TWENTIETH CENTURY USE OF THE CONCERTO GROSSO TECHNIQUE

Thesis for the Degree of M. M.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Loupatti Katherine Miller

1966

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OF THE
CONCERTO GROSSO TECHNIQUE

By

Loupatti Katherine Miller

A THESIS

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PREFACE

The author, during the course of research in the field of the early concerto grosso, became conscious of the tremendous depth and scope of the twentieth-century development in this field. The modern idiom combined with the eighteenth-century form, seemed like a fascinating subject for study, and a worthwhile one, in view of the dearth of material about the twentieth-century concerto grosso.

The analysis of contemporary works in this category illustrates the adaptability of the Baroque form to twentieth-century techniques. The four works were chosen because the compositions, modern in idiom but traditional in their structural principle, are among the outstanding examples of the Neo-classic movement. The individuality as well as the technical competence of the composers sets these works apart for study since the ideals and spirit of the two periods were fused into a successful medium of expression. The compositions and their composers have been recognized by substantial publishing houses and well-known orchestral groups.

The author wishes to express her sincere appreciation to the librarians of Michigan State University

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CHAPTER I

HISTORY

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HISTORY

An investigation into the use of the concerto grosso technique in the twentieth century must be based on an understanding of its development of this form during the Baroque period, as well as a thorough knowledge of its use in the hands of the classical masters. Although the concerto principle itself has never been long out of use with composers since its earliest manifestation in certain forms of sixteenth-century vocal and instrumental music, the popularity of the concerto grosso as a compositional form had until recent years been limited to the relatively short period of the late Baroque. Preliminary investigation will therefore be focused on this period, in an effort to find a musical common denominator which will serve as a guide to the study of the contemporary concerto grosso.

The confusion which exists regarding the derivation of the word "concerto" is reflected in a similar ambiguity in many of the early compositions bearing that title. The Latin *concertare*, meaning to compete, contend, or debate, is in apparent opposition to its Italian counterpart, to accord together or play in concert. Although the element of contention and contrast seems to be the most characteristic of

concertos found in the repertoire today, the concertato style of the late sixteenth century implied not only the setting of one chorus against another (the cori spezzati of the Venetian school), but also simply the use of instrumental accompaniment with choral music (e.g., the Penitential Psalms of Andrea Gabrieli). Composers of this period made little or no differentiation between their choral and instrumental style, often merely doubling voice parts with instruments, or leaving the substitution of instruments for voices to the discretion of the performer. Yet in many of these early Baroque compositions we find one or more of the essential features of the concerto as we know it today--virtuosity, alternation between differing tonal masses, and solo writing with instrumental background.

Virtuosity appeared first in vocal writing, in the ornamental monody of the early operas, and in the secular madrigals such as those by Monteverdi. John Culshaw, in his book on the concerto, considers virtuosity and contrast to be essential elements of the concerto, and goes so far as to say the following about their basis in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century vocal music:

> The concerto is a dramatic form, and its real origins, so far as they can be traced, are to be found not so much in instrumental music as in one of the most dramatic of all musical forms--the operatic aria.[1]

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[1]John Culshaw, The Concerto (New York: Chanticleer Press, 1949), p. 10.

Vocal music of the church also played an important part in the development of the concerto style, especially with regard to the element of contrasting tonal masses. One of the earliest instances of the use of the word "concerto" in a title occurred in the *Concerti . . . per voce et stromenti*, a collection of motets and madrigals for double chorus and instrumental accompaniment by Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, published in 1587. The *Concerti ecclesiastici* of Adriano Banchieri (1595) and Ludovico Viadana (1602, 1607) consisted of several volumes of church motets in a similar vein. Abraham Veinus makes the following comment on the contribution of Viadana:

> . . . [Viadana] pared the concerto principle down to one, two, three, four voices singing to an instrument (the organ); and in so doing . . . [introduced] the possibilities of pitting a solo voice (rather than a massed chorus) against an instrumental tutti.[2]

In the realm of purely instrumental music, Giovanni Gabrieli made a significant contribution to the development of the concerto principle in his *Sonata pian' e forte* of 1597, which makes use of high and low instrumental groups to achieve an element of tonal contrast not unlike that of the concerti grossi of a century later. Also important in this connection are his canzonas, which allow various instruments to appear momentarily as soloists during the course of a single work. But Gabrieli was ahead of his time, and

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[2]Abraham Veinus, *The Concerto* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Doran, 1944), pp. 3f.

his canzonas and sonatas were, in the end, little more than spiritual ancestors of the concerto as it finally emerged.

Throughout the seventeenth century the development of a concerto-like style continued. German composers such as Schein and Schütz wrote beautiful if not virtuoso sacred concertos for voice or voices with instrumental accompaniment. Lully, in his operatic writing, made use of rondo and chaconne forms with an alternation of string tutti and woodwind trio episodes, anticipating the classical minuet-trio form. But it was the Italians in particular who were responsible for the final changes in existing forms which ultimately led to the concerti grossi of Corelli and Vivaldi.

Composers of the early Baroque had begun writing canzonas for varying chamber ensembles, under the titles *canzon da sonar*, *sinfonia*, or simply *sonata*. Merula's *Sonate Concertate da chiesa e da camera*[3] of 1637, and Valentini's sonata for violin, cornettino, bassoon, and trombone (1639), in which each instrument has a solo

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[3]The terms "da chiesa" and "da camera" are usually translated "church" and "chamber," and indicate whether a composition was intended for sacred or secular purposes. Church sonatas and concertos contained no obvious dance movements, while chamber works in the same category eventually developed into full-blown dance suites. There was also a differentiation in the keyboard instrument used to realize the figured bass; the organ was used in the church, while a harpsichord was commonly the accompanying instrument in performances of secular works.

section, are early examples of this form. The general structure of the canzona was retained, with some modifications. The normal sonata of this period consisted of a varying number of movements of contrasting tempo and texture, usually beginning with a chordal introduction and including one or more fugal movements and a slow dance form. Solo and trio sonatas were the most popular combinations, and the literature for these groups is extensive. The solo sonata was scored for one violin and continuo, the trio sonata for two violins and continuo. Since the continuo part was usually realized by a keyboard instrument with a cello or *viola da gamba* doubling the bass line, the total number of players involved was actually more than the "solo" or "trio" designation would indicate.

Sonatas for three or more melodic instruments were also common among the works of the seventeenth-century composers, but it was the solo sonata which became the proving-ground for the many innovations in violin technique which the rapidly-improving instruments and performers of this period made possible. Composers of string music were able to introduce such devices as multiple stops, pizzicato, harmonics, *col legno*, and passages in the higher positions with assurance that they could be played. Composers such as Gabrieli, Fontano, Marini, Turini, Usper, Neri, Valentini, Buonamente, Frescobaldi, and many others gradually enriched the form of the old Venetian canzona. An

eminent authority has said about them: "Their works furnish the tenuous line between the ensemble canzona and the concerto proper of the late Baroque period."[4]

Alessandro Stradella (c. 1645-1682) is generally credited with having been the first composer to make the all-important distinction in his works between a concertino and a concerto grosso instrumental group.[5] This division occurred first as an accompaniment device in his operatic and oratorio writing. He subsequently used it in two Sinfonie a più instrumenti, which appeared about the year 1680. But it remained for Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) to realize more fully the potentialities of this innovation in the arrangement of the orchestra. Corelli received his musical education in Bologna, and appears to have been a celebrated violinist and teacher as well as an admired composer during his lifetime. He is said to have concertized widely, visiting Germany and France

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[4]Manfred Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), p. 55.

[5]The term "concerto grosso" was used as early as the sixteenth century to denote a group of accompanying instruments. It continued to be used in this way, although it later acquired the additional significance of a generic title. It has sometimes been translated "grand concerto." As a generic term it usually implies an orchestra divided into two distinct groups: the "concertino" or small group of soloists (also called "soli"), and the "concerto grosso" or large accompanying group (also called "tutti" or "ripieno"). Another term which is sometimes used to denote solo players is "obbligato" which supposedly means an obligatory rather than ad libitum solo passage, and usually refers to a part which is of secondary importance in relation to the composition as a whole.

before finally settling in Rome under the patronage of Cardinal Ottoboni, some time before 1685. Although the publication date of the twelve concerti grossi which comprise his Op. 6 is usually given as 1712, it is generally believed that they were composed much earlier. Georg Muffat (c. 1645-1704), a student of the styles of both Lully and Corelli and a composer of concerti grossi in his own right, makes the following comment on the number of performers in the preface of his Concerti Grossi (1682):

> J' entendis avec etonnement quelques fymphonies [sic] de M. Arcangelo Corelli tres belles, & [sic] tres bien executées par un bon nombre de Muficiens [sic].[6]

> I heard with amazement some symphonies of M. Arcangelo Corelli, very beautiful and very well performed by a large number of musicians.[7]

Even without this evidence, their conservative style would indicate that Corelli's works belong among the earliest in that form. They adopt the indefinite formal organization of the church and chamber sonata of the day, and are, if anything, even more episodical in character. Corelli's trio sonatas, for instance, are composed of four movements, while his church concertos (Op. 6, Nos. 1-8) were subdivided into as many as nine or ten different sections.

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[6]Guido Adler, ed., Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, XI. Jahrgang, 2 (Graz, Austria: Akademische, 1959), p. 20.

[7]Charles G. Forton, trans. Exchange Teacher, Port Huron High School; Doctor of Music - Lemmens Institute, Malines, Belgium.

More often than not, however, the slow sections serve merely as introductions or bridge passages, and almost invariably end on a half cadence, commonly the Phrygian Cadence. These concertos contain mostly movements using ABA, ABAC, A:||:B:||, and fugal forms, although various other arrangements also occur. The concerti da camera (Nos. 9-12), on the other hand, are generally made up of more distinct dance movements beginning with a Preludio and including a varying number of the more common idealized dance forms (those used by Corelli are the Allemanda, Corrente, Gavotta, Sarabanda, Minuetto, and Giga).

The form of Corelli's concerti grossi did not differ materially from that of his solo and trio sonatas. The distinguishing features of these works pertain not to form, but to orchestration and texture. Even here we find Corelli borrowing from the past, for his concertino consists of the combination of two violins, cello, and cembalo used in the trio sonata. When this group is projected against the background of a string orchestra (with its own cembalo), an infinitely wider range of effects becomes possible. Veinus, observing the broadening scope of the orchestra as a result of the advent of the concerto grosso, makes the following comment:

> The juxtaposition of two such unequal choirs brought into play a whole category of orchestral effects. The grosso was necessarily a heavier, louder, more deliberate body of tone; the concertino lighter, softer, and more agile. The continual

> shifting from choir to choir produced a fascinating chiaroscuro of dynamics, weight, and movement; and when the concertino was taken over by the wind trio [a post-Corellian innovation] against a grosso of strings, a rich and easy source of color contrast was instantly brought to hand. Clearly this was too fruitful a technique to remain the exclusive property of one instrumental form; and so we find the concerto grosso as a principle of orchestration applied in such diverse fields as the opera (A. Scarlatti), the sacred cantata (Graupner's *Mein Herze schwimmt in Blut*), and the oratorio (the *Sinfonia terribile* in Domenico Freschi's *Maracolo del Mago*).[8]

The fact that Corelli and his immediate followers did not at once take advantage of all the new effects is certainly understandable. Corelli himself, although considered the founder of modern violin technique, was a virtuoso only in relation to violinists of his day, and he was content to require no more than third position of his string players. His concertino parts are no more difficult than the corresponding ripieno parts, nor is there any significant structural differentiation in his treatment of the two groups, other than that suggested by their obvious tonal inequality. Thus he makes use of the various effects previously explored by composers of music for multiple choruses: alternation of phrases from one group to the other, punctuation of a dialogue in one group by chords in the other, and the echo effect. It is significant that the whole concertino usually appears rather than separate groups of instruments. In fugal movements Corelli usually gives the first few entrances to the solo violins, achieving a dramatic

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[8]Abraham Veinus, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

climax when he finally brings in the ripieno basses, then the full orchestra. When the tutti and soli appear together, they play the same parts.

It remains only to mention briefly that Corelli was harmonically quite advanced. Bukofzer says that he "can take the credit for the full realization of tonality in the field of instrumental music."[9] Many of his slow movements contain chromatic sections, although a simple dominant-tonic background or a harmonic sequence suffice for the numerous violinistic broken-chord passages of his fast movements. Harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic patterns of the late Baroque all abound in his music.

Among the contemporaries of Corelli are many whose concerti grossi, although not well known or even available for study today, most certainly contributed to the development of that form. Concerti grossi by A. Scarlatti, Valentini, Gregori, and Torelli were published even before those of Corelli. Guiseppe Torelli (c. 1660-1708), although better known for his solo violin concertos than for his works in other forms, was also a prolific composer of the sinfonia, the orchestral concerto,[10] and the concerto grosso. His concerti grossi adopt the three-movement plan which Vivaldi

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[9] Manfred Bukofzer, op. cit., p. 222.

[10] The orchestral concerto, or concerto for orchestra, combines the characteristics of the concerto grosso and the sinfonia. Like the sinfonia it is written for an orchestra with no solo instruments designated, but stylistically it is much closer to the concerto. This fine line of distinction may be observed in the orchestral works of many of the composers of the early eighteenth century.

also used, the usual arrangement being fast-slow-fast. Probably his best known works in this form are included in his _Op. 8_, published in 1708 and consisting of six concerti grossi for two violins and string orchestra, and six solo violin concertos. In addition to reducing the number of movements to three, Torelli also departed from the style of Corelli in the matter of differentiation between tutti and soli. The _ritornello_, a constantly recurring thematic idea whose possibilities were explored by Vivaldi and Bach in their instrumental works as well as by the operatic composers of the day, became the dominant factor in the contrast between ripieno and concertino. The full orchestra introduced the _ritornello_ theme at the outset. A solo section of a different character followed, then the tutti _ritornello_ interrupted in a different key, and so on. Although the soloists might elaborate upon the _ritornello_ theme, they were also given thematic material distinct from that of the tutti sections. Consistent use of the _ritornello_ device produces an effect similar to that of the rondo form, although in the case of the rondo, subsequent entries are usually made in the key of the original.

Even more than Torelli, Antonio Vivaldi (_c._ 1675-_c._ 1741) was responsible for popularizing in his concerti grossi the three-movement plan and the _ritornello_ form. A well-known violinist and teacher as well as a priest by profession, Vivaldi traveled widely throughout Europe and did much to spread interest in the instrumental forms which

had previously been almost exclusively Italian. Much of his prolific output of operàs, sonatas, and concertos has never been published. Vivaldi's _Op. 3_, _L'Estro Armonico_ (_Harmonic Whim_), ranks along with Bach's six _Brandenburg Concertos_ and Handel's twelve concerti grossi, _Op. 6_ in historical significance. It includes twelve concertos with the concertino as solo instruments (Vivaldi did introduce wind solos in some of his other works). Four are concertos for solo violin, four contain solo parts for four violins (two of these with cello _obbligato_), and the remaining four are for two violins or two violins and cello. _Concertos Nos. 2_, _4_, and _7_ begin with a slow introduction in _concerto da chiesa_ fashion, while the rest are cast in the three-movement form, fast-slow-fast, which led eventually to the classical concerto form. Vivaldi's treatment of the solo group differs from Corelli's in that it is used not primarily as a unit of contrast, corresponding to a second choir, but as a group of individual virtuoso soloists. Some of the constant alternation and echo effect common in Corelli's music is present, but it is as often achieved by a contrast of volume within one group or the other as it is by an alternation between the two. Vivaldi at times introduced additional solo players, such as solo viola, or solo string quartet, to supplement the resources at hand. He felt free to dispense with the cembalo during solo passages, although by contrast there are also instances in which the cello and cembalo are momentarily supreme.

With regard to form, Vivaldi used the common device of imitation to further the dialogue between the principals. They are also given a liberal portion of broken-chord and arpeggio figures, bariolage, and scale passages, which are usually related to the thematic idea of the tutti. Allegro movements usually contain four or five appearances of this tutti ritornello, while the slow movement is often fugal or through-composed. Vivaldi's complete mastery of form and the clarity of his thematic ideas made his works popular throughout Europe. Other composers tried to emulate him, and among his contemporaries are some who had great insight as well as many who continued to follow the stylistic pattern of the trio sonata via Corelli. A few of these composers are: Albinoni, Bonporti, Bonocini, Albicastro, Aldrovandini, dall'Abaco, Gasparini, Manfredini, Taglietti, Tessarini, and Venturini. Several have been mentioned previously; others belong to a later generation (Marcello, Barsanti, Sammartini, and the two famous pupils of Corelli, Geminani and Locatelli, who experimented with the use of a string quartet as concertino, and carried the concerto grosso form to England and Holland, respectively). But it remained for a German composer, Johann Sebastian Bach, to appreciate fully and expand the form of the Vivaldi concerto grosso.

In Bach's hands the Baroque period reached its ultimate fruition. His concerti grossi are generally recognized as the highest achievements in that form, both from the standpoint of a full realization of the possibilities

of an already existing form, and because of their refreshing creative genius and imagination. Bach's best-known concerti grossi are the six Brandenburg Concertos, commissioned by the Margrave of Brandenburg for his chamber music collection, and completed in 1721 while Bach was Kapellmeister and director of court chamber music at Cöthen. He also wrote several double, triple, and quadruple concertos besides transcribing works of Vivaldi, which would probably best be classified as concertos.

Unlike Corelli and Handel, Bach did not make use of the traditional string trio as concertino. The number of solo instruments he did choose ranges from that of the nine string parts in Concerto No. 3, which together produce the illusion of both soli and tutti, to the violin part in Concerto No. 4 which is the equivalent of a solo violin part. In his analysis of these works, Hugo Leichtentritt describes the concerto grosso principle, then adds:

> The resulting contrasts of sound and the more or less vivid repartée between the various instrumental groups offer many interesting problems and opportunities for impressive effects. In the application of these basic constructive ideas, Bach showed a very independent mind. His Brandenburg Concerti show more deviations from the typical form than is found in the concerti grossi of any other master. They differ not only from the generally acknowledged models of the species, but also among themselves, each one establishing a new, characteristic type, different from the other five companions.[11]

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[11]Hugo Leichtentritt, Musical Form (Cambridge, Mass; Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 361.

Concerto No. 1 in F major is scored for three oboes, bassoon, two horns, violino piccolo,[12] string orchestra, and cembalo. The concertino of Concerto No. 2 (also in F major) consists of an unusual combination of four treble instruments (violin, flute, oboe, and trumpet), while Concerto No. 3 in G major has no concertino as such; three violins, three violas, three cellos, bass, and cembalo provide both solo and tutti effects through the various methods in which they are subdivided or combined. Concerto No. 6 in B♭ major, scored for an even more restricted and homogeneous-sounding group (two violas, two viola da gambas, cello and thorough-bass), might have been less successful in the hands of a less imaginative composer than Bach. However, the canonic dialogue between the two concertino violas in the first movement, and the lyric beauty of the second, testify to his mastery of the form. Concerto No. 4 in G major has a solo group of violin and two flutes, while Concerto No. 5 in D major is written for solo cembalo (an innovation), flute, and violin with the usual tutti.

The last two great composers of concerti grossi in the Baroque era were Handel and Bach. Handel wrote in a much more conservative vein even though his works appeared after Bach's. In a sense it can be said that he took the examples

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[12]The violino piccolo is a small violin tuned a major third higher than the normal size instrument. Bach also scored for corno da caccia, viola da gamba, flute á bec (or recorder, which he indicated for the second or fourth concertos) and other obsolete instruments whose parts are now usually taken by an appropriate modern instrument.

of Corelli as a point of departure, while Bach developed more in the Vivaldi tradition.

A detailed study of the six *Brandenburg Concertos* is very revealing regarding what may be considered the final form of the classical concerto grosso. Not only are Bach's concertino groupings unusual, but they often seem to merge with the orchestra (e.g., *Concertos Nos. 1* and *3*) resulting in what might be called a forerunner of the twentieth-century concerto for orchestra. The method of changing solo instruments from movement to movement occurs occasionally, as does the practice of minimizing the full orchestra part during a slow movement (Corelli and Handel seemed to prefer the opposite, i.e., that the ripieno should predominate in the slow movements). Bach also inherited from Vivaldi a preference for treating solo instruments independently of each other instead of considering them as a group to be contrasted with the tutti. Bach's technical demands on soloists are not extreme, although some difficulties are encountered today because certain parts are played on instruments which do not have the natural range of their Baroque counterparts. *Bariolage*, arpeggios, scale passages, and double stops are frequent in the violin solo parts.

Bach was a master of contrapuntal writing. Vivaldi used imitation as a convenient method of presenting the solo instruments. Bach, like Corelli, wrote entire fugal movements which were masterpieces in their own right. Bach's harmony is fuller than that of his predecessors, and his

intricate polyphonic treatment of voice-leading, infinitely more advanced. He expanded and clarified the formal system of Vivaldi, upon occasion transforming the *ritornello* structure into a *da capo* form (e.g., the first movement of *Concerto No. 1*, which forms the ABCDEBA pattern). His slow movements are often based upon a free basso ostinato figure or a repeated fugal exposition which results in AA'A'' structure. Three movements arranged in a fast-slow-fast order are most common, although *Concerto No. 1* has four movements (the last, an expanded minuet-trio form, may have been added later), and *Concerto No. 3* has only two movements (the slow movement is missing, although two chords remain which may be part of a longer movement, or may indicate that an improvisation by the first violin was expected at this point). Taken *in toto*, Bach's concertos represent a wealth of creative ideas from which the neo-classic composer of the twentieth century has benefited immeasurably.

In many ways the music of Bach found its complement in the works of his countryman, George Frederick Handel (1685-1759). Each of these composers was in a sense the culmination of the Baroque spirit and ideals, yet in his own individual way. Much has been written about the differences between the temperaments and styles of these two great composers: Bach, the introspective, sedentary, contrapuntal craftsman; and Handel, the extroverted, worldly, improvisational genius. Although this analysis by opposites can be misleading if carried too far, it does serve to illustrate

graphically the basic influences which were brought to bear on their music. Thus we find that Bach wrote fewer concerti grossi than Handel, but imbued each one with a degree of individuality and integrity which one cannot claim for the works of Handel. Handel, on the other hand, using basically the same form and instrumentation that Corelli had used before him, was more prolific in his output, with the help of a few adaptations from his own and other composer's works. It was Handel who first indicated that an improvised cadenza was to be allowed the soloists.

Handel's Op. 3 which consists of twelve concerti grossi for winds and strings was written probably about 1733. The concertino consists normally of pairs of violins, cellos, flutes, oboes, and bassoons, although Handel's practice was to vary the group from one movement to the next. These concertos are sometimes called oboe concertos, although the oboe is not consistently prominent enough to warrant this designation. Handel's Grand Concertos Op. 6, a set of twelve concerti grossi for the more orthodox concertino of two violins and basso continuo, was composed in 1739, during the short space of one month. R. O. Morris says about the quality of these works: "Their emotional range is wide, and they display superb ease of style and mastery of form."[13] Beside the two sets of concerti grossi, several single works in the form are known to have been written by Handel,

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[13] R. O. Morris, The Structure of Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 63.

including a double concerto. In The Violin Concerto Frederic Emery describes this work:

> . . . [it] has nine movements and is written for two concertini, each consisting of two hautboys, one bassoon, and two horns in F, the whole being accompanied by strings and continuo.[14]

One seldom hears these works performed.

Handel tends to vary his concertino from movement to movement, at times, reducing the concertino to one player, as in the fourth movement of Concerto Op. 6, No. 6, which is practically a violin solo. By contrast, the concertino merely doubles the tutti parts in the final movement, while in the third, the soloists as a group alternate, in the style of Corelli, with the full orchestra (which usually includes the concertino in unison with the tutti players). Various other combinations are used, such as different Violin II concertino and ripieno parts, as opposed to similar Violin I parts. In other works Handel wrote in seven more or less independent parts. Although he didn't restrict himself to certain stereotyped techniques of combining his instrumental forces, neither did he give distinctive thematic material to his concertino, so that the total effect does not seem independent.

At first glance Handel's use of forms seems to be quite similar to Corelli's, since he favored a sectional

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[14]Frederic B. Emery, The Violin Concerto (Chicago: The Violin Literature Publishing, 1928), p. 75.

treatment of from two or three to six movements instead of the more advanced three-movement scheme. However, he seems to be rather indiscriminate in his use of dance forms side by side with the more serious forms of the church concerto, so that the distinction between church and chamber concerto is obscured. The polonaise, musette, and siciliano are used, as well as the more familiar dance forms; and fugal movements, da capo airs, variation forms, and movements in French overture style are as common as the ritornello structure. Thus Handel cannot be said to be completely in conformity with the tradition of Corelli any more than Bach can be said to have copied Vivaldi.

In this chapter the problem has been to discover the meaning of the concerto grosso as understood by the composers of the Baroque period who created the form. Veinus describes the concerto grosso form in this manner:

> . . . in its broadest sense the concerto grosso is any composition written for a group of solo instruments contrasted with a larger mass of tutti instruments.[15]

Donald Grout makes the following comment on the terminology of the concerto grosso:

> Concerto Grosso originally signified the "large consort," that is, the orchestra, as opposed to the concertino or "little consort," the group of solo instruments. Later, the term concerto grosso was applied to the composition which used these opposed groups.[16]

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[15]Abraham Veinus, op. cit., p. 32.

[16]Donald J. Grout, A History of Western Music (New York: W. W. Norton, 1960), p. 363.

The Bach concertos for two, three, and four claviers with orchestra, the _Double Violin Concerto_, and the _Triple Concerto in A minor_ may be thought of as concerti grossi. Classification of these works is somewhat determined by a fine line of distinction separating the concerto grosso from the solo concerto for more than one solo instrument. Corelli had little difficulty classifying his work since his concerto grosso is strictly defined as a division between choirs.

Most narrowly the concerto grosso might be described as the contrasting of two unequal tonal bodies. The concertino is simply the smaller choir, not a grouping of individual solos. Had the concertino dissipated into individual solo instruments Corelli might have considered this contrary to the strict principle of the concerto grosso. Vivaldi did this in his concerti grossi and still called them concerti grossi. Form, individual virtuosity, and stylistic idiom are of secondary importance in defining what is and what is not a concerto grosso since these factors do not constitute the difference between the concerto grosso and any other compositional method or technique of the Baroque, e.g., the trio sonata.

There are works which make use of the concerto grosso technique in varying degrees. In 1779 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote several concertos in the _sinfonia concertante_ style, i.e., orchestral works with several solo instruments. _Sinfonia Concertante K. 364_ is

scored for violin, viola, and orchestra and was his most significant work of that year. Its slow movement alone ranks it among his most subtle works. Veinus concludes:

> . . . in his treatment of the solo instruments he has already mastered fully the most crucial aspect of the art of concerto writing, i.e., to fuse a maximum of instrumental virtuosity into a maximum of significant musical expression for the enhancement of both and the detriment of neither.[17]

Ludwig von Beethoven composed the Triple Concerto, Op. 56 in C major for piano, violin, cello, and orchestra in 1804-1805. This concerto interweaves the solo trio and the orchestra producing stimulating and pleasing tonal textures. The work "was intended to be a renovation of the concerto grosso style."[18] Homer Ulrich describes the first movement of the Double Concerto for violin and cello, Op. 102, which was composed in 1887 by Johannes Brahms, as marking a return to:

> . . . pre-Classical concerto form, for it consists essentially of an alternation between passages for full orchestra and for the solo instruments--analogous to the old concerto grosso--with, of course, wide-ranging developments in both types of passage.[19]

Among the factors which define the spirit of the concerto grosso are the intimacy of the chamber orchestra,

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[17]Abraham Veinus, op. cit., p. 96.

[18]Huntington Watts, from notes on record cover of Beethoven's Triple Concerto in C, Columbia Masterworks Set M-MM-327.

[19]Homer Ulrich, Symphonic Music (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), p. 215.

absense of virtuoso display, the dynamic and textural contrast between the different-sized groups, prevalence of the string idiom, echo effect, use of tutti *ritornello* with episodes for concertino, and tempo and mood contrast in successive movements.

CHAPTER II

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED WORKS

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STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED WORKS

A Fugal Concerto for Flute, Oboe, and String Orchestra, Op. 40, No. 2

by

Gustav Holst

One twentieth-century composer who has followed quite literally the example of Bach and the Baroque masters in the writing of a concerto grosso is the English composer Gustav Holst. His Fugal Concerto seems to contain no trace of the mysticism and visionary impulse which is so much a part of many of his compositions (most notably The Planets, one of the works for which he is best known). His interest in the English folk song and its use in contemporary composition has been of greater influence, and a quotation from an old English dance tune appears in the third movement. The Fugal Concerto does, however, belong to the realm of absolute music because it adheres strictly to a conservative, unprogrammatic approach to harmony and melody. Tovey believes that Holst "turns the genuine old forms to new purposes of wit and fancy,"[1] a theory which Percy M. Young echoes in his statement, "Holst shows a

love of the Tudor composers in his style, and an awareness of the value of Bach to the modern world (see the first movement of the Fugal Concerto.)"[2] Because of the influence of the English tradition in his music and thought, one is not surprised to find Holst hailed as a typical English composer, along with Elgar and Vaughan Williams.

Holst was born in Cheltenham, England, in 1874, and died in London, in 1934. He received his education at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he studied composition with Stanford, winning the composition award given by the school. He later held several teaching positions (Morley and Reading Colleges, St. Paul's School for Girls, and the Royal Academy), and spent a great deal of his time composing. His Fugal Concerto, Op. 40, No. 2 was written during a tour of America in 1923, and received its first performance at Queen's Hall in London the same year. Novello has published the work both in its original version and in an arrangement for solo instruments and piano. An alternate concertino of two violins instead of flute and oboe is suggested by the composer. Technically, there are no great difficulties involved with either combination; an infrequent use of g''' constitutes the upper limit of the flute part, and the oboe is kept considerably

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[1]Donald Francis Tovey, Essays in Musical Analysis (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), Vol. II, p. 208.

[2]Percy Young, Biographical Dictionary of Composers (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1934), p. 165.

beneath this. The ripieno string parts are usually written to lie within the third to fifth position.

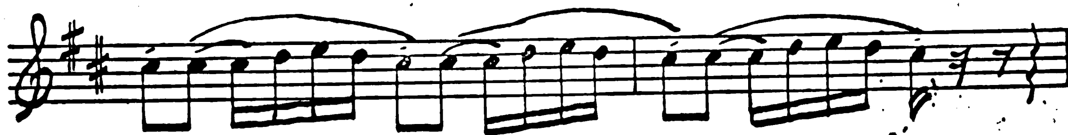
All three movements of the Fugal Concerto are fugal in character, hence its title. Contrary to expectation, the work is quite light, and appears to have been conceived in the style of a miniature. The first movement, a Moderato, is more strict in its formal development than the other two. Of its total of fifty-three measures, only four do not contain the subject, and these occur immediately after the first exposition. The material introduced in this section is derived from the last measure of the fugue subject, and appears later as a counter-melody to the subject. The subject is given below.

Example 1a, Moderato, page 1.

Moderato

Violin I

Example 1b, 4 measures before (A), page 3.



Oboe

The light character of the first movement, and the comparatively infrequent use of contrasting material (practically half of the movement is scored in unison or octaves without any real secondary voice line), tend to give the impression of the texture of a ritornello. However, there are no episodes.

The initial exposition of the Moderato consists of a four-voice fugue with the respective entrances on the tonic (D major), dominant, tonic, and dominant. The subject is first presented in octaves by the strings, then by oboe and flute solos, and finally by the cellos and basses. The subject itself dominates the entire exposition, with no material sufficiently distinctive to be considered a counter-subject appearing. The motive (Ex. 1b) used in the first episode is followed by a statement of the subject in inverted form in the cellos and basses on the dominant, A major, with material from the episode appearing as a counter-subject. The various instruments enter in turn with incomplete versions of the subject in inversion (Ex. 2a), and with the subject built on a minor triad instead of a major triad (Ex. 2b).

Example 2a, 4 measures after (A), page 4.

Flute

Example 2b, 6 measures after (A), page 4.

Oboe

This eleven-measure development passage is supported by a pedal "A" in the lower strings which eventually resolves as the dominant of D. At this point the fugue subject is recapitulated in its entirety by the lower strings, while the violins emphasize its return with multiple stops. A statement by the violins, and partial inversions in the oboe and flute, lead to the final return of the fugue subject which is extended and contrapuntally treated, pianissimo.

The second movement, Adagio, exhibits the influence of Bach, an influence which extends to melody and harmony as well as to orchestration and form. The movement uses ABA form, with predominately imitative writing for

the solo instruments, as do many of Bach's slow movements. The only unorthodox technique from the eighteenth-century standpoint occurs in the rhythm of the bass line throughout most of the two A sections. A duple pattern is superimposed on the basic 3/4 beat.

Example 3, Adagio, page 9.

Flute, Oboe, Cello and Double Bass

Melodically and harmonically the Adagio, basically in D major, is conventional except for the insecurity of its key feeling. The A section consists mostly of fairly strict imitation in the flute and oboe, with the upper strings entering toward the end. In the B section the concertino again presents a subject in imitation, which is closely related to the first. Compare Example 1a with Example 4, which is shown below.

Example 4, (A), page 10.

dim.

Oboe

The strings join the imitation in stretto, gradually diminishing to a pianissimo as the viola introduces the fugue subject of section A again. A condensed version of the stretto section appears below.

Example 5, 6 measures after (A), page 10.

Oboe Flute mf p Viola Violins p mf mf Cello mf

Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, Flute, Oboe

The third section of this movement presents a return of the subject similar to that of the first A section, except that the viola leads in the imitation. The oboe and flute follow, completing a three-part texture (plus bass line), which continues until the violins enter with a portion of

the subject. The flute concludes the movement with a similar portion of the subject against sustained chords in the strings (D major, followed by the first inversion of a G# diminished triad).

The irregular staccato fugue subject of the Allegro is introduced by the strings immediately upon the conclusion of the second movement. Again Holst built most of the movement from the material of a single subject, and in this case, the subject is eventually destined to become the counter-subject for an old English dance tune (Ex. 15). The movement is divided into four sections; the first section contains a fugal exposition of the original staccato subject in the strings, the second section has a similar exposition in the concertino, the third section is characterized by a string episode which treats the subject in contrapuntal fashion, and the fourth section introduces the dance tune in both winds and strings against counterpoint provided by the original fugue subject.

The fugue as it appears in the first section is scored basically in four parts: cello and bass, viola, second violin, and first violin. The full string section plays continuously, one part doubling another until all four parts have entered. The subject (Ex. 6a), which has a rhythmic pattern not coinciding with the 6/8 beat, provides many opportunities for use of cross accents and stretto

imitation (Ex. 6b). These devices are utilized in the ensuing episode.

Example 6a, Allegro, page 13.

Violin I

Example 6b, 4 measures before (A), page 13.

Violin I, Violin II, Viola

A climax in unison ends abruptly with a grand pause after two measures of the theme.

The second exposition in the oboe and flute follows much the same lines as the string exposition. The viola presents a new counter-melody which is imitated a fourth higher by Violin II.

Example 7, 6 measures before (C), page 15.

Viola

The second episode makes use of strings as well as short oboe and flute cadenzas to make the transition to the third section.

Example 8a, 3 measures before (D), page 16.

Oboe

Example 8b, 1 measure before (D), page 16.

Flute

This third section can be called an episode also, but only in relation to the four larger sections. It is exclusively for the strings, and can be divided into two parts. The first of these uses the devices of inversion and contrary motion to develop the thematic material (the fugue subject).

Example 9, (D), page 17.

Violin I, Viola

This part ends with six measures in 2/4 meter instead of 6/8 meter. The first three notes of the fugue subject enter in unison fortissimo. This pattern is repeated twice providing momentum for the coming climax.

Example 10, 9 measures after (D), page 17.

Strings

The conclusion of the 2/4 passage is emphasized by multiple stops in the violins which increase with each rise of the scale steps. The multiple stops, made possible by a poco ritardando, become more impressive by the use of scales in contrary motion, marked pesante, in the lower strings.

Example 11, 12 measures after (D), page 17.

Strings

The subject is similarly treated in the second part, except that the lower strings remain in 2/4 while the upper strings are in 6/8. The fugue subject is given at the original level and an inversion of the fugue subject occurs in the viola.

Example 12, 15 measures after (D), page 17.

Violin I, Viola, Cello and Bass

An accelerando leads into the final section, which introduces the old English dance tune, "If all the world were paper," over a pedal "G" and "D" in the viola (probably in imitation of bagpipes).

Example 13, (E), page 19.

Flute, Viola

A second statement is accompanied by the original fugue subject (now a counter-melody) in the flute and oboe with the drone in Violin II.

Example 14, 9 measures after (E), page 19.

Violin I, Violin II, Flute

The oboe then takes the dance tune against statements of the counter-melody in the muted basses and cellos, respectively. The fugal appearances of both themes continue, the flute and oboe taking the dance tune, while the strings pass the counter-melody back and forth. The last two measures of this theme are treated sequentially by the flute and cello, and the Fugal Concerto draws to a close with a diminuendo trill in the winds, and a continuous ascending version of the fugue subject, pizzicato, in the strings.

In conclusion, a passage from Tovey's analysis of the Fugal Concerto bears quoting, if only to insert a little of the spirit of this work. Tovey makes the following comment on the last movement:

> After various adventures, including lackadaisical cadenzas, apropos of its last notes, on the oboe and flute, followed by attempts at inversion and a ferocious transformation in square time (2/4), this subject fulfills its destiny. For it is obvious to the meanest capacity that it was destined to be a counter-subject to the Old English Dance Tune, "If all the world were paper." Even the double-bass knows that, though he has a severe cold in his head--technically known as a sordine. After this revelation has been expounded, the little concerto trots peacefully away, until, suddenly getting up and scratching itself, it disappears in a trill for the two wind-instruments and a rising pizzicato scale . . . .[3]

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[3]Tovey, op. cit., p. 209f.

Concerto Grosso for String Orchestra With Piano Obbligato

by

Ernest Bloch

Ernest Bloch was another of the group of composers who translated the Baroque concerto grosso into the contemporary idiom in his Concerto Grosso for String Orchestra with Piano Obbligato.[4] Composed between December 1924 and April 1925, this work received its first performance on June 1, 1925 at the Cleveland Institute of Music, conducted by the composer, who was then director of the Institute. It was published by Birchard, in Boston, and recorded by several different companies. At present it is one of the best-known of the contemporary concerti grossi.

Born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1880, Ernest Bloch received his musical training in Europe before coming to the United States in 1916. At this time he began making a conscious attempt to portray in his music the Hebraic tradition of his race in such works as the Israel Symphony and Schelomo for cello and orchestra, which are among his most famous works. The rhapsodic and highly emotional

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[4]No. I. He wrote a second concerto grosso for double string orchestra in 1957.

element which is particularly prominent in these works appeared to a lesser degree in his Concerto Grosso. These works seem to have begun another period in his creative style which David Ewen believes has produced "those works that represent the fullest and ripest expression of his genius."[5] His romanticism is softened by the use of classical forms and devices, and John Tasker Howard states that:

> Bloch is an acknowledged master of his craft. Technique, whether of harmony and counterpoint, of form, or of orchestration, is his servant, so that one rarely thinks of the means he has used; it is the music itself, and sum total of effect that carries its message, and causes the listener to feel the primal urge that inspired it.[6]

Bloch uses a fast--slow--mixed--fast pattern in the four movements of his Concerto Grosso but maintains an extremely close unity throughout the work. His concertino group is not pre-determined, but varies according to the material of each movement. The piano has only an occasional solo passage and generally supports the string harmonies somewhat in the manner of the harpsichord in the Baroque concerto da camera.

In the last three movements of this concerto both single and multiple string solos occur. The ordinary

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[5] David Ewen, ed., The New Book of Modern Composers (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 95.

[6] John Tasker Howard, Our Contemporary Composers (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1941), p. 120.

string texture is expanded considerably by divisi writing with all the instruments except the double bass.

Cyclic treatment contributes to the unity of this work. The third movement contains suggestions of thematic material from the Dirge, while the last movement uses melodic and rhythmic patterns similar to those found in the Prelude, besides quoting several passages more directly. In describing the music, Douglas Moore has this to say:

> . . . [The music is] vehement and passionate, now introspective with wailing dissonance, now savagely rhythmical. These elements are controlled by a fine sense of musical architecture and a discipline usually lacking in the ardent Romantic . . . . [Bloch] attempts to write in the objective vein of Handel, with emphasis on line rather than on color, and in the rich contrapuntal texture of the baroque style.[7]

The Prelude, marked Allegro energico e pesante, consists of three sections of approximately equal length. Each section is introduced by a broad chordal passage of unusual rhythmic irregularity and modal quality. The first appearance of this ritornello in the strings and piano uses the Dorian mode; the second appearance, in which the piano part appears below, gives the effect of the second exposition of a piano concerto, but appears in the dominant key with the strings emphasizing the piano chords by repeated notes on "A"; the third appearance, on "D", is characterized by a quasi inversion of the theme, with the

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[7] Douglas Moore, From Madrigal to Modern Music (New York: W. W. Norton, 1942), pp. 302ff.

two chords of each measure exchanging places and time values. The second and third appearances of the theme are marked *a tempo* and *Tempo I*, having been preceded by an *allargando* chordal passage related to the main theme.

Example 15, (4), page 4.

Piano

Each of the three sections appears in a similar ABA' form, with A' differing enough from the original to provide an appropriate introduction to the next entrance of the same theme. The B part of the outer two sections is built on several sequentially-treated sixteenth- and eighth-note motives, while the middle section consists of a more lyrical treatment of material from both the A and B parts.

The first movement makes no use of string solos and only limited use of divisi writing. Multiple stops for the upper strings create an effect of broadness.

For the most part, the piano is limited to doubling the string parts or reinforcing the bass. The use of arpeggios and repeated chords indicates a non virtuoso keyboard style similar to that of the Baroque rather than the nineteenth century-virtuoso technique. However, some of the figurations in the string parts are reminiscent of the Baroque treatment of the violin.

Example 16a, (5), page 4.

Strings

Example 16b, (8), page 6.

Violins

The contrasting second movement, a Dirge in C# minor, is characterized by the romantic expressiveness and melancholy of the string writing. The tempo is Andante moderato and the time signature, predominately 3/4 alternating with 4/4 and 2/4 passages. The movement uses a three-part pattern, with a metrical scheme similar to that of a Sarabande.

Example 17, Andante moderato, page 8.

Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello

The first A section is divided into two parts with a two-measure extension of the cadence added. The first part consists of a parallel period. Changes of scoring occur in the second period where the melody is given to the violas, which appear above the upper strings (Ex. 21).

Example 18, (10), page 8.

Violin I, Violin II, Viola

A chromatic "sighing" passage in eighth notes begins the second part, followed by material of the first part developed against acrid dissonances in the bass line.

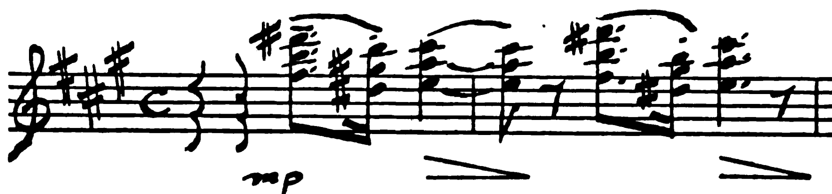
A solo violin introduces a new melody in section B which is accompanied by close harmony in the three other solo violins and triplet arpeggios in the solo viola and piano.

Example 19, 1 measure after (13), page 10.

Strings

Various other combinations of divisi and solo accompaniments are utilized, and the solo violin is several times interrupted by the other solo violins in a return of motives from the A section.

Example 20a, (14), page 11.



Solo Violin II, Solo Violin III, Solo Violin IV

Example 20b, (15), page 12.

Solo Violin II, Solo Violin III, Solo Violin IV

Near the end of the B section, a sequential passage of great intensity results from a striking use of the strings in their higher register, which leads into the recapitulation.

The second appearance of A begins with a piano solo, the only one in the movement, and continues in a free restatement of themes from the first section. The quoted melody (Ex. 17) appears in the bass at (18), and

then is given to the violas, which appear above the upper strings in a passage similar to that at (10).

Example 21, (19), page 14.

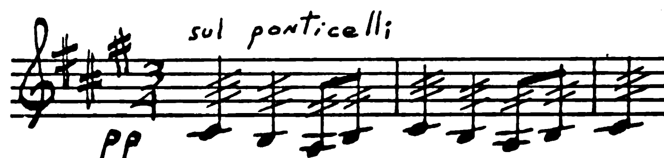
Violin I, Violin II, Viola

The neo-classic nature of the Concerto Grosso is apparent throughout, despite the use of techniques which were not ordinarily used by the Baroque composers. Divided cellos, use of harmonics (outside the normal range of the violins) (Ex. 22a), use of ponticello and tremolo (Ex. 22b), position work on the G string of the violin (Ex. 22c), and the chromatic treatment of material at (11) (Ex. 22d) are among the devices which differentiate Bloch's treatment of the string orchestra from that of the Baroque composers.

Example 22a, (15), page 12.

Solo Violin I

Example 22b, 6 measures after (14), page 11.



Altri Violin I

Example 22c, 4 measures before (18), page 13.

Violin I

Example 22d, (11), page 9.

Piano

Douglas Moore makes the following comment about the third movement, entitled Pastorale and Rustic Dances:

> This movement is intended to follow without pause. It is an alternation in mood and design between a reflective pastorale music . . . with sustained accompaniment, and lively dance tunes, one of which suggests the French folk song En passant par Lorraine.[8]

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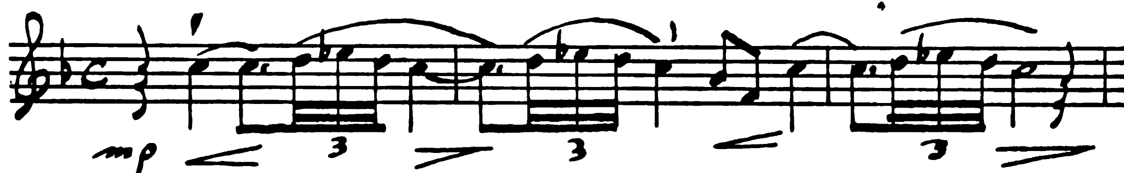
[8]Douglas Moore, op. cit., p. 304.

There is no clear traditional pattern discernible in its formal structure. Tempo marks as well as meter signatures change constantly, the basic indications being <u>Assai lento</u> and <u>Allegro giocoso</u>. The movement begins and ends in the tonality of F, but many other keys are touched upon during the course of its development. The three main themes appear below.

Example 23a, measure 3, page 15.



Solo Viola

Example 23b, <u>Allegro giocoso</u>, page 19.

Violin I

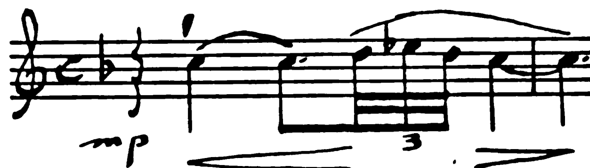
Example 23c, (23) , page 19.

Violin I

Themes 1 and 2 contain the same melodic contour and retain the triplet rhythmic pattern, even though Theme 1 uses simple meter and Theme 2, compound meter.

Another comparison may be made in the relationship of whole- and half-steps. The similarities become apparent when Theme 2 is transposed down to the tonal level of Theme 1, as in the following example.

Example 24a, 2 measures after beginning, page 15.



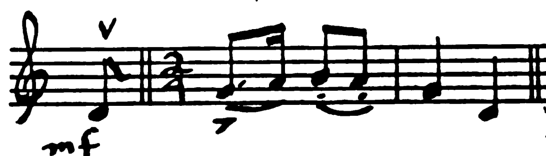
Solo Viola

Example 24b, (20) , page 15.

Solo Viola

Themes 4, 5, and 6 are similar in the melodic contour and range. Another likeness exists in the rhythmic pattern of Themes 3 and 4. The same emphasis upon the basic chord tones and the use of the same scale degrees for the melody are also observed in Themes 3 and 5. Theme 4 occurs in a different position of the scale.

Example 25a, (23) , page 19.



Violin I

Example 25b, (24), page 19.

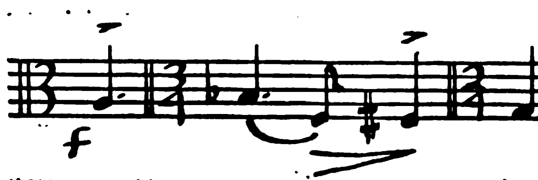
Violin I

Example 25c, (29), page 23.

Viola

These themes are alternated, combined, or treated contrapuntally in the free manner of a fantasia. The first two sections of what might be broadly analyzed as an ABCB form are more clearly delineated than the rest. Section A is basically an exposition of the first theme by the solo viola, violin, and cello, in turn, with interpolations of the second theme, while Section B, the <u>Allegro giocoso</u>, consists mainly of the several rustic dances in alternation. This second section contains some quotations from the <u>Dirge</u>:

Example 26a, (27), page 21.



Viola

Example 26b, 7 measures before (28), page 21.

Violas

A return of the Pastorale theme is followed by an impressive melody somewhat related to the third theme quoted in Example 23c, and taken by the violas, which have been divided into four parts. The dance tunes return and are combined with the viola melody in a section which is characterized by its contrapuntal ingenuity. The final climax is reached and sustained through a return of the Pastorale and dance themes. This movement is not concluded by the original lyrical melody but rather by dance tunes in a new guise.

Except for string solos in the A section which are accompanied by several solo violins as well as divisi tutti parts, this movement is predominately for full orchestra. The piano is used to double the harmonies or bass line, and appears only once in a solo capacity with the solo Violin I, at one measure after (21). It underlines the quotation of a bass motive from the second movement at (27), page 21, and is conspicuous by its absence in several other passages.

Perhaps the most characteristic concerto grosso movement is the last, the Fugue. The tempo indicated is

Allegro and the movement begins in the key of D minor but finishes in major. The movement is almost entirely in 4/4, with the exception of several 2/4 measures which occur near the end of the movement as a result of a short recapitulation of the theme of the first movement.

Example 27, (56), page 43.

Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Piano

The distinctive five-measure fugue subject first appears in the violas on D (Ex. 28a). After a linking measure, Violin II states a tonal answer while the Viola continues with a counter-subject (Ex. 28b).

Example 28a, Allegro, page 31.

Viola

Example 28b, 7 measures after beginning, page 31.

Viola

Two measures after (38) the cellos state a tonal answer with the countersubject in Violin II. Violin I is given the subject at (39) with the countersubject in the cellos. The piano gives a real answer at the fifth at (40) with a quasi-statement of the countersubject in Violin I. The traditional exposition is followed by a lighter episode which because of the alternation between tutti and solo sections seems as though it might have been taken directly from an example by Corelli. Example 29 shows its second appearance following several additional entrances of the fugue subject in major. Except for the piano, which takes the part of the fifth voice in the original exposition, and a later entrance of the fugue theme in the

solo violin with a characteristic figured bass accompaniment, the only solo sections are in the episodes. The piano is treated as previously, as an accompanying cembalo instrument.

Example 29, (46), page 36.

Orchestra

The exposition and contrasting episodes are followed by a gradual build up to a climax, which is achieved through inversions and augmentations of the theme and a use of the driving eighth-note rhythm of the episode figure.

Example 30, 5 measures after (52), page 40.

Violin I

A mirror statement of the subject occurs in the Piano and Violin I.

Example 31, (62), page 47.

Violin I

The climax leads into a short section which quotes passages from the first movement with the addition of descending runs in the violins (Ex. 27). The use of a Neopolitan sixth chord at a cadence point, similar to one used at (42), page 33, leads to a final recapitulation of the fugue and episode themes.

Example 32, (58), page 44.

Violin I, Violin II, and Piano

The following subdued string section precedes the final climax, which is reached through sequential treatment of fragments of the fugue subject.

Capricorn Concerto, Op. 21

by

Samuel Barber

A study of Samuel Barber's Capricorn Concerto for flute, oboe, trumpet, and strings reveals certain similarities to some of the concerti grossi of Bach. For example, the instrumentation, string orchestra and a concertino group of flute, oboe, and trumpet, is almost identical to that of Brandenburg Concerto No. 2, which differs only in that it uses an additional violin solo and cembalo part. Formal and textural similarities are also evident. Each work has three movements and employs the concerto grosso technique by treating the solo group as an entity in itself, rather than as a group of individual soloists.

Barber is comparatively young to have received the degree of attention and admiration which has come to him from both music critics and the public. Born in West Chester, Pennsylvania in 1910, he received his formal musical training at the Curtis Institute under Scalero and Reiner, among others. His early success was partially due to his conservative, romantic style. His awards include the Pulitzer Prizes in 1935 and 1936, the American Prix de Rome in 1935, and a Guggenheim Award in 1945. Edward

Tatnall Canby discusses the sudden development of Barber's style as follows:

> But just as Beethoven, at the height of his success, began suddenly to produce music that shocked his erstwhile supporters . . . so Barber, in a milder manner, developed during World War II a new personal style that is fully modern, dissonant, influenced, but by no means dominated by the leaders of the present elder generation.[9]

Barber's Capricorn Concerto is cast in this new style. Composed in 1944 for the Saidenberg Little Symphony during a leave from his service in the Army-Air Force, the work is named after the house which he shares with Gian-Carlo Menotti near Mount Kisco, New York, overlooking Croton Lake. The edition used for this study is published by G. Schirmer, Inc.

The material of the Allegro ma non Troppo of the Capricorn Concerto displays melodic and rhythmic motives typical of Barber's earlier style. Wide leaps, syncopation, and off-beat accents characterize the material of this brief 2/4 section, which is scored for string tutti in unison and consecutive fourths. The stretto beginning in measure six with the upper strings is suggestive of the strict canon in the first movement of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 6. Unity is achieved by the use of material similar in melodic outline but contrasting

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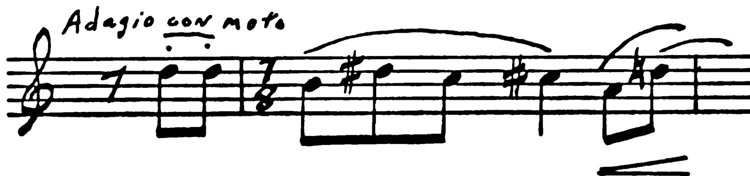
[9]Edward Tatnall Canby, Notes on Barber's Capricorn Concerto, Op. 21 (Concerto Hall Society Limited Edition), Release A 4.

in tempo. The following examples illustrate this idea. The chromatic intervals in the first two examples are identical. The material of the third example is similar in contour but the melodic intervals are simply expanded a semitone. The chromatic semitone is maintained in each example.

Example 33a, Allegro ma non troppo, page 1.

Violin I

Example 33b, Adagio con moto, measure 3, page 2.



Oboe

Example 33c, Allegro, page 5.

Flute

The subject of the Andante con moto, the second section of this movement, is stated fugally by the oboe, flute, and trumpet in turn.

Example 34, Adagio con moto, page 2.

Oboe

Within the basic eighth-note background there is a constant change of meter signature. Following a twelve-measure exposition in the concertino, the subject is stated by the basses and cellos, and answered in stretto by the violas and violins, in turn, until the wind group re-enters. The oboe, trumpet, and flute each state the subject, supported by sustained chords in the violins. A four-measure string episode, using the opening melody in the violas, is followed by an echo in the concertino, with the flute appearing poco forte, the oboe, mezzo-piano, and the trumpet, pianissimo, all at the same time.

Example 35, Ⓒ, page 4.

Viola

This material, repeated several times in the string section, bridges into an unusual Allegro section characterized by sixteenth-note figures.

The *Allegro* functions somewhat as a development section; the character of the thematic material it uses has been altered substantially. The rhythmic pattern has been changed from triplet rhythm to a syncopated sixteenth- and eighth-note rhythm (Ex. 27a and Ex. 27c). The concertino, rather than the full orchestra, is given the first statement of the theme, and the dynamic indication is *piano* instead of *forte*. Fragmentary use of various short motives persists throughout the movement, and a string passage dominates. The absence of strings is noticeable at (I) on page 8 for twenty-three measures, although occasional pizzicato support is given to the concertino group. A passage in which the strings prevail follows, prefaced by a section for flute and solo string quintet playing a complex syncopated pattern. Another flute solo precedes the repeated string chord pattern which leads into the return of the beginning material.

The first movement suggests the arch principle, ABCBA. The final section is composed of two parts; one, a restatement in the trumpet of the *Andante* theme and the other, an *Allegro, come prima*, developed from the last four measures of the *Allegro ma non troppo* and given first by the winds and then full orchestra. "A" serves as a tonal center throughout. Each section begins on "A" and uses "A" as center. The comparatively short BA

section serves to tie the movement together into a balanced whole, much in the manner of several of Bach's fast movements which also recapitulate earlier themes in reverse order, particularly the first movements of the Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 1 and 4. The movement exhibits variety in the use of fast and slow tempos and in the varying length of the sections. The beginning AB sections are lengthy, the C section developmental in nature, and the final BA section, very brief.

The second movement of the Capricorn Concerto is cast in ternary form: Allegretto, molto meno mosso, and Tempo I. The basic tonality is "E♭", the most remote tonal level from the "A" tonality of the first movement. Each wind, in turn, takes the melodic line, which is characterized by a chromatic figure. As in Bach's slow-movement scheme the concertino predominates in the A sections and the strings become more prominent in the middle part, which is very brief. In the A sections the strings are restricted to one broken-chord pizzicato line which moves from viola to cello and back again. One wind taking the melody line is supported by a second wind having a staccato chromatic accompaniment figure and a pizzicato figure in the viola.

Example 36, Allegretto, page 16.

Oboe, Trumpet, Viola

In the A section the orchestration defines a small three-part form. The oboe, accompanied by the viola and muted trumpet, states the theme, repeating it in a slightly varied form before participating in a brief dialogue and then resigning its solo position to the flute. The flute restates the first eight measures of the theme a minor third higher than the original accompanied by the oboe and viola. After an abrupt break, a third statement of the theme by the trumpet leads into a 6/8 section, molto meno mosso, for muted strings.

The mood of the middle section is much more lyric, although many of the rhythms and melodic intervals of thé A section reappear. The texture here

contrasts with that of the first section in that it is scored for string choir alone.

Example 37, 5 measures after (E), page 18.

Strings

The oboe joins the divisi strings to conclude the middle section.

The initial phrase of the principal theme returns in the flute, trumpet, and oboe successively. The trumpet, as if unaware of the ending of the oboe solo, continues its chromatic ramblings in its extreme low register, until the pizzicato cellos lead the movement to a close.[10]

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[10]Although the trumpet part in the score is written in C, a B♭ trumpet is indispensible in the second movement from Tempo I to the end because of the use of the extreme low register of that instrument.

The trumpet fanfare which introduces the main theme of the _Allegro con brio_ recalls the famous Bach trumpet theme in _Brandenburg Concerto No. 2_. The theme, accompanied by C major chords in the strings seems stylistically akin to a Bach trumpet fanfare, except for the superimposed meter (two measures of triple on three measures of duple) and the five-note melodic pattern. The following examples show the trumpet theme and also the violin variation which predominates in later appearances of the _ritornello_. The variation of this energetic theme is emphasized by both Violins I and II playing an octave higher for added brilliance. The upward line of the theme is further stressed by Violin I continuing up to "E" and holding this note while Violin II persists in presenting the variation on the theme.

Example 38a, _Allegro con brio_, page 21.

Allegro con brio
senza sord.

Trumpet, Strings

Example 38b, 8 measures before (A), page 21.

Violin I, Violin II

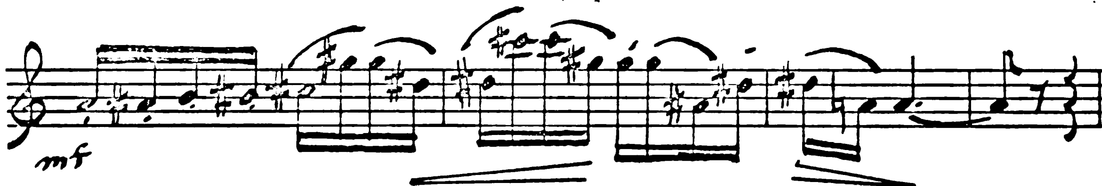
There is a strong structural resemblance between this movement and the Bach ritornello form. In this form each movement begins with a complete exposition of the theme by the full orchestra. Alternating with solo episodes, the material of this tutti exposition recurs once or twice slightly modified and in different keys, and the movement is rounded off and brought to a close with a final tonic tutti practically identical with the opening one. A tutti which recurs in this way in a concerto is called a ritornello. The form is something like that of the rondeau, with the important exception that in a concerto all the ritornellos except the first and last are in different keys. The concerto therefore combines the principle of recurrence with the equally important principle of key relationship. However, in the Capricorn Concerto the ritornellos always appear in the tonic. The ABACADA design of the third movement makes little use of unrelated material except in the slow section D, the Andante, un poco mosso.

From the beginning a prominent stylistic trait of the Allegro movement is the use throughout of individual

solo wind instruments. The first A section contains trumpet and oboe solos, a string tutti section, a concertino solo, and an imitative string section.

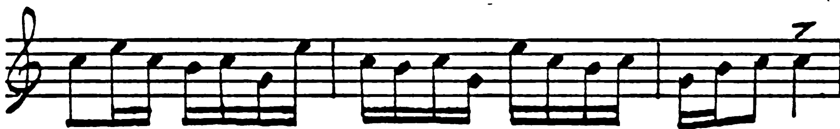
The B section is governed by the flute, with small detached portions or fragments in the oboe and trumpet, and a ponticello accompaniment of measured trills and bowed tremolo in the strings. The time signature remains constant for this section, in contrast with the changing meters of section A. The themes are mainly obtained from earlier material. The first theme is derived melodically, and to some extent, rhythmically from the theme in section A.

Example 39a, ⓒ, page 24.



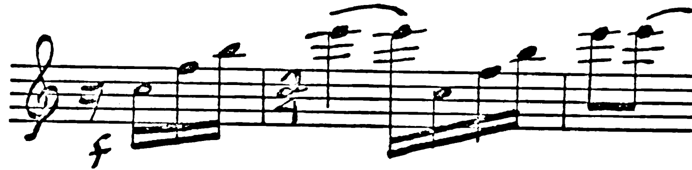
Flute

Example 39b, 3 measures after beginning, page 21.



Trumpet

Example 39c, 8 measures after beginning, page 21.



Violin I

Some fragments from section A are varied in this section, in a dialogue, first between the oboe and flute, and later between the trumpet and the strings.

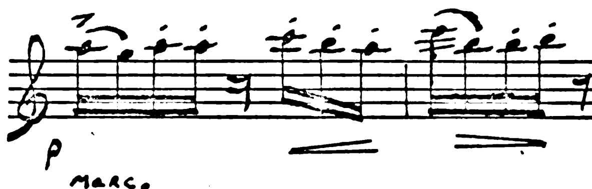
Example 40, (D), page 24.

Flute, Oboe

The themes in this section are assigned to the flute, which uses its wide variety of tonal color, and then to the violins, in turn.

The return of the A section is announced by the trumpet in C major but in a different position of the scale and supported by a I_9 chord. As a sudden contrast, the briefly <u>espressivo</u> string section then becomes more <u>marcato</u> while exploring the possibility of a new theme derived from the old material by short imitative and rhythmic fragments.

Example 41, 4 measures after (H), page 27.



Violin II

The concertino group enters together, the oboe fashions a more lyrical melody from the main theme, and the strings again take over the melody.

A third variation of the main theme leads directly into the D section.

Example 42, (J), page 28.

Oboe

This section includes an oboe solo, a short <u>spiccato</u> string passage somewhat similar rhythmically to the main theme, and a flute and oboe solo. A <u>pianissimo</u> utterance of the trumpet theme by the cellos and basses forms a bridge into the <u>Andante</u>, <u>un poco mosso</u>, a section dominated by pedal tones on "B" and "C" in the form of an ostinato in the lower strings. The heavy, characteristic chords occur first in the concertino with cello and bass ostinato accompaniment, then in the strings with an ostinato, which is transferred to the flute. In the

final <u>fortissimo</u> appearance, the trumpet theme and the theme in Example 39b appear in counterpoint simultaneously in C major.

Example 43, <u>Tempo I</u>, page 35.

Trumpet, Oboe

Concerto en Ré
Pour Orchestra à Cordes
by
Igor Stravinsky

Igor Stravinsky was inspired by the musical forms and ideas of the Baroque to write the Octet for wind instruments, the Dumbarton Oaks Concerto for chamber orchestra, and the Concerto en Ré for strings, yet these works remain comparatively unknown to the musical public today. The economy and formal clarity of neo-classicism have been an integral part of his style since he first departed from the grandiose orchestral palette in such works as Petrushka and Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring), just prior to the 1920's. David Ewen noted a change of style:

> A radical metamorphosis had come over his style, beginning with the satirical Renard (1917), in which he abandoned the role of the fiery rebel peering into the future, and assumed that of the neo-classicist, turning to the past for his idiom and style.[11]

The Concerto en Ré is a recent example of Stravinsky's tendency toward a classic simplicity and design.

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[11] David Ewen, op. cit., p. 68.

Stravinsky was born in Oranienbaum, near St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1882. He studied form and orchestration with Rimsky-Korsakov, and in 1908 began a collaboration with Diaghilev, the impressario of the Ballet Russe, which, with the performance in 1910 of his first ballet score, L'Oiseau de Feu (The Firebird), brought him world-wide fame. The attention he received from this and later works premiered by Daighliev in Paris was by no means entirely favorable; his unmitigated dissonances, rhythmic complexity, bizarre orchestral effects, and primitive melody retarded its acceptance by both lay audiences and music critics. Yet it was not a reactionary public which led him to cultivate the classical forms (the public soon began clamoring for more works in his early style), but rather his own personal desire for increased objectivity and restraint. In adapting the classical forms and devices to his own twentieth-century idiom, Stravinsky succeeded in creating a new and cohesive style. Ingolf Dahl in his notes on the Dumbarton Oaks Concerto shows that ". . . [it differs] in several ways from the eighteenth-century prototype, [and] could best be called a portrait of the Concerto Grosso."[12] In many respects this simile applies equally well to his Concerto en Re.

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[12] Ingolf Dahl, notes on the record jacket of Stravinsky's Dumbarton Oaks Concerto and Card Party, Mercury Classics MG 10014.

Stravinsky's Concerto en Ré was written in 1946 on the occasion of the Basel Chamber Orchestra's twentieth anniversary and dedicated to the Orchestra and its conductor, Paul Sacher. This three-movement work, lasting approximately twelve minutes, is recorded by RCA Victor with the composer conducting. In 1962 another recording by London with the English Chamber Orchestra with Colin Davis conducting was released. The score used in this analysis was published by Boosey and Hawkes.

Although the mood of each movement is quite different, an organic unity is achieved through the subtle use of similar motives and rhythms throughout. A striking similarity occurs in the melodic materials of the first two movements, both of which are based upon the minor second and its inversion, the major seventh. Example 44a shows the use of F# as the third of the tonic chord of D major with its lower neighboring tone of E#. This melody is projected from the harmony given by a chord supplied by the strings at the opening of the movement (Ex. 44b).

Example 44a, (1), page 1.

mf fp mf

Violin I

Example 44b, measure 3, page 1.

Strings

The minor second also manifests itself as a lower auxiliary as shown in Examples 45a and 45b.

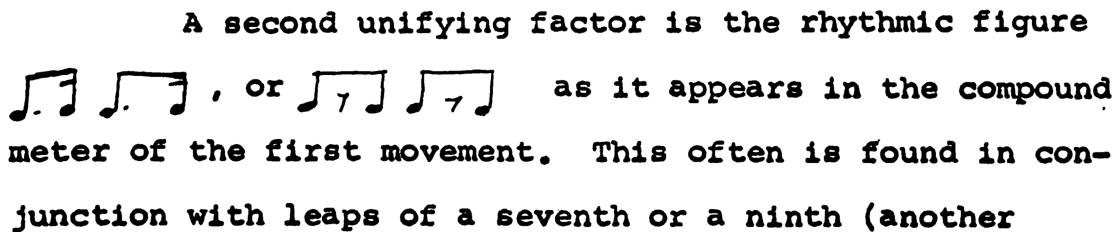
Example 45a, (27), page 8.

Violin I

Example 45b, (61), page 18.

Violin I

A second unifying factor is the rhythmic figure



, or as it appears in the compound meter of the first movement. This often is found in conjunction with leaps of a seventh or a ninth (another

manifestation of the second, by inversion and by octave expansion). The prevalence of these intervals seems to indicate that they might also be considered as motives. With these comparatively simple structural materials, and the further self-imposed limitation of an extremely transparent score, Stravinsky is able to attain his artistic objectives of continuity and clarity of design.

Since Stravinsky's use of the concertino group is rather restricted, it seems best to discuss it in relation to the work as a whole.[13] Aside from using several solo instruments in purely chordal passages (e.g., the transition section at (44) in the first movement which juxtaposes chords in five solo violas with chords in harmonics in the same number of cellos), Stravinsky made rather specialized use of his concertino.

Example 46, (44), page 13.

Viola, Cello

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[13]Stravinsky has experimented with a concertino grouping in various works. In addition to his two concertos for chamber and string orchestra, a Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments, Capriccio for piano and orchestra, Ebony Concerto, and parts of his Symphony in Four Movements all make use of this device to a greater or lesser extent.

The concertino make-up varies, the most usual combination consisting of two or three solo players, although several passages are written for one solo instrument. The most prominent group solo in the first movement is a fifteen-measure lyric passage for violin, viola, and cello which contrasts sharply with the bright staccato section preceding it.

Example 47, 1 measure after (21) , page 7.

pizz.

Solo Violin I, Solo Viola, Solo Cello

The Arioso contains only two short passages, both of which contain bridge material preceding a very emphatic V-I cadence in the lower strings. The first of these results in the echo effect, which was a favorite device of the Baroque concerto grosso.

Example 48, 2 measures before (65), page 19.

Strings

The only example of the use of a single solo instrument occurs at the beginning of the Rondo where the legato cello solo doubles a staccato Violin I theme.

Example 49, 3 measures after (78), page 24.

Violin I, Solo Cello

A viola solo is prominent at the introduction and conclusion of the first movement.

Example 50a, 1 measure before (2), page 1.

Viola

Example 50b, (57), page 16.

Viola

The slow movement contains no solos as such, and much of the important material is given to the first violin and cello sections.

Stravinsky's use of melody is for the most part quite fragmentary; his meters have a tendency to change constantly (although the last movement uses 4/4 throughout); and his harmonies are usually piquant dissonances or less often, satirically-used consonances. His indicated tonality serves as a point of departure for many varied and abrupt modulations.

There is a logical continuity in Stravinsky's writing; yet, it is difficult to outline its over-all

structure. The conception of form as a series of blocks all more or less inter-related through a consistent use of rhythmic and melodic motives has been described by William Brandt as an "additive" construction.

> The first movement [of the Symphony in Three Movements] contains no thematic development, but rather a kind of "additive" construction which regards music as consisting of clearly defined blocks which are given unity and coherence by the continuity of steadily and logically evolving organic force . . . . this is the sophisticated outcome of the primitive repetitive quality of the Russian composers - the preference for repetition and addition of material rather than the development of themes.[14]

An example of this construction occurs in the first movement of the Concerto en Ré.

Example 51a, (5), page 2.

Violin I

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[14]William E. Brandt, The Way of Music (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1963), p. 527.

Example 51b, (27), page 8.

Violin I

The first block contains two complete statements of the theme. Elsewhere portions of it are inverted, used in sequence, and developed in various contrapuntal ways.

A spiccato viola motive is also woven into the fabric, although it often degenerates into an accompaniment figure (Ex. 44a). Just prior to the first Moderato appears the concertino solo for three strings, which has been shown in Example 41. Several interpolations of the chromatic figure in the original theme serve to relate this section to the whole.

The B section is mainly of harmonic significance; it is melodically quite fragmentary and for the most part rhythmically uncertain (Ex. 45b). The recapitulation, at the Con moto, is vague and rhythmically varied.

Example 52, Con moto, page 11.

Violin I

It is only after an extended bridge passage at (46) that the original theme (beginning at (48)) appears in its entirety. This disintegrates rapidly into a nine-measure Moderato, which contains a variation on the main theme.

Example 53, Moderato, page 16.

Violin I

This variation leads into a return of the Tempo I at (57) . Only the viola (Ex. 44b) and the last section of the main theme are utilized here, however, and the movement ends indecisively with harmonics in the cellos and divisi basses, as shown below.

Example 54, 1 measure after (60) , page 17.

Solo

Solo
2 Real pitch

Solo
2 Real pitch

Cellos, Double Basses

Stravinsky's second movement, except for the blunt V-I cadences signifying the end of the first and second sections, might perhaps be called "Waltz in 4/4" rather than Arioso. In the several occurrences of the melody, the accent of the measure falls in different places each time, while at the end of each presentation of the melody beats are also omitted.

Example 55a, 1 measure before (61), page 18.

Violin I

Example 55b, 1 measure before (65), page 19.

Violin I, Cello

Example 55c, 2 measures before (68), page 20.

Violin I, Viola

Even though the bass line and off-beat accompaniments are in four, the character of the melody, the slurred leap in a dotted rhythm, the pizzicato figure in the middle

strings, and the addition of a 3/4 measure now and then, all give the impression of a waltz style. The dotted rhythmic figure falls on the second beat in each example of the melody after each has been re-barred in 3/4.

Example 56a, Andantino, page 18.

Violin I

Example 56b, (61), page 18.

Violin I

Example 56c, 1 measure after (65), page 20.

Violin I

Example 56d, 1 measure after (68), page 21.

Violin I

Formally the second movement falls into an ABA pattern. The third section (beginning at one measure after (68)) presents a condensed version of the first section. The B section (one measure after (65)) starts in the same manner but develops some comparatively new chromatic material.

Example 57, (66), page 20.

Violin I, Violin II

The first section also contains some development of the theme. In this version the notes are the same as at the opening but expanded by an octave. The violin skips down to the B♭ an octave lower so that the cello is left alone on the high B♭ in a sort of hocket device, although the aural effect is negligible.

Example 58, (61), page 18.

Violin I, Cello

The <u>Rondo</u> of this concerto, an <u>Allegro</u>, is not built of clear <u>ritornello</u> and episode sections, although it can be broadly analyzed as an ABACA structure. The A section is characterized by a passage of repeated sixteenth notes in the viola, and is made up of several equally important motives as well as distinctive and technically-difficult sixteenth-note figures.

Example 59a, 4 measures after (71), page 22.

Violin I

Example 59b, 1 measure before (74), page 23.

Violin I, Viola, Cello

The B section starts with a theme which seems contemporary Russian in flavor.

Example 60, 3 measures after (78), page 24.

Violin I

The cello doubles this melody in a legato style (see Ex. 42). A section follows in which the violins are given the melody.

Example 61, 1 measure before (81), page 26.

Violin I, Violin II

A brief return of the A section occurs at two measures before (86). The cello is given a melody containing the characteristic sixteenth-note figures and is joined by the viola in a duet.

Example 62, 1 measure after (86), page 28.

Viola, Cello

Section C consists of duets between two violins, and later, two violas, and corresponds to the solo episode of the Baroque concerto grosso.

Example 63, (88), page 29.

Solo Violins I

A third recapitulation of the A section at (94) develops into a free-for-all of sixteenth-note passages for all the strings, and the movement is drawn to a brilliant close.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

The concerto grosso, which flourished and became one of the most important types of orchestral compositions during the Baroque period, is an orchestral piece based upon the opportunities for contrast between two tonal bodies of unequal size, the concertino and the ripieno. Corelli, Vivaldi, Bach, and Handel form the group of composers who developed the concerto grosso form and raised it to its ultimate success.

Corelli selected a string trio with its own cembalo for a concertino and generally used four or more movements. Handel, greatly influenced by Corelli, was conservative in the solo sections and likewise used the multi-movement form. Vivaldi established the three-movement standard which Bach later used in his _Brandenburg Concertos_, the most inspired and complex concerti grossi of the Baroque era. Characteristics usually associated with the concerto grosso technique, as used by these composers, are the lack of virtuosity for its own sake, the use of terraced dynamics, and the _ritornello_ device.

The twentieth-century composer, searching for fresh insights, returned to the past to merge the aesthetic quality and the fundamental characteristics of the concerto grosso with the linear and vertical sonorities of the modern period. Two major manifestations of the concerto grosso have been used by contemporary composers, i.e., the alternation of predetermined concertino and ripieno blocks, and the obbligato style with individual instruments stepping out of the orchestra for brief solos. In the Concerto Grosso for String Orchestra with Piano Obbligato by Bloch the piano is used as an obbligato instrument although, because of its range, it virtually constitutes a concertino group in itself. Holst, in his Fugal Concerto for Flute, Oboe, and String Orchestra, Op. 40, No. 2, employs a string orchestra ripieno, with flute and oboe operating as obbligato solos. Stravinsky's Concerto en Ré, with transparent texture and instrumentation, utilizes the concerto grosso style by setting solo instruments with and against the rest of the orchestra. In the Capricorn Concerto by Barber, the concertino is sometimes melodically, rhythmically, and dynamically very important, and at other times simply a part of the accompanying fabric.

The composers of the seventeenth century who developed the concerto grosso technique, perhaps did not visualize the extent to which it would be used in the future. However, later realizations of this technique,

such as those found in the four representative works discussed here, illustrate its high degree of adaptability to the styles of different periods and individuals.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Discography

Barber, Samuel

Capricorn Concerto

Hanson, Eastman Or. + Medea
Mer. 50224, 90224.

Bloch, Ernest

Concerto Grosso No. 1 for Strings and Piano

Hanson, Eastman-Rochester Sym. + Con. Grosso 2.
Mer. 50223, 90223.

Kubelik, Chi. Sym. + Gould
Mer. 14034, 18034.

Stravinsky, Igor

Concerto en Ré

Davis, English Ch. Orch. + Danses: "Dumbarton",
Oiseau 50219, 60050.

De Stoutz, Zurich Ch. Orch. + "Dumbarton",
Bartok: Divert.
Van. 1086, 2112.

Page, Boston Orch. Soc. + Bach: Brandenburg 3;
Suite: Villa-Lobas: Bachianos 5
Cook 1062, 1062.

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