Hans Huyssen

Responsorium

for solo violin & African birdcalls (1996)

This playful little piece merges 'artificial' and 'natural' music, 'composed' and 'found' sounds and, of course electronic and physical sound production. In doing so it interweaves a couple of characteristic South African birdcalls into the texture of the violin part.

Sampling technologies would, in principle, offer limitless possibilities to manipulate and change any given sound to the extreme. However, in this case only the tempi and pitches of the birdcalls were marginally altered, adjusting them to concert pitch. Thereby they can seamlessly be integrated into the composition as conventional musical elements – melodic motives, rhythmical figures, ostinato patterns – while still retaining their characteristic recognizable quality.

Recordings of the calls may be downloaded from the composer's website at https://huyssen.de/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Responsorium-bird-calls.zip (or just scan the QR code on the back cover). In the score all calls are cued and numbered with boxed letters in the score (1 – 21 corresponding with the file names 'response call #.mp3'). Some kind of playback system is thus needed for a performance but in most cases a single speaker (such as a portable Bluetooth device) should be sufficient. Depending on the performance venue's acoustics, the speaker could be placed some distance away from the violinist for a better call-and-response effect. An assistant will be needed to follow the cues and synchronize the playback as best as possible with the violinist's performance, as well as to balance volume levels.

Credit and thanks to Len Gillard: The recordings used in this piece were taken from his series of wildlife recordings: *Southern African Bird Calls, Part 1*. Back in my Munich days in the 1990s these tape cassettes with their indigenous African sound track proved to be an important life line, at once reminding me of formative childhood memories and of what I was missing in the European environment. Arguably my fondness of the many remarkably musical utterances of South African bird species, as well as this composition's attempt of recognizing and acknowledging them as intrinsic part of South Africa's eco-cultural heritage has been (in)formed my long absence from this region.

The avian soloists in the order of their appearance:

Redchested Cuckoo - Piet my vrou - *Cuculus solitarius*

Cape Turtle Dove - Gewone Tortelduif - *Streptopelia capicola*

Redeyed Dove - Grootringduif - *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Wood Owl - Bosuil - *Strix woodfordii*

Responsorium

für Violine und afrikanische Vogelrufe

Aninka, zum 30.7.96

Hans Huyssen

Vn

ca. 116 **marcato, stark, schrill** — ca. 88 **legato, dolce, espress.** *fließend*

** Klammern kennzeichnen Vogelrufe in approximativer Notation; die Rufen sollen vor allem charakteristisch, wiedererkennbar gespielt werden*

wieder schrill — (ca. 88) **wieder warm**

(ca. 100) **frei**

(ca. 116) **lento, rubato** (Mittelstimme hervor)

1 [Piet my vrou] ♩ = 100

2 **3**

ca. 116 **poco acc.** ♩ = 110 **più mosso** **4**

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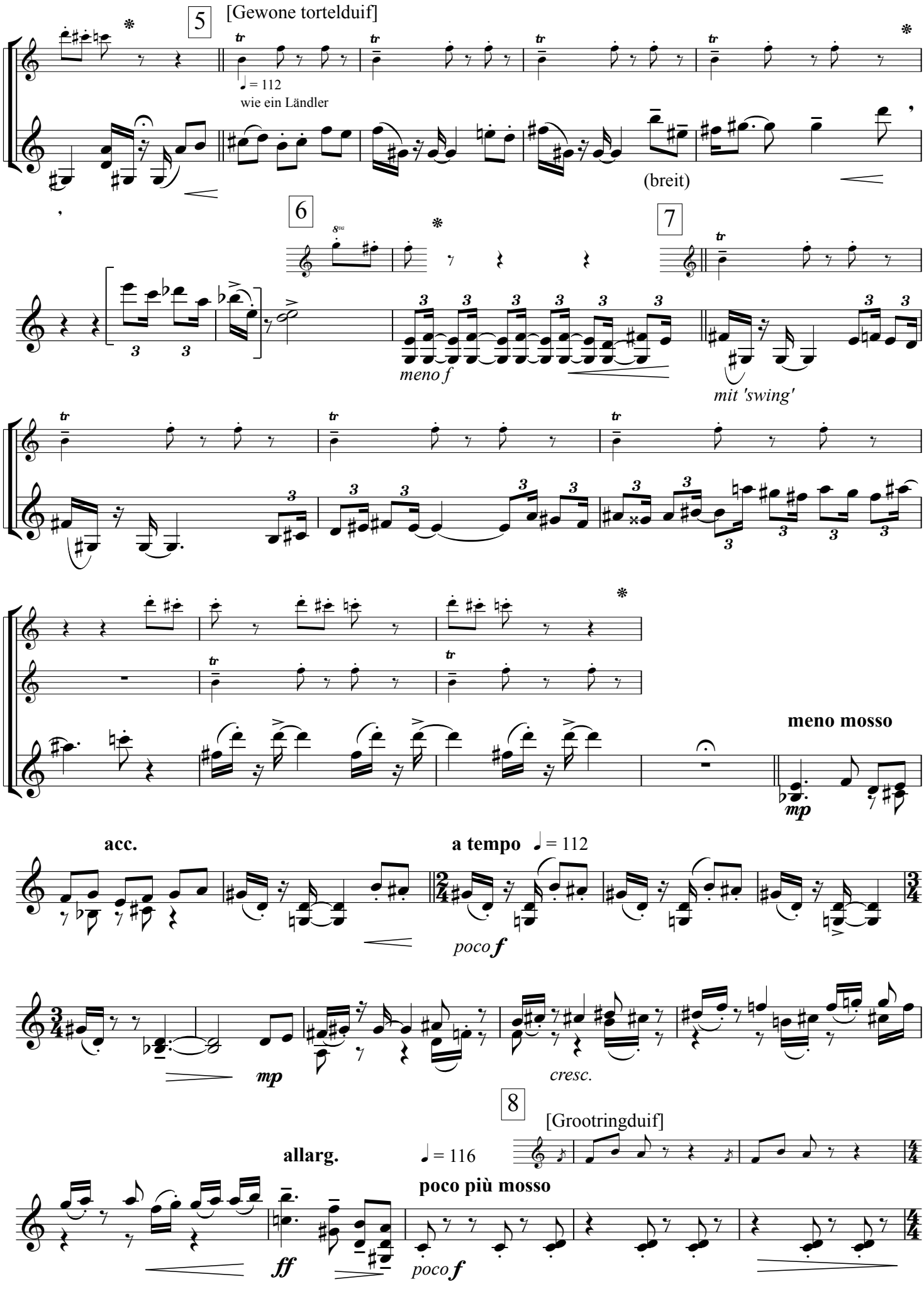
5
[Gewone tortelduif]
♩ = 112
wie ein Ländler
(breit)
6
meno f
7
mit 'swing'
meno mosso
mp
acc.
a tempo ♩ = 112
poco f
mp
cresc.
8
[Grootringduif]
allarg.
♩ = 116
poco più mosso
ff
poco f

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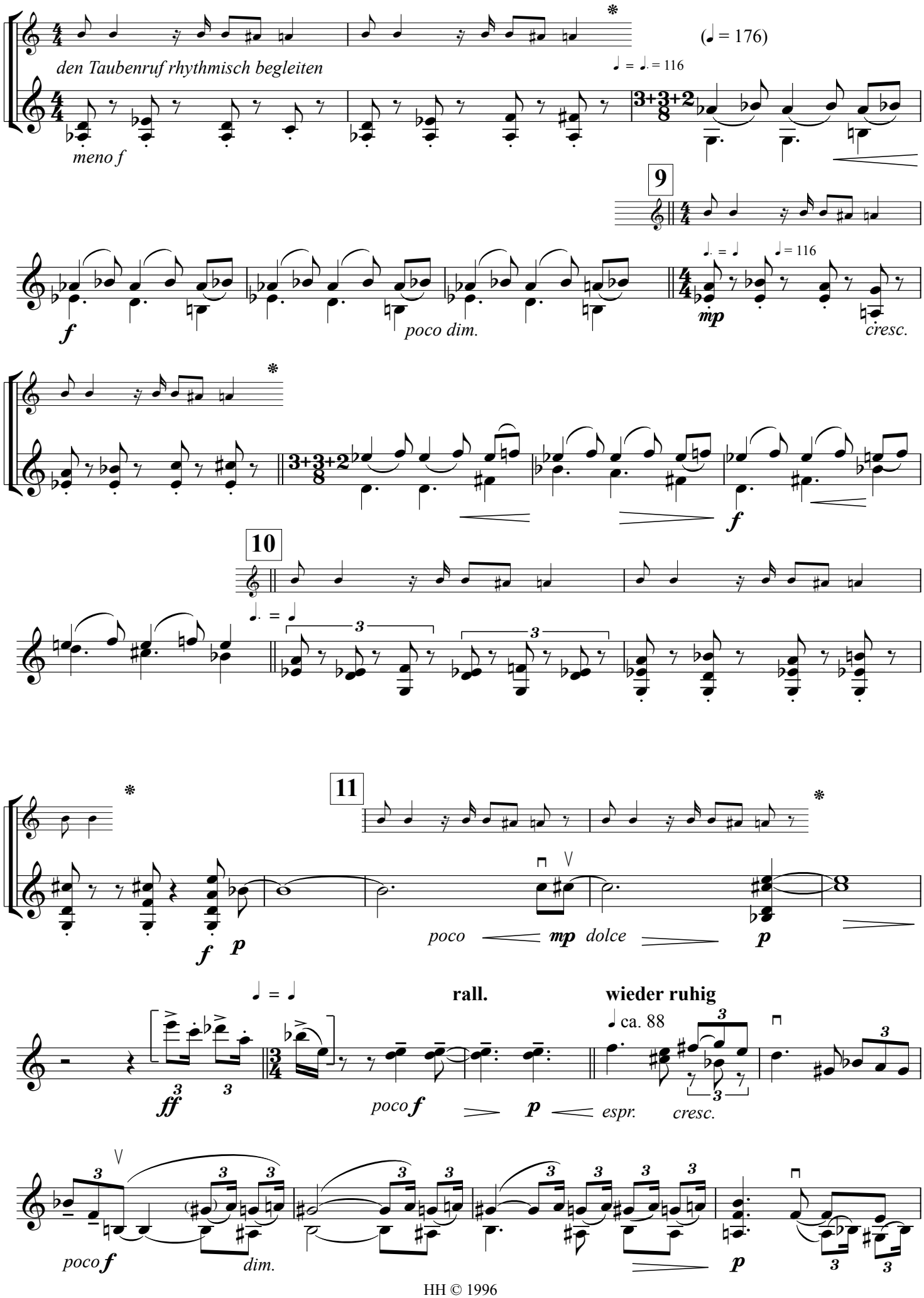
den Taubenruf rhythmisch begleiten
meno f
(♩ = 176)
♩ = ♩. = 116
9
f
poco dim.
mp
cresc.
10
11
poco
mp
dolce
p
rall.
wieder ruhig
ca. 88
ff
poco f
espr.
cresc.
dim.

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drängen

cresc.

♩ = 116

f *f* *f* *meno f*

♩ = 88

p *p* *p*

(zwei verschiedene Tempi und Lautstärken!)

12 [Bosuil]

wie ein Abendlied

frei, ruhig ♩ ca. 56

p *espress.*

13

14

15

16

flüchtig

17

pp *p*

18 **19** **20** **21**

p *morendo* ***pp***

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20.-15.7.96