach, Prelude no. 18 in F minor, Grave, op. 41.

Polystylistism

Prelude no. 18 opens with a chromatic ostinato circling around the tonal center of F (see Musical Example 43). A constant accompaniment through the prelude, the polystylistic ostinato creates consistency for the through-composed prelude. The ostinato moves by step, with some notes maintained in order to thicken the texture. However, not all notes performed become part of the thickening texture and so create a semi-additive approach to the ostinato.

The ostinato is reminiscent of Debussy’s prelude, “…des pas sur la neige.” (see Musical Example 44). Auerbach’s F minor ostinato similarly moves by step, but it is much longer and accumulates notes. Additionally, the lowest notes of the ostinato follow
the descending chromatic fourth bassline also used in Purcell’s *Dido et Aeneas*, Dido’s Lament, “When I am laid in earth…” (see Musical Example 45). Auerbach’s ostinato is a whole step lower than that of Dido’s Lament. It almost seems as though Auerbach’s four-measure ostinato combines Debussy’s winter scene with Purcell’s inevitability of death to be grave-like rather than simply *Grave*.

Musical Example 43. Auerbach, Prelude no. 18 in F minor, op. 41, mm. 1-4.

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Musical Example 44. Debussy, Prelude no. 6, bk. 1, *...des pas sur la niege*. mm. 1-2.\(^{67}\)

Musical Example 45. Excerpt of descending chromatic fourth bassline as used by Purcell in Dido’s Lament from *Dido et Aeneas*.\(^{68}\)

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2.2.19 Prelude no. 19 in E° major, Adagio religioso

Form

This through-composed prelude uses a two-measure pattern that alters and changes with each repetition (see Musical Example 46). With the short pattern, it is clear that there is an evolutionary process at work. The pattern occurs seven times with an additional measure at the end, totaling fifteen measures. This prelude uses rhythmic repetition to create a meditative quality.

Polystylism

There is a striking similarity between Auerbach’s Prelude no. 19 and Aleksandr Scriabin’s Prelude no. 1 in E° major from his Five Preludes, op. 15 (see Musical Examples 46 and 47). Both begin the melodic material with a quintuplet and their RH parts are made up of two voices over a steady LH pattern. Auerbach’s prelude has a meditative quality in the consistent repetitive two-measure pattern. The pitch content changes with each two-measure repetition, morphing over the course of the prelude on a smaller scale than Liszt’s thematic transformation. The coda combines splintered fragments of prior elements to bring the evolution to an end.

Musical Example 46. Auerbach, Prelude no. 19 in E° major, op. 41, mm. 1-2.

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2.2.20 Prelude no. 20 in C minor, Misterioso

Form

The melody of the twentieth prelude is based on a fragment from the melody of Prelude no. 4's lyrical section. This fragment is the fundamental core of the prelude (see Figure 19), appearing a total of three times. Each appearance of the fragment is the beginning of a phrase, occurring at mm. 1, 3, and 5. The phrases are two, two, and five measures in length, respectively. Each phrase changes the fragment in an organic evolution. The second phrase, A', states an altered repetition that ultimately enlarges the range. And the elongated last phrase, A'', increases tension to resolution by delaying the expected resolution of the material.

Figure 19. Diagram of form, Auerbach's Prelude no. 20 in C minor, Misterioso, op. 41.

Polystylistm

The extended use of grace notes throughout Prelude no. 20 embellishes the melody (see Musical Example 48), evoking Chopin’s Étude in E minor, op. 25 no. 5 (see

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Musical Example 49). Grace notes are used in place of the sixteenth notes in mm. 29-36 before the contrasting major section. In Auerbach’s Prelude no. 20, the grace notes are embellishments to the melody, while the grace notes of Chopin’s *Étude in E minor* are integral to the melodic motion.

Musical Example 48. Auerbach, Prelude no. 20 in C minor, op. 41, m. 1.

![Misterioso](image)

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Musical Example 49. Chopin, Etude op. 25 no. 5, (“Wrong Note”), mm. 29-24.70

![Etude](image)

2.2.21 *Prelude no. 21 in B♭ major, Allegro moderato*

*Form*

The Prelude no. 21 primarily uses a three-part form (see Figure 20). The A section is a series of harmonic ninth intervals. The contrasting B section consists of rapid toccata-like sixteenth notes. The transition combines the A and B sections; an augmented version

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of the A section’s harmonic intervals soars above the B section’s figures. The C section contains new material in the middle staff, while the outer staves include a variant of the opening measure of the A section. The altered version of the opening measure also refers back to the augmented version of the melody with the rhythm changed to include half notes. The final section of the prelude combines block chords and disjunct figures that thicken the texture, contributing to a lush conclusion.

![Diagram of form](image)

Figure 20. Diagram of form, Auerbach's Prelude no. 21 in B♭ major, Allegro moderato, op. 41.

**Polystylism**

There is a rhythmic parallelism, also known as intervallic planing, to the ninths of Auerbach’s prelude that could be a cousin to Liszt’s *Historische ungarische Bildnisse*, S.205, I. Széchenyi István (see Musical Examples 50 and 51). This intervallic planing is also a compositional technique that can be found in Debussy’s works, including *Pour le piano*, the Sarabande (see Musical Example 52).

As mentioned in the discussion of form, an augmented version of the melody becomes part of the transition, subsequently combining the A and B sections. Augmentation is a Baroque fugal technique to lengthen the rhythmic values of the main melody. The augmented melody is found in the top staff of the texture of Auerbach’s prelude (see Musical Example 50 for the original, and Musical Example 53 for the augmented version). An example of augmentation can be found in Bach’s *WTC* book 2, Fugue in C minor. The first statement of the subject (Musical Example 54) in mm. 1-3 uses eighth and sixteenth notes. The augmented version of the subject (Musical Example 55) in mm. 14-16 is stated in the middle voice in quarter and eighth notes. At
approximately twice the length of the previous version, the longer rhythms change the quality of the subject and provide contrast with the denser sixteenth note rhythms in the multi-voice texture.

Musical Example 50. Auerbach, Prelude no. 21 in B♭ major, op. 41, mm. 1-2.

![Allegro moderato](image)

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Musical Example 51. Franz Liszt, *Historische ungarische Bildnisse*, S.205, I. Széchenyi István, mm. 137-140.\(^{71}\)

![Franz Liszt, Historische ungarische Bildnisse](image)

Musical Example 52. Debussy, *Pour le piano*, L. 95, Sarabande, mm. 1-4.\(^{72}\)

![Claude Debussy, Pour le piano](image)

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Musical Example 53. Auerbach, Prelude no. 21 in B♭ major, op. 41, mm. 11-12.

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Musical Example 54. Bach, WTC, bk. 2, Fugue in C minor, mm. 1-3.\textsuperscript{73}

Musical Example 55. Bach, WTC, bk. 2, Fugue in C minor, mm. 14-16.\textsuperscript{74}

\subsection*{2.2.22 Prelude no. 22 in G minor, Andante}

\textit{Form}

Using small repeating and evolving cells, the twenty-second prelude has a ternary form of ABA (see Figure 21). Within the A section, there are additional clear

\textsuperscript{73} Bach, \textit{The Well-Tempered Clavier} (1866, 1983).

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
subdivisions into four phrases: a a' b a". The melody appears amidst the drone in the middle of the texture.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 21. Diagram of form, Auerbach's Prelude no. 22 in G minor, Andante, op. 41.*

**Polystylist**

The droning ostinato of this prelude surrounds the melody (see Musical Example 56), suggesting a number of works with similarly overlapping parts. An example of an overlapping of hands is François Couperin’s *Tic-toc-choc, ou Les Maillotins* from his *Troisième livre de pièces de clavecin*, from the dix-huitième ordre (see Musical Example 57). *Tic-toc-choc* is subtitled “piéce croisée” meaning it is a “crossing piece”, and the hands certainly do so for most if not all of the work. In Auerbach’s prelude, the upper staff contains the immutable drone of the minor seventh, alternating between $B^\flat_3$ and $A^\flat_4$, offset by the sixteenth rest, so the drone and the notes of the melody never align. The effect is very similar to Couperin’s *Tic-toc-choc* with the oscillation of melody and droning notes, though the droning notes occur simultaneously.

Another example of overlapping the hands to create the desired effect is in the Toccata from Ravel’s *Le tombeau de Couperin* (see Musical Example 58). An ostinato that surrounds other material can be found in Charles Tomlinson Griffes’ *Roman Sketches*, op. 7, *Nightfall* (see Musical Example 59).
Musical Example 56. Auerbach, Prelude no. 22 in G minor, op. 41, mm. 1-2.

Andante sempre sìmile (B3/A3)

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2.2.23 Prelude no. 23 in F major, Allegretto

Form

The form of this prelude is a straightforward ABA' (see Figure 22). The A' section is nearly an exact replication of A. The only change is the last chord. The highly contrasting B section is given the tempo change of *Meno mosso*, as well as the performance indication of “*wie tot / deadly*” paired with the brief quote of Prelude no. 3’s use of the *Dies irae*.

![Figure 22. Diagram of form, Auerbach's Prelude no. 23 in F major, Allegretto, op. 41.](image)

Polystylism

The B section’s *Dies irae* fragment and simple time signatures are a dark contrast to the A sections’ major key tonality and irregular time signature. In the A section, the irregular $\frac{5}{4} + \frac{1}{8}$ time signature combined with the performance indication of *with swing* creates a jaunty rhythmic quality. By contrast, the ominous B section, with its “*wie tot / deadly*” performance indication, has plodding duple and quadruple meters.

The opening of this prelude presents a double ostinato in the lower voices. One of the ostinatos is presented in the middle voice in triplet eighth- and quarter-note rhythms while the other is a low bass ostinato of resounding harmonic fifths (see Musical Example 60). It bears a resemblance to Bartók’s *Mikrokosmos* vol. VI, *Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm*, no. 3. Both composers use a $\frac{5}{8}$ time signature with an eighth-note melody and a homophonic texture (see Musical Example 61). An additional composition that bears a semblance to this motion is Schoenberg’s setting of “Verlassen,” opus 6, no. 4 (see Musical Example 62). The LH moves in steady quarter note motion, while the RH
employs triplets within its melody. Auerbach’s prelude uses a similar triplet-based rhythm in the RH ostinato and a consistent bass motion.

Musical Example 60. Auerbach, Prelude no. 23 in F major, op. 41, mm. 1-2.

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Musical Example 62. Arnold Schoenberg, Acht Lieder für eine Singstimme und Klavier, op. 6, no. 4. “Verlassen”.

Another more obvious polystylistic influence is a quote of Auerbach’s own Prelude no. 3. The third prelude references the Gregorian plainchant Dies irae. By referencing Prelude no. 3, Prelude no. 23 also refers to the chant melody, and does so with an appropriate character marking for the Day of Wrath tune: “wie tot / deadly” (see

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Musical Examples 63 and 64). This is the penultimate prelude that sounds the death knell for the cycle. The reference to Prelude no. 3 as well as the stylistic reference to Prelude no. 4 will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 3.

Musical Example 63. Auerbach, Prelude no. 23, op. 41, mm. 6-8.

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Musical Example 64. Gregorian plainchant setting of Dies irae.

The final prelude returns to the early ricercar sectional preludes with a rondo-like form of A B A' C A' Coda. Self-referencing quotes abound in this prelude, melding the prelude’s unique material in each section with quotes or allusions to previous material. The A sections combine the unique opening material of Prelude no. 24 and a rhythmically displaced quote of Prelude no. 1. The A section returns three times over the course of the prelude, structuring the prelude with material that merges the first and last preludes together (see Figure 23). The B section includes references to Preludes no. 4 and 23, as well as new material that is given the quality of Prelude no. 4. The C section begins with unique material in a D♭ major tonal center. The D♭ tonal center is first introduced in the A section’s material; the LH’s D minor tonic chord is paired simultaneously with a D♭ major chord in the RH, a nod to Prelude no. 12. The C section

Form

The final prelude returns to the early ricercar sectional preludes with a rondo-like form of A B A' C A' Coda. Self-referencing quotes abound in this prelude, melding the prelude’s unique material in each section with quotes or allusions to previous material. The A sections combine the unique opening material of Prelude no. 24 and a rhythmically displaced quote of Prelude no. 1. The A section returns three times over the course of the prelude, structuring the prelude with material that merges the first and last preludes together (see Figure 23). The B section includes references to Preludes no. 4 and 23, as well as new material that is given the quality of Prelude no. 4. The C section begins with unique material in a D♭ major tonal center. The D♭ tonal center is first introduced in the A section’s material; the LH’s D minor tonic chord is paired simultaneously with a D♭ major chord in the RH, a nod to Prelude no. 12. The C section
includes a seamless quote of Prelude no. 21’s downward melodic motive of parallel 9<sup>th</sup> intervals.

![Diagram of form](https://example.com/diagram.png)

Figure 23. Diagram of form, Auerbach's Prelude no. 24 in D minor, Grandioso, op. 41.

The coda combines a G♯ minor chord with a D minor chord in a tritone of dissonance, before delving into contrary motion chromatic 32<sup>nd</sup> notes that reestablish the D minor opening motive. The return of the motive is not spared its own evolution; this version has a larger registral span that ends the work as though to cover all parts of the keyboard.

Polystylism

This last prelude reinforces the cyclic nature of the set by adjoining the quote of Prelude no. 1 with Prelude no. 24’s new material. By echoing previous preludes, the twenty-fourth prelude also references the polystylism within those same preludes.

For example, the opening material is unique to Prelude no. 24, simultaneously setting the tonality of D minor, but also hearkening back to the bitonality of Prelude no. 12 by including a D♭ major chord (see Musical Example 65). Not truly a bitonal prelude, there is a clash of the chromaticism and the duality of modes. Other composers who have employed bitonality include Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Bartók, and Milhaud.

Prelude no. 24, although strongly self-referential, has some unique elements as well. For example, the C section uses a polychord to replicate the opening tolling of

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80 Again, another reference to Prelude no. 12 in G♯ minor. There are harmonic relationships that commingle these two preludes together, discussed more in the next chapter.
bells in Ravel’s “Le Gibet” from his *Gaspard de la nuit* (see Musical Examples 66 and 67). In Auerbach’s prelude, a tonic D minor chord is linked with a bass G♯ minor chord, another reference to the Prelude no. 12 in G♯ minor. Auerbach returns to this same chord combination at the end of Prelude no. 24 in whole notes, which peal nine times before the last few rousing measures. The reference to Ravel’s work with its evocation of the bells, the gibbet, hanging corpse, and setting sun only heightens the *misterioso pesante* aspect of this section of the prelude (see next page for Musical Examples 65, 66, and 67).

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81 Perhaps the tolling of bells is a nod to the inevitability in life and death.
Musical Example 65. Auerbach, Prelude no. 24 in D minor, op. 41, mm. 1-3 (arrows added by author).

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Musical Example 66. Auerbach, Prelude no. 24 in D minor, op. 41, mm. 40-42.

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Musical Example 67. Maurice Ravel, Gaspard de la nuit, “Le Gibet”, mm. 1-3.\(^2\)

CHAPTER 3: Motivic Connections of 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41

3.1 Overarching Connections

In order to create a large-scale form, Auerbach scaffolds an overarching set of connections over the course of the twenty-four preludes. A large-scale structure is created through relationships of verbatim quotes, allusions, and paraphrases between the preludes (see Figure 24). The following examples will demonstrate the overarching internal referencing structures within the twenty-four preludes.

![Arch Form Diagram](image)

Figure 24. Diagram of the overarching connections, Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41.

3.1.1 Cycle of Keys

The fundamental organizing element that Auerbach uses to unify the set of twenty-four preludes is the overarching circle of fifths of relative major/minor keys. A number of composers including Chopin have used this cycle of key relationships and Auerbach follows in their footsteps.\(^{83}\)

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\(^{83}\) For further reading, the following doctoral document has been informative: Eric Gilbert Beuerman, “The Evolution of the Twenty-four Prelude Set for Piano” (DMA Doctoral Document, University of Arizona, 2003).
3.1.2 Structural Signposts: Every Six (1, 6, 12, 18, 24)

There are multiple structural signposts throughout the preludes, primarily in preludes numbered in multiples of six and four. Prelude no. 1 is quoted in Preludes no. 6, 18, and 24; thus, nearly every sixth prelude has a relationship with Prelude no. 1. The A section of the first prelude is present in the outer preludes, Preludes no. 1 and 24. The second phrase of Prelude no. 24 is a near-verbatim quote of Prelude no. 1’s first full phrase with only a minor rhythmic displacement to merge the two phrases. This rhythmic displacement allows the harmony of the opening material of Prelude no. 24 to become the accompaniment beneath the quote of Prelude no. 1. The first phrase of Prelude no. 1 ends on a D minor chord, foreshadowing and coming full circle to the twenty-fourth prelude (see Musical Examples 68 and 69).

Musical Example 68. Auerbach, Prelude no. 1 in C major, op. 41, mm. 1-4 middle staff.

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Musical Example 69. Auerbach, Prelude no. 24 in D minor, op. 41, mm. 4-6.

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The B section of Prelude no. 1 is found in the internal preludes: Preludes no. 6 and 18. Prelude no. 6, *Corale*, incorporates a significant portion of Prelude no. 1’s B section’s melody out of rhythm in the German Chorale prelude style (see Musical Examples 70 and 71). Composers of German chorale preludes assumed that the congregation was well versed in the chorales, and therefore portions of the chorales would have been sufficient for recognition. Prelude no. 18 quotes verbatim the same B section phrase of Prelude no. 1 (see Musical Examples 70 and 72).

The outer preludes quote the A section of Prelude no. 1 while the inner preludes reference the B section. This creates a framework over the course of the twenty-four preludes of nearly every sixth prelude referencing the first one. The history around the number six also dates back to composers such as Johann Kuhnau and J. S. Bach (e.g. Bach’s six French suites, six English suites, and six partitas).

The prelude missing from this overarching quoting pattern is Prelude no. 12. The twelfth prelude ends the first half of the work, and it would make numerological sense if Prelude no. 12 included a reference to Prelude no. 1. The one thing that they do share is a similarity in form: an opening motive that returns three times, a contrasting middle section, and a codetta. In terms of the structural signposts of preludes numbered in multiples of six, Prelude no. 12 is completely different from the others in its lack of quotation or allusion to Prelude no. 1. This contrast creates the necessary distinct material of a C section in the arch form ABCBA (see Figure 24). The A sections (Preludes no. 1 and 24) quote Prelude no. 1’s A section, the B sections (Preludes no. 6 and 18) quote Prelude no. 1’s B section, and Prelude no. 12 is the unique and singular C section.
Musical Example 70. Auerbach, Prelude no. 1 in C major, op. 41, mm. 9-11 (circles added by author).

Musical Example 71. Auerbach, Prelude no. 6 in B minor, op. 41, mm. 20-22 (full listing of notes below excerpt).

Musical Example 72. Auerbach, Prelude no. 18 in F minor, op. 41, mm. 23-25.

3.1.3 Structural Signposts: Every Four (4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24)

In addition to the structural signposts in multiples of six, there are also signposts apparent in preludes numbered in multiples of four. Prelude no. 4 is referenced every
fourth prelude. The most often quoted material from this prelude is the melodic section with its stylized use of rolling repeated notes to elongate the sound.

A single measure of Prelude no. 8, m. 30, hearkens back to Prelude no. 4’s repeated note melody, but the fragment takes place in the bass registers. Despite the change in register, the single measure evokes the melody of Prelude no. 4. This minute quote is performed without the repeated notes; however, the pitch contour is identical and discernible to the ear (see Musical Examples 73 and 74).

Musical Example 73. Auerbach, Prelude no. 4 in E minor, op. 41, mm. 2-3.

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Musical Example 74. Auerbach, Prelude no. 8 in F# minor, op. 41, mm. 2-3.

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The middle point of the set of twenty-four, Prelude no. 12, references the same lyrical contour of Prelude no. 4 in its opening melody over the driving bitonal accompaniment. However, the fragment is arranged in retrograde. In doing so, the altered quote tantalizes the memory in its nearly inconspicuous arrangement (see Musical Examples 73 and 75).
Unlike Preludes no. 8 and 12, Prelude no. 16 references a different section of Prelude no. 4. The introduction of Prelude no. 16 includes harmonic thirds, recalling the essential interval of the second motive of Prelude no. 4’s A section. The harmonic thirds are cast in declamatory half note rhythms, in contrast to the arpeggiated sixteenth notes of the body of Prelude no. 16 (see Musical Examples 76 and 77).

Musical Example 76. Auerbach, Prelude no. 4 in E minor, op. 41, m. 1 (boxes added by author to indicate motives 1 and 2).

Musical Example 77. Auerbach, Prelude no. 16 in B♭ minor, op. 41, m. 1.

Prelude no. 20 hearkens back to Prelude no. 4 in two ways. First, a fragment taken from the lyrical section of Prelude no. 4 is developed and crafted into a longer phrase on top of a slow-moving ostinato bass accompaniment. As done in Prelude no. 8, the marimba-like rolling technique is removed from the quote and the bare melodic material appears. Each repetition of the fragment is rhythmically altered, transposed, and inverted
to develop a longer phrase in Prelude no. 20. The second way this prelude bridges back to Prelude no. 4 is in the accompaniment. The fourth prelude uses an Alberti bass accompaniment pattern for its tertian-based harmonic progression. The bass register of the twentieth prelude encompasses two parts: the lowest voice produces five low bass occurrences while a middle voice quietly plays a highly augmented and unwavering Alberti bass of C♯, B♮, F♯ and B♭. Prelude no. 20 returns to the accompaniment pattern, yet with a far more dissonant and unchanging selection of intervals (see Musical Examples 73 and 78).

Musical Example 78. Auerbach, Prelude no. 20 in C minor, op. 41, m. 1.

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In Prelude no. 24, the lyrical section of Prelude no. 4 appears at m. 8. A full two-measure introduction of the Alberti bass, transposed to D minor, begins the reference to Prelude no. 4 (see Musical Examples 73 and 79). Similar to Auerbach’s treatment of fragments in Prelude no. 18, the fragment from Prelude no. 4’s rolling stylized melody is extended and altered.
3.1.4 Beginnings and Endings

In addition to the sets of structural signposts just mentioned, there is the additional cyclic relationship of beginnings and endings. The first set of Prelude no. 1 and Prelude no. 24 has already been discussed. Another pair is that of Preludes no. 13 and 23. Prelude no. 13 begins of the second half of the 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41, and Prelude no. 23 is the end of the set before the finale of Prelude no. 24. A fragment of the LH ostinato from Prelude no. 13 is transposed up a half step to the F tonal center of Prelude no. 23. The similarities in contour and intervallc structure are apparent when comparing the two ostinatos (see Musical Examples 80 and 81). At the same time, there are significant differences in pitch and rhythmic content. The ostinato of Prelude no. 13 uses quarter and eighth notes. Prelude no. 23 keeps the contour but uses triplet eighth and quarter notes, coloring the ostinato with the complex series of subdivisions.

Musical Example 80. Auerbach, Prelude no. 13 in F♯ major, op. 41, mm. 1-2 (boxes added by author).

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3.2 Motivic Connections

There are a large number of motivic connections and self-referencing examples in the 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41 that do not fit the patterns of overarching connections, but nonetheless further unify the work. Following is a selection of the motivic connections between the inner preludes.

3.2.1 Chromatic Thirds (Preludes no. 3, 4, 7, 15, 16)

The use of chromatic parallel thirds is a motivic connection among Preludes no. 3, 4, 7, 15, and 16. In Prelude no. 3, the chromatic parallel thirds occur in the contrasting C section of m. 4 and m. 6, used in a melodic motion (see Musical Example 82). The melodic chromatic thirds are used in the second motive of Prelude no. 4, which reappears at the middle and end of the prelude (see Musical Example 83). Preludes no. 7, 15, and 16 use harmonic chromatic thirds. Prelude no. 7 uses harmonic chromatic thirds for its ostinato in the A section (see Musical Example 84). In Prelude no. 15, the harmonic chromatic thirds material from Prelude no. 7 makes an inverted appearance in mm. 12-13 (see Musical Example 85). The first section of Prelude no. 16, as mentioned previously,
uses the chromatic harmonic thirds in a quote of the second motive of Prelude no. 4 (see Musical Example 86).

Musical Example 82. Auerbach, Prelude no. 3 in G major, op. 41, m. 4 (boxes added by author).

Musical Example 83. Auerbach, Prelude no. 4 in E minor, op. 41, m. 1 (boxes and labels added by author to indicate motives 1 and 2).

Musical Example 84. Auerbach, Prelude no. 7 in A major, op. 41, mm. 1-3.
3.2.2 Dies irae (Preludes no. 3, 23, 24)

The opening fragment from the Gregorian plainchant Dies irae is found in m. 2 of Prelude no. 3. This same melody appears in the contrasting section of Prelude no. 23, the meno mosso (“wie tot / deadly”). Subsequently, the meno mosso of Prelude no. 23 is then quoted by Prelude no. 24 with a stylistic allusion to the marimba-like note repetition of Prelude no. 4 (see Musical Examples 87, 88, and 89).

Musical Example 87. Auerbach, Prelude no. 3 in G major, op. 41, m. 2 (circles added by author).
Musical Example 88. Auerbach, Prelude no. 23 in F major, op. 41, mm. 6-8 (circles added by author).

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Musical Example 89. Auerbach, Prelude no. 24 in D minor, op. 41, mm. 20-21 (circles added by author).

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3.2.3 Grace Note Embellishment (Preludes no. 8, 10, 20)

Embellishments and flourishes are part of the charm and motivic structure of Preludes no. 8, 10, and 20. Grace notes enhance and highlight certain motives in Prelude no. 8, especially the fragmentary quote from Prelude no. 4. The melodic material in the bass uses a guitar-like strum of grace notes in mm. 4, 8, and 30 (see Musical Example 90 for m. 30). In addition, octave grace notes are added to the accompanying material in mm. 17 and 18. The next prelude in the grace note set is Prelude no. 10; it uses a similar guitar-like strum of brief but rapid triplet 32\textsuperscript{nd} and quadruplet 64\textsuperscript{th} notes, written without the grace note notation. It is as though the flourishes of rapid notes are grace notes written out throughout the accompaniment of Prelude no. 10 (see Musical Example 91).
In Prelude no. 20, octave grace notes highlight the melody. The melody is written in octaves, with a grace note tied to the lower note (see Musical Example 92).

Musical Example 90. Auerbach, Prelude no. 8 in F♯ minor, op. 41, m. 30.

![Musical Example 90](https://example.com/musical-exam90.png)

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Musical Example 91. Auerbach, Prelude no. 10 in C♯ minor, op. 41, m. 1.

![Musical Example 91](https://example.com/musical-exam91.png)

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Musical Example 92. Auerbach, Prelude no. 20 in C minor, op. 41, m. 1.

![Musical Example 92](https://example.com/musical-exam92.png)

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3.2.4 *Drone-like Accompaniment (Preludes no. 3, 22)*

The droning accompaniment occurs in Preludes no. 3 and 22. The inverted pedal point of Prelude no. 3, a high descant repeating G5, occurs throughout the prelude (see Musical Example 93). In the A sections of Prelude no. 22, a two-note drone of alternating B♭3 and A♭4 surrounds the melody (see Musical Example 94). The integration of droning voices lies in the rhythmically alternating relationship with their respective melodies. In Prelude no. 3, the drone is a series of quarter notes, while the melody is rhythmically offset often by an eighth note. The melody of the later prelude, Prelude no. 22, is offset by a sixteenth rest. Due to the displaced rhythmic nature of both melodies, the droning notes usually occur between melody note.

Musical Example 93. Auerbach, Prelude no. 3 in G major, op. 41, m. 3.

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Musical Example 94. Auerbach, Prelude no. 22 in G minor, op. 41, mm. 1-2.

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3.2.5 *Cluster Chords (Preludes no. 2, 6, 16, 19)*

Cowell’s cluster notation is referenced in Preludes no. 2 (m. 8), 16 (mm. 29-30), and 19 (mm. 15-17). Prelude no. 2 is a study in scalar motion against vertical harmony, with the clustering creating a dissonant effect against the wash of scales (see Musical Example 95). Prelude no. 6 uses the effect of clustering; however, the chromatic clusters are written out instead of using the cluster notation. This is primarily because each voice of the chorale should be identifiable (see Musical Example 96). Preludes no. 16 and 19 both use cluster chords in the accompaniment and use block cluster notation (see Musical Examples 97 and 98).

Musical Example 95. Auerbach, Prelude no. 2 in A minor, op. 41, mm. 8-9.

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Musical Example 96. Auerbach, Prelude no. 6 in B minor, op. 41, mm. 1-6 (author’s reduction demonstrating clustering effect).

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Musical Example 97. Auerbach, Prelude no. 16 in B♭ minor, op. 41, mm. 29-30.

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Musical Example 98. Auerbach, Prelude no. 19 in E♭ major, op. 41, mm. 15-16.

3.2.6  Secondary Melodies (Preludes no. 5, 10)

Prelude no. 5’s counter melody in the A\' section (see Musical Example 99 for the melodic excerpt) shares a similarity of melodic contour with Prelude no. 10’s chant-like B section (see Musical Example 100 for the melodic excerpt). Prelude no. 5’s version sits in the middle of a thick texture, but is indicated to be louder and should sound clearly through the material. The motive is then taken by Prelude no. 10, rhythmically altered, and minimally adorned in a diaphanous texture of parallel octaves.

Musical Example 99. Auerbach, Prelude no. 5 in D major, op. 41, middle voice from mm. 12-13 (circles added by author).

Musical Example 100. Auerbach, Prelude no. 10 in C♯ minor, op. 41, top voice in mm. 9-10 (circles added by author).
3.2.7 La Folia Melodic Fragment (Preludes no. 5, 12)

The primary melody of Prelude no. 5 uses a fragment of the opening of *La folia* (see Musical Example 101 for the melodic excerpt). The rhythm and contour best match the version of *La folia* that Rachmaninoff quotes in his *Variations on a theme by Corelli*, op. 42, as discussed in chapter two in the polystylistic discussion of Prelude no. 5.

Subsequently, this melodic contour is quoted by Prelude no. 12 with rhythmic alterations (see Musical Example 102 for the melodic excerpt). *La folia* is then juxtaposed with the rapid and bombastic accompaniment of Prelude no. 12 to evolve into a distinctive melody for the midway point of the twenty-four preludes.

Musical Example 101. Auerbach, Prelude no. 5 in D major, op. 41, melody from mm. 2-4.

Musical Example 102. Auerbach, Prelude no. 12 in G♯ minor, op. 41, melody from mm. 3-9.

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84 *La folia* is a harmonic progression in a ground bass style, with a standard melody. It is often used as a theme in variation form, and has been used by a large number of composers: Lully, Corelli, Handel, CPE Bach, Liszt, and others.

85 Archangelo Corelli’s version of the *La folia* theme is found in his Sonata for Violin and Continuo in D minor, op. 5 no. 12, written in 1700. Corelli’s sonata is a set of 23 variations on the *La folia* theme. In 1931, Rachmaninoff was inspired to write 20 variations, an intermezzo between variations 13 and 14, and a coda on this theme taken from Corelli’s sonata.
3.2.8 Harmonic Series (Preludes no. 11, 17)

Six preludes apart, Preludes no. 11 and 17 almost seem like they are structural signposts in the 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41. However, instead of quoting Prelude no. 1 as a significant source of inspiration, Preludes no. 11 and 17 refer to the harmonic series, likely the underlying principle of all Western tonal harmony. Prelude no. 11 consists of the harmonic series in its purest form based on the pitch B, the tonic of the prelude. Prelude no. 17 uses the harmonic series of A♭ as an introduction and as the basis for fragments that become integrated into the melodic material (see Musical Examples 103 and 104).

Musical Example 103. Auerbach, Prelude no. 11 in B major, op. 41, first four notes.

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Musical Example 104. Auerbach, Prelude no. 17 in A♭ major, op. 41, mm. 1-3.

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3.2.9 Paired Preludes (Preludes no. 7-8, 11-12, 14-15, 16-17)

Prelude Pair: no. 7 & 8

Preludes no. 7 and 8 are in relative keys, and are thus paired harmonically.

Prelude no. 7’s B section has a slow-moving melody in the bass voice that gradually descends into a lower register, foreshadowing the low bass opening of Prelude no. 8. In addition, the melodic half-step material of Prelude no. 7 returns in the B section of Prelude no. 8 augmented into quarters instead of the original eighths (compare Musical Examples 105 and 106).

Musical Example 105. Auerbach, Prelude no. 7 in A major, op. 41, melody from LH mm. 2-4 (box added by author).

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Musical Example 106. Auerbach, Prelude no. 8 in F♯ minor, op. 41, melody from RH, mm. 12-16 (box added by author).

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Prelude Pair: no. 11 & 12

Prelude no. 11 in B major is in the relative major key of Prelude no. 12 in G♯ minor. Prelude no. 11 ends with a high C7, foreshadowing Prelude no. 12’s second tonality of C minor. In Prelude no. 12, the expected G♯ minor harmony in the bass is juxtaposed with C minor in the upper register (see Musical Examples 107 and 108).

Musical Example 107. Auerbach, Prelude no. 11 in B major, op. 41, excerpt of the last three notes.
Prelude Pair: no. 14 & 15

There is an intervallic resemblance between the ostinatos of Preludes no. 14 and 15. The ostinato of Prelude no. 14 is primarily constructed of melodic fifths, sixths and fourths (see Musical Example 109). Prelude no. 15 has a longer and slower ostinato that begins with two measures that move in a similar motion of melodic fifths and sixths (see Musical Example 110). The momentum is slowed by augmenting the accompaniment, however the likeness is still easily heard.


Musical Example 110. Auerbach, Prelude no. 15 in D♭ major, op. 41, LH ostinato, mm. 1-2 of a much longer ostinato.
Prelude Pair: no. 16 & 17

A brief cameo of Prelude no. 16 appears in mm. 9-10 of Prelude no. 17. The violin-like arpeggiations of Prelude no. 16 is referenced using an inversion of Prelude no. 17’s tonic chord. Prelude no. 17 begins with the harmonic series before the allusion to the previous prelude. The arpeggiation reference is in a very high register and uses the same pattern in the previous prelude (see Musical Examples 111 and 112).

Musical Example 111. Auerbach, Prelude no. 16 in B♭ minor, op. 41, mm. 36-37 (box added by author).

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Musical Example 112. Auerbach, Prelude no. 17 in A♭ major, op. 41, mm. 8-9 (boxes added by author).

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3.2.10 Prelude no. 18

Prelude no. 18 features Preludes no. 1, 4, and 6 in its quotations. A repeated note fragment from Prelude no. 4 is used to sequence to a higher register in mm. 14-18 (see Musical Example 113). This higher register presents the same octave as Prelude no. 1’s B section. A verbatim quote of the upper register of Prelude no. 1’s B section has been
previously discussed in the Structural Signposts part of this chapter. Prelude no. 18 also includes an allusion to Prelude no. 6, using a vertically additive approach in the ostinato of the accompaniment, as well as the layering effect of half-steps in the upper staves in mm. 6-13 (see Musical Example 114).

Musical Example 113. Auerbach, Prelude no. 18 in F minor, op. 41, mm. 19-20 (reference to Prelude no. 4).

\[Musical Example 113. Auerbach, Prelude no. 18 in F minor, op. 41, mm. 19-20 (reference to Prelude no. 4).\]

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Musical Example 114. Auerbach, Prelude no. 18 in F minor, op. 41, mm. 11-16 (reference to Prelude no. 6).

\[Musical Example 114. Auerbach, Prelude no. 18 in F minor, op. 41, mm. 11-16 (reference to Prelude no. 6).\]

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3.2.11 The Finale: Prelude no. 24

The longest of the set of twenty-four, the final prelude is the most conclusive and referential. The direct quotes used include Preludes no. 1, 21, and 23, and allusions to
Preludes no. 4 and 12. The references to Preludes no. 1, 4, and 12 have been previously discussed in depth, and thus mentioned briefly here.

Prelude no. 1 is directly quoted in the A section. Prelude no. 4 has several reincarnations throughout Prelude no. 24. Prelude no. 12 is hinted at with the use of a G♯ minor chord, rather than any verbatim recall of material. In m. 40 of Prelude no. 24, a bitonal tolling of a simultaneous G♯ minor chord and D minor chord begins, combining the two tonalities. It recurs several times throughout the third section, as well as accompanies the quote of Prelude no. 21.

A direct quote of the opening RH of Prelude no. 21 occurs in Prelude no. 24 at m. 60, where it acts as a transition to the return of the opening material. The only change has been the accompanying material (see Musical Examples 115 and 116).

Musical Example 115. Auerbach, Prelude no. 24 in D minor, op. 41, mm. 58-61.

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Musical Example 116. Auerbach, Prelude no. 21 in B♭ major, op. 41, mm. 1-2.

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During the B section of Prelude no. 24, a portion of Prelude no. 23’s B section (\textit{meno mosso}^{86}) is transposed and given the percussive treatment of Prelude no. 4 (see Musical Examples 117 and 118). It moves smoothly from the stylistic reference of Prelude no. 4 to a transposed quote of Prelude no. 4, and finally to a return of the opening material of Prelude no. 24.

Musical Example 117. Auerbach, Prelude no. 23 in F major, op. 41, mm. 6-8.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example117.png}
\end{center}

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Musical Example 118. Auerbach, Prelude no. 24 in D minor, op. 41, mm. 20-21.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example118.png}
\end{center}

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The last prelude ends with a fragment of the first prelude, though here utilizing twice the original tessitura, before the death knell of a series of D minor chords. The prelude cycle then comes full circle as it ends with material heard at the beginning of the work.

\footnote{This is also indicated to be played “\textit{wie tot / deadly}” and it briefly quotes Prelude no. 3’s use of the \textit{Dies irae}. It can be argued that because Prelude no. 23 quotes Prelude no. 3, and Prelude no. 24 quotes Prelude no. 23, then Prelude no. 24 may indirectly have a motivic connection to Prelude no. 3.}
CONCLUSIONS

Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41, demonstrates two aspects of her craft: the polystylism that influences her compositions and her ability to unify a large-scale work of multiple parts. The use of polystylism provides a cornucopia of soundscapes, colors, and techniques that are bound together by the intertwined yet independent preludes. Auerbach employs an overarching twenty-four key cycle that tonally integrates the preludes yet she also diverges into harmonic clashes of bitonality and bimodality, such as in Preludes no. 12 and 24. As another example, the violent dynamic shifts of Prelude no. 1 are distinctly contrasted with the quiet sonority of Prelude no. 11. As a representative work for solo piano by this composer-performer, the polystylism and the relationships of the preludes both singularly and as a whole establish this work as significant to the repertoire.

Auerbach’s approach to polystylism fluidly employs a variety of compositional techniques including bitonality, additive motivic development, modality, minimalism, ostinatos, and ground bass. She also references a number of composers such as Bartók, Debussy, Mussorgsky, Purcell, and Ravel. The listener is then free to have a personal response to the intuitive polystylistic inspiration based on their own breadth of musical knowledge. Auerbach stated, “music usually resonates to that which is already inside of the listener. As long as such connection happens – I accept any associations the listener may make as valid.”

Polystylism is as much a part of Auerbach’s compositional language as it is part of history. Many great composers have polystylistic elements in

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87 Lera Auerbach, email interview with author, September 17, 2012.
their works, for example the works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt, and Gershwin. It is even more widespread today, with the global access to information and a wide spectrum of music and sonority.

There are issues with making a polystylistic set of twenty-four cohesive, and so tight unifying devices are necessary. The 24 Preludes for Piano, op. 41, is unified through the use of motivic connections. Structural cohesion occurs over the course of the twenty-four preludes; for example, every six preludes create an overarching arch form of ABCBA that centers on Prelude no. 1 quotations (or lack thereof in Prelude no. 12’s case). In order to unify twenty-four parts, Auerbach organizes her work to reflect an overarching framework.

Also by creating an overarching structure through self-referencing, Auerbach unites the seemingly disparate preludes. The tools employed include verbatim quotations, allusions, and stylistic references. Auerbach’s set of motivically-connected preludes is a model of polystylistic resourcefulness in molding her personal musical language.

The craft of an artist (and here I mean any artistic expression, be it a musical composition, literature or visual arts) requires building forms, structures within which a work of art can operate, the frames of space and time which it can inhabit. It involves creating certain restrictions within which the work can be free to emerge, and against which it can rebel, in other words, creating frames which can be altered, but nevertheless allow for creative thought to flourish and realize itself.88

Many of the connections discussed in this document may have been intentional, though perhaps some of the resemblances are unconscious unifiers as well. Shenkerian analysis, for example, may reveal unintentional scaffolding that explains why a work is compelling. In an email interview from April 5, 2013, Auerbach stated, “I stay away from

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an analyzing my own music and compose mostly intuitively.”89 The conversion returned once more to her compositional process in December 22, 2014:

While it is true that my process is very intuitive, there are always a lot of structural, psychological and intellectual connections and processes. So, I can only encourage you finding links and connections between the preludes. There are certain gestures or rhymes or motives that appear throughout the cycle, sometimes obviously, sometimes in a subtle way.90

It may be possible that some of the subtler references among preludes have been missed. There may even be references to the other two cycles of preludes, as well as to her second piano trio, *Triptych – This Mirror has Three Faces*. It would be an interesting endeavor for future study to discover these further connections. As Auerbach has stated, “The more you know the work, the composer, you know what to listen for, and how it is made, the more you can appreciate the work...”91 Further studies of her works will more than likely find a web of references and motivic connections between seemingly discrete works.

Within her 24 *Preludes for Piano*, op. 41, Auerbach welds the vast number of memorable moments into a convincing extended work that also demonstrates a vivid exploration of the piano’s sonority. Her music is eclectic and constructed with tremendous imagination and passion. The cycle for solo piano is a compelling work for both audience and performer and should be more widely studied, heard, and performed.

89 Lera Auerbach, email interview with author, April 5, 2013.
90 Lera Auerbach, email interview with author, December 22, 2014.
APPENDIX A: PERMISSIONS

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March 16, 2016

Meily J. Mendez
716 E. 5th Street
Tucson, AZ 85719

RE: SONATA FOR PIANO, by Rodion Shchedrin
TWENTY-FOUR PRELUDES FOR PIANO, OP. 34,
By Dmitri Shostakovich
TWENTY FOUR PRELUDES FOR PIANO, OP. 41, by Lera Auerbach

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By Lera Auerbach
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  • 1: 1-4, 9-11, 15-20
  • 2: 1-4, 6-9
  • 3: 1, 2, 3, 4
  • 4: 1, 2-6
  • 5: 1-4, middle voice of 12-13
  • 6: 20-22
  • 7: 1-3, melody of LH of 2-4
  • 8: 1, 2-3, melody of RH 12-16, 30
  • 9: 1-2, 8-10
  • 10: 1, 2-3, top voice of 9-10
  • 11: first four notes, last three notes of 17 total
  • 12: 1-2, 3-4, melody from 5-96.
  • 13: 1-2
  • 14: 1-3 3/20
  • 15: 1-4, 12-13
  • 16: 1, 2-3, 29-30, 36-37
  • 17: 1-3, 8-9
  • 18: 1-4, 11-16, 19-20, 23-25
  • 19: 1-2, 15-16
  • 20: 1
  • 21: 1-2, 11-12
  • 22: 1-2 2/26
  • 23: 1-2, 6-8
  • 24: 1-3, 4-6, 10-12, 20-21, 40-42, 58-61
APPENDIX B: IRB EXEMPTION

Page of signatures from IRB exemption form, F309, through the University of Arizona (page six of seven).

Digital signature of Sheryl Wurl:
DN: cn=Sheryl Wurl, o=HSPP, ou=Director, Human Subjects Protection Program, email=swurl@email.arizona.edu, c=US
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