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The Viola Compositions of Ernst Mahle and Their Idiomatic and Pedagogical Characteristics.

Sonia Feres-lloyd
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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THE VIOLA COMPOSITIONS OF ERNST MAHLE
AND THEIR IDIOMATIC AND
PEDAGOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

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
Sônia Feres-Lloyd
B M., Faculdades São Judas Tadeu, 1987
M.M., Louisiana State University, 1994
December 2000
To my mother,

my first music teacher.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication..................................................................................................................ii

Acknowledgments.....................................................................................................iii

Abstract......................................................................................................................v

Introduction................................................................................................................1

Compositional Style and Influences...........................................................................6

Teaching and Ideas....................................................................................................9
  The Escola de Música de Piracicaba.............................................................10
  The Competition Jovens Instrumentistas do Brasil.....................................12

The Viola Compositions............................................................................................15
  Sonatina (1956) for Cello (Viola) and Piano................................................17
  Sonata (1968) for Viola and Piano..............................................................17
  Sonatina (1976) for Viola and Piano............................................................18
  Concertino (1978) for Viola and Strings......................................................18
  As Melodias da Cecilia (1982) for Viola and Piano..................................19
  Duos Modais (1991) for Two Violas...........................................................19

The Brazilian Characteristics in Mahle’s Viola Works..............................................21

Idiomatic and Pedagogical Elements in Mahle’s Viola Works.................................35
  Expressive Character of the Viola.................................................................35
  Bowing Articulation......................................................................................38
  Left Hand Articulation..................................................................................45
  Chromaticism.................................................................................................49
  Double-Stoppings.........................................................................................52
  Less Frequently Used String Techniques......................................................57

Conclusion................................................................................................................71

Bibliography.............................................................................................................73

Appendix: Package of Materials from Ernst Mahle..................................................77

Vita..........................................................................................................................78
ABSTRACT

Ernst Mahle was born in Germany, in 1929, but has lived in Brazil since 1951, where he is one of the most important composers of his generation. Besides his work as a composer, he has been developing a very important pedagogical work in Piracicaba, a city in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. Influenced by the teachings of Hans Joachim Koellreutter, Mahle, together with other influential art supporters from that city, founded the Escola de Música de Piracicaba, in 1953.

Mahle believes that it is very important to teach music when children are young. He also encourages practice in musical groups from the earliest stages of development. Mahle has written a great body of compositions for many instruments, at all levels of difficulty, many of which are dedicated to his students. The viola compositions reflect the didactic work Mahle has been developing at the Escola de Música de Piracicaba, as most part of them were written for the students. Mahle’s idiomatic writing shows his knowledge of many instruments, allowing his compositions to be very attractive to the performer.

Mahle has a neoclassic style and he combines in his compositions forms from European classical music (sonata/sonatina, concerto/concertino) with elements of Brazilian music such as the variety of rhythms and strong accents as well as the use of folk songs and modal scales.
INTRODUCTION

This project proposes to discuss works for the viola by Brazilian composer Ernst Mahle. The focus of the study is to identify the idiomatic and pedagogical elements found in these works and cite the evolution of these influences in Mahle’s background. The monograph will also discuss his teaching and his work as the founder and director of the Escola de Música de Piracicaba (EMP) in Brazil, since they are directly related to his work as a composer.

Ernst Mahle was born January 3, 1929, in Stuttgart, Germany. He was expected to follow the same profession as his father and grandfather, that of engineer. This could explain his hobby as an adult of building wind-propelled toys, made of scrap metal, which require a good knowledge of engineering.1 Mahle studied at the Ludwigs-Gymnasium in Stuttgart, and began his studies of music at school. He learned the recorder in classes with other children, as is customary in Germany. Because of the onslaught of World War II, in 1942 Mahle’s father decided to move the family to Austria. Due to his youth and because he was already employed as a metalworker, Mahle did not have to go to the battlefront.

The war instilled in Mahle a desire for a type of work that would make a happier life for humankind; therefore, he abandoned the idea of becoming an engineer and began to think more seriously about music. In his eagerness he overexerted himself practicing the piano and developed tendinitis, which prevented him from having a career as a professional performer. Mahle then tried

1 The information about Ernst Mahle comes mainly from a package obtained from him, which contains his biography, various written interviews, and copies of the manuscript of all the viola compositions. A detailed description of the contents of this package can be found in the appendix.
composition. He failed his first entrance exam to the Hochschule für Musik of Stuttgart because he did not possess a superior proficiency as a pianist, especially in sight-reading. He passed the exam on the second attempt, after successfully being able to improvise in whatever style was asked on a theme given by the director of that school. He studied composition in this school with Johann Nepomuk David.

In 1951, he moved with his parents and two brothers to Brazil, where his father established a firm called Metal Leve in São Paulo. In São Paulo, Mahle studied composition and conducting at the Conservatório Dramático e Musical. In 1952, the Pro-Arte Escola Livre de Música was founded in São Paulo. Mahle also enrolled in that school, in composition classes of Hans Joachim Koellreutter, who would have a great influence on his musical life. In this school he met Maria Aparecida Romera Pinto, from Piracicaba, a city in São Paulo State about 100 miles from São Paulo City; she was to become his wife three years later. In 1953, Mahle founded the Escola de Música de Piracicaba, together with Koellreutter, pianist Maria Dirce de Almeida Camargo, and a few other influential art supporters from Piracicaba.

Mahle returned to Europe many times, where he studied with distinguished composition teachers such as Olivier Messiaen and Wolfgang Fortner though mostly for short periods, in music festivals. He also studied conducting with Lovro von Matić, Rafael Kubelík, and Hans Müller-Kray. Mahle also participated in important music festivals in Brazil, such as the Curso Internacional de Música da Bahia and Curso Internacional de Música de Teresópolis (Rio de Janeiro), both organized by Koellreutter. Mahle also studied with Ernst Krenek, who gave a one month seminar in the Pro-Art in São Paulo in 1952.
In 1955 he married Maria Aparecida, and they lived in São Paulo, traveling to Piracicaba every week to teach. At the end of the year they moved to Piracicaba, where Mahle was naturalized Brazilian in 1963. In 1965 he was made an honorary citizen of that city. Mahle and his wife had five children: Ernesto (1956), Cecilia Elisabeth (1957-1973), Claudio José (1962), Ricardo (1966), and Leonora (1972).

Since the founding of his school in Piracicaba, Mahle’s work has focused on the musical education of youth, conducting, and composition. He believes that ear training, development of perception, musical reading, and practicing in musical groups are essential elements to musical education. Those beliefs have greatly influenced Mahle’s compositions as well. As a teacher he realized that in Brazil there were not enough pieces for children, so he wrote works for his students. Mahle had to teach theory classes and any instrument for which a teacher was lacking. The knowledge about many instruments he gained in this way was important for his composition. By exploring each instrument’s idiom, he made his pieces more attractive and interesting to the player. He became particularly familiar with the piano, organ, harpsichord, violin, viola, cello, double bass, and flute. In August 1955 Mahle founded the first orchestra of the Escola de Música de Piracicaba (EMP), a group of twenty-three children for whom he wrote special arrangements and compositions; the children played these pieces until they gained the skill to play original works of other composers.

In September 1998, the EMP was incorporated into the Instituto Educacional Piracicabano (Piracicaba Educational Institute), which supports a local university, UNIMEP (Methodist University of Piracicaba); Mahle has remained its director. The school has twenty-five teachers and between 250 and 300 students of ages 6 to 18. Instruction is offered in string and wind instruments, piano, voice, theory, composition, and conducting. There are six
ensembles: Children’s Choir, Madrigal, Children’s Orchestra, Youth Symphonic Orchestra, and Chamber Orchestra. The school provides the students, even in the earliest stages of their development, with ensembles and small chamber groups, and with music especially written for them. In 1999, the school was officially renamed Escola de Música de Piracicaba - Maestro Ernst Mahle, in honor of the composer.²

A catalog of Mahle’s works had its second edition published in 1991. In 1996 Mahle presented this author with an annotated copy listing many additional works; a third edition has just been published by UNIMEP. Mahle has written more than 200 works for solo instruments, solo instrument with orchestra, orchestral works, chamber music, and vocal music (among them many songs, two operas, three ballets, and a great number of works for choir). In addition to the major works listed in the catalog are arrangements for children’s choir and instrumental compositions for beginners, plus about 130 arrangements of folk songs for children’s orchestra and transcriptions and orchestrations of other composers’ works.

In 1999 Mahle celebrated his 70th birthday, and many concerts were given in his honour. Throughout his career Mahle has received many awards for his compositions in important Brazilian competitions. He served as Vice-President of the Brazilian Society of Contemporary Music, and he is also a member of the Brazilian Academy of Music.

Mahle’s viola works deserve study for at least two reasons. First, there is a dearth of imaginative and attractive works for beginning and intermediate viola students, and Mahle’s works, hardly known in this country, are exemplary in these respects. Second, Mahle’s works and ideas have had an enormous influence

² The name Escola de Música de Piracicaba (EMP) is used in this monograph.
on generations of performers, teachers, and composers in Brazil. This paper focuses on how Mahle's work as a teacher influenced his viola compositions, on the technical elements and pedagogical aspects of these works, and on the circumstances of their compositions. The monograph will discuss all the viola works of Mahle: Sonatina (1956) for viola and piano, Sonata (1968) for viola and piano, Sonatina (1976) for viola and piano, Concertino (1978) for viola and strings, As Melodias da Cecília (1982) for viola and piano, and Duos Modais (1991) for two violas. Mahle's compositional style and his teaching will be described before discussing these works and their idiomatic and pedagogical characteristics. Also, a section about the Brazilian characteristics will be included, since Mahle was heavily influenced by it (which became part of his compositional idiom).
COMPOSITIONAL STYLE AND INFLUENCES

Mahle studied composition with Johann Nepomuk David in Germany and Hans Joachim Koellreutter in Brazil. As noted by Josef Häuslen, David (1895-1977) studied composition with Joseph Marx at the Vienna Academy of Music in the 1920s. He studied further on his own, and was influenced in varying degrees by Debussy, Ravel, Skryabin, and, particularly, Schoenberg, whom he regarded as his most influential "teacher" after Marx. Häuslen compares David with Paul Hindemith in the use of old forms, German folk tunes of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, extensions of tonal harmony, and in the polyphonic foundation of their art and their emphasis on craftsmanship.3 Although having studied with David for only one year, Mahle acknowledges him as responsible for his solid foundation in harmony and counterpoint.4 Mahle's most influential teacher though, was Hans Joachim Koellreutter (b. 1915). Koellreutter, also from Germany, had studied composition with Paul Hindemith at the Berlin Academy of Music in the early 1930s. He has lived in Brazil since 1938, teaching harmony, counterpoint, fugue, and composition. He has also introduced new works and compositional techniques of European composers to his students, including those of Arnold Schoenberg. Mahle has been particularly influenced by works of Bartók and Hindemith, and professes a great admiration for the works of Brazilian composers, in special Villa Lobos, Camargo Guarnieri, and Guerra Peixe.

4 Eliane Tokeshi, Ernst Mahle: Violin Sonatas and Sonatinas (Ph.D. Diss., Northwestern University, 1999), 5.
Mahle has a neoclassic style and his early compositions reveal what one writer has called "experimental tendencies."\(^5\) In reference to his own style Mahle says that although he has a solid traditional background, his compositions are based on modal scales, on folklore, and on controlled aleatory.\(^6\) Mahle combines the forms of European classical music (sonata/sonatina, concerto/concertino) with elements of Brazilian music (particularly characteristic rhythms and strong accents), folk songs, and modal scales.

As noted above, Mahle has written about 130 arrangements of folk songs for children's orchestra and also transcriptions of other composers' works. The folk songs he uses are from Brazil plus Germany, France, Italy, Hungary, and other countries. In the section devoted to children's orchestra music in his catalog, Mahle grades each one of those pieces, giving the level of difficulty as well as the number of measures. He also lists chronologically about 250 compositions (and some more sophisticated arrangements) for solo instruments, solos with orchestra, orchestral works, chamber music, and vocal music (among them many songs, two operas, and a great number of works for choir). Among his works, Mahle has composed volumes of pieces such as *As Melodias da Cecília* (Cecília's Melodies) and *Duos Modais* (Modal Duets), which were written for several different instruments. Cecília was Mahle's second child (1957-1973), and between the ages of two and six years she produced a great number of melodies (more than 1,000), which were annotated by her father. Gradually, Mahle began to arrange those melodies for different instruments, usually with the accompaniment of piano (violin, viola, cello, double bass, guitar, flute, oboe or recorder, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, French horn, and


\(^6\) Ernst Mahle, written interview by this author, November 11, 1995.
piano - 2 sets). Each instrument has a unique set of melodies. In *Duos Modais*, which Mahle also has set for many different instruments, he works the modal scales, always using two of the same instrument.

One of Ernst Mahle's projects for the future is the composition of his third opera. His first two operas, *Maroquinhas Fru Fru* (based on a play by Maria Clara Machado) and *A Moreninha* (based on a similarly titled 19th century novel by Joaquim Manuel de Macedo), were well received by audiences; the latter had performances in both Brazil and Germany. Among Mahle's recent works is a concerto for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and strings, commissioned for the Orchestre des Jeunes de Fribourg (Switzerland), which premiered in Fribourg in January, 1997.
Mahle quotes his teacher Koellreutter: “There are no bad students, only bad teachers.”Mahle has dedicated his life to the musical education of children. He believes it is very important to teach music when children are very young, and that ear training, development of perception, musical reading, and practice in musical groups are essential elements of the apprenticeship.

Mahle wrote a booklet that explains many of his ideas, both musical and pedagogical. It is called Problemas de Interpretação (Interpretation Problems), and it covers many aspects of performance practice, ranging from how to read a musical text to one’s attitude on the stage. The booklet is divided into ten sections: The Text, The Rhythm, Apoggiatura and Trills, Prolongation and Release, Finishing Touch, Phrasing, Dynamics, Tempo, Concert Programming, and Stage Attitude.

In the Preface, Mahle explains that his intent is to help beginning performers (and perhaps the more advanced) to better execute music from different periods. He believes that, especially in the music from older periods, many factors are ignored, such as mistakes on the musical text, rhythmic misinterpretation, and ornamentation. The same mistakes have been repeated throughout the centuries.

The section about tempo proposes that the metronome is practically useless: the tempo of a musical passage depends on various factors such as the character that the composer intended, the rhythmic values, the instrument for which the piece was written, the technique of the performer, etc. He also adds

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7 Ernst Mahle, written interview by this author, November 11, 1995.
8 Ernst Mahle, Problemas de Interpretação (Piracicaba: Escola de Música de Piracicaba, 1982), 3.
that if a person has rhythmic problems, he or she would solve them better by singing or playing in an ensemble than by working with a metronome. Obviously then, in Mahle’s viola music we find only the tempo marks, with no metronome indications.

Mahle’s pedagogical booklets, all written between 1980 and 1985, include: **Análise** (Analysis), **Contraponto** (Counterpoint), **Harmonia** (Harmony), **Escalas e Modos** (Scales and Modes), and **Regência** (Conducting).

**The Escola de Música de Piracicaba**

The Escola de Música de Piracicaba, as indicated previously, was founded in 1953, and at the beginning it was essentially a branch of the Pro-Art of São Paulo. Koellreuter encouraged Mahle to begin a school of music in Piracicaba, with the help of other influential people in that city (most of them related to the arts). Included in this group were Maria Aparecida Romera Pinto (Mahle’s future wife); pianist Maria Dirce de Almeida Camargo; painter Arquimedes Dutra and his wife, pianist Zoraide Magalhães Dutra; Dr. Meirelles, a physician and president of the Sociedade de Cultura Artística (Society of Artistic Culture) and his wife, pianist Maria Olivia Ferraz Meirelles.

In the early years of the EMP, several figures were particularly important. Koellreutter, who came from São Paulo once a week to teach harmony, conducting, aesthetics, and flute, also brought with him some of his students to teach. The teachers at the beginning of the school included Mahle and his wife, Damiano Cozzella (who taught harmony), Rosita Salgado Gois (who taught the children’s music education course), and Diogo Pacheco (conductor of the EMP’s choir), who was followed later by Isaac Karabchewsky. According to one of its teachers, Dirce de Almeida Camargo was “the soul of EMP.” She worked free of charge (as did some other teachers), and always encouraged the further
development of the school. Mahle’s work was also essential, and he taught whatever instrument was needed for (which made possible the beginning of the children’s orchestra).

Probably because of Mahle’s European background and Koellreutter’s influence, the EMP has always given an incentive to the students to learn orchestral instruments and play in groups. In 1955, Mrs. Dirce de Almeida Camargo asked Mahle to form a children’s orchestra and to make arrangements for them. Mahle and Maria Aparecida R. Pinto, married just that year, were still living in São Paulo and went to Piracicaba once a week. By the end of 1955 they had moved to Piracicaba, enabling more involvement with the EMP. Adults also began to participate in what was before just a children’s orchestra, and in 1958 it became a symphonic orchestra.

Mahle himself has bought many instruments for the orchestra, such as timpani, bassoons and double basses (harder to acquire), and the students can borrow instruments from the school. The EMP also offers scholarships, giving an opportunity to less privileged children of the community and encouraging the study of instruments such as the viola, double bass, and brass. On his frequent trips to Europe Mahle has returned with many scores, thus helping to create the library of the EMP, which is today a valuable asset and source of research for musicians. Besides the great amount of sheet music Mahle brought from Europe, the library has an important collection of compositions by other Brazilian composers (many of them manuscripts not easily obtainable elsewhere), as well as a collection of Mahle’s own works.

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One characteristic of the EMP, a result of Mahle and his wife’s philosophy, is that all the children sing, even those who study instruments. They also play the recorder and must enroll in the children’s music education course before they choose an instrument. Even after they begin studying their chosen instrument, they still sing in the children’s choir and have theory classes. Some of them pursue careers in both instrumental and vocal performance.

The EMP promotes many concerts, some by the school’s ensembles. There are weekly recitals, *Música ao Cair da Tarde* (music at dusk), which are informal concerts featuring teachers and more advanced students. Student recitals are held mostly at the end of the year, and there is a traditional Christmas Concert every year. The EMP gives the students many opportunities to perform and play in chamber music groups. It also hosts the competition *Jovens Instrumentistas do Brasil*, and the orchestra of EMP plays at the final concert with the winners.

For Mahle and his wife, the main consequence of the incorporation of the school to the Instituto Educacional Piracicabano and UNIMEP in 1998 is that the future of the EMP is now secure, even after their retirement. They believe that UNIMEP can maintain the goals they set for the school and carry them even further. 11 One important step in this direction is the publication of Mahle’s works (most of which are still in manuscript or out of print) by UNIMEP.

**The Competition Jovens Instrumentistas do Brasil**

The competition *Jovens Instrumentistas do Brasil* has been held by the EMP since 1971, always in odd numbered years and usually at the end of June and beginning of July. This is an important event in Brazilian musical life, as there are not many other competitions in the country which are especially for...

11 Ernst Mahle, written interview by this author, February 5, 2000.
young musicians, and which are not limited to pianists, violinists, flutists, and guitarists. This competition is for performers of piano and almost all the orchestral instruments (but not harp). The age limit is twenty-one, and there are various levels of difficulty for each instrument. Each level demands the performance of at least one piece by a Brazilian composer.

For Mahle, the main objectives of the competition are:
1. to give talented and hard working young musicians the opportunity to present a good program before a highly qualified jury;
2. to encourage the technical and artistic development of music students;
3. to contribute to the improvement of the level of instrumental teaching in the country;
4. to raise the level of the Brazilian orchestras through the improvement of their performers.¹²

This competition attracts students from all over Brazil. It is also concurrent with some of the most important music festivals (winter), and because this time corresponds to summer vacation in Europe and United States, many foreign artists, as well as emigré Brazilians, come to perform and teach. Some of these musicians serve as judges for the competition. During the competition EMP holds many concerts with local and international artists. Over the years this competition has influenced many generations of performers, and it is often one of the first significant steps in a young musician's career. Among the people who have participated in the competition and are now making their careers in Brazil and internationally are: Antonio Menezes, cellist (winner of the Tchaikovsky competition); Alexandre Klein, oboist (winner of the Genebra competition and first oboist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra); and Washington Barella, oboist

¹² Ernst Mahle, written interview by this author, November 11, 1995.
(finalist in the Munich competition). Since the competition is held at EMP, many students of the school participate, and a great number of them play Mahle's works. Thus the competition helps in disseminating his work, many of which he composes for this occasion.
THE VIOLA COMPOSITIONS

It is common to hear from musicians who have performed Mahle’s works that his pieces generally fit their instruments well. Some find it as if the composer himself had used the instrument during the process of creating his works. Sometimes that was indeed the case: Mahle reports that he often used to take an instrument and improvise on it until finding the principal theme for a composition. He adds that now imagination is sufficient, and he does not need to take an instrument to find the effects he wants.\(^{13}\)

Mahle’s first compositions, from around 1952, seem to show the type of instruments the school had, principally flute, violin and piano. The folk song arrangements for the children’s orchestra did not include viola parts, as there were no children playing that instrument at the EMP at the time. With the addition of adult students and musicians from the community, Mahle began to have a more complete orchestra at his disposal. The first work in his catalog for full orchestra is *Variações para Piano* (Variations for Piano and orchestra) from 1956.

The Sonatina (1956) is his first work for the viola, but, as will be discussed later, was originally composed for the cello. The next work for the viola was the Sonata (1968).\(^{14}\) Since this Sonata was written in a much higher level of difficulty, one could suppose that Mahle did not have at all the intent of composing a student’s piece, but rather, to explore his own compositional skills. As pointed out by Tokeshi, although Mahle received his first composition award

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\(^{13}\) Ernst Mahle, interview by Johnson Machado, 1993.

\(^{14}\) Coincidence or not, the year of 1968 was rich in music written for the viola by Brazilian composers, such as Radames Gnatalli (Sonata for Viola and Piano), Francisco Mignone (*Três Valsas Brasileiras* for Viola and Piano), Marios Nobre (*Desafio* n.1 for Viola and Strings), and Guerra Vicente (Divertimento for Solo Viola).
as early as 1961, he still saw himself mainly as a teacher until 1968. The year of
1968 represented a critical period in his career in this regard, when Mahle felt his
work had attained sufficient maturity and he could truly see himself as a
composer.¹⁵

The next work for the viola, Sonatina (1976), although dedicated to a
renowned violist in Brazil, Perez Dworecki, was also intended for the
competition, *Jovens Instrumentistas do Brasil* (1977). By this time Mahle had
already composed many pieces using the viola, such as works for symphonic
orchestra, various concertini for different solo instruments and string orchestra,
string quartets, divertimenti for strings, etc.

The Sonatina (1956) is the only one of those works that has been
published (by Ricordi). All the other pieces for the viola are still in manuscript
and are available through the composer at EMP. A recording of the Sonata
(1968) was made in Brazil, in 1970, by violist Perez Dworecki and pianist Fritz
Jank.

Mahle's viola works are a good way to introduce beginning and
intermediate students to a more modern musical language, recalling the styles of
composers like Bartók and Hindemith, the latter in particular since, like Mahle,
he wrote idiomatically for many different instruments. Other similarities with
Hindemith come from their neoclassical style and the idea of *Gebrauchsmusik*, or
music for use (a term Hindemith himself did not care for). Hindemith “stressed
the need for new works in a contemporary style, which children and beginners
could use to familiarise themselves with new styles of composition and thus come
nearer to understanding them.”¹⁶ However, as mentioned by Tokeshi, Mahle has

1975), 16.
a greater concern with writing music that is accessible both to the performer and the audience, comparing his intentions more with works such as Schumann’s *Album für die Jugend*, Bach’s *Clavierbüchlein* for Anna Magdalena Bach, and Bartók’s *For Children*.17

**Sonatina (1956) for Cello (Viola) and Piano**

The Sonatina (1956) is Mahle’s first work for the viola, written at the time when Mahle saw himself as a teacher rather than a composer.18 This work was probably first conceived for the cello and then transcribed to the viola, as witnessed by the title (in the piano score the solo part is written as if for cello). It was dedicated to Cesar Camargo, a young cello student at EMP. This piece has a strong Brazilian character resembling the music of the northeastern part of Brazil in its marked rhythm and its use of the Lydian-Mixolydian mode (the so called *Modo Nordestino*); it will be discussed below in the section on the Brazilian characteristics in Mahle’s viola works. This Sonatina reflects a tendency during the 1950s of nationalistic composers from the southeastern regions (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro States especially) to study the folk music of the Northeast.

**Sonata (1968) for Viola and Piano**

Although it is not a long work (around eleven minutes), this three-movement sonata requires a higher level of proficiency than Mahle’s other pieces for the viola. In this Sonata he explores the expressive characteristics of the instrument and its technical possibilities. All three movements (Allegro, Andante, and Vivace) show the influence of Brazilian music. By now however, Mahle is beginning to develop more his own style. There is extensive use of

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melodic fourths and fifths and chromaticism. This Sonata was dedicated to Lithuanian violist Olafs Alnis and pianist Ida Meirelles.

**Sonatina (1976) for Viola and Piano**

This piece was dedicated to violist Perez Dworecki and was written for the competition *Jovens Instrumentistas do Brasil* of 1977. A two-movement work, this Sonatina shows a higher level of difficulty than the one from 1956, although everything fits the viola technique well, again showing Mahle’s knowledge of the instrument. Some characteristics of this piece is rhythmic writing, the use of double stops (especially thirds, fourths, fifths, and sixths), and chromaticism. The first movement, Andante, has a dense contrapuntal texture with dotted rhythmic figures; the second is a fugato, Vivace, in a 9/8 meter.

**Concertino (1978) for Viola and Strings**

This one-movement piece was also composed for the competition *Jovens Instrumentistas do Brasil* (1979) and was dedicated to a young Korean violist, Brian Lew. Claudio, Mahle’s third child, met Lew in a music festival in Campos do Jordão, São Paulo, and they became friends. Later Mahle invited Lew to perform Hindemith’s *Trauermusik* with the EMP’s orchestra. Mahle liked the young violist and dedicated his Concertino to him. Lew gave the world premiere of the Concertino.19

Mahle uses the syncopated rhythm so popular in Brazil (like a *samba*) which demands good bow control in order to get rhythmic clarity (and allow that technical difficulties do not slow the “swing” of the *samba*).

Mahle uses in this piece a variety of bow and left hand techniques, making the piece interesting for both performer and listener. Some of them are the double stops (sixths and octaves), harmonics, arpeggios, and cadenza-like sections.

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19 Ernst Mahle, written interview by this author, February 5, 2000
As Melodias da Cecilia (1982) for Viola and Piano

Some of the As Melodias da Cecilia were first published in 1972 by the Brazilian publisher Vitale. The volumes published then were for piano, violin, cello, flute, oboe or recorder, clarinet, trumpet, and French horn (all with piano accompaniment). Those sets were the only ones considered marketable by Vitale, while the viola, double bass and trombone were left in manuscript. A new edition is being prepared by UNIMEP Press and may include those for all the instruments. The viola set was presented to this author by the composer on Christmas, 1982.

The childlike character of each of the Melodias recalls works of composers such as Schumann (Album für die Jugend and Kinderscenen), Bartók (For Children), and Villa Lobos (Cirandas and Cirandinhas), among others. Knowing a little about Mahle’s life and his school, one could even recognize some references in a few of the pieces, as for example the Valsa da Leonora (Leonora is Mahle’s youngest daughter) and the Polonesa do Stanislau (Stanislau Smilgin was a Polish violin and viola teacher at the EMP).

Finally, an important fact about these pieces is the great variety of styles. Each piece has its own character, and while some explore scenes from childhood using themes such as march, lullaby, animals, and fairy tales, others suggest music from different cultures, like Polonesa do Stanislau and Dança Cigana.

Duos Modais (1991) for Two Violas

This is the most recent viola work by Mahle. It is a set of eight pieces, grouped in order of increasing difficulty, each one built on a different modal scale. Each piece has a distinct character, which in this case is determined by the modal scale used.
Mahle includes in each of the *Duos* the scale or scales he used:

1. pentatonic mode (C-D-E-G-A-C)
2. lydian - mixolydian (G-A-B-C#-D-E-F-G)
3. whole-tone scale (D-E-F#-A-B-C-D)
4. Gypsy mode (A-B-C-D#-E-F-G-A)
5. major triton (hexatonal) (F-G-A-B-C-E-F)
6. phrygian - dorian (B-C-D-E-F#-G-A-B)
7. minor lydian - hexatonal (E-F#-G-A#-B-D-E)
8. regular octatonic (C-D-E-F#-G-A-B-C)

Similarly to *As Melodias da Cecilia*, Mahle wrote sets of *Duos Modais* (between 1969 and 1991) for many different instruments (violin, viola, cello, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, French horn, and trombone). In the duos for the viola Mahle explores different aspects of the instrument technique, using various bow articulations and styles, and presents certain difficulties for the left hand, such as the unusual finger patterns brought on by the different scales. The imitative style of these duets is interesting, giving equally important parts for both violas. Also the range is often close, allowing the sound of the two instruments blend and thus generating an interesting combination of sounds.
THE BRAZILIAN CHARACTERISTICS IN
MAHLE’S VIOLA WORKS

Music in Brazil has received many influences since the country’s
discovery five centuries ago. The most important of them are from the
Portuguese, the African, and Amerindian cultures. Many other cultures have left
their contributions (especially in the 20th century), although to a lesser degree
than those three. The Portuguese, who colonized the country, with their culture
and customs, were dominant in every way. Similar to the Spanish, the Portuguese
used cultural and artistic activities as elements of acculturation over the native
population. As mentioned by Béhague, the Portuguese elements in Brazilian
music have been suffering changes throughout the centuries. However, many of
their stylistic characteristics, such as Iberian folk polyphony (parallel thirds and
sixths) have been preserved, as have the Portuguese melodies present in
children’s songs. Also inherited from the Portuguese are the use of the European
church modes. Béhague also mentions the presence in Brazil of Luso-Hispanic
instruments, particularly string instruments,20 such as the viola (from the guitar
family) and the rabeca (a type of rustic violin originated in medieval Portugal).

The African culture was, after the Portuguese, the most influential on the
Brazilian music. Throughout three centuries of the slave trade with Africa,
different ethnic groups from that continent were brought to Brazil. Their
influences in the Brazilian music are felt mostly on their rhythmic dances and
percussion instruments. Rhythmic elements, such as the hemiola, so characteristic
on Brazilian music, are attributed to the African culture. Melodically, African
influences are present on the Brazilian folk music in some specific scales

(pentatonic, major diatonic with a flattened seventh and major hexatonic scales without the seventh degree).  

The influences of the Amerindian group were smaller if compared with the Portuguese and African. Miscegenation with the Amerindian, and later the African with the Portuguese was an important factor since the colonization, resulting in three ethnic groups: the Caboclo (Portuguese and Indian), Mulato (Portuguese and African), and Cafuzo (Indian and African). Attempts to convert the Brazilian indigenous groups to catholicism by the Portuguese Jesuits occurred very early in the colonization of the country. Also, in the early attempt to enslave this ethnic group, a great part of the population either escaped or died. The Indians taught by the Jesuits promptly absorbed their European music and customs, losing most of their own cultural traditions. The indigenous groups which were not assimilated into the new culture were dispersed throughout the country, mostly in isolated communities, making knowledge of their culture restricted. The Indian music is basically religious or related to the activities of the tribe such as hunting and war. Remains of Indian music in the main folk traditions of Brazil can be found in certain types of instruments, predominantly rattles (like the maraca), choreographic genres and performance features.

In spite of his German background, Mahle is considered a Brazilian nationalist composer. Since the beginning of his residence in Brazil he has been interested in the country’s folk music as well as the works of important nationalist composers like Villa Lobos, Camargo Guarnieri and Guerra Peixe. One important characteristic of Brazilian music in Mahle’s works is the use of

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21 Ibid. Béhague states that the slave trade lasted almost four centuries, but the actual dates that respectively marked the beginning and ending of the slave trade in Brazil were 1549 and 1851.
22 Ibid.
modes, especially the so called *Modo Nordestino*, or Northeast mode. This mode is a combination of the Lydian and Mixolydian modes (lower tetrachord of Lydian and upper tetrachord of Mixolydian) (example 1).

![Example 1 Lydian-Mixolydian scale](image)

As mentioned by Tokeshi, despite controversies on the subject, most scholars agree that the modes most frequently found in the folk music of the Northeast of Brazil are the Mixolydian, Lydian, Lydian-Mixolydian (*Modo Nordestino*), Aeolian, and Dorian. The Lydian-Mixolydian mode is most typically used in the *Baião*, a popular dance of the Northeast. An example of this in Mahle’s viola works is the Sonatina (1956) (Example 2). The rhythmic pattern of the baião is written in the piano part, while the viola has repeated eighth notes. The viola writing, by its simplicity (all in the first position with extensive use of open strings), recalls the *rabeca*, a string instrument used in the folk music of the Northeast of Brazil.

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24 The name baião comes from a dance very popular in the 19th century in the Northeast of Brazil. The rhythmic pattern typical of baião is: \( \frac{J \ J}{T \ T} \) or: \( J \ J J \ J \). Some of the melodic characteristics of the baião reported by César Guerra Peixe are the following: (in a scale from C to C) a) all natural pitches; b) the seventh flattened (B flat); c) with the fourth augmented (F sharp); d) with any mixing of the last two modes (and even the last three); e) sometimes in the European traditional minor mode. Câmara Cascudo, *Dicionário do Folclore Brasileiro*, 3rd ed. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Tecnoprint, 1972, 128-129.
25 As noted by John Murphy, the *rabeca* is a fiddle of Portuguese origin. There are speculations about the *rabeca* having its origin in the *rebec*, a descendant of the North African *rebab* (brought to the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century). The *rabeca* has four strings, tuned in perfect fifths, which varies, according with the range of the singers (usually between the traditional violin and viola tunings). The playing position resembles the pre-1750 European breast violin position, which minimizes fatigue and also makes it comfortable for singing while playing. The right hand loosely holds the bow and the movement requires little wrist motion. The left hand remains in first position. Fingers most used are the index, middle, and ring finger, while the fourth finger is added only occasionally. John Murphy, “The *Rabeca* and Its Music, Old and New, in Pernambuco, Brazil,” *Latin American Music Review*, 18 (1997), 147-171.
Example 2 - Sonatina (1956), mm. 1-10

As mentioned before, the utilization of modes in Brazilian music is not only a characteristic from the Portuguese culture, but also from the African. The music of the Northeast shows Iberian and even Moresque influences. Around 1970, Ariano Suassuna, a poet and writer, idealized a movement called *Armorial*, which intended to rescue the folk-art of the Northeast. The *Quinteto Armorial*, an instrumental group formed in 1970 (based on the ideas of the *Armorial* movement), performed medieval pieces adapted to popular contemporary local genres. The *Quinteto Armorial* included popular instruments such as the *rabeca*, violin, *viola caipira* (from the guitar family), guitar, and *pifano* (type of bamboo flute) among others. The result was the creation of a type of popular-concert music with characteristics both from the music of the Renaissance and the

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Northeast backlands. However, even before the *Armorial*, during the 1950s, composer César Guerra Peixe (1914-1993), from São Paulo, was studying the music of the Northeast. His influences were noticed in many other composers from the Southern regions, with Mahle among them. The Lydian-Mixolydian scale, as mentioned in example 1, is used in *Duos Modais #2* (example 3). This scale is also used by Mahle in the Sonatina (1976) and Sonata (1968). In the Sonatina (1976) it appears in the secondary theme in the first movement, Andante (example 4). The change to this mode, along with the soft arpeggios on the piano part, brings an atmosphere of calm to this section.

Example 3 - *Duos Modais #2*, mm.1-12

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The Sonata also shows some influences of Brazilian music, especially in the second movement, Andante. The elegiac character of the movement recalls the *excelências* or *incelenças*, which are some forms of mourning songs from the Northeast\(^{28}\) (example 5). This movement, in spite of its melancholic and lyrical character, shows an almost monotonous rhythmic periodicity which could be associated with the invocation and supplication traits of a litany. The texture and timbre reinforces this idea; the movement begins with an unaccompanied muted viola line (example 6).

\(^{28}\) *Incelenças* or *excelências* are wake songs or laments sung around the dead body in the northern states of Brazil. They are of Portuguese origin and are believed in some places to help the dead enter Heaven. Behague, “Brazil,” 240.

Another important work from the Brazilian viola repertory to present similar characteristics of Northeast mourning songs is Guerra Peixe’s *Três Peças* (1957) for Viola and Piano (second piece, Andantino).
Example 5 - Example of an *Excelência* or *Incelença*\(^{29}\)

Example 6 - Sonata (1968), Andante, mm. 1-10

However, we should not attribute Mahle’s use of modalism only to the influences of Brazilian music. It is important to keep in mind Mahle’s great interest in the music of Bartók, especially works such as *For Children* and *Mikrokosmos*.\(^{30}\)


Mahle's works are generally highly rhythmic, full of syncopations, dotted figures, metric changes and quirky accents. In this respect his compositions for the viola are no exception. These dotted and syncopated figures are present even in the simplest of the viola works, such as *As Melodias da Cecilia* (examples 7 and 8).

Example 7 - *As Melodias da Cecilia, João e Maria*, mm.1-16
Rhythmic motives may determine the main character of some works, as in the case of the *samba*-like\(^ {31} \) style of Concertino (1978), and the more dramatic and dense atmosphere of Sonatina (1976)(examples 9 and 10).

\(^{31}\) The *samba* term refers to a dance or dance-music form of Afro-Brazilian origin. General characteristics of the *samba* are the duple meter, verses for solo singer alternated with choral refrain, syncopated melodic lines, and accompaniments that combines rhythmic patterns such as: 

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{3}{4} & \quad J J J \\
\frac{2}{4} & \quad J J J J
\end{align*}
\]

over marchlike bass figures such as:

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{2}{4} & \quad J J J J
\end{align*}
\]

The glissando effect is used only a few times in those viola works, although it is very common in the Brazilian instrumental music. The use of this effect by so many nationalist composers probably intend to recall Brazilian popular instrumental forms, such as the *chorinho*, for example.  

The *chorôes* (instrumental ensemble which plays the *chorinho*) generally include wind instruments like the flute, clarinet, and trombone, which use glissandos and portamentos in their improvisatory soloistic sections.

Mahle uses the glissando in a downward motion in the *Sonatina* (1976) (last measure of the first movement), and three times in the *Sonata* (1968) (last movement), where he specifies that the preceding note should be in the fourth position (examples 11, 12). This technique was often used in Bartók’s string writing.

Example 11 - *Sonatina* (1976), Andante, mm. 79-82

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32 *Choro* or *chorinho* is an urban instrumental ensemble music common in the southeastern states in Brazil (especially Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo), usually having one of its member as a soloist. The group usually includes flute, clarinet, ophicleide, trombone, *cavaquinho* (a type of ukelele), guitar, and a few percussion instruments (particularly the tambourine). In the 20th century the *choro* or *chorinho* has been related with other popular dances of urban Brazil such as the *maxixe*, the *tango brasileiro*, and the *samba*. All those dances have the same rhythmic patterns (syncopated binary figures). During the 1930s and 1940s, the *choro*, thanks to musicians such as 'Pixinguinha' (Alfredo da Rocha Viana), had as trademarks “virtuoso improvisation of instrumental variations and the resulting imaginative counterpoint.” Béhague, “Choro,” 4:340.
Another occurrence of glissando happens in the last movement of the Sonata, in combination with other effects such as harmonics, pizzicati, and meter changes. This time the glissando is upwards, and goes from a tritone double-stopping to a unison (example 13). The last section where we find the glissando in this movement, it happens again in an upward movement, and it is combined with harmonics (example 14).
Although Mahle does not use folk songs in his works for the viola, there are many examples in the Melodias da Cecília that recall the style of children's tunes and round-game songs, much like those collected by Villa Lobos in his Guia Prático. As mentioned before, children's songs in Brazil are for the most part of European origin, passed down from the Portuguese colonization.

Some of the Melodias utilizing children-like tunes are: João e Maria (the Brazilian version of Hansel and Gretel), Cantiga de Ninar (Lullaby), Valsa da Mamãe (Mother's Waltz), and Dança do Bode (Goat's Dance) (examples 15, 7, 16, 8).

Example 15- As Melodias da Cecília, Cantiga de Ninar, mm.1-14

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33 The Guia Prático - Estudo Folclórico Musical (Practical Guide - Study of Musical Folklore) is a six volumes work by Heitor Villa Lobos, from 1932, in which the first volume is a collection of childhood themes arranged for choir (with or without accompaniment).
Example 16 - *As Melodias da Cecilia, Valsa da Mamãe*, mm.1-15
IDIOMATIC AND PEDAGOGICAL ELEMENTS IN MAHLE'S VIOLA WORKS

Expressive Character of the Viola

Viola technique has developed considerably in the 20th century. Thanks to important violists such as Lionel Tertis, William Primrose, and many others more recently, a great amount of original new works have been composed. These works have shown a great development of the viola technique, and what were considered almost impossible feats to most violists at one time, are now standard part of the viola repertory. Composers Walton, Bartók, Hindemith (himself an accomplished violist), Schnitke, and Penderecki, have written important concerti which are now widely played.

For a long time, the violist had to resort to transcriptions from other instruments (violin, cello, clarinet). Especially in terms of pedagogical material, practically everything was borrowed from the violin, with few exceptions (Bruni, Campagnoli, and Hoffmeister among others). Not all transcriptions work well, nor do they fulfill the violist's needs. In this century we have seen works emerge such as violist Lillian Fuchs' Fifteen Characteristics Studies for Viola and Sixteen Fantasy Etudes for Viola Solo. These works reflect the special needs of the viola technique in terms of sound production, especially on the legato bow, playing in higher positions on the lower strings, string crossings in a fast tempo, and dexterity of fingers with double-stopping. They offer a valuable source of material for the demands of the new compositions.

But 20th century violists have also stressed the instrument's expressive tone qualities; thus after centuries of neglect, the viola finally has revealed itself

as a unique solo instrument. As mentioned by William Primrose, “sonority and colour are essential in rescuing our instrument from the charge of dullness, dinginess, dreary and lack-lustre sound that is often laid against the viola.” He calls the attention to the danger of the violist using too much pressure on the string. Primrose advises that the “pull-and push” action (the tirer and pousser of the French, which stresses the use of the arm weight and horizontal movement instead of vertical pressure on the string) is mandatory on the viola. 35

Mahle tries to bring out the expressive qualities of the instrument in his viola compositions. In these works expressive sections are alternated with faster and more energetic ones, as for example in the Sonata (1968), Allegro (Example 17).

Example 17 - Sonata (1968), Allegro, mm.1-10

The second movement of the Sonata, Andante, is a beautiful example of Mahle’s preoccupation with the viola’s melodious character. It begins with a muted viola solo in a elegiac fashion, in legato (example 6). We find another example of this expressive character in Cantiga de Ninar, from As Melodias da Cecilia (example 15). The first part of the piece, Andante, is mostly very soft (p and pp) and uses the low range of the instrument (highest pitch is f’). In its lyrical simplicity this piece brings to mind Schumann’s Märchenbilder for viola and piano (last movement). A viola teacher could use this piece to help students develop legato sound, as well as vibrato, in a lyrical musical gesture in a slow tempo and soft dynamics, and in the lower register of the instrument.

_Duos Modais_ #6 is a good example of this type of expressive writing (example 18). Mahle uses the combination of the Phrygian and Dorian modes (B-C-D-E-F#-G#-A-B), in a very slow tempo (Lento). As mentioned by Tokeshi, Mahle believes that “each mode, as well as music in general, is a manifestation of Nature that corresponds to different emotions, colors, and levels of luminosity.” The Phrygian mode is for the composer “the darkest and most mysterious of the modes.”36 This duet is written in a 7/8 measure, which combined with the Phrygian-Dorian scale, gives an atmosphere of uncertainty to the piece. All the _Duos Modais_ show similar relationship between mode and character.

Example 18 - _Duos Modais_ #6, mm. 1-8 (con’d:)

Bowing Articulation

The most common bowing techniques used by Mahle in the viola works are the legato, détaché, martellé, staccato, spiccato, sautille, and tremolo. He uses in most of the viola works a conventional string writing. Effects such as harmonics, tremoli, glissandi, sul ponticello, etc., happen mostly in the Sonata (1968), and even there not frequently. Mahle does not use virtuoso bow strokes such as ricochet and staccato volante in the viola music. This could be due to the serious character of most of the pieces and the composer’s preoccupation with expression, rather than an acrobatic style. Even in his fast works, Mahle chooses heavier bow strokes, especially the détaché, martellé, spiccato (in forte and mezzo-forte) and staccato. One example is the Vivace movement of the Sonatina (1976), in 9/8. In spite of the dance-like character of the movement, it still keeps some of the somber atmosphere of the first movement. In this piece, the articulation is used as part of the theme or motive. The movement is a fugato in which the first part of the subject has staccato indications (spiccato bow), and the second is in legato (example 19). These two articulation motives interact between the viola and the piano throughout the movement. Due to the intricate counterpoint between both instruments, this movement, especially, presents some challenges for the performers ensemblewise.
The most idiomatic for the viola is probably the *legato* bowing, which brings out the deep and mellow sound associated with the instrument. We have already seen examples of this cantabile *legato* style in the section about the Expressive Character of the Viola, although there are many more examples throughout Mahle's viola works. The *legato* articulation is used most of the time to set the main character of the piece or movement, as we have seen in the Sonata (1968), Andante, *Duos Modais* #6, and *Cantiga de Ninar* (examples 6, 18, 15).

The *legato* can also be used as a contrasting section in a more articulated piece. Some of these contrasting sections can be very short, as a sudden change from the articulated to a more *legato* character and back, as in the Concertino (1978) and Sonatina (1976), first movement, Andante (examples 20, 5).
Dotted and syncopated figures are an important part of Mahle's idiom. These rhythmic sections happen with different bow strokes, sometimes more articulated (détaché, spiccato, staccato) and sometimes legato. Clear articulation and rhythmic accuracy are essential in these sections. Because of the slower response in the sound production on the viola if compared with the violin, some attention should be given when performing these rhythmic sections (something to be strived for not only in Mahle's music). For general clarity of sound, White-Smith suggests that the violist should approach the viola more like a low string player than as a violinist. Her advice to violists would be anticipating the beat and staying closer to the string, and starting off-the-string strokes from the string, for clearer sound and accurate timing. She also suggests the practice of
martellé for developing clear articulation, reminding that less bow will be needed for this stroke on the viola than on the violin. A good example of this is in the Concertino (1978) (example 21). The bow indicated by Mahle can sometimes produce an irregular rhythmic result, especially if the performer begins the first note 'off' the string. There is a tendency for the second sixteenth note to sound too short. A suggestion by this author is to keep the bow close to the string, even in spiccato.

Example 21 - Concertino (1978), mm.35-40

Sometimes these rhythmic sections happen in places with legato indications. Examples of these are again in the Sonatina (1976) and Concertino (1978). In both cases the performer has to alternate the legato with a more detached articulation, adding spaces and accents when needed, in order to keep the rhythmic character of the pieces (examples 22 and 23).

Example 22 - Sonatina (1976), mm.1-12

Some specific bow articulations are used to suggest a certain style of playing. Such cases are for example the Gypsy style Mahle uses in some pieces, such as *Dança Cigana (Melodias)*, and *Duos Modais #4* (Gypsy scale: A-B-C-D#-E-F-G#-A). The bow technique used is mostly the fast *detaché* and *staccato* (examples 24, 25).
Example 25 - Duos Modais #4, mm. 1-10

Spiccato is also frequently used by Mahle in his viola works. It happens extensively in the Sonatina (1956), which is a gratifying piece for students to practice this bow technique (example 2). The reason for this statement is that the Sonatina has many repeated eighth notes for the viola, and despite the presence of oddly accented beats, it demands evenness in the rhythm. A similar situation where we find the spiccato, although in a more complex context for both hands, is in Duos Modais #7 (example 26). In a Vivace tempo, this piece presents challenging technical elements such as unusual finger patterns brought by the Minor Lydian-Hexatonic scale (E-F#-G-A#-B-D-E). It requires fast shifts, besides contractions and extensions of the hand shape. Other complexities in this piece are some awkward string crossings and sudden dynamic changes in a fast tempo. The spiccato bow is suggested by this author, since there is no metronome indications and due the difficulties already mentioned. However, the sautille stroke can be applied, if the performer decides for a faster tempo.

38 Conversations with Ester Silveira Ramos, former viola student at EMP, October, 1995.
Awkward string crossings are not a common problem in Mahle's viola pieces, which are most of the times idiomatic for the right hand. However, the Sonata (1968) shows some complexities, as for example in the Allegro (example 27). In this case, it helps to apply fingerings which use as few string crossings as possible and to divide the last long slur into three bows (fingerings and bowings suggested by this author).
Example 27 - Sonata (1968), Allegro, mm.62-65

**Left Hand Articulation**

Although we could not say that Mahle’s viola works are always easy for the left hand, they are for the most part written idiomatically and fit the instrument’s technique well. He often uses open strings, perhaps influenced by his pedagogical work, making his music more technically accessible for students. But the use of open strings does not necessarily infer a lack of complexity, and it is common in important 20th century viola compositions, such as *Lachrimae* for viola and piano by Benjamin Britten. Another reason for the use of open strings could be the Brazilian character present in these compositions, for example in the Sonatina (1956). As mentioned before, there are many influences from the music of the Northeast in this piece, and by the rustic simplicity of its writing (all in first position and extensive use of open strings) as it recalls the *rabeca*.

Extensive use of first position also occurs in *As Melodias da Cecilia*, although the composer includes challenging elements for the young performer: major and minor modes (which can be a helpful tool in developing the student’s fluency in different scales and finger patterns), various bowing articulations, simple forms of double-stops, and meter changes, among others. It is also interesting in these pieces the way the viola interplays with the piano, many times exchanging the accompanimental material. Once more, Mahle shows the importance he gives to chamber music in education, since both the viola and the
piano parts are meant to be played by students. Some of these accompanimental sections are chromatically written, as for example in *Marcha* and *Polonésa do Stanislau* (examples 28, 29).

Example 28 - *As Melodias da Cecilia, Marcha*, mm.22-25

Example 29 - *As Melodias da Cecilia, Polonésa do Stanislau*, mm.26-29

Most of Mahle’s works are comfortable for the violist to keep the hand frame. This is one of the qualities that make those pieces attractive to performers. Extensions and contractions of the fingers are used, although not as often, which
is convenient for the violist due to the size of the instrument. The violist needs a
more extended hand frame, thus favoring the use of half and second positions. It
is interesting that Mahle himself added fingerings to the viola parts, and they can
be helpful, showing the composer’s intention in some cases. One example is in
Sonatina (1976), Andante, where the composer’s fingerings seem to stress the
shifting with the second finger. One reason could be his desire for more vibrato
on specific notes. Ideally, the string player should be able to vibrate equally with
any finger. However, many times we choose to avoid the fourth finger when
looking for a more expressive vibrato (example 10, mm. 7-10).

The shifting to positions higher than the third is not very common in
Mahle’s viola works, and it happens only in few of the pieces. One of the reasons
could be the pedagogic nature, geared toward more beginning students.
However, we do find some examples of higher positions in Duos Modais #8, and
the Concertino (1978) (examples 30, 31).

![Example 30 - Duos Modais #8, mm. 45-47](image)

Example 30 - Duos Modais #8, mm. 45-47

![Example 31 - Concertino (1978), mm. 121-125](image)

Example 31 - Concertino (1978), mm. 121-125
Most often Mahle writes in a range that is very comfortable for the instrument. Similar to the alto and baritone voices, the writing for the viola does not sound as characteristic if there are many prolonged sections in the higher range. The composer reserves the use of higher register to contrasting and climactic sections as we see in the Sonata (1968) (examples 32, 33, 34).

Example 32 - Sonata (1968), Allegro, mm. 91-95

Example 33 - Sonata (1968), Andante, mm. 21-30
Example 34 - Sonata (1968), Vivace, mm. 95-103

Chromaticism

As mentioned before, Mahle writes chromatically even in simple works such as *As Melodias da Cecília* (examples 27, 28). In more complex works, chromatic sections demand more contractions and extensions of the hand frame, often shiftings and use of the half and second positions. In the Concertino (1978) for example (mm.138-141), the performer can maintain the hand shape for most of the section. To avoid unnecessary string crossings, this author suggests to begin the section in third position (mm.138) and shift down to half position on the next measure. The player can basically stay between half and first positions only using few extensions and contractions as shown on the example (example 35).
Example 35 - Concertino (1978), mm.138-145

The performer is also encouraged to approach these chromatic sections enharmonically, which at times helps in visualizing the finger pattern of the section. The Sonatina (1976) (both movements) has some examples of this, as shown below (example 36, 37).

Example 36 - Sonatina (1976), Andante, mm. 52-56
Example 37 - Sonatina (1976), Vivace, mm. 46-55

Mahle’s chromatic sections are still written idiomatically. The performer will not have problems in finding logical fingerings, making these passages comfortable for the left hand.
Double-Stoppings

Double-stops appear in most of Mahle's works for the viola, even in simple pieces like the Melodias da Cecilia (Dança do Bode), the Sonatina (1956), and Duos Modais #1. In such works, though, the double-stop is most commonly obtained by adding an open string to the melody, or simply by playing open strings (examples 38, 39, 40).

Example 38 - *As Melodias da Cecilia, Dança do Bode*, mm. 9-13

Example 39 - *Sonatina* (1956), mm. 71-82

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Thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, and octaves are used by Mahle in more complex works. Among those intervals the minor sixth is a kind of trademark in Mahle’s viola and violin works, as for example in the Concertino (1978). These minor sixths show again Mahle’s preoccupation in writing idiomatically for the viola, making his works accessible to students. The section is a sequence, with groupings of three sixths, at a distance of a minor third from each other (with the first and the last being repeated). It is possible for the performer to maintain the hand frame during each group (fingers 12 - 34), and shifting positions between them, using the first finger as a pivot (example 41). A second section of sixths happens in the recapitulation, in a similar situation, although this time in a higher register (example 42).
Example 41 - Concertino (1978), mm. 76-85

Example 42 - Concertino (1978), mm. 221-230
Mahle also combines the minor sixths with other intervals, as in the Sonatina (1976), where thirds, sixths, and a fourth appear in succession (example 43). In the thirds there is no need for shifting position, only dropping the fingers on the strings within the hand frame. Besides the thirds and sixths double-stops, there are few fourths and fifths. The latter are used in the second movement, Vivace, as part of the fugato subject (example 19).

Example 43 - Sonatina (1976), Andante, mm.25-34

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Another piece in which Mahle writes a series of sixths is the Sonata (1968), Andante. Besides extensions and contractions of the left hand, this section requires frequent shifts. This section is an excellent example of Mahle's idiomatic writing. The composer exploits the viola's technical possibilities, while allowing the performer to maintain a comfortable position of the left hand (example 44 - fingerings by this author).

Example 44 - Sonata (1968), Andante, mm. 66-75
Less Frequently Used String Techniques

Besides the conventional string techniques already mentioned, others are also used in Mahle’s viola compositions, although not as often. They are mostly used in accompanimental sections or as an effect. The techniques included in this section are: harmonics, arpeggios, tremoli, trills, grace notes, and pizzicati. This section of the monograph describes how these techniques are employed in these viola works.

Harmonics in Mahle’s pieces for the viola are mainly natural harmonics, produced using only one finger touching the string lightly. He uses this kind of harmonic in the Concertino, suddenly creating an airy effect to a very energetic line (examples 45, 46, 47).

Example 45 - Concertino (1978), mm. 91-100
In some cases the harmonics are used more for practicality than for the effect mentioned before, as it is the case in the Sonatina (1976), first movement, Andante. The dramatic and very solid character of the movement does not quite suit harmonics, and only one appears, at the very end of the movement. The harmonic is a practical option for, in a fast tempo, it makes it easier to reach the high E (Example 48).
Many times harmonics are used at the end of phrases, as an element of surprise, as in the Sonata (1968), Allegro (example 49).

Harmonics can also have a disruptive character, changing the atmosphere of the previous melodic line, as we find in the same Sonata, Andante (example 50). Also in the Sonata, the composer uses combinations of harmonics and other effects such as *pizzicato* and *glissando* (examples 51, 52).
Example 50 - Sonata (1968), Andante, mm.50-60

Example 51 - Sonata (1968), Vivace, mm. 41-43
Arpeggios are used by Mahle in few of the viola works. In Sonatina (1976) the arpeggios are used as an effect, but also serve as accompaniment to the figato material on the piano line (example 53). These arpeggiated chords of three or four notes usually include open strings, offering to young performers a resonant and gratifying experience with chords. These arpeggiated sections are idiomatically written and allow the performer to keep the hand frame, placing the fingers comfortably on the strings. Contraction of the hand frame will be necessary only in few places, such as in mm. 76 (example 54).
Sometimes the arpeggio is used in cadenza-like sections, as it happens at the end of the Concertino (1978). Again, this is an arpeggiated four note chord, which includes two open strings. The result is a resonant "virtuoso" effect, making the passage attractive to the young performer (example 55).

Example 55 - Concertino (1978), mm. 251-254

Example 54 - Sonatina (1976), Vivace, mm. 73-80
Tremolo is another effect used in Mahle’s works for the viola, although not frequently. Mahle uses tremolo in two forms: separated notes (double stops), and slurred, which is the fingered tremolo, as we see in *Duos Modais #8*, (example 56).

Example 56 - *Duos Modais #8*, mm.14-20

Another way Mahle uses tremolo is in combination with *sul ponticello*. This emphasizes the tremolo effect, as seen in the Sonata (1968), last movement, Vivace. Later in that movement he again uses tremolo, in conjunction with crescendo, while holding a tritone double-stop, which moves to a half step (examples 57, 58).
Trills in Mahle’s viola works are used not as an ornamentation of the melodic line but as an accompanimental effect. There are examples of this in Duos Modais #4 and #5. In #4 it happens in the first viola, with accents that fall on the second half of the first beat, in every other measure, while the second viola has the melodic line. Similar situation, with the trill in the first viola, happens in Duos #5. The line is repeated and it works as an echo (example 59, 60).
The trill is used by Mahle in another viola work, the Sonatina (1976), Vivace, again as an accompanimental figure (example 61).
Mahle uses grace notes in some of the works, but each will have a different purpose. Sometimes the grace notes are part of the melodic line, as in the Sonatina (1976), Vivace, in which it is part of the countersubject of the fugato (example 62). Grace notes are also found as a part of the melodic line in the first movement of the Sonata (1968) (example 63).

Example 62 - Sonatina (1976), Vivace, m.10, mm. 41-42, mm. 63-64

Example 63 - Sonata (1968), Allegro, mm. 16-19
In the Concertino (1978) there is an example where, by using the grace notes, Mahle seems to be trying to emphasize a double stop and making a more pronounced ending to a phrase (example 64).

![Example 64 - Concertino (1978), mm. 39-40](image)

Another way in which the grace note appears in the Concertino is as a variation of the initial theme, when it comes back in the recapitulation (example 65).

![Example 65 - Concertino (1978), mm. 156-160](image)

Grace notes also appear combined with other effects, as in the last movement of the Sonata (1968). This section is full of different effects (harmonics, pizzicati and meter changes), and the grace note happens in double-stoppings, combined with a glissando (example 13).
The last technique to be mentioned in this section is the pizzicato. This technique is used quite often in Mahle’s viola works. Most of the times it functions as a sound effect, combined or not with other effects. Sometimes it happens as part of the melodic line, and not as often, as an accompanimental figure, as in *A Camponesa Alegre* (the happy countrygirl), from *As Melodias da Cecilia* (example 66).

![Example 66 - As Melodias da Cecilia, A Camponesa Alegre, mm. 21-24](image)

Pizzicato as part of the the melodic line can be found in *Duos Modais #7*. Although the first viola begins with the more active line, both voices are equally important here. The pizzicato in the second viola never acts as an accompaniment (example 67).

![Example 67 - Duos Modais #7, mm.10-12](image)
Few other examples of pizzicato are found in the Sonata (1968), in similar situations as already seen. Left hand pizzicato is used only once in all of the viola works, and it is in the first movement of this Sonata (example 68).

Example 68 - Sonata (1968), Allegro, mm. 153-156
CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the beginning of this work, the intention of this monograph was to discuss the viola works by Ernst Mahle with respect as their pedagogical and idiomatic characteristics. A view of Mahle’s life, his ideas and works was necessary in order to understand how he came to write for the viola and how those factors have influenced his compositions. His work as a teacher, conductor and composer, and together with his wife, as director of the Escola de Música de Piracicaba, has greatly influenced those pieces. Also, it was important to show the influences of the Brazilian music in his works, since they are an essential part of his compositional idiom.

Although Mahle has been a very important figure in the Brazilian musical life through his compositions, his school, and his teaching, just recently some works began to be written about him. Most of the information for this project was obtained through a package sent by the composer in 1995, which contains short biographies, written interviews by this and other authors, a catalog of Mahle’s works, a copy of the booklet Problemas de Interpretação, and copies of all the viola works. Few other projects have been done, and among them two should be mentioned. The first, by Antonio Roberto Roccia dal Pozzo Arzolla, a double-bass player and former student at EMP, is a master’s thesis from University of Rio de Janeiro (1994) about Mahle’s Concerto (1990) for double-bass and orchestra. The second, by another former student from EMP, violinist Eliane Tokeshi, is a doctoral dissertation from Northwestern University (1999) about Mahle’s violin sonatas and sonatinas. Other projects are still in progress, which will focus on Mahle’s solo violin, clarinet, and vocal works. Other information has come from conversations with former students and teachers of EMP, and letters from Mr. and Mrs. Mahle, who have been very
helpful throughout the whole process. A new written interview with the composer was done in February, 2000.

The project did not include structural analysis of the pieces, since its main focus was on pedagogical and idiomatic elements. However, this would be a rewarding subject for further projects. It is the hope of this author that Mahle’s compositions will find more recognition among performers and teachers, not only in Brazil but also abroad.
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**Catalogs**


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APPENDIX: PACKAGE OF MATERIALS
FROM ERNST MAHLE

The contents of the package sent by Ernst Mahle to this author in 1995 include:


3. Three short biographies.

4. Interview by this author, November 11, 1995.

5. Interview by UNIDONTO - journal, 1995, Piracicaba, SP.


7. Photocopies of manuscripts of the following works:
   - Sonatina (1956) for cello (viola) and piano;
   - Sonata (1968) for viola and piano;
   - Sonatina (1976) for viola and piano;
   - Concertino (1978) for viola and strings (piano reduction);
   - As Melodias da Cecilia (1982) for viola and piano;
   - Duos Modais (1991) for two violas;

In 1996 Ernst Mahle sent corrections to a previous project written about him by this author and with it a new annotated copy of his catalog. A new edition of the catalog has just been published and it was sent to this author on March, 2000.
VITA

Sônia Feres-Lloyd was born in Jundiaí, São Paulo, Brazil, on July 6, 1965. She began musical studies with her mother, Josette Silveira Mello Feres, at age of four. In 1976 she began violin studies in her city with Edgar Piacentini and in 1979, viola, with Gualberto E. Basavilbaso at UNICAMP (University of Campinas, São Paulo). Mrs. Feres-Lloyd received a Bachelor of music degree from Faculdades São Judas Tadeu, in São Paulo, in 1987, and the degree of Master of Music from Louisiana State University, in 1994. She began her doctoral studies at University of Northern Colorado (Greeley, Colorado) in 1995, transferring back to Louisiana State University in 1996.

Mrs. Feres-Lloyd has played in various musical groups, among them: Orquestra Infanto-Juvenil da Escola de Música de Jundiaí; Orquestra Sinfônica de Tatui, São Paulo; Orquestra Jovem Municipal de São Paulo; Camerata Fukuda, São Paulo; Orquestra de Câmara do Theatro São Pedro, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul; Orquestra Nova Sinfonietta, São Paulo; Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra; and Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra. She has also taught violin and viola to children at the Escola de Música de Jundiaí (1982-90), University of Northern Colorado (String Project, 1995), and LSU Music Academy (1994, 1996 to present). She has studied viola with Klaus Wüsthof, Horacio Schaeffer, Marcello Guerchfeld, Juliet White-Smith, and Jerzy Kosmala.
Candidate: Sonia Feres-Lloyd

Major Field: Music

Title of Dissertation: The Viola Compositions of Ernst Mahle and Their Idiomatic and Pedagogical Characteristics

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

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March 21, 2000

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