

*The Anne Landa Preludes* of Carl Vine: musical characteristics and practical performance  
guidelines

By

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## ABSTRACT

Australian composer Carl Vine wrote *The Anne Landa Preludes* in 2006. Pianist Michael Kieran Harvey was the first performer to record this set in the same year. This collection of twelve small pieces is the successor to the *Five Bagatelles*, which were composed in 1994. In this dissertation, I will focus on the analysis of specific musical characteristics as well as performance guidelines with regard to the interpretation of these pieces.

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## Chapter 1 Biography of Carl Vine

Carl Vine was born in Perth, a city in Western Australia, on October 8, 1954. One of the most famous composers in Australia, Vine has written ten concertos, seven symphonies, three piano sonatas, and music for dance, theatre, film, television, electronic music and numerous chamber works. Although he is recognized as a composer of modern “classical” music, he has also written music for the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games (Atlanta, 1996).

At the age of five, Vine began to play the cornet. Five years later, due to an injury (three fractured vertebrae) he had to stop his cornet studies and started learning the piano and the pipe organ. He served as pianist and organist for church services, assemblies, and assorted performances. In 1970, Vine completed his first electronic work, *Unwritten Divertimento*, which brought him the First Prize in the Australian Society for Music Education Composers’ Competition.

In 1972, Vine enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program majoring in Physics at the University of Western Australia. He won the Perth Music Festival in the open instrumental solo division (Piano). He also earned the Associate in Music degree with distinction in piano from the Australian Music Examination Board in the same year. In 1974, he transferred to the Bachelor of Music program, majoring in composition, at the University of Western Australia. He studied piano with Stephen Dornan and composition with John Exton. After he participated in the inaugural Young Composers training scheme organized by the Australia Council, he moved to Sydney and started his professional career.

From 1975 to 1978, Vine was an accompanist and rehearsal pianist for the Sydney Dance Company (then the ‘Dance Company of New South Wales’). He also served as Musical Director of “Sounds Nice” vocal duo on the Sydney club circuit with various TV

appearances. During his tenure with the Sydney Dance Company, Vine became interested in the interaction between music and dance. In 1977, he completed *Tip* (for Sydney Dance Company), which was his first fully professional commission for dance. In 1978, he became the resident composer with the Sydney Dance Company. During same year he composed the music for the first all-Australian full-length ballet, *Poppy*.

In 1979, Vine served as a conductor, pianist and resident composer at the London Contemporary Dance Theatre. He founded the contemporary music performance ensemble 'Flederman' with trombonist Simone de Haan in Sydney and remained as pianist, composer, conductor and director of the ensemble until 1989. The Flederman ensemble has performed in Australia and the United States, Holland, Finland, and the United Kingdom.

Between 1980 and 1982 Carl Vine worked as a lecturer in Electronic Music Composition at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and participated in the first 'Australian Composers' summer school' with the ABC sinfonietta. In 1983, he received the "Adams" award for outstanding contribution to Music for Dance in Australia. Vine then served variously as musical director of the Australia/New Zealand Choreographic School (Melborne) directed by Glen Tetley (1984); resident composer at the New South Wales State Conservatorium (1985–1987); resident composer with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (1987); guest conductor with the Sydney Philharmonia Society (1987); guest artist at EVOS Music (Perth), W.A University and W.A.Academy for the Performing Arts (1989); Deputy Chairman of the Australia Council (1992–5); Artistic Director of Musica Viva Australia (2000); and Artistic Director of the Hungtinton Estate Music Festival, which is one of the most prestigious and successful annual chamber music festivals in Australia (2006).

Carl Vine's first three symphonies were released in 1993 by ABC Classics Records as the premiere recording, and were performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

He won numerous awards, including several Sounds Australian Awards, the John Bishop Memorial Commission (1990), three Australian Guild of Screen Composers' Awards (1993, 1994), the Australia Council's Don Banks Music Award for outstanding contribution to Australian composition (2005), and an honorary doctorate of music at the University of Western Australia (2010).<sup>1</sup>

Carl Vine is one of the most important musicians from Australia and his music is becoming more and more popular around the world. Currently, he is a free-lance composer living in Sydney.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>2</sup> Carl Vine, "Biography", <http://www.carlvine.com> (accessed October 13, 2015).

## Chapter 2 Musical characteristics in Carl Vine's *The Anne Landa Preludes*

Carl Vine wrote the following program note for this piece on 14 March 2006:

Anne Landa made an extraordinary and sustained contribution to the encouragement of young pianists in Australia, and although her legacy continues, her passion, energy and dedication were taken from us far too soon. This set of twelve small pieces is intended to be the successor to my Five Bagatelles, which I wrote in a rapid burst of energy twelve years ago. By contrast the new pieces emerged slowly, and sometimes with inexplicable difficulty. My musings on the writing process are provided in the Performance Notes below, and there is little else to say about the music except that each piece is as highly differentiated from its neighbours as I could make it.<sup>3</sup>

The twelve preludes are:

*Short Story*

Filigree

Thumper

Ever After Ever

Two Fifths

Milk for Swami Li

Divertissement

Sweetsour

Tarantella

Romance

Fughetta

Chorale

*The Anne Landa Preludes* contain many contrasting compositional techniques and musical styles. This chapter will focus on some prominent music characteristics in terms of harmonic organization, rhythmic organization and dynamic variety and registral contrasts.

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<sup>3</sup> Carl Vine, *The Anne Landa Preludes*. London: Faber Music, 2010.



## Harmonic organization

Vine uses some set classes to compose main sections to unify the whole piece. The process of using specific set class occurs in almost every piece in *The Anne Landa Preludes*. Being able to identify the set class that Vine uses will help us to study, understand and memorize the piece.

The example here is the first ten measures in *Filigree*, the second piece in the set. In measure 1, the first four notes which occur in both hands are F#, D, A, E. The four-note group is a member of set class 4-22sc(0247). This set class 4-22sc(0247) is the dominant set class in this section. The rest of the set classes Vine used are: measure 1, the next four-note group (G#, E, B, F) is a member of set class 4-18sc(0147); the third beat of measure 3 (A, F, C), (G#, E, B) are the member of set class 3-11sc(037); the third beat of measure 5 (E, Db, Ab, Eb) is the member of set class 4-14sc(0237). Measure 6 to 10 repeat the first five measures. In the first five measures, set class 4-22sc(0247) occurs 14 times, set class 4-18sc(0147) occurs 3 times, set class 3-11sc(037) occurs twice and set class 4-14sc(0237) occurs one time. This section repeats again from measure 26 to measure 36. It is the main theme of the whole piece.

Example 2.1: *Filigree* m. 1–5.

In the last part of *Filigree*, the three-note groups in the right hand are all from set class 3-11sc(037) and the first five measures in the left hand part are all from set class 4-18sc(0147). From measure 50 to measure 54, Vine uses set classes 4-z29sc(0137) and set class 4-18sc(0147) in alternation.

Example 2.2: *Filigree* m. 45–56.

The image shows a musical score for Example 2.2: *Filigree* m. 45–56. The score is in 3/4 time and features a complex texture with multiple staves. The right hand (RH) and left hand (LH) parts are shown. The RH part consists of three staves, and the LH part consists of two staves. The score is annotated with set class labels: 3-11(037) in the first measure of the RH, 4-18(0147) in the first measure of the LH, and 4-z29(0137) and 4-18(0147) in measures 50-54. Dynamics include pp, mp, and ppp. There are also markings for 'ff sub.' and '8' (octave).

Another example of using set classes is the first 14 measures in *Tarantella*, the ninth piece in the set. Both hands are using three-note groupings and moving in opposite directions. In this section, most of the three-note groups are based on a minor triad. Except for the places that I circled in the example below: three-note groups are based on minor thirds which are members of set class 3-10sc(036) and three-note groups are based on major thirds which are members of set class 3-12sc(048).

Example 2.3: *Tarantella* m. 1–14.

Interval-class cycles

Vine incorporates different ways of using interval cycles in this piece. The example in *Filigree*, from measure 11 to measure 18 contains C1 cycles from C3 to F#3 (C-C#-D-D#-E-F-F#) and from F#3 to C3 (F#-F-E-D#-D-C#-C) in the right hand with melodic emphasis placed on the note G#. As the quietest voice line in this section, the C1 cycle should produce a mysterious background sonority to support both the melody and bass notes.

Example 2.4: *Filigree* m. 11–18.

The image shows a musical score for Example 2.4, *Filigree* measures 11–18. It is written in bass clef and consists of three systems. The first system shows a dynamic change from *pp* to *mf*. The second system has a repeat sign (8). The third system has a repeat sign (8) and ends with a fermata.

In measure 48 of *Thumper*, the third piece of the set, both hands use minor triads and move in opposite directions. All of these minor triads are arranged to follow the C1 cycle. For example, the top notes of the triads in the right hand part descend by semitone from B5 to Ab4. Vine uses these minor triads from opposing registers of the piano moving towards the middle range to create an extremely powerful sonority that provides a climax as well as preparing for the coda.

Example 2.5: *Thumper* m. 48.

The image shows a musical score for Example 2.5, *Thumper* measure 48. It is written in treble clef and shows a sequence of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

In *Fughetta*, the eleventh piece of the set, the right hand uses chromatic clusters and broken C1 octaves over measure 33 to 36. More specifically, it employs an interval-class cycle 1 within a pitch frame from D to A. The left hand part of measure 33 meanwhile uses

broken octaves in a descending C1 cycle (A-G#-G-F#-F-E-Eb-D-C#-C-B-Bb-A-G#-G-F#).

This is the climax of the piece with all chromatic elements creating large dynamic contrasts and projecting a great sense of energy.

Example 2.6: *Fughetta* m. 33–36.

### Modality

Composers use different modes in their compositions in order to enlarge the variety of the scales that are available to use. Carl Vine incorporates mixed modes into his compositions.

In the second piece of the set, *Filigree*, from measure 19 to 23, the right hand plays the white key diatonic scale while the left hand plays the black key pentatonic scale. In this section, both hands are playing in the same register and very close to each other. The

arrangement of mixed modes with different articulation (legato and staccato) creates a fresh sound in this piece.

Example 2.7: *Filigree* m. 19– 23.

### Rhythmic considerations

Rhythmic variety is another prominent feature in *The Anne Landa Preludes* which includes frequently shifting time signatures, polyrhythms and unique rhythmic groupings.

#### Frequently shifting time signatures

In almost every piece of this set, Carl Vine frequently changes time signatures. The speed of the basic rhythmic subdivision is not usually affected. The change of time signature creates a tempo modulation.

*Thumper*, the fifth piece of the set, contains the most complex rhythmic arrangements of the whole set. It also contains the second most time signature changes: eighteen times changing throughout the fifty-four measures of this prelude. The following example shows the time signature shifts in this piece from measure 18–30. Vine uses different rhythmic groupings every time when he changes the time signature. The emphasis on constantly changing rhythm and time signature provides a unique rhythmic flavor for this piece.

Example 2.8: *Thumper* m. 18–30.

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The musical score for Example 2.8, *Thumper* measures 18–30, is presented in six systems. The first two systems show the piano part in 2/4 time, with dynamics ranging from *p* to *f*. The third system shows the bass part in 2/4 time, with dynamics *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, and *ff*. The fourth system shows the piano part in 18/16 time, with a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 120$ . The fifth and sixth systems show the bass part in 18/16 time. Several sections of the score are circled in red, highlighting specific musical features.

*p* *f*

*p* *f*

*pp* *mf* *pp* *ff*

$\text{♩} = 120$

The table below shows all of the time signature changes found from the entire set of The Preludes, as well as the meters used.<sup>4</sup>

Prelude	Number of Time Signature Changes	Time Signature Changes
No.1 <i>Short Story</i>	2	4/4; 6/4
No.2 <i>Filigree</i>	2	4/4; 2/4
No. 3 <i>Thumper</i>	16	4/4; 3/4; 2/4; 5/4; 9/16; 12/16
No.4 <i>Ever After Ever</i>	16	4/4; 5/4; 2/4; 3/8; 6/4
No.5 <i>Two fifth</i>	18	6/16; 3/8; 12/16; 12/16+1/4; 4/4; 3/4
No.6 <i>Milk for Swami Li</i>	23	3/4; 4/4; 5/8; 2/4; 7/8
No.7 <i>Divertissement</i>	5	4/4; 5/4; 1/8; 3/4
No.8 <i>Sweetsour</i>	8	4/4; 3/4; 6/4; 5/4
No.9 <i>Tarantella</i>	12	12/16; 9/16; 6/16; 15/16
No.10 <i>Romance</i>	1	3/4; 4/4
No.11 <i>Fughetta</i>	2	4/4; 2/4
No.12 <i>Chorale</i>	0	3/4

### Polyrhythms

In this set there are four pieces that use polyrhythms: No.2 *Filigree*; No.3 *Thumper*; No.6 *Milk for Swami Li* and No.11 *Fughetta*. Four against three rhythms is the most common type of

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<sup>4</sup> Ruggiero, Christopher, "A Recording and Guide to the Performance of Carl Vine's Anne Landa Preludes" (D.M.A. diss., Ball State University, 2015).



polyrhythm. It occurs in No.2 *Filigree*; No.3 *Thumper* and No. 11 *Fughetta*. Two against three rhythms occur in the third piece of the set *Thumper*.

Example 2.9: *Thumper* m.31–32.

The musical score for Example 2.9, *Thumper* measures 31-32, is presented in a grand staff. The right hand (treble clef) plays a complex polyrhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with accents marked above every note. The left hand (bass clef) provides a consistent rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The piece is marked *mp sub., cresc.* and includes a first ending bracket labeled *8va*.

### Unique rhythmic groupings

Vine is interested in exploring different rhythmic combinations in this set through switching accents and creating unexpected rhythmic patterns.

In the example, from measure 30 to 33 in *Divertissement*, Vine wrote the accent marking on every note of the middle voice in right hand part that starts a sixteenth note after the downbeat, and all exist as a dotted eighth note. The left hand provides a consistent rhythmic major chord which contrasts rhythmically with the right hand accents on weak portions of the beat. This arrangement makes a “jazzy” atmosphere.

Example 2.12: *Divertissement* m30–33.

The image shows two systems of a piano score for Example 2.12, *Divertissement* measures 30–33. Each system consists of a right-hand staff (treble clef) and a left-hand staff (bass clef). The right hand plays a complex, rhythmic melody with many sixteenth notes and rests. The left hand plays a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. The first system begins with the dynamic marking *ff sub.* and a tempo marking of 8<sup>th</sup>. The second system is marked with a circled 8, (8), at the beginning of the left-hand staff.

*Thumper*, as I mentioned before, which is the most complex rhythmic piece in the set, contains many unique rhythmic patterns. The following example is a five measure section where the rhythmic pattern changes three times. The right hand consistently plays a sixteenth note with an eight note rest. The chords in the left hand all have accent markings and form some unique patterns with the right hand.

Example 2.13: *thumper* m38–42.

The image shows two systems of a piano score for Example 2.13, *thumper* measures 38–42. Each system consists of a right-hand staff (treble clef) and a left-hand staff (bass clef). The right hand plays a simple rhythmic pattern of a sixteenth note followed by an eighth rest. The left hand plays a series of chords, each with an accent marking. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 120. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

### Extreme dynamic and registral contrasts

The twelve preludes in this set are very different from each other in terms of tempo, dynamic and musical feeling. Within each piece, Vine also uses extreme dynamic and register arrangement to enhance tension in the music. This tendency not only occurs in the middle of the piece but also appears at the end of the piece.

Example shows the last seven measures in *Filigree*, notes of the pattern from the top of keyboard all the way to the bottom of the keyboard and the sixteen notes go back to the top again ends with the lowest note from left hand and very top notes from right hand. The arrangement of dynamic here goes from *ff* to *ppp*.

Example 2.10: *Filigree* last seven measures.

The image displays a musical score for the final seven measures of the piece 'Filigree'. The score is written for piano and is organized into three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system (measures 1-3) features a right-hand part with a sixteenth-note pattern and a left-hand part with a similar pattern. The second system (measures 4-6) continues the patterns, with dynamic markings *ff sub.* in both hands. The third system (measures 7-9) concludes the piece, with the right hand playing a descending sixteenth-note pattern and the left hand playing a descending pattern. Dynamic markings *pp* and *ppp* are present in the final measures. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Another example of extreme dynamic and registral changes that I choose is the last five measures in *Fughetta*. Even though there are only five measures in the section, it includes almost every register note on the keyboard and it also ends with the lowest note from the bottom and very top notes on the keyboard. The dynamic here goes from *pp* to *ff* every two measures.

Example 2.11: *Fughetta* last five measures.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the final five measures of a piece. The first system shows the beginning of the section with a *pp sub.* dynamic marking. The second system features a *ff* dynamic marking and includes a circled '8' with a dotted line, indicating an octave shift. The third system shows a *pp* dynamic marking on the left and a *fff* dynamic marking on the right, with another circled '8' and a dotted line indicating a second octave shift. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, various note values, rests, and dynamic markings, illustrating the extreme range of notes and dynamics.

### **Chapter 3 Performance Guidelines in Carl Vine's *The Anne Landa Preludes***

Performing the twelve preludes in this set requires a comprehensive pianistic technique in order to express the great variety of musical ideas and sounds. From a musical point of view, the set of twelve pieces are telling twelve “stories”. From a technical point of view, each of the preludes is like studying an etude.

In this chapter, I will focus on the musical content of each prelude; variety of pianistic touches; rhythmic practice and effective fingering.

#### **Musical content**

##### No. 1 *Short Story*

This haunting piece begins with a remote background feeling and a beautiful melody that will return at the end of the piece. The “drama” emerges in the middle section by using quickening tempos, thicker texture and dynamic changes. The climax appears in the end of the middle section with a huge sonority. Following the climax, the melody from the opening returns and the piece ends quietly.

##### No.2 *Filigree*

The character of this prelude is lively and sparkling, in sharp contrast to the serious and nostalgic character of the first prelude. *Filigree* starts quiet, has a short cantabile and legato middle section, and builds dramatically to the end, but then finishes quietly and mysteriously.

##### No.3 *Thumper*

Carl Vine's first piano teacher often reprimanded him for “thumper” or “thumping” the keyboard. He uses this piece as an open invitation to “thump”, although Carl Vine says finesse is

still advised.<sup>5</sup> Chords run through the whole piece with different rhythmic groupings and extreme dynamic changes. The sharp and often “off-beat” rhythms give *Thumper* a “drunken” feeling.

#### No.4 *Ever after ever*

This is a sad and nostalgic piece. It stays mainly in the middle register, which gives it a feeling of not going anywhere. The flowing melodic line and sensuous color changes make this prelude very beautiful and yearning.

#### No.5 *Two fifth*

“ This prelude was originally known as ‘The Goblin's Cakewalk’, but the teddy bears finished the cake at a picnic. It was then a ‘Goblin's Gavotte’ until the fairies won a demarcation dispute against the Federation of Garden Bottoms. The final attempt to invoke fairy-tale creatures failed after accusations of racial profiling were upheld in favour of the golliwogs”.<sup>6</sup> This percussive prelude uses fifths alternating between the two hands to achieve intensity and excitement. Carl Vine wrote “subito” fourteen times in this short prelude to indicate constant changes of mood. He contrasts the drama and starkness of the opening with the playfulness and lightness of the middle section.

#### No. 6 *Milk for Swami Li*

Swami Li is an imaginary person that Vine has created. He considers this music “milk” for sustaining Swami Li. Mysterious harmony and quick sweeping playing throughout the whole piece make this prelude extremely effective. In the last section, chords that appear in the upper register show a sweet and warm feeling.

#### No.7 *Divertissement*

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<sup>5</sup> Program note for *The Anne Landa Preludes*, No.3 *Thumper*

<sup>6</sup> Program note for *The Anne Landa Preludes*, No.5 *Two fifth*

Carl Vine wrote: “Perhaps the trajectory of our lives is so oppressive that we need constant diversion to cope. Or else our lives have no real trajectory but consist entirely of unrelated diversions, some of which appear weighty. Perhaps the trajectory of our lives is so oppressive that we need constant diversion to cope. Or else our lives have no real trajectory but consist entirely of unrelated diversions, some of which appear weighty.”<sup>7</sup> This prelude provides an extreme contrast to the previous prelude. The unexpected accents and dynamic contrast create an energetic and jazzy feeling in this prelude.

#### No. 8 *Sweetsour*

“Sweet, sour, salty, bitter and hot” are five fundamental qualities from Chinese cuisine point of view. “This prelude is neither simply sweet with bitter undertones nor sad with saccharine overtones, but something more integrated.”<sup>8</sup> Chords with sad melody in the top voice moving in slow tempo combine with broken octaves in higher register. The broken octave in higher register sounds like hope and happiness. However, chords that moving underneath sounds like desperate and sadness.

#### No. 9 *Tarantella*

Tarantella is a dance which is associated with spiders. It is usually in triple meter. This prelude is based on two hands rapidly playing three-note groups in the extremely high and low register which creates a wild and unstable effect.

#### No.10 *Romance*

Carl Vine uses almost the entire range of the keyboard to compose this prelude. It requires great control of voicing through different layers. The dynamic of the whole prelude is soft.

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<sup>7</sup> Program note for *The Anne Landa Preludes*, No.7 *Divertissement*

<sup>8</sup> Program note for *The Anne Landa Preludes*, No. 8 *Sweetsour*

### No.11 Fughetta

In this prelude, Carl Vine combines traditional fugue writing with contemporary musical styles. It starts with a single subject line and grows exponentially to the climax which is totally chromatic. Vine is a great admirer of the great contrapuntal tradition of the Baroque period and is reluctant for this small piece to be compared with those earlier masterpieces and writes “To avoid too close a comparison with those marvels of musical architecture, I offer here just a small example.”<sup>9</sup>

### No. 12 Chorale

This is the most melodic and tonal prelude among the set. It sounds quite simple and “folk-like”. Every beautiful voice line makes this piece very attractive even though it doesn’t include complex music material.

## **Variety of Pianistic Touches**

Because a variety of sounds are required for each prelude, the pianist will need to choose different touches depending on the sound he wants. I will discuss the typical types of touches in this set: use of fingertips (using the very top of the finger to quickly attack the key); use of flat finger (using the pads of the fingers instead of fingertips to produce sound); rotation(uses the rotation of the wrist to help the finger press the key); percussive playing (playing directly into the key).

### Use of fingertips

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<sup>9</sup> Program note for *The Anne Landa Preludes*, No.11 *Fughetta*



No.2 *Filigree* is an excellent example of rapid fingertip touch. The tempo of this piece is 180 per quarter note. It shows a rapid running character through melody in left hand eighth note accents with right hand accompaniment in constant sixteenth note.

Example 3.1, *Filigree* m1–6.

The musical score for Example 3.1, *Filigree* measures 1-6, is presented in two systems. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 180. The first system shows the right hand playing a constant sixteenth-note accompaniment starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic, and the left hand playing a melodic phrase of eighth notes starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second system shows the right hand playing a constant sixteenth-note accompaniment starting with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic, and the left hand playing a melodic phrase of eighth notes starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piece concludes with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic in the left hand.

Even though there is a slur above each group of three sixteenth notes in the right hand, it shouldn't be played too legato. Instead, we should aim for a clear crystal sound. In order to achieve this sound, we must minimize the movement of right hand and try to be as close as possible to the key.

As the example above shows, the two hands are playing in different dynamic ranges. The left hand plays single staccato eight-note group to create the melodic phrase. The left hand also needs the sensitive fingertips touch to build the phrase though the jumping notes.

For practicing this piece, I will suggest the following steps: first, practice two hands separately from slow to fast tempo; second, practice two hands together, but play the right hand silently. The reason for doing this is to listen to the phrase that left hand creates clearly while two hands playing together and feel playing the different dynamic ranges that two hands need to achieve. Finally, practice two hands together.

### Use of flat fingers

Many teachers say the curled position is the “correct” position for playing the piano and the flat finger position is somehow wrong. I think they are both useful to help the pianist to create different sounds. V. Horowitz demonstrated that the flat finger position is very effective in playing the piano.

The flat finger position uses the pads of the fingers instead of fingertips to produce sound. The finger pad is more sensitive to touch and easier to control. In *The Anne Landa preludes*, there are several pieces that require flowing melody and subtle color changes which can be easier achieved by a flat finger approach.

*Ever After Ever* is an example of a prelude that doesn't include major technical difficulties, but there are some musical challenges such as subtle color changes and building of phrase line.

Another reason that I would like to suggest using flat finger approach is that there are a lot of places which contain large intervals. With flat finger position, we can play the intervals using most of the large underside areas of fingers to avoid missing notes and to make the phrase line that we want.

Example 3.2, *Ever After Ever* m1–8.

#### 4. Ever After Ever

Semplice ♩ = 84

*p*

*mp*

Another example of use flat fingers is the fast arpeggio passage in No.6 *Milk for Swami Li*. In this prelude, the fast arpeggio passage continues throughout the whole piece. The arpeggios require an outstretched position for both hands and most of them are played softly. Using flat finger position here will help reduce the stretch of the hand and also help play the arpeggio quietly.

Example 3.3, *Milk for Swami Li* m6–9.

*pp*

*f*

*mp*

Use of rotation

Use of rotation is an important piano technique to help us solve many technical issues in performance. This is a technique that uses the rotation of the wrist to help the finger press the key. It helps the pianist to reduce the chance of injury when they are playing with fixed wrists which are working against the natural movement of their bodies through extensive practice. Also, it makes it easier for the pianist to play certain fast passages.

In No.9 *Tarantella*, the whole prelude is based on a three-note group and both hands are mainly playing in opposite directions. Carl Vine wrote “smoothly” on the beginning of the score. This piece is using the fast three-note grouping in very soft dynamic to create a mysterious dance feeling. In order to achieve the character of this piece, rotation is an effective practice method. Both hands try to stay as close as possible to the key and use the rotation of the wrist to play the notes from top to the bottom or from bottom to the top.

Example 3.4, *Tarantella* m1–12.

The image displays three systems of piano music notation. The first system is in 12/16 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 192 and dynamics of *pp* smoothly. The second system transitions to 9/16 time and features a *mp* dynamic. The third system includes 6/16 time signatures and alternates between *pp* and *mp* dynamics. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various rhythmic patterns and articulations.

### Percussive playing

As I mentioned before, there is one prelude that Carl Vine named “thumper” where he uses the piano percussively. The whole piece consists of chords. The main technical issue in this prelude is playing chords in different rhythms. I will discuss how to practice the rhythm later; here I will focus on how to play chords.

In the example below, the left hand plays black note pentatonic chords in triplets. It is not easy to play accurately on black notes in quite fast tempo. First, I will practice “beat” feeling on either keyboard or anywhere. Let arm and wrist feel relaxed and have some focus on the hand especially the fingers. Then I will practice shaping the phrase by leading with the thumb of the

left hand chords. Get used to the distance of chord moving. Next step is to practice the complete left hand part. Since all the chords are using same structure or interval, they require the same position of left hand. Once we find the location of the top note, we can easily play the correct chord.

Example 3.5, *Thumper* m5–6.



This practice method can be use in the whole prelude. The chord's progressions in this prelude are either parallel or chromatic.

### Rhythmic practicing

The rhythm in No. 3 *Thumper* is very complex. It is a challenge to learn the complicated notes and rhythm at the same time. When I practice this piece, I simplify some complex rhythmic sections. I will practice beating or clapping the rhythm first, and then learn the notes. Here is an example of what I did.

Example 3.6.1, Original score of *Thumper* m22–29.

Musical score for the first system, featuring piano and bass staves. The piano part includes dynamic markings *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, and *ff*. The instruction *(loco)* is present below the piano staff. The system concludes with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket.

Musical score for the second system, showing piano and bass staves. The piano part features eighth notes and first ending brackets. The system concludes with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket.

Musical score for the third system, including a tempo marking  $\text{♩} = \text{♩} = 120$ . The piano and bass staves feature 4:3 and 4-measure groupings. The system concludes with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket.

Musical score for the fourth system, showing piano and bass staves. The piano part features 4-measure groupings and first ending brackets. The system concludes with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket.

Example 3.6.2, Simplified score of *Thumper* m22–29

The image shows a simplified musical score for the piece 'Thumper' from measures 22 to 29. The score is written for two staves, likely representing the left and right hands. The first system (measures 22-23) is in 5/4 time, with the right hand playing a sequence of eighth notes and the left hand playing a sequence of quarter notes. The second system (measures 24-25) is in 3/4 time, with the right hand playing a sequence of eighth notes and the left hand playing a sequence of quarter notes. The third system (measures 26-27) is in 9/16 time, with the right hand playing a sequence of eighth notes and the left hand playing a sequence of quarter notes. The fourth system (measures 28-29) is in 12/16 time, with the right hand playing a sequence of eighth notes and the left hand playing a sequence of quarter notes. The score is written in a simplified, handwritten style.

### Effective Fingering

Choosing fingering is very personal in piano study because everyone has a different hand size and shape. Selecting appropriate fingering will often reduce the difficulty of a passage.

The following example is from *Filigree* measure 19 to 22. In this section both hands play in the same register; the left hand plays black keys and right hand plays white keys in parallel motion. The difficulty here is to play two hands rapidly both white notes and black notes in overlapping position. When I select the fingering here, the first thing I consider is using the same hand position for both hands because two hands are doing parallel motion in this section. It is easier for both hands to do the same thing. The example shows how I group the notes. For example, in measure 19 the fingering I choose for the right hand is changing hand position twice. The first time is on the second beat when I move the thumb to the “F”. The second time is on fourth beat when I use the last finger for the “A”. Similarly, the fingering I choose for left hand is same grouping as right hand which changes the hand position twice and in same place. Another



consideration for choosing fingering in this example is finding the most comfortable gesture to use. In measure 21, I choose fingering “432-432-4321” for left hand because the forth, third, second are the longest finger in our hands. In this extremely overlapping passage, using the longest finger will give both hands more space to play.

Example 3.7, *Filigree* m19–25

Another example for choosing fingering is from *Tarantella* measure 65–72. Here we have a series of diminished seventh chord scales in both hands in contrary motion. It repeats once before the ending of this prelude. Both of them are in *ff* dynamic range. When I choose the fingering for right hand, it is easy for me to divide four notes as a group doing “5-3-2-1” and uses second finger to play the last note. For left hand here, when I try play left hand alone, I feel getting used to play those five notes as a group doing “5-4-3-2-1, 4-3-2-1, and 4-3-2-1”. However, when two hands play together, it is not easy to use this fingering, because two hands are using different fingering grouping where they didn’t crossing the thumb at the same time. So, I decided to change left hand finger to “5-3-2-1, 5-3-2-1, 5-3-2-1, 2” which is exactly same fingering as right hand. I feel much easier after I change this fingering. Basically, in this prelude,

both hands are mainly doing the same thing in contrary motion. Using same fingering grouping for both hands makes it easier to play especially in the fast tempo.

Example 3.8, *Tarantella* m65–72.

(senza rall. al fine)

*p*

*ff*

5 3 2 1 5 3 2 1 5 3 2 1

5 3 2 1 5 3 2 1 5 3 2 1

2

*pp*

*p*

8

8<sup>va</sup>

## Conclusions

*The Anne Landa Preludes* is a set of twelve small pieces that contains many contrasting compositional techniques and musical styles. This is a recent composition and has not been often performed or been the subject of extensive research. Because of the variability and the descriptive title of each piece, it is a wonderful set to introduce both students and lecturers to Carl Vine's compositional style. This set of pieces can also help us understand how to approach Vine's larger works such as the piano sonatas.

Due to the variety of each prelude, this set can easily be programmed into any recital and provides great contrast in musical and technical aspects. Two or three of the preludes can be programmed independently. I hope this dissertation will provide a better understanding of Carl Vine's musical style as well as the challenges that may occur during the study of this set. Finally, I hope that there will be more people to perform and study Carl Vine's piano music.

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