The Viola as a Voice of Lamentation
The Story Behind the Sound

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ABSTRACT

The scope of "The Viola as a Voice of Lamentation: The Story Behind the Sound" is a collection of four case studies that connect the historical trajectory of the lament from vocal music to instrumental music in various contexts, all sharing the thread of storytelling. The chapters emphasize elemental practices and artistic demonstrations of lamentation from Antiquity to the 21st century, highlighting the funerary rituals and oral traditions of the Ancient Greeks, the development of the *lamento* in Renaissance operas and its transference to wordless music within the framework of topic theory, and, lastly, the development of the voice of the viola within its repertoire of more than two hundred works of lamentation and related genres. Looking directly at the stories and musical works from this historical lens, one finds that the cultivation of these characters of lamentation take shape in many forms, including: the lamenting woman (i.e., real-life professional mourners or literary/mythical characters), the lament bass figure as a character of topic theory, and the viola, which, through its own history of construction and the evolution of its repertoire, showcases an affinity for works of a lamentable nature due to its melancholy tone and similarity in range to the human voice. While this dissertation sinks into the history and idiomatic characterization of the viola's lamenting voice, it also advocates for more creative interpretations of its character in a series of writings that would investigate the viola's multifaceted story through its versatile history of sounds.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Márta Hortobágyi Lambert was born in Greenville, North Carolina, and began her musical studies on piano and violin, later developing a love for viola. A passionate educator and advocate for the arts, Márta has held fellowship positions at The Juilliard School, and is currently on faculty at Queens Pre-College, Suzuki on the Island, and Kinhaven Music School.

Márta's devotion to chamber music has created opportunities to perform with members of the Cleveland, Orien, and Cooperstown Quartets, including performances with Miriam Fried, Ida Kavafian, and Colin Carr. Márta has also performed at music festivals including Donaueschingen Musiktage with Talea Ensemble, Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, Prussia Cove, and Kneisel Hall, where she was a founding member of the prize-winning Blue Hill String Quartet.

Márta was awarded the Dean's Prize at Yale University in May 2019 and the Presser Foundation Graduate Music Award from The Juilliard School in March 2021, and she received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in May 2024 as a recipient of the C.V. Starr Fellowship at The Juilliard School. In January 2024, Márta was appointed as the Director of Education and Community Engagement at Seattle Chamber Music Society (SCMS), where she will connect with the community of Seattle through outreach initiatives and SCMS's chamber music academy.

For my parents

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PREFACE

The origin of this dissertation stems from two specific instances. The first is a concert that I heard at Yale University in 2019, when the Brentano Quartet performed a program entitled "Lamentations." The performance included a variety of works including arrangements of madrigals by Gesualdo, Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ*, an Elegy for String Quartet by Dmitri Shostakovich, and another by Elliot Carter, Guillaume Lekeu's *Molto Adagio sempre cantante e doloroso,* and Béla Bartók's String Quartet No. 2. After the concert my colleagues and I went backstage to congratulate the quartet, and violinist Gregory Lewis said something to the effect of "the theme of this concert would be a really good dissertation topic!" In all fairness I owe Greg a huge thanks for serendipitously planting the idea for what would eventually evolve into this dissertation.

The decision to focus on the viola as the main protagonist of lamentation in the final two chapters was inspired by my personal love for the instrument and its rich repertoire of laments. A few months after the Brentano concert I had the pleasure of performing Bridge's *Lament for Two Violas* with my dear friend Bethany Hargreaves on my Yale graduation recital in April 2019, and, as such, the topic of lamentations within the viola repertoire was on the front of my mind as I entered my doctoral degree at Juilliard in September of 2019. While conducting preliminary research for a term paper in the first semester I discovered an article written by violist Paul Groh entitled "Elegiac Reaction: The Elegy in, and out of, the Viola Literature," which included a vast list of more than 200 works of elegies, laments, *lachrymae,* etc. And so, with this, the complete idea for the dissertation was conceived, and resulted in what is presented in these four chapters.

"…song is the most powerful imitator of all things. For it imitates the intentions and affections of the soul, and speech, and also reproduces bodily gestures, human movements and moral characters, and imitates and acts everything so powerfully that it immediately provokes both the singers and hearer to imitate and perform the same things."

Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), Florentine thinker and humanist

"My job is to be the storyteller, and I can do that better if I know the story behind the music."

Gabriela Lena Frank (1972–), composer, educator, and performer

Chapter 1: The Ancient World of Lamentation

The lament genre, as it is known in the study of Western music, is rooted in the cultural practices of Ancient Greek civilizations. The earliest records of these practices were historically maintained through the literary works or written retellings of oral traditions, notable writings from politicians and/or literate members of society, and pictorial etchings or paintings on archeological findings, all of which now serve as the most reliable sources for analysis and study by modern-day researchers. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the process of and impact that ritual laments had on the society, culture, and politics in which they were developed, and to illuminate how the adaptations of Classical ideals and literature in late-Renaissance opera recycled and perpetuated concepts of Ancient influence in its own voice.

I. The Ritual Lament: From *Próthesis* to *Triakostia*

Ancient Greek rituals are rooted in the relationship between a society and their gods. Little is known of the evolution of Ancient Greek religion following the collapse of the Mycenaean society; however, it is theorized that the religious beliefs and practices established in the 8th century BCE were maintained for a millennium and are most accurately represented in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Hesiod's *Theogony.*[1] As stated in *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, "The two most basic features of Homeric worship go back to the old Mycenaean-Minoan religion. They are polytheism, the worship of many gods and goddesses; and the ritual ways of honoring the

[1] Sarah B. Pomeroy, Stanley M. Burstein, Walter Donlan, and Jennifer Tolbert Roberts, "The 'Dark Age' of Greece and the Eighth-Century Renaissance," in *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 63.

gods: with sacrifices and prayers, processions, music, dancing, and hymn singing."[2] One of the most important religious practices of Ancient Greek society was ritual laments, which were highly structured memorializations of the human dead, fallen cities, and the gods. This chapter will focus on the human dead.

The ritual lament was a necessary and all-encompassing ceremony whereby the repercussions of disrespecting the dead or the process in which they were laid to rest were simultaneously lauded and feared. The ritual lament could begin only once the human was undoubtedly deceased (since it was considered to be a bad omen if weeping or lamenting began while they were still alive) and the soul had disengaged or broken free from the body.[3] Memorializing a deceased human through these sacred acts not only gave their life meaning but also "preserved a record of one's actions," and it "enabled one to participate posthumously in the ongoing life of the community. . . ."[4]

The ritual lament for the human dead was comprised of the *próthesis* (the laying out of the corpse)*, ekphora* (the procession to the grave)*,* and the visit to the tomb.[5] The entire ritual spanned thirty days of mourning and entailed a dual process of the physical, as the body was prepared and transported for burial through a series of steps, and the emotional, which invited catharsis in the form of vocal lamentations.[6] As stated by

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Margaret Alexiou, "Tradition and Change in Antiquity," in *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition,* rev. Panagiotis Roilos and Dimitrios Yatromanolakis, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 14, accessed March 15, 2021, https://chs.harvard.edu/read/alexiou-margaret-the-ritual-lament-in-greek-tradition/#.

[4] Charles Segal, "Song, Ritual, and Commemoration in Early Greek Poetry and Tragedy," *Oral Tradition* 4, no. 3 (1989): 331, accessed February 24, 2022, https://hdl.handle.net/10355/64652.

[5] Karen Stears, "Death Becomes Her: Gender and Athenian Death Ritual," in *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond,* ed. Ann Suter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)*,* 139.

[6] Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition,*14. A description of the thirty-day process is outlined in Karen Stears's essay "Death Becomes Her: Gender and Athenian Death Ritual."

scholar Margaret Alexiou in her seminal book *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition,* "The lament was by no means just a spontaneous outbreak of grief. It was carefully controlled in accordance with the ritual at every stage."[7] In other words, the physical and the emotional acts of navigating a life form from one stage to the next were necessary parts of the whole, and they were precisely executed as complementary forces.

Once deceased, the process of *próthesis* began. The body was returned to its *oikos* (the home), where it was washed by kinswomen, covered with layers of fabric and a shroud, laid on the back with the feet toward the door, and further adorned with herbs, leaves, vegetation, and, on occasion, jewelry.[8] Once prepared, the corpse was ready to be viewed in a wake where the chief mourner, usually the wife or mother, was placed at the head of the body, and other women and men gathered.[9] Visual representations of *próthesis* (this more so than *ekphora)* were recorded on pottery and funerary plaques in the Late Geometric style from the 8th century BCE, as well as later styles in the 5th century BCE.[10] As seen in Figure 1, the upper level of the image depicts a *próthesis* where the chief mourner stands around the head of the body with both arms raised overhead in the traditional pose of lamentation.[11]

As is typical of black- and red-figure scenes, the men are situated on the left side of the image "with their arms raised in salutation, palms facing outward, perhaps

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Stears, "Death Becomes Her," 141.

[9] Alexious, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition,* 17.

[10] Stears, "Death Becomes Her," 140–141.

[11] Unknown, *Terracotta Funerary Plaque*, ca. 520–510 BCE, terracotta black-figure, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accessed March 9, 2022, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/254801.

performing a prepared and orderly dirge."[12] In addition to the chief mourner, there are women located closer to the feet of the body who are also signaling gestures of lamentation. These women are non-kinswomen, or, more formerly, they are professional mourners who assist in the vocalized lamentations for the dead.[13] In contrast to the tidy arrangement of the men, the women are angularly arranged and are "depicted as being distraught. They tear at their hair as they sing their lament, moving around the bier as they grieve."[14]



Figure 1: *Terracotta Funerary Plaque,* Terracotta, ca. 520–510 BCE; in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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[12] Stears, "Death Becomes Her," 141.

[13] Alexious, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition,* 17.

[14] Stears, "Death Becomes Her," 141–142. Following one day of *próthesis,* the *ekphora* commenced on the third day and allowed transportation of the body for burial. Vase paintings of this scene, typically arranged from left to right, show men leading the procession followed by both kinswomen and professional mourners who collaborated in vocalized and gesticulated displays of lamentations—a performance that was sometimes accompanied by musical instruments.

The burial and cremation of the corpse was likely led by males since it involved more physical labor in handling the body, sacrificing animals, and perhaps even constructing the tomb. Following this rite, the family returned home for the funeral meal, and cleaned both themselves and the *oikos* to cleanse the environment of the ritual that came with handling the dead. Additional rituals were performed until the thirtieth day (*triakostia*), including the sweeping of the dead's house, the remnants of which were placed at the tomb, thus symbolically protecting the kin and family from the further pollution of death.[15]

It is important to differentiate that *próthesis* was conducted inside in the private space of the *oikos*, while the *ekphora* and burial at the tomb were publicly performed. By the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, public displays for the dead, particularly at the tomb, became a most fitting place for those of exceptional means to flaunt their wealth and power. As will be later addressed, these grandiose displays at the tomb became the primary target of funerary legislations, which affected not only ritual practices, but women. Nonetheless, the vocalizations and physical gestures of grief performed by kinswomen and professional mourners (as seen in the earliest iconography) are central to this study of lamentations, and it is the origin from which the vocalized lamentations of women evolved as a quasi-musical practice.

[15] This summary is paraphrased from Stears's article "Death Becomes Her," 142.

II. Sonic Foundations: *Thrênos*, *Góos,* and Birdsong

The two most common words associated with ritual laments in Ancient Greek usage are *thrênos* and *góos*.[16] The Indo-European etymology defines these terms as "'a shrill cry,' and both contain intense emotions associated with mourning—grief, anger, blame and so on—as well as words of praise for the deceased."[17] *Thrênos* is a previously *composed* dirge performed by female professional mourners, and *góos* is a general expression of grief performed specifically by kinswomen as a *stylized* ritual lament.[18] The freely stylized *góoi* is likened to what Alexious describes as "inarticulate wails and shrieks"[19] that were professed in response to the formalized *thrênos,* thus creating an antiphonal dialogue of verse and refrain.[20] In addition to these vocalizations, however, the ritual lament also involved bodily movement that was "frequently accompanied by the shrill music of the *aulós*," and likely "resembled a dance, sometimes slow and solemn, sometimes wild and ecstatic."[21]

The ontology of vocalized lamentation as music or speech is difficult for scholars to define because the ritual practices predated literacy and musical notation and were primarily preserved through iconography and oral traditions. Numerous scholars have turned to the literature itself, the written records of these oral artifacts, thus resulting in a variety of opinions regarding the sonic nature of lamentations. One method that helps

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[16] Olivia Dunham, "Private Speech, Public Pain: The Power of Women's Laments in Ancient Greek Poetry and Tragedy," *CrissCross* 1, no. 1 (2014): 5, accessed March 25, 2021, http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/crisscross/vol1/iss1/2.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 5; Alexious, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition,* 28.

[19] Dunham, "Private Speech, Public Pain," 6.

[20] Alexious, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition,* 28.

[21] Ibid., 18.

differentiate sung and spoken material is the analysis of the context in which the laments are presented (to go along with the structure of the text and meter). Addressing this in her article, "Private Speech, Public Pain," Olivia Dunham states: "Meter in tragedy distinguishes the speech of an actor from the song and the dance of the chorus, and we know from Ancient scholars, poets, and playwrights that each meter, together with the rhythm and melody of musical accompaniment, evokes a different emotional expression in song and dance."[22] The combined elements of cries, shrieks and sounds of despair did not simply align with song or speech, but were a combination of actions that some scholars likened to "speech-acts,"[23] activities that cultural anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis deemed a dialogue of "truth-claiming," which mediated a conversation between the living and the dead.[24]

As is evident from the research, there are two opposing narratives that seek to define the sonic nature of lamentations. Dunham describes a sound world that implements *musical* elements including "solo-chorus interplay, solo improvisation and antiphony, stylized sobbing, pitch alteration, and other musical techniques in combination with physical gestures."[25] Scholars Charles Segal and Susan Auerbach, however, describe the vocalizations as *non-music*, in the sense that the sounds were songful, but not musical.[26] Researcher Naomi Weiss further explored these concepts through an integrated approach, and describes women's lamentations as both "highly skilled song and

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[22] Dunham, "Private Speech, Public Pain," 3.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Cited in Dunham, "Private Speech, Public Pain," 4.
[25] Ibid., 33.
[26] Cited in Dunham, "Private Speech, Public Pain," 33

inarticulate noise,"[27] with references to both Segal's research on the "negated song" and the oxymoronic nature of Homer's phrase "joy in lamentation."[28]

As described by Weiss in her analysis of the written literature, poet Aeschylus writes of a scene in *Agamemnon* where Cassandra prophesied Queen Clytemnestra's murder. In response to this tragic vision, Cassandra vocalizes nonsensical and incomprehensible utterances that baffle the chorus of Argives elders. They react by saying:

> You're out of your mind, divinely possessed, you cry out about yourself a tuneless tune, like a vibrant nightingale, insatiable in her shouting, *pheu,* with a wretched mind, wailing *Itys Itys* for a death surrounded on both sides with evils.[29]

The chorus is describing a crazed and incomprehensible state in which Cassandra is wailing with grief from her vision, with specific comparison to a "vibrant nightingale"—a recurring literary motive linked to lamentation and song.[30]

The origin of the nightingale trope comes from the Sophocles tragedy *Tereus*.[31] In the story, King Tereus of Thrace visits Athens on behalf of his wife Procne, who since leaving, has longed to see her sister Philomela. Upon meeting Philomela, King Tereus is captivated by her beauty. And through unforgivable acts, he abducts her against her will and sends her into exile, while also cutting out her tongue so that she may never reveal

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[27] Naomi Weiss, "Noise, Music, Speech: The Representation of Lament in Greek Tragedy," *American Journal of Philology* 138, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 243, accessed February 22, 2022, doi:10.1353/ajp.2017.0012.

[28] Charles Segal, "Euripides' Muse of Sorrows and the Artifice of Tragic Pleasure," in *Euripides and the Poetics of Sorrow: Art, Gender, and Commemoration in Alcestis*, *Hippolytus, and Hecuba* (Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 1993), 16.

[29] Translated by Weiss in "Noise, Music, Speech," 243.

[30] Ibid., 253.

[31] The Sophocles tragedy *Tereus* was later retold in Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* Book VI, where Procne becomes the swallow and Philomela the nightingale. This version influenced later literature more than the original.

his heinous crimes. Upon returning to Thrace, King Tereus deceives Procne by claiming that her sister has died. In an effort to communicate without the means to speak and while in exile, Philomela weaves a tapestry that tells her tale. After managing to deliver the tapestry to her sister, Procne and Philomela take revenge on King Tereus by killing his only son, Itys. After realizing what has been done, King Tereus chases after the sisters with an axe, and the women beg to the gods to be transformed into birds so that they may escape. The gods take pity and grant them their wish, thus turning Philomela into a swallow, Tereus into a hoopoe, and Procne into a nightingale. In this story, the motive of the nightingale as a motif of lamentation is created by Procne's never-ending lament for the death of her son Itys through the "tuneless tune" of a songbird.

Weiss's translation of the nightingale's doleful cry as a "tuneless tune" is an example of Segal's previously mentioned "negated song" and speaks to the complex release of pleasure that is produced by suffering. In addition to its frequent usage as a literary trope, the metaphorical relation of women's laments to the nightingale's cry depicts imagery of the emotional sound world surrounding tragic scenes of lamentation and provides context for the history of song in tragedy. As a premise, the connection between birdsong and lamentation is elemental in the foundations of Greek music.[32] Birdsong is interpreted as the earliest form of music in the natural world, with the foundations of human song developing through means of *mimesis*.[33] The combination of musicality and noise as found in birdsong is also evident in women's lamentations, thus

[32] Weiss, "Noise, Music, Speech," 253.
[33] Ibid.

pointing to the lament genre "as a form of archetypal *mousikē*."[34] As further supported by Segal, "In the tragic poets, weeping is itself a type of song . . . [and] the tragedians are fond of using the lament of the nightingale as a motif for conveying this song-like intensity of emotion. But the nightingale is more than just a trite figure for grief. Its very voice is a distillation of unending lamentation, simultaneously songful and tearful."[35]

The language of Ancient Greek poetry (i.e., epics) itself is musical in that the poems were written to be sung to music and were created using poetic meters of rhythmic patterns that sculpted the topography of phrases within larger poetic structures. Tragic poetry, as it is perceived in the modern day, is represented as written-down versions of oral retellings, the traditions of which frequently overlapped with song, thus making these songlike traditions "coterminous with poetry" and, consequently, poetry coterminous with song.[36] Cassandra's lament is composed of sounds that are neither a tuneful tune nor "word-ful" poetry. They are instead the antithesis, "negated songs," which, much like Cassandra, have lost their own identity while in a crazed state of grief. Cassandra's vocalizations are nonsensical, almost nonhuman, and teeter between a "mix of inarticulate sound and lyrical musicality,"[37] the sound of which, as described by Homer, oxymoronically tames grief through catharsis, or the "joy in lamentation."[38]

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Segal, "Song, Ritual, and Commemoration in Early Greek Poetry and Tragedy," 339.

[36] Ibid., 330. In this quotation, Segal is referring specifically to the memorialization of noble deeds through song during the Archaic Period. Earlier on the same page, he notes how the Greeks blurred and overlapped categorizations of song and poetry in their tragic writings, thus making it safe to deduce that song and poetry were born of similar lineage in the Greek poetic tradition.

[37] Weiss, "Noise, Music, Speech," 244.

[38] Segal, "Euripides' Muse of Sorrows and the Artifice of Tragic Pleasure," 16.

III. The Written Word: Solon's Decrees, Democracy, and Male Lamentation

During the early stages of the lament's history, elements of the funeral ritual were typically held in public spaces, were treated as community events of mourning, and allowed wealthy families to partake in grandiose displays while processing to and ritualizing at the tomb. This, however, changed with the ruling of Solon (ca. 630–560 BCE). Given the integral role women played in the ritual lament as a whole, Solon's restrictions of public funerary demonstration could be interpreted as misogynistic. To a degree, this is accurate, but a more nuanced understanding of Solon's decrees is gained when the laws are viewed within a larger context.

Preceding the time in which Solon lived and ruled, Greek communities in the 8th century BCE were faced with the aftermath of hundreds of years of major political, societal, and economic shifts. These changes eventually resulted in the establishment of city-states, or the *polis,* which "came into being with the demographic and economic changes of the 8th century, [and] grew to maturity during the seventh and sixth."[39] The city-state, or the *polis,* encompassed a major city and its surrounding territories, functioned as the central governing unit, and was the foundation for what many consider to be the cradle of modern-day democracy.[40] Integration of these larger regions, or *dēmos*, under the umbrella of the *polis* was not always welcomed, however, and frequently resulted in warfare between and within the communities.[41] In addition to the widening

[39] Ibid., 82.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 83.

economic inequality, this created dire political instability, thus making the earliest versions of the *polis* an easy target for tyrants.[42]

The societies themselves were built upon a hierarchy that favored men of power who held influence in public spaces, with other functions and responsibilities left to women in the private, more domestic sphere. From the "Dark Ages" (1100–750 BCE) though the time of Solon, women were not considered to be autonomous beings but were, rather, subjects of men, and were thus judged based on how well their male guardian abided by traditions of the "male ethic."[43] In the Homeric sense, the social code for men was primarily centered around war, honoring the gods, and exhibiting acts of self-control.[44] As is indicated in the earliest literature, men were conditioned not to display weakness or fear. Showing pity to another was acceptable, but *self*-pity or weeping for oneself was looked down upon and revealed "a temporary lapse from their manliness" or "risk[ed] feminization."[45] Indications of a "good woman" included faithfulness to her husband, modesty, and being a respectable housewife and mother.[46] Similarly to men, however, women were scrutinized aggressively within their given spheres and were compared for their "beauty, skill and diligence in weaving, careful household management, and good practical sense."[47] In light of the totality of these acceptable social and cultural activities, the roles women played were essential to the success and

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece,* 61.

[44] Ibid., 60.

[45] Charles Segal, "Euripides' *Alcestis*: Female Death and Male Tears," *Classical Antiquity* 11, no. 1 (April 1992): 148, accessed March 2, 2022, https://doi.org/25010966.

[46] Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece,* 61.

[47] Ibid., 62.

growth of the immediate family and collective community, and their actions and voices were respected as "part of the public opinion."[48] This voice, however, while "respected," did not extend into the political realm, and thus women were not only societally bound to their male guardian but also subjected to laws created by a male-dominated political system.

Elected as ruler of Athens in 594 BCE, Solon implemented a number of reforms and restrictions, many of which were primarily aimed at narrowing the enormous wealth gap. These restrictions included regulations on funerary rituals, which not only affected families of means but also highly impacted women—both rich and poor. As is reported in Plutarch's biography entitled the *Life of Solon* (published in the 1st century CE):

> [he] made a law which regulated women's appearances in public, as well as their mourning and their festivals, and put an end to wild and disorderly behavior. When women went out of doors, they were not allowed to wear more than three cloaks, or to carry more than an obol's worth of food or drink, or a basket more than eighteen inches high, or to travel at night except in a wagon with a lamp in front of it.[49]

One can hypothesize that the restrictions listed regarding the quantity of cloaks and food are applicable only to those who can afford them, thus attempting to create less opportunity for a family of means to openly display their wealth as a public spectacle. It is not obvious whether professional mourners earned enough income to become specific targets of these laws; however, professional mourners were nonetheless impacted. As recorded by Plutarch, Solon specifically "abolished the practice of lacerating the flesh at funerals, of reciting set dirges, and of lamenting any person at the funeral ceremonies of

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Plutarch, "Solon," in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives,* trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960), 64: Internet Archive, accessed February 24, 2022, https://archive.org/details/risefallofathens00plut.

another. People were also forbidden to sacrifice an ox at the graveside, or to bury their dead with more than three changes of clothing, or to visit the tombs of others besides their own family except at the time of burial."[50] The outlawing of composed dirges in addition to lamentation for one of another family thus restricted performances of lamentation to next of kin, which, in addition to forbidding animal sacrifice at the tomb, regulates not only the roles of women but also of men, as well as the traditions of the ritual lament themselves. With these rulings, the public ceremony was downsized, thus likely not only to dampen exhibitions of wealth, but also to maintain order within the growing democratic ideologies of the *polis*.[51] These changes, however, also prompted a shift that created opportunities for men to publicly lament the dead. As stated by Dunham:

> The outlawing of women's laments in fifth- and fourth-century Greece gave rise to men's "funeral orations"—*élegoi, epitáphios lógos,* and *epikédeion*—which were contrived by male literary societies. These orations were devoid of explosive emotion and made use of controlled, subdued language, but expanded on and emphasized the elements of praise found in laments; they functioned in the male social and political sphere in a way very different from the oldest manifestation of the ritual laments.[52]

The *written* content of these male literary societies existed in many forms, including epigrams, or written inscriptions on tomb stones, and elegies, or poems written in elegiac couplets (dactylic hexameter followed by pentameter).[53] These elegies were usually sung

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Stears, "Death Becomes Her: Gender and Athenian Death Ritual," 142. Stears states, "These stresses on the system and the concomitant legislation have been associated with the rise of the Athenian *polis* and the changing relations between it and Athenian familiar groupings, and with the growth of ideologies concerning political and legal equality—for instance, the establishment of the public burial of the war dead and the *epitaphios logos* (the annual state funeral speech)—as well as with the social control of women."

[52] Dunham, "Private Speech, Public Pain," 24.

[53] Antonio Aloni, "Elegy: Forms, Functions and Communication," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric,* ed. Felix Budelmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 168–169, accessed December 2, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521849449.010.

accompanied by an *aulós,* and they existed in both private and public settings.[54] The former generally honored militaristic, societal, and political events in a style that seemed "filtered through a pensive—sometimes even sorrowful—attitude," while the latter were dramatic narratives performed in festivals, expressing "celebratory, exhortatory and funerary" occasions.[55]

IV. Scenes of Lamentation: Homer's *Iliad* and Euripides's *Alcestis*

Before engaging with the writings of Homer and Euripides, one should reiterate that ritual laments, as they have been previously described, were real events that embodied a sacred practice within Ancient Greek society. Methodological issues underlying the study of these Ancient rituals, however, are complex. The ritual, as Segal states, is "a symbolic-mimetic performance" of "a make-believe world" that is intended to "have an effect on the 'real world.'"[56] The interaction of these two worlds invites fulfillment of the religious duties bestowed by the gods and also provides a platform for grieving and commemoration. The primary issue musicologists, anthropologists, and Greek historians have encountered in attempting to study such rituals is that there is no direct evidence beyond representational artifacts. These include, but are not limited to, vase paintings, epigrams, and literature, all of which are invaluable in hypothesizing practices of the Ancient world, but are sparse in their existence, and fluid in their interpretation.[57] Furthermore, the re-creation of the "real" world in a "parallel" world

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[54] Ibid., 171.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Segal, "Euripides' Music of Sorrows and the Artifice of Tragic Pleasure," 14.

[57] More detailed insight into the methodological issues surrounding these phenomena can be found in the Preface of Margaret Alexiou's *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition.*

poses issues of inconsistency. For example, the transfer of myths, practices, and stories through oral retellings across generations is unstable given human nature, thus affecting the accuracy in transcribing such memories to writing. In this sense, imitation or reflections of the "real" world in drama could never truly present an accurate copy of the original. Nonetheless, these surviving artifacts are crucial sources of study and, as comprehensive sources of analysis, solely contribute to scholars' abilities to hypothesize an accurate representation of the ritual lament as it was practiced by Ancient Greek civilizations.

The oldest and best-known Ancient Greek writings are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey.* The duo epic was written in the early part of the Archaic Period (750–490 BCE) and is a compendium of long narrative tales that were intended to be presented to an audience as sung or recited verse.[58] Philologists, linguists, anthropologists, and scholars of Ancient Greek studies alike have long speculated on the origins of these epics and have theorized that the poems were not written singularly by Homer, but were more likely compiled as a collection of lays and ballads written by "generations of anonymous literature poet-editors."[59] Samuel Butler's unconventional conclusion is addressed in his book *The Authoress of the Odyssey* and went so far as to suggest that the *Odyssey* was written by "a woman—young, headstrong, and unmarried."[60] Many modern-day scholars

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[58] Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece,* 52. Researchers and classical scholars Milman Parry and Albert Lord concluded that Homer's duo epic came to be as a result of "the oral-formulaic theory." In the process of relaying Ancient stories, one recomposed as they went along, and referenced stock formulas and themes that were both easily recognizable, memorizable, and variable.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Samuel Butler, *The Authoress of the Odyssey* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1922, and Project Gutenberg, last updated November 21, 2021), 142, accessed March 3, 2022, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/49324/49324-h/49324-h.htm.

(who frequently mention Butler's work) have come to agree that the duo epic was not written by Homer alone, but by a collection of poets. In a podcast interview from the episode "A History of Epic," the Brandeis University professor and Homer scholar Leonard Muellner speculates that "60 to 70 percent of the creativity that went into the verbal art came from women," and "specifically came from the kinds of songs that women [would] sing on occasions [appropriate for] lamentations and love songs. . . ."[61] This specification of storytelling from women, in combination with ritual acts of lamentation and love songs, points to another theory mentioned by Muellner. The environments in which epic or tragic poems are performed are not specific to sacred or secular events, but are rather woven into an intertwining cultural tapestry stitched of myths, ritual acts, politics, social occasions, religion—everything. As described by Muellner, "At a religious festival at which poetry is performed, poetry looks to us [modern folk] like a secular event, but in Antiquity, it is a totally coherent thing."[62] For example, the performance of an epic poem, like the *Iliad,* at a religious event celebrating Apollo, would necessitate the bard or singer to alter the content of the poem to honor Apollo's divinity. Thus, the symbiotic relationship of elements yielded varying results depending on the environment. As retold from a different vantage point, the podcast's host, Jack Visnjic summarizes Muellner's point saying: "Each instance of a ritual would have a profound effect on a particular episode in the epic, then a sequence of thousands of

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[61] Cited in Jack Visnjic, "Episode 18: A History of Epic," September 11, 2018, interview with Gregory Nagy and Leonard Muellner, in *Ancient Greece Declassified,* podcast, MP3 audio, September 11, 2018, 22:24–23:11, accessed March 4, 2022, https://greecepodcast.libsyn.com/18-a-history-of-epic-w-gregory-nagy-and-leonard-muellner-homer-iliad-gilgamesh.

[62] Ibid.

rituals over the years would put pressure on different pieces of the epic, and the whole epic would morph over time."[63]

With this scholarship in mind, the written versions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* used in the modern day have remarkably survived thousands of years since their inception in oral tradition. The poems as single, written representations culminated from a vast collective memory of Ancient storytellers and, as such, existed as countless versions during their lifetime.

The portion of this epic duo that is most relevant to the study of ritual laments comes from the *Iliad.* This poem, while written in the mid-8th century BCE, tells of the events and characters involved in the Trojan War,[64] which theoretically occurred at the height of the Bronze Age (1600–1150 BCE) and is dated ca. 13th century BCE. It is a time commonly referred to as the Age of Heroes during which the Mycenaean civilization lived and, from the perspective of Homer, is glowingly reflected on as a far superior era compared to his own. It is described as one of riches and architectural magnificence, with men who were braver, stronger, and more heroic in their status as demigods. This admiration for the past develops as a trope in the *Iliad* and molds a perspective of Homer's civilization that attempts to empower the present through the strength of the past.

In Book 24 of the *Iliad,* Akhilleus's wrath has consumed him. He is enraged by the death of his friend and fellow soldier Patroclus, who fell at the hands of Hektor, and has taken it upon himself to humiliate Hektor's honor by roping his body to the back of a

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[63] Ibid., 20:00–20:27.

[64] The existence of the Trojan War is also highly speculated by scholars.

chariot and dragging it around Pactroclus's burial mound. Upon observing this for eleven days, Apollo decides to take action and reminds the gods of Hektor's consistent devotion to their honor. The majority favor Akhilleus, who was born to the goddess Thetis, whereas Hektor is a mere mortal, but Zeus steps in as the voice of reason, deciding that while these men cannot be honored equally, Hektor was the dearest mortal to the gods and never withheld his share of gifts and sacrifices. With this divine certainty, Zeus summons Thetis to abate her son Akhilleus's rage so that he may agree to accept a ransom in place of Hektor's body. After receiving Zeus's message from Iris, Priam prepares the ransom consisting of robes, cloaks, bars of gold, and a precious cup that was gifted to him from the men of Thrace. Despite his wife's accusations of foolishness, Priam sets off bound for the Greek camps—and his enemy. Upon his arrival, Priam quietly slips into the hut where Akhilleus is dining and falls to his knees, kissing his hands. He beckons Akhilleus to think of his own father, who, by virtue of Akhilleus still being alive, has his protection, whereas Priam stands vulnerable, having lost many of his sons in battle—the best of whom was Hektor. He appeals to Akhilleus's heart and asks for mercy out of respect for the gods and his own father. For what appears to occur for the first time in the epic, Akhilleus finds strength beyond his wrath and recognizes Priam's pain within himself. Here, at this poetic juncture, Priam utters the most moving statement in the entire epic:

> Think me more pitiful by far, since I
> have brought myself to do what no man else
> has done before—to lift to my lips the hand

of one who killed my son.[65]

Both men wept in memory of their respective losses, and together the sound of their lamentations filled the hut.

Shortly after, the men shared a meal while women of Akhilleus's clan began preparations for the ritual lament. They bathed and anointed Hektor's body with oil, dressed him in clean clothes, and, in an act of nobility and courage, Akhilleus himself placed Hektor's body upon a cushion in preparation for *próthesis* by Hektor's own people. Upon Priam's return, Hektor's body was met with the wails of Kassandra, who summoned the city with her lamentable cries. As Homer describes it,

> Now, at the sight of Hektor, all gave way
> to loss and longing, and all crowded down
> to meet the escort and body near the gates,
> till no one in the town was left at home.
> There Hektor's lady and his gentle mother
> tore their hair for him, flinging themselves
> upon the wagon to embrace his person
> while the crowd groaned. All that long day
> until the sun went down they might have mourned
> in tears before the gateway.[66]

Shortly after, Hektor's body was displayed for *próthesis.* With Hektor's head laid between the hands of his wife Andrómakhê, singers are invited to lead the dirge, with wails answered by the moans of kinswomen.[67] Following this scene, Andrómakhê, his

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[65] Homer, "Book Twenty-Four: A Grace Given in Sorrow," in *The Iliad,* trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux and Anchor Books, 2004), 578. The English translation yields a numbering of the poem's lines that differs from those used to reference the original Greek text. For the sake of consistency, I will use page numbers.

[66] Ibid., 585.

[67] In the translation of Homer's *Iliad* by Robert Fitzgerald, he specifically notes that the dirge was led by men. Other translations do not specify the gender but rather keep the translation gender neutral. Charles Segal's translation in his article "Song, Ritual, and Commemoration," 337, says: ". . . and they stationed singers beside him as leaders of the dirges, and they lamented him in grieving song, and over him the women groaned." This translation both offers a gender-neutral translation of the singers and provides a clearer picture of the antiphonal cries between the professional mourners and kinswomen.

mother Hékabê, and his sister Helen offer eulogies by his bedside to memorialize his legacy.

Hektor's funeral scene from Book 24 is the only section within the *Iliad* that can be formally identified as a ritual lament because it exemplifies elements of a public ceremony with the invitation of professional mourners.[68] As is emphasized in Christine Perkell's chapter "Reading the Laments of *Iliad* 24," the laments given by Andrómakhê, Hékabê, and Helen are peculiar in their content and remembrance of Hektor. This creates the need to differentiate the lament as it would have been practiced in real life from its use as a poetic device in the epic.[69]

One of the central claims regarding Homer's *Iliad* is its fearless representation of the "heroic code" and the fossilization of heroic acts in the written word of poetry. On separate occasions, Hektor comments on the inevitability of his own memorialization as a hero, with one such example from *Iliad* Book 7:

> "This is the mound of a man who died long ago in battle, Who was one of the bravest, and glorious Hektor killed him." So he will speak some day, and my glory will not be forgotten.[70]

When looking at the content of the laments given by the three women, they fail to mention the *kleos* (glory) and remembrance that Hektor so aspires towards in this quotation, and throughout the entire epic.[71] In the cases of Andrómakhê and Helen, the women even convey bitter feelings of resentment or blame for abandonment. As asserted

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[68] Christine Perkell, "Reading the Laments of *Iliad* 24," in *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond,* ed. Ann Suter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 95.

[69] Ibid., 94.

[70] Quoted in Perkell, "Reading the Laments of the *Iliad* 24," 96.

[71] Ibid., 94.

by Perkell, the placement of the antithetical reactions of the three laments in the concluding scene are subversive to Hektor's pursuit of heroic fame, and thus "function to put heroic ideology into question."[72] In this sense, Homer's *Iliad* creates a dialogue between the past and the present, between the heroic tradition as it was perceived and perpetuated from the 13th century BCE and the time period in which Homer was writing in the 8th century BCE.

In terms of the overall narratology, the structural placement of the ritual lament functions as the last words within the epic. Homer's strategic location and content of such a scene within the context of the epic's emphasis on male heroism could thus be interpreted as social commentary on what it means to be a true hero. It further places the reader's affections with the women, and, with that, the poet's appreciation for them, which "from the perspective of his 'more sublime thought-world,' honors the women and their values more than the *characters* in the poem do."[73]

The relationship between Hektor's ritual lament as a poetic device and its role in the real world is interpretational. However, in an effort to reconcile the literature with the cultural practice, here is one perspective. The general portrayal of women in Ancient Greek societies as "unhappy" and inferior is frequently attributed to their restrictions in social, political, and economic power. Within this established social hierarchy, however, women were *expected* to lead ritual laments noisily and emotionally by extension of their duties in the domestic and spiritual spheres—regardless of whether or not they themselves felt sadness. Despite the imposition of contradiction, the import of duty

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., 95.

empowered women with knowledge of ritual lament, and "may be thought of as enhancing their status rather than reinforcing their inferiority."[74] In the context of Andrómakhê's, Hékabê's, and Helen's ironic remembrance of Hektor, it could be interpreted that Homer's strategic placement of the women as having the final say favored their perspective over those of the purported hero, thus providing a platform for women's voices to be freely heard without repercussion. This literary representation of women speaking honestly and rationally about the reality of their lives can be paralleled with the role that real-life lamentations held for men. In other words, the social expectations for females to rely on men for rationality can be flipped around so that men depend on women to express grief on their behalf through lamentations. In the *Iliad,* Homer allows the women to take on both roles through their lamentations. The women not only emotionally express their grief, as would be expected, but also challenge or subvert the heroic code by rationally acknowledging how the traditional expectations of heroism affect their livelihood and daily living on a very basic level. This deeply personal perspective would likely be known only by women of this period, thus further supporting the previously theorized notion of Homer's *Iliad* being a stitched-together version of a multitude of stories—most notably the stories of women.

In a recent study of the dramatic use of the ritual lament in tragedy, scholar Ann Suter published the chapter "Male Lament in Greek Tragedy" in her edition of the book entitled *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond.* In this chapter Suter challenges the notion that ritual laments are practiced solely by women both in literature

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[74] Ibid., 152.

and in real life, as she aims to "redress the imbalance in the focus of current scholarship."[75] As Super states,

> This essay, however, does not assume that lament *in tragedy* is a properly female activity. Rather it undertakes to determine exactly how gender-related such activity in fact was *in tragedy* and then considers some possible patterns in male tragic lament and if attitudes toward males lamenting in tragedy were different from those determining what was expected of a man in everyday life.[76]

Suter roots her conclusions in a study by Elinor Wright, whose unpublished dissertation, "The Forms of Lament in Greek Tragedy," meticulously catalogued an objective set of criteria comprised by meters and stylistic features extracted from her analysis of tragic lamentation for the human dead.[77] The main finding Wright uncovers is that of the forty-two plays (which she identifies as containing elements from her set of criteria), five contain only male lamentation and six have only female; thus, as stated by Suter, "These figures do not suggest an overwhelmingly female genre."[78] Suter then presents a collection of plays in which "prime-of-life" Greek males freely lament without social repercussions or criticism. One of these includes *Alecestis* of Euripides*,* which Charles Segal wrote extensively about in his article "Euripides' '*Alecestis*:*'* Female Death and Male Tears."

In brief, Segal addresses the well-accepted observation that literary depictions following Homer categorized tears as a gendered construct, but that displays of such grief through women allowed men "the cathartic release of tears without suffering the stigma

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[75] Ann Suter, "Male Lament in Greek Tragedy," in *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond,* ed. Ann Suter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)*,* 156.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Paraphrased from Suter, "Male Lament in Greek Tragedy, 157. Elinor Wright, "The Forms of Lament in Greek Tragedy" (unpublished PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1986), accessed on March 3, 2022, ProQuest, https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/form-laments-greek-tragedy/docview/303519673/se-2.

[78] Suter, "Male Lament in Greek Tragedy," 158.

of womanliness."[79] Segal does, nonetheless, make a case for literary representation that supports expression of male grief, and he does so through examples from Euripides's *Alcestis.* In the final scene, a servant brought the devastating news of Alcestis's death. Heracles, the sympathetic friend, supports Admetus in weeping for his lost wife. Admetus admits that he did not share the tragic news with Heracles at first because he intended to hide it, consequently to suppress his grief. After sighting a veiled woman accompanying Heracles, Admetus became overwhelmed with grief in remembering his wife, and in the open, public space outside of his house, Admetus wept. He cries:

> There in her face the loved one of my dreams
> Looked forth.—My heart is made a turbid thing,
> Craving I know not what, and my tears spring
> Unbidden.—Grief I knew 'twould be; but how
> Fiery grief I never knew till now.[80]

Unlike in other poems in which men tell other men to suppress their grief (e.g., the final scenes from *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the *Heracles*, and the Euripidean *Suppliants),* here Heracles does not admonish Admetus for openly weeping, but supports him. In this scene, as Segal remarks, "Through Admetus's prolonged display of grieving and weeping, Euripides explores the places where the rigid dichotomies of male and female behavior in this society collapse and where there is even an overlapping of male and female roles."[81]

Drawing connections between Suter's and Segal's arguments, one finds it imperative to

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[79] Segal, "Euripides' *Alcestis,"* 150.

[80] Euripides, *Alcestis,* trans. Gilbert Murray (Project Gutenberg, last updated December 23, 2003), accessed March 7, 2022, https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10523.

[81] Segal, "Euripides' *Alcestis*," 152.

recall a particular scene from Homer's *Iliad.* The first statement of the epic tells of Akhilleus's wrath, which permeates and unfolds as a motif throughout the narrative. In the particular scene of grief shared between Akhilleus and Priam in Book 24, Akhilleus's wrath is subdued by the tender pleas of Priam, and Akhilleus, the fearless warrior who was given birth by a goddess and bound to the heroic code by blood and tradition, disobeys by agreeing to return his enemy's body. And without the help of lamenting women, both men weep together out of pity for themselves—and neither reproaches the other. In this moment, Akhilleus is not memorialized for what he gains through wrath, but what he accomplished as an anti-hero. Such achievement is won through Akhilleus's acts of courage finally to lament the loss of his comrade—nonetheless, in front of another man, his enemy's father—and his moral decision to return Hektor's body so that it can receive a proper ritual lament.

This interpretation is in line with scholar Richard Martin's statement that Akhilleus is "the one hero most practiced in the genre of lament,"[82] a notion taken further by scholar Karen Bassi, who identifies tragedy's function as one that reflects on and recreates an "idealized masculinity," which "testifies to the desire to imitate what is no longer to be seen in the 'real life' of the city."[83] Thus, with these examples, it is most appropriate to recall Ann Suter's initial argument that aimed to redress and rebalance the gender dichotomy inherent to lamentations as they are depicted in tragedy, and as they are practiced in real life. In summary, she concludes that both genders lamented in their own ways and both were empowered by acts of lamentations in their own right.

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[82] Quoted in Suter, "Male Lament in Greek Tragedy," 169.

[83] Quoted in ibid.

Furthermore, she states, "There seem to have been, then, two kinds of behavior, male and female, which were regular and predictable. The behavior of each 'consisted of a set of conventional . . . responses to death, both sanctioned and required by society.' It may be, then, that men lamented more than is usually claimed in real life as well as in tragedy."[84]

As has been discussed thus far, two distinct categories of the ritual lament have been identified. One is performed by kinswomen, and the other by professional mourners in the form of *góos* and *thrênos,* respectively. The implementation of Solon's laws restricted the practice of ritual laments to private settings by next of kin, and new, publicly acceptable genres rooted in literary societies of men emerged. The latter gradually replaced the former, thus removing the practices of vocal lamentation at the wake in favor of a formalized written lamentation at the tomb.[85] These genres, however, did not arrive out of thin air but, rather, from the elements of "commemoration and praise, which had been present in the archaic *thrênos,"* which Alexious attributes to the lineage and artistic development of lyric poetry—a genre that was also generally exclusive to men.[86]

V. Lyric Poetry and the Lament Bass in Late-Renaissance Opera

Lyric poetry was primarily developed in the Hellenistic Period (323–30 BCE),[87] but was alluded to in the early 4th century BCE as a "mode of imitation" in Aristotle's

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[84] Ibid., 171.
[85] Alexious, "The Ritual Lament for Gods and Heroes," in *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition,* 200.
[86] Alexious, "Tradition and Change in Antiquity," *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition,* 28.
[87] Ibid., 200

*Poetics (*published ca. 335 BCE*)*.[88] In contrast to the lengthy, dramatic narratives of epic poetry, the sensual and often miniature qualities of lyric poetry explored the inner experience of the main character, frequently accompanied by a lyre—presumably from which its name originated. One of the most famous lyric poets from the late Hellenistic Period was Ovid (43 BCE–ca.17 CE), whose career began with the love elegies *Amores* (16 BCE) and *Heroides* (ca. 16–15 BCE), later writing his best-known work, *Metamorphoses* (8 CE).[89]

Ovid's poems, along with other examples of Ancient texts, were revived during the Renaissance in reverence to the teachings bestowed in Classical art and philosophy,[90] and were reset in operatic works, including Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* (1600), Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1607), and his *L'Arianna* (1608). Generally speaking, the plot of the lyric poetry featured a main female character in distress who was confronting loss, heartache, or abandonment. In these scenarios, the character expressed her grief in a mournful lament, an Italian *lamento*—the emotional power of which eventually came to be represented by another "mode of imitation," or topical device: the lament bass.

According to Ellen Rosand in her book *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice,* the lament did not develop out of opera but, rather, inserted itself as a distinct entity that

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[88] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Samuel Henry Butcher (Project Gutenberg, last updated January 22, 2013), pt. 1, accessed April 16, 2021, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1974/1974-h/1974-h.htm#link2H_4_0003. Lyric poetry is alluded to in addition to Aristotle's explicit listing of epic, tragic, comedic, and dithyrambic poetry as modes of imitating humankind's actions.

[89] James W. McKinnon and Robert Anderson, "Ovid," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* last modified January 20, 2001, accessed April 5, 2021, ed. Deane L. Root, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.51463.

[90] Richard Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music,* vol. 1, *Music from the Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 382.

stemmed from its long history in Ancient Greek tragedy and lyric poetry.[91] Early on, 16th-century Italian operatic composers were drawn to creating musical adaptations of the literary laments in an effort to capture the poetic beauty and nuance of the text in musical language, an effort that Rosand says came to fruition in Renaissance vocal works by the 1640s.[92] The repurposing and morphing of the lament's narrative roots into a dramatic tool suitable for opera allowed it to be distinguished from arias and recitatives in its function as "the affective crux of the narrative structure."[93] This strategic placement of the highly emotionalized *lamento* as the musical highpoint both within the operatic structure and the emotional trajectory of the protagonist "provided the occasion for special formal development [through] the display of particularly expressive rhetoric and affective imagery."[94] In simpler terms, the dual function of the *lamento* as the emotional apotheosis of the protagonist and the climactic point within the structure of the opera created the need for resolution. Thus, in a sense, the *lamento* gave the opera purpose.

One of the earliest and most famous *lamenti* comes from Monteverdi's opera *L'Arianna.* The story is based on Ovid's tenth poem from *Heroides* and features Arianna's lament upon the rock following her abandonment by Theseus.[95] The inaugural performance of *L'Arianna* in 1608 was a huge success; and as stated in a review of its premiere, "…[*Arianna*] being performed by both men and women who excelled in the

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[91] Ellen Rosand, "*Il lamennto:* The Fusion of Music and Drama," in *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 361.

[92] Ellen Rosand, "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament," *The Musical Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (July 1979): 353, accessed March 12, 2021, http://www.jstor.org/stable/741489.

[93] Rosand, "*Il lamento:* The Fusion of Music and Drama," 361.

[94] Rosand, "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament," 347.

[95] Leofranc Holford-Streven's article "'Her Eyes Became Two Spouts': Classical Antecedents of Renaissance Laments" explores the poetry of Ariadne and Theseus in detail, in addition to the influence of Latin poetry within the trajectory of the lament's history.

art of singing, succeeded most admirably in the lament that Ariadne, abandoned by Theseus, sang on the rock; it was performed with so much feeling [*affetto*] and in such a pathetic manner that not a single listener remained unmoved, nor did a single lady fail to shed some small tear at her plaint."[96] Monteverdi's compositional prowess, in combination with an emotionally gripping performance by the soprano Virginia Andreini Ramponi, not only created a truly memorable musical event but also supported and helped solidify *L'Arianna's* legacy as one of the archetypal *lamenti* that many composers referenced as a blueprint thereafter.

Approaching Arianna's *lamento* from a more analytical stance, one discovers that much of its success comes from the music's accentuation of the text. The musical language is open-ended and stylized (much like the *góoi* professed by kinswomen), the flexibility of which allows for more personal interpretation and expression as a "soliloquy" that is easily distinguished as a stand-alone scene within the context of the opera.[97] In its goal to serve the text, the music is both structured and structureless in its shapeshifting malleability, and thus "no superimposed form determines its shape."[98] Arianna's *lamento* thus does not follow the closed structural qualities of an aria, but is instead identified by Rosand as an example of the recitative model, with the suppleness and sensitivity of the music serving as a vehicle of expression for Arianna's emotionally unstable and unpredictable state.

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[96] Quoted in ibid., 347. Suzanne Cusick's article entitled "'There Was Not One Lady Who Failed to Shed a Tear'" addresses this same quotation by Federico Follino, and discusses the social implications of "Modern Womanhood" in 17th-century Italy. Anne MacNeil's article "Weeping at Water's Edge" responds to MacNeil's feminist approach with one that interprets weeping as a cultural trope.

[97] Ibid., 346.

[98] Rosand, "*Il lamento:* The Fusion of Music and Drama," 363.

Another lament type that is of *more* import in its codification as a genre is Monteverdi's setting of the *Lamento della Ninfa,* or "Lament of the Nymph," published in his eighth book of madrigals in 1638. "Nymph" and Arianna's *lamento* share similar attributes of text-setting and heightened expression, but the two main distinguishing factors of the former are the music's setting of strophic text and its construction over a repeating descending tetrachord. As shown in Figure 2,[99] Monteverdi juxtaposes the repetitive yet sturdy harmonic direction of the bass with a complex vocal line containing suspensions, syncopation, phrase overlap, and dissonance, which, in effect, completely blurs the strophic structure of the text.[100] Additionally, Monteverdi specifically notes in the subtitle that while every other work in this book of madrigals should be sung "regularly," the lament "should be sung more freely," thus further supporting the strophic lament's function as the most expressive moment of catharsis within the scheme of the madrigal collection.[101]

Monteverdi's experimentation with the recitative lament from *L'Arianna* and the strophic lament from the *Lamento della Ninfa* paved the way for further exploration by other operatic composers. While the recitative model was regularly utilized for its flexibility, it was the descending-tetrachord ostinato, particularly in the minor mode, that became favored for its ability to invoke the strongest sensations of tragedy. Francesco Cavalli (1602–1676), a contemporary of Monteverdi, utilized both lament models in

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[99] Claudio Monteverdi, "Amor" from *Lamento della Ninfa* in *Madrigals, Book VIII,* ed. Nicholas Sceaux and Sébastien Amadieu (Bordeaux: Éditions Nicolas Sceaux, 2012), mm. 1–32, accessed May 3, 2022, https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/d/d0/IMSLP269048-PMLP82381-LamentoNinfa-concert.pdf.

[100] Rosand, "*Il lamento:* The Fusion of Music and Drama," 369.

[101] See footnote 13 in Rosand, "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament," 351.

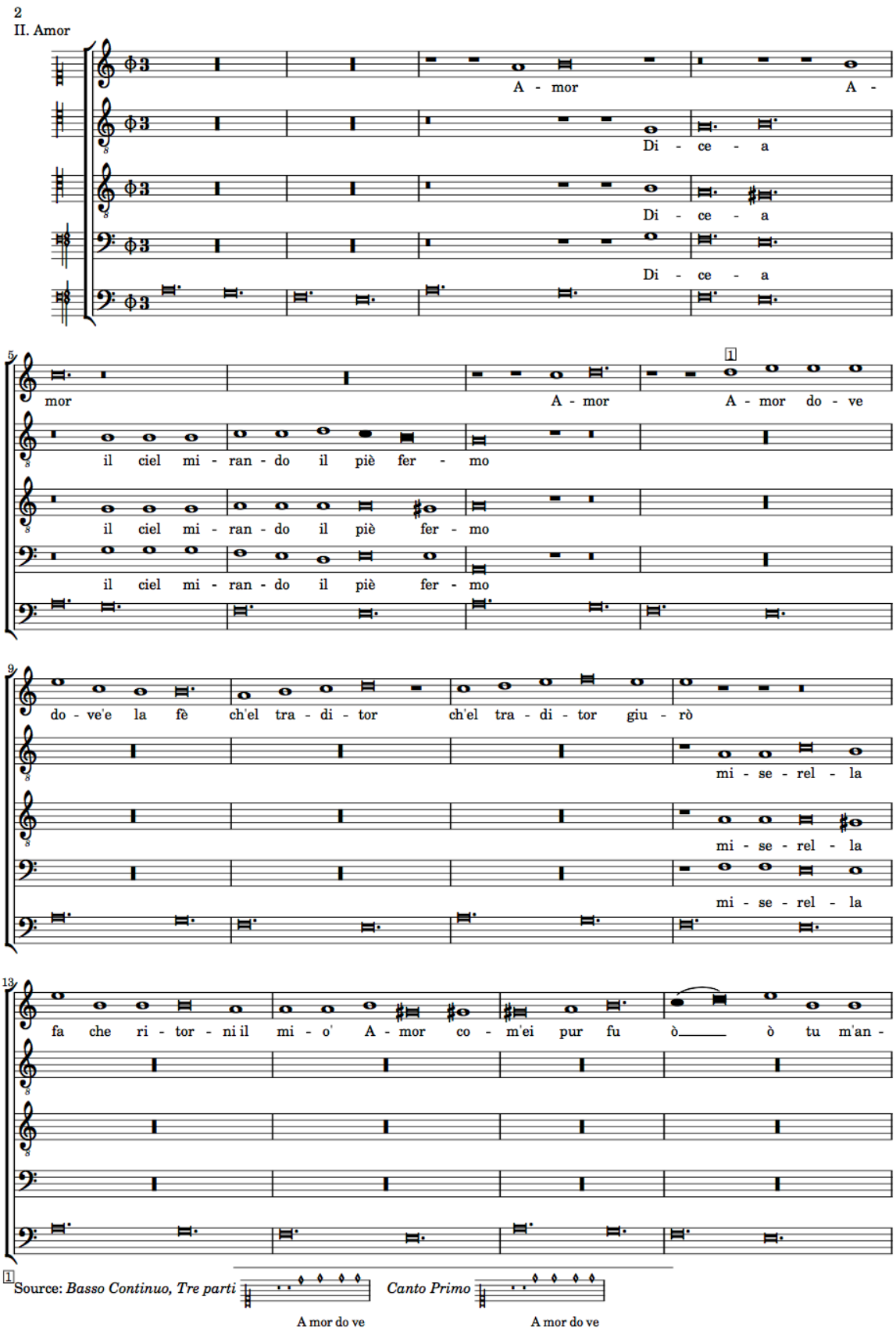
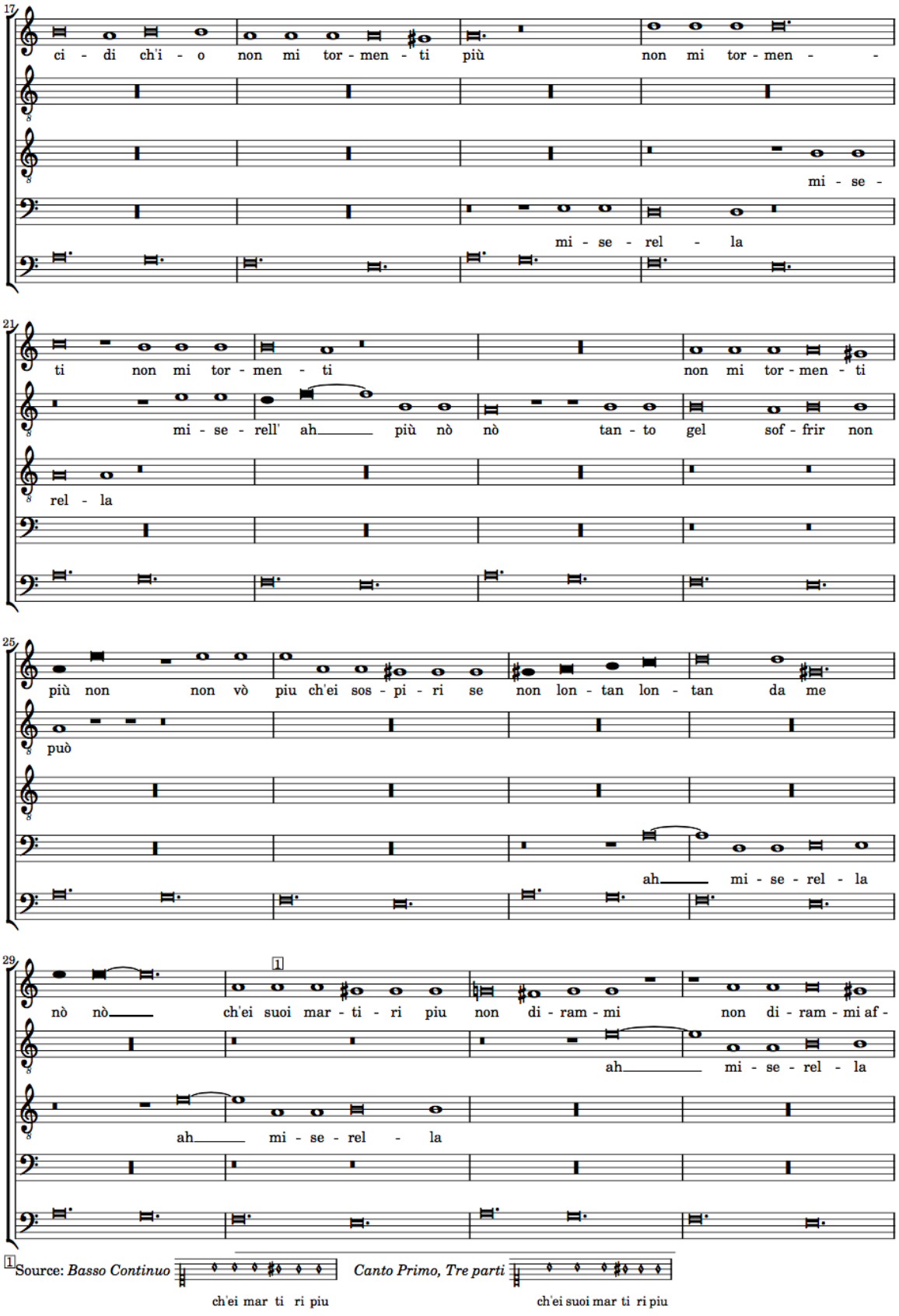


Figure 2: Use of expressive musical devices over the descending-tetrachord ostinato in Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa.*


17
ci - di ch'i - o non mi tor - men - ti più non mi tor - men - -
mi - se -
mi - se - rel - la
21
ti non mi tor - men - ti non mi tor - men - ti
mi - se - rell' ah più nò nò tan - to gel sof - frir non
rel - la
25
più non non vò piu ch'ei sos - pi - ri se non lon - tan lon - tan da me
può
ah mi - se - rel - la
29
1
nò nò ch'ei suoi mar - ti - ri piu non di - ram - mi non di - ram - mi af -
ah mi - se - rel - la
ah mi - se - rel - la
1 Source: Basso Continuo
ch'ei mar ti ri piu
Canto Primo, Tre parti
ch'ei suoi mar ti ri piu

varying capacities in all of his twenty-seven operas.[102] His second opera, entitled *Gli amori d'Apollo e di Dafne* ("The Loves of Apollo and Daphne"), was written just two years after Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa* in 1640 and exemplifies how the various formations of the lament genre could further serve dramatic forces in operatic writing. The libretto, written by Giovanni Francesco Busenello (1598–1659), is based on the myth of Apollo and Daphne from Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* Just preceding the final scene, Daphne the nymph has transformed into a laurel tree to escape the pursuit of Apollo, and thus follows Apollo's lament.

Busenello's construction of Apollo's lament into nine strophes of four-lined text gave Cavalli numerous choices of how the words could be set to music. Instead of strophically setting the text or overlooking the structure entirely, Cavalli chose to group the stanzas into episodes that correlated with varying styles of orchestration, thus taking command of the text through musical reinforcement.[103] The first two stanzas are set using the recitative model (i.e., as in Arianna's *lamento*), the next three use the strophic lament model grounded upon a descending-tetrachord ostinato (i.e., as in *Lamento della Ninfa*), the next three again employ the recitative model, and the last strophe is a new aria.[104] The texture of the music flawlessly morphs with Apollo's emotional journey and sets the canvas for Apollo to paint feelings of disbelief, self-pity, and self-imposed worthlessness. In the last stanza, Apollo's unrelenting commitment to Daphne is musically supported by melismatic lingering on the word "divinity," followed by a Picardy third, which

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[102] Jane Glover, "The Operas," in *Cavalli* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc, 1978), 86.
[103] Rosand, "*Il lamento:* The Fusion of Music and Drama," 367.
[104] Ibid.

poignantly concludes Apollo's lament. The oscillation between the freely stylized recitative and the more structured strophic lament is magnified by their opposite effects. In other words, "The intensity of recitative becomes all the more expressive as it breaks free from the restraints of measured aria style, and the restraint of the aria style in turn earns tension from having succeeded in reining in an emotional outburst."[105] The significance of Cavalli's artistic ability interweave the recitative model seamlessly is, as Rosand recognizes, increasingly progressive within the evolution of 17th-century opera.[106] As she states, Apollo's lament "offers an early instance of the conventional lament-aria based on the tetrachord," with further exemplification of "the pairing of two contrasting arias bridged by recitative," thus pointing ahead to the eventual establishment of the lament aria as the weightier of the two styles starting in the mid-1650s.[107]

While Cavalli was influenced by stylistic and structural components evident in Monteverdi's Arianna-like and Nymph-like models of the lament, it is Cavalli who is given the most credit for fossilizing the emblematic structure into the history of opera. Over the course of his twenty-five-year career as an operatic composer, every one of his twenty-seven operas incorporated laments that, even in their frequent usage, were neither dull nor repetitive, thanks to his unwavering appetite for musical variation and experimentation.

Nearing the turn of the 18th century, the *lamento* generally retained its structural placement as the most dramatic point in opera, but the musical elements themselves were

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[105] Ibid., 375.

[106] Ibid., 372.

[107] Ibid., 372 and 377.

subject to experimentation by Cavalli and his contemporaries. It is assumed that by this point, the main components[108] of the style were embedded so strongly in the aural memory of the *lamento's* history that they "were considered as much a part of the lament convention as the tetrachord itself, and even sometimes served as substitutes for it."[109] Even a fragment of the descending tetrachord in diatonic or chromaticized forms (as was used in Cesti's *Argia* from 1669) was enough to imply the musico-dramatic intentions. And some composers who were well versed in the *lamento* style would simply write *lamento con violino, adagio,* or even just *con viole* or *con violini*, which was enough of an indication for the musicians instinctually to know the sound world the musical language would reflect.[110] The totality of the lament's history and its continued recognition outside of typical contexts points to its historical and musical significance, the strength of which further solidified Rosand's groundbreaking designation of the descending tetrachord as an "emblem of lament." In her words,

> But the lament surpassed all of the other conventions in its impact. From the very outset it had a stronger identity, one that was both musical and dramatic, and indeed, was actually defined by the combination of those two elements. And its identity was reaffirmed and solidified, not only in opera but in monody and aria books that developed symbiotically alongside, influencing and in turn being influenced by operatic developments. The lament did not require a context in order to be recognized—it could (and did) exist independently of opera.[111]

Following its rich history in the operatic tradition, use of the descending tetrachord persisted in and outside of its operatic context into the Baroque period with compositions by George Frideric Handel, J. S. Bach, and Henry Purcell, thus establishing

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[108] Ibid., 376. The primary components of the *lamento* include triple meter, slow tempo, string accompaniment, and melody with syncopations and suspensions that conflicted with the descending tetrachord.

[109] Ibid., 377.

[110] Ibid., 378.

[111] Ibid., 384.

and maintaining its position as a *topos* of lamentation. The codification of the lament bass was further secured by its incorporation into textless compositions, or instrumental works, such as the *Adagiosissimo* movement from J. S. Bach's Capriccio in B-flat Major, BWV 992. This concept, however—the crossover between vocal and instrumental traditions, and more specifically instrumental works of a vocal nature that explore themes of lamentation—will be further explored in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Wordless Meaning in Instrumental Works
The Lament Bass within Topic Theory

The end of the Renaissance witnessed the rise of instrumental music and, consequently, a fascination with discovering new ways to inscribe meaning into music without words. As seen in word-based music of the Renaissance, works composed in the *seconda prattica* style yielded musical figurations at the service of the text. In this sense, the music described, illustrated, and further adorned the literal meaning of the text through word painting. While similar adaptations of word painting were transferred into some instrumental music of the early Baroque period, wordless music of the 17th century was subjected to an infusion of rhetorical devices typically used in oration or speech.[1] This blurring of music with linguistics sparked the interests of music critics, composers, and philosophers, including Johann Mattheson (1681–1764), Johann Adolf Scheibe (1708–1776), and Jean-Jacque Rousseau (1712–1778), who addressed the ontology of music as it relates to language. With this context, from the Baroque period (1600–1750) leading into the Classical period (1750–1830) and beyond, the association of particular musical styles and genres with specific contexts developed a versatile "alphabet" of musical signs, formally known as topics, that comprised the "mixed" musical language used in late-18th-century instrumental music.

Chapter 1 addressed the harmonic character of the descending-tetrachord ostinato and its frequent association with scenes of lamentation in late Renaissance vocal works based on stories from Antiquity. Over time, this contextual association cemented the

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[1] Dietrich Bartel, "Principles of Rhetoric in German Baroque Music," in *Musica Poetica: Musical-Rhetorical Figures in German Baroque Music* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 57.

identity of the descending tetrachord as the lament-bass topic, thus enabling the figure to symbolize its expressive qualities in musical scenarios outside of its original context. According to Leonard Ratner in his seminal book *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and, Style,* topics are a language of musically-oriented rhetorical figures and symbols.[2] In contrast to word painting, topics reference the most salient features of a previously established musical genre or style *without the use of words,* thus encoding the music with "characters from everyday musical life"[3] that can variegate its meaning and interpretation.

I. A Pre-Requisite to Topic Theory: John Dowland's *Lachrimae* (1596)

John Dowland's (1563–1626) *Lachrimae* (1596) is one of the most famous examples of an instrumental work that utilizes the falling-fourth figure as an extramusical symbol of *lachrimae,* or tears. While the title directly characterizes the somber mood of the work, the heavy lilt of the duple-metered pavan, the downward falling gestures, the melodic use of minor intervals, the frequent Phrygian cadences, and the hesitant rhythms all embody sentiments of sadness that are implicit in the music itself,[4] thus further echoing techniques of tone painting that were utilized in the madrigalist style. As is

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[2] Leonard G. Ratner, "Topics," in *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 9.

[3] Danuta Mirka, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory,* ed. Danuta Mirka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2, accessed March 30, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199841578.001.0001.

[4] The Renaissance composer and theorist Thomas Morley wrote in his treatise *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597) that the most appropriate intervals to use when "expressing a lamentable passion" are to include "motions proceeding by half notes, flat thirds, flat sixths, which of their nature are sweet, specially being taken in the true tune and natural air with discretion and judgement." Thomas Morley, "Treating of Composing or Setting of Songs," in *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke,* 1st ed., ed. R. Alec Harman (London: Dent & Sons, 1952): 290.

evident in the figure's formation (see Figure 1),[5] the opening falling-fourth gesture in the upper voice is the melodic version of what eventually became the harmonically-grounded lament-bass ostinato in earlier vocal works written by Monteverdi and Cavalli. While the functions of each figure vary, both are identical in direction and intervallic formation, are utilized in minor keys, and represent affects of lamentation, thus making their mention vital to this investigation of the lament-bass topic.



Figure 1: Mm. 1–4 from John Dowland's *Lachrimae*

John Dowland, after being refused the position of court lutist for Elizabeth I in 1594, traveled across Europe for over a decade (1594–1609), where he visited Germany, Denmark,[6] and, most notably, various parts of Italy (including Rome, Venice, Padua, Genoa, Ferrara, and Florence).[7] During his time abroad, Dowland composed three important works based on the falling-fourth figure. As mentioned, the first work, *Lachrimae* (1596), was written for solo lute, the second, *Flow My Tears* (1600), for voice and accompaniment using words set to the melody of *Lachrimae* and published in

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[5] John Dowland, "*Lachrimae,"* in *The Collected Lute Music of John Dowland,* ed. Diana Poulton and Basil Lam (London: Faber Music, 1974), 67.

[6] Taruskin, *Music from the Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century*, 382.

[7] Diana Poulton, "Chapter 1: The Life of John Dowland," in *John Dowland,* rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 36. Dowland's intention to study with madrigalist Luca Marenzio while in Italy did not come to fruition because of legal issues.

Dowland's *Second Booke of Songes or Ayres* (1600), and the third version, *Lachrimae, or Seaven Teares Figured in Seaven Passionate Pavans* (1604), written for five-part consort. These works, while independent, are structurally and aesthetically connected by the "tear motive," and in conjunction with the titles, they reflect the somber passions so frequently inscribed in music written during the Elizabethan Age of Melancholy. Given this context, and in anticipation of the Italian *lamenti* a few decades later, one wonders how much Dowland's music of melancholia influenced his surroundings while traveling, and how much Dowland himself was influenced by the rise of Italian music in his homeland.[8] As stated by lutist and biographer Diana Poulton, "As he [Dowland] travelled through Italy he left traces of his music in the memories of Italian musicians . . .," inevitably through meetings with composers, including Giulio Caccini (1551–1618), and visits at various ducal palaces.[9] There is even evidence that Dowland's music was subjected to plagiarism, further suggesting his stardom—or carelessness—while abroad.[10] Furthermore, as pointed out by Christopher Hogwood, "In all, with over 90 settings of Dowland's pavan and closely related pieces now traced, it is apparent that it was used, in fact, 'as a starting point for compositional and performative elaboration rather than as a sacrosanct entity.'"[11] Hogwood's mention of the figure "as a starting point for compositional and performative elaboration" points to yet another layer embedded in the history of the descending-tetrachord figure: its use as an educational tool to aid young composers in

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[8] Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music,* vol. 1, 743.

[9] Poulton, "Chapter 1: The Life of John Dowland," 36.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Christopher Hogwood, "John Dowland at the Keyboard," *Early Music* 41, no. 2 (May 2013): 256, accessed September 21, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43307431.

mastering basic schema of composition. With reference to Robert Gjerdingen's book *Child Composer in the Old Conservatories,* the two most basic idioms taught at the earliest stages of compositional training were 1) cadences and 2) the rule of the octave.[12] At the onset of tonality leading into the Baroque period, the harmonization of ascending and descending scales included harmonic structures flanked at both ends by cadences, thus yielding embedded versions of the lament bass.

Given the growing number of permutations of Dowland's pavan(s), the fluidity of musical styles that passed between England and the mainland, the utilization of the figure as an educational tool, and its predominance in a variety of works from different regions within the same timeframe, one senses that it is difficult to know whom to credit regarding the designation of the "tear drop" device or the descending-tetrachord motive as the musical figure of melancholy. But surely John Dowland's aforementioned pieces played a key role in laying the contextual groundwork for what became the traditional 18th-century interpretation of the lament-bass topic.

II. An Early Prototype of Topical Exploration: J. S. Bach's *Capriccio,* BWV 992

Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685–1750) *Capriccio* in B-flat Major, BWV 992, is an early 18th-century instrumental work that consists of a variety of topical references. While predating the Classical timeframe typically prescribed to topic theory, the work is a valuable prototype that (similarly to Dowland's *Lachrimae)* exemplifies topical characteristics in the making.

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[12] Robert O. Gjerdingen, "Schemas, Exemplars, and the Treasure Trove of Memory," in *Child Composers in the Old Conservatories: How Orphans Became Elite Musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 85–88.

J. S. Bach's *Capriccio* was written ca. 1702–1704 and bears the programmatic subtitle *Capriccio sopra la lontananza de il fratro-dilettissimo,* which translates to "Capriccio on the Departure of the Beloved Brother." This title has been interpreted in a number of ways but is typically connected with the departure of J. S. Bach's eldest brother, Johann Jacob, who entered the Royal Swedish Army "as oboist in the guards."[13] However, owing to the inauthentic and disputed use of "*fratello*" (the Italian term for full brother) instead of "*fratro*" (a generic and non-familial term for brother) in printed scores, scholar Christoph Wolff deems it unlikely that the "brother" Bach is referring to is one of blood, and suggests that he is, rather, a "brother" of camaraderie.[14] As discussed in his book *J. S. Bach: The Learned Musician*, Wolff theorizes: "Indeed, [Georg] Erdmann is a most plausible dedicatee of the piece, whose chronological place, on musical grounds, fits much better before 1704 and whose origin may actually go back to Lüneberg, where it could have been written for some kind of graduation party among friends."[15] The sincerity of the *Capriccio's* dedication within the unusual context of this program-based work shows clear signs of experimentation that can be observed at first glance in the "charmingly pretentious concoction of Latin and Italian" titles that point to a "self-conscious search for artistic identity."[16] Furthermore, however, the qualities of "storytelling" that assist in portraying Wolff's "graduation party" are achieved through the free implementation of stylistic and topical choices—including the lament bass.

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[13] Christoph Wolff, "Bypassing a Musical Apprenticeship," in *J. S. Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000), 74.

[14] Ibid., 75.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

Analysis: J. S. Bach's *Capriccio* in B-flat Major, BWV 992

The opening movement of the *Capriccio* begins with the most common and simple phrase model of I ii^{o6} V I, and yet the passing tones and lilting rhythms in the right hand guide the senses towards feelings of nostalgia (see Figure 2).[17] The tune begins mid-thought, mid-measure, perhaps reflecting the vocally-based *Arioso* marking: a genre that is typically inserted in the middle or at the end of a recitative to soften its declamatory nature, and to create continuity. The scenery of this first movement is set by the subtitle *"Adagio. Ist eine Schmeichelung der Freunde, um denselben von seiner Reise abzuhalten,"* which describes a group of friends asking their "brother" not to depart. The melody presented in the first measure ponders up and down by thirds within a motivic 16th-note gesture that saturates the movement. The figure is particularly noticeable in mm. 10–12 (see Figure 3), where tension is generated through repetition and slowly rising scalar patterns in the right hand, only for the phrase to cadence in resignation (m. 12). The build-up is answered by the following measures (mm. 12–17), thus trying once again to replicate a questioning in the music through a similar method of repetition. This time, however, the expectation is heightened using a descending bass line that



Figure 2: Mm. 1–2 from J. S. Bach's *Capriccio, "*I. Arioso"

[17] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Capriccio B-Dur, sopra la lontananza del fratello dilettissimo, BWV 992*, ed. Hartwig Eichberg (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1976). All further excerpts from J. S. Bach's *Capriccio* come from this source.



Figure 3: Mm. 9–17 from J.S. Bach's *Capriccio, "*I. Arioso*"*

drops below and comes back up to an extended cadence on the dominant (mm. 14–16), which resolves to the tonic halfway through the final measure. The patterns plead in their repetition, similar to insistent supplications in human speech, thus embedding this *arioso* movement with speechlike rhetorical gestures most fitting of its operatic foundations.

The second movement is a short yet intricate four-voice fugue subtitled "*Ist eine Vorstellung unterschiedlicher Casuum die ihm in der Fremde könnten vorfallen,"* which warns the traveler of misfortunes lying ahead in foreign lands. The fugue is launched in quasi-attacca mode using D as a common tone between B-flat major of the previous movement and the mediant key of G minor (see Figure 4). Use of the common tone in the soprano voice is a clever trick of the ear that comes to fruition as the countersubject enters in m. 2, thus making it known that the modulation is new, and perhaps even "foreign." The layering of fugal entrances culminates in the final measure of the movement, which comes to a halt on an 8th rest and a shocking tonicization of a C-major

triad. The 4-3 suspension embedded in the inner voice is left hanging, only to find its purpose as the leading tone for the next movement.



Figure 4: Mm. 1–3 from J. S. Bach's *Capriccio, "*II. *Ist eine Vorstellung unterschiedlicher Casuum die ihm in der Fremde könnten vorfallen*"

The *Adagiosissimo* movement, the most intimate and poignant episode within the entire work, is set to the subtitle "*Ist ein allgemeines Lamento der Freunde."* Unable to dissuade the "brother" from departing, the crowd laments. The movement begins not as one would expect, as the hanging leading tone of E from the previous movement resolves into F minor, and, as seen in Figure 5, a chromaticized version of the descending-tetrachord ostinato, or the lament bass, is established. The arrangement of pitches (F, E-natural, D-flat and C), however, is atypical and does not follow the general lament pattern of 1, L7, L6, 5 in the minor mode, but, as will become evident, the opening figuration plants a seed for what is to come.

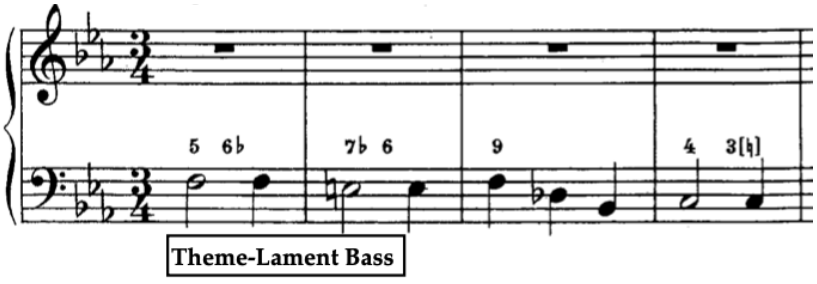


Figure 5: Mm. 1–4 from J. S. Bach's *Capriccio, "*III. Adagiosissimo"

In combination with the anticlimactic arrival in F minor, the opening texture of the third movement reveals the bare bones of figured bass, which invites the performer to

freely interpret the progression in personal response to Bach's implied rhetorical question: "How do you choose to lament?" The simple harmonies and texture of the chorale echo the effects of an instrumental introduction as heard before the entrance of a lamenting soprano in a late-Renaissance or early-Baroque opera. For example, in Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas (*written just 13–15 years prior, ca. 1688*),* "Dido's Lament" is prefaced with a barren instrumental texture that, in its scarcity of notes, highlights the falling lament bass. Within the triple-meter structure, the fully chromaticized accentuations of the bass line are stressed for the duration of the first two beats, thus elongating the suffering qualities through accented dissonance. As triple meter was not uncommonly used in ostinato-based passacaglias, it is not surprising that the metrical division of a chromatic lament-bass line is similarly used in two works written decades later by J. S. Bach: the cantata *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* (Weeping, lamenting, worrying, fearing), BWV 12 (1714), and the *Credo-Crucifixus* of the Mass in B Minor*,* BWV 232 (originated in 1714). It is unlikely that Bach interacted with Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, given its performance history; however, these overlapping features strengthen the foundation in which the lament-bass topic was created and further contextualize J. S. Bach's use of the figure in various pieces. Furthermore, the connection between this set of works and their Renaissance predecessors implicates the ongoing compositional transformation, historical prominence, and rhetorical strength of the descending-tetrachord ostinato as a topic of lamentation outside of its original operatic context. To this effect, as it relates to Bach's *Capriccio,* BWV 992, Ellen Rosand states: "Here, in a keyboard work based on the descending tetrachord ostinato, without text, the lament

affect is projected by a purely musical figure: the pattern itself declares its precise iconographic significance, an emblem of lament."[18]

Following the operatic chorale introduction, Bach's lamenting aria commences. Looking at Figure 6, one can propose that the structural arrangement of the aria possesses two formal forces at play: one organizes each extemporization upon the lament bass into variations, while the other pairs the variations into larger units that show an overlapping and organic development of related material. The following analysis will use these formal relationships to interpret further the interaction of the lament bass within the architecture of the work.

The first pair of variations in Figure 7 yields a single line of sighing figures that are developed through a deliberate rhythmic delaying of the third beat. The lament-bass "Theme," as it was established in the first four measures, is reiterated exactly in Variation 1 (mm. 5–8), with a minimal (yet notable) alteration of octave displacement on the tonic and dominant bookends in Variation 2 (mm. 9 and 12). The distance that is created both in the octave's visible description in the music and its physical requirements on the keyboard yields literal space. As such, the notion of creating space is complemented with the need to fill it. And as seen in the bass lines of Variations 3 and 4 (mm. 13–20) in Figure 8, the octave leap is saturated with a fully chromaticized lament bass. In Variation 3, the right hand harmonizes the chromatic bass line using strictly structured rhythmic gestures that highlight its sequential nature. Variation 4 yields a syncopated version of the sighing figures from Variation 1, with a subtle inclusion of a

[18] Rosand, "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament," 358–359.

Main Sections	Paired Sections	Lament Bass	Description
Theme (mm. 1–4)	Standalone	Yes-Modified	Figured bass only; Initial statement that establishes the lament-bass ostinato.
Variation 1 (mm. 5–8)	A1 and A2	Yes-Modified	Same bass line as the theme with sighing figures in the soprano.
Variation 2 (mm. 9–12)		Yes-Modified	Same bass line with the modified sighing figures that more clearly outline the sequence.
Variation 3 (mm. 13–16)	B1 and B2	Yes-Chromatic	Fully chromaticized lament bass with modified sequential pattern in soprano.
Variation 4 (mm. 17–20)		Yes-Chromatic	Fully chromaticized yet rhythmically varied bass line with syncopations in the soprano; touch on the Neapolitan in m. 20.
Variation 5 (mm. 21–24)	C1 and C2	Yes-Chromatic-Soprano	Ascending and inverted lament bass in the soprano line.
Variation 6 (mm. 25–28)		Yes-Diatonic	Imitation of C1 soprano line with downward motion of a diatonic version of the lament bass.
Variation 7 (mm. 29–32)	D1 and D2	Yes-Chromatic	Fully chromaticized lament bass with rhythmically augmented chromaticized versions in the soprano.
Variation 8 (mm. 33–36)		Yes-Chromatic	Overlap between paired sections that is further blurred by the passing off of chromatic lines between the soprano and bass.
Variation 9 (mm. 37–40)	E1 and E2	Yes-Diatonic/ Modified	Fragmented statement completed with octave displacement; second half of phrase is extended and not part of the lament bass.
Variation 10 (mm.41–44)		Yes-Modified-Variation 1	Seamless return of Variation 1 with octave jumps in bass line and brief touch on the Neapolitan that is part of large Phrygian cadence.
Post-cadential (mm. 45–49)	Standalone	Yes-Chromatic/ Modified	Post-cadential material is transitional and expresses qualities of a recitative. It is comprised of descending and ascending versions of the lament bass with the latter version achieved through octave displacement.

Figure 6: Large-scale organization of J. S. Bach's *Capriccio, "*III. Adagiosissimo"



Figure 7: Mm. 5–13, J. S. Bach's *Capriccio, "*III. Adagiosissimo"



Figure 8: Mm. 13–20, J. S. Bach's *Capriccio,* "III. Adagiosissimo"

harmonic sigh that is achieved through a momentary touch on the Neapolitan chord in m. 20. The chromaticized bass line in Variation 4 provides a stable foundation for the syncopated gestures to play off of, but as is to be expected, it is modified with the inclusion of two ascending 8th notes on the third beat that resist the downward spiral of chromaticism—the importance of this will reveal itself in the next set of variations.

Before analyzing the next set of phrases, one should point out that Variations 5 and 6 (mm. 21–28) are situated directly in the center of the movement and are flanked on both sides by two pairs of variations and four measures of introductory/post-cadential material (see Figure 6). Variations 5 and 6 distinguish themselves with a specific formation of the lament-bass pattern, thus making a case that these measures are the pinnacle within the arch of the movement. Looking directly at the material itself, one sees

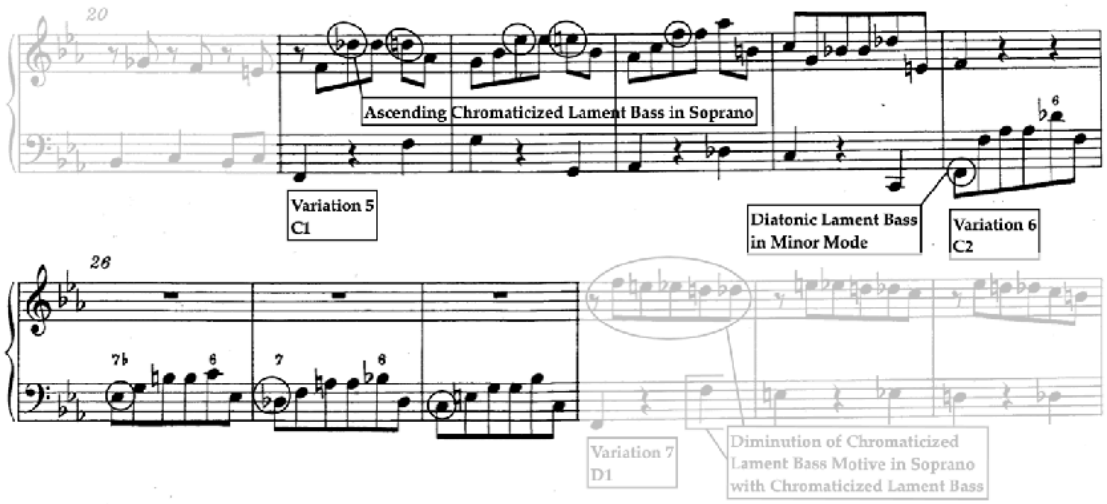


Figure 9: Mm. 21–28, J. S. Bach's *Capriccio, "*III. Adagiosissimo"

that the most obvious distinction in Variation 5 is the *ascending* pattern in the top voice of the *right* hand (see Figure 9). As influenced by the ascending third beats in the left hand from the previous variation, Variation 5 takes this gesture further, thus (while missing the C) outlining a nearly complete chromaticized/ascending version of the tetrachord. In the following variation, the general arrangement of voices in the left hand shadows that of the right hand from Variation 5, and yet the first note of every measure outlines a diatonic version of the lament bass—the first of its kind in the movement, and the version most attributed to its historical roots.

While upon a fragmented lament-bass line, the right hand in Variation 7 restates a chromaticized version of the descending lament bass, but this time as a diminution of the chromatic soprano line from Variation 5. Leading into Variation 8, the left hand takes over the falling chromatic lines from the soprano, and at this juncture Variations 7 and 8 overlap, blurring the distinct beginning and ending of the ostinato pattern (see Figure 10).

The left hand's chromatic shadowings elide with the right hand's semitone gasps that comprise Variation 9, and here a clear statement of the lament bass is lost (see Figure



Figure 10: Mm. 29–36, J. S. Bach's *Capriccio, "*III. Adagiosissimo"

11). The ostinato pattern is broken, and what remains are fragmentations of chromaticized sighs that are reminiscent of Variation 1. Moments later, however, a true recapitulation of Variation 1 is revealed, with the original sighing gestures, the modified lament-bass line, and a colorful hint at the Neapolitan, which this time appears in a nebulous second inversion. The post-cadential material following the quasi-recapitulation again features a diminution of the chromatic lament bass; but this time it is realized first in its descending



Figure 11: Mm. 37–49, J. S. Bach's *Capriccio, "*III. Adagiosissimo"

formation, only to be directly followed by an ascending version that is completed with octave displacement.

Following the F-minor (or -major) cadence at the end of the third movement, the fourth movement bursts forth with dominant chords that, in stark contrast to the *lamento,* quickly divert the mood. This drastic character change is fitting of the subtitle "*Allhier kommen die Freunde (weil sie doch sehen, daß es anders nicht sein kann) und nehmen Abschied*," which loosely depicts a startling realization that the crowd's comrade is not turning back. This movement is brief and, within the overall context, can be interpreted as an instrumental interlude that cleanses the emotional palate in preparation for movement 5.

The final two movements are not based on the emotional sounds of the human voice, but on that of the posthorn, which likely would have been recognized by any community member in Bach's time.[19] The fifth movement, called "V. *Aria di Postiglione,"* and the sixth movement, "VI. *Fuga all' imitatione di Posta,"* translate to Aria of the Postillion (the coach driver) and Fugue in Imitation of the Courier. And they are just as comical as they are symbolic. The change of character is welcome in juxtaposition to the severity of the previous segments, and the final movements, as a pair, elicit a "tongue in cheek" humor that one would expect to find in works influenced by the *commedia dell'arte* or opera buffa. Nonetheless, Bach chooses to compose an "Aria"—a rather serious term for a tune that could easily be whistled in jest—whose main theme is answered by the octave jumps of the posthorn in the second measure. In the sixth and

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[19] Wolff, *J. S. Bach: The Learned Musician,* 74.

final movement to follow, the posthorn motive is utilized as the countersubject, thus creating a zany and comical ending that belies the piece's initially sullen characterization.

In conclusion on this section on Bach's *Capriccio,* it is pertinent to reflect on the *Adagiosissimo* movement, which, through its puzzle of shapes, gestures, and patterns, is unified by pivots around particular modifications of the lament-bass pattern. Using the lament bass as a building block, the expressive potential of this *lamento* is taken to the extreme through Bach's hybridization of a loosely structured ABA^1 rounded-binary form within a quasi-variation structure, thus utilizing the form's flexibility as a vehicle for greater expression. Similar language has been used in reference to Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa,* in which the expressive needs of the text are fulfilled through the malleability of the form. The difference here, however, is that while Bach does manipulate the form for expressive utility, the use of the lament-bass topic yields various layers of cohesion both on aesthetic and structural levels, while simultaneously conveying sentiments of lamentation without the use of words. In this vein, Bach also emulates the human voice. The sighing gestures, for example, while interpretational, are portrayed through the dissonant groans of semitones, which, according to theorist Johann Mattheson, was the most appropriate interval to use when musically mimicking human sadness and cries. This relationship between the emotion and its musical representation falls in line with 18th-century North-German music critics who viewed the linkage

between music and emotion as rooted in the doctrine of mimesis.[20] As stated by Danuta Mirka, "According to this doctrine . . . the function of arts was imitation of nature but, while fine arts imitate the physical world, music should imitate the world of human passions as they express themselves in inarticulate cries and sighs as well as accents and inflections of articulated speech."[21] While the aforementioned quotation of Mirka pertains directly to the perceived and theorized representational efforts of Baroque composers, it is decisively relevant to concepts of Classical composition and style, in which a transformation of the imitative arts "paints the passions"[22] in a similar, yet new light.

III. A Case for Topics: W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421

Music is and has always been representational to some degree. Composers of the Renaissance wrote music that sang in the numbers and proportions of the cosmos, while late Renaissance and Baroque composers recreated sounds of nature (i.e., pictorialism or word painting)—with the latter specifically incorporating rhetorical devices of speech and oration that carried into the Classical period. Composers of the Classical era also wrote music that imitated, but rather than creating objective representations in mono-expressive movements, Classical composers, as it is theorized by music critics of the time

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[20] Quoted in Mirka, *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory,* 12. Translated by Ernest C. Harris in Danuta Mirka's "Introduction" from Mattheson's treatise *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739). "Since, for example, joy is felt [empfunden] as an expansion of our animal spirits [Lebens-Geister], thus it follows reasonably and naturally that I could best express this affect by large and enlarged [erweiterte] intervals. Instead, if one knows that sadness is a contraction of these subtle parts of our body, then it is easy to see that the small and smallest intervals are the most suitable for this passion [Leidenschaft]. If we further consider that love is in fact essentially a diffusion of the spirits [Geister], then we will rightly conform to this in composing, and use similar relationships [gleichförmigen Verhältnissen] of sounds (intervallis n. diffusis & luxuriantibus)."

[21] Ibid.

[22] Wye Jamison Allanbrook, "'Ear-Tickling Nonsense': A New Context for Musical Expression in Mozart's 'Haydn' Quartets," *The St. John's Review* 38, no. 1 (1988): 6, accessed September 13, 2022, https://digitalarchives.sjc.edu/items/show/507.

(e.g., Johann Jakob Engel and Heinrich Koch), aimed to "paint the passions" or directly represent the emotion itself, using a dynamic, colorful, and theatrically-influenced language of musical characters.[23] As famously stated by Johann Jakob Engel (1741–1802), "The composer [of the Classical Period] should always paint feelings rather than objects of feelings. . . . One should . . . paint the inner movements of the soul in a storm rather than the actual storm that arouses these movements."[24] In other words, music of the Classical period repurposed the representation of the *object* into a musical embodiment of the *emotion* itself: a process that Leonard Ratner (among others) argues was aided by topics.

In his book *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style,* Ratner acknowledges how Classical music of the late-18th century became subject to a "thesaurus of characteristic figures," or topics that, when utilized, allowed instrumental music the opportunity to speak and reference extramusical concepts without the necessity of words.[25] Using Ratner's research as a basis, modern-day scholars, including Kofi Agawu and Wye Jamison Allanbrook, have perpetuated research on topic theory that emphasizes how the expressive potentials of the characteristic figures were shaped by the context in which the topics originally gained their meaning.

As described by Ratner, topics are "subjects for musical discourse."[26] They are musical signs extracted from cultural idioms of the "commonplace," thus comprising an expressive alphabet of musical gestures known to the 18th-century audience. In her

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[23] Ibid., 6

[24] Quoted in ibid., 10.

[25] Ratner, *Classic Music,* 9.

[26] Ibid.

article "Ear-Tickling Nonsense," Wye Jamison Allanbrook states, "The characteristic styles, the 'commonplaces' of musical discourse, are a ready-to-hand vocabulary of musical expression gathered from the simpler music written to accompany daily activities: court life, worship, the hunt. From their connections to the noble, middle-class, the humble, the pious and impious, whatever is proud or abased, tranquil or restless, antique or modern, in these occasions, they draw their referential power and their affect."[27] In a sense, the topical language used by many Classical composers consisted of colloquial symbols that were derived *from* and *of* the people and were seen as recognizable elements of day-to-day life. So, within this context, for an audience member of the 18th century (and even of today), how can one recognize and interpret the meaning of a topic? And how was the topic's meaning initially acquired? Firstly, as stated by Allanbrook in reference to Heinrich Koch, instrumental works, and hence topics, are contextualized by the *occasion* in which they originated, thus "provid[ing] the particularity the medium lacks by itself." And as such, in continuation, "'the political, religious, or domestic' associations they bring with them supply the context that complements the indeterminate feelings aroused naturally by the textless music itself. . . ."[28]

Using Agawu's book *Playing with Signs*[29] as a guide, in conjunction with a cursory analysis of Mozart's K. 421 by Allanbrook in her article "Ear-Tickling

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[27] Allanbrook, "Ear-Tickling Nonsense," 12.

[28] Ibid., 11.

[29] Kofi Agawu, "A Semiotic Interpretation of the First Movement of Mozart's String Quintet in C Major, K. 515," in *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 80–99.

Nonsense," I will attempt to create my own topical analysis of W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421, that not only identifies specific topics but also provides a deeper analysis showing how the interaction of topics contributes to the overarching meaning of the work.

Analysis: W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421 (1783)

Upon first glance, the most noticeable and perhaps striking element of Mozart's K. 421 is its key of D minor. Approximately ten percent of Mozart's entire output was composed in minor keys, and of the twenty-three quartets there is only one other one in the minor mode: String Quartet No. 13 in D Minor, K. 173 (1773). Considering the sparse use of minor keys within Mozart's *oeuvre*, and the specific use of D minor in scenarios of other major works, one may reasonably conclude that Mozart's use of D minor in K. 421 carries significant weight as an aesthetic choice and as a structural conduit within the tonal narrative.

As seen in Figure 12, the opening statement of Mozart's second D-minor quartet comprises a three-part texture bearing the vague character marking *sotto voce*. The first violin sings in the *galant* style, portraying a simply ornamented and melody-driven soprano line that already in the antecedent of this periodic phrase reaches the extremes of a minor tenth. The pained melody is both stabilized and destabilized by pulsations in the inner voices that harmonize and activate the lowest voice part, the cello, which descends through "the antique and pathetic"[30] figuration of the lament bass. Within the first four bars of the movement, the combined elements (i.e., the dramatic establishment of D

[30] Allanbrook, "Ear-Tickling Nonsense," 19.



Figure 12: Mm. 1–4, W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421, "Allegro moderato"

minor, the melodramatic intervallic leaps in the first violin, the orchestral pulsations in the inner voices, the use of the lament bass, and Mozart's designation of *sotto voce*, which in its name suggests an instrumental conception of the voice, all point to features of a compositional style influenced by the theater—or more suitably for this time period, opera.

Within this vein, the French composer and theorist Jérome-Joseph de Momigny (1762–1842) published an analysis of Mozart's string quartet "from the standpoint of the orator . . . the opera goer, for it was in the opera house that late 18th-century audiences experienced great music most frequently and most powerfully."[31] Momigny's analysis describes the first movement of K. 421 as a drama that expresses itself "as a wordless operatic aria, having a grammatical structure and a programme of its own."[32] Yet, despite his interpretation of the work as a "wordless aria," Momigny believed that the most effective way to convey the work's "true quality" to an audience was by setting the musical themes to words as a dialogue between the tragic lovers Dido and Aeneas. As

[31] Cited in Peter Le Huray, "Mozart's D-minor String Quartet K421: A Contemporary Analysis," in *Authenticity in Performance: Eighteenth-Century Case Studies* (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1990), 115–116.

[32] Ibid., 116.

stated by Momigny, "The feelings expressed by the composer are to be imagined as those of the beloved who is on the point of being deserted by her hero. Dido . . . immediately sprang to mind. The nobility of her rank, the warmth of her love, the greatness of her misfortune, all these persuaded me to make her the heroine of this piece."[33] With Momigny's tragic interpretation in mind, I would like to propose an interpretation of Mozart's K. 421 that shows how the lament-bass topics come not only to function as the main *character* of Mozart's operatic narrative, but on various occasions to dictate structural junctures within the sonata-form structure.[34] In other words, while the presence of the lament-bass topic is important to identify, a more fruitful understanding of its role is defined by how the elements motivically, harmonically, structurally, and dramatically interact within the "expressive 'plot'" of the narrative structure.[35]

Going back to the first four measures (see Figure 13), one can hear that the lament-bass figure falls while in dissonance with the first violin's reiterations of the tonic note D. This, in combination with the pulsating inner voices, creates an uneasiness, a tumult that references the unpredictable sensations of *Sturm und Drang.* The

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[33] Quoted in ibid., 121. The full analysis of Mozart's K. 421 can be found in Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny's *Cours complet d'harmonie et de composition, d'après une théorie nouvelle et générale de la musique* (Paris, 1803–1806), 307–403.

[34] William Caplin's article "Topics and Formal Functions: The Case of the Lament" looks at a more specific relationship between topics and formal functions by analyzing localized versions of the lament bass within phrase structures (beginning, middle, and ending functions). I am choosing to analyze the formal functions of the lament bass in a similar manner but within a larger framework of the sonata-form structure. See William Caplin's article in Mirka ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory.*

[35] See Robert Hatten, "On Narrativity in Music: Expressive Genres and Levels of Discourse in Beethoven," *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (Spring and Fall 1991): 75, accessed January 1, 2022, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24045351. The reference comes from Robert Hatten's term *expressive genres, "*which coordinate larger scale organization of the expressive 'plot' of a movement. Since expressive genres are negotiated with formal schemes such as sonata, they can help explain events and formal departures that might appear incompletely motivated from a purely formalist perspective." Hatten attaches the term *expressive genres* to works composed after Mozart's K. 421; however, the quartet nonetheless exemplifies the most salient features of the term and further depicts Mozart's affinity towards creating formally cohesive narrative structures on and off the operatic stage.



Figure 13: Mm. 1–10, W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421, "Allegro moderato"

dramatization of the antecedent is achieved in the consequent phrase through the placement of the first violin's voice an octave higher in a *forte* dynamic, with additional tension created through the contrary movements of the cello's chromaticized lament-bass line and the viola's ascending chromatic scale. Following two full statements of the lament-bass pattern (mm. 1–3 and 5–7) and a German augmented-sixth chord (m. 6), we arrive on the first perfect authentic cadence of the piece (m. 8) and the end of the first thematic group within the sonata-form structure.

To follow is the transitional material that utilizes imitative voicing typical of the learned style, which takes the structure away from D minor and towards what is to be expected: the relative major. Just before the second thematic group, the first violin skips its way down using quick flits of 32nd notes that sink into the quickened textural

heartbeat of the inner voices (end of m. 24). Here at the juncture of the second thematic group (m. 25), and in the relative major key of F, the first violin sings with abounding optimism that is further supported by the inverted, ascending version of the lament-bass pattern in the cello voice (see Figure 14). As with the structure of the opening material of the first thematic group, the antecedent phrase is repeated with a brilliance and bravura that would be expected of a first violin part of this time period. The 8-bar phrase briefly cadences in F major (m. 32) but is quickly transformed to G minor, and through the brilliance of imitation achieved by seamless repetitions of a sextuplet figure, the ear is guided from the lush F-major sonority to the development section in the estranged Neapolitan key.



Figure 14: Mm. 20–26, W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421, "Allegro moderato"

The start of the development (m. 42, see Figure 15) yields a tonally transplanted version of the first thematic group in E-flat major—with the lament bass in its typical

formation. This time, however, without resetting on the dominant, the bass line continues to descend, thus taking the harmony through an F-dominant-seventh chord that strikingly



Figure 15: Mm. 42–60, W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421, "Allegro moderato"

resolves to A minor. Starting in m. 46, the two-part texture of suspensions and imitative dotted rhythms build tension within quick successions of *forte, piano,* and *fp* dynamics, thus eventually leading to a *stretto* in the learned style. Here in m. 53, a modified, ascending version of the lament-bass pattern is passed around by the entrances of each voice within the *stretto* structure. The A in the viola is passed up to the B-flat in violin II, followed by the C# in violin I and, eventually through octave displacement, the D in the cello. This arrival in m. 56 instigates overlapped restatements of the movement's first two measures, eventually leading to an incomplete version of the lament bass that harmonically delays the arrival of the dominant. The recollection of material from the opening bars is layered with a shortened iteration of the previously-mentioned stretto (m. 56 cello - D, m. 57 violin II - E-flat, m. 58 violin I - F#)—a pattern that is similarly interrupted in m. 59 by a three-part texture primarily dictated by a duet of violins in the singing style. In the upper voice of the duet, the first violin outlines the same (interrupted) utterance of the lament-bass pattern heard in the cello, reiterating the notes D, C, and B-flat in mm. 59, 61, and 63, respectively (see Figure 16), and yielding the similar harmonic delay of the dominant. Finally, however, the music arrives on the note A in m. 66, which dually functions as the final note of the two incomplete statements of the lament bass and the dominant pedal typical of retransitions to the recapitulation.

The return of the opening material in the recapitulation is nearly identical except for the restatement of the second theme in D minor. Here, the material briefly touches on the Neapolitan (m. 97), which is similarly alluded to in the post-cadential material (m. 114). The first violin, in combination with the vehemently persistent triplets of the second



Figure 16: Mm. 61–70, W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421, "Allegro moderato"

violin, drives to the perfect authentic cadence in a *subito forte* dynamic and, like Momigny's Dido, bids a dramatic farewell with fury saying: "I can no longer endure your hardheartedness."[36]

The major takeaways from the first movement of Mozart's String Quartet K. 421 are the key relationships of the main sections (D minor, F major, E-flat major) and how the lament-bass topic interacts with the formal architecture of the work. A similar approach is applied to the remaining movements of the work, as will be shown in a more cursory analysis.

The second movement, marked *Andante,* takes on the relative key of F major, in a 6/8 lilt that alludes to the pastoral topic of the siciliano (see Figure 17). While the movement does not initially include the dotted figures most associated with the dance, the rhythmic gesture is sprinkled in as the movement progresses. The simple texture and sensitivity of the siciliano character interacts with the sensitive style, *Emfindsamkeit,* which is supported by the music's shifts in mood, silences, meek uncertainty, and ornamentation, all of which, according to Ratner, suggests an "intense personal involvement."[37] Later in the movement another pastoral element comes to fruition in the distant key of A-flat major, the flattened mediant of the movement's home key, and a tritone from D minor. In mm. 35–40, the cello holds an A-flat drone that is filled in with lush chordal harmonies in the inner voices and chromatic filigree in the first violin that in totality evoke the musette topic. The curious choice of key for string instruments, whose only open string option would be the low C, creates a warm yet covered sonority that

[36] Le Huray, *Authenticity in Performance,* 122.
[37] Ratner, *Classic Music,* 22.

displaces it from the warmth of F major. Among the movements in this string quartet, only the second one does not include any utterance of or allusion to the lament bass. Given this lack of motivic continuity and its pastoral references, the movement projects sensations of displacement. Similarly, as Allanbrook states in reference to the siciliano, the dance "often bears an affect of nostalgia and resignation, passions naturally attendant on memories of a better world."[38]



Figure 17: Mm. 1–11, W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421, "Andante"

The third movement, in stark contrast to the second, drives forward as a minuet in D minor that is gnarled with a fully chromaticized lament-bass line (mm. 1–10, see Figure 18). Mozart's use of the rustic siciliano dotted rhythm as the mode of imitation between upper and lower voices belies what is typically a stately and aristocratic dance.

[38] Wye Jamison Allanbrook, "Chapter 2: The Gestures of Social Dance," in *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 44.



Figure 18: Mm. 1–15, W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421, "Menuetto - Allegretto and Trio"

Instead, the motet-like interactions of the voices[39] yield a complex web of rhythms and dissonances that weigh down the generally light-footed movement—a notion that should not go unnoticed. According to Allanbrook, "Earlier in the century the minuet had been a rather quick dance, moving predominantly in quarter notes. By 1770, it had split into two distinguishable types, both used by Mozart. The first retained the look and tempo of the original; the second had slowed down considerably, admitting eighth notes to its figuration in a prominent role."[40] To clarify, the second type of minuet included the addition of 8th notes on the second and third beats of the bar, which in their resistance to the dance step caused the general feel of the dance to slow down. Adding to this interesting distinction, Mozart wrote a letter to his sister in the same year (1770),

[39] Allanbrook, *"'Ear-Tickling Nonsense,'"* 21.

[40] Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart,* 33.

describing this new kind of minuet with specific acknowledgment of its sluggish speed. As excerpted from this letter, Mozart states: "The minuet itself is very beautiful. It comes, of course from Vienna. . . . It has plenty of notes. Why? Because it is a *stage* minuet which is danced slowly."[41] While the Minuet from K. 421 does not specifically replicate the rhythmic requirements of the slower, second type of minuet, it certainly "has plenty of notes" that in combination with the compilation of rhythms and imitation necessitate a slightly slower tempo. Furthermore, in consideration of the context surrounding this quartet and its allusions to opera, it would be fitting for Mozart to utilize a "stage minuet" only if, when noticed by an astute 18th-century concertgoer, it would yield its intended effects.

In contrast, the Trio section of this minuet is in the striking key of D major, using material that references the "Scotch snap" gesture (inverting the rhythm typically heard in the siciliano). This, in combination with the accompanimental snaps of pizzicato in the supporting voices, is yet another indication of the pastoral. And with the da capo return of the minuet, the stark juxtaposition of the pastoral and lament-bass topics is highlighted once again.

The fourth movement reveals itself as a siciliano that is composed out in the structure of theme and variations. Unlike the second movement, the theme of this fourth movement features the typical dotted gestures of a siciliano in full form (see Figure 19), and is coupled with the addition of a trumpet or drum figuration played by the violin that further supports the pastoral setting (m. 3). Taken through the series of variations (most

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[41] Quoted in ibid., 35. Italics are mine.



Figure 19: Mm. 1–11, W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421, "Allegretto ma non troppo"

of which are in D minor), we arrive at the last one, which is preceded by a heartwarming variation in D major. The coda, in D minor, snaps the preceding variation to its senses, and the *Più Allegro* quickens the siciliano's step into that of a gigue or tarantella (see Figure 20). The trumpeted or drummed rhythm heard at the beginning is restated, and it further quickens into a triplet that is reminiscent of the second violin's vehemently persistent line heard at the end of the first movement. The rhythmic figure takes on a new purpose as it is passed around the quartet in quick succession towards the final four bars (mm. 139–142). Here the cello holds a D drone in harmony with a D-major sonority in the viola while the first violin spits out its last statement of the trumpeted triplet figure and drops an octave D that alludes back to its initial statement in the first measure of the piece. And lastly, the second violin, the final puzzle piece of this four-part texture, glues the beginning and end together with an ultimate restatement of the lament bass that,



Figure 20: Mm. 132–142, W. A. Mozart's String Quartet in D minor, K. 421, "Allegretto ma non troppo"

instead of cadencing on the dominant, quickly reroutes the tonality of this predominantly D-minor work towards its heavenly counterpart of D major.

Looking at the string quartet as a whole, we see the combination of primary elements, including the motivic and formal predominance of the lament bass, notable key relationships, the juxtaposition of tragedy and the pastoral, and the use of particular dance topics, all of which allude to the aforementioned genre that Mozart frequented and mastered throughout his career: opera. As seen in the opening of *Don Giovanni* (written just four years after K. 421, in 1787), the overture explodes in the key of D minor with tragic pulsations of the chromatic lament bass. When the same material returns in the *Finale* of Act II, Don Giovanni is summoned by the ghost of Il Commendatore; eventually, by his own doing, he dies. Mozart shows similar manners of craftsmanship in both Don Giovanni and K. 421 by implanting seeds that grow and develop within both

the narrative and formal structures, and by juxtaposing opposing ideals in need of resolution. More specifically for the quartet, the implications of tragedy achieved through the choice of D minor and the lament bass are offset by the pastoral-oriented key of F major used in the secondary key area of the first movement and in the siciliano-based second movement. Not long after, the siciliano, further being considered a dance not of the court but rather "associated with pastoral scenes and melancholy emotions,"[42] is consequently juxtaposed against the return of the chromaticized lament bass in the gruff "theater" minuet in the key of D minor. The minuet, the "queen of all dances," is not a dance of Arcadian character, but a dance of the city folk that was considered the "test of every dancer who wanted to acquire a reputation."[43] The offsetting of these two dances with the implicit juxtapositions of tragedy and pastoral/city and countryside/real life and theater life would surely be something that the inquisitive and cheeky Mozart would suggest to a knowledgeable audience—as he did in the ballroom scene of Don Giovanni.[44] The final movement, however, given the key relationships and relevant topical material, is the biggest mystery—the plot twist. Bearing the siciliano material in the home key of D minor, this movement converges and cross-references all of the major elements of the work, only to conclude with a statement of the lament bass hidden in the

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[42] Meredith Ellis Little, "Siciliana," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, last modified January 20, 2001, accessed November 6, 2022, ed. Deane L. Root, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.25698.

[43] Quoted in Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 33.

[44] This scene from the Finale of Act I includes a simultaneous overlay of three different dances: the aristocratic triple-metered minuet, the controversial duple-metered contredanse, and the rustic triple-metered Teitsch (as Allanbrook cites it). These dances are layered on top of each other, performed by three separate orchestras, and paired with the social classes most fitting of the characters. With this element of social commentary and tongue-in-cheek humor presented in this opera (among nearly all of Mozart's operas), it is entirely possible that Mozart would convey similar concepts to a well-versed and knowledgeable audience listening to his string quartet. The dance descriptions are from Allanbrook, "Chapter 12: The Two Finales," in *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart,* 283.

middle voice of a glorious D-major sonority. This ironic ending, however, yet again points to a similar tactic Mozart used in dramatizing Don Giovanni's death in the final moments of the opera. In this sense, as is seen in both of these works, the witty Mozart toys with expectations, thus diverting from any real hope of resolving the tragedy/ pastoral dichotomy with a final infusion of satire—a joke on death.

While the suggested interpretation of Mozart's K. 421 is purely speculative, it is important to emphasize how the incorporation of topic theory as an analytical tool enriches the contextual and formal understanding of the work, thus making a case for how topics, as "subjects of musical discourse," come to life when interpreted as characters of both the outer and inner-worlds of music. On the surface, the lament-bass and dance topics can be perceived exclusively as symbols of their respective commonplaces: reflections of the outer world (i.e., courts, countryside) in which they were created. But when taken as a whole, in conjunction with the redirection of their meaning from the outer world into the inner world of musical language, the collective narrative takes on a life of its own.

IV. Post-Classical Topic Theory: Context, Orchestration, and the Viola

The many topics established in the 18th century maintained their recognition and identity as a musical language of the commonplace into the 19th and 20th centuries.[45] As

[45] The adaptation of 18th-century and 19th-century concepts of topic theory for 20th-century music is up for debate, but it is generally accepted by scholars, including Julian Horton and Kofi Agawu. Horton quotes Agawu regarding his ideas on 20th-century topics in the article "Listening to Topics in the Nineteenth Century." Agawu says: "Twentieth-century topical practice became, in part, a repository of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century usages even as the universe was expanded to include the products of various strategic denials." In return, Horton states, ". . . there should be no impediment to adapting topic theory beyond the confines of the eighteenth century; on the contrary, the development of a substantial view of nineteenth-century musical style is impossible without acknowledging the central role topics play in its construction." Julian Horton, "Listening to Topics in the Nineteenth Century," in Mirka, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 660.

topics are products of their context, however, the interaction of 18th-century topics with the sociopolitical circumstances experienced by composers of later centuries re-contextualized their meaning.[46] And as such, traditional topics of the 18th century carried new intentions in correlation with the modernizing world. As stated by Julian Horton in "Listening to Topics in the Nineteenth Century":

> On the one hand, the eighteenth-century thesaurus persists, but in changed social circumstances, and this renders attempts to read topical discourse as social commentary irreducibly complex. For the generation of composers born in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, classical topics had themselves become historicized, and were thus received less as markers of social meaning, and more as conventions defining an emerging tradition. On the other hand, nineteenth-century composers also devised fresh topics, which as facets of a new style are conceptually opposed to topics associated with the classical past.[47]

To provide an example, Horton comments on Kofi Agawu's application of the march as a topic bearing new meaning in new contexts. Horton summarizes by saying that "a march written in 1770 carries very different connotations than one written after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, or after the revolutions of 1848 or the Franco-Prussian War of 1871."[48] He further emphasizes the variable societal interpretations of the march topic by juxtaposing it as a social convention in Joseph Haydn's "Military" Symphony versus Ludwig van Beethoven's use as a "symbol of Utopianism in his Symphony No. 5" versus Hector Berlioz's narrative-based, self-destructive "Marche au

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[46] Kofi Agawu, "Chapter 2: Criteria for Analysis I," in *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 42–43. My statement is paraphrased from: "If topics are commonplaces incorporated into musical discourses and recognizable by members of an interpretative community rather than secret codes to be manipulated privately, then the transition into the Romantic period may be understood not as a replacement but as the incorporation of classic protocol into a still more variegated set of Romantic discourses."

[47] Horton, "Listening to Topics in the Nineteenth Century," 643. See Kofi Agawu's compilation of Classic Topics and Romantic Topics in Chapter 2 of his book *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music,* 41–74. Also see Janice Dickensheet, "The Topical Vocabulary of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Musicological Research,* 31, no. 2–3 (June 2012): 97–137, accessed December 20, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1080/01411896.2012.682887.

[48] Ibid.

supplice" from the musical epic *Symphonie fantastique.*[49] All three examples utilize the march topic, and yet they yield completely different uses and interpretations that consequently carry different meanings within their respective time periods.

With this said, and within a similar vein regarding the evolution of meaning through varying contexts and time periods, another concept of representation that could be interpreted as branching out of the established ideals of topic theory is orchestration, and the troping of instrumental sounds with metaphorical associations (i.e., moods, ideals, tone colors, and emotions). One of the most famous encyclopedias of instrumental characterizations, or troping, within orchestral settings is Hector Berlioz's *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes,* more commonly known in English as the *Treatise on Instrumentation* (1844). In his treatise, Berlioz characterizes all of the various orchestral instruments, focusing on their expressive potential (i.e., register, pitch range, timbre, etc.), with additional observations regarding the instrument's structural evolution, reception history, and compositional trends. In relation to this study's overarching exploration of the lament genre and topics of lamentation, Berlioz identifies a particular orchestral instrument, the viola, that, in combination with 19th-century compositional trends and its increasing popularity as a solo instrument, comes to be musically associated with scenes and sounds of lamentation. In this treatise, Berlioz writes:

> Of all orchestral instruments the one whose admirable qualities have been most persistently misunderstood is the viola. It is as agile as the violin, the sound of its lower strings has a particular pungency, its high notes have an especially sad and passionate character, and its profoundly melancholy tone makes its general character quite distinct from that of other stringed instruments. Yet it was long neglected or given the obscure and pointless duty, as often as not, of playing an octave above the bass line.

[49] Ibid., 643–644.

> There are many reasons for the inequitable treatment of this noble instrument. First, most composers of the last century had no use for it since they only rarely worked four real parts, and when they could think of no immediate filling notes of the harmony, they just wrote the fatal "col basso," sometime so carelessly that the result is a doubling of the bass line an octave higher in contradiction to the harmony or the melody or both. Second, it was unfortunately impossible at that time to write distinctive parts for the violas requiring any normal performing skill; players of the viol (the former name for the viola) were always drawn from discarded violinists. When a player could not manage to keep his place as a violinist, he went over to the viola, with the result that viola players could play neither the violin nor the viol. I have to say that this prejudice against the viola has not entirely vanished to this day; there are still some viola players in the best orchestra who are no better at the viola than the violin. But the trouble this easy-going attitude can cause is more widely recognised every day, so that the viola will gradually come to be entrusted only to competent hands like other instruments.[50]

Of all of the details mentioned in this rich quotation, a few stand out as in need of recognition. To Berlioz's first point, the mention of composers having "no use for it" and saying that "composers of the last century . . . rarely worked four real parts" exemplify the evolution of string-quartet writing. For example, using Berlioz's language, the monodic, three-voice textures of early Joseph Haydn and W. A. Mozart quartets could be interpreted by Berlioz as having "no use" for the viola, given its typical accompanimental role alongside the second violin. While it is difficult to imagine this *truly* being the case, music of the late-Classical and Romantic periods exhibits more equalized and inter-reliant four-part textures (i.e., middle and late string quartets by Beethoven) whereby one voice cannot fulfill its role without the others. Furthermore, with the development of musical styles through the Classical and Romantic periods, the inner voices come to carry voicing responsibilities that enriched the harmonic palette through double stopping and chromaticism, doubling at particular octaves that widen and deepen the group sonority (as opposed to "careless" doublings "col basso," as Berlioz says), with increased

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[50] Hector Berlioz, "Bowed Strings," in *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. Hugh Macdonald, Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs, ed. John Butt and Laurence Dreyfus (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2002), 35, accessed December 22, 2022, https://www.academia.edu/7250879/Berliozs_Tratise_of_Orchestration.

interlacing of complex and intricate rhythmic textures and, in some scenarios, the melody! This all goes to show that Berlioz was indeed correct. The viola is historically a misunderstood instrument that over time came to be recognized for its potential, or "use." It took time for composers to recognize how the complexities of the instrument can serve as its strengths, and that the unique nature of its voice warrants equal membership among the string family. Going hand in hand with this concept, however, is the ability for instrumentalists actually to play the viola in a way that shows these qualities to be true. As Berlioz states, perhaps rather crudely, in its earliest days the best violists of the time were "discarded violinists." Whether this is true or not, what can be certain is that some of the most lauded and sought-after violinists became violists, including Lionel Tertis (1876–1975), whose ardent advocacies for the viola contributed to its establishment as an instrument with its own voice and repertoire. Lastly, it is crucial to emphasize Berlioz's distinction of the viola's tone and sound from those of the other string instruments. To reiterate, he stated that of the "admirable qualities" to be "misunderstood" is "the sound of its lower strings [which] have a particular pungency, its high notes [which] have an especially sad and passionate character, and its profoundly melancholy tone [which] makes its general character quite distinct from that of other stringed instruments."[51] Herein lies a mystery. Given the "misunderstood" nature of the viola, Berlioz, a violist himself, and a master of orchestration, must have had evidence to make such claims regarding the viola's admirable qualities. So, what provoked Berlioz to write such a heartfelt advocacy on behalf of the viola? Was it his own explorations on the instrument?

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[51] Ibid.

The material being played? His trust that the instrument owed up to being more than it was deemed to be? Berlioz's plea for the viola to be heard by those "entrusted" with possessing "competent hands" alludes to a belief that the instrument is deserving of musicians who are exclusively violists instead of "discarded violinists." And to this point, Berlioz's advocacy for the instrument as capable and deserving of being heard in his *Harold in Italy,* one of the most famous viola works, further shows his trust in violists who are willing to take on the challenge.

Extending beyond the aforementioned discussion of topic theory, new world views yielded new compositional procedures (orchestration), thus instigating an expansion of topical vocabularies that spoke to the commonplace of modern societies. The chapter to follow will further unravel concepts discussed in Berlioz's treatise, with particular focus on how the viola repurposed its "misunderstandings" to its advantage by carving out a topical foothold in sound worlds of lamentation. Using a variety of vantage points, including an investigation of the viola's structural anomalies, the earliest solo violists, and the more than 200 elegiac works in the viola repertoire, the research will hypothesize how the voice of the viola came to be, and the role it has played within the history of musical lamentation.

Chapter 3: The Viola and Its Voice in 20th-Century Works of Lamentation

"We are an instrument without tradition," wrote the violist and pedagogue William Primrose (1904–1982). "And if this statement brings to you a sense of shock, a moment of reflection may dissipate it. After all, our history of any importance does not precede the advent of Lionel Tertis . . . ."[1] While the history of the viola and its repertoire may not possess a typical lineage relative to other instruments in the string family, one could reframe its history as one that came to be through a tradition of non-traditions. To say that the viola does not possess a history of any importance before Lionel Tertis, the first, and most prosperous, *solo* violist, is to deny the instrument's initial foundations as an inner part in chamber music, and how the instrument itself—and inevitably its voice—endured hundreds of years of permutations before a semblance of consistency was achieved in the hands of composers, performers, and modern makers. As proposed by violist and composer Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979) in her article "The History of the Viola in Quartet Writing," "It is a curious fact that, although the viola is probably the oldest instrument of the quartet, it has been the longest in coming into its own; and one feels, in reviewing its history in chamber music, that, unlike that of the violin and cello, it is, indeed, its life history."[2] In looking at the earliest versions of the viola in terms of its size, playability, and voice range, one finds that it was not initially intended to be a solo instrument, but rather its origins, or "life history," evolved from within ensembles as an inner voice. Over time, and in correlation with other string instruments, the voice of the

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[1] David Dalton, "To the Reader," in *Playing the Viola: Conversations with William Primrose* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1.

[2] Rebecca Clarke, "The History of the Viola in Quartet Writing," *Music & Letters* 4, no. 1 (January 1923): 6, accessed November 22, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/726173.

viola was transformed through various technical advancements that correlated with the increased technical demands of the repertoire (and/or vice versa), and the ability of performers to play it. With its history, and eventually with the rise of solo violists at the turn of the 20th century, the viola extracted itself from the ensemble and developed its own singular voice, thus not only creating opportunities for composers to develop viola-specific repertoire, but further carving out a niche of more than 200 works of lamentation that showcase one of the viola's most admirable, yet historically misunderstood, qualities: its sound. This chapter will look at how the voice of the viola was developed through its tradition of non-traditions, with a specific investigation of the viola's constructional anomalies, its role as an inner voice, the first pioneers of the viola as a solo instrument, and, lastly, notable works of lamentation from its rich repertoire.

I. A Brief History of the Viola

Unlike with most instruments in the string family, the history of how the viola came to be is uncertain. Given the corpus of research, even to this day, there are a minimal number of sources directly dedicated to research on the history of the viola, with a majority of the references integrated into swaths of material on the history of the violin and its virtuosi. David D. Boyden's book entitled *The History of Violin Playing from Its Origins to 1761 and Its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (1965) is one of the most important resources on the history of violin-making, and it includes a sliver of information that aims to debunk the popular assertion that the viola was created before

the violin.[3] A newer compilation of writings published as a set within Andre Zanrè's *The Girolamo Amati Viola in the Galleria Estense* includes an illuminating article that offers a fresh perspective on the history of viola-making. It primarily focuses on the earliest surviving contralto viola made by Girolamo Amati (1561–1630), and how experiments leading up to the establishment of the "Grand Pattern," the most successful blueprint in violin lutherie, could have been initially implemented on the viola.[4] The most thorough publication on the topic is Maurice Riley's *A History of the Viola,* Volumes I and II*,* which chronologically outlines the history of viola-making from the 16th century through the 1990s. Many have praised Riley's two volume set as a "great work . . . [that] provides a wealth of information about the viola . . ."[5]; however, additional sources including *The Early Violin and Viola: A Practical Guide* by Robin Stowell deem the volumes to be ". . . interesting, yet inconsistent . . . ."[6] Given the life history of the viola, it remains to be seen whether Stowell or anyone else has been able to create a *consistent* rendition of the history of the viola, thus leading many of the following claims to be based on well-accepted conjectures.

An element of particular interest regarding this study is how viola-making evolved in correlation with its playability, sound, and repertoire. According to Boyden,

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[3] David D. Boyden, "Chapter 1: The Origin and Development of the Early Violin, 1520–50," in *The History of Violin Playing from Its Origins to 1761 and Its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 15–17.

[4] Andrea Zanrè, "Viola Making in Cremona and Brescia at the Outset of the Contralto Repertoire," in *The Girolamo Amati Viola in the Galleria Estense,* ed. Andrea Zanrè, trans. David Kerr, vol. 1, *Treasures of Italian Violin Making* (Parma: Scrollavezza & Zanrè, 2014), 15.

[5] Charles E. Harman, "Chapter 2: The History of the Viola—Introduction," in *The Standard Viola* (Brookings, OR: Old Court Press, 2006), 11.

[6] Robin Stowell, "Chapter 1: Historical Performance in Context," in *The Early Violin and Viola: A Practical Guide,* Cambridge Handbooks to the Historical Performance of Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3.

before 1600, and in line with the predominance of vocal music of the period (i.e., motets, chorales, chansons, *Lieder,* etc.), most instruments (including the viola) were used to double vocal parts. As a result, "where instruments were used as an adjunct to vocal music, no independent body of instrumental music existed and instrumental technique as such did not develop."[7] What this suggests is that from the 1600s on, the compositions, the playing of the instruments, and the construction of the instruments themselves cycled through a self-referential feedback loop that aimed to meet the demands of each other.

As this relates to the viola, the first composer recognized for not only designating particular dynamics but also assigning specific instrumentation was Giovanni Gabrieli (1557–1612), whose *Sonata pian' e forte* in the first book of *Sacrae Symphoniae* (1597) contains the first known published instrumental work with a viola part.[8] Coro II of the sonata was composed for three trombones and *violino,* which, while suggestive of any member of the violin family, was undoubtedly referring to the viola, considering the number of written notes on the C string.[9] With instrumentation written for the viola and three trombones, one might wonder how the orchestration yielded a balanced ensemble. As proposed by Riley, "The tone-color and volume of the trombone at that time was more like the subdued sound of the medieval *sackbut* . . . it was used to accompany voices in the church . . . [and] furthermore, Gabrieli probably intended the *violino* part for a large viola, which would have had more resonance than the modern instrument."[10] While Coro

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[7] Boyden, "General Introduction," *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761,* 2.

[8] Zanrè, "Viola Making in Cremona and Brescia at the Outset of the Contralto Repertoire," 13.

[9] Maurice W. Riley, "The Viola and Its Music in Italy during the Baroque Era," in *The History of the Viola,* vol. 1. (Ann Arbor, MI: Braun-Brumfield, 1980), 68.

[10] Ibid., 69.

II was likely written for the tenor viola, a few decades following this work, and in line with the proposed instrument-repertoire feedback loop, Girolamo Amati produced the "Estense" viola (1620), "whose form, proportions and dimensions are almost identical to the present-day viola."[11] The significance of this technical development in viola-making not only altered how players could physically handle the instrument but also created opportunities for composers to write for the viola (both large and small) in more involved and innovative ways.[12]

Contralto violas in 17th-century music were utilized primarily in consorts. Much like that of viols and gambas, these consorts consisted of instruments of similar design that fulfilled specific roles based on their voice range within the overall texture of the music. One of the most famous consorts was Louis XIII's *24 Violins du Roy*, which was often divided into two sections of tenor and contralto violas that together supplied the primary parts of polyphony.[13] Similarly, and in conjunction with the implementation of *seconda prattica* styles in musical genres including opera, composers frequently favored the violin family for its abilities to maximize the expressive qualities of a melody through a voice, that "best supported—and was the closest surrogate to—the human voice."[14] The first solo pieces written during these earliest periods of viola-making were minimal, and likely transcribed from works by other instruments—a practice that was commonplace in

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[11] Zanrè, "Viola Making in Cremona and Brescia at the Outset of the Contralto Repertoire," 13.

[12] Zanrè's article uses the terminology "large sized" and "small sized" quite loosely and without specific clarification regarding measurements. It could be ascertained that the "large size" implies the tenor viola and the "small size" refers to the contralto or cutdown version of the tenor viola. Similar language within these criteria will be applied.

[13] Zanrè, "Viola Making in Cremona and Brescia at the Outset of the Contralto Repertoire," 13.

[14] Ibid.

the 17th and 18th centuries. Franz Zeyringer's (1920–2009) *Literatur für Viola* references a few solo works from this period, including Sonata for Violin and Viola (1644) by Nicolaus à Kempis, Viola Sonata (1651) by Massimiliano Neri, and Sonata for Viola (ca. late 17th century) by Carlo Antonio Marino.[15] The sparse number of transcriptions and sonatas for the viola relative to those written for the violin and cello in this time period maintained the viola's position as a primarily accompanimental instrument. While skewed in a negative light by many writers and violists, this is a truth of its life history, and it is implicit to how the voice of the viola was perceived and personified through its development.

Looking at the violas themselves, one hypothesizes that the earliest surviving tenor and contralto violas were experimented with in the mid-16th century, with one of the earliest being Andrea Amati's tenor viola, commissioned in 1560 by Charles IX of France. The prominence of "small violas" arose in the late-16th and early-17th centuries through Brescian makers Gasparo Bertolotti da Salò (1542–1609) and his protege Giovanni Paolo Maggini (1580–1630). While the Brescian makers predated the Cremonese Amati family with contralto designs, the lack of consistent label placement inside the Brescian instruments made it difficult to trace how their work progressed, thus causing the instruments of the Amati family generally to show the clearest lineage of contralto instrument-making from this period.[16] Following da Salò and Maggini, and in the footsteps of his father, one of Girolamo Amati's first small violas, the "Stauffer," contains the original label (dating to 1615), and it "faithfully follows the models used for

[15] Riley, *The History of the Viola,* vol. 1, 71.

[16] Zanrè, "Viola Making in Cremona and Brescia at the Outset of the Contralto Repertoire," 15.

making violins."[17] This is relevant because later in Girolamo's career, he and his son Nicolò Amati together developed the "Grand Pattern," which to this day is recognized as "one of the most successful models in the history of lutherie."[18] In comparison to the larger models developed by Andrea Amati, the "Grand Pattern" widened the upper and lower proportions of the violin design in an effort to create a more powerful, deep sound without drastically increasing the length of the instrument. Within this context and in relation to the viola, Zanrè states: "On observing the model of the ['Stauffer'] contralto, it is clear how its proportions were inspired by similar principles, and indeed—if the timeline of the instruments is accurate—the Grand Pattern may plausibly have been derived from ideas first tried out on the viola, whose model had been introduced a decade earlier."[19] In reference to Boyden's assertion that it was *impossible* for the viola to have been created before the violin, it is evident that the success of each of these instruments was dependent on the other.

The reported decrease in viola-making in the early 18th century sheds clarity on how scarcity in music written to include the viola directly correlated with a decline in its production. According to Nancy Uscher's article, which references the Hill Brothers' famous book *Antonio Stradivari: His Life and Work*: "With regard to the production of instruments, the Hill brothers report that, 'between 1700 and 1750 there was almost a cessation of viola making in all countries; this coincides with the dearth of chamber

[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

music composed in this period in which the viola was not given a part."[20] The chamber music Uscher is most specifically referring to is the *Sonata a tre*, the Trio Sonata, which is made up of two soprano voices (typically played by two violins) and a basso continuo part.[21] In conjunction with the popularity of the Trio Sonata, four-part writing also began to displace five-part music (typically with two viola parts). As a result, viola-making fell out of practice, with Antonio Stradivari (1644–1737) creating no more than eighteen violas,[22] compared to 630 violins and 36 cellos, and The Guarneri Family collectively making fewer than a dozen all together.[23] However, while the quotation mentions a "near cessation" of viola production, this does not mean it stopped entirely. Another famous instrument maker during this time period was Domenico Montagnana (1686–1750), whose 17 and ¼-inch viola from 1714 came to its prime in the hands of the famed Lionel Tertis for a majority of his career. Additionally, the "Golden Period" of Antonio Stradivari's instrument-making yielded one of the most celebrated violas, the MacDonald from 1719,[24] which was played by Peter Schidlof (1922–1987) of the Amadeus Quartet for just over twenty years and later by William Primrose.

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[20] Nancy Uscher, "Historical Account of the Viola, 1700–1900," *American Music Teacher* 32, no. 2 (Nov.–Dec. 1982): 30, accessed November 23, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43541513.

[21] Maurice W. Riley, "The Viola in Germany During the 17th Century," in *The History of the Viola,* vol. 1 (Ann Arbor, MI: Braun-Brumfield, 1980), 104. There are a few Trio Sonatas written by Heinrich I. F. Biber (1644–1704) and Johann H. Schmelzer (1623–1680) that include a part for the viola, but this arrangement is rare.

[22] There is variation as to how many Stradivari violas have survived. Riley states 18 on page 12 of Volume II, but other sources say differently. Maurice W. Riley, "The Viola," in *The History of the Viola,* vol. 2. (Ann Arbor, MI: Braun-Brumfield, 1991), 12.

[23] Ibid.

[24] David Aaron Carpenter and Tim Ingles, "The Macdonald Viola by Antonio Stradivari," *Sotheby's,* informational video, 3:09, published April 4, 2014, accessed April 4, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxeCpFOkrto.

Following this period of relative stasis in viola production, the industry was rejuvenated with the bulk of 18th- and 19th-century viola repertoire and commentary stemming from German and Austrian composers, luthiers, and music scholars. Of the regions worth mentioning, the most prolific outgrowth came from Hamburg, Berlin, Mannheim, and Vienna, with notable contributions from Reinhard Keiser (1674–1739), Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767), Carl Philipp Stamitz (1745–1801), J. S. Bach (1685–1750), Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), and W. A. Mozart (1756–1791); many of these composers played viola themselves and/or advocated for it as a solo instrument in select works. Much of the repertoire written by these composers include the viola's first concertos (which to this day are maintained as standard repertoire), with Mozart's chamber music and the Sinfonia Concertante, K. 364, serving as pinnacle works for the viola in this time period and for centuries to come. One of the best-known commentators on 18th-century music and culture was the flutist and composer Johann Joachim Quantz (1697–1773), who, while in residence at the Prussian court of Frederick II "The Great" (1712–86), included observations not only on common practice but also on the musicians he was interacting with. In his treatise *Versuch einer Anweisung, die Flöte zu spielen* (1752), commonly known as *On Playing the Flute*, he writes in the section entitled "Of the Violist in Particular":

> The viola is commonly regarded as of little importance in the musical establishment. The reason may well be that it is often played by persons who are either still beginners in the ensemble or have no particular gifts with which to distinguish themselves on the violin, or that the instrument yields all too few advances to its players, so that able people are not

> easily persuaded to take it up. I maintain, however, that if the entire accompaniment is to be without defect, the violist must be just as able as the second violinist.[25]

Later Quantz also writes:

> If they employed the necessary industry, they could easily improve their lot in a large establishment, and gradually advance their position, instead of remaining chained to the viola to the end of their lives, as is usually the case . . . . The accompanist actually experiences more pleasure from the music than the player of a concertante part; and anyone who is a true musician takes an interest in the entire ensemble, without troubling himself about whether he plays the first or the last part.[26]

In these excerpts Quantz addresses many of the major issues associated with the history of the viola since its inception. As highlighted in the first statement, he points out that while a majority of violists are typically the less experienced players, many of the more seasoned musicians refused to play viola professionally because the instrument itself possessed inadequacies or did not meet the demands required to play the repertoire. He insisted that, despite these issues, the violist must be just as capable as a second violinist, and that instead of wallowing in the negative norms imposed upon viola culture, the violist must take it upon themselves to find pleasure in carrying the expectation of being a "true musician"; one who is not only capable of playing their part but is able to put the collective sound of the ensemble ahead of their own personal interests.

By the end of the 18th century, contralto violas were almost exclusively favored, thus lending their playability towards more advanced, and soloistic, repertoire. This preference in combination with the compositional trend towards four-voice part-writing

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[25] Johann Joachim Quantz, "Chapter 17: Of the Duties of Those Who Accompany or Execute the Accompanying or Ripieno Parts Associated with a Concertante Part, Section III: Of the Violist in Particular," in *On Playing the Flute*, 2nd ed., trans. Edward Reilly (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 237.

[26] Ibid., 238.

led to significant decline and near discontinuation of the tenor viola.[27] The ease of the contralto's smaller size, however, came at a cost of its sound, which tended to be weaker in sonority and resonance—particularly on the C string. As noted by Riley, "The average viola [the contralto] is about 1/5 larger than the violin. This size does not compensate for its range, which extends 1/5 lower in pitch. As a result many violas have a somewhat nasal or veiled tone as compared with the violin and cello."[28] As such, luthiers in the late-18th century onwards were presented with the dilemma of creating a playable viola that produced a beautiful tone and was versatile enough to satisfy solo viola works, chamber music, and orchestral works, the latter of which inevitably grew in complexity with the symphonic music of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), Richard Wagner (1813–1883), and Hector Berlioz (1803–1869). With these requirements, luthiers witnessed an overflow of small contralto violas with insufficient sound and nearly unplayable tenor violas with body lengths between 17 and 20 inches—and occasionally even larger.[29] What resulted was decades of various experimentations, all of which were a necessary part of the journey towards achieving more successful,

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[27] Riley, "The Viola in Opera in the Late 18th and Early 19th Century," in *The History of the Viola,* vol. 1, 134. According to Riley, "In the 16th and 17th centuries, the *alto* (small viola) and the *tenor* (large viola) were assigned to the three parts of the middle harmony in the five-voice music of the time. With the gradual change to four-part writing, performers chose the smaller *alto* viola because it was easier to play, and the *tenor* viola was not needed." Riley, "Problems in the Construction and Renovation of Violas and Experiments to 'Improve' the Instrument," in *The History of the Viola,* vol. 1, 221.

[28] Riley, "Problems in the Construction and Renovation of Violas," 222.

[29] According to the organological treatise *Syntagma Musicum* by Praetorius, "These instruments must have been massive. The position of the instrument resting on the arm was likely much more common than one would assume, as rib depths and corpus most certainly made them difficult to be played under the chin." Quoted in Nate Tabor, "The Baroque Tenor Viola - Gespenst of History and Tone," Nate Tabor Period Instrument Maker, last modified April 20, 2023, accessed September 15, 2023, https://taborviolas.com/baroque-viola/a-short-history-of-baroque-violas/. This, in conjunction with growing technical demands from the repertoire, created another issue. As noted by Riley, "From c. 1780 to c. 1825, composers and conductors were insisting on obtaining a more resonant sound from the orchestra viola sections. As a result, violists gradually began to demand larger instruments." Riley, "Problems in the Construction and Renovation of Violas," 221.

modern violas.[30] One of the most common methods that evolved starting in the mid-18th century was the cutting down of tenor violas, thus yielding instruments that averaged between 15 1/2 and 17 inches in length.[31] The alterations most frequently applied involved cutting portions at each end of the bouts (the crescents), thus also creating the need to shorten the ribs, reset the end blocks, and refit the neck and fingerboard.[32] The idea of reconfiguring one instrument into a reduced version of itself is inevitably not without risk. According to Riley, it has been proposed that when the procedure was handled by a professional luthier, "the results usually were completely satisfactory, and the resonant qualities of the original instrument were completely retained."[33] Perhaps this is one of the inconsistencies mentioned in Boyden's review, for it is scientifically impossible for a shortened version of a tenor viola to retain its original, resonant qualities. As paraphrased from a talk given by Lionel Tertis at the London Philharmonic Society in 1964, he stated in reference to cut-down tenor violas that the issues with sonority and fullness resulted from the reduced airspace that constricted the lowest register of the instrument from fully resonating.[34] Furthermore, as recorded earlier by French acoustician Felix Savart (1791–1841) in his treatise *Mémoire Sur la construction des instruments à cordes et à archet* (1819), he wrote that the body length of the viola was

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[30] To learn more about detailed descriptions and examples of some of the more creative viola experiments, see Maurice Riley's "Chapter XII: Problems in the Construction and Renovation of Violas and Experiments to 'Improve' the Instrument," 218–240 from Volume I, and "Chapter XI: Experiments in the Design of the Viola," 103–112 from Volume II.

[31] Riley, *The History of the Viola,* vol. 1, 221.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] John White, "Appendix 3: Tertis's Writings and Talks," in *Lionel Tertis: The First Great Virtuoso of the Viola* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2006), 322.

too short relative to the tonal range it was expected to reach.[35] As a result, this created a doubly complex issue for cut-down tenor violas, which reduced not only their airspace but also their string length, thus potentially making these instruments an inconsistent choice for violists of the highest caliber.

In the modern era, there are only a few original tenor violas made by well-known luthiers that were left intact without any alterations. Some of the most notable include Jacob Stainer's (1618–1683) tenor viola from 1660 (body length of 17 3/16 inches), which is currently housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, Antonio Stradivari's "Tuscan" tenor viola from 1690 (body length of 18.7 inches), which is preserved in the *Conservatorio Luigi Cherubini* in Florence, Italy, and Andrea Guarneri's (1626–1698) tenor viola from 1664 (body length of 18.9 inches with an unusually long neck length of 6 inches), which is held in the National Music Museum in Vermillion, South Dakota. One of the most treasured examples, however, comes from Andrea Amati's (1505–1577) collection of 38 violins, violas, and cellos commissioned by King Charles IX, ca. 1560, all of which bear the powerful motto "Pietate et Iustitia" ("Pity and Justice").[36] This tenor viola, now safely preserved in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, was built ca. 1564 with a body length of 18 1/2 inches, and it is the only viola that was salvaged following the French Revolution.

One uncut tenor viola that is specifically worth mentioning is not in a museum, but one recently played by Steve Tenenbom (1965–) of the Orien Quartet. Tenenbom's 18

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[35] Riley, *The History of the Viola,* vol. 1, 225.

[36] Zanrè, "Viola Making in Cremona and Brescia at the Outset of the Contralto Repertoire," 15.

1/4-inch tenor viola was likely made by the early-Brescian maker Peregrino Michelli di Zanetto (1520–ca. 1603) around 1560. When asked about his experiences performing on a tenor viola, Tenenbom shared: “The first thing I felt was pain. In order to play it I had to wrap my left arm around a little bit more than was comfortable, and I felt my ulna and radial bones twisting around each other like a fig tree. Thankfully I was able to figure it out and I was happy to play for 32 years on that viola.”[37] Over the course of his tenure with the Zanetto, Tenenbom recounted special instances in which he performed the complete Beethoven String Quartet cycle in five concerts over the course of fifty hours (while enduring a shoulder injury from the viola no less) and recorded the Brahms String Quintets and the Clarinet Quintet with clarinetist David Shifrin (among other major works), all relatively without issue. Tenenbom also played major concertos on the instrument, but he claims, “. . . I never knew how difficult it was until I played the smaller viola (his current instrument is a viola by Peter and Wendy Moes). It really felt like switching from a stretch limo to a Porsche 911. The facility was there on the smaller viola while the bigger one took longer to speak.”[38] All things considered, Tenenbom loved his Zanetto tenor viola for its ease of projection and its open and resonant sound, with particularly fond memories of playing the second movement of Antonín Dvořák’s Piano Quintet No. 2, op. 81, for which the viola’s vibrantly dense tone had a natural affinity.

Of the remaining cut-down tenor and contralto violas created by the oldest and most famous luthiers, many have fallen into the hands of collectors and museums, with a

[37] Steve Tenenbom, interview by author, New York, NY, March 29, 2023.
[38] Ibid.

handful still played by top musicians of today. Regarding violas in particular, the earliest performers to use these antique instruments were the *first* solo violists. As a result, listeners of the modern era are able not only to trace how the history of viola-making continued to evolve in the literature but also to *hear* how these violas sounded when played by instrumentalists who dedicated their life to developing a repertoire, technique, and sound that was truly violistic. Interestingly, even while using the best possible violas made available to them at the time of their careers, many of the first solo violists brought to light how their old, cutdown tenor violas or contraltos presented issues in sound production, and, as such, a select few chose to experiment with ways to continue improving the viola by working with modern-day luthiers of their era—even creating individualized models of their own.

In summary, the design and craftsmanship of violin- and viola-making went hand and hand from the inception of the violin family in the 16th century. While a more standardized design of the violin was established early on, the viola endured a variety of drastic changes over the course of hundreds of years. As of today, a standardized viola does not exist—and it likely never will. Laying the groundwork for how the viola and its voice generally came to be through the earliest developments of the instrument and its repertoire allows a refocusing on how it emerged in chamber music, and later in the hands of the first solo violists.

II. From the Inside Out: The Viola as an Inner Voice

As viola-making continued to evolve into the 19th and 20th centuries, the increasing demands for viola repertoire developed alongside it with the largest corpus of

viola music culminating in the hands of the first solo violists. While this chronology falls in line with Primrose's initial statement regarding how no viola history of importance preceded the advent of Lionel Tertis, one must consider earlier concerti and chamber music works for viola written by composers including J. S. Bach (1685–1750), W. A. Mozart (1756–1791), and Johannes Brahms (1833–1897).

J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B-flat Major, BWV 1051 (1721), is the last of a set of six concertos and is the only one to feature two viola soloists. The string instrumentation for this work does not include violin parts, but rather the *viola da gamba* and *violoncello.* The deep sonority and pitch of these accompanying string instruments helps distinguish the middle-ranged *viola da braccio* at the fore of the texture, which is unusually given the typical embedment of its middle-ranged voice within the harmonic and polyphonic fabric of the ensemble. According to J. S. Bach's first biographer, Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749–1818), Bach himself embraced the centralized role the viola played as an inner voice within the ensemble to the effect that, as Forkel wrote: "With this instrument he [Bach] was, as it were, in the center of the harmony, where he could hear and enjoy to the utmost what was going on both sides of him."[39] In this vein, it is charming to learn of J. S. Bach's personal affinity for the viola as described in the writings of his wife, Anna Magdalena. She writes, "Whatever troubles there were [in the first few years in the Thomas School], they found no place in our home. They belonged 'outside,' and there they remained when Sebastian sat down beside

[39] Quoted in David Blum, "Four Voices: Michael Tree," in *The Art of Quartet Playing: The Guarneri Quartet in Conversation with David Blum* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 113.

the clavier or took out his viola."[40] While the context for this quotation falls years after the composition of the Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 (Bach worked at the Thomas School in 1723–1750), it nonetheless suggests Bach's connection to the instruments he wrote for, and the role certain instruments played in both his life and his music.

Following the orchestral/solo suites and concerti of J. S. Bach, there is the matter of the viola in chamber music. Above all, the evolution of the viola's role within the string quartet and additional chamber music formations traces how composers came to treat its voice as a worthy and equal companion to amongst the violin and cello, thus compelling further exploration of the viola's potential for variety as a solo instrument from within the ensemble. Composing a few decades later and in the footsteps of Joseph Haydn's invention of what became standardized string quartet writing, there is W. A. Mozart, the biggest liberator of the viola, whose chamber works, and perhaps most notably the Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major, K. 364 (1779), leveled the viola on an equal footing with its string counterparts. For the Sinfonia Concertante, Mozart's composing of the viola part a half step higher using *scordatura* allowed the more cumbersome key of E-flat major to be played on open strings that supplied a brighter and more resonant sonority. Presumably the decision to implement *scordatura* was the result of Mozart's knowledge of the instrument's capabilities as well as its limitations in comparison to the violin. As discussed by Neal Zaslaw in his *The Compleat Mozart*:

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[40] Quoted in David Dalton, "The Repertoire," in *Playing the Viola: Conversations with William Primrose* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 188. The context for this quotation arose in David Dalton's book while discussing J. S. Bach's solo violin and cello suites with William Primrose. The question of interest inquires whether the solo cello suites could have been originally written for the viola, given Bach's love for the viola and his passion for transcriptions. The theory is written out in Richard Efrati's book *Treatise on the Execution and Interpretation of the Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin and the Suites for Solo Cello by Johann Sebastian Bach,* but there is no evidence as of late to support it.

"Mozart was an excellent violist as well as violinist, and he treats the two instruments with absolute equality throughout this double concerto, often giving to the viola in the recapitulations what he had given to the violin in the expositions."[41] The virtuosity and genius of this work is also mentioned and praised in nearly every single document written by the first solo violists. In Lionel Tertis's retelling of one of his first performances of the work in Queen's Hall, he claimed that it was "a work then practically unknown."[42] While this quotation is difficult for a musician of the modern era to fathom, it is plausible that the Sinfonia Concertante was not often played until Tertis because violists were not readily equipped with an instrument that facilitated the technique required to play such a demanding work. Given that the original manuscript is lost, there is no information regarding the date and musicians who participated in its premiere. If one had to guess, the violist or violinist could have been W. A. Mozart himself, but it is impossible to know for sure with the information that is available. Nonetheless, with Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante,* the six string quintets (more colloquially known as the viola quintets), the *Kegelstatt* Trio in E-flat Major, K. 498 (1786), and the Divertimento for String Trio in E-flat Major, K. 563 (1788), it is not unreasonable to ascertain that while Tertis may have been the first solo violist, Mozart was the first to advocate for the potential of the instrument through his extensive output of notable chamber music compositions featuring the viola in varying capacities.

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[41] Neal Zaslaw and William Cowdery, eds., "Chapter 9: Concertos and Concerto Movements - Concerto for Strings," in *The Compleat Mozart: A Guide to the Musical Works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,* 1st ed. (New York: Mozart Bicentennial at Lincoln Center, 1990), 146.

[42] Lionel Tertis, "Introduction to an English Viola," *Music & Letters* 28, no. 5 (July 1947): 216, https://www.jstor.org/stable/854488.

As stated by Rebecca Clarke, while Mozart "was the one who first realized that it [the viola] might have something of its own to say . . . it is with Johannes Brahms, however, that the viola arrived fully into its kingdom."[43] While lauded for Brahms's own transcription of the Clarinet Sonatas, op. 120, nos. 1 and 2, for solo viola and piano, Brahms's output of chamber music is of equal importance to the viola's development and conveyance of versatility. As is evident in the 3 string quartets, 2 string quintets, 2 string sextets, 3 piano quartets, and the piano quintet, Brahms utilizes the unique voices of each instrument to enrich the color, texture, and richness of the collective sound of the ensemble. Brahms's personal knowledge of the viola and its placement within the musical texture of his chamber works results in a unique collective voice that is curated in part by the viola's "intensely personal tone"[44] and its ability to serve a range of roles within the ensemble. In Brahms's String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor, op. 51, for example, the opening material consists of a three-part texture comprised of the melody in the first violin, textural and harmonically-oriented whole notes in contrary motion played by the second violin and cello, and the viola part, which consists of triplets that weave in and out of the main line as a countermelody, as harmony, and as a necessary part of the webbed rhythmic texture. The hue of the ensemble's collective sound pales without the added dimensions of color, complexity, and richness that the viola's middle range brings to the dense sound world of Brahms's music. In comparison with many earlier chamber works by composers such as Joseph Haydn in which the viola played a vital yet primarily

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[43] Clarke, "The History of the Viola in Quartet Playing," 7

[44] Ibid., 11.

accompanimental role, the works of Brahms would not be what they are without the equal and exceptional treatment of the viola part.

This brief overview of the viola in chamber music touches on composers and works that significantly impacted the development of the viola from within the chamber group.[45] The included works exemplify how the composers' evolving perception of the viola came to include capabilities beyond its historical role as an accompanimental voice. The listed examples from Bach to Brahms most importantly show how the viola gained independence and versatility, thus extending its role as a necessary conduit of harmony, rhythm, texture, counterpoint, and countermelody, with more frequent features of the viola's characterful and coloristic voice in soloistic passages. The viola came into its own as a solo instrument as a result of its growing functions within chamber music, thus presenting a rich history of ensemble writing for composers of the 20th and 21st centuries to draw from when commissioned to write solo viola music for the first solo violists.

III. The First Solo Violists: Tertis, Clarke, and Primrose

The turn of the 20th century witnessed the most significant developments in the history of the viola and gave rise to the first solo violists. In addition to addressing professional contributions made by the first major violists, their instruments will also be discussed to describe how these violists were able to perform and commission music of greater demand and complexity. Researching autobiographical writings and published articles will further reveal (in their own words) how the first soloists came to appreciate

[45]Additional composers worth mentioning for their endeavors as viola players and for their ardent advocacy for the viola through chamber music compositions include: Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), Franz Schubert (1797–1828), Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847), Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), Frank Bridge (1879–1941), Bedřich Smetena (1884–1824), Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Paul Hindemith (1895–1963), Benjamin Britten (1913–1976), and Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979).

the viola, their stance on its history, their experiences premiering works that are now considered standard repertoire, and the path they took to overcome technical difficulties inherent in the instrument's construction. These personal essays, interviews, books, and recordings are also crucial because the solo violists, alongside select composers, are the initial sculptors of the viola's autonomy, thus paving the way for the perpetual growth of a repertoire and voice that is exclusive to the viola.

i. Lionel Tertis (1876–1975): The "First" Solo Violist

Lionel Tertis (1876–1975) is heavily regarded by many as the *first* soloist in viola history. Over the course of his career, Mr. Tertis brought the viola to light through his ardent advocacy of the instrument's capabilities, his achievements as the first professor of viola, his contributions to the history of viola making, and, perhaps most importantly, the enrichment of viola repertoire brought forth by fruitful collaborations with composers such as York Bowen (1884–1961), Arthur Bax (1883–1953), and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958). Tertis's autobiography, entitled *My Viola and I* (1974), and John White's biography, *Lionel Tertis: The First Great Virtuoso of the Viola* (2006), share a wealth of reviews, lectures, and correspondences between Tertis and his colleagues, and further share how Tertis's invention of the Richardson-Tertis Model served a crucial purpose in the history of viola-making—and in Tertis's life.

During the earliest stages of Tertis's musical journey, he recalls that, while enrolled at the Royal Academy of Music, there was no viola professor to be found. In his article "Introduction to an English Viola," he states: "A little old man was, however, engaged by the Academy to come in twice a week to play at the orchestral practices. He

was a professional; but from his so-called viola—a very small one—he drew as ugly a sound as can ever have been produced from a stringed instrument. I remember that he played with no vibrato at all, and his bone-dry tone made one's hair stand on end. 'A necessary evil!'—so I recall Sir Alexander Mackenzie's describing him to me."[46] This statement, while revealing of Tertis's ever-present wry sense of humor, is very telling of the priorities that he aimed to achieve as a solo violist. In 1900, five years following Tertis's recollection of this memory, he himself became the first *true* professor of viola at the Royal Academy of Music, and he taught a number of successful violists including Bernard Shore and Rebecca Clarke.[47] Regarding the jab at the musician's "so-called viola —a very small one," Tertis was a staunch believer that violists should play the biggest viola they are able to handle for the sake of achieving a rich tone (particularly on the C string), with a minimum body length of 16 3/4 inches.[48] As a testament to his opinions, Tertis played on a number of larger violas over the course of his life, including a 17-inch viola made by Carlo Antonio Testore (1687–1765) in 1735[49], a Domenico Montagnana (1686–1750) viola made ca. 1727 with a body length of 17 1/8 inches (used as his primary instrument from 1924 to 1933), and a Gasparo da Salò (1542–1609) viola made ca. 1590 with a body length of a shocking 17 3/4 inches. In 1937, thirteen years after the purchase of his Montagnana viola, Tertis became seriously disabled with rheumatism, thus forcing him to take an early retirement. This time, however, did not go to waste, for

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[46] Tertis, "Introduction to an English Viola," 214.

[47] Interestingly, in his autobiography there is an entire chapter dedicated to his students and their successes, but there is not one mention of Rebecca Clarke, who arguably was one of his most successful students in both her viola playing and her compositions.

[48] White, "Appendix 3: Tertis's Writings and Talks," 322.

[49] This viola is now owned and played by violist Thomas Riebl.

it gave him the opportunity to refocus his attention on teaching, writing a number of articles and treatises related to the viola and general string playing, and designing his own Tertis Model (T. M.) viola, which he built with the help of the luthier Arthur Richardson.[50]

The primary motivation behind creating the T. M. aimed to address an age-old issue: large-sized violas passed down from previous generations (like the ones Tertis played) were cumbersome to handle without injury, and the smaller-sized violas did not produce enough sound. In Tertis's last lecture given in the spring of 1964, he stated:

> When I began playing the viola about 70 years ago, in the 1890s, I found that the comparatively few really good old violas were excessively large, clumsy, and most awkward to play. Not only that, but they were of vastly different sizes. Indeed, the body-length of these violas was anything between a good 17 and 18 inches, making them practically unmanageable. Some of them had been mutilated, and cut down to 15 or 16 inches long in order to make them easier to play. The result was that the reduced air space did not, and could not, give us any semblance of the real C-string sonority which, after all, is the vital tone-quality of the viola. One of my objects, therefore, was to standardise the size, so that the player could go from one viola to another without any difficulty; and now I feel this standardisation is well on the way.[51]

It should be noted that through his seventy years as a violist, the injuries caused by playing "unmanageable" large violas between 17 and 18 inches caused Tertis to accept smaller violas as a necessary change for the future of viola playing. For perspective, this quotation was excerpted from a pre-concert talk given before Tertis's last performance with his wife Lillian and former students Ruth Fermoy (1906–1993) and Bernard Shore (1896–1985). As is evident in the time period following Tertis's initial retirement, the efforts put forth in perpetuating a new wave of viola-making allowed Tertis to become a testament to his own desires, thus enabling him to perform again from 1939 well into his eighties.

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[50] Lionel Tertis, "Chapter 11: A Dark Cloud," in *My Viola and I ,* (London: Elek Books Limited, 1974), 88.
[51] White, "Appendix 3: Tertis's Writings and Talks," 322.

The final portion of Tertis's initial quotation, regarding "bone-dry tone," is also necessary to address with reference to his stance on sound quality in viola playing. Tertis's treatise *Beauty of Tone in String Playing* supplies principles that are applicable not only to the viola but to all string instruments. In summary, there is a larger emphasis on left-hand technique (intonation, vibrato, portamento) than on that of the bow hand, with the first sentence following the introduction being: "*Perfect* intonation is the rock-foundation of the string player's equipment. Without this absolute essential of essentials no one should be allowed to perform in public."[52] The latter part of the treatise focuses on right-hand expression and instrument maintenance, with the final section highlighting the necessity of care of the self—both emotionally and physically. Putting his own ideals into practice, Tertis was praised at the height of his career for possessing an "expressive, and dark-toned viola," and as stated in a review of Fritz Kreisler and Lionel Tertis following their performance of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* in Albert Hall:

> It was a different beauty, but a well-nigh equal one, and it was enchanting to hear the two singing, as it were, in affectionate mutual emulation. The violin would seem to be playfully challenging the viola to imitate its gay upward flight. The viola was not loth, and if it could not reproduce the other's brilliant accent its own turn would come after a time when the violin was demurely invited to match the viola's peculiar gravity of expression . . . . The viola has in the past been the Cinderella of the string family, always overshadowed by violin and cello. It was very graceful of Mr. Kreisler yesterday to help it to a new place. It was, perhaps, a turning point for the viola and for Mr. Tertis, so long its splendidly gifted devotee.[53]

While the penultimate statement credits Kreisler with helping to bring the viola to the fore, it is indeed Tertis who deserves a weightier applause for demanding that the viola be heard on an equal footing with the violin. And as a result, as is implied in this review and heard side by side with the violin, the viola shined not in its brilliance, but through the

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[52] Tertis, "Beauty of Tone in String Playing," in *My Viola and I* (London: Elek Books Limited, 1974), 146.
[53] Tertis, "Chapter 7: American Tours," in *My Viola and I*, 55.

"dark toned" nuances that carried a "peculiar gravity of expression"—qualities one might argue are exclusive to the voice of the viola.

As for Tertis's contributions to the viola repertoire, there are more than fifty works that were either composed for Mr. Tertis or arranged by him for the viola.[54] Some of his first collaborations occurred with Benjamin Dale (1885–1934) and York Bowen, followed shortly after by those with Arnold Bax. Having recognized the void of viola repertoire beyond major works including Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* and Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*, Tertis claims to have "begged for viola compositions from the younger English composers. . . ."[55] In continuation, he states: "It was pure generosity in those days at the beginning of the century to write for the solo viola. Publishers would not consider anything of the sort, to them it was a distinctly bad commercial proposition. However, my composer friends continued to write a number of works for me. The style of their music belongs to the period, but it was beautiful, and was a powerful influence in the advancement of the viola."[56] While Tertis chooses to highlight the compositions of Berlioz and Mozart as being the most worthwhile works for viola written before his lifetime, it should be noted that Franz Zeyringer's *Literature für Viola* shows a vast record of numerous works written for viola that perhaps Tertis himself was not knowledgeable of or chose not to pursue, but they did exist.[57] Many of the composers

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[54] The back of *My Viola and I* contains the complete list of both published and unpublished works. Tertis, "Appendix: Works for Viola Solo," in *My Viola and I*, 171–174.

[55] Tertis, "Chapter 5: The Young Mr. Beecham - And New English Composers," in *My Viola and I,* 33.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Zeyringer's compilation of duos, trios, solo works, etc., can be found in Franz Zeyringer, *Literatur für Viola: Verzeichnis der Werke für Viola-Solo, Duos mit Viola, Trios mit Viola, Viola-Solo mit Begleitung, Blockflöte mit Viola, Gesang mit Viola und der Schul- und Studienwerke für Viola* (Hartberg: J. Schönwetter, 1976).

listed are unknown in the common repertoire today, but it is without a doubt that Tertis would have been acquainted with the growing number of works written by fellow violist Paul Hindemith (1895–1963), whose viola sonatas and concerto written between 1919 and 1937 were undoubtedly crucial additions to the viola at the advent of its solo voice. An anecdote will perhaps provide some clarity on the matter. At the time when William Walton (1902–1983) completed his viola concerto, he asked Tertis to premiere it. Tertis declined because of sickness, and also on the premise that he admittedly "had not learnt to appreciate Walton's style."[58] When asked whom Tertis would suggest to premiere the piece in his place, he recommended Paul Hindemith. He recounts the performance as follows:

> So it was that Hindemith played the work for the first time in Queen's Hall. I was a member of the audience, and felt great disappointment with his playing. The notes, certainly, were all there, but the tone was cold and unpleasing and the instrument he played did not deserve to be called a viola, it was far too small. Later on a chance was offered to me to play a concerto by Hindemith himself. In a letter from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra it was suggested that it would be pleasing for a British viola-player to play the composition of a German composer who was himself a viola soloist. I perused the score and found that most of it was crammed with fiendishly difficult passage-work—a technique that was peculiarly his own and which he himself played marvelously. It was not music to me, and I reluctantly had to refuse the offer.[59]

And that is Tertis's opinion on the matter. One can conjecture from this reaction that while Tertis respected Hindemith for his accomplishments as a violist and composer, his musical preferences lay in that of the Classical and Romantic styles. While works of Bowen, Bax, and Dale were composed for Tertis in his lifetime, they were "of the period" and reflected a sound world stemming from that of the great late-Romantics—a sound world that Tertis cherished until his last performance in 1964.[60]

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[58] Tertis, "The Young Mr. Beecham - and New English Composers," in *My Viola and I,* 36.

[59] Ibid., 36–37.

[60] White, "Chapter 14: Second Marriage and Last Appearance," in *The First Great Virtuoso of the Viola*, 273.

Tertis's efforts on all fronts as a teacher, arranger, commissioner, writer, viola designer, and performer all contribute to his legacy and title as the first solo violist. While Tertis claims to have been the "only enthusiast endeavoring to raise the viola out of the rut,"[61] his persistence and influence brought the stature of the viola to its rightful place as an equal amongst the string family for years to come.

ii. Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979): The First "Lady Musician" of the Viola

A notable figure who further perpetuated the development of the viola and its repertoire was British-born violist and composer Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979). It is important to establish that most of this study's cited information on Clarke will come from the publications and scholarship of Dr. Liane Curtis, the founder of the Rebecca Clarke Society and editor of *A Rebecca Clarke Reader* (2005). For reasons that are unclear, it is difficult to access information beyond what Curtis has published because of issues with Clarke's estate, but given what is readily available, there is plenty to draw upon.[62]

Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979) was born in London in 1886 and was raised with her two brothers in a musically inclined family. At age 17, she was accepted into the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) as a violinist, and two years later in 1907, she attended the

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[61] Ibid., 264.

[62] The current head of Rebecca Clarke's estate is Christopher Johnson, who is Clarke's grandnephew by marriage. While a doctoral student at CUNY, Johnson began writing his dissertation on Clarke's life and music, and he obtained many of her personal documents for research purposes while Clarke was still alive. After her death, Johnson was deeded what was left of her materials from family members—the transaction of which Curtis believes was potentially done without Clarke's explicit consent. In an effort to make Rebecca Clarke's music and articles more readily available, Curtis's attempts to publish writings have received severe backlash from Johnson regarding copyright issues. Curtis published an article in 2009 that outlines the legal battles she has endured with Johnson regarding research propositions, publication of unknown writings and works, and even requests for basic maintenance for preservation of Clarke's documents.

Royal College of Music as one of the first female students to study composition with Sir Charles Stanford.[63] During her time at the Royal College, Clarke was encouraged by Stanford to pursue the viola, which he claimed would assist in her compositional studies because of the viola's middle voice range and its significant role in chamber music. As Stanford stated, by playing the viola Clarke would sit "right in the middle of the sound, and [be able to] tell how it's all done."[64] She heeded his advice, took up viola under the tutelage of the leading violist at the time, Lionel Tertis, and supported herself as a viola player and composer for twenty years.

In 1912, Clarke was selected as one of "six lady musicians chosen by Sir Henry Wood to augment the Queen's Hall Orchestra,"[65] which was highly acclaimed for its time and also Clarke the opportunity to regularly tour within Europe and abroad. During one of her trips to the United States, Clarke became acquainted with Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (1864–1953), a well-known American patron of the arts, and founder of the Berkshire Chamber Music Festival in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Upon making each other's acquaintance, Clarke was encouraged by Coolidge to enter the Berkshire Chamber Music Festival's annual competition for composition.[66] Clarke submitted her Viola Sonata (1919) and tied for first place with Ernest Bloch's Suite for Viola (1919). The judges were so intrigued by the Viola Sonata that they demanded to know who had

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[63] Among other composers who studied under Stanford were Frank Bridge, Gustav Holst, and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

[64] Christopher Johnson, "Life," Rebecca Clarke: Viola Player and Composer, Christopher Johnson, accessed February 10, 2023, https://rebeccaclarkecomposer.com/life/.

[65] Liane Curtis, "A Case of Identity," *Musical Times* 137, no. 1839 (May 1996): 15.

[66] Liane Curtis, ed., "Chapter 11: Robert Sherman Interviews Rebecca Clarke about Herself," in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader* (Waltham, MA: Rebecca Clarke Society, 2005), 174.

written it. As Coolidge later told Clarke, "You should have seen their faces when they saw it was by a woman."[67] Very telling of the times, this statement illustrates how women in the 1920s had to fight against imposed positions of "cultural invisibility"[68] in a predominantly man's world. While fellow composer Ethyl Smyth (1858–1944), "a proud suffragette [who] carried the banner of 'woman composer' high,"[69] Clarke shied away from this, and even credited some works to Anthony Trent—a pseudonym Clarke used for her early viola and piano work *Morpheus* and, most notably, the Viola Sonata (1919). As is most evident in her last interviews with the WQXR broadcaster Robert Sherman, Clarke's attitude towards her own potential as a professional musician—as a composer in particular—is modest. In many quotations, she undermines her own successes by saying in various ways that she felt she "never fully deserved it," while also curiously alluding to feelings of not being "seen."[70] The most striking example of this inner conflict is exemplified in the aftermath of Coolidge's competition, which is best illustrated in an interview with Sherman:[71]

> Clarke: And when I had that one little whiff of success that I've had in my life, with the Viola Sonata . . . the rumor went around, I hear, that I hadn't written the stuff myself, that somebody had done it for me. And I even got one or two little bits of—I don't know if I've still got them, I doubt it—little bits of press clippings saying that it was impossible, that I couldn't have written it myself. And the funniest of all was that I had a clipping once which said that I didn't exist, there wasn't any such person as Rebecca Clarke, that it was a pseudonym.
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> Sherman: [laughs]
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> Clarke: Now these people had got it most beautifully mixed—that it was a pseudonym for Ernest Bloch! I thought to myself what a funny idea that when he writes his very

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[67] Ibid., 175.

[68] Curtis, "A Case of Identity," 16.

[69] Ibid., 16–17.

[70] Quoted in ibid., 17.

[71] Curtis, "Chapter 11: Robert Sherman Interviews Rebecca Clarke about Herself," in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader,* 171.

> much lesser works that he should take a pseudonym of a girl, that anyone should consider this possible![72]

As is witnessed in this interview, Clarke shrugs off her deemed lack of existence with humor, but one can imagine how demeaning it must have been not to receive credit where it was due.

Clarke stopped composing shortly before her marriage to pianist and composer James Friskin (1886–1967) in 1944, with her last work being *Chorus from Shelley's "Hellas"* (1943).[73] Given the correlation of events in combination with societal pressures and prevalent internal/external struggles with self-identity, one questions whether Clarke's marriage influenced her decision to stop composing. In search of more information, Toby Appel, a current professor of viola at The Juilliard School, who was a dear friend of Clarke, performed her Viola Sonata (1919) at her 90th birthday with Emanuel Ax, and kept in close contact with her through the end of her life, has offered a possible answer. He theorizes that her decision to stop composing *was* related to her marriage, and that Clarke, knowing that she was a potentially superior composer to her husband, felt it was her wifely duty to step down so as to not overshadow him.[74] If this is true, it is a shame that, because of her status as a woman, Clarke did not feel she could continue pursuing her career. So why did she stop composing? It could be interpreted, and it is likely the case, that the decision stemmed from a combination of elements: the collision of environmental factors, including the lack of support from her immediate

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[72] Curtis, "Chapter 11: Robert Sherman Interviews Rebecca Clarke about Herself," in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader,* 171.

[73] Friskin was a piano teacher at The Juilliard School, and he was also a composer—more of a hobbyist composer—who wrote a select few pieces including an Elegy written specifically for Clarke.

[74] Toby Appel, interview by author, New York, NY, March 30, 2022.

family (particularly her father),[75] social issues related to gender stereotypes, her marriage, and, lastly, her personal struggles with self-advocacy. All of this tells a not so unfamiliar tale of women musicians whose success and recognition were curtailed because of their gender. Even to this day, nearly 100 years later, the music and writings of Rebecca Clarke are still not fully available because of her estate's withholdings. Nonetheless, by sharing a sliver of her story, one hopes that violists and scholars alike will gain awareness of the facts of her accomplishments and will persist in helping Rebecca Clarke's voice be heard.

Over the course of her career Clarke composed 15 known works for viola. As is expected, Clarke's knowledge and love of the instrument influenced how she wrote for it, thus yielding an idiomatic language that suits the most beautiful qualities of the viola's tone, range, and expressive palette. Clarke's style of composition, while generally rich in texture and harmonic flavors, is versatile in its canvas of musical expressivity. Her invention of shapeshifting musical topographies achieved through clever juxtapositions of extremes in range, textures, motion and stillness, and functional versus nonfunctional harmonies demonstrates Clarke's affinity towards color in sound. Regarding her observation of the early 20th-century composer's growing "preoccupation with musical color," Clarke puts the viola into context, writing:

> It can be easily understood that as no great demands were made upon the technique of the viola, it had few adequate exponents; and conversely little of interest could be written for it, owing to the very limited powers of viola-players—a vicious circle which has lasted almost up to the present generation. Of late years, however, its position has changed considerably. A growing preoccupation with musical color has been quick to discover the peculiar and often most effective possibilities of the viola. Its dark and often somewhat nasal timbre—often akin to that of the woodwind family—can be made to contrast most tellingly with the more open tone of the other string instruments thus making a virtue of its very defects; and where in

[75] Curtis mentions Clarke's memoir, *I Had a Father, Too*, on several occasions in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader.* It contains pertinent information about Clarke's relationship with her father, including a number of distressing quotations that point to an abusive relationship. The full contents of Clarke's memoir are currently withheld by her estate.

> former days the occasional solos entrusted to it in concerted music were chiefly for the sake of contrapuntal contrast, it is now eagerly seized upon by the modern composer for its own particular qualities. This has been the natural result of bringing into being a new standard of viola playing, which, though as yet somewhat lower than that of the violin or cello, is immeasurably higher than before.[76]

The main concepts at the fore of this statement are Clarke's specific mention of how the viola's musical color served as an impetus for composers to write for it, with further mention of how the viola's sound quality distinguished it from other string instruments in a string quartet setting. It is also intriguing that Clarke uses the combination of the words "dark" and "nasal" to describe the viola's sound. Perhaps inherent in this description is Clarke's personal experiences with her own viola, a Giovanni and Francesco Grancino viola (ca. 1675) measuring at 16 1/4 inches in body length. The most recent owner of this instrument, Toby Appel, who performed on Clarke's viola for a period of time, gave a mixed review of its voice, stating: "While incredibly beautiful, [it] was not powerful enough for me, and I found I rarely used it."[77] During the period in which Clarke played this same viola, and in reference to a concert that Clarke gave with cellist May Mukle at Aeolian Hall in February 1918, a reviewer wrote: ". . . the viola was the chief centre of interest. . . . The beauty of the instrument, which possesses something of the flexibility of the violin with the intensity of the cello, was admirably exploited by Miss Clarke, and set the audience wondering whether more could not be heard from this instrument. . . ."[78] While less glowing, another review of the same concert read: "Miss Clarke, except for a tendency to part from the pitch, also showed herself a finished artist. The viola is not

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[76] Rebecca Clarke, "Chapter 7: Viola," in *Rebecca Clarke Reader,* ed. Liane Curtis (Waltham, MA: Rebecca Clarke Society, 2005), 135–136.

[77] Toby Appel, interview by Manchester Music Festival, February 3, 2020, transcript, accessed February 15, 2023, https://www.mmfvt.org/interviews/2020/2/3/an-interview-with-toby-appel.

[78] Cited in Curtis, "A Case of Identity," 18.

monotonous when so played."[79] While the nasal quality identified by Clarke and the lack of strength in sound mentioned by Appel are likely attributed to the instrument's smaller size, from the evidence left in her wake, it is clear that Rebecca Clarke's viola playing was of the highest quality in her time period, and that even its smaller sound did not lessen the audience's desire to hear more.

Lastly, it is important to refer back to one of Clarke's statements mentioned earlier in this chapter. While Clarke advocated for the viola as a soloist in her own compositions and as a performer, it would be inaccurate to assume that Clarke confidently believed the viola to be the *best* option for a solo setting. She states, "The tone of the viola is apt to become slightly monotonous in an entire recital, as it has not as large or brilliant a range of tone-color as the violin or cello; nevertheless, it can sound very effective in a sonata, and of late years its repertory has greatly increased."[80] Despite this surprising opinion, Clarke believed the viola's rightful place to be amongst others in chamber music—in the quartet in particular.[81] In her article entitled "The History of the Quartet in Viola Writing," Clarke gives a personal overview showing how the viola developed through select chamber works, thus ultimately crediting Brahms as the biggest advocate for the viola.[82] She elaborates by saying: "He seems to have had a particular affinity for its

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[79] Cited in ibid.

[80] Clarke, "Viola," in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader,* 139.

[81] Clarke, "The History of the Viola in Quartet Writing," 6. Here she says: ". . . although it [the viola] has always appeared in democratic numbers in the orchestra, its chief scope of utterance as a personal entity has been, and still is, in chamber music, and the quartet in particular."

[82] Ibid., 11.

intensely personal tone—sombre yet glowing, reserved yet eloquent—so like the character of his own music."[83]

Much of the previous quotation regarding Brahms's music could be used to describe Rebecca Clarke, who, despite her self-imposed criticisms and personal doubts, flourished as a master musician and composer of her time. Her contributions to the viola repertoire are among the staple works played by violists of today, and while Clarke may not have believed it to be true of herself, the legacy surrounding her achievements as one of the first women composers and violists to succeed on an international level at the height of the first feminist wave in the 1920s deserves ardent applause and recognition. While much of Clarke's life and publications are still shadowed in enigmatic legalities as a result of her estate, what is known to the public is sufficient enough to celebrate "the glorious Rebecca Clarke"[84] for all that she is, and for all that she contributed to the history of the viola.

iii. William Primrose (1904–1982): The Virtuosic Viola and the "Biggest Mistake"

Scottish-born violist William Primrose (1904–1982) was introduced to the violin as an infant by his father, began taking violin lessons with Camillo Ritter (1875–1940) at age 4,[85] and gave his first notable public performance at age 12 when he performed Felix Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in St. Andrew's Hall in Glasgow. Coming from a musical family and with the established structure of violin lessons from an early age, Primrose

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[83] Ibid., 11. Clarke also adds, "His love of it is shown in many of his works, such as in the string sextets, or in his choice of it for the important obbligato in his two beautiful songs for contralto, *Gestillte Sebnsucht* and *Geistliches Wiegenlied*; but in nothing does he give it a finer chance than in his string quartet in B flat."

[84] Quoted in a letter written from Arthur Rubinstein to Clarke in 1966; shown in Curtis, "A Case of Identity," 21. Arthur Rubinstein said this in a letter to Rebecca Clarke. It is in the Curtis article.

[85] He engaged in a steady diet of scales, arpeggios, and rigorous studies created by violinist Otakar Ševčík —who was Ritter's own teacher along with Joseph Joachim.

experienced rapid growth that was perpetuated with exposure to classical music concerts given by some of the greatest musicians of his time: Enrico Caruso (1873–1921), Emmy Destinn (1878–1930), Eugene Ysaÿe (1858–1931), Jan Kubelík (1880–1940), Mischa Elman (1891–1967), Joseph Szigeti (1892–1973), and Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962). Primrose reflects on these performances from 1909 in his memoir, writing how he remembers "their respective sounds in my inmost ear."[86] Ten years later Primrose enrolled at the Guildhall School of Music in 1919 with violinist Max Mossel (1884–1956), whom Primrose did not take a liking to, but who nonetheless supported Primrose in having his Queen's Hall debut in 1923.

Primrose had the opportunity to perform on a variety of instruments, including the Betts Stradivarius violin from 1704 that he used at his debut. His father owned both a Nicolò Gagliano (ca. 1730–1787) violin from 1735, which he had purchased for a mere ninety pounds, and an Antonio & Girolamo Amati viola from 1600, which was played on occasion in quartet readings. Primrose recalls his first experiences with the Amati viola in his memoir *Walk on the North Side*: "As a youngster, when he [his father] wasn't around, I found a way to open the latch on the cupboard where the Amati was kept and played it with considerable satisfaction. I preferred its sound to that of the violin. The only serious thought I might have given to a career as a violist at that point, however, was coupled with my intense desire to take part in chamber music."[87] Primrose's love for the viola persisted despite external pressures to keep with the violin. His father, for example, being

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[86] William Primrose, "Chapter 2: Early Years in Glasgow," in *Walk on the North Side: Memoirs of a Violist* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 15.

[87] Primrose, "Chapter 4: Warming Up," in *Walk on the North Side: Memoirs of a Violist,* 45.

primarily a violinist and playing viola on the side, did not support Primrose's aspiration of becoming a full-time violist. He writes, "Although my father 'doubled' on this instrument, he always felt that anyone who was confined to play out his musical life on what he regarded as the secondary instrument did but confess his failure as a violinist."[88] Colleagues similarly shared the opinion that Primrose's switching to the viola would be the "biggest mistake" of his life.[89] Despite the eventual estrangement from his father and the apprehension of colleagues, Primrose became a full-time violist in the late 1920s. He came to the decision with the help of his violin teacher at the time, Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931), who himself suggested Primrose consider becoming a full-time violist because of his obvious propensity for the instrument. Emboldened by Ysaÿe's support, Primrose became a violist.

In contrast to Tertis, who favored the dark, contralto voice of his Montagnana viola, Primrose preferred the mezzo viola timbre, and discovered his ideal viola voice on an Andrea Guarneri viola built in 1697 that he purchased in 1954. Having previously played on his father's Amati for much of his career, Primrose was later forced to sell it because of irreversible damage that emerged after the large viola was cut down.[90] As a result, he resorted to two violas, one made by William Moenig (1883–1962) of Philadelphia, who utilized elements from the Tertis-Richardson design for sound and playability, and the second being a Pierre Vidoudez (1907–1994) of Geneva. All this

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[88] Ibid., "Chapter 2: Early Years in Glasgow," in *Walk on the North Side: Memoirs of a Violist* 19.

[89] Ibid., "Chapter 4: Warming Up," in *Walk on the North Side: Memoirs of a Violist,* 46.

[90] Ibid., "Chapter 11: Lionel Tertis and Others,*"* in *Walk on the North Side: Memories of a Violist,* 166. The shortening of the instrument produced wolf tones and a smaller sound that hindered Primrose from projecting in solo and chamber music settings.

time, however, Primrose had been on the hunt for an old Italian instrument, and when the ex-Lord Harrington Guarneri viola became available, he played a single recital on it and was so taken by its beauty that he purchased it the next day.[91]

The legacy Primrose left behind as one of the first solo violists is vast. He contributed a plethora of recordings of both standard and modern works for the viola (including the first recording of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*),[92] premieres, commissions, and publications, including *Art and Practice of Scale Playing* (1954), *Technique Is Memory* (1960), *Violin and Viola* (1976), *Walk on the North Side* (1978), and *Playing the Viola* (1988). The latter, which was published as a collection of interviews led by David Dalton, is a technique book that is similar to Tertis's in its material and presentation, but it is more specific and demonstrates some of the most crucial aspects of viola playing through detailed descriptions and pictures.[93] What is most valuable to the history of the viola, however, is William Primrose's commissioning of Béla Bartók's *Viola Concerto*. At the time of its commission, Bartók was regarded as an esoteric composer who was better known and respected by musicians than by the general public. Upon Primrose's formal commission, many people including Primrose's manager had thought he had made a grave mistake, opting for alternate, more successful composers such as Paul Hindemith and Igor Stravinsky—both of whom he approached without success.[94] Primrose's primary motivation for seeking out a viola concerto from Bartók, however, was his infatuation with the Violin Concerto No. 2—specifically the recording by violinist Yehudi Menuhin

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[91] Ibid.

[92] See "Discography" in ibid., 223–232, for the complete list.

[93] Dalton, *Playing the Viola: Conversations with William Primrose,* Chapters 1–10.

[94] Ibid., "Chapter 13: The Repertoire," in *Playing the Viola: Conversations with William Primrose,* 186.

(1916–1999). Primrose visited Bartók in 1945 and offered a formal commission, to which the composer expressed candid hesitation for not knowing enough about the instrument to compose a solo work. However, after hearing Primrose's performance of William Walton's Viola Concerto on the radio and the way Walton wrote for the instrument, Bartók agreed to the commission. Later that same year, Bartók sent a letter stating that he had completed a draft of the concerto with only the orchestration remaining, with an additional request to consult Primrose regarding a few technical passages. As the story goes, Bartók died before he was able complete the viola concerto. Primrose writes, "If I had been able to consult with Bartók as he proposed, I would have offered a few suggestions that might have altered the concerto in its present form."[95] The task of filling in the missing pieces of the manuscript was handed to composer and violist Tibor Serly (1901–1978), who collaborated with Primrose in creating the first complete edition. Despite the concerto's general acceptance as one of the most important works in the viola repertoire, the incomplete manuscript left by Bartók obscures the authenticity of Serly's edition.[96] To this day there exist two standard editions of Bartók's viola concerto: the one by Serly, which was first premiered in December 1949, and a second, originally published in 1995 (revised edition published in October 2003) by the composer's son, Peter Bartók (1924–2020) and Nelson Dellamaggiore.[97] A third and more recent rendition

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[95] Cited in ibid., 187.

[96] David Dalton, "The Genesis of Bartók's Viola Concerto," *Music and Letters* 57, no. 2 (April 1976): 117, accessed November 23, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/734979. This article contains separate interviews with Tibor Serly and William Primrose.

[97] Peter Bartók, "The Principal Theme of Béla Bartók's Viola Concerto," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 35 (1993–1934): 45, accessed November 23, 2023, https://www.jstor.org/stable/902196. Paul Neubauer approached Peter Bartók with the idea that the Viola Concerto should be performed "as Béla Bartók wrote it." Peter Bartók's latest edition of the Viola Concerto from 2003 includes edits in the solo part by Paul Neubauer.

of Bartók's concerto exists that is less known but certainly holds value. In making this edition, Hungarian violist Csaba Erdélyi (1946–) researched Bartók's original manuscript for more than twenty years and created a critical edition that aimed to correct "divergences" that he discovered between Bartók's original manuscript and the Boosey & Hawkes publication (i.e., Serly's edition).[98] What is most compelling about this edition is Erdélyi's handling of sections that were left blank in the manuscript. As he writes, "In my piano reduction (PE066), those few markings that were supplied by the composer are identified in parentheses, and a detailed critical apparatus is included so that comparison may be made with the work as it appears in the original manuscript draft. Thus, informed decisions may be taken by the performer with regards to the editorial suggestions made throughout the score."[99] All in all, it is impossible to know what Bartók intended for the orchestration of his Viola Concerto. While Primrose was initially surprised to learn of Serly's editing of the work, he did not challenge his intentions to reproduce the most authentic version possible, given Serly's personal dealings with Bartók's manuscripts in the past and his familiarity with the musical shorthand that Bartók used. He was convinced that, if anything, Serly took more material out that he was not entirely certain about rather than inserting his own compositional suggestions.

William Primrose is generally regarded as the next star violist following the advent of Lionel Tertis. Against all odds regarding familial estrangement and collegial dissuasion, his unwavering love of the instrument gifted violists of today a masterpiece in

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[98] Cited in Béla Bartók, "Foreword to the Critical Edition," in *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra,* ed. Csaba Erdélyi (Wellington, New Zealand: Promethean Editions Limited, 2004), iii, accessed May 28, 2023, https://www.yumpu.com/xx/document/read/60131397/viola-concerto-erdelyi-restoration-and-orchestration.

[99] Ibid., iv.

the viola literature that, despite its shrouded history and numerous editions, is considered a staple at every orchestral and conservatory audition for the viola. Primrose's accomplishments on the instrument and for the repertoire make his name "synonymous" with that of the viola, as János Starker wrote, and the voice of his legacy lives on through the numerous students he mentored, and his cherished instruments.[100]

IV. The Voice of the Viola: A Niche for Lamentation

The voice of the viola underwent hundreds of years of development since the instrument's inception in the late-16th century, with the leading evolutionary forces being the instruments themselves, the first solo violists, and its resulting repertoire. In collaboration with late-19th- and 20th-century composers (very many of whom also played the viola), the first solo violists and select composers sought out an opportunity to expose how the historically misunderstood qualities of the viola could serve as its strengths, thus over time creating a niche within its repertoire that highlights the viola's capacity for works of lamentation. The unique voice of the viola is a result of its register: a range of pitches that resonate within the general *tessitura* of the human voice. The familiarity of this middle register, its human quality of voice, and its "gravity of expression" are inherent in the viola's sound and collectively prompt an expressive language that is idiomatic to the nuances of instrumental vocality used in musical works of mourning. Sharing this view, Berlioz wrote in his treatise on orchestration that "the

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[100] William Primrose taught Karen Tuttle, Martha Strongin Katz, and Cynthia Phelps, to name a few. The ex-Primrose Amati viola is played by violist and President/CEO of the Curtis Institute of Music, Roberto Diaz, and the ex-Primrose Guarneri viola was sold in 2012 to its current owner for a record sum. More details on the ex-Primrose Guarneri viola can be found in Jason Price, "The 'Primrose, Lord Harrington' Guarneri Viola," Tarisio Fine Instruments and Bows, last modified May 4, 2021, accessed April 10, 2023, https://tarisio.com/cozio-archive/cozio-carteggio/the-primrose-lord-harrington-guarneri-viola/.

sound of its lower strings has a particular pungency, its high notes have an especially sad and passionate character, and its profoundly melancholy tone makes its general character quite distinct from that of other stringed instruments."[101] With this said, however, it is crucial to note that while the viola is frequently and historically characterized for its solemnity of sound, the instrument possesses a voice of many colors and holds the capacity for brilliance, nimbleness, and suavity, to name a few; and there are plenty of examples in the repertoire that showcase these qualities. Looking at the repertoire as a whole, however, one finds it curious that, since the viola's unveiling as a solo instrument, more than 200 works have emerged that feature the viola as a voice of lamentation in genres including the lament, elegy, *lachrymae*, requiem, in memoriam, threnody, epitaph, *funerailles*, and dirge.[102] While all of these terms feature their own slant as works of mourning, they can be generally considered under the collective umbrella of the lamentation genre. In response to these observations, and in consideration of how the viola's voice has been shaped through history thus far, the following pages will analyze selected works of lamentation for viola, focusing on a variety of elements, including: origin, context, commissions/dedicatees, stylistic properties that support its designation as music of lamentation, topics of lamentation, the invocation of voice, the physicality of its performance, and, most importantly, why the viola is most suitable for conveying the intentions of the work.

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[101] Hector Berlioz, "Bowed Strings," in *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise: A Translation and Commentary*,, 35, accessed December 22, 2022, https://www.academia.edu/7250879/Berliozs_Tratise_of_Orchestration.

[102] I became more aware of this niche in the viola repertoire after reading "Elegiac Reaction: The Elegy In, and Out of, the Viola Literature," written by the New Zealand violist Paul Groh. Included in the Appendix of the article is a detailed list of more than 200 elegies. Groh's initial list of elegies is included with updates made by this author in Appendix A.

i. Frank Bridge, Lament for Two Violas (1912)

English-born composer Frank Bridge (1845–1945) wrote the *Lament for Two Violas* in 1912 amidst the political tensions leading up to World War I. The work was written in what is considered Bridge's pre-war style of composition and exemplifies clear, tonally directed phrases with an affinity towards color and imagery. Looking at patterns of composition regarding genre and instrumentation in other works written in the same time period, one can gain a larger understanding of the context and motivations in which the *Lament* was composed.

Many of the pieces written around the same time as the *Lament for Two Violas* are pastoral in nature.[103] As exemplified in Bridge's most famous orchestral work from this period, *The Sea* (1911), the composition depicts features of a turbulent and electric atmosphere that culminate in the final movement as a storm. The pastoral underpinnings of the work are initially distinguished by the emergence of the viola section, which plays a simple and singable pentatonic melody set against the well-known pastoral topic of a drone of fifths in the bassoon, clarinet, and flute. The range of the reed instruments sits in the same register as the violas', with the more piercing tone of the flute glistening in the highest overtones, thus creating an interweaving, moody, and shimmering texture that reflects the imagery of the seascape. The association of the pastoral drone topic with the viola's tone of voice and register triggers mixed sensations of nostalgia and suspense that

[103] Other works featuring pastoral titles and material are *The Mountain Voice* (ca. 1903), *Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind* (1903), *A Sea Idyl* from 2 Solos for Piano (1905), *Amaryllis* (1905), *Summer, A Symphonic Poem* (1915), *3 Miniature Pastorals for Piano:* Set 1 (1917), Set 2 (1921), and Set 3 (1921).

together anticipate the coming storm.[104] This frequent association of pastoral topics with nostalgia also alludes to sensations of contemplation and pensiveness, thus also drawing connections to works of a more melancholy nature. Examples from Bridge's *oeuvre* from this period include: *Romance: One Lamentation d'amour for Violin and Piano* (1900), *A Dirge for Medium Voice and Piano* (1903), *Élégie for Cello and Piano* (1904), "Pensiero" from *Two Pieces for Viola* (1905), *O Weary Hearts for Mixed Chorus A Capella* (1909), and *Lament for Catherine for String Orchestra* (1915), to name a few. Given Bridge's affinity for reflective genres, his personal knowledge of the viola, and the personification of medium voice parts in works of inner contemplation, one finds it fitting for two violas to fulfill the role as lamenting figures in Bridge's *Lament for Two Violas.*

Bridge's *Lament* was commissioned and premiered by Lionel Tertis (alongside Bridge), and it is beloved for its dark, lush melodies and idiomatic writing for the most favorable registers of the viola. While the work is titled *Lament,* there is no indication of a program or a dedication, thus yielding a purely instrumental work that explores the concepts and emotions of melancholy. Given the date of this work and Bridge's known pacifist attitude towards the simmering anxieties of World War I, one could propose that Bridge naturally turned to writing for his own instrument using an elegiac and pastoral voice as a way to stand in solitude with those at war, but this is a matter of opinion.

As shown in Figure 1, from the first measure, a motive, which is subsequently called Motive A, subtly emerges played by the second viola (m. 1). The minor tonality

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[104] This observation is in line with Wye Jamison Allanbrook's previously-mentioned connection between the pastoral elements of the siciliano and elements of nostalgia (see Chapter 2, page 67). Wye Jamison Allanbrook, "Chapter 2: The Gestures of Social Dance," in *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 44.



Figure 1: Mm. 1–4 of Frank Bridge's *Lament for Two Violas,* Viola 2

and grim atmosphere are cast in the lowest register of the instrument, with the potential of playing the entire melody *sul* C. If done so, the resonance of the lower positions is met with the resistance of higher positions, thus creating a choked quality of sound at the height of the phrase that is apt for the pained nature of the lament. The grace note added to the triplet figure in m. 1 adds an extra layer of complexity to the otherwise simple, upper-neighbor triplet figure, thus emulating a painful shudder in both character and melodic dissonance. The first viola imitates the same figure an octave higher in m. 13, but instead the voices are in counterpoint, and the grace note added to the triplet is played in tandem with a duplet, thus creating an even more sonorous friction between the two instruments.

The E-minor section (mm. 47–70; see Figure 2) begins with the second viola playing Motive B: a motivically-related version of Motive A's trembling triplet, with a 32nd-note rhythm in place of the grace note. As in the opening phrase, the first viola sings the melody back, but this time in the reversed register (an octave lower). As the passage develops, the dialogue of Motive B material is intertwined, and culminates in a



Figure 2: Mm. 47–50 of Frank Bridge's *Lament for Two Viola*s, Viola 2

frustration of motivic interplay (mm. 60–63) on nearly every beat. In m. 64 the first viola prevails by playing Motive B in exactly the same register that the second viola began in, thus creating a seamless exchange between the instruments. This structural midpoint of cathartic drama is immediately juxtaposed with a harmonic and textural transformation of simmering tremolos that support the second viola's last singing of the opening theme in C# minor (m. 71), a key that, while tonally removed by a semitone, is more noticeably suppressed in sonority on account of the lack of sympathetic overtones produced with open strings. The closing iteration of the theme containing Motive A occurs in reverse order, with the first viola expressing the doleful melody in its original register and key (m. 115), accompanied by the second viola's subtle insertions of the shuddering Motive B. Here the two versions of the same motive are fused in a perspective of foreground and background, thus recycling familiar material in a hauntingly nostalgic context of instrumental mourning.

While Motives A and B do not carry lineage with the more frequently used topic of mourning, the lament bass, Motive B in particular emulates the trembling sensation of human grief, thus reproducing physical reactions and vocalizations of human pain through an instrumental voice. Interestingly, the intervallic composition, the shape of the figuration, and the rhythm of Motive B are all nearly identical to a motive that Igor Stravinsky himself called a "stutter"[105] (shown in Figure 3). As will be discussed in a later section, Stravinsky's "stutter" was used in a variety of pieces, including *Élégie* (1944).[106] Based on the lamenting nature of the highlighted works, the instrumentation,

[105] See footnote 123 of this same chapter for the complete quotation.

[106] Section iii will go into more detail on this topic in an analysis of Igor Stravinsky's *Élégie* (1944).

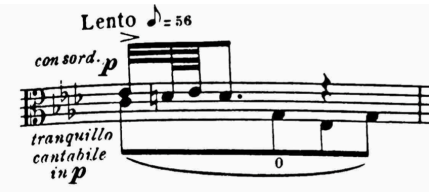


Figure 3: M. 1 of Igor Stravinsky's *Élégie* (1944). The "stutter" is in the top voice.

and the identical motivic structures, Bridge's shudder and Stravinsky's "stutter" could be interpreted as a *sub-topic* of an 18th-century figure that came to be recognized for its intonation of human vocalizations of grief through a sinking semitone: the "sigh" motive.[107] Furthermore, the establishment, permeation, and recollection of both Motives A and B within the structure of Bridge's *Lament* serve a rhetorical purpose in their ability to emotionally, musically, and aesthetically conjure sensations of remembrance within the unsettled atmosphere. The structural arrangement and juxtaposition of both motives within the short duration of the work echo what Walter Frisch called the "memory-based model," which supports how the shaping of a musical narrative is "dependent on what one can remember of past events in the music."[108] Tracing the "sigh" motive and its proposed sub-topic across 200 years of music shows how the localized creation of memory within Bridge's *Lament* could extend beyond the scope of the piece to that of the vocalized sighs represented in 18th-century music. In this sense, the more *long-term* "memory-based model" is inherent not only in the structural formation of the *Lament*'s material but also in the instrumentation, which holds the capacity to speak at a middle

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[107] The sigh is listed in Kofi Agawu's "Universe of Topics," and as stated in Danuta Mika's "Introduction" to the *Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory,* "'Sigh' motives originate in imitation of sigh as an index of grief in vocal music but they turned into an attribute of the 18th-century culture of sensibility (*Empfindsamkeit*) in vocal and instrumental music." Danuta Mirka, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 36.

[108] Walter Frisch, "'You Must Remember This': Memory and Structure in Schubert's String Quartet in G Major, D. 887," *The Musical Quarterly* 84, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 582, accessed September 29, 2023, https://www.jstor.org/stable/742597.

register that intimately resonates with the voices of those listening and, thus, with the human voice from which the sigh motive was derived.

ii. Rebecca Clarke, Dumka: Duo Concertante for Violin and Viola, with Piano (ca. 1940)

Rebecca Clarke's *Dumka* was composed shortly before the end of her career in 1941 and was played and extensively worked on by Clarke and her colleagues while the piece was being written.[109] The late dating of the work represents Clarke's mature style, but nonetheless exemplifies trademark qualities of vivid textures and colorful harmonic shifts established in earlier works, including *Morpheus* (1907) and the Viola Sonata (1919). Within this style, Clarke's *Dumka* portrays pondering and melancholy imagery that is offset by festive rhythms and a swashbuckling rustic dance, thus perhaps serving as a reflection on a centuries-old folk genre of storytelling called *duma*, from which the name *dumka* originates.

Dumas are sung heroic epics of Ukrainian origin. The etymological relationship between *duma* and *mythos* through the Indo-European root *mudh*- potentially links their traditions in practices of storytelling, thus making the practitioners of these tales crucial to the history of the societies in which they originated.[110] The Ukrainian epic or ballade genre of *dumy* is speculated to have originated ca. 1400 and was performed by traveling bards called *kobzars* or *lirnyks,* who accompanied Cossacks (free men or free warriors)

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[109] Rebecca Clarke, Preface to *Dumka,* ed. Christopher Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2.

[110] John Tyrell, "Dumka," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* last modified January 20, 2001, accessed February 3, 2022, ed. Deane L. Root, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08312.

into battle.[111] While the traditions of *duma* go back nearly a thousand years, scholar Natalie O. Kononenko claims that the most reliable information related to its development dates to 1850–1930, the years that best "represent the zenith of traditional minstrelsy, or at least, of available information about this phenomenon."[112] While the tradition inevitably changed from its inception until the period of study, the most salient features of the tradition known to scholars are addressed—consequently, during the time in which Clarke was active as a composer.

The main ideals conveyed in *dumas* include two groups: (1) the older tales reflect on struggles between the Tatars and Turks, captivity and liberation, and heroic death, while (2) the newer *dumas* speak of the Cossack-Polish conflict and specific battles, with additional tellings of such general social themes as moral expectations, praying for kin, respecting your neighbor, peasant life, and religious ideals.[113] While on the battlefield, the bards recited or sang the stories with the intention of raising morale, unity, and strength, thus reminding the soldiers whom and what they were fighting for.[114] In addition to their nationalistically unifying roles, their presence also made the bards observers of historical events, and purveyors of the cultural and social traditions that reflected the values of the people during that era. In this sense, many ethnomusicologists and even modern-day

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[111] Petro Ordarchenko, "Duma," Encyclopedia of Ukraine, vol. 1, last modified 1984, accessed February 15, 2022, http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CD%5CU%5CDuma.htm.

[112] Natalie Kononenko, "Chapter 1: The Singers," in *Ukrainian Minstrels: And the Blind Shall Sing* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 3.

[113] Ordarchenko, "Duma," http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CD%5CU%5CDuma.htm. As quoted in the article, the older dumas of the first group "are distinguished by their lyrical quality, mournful tone, and profound moral insight. Their linguistic richness and style point to their close connection with the older folk songs, particularly funeral laments."

[114] Mykola Mushynka, "Kobzars," Encyclopedia of Ukraine, vol. 2, last modified 1988, accessed February 16, 2022, http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp.linkpath=pages%5CK%5CO%5CKobzars.htm.

performers of this practice interpret the storytelling traditions of the *kobzari* as seekers of the truth, or even seers of the truth, which is an oxymoronic statement considering that many of these performers were known to be blind.[115] While singing these epics, the *lirnyks* accompanied themselves with a lira (a type of hurdy-gurdy), while the *kobzari* played the *kobza*, a strummed instrument from the lute family. During Soviet times, the *kobza* was modified to include more strings and a larger body, and was renamed the *bandura*, which to this day is Ukraine's national instrument.[116]

Dumka developed out of the epic/ballade tradition of *duma* but differs slightly in that it was a *song* of lamentation usually sung by women instead of what was traditionally a male bard.[117] The melancholy and plaintive character of the *dumka* was eventually adapted into the Western canon as instrumental works by 19th- and 20th-century composers, including Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849), Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893). Given that Dvořák proved to have a particularly rich influence on the compositional style of Rebecca Clarke, it is possible that she devised the idea for writing her own *Dumka* through knowledge of select works from the Western repertoire. In the previously mentioned interview with Toby Appel, however, he suggested it is also plausible that Clarke was aware of the origins of *Dumka* through her curiosity and intelligence, but this cannot be proven.[118] Nonetheless, by

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[115] Konomenko, "Chapter 1: The Singers," *Ukrainian Minstrels: And the Blind Shall Sing,* 3. Konomenko writes that that there was even an obligatory element of blindness linked to the *kobzari* and *lirnyky* traditions.

[116] "Kobza," Encyclopedia of Ukraine, vol. 2, last modified 1989, accessed February 16, 2022, http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CK%5CO%5CKobza.htm.

[117] Tyrell, "Dumka," accessed February 3, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08312.

[118] Toby Appel, interview by author, New York, NY, March 30, 2022.

virtue of its title and history as a sung, melancholy work of ancient origins, it is appropriate to include it in this study.

Since there are no external references beyond *Dumka'*s designated title and Clarke's handwritten scores/parts, one wonders what compelled the work's creation and what it could signify. Looking at its components, one sees that the unique instrumentation could hold a personal significance as Clarke played both the violin and viola. In this light, the choice of these two string instruments, as opposed to the standard piano trio, could make *Dumka* a self-referential homage. On the other hand, Antonin Dvořák's *Terzetto* in C Major, op. 74 (1887), features a similarly unusual arrangement of instrumentation for two violins and viola. Additional knowledge of Dvořák's popularization of *dumky* in his Piano Trio No. 3 in E Minor, op. 90 (1891), more commonly known as the "Dumky" Trio, makes it plausible to propose Dvořák as a potential source of influence for Clarke's *Dumka.* Furthermore, given the consistent use of stylistic tendencies exhibited in Clarke's other instrumental works, *Dumka* stands out for the its title and folk-influenced elements: meter changes, crunchy "out-of-tune" dissonances, and the juxtaposition of the opening doleful melody with the *furiant*-like gypsy dance of the middle section. All these attributes, not surprisingly, allude to the fusion of languages inherent in Dvořák's style of composition in *Terzetto,* the "Dumky" Trio, and the "American" Quartet. In line with this reasoning, Christopher Johnson writes that the dating of *Dumka* (ca. 1940–1941) placed it "near the beginning [of] a series of late compositions that would alternate between lean, linear, avowedly modern conceptions and explicit *homages* to ancient styles, forms, and composers. *Dumka* looks both ways at once: forward to the *Chorus from Shelley's*

"Hellas" in its stripped-down textures and implied eroticism; backward to the gorgeous melancholy and smoky passion that Clarke imbibed from the gypsy music of Brahms and Dvórák."[119] In this vein, and in a similar way of thinking as compared with works by Brahms and Dvórák, Clarke's use of the viola in *Dumka* fills the center of the ensemble's sonority, thus creating the potential for a perfect balance and cohesion of stringed voices that are differentiated by their own uniqueness of tone. The similarity in register of the violin and viola makes the passing off of material almost seamless, yet when the viola plays related material to that of the violin, the weepiness of its alto voice adds a dimension that is rich, yet not overpowering, thus creating an affect of yearning that is unmatchable by any other instrument. The late dating of this work and its chronological placement only a few years before Clarke stopped composing give the use of the viola within the melancholy *Dumka* an autobiographical significance beyond the instrument itself, but no less contributes to the historical shaping of its voice within sound worlds of sadness.

iii. Igor Stravinsky, Élégie for Solo Viola (1944)

Igor Stravinsky's *Élégie for Solo Viola* was composed in 1944 in memory of violist Alphonse Onnou from the Pro Arte Quartet. Only four-and-a-half minutes in length, the work portrays a dense array of material that evokes the introspective and painful nature of grieving through the voice of the viola. Stravinsky's implementation of Neoclassical characteristics yields a musical language that sits within the stylistic continuum of the past and the future. The use of Baroque and Classical phrase lengths

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[119] Rebecca Clarke, Preface to *Dumka,* ed. Christopher Johnson, 4.

and rounded binary form provides a familiar structure to Stravinsky's modally, intervallically, and motivically constructed *Élégie,* which, with the use of the viola, serves as a vehicle of remembrance that is deeply personal, yet emotionally distant. In place of utilizing the late-Romantic styles that tended towards extended forms, sometimes indulgent harmonies, and an outpouring of emotion, Stravinsky abstracts what would be expected of grievance in musical form and rather puts forth an economical and objective portrayal that is received as nearly expressionless. In line with the early-20th-century German concept of *neue Sachlichkeit* ("new objectivity"), Stravinsky's motivation to "reject the more expressionistic tone of the immediate past" is put into practice in several of Stravinsky's Neoclassical works that, with the *Élégie,* are "expressive through the very suppression of expressionism."[120] Stravinsky's suppression of the "large-scale" is repurposed as a miniature *Élégie* that yields a concentrated version of the most intrinsic characteristics of grief that are achieved through the interaction of Stravinsky's compositional style and his chosen instrumentation. Stravinsky's knowledge of the viola's capabilities and the choked quality of sound that would be produced by playing muted double stops in the middle range projects an informed application of elements, thus yielding a quality of voice in *Élégie* that serves as a metaphor for human pain.

Written in the C-Phrygian mode and without the guidance of a time signature, Stravinsky's *Élégie* unfolds as a hallowed and hushed meditation of structured improvisation that is dictated within the parameters of pulse, gesture, and a motive that

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[120] Arnold Whittall, "Neo-classicism," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* last modified January 20, 2021, accessed May 6, 2023, ed. Deane L. Root, https://0-doi-org.library.juilliard.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.19723. Quoted by Hans Keller in reaction to Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* (1939).

Stravinsky himself called a "stutter."[121] The "stutter," as shown in Figure 4, appears in the first measure of *Élégie*, and consists of a quick oscillation between two pitches that

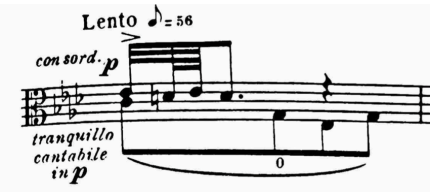


Figure 4: M. 1 of Igor Stravinsky's *Élégie* (1944)

are typically a semitone apart.[122] Stravinsky's mention of the "stutter" was not initially in reference to *Élégie*, but rather to a later work of mourning entitled *Elegy for J. F. K.* (1964). When asked about the origins of the work, Stravinsky replied that the figure described "a recurring stutter in my musical speech that . . . in fact [was] a lifelong affliction."[123] This quotation, while recorded twenty years following *Élégie'*s inception, is pertinent given Stravinsky's consistent association of the "stutter" figure with notions of lamentation. In his vocal work *Elegy for J. F. K.,* the stuttering figure frequently accompanies such texts as "lamentation" (m. 3) and "The Heavens are silent" (m. 14)—the latter of which Stravinsky specifically referred to in his initial quotation. Another work that exemplifies the "stutter" comes from Stravinsky's ballet called *Orpheus (*1947). The first of three tableaux opens with Orpheus weeping over the death of Eurydice while strumming the lyre, which is heard from the orchestra as a descending-tetrachord ostinato

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[121] Karen E. Rostron, "The Relation of Analysis to Performance of Post-tonal Violin Music: Three Case Studies" (PhD diss., The Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2016), 63, CUNY Academic Works, accessed December 2, 2019, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/1565?utm_source=academicworks.cuny.edu%2Fgc_etds%2F1565&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Cited in ibid.

in the Phrygian mode played on the harp. Following this initial texture the entire string section joins together in ascending surges that culminate in agitated tremolos and a heralding funeral call in the trumpet, thus taking Orpheus to the underworld. The stark change of scenery from one of melancholy serenity to one of fury is further confronted with the vigorous entrance of the "stuttering" figure (m. 25), played by solo violin in music that accompanies Orpheus's *Air de Danse* from Tableaux II.

In the *Élégie,* the "stutter" is used not only as a semiotic tool, or subtopic/topic, of lamentation, but also as a formal device that is employed to designate the larger ABA^1 format of the piece. The opening four measures of both the A and A^1 sections begin with the "stutter" figure layered on top of a bass line of 8th notes that repeat in a varied ostinato-like pattern. The implementation of double stops on the middle and lower two strings, in combination with the *con sordino*, *tranquillo cantabile in Piano,* and *Lento* markings, makes the playing of the material on the viola gnarled and ground out, thus suppressing the potential richness of the chords to internal resonances of contrapuntally controlled harmonies.[124] Stravinsky's juxtaposition of "light" and "dark" through the implementation and cancellation of E-flat and E-natural within the C-Phrygian sonority flavors the work with an imbalance of opposites. The first four measures in C minor are momentarily transformed by a suggestive E-natural in m. 5, only to be quickly relinquished by an E-flat on the second half of beat 3. The repetition of material starting midway through this same measure yields a modal struggle that is heard through the quick succession of E-natural and E-flat within the overall pillar of C. These individual

[124] Stravinsky specifically marks in the score: "The fingerings have been chosen with a view to underlining the counterpoint, and not for technical facility."

moments of conflict, however, exist within the larger transition from m. 1 to m. 15 (see Figure 5), thus showing how the initial semitone relationship heard in the "stutter" figure comes to fruition as a larger structural impetus in the transformation from C minor in m. 1 to C major in m. 15.

The B section (mm. 16–44) gives the impression of a fugue, but upon further analysis it proves to consist of layers of *stretto* comprised of fragments of the subject (mm. 16–20) and the countersubject (beginning in m. 21). The opening measure of the subject consists of two quarter notes with accents (which Stravinsky says should be treated as *sFp* throughout) and pronounces the notes C and A-flat, thus posing a possible shift towards the suggested key signature of A-flat major. These quarter notes become

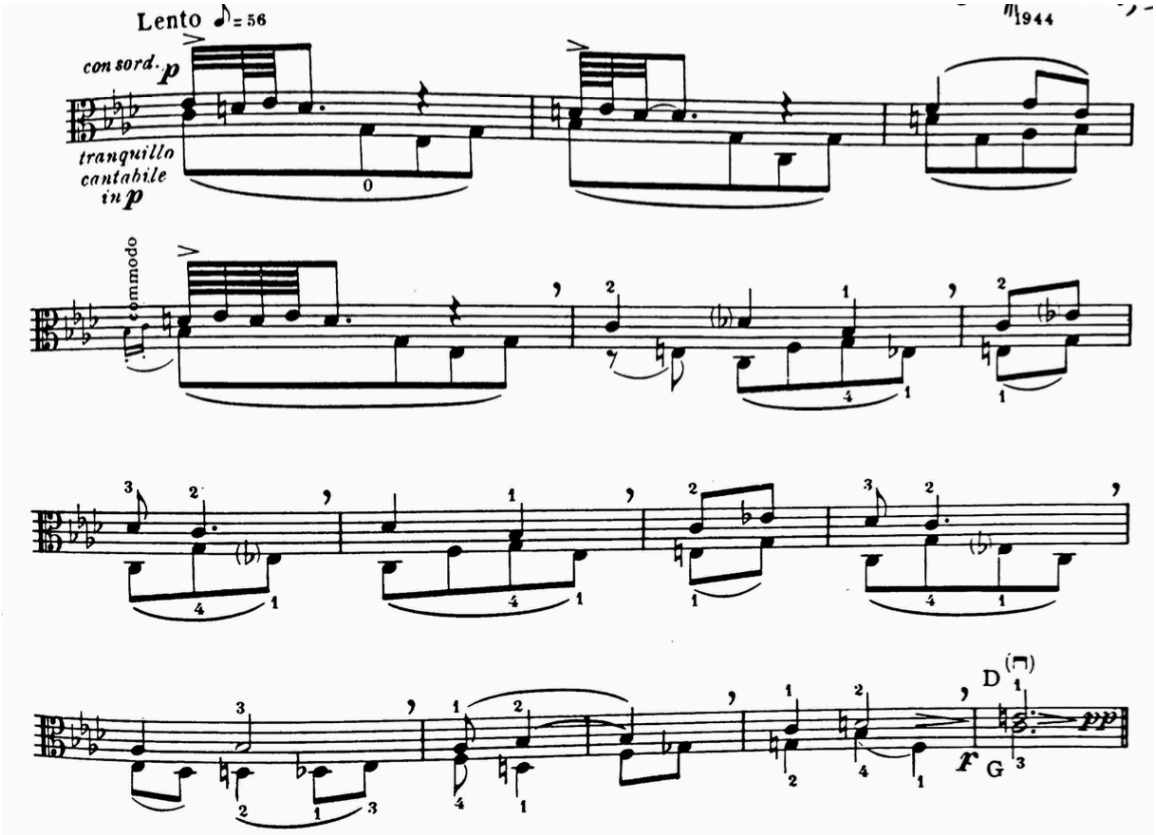


Figure 5: Mm. 1–15 of Igor Stravinsky's *Élégie* (1944)

structural pillars and create an ascending line of perfect and imperfect intervals. The first reiteration of the subject and countersubject together occurs in m. 21, with the subject a fourth above C on the pitches on F and D-flat; the second occurs in m. 30 on G and E-flat as a fifth above C; and the last occurrence is in m. 40 on D and B-natural, a fifth above the previous entrance point, G. This last reiteration is curious because it is marked *marcato-espressivo ma non F* and is thus the climactic point of the piece. It is answered by a melodically inverted form of quarter-note structure on E-flat and G, thus perhaps signaling the retransition back to the A material.

The A^1 material repeats the opening section verbatim with the most significant change occurring in the last four bars (see Figure 6). Here the material is extended through metric elongation (20 beats versus 17 beats) relative to the initial A section. And in remembrance of the conflict of modes, m. 58 contains a B-natural, which suggests a leading-tone resolution to C; however, in the last measure the C the ear expects is absent, and the listener is left with a minor third on E-natural and G, thus shadowing a C-major cadence that is left unfilled by its root.



Figure 6: Mm. 56–59 of Igor Stravinsky's *Élégie* (1944).

Stravinsky's use here of the "stutter" and the modal juxtapositions of "light" and "dark" intervals within the context of *Élégie* make the employment of the viola as its conduit of lamentation a natural fit. The primary usage of the lower and middle ranges of

the instrument and the shudderings of the "stutter" figure yield a vocal quality of pain that, as stated by Joseph N. Straus, "in real life, suggests an inability to speak fluently . . . [which] renders the melody static, fixed in place, and enhances the isolation of the musical fragment of which it is part."[125] The isolation of the solo viola in combination with the struggle inherent in the middle range in which the stuttering figure appears requires a physicality of playing that is meticulously controlled and nuanced in the fine details, thus making the experience of its performance two sides of the same coin in its projection of human pain and the internalized struggle felt while playing it.

iv. Benjamin Britten, Lachrymae: Reflections on a Song of Dowland, op. 48 (1950)

"Music for me is clarification; I try to clarify, to refine, to sensitize. Stravinsky once said that one must work perpetually at one's technique. But what is technique? Schoenberg's technique is often a tremendous elaboration. My technique is to tear all the waste away; to achieve perfect clarity of expression, that is my aim."[126] Resonating with ideals of "new objectivity" implemented in Stravinsky's *Élégie,* Benjamin Britten's compositional process, while oftentimes swift, was meticulous, with an ear and pen that demanded no less than perfection, and a conceptualization of composition that aimed to gain more from less. Inspired by lutenist and composer John Dowland, *Lachrymae, Reflections on a Song of Dowland,* op. 48 (1950), is one of Britten's few string works written after World War II that feature the voice of the solo viola. While there is little primary source material directly related to the origin and writing of *Lachrymae* beyond

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[125] Quoted in Rostron, "The Relation of Analysis to Performance of Post-tonal Violin Music: Three Case Studies," 64.

[126] Quoted in David M. Bynog, "Chapter 7: Benjamin Britten: *Lachrymae,* Op. 48*,"* in *Notes for Violists: A Guide to the Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 78.

details of its premiere, the following interpretation will primarily contextualize how Britten personified the voice of the viola through the chronology of his *oeuvre* leading up to *Lachrymae.*

Britten began learning the viola at age 10 alongside composition and piano lessons, much later becoming a conductor. While regularly performing as a pianist and conductor in public settings for much of his career, the same cannot be said regarding the viola. Personal letters written between Britten and Peter Pears, his partner, reveal little mention of the viola in Britten's professional life. From the works Britten wrote for the viola and select moments it is spotlighted within larger operatic and instrumental works, however, it is reasonable to conjecture that Britten chose to reserve the viola for particular musical settings, ones that were orchestrationally befitting not only of the musical context but also of the viola's voice-type and character that Britten personified through his own connection to the instrument. The few written records of Britten playing the viola include an early performance while he was enrolled at the South Lodge Preparatory School, from which an observer wrote, "He proved a very reliable musician in ensemble work."[127] Another instance occurred years later while Britten was sojourning in Long Island, New York, at the height of World War II. During this recorded instance he was offered the opportunity to read string quartets with Albert Einstein at a small music shop in Suffolk. In response to the shop owner's questioning of Einstein regarding what he thought of Britten and Pears, Einstein said, "They are talented and they will go very

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[127] Imogen Holst, "Chapter 2: School," in *Britten,* The Great Composers, 3rd ed. (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1980), 21.

far."[128] And indeed they did! Britten's "thoroughly practical, practiced, and professional" understanding of instruments,[129] his voracious attitude towards music, and his personal experiences on viola and piano shaped a keen understanding of the nature of the instruments he wrote for, thus showing a natural ability to compose with "the feel as well as the sound of the instruments in his mind."[130] Over the span of his *oeuvre,* Britten personified the "feel" and the "sound" of the viola as a trope of reflection, melancholy, and darkness within various contexts that are revealing of Britten's particular characterization of the instrument as both an orchestrator and violist.

After several years of studying composition with violist and composer Frank Bridge, Britten enrolled at the Royal College of Music with John Ireland (1914–1992), and composed a number of early works for viola. They include: *Reflection for Viola and Piano* (1930), *Elegy for Unaccompanied Viola* (1930), *Two Portraits: No. 2 ("E. B. B.") for Solo Viola and String Orchestra* (1930), and *Double Concerto for Violin, Viola, and Orchestra* (1932).[131] In addition to the prevalent themes of nostalgia inherent in most of the titles, the musical material of the works yield a language idiomatic of the viola's capacity for lamentation. With *Elegy for Unaccompanied Viola*, Britten explores the introspective and quasi-vocal elements of mourning in a musical language that utilizes the viola's full voice range, hushed and compressed sounds through infrequent use of open strings, enharmonic re-spellings, and written-out slides, or sighs. The design of the

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[128] *Benjamin Britten: A Time There Was,* directed by Tony Palmer, 00:28:17–00:29:03 (Isolde Films, 1979), accessed April 20, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECQqWrn1-i4&t=1504s.

[129] Christopher Palmer, "Chapter 35: The Orchestral Works: Britten as Instrumentalist," in *The Britten Companion*, ed. Christopher Palmer (New York: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1984), 393.

[130] Holst, "Chapter 2: School," in *Britten,* 14.

[131] Bynog, "Chapter 7: Benjamin Britten: *Lachrymae,* Op. 48," 80.

work is self-referential, thus creating a formal metaphor of reflection that is fitting of its title—and also perhaps allusive to the period in Britten's life in which this work was written. Britten composed *Elegy* one day after leaving high school at the age of sixteen. In reaction to this life event, he wrote in his diary, "I didn't think I should be so sorry to leave"; however, Britten's composing of *Elegy* for his own instrument on the day following his exit suggests otherwise.[132]

As shown in Figure 7, following the initial presentation of core material (mm. 1–15), the main thematic elements are restated and transformed as fragmentations (m. 2 compared to mm. 13–14) and re-contextualized versions at the octave or otherwise (mm. 1–7 compared to mm. 16–22), with additional variation achieved through shifts in dynamics (mm. 31–38), enharmonic re-colorings of single pitches (mm. 4 and 19), and expressive shifts (m. 12). In addition to these elements, the overall design, while consisting of a basic ABA^1, is dramatized by Britten's infusion of a Phrygian relationship between C and D-flat/C#. The use of D-flat as the starting pitch followed by the relentless grind of semitone movement within the first few measures creates a pattern from which the ear expects a falling semitone from D-flat to C-natural in m. 4; however, Britten instead uses D-flat's enharmonic partner, C#, thus giving a sign of the music's deliberate avoidance of C-natural, and henceforth the establishment of Phrygian tension. The first use of C occurs in mm. 30–32, where three octaves of C are trumpeted in succession, followed by a chromatic ladder that is reminiscent of the dotted figure in m. 1. The final statement of the primary material (from mm. 1–15) in the A^1 section (see Figure 8, mm.

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[132] Colin Matthews and Rosamund Strode, Preface to *Elegy,* by Benjamin Britten (London: Faber Music Ltd, 1985), 1.



Figure 7: Mm. 1–38 from Benjamin Britten's *Elegy*

73–88) yields a varied repetition of the core material with rhythmic change and intervallic displacement. Following the opening theme (mm. 1–7 compared to mm. 73–79), the ear is guided to the last nine measures (mm. 80–88), which rephrase the earlier material (mm. 8–15) and yield a crucial shift in the enharmonic tension. The beginning of the phrase starts on D-flat, but instead of an exact repetition, the *glissando* in m. 84



Figure 8: Mm. 71–88 from Benjamin Britten's *Elegy*

moves to a D-natural followed by a C-sharp (instead of D-flat), thus suggesting enharmonic transformation. In the final measure, the pervading conflict of enharmonicism is resolved with the use of the pitch C. Rather than utilizing the treasured open C for which the last measure yearns, however, Britten places the C as a harmonic, thus yet again abstracting the resolution of tension to a reminder of what it could have been.

Another work of notable importance that follows *Elegy* by fifteen years is Britten's first opera *Peter Grimes* (1945). Britten's intention in turning George Crabbe's poem *The Borough* into an opera was "to express my awareness of the perpetual struggle of men and women whose livelihood depends on the sea. . . ."[133] While vague in its meaning, one can extract a more holistic and self-reflective message when analyzing the

[133] Benjamin Britten, "Chapter 7: Introduction," in *Peter Grimes,* ed. Philip Brett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 149.

complexities of the main character, the fishmonger and town outcast Peter Grimes. As stated by Hans Keller in his analysis:

> Peter Grimes is the living conflict. His pride, ambition, and urge for independence fight with his need for love; his self-love battles against his self-hate. Others, too, he can (sometimes) love as intensely as he can despise them, but he cannot show, let alone prove his tenderness as easily as his wrath—except through the music which, alas, the people on stage don't hear. Thus he is destined to seem worse than he is, and not to be as good as he feels. *Peter Grimes* is the story of the man who couldn't fit in.[134]

Not exclusively attached to the life of sea folk, this message is universal to all, and could arguably be directly applied to Britten, whose pacifist views, homosexuality, battles with depression, and what family friend Beata Mayer described as a "big inferiority complex" possibly made him feel like an outsider.[135] Many of Britten's family members and friends who were close to him during his lifetime have said that what was observed on the outside was not a true reflection of the inside. Leonard Bernstein, in direct concurrence, stated:

> Ben Britten was a man at odds with the world. It's strange because on the surface Britten's music would seem to be decorative, positive, charming, and it's so much more than that. When you hear Britten's music, if you really hear it, not just listen to it superficially, you become aware of something very dark. There are gears that are grinding and not quite meshing, and they make a great pain. It was a difficult and lonely time. Yes, he was a man at odds with the world in many ways. And he didn't show it.[136]

Looking at the stories and poems Britten chose to dramatize through his operas in particular, the main character—the lead usually being a male role written for Peter Pears —was typically an outcast, who, much like Britten (and all of humanity, for that matter),

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[134] Hans Keller, "Chapter 5: 'Peter Grimes': The Story, The Music Not Excluded," ed. Philip Brett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 105.

[135] Quoted by Beata Meyer in *Benjamin Britten: A Time There Was,* directed by Tony Palmer, 00:26:00–00-26:07.

[136] Leonard Bernstein in *Benjamin Britten: A Time There Was,* directed by Tony Palmer, 00:00:09–00:01:09.

contended with personal difficulties in an unforgiving world.[137] While *Peter Grimes* tells the story and circumstances surrounding its main character, the overriding theme of "being at odds" and the ways in which society can hurt or help individuals is a message a collective group could relate to and ponder in the reality of their own world. In this sense, Britten's strong desire for his music to be "used" is fulfilled.[138]

Britten further explores his relationship with the viola in *Peter Grimes*. Leading up to Act 2, Scene 2, Peter Grimes has been the brunt of the town's gossip. He is suspected by the townspeople of murdering his apprentice despite having been declared innocent by the court. The chatter of the town gossip and the slandering of his character eat away at Grimes's humanity, thus leading him eventually to become what he claimed not to be. In a conversation with Ellen, from Act 2, Scene 1, Peter reveals that his ruthless behavior is a result of his desperation to be free of the Borough and all the gossip that haunts him. When asked by Ellen, "What aim, what future, what peace, will your hard profits buy?," Peter replies, "Buy us a home, buy us respect, and buy us freedom from pain of grinning at gossip's tales. Believe in me, we shall be free!."[139] Upon discovering that Peter has been mistreating his second apprentice, Ellen loses hope and asks whether

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[137] Adding to this, there is another element that draws the themes of Britten even closer to his composing of *Peter Grimes.* As succinctly stated by Pears, "Grimes is not a hero nor an operatic villain. . . . He is very much of an ordinary weak person who, being at odds with the society in which he finds himself, tries to overcome it and, in doing so, offends against the conventional code, is classed by society as a criminal, and destroyed as such. There are plenty of Grimeses around still, I think!" The persistent theme of "being at odds" and going "against the conventional code" points to a possible encodement of Britten's anxiety about his homosexuality, a way of being that "in 1945 was still the crime that hardly dare speak its name." Quoted in Philip Brett, ed., "Chapter 13: Britten and Grimes," in *Peter Grimes,* Cambridge Opera Handbooks (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 187.

[138] Quoted from *Benjamin Britten: A Time There Was,* directed by Tony Palmer, 1:01:54-1:01:58. Full quote: "I've got so strongly the feeling that I want my music to be used. I've almost never written a piece of music that wasn't attached to some performer or group of performers."

[139] Montague Slater, *Peter Grimes,* act 2, scene 1 (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1945), 28, accessed May 10, 2023, https://www.rodoni.ch/OPERNHAUS/britten/libretto_originale.pdf.

she was mistaken in standing up for his innocence and trying to clear his name. She states, “Peter! You cannot buy your peace. You’ll never stop the gossips’ talk. With all the fish from out the sea. We were mistaken to have dreamed . . . Peter! We’ve failed. We’ve failed.” Peter strikes Ellen and runs for his hut, taking his apprentice with him. The town is in shambles, and the people of the Borough march to Grimes’s hut seeking vengeance. In conversation with the Chorus, the women of the town express their angst with the fickle ways of men in the Borough. Ellen remarks, “On the manly calendar, we only mark heroic days. . . .They are children when they weep, we are mothers when they strive, schooling our own hearts to keep, the bitter treasure of their love.” In reply, all the women together chant, “Do we smile or do we weep, or wait quietly till they sleep?.”[140] In response to this complex and tragic scene, Britten writes Interlude IV, a *Passacaglia* that is first heard in the solo voice of the viola.

Sitting upon the sparse pizzicato bass line heard in the cello and bass parts, the solo viola line emerges within the compressed region of the viola’s range halfway up the fingerboard on *sul C.* The highly chromatic melody is created through a repeating pattern of large leaps that fold into themselves with semitone lifts, thus creating a descending scalar pattern. The return of the viola solo at the end of Interlude IV is reflective of its opening counterpart in affect and use of semitone material; however, the music itself has been transformed through inversion. The supportive material underneath the solo is no longer within the framework of the opening passacaglia, but is rather ethereal and mystical, with wavelike murmurs heard in the arpeggiation of the celesta and distant

[140] Ibid.

harmonics played by the last chairs of the viola and cello sections. The opposing relationship of these bookending viola solos signifies transformation, which is further supported by the happenings in the plot. Following the conclusion of Interlude IV, Peter Grimes is confronted with the decision to choose between two doors: one that goes out to sea and the other that faces the mob of villagers. Despite the objections of Ellen and the silent wishes of his apprentice, Grimes chooses to go to sea and his apprentice is killed. Given the context of material within the trajectory of the plot, one can conjecture that the transformative underpinnings of the viola's two solos in Interlude IV conform to the tragic metamorphosis of Peter's character. Britten's utilization of the viola as the conduit for which Peter Grimes experiences his moment of transformation is befitting of the composer's previous writings for the instrument and further perpetuates his developing personification of its voice.

Lachrymae was composed in 1950, five years after *Peter Grimes*, and was written for and premiered by William Primrose with Britten at the piano at the Aldeburgh Festival. Constructed in the clever formation of "reverse variation," the melody from the well-known Renaissance vocal work *If My Complaints Could Passions Move* is revealed as the final theme, thus harkening back to the despondent sighs of Elizabethan melancholy that are heard in and inscribed into nearly every work composed by John Dowland. The wordless setting of Dowland's vocal work as an instrumental arrangement for viola and piano is notable given the contexts in which Britten previously used the viola, as well as his affinity towards poetry. In place of the sung words, which were undoubtedly known to Britten, there is the viola, whose husky, growling, simmering, and

shrieking voice assumes its role as the lamenting figure. In the footsteps of *Elegy* and the *Passacaglia* from Interlude IV of *Peter Grimes,* Britten again sets the viola as the conduit of mourning, of tears, thus further personifying its sound as a voice type most appropriate for musical settings of lamentation.

In the text of Dowland's song, the narrative describes a character speaking directly to Love, complaining of how the unfairness and despair caused by Love "govern'd me too long."[141] The poem begins from a place of weakness, a giving into Love despite its unkindness and heartbreak. As the poetry progresses, the character is transformed, thus questioning Love, eventually finding conviction in the character's self-realization of truth: "I was more true to Love than Love to me."[142] The large-scale design of Britten's *Lachrymae* mirrors the poem's trajectory towards a discovery of truth. Similar to that of Britten's *Elegy,* and as notated in the Introduction shown in Figure 9, the architectural make up of *Lachrymae* is built upon fragments of Dowland's theme that are intertwined, layered, truncated, elongated, rhythmically disguised, and displaced over the course of Britten's ten variations—or, as he calls them in the title, "reflections."[143] The final arrival of Dowland's *complete* melody in the reverse variation form contextualizes the cracked and distorted reflections as a means to an end within the wholeness of the theme. In other words, within the variations the horizontal fragmentation and vertical layering of Dowland's melody in both instrumental parts

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[141] Anonymous, "If My Complaints Could Passions Move," The Liedernet Archive, accessed May 10, 2023, https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=542.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Figure 9 shows the introductory material that includes head fragments from the first measures of both the first (1a) and second (1b) subphrases within Phrase 1. See Figure 11 for the entire statement of the melody containing 1a and 1b.

create a fractured version of the theme that is difficult to decipher (see Variation 10 in Figure 10 as an example). The permutations of the song over the course of *Lachrymae'*s reflection coalesce in the theme solely played by the viola (see Figure 11). As with the self-realizing trajectory of the poetry, each variation, as an abstracted reflection, serves as a puzzle piece that discovers its larger function, its truth, within the completeness of the melody. The backward-looking nature typical of human reflection is thus set against the music's forward-looking reflection, therefore creating a work that is at odds not only with itself but with the human experience and perception of time.

Britten's association of the viola as the primary instrument in scenes and works of lamentation establish its voice as a trope of mourning within his *oeuvre.* The use of the viola as the main character in works that explicitly bear titles of mourning (i.e., *Elegy* and *Lachrymae*) strengthens its significance in larger compositions such as *Peter Grimes,* where it not only leads the musical transition between scenes in Interlude IV but also, in symbolizing Peter's evolution of character, serves as an intrinsic element of the transformation of the entire plot of the opera. In consideration of the music itself, and with the support of biographical details, one is given numerous reasons to speculate as to *why* Britten chose to represent these particular moments and works through the viola's voice. Britten's connection to the instrument from an early age and the fact that his first viola teacher introduced him to Frank Bridge make the viola instrumental to Britten's first successes in music. Having also been gifted Bridge's viola by his beloved teacher shortly before traveling to the United States suggests a strong personal connection to the viola in general, and to the specific instrument that Britten presumably used when

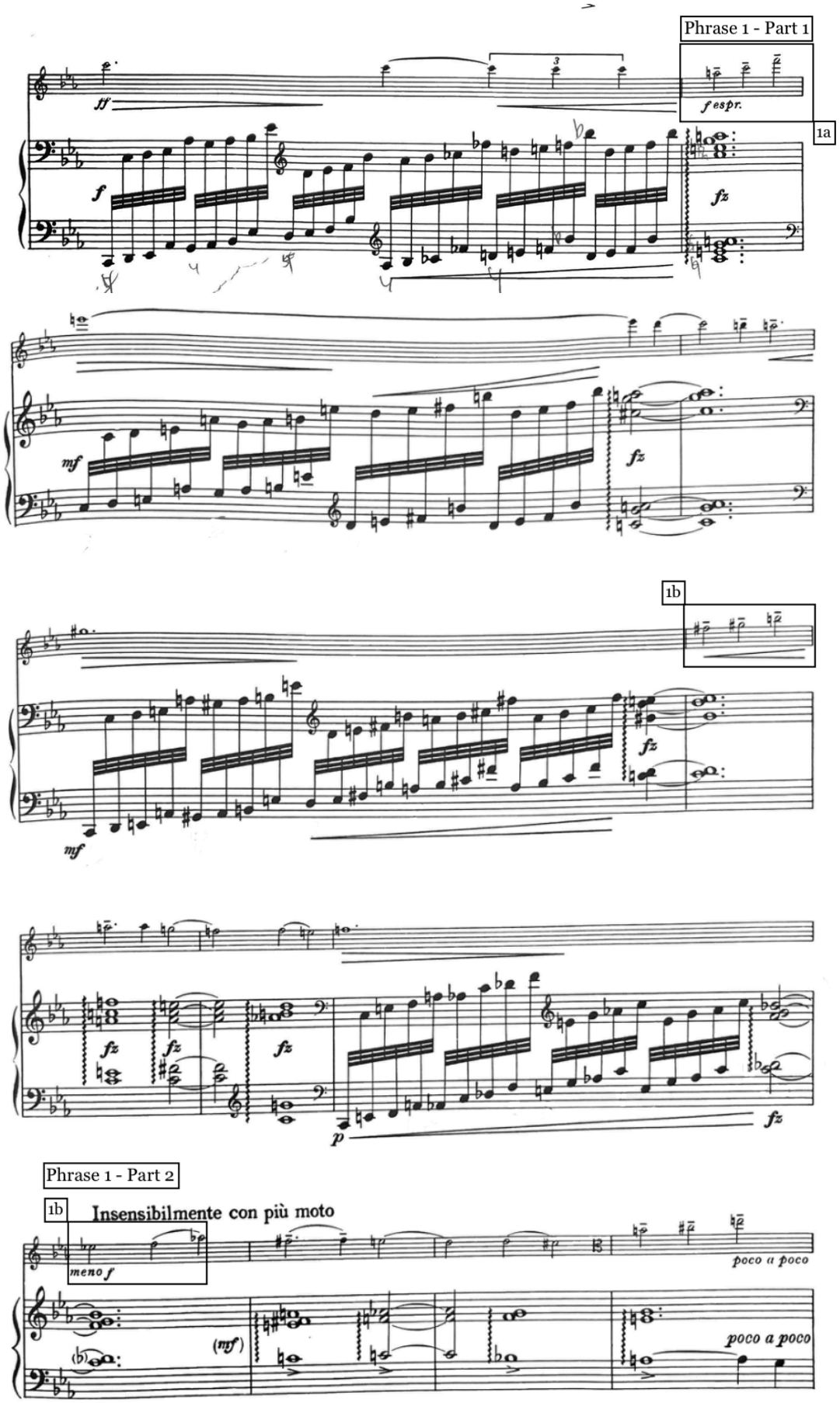


Figure 9: Introduction from Benjamin Britten's *Lachrymae,* Op. 48. Motives 1a and 1b are fragmented themes extracted from the first complete phrase of Dowland's song. The overlay of motives within the Introduction presents the primary material that is deconstructed throughout the ten variations and reconstructed in the final statement of the theme.



Figure 10: Benjamin Britten's *Lachrymae,* Variation 10 starting at rehearsal number 10. In combination with sustained piano chords that are reflective of the introductory material, the head motives 1a and 1b are utilized as smaller units that anticipate the return of the theme.

composing for viola. Recognizing that Britten rarely performed the viola in public proposes not only that the composing of numerous works featuring its voice in certain scenarios was intentional for musical and orchestration purposes, but also that its positioning in moments of mourning could, in addition, be personally emblematic. Given that most of the discussed pieces were composed within a war-torn society that was unaccepting of Britten's homosexuality and staunch pacifist views, Britten's craft was a means to communicate how he processed the human concept of "being at odds." His personal claim that music is clarification and that tearing away excess illuminates the core of what the music is communicating is perceived in Britten's meticulous knowledge of the instruments he was writing for—particularly the viola. In concurrence, Donald


Phrase 1 - Part 1
1a
1b
Phrase 1 - Part 2
1b
Insensibilmente con più moto
meno f
poco a poco
poco a poco

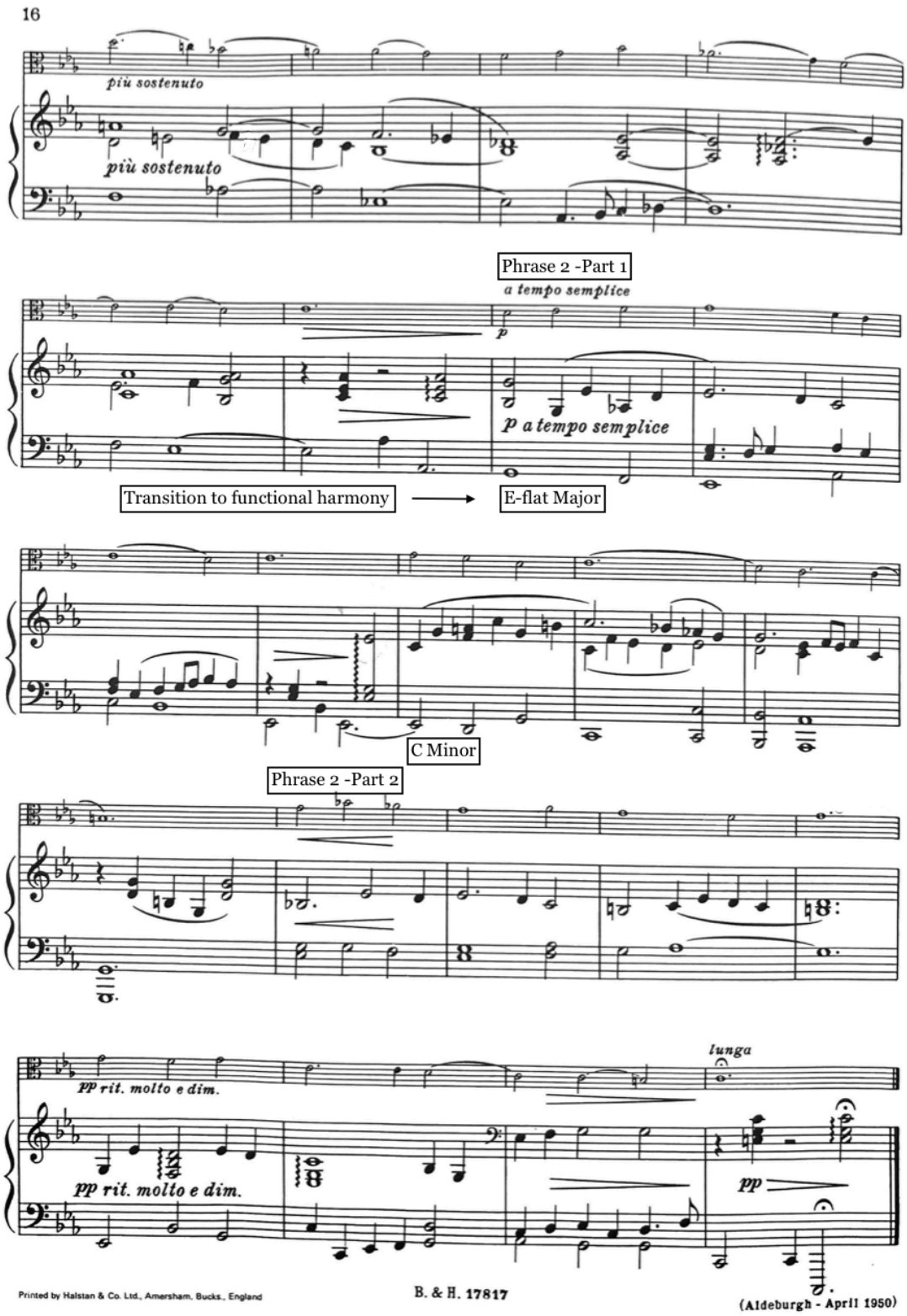


Figure 11: Benjamin Britten's *Lachrymae,* Theme. The harmonization of the main theme in the viola transitions towards tonal harmony; this is similar to what is realized in Dowland's original rendition.

Mitchell wrote, ". . . all his music is chamber music, however small or large the forces for which it is scored, and this is a large part of the secret of his success as a communicator. Players and audience alike feel that they are being provided for or addressed as individuals rather than as a faceless herd."[144] In this sense, Britten's intent to communicate to the society in which he resided through his music was inextricably linked to his duty as a composer. The establishment of the viola as a musical and personal trope within Britten's musical lexicon not only strengthens its meaning within his output, but gives evidence that Britten perceived the viola as a respectable instrument in its own right. As seen in the works discussed, the viola's voice was not used as an auxiliary voice-part, but rather it was sought after for the valuable qualities of voice that make it what it is, and the elements that make it most suitable in works of lamentation.

V. Conclusion and Synthesis

It is no coincidence that the bulk of solo viola repertoire in the late-19th and 20th centuries was composed for and premiered by violists of primarily British descent. While the contents of this chapter take issue with the semantics of William Primrose's initial quotation, it is undeniably true that the efforts and achievements of the British-born violist Lionel Tertis awoke the classical music world of his era to the viola, and helped perpetuate its future primarily through the successes of his students and the works that he commissioned and premiered in his lifetime—many of which are considered standard repertoire today. It is also notable how Tertis took on the responsibility of bringing issues inherent in the construction and playability of the viola to the fore. While the Tertis

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[144] Cited in Palmer, ed., "The Orchestral Works: Britten as Instrumentalist," in *The Britten Companion*. 394.

Model did not achieve renowned acclaim, the fact that the issue was publicly addressed inevitably contributed to how musicians and critics perceived the instrument, thus creating a greater appreciation for those musicians who took on the risks of becoming professional violists.

Of the plethora of repertoire that now exists for the viola, it is worth considering why more than 200 of these works contain titles pertaining to themes of lamentation. While the connection of the viola's sound to the human quality of voice and the human vocal range makes it the most appropriate option for such a genre, there is also the matter of the viola's distinct instrumental voice and its natural affinity towards melancholy that is achieved through its versatile color palette of dark and light, pungent and fragile, husky and sweet. As mentioned in discussing the selected works, there are particular compositional choices that fulfill the sound world expected of works that bear a title of mourning. For example, Igor Stravinsky's *Élégie for Solo Viola* features a complex array of double stops that are played while muted in various ranges of the instrument, thus conveying the inner sensations of struggle inherent in mourning. While this work was written with the purpose of memorializing violist Alphonse Onnou of the Pro Arte Quartet, Stravinsky still utilized the constrained elements of the instrument to convey how his vision of the title *Élégie* materializes in the voice of the viola.

Of the works mentioned in this chapter, there are a variety of titles that fall under the umbrella term of lamentation: lament, *dumka*, *élégie,* and *lachrymae,* with other possibilities including threnody, *funerailles*, *threnos*, and dirge, to name a few. While intended to clarify the surface meaning and mood of the work, these titles also carry what

Elaine Sisman describes as "a kind of talismanic force," which despite their purpose of illumination nonetheless leads to more questions than answers. Sisman writes, "Yet their meanings are passionately argued, and their endless ambiguities have led philosopher Arnold Berleant to insist that 'instead of titles telling us what the music means, the music tells us what the titles mean.'"[145] As this notion relates to the purpose of this chapter, the common threads amongst the discussed works are the viola and its role in works bearing various titles of lamentation. The pattern of composing for the viola within this niche repertoire established its voice as a trope of mourning in and outside of works with dedicated titles of lamentation, thus allowing composers to turn to the viola for its individual characterization of voice that makes the viola what it is. The chapter to follow will focus on lesser-known works of lamentation by living composers of the 21st century, thus showing how the viola's association with sound worlds of mourning continues to evolve in the hands of modern-day composers and violists.

[145] Elaine Sisman, "Beethoven's Cavatina, Haydn's *Seasons,* and the Thickness of Inscription," in *The New Beethoven: Evolution, Analysis, Interpretation,* ed. Jeremy Yudkin, 483 (Suffolk, England: Boydell and Brewer, 2020), accessed December 9, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv105bbrb.27.

Chapter 4: Tales of Mourning for the Modern Violist

In an effort to achieve more accessibility and to broaden the scope of art music in our present world, many composers of the 21st century have trended towards methods of composition that sculpt music through storytelling. This notion is not entirely unknown in the history of Western music, as, for example, when looking at the tone poems of Richard Strauss (1864–1949), who turned Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote de la Mancha* into a musical masterwork of fantasy variations with the cello playing Don Quixote and the viola as Sancho Panza. In addition to such general retelling of novels or short stories in musical form, there is also the preservation of cultural traditions that exist through the spoken word, myths, legends, and folk music. One of the most famous collections is that of Béla Bartók (1881–1945) and Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), who recorded and memorialized folk music and traditions from regions that are no longer known by their original names (i.e., Ruthenia and Transylvania). Within this vein, the material to follow will draw conclusions from select works that showcase the role of the viola as the lamenting figure within the storylines of their subject matter. This chapter will begin with compositions by Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972) that exhibit an integration of Western techniques and folk traditions from Peruvian and Incan cultures, as well as a composition based on O'Henry's short story entitled "Last Leaf," which was commissioned by this author and is entitled "Last Leaf: In Memoriam."

I. The Viola as *La Llorona* in Select Works by Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972)

Born in the United States to a Jewish-American father and a Peruvian mother of Spanish, Chinese, and Quechua Indian background, Gabriela Lena Frank found her

calling as a composer through the exploration of her multicultural identity.[1] Drawing from the influences of her heritage and trained in the Western practices of composers including Béla Bartók, Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983), and Witold Lutosławski (1913–1994), Frank's musical language developed as an amalgamation of learned and traditional art forms. Her voracity for knowledge led Frank to conduct her own ethnomusicological research through recording the sounds of her Motherland, and also studying the history, myths, fairy tales, archeology, poetry, and literary resources surrounding folkloric music of Peru.[2] This in combination with the foundations of Frank's training yielded a unique musical language of mixed styles that she coined *mestizaje,* which invites the traditional sounds of Latin American folk music and the techniques and instruments of Western music to coexist in harmony.[3] As a lifelong learner and teacher, Frank has encouraged her own students and all listeners of music to interpret what they hear through a cultural lens that instills a curiosity for what is beyond the notes. About all this, Frank says:

> I don't think understanding somebody's music is an academic question. Having played a lot of new music myself, I totally understand that. And I think it's what makes me a good coach. Because I know the kind of information that a performer needs to hear. Sometimes it's technical, but sometimes it's the context of it. For example, if I have a phrase, I may have an image of a vendor going down and selling his knives in the street in Spain. He's shouting "Knives! Knives!" in the music. If the performers become aware of that, you suddenly see them bringing out the accents, or changing their bowing, or they're holding notes a little longer and are freer because you gave them something to hook into. Now they have multiple different ways of doing it. Before, they were doing it one way on the page, and now it has blood and life in it.[4]

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[1] Deborah Hayes, "Gabriela Lena Frank," in *Women of Influence in Contemporary Music: Nine American Composers,* ed. Michael K. Slayton (Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 85.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid, 86.

[4] Cited in Jennifer Kelly, "Chapter 4: Gabriela Lena Frank," in *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 65, accessed June 7, 2023, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt2tt9pb.

Turning to Frank's music and the personal relationship she shares with the myths and legends she so colorfully portrays in her works, one finds that it is important to take Frank's lead and return to the source as a frame of reference. Reflecting on the lamenting rituals of Ancient Greece discussed in Chapter 1, current research shows that professional mourning still exists today in various forms and cultures. The tradition persists in the Peloponnese region of Greece, as documented by the Greek photographer Ioanna Sakellaraki (b. 1989), as well as in other practices and areas of the world, including the *Rudaalis* tradition of Rajasthan, India, in South Africa, as observed in *Ways of Dying* (1995) written by Zakes Mda (b. 1948), in Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria, where the profession serves a large portion of the population as a main source of income,[5] and in China, where the well-known professional mourner Hu Xinglian (more famously known by her stage name, Dragonfly Mao) fuses ancient and modern traditions in staged performances of crying and shouting that is more commonly called *kusang*.[6] While these traditions serve as real-life and current examples of the professional mourning ritual, there are also various myths and legends from around the world that dramatize the spiritual entity of the crying woman as someone who is feared just as much as she is revered. These figures include the *rusalka* from Russia, the *kuchisake-onn*a from Japan, and the *mélusine* from France to name a few, all of which carry their own colloquial flavor based on the retelling of the oral tradition in their respective countries and native

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[5] Zipporah Njeri Nyambura, "Professional Mourners in Africa," The 77 Percent, DW: Made for Minds, last modified March 3, 2020, accessed September 13, 2023, https://www.dw.com/en/the-77-percent-professional-mourners-in-africa/audio-52910734.

[6] Louisa Lim, "Belly Dancing for the Dead," Asia, NPR, last modified June 26, 2013, accessed September 13, 2023, https://www.npr.org/2013/06/26/195565696/belly-dancing-for-the-dead-a-day-with-chinas-top-mourner.

tongues. The character most relevant to this discussion is that of *la llorona,* the crying woman of Latin American folklore, whose tragic tale is retold in select works of Frank with the viola as her voice.

Frank's associations of instruments with certain characters from the myths and legends she cites are not immediately established, but are cultivated throughout her *oeuvre*. One work called *Elegía Andina* (2000) explores this idea of instrumental personification, and further sets up a palette of elements that are later reused in specific contexts. In Frank's program notes, she states: "*Elegía Andina* (Andean Elegy) is one of my first written-down compositions to explore what it means to be of several ethnic persuasions, of several minds. It uses stylistic elements of Peruvian *arca*/*ira zampoña* panpipes (double-row panpipes, each row with its own tuning) to paint an elegiac picture of my questions."[7] Portraying an "elegiac picture" through the emulated sounds of Peruvian instruments suggests not a mourning for her homeland, but rather a nostalgia for the culture that is primarily known to her only by blood.

Following the introductory material of instruments that are layered through overlapping rising thirds and dispersed around the pitter-pattering of woodblocks, the flute enters as the main protagonist.[8] As the melody develops the elaborated grace-note accentuations weigh on the front of the gesture, thus emulating an elemental characteristic of Hungarian speech that was utilized in works by Bartók (see Figure 1).

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[7] Gabriela Lena Frank, "*Elegía Andina* (2020): Programme Note*,"* G. Schirmer, Inc., Wise Music Classical, accessed September 14, 2023, https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/27960/Elegia-Andina--Gabriela-Lena-Frank/.

[8] The characterization of the flute is later developed as the mythical character Illapa in Frank's tone poem written four years after *Elegía Andina* and entitled *Illapa: Tone Poem for Flute and Orchestra* (2004).

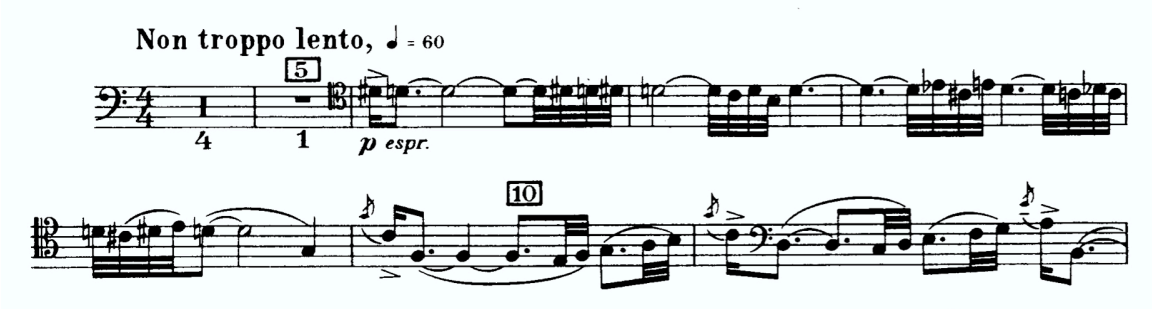


Figure 1: Example of the Hungarian speech rhythm used by Béla Bartók in the cello solo from String Quartet No. 4, "Non troppo lento," mm. 1–11.

Frank's reference to this Hungarian speech rhythm could be a coincidence, or it could be interpreted as an homage, since Frank deeply admired Bartók for his preservation and modernization of folk music from Eastern European regions.[9] As shown in Figure 2, the flute line creates momentum through 32nd notes that gather on the downbeat of m. 39, followed by grace notes that function as a sputtering version of the Bartókian accentuation. Within the texture, however, the true replication of the figure is hidden in the bassoon part, with the first 32nd note receiving maximum emphasis through a *forte* dynamic and an accent.

The development of another trope occurs twenty measures later (mm 64–73; Figure 3), where Frank morphs the flute, the clarinet, and the oboe into a warm yet reedy sonority that highlights the glossing of the flute as a reflection of the fuller melody played in the alto range. A similar technique is utilized in m. 101 between the cello and the viola, accompanied by the marking "growing more vigorous," thus creating visceral waves of tension that are satisfied by the collective timbre supported by each instrument's respective quality of voice.

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[9] Gabriela Lena Frank, "Bartok, My Daddy," Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Foundation of Music, last modified October 1, 2020, accessed September 14, 2023, https://www.glfcam.com/directors-blog/bartok-my-daddy.



Figure 2: Mm. 38–42, Gabriel Lena Frank's *Elegía Andina.*



Figure 3: Mm. 69–73, Gabriel Lena Frank's *Elegía Andina*

The palette of elements established in *Elegía Andina,* including the characterization of instruments, the Bartókian speech rhythm, and the timbral effects of instrument layering, is recycled in later works in contexts that are also elegiac in nature,

thus establishing a musical language for this genre that is specific to Frank and the contexts that she writes for.

One of the first works to exemplify the viola as *la llorona* is Frank's string quartet entitled *Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout* (2001). This six-movement work explores Peruvian legends through a carefully orchestrated sound world of folk instruments that are replicated through the string quartet. The opening movement of the work begins with the quartet imitating the sound of the *toyos*, a panpipe instrument that is collaborative by nature because of its large, cumbersome size. As shown in Figure 4, the viola, in this instance, voices both parts of the ensemble in fourths, with specific instructions to play *flautando, sul tasto,* and *molto vibrato,* with written-out slides and pulsated articulations that give the music a sung, yet spoken, quality. Violin II and cello are instructed to play *pizzicato sul ponticello,* which creates an icy yet dull effect given how the resonance of the *pizzicato* is dampened by the finger's proximity to the bridge. The overall timbral effect is remarkable, with the combined elements of the viola's breathy, wavering overtones and the percussive spitting of the *pizzicato* simulating the panpipe as if it were in its original form.[10]

Following "Tarqueada," a bursting dance movement, "Himno de Zampoñas," a modified ensemble rendition of another type of panpipe called *zampoña,* and the thrilling movement "Chasqui," which represents the fleet feet of the Incan Courier (a trained runner who traversed thousands of miles through the paths of the Andes to deliver

[10] *Leyendas* was premiered by the Chiara Quartet in July 2001 and recorded in 2006. To assist in the rehearsal process of imitating the folk elements and instruments written into the work, Frank shared sound samples of Andean instruments and voices that she herself recorded, in addition to those collected by professional ethnomusicologists, so that the quartet could conceive of what was written on the page from the original context.



Figure 4: Mm. 1–7, Gabriel Lena Frank's *Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout, "*I. Toyos"

messages), we arrive at Movement V: "Canto de Velorio," which translates as "Song for the Dead." This movement, as described by Deborah Hayes, "portrays the singing of two *lloronas*—not the ghosts of the tone poem *La Llorona,* but living, professional crying women hired to make funeral rituals even sadder."[11]

As shown in Figure 5, the opening material of the funerary scene is set by a series of major-second chords that illustrate the Bartókian speech rhythm from the first utterance. Each entrance triggers the next, with drumlike pizzicato in the cello that darkens, almost threatens, the peaceful atmosphere.[12] From within this texture, an aleatory *Dies Irae* emerges played by the violins in the highest register of the instrument. This reference to the Requiem, one of the earliest genres of mourning used in Western music, is juxtaposed in an eerie light with the entrances of *llorona primera* and *llorona segunda,* who embody the ancient Peruvian funerary ritual and are respectively played by the cello and the viola.

As *llorona primera,* the cello sings an accented triplet figure marked *mourning* that is vocalized by a glissando up to the pitch B. The viola, as the *llorona segunda*,

[11] Hayes, "Gabriela Lena Frank," 125.

[12] The cello pizzicato is reminiscent of the woodblock motive used in the beginning of *Elegía Andina.*



Figure 5: Mm. 1–21, Gabriel Lena Frank's *Leyendas*: An Andean Walkabout*,* "V: Canto de Velorio"

responds with a similar triplet figure from a voice that is distorted through pitch bending on a quarter tone and the use of a mute that together yield an echo effect. The initial statement of the two *lloronas* is answered by the *coro de mujeres* ("chorus of women") in m. 22 (and later in mm. 39–41, as shown in Figure 6) whose grieving sobs precipitate and spiral in major seconds in a call-and-response texture that reflects the mourning rituals of Ancient Greece. Following this texture, the *Dies Irae* returns (see m. 29 in Figure 6), and the two *lloronas* begin their lament as before; yet, this time, the second violin creates an additional echo effect through figures that are to be expressed as "unmeasured, play each figure quickly, immediately after viola's last articulated note," thus extending the echo to overlap with the cello's gestures marked "intake of breath." The overall effect of the extended echoing figures, intakes of breath with glissandos, *Dies Irae,* re-entrance of the choir of women mourners, and wavering in and out of *sul ponticello,* tremolo, and snap pizzicato creates a texture of angst and tension, one that suggests a more outwardly physical and wild expression of pain, cultivated across fifty measures, and culminates in a full quartet *FFF* arrival in m. 76. What follows, however, is the consolation of a mournful melody sung by the viola and cello in octaves (see Figure 7 mm. 77–95), which is offset by forceful iterations of the Hungarian speech rhythm in the violins. Reflecting on the timbral techniques similarly used in *Elegía Andina,* the constrained melody of the lower voices features displaced accents within the 16th-note figures that also allude to the speech rhythm. Eventually, the octave melody concedes and the speech rhythm prevails with the entire quartet utilizing the device in rhythmic unison through left-hand *pizzicato* and *arco,* which eventually lands on another *FFF* juncture in m. 95. Following the



Figure 6: Mm. 22–43, Gabriel Lena Frank's *Leyendas*: An Andean Walkabout,"V: Canto de Velorio"



Figure 7: Mm. 76–96, Gabriel Lena Frank's *Leyendas*: An Andean Walkabout, "V: Canto de Velorio"

highest moments of intensity in this crazed mourning ritual, the string quartet vanishes into a "memorized" and "slightly pulsating" stupor that dissolves into the *Dies Irae* reformulated in false harmonics. Remnants of the melody sung by the two *lloronas* resurface, but only briefly before fading into nothingness.

The placement and subject matter of "Canto de Velorio" within the context of the surrounding movements suggests a deeper motivation, given the dedication of the work to Frank's mother, "from whom I received the gift of Peru," and her efforts to replicate

the sounds of traditional instruments and rituals through modern means and notation. Furthermore, the work's initial title, *Mestiza: Letters from the Motherland for String Quartet,* emphasizes Frank's desire to explore her identity through her own Andean walkabout*,* which "suggests a spiritual journey, a rite of passage like the walkabout of young Australian Aborigines who walk the land to learn the paths or 'song lines' of their ancestors."[13] In this sense, *Leyendas* is as much of a rendering of Peruvian cultural elements as it is a biographical exploration of Frank's heritage. The spotlighting of the Peruvian mourning ritual as the emotionally climactic point of the work, along with the implications of the practice, suggests Frank's personal fascination with the *llorona* as a cultural figure, thus lending its representation in music through the voice of the viola as a personal trope for Frank's "elegiac questioning" of her roots.

Frank composed *La Llorona: A Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra* six years after *Leyendas* in 2007. It tells the story not of the real-life mourners but, rather, of the mythical *la llorona,* whose tragic tale is embedded in the cultural fabric of many Latin American countries.[14] The work unfolds across seven movements, portraying the transformation of *la llorona* as she comes to accept her new spiritual form. As written by Frank in her program notes, the progression of *la llorona* within the work is as follows:[15]

> I. Slumber: It is just minutes after the *llorona* has lost her human life and crossed over into the new realm. Not fully conscious, she is still in the fog of a supernatural sleep.

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[13] Hayes, "Gabriela Lena Frank," 122.

[14] To explore the various versions of *La Llorona* from around the world, look at this source: *La Llorona: Encounters with the Weeping Woman,* ed. Judith Shaw Beatty (Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press, 2004).

[15] Gabriela Lena Frank, "*La Llorona: Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra* (2007): Programme Note*,"* G. Schirmer, Inc., Wise Music Classical, accessed September 14, 2023, https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/35667/La-Llorona-Tone-Poem-for-Viola-and-Orchestra--Gabriela-Le.

II. Awakening: After the quiet orchestral tutti which builds, the solo viola's entrance signals that the *llorona* has sprung to new life.

III. Flight: The *llorona* denies this new reality and tries to escape, literally. Irrationally, she runs here and there, crying for what was.

IV. Danza de las Chullpas: In the course of fleeing her fate, the *llorona* stumbles upon a scene of other spirits normally unseen to humans. The *chullpas* are ancient spirits (hailing from Peruvian culture) in the form of skeletons hobbled over from having been bound into fetal positions as mummies. The *llorona* reluctantly begins to realize that she has indeed crossed over into another realm.

V. Canto de la Luna: Revered in many cultures, the moon is often a female deity that communicates with humans and spirits alike. Here, moonlight sings to the *llorona*, asking her to find acceptance.

VI. Flight: The *llorona* cannot find it in herself to accept, and tries once again to escape.

VII. Coda: The *llorona* slowly retreats into the shadows to join the other spirits unseen by the rest of us. It is the acknowledgement that, tragically, she simply can't change what's not hers to change.

Much of the material utilized in the tone poem falls in line with the palette of elements established in *Elegía Andina* and *Leyendas.* Compared to these earlier works, however, the musical story of *La Llorona* is primarily crafted through the Neoclassical style with folk elements, with additional references to the orchestrational and timbral techniques of Stravinsky, the speech rhythms of Bartók, and the intricate, atmospheric textures of Lutosławski.



Figure 8: Mm. 1–7, Gabriel Lena Frank's *La Llorona: A Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra*, "I. Slumber"

The entrance of the viola is first heard following the dreary and foggy atmosphere of "Slumber," which is created through oscillations between A, E-flat and B-flat in the harp, A and G#/G-natural in the cellos, and D in the basses, thus creating a distorted cluster of wavering pitches set in the lowest regions of the respective instruments (see Figure 8). The entrance of the bass clarinet in m. 8 instigates movement in the horn, bassoon, and B-flat clarinet, which results in a swarm of arpeggios in the strings, thus preparing for the solo viola. From its entrance at m. 47 (see Figure 9), the solo viola plays in the higher register of the instrument, thus displaying the angst and harsh cry of *la llorona* through fluttering double stops heard at the pitches A# and B. The initial use of B-flat within the minor 9th in the harp is now transformed to A#, with the B-natural below creating a major 7th. This early transformation of pitches and intervals that are centered around the semitone plants a seed for development that is unveiled as the work progresses.



Figure 9: Mm. 46–53, Gabriel Lena Frank's *La Llorona: A Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra, "*I. Awakening"

The third movement portrays *la llorona* attempting to escape her new state of being through running 16th notes that take unexpected twists and turns through meter changes, ties, dynamic surges, and sudden stops that yank the music around. This leads to movement IV, where a group of spirits called *chullpas* help *la llorona* realize that she is no longer in human form, but is truly in the land of the spirits. The deformed skeletons of the *chullpas* come into view through the hollow and ancient sound world of Frank's

orchestration. As shown in Figure 10, the layering of middle-ranged instruments, including horn, trombone, harp, violin II, and viola, as they sag together in an awkward procession that is organized around the gonglike effects of three marimbas. The overall atmosphere is one of otherworldliness, of the in-between spirit world, which upon being realized by *la llorona* causes her to weep in circular bouts of chromatic sobs in the solo



Figure 10: Mm. 250–255, Gabriel Lena Frank's *La Llorona: A Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra,* "IV. Danza de las Chullpas"

viola (m. 279). In the material to follow, *la llorona* beckons the *chullpas* with her questioning cries. They reply with tumultuous cascades of scales that are passed between the celesta, clarinet, flute, and piccolo, in a call-and-response formation (mm. 305–309) that reflects on material used earlier in the movement (mm. 273–278). The realization that there is no going back is reflected in the sinking voice of *la llorona,* whose sputtering chromatics give way to a long exhale of despair.

Movement V, entitled "V. Canto de la Luna," or "Song of the Moon," is represented through the striking combination of the bass clarinet and the piccolo, which play the same melody a fifth apart. The four octaves of space between the registers of the instruments and the contrast of timbres create an eerie glow, much like that of the moon's reflection in water and the haze of light that surrounds it in the night sky. The moon's song is not only one of beauty but also one of consolation, thus empathizing with *la llorona* as she battles to accept her fate. In response to the moon's song, the viola sobs three times in downward glissandos in mm. 338–339, which reappear in mm. 357–359, mm. 368–372 (see Figure 11), and through much of the rest of the movement, with the



Figure 11: Mm. 368–372, Gabriel Lena Frank's *La Llorona: A Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra, "*V. Canto de la Luna"

violins imitating the solo viola in a hocketing texture that is nearly identical to the effect used between the two *lloronas* and *coro de mujeres* in *Leyendas* (m. 22). *La llorona'*s sobbing is offset by the moon, responding with the unchanged, austere, and steely melody heard in the bass clarinet and piccolo. In mm. 336–402, Frank utilizes the Bartókian speech rhythm in conjunction with the sobbing glissandos heard in the entire string section, thus causing *la llorona* to become agitated again, as reflected in the screeching minor-ninth interval of A to B-flat that serves as the transition to the next movement.

In her state of frustration, *la llorona* attempts to escape yet again in Movement VI in a frenzy of flight that is heard as the same material from Movement III an octave higher. The tumult leads to an extended trill that is paired with the percussive thunks of pizzicato from the solo viola using the pitches B-flat and A. The combination of trills evolves into the final movement, the Coda, which replicates the very opening texture between the strings and the harp. This time, however, the solo viola enters in the lowest register of the instrument in a slow melody—the combination of elements that has not been used once in the solo viola part until this moment. Frank's portrayal of *la llorona* as she fades away is achieved through this specific setting and range of the viola, thus giving reason to believe that it was saved for this specific moment of resolve within the musical plot. As *la llorona* blends into her spiritual world, the solo viola oscillates using the pitches B-natural, B-flat and A (see Figure 12), with each *arco* iteration reset against the persistent *pizzicato* chord of B-flat and A. While the grip of dissonance felt between these pitches yearns for release on A (mm. 574–589), each regrouping at the major-7th chord maintains *la llorona'*s unresolved contemplation of her fate. As a result,



Figure 12: Mm. 583–601, Gabriel Lena Frank's *La Llorona: A Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra,* "VII. Coda"

the final iteration of the three pitches never leaves B-flat, thus thwarting the tonal expectation of resolution and retaining *la llorona*'s bitterness as she fades into the shadows.

II. Commissioning Project: *Last Leaf: In Memoriam* (2021)

In continuation of the ideals of storytelling established in Frank's language of composition, the work to follow uses the viola to represent three characters from O'Henry's short story entitled "Last Leaf." The impetus for commissioning "Last Leaf: In Memoriam" stems from an intersection of circumstances. The first comes from a discussion that took place in a doctoral class called "Schubert: The Final Decade." During a particular week, the class was assigned to listen to and prepare notes for a discussion on the music and poetry of Franz Schubert's (1797–1828) *Winterreise*. Upon reading the last poem, the professor, Dr. L. Michael Griffel, recalled the imagery and feeling surrounding the tale of another character who endured a similar fate as the hurdy-gurdy player: Behrman from O'Henry's "Last Leaf." My reading of the short story in its entirety supported a period of reflection regarding a personal battle involving the loss of a dear musician and friend who tragically died in July of 2020. The commissioning of an elegy for viola and piano based on the characters of O'Henry's *Last Leaf* fell into place,

and it was written as a collaborative effort with composers Iván Rodríguez (1990–), Marc Migó (1993–), and Anne Wang (1994–).[16]

Working with three different composers to create a single work stemmed from the concept of perspective. Simply put, every character within O'Henry's short story perceives and lives from their own vantage point—much like the readers interpreting O'Henry's words. With this idea, the composers were asked to read the story and choose a character that spoke to them and would inspire a musical work. Knowing the FAE Sonata co-written by Albert Dietrich (1829–1908), Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), and Robert Schumann (1810–1856), this author took a similar approach and composed the leaf motive, which every composer utilized as their movement's DNA. As shown in Figure 13, the motive is circular, highly chromatic, constructed in an arch form, falls within the mid- to upper range of the viola, has Phrygian tendencies between E and F, and is a combination of gestures extracted from György Ligeti's (1923–2006) String Quartet No. 1 (1953–54) and Toru Takemitsu's (1930–1996) "A Bird Came Down the Walk" (1994). What resulted from the three composers was a collaboration of movements telling the story of O'Henry's *Last Leaf* from the perspectives of the artist Behrman, the sickly Johnsy, and the leaf.



Figure 13: The leaf motive.

[16] This project was generously supported by the Presser Foundation Music Award granted to this author in March 2021.

Iván Rodríguez's compositional portrayal of Behrman is thorny, tumultuous, driving, and aptly crafted in correlation with the character's perpetual frustrations with his inability to create a master artwork. Rodríguez's compositional approach evolved from his interaction with Behrman's character, to whom the composer was immediately drawn for his psychologically tempestuous personality and the connection felt to Behrman when he "sacrificed through his art to save a life."[17] He captures Behrman's emotionally conflicted character through a complex musical language that uses dense chromaticism, rich harmonies, polyrhythms, and busy textures, which are offset by episodes of repose and tragic lyricism. The sound world that Rodríguez creates is pained, as he writes for the viola in a way that captures its raw tone of voice. As stated by Rodríguez, "The character I'm writing for demands for it to be the viola. There's something visceral about the range, because you can get low, and you can get high, but the high register can also be strained. And when I think of the high range, I don't imagine birds chirping, I think of screaming for release. And I think that sound—the viola can do that."[18]

The intertwining of the leaf motive is evident from the very first measure (see Figure 14), where Rodríguez establishes a quasi-passacaglia recitation of the motive's pitches in the lowest bass notes. The fatigued ("*fatigado"*) introductory material is later juxtaposed with fierce textures marked *con pasión y tempestad* ("with passion and storminess/tempestuousness"), which showcases the unpredictability of Behrman's character. In response to how he planned to integrate the motive, Rodríguez stated: "I

[17] Iván Rodríguez, interview by author, New York, March 16, 2022.
[18] Ibid.



Figure 14: Mm. 1–11, Iván Rodríguez's "I. Mr. Behrman" from *Last Leaf: In Memoriam*

knew that I wanted to treat Behrman psychologically. So, I wanted to feel what he was feeling and integrate it organically. Once I had this, I took the motive and improvised. In the slow introduction I gave you the motive very clearly and then the movement evolved."[19] From the performer's perspective, the totality of the movement elicits Behrman's emotional vulnerability, which ranges from rage to tenderness, thus portraying the heightened sensitivity and unpredictability Behrman's character brings from beginning to end.

[19] Ibid.

Marc Migó's movement was written from the perspective of Johnsy, who serves as the antithesis of Behrman. Instead of driving forward with angst, Johnsy's movement is presented in a musical space that is, for the most part, suspended in a state of wandering and timelessness. In the story, Johnsy has fallen ill, and in her weakened mind she comes to associate her finals days with leaves as they fall from a tree outside her window. She decides that the last leaf to fall will bring her death. Migó recreates Johnsy's musical sound world by interlocking fragments of the leaf motive into an ostinato-like unit that wavers around B-flat in both hands of the piano (see Figure 15). The atmosphere is otherworldly, a figment of the imagination that is achieved through use of harmonic glissandos and swooping melodic gestures. Over the course of the movement, hopefulness is beckoned by tremolos in the piano (the tremolos begin in m. 24 in preparation for the viola entrance; see figure 16), which spark optimism through free improvisations of "leaf-like runs" in the viola. The trembling piano texture and sweeping viola lines culminate at the most climactic point of the movement, centered around E, which is a tritone away from the opening B-flat sonority, thus reflecting the tritone relationship established in the original motive.

The climactic point of the movement quickly unravels into a lullaby-esque lilt in 12/8 that returns to a sonority centered around B-flat, and the piece, in a sense, ends where it began, with harmonic swoops and delicate pizzicato that Migó describes as a musical ellipsis. He says, "[The movement] is a journey from this depressive state that recovers to life as we know it. The ending is as sudden as it is open . . . it's like an ellipsis



Figure 15: Mm. 1–9, Marc Migó's "II. Fantasia-Lament" from *Last Leaf: In Memoriam*

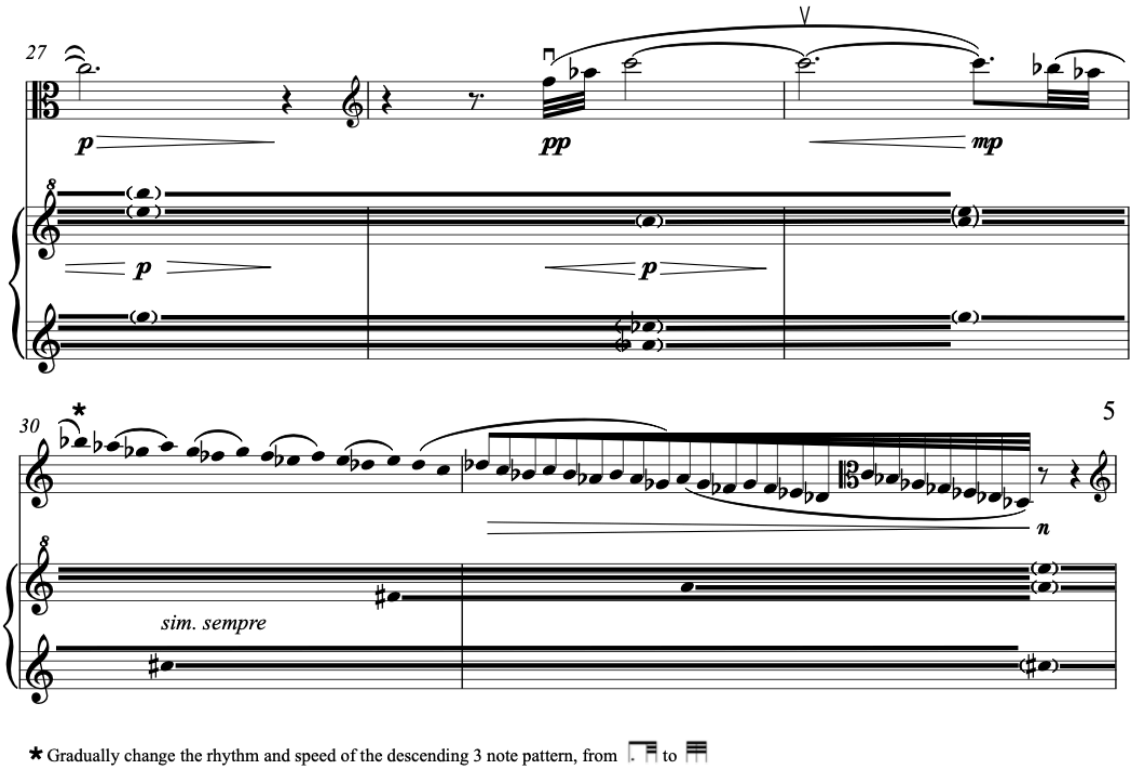


Figure 16: Mm. 27–31, Marc Migó's "II. Fantasia-Lament" from *Last Leaf: In Memoriam*

to be continued. It's not the full stop of death, so to speak."[20] The waxing and waning of musical intensity from beginning to end is subtle, but it is a sensation that gradually grows from despair to hopefulness, which Migó beautifully sketched in a map of intensity shown in Figure 17. He comments, "For me [the diagram] is more abstract and it can be a moment where dynamics and speed are increasing but the intensity is waning. It's not so obvious but it is more useful for me to see it . . . it tells me from the beginning what I want for the proportions of the piece."[21]

Lastly, the title "Fantasia-Lament" was assigned by Migó and is aptly named for the improvisational or freely developing nature of the material that co-exists over the

[20] Marc Migó, interview by author, New York, March 21, 2022.
[21] Ibid.

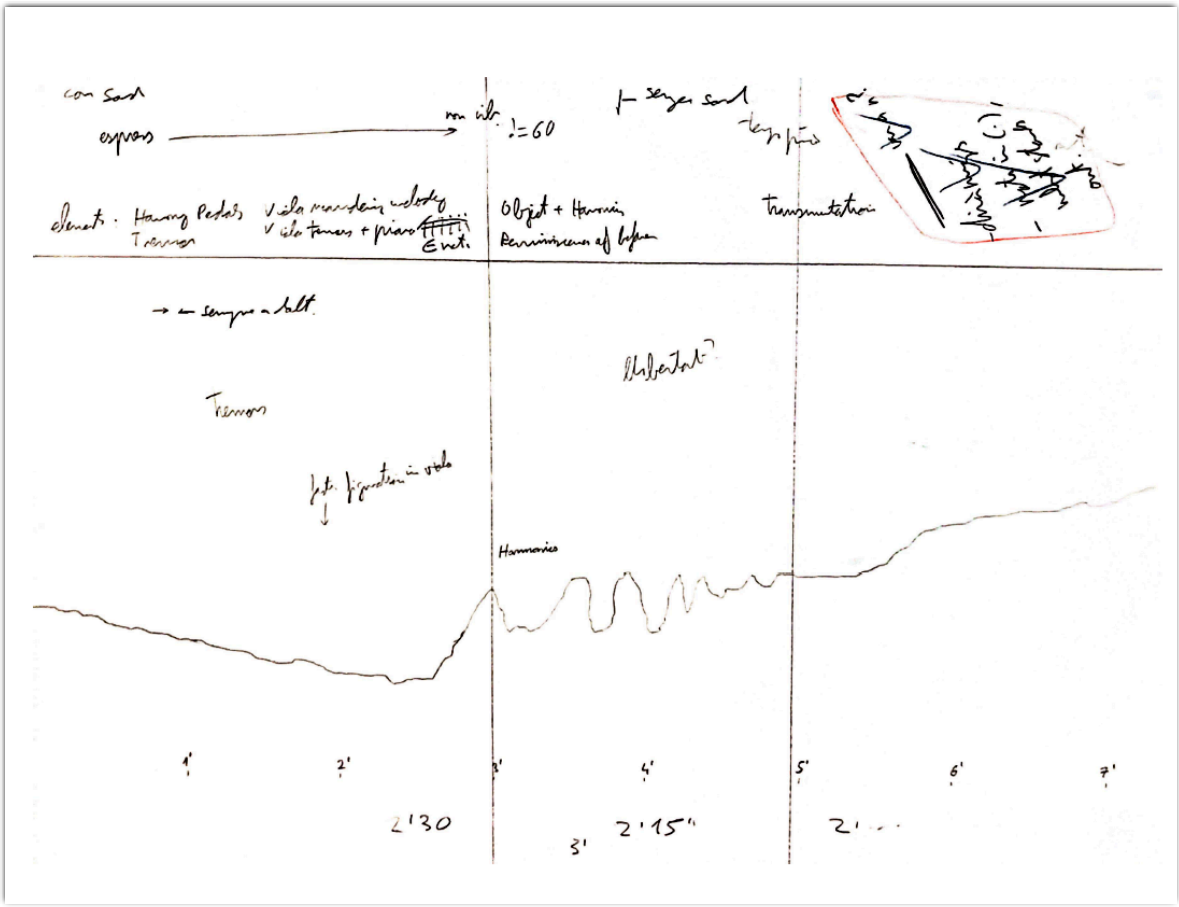


Figure 17: Migó's mapping of musical intensity for "II. Fantasia-Lament."

ostinato-like leaf motive. These characteristic elements were not specifically planned but rather came about naturally from the storytelling material and the instrumentation. As stated by Migó, "It [the viola] is so human. It's like a voice and it has more of a gripping effect on me. This was the first work I wrote with viola as the main character, and it has this more human quality because it's bigger than a violin. It was an optimal choice for writing a Fantasia-Lament and for commenting on this tale. I love the sound of it. Even when the viola is playing the most triumphant moment, it has a nuance to it, the color, the range—it's wonderful."[22]

[22] Ibid. In this same interview, Migó mentioned the idea of expanding "Fantasia-Lament" into a Viola Concerto. Since the movement's premiere, it has received awards including: Classic Pure Vienna International Competition, Silver Medal (2023) and Music Now Competition, Winner (2022).

The final character is the leaf, which was chosen and portrayed by Anne Wang for her movement, “The Leaf, or Tenacity.” The leaf, as the central character for Wang, encompasses two main themes within the plot. As an organic object, the leaf represents the cyclic symbolism of the natural world, of life and death. And as a rhetorical device, the leaf reflects upon everything and everyone, thus serving as a single thread that intertwines its presence into every fiber of the plot—much as it does as a musical motive. Much of Wang’s explorative sketching was inspired by the interplay of these two themes, as well as the visual components of movement and stillness that are juxtaposed by the leaves in nature versus the solitary leaf painted on the window. As interpreted by Wang, the goal-oriented projection of O’Henry’s “Last Leaf,” with the leaf serving as the final piece of the narrative, conjured a compositional plan that supported “moving towards something that was uplifted,” thus orienting the intentions of her movement less around the plot and more towards “the whole concept of the leaf, with tenacity being the central idea.”[23]

The creative process behind Wang’s movement is best exemplified in her earliest sketches.[24] Shown in Figure 18, Wang lists a collection of intervallic cells extracted from the motive that symbolize the friction between opposites. As stated by Wang, "When I was looking at your motive, the first thing I thought of was the tension between three different kinds of intervals: the minor second and the major second, the major second and the diminished third, and the perfect fourth and the augmented fourth. Those three pairs

[23] Anne Wang, interview by author, New York, March 17, 2022.

[24] All of Wang’s sketches can be found in Appendix B.



Figure 18: Wang's sketching of opposing intervals that she extracted from the leaf motive.

of intervals stuck out to me. I noticed this while also knowing that I wanted to have this constant shifting between juxtapositions, and that is what I ended up running with: the constant push and pull between those intervals with this through-line from F to E."[25] The push and pull that Wang references is evident in the Phrygian tugs as well as the structure of the movement. In addition to the thematic interplay of opposites, Wang perceived the shape of the movement to be sculpted from the scope of tension, which is also inherent in the relationship of juxtaposing forces. As shown in Figure 19, the overall levels of dynamics, tension, and textural dialogue between the two instruments are displayed through the different colored lines, thus pointing out how the elements interact within the overall context. In the movement itself, Wang juxtaposes the intervals and textures based



Figure 19: Wang's drawing of compositional forces that are represented by different colors. The dark brown shows the overall dynamics/tension, the green shows the viola sustaining in dialogue with the piano, and the blue is the whir of piano cascades in response to the viola.

[25] Anne Wang, interview by author, New York, March 17, 2022.

on their lightness and darkness, thus using these smaller cells to paint a transformation from dissonance to consonance within the large-scale Phrygian descent from F to E. As a result, the leaf, while fragile, is tenacious in its presence. And in the end, with Berhman's artistic gift, the last leaf never falls.

Concluding Thoughts

The scope of *The Story Behind the Sound* is a collection of four case studies that show the historical trajectory of the lament from vocal music to instrumental music in various contexts, all sharing the thread of storytelling. The Ancient Greeks practiced ritual laments that were passed down through oral traditions and were eventually recorded in the written word of tragedies. The resetting of these tragedies in Renaissance operas cultivated the *lamento* and, consequently, the lament bass, which was later transferred into wordless music carrying its original context and cultural colloquialisms in what is called topic theory. The rise of the viola and its settings in chamber music and orchestral works crafted its voice as a frequent character, or topic, of lamentation, which later played a crucial role in the development of its own repertoire in the 20th and 21st centuries—a collection which to this day contains more than two hundred works of lamentation and related genres.

The development of the viola, the solo violist, and the viola's repertoire was a trepidatious path, given that the viola had suffered misgivings due to its unique history of construction and limited solo opportunities when compared with other string instruments. The first solo violist, Lionel Tertis, brought the viola to the fore and advocated for the development of its own repertoire, thus forever changing its history. Instead of accepting the ill fate of the viola as it had been historically perceived, Tertis chose to inform composers of what the instrument could do. Many of the initial works for viola were written by violists themselves, including Johannes Brahms, Rebecca Clarke, and Benjamin Britten, but even to this day, as stated by composer Gabriela Lena Frank,

"Performers need to take on the role of educating us composers."[26] It is not enough for composers to have a desire to write for the viola, they have to know *why* the viola is valuable and what it can offer. With that said, while there is a plethora of works of lamentation in the relatively meager (yet growing) repertoire for viola, the instrument has a versatile palette that has been made more accessible with the help of modern viola makers and with composers who are well versed in what the viola—and the modern violist—can do.

The viola will always carry a lamenting nature due to its melancholy quality of sound and its relationship in range to the human voice; however, there is room for more. The next stage for this project would be to create a series that explores the whole of the viola repertoire from different vantage points, such as: "The Viola and Its Voice of Virtuosity," "The Viola and Its Voice of Brilliance," and "The Viola and Its Voice of Humor," to showcase in this way the instrument's multifaceted nature. The concept would introduce a whole other perspective for the evolution of the viola, thus unveiling another layer of history in its story behind the sound.

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[26] Kelly, *In Her Own Words,* 73.

Appendix A

Most of this collection of viola works was compiled by Paul Groh and serves as an Appendix to his article "Elegiac Reaction: The Elegy In, and Out of, The Viola Literature." The list primarily focuses on elegies but also encompasses related titles of lamentation. "#" indicates the other movements in the work. Paul Groh has granted this author permission to replicate his original list of elegies in this dissertation with adjustments and additions indicated by this author in red. Groh's article and appended list can be found here: Groh, Paul. "Elegiac Reaction: The Elegy In, and Out of, the Viola Literature," ANZVS no. 23 (June 2008).

Collection of Elegies, Laments, and Related Genres for Viola and Other Instruments

Viola Solo

BARNES, Milton	*Lamentations of Jeremiah*	1959
BARROWS, R. C.	*Elegy*	
BERNSTEIN, Charles Harold	*Elegiac Dreams and Awakenings*	
BONSEL, Adriaan	*Elegie*	1961
BRITTEN, Benjamin	*Elegy for Unaccompanied Viola*	1930
CARDENAS, Alfredo	*Elegía por la muerte de Silvestre Revueltas*	1972
CHEUNG, Anthony	*Elegy for the Victims of Nanjing*	1997
CSIRE, József	*Elegie I*	1980
CSIRE, József	*Elegie II*	1980
ELLING, Hans	*Elegie*	1930
ENGELMANN, Johann	*Trauersonate in c*	1932
FEIGIN, Joel	*Lament*	2007
FINE, Marshall	*Elegy*	1980
FISH, Adrian Vernon	*Elegy*	1984

FLOTHUIS, Marius	*Elegia*	1981
GERBER, Steven R.	*Elegy on the name Dmitri Shostakovich*	1991
GROH, Paul	*Elegie in modo di canto gregoriano*	1976
HARIZANOV, Georgi	*Lament*	2005
JACOB, Gordon	*3 Pieces (Elegie,#,#)*	1930
JETHS, Willem	*Elegia*	2002
KASULIN, Aitana	*Do Saudades*	2020/21
KNOBLER, Rachel	*Elegy*	
KONÍČEK, Štěpán	*Kleine Trauermusik*	1980
KÓSA, György	*In Memoriam*	1978
KVANDAL, Johan	*Elegy and Capriccio*	1978
LADERMAN, Ezra	*Elegie*	1983
LEDUC, Jacques	*Lamento, op. 70*	1988
LEE, Christopher	*Elegy (in memoriam Yitzhak Rabin)*	1995
LISTER, Rodney	*Complicated Grief*	2014
LOISELEUR, Patrick	*Elegie*	2006
MARSHALL, Christopher	*Elegy*	1994
MARTINČEK, Dušan	*Elegia*	1965
MARTINI, Manlio	*Tema elegiaco*	1985
MERLÄINEN, Usko	*Trauerlied*	1962
METTRAUX, Laurent	*Sonata (Elegiaco,#,#)*	1998
MILOŠEVIĆ, Vlado	*Preludij I elegija*	1970
MORRICONE, Ennio	*Elegia per viola (1972 film Violenza:QP)*	1972
NENING, Wolfgang	*Elegia*	2004
POWNING, Graham	*Vale Win Durie*	2008
PRESTINI, Paola	*Vento e sole: Elegy for Jonah (un lamento fortepiano)*	2018
PTASZYŃSKA, Marta	*Elegia: In memoriam Pope John Paul II*	2005

RAMIREZ, Luis Antonio	*Meditación a la memoria de Segundo Ruis Belvis*	1973
RODRÍGUEZ, Iván Enrique	*On Being*	2018
SALMENHAARA, Erkki	*Elegia Nr. 4*	1967
SAMAZEUILH, Gustave	*Lamento, aus 2 pieces breves*	1947
SARKISSIAN, Ara	*Elegy*	
SEREBRIER, José	*Nostalgia for Solo Viola*	
SERGHI, Sophia	*Elegy*	2004
SIDELNIKOV, Nikolai	*Sonata-Elegia*	
SILVESTROV, Valentin	*Lachrymosa*	2003
STRAVINSKY, Igor	*Elegie (in memoriam Alphonse Onou)*	1944
STUTSCHEWSKI, Joachim	*Elegie*	1980
VIÑUELA, Eduardo	*In Memoriam*	
VOLPERT, Andreas	*Elegie und Etude*	1954
WELLS, Andrew	*3 Short Pieces (#,Elegy,#)*	2004
WHEELER, Larry	*Elegy - 9 Caprices, Op. 1 No. 8*	1970
WYK, Arnold van	*Elegie nr. 3*	1946
YANG, Hua	*Lament, op. 26*	1994

Duos with Viola

Viola and Flute

HARIZANOV, Georgi	*Lament*	2006
PINKHAM, Daniel	*Sonata da Camera (/,/,/,Elegy)*	

Viola and Percussion

MILHAUD, Darius	*Elegie, op. 416*	1965

Viola and Computer Processing

DODGE, Charles	*Viola Elegy*	1987

Viola and Tape/Electronics

HANNAY, Roger	*Elegie*	1970
KNECHT, Kurt	*CURRENTly (from Strong Sad)*	2017
MILETIĆ, Miroslav	*Lamentacija*	1963
SIGURÐSSON, Valgeir	*Remnant for Viola and Electronics (from Strong Sad)*	2018
SIROTA, Jonah	*When You Lose You Win for Live Viola, Tracked Viola, and Electronics*	2016
	Viola and Violin	
COPLAND, Aaron	*Elegie*	1932
ENGEL, Yehuda	*Elegy*	1980
HWEI, Fung Chen	*The Necessary Elements (Prelude, Elegia)*	
	2 Violas	
BRIDGE, Frank	*Lament*	1912
CARDY, Patrick	*Elegy*	1994
MALSKY, Matt	*Elegy*	2011
MUHLY, Nico	*Lean (from Strong Sad)*	2017
	Cello and Viola	
BRIDGE, Frank	*Lament*	1912
CARDY, Patrick	*Elegy*	1994
MALSKY, Matt	*Elegy*	2011
MUHLY, Nico	*Lean (from Strong Sad)*	2017
	Viola and Bass	
LOEB, David	*Elegy*	
	Viola and Harp	
FELIX, Vaclav	*Pezzo Eligiaco*	1966
LEHMANN, Robert	*Elegie in C (B, orig. vlc. & hp)*	1882
	Viola and Guitar	
AGUIAR, Renato César de	*Elegía for Viola and Guitar*	1995

Viola and Harpsichord		
MANSKER, Carl	*Elegy*	2005
Viola and Organ		
LEHMANN, Robert	*Elegie in c (B, orig. vlc.)*	1882
MAGLE, Frederik	*Lament for Viola and Organ*	2017
SCHUMANN, Gerhard	*Elegie und Ballade*	1972
SCHUMANN, Gerhard	*In Memoriam*	1972
STAHMER, Klaus	*Threnos. In mem. P. Hindemith*	1964
TIESSEN, Heinz	*Music for Viola and Organ (Elegie,#,#,#)*	1964
WEINER, Stanley	*Elegy and Rondo*	1979
Viola and Accordion		
ROJKO, Uros	*Elegia per Hugo*	1993
Viola and Piano		
ADAMS, Chas. E.	*7 Pieces (#,#,Elegy,#,#,#,#)*	1911
ADOLPHE, BRUCE	*Elegy for Roger (in memory of Roger Tapping)*	2022
ALBRECHT, Alexander	*Elegicka piesen*	
ALMEIDA PRADO, José Antonio Rezende de	*Réquiem para a paz: sobre fragmentos de Réquiem de Mozart*	1985
ALTES, Ernest Eugene	*Elegie et Montagnarde*	1866
AMBROSIUS, Hermann	*2 Elegien*	1947
AMIROV, Fikret	*Elegie (B, vlc)*	1951
ANDRIX, George	*Elegie*	1967
ARNOLD, R. P.	*Elegia*	1903
BACK, Sven-Erik	*Elegy*	1952
BARLOW, Wayne	*Elegie*	1967
BARNETT, Caroll	*Memoriam*	1975
BARRUS, LaMar	*Elegy*	

BAZELAIRE, Paul	*Funerailles*	1946
BEHREND, Jeanne	*Lamentation*	1944
BIHARI, Sándor	*Elegia*	1972
BLYTON, Carey	*Elegy*	
BRITTEN, Benjamin	*Lachrymae*	1950
BRITTEN, Benjamin	*Reflection for Viola and Piano*	1930
BRITTEN, Benjamin	*Two Portraits: No. 2 ("E. B. B.") for Solo Viola and String Orchestra*	1930
BURROWS, Benjamin	*Lament and Gigue*	
CANFIELD, David DeBoor	*Elegy for Terri*	2006
CARTER, Elliot	*Elegie*	1943
CEREMUGA, Josef	*Sonata Elegica*	1961
DAMAIS, Émile	*Poeme elegiaque*	
DARGOMYSHSKY, Alexander	*Elegy*	
DELIUS, Frederick	*Caprice, Elegie (B)*	1925
DRAESEKE, Felix	*Sonata #1 in c minor (Mod. Elegiaco,#,#,#)*	1892
DUMAS, Louis	*Lamento*	1903
DVARIONAS, Belys	*Pezzo Elegiaco*	1947
ELÍAS, Manuel de	*Elegia*	1962
ELKIND, S. W.	*Elegie Hebraique*	
ENESCU, Georges	*Elegija*	
FARRELL, Eibhlis	*Elegy*	
FAURÉ, Gabriel	*Elegie (B)*	1880
FIÉVET, Paul	*Chant elegiaque nr. 2, in e*	1919
FREUDENTHAL, Otto	*In memory of Robert Hyde*	1973
FRIEMANN, Witold	*Elegie, in f*	1918
FRISKIN, James	*Elegy*	1915

FRUMERIE, Gunnar de	*Elegische Suite*	1946
FUKUTOMI, Hideo	*Elegiaco*	1995
GATES, Keith	*Elegy*	
GESSLER, I.	*Elegia*	1961
GLAZUNOV, Alexander	*Elegie in g, op. 44*	1894
GONZÁLEZ, Luis Jorge	*Sonata Elegíaca*	2002
HALBERSTADT, Josef	*Elegie*	1875
HANESYAN, Harutyun	*Menuetto, Nocturno, Elegie*	1962
HARRISON, Pamela	*Lament*	1965
HERBERGER, Rolf	*Elegie*	1975
HINDSON, Matthew	*Lament*	
HIPMANN, Silvester	*Weihnachtselegie*	1939
HODKINSON, Sydney	*Introit, Elegie and Dance Macabre*	1981
HÖLLER, Karl	*Sonata "in memoriam Paul Hindemith"*	1967
HOLZHAUS, H.	*Elegie, op. 2*	
HUBAY, Jenő	*Elegie, in g*	
HUNKE, Joseph	*Elegie*	1882
HUTTER, Matthias	*Elegie, op. 14*	2004
JACOBSON, Maurice	*Lament*	1941
JOHNSTONE, David	*Elegy*	
JONSSON, Josef	*Fantasia elegiaca*	1940
KANER, Matthew	*Elegy and Tango*	2006
KATES, Morris	*Lament*	1998
ĶENIŅŠ, Tālivaldis	*Elegy and Rondo*	1979
KLOSE, Friedrich	*Elegie, op. 7*	
KÖHLER, Moritz	*Elegie, op. 31*	1899
KRJUKOW, Vladimir	*4 Pieces, op. 13/1 (#,Elegie,#,#)*	1930

KUGEL, Michael	*Suite in Memoriam Dmitri Shostakovich*	1988
LAI, Deh-Ho	*Elegy*	1996
LEGIDO, Jesús María	*Elegiaca*	
LEGLEY, Victor	*Elegisch Lied, op. 7*	1944
LEHMANN, Robert	*Elegie, in c, op. 29*	
LEONBRODE, Leo	*Elegie*	1908
LOMBARDO, Mario	*Elegy*	
MACUDZINSKI, Rudolf	*Elegia, op. 24*	1974
MARÉCHAL, Henri	*Elegie*	1931
MARKOV, Assen	*Elegie*	1954
MARTINI, Manlio	*Elegia (B)*	1958
MARTINI, Manlio	*Momento elegiaco*	1969
MAZAS, Jacques Féréol	*3 Elegien, op. 29, 73, 92*	
MIGÓ, Marc	*Last Leaf: In Memoriam, II. Fantasia-Lament*	2021
MOORE, John Herbert	*Elegy*	1911
MOREHEAD, Patricia	*Elegy*	2003
PATTERSON, Paul	*Elegiac Blues, op. 97a*	2006
PERKINSON, Coleridge-Taylor	*Lament for Viola and Piano*	c. 1950
PERON, Paul	*Elegie, in d, op. 7*	1903
POVIA, F.	*Elegie*	
RAPOPORT, Alexander	*Elegy*	1992
REISCH, Matthäus	*Elegie*	
RODRÍGUEZ, Iván Enrique	*Last Leaf: In Memoriam, I. Mr. Behrman*	2021
SAENZ, Pedro	*Dos Elegias y Epilogo*	1984
SAINTON, Philip	*Lament*	
SALESSES, P.	*Elegie, op. 21*	1882

SCHEER, Leo	*Lament*	1945
SCHUMANN, Gerhard	*Elegie*	
SETER, Mordecai	*Elegie*	1954
SEYFRIED, Sheridan	*Elegy*	2006
SEYMOUR, John Laurence	*Elegiac Tone Poem Nr. 2, in f*	1946
SILVERSTEEN, Rosemary	*Elegy*	
SILVESTROV, Valentin	*Epitaph*	1999
SIROTA, Robert	*Elegy for a Lost World (from Strong Sad)*	2017
SIROTA, Robert	*Here Come the Waterworks (from Strong Sad)*	2017
SITT, Hans	*3 Morceaux, op. 75 (Elegie,#,#)*	1901
ŠKERJANC, Lucijan Marija	*Elegija*	
SLADEK, Paul	*Elegy*	1928
SPIERS, Colin	*Elegy*	1989
STAHMER, Klaus	*Threnos (in mem. P. Hindemith)*	1964
STARER, Robert	*Elegy*	
STARK, Brad	*Sonata (Elegy,#,#)*	2003
SWINNEN, Hans	*Elegie*	1982
THEOFANDIS, Christopher	*Flow My Tears*	1997
TOMC, Matija	*Elegy*	1954
TOMLINSON, Ernest	*Lament*	1922
TÜMLER, Rudolf	*Elegie, op. 11 "Was ist das Gluck?"*	1937
VEPRIK, Alexander	*Kadisch*	1926
VERCOE, Elizabeth Walton	*Elegy*	
VIEUXTEMPS, Henri	*Elegie*	1854
VOGEL, Heinrich	*3 Morceaux, op. 1 (#,#,Elegie)*	1861
VOLPERT, Andreas	*Elegie und Etude*	
VREDENBURG, Max	*Lamento*	1953

WANG, Anne	*Last Leaf: In Memoriam, III. The Leaf, or Tenacity*	2021
CARDONA, Alejandro	*Laberintos de Soledades*	2009
LÓPEZ MARIN, Jorge	*Música para viola y piano. A Federico Smith in memoriam*	1977
WINKELMANN, R. A.	*Elegie #1 in g minor*	2001
ZEHM, Friedrich	*3 Elegies*	
ZICH, Otakar	*Elegie*	1905
ZICH, Otakar	*Elegie #2 in g minor*	2001

Chamber Music: Trios, Quartets, and Quintets with Viola

Viola and 2 Violins

DVOŘÁK, Antonín	*4 Bagatelles (#,#,#,Elegia)*	1887
MOSS, Lawrence	*Elegy*	1969

Viola with Violin and Cello

BANCQUART, Alain	*Threne*	1967
DUBLANC, Emilio Antonio	*Elegia, op. 19*	1962
ENDRES, O. P.	*Dirge*	
SIMS-WILLIAMS, Nicholas	*In memoriam*	1949
TESKE, John	*Lament*	2005

Viola with Cello and Double Bass

SCHIDLOWSKY, León	*In memoriam Luigi Nono for Viola, Cello and Double Bass*	1991

Viola with Violin and Piano

CLARKE, Rebecca	*Dumka: Duo Concertante for Violin and Viola with Piano*	1940

Viola with Violin and Harp

DAUTHAGE, Max	*Elegie*	

Viola with Guitar and Flute

CHAB, Gustavo	*Artesano Triste for Viola, Guitar and Flute*	1994
Viola with Bass and Tape		
PROTO, Frank	*Reflections (Elegy,#,#,#,#)*	1979
Viola with Piano and Tape		
POVIA, F.	*Elegija*	
Viola with Clarinet and Cello		
LJUNGDAHL, Maria	*Elegy and Dance*	
Viola with Clarinet and Piano		
ARIAS, Luis	*Elegía a la memoria de Tirso de Olazábal for Viola, Clarinet and Piano*	1963
Viola with Flute and Percussion		
SCHIDLOWSKY, León	*Threnos for Viola, Flute and Percussion*	1996
Viola with Cor Anglais and Bassoon		
OEHRING, Helmut	*Lethal Injection*	1995
Viola with Oboe and Harpsichord		
ALSUET, Claudio	*In Memoriam a Thomas Tichauer: Trio for Viola, Oboe and Harpsichord*	1995
String Trio		
CARREÑO, Juan Pablo	*Llorando Gruesas Lágrimas Lluvia for String Trio*	2008
String Quartet		
BARTÓK, Béla	*String Quartet No. 6*	1945
CARTER, Elliot	*Elegy for String Quartet*	1943
FRANK, Gabriela Lena	*Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout, #,#,#,#, V. Canto de Velorio, #*	2001
LEKEU, Guillaume	*Molto Adagio sempre cantante e doloroso*	1887
SHOSTAKOVICH, Dmitri	*Elegy for String Quartet,* from Katrina's Aria, Act. III of *Lady Macbeth of Mtensk*	1931
String Quintet		

RANJBARAN, Behjad	*Elegy for Strings*	1985
	Piano Quintet	
DVOŘÁK, Antonín	*Piano Quintet in A Major, Op. 81 No. 2 - II. Dumka. Andante con moto.*	1887
SCHUMANN, Robert	*Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44 - II. In Modo d'una Marcia. Un poco largamente.*	1842
	Viola Solo with Orchestra	
ADOMIÁN, Lan	*Soledades*	1962
ARAD, Atar	*Epitaph*	2012
BAIRD, Tadeusz	*Concerto lugubre*	1978
BENJAMIN, Arthur	*Concerto. Elegia valzer e toccata*	1945
BENNETT, Richard Rodney	*Elegy for Caroline Lamb*	1975
BERT, Rudolph	*Epitaph*	
BRITTEN, Benjamin	*Lachrymae*	1950
CASTRO, Washington	*Concerto elegiaco*	1950
CURTI, Franz	*2 Lamentations, op. 4*	
DOSS, Thomas	*Elegie (for Viola and wind orchestra)*	2003
ERBACH, Walter	*Elegie, op. 5*	
ERNST, Heinrich Wilhelm	*Elegie, op. 10*	1895
FRANK, Gabriela Lena	*La Llorona: Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra*	2007
GLAZUNOV, Alexander	*Elegy, in g, op. 44*	1893
GUILLOU, René Alfred	*Elegie*	1927
HARRIS, Roy	*Elegy and Paean*	1948
HAYASHI, Hikari	*Concerto-Elegie*	1995
HINDEMITH, Paul	*Trauermusik*	1936
HOLZHAUS, Henry	*Elegy, op. 2*	1896
HOWELLS, Herbert	*Elegie, in C*	1917

JONGEN, Joseph	*Suite, op. 48 (Poeme Elegiaque, Final)*	1915
KOPLOW, Philip	*Elegy*	1968
MAZAS, Jacques Féréol	*Elegie, in C, op. 73*	
MILANO, Roberto	*Concerto (#,#,#,Elegia)*	2005
MILFORD, Robin	*Elegiac Meditation*	1946/7
MONTERO, Claudia	*Elegia*	
PARTOS, Oedoen	*Yizkor (In Memoriam) for Viola and String Orchestra*	1947
PIRE ROJAS, Franklin Rafael	*Lamento para viola y cuerdas, Op. 58*	
POLAND, Theo	*Elegie*	1951
PRAEGER, Ferdinand	*Lamentation for Viola and Piano*	1885
PRAEGER, Ferdinand	*Elegy in E Minor for Viola and Piano*	1885
SANTÓRSOLA, Guido	*Cançâo triste y Danza Brasileña*	1934
SCHUMANN, Gerhard	*Elegie*	
SCULTHORPE, Peter	*Elegy*	2006
SEIBER, Mátyás	*Elegie*	1954
SETER, Mordechai	*Elegie*	1955
STEFFENS, Walter	*Elegie "Guernica"*	1976/8
STRUBE, Gustav	*Elegy*	
VELLÈRE, Lucie	*Epitaph pour un ami*	1964
ZAFRED, Mario	*Elegia in tre tempi*	1968
Viola Solo with String Quartet		
HOLZHAUS, H.	*Elegie, op. 2*	
HYARD, Eugene	*Elegie*	1952
MORIN, Eric	*Elegy*	2004
SETER, Mordecai	*Elegie*	1954
Viola Solo with String Quartet and Organ		

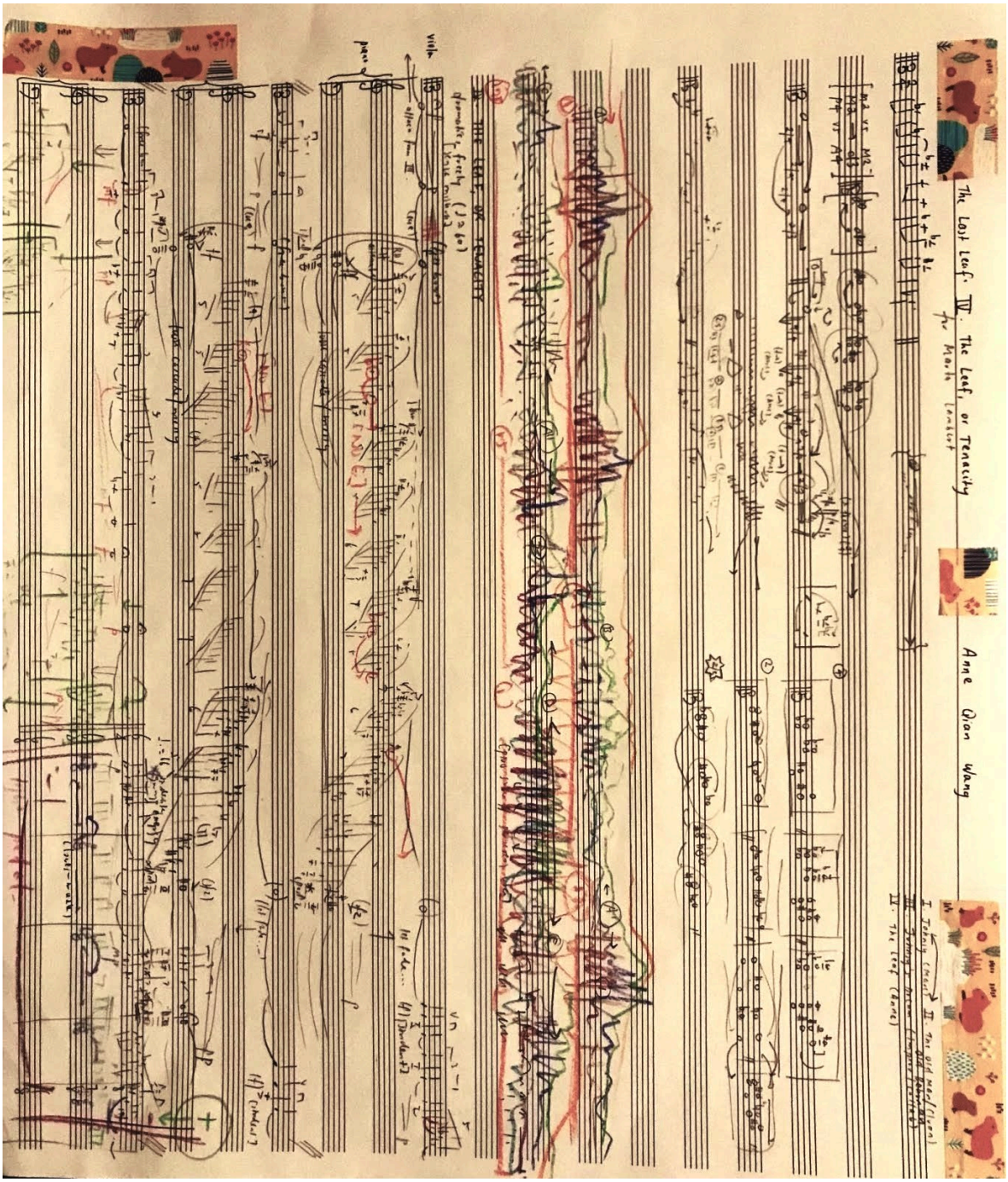
MAZAS, Jacques Féréol	*Elegie*	1831
Viola Solo with String Quartet and Orchestra		
HOWELLS, Herbert	Elegie, op. 15	1917
Viola and Saxophone Solo with Orchestra		
TURNER, Clement Browning	*Elegiac Requiem and Dance*	1975/6
2 Violas with Orchestra		
TURNER, Clement Browning	*Elegiac Requiem and Dance*	1975/6
Viola and Harp Solo with Strings		
ZIEMS, Harry	*Elegie*	1964
Viola and Voice		
MOSSOLOV, Alexander	*2 Elegien*	1943
Viola with Voice and Vibraphone		
SMOLANOV, Michael	*Elegy for Lovers*	
Viola with Voice and Piano		
DARGOMYZHSKY, Alexander	*Elegie "Sie naht"*	1843
MACUDZINSKI, Rudolf	*Elegia, op. 24*	
MASSENET, Jules	*Elegie*	
WHETTAM, Graham	*Lamentations, op. 25*	
Viola with Voice, Flute and Cello		
KROPFREITER, August Franz	*In Memoriam*	1964
Viola with Voice, Bass and Percussion		
CUMMINGS, David	*Elegy*	1964
Viola with Voice, Harp and Timpani		
VOGEL, Wladimir	*In memoriam Roger Vuataz*	

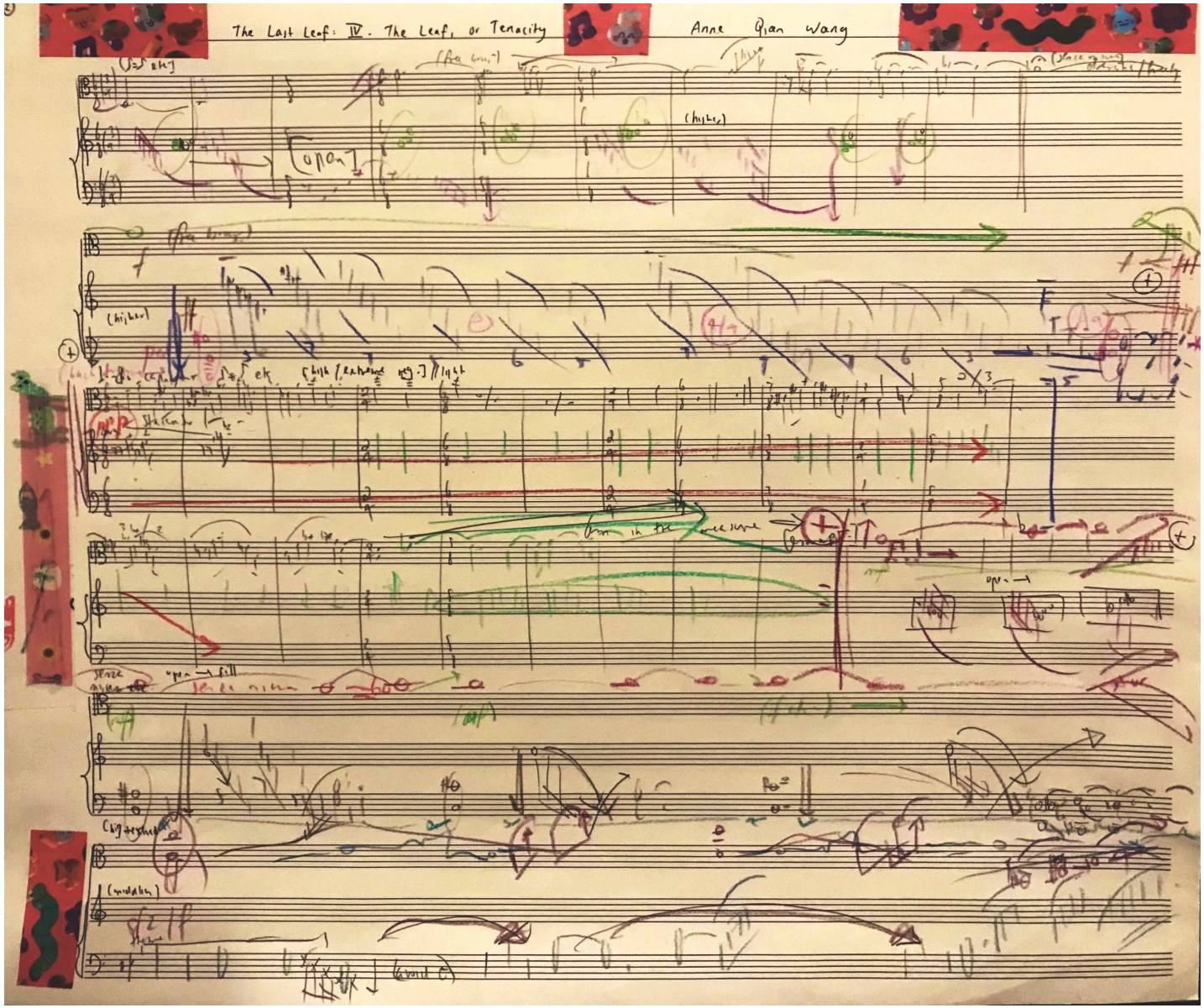
4 Violas with Percussion		
HAMARY, Andreas	*Grauzonen. Elegie in Bruchstücken*	
12 Violas with Harp, Celesta and Percussion		
RAIMI, Max	*Elegy*	1997
Viola with Violin and 2 Marimbas		
WALLIN, Peter	*Elegia*	1996
Viola with Flute, Clarinet and Cello		
LAAKSO, Ilari	*Elegia*	1979
Viola with Oboe, Clarinet and Percussion		
SIMS, Ezra	*Elegie nach Rilke*	
Viola with Flute, Oboe, Piano and Percussion		
BOQUIREN, Sidney M.	*4 Laments and a Dirge*	2007
Viola with Oboe, Clarinet, Violin and Bass		
ZAIMONT, Judith Lang	*Elegy*	
Viola with Flute, Guitar, Percussion, Voice and Tape		
ZORN, John	*Elegy*	1991
Studio Album with Viola Solo		
LEVEN, Jackie	*Elegy for Johnny Cash*	2005

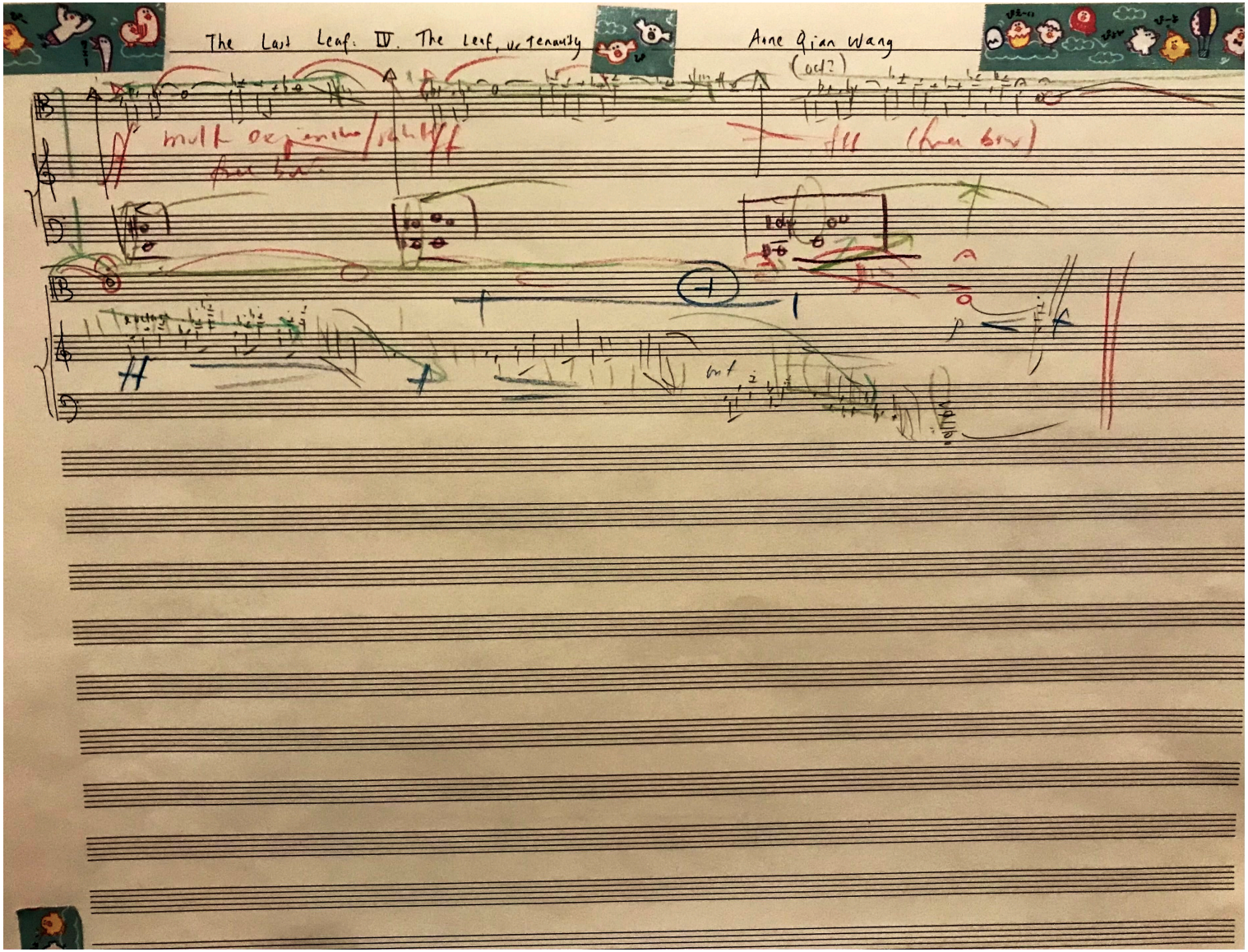
Appendix B

Parts I and II of Appendix B expand on materials discussed and displayed in Chapter 4. Part I shows the earliest sketches by composer Anne Wang, and Part II is the script of interviews from all three composers of *Last Leaf: In Memoriam.*

I. The following images display the complete collection of the earliest sketches by Anne Wang for her movement “The Leaf, or Tenacity” from *Last Leaf: In Memoriam.*




The Last Leaf: IV. The Leaf, or Tenacity
Anne Qian Wang


The Last Leaf: IV. The Leaf, ut tenuity
Anne Qian Wang
(oct?)
mult. oct.
dll (bow bow)

II. Interviews: The following interviews were transcribed from Zoom conversations that occurred upon the completion of the Last Leaf Project. All three composers have consented for the transcripts to be used in this dissertation. Some content has been modified for fluency with approval from the composers. Questions and comments from the author are marked in bold, and responses from the composers are in regular font.

Interview 1: Iván Rodríguez, I. Mr. Behrman
New York - March 16, 2022

ML: Why did you choose Behrman as your character?

IR: He is an artist, but he is also a failed artist. If we fast forward to the end, he sacrificed *through* his art to save a life. Even though it's kind of a toxic, romantic way of seeing it, it's a way of life that I feel that I identify with. If you see my music and how I treat art, I think of it as this suffering thing. Art can be entertainment but it can also be a way of saying or doing something that you can't do in any other way. I don't have the words anymore and so I do the art. That caught my attention more so because Behrman was old and didn't have any more opportunities. He said, this is it. He also never boasted about it. It's that internal conflict that I'm going to do something but there's a filter of honesty. No matter how cranky I get . . . he lived for his art because he died for his art. He was truly affected by not being successful, but he lived for it because he died for it. So that really caught my attention.

ML: Behrman was constantly seeking his masterpiece, but in the end, I wonder if his idea of a masterpiece evolved as he realized his masterwork was coming into fruition.

The end of the piece finishes with a calming moment that suddenly erupts, why? Because while Behrman's painting the leaf thinking that it might be his masterpiece, he will never know it.

ML: So, the inner and outer worlds collided . . . that's kind of a theme in your whole movement: the extremes, the dreaminess versus the explosive. Your compositional style really speaks in that way in every sense. For example, the types of textures that you gravitate towards are very Schumannesque in that the active filigree fills in the larger lines. And you also create a constantly morphing amoeba of sound that is created through frequent time signature changes, polyrhythms, chromaticisms . . . it's a machine that jerks into a flow but it never quite gets there.

IR: That's right. And for it to get there by the end, I put a fermata over a rest in that sense that, "let's just start over." We are trying too hard and nothing is taking shape. And then once you start over, you die.

ML: Do you think this musical language is best suited for the psychological elements of Behrman that you are attracted to?

IR: In the opening of the piece, I use the motive in a passacaglia recitation. But then everything explodes into sharp turns that dissolve into *meno mosso* moments that are more calming. So that's how I tried to separate the artist: the honest part and the frustration part. Being angry in life, there are moments where he is connected with himself through the art, and therefore he is connected with life itself. That's why I have this push and pull because it's steady but not steady.

ML: When you were first approaching the movement, how did you use the motive and what came first?

IR: I think two years ago I would have tried to give you an esoteric answer but I'm going to be entirely honest because I think it should be pulled down and made accessible. I knew that I wanted to treat Behrman psychologically. So, I wanted to feel what he was feeling and integrate it organically. Once I had this, I took the motive and improvised. In the slow introduction I gave you the motive very clearly and then the movement evolved.

ML: I'm going to shift the topic a little bit. You've written for viola in a number of ways.

IR: Yes, I've written for viola, guitar, and harp, and many chamber and symphonic movements. Whenever I write these kinds of ensemble works, the viola takes a strong role. It's like when I write for voice, I prefer writing for the mezzo. My music is not happy music . . . everything that I write emphasizes the three Ds: death, doom, and demise. And I think the viola can capture that sound. Violin is more strident, the lower register for cello is actually bright in my opinion . . . the viola in the middle is a very dark sound. And I think that's why I always give this instrument the leading role in chamber music.

ML: Do you think the range of the instrument and the range of the mezzo is visceral to you in the human sense?

IR: Yes, I think there's also a psychology to it.

ML: So there's a personality to the instrument.

IR: Yes, but also the character that I'm writing for demands for it to be the viola. There's something visceral about the range, because you can get low, and you can get high, but the higher register can also be strained. And when I think of high range, I don't imagine birds chirping, I think of screaming for release. And I think that sound . . . the viola can do that.

ML: How was your experience writing for viola in the context of the short story and collaborating with other composers? What were pros and cons?

IR: This is cliché because there is never a con for when I'm writing. I love writing, and I've said this ever since I was a teenager, but when I wrote orchestral pieces in Puerto Rico, I didn't write for the orchestra, I wrote for the members of the orchestra. So, I wasn't writing for viola, I was writing for Marta. So that adds a layer of enjoyment that is no longer about the instrument but about the person. So the process of writing this piece was for you! Everything that I know . . . I'm writing for the person, and that is why I love writing for friends. It gives you that opportunity. That was basically the whole experience.

Interview 2: Marc Migó, II. Fantasia-Lament
New York - March 21, 2022

ML: Why did you choose Johnsy as your character?

MM: Personal experience of loving and connecting with someone who is sick. It's not just the physiological aspects of the symptoms but it's how you navigate these difficulties. You have to be strong for the person next to you. When I read the tale, I felt very close to Johnsy as a patient and it brought back a lot of memories. There's always a piece of this in every piece of music that I write because it's inevitable. Writing for this character allowed me to address it completely in a piece of music.

ML: Everything is very interconnected for you. In the context that this was presented to you and your own personal experiences, did this project create a kind of catharsis for you?

MM: If I couldn't write music, I would be so frustrated because it allows me to channel my energy in moments of distress. It is so helpful and sublimes all of the things that I keep to myself. This story went to the heart of my situation with my partner.

ML: In your choosing of Johnsy, did she come across as the main character for you?

MM: In a way, she is because she's the one who connects everything. Behrman wants to save her and the leaf is there because it was noticed by Johnsy and it's perceived as the last hope to survive. And because of my personal connection with Johnsy's character, it's a piece that is revolving around her. The fragility of the leaf is all related to the illness and the lightness of life, and all of this is embodied in the sickness and how to survive it.

ML: What elements of her character did you choose to express?

MM: It's a journey from this depressive state that recovers to life as we know it. The ending is as sudden as it is open . . . it's like an ellipsis that is to be continued. It's not the full stop of death, so to speak. There are some ideas dramatic enough in the tale . . . from darkness to light. The idea of sickness and the haziness—living in a dream and the idea of the leaf, this object, that is more improvisatory . . . .

ML: You also do a lot with harmonics. And I found this relationship of timbre that you wrote out: leaving a harmonic and going to a fixed note . . . I also sense a lot of utterances that speak of a more poetic approach.

MM: That is what I tried to do. I think there's a lot of wandering and wondering in this piece. After you leave the middle section with the little chimes that the piano plays, you can feel it going somewhere. It's a sublimation of all of these emotions. The ellipsis connects with the very beginning . . . it's transfiguration. In the beginning the piano creates a nauseating sensation with the clash between the triplets and 8th notes. By the end, it loses its creepy sounds and it's liberated.

ML: You entitled the work Fantasia-Lament

MM: It is a fantasia because of its freer, even improvisatory nature. I added lament to another work recently, "Berceuse-Lament" that was written for saxophone, bassoon and piano. It has more of a static nature that is more meditative rather than a journey. It's kind of a companion piece to the Fantasia-Lament. In a way, the musical lament . . . writing it for me was a catharsis to express this inner lament. It's not just another fantasia, it's more precise and evocative and fairer to what this piece is.

ML: I love the idea of your sketching out of intensity.

For me it's more abstract and it can be a moment where dynamics and speed are increasing but the intensity is waning. It's not so obvious but it is more useful for me. Afterwards maybe I'll become more precise regarding range, dynamics, colors, motives, interactions among instruments, but it tells me from the beginning what I want for the proportions of the piece.

ML: When you received the leaf motive, what did you think of it and how did you choose to incorporate it?

MM: It was so rich in the pitches that it suggested more of a harmony, an atmosphere. The contour of the melody suggested to me this shivering and fragility of the leaf. It led me to write the first part in the piano. I started playing around with that before drafting anything, and it gave me a harmonic basis and a dramatic context of a sickening thing. It was an irregular *ostinato* that imitated sick heartbeats in which the viola can float.

ML: How do you generally hear the viola from a compositional standpoint?

MM: It's so human. It's like a voice and it has more of a gripping effect on me. This was the first work I wrote for with viola as the main character, and it has this more human quality because it's bigger than a violin. It was an optimal choice for writing a Fantasia-Lament and for commenting on this tale. I love the sound of it. Even when the viola is playing the most triumphant moments, it has a nuance to it, the color, the range, whatever it is . . . it's wonderful. After writing this . . . it should be a concerto. . . .

ML: Did the motif shape the form of your Fantasia-Lament?

MM: I first started playing with the motive and came out with the texture at the beginning . . . it feels like something that has its own gravity and sickness. So, in a way it was through the piano that I conceived the piece despite it being for viola and piano. The first idea was the piano shiver in which everything expanded. If you hadn't provided the motive, I would have started from the sketch. But with the motive it's very important to treat it in a convincing manner, and so it was better for it to flow naturally from this shape. The *ostinato* and the form didn't have to be a lament, it could have been something different.

ML: I'm curious, how as a composer the "ready set go" experience was for you in terms of me giving you very little material to work with other than your chosen character and the leaf motive.

MM: This was a very special commission, not only because it's by a very good friend, but it was based on a specific tale and there was this element provided to us, the motive. It would have been different if you hadn't given me any guidelines at all. So, it was quite unique. I don't think I've done anything like this. For me, if the limitations are appealing, it's great.

Interview 3: Anne Wang, III. The Leaf, or Tenacity
New York - March 17, 2022

ML: Why the leaf?

AW**:** I love the image of lots of moving parts circling around particular ideas, but in the middle of that is the leaf. I like the fundamental essence that things are circling around when it comes to narrative stories. In this sense, the leaf reflects upon all other characters in the situation. The image that stayed in my mind and is so vivid was the painted leaf on the window.

ML: When you visualize this, what is surrounding the image?

AW: I see the characters moving around but when the storm happens, I had such a vivid image of leaves in motion in relation to nature, but for me the leaf that is just on the window . . . the whole concept of the leaf and tenacity being the central idea is what struck me.

ML: The aura of the leaf in the story was something quite dark and mysterious, even foreboding, but what is interesting in your movement is that there is a fragility about the leaf that is uplifting.

AW: When I was first conceiving the piece and having the feeling of going towards something, that was uplifting.

ML: What elements of the leaf motive did you latch onto?

AW: When I was looking at your motive, the first thing I thought of was the tension among three different kinds of intervals: the minor second and the major second, the major second and the diminished third, and perfect fourth and the augmented fourth. Those three pairs of intervals stuck out to me. I noticed this while also knowing that I wanted to have this constant shifting between juxtapositions, and that is what I ended up running with: the constant push and pull between those intervals with this through-line from F to E.

ML: What do the different colors mean?

AW: This is an expanded version of me thinking about the big free dialogue parts in the piano and the scattered rhythmic parts. I knew I wanted there to be strong statement dialogues that were flipped with the rhythmic section. I also approached the piece from the scope of tension, which also became inherent to the relationship of opposites The colors represent:

- Dark brown/purple: overall dynamics/tension
- Green: viola sustaining/dialogue
- Blue: piano in response with sprinkled feeling in rhythmic part

ML: Have you written for viola before?

AW: The last time I composed for viola was in an experimental chamber music context where there were multiple protagonists.This was the first time I wrote a work where the viola is the protagonist.

ML: How do you hear the viola from a compositional standpoint?

AW: I love the viola and like it way more than the violin. I have a difficult time writing for violin. Your fifth on the bottom is everything to me. When I am writing for the violin, I think why can't I go lower. When I think about the viola and what kind of material I imagine in that range, I feel so liberated that I can go down there, and it gives me an enormous sense of contrast. I think it has a lot to do with timbre. There's more that you can do with it on the instrument compared to the violin. If I wrote this piece for the violin, I would not be able to get that contrast between dark and light.

ML: How the range sits right in the same range as we speak. And to me that has a visceral relationship to my psyche with it speaking to me.

AW: That lowest octave has such a different timbre, depending on what instrument it is, but where it sits on the viola . . . it has a feeling like the voice.
I am oriented toward tone color in my writing among instruments. In larger instrumentation contexts I am thinking about where the viola falls, but I didn't have to worry about that at all here and so I could do a lot of things with the range.

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Glossary

***Duma*(*s*):** sung heroic epics of Ukrainian origin. The etymological relationship between *duma* and *mythos* through the Indo-European root *mudh-* links their traditions in practices of storytelling. The main ideals conveyed in *dumas* include two groups: (1) the older tales reflect on struggles between the Tatars and Turks, captivity and liberation, and heroic death, while (2) the newer *dumas* tell of the Cossack-Polish conflict and specific battles, with additional tellings of such general social themes as moral expectations, praying for kin, respecting your neighbor, peasant life, and religious ideals.

Dumka: the term developed out of the epic/ballade tradition of *duma* but differs in that it was a song of lamentation usually sung by women instead of what was traditionally a male bard. The genre was adapted into instrumental genres by 19th-century composers including Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849), Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893), and Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979).

Góos: an Ancient Greek term that describes a general expression of grief performed specifically by kinswomen as a stylized ritual lament.

***Mestizaje*:** a term developed by composer Gabriela Lena Frank. It explores the concept of mixed styles in music where the traditional sounds of Latin American folk music and the techniques and instruments of Western music coexist in harmony.

Ritual Lament: the ritual lament was a necessary and all-encompassing ceremony for the human dead in Ancient Greek culture. The process includes *próthesis* (the laying out of the corpse)*, ekphora* (the procession to the grave)*,* and the visit to the tomb. The thirty-day ritual entailed a dual process of the physical, as the body was prepared and transported for burial, and the emotional, which invited catharsis in the form of vocal lamentations performed by professional mourners and kinswomen (see *góos* and *thrênos*)

***Thrênos*:** an Ancient Greek term that describes a previously composed dirge performed by female professional mourners.

Topic Theory: a concept developed by Leonard Ratner that aims to explain musical conventions of subjects, or *topics,* born in the "commonplace" of 18th-century culture and musical practice.

Topics: musical signs extracted from cultural idioms of the "commonplace" that comprise an expressive alphabet of musical gestures known to the 18th-century audience.

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