

4-27-2012

Extended Program Notes for Thesis Violin Recital

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DOI: 10.25148/etd.FI12080802

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES FOR THESIS VIOLIN RECITAL

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

by

Paul Tulloch

2012

To: Dean Brian Schriener
College of Architecture and the Arts

This thesis, written by Paul Tulloch, and entitled Extended Program Notes for Thesis Violin Recital, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

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Date of Defense: April 27, 2012

The thesis of Paul Tulloch is approved.

Dean Brian Schriener
College of Architecture and the Arts

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Florida International University, 2012

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES FOR THESIS VIOLIN RECITAL

by

Paul Tulloch

Florida International University, 2012

Miami, Florida

Professor Robert Davidovici, Major Professor

This thesis presents extended program notes for a sixty-minute violin graduate recital consisting of the following repertoire: César Franck, *Sonata* for Piano and Violin; Peter Sculthorpe, *Irkanda I* for solo violin; Ernest Chausson, *Poème*; Béla Bartók, Violin Concerto No. 2. Composed over the past two centuries, these works display a variety of styles and musical forms. The content of this thesis features detailed information on these works through historical study and musical analysis.

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Chapter One. César Franck's Violin Sonata

“This is not a sonata, but it is damned beautiful anyhow!” proclaimed French composer and music critic Ernest Reyer after hearing the premiere of the sonata.¹ Its innovative structure in many ways looks backwards to concepts of the past; the first two movements, for example, are in sonata form, while the last is a rondo. At the same time, Franck was aligning himself with the progressive tendencies of the New German School, represented by Liszt and Wagner. His synthesis of traditional and avant-garde approaches to musical form challenged the listeners of his day.

This chapter will focus predominantly on Franck's use of cyclic form. Cyclic form can be defined as music that either “returns at its end to the point whence it set out at the beginning” or music where “thematic links bind more than one movement.”² Cyclic form itself was not a new idea, having roots in some music of the Baroque and Classical periods. With the precedent of Beethoven's late style in mind, however, thematic integration across an entire sonata cycle became a compositional holy grail, as it were, for composers of the New German School and for the Francophone composers who, in the wake of the humiliating 1871 French defeat at Sadowa, sought to prove that they could rival their German colleagues on the artistic front, if not the military one. (Franck—Belgian by birth—was a charter member of the Société Nationale de Musique, founded after the Franco-Prussian war with the explicit aim of promoting music by French composers.)

¹ Lorenz Gamma, *The Sonata by César Franck: A Critical Edition for Violinists*. Los Angeles: University of California, 2005, 1.

² Grove Music Online, s.v. “Cyclic Form”
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07001>

Franck rarely dedicated his works to performers, more often inscribing them to his fellow composers, as he did with his Piano Quintet dedicated to Camille Saint-Saëns. Not much is known about the circumstances surrounding the Violin Sonata's conception. The twenty-six-year-old Eugène Ysaÿe, who was becoming known as one of the finest violinists of his day, was not originally intended to be the work's dedicatee but was chosen only after the work's completion in the summer of 1886. After having finished the sonata in three short weeks in the small Loire Valley town of Quincy, Franck wrote the following to his close friend and pianist Marie Lóntine Bordes-Pène, who, along with Ysaÿe, was to later premiere the work:

You are asking me, dear Madame, to dedicate the sonata to Ysaÿe. I will do so with great pleasure, not having promised it yet to anybody else, and I will be very happy to give it under the advocacy of such an artist.³

This shows that although Ysaÿe had not been the intended recipient when work on the composition began, Franck was already aware of the young violinist. The sonata would in fact become the composer's wedding present to his future collaborator—Ysaÿe was married on September 26, a few weeks after the work's completion.

The premiere took place in Brussels that December 16 on a program featuring works exclusively by Franck. The performance included the Piano Quintet, the *Prélude, chorale et fugue*, and several short vocal works. The violinist Alfred Marchot, who performed in the quintet that evening, had been sitting near Franck during the performance of the sonata. He reported:

Never have I seen this simple, gentle and modest man in such joy. He was literally drinking his music and did not know how to express his satisfaction to the performers, especially to Ysaÿe.⁴

³ Gamma, 4.

⁴ Cited in Gamma, 5.

As Ysaÿe travelled the world on various concert tours, he promoted and popularized Franck's sonata, which became a mainstay of his repertoire.

Structural Analysis

Written in four movements, the Sonata for Piano and Violin is a hybrid of various styles and genres involving through-composed motivic relations, both melodic and rhythmic. The opening movement is composed in an abbreviated sonata form, followed by a movement in a fully developed sonata form. In stark contrast, the somber third movement is constructed in three song-like sections, with fantasia and recitative qualities. The slow, *moderato* nature of this third movement reflects Franck's interest in Baroque, as it was more common in the nineteenth century to find a fast-slow-fast-fast layout in a four-movement sonata. The sonata culminates in the fourth movement, brimming with joy and optimism, which firmly reestablishes the tonic, A major. This last movement is multi-dimensional in that it combines a pastoral-sounding, classical sonata-rondo form with a thirty-five-measure, Baroque-style canon in two voices.

First Movement: *Allegretto ben moderato*

As a result of the very confined development (mm. 47–62) and coda (mm. 108–117), Franck's use of sonata form in the first movement does not sound fully-fledged. In each phrase, Franck assigns different characteristic qualities to each instrument that are maintained throughout the movement.

The first theme is presented by the violin in both the exposition and the recapitulation and captures a lilting, misty, and harmonically uncertain quality. For example, the movement begins off-tonic and quickly tonicizes the major mediant, avoiding any clear cadential progression in the A major. The second theme, in a

much more elaborate and virtuosic style that at times resembling Chopin's, cadences first in F# minor and then C# minor, rather than the expected dominant. The thematic contrast between the two themes creates a balance between the instruments.

Both the shortened sonata form, and the *cantabile* yet mysterious character of the violin part, with its sparse accompaniment, help Franck to achieve a dreamlike quality in this movement that gives it a stark contrast to the virtuosic, instrumental nature of the second.

Second Movement: *Allegro*

Unlike the first movement, the D-minor second movement is a strict sonata form:

- Exposition mm. 1–79
- Development mm. 80–137
- Recapitulation mm. 138–219
- Coda mm. 220–229

The differing lengths of the development sections in the first two movements strengthens the idea that Franck sought to create contrasting characters in each, not only through melodic and harmonic means, but also through his use of form.

The second movement is one of high-strung passion, with turbulent melodic and accompaniment lines shared between the two instruments throughout. It is not surprising that in order to intensify this, the development section contains many interruptions, recitative sections, and complex transformations of previous themes.

The first movement, though it avoided strong local affirmations of A major, never strayed far from that key in its development section. In the second movement, on the

contrary, we hear strenuously articulated local D-minor cadences; the first theme is a massive, forty-three-measure first theme group, in quatrain form (aaba), with no fewer than three perfect authentic cadences in the tonic. The arrival of the secondary key, F major, is confirmed at the end of the exposition by a thirteen-measure pedal point over F tonic. But the development section heightens the movement's emotional and fiery nature through frequent modulations, often to remote minor keys: A minor, C-sharp minor, E-flat major, and G-sharp minor.

Third Movement: *Recitativo–Fantasia: Moderato*

It is unusual to find in this sonata a slow third movement, recalling the typical slow–fast–slow–fast movement layout of the Baroque *sonata da chiesa*. Franck's choice of a more archaic plan suggests that he is looking into the past while simultaneously driving the sonata into the future.

This movement can be considered a three-part *Lied* form. The first section (mm.1–52) is an improvisatory, extroverted section, marked *con fantasia*. The second section introduces a more introspective character and presents new material that will assume importance in the last movement. The third section (mm.93–117) is retrospective in three ways: first, at m. 93, we hear a statement of the opening theme from the first movement; this is followed by the reappearance at m. 101 of the introspective core material from this third movement; finally, at m. 111, marked *Molto lento e mesto*, Franck repeats the material from the *Molto lento* section at the third movement's opening.

Fourth Movement: *Allegretto poco mosso*

The final movement is written in a multi-couplet rondo form (A–B–A'–C–A''–D–A'''–E–A''''). Section A features the compositional technique of a canon, looking back to the eighteenth-century tradition of fugal or canonic finales, of which the finale of Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony is perhaps the most famous instance. Beethoven, of course, appropriated the fugal finale—the double fugue towards the end of Ninth Symphony finale is an obvious example. Closer to Franck's day, we have the finale to Brahms's Cello Sonata, op. 38 and that of Saint-Saëns's Organ symphony.

Franck alternates his A sections with other segments that are derived from material found earlier in the work, thus giving the fourth movement a unifying, cyclic character. Franck also employs aspects of sonata form. For instance, the fourth occurrence of the A theme and section E can be viewed together as a sort of development section. Here, Theme A is presented for the first time by the violin, without the piano's canonic imitation, and the theme is only given in part, more like a motif. This motivic fragmentation, together with the frequent modulation to far-removed keys, first to b-flat major and then to e-flat minor, heighten the impression of a developmental section. The E section is filled with motivic references: first the piano recalls a rhythmic motif from the third and fourth bars of section A; then the violin then enters at m. 143 with the material from m.73 of the third movement.

The fourth refrain statement (A'''' at m. 185), bringing us back firmly to the initial key of A major giving the movement the strong sense of a sonata recapitulation, followed by an easily identifiable coda section starting at m. 221 that uses the brilliant quarter-note material found at the end of A'' to bring the work to a close.

The form of this final movement does not adhere strictly to either rondo or sonata form, but rather freely takes aspects of each to create a new form. The way that Franck uses the material from previous movements or earlier sections within the finale sheds new light on the themes and motifs. The cyclic nature of the entire work culminates here, much in the way a coda would summarize a single movement.

The term *Finale–Sonate* was used by Herbert Schneider when describing the form of this final movement:

In his violin sonata Franck freed himself of the predicament in which ended up at the end of the D-minor symphony, through the ingenious combination of canon, rondo and sonata form. At the same time we have in this case a *Finale Sonata*....⁵

Franck's inter-movement developments show how the movements are connected in order to reveal greater meaning. An integral aspect of the first three movements is a rhythmic uncertainty, or lilt, by means of a weakened downbeat. The first movement begins with a questioning piano line, the upper voice almost a reaction to the quiet first-beat chords of each bar. This off-beat accentuation creates a tentative, unresolved character, which the violin maintains at its entrance in m. 5. The recurring result is a weakened first bar (due to the off-beat entrance) that leads to a strong second bar.

Having a structure that leans more on every second bar creates a sense of unease, as it is traditional for the first bar to be accented. Four-bar phrases are commonly written with the same hypermetric hierarchy among measures as that governing the relative weights of beats *within a measure*: strongest–relatively weak–relatively

⁵ Herbert Schneider, "Analyse der Violinsonate A-Dur von C. Franck", trans. Lorenz Gamma, *Revue Belge de Musicologie* 45 (1991), 139.

strong–weakest. The questioning nature of the work comes from the change in hierarchy, giving more strength to measures two and four of each phrase.

Similarly in the second movement, after a three-measure introduction, the melody enters off the beat, placing the emphasis on the following bar. In this particular movement, through thwarting the listener's expectations, the character becomes more turbulent and agitated.

The introduction to the third movement is similar to the opening of the first, in that it opens with three measures of an accentuated, off-beat upper voice motif, although in this instance it resolves into the fourth measure.

One can think of the first three movements as searching for a resolution that only comes from the fourth movement. Unlike the material that comes before, the opening melody of this final movement begins with an anacrusis into the first measure, giving the melody solidity and calmness. Once again, through inter-movement relations, Franck molds the entire work into a single, over-arching structure.

Chapter Two. Peter Sculthorpe: The creation of an Australian voice

Sculthorpe is widely regarded as one of Australia's leading composers, having created an individual style that is recognizably nationalistic. *Irkanda I* marks a turning point in Sculthorpe's creative and prolific output.

After completing his high-school education in Tasmania, the island state just off the coast of Australia, Peter Sculthorpe (born in 1929) had several options open to him for his further education. His mentor and future composition professor, James Steele, proposed two ideas based on Sculthorpe's high grades on his Australian Musical Examination Board (AMEB) exams of 1945. Firstly, Steele offered him a place on the mainland at the Melbourne University Conservatorium (referred to as simply 'the Con'), but because Sculthorpe was seventeen and too young to enroll, Steele suggested that he spend a year in London, or "back home," at the Royal College of Music. Sculthorpe and his family foresaw that in spite of the scholarship that he had received, it would be too difficult to cover all his living expenses. Additionally, his parents believed London might not be a suitable place for a sixteen year old, so soon into the country's post-war reconstruction. With this in mind, they focused on securing a place in Melbourne.

Thus it was agreed that Sculthorpe would not enter 'the Con' until 1947, first taking a preparatory year of private lessons with Steele himself and pianist Raymond Lambert in harmony, theory, and piano.⁶

James Steele remained Sculthorpe's composition instructor for the following five years. Typical of the composition instruction in that time, Sculthorpe's lessons

⁶ Graeme Skinner, *Peter Sculthorpe: the making of an Australian composer*, (New South Wales, Australia: University of New South Wales Press, 2007), 95.

centered on the analysis and imitation of Classical models. He once said with possible exaggeration that “he was kept busy writing weekly imitations of sections of Beethoven quartets for eighteen months.”⁷

Peter received an introduction to the Second Viennese School, specifically Schoenberg, after meeting Felix Werder in 1946, who was the first composer he had contact with that was following a “modernist” approach. Sculthorpe found himself being labeled an *enfant terrible* at the Con, “particularly after we discovered Schoenberg.”⁸ Although, back in 1945, he had become interested in *Sprechstimme* (an expressionist vocal technique somewhere in between speaking and singing most closely associated with Schoenberg, specifically his 1912 work *Pierrot Lunaire*), it was not until this meeting with Werder that Sculthorpe led a largely self-guided investigation into serialism. Later, Sculthorpe destroyed many of his exercises in serialism, having found the approach in *Studies in Counterpoint* (1940) by Ernest Krenek to be “rather unmusical.”⁹

In 1947, Sculthorpe was one of three students accepted with a full-scholarship into the university, now under full enrollment. One other was Wilfred Lehmann, violinist, future friend, and recipient of Sculthorpe’s *Irkanda I* for solo violin.

From his very beginnings as a composition student in Melbourne, Sculthorpe was constantly on the lookout for a genuine Australian sound. In 1947–48, Sculthorpe had the opportunity to perform works by the contemporary Australian composer, Margaret Sutherland. Sculthorpe had taken a secondary study in double-bass, on

⁷ Skinner, 98.

⁸ Skinner, 102.

⁹ Skinner, 102.

which he had become “very good at faking,”¹⁰ and he was a member of the Conservatorium String Orchestra when it performed Sutherland’s *Concerto for String Orchestra*. In this work, he found what he had been searching for, recalling that it was “like no other music that I’d ever heard, and I felt that this was my first encounter with a truly original and Australian voice.”¹¹ He had, however, already composed one work with his nationality in mind, a solo piano piece titled *Aboriginal Legend* (1947).

Sculthorpe was well acquainted with his friend Wilfred (“Wilf”) Lehmann’s playing. Lehmann had performed numerous works previously written by Sculthorpe, not to mention the many occasions they played together in the school’s string orchestra, where Lehmann was concertmaster. Lehmann performed the solo violin introduction to Sculthorpe’s substantial *Elegy* (1947) for string orchestra, the *Suite for Two Violins and Cello* (1947), and his early string quartets of 1947–49. It is in the *Quartet No. 4* of 1950 that Sculthorpe acknowledged one of his first attempts at ‘wilderness music’¹²

Aside from his close acquaintance with Lehmann, Sculthorpe came into contact with many other musicians of the highest caliber. One who may have further inspired him to write for solo violin was the famed French violinist Ginette Neveu. Since late 1947 Sculthorpe had been enlisted as a page-turner for the Australian Broadcast Corporation (ABC) recitals. In 1948, during a recital by Ginette Neveu, he turned pages for her brother Jean-Paul. In the last work on the program, Franck’s

¹⁰ Skinner, 107.

¹¹ Skinner, 107.

¹² Skinner, 136.

Sonata, “Peter turned a page too quickly in the home stretch, and the last pages fell onto the floor. Jean-Paul kept going for as long as he could, but had to stop, to Peter’s intense embarrassment.”¹³

Sculthorpe was familiar with many of Stravinsky’s works, as his student workbook of 1950 testifies, with its written-out analysis of *Firebird* among many other composers’ works.¹⁴ He also found new “musical landscapes” in the works of Mahler, Delius, Bartók, and Ernest Bloch, saying that he equated Bloch’s biblical wilderness with the Australian wilderness and loneliness.”¹⁵

This search for the sound of the Australian ‘wilderness’ continued with his return to Tasmania in 1951 after his studies concluded in Melbourne. A brief advertisement for an upcoming concert noted that his new “spare-time occupation is research into Tasmanian aboriginal music.”¹⁶ Sculthorpe’s approach at this time was scholarly rather than musical, in that he searched for every documented mention of Aboriginal music he could find, creating a type of bibliography — a passion that occupied him until 1958.

In his *Sonatina for Piano* (1954) he attempted to musicalize an Aboriginal legend that had been repackaged in W. E. Thomas’ *Some Myths and Legends of the Australian Aborigines* of 1923. This was to lay the path for many of his future compositions. Musicologist Andrew McCredie heard in the *Sonatina* a “reject[ion of] any imitation of European styles in favor of an aggressive but eloquent

¹³ Skinner, 118.

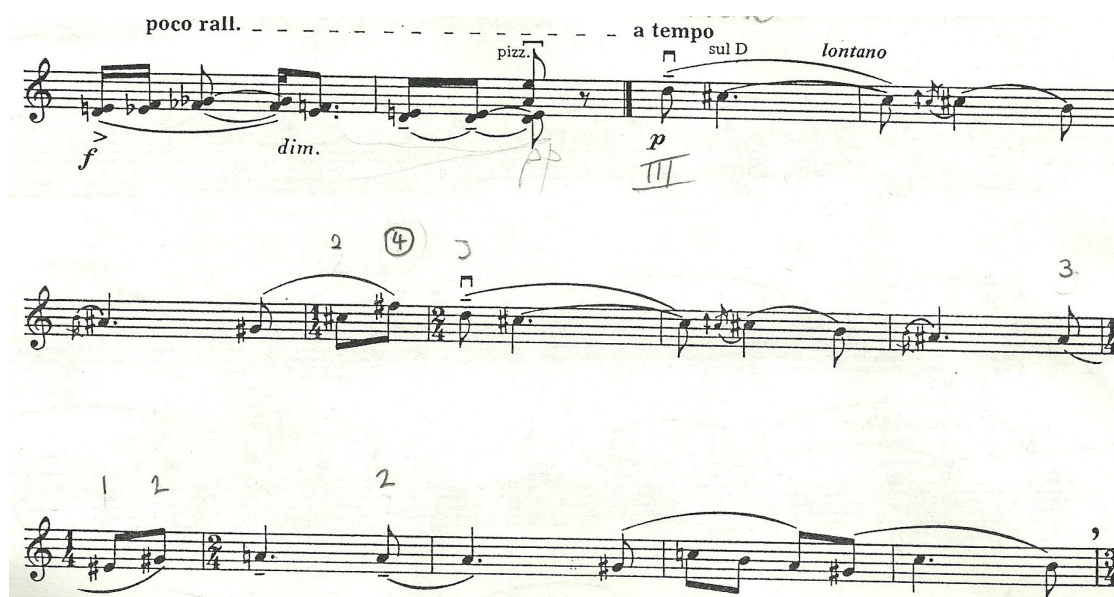
¹⁴ Skinner, 139.

¹⁵ Skinner, 145.

¹⁶ Skinner, 145.

Australianism.”¹⁷ In the same vein, Sir Bernard Heinze, when addressing a Parliamentary committee, spoke of the necessity for a true Australian sound, saying that “no country is deemed musical or even cultured, which lives on the music of other people, and all that is permanent in the arts of music, lives in its composition.”

After a visit to mainland Australia in 1955, he came face to face with the “Outback” that until then he had solely imagined. It was the wide, low valleys of the Great Dividing Range that inspired him to sketch on the spot a new work for solo violin, whose opening melody he later described as a “three-hundred-and-sixty degree contour of the hills around Canberra.” The topography of the melody can be seen as an undulating landscape, with the bare melody evoking a sense of serenity (Example 1).



Example 1: The opening melody (m.7) from *Irkanda I*, in which Sculthorpe intended to represent the hills of the Australian outback, near Canberra.

¹⁷ Skinner, 162.

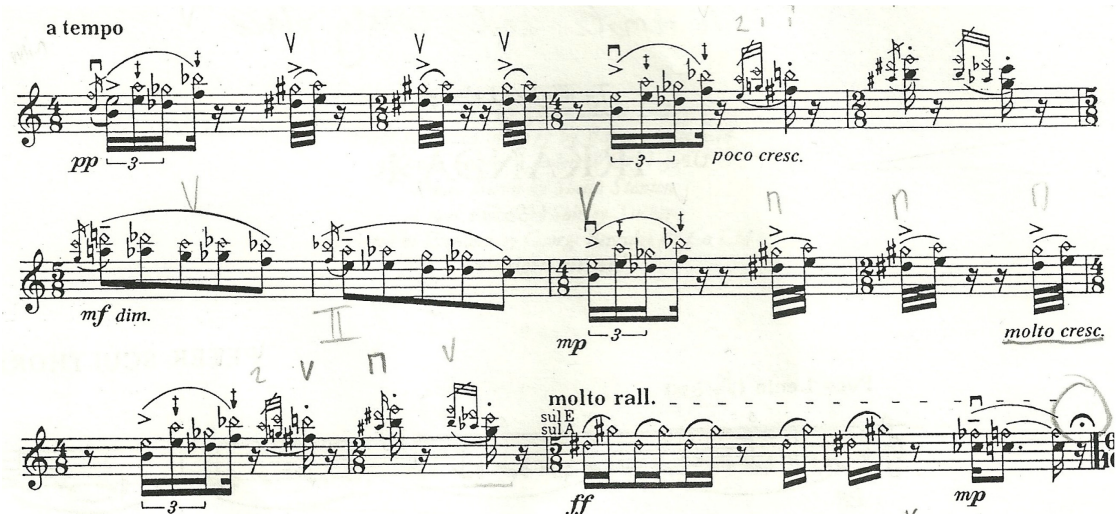
Here, he believed he had written not only his finest work to date, but also a work that was “truly Australian.”¹⁸ In a program note for a 1960 performance, Sculthorpe describes the work thus:

This imaginative and unusual work seeks primarily to portray the lonely atmosphere of the wild Australian bush and desert where the aboriginals live. The violin is exploited in many novel ways; it captures the call of wild birds, the savage tribal dance and the weird sounds of the night. There are two principal themes. The first marked ‘very slowly: remote. Song and bird song’. This is heard after a short introduction. The second ... is marked ‘Dance; the rhythmic and rhythmic harmonic’. The dance is interspersed with mysterious effects of quiet tremolando and sudden contrasts of tone. The climax of the dance comes at the end of the work with savage discords; a few bird-calls are heard briefly, the work ends quietly with the first theme played in harmonics.¹⁹

On a return trip from London in 1954–55, “Wilf” Lehmann he gave the premiere of *Irkanda I* during a farewell recital on June 30, 1955, when he played with “considerable zest,” although he didn’t care much for the bird-calls. It was possibly in the writings of Henry Tate, in his *Australian Musical Possibilities* (1926), that Sculthorpe came upon the idea of using bird song. Tate suggested that “using birdsong from the bush” could yield a new Australian musical vocabulary; specifically one could use the interval of a minor second to represent the butcherbird. This is exactly the idea that Sculthorpe incorporates (Example 2).

¹⁸ Skinner, 164.

¹⁹ Skinner, 165.



Example 2: The uses of birdcall in *Irkanda I*, with the interval of a minor second (circled) imitating the butcherbird.

Robert Henderson later commented on the work, finding in it the evocation of “the mystery of space, of endless uninhabited land, silent except for the sudden calls of birds screaming far in the distance, the seemingly boundless nothingness....”²⁰

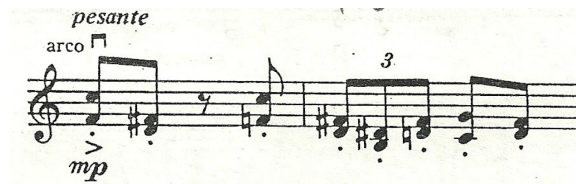
The cyclic nature of the work is created through an A–B–A’ structure in which the opening theme is revisited in an abridged version towards the end. Although the overarching structure is easily recognizable, with the birdcalls of the opening heralding the return of the A section, much of the B section is less obviously related thematically. The opening of the B section serves as a rhythmic motif (Example 3):



Example 3: The rhythmic motif at the opening of the B section, *Irkanda I*.

²⁰ Skinner, 165.

The *pesante* section that follows presents an elaborated version of the rhythmic motif, in double-stops, with a rhythmic extension in the second measure (Example 4).



Example 4: The *pesante* line in Section B, showing a development on the initial motif.

In this middle section, described by Sculthorpe as a dance, one can readily hear references to Stravinsky’s ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913), specifically to the section marked “Adoration of the earth,” which depicts a ritual pagan preparation for the sacrifice of a young woman in an attempt to appease the god of Spring. In Australian Aboriginal tradition, the term *dreamtime* refers to the sets of individual beliefs and spirituality that belong to the various tribes across the country, all of which have a strong connection to the earth and nature. The method of passing these beliefs down was through a song and the dance ceremony known as the Corroboree. It is through this pantheistic connection to the land and nature that Sculthorpe possibly found inspiration for *Irkanda I*, with the central dance section often evoking the rhythmically pointed, angular, and unpredictable melodic and rhythmic qualities (see Examples 3 and 4) that are so recognizable in much of Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre*.

Chapter Three. Chausson's *Poème*: A story of triumphant love

Born into a privileged French family in 1855, Chausson was an only child. Having already lost two children, his parents were protective of Ernest. For his formal education, they arranged for him to be tutored at home rather than attend school. His tutor, Léon Brethous-Lafargue, emphasized the arts, having him spend much of his time playing piano, drawing, attending museums, and reading literature. Adhering to his father's request, Chausson pursued a law degree, and went on to become a lawyer. After two years practicing law, his love of the arts was reignited during a stay in Munich in 1879, where he heard performances of Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. These performances brought him to the realization that he wanted nothing more than to pursue a life in music, although given his nervous temperament, this decision was fraught with anxiety and self-doubt. Having started his musical career at such a late stage did not help matters, and Chausson continually feared this would prove too much of a handicap, writing in one letter from Germany: "There are moments when I feel myself driven by a kind of feverish instinct, as if I had the presentiment of being unable to attain my goal or [of attaining it] too late."²¹

Regardless, he proceeded to enroll in classes at the Conservatory, under Jules Massenet and César Franck. In the summer of 1880, Chausson travelled to Bayreuth, writing to his long time mentor, Madame de Rayssac, "I have heard *Tristan*, which is marvelous; I don't know any other work which possesses such intensesness of feeling. As pure music it is splendid and of the highest order; as a way of understanding the musical drama it is a revolution."²²

²¹ Cited in Haupt, 9 (Munich, August, 1879; to Madame de Rayssac).

²² Cited in Haupt, 12 (Munich, August, 1879; to Madame de Rayssac).

Upon his return to France, Chausson realized that he could no longer study with both Massenet and Franck, two teachers who were fundamentally different in their approach to composition; he decided to study exclusively with Franck, the more progressive of the two.

The tight-knit group of students under César Franck included Vincent D'Indy and Henri Duparc, who along with Chausson were known as the “*bande à Franck*,” or “Franck’s circle.” They all, Franck included, held Wagner in high esteem, although Franck urged them to compose in more traditional genres, such as symphonies and chamber music. Unfortunately for Franck and his students alike, they were given little attention by the critics who heard Franck as a second-rate composer and the works of his students as mere imitations.

Chausson lived a financially comfortable life, not needing to work for a living. Thus he spent years revising and revisiting works. His adult life was one of ease, living with his wife and children, collecting paintings and books. He hosted a salon in Paris where many well-known minds of the day gathered, allowing him to meet some young, emerging composers—notably, Debussy. Despite all of these advantages, Chausson had a melancholy disposition, plagued with self-doubt. While writing the *Concert* for violin, piano, and string quartet, he wrote to his friend Ysaÿe: “At the moment I am working but it doesn’t follow that my work is productive. I flounder, sink beneath the waves, struggle to the surface again, curse myself, and then, just for a moment or two, get the impression that what I have written is not quite so bad as I thought.”²³ Such anxious, introspective, and doleful characteristics manifested themselves in his music, nowhere more so than in the *Poème*, which exudes a

²³ Antoine Ysaÿe and Bertram Ratcliffe, *Ysaÿe: His Life, Work and Influence* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1947), 174.

melancholy ethos right from the orchestral introduction and the opening solo violin melody.

From his youth, Chausson had an avid interest in literature. His Parisian salon was one means by which he was able to keep abreast of the latest trends and movements. One that held his attention was Symbolism. This literary movement, often associated with the poet Stephane Mallarmé (1842–1898), possibly appealed to Chausson because of its concern with “the inner world of the spirit and the imagination,” and the symbolists’ practice of “continually re-edit[ing] their works, seeking an ideal inner beauty,”²⁴ had much in common with Chausson’s writing habits. For instance, in a letter to his friend Paul Poujard in 1886, Chausson describes the compositional process behind his tone poem, *Solitude dans les Bois*, writing that it was based on “a poem which I make up alone in my head and of which I give a general impression to the public... There is no description in it, no hint of a story; only feelings.”²⁵

Eugene Ysaÿe: Friend and Inspiration

A versatile musician, Ysaÿe was a composer and conductor as well as an acclaimed violinist. He was known as a major exponent of new music, and many works were dedicated to him, particularly those by French and Belgian composers. As a composer, his compositions were generally intended to provide works for his own use in recital, such as his *Poème élégiaque*, composed shortly before Chausson’s own *Poème*.

²⁴ Laura Haupt, “The Legacy of Chausson’s *Poème*” (PhD dissertation, University of Nebraska, December 2003), 10.

²⁵ Jean-Pierre Barricelli and Leo Weinstein, *Ernest Chausson: The Composer’s Life and Works* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955; rpt. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1973), 161.

The two friends met for the first time when Ysaÿe moved to Paris in 1883. Despite their differing personalities (unlike Chausson, Ysaÿe was rather extroverted) the two maintained a close, life-long friendship. The large amount of documented correspondence shows how open Chausson was with Ysaÿe, often revealing his sensitivities and insecurities. There is a nice account of Ysaÿe and Chausson playing together Cesar Franck's violin sonata (a work also dedicated to Ysaÿe) in the studio of the sculptor Auguste Rodin.

Chausson's major work prior to *Poème*, one that helped gain him wider recognition in Brussels and Paris, was his *Concert* for violin, piano, and string quartet of 1892. The boost of self-confidence that Chausson received from the public's reception of this work gave him the desire to later write a violin concerto for Ysaÿe, which became the *Poème*. Chausson recognized that the *Concert* was a significant step for him, showing signs of his maturity as a composer:

My dear Ysaÿe: D'Indy told me that if your trip to Berlin did not take too much of your time you would agree to play my *Concert* at the second concert of the Twenty Club. I needn't tell you how glad I should be in such a case. It is always a joy for a composer when you play his works and I had an occasion to experience this joy a few years ago when you consented to perform my trio at Mme. Borde's concert. This time, however, the work in question is of much more importance to me. I worked on it very long and have a firm conviction that it is the best thing I have written up to now. You understand how necessary it is for me to have this work presented to the Brussels public in the best possible way.²⁶

Ysaÿe's continued performances of *Concert* met with great success and helped bring about public and critical recognition of Chausson.

²⁶ Lev Ginsburg, *Ysaÿe*, ed. Dr. H.R. Axelrod, trans. X.M. Danko (Neptune City, NJ: Paganiana Publications, 1980), 132.

Shortly after Chausson's untimely death in 1899, Ysaÿe gave an emotional performance of *Poème* in London, after which he wrote this letter to Chausson's children:

Today, June 17, 1899, three thousand listeners, informed of the composer's death, listened pensively and religiously and with an emotion I felt to be increasing—to his *Poème* in whose sad and sublimely plaintive melody I let my heart sob. Your father has received today – I affirm it, for I felt it strongly—the first leaf of a crown of glory, which all the peoples will weave for him; and I, who was among the first to understand, love, and admire the intimate musician, the sincere and gently melancholic poet he was – I was today still more moved at the thought that I was the first after his death to place humbly all my artistic strength at the service of one of his works, whose pure beauty will reflect itself on all of you.²⁷

The Compositional Style of Chausson's *Poème*

As mentioned earlier, there were a number of elements that contributed to Chausson's approach to his composition: a love of Wagner, the teachings of César Franck and his circle, the Symbolist movement and the poet Mallarmé, Chausson's own melancholic personality, and his close friendship with the young violinist, Ysaÿe. The *Poème* was the culmination of a lifetime involvement with literature, music, and performance styles, mixed in with emotional character traits.

I. The Symphonic Poem

Prior to the symphonic poem *Poème* for violin and orchestra, Chausson had written two other works in the same style, also known as tone poems—*Viviane* of 1882, and *Solitude dans les bois* of 1886. His final work in this genre was *Soir de fête*, completed between 1897 and 1898.

César Franck was one of the first, along with Franz Liszt, to compose in the new, relatively free form of a Symphonic Poem. Liszt established himself as an innovator

²⁷ Barricelli and Weinstein, 106.

in this new genre, publishing twelve in all. Franck wrote four such works, although they were not as successful as Liszt's. Chausson was undoubtedly aware of both composers' works. Additionally, Chausson was close to Debussy, whose descriptive orchestral score *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un Faune* (1891–94), inspired by Mallarmé's eponymous poem was likely familiar to Chausson.

Chausson's approaches to the concepts within his tone poems were varied. In *Viviane*, Chausson depicts the relationship between Merlin and Viviane, often giving obvious musical references to the plot, such as offstage trumpet calls illustrating King Arthur's search for Merlin in the woods. In comparison, as mentioned earlier, Chausson described *Solitude dans les bois* as based on "a poem which I [made] up alone in my head... there is no description in it, no hint of a story." Such an approach is perhaps closely linked to the works of Debussy. For Debussy's *Prélude*, the inspiration was a poem—specifically, an eclogue—in which there is scarcely any narrative element. Debussy captures the general impression left by the reading of this poem.

Debussy and Chausson spent a vacation together in 1893, travelling to Luzancy. It is likely that the two spoke of the works they owned by Russian novelists such as Tolstoy and Turgenev, and Russian composers like Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Both friends were influenced by the Russians, and it is conceivable that Chausson mentioned his plans for the *Poème* to Debussy at this point.

II. Le Chant de l'Amour Triomphant by Turgenev

It is likely that Chausson met Ivan Turgenev (1818–83) on one of the Russian author's many visits to Paris early in Chausson's career. Chausson was an avid admirer of Turgenev, owning all of his published works. It was one these works, the

1881 novella *Le Chant de l'amour triomphant* (The Song of Triumphant Love) that inspired the composition of Chausson's third tone poem, the *Poème* for violin and orchestra.

It is notable that in the choice of this short story, Chausson has taken a step away from Wagner. It was common-place for Wagner and his followers to use myths and legends as the basis for their operas and various other works, Chausson himself did this in selecting the story of King Arthur for *Viviane*. Choosing Turgenev's story, one filled with dreamlike episodes and inexplicable events, Chausson is able to follow a more symbolist approach.

The story involves three main characters: the two artistic long-time friends, Muzio and Fabio, and Valerie, their shared love. After both Muzio and Fabio have attempted to seduce Valerie, she chooses to marry Fabio, resulting in Muzio's leaving them to travel the Orient and other distant lands. Several years pass, and Muzio suddenly returns, bearing many interesting tales and items from his travels: some strange wine and an Indian violin made from a skin of some variety. As they talk, and drink the wine, Muzio begins to play on this violin a melody that he learned abroad, momentarily lulling his listeners and seducing Valerie. After this evening, Valerie begins to have strange dreams involving Muzio, experiencing feelings she had not previously felt. The rest of the story involves many dreams, torrid emotions, exotic tales, and uncanny events.

Chausson, in keeping with symbolism, gave no obvious musical references to the short story (aside from the trivial one that a violin is being played in the novella). The original title of the work, which made explicit the connection to Turgenev, was *Poème symphonique pour violon et orchestra: Le Chant de l'amour Triumphant*. This shows that in some ways the piece was conceived to be an orchestral tone poem, as

opposed to simply a concerto or instrumental showpiece. In its final format, Chausson removed the subtitle that linked the work to its inspiration, eradicating all direct references for the listener and performer alike.

III. Ysaÿe's Poème Élegiaque

The composition of Chausson's *Poème* likely was inspired in part by Ysaÿe's own *Poème Élegiaque*, completed one year earlier in 1895. Ysaÿe's composition is the first for violin and orchestra with the word *Poème* in the title. It was the beginning of a new genre. It is hardly surprising to think that Ysaÿe experimented with this form as a way to highlight the attributes of virtuosity and freedom that were the hallmarks of his playing. Ysaÿe writes:

The form of the poem has appealed to me. It is admirably suited for the expression of feeling and is free from the restrictions of the concerto. It can be dramatic or lyrical, for by its very nature it is romantic and impressionistic; it allows for weeping and singing, for depicting light and shadow – it is a refracting prism. It is free, it lays no restriction on the composer who is able to express feelings and images outside any literary framework. I think that the poem marks further progress in my creative input...It signifies a decisive stage in my experimentation, in my striving for independence, for combining musical interest with virtuosity on a large scale. I mean the true virtuosity which has been so flagrantly neglected since, oblivious of the practice of the masters of the past, instrumentalists have been shy of composing, leaving it to those who do not know well all the secrets and devices at the command of the professionals.²⁸

IV. Ysaÿe's Playing Style and Collaboration in Chausson's Poème

It is likely that Ysaÿe actually composed—or arranged—some of the violin passages in Chausson's *Poème*.²⁹ There are documented instances where both Ysaÿe and Chausson shared ideas and compositional advice. In one letter, Chausson even

²⁸ Ginsburg, 309 and 312.

²⁹ Haupt, 20.

referred to the work as “My/Your *Poème*.” The degree to which Ysaÿe had any say or influence over this particular composition is not documented. There is only hearsay. David Holguin told famed Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti the following anecdote: during a master-class, Ysaÿe reportedly claimed to have written the solo double-stop improvisatory passage near the work’s opening, using only the framework given to him by Chausson.³⁰

Musical Analysis

It is possible to attribute certain elements of the composition to various parts of the story. For instance, one can imagine the opening violin melody as the exotic tune played by Muzio on the oriental instrument, or as Jean Gallois describes it in his *Ernest Chausson*, the first theme as representing Valerie, and the second being that of Muzio. As we know that Chausson was seeking to follow a more symbolist approach, being intentionally vague and abstract, it doesn’t seem particularly beneficial to read too far into any apparent connections between the text and the music. Accordingly, I will focus more on the structural and cyclic elements in the composition.

The work is divided in five easily distinguishable sections, with Theme 1 dominating sections 1, 3 and 5, and Theme 2, sections 2 and 4 (Table 1). The clear distinctions between the sections are articulated by shared tempi and meters between similar sections.

³⁰ Laurence Davies, *César Franck and His Circle* (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd, 1970), 195.

Table 1. An overview of the 5 sections within Chausson's *Poème*.

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5
Lento e misterioso	Animato	Poco lento	Allegro	Tempo 1
3/4	6/8	3/4	6/8 (occasionally 9/8)	3/4a
Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 1

The interval of a fourth plays a central role through much of the work, especially in much of the introductory and transitional material, as well as in Theme 1. The orchestral introduction of the work opens with two cello lines, outlining a rising fourth between them, from B-flat to E-flat, with various neighbor and passing tones for embellishment. The end result is an E-flat minor chord in first inversion. This will be referred to as the Introduction (Example 5).

Violoncelli.

Example 5: The introduction to Chausson's *Poème*, with the interval of a rising fourth between the two cello lines, from B-flat to E-flat, resulting in a first inversion E-flat minor triad, mm. 1–3.

After the cello restatement in m. 26 of the pair of rising fourths from the opening, the solo violin enters on a sustained low B-flat. The beginning of the first theme from the solo violin (mm. 34) continues the trend by starting with an ascending interval of a fourth, again establishing a sense of key through an E-flat minor arpeggio, with D-natural as a lower neighbor tone, in a *molto cantabile* style (Example 6).

n with additional notes (labeled “introduction B” in the tables). After reaching 1
 system of D-flat, the music slowly descends one system with sequences and a dec

Example 6: *Poème*, mm.31–39. Violin entrance, beginning with the upward interval of a fourth, then spelling out an E-flat minor arpeggio

After the orchestral statement of the first theme, the solo violin enters with a continuation of the opening introductory material, still based on the upward interval of a fourth, this time using triplet sixteenth notes to embellish the interval. This will be labeled “Introduction B” (Example 7).

Violin and Orchestra	Orchestra	Violin and Orchestra	Violin Orche Accor
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Example 7: Chausson, *Poème*, m. 65. The embellished interval of a fourth in the solo violin (Introduction B).

This work does not follow traditional sonata or rondo form, with a conventional unfolding of thematic material and tonal areas. Rather it follows a free quasi-improvisatory style. Within this framework, each section uses one of two main themes divided by two distinct bridge passages, here named transitional material. Below is a more detailed analysis of each section, using the terminology given already (Table 2).

Table 2: A detailed analysis of each section within Chausson's *Poème*.

Section,1;Lento,e,misterioso,

m.1-m.30	m.31-m.50	m.50-m.65	m.65-76	m.77-89	m.90-96
Introduction	Theme	Theme	Introductory B	Theme	Transition with Introductory
Orchestra	Violin Solo	Orchestra	Violin Solo	Violin Solo	Violin and Orchestra

&

Section,2;Animato,-,Molto,animato,-,Animato,

m.97-m.105	m.105-112	m.113-122	m.123-137	m.138-152
Transition (descending solo line)	Transition	Transition	Theme	Theme
Violin and Orchestra	Orchestra	Violin and Orchestra	Violin with Orchestra	Violin and Orchestra (Theme and viola section with boe)

(Section,2,continued),

m.152-m.163	m.164-m.179	m.180-m.188	m.188-m.198
Transition containing motives recalling descending movement in theme and introduction	Transition (with emphasis of neighbour tone like Transition)	Theme	Transition (ascending solo line)
Orchestra	Violin and Orchestra	Violin and Orchestra (Theme and both)	Violin and Orchestra

Section,3; Poco, lento, -, Poco, meno, lento,

m.198=m.205&	m.206=m.224&	m.225=m.240&
Introductory&&&	Theme&1&	Theme&1&with&new&ending&
Orchestra&then&Orchestra&and&Violin&	Orchestra&then&Violin&with&Orchestral&accompaniment&	Violin&with&Orchestral&accompaniment&

Section,4; Allegro,

m.240=m.245&	m.246=m.254&	m.255=262&
Transition&&	Theme&2&with&Transition&&material&	Theme&2&
Violin&and&Orchestra&	Violin&with&Orchestral&accompaniment&	Violin&with&Orchestra&

(Section,4,continued),

m.263=m.270&	m.271=m.284&	m.285=m.290&	m.291=m.300&
Theme&2&	Transitional&material&based&on&motive&from&Theme&2&	Theme&2&(incomplete)&	Transitional&
Violin&with&Orchestra&	Violin&with&Orchestra&	Violin&with&Orchestra&	Violin&with&Orchestra&

Section,5; Tempo,1,

m.301=m.312,	m.313=m.316,	m.317=m.328,	m.329=m.336,	m.337=m.347,
Theme&,	Introductory&A,	Transitional,	Ending,	Ending,
Orchestra&then&Violin&and&Orchestra,	Violin&with&Orchestra,	Violin&with&Orchestral&accompaniment,	Violin&and&Orchestra,	Violin&and&Orchestra&in&contrary&motion,

Chapter Four. Béla Bartók's Second Violin Concerto.

Origins and Influences

Composed during a time of great personal and national unrest, the Violin Concerto of 1938 is one the pinnacles of concerto form in the twentieth century. For Bartók, like many others in Hungary, it was a time of despair, fear, and uncertainty. In spite of this, the works from this period, directly before his departure for the United States, are his most melodious and accessible. In a 13 April 1938 letter written to his friend, Mrs. Müller-Widmann in Basel, Bartók conveys his conviction of

...the imminent danger that Hungary will surrender to this regime of thieves and murderers. The only question is—when, and how? And how I can go on living in such a country or—which means the same thing—working, I simply cannot conceive.... So much for Hungary, where, unfortunately, nearly all of our “educated” Christians are adherents of the Nazi regime; I feel quite ashamed of coming from this class...

We were greatly touched by your offer of help! Actually there are 3 matters in which I would appreciate your assistance if this would not cause you too much inconvenience. 1. A far back as Nov, I noticed that Hungarian policy was being diverted from the right track: I then conceived the idea of putting at least the original manuscripts of my musical compositions in some safe place...Well, now I ask you both, would you be so kind as to give shelter to my manuscripts?”³¹

Bartók, here clearly a disappointed man, is unsure of what the future holds, or perhaps he knows full well. Nonetheless, 1937–1939 were Bartók's most productive years. He composed the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion (1937); *Contrasts* for Piano, Clarinet, and Violin (1938), Violin Concerto No. 2 (1937–38), Divertimento (1939), and the String Quartet No. 6 (1939). This burst of creativity gives little sign of the uncertainty and dread surrounding the composer on a daily basis, for his works from this period are by far some of his most melodious, “full of energy, youthfulness and

³¹ Janos Demény, ed., *Bartók Letters*, trans. Péter Balabán and István Farkas, rev. Elizabeth West and Colin Mason, (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó 1978), 267-9.

optimism.”³² Of these last European works, apart from the sixth String Quartet, whose opening melody spreads its *Mesto* motive “cancerously” with each recurrence, the character of these compositions is notoriously difficult to relate to the political tensions in Hungary at the time. Of these, the Violin Concerto is especially perplexing, for its lush lyricism seems to clash most oddly with the forebodingly late date at the end of the score: 31 December 1938.³³ Hungarian scholars, such as Bence Szabolcsi, József Ujfalussy, and György Kroó, compare this lyrical and melodious output to that of composers like Mozart and Beethoven, whose compositions written during times of strife or shortly before their deaths, were among their most optimistic (*Magic Flute*, Symphony No. 9).³⁴

For some Europeans, the sense that Bartók’s music was stylistically or politically regressive was amplified with the Anti-American notion that Bartók, among others, had been forced to compose more popular music in the time surrounding his “exile” in New York.³⁵ Historian Danielle Fossler-Lussier makes the point that this association of Bartók’s late works with America and the appearance of an accessible style tainted the late works in the eyes of “advanced” Europeans.

³² Alexander J. Nagy, *Béla Bartók’s Violin Concerto No.2: An Analysis of the Creative and Compositional Process Through a Study of the Manuscripts* (New York: The City University of New York, 1992), 3.

³³ David Schneider, *Bartók, Hungary, and the Renewal of Tradition: Case Studies in the Intersection of Modernity and Nationality* (California: University of California Press, 2006), 218.

³⁴ Nagy, 3.

³⁵ Danielle Fossler-Lussier, *Music Divided: Bartók’s Legacy in Cold War Culture* (California, University of California Press, 2007), 36.

Beginnings of the Concerto

The Violin Concerto is a special case in Bartók's output because unlike his other works, it was composed in installments. Bartók himself dates the work from summer 1937 through December 1939, but it has roots back to 1936, with the suggestion from his good friend and violinist, Zoltán Székely, to write a concerto for him. Their friendship dates back to the mid-1920s, when Bartók supported the young violinist by recommending him to his friends and agents as a soloist, as well as touring with him in Europe in the 1920s and 30s, playing works of the classical repertory as well as Bartók's own. In the summer of 1936, Bartók had travelled to Baden Baden working on Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta. He was supposed to be working on a set of five short orchestral pieces, but these pieces never made it beyond sketch form. Somewhat before this, Bartók's agent in Holland had commissioned a Piano Trio from Bartók that was also never realized. The first mention of a Violin Concerto dates from this time, in an August 10, 1936 letter to Bartók from Székely.

...I can see that this Trio fizzled. It is a pity. Would you be interested in composing a Violin Concerto under the same agreement? I would be very happy if you would... It would mean a great deal to me if you would agree, since my secret dream has been, for a long time, a Bartók concerto.³⁶

Bartók was interested in the request and contacted his publisher, Universal Edition, in order for them to send him a collection of contemporary violin concerto scores. He then proceeded to study the concertos of Alban Berg, Kurt Weill, and Krzysztof Szymanowski.

³⁶ László Somfai, *Variációs Stratégia A Hegedűverseny II: Tételében*, trans. Alexander Nagy (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1981), 218.

When they next met, Bartók proposed to Székely a one-movement “Konzertstücke” in theme and variation form, which, according to historian György Kroó, already existed in sketches. Kroó also suggests that some of the material from the two previously unrealized works (the Five Pieces for Orchestra and the Piano Trio) might have been used in these initial sketches.³⁷ Székely did not agree to the concept, instead insisting on a traditional three-movement concerto format. Regardless, Bartók decided to keep the idea and write the second movement as a theme and variations. Likely composed during the summer and fall of 1938, Bartók jokingly described the third movement in a letter to Székely as “a free variation of the first movement (therefore, and in spite of it, I succeeded to outsmart you and compose a series of variations).”³⁸

Székely, at first not having heard a confirmation from Bartók that he would indeed write the work, offered 500 Dutch Florins as a commission, but asked for exclusive performing rights for three years. It seems as though by December of 1936 Bartók had indeed replied, as Székely’s letter, dated December 20, expresses gratitude to Bartók for accepting the commission: “I am very happy that you are inclined to compose a Violin Concerto. When you will come we will discuss it in detail.”³⁹ This indicates that Bartók would have started the work, or at least begun thinking about it between October and December of 1936.

Due to publishing and performance right issues with Universal Edition, the work was constantly put on hold, with Bartók threatening to drop the work unless the

³⁷ Nagy, 6.

³⁸ Nagy, 12.

³⁹ Zoltán Székely, (unpublished letters), trans. Nagy, (Bartók Archives Budapest).

publishers agreed to his terms. This was a great source of anxiety for Székely, who was often scared that his concerto would never be completed. In addition to these setbacks, the concerto was further put on hold in July 1937, when Bartók started work on his Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion. Work did not begin again till late August 1937, which is when Bartók later reported that he began the concerto. With further delays and Székely's waxing anxiety, the concerto was again put on hold for the composition of *Contrasts* and the beginning of work on Divertimento.

In a letter from July 14, 1938, as well as urging Bartók to leave Hungary because of the tense political situation, Székely once again pleads that the composer finish the concerto:

I beg you to finish the Violin Concerto regardless of your dealings with the publisher. Do not worry that I will not have time to perform it. Each year I will be sure to reserve a period for its performance.⁴⁰

It is clear in another letter from September 30, 1938, that the work was finally finished except for some orchestration and the end of the third movement. This places the Violin Concerto chronologically between three of Bartók's important compositions: the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, *Contrasts*, and the Divertimento.

⁴⁰ Zoltán Székely, (unpublished letters), trans. Nagy, (Bartók Archives Budapest).

Compositional Style and Form

I. Renewal of Tradition

There are two important factors that are fundamental to the understanding of the Violin Concerto's composition and form: the principle of inter-movement thematic unity, and the thematic dualism of the sonata form. An observance of classical idioms becomes more and more apparent in Bartók's late compositional period, and almost all the works of this period use classical forms.

The first movement is a traditional sonata form with a tonal center of B. The bridge arrives at m. 56, leading to the second theme based on a 12-tone row (m. 73), contrasting in character to the first theme, as one would expect in Sonata Form, with more static rhythm and less dramatic quality.

The second movement is a set of six variations on an eight-bar theme (extended by a repetition of the last two measures in the orchestra). The six variations are all clearly outlined, each using small chamber ensembles in addition to the solo violin, most of them also using percussion.

The third movement, like the first, is in sonata form centered on B, and while it is a variation on the first movement, it is written in a far more rhapsodic and less strict fashion. The table below gives an outline of the concerto's form (Table 3).

Table 3 A Formal Overview of the Violin Concerto.

I	Allegro non troppo	4/4		<i>Sonata Allegro</i>	(389 m.)
	Exposition		A	First Theme	m.7
			B	Bridge Theme	m. 56
			C	Second Theme	m. 73
			D	Closing Theme	m.92
	Development				m.115
	Recapitulation		A	First Theme	m.213
			B'	Bridge Theme	m.248
			C'	Second Theme	m. 255
			D'	Closing Theme	m. 280
				Coda	m. 364
II	Andante tranquillo	9/8		<i>Theme and variation</i>	(127 m.)
			E	Theme in G	m. 2
	Un poco piu andante		E1	Var. 1 in G	m. 12
	Un poco piu tranquillo		E2	Var.2 in E	m. 23
	Piu mosso		E3	Var.3 in B	m. 43
	Lento		E4	Var.4 in Db	m. 58
	Allegro scherzando		E5	Var.5 in Bb	m. 83
	Commodo		E6	Var.6 in Bb	m. 105
	Tempo I		E	Coda in G	m. 118
III	Allegro molto	3/4		<i>Sonata allegro</i>	(620 m.)

	Exposition				
			A''	First Theme	m. 5
			B''	Bridge Theme	m. 87
			C''	Second Theme	m. 126
			D''	Closing Theme	m. 219
	Development				m. 260
	Recapitulation		A'''	First Theme	m. 349
			B'''	Bridge Theme	m. 400
			C'''	Second Theme	m. 422
			D'''	Closing Theme	m. 450
				Coda	m. 555
	Ending				
				Solo Violin version	mm. 593–620
				Orchestral version	mm. 593– 614

Many of the stylistic qualities heard in this concerto are in contrast to much of Bartók's work of the previous decade, especially in its reminiscent quality: looking backwards to the Romantic nineteenth-century Hungarian national music and further back to the folk music that Bartók had analyzed and knew so well. This move towards accessibility and lyricism was in keeping with a general European retreat from the extremes of postwar Modernism, not due to any external factors linked to his immigration to New York, as some of his contemporaries reported. For his part, Bartók had a renewed interest in the *verbunkos*, or "recruiting dance." He used its instrumental characteristics in conjunction with elements of folk songs to create a new

style within his work that smoothed over much of the more irregular dissonance treatment found in his music of the 1920s.

Apart from the Violin Concerto and other works of the same period (*Contrasts* and the Sixth String Quartet), one has to go back to the Violin Rhapsodies of 1928 to find a clear reference to the *verbunkos*. To find a deliberate and clear reference to *verbunkos* that is neither a straight arrangement of a folk melody (as in the Violin Rhapsodies) nor a caricature of the style (like that found in *The Wooden Prince*, 1914–16), one must look prior to Bartók’s discovery of peasant music in 1907—to his works that embodied the Hungarian national style that he later set aside.

Within the Violin Concerto, the references to the *verbunkos* can be found in various aspects of the opening, most notably, the harp’s steady, medium-fast, quarter-note percussive accompaniment in common time evokes the traditional *düvö*, an accompaniment pattern for Hungarian dances. The characteristic feature of the *düvö* is its steady stream of even pulses, placed in pairs with an accent on the second pulse of each pair—such an accompaniment is found clearly in the Violin Rhapsodies (Example 8).

Prima Parte (“Lassú”) [Slow]
Moderato, ♩ = 108

The image shows a musical score for the opening of Rhapsody No. 1. It consists of two staves: Violin and Piano. The Violin staff is in G major (one sharp) and 4/8 time. The Piano staff is also in G major and 4/8 time. The Piano part features a steady stream of quarter notes in the bass line, characteristic of the traditional 'dúvö' accompaniment pattern. The score includes a 'Ped.' marking at the bottom.

Example 8: The opening of Rhapsody No. 1 with an example of a traditional *düvö* accompaniment in the bass-line of the piano, similar to that of the Violin Concerto.

The removal of accents on the second and fourth beats in the introduction of the Violin Concerto might denote an attempt to abstract the traditional ties to folk music and open it to more extensive musical associations. David E. Schneider suggests several such associations, as in the “introduction to a bardic rendition of a tale...the exoticism of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*... [or] the four timpani strokes that open Beethoven’s Violin Concerto....”⁴¹ This, along with Bartók’s final decision to remove his initial marking of “Tempo di verbunkos” from the opening of the work may have been an attempt to not constrain the interpretation of the work’s potential richness.

The melodic ‘hiccup’ or interrupted pick-up found in m. 10, is a further connection to the *verbunkos* style, often found in the late nineteenth-century arrangements of Hungarian tunes by Gyula Káldy, Zoltán Kodály’s opera *Háry János* (1926), and the First Rhapsody for Violin by Bartók himself (1928).

II. Thematic Unity and Dualism in the Violin Concerto

Although Bartók had already told Székely of the variation quality of the third movement, it seems as though the actual creative decision about how that would in fact work was yet to be conceived on paper. A single page manuscript that was given to Tossy Spivakovsky contains the earliest sketches of the third movement’s theme. The first time the original theme of the first movement and its third movement variant can be seen together is when Bartók sketched them directly atop one another in his Concept Score (Example 9).

⁴¹ Schneider, 237.

As has been mentioned, Bartók's intent was to compose a one-movement concerto, and only on the insistence of his friend, Z. Székely, did he agree on a three-movement format. Bartók then decided that the two outer movements would be closely related, or as he put it, "...the third movement is a variation of the first." The creative decision, however, was not yet formulated (at least not on paper) on the One-Page Manuscript (MS 1) given to Tossy

Example 9: Excerpt from Bartók's Concept Score, now situated in the Florida Bartók Archives, showing clear unity between first and third movements (top two lines of example).

In this sketch, out of the eight-measure opening theme of the third movement, only the first four and last two measures are given, with mm. 5 and 6 missing. Of the presented material, the vertical alignment makes it clear that Bartók intended to have the same pitch material in the main themes of both movements. It is easier to see the alignment when written out clearly in full (Example 10).

Example 9: Excerpt from Bartók's Concept Score, now situated in the Florida Bartók Archives, showing clear unity between first and third movements (top two lines of example).

in that in no other source is there such a clear indication concerning inter-movement thematic unity, where themes of two different movements appear at the same time. The sharing of pitches is strictly followed by the composer later, when the themes are repeated at the fifth above (Example 6).

Example 10: Shared pitch material in the first and third movement's first theme.⁴²

The first seven pitches of both movements are in perfect unity, followed by melodic alteration and extension involving the next three notes of the first movement

⁴² Nagy, 25.

(E, A, G sharp). Continuing on, the next two pitches are again in perfect alignment, followed by the missing measures 5 and 6. Measure 7 of the third movement aligns with m. 3 of the first, with only a slight melodic extension at the end of m.7 (F sharp, D sharp).

This sharing of pitches is followed even more closely in the second phrase of each movement's opening section, starting on F-sharp, the dominant of the initial statement (Example 11). Apart from two instances of a two-note melodic extension, the matching here is more precise as there are no melodic alterations or order permutations.

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Example 5. Shared pitch material in the first and third movement's first theme (transcr. Nagy).

Example 11: Shared pitch material between movements one and three in the second phrase of the first theme.⁴³

There are further links between the outer movements, namely the bridge and the second theme. The bridge theme of both movements one and three contain similar pitch patterns, with only a few melodic extensions creating a difference (Example 12). The thematic unity is undeniable.

⁴³ Nagy, 25.



Example 12: Common pitches in the bridge themes of the Violin Concerto's first and third movements.⁴⁴

Similarly, the second themes of both movements utilize the same twelve-tone row (Example 13).

With the exception of two groups of two-note melodic extensions, the

Example 13: Shared twelve-tone row in the second themes of the outer movements.⁴⁵

The same as the , the second themes are repeated – a perfect fourth above in the first movement, and a perfect fifth below in the third (Example 14). This subsequent iteration of the second theme uses a different pitch order of the same twelve-tone row, but this new order remains the same in both movements.

⁴⁴ Nagy, 26.

⁴⁵ Nagy, 26.



Example 14: The second phrase of the second theme, using a new order of the same twelve-tone row.⁴⁶

Such examples show tight thematic integration and demonstrate the creative process used in the composition of this concerto. Motivic associations are not happenstance but result from a well-planned method for achieving cyclic, inter-movement unity.

On a deeper level than the melodic connections that join the outer movements, one can find numerous links between elements within the first movement alone. The opening bass line contains a motivic seed that generates much of the material of the movement, and by association, much of the third movement as well (Example 15).

⁴⁶ Nagy, 27.

Allegro non troppo, ♩ = 100

The image shows a musical score for Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 2, first movement, measures 1-9. The tempo is marked 'Allegro non troppo' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The score is in 4/4 time and D major. It consists of two systems. The first system shows the piano accompaniment for measures 1-3. The piano part features a rhythmic motif of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The solo violin part is silent in measures 1-3. The second system shows measures 4-9. The piano part continues with the same rhythmic motif. The solo violin part begins in measure 6 with a motif that is an embellishment of the piano's bass line. Circled notes in the violin part indicate the motif's origin. A 'pizz.' marking is present in the piano's bass line in measure 3.

Example 15: Bartók's Violin Concerto No.2, first movement, m.1–9, with circled notes of the motif, introduced by the bass in measure 3, followed by an elaboration of the same motif in m.7–9 from the solo violin.⁴⁷

Apart from the 16th note upbeat that Bartók added as an afterthought (most likely during his rehearsal with Székely in Paris prior to the premiere), the opening phrase is clearly an embellishment of the bass line that introduces it. The most direct quotation of the bass line comes from the solo violin at the beginning of the development section, this time played on the dominant (Example 16).

⁴⁷ Schneider, 238.

The image shows a musical score for Harp and Solo Violin (S.Vln.). The Harp part is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) and is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Solo Violin part is written in a single staff (treble clef) and is marked with a measure number of 115. The Solo Violin part features a melodic line that is a quotation of the opening motif from the Harp part, starting with a half note followed by a quarter note, then a half note, and finally a quarter note, with a fermata over the final note.

Example 16: Quotation of the opening motif, now in the violin line at the beginning of the development section, m.115–119

A further elaboration of this opening bass line can be heard in the third section of this opening phrase (mm.15–18), where the downbeats of the solo violin line imitate the intervallic structure of the opening bass line: down a fourth, up a minor third, then down a fourth (Example 17). The flowing scalar passages that connect each bar show a melodic elaboration of the underlying harmonic progression of the opening section.

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