

THE PRELUDES OF CHOPIN

by

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submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the degree of

BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONOURS)  
UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

University of the Western Cape

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November 1996

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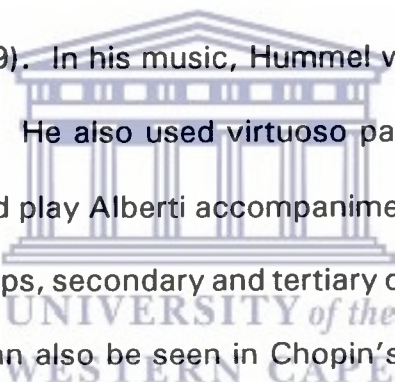


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The essential feature of the prelude is to attract the listener's attention and define the pitch, mode or tonality. This can be the reason why preludes are often written in a selection of 24 major tonalities. As one of the central features of a prelude is to define the pitch or key of a piece, Chopin's preludes Opus 28 move through a logical tonal sequence of major and minor keys.

Chopin did not invent this principle. J.N. Hummel had published a set of 24 preludes in major and minor keys in Opus 67, in the year 1814. It is believed that these works of Hummel influenced Chopin when he later wrote his set of 24 preludes, Opus 28 (1836-1839). In his music, Hummel was fond of homophonic textures with Italian melodies. He also used virtuoso passages in his right hand parts, while the left hand would play Alberti accompaniments. Hummel also made frequent use of third-relationships, secondary and tertiary dominants and chromatic passing notes. These traits can also be seen in Chopin's Opus 28.



The repeat of bars 25 - 26 in bars 27 - 28 creates a kind of an echo, which also slows down the pace. When the composer reduces the ? element to one sustained note in bar 29, a sense of "dying away" is created.

Much use is made of chromatic harmony, although the C major triad (CEG) is prominent throughout this short prelude. The composer starts the prelude by using G and E as boundary? notes. These two notes are used throughout the prelude. The repeat section starts on G in the soprano. In bar 15, the small climax is on G again, still chord I of C major.

In the climax (bar 21) the non-harmonic pitch D, resolves onto C. From bar 25 onwards, C acts as a drone in the bass part and reinforces the C major triad. The composer ends the prelude with a C major triad, with the third in the soprano. Thus the ending has a touch of incompleteness.

Chopin exercise-type passages in sixths and octaves, for example in the left-hand part bar 1, movement from G to E, bar 5 movement from C to A.

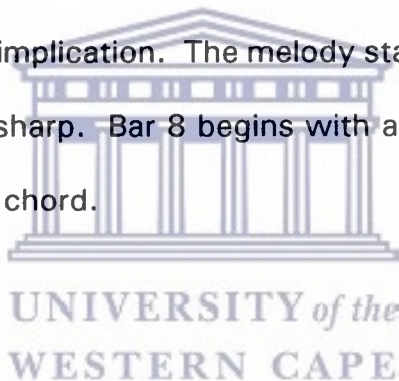
Music Example 2: Prelude no.1, left hand, bars 1-2




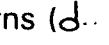
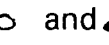
## PRELUDE NO.2 IN A MINOR

The most striking feature of this prelude is that the key of A minor is not obvious but only present by implication. From bar 1 (E minor) to bar 21 there is a feeling of E major. The fact that Chopin alternates the low G sharp and high G in the bass part 1?, creates a dissonant sound. At times, it is evident that there is no real modulations, but a play of colour by means of chromaticism.

The prelude centres attention on its harmonic language. As mentioned earlier, the A minor key is only present by implication. The melody starts on an E minor chord in bar 3, with neighbouring A sharp. Bar 8 begins with a Flat minor chord, i.e. a perfect 5th above the E minor chord.



The second prelude contrasts the firsts. Two bars serve as an introduction to establish a minor tonality. The tempo and pace of this prelude is slow, evident in the introductory first two bars, as well as when the melody starts in bar 3. There is a clear sense of melody and accompaniment in this prelude.

The use of repetition is quite extensive, notable the left-hand quaver pattern  and the right hand patterns (  and  ). The length of the phrases (i.e. long phrases of 4 or 3 bars) contributes towards the slow pace and legato feeling of the prelude.





From bars 18-21 a key change to C major occurs. However, in bar 22 the F sharp is re-introduced in the context of a C major chord. The F sharp suggests the Lydian mode (perhaps most easily likened to a major scale with a raised fourth). Bar 22 leads to the dominant d (d major) chord in bars 24-25.

The final cadence point occurs in bars 25-26, with Chopin allowing eight bars on chord I of G major, to the end of the prelude. Chopin's harmonic rhythm in this prelude slows down towards the end.



## PRELUDE NO.4 IN E MINOR

The most striking feature of this prelude is the simple melody over a rich harmonic background. A slow chromatic descent of notes in the bass part from bars one to ten (G, F<sup>#</sup>, F, E, D<sup>#</sup>, D, C, B) creates a feeling of movement towards a goal (Example 3).

Music Example 4: Prelude no.4, left hand, bars 1-8

**Largo** F. CHOPIN, Op.28,

4 *p* *espress.*

5

10

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The prelude is in binary form with the melody from bars 1 - 12, and the repeat section from bars 13 - 25.


Chopin makes use of chromatic harmony but stays in the key of E minor. In bar 12, the Flat major 7th chord leads into the repeat section, and resolves to the tonic chord of E minor (bar 13).



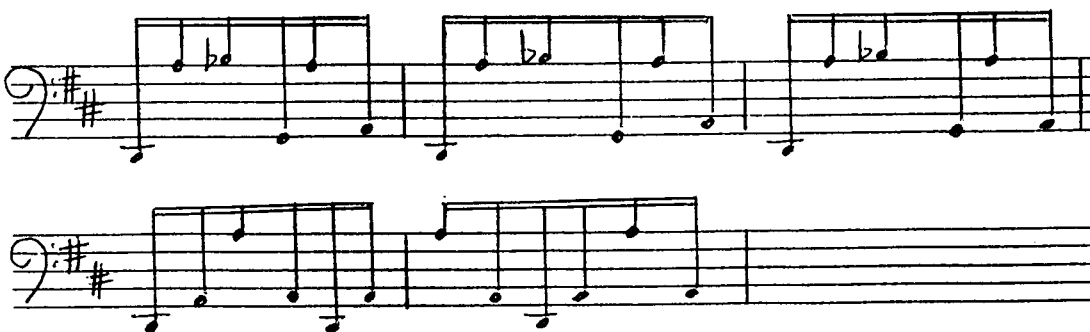
## PRELUDE NO.5 IS D MAJOR

This prelude is a study for extended hand positions in both hands. It is of a figurative nature with no clear melody and extensive chromaticism that creates a blend of major and minor modality.

The prelude is written in binary form. The A section occurs from bars 1-16. The repeat section with some development starts in bar 17 until the end of bar 39. There is repetition of a single bar in both left and right hand, in bars 13-16, as well as bars 29-33.

The rhythm of this prelude is interesting. The same rhythmic pattern is used in both right and left hand ( $3/8$  ). The groupings towards the end of the prelude in the left hand, for example bars 30-32 and bars 33-36 creates a change of metre or pulse (Example 4).

Music Example 5: Prelude no.5, left hand, bars 30-34



Chopin use phrases that extent over five or more bars. By doing so Chopin ensures a strong feeling of continuity. He also makes use of chromatically altered notes in this prelude. Arpeggiated figures in both the left and right hand alternate frequently (for example Flat and B flat in bars 3 and 4, 19 and 20). Frequent use of dominant sevenths is made, for example bar 1 begins with  $V^7$  of D.

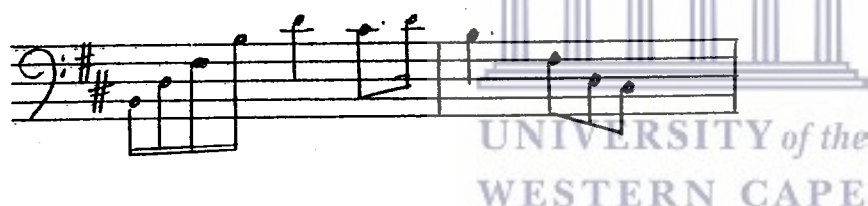
In the last bar, Chopin uses chord I ( $DF^{\#}A$ ) also used this construction of the final chord in preludes one and three. In the last bar Chopin uses chord I ( $DF^{\#}A$ ) with the third in the soprano, as in preludes one and three.



## PRELUDE NO.6 IN B MINOR

Chopin uses binary form in this prelude. The first section is from bars 1 - 8. From bar 9 to the end of the prelude, a repeat section with development on it, follows. The prelude presents the listener with a change in texture and manner, with the melody in the left hand appearing with a right hand accompaniment. The melody is prefaced by arpeggio patterns in the left hand. Chopin contrasts the ascending and descending arpeggio patterns. In the left hand, in bars 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6 etc., good examples are found (Music Example 6).

Music Example 6: Prelude no.6, left hand, bars 1-2



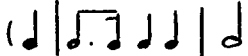


The descending pattern acts as an echo. Measure 3 acts as a development on bar 1 where the arpeggio ascends up to B.

The composer uses the same rhythmic pattern in the left hand (3/4  $\text{♪} \text{♪} \text{♪}$ ) throughout the prelude. Chopin contrasts the right hand pattern ( $\text{♪♪♪} \text{♪} \text{♪}$ ) in bars 1, 3, 5, 9, 11 and 13 with  $\text{♪} \text{♪} \text{♪♪}$  in bars 15, 16, 19, 20). (Whereas the first rhythm begins with four semiquavers the second rhythm ends with four semiquavers.) The rhythm in the right hand is detached with accents (eg. bar 1) to give a contrast in articulation.

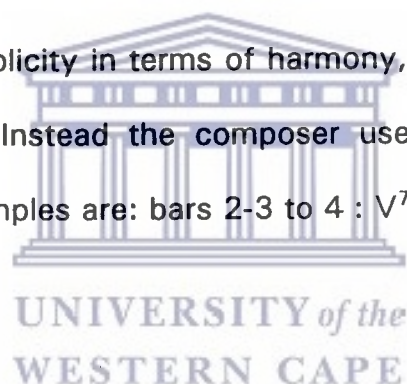
In the harmony of the prelude, much use is made of the primary chords especially chord I. A good example is the first four bars that stay in the tonic chord (BDF<sup>#</sup>). Bars 12-14 are build on the Neopolitan sixth which occurs in bar 21-22. The last five, bars also stay in the tonic chord and this establishes the supremacy of the tonic chord in the prelude.



## PRELUDE NO.7 IN A MAJOR

A striking feature of this prelude is its simplicity with rhythm (  ), and melodic repetition that occurs throughout the prelude. Melodic repetition can be linked to the binary form of the prelude. Section A is from bars 1 - 8. Repetition can also be found in the three repeated notes (2nd, 3rd, and 1st beats) in the right hand. In the left hand the rhythmic idea used is (  ) while in the right hand the pattern is  .

The prelude maintains its simplicity in terms of harmony, as no modulations are introduced in this prelude. Instead the composer uses extensive chromatic harmony in this prelude. Examples are: bars 2-3 to 4 :  $V^7 - I$ ; bars 5-6 to 7 :  $V^9 - I$ ; bars 9-10 to 11 :  $V^7 - I$ .



From bar 11 a crescendo leads into the climax in bar 12. It is built on a  $F^{\#7}$  chord ( $F^{\#}A^{\#}C^{\#}E$ ).



## PRELUDE NO.8 IN F SHARP MINOR

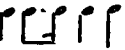


This prelude has a figurative character with the melody surrounded by a haze of grace notes. It is an agitated piece, in stark contrast to the previous prelude No. 7 in A major (the relative major).

The rhythmic pattern used for the left hand and right hand respectively, is used throughout the piece. Because of the fact that the rhythm is quite simple, and remains the same, Chopin focuses on another challenging element, namely harmony.

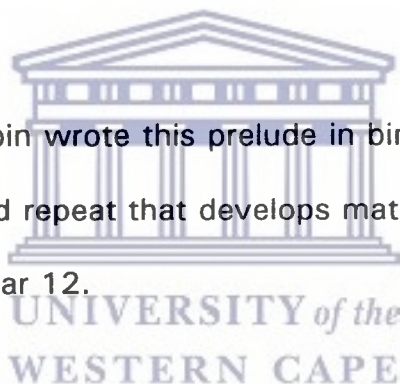


Bar one is repeated in bar two with the same harmony (I - I<sup>6</sup> - ii<sup>7</sup> - V<sup>7</sup>). Repetitions of bar one can also be found in bars 5 and 19. The use of the V<sup>7</sup> chord is quite prominent. There is a chromatically descending passage in the left hand from bars 3 and 4 that precede the repeated section beginning in bars.

## PRELUDE NO.9 IN E MAJOR

This prelude focuses on the lower register of the piano with its thick texture and dark tone colour. It has a march-like character. Chopin uses chord structures in this prelude rather than running scale passages. The rhythm of both the right and left hand stay the same throughout the piece. The right hand rhythm is  while that of the left hand is . These two dotted rhythms of right and left hand in bar 1 are repeated at other points in the piece and the rhythmic motive  dominates the right hand pattern.

With regard to the form, Chopin wrote this prelude in binary form. Section A is stated in bars 1-4 and a varied repeat that develops material, beginning in bar 5 and continuing to the end in bar 12.

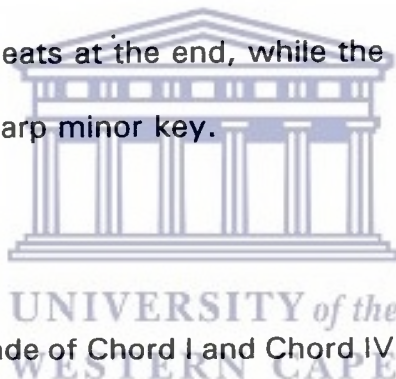


In Section A Chopin uses primary triads. In the soprano part, there is a steady ascent from bar 1 (B) to bar 3 (E). From bars 3-4, a descending passage follows which leads into the repeat section. In this section, the harmony in bar 5 changes to I - V - III from a simple structure I - V - I. From bar 5, there is an increase in chromaticism, including an enharmonic change in bar 8 (A<sup>b</sup>C<sup>b</sup>E<sup>b</sup> becomes G<sup>#</sup>BD<sup>#</sup>).

## PRELUDE NO.10 IN C SHARP MINOR

The prelude in C sharp minor is fast, figurative and technically challenging in the right hand. This prelude contrasts prelude no. 9 in E major, in terms of tempo and style, with fingerwork being of utmost importance whereas the previous one is more chordal.

The prelude is in binary form: section A (bar 1-12) and section Flat (bar 13-18). Bars 15 and 16 are repeated in bars 17 and 18, in both melody and harmony. The last bar is shortened to two beats at the end, while the chord V pattern is twice repeated to reinforce the C sharp minor key.




In this prelude, much use is made of Chord I and Chord IV structure. Bars two and three serve as example. In bars 9 to 10, there is a modulation to F sharp minor. A descending melodic pattern in the right hand (bars 1 - 3) alternates with an ascending melodic pattern (bars 4-5).

## PRELUDE NO.11 IN Flat MAJOR

In this prelude phrases are repeated four times. The first two bars functions as an upbeat to the melody and is therefore omitted when the melody is repeated later one. An example is found is bar 15.

Music Example 7, Prelude no.11, right hand, bars 1-2 and 22-24

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From bar 22, a sequential pattern in the right hand (until bar 24) leads to the cadence at the end of the prelude. The rhythmic pattern of the prelude is simple, as both the right and left hand both use largely the same pattern (  ).

In terms of harmony, the prelude maintains its simplicity because there is no modulation to another key. Bar 21 is the climax of the prelude. This is followed by the same bar that introduced the melody, but this time leading to a short coda.

## PRELUDE NO.12 IN G SHARP MINOR

Ascending chromatic movement in the right hand tends to dominate most of the prelude (for example, ascending chromatic movement from bars 1-5) (Music Example 7). The idea of bars 1-5 is repeated in bars 9-12, and re-appears later and similarly is repeated in bars 49-53. Ascending and descending melodic patterns alternate.

Music Example 8: Prelude no.12, right hand, bars 1-4



Rhythmically the right hand consists of regular quaver movement (♩ ♩ ♩), while the left-hand accompaniment with its regular crochet movement (♩ ♩ ♩) creates a march-like character.

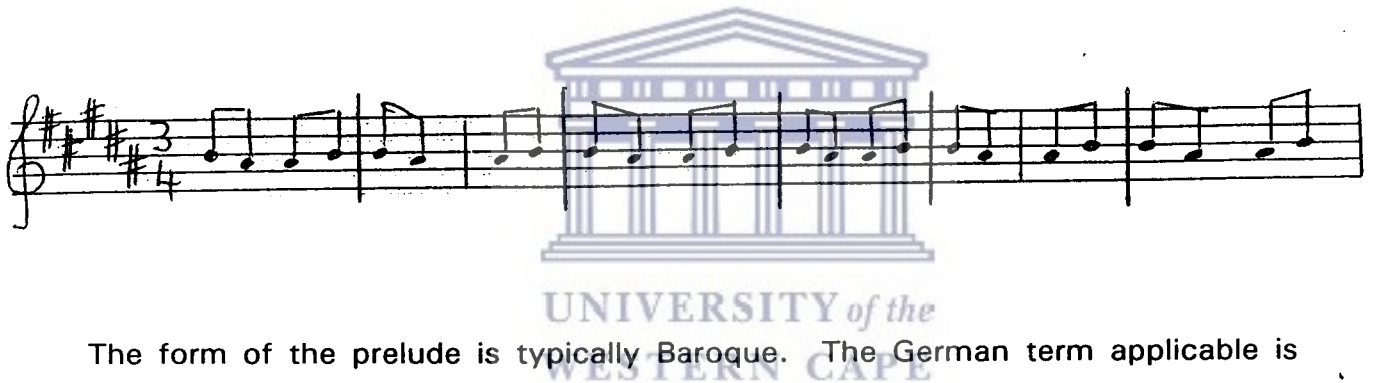
Due to the chromatic harmony, the exact locations of keys are difficult to identify. The first five bars are built on the G sharp minor triad (tonic). In bar 11 there is a feeling of E minor. Bar 24 is built on A minor, while bar 28 centres around G.

Chopin uses repetition of the interval Flat to G in bars 17 to 20. This forms part of a group of four quavers that suggest a change of metre of 2/4. In musical terms this is called a "Hemiola effect". Although the time signature still says 3/4, it is

actually in 2/4. An example of a hemiola occurs in bars 17-20. In bar 57, there is repetition from b, a, a, flat which also changes the metre. Actual and implied bar lines co-incide.

The cadence point is in the last bar (bar 80) but chord V (D#FxA#) is already established in bar 74. This stresses the dominant.

Music Example 9: Prelude no.12, right hand, bars 57-60



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The form of the prelude is typically Baroque. The German term applicable is "fortspinnung".

## PRELUDE NO.13 IN F SHARP MAJOR

In this prelude a song-like melody<sup>1</sup> is accompanied by a left hand that states the same throughout (<sup>6</sup>4 [ ] [ ] ).

The prelude is in ternary form. The A section (bars 1 - 18) is slow and the melody develops slowly. Chopin starts the prelude by using the F sharp chord with top A sharp thrice, before developing the melody. A V<sup>7</sup> chord is then introduced in the second beat of bar 2. A repeat follows in bar 5, but Chopin allows a development of the chord VI in bar 6. In bar 7, a cadential <sup>6</sup>4 leads into a V - I cadence. A sequential pattern in the bass leads into the repeat section in bar 8.

Music Example 10: Prelude no.13, left hand, bar 8



Although bar 9 repeats material the triplet rhythm in bar 11 provides contrast and implies improvisation. In bar 14, stark dissonance is produced by the E in the treble part, and E sharp in the bass.


In the last bar of the A section Chopin uses an irregular pattern to lead into the Flat section (bars 21 - 28). In this section, Chopin uses an octave leap for expressive quality. There is repetitiveness in bar 21 (D, F, A), bar 22 (E, G) and so on that serves to show the different texture. From bar 21 - 24, there is a descending

sequence in the alto part, as Chopin gradually prepares for the A repeat section from bars 29 - 38, at the end of the prelude.





## PRELUDE NO.14 IN E FLAT MINOR

This prelude is a figurative study which makes use of the lower register of the piano. Both the right hand and the left hand use the same rhythmic pattern throughout the piece. The pattern used is : 4/4 

It is interesting to note that Chopin only uses one melodic line with no other parts. The right hand and left hand move together in octaves. There is movement by leap that is chordal. The way in which the chord is structured also attracts attention. For example in bar 4.

Music Example 11: Prelude no.14, right hand, bar 4

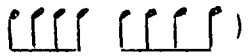


In the first six bars, there is repetition in rising sequential movement. From bar 7 to 10, there is a descending pattern. Chopin uses the ascending and descending pattern for contrast. From bar 11, there is an exact repetition of the beginning. Therefore, the prelude is in binary form (section A in bars 1-10 and section B in bars 11-19).

## PRELUDE NO.15 IN D FLAT MAJOR

Prelude No. 15 is the longest prelude in the whole collection. It has acquired the name of "Raindrop Prelude" due to the repeated A flat used throughout the prelude. The music assumes an entirely different character in the central section when the A flat is enharmonically altered to G sharp. Though the same note it causes darkening in tone colour.

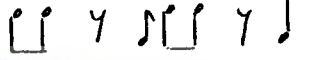
The prelude is written in ternary form. The first section A in D flat major (bars 1 - 27), section Flat in C sharp minor (bars 28 - 75) and the repeat section A in D flat major (bars 76 - 89).

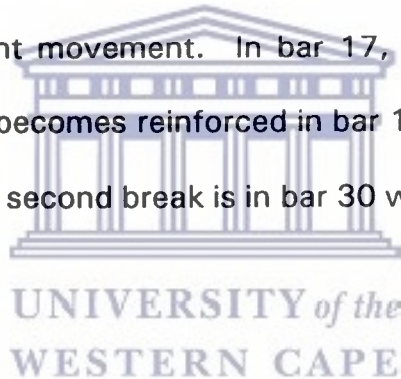
From bars 1 - 27, the melody stays in the right hand. The left hand accompaniment pattern stays the same throughout the piece ( $\frac{4}{4}$  ) but from bars 28 to 75 the Flat section) the rhythmic pattern changes, with the right hand taking on the above-mentioned pattern.

Cadence Points are found in bars 4-5 and bars 19-20 etc. Chopin also ends on chord I with the third in the top voice, as in preludes one and three.

## PRELUDE NO.16 IN B FLAT MINOR

This study for velocity is illustrated through fast, scale passages in the right hand and skips in the left hand. Virtually the whole range of the keyboard is explored. There is no melodic line. Instead figurative passages demand fingerwork in the right hand and technical dexterity in the left.

The right hand uses the regular semi-quaver movement throughout the prelude while the left hand mainly uses one rhythm . This creates a sense of impetus and constant movement. In bar 17, the left-hand rhythm is broken for the first time, then becomes reinforced in bar 18 when octaves appear on other parts of the bar. The second break is in bar 30 which like bar 18, occurs on a dominant-seventh chord.



Chopin makes use of melodic repetition in bar 5, 10 and 11, and bars 12-13. The latter is ascending sequential movement. In bars 15-16, 24-25, he uses descending sequential movement. The ascending and descending pattern create contrast.

Chopin makes use of chromatic movement in the right hand but the left hand gives a good indication of the harmonies in the prelude. He uses chord IV in bars 5-7. In bar 17, V<sup>7</sup> leads into B Flat minor into the repeat section. In bar 33 and 34 as well as bars 42-45 Chopin uses one melodic line. In bar 29 a feeling of A minor is given. In bar 40 the Neopolitan sixth leads to V-I chord progression in bars 45-46, in an abrupt ending.

## PRELUDE NO.17 IN A FLAT MAJOR

A two-bar introduction on the tonic chord I(<sup>6</sup>4) leads to a E<sup>7</sup> chord in bar 3, and then to chord I in root position.

In the first section (bars 1-18) Chopin makes use of primary chords. Imitation occurs in bar 5, which serves as an answer to the statement in bar 3. From bar 10, a repeat of section one in A flat follows. From bar 19, a sudden turn to E major chord occurs. The chromaticism in bar 20 in the left hand leads to the G sharp in bar 21. This bar is in C sharp major. Chromatic movement in bar 26 leads to the E major chord in bar 27. There is repetition of bars 27 and 28 in bars 29 and 30. It leads to the enharmonic change from G sharp major to A flat major.

A diminished chord on D in bar 33 leads to a repeat of section one in bar 35. E major is established by means of a V - I progression in bars 43-44.

Chords produce a thick texture of in the prelude. An example is the German sixth in bar 54, or diminished seventh (V<sup>o7</sup>) in bar 55 etcetera. From bar 65 the repeat section follows. Chopin uses the A flat as a drone note till the end of the prelude in bar 90.

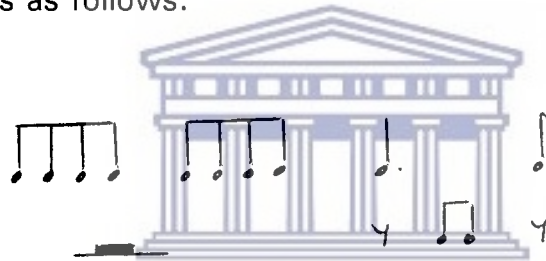
Interestingly, the prelude ends as it began, on a I<sup>6</sup>4 chord, with the 3rd of the chord again in the top voice.

## PRELUDE NO.18 IN F MINOR

This prelude of a figurative nature and lacking a clear melody contains unison passages that result in changes in texture.

Melodic Repetition occurs: Bar 1 is repeat in bar 2 and the 1st beat of bar 3, bar 6 is repeated in bar 7 etc. Unison occurs in bars 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12-15. By using one line, Chopin focuses all attention on this idea.

The rhythmic pattern is as follows:



Question

Answer

Chopin plays around with the rhythmic pattern of bar 1 ( ).

Examples of these "variations" are found in bar 9 ( ) and bar 15 ( ).

## PRELUDE NO.19 IN E FLAT MAJOR

The same rhythmic pattern of triplet quavers is used throughout this prelude. The prelude is a study in extended hand position. The melody develops through the top notes in the right hand. Chopin uses contrary movement between the hands throughout the prelude.

The opening of the prelude (bars 1 - 8) is repeated at other points in the prelude, bars 33 - 42 and later bars 61 - 72.

In this work Chopin makes use of imitations and sequences. An example of an imitation an octave higher can be found in bars 3 and 8. The bar ends on a dominant seventh chord that leads into the repeat section in bar 9. Sequential movement can be found in bars 2 and 3 on the tonic chord. In bars 29-32, there is a rising sequence, of third in the right hand. The sequential pattern changes the metre from 3/4 to 2/4 resulting in a hemiola. In bar 65 there is alternation between E flat and B flat, A, A flat, G, F sharp, G. It is also a descending pattern. ? show this in the music example

Music Example 12: Prelude no.19, right hand, bars 65-66





Cadence Points are found in bars 8-9 (V - I), bars 32-33 (V - I) bars 70-71 (V - I).

These early cadence points lead into repeat sections of material used in bars 1-8.

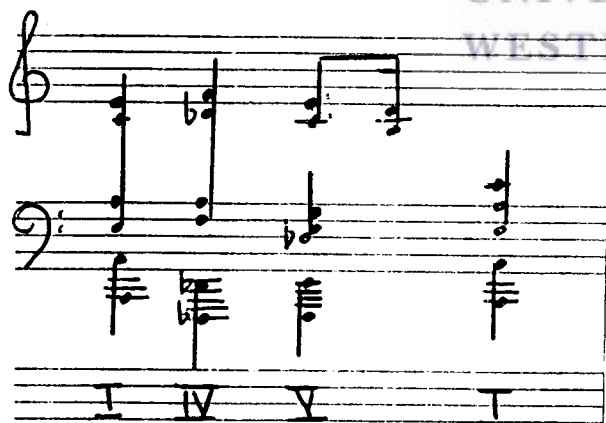


## PRELUDE NO.20 IN C MINOR

The prelude a funeral march, is chordal in texture. The right hand rhythmic pattern (4/4 ) and left hand rhythmic pattern (4/4 ) stays the same throughout the work, ensuring a strong sense of unity.

The prelude is in binary form: the A section (bars 1-4) and Flat section (bars 5-13). The contrast between these two sections is evident in tone colour as well as in dynamic level. In bar 1 Chopin uses as I - IV - V - I procession. In bar 2, the key changes to A flat major but the progression of I - IV - V - I remains the same. Bars 5-8 is repeated in bars 9-13.

Music Example 13: Prelude no.20, bar 2



In bar 4 a V - I progression leads into the section where Chopin repeats bar 1 in the alto part (middle part) in a subtle way. This is evident through the movement from G to A flat. In bar 5 and 6 the bass descends chromatically. In bar 8 on the second beat a Neapolitan sixth chord is used to precede the V - I cadential progression.



## Music Example 14: Prelude no.20, bars 1 and 5

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Chopin's Prelude no. 20, bars 1 and 5. The score is written on three staves: Treble, Bass, and Treble. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and the time signature is common time (C). The first staff is labeled 'bar 1' and the second staff is labeled 'bar 5'. The music consists of chords and single notes in the upper staves, and chords in the lower staves.

Chopin uses a French sixth chord in the second beat of bar 10, as a decoration. With the dynamic level of "p" in bars 5-8 and "pp" in bars 9-12, bars 9-12 serve as an echo. Chopin uses chord I twice to end the prelude, structured in different ways, thus providing a very definite ending.

## PRELUDE NO.21 IN B FLAT MAJOR

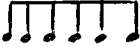
The right hand presents the melody, but the figurative left-hand part contains much chromatic movement.

The prelude is in Ternary form: A (bars 1-16), B (bars 17-32) and a repeat of A (bars 33-58). The A Section is in the key of B flat major. In this section Chopin uses contrary motion extensively within the left hand part, for instance:

Music Example 15: Prelude no.21, left hand, bar 1

The B Section (bars 17-32) is in the key of G flat major and introduces an ostinato in the left hand.[?a music example needed] From bars 17-24, Chopin uses three chords in various order. Another example is from bars 25-32. The final A section is in Flat flat major. In this section Chopin uses descending sequential movement in unison that leads to Chord I (Bb D F) in bar 45.

Music Example 16: Prelude no.21, left hand, bars 17-19


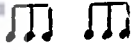
Rhythmic and melodic repetition is important in this prelude.: the left hand accompaniment uses the same rhythmic pattern (3/4 ) throughout and examples of melodic repetition are found from bars 46-47, 48-49. The V - I cadence is presented twice.



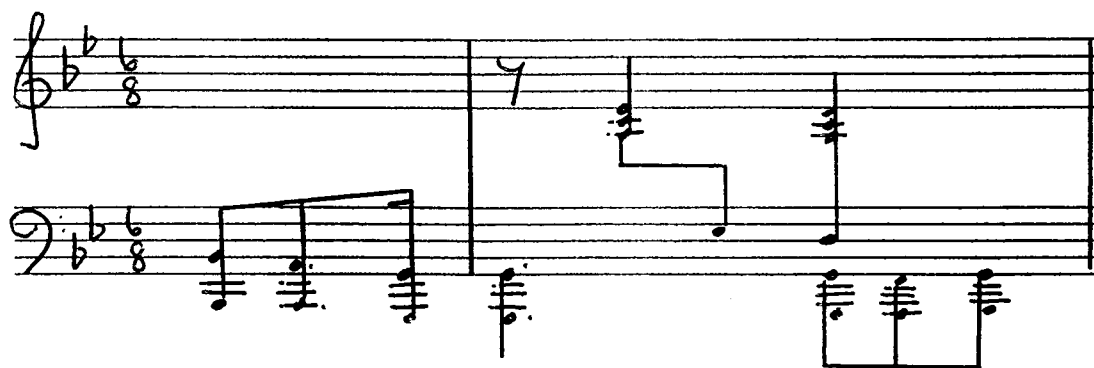
## PRELUDE NO.22 IN G MINOR

This prelude is a study for octave playing in the left hand, at a fast tempo. A striking feature of the piece is the strong melody in the bass, strengthened by doubled octaves and dissonance.

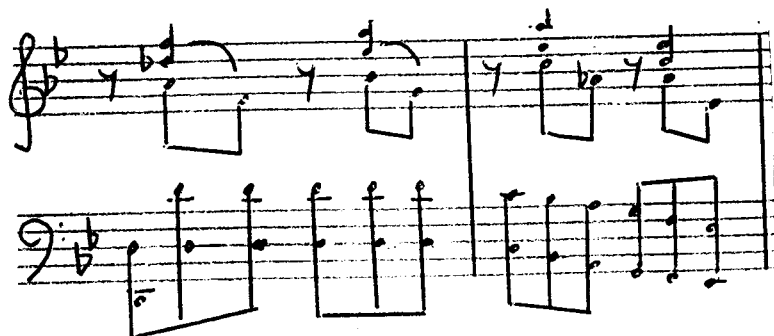
The prelude is in ternary form: A Section in G minor (bars 1 - 16), the Flat Section (bars 17-34), a part of which is in D flat major and the repeat of A in the tonic (bars 34-41).

In the A Section the left hand rhythmic pattern prominent is . In the B section the rhythm in the left hand changes to . It creates a sense of movement, especially as it is combined with extensive repetition. Examples of rhythmic repetition are found from bars 1-7, 10-13, 15-30 etc.

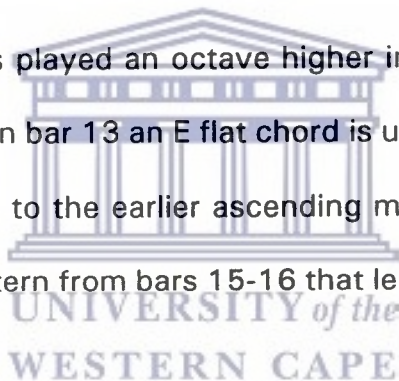
Music Example 17: Prelude no.22, bars 1-2



Melodic repetitions are found in bars 17-18, 19-20, 25-26, 27-28 etc.

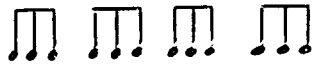


Apart from the major key change in bars 16-17 (G minor - D flat major) Chopin makes use of chromatic harmony in this prelude. A good example of chromaticism is found in bar 5 with the augmented-sixth chord (E<sup>b</sup> G B<sup>b</sup> against C<sup>#</sup>). From bars 8 to 12 the opening pattern is played an octave higher in the bass, with a slight alteration in bar 12 (C<sup>#</sup> - C ). In bar 13 an E flat chord is used, while a D flat chord is used in bar 14. In contrast to the earlier ascending movement (bars 2-5) etc. Chopin uses a descending pattern from bars 15-16 that leads into the key of D flat major.



## PRELUDE NO.23 IN F MAJOR

This prelude is figurative and makes use of harplike arpeggiated chords throughout. The prelude is ternary in form but marked by a high degree of continuity. There is no contrast material and the outline is as follows: A section (bars 1-8), a repeat and development of A (bars 9-16) and a repeat of the A section (bars 17-22).

This prelude is marked by a great continuity in the right hand:  is used throughout. The wide range of the keyboard explored in the right hand part contributes towards the association of a harp.

Chopin uses simple harmony in this prelude: in bars 1-4 only chord I is used in F major, in bars 5-8, there is a modulation to the dominant key of C major. In bar 8 a V<sup>7</sup> chord leads back to chord I in F major.

From bars 8-11, the opening bars 1-4 are played an octave higher. In bar 12 there is a key change to B flat major. A cadential progression of V<sup>7</sup> - I is found in bars 12 - 13. In bar 15, the C major chord is used to lead into the repeat section of the melody in bar 17. Thus, a V - I progression is used.

The melody section from bars 17 - 22, is in the key of F major.



## CONCLUSION

An extraordinary variety of content and mood is captured in the preludes of Opus 28. Chopin, by composing them, presented the world with a set of pieces in which a structural principle is used. Often Chopin uses a small motif that would create a technical problem. Through passage work harmony and key changes, he gives practice in this technical aspect.

According to the book *Romantic Music: A concise History from Schubert to Sibelius* by Arnold Whittall (1987: 72), the twentieth-century mind will need little convincing that there is more to Chopin's compositions of the period 1836-1839, including the completion of the Opus 25 Etudes, the Opus 33 and Opus 41 Mazurkas the F major ballad, the C sharp minor Scherzo and the Sonata in B flat minor. In the Etudes, Chopin is more concerned with virtuosity. Several of the Etudes deal with technical problems. In the Mazurkas, Chopin managed to create a less aristocratic mood by adding a Polish folk music flavour to it. According to the *New Grove's Dictionary* (volume 4: 304), the mazurkas have an almost inexhaustible variety of mood which is paralleled in the preludes. In the F major ballad Chopin creates a contrast between two moods and keys (A minor and F major). The Scherzos count among Chopin's most powerful works, with the C sharp minor scherzo, Opus 39 having a suggestion of directness with less lyricism. In the Flat minor Sonata (1844), Chopin absented flowing lyricism, which in a whole can be seen as a more serious work.



David Ewen (1966: 503) stresses that the preludes, by not having a set form, suggests a temporary emotion. If one has to place the preludes into context with Chopin's life, one can say that the preludes in Opus 28 reflect the torment and physical suffering to which the composer was exposed to, on Majorca. Chopin also widened the scope of the method of repetitions by introducing rhythmical as well as melodic ones. Good examples are preludes no. 7 and 19.

According to the book *Man and his Music* by Alec Harman and Wilfred Mellers, Chopin's melodies are diatonic. However, his ornamentation is chromatic. Through the use of rubato (used in Italian bel canto), Chopin creates a link between a diatonic melody and chromaticism of the harmony. Through the use of Polish folk music, Chopin also makes use of Lydian raised fourths in some of the preludes. The book stresses that Chopin was fascinated by the modal and rhythmic ambiguities of folk music because both stimulated and complimented the harmonic and pianistic subtleties through which Chopin expressed his life experiences.

There is a high degree of integration and fusion of musical content, form, style and technical exploitation of the instrument. Usually, a prelude is of medium length and explores one technical problem. In Chopin's music, there is evidence that the piano is mostly treated as a legato instrument. In a letter to his friend Woyiechowski, Chopin wrote "I tell my piano what I can confide to no one but yourself" (Cortot, 1951: 51) .

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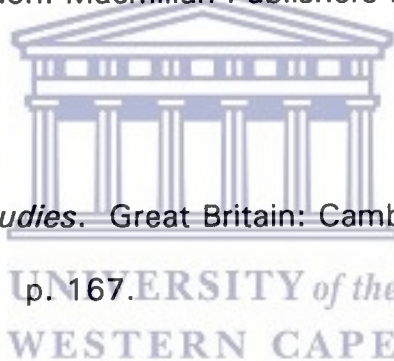
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