Journal of the American Viola Society
Volume 33 Number 2

Features:

Traditional Musical Materials in Ernest Bloch's Works for Viola

The Process of Variation in Ligeti's Sonata for Viola Solo

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News & Notes

Feature Articles

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On the Cover:
Gregory Pastoll
Viola Player and 'Cellist
Watercolor on paper, 28 x 32 cm

In addition to teaching mechanical engineering in his native South Africa, Gregory Pastoll enjoys diverse creative pursuits: studying violin-making, writing musicals, developing board games, and painting. Pastoll finds musicians at work one of the most inspiring subjects to paint, and this work is loosely based on a photo taken while friends of the artist were having an impromptu music session at the home of luthier Brian Lisus.

For more works by the artist, please visit:
http://www.gregorypastoll.co.za/paintforsale.html.

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

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

From the Editor

One of the great joys of being a violist is having a vast repertoire of modern and contemporary music written for our instrument. In my mind, our lack of works from some of the great Classical and Romantic era composers is nullified by this wealth and diversity of twentieth and twenty-first century music. We may not have a Beethoven, but we surely have a Schnittke, Hindemith(s), Shostakovich, Ligeti, and so many more.

Along with Carlos María Solare's engaging reviews of contemporary music recordings and Julie Edwards's introduction of the Utah Symphony violists, this issue presents three large articles that take a deep dive into modern viola music. Alexander Knapp, a scholar of, among other things, Ernest Bloch's music and Jewish music, takes us on an enlightening journey through Bloch's Jewish pieces for viola. He uncovers the traditional sources for these works and shows their direct incorporation into the fabric of each piece. Along the way, Knapp refutes Bloch's claim that these traditional melodies had been untraceably absorbed into his own idiomatic language. Of particular interest is figure 5, Bloch's handwritten notes for *Suite Hébraïque.* With the kind permission of Bloch's heirs, this important document is reproduced here for the first time. I know that many of you will find this article to be essential reading, and I am already looking forward to assigning it to my students when they study Bloch's music!

Kevin Nordstorm gives us an incisive and convincing analysis of two movements from Ligeti's Sonata for Viola Solo, one of the most popular large works for solo viola written in the past 30 years. Differing from Dr. Knapp, Dr. Nordstrom approaches this work from a theoretical and analytical standpoint. His article helps untangle the thicket of notes in these two movements, as he provides a clear-eyed and structurally-based analysis of both movements.

In the third of our trio of articles, contemporary music specialists Anne Lanzilotti and John Stulz discuss their approaches in conceptualizing, learning, and performing contemporary music. Drawing on the required repertoire for the Lucerne Festival Academy audition, the two violists not only share advice about the technical skills needed for effectively performing these pieces, they also show the value of creating a unique philosophical standpoint for approaching each work.

While these three articles focus on music from the past seventy years, each article draws connections to canonical composers and long-standing musical concepts. Knapp highlights Bloch's nod towards Brahms, while Nordstrom uses elements from Beethoven to elucidate Ligeti. And perhaps most traditionally, Stulz provides technical guidance for complicated contemporary music through that most common exercise for instrumentalists: scales.

What I learned most from reading this issue is that music communicates along a continuum of ideas, unbracketed by time period. Old can be informed by new just as easily as new by old, and we can gather scraps of knowledge from an array of sources, no matter how far afield they are from the task at hand. When reading this issue, I encourage you to find those bits that speak to you, and to see how, even in this limited sample, the authors and works communicate with each other in a lively exchange of ideas.

Sincerely,

Andrew Braddock
Editor

The David Dalton Viola Research Competition Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Submission:
Entries must be submitted electronically using Microsoft Word by May 15, 2018. For the electronic submission form, please visit http://www.americanviolasociety.org/Competitions/Dalton.php.

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

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

From the President

Hello my friends,

Fall is really here and schools are in session. In my neck of the woods, the colors in the mountains are incredible, thanks to enough moisture and moderate temperatures.

With the advent of fall, the year begins its headlong tumble to December 31. What's important about December 31 for the AVS is that it is the deadline for applications for the 2020 AVS Festival site bids. Yes, we are already preparing to hold another Festival, but we need a place to host it! You may have the perfect site to make this Festival possible, and we need your help. To find a link to specific site needs and application procedures go to the AVS website and look under the Events tab. Click on AVS Festival, and on the right sidebar you will see "2020 AVS Festival Site Search." Click there and apply to have your school considered for the Festival.

Of course, while you are there you will absolutely want to register for the 2018 AVS Festival, which will be held concurrently with the Primrose International Viola Competition®. Notice the ®? Yes, the name is now trademarked, and officially belongs to the AVS. Registration for the 2018 Festival goes live on November 1, so be the first kid on your block to get registered.

There are some great events taking place at the 2018 Festival. The **Orchestral Audition Seminar**, with live final rounds on June 13 carries a $1,500 first prize (thanks Terra Nova), plus a $1,000 second prize and a third prize of a BAM case.

The **Festival Youth Competitions**, with the final rounds on June 13, and prizes that include:

- Collegiate Solo Competition: First prize is $2,000, and second prize is $1,000
- Senior Solo Competition: First prize is $1,250, and second prize is $500
- Junior Solo Competition: First prize is $600, and second prize is $250

All finalists will also receive complimentary registration for the full 2018 AVS Festival! This doesn't include housing, meals, or travel.

The **Youth Viola Ensemble Invitational Showcase**
The American Viola Society will invite nine highly qualified youth viola ensembles (three from each division, Junior, Senior, and Collegiate) to perform in a viola ensemble showcase and mass viola ensemble performance at the 2018 American Viola Society Festival. The entry fee is only $50.00 per ensemble.

The premier event is the **Primrose International Viola Competition®**, with prizes of $15,000, $10,000, and $5,000 as well as a special $1,000 Transcription Prize.

You will find links to each event under the Events/AVS Festival tabs on the website, or in the AVS Newsletters.

It has been very gratifying to see that there are more and more local viola organizations springing up all over the country. States, cities, and schools are forming groups to promote and celebrate the viola. The AVS wants to help and support you. If you are looking for ideas on how to organize please contact me. Also, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have concerns, ideas for improving the AVS, or just want to say hello. My email is mpalumbo45@gmail.com.

Warm regards,

Mike

2020 AVS Festival: Bids for Site Selection
The American Viola Society invites you to consider hosting the 2020 AVS Festival in late May or early June 2020. For detailed information, please visit the following website, and click the link on the right side: http://www.americanviolasociety.org/Events/AVS-Festival.php. Host sites that can provide facilities usage (except for dorm space) at minimal or no cost to the American Viola Society will be given high priority in the selection process. Electronic proposals are due to Madeline Crouch at the AVS National Office by December 31, 2017.

American Viola Society Festival June 13–16, 2018
Primrose International Viola Competition®
June 10–16, 2018
The Colburn School, Los Angeles, CA

Join us in June 2018 for the AVS Festival in Los Angeles. The Festival features over 80 presenters in lectures, recital performances, workshops and master classes. Special guest artists include Atar Arad, David Dalton, Roland Glassl, Kuzuhide Isomura, Nokuthula Ngwenyama, Xidi Shen, and Lars Anders Tomter.

Primrose International Viola Competition will run concurrently with the Festival, and you can hear 24 PIVC quarter-finalists in live rounds competing for over $30,000.

Additional events include the new AVS Orchestral Audition Seminar, AVS Youth Solo Competitions, and the Youth Ensemble Invitational. You can join in a premiere of a new viola ensemble work by Garth Knox, commissioned especially for the festival. Vendor exhibits will showcase instruments, accessories, music, and the best viola swag.

Early online registration opens November 1, 2017! We look forward to seeing you in Los Angeles!

Local Viola Organization Resources Online
The AVS is working to assist those members wishing to start a local viola organization, and join in partnership with the AVS to further the cause of the viola. To this end we have developed three documents that may be of interest. These can be found on the right sidebar at: http://www.americanviolasociety.org/Community/Local-Viola-Organizations.php

- Benefits of Partnering
- Local Organization Partnership Application
- Startup Suggestions

For more information please contact Michael Palumbo, the AVS president at mpalumbo45@gmail.com

AVS Board Nominations
The Nominations Committee of the AVS Executive Board is seeking nominations for the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, and four Member-at-Large positions commencing July 1, 2018.

AVS members are encouraged to send recommendations for nominees (self-nominations are allowed), and all nominees must be AVS members. Non-AVS members are encouraged to join or renew their memberships to be eligible to participate in the process.

Nominees should be highly motivated and prepared for significant service assignments and committee work to further the aims and programs of the society. In keeping with the AVS's commitment to serve a diverse constituency of violists and viola enthusiasts, the AVS especially encourages nominations from groups currently underrepresented within its membership, such as music educators and amateur violists. Nominations of individuals with expertise in development, finance, social media/web development, and organizing events (such as festivals and workshops) are also encouraged.

All nominations must be received by January 31, 2018. Visit https://www.americanviolasociety.org/AVS/Nominations.php for detailed nomination guidelines, eligibility requirements, board responsibilities, and an explanation of the nominations and election process.

Questions about the nominations process or the responsibilities of AVS Executive Board members may be addressed to Julie Edwards, chair of the Nominations Committee, at nominations@americanviolasociety.org.

Robert Bridges (RBP Publishing) Viola Arrangements Available at Primrose International Viola Archive

By Jennifer Bridges

Robert Bridges in 1972; one of many historical materials now available as part of the Robert Bridges Collection at PIVA.

Violists are always looking for enjoyable music to play. My brother, professional violist Robert Bridges, spent much effort searching for and championing little-known original viola music. But he also created a large number of arrangements for viola, founding his own company, RBP Publishing, to make these arrangements available. Most of his arrangements are by well-known composers and are well-known pieces among classical musicians, known by many as "masterworks." Robert's arrangements are in many instances comparable to Vadim Borisovsky, who arranged more than one hundred works, and Milton Katims, who made probably close to seventy-five viola arrangements. In a few instances the three of them have arranged some of the same exact pieces! Robert's many arrangements and other materials—totaling about 1000 pages—are now available at the Primrose International Viola Archive (PIVA) in Provo, UT (see address at the end of this article).

Robert, known as Rob to his friends and colleagues, while still in high school studied with William Primrose in the beautiful setting of the Banff, Canada, Institutes in 1974 and 1976. After high school, he continued his studies at the Peabody Institute under the tutelage of the incomparable Karen Tuttle from 1975–1979. He was a semi-finalist in the first Primrose International Viola Competition in 1979.

Rob spent the majority of his career with the Houston Ballet Orchestra (HBO) as both assistant principal violist and HBO librarian. It was this second experience as librarian that provided him with additional opportunities and insights to propel him in his career as musical arranger. Tragically, Rob died of cancer at age 52, but it was his greatest wish to share the music he so lovingly crafted. Thus, on his deathbed, he asked his youngest of two sisters to prepare and donate his collection to PIVA.

Here is a brief summary of what is available in the Robert Bridges Collection:

• All of his musical arrangements in paper as printed by RBP (Robert Bridges Publishing). Most of his works are arrangements for the viola and other instruments, including piano, harp, violin, cello, and orchestra. There are a few reductions and other items included.

• Reference materials that he used to create his unique arrangements (e.g., scores, historical documents, etc.). These were included for those wanting to see how he approached his arrangements. Some of his handwritten notes are included in these materials. These reference materials might also help one find an original score related to the Bridges collection.

• Musical recordings are also in the collection for those who want to hear Robert Bridges playing many of his own arrangements.

• Photographs of Robert as both a professional violist and from his personal life to give personality and character to the arranger for those who never met him.

• Uniquely, he created some specific arrangements for viola d'amore! These are in this collection as well.

Personal and professional documentation (e.g., resumes) are also there for those who want to know a bit more about the career of Robert Bridges. RBP, the business that Robert created to distribute his arrangements, is represented with copyright and publication information. The early arrangements that he created were typeset by professional music printers. However, during his arranging career, software became available where he could do his own type setting. He used Finale (2003 version) to create his later arrangements. Thus, only a limited number of his works are available in Finale format.

PIVA has organized all of the materials in boxes and has prepared a finding aid listing the individual arrangements, which will make for easy access to these materials. My hope is that the viola world will benefit from his passionate life work!

Inquiries on the Robert Bridges Collection can be directed to:
David Day, Curator, Music Special Collections
Harold B. Lee Library,
Brigham Young University,
Provo, UT, U.S.A. 84602
david_day@byu.edu
801-422-6119

The American Viola Society is pleased to make three editions by Robert Bridges available in our members-only section: his cadenza to J. N. Hummel's Fantasie*, his* Carmen Fantasy*, and his reconstruction of a concerto for violin, viola, and strings by J. S. Bach: http://www.americanviolasociety.org/Resources/Scores.php.*

Transformation and Distortion: The Process of Variation in Ligeti's Sonata for Viola Solo

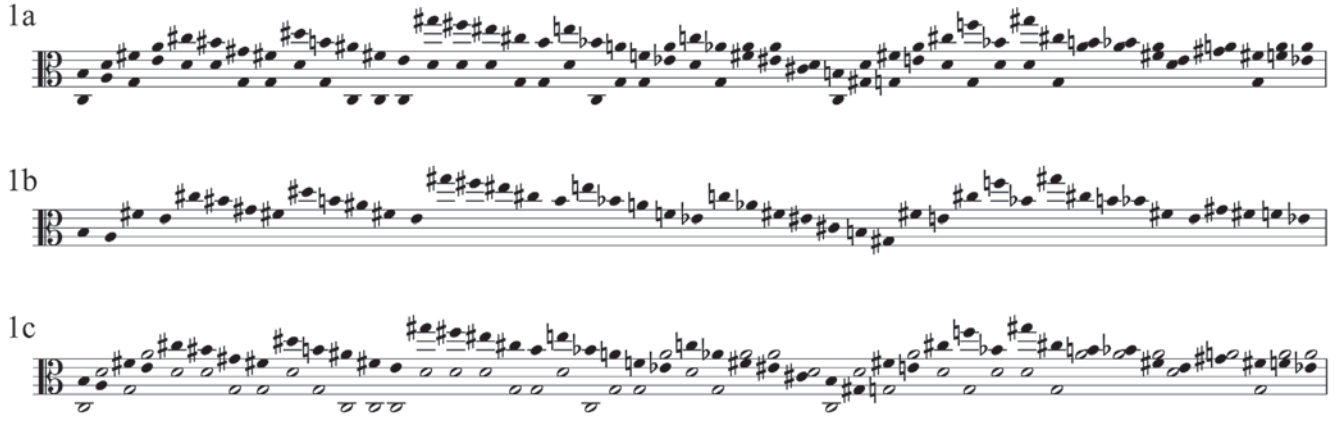
Kevin Nordstrom

Since its completion in 1994, György Ligeti's Sonata for Viola Solo has become one of the few contemporary works for the viola to earn a place in the standard repertoire. Its six movements are juxtaposed stylistically between the various traditional and radical musical vocabularies that Ligeti had been employing throughout his career, especially those he had been using since the late 1970s. Despite its rise in popularity and Ligeti's intriguing musical vocabulary, there are a surprisingly small number of published analyses of this work. The analyses that have been done do not in my view go far enough, providing us with only a partial and abstract explanation of the work's musical complexities. In his analysis, musicologist Benjamin Dwyer suggests that all six movements of the sonata share similarities in musical construction, which at a basic level focuses on the manipulation and transformation of ostinati.[1] While repeated motivic elements or ostinati are present within each movement, this does little to aid in understanding *Loop* and *Facsar,* the second and third movements. They are constructed in a way that breaks the limits of mere ostinato writing and can scarcely be defined sufficiently along those lines. In my reading, *Loop* and *Facsar* unfold not with the repetitive nature of an ostinato movement but with something closer to the narrative drama of a theme and variations. By alluding to several contemporary models for *Loop* and historical models for *Facsar*, this article seeks to counter Dwyer's reading in support of an alternate and more revealing view that these movements are modern versions of a theme and variations.

Loop

Loop is an outrageous expression of both compositional and performance virtuosity, a particular obsession of Ligeti's.[2] He directs that the movement be played "Molto vivace, ritmico - with swing, sixteenth-note = 320,"

Example 1. György Ligeti, Sonata for Viola Solo, mvt. 2: Loop.
a: The complete set of dyads presented with no rhythmic attachment.
b: The stopped pitches of the dyads.
c: The complete set of dyads with hollow note-heads representing an open string.



with each measure alternating between 8/16 and 10/16 meters.[3] The reason *Loop* has yet to be referred to as a theme and variations is because a theme is not presented at the outset of the movement. What we hear is simply a repeated set of forty-five dyads attached to no consistent rhythm (ex. 1a). Each dyad comprises one stopped pitch and an open string. Their pitches are repeated in the same order across the movement's ten cycles, and remain entirely unchanged throughout the movement.

The rhythmic irregularity of each cycle of dyads amounts to what is essentially an evolving process of variation. In order for the dyads to create a true theme on which these variations are based, they cannot only be a set of rhythmically erratic pitches; there must be a definitive version of the material which attaches these dyads to a regular rhythm. If this is true, then we must ask the following two-part question: What is the original version of the material which is being varied, and where can it be found?

Finding the Theme

A major issue in identifying *Loop's* theme is that the stopped notes of each dyad are often paired with successive open strings of the same pitch that have been elongated or run together with ties.[4] Even though each of *Loop's* ten cycles use the same dyads, the tied/repeated open strings blur the lines between each dyad and prevent them from being presented independently. For each dyad to be in its purest form, it must be presented as rhythmically independent of the others, and my reasoning for this is rather straightforward. *Loop* was dedicated to the music publisher Alfred Schlee to commemorate his ninetieth birthday. Forty-five dyads make for a total of ninety notes, thereby matching the age of the dedicatee. To properly form ninety independent notes, there should be no ties or elongations in either voice, and so we must search for a cycle where everything is reduced to a duration that achieves this. In his analysis of *Loop,* Benjamin Dwyer begins with the forty-five dyads as found in the movement's opening cycle, ties and all.[5] This first cycle is the most expansive and forms what we may call its biggest picture. Dwyer's inclusion of the ties in his analysis means that his set of dyads is not analogous to the ninety pitches needed to reflect the ninety years of Schlee and cannot therefore be the true presentation of the theme. To locate the theme in its purest form, we will need to turn the movement on its head and analyze it in the opposite direction from which it is performed.

Beginning in the late 1980s and stretching to the time of *Loop's* composition, Ligeti was fascinated by the transformational process and deterministic chaos of fractal geometric art, for which he constantly sought a musical equivalent. Ligeti was so interested in fractal geometric art that his friend Heinz-Otto Peitgen produced a work during the 1980s in his honor titled *The Ligeti Fractal*.[6] In images produced by fractal geometry, self-similar objects are endlessly repeated over and over again. These tiny objects are continuously multiplied to create wide arcs which form larger images sometimes unrelated to the object which builds them. This self-similar multiplication and contraction is so extreme that a sense of orientation vanishes, and the viewer is left to consider whether what they are looking at is the big picture or really the tiny object that has created it.[7] Considering that fractal geometry (with its deterministic chaos and multi-directional construction) was a major influence on Ligeti's music just before and during the time of *Loop's* composition, I believe we are inclined to search for the theme not at the beginning of the movement, where the largest picture is found, but at its end, where we may discover its smallest image.

As stated previously, Ligeti calls for *Loop* to be played at a metronome marking of 320 to the sixteenth note, and then lays out each measure in either eight or ten sixteenth notes. With these two pieces of information, we can reasonably assume that the material was originally conceived in an analogous rhythm of sixteenths. Further evidence can be found by comparing *Loop* to *Monument*, the first movement from Ligeti's *Three Pieces for Two Pianos* of 1976.[8] The multi-layered "themes" of *Monument,* what Richard Steinitz and Ligeti call "lattices,"[9] are initially presented with great rhythmic breadth and are over time subjected to continuous manipulations of rhythm and pulse,[10] leading to the eventual collapse of the material.[11] After the diminutions end, we are left with a calm, single layer of repeated sixteenth notes which slowly peter out. Although doing so in different ways and on different scales, both *Loop* and *Monument* exploit the same process of rhythmic diminution to achieve similar results.

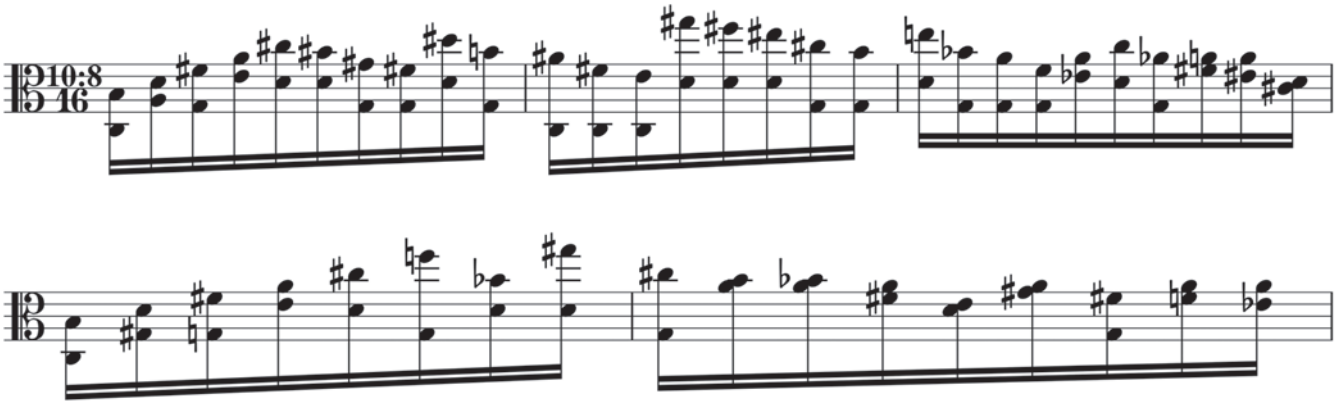
In *Loop's* ninth cycle, there are only three dyads which remain as eighth notes, while everything else has been reduced to sixteenths, with the exception of a few ties and slurs. Because so few dyads remain to be completely reduced to sixteenths in this cycle, I assert that the next

and final cycle (number ten) is, or would have been, the complete reduction of the dyads to rhythmically independent sixteenth notes, thereby revealing the theme. However, as it stands in the score, *Loop's* tenth cycle has only the first three sixteenth-note dyads, after which Ligeti writes the words "as if torn off." This leaves the piece to play out with just short of four empty measures, effectively hiding from our aural view what could have been there.[12]

Facsar

Like *Loop, Facsar* is a theme and variations movement. But unlike it, *Facsar* is more traditional. The theme is suggestive of folk music and is, as Ligeti states, "pseudo-tonal."[13] Just as in *Loop*, this theme has nine variations, but in *Facsar,* the theme is presented at the beginning and no attempts are initially made to hide or obscure it. Here, the variations focus not on rhythm, but on manipulations of melody and harmony.[14] Ligeti gradually subjects this theme to a series

Example 2. The hypothetical tenth cycle from György Ligeti's Sonata for Viola Solo, mvt. 2: Loop.



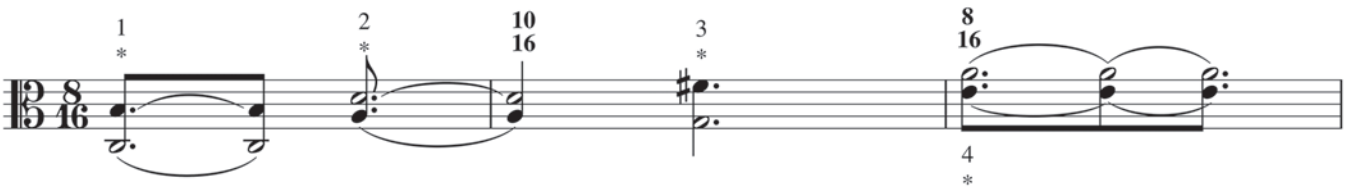
I believe that *Loop's* actual theme resides here, in the empty measures of the movement's concluding tenth cycle. Example 2 shows the hypothetical version of the theme that I have completed. It features a complete iteration of forty-five rhythmically independent sixteenth-note dyads similar to what occurs in *Monument*, and is reflective of the tempo indication outlined at the beginning of *Loop*. Ligeti's interest in fractal geometry gives us the freedom to turn the piece around and look for the theme at the end of the movement, *Loop's* compositional directions provide a clue regarding his rhythmic intentions, and the diminution process in *Monument* has shown us that he had worked towards a similar goal in another piece. I believe that this evidence supports the notion that *Loop's* theme is not found at the beginning of the movement, but at its end which is torn off and largely invisible. Now that we have established what the theme is, we see that *Loop* is not an ostinato movement as Dwyer suggests, but is instead a multi-directional theme and variations. From an analytical point of view, we can understand *Loop* as being constructed backwards, with an unheard theme and nine rhythmic variations starting in the opposite direction from which it is played.

of what he calls "displaced twisted modulations" which distort the original material so dramatically that it becomes entirely unrecognizable by the end of the movement. [15] Unlike what we encountered in *Loop,* locating the theme for *Facsar* is not an issue; understanding the origin of its harmonic outline and keeping track of it as the variations unfold is. The analysis of this movement will be presented in two parts, both of which are supported by similar instances found in two theme and variation works by Beethoven. I will look first at the harmonic structure of *Facsar's* theme and early variations, and show how they are harmonically linked to *Loop*. Then, following a short narrative summary of the entire movement, the process of distortion will be examined in greater detail as it is applied to important points in *Facsar's* early variations where that process is more easily seen and understood.

The Harmonic Structure of *Facsar's* Theme and First Two Variations

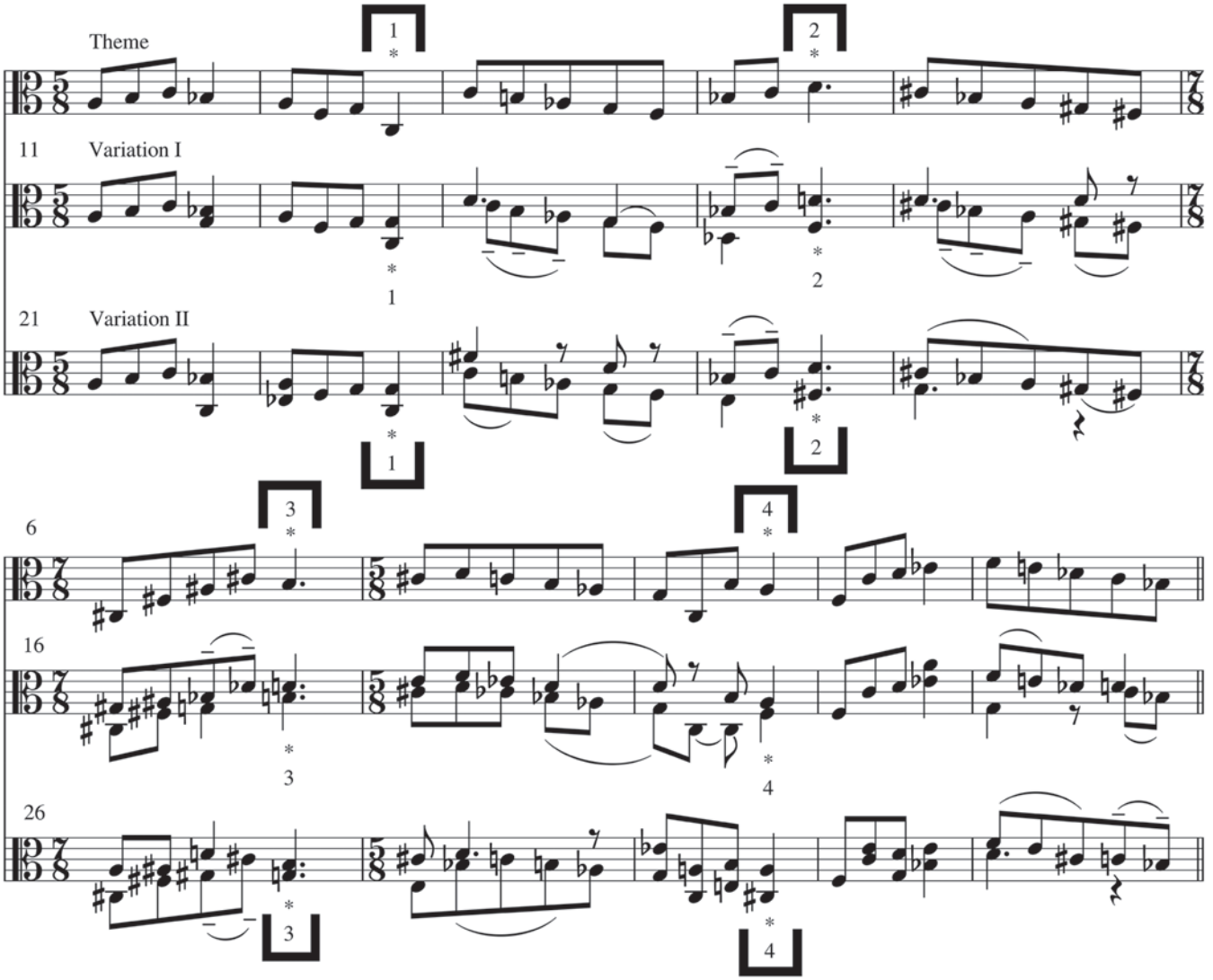
In addition to their shared formal structure, *Loop* and *Facsar* have another crucial point of similarity which shows that they are intrinsically linked. *Loop's* variations

Example 3. György Ligeti, Sonata for Viola Solo, mvt. 2: Loop*, mm. 1–3. The hollow note-heads represent open strings.*



are preceded by a three-measure introduction (ex. 3) which upon first glance, only hints at that movement's subsequent material. Like each dyad of *Loop*'s theme, those which form its introduction are made of one stopped pitch and one open string. Upon closer examination, it is evident that the open string pitches serve a further purpose: they are directly related to the major melodic and harmonic arrival points within *Facsar's* theme and its early variations. Over the course of *Facsar's* subsequent variations, these arrival points become major centers for the harmonic distortion so important to the movement.

Example 4. Facsar's *theme and first two variations as found in the score. György Ligeti, Sonata for Viola Solo, mvt. 3: Facsar, mm. 1–10; 11–20; 21–30.*



This harmonic foreshadowing is strikingly reminiscent of Beethoven's "Eroica Variations," op. 35, in which the harmonic outline of the theme is presented in advance of its full statement. Whether explicit or subconscious, Ligeti's reflection of Beethoven here is not an anomaly. The passacaglia that ends Ligeti's opera *Le Grand Macabre* is a transformation of the opening theme from the last movement of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, which is coincidently the same theme used in the "Eroica Variations" mentioned above.[16]

A complete harmonic alignment of *Facsar's* theme and first two variations with *Loop's* introduction is not wholly apparent without some investigation. In example 4, we see *Facsar's* theme and first two variations with stars placed at the major arrival points in measures two, four, six, and eight. Beginning with *Facsar's* theme, we notice that the first, second, and fourth starred arrival points are the same pitches as the first, second, and fourth open strings used in *Loop*'s introduction. The third starred pitch from the theme, B natural, is problematic since it corresponds to the open G from *Loop's* introduction seen in example 3. Recalling *Facsar's* pseudo-tonal nature and drawing on the evidence found at the other starred arrival points, we can infer that the theme's third starred pitch is somehow related to G. The first four notes of m. 6 (ex. 4) outline an inverted F-sharp major chord. The starred pitch (B natural) which follows it could result in a tonal resolution to a B chord. However, the pseudo-tonal nature of *Facsar* means we should not necessarily look for a functional chord progression implied by this motion. From a pseudo-tonal perspective, the F-sharp major chord can be resolved by chromatic motion to a G-major chord, thereby encompassing the printed B natural.[18]

In the first two variations (ex. 4), we can find further evidence of harmonic alignment with *Loop's* introduction. In variations I and II, the open string pitches from *Loop*'s introduction can serve as either the root or third of an arrival chord. For the first two starred arrival points in both variations, *Loop's* corresponding pitches are the roots of C and D chords. The pitch A of the fourth starred arrival point becomes the third of an F-major chord in variation I, and the root of an A-major chord in variation II.[19] The third starred pitch is again the problem: at that point in variation I, there is clearly no G, though G is the root of the chord at the same place in variation II. However, in the bottom voice of variation I, a G immediately precedes the third starred pitch. Because distortion is the sole means of variation in *Facsar*, this moment can be understood as a permutation within this measure of the previously established pattern for the other arrival points. Viewed through the lens of Ligeti's pseudo-tonal writing and displaced, twisted modulations, we can see that in the first two variations, the third starred pitch either is a G chord, or points towards one, as was the case in the theme. This supports the inference that *Facsar's* theme and first two variations are harmonically aligned with the open string pitches of *Loop's* introduction.

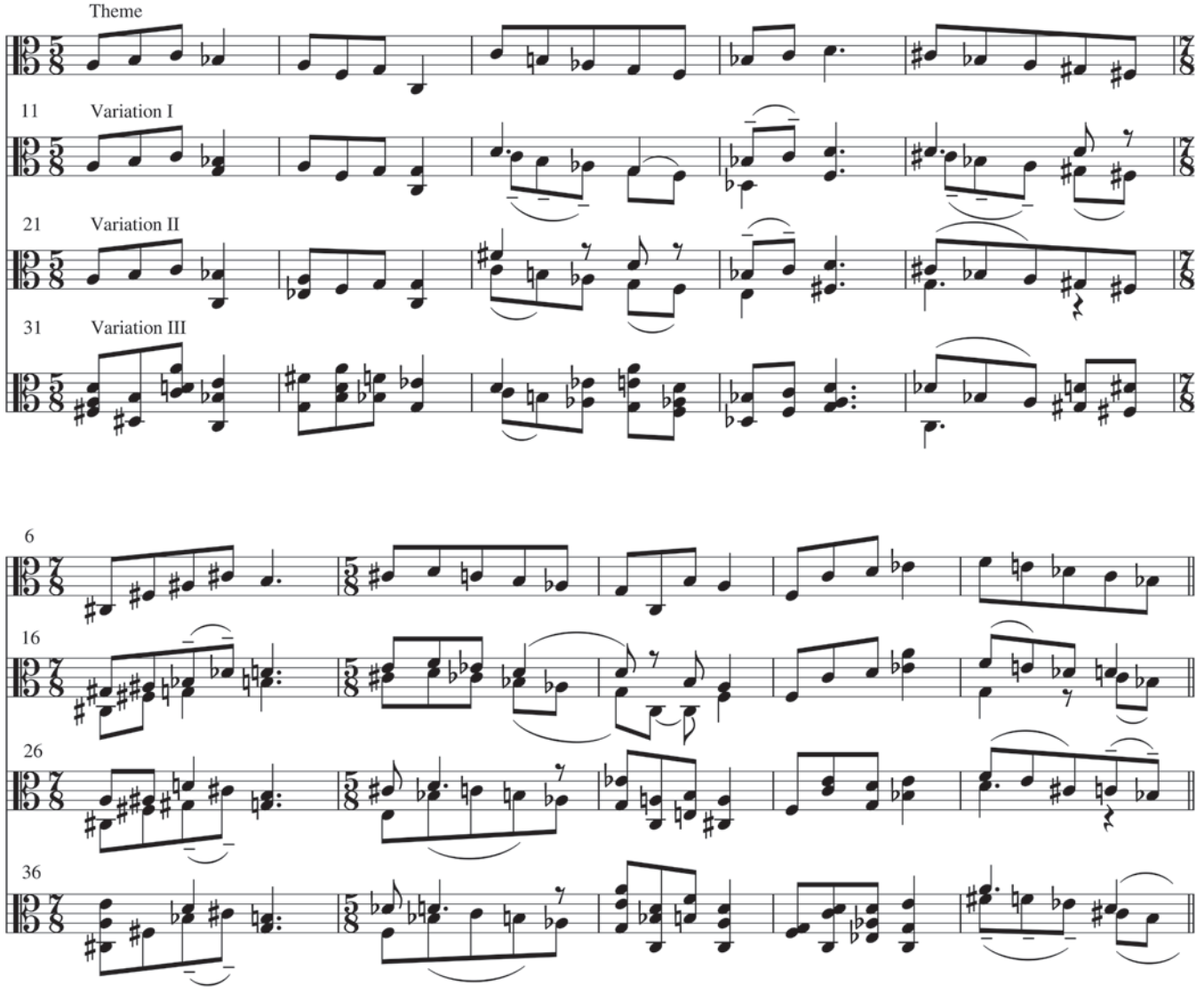
The Process of Distortion

In his analysis of Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*, Maynard Solomon organizes the dramatic action across the entirety of that work into several "strategically placed plateaus," each featuring different levels of musical activity and degrees of variation.[20] *Facsar* is organized along similar lines, and so it will be useful to borrow Solomon's terminology for this analysis. Following the statement of the theme, Ligeti's process of distortion unfolds very gradually and is applied with calculated intensification throughout each variation. The nine subsequent variations can be analyzed more clearly when divided into three plateaus. In *Facsar,* each of these plateaus contain three variations which comprise different levels of distortional intensity and consequently, different intensities of musical character. A more minute examination of the first plateau will be undertaken shortly, but first, a narrative summary of the whole movement will prove beneficial to the analysis.

With the exception of the third variation (see below), the first plateau (mm. 11–40) maintains the theme more or less intact, distorting it occasionally with enharmonic writing or with the addition of double and triple stops. As the second plateau (mm. 41–70) progresses, the thematic material is subjected to its most intense period of distortion. Though the general musical shape is maintained throughout this second plateau, Ligeti writes a series of twisted modulations in m. 41 which begin to drag the thematic material to higher harmonic planes. Instead of starting on an A as is the case with the theme and every variation in the first plateau, variation IV (m. 41) begins on a B-flat and variation V (m. 51) starts on B natural. Unlike what occurred in variation IV, the theme in variation V does not remain on a consistent harmonic level. Segments of it often fluctuate between the B-natural and original A harmonic levels. As variations IV and V unfold and variation VI (mm. 61–70) begins, the music

pushes towards its climax, and the process of distortion becomes so extreme that the thematic material loses much of its definition and becomes increasingly difficult to track. To heighten this increased harmonic strain, Ligeti writes *Più Mosso* for several measures beginning in m. 60. This pushes the music towards a climactic point and a new plateau at the start of variation VII where the dense musical texture and extreme dynamic levels reach the limits of what the viola can accommodate.[21] As the excitement begins to dissipate following this climax at variation VII, and as the third plateau (mm. 71–96) progresses, the process of distortion begins to lose momentum. Variation VII and the third plateau return again to the original harmonic plane beginning on A, with the only alteration being the reversal of the accidentals applied to B in m. 71. The next measure (m. 72) sees a jolt when the corresponding pitches from the theme are raised by a major tenth (with slight alterations) to become C-sharp–A-sharp–B–E. Remarkably, the thematic pitches of mm. 73 and 74 adhere directly to their corresponding originals. In m. 73, the theme is seen in the top voice (with one exception) and has been raised an octave, while in m. 74 (again with one exception) it is found in the bottom voice. Following this, the theme is distorted to such an extent that any attempt to plot its course becomes largely arbitrary and futile.[22] As the final variation (mm. 91–96) is reached, the thematic material has been so obliterated that it cannot fill out the standard ten measures of all the other variations, lasting instead for only six measures.[23] The movement closes with a calm, irresolute B-major seventh chord.[24]

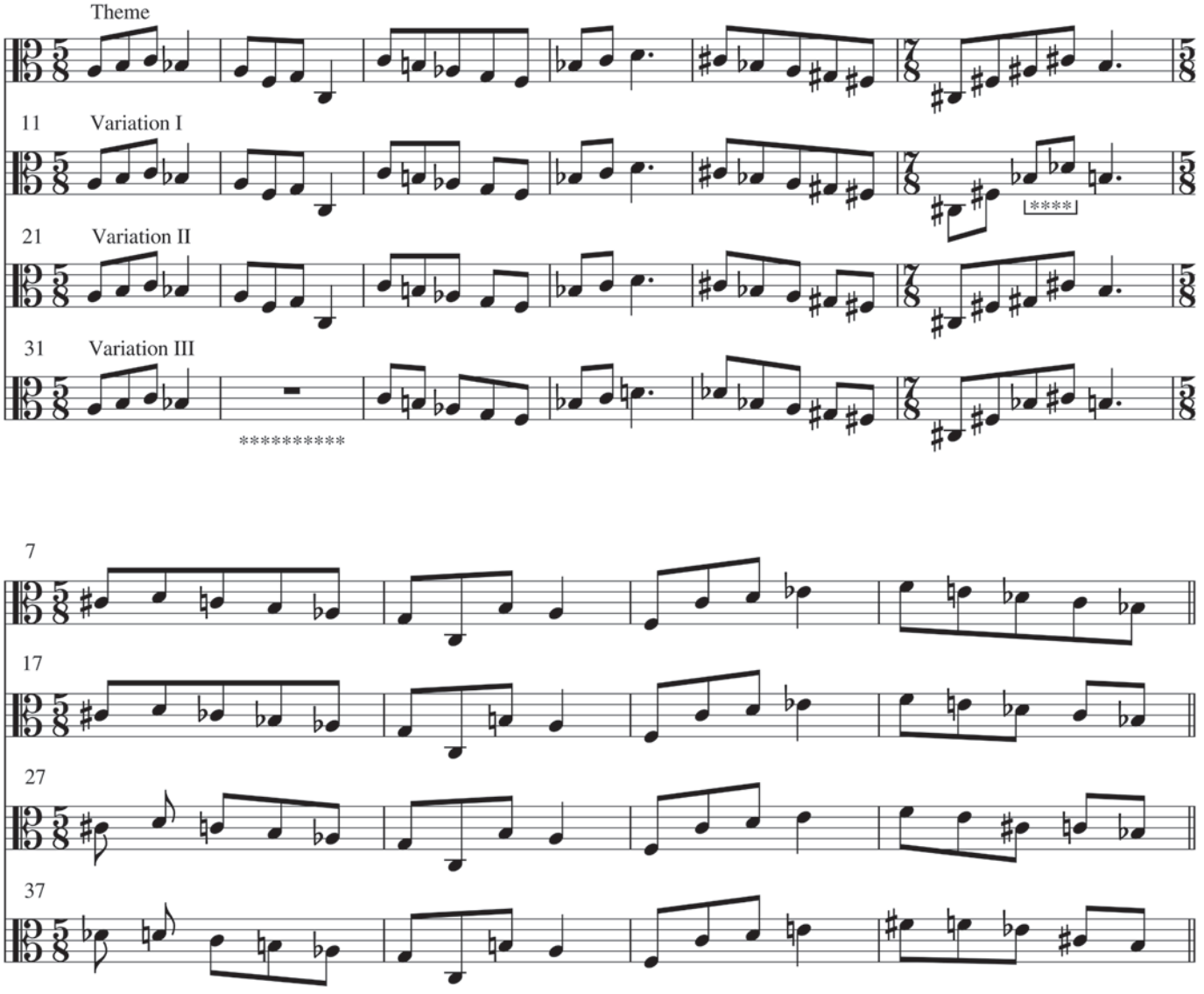
Example 5. György Ligeti, Sonata for Viola Solo, mvt. 3: Facsar. Facsar's *theme (mm. 1–10) and first plateau (mm. 11–40) as found in the score.*



Several key points within the first plateau illustrate *Facsar's* process of distortion clearly. Example 5 shows *Facsar*'s theme and first three variations as they appear in the score. As Dwyer rightly points out, Ligeti's process of distortion generally consists of first adding notes to the texture, and then allowing those new notes to slowly draw the thematic material out of line from the original.[26] As seen in example 5, Ligeti adds one note to the texture to form the double stops in variations I and II, moving on to add two notes to the original texture to form the triple stops more prevalent in variation III.

Example 6 is an extraction of the thematic material from the increasingly dense polyphonic writing of the first plateau with the theme printed above for ease of comparison. The first distortion is an enharmonic pitch change that occurs in m. 16 of variation I (distinguished by bracketed stars in example 6). It is so subtle that it is entirely inaudible to the listener, though readily apparent to the performer reading the score. In Ligeti's usage, enharmonic writing sometimes occurs more for the sake of technical expediency than for adding to the musical qualities of a particular work. In his ninth piano etude, *Vertige,* for example, Ligeti employs enharmonic writing to make the notes themselves easier to read by the performer.[27] This has no impact whatsoever on the listener. The enharmonic writing in *Facsar* is very different when the variation process is taken into consideration,

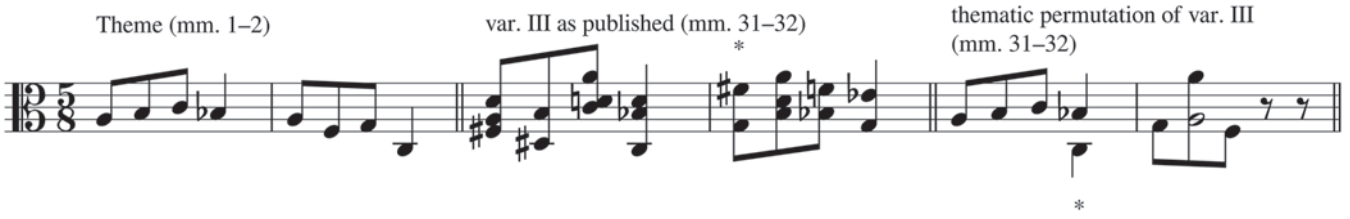
Example 6. György Ligeti, Sonata for Viola Solo, mvt. 3: Facsar. Facsar's *theme (mm. 1–10) and thematic extraction from the first plateau (mm. 11–40).*



and especially since these changes do little to aid the player's technique.[28] The enharmonic changes in *Facsar* are better understood as the starting point for the gradual process of distortion. It is almost as if those changes come from nothing, arising from somewhere in the music's subconscious mind. Variations I and II continue in a similar vein with additional enharmonic writing and the incorporation of sharps or flats to irregularly distort some notes of the thematic material.

distortions. Example 7 is divided into three sections. The first shows the opening two measures of the theme. The second is the same segment from variation III (mm. 31–32) as it appears in the score, and the final section is my extraction of the permuted material from it (again mm. 31–32). The pitches in m. 2 of the theme are A–F–G–C. These same pitches are hidden within the dense texture of the corresponding measures from variation III as seen in the second segment of example 7. The third section

Example 7. Permutation of thematic material in the second and third measures of Facsar, var. III, from György Ligeti, Sonata for Viola Solo.



Though the first three variations use a very gradual process of distortion, there is what seems to be a moment of great turbulence within variation III that warrants closer examination. In example 6, the second measure of variation III (m. 32) has been intentionally left blank as there is no extraction of the thematic material which makes sense in the context of the gradual process of distortion expected at this point in *Facsar*. In his analysis of *Facsar*, Dwyer has understood this same point in variation III as consisting only of added notes to the ostinato theme.[29] In my view there is an alternate reading of this that more closely adheres to the gradual process of distortion.

A closer look at the distortion which occurs in the first two measures of variation III (ex. 7) reveals that the theme is not entirely absent. Rather, it is only subjected to permutation, and displaced to overlap with the previous bar, adhering to the nature of *Facsar's* distortions and modulations as described by Ligeti. This sudden realignment in the variation again recalls Solomon's analysis of the *Diabelli Variations* in which he points out that the "early variations contain a calculated irregularity or a surprising or anomalous feature."[30] The opening two measures of variation III in *Facsar* are a "calculated irregularity" or aberration in the trend of gradual

of example 7 shows how these measures can be read as a permutation of the original, thus displaying a calculated irregularity in the amount of distortion applied at this point in *Facsar*. In the second measure of variation III, the pitches are not presented in order A–F–G–C, but as C–G–A–F, with the C being displaced to form a double stop with the last note (B-flat) of the preceding measure.

At first glance, the beginning of variation III only appears to be one of the most jarring moments in all of *Facsar*. However, a closer look at the material shows that the process of distortion has not yet progressed to the extent where so many consecutive pitches are altered or as Dwyer insists, changed completely. The only thing that has been changed is the location and order of the original pitches. This moment of calculated irregularity serves as the springboard for the great distortional intensity of the following plateau. By doing so, the listener is prepared for the drama to come and can more closely follow the gradual process of distortion so important to *Facsar* and to Ligeti's music in general. From this, it becomes clear that Ligeti's distortions are in fact a process of variation. Understanding this as a process of variation serves to impart on *Facsar* dramatic qualities that go much further than those accommodated by an ostinato conceptualization, creating music that is far more compelling than that which is suggested in the analysis by Dwyer.

As in *Loop,* the process of variation in *Facsar* was found to be so intense, and the transformation and distortion of its theme so complete, that the regular and consistent repetition of material required by an ostinato, even a transformational one, was no longer applicable or possible. After considering the musical complexities of *Loop* and *Facsar* in greater detail, we can say with certainty that they are not ostinato movements, but are rather a set of elaborate theme and variations.

Dr. Kevin Nordstrom leads a busy career as performer, teacher, and scholar. He has performed solo concerts in Canada, Italy, Austria, China, and throughout the United States. Recently, he presented lecture recitals and performances of the Ligeti and Koechlin viola sonatas for the College Music Society, and was a guest clinician at the TMEA convention in San Antonio. Dr. Nordstrom is currently the Adjunct Instructor of Viola at Wright State University, and Adjunct Professor of Violin/Viola at Earlham College. For more information, visit www.kevinnordstrom.com.

Notes

[1] Benjamin Dwyer, "Transformational Ostinati in György Ligeti's Sonatas for Solo Cello and Solo Viola," in *György Ligeti: Of Foreign Lands and Strange Sounds,* ed. Louise Duchesneau and Wolfgang Marx (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2011), 25–50. Dwyer's term for this throughout his chapter is "transformational ostinato."

[2] Richard Toop, *György Ligeti* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1999), 39. Toop comments upon Ligeti's "fascination with Paganini's string writing."

[3] György Ligeti, *Sonata for Viola Solo (mvt. 2 "Loop"),* (Mainz: Schott Music, 2001), 14. See tempo indications at the beginning of the movement.

[4] These ties are seemingly haphazard and are inconsistently applied across all ten cycles, with very few instances where an open string tied in one cycle remains so in another.

[5] Dwyer, "Transformational Ostinati," 31.

[6] Heinz-Otto Peitgen. "Continuum, Chaos and Metronomes – A Fractal Friendship" in *György Ligeti: Of Foreign Lands and Strange Sounds,* 87–106. *The Ligeti Fractal* is reproduced on p. 95.

[7] Richard Steinitz, *György Ligeti: Music of the Imagination* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003), 274.

[8] Due to its use of two pianos rather than a single viola, *Monument* is considerably more complex than is *Loop*. Regardless of this, the result in both is nearly the same.

[9] Steinitz, *György Ligeti***,** 208.

[10] Dwyer, "Transformational Ostinati," 30. The phrase "manipulation of rhythm and pulse" is borrowed from Dwyer's description of *Loop* which as my comparison shows is an appropriate description for both it and *Monument.*

[11] Steinitz, *György Ligeti,* 208–209.

[12] The empty measures leave enough space for nearly every remaining dyad.

[13] Ligeti, *Sonata for Viola Solo* (Mainz: Schott Music, 2001), preface. In the Preface to this work, Ligeti has provided a brief summary of each movement, describing their general musical characteristics and sometimes the origins of the material used in them.

[14] Dwyer, "Transformational Ostinati," 33.

[15] Ligeti, *Sonata for Viola Solo***,** preface.

[16] Steinitz, *György Ligeti,* 232–233. *Le Grand Macabre* was written between 1974 and 1977. Ligeti later revised the work in 1996. Another instance of Beethoven's direct influence can be found in Ligeti's *Trio for Violin, Horn, and Piano* from 1982 which, though ostensibly an homage to Brahms, owes much to Beethoven's *Les Adieux* Piano Sonata op. 81a. See Steinitz, *György Ligeti,* 255.

[17] This example is presented without dynamics and without some of the articulations which are found in the score.

[18] Jonathan W. Bernard, "Ligeti's Restoration of Interval and Its Significance for His Later Works," *Music Theory Spectrum* 21, no. 1 (Spring, 1999): 28. On page 28 of this article, Jonathan Bernard discusses non-functional "tonal"-sounding intervals as existing in a chromatic environment.

[19] This F-major chord in variation I is the only instance in the excerpt from example 4 where the open string pitch from *Loop's* introduction serves as a pitch other than the root of its corresponding arrival chord. However, it does support my assertion that the arrival chords are major centers for harmonic distortion.

[20] Maynard Solomon, *Late Beethoven: Music, Thought, Imagination* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 192.

[21] Variations VI and VII have a great deal of triple and quadruple stopping in them which are combined with a *fff* dynamic at the climactic moment in m. 72. The highest dynamic in the whole sonata, however, is in m. 73 of the sixth movement: ***fffff*.**

[22] Dwyer, "Transformational Ostinati," 34–35. An attempt to plot the course of the distorted theme can be found in Dwyer's article from pg. 34–35.

[23] Dwyer, "Transformational Ostinati," 33. Dwyer's analysis of *Facsar* describes the last cycle in that movement as "a coda of six bars (bars. 91–6)." If this is so, then *Loop* and *Facsar* do not have the same number of variations and are not therefore as similar as I suggest and believe them to be.

[24] The sonata's final movement, *Chaconne chromatique,* ends with a B-major chord, offering a sense of completion to the irresolute B-major seventh chord at the close of *Facsar*.

[25] This example is presented without dynamics and without some of the articulations which are found in the score.

[26] Dwyer, "Transformational Ostinati," 33. Dwyer's description of the movement here is very concise and informative.

[27] György Ligeti, Études pour piano, Étude 9: *Vertige,* (Mainz: Schott Music, 1998), 18. The performance notes provided by Ligeti for this etude describe the use of enharmonic notation or what he calls simply "consistent notation." An early instance of the use of enharmonic notation is seen when comparing for example m. 1 and 4 of *Vertige*, where the B of m. 1 has become the C-flat in m. 9.

[28] You could in fact argue that these enharmonic changes make it more difficult to read as they imply, from a certain perspective, a different and more challenging fingering.

[29] Dwyer, "Transformational Ostinati," 33. Dwyer provides in his analysis from pg. 34–35 a complete extraction (Example 12) of the "theme" from what he calls the movement's transformational ostinati. As he describes on page 33 preceding this extraction, these added notes are marked with an asterisk. In his extraction, these asterisks become increasingly prevalent and the later cycles of his "ostinato" are for the most part made up entirely of new notes. This begs the question of his analysis as to whether or not this is actually a transformation of the "ostinato" theme or something entirely new.

[30] Solomon, *Late Beethoven,* 186.

Ernest Bloch's *Suite Hébraïque* and *Meditation and Processional:* Historical Overview and Analysis of Traditional Musical Materials

Alexander Knapp

Introduction

Ernest Bloch was born in Geneva in 1880 and died in Portland, Oregon, in 1959. Of his six-dozen published works, about one quarter bear Jewish titles, reveal a Jewish ethos on closer examination, or include traditional Jewish musical elements. The first six of these, forming the *Jewish Cycle,* were written between 1911 and 1916; the remaining Jewish compositions were completed between 1923 and 1955. The penultimate work in the latter category was originally entitled *Five Jewish Pieces for Viola and Piano,* but soon afterwards became reconfigured into two independent works: (i) *Suite Hébraïque* for viola (or violin) and piano (or orchestra); and (ii) *Meditation and Processional* for viola and piano—both completed in 1951. Although Bloch composed only three other works for the viola as a solo instrument (the Suite for viola and piano—or orchestra—of 1919, the Concertino for flute, viola and piano—or string orchestra—of 1948, and the incomplete unaccompanied Suite of 1958),[1] his compositions for this instrument have made a decisive impact upon the Classical repertoire.

In this article, I shall begin by investigating the history behind the *Five Jewish Pieces*, which Bloch composed as a gesture of warm appreciation following the Festival of his music held in Chicago in 1950 in his honor, and then analyze the music—primarily from the perspective of the traditional elements embedded within them.

History of the 1950 Bloch Festival in Chicago

In mid-1949, Samuel Laderman—a Chicagoan businessman of Polish-Jewish background,[2] proud possessor of an impressively large record collection, and uncle of the renowned American composer Ezra Laderman (1924–2015)—approached Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman**,** the then Director of the Chicago Federation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (henceforth CFUAHC)[3] with a view to securing sponsorship for a substantial celebration of Bloch's music the following year, to celebrate the composer's 70th birthday.[4]

Although Bloch had never lived in Chicago, there was great enthusiasm for such a project; and the CFUAHC, in collaboration with the Orchestral Association of Chicago, acceded wholeheartedly to Laderman's request.[5] An Ernest Bloch Festival Association (a not-for-profit corporation, henceforth EBFA) was established "to stimulate interest in Ernest Bloch, the composer, and his art" and "to promote education in the field of music."[6] Rabbi Schaalman was appointed Executive Secretary of the EBFA, with Sam Laderman as its Secretary.

At the end of eighteen months' intense activity, Laderman, the CFUAHC (chief sponsoring organization), and nearly 300 individual sponsors and institutions realized the fruits of their labor in the shape of A Six-Day Ernest Bloch Music Festival, presented by "The Ernest Bloch Festival Association with the co-operation of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Fine Arts Quartet, and distinguished soloists" in November and December 1950.[7]

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra participated in the Festival as part of its 60th season celebrations, and gave three concerts, two conducted by the Czech-born conductor and composer Rafael Kubelik (1914–1996), and one by Bloch. The "distinguished soloists" were Ludmila Bertlova (Kubelik's wife: violin), Florence Kirsch

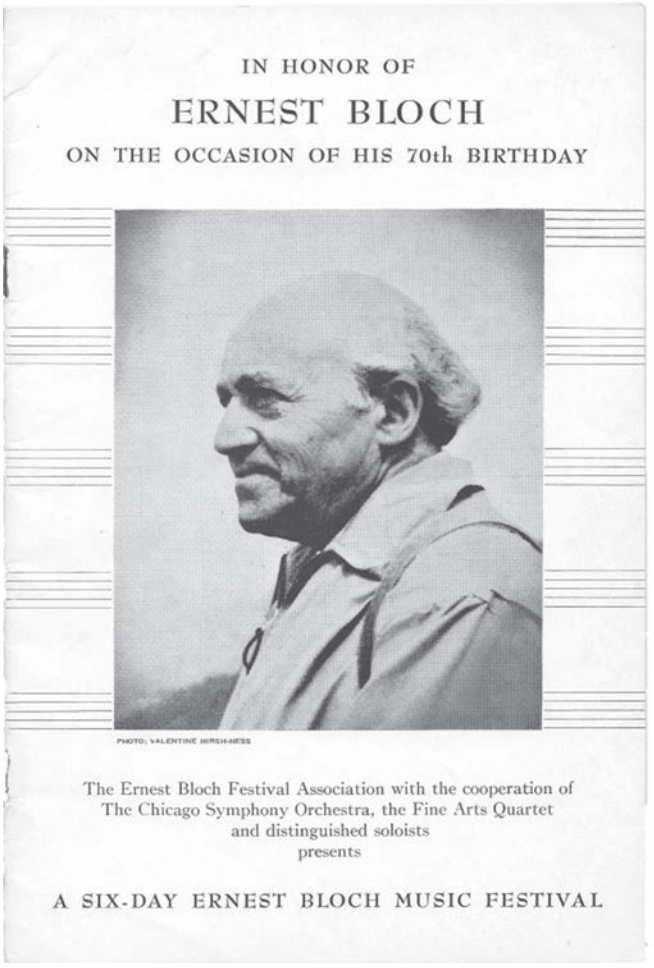
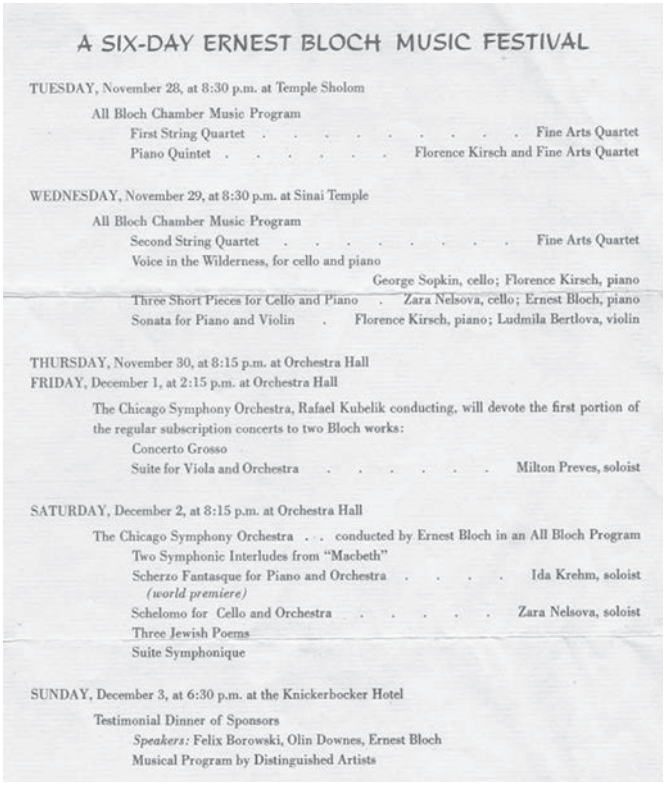


Figure 1. Cover page of the festival booklet

(piano), Ida Krehm (piano), Zara Nelsova (cello), Milton Preves (viola), George Schick (piano, and Assistant Conductor of the CSO), and George Sopkin (cello, and member of the Fine Arts Quartet).

The Festival booklet (27 pages in all) consisted of a considerable quantity of illuminating information, beginning with a photograph of Bloch on the front cover, and a letter of congratulation to Ernest B. Zeisler (Chairman of the EBFA) from the eminent English musicologist and music critic Ernest Newman (1868–1959) on the inside front cover. Detailed program notes were provided for every one of the twelve scheduled works (spanning most of Bloch's creative life), including Suite for Viola and Orchestra of 1919 (see Bloch's letter to Jack Percal, below).[8]

The Festival took place in several prestigious venues in Chicago: chamber music recitals at Temple Sholom and Sinai Temple; orchestral concerts at Orchestra Hall;


A SIX-DAY ERNEST BLOCH MUSIC FESTIVAL

TUESDAY, November 28, at 8:30 p.m. at Temple Sholom
All Bloch Chamber Music Program
First String Quartet . . . . . Fine Arts Quartet
Piano Quintet . . . . . Florence Kirsch and Fine Arts Quartet

WEDNESDAY, November 29, at 8:30 p.m. at Sinai Temple
All Bloch Chamber Music Program
Second String Quartet . . . . . Fine Arts Quartet
Voice in the Wilderness, for cello and piano
George Sopkin, cello; Florence Kirsch, piano
Three Short Pieces for Cello and Piano . Zara Nelsova, cello; Ernest Bloch, piano
Sonata for Piano and Violin . Florence Kirsch, piano; Ludmila Bertlova, violin

THURSDAY, November 30, at 8:15 p.m. at Orchestra Hall
FRIDAY, December 1, at 2:15 p.m. at Orchestra Hall
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik conducting, will devote the first portion of the regular subscription concerts to two Bloch works:
Concerto Grosso
Suite for Viola and Orchestra . . . . . Milton Preves, soloist

SATURDAY, December 2, at 8:15 p.m. at Orchestra Hall
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra . . . conducted by Ernest Bloch in an All Bloch Program
Two Symphonic Interludes from "Macbeth"
Scherzo Fantasque for Piano and Orchestra . . . . . Ida Krehm, soloist
(world premiere)
Schelomo for Cello and Orchestra . . . . . Zara Nelsova, soloist
Three Jewish Poems
Suite Symphonique

SUNDAY, December 3, at 6:30 p.m. at the Knickerbocker Hotel
Testimonial Dinner of Sponsors
Speakers: Felix Borowski, Olin Downes, Ernest Bloch
Musical Program by Distinguished Artists

Figure 2. The Festival Program

and the Testimonial Dinner of Sponsors, attended by some 500 guests, took place at the Knickerbocker Hotel on the last day of the Festival, Sunday, December 3. The speakers were Bloch,[9] Felix Borowski (1872–1956, British-American composer and teacher), and Olin Downes (1886–1955, American music critic). The Mayor of Chicago was also present.

At this stage, no direct relationship appears to have existed between the CFUAHC and the EBFA on the one hand, and the "Covenant Club of Illinois" (henceforth, CCI) on the other.[10] However, on the Monday afternoon, i.e. the day after the official conclusion of the Festival, Laderman invited all the members of the orchestra to a banquet at the CCI at its premises at 10 North Dearborn Street. Bloch was deeply moved by the gift of a Swiss gold watch ("with the days, months, phases of the moon, a miracle!")[11] that he received from Joseph H. Braun, president of the CCI. In his letter of thanks to Braun, sent from his home in Agate Beach, Oregon, Bloch expressed his emotions as follows:

> When I returned from Chicago, my heart was still overflowing with the feeling of warmth and brotherhood which surrounded me during those

> wonderful days in Chicago. I was particularly impressed with the fine atmosphere of the Covenant Club, and by the wonderful and symbolic gift which the members presented to me. . . .[12]

Although the Festival events were not broadcast on radio or television, the press coverage was extensive and enthusiastic;[13] and Bloch—to judge from his letters to family and friends—was completely overwhelmed. Here, for example, is an extract from a hitherto unpublished letter that he wrote to his English friend Jack Percal from Agate Beach on May 1, 1951:

> The Festival in Chicago . . . brought me much satisfaction. Interpreters were great, I had hardly a word to tell them—they grasped my intentions as if they had known me for ever—The audience were respectful and most responsive—the orchestra, first class, followed me in all details and gave superb performances—Kubelik, a great and imaginative conductor and M. Preves, admirable violist, revived my Viola Suite, in its orchestral form in a stupendous way—I had heard this great work only once in 1919 and was somewhat apprehensive that the ultra subtle score could not, materially, be brought out. . . . But it was a revelation to me and I think it is probably the most extraordinary orchestral piece I have written. And I was surrounded by a crowd of most devoted and active friends. The hotel had put at my disposal for my whole sojourn a suite de luxe, complimentary! Now, the committee has formed an EB Society and will pursue their efforts on behalf of my music—try to have all my works recorded, organize other festivals in other cities. After Chicago, my desk was overfilled with letters, papers, matters to classify! More than I could cope with.

It is clear that, for Bloch, a high point of the Festival was the deeply insightful interpretation of his Viola Suite (1919) by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Kubelik, with their principal violist, Milton Preves as soloist, on the evening of Thursday, November 30, and again on the afternoon of Friday, December 1.

Milton Preves

Milton Preves was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on June 18, 1909 and died in Glenview, Illinois, on June 11, 2000. Following student training as a violinist at the University of Chicago, Preves began his professional career as a viola player, and became a much sought-after recitalist and soloist with orchestras throughout the USA.

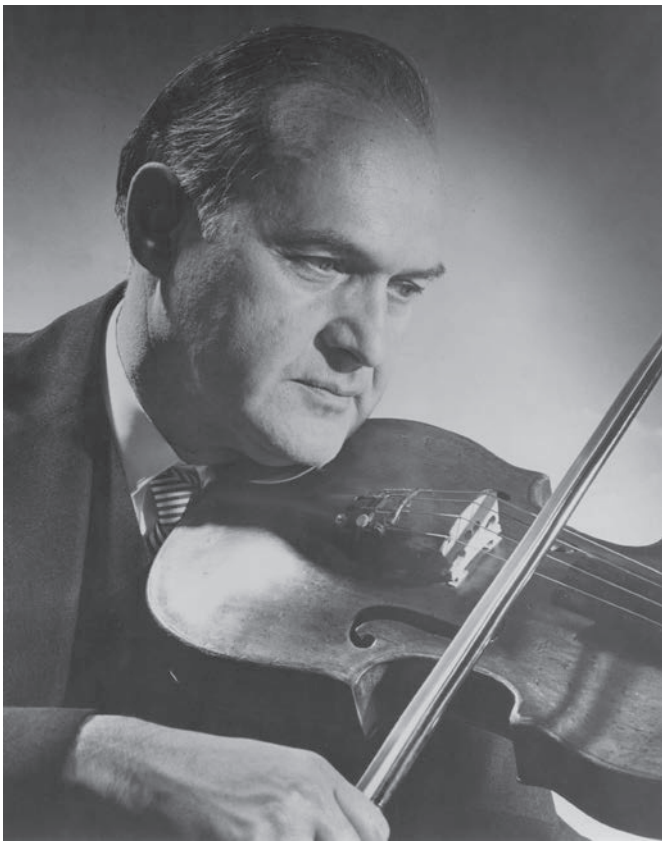


Figure 3. Milton Preves

In 1931**,** he joined the Little Symphony (an apprentice orchestra linked to the Chicago Symphony), and two years later became a member of the Mischakoff String Quartet. Appointed to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1934, he was promoted to the position of principal viola four years later. He remained in this post until his retirement from the orchestra in 1986. He was also a member of the Chautauqua Symphony.

In addition to his orchestral achievements, Preves received great acclaim as a chamber musician, conductor, and educator. He was a founding member of the Chicago String Quartet, and guest artist with the Budapest, the Gordon, and the Fine Arts String Quartets. In the summer of 1949, he was selected by Roy Harris to be a member of his string quartet at the Utah State Agricultural College in Logan, Utah. The concerts presented there were broadcast throughout the USA, South America and Europe. Preves was musical director of the North Side Symphony for 26 years. Other symphonies which he conducted included Oak Park –

River Forest, Wheaton, Gary, and Gold Coast Chamber Orchestra. He also taught on the music faculties of Chicago Musical College (Roosevelt University), Northwestern University, and DePaul University.

Preves had a deep affinity for the viola works of Ernest Bloch. On January 21 and 22, 1943, he had played the Viola Suite (1919) with the Chicago Symphony under Hans Lange. Preves played the same work during the Bloch Festival in Chicago with the same orchestra under Rafael Kubelik. He recorded a ten-inch LP of the *Five Jewish Pieces* for viola and piano in 1952, and played *Suite Hébraïque* in Bloch's original viola and piano version at the Covenent Club, Chicago, on March 3 of the same year (see below). He was soloist in the world premiere of the orchestral version of the *Suite* at Chicago's Orchestra Hall on January 1 and 2, 1953, again with Kubelik conducting the CSO. In her review for the *Chicago Daily Tribune,* Claudia Cassidy wrote of Preves' performance of this work: "he has an uncommonly big and beautiful viola tone."[14] The Chicago premiere of Bloch's *Concertino* for flute, viola and strings took place on November 6, 1971, in which Preves and flautist Donald Peck were the soloists with the CSO under Henri Mazer.

Milton Preves, who played a rare Montagnana viola that had been loaned to him from the collection of Ralph H. Norton, was the dedicatee of the two of the *Five Jewish Pieces* that were ultimately to be entitled *Meditation and Processional.*

The History of the *Five Jewish Pieces*

It was to show them my gratitude that I thought of writing these Jewish pieces, which were the first work I composed after the Chicago Festival.[15]

The earliest working title of this set of new works, written and revised between December 1950 and March 1951, was *Five Jewish Pieces.* The sketches and piano scores initially comprised a *Rhapsodie Hébraïque* that Bloch completed on February 9, 1951; a *Meditation* dated February 16; and *Processionals I, II*, and *III,* all dated February 17.[16] When these were subsequently recast into two separate groups, the following structure was adopted:

Suite Hébraïque:
(i) Rapsodie [sic], originally *Rhapsodie Hébraïque*
(ii) Processional, originally *Processional II*
(iii) Affirmation, originally *Processional III*

Meditation and Processional:
(i) Meditation, originally *Meditation*
(ii) Processional, originally *Processional I*

Each of these pieces was structured in simple or modified ternary form.

Milton Preves, with Helene Brahm (piano), gave the world premiere of all five pieces at a *Musicale* at the CCI on March 3, 1952.[17] And it was at this point that the CCI—with Joseph H. Braun continuing as President, and Samuel Laderman listed, at the foot of the program, as the chairman of the CCI Music Committee—seems to have taken on a more prominent role in the propagation of Bloch's music. The success of this event was so immense that the board of directors of the Covenant Club voted to sponsor a recording by the same two instrumentalists. The result was a ten-inch LP disc entitled *Bloch: Five Jewish Pieces—for Viola and Piano* (E2-CL-3628/9), featuring a blue-tinted photograph of Bloch on the front, and an informative, but anonymous, commentary on the back.

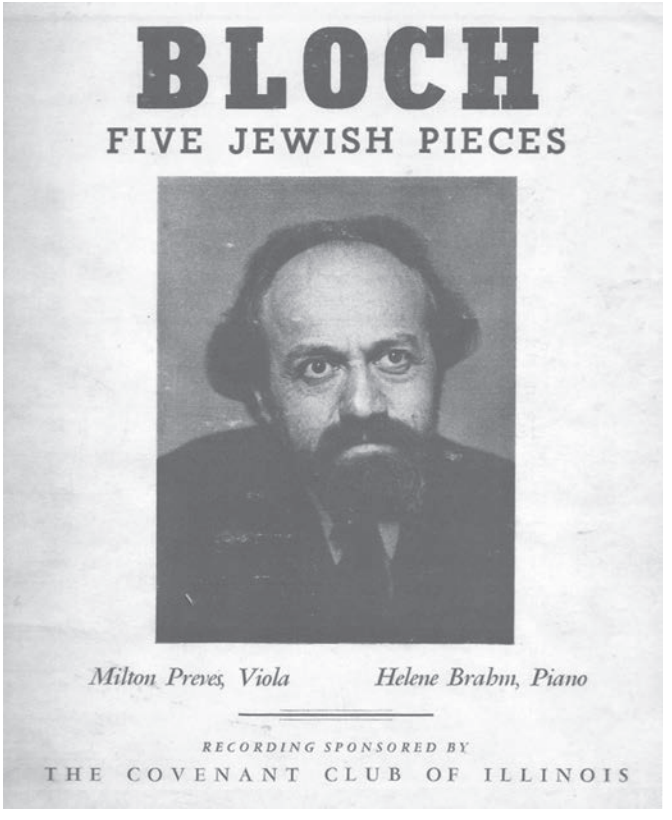


Figure 4. Cover of LP of Five Jewish Pieces

Side "A" comprised *Suite Hébraïque* (11½ minutes) dedicated to "The Covenant Club of Illinois".[18] Side

"B" consisted of *Meditation* and *Processional* (6 mins.) dedicated to "Mr. Milton Preves." No date is given on the LP itself or on the front or back cover; but there is evidence to suggest that the recording was made later in 1952.[19]

Whereas the second of the two dedications is natural and uncontroversial, the first presents a conundrum. Both the official Festival booklet and the brochure, and all the attendant press publicity, quite clearly stated that the sponsoring organization of the Bloch Festival of 1950 was the CFUAHC. Why, then, did Bloch dedicate *Suite Hébraïque* not to CFUAHC, but instead to CCI? Conversely, why was the only mention of CCI on p. 24 of the booklet, where it comes forty-fifth in an alphabetical list of nearly 300 sponsors? And to what extent, if at all, was Bloch aware of these anomalies? Rachel Heimovics Braun, in her remarks delivered at the Chicago Jewish Historical open meeting at Roosevelt University on June 12, 2011,[20] raises this—among many other important issues—but does not attempt to resolve the mystery. My conjecture is that Bloch dedicated the *Suite* to the CCI, because, although they were not the major sponsor of the 1950 Festival, it was they who sponsored the world premiere of the five pieces in 1952 and, subsequently, the recording. As Bloch wrote,

> So this Suite Hébraïque . . . is dedicated to the Covenant Club of Illinois. I hope that when all of you hear the music, it will speak to your hearts better than my clumsy words, and that you will feel my own heart beating fraternally with yours.[21]

Meditation and Processional

While the three movements of the *Suite Hébraïque* remain the most popular of the *Five Jewish Pieces*, the unjustly neglected *Meditation and Processional* warrant attention too; for although technically perhaps less demanding, they are equally attractive and compelling. Both movements are highly contrapuntal, with numerous instances of canonic imitation. The first, entitled Andante, begins with a chromatic theme on solo viola that nevertheless establishes D minor as the tonic key. There are melodic intervals of the augmented 2nd, as well as open fourths and fifths, and occasional hints of the Eastern Ashkenazi *Mi Shebeirach* mode.[22] The second movement, Moderato, has a stately character, reminiscent of some of the organ works that Bloch had completed in 1950.[23] Mainly pandiatonic, it begins in the Lydian mode on F.[24] There are several motifs that rise and fall by step. Most of the rhythmic material comprises quarter notes and eighth notes, occasionally contrasting with dotted figures and triplet broken chords. There are excursions into a variety of modes, ending in a combined major/minor tonality based on E.[25] Neither movement appears to quote specific themes from the traditional Jewish repertoire.

Meditation and Processional were not arranged by Bloch for any medium other than viola and piano, and they were published in that form by G. Schirmer in 1954. However, they were later orchestrated by Francis Tursi (1922–91, sometime professor of viola at the Eastman School of Music).

Traditional Elements in *Suite Hébraïque*

Although the immediate stimulus for Bloch's creation of the music under discussion sprang from the 1950 Chicago Festival, it might be argued that the actual genesis of *Suite Hébraïque* could be traced back to ca. 1918, when Bloch, having recently settled in New York with his family, was making regular visits to the New York Public Library to copy out examples of traditional Jewish liturgical and paraliturgical music from many parts of the world, as presented by Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen (1862–1934, henceforth FLC)[26] in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (henceforth *JE*).[27] Why did Bloch do this? After all, he had been quoted, in numerous published interviews, as saying with great conviction that he composed Jewish music out of himself: "I am not an archaeologist."[28] What is musical archaeology if not searching for, and gathering, materials from pre-existing written sources?

By way of explanation we may observe that, for well over a decade, Bloch had been discussing a biblical opera on the theme of *Jézabel* with his friend and colleague Edmond Fleg (1874–1963, the French-Jewish poet and novelist), who had written the libretto for their opera *Macbeth* (1909). Although Bloch produced a vast number of sketches for *Jézabel* (now housed in the Library of Congress), he seems to have suffered a loss of energy and inspiration; and Fleg's intention was to help Bloch breathe life into this, their second operatic venture, by suggesting that he explore Jewish religious melodies and motifs that were sprinkled liberally throughout *JE*. Sadly, by the mid-1920s, *Jézabel* had in effect been abandoned. But the 85-page manuscript book entitled *Chants Juifs*

(henceforth *CJ*), into which Bloch had copied by hand almost all the musical examples contained within the twelve-volume encyclopedia, proved to be an enormously valuable resource for some of his subsequent Jewish compositions. And it was to this book that Bloch turned for traditional materials when composing *Suite Hébraïque* some three decades later.

Among other fascinating documents in her personal archive,[29] Bloch's daughter Suzanne (1907–2002) preserved an undated sheet of notepaper in her father's handwriting, headed "Suite Hébraïque (Motifs fr. Jewish Encyclopedia)"[30]—henceforth referred to as *EBnotes*, giving (a) full details of each of the three movements of the *Suite,* (b) the name of the traditional Jewish motifs or melodies incorporated, (c) the page numbers of *CJ* in which they appeared, (d) page and measure references to the piano score published by G. Schirmer in 1953, (e) the volume and page number of the *JE* from which they had been extracted, and (f) observations on their historical and ethnic provenance. The material is laid out neatly in clearly demarcated columns.[31] A paraphrase of these details will now be discussed in the commentaries on each movement, to facilitate direct comparison between *JE* and Bloch's piano score.

When did Bloch assemble his *EBnotes*? It must have been some time after he had written to Joseph Braun, in relation to the movements of *Suite Hébraïque:* "I have used, in some of them, old and traditional melodies; but I have absorbed them to such a point that it may be difficult for future musicologists to determine what is traditional and what is Bloch."[32] However, *EBnotes* actually make this task astonishingly simple!

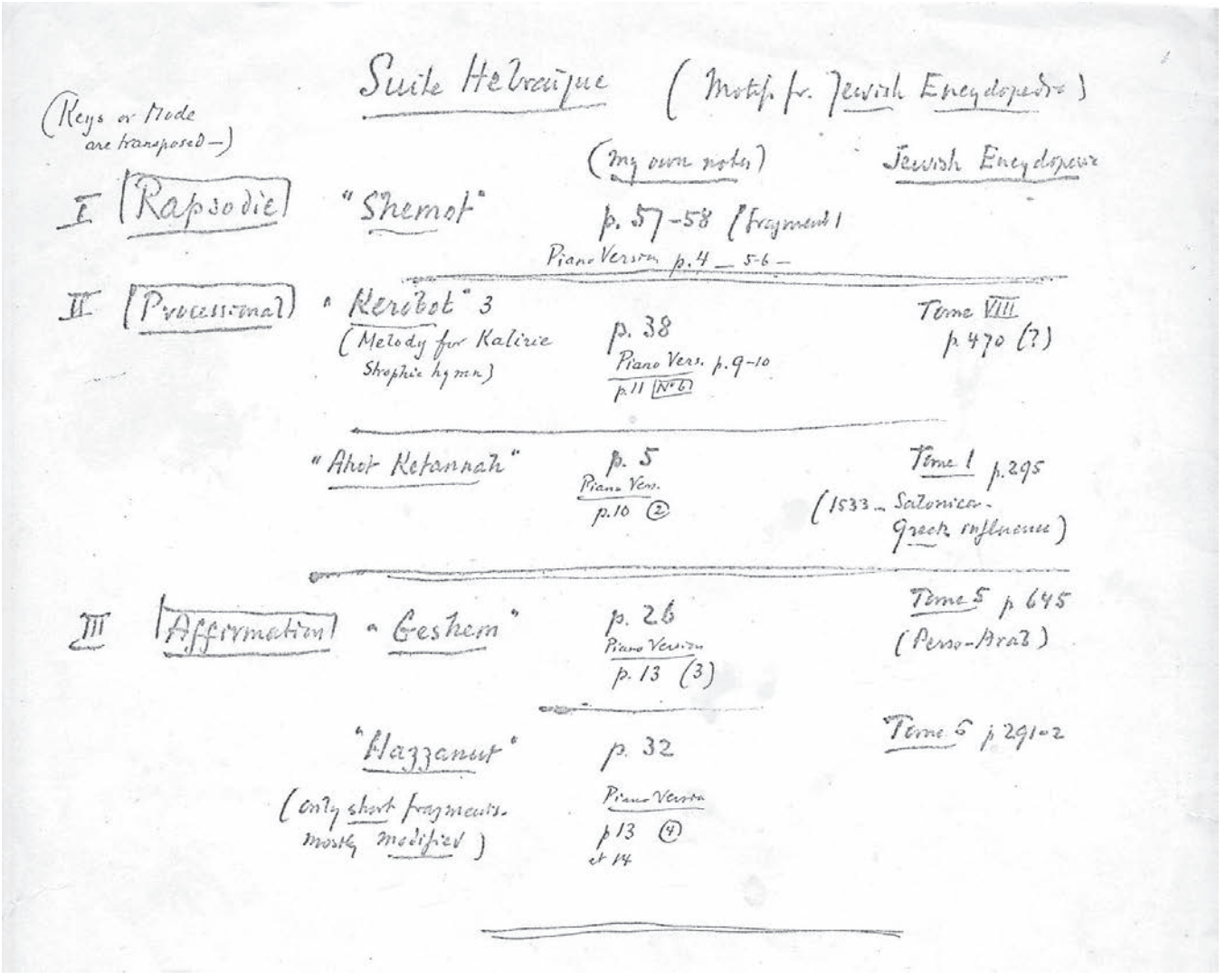


Figure 5. EBnotes, "Suite Hébraïque (Motifs fr. Jewish Encyclopedia)": document in Bloch's handwriting. Published for the first time in this article. Reproduced by kind permission of Ernest Bloch's heirs (grandchildren).

Before proceeding to the analyses, I need to clarify five points:

(a) The twelve volumes of *JE* were brought out over a period of six years (1901–6); therefore, when reference is made to a particular volume, the year of its publication is given in parentheses.

(b) Whether Bloch chose the melodies from *JE* primarily on musical grounds, or for their historical/ethnic interest, or for their textual and religious significance, has not been established. What is clear, however, from his annotations in *CJ,* is that he had read the commentaries provided in the encyclopedia by FLC, and that he was therefore aware of their respective texts and contexts.[33]

(c) Jewish modality (Heb. *Nusach*) differs from Western tonality insofar as the system is based, first and foremost, on a large number of traditional melodic motifs – some succinct, others extended. When these essential "building bricks" are rationalized into ascending and descending sequences of adjacent notes, they form a repertoire of distinct scale patterns. This Jewish system provides an entire framework for vocal improvisation by the cantor (the leader of prayer in the synagogue), each "family" of motifs with its own associations regarding religious service, Festival, season, time of day, and mood, just as in the case of Arabic, Turkish, and Indian modalities (*maqam, makam,* and *raga).* The German/Yiddish term *Steiger/Shtayger* has been applied by scholars and commentators to the Ashkenazi-Jewish modal scales and their typical patterns; but, whereas Western scales replicate exactly in each octave, the Jewish *shtaygers* may include intervals above the upper tonic and below the lower tonic that are different from those within the main octave (as shown in the footnotes). Jewish modes can be transposed to any pitch.

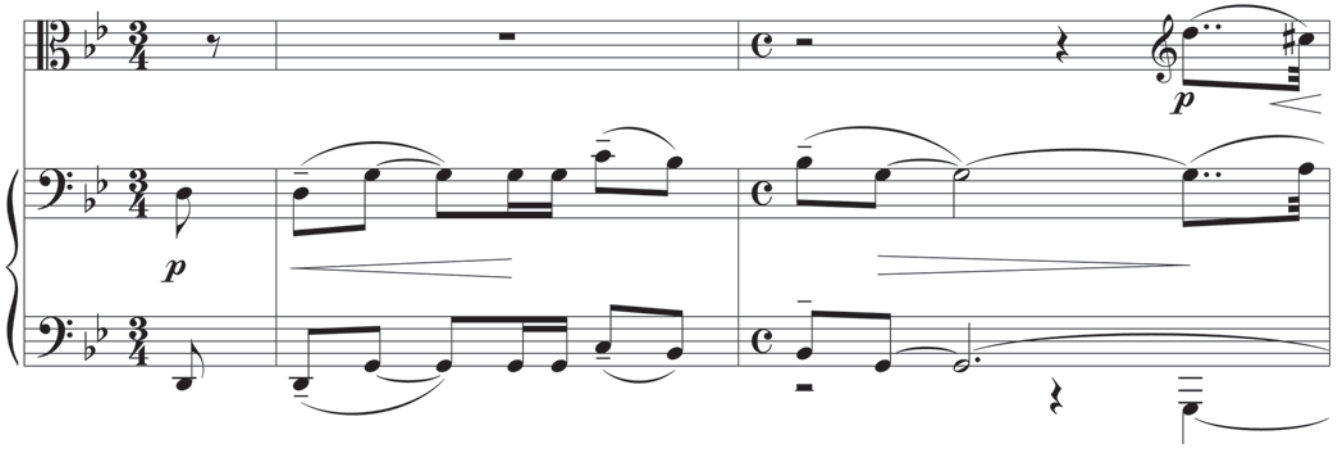
(d) Modal terminologies derived from ancient Greece actually refer here to the modes of Gregorian chant which began to develop a full millennium later.

(e) All measure numbers refer to the piano scores of *Suite Hébraïque* published by G. Schirmer, Inc. in New York in 1953, and of *Meditation and Processional* published the following year.

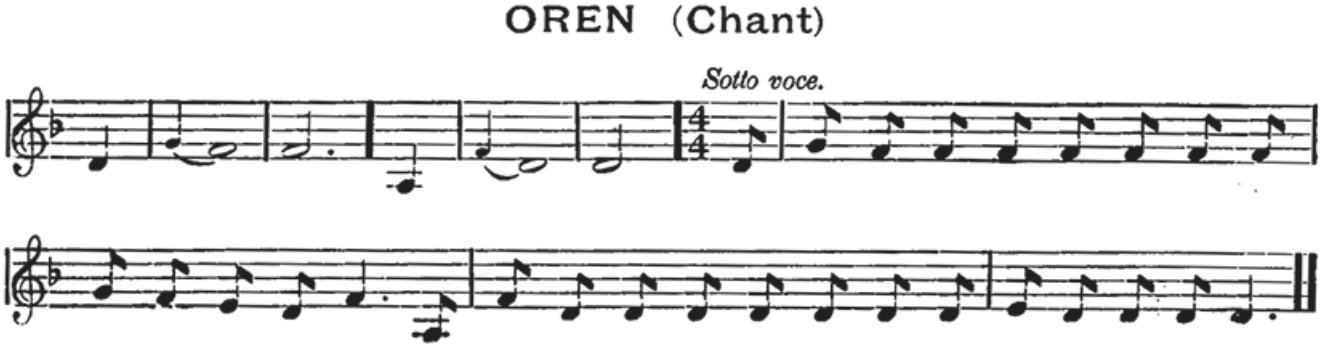
(i) *Rapsodie* (5½ minutes)

This movement contains two overtly Jewish themes. The first, in the Jewish *Magen Avot* mode on G,[34] is stated at the very opening of the work (mm. 1–2; ex. 1); and it is related to the motifs of the *Oren* chant as they appear in *JE* Vol. IX (1905), p. 431 (ex. 2).[35] While Bloch does not replicate the *Oren* chant exactly, mm. 1–2 of *Rapsodie* closely follow some of the significant elements of *Oren's* melodic contour: *Rapsodie's* rising fourths and subsequent falling intervals (D–G–C–B-flat–G) correspond to those in *Oren* (A–D–G–F–D). Although Bloch did not refer to this theme in *EBnotes,* he included it in *CJ* (p. 61), and may also have absorbed it either while attending services at the Geneva Synagogue during his childhood, or from his father, Maurice,[36] who enjoyed singing snatches of cantorial music at home. Indeed, this theme is heard frequently in the Ashkenazi prayer chant repertoire, as evidenced by dozens of appearances in Abraham Baer's *Baal T'fillah*[37]—an enormous and authoritative compendium of liturgical music, mainly in the Ashkenazi tradition, for the entire religious calendar.

Example 1. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Rapsodie, *mm. 1–2.*



Example 2. Oren *chant from the* Jewish Encyclopedia.

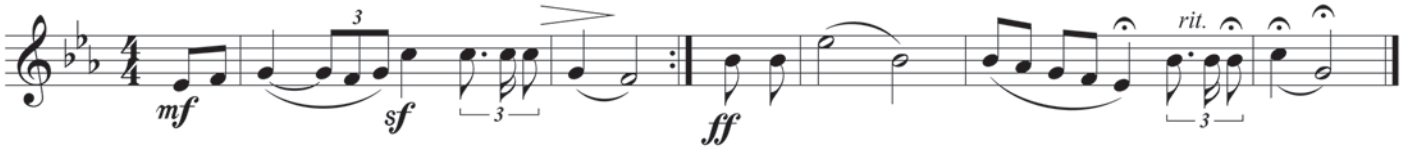


The second theme is entitled *Shemot*, as chanted in Ashkenazi synagogues at the very end of *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). This "fragment"—as it is described in *EBnotes*—occurs in *JE* Vol. IX (1905), p. 220, under the general heading *Ne'ilah (Concluding Melodies)*[38] and is shown in lines 3–4 of *II. Shemot (Profession of Faith)* (ex. 3).[39] It concludes with a typical High Holy Day cadence. In Bloch's piano score, the melody—embellished by double, triple and quadruple stoppings on the viola—can be clearly identified in mm. 33–38 (ex. 4), on the piano in mm. 53–57 (extended to m. 59), and finally in an abbreviated version on the viola in mm. 86–87. In *CJ* (pp. 57–58), Bloch describes this theme as "théâtral, d'abord" (theatrical, foremost).

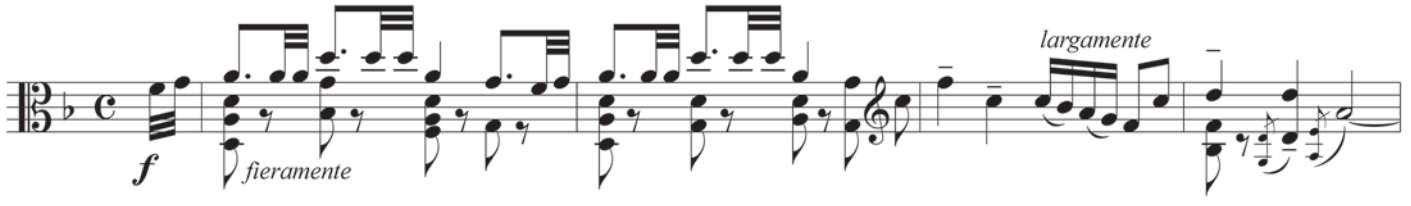
Brief reference should also be made to two further themes of particular interest in this movement. First of all, the two-measure motto in mm. 22–23 (ex. 5) and 79–81 that Bloch borrowed not only from his cello rhapsody *Schelomo* (mm. 269–71; ex. 6), but also from several other works of the *Jewish Cycle.* Secondly—and outside the framework of Jewish music—the first four measures of the dramatic cadenza (mm. 62–65; ex. 7), preceding the recapitulation of the main theme (m. 69), which bear striking melodic and harmonic resemblances to passages in the first movement of the Violin Concerto by Johannes Brahms (exposition: mm. 250–53, ex. 8; and recapitulation: mm. 491–94).

Rapsodie shares several similarities with *Nigun,* the centerpiece of Bloch's *Baal Shem Suite: Three Pictures of Chassidic Life,* a Jewish work for violin and piano composed in 1923 and orchestrated by Bloch in 1939.[40] Both works begin in G minor, the home key and, following modulations into closely related keys, conclude on a D major chord, giving the impression of an imperfect cadence. But this is, in fact, a perfect cadence in the Jewish *Ahava Rabba* mode on D,[41] the main octave comprising the same notes as G harmonic minor. Other features common to the two works include numerous rapid scale passages and tetrachordal figures based on melodic and harmonic forms of the minor key, scales incorporating augmented seconds between the second and third degrees and between the sixth and seventh degrees, and dotted and double-dotted rhythms. Also, the last measures of the cadenza in *Rapsodie* (mm. 67–69; ex. 9) and the latter part of the cadenza in *Nigun* (piano score, mm. 88–89; ex. 10) share similar pitches (C-sharp, D, and E-flat) and melodic contour.

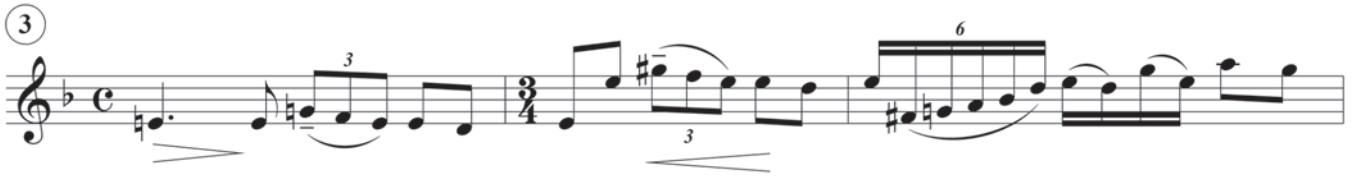
Example 3. Shemot from the Jewish Encyclopedia, mm. 12–17.



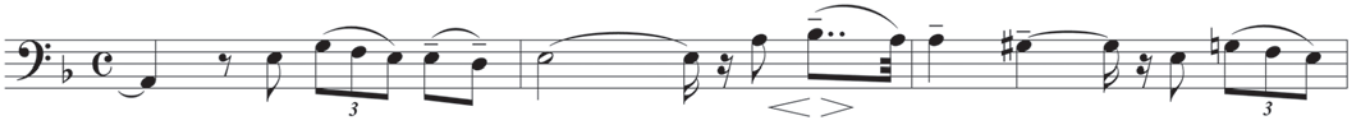
Example 4. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Rapsodie, mm. 33–37.



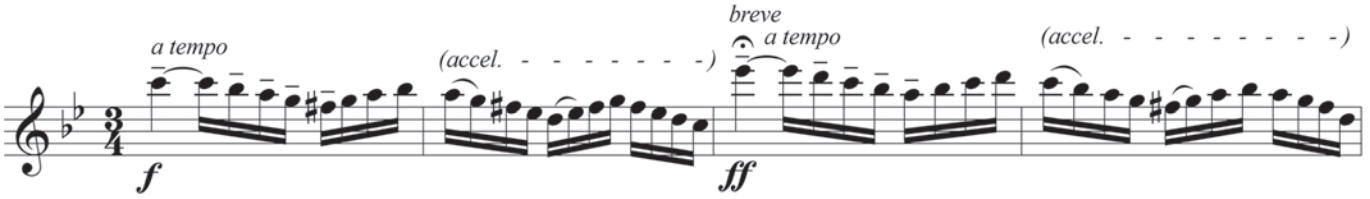
Example 5. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Rapsodie*, mm. 22–24.*



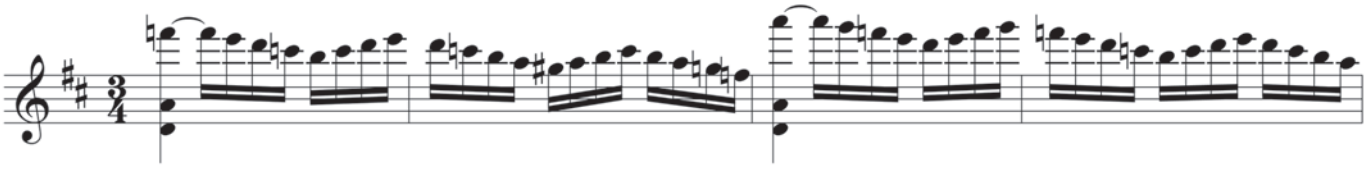
Example 6. Ernest Bloch, Schelomo*, mm. 269–71.*



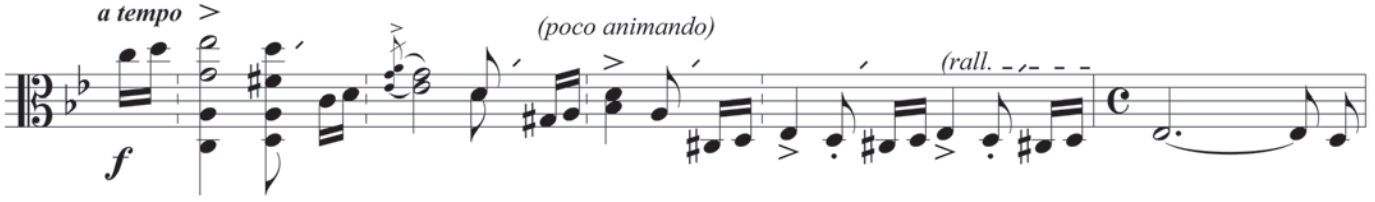
Example 7. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Rapsodie*, mm. 62–65.*



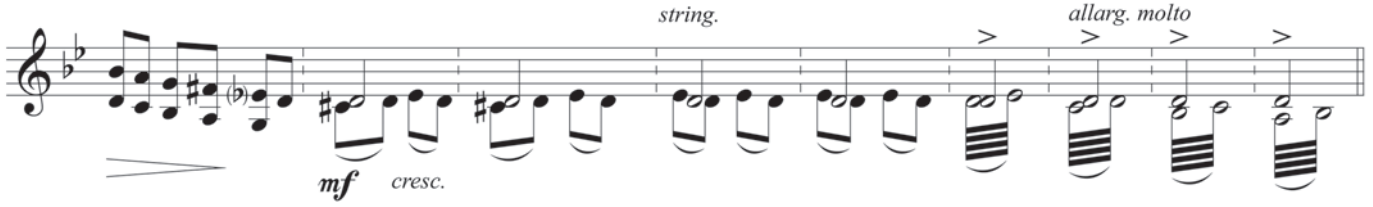
Example 8. Johannes Brahms, Violin Concerto, mvt. I, mm. 250–53.



Example 9. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Rapsodie*, mm. 67–68.*



Example 10. Ernest Bloch, Baal Shem Suite, Nigun*, mm. 88–89.*



(ii) *Processional* (2¼ mins.)

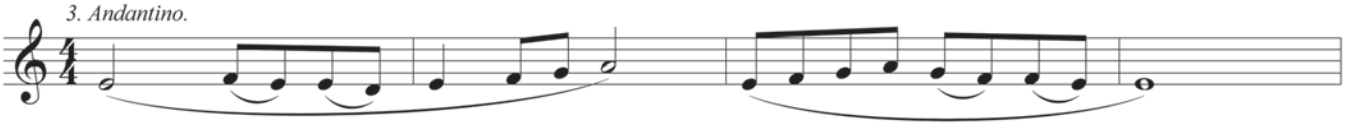
This movement opens with an ostinato four-chord motif that reflects the essential contour of the first theme of the preceding *Rapsodie;* but the mood here is entirely different. For this is a slow march in strict four-time, in which the quarter-note rhythm dominates. Occasional excursions into two- and three-time occur in the contrasting middle section.

There are two Jewish themes, the first vigorous, the second more lyrical. The first, forming the second part of the "A" section of this movement, is an "ancient" melody in the Phrygian mode,[42] shown in *JE* Vol. VII (1904), p. 470, under the heading *Kerobot (Melodies for Kaliric Strophic Hymn),*[43] *no. 3. Andantino,* lines 1–2 (ex. 11). This corresponds to its appearance in Bloch's piano score, mm. 9–12 (ex. 12), and in a modified form in mm. 37–41. On p. 38 of *CJ,* Bloch has added the name "Naboth"

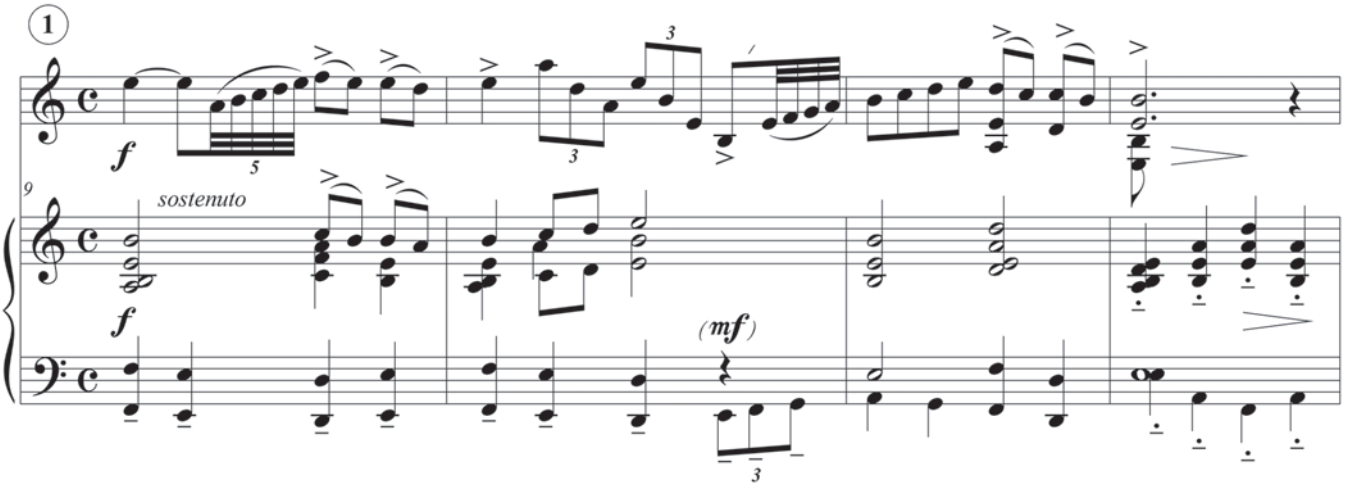
in the margin, thus designating the melody as a leitmotif for this character in *Jézabel.* It follows on immediately from the first melody of the "A" section, which is also in the Phrygian mode.

compare the tonal harmonization (melodic minor) of the Sephardic version with the shifting modalities favored by Bloch. On p. 5 of *CJ,* Bloch has written the abbreviation "Souk." (for *Sukkot:* "Tabernacles"—the harvest festival that follows the *High Holy Days* each fall) in the margin,

Example 11. Kerobot *from the* Jewish Encyclopedia*, mm. 1–4.*



Example 12. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Processional*, mm. 9–12.*



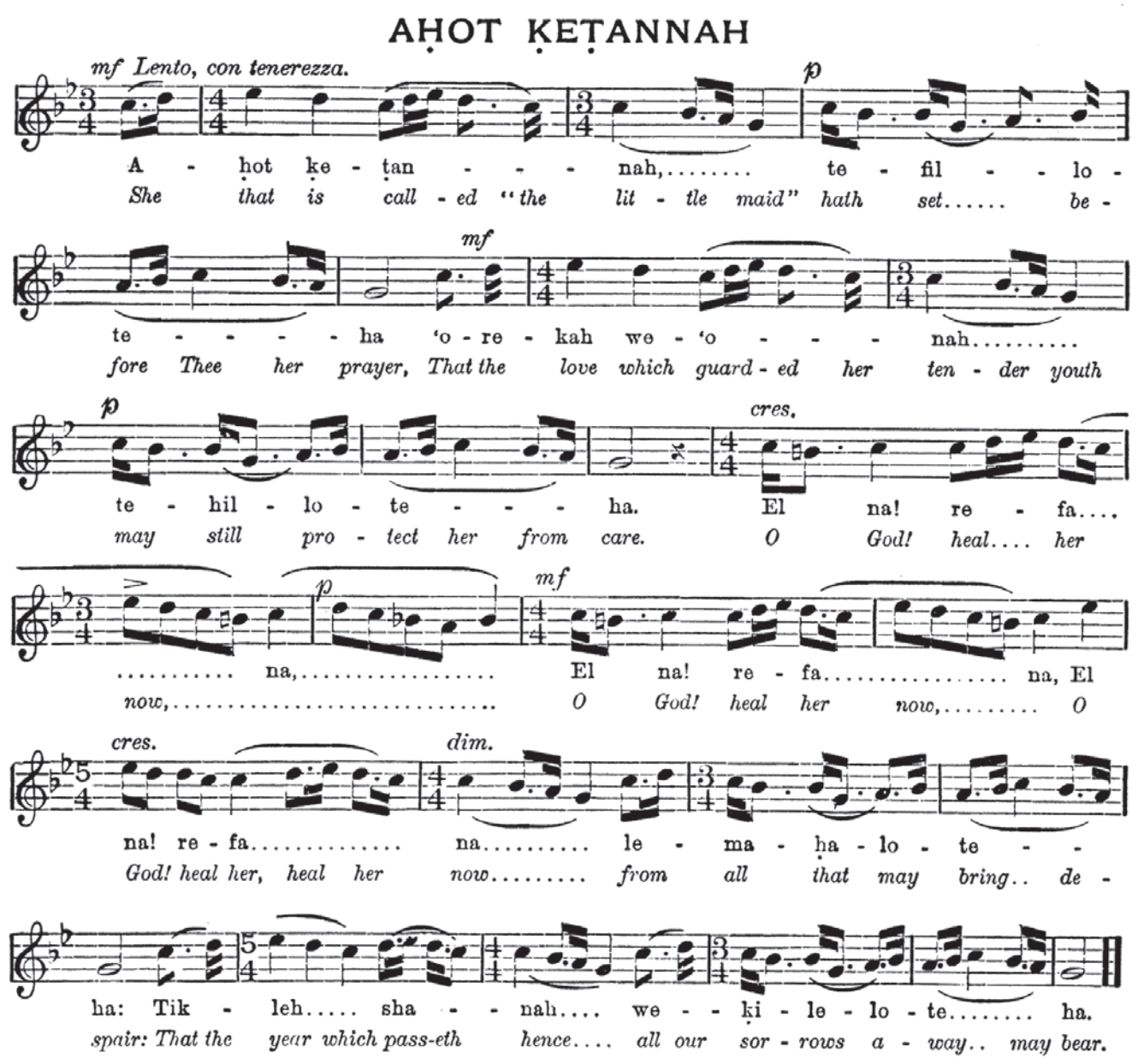
The entire "B" section is devoted to the second of the two Jewish melodies in this movement, which is taken from *JE* Vol. I (1901), p. 295, namely, *Ahot Ketannah* (from the High Holy Day liturgy; ex. 13).[44] In line with FLC's entry, Bloch adds the comment: "1533 Salonica, Greek influence" (underlining as shown in *EBnotes)*. In the original source, this theme is itself in ternary form ("xxyyxx"). Bloch, in mm. 13–24, has given the "x" section (ex. 14) to the viola and repeated the first half of it as a solo piano interlude; this leads immediately to the "y" section (ex. 15) on the viola and, again, the first part only is repeated on the solo piano before the main theme of the *Processional* is recapitulated. "Scotch snap" rhythms appear in both the "x" and "y" sections of *Ahot Ketannah.* Bloch would have felt an immediate affinity for this theme, since the "Scotch snap" rhythm can be found throughout his *oeuvre.*

This melody also appears in a four-part arrangement in *Sephardi Melodies*[45] by Emanuel Aguilar and the Rev. David A. De Sola, Part I: "The Ancient Melodies": *Achot Ketana [sic],* pp. 24–5, no. 26. It is fascinating to thus earmarking this theme as a "seasonal" leitmotif in *Jézabel.*

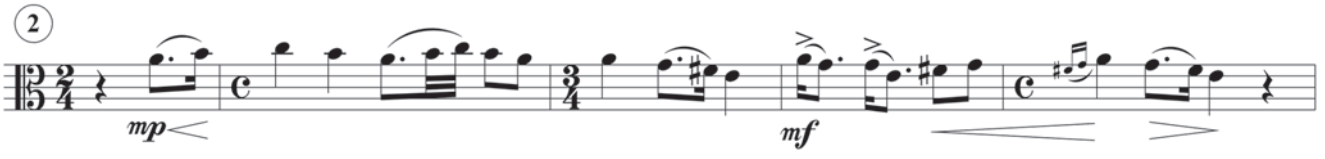
(iii) *Affirmation* (3¾ mins.)

The two themes from *JE* appear consecutively in the middle section of this majestic but contrapuntally energetic movement. The first is taken from the first line of *Geshem [version] C,* as shown in *JE* Vol. V (1903), p. 645 (ex. 16).[46] In his entry on pp. 643–5, FLC believes that the melody **is** probably Turkish; but it may have originated in Persia or in the Arab lands. Bloch has described it as "Perso-Arab" in his *EBnotes.* He states the four-measure melody once on the viola, and then repeats only the first half an octave lower (mm. 19–25; ex. 17) before moving immediately to the second theme from *JE,* namely, *Hazzanut*,[47] (ex. 18) to be found in Vol. VI (1904), pp. 291–92 (*CJ,* p. 32). Here, Bloch presents the first four measures of the traditional melody on the viola (ex. 19, mm. 25–29), and repeats them on the piano, before moving to the second line of the original tune in mm. 33–35 (ex. 20): "only short fragments, mostly

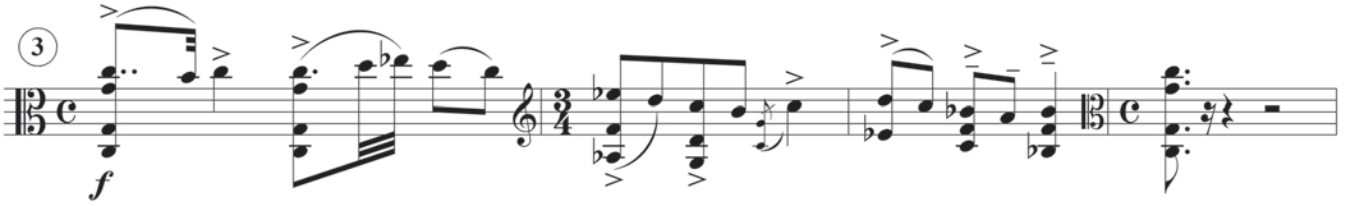
Example 13. Ahot Ketannah *from the* Jewish Encyclopedia.



Example 14. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Processional*, mm. 13–17.*



Example 15. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Processional*, mm. 20–23.*

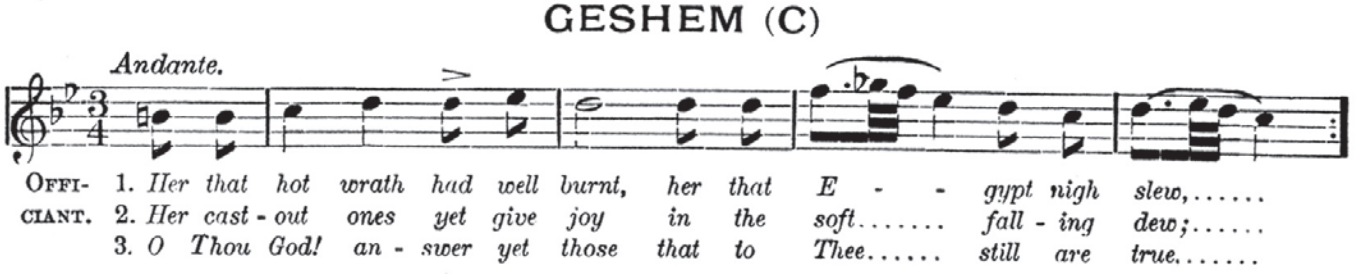


modified" (Bloch's underlinings in *EBnotes)*. In *Jézabel,* the Festival of *Sukkot* would have been represented by this theme also.

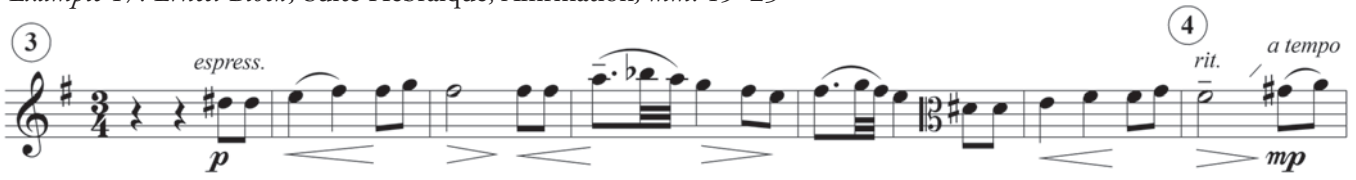
Evocations of the *shofar*[48] may be heard in mm. 9–11, 50–52 and 56–58. The descending roulades and tetrachords of the cadenza (mm. 35–39) recall the cadenza heard earlier in *Rapsodie.* A descending major scale in the piano establishes a festive mood in the closing measures of this movement, as does the vigorous plagal cadence, reminiscent of the ending of *Simchas Torah*—the finale of the *Baal Shem Suite.*

In fact, *Suite Hébraïque* shares many character traits with *Baal Shem* in matters of overall style: both works are accessible to audiences attuned to Western classical and

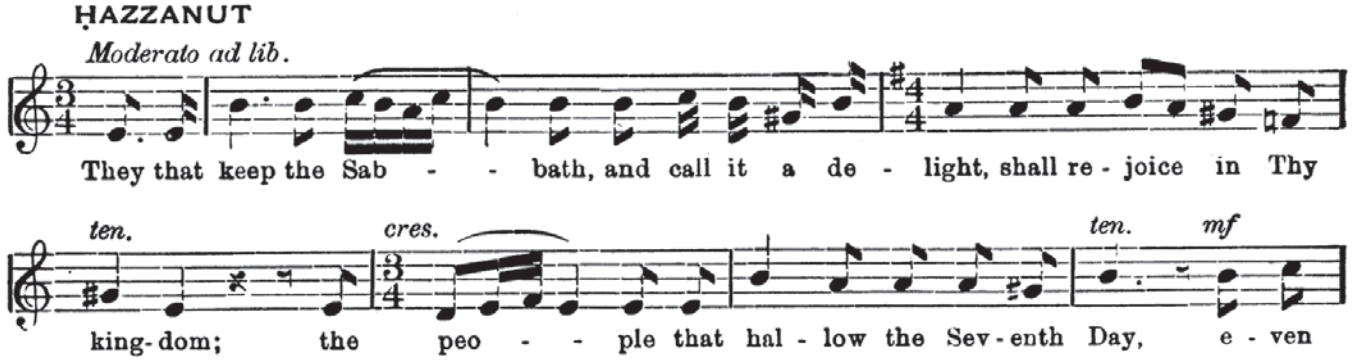
Example 16. Geshem *from the* Jewish Encyclopedia.



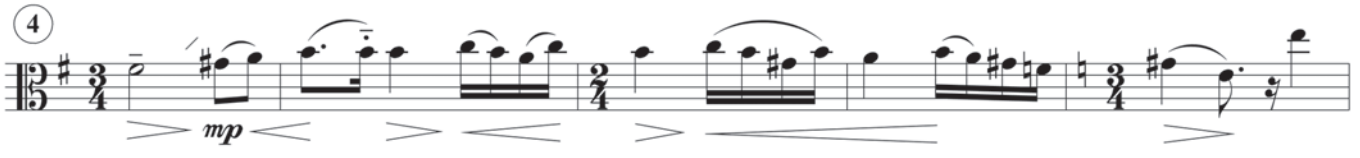
Example 17. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Affirmation*, mm. 19–25*



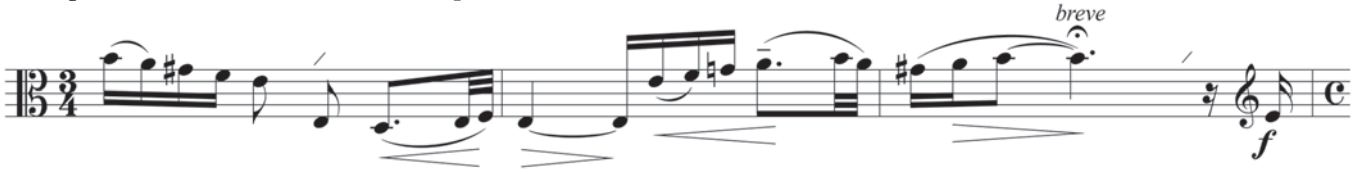
Example 18. Hazzanut *from the* Jewish Encyclopedia*, mm. 1–7.*



Example 19. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Affirmation*, mm. 25–29.*



Example 20. Ernest Bloch, Suite Hébraïque, Affirmation*, mm. 33–35.*



popular idioms as well as to traditional Ashkenazi melos. There are moments of seemingly free improvisation contrasting with passages in strict rhythm; major and minor tonalities blend with a wide variety of modalities represented by the motifs, melodies and cadences of the traditional *shtaygers*; intervals of the augmented 2nd and 4th, perfect 4th and 5th are ubiquitous; resonances of the *shofar* and frequent changes in tempo and meter enhance the alternating moods of pathos and joyfulness, intensity and relaxation, that create a deeply emotional soundscape.

In *Suite Hébraïque* specifically, every part of the viola range is explored extensively—from the deepest, almost cello-like sonorities on the C string to the most penetrating timbres high on the A string, as well as the entire gamut in between. But Bloch also made his own arrangement for violin and piano; this version and that for viola and piano were published by G. Schirmer in 1953.

The manuscript draft of the orchestral version of *Suite Hébraïque,* completed on March 10, 1951, consists of the following instrumentation: double woodwind; four horns and three trumpets; timpani, cymbals, gong, and side drum; harp and strings—a somewhat lighter timbre than that of many of Bloch's orchestral works. The orchestral score (with viola solo, plus Bloch's own alternative version for violin solo) was brought out by Schirmer in 1953.

Postscript

The Paris premiere of *Suite Hébraïque* took place on November 13, 1957 at the Salle Pleyel, with the American violinist Miriam Solovieff (1921–2004) as soloist with the Orchestre Colonne under Charles Bruck (1911–95). It may be significant that this performance was given during the First International Conference on Jewish Music, during which the celebrated American musicologist Curt Sachs (1881–1959) made his oft-quoted pronouncement about Jewish music, defining it as that music which is made by Jews, for Jews, as Jews. Might *Suite Hébraïque* have been selected to exemplify this definition?[49] As in the case of many other Bloch works published by G. Schirmer, the initials "EB" within a Star of David are placed at the center top of the decorative border of the piano scores of *Suite Hébraïque* and *Meditation and Processional* as a gesture of respect for Bloch's central contribution to the promoting of Jewish art music to its rightful place in the Western Classical canon.

Alexander Knapp is a musicologist, ethnomusicologist, educator, composer, arranger, and pianist. He graduated with MA, MusB and PhD degrees from Selwyn College, Cambridge. His most recent publication (January 2017) is entitled Ernest Bloch Studies, *a co-edited volume for Cambridge University Press.*

Notes

[1] In 1989, Broude Brothers Ltd. published an impressively idiomatic *Conclusion* composed by David L. Sills, the eminent American violist and Bloch scholar.

[2] Little seems to be known about Laderman's life, beyond his activities as a labor leader (e.g. member of the national panel on the raising of the minimum wage during World War II, and sometime Head of the Furriers' Union). See Rachel Heimovics Braun, "Ernest Bloch and His Chicago Jewish Colleagues: Remarks delivered at the Chicago Jewish Historical Society open meeting, June 12, 2011, in Rudolph Ganz Memorial Hall, Roosevelt University . . .", *Chicago Jewish History*, 35 no. 2 (Spring 2011), 5.

[3] The CFUAHC was the umbrella organization for eighteen Reform Congregations in the Chicago metropolitan area.

[4] See Braun, 4–6.

[5] The CFUAHC was particularly responsive to the idea because of its gratitude to Bloch for having composed his *Avodath Hakodesh (Sacred Service)* according to texts drawn from the American Reform liturgy for the Sabbath. See the official booklet *In Honor of Ernest Bloch on the occasion of his 70th Birthday: The Ernest Bloch Festival Association with the cooperation of The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Fine Arts Quartet and distinguished soloists present A Six-Day Ernest Bloch Music Festival,* p. 2.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid. Front cover of the brochure and front cover of the official booklet. Bloch arrived in Chicago on November 22, and was invited to religious services, receptions and dinners held in his honor. Some of these additional events, scheduled both before and after the specified dates of the Festival, included performances of several works by Bloch, including *Psalms 137 and 114*. See Bloch's letter to his niece Evelyn Hirsch sent from Agate Beach on November 16, 1950, quoted in Joseph Lewinski and Emmanuelle Dijon, *Ernest Bloch: Sa vie et sa pensée, Tome IV: 1939–1959: le havre de paix en Oregon* (Geneva: Éditions Slatkine, 2005), 403.

[8] Most of the program notes were written by Alex Cohen (medical practitioner, keen amateur violinist, great admirer of Bloch, and expert on the composer's life and music, who lived in Birmingham, UK); but a few of commentaries were contributed by Bloch himself, Ernest Newman, and the Italian music critic Guido Gatti (1892–1973).

[9] His son Ivan and elder daughter Suzanne attended some of the Festival events.

[10] The CCI was founded in ca. 1916 by the *B'nai B'rith* (international Jewish welfare organization), and it soon became a popular social and cultural centre in downtown Chicago for Jews of Eastern European background. At its height there were some 2000 members. It continued its activities until the mid-1980s.

[11] Bloch's letter to Lillian Hodghead and Ada Clement, from Agate Beach, December 14, 1950; quoted in Lewinski and Dijon, *Ernest Bloch*, IV:417.

[12] Published (undated) on the back cover of a private recording sponsored by the CCI, and included in the program notes for the orchestral premiere of *Suite Hébraïque* at Orchestra Hall, Chicago, on January 1 and 2, 1953.

[13] See, for example, Olin Downes, "Bloch Festival: Six-Day Observance in Chicago Honors Composer of Spiritual Power", *The New York Times* (Sunday, December 10, 1950). In his long article, Downes paid tribute not only to the greatness of Bloch's music but also to his remarkable abilities as a conductor.

[14] Claudia Cassidy, "Preves' Bloch Suite and Mussorgsky's 'Pictures' In Kubelik Farewell", "On the Aisle", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 2, 1953, p. A1.

[15] Bloch to Joseph Braun: see note 12.

[16] Manuscripts containing pencil sketches are held in the substantial Bloch Archive at the Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC, and rough drafts in ink at the Music Library, University of California at Berkeley.

[17] The program also included performances by Suzanne Bloch on the lute, recorder, and virginals.

[18] The order of the three movements was altered without explanation: the *Rapsodie* was placed last instead of first.

[19] Lewinski and Dijon, *Ernest Bloch*, IV:411.

[20] Braun, 5.

[21] Bloch to Joseph Braun: see note 12.

[22] D–E–F–G-sharp–A–B–C–D (also known, outside the Jewish context, as Ukrainian-Dorian). For Jewish modality, see p. 25, item (c).

[23] *Four Wedding Marches* and *Six Organ Preludes.*

[24] F–G–A–B (natural)–C–D–E–F.

[25] E–F-sharp-G-sharp–A–B–C–D–E.

[26] Cohen was born in Aldershot, England, and educated at Jews' College, London, and University College, London. He was appointed to pulpits in Dublin, London, and Sydney; and as the author of numerous books and articles, he became an internationally recognized authority on Jewish music.

[27] Isidore Singer, ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12 vols. (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1901–6).

[28] Letter in French, written by Bloch to Philip Hale, translated into English by Hale and published in *Boston Symphony Orchestra Program Notes* (March 23–4, 1917), pp. 1132 and 1134.

[29] This now forms part of the Bloch Archive at the Library of Congress.

[30] Bloch's underlinings.

[31] A very faint early draft of this document is also extant. Here, the information is presented more casually. In it, Bloch refers to the original names of the three movements (i.e. *Rhapsodie, Processional II,* and *Process. III*), thus proving that this sheet was a precursor to *EBnotes*.

[32] Bloch to Joseph Braun: see note 12.

[33] Given that FLC's commentaries were written in the early twentieth century, modern scholarship has advanced dramatically and may well be at variance with the views expressed in the encyclopedia. Nevertheless, this is the information that Bloch read and absorbed.

[34] G–A–B-flat–C–D–E-flat–F–G ("natural minor" in Western music).

[35] See FLC's entry under *Oren* in *JE* IX, pp. 431–2.

[36] Maurice was the name that Bloch's father (1832–1913) adopted when he moved to francophone Geneva, having been born in German-speaking Lengnau, a North-Swiss village in Canton Aargau. His secular name was originally Moritz and his Hebrew name Meier. Maurice had had direct exposure to liturgical music as a teenage chorister (alto) in the Lengnau Synagogue. As a young man, he had considered entering the Rabbinate, but went into business instead.

[37] Abaham Baer, Baal *T'fillah, oder "Der practische Vorbeter"* (Gothenburg, 1877); reprinted in Eric Werner (Ed.), *Out of Print Classics Series of Synagogue Music, No. 1* (New York: Sacred Music Press of the Hebrew Union School of Sacred Music, 1953), 118 *et passim.*

[38] See pp. 214–22 for FLC's entry under *Ne'ilah.*

[39] Klára Móricz states that Bloch might originally have notated this theme from memory, recalling it from his childhood. See *Jewish Identities: Nationalism, Racism, and Utopianism in Twentieth-Century Music* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2008), 128.

[40] Carl Fischer, Inc., had published the original version for violin and piano in 1924, and the orchestral version in 1940.

[41] Main octave: D–E-flat–F-sharp–G–A–B-flat–C–D (analogous to the Arabic *Maqam Hijaz*).

[42] E–F–G–A–B–C–D–E.

[43] The information in parentheses also appears in *EBnotes* and refers to Eleazar Kalir (Kallir), a native of the Levant, who was one of the most prolific and influential composers of *piyyutim* (hymns). See FLC's entry in *JE* Vol. VII, pp. 468–71; and Cecil Roth (ed.), "Kallir, Eleazar", *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1972), vol. 10, cols. 713–5.

[44] See FLC's entry on pp. 294–5.

[45] Emanuel Aguilar and Rev. David A. De Sola, *Sephardi Melodies, being the Traditional Liturgical Chants of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, London; published by the Society of Heshaim with the sanction of the Board of Elders of the Congregation* (Oxford University Press, 1931).

[46] In *CJ*, this appears on p. 28, not p. 26 as indicated in *EBnotes*.

[47] *Hazzanut* is a term used to designate "cantorial chant" as a genre within the wider framework of Jewish liturgical music. This is an example of the genre based in the *Ahava Rabba* mode on E. Main octave: E–F–G-sharp–A–B–C–D–E. See FLC's entry on *Hazzanut* on pp. 289–92.

[48] This is the Hebrew word for the ram's horn, the only instrument that survives in Jewish religious practice from Temple times (Jerusalem, during the first millennium BCE). Ever since the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE, the *shofar* has been blown according to a set of prescribed calls at New-Year and Day-of-Atonement services each fall in synagogues of every ethnicity and denomination.

[49] Scholars and commentators have never ceased to debate the definition of Jewish music. For his part, Bloch saw no contradiction between being a "Jewish" composer and a "universal" composer, and it was indeed his stated aim to reach out to the world with his "Jewish" works as well as with the three-quarters of his total creative output that showed no overt connection with his Jewish heritage. But that is a subject that falls beyond the scope of this article, and has been addressed elsewhere. See, for example, Alexander Knapp (1971), "The Jewishness of Bloch: Subconscious or Conscious?", *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association 1970-71*, 97, 99–112.

Approaches to Modern European Viola Repertoire: A Conversation with John Stulz

Anne Lanzilotti and John Stulz

Introduction by Anne Lanzilotti

As an interpreter of contemporary music, I am often asked by students how to execute techniques. While that is something that intrigues me, most of my time is spent examining the philosophy behind extended techniques, how to teach those techniques, and how to stay extremely relaxed while playing highly controlled, technical repertoire. Recently, John Stulz and I have been talking about the Lucerne Festival Academy (where we met in 2008) and the way the audition repertoire reflects the values of the organization.

Stulz began working on these pieces while he was a student at the New England Conservatory studying under Garth Knox. Stulz would come in every week with a new work, developing ways of approaching European modern viola repertoire. Stulz is now a composer-performer based in Paris. In addition to his position as violist in the Ensemble Intercontemporain, he is a co-founder and co-artistic director of VIVO Music Festival in his hometown of Columbus, Ohio. His commitment to performing contemporary music is strengthened by his deep engagement with philosophies of composition. In one breath, he'll be explaining Radulescu bow techniques, and in the next he'll be talking about how Calvino's *Six Essays for the New Millennium* informed his approach to contemporary music.

Younger violists have begun to ask us about how to approach this repertoire—mainly through their own interest in auditioning for the Lucerne Festival Academy—so we began discussing these concepts more and decided to put some ideas together for students who might not know where to start. Here is the list from this year's audition:

Ligeti: Sonata for Viola Solo (1991–4)
Berio: *Sequenza VI* (1967)
Maderna: *Viola* (1971)
B.A. Zimmermann: Sonata for Solo Viola: ". . . an den Gesang eines Engels" (1955)
Scelsi: *Manto* (1957)
Pintscher: *in nomine: Übermalung for Viola solo* (1999)
Grisey: *Prologue for Solo Viola* (1976)
Sciarrino: *Tre notturni brillanti* (1975)
Fujikura: *Engraving* (2014)
Hosokawa: *Threnody: to the victims of Tohoku Earthquake 3.11* (2011)
Kurtág: *Signs, Games, and Messages for Solo Viola* (1961–2005)

Looking at this list can be daunting, but perhaps by listening to the works or hearing some of the ways to approach them, students might find "truths" in the pieces that speak to them, or broader concepts for approaching contemporary repertoire that might resonate with them. The following is adapted from our recent discussion.

Anne Lanzilotti: *You've often talked about the idea of "finding a truth of a piece of music" as a starting point to how you interpret it. Could you elaborate on that idea?*

John Stulz: The aim of any great work is to create truths. This holds for music just as it does for literature, science, politics, painting or philosophy. In music, truth is neither linguistic nor logical. It comes out in instants, in moments of true feeling. But there are truths nonetheless, undeniable concepts and emotions that are eternal, infinite, and universal openings in the world. Our goal as performers is to present great works in a way that can somehow rip our listeners out of their world, even if just for a split second, and bring them into an experience of truth as something greater than themselves. In this sense,

music for me has always been a praxis towards freedom from the banalities of our tiny everyday worlds. Each great piece of music contains some experience of truth.

I start from this kind of thinking not because I claim to know truth or how one achieves it through performance, but because I think that this music in particular demands a gesture towards truth. Each of the pieces on this list come from a radical conviction which it is our job to find, understand and somehow make our own before we can successfully create the possibility of those convictions breaking through into the world. As performers, we need to do more than simply play a piece, we need to take a stand with it, we need to become a subject of the work and its truths.

So, when we begin to work on any new piece we need to enter its world from three simultaneous levels, all circling around this idea of uncovering its truths. We need to build the piece up instrumentally, we have to examine it analytically, and we must prepare ourselves philosophically to become a subject of the work. In this sense, we are working with three forms of virtuosity: instrumental virtuosity in the model of Paganini, the virtuosity of the intellect which Luciano Berio talks about in his excellent lectures *Remembering the Future*, and the virtuosity of the self that Luigi Nono calls "musical-being."

What are some ways that you as a performer engage with the material in order to expose those "truths" to an audience?

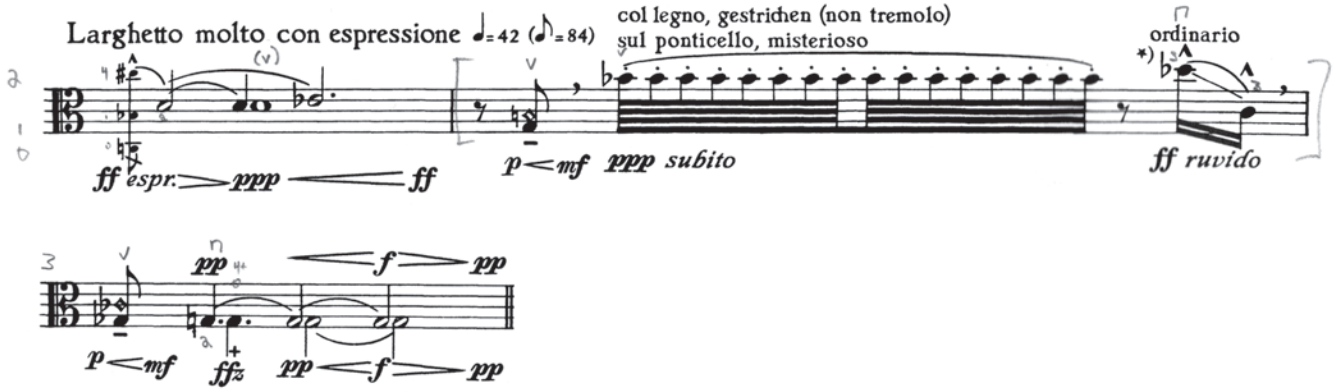
The first step is to gain control over the material itself. I start by learning to recite the piece, which means being able to execute as faithfully and easily as possible what's written on the page. This building phase relies on the same basic practicing techniques we use with any kind of music: slow practice, thinking critically about how to solve technical problems, finding ways to execute difficult passages as easily and efficiently as possible.

With music after World War II, this is of course a bit trickier because the degree of specificity for each sound increased radically as a result of both new developments in electronic music where the composer had to program each parameter of each sound individually, and the Darmstadt School's reading of Webern where each parameter is treated individually to compositional sequencing. Take, for example, the first three bars of Zimmermann's Sonata (ex. 1). Each note has its own specific dynamic, articulation, timbre, expression, and mode of playing. To play the piece properly is to have control over each and every one of these individual parameters.

You can quickly build this technique by practicing scales while focusing on controlling each parameter individually. With dynamics, for instance, start by alternating between *piano* and *forte* for each note of a scale. Have clear, equal levels so that each *forte* note is the same and each *piano* note is the same. Then, add levels, so you have ***pp–p–f–ff***, until you eventually get to the point where you can play a sequence like ***p–f–mp–fff–ppp–pp–f*** clearly enough that someone could write an accurate dictation of your dynamics.

You can take the same principle and build up a similar level of control for any parameter of sound—which in turn builds fluency and control over a much broader range of sounds on the instrument. The key to learning

Example 1. Bernd Alois Zimmerman, Sonata für Viola solo, mm. 1–3, with handwritten markings from John Stulz.

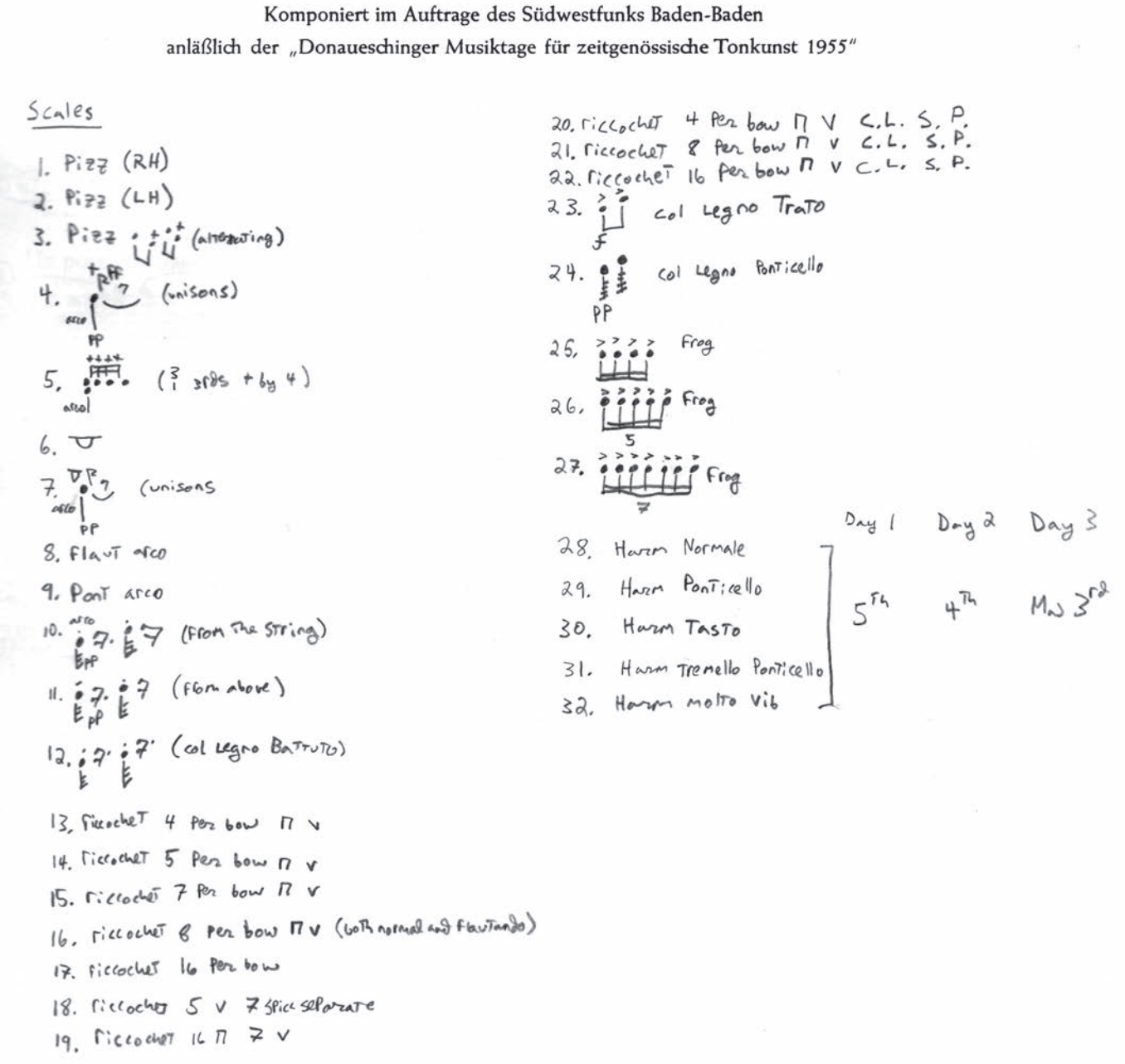


any new technique—I don't like the term extended techniques because it places an arbitrary limit that gets in the way of our openness to exploring the instrument—is to remember that the values always stay the same. Whether you're working on basic sound production or playing overpressure scratch tones, you need to perform with beauty, ease and control.

Scales are, of course, the best place to build technique. I was lucky that my teachers Roland Vamos, Donald McInnes, and Kim Kashkashian emphasized this fact. The trick, once you've developed a basic fluency with scales, is to put them to proper use so they can serve your needs. When I first started learning the Zimmerman Sonata, I followed Mr. Vamos's lead and wrote a scale regimen into my part, playing scales with each of the 32 techniques in the piece (fig. 1).

You can do this for any piece, breaking apart all of its elements so that you can focus on each technique individually. If you practice a regimen like this every day, you start to gain facility and control in no time. By

Figure 1. John Stulz's scale regimen for Zimmerman's Sonata for Viola solo.



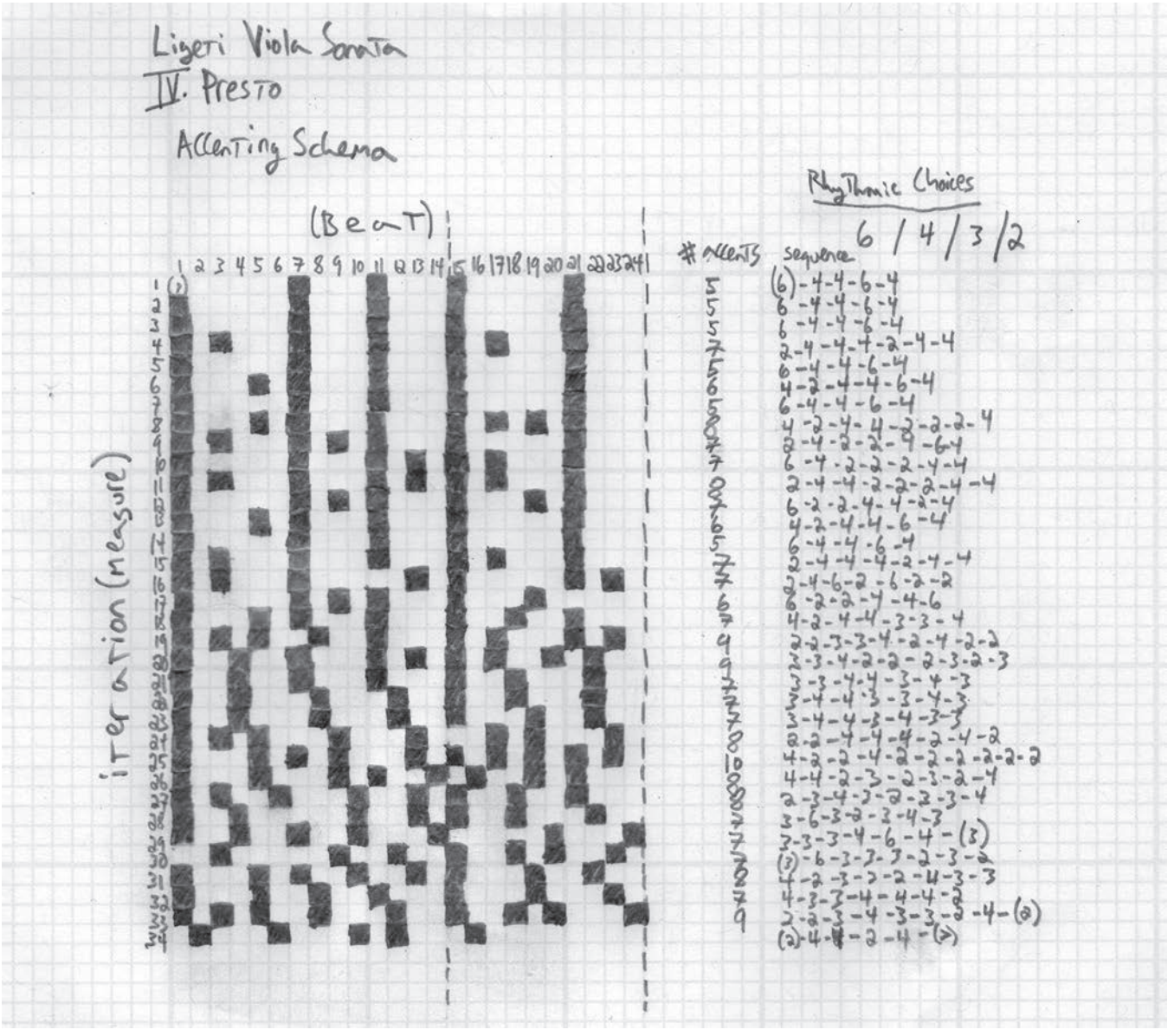
building an instrumental control of the material, you can bring the piece to life in a way that reveals the truths of the piece through the structure of the piece.

And in the Zimmermann, in order to go beyond the structure of the piece, you have to show the structure of the piece.

Exactly! That's what we could call the Boulez approach: show the logic of the piece. This is why, simultaneously with building up the piece instrumentally, we need to invest time in analysis. The end goal is to create hierarchy so that your audience can focus their listening. With Zimmerman that means showing the mirror structures, showing the variations, and playing with recurring motifs or harmonies like the opening chord. This becomes especially important in hyper-complex music by Boulez, Carter, or Ferneyhough. It's the same basic approach that you'd take to interpreting a Bach fugue. The goal is to create a "live analysis" by playing in such a way that you analyze the piece for your audience through performance. Or, put another way, play so that the audience can actually hear how you hear the piece.

So, if a performer is meticulous about the details of a piece, they can both reveal the structure or logic for themselves and the audience. In the Zimmermann, I believe timbre highlights or brings the structure into focus. These timbral details make the palindromes audible. I found that using

Figure 2. Stulz's chart of the accents from the fourth movement of Ligeti's Sonata for Viola Solo.



different highlighter colors to help me see the bow technique changes—from ponticello *to* ordinario*, as well as* col legno*—also helped me see the structure clearly. That visualization helped me not only perform these timbres accurately, but also to see the palindromes in real time as I was playing them—to see structure in time.*

That's a great technique for analysis. I like to play off clean parts in performance, so I often have secondary copies that are analyzed like this. The point is to clarify the structure in your mind.

Another useful technique is to create maps or graphs. The chart I made plotting the accents in the Presto movement of the Ligeti Sonata was incredibly helpful for me in getting beyond the instrumental difficulties of playing the piece (fig. 2). It allowed me to move between a musical logic and a visual logic, helping me to see the work for the simple chaotic breakdown that it is. At the same time, it served as a neat reminder of the kind of ideas in Ligeti's mind at the time, mirroring both the graphic cellular automata of chaos theory and the beautiful player piano rolls of Conlon Nancarrow.

Graphs or other visualizations help not just with clarifying the structure, but also with establishing a sense of the extremes of the piece.

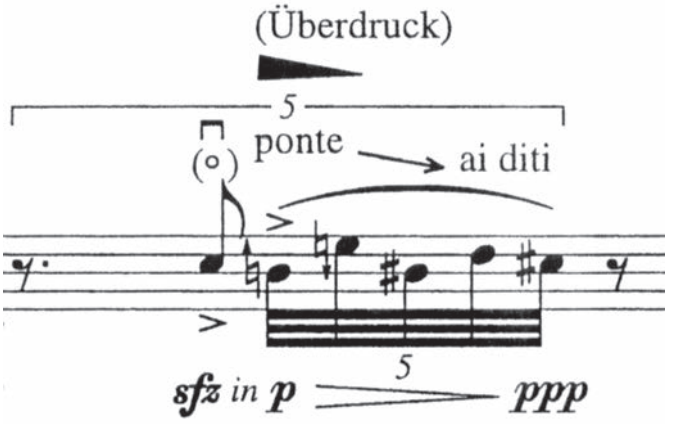
Yes. Wild extremes are a defining feature of modernism. This music forces us to think more openly about what we can do with our instrument, to go to new extremes.

One of the great moments in music history is in *Kontakte* (1958–60) where Stockhausen shows us that pitch is rhythm by glissing from a steady high pitch down through our entire range of pitch perception until the sound is revealed as a series of rhythmic pulses. It shows that sound is, at its most fundamental, simply a rhythmic disturbance moving through a medium. There are no limits beyond that. Each parameter is simply a consequence of physical force and thus, within the extreme limits of perceptibility, an infinitely-variable possibility space. With Zimmermann, we had to treat parameters platonically, as you would with orchestral excerpts. A *forte* note is always a *forte* note within the space of the piece, an F-sharp always an F-sharp. But with Grisey, Scelsi, and Pintscher we leave that world of ideal forms for the murky space of continuum.

. . . Ideal forms, and also ideal beauty, or rather traditional concepts of "beautiful." Some of these works have gorgeous, ephemeral sounds that don't work unless you let go of always trying to make a traditional, ordinary sound with lots of vibrato. Where do you think the beauty of the sound in these works comes from?

The beauty of sound comes from the material quality of the sound itself, which compels us to approach each gesture as a gestalt or unity. James Tenney's book *META+HODOS* is a great introduction to this idea. This gesture from Pintscher's *in nomine* (ex. 2) starts with a *ponticello* overpressure ("überdruck") "***sfz*** in ***p***" (!) which dissipates to ***ppp*** as the bow travels all the way towards the left-hand fingers ("ai diti"). The overall result is essentially a kind of sensual grunt, quickly shifting from scratch through tone to muffled noise. All of this is one gesture, one unity. The beauty comes from the transition between these extremes, the life within a sound. It's similar to when a teacher will tell you to play between the notes in Schubert, it's *difference* which gives meaning, which produces tension. Here we are simply playing between sound states. Kim Kashkashian's approach of sculpting notes from within is the same idea applied to classical performance.

Example 2. Matthias Pintscher, in nomine*, mm. 2*



Do you think your approach to finding "beauty" in these works is different than finding it in a Brahms sonata?

No—and Matthias would be the first to agree with me on that. The only difference is that I have a clear idea of beauty with these pieces whereas beauty has always eluded me with Brahms! But in both cases, if you play without natural freedom, musical intention, and a proper concept of beauty, you are just going to confuse people. We are lucky our teachers know the classics well enough to guide us in the right direction. With contemporary music, unless we have access to someone who has really lived with this music—like I was fortunate enough to have had in Garth Knox—we have to figure it out on our own.

Do you think that's because old concepts of beauty and old forms are more ingrained?

Absolutely. We are trained to understand the older forms, the sense of repetition, harmonic tension, and order. These forms, however, are generally much more subtle than what we find in the contemporary repertoire. Just look again at the diagram for the Ligeti Sonata—try making something like that for a Brahms quintet!

For me, form is memory: the synthesis of past events with the present to imply a future. Events can grow out of the past, be in conflict with the past, have no relation to the past, or even negate the past. Reading is an important way into understanding this. We think of literature as something removed from time, but the act of reading takes time. With every word memory is added to. Take the novels of Joyce, Beckett, Cortázar, Burroughs or Thomas Bernhard. Each of these authors radically experimented with this fact, and redefined the form of the read novel. Their thinking was in turn picked up by composers and applied to composition, as each of these authors have come up as citations by various composers in my background research. Just as with the visual representations of Ligeti above, it is important to shift between different modalities of thought, tracing ideas as they appear across disciplines.

That's something that I loved about the Iannis Xenakis book you recommended, Formalized Music. *It has changed the way I think about time and memory. I believe those concepts can be applied to all types of music, but they are perhaps hyper-realized in these new pieces. Or maybe we just give ourselves permission to find our own solutions and listen this way with new works because they don't yet carry the same weight of tradition.*

Xenakis is the perfect model of transdisciplinary thinking. In each composition, he brings together concepts from statistics, architecture, myth and philosophy, forcing us mere instrumentalists to follow him and engage with highly specialized ideas in each of those disciplines. First and foremost, he taught us to listen stochastically, to perceive complex masses like a flock of birds as one unit. Whereas at the micro level of each gesture the detail in a lot of contemporary music is staggering, at the macro level overall forms are often bold, direct, and straightforward. *Finnegans Wake* is a wild book filled with an infinite world of detail, but at the end of the day it's only the stream of unconsciousness of a sleeping (or dead) man stuck in an eternal loop. By the old standards, a Jackson Pollock painting is formless, but then you take a step back and remember that it's just primal psychic action in a rectangle. Contemporary music is often formally direct in a similar way which, in a sense, makes it easier to understand.

Perhaps then figuring it out on your own is an exciting part of the work: to think about which process the composer is using, to be able to navigate between the expanse of details and the focus that form or process brings. Which of these works do you think are most direct or bold in their use of form?

Ligeti's Sonata is based on the idea of chaotic growth, looping, and cycling. As the drawing above shows, each movement is, on the formal level, a simple gesture which is easy to show in performance. Grisey and Berio also use simple processes, but combined in a slightly more complex overall structure. Each of Sciarrino's *Tre notturni brillanti* are built on only a few repeating ideas, so it becomes a simple game of how the gestures are different each time. This makes them wonderful pieces for children. And then, of course, the most basic form of all is the so-called Moment Form we find in Maderna. It is a rejection of narrative logic; the performer's role is simply to play each gesture as is. The listener will associate or not as they see fit, but it's really an internally open piece, where each moment is what counts—which is why you can, and should, play it in any order.

The ability to make associations in any of these works takes focused listening on the part of the audience. This also means taking on the perspective of the composer: how they hear sound, how they make sense of structure in time. Perspective-taking is something I've been thinking about a lot recently. The greatest resource of this list is that it gathers various voices with different perspectives on form, organization, melody, etc. Playing these pieces means taking on these different ways of thinking.

That's because these composers knew the truth of the avant-garde! They understood that art can only be art if it is new. Each of these composers had to struggle with the entire history of western music and against each other to create a musical language that was both singular and new. The diversity of ideas is absolutely stunning—and that's from a list which doesn't even include the greatest masters of the era: Boulez, Nono, Xenakis, Feldman, Stockhausen, Carter, and Cage! Although we know now that this old concept of avant-garde only saw the world from a very limited perspective (except, maybe, in Nono's case), it's important to retain the basic understanding that meaning comes from the hard work of expanding one's world.

And it's so important to do this hard work today! For us, that means not just learning how to execute a piece only to let it go once it's "learned." We need to continue and deepen our engagement with these works by grappling with their ideas over long stretches of time. Music, like all things, is terribly unsatisfying if it exists only at the surface level so common in our current mindset.

I think that's part of what Dai Fujikura wanted to do by asking the performer to determine the order of the "elements" and therefore the form in Engraving. *By forcing the performers to choose which permutation of the piece to play, he is making them think about how these textures or systems of organization could be put together to create a piece. He asks them not just to learn the notes, or to be able to execute the piece on a "surface level," but also to take part in the process of thinking deeply about how one thing leads to another.*

That's what was so clever about Dai's piece, which admittedly I have yet to work on. It was a test piece, but rather than testing the violist's ability to play notes, he tested their understanding of form.

Yes, and the results were fascinating. Of course, my preferred order is influenced by the order he sent "elements" to me while he was working on the piece. I only experienced seeing the elements one at a time as he sent them—I would record them and send them back, offering suggestions for playability. So they began to take shape as individual pieces before they were a part of the whole. Also, having played so much of his viola music and seeing how he deals with form affects my instincts about how one element should lead to the next. However, it was wonderful to see how the participants in the Tokyo International Competition [for which the piece was written] all came up with their own solutions that felt true to their interpretations.

This gets back to the ideas of virtuosity we discussed earlier: those performances were convincing because the performers all succeeded in getting beyond the technical facets of the instrument to deal with the piece on a deeper level. You can't just thoughtlessly pick the order; you have to carry out an analysis based on the ramifications of the order you chose. Just as in the opposite case of Maderna, you can't (thoughtlessly) try to compose a logical order. Any sense of predetermined order would kill the piece.

We have talked a lot about the performer making form clear to the audience, but where do you draw the line between emphasizing perceptibility and affecting one's performing too much?

That's a hard one! I think it goes back to our model of how to play a fugue so you show the logic of the piece. If you overemphasize one voice it becomes redundant and you take away the possibility of listening on different levels. I think approaching with the goal of creating multiple levels for listening is key. We need to show and guide and analyze the work for our audience, but we still need to allow them to listen to the work on all of its various levels. Just as there is a skill of listening contrapuntally, there is a skill to listening to various contemporary musics. Ideally, we should perform in such a way that makes sense for both those listeners who have that skill and those who don't.

One trick is to find ways of using subtle visual cues to help guide your listener. For instance, being intentional about placing a mute in the dramatic place of the music (as in that weird muted aside in the last movement of Bartok's second string quartet), holding still during a fermata to physically mirror the musical stasis, or turning your ear toward the viola to listen "inside" the instrument. It's really just a matter of recognizing the theater of performance and using that to your advantage without getting in the way. Garth Knox is the master of this; when he plays he teaches you how to listen.

. . . Which is emphasized by his focus on playing naturally—these moments of gesture are all a part of a greater system of physical ease and facility, so it never seems unnatural.

Yes, everything is integrated. The greatest hurdle is finding a way to turn these abstract musical languages into something completely natural and organic to you as a performer. Virtuosity, regardless of the type, always means making something easy despite the enormous amount of work and effort put in behind the scenes.

Berio's *Sequenza* is the virtuoso piece ne plus ultra. In spite of its radical physical demands, you need to play in such a way that it is free and relaxed. That means, through smart practicing, learning how to let go, learning how to economize effort, and learning how to vary muscle usage so that you never over exert one muscle to the point of collapse.

While keeping physical ease as paramount, does the hall or space you perform in change how you approach the theater of performance?

Certainly. Music is always sound in space, which means we have to understand how to play the room. The space is not only an extension of your instrument, but an instrument in itself.

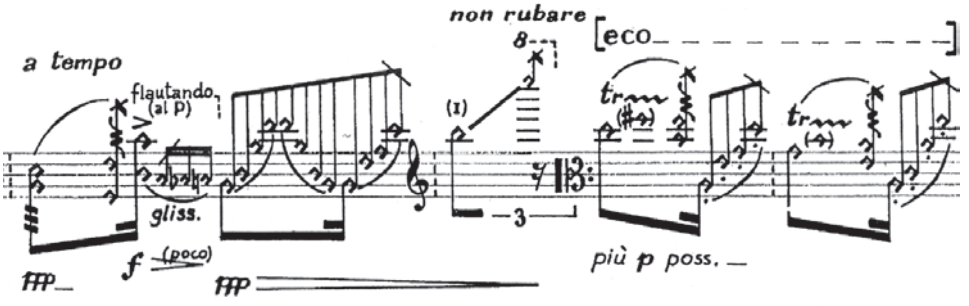
In his first notturno (ex. 3), Sciarrino toys around with the idea of audibility: play as quietly as possible and then play the echo of that (the notes marked "[eco_ _ _ _]")! This is music really at, and often under, the limit of what the public can hear. That requires us to factor in the distance between us and the listener, resonance, ambient sounds, and each individual's range of perception in order to know how the piece will be perceived. We are inverting the traditional dynamic which says that the violist needs to articulate and enunciate sounds so that they are clearly understood; here we are hiding sounds in the shadows so the public is challenged to listen.

That challenge itself is some of the drama of performance. Getting the audience to lean in can make a large space seem small, or make a small space seem infinite. Kurtág often demands both: this ability to get the audience to lean in, and the ability to project aggressive energy to the back of the hall. When you have to perform a piece that makes these sorts of demands of extremes in sound, how do you approach learning and performing it?

Kurtág might be the most demanding composer of all on this list; it is a music of impossibility coming from an existential necessity. In a way, his presence on this list is a trap! They are not just short pieces you can put together quickly to fulfill the contemporary music requirement. It takes the highest levels of instrumental, intellectual and philosophical virtuosity to achieve even a semi-decent performance. Practicing it makes me feel like I'm on a blind pilgrimage, like I'm hundreds of miles away from a place I want to be that possibly doesn't exist but each step *might* take me a little closer.

The point, to reiterate, is not that we claim to know "truth" or what makes a performance "truthful," but that we gesture towards truth. Achieving the basic standards of a piece (sound, intonation, rhythm, etc.) is only the first step. Each of these pieces is an infinite opening. They are like Bach, a lifetime of work. The exciting thing is that as younger violists are starting to learn these pieces, we are watching them become part of the canon. Now our task is to unlock their truths.

Example 3. Salvatore Sciarrino, I. Di volo, mm. 14–16 from Tre notturni brillanti.



Anne Lanzilotti is a performer, composer, scholar, and educator. In addition to her position as Assistant Professor of Viola at University of Northern Colorado School of Music, she runs the Contemporary Music Ensemble and is Co-Director of Open Space Festival of New Music. As a performer, Dr. Lanzilotti has distinguished herself by collaborating with composers of her generation. Read more about her current commissioning initiative with Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Andrew Norman, and Scott Wollschleger, The 20/19 Project at http://annelanzilotti.com

John Stulz plays viola with Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris, France and is founding co-artistic director of VIVO Music Festival in Columbus, Ohio. Prior to joining EIC in 2015, John was a fellow of Carnegie Hall's Ensemble ACJW and performed with such organizations as the Marlboro Music Festival, Klangforum Wien (Austria), Omnibus Ensemble (Uzbekistan), and What's Next? Ensemble in Los Angeles which he founded with conductor Vimbayi Kaziboni. John's teachers include Donald McInnes, Kim Kashkashian, Roland and Almita Vamos, and Garth Knox.

Meet the Section: Utah Symphony

Julie Edwards

The Utah Symphony Viola Section, in Carnegie Hall, Spring 2016.
Back row (left to right): Carl Johansen, Scott Lewis, Joel Gibbs, Brant Bayless, Julie Edwards. Front row: Leslie Richards, Chris McKellar, Elizabeth Beilman, Whittney Thomas, Roberta Zalkind

The Mighty Nine. (But sometimes Ten.) We grew up all over the country, from California to Alaska and all over the Midwest. We come from different musical backgrounds, and we studied with teachers ranging literally from A to Z: Arad to Zukerman. Our tenures in the orchestra range from two to fifty years. We all have different styles of playing, different musical ideas, different concepts of sound, but in the end, we come together and create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. And that is the joy of section string playing.

My colleagues are all wonderful individuals, and I learn so much from sitting with each one of them. When I share a stand with Chris, I'm reminded to try to live a whole artistic and creative life. He paints, he makes pickles, and bakes his own bread from wheat he grew in his garden! Whittney's left hand is so free, I've learned how to release mine from watching hers. Roberta's vibrato is one I've sat in rehearsal and tried—and failed—to emulate. Our principal, Brant Bayless, articulates like nobody else; many of us strive to play like Brant, but it

can't be done. I admire Scott's elegance, Elizabeth is so quick to catch bowing changes, Leslie exudes a calming presence and appears to remain unruffled—even when we should be ruffled—and Joel always hears the misprints and wrong notes. And when I share a stand with Carl, I'm reminded how much fun we can have, and how we can make a double entendre out of anything!

Associate principal Roberta Zalkind is on sabbatical this year, and we are happy that our first call sub and our Mighty 10th player, Leslie Richards, is joining us for the season.

I hope you enjoy meeting my colleagues, the wonderful violists of the Utah Symphony.

Where are you from, and how did you begin playing the viola?

Brant Bayless: Ponca City, Oklahoma! Our little town had a GREAT public school music program, and I started viola in 5th grade. I wanted to play violin, but my dad heard that you had to rent violins, but there was a whole closet full of violas for free!

Elizabeth Beilman: My family moved around a lot when I was young, but I consider both Chicago, IL and Ann Arbor, MI to be my hometowns. Ann Arbor is also the place where I began to play the viola! In high school, I was at a chamber music camp as a violinist, but there was a need for a violist in a Dvorak Piano Quintet group. I volunteered to play and had the great fortune to be coached by Cynthia Phelps. When she learned that I had recently moved to Ann Arbor and had never studied the viola before, she recommended I contact Yizhak Schotten at University of Michigan. The rest is history!

Joel Gibbs: My hometown is St. Louis, Missouri, but I was born in Scappoose, Oregon. When a new baby was born, cards were sent that said a new papoose has come to Scappoose! I started on viola when I was 12 years old. My orchestra teacher asked if I would add viola to the violin I was already playing in orchestra. I continued playing both through high school and I doubled on both instruments until graduate school when viola became a bigger focus. Midway through grad school, when I successfully auditioned onto the sub list for the Milwaukee Symphony, I realized that viola was a promising career path. I thought, "Hey, this could be a real thing!"

Scott Lewis: I grew up in South Bend, Indiana and in St. Peter, Minnesota, but was born in Anaheim, California. My father played in the Los Angeles Philharmonic violin section. My parents met while both playing violin in the St. Louis Symphony. My older sister played cello, so I picked viola to round out a quartet in my family. I was drawn to the tone of the viola after hearing its sound in a quartet my parents played in. The violist in that group had played in the Chicago Symphony under Fritz Reiner. I was eight when I started private lessons with my mom, who was a terrific player and teacher.

Roberta Zalkind: I grew up in Reseda, Southern California. My origin story is that I was a pianist, but I didn't want to practice, and so I thought playing a string instrument might be easier! I loved the idea of playing in an orchestra, and playing chamber music with others. I was almost 16 when I started playing viola, I fell in love with it the minute I played it. It was a cosmic thing and I was drawn to it. I was sucked into the C-string and there was no going back.

Chris McKellar: I was actually born in Salt Lake City, but grew up in Orem, Utah. I played violin in junior high school. During my senior year of high school, I came to Salt Lake to study with Sally Peck, who taught both violin and viola. One Saturday after youth symphony, I was playing the Bruch Concerto, and Sally asked if I'd considered ever playing viola. So we went and found a viola, and when I started playing it was like coming home. The size was just right, and I didn't have to hold back on the pressure. And the sound! I was a violist after that.

In 1966, while still in my senior year of high school, my teacher took me to Maestro Maurice Abravanel's house to play for him. He had a studio in his basement, with a grand piano. He was in his bathrobe; he loved to take naps in the afternoon. I understood that I was auditioning for him, but time went by and I still hadn't heard anything. A few months later I got a call that I was in the symphony. So, I bought a set of tails, got my shots and a passport, and the first concert I played was in Carnegie Hall! From there, we went on tour to Athens, Greece to play in the Athens festival. We played Shostakovich's Violin Concerto with David Oistrakh, and the audience just went crazy.

Back in those days, Utah Symphony rehearsals were at 6 PM, so you could work or go to school during the day, and still play in the symphony. Later on, the symphony added an 8:15 AM rehearsal, so I could go to rehearsal, and then drive like mad to get to an 11 AM class at the University of Utah.

Whittney Thomas: I was born and raised in San Diego, California. I began playing the viola when I was about 17 years old, but I already had been playing violin for 9 years. My youth orchestra conductor was offering a viola class to people as a secondary instrument so I decided to take it and fell in love. When it came to choosing which instrument to study in school, it was an easy decision considering my mother was not a fan of viola and I was a defiant teenager!

Leslie Richards: I grew up in Vernal, Utah, but I consider Salt Lake City to be my musical hometown. When we moved to Vernal, we were pleased to find they had a school orchestra program, which sadly was cut a couple of years after we moved. My sister started playing the cello, and even though I was in first grade and too young to participate, I decided I wanted to play an instrument too. I chose the viola for two reasons: my sister didn't want me to play the violin because it was too high and squeaky, and the orchestra director said I'd have a lot more opportunities if I chose the viola. Both have turned out to be true!

Carl Johansen: I grew up around the country. I was born in New York City, and grew up in Boston, Rockford, Illinois and Juneau, Alaska. I did my undergraduate work at Willamette University, in Salem Oregon. I went to Manhattan School of Music, where I got a Master's degree and began working on a DMA. In 1992, I won an audition for a spot in the section of what is now called Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona y Nacional de Cataluña. I joined the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in 2000, the Rochester Philharmonic in 2002, and the Utah Symphony in 2005.

What's your favorite memory of playing in the Utah Symphony?

Joel: One of my favorite memories is probably my first tour with the Utah Symphony. I was amazed at how beautiful my new home state was. We visited places like Moab and Torrey, I'd never seen anything like the red rock country.

Brant: Maybe it's because of his recent death, but some memorable performances that really come to mind are of Bruckner 8 and 9 under Maestro Stanislaw Skrowaczewski. Other highlights are last season, our 75th Anniversary, that included recording projects and our return to Carnegie Hall, as well as the several times I've been privileged to stand in front of this wonderful orchestra as a soloist.

Roberta: My favorite memory in the Utah Symphony was hearing [former principal clarinetist] Christie Lundquist play Rachmaninoff symphony solos—such an exquisite clarinet sound.

Scott: My favorite memory is from right after Christie passed away. The symphony decided to perform the slow movement from Vaughn-Williams "London" Symphony in memory of her on a subscription concert. Joseph Silverstein conducted. Our principal and associate were unable to play that night, so I was put in to play the haunting solo. The feeling of the whole orchestra coming together to honor Christie Lundquist is a feeling I will never forget. All of us in the music business have our differences, but luckily the music is always there to bring us together into a common experience of beauty and inspiration.

What was some of the best advice you've received that helped you in your career?

Roberta: The best piece of advice I got came from Paul Jorgensen, a former member of the viola section of the Utah Symphony. He told me when I first got in the orchestra, "Now you'll need to practice your Carl Flesch every day, or else you will lose your chops!" He is the reason I became a solid player.

Carl: One piece of advice that I've received came from Philip Ruder, a violinist who was teaching at the Grand Teton Orchestral Training Seminar. He told us that sometimes in orchestra we needed to make a sound that would be perhaps too thin to sound good individually, but if we all played that way the collective sound would be magnificent. Over the years, I have concluded that he was right about that.

Scott: The best piece of viola advice came from a former principal of the Cleveland Orchestra who taught an orchestral repertoire class at Cleveland Institute of Music.

He told us that he had secret way make the excerpts much easier and enjoyable for the rest of our careers: Prepare each one like a solo you are getting ready for the Geneva Competition. I totally did not appreciate that at the time, but it was true and has become my guiding professional principle.

What advice do you wish to share with violists aspiring to an orchestral career?

Roberta: I think that anybody who aspires to be an orchestra musician must make a conscious effort to take care of their bodies. Be very aware of your posture, take care of your backs, necks, arms, hands, and be aware of your setup in the orchestra. When people first get into an orchestra, they're so used to being able to play full strength all the time, but one really must be able to pace themselves through the rigors of the symphony orchestra schedule.

Brant: How you play on the job can't be like how you play in an audition. Flexibility, awareness, and great big open ears are the most important parts of being in an orchestra, and these things really can't be judged at an audition. So, don't leave those qualities completely behind as you take auditions and are hopefully met with success.

Carl: Audition preparation is something very different from being in school and playing concertos and sonatas all day long. Self-awareness and self-analysis are extremely important, and for that reason I strongly recommend recording yourself frequently. I record myself in almost every practice session. I use a video camera, to check if my bow direction is good, if I'm making as much of a phrase as I think I am, or if I'm rushing the 16th notes in passagework.

Joel: In orchestra life, you need to find ways to keep music fresh, such as teaching, outside performance opportunities, or other ways to have an independent creative or musical outlet. Playing in an orchestra doesn't feel very independent most of the time. I feel most independent in a chamber music setting—even a couple times a year is helpful.

Elizabeth: Focusing on an orchestra career does not mean neglecting your other musical passions. I continue to be pleasantly surprised at how much my orchestra job gives me the ability to pursue solo playing, chamber music performances and private teaching.

Chris: I guess I'd want musicians who wish for an orchestra career to know that you should take up a career as a musician not because you can play, but because you have to play. I had some burnout at one point in my career, and I shook myself and said, "Reconnect with the music, and look at what you're doing." It's not about the practicing or the technical parts, but it's about the music! Remember that you have 85 individual musicians on stage that come together and create a magnificent whole.

Scott: A life of professional music making is as full of challenges as most other lives. I do feel strongly that living with music, striving to recreate it at a high level, and sharing it with other music lovers does compensate for many of the frustrations professionals face. My advice for anyone who is considering a career as an orchestral violist is to make sure you are truly passionate about your playing and your art. Be prepared to make it a lifelong process of learning and growing.

What's your favorite thing about the Utah Symphony viola section, and what is your favorite viola soli to play?

Chris: The viola section has always been good, but back when Sally Peck was here, most of the section members were her students. We always really tried for the same sound, and we all adored her, so we all tried to be devoted. When viola jokes became popular, a couple people in the orchestra told me that they didn't get them because the jokes didn't apply to this viola section! My most satisfying moment in the orchestra was playing *Don Quixote* with Maurice Abravanel conducting. Rachmaninoff has lots of great viola section moments, as does Bartok Concerto for Orchestra, but Mahler's Tenth Symphony is it!

Leslie: Definitely the opening of the second suite from *Daphnis et Chloé*. It doesn't get more magical than that. That piece has always held deep meaning for me, and I feel lucky every time I get to play that gorgeous melody—except maybe at auditions!

Joel: I love performing Sunrise from *Daphnis et Chloé*. It shows off what's great about the viola section, and it is the most beautiful moment in one of my favorite pieces.

Carl: My favorite thing to play with the viola section is the slow part near the beginning of *Daphnis et Chloé.* And Brahms symphonies are always a pleasure. I don't know what the viola section would be known for, but I think we're in a good place with people getting along and trying to all row in the same direction.

Roberta: I think that we the viola section have an incredible sound and wonderful energy. Our section is like a family and I feel lucky to be close to a lot of members of my section!

Anything individually that we may be feeling vanishes when we have an awesome section soli to play. My favorite soli to play is Mahler's Tenth Symphony. I remember when [Music Director Thierry Fischer] asked us to read it for a photo shoot service, and we just played the heck out of it! I was so stoked!

Scott: There has always been a shared feeling of striving for higher levels of ensemble and musicianship. The strength of the section comes from all its members taking great pride in individual and collective preparation and execution. I also believe that there is a real sense of community and respect between members in the section. Very seldom have I been aware of personal issues affecting the way the section plays and works together. I feel a real sense of professionalism in the violas.

What do you do outside orchestra life, or what do you want the viola world to know about you?

Whittney: I recently signed up for Alta's learn to ski program. Yes, I'm finally skiing after 3 years of living here, better late than never! I'm really looking forward to seeing how I progress. I'm also in the process of becoming a big sister for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah.

Brant: Skiing, all kinds! Biking, all kinds! Camping with my 4-year-old. Chamber music, especially when I get to play with my wife! [Fry Street Quartet cellist Anne Francis Bayless.] I put together IKEA furniture better than anyone on the planet.

Roberta: Outside orchestra life, I teach people how to play the viola! I consider that my specialty. I am passionate about teaching adolescent students, and helping get them ready for college auditions. I'm going to Haiti to volunteer with my Utah Symphony colleagues with the National Orchestra Institute.

Joel: Outside orchestra, I camp and ski. Hiking Zion Park's Subway hike was a highlight.

Scott: I enjoy paragliding in the mountains. My wife and I are active in our church and enjoy joining with others to prepare food supplies and emergency relief that are sent to the many parts of the world that never seem to have a lack of man-made and natural disasters. We have a daughter who is currently in St. Petersburg learning Russian language and culture, and will be graduating with a Russian language degree this spring.

Carl: I enjoy paragliding, skiing, and riding my motorcycle. My wife is Peruvian, so we go there every few years. Our daughter is off to college next year, so we'll be visiting her wherever she ends up!

Elizabeth: I am a voracious reader. I also love to cook and hike. My absolute favorite thing to do outside of work is to play chamber music, especially with my husband [clarinetist Joe Morris] or my brother [violinist Benjamin Beilman].

Leslie: My husband and I like to hike and explore the mountains with our two dogs. We also like to garden and fix up old furniture. I really like to cook and am always searching out interesting recipes from around the world. We also just had a baby, so we'll have three people for our adventures from now on!

Chris: Outside orchestra life I like to bake, cook, write, paint, backpack, and hike. I enjoy gardening, particularly herbs and tomatoes. I still hand-write letters and have a romance with fountain pens, and to a lesser degree, typewriters. I built my first computer in 1981—yes, nineteen eighty and one!—and have been loving (and hating) them since. I wrote a book about my solo backpack trip in Zion called *A Week in the Park.* I also keep track of what National celebration day it is. Today is National Water Day!

To learn more about the Viola Section of the Utah Symphony, you can follow us on Facebook or check out the Utah Symphony. Come to a concert and meet us in person!

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Recording Reviews

Carlos María Solare

Ispirare: Works by George Rochberg, Atar Arad, Luciano Berio, and Shulamit Ran
Melia Watras, viola
Sono Luminus SLE-70002

26: Works by Atar Arad, Melia Watras, Garth Knox, and Richard Karpen
Melia Watras and Atar Arad, viola; Garth Know, viola d'amore; Michael Jinsoo Lim, violin.
Sono Luminus SLE 70007

Taken together, these two latest recordings by Melia Watras are an eloquent testimonial to her ever-enterprising, imaginative approach to music and music making. To couple a piece of music with another one that inspired it is always illuminating. The use that the Pulitzer Prize-winner Shulamit Ran makes of a short motif from Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs*, from which she extrapolates a 10-minute unaccompanied piece, is the most obvious example here. Not only does the distinctive three-note figure permeate the whole composition, but also some of the colors employed by Watras appear to derive from those used in the song by Berio that immediately precedes it on the CD. An eerie mixture of screaming interjections and mysterious flautando passages, *Perfect Storm* is an effective showpiece that has already, and deservedly, been taken up by other prominent soloists.

Berio's *Naturale* is itself derived from his own orchestrally-accompanied piece *Voci* (Voices), which carries the subtitle *Folk Songs II*. It makes a suitable conclusion to this trio of closely-related pieces, and Watras performs it with remarkable exactitude in the implementation of the vocally inspired portamenti and glissandi, drumming pizzicato effects, microtonal passages, and perfectly pitched harmonics. Interaction with percussionist Matthew Kocmieroski—and with the recorded voice of a singing Sicilian peasant—is perfectly gauged. Only the very end sounds slightly matter-of-fact when set besides the devastating readings of, say, Kim Kashkashian or the work's dedicatee, Aldo Bennici.

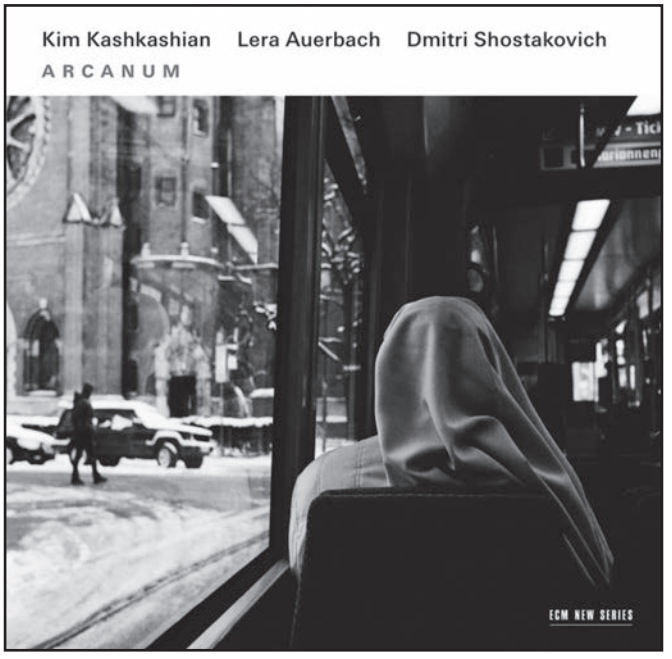
A comparable coolness of approach characterizes Watras's reading of the Viola Sonata by George Rochberg, a classic of the viola repertoire stateside but still too little known elsewhere. The heart-on-sleeve expressivity of this

repented serialist's music is astutely held in check by Watras and pianist Winston Choi in an understatedly eloquent, well-paced reading. Atar Arad's Caprice Four, inspired by Rochberg's Sonata, makes for an ideal encore to it.

While the previously discussed recital placed Melia Watras decidedly in the limelight, the second CD features her as one of a team of player-composers performing mainly their own music; the only exception is Richard Karpen's somewhat long-winded *Bicinium*, which is dedicated to the present interpreters, Watras and violinist Michael Jinso Lee. The mysterious figure that serves as the CD's title is revealed, after having "done the math", as the sum total of the strings heard during the course of the recital, although never do they all play together. More importantly, the occasion was obviously a labour of love for all involved.

Atar Arad was Melia Watras's viola teacher at Indiana University but he influenced her as a composer too, as this juxtaposition of their music shows. Watras's *Prelude*—lovingly performed by Arad—was inspired both by the opening of Bach's Third Suite and the composer-player's warm-up routines. Her unaccompanied Sonata begins with a bang before going on to a soulful folk song that builds the main body of the first movement. Soft percussive effects punctuate the "semplice" slow movement that, heard from off-stage, also ends the work after an angst-ridden fast section. Watras's Virginia Woolf-inspired duo *Liquid Voices* takes its material from the series of natural harmonic that the violin plays at the beginning. *Luminous Points* (for solo violin) wistfully contrasts the instrument's extreme registers before and after a playfully Paganinian intermezzo. The eponymous *Photo by Mikel* shows a landscape in Turkey that is evocatively translated into sound in Watras's short sketch.

Arad's wimpish *Toccatina a la Turk* was inspired by Dave Brubeck's similarly-styled piece (*Blue Rondo a la Turk*) but its sprightly rhythms placed it in the tradition of Bartók's folk-based duets. *Esther* is a "nostalgic reflection" on the Sephardic songs that the composer's mother used to sing, and as such ideal material for the viola (let alone, as here, two of them!). Garth Knox's *Stranger*, based on an ancient Irish tune, makes typically imaginative use of the sympathetic strings of the viola d'amore, which are alternatively struck, plucked or just left to do their job of resonating supportively to the music. This is a most rewarding addition to the repertoire—smaller than one may think—of duos for viola and viola d'amore. This CD, fabulously played, vividly recorded and lovingly presented, demonstrates triumphantly that the tradition of virtuoso player-composers is still alive and well in the 21st century.



24 Preludes, op. 34: Dmitri Shostakovich/Lera Auerbach
Lera Auerbach: *Arcanum*.
Kim Kashkashian, viola; Lera Auerbach, piano.
ECM New Series 2375

Russian-American composer Lera Auerbach seems to have an ongoing fascination with Shostakovich's set of 24 piano Preludes op. 34. Her involvement with them began at the turn of the present century, when she transcribed five of them that the composer's friend, Dmitri Tsyganov—leader of the Beethoven Quartet—had left out of his own arrangement for violin and piano. A few years later, Auerbach created a transcription of the whole set for cello and piano before completing a viola arrangement in 2010 for the present soloist. It should be noted that these versions are not adjustments of each other: each is a newly thought, thoroughly idiomatic transcription.

Another friend of Shostakovich's, the violist Evgeny Strakhov, had already arranged seven of the preludes for his instrument, transposing them into keys that allow for maximum instrumental effect and place the viola

unashamedly in the spotlight. Conversely, Auerbach—who keeps throughout to the original keys with no loss of brilliance—integrates the string instrument into the piano's texture in an inconspicuous, perfectly natural way. Kim Kashkashian's playing is characterized throughout by a bel canto quality that suits the composer's tongue-in-cheek trifles to a tee. Shostakovich's humour could be of a rather rude kind; Auerbach and Kashkashian don't shy away from a few over-the-top effects, and one can well imagine the composer laughing out approvingly!

Arcanum, the piece written by Auerbach for Kashkashian following their Shostakovich collaboration, is a composition of a completely different, elusive hue. Starting with the Latin words that function as titles to the four movements, it inhabits a valedictory atmosphere that is reinforced by omnipresent funeral march rhythms, the sound of tolling bells in the piano, a pope's chanting on the viola's part and an ending comparable to Shostakovich's last work in its bleak otherworldliness. With nuanced phrasing and infinitely expressive sound, Kashkashian achieves a definitive reading, well seconded by the composer's eloquent pianism. Both have been captured in a lifelike acoustic, and ECM's characteristically elegant presentation further enhances a most attractive issue.

Approaching Northern Darkness: Concerto for viola and orchestra, by Kenneth A. Jacobs
Sheila Browne, viola; Kiev Philharmonic; Robert Winstin, cond.
The Zyode Company DS1018

It seems a pity that this recording of Kenneth A. Jacobs's monumental concerto, *Approaching Northern Darkness*, made shortly after the piece was finished, has had to wait all of ten years for publication. I remember the present soloist introducing the newly-written concerto (with piano accompaniment) back in 2007 at the International Viola Congress in Adelaide. At almost 50 minutes length, the piece demands quite something in the way of stamina from both players and listeners, but it is an effort worth making: Jacobs's music just needs the time to make its mark. The atmosphere of the first movement, *Dance of Seduction*, is, in the composer's words, "hypnotic and trance-like in its cumulative effect." The seduction work starts immediately with the viola introducing an ostinato motif of a vaguely Oriental hue that is taken up by the orchestra—the viola section is prominent throughout the work—and subjected to a rousing development. All three movements are tripartite in their structure, highlighting the different moods through consistently idiomatic viola writing that is nevertheless quite demanding.

Sheila Browne copes with great confidence with long stretches of insistent double-stopping while phrasing the extended melodies soulfully and with consistent beauty of tone. Several passages require the soloist to repeat an ostinato figure for many minutes at a time, perhaps accompanying a solo from the woodwinds, and Browne shapes these with a canny awareness of each particular context. The recording balance is none too realistic, bringing the various instruments in and out of the aural spotlight rather artificially. The plus side is that Jacobs's idiosyncratic orchestral writing can be appreciated as clearly as if one were reading the score. The Kiev Philharmonic acquit themselves well under Robert Winstin's energetic leadership.

Jennifer Higdon: Viola Concerto; Oboe Concerto; *All Things Majestic*.
Roberto Díaz, viola; James Button, oboe; Nashville Symphony; Giancarlo Guerrero, cond.
Naxos 8.559823

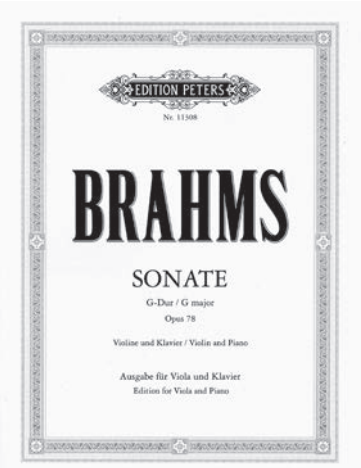
The Viola Concerto by Jennifer Higdon, written in 2014, is very much a Curtis Institute of Music affair: she is the institution's teacher of composition, and the concerto's dedicatee is its president, Roberto Díaz. The piece is a

very effective concert item, its three sections going from slow through fast to even faster. The viola starts on its own with a yearning, undulating melody that wanders through the viola's register, accompanied by continually changing orchestral colours before ending on a solitary low C from the soloist. There follows a swinging scherzo and a finale that begins with a slow introduction before going on to a jazzy main section. Díaz plays with a perfectly focused sound throughout the whole range of his instrument, the ex-Primrose Amati. He exhibits a complete intellectual control that allows him—with conductor Giancarlo Guerrero's complicity—to hold the long, occasionally rambling opening movement together convincingly. Díaz negotiates the finale's high-wire act at top-speed and with the greatest aplomb, making an excellent case for this addition to the viola's concerto repertoire.

In contrast with the more solo-centred Viola Concerto, Higdon's Oboe Concerto from 2005 could be described as chamber music that just happens to employ or a larger group than usual. Throughout its only, multi-section movement, the soloist is variously paired with the different instrumental groups or their principals. James Button and his Nashville Symphony colleagues are on the appropriate wavelength for this work. As a grandiose conclusion to the CD, the kaleidoscopic variety of *All Things Majestic* showcases the collective virtuosity of this ensemble, well recorded in its own Laura Turner Concert Hall. The four-movement suite was inspired by the breath-taking landscapes of the Tetons mountain range. The opening toccata spotlights the brass. In *String Lake*—appropriately scored for strings—Higdon creates some wide-ranging fields of sound through the use of multiple divisi and plangent solo passages. There follows *Snake River*, a scherzo with jagged rhythms and prominent percussion, and the suite ends with the imposing *Cathedrals*—thus the name of the tallest group of mountains in the Tetons range. This successful cross-section of Higdon's orchestral compositions should prompt a sampling of her work in other genres: to mention just works that feature the viola, there is an early sonata, a string trio and several pieces for string quartet that merit close inspection.

Brahms Transcriptions

Andrew Braddock



Sonata in G major, op. 78
Johannes Brahms; edited by Thomas Riebl
C.F. Peters
$24.50

Sonata in F minor, op. 120 no. 1
Johannes Brahms; edited by Thomas Riebl
Partitura
$21.95

Sonata in E-flat major, op. 120 no. 2
Johannes Brahms; edited by Thomas Riebl
Partitura
$21.95

Brahms's music stands at the center of the violist's solo repertoire, despite the fact that he wrote no original works primarily featuring the viola. His chamber and symphonic works include dozens of transcendent viola passages, but even in his only work originally written to feature the viola—Two Songs, op. 91—the violist shares the spotlight with a vocalist. Transcriptions, however, come in to fill this gap, with works borrowed from instruments across the musical spectrum, including clarinet, cello, violin, horn, and voice. All have various degrees of separation from the composer: from Brahms's own transcriptions, to those made by his publisher's in-house arranger Paul Klengel, and more contemporary transcriptions of the Double Concerto and Horn Trio.

Three recent publications, all edited by violist Thomas Riebl, perpetuate and enhance this transcription tradition. The most substantial of this batch, a brand-new transcription of Brahms's Violin Sonata in G major, op. 78, stands as a marked improvement over the D-major transpositions and Klengel's vastly altered arrangement. The others—new editions of the Clarinet Sonatas, op. 120 nos. 1 and 2—offer less new material and ideas, but nevertheless shine because of the publisher Partitura's attractive layout and Riebl's thoughtful octave choices.

Taken as a whole, these three publications reveal Riebl's restrained, yet decisive editorial stance. Throughout all three editions, Riebl unambiguously identifies every deviation from the sources, which consist of the Brahms complete works edition for the op. 78 sonata; and for the op. 120 sonatas, a trifecta of Kupfer's engraver's copy, Simrock's first edition (1895), and the latest Henle urtext edition. Whether in appended notes or by brackets in the score, Riebl maintains utter transparency in all of his editorial alterations. This shows that he has nothing to hide and isn't trying to pull any crafty tricks. Frankly, this openness makes me trust his judgement even more than if the changes were unmarked. Additionally, this practice tacitly encourages violists to decide upon these changes for themselves, and makes it much easier for the performer to engage in the editorial process. Part of the fun in making and playing transcriptions is that every opinion will be different, which creates space for lively debate. I suspect that both Riebl and Brahms would openly encourage this dialogue.

These editions make clear that Riebl strives for his editorial presence to be as unobtrusive as possible. In fact, his ideal editor seems to be an invisible one. When he does decide to make a change, each is done with great respect for both the original text and the performer's practical considerations. Some editorial choices prioritize adherence to the original text over playing ease. The choice of the upper octaves in mm. 53 and 136–8 in

the third movement of the E-flat sonata place outsize technical demands on the violist. But even in these rare cases, Riebl assists with a higher density of suggested fingerings. And two notably high passages in the op. 78 transcription—mm. 216–22 in the first movement, and mm. 92–3 in the third—are accompanied with *ossia* alternatives an octave lower. These additions acknowledge the inherent difficulties of playing transcriptions, and tell the performer that the editor is on their side, rather than attempting to challenge them.

Musically, Riebl takes great care in maintaining the linearity of melodies. A hallmark of an unscrupulous transcription is an unpleasant octave disjunction when the new instrument's range does not permit the original line's continuity. Riebl's editions eliminate—though not totally—these blemishes. The upwardly surging scales in the first movement of op. 78 remain intact, and Riebl even "corrects" Brahms's own transcription by restoring linearity to several notable passages in the recapitulation of the first movement of op. 120 no. 1 (mm. 187–88; 199–200). However subtle, these sensitive changes bespeak a diligent and thoughtful editor who is aware of the delicate balance between performance ease and musical integrity.

Aligning with a recent trend in publishing, these editions include two versions of the viola's music: one with bowing and fingering suggestions from the editor, and one without. Happily gone are the days of whitening over editor's fingerings to preserve an unspoiled first impression. The Peters edition of the op. 78 sonata includes two separate viola parts (one marked, the other not), while the marked viola parts in the Partitura editions appear in the "Spielpartitur Klavier."

The level of specificity in the marked parts differs vastly between the two editions. In total, the seven movements of the clarinet sonatas contain 63 fingerings; the first movement alone of violin sonata has 140. The latter number is hardly excessive for the violin sonata: it accounts for only around half of the position changes needed to play this music. In some cases, such as the octave-down viola lines the second movement (mm. 49–57), added fingerings would more clearly impart the editor's string preferences. Overall, the fingerings in the op. 78 sonata display the distinct logic and technical thoughtfulness of the editor, along with a general preference for lower positions. On the other end of the spectrum are the clarinet sonatas, in which Riebl, as he writes in the preface, "refrain[s] from adding fingerings and bowings with the exception of some highly technically difficult passages." This is a missed opportunity. With numerous editions of these sonatas available, part of the appeal of a new edition are the suggestions of an editor, and the point of view that they express. The op. 78 edition shows that Riebl is not shy in offering suggestions, and I'm left wanting for that same valuable perspective in the op. 120 sonatas.

Now, some thoughts about each publication specifically. To the best of my knowledge, Riebl's edition of the Violin Sonata op. 78 is the first published transcription for viola in the original key, G major. This work has a long history of transcription, beginning in 1897 with the D-major arrangement for cello by Paul Klengel (1854–1935), the in-house arranger at Brahms's publisher Simrock.[1] This transcription, which features significant changes and swapping of music between cello and piano, is different enough to be considered a revision of the original. Leonard Davis arranged the Klengel version for viola and piano. In the early 1990's, violist Csaba Erdélyi's version, recorded by Roberto Diaz, restored much of Brahms's original voicing but remained in D-major. Neither these two editions nor Riebl's are an exact replica of the original violin version; however, Riebl's comes the closest with its almost completely unaltered piano part, original key, and relationship between piano and viola.

While the piano part in Riebl's edition remains almost exactly the same as Brahms's original, the viola part retains nearly sixty percent of the original violin notes. Of the 508 measures in which the viola plays, 297 of them appear exactly as in the violin part, amounting to 59 percent original music, 41 percent altered. The majority of the altered notes reside in the second movement, which contains only 42 percent original notes. The first movement has 65 percent original notes, and the third movement has 59 percent. Considering that the viola rarely passes above fifth position, the number of original notes retained is quite astounding, and a testament to Riebl's unobtrusive editorial stance.

Aside from a few range-based reshufflings, the only other irregularities have to do with large-scale structural relationships. The second appearance of the *grazioso* theme in the first movement sits a fifth below its first appearance, whereas in the violin version, it floats a

fourth above the first appearance. And in the third movement, in order to maintain melodic continuity in an octave-down passage, the first reappearance of the main theme is an octave lower than its previous iteration (both are at the same pitch in the original), which creates a slight aural separation from Brahms's original. The most noticeable disjunction in the piece occurs at the beginning of the first movement's coda, as the soaring viola line reaches its pensive and suspenseful terminus on a *pianissimo* high E-flat in mm. 222. Instead of resolving a half step down to D as in Brahms's original, Riebl displaces this resolution by an octave, having the viola leap down a minor ninth. For my taste, this leap interrupts this tender and poignant resolution, and could be better handled two measures later.

With transcriptions, a broader question emerges: is the goal to mimic the original instrument as closely as possible, or should one strive to create a new piece altogether? Riebl answers "yes" to both questions, as each movement displays a different preference. The first movement is the most violin-like of the three, with most of the notes in the treble register, though never uncomfortably high. In fact, the first page and a half of the viola part contains no pitches below the open G—so it is, in reality, a "violin" piece until the F-sharp in m. 78. However, hints of a viola sound do seep in: the syncopated descending scale ending on an open C creates a hollow effect in mm. 98–9, and the low register in mm. 202–207 gives the music an added dusky mystery. In the second movement, Riebl's editorial pen is the most active: the majority of the viola's music is transposed down an octave. This scoring allows the viola to draw out the dark and thick tones of its lowest register, creating excitingly new and rich colors from this well-known movement.

Turning to the op. 120 sonatas, Partitura's editions are a gift to chamber music minded violists. This ten-year old publisher's one-of-a-kind format prints the entire score—both piano and viola music—in the viola part. In the "Spielpartitur Viola," the viola line appears in a normal size and the piano part is smaller, but still easily readable. Due to meticulous pagination and an almost slavish devotion to five systems per page, page turns are never an issue in the op. 120 editions. You'll have a minimum of five seconds of rests—and often more—available per turn. There's even an ingenious instruction to horizontally cut a page in the second movement of the E-flat sonata, allowing you to turn half of the page at a time, which avoids a noisy page turn during the serene conclusion of the trio section.

As many performers know, the benefits of reading from the score are abundant, so they don't need enumeration here. However, when playing through these pieces, I was particularly struck by this edition's visual layout. It remarkably captures musical textures, making them immediately, and almost unconsciously, apparent at a glance. One quick look at the second movement of the F-minor sonata instantly reveals the sparseness of the piano accompaniment in contradistinction to the viola's wandering filigree. As your eye tracks through the movement, the sheer density of ink on the page effortlessly imparts shifts in texture. Performers should always have an aural awareness of these changes, but having a passively perceivable representation of texture enables quicker recognition as well as advanced planning for upcoming changes. Especially for violists, who must constantly maintain awareness of balance, this visual element is alone worth the cover price. If you add to this the heavyweight paper and ultra-clear engraving, the value of these editions far exceeds their prices.

As for the notes themselves, many of Riebl's octave and pitch choices are consistent with previous Henle urtext editions. At several points throughout the sonatas, Riebl opts for the original clarinet arrangement of notes, rather than those from the engraver's copy of the viola part containing Brahms's corrections. The most noticeable of these are the triplets at the beginning of the recapitulation in the first movement of the F-minor sonata. Having played and heard the engraver's version for my whole life, it's difficult not to hear the notes here as odd, but Riebl's prefatory notes clearly identify this and other clarinet-based changes.

The E-flat sonata, specifically the first movement, contains most of the octave alterations. Riebl's preference is usually for the upper octave, aligning with the opinion of most students and performers. As he showed in the op. 78 transcription, melodic continuity guides his octave decisions. In the first movement of the E-flat sonata, the four-measure phrase (mm. 18–21) leading into the second theme appears in the original clarinet octave, starting on a high B-flat. During these four measures, the music wafts down through the instrument's entire range, concluding with a delicious descending tritone that resolves stepwise up to F, the first note of the second

theme. While this higher octave is frequently the choice for violists, it nevertheless attests to the priority that Riebl places on maintaining Brahms's exquisitely crafted melodies. (And, it will also save many violists from their pasted over scores!)

Performing transcriptions—especially by canonical composers like Brahms—is like a multi-dimensional collaboration. You have to deal with not only the composer and the piece itself, but also its previous form(s), the editor's view, and your own preferences. With all of these points of view floating around, the process can become maddening. However, none of these three editions will cause one to slip into that place, thanks in most part to Thomas Riebl's thoughtful editorship. The op. 78 transcription will open new doors for viola repertoire and allow violists to perform the piece closest to its original when compared to previous editions. As for the op. 120 editions, while there are multiple other editions available, Partitura's chamber music friendly layout and high-quality materials provide for an engaging and intuitively insightful performing experience.

Notes

[1] See distinguished Brahms scholar George Bozarth's thoughts on the provenance of this transcription. George S. Bozarth, "Brahms's posthumous compositions and arrangements," in *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies,* ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 78–81.

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