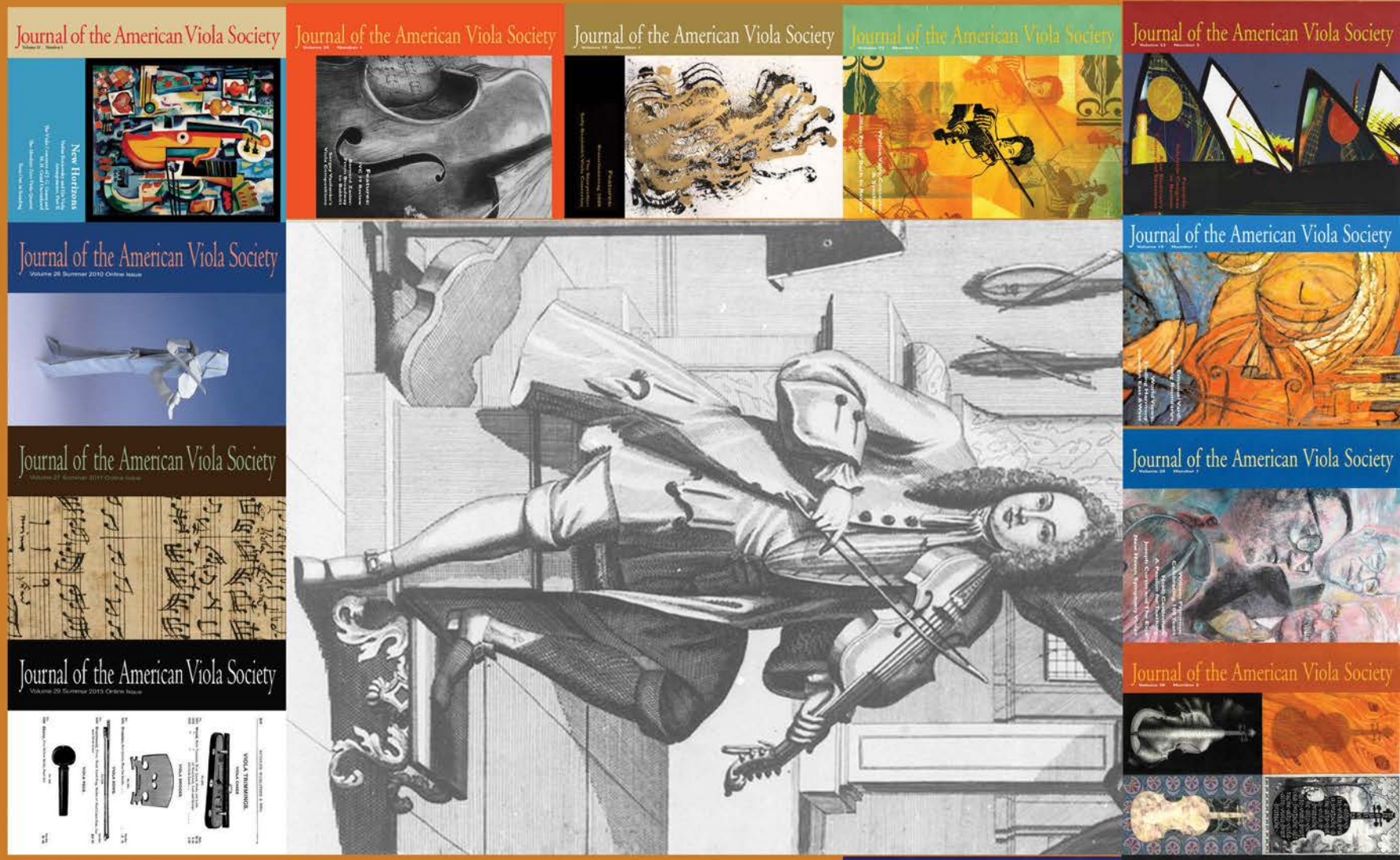
Journal of the American Viola Society

Volume 31 Summer 2015 Online Issue

30 Years of JAVS



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Journal of the American Viola Society

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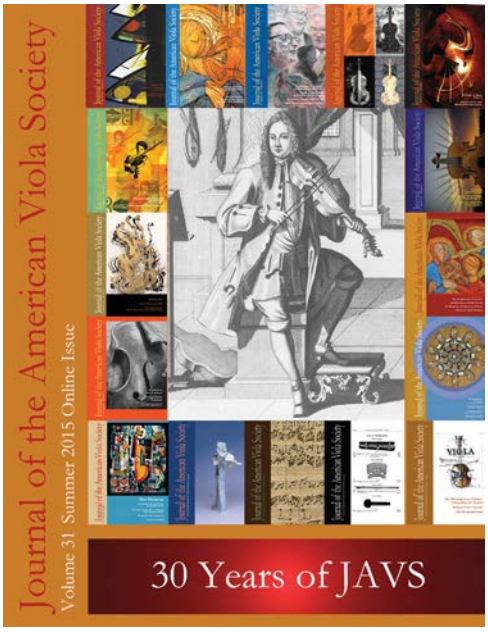
Summer 2015: Volume 31, Online Issue

News & Notes

Feature Article

Departments



On the Covers:
30 Years of JAVS Covers
compiled by
Andrew Filmer and David Bynog

AVS National Office
14070 Proton Road, Suite 100
Dallas, TX 75244
(972) 233-9107 ext. 204

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, *javseditor@americanviolasociety.org* or to Madeleine Crouch, 14070 Proton Rd., Suite 100 Dallas, TX 75244

(Photo courtesy of Jonathan Yee)

Articles on international topics go back to the very start of JAVS, with the very first issues discussing music from Argentina and performers from Russia, and the then surprisingly impressive quality of violists in China. Fast forward 30 years and we note how the London Symphony Orchestra's principal violist has decided to relocate to China.

This issue continues this celebration of the global reach of the viola, with an exploration of repertoire and performers across three continents. Perhaps even more significantly, we note how personalities influence the path the instrument takes: how a loyal violist led to Costa Rica's first viola concerto, how the stature of a violinist can allow the introduction of the viola into Hindustani classical music, and the influence of Lionel Tertis on British viola music.

The last of these is a reprint from the AVS Newsletter, in acknowledging the pioneering role of this journal's predecessor in this, the final issue of JAVS's thirtieth year. We also look back at the life of the late Joseph de Pasquale and see how his vibrant personality and generous spirit influenced so many.

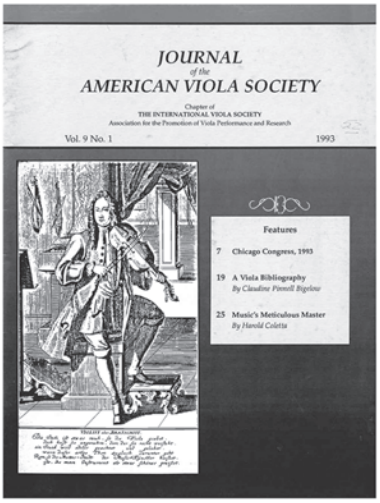
The journal continues to take technological strides forward. This issue includes links to audio material on the AVS website, QR codes, URL shorteners, and spectrograms. It is perhaps fitting, in completing the commemoration of *30 Years of JAVS*, that we gratefully acknowledge the past while looking to the future.

I am glad to have been part of that experience, with this being my final issue at the helm of the Journal of the American Viola Society. While I will not be taking up the Publication Committee's generous recommendation to continue in this role for another three years, I look forward to a continued participation in projects related to the American Viola Society. I would like to express my thanks to Associate Editor David Bynog, the authors, departmental editors, and reviewers, for their help and invaluable knowledge.

Best wishes,

Andrew Filmer

1993 VOL. 9, NO. 1 — 30 YEARS OF JAVS



Claudine Bigelow provided a selected (and annotated) bibliography in viola pedagogy, listing some 138 resources ranging "from the unusual to the very helpful." The article also includes valuable observations on trends, and styles of writing. At the time, Bigelow was a student at BYU working towards a master's degree, today she is a full professor at the same institution, and head of PIVA.

JAVS provided some international commentary, including news of Australasia's first Viola Convention, and news of the marriage of Japanese Crown Prince Naruhito—who has or had an interest in the viola. Harold Coletta provided interesting anecdotes on playing in a sextet with such players as Heifetz, Piatigorsky, and Joseph de Pasquale.

AVS PUBLICATIONS

VIOLA SOLO

Bob Cobert
Music for Only One Lonely Viola. AVS 028

John Duke
Suite for Viola Alone. AVS 027

Ivan Langstroth
Viola Suite. AVS 022

Quincy Porter
Suite for Viola Alone. AVS 008

Jeong Eun Park
Mook Nyum (A Moment of Silence). AVS 039

Frederick Slee
Variations on a Hymn Tune for Solo Viola. AVS 003

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Bob Cobert
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Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Canon for Two Violas. AVS 004

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Scott Slapin
Capricious. AVS 012

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J. S. Bach
Sinfonia from the Cantata: Gleichwie der Regen und Schnee vom Himmel fällt. AVS 005

Léo Delibes
La Paix, from Coppélia, for Solo Viola and Viola Quartet. AVS 023a

Matthias Durst
Adagio for Four Violas. AVS 001

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Adagio from String Sinfonia VIII. AVS 011a

Hendrik Waelput
Cantabile for Four Violas. AVS 018

Max von Weinzierl
Nachtstück für 4 Violen, op. 34. AVS 009

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Jeanne Behrend
Lamentation for Viola and Piano. AVS 035

Blanche Blood
Barcarolle for Viola and Piano. AVS 002

Léo Delibes
La Paix, from Coppélia, for Viola and Piano. AVS 023

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Arthur Foote
Melody for Viola and Piano, op. 44a. AVS 015

Peter Racine Fricker
Fantasy for Viola and Piano, op. 44. AVS 032

Carl Fuerstner
Two Pieces for Viola and Piano. AVS 021

Henry Holden Huss
Sonata Movement for Viola and Piano. AVS 034

Edna Frida Pietsch
Andante Cantabile for Viola and Piano. AVS 033

Quincy Porter
Speed Etude for Viola and Piano. AVS 007

Ferdinand Praeger
Elegy for Viola and Piano. AVS 031

Gustav Strube
Regrets for Viola and Piano. AVS 010

Theodore Thomas
Divertissement for Viola and Piano. AVS 006

Fidelis Zitterbart Jr.
Sonata No. 2 in G Minor for Viola and Piano. AVS 041

VIOLIN AND VIOLA

Louise Lincoln Kerr
Etude. AVS 020

J. N. Pychowski
Perpetual Canon. AVS 017

VIOLA AND ORCHESTRA

Ernő Dohnányi
Intermezzo, from Symphony No. 1. AVS 040

Cecil Forsyth
The Dark Road for Viola and String Orchestra. AVS 024

W. A. Mozart
Principal Viola Part for Sinfonia Concertante, K. 364, Extended Scordatura Edition. AVS 019

Principal Viola Part for Sinfonia Concertante, K. 364, Scordatura Edition. AVS 019a

G. P. Telemann
Concerto for Two Violettas, TWV 52:G3. Critical Edition Including Alternative Scordatura Solo Parts. AVS 025

MIXED ENSEMBLES

J. S. Bach
Chorale: Ich, dein betrubtes Kind, for Soprano, Viola obligata, and Continuo from the Cantata Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut. AVS 013

Ergieße dich reichlich,du göttliche Quelle, Aria for Tenor, Viola, and Continuo from the Cantata Wo soll ich fliehen hin. AVS 014

Hochgelobter Gottessohn, Aria for Alto, Viola, and Continuo from the Cantata Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden. AVS 029

Sinfonia from the Cantata: Gleichwie der Regen und Schnee vom Himmel fällt. AVS 005

Michael Colgrass
Revisions to Variations for Four Drums and Viola. AVS 016

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Adagio from String Sinfonia VIII. AVS 011

Quincy Porter
Little Trio (Suite in E Major) for Flute, Violin, and Viola. AVS 026

http://americanviolasociety.org/Resources/Scores.php

From the President

Greetings from the American Viola Society!

This summer I have been thinking a lot about advocacy and how that word describes our work together. What does it mean to be an advocate? We are involved in our communities in a variety of ways in support of a range of causes. From artistic to pedagogical, philanthropic to community service, we reach out to make the world just a bit better through collaborating, educating, and sharing messages of hope through our music. Interacting with others, we find ways to build and expand community by using our gifts and abilities for the greater good. From Music for Food concerts to outreach projects like the Dajara Strings project in Tanzania, to summer festivals and concerts that bring joy to those in attendance, there are many ways to impact lives in positive ways through our art.

The American Viola Society takes very seriously its role as an advocate for increasing excellence, artistry, and opportunity in the viola community. The AVS is an advocate for career advancement of our young professionals as they develop and share their research, performance, and pedagogical skills. The AVS is an advocate for ever higher standards of viola performance, recognizing excellence through our competitions, our festivals, and our many projects. The AVS promotes new expression, supporting composition and research, seeking out and presenting information that impacts our craft in a variety of ways. The AVS is also a tireless advocate for educational outreach and viola pedagogy, committed to the idea that our next generation will continue to thrive if we do our part.

Next summer, the 2016 American Viola Society Festival will take place on the beautiful campus of Oberlin College Conservatory, June 8-11, 2016. We have recently completed our festival proposal selection process and an exciting schedule of events is beginning to take shape. Studio teachers will already find opportunities for student solo competitions and a student ensemble invitational posted on the festival website at http://www.americanviolasociety.org/Events/AVS-Festival.php and we encourage you to get your students involved. Additional information regarding AVS festival registration, schedule of events, and other festival details will be posted in the coming months. Mark your calendars and plan to join us in Oberlin as we celebrate all things viola!

Kathryn Steely
President, American Viola Society

1986 VOL. 2, NO. 1

30 YEARS OF JAVS


JOURNAL
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Chapter of
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Vol. 2 No. 1 April, 1986

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Milton Katims—Toscanini's principal viola—wrote an article called "West Meets East in the Alto Clef," on his visit to the Shanghai Conservatory, discovering something that three decades later we would take for granted: that the Chinese are a formidable force in music.

Michael Tree reflected on transitioning from the violin to the viola, and the surprises that the new instrument had in store for him, and advocating for contemporary luthiers.

In this issue, it was announced that two books were soon to be published: Zeyringer's *Literatur für Viola*, and David Dalton's *Playing the Viola: Conversations with William Primrose*—not only works with which we are now all familiar, but by the only two recipients of the Gold Alto Clef.

In Memoriam: Joseph de Pasquale Remembered

Paul Cortese

Joseph de Pasquale graduated from Curtis in 1942, after being convinced to switch from the violin to the viola by the great violin teacher Jascha Brodsky. He studied at Curtis with Louis Bailly, Max Aronoff, and William Primrose. He was a member of the American Youth Symphony under Leopold Stokowski, sharing a stand with the great Emanuel Vardi.

My beloved teacher was principal viola of the Boston Symphony from 1947-1964, hired by Serge Koussevitsky just in front of Vardi, who was greatly admired by de Pasquale. In 1964, he became the principal viola of the Philadelphia Orchestra, convincing Eugene Ormandy to hire his three brothers, in one of his many generous and kind moments. They performed as the de Pasquale Quartet for many years on a very high artistic level. When William Primrose had nerve damage in his ear, he recommended one of his most outstanding pupils, Joseph de Pasquale, to take his place in the Heifetz-Piatigorsky recordings. He taught at the Curtis Institute for over fifty years, and was still alive and well, until leaving us at the grand age of 95. He made his last viola and piano disc at the age of 83. He played a viola concerto with both the Boston and Philadelphia orchestras practically every season from 1947 until his retirement. His sound is legendary, and I will always be grateful for having studied with him at the Curtis Institute.

Joseph de Pasquale offers advice to Toby Hoffman during a master class at IVC VII, held at Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, in 1979 (all photos courtesy of Dwight Pounds)

On a personal level, this was the most generous man that I ever met in this often cruel and tough music world. He had a great sense of humor, making me laugh often in lessons. He would ask me to repeat passages, especially when they were well played, saying, "I just wanted to make sure it wasn't an accident!" He had a funny tie that he wore often that said *One Way*, and then in dark, subtle letters, was written *My Way*. He often invited me to go buy him a sandwich, always saying, "and buy something for yourself". He knew that I came from a humble family, and helped me out that way, too.

Summers at the Grand Teton Festival were great with de Pasquale and my classmate Anibal Dos Santos. Joe made us *linguine alle vongole*, and read from Primrose's book with David Dalton, *Playing the Viola.* We couldn't get enough of his company. In 1996, I went to Merion Park to his home to give him my new Milhaud viola chamber music disc. He asked, "Did you record with the Primrose octave changes?" I swallowed hard, and said that I played the printed version. Joe said, "Well, you should have! Primrose knew a little about the viola!" He took out his viola, and played the entire Milhaud Sonata No. 1 from memory, and it was so beautifully played, with his Olive gut strings, that I felt my ego shrinking by the minute. It was just breathtaking, and he was a youthful 76 years old at the time!

RIP, Joseph de Pasquale. You will be greatly missed by so many people.

Anibal Dos Santos

My relationship with Joe de Pasquale lasted for thirty-four years and it ranged from me being a student at a very elementary level to him becoming a friend and a father figure as I advanced. As I grew older, I learned to appreciate what a special artist he was. When with the Bogota Philharmonic, I was able to bring him to Columbia several times, and he became very loved and admired by the orchestra.

Vladimir Sokoloff and Joesph de Pasquale receive congratulations from William Primrose after the premiere of George Rochberg's Viola Sonata in 1979

One day I told him that I would love to have his viola some day. He looked deeply at me for several seconds and then he said, "Maybe." I didn't hear any thing else on the matter until several years later when he gave me a call to tell me that he wanted me to have his Peresson. I remember his nostalgic face telling me, "This is a good viola, boy. Use it and take care of it." From that moment, every time that I would stop on the east coast, I would go to his house and show the viola to him so he would see how well treated his viola was.

I cannot think of how many hours I spent talking to him in my life. It was amazing for me to think that I could be talking so freely with somebody forty-four years older than me. One time at a summer camp close to Tanglewood that Joe attended with his wife, Maria, he said out loud, "You know, I'm hardly drinking any hard liquor lately." Then when his wife moved away from the car, he said to me, "Anibal, keep an eye on her" as he would take a hidden bottle of scotch from his trunk and pour a quick shot for himself. I believe that all this childlike behavior kept him going strong for so many years.

All those years that I got the great chance to be close to Joe can only be described as a combination of learning and laughing. A couple of years ago he told me, "If I die in any moment, I can only thank God for the wonderful life that I have had."

Joe, I will always miss you. I promise that I will treasure your viola and try to play it better every day.

Dwight Pounds

The first time I personally heard Joseph de Pasquale perform was in Provo in 1979, well past the time he had transitioned from the da Salo he had played for many years to his Peresson, and which by that time he had come to love. Like much about the man, the tone he coaxed out of his viola was legendary and responding to many questions about his viola, he couldn't wait to tell a story about how he acquired the instrument. If anyone knew anything about Joe de Pasquale, it was that he loved to spin a yarn and was quite the raconteur. The account sounded suspiciously exaggerated here and there but nevertheless was a marvelous thing to hear. Here is the story he shared, at least to the best of my ability to reconstruct it:

> *Following a recital one day years earlier, someone came backstage, said that he really liked my playing, and would like to build a viola for me. So I'm sitting there after playing for well over an hour with my ax probably still vibrating there in the open case, and this bozo comes in who just heard a program played on one of the best violas on this planet and he thinks he can build a viola as good as a Gasparo??!! Well wadd'ya do when someone sez something like that?! The guy's clearly crazy—and even crazier if he thinks I'm gonna to commit on something like this! I said, "Well I'd like to see the viola that sounds as good as mine," and immediately began speaking to someone else. Well, one day this same guy shows up with this case under his arm an' sez "I've got your viola." "You've got my what??!" and he reminded me of our meeting. Well I had to at least try it even though I dreaded disappointing him. Well, guess what—I played it and loved it! Couldn't believe my own ears! Now you know the whole story—I bought the damn thing and sold the Gasparo!!*

It was totally serendipitous, but the timing of my visit was perfect, as much for insights into the irrepressible character telling it and the gusto with which he embellished each phrase as the story itself. Margaret Campbell's excellent article on Joseph de Pasquale published several years ago in the *Strad* more factually documented his purchase of the Peresson and confirmed two thoughts in my mind: although he had taken *extreme* liberties with the story that we heard backstage in Provo, a basic truth regarding how he had acquired the Peresson lay buried in all the bluster and *ad libitum* of his wild yarn.

David Dalton

"Hello, David, this is Joe." Really, there was no need to introduce himself on the phone. His voice, as large as the tone of his former Gasparo viola, was unmistakable. When I ponder Joe's departure, vignettes of my acquaintance with this formidable violist and personality spring to mind. I first saw him in 1953 when the Boston Symphony performed at Brigham Young University,

and some seven years later at the Eastman School, when I found myself, as a fledgling violist, in a masterclass organized by Prof. Tursi on behalf of Mr. de Pasquale, his former classmate at the Curtis Institute. The sound of his large Gasparo, his voluminous voice, and his presence filled the room. My former feeling of intimidation, now mixed with some awe, persisted.

About 1965 I leaned against the wall in the foyer of the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago watching the Philadelphians gather to board buses for their guest concert at a nearby college. In strode the principal violist, with attendants, his lengthy cigar at the forefront. My impulse was to step forward and recall that I remembered him from previous "encounters." But the intimidation factor still loomed too large. This time, however, I understood why: if Central Casting had sent in someone to impersonate a *capo di mafiosi*—decisive, commandeering, big presence, and, yes, handsome—de Pasquale fit!

Through the years we became good friends. Ironically, and despite some incongruities. I was a farm boy from a small Mormon town in Utah, while he was Italian-Catholic from emigrant parents in South Philly. When and how was my Joe-neurosis overcome? 1979 at the Primrose International Viola Competition, the first such event *exclusively* for violists, Primrose had given his endorsement for it to be held in Utah in conjunction with Viola Congress VII in Provo. I was to organize and host it. Primrose, de Pasquale, and Ralph Aldrich were jurors. Joe played a recital that lingers long in the memory in which he premiered a sonata by George Rochberg, a thrilling moment. (I had gathered funds and commissioned the composer to write it. Primrose insisted Joe premiere it.) He ended with an expansive rendition of the Bloch 1919 Suite with his partner, Vladimir Sokoloff, magically orchestrating at the keyboard. Primrose sat in the front row. It was Joe's turn to feel intimidated!

Our association in the AVS and various events brought us in closer personal proximity. He allowed for a lengthy interview, during which we laughed a good deal. (See *JAVS*, Vol.13 No. 1, 1997; also Vol. 14 No. 3 on the Rochberg Sonata). I had discovered the soft underbelly of Joe's personality, and my former intimidation vanished, replaced by warm friendship. It was a salient influence that initially cemented our comfortable relationship: our devotion and love as former students for the art of William Primrose—and the man.

My wife, Donna, and I visited Joe again last summer at his Teton condo in Jackson Hole. We found him sitting outside in the warm sun with a stack of CDs at his side and a "ghetto blaster" blasting. "This is what I do much of the afternoon: listen," as he put on a recording of long ago with him playing in a string trio with the Ricci brothers, Ruggiero and George. Joe was looking aged, as he deserved, and we wondered if we would ever see him again . . . .

Yes, what a guy–the "marathon man" of all principals–and what a violist!

A Look Back at the AVS Newsletter: English Viola Music Before 1937

Thomas Tatton

November 1976

There are few original compositions for viola in the nineteenth century. The literature consists of works by violin-composers who occasionally performed on viola; one work each by R. Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Berlioz; and a handful of works by lesser-known composers. In contrast, the body of twentieth-century literature is extremely large and there is widespread composer interest. The original impetus for the resurgence of interest in composition for the viola came in Great Britain in the 1890's. At this time, there was the beginning of a sizeable body of English viola literature that is largely unknown and unexplored by today's violists. The rise in importance of the viola was first expressed in English chamber music and coincided with several factors in what has been popularly been labeled the English musical renaissance. This resurgence of the viola was largely led by one man—Lionel Tertis. He was this century's first viola virtuoso and during the course of his career, encouraged, cajoled, and commissioned English composers to write for the instrument.

Over fifty English composers contributed to the viola repertoire before Tertis retired in 1937. Many works by composers such as York Bowen, Benjamin Dale, John McEwen, Cyril Scott, William Wolstenholme, and others, were never published, or are now out of print. All of the works have historical significance to violists, and most can be considered important in one or more of the following categories:

1. Works of artistic importance and of lasting value, i.e. by Arnold Bax, Arthur Bliss, Rebecca Clarke, and Vaughan Williams,

2. Works of pedagogical interest, i.e., by Frank Bridge, Harry Farjeon, Cecil Forsyth, Swan Hennesay, Emil Kreuz (especially his *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, op. 13), and William Wolstenholme,

3. Marginal works of interest to violists and worthy of occasional performance, i.e., Granville Bantock, York Bowen, James Friskin, Julius Harrison, Theodore Holland, Herbert Howells, John McEwen, Ebenezer Prout, and William Wolstenholme, and

4. Novelties—two works stand out in this category as having exceptional interest to violisrs. They are York Bowen's *Fantasy Quartet for Four Violas*, and B.J. Dale's *Introduction and Andante for Viola Sextet*. Both composers were influenced by Tertis and wrote substantial works for him. In addition to the above-mentioned works, Bowen (1885–1961) wrote two viola sonatas, a *Phantasy for Viola and Piano* and a Concerto, plus some miscellaneous works. B.J. Dale (1885–1943) contributed *Phantasy*, op. 4, *Ballade* op. 15 and a *Suite*, op. 2, originally for viola and piano and later arranged for viola and orchestra. The slow movement for the Suite, labeled Romance, was a favorite work of Tertis. He gives the movement high praise in both *Cinderella No More* and the expanded version, *My Viola and I*. Both the *Fantasy Quartet* and the *Introduction and Andante* are in manuscript and held by the Royal Academy of Music. They are both one-movement works in which all the violists must be excellent performers. The *Fantasy Quartet* by Bowen uses a variety of close part writing, expansive open harmonies, brilliant passage work, and sombre dark colors. The *Introduction and Andante* is the more difficult of the two. The texture in this work is often reduced to one or two melodic parts with

accompaniment. The first viola is at times extremely high, while the sixth viola is scordatura—the C string is tuned down to B flat. The Bowen *Fantasy* is more romantic, or subjective and Brahmsian in concept, while Dale's *Introduction and Andante* is scored less thickly and more Debussy-like in sound. Neither are simply academic exercises in writing for like instruments; they are artistic works with variety, color, and imagination. Both are superb and welcome contributions to the viola repertoire.

There is a variety of styles and quality in this large body of original viola works and it is important that we preserve this literature for historical reasons. A great many of these works deserve to remain in our performing repertoire.

July 2015

My doctoral dissertation concerned the viola literature inspired by the extraordinary English violist, Lionel Tertis whose first retirement was in 1937. In 1973, I came across the York Bowen *Fantasia,* Op. 41 for four violas and the Benjamin Dale *Introduction and Andante,* Op. 5 for six violas. I immediately recognized the quality of the music but was not sure how to characterize or categorize this literature. When I presented my findings at the 1976 Fourth International Viola Congress I performed snippets of some well written, but lesser known, English viola music and talked about each piece. I dared not gather a quartet on site to perform the Bowen, and knew the Dale to be even more difficult so, I tape recorded three of my students and myself performing the *Fantasia* quartet and shared that performance with those in attendance. Following the lecture/performance, numbers of attendees crowded round and wanted information about the Bowen. Many wanted to exchange music. That was the nascence of the viola ensemble "movement".

My, has the world changed. Since 1976 the quantity and availability of original literature and arrangements for viola ensemble, as well as the availability of many of the then lesser known, and unpublished or out of print English compositions, including works by Rebecca Clark, Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge, William Wolstenholme and York Bowen, has exploded!

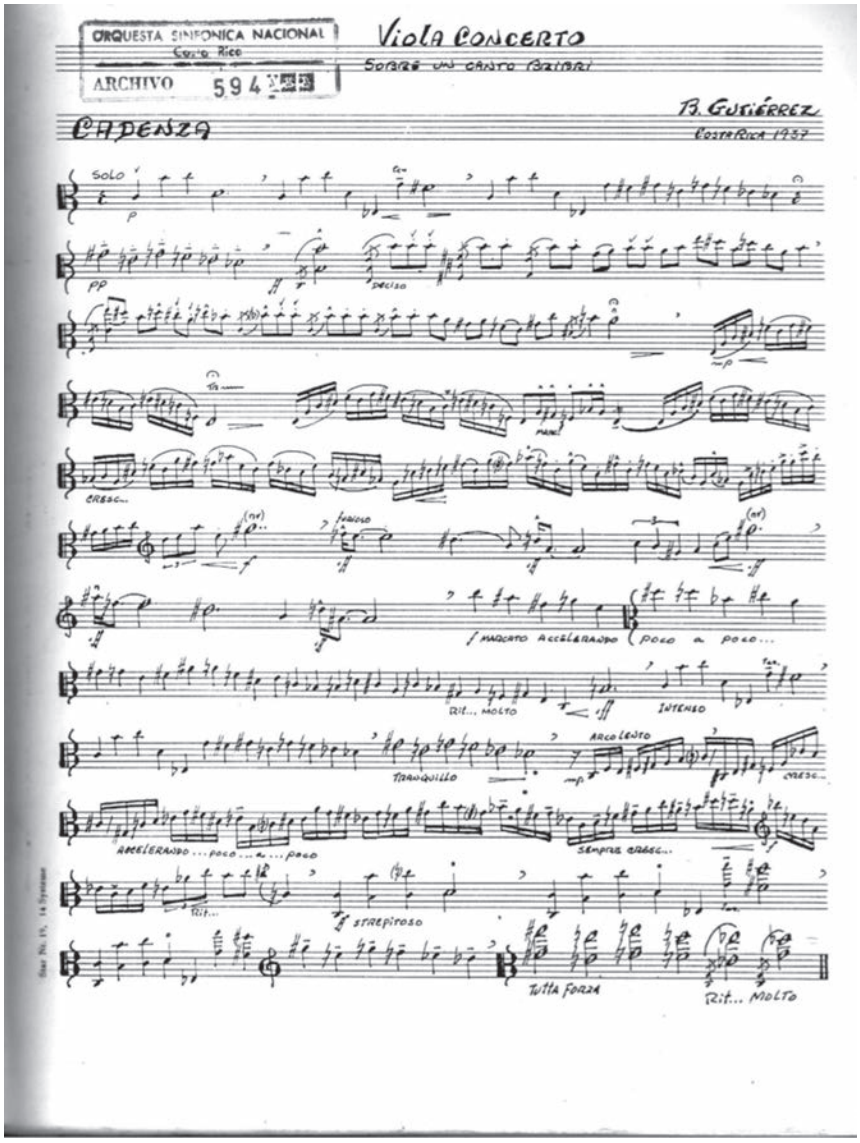
Currently retired, Thomas Tatton taught at Whittier College and the University of the Pacific. His leadership positions have included that of President of the American Viola Society and Vice-President of the International Viola Society. He now serves as President of the California Chapter of the American String Teachers Association and a Northern California Viola Society board member. He is presently editor of the Retrospective Column for JAVS. Dr. Tatton remains active as a performer, clinician, guest conductor, writer and adjudicator.

Concerto for Viola Sobre un Canto Bribri by Costa Rican composer Benjamín Gutiérrez

Orquídea Guandique

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the amount of repertoire for viola solo has expanded considerably, and the viola has certainly acquired a new standard in terms of technical and musical challenges. It brought with it many changes and contributions to the overall skills of the performance not only for the string family, but also to music in general. For violists in particular, it was a century that helped the instrument flourish to an unprecedented degree.

Part of the shift in the amount of contributions to the solo viola repertoire over the last century was due to the blossoming of modern viola virtuosos who devoted their careers not only to increase public recognition of the instrument, but also to inspire contemporary composers to write new works for it. Thanks to figures like Lionel Tertis, William Primrose, and Paul Hindemith, we acquired three of the most important concertos in the repertoire for viola: the concertos for viola by William Walton, Béla Bartók, and Hindemith. These concertos form the most representative works in the standard repertoire for the instrument. This is the case of Costa Rican composer Benjamín Gutiérrez's viola concerto, dedicated to American violist William Schuck. Although beautiful and challenging, Gutiérrez's concerto has not yet earned a place in the professional repertory of modern violists, since it has yet to be published. It is my aim to offer the history behind this piece because it would be an important addition to the repertoire for viola, and also because it pays homage to the efforts of a nation to establish a symphonic music tradition.



Illus. 1. Manuscript of the first page of the score.[1]

To guide the reader in this process, I will present a summary of Gutiérrez's life and music production, as well as the relevant historical aspects of Costa Rican music tradition. The article concludes with a discussion of Gutiérrez's concerto in comparison to other works from the viola literature.

It is important to mention that I have been working on the first edition of the piece, along my colleague Fernando Zúñiga and under the support of the Universidad de Costa Rica. The edition will be ready by the end of 2015.

The composer

Benjamín Gutiérrez was born in 1937 in Costa Rica to a musical family. He began his musical training in piano under the tutelage of his grandmother, Rosa Jiménez Núñez. He continued his piano studies at the National Conservatory of Costa Rica, and later at the Guatemalan National Conservatory.

Gutiérrez returned to his native Costa Rica following the completion of his Bachelor of Arts degree in piano performance in 1957 in Guatemala, and he devoted himself completely to the pursuit of a career in composition. The impetus for this change in direction was the immense success of his opera, Marianela—also the first Costa Rican opera—that premiered October 7, 1957 in Costa Rica's National Theatre in San José, with Gutiérrez at the baton.

Due to the success of the opera, Gutiérrez was granted a scholarship to study at the New England Conservatory in Boston by the Institute of International Education. He moved to the United States in the fall of 1958 to pursue a master's degree in composition that he completed in 1960. During his time in the United States he had the opportunity to study with renowned composers such as Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) and Francis Judd Cooke (1910-1995).

In 1965, thanks to a fellowship granted by the University of Costa Rica, Gutiérrez travelled to Argentina to attend the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires to study under the tutelage of Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983). At the time, Ginastera was the director of the Latin American Center of Higher Musical Studies (CLAEM), which was part of the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, and subsidized by the Rockefeller Foundation.

During his studies abroad, Gutiérrez worked primarily with composers who dealt with contemporary musical languages, leading him to experiment with compositional techniques such as polytonality, and it was from his studies in the United States that he absorbed the dominant musical language of the time: the twelve-tone system. Ronald Sider remarks:

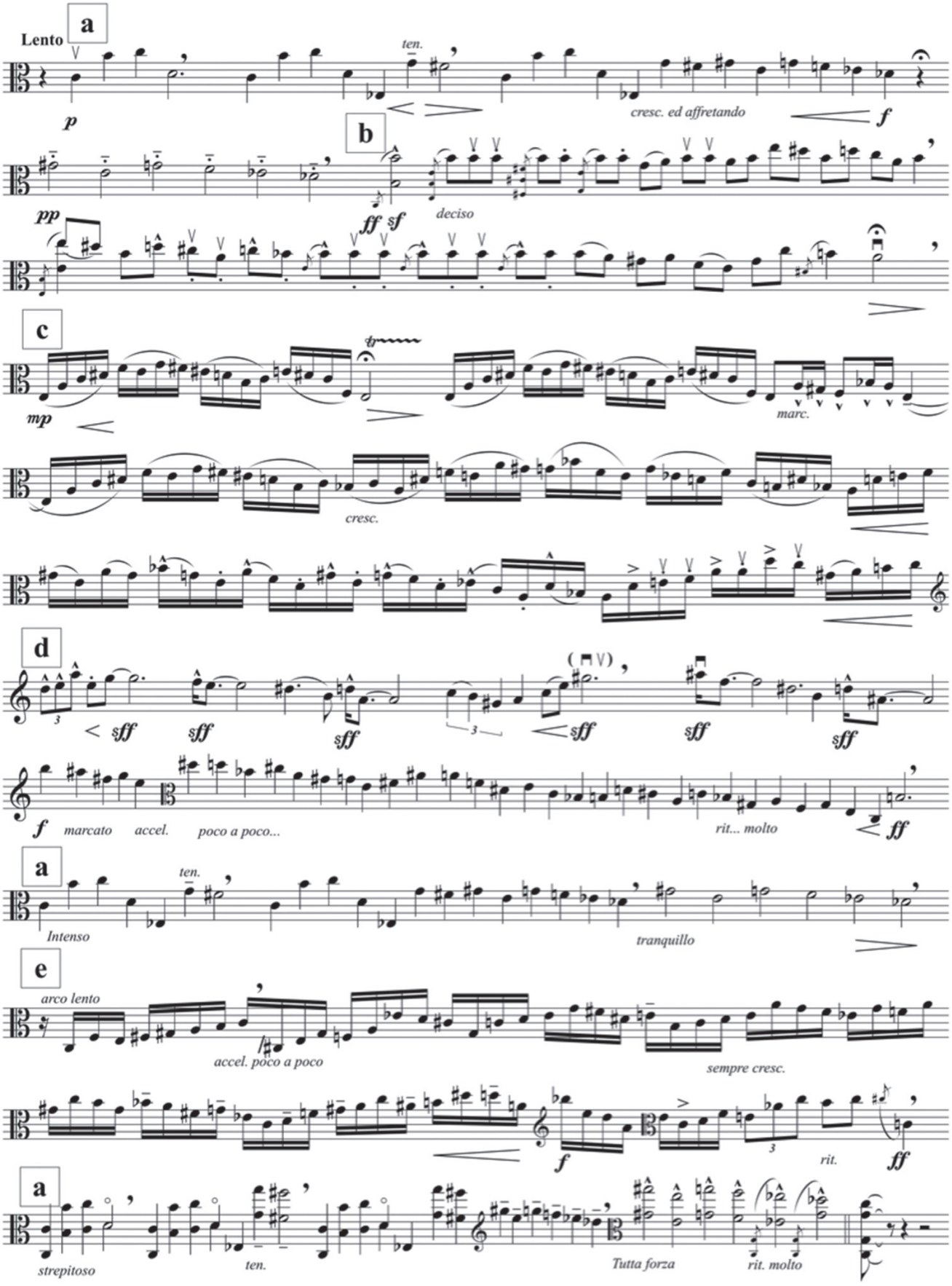
> [Gutiérrez's] 'Music for Seven Instruments' (1965) was written in Buenos Aires, and he uses the twelve-tone idiom fairly consistently, and the Toccata and Fugue for Piano (1960), written under Milhaud, is very free, tonally, and explores dissonant sonorities.[2]

Later he states:

> His style has gradually evolved from the full-blown romanticism of his early works—an expansive, romantic spirit, rhythmic vitality, with certain Latin American influences, seen in rhythm and orchestration (he cites the influence of Revueltas and Ginastera), modality and ostinatos—through shifting tonalities and polytonal experiments, to the free use of dodecaphonic techniques since 1978."[3]

Additionally, Bernal Flores describes Gutiérrez as a composer whose "style is contemporary-romantic, with firm orchestration and dissonant harmony without extremes, in which the use of tonality, within a free context, appears darkened by chords that speak twentieth-century idioms."[4]

Gutiérrez is a composer who during his training years absorbed musical influences from many different contexts: the Guatemalan conservatory, twentieth-century trends in the United States, and also the nationalistic movement in Latin America. He also traveled briefly to Mexico in 1972 and to Paris in 1984, encountering new musical ideas while there. Nevertheless, he did not adhere to any particular compositional technique; rather, he took elements from all movements that he encountered, and blended them into a unique style. Most significantly, despite the influence of the nationalistic trend in Latin America culture, Gutiérrez did not favor the creation of music with national archetypes.



Illus. 2. Initial cadenza.

Gutiérrez´s catalog includes symphonic works, chamber music and two operas. It is important to note that he was the first composer to write a concerto for the viola in Costa Rica.

Concerto for viola

Commissioned by the Board of Directors of the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica for the 1983 season, Benjamín Gutiérrez composed his *Viola Concerto Sobre un Canto Bribri* (based on a *bribri* song) in 1982-83.[5]

The dedicatee, William Schuck moved to Costa Rica in 1972 as member of the Peace Corps to form part of the National Symphony Orchestra, and served as principal viola from the 1980s. He was also appointed a viola teacher at the Instituto Nacional de Música, and also as visiting professor at the Universidad de Costa Rica.

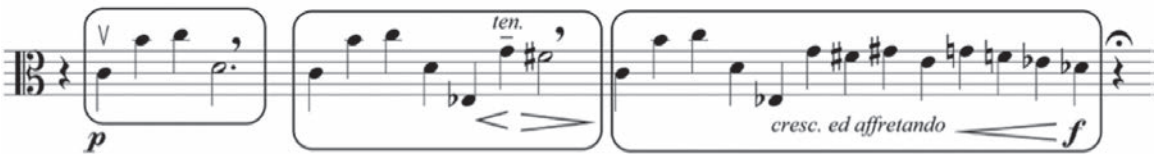
Schuck is an essential figure in the origin of Gutiérrez's viola concerto, since the work was written for and dedicated to him to honor his decision to remain in the country despite the financial turbulence that afflicted Costa Rica's economy during the 1980s, that forced orchestra personnel to leave their positions. Shuck was one of the few musicians that stayed, while continuing to be part of the orchestra.

Structure of the Concerto

Gutiérrez's concerto for viola is structured in a single movement. The concerto begins with a cadenza for the solo viola, where there is no meter or tempo marking other than *Lento*, and the phrases are marked by commas and fermatas over a rest. This first statement of the soloist presents all the motivic elements that will shape the structure of the concerto, and also the thematic material that the composer will develop throughout the piece.

The cadenza presents five different themes (or motives) that will appear through the rest of the piece, either in their original form, or in some sort of variation. Illustration 2 shows the initial cadenza, with each of the themes marked with lower case letters.

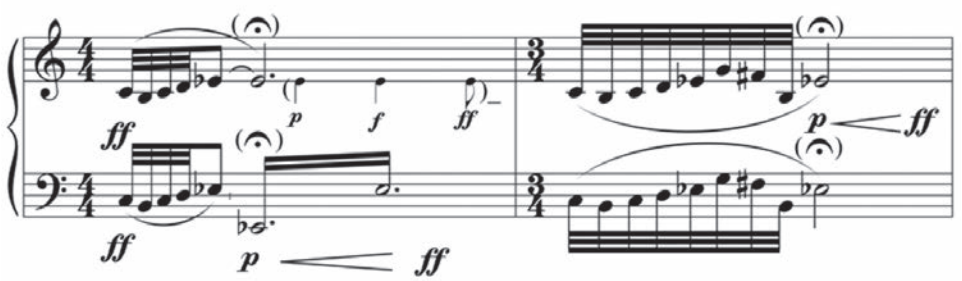
The first theme of the cadenza will serve as a connective passage between the larger sections of the piece. This first theme is presented in three different keys, although it retains the same melodic structure in each transposition. The first theme is based upon a single cell that will be presented in modified versions throughout the movement. Illustration 3 shows the structure of the first theme with the different expansions of the cell and its extension.



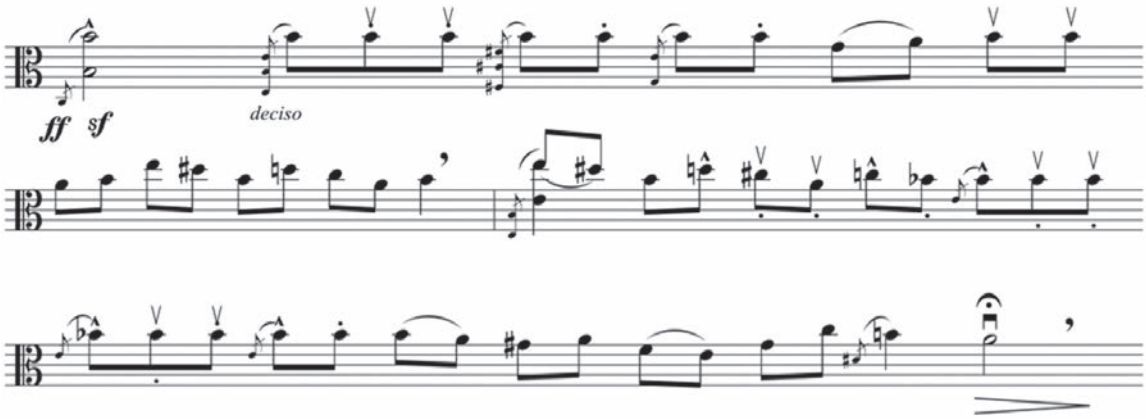
Illus. 3. First motive (*a*). Original cell, expansion of the first motive and further expansion

Cadenza	Introduction	A	B	A	Coda	Cadenza
Lento Opening to m. 1	*Recitativo* 40 measures	*Poco meno mosso* 100 measures	*Lento* 46 measures	*Tempo giusto e marcato* 30 measures	*Allegro molto agitato* 81 measures	 m. 321 to the end
		Transition: 13 measures Cadenza	 Cadenza 2 measures		Transition: 9 measures	

Illus. 4. Formal outline of the Concerto



Illus. 5. Transformation of the original cell



Illus. 6. Theme *b* section from the opening cadenza

The initial four-note motive of the cadenza is the source for most of the material of the piece. It reappears through the rest of the piece either in its original form as a cadenza, or transformed in the orchestral parts or the solo line.

The work begins with the solo viola and it also ends with the solo viola playing over an A pedal in the orchestra. It is responsorial in nature, alternating solo cadenzas (eight in total) and sections where orchestra plays alongside the solo viola.

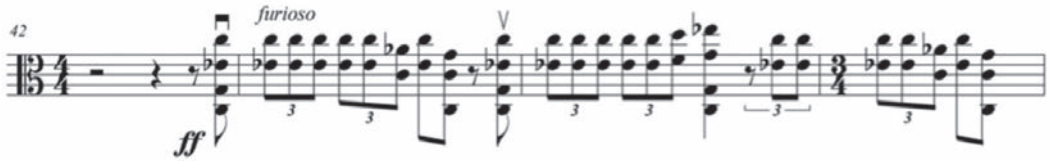
The entire piece can be seen from differing perspectives: it can be interpreted as a three short movements, but also it can be seen as an arch form with an introduction (see Illustration 4).

However, the introduction and the coda do not share the same thematic structure. The arch form is defined by the cadenzas at the beginning and the end, and also by the introductory and concluding parts.

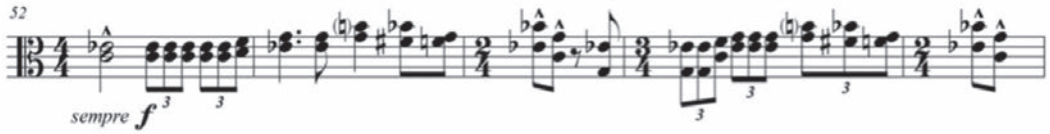
The introduction starts with the entrance of the orchestra after the viola cadenza, and continues until m. 40 where another cadenza (shorter than the first one) begins. The introduction is constructed with motivic elements from the first cadenza. However, this material is transformed from its original version. Illustration 5 shows the transformation of the original cell, which creates a new section.

Even though the material seems different from the opening line, it has the same pitch content as the opening cell. It is important to note that the orchestra almost never plays the original cell presented at the beginning of the cadenza, instead presenting the transformed version shown in musical Illustration 5. The only place where the orchestra plays the first theme is in mm. 147-148 in the contrabassoon, celli, and bass lines. The inclusion of the *a* motive in this particular section serves as a remembrance of previous thematic material, but at the same time the viola introduces new elements.

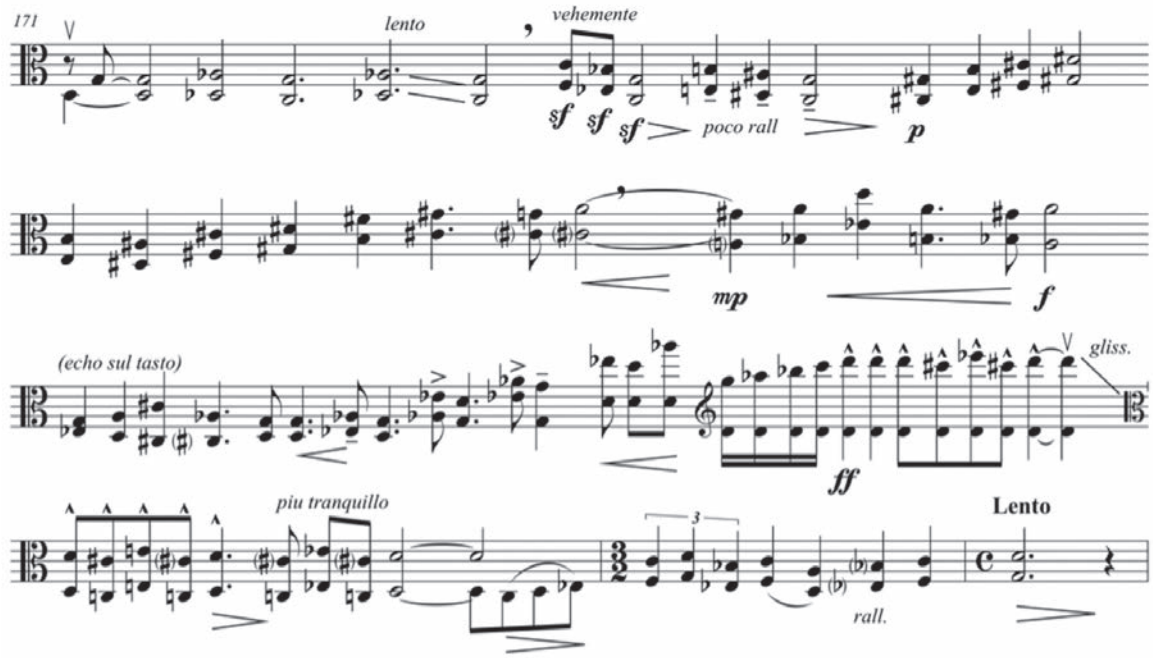
Section A has a new tempo marking: *Poco meno mosso e marcato*. This section contains newly arranged thematic material based on music from the cadenza and in multiple respects significantly contrasts with the preceding material. The preceding introduction presented a responsorial texture in which the solo viola does not compete with the orchestra, allowing the orchestral *tutti* to present a dominant character



Illus. 7. Transformation of *b*



Illus. 8. Further transformation of *b*



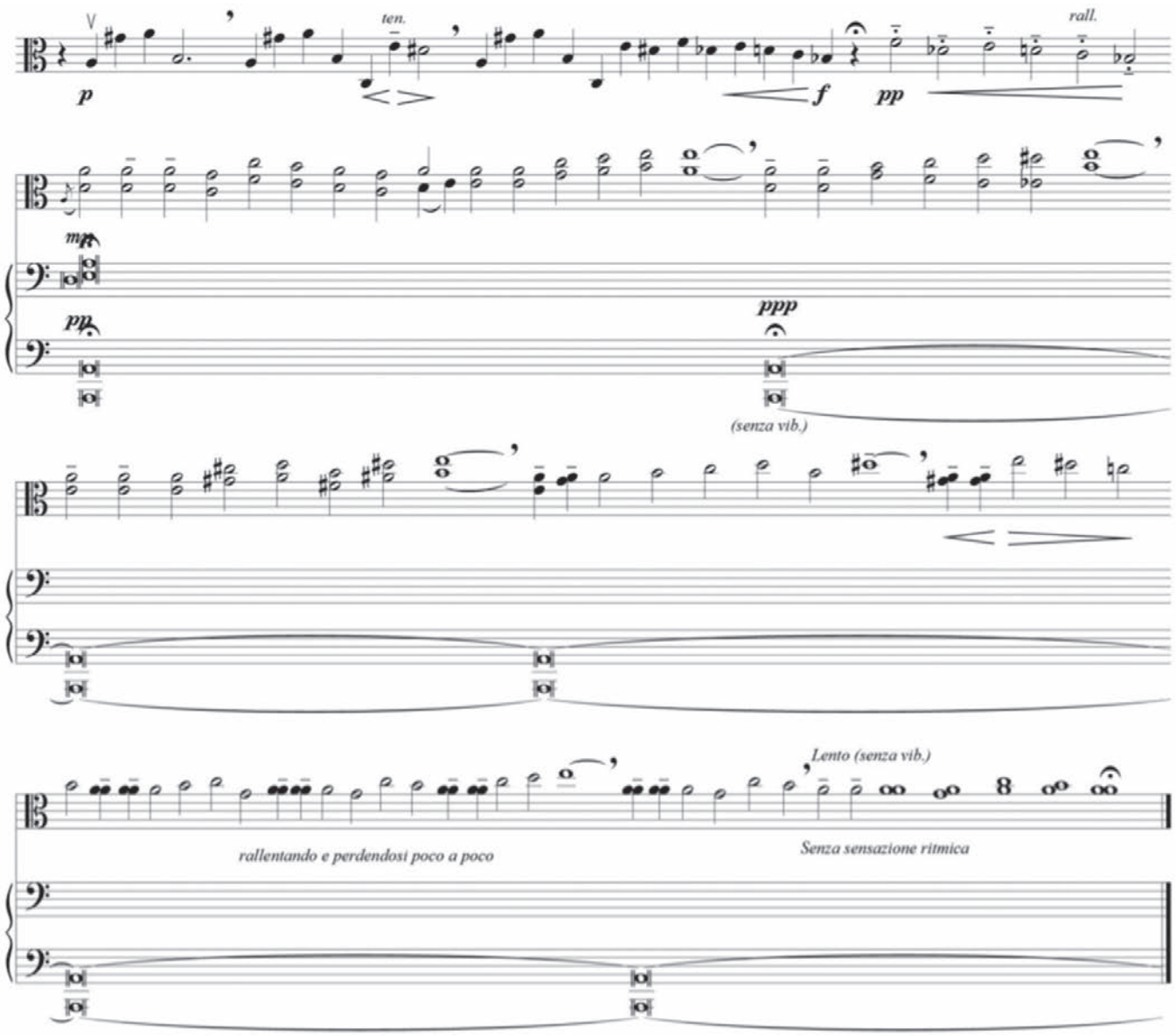
Illus. 9. B section cadenza

without the soloist. In contrast, this new section is noticeably structured to permit a greater participation of the orchestra, and although it is marked with softer dynamics than the soloist, the dense orchestration tends to interfere with the solo line. Section A also presents a contrast in that the solo part is written in the middle register of the instrument, limiting the sound production of the soloist, allowing the solo line to be in the midst of the whole texture rather than simply above the orchestra.

The thematic material presented in this section comes from the material of the opening cadenza, though not in its original form, and it also incorporates material from the introduction. Illustrations 6 to 8 show the material from the opening cadenza and the transformation in this section.

Significantly legato and lyrical lines characterize the B section. The composer uses the orchestra to set a different mood, reminiscent of Impressionism. The strings are muted, the dynamic marking is *pianissimo*, and the viola section plays harmonics. The main line is given to the flute in its low register. The first theme of the cadenza (*a*) is also incorporated in the solo viola line, but in a different character: more connected and lyrical.

This section sets a new mood in the larger scheme of the piece. There is a new tempo marking: *Lento pensativo*,



Illus. 10. Final cadenza

and it is structured in two sections separated by a solo cadenza. However, this time the cadenza is not based on material from the previous solo sections. This entire section could also be seen as a second movement because of the highly contrasting nature with the other sections. The cadenza of this middle section is longer than those that serve as transitions or connection passages. The material used in this cadenza comes from the material in m. 147 in the solo viola, with prominent use of perfect fourths and fifths, as seen in musical Illustration 9. The coda begins in m. 230, and it functions as an orchestral interlude. This section contains material from previous sections, as well as newly composed material. The tempo indication is *Allegro molto agitato*, and the dynamic is *fortissimo* for the majority of the section. Percussion and brass are very prominent, and the strings serve as a driving force.

At the beginning of the final cadenza (see Illustration 10), the original *a* motive is presented, but in a different transposition, and employs material from the second cadenza in the form of quartal writing for the instrument. The entire cadenza sets an entirely different mood from the previous section, in which the orchestra had a prominent role, and the composer exploits the dynamic range of orchestral sections such as brass and percussion. The final statement of the cadenza has the solo viola over an A pedal on the harp and basses.

Overall, Gutiérrez's concerto is built around the middle register of the instrument. In the solo cadenzas this does not represent a significant issue, since the soloist is playing without the orchestra, but, in the sections in which the soloist is playing against the large ensemble, while it is a compositional feature, it can also present considerable challenges in its effective execution. Nevertheless, the composer's choices of orchestration still reflect a careful examination of the viola's timbre because he leaves the use of full brass and percussion to the sections of orchestral interlude.

Another notable aspect of this work is that there is a significant use of perfect fourth and perfect fifth intervals, something that Gutiérrez favored in previous compositions, such as the *Toccatina for violin and cello*, in which the slow section of the piece uses parallel open fourths and fifths, according to Ronald Sider.[6] It is important to mention that even though the entire piece uses these types of sonorities, the slow sections of the Concerto have the most prominent use of quartal sonorities.

The concerto in context

In an interview with the composer, he asserts that in composing a concerto for viola, a composer must compete with Hindemith's viola concerto.[7] Although Gutiérrez did not state that he molded his own concerto with Hindemith's in mind, there are many similarities between the two pieces.

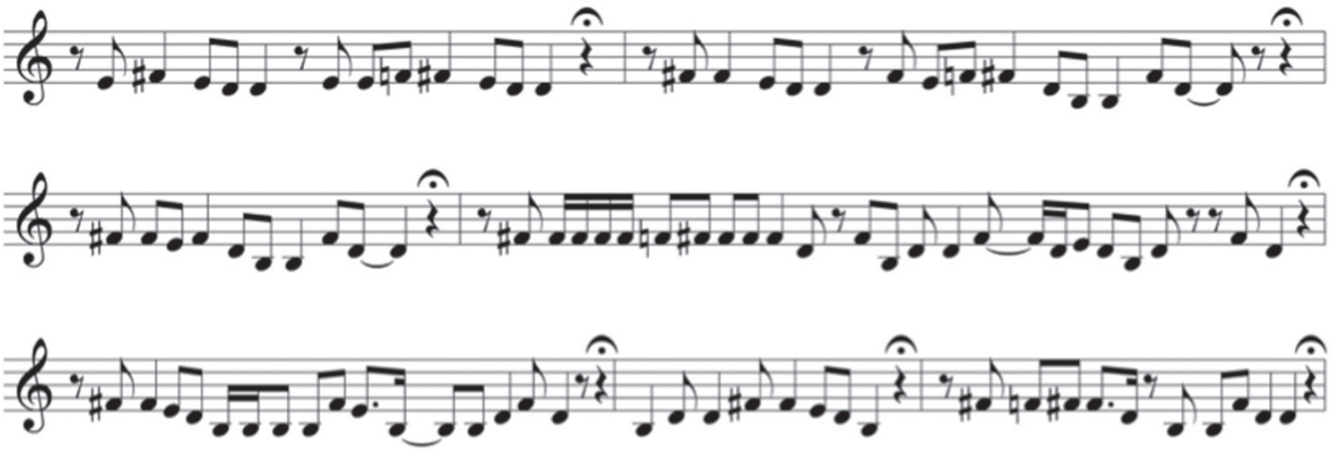
> Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher* was composed in 1935 and is based on old German folk tunes. Soo Mi Lee notes that "Hindemith uses the tunes in a variety of manners and techniques; a similarity among all is that they are used as thematic material. None are heard in a passing, referencing manner as much as an integral part of the formal fabric of the pieces. Therefore, at some point they tend to be direct quotations with little paraphrasing, but Hindemith develops them extensively."[8] Hindemith took the tunes from Franz Magnus Bohme's *Altdeutsches Liederbuc,* a collection of over 660 folk tunes that dates back to the medieval period. Likewise, Gutiérrez was also inspired by regional Costa Rican songs, though despite resemblances to some *bribri* songs present in Acevedo's compilation, there are no direct quotations from any of them in his concerto.

Another compositional element, present in both Hindemith and Gutiérrez's concerti is the treatment of borrowed material. J. Peter Burkholder notes that a composer has a vast number of possibilities in order to use borrowed material.[9] Lee summarizes the different techniques used by Hindemith in each of the movements of the concerto.[10] In the first movement he uses a *cantus firmus* technique. The second movement utilizes "a technique that Burkholder would describe as patch-work, because Hindemith goes back and forth between the phrases of two themes."[11] This same movement also uses another *cantus firmus,* in addition to a fugato and chorale sections into which he inserted the borrowed material. The third movement is comprised of a theme and variations: "The theme is presented at the beginning of the movement in the woodwinds, and then heard in twelve subsequent variations, which generally increase in difficulty and complexity towards the end."[12]

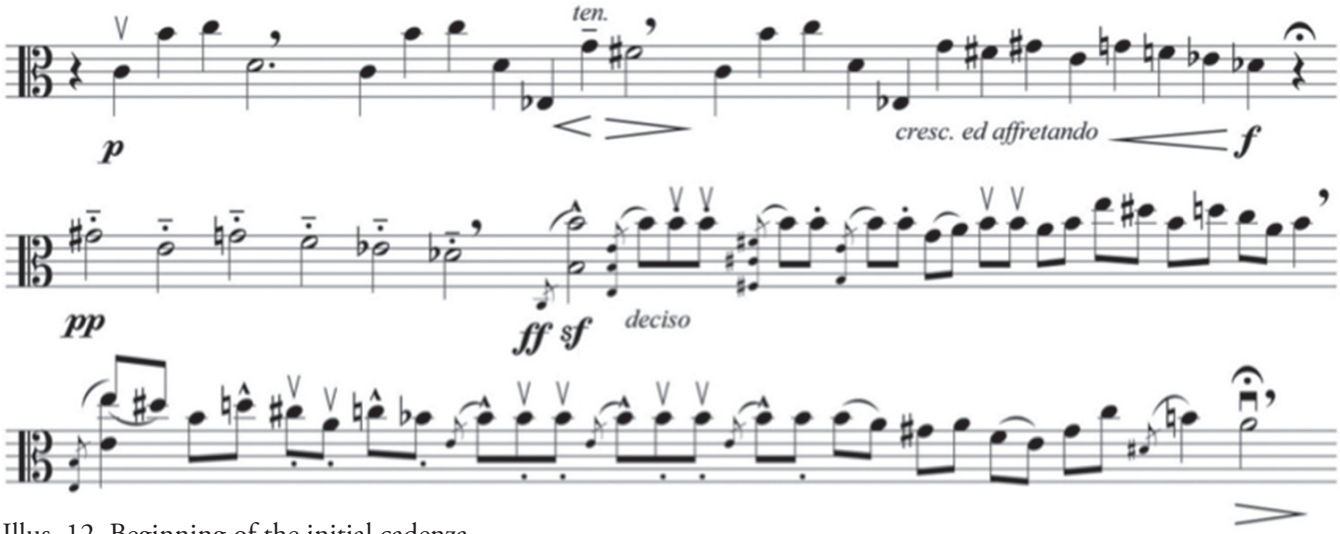
In Gutiérrez's work, there are no clear statements of the borrowed material (if any), but according to Burkholder, there are other ways to insert material from other composers or tunes in a composition that do not have to be explicit. Burkholder might describe Gutiérrez's technique as:

> …*modeling* a work on an existing one, assuming its structure, incorporating a small portion of its melodic material, or depending upon it as a model in some other way … modeling on the level of melody, which most often involves incorporating some structural aspects of the source as well as melodic shape and details.[13]

Following this line of analysis, it can be argued that Gutiérrez's concerto models the *sorbón* music of the *bribri*, [14] since the opening of the cadenza resembles the melodic shape of *bribri* song.[15] The characteristics found in that first statement of the melody are: a melody composed of small fragments, each of the fragments being somewhat longer than the previous one. The beginning of each fragment starts with the same motive, which is built upon every time it appears in the first phrase of the cadenza. The first motive is of great importance in the development of the piece, and it is the only passage in the concerto that resembles structural characteristics from the *bribri* song. Moreover, this first theme is the cell that will appear in the entire piece, and it will serve as a connective passage either in its original form or modified.



Illus. 11. Transcription of *Estilo Segundo* (*Siwą' Kulé)*, "Second Style," a *bribri* chant from the *Siwą'* tradition (excerpt)



Illus. 12. Beginning of the initial cadenza

Illustrations 11 and 12 show a comparison between the beginning of a *sorbón* song and the opening cadenza of Gutiérrez's work.

As previously mentioned, another feature of Gutiérrez's concerto is that it is conceived in a responsorial nature in which the viola soloist alternates its solo cadenzas with the orchestral *tutti*. The solo passages allow the soloist to play freely without having to compete with the orchestra. As with the start of Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher,* the beginning of Gutiérrez's concerto starts with a solo cadenza, where all the thematic material of the concerto is presented. Additionally, the first movement of Hindemith's work contains another cadenza at the end of the work that has the same thematic material as the opening cadenza (though in a shorter form), as does Gutiérrez's concerto.

The first movement of Hindemith's concerto probably bears the most significant similarities between the two works, in terms of structural nature of the piece. That being said, these structural traces are not unique to these works. Nancy Usher provides an analysis of Jacob Druckman's (1928-1996) viola concerto,[16] and there are some structural elements that can be compared to Gutiérrez's work.

Druckman wrote his viola concerto in 1978 on a commission from the New York Philharmonic to compose a work for its principal violist, Sol Greitzer. According to Uscher's analysis, Druckman's concerto is composed in one uninterrupted movement structure with seven separate sections: Viola solo–tutti–viola solo–tutti–viola solo–tutti–viola solo.[17] However, the sections indicated as solo viola are not exclusively solo or cadenza-

like passages, but include a lighter orchestration in the accompaniment.

Conclusions

The concerto for viola by Costa Rican composer Benjamín Gutiérrez defines Costa Rican music tradition from various perspectives. On the one hand, it draws upon the historical foundations that consolidated and established the nation's symphonic tradition. It also represents the development and achievement of one of the nation's most important composers.

The structural elements that are the basis for the form of the concerto are not unique to the piece. On the contrary, Gutiérrez's concerto coheres with recognized universal compositional standards, embellished with his own musical ideas drawn from his personal experience and background.

While he did not take Hindemith's concerto as a model for his own, Gutiérrez recognizes Hindemith's contribution to the repertoire for viola as a keystone in the outcome of new pieces for the instrument.

Regardless of whether or not the composer intended to literally quote *bribri* music, it is clear that he pays tribute to their culture in his viola concerto. The name of the piece will direct the listener or the performer to the culture of the *bribri*, and it will always predispose players to find elements of the *bribri* music, even if the quest proves elusive. Gutiérrez chose not to use direct quotes but rather the technique of conceptual modeling to pay homage to the *bribri*.

Orquídea Guandique holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Arizona. She currently serves as viola and music history professor at the University of Costa Rica. She has presented recitals and conferences in the United States, Portugal, Costa Rica, Poland, and El Salvador.

1. Benjamín Gutiérrez, "Concierto para Viola y Orquesta, Sobre un Canto Bribri," score, 1983, Archivo Histórico Musical, Universidad de Costa Rica.

2. Ronald Sider, "Contemporary Composers in Costa Rica," *Latin American Music Review /Revista de Música Latinoamericana* 5, no. 2 (1984), 268.

3. Ibid., 268.

4. Bernal Flores, *La Música en Costa Rica* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1978), 137.

5. The *bribri* referenced in the title of Gutiérrez's concerto for viola represent one of Costa Rica's few surviving indigenous groups. Residing in the mountains of Talamanca in the southeast part of the country, their musical repertory and style are closely related to that of the *Cabécar* groups, broadly known as the *Talamancan* Indians. The *bribri* is the largest of all the indigenous population in Costa Rica.

6. Sider, 269.

7. Benjamín Gutiérrez, interview by Fernando Zúñiga, tape recording, San José, January 2010.

8. Soo Mi Lee, "Musical Borrowing in Four Twentieth-Century Works for Viola by Hindemith, Bloch, Bacewicz, and Shostakovich" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati 2010), 16-17.

9. J. Peter Burkholder, "The Use of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field," *Notes* 50, No. 3 (1994): 851-870.

10. Soo Mi Lee, "Musical Borrowing in Four Twentieth-Century Works for Viola by Hindemith, Bloch, Bacewicz, and Shostakovich" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2010).

11. Ibid., 19.

12. Ibid., 22.

13. J. Peter Burkholder, "Quotation and Emulation: Charles Ives's Uses of His Models," *The Musical Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (1985): 2-3.

14. The *sorbón* is a male dance song that is performed by a leading singer and a mixed chorus at communal parties known as *chichadas*. Men and women perform the dance, and it symbolizes unity and fraternity among the members of the community. It is sung in the *Teribe* language and is accompanied by drums played by a male member. This dance has a responsorial structure, alternating between the male singer and the choir.

15. According to Cervantes, "intervals of seconds and thirds are more frequent. Melodic range rarely exceeds the fifth. Some chants are pentatonic, but most of them are tritonic and tetratonic, including the case of the leading part of *sorbón* dance songs. Melodies of chants oscillate up and down a central tone…There are also intentional separation of phrases marked by breathing and long pauses."

16. Nancy Uscher, "Two Contemporary Viola Concerti: A Comparative Study" *Tempo* (1983): 23-29.

17. Ibid., 24.

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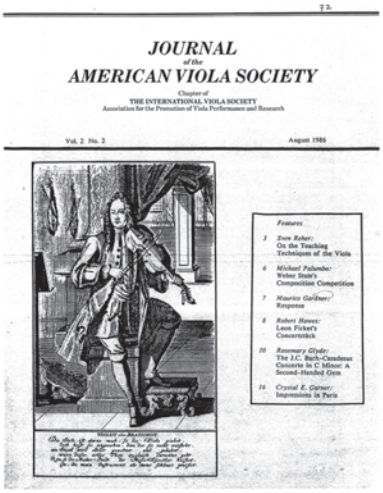
1986 VOL. 2, NO. 2

30 YEARS OF JAVS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Features

Michael Palumbo discussed the setting up of the Weber State Composition Competition. The winner was Maurice Garner for Quadricinium—the composer whose name now graces the AVS's own Composition Competition. Garner wrote a brief commentary, noting that as a result of the win, "I felt fulfilled and confident that I had made the right move when I decided to start composing seriously once more some ten years ago."

Robert Howes discussed the virtuosity in a work of 19th-century composer Leon Firket, Rosemary Glyde looked at the J.S. Bach-Casadesus Concerto as "an second-handed gem,", and Crystal Garner reflected on experiences studying in Paris.

In this issue, JAVS included musical examples for the very first time.

Thought Multi-Tasking (or What I Learned about Painting from Playing the Viola)

Katrin Meidell

Recently, I purchased a home. It was built in the 1960s, and a lot of the features in the house seem to be original, or at least a good twenty to thirty years old. The house has great bones but really needed some updating. So, for the last few weeks, I have been painting, changing fixtures, replacing outlets and light switches, cleaning, and dealing with many other hands-on home-sprucing activities. As you may imagine, I have not had much desire or energy to practice the viola while doing all of this. But, throughout all of this, I did discover something interesting related to my viola-playing career.

See, as a violist, I *think* all of the time while I am playing, whether it be rehearsing with my trio or an orchestra, preparing for a solo recital, or especially when warming up. Other than the obvious things like, "What notes and dynamics am I playing?" I am constantly thinking about the following things: my bow hold, releasing unwanted tension in my shoulders or other parts of my body, which fingering will be easiest for the upcoming passage (or inversely, which will provide the greatest shifting or vibrato challenge—especially in boring orchestral parts!), whether or not I am clenching my jaw, vibrato connection between notes, "release and plop," [1] and a whole host of other considerations. This kind of "thought multi-tasking" within my brain is probably a normal occurrence for most musicians and one of the reasons I love to do "simple"

One of several "thought multi-tasking" mobiles hanging in the author's studio

activities, such as cycling, where there is basically only one thing to think about to execute the task accurately—staying upright!

So, a few weeks ago, as I was painting the trim in my living room, I was struck by how uncomfortable I was, up on the ladder, compressing myself toward the ceiling to get the edge of the paintbrush perfectly aligned with the trim, so as not to get any paint onto the ceiling. But I *was* getting paint on the ceiling, and it was so frustrating! Why was my normally steady hand so inaccurate? Why was I unable to execute this relatively simple task? And why did I care SO much if a little off-white trim paint got onto the white ceiling? I took a break and gave myself a chance to think about all of this.

> "Too often, students only think about one or two things while playing, and more often than not, they do not actively listen to the sounds they are producing."

See, this is my first house, and I *care*. As a perfectionist in just about all of the tasks I undertake, correctly painting the room in which I will spend the most time while at home is important. To me, the stakes were high. Because of this, I had been seriously clenching my jaw and had been holding tension throughout my body in an unconscious effort to control my motions and to do well.

High stakes and the desire to perform well: Sounds like any audition or performance situation, does it not?

It turns out that, in my mind, painting the trim in my new living room was on the same level as performing the viola well. I climbed back up on my ladder and immediately felt my jaw clench. The ladder had taken on the likeness of the stage, and the painting had taken on the likeness of performing. I loosened my jaw, considered my body position, and decided to stand on the lower step so that I was not as contorted as before. I realized that I had been holding my breath while painting, so I made a conscious effort to breathe and continued to focus on my breathing as I again began to paint.

The "thought multi-tasking" that I mentioned earlier is something I often discuss with my students. Too often, students only think about one or two things while playing, and more often than not, they do not *actively* listen to the sounds they are producing. In an attempt to increase their awareness of many of the factors required to play the viola well, I ask them to list six items that they are trying to address. For example: stacked body (feet under knees under hips under shoulders), vibrato connection, relaxed jaw, loose thumbs, relaxed shifts, and breathe. I have them write these six items on a piece of paper and leave that paper on the music stand next to their music. I ask them to scan the paper before they start playing and in every rest or long note. As they start to memorize the six items, I ask them to imagine a cube, with an always-bouncing ball inside of it. Each surface of the cube contains one of these items, and each time the ball bounces against a surface, the student thinks about or executes the item listed on that surface. Because the ball within the cube does not bounce in the same order, the "thought multi-tasking" could go something like: "relaxed jaw, stacked body, loose thumbs, relaxed jaw, vibrato connection, relaxed shifts, loose thumbs, breathe, vibrato connection, etc." It is difficult to do at first, and starting with a smaller list is perhaps a good idea. But in my experience, this "thought multi-tasking" is what helps students progress more quickly than if they get stuck in only two or three thoughts.

Many years ago, a friend of mine gave me a mobile to which you could attach your own photographs. For a long time, it had pictures of good friends from college, but shortly after starting my job at Ball State, I thought that the mobile would be a perfect "thought multi-tasking" reminder. I created colorful cards with eight of the most common requests I make of my students: relaxed jaw, loose thumbs, squishy knees (misspelled on the mobile! I always spell it "squooshy"), breathe, taffy bow (i.e., right arm weight), round fingers (right pinky), center, and release and plop. The mobile now hangs in my office, right in eyesight of the music stand at which my students perform. With the room's airflow, the mobile gently vacillates, so that different ideas are visible at different times. Since I hung it, many students have commented that a specific idea comes into sight and they remember to focus on that item. It is a fun and decorative element in my office that also serves a useful purpose.

As I stood there on my ladder-stage, holding my paintbrush-viola, I discovered that my mind had been in a place where I thought of myself as a novice painter, worried about my execution and afraid of making mistakes. Instead of thinking about the task, I was thinking about the judgment that I, as the outside observer of the finished work, would pass. All of the same unconscious habits that I had as a young violist were active in this novel venue. I was tense and mildly nervous, uncomfortable, unbalanced on my feet, and way too worried about the outcome of my painting. The task of painting the trim had taken on the resemblance of a scary viola audition. But then I realized that I could handle this otherwise-simple task by drawing on the years of experience I had in a much more difficult endeavor. My "thought multi-tasking" went something like: "breathe, relaxed jaw, slow stroke, breathe, balance," and I was able to execute my trim-painting much more accurately than I had been able to before I started actively thinking about what I was doing and how my body was doing it.

When I look at my new living room now, I am quite proud of how it turned out. The paint is beautiful—especially the trim.

Notes

1. "Release and plop" is a Karen Tuttle coordination reminder for loose finger action.

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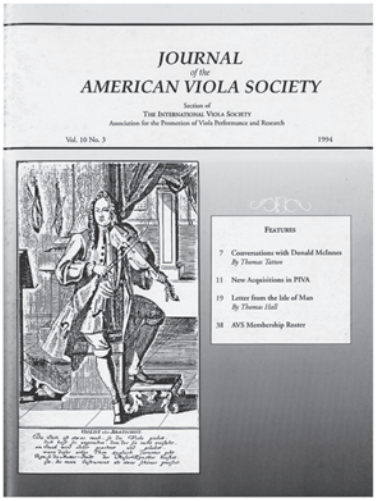
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FEATURES
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Tom Tatton's article, "Conversations with Donald McInnes," began with an account of a masterclass that included the line: "Somehow a little white poodle got into the room, whereupon the student improvised the first line of 'How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?'" This was followed by an interview that included early influences, what McInnes looks for in students, and his teaching style.

When asked what he looks for in students, McInnes stated three factors: "Ambition—a keen intensity that drives the student to practice; intelligence, which enables the student to accomplish and overcome the difficulties in practice time; and three, talent—talent is important, but always third." He also discussed his teaching style, early influences, and his performing career.

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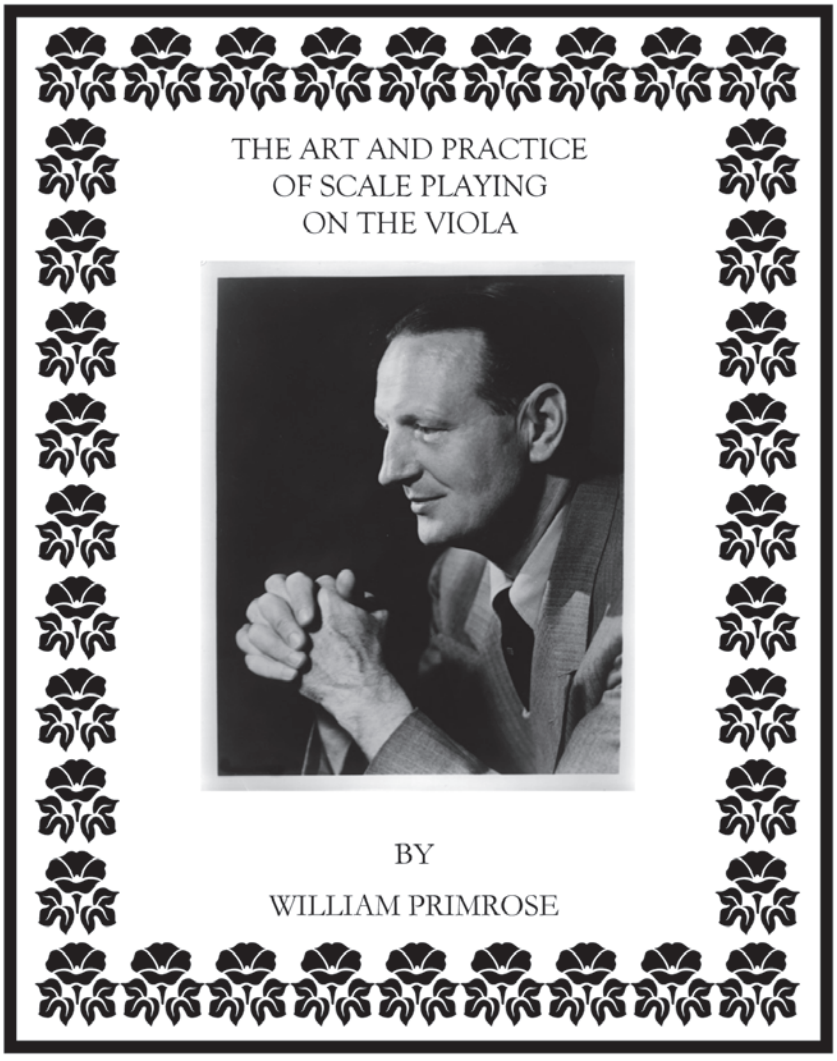

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Experiencing the Viola in Hindustani Classical Music

Gisa Jähnichen, Chinthaka P. Meddegoda, and Ruwin R. Dias

Introduction

It may surprise some to know that the viola is not a rare participant in Indian classical music. From the technical standpoint, there are at least two different conditions for having a viola in a classical or light classical music ensemble: one is as a replacement of the violin; another is the functional replacement of a sarangi,[1] a bowed, short necked lute with three playing strings and 12 to 15 sympathetic strings, more precisely called "aliquot strings."[2]

However, we will find that it is only the first of these options—the replacement of the violin—that provides the occasions when the viola is employed. While it is theoretically an option, there are actually no musicians who play the viola instead of a sarangi for the simple reason that there are not many sarangi players at all compared to violin players, making the substitution of the violin more likely than that of the sarangi. The viola is in most of the cases seen as a "big violin" thus replacing the violin, which actually was first used in order to substitute the sarangi. While in Indian Carnatic music, viola playing is at times admired when played by outstanding artists such as Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna and Chittoor Kumareshan (Kumar, 1999;[4] Satish Kamath, 2002), the viola is rather "special" in the context of Hindustani classical music.

Illus. 1: Sarangi (photo: open source) [3]

On various occasions from 2012 to 2015, two postgraduate students with their lecturer at the Music Department of Universiti Putra Malaysia played Hindustani classical music fusion—or at least, they tried some modified raga interpretations—for their own elevation, rather than of any specific academic purpose. The three are the authors of this article. The two postgraduate students came from Sri Lanka to Malaysia and are teachers of Hindustani classical music at the University of Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo. They were musically educated in North India, including Lucknow and Banaras. The lecturer is a European musicologist with some interest in all types of music, especially in South and Southeast Asia.

This report chronicles the experience of these three people, focusing on having a viola in their ensemble. The ensemble plays mainly instrumental music with tabla, a bansuri alternating with a free reed pipe used as an additional drone modifying the electric *raghini*, and a virtuosic violin.

Illus. 2: Ruwin R. Dias on viola, Gisa Jähnichen on bansuri (with harmonium in front), and Chinthaka P. Meddegoda on tabla.

Ruwin Dias, the violin player, took the opportunity to play on the viola instead of his violin. His former teacher at Banaras Hindu University, Vankhatramanujam Balaji, an exceptional musician who plays both the violin and the viola and who may have inspired Ruwin's experiment. Vankhatramanujam Balaji's viola is equipped with a second neck that bears aliquot strings guided through the joint bridge (see Illustration 3).

His viola rests on a special wooden stand for violin or viola, with the section of the stand that supports the scroll end of the instrument carved in the shape of a hand. The usual playing method that allows for resting the peg box of the violin or viola on the heel of the performer is deemed by the performer to be inappropriate, as showing the bare feet into any direction of other people is considered impolite. A recording of Vankhatramanujam Balaji is accessible online.[6]

Illus. 3: Vankhatramanujam Balaji with his viola in 2009 (photo: open source)[5]

Some Background

The use of the viola is promoted through a number of reasons given in public statements. Satish Kamath writes in *The Hindu* (July

25, 2002) under the headline "It should have been the viola" that the larger viola could have been better equipped with aliquot strings.[7] Additionally, the viola caters to the accompaniment of the voice in a more equal way and is seemingly never too high. He explains with regard to the vocal parts: "This is the exact range of the viola, around 50 or so notes, whether it was a woman singing in the highest pitch acceptable to the Indian ear, or the lowest pitch of the male voice. Had the viola been adopted instead of the violin, there would have been no necessity to retune the instrument."[8] (By saying 'no necessity to retune' Satish Kamath refers to the range the viola can provide. That does not mean that the individual strings are not retuned in other intervals so as to accommodate characteristic playing techniques.)

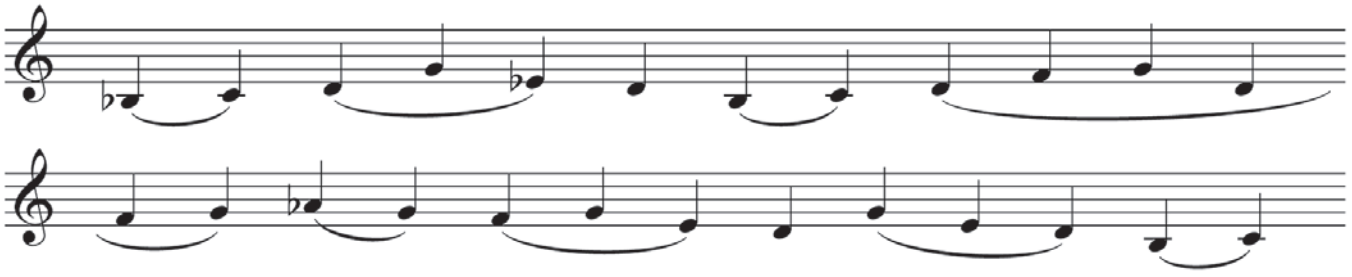
Even though it is used to accompany singers, the viola is mainly thought of a solo instrument as available recordings and personal observations affirm. However, the viola is always available as a "possibility" in representing Hindustani classical music. A job offer advertised by the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan titled "Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM), the first and the only college of music in Afghanistan searching for violin and viola teacher," states: "Given the interests of ANIM students in a variety of musical genres, the ability of an applicant to also teach music in both Western classical and Hindustani classical genres will be considered a plus."[9] In an online index of teachers providing music education in Hindustani classical music, one can find descriptions of skills that include statements such as "I am a violinist/violist in the Hindustani classical tradition as also a musicologist. I also play the Esraj and can handle the Tabla. I am at home in western classical music, too—both performance and theory."[10] Interestingly, the viola is not mentioned on the teacher's homepage,[11] and, in Hindustani classical music performances where viola is played, it seems that the presence of the viola is omitted, with only the mention of a "violin." This might be due to audiences that are not familiar with the term of the instrument, identifying a viola simply as a large violin.

Despite the reputation of the viola in Hindustani classical and light classical music, the use of the viola in Carnatic music is more accepted since the voices of singers are generally slightly lower in pitch. This thus creates a preference for accompanying instruments that do not exceed the singers' range. In this case the viola seems to be well placed.

The Experiment

The setting of the session was informal, and took place in mutlipurpose rooms that were not made for performances. Sitting on a mat covering the tiled ground, the three musicians faced each other and have been, thus far, the only audience. The viola started, and was followed by the bansuri. The tabla usually entered at a later stage, when melodic figures and progressions were for the most part rhythmically fixed. The introductory section is generally quite long; in this part of the performance, the musicians negotiate the melodic phrases, tonal frame, range and speed of micro-melodic features that are very important for the respective mood. Once an agreement is felt, the musicians progress to the solid metric section that requires the tabla. This particular session that took place in the Music Department of Universiti Putra Malaysia on February 10, 2015, was definitely one of fusion between a raga interpretation and free improvisation in a given tonal space played on bansuri, and later, the violin.

The basic raga chosen was raga Desi. This raga is described according to Bhatkhande in 'Kramik Pustak Malika' (Bhatkhande, vol. 6, 2009):



Illus. 4: Raga Desi as described by Bhatkhande (2009). (Transcription by Chinthaka Prageeth Meddegoda).

The framework of raga Desi is illustrated in Hindi scripts, called *devanagari*, as to be used in the free metric introduction, called *alap*.

The following lines in Illustration 5 have been demonstrated by Ramashreya Jha (Ramrang) in an audio recording.[12] The duration of tones is not considered because it is a piece in free metric melodic elaboration. However, the breaks of 'breathing' are underpinned for a better understanding of melodic phrases, which are intriguing in finding the actual mood of the raga.

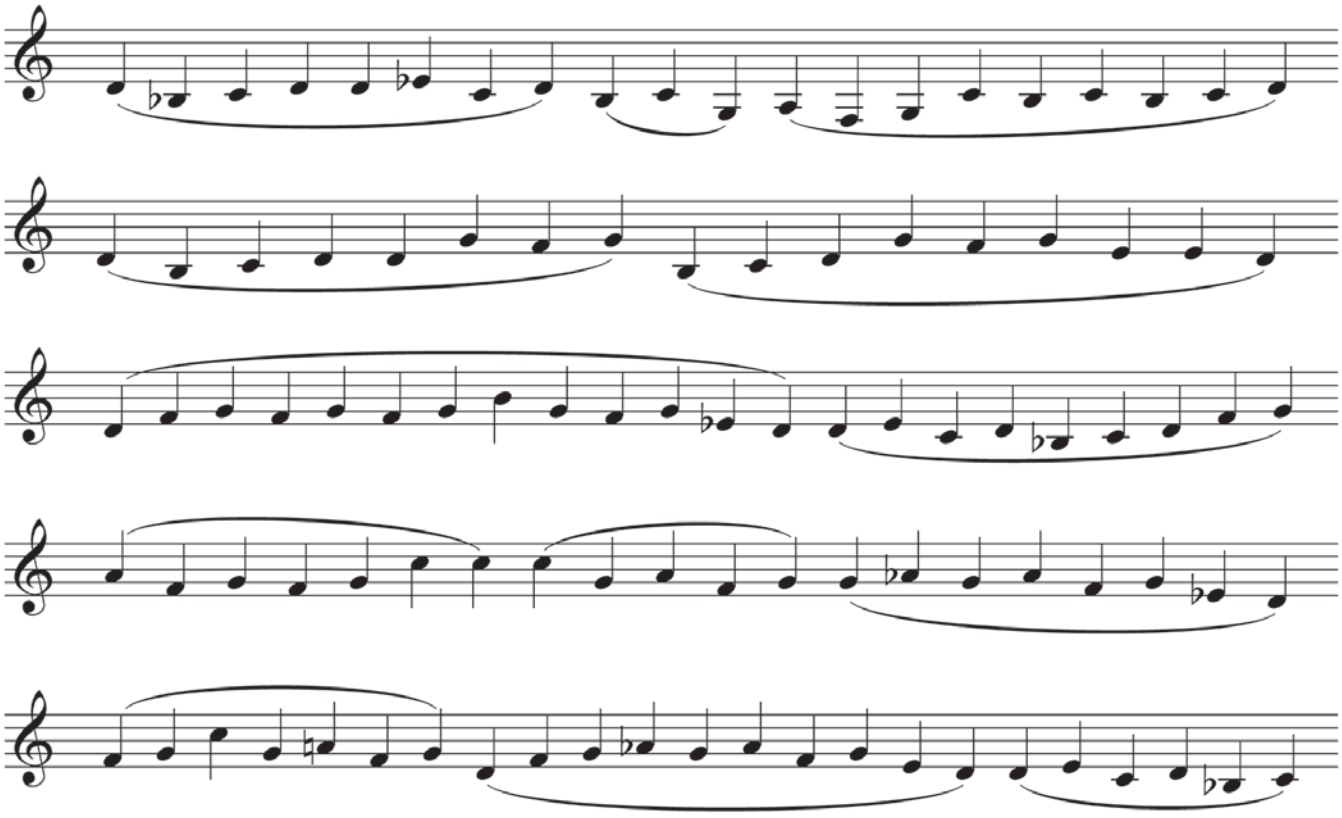
The tuning of the viola in the experiment was E flat–B flat–E flat–B flat.[13] The electric tanpura represented by the *raghini* has been set to an E–flat drone.

However, only the viola player kept to the respective raga while the other musicians, the bansuri and the reed pipe, as well as the the violin that joined later on, freely improvised with the tonal material given, though not following the typical melodic progressions of raga Desi.

According to the tradition, raga Desi is sung in the late morning, approximately from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Raga Desi is put in the Asawari Thata as the deriving scale (Rao et al. 1999). A Thata is an abstract scale of pitches used within a Raga. The Asawari Thata has seven ascending and seven descending tones in one octave, where Gandhar (*ga*, 3rd tone), Dhaivat (*dha*, 6th tone) and Nishad (*ni*, 7th tone) are flat and all other tones 'full'.

The Unmodified Viola in the Context of the Experiment

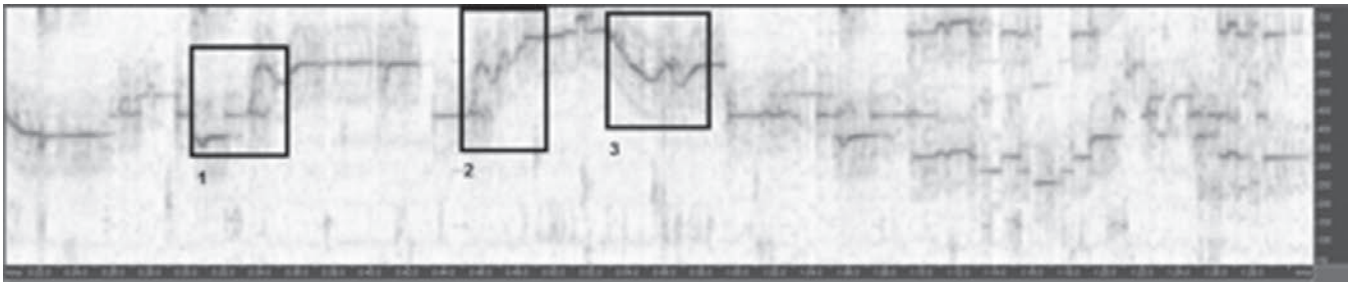
Unlike the example of Balaji mentioned earlier, the viola played had no modifications to its physical appearance, meaning that there were no aliquot strings attached. Only the tuning was changed as mentioned above. Nonetheless, the sound of the instrument still differed remarkably from a violin from the aspects of loudness, timbre and range. As there was no singer present, it seemed that the viola took over a vocal part. This impression might have been caused through the fact that the viola played the raga in the most detailed and accurate manner. On the perception of different playing techniques and positions, the violist says the following:



Illus. 5: Raga Desi as demonstrated by Ramashreya Jha. (Transcription by Chinthaka Prageeth Meddegoda).

Many musicians either keep the viola as in the Western tradition or use a stand so that the viola is firmly held as it is seen in the practice of teacher Vankhatramanujam Balaji. More importantly, the stand is used because of the convenience having the left hand free and not burdened by holding the instrument. The stand can release tension in the chin and the heel. So musicians prefer to use the viola on a stand. In this performance, the viola is held without a stand, which limits playing possibilities somewhat.

String instrumentalists from other musical traditions may find this an unusual statement—after all, in Western classical music, much agility and virtuosity is attained without the aid of any apparatus. A common element of Indian classical music that makes a difference is the use of *meends*, sliding tones that are remarkably fast by any standard, and particularly a different physical setup and placement of the instrument. To illustrate this, let us examine the following spectrographic excerpt (Illustration 6). (Audio excerpt available on the AVS website: http://www.americanviolasociety.org/Resources/Audio-Recordings.php)



Illus. 6: Spectrographic excerpt (slowed down to 25% for better visibility) from the alap with short distance and long distance meends.

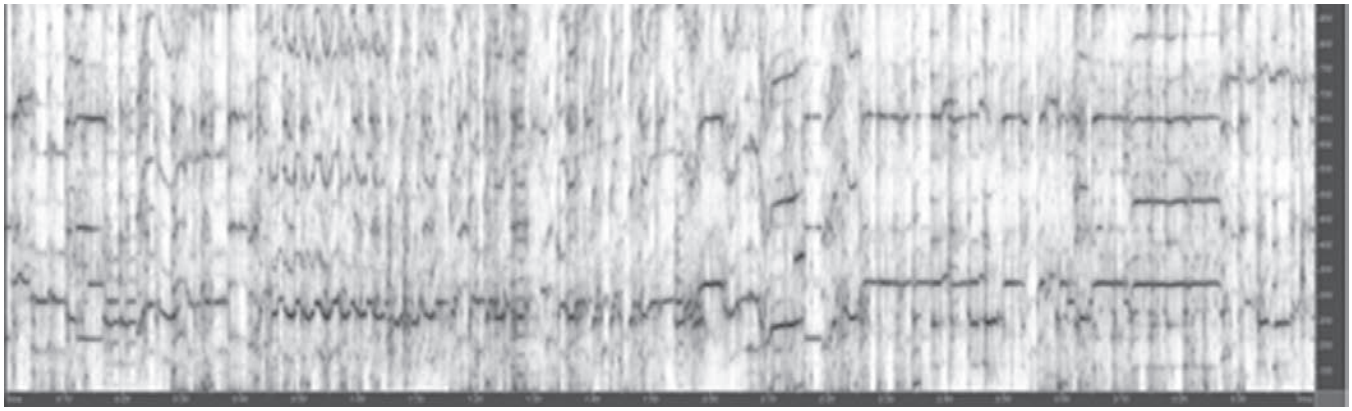
Some of these sliding tones are as short as 1/10 of a second yet they have to cover an interval up to a fourth. In area 1, a *khatka* is followed by a long distance *meend*; in area 2, the viola is "stepping up" in middle distance slides; in area 3, a long descending slide precedes a short distance up and down *meend*. The thickness of the spectrographic line shows uneven patterns in the long distance *meends* while the short *meends* are of evenly distributed strength.

Keeping these sliding tones in mind, it is a particular challenge for violin players to switch to the viola in a short period of time in ways that would be different than for those in the Western classical music world. The distances between intervals are longer on the viola and therefore a violin player is unable to play in the same virtuosic way on the viola. Some fingering techniques, such as using all four fingers at a particularly fast tempo, can be difficult on viola. The gauges of viola strings are bigger and therefore it is seemingly less convenient moving the fingers over the thicker strings than on the violin.

In contrast, the use of *shrutis*—quick, minute, microtonal intervals—is more convenient on viola because of the ease in moving fingers on the fingerboard across larger distances; for example, as it would be necessary for raga Darbari.

The following spectrogram of the performance discussed shows the viola elaborating between *ni* (the seventh tone below the basic tone *sa*) and *ri* (the second tone) and descending then to *sa* (see Illustration 7). The steadiness of the *gamak* (evenly played vibrato over a wider interval), the slightly ascending tones played, the microtonal accents set over the long tone in the last third of the excerpt as well as the straight application of the lower octave on the last long tone are possibly more precise than if played on the violin. In the spectrogram, the drone tone was removed to achieve a better clarity of the melodic line and the picture.

The Tintal—a cyclic rhythmic structure in Hindustani classical music consisting of four sets of four beats—is played in the recording and begins with Madhya Laya (medium tempo) and ends with Dhrut Laya (fast tempo). The speed depends on the negotiated preference of the musicians who play the raga. In some cases, a particular tempo needs to be maintained as inappropriate speed of rhythmic patterns may affect the intended mood of the



Illus. 7: This spectrographic excerpt from the recording shows the viola in the range between 100 and 400 Hz, depicted without drone.

raga—for example, the raga Darbari is usually not sung or played in faster tempo as the raga Darbari is a grave raga with slow vibration on Gandhar (*ga* third tone, a minor third above *sa*) most often played deep in the night. However, in raga Desi, a gradual increase of tempo is welcome. The final tempo did not influence the way to play the viola in comparison to the violin; rather, it was only more physically demanding as the larger movements require slightly more physical energy.

Experiencing the viola by other ensemble members

From the viewpoint of the bansuri player, having the viola was a different experience, as the range of the instrument allowed for more contrasting sequences. While interacting with the violin, a bansuri has to be very careful in not muting the given melodic lines while the viola offers much more space through a different timbre, loudness in the low register and more detailed shrutis (glissandi called *meend*, special trills called *khatka* or *murkhi*). Therefore, the bansuri enjoyed more freedom in choosing the register and in elaborating larger tonal spaces for melodic progressions. The freedom, on the other hand, can be also demanding in terms that the player has to be spontaneously innovative and decisive.

Today, due to various advantages, a number of Hindustani classical musicians prefer the viola over the violin in performing Hindustani classical music. The lower frequencies in comparison to that of the violin that makes it easier to accompany singers.

But there are also other views. Indrani Edirisuriya, a lecturer of violin in the University of Visual and Performing Arts expressed that she prefers the sound of the violin more than the viola for Hindustani classical music. The reasons she has given are as follows:

> The viola has a bass sound which is not the same as the sound of violin. I prefer to hear Hindustani classical violin … but not on viola. We used to hear Hindustani classical music on violin in which violin playing techniques are employed. I find it is somehow not appropriate playing the same melodies on viola though it is played using the same playing techniques as on the violin. Tonal color … of the viola is much different from the violin, especially the sound of the first two strings of the viola that are really very different from the sound of the first two strings of the violin. My Guru Balaji used to play a viola, but I prefer the violin sound played by N. Rajam, the Guru of Balaji.[14]

Nevertheless, she agreed that the resonance of viola provides the sound that is widely preferred by Hindustani musicians who depend on drones or any continuous sound which includes rich overtones. As is the case in Illustration 3, some Hindustani musicians have added some precisely-tuned aliquot strings called *tarap* to the viola so that they can hear the exact resonance for each tone they play on the viola.

From the viewpoint of the tabla player, the sound of the viola is more attractive in many ways. For one, it seems to have a larger sound than the violin; this is not only in terms of the lower register but also the overall resonance that can be heard more clearly even on an unmodified viola. The tuning of the viola is set at lower pitches compared to the violin, even when the violin is already retuned in pitches lower than commonly expected, usually in f–c'–g'–d" and f–c'–g'–c in order

to accommodate singers. Hindustani classical music is more appropriate in a lower register that allows for a richer timbre, which is more aesthetically pleasing to the ear. This also has a relation to the role of the voice, with the lower register enabling the voice to build up a greater level of contrast in the course of exploring the tonal space of a raga. Hindustani classical solos are played on longer bamboo flutes which may give the key tones e.g., E flat, E, and F.

Another viewpoint is that the ragas in which the *Mandra saptak* (lower octave) is used are more appropriate for viola than the violin; thus the viola can depict the mood of the raga as intended. The disadvantage of viola is that some ragas which are elaborated on *Madhya saptak* (the middle range of the performer) and *Uchcha saptak* (higher octave) will not be improved when a viola is employed instead of a violin.

Finally, the stature of a performer within his musical society may be related to the fact whether the violin or viola is considered suitable. Viola players are in many cases outstanding personalities: due to their reputation, they dare to challenge an existing image of Hindustani classical music and they are confident in doing so.

Overall, the experiment was very useful in learning more about not only the technical and physical aspects of the instrument, but also about musical perceptions and cultural biases.

An excerpt of the performance is also available on the AVS website at the link provided on page 35.

Chinthaka Prageeth Meddegoda and Ruwin Rangeeth Dias are both on the faculty of the University for Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka. They obtained their musical expertise in India, namely in North Indian classical music at the Banares Hindu University. Specializing in vocal and violin teaching respectively, they are keen explorers of various music cultures and performance practices. They were PhD candidates at Universiti Putra Malaysia until the completion of their dissertations in 2015, supervised by Professor Gisa Jähnichen.

Jähnichen is a German musicologist has worked for over 25 years in Southeast Asia at several universities and in preservation projects. Among various roles, she is an organologist and chairs an international Study Group on Musical Instruments within the International Council of Traditional Music. She enjoys practicing music with her students.

1. A sarangi is a bowed, short-necked lute with three playing strings and 12 to 15 aliquot strings.

2. Aliquot strings represent in their length and tuning a part of the string and/or the division of the string with which they will sound in order to enrich the overtone spectrum of a musical modus. Sympathetic strings, however, can be of any length or tuning, they just enrich the overall resonance. Aliquot strings are used in some Blüthner pianos as well.

3. National Music Museum website, open source, http://orgs.usd.edu/nmm/India/1187Sarangi/Sarangi1187.html, (accessed May 10, 2015).

4. Kumar introduced the viola into the Indian academic discussion under the title "Introduction of Viola" at the Annual Conference of the Chembur Fine Arts Society, Mumbai, 1999: "The Viola is approximately an inch or slightly more in length than the Violin. The pitch or sruti of Viola is generally C or C sharp (1–1 1/2 kattai), or sometimes even less, which shows that the quality of tone is rather base. It does not have a shrill tone like the violin. The bow used for the viola is thicker and smaller than the bow used for violin. After the instrument has been adapted for Carnatic music, its tuning has also undergone a change." The use of the term 'base' relates to the function of the base note in a raga, which, interestingly is in a bass level compared to the usual register of singers.

5. Source: International Ancient Arts Symposium Festival http://goo.gl/HrJHbF (accessed August 7, 2015).

6. "Vankhatramanujam Balaji is playing Brindabani Sarang—Ban Ban Dhoondan Jaoon," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=599K-yjYNOY, (uploaded by Malyada Goverdhan on February 8, 2010; accessed April 2, 2015."

7. Satish Kamath, "It should have been the viola." *The Hindu*, Jul. 25, 2002, http://www.thehindujobs.com/thehindu/mp/2002/07/25/stories/2002072500340300.htm, (accessed April 1, 2015).

8. Ibid.

9. Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan website, http://moe.gov.af/en/jobs/violin-and-viola-teacher (posted on February 19, 2014; accessed July 25, 2015.)

10. Listed in Teachers and Performers of Indian Music and Dance, http://chandrakantha.com/teachers/teach_music_new_zealand.html (accessed August 7, 2015).

11. Website of Chintamani Rath from Tauranga, New Zealand: www.ragaculture.com (accessed April 2, 2015).

12. http://www.parrikar.org/hindustani/desi/, created in 2002 (accessed July 25, 2015).

13. Some violinists prefer strictly the tuning D–A–D–A.

14. Personal communication, March 31, 2015.

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Kumar V.L. "Introduction of Viola." Annual Conference of the Chembur Fine Arts Society (Mumbai: ms., 1999).

Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2014), vacancy accessible via: http://goo.gl/ArguIL, (accessed April 2, 2015).

Chintamani Rath, official website: www.ragaculture.com (accessed April 2, 2015).

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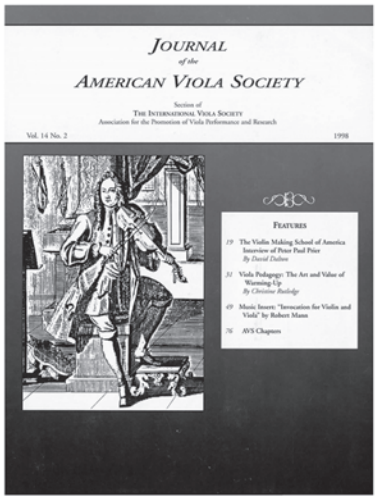
Rao, Suvarnalata; Wim van der Meer, Jane Harvey. *The Raga Guide: A Survey of 74 Hindustani Ragas*, ed. Joep Bor (London: Zenith Media, 1999).

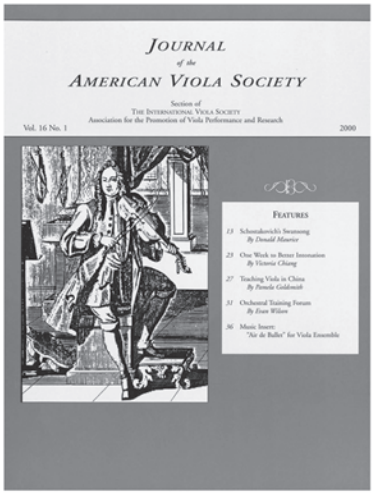
1998 VOL. 14, NO. 2 — 30 YEARS OF JAVS



This issue included an interview by David Dalton of Peter Paul Prier, the founder of the Violin Making School of America. This explored the luthier's family history, the adventure of "striking out on one's own," the school, and plans for the future. To graduate, each student presents two instruments (one unvarnished), a thesis, and the notebook that they have used over three years.

Christine Rutledge emphasized the value of warming up in a pedagogical article. She provided a 12-point system that included exercises, in both descriptions and notation, for vibrato, string crossing, shifting, and stretching one's fingers. Robert Mann, who founded the Juilliard String Quartet, contributed a duo for violin and viola.

2000 VOL. 16, NO. 1

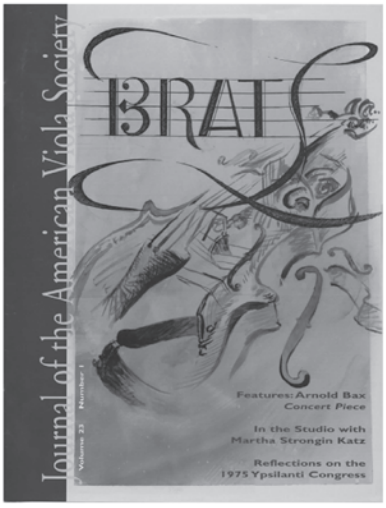


In "Schostakovich's Swansong," Donald Maurice took readers on a tour of the composer's viola sonata, providing a historical framework, references to symphonies, and in particular a connection to Beethoven.

In an article that connected well to Heidi Castleman's guide to learning rhythm in the preceding issue, Victoria Chiang went to the basics of playing in tune. She began with the issue of hearing in tune, noting, "The driver who gets into the car without knowing where he is going has little chance of getting there."

14 years after Milton Katim's article, Pamela Goldsmith visited the Shanghai Conservatory, and provided an account of her visit in this issue. "Harold may have gone to Italy," she wrote, "but I went to China."

2007 VOL. 23, NO. 1



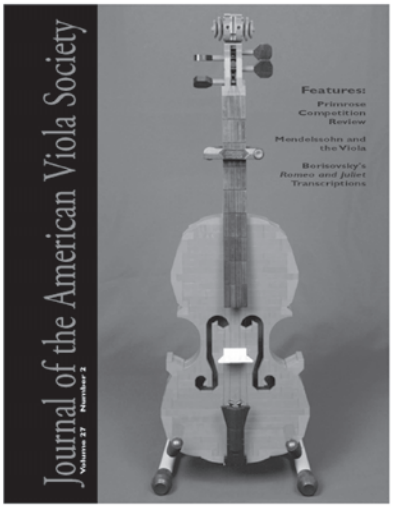
In the Retrospective department, Dwight Pounds compiled excerpts from the Viola Research Society Newsletter—similarly reflecting back 31 years—that included the then upcoming publication of Shostakovich's viola sonata. Myron Rosenblum, who was the editor of the Newsletter then, also provided some reflections on the first American International Viola Congress in 1975.

Leanne Darling contributed an article on the viola in Middle Eastern music, and a particularly interesting part of this discussion was the placement of the viola vertically on one's lap, with the performer crossing strings by moving the instrument instead of the bow.

Christine Piacilla's Dalton Competition-winning article on Arnold Bax's *Concert Piece for Viola and Piano* was artfully titled "The Englishman and His Mistress," relating to the composer's "life-long love affair… with all things Irish." Also in this issue was a pedagogical article on Martha Katz.

Advertiser Index

2011 VOL. 27, NO. 2 30 YEARS OF JAVS



A thread running through this issue was the expansion of repertoire for the viola, most notably an article by Matthew Jones on the subject of Borisovsky's trancriptions of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. This included the choices for transcription, and the process involved in acclimatizing the work for our instrument, as well as preserving the composer's "famously colorful and varied" score in the piano part. Molly Gebrian contributed an article on music for viola and percussion, forming what she called trios for two people—with the percussionist doubling as a pianist.

Linda Shaver-Gleason's article on Mendelssohn explored to what extent the composer played the viola, and the connection of the viola sonata to the third symphony, and ends with editorial suggestions to address problems in the third movement of the sonata. Also included in this issue were profiles of violist Brett Deubner and luthier Ray Melanson, and a look at the student workers at PIVA.

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

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(Continued on following page)
updated 2/8/15

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