Journal of the American Viola Society

Volume 35 Number 1

Features:

George Rochberg's Viola Sonata

Loeffler's Rapsodies

The David Dalton Viola Research Competition Guidelines

The *Journal of the American Viola Society* welcomes submissions for the David Dalton Viola Research Competition for university and college student members of the American Viola Society.

Eligibility:
All entrants must be members of the American Viola Society who are currently enrolled in a university or who have completed any degree within twelve months of the entry deadline.

General Guidelines:
Entries must be original contributions to the field of viola research and may address issues concerning viola literature, history, performers, and pedagogy. Entries must not have been published in any other publication or be summaries of another author's work. The body of the work should be 1500–3500 words in length and should adhere to standard criteria for a scholarly paper. For more details on standard criteria for a scholarly paper, please consult one of these sources:

Bellman, Jonathan D. *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*. 2nd ed. New York: Pearson, 2007.
Herbert, Trevor. *Music in Words: A Guide to Writing about Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Wingell, Richard J. *Writing about Music: An Introductory Guide*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2009.

Entries should include relevant footnotes and bibliographic information and may include short musical examples. Papers originally written for school projects may be submitted but should conform to these guidelines; see judging criteria for additional expectations of entries. Any questions regarding these guidelines or judging criteria should be sent to info@avsnationaloffice.org.

Judging:
A panel of violists and scholars will evaluate submissions and then select a maximum of three winning entries.

Entries will be judged according to scholarly criteria, including statement of purpose, thesis development, originality and value of the research, organization of materials, quality of writing, and supporting documentation.

Submission:
Entries must be submitted electronically using Microsoft Word by May 15, 2020. For the electronic submission form, please visit http://www.americanviolasociety.org/Competitions/Dalton.php.

Prize Categories:
All winning entries will be featured in the *Journal of the American Viola Society*, with authors receiving the following additional prizes:

1st Prize:	$400, sponsored by Thomas and Polly Tatton
2nd Prize:	$200
3rd Prize:	Henle edition sheet music package including works by Schumann, Reger, Stamitz, Mendelssohn, and Bruch, donated by Hal Leonard Corporation

Journal of the American Viola Society

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On the Cover:
Eugene Larkin
Violist – John
Woodblock print, 1998

Eugene Larkin (1921–2010) was an American artist who specialized in prints. Musicians were frequently the subjects of his art, including at least six prints of violists. His son, artist Alan Larkin, writes: "My parents were both devotees of classical music and made friends with a number of musicians from Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. There was a group of them that had formed a string quartet and my father would invite them to come practice at the house. They would set up in the sun room and he would paint or draw them while they performed. Some of these he would transfer by tracing onto woodblocks, which he would then carve out and print in the studio." More information and artworks can be found at eugenelarkin.com.

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The *Journal of the American Viola Society* is published in spring and fall and as an online-only issue in summer. The American Viola Society is a nonprofit organization of viola enthusiasts, including students, performers, teachers, scholars, composers, makers, and friends, who seek to encourage excellence in performance, pedagogy, research, composition, and lutherie. United in our commitment to promote the viola and its related activities, the AVS fosters communication and friendship among violists of all skill levels, ages, nationalities, and backgrounds.

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JAVS welcomes articles from its readers. Submission deadlines are December 15 for the Spring issue, April 15 for the Summer online issue, and August 15 for the Fall issue. Send submissions to the AVS Editorial Office, Andrew Braddock *editor@americanviolasociety.org* or to Madeleine Crouch, 14070 Proton Rd., Suite 100 Dallas, TX 75244

From the Editor

The musical world is awash in anniversary celebrations. It's a way to commemorate, recognize, and reconsider some of the works and personalities that shaped our vast repertoire. Especially since the majority of the works we perform are decades or even centuries old, round-numbered anniversaries present—at least on the surface—a good reason to celebrate composers and their works.

While the entire musical world prepares to celebrate Beethoven's 250th birthday in 2020, we violists have our own, slightly more niche, musical landmarks to commemorate. Back in 2017, a quartet colleague of mine mentioned that his group would be performing some of George Rochberg's works during their 2018 season as a way to celebrate the centenary of the composer's birth. After looking closer, I realized that 2019 also represented another "anniversary" for Rochberg: it marked 40 years since he composed his Viola Sonata. This presented an unmissable opportunity to highlight a work and composer not only important to violists, but also intrinsically tied to the American Viola Society. To add even another layer of anniversary celebration, this work itself was commissioned for William Primrose's 75th birthday.

In this issue, we commemorate this "double anniversary": Rochberg's centenary, and the Viola Sonata's 40th birthday. This commemoration comes in the form of three articles that examine Rochberg and his Viola Sonata from various perspectives. Jacob Adams leads off by providing a broad overview of Rochberg's career and giving context to the Sonata, making some insightful observations about Rochberg's recycling of musical ideas. Following this, David Dalton, the person responsible for commissioning the work, shares the engaging story of the work's origin. In the final article, Leah Frederick offers a compelling and detailed musical analysis of the work. Taken as a whole, these three articles will give you a full-bodied understanding of a work that has become one of the cornerstones of modern viola sonata repertoire.

Reconsidering works on the occasion of anniversaries is an inherently backward-looking venture, but this process can also inspire the creation of new works. As many violists know, three works written in 1919 are some of the most frequently-performed recital pieces for viola and piano: Hindemith's Sonata op. 11 no. 4, Clarke's Sonata, and Bloch's Suite. Anne Lanzilotti's thoughtful consideration of these works' one hundredth anniversaries resulted in the inspiration for her own commissioning project. She describes the project in an article in this issue, the first of a three-part series. She shares both the practical framework of the project and some of the motivating principles that led her on this pathway.

In addition to these anniversary-related articles, this issue offers a bevy of fascinating ideas. Almost all of our contributors are violists, so it's exciting to be able to feature the work of another musician. Bringing a woodwind perspective to these pages, oboist Courtney Miller tells the riveting story of Loeffler's *Deux Rapsodies* for viola, oboe, and piano. Later in the issue, Tim Feverston clearly illuminates the often frustrating topic of chin and shoulder rests, and Carlos María Solare and Katrin Meidell review recorded and printed music.

Finally, a brief word about this issue's cover art. AVS Board member Martha Carapetyan alerted me that the artist Eugene Larkin had made some prints featuring violists. I was overjoyed to see that he had made at least six woodcut prints of violists, all of which can be easily found at eugenelarkin.com. I'm very grateful for Alan Larkin for his permission to feature one of the prints on the cover, and for the advice and perspective of Martha, Alan, David Bynog, and Ara Carapetyan.

Sincerely,

Andrew Braddock
Editor

From the President

Hello my friends,

I hope everyone reading this issue of the *JAVS* is doing well and staying healthy. It's a beautiful, albeit a bit windy day in Utah. Warm weather was a long time coming, but it has finally arrived, and my wife and I have been enjoying it.

The redesign of the AVS website is going well. There are a lot of links to adjust and outdated information to remove, plus new information to add. Thanks to Adam Cordle and Brian Covington for their work continuing, and to all of the members who have assisted by providing new information in one form or another.

One of the ways that every member of the AVS can have a part in shaping the website is to provide us with current contact information about your local viola organizations. We are revamping the information under the Local Organizations tab and we need your help. Whether you are a member of a statewide society, a local city group, a college or university viola class, or any combination of organizations, the AVS would like to be able to list your organization on the website. Please send me an email with names and contact information for your officers, and if you have a webpage, the URL. Send information to mpalumbo45@gmail.com.

Are you a violist without any type of local organization in your area? If you are, we can help get you with information about creating a local viola group. Just contact me at the above email.

By the time you read this the period of time for proposals to the 2020 AVS Festival will be past. We are planning on an excellent Festival with many different types of sessions and concerts. The University of Tennessee-Knoxville is a great setting. The area is beautiful, and the university is being extremely accommodating.

Speaking of the 2020 AVS Festival, it's not too early to begin thinking about having your university host the 2022 AVS Festival. This isn't a call for festival site applications; that will be announced officially later, it's just something to get you thinking about it.

I will be in touch with the Primrose International Viola Competition people soon as we begin planning for another great competition. The competition in 2018 at the Colburn School was incredible and set a high standard for future PIVC competitions.

Are you a member of the AVS Facebook Group? It's easy to join us and keep in touch with your friends. Currently we have over 1,800 members. All you have to do to join is go to www.facebook.com/groups/americanviola and click on the Join link. You will be asked three simple questions to assure us you aren't a robot.

As I close this letter I want to thank you personally for your continued support of the AVS. Membership is the lifeblood of any organization, and every member is equally important in sustaining this great organization that we call the American Viola Society.

Warm regards,

Mike Palumbo
AVS President

Advertiser Index

45th IVC in Review

Andrew Braddock

In late November 2018, violists from around the world converged on the vibrant city of Rotterdam for five days filled to the brim with viola. Though I am a veteran of stateside viola events, this was my first visit to a Congress outside of America, and it was a fantastic introduction to the world-wide community of violists. From masterclasses to lectures, "talk shows" to recitals, and dramatic performances to late-night sessions, this Congress covered an extraordinary range of anything related to the viola.

The theme of the Congress was "Exploring New Ways to Perform," pointing towards an emphasis on both performance and new music. There were six types of events during the Congress, and the frequency of each showed the emphasis on performing: recitals (24), workshops (17), master classes (16), lecture-recitals (8), lectures (7), and talk shows (2).

My time in Rotterdam began the evening before the Congress with an informal dinner organized its hosts, Kristofer Skaug and Karin Dolman. The dinner served as a portentous microcosm of the week's events to come: convivial violists from all continents gathered, rekindling old friendships or igniting new ones in spite of the chilly Rotterdam winds.

Tuesday morning opened with a throng of violists descending upon the lobby of the Hofplien Theater for registration. A scene like this is always chaotic, as everyone figures out their bearings, checks in, and stops every few feet to hug an old friend. The following brief opening ceremony with introductions by Kristofer Skaug, Karin Dolman, and Carlos María Solare (president of the International Viola Society) marked the official beginning of the 45th International Viola Congress.

Molly Gebrian, Marcin Murawski, Hillary Herndon, and Andrew Braddock at the 45th IVC in Rotterdam. Photo by Dwight Pounds

The morning's chaos extended into the early afternoon, as Lawrence Power's masterclass was rescheduled and later re-assigned to the always-ready and always-brilliant Jutta Puchhammer-Sédillot, causing a ripple effect throughout the opening day's events. I was, however, the happy beneficiary of this reshuffling. It allotted a little extra time to the 1919 Berkshire Festival Competition lecture-recital, during which Daphne Gerling, Hillary Herndon, Bernadette Lo,

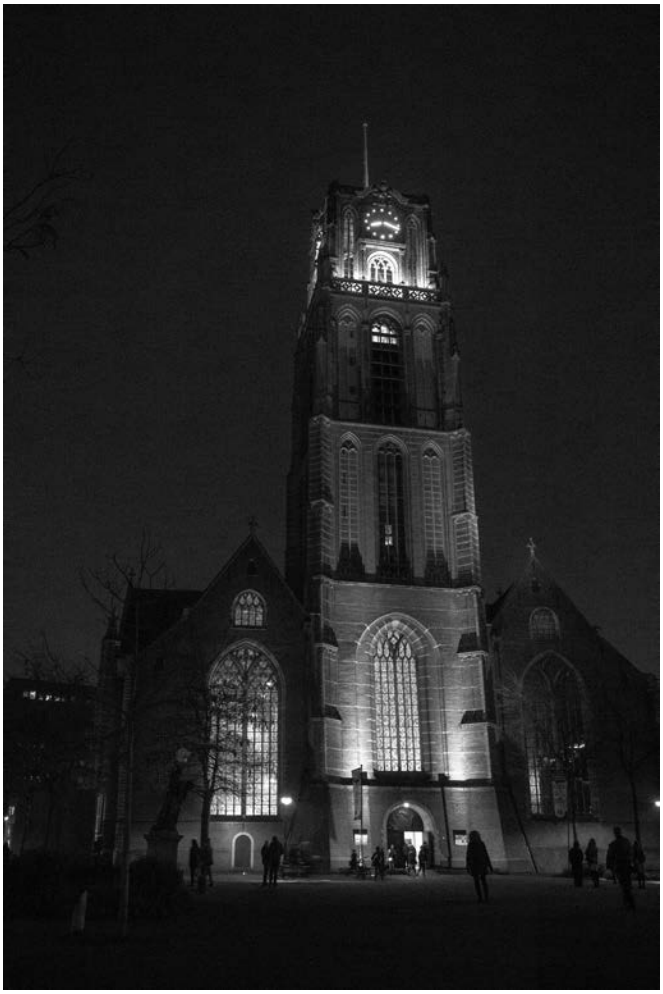
Katrin Meidell, and I presented and performed selections from works possibly submitted to the famed competition. We were overjoyed with the positive response to our presentation, and were excited to perform many under-recognized works.

Following this presentation, I spent the rest of the congress darting between every possible event, venue, and my own presentations, so it would be impossible to honestly recount all of the week's events. Instead of a complete listing, I'll share some of the many highlights and offer my perspective on the events.

The daytime events from this opening day ended with another ceremony, the Opening Celebration. After introductions from Neil Wallace, the program director of De Doelen concert hall, and Drew Forde, better known as ThatViolaKid, the Opening Celebration concluded with a performance of two viola sextets by members of the Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. The first was a premiere performance of Leo Samama's *Viola Pomposa.* The composer, whose brother is a violist, remarked that he went against the standard advice of "never write anything difficult for the viola" when composing this piece. Though he succeeded in his aspirations, the performers deftly handled all the challenges he presented. The most innovative part came about three quarters of the way through: After a syncopated ostinato in the inner voices, the music melted into an amorphous texture of harmonics and descending pizzicato gestures that sounded like a waterfall of pebbles. The work was punctuated by a driving and polyrhythmic conclusion. Benjamin Dale's Introduction and Allegro, op. 5, for six violas rounded out this brief program. The players gave a sparkling performance of the works, and León van den Berg shined in the stratospheric passages for the first viola.

Featured Artist Performances

The Congress's featured artists ran the gamut from seasoned veterans to burgeoning stars: Atar Arad, Nobuko Imai, Kim Kashkashian, Lawrence Power, and Timothy Ridout. All of their performances were not to be missed. Lawrence Power bookended the Congress with two orchestral-based performances. Though his presence at the Congress was only to be apprehended via the stage platform, his signature luscious tone and free rubato made for two remarkable performances. The first



Rotterdam's majestic Laurenskerk, the setting for a viola and carillon premiere and the IVC's first evening concert. Photo by Dwight Pounds

on Wednesday night was in the majestic setting of the fifteenth-century Laurenskerk (St. Lawrence Cathedral). Before the concert, Congress co-host Karin Dolman joined carillonneur Richard de Waardt for a premiere of Leo Samama's *Cadenzas and Songs* for viola and carillon. The cold weather did not keep a sizable group of violists from experiencing this one-of-a-kind event. Inside the church, Power joined the Codarts Chamber Orchestra and the Laurenscantorij for performances including works by Puccini (*Requiem* for choir, viola, and organ), William Alwyn (*Pastoral Fantasia* for viola and strings), and Schubert (*Gesang der Geister über den Wassern*). Though the cavernous cathedral led to some muddy acoustics, Power's sound spoke with direction and clarity.

Power returned on the Congress's final evening to perform with the Bochumer Symphoniker inside the beautiful Grote Zaal of de Doelen. Along with the

Doelen Quartet, they performed Herbert Howells's understated and richly scored *Elegy* for viola, string quartet, and string orchestra, and led attacca into Walton's Concerto for viola and orchestra. Power did well to fill the large hall with his sound, but his performance was most remarkable for the blistering tempo—the fastest I've ever heard—of the second movement. For an encore, he played Aleksey Igudesman's darkly humorous *Brexit Polka*, a mashup of the national anthems of all EU countries, rudely interrupted by Britain's "God Save the Queen."

Timothy Ridout (left) and Nobuko Imai (right) perform Bridge's Lament. Photo by Dwight Pounds.

One of the musical highlights of the Congress was Thursday night's concert on the 105th birthday of Benjamin Britten. Both the repertoire and the personnel invoked a variety of student-teacher connections: Britten and his teacher Frank Bridge, Timothy Ridout and his teacher Nobuko Imai, and Yuval Gotlibovich and his teacher Atar Arad. Imai opened the recital with Britten's *Elegy* for solo viola, and returned before intermission to perform Bridge's *Lament* for two violas with Ridout. It's impossible to imagine a more unified sound than that presented by Imai and Ridout. Both took great pleasure in sculpting ever richer tones from all corners of their ranges. Imai begin with a focused and unembellished tone, setting the stage for Ridout's richly singing mezzo-soprano entrance. They played with such a wide of range of colors that they sounded at times like an entire string quartet, rather than just a viola duo. They concluded the piece with a heartbreaking non-vibrato C minor chord.

In between this student-teacher double bill came Gotlibovich's performance of his Sonata for Viola and Piano Left Hand with Noriko Yabe, a work that Imai had premiered one year earlier in Tokyo. The first movement began with an echo-box effect between the viola's harmonics and the piano, reminiscent of the technique used in Schnittke's Concerto for Viola. Gotlibovich played the swinging second movement with great ease, and the third movement, an homage to Ravel, featured wandering scalar lines and unison passages. The fourth and final movement was a deliberate *moto perpetuo* with Bernstein-like harmonic gestures, ending with a whirling ascending scale that landed on a perfect fifth, like a whiff of sweet-smelling smoke.

After intermission, the Utrecht Conservatory Strings, conducted by violist/conductor Mikhail Zemstov, performed a rousing rendition of Britten's Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge before welcoming Atar Arad onstage for the world premiere of his Concerto for viola and strings (*Ceci n'est pas un Bach*). As Arad remarked, the work was his attempt at writing a "fake Bach concerto," written "maybe not by Johann Sebastian, but maybe by one of his sons." The first movement was dominated by a rhythmic cell that would thread through all three movements of the work. It was almost the inverse of the rhythm from the first movement of J.S. Bach's G minor gamba sonata. The second movement featured ornamented lyrical lines and a remarkable moment with the solo viola playing bass accompaniment to the violins' higher line. The final gigue-like movement featured furious passagework and a cadenza with borrowed bits of Bach's Chromatic Fantasy. Arad brought panache and energy to his performance of his piece, and his virtuoso technique shined as brilliantly as ever. As a programmed encore, Arad performed his Caprice no. 9 (Benjamin), with arpeggiated chords masking references to *Lachrymae.*

Atar Arad premieres his concerto, Ceci n'est pa un Bach, with the Utrecht Conservatory Strings. Photo by Dwight Pounds.

The evening concluded with Timothy Ridout's heartrending performance of Britten's *Lachrymae* for viola and string orchestra. He used a heavy practice mute to achieve a glassy and transparent tone in the work's first part, a contrast which made the first *senza sordino* notes speak with unparalleled focus. I was particularly moved by his expressive playing of the pizzicato variation and his selective employment of non-vibrato colors. The work ends with one of the great feelings of transcendental serenity in all of music, but this did not stop the audience from bursting into applause, requesting no fewer than three curtain calls for Ridout.

On Friday night, Kim Kashkashian and percussionist Robyn Schulkowsky performed a wide-ranging recital in de Doelen's recital hall. The percussion battery included a marimba, an assortment of drums, a glockenspiel, an array of gongs, and even upside-down wine glasses, but the music was never sonically overwhelming. The program intertwined works with folk elements—arrangements of Armenian songs by Komitas, Mansurian's *Three Medieval Taghs* ("laments), and Berio's *Naturale*—alongside viola and percussion versions of Kurtág's *Signs, Games, and Messages* and Linda Bouchard's *Pourtinade. Naturale* provided a powerful and doom-filled conclusion, with its final devastating gunshots and plaintive harmonics echoing through the hall. For a more light-hearted ending, the duo came back on stage for an encore of a dance written by Mansurian. Above all, I was blown away by the precision of ensemble and expression between these two close collaborators. I felt that no matter what instruments they might be playing—viola, wine glasses, or gongs—the two artists were resonating on the same unbreakable wavelength.

Recitals

With over 24 recitals during the Congress's five-day span, it was impossible to attend every one. But, in seeking my viola "fix" for the winter, I tried to hear as many as possible. Here are just a few of the recitals that excited me the most.

It only makes sense that the International Viola Congress would host a bevy of geographically themed recitals; Norway, New Zealand, Poland, Middle and South America, Italy, Turkey, and Switzerland all received recitals devoted to their music. The performance featuring music from South America was a real highlight in

Kim Kashkashian (left) and Robyn Schulkowsky (right) perform at de Doelen. Photo by Dwight Pounds.

this regard. The Sonata for Viola and Piano (1960) by Venezuelan composer Modesta Bor was a beautiful (tonal) piece that would be great for students. It contains lovely lyricism and rhythmic jazzy parts, while showcasing the color of the viola. This was followed by another composition by a South American woman composer, the *Capricho Montevideano* for viola and piano by Uruguayan composer Beatriz Lockhart, which can be found online. It has a strong tango character but is not overly difficult and would be a great piece for students. The concert closed with a set of fantastic pieces by Argentinian composer Juan Esteban Cuacci, with the composer at the piano. Three of the movements performed, Cromado I, VII, and XIII, are part of a larger work for solo viola. All three of these movements are real crowd-pleasers: rhythmic and

Olivier Marin performing his work Undō for viola, electronics, and video. Photo by Andrew Braddock

driving, with some contrasting lyrical sections. These pieces were much more difficult than other, and are more suitable for an advanced student (or professional). Recordings of Silvina Alvarez, the superb Argentinian violist who performed here, are available on SoundCloud.

The Congress was awash in performances of contemporary and new music. Two recitals on opposite ends of the instrumental spectrum—one for viola duo, the other for viola orchestra—were particularly gripping. On Wednesday, a 23-member viola orchestra comprised of faculty and students of the Conservatory of Amsterdam performed Max Knigge's *Achille, Ajax & Moi* (2008). Subtitled "an imaginary ballet for solo viola and viola orchestra," the work loosely recounted scenes from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* from the perspective of Odysseus. It was filled with imaginative and surprising combinations of colors—I was most struck by the sheer variety of sounds Knigge conjured from the ensemble. Takehiro Konoye adeptly handled the demanding solo part of this richly engrossing work.

Takehiro Konoye performs the solo part of Max Knigge's Achille, Ajax & Moi *for viola solo and viola orchestra. Photo by Andrew Braddock.*

On other end of this spectrum—and the final recital of the Congress—was a riveting performance of viola duos by Italian violists Luca Sanzò and Camilla Insom. Sandwiched between two sections from Garth Knox's *Viola Spaces* were Gérard Pesson's *Paraphernalia* (2009) and George Benjamin's *Viola, Viola* (1997). In terms of sheer execution, this recital presented the most formidable challenges of the Congress, but the two modern-music experts relished in them, playing with near flawless delivery and laser-sharp focus. In *Paraphernalia*, the performers swam in hazy and shadowy colors, crafting a mysterious sound world through ponticello, ricochet, and pianissimo tremolo. Their virtuoso rendering of *Viola, Viola* made the work's extreme difficulties seem almost manageable, and I was astounded with their rhythmic precision.

Two other performances featured inventive presentations of viola repertoire by student groups. The first recital consisted of arrangements for viola ensemble of Lionel Tertis's compositions, performed by the ESMAE (Escola Superior de Música e Artes do Espectáculo) Viola Ensemble from Porto, Portugal. The students brought a fresh sense of energy to these works, and they showed Tertis's lasting importance in viola literature. Later in the week, viola and drama students from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire created a multimedia version of *Romeo and Juliet:* excerpts from Shakespeare's play were interspersed with selections from Borisovsky's arrangement of Prokofiev's ballet for viola and piano.

Master Classes

Alongside the recitals, the many master classes allowed Congress attendees to not only hear great performances, but also to learn from great teachers. The classes began in earnest on Wednesday, when I was able to attend three of the four classes that day. Each presented the unique pedagogical viewpoints of the teachers. Marcin Murawski focused on the technical elements that create an artistic performance. He worked on vibrato with students playing both the Vieuxtemps Sonata and Schumann's *Fantasiestücke,* asking for a "seductive vibrato" that would draw an audience in. This would help create an immediately approachable sound—a "YouTube moment"— so the listener wouldn't be tempted to click to another video. After lunch, Timothy Ridout taught through performing, offering imaginative and enthralling demonstrations. When working with a student on *Märchenbilder*, Ridout conjured extreme tone colors in the first movement, both delicately hushed and forcefully present, and effectively embodied the "gallant knights and trumpet calls" in the second movement.

Given only twenty minutes to work with each student, Atar Arad opted to share a few specific pieces of salient wisdom rather than get into the minutiae of viola technique. After a performance of the first movement from Brahms's E-flat Sonata, Arad asked if there were any non-violists in the audience. Of the 125 or so audience

members, only one person raised his hand. Arad then asked him if he knew the title of the movement—he did not—and then asked him to guess. His first guess, "Allegro moderato," was met with a curt "No, try again" from Arad. "Poco Sostenuto?" Again, "No." After a third unsuccessful guess, Arad revealed the title ("Allegro amabile"), proving his point that performers must make clear the meaning of the music, to all audience members. When working with the next student on the Bartók Concerto, Arad implored her to study the manuscript to differentiate the Bartók and Serly features of the score. He also gave a plug for violists to seek out Serly's own Viola Concerto. The final student, Anuschka Pedano, performed the first movement of Rebecca Clarke's Sonata with an uncommon maturity and conviction, so much so that Arad remarked: "You do a lot of things completely differently from me, but I still like it, because it's personal." He proceeded to offer a few special fingerings and technical tricks before sharing an amusing anecdote whose punchline had the audience roaring with laughter.

Arttu Nummela (left) performs Kurtág for Kim Kim Kashkashian. Photo by Andrew Braddock

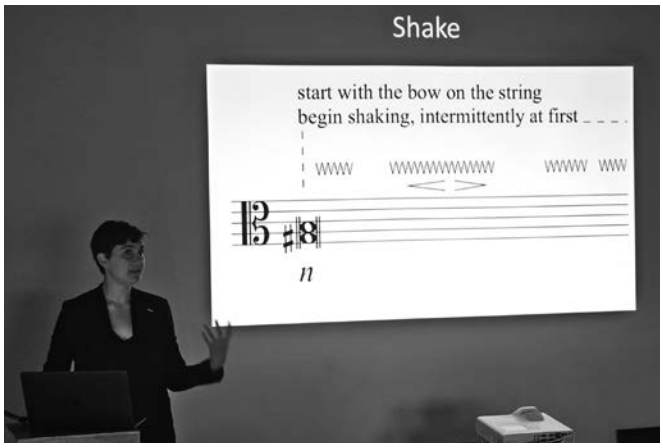
On Friday, Nobuko Imai's master class got off to an untraditional start, as she performed Toru Takemitsu's *A Bird Came Down the Walk*. She recounted the origin of the work in her introduction. After premiering Takemitsu's *A String around Autumn* for viola and orchestra, she found that orchestras were reluctant to program it due to its large and varied instrumentation. So, she went back to Takemitsu and asked for a piece for viola and piano. After not receiving a definitive response, she was delighted when, a few years later and out of the blue, he sent her *A Bird Came Down the Walk.* She was able to premiere the work four months before the composer's death in 1996. When speaking about the work itself, Imai brought up Takemitsu's fascination with the second movement of Brahms's F-minor viola sonata. The texture of *A Bird Came Down the Walk* certainly bears similarities to that work, but, the connection between the two works became more explicit during Imai's luscious and full-bodied performance. She played with a richness and warmth well beyond the *p* and *pp* dynamic indications, giving the work a more romantic and sensuous quality. Her master class continued along the same lines, as she showed an almost maniacal obsession with sound when coaching students on works by Hoffmeister and Hindemith.

Two other master classes paired teachers with repertoire with which they have particularly intimate connections. Jutta Puchhammer-Sédillot's class was on the "Pièces de Concours" of the Paris Conservatory, which Puchhammer- Sédillot both recorded and edited for publication (see *JAVS* Summer 2017 for an interview about her project). After performing Leon Firket's *Concertino,* she shared her exacting attention to detail and note-by-note knowledge of the works with two student performers.

In the Congress's final master class, Kim Kashkashian coached students in selections from Kurtág's *Signs, Games, and Messages.* Kashkashian shared stories about playing the works for Kurtág and working with him on subtle nuances of expression. Student Arttu Nummela played with great poise and technical security, and Kashkashian helped him bring out different colors through string choices, bow speed, and contact point changes. After Gonzalo Martin Rodriguez's performance of *The Carenza Jig,* Kashkashian shared that it was written at Prussia Cove and supposed to imitate a young girl dancing with screeching seagulls overhead. In addition to her spot-on technical advice, details like these brought added meaning—and comprehension—to these elusive works.

Lecture Recitals, Workshops, and More

While concerts, recitals, and master classes represented a sizable majority of the week's offerings, a variety of other events filled out the Congress. Workshops offered attendees the opportunity to open their cases and learn through playing. Anne Lanzilotti led two workshops exploring extended techniques. She began by performing Andrew Norman's *Susanna*, and guided us towards



Anne Lanzilotti leads an extended technique workshop. Photo by Andrew Braddock

hearing its overall arch-like structure. Throughout the course of her workshop, she repeatedly touched on the exciting pedagogical uses of many extended techniques, such as scratch tones. Teaching kids to play scratch tones on purpose, she said, can allow them to problem solve for the times when they *don't* want a scratch, and informs them about which techniques can change their sound. In another workshop, Daphne Gerling transmitted her ideas about bowing technique and physical set up alongside Karen Tuttle techniques. I loved seeing her tricks with rubber bands to encourage bow arm release.

Daphne Gerling demonstrates bow arm release with Krzysztof Komendarek-Tymendorf. Photo by Andrew Braddock

Several lecture-recitals assembled large ensembles for their performances. Donald Maurice and Marcin Murawski performed Johann Christoph Graupner's Concerto for Viola and Viola d'amore in A major with an ensemble of five violins, two violas, and a cello, followed by an illuminating examination of Graupner's life and works. In one of the largest lecture recitals, the Italian ensemble I Solisti Aquilani and musicologist Daniela Macchione performed two Mozart concerti incorporating scordatura: the famous Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola, and a completion of the first movement of Sinfonia Concertante KV Anh 104 for violin, viola, cello and orchestra.

Donald Maurice (left) and Marcin Murawski (right) perform Graupner's Concerto in A major for viola d'amore and viola. Photo by Dwight Pounds

Amidst the busyness in the lobby, several informal "Talk Shows" offered a relaxed discussion of viola topics. Max Knigge moderated a chat about composing for the viola with Atar Arad, Anne Lanzilotti, Yoshiaki Onishi, and Leo Samama. Lanzilotti observed that the viola is the best adapted instrument to scordatura, which can "make it sound like an entire string quartet." Then Arad spoke of how the viola is the most human of instruments: the viola's size is acoustically imperfect for its range, so it is flawed, just as humans are flawed.

Kai-Thomas Roth (right), Jan van der Elst (middle), and Chaim Achttienribbe (right) discuss their viola. Photo by Dwight Pounds

One final unique aspect of this Congress was a team of four luthiers stationed in the lobby. They sought to make a viola from start to finish during the span of the Congress (just five days). The luthiers—Chaim Achttienribbe, Kai-Thomas Roth, Jan van der Elst, and Gijsbert van Ziel—modelled their instrument after Andrea Guarneri's 1676 "Conte Vitale" viola. It was fascinating to see them work away at each step in the process during the course of the Congress.

A Closing Celebration on Saturday afternoon wrapped up the week's events. It began with a 32-member viola orchestra performing, among others, the Radetzky March and Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. Following closing remarks from Kristofer Skaug, the four luthiers presented their completed (but unvarnished) viola to Kim Kashkashian and Atar Arad for a brief demonstration. We all marveled at the transformation from slabs of wood into a real viola playable by master artists in just five days! Next, Carlos María Solare presented Atar Arad with the IVS's Silver Alto Clef, its highest award, in recognition of his performing, teaching, and scholarly contributions to the viola. The ceremony concluded with an invitation to attend the 2019 IVC in Poznań, Poland.

Conclusion

As with many of the viola conferences I've attended, I was overwhelmed by the warmth and friendliness of everyone in attendance. I was also overwhelmed by all of the viola music crammed into five days, but it allowed me to fill up my ears and mind with many ideas to bring home. For both the variety of its events and the headlining guest artists, the

Atar Arad (left) receives the Silver Alto Clef award from IVS President Carlos María Solare. Photo by Dwight Pounds

Congress brought together an enthusiastic and talented set of violists, renewing old friendships and creating new ones in its five short days. I'm already looking forward to the next one.

A special thanks to Molly Gebrian for her contribution to this review.

Andrew Braddock is the editor of this Journal and teaches viola at Western Kentucky University.

Rochberg's Viola Sonata in Historical Context

Jacob Adams

> "George Rochberg's Viola Sonata is a major addition to the viola and piano repertoire and it deserves many, many performances by other artists."
>
> —Joseph de Pasquale[1]

If George Rochberg's music is known to viola players, it is primarily and understandably because of his 1979 Sonata for Viola and Piano, which is being celebrated in this, the 40th anniversary of its premiere. Rochberg was jointly commissioned by the American Viola Society and Brigham Young University to compose the sonata for the occasion of William Primrose's seventy-fifth birthday. Premiered at the Seventh International Viola Congress in Provo, Utah by Joseph de Pasquale and Vladimir Sokoloff on July 14, 1979, the sonata's auspicious origins ensured it would quickly solidify itself as a significant late-twentieth century addition to the viola-piano duo repertoire.

This article will give some historical context to the viola sonata within Rochberg's larger oeuvre and career. Fans of the viola sonata may discover other works by Rochberg worthy of studying, listening, or performing.

Rochberg's sketches for the Viola Sonata

Given that the viola sonata was written and premiered in 1979, it may come as a surprise to discover that Rochberg took the majority of its musical material from sketches he had written decades earlier—in 1942—only weeks before he was drafted into the army to serve in World War II. These early sketches were for two movements of a planned violin-piano sonata which never materialized. Rochberg would say in his memoir that these sketches "marked a significant change in direction" and that he "had discovered...the musical 'hieroglyph.'" [2]

The 'hieroglyph' which Rochberg refers to is in fact what eventually became the opening statement of the Viola Sonata: F–C, B–F-sharp. This pair of intervals outlines the fundamental fifths of the two keys bound together by the tritone F–B. Rochberg attributed this discovery to his concurrent study of Bartók's music at the time (in the early 1940s), which "opened [my] ears to the possibilities inherent in such tonal extensions, which spilled over into new ways of thinking and hearing melodically." [3]

Why would Rochberg return to these sketches some 37 years later? Composers typically scoff at their earlier compositional efforts, especially if left unfinished. But Rochberg's career and stylistic trajectory was far from typical for a composer of his era.

Rochberg's career before the Viola Sonata

After being wounded and discharged from the Army with the Purple Heart in 1945, Rochberg attended the Curtis Institute to pursue compositional studies with Rosario Scalero and Gian Carlo Menotti. By 1948, he was already on faculty at Curtis, and over the next decade, established himself as a rising star among the cadre of post-Webern serialist composers. Rochberg won major international awards and fellowships, and eventually joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. He also served as music editor for the Theodore Presser Company (still the exclusive publisher of his musical scores).

In 1961, Rochberg's son Paul was diagnosed with a brain tumor, and died in November 1964. This devastating event indirectly led to Rochberg's most significant career turning point. Rochberg felt unable to fully express his emotional state within the strictures of serialism, and began exploring new approaches.[4] He wrote:

> The much-vaunted pluralism of our present musical culture is a direct result of the loss of a communicable language; and such a loss is the fallout and heritage of either free or ordered atonality or both.[5]

Ironically, it was Rochberg's music of this period that began generating talk of "pluralism," and "pastiche." In 1965, he employed borrowed quotations from other composers' works in his chamber ensemble work *Music for the Magic Theater*. Some of these quotations are from expected modernist sources (Stockhausen, Varese, Webern) and others come from very unexpected, tonal, sources (Beethoven, Mahler, Mozart, and Miles Davis).

It was the String Quartet No. 3, premiered in 1972 by the Concord String Quartet, that became the seminal work in what came to be known as Rochberg's new style. The work juxtaposes atonal language with lush, tonal diatonicism in its extended middle section of variations, evoking the style and sound of a late Beethoven quartet. The stark contrast in content and style within the same work has led some to refer to this as the beginnings of "musical postmodernism," a term Rochberg himself never embraced.[6]

The unabashedly tonal sections of String Quartet No. 3 sent shockwaves through the new music world of the early 1970s. Rochberg had previously established himself as a highly successful and thoroughly modernist composer. By embracing such traditional tonality, he was, in the view of his critics, effectively turning his back on the entire ethos of postwar compositional practice. More accurately, though, he was attempting to develop a new musical language combining the tonal and atonal worlds into a fresh amalgam:

> There was a strong sense that the two great languages of musical expression, tonality and atonality, had reached a point of high maturation beyond which neither could be pushed with any fruitfulness. Then came the sudden realization that each, if juxtaposed to the other in genuinely imaginative ways, might yield new forms, new meanings, and new values understood as complementarities. . . . Thus was born the idea that polar opposites are not mutually exclusive, but are as complementary to each other as night and day, hot and cold, wet and dry. Thus was born the possibility that the art of music was no longer a case of either/or, but of both/and. . . .[7]

By the time David Dalton approached Rochberg with the commission for the viola sonata, the dramatic shift in Rochberg's compositional style was well known in the music world. In January 1979, seven months before the premiere of the Viola Sonata at the Utah Congress, Rochberg's *"Concord Quartets,"*—his Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth string quartets—were premiered as a set. These three works all continue in the vein of the Third Quartet, with the slow movement of the Sixth Quartet being, unironically, "a quaint set of variations on Pachelbel's popular canon in D major." [8]

Rochberg's approach to composing the Viola Sonata

Given the context of where Rochberg's compositional career during the previous decade, it is perhaps less surprising that Rochberg might return to sketches from so early in his career for inspiration. In describing how he returned to his 1942 sketches when composing the Viola Sonata, Rochberg wrote in his memoir:

> In casting about for the right approach to the music I wanted to produce for the Primrose piece, I decided to dig out the old violin sonata sketches and test their possibilities. Uppermost in my mind was a series of questions that had to do primarily with the viability of the old ideas and their emotional substance. Would they lend themselves to transference to the darker timbres of the viola? Would the overall qualities of my initial ideas sound *natural* [sic] to the viola—not just larger than the violin, but also more plangent in tone? It was the dirge-like, sadly singing character of the second movement that ultimately decided the issue.[9]

Rochberg goes on to add that he "did virtually nothing to alter the basic design of the 1942 sketch."[10] These became, with minor modifications, the first two movements of the viola sonata. The short third movement was later added at the suggestion of Rochberg's wife, Gene, who felt that the sonata was not finished as just a two-movement statement.[11] Regarding the unusual nature of the third movement, Rochberg said:

> I had resisted the feeling that something of a definitive, concluding nature needed to follow the Adagio lamentoso. The kind of last movement I knew I could not add—that in fact I detested—was a fast, concluding movement in order to fulfill a purely perfunctory function. . . . I settled on writing an epilogue, one that had the sense of "remembrance of things past."[12]

In context, Rochberg's viola sonata stands apart stylistically from other pieces he was writing at the time, particularly the Concord String Quartets. While the quartets have entire movements of Classical and early Romantic-era evocation, they also feature many movements with dissonance and complex chromaticism as the ordering principle, and are still firmly rooted in a modernist aesthetic. The Viola Sonata seems to evoke more clearly an early twentieth century tonal style, particularly some of Bartók's more tonal and melodic writing. This makes sense, as the bulk of its musical content comes not from 1979, but 1942, and Rochberg himself acknowledged the influence Bartók had on his music at the time.

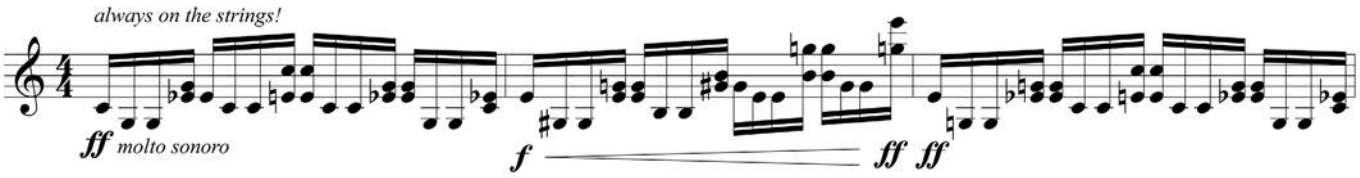
There may be another explanation for Rochberg's returning to old sketches for the Viola Sonata. The commission for the Viola Sonata came in the middle of 1978, with the premiere taking place a year later. This was a very fast turnaround to produce a new work compared with most of Rochberg's output, as most pieces took several years to gestate. He was also in the midst of a particularly busy and prolific stretch of composing.[13] One could make a case that dusting off sketches from 1942 allowed for a much quicker writing process, and it was as much a practical decision for this specific commission as it was for any larger aesthetic reason.

Other Rochberg Works to Explore

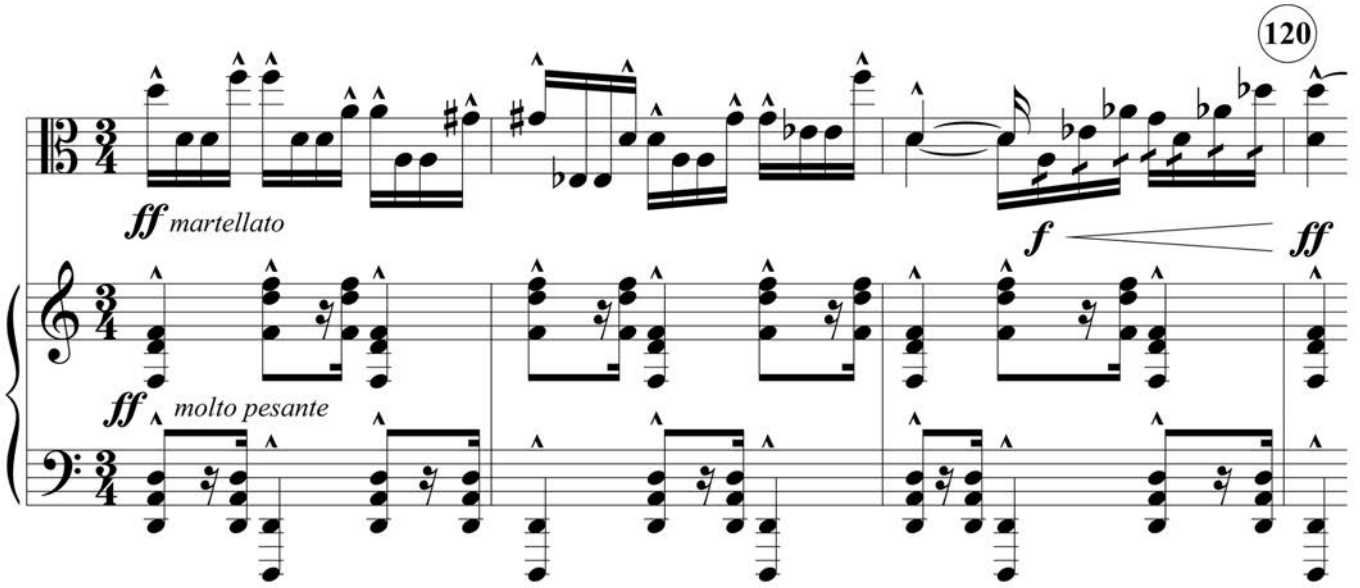
While the Sonata is Rochberg's lone contribution to the viola solo repertoire, there are seventeen chamber works that include viola (year of premiere in parenthesis):

Blake Songs for Soprano and Chamber Ensemble (1961)
Chamber Symphony for Nine Instruments (1953)
Music for "The Alchemist" for Soprano and Eleven Players (1966)
Music for the Magic Theater for a Chamber Ensemble of Fifteen Players (1967)
Octet, A Grand Fantasia for Flute, Clarinet, Horn, Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass, and Piano[14] (1980)
Piano Quartet (1985)
Piano Quintet (1976)
String Quintet (two cellos) (1982)
Serenata d'estate for Flute, Harp, Guitar, Violin, Viola, and Cello (1958)
String Quartet No. 1 (1953)
String Quartet No. 2 with Soprano (1962)
String Quartet No. 3 (1972)
String Quartet No. 4 "The Concord Quartets" (1979)
String Quartet No. 5 "The Concord Quartets" (1979)
String Quartet No. 6 "The Concord Quartets" (1979)
String Quartet No. 7 with Baritone (1980)
Tableaux (Sound Pictures from the "Silver Talons of Piero Kostrov," by Paul Rochberg) for Soprano, Two Actors' Voices, Small Men's Chorus, and Twelve Players (1968)[15]

As stated earlier, Rochberg's style shifted dramatically during his transitional period between about 1965–1972, and any pieces written after the Third String Quartet can be considered as part of his new, more tonal, style. The formal structure of Rochberg's *Violin Concerto*—written for Isaac Stern and the Pittsburgh Symphony and premiered in 1975—is not unlike the Third Quartet. Both pieces are divided into 2 large parts, each featuring smaller movements within as well as contrasting intermezzi movements. The Violin Concerto also contains a Fantasia movement and an Epilogue—titles both used in the last movement of the Viola Sonata. Musically, there are some moments in the Violin Concerto that look and sound similar to moments in the Viola Sonata, as shown in examples 1–4.



Example 1. George Rochberg, Violin Concerto, mvt I, mm. 41–43. Notice the similarity between this and example 2.



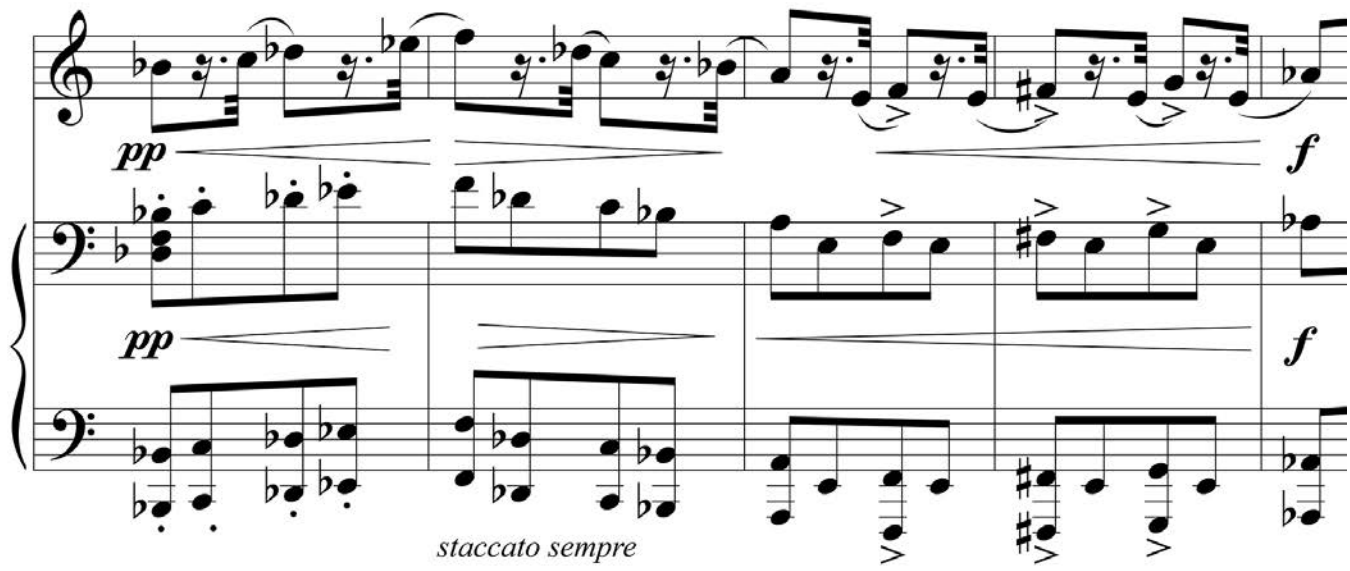
Example 2. George Rochberg, Viola Sonata, mvt 1, mm. 117–119.

Several other works by Rochberg for solo violin and cello are worth mentioning for anyone interested in exploring more of the composer's string writing. The *Caprice Variations* (1970) for Solo Violin might be seen as a distant cousin of the Viola Sonata. No one would confuse the pieces for one another in design or style: one is a mostly straightforward sonata for viola and piano, the other is a set of fifty variations on Paganini's 24th Caprice for solo violin. Both works, though, could be mistaken for being written in the first half of the twentieth century. The *Caprice Variations* certainly foreshadowed where Rochberg would go in the Third Quartet, with Rochberg acknowledging an

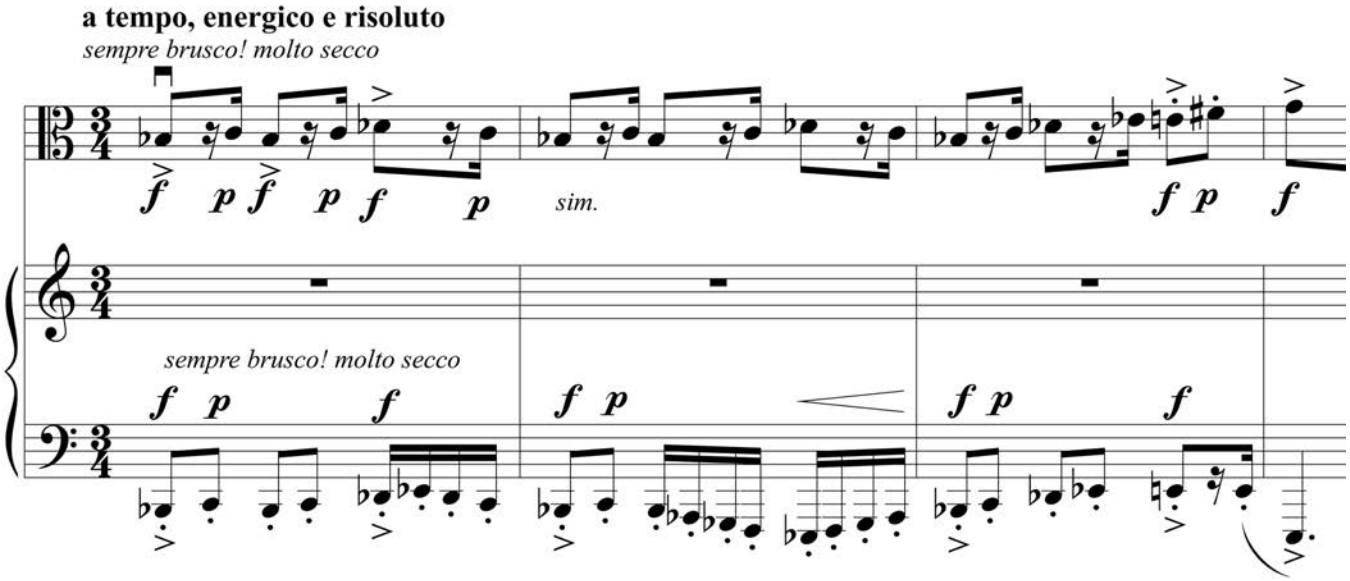
> interest in the variation theme in general and the Brahms double set [two books of variations on the Paganini theme for solo piano] in particular. I have paid homage to Brahms . . . where it seemed musically possible I have also paid homage to Beethoven, Schubert, Bartók, Webern, Stravinsky—all great masters of the art of variation—by quoting them as well as commenting on them.[16]

Like *Music for the Magic Theater,* the *Caprice Variations* were composed during what is typically seen as Rochberg's transitional phase, which culminated in his new style appearing fully in the Third Quartet. As noted in the preceding passage from his memoirs, Rochberg quoted freely from other composers, as he did in other "collage" or "pastiche" works from this period.

Another notable work is the romantic and highly tonal *Ricordanza (Soliloquy)* for Cello and Piano (1973). The piece is a "commentary" on the opening cello statement of Beethoven's op. 102 no. 1 cello sonata. In 1990, Rochberg penned a *Rhapsody and Prayer for Violin and Piano* for the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis. The piece was a required work for competition entrants to learn, and marks another foray by Rochberg into the world of assemblages of string instrument specialists (following the Viola Congress and Viola Sonata premiere, of course). Other pieces worth mentioning include his *Sonata for Violin and Piano* from 1988 and his *Sonata-Aria for cello and piano* from 1992.



Example 3. George Rochberg, Violin Concerto (piano reduction), mvt. II, mm. 116–120.



Example 4. George Rochberg, Viola Sonata, mvt. I, mm. 188–191.

All of these works are worthy of further listening and study, and any of them could pair with the Viola Sonata for possible programming choices. It should be noted that all of Rochberg's string music—while mostly tonal and accessible—is technically and musically demanding. Therefore, it is appropriate for only more advanced players to tackle.

Conclusion

Rochberg's career stands apart from his compositional contemporaries. Following retrospectives and celebrations of Rochberg in 2018—the centennial year of his birth—critics and scholars continue to debate his place and importance in the late-twentieth century musical landscape. Depending on one's perspective, Rochberg is regarded as either a radical anomaly, a conservative traditionalist, or simply a curiosity.[17]

Regardless of one's opinions about Rochberg's place in contemporary music, violists can be thrilled that he gifted us the viola sonata. Composed in the midst of his most oft performed stretch of chamber works, it stands as an important contribution to the viola repertoire. It remains popular with both performers and audiences, forty years after the extraordinary circumstances of its premiere.

Jacob Adams is Assistant Professor of Viola at the University of Alabama. He was Festival program coordinator for the 2018 AVS Festival and serves on the board of the American Viola Society.

Editor's note: In the previous issue, Dr. Adams's name was mistakenly omitted in the acknowledgements for the 2018 AVS Festival. He was instrumental in the success of the festival in his many roles, not the least in serving as the Chair of the Festival Proposal Submission Committee. I deeply regret this omission.

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Notes

[1] Dixon, Joan DeVee. *George Rochberg: A Bio-bibliographic Guide to His Life and Works* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1992), xvii.

[2] Rochberg, George. *Five Lines Four Spaces: The World of My Music* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 225. Rochberg refers to this as a hieroglyph to "emphasize its symbolic, magical property."

[3] Rochberg, 225.

[4] Rochberg, 98.

[5] Rochberg, George. "Can the Arts Survive Modernism? (A Discussion of the Characteristics, History, and Legacy of Modernism)." *Critical Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (1984): 332.

[6] Most prominently, the 1972 premiere of Rochberg's *String Quartet No. 3* is highlighted in Richard Taruskin's voluminous *Oxford History of Western Music* as being the beginning point of "the postmodernist turn in music." See Richard Taruskin, "After Everything," in *The Oxford History of Western Music,* vol. 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 414. Wierzbicki, James. "Reflections on Rochberg and "Postmodernism"." *Perspectives of New Music* 45, no. 2 (2007): 108.

[7] George Rochberg, "Polarity in Music: Symmetry and Asymmetry and their Consequences," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 141, No. 2 (June, 1997): 174-175.

[8] Brunner, Lance W. *Notes* 38, no. 2 (1981): 424. doi:10.2307/939895.

[9] Rochberg, 227.

[10] Rochberg, 227.

[11] Rochberg, 228.

[12] Rochberg, 228. Critics did point to this as a structural flaw in the Viola Sonata, writing that the piece was "curiously unbalanced." See Dickinson, Peter. *Music & Letters* 65, no. 1 (1984): 130. http://www.jstor.org/stable/736388.

[13] Dixon, 24-26.

[14] A note on Rochberg's *Octet*: Rochberg referred to this as "the last in a long series of varied chamber works which have occupied me over the last decade, works in which I explore the possibilities of a larger palette of expressive means than allowed by modernism *per se.*" While he is likely referring mainly to the Concord Quartets with this quote, the way he frames the timeline would include the Viola Sonata as among these chamber works. See Dixon, 103.

[15] Dixon, xxxix.

[16] Dixon, 60.

[17] For an example of Rochberg's ongoing debate with the avant-garde, see his 1984 debate with Jonathan Kramer in *Critical Inquiry*: George Rochberg, "Can the Arts Survive Modernism? (A Discussion of the Characteristics, History, and Legacy of Modernism)." *Critical Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (1984): 317-40, and Jonathan D. Kramer, "Can Modernism Survive George Rochberg?" *Critical Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (1984): 341-54. For articles championing and re-assessing Rochberg's progressive bonafides, see Jay Reise, "Rochberg the Progressive," Perspectives of New Music 19, No. 1/2 (Autumn, 1980–Summer, 1981): 395–407, and Robert Gross. "Rochberg the Progressive, Revisited: An Analysis of the Third String Quartet." *Perspectives of New Music* 51, no. 2 (2013): 192-241.

Special Feature

Pursuing a Commission

David Dalton

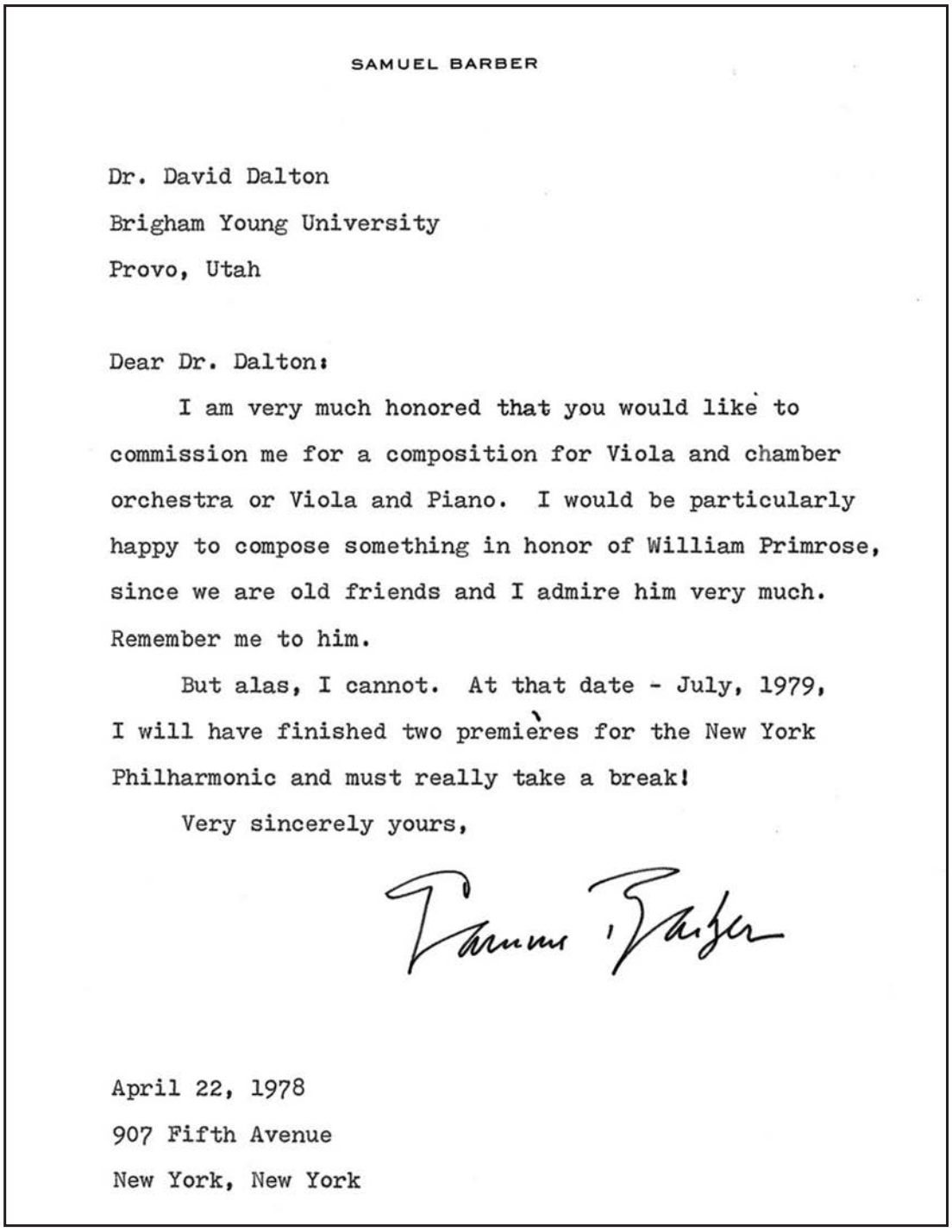
Joseph de Pasquale (center) shaking the hand of William Primrose (right) following the premiere of Rochberg's Viola Sonata on July 14, 1979 at the International Viola Congress in Provo, Utah, with pianist Vladimir Sokoloff (left). Photo by Dwight Pounds.

As organizer and host of the 1979 International Viola Congress at Brigham Young University, I was hopeful to commission a major work for viola to be premiered at the Congress in commemoration of William Primrose's approaching birthday. Perhaps I was overly ambitious, which is possibly one of my foibles in wanting a sonata or concerto by a well-known, even major American composer. Several problems immediately loomed. What would it cost? Which composer? How to make contact? When I started on this quest, I had no money to pay a composer and only a vague idea of possible funding sources. These circumstances convinced me that mine was a brazen idea. But I decided to plunge ahead as far as I could go.

A year or so before the Congress, which would take place the following July, I was given a tip that a good starting place in identifying potential composers was the American Music Center in New York City, and specifically one, Margaret Jory. "Peggy," as she was known, was not only knowledgeable, but helpful, even encouraging. I felt I had struck a vein of gold. Money being the bottom line, it became the top priority of discussion. "What would a commission cost for a full-length sonata or concerto?" Her immediate answer was $5,000 for a sonata and $7,000 for a concerto. ($5,000 would be equivalent to about $17,000 in 2019 dollars). This did not strike me as an insurmountable sum, but it bode of hours of hard work with prospective donors. Who would these be?

I soon learned it was too late on national, and sometimes state, calendars for arts funding, so I had to turn elsewhere. Would BYU contribute even more than it was already doing in behalf of the Congress? And what about the American Viola Society, with only modest recourses? The larger and amorphous circle of viola devotees? Would there be one individual in "Friends of Primrose," who would gladly step forward and honor his friend and his art by guaranteeing the commission?

I recited to Ms. Jory my short list of composers from whom I would personally like to imagine a new viola work. "My first choice would be Samuel Barber," I said. I knew his violin concerto and cello sonata, and I thought his lyricism would fit the viola superbly. She answered



SAMUEL BARBER

Dr. David Dalton
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

Dear Dr. Dalton:

I am very much honored that you would like to commission me for a composition for Viola and chamber orchestra or Viola and Piano. I would be particularly happy to compose something in honor of William Primrose, since we are old friends and I admire him very much. Remember me to him.

But alas, I cannot. At that date - July, 1979, I will have finished two premières for the New York Philharmonic and must really take a break!

Very sincerely yours,

Samuel Barber

April 22, 1978
907 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

Figure 1. Letter from Samuel Barber to David Dalton. Graciously provided by David Day, curator of the Primrose International Viola Archive.

that I was free to approach him, and furnished his contact information. But she was not optimistic because he had been ill and already had several commissions awaiting his attention. Nevertheless, I did write Barber and he graciously declined in writing my offer of a commission (fig. 1). Similarly, I contacted Aaron Copland, though Peggy advised he was no longer composing. She seemed to have current and encyclopedic knowledge of American composers generally, and could guide me away from others I had suggested, i.e. George Crumb, Elliott Carter. I had even approached William Walton for another concerto. After all, it was said that Walton had indicated to Tertis he might want to write a second work for the violist. And Primrose had said he and Walton were "old friends."

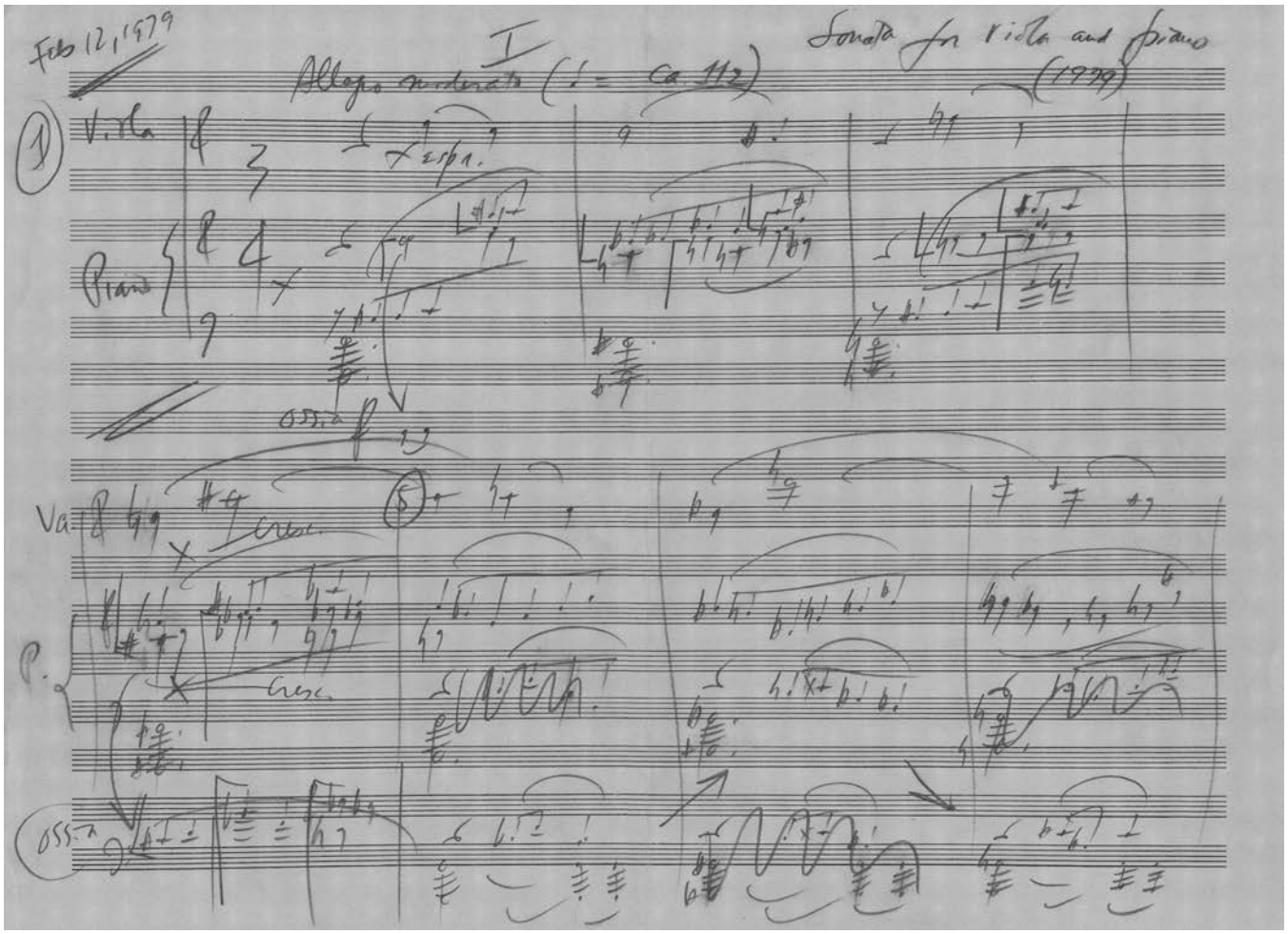
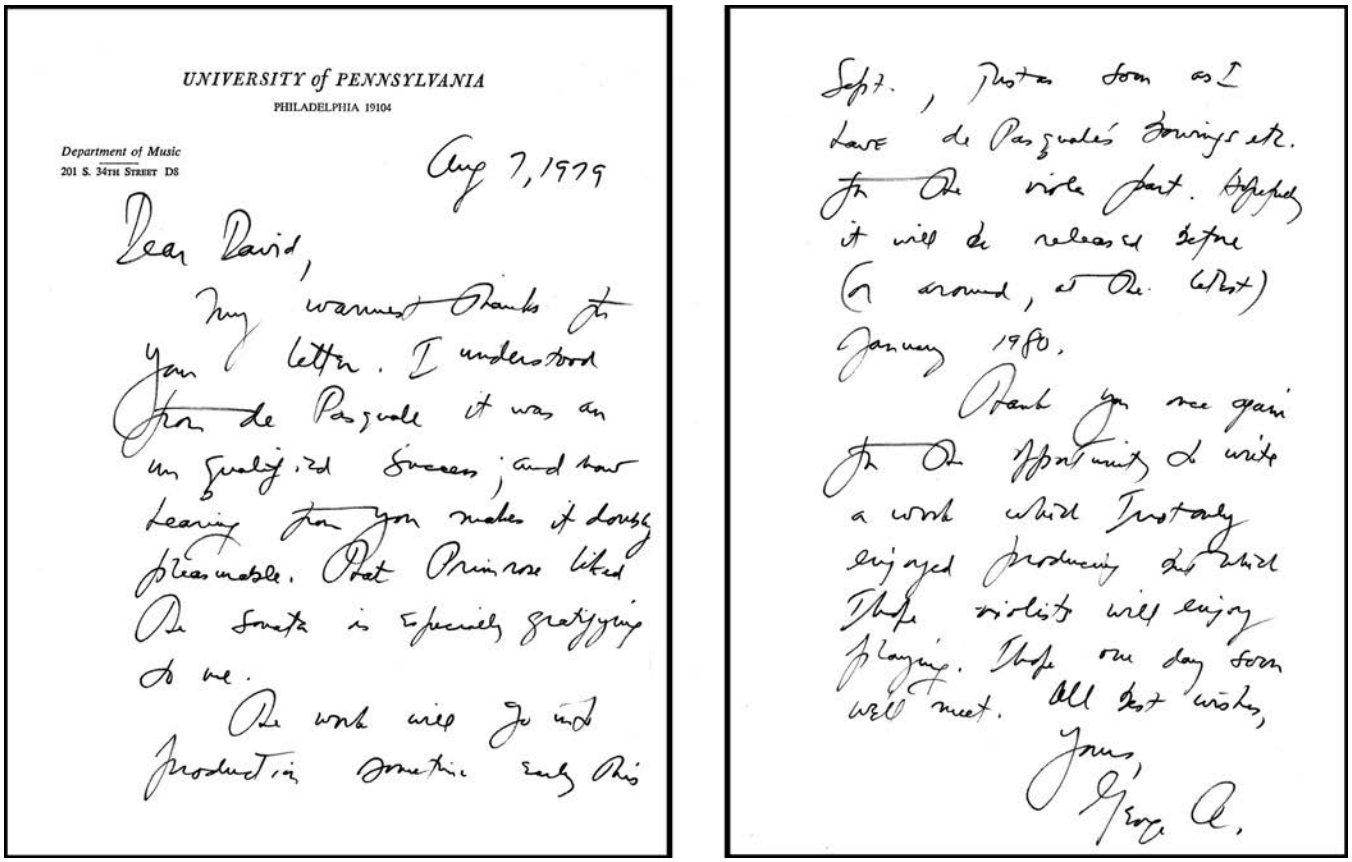


Figure 2. The first page of the autograph manuscript of George Rochberg's Sonata for viola and piano. Graciously provided by David Day, curator of the Primrose International Viola Archive.

Then almost suddenly, as I remember, Peggy asked, "What about George Rochberg?" I admitted that I knew little of his work but admired his Third String Quartet. She explained that he had left his serial period, and was now writing in a postmodern romantic style. She thought he had completed a project and might be free to entertain a commission. I wrote him and he was very interested in writing a sonata for viola. Further, I told him of Mr. Primrose's desire to have Joseph de Pasquale, whom Rochberg knew, premier the work. Conveniently, both lived in the Philadelphia area where working together on the new sonata would be eased. Efforts were made to secure funding, and contributors were recognized on the opposite page of the Theodore Presser score:

> *Commissioned by Friends of William Primrose, The American Viola Society and Brigham Young University*
> *In honor of William Primrose on his 75th Birthday*

De Pasquale sent me a rough draft of the new work simply to gain my reaction. I was immediately impressed and thought this viola sonata might enjoy some longevity. I was moved by the expressive slow movement, and liked the drama of the first.[1] My anticipation was greatly heightened as the date of the premier approached, July 14, 1979 at the Seventh International Viola Congress, BYU, Provo, Utah. That afternoon the atmosphere in the hall was electric. Two superb musicians, de Pasquale and Vladimir Sokoloff, were poised to play with Primrose "presiding" front and center from his seat in the audience. With the sweep of the beginning measures, I was swept away, thinking that finally, it had all come together. It was one of those rare musical moments one experiences and which remains indelible.


UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA 19104

Department of Music
201 S. 34TH STREET DS

Aug 7, 1979

Dear David,

My warmest thanks for your letter. I understood from de Pasquale it was an unqualified success; and now hearing from you makes it double pleasurable. That Primrose liked the Sonata is especially gratifying to me.

The work will go into production sometime early this Sept., just as soon as I have de Pasquale's bowings etc. for the viola part. Hopefully it will be released before (or around, at the least) January 1980.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to write a work which I not only enjoyed producing but which I hope violists will enjoy playing. I hope one day soon we'll meet. All best wishes,

Yours,

George R.

Figure 3. Letter from George Rochberg to David Dalton following the premiere performance of the Sonata. Graciously provided by David Day, curator of the Primrose International Viola Archive.

Transcription of the letter above:
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Dr. David Dalton is professor emeritus of Brigham Young University where he co-founded with his teacher, William Primrose, the Primrose International Viola Archive (PIVA). He was editor of JAVS for fifteen years, and served as president or the American as well as the International Viola Societies. He is one of two persons to be honored by the Society with the Golden Clef.

Notes

[1] For an analysis of the Rochberg viola sonata by Dr. LeeAnn Morgan, including an interview with the Joseph de Pasquale, see *Journal of the American Viola Society,* Vol. 14 No. 3, 1998.

Special Feature

A "Design of Exchange" in George Rochberg's Sonata for Viola and Piano (1979)

Leah Frederick

> "Before I knew anything about the history and background of chamber-music literature for solo string instruments and piano, the very sound of the violin, viola, or cello in concert with the piano exerted a magnetism I found irresistible. . . . There is a magic in these duos with their constantly changing patterns of color, in the subtle varieties of sound patterns as different registers and textures mix, mingle, and share in a composed *design of exchange*. . . .
>
> Only a few composers have had the luck to make this magic happen consistently—Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. The secret of how they managed this lay in their inordinate skill in handling the art of musical conversation—how their incomparable ideas were made to pass from one instrument to the other in an inevitable, seamless flow of *dialogue*."[1]

In this excerpt from his published memoirs, American composer George Rochberg portrays the interactions in string-piano duos as a type of dialogue. Such a characterization embraces a long tradition of likening chamber music to conversation.[2] This article takes the notion of "dialogue" as inspiration for an analytical reading of the first two movements of George Rochberg's Sonata for Viola and Piano—notably Rochberg's only string-piano duo involving the viola. My analysis interprets the term "dialogue" in two ways: first, in reference to this "composed design of exchange," where players converse by trading and responding to one another's musical ideas; and second, as a way of relating this piece to the conventions of the past.[3]

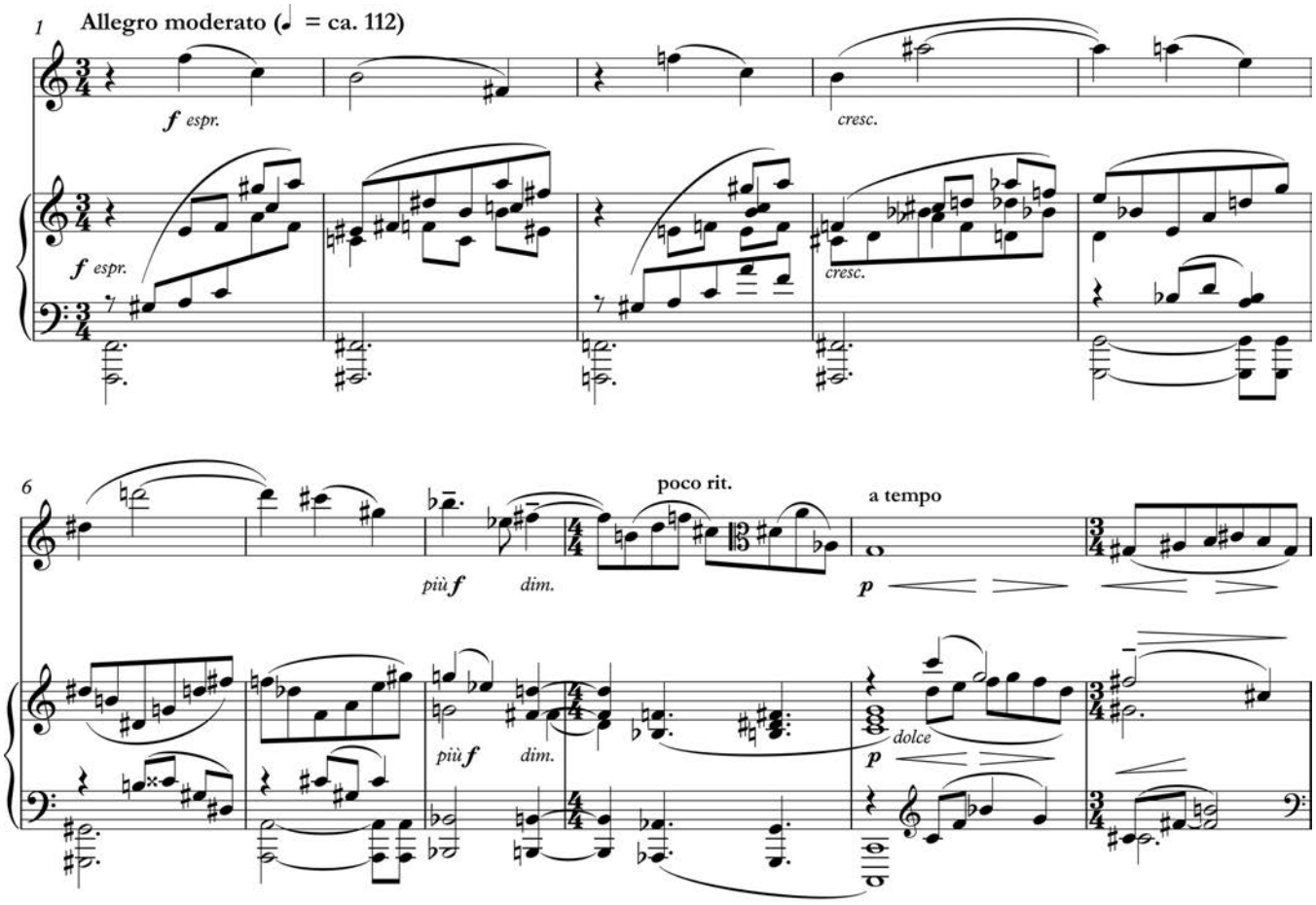
Rochberg's Viola Sonata was completed in 1979, after his famous shift from serialism back to tonality. Like many twentieth-century works, this sonata alludes to the harmonic syntax and classical forms of the common-practice era—the latter part of my analytical lens highlights such references to tonality. In adopting such an approach, I do not wish to ignore the innovations of the twentieth century; rather, I hope to invite a new way of hearing this piece that celebrates its relationship with the music that came before.

Movement I: Allegro Moderato

Exposition

The first movement of the sonata opens with a lyrical, sweeping motive comprised of two descending fourths F–C and B–F-sharp (ex. 1, mm. 1–2). In his memoirs, Rochberg describes this melodic fragment as a "hieroglyph" that originated in sketches for a violin sonata begun in 1942.[4] At the start of the piece there are three components to the texture: the viola's "hieroglyph" melody, the piano's perpetual eighth-note accompaniment, and the piano's steady bass line, reinforced in octaves. This bass line is rather conventional due to its stepwise linear motion and outlining of fifths: it starts on an F, is decorated by an upper neighbor note, and then ascends by semitone.[5] Just before reaching its eventual goal of C, the bass line changes direction, plummeting to a lower octave. The descent from G to C at the start of m. 10 acts as an elided authentic cadence.

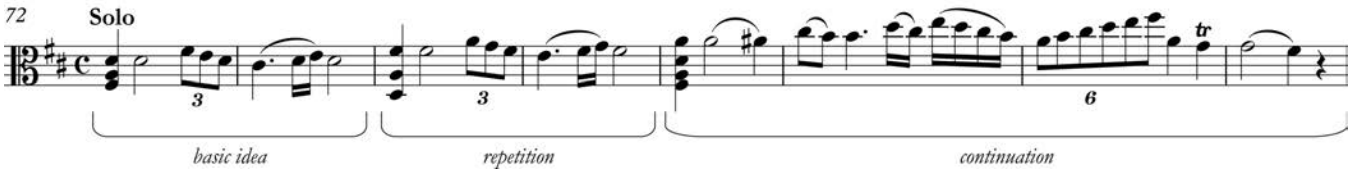
A version of this article was presented at the American Viola Society's 2018 Festival in Los Angeles, CA. The author gratefully acknowledges the comments received on that occasion, as well as conversations about this piece with Christa Cole, Julian Hook, Blair Johnston, and Marianne Kielian-Gilbert.



Example 1. Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, I, mm. 1–11

This formal boundary is signaled not only by the bass line's descent by fifth, but also by the preceding hemiola-like rhythm in mm. 8–9, a gesture frequently used to signal an impending cadence. The emphasis on the tonal frame from F to C implied by both the bass line and the initial two melodic pitches suggests a pitch center of F. Although this music is certainly not in "F major" or "F minor," in the context of this piece the note F assumes the stability of a "tonic," while the note C acts as a "dominant." In addition to these harmonic allusions to tonality, the formal structure of this theme further strengthens its connection to common-practice-era repertoire. The initial phrase resembles a pattern common in the classical era: a sentence.[6]

As an eighteenth-century example of a prototypical sentence, consider the soloist's first phrase in Carl Stamitz's Viola Concerto in D major, Op. 1 (ex. 2). The first two measures present the basic idea. Next comes the repetition (mm. 3–4), where the initial gesture is repeated, possibly with slight alterations. The final four bars (mm. 5–8) form the continuation, which often starts with a fragmented form of the motive and ends with a push towards a cadence. While a prototypical sentence structure has these 2+2+4 proportions, in the opening phrase of Rochberg's Sonata, the hemiola expands the continuation to a total length of 6 bars.



Example 2. Stamitz, Concerto for Viola and Orchestra in D major, Op. 1, I, mm. 72–79, (solo viola)

Interpreting this phrase as a reference to a classical sentence structure draws attention to the role of each instrument in defining this formal type. The 2+2+6 organization is quite clear in the piano's part due to the texture: the rhythms and general shape of mm. 1–2 are nearly exactly repeated in mm. 3–4, and the new contour of the right hand's eighth notes in m. 5 repeats in the following two measures. The viola, on the other hand, seems to fight against these formal divisions. She presents the sweeping, descending fourth motive as a basic idea and begins a repetition of it, but then holds the A-sharp for too long, blurring over the boundary between mm. 4–5 with a tie instead of articulating a new beginning to initiate the continuation. Her ascending leap from B to A-sharp builds intensity, propelling the line to soar ever higher, only coaxed to a cadence by the piano's hemiola-like rhythms.

This opening phrase serves as the primary theme in a twentieth-century interpretation of a sonata form, shown in Figure 1. The transition section begins with the arrival on the cadence in m. 10, establishing a "new key" area with a pitch center of C, the dominant. Here the viola lands on a whole-note G, shifting the listener's attention to her duo partner. The piano responds by repeating the melody of the primary theme, now transposed up a fifth and situated in new textural surroundings (ex. 1, mm. 10–11).[7] The stability of the bass line is gone: the lowest voice of the piano's left hand still ascends by semitone; however, it is now three octaves higher than before. This high register creates a less grounded feeling, as is appropriate during the transition section of a sonata exposition. Instead of playing the original inner-voice accompaniment, the piano introduces a new eighth-note idea beneath the primary theme. This gesture is passed to the viola, who initially passes it back (m. 12), but then

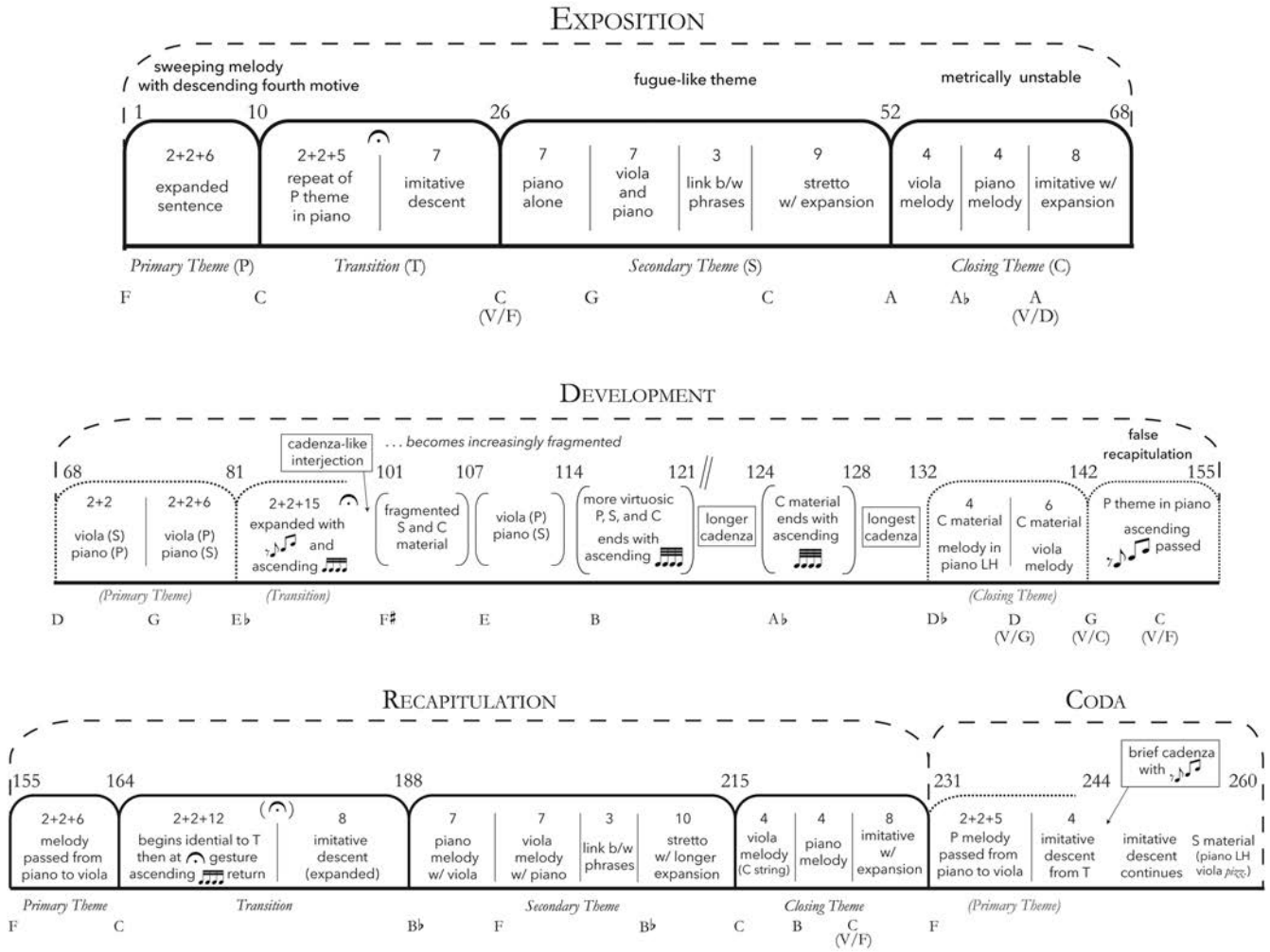
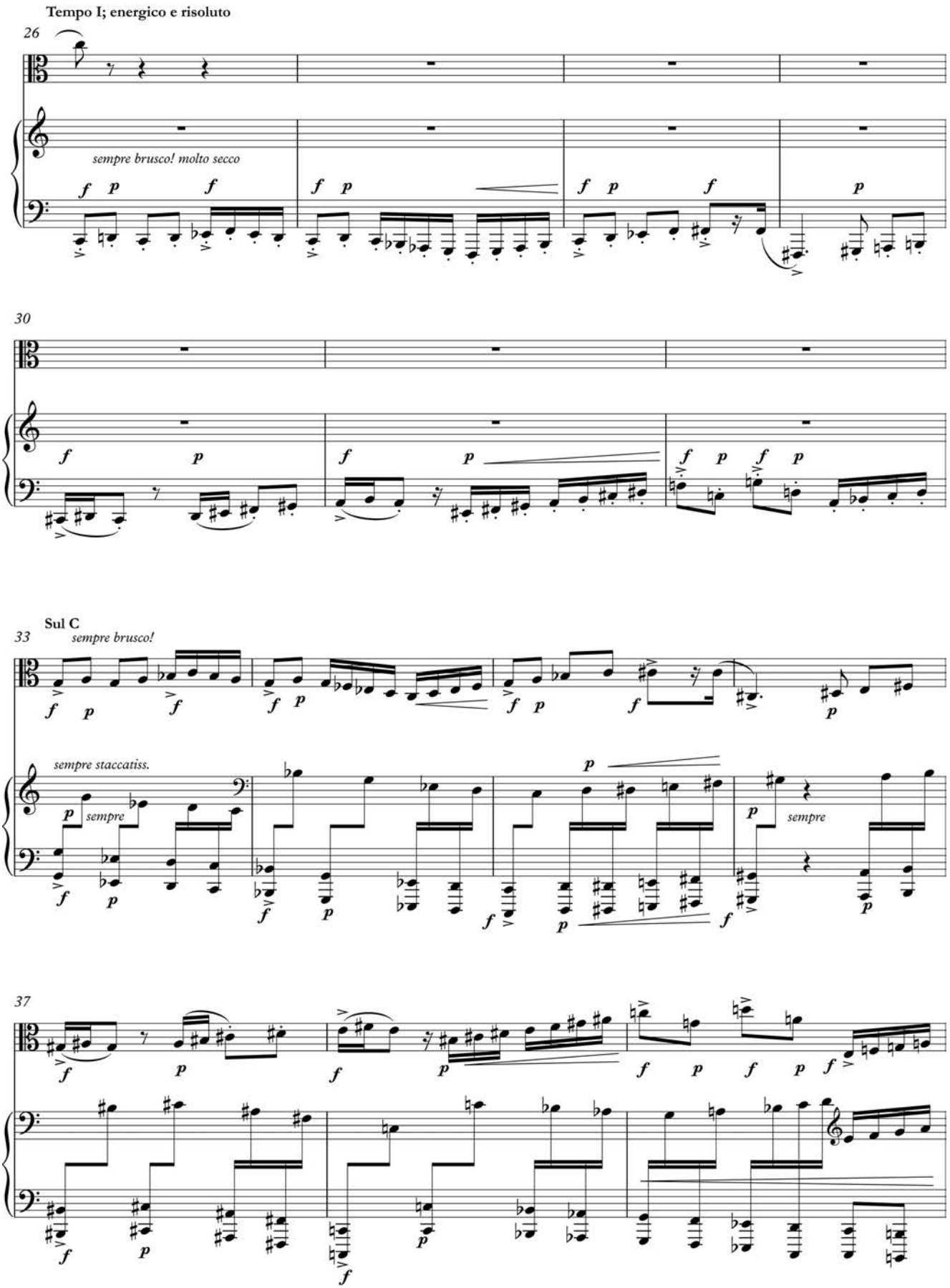


Figure 1: Formal Map of Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, 1st movement



Example 3. Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, I, mm. 26–39.

slightly alters the figure into an ascending scalar pattern, allowing her to begin to climb. This time there is no hemiola to halt her ascent; instead, both instruments land on a dissonant, *fortissimo* chord reminiscent of a half cadence (m. 18). The *allargando* and *espressivo* directions and long durational value suggest that this arrival could be held for longer than notated; perhaps the viola might even insert a slight break before her *dolcissimo* entrance.[8]

Beneath this building intensity (mm. 14–18), the piano continues an almost verbatim statement of the primary theme's melody transposed up a fifth to C—but as the viola's line gains momentum, she also draws the listener's attention. By the middle of this section, it is no longer clear which part is melody and which is accompaniment; the two textural roles have been conflated. After the climactic arrival (m. 18), energy dissipates as the viola and piano trade a descending fragment, borrowed from the primary theme and repurposed in an imitative texture. The piano introduces a hemiola in the bass line (mm. 23–24), perhaps both as a reference to the end of the primary theme and as a signal for the close of the section.

The secondary theme (mm. 26–51) establishes new roles for each instrument (ex. 3). The piano begins alone, presenting an accented, angular line. The rhythmic profile and single-voice texture of this new theme allude to characteristics of a fugue, a genre that epitomizes equality between voices. After eight measures of piano alone, the viola enters a fifth higher, acting as the answer to the piano's fugal subject. Within the sonata-form context of this movement, this entrance pushes the pitch center a fifth too far: we expect the secondary theme to appear in the dominant (C) during the exposition and be transposed down a fifth to the tonic (F) during the recapitulation. When the fugue subject returns to the piano in m. 43—now presented in a stretto-like texture between the two hands—the pitch center has returned to C.

This play of pitch center within the secondary theme continues in the recapitulation. Instead of beginning a fifth lower than in the exposition, the secondary theme begins two fifths lower (on B-flat instead of F; m. 188). This adjustment means that only the viola's "fugal answer" (beginning in m. 195) has the pitch center one would expect for the secondary theme in the recapitulation (the global tonic, F); the rest of the theme centers around B-flat (see fig. 1).

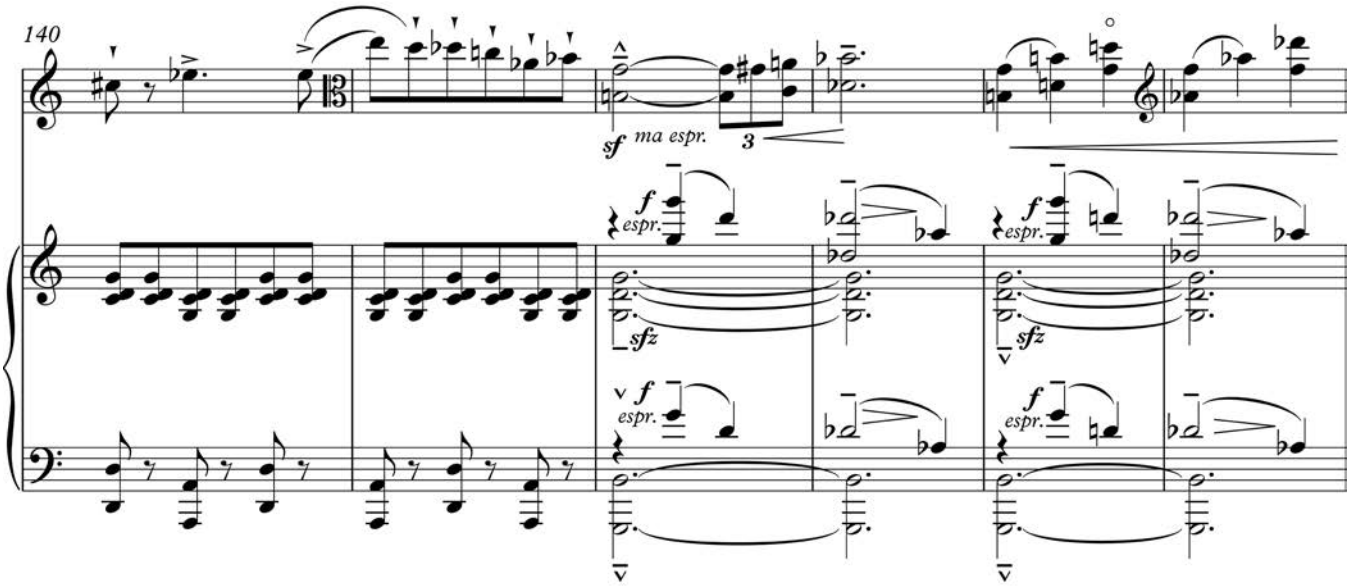
Back in the exposition, the relationship between instruments changes yet again during the exposition's closing section (mm. 52–68). The viola-melody/piano-accompaniment texture of the opening returns with a theme characterized by metric instability. This closing theme seems to have grown out of the sixteenth-note pickup gesture in the secondary theme area (for example, see m. 29). The pattern of the piano's accompaniment implies metrical accents every two beats, creating a hemiola against the notated 3/4 meter.[9] The viola's melody is also metrically unstable: her entrance and accents on beat 3 sound like downbeats (m. 52 and m. 53); the notated meter only returns with the early accent and eighth notes in mm. 54–55. The melodic line is passed to the piano's right hand for four measures, and then the two instruments share an imitative version of the theme that is stretched slightly, until the start of the development (m. 68).

Development and Recapitulation

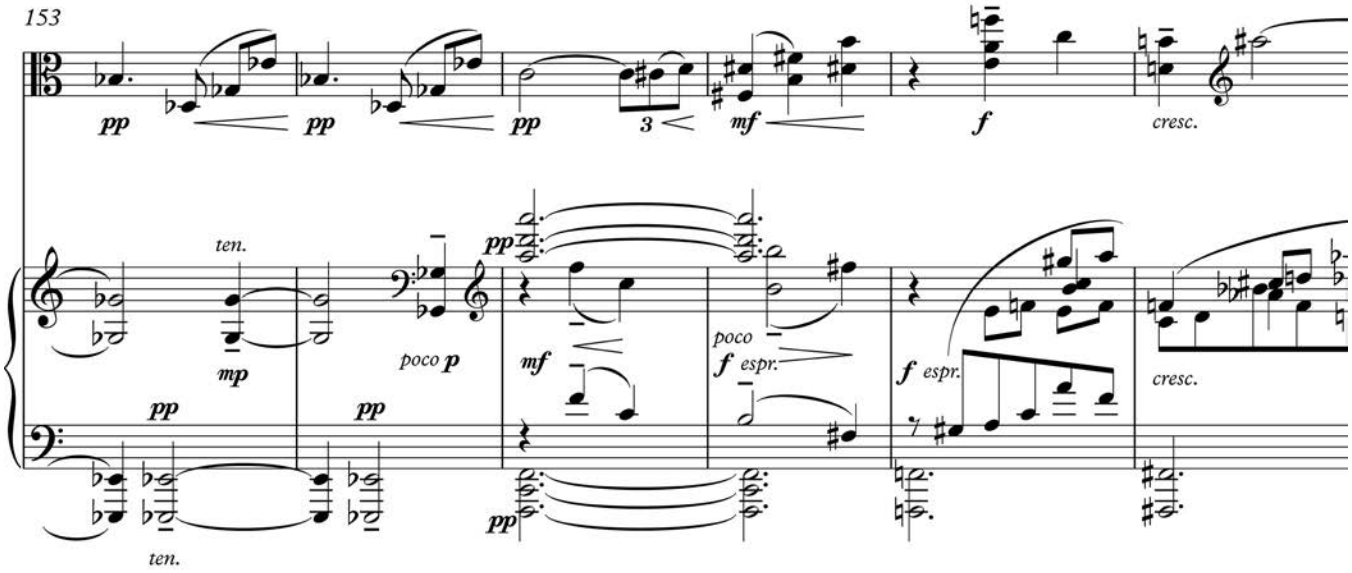
As one would expect in a sonata-form movement, the development recycles the thematic materials introduced in the exposition.[10] Rochberg begins the turbulent development with a contrapuntal combination of primary and secondary theme material with a pitch center on D. Each theme has been texturally altered from its original presentation: the piano's statement of the primary theme lacks the inner voices and bass line that appeared in the original version, and the viola presents a *pizzicato* version of the secondary theme moved to a higher register. Upon arrival in m. 72, the instruments trade roles: the piano suddenly switches to the secondary theme's fugue subject, and the viola layers a statement of the primary theme on top; here, the theme is transformed to include *pizzicato* chords on the downbeats that previously contained rests. Once the viola has presented nearly an entire statement of the primary theme, the development continues to cycle through the material from the exposition. The transition material returns in m. 81 with a pitch center of E-flat. This time the viola rests instead of holding whole notes and then introduces a rising motive of three eighth notes in m. 85. Meanwhile, the piano continues with transition material until m. 89, finally breaking from the primary theme melody in order to contribute punctuating chords as a response to the viola's ascending sixteenth notes. The tension builds, and then dissipates with a cadenza-like interjection from the viola (mm. 98–100).

Suddenly, the piano interrupts with secondary theme material. From here the development continues to combine the various themes in an increasingly fragmented manner. Twice more this culminates in an ascending viola line—the climbing sixteenth-notes turn into thirty-second notes (mm. 117–20 and mm. 124–27)—and both times it arrives at a viola cadenza, each one longer than the last (mm. 121–23 and mm. 128–31). The rotation through thematic material finally concludes with a fragmented version of the closing theme which passes the melody from the piano's left hand to the viola (mm. 132–40).

The piano is the first to urge for recapitulation by beginning a statement of the primary theme at the *sforzando* arrival on the downbeat of m. 142 (ex. 4). But his return is fake. The pitch center of this return is a step too high: it's on G, instead of the global tonic of F, necessary for a true recapitulation. The piano begins another statement of the primary theme with a gentler arrival in m. 155. This time the viola picks up the theme after two bars, as if finally in agreement that this is the proper moment for recapitulation (ex. 5). She enters in the exact same register as in the movement's opening bars, but now she begins with a rolled chord—as if to draw the



Example 4: Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, I, mm. 140–45



Example 5: Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, I, mm. 153–58

listener's attention to her entrance—and subsequently decorates the theme with double-stops. From here, the recapitulation proceeds mostly as expected, with a few exceptions. One such exception occurs in m. 173, where the viola's rapidly ascending sixteenth notes (which first appeared in the development) begin to infiltrate. The intensity builds until m. 178, the corresponding location to the quasi-half cadence in m. 18. The imitative descent that follows is expanded, allowing the extra tension to dissolve before the start of the secondary theme. Another alteration occurs at the start of the secondary theme (m. 188), where the viola joins the piano for the initial statement of the fugue subject.

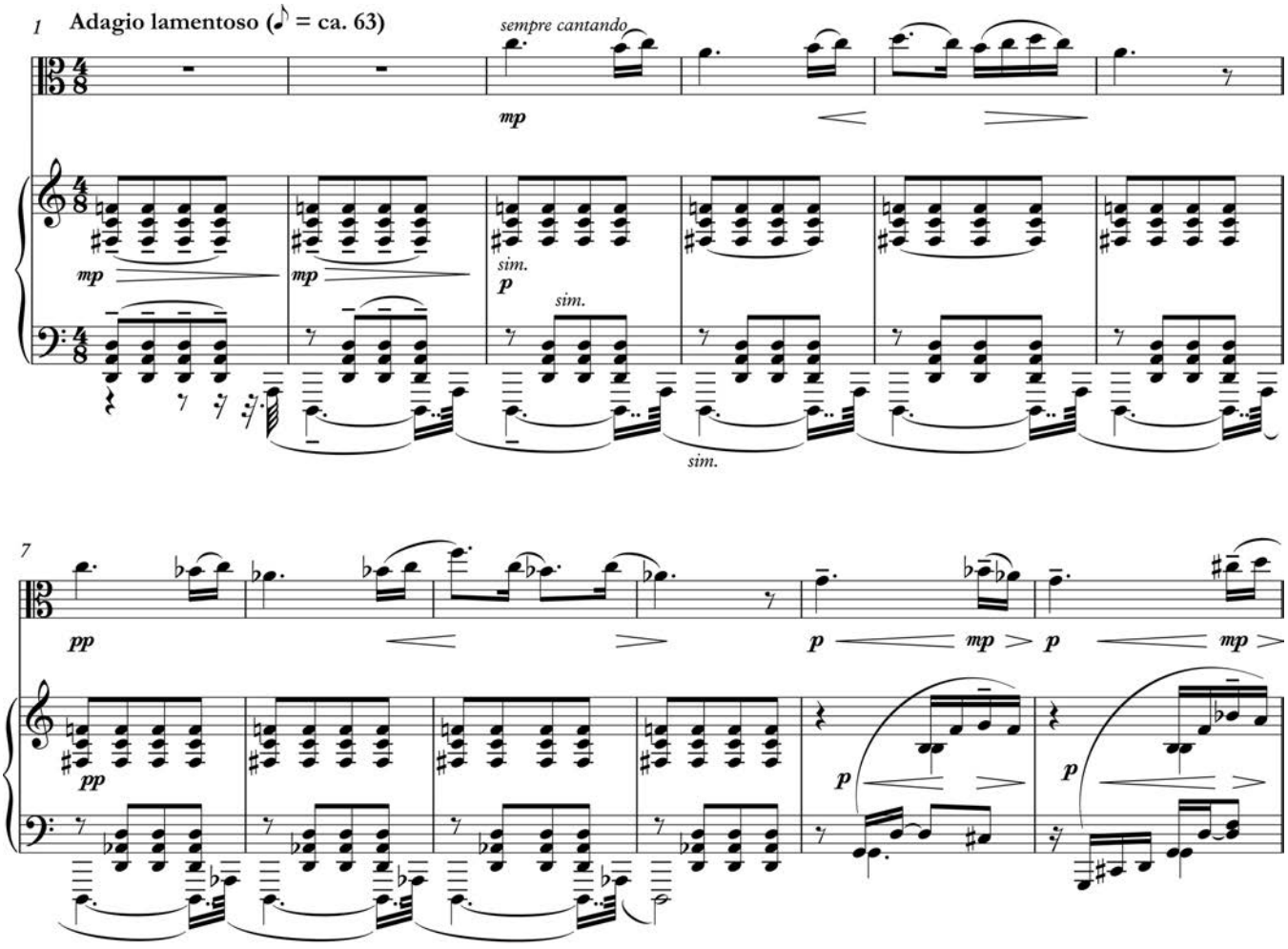
Coda

The end of the closing theme in the recapitulation leads seamlessly into a coda (m. 231) which begins with primary theme material. Just as in the recapitulation, the piano passes the primary theme to the viola after two measures. The piano continues with an accompaniment exactly as in mm. 3–7—apart from the appearance in the recapitulation, this is the only time that the piano's original inner voices and bass line have accompanied this theme. The viola's primary theme is an octave lower than before, allowing for a warmer tone color. A change occurs in m. 238: rather than leaping up to the B-flat suddenly (like in m. 8), the viola continues the theme's pattern with a step down and leap up.[11] As compared to the opening of the piece, here it seems as if the primary theme has broken free from its formal boundaries. The theme does not come to a cadence as before; instead it turns into a fantasia, foreshadowing the events of the third movement.

Movement II: Adagio Lamentoso

A section (mm. 1–14)

The piano establishes the mood of the second movement (ex. 6) with a two-bar introduction: a pulsing D-based



Example 6: Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, II, mm. 1–12

sonority containing both a major third (F-sharp) and a minor third (F-natural), as well as a minor seventh (C-natural).[12] Beginning as a pickup to m. 2, a low bass oscillation between A and D establishes D as the pitch center of this movement. Despite the instability of the sonority itself, its unfaltering repetition establishes a stable foundation for the entrance of the viola's song-like melody.

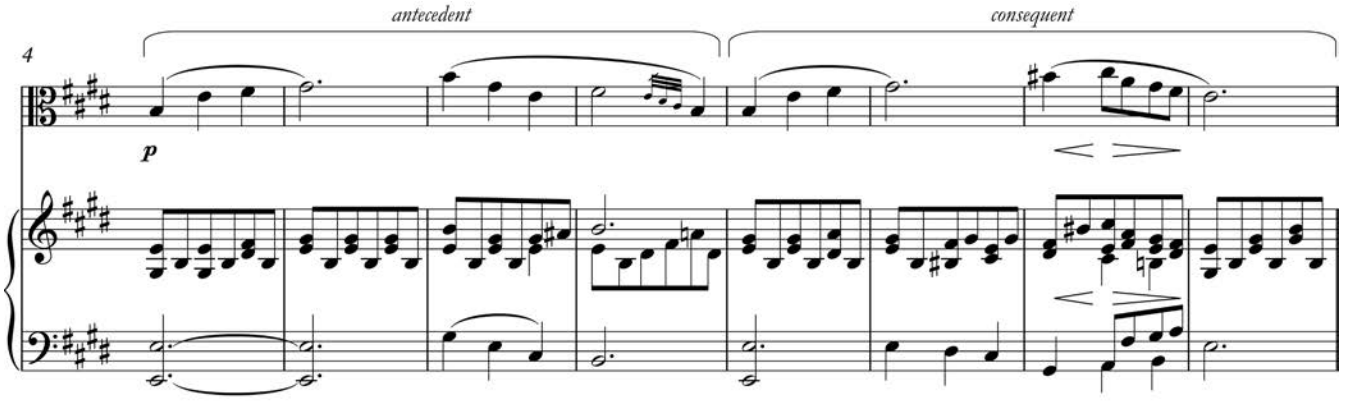
From the viola's perspective, this D tonic is completely absent. Her eight-bar melody seems to contain two different pitch centers: the first phrase (mm. 3–6) projects a tonic of A, whereas the second (mm. 7–10) centers around A-flat due to the addition of the two extra flats. Despite this harmonic complexity, it is worth emphasizing the inherent simplicity of this melody. Within each pitch center, the melody primarily uses diatonic scale degrees 1, 2, and 3, and in both cases, leaps to higher pitches only occur at the start of the third bar, giving each phrase a traditional melodic arch shape. One could also understand this dichotomy between simplicity and complexity to occur throughout time: the antecedent phrase presents a simple melodic shape with repeating accompaniment, while the consequent phrase takes the same idea but makes it more complex by adding more dissonance. Together, these two phrases reference another type of classical phrase structure: a parallel period. In such a structure, the first phrase, the antecedent, typically ends with a slightly weaker cadence, while the subsequent phrase, the consequent, ends stronger.[13]

A more conventional example of a parallel period occurs in the second movement of Schubert's "Arpeggione" Sonata (ex. 7). In this example the first phrase ends on the dominant with a half cadence, while the second ends on the tonic with a perfect authentic cadence. In Rochberg's Sonata, the piano's static accompaniment does not allow it to assist harmonically in the creation of either cadence. The viola's melody, however, implies a return to the tonic at the end of each phrase; a performer might choose to imply a stronger cadence in m. 10 than in m. 6.[14]

The harmonic tension between the viola and piano is immediately resolved upon arrival in m. 11 (ex. 6). Both instruments start on G, the subdominant (assuming a global tonic of D), and they seem to work together in the first unified gesture of the movement. The bass of the next two measures emphasizes A-flat (indicated as flat-V in fig. 2), and the subsequent section begins with a pitch center of A, the dominant (m. 15).

Overall Form

This passage constitutes the A section of the second movement, which has an overall formal structure: AAB/AAB/Coda (fig. 2). As in the first movement, this movement is composed from only a small amount of thematic material. There are essentially 20 bars of melodic ideas: 12 measures in the A section and 8 in the B section. The A material initially appears with a pitch center of D and moves through a quasi-functional progression (I–IV–flat-V–V), with the final V chord in D corresponding to the start of the next A section. This dominant chord acts as a sort of pivot that becomes the new tonic—the pitch center has essentially just moved up a fifth—and, as the A material repeats, so does the progression. After a contrasting B section, the next A section begins with a pitch center of G. This is clever since, once the section repeats a fifth higher, it has arrived back at the global tonic D. A similar fifth relationship occurs between the key areas of the two B sections. The coda begins off tonic, but eventually arrives to conclude in D.



Example 7: Schubert, Sonata for Arpeggione (Viola) and Piano in A minor, D. 821, II, mm. 4–11

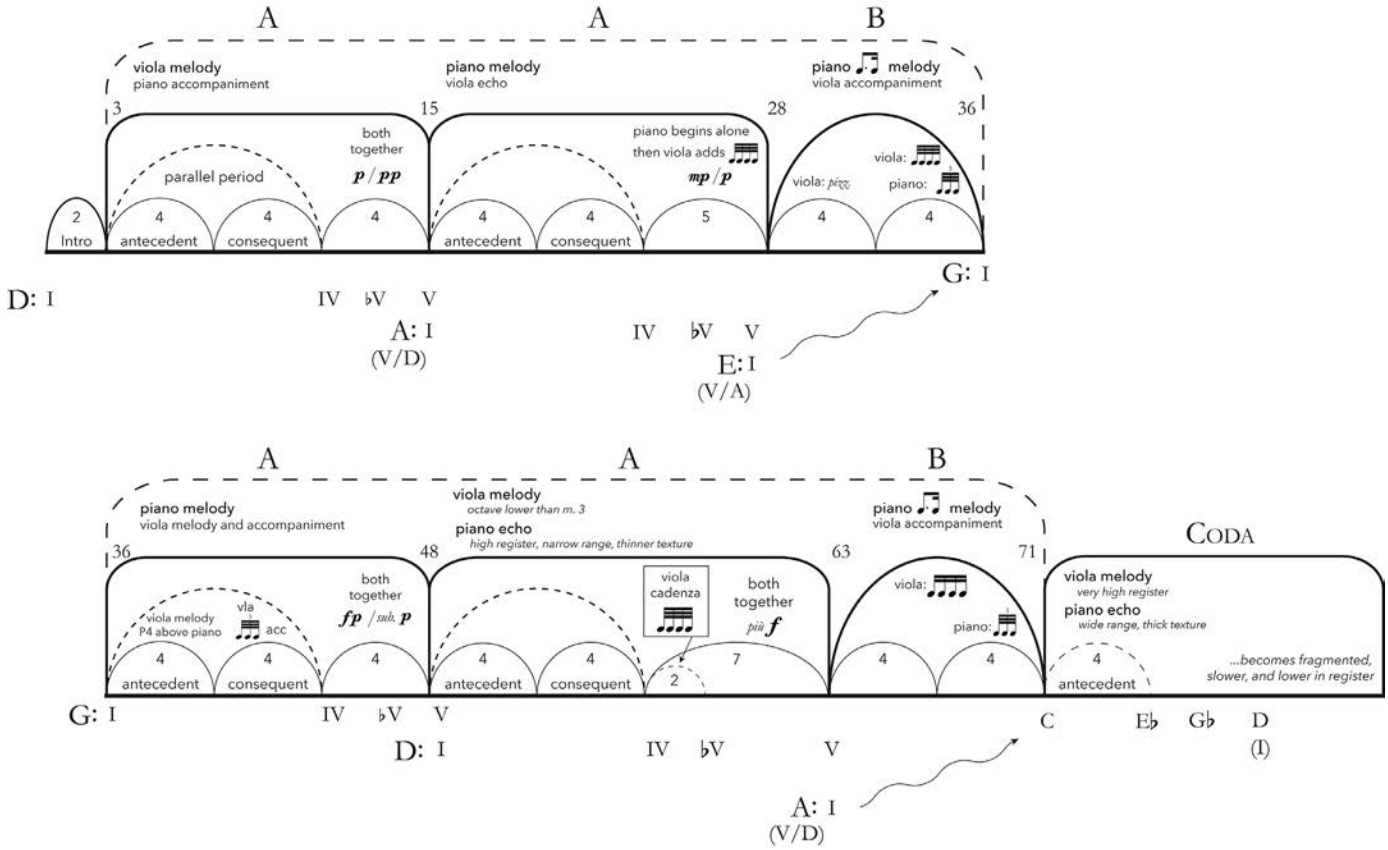
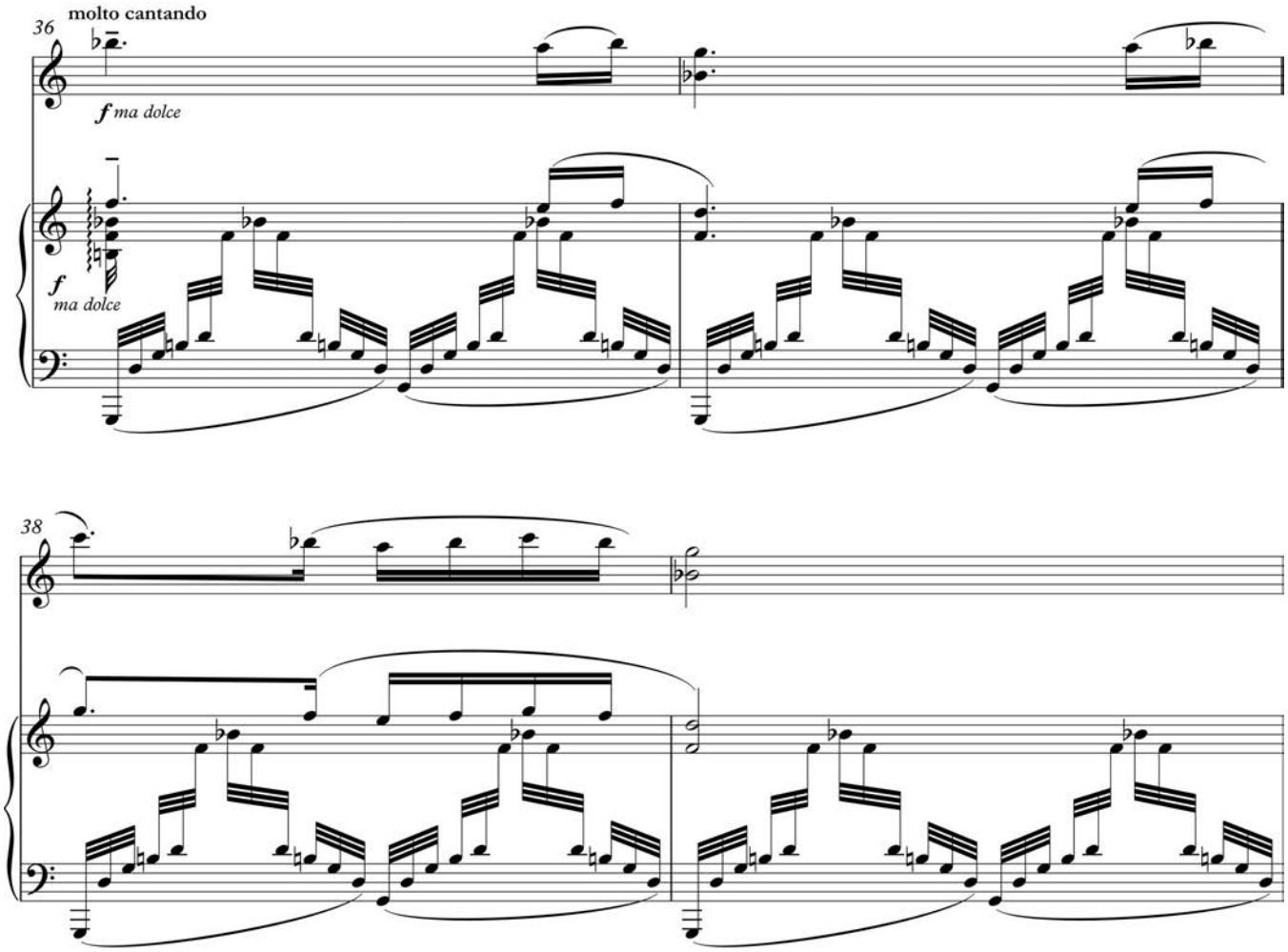


Figure 2: Formal Map of Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, 2nd movement

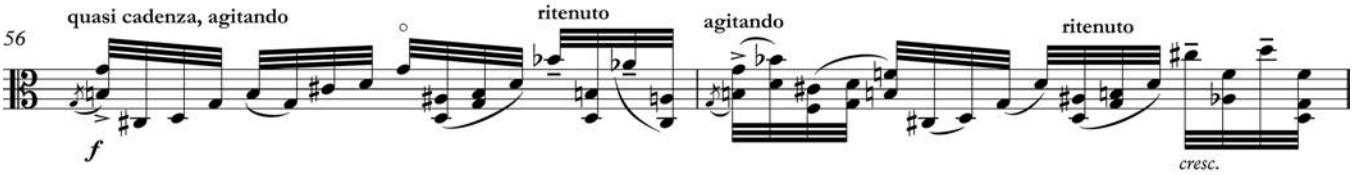
Return of Thematic Material

Each time the A material returns brings a new texture and relationship between instruments. In m. 15, the melody begins as an inner voice in the piano and is echoed a measure later and an octave higher by the viola. The viola quickly compresses the melody, so that she ends up only a single eighth note behind the piano by m. 17.
The most dramatic version of the antecedent phrase appears in m. 36: not only is the melody supported by the piano's flowing triplet-sixteenth-note accompaniment, it also appears at two different pitch levels (ex. 8). Although the viola initially seems to play the role of the melody here, it is actually the piano who states the melody at its original pitch level (in relation to the new pitch center), a seventh above the bass; the viola's melody moves in parallel fourths above the piano. Notably, at this pitch level the viola's statement of the melody implies a pitch center that matches that of the piano's accompaniment (G), perhaps alluding to resolution of the conflict implied at the opening of the movement. During the consequent phrase (mm. 40–43), the viola joins with the left hand's triplet sixteenths, leaving the melody only in the piano's right hand at the "proper" pitch level.
The melody appears again in the last A section (m. 48) at the same pitch level as the opening and with a similar texture. The most notable change here is the use of register: the viola plays an octave lower than before—allowing for a more resonant timbre—while the piano's chord spans a mere tenth in contrast to the vast four octaves traversed in the opening measures of the movement. The antecedent phrase of this melody appears one final time during the movement's coda. This version includes the "echo" from m. 15, but the instruments have traded roles so the piano now follows the viola; the melodic line is supported by a thick accompaniment of rolled chords in the piano's left hand.

As mentioned above, the final four bars of the first A section (mm. 11–14) serve as a moment of unification, the first spot in the movement where both instruments come together in agreement. The same collaborative gesture happens in m. 44, except with subtle alterations to the dynamic markings. The other two corresponding locations (m. 23 and m. 56), however, are transformed from a shared gesture to a moment of solo display. In m. 23, the piano comes into the spotlight, absorbing all of the textural components into his own part. The viola rests, and then enters with a shimmering, intricate accompaniment. The final appearance of this moment



Example 8. Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, II, mm. 36–39



Example 9. Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, II, mm. 56–57 (viola part)

is the viola's opportunity for virtuosity—but unlike the piano, she is not capable of playing both the melody and accompaniment herself. Instead, she transforms the gesture into a virtuosic cadenza; in fact, a shadow of the original melody can be traced in the highest notes of the passage (ex. 9; compare to ex. 6, mm. 11–12). The prominent use of the open G string implies the same subdominant harmony that appeared in the corresponding locations. In m. 58, the two instruments reunite in a texture similar to that of mm. 13–14, but expanded, so the entire four-bar section is stretched to seven bars.

Conclusion — Movement III: Fantasia: Epilogue

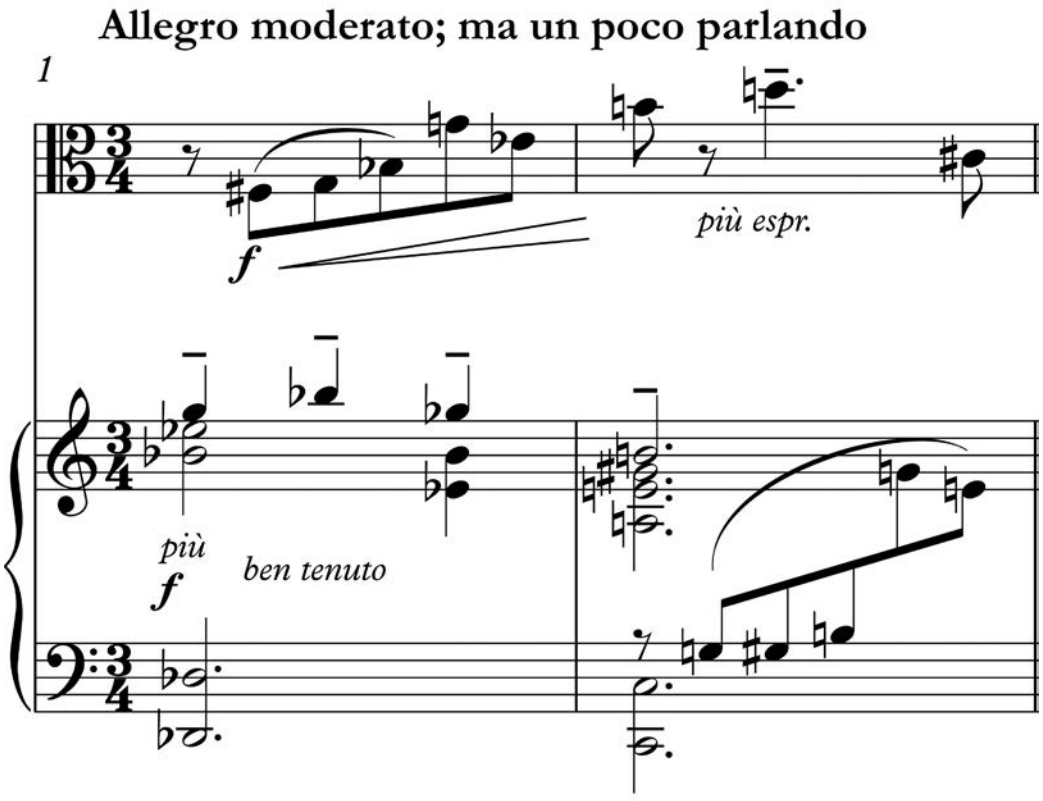
The third movement of the sonata is quite unlike the two that precede it. This final movement is very short (barely over 50 measures) and brings back ideas from the first movement in an improvisatory manner. In his memoirs, Rochberg describes his intentions to finish the sonata as a

two-movement work. At his wife's suggestion he agreed to add another movement:

> "The kind of last movement I knew I could not add—that in fact I detested—was a fast, concluding movement in order to fulfill a purely perfunctory function. If anything, it would have to speak the language and expressive character of what preceded it. I rejected the idea of a stormy finale—a kind of 'battle scenario' merely to round off the old fast-slow-fast structural format. After days of fretting and worrying about the problem, I settled on writing an epilogue, one that had the sense of 'remembrance of things past,' a musical recollection of major idiomatic elements that were characteristic of the opening Allegro moderato movement. To accomplish this I knew that I needed to write a fantasia—a free, open, unhampered musical flow that went from thought to thought without being bound into a tight formal structure. The Fantasia: Epilogue became the shortest of the three movements, but despite its restless, constant changing motion from idea to idea, it ends the work with a sense of deep repose and resolution—paradoxically, because of its last, stabbing, painful, *più forte espressivo* outburst just before the concluding *pianissimo* F-major chord."[15]

In this final movement, the dialogue between players continues to develop, intertwined with prior thematic material. Such interactions begin from the viola's first few notes, which are adapted from the piano's inner voices in the very first measure of the piece (ex. 10).[16] Nonetheless, unlike the initial two movements, this one has freed itself from harmonic expectation and formal constraints. What binds this movement together is its relationship to what came before: perhaps we might hear this final movement in dialogue with the sonata itself.

Leah Frederick is a Ph.D. candidate in music theory at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where she also studied viola with Atar Arad. She holds a B.M.A. in Viola Performance and a B.S. from Mathematics from Penn State University, where she studied viola with Timothy Deighton. Leah is currently writing a dissertation that studies diatonic voice leading using mathematical techniques.



Example 10. Rochberg, Sonata for Viola and Piano, III, mm.1–2

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Notes

[1] George Rochberg, *Five Lines, Four Spaces: The World of My Music*, ed. Gene Rochberg and Richard Griscom (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 223 (emphasis added).

[2] For a historical overview on the metaphor of chamber music as conversation, see Edward Klorman, *Mozart's Music of Friends: Social Interplay in the Chamber Works* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), ch. 2.

[3] My approach to describing the interaction between the two instruments loosely adapts Klorman's theory of multiple agency; see Klorman, *Mozart's Music of Friends*, ch. 4. Throughout my analysis I use instrument names ("viola" and "piano") to represent Klorman's "fictional performer personas," not actual performers (133). This approach leads to a problematic use of gendered pronouns (see Klorman 134n57); in my prose, I have arbitrarily chosen to use male pronouns for the piano and female pronouns for the viola.
My approach to interpreting this sonata as a twentieth-century tonal composition draws on Daniel Harrison, *Pieces of Tradition: An Analysis of Contemporary Tonal Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). In particular, Harrison defines four tonal techniques that can serve to reference tonality in contemporary works (40). All four techniques—linearity, meter, harmonic fluctuation, and traditional rhetoric—are present in Rochberg's Sonata.

[4] Rochberg, *Five Lines, Four Spaces*, 225. The organization of these pitches as two fourths (or fifths) separated by a tritone relates to a theoretical construct Rochberg later described as the "new circle of fifths"; see George Rochberg, *A Dance of Polar Opposites: The Continuing Transformation of Our Musical Language*, ed. Jeremy Gill (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012), 140–42.

[5] The emphasis on perfect fifths relates to Harrison's concept of "overtonality"; see Harrison, *Pieces of Tradition*, 17.

[6] For a detailed presentation of sentence structure and its role in classical form, see William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 35–48.

[7] The reader is encouraged to consult the details provided in the formal maps (Figures 1 and 2) for sections of the piece not included in musical examples.

[8] In fact, when this passage returns in the recapitulation (m. 179), there is a notated rest before the viola's next entrance.

[9] Unlike the local hemiola at the end of the primary theme, in the closing theme the metric dissonance continues throughout the entire section. A hemiola is specific type of "grouping dissonance" that involves a 2:3 ratio. For a definition and discussion of "grouping dissonance," see Harald Krebs, *Fantasy Pieces: Metrical Dissonance in the Music of Robert Schumann* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 31.

[10] It is also quite common for eighteenth-century sonatas to cycle through thematic material in P–T–S–C order during the development. This is one aspect of what Hepokoski and Darcy's call "rotational form"; see James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 611–14.

[11] This alteration has been anticipated throughout the movement. The primary theme material returns quite frequently, and there are six locations in the movement that correspond to m. 8: mm. 17, 79, 88, 162, 171, 238. From its first statement of this theme in the transition of the exposition, the piano always includes the extra step down (m. 17). The only time that the viola includes the extra step down is during the coda (m. 238); often a deviation at this location in the theme leads to some kind of chaotic gesture (for instance, see m. 88 and m. 171).

[12] This type of sonority is often used in jazz as a type of V chord. If one were to hear the opening in such a context, then the viola's emphasis on the seventh of the chord would further emphasize the dominant function of the sonority. This hearing would imply that the note D serves the role of a dominant, not a tonic.

[13] For a detailed presentation of periods and their use in classical form, see Caplin, *Classical Form*, 49–58.

[14] The term "parallel" refers to fact that both phrases start with the same melody. In the "Arpeggione" Sonata, the melodic lines of the two phrases begin identically. Although Rochberg's Sonata adds two flats in the second phrase, the two phrases resemble one another enough to be considered parallel.

[15] Rochberg, *Five Lines, Four Spaces*, 228.

[16] In the first movement, the viola presents a gesture in m. 254 that is identical to the piano's inner voices in m. 1. This gesture also seems related to the rising eighth notes that first appear in m. 85 of Movement 1 and are recalled throughout Movement 3.

Loss and Renewal: The Evolution of Charles Loeffler's *Deux Rapsodies*

Courtney Miller

Deux Rapsodies for oboe, viola and piano by Charles Martin Loeffler has become a staple of the chamber repertoire for both viola and oboe, admired for its strikingly evocative themes and programmatic effects. Taking its inspiration from French symbolist poetry, *Deux Rapsodies* has been capturing the imaginations of audiences for over a century. However, the personal tragedy interwoven in the creation of this composition is perhaps lesser known. *Deux Rapsodies* is actually a reworking of one of Loeffler's earlier compositions, *Rapsodies,* a three-movement work for clarinet, viola, voice, and piano and set to text from the poetry of Maurice Rollinat. This article will explore how Loeffler incorporates the programmatic elements illuminated by the text setting of his vocal *Rapsodies* into his instrumental *Deux Rapsodies*. This article will also delve into the tragic circumstances and emotional vulnerability surrounding these compositions.

Loeffler's Early Life

Charles Martin Loeffler is of German heritage and was born in 1861, most likely in Berlin. However, much of his early childhood was spent in Alsace, a province of France. His father was a successful academic in the field of agriculture with a specialty in horse breeding. His mother had a strong affinity for poetry and reading, which perhaps proved to have a direct influence for his compositions. In addition to being a distinguished researcher, his father also held political views that were not favorable with the German chancellor. As a result, Loeffler moved frequently while growing up and lived many places including France, Kiev, Hungary and at times in Germany. These experiences influenced his taste in music and his cultural identity. For example, when he lived in Hungary, he would spend evenings listening to the fiddling of the gypsy caravans. A frequent place to hear them was a row of inns near the Royal Agricultural Academy where his father taught. He also had fond and strong memories of spending time in Russia and Russian inspired themes would frequent his compositions throughout his compositional career. It was also in Russia where Loeffler began the study of music on the violin at age 8, with a German violinist in the St. Petersburg Orchestra.[1]

Professional Education and Early Career

In 1874, Loeffler decided to pursue music as a profession and moved to Berlin to study at the Hochschule für Musik. During his time in Berlin he studied with Eduard Rappoldi and then the great Joseph Joachim. Around 1877 he departed for further study in France. As a violinist in France, he studied with Lambert-Joseph Massart and joined the private orchestra of Paul de Derwies in 1879 as 2nd chair, first violin.[2]

Loeffler found his artistic home and soul in France. It was during his time in Paris that Decadence, which would become Symbolism, was taking root in literature and poetry featuring poets such as Mallermé, Rimbaud, Verlaine. He also came face to face with and fell in love with Impressionism. Loeffler became a "Francophile in his musical, artistic, and literary tastes."[3] This time-period of his study perhaps most directly influenced his *Rapsodies* as well as his *Four Poems,* opus 5, for voice, viola and piano. Both of these chamber works are scored for voice, viola and piano with direct inspiration and text from symbolist poetry.[4]

In 1881 Paul de Derwies, the conductor of Loeffler's orchestra, died unexpectedly. This event was the impetus necessary to nudge Loeffler to seek opportunity in America. He saved his money and traveled first-class on

Le Canada carrying with him letters of recommendation for work in America.[5] He spent one very successful season as a musician in New York before being personally appointed in 1882 to the position of Assistant Concertmaster of the Boston Symphony by Major Henry Lee Higginson, the owner of the Boston Symphony.[6]

Once in Boston, Loeffler gained prominence as a virtuoso violinist and avid chamber musician. He became an American citizen in May of 1887. He premiered his suite for violin and orchestra, *Les veilées de l'Ukraine* with the Boston Symphony on November 20, 1891 and was revered by both critics and patrons. This success as both composer and performer swung the door wide open for Loeffler to pursue composition with support and enthusiasm from the city of Boston.[7] Loeffler's popularity in Boston is still evident in 2019. His portrait hangs in both Symphony Hall and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Both venues continue to be revered centers of musical activity in Boston.

Loeffler's cultural identity is a bit complex and something he wrestled with throughout his lifetime. He never identified with his German heritage. In fact, he often claimed to have been born in Alsace, a province in France. Several articles written during his lifetime support this notion, but family records indicate that he was born Berlin. Throughout his childhood and even young adult life his family had political problems with Germany. They were so great that when Loeffler did immigrate to the United States in 1881, it is believed that his father was in prison for political reasons and Charles was left carrying the bulk of the financial burden for the family.[8]

The Poems

For the inspiration and text for *Rapsodies* Loeffler used poems from the French poet Maurice Rollinat's *Les Névroses*, a collection of poems published in 1883.[9] Loeffler specifically chose the poems "L'Étang," "La Cornemuse," and "La Villanelle du Diable" from the collection to set to music. Loeffler was often drawn to texts of a disconcerting and unsettling nature that dwell on death and the supernatural.[10] His choice of poems for *Rapsodies* vividly illustrates and represents this fascination.

Why did Loeffler choose these particular poems? The answer to this lies in Loeffler's close friendship with and admiration for Léon Pourtau, the principal clarinetist of the Boston Symphony. Pourtau and Loeffler shared a passion for Rollinat's poetry and would read and discuss it with one another. Pourtau could even recite "L'Étang" by heart. One can infer that Loeffler chose "L'Étang" for his friend Pourtau knowing of his particular affinity for the poem. Loeffler composed *Rapsodies* for baritone, viola, clarinet and piano: "L'Étang," "La Cornemuse," and "La villanelle du Diable" in the summer of 1898 in Medford, Massachusetts. Loeffler had intended to travel to Europe during the summer as many of his colleagues from the orchestra did, but had to remain in Massachusetts due to poor health.

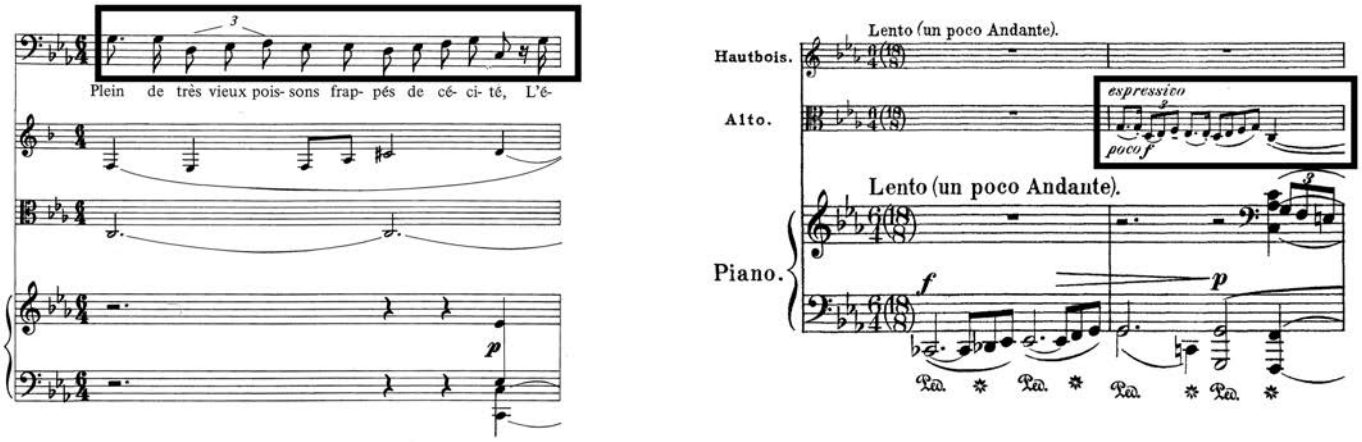
The Tragedy

Early in the morning on July 4, 1898, the French steamboat *La Bourgogne* struck the British sailing vessel the *Cromartyshire* off the coast of Halifax, Nova Scotia. *La Bourgogne* sank within an hour of impact. Over two-thirds (500+) of the people aboard died including all of the first-class passengers. Among the dead were three woodwind players of the Boston Symphony along with their families: Léon Pourtau, principal clarinetist, age 29; Albert Weiss, principal oboist, age 33; and Léon Jacquet, principal flutist, age 29.[11]

When Loeffler heard this news, he was distraught. He stopped working on *Rapsodies* and abandoned the work before it was ever performed. He wrote the following in a letter to Isabella Stewart Gardner, a notable patron of the arts in Boston at the turn of the century, regarding the event and his composition:

Figure 1. A comparison of the two Rapsodies.

Work	*Rapsodies* ("vocal rapsodies")	*Deux Rapsodies* ("instrumental rapsodies")
Instrumentation	Viola, Clarinet, Voice, and Piano	Viola, Oboe and, Piano
Poems	"L'Étang" "La Cornemuse" and "La Villanelle du Diable", by Rollinat	"L'Étang" and "La Cornemuse", by Rollinat



Example 1. The same melody in the beginning of "L'Etang" in the vocal rapsodies (left, m. 8) and the instrumental rapsodies (right, mm. 1–2).

> With dear old Pourtau at the Clarinette there might have shone some beauty out of them but now—I am discouraged. We shall not hear another artist like him in our days. What a catastrophe it all was and what a loss! I was truly fond of him. . . . He was an excellent companion. . . .[12]

Inspiration and Renewal

The Boston Symphony began seeking musicians from Europe to replace the three principal woodwind players who died on *La Bourgogne.* One of these musicians from France was an oboist named Georges Longy. In addition to his new duties as principal oboe of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Longy conducted the Orchestra Club of Boston between 1899 and 1911 and through this post introduced many French compositions to the city of Boston.[13] He also founded the Longy Club, which focused on chamber music for winds.[14] During his time with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Longy became an ardent supporter of Loeffler and encouraged him to revisit his *Rapsodies* in 1901. With Longy in mind, Loeffler reworked the composition and re-orchestrated the first two poems of the set: "L'Étang" and "La Cornemuse" for oboe, viola and piano. On December 16, 1901, Longy, Loeffler, and pianist Heinrich Gebhard premiered the work at the Longy Club.[15]

Figure 2. The musical sections of "L'Étang" in the 1905 "instrumental rapsodies" align with the stanza of the poem each section depicts.

Measures	Text
1–12	*Stanza 1* Full of old fish, blind stricken long ago, the pool, under a near sky rumbling dull thunder, bares between centuries-old rushes the splashing horror of its gloom
13–38	Instrumental Interlude between stanzas
39–46	*Stanza 2* Over yonder, goblins light up more than one marsh that is black, sinister, and unbearable; but the pool is revealed in this lonely place only by the croakings of consumptive frogs.
47–50	Instrumental Interlude
51–101	*Stanza 3* Now the moon, piercing at this very moment, seems to look here at herself fantastically; as if one might say to see her spectral face
102–121	*Stanza 4* Her flat nose, the strange vacuity of teeth-a death's-head lighted from within, about to peer into a dull mirror
122–147	Instrumental conclusion

It was extremely well received. The *Boston Transcript* described the performance as "for mere beauty of sound, anything more striking has not been heard here in years; the combination of oboe and viola formed a mass of tone the strange loneliness of which can only be described as haunting." The *Boston Journal* declared that "no sensitive hearer could have failed to recognize the presence of something rarely and wildly beautiful." The trio performed the work many more times and it became a personal favorite of Loeffler's.

Schirmer Music published *Deux Rapsodies* in 1905.[16] Loeffler dedicated the "L'Étang" to Pourtau and "La Cornemuse" to Longy. *Deux Rapsodies* is one of just a few of Loeffler's works that was published during his lifetime. The work was also one of Loeffler's favorites to perform and is Loeffler's most recorded composition.[17] For clarity moving forward when comparing the works, the first composition, *Rapsodies* will be referred to as his "vocal rapsodies" and the *Deux Rapsodies* will be referred to as his "instrumental rapsodies."

Loeffler's Rapsodies

This section is dedicated to the study and comparison between his vocal rapsodies and his instrumental rapsodies. Analysis and relevant structural correlations between the poems and the musical compositions are noted, drawing direct correlations between text and musical motives.

The text of the first poem "L'Étang" appears below.

L'Étang (The Pond)

> Full of old fish, blind-stricken long ago, the pool, under a near sky rumbling dull thunder, bares between centuries-old rushes the splashing horror of its gloom.
>
> Over yonder, goblins light up more than one marsh that is black, sinister, unbearable; but the pool is revealed in this lonely place only by the croakings of consumptive frogs.
>
> Now the moon, piercing at this very moment, seems to look here at herself fantastically; as though, one might say, to see her spectral face, her flat nose, the strange vacuity of teeth–a death's–head lighted from within, about to peer into a dull mirror.[18]
>
> – Maurice Rollinat (translated by Philip Hale)

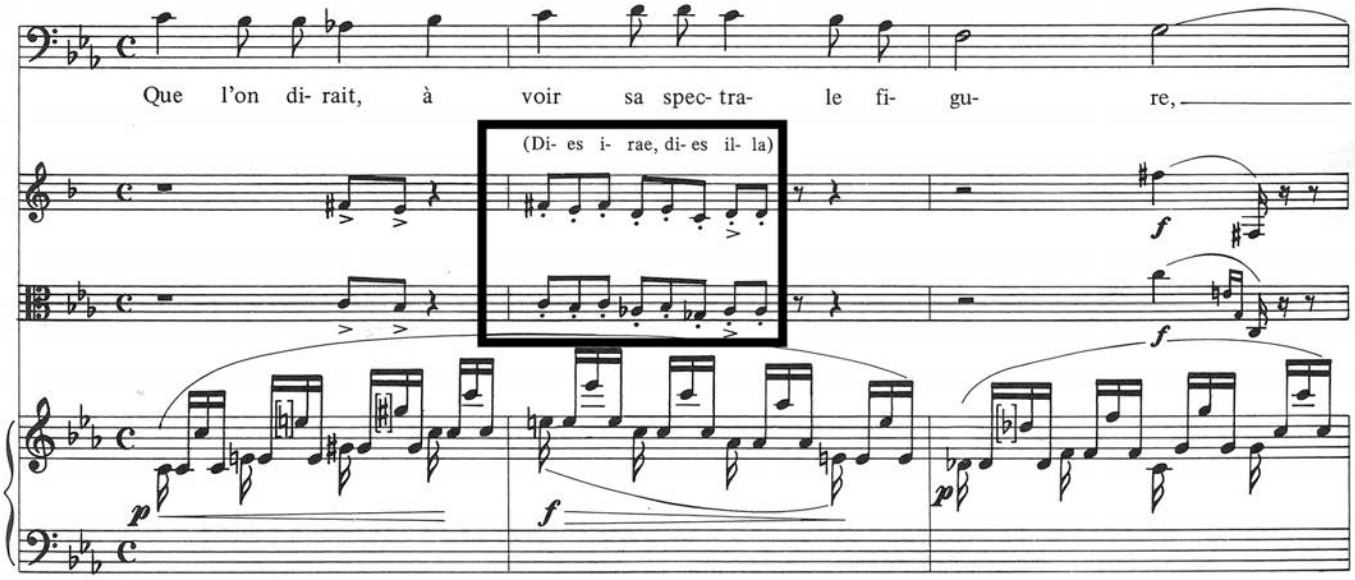
How different are the instrumental rapsodies from the vocal rapsodies for voice, clarinet, viola and piano? Loeffler kept the musical structure of "L'Étang" intact between both versions. More specifically, the stanzas of the poem and the music that accompanies each stanza are clearly defined and consistent between *Rapsodies* and *Deux Rapsodies*, which can be seen in ex. 1. The instrumental rapsodies often have longer and more developed thematic material; however, both versions have musical themes that correlate directly with the poetry.

As mentioned above, the structure of "L'Étang" in the instrumental rapsodies is very similar to the vocal rapsodies. This was possibly out of respect to his friend Pourtau for whom he originally conceived the piece. The result is an instrumental setting of "L'Étang" that is a chronological musical depiction of the poem, where each stanza and sometimes each line of the poem can be matched to its musical counterpart (theme or section). Figure 2 outlines the text translation with its corresponding measure numbers in the score.

These texts were translated to English by Philip Hale, who was the program annotator for the Boston Symphony during this era and a prominent supporter and admirer of Loeffler.[19] His translation of the poems from French to English was later published with the score for *Deux Rapsodies*. The only oddity about his translation is that he compressed four stanzas of French text in "L'Étang" into three stanzas of English. Upon examination of the above chart, there may have been a musical reason to combine stanzas three and four. These are the only stanzas that Loeffler doesn't separate with an instrumental interlude in his vocal rapsodies.

Text painting is clearly evident in his vocal rapsodies. One of the most easily identifiable examples of text painting is the appearance of the chant *Dies Irae* in the piano part that accompanies any textual reference to death or a specter (e.g. mm. 37, 40, 43–44), as shown in example 2. In the instrumental rapsodies instead of inserting *Dies Irae* as a countermelody in the piano, he gives it to the viola in a two-bar solo (mm. 106–107) marked "ponticello." The harsher quality of ponticello adds an extra layer of eeriness to this morbid motive (ex. 3).

Another example of "text-painting" the musical motive associated with "spectral figure" occurs in mm. 99–100 of the instrumental rapsodies, as illustrated in example 4.



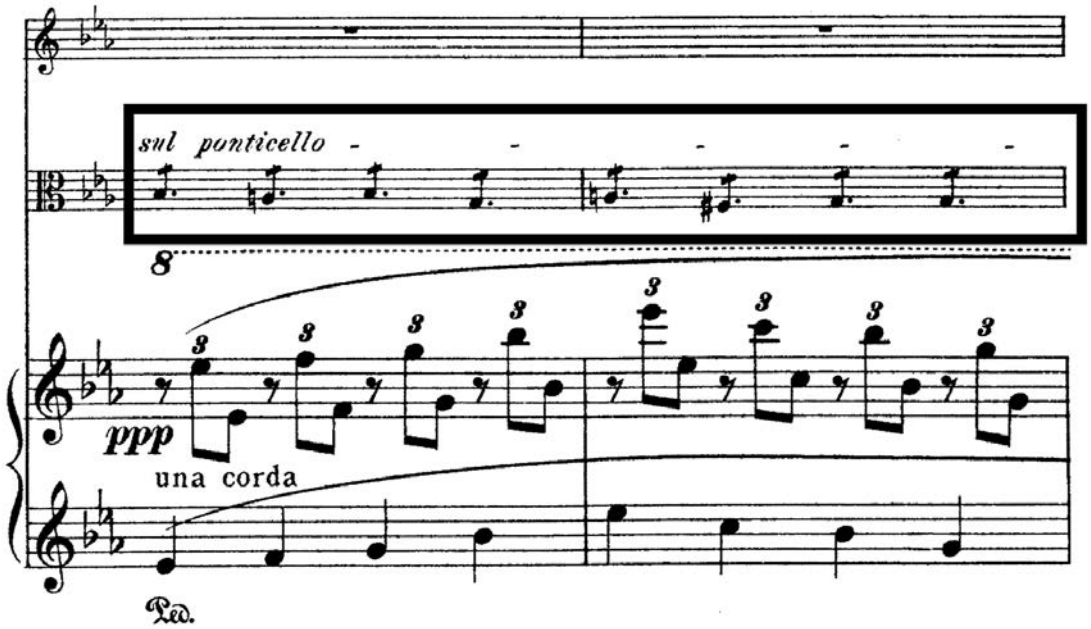
Example 2. The Dies Irae *chant in the vocal rapsodies, "L'Étang," mm. 36–38.*

Loeffler gives the baritone's melody in mm. 36–37 of the vocal rapsodies to the viola and oboe in mm. 99–100 to be performed in a unison *sotto voce*. This melodic material is placed immediately following a *forte crescendo*, and if it is performed correctly, it should create an unnerving and eerie effect.

Hemiola, thick orchestration, and frequent changes in both dynamics and tempo are pervasive throughout "L'Étang" (ex. 5). The multi-layered texture and instability of tempo combine to obscure the clarity of the musical motives and possibly allude to the muddy and foggy scene that the poem depicts. The thick textures along with the tempo changes blur and obscure the inherent cross rhythms between the voices and help portray the overall, dark, esoteric and tangled nature of the text.

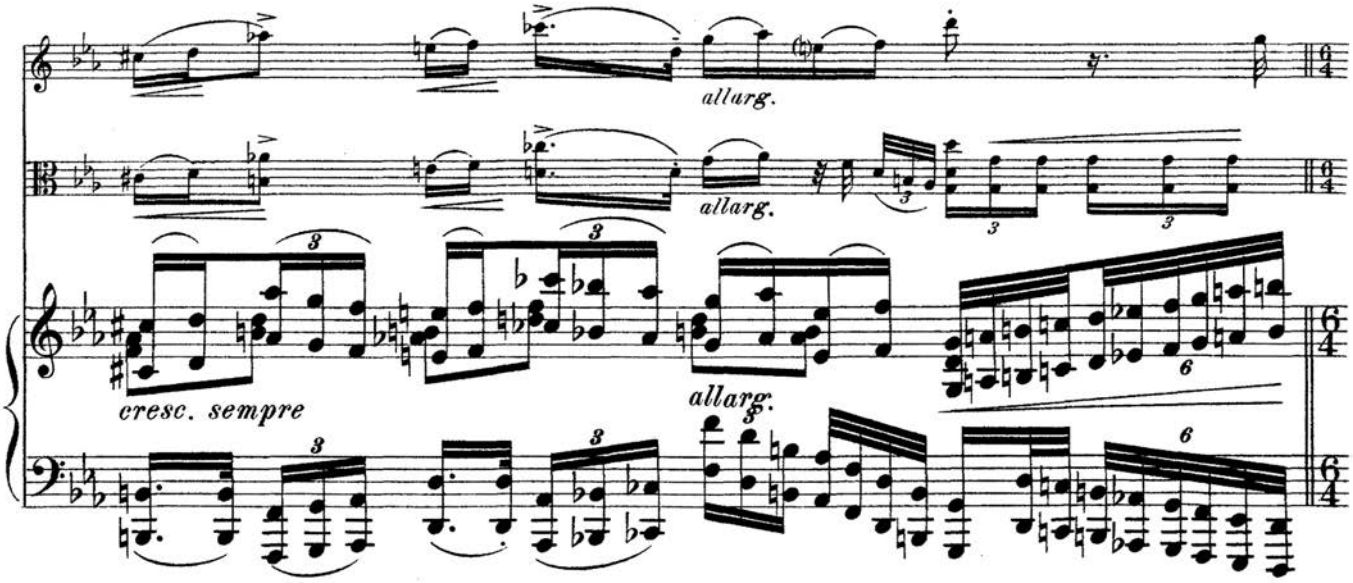
"La Cornemuse"

In the reworking of the second poem "La Cornemuse" in the instrumental rapsodies, Loeffler introduces new themes and departs from the clear textual and structural correlation that was apparent between both musical



Example 3. The Dies Irae chant in the instrumental rapsodies, mm. 106–107.

Example 4. The instrumental rapsodies, L'Étang, mm. 99–100.



Example 5. A thickly-scored passage from "L'Étang" from the instrumental rapsodies, m. 38.

settings of "L'Étang." However, Loeffler does maintain a few specific motives that link both versions of the work and help unify the movement. The vocal rapsodies provide insight into the textual/programmatic meaning of musical motives that reappear throughout "La Cornemuse" in the instrumental rapsodies. The text is as follows:

La Cornemuse (The Bagpipe)

His bagpipe groaned in the woods as the wind that belleth; and never has stag at bay, nor willow, nor oar, wept as that voice wept.

Those sounds of flute and hautboy seemed like the death-rattle of a woman. OH! His bagpipe, near the cross-roads of the crucifix!

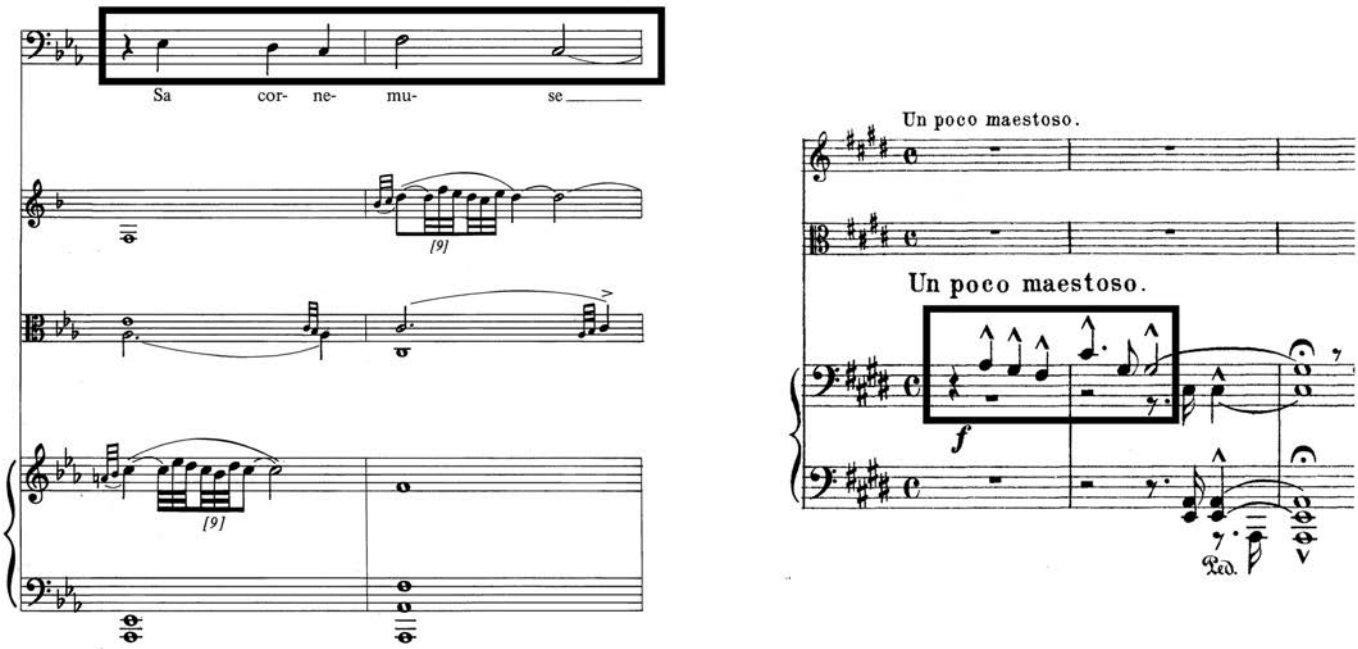
He is dead. But under cold skies, as soon as night weaves her mesh, down deep in my soul, there in the nook of old fears, I always hear, his bagpipe groaning as of yore.

– Maurice Rollinat (translated by Philip Hale)

The motive that opens the movement is the most easily recognizable motive in the movement. It is textually tied to "La Cornemuse" which translates into the bagpipe. It appears throughout the movement and builds to a skillfully interwoven climax between all three voices at the bottom of mm. 137–140.

Another important motive is seen below in example 7. In the "instrumental rapsodies," this motive often appears to introduce a new, slower tempo and serves to separate different sections of the movement. Its chromatic figuration represents the howling and moaning of the bagpipes.

A third motive in this movement (ex. 8) references the third stanza of the poem and reflects the "sounds of flute and oboe." These motives and variations of them appear throughout this movement, overlap, and trade-off between voices. All three motives were originally linked to text that describes the sound of the bagpipes. Loeffler uses these motives to unify the work, as well as bring to life the text of Rollinat's poem.



Example 6. The same melody in the opening measure of La Cornemuse in each rapsodie. The vocal rapsodies, mm. 5–6, left; the instrumental rapsodies, mm. 1–2, right.

46th International Viola Congress in Poznań, Poland

The **Polish Viola Society** will be hosting the 46th International Viola Congress in Poznań (Poland), from September 24th – 28th, 2019. This will be the second time – after 2013 – that the main yearly event of the International Viola Society takes place in Poland.

The congress theme is: **BETWEEN EAST AND WEST**

We are putting together a diverse, accessible, innovative and progressive program that will place the viola center stage of the musical scene. Visit http://www.ptal.art.pl/index.php/46th-viola-congress for more details and Registration.

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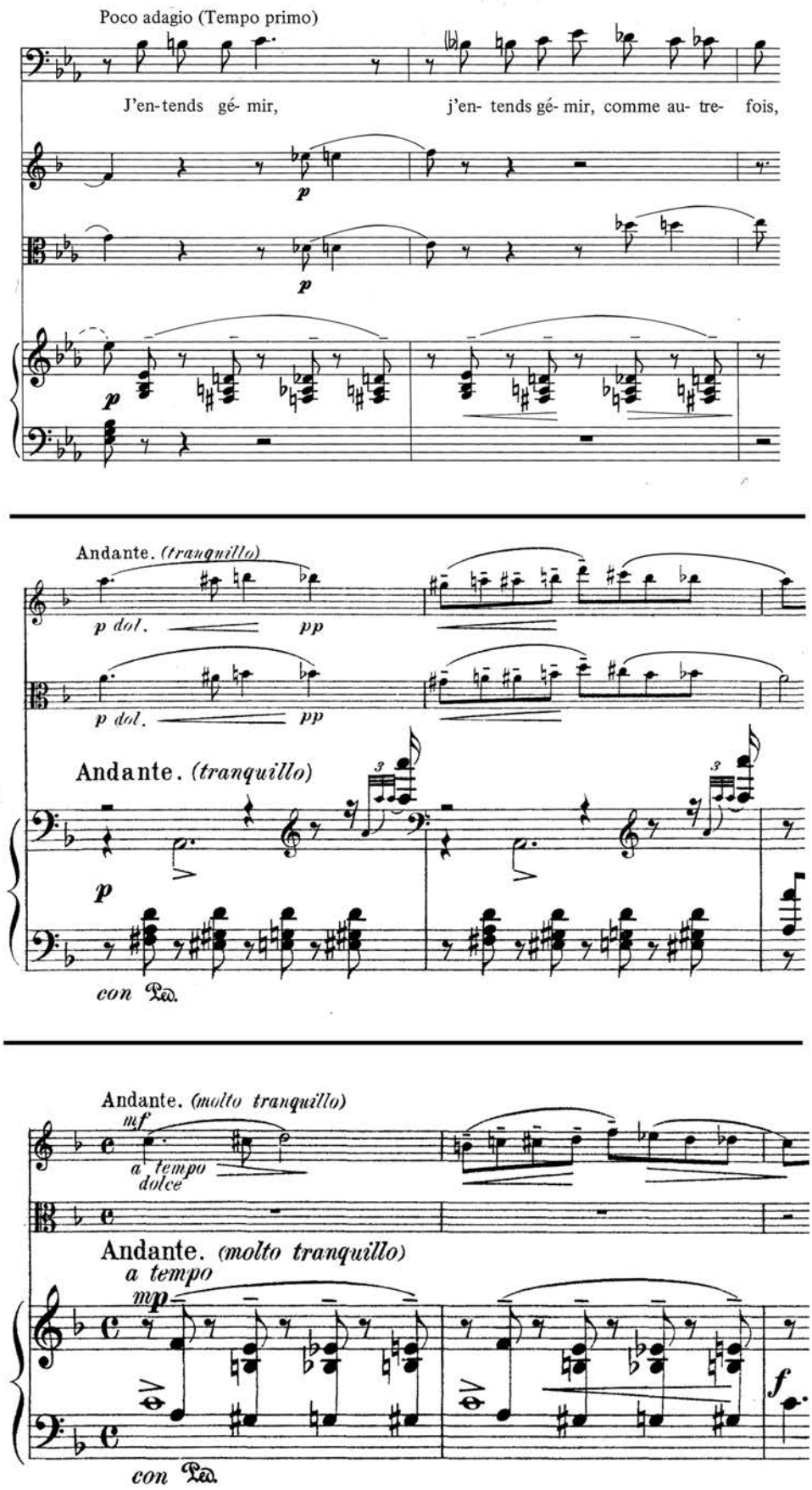


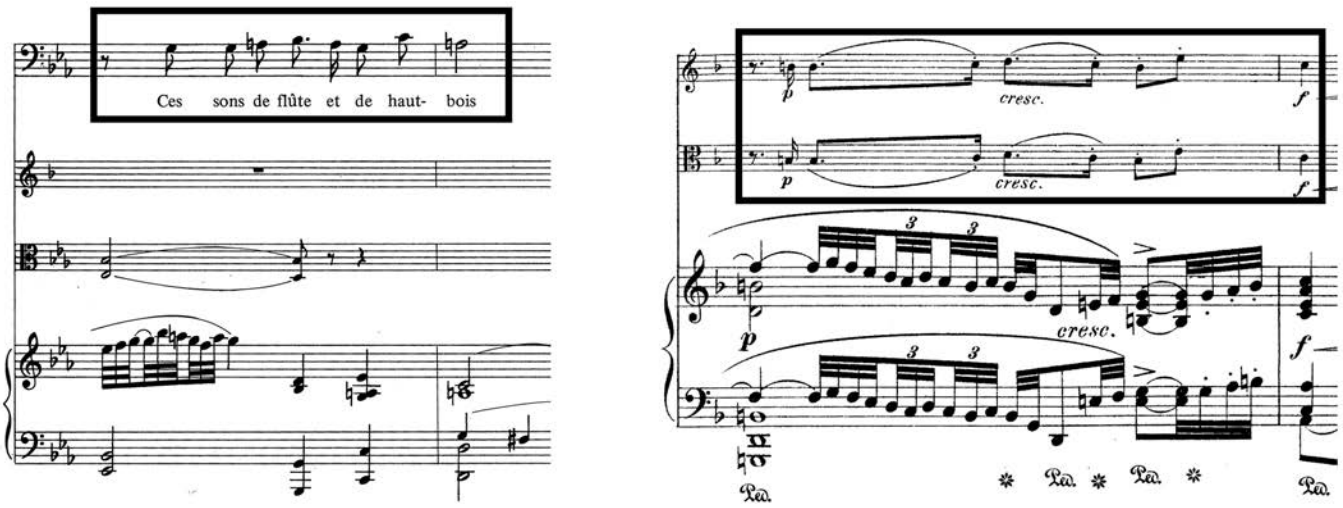
Example 7. Similar melodies and accompaniments in "La Cornemuse." Top: vocal rapsodies, mm. 63–64; Middle: instrumental rapsodies, mm. 92–93; Bottom: instrumental rapsodies, mm. 72–73.

In the instrumental rapsodies, Loeffler incorporates many new ideas and changes. There is one new section that, due to its magnitude and programmatic significance, must be addressed (ex. 9). In this section, the solo oboe line and the perfect fifth drones in the viola paint a clear reference to the song and sound of bagpipes. It is a glorious and challenging oboe solo that fits the oboe well. The solo lies in the sweet range of the instrument which allows the oboist virtuosic flexibility to move fluidly between the held drones within the melodic line and embody the bagpipes. This section contains new material and was almost certainly inspired by Longy.

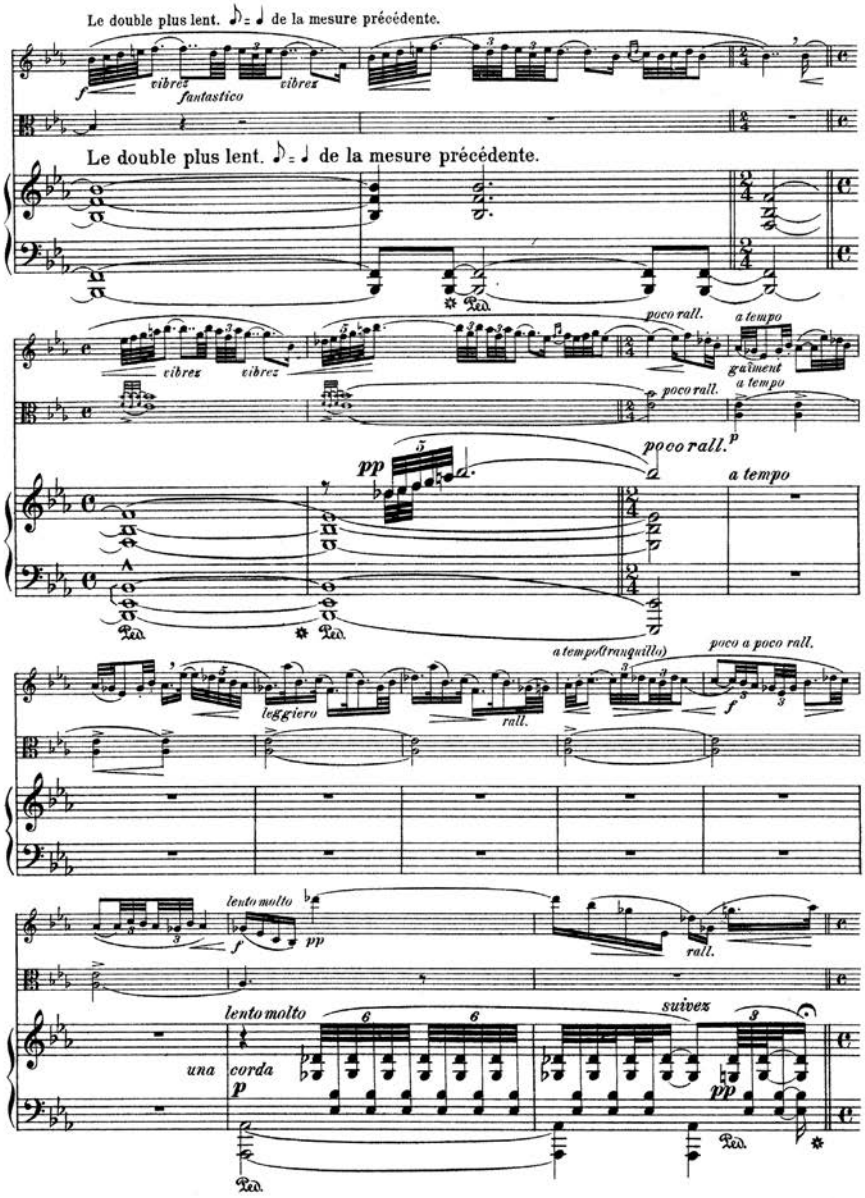
Conclusion

My goal in writing this article is to provide a deeper understating of Loeffler and his *Rapsodies*, and an accessible programmatic and motivic analysis to aid in the musical interpretation and performance of *Deux Rapsodies.* On an emotional level, these compositions are connected to deep, personal loss in Loeffler's life. This adds yet another layer of complication and pain to the already bleak and desolate poetry.

It is rare in instrumental music to be handed a key in which to decipher specific programmatic elements. This is the gift that the vocal rapsodies provides. The opportunity to dive into and examine Rollinat's poetry provides context, mood and



Example 8. The motive reflecting "the sound of the flute an oboe" from "La Cornemuse." Left: vocal rapsodies, m. 20; right: instrumental rapsodies, m. 89



insight. It sets the scene for the music and invites the challenge to evoke vivid imagery and meaning to previously abstract music. Next time you pick up this work, please allow yourself to enter Loeffler's world of fierce friendship, haunting imagery, and his journey for cultural identity.

Dr. Courtney Miller is the oboe professor at the University of Iowa. Prior to this position, she taught at Boston College and Ashland University. Fanfare Magazine hails Courtney Miller as "a performer of considerable skill, with an unfailingly lovely sound, abundant technical ability, and a special gift for turning notes into poetry."

Example 9. "La Cornemuse" from the instrumental rapsodies, mm. 34–48.

Notes

[1] Ellen Knight, *Charles Martin Loeffler: A Life Apart in American Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 5–7. Carl Engel, "Charles Martin Loeffler," *The Musical Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1925): 314–15.

[2] Knight 18–22.

[3] Kinght, 18.

[4] Charles Martin Loeffler, *Four Poems* (New York: G. Schirmer 1904).

[5] Knight, 24–25.

[6] Engel, 318.

[7] Knight, 87.

[8] Ibid, 5, 24.

[9] Ellen E. Knight, 1988 foreword to *Rapsodies por voix, clarinette, alto et piano,* Selected Songs with Chamber Accompaniment, Madison: A-R Editions, VIII.

[10] Lawrence Gilman, "The Music of Loeffler," *The North American Review* 193, no. 662 (1911): 51, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25106846.

[11] Valerie M Gudell, "Georges Longy: His Life and Legacy" (DMA diss., Moores School of Music University of Houston, 2001), 21.

[12] Knight, 114.

[13] Ibid, 120.

[14] Gudell, vi.

[15] Knight, 122.

[16] David M. Bynog, "The viola in America: Two centuries of progress," *Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* 68, no. 4 (2012): 729.

[17] Knight, 123; Bynog, 744.

[18] Loeffler, Charles Martin. *Two Rhapsodies* for Oboe, Viola and Piano. New York: G. Schirmer, 1905.

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The 20/19 Project: A Centennial Celebration

Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti

While researching repertoire, I came across a surprising historical synchronicity: three of the most performed viola sonatas in our repertoire were written in the same year, 1919. Arts patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge held a composition competition that year calling for viola sonatas as submissions. She encouraged two of her close friends, Rebecca Clarke and Ernest Bloch, to submit works. Halfway around the world, a young Paul Hindemith was finding his voice and wrote his own viola sonata inspired by Claude Debussy's colorful writing.

To celebrate the centennial of that milestone season, I have commissioned three new viola sonatas by Andrew Norman, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, and Scott Wollschleger. In this series for the *Journal of the American Viola Society*, I'll be sharing the process of the commissioning project at various stages. This first article shares background information about The 20/19 Project and gives some insight into how to commission new works.

Anne Lanzilotti. Photo by Blaise Hayward Studio

Celebrating a Centennial

There are several wonderful projects that celebrate the centennial of the 1919 sonatas. Ruth Lomon orchestrated the Clarke Sonata so it can be performed as a gorgeous viola concerto. Violist and scholar Daphne Gerling wrote her doctoral dissertation about the history of the three 1919 sonatas by Bloch, Clarke, and Hindemith.[1] Along with Andrew Braddock, David Bynog, Hillary Herndon, and Katrin Meidell, Gerling has been continuing her research in the form of presentations and performances of other sonatas that may have been entered in the 1919 Coolidge Competition. These projects amplify the historical significance of the original works.

Since my interests are more in contemporary music, I wanted to celebrate the centennial by commissioning new works. The idea solidified in my mind as I was finishing my doctorate: I decided that I needed to start another big project to keep my momentum and be excited about moving forward after my dissertation was completed. This system of overlapping long-term goals has become a positive force in keeping my own creative momentum since I'm interested in many different things. It also allows for lulls in projects to overlap with moments of action in others. Ultimately, it is a system that keeps me hopeful: even if I get discouraged about a smaller task I have to do, or I feel bogged down by the minutia of administrative work, I can plug these in to larger projects that I am really excited about.

Commissioning New Works

Once I had the idea of commissioning new works for the centennial, I had to decide who the

specific composers would be. The three I chose are composers whose work I admire, especially because of their string writing—Norman is at the forefront of extended techniques for strings and I have dedicated my academic research to his music. Thorvaldsdottir's haunting timbres turn strings into whispering echoes of an unremembered text. From the first time I heard her music live, I was taken by her powerful voice as a composer. Finally, Wollschleger is a close collaborator and friend whose work often explores the disintegration of memory and sound. Through my personal connection with two of the composers, I knew that they were good to work with. In a project of this scale—taking place over a five-year period—that is essential. Although I didn't know Thorvaldsdottir well, I had only ever heard great things about her. She has a reputation as someone who was professional and kind, and I love the way she talks about her work.

gain international recognition. Norman won the Grawemeyer Award for his symphonic work *Play*, and recently had an opera co-commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and London Symphony Orchestra. Thorvaldsdottir was awarded the Kravis Emerging Composer for the New York Philharmonic—which meant they also commissioned her new work *Metacosmos*, which is currently being played by orchestras all over the world—and she is currently Composer-in-Residence with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Wollschleger "has become a formidable, individual presence"[2] in the contemporary American musical landscape. His debut album, *Soft Aberration* was named a Notable Recording of 2017 in *The New Yorker*. I believe in these composers and their work. Beyond any awards or external validation, this belief and genuine enthusiasm is essential when talking to donors, writing grants, writing press releases, and of course

Composers (left to right) Andrew Norman, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, and Scott Wollschleger. Photos by Bryan Sheffield (Norman), Kristinn Ingvarsson (Thorvaldsdottir), and Anne Lanzilotti (Wollschleger).

In terms of the musical aspects of the commission, I only specified the length and instrumentation. While Norman and Wollschleger will be writing sonatas for viola and piano, I left it up to Thorvaldsdottir to choose. Her new work is for viola solo and electronics—a twenty-first century take on the traditional sonata. It was important to me to not specify any other musical elements and let the composers write whatever they wanted. I felt that the centennial and instrumentation were strong enough elements to draw a connection between the original 1919 sonatas and these new 2019 sonatas. This gave the composers much more freedom.

In the time since I first asked the composers about two years ago, they have continued to

when talking to an audience about the new work in a performance.

The next hurdle was how to pay for the commissions. Before meeting with any of the donors, I got permission from the composers to put up a project page on my website outlining the basic idea with photos and links to their music. Having an organized digital project page helped me focus my vision and also helped show others that I had put a lot of thought into the arch of the project. Then, I sat down with several friends who are in charge of fundraising for nonprofits to ask about narrowing down a list of potential donors. I met with a handful of these known sponsors to pitch the idea and get feedback. All of them were very generous with their

time and had different opinions about how to move forward. But it was clear when the right donors came along to help realize the project.

I'm extremely grateful to Elizabeth and Justus Schlichting for their generous support of the commission funding—and I especially love that another Elizabeth is honoring Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge's legacy of commissioning new works! The Schlichtings allowed me to share their name publicly because they want to encourage others to become sponsors of classical contemporary music as well. Justus Schlichting was inspired by a famous patron himself. He described an instance where he was listening to some of Beethoven's Quartets: "I was sitting there having an incredibly emotional response to the music and realized someone back then had made it all possible—this Razumovsky. And I suddenly thought, 'I don't know who he was.' It turned out he was just fascinating."[3]

These conversations about commission funding were all two years in advance of the deadline for the composers. Especially for a commission of this length, it is important to secure initial payments in order to ask the composers to start writing. (If you're unsure how much standard rates are, New Music USA has a handy "Commissioning Fees Calculator" online.[4]) However, I also knew I needed to find funding for the other aspects of the project which are important to the potential impact and legacy of new works.

Beyond Creative Ideas

Other aspects of managing the project involve writing the commission contracts, continually applying for grants, reaching out to presenters for performance opportunities, organizing rehearsal/performance/recording schedules, and pitching the album to potential labels. Many professional musicians like myself write their own grants, press releases, and liner notes. It's something that I enjoy doing, but also a necessity of the current artist economy—especially if you're interested in pursuing your own projects. I have also been building momentum for the project by performing works by and writing scholarship about Norman,[5] Thorvaldsdottir,[6] and Wollschleger.[7] Rather than go into detail about the many important logistical aspects of the project, here are a few resources that I found helpful in planning and executing these various other tasks.

- *Beyond Talent* by Angela Beeching: from building strong habits for creative productivity/project planning, to how to write to presenters, to how to plan out a timeline for press on a project, this book is the definitive guide to freelancing in the twenty-first century. Beeching also has an excellent weekly mailing list that she sends out and free weekly Facebook live meetings that anyone can join in which she rotates through various topics.
- *Getting It Published* by William Germano: this book is more geared towards publishing a book or article after one has already written a dissertation, but some of the points he addresses in terms of whether to go with a formal publisher or self-publish are applicable to writing articles as well.
- *NewMusicBox*: NewMusicUSA publishes a blog online with articles by members of the music community as well as some of their staff writers/editors. For example, editor Molly Sheridan has a great introductory article to grant writing[8], and they update the website every year to give clear guidelines about their own granting programs.

Vision & Impact

Looking back at the original 1919 sonatas made me think about how legacy is developed over time through the impact of works which are given substantial resources beyond the premiere: in particular, high-quality recordings which lead to repeated performances and integration into curriculum. The original pieces became staples of the viola repertoire through performances by great viola soloists such as Clarke and Hindemith themselves, scholarship such as Gerling's excellent dissertation, and recordings/curation of the three works together because of their origins in the same year. Therefore, in my planning for The 20/19 Project, I wanted to go beyond the commissions and premieres of the sonatas to include recordings of the works and video tutorials to show extended techniques used in the pieces. Through this extensive free educational resource (an expansion of www.shakennotstuttered.com) other performers,

students, and audience members will have a window into the creative process and a way to continue to learn the works, spark curiosity, and support a thriving culture of contemporary music for everyone.

Filmmakers/percussionists Kevin Eikenberg and Evan Chapman of Four/Ten Media have been filming the new videos for *Shaken Not Stuttered* in workshops with each of the composers—I'll share more about that process in the next article in this series. Alongside the technique videos, we'll be recording the three new sonatas. By recording these works and releasing them as an album, I will be able to have an impact and reach audiences beyond my immediate community. My hope is that the three new sonatas by Norman, Thorvaldsdottir, and Wollschleger will become a part of the standard repertoire, will be performed by many other musicians, and will inspire audiences for generations to come.

In the next article, JAVS readers will get a behind the scenes look at workshops with the composers at University of Northern Colorado, Oberlin Conservatory, and Thorvaldsdottir's studio in London. The workshops give us a chance to work together on the new commissions, and to develop digital educational resources to complement the pieces. Reaching out into these communities—through the University workshops and more globally online—is important to me as an educator, and deep down, as a viola nerd.

Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti is a composer-performer, scholar, and educator with a passion for contemporary music. For a complete bio, please visit: http://annelanzilotti.com

Notes

1 Daphne Cristina Capparelli Gerling, "Connecting histories: Identity and exoticism in Ernest Bloch, Rebecca Clarke, and Paul Hindemith's viola works of 1919" (DMA diss., Rice University, 2007).

2 Alex Ross, "A Wollschleger moment," *The Rest Is Noise*, March 23, 2016, https://www.therestisnoise.com/2016/03/a-wollschleger-moment.html.

3 Alex Marshall, "The 21st century patrons commissioning classical music masterpieces," *How to Spend It*, June 7, 2018, https://howtospendit.ft.com/art-philanthropy/203593-The-21st-century-patrons-commissioning-classical-music-masterpieces.

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Leave it to the Rests!
A Violist's Guide for Chin and Shoulder Rests.

Tim Feverston

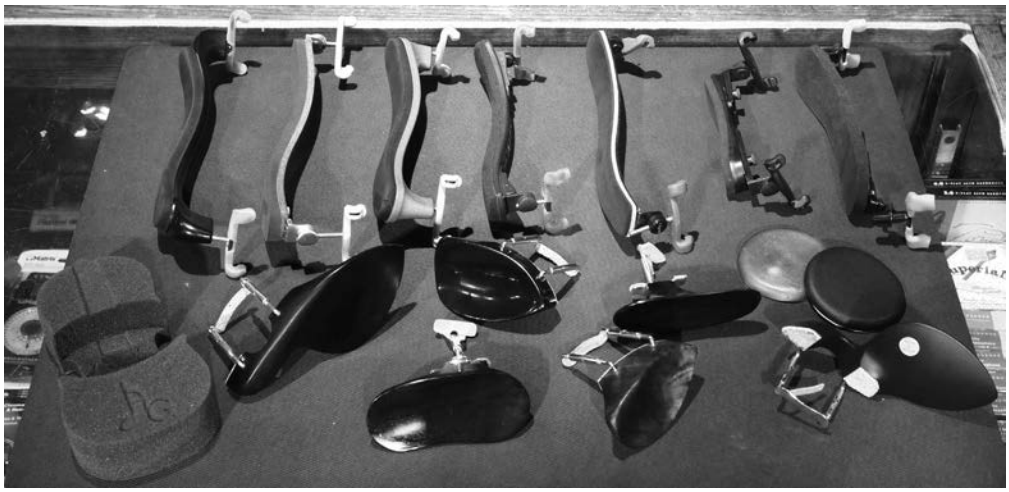


Figure 1. A selection of shoulder and chin rests. Photo by Leanna Oquendo

If you play either the viola or violin, you most certainly have come into possession of two important pieces of equipment: the chin and shoulder rests. These two items are either the player's worst enemy (discomfort, restriction, frustration) or best friend (comfort, stability, ease). From my perspective, they have always been my worst enemy. The battle between my physicality and the ill-fitting shapes of rests made these past 18 years of music a constant struggle. At one point, I owned nearly every model of chin and shoulder rest available on the market, but none of them seemed to be a definite solution to my dilemma.

We are fortunate to have so many different options for chin and shoulder rests on the market today, but generic "one-size-fits-all" brands and models do not work for everyone. Humans are neither one size nor one shape, and, specifically, the difference in how we navigate the collarbone is crucial to our playing. This article is intended to provide insight and understanding for the purpose of selecting an appropriate chin and shoulder rest for a more personalized fit.

Posture and Instrument Placement

Before delving into the specifics of both rests, understanding the meaning of "good posture" as it relates to the upper part of the body is fundamental in finding appropriate positioning of the instrument and the chin rest. Having a healthy posture is necessary when playing; it allows the body to move fluidly without tension. With that being said, here are some steps to help guide the process to finding the best position for the instrument. First, remove the chin rest, shoulder rest, sponges, cloth, or any other aids. Next, find your ideal posture, preferably while standing in front of a mirror or with the help of a teacher or colleague. Your ideal posture should include:

- Standing firm with feet shoulder-width apart, making sure that your toes are pointing straight in front of you.
- Knees slightly bent.
- Relaxed shoulders.
- Broadening the chest when arms are raised, rotating the shoulders back and down.
- The crown of the head stretching upwards. (Feel like there is a string attached to the crown that is being pulled.)

In an article in the Spring 2011 issue of *JAVS*, Hillary Herndon writes, "When standing in front of a mirror, relax your neck, look forward, and allow your head to pivot around the top of your spine (located between your

ears). Find a 'neutral' position where your chin, eyes, and ears will be more or less parallel with the floor. Keeping this position, bring the instrument up to your body, and rest the bottom lip of the viola on the collarbone."[1]

Begin by examining your current position. Notice the current position of your instrument and how it fits on your clavicle. The area between your now properly placed instrument and your jaw is the correct chin rest location. Note how much space there is between the instrument and your jaw. This space should *almost* be filled by the chin rest. Herndon suggests: "You will want enough room to 'drop' your head onto the chinrest by tilting the weight of the head forward off the back of the spine and onto the chin rest. This motion will be similar to a nod."[2] This bit of space between the chin rest and jaw is important to prevent any future tension in the neck. When our equipment becomes uncomfortable, it is a sign that we need to adjust our setup.

Chin Rests

When selecting a chin rest, comfort should supersede all other priorities. Good posture and supporting the instrument correctly underneath the jaw with the chin rest provides a stable, comfortable foundation. Thus, once a healthy posture has been established, selecting an appropriate chin rest is easier and more intuitive than you might think. Luckily, there are significantly fewer models of chin rests available compared to shoulder rests.

The first step to picking out the appropriate chin rest is positioning on the instrument. There are two possible positions for chin rests: the left side of the tail piece or straddling it. After determining which position works for you, you should then assess how tall the chin rest needs to be. For those like me with a long neck, you may want to choose a taller chin rest model. If we rely solely on the shoulder rest to fill all of the empty space, we run the risk of discomfort or sound dampening. This also changes the vertical height of the instrument, which causes the bow arm to be higher. To help fill some of the space or adjust the shape of the top, there are options to add items to your chin rest including cloth coverings and moldable chin rest toppers. One final consideration is the material. Most chin rests are commonly made from the same materials, wood (boxwood, ebony, rosewood) or plastic, and each material weighs differently.

To make the chin rest decision even easier, there is an option to have a custom chin rest made. For me, this was the best (and most economical) option available. To begin this process, you will need to have access to a chin rest building kit. If you are able to visit the maker, attend a customization demonstration at any violin or viola festival or workshop, or if your teacher has purchased one, you can select the ideal position, height, shape, wood, and varnish of your chin rest.

Shoulder Rests

Now that you have a newly fitted chin rest and good posture, it's time to fill most of the remaining space with a shoulder rest. One of the biggest mistakes I see other players make is over-compensating and over-itemizing

Figure 2. With his raised chin rest, Alan demonstrates the importance of relying on more than just the shoulder rest to supply adequate height. Photos by Leanna Oquendo

the shoulder rest. Keep in mind that a shoulder rest is on a fixed axis. Adjusting the height of the feet changes the angle of the shoulder rest in relation to the instrument. Some players generally compensate the leftover space with sponges, cloth, or other items. However, with a properly fitted chin rest, there should be less space overall that needs to be filled. The shoulder rest should simply add to the comfort, and not complexity, to your setup. Or, there is always the option not to use one. As with all aspects of setup, there are positive and negative outcomes of playing without a shoulder rest.

Shoulder Rest-less

In my own personal viola-playing experience, I have found that not using a shoulder rest has been the most enlightening process. I suddenly found myself very aware of my every body movement, particularly in the shoulders and back. My decision to forsake the shoulder rest was met with skepticism from other players. There was one instance in particular which I remember very well. In front of an audience at a viola festival, an unnamed educator told me after my performance that I "will never be a professional viola player if you do not use a shoulder rest." The remaining time during this master class consisted of this person not really knowing or caring what to say next about my actual playing. In the following years, I have had the opportunity to meet some fabulous violists and hear their superb performances all without a shoulder rest. It all comes down to the personal preferences of the individual to pick the set-up that feels right for them.

As I stated before, playing with no shoulder rest has its benefits and complications. The biggest challenges when first removing the rest are stamina and intonation. You will find that after two hours into an orchestra rehearsal, your instrument feels like it weighs two hundred pounds. Players who do not use a shoulder rest have to lift and support the bulk of the instrument with their arm and it can be quite tiring. Newfound tension can also appear in the left hand quite easily now that the arm does all the heavy lifting. With the increased workload on the left arm, finger placement and arm motion are affected, making intonation and shifting more difficult. It is much more difficult to stretch and shift to higher notes while supporting the instrument in the same arm. With practice and attention, these issues can be overcome.

While the shoulder rest may seem like a clear winner in terms of left-hand mobility, the rest-less option has some unique benefits. In many cases the shoulder rest can actually inhibit the player's mobility by cutting off access to the shoulder. With no shoulder rest in the way, the rest-less player is free to make decisions based on how the shoulder and left arm moves. For example, if I want to get an even heavier and louder sound on the C-string, I can bring my entire left arm closer to my center. Likewise, I can even change the angle of the instrument to better suit the lower strings.

The Shoulder Rest

For those who do wish to use a shoulder rest, fortunately there are many different models and customization options available!

Figure 3. A comparison of shoulder rest heights. The photo on the left shows an appropriately selected shoulder rest that provides the correct amount of height for his figure. On the right, a too-large shoulder rest tilts the head back and prevents the instrument from fitting under the jaw. Photo by Leanna Oquendo

The shoulder rest is a 20th century invention and has become a world-wide standard for nearly all violinists and violists. There exist today so many different makes and models fitting a wide variety of body types. Some rests come with a variety of features, including a hooked left side for added stability, the ability to bend the rest, adjustable feet height and positioning, and options changing the angle against the instrument. The rests can also be made of many different materials. The feet are often made of either wood, soft plastic, or covered in rubber tubing, and the main body can be made of wood, carbon fiber, or plastic. Shoulder rests can also be entirely made of sponge or foam material that can be "stuck" to the back of the instrument or secured with a rubber band. The material you choose can have an impact on your overall comfort and sound production. While comfort may be the most obvious concern, players often overlook the shoulder rest's impacts on sound.

Anything that directly attaches to the instrument reduces its natural vibrations and acts as a dampener; the affected sound is most noticeable in terms of projection and open string resonance. Different rests dampen the sound to varying degrees, so it is important to consider your sound when choosing a shoulder rest. Pads or sponges that attach directly to the body of the instrument dampen the sound more than shoulder rests that hook on the sides. The hooked shoulder rests, however, place inward tension on the instrument, which changes the resonance of the wood.

Different items may be added to the shoulder rest to add additional comfort and take up some of the remaining empty spaces. (It is important to rearticulate that the goal is to not fill the space entirely. If the space is completely filled, our mobility decreases and tension increases in the head and neck.) These attachments are commonly added to the side that sits on the chest. Folded cloth or cut sponge attached by rubber band are some examples of shoulder rest modification. It is important to note that, when using sponge or cloth that is attached to a shoulder rest rather than the body of the instrument, the sound is unaffected. The possibilities of shoulder rest customization are endless and depend solely on the player's preferences.

Setup and Placement

Finding your ideal shoulder rest fit and position can be most difficult for some. With a well-fitting chin rest and healthy posture, note how much empty space still remains between the left side of the instrument and shoulder and also between the right side and chest. Adjust the feet of the shoulder rest accordingly.

The left side will always have a considerably smaller space to fill. It is important that this side of the shoulder rest sit on the trapezius superior (upper shoulder muscle) and not the edge of the clavicle. If it rests on the ball-and-socket join where the arm connects, then mobility can be restricted. For some, it may be difficult to find the correct shoulder rest if the space on the shoulder is too small. Shoulder rests have to be designed with a minimum height requirement to avoid scratching the back of the instrument. In this scenario, attaching different items to the back of the instrument may yield more successful results. Similarly, if there is still extra empty space on the right side of the instrument, the addition of extra items should be considered.

Conclusion

Having proper fitting equipment goes beyond comfort and stability. It can make the difference between a resonant or choked sound, relaxation or tightness in our muscles, and being healthy or injured. When our movement is unhindered, our technique can flourish. The best-fitting equipment should always be most comfortable to the player, and it will likely be unique in comparison to others. Self-awareness and experimentation are the keys to unlocking the perfect setup. It is possible to obtain total comfort while playing our instrument. Just leave everything else to the rests!

Tim Feverston holds a Master of Music degree in viola performance from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he studied under the direction of Hillary Herndon, and a B.F.A. from Marshall University with Dr. Elizabeth Reed Smith. He currently teaches privately and performs in the Dayton, Ohio area.

Special thanks to Alan and Leanna Oquendo for photography and modeling. Thanks also to Avery Clark for modeling, and to Hauer Music in Dayton, Ohio for letting us use their facilities.

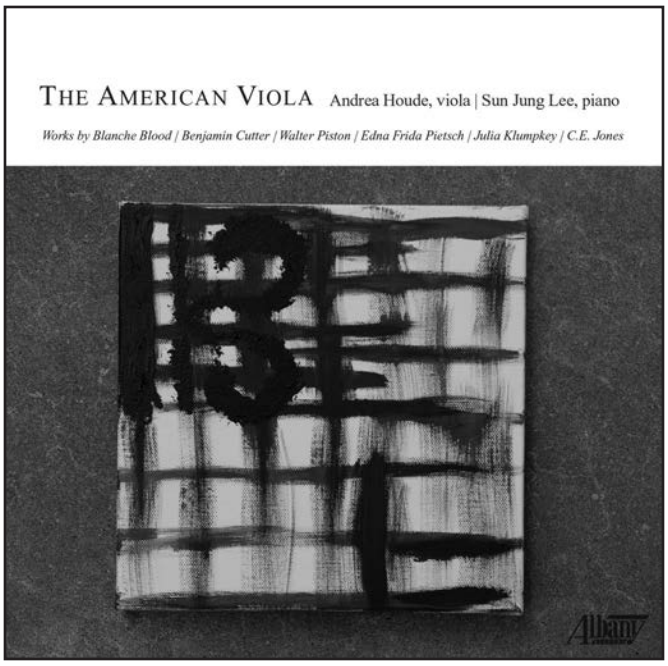
Notes

[1] Hillary Herndon, "Healthy Bow, Healthy Sound," *Journal of the American Viola Society* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 20

[2] Ibid.

Recording Reviews

Carlos María Solare



The American Viola—Blood: *Barcarolle*; Cutter: *Eine Liebes-Novelle*; Piston: *Interlude*; Pietsch: *Andante Cantabile*; Klumpkey: *Lullaby*; Jones: Concerto for Viola *"Monongahela"*. Andrea Houde, viola; Sun Jung Lee, piano. Albany TROY1749

This CD's program is based on the American Viola Society's ongoing eponymous project, with four of the six pieces therein having been published on the organization's website. It is surely not a coincidence that most of the composers represented were professional viola players. Blanche Blood, who was active in the Chicago area, was also a pioneer player of the viola d'amore. Her *Barcarolle*, published in 1906, was "originally written for and . . . especially adapted to the deep-toned effects of the viola." It includes a magical moment when, after a short cadenza of the viola, the piano picks up the main tune to a wave-like accompaniment on the viola.

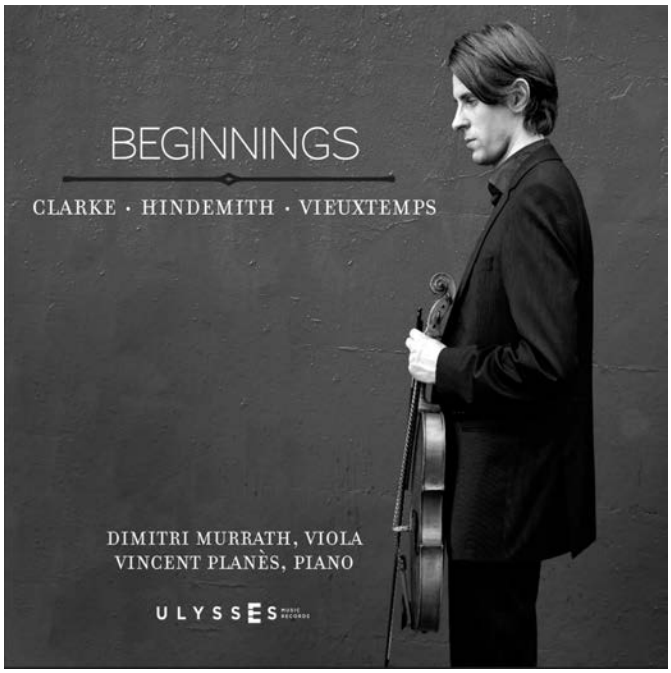
Many traits in Benjamin Cutter's charming suite of five "bagatelles" bear witness to his training in Stuttgart, Germany, starting with its German title: *Eine Liebes-Novelle* (*A Love Story*); it is dedicated "in veneration" to Cutter's teacher Edmund Singer, concertmaster of the Stuttgart Court Orchestra. First performed by the composer at the New England Conservatory in 1889, this could almost be a lost cycle of phantasy pieces by Robert Schumann, chronicling a romantic relationship from the "First Meeting" to its "Happy Ending", not lacking bout of "Melancholy" and "Jealousy", quickly appeased by the lover's lilting "Serenade"—all this clad in bitter-sweet romantic harmonies and idiomatic writing for both instruments.

Julia Klumpkey numbered Eugène Ysaÿe and Leopold Auer among her teachers—not to forget the perhaps less celebrated Parisian viola pedagogue Henri Benoit. She wrote several pieces for the viola, including the present *Lullaby* published in 1937, an insidiously melodious miniature that is proving hard to get out of my head. Edna Pietsch continued to write in her own brand of romanticism throughout her long life; the *Andante Cantabile* is thought to date from the 1950s, but a good tune is timeless anyway, and this one is beautifully set with a rich piano accompaniment that makes the most of it. I had been aware of Walter Piston's *Interlude* for decades, as it is listed on the back page of Boosey & Hawkes's editions of Britten's *Lachrymæ* and the Bartók Concerto, so it's nice to finally be able to match sounds to the name, and really stern sounds they are, too, stemming from the years of WWII.

C.E. Jones—his given names seem to be a state secret but Internet research revealed the first one to be Christopher—wrote his Concerto for Viola *"Monongahela"* upon a commission from the present soloist; the piano-accompanied version was premiered at

the 44th International Viola Congress in Wellington, New Zealand in September 2017, and the orchestral version a year later in Norfolk, Virginia. As its title suggests, the piece was inspired by the progress of the eponymous river through West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Written in a continuous 15-minute span, its three main sections feature atmospheric harmonies that sound not a little like Bartókian "night music"; a bitter-sweet tune in the central section is reminiscent of Stephen Foster's songs; the faster concluding section is of a more virtuosic hue, including chords, octaves and sundry passage work.

Andrea Houde takes all this comfortably in her stride, while showing a beautiful lyrical vein throughout the recital. She finds an appropriately light touch for Cutter's pieces, including some convincing "strumming" strokes in the Serenade, in which the viola accompanies the piano. Sung Jung Lee is an empathic partner throughout. David Bynog tells us everything we need to know in his typically erudite liner notes, which greatly add to the value of this most enjoyable issue.

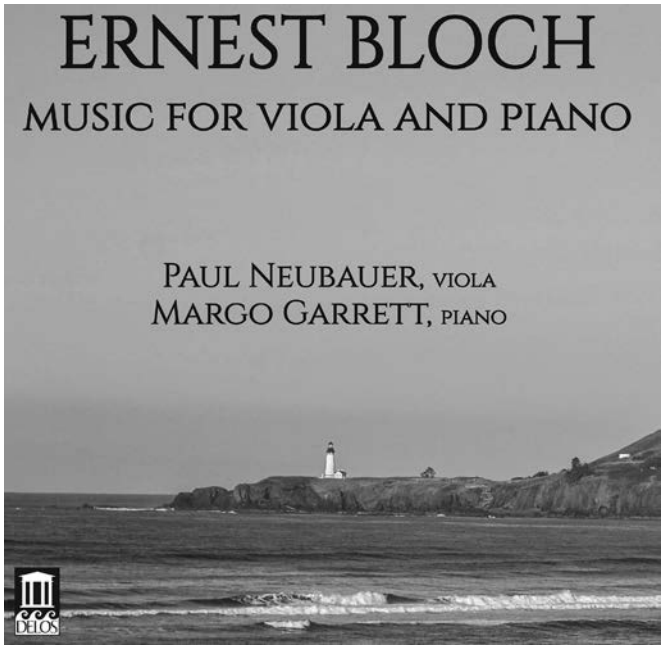


Beginnings—Clarke: Viola Sonata; Hindemith: Viola Sonata op. 11 No. 4; Vieuxtemps: Viola Sonata op. 36, *Élégie* op. 30, *Capriccio* in C minor; David (arr. Vieuxtemps): *La Nuit*. Dimitri Murrath, viola; Vincent Planès, piano. Ulysses Music Records UMR 100

This CD proved difficult to write about because I was constantly tempted to put aside block and pencil, and just enjoy the playing of this wonderfully well-attuned duo—I ended up listening several times to the whole recital as to a well-planned concert. The beginning of Rebecca Clarke's Sonata is "impetuoso" indeed in these performers' hands. Dimitri Murrath takes due note of the composer's indications regarding fingerings and choice of strings; she was a Tertis student and it shows. Murrath finds beautiful colors throughout, most seductively in the third movement—this must be the bit that led those Berkshire Competition jurors to attribute the piece to Ravel!

The Hindemith Sonata features also several moments of magic, such as the transition from the first to the second movement, where Murrath makes that one note flip from A sharp to B flat by a change in timbre. The whole sonata pours forth in one piece, its variations growing seamlessly out of each other. Vieuxtemps was principally a violinist but found a way of writing virtuoso music that is ideally suited to the viola. Murrath relishes the C string strains of the solemn introduction as much as the passage-work of the movement's vivacious main section. The melancholic musings of the Barcarolla are wistfully voiced, and the final movement's initially tripping steps develop a huge momentum.

The shorter pieces work well as so many encores; Murrath works up quite a steam in the *Élégie*'s final moments and exhibits admirable bowing control in the unaccompanied *Capriccio*. It seems strange to bill *La nuit* as a piece by Vieuxtemps—who only transcribed it—and relegate the actual composer to the small print. This, by the way, is the Frenchman Félicien David, not—as printed on the CD's case—Mendelssohn's friend Ferdinand of that ilk (the liner notes have it right). David's "symphonic ode" *Le désert* would today be considered to be hopelessly beyond the PC pale as a piece of "cultural appropriation", but the Hymn to the Night chosen by Vieuxtemps is a delightful vignette that brings one's pulse rate back to normal after the virtuoso exertions of the previous pieces.



Bloch: Suite for Viola and Piano, Suite for Viola Solo, *Suite Hebraïque*, *Meditation and Processional*. Paul Neubauer, viola; Margo Garrett, piano. Delos DE 3498

This recording was made as long ago as 2001 but the tapes were mislaid and only resurfaced last year. Most fortunately, as it happens, since they turned out to contain beautiful readings of music that is central to the viola's repertoire. Ernest Bloch's complete viola works fit conveniently on one CD; they even fit on an LP, evidenced by recordings of William Primrose and David Stimer (1956) or Ernst and Lory Wallfisch (1972). The latter even included the unfinished unaccompanied Suite from 1958, as does Paul Neubauer on this latest recording. His rhythmically taut reading underlines forcefully how near to Bach's orbit Bloch was operating towards the end of his life; several specific Bachian movements—say, the D major Prelude or the C minor Sarabande—seem to be right around the corner. There have been several attempts to complete the piece, including one by David Sills that had the blessing of Bloch's daughter. Neubauer stops where the composer's manuscript ends, leaving the listener to wonder what might have followed.

Bloch is perhaps best known for his music of Jewish inspiration. The five movements included here were written—as *Five Jewish Pieces*—in 1951 for the Chicago Covenant Club but later divided and published separately as *Suite Hebraïque* and *Meditation and Processional*. If Neubauer's rubato can be a bit fussy in some cadenza-like passages, he consistently inflects the aching melodies with deep expression and beauty of tone. Margo Garrett seconds him with complete understanding, giving a nice lilt to the strumming accompaniments of the various processional movements. The pianist comes into her own in the Suite from 1919, the piece that famously beat Rebecca Clarke's Sonata at that year's Berkshire Festival Competition. This monumental work—it set out to describe nothing less than the beginnings of life on Earth—is excitingly characterized by the duo, who once and again bring out hidden detail while always keeping an eye on the larger structure. Their biting articulation underlines the grotesque elements of the Allegro ironico, and they build up to a glorious climax in the final movement. David Brin's succinct liner notes usefully put the music in context, while the evocative cover shows a view of Bloch's last place of residence at Agate Beach, Oregon, where he wrote most of the music included here.

Mikrokosmos. Seelenverwandtschaften—Bartók: Sonata for solo violin; Ligeti: Sonata for solo viola; Kurtág: *Jelek* op. 5; Kodály: *Adagio*. Vidor Nagy, viola. Edition Hera HERA02127 (CD & DVD)

Vidor Nagy [pronounced "Notch"] may not be a household name stateside, but this Hungarian violist (born in 1942) has been a leading mover and shaker in Southern Germany for several decades, including a 30-year stint as principal viola of the Stuttgart State Opera. Now in his seventies and officially retired, Nagy

is enjoying a late bloom as a soloist, documented in a growing number of audio and video recordings of which the set under review (presented in both formats) is the latest. Its caption, which translates as "Spiritual Kinships", refers to the thread uniting the four composers represented in the program, who knew and appreciated one another, and to their shared cultural link with the present interpreter. The CD and the "bonus" DVD feature the selfsame performances. The pieces by Kurtág and Kodály stem from a concert Nagy played in Cluj, Romania on April 6, 2017, while those by Bartók and Ligeti were filmed later in the same year, without an audience, in a tiny village church at Alsóörs, Hungary.

These four pieces could be said to represent twentieth century Hungarian music in the proverbial nutshell. Béla Bartók's unaccompanied sonata was, of course, originally conceived for the violin. Written in 1944 upon a commission from Yehudi Menuhin, it was to be the last finished piece by the terminally ill composer. Nagy performs it on the viola with no compromises whatsoever, with even the trickiest chords and double stops—several tenths among them—flawlessly in place. Through the viola's lower register, enhanced by the friendly acoustic, Bartók's homage to Bach becomes a solemn celebration of string sound. The *Hora lungă* from György Ligeti's Sonata showcases the sonorous C string of Nagy's instrument to most seductive effect. His playing matches Ligeti's apparently improvisational music—which, of course, is written out down to the smallest detail. György Kurtág's *Jelek* (Signs) is an early work by arguably the greatest living Hungarian composer. Its six aphoristic movements—most of them are well under the one-minute mark—include almost as many words of instruction as notes. Nagy realizes them faithfully while managing to make them sound spontaneous. The hour-long recital ends with the *Adagio* by Zoltán Kodály in Nagy's arrangement as an unaccompanied piece. The simple, unpretentious melody flows with such heart-rending intimacy that one hardly dares to breath for fear of breaking the spell.

In Alto—Bloch: Suite for Viola Solo; Bach (arr. Kodály): Fantasia Cromatica; Penderecki: Tempo di Valse; Bozzi: Der psychophysische Bogen, Mumford: Revisiting Variazioni Elegiache, S. Stravinsky: Suite for Viola Solo, Britten: Suite op. 72. Laura Menegozzo, viola. Stefano Sciascia Production SSP 2019

As with previous recordings by this engaging violist, I was instantaneously drawn in by the intoxicatingly beautiful sounds she draws from her 1699 Carlo Giuseppe Testore instrument. Letting oneself be carried away by the full-bodied double stops in the recurring *Canto* from Benjamin Britten's First Suite is bliss indeed! This is the first time I have come across this cello piece in a viola version; the musical text has been transcribed one-to-one, resulting in some very high passages, which—needless to say—are not in the least tonally compromised in Menegozzo's hands. Her pizzicato playing in the 3rd movement (*Serenata*) resounds happily, as does the left-hand plucking over a sustained open D in the 5th one (*Bordone*), and she is remarkably agile in the concluding *Moto Perpetuo*.

Menegozzo's weakness—which may not worry other listeners at all—is a carefree attitude towards agogics that is felt throughout this ambitious recital. Compared to Paul Neubauer's recording reviewed above, the Baroque dance rhythms hidden in Bloch's Suite are here harder to pin down, and the rushing arpeggios in Kodály's Bach transcription sound quite mannered. A more recalcitrant recreation of Baroque style, Soulima Stravinsky's serial Suite fares better, as it gives the interpreter less leeway for indulgence. Penderecki's *Tempo di Valse*—another cello transcription—rounds off Mengozzo's program alongside two vignettes that explore and extend the viola's sound world: Jeffrey Mumford doing so in a more adventurous way than the psychologist-cum-composer Paolo Bozzi in his intimidatingly titled *The Psychophysical Bow*, where Menegozzo's sharp spiccato is prominently featured. This enterprising recital will be an inspiration to violists seeking rare repertoire, as well as to anyone wishing to indulge in some gorgeously colorful viola sound.

New Pedagogical Works by Callus, Slapin, and Vamos

Katrin Meidell

When tasked with writing a review of new scale and etude books, I rolled my eyes and thought, "MORE scale books? What can someone possibly write that hasn't already been covered by Galamian, Flesch, Primrose, and the rest?" But when the books arrived in the mail, I was surprised by what greeted me. Making perhaps the most positive impression was Helen Callus' *One-Step Scale System for Viola: 10 Exercises to a Better Left Hand*. Of the etude books, I was impressed with Scott Slapin's *24 Progressive Etude*s for viola solo or duo, and delighted to learn that Roland Vamos had finally published his impressive *Exercises for the Violin in Various Combinations of Double-Stops* for viola (both violin and viola versions published by Carl Fischer).

I've been using the violin version of Vamos's work for years with much success (after quite a bit of frustration) with my students. Now that the exercises have been transposed down a fifth, I highly encourage the swift acquisition of this etude book. The double-stops are quite difficult at first, and get to the heart of a common problem among less-developed violists—true independence of fingers. Vamos methodically trains the left hand across positions through combinations of double stops that you won't necessarily find in wide use in repertoire. These double stops solidly center the hand within each position, training intonation based on the octave and stable hand frame, as well as dexterity and independence of fingers. I highly encourage my students to use as little hand strength as possible, as the exercises can lead to tightness and squeezing if not vigilant about easing unnecessary tension. I also come from the school of thought where no excess fingers should be left on the fingerboard, so ask my students to lift their fingers such that there are only ever two fingers on the fingerboard at a time (Vamos himself marks this in versions H and I of each position and pattern). This is where finger independence truly is learned, and it helps students release tension that otherwise can build in the hand.

Slapin's charming *24 Progressive Etudes* for viola solo or duo, published by Ourtext, is another fine addition to etude repertoire. Published in three parts, Book I, Book II, and Score, the etudes can either be learned individually or as a duet. I enjoyed recording myself and then playing the corresponding etude with my recording (e.g. No. 1, the first in Book I, and No. 13, the first in Book II, are a duet, as are Nos. 2 and 14, etc.). The first set of etudes are in first position. No. 1, which is a series of eighth notes, doesn't always go where you'd expect, and when I asked two students to sight read the etudes, they fell into the holes Slapin so craftily composed. In addition to unexpected leaps and harmonic changes, the meter changes occasionally. These etude sets encourage active reading and require the brain to be "on" for correct execution. Furthermore, you can perform with your student, which is always fun. Likewise, they truly are progressive, with each etude set becoming more difficult. The final set, Nos. 12 and 24, changes keys every two measures for nearly the entire etude, but again, doesn't always go where you'd expect. While No. 12 stays in alto clef, No. 24 utilizes quite a bit of treble clef. The etudes would make a fine addition to the library of any private teacher, and I estimate they would be a nice precursor to the early Kreutzer etudes. They would be especially appropriate to use with students switching from violin, because they were composed for the viola and there's no chance the student played them in their former life as a violinist.

Hellen Callus's *One-Step Scale System for Viola: 10 Exercises to a Better Left Hand* is an excellent addition to the otherwise highly-saturated scale book market. In the preface, Callus writes, "The objective with this

scale system is to try to learn the kind of mechanical/technical flexibility that one needs before studying a piece and becoming more comfortable with what might be considered a more virtuosic technique enabling you to tackle pieces of any level of difficulty." The book is divided into ten parts, covering single notes and double stops, including chromatic one-finger scales and double stops in seconds, fourths, and sevenths, in addition to the otherwise-typical thirds, sixths and octaves. Additionally, Callus includes interval leaps, whole-tone scales—both in single notes and in double stops—double stop tunes, walking sixths and octaves, and sequences of scale-like single and double notes. Finally, she includes four pages of blank staff paper and encourages the violist to "create your own exercises," which personally I find unnecessary. I create my own exercises all the time, but do not feel the compulsion to write them down. That said, it is an interesting idea and one of my students to whom I showed the book said she loved that staff paper was included.

Callus' introduction is well written and covers suggestions for practice. She also writes about "related" double stops, i.e. "that a sixth inverted physically . . . becomes the interval of a fourth," so by practicing sixths you are also preparing to practice fourths. I found this to be a refreshing concept, and it encourages the violist to think about and practice intervals that aren't commonly found in etude or scale books, but that occur all over 20th century literature (Hindemith, in particular, comes to mind). I'm not sure that thinking about double stops in this fashion would cut down practice time by half (in other words, if thinking about related double stops, would your fourths automatically be in tune without practicing them because you're practicing sixths?), but it is a clever way of approaching double stops that I have not yet encountered.

While I think Callus's work has a lot to offer, I do have one complaint (which is a typical one I have of scale books). The exercises that are at the beginning of the book, and thus easier than those towards the end, are all written out. In Part I, Callus writes a one-octave chromatic scale on one finger, starting on B first the first finger, then C, then C#, both on the second finger, etc. Writing out the first exercise and then the first few measures of each subsequent exercise would suffice (perhaps even a written description would be enough with one fully written-out example). Instead, four pages are used to cover this idea for each string. Then for exercises that are more difficult, like Part 4B (which is whole-tone scales in double stops), the direction is, "Please do this exercise on all strings with all varieties of double stops and finger combinations" (page 42). I believe these exercises are more difficult to conceptualize, thus having them written out sure would be useful. This seems to be a common issue amongst scale books: the easy-to-understand concepts use up pages and pages, but when you're left with a really tricky exercise, only one example of it, and written directions to do it in all possible other ways. Another small complaint is Part 9, "Optional Bowing Variations for Parts 1, 2, 4, and 5." Instead of a stand-alone "Part," I find this would be more useful as a prologue at the beginning of the book, to give students an overview of different patterns before they go through the whole book.

In the end though, I was pleasantly surprised with the usefulness and relevancy of Callus's work. I am working on incorporating many of the exercises into my regular teaching, and have added several aspects of this book to my own regular routine. I am sure many violists will benefit from adding Callus's work to their repertoire.

Dr. Katrin Meidell is a board member of the AVS and teaches at Columbus State University. Visit her website at katrinmeidell.com for more information.

The David Dalton Viola Research Competition Guidelines

The *Journal of the American Viola Society* welcomes submissions for the David Dalton Viola Research Competition for university and college student members of the American Viola Society.

Eligibility:
All entrants must be members of the American Viola Society who are currently enrolled in a university or who have completed any degree within twelve months of the entry deadline.

General Guidelines:
Entries must be original contributions to the field of viola research and may address issues concerning viola literature, history, performers, and pedagogy. Entries must not have been published in any other publication or be summaries of another author's work. The body of the work should be 1500–3500 words in length and should adhere to standard criteria for a scholarly paper. For more details on standard criteria for a scholarly paper, please consult one of these sources:

Bellman, Jonathan D. *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*. 2nd ed. New York: Pearson, 2007.
Herbert, Trevor. *Music in Words: A Guide to Writing about Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Wingell, Richard J. *Writing about Music: An Introductory Guide*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2009.

Entries should include relevant footnotes and bibliographic information and may include short musical examples. Papers originally written for school projects may be submitted but should conform to these guidelines; see judging criteria for additional expectations of entries. Any questions regarding these guidelines or judging criteria should be sent to info@avsnationaloffice.org.

Judging:
A panel of violists and scholars will evaluate submissions and then select a maximum of three winning entries.

Entries will be judged according to scholarly criteria, including statement of purpose, thesis development, originality and value of the research, organization of materials, quality of writing, and supporting documentation.

Submission:
Entries must be submitted electronically using Microsoft Word by May 15, 2020. For the electronic submission form, please visit http://www.americanviolasociety.org/Competitions/Dalton.php.

Prize Categories:
All winning entries will be featured in the *Journal of the American Viola Society*, with authors receiving the following additional prizes:

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The American Viola Society

Announcing the

Maurice Gardner Competition for Composers

In honor of prolific composer, Maurice Gardner (1909–2002), the mission of the Gardner Competition is to identify and promote important new works for the viola and to honor Mr. Gardner's legacy.

Deadline: Online entries due by December 1, 2019

Awards:

- **First Prize** - $1,000 and a performance at the American Viola Society Festival, June 3–6, 2020 in Knoxville, Tennessee at the University of Tennessee. First prize also includes a $500 travel and lodging stipend to attend the performance in Knoxville.
- **2nd Prize** - $500

Competition Rules:

- Entries must not have been commercially recorded or previously performed;
- Entries will be a maximum of 15 minutes in length;
- Entries must be for solo viola, or viola and one other instrument. Any interactive media required for the performance of the winning composition will be the responsibility of the composer.
- The competition is open to composers of all ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender expressions and identities, sexual orientations, nationalities, and religious beliefs.

Guidelines for Anonymous Submission:

- All application materials, including entry form, will be found and submitted online at http://www.americanviolasociety.org/News-And-Events/Gardner.php
- The composer's real name must be removed from scores and recordings and from file names submitted. Entrants will be invited to create a pseudonym on the entry form.
- Composers must submit a highly legible score in PDF format. The AVS reserves the right to reject illegible scores.
- A live or MIDI recording of the composition.
- A non-refundable application fee of US $40, payable by credit card, check or via Paypal, limited to one composition per entry.
- The winning composer will be notified via email by March 1, 2020

Direct questions and inquiries to Martha Carapetyan, Competition Chair, marthacarapetyan@gmail.com, (512) 699-5946.

The American Viola Society (AVS) was founded for the promotion of viola performance and research. AVS membership includes two print issues of the *Journal of the American Viola Society*, published in November and March, and an online-only issue released in July. Your personal and financial support through AVS membership is appreciated!

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