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Bach, Tartini, Bloch, Zehnder: Extended Program Note

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BACH, TARTINI, BLOCH, ZEHNDER:
EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTE

by

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B.A., Thomas Aquinas College, 2013

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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Department of Music
in the Graduate School
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CHAPTER 1

ERNST BLOCH: *VIOLIN CONCERTO*, MOVEMENT I

Though Bloch's 1938 *Violin Concerto* in many ways exemplifies his mature compositional style, it is atypical of the composer for not drawing on Jewish folk music. Like his early idols Wagner and Mussorgsky, Bloch believed that art should have a national character. To this end, he incorporated themes from his Jewish heritage into many of his compositions.

Schelomo: a Hebrew Rhapsody (a tone-poem depicting the life of the biblical King Solomon) and *Avodath Hakodesh* (a setting of traditional Jewish evening prayers) are representative works of this type. Though he was not religious, Bloch seems to have seen himself as playing a role similar to that of the Biblical prophets: his task was to awaken a sense of nationalism in the Jewish people, which would culminate in the establishment of a Jewish homeland. “We must make people hear the Jewish spirit, the greatness and the destiny of this race,” he wrote in 1901; “It should inspire confidence in the future.”¹ Like Bartok, Bloch seldom quoted actual folk melodies, but the structure of Jewish folk music pervades his music. Yet for the *Violin Concerto*, he eschewed explicit Jewish references, turning instead to another cultural source: Native American folk song

How did this seeming *volte face* come about? Indeed, one wonders if there is some hidden message in the use of Native American themes. For like the Jews, Native Americans have a long history of oppression at the hands of others. Is “Indian-ness” in Bloch's music a code for Jewishness? But though such a theory is tempting, there is little hard evidence to support it. What

¹ Klara Moritz, “Sensuous Pagans and Righteous Jews: The Changing Concepts of Jewish Identity in Bloch's *Jezebel* and *Schelomo*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54, no 3 (Fall 2003); 449.

we do know is this: the period during which Bloch lived in the United States (1917-1930) coincided with a public craze for all things “Indian.” This craze had many causes -- burgeoning nationalism, Federal government policies, Sigmund Freud's then-fashionable views on “primitive” peoples -- but Bloch was apparently swept up in it. To his credit, he seems to have taken more than a tourist's interest in Native American culture, and here personal reasons may have been at play. While living in Ontario, Canada, he became friends with Charlie Potts, an Ojibwa chief. Potts was a frequent visitor at the Bloch home, and for a time was romantically involved with one of Bloch's daughters. (The social *mores* of the time would certainly have frowned on such a liason, but Bloch seems to have had little personal sympathy with contemporary racial taboos. In 1924, for example, he told Romain Rolland: “I'd like to conduct an orchestra comprised solely of Negroes. They possess the only original talent in this land.”)² In the years that followed, Bloch visited several reservations and attended government sponsored events on Native American culture. He also studied Francis Densmore's pioneering anthologies of Mandan, Hidatsa, and Chippewa folk songs.

This interest culminated in two works drawing on Native American folk music: *America: an Epic Rhapsody*, and the *Violin Concerto*. *America* is by far the less musically sophisticated of the two. Divided into three large sections, each of which depicts a specific period in American history, it quotes Native, Euro-American, and African-American folk songs. But the “folk” element is coloristic rather than structural, and sometimes Bloch miscalculates badly. For example, a lugubrious rendition of “Pop Goes the Weasel” in the second section is likely to

² Elaine Brody, “Romain Rolland and Ernest Bloch,” *The Musical Quarterly* 68, no 1 (January 1982); 72.

strike modern American listeners as comic rather than touching.³ The *Violin Concerto* achieves a much more fundamental integration of folk elements; indeed, the work is one of Bloch's most tightly-structured. To achieve this level of synthesis between the folk and European concert traditions, Bloch treated the Native American themes he knew from Densmore's anthologies exactly as he had always treated Jewish folk music. For the most part he eschewed direct quotation. Instead, he imbued his own composition with the constructive principles found in Native American music. To this end, Bloch synthesized the musical traditions of several tribes, though Navajo folk song seems to have been his most important influence. Bloch also supplemented his primarily literate knowledge of Native American music with field recordings. (Unlike Bartok and Kodaly in Hungary, or Alan Lomax in the United States, Bloch did not *make* any of these recordings himself; rather he used what was available to him in the “ethnographical” departments of several universities). Friedlander provides evidence that the *Concerto's* main theme is derived from “Gmiwum's Dream Song” as performed by an Ojibwa singer on a 1921 field recording. However, he states that the shifting time signatures within the theme appear to be an attempt to imitate the characteristic five-beat stress pattern of many Pueblo Indian folk songs; also that ending on a descending minor third, as the *Concerto's* main theme does, is characteristic of any number of Native American musical styles.⁴ Thus, Friedlander concludes, Bloch draws on a constructed and homogenous “Indian” style that has no real basis in historical fact. For in most

³ We should note, however, Mahler's use of the no less juvenile “Brüder Martin” theme in his *Symphony No. 1*. The instinctive response of an American listener to Bloch's use of “Pop Goes the Weasel” may thus be testament to a cultural difference between Europe and the United States. The German theorists of Romanticism had all but deified folk song as the unmediated expression of the *Volk*. In the U.S., folk music has been seen as either provincial or commercial, and thus always outside the realm of “high” art.

⁴ Joshua Friedlander, “The Cultural Sources of Bloch's Violin Concerto,” DMA diss., Florida State University, 2015; 16

of North America, the various Native tribes tended to be insular during their periods of cultural formation, either indifferent to or at war with each other.⁵ But we should remember that a process of homogenization, of created identity, was central to all nationalist thinking of during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and is not yet dead today. The idea of a nation as rooted in pluralism simply did not exist. Even those who fought, or claimed to fight, for marginalized peoples conceived of the national struggle as one in which a “race” – the word, which denoted a broader concept than it does today, was in common use among both right and left-wing politicians – achieved its true “national destiny.” Constructed identity is common theme in all nationalist art of the period, and is central to Bloch’s Jewish works.

But if Bloch’s Jewish compositions are explicitly nationalist in intent, the question must then be asked: is the *Violin Concerto* a work of American nationalism? Bloch, after all, became an American citizen in 1926. Jewish nationalism -- Zionism -- does not necessarily preclude American nationalism; throughout the twentieth century, nationalists all over the world tended to identify themselves with one of the two emerging superpowers, the USA and USSR.⁶ The question is difficult to settle one way or the other. On the one hand, Bloch's identification with his Jewish heritage was complex. He had “few positive religious experiences”⁷ during his childhood and adolescence, and throughout his life attended synagogue sporadically. Visitors to Bloch's house were often surprised to find a large crucifix hanging on the wall of his study,

⁵ The situation was different in South America, as well as in the southernmost part of the North American continent. Here the Mayan and Aztec empires facilitated cultural cross-fertilization.

⁶ Up until the rise of Hitler, many right-wing German intellectuals expressed qualified admiration for the Soviet Union; for example, Ernst Niekisch and Arthur Moeller van den Bruck. Particularly interesting from an historical point of view is Niekisch's hybrid ideology of “National Bolshevism.”

⁷ Joshua Friedlander, “The Cultural Sources of Bloch's Violin Concerto,” DMA diss., Florida State University, 2015; 16

though to Bloch, the cross was not so much a symbol of Christianity as of universal human suffering and spiritual aspiration.⁸ Bloch also could be ambivalent about his Jewish heritage. “The Jews have not changed since Biblical times,” he wrote to his friend and mentor Paul Fleg. “3/4 of them are nasty Jews... I want to be part of the community, but I am afraid I will find it lacks spirit... Will I have to look for this spirit among the Goyim?”⁹ At one time, Bloch even identified with the anti-Semitic portions of Wagner's philosophy; he felt that upper-class European Jews exemplified many of the traits criticized by German nationalists.¹⁰

Yet if Bloch could speak harshly about his heritage, he spoke equally harshly about American culture. “If you were here, you'd probably be in prison,” he wrote to Romain Rolland in 1925. “The police are everywhere. It wouldn't be tolerated in any thinking country.” (This was at the time of the Sacco and Vanzetti case, in which Bloch took “a passionate interest.”) In words that might have been spoken by Jack London or Sinclair Lewis, he continued:

But here there will be no revolution. The poor Italian, Turk, or Greek who arrives hungry, and after two or three months earns his living by shining shoes, hopes to open a shop the following year. Then when he reaches that point, he has some employees and becomes a capitalist and oppressor in turn. And this, repeated millions of times, explains everything. In Art, it is industrialism, the big bluff, “business” first [...] In five years in Cleveland, I have found two or three truly living and thinking human beings: one, a solitary, poor bookseller, the other a “printer” anarchist, poor, free, admirable. All the rest... mere digestive tracts.¹¹

We find bitter denunciations like this running through all Bloch's writings.

Dillusionment, whether with the Jews, the United States, or the Soviet Union, seems to be a

⁸ *Ibid*, 22

⁹ Klara Moritz, “Sensuous Pagans and Righteous Jews: the Changing Concepts of Jewish Identity in Bloch's *Jezebel* and *Schelomo*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54, no 3 (Fall 2003); 445

¹⁰ Joshua Friedlander, “The Cultural Sources of Bloch's Violin Concerto,” DMA diss., Florida State University, 2015; 19

¹¹ Elaine Brody, “Romain Rolland and Ernest Bloch,” *The Musical Quarterly* 68, no 1 (January 1982); 73

constant *leitmotif*. Perhaps it is merciful that Bloch died before the State of Israel became well established, for it would almost certainly not have lived up to his expectations. Yet in a way this constant sense of disillusionment can be understood as stemming from Bloch's utter identification with his Jewish heritage, or rather, with that heritage as he understood it. For Bloch, the Jews were wanderers seeking a homeland. They might live among non-Jews, adopt non-Jewish ideas and philosophies, but they themselves would always be aliens. As long as the Jewish people had no country of their own, the world would be antagonistic to Jews; for this reason, a Jew could never approve of anything in the "gentile" world uncritically. Thus, to reduce Bloch's views on the United States to a black and white dichotomy of approval vs. disapproval may be simplistic. There were aspects of American nationalism that revolted him. There were likely other aspects that he saw as positive ones; in any case, considered appraisal of a thing in its good as well as bad aspects was probably how he believed a Jew should confront the non-Jewish world. Such a philosophy is at once cosmopolitan *and* nationalist. The theoretically pan-ethnic character of American democracy may thus have appealed to Bloch. It is possible that he did not fully appreciate to what degree pan-racialism in America has always been a sham. The United States suffers from extreme ethnic tensions, arguably to a greater degree than Europe. Yet if Bloch did not see this, he was no more blind than many European emigres: for from Tocqueville onwards, Europeans have often failed to appreciate how deep racial divides go in American society. These divides are no less potent for being based on something as superficial as skin color.

What of the music of the concerto? Structurally, its first movement presents some interesting features. First it should be noted that while Bloch throughout his life drew on modernist techniques, he himself was not a modernist; his music remains essentially late-

romantic in character. Nevertheless, the *Violin Concerto's* opening movement is not in sonata form, contrary to what one would expect from a genuine late 19th century work. Here a parallel can be drawn with the single violin concerto of Bloch's close contemporary, the German composer Hans Pfitzner.¹² Pfitzner's concerto begins with what sounds like an exposition, but then proceeds, via Schoenbergian chromatic figures, to an almost brutalized theme and variations. Tellingly, Pfitzner like Bloch was interested in writing music with a national character. In every age one finds composers of this sort: seemingly born too late, out of touch with their time both musically and ideologically. Of course, artistic-intellectual periods are not absolute, and today we can see that standard characterizations of the early twentieth century solely as an age of mechanism and revolt are simplistic. But if Pfitzner and Bloch were not exactly isolated survivals of the 19th century, neither were they riding the crest of the avant-garde. For many artists of the interwar period, Romantic emotionalism seemed out of place in a world racked by global conflicts. In the ideological arena, nationalism was giving way to internationalism: even a nationalist ideology like Fascism had internationalist aspects.¹³

But at the same time, Bloch's violin concerto is more modern than is apparent at first hearing. In it, Bloch managed to incorporate modernist influences into the deep structure of the music. First, the *Concerto's* basic tonality is flavored throughout with "primitive" quartal harmony. Second and more importantly, the music exhibits a feature we typically associate with the music of Webern: generation from cells. *As regards basic irreducible units*, there is in the first movement no first theme, second theme, and so on. Instead there are a multitude of short

¹² Hans Pfitzner, *Violin Konzert in einem Satz*. Berlin: Adolph Fürstner, 1924.

¹³ For example, the abortive 1934 attempt to found a "Fascist Internationale" as a counterbloc to the USSR.

motives, whose interplay determines the fabric of the music. Thus the peculiar character of the work is accounted for. It sounds rhapsodic, improvisatory, and at the same time highly disciplined. Soaring line succeeds soaring line, but each virtuoso cantilene is highly synthetic. Thus, though Bloch very skillfully hints at sonata form throughout, the work cannot be said to be in that form. For sonata form is based in the conflict between two key areas, represented by two subjects or subject groups. In classical sonata form, a high level of motivic density can and does appear -- in Brahms, for example -- but key areas are what drive the piece.¹⁴ In Bloch's *Violin Concerto*, motivic germ-cells supersede key areas in importance. They, not tonal relations, are generative. As a result, the concerto contains a much greater number of "subjects" than would be typical in, say, in Beethoven. It can thus only be analyzed according to motif. Yet the strange result is that in basic outline, the first movement of the concerto hews fairly close to late 19th century tripartite sonata form: the Old is remade in façade, but the underlying essence is qualitatively different. Such procedure is peculiarly modern. It recalls a central preoccupation of much twentieth-century fiction, the conflict between appearance and reality; or, to use an example from music, the late Stravinsky's use of rows specially constructed so that their combination/permutation can yield something analogous to a key center.¹⁵

The first movement starts with a short introduction, given in brass. Here, in the guise of "Gmiwum's Dream Song," the first of the generative cells is introduced: the rising fourth-descending triplet motif which we will label "A." The accompaniment, consciously "primitive,"

¹⁴ Conflicting key areas, of course, are bound up in a higher unity: that of the basic I-V-I progression that underlies every single tonal composition. This aesthetically fecund synthesis of conflict and unity, rather than any rootedness in acoustics or human psychology, is likely what made tonality for centuries the dominant musical system.

¹⁵ Richard Taruskin. "Chapter 3 The Apex." In *Music in the Late Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press. (New York, USA, n.d.). Retrieved 22 Jan. 2019, from <http://www.oxfordwesternmusic.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/view/Volume5/actrade-9780195384857-div1-003005.xml>

is in organum at the interval of a fifth, with a pedal point suggesting the drones used in much Native American music. (The modern listener, unfortunately, is apt to find this the least subtle part of the concerto. This is partly because the sound, characteristic of whole host of pre-war primitivist pieces, has been imitated over and over in film scores. Bloch's true compositional skill will be seen later; it lies in extracting the melody's generative essence).

After eight measures, the solo violin enters with a Neapolitan or "sharp" rhythm (sixteenth-dotted eighth). This is repeated at successive intervals of a fourth, yielding a pentatonic scale. On a coloristic level, this is perhaps meant to be reminiscent of the flute melodies used in some Native American religious rituals. But structurally, it serves a deeper purpose. It extracts the essential factor of the opening melody, the ascending fourth. The spare nature of the violin line emphasizes this interval, not as a destination in itself, but as a building block of larger structures to come. A rhapsodic, cadenza-like section follows, derived from the opening triplet. It culminates in the introduction of a new motif, B, whose contrast with A will provide much of the dialectic for the entire movement. B differs from A largely in its conjunct motion – unlike A, it is melodic in the traditional sense – and in its syncopation. Bloch underlines the importance of B by giving the accompaniment greater symphonic weight. This is followed by another cadenza passage leading to the entrance of the full orchestra, on the Neapolitan rhythm.

Structurally, what has happened? The music is diffuse enough to be recognizable as the introduction to something larger, perhaps as a slow introduction before the exposition proper. Yet there have been unusual features. Of course, the weight given the opening orchestral figure would not be particularly out of character in an orthodox introductory section. The emphasis given to theme B, however, is more atypical. A cadenza is essentially a transition figure. In the

standard classical concerto, it is merely a long elaboration of a cadential 6/4, and serves no structural function that a cadential 6/4 could not serve. To interrupt the flow of the music, as Bloch does, in order to emphasize a melodic fragment is either bad compositional technique or a sign that the work's generative essence is not that of sonata form.

And the latter does prove to be the case. The orchestral entrance does not introduce a recognizable first subject. All we get is another transitional figure, this time derived from B, with wind flourishes derived from melody which opened the movement. Then the solo violin enters with theme A, and at last we hear something that sounds like the first subject of a sonata form. But the music does not continue on in this vein. The solo violin simply extemporizes on A, in a fashion partly rhapsodic and partly reminiscent of Baroque *Forstpinnung*. Underneath this like an *idée fixe*, we hear a continually-repeated dotted figure derived from B. The two lines, violin and orchestra, do not match; they seem at variance with each other; and soon the violin line comes to an abrupt stop, and dies away in a series of ghostly scale-figures. After a few static reiterations of the B-derived orchestral line the violin takes up B in its lowest register, turning it into an obsessive, chant-like melody that turns back upon itself. A complex passage with much interplay between the soloist and orchestra follows. A and B are fragmented, elaborated, and combined, leading to a shattering statement of A in both the violin and orchestra. This violin line dissolves into repeating triplet patterns -- fairly conventional virtuoso writing except for the predominance given to the perfect fourth. Over this the orchestra states a modification of A. For the moment, the conflict has been resolved. The orchestra plays A itself, while the soloist accompanies it with perfect fourths; perfect fourths being, of course, the essence of motif A.

This detailed description of a fairly brief passage is given to show the subtle way in which Bloch manipulates his motivic material. It also shows the difficulty of analyzing the

concerto, or of interpreting it in terms of standard forms. Structurally, what role does the passage just described play? As noted above, it has some analogies with a sonata-form exposition. If we decided to classify it as such, A would then be Subject I. But as we also noted, the music is too diffuse, too rhapsodic, too searching – too developmental – to serve well as an exposition. To capture the similarities and differences between this passage and a standard exposition, we will label it “quasi-exposition.”

The section continues, introducing a new motif (C). This first appears in the solo violin, is in sixteenth notes, and like the opening melody of the movement is in parallel fifths. It is also more “transitional” than earlier motifs. It leads to a passage which, unlike much of what has gone before, is purely sequence-driven. Within the context of quasi-exposition, this can be thought of as the transition to the second theme. The second theme, an elegant synthesis of motifs, enters soon afterward. It combines the rising fourth of A with the syncopation and conjunct motion of B, and it also makes heavy use of the tritone. Strictly speaking, this “second subject” is probably best thought of as a second subject group, for it lasts almost as long as the entire introduction. Unlike the introduction, however, it remains melodically and rhythmically consistent throughout.

Here Bloch’s substitute for the standard exposition ends. In general, the various sections of this movement are very clearly punctuated. A development, or rather quasi-development, follows. First, however, Bloch hints at a repeat of the entire concerto up to this point. The opening cadenza enters with a more determined and self-sufficient orchestral accompaniment. The fact that the cadenza as we first heard it was introductory and not part of a sonata form proper does not invalidate the analogies with sonata form that Bloch is trying to draw. For the same opening cadenza, with its characteristic rising fourths, was a stable point, harmonically

concise and clearly delineated as a section. In the extended, rhapsodic form of this concerto, two contrasting stable points are enough to root the entire first movement in sonata form.

The development (or quasi-development) is somewhat attenuated, and only distinguishable from the quasi-exposition by the relative thickness of the texture and the density of motifs. It leads to a massive cadenza, unaccompanied, which is itself developmental. It too is motivically driven -- very densely so: this is no "filler music," though to describe it in detail would run to many pages. The important factors are A and C. Through acquiring harmonic detail these are gradually assimilated to one another. Eventually they become a series of fourth-based chords, with which the cadenza ends, rather than with the usual trill. There is no recapitulation. The expositional material is repeated in shortened form. The second subject is given the greater weight, since it is by far the most stable material of the entire movement. A coda derived from C, follows, ending on a complex of consonant pitches. The sound is that of a minor tonic triad, but the approach is unorthodox; it is perhaps best to consider the concluding aggregate not as a functional chord in its own right, but as a complex of pitches having pc 10 as a clearly identifiable pitch-center.

Thus Bloch creates, on a traditional foundation, a profoundly original and personal work. Though not in sonata form, it utilizes some of sonata form's organizing principles. At the same time, it has an interior consistency derived from cell technique. The music, in other words, is both traditional and modern. It is perhaps this twofold aspect which has kept much of Bloch's music out of the standard repertoire; our sense of what makes a masterwork is still more conditioned by early twentieth-century historiography than we would like to admit, and for many of us, the dichotomy between "traditional" and "modern" still looms as an unbridgeable divide.

But as Bloch's *Violin Concerto* shows us, the wall between the two is more porous than we often realize.

At the same time, the concerto, like many early twentieth century primitivist works, raises for modern audiences the specter of what today is often referred to as cultural appropriation. That Bloch's use of Amerindian themes was undoubtedly meant as honorific does not necessarily exonerate him. Various bits of cultural bric-a-brac, such as sports mascots and company logos featuring stereotyped images of Native Americans, are now widely considered offensive even though their original purpose was likewise celebratory. What is perhaps most evident to us now is that Bloch's perspective of Native American culture is very much that of an outsider looking in. Nevertheless, the *Concerto*, in the present writer's view, presents several features which raise the work above the many "Indian" books, paintings, musical works, etc. that litter our cultural landscape. The essence of appropriation, as opposed to respectful borrowing -- both are constants throughout history -- is kitsch. The minstrel show "darkie," the sexualized "squaw," and the ape-like "jap" are all constructs that treat culture as if its superficial elements were its essence, and that very essence nothing other than novelty. There is nothing superficial or simple about the music of the *Concerto*. Apart, perhaps, from the regrettable first eight measures, Bloch treats the Native American melodies with all his considerable compositional skill. If the music is "Indian" at all, it is so because of constructional possibilities embedded within the themes themselves -- not because it wears the musical equivalent of dime store buskins and a feather headdress.

CHAPTER 2

ZEHNDER: *TOD IM MAI*, ELEGY FOR STRING QUARTET

Unlike most of my compositions, *Tod im Mai* had a specific extra-musical inspiration. I commenced the piece on a weekday, in between classes. To pass the time, I had been reading the news, and I came across an article dealing with the tragedy currently unfolding in Ukraine. In passing, the article mentioned that one of the soldiers killed -- I cannot recall for which side he fought -- had been a poet. Somehow, that bit of human interest hidden amid cold records of fact brought home to me, all of a sudden, the human cost of war. I was deeply moved. There and then, I picked up my violin and within a few minutes had conceived the theme and opening *ritornello*. During the next two days, I sketched most of the exposition and a few pieces of the development.

As it developed, the piece became a meditation not only on the dreadful human cost of the Ukrainian civil war. I conceived it as an elegy on a universal theme, the sufferings of innocents in wartime. Specifically, I wanted to make it, insofar as my ability lay, a requiem for those killed in the many wars which have taken place during my own short lifetime: Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen. The title "Death in May," references the month traditionally reserved for workers' demonstrations. The subtitle, "To the Fallen," which might normally suggest soldiers killed in action, refers in this case to civilian dead. In any case, the military-like phraseology is meant to suggest that war's innocent victims, whom we all too often dismiss as "collateral damage," have a dignity equal to that of actual combatants. It also references the German novelist Ernst Jünger's war memoir, *Im Stahlgewittern* -- one of the most

brutally realistic descriptions of battle I have read.¹⁶ Jünger, at first a soldier and proponent of the German cause in World War I, later came to see militarism as “a calamitous mistake.”¹⁷ the subtitle can be seen as referencing this turn away from war.

Harmonically, *Tod im Mai* is basically tonal throughout. To pinpoint influences is difficult, inasmuch as my main concern while composing was to ensure that the music followed its own inner logic throughout, not to copy the sound of this or that famous work. Whether or not I have been successful is for the listener to judge. But the basic artistic aims of the composition, or more precisely the musical-technical goals I set myself, are for me exemplified by several composers. First of all is Beethoven, the *ne plus ultra* of tight construction and logical development. Next is Bruckner, whose fluid harmonic movement is and has been to me a marvel ever since I first heard the 8th Symphony. The quartets of Shostakovich (particularly the fourth, the first piece of chamber music I heard in concert) were in some sense the model I set for myself when writing the *Elegy*; and Hanns Eisler's *Lenin Requiem* gave me the idea of introducing a march melody into the development section.¹⁸

A central preoccupation was to avoid the phenomena of the superfluous middle voice one often sees even in the early quartets of Mozart. From the beginning, I decided to give the viola a central role. Particularly in the development and the recapitulation (which, following Mahler, itself has developmental characteristics), the viola has an important determinative function over musical direction. If there is a particular compositional device that marks *Tod im Mai*, it is the

¹⁶ Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2004)

¹⁷ David Binder, “Ernst Jünger, Contradictory German Author Who Wrote About War, is Dead at 102.” In *The New York Times*. Retrieved January 23, 2019, from <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/02/18/arts/ernst-junger-contradictory-german-author-who-wrote-about-war-is-dead-at-102.html?pagewanted=3>

¹⁸ Hanns Eisler, *Lieder und Kataten Band 3*, (Leipzig: VEB Breitkopf und Härtel, 1958)

omnipresence of the lowered second degree (Phrygian mode). To me, the lowered second sounds especially tragic, and its downward-leading tendency opens up some interesting functional possibilities. It references as well the so-called “Neopolitan complex” of Beethoven’s C-sharp minor quartet. Also important to *To dim Mai* is the coincidence of triple and compound time signatures. The staggered occurrence of stressed beats resulting from this collision is an important part of the counterpoint.

Tod im Mai begins with a short ritornello figure, almost purely homophonic. This was intentionally modelled on certain passages in the slow movements of Vivaldi, or in recitatives by Handel. The progression itself is quite simple (i6-V6/5-V7, with escape tones in the second and fourth measure), but the insistent rhythm is intended to give a sense of urgency from the very beginning -- especially important for a piece in slow tempo. The first subject is then introduced, with a fragmented version of the ritornello serving as accompaniment. Here there is, for the first time, a polyrhythmic element: while the melody is in 6/8, the accompaniment is in 3/4. Nevertheless, the first beat in the accompaniment is consistently omitted. Thus, though it is clear that stressed beats in the melody and accompaniment do not coincide, the ear has trouble fitting the beats of each into a regular stress pattern. This sets up a musical-dramatic conflict that will be solved as the work progresses.

The first theme dies away. There then occurs, in the violins, a stridently dissonant interval (F-sharp/G, or the minor second); this is held for some time before a downward figure in the second violin, and the entry of the lower voices, reveal it as an (unprepared) suspension. Out of this a modulation is generated, and Subject II enters in the relative major. This is a *cantabile* melody in the violins that switches between triple and compound meters. It is elaborated to the extent that is probably more correct to speak of a “subject group” rather than a second subject as

such, but the elaboration serves a musical purpose: to concentrate the diffuse rhythmic energy of the melody into a single, compact, 2/4 measure (mm.61). With metrical discipline established, the opening of the subject group is repeated, only to die away in a 4/4 plagal cadence. A sustained B-flat major chord ends the exposition.

While the exposition focused on reconciling -- however temporarily -- the disparate stress patterns, the development unleashes the centrifugal forces at the heart of their coincidence. After a more harmonically fraught version of the opening ritornello, Subject I appear again; now, however, there is no attempt to reconcile melody and accompaniment. For a few measures, the jigsaw pieces fit together. Then both collapse in a morass of dissonant harmonies. The first violin tries to salvage things by entering with an insistent (and, in view of the local harmonic motion, artificially maintained) dotted figure, while the other voices pass a 3/4 melody back and fourth. An ascending and descending fourth figure in a distant key center enters; then the music suddenly accelerates, and a march theme is introduced. This theme is based on the Polish labor hymn "Warszawianka," but also includes structural elements of both the Ukrainian national anthem and the Donbas separatist song "Vstavay Donbas, Rabochiy Ispolin" ("Arise Donbas, Working Giant"). A canon is hinted at, before the march flies apart in a series of chromatic fragments. The music itself collapses into a disconnected jumble of motifs, which nevertheless converge around a basic modulatory progression. Out of the chaos, a series of repeated eighth notes emerge; and, in the opening key of the *Elegy*, the four voices sound, one by one and hesitantly, the *ritornello* which began the work. We are now at the recapitulation.

The first subject sounds and dies away, almost exactly as it did at the beginning of the movement. (The accompaniment now, however, has more of sense of exhaustion). Then the viola enters with a rough, awkward sounding theme, accompanied by cello and with scalar

interjections in the violin. We get a more or less dissonant, and non-modulatory, version of the original transition between Subjects I and II; then Subject II enters, in the minor mode, and with Baroque-style counterpoint. Another dissonant section follows, constructed out of compressed versions of previous motifs. Then, now unambiguously in both 3/4 and in the tonic key, a stabilized version of a motif from the development appears, in octaves, to the accompaniment of a bass line in the cello: the metrical conflict has at last stabilized. The music dies away, and the last we here of the recapitulation is a quieter, more tender version of the march melody. A short coda follows, made up of ultra-compressed iterations of the *ritornello*. Then, at staggered time-intervals, a seventh chord enters, and the final cadence is introduced. The movement is rounded out with short descending cello line, in Phrygian mode, and closes with a single pizzicato chord.

Political messages tend to limit a work of art's longevity. Many poems of Schiller commemorating this or that historical revolution are hardly read today. On those rare occasions where he does little more than give vent to his political enmities, even Dante can come across as insufferable. At the same time, theoretical works like *The Prince*, *De Regimine*, and *The Social Contract* continue to be studied long after the political situation they describe has ceased to exist. This seems to suggest that art and politics are essentially opposed, or at least that they exist in an uncomfortable relationship. With this in mind, *Tod im Mai* is in no sense a political or a propaganda work. Broadly speaking, it is an anti-war piece; but like war itself, opposition to war is a theme not bound to any particular time. *Tod im Mai* simply seeks to translate, as all honest artistic endeavor should, human emotion into terms unique to a particular art (color for painting, mass and volume for sculpture, words for poetry, and tones for music) -- and to find, thereby, a kind of transcendence.

CHAPTER 3

BEETHOVEN: *ROMANCE IN G*

Ludwig van Beethoven, who “bestrides the 18th and 19th century like a colossus,”¹⁹ is a pivotal figure not only in the history of music, but of Western culture in general. His personality, or rather his mythologized personality, shaped the 19th century image of the “great man,” and likely still influences us today. Writing in 1927, Romain Rolland states that “the whole being of a Beethoven... is representative of a certain European epoch.”²⁰ Beethoven's personal struggles -- too well known to require summarizing here -- made him, for several generations, the ideal of the suffering artist. His music seemed in its revolutionary expressiveness to encapsulate all the ideals of Romanticism. It is noteworthy that the competing Brahmsian and New German schools each cited Beethoven as the justification for their differing interpretations of what Romanticism meant.

Yet the essence of greatness, whether it exists in a musical artifact, a personality, or an historical event -- and Beethoven, in a sense, is all of these -- is that different eras can, indeed *must*, interpret it differently. It is the hidebound, uninspired work that remains forever fixed in time and place, and thus can only be appreciated by antiquarians. Where 19th century commentators like Liszt were impressed first and foremost by the *emotionality* of Beethoven's music, its trampling underfoot of forms the 18th century had deemed sacrosanct, we today are equally struck by the tremendous *control* Beethoven at all times exerts over his materials.

¹⁹ Steven Ozmet, *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 197

²⁰ Romain Rolland, *Beethoven the Creator* (New York: Dover Publications, 1964), xvii

Audiences of 1803 heard the “grotesquely long, overelaborated fantasia” which is the “Eroica” symphony as heralding the death knell of sonata form. Today, the first movement is taught as one of the great examples of sonata-form composition: great precisely because Beethoven's innovations reveal all sonata form's hidden possibilities.

This is not, of course, to say that at long last we finally understand Beethoven, any more than we understand, say, Bach, Mozart, or Palestrina. Our time too is only a passing moment. Future generations will qualify, perhaps even reject outright, whatever understanding we have gained. But the contemporary understanding of Beethoven does point out the difficulty of fully describing his style. If we accept say, Salieri or Stamitz, as the encapsulation of the Classical period, then Beethoven is certainly not classical. But neither is he fully Romantic. Again, Romain Rolland states the problem well. His *Beethoven the Creator* is essentially hagiography, not scholarship, and clearly owes a great deal to Romantic interpretations of Beethoven. Yet already Rolland recognizes the fundamental difference between Beethoven and the Romantic composers that claimed him as their forebear. “It would be absurd to confuse these neo-Gothics or impressionists with the Roman builder. Everything that was characteristic of them would have been repugnant to him -- their sentimentality, their lack of logic, their disordered imagination.”²¹

It is best to consider Beethoven as a transition figure, but a unique one. Like Goethe, Beethoven is both a romantic and a classicist. Yet also like Goethe, his work is not a hybrid but a unity in itself. This perhaps accounts for the enduring fascination of his music. It likely accounts as well for the occasional puzzled reaction it gets from concertgoers steeped in the more lyrical romanticism of Schubert, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky. Such listeners, accustomed to formal

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3

ambiguity,²² non-functional tonality, and Wagnerian-influenced “never-ending melody,” digest the third, fifth, seventh, and ninth symphonies fairly easily, but find the fourth and eighth hard to place. For Beethoven's historical position makes him one of history's few truly original artists. Unlike even such innovative giants as Wagner and Schoenberg, Beethoven is *sui generis*. He is his own period, and does not fit easily into any musicological-historical schema.

Few pieces encapsulate the enigma of Beethoven so well, or in such relatively brief form, as the Romance in G major, for Violin and Orchestra. Along with the more commonly-played Romance in F, it was likely written as a sketch, or cartoon, for the later *Violin Concerto* of 1806. Though in the published set of romances the G major appears as No. 2, it appears to have been composed later than the F major. This later provenance is shown by the more extended, more daring use of violin technique, particularly as concerns double-stopping. It is typical of Beethoven that while the writing is eminently suited to the *sound* of the instrument, it is not especially violinistic technically. There are some awkward stretches, clearly conceived with the piano in mind, which most violinists typically edit out in concert. The great Austrian Beethoven specialist Wolfgang Schneiderhan was one of the few violinists to play the music as written.

The Romance begins with the solo violin playing, unaccompanied by the orchestra and in double stops, the main theme of the piece. This theme can be easily be described as lyrical, but it is important to note its essentially ambiguous character. It moves almost entirely by step, a comparative rarity in Beethoven. But the manner in which it so strictly hews to the basic rhythmic pattern of the meter gives it a muscular character. It even has some metrical devices, such as the dotted eighth note -- sixteenth figure in the second half of mm. 2, which are typically

²² Or even, as in the case of Tchaikovsky, formal incoherence.

characteristic of a march. (Beethoven, in fact, wrote several marches during his lifetime: the infamous *Turkish March from the Ruins of Athens*, and also the *Yorkscher Marsch*, which was once the official march of the East German NVA and is still played today by the Bundeswehr). In addition, the repeated B7 in mm. 2-3 sound an insistent, urgent note not typical of a lyrical melody. We thus see from the beginning that the character of the theme will be determined partly by its context, and especially by orchestration and accompaniment.

After its initial statement by the soloist, theme is taken up by the orchestra and repeated verbatim. However, the relatively thick orchestration gives it a slightly different character. Again, the solo violin enters, and plays (again unaccompanied) a continuation of the opening theme. As in a dialogue, this latter is taken up by the orchestra, and its ending elaborated, drawn out, until the music drives home a powerful cadence. Immediately, the music switches character. The slowly-moving, majestic-lyrical dialogue that marked the opening is replaced by flowing sixteenth notes in the solo violin. Chromatic passing tones feature heavily. Here for the first time the name “Romanza” seems accurate. Yet the opening is not completely forgotten. The dotted figure from mm. 2 is re-introduced, this time with not the slightest hint of a military character; rather, the music seems joyful, exuberant, even heroic, flushed perhaps (if a programmatic interpretation may be ventured) with the sudden realization of being possessed by a great love -- whether of God, Nature, or another human being scarcely matters. It is a passing moment. The impulse dies down, and tender and passionate moods alternate before the majestic calm of the first theme returns. Again, the theme is double-stopped, but the accompanying line, now in eighth notes and with an intervallic structure similar to that of an Alberti bass, is gentler and more flowing.

This completes the first half of the Romance. The second half is more passionate, freer, with much less double-stopping. The dotted rhythm becomes a minor-key theme, which by a series of chromatic transitional figurations, eventually leads to a non-double-stopped version of the opening theme, now embellished with filigree work in the solo violin. The orchestra plays the “Alberti bass” accompaniment from the theme's second entrance. With figurations that clearly foreshadow the later *Violin Concerto*, the music dies away into silence, only to be interrupted with a series of loud final chords. Then, after this passionate interpolation, the music come to rest softly on a final tonic chord.

CHAPTER 4

BACH: “CHACONNE,” FROM PARTITA NO. 2

The Chaconne, last movement of the *Partita no. 2 in D minor*, is likely the most well-known of Bach's violin works. Nearly as long as the other four movements put together, it is often played alone: not only in its original form, but in transcriptions for organ, piano (Busoni's is the most famous of these), guitar, or even orchestra. Such excerpction of the Chaconne from its surroundings is in some ways unfortunate. Undoubtedly, the piece by itself makes a powerful impact on its own, but that impact is heightened when we hear how the motivic, contrapuntal, and harmonic material of the Chaconne is derived from earlier movements. The difficulty of writing a dance suite is always the problem of making the various movements cohere into a unified whole. Bach solves this by making the opening numbers of the suite essentially sketches for the monumental last movement.

Historically, the chaconne was a Spanish dance, typically in a major key. It may have originated in the New World, in Spanish colonial possessions. By Bach's time, however, the chaconne had lost most of its connections to dance, and had become a virtuoso compositional exercise in theme and variations. The classical chaconne of Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, etc., consists of a repeating harmonic pattern. This pattern remains unchanged throughout, though the musical foreground is elaborated with sequences, chromaticism, and complex polyphony. The form is thus similar to that of a passacaglia, though the basis for variation in a passacaglia is a repeating bass pattern. (There seems historically to have been a certain amount of confusion regarding the terms, with chaconnes sometimes referred to as passacaglias, and vice versa).

Bach's chaconne is notable both for the demands it makes on the performer, and also as a skillful example of polyphonic writing for a melody instrument. However, though in his violin sonatas and partitas Bach certainly raised solo polyphonic writing to a new level of complexity, he was less innovative than is often supposed. The tendency of German Baroque (as opposed to Italian) violin-playing was to “make the violin a self-sufficient instrument”²³ and Bach had important forbears in this respect, such as Ignaz Biber. It has been argued that Ole Bull, the 19th century Norwegian virtuoso celebrated during his lifetime for his ability to play polyphonically, was in fact a survivor of this tradition; Norway, isolated from most of Europe's cultural centers, would have kept older styles in currency longer.

The chaconne opens with a simple harmonic progression, given in four-note chords: i - V6/5 - i - VI - iv (P6/4) - V6/5 - i. This progression will be the basis for continuous foreground variation. Bach's notation raises a technical difficulty, calling as it does for a note to be sustained on the lowest string while a moving pattern is played on the highest string -- something that the curve of the bridge makes impossible. A closer approximation to what Bach writes would have been possible with the 18th-century bow, which, unlike its modern counterpart, was curved outward. Nevertheless, one still could not have played the music exactly as written. The notation should be considered, then, not an exact indicator of what should be played. Rather, it gives the inner polyphonic essence of the music, which essence the violinist must then intelligently approximate within the limits posed by the instrument. This procedure has clear historical precedent. When transcribed exactly, the tablature lute pieces of Frescobaldi and other Italian Baroque composers show many violations of strict contrapuntal practice; and these violations

²³ Di Su, “The Tardy Recognition of J.S. Bach’s Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo,” *American String Teacher* 61, no 2 (May 2011); 26.

clearly spring from the specific limitations of the instrument. By contrast, a less strict transcription -- one conditioned by a knowledge of contrapuntal procedure -- will yield a piece which is much closer to strict polyphony.²⁴ Bach effectively asks us to perform this operation in reverse.

After the relatively simple chordal opening, the second variation (beat 2 of mm. 8) introduces a certain level of complexity and motivic reference. The characteristic “French” rhythm of this variation -- dotted eighth-sixteenth, then a dotted eighth followed by two thirty-second notes, introduced in a rising scalar pattern -- recalls an important *descending* scalar pattern in mm. 17 of the Sarabande. But this figure is itself derived from a dotted rhythm in the theme of the opening Allemande. Though the second variation is nearly four times as long as the first, the rate of harmonic change is nearly identical. To fill out the variation, Bach repeats the harmonic pattern three times. Each iteration is more chromatic than the last; the chromatic element is introduced via passing tones. Then the third variation enters. Its simple scalar/arpeggiation passages conceal a sophisticated compound melody. The passages themselves are ultimately derived from the Allemande: note the similarity of the, say, 55 in the Chaconne to mm. 24 in the Allemande. This variation could be described in as great detail as the first; but such dense analysis of every variation could well be counterproductive to an understanding of the larger formal structure. The forgoing analysis is given to show the skill Bach brings to bear on his process of constant variation.

In larger terms, the Chaconne is tripartite. An opening minor section (A) gives way to a major section (B), which is then closed off by another minor section (C). The meter remains

²⁴ Willi Apel, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Medieval Academy of America, 1953), 59-61.

triple throughout. Each section progress from relative simplicity to a high degree of rhythmic and polyphonic complexity, and then returns to its opening simplicity. Thus A, B, and C are *texturally palindromic*. Section A and the Chaconne as a whole are *melodically palindromic* as well, for the strain with which the movement began ends both A and the entire piece. The overall structure of the Chaconne can thus be seen as broadly similar to the structure of each of its parts. Bach, deeply religious and fascinated by numerology, may well have consciously structured his music around the number three, important in Christian theology. It is worth noting that in the medieval mensural notation, the meter which we today would call 9/8 was referred to as *prolatio perfectum et tempus perfectum*²⁵ -- most perfect because, like Bach's Chaconne, it was tripartite in microcosm as well as in macrocosm.

A gathers contrapuntal complexity as its variations progress. At mm. 57 a fully sounded rather than implied polyphonic passage emerges, made up of two fully realized contrapuntal strands and an implied third strand. This variation and the one immediately following it (mm. 61 - 66), are in a sense the high point of the A section. Beginning on the third beat of 66, a new variation emerges, whose virtuoso runs (derived from mm. 27 onward of the Sarabande) again imply counterpoint rather than explicitly state it. A virtuoso passage in mostly 1:1 counterpoint follows (mm. 89-124); here the chords are arpeggiated rather than sounded together. At mm. 126, the opening strain returns, and achieves a final cadence on the downbeat of mm. 133. The third of the chord is omitted, however, and the next beat is an F-sharp. The music continues in this vein, reaching a cadence in D major in mm. 140-141. The B section has begun.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

It starts unpretentiously, at first seeming to be little more than a major-key version of mm. 1-9. Then, in mm. 141, a lush three-voice polyphonic passage is introduced, whose upper voice recalls scalar passages in the Gigue (note the second half of mm. 6 in the latter movement). An arpeggiated passage follows, which seems to recall in a joyful, more complete manner the restless passagework of both the Gigue and Allemande. This too does not last long. An incessantly repeating three note motif-- beginning with the high A's in mm. 61 -- propels the music forward into a difficult chordal passage, and a double-stopped polyphonic section follows (mm. 177-200). A simple arpeggiated section follows, leading to the return of the minor mode at mm. 209, and beginning of the "D" section.

For the most part, the polyphony in this last section of the piece is implied rather than directly stated -- i.e., it uses compound melody more than double stops. This section too follows a tripartite schema. Polyphonic complexity remains relatively constant throughout, while harmonic density varies greatly. The harmony begins rather sparsely. Then, in mm. 225, a series of thirty-second note runs are introduced, which propel the music into a long passage in *barriolage*. As this dies away, a series of sixteenth-note triplets, derived from the ceaseless triplet motion of the Courante, lead to a final virtuoso run; and with the return of the opening strain, the Chaconne ends as it began.

CHAPTER 5

TARTINI: VIOLIN SONATA IN G MINOR, “DIDONE ABBANDONATA”

Never forgotten by violinists, and important to musical historians, the name of Giuseppe Tartini appears does not appear regularly on concert programs or in the vocabulary of the average listener. Early 18th-century *cognoscenti* would probably have greeted this situation with disbelief. (For context, they probably would be equally stupefied to find an obscure German church musician venerated as perhaps the greatest of all composers). The “Maestro della Nazione,” as Tartini’s contemporaries called him, raised the technical level of violinists to new heights. He was thought also to have brought the singing style of Corelli to its full perfection. Interestingly, his music was better known a century ago than it is today: the Romantics considered Tartini, rather than Vivaldi or Corelli, to be the pinnacle of the Italian baroque. The “Devil’s Trill” sonata, which depicts a Faustian pact with Satan, was very common on 19th century concert programs.

Accurate information on Tartini’s life is difficult to come by. His life, insofar as it is known at all, has been romanticized. Melodramatic episodes such as duels, a secret marriage (to the bishop of Vincenza’s mistress!) and a flight to the famous monastery at Assisi, have been celebrated in such literary curiosities as a novel by Albert Spalding and the theosophical writings of Madame Blavatsky. He is supposed to have shut himself up to practice as a young man, refusing contact with the outside world until he could play as well as his idol Veracini. This may be pure legend. But he does seem to have begun studying the violin relatively late in life -- as a teenager – and only to have reached full technical maturity in his thirties.

The sonata's title, which appears to be Tartini's own, references an episode in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Tartini was very much a literary composer. Many of his works have, as a sort of dedication, a quotation from Petrarch or Mestasio. Indeed, the editors of the *Opera Omnia* suggest that the Tartini often conceived his melodic lines as settings of these particular poetic lines. This procedure might seem strange to us. It should be remembered, however, that the idea of music as a totally self-sufficient art only gained complete currency in the 19th century. Before Beethoven, that musical expressiveness was closely related to the expressiveness of the spoken word was taken as a matter of course. We often think of the Romantics as having invented program music, but in fact they were the first generation of musicians who largely turned away from it.

The story of Dido and Aeneas come from book IX of the *Aeneid*. Aeneas, the leader of the exiled Trojans, puts in at Carthage for supplies. There he begins an affair with Dido, the Carthaginian queen. This is blasphemous on both their parts, for Dido had previously sworn on the ashes of her dead husband never to take another lover. Dido wishes to make Aeneas her consort, but the gods foresee that if this happens Rome will never be founded. They warn Aeneas; he and the Trojans depart. Dido in despair commits suicide. Today, the story is often read as a sordid tale of betrayal, but educated audiences of Tartini's time would have seen it differently. To them, it was a tragic story of human beings caught up in a web of conflicting duties, made doubly tragic by later historical events. Every literate person knew about the Roman sack of Carthage in 149 BCE, where after razing the city, Roman troops were supposed to have plowed the ground with salt to make it infertile. But for all this element of tragedy, leaving Dido was the only moral choice Aeneas could have made. That Rome remain unfounded was unthinkable to the Italians of Tartini's day. Indeed, there existed a long European tradition of

regarding the Roman founding as providential; in this view, the Roman Empire was a sort of pagan foreshadowing of Christendom. Thus, in titling his sonata as he did, Tartini was touching on themes central to the culture of his time.

The sonata follows the four movement church sonata (*sonata del chiesa*) form, and is written in Tartini's late, *gallante*-influenced style. Like J.S. Bach, Tartini never went over to the *gallante* style completely. His late as well as his early works remain essentially high baroque. But influences of the *gallante*, which he probably absorbed from the theater, are in evidence in all his fully mature works. Tartini's late compositions tend to be homophonic rather than polyphonic. In place of the complicated and often sequence-based passagework found in the early sonatas and concertos, he began to use simple, flowing melodies which were clearly vocal in inspiration. As a result, the virtuoso element in these late works is downplayed. Conceivably, lesser technical demands might have been motivated by necessity. It is possible that like many artists Tartini was unable to maintain in old age the technical skill he had had as a young man. But we do not know for certain; he may have continued to play the early, more technically difficult works all his life, while seeking in newer compositions a different avenue of expression.

The first movement is a study in contrasts. No tempo indication is given in the manuscript, but the formal and musical considerations both suggest a slow tempo, likely something close to *larghetto*. An opening theme marked by *lamentoso* descending minor seconds alternates with a fanfare-like theme, perhaps modelled after Gabrielli's brass antiphons. Also important is a song-like melody in the major mode, atypical of the baroque style but very characteristic of the *gallante*. The second movement is a fast dance in 3/4, marked by suspensions and harsh dissonances. The funereal third movement is marked Grave, like the bleak processional music which opens Handel's *Messiah*. It is characterized by double-stopping and by

persistent dotted rhythms; during the 18th century, of course, the latter were often associated with royalty. In terms of technical difficulty, the double-stops in are well below the level of those found in many of Tartini's other sonatas. Nevertheless, they show excellent understanding of the violin's possibilities: they are clearly designed to exploit the natural resonance of the instrument. The last movement is a sprightly dance in *gallante* style. However, its strict four-square construction, which seems so much at odds with the vocal character of the music, give it a constrained, even tragic feeling.

Paul Stoeving, in his effusive *Story of the Violin* (1904), unimpressive as scholarship but fascinating as a record of musical attitudes at the turn of the century, considers the final movement to be characteristic of Tartini's style. Calling Tartini a "mixture of medievalism and modernism,"²⁶ he goes on to describe what made Tartini, almost alone among Italian Baroque composers, of interest to 19th century audiences. In what strikes us now as uncomfortably purple prose, he also lays his finger on what can make Tartini's music difficult for modern listeners:

Tartini loved those golden chains of the house of God. They were to him not chains to hold him fast to the cold stone floor, but they drew him up to the lofty dome, or often transformed themselves into [...] wings of inspiration to soar still higher. Only at times he peeks, as it were, through the high church-windows into the world below, and then his heart is moved with strange earthly passions and feelings. His violin begins to speak another language – the language of the world – full of warmth and tenderness. It is worldly [...] without quite daring to be so; even with the devil the master prefers wrestling in front of the altar.²⁷

The stylistic conflict -- for it can only be called that -- which exists in Tartini's works is apt to strike the modern listener somewhat less sympathetically. We no longer hear the polyphonic style of the high baroque as "academic" or outdated. Indeed, due to the near mania

²⁶ Paul Stoeving, *Story of the Violin* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 179.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 268

for baroque music which has developed in the last thirty years, it is the *gallante* works which are apt to strike contemporary audiences as insufferably mannered. But the prejudices of the moment are not necessarily determinative. If we listen sympathetically to Tartini's music --- if we enter his sound-world on its own terms rather than our own -- we can still hear a voice that speaks to us with undimmed immediacy; one, moreover, that expresses with unparalleled eloquence the struggles and contradictions of Tartini's own time and place.

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