

ABSTRACT

MEMORY FOR MUSICIANS AND ALZHEIMER'S PATIENTS

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There have been many studies on how music can affect memory, especially in the context of memory care patients, as well as how musicians understand the concept of memory. The first chapter of this thesis discusses how musicians perceive memory, such as memorization strategies they use when learning music. The second chapter focuses on how memory care patients relate to music. It places an emphasis on discovering what types of music elicit the most response and possible reasoning behind the relation of the specific genres to their memories, specifically when related to memories from childhood. The final chapter looks at four specific examples of a composer using memory-like concepts in Grieg's *Lyrical Pieces*. It details how certain phrases within the pieces relate to remembering the past as well as remembering back to other phrases or melodic ideas in the pieces.

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CHAPTER ONE

Memory for Musicians

For musicians, especially pianists, memory is a necessary but sometimes difficult aspect of performing. The standard practice has traditionally been to play from memory, but, more than that, not relying on a score allows the musician more freedom in their musicianship. They are able to listen better and notice more nuanced details in their playing when not focused on reading from the page in front of them. Because of this, memorizing music is a normal part of life for musicians. There are many different strategies musicians use for memorizing pieces as well as many unconscious ways the brain works in their favor; however, there are also basic principles and ways of memorizing that are employed by almost all musicians.

There are four ways most musicians consciously memorize music: kinesthetic memory, visual memory, auditory memory, and analytical memory¹. Kinesthetic memory is the one most easily accessible. It comes from continually playing a piece or drilling certain parts of it to where the hands instinctively know what notes to play next and how to move to those notes. It functions much like athletes practicing their sports, such as how baseball players learn to swing a bat. The goal is for the musician to have the physical aspects of playing so ingrained into their memory that they can think less about the action of playing and can focus on the musical aspects. It is imperative to have this form of

¹ Joanne Haroutounian, *Fourth Finger on B-Flat* (San Diego: Neil A. Kjos Music Company, 2012), 148.

memory, otherwise it is nearly impossible to play; however, it is not foolproof. Many outside conditions can change the way muscle memory works, such as if the piano in the concert hall is stiffer, the pedal is firmer, or the room is cold and makes the hands less adaptable. More than that, however, nerves are a big factor in making kinesthetic memory unreliable. One way of practicing muscle memory is to play passages that would normally be staccato more legato so the hands are forced to ground into the keys and feel where they should go. Even so, muscle memory is necessary but not the most reliable.

The next type of memorization is visual. Not all musicians use visual memory often, but it is particularly useful for people with photographic memories or more visual learners. This type of memory tends to work in one of two ways. The first is that the musician will picture the score and play the notes they see in their mind. Another way is for the musician to visualize their hands playing the notes and let that guide them. They picture what the hands look like much as dancers picture their choreography in their minds to mentally practice a dance. As they do either of these, they use visual cues to help them determine what to play. If they can picture exactly what notes to play either from the score or on their instrument, it is much easier to actually play them. Mental practice, which will be expanded on, is particularly useful in this instance. The more familiar a musician is with the score, the easier it is to picture it in the mind, so there is no guarantee that this will work all of the time.

Auditory memory is the third type of memory. This comes especially easily for people with perfect pitch who can hear a pitch and know exactly which note it is. With auditory memory, the musician focuses on hearing what notes come next from their previous experience listening to, singing, and, playing the work to guide them to the next

note. Emphasis may be placed on thinking about the shape of phrases, such as whether it is going up or down, and listening for intervals between notes, among other things. A study done by Rachel M. Brown and Caroline Palmer emphasizes the importance of listening for memory. In their study, they tested which different combinations of listening and playing a piece would be the best for recognizing it later. They found that the best way was to both listen and play a piece, but auditory memory seemed to take precedence in most situations in their trial for being able to recall melodies.² If someone only played the piece without listening to it, such as playing on a keyboard with no sound, there was little improvement compared to if they only listened.

The last type of musical memory is analytical. This memory is the highest form and the most secure³. It relies heavily on knowledge of theory and the structure of the music. The musician must analyze the music in order to memorize it. They look at chord progressions, the form of the piece, the background structure, key changes, and any other aspects of the piece that could contribute to understanding it from an analytical standpoint. Then, when they start to memorize the work, they are able to focus on and remember these aspects to guide them. It helps with having something concrete to focus on, as opposed to the way the piece feels, sounds, or looks, since those aspects can all be less reliable depending on the space in which a musician is performing and their nerves. The structure of a piece will always remain constant, so if a performer is able to memorize this way, it is much more likely to be a performance free from memory mistakes. The way the musician does this is to study the score. For something like the

² Rachel Brown Brown and Caroline Palmer, "Auditory-motor Learning Influences Auditory Memory for Music." *Memory & Cognition* 40, no. 4 (2012): 576.

³ Haroutounian, *Fourth Finger*, 148.

first movement of a Mozart sonata, the musician would determine if there are significant differences in the exposition and recapitulation. They would also want to discover where the themes are as well as the transitions. In the development section, it would be important to know which key it transitions to and how it transitions back to the original key. Analyzing harmonic movement throughout can also be useful in parts that seem more ambiguous.

Bob Snyder describes three other, more scientific, categories of memory in his book *Music and Memory: An Introduction*: echoic memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory⁴. In echoic memory, “the inner ear converts sounds into trains of nerve impulses that represent the frequency and amplitude of individual acoustical vibrations [and] usually [decay] in less than a second, like an echo.”⁵ Therefore, it is not a strong form of memory. It can form as a foundation for more stable auditory memories, but it is not going to be reliable itself.⁶

Short-term memories are exactly what the name intends. They are only accessible for 3 to 5 seconds before they become harder to remember⁷. An example of this is listening to a Mozart sonata once. Immediately after, it would not be difficult to recall some of the melodic moments; however, a day later, it would be difficult to remember anything concrete. However, if someone were to listen to it several times over the course of those days, it would begin to be more permanent and easier to remember both the themes and other details from the development. In this case, the way the sonata sounds

⁴ Snyder, *Music and Memory* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000), 3.

⁵ Snyder, *Music and Memory*, 4.

⁶Snyder, *Music and Memory*, 4.

⁷ Snyder, *Music and Memory*, 5.

would then be moving into the last category, long-term memory. “Long term memories comprise knowledge about the events that evoked them and consist of content usually not in conscious awareness (not activated), which must be retrieved from the unconscious,”⁸ so the other types of memory also go into building long term memories⁹. For musicians, the goal is for pieces to move into long term memory. They need to be able to perform a piece months after first learning it, so it is imperative that it be in long term memory. Continual practice and understanding the analytical aspects of the piece are keys to a more permanent memory of the work.

Another way musicians think about memorizing is through the use of phrases. Music is composed much like essays. There are individual notes (the words) that make up phrases (sentences), which make up periods (paragraphs), which make up pieces (the paper). A way to combine all the previously discussed ways to memorize is to begin by looking at phrases. Noticing where the phrase begins and ends can serve as landmarks for the piece as a whole so that if there is a memory mistake during a performance, there are spots the performer knows as places where they can jump and begin a new phrase. From there, many different approaches work to memorize the information in the middle of the phrase. One popular way is to memorize hands separately for more intricate works, such as piece by Bach. The musician will practice one phrase one hand at a time and pay attention to the structure of the line, such as big intervals or direction of motion. One of the harder aspects of memorizing pieces by Bach is the lack a of memorable melody in much of his piano works. Both hands are typically moving in counterpoint, which makes

⁸ Snyder, *Music and Memory*, 4.

⁹ Snyder, *Music and Memory*, 5.

it harder to have a solid memory of how it sounds until the pianist has already learned the piece well. Phrases can be very helpful for this. He generally uses typical phrase structures, so memorizing in this way helps with categorizing the music into the brain.

The brain naturally wants to separate ideas into groups in order to better process and remember them. In music, “A grouping is to melodic, rhythmic, or formal organization what an object is to visual and spatial organization—a coherent entity within a set of boundaries.”¹⁰ As such, it is much easier to memorize music when there are structures in place to help it make sense. Finding sections that are similar to one another is one way to focus on the concept of grouping, or chunking. The musician can then practice out of context the parts that are similar in order to understand how they align and what makes them different to better memorize them when they put them back into the context of the work as a whole. When a musician chunks sections together, they are more likely to stay in the memory as a group. Musicians grouping similar sequences also are important to notice when memorizing and grouping.¹¹ One benefit of Bach is his use of sequences. The main way that sequences are helpful is that if the musician knows the first subphrase of the sequence, they can play the rest of it as long as they know the harmony behind each subphrase and where the sequence stops.

Snyder gives an example of how sequences and organization come into play when it comes to memory: “although we cannot quickly memorize and repeat the sequence of letters cbdacabcbadbcdab, if we rearrange the same letters as bacdbcadbaadbccd, the repetition of certain features creates boundaries, hence groupings, which make the new

¹⁰ Snyder, *Music and Memory*, 32.

¹¹ Snyder, *Music and Memory*, 32-33.

sequence easier to memorize and repeat.”¹² Even if there are not obvious, literal sequences in the music, there are ways to organize it where it becomes more of a group than a collection of notes. Looking at the harmonic progression is one strategy. Then, the musician can notice if it follows a typical harmonic progression or if there are any surprising chords in the mix, which can help illustrate the logic in the phrase. There can also be sequences within the context of a chord progression. There can be the same progression in multiple parts of the piece without there being the same melodic content. That is why it is important for musicians to look beyond the immediately obvious parts of the score or rely on muscle memory to carry them through a performance since the background structure has important functions, too.

Mental practice is also a very effective strategy for rehearsing and memorizing. Mental practice involves looking at the score away from the piano and thinking through some of the strategies previously mentioned, such as form and background structure. Oliver Sacks in *Musicophilia* gives Beethoven as an example of someone who had incredible abilities of musical imagery: “It is possible that his musical imagery was even intensified by deafness, for with the removal of normal auditory input, the auditory cortex may become hypersensitive, with heightened powers of musical imagery.”¹³ Being able to see a score and hear it without relying on physically playing it can help to reinforce the piece and memory of it.

Research has shown how mental practice can be very beneficial for performers. Testing “[has] shown that imagining music can indeed activate the auditory cortex almost

¹² Snyder, *Music and Memory*, 36.

¹³ Sacks, *Musicophilia* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 33.

as strongly as listening to it. Imagining music also stimulates the motor cortex, and conversely imaging the action of playing music stimulates the auditory context,”¹⁴ which shows how mental practice can be just as important as physically playing. The findings from Brown and Palmer’s study on physical versus auditory practice also helps to support the importance of mental practice.¹⁵ When a musician focuses on the score rather than the physical aspects of playing, it solidifies the visual information and can also be helpful for noticing details that sometimes are easily overlooked when reading through the piece or learning it. Additionally, as mentioned above, mental practice can even help with auditory memory. The brain’s ability to hear music just by looking at the score (or even by simply thinking of a piece) has its dangers too; sometimes, the brain can fill in notes that are not actually played since it knows what is supposed to go there, which makes it harder for the musician to notice if they are omitting or glossing over notes.¹⁶

“Mapping,” where a student writes out a map of what to think about while playing, is also a useful memorization tool. A study by Tania Lisboa, Roger Chaffin, and Alexander P. Demos was done on how mapping helps with memory. A teacher made notes on a clean score each week as a map of what to think about when practicing. The student would then report back the next week about her thoughts, which would then constitute a new map. They found that it helped her to memorize the piece; however, she did not have to think through the things on her weekly maps in order to perform since

¹⁴ Sacks, *Musicophilia*, 34.

¹⁵ Brown and Palmer, “Auditory-motor Learning Influences,” 576.

¹⁶ Sacks, *Musicophilia*, 35-36.

much of it had become automatic. The map would change each week to reflect her new thoughts on the piece.¹⁷

There are also other aspects that go into memorizing a piece that are more intricate than simply memorizing notes on a page. As Sacks writes, “There are clearly many sorts of memory, and emotional memory is one of the deepest and least understood,”¹⁸ and this pertains to memorizing music as well. There are certain pieces that musicians connect with on a deeper level due to a wide variety of life experiences. Some pieces have hymns or folk songs incorporated into the music that can give the work a deeper meaning if the folk music is from their home country or the hymn has a special significance. Other music can remind musicians of pieces they have played before and had fond experiences. Often, musicians will even make up story lines to follow the way the music sounds to help with context for the piece and give it a meaning if there is not already another special connection to the work. All of this helps with memory as well. Having something like a story line can help to lead the musician to the next “plot point” or section of the music. Having deep emotional connections helps the performer to connect more, which makes memorizing the phrasing or color changes in the piece easier and more. Although memory works differently for Alzheimer’s patients, the next section will explore similar ideas of how emotions and certain aspects within the form or composition of pieces are more likely to help with bringing memories back for them.

¹⁷ Tania Lisboa, Roger Chaffin, and Alexander P. Demos, “Recording Thoughts While Memorizing Music: a Case Study.” *Frontiers in psychology* 5 (2014).

¹⁸ Sacks, *Musicophilia*, 217.

CHAPTER TWO

Music and Alzheimer's Disease

With the connection already established between music and memory, the next aspect to look into is the way Alzheimer's disease works with music. As defined by the Alzheimer's Association, "Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that affects memory, thinking and behavior. Symptoms eventually grow severe enough to interfere with daily tasks."¹ One remarkable thing about Alzheimer's patients, though, is their response to music. For many patients, music has the ability to bring back some quality of life. The national organization Music and Memory, which centers around making personalized playlists for memory care patients, explains that music can "tap deep memories not lost to dementia and can bring listeners back to life, enabling them to feel like themselves again, to converse, socialize, and stay present."² There have even been a few videos to circulate recently on the internet of musicians with Alzheimer's who were still able to play some of their favorite pieces on a piano, as well as dancers hearing a song and knowing the dance moves that went with it from years ago. As such, music seems to affect them in a deeper, more emotional way.

As Oliver Sacks writes, "The aim of music therapy in people with dementia is far broader than [other disorders]—it seeks to address the emotions, cognitive powers,

¹ <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-alzheimers>

² <https://musicandmemory.org/about/>

thoughts, and memories, the surviving “self” of the patient, to stimulate these and bring them to the fore. It aims to enrich and enlarge existence, to give freedom, stability, organization, and focus.³” Alzheimer’s patients have noticeable reactions to familiar music. Some will go from being nearly completely unresponsive to being able to look at the people around them and even smile some. Others will go as far as humming along, singing, or even dancing, all of which is a far cry from unresponsiveness and confusion. Some Alzheimer’s patients become anxious when they realize that they are confused or forgetful, and the music of their past can serve as a comfort as well. Sacks also comments on this phenomenon: “There is a sudden attention: a dozen pairs of distracted eyes fasten on the player. Torpid patients become alert and aware; agitated ones grow calmer.⁴” He also discusses a specific case of a man who was a talented singer with Alzheimer’s, having received a note from his daughter that said “He has no idea what he did for a living, where he is living now, or what he did ten minutes ago. Almost every memory is gone. Except for the music. In fact, he opened for the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes in Detroit this past November.”⁵ Music sticks with many Alzheimer’s patients long after many of their other memories have disappeared.

Lola Cuddy and Jacalyn Duffin completed a study attempting to discover the relationship between music and memory. They tested to see if activities like speaking lyrics to popular songs would trigger memories, causing patients to sing the melody and determine if they would be able to finish the lyrics correctly. They determined that

³ Sacks, *Musicophilia*, 372-373.

⁴ Sacks, *Musicophilia*, 380.

⁵ Sacks, *Musicophilia*, 375.

Alzheimer's patients were better able to remember lyrics to songs when they were put to music, but there was not a huge change in people without the disease with lyrics when put to music. They also found that "The spoken lyrics of 12 tunes (e.g., "Au Clair de la Lune", "Silent Night", "Happy Birthday" and "Frère Jacques") elicited correct vocal renditions of the tune, though only some of the words were recalled correctly."⁶ In addition, although the patient "was unable to complete the lyrics of the tunes [...], the text of a tune could often act as a recall cue for the tune itself."⁷ As such, it matters what music is being played when using it as a form of therapy for Alzheimer's patients. Not all music is inherently going to help them to have positive reactions and trigger memories. It has to be something with which they are familiar.

Even for people without memory diseases, certain types of music still function to enhance memory or to become earworms. A study was done on how music in advertising is related to memory. They used four types of music: a jingle, instrumental music, music and a voiceover, and sound effects and a voiceover.⁸ The results were that people remembered the most about the advertisements with music, and that the jingles specifically helped with memory more. They were found to have helped implicit memory more than direct recall of specific elements on the advertisement. The success of the jingle "emphasizes the power of rhymes and metrical mnemonics; the latter help us connect items that otherwise seem wholly unrelated into a rhythmic pattern, while the

⁶ Lola Cuddy and Jacalyn Duffin. "Music, Memory, and Alzheimer's Disease: Is Music Recognition Spared in Dementia, and How Can It Be Assessed?" *Medical Hypotheses* 64, no. 2 (2005).

⁷ Cuddy and Duffin, "Music, Memory, and Alzheimer's Disease".

⁸ Margarita Alexomanolaki. "Music and Memory in Advertising: Music as a Device of Implicit Learning and Recall." *Music, sound and the moving image* 1, no. 1 (2007).

former provide an order and a prosodic structure which is associated to melody.”⁹ As such, it implies that certain types of music are more likely to enhance memories, regardless of if someone has Alzheimer’s or not. Jingles are usually short and simplistic, with melodies that are catchy and easy to sing and rhythms that are also simplistic. The downbeats are rarely obscured, and it is easy to tap a foot along. This is similar to the songs mentioned in the other study, “Silent Night”, “Happy Birthday”, and “Frère Jacques”. They are strophic, meaning there is one main melody that repeats with different text. The rhythms are not very complex either. These are also typically songs taught during childhood, which may also have a connection to their importance as memories.

Most of these songs are designed to be remembered, especially when considering the purpose of a jingle is to encourage people to remember a product and want to buy it. In music like this and popular children’s tunes, “it can be learned—represented and stored efficiently in long-term memory. [...] All of which means that over multiple listenings, listeners can build up a representation of the music”.¹⁰ Songs like this typically do not have many accidentals and stay within the key. The harmony is also pretty straightforward. When looking at “Happy Birthday”, the only chords when being sung in C major are C, G, and F. This means it only contains tonic, dominant, and subdominant chords. Pop songs are usually similar harmonically, sometimes with a minor chord also added in. The purpose of this genre of music is not to be complex for in depth analyzation but for easily accessible enjoyment. As such, it is typically repetitive enough to be memorable for the listener without them having to put in real effort to intentionally memorize how it sounds or its lyrics.

⁹ Alexomanolaki, “Music and Memory in Advertising”.

¹⁰ Synder, *Music and Memory*, 234.

Additionally, “Often separated from other phrases by silent pauses, a phrase is the largest melodic unit that can fit within the limits of short-term memory.”¹¹ An example of the way phrases are broken up in simplistic children’s tunes would be “Happy Birthday”. The first phrase is “happy birthday to you,” the second is “happy birthday to you,” the third is “happy birthday dear someone,” and the last is “happy birthday to you”. After each phrase, the singers usually take a small pause or breath. Here, the lyrics form repetition. In “Silent Night”, the melody “silent night” and “holy night” have melodic repetition, as well as “round virgin Mother and Child” and “holy infant so tender and mild”. Even in more complex music, such as that written by Bach, tends to repeat ideas three times, sometimes in different key areas, but still with repetition. The way phrases are broken aids in the memory, as well as repetition, since only small phrases can be remembered at a time.

Different Alzheimer’s patients respond to different types of music. As part of a branch of Music and Memory, I have been involved in Baylor’s Music and Memory club, where I have gone to a local memory care facility to play music for the Alzheimer’s patients and help create their personalized playlists, so I have witnessed how their memories are affected by different genres. One resident in particular had very drastic responses. She would stand up, stop holding onto her walker, and start dancing when we played Elvis songs for her. “All Shook Up” was a favorite of hers, and she would emphatically sing “uh I’m all shook up”. Many of the residents grew up attending traditional church services, and they could still sing along to hymns, sometimes even more than the first verse. If we played something less familiar, though, they would have little or no response. This emphasizes the importance of the type of music being played

¹¹ Snyder, *Music and Memory*, 135-136.

being familiar and usually part of their childhoods. Most of the styles that trigger responses are also in the style similar to what was described by much of the previously mentioned research. Both popular music and hymns are typically straightforward. Hymns are usually strophic. The text might be a bit difficult at times since it changes every stanza, but the melodies and harmonies stay exactly the same in each stanza, which makes it easy to be able to hum along to even without recalling the exact text. Popular music has the same concept with the verses being different text but the same melody each time. The chorus is even the exact same each time it is sung.

The emotional appeal of the music also has something to do with the way it is connected to memory. The vocalist with Alzheimer's described by his daughter's letter mentioned above clearly was able to connect with emotions in music, which was evident in the way he performed a song; "he showed all the expressions, emotions, and postures appropriate to the song, and to singing in a group—turning to others, awaiting their cues, and so on. This was so with all the songs they sang—whether they were exuberant, jazzy, lyrical and romantic, funny, or sad."¹² The meaning behind the music also connects for them. Many of the residents we played for connected to love songs, songs they would have danced to in the teenage years, or hymns, all of which have memories associated and deep emotional meaning. The next section will explore what types of pieces in the classical repertoire would create the same ideas of emotional responses from the performer and listener, as well as ways that composers incorporate memories into their compositions.

¹² Sacks, *Musicophilia*, 377.

CHAPTER THREE

Memory in Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*

Even in classical music, there are examples of composers using elements of pieces to refer to memory or elicit memories from their audience. One way of doing so is by using allusions, which, “according to one standard dictionary definition, is ‘an implied indication or indirect reference...especially as utilized in literature.’”¹ When using an allusion, a composer incorporates part of another piece in their work. Brahms even openly discussed his use of allusions, saying that anyone “could hear the resemblance between the main theme of the finale of his First Symphony (Op. 68) and the “Ode to Joy” theme of Beethoven’s Ninth”.² Allusions are like little musical memories inside of other pieces. Composers are intentionally harkening back to previously written music and bringing up memories of those pieces in conjunction with their own new work.

There are also musical ways of representing the past that are meant to be like memories. Schubert experimented with this in his Impromptu in F minor: “the cascading A-flat major arpeggios that link sections D and E articulate a moment in the present, the evocative dialogue without words unfolds as a memory of things past, and the emergence of the delicate, accompanimental embroidery of the wordless dialogue from the preceding

¹ John Daverio. *Crossing Paths Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 7.

² Daverio, *Crossing Paths*, 7.

arpeggios owes its existence to the ‘miracle of analogy.’”³ Another example of a piece that combines both allusion and musical material that sounds like memories is George Crumb’s piece *Dream Images*. He instructs that it should be played “musingly, like the gentle caress of a faintly remembered music.”⁴ The single-note melody is slow, with the pedal held through it, so it sounds wistful. It then transitions to a quick section of Chopin’s *Fantasia Impromptu*, which is a very direct allusion. The piece continues switching back and forth between Crumb’s melody and Chopin’s *fantasia* until it eventually dies away with three ascending notes from Crumb’s melody being repeated. The allusion is an overt way of implying that the piece is related to memory, but the way it weaves in and out references that the *fantasia* is the “faintly remembered music” he was referring to in his instructions.

There are certain types of pieces that would be more related to Alzheimer’s with the way they allude to other works. Since simple melodies and emotionally important songs are typically what connects the most for Alzheimer’s patients, composers that use folk music in their works are the most relevant to the disease. Bartok was especially known for using folk music. He would directly use folk tunes, use elements like harmonic structures, or sometimes even create his own. He traveled to collect Hungarian music, which he then used in his own compositions. Much of it has a distinctively folk-like, regional sound that distinguishes it from other music. It would be memorable for people from Hungary and have meaning for them. There are also examples of this for American composers. In the movement titled “The Alcotts” from his *Concord Sonata*, Charles Ives

³ Daverio, *Crossing Paths*, 56.

⁴ George Crumb, *Dream Images*.

uses some American folk tunes as well as alludes to hymns. These types of allusions most resemble the type of music that stimulates Alzheimer's patients. Since music that is familiar to them and from their childhood is what helps trigger memories, allusions to folk music, although not as effective for memory care patients as playing the original version of their pop songs or hymns, is the closest classical version and most relevant to people without memory disease.

One example of memories being found in music compositions is in Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg's (1843-1907) *Lyric Pieces*. Grieg "became the focus of Norwegian musical nationalism"⁵. He was known for using aspects of Norwegian folk music in his own writing, whether in direct music quotes or by composing his own material after the folk style.⁶ As his notoriety as a Norwegian composer grew, "he launched a project for a Norwegian Academy of Music, which opened on 14 January 1867."⁷ His *Lyric Pieces* are a notable example of his folk style of writing. They are "collections of miniature character-pieces. Within the simple outlines of traditional small forms (ABA and especially the extended ABABA, often with varied reprises), he managed to create a wealth of mood-sketches."⁸ They also relate to the concept of memory. The four focused on here are "Arietta", "Elegy", "Vanished Days", and "Remembrances". "Arietta" and "Remembrances" are directly related through the

⁵ Robert Philip, "Edvard Grieg: 1843–1907." *The Classical Music Lover's Companion to Orchestral Music* (Yale University Press, 2018): 288.

⁶ Philip, "Edvard Grieg," 288.

⁷ *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press., 2007.

⁸ *Oxford Music Online*.

similarities in melody. “Elegy” is a folk-sounding tune in memory of a person, and “Vanished Days” also has folk elements with the name also indicating memories.

The first piece of the Opus 12 of the *Lyric Pieces*, which is the first opus, is “Arietta”, and the last pieces of Opus 71, the last opus, is “Remembrances”.

“Remembrances” is aptly named, as it is a literal restatement of “Arietta”’s melody. From measures 1-23 of “Remembrances”, the melody is nearly identical, with some rhythmic differences, to that of “Arietta”. However, there are two main differences in this A section of the piece from the original: the meter/rhythmic elements and the harmonies.

“Remembrances” is in triple meter, but “Arietta” is in duple. The result is that

“Remembrances” feels more like a waltz. It gives the effect of the person remembering the original melody fondly with the upbeat dance feel. Additionally, the harmonic

elements are different between the two pieces. For example, the second phrase, beginning in measure three for “Arietta” and measure four in “Remembrances”, is an f half

diminished seventh chord (ii half diminished seventh) in “Arietta”, but in

“Remembrances” (measure 4) is an F7 chord (II7) before changing to the ii half diminished seventh in the second measure of the phrase.

Arietta.

Poco Andante e sostenuto. Edvard Grieg, Op. 12.

1.

Figure 1: “Arietta” measures 1-4

Tempo di Valse. M.M. ♩ = 63. Edvard Grieg, Op. 71 N° 7.

7.

p con grazia e leggerezza

Figure 2: “Remembrances” measures 1-12

Another difference is the form of the pieces. “Arietta” has two almost identical sections; however, “Remembrances” has a B section that changes key and even has different melodic content than seen in Arietta. It is as if someone is remembering the melody in different ways throughout different points of his or her life.



Figure 3: “Remembrances” measures 40-52

All of these elements contribute to the overall concept of memory in relation to music. As mentioned previously, simple melodies are more likely to remain in the memory for a longer amount of time. An arietta is a type of vocal work usually, so the melody is meant to have a singing connotation. The main theme is the idea of five repeated notes followed by a third down and a second up. It is very simply constructed without competing counter melodies or complex ideas. It’s reiteration in “Remembrances” is reminiscent of how memories work. It has the same melody, but there is a more abstract sense of the details, with harmonic changes and rhythmic changes (the melody has a dotted quarter to eighth note figure that is different from the straight eighth notes in “Arietta”).

Both also have an idea found often in folk music. The melody is a single line with accompaniment figures underneath it. In “Arietta”, the accompaniment is flowing and lyrical, which relates to the idea that it is meant to be sung. In “Remembrances”, the waltz accompaniment sounds like instrumental accompaniment to the melody line. Its

tempo marking of a waltz also would fit within the idea of folk tunes since many were meant to have a dance within them.

The next piece, an elegy, is “a song or poem expressing sorrow or lamentation especially for one who is dead” or “a short pensive poem that is usually nostalgic or melancholy”⁹. As such, it has connections to both the folk song tradition and to memories.



Figure 4: “Elegie” measure 1-8

This left hand meodic line in “Elegie” occurs six times during the duration of the piece, sometimes in octaves and sometimes exactly as seen in the figure above. It is reminiscent of the song or poem that would typically be called an elegy. This melody keeps coming back like a refrain that would be in a song. It is as if the poet or singer is remembering the person they lost through different sets of memories, interrupted by a more speech-like, folk melody.

⁹ “Elegy,” Merriam Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/elegy?msclkid=1072643ec12e11ec8b71a4e1d0fd75cb>.



Figure 5: “Elegie” measures 17-20

The interruption is pictured in the figure above. This repeats starting on different notes and ends with a dramatic arpeggiation before returning to the left hand melody line. The accidentals create melodic and harmonic content in a folk style, and the rhythm sounds more as if someone is talking than the lyricism of the previous melody. This occurs twice, both times evoking a sense of someone remembering in words rather than song. As such, this piece combines both the poetic and song meaning of a elegy as well as a sense of remembering someone.

“Vanished Days” is in ABA form, with the middle section having a very contrasting character. The A sections are melancholy and in a minor key. There is a larger dynamic contrast in this section than in the previous selections from the *Lyric Pieces*, ranging from pianissimo with the *una corda* pedal to *fortissimo*. The dynamic contrast creates drama consistent with the concept of remembering days gone by and longing for better times, such as in a memory.

Figure 6: “Vanished Days” measure 29-39

The melodic content, with help from accidentals, is similar to the folk ideas found in the elegy. The drone in the left hand is reminiscent of folk instrument accompaniment with a more dramatic melody. The delicate melody of this part contrasts with the crescendo to come. In the context of memories, it evokes a sense of remembering a distant memory that swells into something much more dramatic to the person remembering.



Figure 7: “Vanished Days: measures 5-14

The B section switches to the major mode with more of a lilting rhythm. Some of the melodic content is taken from A, but the change to major and the rhythmic changes result in a more innocent sound, possibly to convey childhood memories, which are sometimes more concrete for Alzheimer’s patients.



Figure 8: “Vanished Days” measure 49-52

The juxtaposition of the two sections serves to give the feeling of someone remembering the past with nostalgia and some sadness at the loss of their youth mixed

with more vivid, pleasant memories of their childhood that fade away to be again replaced by the nostalgia. The four Grieg *Lyric Pieces* convey memories of times gone by through melodic and harmonic content, along with Grieg's use of reintroducing the first piece's melody in the last piece.

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