

# MUSICOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS



Volume 13, 2012

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# Table of Contents

<b>From the Editor</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>An Interview with Christopher Butterfield</b> <i>Mary-Ellen Rayner and Crystal Yang</i>	<b>7</b>
<b>An Interview with Jordan Nobles</b> <i>Sasha Koerbler</i>	<b>17</b>
<b>An Interview with Allan Gordon Bell</b> <i>Monika Zaborowski</i>	<b>29</b>
<b>An Interview with Jeff Enns</b> <i>Iain Gillis</i>	<b>41</b>
<b>The Setting-Up and the Role of a Couple “Corpus/Counter-Corpus”: the Example of the Nineteenth-Century Student Concertos</b> <i>Priscille Lachat-Sarrete</i>	<b>53</b>
<b>Handel’s <i>Messiah</i> as Model and Source for Beethoven’s <i>Missa Solemnis</i></b> <i>Amy Carr-Richardson</i>	<b>93</b>
<b>Constructing Robert Johnson</b> <i>Sean Lorre</i>	<b>127</b>
<b>Schenker and the Moonlight Sonata: Unpublished Graphs and Commentary</b> <i>Kiyomi Kimura</i>	<b>155</b>
<b>Biographies</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Submissions and Subscriptions</b>	<b>184</b>





## From the Editor

On behalf of the editorial board, I am pleased to present this thirteenth volume of *Musicological Explorations*. I am grateful to the board's members for their insights and energies during the review process.

The present volume takes a form that is unique in the journal's history: we offer four interviews with Canadian composers, offshoots of a seminar on composers' writings organized by Dr. Goldman in fall 2011. Thank you to Mary-Ellen Rayner for having formally introduced *Musicological Explorations* and the Canadian Music Centre, where full interviews are to be made available for the member composers.

In the articles, we find two new traversals (by Amy Carr-Richardson and Kiyomi Kimura) of that well-trodden and vast terrain, Beethoven studies, alongside two studies of the intersections between contemporary musicological debate and less familiar repertoires (Priscille Lachat-Sarrete on canon formation and the student concerto; Sean Lorre on the problems facing historiographers and Robert Johnson).

The number of international inquiries has prompted the move to make our back issues available online. I am keen to see where and how the journal continues to grow in the near and distant future.

I should like to thank Dr. Jonathan Goldman for his patience and guidance during the lengthy gestation of this volume of *Musicological Explorations*.

Iain Gillis  
Managing Editor



## **An Interview with Christopher Butterfield**

*Mary-Ellen Rayner and Crystal Yang*

On November 14, 2011, we interviewed composer Christopher Butterfield in his office at the University of Victoria. He started his musical life at the age of eight as a chorister in King's College Choir, Cambridge, and decided he wanted to be a composer at the age of eighteen. He has always had an interest in performance, whether he was fronting a rock band, conducting, making performance art, or reciting sound poetry. As performers ourselves, we were especially interested in his relationship to performance and performers: In Montreal this fall, he reprised his acclaimed interpretation of Kurt Schwitters' *Ursonate*, and in May he will be giving a recital of Erik Satie's *Socrate* in Toronto. In addition to performance, we asked him about literature, his own compositional language, and specifically his 2009 piece, *Bosquet*, written for twenty-two flutes and one cello.

### **How does your background as a singer influence the way you compose?**

I can't say that it consciously has anything to do with it, singing with writing. I don't use it as a tool and I don't allude to it. But at the same time I can't ignore the fact that it is such a part of my musical life from childhood, that there has to be a whole set of responses there that come out of it. I suppose the allusion would be, when I was a kid I learned Latin for five years. And I don't think about it, I can't remember the first thing about it. And yet it forms part of the substrate of knowledge with which you go about doing other things. It's much like an early training in anything—it's there in spite of everything. Because I don't think these things particularly go away.

**Would it be fair to say your performing and composing identities are parallel existences that don't have a lot to do with each other? For instance, when you go and perform Socrate, you're quite removed from your role as a composer, aren't you?**

Well I'm trying to use it as an excuse that if you don't like what you hear, you can say, 'At least he's not a professional singer and he's just a composer.'

**So you can't separate them entirely.**

No, I wouldn't want to. There's a purpose in it, a little bit. But I don't have much of a relationship with performers. I don't work with them very often. I tend to do things that I think are very much within the capabilities of people. I'm told over and over again that the music doesn't *look* as if it's terribly difficult but ends up being rather difficult, for various reasons. Maybe it's neither one thing nor the other; it's not a super complex music and it's not a super simple music. It's a kind of unpredictable music that's somewhere in between.

**They're surprised by the language?**

They're maybe a little puzzled by it. Because it looks like it might be one thing, and it's not that. But that other thing, it's not that either. And that's not saying that it's somehow unique or different, it's just maybe a little bit unpredictable. I mean, until you actually assimilate it.

But I think the only thing I know about performers, which I get quite excited about, is that you have to make sure that you give them parts that are made up with nine by twelve sheets of 60-pound or 70-pound

ivory bond paper, bound in books with page turns that you could drive a train through, time-wise. You could write anything and as long as you gave them a good part that they could read, and turn the page on in time, and that they didn't have to screw up, or mess around, or pick up falling pieces of paper, you can do anything. Just don't do *that*. It's very simple. This sounds like a reduction to absurdity, but music is a simple business. It depends on these sorts of things. So if you ask me, 'What's my relationship to performers?' I say, 'Give them decent parts.'

**I read an interview with you online about your Schwitters performance where you were asked how Dada influences your own composition.<sup>1</sup>**

It's very difficult to talk about Dada music because I don't think it really exists. It's like talking about surreal music or something like this. It's at once too concrete and there's too much going on for one to ever be able to say, 'That's surreal.' Expressionism is a different thing, because we still talk about conveying emotions in music through extraordinary use of dynamics, and dissonance and so on. In that original idea from a hundred years ago of heightened states of mind—all right, music can reflect that quite well. But to talk about music that is somehow a mutation of reality, or something totally absurd, it's never worked very well, at least for me. It's sort of like the practice of Zen. In order to become Zen you have to ignore it

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<sup>1</sup> Isak Goldschneider. Interview with Christopher Butterfield, September 18<sup>th</sup> 2011.

<http://innovationsenconcert.ca/zine/interview/avec-christopher-butterfield/>



completely. The moment you think you're Dada you're not. There's no doubt that I like to be playful in what I write; maybe sometimes it even comes off as humorous. I don't think that's intentional. Usually it's a byproduct of the way I structure things.

**What is your relationship to rules and structure in your composition?**

I surround myself with rules and always have. I would like to get out of it, but it's not easy. I'm not a terribly intuitive composer. I'm interested in music as a puzzle. You organize certain things and put them together in a way that is dictated by *something*, because you'd like to see what happens. It's always a problem to be solved. But there's usually a structure involved for me. In a funny kind of way, structure gives me freedom, because I do recognize that what comes out puts me in a place where I'm quite happily free. If I'm lucky. It doesn't work every time.

**In Montreal in September you performed three songs.<sup>2</sup> Were they on prose texts?**

Yes, They were just things that I'd found.

**How do you arrive at choosing texts? What are your thoughts on poetry?**

I'm not good with poetry. Unless there's a hook. And actually it's funny because I've found something that there is a hook to. It's kind of kitschy but I'll find a way to make it work. My father collected postcards and he had in his collection a set of postcards with

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<sup>2</sup> "Song About Ignorance," "Political Song," and "American Song" performed September 27, 2011 at *Innovations en concert*, Montreal.

the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*.<sup>3</sup> It was a set of six postcards from the twenties with these pictures of these romantic views, with this extremely evocative poetry on it. And then you turn it over, and it's a postcard from some guy in Belfast to his wife, saying, 'Did you get the parcel I sent you last week?' or something. It's completely mundane, dumb. So you have this on one side and this on the other. As a juxtaposition of texts it was very funny.

I tend to like things you wouldn't normally set to music. You've mentioned *Jappements à la Lune*.<sup>4</sup> Those were poems by Claude Gauvreau, a Québec poet who wrote, at the end of his life, a kind of complete nonsense poetry, sound poetry. It has no meaning at all. It's really neat setting words that don't mean anything because you no longer have words telling you what they're supposed to be. You now have vocal utterance. All we've got to go on is the flavor, or the character of the music itself.

### **And you're not bound to the meaning of the words?**

No, you can construct meanings. Not that one will ever get to a concrete meaning of any kind, one won't. But it's bound to happen because people want it to mean something. You mentioned the opera as well,<sup>5</sup> and the reason I did that is because the

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<sup>3</sup> Omar Khayyám (1048–1131) was a Persian poet. The *Rubáiyát* became popular in the West in the nineteenth century through translations by Edward FitzGerald (1809–1883).

<sup>4</sup> *Jappements à la Lune* (1990): Song cycle for mezzo soprano, piccolo, English horn, bass clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, viola, cello and double bass.

<sup>5</sup> *Zurich 1916*, on a libretto by John Bentley Mays, was premiered at the Banff Festival for the Arts in 1998.

language for that was this completely fractured, repetitive language that is close to nonsense. Which I then destroyed further by moving accent structures around, breaking things up, moving it about, and so it came out as a kind of salad.

**Did you concern yourself with ideas of narrative when you wrote it, given that it's a dramatic genre?**

Frankly, no. I have such a hard time hearing words and music on a stage. I hear the music, but the text I don't really hear. Unless it's extremely melodramatic, and grossly sentimental. If I'm listening to *The Dream of Gerontius*<sup>6</sup> and Gerontius is going, "Take me, take me away," I just dissolve. Actually I'm doing that right now just thinking about it. Maybe what I do is try to stay away from it.

**Maybe text creates a problem of what to do with a poetic subject.**

Yes, and that gets too complicated for me. That's why I like *Socrate*: because it's so dumb. It's so matter of fact. It gets more wonderful the more you do it.

**Ned Rorem writes that a person can sing through Socrate for years and never tire of it.<sup>7</sup>**

You'd get tired of it when you started, but the more you do it the more extraordinary it becomes. That's the way it's been for me. It becomes more and more

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<sup>6</sup> *The Dream of Gerontius*, oratorio by Edward Elgar (1900).

<sup>7</sup> "Socrate is one of the few pieces to which for two decades I've repeatedly returned without disappointment, the pleasures of anticipation always remaining fresh." See Ned Rorem, "Around Satie's *Socrate*," in *Setting the Tone: Essays and a Diary* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1983), 351.

perfect. It's very difficult to sing because you want to make a story out of it, and it's impossible to do that. It's having to take all those impulses and putting them away, so that you're almost making it up as you go along. There are various states of serenity that you can be in. That's probably the easiest way to talk about it.

**We've talked a little bit about literature. Does the idea of writing anything other than music appeal to you?**

I'm such a flake. I do things as they occur to me. I've done things with writing that have been part of installations in galleries. But I think I made a choice early on not to write words, because it was a little too exposed. Music you can hide behind, in a certain way.

**Words are so direct.**

It's very definite for me, and I'm not good with definition. I like to sit in a sort of fog. And music is quite good for that. I don't really know what any of it means, and I'm not particularly interested. One puts together sounds and sees what comes out.

**What was your inspiration for writing a unique piece like *Bosquet*? The instrumentation is interesting to me as a flute player.**

This is what I mean by problems; they called me and asked me to write a piece for eight flutes. There is an ensemble in Montreal that's eight flutes and one cello<sup>8</sup>—that's a standing ensemble. They called up and they said, 'Um, actually we'd like you to write a piece for *twenty-two* flutes and one cello. We'd like to add fourteen.' So you're presented this problem. Twenty-

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<sup>8</sup> Ensemble Alizé

two flutes? That's a problem. And then you add a cello, that's a bigger problem. And so really, this is just a kind of a response to a set of circumstances.

And my other instant response was that it would be really nice to have the players around the audience. Because the idea of twenty-two flutes standing all together on a stage is too awful to even think about. It's an awful lot of whistles on a stage. And it worked very well, actually. It's this kind of physical thing.

**How did you choose the pitches for your tone clusters?**

Well, it gets a little technical. There's a kind of a system that I've used for years which is a way of analyzing non-tonal chords. There's a finite number of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12-note chords. There are, for example, 19 three-note chords, 43 four-note chords, and 66 five-note chords and 80 six-note chords, and it goes back on itself. So what I did was take all possible 43 four-note chords and all possible 66 five-note chords, and say, 'the piece is going to be twenty minutes long and have equal distance spacing of 43 chords, and then equal distance of the 66 five-note chords.' So it's a ratio of 43 over 66, and then somehow, those chords all interact with each other. It doesn't have to make sense, but that's the way it's structured.

**At times, the piece gives a synthesized, electronic impression. Was it your intention to construct such an effect?**

Well, that's just the sound you get when you've got an awful lot of flutes playing extremely dissonant tones with each other. And if you're lucky it becomes something bigger than it should. So maybe I got

lucky, I don't know. But somebody might ask, just because of that response that you have, are you using spectral analysis or something to come up with these sounds? And I have to say, absolutely not. I'm just writing chords, I'm just writing harmonies with lots and lots of flutes. You voice a chord a certain way and hope for the best. It's quite something to have that many instruments of a single family at the service of one particular thing. I think also there was maybe a slightly perverse desire in writing the piece, that when people went away from it, they would never ever forget the sound of twenty-two flutes playing together.

**Is it intended as a duet between the cello and the flutes?**

The cello is not supposed to be a solo part. I finally hit on a kind of image for the cellist to think of, in the introduction: it's a bit like you've got somebody in the woods and they're moving in and out of a thicket. They're appearing, and going behind it. You've got the ensemble and you've got this voice moving through it. But the way it was recorded, it's like, 'Oh! It's Elgar! And these flutes are a really weird noise in the background.' It shouldn't be like that.

**What would you say that was the most challenging task in composing this piece?**

I'd say getting the concept right at the very beginning. Getting an image for the piece that you can see absolutely clearly. You've got twenty-two flutes, one cello. There's the cello, everybody else is all around,



and the thing will be a kind of continuous sound. And then you make your decisions about structure and so on, and as long as you feel confident about those you can say, okay fine, now we'll write the piece.

### **Did it come out the way you expected?**

I think it came out better. I'm not so good that I know exactly how everything is going to be. Most of the things I do are in some way quite speculative: let's try this and hope we're lucky. But hopefully you learn enough along the way that maybe your choices have a better chance of working than not, but nobody's saying that for sure. I was kind of shocked with the way it turned out.

It's very unlikely that one would get a commission like that. It's just odd, kind of a one-off. But it's funny how things work out like that. The other piece that I did at the same time, which is just as odd in certain way, was one that I was asked to write for two improvising sopranos. I'm not much of an improviser and I don't know what to do for improvisers. That's problem one. Second of all is they wanted a piece on the subject of public washrooms. That's another problem. I called it "Stall."<sup>9</sup> That was very interesting because it ended up being extremely structured as well, but it was for improvisers. It had to have materials they could use, and be able to move through freely, while still having a fixed structure of twenty elements, each one running for a minute. So that was another interesting problem. And now, life's beginning to get a little boring, because now it's just writing pieces for normal ensembles. ■

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<sup>9</sup> "Stall" was written for sopranos Christine Duncan and DB Boyko who form the duo Idiolalla.

# An Interview with Jordan Nobles

*Sasha Koerbler*

Vancouver composer Jordan Nobles writes spatial music.<sup>1</sup> Inspired by the architecture of a specific public venue, he utilizes its acoustic qualities to produce a motion of sound that will surround the audience—immerse it in music—and enable its members to freely move within it. Having composed almost a hundred works, not all of them spatial, he has mastered a technique of “hearing” the acoustic potential of a specific venue and crafting a composition that will effectively infuse its architecture with music.

The original sound of Nobles’s music, as well as the openness and accessibility of the public venues attract large audiences to his concerts. Many Vancouver venues have hosted performances of his music, among them the atrium of the Vancouver Public Library, the Rotunda of the Vancouver Art Gallery, the WOSK Centre for Dialogue, the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre, and the Pendulum Gallery located at a branch of the HSBC bank on West Georgia Street. Nobles’s music has also been performed throughout Canada, the US, Europe and Asia, engaging symphony orchestras, choirs, chamber ensembles, and soloists.

At the age of 42, Nobles has been commissioned over twenty times, and counts over fifty performances of his works per year, some of which have led to CD recordings. He is a co-Artistic Director of the Redshift Music Society and has been organizing and presenting concerts of new music for the past ten years. On November 5, 2011 the Society presented a concert at the atrium of the Vancouver Public Library.<sup>2</sup> The concert was part of the “Vertical Orchestra” series, conducted by Leslie Dala. It featured two compositions by Nobles, *Hive* and *ather*, the latter receiving its premiere.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jordannobles.com>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.redshiftmusic.org>

<sup>3</sup> See the composer’s website for a video excerpt of that performance: <http://www.jordannobles.com/Video.html>.

**Jordan, *æther* was created specifically with this venue in mind, and its performance by such a large number of musicians, the Vancouver Bach Choir, the Vertical Orchestra and the Negative Zed ensemble, must have necessitated a number of unusual decisions.<sup>4</sup> What were they?**

The atrium of the Library is architecturally unique, because its eastern wall is seven stories high and cavernous, full of interior balconies. I wanted to create a big wall of sound by placing as many singers and instrumentalists onto as many balconies as possible. The Redshift Music has presented many concerts in here, all performed by only ten or fourteen musicians. This time, however, we were able to add the Vancouver Bach Choir to an already enlarged instrumental ensemble, and, under the direction of Leslie Dala, the imagined wall of sound came to life.

The original, earlier version of *æther* is an open-form composition, consisting of dozens of short melodies in G minor, scattered over just one page. The idea behind the open-form approach is to have performers choose their own phrases and play or sing them at will. For this performance, which involved some 120 musicians, I decided to write out the score in full, however, so that a conductor can cue in entries of phrases, and structure a performance. So, both the atrium and the number of performers involved definitely made me rethink certain previously made decisions.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.vancouverbachchoir.com>

The Negative Zed new-music ensemble operates under the auspices of the Redshift Music Society.

Spatial music is not a novelty. Throughout history there have been composers who utilized the acoustic features of a venue to trigger spatial effects. One thinks of not only Willaert, Tallis and Gabrieli, whom you had mentioned in your article,<sup>5</sup> but also of Monteverdi's many works for San Marco's cathedral in Venice and his *Orfeo*,<sup>6</sup> of Mozart's *Notturmo* for four orchestras (KV 286),<sup>7</sup> of Berlioz and his *Requiem*,<sup>8</sup> and then of Ives, Stockhausen, Xenakis, and Cage,<sup>9</sup> particularly his composition *A Collection of Rocks*.<sup>10</sup> How did your interest in spatial music come about?

I like standing in the middle of a performing ensemble, to be immersed in music that is happening around me, and I wanted to bring that experience to

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<sup>5</sup> Jordan Nobles, "Music's Fourth Dimension: Spatial Music and Guerilla Concert Tactics," *Musicworks* 100 (Spring 2008): 41.

<sup>6</sup> Joachim Steinheuer, "Orfeo (1607)," in *The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi*, edited by John Whenham, 119-140 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 125.

<sup>7</sup> Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Notturmo* for four orchestras, KV. 286 (269a), in *Neue Mozart Ausgabe* Serie IV/12 Band 5 (Basel: Barenreiter Verlag, 1981), 123-166. The orchestras are to be located in different parts of a venue, to produce an echoing effect.

<sup>8</sup> Nobles, 41.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>10</sup> John Cage, *A Collection of Rocks* (Frankfurt: Edition Peters, 1984). This composition was performed at the 1985 Music Biennale Zagreb, Croatia, at the "Vatroslav Lisinski" concert hall. More information can be found in: Naima Balic, "Yugoslavia," *International Journal of Music Education* 7/1 (May 1986): 47. <http://ijm.sagepub.com/content/os-7/1/46.citation> (accessed Nov. 21, 2011). Also, there is some more information available here:

<http://www.johncage.info/workscage/collectionofrocks.html>

an audience. I used to listen to compositions of Morton Feldman on multiple stereos in my house: each room had some form of a stereo, so I played a different composition in each room, sat in the middle of the house and listened to the interaction of all the different pieces. They were all very sparse, “non-busy” pieces composed for piano, or small chamber ensemble, like *Rothko Chapel* for instance, and somehow they all fit together. I started imagining using that technique for a live performance. But I didn’t write music like Morton Feldman. I wrote like me.

Then, as my interest grew, I also started to research spatial music more, coming across Henry Brant<sup>11</sup> and R. Murray Schafer.<sup>12</sup> I became familiar with Brant’s rules for spatial composition, but I did not follow them, because I did not want distinctly separate compositions simultaneously going on. I wanted to have a single composition, an “organic” body of music surround my audience.

Also, Brant’s scores are written for a large ensemble. They are all conducted, and, at times, by a number of

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<sup>11</sup> Nobles, 40, 42-43. Other related articles are: Henry Brant and Frank J. Oteri, “Spatial Music and Orchestration: From ‘Spaced Out with Henry Brant,’ in *Orchestration: An Anthology of Writings*, edited by Paul Matthews (New York: Routledge, 2006), 194-202. Also, Maria Anna Harley, “An American in Space: Henry Brant’s ‘Spatial Music,’” *American Music* 15/1 (1997): 70-92.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3052698> (accessed Nov. 01, 2011)

<sup>12</sup> Nobles, 43. The related works of R. Murray Schafer are, for example, *Music for Wilderness Lake* for 12 trombones, *Credo* for 12 choirs, as well as various sections from *Patria*.

conductors.<sup>13</sup> I find, however, that conducting does not always work in a spatial performance: sometimes musicians are too far apart to see the conductor, so I have used some other methods.

**Comparing scores of some, perhaps, more site-specific compositions that you have written over the years, one notices that your techniques for inducing spatial effects change with a venue. What part does the architecture play in your compositional process?**

Well, I always want to have my audience immersed in music. That's my goal. So, I spend a lot of "listening" time in a given venue and develop site-specific techniques. *Coriolis*, for instance, was written for a conference room of the WOSK Centre for Dialogue.<sup>14</sup> This room is in circular shape with a

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<sup>13</sup> In his article "Music's Fourth Dimension," Nobles points out that Brant "often employs multiple conductors in order to juxtapose distinct timbres, tempos, and themes played simultaneously and with no synchronization among separate groups or ensembles. Brant has even required no less than six conductors for his piece *Northern Lights Over the Twin Cities* (1985)," 42.

(The practice of employing multiple conductors is not a 20<sup>th</sup>-century invention. In her article entitled "Rejected Traditions," Donna M. Di Grazia discusses the 19<sup>th</sup>-century performance practice: including numerous choral and orchestral seating plans as well as engravings of concert performances of compositions by Berlioz and Liszt, she explains that multiple conductors had to be employed due to an extravagant number of performers.) Donna M. Di Grazia, "Rejected Traditions: Ensemble Placement in Nineteenth-Century Paris," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 22/2 (1998): 190-209, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/746857> (Accessed Nov. 21, 2011)

<sup>14</sup> Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue is located at the Simon Fraser University in Vancouver: <http://www.sfu.ca/dialog/>



centrally placed sitting area. It also has twelve points around the centre, like a clock, which I thought would provide a perfect spot for each of the twelve singers of Musica Intima.<sup>15</sup> So, for the first time, I composed music with motives dancing around on the “outside rim” of the sitting area, “around the clock,” and it worked really well: the music spun around in one direction until the climax of the piece, and then in reverse direction in the second half of the piece.

*Processional*, written for choir, piano and string ensemble, was composed for the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre.<sup>16</sup> Blusson Centre has a nice, big atrium, but because it is a spinal cord research facility, it also has a peanut-shell-shaped, wheelchair-accessible ramp in the centre of the atrium. It is some 600 meters long, going three stories up. The descent is very gradual and, in my mind, it created an image of singers walking down the ramp while reading music.

As a result, the *Processional* is eight minutes long, and, due to the oval shape of the ramp, its performance required six conductors! Placed on the main level, the string orchestra and the piano resonated throughout the atrium. Members of the audience, seated on the main level, and surrounded by various levels of the ramp, were hearing the singers walk pass them, behind them and around them.

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<sup>15</sup> Musica Intima is a choir based in Vancouver:

<http://www.musicaintima.org/>

<sup>16</sup> Blusson Spinal Cord Centre:

<http://www.mcmaparchitects.com/portfolio/6>

The concert was performed by the Vancouver Cantata Singers, directed by Eric Hannan.

**Which of your compositions was most extravagant in terms of employing a conductor?**

I think it was the *Periods*, composed for the “Pendulum Gallery”.<sup>17</sup> The four-storey long pendulum, swinging back and forth in the atrium of the HCBK bank became the conductor of the Standing Wave ensemble!<sup>18</sup> I timed the swinging of the pendulum and it came to something like 15 on the metronome. I decided to split the Standing Wave ensemble into two trios, each performing at the opposite end of the swing, and getting a downbeat from the pendulum. There was a lot of other stuff going on in the music, but, most of the time, the pendulum cued the beginning of phrases. It was the tallest conductor anyone has ever had!

**How has your desire to write spatial music influenced various elements of your compositions?**

Due to the nature of large spaces, I have to assume that my music is not necessarily going to be played “in sync.” So, I write music that can blur a lot, music that is not rhythmically elaborate and does not require “in sync” approach. My phrases are “cells,” short musical fragments that can come in and move at different times and at different tempi. The audience does not necessarily hear their individual content, structure or

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<sup>17</sup> The “Pendulum Gallery” is located at the HSBC bank, 885 West Georgia Street, Vancouver.  
<http://www.pendulumgallery.bc.ca/home.html> The pendulum, i.e., the multi-story kinetic sculpture created by Alan Storey, could be seen here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MSEPyTQhJs>

<sup>18</sup> Standing Wave is a new-music ensemble based in Vancouver:  
<http://www.standingwave.ca/>

point of entry ... it just hears them merge. As mentioned earlier, my original version of *ather* is an open-form composition: it allows performers to make their own selection of phrases that are provided, repeat them in any order, as often as they wish and whenever they wish, and at any tempo between metronome markings of 60 and 90. In such an open-form version of the score, being even 30 seconds out would not really make a difference.

I have dealt with issues of steady tempo by using the pendulum, the conductor or a soloist, stopwatches, or even click track. A specific venue required a specific solution. I will not be using stopwatches any more: some of my compositions require as many as 35 of them, so they just simply do not get performed. Also, using a click-track has proven to be a challenge: I have had musicians standing all over a venue, relying on a click-track feed in their earphones. This required hundred-feet-long cables to provide the feed, which was inconvenient. The only accelerating and decelerating pieces I have written since are for non-spatial performance.

In terms of the pitch content, I like having my harmonies evolve slowly and parsimoniously: a note of a chord would change after a while, then another note, and then another. It means that if a musician is a second behind, his/her entry is not going to clash harmonically with the sounding chord.

The dynamics are a lot more difficult to achieve in large open spaces. Also, I want people anywhere in the hall to be able to hear the music that is happening. So, I do not have a lot of dynamic change ... it is all played forte. In terms of instrumentation, I don't get to use strings much, because in a big space they do

not project as well. I tend to use winds, brass, and percussion. I also prefer not to use text, because the articulation gets lost in the venue. In *æther*, the Vancouver Bach Choir sang “oo,” “ah,” and “oh” vowels, with some humming at the beginning.

Finally, tuning is an issue at times: when musicians are far apart, they can only hear themselves and cannot quite tell if they are in tune with others. That is why I often use percussion instruments, because their tuning remains constant during a performance. Although the appearance of my scores might give an impression that amateur musicians could easily perform the music, the tuning challenges imposed by spatial realities require the ears of professional performers.

**Your scores look quite unusual: they consist of short music fragments, or cells, as you call them, sprinkled on a sheet (or two) of paper, implying a form of aleatoric approach to their performance.**

I love the open-form approach. I also love one-page scores. *æther* is an example of that, but so is *Simulacrum*.<sup>19</sup> It provides only cells of a composition that is to grow into its embodiment during a performance. In *Simulacrum* a soloist leads the unfolding of the composition by initiating a new phrase and thus cuing the rest of the ensemble into the next section. However, nobody has to be rhythmically in time in *Simulacrum*, which makes it largely an open-form composition.

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<sup>19</sup> *Simulacrum* was composed in 2010, and premiered on May 15, 2010 by six ensembles in six different cities across Canada. All six concerts shared the same program and printed-out program notes. Since then, it has been recorded on numerous CDs, all listed here: <http://www.jordannobles.com/Discography.html>

**What are the main challenges to performances of your works?**

In terms of venues, rhythmic coordination and ensemble playing are the two main issues facing performers. I often circumvent them by not having rhythmic coordination required. *Simulacrum* is an example of that: as a player you get the cue from the soloist, but you do not have to play in time with the soloist. In terms of the ensemble playing, I am working on musicians being comfortable in a huge space and feeling like they are playing together regardless of independency required by the open-form approach.

In terms of my site-specific compositions, a challenge might be getting a second performance. I am not worried about that. These compositions are getting played around the world regardless, but mostly in a typical choral or stage-based layout. While the spatial element is lost, the music is still being performed for other reasons.

***Simulacrum* has been mentioned a couple of times now, and I am wondering whether or not it represents an “apotheosis” of your efforts at this point?**

*Simulacrum* has all the elements that I like: it has solo lines that are singing, it has my harmonic aspirations, it moves through keys quite quickly, it is non-rhythmic, spatial (but doesn't have to be), full of variety, and no two performances of it are ever the same. And the score looks good: it has four one-page sheets, it is in open-form, which also means that performers get to determine its length. I like that. I also like the way it sounds. I would like its performance to be spatial and reverberant, and I would like it to be played by at least five or six instruments, but those are all options. Any one is good. *Simulacrum* is the piece that, at this particular stage in my life, I am the most proud of. ■



## **An Interview with Allan Gordon Bell**

*Monika Zaborowski*

Alberta-born composer Allan Gordon Bell is a well-known representative of what is a true “Canadian” music. Bell's music is not contemporary in the sense that he is trying to confuse the audience and apply theories that can only be understood by the few academics that wish to analyze it. Instead, his music derives its sounds from aural experiences from the Albertan landscape. Bell is fascinated with the outer world of his land. Mapping the musical sounds of his environment through ‘pure’ listening, Bell has developed a compositional language that challenges listeners to find experiential connections in his music, calling out for us to find our place in this land we call Canada. His music evokes aural memories of our Canadian surroundings, to inform us and remind us of the beauty we so often neglect. Bell is a Professor of Music at the University of Calgary, and former President of the Canadian Music Centre. I spoke with the composer via telephone on October 20, 2011.

*[interview begins verso]*



**I've read you completed your undergraduate degree in philosophy. Could you tell us the connection and transition between your studies in philosophy and later focus on composition? How did you decide to pursue composition?**

I began university thinking I wanted to be a writer. However when I entered English, I determined that was probably not the right direction. I was pursuing philosophy because I wanted to gain a greater understanding of what was going on in the world. I had been a musician in various capacities since my teens. During my philosophy degree, I was able to take some serious music courses in theory, and eventually composition, which led to my discovery that my true interests lay there.

My turnover to composition however did not diminish the importance of my thinking deeply. I continued to read philosophy and read people who were thinking deeply about the nature of what it means to be human on this planet from all points of view; that could be of writers as well as philosophers, scientists, and others. This intellectual pursuit is extremely important to me at the same time, as is the creative element of making music. I try to combine them both. So often my pieces now have a thrust towards the ultimate question of what it now means to be human on this planet and the meaning behind being connected to it?

## How would you say your compositional style has evolved over the years?

Well, when one begins their craft, there is an *apprenticeship* time; this time consisted of my grad school studies and post-academic work as a freelancer and also early work as a teacher in the university. This *apprenticeship* period was a time of trying to absorb as much vocabulary and challenge myself with as many different possible avenues of work in order to acquire my fundamental basic craft.

After that it was necessary to carve out a space for myself, and that happened a few years after I left the school. I had a crisis of sorts, however, this brought me to understand what place I had in the crowded artistic community. Because there is so much fine music out there one has to find a space to create in. My space ultimately turned to be about trying to find how to capture the beauty of the music of the land that surrounds me, which is basically this part of Western Canada (Alberta).

This began another process, in that I had no idea how to do this, so I needed to experiment with a lot of technical things in composition; how to deal with polychronic events in an easy way so that musicians could still perform them but still create a sense of multiplicities and time happening, and how to capture the ‘aurages’ that are actually present and how to make them into musical ideas and work with them as such.

Now that I’ve learnt to do this, it still continues to be part of what I do, but I focus on further challenging myself. When I don’t know how to do something, I try to follow that pathway; for example, in 2001 I

finally agreed to do an opera for Calgary Opera Association. The reason I had turned it down for so much time was because I didn't know how to do it and I finally realized that not knowing how to was exactly the reason to try to do it. So that opens up all sorts of new possibilities of thinking and new challenges that keep everything alive. The only thing I don't want to do is repeat myself. I have to continue to incorporate new challenges.

**You mention here that there have been different compositional periods in your life. This periodization of a composers' composing style between an early, middle, late period has been a hot discussion of debate. Do you think these periods fit into your career as a composer, and if so, which stage would you say you are currently in?**

Well I hope I am in the middle stage of my composing career, although seven years ago I thought I was in my last stage after I had a major crisis. I do believe there is something called the late work. If you have read Edward Said's book on 'the late work', he makes a good case to what happens when an artist reaches a certain stage. I know that I have experienced the 'beginning', but more so, it feels like a continuum. For me, it feels like I am actually writing one really big work with little sections called pieces that I give out to people. In this one really big life work, that goes on indefinitely, when I encounter something I don't know how to do, (for example when I did the opera), I become a beginner all over again. So in all, it is really hard to put those nice

musicological categories onto one's own work. We'll let others think about that. I am sure however, on reflection, that there are trends I am currently unaware of.

**In terms of your musical influences, are there any particular composers you feel have played a major impact on your musical aesthetic and language, and if so who and in what ways?**

Oh yes. There is a large list. There are of course my teachers Violet Archer, Malcolm Forsyth, Manus Sasonkin who were and continue to be posthumously very important and informative musicians and composers. In terms of listening, Bach without question has been on top of my list, especially through the contrapuntal elements. I always start my composing day banging my way through one of his fugues. I use it as a reminder of being the highest standard of what the musical world can achieve. No one in the twentieth century goes untouched by Stravinsky; and no one goes untouched by Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg. I also did some work with Bruce Mather, which gave me a profound introduction to his teachers, Messiaen and Boulez. Boulez in particular has played his part as a sort of opposition to the type of thinking I have towards music. Nonetheless I have been fascinated with the aural result of his work. Of course, Murray Schafer's careful listening to the world, his creation of the Soundscape Project, and his astonishing output has been of great influence. My good friend Alexina Louie's music moves me and one cannot but be influenced by her music. My teaching of certain courses has also allowed me the opportunity to listen to the greats of other traditions: Indian, Chinese

classical music, African, and Arabic; all of this goes into my musical language. However, the world music element is not so much influenced on the sound of my music but more so is addressed in some of the of the philosophical underpinnings of my work.

**Has literature specifically Canadian literature played a role or influence on your work? And if so in what ways?**

Yes, in some profound ways, however not on specific pieces. The project of Canadian writers has been to get a sense of knowing where we are. Margaret Atwood's book *Survival* traces that whole notion of confronting this formidable landscape. If you're not living in a city, you need to know what you're doing to survive. The notion all these writers had, of really getting to know this place, was something that influenced me because I was not only interested in the stories but very much in getting to know the sound, rhythm and music of the place, (which is ultimately my project).

Then there are particularly Canadian poets like Tim Lilburn (UVic), who is deeply engaged with the ideas of trying to be at home here in this land. This is very difficult for those of us that are sensitive about the realization that we (the ancestors of the Europeans) came and stole the land for those who knew how to be at home here. Basically until we can reconcile with that, we will live in fundamental shame. We can only begin to get to know the land in the way that took them ten thousand years to get to know, and we should approach it with certain humility. At the same time Lilburn's poetry also is filled with what he calls the 'erotics' of the landscape; a real desire to be here and understand the relationship between person,

place, creature, vegetation, sky and water and all the rest. Others from this group of poets that I much admire are, Jan Zwicky, Don McKay, and Lorna Crozier.

**You are an Albertan boy, born and raised, and this is very much reflected in your compositional output. However, some of your activity as a composer and university professor has led you on trips abroad, such as Europe, Taiwan and other places. Did your travels have any impact on any aspect of your compositional outlook or musical aesthetic?**

Without question. When you go away from some place, you gain perspective. Travelling abroad, and trying to become immersed in other cultures, allows the opportunity to reflect upon difference. You see Canada for the difference it has, and when you leave for some time and return, then the things that are important are amplified. I also like travelling because I am always curious to know what other artists/composers are doing elsewhere. Because the CBC radio doesn't give us as much exposure anymore, to what is going on in our country and more so with the world, composers need to travel, listen to concerts, talk to the artists, see what there concerns are, go to the galleries watch the choreography, see the architecture, and listen to the sounds of the streets. It's all food for the creative juices and food for the soul.

**You've been commissioned to write a lot of works, most of which have ended being your most acknowledged. Are you a composer that likes working under this kind of pressure, and would you say that your final product represents what you want to say through your music?**

The commissioning process has changed for me now, but the important part of the profession is to enter into an agreement with a group of performers, or a performer, or a performing organization in which they will commit to performing a piece that I have created. In acknowledging that they have deadlines I have to fit those deadlines into my schedule and accept them. Generally deadlines are not a problem, although the composing problem doesn't always line up with those deadlines. But the exciting aspect is the knowledge of the performers. Knowing what their sounds are, knowing what they are interested in doing and what they are capable of achieving, provides an interesting type of challenge of trying to create a piece they will connect with. The third important factor is that the piece reaches an audience. Knowing whether or not a piece will be performed is a large factor in the composing process.

**So do you keep a close contact between you and the performers?**

Well, they ask and I go ahead and write. After they get the piece, they get nervous and ask me questions, which spark a further dialogue. Because notation does not capture everything, performers want to be careful to do what you want which frequently leads into the rehearsal process. That's an exciting realm. I know a piece has begun to work when a performer

approaches me with questions of interpretation. This means the performer is trying to make something out of it, not that they don't know what to make of it. This is priceless.

**From what I already understand about your concept of the 'aurage', is that you listen to 'pure' sounds, without the intervention of visual or tactile imagery. You then collect from these sounds, aural images or 'aurages', which you then transform into music. Could you elaborate?**

Yes. There is a kind of simplicity behind the concept, even in the fundamental definition of it. Basically, an 'aurage' is to the mind's ear, what an image is to the mind's eye. For example, your hearing of a cat purring creates a sound event that can expand to emotional associations. For example hearing your own cat's purring would conjure up an element of connection. I am interested in the sounds that can carry with them emotional affects. I coined the word cause I was tired of people referring to things as 'aural images'. When it comes to my composing, I decided that listeners need to be challenged and use a sense of imagination simply to see what is happening in the composer's mind, what he is trying to convey. So in my music, there becomes a primacy of a sound I want to bring in. I am listening to sounds all the time. I'm like a sonic sponge. I don't use a tape recorder unless I'm trying to capture a sound for an electroacoustic means for manipulation. But normally, I just listen and the sounds that interest me, and I will then try to transcribe into some kind of pitch and rhythmic relationship. The moment I've done that I've created another type of 'aurage', which is different from the original, sort of a photograph (by analogy). This



becomes musically useful because it then has rhythm, contour, and timbre. The timbre may be more important than the pitch contour in a sound which is more leaned towards a type of noise, (less pitch content). For example, the squeal of a hawk is high-pitched, with a scrapy element to it. This scrapy element is the most important so I would ask string players to scrape their strings. Once the sounds become musical, the music proceeds in a normal way of working with these musical ideas and developing them and generating forms that emerge from them. My hope is that something from the original 'aurage' will continue to permeate the piece and lend the sense of where it came from.

**It seems the corpus of works is written for the traditional performance space with traditional instruments. What is your reason of keeping within this traditional sphere?**

A lot of the performances of my works have taken place in a landscape. The performances outside present interesting challenges, I know that from experiencing the pieces of Murray Schafer's work. Nonetheless, my composing for traditional means is mostly because I profoundly admire what practicing musicians do and are capable of doing. The second reason is that I have a hope that through listening to my pieces in a concert like setting people will realize and reminded that they too love the land in which they live and would want to go out there. The third reason is when I step outside or go for a hike, there is so much music out there already, that there is no reason for me to impose my music on it. I think people should listen to the world as the world and discover all the deep pleasures that are there in all the

birdsong, sounds of the wind, grass the endless list of things that are taking place that are deeply musical and see this earth as a large musical instrument. You don't need a symphony orchestra out there; just sit, be quiet and listen and it will all come to you.

**I noticed in your list of works that in the eighties and nineties you composed some computer music and worked with electronic mediums. Is this still a medium you can see yourself revisiting in the future. Have any of your thoughts changed in terms of your relationship with electronic technology?**

Actually, last year in January I had a piece performed by the University of Calgary String Quartet, involving interactive electronics, where I had a computer diffusing the sound throughout the audience. This was the most recent electronic work I wrote which required a considerable amount of expertise. My university has two people, David Eagle and Lori Radford who have deep expertise with this working with this medium. When I get the chance, I listen to what they do and occasionally will have an opportunity to explore what it may mean to my musical language. I am mostly interested with a live performer having an interaction with the electronic medium. It is becoming easier for this interaction to take place because of the burgeoning expertise people have nowadays. So yes, this is still part of what I do. I haven't done it for large ensemble yet. But it is worth knowing about and it still interests me. Especially when a project comes forward and I don't know how to do it, I'm curious to find out. For instance, how to make the string quartet work with eight speakers, diffuse the sound, and create a situation so that

people don't know where the music is coming from at any given time, even by watching the performers and have it still sound like a piece of chamber music.

**What piece is this?**

The piece was called *A Cast, a Charm and Exaltation*, based on its pluralization: a cast of hawks, a charm of finches, an exaltation of larks. My notion was to create an allusion of flocking. I am interested in how birds shift shape and location in time and space with amazing speed. The work was performed once, and not yet published. There does exist a recording, however, it was not successful in capturing the spationalization of this experience.

**May last question before we end is do you have any dream projects?**

No. There is no one thing I have to do before I die. I lost some of that ambition in my 30s. The desire to write a piece that would be internationally known and recognized as a masterpiece, just seems to me like a waste of time. My job is to write one piece at a time and do the best I can on that piece, and then move on to the next one. Again it's that idea of writing a life's work and I'll see what it is when I'm finished. I nonetheless have very many interests and am still continuing to create. ■

## An Interview with Jeff Enns

*Iain Gillis*

“I wear my heart on my sleeve most of the time, and I write that way. I can’t be a cerebral composer. Hanging out in lots of church circles, “Contemporary Music,” means a different thing there, as well. So, if you’re talking about the avant-garde, I find that kind of funny. Sure, twelve-tone this and that, blah-blah-blah: that’s old music already. That was twenties, thirties, and forties, and people have been experimenting with it since, but in some ways I’m more modern because I’m neo-Romantic or something – I’m not even sure where I’d get pigeonholed, or why I’d need to be pigeonholed. This is how I’d describe my music: it would be if Vaughan Williams and Duruflé went to a Rush concert. [pauses] Sort of. I mean, there’s a lot of other stuff in there. That covers a lot of influences. Or if Vaughan Williams, Duruflé, and the guys from Rush went to a High Anglican church service... and sang Appalachian tunes.”

Thus Jeff Enns. He has won a number of composition competitions and had his music performed across North America, as well Ireland, the U.K and Japan, and was recently the composer-in-residence for the Canadian Chamber Choir. He has been widely commissioned, by groups that include Victoria-based Vox Humana. It was that choir’s director, Brian Wismath, who first introduced me to Jeff and his music. Jeff teaches violin at the Beckett School in Kitchener, and is music director of St. James Lutheran church in Elmira, ON. In his typically generous way, he agreed to speak to me on the phone from his home in Elmira, where he lives with his family and is a stay-at-home father of 2, in late October 2011.

**Would you mind sharing a few words about your personal and musical background?**

I was born and raised in Waterloo, in a Mennonite church. My grandfather was a church choir director for forty seven-plus years, and they would always have choir festivals. My grandparents all came from Ukraine in the twenties, and that's a cultural identity in itself. Not that that *necessarily* matters, but it does shape who you are, in where things came from, depending on how much you hold onto that. My mother is still a church organist. Church was a very safe and familiar place, and we spent lots of time there.

I started violin lessons at six, and my mother taught piano at our house. I'd have a lesson, and my mom would play something, and then I'd know how it went and I'd figure it out. My fingerings were just awful. [laughs] I had to re-learn stuff in high school because I wanted to take organ lessons: I loved the organ and I still love it. It's just such a fantastic sound — I never, ever get tired of it.

I picked up cello when I was 9, probably, and I'd sung in choirs since I was very young. I still do: I've sung with Da Capo Chamber Choir<sup>1</sup> in Waterloo for the last five years, and this year I'm singing with the Elora Festival Singers. I studied organ and viola at Wilfred Laurier.<sup>2</sup> I grew up three blocks away.

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<sup>1</sup> The Da Capo Chamber Choir was founded in 1998 in Kitchener-Waterloo by Leonard Enns, to whom Jeff is not related.

<sup>2</sup> Glenn Buhr, with whom Jeff studied composition, is still the composition professor there. With Bramwell Tovey, current Music Director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Dr. Buhr co-founded the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra New Music Festival in 1992.

### Who were your teachers at Laurier?

The Penderecki Quartet started in residence, I think in my very first year there.<sup>3</sup> So I studied with Yariv Aloni, whom you probably know. He's just a fantastic guy! But then he fell in love, got married, moved to Victoria.... [laughs] Dov Scheindlin was the next violist. It was kind of interesting, because he was not even a full year older than me, but he already had a master's, he'd been concertizing. I think he went Julliard; I took a year off and did this for a while, and then took another year off... I hadn't gotten very far.

With the organ, I didn't have the discipline to just sit and do scales. I just wanted to play organ music. It's like trying to run before you can walk.

I always wanted to do composition, to write stuff. I remember being mad as a little kid. I loved Vivaldi and Bach, all sorts of different violin things, and I remember being annoyed listening to Handel's *Water Music* and such, thinking, "I'd like to write that when I get bigger, but now I can't, because they already did it. And they had a three-hundred-year head start on me, so it's just not fair!" I tried to write stuff in high school. I love fugues, but I'm not very mathematical,

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<sup>3</sup> The current roster of the Penderecki String Quartet, quartet-in-residence at Wilfred Laurier University since 1991, is composed of Jeremy Bell and Jerzy Kaplanek (violins), Christine Vlajk (viola), and Jacob Braun (cello). Yariv Aloni is currently a sessional instructor of chamber music and viola at the University of Victoria, and is very active on the podium as music director of the Galiano Ensemble of Victoria, the Victoria Chamber Orchestra, and the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra. Dov Scheindlin is currently a member of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and associate member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

and trying to write a five-part fugue in B major when you're in grade eleven... again, running without being able to walk. I just didn't have the depth of knowledge to do it. There was stuff in my head, but I just couldn't get it out. My second or third year I took composition.

**What's the earliest piece of your own that you were willing to sign off on?**

I found some boxed stuff a little while ago that's from 1994. It's... not very good... at all. [laughs] The first piece that's really quite good? I did a setting of "O magnum mysterium" in 1997, and that was sort of my hit for a while. It won the Amadeus Choir Composition Competition, and Elmer Iseler Singers did it, it was recorded by a choir at Bemidji State University -- it sort of got far and wide for a while.<sup>4</sup> It was recorded by the Gerald Fagan Singers in London [Ontario], Camerata Singers in Halifax,<sup>5</sup> and I think some others.

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<sup>4</sup> Both the Amadeus Choir (est. 1975) and Elmer Iseler Singers (est. 1979) are based in Toronto and are currently under the direction of Dr. Lydia Adams.

<sup>5</sup> Under the direction of their namesake, the Gerald Fagan Singers have long championed Canadian repertoire. The Halifax-based Camerata Singers, founded in 1986 by their director Jeff Joudrey, make a point of their history of commissioning new works.

It was one of those pieces that just happened: I think it took me two hours to write. I get inspired by particular moments, I think. I wrote it in the middle of August. I've written some good Christmas things in August.

**That's about the time they put Christmas cards out in stores these days...**

[laughs] All that being said, I grew up with an organ in the church, and we always sang everything in four parts. I assumed everyone sang everything in four parts – I mean, why wouldn't you?

**Did you grow up with English services?**

Yes – my home church still has a German service. I'd play organ for it, but I'd never attend if I didn't have to.

**You mentioned in our preliminary conversation that you like the fluid sound of Latin, and so you like to set Latin texts. Do you conceive of other languages as having characteristic sounds that encourage or discourage you to set them to music?**

I've done a couple of French texts just recently. I sang a setting of *Sous le Pont Mirabeau*;<sup>6</sup> I really liked the text, and I wanted to set it. I did: it's in D-flat, and I think of it as very warm, kind of like looking at Paris skyline without my glasses on. It's funny: French makes me think Impressionist, water-flowing-around, Monet, Debussy-Ravel-ish. Not that I'd necessarily write in that style.

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<sup>6</sup> "Sous le Pont Mirabeau" is from Guillaume Apollinaire's (1880-1918) 1913 collection, *Alcools*.



I haven't really set anything in German, but I've been trying to set a couple of German texts – solo songs – for a friend of mine. Not that I've managed to do it yet.

**You seem to have a certain historical awareness, even a historical bent. Do these recent settings of yours use contemporary poems, or texts that date a bit further back?**

They're not contemporary poems. The German is a hymn text that was read at the funeral of a blind organist from my home church – he was basically responsible for getting the organ we have now; I liked the words.

**To stay with texts, then: in preparing for this interview, I came across a clip of you online discussing a piece of yours called “Moonset” —**

—at Composers' Circle.<sup>7</sup> That was a really neat experience.

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<sup>7</sup> The Waterloo Region Composers Choral Song Circle, held at Kitchener's City Hall Rotunda on September 27, 2008, featured the choral music of Glenn Buhr, Barrie Cabena, Leonard Enns, Jeff Enns, Michael Purves-Smith and Carol Ann Weaver.

**Speaking about Pauline Johnson and your choice of texts.<sup>8</sup> You said that you “wait until a text leaps out at you and then you have to run with it, or it’s gone.” Is that still the case, three years later?**

I go searching for texts. I’ve probably read more poetry in the last ten years than most people read in their lives. I love poetry—I love the meter of words, and the non-meter of words—but every time I look at a poem, I’m thinking, “How could this be good for music?” Sometimes, things leap to mind right away, and I try to store them in my brain if I don’t have anything to write them down in the moment. I’ve got all sorts of little scraps of stuff all around my piano. Little bits that may work, or may never work. And I’ve got some ideas started that I think are really good ideas, but I haven’t done anything with them. Other times I do go run with them, and the piece just happens.

**Like with the “O magnum mysterium?”**

Yes, exactly. Anyway, I love Pauline Johnson’s poetry – her way with words. I love the fact that she’s from Ontario – the Six Nations Reserve just outside Brantford. I love that she’s a half-Native woman who bucked just about every trend and was a one-woman show in her twenties. And I like the fact that she’s not under copyright, either. [laughs]

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<sup>8</sup> Pauline Johnson (1861–1913), also known as Tekahionwake, was a writer and performer whose work is notable for its celebration of Johnson’s cultural identity as a First Nations woman. A selection of her poetry is available through the University of Toronto’s e-resource Representative Poetry Online (RPO). See <http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poet/177.html>.

**How did you first come across her poetry? I've only just came across it through this piece.**

I sang somebody else's setting of "I may not go to Bethlehem," which I hadn't read before. I didn't like the piece very much, but I really liked the text. "Brier" is just a fantastic Good Friday poem. Jeff Smallman set that. I tried to set it a bunch of times, but he did such a fantastic job of setting that text. I try to have something different to say, but there are certain texts that I hear set and I think, "*That's* the tune." He got it.... Before I did. [laughs]

A cousin of mine had a baby that was born without lungs. "Moonset" was kind of written for little Nathan. The last line is "I never touched your soul in shadow-land." I set it kind of ethereally, a bit like the Duruflé Requiem – unresolved. It wasn't the same chord, but in my mind, it was the same kind of idea. It's not so far from this world to the next world. At least for some people. [pauses]

**You said in that same clip that the more you thought about it, the more you were convinced that "Moonset" was actually a sacred poem. Are you able to define what makes something sacred for you?**

Faith is kind of a hard thing to talk about. Growing up, it was very much your personal thing. I think it is. I've met too many people who talk very openly about things, but then it just annoys other people. And I don't want to annoy other people.

But music is sacred. I love being a church musician, because that's how I worship. And I don't have to be in church. It certainly helps to focus things, but some of my best, my favourite times are the week after

choir when everybody's gone, and I just sit with the lights off and play. I still need to practice for Sunday, of course, and sort things out, but I play for me. Sometimes I improvise and it's very inspired, and sometimes I improvise and it's....

**Does improvisation inform your compositional process at all?**

At university, that's what really opened the doors. I took organ improvisation lessons and composition lessons at the same time. They both helped each other out immensely. I'll often take whatever tune has been floating about in my head and try to grab it and work it into a loose framework. I'm in a bit of a three-minute-prelude rut right now, because that's what I have to do. I'm terrified to improvise postludes because your mistakes are louder. It's much easier to do communion "moonbeams."

**Outside of poetry, where do get your ideas? You mentioned Monet earlier and have talked about images in texts—**

I love art, and I'm happy to look at most painters. I love Marc Chagall. I love that he did stained glass. Before I had kids, I did stained glass fairly regularly. I love it. It catches the light so beautifully. I've got a few pieces that I made around the house. I like to look at them, too, once in a while.

Chagall makes me happy. There's a Chagall exhibit on at the Art Gallery of Ontario that my wife and I went to last Saturday.<sup>9</sup> There were a couple of huge paintings, and as I looked at them, they just made me smile.

**Do you hope that your music might have a similar effect on those who hear it?**

I do, and that's a very hard part for me about commissions. If I've just written a piece, and no one has paid me money yet for it – the heaps and heaps of money that I'm raking in hand over fist [laughs].... Commissions frighten me. What if they don't like it? Either I haven't written any duds yet, or the people are far too nice to say that they don't like it. I'm gonna go with "people really do like it."

One thing I learned in university: you are a product of your influences. What are my influences? From an early age and through your formative years (and hopefully I'm still forming), you grab onto things that you like. I was raised with a four-part singing tradition, so I really do like harmony, but I also love plainchant. I love organ music, I love strings; I also love crazy out-there heavy metal underground guys. (Not so much the Cookie Monster vocal parts.) There are some really great musicians in those bands and crazy things happening in that music. To jazz... I'd to be able to play jazz. I love listening to it.

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<sup>9</sup> The 118-piece exhibition, "Chagall and the Russian Avant-Garde," ran from October 18, 2011 to January 15, 2012. See <http://www.ago.net/chagall-and-the-russian-avant-garde>.

**You said there are certain things you tend to come back to, that evolve. Could you say something specific about your compositional technique?**

I try to give everybody a least little bits of melody, or to make everything the melody. My technique... I failed theory a couple of times, and counterpoint. I mean, I eventually passed them, but I like to tell people that I failed them and still did composition. I love added seconds, and major-minor seventh chords. I love to expand and write thick chords, but I like to come back to unisons and two- or three-note clusters. I like parallels and I love Vaughan Williams. I figure if *he* can be so fantastic and write parallel fourths, why can't I? I write parallel fifths partly because the fifth has the overtones set out. It's like power chords in a rock band, or on the full organ with mixtures. The open fifth is a very powerful chord. I know you're not supposed to write parallel fifths, but if you use them for good and not for evil, I suppose.... If I had even one sixtieth of the brain that Bach had, I'd probably find other ways around that.

I want to write music that other people will like to listen to, or at least something that I'll enjoy listening to and hopefully other people will enjoy it, too. And if they don't, I tend to write things that are shorter, so if you really don't like it [smiles audibly] it's gonna be over in a couple of minutes anyway. [laughs]

I always try to put a piece of me or my soul or something into each piece. Maybe that's not the best way to describe it....

I've had a number of people say that there is a "Jeff Enns sound," which makes me really happy. Because

how can you have your own sound? There's a thousand years of music before me, and we've only got 12 pitches to choose from. That makes it a lot more difficult. I find it really hard to write in just four parts. The human voice is so amazing. And when you put a choir together – especially a really good choir, but even a not-that-great choir – it's just one more glimpse of the divine there. There's a reason that there's a saying, "He who sings, prays twice." I'm a firm believer in that. ■

## The Setting-Up and the Role of a Couple “Corpus / Counter-Corpus”: the Example of the Nineteenth Century Student Concertos

*Priscille Lachat-Sarrete*

The concerto for a soloist is, by its nature, a *showpiece*, part of a performance. Always written with the prospect of an imminent public performance, it belongs, just like opera, to a genre in direct symbiosis with public musical life. While in the epoch known as “Classical,”<sup>1</sup> string quartets, piano sonatas, and Lieder were regarded as *Musiziermusik*, or music-for-musicians, the kind of music that musicians could play for each other, the presence of a public appears to have been essential for the concerto, as for symphonies or arias in concert. The heroic display of the soloist in the concerto may be contrasted with the intimacy of chamber music.

Since there may be no concerto without a public performance, part of the compositional effort involves the search for an effect on the listener. The composer must meet the expectations of his public, mingle a touch of inventiveness with a certain amount of conformism, prevent his originality from being perceived as ignorance of convention, and never hesitate to tend towards eccentricity, while especially avoiding academism, which can only trigger boredom. Accordingly, identifying the implicit expectations of the public is more important for a concerto than for chamber music.

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<sup>1</sup> The generally accepted begin/end dates for the Classical Period in Western music are 1750–1820.



Whatever the selected level of stylistic analysis, it is extremely delicate to attempt to define the implicit expectations of a listening public. Many studies have tried, on several levels. For example, the studies of Eugen Narmour<sup>2</sup> have a narrow focus, seeking to predict which note is expected after a particular note. On an intermediate level of analysis, one may try to model when a deceptive cadence will be perceived as a deviance and when it will be perceived as a normal resolution of a dominant chord. In this article, we have elected a higher-level analysis, seeking to investigate the implicit expectations of the public as regards the concerto genre.

Quantitative stylistic analysis is one of the more relevant tools for this purpose.<sup>3</sup> The inductive method is to be distinguished from the deductive method.<sup>4</sup> The inductive method gathers a broad and coherent set of works, identifies the constants and alternatives of the form or the musical language employed, and extrapolates from these the supposed expectations of the public. In searching for a definition of the concerto, this methodology may

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<sup>2</sup> Eugen Narmour, *The Analysis and Cognition of Melodic Complexity: The Implication-Realization Model* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Quantitative stylistic analysis was in particular used by Priscille Lachat-Sarrete, "L'entrée du soliste dans les concertos de 1750 à 1810, à travers les œuvres de Johann Christian Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Viotti et Beethoven [The entry of the soloist in concertos written from 1750 to 1810 by Johann Christian Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Viotti, and Beethoven]" (PhD diss., Paris-Sorbonne, 2010). The author studied the entry of the soloist in some 140 concertos of this period. <http://www.e-sorbonne.fr/theses/l-entree-soliste-les-concertos-1750-1810-travers-les-oeuvres-johann-christian-bach-haydn-mozart#>

<sup>4</sup> Guido Adler, *Der Stil in der Musik*, Leipzig, 1911.

provide results very close to the “neutral level,”<sup>5</sup> closer to the work than other methods. However, even if these results are cross-checked with reception history, the musicologist may easily retain unfalsifiable assumptions regarding the expectations of the public, which concern aesthetics.<sup>6</sup>

The deductive method, by contrast, compares a work with its system. As Jean-Pierre Bartoli explains, it appears that all stylistic analyses suppose a wish for comparison and quantification.<sup>7</sup> To describe what is exceptional, it is initially advisable to define a frame of reference that may be used as a standard. As Nicolas Meeùs indicates, “the stylistic standard itself can only exist in its difference compared to a broader normality and in variation with the system that surrounds it.”<sup>8</sup> One of the main problems is to determine with which work, or rather with which set of works, the work that is to be analysed is to be compared, that is, to locate it within the pyramid of stylistic levels described by Jean-Jacques Nattiez:<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez recapitulates the tripartition of Jean Molino, differentiating the *neutral level*, corresponding to the message itself in its material reality, *poietics*, which is the strategy for producing the message, and *aesthetics*, which relates to the strategies concerning its reception. Cf. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Fondements d'une sémiologie de la musique*, (Paris : Union générale d'édition, 1975), 20–23.

<sup>6</sup> αἰσθησις in Greek for “ability to perceive.”

<sup>7</sup> Jean-Pierre Bartoli, “La notion de style et l'analyse musicale: bilan et essai d'interprétation,” *Analyse musicale* 17 (1989): 12.

<sup>8</sup> “La norme stylistique elle-même ne peut exister que dans sa différence par rapport à une normalité plus large dans un écart par rapport au système qui l'entoure,” Nicolas Meeùs, “Les rapports associatifs comme déterminants du style,” *Analyse musicale* 32 (1993): 9.

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Fondements d'une sémiologie de la musique* (Paris, Union générale d'éditions, 1975), 82–83.

each level of stylistic analysis supposes the implicit or explicit definition of a counter-corpus. The a priori, specific characteristics of a work may be identified, but that is only possible if they are located by comparison to another level of the pyramid: for example, to the suitable style for a given period of the production of a composer”<sup>10</sup>

An ordinal prioritization is implied, with a time before and a time afterwards.

The following comments begin by studying the process of creating a sorting filter to identify the counter-corpus, which, as mentioned above, encompasses concertos written for students. The second step involves analysing these student concertos, while the third step concerns an investigation of composers’ affinity for virtuosity and virtuosic passages. The last step involves a discussion of methods for increasing the inherent stage worthiness of the concerto.

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<sup>10</sup> “Chaque niveau d’analyse stylistique suppose la définition, implicite ou explicite, d’un contre-corpus. Dans une œuvre, on peut identifier des caractéristiques qui a priori lui sont spécifiques, mais cela n’est possible que si on les situe par rapport à un autre niveau de la pyramide : le style propre à une période donnée de la production d’un compositeur par exemple,” Jean-Jacques Nattiez, “Quelques réflexions sur l’analyse de style,” *Analyse musicale* 32 (1993): 6.

## Creating a Sorting Filter<sup>11</sup> to Identify the Counter-Corpus

A counter-corpus, which, following Nattiez, can be opposed to the main corpus, will help to identify the implicit expectations of the public regarding concertos during the nineteenth century. Selecting a counter-corpus involves using a sorting filter on a broad set of works. For example, selecting a counter-corpus for a study of the pianistic writing of the Liszt's concertos would involve gathering all works for piano by Liszt and sorting them into concertos on the one hand and other pieces with piano on the other; here, the sorting filter is genre. As another example, if one were gathering a large number of piano concertos contemporary to those of Liszt, the sorting filter would be the composer's name.

Within the exhaustive corpus of all concertos from the same epoch, as a matter of practicality, musicologists typically study the concertos of the repertoire, that is, those which are published, those which are still currently played in concert, or those that were regularly played in concert during the epoch under consideration. The remainder of the corpus remains quasi-unknown. To identify the implicit expectations of the public regarding concertos, student concertos are here proposed as a counter-corpus to the concertos of the repertoire.

Identifying those works belonging to the “student concerto” counter-corpus involves a sorting filter made up of two essential conditions and one

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<sup>11</sup> The wording “sorting filter” is used in engineering ; “filter” is the equipment used to perform the process of selecting the elements of a set with a common attribute.

subsidiary condition. These conditions will preferably be objective in order to allow reproduction of the counter-corpus no matter the investigator. Reporting the difference between the filtrate (the counter-corpus) and the matter to be filtered (the corpus) attests to the very existence of a counter-corpus.

### **First Condition: Playing Facility**

The essential first condition is playing facility. It is understood that the concertos from the “standard” repertoire at an intermediate technical level but which were not written for students, such as some of the concertos of Haydn or Bach, are excluded. Even some concertos of the repertoire in which the composers refused to pay a toll to technical prowess, such as Mendelssohn’s Concerto for Violin in E Minor op. 64, cannot be played by students of intermediate level and thus are excluded from the counter-corpus.

Student concertos as such form an autonomous pedagogical repertoire. To write for “*poor or weak hands*,” as Couperin wrote, led to certain masterpieces that are remembered by all musicians with particular tenderness. Famous examples include Bach’s *Clavierbüchlein*, Mozart’s *Sonata semplice*, Beethoven’s *Für Elise*, Bizet’s *Jeux d’enfants*, Liszt’s *Weihnachtsbaum*, Grieg’s *Lyrical Pieces*, Tchaikovsky’s *Children’s Album*, Fauré’s *Dolly*, Debussy’s *Children’s Corner* and *The Little Negro*, Ravel’s *Ma Mère l’Oye*, Bartók’s *Mikrokosmos* or his *Duets for two violins*.

Actually, there are two opposing designs, as illustrated by two collections of works by Schumann. Some works are really intended for children (e.g., *Album für die Jugend* op. 68), while others evoke the nostalgic glance of adults into their past (e.g., *Kinderszenen* op. 15).<sup>12</sup> These two categories are permeable, but works of both categories speak to the complexity of writing for children. Each time, the composer adapts his work to the technical level of children or young people learning music while expressing himself in his own style and with his indisputable talent, which makes these pieces so exceptional in the eyes of young interpreters and their teachers.

Few famous composers wrote easy-to-play concertos.<sup>13</sup> Let us only mention in the twentieth century the Concerto for Piano that Shostakovich composed for his son. The original version is for two pianos, not piano and orchestra (see *infra* the secondary third condition). Moreover, few concertos initially intended for students passed to the concert hall repertoire. Among the rare works that knew this privilege are the concertos of Kabalevsky, assistant and later titular professor with the Moscow Conservatory (from 1932 and 1939, respectively), who continued until the end of his life to teach music

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<sup>12</sup> Schumann speaks about precisely this in a letter to Carl Reinecke dated 6 October 1848: "These parts are completely different from *Kinderszenen*. These latter were memories composed by an adult for adults, while *Weihnachtsalbum* [the proposed name for the *Album für die Jugend* before it was changed by the publisher] contains images likely to wake up presentiments of the future in the minds of the small."

<sup>13</sup> In the same way, few famous writers wrote children's fictions, let's only mention *The Crows of Pearlblossom* by Aldous Huxley and *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

at the primary school in his district, voluntarily and in addition to his duties at the Conservatory. As a well-known composer in the former Soviet Union, he wrote many pieces for children, including an *Album of Children's Pieces*, *Thirty Children's Pieces* op. 3, *From the Life of a Pioneer* op. 14 and *Twenty-Four Easy Pieces* op. 39. In 1952, he composed his Third Concerto for Piano in D Major op. 50, the Concerto for Violin in C Major op. 48, and the Concerto for Cello in G Minor op. 49 for young interpreters in the Soviet Union.

### **Second Condition: Having a Title like “concerto” or a Derived Wording**

A perhaps unsurprising essential second condition is that these works carry the title “concerto” or a derivative thereof, such as “concertino” or “concertinetto”. Names like “concerto” or “concertino” are not accidental. The latter wording actually means “*miniature concerto*” in this context and does not refer to older pieces carrying this title, such as the works of Haydn.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, composers were free to choose any other title, and often wrote easy pieces named “sonata,” “variations,” or various other titles.<sup>15</sup> These concertos, by virtue of their title, must

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<sup>14</sup> The concertos of Joseph Haydn may be considered as chamber music. They are similar to keyboard music, grown up to concertos, not through the formal structure, the solo/tutti effects or the virtuosic passages, but only through the presence of a sporadic string accompaniment.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Oscar Rieding was the author of ten odd student concertos, but he also wrote, always for junior instrumentalists, a large number of pieces with varied titles among which are: *Waltz with the Devil* op. 28, *Fairy Tale* op. 30, *The Expectation* op. 31, *The Giant* op. 32, *Burning Desire Lyric Piece* op. 41, and *Gavotte, Easy Piece* op. 42.

be different from fantasies, sonatas, or any other piece with a specific title targeting students of the same level, for example through formal aspects and the use of virtuosity (*cf. infra*).

These works are didactic not only because they are addressed to instrumentalists with still-limited technical facility, but also because they must teach these instrumentalists the basics for understanding the concerto genre. Young students and amateurs can thereby approach the technically demanding concerto genre through more accessible writing.

### **Third Condition: the Absence of Orchestra**

The subsidiary third condition relates to the accompaniment of the works in question, which is generally a piano and not an orchestra. For composers, the challenge of this corpus relative to the standard repertoire is to make the works understandable as concertos despite their lack of an orchestral accompaniment, one of the fundamental characteristics of the genre. Some rare pieces among those studied were evidently successful enough that they were later orchestrated, such as Rieding's Concerto op. 35 or Seitz's Concerto op. 7.

Performances of concertos with reduced orchestral manpower are not exceptional. A number of concertos from the second half of the eighteenth century, for example, such as those of Johann Christian Bach, were conceived with very small instrumental accompaniment, perhaps two violin parts and one bass part. Accordingly, the keyboardist could perform such a concerto accompanied by a minimum of three instrumentalists. During the private performances that were common in the



nineteenth century, some pianists played concertos with the accompaniment of a string quintet. For example, Chopin's Piano Concertos also exist in chamber versions. This practice directly inspired some composers to write for this formation.<sup>16</sup> When in 1842 Schumann composed his Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, op. 44, he actually wrote a concerto with miniature accompaniment, since he planned to offer to his wife Clara an orchestral work for concert performance. In the same way, in 1843 César Franck composed a solo piano work with string quartet accompaniment.

Sometimes, the orchestra is even removed from the work entirely. In editions of some concertos for two pianos, like those of Hummel or Steibelt, most of the orchestral sections covered by the second piano may be omitted, lying between the annotations "VI -" and "- - DE." In this case, the melodic unfolding is modified by the reduction to piano. Other Parisian editions specified "with accompaniment ad libitum", or even "this concerto may also be performed on the piano alone"<sup>17</sup> In 1836, Joseph Mainzer reports that the organization of concerts in Paris was so defective that it was common to perform concertos without orchestral accompaniment.<sup>18</sup>

Accordingly, an accompaniment of piano rather than orchestra is a non-essential, subsidiary condition that

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<sup>16</sup> Brigitte François-Sappey, *Robert Schumann* (Paris: Fayard, 2000), 765.

<sup>17</sup> Isabella Amster, *Das Virtuosenkonzert in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Klavierkonzerte* (Wolfenbüttel, Berlin: Kallmeyer Verlag, 1931), 25.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Mainzer, "Concertwesen in Paris," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 4 (1936): 165–167.

not all works in the counter-corpus fulfil. The form of the accompaniment is a consequence of the level of playing facility required for pedagogical repertoire and the conditions of these pieces' performance. When a student concerto is orchestrated, a group of older students may accompany the budding virtuoso while keeping the melodic unfolding as the composer intended. Though in this case there is an orchestra, there are no large orchestral sections, unlike many concertos initially conceived for soloist and orchestra.

### **The Result of Filtering: the Counter-Corpus of Nineteenth Century Student Concertos**

The works studied here are seldom regarded as masterpieces. They were written by well-known instrumentalists, professors at the newly created European conservatories whose talents as composers were not inevitably recognized. They do not appear in the repertoire of concertos of Lindeman<sup>19</sup> and the majority of them are missing from the Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.

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<sup>19</sup> Stephen D. Lindeman, *The Concerto: A Research and Information Guide*. New York: Routledge Music Bibliographies, 2006.

These works met the desire to renew and update the pedagogical repertoire, a desire that materialized in particular with the methods for instruments published by the “Magasin de musique” between 1794 and 1814. Some concertos were published for the contests or exercises of the students at the Conservatoire of Paris, in particular two concertos for piano by Jadin<sup>20</sup> and one for cello by Duport.<sup>21</sup>

The distribution of student concertos by solo instrument corresponds rather well to the proportions present in the standard repertoire of the nineteenth century. The violin is significantly represented early in the century, with two works by Accolay,<sup>22</sup> eight by Rieding,<sup>23</sup> eight by Seitz,<sup>24</sup> five by K  chler,<sup>25</sup> five by Huber,<sup>26</sup> four by Portnoff,<sup>27</sup> five by

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<sup>20</sup> Louis Emmanuel Jadin, 1768–1853, Composer and professor with the Conservatoire of Paris.

<sup>21</sup> Herv   Aud  on, “Le Conservatoire et l  dition musicale : l  activit   du Magasin de musique” [The Conservatoire and musical publishing: the activity of the Magasin de musique] (1794–1814),” in *Le Conservatoire. Deux cents ans de p  dagogie* (ed. Anne Bongrain and Alain Poirier, vol. 2, Paris : Buchet / Chastel, 1999), 205–226.

<sup>22</sup> Jean-Baptiste Accolay, 1833–1900, Belgian teacher.

<sup>23</sup> Oskar Rieding, 1840–1918, solo violin with the Budapest opera from 1871 until 1904, who also enjoyed great fame as a private teacher.

<sup>24</sup> Friedrich Seitz, 1848–1918, founder of the School of music in Magdeburg.

<sup>25</sup> Ferdinand K  chler, 1867–1937, professor with the Academy of Frankfurt from 1898 until 1910, founder of a private school of music in Basel where he taught from 1910 until 1927, and professor with the Academy of Leipzig from 1927 until 1936.

<sup>26</sup> Adolf Huber, 1872–1946, professor with the Academy of Magdeburg.

<sup>27</sup> Leo Portnoff, 1875–1940, American teacher of Ukrainian origin.

Heck,<sup>28</sup> and one by Ten Have.<sup>29</sup> Production of student concertos slowed during the second half of the nineteenth century, with two concertos by Milliès,<sup>30</sup> two by Mokry,<sup>31</sup> and nine by Gallois-Montbrun.<sup>32</sup> There was an important production of student concertos for violoncello during the nineteenth century, with seven works by Bréval,<sup>33</sup> four by Baudiot,<sup>34</sup> four by Davydov,<sup>35</sup> and then two concertos by Kouguell written in the twentieth century.<sup>36</sup> A number of student concertos for violin were transcribed for viola, an instrument for which a literature targeting students appeared in the twentieth century, noting in particular the seven concertinettes of Roche and Doury.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, there were four concertinos by Labro<sup>38</sup> for double bass.

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<sup>28</sup> Armand Heck, ?–1947, professor with the Conservatoire of Nancy.

<sup>29</sup> Willem Ten Have, 1831–1924, professor with the University of Lyon.

<sup>30</sup> Hans Milliès, 1887–1957, German teacher. The Concertino in the style of Mozart was copyrighted in 1953.

<sup>31</sup> Jiri Mokry, whose Concertino in G was copyrighted in 1936.

<sup>32</sup> Raymond Gallois-Montbrun, 1918–1994, director of the Conservatoire of Versailles, and later of the Conservatoire of Paris.

<sup>33</sup> Jean-Baptiste Bréval, 1756–1825, first professor (since 1796) of cello with the Conservatoire de Paris, author of a *Traité du violoncelle* [*Cello treatise*], 1804.

<sup>34</sup> Charles-Nicolas Baudiot, 1773–1849, professor with the Conservatoire of Paris from 1802 until 1822, and author of a method of teaching cello (1826–1827).

<sup>35</sup> Karl Davydov, 1838–1889, professor, later director of the Saint-Petersburg Conservatory.

<sup>36</sup> Arkadie Kouguell, 1898–1985, American pianist and composer of Russian origin.

<sup>37</sup> Roger Roche, violist with the Loewenguth Quartet & Doury Pierre (1925–?), Grand Prix de Rome (a highly regarded French

It is worth noting that concertinos written especially for students first appeared in the eighteenth century. At the same time, students played theatrical works with a didactic goal. These latter works belong to the genre of so-called “educational theatre” (in French: *Théâtre d’éducation*), which is characterized by the central position of the child or teenager.<sup>39</sup> There are also works which were not dedicated to a didactic purpose, but which are so considered today because they long ago disappeared from concert halls. The style of some of these works may be perceived as academic. Accordingly, they could also help us to understand the standards relevant for concerto writing during the nineteenth century. Examples of these include the concertos for violoncello by Romberg,<sup>40</sup> or those for violin by Bériot<sup>41</sup> or Baillot.<sup>42</sup> The concertos for violin by Viotti<sup>43</sup> could also almost be included today in this category. Though well-known composers including Brahms held Viotti in

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academic prize), director of the Conservatoire of Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, and professor of composition with the *Schola cantorum*.

<sup>38</sup> Charles Labro, 1810–1882, professor with the Conservatoire of Paris.

<sup>39</sup> Magali Soulatges, “Désordre et prolifération des genres,” in *Le théâtre français du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Pierre Frantz and Sophie Marchand (Éditions L’avant-scène Théâtre : Paris, 2009), 385.

<sup>40</sup> Bernhard Romberg, 1767–1841, author of a cello method in 1840.

<sup>41</sup> Charles de Bériot, 1802–1870, professor with the Conservatoire of Brussels and author of a method for teaching violin, divided into three parts, 1857.

<sup>42</sup> Pierre Baillot, 1771–1842, professor with the Conservatoire of Paris.

<sup>43</sup> Giovanni Battista Viotti, 1755–1824, composer of twenty-nine violin concertos.

high esteem,<sup>44</sup> over decades his works were played in contests organized by the Conservatoire of Paris; thus, the most significant renovator of the French school of violin since Lully had his reputation hidden by being an exceptional pedagogue.

One notices the near absence of concertos for wind instruments, which corresponds to the relative scarcity of wind repertoire in the nineteenth century. The notable exceptions are the twelve concertos for flute by Jean-Louis Tulou,<sup>45</sup> professor with the Conservatoire of Paris from 1829 until 1856.

On the other hand, the absence of student concertos for piano stands out against the significant number of works in the piano repertoire of this time, though it corresponded to the pedagogical tradition. Given the extent of the repertoire for solo piano, the study of concertos for piano, even those of intermediate level like some by Mozart or Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, remained exceptional. Only during the second half of the twentieth century did a repertoire of student concertos for piano emerge, beginning with the commissions to composers such as Christian Manen, Jacques Duport, Pierre Lantier, and Gerard Meunier by the French publisher Zurfluh in 1968, and later with intense American production (for example, to list only works written between 1990 and 2010, those by Dennis Alexander, Anna Asch, Matthew Edwards, Martha Mier, Beatrice A. Miller, Kevin Olson, Alexander Peskanov, Eugenie Rocherolle, Diane

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<sup>44</sup> Brahms considered Viotti's 22nd Concerto to be the nicest ever written for the violin.

<sup>45</sup> Jean-Louis Tulou, 1786–1865, professor of flute with the Conservatoire of Paris from 1829 until 1856, strongly opposed to the new flute invented by Boehm.

Goolkasian Rahbee, Catherine Rollin, BJ Rosco, and Robert Vandall). That more recent student concertos have been written in neo-classical style raises specific issues regarding the decision to limit the present study to concertos written during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

## **Identifying the Form of the Concertos**

### **Questioning the Conventional Three Movement Construction**

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the concerto generally had three movements, of the form fast – slow – fast. Other designs existed (for example, the concertos in two movements of Johann Christian Bach, as in two of the six concertos of Ops. 1, 7, and 13) but remained marginal compared to the size of the whole repertoire. Among the student concertos of the nineteenth century, two-thirds follow the standard model of three movements. The other third of the concertos have only one movement. However, such pieces (for example, the *Concertino for Violin* by Armand Heck or the *Concertinetto No.1 for Viola* by Roche and Doury) always target very young instrumentalists (one to three years playing the instrument) who are not yet able to play a longer work. Accordingly, the single movement is not a formal innovation, but rather a simplification of the form for beginners.

On the other hand, some student concertos have continuous movements. This challenges the standard dominant model of three movements, fast – slow – fast. Half of the student concertos in three movements display this evolution, which may also be

seen in the concertos of the standard repertoire, such as two of Mendelssohn's concertos: in the Piano Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, op. 25, the passage from the first to the second movement is played without interruption, and, thanks to the bassoon's sustain of B natural from the final chord of the first movement before moving up a semitone to middle C, the first and second movements of the Violin Concerto in E Minor, op. 64, are also continuous.

Continuous movements sometimes result in different, more daring constructions. In some student concertos, the sequential themes in various tonalities are separated by more brilliant episodes that do not seem to correspond to any traditional form, but instead seem to create a free sequence. Examples include passages in Charles Labro's concertinos for double bass or in Accolay's Violin Concerto No. 1. The same rhapsodic freedom is present in certain concertos in the repertoire, such as Clara Wieck's Piano Concerto op. 7.

### **The Nature of Each of the Three Movements**

The first movements of the student concertos have, without exception, a first region (or group) in the home key and a second region in a subordinate key, with a series of virtuosic figurations after each thematic group. In accordance with their most common use in sonata form, the secondary theme is either on the dominant of the main theme or sometimes, when the main theme is in a minor key, in the relative major. In some concertos, the composer writes a change of key signature in advance of the modulation (see, in particular, Rieding's concertos). This practice, which is unusual with respect to the



concertos in the corpus, aims to draw students' attention to the change in tonality. Its prominence is also a sign that the modulation is regarded as an element of extreme importance.<sup>46</sup> The two themes are usually greatly contrasted. There seems to be an insistence on the opposition of character and tonality, becoming more important in the piece's overall search for unity. Example 1a shows the main theme of Oscar Rieding's Concertino for Violin and Piano in G Major, which is rhythmically characterized by the presence of sixteenth notes and the "dotted rhythm" formula. The secondary theme, reproduced in Example 1b, is in the dominant key with the appropriate change of key signature and uses longer note values.



**Example 1a:** Oscar Rieding, Concertino for Violin and Piano in G Major op. 24, main theme, bars 9–18.

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<sup>46</sup> This practice implies a design very different from that developed by Schoenberg, who considered each movement to be linked by only one tonality. He analyzed modulations as if they were variations, but not negations of the principal tonality. On the other hand, the subjacent thought in the student concertos is more parceled. Cf. Arnold Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, New York: Norton, 1954.



**Example 1b:** Oscar Rieding, *Concertino for Violin and Piano* in G Major op. 24, secondary theme, bars 39–47.

The second movement of these works is typically shorter. Just one slow sentence of sixteen measures can sometimes be enough (for example, in Küchler's *Concerto* op. 11). Sometimes, this movement takes an ABA' ternary form. Very seldom, it may be in the form of a theme and variations. Sometimes, the writing is rhapsodic, like written *rubato*. The second movement tends to be longer and more developed when the whole of the concerto is more technically demanding, while a first movement can be long even if rather easy. As for the third movement, it is a rondo almost without exception, but in a faster tempo than the first movement and sometimes with ternary rhythm.

The forms found in the three movements of the student concertos correspond to those present in the majority of the concertos of the repertoire. It may be supposed, then, that listeners expected a lyrical second movement, often of ABA' ternary form, and a dancing finale of rondo form.

### The Importance Attached to the First Movement

Among the three movements, the first is most important. When a student concerto includes only one single movement, it means that the second and third are omitted. The first movement is always the

most developed, most elaborate, and most original; hence, it became the main movement of the concerto. The gist of the genre seems to be the first solo of the first movement, which takes the name “Solo de concerto” for some composers. For example, Cousin<sup>47</sup> wrote twenty Solo Concertants for violin, Léonard<sup>48</sup> composed several series of six for violin of increasing difficulty, Dancla<sup>49</sup> composed the Concertos for Violin op. 78 and three *Solos de Concertos* op. 77, and Tulou is the author of five concertos for flute and fifteen *Grand Solos* for flute and piano with a pedagogic purpose.

It seems that the first solo of the first movement is the essential element, the quintessence of the concerto, which is sufficient to characterize the genre. In a concomitant way, the editorial practice of publishing only the first solo of concertos from the repertoire with a reduction for piano of the orchestral accompaniment was developed for students improving on their instrument. Presently, the first solos of many concertos of Spohr, Viotti, Kreutzer, and Rode are still practised by generations of apprentice violinists.

The first movement’s construction is the most complex, mixing elements of sonata form with the baroque concerto, which drew its interest from the

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<sup>47</sup> Emile Cousin, founder (in 1878) and director of the Conservatoire of Versailles.

<sup>48</sup> Hubert Léonard, 1819–1890, Belgian violinist, pupil of Habeneck, Principal professor with the Conservatoire of Brussels from 1848 until 1867, he later settled in Paris, where he gave private lessons.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Dancla, 1817–1907, professor at the Conservatoire of Paris for 35 years.

alternation of solos and tutti. In student concertos, in the absence of orchestra, the issue of solos and tutti passages is necessarily neglected. The fundamental element is instead the succession of two distinct themes characterized by different tonalities and characters.

### Issues Relating to Slow Introductions

A considerable number of student concertos have a slow introduction. Although this form is common to several different genres, including openings of opera, symphonies, and pieces of chamber music, from the baroque to the post-romantic, it is rare in the concertos of the repertoire. Indeed, it may be found in some concertos of Johann Christoph Graupner, Antonio Vivaldi, and Pietro Locatelli, in only one concerto of Mozart (the fifth Violin Concerto in A Major K. 219), in three concertos of Viotti, and eight concertos of Joseph Antonin Steffan.<sup>50</sup>

The slightly higher frequency of slow introductions in the student concertos of the nineteenth century is explained by the reappraisal of the form of the first movement when removing the initial orchestral section, which prepares the entry of the soloist and makes a strong contrast possible. An orchestral introduction is normally in the same tempo and often presents themes that will be used again by the soloist. In the absence of an orchestral introduction, there is

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<sup>50</sup> Priscille Lachat-Sarrete, "L'entrée du soliste dans les concertos de 1750 à 1810, à travers les œuvres de Johann Christian Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Viotti et Beethoven [The entry of the soloist in concertos written from 1750 to 1810 by Johann Christian Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Viotti, and Beethoven]" (PhD diss., Paris - Sorbonne 2010), 202–209.

a lack of opposition between tutti and solo. The addition of a slow introduction makes it possible to create a contrast based on tempo and character, thereby establishing the clear and distinct divisions that characterize the progression from one section to another, and particularly from solo to tutti and *vice versa*, in a standard concerto.

The slow introduction sometimes fulfils a more subtle function, contrasting by its freedom of design with the more rigorous construction that succeeds it. During the seventeenth century, a similar dualism characterised the “toccata and fugue,” “fantasia and fugue,” “prelude and fugue,” or the French overture with the two parts complementary in style (slow with dotted rhythms and fast in fugal style). The sung recitative plays the same introductory role in connection with the aria. Sometimes, the slow introduction is of improvised type, but sometimes it presents fragments of the theme to come. In this case, the two sections, one free, the other organized, form a whole whose richness is born from their opposition. However, nothing indicates that such a function was specifically allotted to slow introductions in student concertos. It seems instead that it was only an attempt to compensate for the lack of contrast resulting from the absence of an initial orchestral section.

### **Display of virtuosity**

In all of the studied concertos, virtuosic passages occupy a significant portion of each work. When there are three movements, virtuosic passages are more common in the first movement. Composers inserted such passages after each statement of a

theme and at the end of the movement to form a brilliant coda. However, the choice of their placement was not a result of freedom or personal experimentation. These passages are longer when the concerto addressed itself to a more technically advanced student, and comprise between two and five times as many measures as the theme itself.

### **The Uniformity of Virtuoso Passages**

The figures are almost always uniform, that is, only one formula is developed at will, and without it being mingled with others. Sometimes, virtuosic figures are based on the main notes of the theme they follow, but generally they are an arrangement of scales and arpeggios repeating a rhythmic formula and a type of articulation throughout the *ambitus* of the instrument (or throughout the accessible *ambitus* at a particular level) and independently of any theme of the concerto. In fact, relatively stereotypical sequences seem interchangeable between one concerto and another.

Example 2 presents an extract of a virtuosic passage from Karl Davydov's Cello Concerto op. 14, No. 2. The same formula in triplets in stepwise melodic motion, with arpeggios added later, is developed over twenty-eight measures.

**Allegro**  
*a tempo*

83 *p* 3 3 3

85

87

89

91

93

**Example 2:** Karl Davydov, Concerto for Cello op. 14, No. 2, bars 83-95.

One might wonder whether the uniformity of the figures was a characteristic of the concerto repertoire in general or if it is instead a deformation due to the sorting filter used to select the counter-corpus. Sometimes, indeed, the length of these passages using a single formula recalls contemporaneous etudes, which try to exhaust all of the possible presentations of an articulation or a rhythmic figure for an instrument. The pedagogic purpose would seem to have preference over artistic merit.

In the standard repertoire of concertos, moreover, the figures are often very uniform, such as in the concertos for keyboard by Johann Christian Bach in the second half of the eighteenth century or the later, nineteenth century concertos of Hummel, Moscheles, or Paganini. If this uniformity of figuration seems less strong in works by Beethoven or Brahms, it is not

so much because the figures are indeed more varied,<sup>51</sup> but because other elements draw attention away from the stock figuration, such as orchestration, the addition of a new theme by another instrument (not to mention the superposition of two new themes), or the effects of harmonic surprise. In student concertos, then, the academism of virtuosic figuration is reinforced by the poverty of the piano accompaniment.

### **The Need for Virtuosity: an Aesthetic Choice**

The importance attached to virtuosity and the need to master it were constant issues during the nineteenth century, as evidenced by the multiplication of new methods for piano. While until the end of the eighteenth century, the aim of method books was both the theoretical and practical training of the student, as in the method of Türk,<sup>52</sup> the many methods published in the nineteenth century were most frequently directed towards the acquisition of practical, technical perfection in performance. Among the more famous is the *Klavierschule* of Czerny, who was one of the craftsmen who systematised keyboard technique, and the *Method or general principles for fingering on the pianoforte*<sup>53</sup> by Adam and Lachnith, which was used at the Conservatoire of Paris. The revised

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<sup>51</sup> Alexandre Dratwicki, *Un nouveau commerce de la virtuosité : émancipation et métamorphoses de la musique concertante au sein des institutions musicales parisiennes (1780-1830)*, Lyon: Symétrie, 2005.

<sup>52</sup> Daniel Gottlob Türk, *Klavierschule oder Anweisung zum Clavierspielen*, Leipzig: Schwickert, 1789.

<sup>53</sup> Louis Adam and Ludwig Wenzel Lachnith, *Méthode ou principe général du doigté pour le forte piano*, Paris, 1798.



edition of the method<sup>54</sup> of Pleyel and Dussek places great emphasis on the acquisition of ever-better technical skill. This period also saw the invention of training devices like the “Chiroplast” of Johann Bernhard Logier (1814), the “Dactylion” of Henri Herz (1836), the “Chirogymnast” of Casimir Martin (1840), and the “Finger warming-up device” of Félix Levacher d’Urclé (1846). These mechanisms were designed to perfect the position of the hands and to increase their agility.

If virtuosity caused admiration, it was simultaneously the object of strong criticism. The virtuosity of Paganini, above all, drastically changed musical life in Europe after 1830. Critics sought to distinguish good from bad virtuosity, acceptable virtuosity from the reprehensible, in a quasi-moral investigation of good and bad taste. In February 1831, commenting Paganini’s first Parisian performance, Fétis virulently argued that a good instrumentalist is characterized by the way he uses the various parameters of instrumental playing (e.g., finger agility, beauty of sound, art of fingering) to explore and develop his musical expression.<sup>55</sup> Effects originating in virtuosity, described by Fétis as “blameworthy virtuosity,” begin when the search for musical expression is blurred by search for a *tour de force*.

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<sup>54</sup> Ignaz Pleyel and Johann Ludwig Dussek are the authors of a method published in 1797; the first upgraded version was published in 1801.

<sup>55</sup> François-Joseph Fétis, *Revue musicale*, Vol. XI, Paris, 11 March 1831.

By contrast, Liszt was one of the most skilful defenders of virtuosity, writing, “*virtuosity is not only finger mechanics but is also an essential element of musical life.*”<sup>56</sup> According to Liszt, virtuosity is not only a tool for the musician to overcome difficulties of execution with more or less skill. It is in itself a musical invention, accorded the same status as harmony or melody.<sup>57</sup> Busoni<sup>58</sup>, writing later, offers a similar perspective.

The virtuosity of the counter-corpus of student concertos makes it possible to revalue the huge production of virtuosic concertos, scorned by some contemporaneous musicians and critics even though these works account for a significant part of musical life. One readily opposes this repertoire to symphonic concertos. These two categories reveal the two opposite directions taken by concerto writing in the nineteenth century. Inherent to the genre is the problem of balancing the two protagonists, the soloist and the orchestra. If all the attention of the public is focused on the former by his exploits, reducing the second to a mere accompanist, the concerto belongs to the virtuosic side of the repertoire. Conversely, if the orchestral writing benefits from the compositional techniques

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<sup>56</sup> “*La virtuosité n’est pas seulement une mécanique des doigts mais aussi un élément indispensable de la vie musicale,*” quoted by R. Larry Todd, “Nineteenth-century Concertos for Strings and Winds,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Concerto*, ed. Simon P. Keefe (Cambridge UK : Cambridge University Press, 2005), 122.

<sup>57</sup> Cécile Reynaud, “La notion de virtuosité dans les écrits critiques de Franz Liszt” (Ph.D diss., Paris III Sorbonne nouvelle, 2001).

<sup>58</sup> Ferruccio Busoni, 1866–1924, Italian pianist, composer, teacher, writer, editor and conductor.

developed for the symphony, as evidenced by the number and diversity of musicians, mature writing, and a mastery of sound, while at the same time the soloist is offered superb melodic and virtuosic sections, the work belongs to the “symphonic concerto” part of the genre.

Even when a student concerto comprises only one movement, and even when there is only one theme, passages of virtuosic figures are always present. The student was thus guided to understand that virtuosity belonged to the very essence of the concerto, for better or for worse. Placing increasingly virtuosic passages in student concertos enabled students to apprehend them *in situ*, rather than only in etudes, many collections of which were also published at that time. Young musicians could test their technical level in a pleasant and rewarding way, within a genuine musical framework, while being confronted with the feeling of playing a concerto. Vis-à-vis the extreme attention paid to the acquisition of a virtuosic technique, it should be admitted that its prevalence in student concertos implied an aesthetic choice.

## Increasing the Inherent Stage-Worthiness of the Concerto

Both musical writing and theatrical gestures characterise a concerto. In student concertos, the possibility of theatrical effects is erased, be they in the construction of the entry of the soloist or in the choice to insert a cadenza. The concerto appears with the musical characteristics of the genre intact, but with reduced theatrical gestures, which are not supposed to be accessible to an apprentice musician.

### The Entry of the Soloist

The entry of the soloist is one of the most important elements of the concerto form, as stated bitinglly by Charles Rosen:

The most important fact about concerto form is that the audience waits until the soloist to enter, and when he stops playing they wait for him to begin again. In so far as the concerto may be said to have a form after 1755, that is the basis of it.<sup>59</sup>

In the concertos of the repertoire, one of the most typical formulas is that the orchestra stops on a full authentic cadence, followed by silence and the entry of the soloist on the first downbeat of a new bar and on the first scale degree of the main tonality.<sup>60</sup> In

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<sup>59</sup> Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), 196.

<sup>60</sup> Chapter “Les stratégies de clôture de l’exposition orchestrale” [The closing strategies of the orchestral exposition], Priscille Lachat-Sarrete, “L’entrée du soliste dans les concertos de 1750 à 1810, à travers les œuvres de Johann Christian Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Viotti et Beethoven [The entry of the soloist in concertos written from 1750 to 1810 by Johann Christian Bach,

student concertos, the accompanying pianist generally plays some measures (fewer than ten) the last of which ends with a dominant chord in the main tonality, allowing the student to continue on the first scale degree without break.

This scenario does not correspond to the conventions of the genre quite simply because there is no first orchestral tutti that plays the role of introduction and presentation of the themes. Without this, it is not possible to organize the audience's expectation of the soloist. Without doubt, the dramatic entrance of an accomplished soloist, adulated by the public, may not be compared with that of a student.

### **The Absence of Cadenza**

Given the importance placed on virtuosity in student concertos, the quasi-systematic absence of cadenzas may be astonishing. Admittedly, cadenzas experienced some evolution during the nineteenth century. Initially left to the improvisation of the performer, later composers sometimes wrote them out themselves in order to avoid the obscure gibberish of a brilliant technician who may lack musical smoothness. During the eighteenth century, cadenzas were frequent in concertos. For example, within the 52 concertos of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, there is a cadenza in half of the first movements, in almost all of the second movements, and seldom in the finales; in the 29 concertos of Viotti, meanwhile, there are cadenzas in half of the first movements, two-thirds of the second movements, and in a quarter of the final movements. The last 22 piano concertos of Mozart and almost all

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Haydn, Mozart, Viotti, and Beethoven]" (PhD diss., Paris-Sorbonne, 2010), 243–337.

of Mozart's concertos for another solo instrument contain one or more cadenzas. Some composers of the nineteenth century inserted cadenzas in a particularly original way, like Mendelssohn in his Violin Concerto op. 64 which, at the end of the cadenza, returns the first theme to the first violins followed by the whole orchestra, or like Tchaikovsky in his Piano Concerto No. 1, where the cadenza is placed almost at the beginning of the first movement. During the twentieth century, composers as disparate as Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Richard Strauss wrote concertos, some with original solutions like Aaron Copland's Clarinet Concerto, which connects two movements, or Elgar's Violin Concerto, which is accompanied by pizzicato strings. In 2003, Frederic Rzewski composed a "Cadenza con o senza Beethoven" for Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, which can also be played alone as a separate piece. In other words, the complete absence of cadenzas in student concertos corresponds neither to a former practice nor to the practice of their contemporaries, nor is it an anticipation of a practice to come.

Two explanations may be suggested regarding the absence of cadenzas in student concertos. On the one hand, the theatrical effect resulting from the silence of the whole orchestra after a cadential six-four chord shrinks away to nothing when the figure is instead placed in a piano accompaniment. On the other hand, the freedom of interpretation required to maintain the interest of a listener during a cadenza requires musical skills exceeding the purely technical capabilities required; this is a residue of working out too completely the art of improvisation for students.

## Facit

The corpus and counter-corpus pair may now be used to try to understand the expectations of the nineteenth century public regarding the concerto. The counter-corpus is supposed to provide information about the standards of the time rather than focusing on innovative or diverting pieces.

Some aspects of the counter-corpus faithfully mirror the standards of the corpus. Thus, apart from exceptions, which are readily explained by the purpose of the student concertos, there are almost always three movements. This corresponds to the standard of the concertos of the nineteenth century and leads one to suppose that the attempts to introduce a fourth movement to the concerto on the model of the scherzo in the symphony did indeed surprise the public. Wished for by Schumann,<sup>61</sup> such a movement is present in some works of the nineteenth century, in particular in the *Concerto pathétique* op. 93 by Moscheles<sup>62</sup> dated 1835-1836, in a concerto by Litolff,<sup>63</sup> and in the B♭ Major Piano Concerto op. 83 by Brahms dated 1878-1881, but the movement was never essential to the form.

Studying student concertos shows progressive questioning of the conventional three-movement form, and in particular their sequence. One of the first works in the repertoire that is emblematic of this

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<sup>61</sup> Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, Vol. 2 (Leipzig: Georg Wigard, 1871), 62 [Fac-Simile Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1985].

<sup>62</sup> Ignaz Moscheles, 1794–1870, Czech pianist and composer.

<sup>63</sup> Henry Charles Litolff, 1818–1891, French pianist and composer.

transformation is the *Konzertstück* for Piano in F Minor, op. 79 by Weber of 1823, which consists of three continuous movements. In the *Concerto da camera* No. 1 in A Minor, op. 10 by Alkan<sup>64</sup> dated 1832, there is no harmonic resolution at the end of the first or second movements, which are thereby drawn towards the third. Finally, the Piano Concerto No. 1 in E♭ major of Liszt, dated 1849, is a cyclic work with closely connected movements.

The search for virtuosity is of primary importance in student concertos and corresponds to the passion of the public for the virtuosic concerto. Brigitte François-Sappey explains the characteristic taste of the nineteenth century thus

From Vivaldi with the violin until Mozart with the keyboard, it is the eighteenth century which brought the concerto to the pinnacle, in parallel with opera seria and with the decorated style of vocal prowess of the prima donna and the primo uomo. The more tempered ideology asserted by the nineteenth century is reflected by the taste of the bourgeoisie for serious symphonies, even if this meant enjoying tournaments of virtuosos in living rooms.<sup>65</sup>

Studying student concertos shows that, unlike today, the symphonic concerto was not always preferred when selecting pieces for concerts.

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<sup>64</sup> Charles-Valentin Alkan, né Charles-Henri-Valentin Morhange, 1813–1888, French pianist and composer.

<sup>65</sup> “*De Vivaldi au violon à Mozart au clavier, c’est le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle qui a monté le concerto au pinacle, en parallèle de l’opera seria et des prouesses vocales en style orné de la prima donna et du primo uomo. L’idéologie plus égalitaire revendiquée par le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle se répercute sur le goût de la bourgeoisie pour les sérieuses symphonies, quitte à se complaire dans les salons aux joutes des virtuoses.*”, Brigitte François-Sappey, *La musique dans l’Allemagne romantique* (Paris: Fayard, 2009), 575.



Other aspects of the counter-corpus provide only fragmentary or distorted information about the public's expectations. Theatrical effects, which are inherent to the concerto genre, are neglected in the student concertos. Because of the absence of orchestra, the entry of the soloist, normally a masterly gesture revealing the genre, is unobtrusive. In the same way, the absence of the cadenza, another key moment in the genre, may be explained by the fact that student concertos are addressed to students whose musical maturity is insufficient to play cadenzas in a satisfactory way. To mitigate these shortcomings, which are due to the limitations of the intended interpreters of the works, composers used specific compositional techniques without equivalent in the concertos of the repertoire. The high frequency of slow introductions, for example, replaces the usual contrast of repertoire concertos between a preliminary orchestral tutti and the soloist's entrance.

The study of the counter-corpus comprising nineteenth century student concertos clearly sheds light on the real importance of the virtuosic concertos, because of their number and the passion they aroused in the public. There was indeed a glittering array of virtuoso composers like Steibelt, Wölfl, Hummel, Ries, Kalkbrenner, Moscheles, Liszt, Chopin, Herz, and Thalberg on the piano, and Viotti, Paganini, Baillot, Rode, Kreutzer, Spohr, Kalliwoda, David, Joachim, Vieuxtemps, and Wieniawski on the violin. The tendency to neglect the virtuosic concertos compared to the symphonic concertos has two sources. On the one hand, it is rooted in the contempt of some nineteenth century critiques of virtuosity (for example, those of Fétis and sometimes

Schumann).<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, it corresponds to the natural propensity to remember more clearly the better-projecting masterpieces of past epochs while underestimating the whole of production from the same epoch. Just as one cannot reduce the rich and plentiful classical period to its three most famous representatives – Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven – it is advisable to take into account the actual place of the nineteenth century virtuosic concertos to try to better assess the expectations of the public regarding concertos.

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<sup>66</sup> Schumann's opinions were less sharp than it is sometimes said; for example, he strongly rejected Kalkbrenner but admired Paganini.

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## Abstract

In order to establish the implicit expectations of the public for concertos in the nineteenth century, a “counter-corpus”, which, following Jean-Jacques Nattiez, may be compared to the main corpus, is obtained by applying to the standard repertoire a sorting filter comprising essential and secondary conditions. This counter-corpus consists of concertos and concertinos written for students, which offered intermediate-level instrumentalists the opportunity to discover the principles of the concerto genre. Although some of the theatrical effects specific to the genre were neglected in the works of this counter-corpus, these works nevertheless provide some reliable information about the public’s expectations for concertos and the conventions regarding the three-movement form. Displaying virtuosity was a key issue for the composers of student concertos. These virtuosic passages appear to be almost always uniform with a formula developed at will, without being mingled with other formulas. This leads to the question of whether this is a characteristic of the concerto repertoire or a deformation due to the sorting filter. It also invites reassessment of the importance of the nineteenth century virtuosic concerto in comparison with the symphonic concerto of the nineteenth century.



## Handel's *Messiah* as Model and Source for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*

Amy Carr-Richardson

Beethoven had the highest regard for Handel, claiming on more than one occasion “he was the greatest composer who ever lived.”<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Archduke Rudolph written during the composition of the *Missa Solemnis* and dated 1819, he wrote that “the old masters . . . have real artistic value (among them, of course, only the German Handel and Sebastian Bach possessed genius).”<sup>2</sup> While in his earlier years, Beethoven claimed that Mozart was the greatest composer, he indicated a preference for the works of Handel and Bach when he reached his own mature years. In 1823, Beethoven also spoke of *Messiah* with highest praise, and he said of Handel, “I would uncover my head, and kneel down at his tomb!”<sup>3</sup> In the last few months of his life, Beethoven received a gift of the Arnold complete edition of Handel’s works, which he described as “glorious;”<sup>4</sup> and even during his final illness, in February 1827, Beethoven reportedly told his doctor that “if there were a physician who could help me, his name shall be called Wonderful!”<sup>5</sup> These statements are considered to be consistent with the view of Handel’s music as serious and appropriate for grand state occasions in

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Thayer, *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven*, revised and edited by Elliot Forbes, (Princeton: 1967), 871.

<sup>2</sup>Emily Anderson, trans. and ed., *The Letters of Beethoven* (London: 1961), 822–23, no. 955; *Ludwig van Beethovens sämtliche Briefe*, ed. Emerich Kastner, rev. Julius Kapp (Leipzig: 1923), 511, no. 900.

<sup>3</sup>Thayer-Forbes, 871.

<sup>4</sup>Anderson, letter 1550.

<sup>5</sup>Thayer-Forbes, 1038.



Vienna. The monumentality of Handel's choruses and the effect of the choral sublime had an influence on Beethoven's music.<sup>6</sup>

Beethoven's knowledge of the earlier composer was considerable: along with the keyboard suites, six keyboard fugues, and concerti grossi (op. 6), Beethoven definitely knew Handel's *Julius Caesar*, *Esther*, *Alexander's Feast*, *Saul*, *Solomon*, *Belsazzar*, and *Judas Maccabeus*, as well as *Messiah*.<sup>7</sup> A reference to the "Dead March" from Handel's oratorio *Saul* is found in a conversation book entry of 1820. Based on this inscription, Beethoven apparently considered composing variations on the march.<sup>8</sup> His knowledge of Handel's music stemmed, in part, from his access to private music libraries and musical performances in Vienna. Baron van Swieten, Austrian ambassador to North Germany, played a pivotal role in this situation. He hosted weekly Sunday afternoon musical gatherings at his home, which focused on the instrumental and vocal music of the Bach family and Handel. Beginning in April 1782, some of Mozart's

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<sup>6</sup> See Nicholas Mathew, "Beethoven's Political Music, the Handelian Sublime, and the Aesthetics of Prostration," *Nineteenth-century Music*, 33:2 (fall 2009), 110–150; see also James Webster "The *Creation*, Haydn's Late Vocal Music and the Musical Sublime," in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 57–102.

<sup>7</sup> Warren Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, revised and expanded second edition, trans. Margaret Bent and the author (Durham, North Carolina: 1979), 215–217. Also see Carol Ann Bruner, *The Genesis and Structure of Beethoven's Overture "Die Weihe des Hauses,"* op.124, Thesis (M.A.) - University of Victoria, 1985.

<sup>8</sup> Ludwig van Beethoven, *Konversationshefte*, 1, ed. Karl-Heinz Köhler and Grita Herre, (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1972), 322.

letters referred to these gatherings, in which Beethoven participated after his arrival in Vienna in 1792. The baron frequently invited Beethoven to his home and took an active interest in the composer's counterpoint studies with Haydn and Schenk.<sup>9</sup> Under van Swieten, Handel's oratorios were performed occasionally in Vienna—between 1792–99, at least six such productions took place, including one of *Messiah*. After his death in 1803, the number of these productions declined, but they did not cease. In fact, another Viennese performance of *Messiah* took place in 1815.<sup>10</sup>

Beethoven's admiration for Handel's music contributed directly to some of his own compositions. For example, Beethoven composed twelve variations (WoO 45) for 'cello and piano on the theme from Handel's chorus "See the conquering hero comes" from *Judas Maccabaeus*: this particular composition could have been inspired by the Viennese performance of *Judas Maccabaeus* organized by van Swieten in the spring of 1794.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Beethoven's overture, "Die Weihe des Hauses," op.124 (1822) indicates the retrospective character often associated with his late works, particularly through his emulation of Handel's direct contrapuntal style.<sup>12</sup> This work may have been influenced by *Solomon*, as Beethoven had transcribed the fugue from

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<sup>9</sup> Teresa M. Neff, "Baron van Swieten and Late Eighteenth-Century Viennese Musical Culture," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1998.

<sup>10</sup> Kirkendale, *Fugue*, 219.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 216–17.

<sup>12</sup> Bruner, *Die Weihe*, provides a discussion of Handel's broader influence on Beethoven and on this piece, as well as a detailed analysis of the work.

Solomon's overture for string quartet (Hess 36), and as Warren Kirkendale points out, the opening melodic gestures of the two works are generally similar: "Beethoven may have had the theme of this overture (with fifth-step melody) in mind when he wrote his overture."<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the direct influence from Handel's music that may be traced with variations on one of his themes, direct transcriptions of his fugues, or the general evocation of Handel's style in Beethoven's choral fugues, this article proposes that Beethoven may have borrowed specific musical ideas from Handel's *Messiah* and reworked them for use in his own *Missa Solemnis*. Scholars have previously noted stylistic resemblances between choruses of the *Missa Solemnis* and those written by Handel, and more specifically how Beethoven may have based the fugal subject of his *Dona nobis pacem* (from the *Agnus Dei*, m. 215) on Handel's "and He shall reign forever and ever" in the Hallelujah Chorus.<sup>14</sup> The autograph score

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<sup>13</sup> Kirkendale, *Fugue*, 216–217. Willy Hess's *Verzeichnis der nicht in der Gesamtausgabe veröffentlichten Werke Ludwig van Beethoven*, (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel), 1957, was intended as a catalog that would supplement and act as an addendum to the old Gesamtausgabe. It included unfinished works and attempted to present a more complete edition of Beethoven's works. *The New Hess Catalog of Beethoven's Works* by James F. Green (West Newbury, Vermont: Vance Brook Publishing), 2003, contains a revised edition of the original catalog, including new appendices and an expanded concordance.

<sup>14</sup> Warren Kirkendale, "New Roads to Old Ideas in Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*," *Musical Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (October 1970), 665–701. Kirkendale and others have asserted that Beethoven undoubtedly borrowed from the Hallelujah chorus in a conscious manner. Based on his study of sketches for the mass, William Drabkin claims that perhaps this passage was not

of the Gloria has been missing since the nineteenth century, but extant sketches for this movement provide some opportunities to explore its genesis.

In discussing the plagal cadence that sounds at the end of the Gloria, Birgit Lodes notes that “... Beethoven might have found his models in older music, from Renaissance vocal polyphony or religious works by Handel, or C.P.E. Bach rather than the mass repertory of his own time. There is evidence that Beethoven took a lively interest in their church music before and during the composition of the *Missa Solemnis*.”<sup>15</sup> She goes on to note that Beethoven copied “And the glory of the Lord,” “Lift up your Heads,” and the “Hallelujah” and points out, further, that Beethoven’s copy of the chorus “And with his stripes” in his own hand (which is based on Mozart’s version of the *Messiah*) provides evidence that Beethoven was thinking about the *Messiah* while composing his own mass: “Hitherto it has not been recognized that several sketches for the Gloria were

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conceived as a quotation, and that Beethoven may have wished to cloak any perceived thematic resemblances between this passage and Handel’s theme. He also points out that no reference to this Handel chorus has ever been found in the sketchbooks, despite the presence of numerous excerpts from *Messiah*. See William Drabkin, “The Agnus Dei of Beethoven’s *Missa solemnis*: The Growth of its Form,” in *Beethoven’s Compositional Process*, North American Beethoven Studies Vol. I, ed. William Kinderman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 131–159 and Drabkin, *Beethoven: Missa Solemnis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3–4 and 92–93.

<sup>15</sup> Birgit Lodes, “‘When I try, now and then, to give musical form to my turbulent feelings’: The Human and the Divine in the Gloria of Beethoven’s *Missa solemnis*,” *Beethoven Forum* 6, Lewis Lockwood, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 1998, 163.

entered on the last, empty page of Beethoven's copy [of this Handel chorus]."<sup>16</sup> Scholars have also noted that Beethoven's sketches include isolated entries for "All they that see Him," and "He trusted in God."<sup>17</sup>

Composed from the spring of 1819 to 1822, the *Missa Solemnis* was corrected in 1823 and premiered in 1824. Based on his study of the sketches and conversation books, Winter has determined that work on the mass could not have started before April 1819, and that the main work on the Gloria likely extended from approximately June through December 1819.

Originally conceived as a means of paying tribute to Archduke Rudolph on his installation as Archbishop in March 1820, the mass was not completed in time, with the main work on the piece being completed by August 1822.<sup>18</sup>

Beethoven made extensive study and preparation before the composition of his mass, including collecting plainchant, consulting sources in Archduke Rudolph's library of sacred music, consulting

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> As explained by Johnson, Tyson, and Winter, isolated entries for "All they that see him," and "He trusted in God," are found on page 5 of the sketchbook Artaria 197. Isolated sketches for the Gloria are found on page 21. Based on the physical condition of these pages and sketches, they may have occurred at an earlier time, prior to the assembly of the sketchbook.

Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson, and Robert Winter, *The Beethoven Sketchbooks* (Berkeley, University of California Press), 265–270.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Winter, "Reconstructing Riddles: The Sources for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*," in *Beethoven Essays: Studies in Honor of Elliot Forbes*, ed. Lewis Lockwood and Phyllis Benjamin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 217–250. This article also contains an appendix that lists the unstitched pocket sketches for the mass.

historical treatises, and carefully considering his setting of the text.<sup>19</sup> Kirkendale traces the influence of traditional rhetorical figures in the Gloria and other movements, as well as that of traditional musical military idioms in the Agnus Dei. He also claims that Handel's *Messiah* was a direct model for passages of the Benedictus, which he also compares with the slow movement of op. 59/2.

The sketches for the Mass in C, op. 86, provide evidence that Beethoven's earlier sacred choral works may also have been shaped by modeling. McGrann explains that the sketches indicate a clear relationship between passages of the Gloria of Haydn's Creation Mass and op. 86, in the realms of structure, content, and text-setting. As he notes, Beethoven copied portions of this work by Haydn, and "it would appear that Beethoven grafted the opening Allegro of his Gloria onto Haydn's Gloria . . ." <sup>20</sup> Haydn's *Missa in*

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<sup>19</sup> Kirkendale, "New Roads," 699. For further discussion of Beethoven's knowledge of earlier sacred music, see Richard Kramer, "In Search of Palestrina: Beethoven in the Archives," in *Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven: Studies in the Music of the Classical Period*, ed. Sieghard Brandenburg (Oxford, 1998), 283–300 and Sieghard Brandenburg, "The Historical Background to the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' from Opus 132," in *Beethoven Studies* 3, ed. Alan Tyson (Cambridge and New York, 1982), 161–191.

<sup>20</sup> Jeremiah W. McGrann, "Haydn, a Prince, and Beethoven's Mass in C," *Choral Journal* 50.2 (September 2009), 9–23; pg. 11; also see McGrann, "Beethoven's Mass in C, Op. 86: Genesis and Compositional Background," 2 vols., Ph.D. diss., Harvard, 1991. Other sources discussing the influence of Haydn's masses on op. 86 include Jens Peter Larsen, "Beethoven's C-Major Mass and the Late Masses of Joseph Haydn," in *Handel, Haydn, and the Viennese Classical Style*, Studies in Musicology, no. 100 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1988), and J. Merrill Knapp, "Beethoven's Mass in C Major, Op. 86," in *Beethoven Essays*, 199–216.

*angustiis* and *Theresienmesse* may also have influenced op. 86. In a letter of July 1807 to Prince Esterházy, who had commissioned the work to celebrate his wife's name day, Beethoven claimed to be apprehensive about comparison of his new work with the late masses of Haydn. McGrann interprets this "stated apprehension" as concealing the fact that Beethoven was actually imitating Haydn.<sup>21</sup>

Bathia Churgin has described Beethoven's analysis of the *Kyrie* fugue from Mozart's *Requiem*, which is located on the reverse side of a sketch containing a draft for the Credo fugue from the *Missa Solemnis*. She notes that Beethoven likely studied Mozart's fugue during 1819 or 1820, perhaps while preparing to compose his own Gloria and Credo fugues. Beethoven's notes about Mozart's fugue suggest an interest in selecting the voices for presentation of the subject and countersubject, use of double counterpoint, and the metric placement of the subject and countersubject.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Anderson, letter 150, page 174; McGrann, "Haydn," 21. See also Prince Esterházy's reply of 9 August 1807, in which he states that Beethoven's concern about comparison with Haydn's late masses, which had been composed for the same purpose, "only enhances the value of your work." See *Letters to Beethoven*, trans. and ed. by Theodore Albrecht, North American Beethoven Studies, vol. 2, ed. William Meredith (University of Nebraska Press, 1996), letter 123, page 192.

<sup>22</sup> Bathia Churgin, "Beethoven and Mozart's Requiem: A New Connection," *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987): 457–77. Reprint with additions and corrections, Min-Ad, *Israeli Studies in Musicology Online* (Vol. II, 2006): 19–39 and Addenda.

Along with the possible connections between Beethoven's mass and works by other composers, scholars have noted a close relationship between passages in the mass and some of Beethoven's other compositions. Kinderman has discussed the use of a network of referential harmonies in the mass, especially the Credo and Benedictus, the ninth symphony, and the string quartet op. 127. He describes the consistent use of these specific harmonies placed in a high register and their symbolic reference to eternal life or to the heavens.<sup>23</sup> Even brief musical works, such as canons, may point toward an integrated relationship between the mass and Beethoven's other works. A puzzle canon, "Gott ist eine feste Burg" (WoO 188), which was written in January, 1825, after completion of the *Missa solemnis*, shares a motivic connection with it. The "credo, credo" motive of the mass (mm. 3–4 and 5–6) are exactly the same as mm. 1–2 and 5–6 of the canon.<sup>24</sup> These examples suggest an open attitude on Beethoven's part in terms of seeking musical ideas and an interest in exploiting their complete potential in a variety of musical contexts.

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<sup>23</sup> William Kinderman, "Beethoven's Symbol for the Deity in the *Missa Solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 9 (1985): 102–118; and "Beethoven's Compositional Models for the Choral Finale of the Ninth Symphony," in *Beethoven's Compositional Process*, 160–188; and *Beethoven* (New York: Oxford, 2009), 276 and 309.

<sup>24</sup> Leilani Kathryn Lutes, *Beethoven's Re-Uses of his own Compositions, 1782–1826*, Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1974, 378–379. She provides a thorough account of the types of re-use and concludes that over one-third of Beethoven's compositions were involved in some type of re-use of material.



### Voice-leading

The method by which Beethoven may have reworked materials from Handel's music includes the use of composite melodies, whereby a single melodic statement is presented by different voices and in different registers. An instance of this compositional technique is shown in example 1, which contains an excerpt from Beethoven's string quartet arrangement of a four-voice fugue from the *Well Tempered Clavier*. Created in 1817, this arrangement (Hess 35) adapts the counterpoint by redistributing the original melodic lines.

Note in example 1b how the second violin begins this passage with a segment of the soprano line, but then continues with a segment of the alto line, while violin 1 begins with the alto line and continues with the soprano line. A similar situation occurs in the *Agnus Dei* of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, where according to the sketches, he planned to quote the name "BACH" (see example 2a).



**Example 1a:** Bach, B minor fugue, WTC, Book I, mm. 30-33.



**Example 1b:** Beethoven's string quartet arrangement of Bach's B minor fugue, violin parts, mm. 31-33 (transcription from Willy Hess, "Eine Bach- und Handlbearbeitung Beethovens," *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 94 (1954), 142-43).



**Example 2a:** Beethoven, sketches for *Agnus Dei* of *Missa Solemnis*, from Artaria 197, p. 62 (William Drabkin, "The Sketches and Autographs for the Later Movements of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*," *Beethoven Forum* 2, 1993, 97-132; sketch examples are from p. 122).



**Example 2b:** Beethoven, sketches for *Agnus Dei* of *Missa Solemnis*, from Artaria 201, pp. 70 and 71 (William Drabkin, "The Sketches and Autographs for the Later Movements of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*," *Beethoven Forum* 2, 1993, 97-132; sketch examples are from p. 122).

As William Drabkin has explained, an actual quote is not retained in the final version, but Beethoven did not abandon this idea immediately. In the sketches from Artaria 201, the melodic segment B $\flat$ —A—C—B $\sharp$  is preserved in the soprano line, and then divided between the tenor and soprano parts (see example 2b). Note that a voice-exchange occurs between the tenor and soprano at the point where the signature motive transfers from tenor to soprano: pitch-classes A and C are exchanged here. In the final version, only remnants of the reference to “BACH” remain: not only are the notes spread between different voices and sung in different octaves, but they are also separated by two measures: G—B $\flat$ —A (tenor solo, mm. 198–99) and A—C—B (alto solo, mm. 202–204).<sup>25</sup> The three pairs of square brackets on example 2b (pages 70–71 of the sketchbook Artaria 201) are mine and have been added to clarify the specific usage of the BACH motive, and especially its composite setting.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> William Drabkin, “The Sketches and Autographs for the Later Movements of Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*,” in *Beethoven Forum* 2, ed. Lewis Lockwood (Lincoln, Nebraska: 1993), 97–132.

<sup>26</sup> In his transcription of Beethoven’s sketchbook Artaria 195, which includes many notations related to the mass, Kinderman includes his own transcription of the first sketch shown in example 2 above (Artaria 197, page 62). It differs only slightly from that of Drabkin by including letter-name labels for two of the pitches (G4 and D4) that remain unmarked in example 2. Kinderman’s commentary acknowledges the difficulty of reading this particular sketch. See William Kinderman, *Artaria 195: Beethoven’s Sketchbook for the Missa Solemnis and the Piano Sonata in E major, Opus 109*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), vol. III, ix.

Beethoven once remarked that his late quartets contained a new type of “voice treatment (part writing), and thank God there is no less imagination than ever before.”<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the use of composite melodies, as shown in examples 1 and 2, is one aspect of the new compositional technique to which he referred. While the examples just discussed may provide easy opportunities for tracing composite melody because they consist of an arrangement (example 1) and an ordered series of sketches (example 2), other musical characteristics of a passage may aid in identifying the path of a composite melody. In most cases, one of three situations occurs when the composite melody shifts to a new voice: a voice-exchange (such as in the sketch from the *Agnus Dei* cited above), a melodic or harmonic octave or unison between the two voices, or the use of the same distinct register in the two voices presenting consecutive segments of the melody.

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<sup>27</sup> Thayer-Forbes, 982; from Holz’s recollections as recorded in Wilhelm von Lenz, *Eine Kunst-Studie*, (Hamburg: Hoffman and Campe, 1860), part 5, page 217. Holz’s recollections were transmitted orally to Lenz in 1857, but are generally considered reliable. In a separate passage, Holz acknowledged the high degree of independence among the four voices in Beethoven’s late quartets; see Lenz, part 5, page 213. For further discussion on this aspect of the late quartets, see William Drabkin, “The Cello Part in Beethoven’s Late Quartets,” in *Beethoven Forum* 7, ed. Mark Evan Bonds (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 45–66, and Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven: Studies in the Creative Process* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 130.

The fourth number in *Messiah*, the chorus “And the Glory of the Lord,” offers an example of thematic economy through Handel’s use of stretto (see example 3). Two passages from the chorus incorporate close imitation with the theme in two different ways. First, the passage in measure 20 and following contains stretto statements within the last half of the main theme (example 3a, with the text “shall be revealed”), and with the soprano imitating the bass at a timespan of one measure. Secondly, a passage in measure 110 and following (example 3b) places the two halves of the theme in counterpoint, with the soprano’s concluding phrase (“shall be revealed”) overlapping with the lower voices’ opening phrase (“and the glory of the Lord”).

In addition to these imitative choral uses of the theme, the upper string parts of the opening measures embody an underlying sequential pattern that may suggest close imitation (see example 3c). While the first violin states the main theme in the opening measures, violin two contains a series of descending thirds arranged in a rising scalar contour (B-G#, C#-A, etc.). If the pattern’s second melodic third (C#-A) were considered as passing in nature, the second violin’s melody in measures 2–4 would approximate a stretto treatment of the theme, with the imitation occurring on G# and with a time interval of only two beats between the statements.



**Example 3a:** Handel, *Messiah*, “And the Glory of the Lord,”  
mm. 19–23 (text: “shall be revealed”)



**Example 3b:** Handel, *Messiah*, “And the Glory of the Lord,”  
mm. 110–114 (text: “and the glory, the glory of the Lord/shall  
be revealed”)



**Example 3c:** Handel, *Messiah*, “And the Glory of the Lord,”  
violin parts, mm. 1–4.

This article proposes that Beethoven was likely attracted to the thematic economy embodied by the explicit and latent stretto in Handel’s chorus, and furthermore, that he exploited this characteristic as he borrowed materials from this chorus for use in the *Gloria* of his own mass. The borrowings are not overt quotations that are immediately recognizable, but rather are disguised by the compositional techniques, such as stretto and composite melody, that Beethoven employs.

A series of layered stretto statements on E $\flat$  is given by the chorus in measures 162–73, where E $\flat$  is tonicized within the broader context of B $\flat$  major. The choral statements are given in example 4.

Handel

Beethoven

soprano

alto

bass solo

soprano

tenor

bass

168

soprano

alto

tenor

bass

(soprano)

(tenor)

(bass)

**Example 4:** *Missa Solemnis*, Gloria, mm. 162–173, three composite statements of *Messiah* “glory” theme, top. Text: “Gratias agimus tibi propter magnum gloriam tuam” (“We give thanks to you for your great glory”)

The first  $E\flat$  is adjusted to  $E\sharp$ , where the local harmony is a secondary dominant-seventh chord with a root of C. The final pitch of each of the composite statements is  $E\flat$ , however. Each of the three statements is given as a series of layers, with the original melody's opening descending thirds being combined harmonically in a pair of voices, while a third voice (bass or soprano) provides the final ascending scalar motive (analogous to Handel's passage with the text "glory of the Lord"). In the first case (mm. 162–65), the opening thirds ( $G$ — $E\flat$  and  $B\flat$ — $G$ ) are given in the soprano and alto parts, which move in parallel sixths, while the solo bass sings the concluding scalar segment of the statement at the same time. The end of this first statement overlaps by one measure (m. 165) with the second statement, where the counterpoint is inverted: the men's voices state the melodic descending-third motives, now in parallel thirds, and the ascending soprano line concludes the melody (mm. 167–69). The third and final statement in this example is the most compressed occurrence of the borrowed theme, in that the three layers begin nearly simultaneously at the downbeat of m. 170. The final portion of this last statement is lengthened through added chromatic motion in the bass.

An isolated entry from Beethoven's pocket sketchbook of 1819–20 may support this idea of a harmonic perspective on Handel's melody (see example 5a). The published transcriptions of this sketchbook do not include clefs or key signatures. The examples containing sketches show the exact transcriptions as created by Joseph Schmidt-Görg,



except that clefs have been added. Below each sketch transcription, an example with clef and key signature summarizes the content of the sketch and the possible relationship with Handel's melody.<sup>28</sup>

Handel, "Glory" melody

**Example 5a:** Beethoven, from *Drei Skizzenbücher zur Missa Solemnis I, Ein Skizzenbuch aus den Jahren 1819/20*, page 25, staves 1-2 (transcribed by Joseph Schmidt-Görg and published by the Beethovenhaus, Bonn, 1952), and Handel's "Glory Melody," pitches only.

If the sketch in example 5a were based on a harmonic treatment of Handel's melody, it would represent two strands of the melody (its first 5 pitch-classes) verticalized as harmonic thirds (that is, melodic segments C# to A and E to C# combined harmonically). This sketch may thus support the previous example (example 4), in which Handel's melody was represented in layers containing parallel thirds or sixths. The climactic ascent of Handel's melody, F#–G#–A is partially represented in the

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Schmidt-Görg, trans. and ed., *Drei Skizzenbücher zur Missa Solemnis I, Ein Skizzenbuch aus den Jahren 1819/20* (Bonn: Beethovenhaus, 1952), page 25, staves 1–2.

sketch as F[#]–G[#], which are the highest pitches in the sketch. And the final motive of Handel’s melody, E–D–C–B, is given in the alto strand, overlapping with the parallel thirds and partially superimposed on them. Thus, the sketch may represent two means of using Handel’s theme: verticalizing distinct melodic strands as parallel thirds, and representing distinct, yet common segments of a borrowed melody (here, pitch-classes E–D–C#) as superimposed.

Another sketch from the same page (staves 4–7) may signal Beethoven’s consideration of the possibilities of stretto with Handel’s “glory” melody (see example 5b). If the two melodic parts are read in tenor and bass clefs, the bottom line states the beginning of Handel’s melody in D, the same key as the *Gloria*. Simultaneously, the line’s climactic ascent, B–C#–D, would be provided by the upper voice. The third strand of counterpoint in this sketch contains the descending perfect-fourth scalar motives from the end of Handel’s melody. Both motivic scalar segments are found in the sketch, with the first of these descending fourths (B–A–G–F#) being superimposed on the third through fifth pitches of Handel’s melody (A–G–F#). The sketch thus supports the idea of the borrowed melody being given in three contrapuntal layers, which are perhaps arranged in a way that takes advantage of repeated segments in Handel’s melody (A–G–F#).

The musical score is divided into four systems, each with a treble and bass staff.

- System 1:** Staves 4 and 5. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass staff has a 3/4 time signature. The music consists of a piano introduction with a treble staff melody and a bass staff accompaniment.
- System 2:** Staves 6 and 7. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass staff has a 3/4 time signature. The music consists of a piano introduction with a treble staff melody and a bass staff accompaniment.
- System 3:** Staves 8 and 9. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass staff has a 3/4 time signature. The music is labeled "statement on D". It features a treble staff melody with fingerings 1, 2, and 3, and a bass staff accompaniment with a "passing" note and a "y" marking.
- System 4:** Staves 10 and 11. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass staff has a 3/4 time signature. The music is labeled "statement on F#". It features a treble staff melody with fingerings 1, 2, 3, and 4, and a bass staff accompaniment with a "neighbor" note and a "passing" note.

**Example 5b:** Beethoven, *Ein Skizzenbuch aus den Jahren 1819/20*, page 25, staves 4–7 (transcribed by Joseph Schmidt-Görg), with arrangements by the present author

Further, as is also shown in example 5b, the sketch contains a condensed statement of Handel's melody on F#. Its first pitch-class (A) is shown in square brackets to indicate that it is not present in the sketch. The full theme is represented, however, including the final descending fourth, which is given as a group of eighth notes in a distinct voice. The sketch contains composite melodic statements on two pitch levels, and the statements are intertwined, sounding simultaneously and sharing some pitch content. Some of the pitch content in the sketch serves multiple functions: for example, the A tied between measures 1 and 2 acts as part of two distinct strands of the statement on D as well as part of the statement on F#. Thus, the sketch supports the notion that Beethoven experimented with using segments of Handel's melody in stretto and in composite fashion.

Beethoven's highly abstract usages of the choral theme with a layered stretto technique cannot be perceived directly by a listener, and the foregoing examples are illustrative of a possible means of compositional method rather than an audible form of musical quotation, in any traditional sense. Further studies, especially studies of the surviving sketches, would be necessary to make a feasible case for widespread use of the modeling and voice-leading techniques proposed above. The fact that the autograph score for the Gloria is missing adds to the challenge of considering these ideas in relation to this particular movement.<sup>29</sup> What is being suggested,

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<sup>29</sup> Joel Lester has explained that the autograph score of the mass's Kyrie contains extensive alterations. He also notes the significance of the autograph's cue staff, which contains valuable information for a study of the movement's genesis. See Lester,

however, is that this method—the creation of counterpoint through composite melodies—could be one means by which some passages of the mass were created. A metaphor for this contrapuntal layering technique may be found in visual art—in the process of lithography, whereby the artist repeatedly applies various colors of ink to the image on stone and then records the image on paper with the use of a press, working through the printing process in several stages (once for each color). While each layer of printing may not be distinctly perceptible to a person viewing the finished artwork, the full image and its shades of colors and mixed colors visible in the completed print are a direct result of this multi-layered process.

The Gloria's climactic fugue on the text "in Gloria Dei patris" may also be linked to Handel's chorus. As shown in example 6, the first half of Handel's melody may be generated by an interval series of a descending third followed by a rising fourth (or alternatively, the pattern may be viewed as a rising scale, with each pitch followed immediately by a descending third). On the example, the parenthetical pitches given below violin 2 would complete the interval pattern and would serve a passing function, or they would be implied by the continuation of the pattern. Note how the second violin's counterpoint in measure 2 of the *Messiah* chorus not only suggests stretto with violin 1, but also states this scalar pattern of melodic thirds for a span of 3 measures (with four consecutive melodic thirds given in mm. 2–4). As illustrated in example 6, the same intervallic pattern (rising fourth and falling

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"Revisions in the Autograph of the 'Missa Solemnis Kyrie,'" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 23:3 (fall 1970), 420–438.

third) underlies the *Gloria's* fugue subject, which may thus embody a “composing out” of Handel’s theme. The intervallic pattern is made more explicit by the oboe and clarinet’s partial stretto imitation of the subject and answer in mm. 361–62 and mm. 365–66.<sup>30</sup>

The image displays two musical excerpts for comparison. The top excerpt is from Handel's *Messiah*, measures 361–62, featuring Violin 1 (vln. 1), Violin 2 (vln. 2), and a cello/bass line. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The violin parts play a melodic line, while the cello/bass part plays a lower, more rhythmic line. A label 'underlying sequence (passing)' points to the cello/bass line. The bottom excerpt is from Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, measures 360–364, featuring Oboe/Clarinet (ob./cl.), Bass (subject), and a cello/bass line. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The oboe/clarinet part plays a melodic line, the bass part plays a lower, more rhythmic line, and the cello/bass part plays a lower, more rhythmic line. Labels 'underlying sequential pattern' and 'tenor (answer)' point to the respective parts.

**Example 7:** *Missa Solemnis*, *Gloria*, concluding fugal subject (top) in comparison with *Messiah* “glory” theme (below)

<sup>30</sup> Birgit Lodes describes the underlying structure of the *Gloria's* sequential fugal subject in a similar way (alternating rising perfect fourths and descending thirds), and she points out how some melodic content of the *Agnus Dei* (m. 107 ff. and m. 139 ff.) follows the same underlying melodic pattern. Birgit Lodes, *Das Gloria in Beethovens Missa Solemnis*, Münchner Veröffentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte, vol. 54. (Tutzing: 1997), 178–184.

In the fugal passage described above, Beethoven may have exploited a basic pattern that underlies a melodic idea borrowed from Handel. Other movements of the mass contain basic sequential patterns involving melodic thirds, as well. One setting of the text “dona nobis pacem” in mm. 96–100 of the *Agnus Dei*, contains six descending thirds (spanning from E4 to G2, in the combined tenor and bass lines). As the same text is restated later (mm. 187–199), the three upper parts join to present a series of thirteen melodic thirds, given as a composite melody that migrates twice from the soprano through the alto to the tenor part, before concluding with the soprano. As discussed by Kinderman, the Credo fugue from the *Missa Solemnis* is also marked by chains of thirds.<sup>31</sup>

Overall, Beethoven’s *Gloria* exhibits not only general, stylistic similarities, but also specific musical parallels with Handel’s chorus. Through Beethoven’s borrowings and compositional techniques, Handel’s melody creates the full substance of some passages of the mass, even without being quoted directly. In addition, Beethoven plays on the original imitative

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<sup>31</sup> See Kinderman, *Artaria* 195, who discusses the substantial effort made by Beethoven with plans for the descending-third based fugue subject for the text “et vitam venture saeculi amen,” 65–72, and Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 269–275, in which he describes chains of thirds in op. 106, the choral finale of the ninth symphony, and passages of the *Missa Solemnis*. See also Maria Rivers Rule, “The Allure of Beethoven’s ‘Terzen–Ketten’: Third-Chain Studies by Nottebohm and Music by Brahms,” Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 2011. She documents the presence of circles of thirds found in Beethoven’s sketches as well as completed works, and the study of these tonal patterns by Nottebohm and Brahms. The combination of B-flat and G and the use of third-chains in op. 106 is discussed by Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: Norton, 1972), 409–434.

relationships found in Handel's "Glory" chorus and extends them, in an abstract sense, by using his own stretto techniques, pacing segments of the borrowed melody so that they are given simultaneously rather than just in a quick imitative manner. In the *Gloria*'s concluding fugue subject (example 6, above), a recurring interval pattern acts as a "musical germ," just as in Handel's chorus. Thus, Beethoven's fugal subject may be viewed as a "composed-out" version of Handel's melody. The core interval pattern of descending third and rising fourth is given explicitly in violin 2 in the very opening measures of Handel's chorus, providing counterpoint for the main melody. Because of this tight motivic relationship between the theme and its counterpoint, they may be viewed as a single idea, which is shown in its "purest" state in the counterpoint line. Thus, Beethoven's usage and extension of Handel's thematic ideas and stretto techniques literally draw upon Handel's counterpoint and incorporate it in the *Missa Solemnis* in ways that metaphorically place Handel's work "in counterpoint" with that of Beethoven.

This raises the larger issue of musical borrowing, which inevitably creates questions of motivation. Many studies have addressed this topic, both in terms of music and other arts (literary criticism, for example).<sup>32</sup> If Beethoven did model his *Gloria* on ideas from the *Messiah*, his reasons for doing so could

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<sup>32</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: a Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1973. Many studies have considered similar circumstances of influence among eighteenth-century composers, including Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven: for example, see Jeremy Yudkin, "Beethoven's 'Mozart' Quartet," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 45, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 30–74.



have been mixed, characterized both by a desire to pay respect to Handel and also an interest in competing with his musical accomplishments. We know that Beethoven referred to the *Missa Solemnis* as “the greatest work that I have composed thus far.”<sup>33</sup> While Beethoven’s motivations can never be known completely from our perspective, it seems he may have believed that by drawing upon the works of his two predecessors to whom he ascribed “true genius” (J.S. Bach and Handel), and by placing his music “in counterpoint” with theirs, he was paying homage to them and also linking himself with the legacy of their musical greatness.

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<sup>33</sup> This statement was made in a letter to publisher Carl Peters, dated 5 June 1822; see Anderson, letter 1079.

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## Abstract

Beethoven had the highest regard for Handel, claiming on more than one occasion “he was the greatest composer who ever lived.” Beethoven’s knowledge of the earlier composer’s music was considerable. In addition to the direct influence from Handel’s music that may be traced with Beethoven’s variations on one of his themes, direct transcriptions of his fugues, or the general evocation of Handel’s style in Beethoven’s choral fugues, this article proposes that Beethoven may have borrowed specific musical ideas from Handel’s *Messiah* and reworked them for use in his own *Missa Solemnis*.

The method by which Beethoven may have adapted materials from Handel’s music includes the use of composite melodies, whereby a single melodic line is presented by different voices and in different registers. Sketches for the *Gloria* of Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* indicate that Beethoven considered using this type of voice-leading technique in adapting the opening melody from Handel’s chorus “And the Glory of the Lord.” Analytical examples illustrate how these composite statements of the borrowed melody could have been incorporated in the *Missa Solemnis*, and further, how the fugal theme of Beethoven’s *Gloria* may consist of a “composed out” version of Handel’s theme. Beethoven’s music plays on the original imitative relationships found in Handel’s “Glory” chorus and extends them, in an abstract sense, by creating counterpoint from the borrowed melody.

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# Constructing Robert Johnson

Sean Lorre

I don't think I'd even heard of Robert Johnson *when I first* found [King of the Delta Blues Singers (1961)]; it was probably fresh out. I was around fifteen or sixteen, and it came as something of a *shock to me that there could be anything that powerful...* It was almost as if he felt things so acutely that he found it almost unbearable.... At first it was almost too painful, but then after about six months I started listening, and then I didn't listen to anything else. Up until the time I was 25, if you didn't know who Robert Johnson was I wouldn't talk to you.

-Eric Clapton<sup>1</sup>

I was thirteen years old when Woodstock-era nostalgia swept through my small suburban world in the early 1990s. By that time, I had amassed a large collection of classic rock LPs including my personal favorites, Cream's *Greatest Hits* and Led Zeppelin *IV*. In the year or so following, on the recommendations of my local record store clerks and friends in the know, I picked up a copy of the brand new *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* (1990). These most trusted of advisors let it be known that if I liked Eric Clapton, then I would love Johnson, because he was "the real deal," "where rock n' roll came from." When I brought the boxed set home – cassettes, mind you, not CDs – I poured over the liner notes before popping in the tapes. Following an 8,000-word essay about the greatness of Robert Johnson divided into sections entitled "The Man" and "The Music," came the testimonial of my idol, Clapton himself, who

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<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Recordings* 1990, 22

professed his love for Johnson in no uncertain terms, stating “I have never found anything more deeply soulful than Robert Johnson. His music remains the most powerful cry that I think you can find in the human voice.” Punctuating Clapton’s encomium was a short essay written by Keith Richards summed up by its title: “Well, This is it.”<sup>2</sup> From these multiple sources of influence and, dare I say, pressure, I was convinced that Johnson, would be, in fact, “it.” To my surprise and perhaps dismay, it didn’t speak to me as directly as I wanted it to. To my ear, it lacked the affective power of Zeppelin and Clapton. In short, I liked the music but didn’t love it.

I open this discussion of the historiography of America’s preeminent bluesman with this brief telling of my own discovery of Robert Johnson only in part because it seems to be a *sine qua non* of writing about him.<sup>3</sup> More to the point, I chose to share this anecdote because it was my own early ambivalence about Johnson – which through a few months of persistent listening was replaced by appreciation and later adoration – led me, like so many that came before, to want to understand more about him and perhaps uncover why this one man and his small collection of songs held such sway over the collective rock and blues imagination.

Robert Johnson has been called “the best-known and least understood” of all rural blues artists.<sup>4</sup> Born in 1911, Johnson recorded only twice, in 1936 and 1937, producing twenty-nine sides intended for the race

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<sup>2</sup> *The Complete Recordings* 1990, 21-22

<sup>3</sup> See Charters 1959 and 1991; Guralnick 1989; Lomax 1993; Wald 2004; to name but a few.

<sup>4</sup> Pearson and McCullough 2004, 1

market nearly a decade after the peak years of popularity for the rural, “downhome” blues.<sup>5</sup> By the end of 1938, Johnson was dead, by most accounts poisoned by either a jealous husband or a spurned lover. During his short life Johnson was a virtual unknown, at least outside of the mostly rural, black communities in which he lived and performed. Robert Johnson – at least the Robert Johnson that is knowable today, one hundred years after his birth and nearly seventy-five years after his death – is best understood as a product of the mass of literature that makes up the discourse of Robert Johnson, a construct formed by generations of critics, fans and scholars. In this regard, “Robert Johnson” can be thought of as an empty/ied signifier, at once a man, a voice, and a blank slate.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of early print mentions of Johnson focus on his records, accompanied by admissions of how little was known about the man himself. These admissions are frequently followed by some statement or supposition about his life, typically a questionably sourced anecdote or vague generalization.<sup>7</sup> Faced with this dearth of historical facts, many writers – having nothing else to go on other than the sound of his voice and his words – imagined psychological profiles of Johnson from their interpretations of his lyrics and their own preconceived notions of black culture. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the amount of writing on Robert Johnson grew exponentially, fueled generally by the folk revival and more specifically by

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<sup>5</sup> Titon 1977, 59

<sup>6</sup> I borrow the concept of the “empty signifier” here from Patricia Schroeder. See Schroeder 2004, 160.

<sup>7</sup> See Charters 1959, 207-11 and Driggs 1961.

Samuel Charters's *The Country Blues* (1959) and the Columbia Records LP *Robert Johnson: King of the Delta Blues Singers* (1961). Folklorists and fans conducted extensive fieldwork and investigation, uncovering historical documents and numerous firsthand accounts of Johnson.<sup>8</sup> Despite this search for the story of Johnson, the man, much of the writing published during this time – although occasionally grounded in documentation and recollection – was just as marked by imaginings, misrepresentations, and mythology. It would take Johnson's 1986 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as an "early influence" to spur the publication of narratives that attempted to address Robert Johnson as an historical figure.

Around the turn of the century, undoubtedly due to the enormous success of Columbia Records' *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* (1990) and Johnson's enshrinement on a U.S. postage stamp in 1994, Robert Johnson became the subject of multiple scholarly works, including two studies in the Music in American Life series.<sup>9</sup> Although many of these works feature biographical sketches of Johnson's life, they are primarily concerned with the music (Ford 1998 and Evans 2008) or with a reflexive analysis of the

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<sup>8</sup> Mack McCormick, Gayle Dean Wardlow and Steve LaVere were leaders in this movement. McCormick has yet to publish his extensive findings in a book-length treatment to date but has written shorter pieces on Johnson and contributed research and guidance to other Johnson projects including the 1992 film *The Search for Robert Johnson* and Peter Guralnick's 1989 short book *Searching for Robert Johnson*.

<sup>9</sup> Pearson and McCullough 2003 and Schroeder 2004. See Schroeder for an in depth look at the controversy that surrounded the Robert Johnson stamp.

function and misuses of the myth(s) of Johnson (Lipsitz 1998, Pearson and McCullough 2003, Schroeder 2004, Wald 2004, Rothenbuhler 2007b). Schroeder, in particular, is concerned not with how the legend of Johnson came to be, nor with a debunking agenda, but rather with deconstructing the various symbolic meanings Robert Johnson has taken on in the later part of the twentieth century. Schroeder addresses Johnson as signifier in a variety of cultural products, focusing not only on histories but on representations of Johnson in works of fiction and film and representations of the “virtual Robert Johnson” found on the Internet.<sup>10</sup>

In this study, I will focus my attention on the formation and development of the Robert Johnson discourse prior to the turn towards metacommentary and revision in the twenty-first century. Addressing representative selections from the Johnson literature over a span of roughly sixty years, I will focus my analysis on the discursive construction of Robert Johnson. Inspired in part by Schroeder’s model, and keeping in mind Spivak’s assertion (via Foucault) that “it is no longer too avant-garde to suspect or admit that ‘events’ are never not discursively constituted,”<sup>11</sup> I will attempt, by investigating literary representations of Robert Johnson, to trace the ideological assumptions, hermeneutic frameworks, and narrative strategies that facilitated these many interpretations of Johnson. This study will analyze a sample of these representations to identify how the construct of Johnson has been inscribed into various overarching narratives. These narratives will be addressed with an

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<sup>10</sup> Schroeder 2004, 136

<sup>11</sup> Spivak 1988, 242

eye toward what Jameson refers to as the “sedimented layers of previous interpretation,” through which texts are read and rewritten from previous writings and inherited cultural codes.<sup>12</sup> Throughout, we will see the term “Robert Johnson” used in a multiplicity of ways. For some authors, Robert Johnson was a once-living and breathing historical figure, for others “he” is a set of song lyrics, and in at least one case, “very little more than a name on aging index cards and a few dusty master records.”<sup>13</sup>

### **The Greatest Negro Blues Singer**

Robert Johnson first enters the literary historical frame in the communist-oriented, New York-based weekly publication *The New Masses*, in three references between early 1937 and the end of 1938. In March 1937 and again in June 1937, *The New Masses* featured recommendations of Johnson’s records penned by John Hammond.<sup>14</sup> Hammond – a record producer, talent scout and outspoken advocate for African American music – is best known for his “discoveries” of black musicians, including Count Basie and Billie Holiday. Hammond’s short pieces appear aimed at record collectors, extolling Johnson as “the greatest Negro blues singer who has cropped up in recent years.... Johnson makes Leadbelly sound like an accomplished poseur.”<sup>15</sup> These were followed the next year by a reprint of the program for the “From Spirituals to Swing Concert” held at Carnegie Hall on

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<sup>12</sup> Jameson 1981, 3

<sup>13</sup> Driggs 1961

<sup>14</sup> Pearson and McCullough 2003, 18-21. Although the first piece about Johnson is credited to “Henry Johnson,” the authors believe that it is in fact Hammond writing under a pseudonym.

<sup>15</sup> quoted in Pearson and McCullough, 28

23 December 1938, an event sponsored by *The New Masses* and organized by Hammond. I will quote the section from the program that deals with Robert Johnson in its entirety, as this short remark – which Hammond reportedly also spoke on stage at the concert – stands as a point of origin for the Robert Johnson discourse.

Robert Johnson was going to be the big surprise of the evening. I knew him only from his blues records and the tall, exciting tales the recording engineers and supervisors used to bring about him from improvised studios in Dallas and San Antonio. I don't believe that Johnson ever worked as a professional musician anywhere and it still knocks me over how lucky it is that talent like this ever found its way to phonograph records. At the concert we will have to be content with playing two of his records; Johnson died last week at the precise moment when Vocalion scouts finally reached him and told him he was booked to appear at Carnegie Hall on December 23. He was in his middle twenties and nobody seems to know what caused his death.<sup>16</sup>

The introductory portion of the program, entitled "The Music Nobody Knows," in which the aims of the concert are outlined, offers an insightful contextualization for Hammond's remarks. The concert is billed as "an evening of American Negro music," which "...is rarely heard... serious audiences have neglected it... in this concert we want to show you what the real thing is by presenting some of its best Negro practitioners... what you will hear is the most sincere and valid representations that our researches could find."<sup>17</sup> The music presented was

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<sup>16</sup> *Spirituals to Swing* 1999, 19

<sup>17</sup> *Spirituals to Swing* 1999, 3-4



intended to demonstrate the genealogy of authentic jazz, in contrast to mainstream “jitterbug” swing.<sup>18</sup> By his programming of the “From Spirituals to Swing” concert and the subsequent literature surrounding it, Hammond establishes what James Smethurst refers to as a “construction of an ‘authentic’ oppositional folk voice” to stand against the capitalist superstructure of the commercial music industry.<sup>19</sup> The overt message and who is speaking is now evident; however, the intended audience is less clear. Who is it that Hammond feels needs to be exposed to the music? We can turn again to the text for indications: “the *New Masses* ball is the big social event of literary and artistic New York; the magazine’s lectures, art exhibitions and concerts are lively spots in any cultural season.”<sup>20</sup>

With this information in mind, we can read Hammond’s *New Masses* articles in a properly contextualized frame. For Hammond and by extension the literary, artistic and cultural intelligentsia of New York, Johnson here is the “greatest Negro blues singer,” an exemplar of the type of authenticity that can only be found in the performances of someone who has never “worked as a professional musician anywhere.”<sup>21</sup> Johnson’s music is the eternal music of the folk, speaking to the reality of the African American condition in a manner uncorrupted

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<sup>18</sup> For more on Hammond’s role in forming the jazz discourse of the time, see Gennari 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Gennari 2006, 35

<sup>20</sup> *Spirituals to Swing* 1999, 6

<sup>21</sup> This anti-commercial image becomes essential to both folk and rock discourses. For a detailed discussion the ideology of folk and rock based around anti-commerciality, community and authenticity, see Frith 1981.

by the influence of commerce so prevalent in the popular swing music of the day. This reading is best framed by the populist, Depression-era communist ideology espoused by the *New Masses* and the “Popular Front Movement,” which viewed Southern rural blacks as *de facto* the most oppressed class of American.<sup>22</sup> Considered as such, Johnson serves as a representation of the voiceless proletariat to whom Hammond gives a voice, an object to be championed. Despite this sympathetic agenda, Johnson is represented as a stereotype in language rife with romanticism.<sup>23</sup> Johnson is unknown, at least to white, urban audiences. He is mysterious in all details of his life and death, and in his last moment a tragic figure that missed his one opportunity – provided by Hammond – to rise from obscurity and (assumed) poverty.

These themes of authenticity and romanticism quickly become essential elements in the ways in which Johnson is discussed, evident in two books by New York-based jazz critics: *The Jazz Record Book* (1942) by Charles Edward Smith; and *Shining Trumpets* (1946) by Rudi Blesh.<sup>24</sup> Written by members of the “moldy figs” camp of Dixieland revivalist critics, these texts are again addressed to a record collector audience. Similar in intent to the “From Spirituals to Swing Concert,”

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<sup>22</sup> For more about New Deal-era Marxism, race and music see Mullen 90-97.

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed discussion of the ambivalence of stereotypes see Bhabha 1994, 66-84

<sup>24</sup> Note that I am intentionally using the terms “authentic” and “authenticity” loosely (often in “scare quotes”) and generally preserving the context in which they originally appear. I do not intend to unpack the concept here nor clearly define it. For an informative discussion on authenticity see Frith 1981.

*The Jazz Record Book* and *Shining Trumpets* are concerned with portraying jazz as an extension of authentic African American folk traditions. Smith emphasizes that Johnson was “trained by an oldtime New Orleans guitar player,” Johnson’s playing “as exciting as almost any in the folk blues field.”<sup>25</sup> Blesh praises Johnson’s “Hell Hound on my Trail” as “authentic blues... the expression of uncanny and weird feelings... Johnson’s voice sounds possessed like that of a man cast in a spell.”<sup>26</sup> Following Hammond’s lead, the point is made explicitly by Blesh and Smith that Johnson’s music is “authentic, folk blues.” But what does this really mean? If we accept that authenticity is socially constructed and that folk music is a reflection of the experiences of a community,<sup>27</sup> how do white writers writing for a white audience properly assign folk authenticity to a black musician? Johnson’s authenticity is constructed here by those who lack the necessary perspective to make such a designation. What we find is the “authenticity of music... judged by its effects rather than its sources,” emancipated from its site of cultural production.<sup>28</sup> As such, these literary representations of Johnson are best read in terms of what Toni Morrison refers to as Africanism:

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<sup>25</sup> Smith’s claim that Johnson studied with a New Orleans guitar player appears to be entirely unfounded and is never substantiated by later research. I can only assume that Smith is trying to further connect Johnson and rural blues to the perceived Southern/non-commercial/loosely “rural” roots of jazz. (Smith 1942, 259)

<sup>26</sup> Blesh 1946, 121

<sup>27</sup> Mullen 2008, 15; Frith 1981

<sup>28</sup> Frith 1981, 162

a term for the denotative and connotative blackness that that African peoples have come to signify, as well as the entire range of views, assumptions, readings, and misreading that accompany Eurocentric learning about these people... Africanism makes it possible to say and not say, to inscribe and erase, to escape and engage, to act out and act on, to historicize and render timeless.<sup>29</sup>

Viewed in this framework we can see how these and future constructions of Johnson represent and misrepresent his racial, cultural and historical otherness to reflect the Eurocentric assumptions and agendas of the writers.

### **A Brooding Sense of Torment and Despair**

The first turn toward a sense of cultural self-consciousness appears in Samuel Charters' *The Country Blues*.

The young Negro audience for whom the blues has been a natural emotional expression has never concerned itself with artistic pretensions. By their standards, Robert Johnson was sullen and brooding, and his records sold very poorly. It is artificial to consider him by the standards of a sophisticated audience that during his short life was not even aware of him, but by these standards he is one of the superbly creative blues singers.<sup>30</sup>

In these introductory words to his five-page section on Robert Johnson, Charters is quick to recognize that his own perspective on Johnson may not, and most likely was not, shared by Johnson's cultural or historical peers. Despite this recognition, despite his

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<sup>29</sup> Morrison 1992, 6-7. Morrison's concept bears an interesting similarity to Edward Said's notion of Orientalism. See Said 1979.

<sup>30</sup> Charters 1959, 207

very own warning, he proceeds along these “artificial” lines. In these pages, Charters establishes a narrative strategy of mixing biography with lyric analysis that serves as prototype within the Johnson discourse. Although there are a handful of historical facts presented, he is quick to point out the paucity of information available about Johnson, a notion underscored by frequent qualifiers to the statements made in the three paragraphs dealing with Johnson’s life.

Charters appears much more confident in the insights he gains by interpreting Johnson’s lyrics. Although he openly admits that a cultural distance exists between himself and Johnson, he does not seem to see this as an impediment to interpreting Johnson through his songs. For Charters, “the finest of Johnson’s blues have a brooding sense of torment and despair.”<sup>31</sup> He discusses at length the lyrics to two songs that he believes qualifies as Johnson’s finest, “Hellhound on My Trail” and “Me and the Devil Blues.” In these interpretations, Charters sees Johnson as “so disturbed it is almost impossible to understand the words... emotionally disturbed by the image of the Devil, the ‘Hellhound’... the figure seemed to be his torment.”<sup>32</sup> This reading of Johnson the man from his lyrics (in particular the lyrics to “Hellhound on My Trail”) is a trope extending from Blesh that will remain a constant facet of the literature on Johnson.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Charters 1959, 210

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*

<sup>33</sup> For a point of contrast see Lawrence W. Levine’s reading of “Hellhound on my Trail” in *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. Levine reads “Hellhound” as rather than “an expression of trouble and woe,” an expression of African American’s embrace of freedom and special mobility. (Levine 1977, 262)

Although the approach is inherited, Charters enhances the level of rhetoric and romantic imagery used in an effort to stir his readers' imaginations. Reflecting on *The Country Blues* in 1975 Charters was quite candid about this agenda.

*The Country Blues* was two things. It was romanticization of certain aspects of black life in an effort to force the white society to reconsider some of its racial attitudes, and on the other hand it was a cry for help. I wanted hundreds of people to go out and interview the surviving blues artists. I wanted people to record them and document their lives, their environment, and their music—not only so that their story would be preserved but also so they'd get a little money and a little recognition in their last years. So there was another kind of romanticism in the book. I was trying to make the journey to find the artists as glamorous as possible, by describing the roadsides, and the farms, and the shacks, and the musicians themselves.<sup>34</sup>

Through the continued and escalating presentation of Johnson as a mysterious, romantic, now tragic figure, Charters's book was effective in generating interest in Johnson, the person, while simultaneously perpetuating the discursive patterns established by Blesh and Smith. Charters's book was well received by an eager group of young, white, middle-class, future writers and researchers who were more than willing to appreciate black blues artists through Charters's romanticizations and to heed his "cry for help." Enthralled by his effusive prose, the sounds they heard on Columbia Records' *Robert Johnson: King of the Delta Blues Singers*, and a propensity for romanticizing the Other, they set out on the "search" for Robert Johnson.

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<sup>34</sup> quoted in Charters 1991, vii-viii.

Folklorist Patrick Mullen argues that white audiences during the folk revival were seeking in the “rediscovered” rural bluesmen a “symbolic alternative to a repressed white society”; but the representations of these artists as constructed by white revivalists rarely reflected the musicians’ realities.<sup>35</sup> Jeff Todd Titon points out that by “rejecting conformity to middle-class values, blues revivalists embraced the music of people who seemed unbound by conventions of work, family, sexual propriety, worship and so forth.... The romantic strain projected a kind of primitivism on the blues singer and located him in a culture of natural license.”<sup>36</sup> As blues revival-era researchers set out to gather the “reality” of Johnson, much of what they found, or at least what they felt should be presented, simply reinforced the romantic notions of earlier generations. Before turning to an example of this type of research-based narrative representation of Johnson, I will address what is perhaps the most overtly impressionist and one of the most influential constructions of Robert Johnson, found in Greil Marcus’s *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock ‘n’ Roll Music* (1975).

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<sup>35</sup> Mullen 2008, 124.

<sup>36</sup> quoted in Mullen 2008, 124.

## The Spirit of Rock ‘n’ Roll

In his prologue, Marcus is careful to assert that Johnson is not the literal inventor of rock, but rather an early representation of the spirit of rock n’ roll, stating that “Johnson figures as metaphor more than musical influence.”<sup>37</sup> He is less careful on this point later in the work, mixing statements of spiritual influence and musical lineage in claims that Johnson’s “presence” can be felt in many of the best guitarists and singers of the day: “a good musical case can be made for Johnson as the first rock ‘n’ roller of all... he was, I think, working out a whole new aesthetic that rock ‘n’roll eventually completed.”<sup>38</sup> In his attempt to construct Johnson as a suitable spiritual forbearer for the massively popular rock music of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Marcus follows and escalates the well-worn patterns utilized in early writings on Johnson. Despite the recent emergence and publication of historical information about Johnson in the years prior to the release of his book, Marcus eschews biography for interpretation, supporting this methodology by proposing that a “mythical authority... comes when an artist confirms his work with his life.”<sup>39</sup> Besides Johnson’s date of birth, recording dates and date of death, Marcus only includes historical “facts” and firsthand accounts that serve his reading of Johnson. Only in speaking of Johnson’s “tragic” death does he present anything resembling a data-driven postulation of the historical Johnson: “if some remember that he was stabbed, others say he was poisoned; that he died on his hands

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<sup>37</sup> Marcus 1975, 6

<sup>38</sup> Marcus 1974, 23, 30.

<sup>39</sup> Marcus 1975, 31.



and knees, barking like a dog; that his death ‘had something to do with the black arts.’”<sup>40</sup> Writing for an alienated, post-1960s American audience, Marcus asserts that “Johnson’s vision was of a world without salvation, redemption, or rest; it was a vision he resisted, laughed at, to which he gave himself over, but most of all it was a vision he pursued.”<sup>41</sup>

Marcus’s prose is filled with the type of evocative descriptors that reinforce Titon’s notion of “projected primitivism.” Johnson is represented by his “grace and bitterness,” “slow sexual menace,” “a brooding man who did his work on the darker side of American life.” Furthermore, and in line with the notion of escalating rhetoric in the Johnson discourse, the book goes to great length to amplify Johnson’s image from disturbed and tragic to literally damned and possessed.

There were demons in his songs—blues that walked like a man, the Devil, or the two in league with each other—and Johnson was often on good terms with them; his greatest fear seems to have been that his desires were so extreme that he could satisfy them only by becoming a kind of demon himself.<sup>42</sup>

Marcus supports this vision of Johnson as in league with the Devil by latching on to a quotation from Son House – the only quotation in this chapter from someone who actually knew Robert Johnson – in which House simply states, “[Johnson] sold his soul to the Devil to get to play like that.” Despite the fact

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<sup>40</sup> Marcus 1975, 23.

<sup>41</sup> Marcus, 1975, 24.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

that House was interviewed countless times about Johnson, this was the only time he claimed an affiliation between Johnson and the Devil.<sup>43</sup> Although the notion that Johnson sold his soul to the Devil is here connected with African American culture via House, it is nonetheless emphasized by Marcus for its romantic narrative function, supporting Marcus's vision, rather than with an effort to reinscribe Johnson in a more appropriate cultural framework.<sup>44</sup>

To further support this construct, Marcus analyzes lyrics from ten of Johnson's twenty-nine records, finding in them the necessary imagery and allusions to support his assertions.<sup>45</sup> Although he does not claim to provide a comprehensive overview, his analysis is nevertheless marked by exclusion. That he only examines one-third of the available body of work is not on its own problematic, as a selection can represent the whole. Rather, it is the degree of selectivity by which Marcus includes and excludes in order to inscribe his own vision that is of greater concern. This process of inscription and exclusion is best seen in his interpretation of "Stones in My Passway," which Marcus refers to as a "two-minute image of doom that has the power to make doom a fact."<sup>46</sup> Marcus reads in "Stones in My Passway" "terror... too ubiquitous to have a face: it is formless, elusive, overpowering," although he states that on a primary level the song is about sexual impotence.

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<sup>43</sup> In an interview with Pete Welding, published in *Down Beat Music '66* (Pearson and McCullough 2004, 89).

<sup>44</sup> See Lipsitz 1998 for more about the romantic and cultural functions of the Robert Johnson Devil myth.

<sup>45</sup> By this time all twenty-nine of Johnson's songs were commercially available on *King of the Delta Blues Singers vol. I & II*.

<sup>46</sup> Marcus 1975, 36

While the reading is perhaps a stretch, it is not necessarily the conclusion that is of concern, but rather the fact that Marcus only considers four of the five verses of the song. It seems the second verse – “I have a bird to whistle and a bird to sing, a woman that I’m loving, but she don’t mean a thing” – does not fit his agenda.

### Searching for Robert Johnson

Coinciding with the release of the *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* boxed set, the years around 1990 mark the peak point for contributions to the Robert Johnson literature. Information gathered through exhaustive research and extensive interviews conducted throughout the Mississippi Delta region, though first published in short form and in sections of larger works on the blues, was now compiled in the form of comprehensive narratives.<sup>47</sup> In addition to an 8,000-word essay that accompanied the *Complete Recordings*, two important works concerned with portraying the “real” Robert Johnson emerged around this time: Peter Guralnick’s short book, *Searching for Robert Johnson* (1989), and the British documentary film, *In Search of Robert Johnson* (1992), starring John Hammond, Jr. It is to the former of these that we will now turn.

Guralnick’s *Searching for Robert Johnson* is one of the first comprehensive attempts to reconcile earlier interpretations of Johnson with historical documentation and quotations from informants.

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<sup>47</sup> Earlier biographical sketches and interviews regarding Johnson appear in Palmer 1981, Welding 1966, Charters 1973 as well as numerous articles in a variety of trade publications, including *Living Blues*.

Guralnick, whose interest in Johnson and the blues is a product of the blues revival, picks up the mystery theme that he inherited. In the introduction to *Searching*, he discusses how he was influenced by Charters's writing in particular:

What could seem more appropriate to our sense of romantic mystery than an "emotionally disturbed" poet scarcely able to contain his "brooding sense of torment and despair" [quoting Charters 1959]...Robert Johnson became the personification of the existential blues singer, unencumbered by corporality or history.<sup>48</sup>

The first ten pages of the book deal primarily with Guralnick's own "discovery" of Robert Johnson and a brief description of the mystery that is Robert Johnson: "How was one individual...able to create an *oeuvre* so original, of such sweeping scope and power?"<sup>49</sup> The proceeding forty-five pages tell the story of Johnson's life in a level of detail not hitherto found in the literature.<sup>50</sup> Guralnick attempts to present the historical Robert Johnson, writing about Johnson's relationship with his parents, his scant education and his frequent travels. Furthermore, for the first time in the examples I have cited, the voices of those who actually knew Robert Johnson are allowed to inform the narrative. Nevertheless, their words are filtered and selected through the editorial process, used to reinforce a construct of Robert

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<sup>48</sup> Guralnick 1989, 2.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Although many of the facts are presented in less detail in prior writings. For example, see sections in Guralnick 1989, 21-22 and Palmer 1981, 117-119 that discuss Johnny Shines interaction with Johnson.

Johnson that in many ways conforms to earlier representations.

While many of the established tropes – tragedy, possession, torment, etc. – recur in *Searching*, a new concept of Johnson emerges: that of a “self-conceived professional musician.”<sup>51</sup> Robert Johnson, the professional, emerges in part from the stories told by many of Johnson’s peers, notably musician Johnny Shines. Shines is quick to point out that when he and Johnson performed together their repertory was not limited to blues nor dictated by their own personal interests: “You didn’t play what *you* liked; you played what the people liked. That was what you had to do... Robert could play anything... Hillbilly, blues, all the rest.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore and contrary to the idea of Johnson and the rural blues as static folk music, “Robert’s material was way ahead of his time. He was already trying to play jazz... if he were around today you can’t even *imagine* what he’d be doing.”<sup>53</sup> Shines also stresses the connection between performance and commerce for Johnson, stating that “when he picked up his guitar it was for business.”<sup>54</sup> From these accounts, the view that Johnson was strictly a folk musician demands reconsideration and threatens much of the romantic concept of Johnson. In this light, it becomes problematic to view Johnson’s music through the lens of authenticity as it can no longer be seen strictly as “the direct expression of emotion,” but rather demands to be seen as “the product of

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<sup>51</sup> Guralnick 1989, 33.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>53</sup> Guralnick 1989, 60.

<sup>54</sup> Guralnick 1989, 56. The context of this quote makes it clear that Johnson was concerned with making money from his playing and saw it as a livelihood rather than an avocation.

talent and craft.”<sup>55</sup> Addressing this conflict between commercial and folk constructions of Johnson, George Lipsitz raises the point that “romantic critics might prefer to imagine blues musicians as folk artists outside the culture industry, but in order to survive, much less record, they had to display a mastery of the codes of commercial culture.”<sup>56</sup> It appears that despite the romantic proclivity in the discourse for understanding Johnson as folk, faced with so much new information, a reconsideration was unavoidable.

Nevertheless, Guralnick does not seem able to allow Johnson, the professional, commercially aware musician, to stand without some degree of romantic conjecture which he inscribes through his discussion of Robert Johnson and the Devil. In *Searching*, the Devil story is neither refuted nor proselytized, but simply stated by way of another’s words: “Many stories have been advanced to account for [Johnson’s] sudden proficiency in the blues... Son House was convinced that Robert Johnson had [soul his soul to the Devil], and undoubtedly, as Johnny Shines says, others were too.”<sup>57</sup> This quotation is followed by four pages of informant accounts of Johnson’s almost supernatural abilities to perform, learn songs on first listen, and attract a crowd while the suspected pact with the Devil is not mentioned again in the narrative at all.<sup>58</sup> Via this strategy, Guralnick does not take on

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<sup>55</sup> Schroder 2004, 100.

<sup>56</sup> Lipsitz 1998, 47.

<sup>57</sup> Guralnick 1989, 18.

<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, Guralnick makes no reference to the counterargument to the Devil myth raised by Robert Palmer in 1981 that Johnson gained his proficiency on the guitar through study with Alabama-born bluesman, Ike Zinneman. This exclusion is even more troubling considering Palmer and

the myth of Johnson and the Devil directly, but reinscribes it through carefully arranged allusion. While the author sets out to “find” the real Johnson he is not willing to solve the mystery and risk losing the romantic vision of Johnson, claiming in his conclusion that no matter how many facts emerge “the central mystery of Robert Johnson will remain.”<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusion

Through these examples I have presented a sampling of the ways in which Robert Johnson has been constructed through discourse to represent the ideologies of those who created the literature. Referring to this discursive formation of Johnson, George Lipsitz astutely points out that “the life and legend of Robert Johnson can be made to conform perfectly to the contours of romanticism.... Yet by incorporating Robert Johnson into the romantic narrative, these appropriations of his story hide both the social circumstances and the cultural strategies that informed his life and art.”<sup>60</sup> Throughout the many writings on Johnson, the scant historical facts of his twenty-seven years of life have been modified, manipulated and at times fabricated to serve a romantic narrative in which this poor, virtually unknown/unknowable bluesman stands in as the antidote to generations of commercialization and alienation. In investigating the construction of

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Guralnick both relied heavily on the research and guidance of Mack McCormick. (Palmer 1981, 113-114).

<sup>59</sup> Guralnick 1989, 64.

<sup>60</sup> Lipsitz 1998, 43-44.

“Robert Johnson,” we consider the man, the voice, the songs, etc., but in essence, it is the very embedded layers of meaning and signification that critics and fans have poured into the construct that reflect back at us most clearly.

From the moment in 1938 when John Hammond was unable to produce the corporeal Johnson and used his records and tall tales to stand in for the man, “Robert Johnson” became the most malleable stuff of legend, romance and imagination. From that point on writers have molded Johnson to be something meaningful for them, to fulfill a need for something authentic, a romantic, mythical other to represent a sense of honesty and community that was somehow lacking in their modern lives.<sup>61</sup> As my pre-scholarly concept of Robert Johnson was formed through these very constructions and through these very impulses, I was not immune to this process. Friends, rock gods, and liner notes told me that Robert Johnson could be my personal salvation, my “antidote to the shallowness of contemporary commercial culture.”<sup>62</sup> Even at the age of thirteen, this was something I could relate to – to self-alienate from mainstream popular music was all that many a suburban American teenager craved in the face of an industrial model of mass music consumption.<sup>63</sup> In that sense, Johnson has been

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<sup>61</sup> Eric Clapton indicates an unwillingness to give up the romantic construct of Robert Johnson in the close of his remark in *The Complete Recordings* liner notes: “It would be great if people could simply appreciate his music for what it is, for its truth and beauty, without it having to be a scholarly event.” (*The Complete Recordings* 1990, 23).

<sup>62</sup> Lipsitz 1998, 41.

<sup>63</sup> Which at this time meant Debbie Gibson, Tiffany, New Kids on the Block...



constructed to fulfill just that need. He was created through the discourse to stand as the epitome of “authenticity,” the roots, the very heart and soul of the musical traditions we consider “real.”

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**Abstract**

Robert Johnson — at least the Robert Johnson that is knowable today, one hundred years after his birth and nearly seventy-five years after his death — is best understood as a discursive construction formed by generations of critics, fans and scholars. Faced with this dearth of historical facts, many writers — having nothing else to go on other than the sound of his voice and his words — imagined psychological profiles of Johnson from their interpretations of his lyrics and their own preconceived notions of black culture. In this regard, "Robert Johnson" can be thought of as an empty/ied signifier, at once a man, a voice, and a blank slate.

This study focuses on the formation and development of the Robert Johnson discourse in an attempt to trace the ideological assumptions, hermeneutic frameworks, and narrative strategies that facilitated a construction of Johnson by addressing representative selections from the Johnson literature by John Hammond, Samuel Charters, Greil Marcus and others over a span of roughly sixty years. Throughout these writings the scant historical facts of Johnson's twenty-seven years of life have been modified, manipulated and at times fabricated to serve a romantic narrative in which this poor, virtually unknown/unknowable bluesman stands in as the antidote to generations of commercialization and alienation. While these works consider the historical figure and the music, in essence, it is the embedded layers of meaning and signification that critics and fans have poured into the "Robert Johnson" that reflect back at us most clearly.

# **Schenker and the Moonlight Sonata: Unpublished Graphs and Commentary**

*Kiyomi Kimura*

Heinrich Schenker had a great interest in Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. In 1921, he published a facsimile edition of the sonata, with an introduction discussing Beethoven's autograph and sketches.<sup>1</sup> In addition, at his death, he left unpublished graphs of the work and a commentary on its performance. In this paper I will introduce these unpublished materials, which include an analysis of the first movement in differing versions. The paper consists of two parts: in the first I discuss the origin and purpose of the graphs and commentary. In the second and main section I compare the variant forms of the analysis and attempt to link them with the commentary and with Schenker's published fingerings. I hope to show that these unpublished materials may serve the practical musician as well as the theorist.

## **1. Introduction to the Graphs and the *Notizen***

### **The Graphs and the Seminar**

I found these unpublished materials on the Moonlight Sonata in the Felix Salzer Papers at the New York Public Library. These papers are divided into two series. The first series comprises Salzer's own papers; the second consists of papers from Schenker's *Nachlass*. In 1936, Salzer purchased four folders of

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<sup>1</sup> See John Rothgeb, "Schenkerian Theory and Manuscript Studies: Modes of Interaction," in *Schenker Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 7-11.

Schenker's *Nachlass* from Jeanette Schenker.<sup>2</sup> Each folder is called a "*Mappe*."<sup>3</sup> One of the four *Mappen* (*Mappe* 28) contains analyses prepared in a seminar conducted by Schenker from 1931 until the spring of 1934. This *Mappe* contains Schenker's notes, sketches (partial analyses), and full-length analyses of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. In addition to the pages of the analyses, there is a commentary on performance interpretation titled *Notizen zum Vortrag der Mondscheinsonate* ("Notes on the performance of the Moonlight Sonata").<sup>4</sup> The discussion of this commentary will be presented later in this paper.

The newly discovered unpublished graphs were brought almost to completion in the seminar. They include three full-length graphs of the first movement shown in five levels.<sup>5</sup> Of the three, one is a complete graph in the hand of Greta Kraus;<sup>6</sup> two, in the hand of Angelika Elias,<sup>7</sup> are nearly complete.<sup>8</sup> Elias was not

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<sup>2</sup> For a biography, see [http://mt.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/schenker/profile/person/schenker\\_jeanette.html](http://mt.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/schenker/profile/person/schenker_jeanette.html)

<sup>3</sup> "*Mappe*" is derived from Jeanette Schenker's terminology as found in the list she made of the items in Schenker's *Nachlass* after his death in 1935. The NYPL Finding Aid to the Salzer Papers explicates the terminology used: "The original German words '*Nachlass*' and '*Mappe*' have been retained to describe the contents of the papers. '*Nachlass*' refers to all the papers of Schenker, while '*Mappe*' refers to each individual file from the collection." See <http://www.nypl.org/ead/2898>.

<sup>4</sup> Salzer Papers, b. 55, f. 7, 28/9 – 28/ 13.

<sup>5</sup> The only published graphs of the Moonlight Sonata's first movement are the partial or background graphs in *Der freie Satz* (Figures 7,a; 54,3; 56,1b; 76,7; 77; 149,4). See Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Salzer Papers, b.55, f.7, 28/2.

<sup>7</sup> See [http://www.schenkerdocumentsonline.org/profiles/person/elias\\_angelika.html](http://www.schenkerdocumentsonline.org/profiles/person/elias_angelika.html) for a brief biography.

a member of the seminar; according to Schenker's lesson book,<sup>9</sup> she studied the Moonlight Sonata on December 24, 1931, in one of her private lessons with Schenker. Therefore, Elias's graphs do not originate in the seminar, but they are valuable for purposes of comparison. They can be viewed as a record of the ideas that Schenker transmitted to her.<sup>10</sup> Kraus's complete graph seems to be a clean copy prepared for the seminar. Appendix I gives a facsimile of Kraus's complete graph.

Let me briefly discuss the history of the seminar. In this seminar, Schenker's four pupils, Manfred H. Willfort, Trude Kral, Greta Kraus, and Felix Salzer, worked together to help Schenker prepare analytic studies in the most careful graphic form.<sup>11</sup> The goal

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See also Michaela R. Rejack. "Introducing Angelika Elias: A Discovery in Schenkerian Studies" (Master's thesis, Ohio State University, 2004), [http://etd.ohiolink.edu/view.cgi?acc\\_num=osu1208904067](http://etd.ohiolink.edu/view.cgi?acc_num=osu1208904067).

<sup>8</sup> Salzer Papers, b. 55, f. 8, 28/14 and b. 56, f. 1, 28/25 - 28/26

<sup>9</sup> Oster Collection, item 16/14. See <http://www.nypl.org/archives/2854>.

<sup>10</sup> It is possible that Elias was asked to prepare a clean copy of the graph to supplement the seminar's work – as happened with the graph of Bach's C Major Prelude. See Schenker's letter to von Cube at [http://schenkerdocumentsonline.org/documents/correspondence/OJ-5-7a\\_40.html](http://schenkerdocumentsonline.org/documents/correspondence/OJ-5-7a_40.html).

<sup>11</sup> Felix Salzer explains: "Each of us was assigned a different composition; the work on the voice-leading graphs went through many stages until they represented Schenker's point of view.... In my opinion, the ... graphs show the profound insights of Schenker in his most mature and convincing manner." See Heinrich Schenker, *Five Graphic Music Analyses*, introduction by Felix Salzer (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 17 and 20. The seminar is briefly described at <http://schenkerdocumentsonline.org/profiles/organization/entity-002499.html>.



for the seminar was to complete the graphs of a number of pieces, and eventually to issue them all. For the seminar, Schenker made a list of sixteen compositions to be analyzed.<sup>12</sup> Graphs of the first five pieces were published as the *Five Graphic Music Analyses*, but the graphic analyses of the remaining pieces on the list were not completed or published during Schenker's lifetime. Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata Op.27/2 is the eighth, and one may speculate that it would have been published in the second series.<sup>13</sup> The graph of only one of the remaining pieces on the list, Brahms's *Auf dem Kirchhofe* was published after Schenker's death. In the 1960s Salzer worked on an introduction and planned to publish the graph, but the project came to a standstill for uncertain reasons. The graph was later published in *Theory and Practice*.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The list is published in facsimile on pages 18-19 of *Five Graphic Music Analyses*.

<sup>13</sup> In letters written to von Cube in 1934, Schenker, at least twice, specifically indicated that graphs of the Moonlight Sonata (all movements) were in preparation for the second series of *Urlinie-Tafeln*. See [http://schenkerdocumentsonline.org/documents/correspondence/OJ-5-7a\\_49.html](http://schenkerdocumentsonline.org/documents/correspondence/OJ-5-7a_49.html) and [http://schenkerdocumentsonline.org/documents/correspondence/OJ-5-7a\\_51.html](http://schenkerdocumentsonline.org/documents/correspondence/OJ-5-7a_51.html).

<sup>14</sup> Heinrich Schenker, "Graphic Analysis of Brahms's *Auf dem Kirchhofe*, Op. 105, No. 4," with an introduction by Hedi Siegel and a commentary by Arthur Maisel, *Theory and Practice* 13 (1988), 1-14, <http://hdl.handle.net/1802/5206>. The published graph is based on copies in the hands of Kraus and Elias (see Salzer's comments on p. 2).

## The *Notizen*

What makes these unpublished materials unique is that they contain graphs and detailed performance instructions on the same piece. The *Notizen* are commentaries on performance interpretation dictated by Schenker to his wife.<sup>15</sup> They seem to have been dictated after Schenker had clearly discerned what he wished to suggest to pianists. These performance instructions consist of five manuscript pages on the first and second movements. No notes on the third movement exist, although the title and space are provided for them; we may therefore conclude that the project was abandoned. A facsimile of the commentary on the first movement is given in Appendix II, along with my transcription and translation.

Even though the *Notizen* were found in *Mappe* 28, they may not have originated in relation to the seminar. They are not dated, and may have been written before the 1930s; the handwriting seems somewhat more rounded than Jeanette Schenker's mature script.<sup>16</sup> It is natural to think that this may have been an independent project.

Reading through the *Notizen*, we immediately notice that Schenker wished his instructions to serve as a practical and concrete guide to help with the actual execution of the composition by a pianist. He did not simply give elusive metaphorical suggestions such as “play such a measure with a *decrescendo*,” or “play the

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<sup>15</sup> Because of Schenker's deteriorating eyesight, his wife Jeanette took over the writing of his diary, as well as the texts of his analyses, articles, and theoretical works. See [http://mt.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/schenker/profile/person/schenker\\_jeanette.html](http://mt.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/schenker/profile/person/schenker_jeanette.html).

<sup>16</sup> Personal communication from Hedi Siegel.

high note with a crisp sound.” Instead he explains, always with a supporting theoretical or analytical reason, how to execute each note to bring out the desired musical result; or he refers to the nature of the piano, and describes practical techniques to make us aware of specific physical and psychological problems. But he does not limit himself to technical questions alone. He also tells pianists how to feel and interpret the harmony, the pulse and the agogic accents.

I will attempt to relate the graphs and the *Notizen* in the hope that together they will serve both pianists and theorists as an important guide to Schenker’s analysis and provide them with insights into his ideas on the performance of the Moonlight Sonata.

## 2. The analyses

First, let us compare the graphs of the Moonlight Sonata.<sup>17</sup> There are three variant passages I would like to highlight. The first noteworthy passage is in the bass line in measures 19–22 (see Graphs 1–2 and Score 1).

Looking at the bass, Kraus graphs the B1–G#1–E#1 as a motion by two consecutive steps and shows E#1–F#1–B1–B#1–C# as a single phrase associated with the right-hand melody by indicating the voice exchange between the tenor and bass lines. On the other hand, Elias’s graph slurs together B1–G#1–E#1–F#1, picking up on the sense of resolution from the applied dominant  $\frac{6}{5}$  to the F# minor chord on the

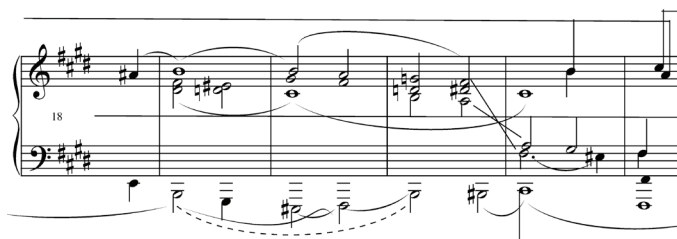
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<sup>17</sup> For convenience, I used the labels “Kraus” and “Elias” for excerpts from the graphs in the hands of Greta Kraus and Angelika Elias, respectively.

third beat in measure 20. The F# minor chord leads to a local  $\sharp\text{II}_6$  on the bass B1, and then the diminished  $\text{VII}_7$  on B#1 leads to the C# which is the bass of the cadential  $\frac{6}{5} \frac{4}{3}$  in F# minor.



**Graph 1:** Kraus (measures 18–23).



**Graph 2:** Elias (measures 18–23).



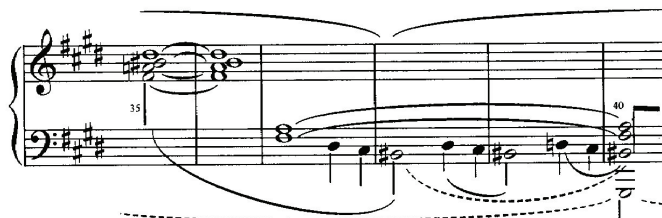
**Score 1:** Beethoven, ed. Schenker (measures 16–23).

Because of the indicated voice exchange, Kraus's bass slur, tying  $E\sharp_1$  and  $C\sharp_1$ , lessens the significance of the Neapolitan  $\natural II_6$  chord on  $B_1$ ; instead, it emphasizes the  $V_5^6$  chord on  $E\sharp_1$ , which appears as if it were resolving to the  $C\sharp$  at the cadential  $\frac{6}{5}-\frac{4}{3}$  progression. In Elias's graph, the  $V_5^6$  chord on the  $E\sharp_1$ , after a brief resolution to  $F\sharp_1$ , continues further, in accordance with Beethoven's right-hand slur in measures 20–21 (given in Schenker's edition).<sup>18</sup> Elias's graph replicates this slur; moreover, the dotted slur in the bass calls attention to the prolonged  $B_1$ , since the departing  $B_1$  (measure 19) has a totally different meaning from the returning  $B_1$  (measure 21). The first  $B_1$  is the root of  $V$  in  $E$  minor. The arpeggiated bass descent through the  $E\sharp$  diminished chord,  $B_1-G\sharp_1-E\sharp_1$ , brings us closer to  $F\sharp$  minor and when the  $B_1$  returns as the bass note of the Neapolitan  $\natural II_6$  chord it stimulates the tonicization of  $F\sharp$  minor. Therefore, Elias's graph is truer to the broader melodic and harmonic flow, and is more pertinent to performance.

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<sup>18</sup> L. v. Beethoven, *Complete Piano Sonatas*, edited by Heinrich Schenker, introduction by Carl Schachter (New York: Dover Publications, 1975). In his preface (p. xii) Schenker clarifies his editorial stance: "Beethoven's notation alone can lead to an understanding of his musical ideas. Any alteration ... tends rather to obstruct the access to Beethoven's compositional ideas and even makes the technique of playing more difficult! This includes ... attempting to "interpret" the text by means of so-called phrasing slurs and other aids intended to facilitate playing." Carl Schachter adds in his introduction (p. viii): "This edition, of course, contains no interpretative supplements to the score, for Schenker wished to avoid anything that would obscure Beethoven's text." The excerpts from the score of the Moonlight Sonata given in this paper are drawn from Schenker's edition.

The second noteworthy spot is in the tenor line in measure 37 (see Graphs 3–4 and Score 2).



**Graph 3:** Kraus (measures 35–40).



**Graph 4:** Elias (measures 35–40).

As opposed to Kraus's graph, Elias's separates this subordinate three-note melody line,  $d\sharp-c\sharp-B\sharp$ , from the arpeggiated run of the  $B\sharp$ -diminished chord starting in measure 35. This three-note melody is an inversion of the previous three-note melody,  $b\sharp^1-c\sharp^2-d\sharp^2$ , which appears in the soprano line in measures 25–26 accompanied by the voice exchange against the bass line. Kraus's graph shows only the first idea, but Elias's shows both. This emphasizes the motivic connection and respects the separating slurs in measure 37.

The musical score is for a piano piece in D major, spanning measures 24 to 39. It is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 24-29) shows a melody in the right hand with a 'cresc.' marking at measure 25 and a 'decrec.' marking at measure 29. The second system (measures 30-39) continues the melody, with a 'p' (piano) marking at measure 30. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Score 2: Beethoven, ed. Schenker (measures 24–39).

The *Notizen* also refer to this measure and emphasize the recurrence of this line:

M37: the lower voice reemerges.

Thus Elias's graph seems more precise and more pertinent in regard to Schenker's ideas on performance.

Moreover, the *Notizen* provide an important performance instruction regarding measure 39.

M39: Play the Phrygian d instead of d-sharp with deeper expression.

The fingerings in Schenker's edition also imply how to execute this Phrygian d. In measures 37 and 38, the R. H. fingerings 2 and 1 are indicated twice for the d# and c#; in measure 39, where the Phrygian d takes place, Schenker instead indicates 1 and 2 for d<sup>♮</sup> and c#. His intention is to alert pianists to play the Phrygian d<sup>♮</sup> with a certain distinction by indicating a different fingering than for the two d#'s. The use of the thumb on the d<sup>♮</sup> results in a deeper sound simply because of the thumb's greater weight. It is evident that Schenker's fingerings are truly more than mere numbers; they are fully equivalent to his commentary.

Lastly, from measure 28, both Kraus's and Elias's graphs show the occurrence of the submerged shifting b# and c# (or b#<sup>1</sup> and c#<sup>1</sup>), which form intervals of a third and fourth against the dominant bass G#<sub>1</sub> (see Graph 5). The undulating 3-4 intervals prolong until the recapitulation's cadence in measure 42.

More precisely, Kraus's graph presents two sets of 3-4-3 and a set of 3-4-4-3, while Elias's graph exhibits a long 3-4 and two sets of 3-4-4-3. Kraus disregards the b#1 in measure 35 and instead takes account of the b#1 in measure 38. This may answer Kraus's slur previously discussed at graph 3. Kraus interprets the motivic three-note melody d#-c#-B# as part of the fourth that is suspended until the B# appears in the bass. Thus, the first three-note melody is not shown with the separated slur. Elias's graph, on the other hand, adheres to the pattern of the undulating 3-4-4-3 more coherently than Kraus's. Elias's graph not only displays the importance of the 3-4 undulation but also shows the metric diminution. From measure 28 to 31, the harmony changes every two measures but at the



following 3-4-4-3 the harmonic change occurs at each measure. Furthermore, in the recurring 3-4-4-3 at the end of the dominant pedal section the harmony changes every half measure. This metric diminution gives a sense of acceleration. By showing the intervallic sequences, Elias gives us a hint of how to feel the musical flow.

In the *Notizen*, Schenker has the following commentary on measures 28–32:

M28: The dialogue is presented in fairly lively manner on the dominant, mm32ff must be completely flowing, even hurrying, it is as if two voices were lost in the fog.

With his usual consistency, Schenker suggests an acceleration here. According to the fingering given in his edition of the sonata (see Score 2, above), the 2nd finger is used on the two consecutive notes between measures 33 and 34. This peculiar fingering shows that Schenker wishes to disconnect these two notes because they belong to two different harmonies. Therefore, even though the fourth is suspended in the undulating 3-4-4-3 pattern, the accelerating pulse may become apparent by articulating the point at which each harmony changes.

The subject of Schenker's fingerings needs to be addressed further. There are a number of points of comparison between the graphic analysis, the *Notizen* and Schenker's fingerings as shown in his edition. Let us compare the two cadences at measures 8 and 14. Firstly, the graph helps us to see the structural importance of these two cadences. Secondly, the *Notizen* support the analyses in the graph and give pianists practical advices and rational explanations.

And lastly, the fingering coherently realizes both the analysis and the performance interpretation by putting them into execution.

The image shows two staves of music for measures 28-41. The top staff is labeled 'Kraus:' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Elias:'. Both staves have a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The music is in 3/4 time. Above the staves, there are various annotations and brackets indicating intervals. For Kraus, there are brackets labeled '3-', '-4-', '-3-', '-4-', and '3-4 4-3'. For Elias, there are brackets labeled '3-', '-4-', '-3-', '-4-', and '3-4 4-3'. The music itself consists of a series of chords and single notes, with some notes marked with 'x' and 'y'.

**Graph 5:** Kraus (measures 28–41), with the 3-4 intervals as marked by Kraus (top) and Elias (bottom)

The image shows a single staff of music for measures 5-15. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The music is in 3/4 time. Above the staff, there are various annotations and brackets indicating intervals. The annotations include 'I VI', '(III+ $\frac{5}{2}$  V $\frac{7}{2}$  VII II) V $\frac{7}{2}$  II- $\frac{5}{2}$  IV', '(V $\frac{7}{2}$  I II $\frac{5}{2}$  V $\frac{7}{2}$  II- $\frac{5}{2}$  IV', and '(V $\frac{7}{2}$  II- $\frac{5}{2}$  IV'. The music itself consists of a series of chords and single notes, with some notes marked with 'x' and 'y'.

**Graph 6:** Kraus (measures 5–15) with Kraus's harmonic analysis and additions (in parentheses) by the author of the paper.

In Kraus's graph, the cadence in measure 14 appears as one of the important cadences on a structural level; it is comparatively more important than the one in measure 8 (see Graph 6).

Starting on the third beat of measure 12, the progression gives a strong sense of tonicization. In measure 7, on the other hand, only the F# minor chord gives a momentary sense of E major before the cadence. As the graph tells us with the beam, the cadence in measures 8–9 indicates it is part of an *Übergreifzug* (the technique of shifting or overlapping tones) and can be regarded merely as part of a passing motion.

Here is what the *Notizen* suggest concerning these measures:

M8: The legato melody of the last quarter in the melody b<sup>1</sup> with the following first quarter note e<sup>1</sup> is created through substitution by means of an illusion: the 2<sup>nd</sup> eighth of the triplet b is struck and held with the thumb, whereupon d-sharp is played with the 4<sup>th</sup> finger as if it came from the b of the accompaniment. The actually created *legatissimo* in the accompaniment also creates the illusion of a legato in the melody.

M14: At the barline, express a little hesitation on the occasion of the cadence by articulating the last 3 eighths.

Schenker's gives a greater priority to the later cadence, which he considers more important. At measure 14, he clearly alerts pianists to the cadence and suggests a little *ritardando*. At measure 8, on the other hand, his discussion is not about the cadence but is prioritized on creating *legatissimo*.

Measure 8 in his edition is consistent with the *Notizen*: his fingering obliges the pianist to hold  $b^1$  instead of  $b^1$  by using the 4<sup>th</sup> finger on  $d^{\sharp 1}$  (see Score 3).



Score 3: Beethoven, ed. Schenker (measures 8–9).

In the graph in measure 8, in addition to the half note  $b$ , the whole note  $b$  is written in the tenor part (see Graph 6). The structural voice-leading line is now made more distinct through the elimination of the embellishing  $b^1$  in the soprano. If one is aware of this in performance, the voice leading serves to create a stronger sense of *legato* in the five-note melody line,  $g^{\sharp 1}-a^1-g^{\sharp 1}-f^{\sharp 1}-e^1$ . Schenker's suggestion that the right-hand thumb should hold the  $b$  for the support of the melody appears to be pertinent to execution of this phrase. Beethoven's slur disconnects  $b^1$  and  $e^1$  in the soprano and Schenker's fingering agrees, by disconnecting them physically, but the suggestion to hold the right-hand thumb makes it musically possible to create an illusional *legatissimo*.

In sum, at measure 8 the graph shows that the cadence is relatively less important since it occurs in the middle of an *Übergreifzug*. Because of this subordinate status, Schenker's fingering shows that the graph's whole note  $b$  should be held by the thumb in order to make an illusional *legatissimo* in the melody.

Thus Schenker's fingering exactly translates this idea into the physical motion.

Let us also examine Schenker's fingerings in the important cadence at measure 14 (see Score 4).



**Score 4:** Beethoven, ed. Schenker (measures 12–15).

We may relate it to the graph and the *Notizen* at measures 11–15. The voice leading of the soprano and the alto are shown in the graph (see Graph 6). The alto line, indicated by the beam between measures 13 and 14, shows that the important voice leading deviates from the soprano's  $f\sharp^1$  and becomes a  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  line in B minor, which supports the structural cadence. Schenker suggests that the 4<sup>th</sup> finger should be used on  $d\sharp^1$ , the 3<sup>rd</sup> on  $c\sharp^1$  and the 1<sup>st</sup> on  $b$ , which seems to be redundant because these are most likely the fingerings that pianists would naturally choose even without suggestions. It is apparent that he is calling pianists' attention to these three notes and is emphasizing their psychological importance through exposing the fingerings. Schenker's suggestion regarding the physical connection between  $\hat{2}$  and  $\hat{1}$  may cause the performer to make a natural hesitation at the cadence. In short, his fingerings endorse the melodic connection in the  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  alto line by attracting the pianists' attention, and perhaps causing a slight and natural *ritardando*.

As a music pedagogue, as a theorist and as a musician, especially in terms of piano performance, Schenker's

contributions to music and music performance show that he was more than a master of just one area. If he had been just a theorist, he could not have suggested such detailed fingerings; if he had been just a piano teacher, he could not have discovered the *Urlinie*, or developed his succinct and pithy graphic analysis; if he had been just an instrumentalist, he could not have explicitly discussed music in such an analytical, philosophical and conceptual way. His unpublished work on the Moonlight Sonata, like his published analyses and writings, demonstrates the value of his multifaceted approach. I hope my discussion of this unpublished material has shown that this approach can guide pianists and theorists in their own further study.



This image shows a handwritten musical score for the Moonlight Sonata, likely a student or working draft. The score is written on multiple staves, with various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key features include:

- Staff 1 (Top):** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 1) and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 2:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 3:** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 4:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 5:** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 6:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 7:** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 8:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 9:** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 10:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 11:** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 12:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 13:** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 14:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 15:** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 16:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 17:** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 18:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 19:** Contains a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.
- Staff 20:** Features a series of notes with fingerings (3, 2, 2) and a dynamic marking of *p*. A bracket indicates a phrase, and a handwritten note "(Bach 1800-1810)" is visible.



A handwritten musical score on ten staves. The notation is dense and includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The score is written in ink on aged, slightly yellowed paper. The first staff has a small logo in the top left corner. The notation is complex, with many notes and rests, and some parts are enclosed in brackets or boxes. The overall style is that of a personal or working manuscript.

## Appendix 2: Facsimile with author's transcription and translation of Heinrich Schenker's manuscript "Notes on the performance of the moonlight sonata"

Notizen zum Vortrag der Mondscheinsonate	Notes on the performance of the moonlight sonata
1. Satz	1. Movement
Durchaus das alla breve zu beachten.	Be sure to observe the alla breve.
T. 5: Das Melodie-Sechzehntel gis im 5. Takt ist sehr bequem nach dem letzten Achtel der Triole u. dem 1. Achtel des nachfolgenden Viertels zu spielen, jedoch muß die Triole entsprechend langsamer gespielt, die einzelnen Achtel artikuliert werden, damit die Breite des letzten Achtels nicht plötzlich auf falle.	M 5: The sixteenth note of the melody in measure 5 is to be played very leisurely after the last eighth of the triplet and the first eighth of the following bar, but the triplet must accordingly be played slower and the individual eighths articulated, so that the last eighth is not conspicuously longer than the others.
T. 6: Das 1. Achtel gis bei der Begleitung des 2. Viertels muß etwas stärker als die übrigen 3 gis desselben Taktes angespielt werden, etwa: >. Der (tiefe?) Grund davon ist der, daß der Einsatz der Melodie beim 4. Viertel des vorhergegangenen Taktes die Aufmerksamkeit auf den schwachen Taktteil überhaupt gelenkt hat, dem durch den Druck auf das kleine gis beim 2. Viertel eine neue, aber konsequente Huldigung dargebracht wird.	M 6: The 1st eighth note, g-sharp, in the accompaniment of the 2nd quarter note must be played slightly stronger than the other 3 g-sharps of the same measure, like so: >. The (deep?) reason for this is that the entrance of the melody at the 4th quarter note of the previous measure attracted the attention to the weak part of the bar which receives a new but consistent homage from the emphasis on the g-sharp at the 2nd quarter.

Notizen  
zum Vortrag der Mondscheinsonate:  
1. Satz.  
Durchaus das alla breve zu beachten.  
T. 5: Das Melodie-Sechzehntel gis im 5. Takt ist sehr bequem nach dem letzten Achtel der Triole u. dem 1. Achtel des nachfolgenden Viertels zu spielen, jedoch muß die Triole entsprechend langsamer gespielt, die einzelnen Achtel artikuliert werden, damit die Breite des letzten Achtels nicht plötzlich auf falle.  
T. 6: Das 1. Achtel gis bei der Begleitung des 2. Viertels muß etwas stärker als die übrigen 3 gis desselben Taktes angespielt werden, etwa: >. Der (tiefe?) Grund davon ist der, daß der Einsatz der Melodie beim 4. Viertel des vorhergegangenen Taktes die Aufmerksamkeit auf den schwachen Taktteil überhaupt gelenkt hat, dem durch den Druck auf das kleine gis beim 2. Viertel eine neue, aber konsequente Huldigung dargebracht wird.

M 8: The legato melody of the last quarter in the melody b1 with the following first quarter note e1 is created through substitution by means of an illusion: the 2nd eighth of the triplet b is struck and held with the thumb, whereupon d-sharp is played with the 4th Finger as if it came from the b of the accompaniment. The actually created *legatissimo* in the accompaniment also creates the illusion of a legato in the melody.

M 14: At the barline, express a little hesitation on the occasion of the cadence by articulating the last 3 eighths.

M 16: Strike the ninth (ninth) at the beginning of the 1st quarter exactly together. The < to the 3rd Quarter (see Bass) calls for a small acceleration, which must be reversed at >. (Articulate the last 3 eighth notes!)

M 22: As in bar 14.

T. 8: Das *legato* des letzten Melodie-Viertels h1 zum nachfolgenden 1. Viertel e1 wird auf dem Wege einer Täuschung durch Vertretung erzeugt, indem nämlich das 2. Achtel der Triole h mit dem Daumen angeschlagen und gehalten wird, worauf dis mit dem 4. Finger gegriffen wird als käme es vom h der Begleitung. Das wirklich hergestellte *legatissimo* bei der Begleitung täuscht das *legato* auch bei der Melodie vor.

T. 14: An der Wende des Taktes ein kleines Zögern aus Anlaß der Kadenz auszudrücken durch artikulieren der letzten 3 Achtel.

T. 16: Die None (ninth) zu Beginn des 1. Viertels durchaus gleichzeitig anschlagen. Das < zum 3. Viertel (siehe Bass) fordert eine kleine Beschleunigung, die beim > zurückgegeben werden muß. (Letzten 3 Achtel artikulieren!)

T. 22: wie beim T. 14

Op. 10. No. 10. Largo. Die letzten Melodie-Viertel h1 zum nachfolgenden 1. Viertel e1 wird auf dem Wege einer Täuschung durch Vertretung erzeugt, indem nämlich das 2. Achtel der Triole h mit dem Daumen angeschlagen wird, worauf dis mit dem 4. Finger gegriffen wird als käme es vom h der Begleitung. Das wirklich hergestellte *legatissimo* bei der Begleitung täuscht das *legato* auch bei der Melodie vor.

Op. 14. An der Wende des Taktes ein kleines Zögern aus Anlaß der Kadenz auszudrücken durch artikulieren der letzten 3 Achtel.

Op. 16. Die None zu Beginn des 1. Viertels durchaus gleichzeitig anschlagen. Das < zum 3. Viertel (siehe Bass) fordert eine kleine Beschleunigung, die beim > zurückgegeben werden muß. (Letzten 3 Achtel artikulieren!)

Op. 22. wie beim T. 14

- T.23: Die höhere Lage in der sich Melodie  
mit Begleitung befinden, macht eine  
besondere Vorsicht dahin notwendig, den  
Daumen nicht mit dem Melodieton gleich  
stark zu spielen. In dieser hohen Lage  
müssten sich dann bei zu starkem  
Daumendruck die Oktaven ungleich  
bemerklicher machen als in der tieferen  
Lage, wie z.B. bei T.4ff.
- T.28: Auf der Dominante wird der Dialog  
recht lebhaft vorgetragen; vollends  
fließend, ja sogar eilend sind die T.32ff zu  
spielen; es ist, als wenn zwei Stimmen sich  
in den Nebel verloren hätten.
- T.37: taucht die tiefere Stimme wieder auf.
- T.39: Das phrygische d statt dis mit  
vertiefterem Ausdruck spielen.  
Ritenuo der Kadenz erst in T.41 spielen.
- T.58: Das < auch bei der linken Hand.  
T.60ff: Trotz pp den Gesang der linken  
Hand durchdringend u. sonor vortragen.  
T.67: Pedal zum 4. Viertel weglassen, da  
es zur engen Lage, die dort erscheint,  
nicht taugt.
- M.23: the higher register in which the  
melody and accompaniment are placed,  
necessitates a special caution, not to play  
the thumb as strong as the melody note.  
In this high register, heavy thumb pressure  
would make the octaves expressively  
noticeable, unlike in the lower register at  
the measure 4.
- M.28: The dialogue is presented in fairly  
lively manner on the dominant, mm32ff  
must be completely flowing, even  
hurrying, it is as if two voices were lost in  
the fog.
- M.37: the lower voice reemerges.
- M.39: Play the Phrygian d instead of d-  
sharp with deeper expression. Play the  
Ritenuo at the cadence until T.41.
- M.58: The < with the left hand, too.  
Mm 60ff: despite the pp, play the left hand  
melody ringingly and with the good tone.  
M.67: Omit pedal at the 4th Quarter,  
because it does not suit the close position  
of the harmony which appears there.

T.23: Die höhere Lage in der  
sich Melodie und Begleitung  
befinden, macht eine  
besondere Vorsicht dahin  
notwendig, den Daumen  
nicht mit dem Melodieton  
gleich stark zu spielen.

In dieser hohen Lage  
müssten sich dann bei zu  
starkem Daumendruck die  
Oktaven ungleich bemer-  
klicher machen als in der  
tieferen Lage, wie z.B. bei  
T.4ff.

T.28: Auf der Dominante wird  
der Dialog recht lebhaft  
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Nebel verloren hätten.

T.37: taucht die tiefere  
Stimme wieder auf.

T.39: Das phrygische d  
statt dis mit vertiefterem  
Ausdruck spielen.  
Ritenuo der Kadenz erst  
in T.41 spielen.

T.58: Das < auch bei der  
linken Hand. T.60ff: Trotz  
pp den Gesang der linken  
Hand durchdringend u.  
sonor vortragen.

T.67: Pedal zum 4. Viertel  
weglassen, da es zur engen  
Lage, die dort erscheint,  
nicht taugt.

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## Abstract

This paper examines Schenker's unpublished materials on the first movement of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata — analytic graphs of the work and a commentary on its performance. The materials, which are found in the Felix Salzer Papers at the New York Public Library, include analyses prepared in a seminar conducted by Schenker from 1931 until the spring of 1934. There are three full-length graphs of the first movement shown in five levels. Of the three, one is a complete graph in the hand of Greta Kraus (a member of seminar); two, in the hand of Angelika Elias, are nearly complete. (Elias was not a member of the seminar; she studied Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata in her private lessons with Schenker.) In addition to the pages of the analyses, there is a commentary on performance interpretation titled *Notizen zum Vortrag der Mondscheinsonate* (Notes on the performance of the Moonlight Sonata). I will provide a facsimile, transcription, and English translation of the commentary on the first movement. I will also present Kraus's complete graph of the first movement in facsimile and will compare selected passages with the interpretations given in the graphs by Elias. As a supplement, I will offer a few analytic interpretations of my own.

In my paper, I will relate the unpublished graphs, the *Notizen*, and Schenker's fingerings in the hope that together they will serve both pianists and theorists as an important guide to Schenker's analysis and provide them with insights into the performance of the Moonlight Sonata.





## Biographies

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