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GRADUATE VIOLA RECITAL

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Master of Music

Chelsea Renae Pfeifer

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

May, 2020

GRADUATE VIOLA RECITAL

Chelsea Renae Pfeifer

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GRADUATE VIOLA RECITAL

An Abstract of the Thesis by
Chelsea Renae Pfeifer

The purpose of this thesis is to provide an understanding of, and present historical information regarding the selections performed on a graduate viola recital. Selections performed were written by the following composers: Johann Sebastian Bach, Franz Schubert, Max Bruch, and Alan Hovhaness. Biographical information of the composer, program notes, and performance considerations will be included.

Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
PRESENTS

Graduate Recital

Chelsea Pfeifer, Viola
assisted by
Rebecca Cutler-Metzger, Piano
Xiaotong Yang, Violin
Hanxue Gao, Piano

Friday, March 22, 2019
Sharon Kay Dean Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.

Program

- | | |
|---|--|
| Sonata for Viola da Gamba in G Major, BWV 1027, No. 1 | Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685 – 1750) |
| I. Adagio | |
| II. Allegro | |
| III. Andante | |
| IV. Allegro | |
| Chahagir for Solo Viola, Op. 56A | Alan Hovhaness
(1911 – 2000) |
| Eight Pieces for Viola, Clarinet (alt. Violin), and Piano, Op. 83 | Max Bruch
(1838 – 1920) |
| I. Andante | |
| II. Allegro con moto | |
| III. Andante con moto | |
| | <i>Xiaotong Yang, Violin</i>
<i>Hanxue Gao, Piano</i> |

Brief Pause

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Sonata “Arpeggione” in A minor, D. 821 | Franz Schubert
(1797 – 1828) |
| I. Allegro moderato | |
| II. Adagio | |
| III. Allegretto | |

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree for Ms. Pfeifer.
The Department of Music is a constituent of the College of Arts and Sciences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER.....	PAGE
I. THE VIOLA: AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH.....	3
Life and Works.....	3
Bach's Music and the Viola.....	5
Sonata for Viola da Gamba in G Major, BWV 1027, no.1.....	6
III. FRANZ SCHUBERT.....	10
Life and Works.....	10
Sonata "Arpeggione" in A minor, D. 821.....	11
Musical Analysis.....	12
Performance Considerations.....	15
IV. MAX BRUCH.....	17
Life and Works.....	17
Eight Pieces for Clarinet (sub. Violin), Viola, and Piano, Op. 83.....	19
V. ALAN HOVHANESS.....	25
Life and Works.....	25
Chahagir for Solo Viola, Op. 56A.....	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	30

CHAPTER I

THE VIOLA:

AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The viola is a bowed string instrument, most closely related to the violin and cello. Historically, the viola has not been considered by the vast majority to be an adequate solo instrument. It is for this reason that roughly until the 20th century, much of the solo repertoire studied by violists had primarily been transcriptions of works for other instruments.

Early in the 17th century, most of the Italian luthiers were making lutes, viols, and violins. There was however, a gradual decrease in the market for viols and lutes, accompanied by an ever-increasing sale of violins, cellos, and basses. Violas were in short demand for two reasons: (1) the gradual change after 1600 from five-part to four-part harmony, thus eliminating one of the inner parts played by the viola; and (2) the emergence of the trio sonata as the most popular form of chamber music in the 17th century, music which usually featured two violins, to the virtual exclusion of the viola.¹

Despite the viola's unpopularity in the 17th century, works by Baroque composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach and George Philipp Telemann are treasured for shining a light on this instrument. Bach featured the viola in two of his six 'Brandenburg' Concertos, and Telemann composed the first known solo concerto for viola and orchestra. This instrument would remain still a member of the continuo for some time after, but

¹ (Riley, *The History of the Viola* 1980)

these modest beginnings laid the foundation for later prominent works that would truly explore the viola as a solo instrument.

CHAPTER II

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Life and Works

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany on the 21st of March, 1685. He was the youngest of eight children, born into a prominent musical family that spanned several generations. His father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, was Court and Town's Musician in Eisenach. Ambrosius was competent in many instrumental disciplines, particularly violin and viola, from whom Bach learned to play as a child. Sadly, between his ninth and tenth birthdays, both his mother, Elizabeth, and his father had died.

Following his father's death, he went to live with his eldest brother, Johann Christoph. Christoph, a student of Pachelbel, taught Bach the technique of the keyboard in his time living there. After five years under his brother's roof and at Ohrdruf's school, he spent two years as a male soprano in the choir at Lüneburg.² Of his religious music, he composed over 200 church cantatas, the St. John and St. Matthew Passions, and the Mass in B Minor.

In 1722, Bach wrote the Well-Tempered Klavier, followed by the second set in 1742. Each contains twenty-four preludes and fugues in a cycle meant to take the player through each of the major and minor keys.

² (Terry 1963)

Of the solo instrumental sets, he only created two: a set of Six Sonatas and Partitas for Violin, and Six Suites for Cello. The Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin are certainly staples in literature for the modern-day violinist. However, during Bach's time they did not have quite the same traction as they do today. Though these works were completed by 1720, the first complete edition did not appear until 1802, over fifty years after Bach's death. Even more time had passed before the first public performance was given in 1840, a partial recording in 1903, and the first complete set recorded in 1933-34 by Yehudi Menuhin.

These works were composed during Bach's time in Cöthen, where he also composed the Brandenburg Concertos. There is speculation about the intended purpose of the solo violin sonatas and partitas, though there is not enough evidence to confirm any one theory. Some speculate that these pieces were likely written for a virtuoso performer- Johann Georg Pisendel- a German violinist, French violinist Volumier of Dresden, Prince Leopold, or Joseph Spiess- court Konzertmeister of the Cöthen orchestra.

It would not be unusual that Bach wrote the solos for Pisendel because other notable contemporary composers also dedicated works to him, including Tomaso Albinoni, Antonio Vivaldi, and George Phillip Telemann.³

Additional speculation is that these works were written for teaching purposes, as he did write a number of teaching pieces during the Cöthen period. "His goal of teaching, as stated on the title page of the Inventions, is to make a musician who possesses not only good inventions [ideas] but also the ability to 'develop' them."

Bach was influenced by the playing style of the Italian school but he also hailed from the German school of violin playing, in which the polyphonic style of playing was

³ (Su 2011)

well rooted. In his unaccompanied solo works, Bach displayed his skills in writing melodic polyphony, where several voices are implied in a single melodic line.

Bach's Music and the Viola

Among Bach's contemporaries was George Philipp Telemann (1681-1767), a prolific German composer who is recognized for writing the first known concerto for viola (1731). However, Bach was the first to really give the viola a featured role. In 1713, while stationed at Weimar, he composed his Cantata BWV 18. In its original form, the orchestration included four violas, cello, bassoon, and continuo. This is unique because not only did Bach feature four violas, but he omitted the violins altogether. In Leipzig, 1724, for its second performance, Bach revised the orchestration by adding 2 recorders to double the top two viola lines.⁴

In Cöthen, 1721, Bach presented a manuscript of his six concerti to Christian Ludwig, the Margrave of Brandenburg, in hopes to secure employment at the court in Berlin. These works were based on the Italian concerto grosso form, pioneered by Corelli and Vivaldi. They are comprised of three movements, fast-slow-fast, and written for two or more solo instruments, and orchestra.⁵ They stand apart from other works due to their unique orchestration. The third and sixth concertos, in particular, feature the viola, which was not common at the time. However, some believe that Bach was the first composer to understand the potential of the instrument tonally and technically.⁶ The third Brandenburg concerto features independent parts for three violins, three violas, three

⁴ (emmanuelmusic.org n.d.)

⁵ (Shuttleworth 2014)

⁶ (Cuneo 2017)

celli, and continuo. The sixth is unique because there are no violins; only two solo violas and as accompaniment, two violas da gamba, cello, and continuo.

Sonata for Viola da Gamba in G Major, BWV 1027, No.1

Presumably intended by Bach as a set, the three *Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord*, BWV 1027-29, have survived as separate pieces. The sonatas have the usual texture of Bach's instrumental sonatas, with two upper parts supported by a bass part, the form familiar from the organ *Trio Sonatas*, BWV 525-530. The *Viola da Gamba Sonatas* have been variously dated, either to about 1720, to Bach's Cöthen period, when the Court Capelle included the bass viol-player Christian Ferdinand Abel, or to the later period in Leipzig, when Bach was occupied with the Collegium musicum, in the repertoire of which the sonatas may have been included. The first of the set, the *Sonata in G major*, BWV 1027, is seemingly based on a supposedly earlier work, the *Sonata for Two Flutes and Continuo*, BWV 1039, and it is conceivable that the other two sonatas had their origin in earlier works.⁷

The viola da gamba (literally meaning leg-viol) was synonymous with the bass viol in its time. Being the forerunner of the cello, it is similar in shape and size, but held between the legs instead of rested on the floor with an endpin. Gambas are characterized by sloping shoulders, broad ribs, and a fretted neck. They typically had six or seven strings, as opposed to the four strings on the cello and viola. At the time, the bow was played with the hand on the underside of the frog, opposite the modern bow hold.

When performing any Baroque piece on a modern instrument, one must consider adjusting technique to imitate the instrument it was intended for and to execute the appropriate sound, characteristic of the period. A general airiness and lighter contact are ideal. Achieving this may look like a more fluid bow stroke in the horizontal plane, rather than pressing downward in the vertical plane. It is also understood that in Baroque music, the 16th notes are connected, and the 8th notes are separated. However, separated

⁷ (Anderson n.d.)

articulation should not be confused with staccato, as the construct of the Baroque bow, being convex, did not provide such an articulation easily.

The first movement, *Adagio*, is the only movement in which the gamba enters with the theme at the downbeat of the first measure. All subsequent movements begin with an introduction by one of the voices in the keyboard. The gamba enters with the main theme. In measure 4, the upper voice in the keyboard picks up the theme in the Dominant, while the gamba sustains for a measure and a half on an “A.” In measures 6 through 12, thematic material is tossed closely back and forth in a playful conversation. The main theme, now in the Tonic, is then carried by the upper voice in the keyboard while the gamba sustains on a “D.” The theme returns in the gamba in measure 15, followed by imitation in measure 19, much like measures 6 through 12. As the movement comes to a close, the imitative material is now present in all three voices from measures 21 to 24. The movement concludes with a Half Cadence that leads *attacca* into the second movement.

In the second movement, *Allegro ma non tanto*, the primary theme is presented in the upper keyboard voice as a four-bar introduction. The gamba then enters, but presents the theme in the Dominant. In measure 38, a 16th-note subject is introduced, first by the right-hand voice in the keyboard. This subject is then carried from the gamba, back to the upper keyboard, then to include the bass. The gamba returns with the primary theme at the end of measure 46. A secondary theme is then presented at measure 61, first in the upper keyboard, followed by the gamba, and then the bass. This format continues throughout the movement until measure 124 when the primary thematic material is

introduced by the gamba one last time. The movement concludes with a Perfect Authentic Cadence.

The third movement, *Andante*, is the shortest movement in the sonata. It is more relaxed in character and exudes a melancholy tone. This movement begins in the minor mode, and the only dynamic marking is *piano* at the start. Despite only one dynamic indication, the performer should follow the shape of the line in regards to dynamic direction. However, one must be careful not to play with so much intensity that the character of this movement is lost. The movement concludes on a B major chord, and proceeds attacca into the fourth movement.

In the final movement, *Allegro moderato*, the subject is introduced again in the keyboard. At the start, the theme is presented as a fugue in both keyboard voices. The gamba enters in the pickup to the ninth bar (measure 27) with the same fugal material. All three voices continue the initial fugue until measure 63, when the right hand of the keyboard introduces a syncopated rhythm. This syncopation returns in the gamba in measure 69, where the two lines alternate playing on and off the strong beats.

The fugue continues to propel toward the end as there are never really any rests for all three voices. Because of this, and the fact that it is in *cut time*, playing through a fugue presents its own challenges for the performers, as it would be difficult to jump back in, were someone to lose their place in the music.

Louise Rood, in an article written in 1952, recommended that violists add these *Sonatas* to their repertoire... Following [World War II] several newly arranged and transcribed editions were brought out by other publishers. Paul Doktor believed that all of these editions have a common fault: the editors used the original keys, which were intended for the viola da gamba, but which are not suitable for the viola... He explained that if the original keys are used for the transcription, the viola part must frequently be transposed an octave higher, which

results in a crossing of parts not intended by Bach, and interferes with the audibility of the voice leading in the contrapuntal texture of the music.

Recently research scholars have discovered, edited, and prepared for publication an impressive number of Baroque works that were written originally for the viola by other composers. This expansion of the violist's literature is a most welcome trend which will in no way lessen the importance or popularity of the Bach transcriptions—music that will always constitute a significant part of the core of the violist's repertoire.⁸

⁸ (Riley, *The History of The Viola* 1980)

CHAPTER III

FRANZ PETER SCHUBERT

Life and Works

Franz Schubert, who came to be known as the Prince of Lieder (song), was born in 1797 in Himmelpfortgrund, Germany. He was the fourth of five surviving children by Franz Theodor Schubert and Elizabeth Vietz. He had humble beginnings, as his father was a schoolteacher in a small district. The school itself was under Theodor's direction, however, he was not paid much nor regularly. Even as the reputation of the school was bettered and more students attended, hiring other assistants to accommodate such an influx prevented the Schubert's from obtaining a growth in financial earnings.

In his early years, Schubert studied the violin, piano, and organ, and occasionally played the viola in chamber ensembles in his adult years.⁹ Noticing his interest and talent in music, Schubert's father introduced him to respected composition teacher, Anton Salieri. Soon after, he was accepted into *Stadtkonvikt* as a choirboy in the chapel of the Imperial Court. By the age of twelve, young Schubert had begun to compose his own music.

In 1812, his voice broke, prohibiting him from continuing as a choirboy. He continued his studies with Salieri, but two years later, he took a job at his father's school.

⁹ (Riley, *The History of the Viola* 1980)

While maintaining his teaching post, he continued to compose, writing several piano works, string quartets, an opera, and three symphonies. Also included in these were his two Lieder, “Erlkönig” (Elf King) and “Gretchen am Spinnrade” (Gretchen at her Spinning Wheel), both of which were written using text from the great poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.¹⁰

In 1818, Schubert resigned as a teacher and left to pursue his musical aspirations full-time. He had some success but publishers were leery of hiring a young composer whose music wasn’t conventional. In 1821, he was able to increase his earnings as his songs and dances were popular in Vienna. But, in 1822 he became ill due to contracting what many believe to have been syphilis. However, even with his illness, he continued to produce several compositions. He died in Vienna in November, 1828.

Sonata “Arpeggione” in A minor, D. 821

Schubert wrote the Sonata “Arpeggione” in 1824, at the age of twenty-seven, and dedicated it to a friend and virtuoso guitarist, Vincenz Schuster. The arpeggione [ar-pej-ee-oh-nay] was invented by Viennese guitar luthier, Johann George Stauffer. It was a bowed six-string instrument that was tuned and fretted like a guitar. However, it was played held between the knees and bowed like a cello, similar to the viola da gamba.

The Sonata wasn’t actually published until 1871, more than forty years after Schubert’s death, and long after the short-lived popularity of the arpeggione had ceased. Only a few instruments had been produced at the time of the arpeggione’s initial debut, and by 1871 it was practically extinct. In fact, with the first publication, an alternate part

¹⁰ (Biography.com 2014)

for the cello was already included. Now, in the 21st century, this sonata is performed almost exclusively on the cello or viola, as they are the closest in timbre to the arpeggione itself. However, other transcriptions also exist. Parts substituted for the arpeggione are double bass, flute, euphonium, clarinet, and guitar or harp in place of the piano accompaniment.

Musical Analysis

The first movement of the sonata, *Allegro moderato*, begins with the first subject in the piano accompaniment, a simple and somber melody. Just before the viola enters, a moment of tension as the piano line moves to a Dominant 7, then resolving to the Tonic (A minor) just as the melody gently passes off to the viola. The subject then is embellished and gradually becomes lively and slightly agitated. Upon arrival to the second subject, the articulation has altogether changed in the accompaniment. Instead of the previous connected articulation, now with 8th-notes separated by 8th-note rests, this provides an alternating “boom-chick” sound and a playful character change.

More than half way through the Exposition, the presence of 16th-note passages and alternating octave leaps are more prevalent, driving the melody forward. The Exposition concludes with quarter-note pizzicato chords in the viola, and unison chords in the piano. The final chord in the first ending is an E7, the Dominant in the original key. However, as the second ending will proceed to the Development, its final chord is a C7, which is the Dominant of F.

At the start of the Development, the piano again presents the calm first subject, but this time it's in the Subdominant key of F major. Meanwhile, the viola has moving

8th-note pizzicati, outlining the new key. The second subject returns in the viola line, with 16th-note passages alternating with octave leaps, just as it did in the Exposition. After this two-bar statement, it is repeated an octave higher. This agitated passage continues until measure 95, where it comes to a halt. The viola sustains an “F” at a very soft dynamic, while the piano has a dotted 8th-note figure on beat four and a quarter-note on beat one. In the third measure of this momentary calm, the piano expands the dotted 8th-note motif, building tension as the viola continues to sustain.

This subject continues to return as the music is transposed through different keys. The Development began with the tonicization of F major, but then tonicizes D minor (the relative minor to F). When the subject returns in the viola, it comes back to F, and then gradually finds its way back to A minor for the Recapitulation (measure 124). Finally, the first subject is re-presented, and in the original key (A minor). This recap of the first subject transitions to a false ending, mimicking the quarter-note chords at the end of the Exposition. However, the piano plays these on the beat, while the viola plays them on the off-beats.

The Coda takes off with strong dynamic presence and the lively, imitative second subject. This theme comes and goes from measures 149 through 179, at which point both voices trade 16th-notes for a simpler rhythmic line. This section resembles the material at the end of the Exposition, characterized by rising and falling dynamics. Fragments of the first subject return, with rests further spacing out the theme to gently bring the movement to a close. This slowing of the melody is paired with *piano* and *pianissimo* dynamics. Upon the arrival to measure 200, the viola proclaims a low A (A3) at a *forte* dynamic, and decrescendos as an A major arpeggio moves upward through the register. As the line

ascends, it stretches to the high A (A5), which is held for two full measures, all the while getting softer. Then abruptly, the movement ends *fortissimo*, with two chords on beats three and one, V7 (E) and I (Am).

The second movement, *Adagio*, is characterized by long, arc-like phrases. This movement is in 3/4 time, marked *cantabile*- meaning song-like. It begins in E major with a soft *piano* dynamic. Two rhythmic motifs comprise the first nineteen measures, both with a rising and falling melody. The first theme returns in measure 20, initially as it began, followed by an embellishment of the line. A third theme is stated in measure 34, at first, built on an open G (G3) and ascending to C4. When it returns in measure 42, the same theme is present with a slight alteration in the pattern. The piano marks each beat in bar 49 while the viola sustains long notes, outlining the Tonic chord. At measure 67, the piano and viola sustain an E major chord. The piano drops out and the viola carries the line solo. With *rubato*, the line ascends, and on the descent, a *ritardando* stretches the last moments of this movement. The final beat resume *a tempo* with a triplet on a crescendo, which leads attacca right into the *Allegretto*.

At the start of the *Allegretto*, the meter changes to Two, and the key is now firmly in A major. The first theme, marked with dotted quarter notes tied to an 8th-note, and with accents on beat one, provides a steady propulsion forward. This opening theme is restated in measures 104 and 128. However, the mood shifts at measure 148. This new D minor subject is somewhat frantic, with 16th-note octave leaps. It returns several times before the restatement of the first subject in measure 232. The material here through measure 282 is the same as before (m.72-146), only now, it's voiced an octave higher.

The third theme is presented in measure 283, with the tonicization of E major, the Dominant of A. It is restated in measures 312 and 332 with slight alterations. In measure 367, the piano carries the melody while the viola has 8th-note pizzicato, outlining the chords in this transition back to the tonic. The modulation brings the tonic back to A minor, along with the return of the frantic second subject (m.391). This restatement is nearly identical to the material from measures 148 through 231, mainly with the exception of the change in key. In measure 467, the very first subject is recapped in its original key of A major. When it is repeated in measure 499, it's voiced an octave higher, and the dynamic is *piano*.

Moving forward, the dynamics are overall quite soft. The final phrase begins *pianissimo*. It continues to decrescendo while outlining the Tonic (A major), from the lowest sounding register, upward to sustain a natural harmonic, A5. The two final chords are unison between the viola and piano. The first chord is marked *fortissimo* and sounds on beat one of the penultimate measure. The final chord, again on beat one, is marked *piano* in both voices. With pizzicato, the viola rolls an arpeggiated A major chord, while the piano sustains the final chord with a fermata.

Performance Considerations

Schubert's sonata was the only major work composed for the arpeggione, and it was written in such a way that truly complemented the instrument. Because it had six strings, the virtuosic passages were played more easily and fell more naturally in first position. With the limit of four strings on the cello and viola, performing with either of these instruments demands more technical dexterity from the performer. Because of these

differences, there are several editions to choose from, and there is often the question of which to use.

Essentially, there are two factors that contribute to the desire for several editions:

1) Considering the original scoring for the arpeggione, and 2) Ease of playability for difficult passages. The Henle Verlag urtext edition takes into consideration both factors. Because this publisher always strives to have the most historically accurate edition, they have tried to maintain original scoring that would coincide with the sounding range of the arpeggione. However, there are several instances where a rapid octave jump occurs, and keeping it scored in the original octave is not practical for many violists. In this instance, the urtext edition may provide a transposition to a different octave, or in the case of chords, a minimal alteration, to make it possible to play on the viola. They also include brackets to indicate where a passage may be altered so that the performer is aware of where the changes occurred.

CHAPTER IV

MAX BRUCH

Life and Works

Max Christian Friedrich Bruch was a German composer and conductor during the late Romantic period. He was born in Cologne [Köln], Germany January 6th, 1838. His mother, who was a singer, and father, a lawyer, encouraged his musical endeavors beginning at the age of 9. He had only one sibling, Mathilde.

In 1852, at the age of 14, Bruch was awarded The Frankfurt Mozart Foundation prize. This provided him the opportunity to study piano with Carl Reinecke, and composition with Ferdinand Hiller, who founded the Cologne Conservatory in 1850. In 1858, he produced his first opera *Scherz, List, und Rache* (Jest, Deceit, and Revenge), in which the text was adapted from a work by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. From 1862 to 1864, he lived in Mannheim, where he wrote the opera *Die Loreley* (1862-63). In 1865, he became the music director at Koblenz, followed by Court Kapellmeister in Sonderhausen from 1867 to 1870. From 1873 to 1878, he composed independently in Bonn, then for a short period, he became the conductor of the Liverpool Society in England. He left in 1883 to become director of the Breslau Orchestral Society. In 1890, Bruch became a professor of composition at Berlin Hochschule für Musik (Berlin

Academy). During his time there, some of his students included other accomplished composers such as Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936) and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958). In 1893, he was awarded an honorary doctorate in music from Cambridge University. He retired in 1910, but maintained rank as professor there until his death in 1920.

Despite writing over 200 compositions, only a modest few are acknowledged and performed by musicians in the 21st century. As a matter of fact, even during his time, Bruch did not acquire such adoration as his predecessors or contemporaries, aside perhaps from the popularity of his *Violin Concerto no. 1 in G Minor* (1868) which is a staple in violin repertoire today. “The popularity of his first violin concerto, however, eclipsed his overall output, and his talents were overshadowed by those of another German composer, Johannes Brahms (1833-1897).”¹¹ In addition to the G Minor violin concerto, the other two most widely known and performed works are his *Scottish Fantasy* for violin and orchestra (1880), and *Kol Nidrei* for cello and orchestra (1881).

Bruch was an unusually ambitious and productive composer. His greatest successes in his own lifetime were his massive works for choir and orchestra—such as *Schön Ellen* (1867; *Beautiful Ellen*) and *Odysseus* (1872). These were favorites with German choral societies during the late 19th century. These works failed to remain in the concert repertoire, possibly because, despite his sound workmanship and effective choral writing, he lacked the depth of conception and originality needed to sustain large works.¹²

Late in his life, he wrote multiple works that featured the viola. These included *Eight Pieces for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano, Op.83* (1909), and *Romanze for Viola and Orchestra, Op.55* (1911). He also composed his *Concerto for Clarinet and Viola in E minor, Op.88* in 1911. However, though the double concerto was premiered in 1912, it

¹¹ (Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival 2017)

¹² (Encyclopedia Britannica 1999)

was not published until 1942. Even then, it was not included in Bruch's collection of works until an original autograph was discovered in 1991.

Bruch was known for writing exceptionally beautiful, though simplistic, melodies. Throughout his life, as compositional form and focus began to shift, other composers such as Franz Liszt (1811-1886) and Richard Wagner (1813-1883) were changing the trajectory of composition, while Bruch's music remained conservatively within the realm of Romantic Classicism. At the end of his life, music continued to drift away from Romanticism, incorporating atonality. During this time, he was composing at the same time as Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) and Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), whose works could not have been more different from Bruch's. Some say he was just born too late.

Eight Pieces for Clarinet (sub. Violin), Viola, and Piano, Op. 83

In 1909, at the age of 70, Bruch wrote a set of trio works with his son Felix in mind. Max Felix Bruch, a clarinetist, also inspired Bruch's *Double Concerto for Clarinet and Viola in E Minor, Op. 88* (1911). Like Brahms' late works for clarinet, the *Eight Pieces* have a rich, mellow instrumentation with the significant use of alto voice. The *Eight Pieces* was intended to be regarded as a set of independent vignettes of different styles rather than as a complete cycle, so the movements do not go attacca into the other. At the request of the publisher, Bruch arranged the clarinet part for violin, and arranged the viola part for cello, prior to signing his contract. Today, much of his chamber music isn't performed but this work has become a staple for chamber music repertoire in recent years.

The first vignette, *Andante*, is scored in the key of A minor. It begins with a single line, building from the bottom, upward through each voice. The bass in the piano speaks first with the opening theme. Then, four measures later, the upper piano voice enters with the same introduction. This is then followed by the entrance of the viola, again with the same material, in measure 8. As the viola fades away, the violin enters at rehearsal A (measure 16) with the opening theme. Two measures before rehearsal B, the violin and viola have unison movement, harmonized a third apart. Up to this point, the dynamic range has barely peaked above *piano*, and “hairpin” dynamics help to shape the melodic line as it rises and falls. At rehearsal B, the viola states a new theme, which is then represented by the violin in measures 35 through 40.

Finally, in measure 46, the two voices come together in perfect unison to echo what the violin whispered three measures prior. From there, they begin to overlap more closely. Upon arrival to rehearsal D (measure 58), both voices restate the opening theme, which again, is harmonized a third apart. In the midst of this restatement, the piano displays harp-like 16th notes cascading upwards. In measure 62, the violin and viola have overlapping, off-beat entrances. This line, paired with crescendos, drives to the arrival of measure 66, where the opening theme is restated in the upper voices at a *forte* dynamic.

The measure before rehearsal E ends on a Dominant chord (E7), creating a Half Cadence. At the start of the next bar, the key changes to the parallel, A major. The viola carries the melody first, passing it off to the violin in measure 86, an octave higher. They come back together for a perfect unison motif, replicating measures 45 and 46. At rehearsal G (measure 108), the violin and viola restate the opening theme one last time, harmonized a third apart. The piano moves from D major to D minor with an “A” pedal

sustained in the bass of the piano. Then in measure 116, the violin outlines the tonic chord with 8th-note arpeggiation. With a *ritardando* and *morendo*, this movement ends on an A major chord, sustained under a fermata.

No. 2, *Allegro con moto*, is in the key of B minor, and 3/4 time. The four-bar piano introduction is rather busy with triplet arpeggiation in the low range of the instrument. Even the right hand is notated in bass clef. The viola enters alone in measure 5 with the first theme, and this waltz-like melody provides the feeling of a relaxed meter in *one*. Bruch marked the viola entrance *espressivo*, which later appears in the violin entrance as well. He employs crescendo swells that often result in a *sforzando* to emphasize an arrival point. The violin doesn't enter until the 29th measure (rehearsal A), at which point the viola decrescendos and fades out. However, the violin only has four measures as the soloist before the viola returns to interject underneath it.

The two converse back and forth with growing intensity. Upon arrival to rehearsal B, all voices return softly to a *piano* dynamic, with *dolce* marked in the upper voices. The violin and viola begin to pass around fragmented melodies, one echoing its counterpart. As rehearsal C nears, the viola and piano echo each other with a pulsing three-quarter-note pattern. All three voices crescendo through the bar leading up to rehearsal C. The violin and piano arrive with a *forte* dynamic and *espressivo* notated in the violin line.

At rehearsal D, the viola restates the first theme, followed by an imitation in the violin. The piano resumes arpeggiated triplets, as done in the introduction. Again, at E, the theme is restated a perfect fifth lower in the viola, followed by an imitation in the violin at measure 103, only an octave above the viola. The pulsating three-quarter-note motif returns for a short moment at rehearsal F. The viola answers the violin's statement,

and they arrive together to the same B-natural (B3). The piano states the three-quarter-note motif twice more in each hand, while the upper voices sustain the unison B. The movement comes to an end with an expansion in volume, followed by a decrescendo to *pianissimo*.

The third vignette, *Andante con moto*, can be divided into four sections which display contrasting moods between the violin and viola parts. Essentially in the first two sections, both upper voices establish two themes and a single motif. The viola solo returns in the third section, at rehearsal E, with material from the beginning. In the fourth section, the violin returns alone, but at the end of the first phrase, the viola interjects. Previous material overlaps in fragments as both voices are interwoven together.

The viola introduces the first theme in C# minor. It begins with a very stately, somewhat pompous melody. The combination of the double-dotted 8th-note and *forte* dynamic establishes a proud and confident character. The piano voicing is rather simple, with arpeggiated quarter-note chords. The second theme is introduced at rehearsal A. It is slightly less articulate, but still notated with accents on most of the 8th-notes. At rehearsal B (measure 19), a two-bar motif is introduced.

The tone has altogether changed when the violin enters at measure 25 (rehearsal C). The tempo scales back a bit to *andante*, a new key is present (A major), and the time signature changes to Four. The melody in this section (the third theme) is rather gentle compared to that of the first section. It is characterized by simplistic and lengthy melodic lines that rise and fall. The piano keeps the music from pulling behind with motor-rhythmic triplet 8th-note chords. The fourth theme, introduced by the violin at rehearsal D, aligns with the character of the preceding melody. It's mellow, simplistic, and

characterized by arcing lines. In measure 46, a descending syncopated motif is presented for the first time, and will later appear in both upper voices.

Measure 54 is marked *Tempo I*, and the meter returns to Three. The piano provides a two-bar segue before the viola returns at rehearsal E, with the very first theme. The key signature remains, but the key is altered to F# minor. The first and second themes are nearly identical to their initial presentation at the start of the movement. The motif presented at rehearsal B returns at rehearsal F. However, it is doubled in length here with an added extension on the end of the phrase.

Just as the viola did, the violin returns at rehearsal G with the same material from its initial entrance. The key is now in Db major, the enharmonic key to C#, which was tonicized at the start. Four measures later, the viola interjects with a single statement of the motif presented at rehearsal B. The violin continues to state the third theme, as if nothing happened. The viola interjects again as the third theme is restated once more. At measure 90, the viola joins the violin to complete the phrase, harmonizing a third apart.

Both voices begin to interweave. When they arrive at rehearsal H, the viola restates the thematic material from rehearsal D. This section is filled with call-and-response between the two upper voices. The lower voice in the piano doubles the viola, and likewise, the upper voice doubles the violin. From this point, the intensity grows as the dynamics begin to reach higher limits, and for longer periods of time.

At rehearsal I (measure 106), the upper voices are finally in perfect unison, singing the same melodic content, in the same range. The syncopated motif from measure 46 has returned. The dynamics continue to rise and fall, but overall, it is much softer. Both voices in the piano restate the material from rehearsal D, while the upper voices

respond to each other in fragments. Three measures from the end, the violin and viola have unison rhythm, moving with half notes, while the bass in the piano sustains a Db pedal. A decrescendo brings the dynamic down to a *pianissimo*. Each voice arrives together at the final Db major chord, sustained under a fermata.

CHAPTER V

ALAN HOVHANESS

Life and Works

Alan Hovhaness (1911-2000) was born in Somerville, Massachusetts. His father, Haroutioun Hovhaness Chakmakjian, was from Adana, Turkey. In Massachusetts, he worked as a chemistry professor at Tufts College. Alan's mother, Madeleine Scott, who was of Scottish ancestry, served as choir director at the First Baptist Church. She did not want Alan learning about his father's Armenian culture, so she made him known as Alan Scott Vaness. However, when she died in 1931, Alan took up his paternal surname, adding the "h" after the "v" in order to emphasize the second syllable.

Hovhaness had already taken an interest in music by the age of 4. At age 7, he had his first piano lessons and began composing. He had not desired to become a composer, but it came naturally to him. In an interview, he said, "My family thought writing music was abnormal, so they would confiscate my music if they caught me in the act. I used to compose in the bathroom and hide the manuscripts under the bathtub."¹³

By the age of 14, he had determined to pursue a career in music. In his teen years, he studied all of Handel's works and attributed that influence, along with his study of Bach, to his understanding of the use of music for sacred purposes. It was also during this

¹³ (Shirodkar, the Alan Hovhaness web site n.d.)

time that Eastern philosophy and culture became more appealing to him than his mother's Christian beliefs and practices. In his youth and throughout his life, he gleaned inspiration from nature, particularly mountain climbing. It was for this reason that he chose to live the end of his life near the mountains in Washington state.

Composer, Jean Sibelius, was an early musical inspiration for Hovhaness. In 1935, he and his first wife travelled to Finland to meet Sibelius. They developed a friendship, and later, Sibelius became godfather to their daughter, Jean Christina. Hovhaness recounted attending a performance that featured Sibelius's fourth symphony, saying, "I thought that piece, its great unison melodies, so lonely and original, said everything there was to say... and not only about music."

While he wrote mostly chamber music in the 1930's, his *Symphony No.1, Op.17 "Exile Symphony"* was written in 1937, in response to the persecution of Armenians by the Turks. This work initially had an early success when the principal conductor of the BBC Midland Orchestra, Leslie Heward, conducted it. Heward praised Hovhaness's work in an interview, but died soon after, inhibiting the potential benefits for Hovhaness's career.

From 1940 to 1951, Hovhaness worked as an organist at the Orthodox Armenian Cathedral in Watertown, Massachusetts, where he learned the modes and monody of Armenian liturgy. While there, he encountered the music of Armenian composer and priest, Komitas Vartabed. It was Komitas's work that sparked Hovhaness's desire for minimalism in his music. The year 1943 officially began his working "Armenian Period," during which his works had Armenian titles or subject matter. His work during this period was characterized by "extended melodic incantation, almost at the expense of

harmony, the overriding preoccupation during this creative phase, and long sections of works are harmonically static with just a pedal (or sustained open fifth) drone.”¹⁴

Another sign of his success was in 1945 when Modern Dance choreographer, Martha Graham, commissioned music for her ballet, *Ardent Song*. In the late 1940’s, Pianist Maro Ajemian helped Hovhaness launch his career in New York by co-founding *The Friends of Armenian Music Committee*. In 1948, he began working at the Boston Music Conservatory, where he taught composition and conducted the student orchestra. As he acquired a consistent flow of commissions, in 1951, he moved to New York City to pursue composition full-time. In the late 1950’s, he taught during summers at the Eastman School of Music, and received honorary Doctorate of Music degrees from the University of Rochester and Bates College in Main.

The next two decades were filled with travel to and from the East, and domestically. In the early 1960’s, Hovhaness travelled to Japan to work with the Tokyo Symphony and Japan Philharmonic. From 1966-67 he was Composer in Residence with the Seattle Symphony, the city wherein he settled. He was still composing in 1994, before his health began to decline drastically. He died in Seattle, June 21, 2000.

Chahagir for Viola Solo, Opus 56A

Hovhaness’s work for solo viola, *Chahagir*, means “Torch Bearer.” It holds significant meaning in the Armenian Orthodox Church, as they proclaim themselves to be torch bearers for their faith. This work was written in 1945, at the beginning of the composer’s “Armenian Period.”

¹⁴ (Shirodkar, the Alan Hovhaness web site n.d.)

Hovhaness includes the notes “*slow, mysterious*” to aid the performer in setting the tone. The key signature alludes to C major or A minor, but based on the accidentals present, it is a quasi C harmonic minor. This work begins very softly, at a *pianissimo* dynamic. Voicing is notated in the lowest range of the viola, with an open fifth chord built on C. As is prevalent throughout the piece, it then moves up a minor second, followed by an augmented second. The augmented interval establishes the Eastern modality, which is clearly present throughout the work.

The composer employs the use of dynamics to help shape the phrasing. For example, the ends of phrases in the first seventeen measures cadence with a decrescendo. Throughout the piece, Hovhaness pairs very soft dynamics with lower voicing. Likewise, as the dynamic intensity rises, so does the voicing. He also changes the meter frequently between *two* and *three* to accommodate the melodic line.

The mood shifts at measure 27, as tonic chords are present in the major form. They are notated with grace-note open fifths on the bottom, indicating a slight break in the chords. This measure also provides the first *forte* dynamic marking, which when coupled with chords, establishes energy that will intensify as the piece progresses. This section also explores the middle range of the instrument, as opposed to the low range primarily used in the first section.

At the *Tempo primo* in measure 47, the first theme returns, again at a very soft dynamic. This time, it is only stated once, with a small extension, before new material is presented at measure 61. It is worth mentioning that there is a decrescendo in measure 60, and there is no indication to play louder at 61. However, several violists opt to play this section louder. Due to the voicing in the chord at 61, the sound will naturally ring out at a

higher volume, as it also includes the A string. Given that this third theme begins with a chord, one could relate it to the second theme as well. Because both similarly contrast Theme 1, perhaps a louder dynamic is implied. The material here also stands apart from previous sections because the voicing is primarily in the viola's upper range.

The fourth and final thematic material is presented at measure 87. From the third theme to this point, the volume has remained in the *forte* and *fortissimo* dynamic range. This section opens again with broken chords, similar to the second theme. Here, Hovhaness makes use (mostly) of the full range of the instrument. The chord progressions don't really serve a harmonic purpose, not in the way of Western Harmony. There are two sets of progressions that reoccur: Cm-Gm-Dm-C and Am-Gm-Bb-Gm. These chords, which make up a majority of the material in this section, occur twice in their entirety. In the last few measures, the first progression appears to return once more, but is then altered. The progression moves from Cm to Gm, then Ebm to Bbm, and in the final bar, Gm to C major. The G chord does serve as the V for C. However, it isn't common for the V to be in the minor form. What is also interesting is the final chord is C major. The entire work has primarily tonicized a minor mode, so a Picardy Third is the result of the major chord concluding this *minor* work.

When performing this piece, the violist should consider the relationship between dynamics, range, and tone quality. During moments of high intensity, it is important not to compromise tone quality for the sake of dynamics, particularly in the viola's low range, as it could easily produce too heavy a sound. One must also avoid inserting space between bow changes, particularly in reference to double-stops and chords. This will allow the music to remain fluid and connected.

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