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LERA AUERBACH’S 24 PRELUDES FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, OP. 46:  
UNITY AND MUSICAL NARRATIVE

By
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In loving memory of my teacher and mentor Beth Newdome, whose unwavering support and encouragement has enabled me to grow as a musician and a teacher.
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Lera Auerbach’s *24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, Op. 46*

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ABSTRACT

This treatise identifies elements of large-scale unity in Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, Op. 46. The prelude genre has evolved through history from its use as an introductory piece into a piece with diverse styles and forms. Largely due to the impact of Chopin’s 24 Preludes, Op. 28, composers began composing preludes as short independent character pieces that were meant to stand alone. Chopin’s was the first collection of 24 preludes that seemed to make more sense as a large-scale piece rather than 24 individual pieces. Auerbach wrote her 24 Preludes with a distinct concept of large-scale unity. This treatise explores the use of direct quotation, two half-step motives, and musical elements of narrative to show the large-scale unity in this piece.
INTRODUCTION

Lera Auerbach is on her way to becoming one of the foremost composers of the twenty-first century. At age 36, she is the youngest composer to be represented by the renowned publishing company Hans Sikorski, which has represented such composers as Sergei Prokofiev, Alfred Schnittke, and Dmitri Shostakovich. Her music has been performed in such venues as Carnegie Hall, Washington’s Kennedy Center, Chicago’s Orchestra Hall, and Munich’s Herkulessaal. She has also worked with such notable artists as the Tokyo String Quartet, violinist Gidon Kremer, cellist David Finckel, and conductor Eiji Oue.¹

Auerbach has received numerous musical honors including composer residencies at the Bremen Music Festival, the Pacific Music Festival, the Lockenhaus Music Festival in Austria, and the International Johannes Brahms Foundation in Baden-Baden.² Not only an accomplished composer, Auerbach also has a strong reputation as a virtuoso pianist and poet. She graduated from the piano soloist program of the Hannover Hochschule für Musik, has written five volumes of poetry and prose, and was named Poet-of-the-Year by the International Pushkin Society in 1996.³ Originally from Russia, she moved to the United States at age seventeen to begin studying at the Manhattan School of Music and later at The Juilliard School. Her music has been compared to many composers, including Shostakovich and Schnittke, in that the dark characters are reminiscent of much of the music of twentieth-century Russia. Her music captures the audience through its striking colors, dramatic gestures, and polystylistic techniques.

The 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, Op. 46 were written in the summer of 1999 as part of a cycle of three. She also wrote a collection for solo piano, and one for cello and piano.⁴ Though all three cycles have somewhat hidden relations to each other, the

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² Ibid.
³ Lera Auerbach, notes to 24 Preludes, 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano; T’filah; Postlude (2003), CD, BIS-1242 Stereo.
⁴ Ibid.
collections are meant to stand alone. Auerbach’s 24 Preludes is one of the only examples of a collection of 24 preludes that is not for piano alone.

Traditional uses of the prelude include the establishment of a key, introduction of another piece, and as a platform for improvisation. Chopin was one of the first composers to change the function of the prelude in his own set of Preludes Op. 28. These preludes became unified in one large-scale piece instead of 24 independent pieces. Similarly, Auerbach intended to create one large musical work through her 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, Op. 46. Auerbach writes, “The challenge was not only to write a meaningful and complete prelude that might be only a minute long, but also for this short piece to be an organic part of a larger composition with its own form.” There are currently no scholarly writings on Auerbach or her music. The only accessible information comes from her website, liner notes of her recordings, and numerous online versions of her biography or performance reviews. The purpose of this paper is to identify the elements of unity found in the 24 Preludes, and this unity is found through direct quotation, two half-step motivic units, and through a musical narrative that shows the 24 Preludes as a musical rendering of a human life.

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5 Lera Auerbach, personal interview, 2 February 2009.
7 Ibid., iv
8 Lera Auerbach, notes to 24 Preludes, 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano; T'filah; Postlude (2003), CD, BIS-1242 Stereo.
CHAPTER 1
A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PRELUDE: BEGINNING THROUGH CHOPIN

The prelude is a term originally associated with works for keyboard that were meant to introduce another piece and establish a key or mode. Throughout its development from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth century, it has served the practical purposes of giving vocalists the tonality of a piece, allowing instrumentalists to tune, calling the attention of the audience, introducing a more important piece, warming up the performer, testing the instrument to be used, setting the mood of the following piece, and serving as a teaching tool for students. Though originally improvised, it gradually grew in complexity and importance until composers were including the prelude as a written composition in their works.

The prelude began as an improvised work for keyboard; thus surviving examples are rare. Early notated preludes were for pedagogical purposes, often with a particular technical purpose, or as a collection of preludes that could be re-used to introduce any piece in that key. The earliest surviving manuscripts date back to 1448 with Adam Ileborgh’s collection of organ praeambula. They were characterized by improvisational right hand passages over simple sustained chords in the left hand, and were used in church services to establish tonality and introduce the following vocal number. Early organ preludes were also used during transitions in the liturgical service and, in secular settings, as a way of displaying skill. The virtuosic characteristics of the early prelude distinguished it from the counterpoint of the vocal numbers, and it was established as the first idiomatic genre for keyboard. Players could now exploit the technical capabilities of the instrument and a freedom of styles. In his research on early keyboard practices Apel comments, “One almost has the impression that a long-suppressed aspiration to free oneself from a foreign domination has finally emerged in an

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elementary manner.” Other sources from the same time period include *Fundamentum organisandi* (1452) by Conrad Paumann and the *Buxheimer Orgelbuch* (1470). They both show that common characteristics of early preludes included simple sustained chordal movement and florid upper passages over a slow lower line.

A common practice of sixteenth century keyboard performance assumed all players could improvise a prelude, and began to include such characteristics as sequential patterns, imitation, and antiphonal style between voices. These characteristics were found in the works of Leonhard Kleber (c. 1524), Hans Kotter (before 1535), and in the lute music of Hans Judenkunig (1523) and Hans Neusidler (1536). As the practice of preluding continued, the diversity of styles and forms within the genre expanded, giving the term a rather generic meaning. There was no set form or texture that one would hear in a prelude, only the expectation of another piece to come. The use of the written title of ‘prelude’ was not common in the late sixteenth century, but this type of piece was referred to by other titles such as *toccata*, *ricercare*, *intrada* and *intonazione*. In addition to establishing the key, these introductory pieces were used for the performer to test the instrument, warm up the fingers, allow for the tuning of instruments, call the listener to attention, and prepare the mood of the upcoming piece.

As the seventeenth century approached, there was a growth of keyboard literature. The prelude adopted such characteristics as opening imitation, dissonances, and evaded cadences. It was also associated with the beginning of instrumental dance suites. Though there were many types of these introductory pieces, two distinct forms of the prelude began to develop during the Baroque era. The North German *praeludium pedaliter* for organ is characterized by its clear sections of improvisation and fugal material, and saw its full development in the virtuosic works of Buxtehude. His lengthy preludes include elements of stylistic diversity and show the most complexity

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
and form thus far in the genre. In addition to the *praeludium pedaliter*, the unmeasured prelude that originated in France is characterized by the lack of notated rhythm and is found in works by Jacques Champion de Chambonnières, Louis Couperin, and Denis Gaultier. The development of this style of the prelude is seen in music for lute, viol and harpsichord, and probably came about from the tuning habits of the lute players. It was common for the instrumentalist to test the tuning or to warm up the fingers before playing, eventually leading to the timeless improvisation of these preludes.

In Italy, Corelli began writing preludes to introduce instrumental sonatas, as in his chamber sonatas (1685, 1694) and violin sonatas (1700). Toward the end of the seventeenth century, it seems the prelude was not only meant to be an improvised introduction that followed certain accepted formats, but it was an organized written work. With the mastery and skill of J.S. Bach came the peak of the prelude genre. The most noted collections of preludes up to this point are his two sets of 24 preludes and fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, composed in 1722 and 1744 and used primarily as pedagogical tools for learning keyboard techniques and composition. Bach took advantage of all types of styles in his preludes, and they can be divided into three groups: those that elaborate on harmonic progressions as if improvised, those that are polyphonic and fugal, and those with *cantabile* melody. The collections were also the

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18 Ibid.
first ones to highlight the new tuning system of the keyboard by including preludes and fugues in all 24 major and minor keys.\textsuperscript{21}

With the rise of sonata form in the Classical era, the popularity of the prelude began to fade. As a common component of the Baroque dance suite, the prelude was replaced by other keyboard forms, and the rise of the pianoforte overshadowed the common practices associated with the harpsichord and organ. The use of the organ began to fade because the church was no longer the main source of musical activity. In addition, the move of the Classical era away from counterpoint caused the prelude and its associated fugal partner to be unpopular.\textsuperscript{22} Church music was overtaken by secular instrumental concerts, and the rise of the amateur musician spurred a growth in keyboard music. The need for an improvised introduction was replaced with written out movements of symphonies and sonatas, though the prelude still served as introduction in church services.

Some composers wrote collections of preludes after Bach, but they were used primarily for teaching tools, and generally included simple scale and arpeggio passages in the new galant style of lightness and symmetry.\textsuperscript{23} Such compositions include those by Muzio Clementi (1811), Johann Baptist Cramer (1818), Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1827), and the more complex collection of Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1814). Other than Bach, Hummel’s Op. 67 collection of 24 preludes showed more virtuosity, harmonic complexity, thematic independence, and stylistic diversity than those collections before him. It was the only collection besides Bach to include all 24 keys. As the tradition of the prelude began to fade, Hummel’s collection was seen as an important work in the evolution of the prelude into an independent piece.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.

Though the practice of preluding continued as a form of improvisation in the nineteenth century, a growth of interest in early forms caused composers to use the prelude again as a written component in their works. Mendelssohn, Brahms and Liszt were among those who paid tribute to Bach by bringing back the traditional prelude and fugue.\(^{25}\) Chopin's 24 Preludes Op. 28, composed in 1839, changed the function and possibilities of the genre. His collection no longer served purely functional purposes as its tradition was rooted, but established the genre as an independent character piece unlike any collections that had come before him. In addition to changing the basic function of the prelude, Chopin's Op. 28 has been argued by many authors as having large-scale unity between the 24 smaller pieces.

Several aspects of Chopin's work show characteristics of its non-traditional uses. Chopin's Preludes do not serve as introduction to another piece; thus it would be difficult to take one out of its context and pair it with an arbitrary work. Ferguson comments, “Although some of his preludes are epigrammatically short, others are so large in scale and so dramatic in content that they would overshadow any alien sequel to which they might be attached. It seems likely, therefore, that they were always intended either to be played as a complete cycle or to serve as a quarry from which shorter homogeneous groups could be made up.”\(^{26}\) It was typical for preludes during this time to include many different styles, but usually the styles would be contained within one prelude, taking on monothematic characteristics.\(^{27}\) Chopin's Preludes range from monothematic to those with two and three-part forms. In addition, Chopin paid tribute to the Romantic ideals of emotion by including a wide range of styles, emotional content, and technical difficulty. Chopin's Op. 28 was not intended as a pedagogical study, but was a musical rendering of small character pieces that explored wide ranges


\(^{26}\) Ibid.

of moods. His collection became a model for composers to continue in this vein, including Heller, Alkan, Cui, Skryabin, Rachmaninof, Debussy, and Kabalevsky.

There are many examples in Chopin’s *Preludes* that show how influenced he was by Bach and the Baroque tradition. He was described by Liszt as a Bach enthusiast, and he often used the *Well-Tempered Clavier* as a reference in all aspects of his musical life.\(^28\) Included in his Op. 28 are such Baroque characteristics as chorale-style writing, chromatic descending bass lines, improvisatory elements, and recitative style.\(^29\) He also mimicked the lute writing of Bach by taking several independent lines and combining them in a polymelodic texture.\(^30\)

The aspect of large-scale unity among the preludes in Chopin’s Op. 28 has been discussed by many authors, and an overview of their theories will provide a basis for discussion on Auerbach’s collection. The earliest study of unity among the *Preludes* was in 1950 by Chopin specialist Josef Chominski. He concluded that the Chopin *Preludes* make up a large three-part form with preludes 1-12 as the first part, 13-15 as the second, and 16-24 as the last. Though there are only three preludes in the middle group, they are the longest preludes and his groupings make sense to performers and listeners because they are defined by their contrasts. Chominski also attempted to show unity through a stepwise motive that appeared throughout the *Preludes*. However, he was able to find the motive in only twelve preludes, and since stepwise motion is a common element in all music, the validity of this argument has been challenged.\(^31\)

Jean Jacques Eigeldinger acknowledged Chominski’s analysis, but he calls the three-part form “speculation” and argues that unity by a motivic cell must include all the preludes. Eigeldinger’s studies show that the Chopin *Preludes* are unified by a common motivic cell characterized by an ascending sixth which falls back onto the fifth. He goes

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 174.


on to say that the reason for this motive had to do with the temperament of Chopin’s piano and how it had been tuned.\textsuperscript{32} A more philosophical explanation of the \textit{Preludes} comes from the studies done by Anslem Gerhard. She claims that the \textit{Preludes} show harmonic instability through their deceptive movements and thus give them an indecisive quality. She views the beginnings and endings of each prelude as showing a question being posed and then answered at the end. This is consistent with a Romantic notion that every beginning of an organic existence is already related to its coming end.\textsuperscript{33}

Jeffrey Kresky argues that the overall key scheme of the \textit{Preludes} lends itself to a musical interpretation. Instead of the method used by Bach, moving up a half step in key through the preludes, Chopin uses a major key followed by its relative minor, and continues moving up a fifth with its relative minor. This choice of keys makes the move from each prelude feel more musical, as there are more common tones between each one. There are also six examples in the collection in which the last figure or note of the prelude is reincarnated into the next one’s beginning; thus the \textit{Preludes} seem to make the most sense when they are grouped together, not as isolated pieces. In addition, the \textit{Preludes} exploit a vast number of contrasting characters, similar to what one would expect to find in a large multi-movemental work. He says, “In the Chopin preludes we find the greatest care taken to assure that a piece of one stark type is followed by striking and refreshing contrast, in terms of mood, length, scope, intensity. This, then, is another piece-like aspect of the preludes.”\textsuperscript{34} Finally, in Andreas Boeckle’s dissertation, he claims that the Chopin \textit{Preludes} are unified by motion between the fifth and sixth scale degrees. This motive occurs as melody, motivic seed, alternation between major and minor sixth scale degree, motion as underlying structure, motion highlighted by marcato accents, and motion at climactic moments.\textsuperscript{35}


Though the previous authors used different methods to analyze Chopin’s collection, the common factor in their theories is that they all thought the individual pieces were a part of a larger structure, which was uncommon for these types of collections. Largely due to Chopin’s Op. 28, composers since then have written many collections of preludes that can stand alone as individual pieces that are not introductory in nature. Some composers wrote groups of 24 preludes, and some only wrote a few. Regardless if Chopin intended his work to be a unified whole, previous authors have clearly seen this as a possibility. Auerbach did approach her 24 Preludes with a clear idea of large-scale continuity, and this piece is unique in that all 24 preludes were written at the same time as part of an entire piece of music intended to be unified.
CHAPTER 2
LERA AUERBACH’S 24 PRELUDES FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, OP. 46: UNITY THROUGH DIRECT QUOTATION

A significant unifying factor in the Preludes Op. 46 is direct quotation. The following five musical figures include a triplet pattern, half-step motion downward, alternating half-step motion, a sequence of eight intervals, and a half-step lyrical melody. Though not always pitch-specific, these figures are quoted at various times in the collection in the same spirit in which they first occur. In addition, the first example shows that Prelude 24 has two clear quotations from Prelude 1, undeniably linking the beginning and ending of the entire work.

The first example of quotation is a triplet figure that occurs in the first bar of Prelude 1. The piano begins with slow but steady triplets in the right hand that continue throughout the entire Prelude, leaving a lasting impression. (see Fig. 1)

![Fig. 1 Prelude No. 1 in C major, meas. 1-4](image)

In Prelude 24, after the wild Presto at the beginning, the tempo suddenly falls into the Adagio where the triplet figure emerges in the same character as seen Prelude 1. (see Fig. 2)
Fig. 2 Prelude No. 24 in D minor, meas. 18-23

These triplets continue for the next twelve measures, giving the listener time to remember Prelude 1. In addition to the reoccurrence of the triplets in Prelude 24, the violin melody line in meas. 27-29 is exactly the same as the opening violin line in Prelude 1, but is taken up an octave. (see Fig. 1, 3)
Fig. 3 Prelude No. 24 in D minor, meas. 27-29

The second quotation begins in meas. 13 of Prelude 1 and includes a half-step motive repeated three times within two triplets. This motive continues until meas. 21 where the figure changes rhythm, but keeps the same gesture. (see Fig. 4)

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Fig. 4 Prelude No. 1 in C major, meas. 10-21 (continued on next page)
This same half-step figure appears in meas. 15 of Prelude 13 showing the same accents and rhythmic structure as the statement in meas. 21 of Prelude 1. It also occurs in the top piano voice in meas. 17-18. (see Fig. 5)

Fig. 5 Prelude No. 13 in F-sharp major, meas. 15-18

The final quote of this half-step motive occurs in the very last two bars of Prelude 24. The rhythm is different than the former examples, occurring as a quarter and half-note, but the figure is repeated three times with the same half-step motion, and the last time it is elongated as in the former examples. (see Fig. 6)

Fig. 6 Prelude No. 24 in D minor, meas. 74-77
The third quotation occurs in the heavy waltz character of Prelude 2. The chromatic figure in meas. 9-10 from F-E-D#-E-F-E is an obvious part of the melody and occurs in both the piano and the violin line. (see Fig. 7)

![Fig. 7 Prelude No. 2 in A minor, meas. 1-11](image)

In Prelude 6 a slow tango rhythm is followed by a waltz-like melody in which the violin quotes the passage from Prelude 2. Though only a measure long, this figure in meas. 48 is clearly heard as melodic material in both preludes. (see Fig. 8)
Prelude 4 and 14 are very similar in character, and they are the only two preludes with continuous perpetual motion. Both display a high level of energy with very fast passages in both the piano and violin. The fourth quotation is found in the first eight bars of Prelude 4. Each measure outlines an interval in the piano’s right hand and include a minor third, minor second, minor third, major second, major third, minor second, minor second, minor second. (see Fig. 9)
Within the wildness of Prelude 14 come the clear sounds of this same pattern, but this time in the violin line. Beginning with meas. 20, the meter changes to 6/8 as in Prelude 4 and all the intervals are the same. Because of the length of the pattern, it is easily recognized as a quote from Prelude 4. (see Fig. 10)
The last example of direct quotation first occurs in Prelude 15. The first four measures of the violin line sing a sad melody characterized by half steps and leaps. (see Fig. 11)
Fig. 11 Prelude No. 15 in C-sharp major, meas.1-4

This same melody reappears at the very end of Prelude 24. Though the harmonic movement is different than Prelude 15, the rhythmic and half step characteristics clearly relate the themes. (see Fig. 12)

Fig. 12 Prelude No. 24 in D minor, meas. 66-69

The inclusion of quoted material throughout the Preludes helps to strengthen the case for large-scale unity in the collection. The previous five musical examples show that Auerbach not only creates connections throughout the Preludes, but links the beginning and the end.
CHAPTER 3
LERA AUERBACH’S 24 PRELUDES FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, OP. 46: UNITY THROUGH TWO HALF-STEP MOTIVIC UNITS

Not only are the Preludes unified by direct quotation, but there are two half-step motivic units that pervade the entire collection. Though half-steps are common in all music, the way in which they are used in Auerbach’s Preludes give them importance. This motivic analysis will focus on half-step motion down, half-step motion up, and the combination of each of these within a prelude. The motivic units are significant because of their frequent repetition, accented qualities, and use as melodic material. Most of the Preludes include a combination of both of the units, many times in a struggle against each other. The following analysis will follow the Preludes from 1 to 24 to show the use of these motivic units.

Prelude 1 is in ABA form with the aggressive middle section being framed by the calm of the A sections. It is within this middle section that the listener is first exposed to the two motivic units and their relationship to each other. After a calm landing of the violin on the high G in meas. 12 comes the abrupt dissonant half-step unit in the violin. This half-step motion downward is followed in meas. 15 with its opponent half-step motion upward. Again in meas. 17 the upward motion is repeated, only to be followed three bars later with three immediate statements of the downward motion in the più agitato, as if emphasizing its domination. (see Fig. 13)

Fig. 13 Prelude No. 1 in C major, meas. 10-21 (continued on next page)
Prelude 2 alternates between a burdened *pesante* waltz, and a sad innocent theme in A minor. The theme associated with the waltz begins with the violin in meas. 5 and includes half-step motion from E to F. In meas. 9 the upward half-step motion is framed by two half-step units downward as seen in the violin and piano part. At the end of this phrase in meas. 12, the upward motion is seen again from B to C, and is repeated twice by the piano line in meas. 16-17. The contrasting theme begins in meas. 18 and repeats the half step unit downward from A to G-sharp three times from meas. 18-23. It seems that the first theme was dominated by the upward movement, and the second one by the downward. An interesting combination happens in meas. 32 when the two themes are played at the same time, as if in quiet competition. (see Fig. 14)
Fig. 14 Prelude No. 2 in A minor, meas. 1-23 (continued on next page)
Prelude 3 and 4 make the most sense when grouped together. The simple melody of Prelude 3 is interrupted with jarring chords that are soon followed by Prelude 4’s frightened reaction to those chords. The frantic energy of Prelude 4 continues to quickly build, when in meas. 25 the piano suddenly stops the constant 16th notes and lands decisively on three chords. These chords punctuate the violin line as it repeats a sequence of three 16th-note patterns. This is the most consistent pattern to have emerged in Prelude 4, and it draws the listener to hear it as an arrival point. As seen in meas. 25-26, the accented notes of E in the violin are followed by D-sharp, a half-step below it. From meas. 28-35, the half-step unit in the violin line indecisively alternates between F to E as the downward half-step, and D-sharp to E as the upward half-step. The piano also uses the D-sharp to E interval in meas. 32-35. (see Fig. 15)
Prelude 5 begins with long flourishing scales in the piano over a steady pulsing octave in the left hand. Other than these scales, the most interesting pattern occurs with the sextuplets in meas. 8-9 and again toward the end. The accented notes move from F to E, showing the structure of the downward half-step motive. (see Fig. 16) There is also additional use of the half-step motion at the end of the Prelude. Until meas. 48, the piano’s left hand has been playing D octaves throughout the Prelude. In meas. 48, the top voice of the octave moves to E-flat for two bars, showing the half-step motion upward. In meas. 50, the top voice moves to B-flat for one bar and A for two bars, showing the half-step motion downward. Again in meas. 55 the B-flat is played for one bar, and then resolves to A for the ending chords. (see Fig. 17)
Fig. 16 Prelude No. 5 in D major, meas. 6-11

Fig. 17 Prelude No. 5 in D major, meas. 47-59
Prelude 6 begins with a lopsided passage characterized by mixed meter and impulsive leaps. As it settles into the contrasting middle section, a soft tango begins in the Andante of meas. 23. As the tune begins in meas. 25, it is clear to see the influence of the half-step motive upward as seen in the F-double sharp to G-sharp. The piano takes over the tune in m. 28 and continues the motive with the G-sharp to A. As the tango becomes a waltz in meas. 30, the piano continues the half-step motive with G-sharp to A but this time it is immediately followed by a drop downward from B-flat to A, the first sign of a threat. It seems clear that these melodies are characterized by the half-step motion upward. (see Fig. 18)

![Fig. 18 Prelude No. 6 in B minor, meas. 25-34](image)

Continuing in Prelude 6, in meas. 46 the clear signs of the half-step motive downward are seen in the violin part from F-sharp to F and also in meas. 48-49 from A-flat to G.
As the volume increases, the downward unit persists with F-sharp to F in meas. 51-53 until it storms into the *più mosso* at meas. 54. This new theme in the piano begins with F-sharp to F, and is used throughout the middle section to show the strong character of the downward motion. The entire middle section of Prelude 6 is composed of two ideas. The first one uses half-step motion upward to sing its simple and calm melodies while the second one is an angry response that emphasizes the half-step downward motion. (see Fig. 19)

![Figure 19: Prelude No. 6 in B minor, meas. 46-56](image)

In Prelude 7, the notes in meas. 1 of the violin stay the same throughout the entire Prelude. This consistent gesture is made up of both half-step units. Though spaced over an octave, the quick movement from A to B-flat shows a half-step motion upward. Each 32nd-note pair lands on a longer dotted eighth note that outlines the movement downward from A to G-sharp. The very end of the Prelude in meas. 11-12 shows the only time the violin’s movement from A to B-flat is not paired with the other notes in meas. 1. (see Fig. 20, 21) It is also interesting that this upward movement from
A to B-flat at the end is repeated three times in succession, the same number of times the downward movement was first shown in Prelude 1. (see Fig. 4 p. 11)

![Allegro moderato](image)

Fig. 20 Prelude No. 7 in A major, meas. 1-2

![Fig. 21 Prelude No. 7 in A major, meas. 9-12](image)

In Prelude 10 the violin begins in meas. 2 with a series of triplets that accent the notes A and G-sharp in meas. 3. At the same time that this half-step downward motion happens in the violin, the piano has a quick half-step upward movement at the end of meas. 2 from B-B#-C#. This same motion happens again in meas. 4-5. It seems that
these two ideas continue to be at odds with one another throughout the Prelude. (see Fig. 22) Starting in meas. 14, the triplets begin their half-step pattern, the piano plays the lyrical melody from meas. 16-19, and the triplets overtake again as they rise higher in pitch and in volume. (see Fig. 23)

Fig. 22 Prelude No. 10 in C-sharp minor meas. 1-6
Fig. 23 Prelude No. 10 in C-sharp minor meas. 12-24
In Prelude 12 the violin line begins with a succession of quick turns that gradually rise in pitch. Through the entire prelude, the violin continues to rise until it finally arrives at the end in the highest register of the violin. A closer look at the turns shows that the second note of each 32\textsuperscript{nd}-note pair is a half-step higher than the long note associated with it. For example, in meas. 1-2, the turns include a C-sharp to C, E-flat to D, F to E, A-flat to G and B to B-flat. This same figure occurs 18 times throughout the prelude, and is an important component. The half-step downward figure shows itself most clearly in meas. 3-5 as it tries to pull the upward movement back down. (see Fig. 24)

Fig. 24 Prelude No. 12 in G-sharp minor, meas. 1-5

Prelude 13 opens with a recitative-like section for violin in which the half-step units are presented. In the third measure of the example, the two movements from C-sharp to D frame the A-sharp to A. When the piano enters with the pesante chords, the violin plays G to F-sharp as if recalling the pesante character of the first appearance of this downward gesture in Prelude 1. (see Fig. 25)
Fig. 25 Prelude No. 13 in F-sharp major

Prelude 14 begins with the same frantic character as Prelude 4. At the very end of Prelude 14 a pattern emerges that gives importance to the half-step motives. Through meas. 42-43 there are a series of accented notes that highlight the movement from Eb-D-Db-D in the violin line. (see Fig. 26)

Fig. 26 Prelude No. 14 in E-flat minor, meas. 42-43
While Prelude 15 most obviously highlights the half-step movement downward, as seen in its frequent use in the melody line (see Fig. 11, p. 16), there is a short passage in the right hand of the piano in meas. 9 that shows alternating half-steps using the notes E#-E-D#-E-E#-E-D#-E. This pattern emerges out of the light texture of the Prelude as a reminder of the continual dialogue between these two units. (see Fig. 27)

Fig. 27 Prelude No. 15 in C-sharp major, meas. 9-12

Prelude 16 is one of the most interesting preludes in the collection. It has no time signature and is primarily composed of quarter notes, with an occasional half note. There is no obvious melodic line or predictability about the intervals that are used, only the terrifying plodding of the quarter notes played sul ponticello. There is one section of 14 notes that always returns to E-flat every other note, a pattern that is not seen anywhere else in the Prelude. The notes that occur between the E-flats are descending half-steps. At the beginning of the following example, the notes between the E-flat’s are G-flat to F, B-flat to A, and G-flat to F. In addition, the last eight notes before the final fermata show a series of half-steps. The first half-step is downward from C-flat to B-flat and then the following three are a half-step upwards from D-flat to D, E-flat to E, and G-flat to G. (see Fig. 28)
After the manic opening of Prelude 17 comes an extended passage of large chords in the piano part moving in parallel motion. Each tone of the chord moves in half-step motion in the same way. Though the passage alternates between the half-step motion up and down, it seems the downward motion is most prevalent. In meas. 9 at the end of the first part of the phrase, the half notes stress the movement from the B-double flat to A-flat. After a pause in meas. 13, the next few measures emphasize the movement from the B-flat and B-double flat quarter notes to the A-flat half notes. In addition, these last statements of the half-step movement downward happen three times as if to stress their importance and refer to the opening unit in Prelude 1. (see Fig. 29)
Fig. 29 Prelude No. 17 in A-flat major, meas. 7-17

Prelude 18 is one of the longer ones, and shows its Romantic characters through its consonant harmonies, large textures, and passionate melody. The opening gesture is labeled *molto espressivo* and lingers by way of the *fermata* on the half-step movement from C to B. This downward figure shows its prominence by occurring five more times in the Prelude, often marked with a *fermata*. (see Fig. 30) By contrast, there is a passage in the piano that uses this same figure three times but moves up a half-step instead of down. In meas. 57 the figure is played in the top piano line with motion from the last eighth note of D-flat to the half note of D instead of the expected C. Again
in meas. 59 the piano moves from D to E-flat and in meas. 60 from C-sharp to D. (see Fig. 31)

Fig. 30 Prelude No. 18 in F minor, meas. 1-3

Fig. 31 Prelude No. 18 in F minor, meas. 57-60

In Prelude 19, the first statement in meas. 4 of the violin line descends a minor ninth from a B-flat to an A instead of ascending a minor second, and presents itself as melodic content throughout the Prelude. (see Fig. 32) This falling gesture happens five times with half-step motion downward, and another four times with half-step motion upward. Upward motion is shown in meas. 19-20 from the B-natural to C and the F-sharp to G in the violin line. (see Fig. 33)
Similar to Prelude 13, Prelude 21 begins with a recitative section for the violin, yet the *Andante misterioso* gives it a much different character than the *Allegro* of Prelude 13. From the beginning, the violin tosses around both half-step figures as seen in meas. 1-2 from the B-flat to A, and meas. 5-6 between the D, D-sharp and C-sharp. This same up and down motion is seen throughout the rest of the Prelude, giving it an indecisive and unsure character. (see Fig. 34)
Prelude 22 is a four-voice fugue. The fourth bar of the subject moves down from D to D-flat in meas. 3-4, but the next two entrances of the subject go up a half-step at that same point, as seen in meas. 6-7 from D to E-flat and meas. 9-10 from A to B-flat. The final entrance of the subject begins in meas. 10 and moves downward to C-sharp in meas. 13 like the first entrance, continuing the dialogue between the half-step motivic units throughout the Preludes. In addition, the pesante figure in meas. 14 of the violin part repeats the downward unit from C-sharp to B-sharp in the top voice while the bottom voice moves from D to C-sharp to D. (see Fig. 35)
Fig. 35 Prelude No. 22 in G minor, meas. 1-18
From the beginning *Presto* of Prelude 24 comes the accented motion of the downward half-step unit. In meas. 2 the clearly accented C-sharp moves to the C, followed by the B-flat to A in meas. 3. (see Fig. 36) At the end of the Prelude in meas. 66-71 there is clear reference to Prelude 15 in the half-step motion downward. The final statement of the upward motion happens in meas. 72 as the piano’s right hand indecisively rocks up and down three times from E-D♯-E while the left hand continues to repeat the A to G-sharp motion. As if in summary of the entire collection, the last two measures of Prelude 24 somberly echo three times the domination of the downward half-step motion as if confirming a prediction made in Prelude 1. (see Fig. 37)

![Fig. 36 Prelude No. 24 in D minor, meas. 1-5](image-url)
Throughout the *Preludes* the combination of these two half-step motives is evident. From its beginning downward assertiveness in Prelude 1 to its ending in Prelude 24, the struggle between the upward and downward motion is apparent. The motives show their significance in their frequent appearance, use as melodic material, and the way in which they are highlighted through accents.
CHAPTER 4
THE ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUE OF MUSICAL NARRATIVE

The use of narrative to analyze music is a controversial subject that has been discussed by many authors over the past two decades. This rather young debate is rooted in the more weathered question of musical meaning, which covers viewpoints across the spectrum. The model by Eduard Hanslick suggests meaning in music is fully contained in the music itself, the model by Theodor Adorno claims that musical meaning is a social construct, and another model by Martina Viljoen says musical meaning is a combination of them both. Indeed, the vast amount of literature covering these theories and other topics of musical meaning goes far beyond the scope of this paper. Musical narrative has been defined in many different ways by critics and authors, and is often grouped with programmatic music. It has its appeal in our human desire to express things in a way we can identify with and to tell stories about our experiences. The following discussion will show the general points of controversy regarding the idea of musical narrative, and will establish the parameters upon which this paper will apply the concept to the analysis of Auerbach’s work.

Narrative is a broad term that carries with it the subjectivity that warrants its opposition. Though programmatic works can be included under the umbrella of narrative, these types of pieces are usually accompanied by a specific program that the music is meant to describe. Narrative is a way of looking at music, regardless of the composer’s revelation of a program, in a way that shows concepts of narrative as they relate to the musical activity. It intends to express emotional states instead of specific events. In Michael Klein’s article on Chopin’s Fourth Ballade, he states his narrative objective: “Instead of mapping a particular story of actors and actions onto the music, I shall describe expressive states evoked by this music and the ways that their

unfolding implies a narrative.”\(^{38}\) The vast number of variables in a given musical work, variables which have different meanings and associations to each listener, ensure different interpretations of a work. Narrative simply attempts to convince a listener of its validity, not of its correctness.\(^{39}\) In Almen’s words, “The primary task of a narrative analysis is to correlate the details of musical activity with a temporal model that describes how the primary conflicting elements influence each other.”\(^{40}\)

The concept of narrative quite clearly comes from, and is thus compared to, its literary counterpart. Most of the objections to using narrative in musical analysis stem from music’s inability to function in the same way as literature does. In addition, many debates on the issue come from the wide variety of definitions ascribed to the term “narrative.” The problem with comparing music to literature is that inevitably the comparison will break down, giving individual merit to the unique functions of the two that are not and should not be similar. The question should not be “How is music like literature?”, but rather “How can music use narrative principles?”\(^{41}\)

For the present discussion, the focus will be on musical narrative’s association with literature, as this association is central to many of the debates around musical narrative. Jean-Jacques Nattiez is a respected author on this topic and brings up three points of debate that challenge musical narrative as a valid analytical technique. Since these points are often re-emphasized by other authors, a short explanation of each of them will be followed by a counterargument as seen in the article by Almen. The first point by Nattiez claims music must be accompanied by a text or a program if it is to be listened to in a narrative way. When reading a piece of literature, the words clearly tell the listener what is going on in the story. In listening to music, the listener might be aware of certain images and emotions the music brings up, as in Dukas’ *L’apprenti sorcier*, but will not associate them with this story unless they see the title or are told to listen in that way.\(^{42}\) Second, there is no consistent process in which musical facts or


\(^{40}\) Ibid., 20.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 3.

events are organized. A story is created not by the facts or the events, but by placing of these events into an order that relays the action. The verbal cues of a narrator in literature communicate the actions. Musical events without organization merely conjure up certain impressions or emotions, not narrative. In short, this kind of sporadic listening is more an indicator not of the narrative in the music, but the one imagined by the listener. Finally, music has no narrator and thus cannot be narrated. Carolyn Abbate, a significant author on narrative, echoes this point when she suggests, “Perhaps musical works have no ability to narrate in the most basic literary sense; that is, to posit a narrating survivor of the tale who speaks of it in the past tense. But this incapability cannot be said to impoverish music; rather it lends music a terrible force to move us by catching us in played-out time. When music ends, it ends absolutely, in the cessation of passing time and movement, in death.” In this regard, it seems music would be better suited to a comparison with drama rather than literature, an idea echoed in Klein’s article when he cites Edward Cone’s concept that the expressive states of musical characters seem to speak for themselves, acting without a narrator.

Almen’s article offers a stimulating discussion in reply to the previous points of debate. First, concerning the issue of textual or programmatic aids in listening, Almen argues that there are more ways than one to conjure up a narrative listening strategy. Not only do words and programs offer a guide to listening, but the music itself gives cues to a listener. He comments, “The crucial point, however, is that an awareness of musical style, genre, and syntax is the primary way that a listener orients him/herself within a piece. While a text or title may add greater semantic specificity, they are not responsible for most of what leads to the choice of a listening strategy.” For example, if a listener is familiar with sonata form, a deviation from key regions or other such events can cause a listening strategy of “a problem being solved” to occur. In addition, employment of certain musical styles such as operatic or nationalistic gestures can

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43 Ibid., 244-246.
44 Ibid., 249.
awaken a listening strategy, as can general musical movement from fast to slow and
soft to loud.48

The second point of debate concerns the organization of events in a musical
piece and the claim by Nattiez that this organization is imperative in order for narration
to occur. Almen is a bit more skeptical about this when he points out that in literature,
are we so certain the narrator is reliable? There are literary works in which the purpose
is to lead the reader astray by leaving out important information, only to be surprised in
the end. Thus, the true narration happens in the mind of the reader, whether he
chooses to believe the narrator or not.49 Nattiez believes in the merits of even the
deceptive narrator who organizes material, and Almen believes the absence of this
narrator will not effect how the listener chooses to organize the story.

The final argument deals with the absence of a narrator in music, and is best
explained through the idea in Almen’s article that was previously discussed by Gerard
Genette. When a narrator is summarizing events, the listener is aware of the narrator,
but when the summary moves to a scene, the listener puts the narrator in the
background and draws information from the action. In this case, if a narrator is
presented for a very short time, and the majority of the work is made of scenes, was the
narrator really necessary? This brings up the previous thought of the similarities
between music and drama as opposed to music and literature. Almen says, “I believe
that at a definitional level, music, drama, and literature can unfold a narrative, but that
they differ with respect to its character and its concrete manifestation.”50

The previous points concerning musical narrative are commonly debated, but
offer only a glimpse of the literature dedicated to this topic. Ultimately, the intent of
using narrative to describe music is a way of mediating between the raw elements of
music theory and the undeniable connection that music has to human emotion. The
previous arguments that deny music’s capability of narration make valuable points, but
Klein helps give clarity to the subject by re-emphasizing that the point of narrative is not
to claim certain characters and actions as in literature, but to “signify expressive states

48 Byron Almen, “Narrative Archetypes: A Critique, Theory, and Method of Narrative Analysis,” Journal of
49 Ibid., 7.
50 Ibid., 8-9.
whose arrangement follows a narrative logic.” By using the term “narrative”, the comparison to literature is expected, but since music’s basic properties are different than literature, this comparison fails to show how a narrative approach can be used in music. Music does not have an inherent narrative, but it evokes images and associations that cause the listener to narrate the work. These images and associations are backed up by convincing musical activity. The aim of narrative is not to box the music into a prescribed form, but to suggest one of many ways in which the music can be interpreted. Validating a narrative approach can be difficult, but as Kraus comments: “Emotional expression in music has often been viewed as completely subjective or trivial in the serious theoretical literature of the past few decades, but recent scholarship points toward a rehabilitation of this oft-maligned concept. Addressing the problem of intersubjectivity, Peter Kivy claims that emotive descriptions can be objective, provided that they are not overly specific.”

The following analysis of Auerbach’s 24 Preludes is based foremost on a suggestion by the composer of the intent and inspiration of her work. Though she did not prescribe a specific program onto the music, she gave a broad framework in which the music can be interpreted. The style of her musical language is especially appropriate for narrative, and her own description of her music shows its human representations. Instead of identifying certain characters, scenes, and actions throughout the piece, a closer look at the Preludes will show how the idea of struggle can be seen throughout the work, and how that idea might reflect the human life.

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CHAPTER 5
MUSICAL NARRATIVE: PRELUDES AS A HUMAN LIFE

The following view of Auerbach’s 24 Preludes does not attempt to liken its narration to a piece of literature, nor does it ascribe specific actions onto the music. It attempts to connect certain musical elements throughout the Preludes with aspects of the human experience. Auerbach, like many other composers, does not claim one specific interpretation of her music, but desires each listener to create their own. Any reference to preconceived ideas comes from her own inspiration, and is one of many ways to look at the music. Interpreting her 24 Preludes is “a matter of how you see them, and it will work different ways.” As mentioned in the first section of this paper, collections of preludes are often short pieces that each explore a different key area and whose form has no prescribed model. Collections of preludes are still used by many composers, and the lack of formal expectation gives room for a variety of analytical approaches. Using musical narrative to examine this collection is one of many ways to explain how the music works. In addition, Auerbach’s strong interest in poetry is shown in the dramatic and story-telling nature of her music, and in the personal descriptions of her music.

One of the ways in which Auerbach views the Preludes is in thinking of them as “different memories which together form human life.” One aspect that reflects this thought is found in Prelude 24. She quotes, “If you follow these few measures (meas. 66-72) in the last Prelude there are all 24 tonalities. If you think of life, the last Prelude is in D minor, the key of requiem which carries the history of death. Some say that when one dies there is an image of the whole life condensed, that you see all the memories of your life at one time. This is the 24 keys all at once.” (see Fig. 38)

54 Lera Auerbach, personal interview, 2 February 2009.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
It is clear that Auerbach includes musical imagery in order to paint a picture of death, and one might draw another conclusion in relation to the half-step motion mentioned in chapter three. At the very end of this “death” Prelude are the last three statements of the half-step downward motion. The threatening first statement of the same half-step motion in Prelude 1 can be seen as a foreshadowing of what will come, and is echoed appropriately in these last two measures of Prelude 24 as death quietly claims its victory. (see Fig. 4, p. 11 and Fig. 37) Another interesting aspect is that the key of Prelude 24 is D minor, but the notes of the last downward motive are G to F-sharp. Since F-sharp is not in the key of D minor, this picardy third motion gives a bit of
hope to the ending sadness, as if to say that death is just the beginning of a new life. In addition, F-sharp is a leading tone to G which is the major tonal center of Prelude 1, even though its key is C major. Therefore, the lingering F-sharp at the end of Prelude 24 leads straight back to the beginning of Prelude 1 and completes the unified circle of the Preludes. (see Fig. 37 and Fig. 1, p. 9)

Based on Auerbach’s explanation of Prelude 24 as death, her concept of the entire collection as a human life, and the vivid imagery of her musical writing, one is engaged to look more closely in search of musical references to this larger concept. After a short time of hearing the music, a listener would certainly label the work as one filled with darkness and struggle. This emotion within the music is accomplished through the use of elements such as: unexpected dissonance, frantic phrase structure, simple melodies with abrupt interruptions in character, jarring dynamic contrasts, and incomplete endings. The style of her writing reflects how Fred Maus views the beginning of the Beethoven Op. 95 quartet. He says: “It would be natural to call the quartet a conspicuously dramatic composition, and the analysis (one using anthropomorphized description) makes the sense of drama concrete by narrating a succession of dramatic actions.” If the idea of Prelude 24 is death, and the rest of the collection is meant to show a human life, this use of struggle within the Preludes can be seen to depict the struggle between life and death. According to Auerbach, analyzing the Preludes is a matter of how the individual sees the work. “There are a lot of inner divisions, and that was part of my intent because numbers are important to me. There is a lot of hidden material in the work that doesn’t need to be obvious or heard, but it is still there. Some of the material has to do with symbolism.” Though Auerbach did not continue to expound on this symbolism, the conflicting half-step motion throughout the piece, and the following two conflicting musical ideas can be seen to strengthen the narration of struggle in the human life.

Taking a closer look at the Preludes, the struggle between life and death can be seen through two conflicting musical ideas throughout the collection. These are

58 Lera Auerbach, personal interview, 2 February 2009.
significant to Auerbach because “they present two different sonorities.” The first idea is characterized by its steadiness, persistence, and frequent repetition. It is similar to the steady passing of time, and becomes important as the entire collection moves toward the climax of Prelude 16. This high point of the work is the moment the music becomes timeless and outside the influence of this first musical idea. Auerbach comments:

In terms of the climax of the work, you can look at Preludes 14-16. The three together represent a different type of climax. Prelude 14 is the usual climax of big, fast and dark elements. It announces 'here I am' and then falls right into Prelude 15. Since you aren’t supposed to lift the piano pedal as you begin Prelude 15, it comes from the cluster of the previous Prelude. Because of all the overtones of the piano, this becomes a complete shadow of what it could be and it is very unreal, like a memory or something lost and forgotten that is without gravity. Prelude 16 is to me the real climax and golden section because it’s really standing outside of time. A lot of the Preludes deal with time and this one is timeless, spaceless and outside of this life. It is very terrifying because of just the quarter notes. It is in darkness and doesn’t know where the turns are, as if something terrible has happened and all your orientation is lost.60

Auerbach’s description of the climax shows how she identifies with this piece in a dramatic and human way, and helps justify using a narrative approach to her music. In addition, since the highest point of the work is the moment in which time is lost, the otherwise consistent musical idea of steadiness and persistence is seen as a subtle yet important element of unity throughout the work.

In contrast to the idea of persistence of time, a very unsteady second idea shows characteristics of unpredictable rhythmic movement and tonal ambiguity through elements such as: sporadic outbursts of incomplete phrases, chromatic wandering, and asymmetrical rhythmic groupings. Its clear contrast to the first musical idea can be

59 Lera Auerbach, personal interview, 2 February 2009.
60 Ibid.
seen to represent resistance of and frustration toward the relentless passage of time. Most of the following examples show these two ideas juxtaposed together in the music, and some show their inclusion at separate times within a prelude.

Prelude 1 begins with a steady pattern of triplets that might be seen to represent the heartbeat of a life. An important point to make about using this kind of imagery is that even if a listener cannot be persuaded that this is a heartbeat figure, the music suggests a steady pattern that is like a heartbeat. The point is not about the elements used to describe the music, but the function of the action, as made clear by Almen when he says, “It is the determination of function, independent of reference, that organizes narrative.”61 This heartbeat continues throughout the entire Prelude at the same dynamic level, regardless of the activity above it, as if to show that nothing can stop or frustrate the consistent passage of time. The open harmony of C and G leave a musical feeling of purity, innocence, and a blank page. In complete contrast, the violin enters with a melodic line that is unpredictable in pitch and tonally inferior to the key of C major. For the next ten measures, the notes wander around in some sort of chromatic fashion as if lost, and the rhythms move in equal ambiguity. (see Fig. 39)

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Fig. 39 Prelude No. 1 in C major, meas. 1-9

The piano part that begins Prelude 2 is bold, relentless, and in keeping with the steady beat of the waltz. The melody line in the violin part is unpredictable and impulsive. From meas. 7-13, the violin line and the top piano voice pass along gestures at random. In meas. 22, the melody begins in the violin, only to be interrupted by its own screams of the glissandos and continues its insanity until the end. (see Fig. 40, 41)
Fig. 40 Prelude No. 2 in A minor, meas. 1-11

Fig. 41 Prelude No. 2 in A minor, meas. 18-45 (continued on next page)
Prelude 3 and 4 make the most sense when grouped together. Prelude 3 is a simple melody with accompaniment that calls for *sul ponticello* in the violin, giving the simple melody a fearful quality, as if the innocence of the melody is already been tainted with death. (see Fig. 42) The melody begins to hesitate as if it is waiting in fright for some hidden attack. Suddenly a passage with loud and steady dissonant chords takes over for four bars. Prelude 4 is the frightened reaction to the end of the previous
Prelude as it frantically takes off with its energetic 16th notes. (see Fig. 43) The steadiness of the melody in Prelude 3 is then contrasted with the chaos of Prelude 4.

Fig. 42 Prelude No. 3 in G major, meas. 1-3

Fig. 43 Prelude No. 4 in E minor, meas. 1-4

Prelude 5 begins with steady marcato octaves in the piano part under rapid scales in the right hand. Throughout the Prelude, the scales in the right hand are indecisive by
occurring in the keys of D, B-flat, E and G minor. They also occur in groups of 28 which do not divide into three as the time signature indicates. (see Fig. 44)

![Fig. 44 Prelude No. 5 in D Major, mm. 1-5](image)

Prelude 6 is one of the longer preludes and is in ABA form. The A section is characterized by mixed meter, random accents, and a general feeling of chaos between both the piano and violin part. (see Fig. 45) In contrast, the middle section is a combination of a tango and a waltz and maintains the steady dance pulse. (see Fig. 18, p. 23)
In the short twelve measures that make up Prelude 7, the piano part is comprised of various chord changes. These chords are much more stable than the violin part above. Though the notes of the violin part stay the same, the occurrences are fragmented and unpredictable. (see Fig. 46)
Similar to Prelude 5, Prelude 10 has a consistent steady pulse in the left hand of the piano. The two upper voices include passages of triplets, sixteenth notes, a legato melody, and combinations of all these. (see Fig. 23, p. 26) Toward the end of the Prelude, the two upper voices begin dying away, showing fragments of previous material while the left hand keeps the steady pulse. (see Fig. 47)
Prelude 11 begins as a fugue. As the subject is being passed to the different voices, the pulse remains steady until the very end, the subject abruptly stops in meas. 28. The piano continues a slight pulse but eventually lands on a sustained chord until the end. The violin line proceeds to play a *glissando* figure three times before the end, a gesture that not only is completely out of character in this Prelude, but one that seems to mimic crying. (see Fig. 48)
Prelude 12 begins with heavy chords in the piano part and eventually these chords give way to a *pesante* broken-chord figure. As excitement builds, this *pesante* figure changes into a persistent quarter note pulse until the end of the Prelude. Above this steadiness is a climbing figure in the violin line that is highly chromatic and rhythmically impulsive. (see Fig. 49)
Fig. 49 Prelude No. 12 in G-sharp minor, meas. 15-22
Prelude 13 is roughly twenty measures long and is primarily an unmeasured violin recitative. The only steady four measures appear when the piano enters at the *pesante* section in 3/4, which is also the statement of the downward half-step figure that seems to represent death. (see Fig. 50)

![Fig. 50 Prelude No. 13 in F-sharp major](image)

Prelude 14 is a frantic prelude including syncopated accents and fast sixteenth note passages. The last three chords give a strong sense of finality, except for the directions in the score to hold the pedal down through the next Prelude. Prelude 15 is meant to be played in the wake of the final chords of Prelude 14, as if these two Preludes were one. (see Fig. 51) Prelude 15 sings a very sad melody and its predictable phrase structure and steady accompaniment set it apart from its predecessor. (see Fig. 11, p. 16)
Prelude 17 begins with a very impulsive and scattered dialogue between the piano and violin. After coming to rest in meas. 7, a series of steady chords marked mortale (mortal or deadly) take over. (see Fig. 52)
The most obvious passage in Prelude 18 that shows the contrast of the two characters happens toward the middle of the Prelude in meas. 25. The heavy fortissimo
chords in the piano are reminiscent of the absolute and demanding nature of death, and these chords have appeared throughout the *Preludes*. As the chords begin, the violin plays a very dramatic melody that is characterized by desperation and pleading. (see Fig. 53)

![Fig. 53 Prelude No. 18 in F minor, meas. 25-30](image)

Again in Prelude 20, the tragic chords continue to plod along as the sporadic violin line jumps around above the chords. (see Fig. 54)
After the opening violin recitative of Prelude 21, the piano enters religiously in meas. 9. The bottom left hand figure begins a steady quarter note pulse that will continue until the end. Above this pulse the upper two voices continue to climb in register with rhythmic and harmonic ambiguity (see Fig. 55), similar to the movement seen in Prelude 12.
As mentioned in Chapter 2, Prelude 24 contains many quotations from the rest of the Preludes, and most obviously replays material from Prelude 1 that shows the contrast between the steady triplets and the chromatic violin line. (see. Fig. 3)
Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano is a dramatic collection of powerful dialogue that seeks to communicate its unity through the idea of struggle and time. The musical narrative of the Preludes as a human life is shown through Auerbach’s description of the work, and through the musical language. This language is evident between a combination of figures that show their steadiness and persistence, and those that are unpredictable and sporadic.
CONCLUSION

From its traditional purpose as an improvised introductory piece for keyboard, the prelude genre has evolved into a self-contained form that can include many different styles of music. As a way of establishing a key for the following piece, preludes were short in length and varied in key. Preludes were written out as pedagogical tools, but as the genre became more common, composers began to write preludes as a specific part of a piece, not just an improvised introduction. Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* was the first collection of preludes that explored each key area, and showed such a diversity of styles within the collection. Chopin’s *Preludes, Op. 28* was significant in that it lacked traditional form and purpose. His preludes were not meant to be introductions, but short character pieces that could not easily be paired with other works. Due to the wide range of difficulty, it seems they were not meant to be pedagogical tools. His collection opened the door for many other composers to experiment with the prelude as an independent form. In addition, the possibility that Chopin’s collection forms a large-scale piece is an important precursor to Auerbach’s own *24 Preludes*.

Auerbach approached her *24 Preludes* as a large-scale work. In addition to the use of direct quotation throughout the collection, Auerbach’s work shows the use of two half-step motivic units that are used to unify the piece. These half-step units have an indecisive character about them and are often in struggle with each other. Auerbach’s *Preludes* are also unified by a comparison to human life, which is shown through the view of Prelude 24 as death, and through the use of struggle as seen in the contrasting ideas of persistence and unsteadiness in the *Preludes*. Through the combination of innocent melodies, jarring dissonances, chaotic spurts, and moments of hope and despair, the music communicates the journey of life and the ultimate reality of death’s victory.


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kimberly Hain holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Cedarville University in Cedarville, OH, and her Master's Degree in Violin Performance from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO. In 2010 she will complete her Doctorate in Violin Performance from the Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL, and will also complete a second Master's in Chamber Music from Kent State University in May 2011.

Kimberly has performed in many ensembles including the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra, the Fort Collins Symphony, Cheyenne Symphony, Pensacola Symphony, and the Tallahassee Symphony. In addition, she has served as concertmaster of the Cedarville University Orchestra and the University of Northern Colorado Symphony Orchestra. She performed with the Eppes String Quartet at Florida State University as the second violinist, and she is currently playing second violin in the Aidan String Quartet in Kent, Ohio.

Her teaching experiences include serving two summers as faculty at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Michigan, teaching undergraduate lessons as a graduate assistant in Florida and Colorado, building a private studio of all ages, teaching elementary strings programs in Florida, and serving as the violin coach of the Tallahassee Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Her major teachers have included Stacey Woolley, Richard Fuchs, Beth Newdome, and Cathy Robinson.