



The American Viola Society

SUITE
FOR VIOLA ALONE

Quincy Porter
(1897-1966)



AVS Publications 008

Preface

The American composer Quincy Porter (1897–1966) completed his *Suite for Viola Alone* on October 15, 1930, during a three-year stay in Paris funded by a Guggenheim Fellowship. Porter premiered the work at a critically successful recital devoted to his music at the Salle Chopin on February 18, 1931; this concert greatly furthered his reputation as both a composer and violist. After his return to the United States, Porter held teaching and administrative posts at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Vassar, the New England Conservatory of Music, and Yale. Highly committed to the development and promotion of American music, Porter was among a group of composers who co-founded the American Music Center (Aaron Copland and Howard Hanson were two of his notable colleagues in this endeavor). While Porter's music exhibits a twentieth-century tonality, he eschewed many of the avant-garde experiments of his fellow composers and focused on writing well-crafted music in traditional forms.

The *Suite for Viola Alone* is a model of Porter's superb compositional craftsmanship: idiomatically written for the viola, the suite's four tightly constructed movements display a mixture of styles and harmonic consonance and dissonance. The first movement, *Lento*, explores the viola's color palette and leads directly into the frenetic *Allegro furioso*, with a pulsating rhythmic drive that suggests a locomotive. The lyrical third movement, *Larghetto espressivo*, is a calm and serene moment of repose before the boisterous *Allegro spiritoso*, an impressive feat of fiddling that reveals Porter's American roots.

This AVS edition is made possible by the generosity of the Quincy Porter estate. Please see the Critical Comments for additional details on the sources for this edition.

David M. Bynog, editor
October 2015

Suite for Viola Alone

Quincy Porter
Edited by David M. Bynog

Lento $\text{♩} = 48$

III
V

II

I

II

ppp *p* *p* *mf* *mp* *pp*

6 *cresc.* *f*

9 *poco ritardando* *a tempo*
mf dim. *pp p* *poco a poco cresc.*

14 *poco accelerando* *ff*

19 *a tempo* *poco ritardando*
mp dim. *pp*

Allegro furioso $\text{♩} = 144$

24 *pp* *p* *poco a poco accel. e cresc.**

27 *p* *f* *(poco a poco cresc.)**

30 *p* *f*

*See the critical comments regarding the location of this crescendo

33 *f* *dim.* *mp poco a poco cresc.*

36

39

41 *ff* *mf*

44 *ff*

48 *cresc.*

51

54 *dim. poco a poco*

56

58

61 *poco a poco ritardando*

64

67

69

72

74 *poco rit.*

135 *dim.*

140 *p* *cresc.*

145 *mf* *dim.*

150 *mf* *dim.*

155 *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

160

165

170 *(poco ritardando)** (a tempo)*** *ff*

175 *f* *dim.* *p* *poco a poco cresc.*

180

185 *fff* *Fine*

** See the critical comments regarding the accuracy of these tempo markings

Critical Comments

In preparing this edition, two sources were consulted from the Quincy Porter papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University: a holograph score marked “original manuscript,” bearing a copyright date of 1937 (HM) and the Valley Music Press (VMP) edition, bearing a copyright date of 1937 and published in 1946. Two other sources were consulted: an edition titled *Suite Para Viola Solo* published in the *Boletín Latino-Americano de Música* vol. 5, suplemento musical (Oct. 1941): 90–94 (BLM) and Porter’s recording of this work (New Music Recordings 1512, 1939; CRI SRD 390, 1978).

While there are discrepancies among the HM, VMP, and BLM sources, this new AVS edition largely adheres to the holograph manuscript, which contains several markings that do not appear in the VMP or BLM edition. In addition to several extra fingerings, other markings (and alternative readings in the other editions) appear below:

M. 8. In the HM, a slur appears over the first two notes of the triplet on beat three.

M. 17. In the HM, a marcato accent (>) appears over the second eighth note of the measure.

M. 26–28. The HM and BLM edition contain the marking *poco a poco accel e cresc.* in M. 26. The VMP edition contains only *poco a poco accel.* in M. 26, with the marking *poco a poco cresc.* in M. 28. (In Porter’s recording of the work, he begins both a crescendo and accelerando in M. 26.)

M. 32. The BLM edition contains an additional marcato accent on the first note (f#’) of the second three-note grouping of sixteenth notes, which is likely a transcription error.

M. 33. The HM contains a tie between the second and third notes (g) in the lower voice, which is absent in the VMP and BLM editions.

M. 35. In the HM, dashes appear on the first sixteenth note of each three-note grouping of sixteenth notes in this measure.

M. 38. The marcato accents in the HM are placed between the upper and lower viola voices. The VMP and BLM editions transcribed this as an accent in each voice. As the placement of these accents in the HM seems to be a space issue (text completely fills the space above the staves, preventing any additional markings there), the accents likely are intended only for the upper voice, similar to M. 36.

M. 39. In the HM, a slur appears on the third beat’s second and third sixteenth notes.

M. 46. In the BLM edition, a marcato accent appears on the fourth note in this measure, which is likely a transcription error.

M. 57. In addition to the sforzando accents (^) on the fifth and eleventh notes in this measure, marcato accents (>) appear below these notes in the BLM edition, which are likely transcription errors.

M. 71. In the HM and BLM edition, the upper voice's final beat consists of a sixteenth note and an eighth note followed by a sixteenth rest. This was transcribed in the VMP edition as two sixteenth notes followed by a sixteenth rest and is also reproduced here as such.

M. 76. The HM contains a time signature change to $\frac{12}{8}$, which is absent in the VMP and BLM editions.

M. 77. In the HM, a fermata appears over the final barline.

M. 78. In addition to the tempo marking of *Larghetto espressivo*, the HM and BLM edition also contain the marking *espressivo*.

M. 90. In the HM, a dash appears over the first note of this measure.

M. 106–107. The HM and BLM edition contain a crescendo from the third beat of M. 106 to the second beat of M. 107, with a dynamic marking of *pp* on the second beat of M. 107.

M. 108. The HM and BLM contain the marking *poco a poco cresc. ed. accel.* The VMP edition separates these into two markings: *poco a poco cresc.* and *poco a poco accel.*

M. 115. The HM contains the tempo marking *Allegro spiritoso*; the VMP and BLM editions *Allegro spiritoso*.

M. 117. In the HM and VMP edition, a dot appears over the second note in this measure (e''), which is absent in the BLM, likely owing to a transcription error.

M. 139. In the HM and VMP edition, a dash appears over the first note in this measure, which is absent in the BLM, likely owing to a transcription error.

M. 147. In the HM, a marcato accent appears on the seventh sixteenth note of the measure (f'). In the VMP and BLM editions, the accent appears on the eighth sixteenth note (b-flat'), which, given the placement of other accents throughout this movement, is likely a transcription error.

M. 172–173. The HM and BLM edition do not contain a *poco ritardando* and *a tempo* in these measures, nor is there a noticeable *ritard* in M. 172 in Porter's recording. The presence of these markings in the VMP edition cannot satisfactorily be explained as a transcription error, so Porter likely chose to incorporate these notations in the VMP edition.

M. 188. In the HM and VMP edition, a dash appears over the first note in this measure, which is absent in the BLM, likely owing to a transcription error.

David M. Bynog, editor
October 2015



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