

1994

A Study of Bela Bartok's Cello Concerto.

Ning Tien Scialla

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation

Scialla, Ning Tien, "A Study of Bela Bartok's Cello Concerto." (1994). *LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses*. 5755.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/5755

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9502142

A study of Béla Bartók's cello concerto

Scialla, Ning Tien, D.M.A.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1994

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

A STUDY OF BÉLA BARTÓK'S CELLO CONCERTO

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

Ning Tien Scialla

B.M., The Eastman School of Music, 1986

M.M., The Eastman School of Music, 1988

May 1994

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
CHAPTER	
1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1
2 FORM	6
3 HARMONY	11
4 MELODY AND RHYTHM	21
BIBLIOGRAPHY	33
VITA	34

ABSTRACT

The Viola Concerto of Béla Bartók is a well known work, and appears frequently in the concert repertoire. However, its twin version for cello and orchestra is not often heard. The work was commissioned in 1945 by William Primrose, but Bartók died shortly before completing it. It has been the purpose of this study to examine the background of this work in both the viola and cello versions, and to analyze its compositional structure.

To accomplish this purpose, the author has chosen to examine the work from various aspects. For example, the circumstance which engendered his composition is investigated. Also, a movement by movement formal analysis of the concerto in cello version is discussed--namely: form, harmony, melody and rhythm.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The relatively unknown Cello Concerto of Béla Bartók (1881-1945) is actually a transcription of his more popular Viola Concerto. The work was commissioned by the violist William Primrose in 1945 for the sum of \$1,000.¹ However, Bartók never completed the viola concerto.

In a letter to Primrose in the summer of 1945, Bartók wrote:

I am very glad to be able to tell you that your viola concerto is ready in draft, so that only the score has to be written, which means a purely mechanical work, so to speak. If nothing happens I can be through in five or six weeks. . .²

However, the work was never completed due to Bartók's death shortly after, on September 26.

The task of completing the unfinished viola concerto was taken on by Tibor Serly in 1945.³ Serly was a Hungarian composer who studied with Bartók. He also made string quartet arrangements of selected pieces from Bartók's Mikrokosmos, which Bartók himself recommended to the

¹Vilmos Juhasz, Bartók's Years in America (Washington D.C.: Occidental Press, 1981), 38.

²Béla Bartók, Béla Bartók Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, prepared for publication from the composer's original manuscript by Tibor Serly (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1950), 2.

³Ibid.

publishing firm of Boosey and Hawkes for publication.⁴

Later, Serly also completed the Mikrokosmos Suite for Orchestra.⁵ An accomplished violist and violinist, Serly played with the N.B.C. orchestra during the time that William Primrose served as the orchestra's principal violist.⁶

Since Bartók left only rough drafts of the concerto in which other unrelated works were intermingled, it took Serly more than two years to reconstruct the entire piece.⁷ Furthermore, Bartók had not begun the task of orchestrating the concerto, which, at the time of his death, consisted of piano score sketches.

In a letter written to Primrose, Bartók made some very general comments regarding the orchestration of the concerto:

The orchestration will be rather transparent, more transparent than in the violin concerto. Also, the somber, more masculine character of your instrument executed some influence on the general character of

⁴R. Kevin Call, "A Historical Analysis and Comparison of Several Sources for Béla Bartók's Viola Concerto," The Viola 6 (1991): 36.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Richard Freed, liner notes in Béla Bartók: Viola Concerto, Janos Starker, cellist, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, RCA 60717-2-RC.

⁷Tibor Serly, "A Belated Account of the Reconstruction of a 20th-Century Masterpiece," College Music Symposium 15 (1975): 12.

the work. The high note is A, but I exploit rather frequently the lower registers.⁸

This quote is the only source which Serly had at his disposal regarding Bartók's intention to orchestrate the concerto. In fact, the orchestration of the concerto was done entirely by Serly, who stated:

Apart from deciphering the many strange signs and symbols and trying to locate partially-printed measures sometimes hidden elsewhere, the main task was in the orchestration which,⁹ as stated in the printed score, is entirely mine.

During the process of orchestrating the concerto, Serly began a cello version of the same work:

After I had examined the manuscript thoroughly . . . , it occurred to me that, in view of Bartók's statement to Primrose, "most probably some passages will prove uncomfortable or unplayable" (and indeed there were such), and remembering Bartók's own setting of his own Rhapsody No. 1 for both violin and cello (1928), I would work on a double version, one for viola and another for violoncello . . . both versions were simultaneously completed in the fall of 1948.¹⁰

Later that year, Serly arranged a gathering of sixteen of Bartók's closest friends in his New York studio to listen to both versions of the concerto, performed by violist

⁸Bartók, 2.

⁹Serly, 8.

¹⁰Ibid., 12.

Burton Fisch, and cellist David Soyer. After the performance, the listeners were asked which version they preferred. The result was a vote of eight to six in favor of the cello version with two listeners not committing themselves.¹¹

Cellist Janos Starker recalled a conversation with Serly that took place in 1951 regarding the cello version of the concerto:

My recollection is that, according to Serly, Bartók himself contemplated writing a cello version (of the viola concerto) simultaneously, intending that it should be for Gregor Piatigorsky. As it is, the cello part is 99% identical to the viola version and uses exactly the same orchestration. The minimal changes were octave ranges--higher or lower so as to provide the cello with tonal advantages.¹²

However, Primrose, who commissioned the concerto from Bartók, was given the exclusive performing rights to the viola version. Furthermore, The cello version was to be withheld from publication until 1956.¹³

The viola concerto was premiered in December, 1949 by Primrose and the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Antal Dorati.¹⁴ The Concerto for Violoncello and

¹¹Ibid., 12.

¹²Quoted by Freed.

¹³Bartók, i.

¹⁴Serly, 8.

Orchestra was published in 1956, but did not become popular until Janos Starker began performing it after seeing the published score in 1980.¹⁵ In fact, Starker gave what was probably the public premier of the cello concerto at the Banff Festival in Canada, in the summer of 1981.¹⁶ Since then, the cello version of Bartók's concerto has gained considerable popularity among cellists.

¹⁵Freed.

¹⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

FORM

This concerto consists of three movements which are connected to each other by interludes. The first two movements are cast in traditional schemes: the first movement is in sonata form, the second in ternary form, and the third is a modified rondo.

Bartók places a cadenza at the end of the development section of the first movement. Aside from sheer, virtuosic display, the normal function of a cadenza is to prolong dominant harmony. However, Bartók's cadenza emphasizes the relationship of the tritone A/Eb. Furthermore, this cadenza serves as a link between the development and recapitulation, rather than a conclusion to the movement.

An unusual feature is the interlude which occurs at the close of the first movement. Based on the principal theme, this interlude is enclosed by double bar lines, and links the first and second movements.

The following chart outlines the sections of sonata form and the tonal centers employed therein (see Example 1).

The second movement, Adagio religioso, is in ternary form (ABA') and contains two contrasting themes. The three sections are clearly delineated by the use of the designations Poco agitato, and Tempo I. Further contrast is achieved through the use of varied orchestration. For

Exp.				Dev.	Cadenza
PT	TR	ST	CL	PT	
mm. 1-40	41-51	52-60	61-80	81-126	127-146
Tonal Center:C		B	E		TT (A, Eb)

Recap.				Coda	Interlude
PT	TR	ST	CL	PT	PT
147-161	162-172	173-183	184-206	207-230	231-244-248
C		E	A	C	C

Example 1.

instance, theme A is accompanied by the full strings with winds, while theme B is accompanied by violins, piccolo, flute, and clarinets.

An unusual aspect of this movement is the combined return of motives from the A and B sections (mm. 40-49). Traditionally, in ternary form, materials from the A and B sections are kept separate for purposes of contrast.

Another uncommon feature is the interlude at the end of the second movement. This interlude consists of two elements: the principal theme from the first movement with an altered accompaniment, and an accelerating passage based on the interval of a fourth. It also serves as a segue between the second and third movement. The ternary

structure, and the underlying tonal centers are outlined in Example 2.

A	B	A'	Interlude 1, 2	
mm. 1-29	30-39	40-49	50-57	58-85
Tonal Center: E		E		

Example 2.

The third movement, Allegro vivace, is a modified rondo in that the usual rondo structure ABACABA is altered -- that is, the third ritornello section is absent. Furthermore, the fourth ritornello section includes material from both the A and C sections, with the dance-like characteristics of section C dominating. The modified rondo structure, as well as the main tonal centers are shown in Example 3.

	A	B	A	C	B'	A' (C/A)	
mm.	1-50	51-83	84-113	114-176	177-220	221-249-267	
Tonal Center:	A	C#	A	A, Ab	F#	A	C#/Db A

Example 3.

Serly at times alters sections of the concerto. The first occurrence of such an alteration is found in the first movement, at mm. 245-248. Here, Serly borrowed the melody

line from the orchestral accompaniment found at m. 154 and transferred it to the solo bassoon. Regarding this alteration, Serly states:

At this point there is a bar line marked 2/4 (in Bartók's sketch), followed by a blank space which also terminates page seven in the original manuscript. . . I decided to insert a connecting part which would lead smoothly into the second movement.¹⁷

Perhaps justifying his attempt yet further, he continues: "I solved what was to me the knottiest problem in the concerto, and this without a single bar of Bartók's music having been omitted from the original manuscript."¹⁸

Another alteration occurs in the second movement at m. 61, where Serly entirely omits eight measures. Regarding this alteration, Serly states:

It is the only place in the concerto where I found it unavoidable to omit eight measures. To attempt to give the details of these left-out measures cannot be done without a minute analysis of the original manuscript (pp. 8 and 9) before and after the eight mysteriously unaccountable measures. Suffice it to say that countless attempts were made but each clue led nowhere. And since the rest of the twenty-five bars of introduction led perfectly into the Allegro Vivace finale, there was no alternative but to omit these measures. This is just a guess on my part, but it is my conviction

¹⁷Serly, "Reconstruction of a 20th-Century Masterpiece," 15.

¹⁸Ibid., 19.

that Bartók himself would not have included the bit.¹⁹

The last of Serly's alterations occurs in the third movement at mm. 259-263, where he inserted a four-measure orchestral tutti. Regarding this insertion, Serly wrote:

I could not resist interjecting a short tutti of four measures, . . . with my own harmonization. For this (addition of the four measures) I hope I may be forgiven, although I ponder what the reaction would now be, were these four measures to be omitted.²⁰

¹⁹Ibid., 19.

²⁰Ibid., 21.

CHAPTER 3

HARMONY

Bartók does not employ key signatures in this concerto, though, as in all of his concertos, he uses tonal centers to establish a harmonic framework. Unlike his other concertos, the first and third movements of this concerto do not share the same tonal center.

The three most prominent tonal centers in this concerto are: C in the first movement, E in the second, and A in the third. The relationship of these tonal centers is based on thirds, and three tonal centers could be regarded as the projection of an A minor triad. Another explanation of the tonal structure is that the principal theme is stated three times on A which coheres with the A tonal center of the third movement, resulting in a single tonal center for the entire concerto.

The harmonic structure of the first movement is outlined in Example 4. The tonal centers of the three main sections in the exposition are: C in the principal theme and transition, B in the secondary theme, and E in the closing theme. These sections are related to each other by the intervals of a second and a third, as opposed to traditional tonic/dominant relationships.

The principal theme section introduces four important elements: the use of varied imitation, the main tonal center of the movement, the major/minor seventh sonority (the most

prominent harmonic feature in the concerto), and the interval of the tritone.

Exp.					Dev.											
PT		TR	ST	CL	PT											
mm.	1	14	18	25	29	41	52	61	65	68	81	102	113	116	119	124

T.C.	Cb7	F7C7	A7	Cmin							F7	B7	Eb7	Ab7	Db	A
------	-----	------	----	------	--	--	--	--	--	--	----	----	-----	-----	----	---

Recap.					Coda		Interlude					
Cadenza	PT	TR	ST	CL	PT		PT					
mm.	127	147	162	173	184	188	191	207	213	231	244	248

T.C.	TT (A,Eb)	F7	Emin					Cmin
------	-----------	----	------	--	--	--	--	------

Example 4.

As shown in Example 4, the principal theme is stated five times, occurring in mm. 1, 14, 18, 25, and 29, with each statement varied. The first statement of the principal theme by the solo cello is introductory in nature. This statement does not project a clear tonal center, as is also

the case with the second entrance. The accompaniment of the second entrance is based on a Cb seventh chord, which is the first of a series of four inverted major/minor seventh chords.

The tritone A-Eb occurs melodically in each of the first three statements of the theme. It is also a member of the inverted Cb7 harmony which sounds beneath the second entrance, and of the inverted F7 harmony beneath the third entrance. These two inverted major/minor seventh chords (Cb7 and F7) are also a tritone apart from each other. The tutti passage occurring in the third entrance (m. 18), with its stretto of statements of the principal theme in the winds, establishes the bass C as the first stable tonal center in the movement.

Example 4 also shows two superimposed triads formed by the theme's entrances at mm. 18, 25, and 29, that is: the entrances of the melody outline the A major triad, and entrances of the accompaniment outline the C major triad. These two tonal centers (A and C) foreshadow a much larger structural plan: C as the tonal center for the first movement, and A as the main tonal center for the concerto.

The secondary theme, played by the solo cello, establishes the tonal center B, which is then reinforced through a vigorous arpeggiation of the B7 chord (mm 54-59). Of course, this B7 harmony is familiar, for it was introduced (enharmonically spelled) in the accompaniment of

the principal theme at m. 14. However, in this case it functions in a traditional manner, as dominant preparation for the closing theme, whose tonal center is E.

Like the principal theme, the closing theme reinforces its tonal center through a broad arpeggiation: imitative entrances in mm. 61, 65, and 68 spell out an E triad, as shown in Example 4.

The development (mm. 81-146) contains four sections, the last of which is a cadenza (mm. 127-146). Each of these sections is based on a different harmonic element derived from the principal theme. The opening of the development (mm. 81-101) recalls the principal theme as it appeared in m. 18, again with the same F7 chord in the accompaniment.

A brief second section (mm. 102-108) is mostly diatonic (conventional B major), ending with a clear half cadence in measure 108. In the third section (mm. 109-126), Bartók develops a secondary motive from the principal theme, working through a sequence of falling fifths in measures 113-119.

The cadenza (mm. 127-146) features the tritone A and Eb. These notes are precisely the common tones held between the F7 chord (found at the beginning of the exposition, development, and recapitulation) and the B7 chord which was used in the secondary theme in the exposition, in the second section of the development, and as the final harmony heard before the recapitulation.

The recapitulation (mm. 147-206) contains all of the themes that were presented in the exposition. Example 4 shows that the multiple entrances of the principal theme are reduced to a single entrance in mm. 147-161. The transition which follows is transposed up by a third to E, and both the secondary and closing themes are transposed, respectively, up by a fourth to E and A.

The secondary theme (mm. 173-183) is once again stated in stretto fashion, but now centered on E. The three sequential entrances of the closing theme (mm. 184-206) outline an A minor triad, once again reinforcing the relationship of thirds.

The recapitulation serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it functions in the traditional manner of restating material from the exposition a fourth higher. Secondly, it emphasizes the relationship of thirds through the local tonal centers C, E, and A, mirroring the overall tonal plan of the entire concerto.

The coda (mm. 207-232) is based on the principal theme. Four entrances at mm. 207, 210, 213 and 215 project the tonal centers C and G, reinforcing C as the tonal center of the movement in a traditional V-I relationship.

The harmonic language of the second movement is outlined in Example 5.

Theme A, which contains three phrases, respectively in measures 1, 12, and 18, incorporates several modes.

movement in the Third Piano Concerto, written at the same time.²¹

Serly's orchestral embellishment creates even greater harmonic instability due to the fleeting chromatic figures of the woodwinds.

The A' section (mm. 40-49) combines the motives from themes A and B in an echo style. Theme A is again in E mixolydian, while theme B continues to assert the minor third (C-Eb). This combination of the two themes is then stated three times on E (m. 40), B (m. 43), and once again, E (m. 46). The perfect fifth relationship helps enhance the perception of E as the tonal center for this movement.

The interlude at the end of the second movement (mm. 50-85) is in two parts, as shown in Example 5. The first part (mm. 50-57) is based on the principal theme of the first movement, once again accompanied by the F7 chord, but now in first inversion. The bass descends stepwise to a V-I cadence on C. This return of the principal theme at the end of the second movement is unusual in Bartók's works.

The second part of the interlude (mm. 58-85) is built on a series of fourths: C-F-Bb-Eb. Its rhythmic pattern consists of a diminution of note values from half to quarter to eighth, and finally, to sixteenth notes. Serly calls this section "Allegretto introduction"²² because it serves

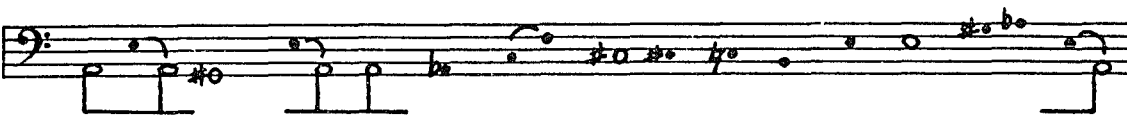
²¹Ibid., 17.

²²Ibid., 19.

to establish the new tempo "Allegro vivace" for the third movement.

The third movement, which is a modified rondo, contains six sections, as illustrated in Example 6.

	A	B A	C	B'	A' (A/C)
mm.	4 49	51 84 110	114 134 173	177 184 190 198 206 221	249 267



T.C.	A7 V-I 6 4	V-I A	Ab7 V-i 6 4	6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 V-I 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4
------	---------------	-------	----------------	--

Example 6.

Sections A, B, and C are based on three contrasting dances. Each of the three A sections is built around the tonal center of A, all closing with a strong V-I cadences.

The first A section (mm. 1-50) opens with a four measure introduction (mm. 1-4) on the A major triad. Dance A and its accompaniment (mm. 5-7) outline the A major/minor seventh chord.

The B section (mm. 51-83) contains one main tonal center of C#, with an implication of a secondary tonal

center of F. This relationship, of course, is that of an enharmonically spelled third. The accompaniment is based on C# six-four chord with the melody emphasizing the minor third C#-E, the notes of which are common tones of the A triad.

The harmonic structure of the second A section (mm. 84-113) is unusual in that it begins as an unstable, modulating passage. And though the material is that of the A section, the original tonal center, (A) is lacking. Eventually, this section cadences on A (m. 110), and prepares the entrance of dance C at m. 114.

The C section (mm. 114-129) is based on two tonal centers: A (mm. 114-133), and Ab (mm. 134-173). Dance C also contains open fifths in the accompaniment, similar to those of dance A. The only difference is that both the melody of dance C and its accompaniment outline the A major triad instead of the A major/minor seventh chord.

The B' section (mm. 177-220) contains six sequential entrances of dance B: F# (m. 177), A (m. 184), C (mm. 190-191, in canon), G (m. 198), C (m. 206), and back to F# (m. 212). Each entrance has a different local tonal center, and is accompanied by a pure triad, most often in second inversion. This developmental section links B' to A'.

The final A' section (mm. 221-267) begins with a restatement of dance A over an A major six-four triad. In m. 249, dance C returns, now transposed to Db, which is the

enharmonically spelled third of the A major triad, reinforcing the final tonality of A in mm. 266-267.

Serly considered the reconstruction of the third movement to be the most problematic of the three, stating: "It must be conceded at the start that the last movement proved to be the most bafflingly arduous. This is not due to its incompleteness, as it was finished to the very last measure, but rather on account of its bareness."²³

Unlike most of Bartók's major works which emphasize one main tonal center, this concerto exploits a different tonal center in each movement. However, a sense of closure is achieved in that, despite the lack of a return to the original tonal center in the last movement, the work ends with the same note that it opened with, which is A.

²³Ibid., 19.

CHAPTER 4

MELODY and RHYTHM

In his book entitled The Hungarian Folk Song, Bartók describes the content of folk melody as "short tunes consisting of one-bar or two-bar motives or of duplex motives forming periods evolved from these single motives."²⁴ Bartók applies this style to the cello concerto and constructs many themes based on this principle.

There are seven main themes in the cello concerto: three in the first movement (principal, secondary, closing), one in the second movement (theme A), and three in the third movement (dances A, B, and C). All of these themes are constructed as strings of short motives, in the manner of Bartók's beloved folk tunes.

The principal theme in the first movement is based on an arpeggiated major/minor seventh chord in first inversion. This theme is stated in a series of five entrances in mm. 1-29. The first entrance (mm. 1-6) is constructed of a two bar motive which is immediately restated in varied fashion, as shown in Example 7.

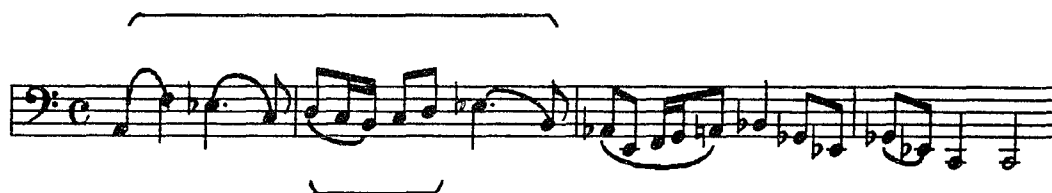
The second entrance (mm. 14-17) introduces a new continuation which is an octave lower than the first

²⁴Béla Bartók, Hungarian Folk Song, ed., by Benjamin Suchoff, trans., by M. D. Calvocoressi with annotations by Zoltan Kodaly (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 8.



Example 7.

entrance. It consists of dotted quarter notes, and a new rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, as shown in Example 8. The new rhythmic motive in measure 15 will be developed prominently later in the movement.



Example 8.

The third entrance (mm. 18-19) is characterized by an orchestral stretto on an arpeggiation of the F7 chord, as shown in example 9.



Example 9.

The fourth entrance (mm. 25-28) contains rhythmic patterns similar to those of the second entrance and is stated on E,

a fifth higher than the previous three entrances, as can be seen in Example 10.



Example 10.

The fifth entrance (mm. 29-33) contains dotted rhythms, but without the sixteenth notes. As Example 11 shows, this entrance is stated on C#, a major sixth higher than the fourth entrance.

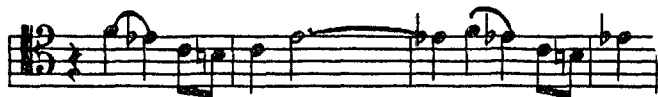


Example 11.

All five entrances of the melody begin on a note that is a member of an A major triad. The accompaniment, in all instances, contains notes that belong to the C major and minor triads.

The secondary theme (mm. 52-54) contains much shorter note values in comparison to the principal theme, and outlines both the B major/minor and B minor/minor seventh

mm. 81-84



mm. 85-86



Example 14. Comparison of mm. 81-84, and 85-86.

A significant portion of the development (mm. 120-134), is based mainly on a single rhythmic germ, derived from the motive found in m. 15, (see Example 15).

mm. 120-122



Example 15.

In the coda (mm. 207-230), the two versions of the principal theme in mm. 1-2, and mm. 14-15, are combined, and the intervallic content expanded: the minor sixth leap in mm. 1-2 is extended to an octave in m. 207. Furthermore, a

six-four meter at m. 209 replaces the previous four-four meter, as shown in Example 16.

mm. 207-210



Example 16.

The interlude (mm. 231-248) is also based on the principal theme, but now the motive is taken from mm. 3-4, as shown in Example 17.

mm. 3-4



mm. 231-234



Example 17. Comparison of mm. 3-4, and mm. 231-234.

It is clear in Examples 14-17 that Bartók transformed the motives found in mm. 1-4, and mm. 14-15, and composed an entire movement based on them.

The second movement is marked "semplice" while the tempo marking "Adagio religioso" establishes the overall character of the movement. This marking was used in only one other instance by Bartók: in the second movement of the Third Piano Concerto, composed at approximately the same time.²⁵

The entire A section (mm. 1-29) consists of three broad phrases based on a simple rhythm, consisting mainly of quarter and half notes. The melody and its accompaniment contain elements of a superimposed mode and triad. Theme A (mm. 1-3) outlines an E major/minor seventh chord in root position and also provides the pitch content of an E mixolydian mode, as can be seen in Example 18.



Example 18.

Theme A' (mm. 40-44) is based on an inversion of theme A and the echo-like return of the minor third C-Eb from

²⁵Elliot Antokoletz, Béla Bartók: A Guide to Research (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 16.

theme B. Its accompaniment contains the E major triad in second inversion, less stable than the opening section, whose accompaniment consists of root position triads, as shown in Example 19.



Example 19.

The third movement contains three dance-like themes, all in duple meter. The melodic motives, which are based on the major/minor seventh chord, are no longer than four measures in length.

Dance A (mm. 4-10) is built on a fast sixteenth note motive (mm. 4-6) outlining a diminished triad on C#. Its accompaniment contains an open fifth on A-E which completes the major/minor seventh chord on A. This theme is similar to the principal theme of the first movement in that both melodies contain a major/minor seventh chord: principal

theme on F, and Dance A (with its accompaniment) on A. The comparison of the two themes is shown in example 20.

Principal Theme (mm. 1-4):



Dance A (mm. 4-7):



Example 20. Comparison of Principal Theme, and Dance A.

Dance B (mm. 51-54) is an augmentation and variation of the first dance. The C# diminished triad from dance A is reduced to the interval of a minor third (C#-E), and its rhythmic pattern of sixteenth note is augmented. Furthermore, the original one-bar motive is extended into a three-bar phrase, as can be seen in Example 21.



Example 21.

Dance C (mm. 124-127) is based on an arpeggiated A major triad. Both the melody and accompaniment use a syncopated rhythmic pattern, and outline the A major triad in root position, as shown in Example 22.



Example 22.

In the third movement, both Dances A and C are based on the A major triad, but only Dance A contains the complete major/minor seventh chord. Serly states that the entire

concerto is based on a single chord, the dominant seventh.²⁶ The analysis of both the harmonic and melodic content in chapters 3 and 4 seem to support his conclusion.

Two tempo characteristics are exploited in this concerto: the more flexible tempo implied by the marking *rubato*, and the more strict style, implied by the marking *tempo giusto*. The more flexible tempo is used in both the first and second movements, and the *tempo-giusto* style in the third movement.

The first statement of the principal theme of the opening movement carries the marking "*accelerando*" "*poco rubato*" and "*precipitato*". The result of these markings is an almost improvisatory character.

The entire third movement (*Allegro vivace*) is characterized by the "*tempo-giusto*" style. The rhythmic vitality of all three dances is made more effective through Bartók's frequent use of syncopation in the strict framework of duple meter, creating an exciting finale.

The fact that this concerto is not entirely Bartók's own creation has caused some to view it in a less than favorable light, such as Halsey Stevens. In his biography The Life and Music of Béla Bartók, Stevens states:

No matter how skillful the reconstruction, it must be admitted that no one but the composer himself could have decided exactly how it was to be done; and for that reason there will always be reluctance

²⁶Serly, 25.

to accept the Viola Concerto as an authentic work of Bartók.²⁷

However, Mozart's Requiem, and Berg's Lulu are works that were finished by people other than the composers themselves, and yet are considered legitimate works in their own right. Perhaps, in time, Bartók's Viola Concerto and its cello version will be accorded the same stature. Nevertheless, this work enables the listener and the performer to glean further insight into Bartók's fully matured style while supplying both the violist and the cellist a twentieth-century masterwork.

²⁷Halsey Stevens, The Life and Music of Béla Bartók (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 228.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Scores

Bartók, Béla. Concerto for Viola and Orchestra. Prepared for publication by Tibor Serly. London: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., 1950.

Bartók, Béla. Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra. Adaptation of the Viola Concerto, prepared for publication by Tibor Serly. London: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., 1956.

II. Books

Antokoletz, Elliott. Béla Bartók: A Guide to Research. London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988.

Bartók, Béla. The Hungarian Folk Song. Edited by Benjamin Suchoff. Translated by M. D. Calvocoressi. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981.

Juhasz, Vilmos. Bartók's Years in America. Washington D.C.: Occidental Press, 1981.

Stevens, Halsey. The Life and Music of Béla Bartók. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.

III. Journals and Periodicals

Call, R. Kevin. "A Historical Analysis and Comparison of Several Sources for Béla Bartók's Viola Concerto." The Viola 6 (1991): 35-63.

Serly, Tibor. "A Belated Account of the Reconstruction of a 20th-Century Masterpiece." College Music Symposium 15 (1975): 7-25.

IV. Dictionaries

Sadie, Stanley, ed. The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. London: Macmillan, 1980. S. v. Bartók.

V. Other

Freed, Richard. Liner notes. Béla Bartók: Viola Concerto. Janos Starker, cellist, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. RCA 60717-2-RC.

VITA

Ning Tien Scialla was born in Beijing, China, and began her musical training at the age of eight with her mother, Professor Tao Song. She received the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from The Eastman School of Music, where she studied cello with Professor Paul Katz.

At Louisiana State University Mrs. Scialla studied cello with Dennis Parker and held a teaching assistantship. She has won numerous awards including the Young Artists Competition in Beijing, China, the San Francisco Symphony Concerto Competition, the Camellia Concerto Competition, the C.S.U.S. Concerto Competition, the L.S.U. Concerto Competition, and the Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music.

In 1991, she and her husband Carmen Scialla gave recitals and presented master classes in Beijing and Nanning in a tour sponsored by the Nanning Institute of Arts, China. In 1992, she was featured as soloist in a concert of Dinos Constantinides' music at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. Currently, Mrs. Scialla resides in North Plainfield, New Jersey, and frequently performs concerts in the United States and abroad.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Ning Tien Scialla

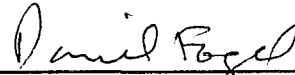
Major Field: Music

Title of Dissertation: A Study of Bela Bartok's Cello Concerto

Approved:

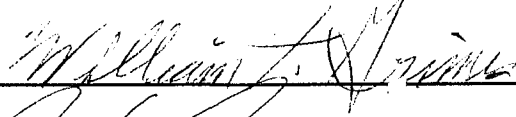


Major Professor and Chairman

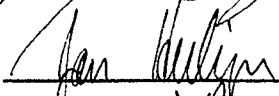


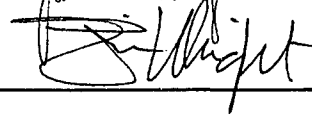
Dean of the Graduate School

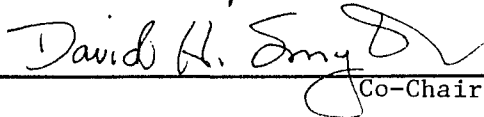
EXAMINING COMMITTEE:











Co-Chair

Date of Examination:

November 1, 1993