

BRUCE EDWARD GBUR
The Bassoon Concertos and Contrabassoon Concerto of Victor Bruns
(Under the direction of WILLIAM D. DAVIS)

The purpose of this study is to examine the four bassoon concertos and contrabassoon concerto of Victor Bruns (1904-1996), and in doing so to interest bassoonists in performing them. These works represent a body of repertoire for the bassoon that is unparalleled in the twentieth century. The political situation between the United States and East Germany during the Cold War prevented many of these works from being disseminated or performed in our country.

This study contains an introductory chapter and a biographical chapter. The next five chapters are devoted to each of the works examined. Information provided regarding each composition includes date of composition, dedication and/or commission, orchestration, approximate timing, date and performers of premiere, publication information, available recordings, known reviews, a structural analysis, and performance considerations.

The final chapter of conclusions discusses the five concertos regarding their overall formal structures, harmonic language, idiomatic writing for the bassoon, cadenzas, and orchestration, as well as suggestions for further study of this composer.

INDEX WORDS: Bassoon, contrabassoon, Bruns, concerto, performance

THE BASSOON CONCERTOS AND CONTRABASSOON CONCERTO
OF VICTOR BRUNS

by

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Dedicated to

Ronald Phillips

Teacher, Mentor, and Friend

With deepest appreciation for over thirty years of
guidance, encouragement, and inspiration

and to

William D. Davis

Without whose persistence and self-sacrifice
this project would not have seen completion.

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Contrabassoon Concerto. Hank also gave me a copy of the freshly printed orchestra score for that work and a copy of the holograph piano reduction.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the most devastating results of World War II was the partitioning of Germany and its capital, Berlin. Physically divided by the Berlin Wall in 1962, that city was a tangible representation of the Cold War waged between the Western democracies and the communist governments of the East. The very name of the city evokes mental images of prisoner exchanges at Checkpoint Charlie and an entire literary genre exemplified by the writings of John Le Carré.

The politics of the Cold War made it difficult to obtain printed music or recordings from the former East Germany (German Democratic Republic, or GDR). Those same politics made it unwise, at times, to perform or broadcast such music if it was obtained. Furthermore, there is a paucity of information in English on the musical life of the former East Germany and a widespread ignorance in the West about East German composers and the repertoire they have produced. Many English-speaking musicians and scholars would find it difficult to name a single East German composer. Some might think of Hans Eisler or Boris Blacher, but it is probable that few queried would have ever heard a live performance of their music in the West.

The German composer Victor Bruns (1904-1996) is a good example of this unfamiliarity. Born to German parents in Czarist Russia on 15 August 1904, he was in his early teens when Czar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate and the Bolsheviks seized power.¹ Bruns lived and worked in the newly created Soviet Union until 1938, when all ethnic Germans were deported by edict of Josef Stalin.² When Bruns settled in Berlin later that same year, Hitler had already been Chancellor for four years and had gained total control of Germany. After World War II the composer continued to live in what became East Berlin. He had a very successful career as a bassoonist and composer in the GDR, and he heard his works performed by many of the Eastern Bloc's foremost ensembles.

Statement of Purpose

Victor Bruns is one of the most prolific composers of music for bassoon in the twentieth century. His contributions to the literature include three sonatas with piano, four concertos with orchestra, a multi-movement work for bassoon and string trio, a set of four unaccompanied pieces for bassoon, three sets of pieces for contrabassoon and piano, three suites for three bassoons and contrabassoon, and a concerto for contrabassoon and orchestra.

¹The Soviet Union continued to follow the Julian Calendar until February 1918. For the sake of clarity, all dates will be given according to the Gregorian Calendar.

²Helge Bartolomäus, "Victor Bruns," translated by William Waterhouse, *The Double Reed* 14 (Winter 1991): 37.

All of these works are well crafted and display skillful idiomatic writing for the instrument. The political climate during the Cold War made most of these works almost inaccessible in the West, particularly in the United States. Bruns's First and Second Concertos were actually published in the United States by Leeds Music and International Music, respectively, through legal copyright loopholes. Although both of these editions were issued prior to Senator Joseph McCarthy's communist witch hunts, no information identifying Bruns as an East German or former Soviet citizen was included with those publications. Several of Bruns's bassoon works are currently out of print and are difficult to find, even in the former GDR. The purpose of this study is to provide new information about Bruns's bassoon and contrabassoon concertos, and in doing so to interest bassoonists in performing them. It is hoped that a wider demand for this music from performers in North and South America will cause the publishers of those pieces that are currently out of print to consider reissuing them.

Delimitations

The music selected for this study consists of the four concertos for bassoon and orchestra, opp. 5 (1933), 15 (1946), 41 (1966), and 83 (1986), and the Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, op. 98 (1992). The concertos range from Bruns's earliest surviving work (Concerto No. 1 for Bassoon and Orchestra, op. 5) through his final composition (Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, op. 98). These works were chosen primarily for the potential

importance of their positions in the repertoire of the bassoon and contrabassoon.

Justification for the Study

The bassoon has suffered a decided lack of attention from composers since the end of the Classical era, when it was popular as a solo instrument. Composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have not made as many significant additions to the bassoon's concerto repertoire as did their counterparts in the Baroque and Classical periods. During the twentieth century few concertos have emerged as standard repertoire for the bassoonist. Too many new concertos are premiered by the commissioner and then relegated to obscurity; they are rarely either published or subsequently performed by soloists other than the commissioners themselves. Many factors are involved in this, including 1) the lack of published piano reductions, 2) the rental status and subsequent expense of obtaining many of the scores and orchestral parts for most twentieth-century concerto accompaniments, and 3) the lack of commercial recordings of the works, which would help to increase their popularity and stir the interest of performers.

If queried about twentieth-century concertos, the average professional bassoonist will probably profess knowledge of works by André Jolivet, Henri Tomasi, Dan Welcher, Ray Luke, Jean Françaix, Gordon Jacob, and Ellen Taaffe Zwillich. Other recently composed works include contributions from

Gunther Schuller, David Amram, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, and John Williams. The four concertos by Victor Bruns thus represent a major addition to the sparse twentieth-century repertoire. Scores and orchestral parts for all four of the concertos are available as rental material from their respective publishers, but only the first three concertos have been published with piano reductions. Of these, the piano reductions of only the first and second concertos are currently in print.

The Contrabassoon Concerto, op. 98, is one of few such works composed for that instrument. Two of the most well-publicized works for solo contrabassoon and orchestra written in the latter half of the twentieth century by Donald Erb and Gunther Schuller call for a technical virtuosity few performers ever achieve on that instrument, as well as employing the instrument's extreme upper range. The Bruns Contrabassoon Concerto is technically quite challenging but still falls within the grasp of a good player.

Review of Literature

Despite his large number of published works and their popularity among German and Eastern Bloc audiences and performers, there is no information on Bruns in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, nor is he mentioned in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Detailed information is scarce, but brief entries occur in supplemental volumes to two lesser-known German music dictionaries, the *Kurzgefaßtes Tonkünstler-Lexicon; Zweiter Teil* and Hans Joachim Moser's *Musik Lexicon*,

(*Ergänzungsband A-Z*).³ The most extensive article dealing with Victor Bruns and his music appeared in an issue of *The Double Reed*.⁴ It was written by the composer's friend Helge Bartolomäus, assistant principal bassoonist of the Deutsche Oper in Berlin. Bruns receives frequent, albeit brief, mention in *Das Musikleben in der deutschen demokratischen Republik, 1945-1959*, by Karl Laux.⁵ Two important sources have been disseminated by Bruns's primary publisher, Breitkopf & Härtel. The first is an interview with Bruns conducted by Reiner Kontressowitz,⁶ and the second is a biographical pamphlet done as part of a series to promote composers associated with Breitkopf & Härtel.⁷ Bruns's own correspondence files and scrapbooks have been placed in the Province Library of Saxony in Dresden, but they have not yet been catalogued and are unavailable for study at this time.

³Helmut Rösner, ed. *Kurzgefaßtes Tonkünstler-Lexicon; Zweiter Teil: Ergänzungen und Erweiterungen seit 1937, Band 1: A-k*, 15. Auflage. (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofens Verlag, 1974); and Hans Joachim Moser, *Musik Lexicon, Ergänzungsband A-Z* (Hamburg: Hans Sikorski Verlag, 1963).

⁴Helge Bartolomäus, "Victor Bruns," translated by William Waterhouse, *The Double Reed* 14 (Winter 1991), 37-40.

⁵Karl Laux, *Das Musikleben in der deutschen demokratischen Republik, 1945-1959* (Leipzig: Deutsche Verlag für Musik, 1963) 66, 128. 222, 231f, 355, 393-396.

⁶Victor Bruns, "A Conversation with Victor Bruns," interview by Reiner Kontressowitz, *Inform 1* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, n. d.): 32-40. Kontressowitz was Bruns's agent with Breitkopf & Härtel, in addition to being a close personal friend.

Methodology

This study consists of an introduction; a biographical chapter; a chapter devoted to each of the five concertos; and a conclusion. The biographical material is based on personal interviews and correspondence with the composer's family, professional colleagues, friends, and business associates. These resources have been supplemented by the limited published material currently available on Bruns as well as by newspaper reviews of his music. Among the composer's contemporaries who have provided access to personal correspondence are Herbert Heilmann, former principal bassoon of the Berlin Staatskappelle, who premiered the second, third, and fourth bassoon concertos; and Reiner Kontressowitz, Bruns's former agent at Breitkopf & Härtel. Henry Skolnick, who not only premiered the Concerto for Contrabassoon, op. 98, but was also the catalyst behind its conception, provided copies of the correspondence through which that work was commissioned.

A number of primary source materials relating to the Bruns bassoon and contrabassoon concertos were used for this study. These materials include copies of the holograph scores of the second and fourth concertos, the unpublished holograph piano reduction of the fourth concerto, and the holograph piano reduction of the contrabassoon concerto, which will be published by Bassoon Heritage Edition, edited by this author. The other works were studied from published scores.

⁷H. R., *Victor Bruns*, (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1989). The initials H.

This study provides information about the individual concertos such as dates of premieres, soloists, conductors, accompanying orchestras, orchestration information, publication information, available recordings, performance considerations, and reviews of the works. It also includes a structural analysis of each movement of each concerto. The concluding chapter assesses the significance of the concertos discussed and suggests directions for further study of Victor Bruns and his music.

Except where otherwise noted, all translations from the German are by the author. In discussing musical notation and ranges, the following system will be employed (Figure 1).

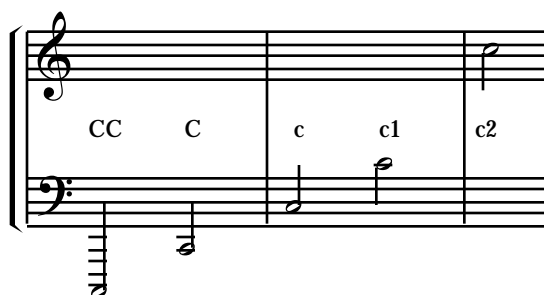


Figure 1

Pitch nomenclature of different octaves

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Victor Bruns was born on 15 August 1904, in the village of Ollila, in Finnish Karelia where his family had their *dacha*, or summer cottage.¹ Both of his parents were German citizens; his father was a sales representative for a German manufacturing firm in St. Petersburg, his mother was a housewife. At this time there was a very strong German presence in the Imperial capital. There were schools, churches, and social organizations to accommodate and serve the large expatriate community. Victor grew up in a bilingual community, speaking German at home with his family and close friends, and Russian at the Conservatory and work.

Both of Victor's parents were musically inclined; his father sang bass in one of the German *Männerchöre* that flourished in St. Petersburg and his mother played the piano. At the mother's insistence all three of the children played an instrument: Erich, the eldest, played the violin; Victor studied the piano with his mother; and Friedrich, the youngest, played cello. Victor originally intended to study natural science as a profession. He was exposed to

¹At the time of Bruns's birth Finland was politically a Grand Duchy under the Russian Czar.

the bassoon around age fifteen when his brother Erich, who played with the amateur orchestra at the local technical institute, asked if he would like to join the orchestra. Victor studied with Vassily Gavrilov, the principal bassoonist at the Maryinsky Theater, until he was twenty, then auditioned successfully for admission to the Leningrad Conservatory in 1924. His bassoon teacher at the Conservatory was Alexander Vasiliev, principal bassoonist with the Leningrad Philharmonic. While at the Conservatory, Bruns had an opportunity to meet Sergei Prokofiev. The Russian composer had returned to Leningrad in 1927 for a concert that included his “Classical” Symphony and one of his piano concertos.² At a gala reception after the concert, Victor was one of four Conservatory bassoonists who serenaded Prokofiev with the renowned composer’s own bassoon quartet, the *Humorous Scherzo*, op. 12, No. 9. After graduating from the Conservatory in 1927, Bruns won the position of second bassoonist with the Leningrad State Opera, where he remained until 1938.

Bruns began to study composition with Vladimir Vladimirovich Shcherbachov at the Conservatory in 1926, continuing until 1931.³ Shcherbachov (1889-1952) was a former pupil of the renowned composer Anatol Lyadov (1855-1914) as well as Maximilian Shteynberg (1883-1946).⁴

²This was Prokofiev’s first visit to the Soviet Union since his departure in 1918. He returned first to Moscow for several concerts of his music, then traveled to Leningrad.

³Victor Bruns, “A Conversation with Victor Bruns.”

Hired as a member of the Conservatory's composition faculty in 1923, Shcherbachov was made head of the composition division in 1925 and was responsible for implementing reforms in the composition curriculum, which had been established by Rimsky-Korsakov two decades before. Under the old system a student undertook a three-year course of preparatory study including harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, and form, before ever working on an original composition. Shcherbachov's curriculum called for original composition work to begin during the student's first term, each subsequent term adding new skills and familiarity with standard musical forms.⁵ As new works were formally analyzed and their structures discussed, students added another style into their arsenal in an effort to foster their creativity. "Thus each encounter with a style resulted not in a set of rules and conventions to assimilate but a set of possibilities, which the young composer would be free to discard or put to use in his or her unique personal voice."⁶

In addition to his formal composition studies, Bruns was influenced by the vast array of contemporary music performed in Leningrad at that time.

⁴Shteynberg was a pupil of N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov, as well as the great composer's son-in-law. This makes Bruns, in a sense, a musical descendant of the Russian master. Shteynberg's music is not well known in the West, but he is remembered as the principal composition teacher of Dmitri Shostakovich. Shteynberg's name may often be found spelled in English as "Steinberg." This document uses the transliterations of Russian names found in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

⁵David Haas. *Leningrad's Modernists: Studies in Composition and Musical Thought, 1917-1932*, American University Series 20, Fine Arts; Vol. 31 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1998) 85-90.

Leningrad was the center for contemporary musical activity in the Soviet Union and was the site of opera, symphony, and chamber music performances of composers such as Schoenberg, Milhaud, Honegger, Hindemith, Berg, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Krenek, and many others. Bruns played the Soviet premiere of *Wozzeck*, with Berg in the audience, as well as the Soviet premiere of Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf*.⁷

Bruns began his compositional career with chamber music. His first few pieces were for woodwinds: the *Music for Three Clarinets and Bassoon*, op. 1, and a sextet for pairs of flutes, oboes, and bassoons entitled *Little Suite*, op. 2. After these works he explored other compositional media, producing a *Suite for Orchestra*, op. 3, and *Die Mauer der Erschossenen (The Firing-Squad Wall)*, op. 4, for bass voice and orchestra. In 1933 Bruns completed his *Bassoon Concerto*, op. 5, which he premiered with the Leningrad Philharmonic in 1934, conducted by the Englishman Albert Coates.⁸ Other works written at this time include the *String Quartet No. 1*, op. 6; *Filmmusik*, op. 7, composed to accompany a silent film, the title of which is no longer known; *Symphonic Poem for Large Orchestra*, op. 8; *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, op. 9; *Romanze for Bass Voice and Piano on a Text by Pushkin*, op. 10; and *Three Pieces for Cello and Piano*, op. 11, completed in 1938.

⁶Ibid., 90-91.

⁷Victor Bruns, "A Conversation with Victor Bruns."

⁸All of the works lists provided by Breitkopf & Härtel give the year of this work's premiere as 1933, but provide no day, year, or the name of the

As previously mentioned, Bruns, as an ethnic German, was deported from the Soviet Union by decree of Josef Stalin in 1938. Among Bruns's opp. 1-9, only the Bassoon Concerto, op. 5, had been published. The others were left behind in the Soviet Union or lost during the immigration to Germany and have never resurfaced. His brothers had left the previous year and had settled in Berlin. Family ties led Victor to the German capital as well. Although Bruns would live the remainder of his life in Berlin, his origins would be evidenced/betrayed by a discernable Russian accent in his spoken German.⁹

Bruns was able to obtain employment as a free-lance music copyist for several of the publishing firms in Berlin which were still active despite the growing military activities. With the generous help of other bassoonists in the city he was also able to find work as a free-lance performer until he won a position with the Berlin Volksoper in 1940. He played with that ensemble until the members of the Volksoper and their families were evacuated to Hirschberg, in Silesia, in 1944. When Bruns was drafted shortly afterwards into the German army, his wife returned to Berlin, taking his instrument with her. During the final days of the war their apartment building was bombed and his bassoon destroyed.¹⁰ Bruns returned to Berlin in 1945 and

conductor. The premiere actually took place on 9 April 1934, as shown by a reproduction of the program in the author's private collection.

⁹Noted by the author during conversations with Victor Bruns during 1992-1993.

¹⁰Victor Bruns, "A Conversation with Victor Bruns."

successfully auditioned for the position of second bassoon and utility contrabassoon with the Berlin Staatsoper,¹¹ borrowing a bassoon from the wife of a colleague who was still interned as a prisoner of war. He was offered the post of principal bassoon at one time, but declined the honor, wishing to retain the free time necessary to compose.¹² Bruns was awarded the title of *Kammervirtuos*¹³ in 1959; after his retirement from the orchestra in 1969 he was named an Honorary Member of the orchestra. This last was a great honor, requiring a majority vote by the active membership of the orchestra.

Bruns returned to the study of composition in 1946 at the suggestion of Johannes Schüller, a local conductor, who sent him to Boris Blacher (1903-1975). Blacher was a respected composer and pedagogue who attracted many students to Berlin. Among his most well known pupils are Claude Ballif and Gottfried von Einem. Blacher's own music had been declared "degenerate" by the Nazi government in 1938.¹⁴

Since his arrival in Berlin, Bruns had composed the Five Pieces for Bassoon and Piano, op. 12, and two symphonies, opp. 13 and 14. Bruns

¹¹ In the German and Austrian system one instrumental ensemble will use different names, depending on the function it is performing. When the orchestra of the Berlin Staatsoper presents symphony and chamber music concerts, the ensemble is known as the Berlin Staatskapelle.

¹² Helge Bartolomäus, "Victor Bruns," 39.

¹³ *Kammervirtuos* ("Chamber Virtuoso" in English) is an honorific bestowed by the governments of Germany and Austria in recognition of instrumental performers who have made significant contributions to the cultural life of those countries.

showed one of these to Blacher at their first meeting and was told “Please, no symphonies! You know, Herr Bruns, you have a talent for concertos. You are an orchestral player, that’s the great thing. You know lots of pieces, having played in most of them yourself; you know about every instrument.” Blacher also advised Bruns to concentrate on his interest in rhythms and not to try too much counterpoint.¹⁵ Blacher helped Bruns develop a new clarity in his music, achieved predominantly through the use of less dense textures and lighter scoring.

Bruns continued studying with Blacher until 1949. Works composed under Blacher’s direction included the Bassoon Concerto No. 2, op. 15; Wind Quintet, op. 16; String Quartet No. 2, op. 17; Woodwind Quartet, op. 18; *Orchesterstück*, op. 19; and the Sonata for Bassoon and Piano, op. 20. Bruns has stated, “Apart from the two good composition teachers that I’ve had, it was important to be playing in the orchestra. This was my third teacher, and the best one I could have had.”¹⁶ Bruns premiered the Bassoon Sonata himself on a program at the State Music Library in Berlin’s American-controlled Charlottenburg district in 1949.

The East German music publishing industry was centered around Leipzig, and Bruns established a working relationship with three of the major

¹⁴*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s. v. “Blacher, Boris.”

¹⁵Victor Bruns, “A Conversation with Victor Bruns.”

¹⁶Helge Bartolomäus, “Victor Bruns,” 39.

publishers there. The Wind Quintet and Second Bassoon Concerto were published by Hofmeister Verlag, the Bassoon Sonata by Pro Musica Verlag, and *Orchesterstück* by Breitkopf and Härtel. Most of his music continued to be published by these three firms until the late 1980s.

The first work Bruns completed after finishing his studies with Blacher was, not surprisingly, a symphony. The earlier work which had been given the designation op. 14 was withdrawn by the composer; the new Symphony No. 2, op. 21, was completed in 1949. Between that time and the end of 1950 Bruns's energies were diverted to chamber music, resulting in sonatas for clarinet and piano, op. 22; solo piano, op. 24; and oboe and piano, op. 25. At this time he also composed the *Sinfonietta* for Orchestra, op. 23, which was not premiered until 1953.

In 1951 Bruns received the first of a long series of requests from his colleagues in the Staatskapelle and other orchestras to compose concertos for them to play. It is notable that, in general, Bruns composed either through his own creative impulse or by request from a specific colleague, and not by commission.

The only work Bruns composed in 1951 was the Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, op. 26, which had been requested by Oskar Michallik, solo clarinetist of the Berlin Staatskapelle. In 1952 Bruns wrote the Concerto for Oboe and Chamber Orchestra, op. 28, for Hans Werner Wätzig, and began his long-time collaboration with ballet scenarist Albert Burkat. Bruns's first ballet with Burkat, *Das Recht des Herren* (*The Lord's Privilege*), op. 27, was

completed in 1953 and was produced by the ballet of the Staatsoper on 12 July of that year. The work was a great success and brought Bruns to prominent attention as a composer. He extracted two suites of music from the ballet which were performed at regular concerts of the Staatskapelle and on radio broadcasts. After the success of the ballet, Bruns turned again to non-programmatic instrumental works, composing his Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra, op. 29, for Bernhard Günther, principal cellist of the Berlin Staatskapelle, and a set of Five Pieces for Piano, op. 30, both from 1953. Bruns and Burkat began working on another ballet, *Das Edelfräulein als Bäuerin* (*The Nobleman's Daughter as Farmer's Wife*), op. 31, in 1954, completing it in 1955. The new ballet was again produced by the ballet of the Staatsoper, receiving its first performance in 1955. The composer extracted one suite of music from this ballet.

Although Bruns never held a teaching post at any of Berlin's numerous schools of music, he made a contribution to the teaching of his instrument by composing his *Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene* (*Bassoon Studies for Advanced Students*), op. 32, in 1955. Almost thirty years later, at the request of Günther Angerhofer and Eric Seltmann, Bruns composed several pedagogical studies, some etudes for contrabassoon based on famous orchestral passages, three pieces for bassoon and piano, and three duets for two bassoons for inclusion in Seltmann and Angerhöfer's monumental *Das Fagott*, a bassoon method book in six volumes published by B. Schotts Söhne in 1984.

The ballet *Neue Odyssee* (*New Odyssey*), op. 33, marked a turning point in Bruns's life as a composer. The work was his third collaboration with Albert Burkat, and his most successful, both in terms of number of performances and recognition. Composed during 1956-57, the ballet was produced by the Staatsoper on 16 November 1957. It generated a large number of favorable reviews from all of the newspapers in East and West Berlin, as well as newspapers located in other major cities throughout divided Germany and the Eastern Bloc. The scenario deals with the adventures of a German soldier returning to his family after World War II. It became a repertoire piece for the ballet of the Berlin Staatsoper, receiving forty-five performances over a five-year period, and it was extensively performed by that troupe on tours throughout Eastern Europe. In addition, it has been produced by ballet companies in Poland, the former Soviet Union, and Cuba.¹⁷ When the Staatsoper was invited to do a residency at the Prague Spring festival in 1959, its repertoire included operas by Händel (*Ariodante*), Wagner (*Lohengrin*), Strauss (*Elektra*), and the ballet *Neue Odyssee* by Bruns.¹⁸ This was the last new stage work by Bruns to be produced at the Berlin Staatsoper.

¹⁷Carl Dahlhaus, ed., *Pipers Enzyklopädie des Musiktheaters: Oper, Operetta, Musical, Ballet* (Zurich: Piper, 1987), s. v. "Gruber, Lilo." Gruber was the choreographer for *Neue Odyssee*.

¹⁸E-mail from Katerina Bacova, Administrative Assistant at the Prague Spring Festival, to the author, 19 April 2001. Laux, *Das Musikleben*, 393, incorrectly states that the repertoire also included *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* by Monteverdi, but the Staatsoper did two performances of the Handel work.

Max Burghardt was the *Intendant*, or general manager, of the Staatsoper from 1954 to 1963. By the time Bruns finished his next project for the stage, a comic opera entitled *Minna von Barnhelm*, op. 39, based on the play of the same title by Lessing, Burghardt had retired and been replaced by Hans Pischner, who held the post until 1984.

Bruns and Burkat produced three more ballets, actually a trilogy of related works under the umbrella title of *Theseus*. These are *Das Band der Ariadne*, op. 46 (1969); *Ariadne auf Naxos*, op. 54 (1974); and *Phaedra*, op. 56 (1975). Pischner was evidently not interested in producing new stage works by Bruns, despite the critical success of the previous three ballets. Neither *Minna von Barnhelm* nor any part of the *Theseus* trilogy has been premiered.

The reason for this neglect may have been political in nature. Although Bruns worked all of his life either in the Soviet Union or East Germany, he never joined the Communist Party. This did not hinder him as a performer, but it prevented him from joining the Composer's Union in Berlin after World War II. The huge critical success of *Neue Odyssee* earned Bruns the *Kunstpreis der DDR* (Artistic Award of the German Democratic Republic) in 1960.¹⁹ The established composers in East Berlin, who belonged to the Composer's Union, expected Bruns to join the Party and the Union, but he did neither. This might have had some influence on Pischner's decision

Neue Odyssee was performed at the festival on 25 May 1959, conducted by Horst Stein.

¹⁹William Waterhouse, "Victor Bruns," *The Double Reed* 9 (Autumn 1986): 18.

not to produce any more of Bruns's stage works. Bruns's failure to join the Party and the Union had a long-range economic effect; he retired on his pension from the Staatsoper and royalty payments from his various publishers and performing rights organizations.²⁰ Had he been a member of the Composer's Union he would also have received a pension from that organization.

From the early 1960s through 1992 Bruns produced a steady flow of new works at the average rate of two per year. That this rate did not increase by any appreciable amount after his retirement from the Staatsoper in 1969 may be attributed to the declining health of his wife. She became an invalid, rarely leaving their apartment. Many of Bruns's younger friends and colleagues, such as Helge Bartolomäus, who joined the Deutsche Oper in West Berlin in 1974, never met Frau Bruns. Bruns refused to place her in a nursing home and remained her primary care-giver until her death in 1990.²¹

Bruns's output following his retirement centered primarily on instrumental concertos and chamber music. The number of concertos is especially impressive. These works include the Fourth Bassoon Concerto, op. 83; the Second and Third Clarinet Concertos, opp. 48 & 76; the Second and Third Cello Concertos, opp. 59 & 77; concertos for trumpet, op. 50; flute, op. 51; violin, op. 53; English horn, op. 61; horn, op. 63; viola, op. 69; double bass, op.

²⁰Helge Bartolomäus, Conversation with Bruce Gbur, 22 August 1993.

²¹*Ibid.*

73; and contrabassoon, op. 98. He also composed double concertos for oboe and bassoon, op. 66; flute and English horn, op. 74; two clarinets, op. 87; violin and violoncello, op. 89; and a Concerto for Woodwind Quintet, op. 85.

Bruns has been criticized for not following any of the modern trends in twentieth-century music. He has commented on his compositional style in general, saying: "It's funny, I'm always asked for something melodious and tuneful which needs to be straightforward and rhythmically interesting. They always want the same thing - that is the reason why I'm rather old-fashioned."²² Bruns acknowledged that his music has been influenced by composers such as Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Hindemith, and Bartók.²³ He also commented on the popularity of the late romantic style and its descendants: "In my opinion, the concept of serialism has confused an entire generation. The Russians less so, but the Germans experimented with it too much. That is why in the Soviet Union there are such significant composers as Prokofiev and Shostakovich. Schoenberg will never be as well-received by the public as they or Stravinsky. I'm sorry that the great tradition carried forward by Brahms was broken by serialism. Romanticism is deeply planted within people, especially the public, that is why we can not live without Tchaikovsky."²⁴ Concerning his own attitude toward contemporary

²²Helge Bartolomäus, "Victor Bruns," 39-40.

²³Ibid., 39.

²⁴Victor Bruns, "A Conversation with Victor Bruns."

audiences, Bruns once said: “I endeavor to write music which has a healthy relationship to our lives.”²⁵

Bruns had hoped to compose an even one hundred works that would be acknowledged with opus numbers.²⁶ He fell short of completing this goal owing to a series of small strokes which began in 1992. He had already begun sketches for opp. 99 and 100, an octet for seven bassoons and contrabassoon, and a work for string orchestra, respectively. The diagnosed series of strokes, which left him in a nursing home for the remainder of his life, began on Christmas day, 1992. Although he remained physically active, Bruns experienced a decline in his cognitive powers beginning in early 1993 and composed no more music. He died in Berlin on 6 December 1996.²⁷

²⁵Program notes for a concert of the Berlin Staatskapelle, 25 March 1975.

²⁶Telephone conversation with Victor Bruns, 05 August 1992.

²⁷Helge Bartolomäus, Berlin, letter to Bruce Gbur, Athens, Georgia, 27 December 1996.

CHAPTER 3

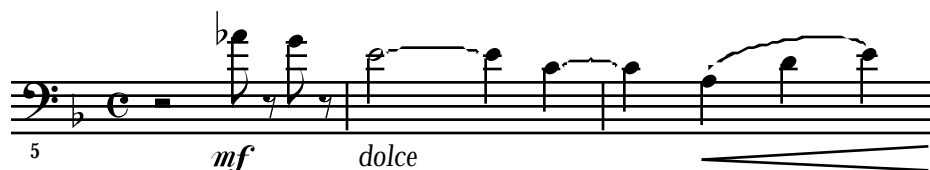
CONCERTO NO. 1 FOR BBASOON AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 5

Year of Composition:	1933
Movements:	Written as one movement with the following sections: Allegro sostenuto; Andante; Allegro sostenuto; Animato; Andante molto sostenuto; Allegro molto sostenuto; Andante grazioso
Date of Premiere:	9 April 1934
Soloist:	Victor Bruns
Conductor:	Albert Coates
Orchestra:	Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra
Dedication:	No dedication
Orchestration:	3322-4311-Timp.-Strs.
Duration:	approx. 14'
Publication:	Moscow: State Music Publishers, 1934, orchestral material and piano reduction. New York: Russian-American Music Publishers, Inc., 1946, piano reduction. New York: Leeds Music Corporation, 1948, piano reduction. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d., orchestral material available as rental and piano reduction available for purchase. Berlin: Musik- und Buchverlag Werner Feja, 1993, piano reduction.

One of the first big projects Bruns undertook after completing his studies with Shcherbachov was composing a concerto for himself to play. Although all published biographical sources and works lists give the premiere with the Leningrad Philharmonic as occurring in 1933, in fact it took place the following year, as has been previously mentioned. In composing this concerto, Bruns chose not to employ the traditional three-movement format, but rather opted for a single extended movement in eleven sections. Instead of a single traditional form or combination of forms, he used a freely-structured approach which reflected his training under Shcherbachov. This structure may be viewed as introduction-A-interlude-A'-B-C-development-cadenza-B'-cadenza-coda.

The opening three measures, marked "Allegro sostenuto," act as an introduction and create a dominant effect which is resolved in measure 4, where the tonality of F is established at the beginning of the A section by means of a tonic triad pedal which continues through m. 11. The A section begins with the first of the work's two major themes, the opening motive of which is a descending half step followed by a descending minor third. Although this motive first appears as B-flat, A, F-sharp in the bass line of the introduction, mm. 1-2, it is not clearly perceivable until introduced by the solo bassoon's first entrance in m. 5 (Example 1). A repeated triplet pattern is also set in motion in m. 4; this is the primary rhythmic activity through m. 29 and is also characteristic of the A sections. Section A of the concerto consists of mm. 4-35, it ends harmonically open in mm. 34-35.

Example 1
Concerto No. 1, mm. 5-7, solo bassoon



Measures 36-52 contain different melodic material, although it is also distinguished by triplet figures in the solo bassoon. This passage serves as an interlude between sections A and A'.

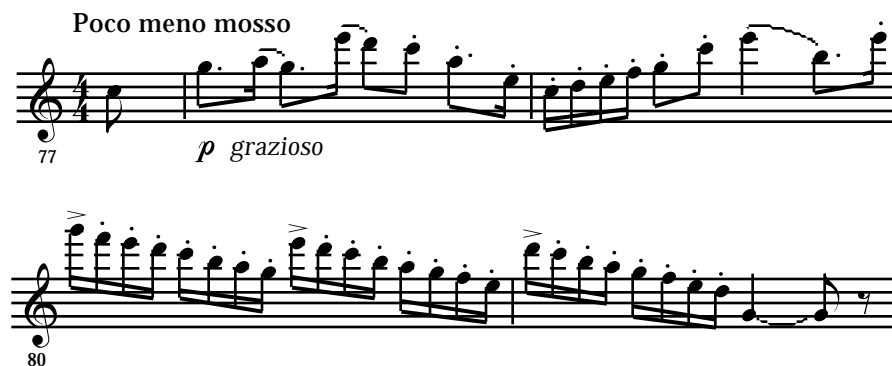
Section A' (mm. 52- 76) is scored for the orchestra without the soloist. Like section A, A' begins in F with the descending half step, minor third motive. The melodic and harmonic materials are varied treatments of the original material found in section A, mm. 52-66 corresponding to mm. 5-19. Measures 1-77 utilize a key signature of one flat, which is removed in m. 78. Section A' ends harmonically open in mm. 74-76.

While the A sections are driven by triplet rhythms, simple divisions of the beat distinguish the B sections of the concerto. The first of these, mm. 78-135, begins with the marking "Poco meno mosso." The concerto's second major theme begins the B sections. It is a modal melody characterized by the use of dotted rhythms, as seen in mm. 78-81 (Example 2). The B section begins in a tonality of C. The folk-like theme originates in the orchestra and is taken over by the bassoon in m. 82. The conclusion of this section is harmonically

open, characterized by an E pedal-tone in mm. 130-135, which links it to the section which follows.

Example 2

Concerto No. 1, mm. 78-81, piano, right hand



The C section of the work, mm. 136-156, is designated “Andante,” and is in general a dialogue between the soloist and the orchestra (Example 3). The E pedal tone from the previous section continues from m. 136 through the second beat of m. 151. A transition leads from that point to the next section.

The fourth section of the concerto, mm. 157-233, develops previously-heard melodic material from the A sections, supported by the pattern of repeated triplet rhythms. The tonality at the beginning of this section is A-flat. In mm. 216-219 the solo bassoon gradually ascends from d-flat¹ to d-flat². This final pitch is clearly climactic in nature, being sustained fortissimo above repeated triplets in the accompaniment through m. 221.

The ascent to the comfortable upper limits of the instrument's range will be seen to be a favorite gesture of the composer, appearing in many of his other works for bassoon. The orchestra reaches a climax with a fortissimo C major triad in m. 227. Measures 231-233 accelerate and crescendo into a

Example 3

Concerto No. 1, mm. 136-143, solo bassoon and piano

Andante

136 *mp*

136 *pp*

140 *8va* *mp* *8va*

140 *p*

140

diminished seventh harmony on G, which leads directly into a composed cadenza for the solo bassoon, in mm. 234-260. The cadenza is clearly metered and the measures are included as part of the total length of the work. None of the previous major thematic material figures as a part of the cadenza. An easily achieved virtuosity is given to the soloist in mm. 240-245, with a passage of sixteenth and thirty-second notes which lie comfortably in the bassoon's middle register. Bruns takes the soloist up to d² in mm. 255-256. These climactic measures are marked "molto espressivo;" following them, the cadenza ends quietly in a lower tessitura.

After the cadenza, the key signature of one flat returns and is maintained until the end of the concerto. Section B', mm. 261-323, designated "Allegro molto sostenuto (e grazioso)," utilizes the folk-like melody of section B but begins with a tonality of F rather than C as was heard earlier. This restatement of previously heard material in the tonic key is as close as Bruns comes to approaching sonata principles in the bassoon concertos. The ending of this section, mm. 322-323, is harmonically unstable, leading into another solo cadenza in mm. 324-334, in which both of the main thematic ideas are present in the tonic key of F.

The orchestra rejoins the soloist at the beginning of the coda, mm. 335-346. The coda utilizes section B material, this time presented in B-flat lydian mode. Measures 340-342 contain a virtuosic ascending passage for the solo bassoon in sixteenth-note triplets, climaxing on a d-flat² in mm. 343-344. This is reminiscent of the earlier climax for the bassoon in mm. 219-221 of the

development section. A varied repetition of the introduction occurs in m. 344. In this instance the descending half-step, minor third pattern in the bass line is spelled B-flat, A, G-flat, and leads the work back to its original tonal center of F for the two concluding measures of the piece

The greatest challenge to the performer of this concerto is to create a convincing shape to the entire piece, overcoming its inherent feeling of sectionalization. A crucial factor is to emphasize the descending half step - minor third motive, in order to increase the audience's aural awareness of its importance.

Bruns does not provide a metronome marking for any of the tempi in this concerto. In order to create the sustained phrases of the A section solo lines with their longer note values, the author suggests a tempo range of quarter note = 132-152 for these passages. The technically difficult places for the solo bassoonist in this work all occur during the B sections and the cadenzas. Extended passages involving sequences, such as mm. 113-118, may appear to follow a strict pattern, but often do not, as shown in Example 4.

Example 4

Concerto No. 1, mm. 113-118, solo bassoon



As will be seen in all of the bassoon concertos and the Contrabassoon Concerto, Bruns exploited his personal technique and knowledge of the instrument to compose music that is both idiomatic and effective. Passages that may appear and sound to be of great difficulty usually lie naturally beneath the performer's fingers, as in the visually intimidating thirty-second-note section of the first solo cadenza, mm. 240-244 (Example 5).

Example 5

Concerto No. 1, mm. 240-244, solo bassoon

The musical score for Example 5 is written for solo bassoon in 4/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff, measures 240-241, begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and is marked *animato e crescendo*. The second staff, measures 242-243, continues the rapid thirty-second-note passage. The third staff, measures 243-244, includes dynamic markings *f > mf* and *f >*, indicating a crescendo and a final forte accent.

Bruns had enough formal training as a pianist during his Conservatory days that he regularly prepared the piano reductions for all of his concertos

himself, beginning with the Concerto No. 1 for Bassoon, op. 5. In performing this work with the piano reduction, the pianist must take special care on two points. The first of these is the many passages of repeated triplet eighth-notes which are every bit as fatiguing as the accompaniment to Schubert's *Der Erlkönig*, and as difficult as that work to keep cleanly articulated. The other concern is one of balance. Despite the various passages of chamber music-like transparency that occur in the First Concerto, the pianist is just as capable of overpowering the solo bassoon as is an orchestra.

The Bruns Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra, op. 5, was performed twice with orchestra in the United States prior to the escalation of the Cold War. Charles Sirard, principal bassoonist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, had been asked by that ensemble's music director, Karl Krueger, to select a modern concerto to perform along with the Weber Concerto in F Major, op. 75. Sirard chose the Bruns Concerto, op. 5, which he only knew in the version for bassoon and piano. Since no information on Bruns or the orchestral materials was available, Sirard asked the American hornist and composer John Barrows to orchestrate the piano accompaniment. Sirard also wrote to the Italian-American bassoonist and pedagogue Vincent Pezzi, who taught at the Eastman School of Music, soliciting his opinion of the piece.¹

¹Letter from Charles Sirard, Detroit, to Vincent Pezzi, Rochester, 10 November 1948.

Pezzi had a copy of the Soviet-published piano reduction of the concerto,² and evidently thought highly of the work.

Sirard performed the piece with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Karl Krueger, on 2 and 3 December 1948. After the concerts Sirard wrote to Pezzi again, stating: "I know that you will be glad to know that at least locally the V. Bruns Concerto for bassoon was well received at the concerts last week. . . I was a little afraid of playing a new bassoon concerto but all of the critics as well as the public and the orchestra seemed to find the Bruns an interesting work."³ Sirard performed the Concerto again with the Detroit Symphony for a live radio broadcast concert on 7 December 1948.⁴

K. David Van Hoesen was one of Pezzi's students at Eastman. He later served as principal bassoonist of the Cleveland Orchestra and eventually succeeded Pezzi as professor of bassoon at his alma mater. Van Hoesen performed the Bruns Concerto, op. 5, with the Eastman Orchestra, conducted by Howard Hanson, on 24 May 1950. Based on recordings of both performances, which are in the author's collection, the accompaniment for

²A photocopy of Pezzi's music for this work is in the author's collection.

³Letter from Charles Sirard, Detroit, to Vincent Pezzi, Rochester, 4 December 1948.

⁴Postcard from Charles Sirard, Detroit, to Vincent Pezzi, Rochester, 29 November 1948. A copy of this broadcast performance, remastered to compact disc, was provided to the author by Hugh Lewis Cooper, who was the assistant principal bassoonist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the time of these performances.

the Rochester performance was again the Barrows orchestration. The author has not been able to locate the score and parts used for these performances. Unfortunately, neither Sirard or Van Hoesen championed the work in their own teaching and it fell into obscurity in the United States. No further performances with orchestra, either Bruns's original scoring or the Barrows orchestration, are known.

CHAPTER 4
CONCERTO NO. 2 FOR BASSOON AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 15

Year of Composition:	1946
Movements:	1. Moderato; Allegro non troppo, ma animato 2. Andante molto tranquillo 3. Allegro animato e leggiero
Date of Premiere:	1951
Soloist:	Herbert Heilmann
Conductor:	G. Pflüger
Orchestra:	Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra
Dedication:	Dedicated to W. Fugmann
Orchestration:	2121-3210-Timp.-Perc.-Strs.
Duration:	approx. 18'
Publication:	Leipzig: Hofmeister Verlag, 1954. Orchestral materials on rental, piano reduction for purchase. New York: International Music Company, 1958, piano reduction edited by Gustave Dhérin. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Muzyka, 1968, piano reduction. Melville, NY: Belwin-Mills, 1970, piano reduction.

This work is the first concerto that Bruns composed while studying with Boris Blacher. That pedagogue's influence is discernable in the thinner textures and lighter scoring than in the First Concerto, op. 5, the use of contrapuntal techniques--primarily imitation and canon, and the employment of a more traditional approach to structure. Unlike the First

Concerto, this piece is cast into three distinct movements, each of which utilizes a clear formal structure.

The first movement is composed in an arch form with an overall structure of introduction-A-B-development-B'-cadenza-A'-coda. The introduction, mm. 1-6, marked “Moderato,” presents an important rhythmic motive which characterizes the A sections of the movement (Example 6).

Example 6

Concerto No. 2, Movement I, mm. 1-4, piano



The A section begins in m. 7 with two measures which state the orchestral accompaniment pattern and prolong a C major tonic triad prior to the entrance of the solo bassoon. Marked “Allegro non troppo, ma animato,” with a metronome marking of quarter note = 120, the A section comprises

mm. 7-48 and includes two subsections. The first of these consists of mm. 9-31; it presents the thematic material of the A section played by the soloist (Example 7). This subsection begins and ends in C, and concludes with an

Example 7

Concerto No. 2, Movement I, mm. 9-15, solo bassoon

The musical score for the solo bassoon part, measures 9-15, is presented in three staves. The first staff begins with the tempo marking 'animato' and the dynamic 'mf espressivo'. It contains measures 9 through 15. The second staff starts at measure 11 with a forte 'f' dynamic. The third staff starts at measure 14, also with a forte 'f' dynamic. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and slurs.

embellished D-flat major arpeggio in the solo bassoon in mm. 29-30, followed by a short forte dominant seventh chord in m. 31 in the orchestra, i.e., a traditional half cadence. The second subsection, mm. 32-48, begins in a parallel manner to mm. 9-31, but the material is presented by the orchestra without the soloist, a reversal of the traditional presentation of concerti expositions. This portion of the movement ends on an altered dominant

harmony on C, preparing the tonal center of F, which begins the next part of the concerto.

The B section of the work, mm. 49-70, is marked “Poco meno” and is given a metronome marking of quarter note = 84 and a key signature of four flats. This contrasting section presents a lyrical melody for the solo bassoon that encompasses the entire range of the instrument, utilizing repeated pitches of d-flat² down to repeated BB-flats. This exploitation by Bruns of the bassoon’s wide range within a melodic statement or short space of time will emerge as a characteristic of his writing in the various concerti. The soloist is accompanied at first by a gently syncopated figure in the orchestra (Example 8). Measures 50, 52, and 54 contain brief points of free imitation between the solo bassoon and the bass line. Although this section begins in F minor, it ends with a sustained G-flat major triad in the accompaniment in m. 65-70.

The portion of the movement that follows, mm. 71-116, serves as a development section. Marked “Tempo I,” it begins with an ambiguous tonal center and ends in D-flat Lydian mode. No key signature is used. This section develops thematic material from the A section of the movement and frequently utilizes imitation of motivic fragments between the soloist and the orchestra.

Section B’, mm. 117-145, is a varied repetition of the previous B section, but it begins in the tonality of D minor with a key signature of one flat. The melodic material is again presented by the solo bassoon, but with more florid

Example 8

Concerto No. 2, Movement I, mm. 49-54, solo bassoon and piano

Poco meno

mf molto cantabile

p

51

51

53

53

passage work, accompanied as before with chordal syncopation and free imitation between the soloist and the bass line. The orchestra states the thematic material in mm. 132-145, employing the same imitative devices as before. The music accelerates and crescendos from m. 140 through m. 145, leading directly into a cadenza for the soloist. The cadenza, mm. 146-176, has no key signature and is based on material from both the A and B sections of the movement. The cadenza concludes with a climactic chromatic ascent from a-flat¹ through d² in mm. 174-176. This pitch will return in other works as Bruns's *Lieblingstöne*, or favorite pitch for climaxes. The orchestra enters underneath the sustained d² in mm. 175, harmonically preparing for the closing A section.

The movement concludes with section A', mm. 177-188. This is a short orchestral statement of the A section material, beginning and ending in the tonal center of C. A brief coda, mm. 189-193, marked "Molto animato," includes a repetition of mm. 5-6 in mm. 191-192.

The second movement of the concerto is written in ternary form. The orchestral score bears the tempo indication "Andante molto tranquillo quarter note = 56." It should be noted that none of the published piano reductions includes the word "molto" in the written tempo indication. The A section, mm. 1-23, begins in the tonality of C-sharp minor with a key signature of four sharps, established in the first two measures which serve as a short introduction. On the last eighth note of m. 2 the solo bassoon enters with a lyric melody, marked "molto cantabile," that encompasses the full

range of the instrument. The beginning of this melody is shown in Example 9. The end of this section is elided with the beginning of the B section, mm. 23-42.

Example 9

Concerto No. 2, Movement II, mm. 2-6, solo bassoon



The B section begins in A major, with a key signature of three sharps, and with an imitative treatment of another lyric theme between the principal flute and the solo bassoon over a syncopated chordal accompaniment (Example 10). This portion of the movement ends harmonically open in m. 42.

The A' section follows in mm. 43-66 and returns to the original key signature. This is a varied restatement of the earlier A section. The material in the solo bassoon in mm. 42-58 is a repetition of mm. 2-17, but an octave lower. A brief coda in mm. 66-70 concludes the movement.

Bruns enriches the simplicity of this movement's structure in a variety of ways. The B section has a slightly faster tempo than its surrounding sections and also utilizes the orchestral resources for greater timbral contrast.

Example 10

Concerto No. 2, Movement II, mm. 23-29, solo bassoon and piano

Poco più mosso

23

(flute)

mp

dolce

p

26

dolce

mp

28

The accompaniment in the two A sections is scored for strings, except for the principal clarinet playing two imitative fragments in mm. 62-64. Other than a sustained interval of a fifth in the first six beats in the cellos and basses and a pizzicato eighth-note chord in m. 37, the accompaniment in the B section is given exclusively to the woodwinds.

The third movement of the concerto is a rondo with an overall structure as follows: introduction-A-B-A'-C-A''-cadenza-coda. The introduction, mm. 1-4, is given a tempo indication of "Allegro animato e leggiero, quarter note =144" and consists of the first flute and first clarinet playing the pitch class G, decorated with upper neighboring tones. These pitches serve as a dominant preparation for the first statement of the rondo theme, which is in C minor. The A section of this movement comprises mm. 6-106 and has a key signature of three flats. The solo bassoon states the rondo theme beginning in m. 6 (Example 11) over a light accompaniment in the orchestra. The soloist continues with the thematic material through m. 63. Bruns introduces a dominant seventh chord on G in m. 55, sustaining it through m. 60, preparing for a perfect authentic cadence in C minor in m. 63. Measures 63-106 serve as a transition for the orchestra. A G-flat major triad occurs in mm. 97-100, alternating with a C major triad to create a tritone root relationship. The section concludes with a sustained G-flat major triad under a rhythmic figure marked "dim. e ritard."

orchestra and the soloist. In mm. 138-149 the solo bassoon begins a transitional passage, unaccompanied after m. 138, which leads to a varied statement of the B theme in mm. 150-157 for solo bassoon and orchestra, and to mm. 158-165 for orchestra without the soloist, which serve as a retransition.

A varied presentation of the rondo theme, section A', occurs in mm. 166-207, again in C minor with a key signature of three flats. The material in mm. 166-194 is an exact repetition of mm. 5-33. In mm. 200-203 Bruns once again utilizes G-flat major triads alternating with C major triads. Also as in the previous A section, a sustained G-flat major triad brings this section to a close in mm. 204-207.

The second episode, section C, marked "Scherzando," consists of mm. 208-248. It bears a key signature of one sharp and begins in the tonality of E minor. This opening tonality is asserted by the presence of E pedal points in mm. 208-210 and 212-214. The orchestra plays the initial statement of the C material in mm. 208-227, a portion of which is shown in Example 13. The solo bassoon plays the C theme in mm. 228-248; this statement of the material begins in E minor and ends harmonically open.

Section A" is presented by the orchestra in mm. 249-282. This is a varied statement of the rondo theme, again in C minor with a key signature of three flats. Bruns prepares for the soloist's cadenza by introducing tonal instability near the end of this section. An E dominant-seventh chord is sustained in mm. 272-275, followed by a sustained E diminished-ninth chord

Example 13

Concerto No. 2, Movement III, mm. 208-215, 1st violins

Scherzando
(1st violins)

208 *mf*

212

in mm. 276-278 and finally by a D diminished triad in mm. 278-282. Bruns emphasizes the tritone D and A-flat in mm. 278-280 by alternating those pitches in the bass instruments. This leads directly into the cadenza for the solo bassoon in mm. 283-329.

The cadenza, which bears no key signature, is built on materials from the rondo theme and the B section. Although Bruns has employed standard Italian terms in order to indicate tempo or style, the cadenza bears the marking “*gemächlich*,” or “leisurely.” The soloist concludes the cadenza with a short scalar passage ascending to c^2 , eliding with the coda.

The coda, mm. 330-347, which returns to the key signature of three flats, begins in C minor and is based on the material of the rondo theme. Bruns ends the piece with a C major triad in the final two measures.

Of the three concertos that have been published with piano reductions, only the Second Concerto has remained consistently available to performers, and it is the most well known outside the former Eastern Bloc countries. This availability is owing to its publication in 1958 by International Music Company in New York City. Since East Germany was not a participant in the Geneva Copyright Convention, the Concerto No. 2 was legally in the public domain at that time. The IMC publication was edited by bassoonist Gustave Dhérin (1887-1964), professor of bassoon at the Paris Conservatory from 1934 through 1957. Dhérin altered several of Bruns's articulation and tempo markings, removed the metronome markings the composer had provided for each movement, and added numerous breath marks and expression markings to the solo bassoon part. Many bassoonists feel that these liberties are less than desirable.

Obtaining a good edition of the Concerto No. 2, op. 15, is of primary importance to anyone wishing to prepare it for performance. The preferred editions are produced by F. Hofmeister Verlag in Leipzig and Belwin-Mills in Melville, New York. The latter is a reprint of the former, with an Italian title substituted for the original German one. The edition published by International Music Company of New York should be avoided for the reasons mentioned above.

The greatest challenges facing the performer of the Concerto No. 2, op. 15, are passages of fast tonguing in the first and third movements, especially if one is faithful in observing Bruns's metronome markings. The difficulties

posed by these markings would probably explain or rationalize their absence in the IMC edition. For example, there are two measures in the first episode of the third movement, mm. 140-141 (Example 14), which would probably

Example 14

Concerto No. 2, Movement III, mm. 140-141, solo bassoon



require double tonguing at Bruns's suggested tempo. In addition to articulation pitfalls, the other potential difficulty is Bruns's penchant for large leaps during technical passages, as shown in Example 15. Although such leaps are idiomatic and an essential part of the bassoonist's technical arsenal, passages such as Example 15 represent problem spots for the performer regarding response and intonation.

Example 15

Concerto No. 2, Movement III cadenza, mm. 297-300, solo bassoon

The musical score for the solo bassoon part, Example 15, spans measures 297 to 300. The notation is in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature. The piece begins at measure 297 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The tempo is marked *bewegt* (moderately fast). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. A crescendo hairpin is visible below the staff, starting around measure 298 and ending around measure 300. The tempo marking changes to *bewegter* (faster) at the beginning of measure 300. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

CHAPTER 5

CONCERTO NO. 3 FOR BASSOON AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 41

Year of Composition:	1966
Movements:	1. Allegro animato 2. Andante tranquillo 3. Allegro con moto
Date of Premiere:	16 March 1970
Soloist:	Herbert Heilmann
Conductor:	Heinz Rögner
Orchestra:	Members of the Berlin Staatskapelle
Dedication:	Dedicated to Herbert Heilmann
Orchestration:	1111-2200-Timp.-Perc.-Strs.
Duration:	approx. 20'
Publication:	Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1972, orchestral materials on rental, piano reduction, EB 7516.
Recording:	LP Stereo recording with Herbert Heilmann and the Berlin Radio Symphonie; NOVA 885 185. This recording is out of print and has not been remastered to compact disc format.

As previously mentioned, Bruns has acknowledged Sergei Prokofiev as an influence on his own compositions. This is probably no more clearly evident than in the Third Bassoon Concerto, op. 41. The use of ostinato motor rhythms in the accompaniment figures as well as the broad opening

theme of the first movement, marked “Allegro animato (half note = ca. 104),” are typical of the Russian master’s works. Bruns’s harmonic language, tertian with frequent chromaticism, is also reminiscent of Prokofiev’s music.

The first movement is written as a rondo with an overall structure as follows: introduction-A-B-A’-C-A’’-B’-A’’’-C’-cadenza-A’’’’-coda. A brief introduction, mm. 1-7, establishes the tonality of D with a cadence in m. 5 as well as with the outline of a D major triad in the bass line for five measures beginning at that cadence point. Bruns also introduces an important dotted-rhythm motive as an ostinato in m. 5 (Example 16). The rondo theme begins

Example 16

Concerto No. 3, Movement I, mm. 5-7, piano

and ends in D and is presented in the solo bassoon in mm. 8-24 (Example 17).

This theme utilizes the majority of the bassoon’s practical range, from D to b¹, characteristic of Bruns’s writing for the bassoon as a solo instrument.

Measures 25-26 constitute a brief transition that leads to section B in F. This first episode, mm. 27-87, consists of two subsections. The material in the first

Example 17

Concerto No. 3, Movement I, mm. 8-24, solo bassoon

mf molto cantabile

13

19

f *p*

subsection, mm. 27-46, incorporates the dotted-rhythm motive from the introduction and the ostinato figure. The motive's rhythmic activity and the staccato articulation in the solo bassoon part contrast with the legato character of the orchestral material, which is based on the rondo theme (Example 18).

The remainder of the B section, mm. 48-87, is based primarily on rondo theme material. This is treated as a canon between the solo bassoon and the first clarinet in mm. 48-68, and then as free imitation in mm. 69-76. The end of this section serves as a transition back to the tonality of D and the rondo theme. In mm. 81-86 the solo bassoon ascends in scalar motion from BB to d², sustaining this climactic pitch through the downbeat of m. 87.

Example 18

Concerto No. 3, Movement I, mm. 31-34,
solo bassoon and woodwinds

Section A', mm. 88-105, is essentially a restatement of the rondo theme by the orchestra alone.

The second episode, section C, mm. 106-157, is a small ternary structure. The tonal center of the first small subsection, a, mm. 106-127, is A-flat, forming a tritone relation with the tonality of the previous section. This subsection is linked to the A section of the movement by the first oboe line in m. 109 and the solo bassoon line in m. 114, which are based on the pattern established in mm. 5-7 (see Example 16 above). It should be noted that there is an error in the piano reduction in m. 127. The solo bassoon note that begins on beat three of this measure should be e-flat¹. This pitch is correct in the solo

bassoon part. The b subsection, mm. 128-145, begins with a reassertion of the tonality of D and ends harmonically open. It exploits the rhythm of an eighth note--sixteenth note rest--sixteenth note in chromatic scalar motion, as well a figure of descending triplet eighth notes. The third subsection, a', mm. 146-157, is written for tutti orchestra without the soloist and re-establishes the A-flat tonal center. This time the material leads directly into a repetition of the opening four measures in mm. 158-161.

Section A'', mm. 162-178, the third statement of the rondo theme, is aurally disguised. Bruns presents the theme in inversion, and treats it canonically between the orchestra and the soloist until m. 172 (Example 19).

Example 19

Concerto No. 3, Movement I, mm. 162-170, solo bassoon and viola

10

162

mf molto cantabile

mf cantabile

166

170

There is a repetition of the transitional mm. 25-26 in mm. 179-180, again modulating to F. The third episode, section B', mm. 181-210, is a variation of the earlier B section at the same tonal level. Measures 181-188 are also an exact repetition of mm. 27- 34. In mm. 189-201 the distribution of the melodic material between the soloist and the orchestra is reversed from the parallel place in B, mm. 35-46. This section ends harmonically open.

The rondo theme returns in the orchestra as A''' in mm. 210-240. The theme proceeds for only four measures before it is interrupted by the solo bassoon with material based on the opening measure of the movement. This statement-interruption gesture occurs two more times, beginning, in m. 218 and m. 226, with each of these subsequent gestures sequencing up a half step. The section ends on a C-sharp diminished seventh chord in mm. 238-240, followed by one measure of general pause, m. 241.

The fourth episode, section C', mm. 242-290, is a binary structure with subsections that parallel the first two subsections of the initial C section. The first subsection, a, mm. 242-263, is parallel to mm. 106-127. It begins in the tonality of F-sharp and ends on a half-cadence, spelled enharmonically as a D-flat dominant seventh chord. The b subsection, mm. 264-274, is a variant of mm. 128-138. It begins in C minor and ends harmonically open. Measures 275-290 form a transition beginning in D minor and leading to the cadenza.

The cadenza, mm. 291-335, is based primarily on material from section C and contains some unusual features. In addition to sequential treatment of the C section material, Bruns includes three phrases, mm. 314-323, which

begin on a sustained b-flat¹ and are followed by sixteenth-notes passages which descend to the lower regions of the bassoon's range. These provide the performer with the best opportunity in the cadenza for displaying technical virtuosity as well as an effective means of musical expression (Example 20). Two other points of interest about this cadenza are that Bruns does not take the soloist up to the expected d², his usual note of climax, and that the cadenza ends quietly, on a sustained e¹.

In mm. 336-338 a short orchestral restatement of the dotted-rhythm motive from the introduction leads to the final presentation of the rondo theme, A''', in mm. 339-355. Section A''' is an almost exact repetition of mm. 8-23 of the original A section. The movement concludes with a coda involving both the soloist and the orchestra in mm. 356-373. Bruns bases the coda on the dotted-rhythm motive, varying from the original material by the use of interval expansion beginning in m. 362. The movement concludes quietly in D major.

The second movement, marked "Andante tranquillo (quarter note = ca. 72)," is written in ternary form. A brief introduction, mm. 1-2, establishes an ostinato in the orchestral accompaniment, which is used through m. 12 (Example 21). Following this, the ostinato pattern is continued for seven more measures. The A section, mm. 3-18, begins and ends in F with a lyrical melody in the solo bassoon (Example 22). This is another example of Bruns exploiting the bassoon's range within the scope of a single, broad theme. The

Example 20

Concerto No. 3, Movement I, mm. 214-223, solo bassoon cadenza

314 *f* molto espr. *ff* *f*

317 *ff*

321 *ff*

Example 21

Concerto No. 3, Movement II, mm. 1-2, string ostinato

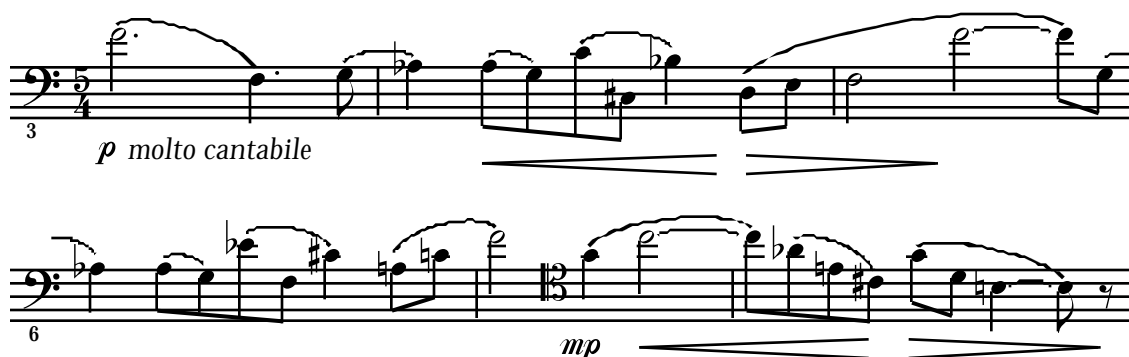
Andante tranquillo (♩ = ca. 72)

p cantabile

1

Example 22

Concerto No. 3, Movement II, mm. 3-8, solo bassoon

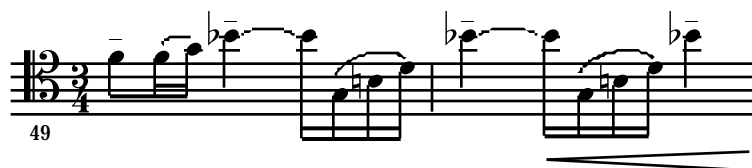


final cadence of this section occurs in m. 16, and mm. 17-18 serve as cadential extension.

The B section, mm. 19-64, is marked “Poco animato (quarter note = ca. 92-96).” In addition to the change of tempo, there is a change of character in the music. Although Bruns marks the solo part “espressivo,” both the accompaniment and the solo part are more rhythmically active than in the preceding A section. The tonality of this section is kept ambiguous. The bass line of mm. 41-49 is an ascending octatonic scale, but Bruns does not employ it to establish a feeling of tonal center. Measures 49 and 50 are related to mm. 314-323 in the first movement cadenza by the ascent of the solo bassoon line three times to b-flat¹ (Example 23). In m. 51 the solo bassoon crescendos while moving chromatically from b-flat¹ to a fortissimo d², Bruns once again using his favorite note of climax. This is also another example of Bruns’s broad registral gesture, this section descending three octaves from b-flat¹ in m. 51 to

Example 23

Concerto No. 3, Movement II, mm. 49-50, solo bassoon



BB-flat in m. 54. This section ends in mm. 63-64 on an E dominant minor ninth chord.

This chord resolves deceptively into the tonality of F for the final section, A', mm. 65-83. This section presents the opening material of the initial A section an octave lower in the bassoon. Except for this octave transposition, the solo part is identical to the opening section until the second half of mm. 75. The section ends harmonically open in m. 77, and mm. 78-83 serve as a brief coda which reinforces the tonal center of F.

Like the first movement, the third movement, "Allegro con moto (quarter note = ca. 160)," is a rondo. Its overall structure is as follows: introduction-A-B-A'-C-A''-D-cadenza-A'''-coda. A two-measure introduction precedes the A section, mm. 3-16, which is characterized in the solo bassoon by the alternation of triplet figures with those of an eighth note and two sixteenth notes (Example 24). The initial statement of the rondo theme begins in G and ends in D.

The B section, mm. 17-51, begins in E-flat and ends harmonically open. This section is characterized by the use of triplet rhythms in both the solo

Example 24

Concerto No. 3, Movement III, mm. 7-14, solo bassoon

The musical score for the solo bassoon part, measures 7-14, is presented in three staves. The first staff (measures 7-9) begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and features a melodic line with various ornaments, including grace notes and slurs. A crescendo hairpin is present, leading to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff (measures 10-11) continues the melodic line with triplet markings (3). The third staff (measures 12-14) concludes the passage with a triplet marking (3) and a final melodic flourish. The measures are numbered 7, 10, and 12.

bassoon part and the orchestra, as well as Bruns's exploitation of the bassoon's range. The second appearance of the rondo theme, section A', mm. 52-65, again begins in G and ends in D. Like the A' section in the first-movement rondo, this statement of the theme is confined to the orchestra. Also, as in the first movement, Bruns has cast the C section, mm. 66-124, as a small ternary structure. Subsection a, mm. 66-85, consists of two parallel phrases linked by two measures. The first phrase, mm. 66-74, begins with a soaring melody in the upper orchestra and a staccato countermelody in the solo bassoon (Example 25). After two bridge measures, mm. 75-76, the second phrase, mm. 77-85, repeats the material in mm. 66-74, but giving the solo bassoon the soaring melodic material. Subsection a begins in A minor and ends in F-sharp

Example 25

Concerto No. 3, Movement III, mm. 67-70,

solo bassoon and first violins

The musical score for Example 25 shows measures 67-70 for solo bassoon and first violins. The bassoon part (top staff) features a triplet eighth-note figure in measures 67 and 69, and a single eighth note in measures 68 and 70. The first violin part (bottom staff) features a sustained chord in measures 67 and 68, and a triplet eighth-note figure in measures 69 and 70. Both parts are marked *p grazioso*.

major.

Subsection b, mm. 85-103, is harmonically ambiguous. Its melodic material exploits triplet eighth notes in a generally descending direction.

Subsection a', mm. 103-124, is a varied restatement of the original a subsection, the primary difference being the embellishment of the staccato countermelody with triplet figurations. Like the first a subsection, a' begins in A minor, but this time ends harmonically open.

Section A'', mm. 125-141 opens in G. It is identical to section A from mm. 125-136, then it is changed to end harmonically open in mm. 139-141 to link to the next section with a figure in the bassoon borrowed from m. 51 in the B section.

Bruns establishes a cyclic element in the concerto by employing the main theme from the first movement as the D section of this final

movement in mm. 142-168. This statement is played by the orchestra without the soloist and begins in the key of D. Measures 142-155 are very similar to mm. 88-101 in the first movement. The ending portion of this section, mm. 156-168 is changed to end harmonically open and lead to the cadenza.

The cadenza for this movement occurs in mm. 169-204. This is based on the main thematic material from the first movement. It should be noted that there is an error in the solo bassoon part in m. 180, although it is correct in the piano reduction. The pitch on beat two of this measure should be a. At m. 187 the composer provides a choice of two different conclusions for the cadenza. The first option is four measures longer than the second and extends to an e-flat² (Example 26). The shorter second option confines itself to the d² a half step lower (Example 27). Bruns employs his registral gesture again, giving the variants a range from D to e-flat² (or d²).

The final statement of the Rondo theme, A''', mm. 204-219, begins in G and ends harmonically open. The extensive coda, mm. 219-246, is based on materials from the C section, the rondo theme, and the introductory material of the movement. This section can also be linked to the cadenza of the first movement by three pitches of b-flat¹ in mm. 224, 227, and 230, before descending in a triplet eighth-note figure to D, D, and BB, respectively. The only time the rondo theme is heard in D is in m. 234-237. In mm. 238-240, the solo bassoon begins a scalar ascent climaxing on a fortissimo d² in m. 240. Bruns's registral gesture is again evident with the three-octave range of the bassoon in mm. 234-240. The work ends in a tonal center of D.

Example 26
 Concerto No. 3, Movement III, mm. 187-203,
 solo bassoon cadenza, “Variante 1”

187 *f espr.*

191

195

199 *poco ten.*

Performance considerations for the bassoonist preparing this concerto fall into the categories of reeds, intonation, and rhythmic accuracy. Bruns is not afraid to exploit the extreme ranges of the instrument. He often places important melodic material in the lower tessitura, where intonation tends to be sharp. The performer's reed must be soft enough to handle the low register without sharpness. It must also be capable of rapid staccato tonguing throughout the

Example 27

Concerto No. 3, Movement III, mm. 187-199,

solo bassoon cadenza, “Variante 2”

187 *f espr.*

190 *poco ten.*

195

range of the instrument as well as ease of response in the upper register.

Except for the one e-flat² in the last movement cadenza, which is approached and left by half-step motion, Bruns establishes d² as his practical upper limit.

The third movement is treacherous for its rapid juxtaposition of rhythms which may be easily confused aurally. In mm. 9-13, for example, triplet rhythms alternate with eighth- and sixteenth-note rhythms. The work is skilfully scored, so balance should be no problem for a mature player, although care should be taken that an enthusiastic pianist does not overpower the bassoon in a recital setting.

The premiere of the Concerto No. 3, op. 41, received an ambiguous review from Manfred Hinrich in the *Berliner Abend*. In the review, which is entitled “It Could Have Been More Daring,” he praised the new concerto for its substance, virtuosity, delicate instrumentation, witty rhythmic figures, and structural unity as well as for Herbert Heilmann’s brilliant performance of the solo part. However, he finishes his discussion of the concerto by saying that “it is pretty conventional, without work for the ears.”¹ The other review of the first performance, by Hans-Peter Müller, is not only a much more in-depth discussion of the work, but is much more consistent in its evaluation of the concerto, stating “it may be looked at as an enrichment to the not-too-extensive contemporary solo literature for the bassoon.” Müller also acknowledges the conservative nature of Bruns’s writing: “(the concerto) does not advance into any new ‘worlds’ of sound,” but he further observes that “in each measure the composer demonstrates that he is a passionate and responsible musician.”²

¹ Hinrich, Manfred. “Könnte kühner sein,” *Berliner Abend*, 17 March 1970.

² Müller, Hans-Peter. “Neuer Werke unserer Komponisten.” *Musik und Gesellschaft* 20 (May 1970): 338-339.

CHAPTER 6

CONCERTO NO. 4 FOR BASSOON AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 83

Year of Composition:	1986
Movements:	1. Moderato; Allegro non troppo 2. Andante tranquillo 3. Allegro giocoso
Date of Premiere:	14 June 1989
Soloist:	Herbert Heilmann
Conductor:	Walter Weller
Orchestra:	Berlin Staatskapelle
Dedication:	Dedicated to Herbert Heilmann
Orchestration:	1111-2200-Timp.-Perc.-Hp.-Strs.
Duration:	approx. 20'
Publication:	Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, orchestral materials on rental. Piano reduction by the composer remains an unpublished holograph and unavailable to the general public.
Recording:	Radio Broadcast of the premiere in the author's collection.

Bruns composed the Fourth Bassoon Concerto for his friend and colleague Herbert Heilmann to celebrate Heilmann's retirement as solo bassoonist of the Berlin Staatskapelle in 1989. Heilmann joined the orchestra in 1950 after serving as a member of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Leipzig for three years. He worked with Bruns for nineteen of his thirty-nine years with the Staatskapelle and premiered several of Bruns's compositions. When

Heilmann was invited to perform a concerto on his final concert with the orchestra he asked Bruns to compose a new work for him.

Like Bruns's previous two concertos for bassoon, the Concerto No. 4, op. 83, is written in three movements. The first movement is written as a free arch form and has the following structure: introduction-A-B-C-A'-C'-B'-cadenza-coda. The introduction, mm. 1-4, scored for tutti orchestra, is based on a repeated motive in the upper voices of the orchestra, followed by two measures of descending quarter notes (Example 28). This introduction also serves as a unifying device throughout the entire concerto, returning as a motto in the first movement and in the second and third movements as well. The A section, mm. 5-49, contains two subsections. The first subsection, mm. 5-21, begins with two measures in the orchestra that establish the tonality of A. The solo bassoon enters in m. 7 with a theme dominated by triplet rhythms (Example 29). The subsection ends with a strong affirmation of the key of A. Measures 22-29 serve as a transition to the second subsection, mm. 30-49. This portion of the work introduces a broad melody in the first violins with the solo bassoon providing an active counterpoint in triplets (Example 30). Measures 46-49 make a brief reference to the theme of the first subsection and end the A section firmly in A.

The B section, mm. 50-60, begins with two measures of ascending figures in the harp, accompanied by the strings, which establish the tonality of D-flat major. The solo bassoon enters in m. 52 with a cantabile theme which extends through m. 60, ending in D-flat major (Example 31).

Example 28

Concerto No. 4, Movement I, mm. 1-4, piano

The C section, mm. 61-89, consists of two subsections. The first of these, mm. 61-68, begins in D minor with an eighth-note motive that is treated imitatively between the oboe and the solo bassoon in mm. 61-62 (Example 32). The second subsection, mm. 69-89, employs a theme in the bassoon that incorporates the rhythmic motive from the previous subsection, but is melodically different. The solo bassoon ascends to d^2 in m. 84, its arrival

Example 29

Concerto No. 4, Movement I, mm. 7-11, solo bassoon

The musical score for the solo bassoon part, measures 7-11, is presented on two staves. The notation includes various ornaments (trills, mordents) and triplets. The first staff begins with a *mf cantabile* marking. The second staff starts with a *mf* dynamic, followed by a decrescendo hairpin leading to a *mp* dynamic. The score concludes with a crescendo hairpin.

eliding with a brief restatement of this subsection's theme in the full orchestra. The second subsection, and section C, end harmonically open.

Section A', mm. 90-120, is a varied restatement of the A section. The centerpiece of the movement's free arch structure, it begins in A, but cadences in D in m. 103, with a d^2 in the solo bassoon. Measures 107-120 are a transition leading to section C'. This harmonically ambiguous section comprises mm. 121-135, which parallel mm. 69-83 in the original C section. The solo bassoon again ascends to its upper range, but climaxes on $d\text{-flat}^2$ in m. 136, rather than on d^2 as it did in the parallel passage in section C.

A cadential elision occurs in m. 136 where section B' begins. Consisting of mm. 136-143, B' is a truncated statement of the previous B section. It utilizes material from the second subsection, mm. 136-141 being the same material as mm. 52-57, but being stated in the tutti orchestra rather than in

Example 30

Concerto No. 4, Movement I, mm. 30-33, solo bassoon and first violins

the solo bassoon. Beginning strongly in the tonality of D-flat, this section leads into another appearance of the concerto's motto, mm. 144-149. This ends harmonically open in preparation for the solo bassoon cadenza.

The cadenza, mm. 151-190, employs material based on the A section in mm. 161-171. Measures 179-184 contain a sequential ascent to d^2 , while mm. 186-189 contain a three-octave descent, from $b\text{-flat}^1$ to $BB\text{-flat}$. The opening and closing portions of the cadenza, mm. 151-161 and mm. 181-190 respectively, are driven by duple divisions and subdivisions of the beat. The

Example 31

Concerto No. 4, Movement I, mm. 51-60, solo bassoon

mp *molto cant.*

54 *mf* *f*

57

Example 32

Concerto No. 4, Movement I, mm. 61-62, oboe and solo bassoon

7

p *mp*

61 *p*

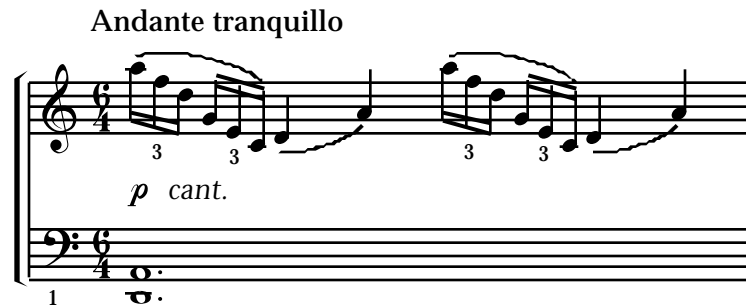
central portion of the cadenza, mm. 162-180, emphasizes triple divisions of the beat. Within this central portion, the articulation of the triplet divisions is almost exclusively staccato.

The coda, mm. 191-205, begins and ends in A minor. It is a synthesis of previously heard material, combining the accompaniment pattern of section A in the orchestra with the thematic material of section B in the solo bassoon. This statement of section B material, which originally occurred in D-flat major, is “resolved” to the tonic key of A minor. This large-scale resolution of a tonal area, and a similar occurrence in the Concerto No. 1, previously mentioned in Chapter 3, are the closest approaches to sonata principles in any of the Bruns bassoon concertos.

The second movement, marked “Andante tranquillo,” is written as a ternary form with a structure of A-B-cadenza-A’-coda. The A section begins and ends in D major, and it consists of mm. 1-15. The first measure introduces sixteenth-note triplets that become an important rhythmic motive throughout the movement (Example 33). The solo bassoon enters in m. 2 with a melody driven by sixteenth notes (Example 34), which extends through m. 13. Bruns again exploits almost the full range of the bassoon within this melody. The solo line ascends twice to d², in mm. 8 and 9, and descends to D in mm. 12-13. Until beat two of m. 11, all of the sixteenth-note figures begin with the interval of a half step, either ascending or descending. The entire A section is essentially a duet for bassoon and harp, with harmonic support

Example 33

Concerto No. 4, Movement II, m. 1, harp



Example 34

Concerto No. 4, Movement II, mm. 2-3, solo bassoon



from the strings. This texture was foreshadowed by the B section of the first movement.

The B section, mm. 16-64, is marked “Poco più mosso.” It begins tonally ambiguous, and it, too, is driven by sixteenth-note rhythmic patterns. The

primary melodic material is introduced by the oboe in mm. 16-17 and is freely restated by the bassoon in mm. 18-19 (Example 35). The sixteenth-note

Example 35

Concerto No. 4, Movement II, mm.16-19, oboe and solo bassoon

Poco più mosso

16

p cant.

p *mp*

patterns are related to those in the A section in that they begin with the interval of a half step between the first two pitches. In mm. 19-22 and 25-26 Bruns employs brief points of imitation between the orchestra and the soloist. Lengthier imitation occurs between the flute and bassoon in mm. 28-30, and between the clarinet and bassoon in mm. 31-32. The solo bassoon line in m. 33 begins with a new rhythmic motive: a sixteenth note and dotted eighth note followed by a sustained pitch that leads to a set of sixteenth notes (Example 36). This is used again in the solo bassoon in m. 37. A variant of this motive is given to the orchestra in m. 41, capping the climax of the bassoon's ascending line, and becoming the first measure of a freely repeated pattern between the soloist and the orchestra. Two measures of forte tutti orchestra,

Example 36

Concerto No. 4, Movement II, m. 33, solo bassoon



mm. 41-42, are followed by a measure of duet for bassoon and harp in which the sixteenth-note triplet rhythm from the A section is reintroduced in the harp part. The bassoon finishes its material in mm. 44-45, accompanied by soft woodwinds and strings. The basic gesture of these four measures is repeated in mm. 45-48, with the bassoon line now extending through m. 50. A variant of the rhythmic motive from m. 33 occurs again in the tutti orchestra in m. 50. The solo bassoon enters in m. 55 with a descending line that leads to a bravura measure of sixteenth-note triplets, the only time this rhythmic motive is given to the soloist. Bruns's broad registral gesture is again evident. This passage extends from E and climaxes on the *Lieblingstöne*, d^2 , in m. 57. This climax elides with the reintroduction of the Fourth Concerto's motto, occurring as an orchestral tutti in mm. 58-63. The motto ends harmonically open in preparation for a short cadenza for the solo bassoon, mm. 64-69. This is more in the nature of an *Eingang* than a full cadenza, in that it is very short and contains no virtuoso displays of technique or register, unlike any of the cadenzas found in Bruns's other bassoon concerto movements. It is harmonically open, preparing for the A' section, mm. 70-82.

A' is a truncated statement, shorter than the original A section.

Measures 71-73 parallel mm. 2-4, and mm. 74-77 parallel mm. 9-11. Measures 79-82 consist of cadential extension, featuring the solo harp. They confirm the tonality of D minor, and the movement ends on a D minor seventh chord.

The third movement, marked “Allegro giocoso,” is also written as a ternary form. It has an overall structure of A-B-A'-development-cadenza-coda. The A section, mm. 1-31, consists of two subsections. The first of these, mm. 1-11, begins and ends in the tonality of C-sharp. Measures 1-4 serve as an introduction and preview the opening portion of the solo bassoon line. The solo bassoon enters in m. 5. This material begins calmly but becomes rhythmically active in mm. 7-9 (Example 37).

Example 37

Concerto No. 4, Movement III, mm. 5-11, solo bassoon

The musical score for Example 37 is presented in two staves. The first staff, measures 5-11, begins with a box containing the number 27. The dynamics are marked as *mf*, *espress.*, and *f*. The second staff, measures 7-11, features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 7 and a fermata in measure 11.

The second subsection, mm. 12-31, begins with imitative passages between the flute and solo bassoon (Example 38). Bruns varies the

Example 38

Concerto No. 4, Movement III, mm. 12-14, flute and solo bassoon

The musical score for Example 38 shows measures 28-31. The flute part (top staff) begins in measure 28 with a piano (*p*) dynamic, playing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bassoon part (bottom staff) also begins in measure 28 with a piano (*p*) dynamic, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The score concludes with a crescendo leading to a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic in measure 31.

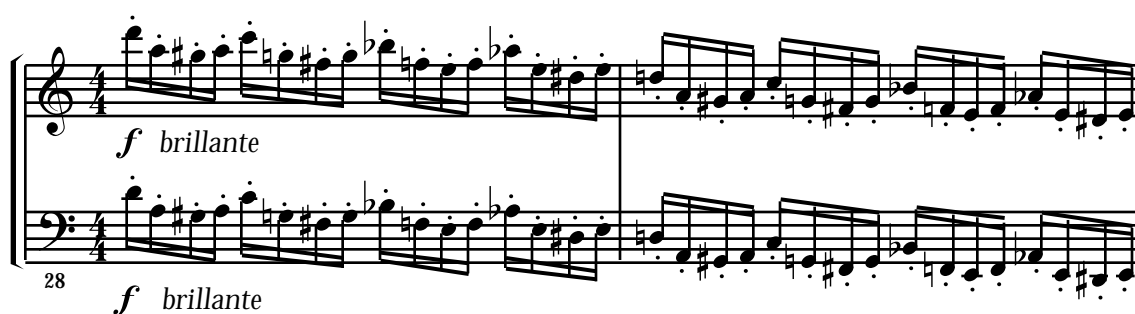
rhythmic activity throughout this subsection, but limits himself to duple divisions and subdivisions of the beat. The closing portion of this subsection, mm. 28-31, is marked “brillante,” and features patterns of sixteenth-note figures in the solo bassoon, doubled an octave higher by the woodwinds and first violins (Example 39). This section ends in D minor.

The B section of this movement, mm. 32-62, is marked “Allegretto grazioso,” and begins in C major. The opening thematic material of this section is presented by the first violins beginning in mm. 32-35 (Example 40). A figure utilizing primarily chromatically descending sixteenth-note triplets

is introduced in m. 40-41 by the trumpet and the oboe. This is given to the solo bassoon in mm. 44 (Example 41). Measures 53-56 combine the first violin

Example 39

Concerto No. 4, Movement III, mm. 28-29, solo bassoon and first violins



Example 40

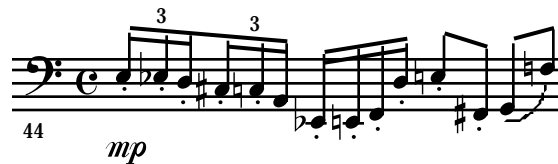
Concerto No. 4, op. 83, Movement III, mm. 32-33, first violins



theme that opened this section with the sixteenth-note triplet figure in the solo bassoon. The opening violin theme is given to the solo bassoon in mm. 58-59. Tonally, the B section ends as it begins, in C major.

Example 41

Concerto No. 4, Movement III, m. 44, solo bassoon



The next section is A', mm. 63-120, and like the original A section it has two subsections. The first of these, a, consists of mm. 63-74, and duplicates the same material as mm. 1-11, at the same tonal levels. The second subsection, b, begins in m. 75 in a similar manner to the original subsection b until m. 86. Measures 87-88 are cadential extension.

This is followed by a development section, mm. 89-120. A figure based on the rhythm of an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes is introduced by the solo bassoon in m. 89. Most of the material in the development section is based on motives from the A section. Measures 112-120 are an orchestral tutti that ends harmonically open in preparation for the bassoon cadenza.

The cadenza, mm. 121-158, is an extended duet for bassoon and harp, with harmonic support from the glockenspiel and interjections from the tutti orchestra in mm. 151-158. The cadenza is in two subsections that are distinguished by tempo markings and rhythmic activity. The first subsection, mm. 121-128, is marked “tranquillo e rubato” and employs a “question and answer” texture between the harp and solo bassoon. It is based very loosely on A section material: the first three pitches of the bassoon part are the same pitch classes as the opening notes of the introduction. The second subsection, mm. 129-150, is marked “Allegro agitato” and features virtuoso passage work in the solo bassoon. The solo bassoon line utilizes duple divisions of the beat in mm. 129-133, but is dominated by triplet divisions from m. 134 through the end of the cadenza.

The entrance of the tutti orchestra in m. 151 heralds the first of three two- or three-measure units that precede the coda, mm. 158-165. These units consist of a figure presented in the orchestra that is immediately answered by the solo bassoon. The melodic material of these units sequences upward with each subsequent appearance. This prepares the ascent of the solo bassoon in mm. 155-158, to Bruns’s favorite note of climax, d^2 . The arrival of the soloist on this pitch is followed two measures later by the coda, which the final appearance of the motto introduced in the first movement. This motto brings the concerto to a close in the tonality of D major.

The Concerto No. 4, op. 83, is undoubtedly the most technically difficult of Bruns’s four bassoon concerti. It would seem that the composer

was determined to demonstrate to the public that his old friend and colleague Herbert Heilmann was retiring by his own choice and not because his powers of performance had deteriorated. This is the only one of the composer's bassoon concerti which has not been published with a piano reduction. Bruns prepared such a reduction for rehearsal purposes, but it remains in holograph form and is not available to the general public. It may be safely assumed that the formidable technical challenges presented by the work, and projected low sales figures, discouraged Breitkopf and Härtel from issuing the piano reduction as part of its retail catalogue.

The bassoonist who accepts the challenge of preparing this concerto will find it necessary to employ a reed which may be lighter in resistance than their usual choice. The difficulty of wide leaps in passages of rapidly running sixteenth notes or triplets are often compounded by the length of these passages and their call for constant staccato articulation. As is often the case with Bruns, the technical passages of this concerto often juxtapose sixteenth notes and triplets in rapid alternation, creating metric pitfalls. Although there are cantabile and expressive sections, the emphasis in this piece is on the display of virtuosity. Bruns did not provide metronome markings for this concerto. The tempos selected by Herbert Heilmann for the premiere, as evidenced by a recording of the performance and undoubtedly endorsed by the composer, necessitate the use of multiple tonguing, especially in the third movement.

Besides the technical difficulties of the piece, the Concerto No. 4 may be less marketable than the Second and Third Concerti owing to the more esoteric nature of its thematic material. There are relatively few “tunes” which the audience can hum as it leaves the concert venue. A further consideration is that the soloist must have a good working relationship with the orchestra’s harpist, for that performer can have a decisive effect on the success of this concerto. Extra rehearsals with the harpist will be necessary for the outer portions of the second movement and the third movement’s cadenza.

CHAPTER 7

CONCERTO FOR CONTRABASSOON AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 98

Year of Composition:	1991-92
Movements:	1. Allegro non troppo; Allegretto grazioso 2. Andante tranquillo 3. Allegro leggiero
Date of Premiere:	21 February 1996
Soloist:	Henry Skolnick
Conductor:	Duilio Dobrin¹
Orchestra:	Florida Philharmonic Orchestra
Dedication:	Dedicated to Henry Skolnick
Commissioner:	Florida Philharmonic Orchestra with financial assistance of Joanne Walbridge, in memory of her mother, Doris Rothchild
Orchestration:	1111-2200-Perc.-Strs.
Duration:	approx. 20'
Publication:	Fort Lauderdale: Bassoon Heritage Edition, orchestral materials, 1996, rental; piano reduction edited by Bruce Gbur, 2001.
Recording:	Recording of the premiere and recording of the first performance with the piano reduction, in the author's collection.

¹Although Music Director James Judd is listed in the program, the performances of the Bruns Contrabassoon Concerto on 21 & 24 February 1996 were directed by Associate Conductor Duilio Dobrin. This fact is based on personal observation of the author, who attended the first performance.

Bruns composed the Contrabassoon Concerto, op. 98, at the request of Henry Skolnick, contrabassoonist of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra. It is one of only two commissions that Bruns received, the other being the Symphony No. 4, op. 47, "Konzertante," for solo woodwind quintet and orchestra. All of the other works requested by colleagues were composed as favors and did not generate any income for Bruns unless they were published. Skolnick had long been an admirer of Bruns's music and had given the first American performances of two of the composer's sets of pieces for contrabassoon and piano. Bruns had heard tapes of these performances and expressed admiration for Skolnick's playing. The commission for the Contrabassoon Concerto, op. 98, came from the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, of which Skolnick is a member, with assistance from a local patron of the arts, Joanne Walbridge.

Bruns began the new concerto during the autumn of 1991, and by the end of October had set the instrumentation and acknowledged the necessity of not covering the solo contrabassoon: "I have begun to write the Concerto. I don't need a large ensemble: 1 flute, 1 oboe, 1 clarinet, 1 bassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, percussion, and strings."² Skolnick mentioned certain strengths among his orchestra to Bruns, and in a later letter, the composer stated that

² Letter from Victor Bruns to Henry Skolnick, Berlin, 28 October 1991.

he was thinking about the abilities of the principal hornist, Andrew Lewinter.³ In the same letter he enquired about the range of Skolnick's instrument, mentioning that he would like to employ a range from written BB to a¹. By mid-December the second movement was completed and work on the finale had been started. The composer again expressed concerns to Skolnick about the contrabassoon's ability to project through the orchestra as a soloist, and mentioned the possibility of doubling certain passages with the bassoon or solo horn.⁴ By early the next year Bruns had decided to double some of the solo passages with bassoon, mentioning that if projection were not a problem, those places could be played by the contrabassoon alone.⁵ In the same letter, Bruns also announced that for the close of the work, he had written a cadenza as a dialogue between the solo horn and the contrabassoon. Bruns was able to send the completed orchestra score to Skolnick in mid-January. In February the composer acknowledged the receipt of the commission fee and thanked Skolnick again for the commission.⁶

The premiere of the Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, op. 98, was delayed for almost four years. Several dates were proposed and then discarded by the Florida Philharmonic's Music Director James Judd. The first

³ Letter from Victor Bruns to Henry Skolnick, Berlin, 23 November 1991.

⁴ Letter from Victor Bruns to Henry Skolnick, Berlin, 16 December 1991.

⁵ Letter from Victor Bruns to Henry Skolnick, Berlin, 06 January 1992.

⁶ Letter from Victor Bruns to Henry Skolnick, Berlin, 27 February 1992.

performance took place on 21 February 1996, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Henry Skolnick was the soloist; the orchestra was led by its Associate Conductor, Dulio Dobrin. Several bassoonists and contrabassoonists were in the audience for the premiere of the Concerto, including William Davis and this author from the University of Georgia, as well as Emanuel Ziegler, the retired principal bassoonist of the New York Philharmonic. Unfortunately, the concert was not reviewed by any of the local newspapers. Skolnick and pianist José Lopez presented the first performance of the Contrabassoon Concerto with piano reduction on 5 June 1996, in Tallahassee, Florida, during the Annual Conference of the International Double Reed Society. There have been no further performances of this work with orchestra since its premiere.

The Contrabassoon Concerto, op. 98, is written in three movements. The first of these is marked “Allegro non troppo” and has a formal structure of introduction-A-B-A’-development-B’-coda. The introduction, mm. 1-6, presents a rhythmic pattern in the upper woodwinds and strings that is used extensively throughout this movement (Example 42). The A section, mm. 7-43, is a small ternary form. Subsection a, mm. 7-18, begins with two measures in the orchestra that establish the tonality of C-sharp minor. The contrabassoon enters in m. 9 with the main theme of this subsection (Example 43). In addition to making frequent use of the rhythmic motive from the introduction and quoting it exactly in m. 11, Bruns exploits almost the full range of the contrabassoon during the course of this thematic material, employing the instrument’s lowest standard pitch, BB-flat, in m. 9

Example 42

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement I, m. 1, tutti orchestra



Example 43

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement I, mm. 9-12, solo contrabassoon



(written enharmonically as AA-sharp² to c-sharp² in m. 15. This extreme range is most noticeable in mm. 15-18, when the contrabassoon descends three octaves, from c-sharp² to C-sharp. Measures 19-24 serve as a transition to the next subsection, and end in D minor.

Subsection b, mm. 25-33, is tonally ambiguous. It employs the rhythmic motive from the introduction, as well as fragments of that motive. It ends harmonically open and leads into the third subsection, a'. This subsection, mm. 34-43, returns to subsection a's tonality of C-sharp minor and presents a slightly varied statement of the thematic material previously played by the contrabassoon in mm. 9-18. Like the original subsection, this one ends in C-sharp minor.

The B section, mm. 44-67, is marked "Allegretto grazioso," with the instructions that the duration of the previous half notes now equals the duration of the quarter notes. Section B consists of two subsections. The first of these, subsection a, mm. 44-54, opens in A-flat major. The thematic material for this subsection is presented in mm. 44-45 by the flute (Example 44). This material is presented by the contrabassoon in m. 50, followed by an

Example 44

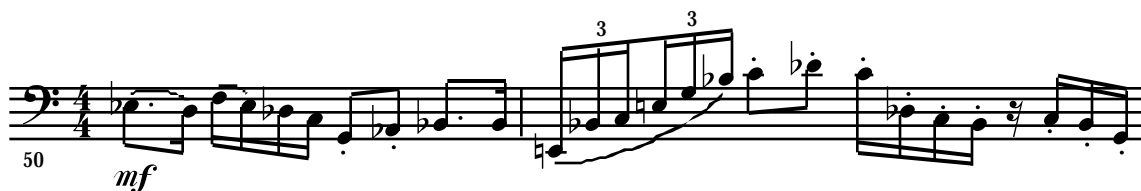
Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement I, mm. 44-45, flute



technically challenging rhythmic pattern in m. 51 (Example 45) that sequences step-wise upward in mm. 52 and 53. The second subsection, b, mm. 55-59,

Example 45

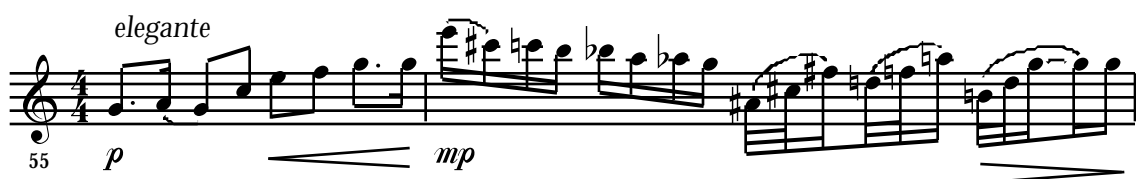
Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement I, mm. 50-51, solo contrabassoon



presents new thematic material in the first violins (Example 46). This

Example 46

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement I, mm. 55-56, first violins



material is linked to that in the previous subsection by the use of the dotted eighth and sixteenth note rhythm on beat one of m. 55. The rhythmic pattern introduced in beats three and four of m. 56 may be regarded as a variant of the sixteenth-note triplet figure shown in Example 45. Measures 57-58 are a variant of mm. 55-56. Measures 60-67 are in E minor and serve as a retransition to the next section of the work.

Section A', mm. 68-74, begins in C-sharp minor and is a restatement of the previous A section. Measures 68-73 parallel mm. 1-8, with the difference that in mm. 72-73, the contrabassoon line is presented an octave lower. Measures 75-91 are a development of the material from the movement's introduction. This section begins tonally ambiguous but ends in E major. The development contains the first instance of Bruns doubling the contra-bassoon line with the bassoon in mm. 77-85, and adding the principal horn as another supporting voice in mm. 83-85.

Section B', mm. 92-104, consists of two subsections, as did the original B section, but in B' the presentation of thematic material is reversed. Measures 92-97 use the subsection b theme in C major, played by the contrabassoon, then restated in the orchestra in mm. 96-97. Subsection a material is played by the full orchestra in m. 98 and a variant of that material, in m. 99. Measures 103-105 use the thematic material from the introduction and serve as a transition to the coda.

The coda, mm. 106-115, is based on material from section B, subsection b and the motive from the introduction. The contrabassoon rejoins the orchestra half way through m. 107 and plays through the end of the work. The solo line descends step wise in mm. 113-114, in quarter notes from G to C in a clear dominant-tonic motion, ending the movement quietly in C major.

The second movement, marked "Andante tranquillo," is written as a compound ternary form with an overall structure of A-B-cadenza-A'. Section A, mm. 1-15, begins with four measures of introductory material. The

contrabassoon enters in m. 5 with the thematic material on which the entire section is based. This theme is a cantabile melody that begins in the middle and lower registers of the instrument (Example 47). The tonal center is E, and

Example 47

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement II, mm. 5-7, solo contrabassoon



some large ascending leaps are present. Bruns makes another of his broad registral gestures with this material, extending the melody from C-sharp in m. 5 to c² in m. 10. Except for subtle support from the celli, double basses, and glockenspiel, Bruns assigns the accompaniment to the woodwinds and horns. The section ends in E minor in m. 15.

Section B, mm. 16-50, is itself a small ternary form. Subsection a, mm. 16-23, begins in B major, but ends harmonically open. The principal horn presents the thematic material for this subsection in mm. 17-20 (Example 48). A variant of this theme is given to the contrabassoon in mm. 21-23. Subsection b, mm. 24-34, begins in C major and presents new thematic material in the contrabassoon with a countermelody in the oboe and then the flute (Example 49). Bruns again has the bassoon double the contrabassoon line

Example 48

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement II, mm. 17-20, first horn in F

17 *p dolce*

19 *mf*

Example 49

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement II, mm. 24-25, oboe and
solo contrabassoon

16 *p*

25 *mf*

mp *f*

in mm. 31-34. Subsection a', mm. 35-50, begins in B major as before. The thematic material is presented in the tutti orchestra. Measures 43-50 are a transition leading to the cadenza.

The material for the cadenza, mm. 51-63, is not obviously derived from themes in either section A or B. The closest associations to previously stated material are the large upward leaps and the rhythm of an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes. These could be construed as variants of motives in the A sections.

Section A', mm. 64-77, is almost an exact restatement of the original A section, the only differences being the lack of the first two measures of introductory material and the addition of the final measure, m. 77, which is an extension of the E minor triad. It should be noted that this example is the only occurrence in the bassoon concertos or Contrabassoon Concerto of Bruns employing this exact a repetition of material in a ternary form movement.

The third movement, marked "Allegro leggiero," is essentially a compound ternary form with a structure of A-B-A'-cadenza-A", in which A" serves as a brief coda. The A section, mm. 1-40, is itself a small ternary form. Subsection a, mm. 1-14, opens with a trumpet and percussion fanfare in mm. 1-5 (Example 50). This fanfare cadences in mm. 6-7, establishing the tonality of G major. Measures 6-7 also introduce an eighth-note figure in the bass instruments of the orchestra (Example 51).

The contrabassoon presents the thematic material for subsection a in mm. 8-14, beginning and ending in G major (Example 52). It should be noted

Example 50

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement III, mm. 1-5, B-flat trumpets

Allegro leggiero

1 *mf* *f*

3 *mf* *f* *mf*

Example 51

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement III, mm. 6-7, bassoon, celli, basses

20

6 *f*

that m. 13 in the contrabassoon uses the same eighth-note pattern as mm. 6-7 of the fanfare, and that Bruns varies the meter more than is his usual style. Subsection b, mm. 15-32, begins in B major but also is in E-flat major in mm.

Example 52

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement III, mm. 8-14, solo contrabassoon

The musical score for Example 52 is written for solo contrabassoon. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff, measures 8-9, is in 5/4 time and marked *mp*. The second staff, measures 10-11, is in 2/4 time and marked *mf*, featuring crescendo and decrescendo hairpins. The third staff, measures 12-14, is in 3/4 time and marked *f*, ending with a decrescendo hairpin.

20-23. The thematic material is based on that of subsection a, although triplet divisions of the beat are used for the first time in this movement. This subsection includes another instance of Bruns doubling the soloist with the orchestral bassoon in order to ensure the projection of the solo line, in mm. 28-32. Subsection a', mm. 33-40, is a varied statement of the original subsection a theme, presented by the orchestra without the soloist.

The B section, mm. 41-62, consists of two statements of a new theme. The first one is played by the contrabassoon in mm. 41-51 (Example 53). It begins in the tonality of E-flat major and moves to C at its close. The end of this statement elides with the second presentation of the theme in mm. 51-61,

Example 53

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement III, mm. 41-44, solo contrabassoon



this time played by the orchestra without the soloist. The theme now begins in the tonality of C major and cadences in A-flat in m. 61.

Section A', mm. 63-90, begins as an exact repetition of the A section, without the opening fanfare. This includes the tonal levels that it encompasses, i.e., G major, B major, and E-flat major. Measures 63-87 parallel mm. 8-32. Measures 88-90, instead of presenting a return of the subsection a theme in G major, are left harmonically open in preparation for the cadenza.

The cadenza, mm. 91-112, is marked "Cad. non troppo, scherzando" and is a duet for the principal horn and the contrabassoon, accompanied by occasional eighth notes in the strings (Example 54). It moves from the tonality of F to G major in preparation for the concerto's final section.

Section A", mm. 102-110, is based on the A section material, presented by the tutti orchestra without the soloist. This section clearly reaffirms the tonic key of G major.

Bruns seems to have enjoyed working with third relationships in this final movement. Each of the sections employs tonal centers grouped in

Example 54

Contrabassoon Concerto, Movement III, mm. 91-94,
first horn and solo contrabassoon

Cad. non troppo, scherzando

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 91 and 92, and the second system covers measures 93 and 94. Each system consists of a first horn part (treble clef) and a solo contrabassoon part (bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 5/4. The tempo and mood are indicated as 'Cad. non troppo, scherzando'. The music is marked 'p' (piano). Dynamic markings '<' and '>' are used to indicate crescendos and decrescendos. The first system shows the first horn playing a melodic line while the contrabassoon has rests, and the second system shows the contrabassoon playing a melodic line while the first horn has rests.

thirds: section A centering on G-B-E-flat-G, and section B centering on E-flat-C-A-flat. To extend this concept to the entire concerto, the closing tonalities of the three movements are, in order, C major, E minor, and G major.

Performance considerations for the Contrabassoon Concerto fall into three areas: technique, range, and balance. The contrabassoon concertos written by the contemporary American composers Gunther Schuller and Donald Erb call for an extraordinary technique on the instrument which few professional players possess, corresponding in difficulty to the Concerto for Bassoon by André Jolivet in that instrument's repertoire. The Bruns

Contrabassoon Concerto is much more accessible to the performer. While it is a difficult work, the technical demands are not beyond the ability of a professional orchestral contrabassoonist. It will nonetheless require a great deal of practice. The demands for digital dexterity are more severe than the average orchestral contrabassoon part, with the possible exception of such noted works as the finale to the Beethoven Symphony No. 9 in D minor, that composer's *Missa solemnis*, or the Chamber Symphony No. 1, by Arnold Schoenberg.

Unfortunately, the key mechanism of the contrabassoon is far from standardized. Many instruments do not have an A-flat key operated by the right thumb, a key that has been standard on the bassoon for many years. Such a key is very much needed in many technical passages in the Bruns Contrabassoon Concerto. The acoustical impossibility of employing the bassoon's left hand forked fingering for E-flat necessitates a key operated by the third finger of the left hand. This use of this key is often awkward in non-scalar passages. To help alleviate this situation, alternate E-flat keys have been developed, normally operated by either the right thumb or by the right index finger. Another possibility has recently been employed, a key that is operated by the little finger of the left hand. This is similar to the little-finger whisper key occasionally found on the Heckel system bassoon and standard on the Buffet system *basson*. All of the above options are useful in order to achieve the fluid technique called for by Bruns in this concerto. Their presence is no less essential to the correct playing of the instrument than are the alternate

little-finger keys found on members of the clarinet family or the left F key on members of the oboe family. There are several bassoon and contrabassoon repair technicians in the United States who can add these keys, none of which should necessitate drilling new tone holes into the instrument.

The range considerations elide with the technical concerns. Bruns asks the performer to play with ease in the instrument's extreme low and high ranges with a fluid technique. The upper-range portions of the concerto will require extra practice owing to the complexity of the fingerings in that register, and the average player's unfamiliarity with them. Most orchestral contrabassoonists are seldom required to play above g¹. Exceptions to this may be found in the fourth movement of the Symphony No. 3 in F major, op. 90, by Brahms, which calls for a-flat¹ in a fast technical passage, or the "Beauty and the Beast" movement of Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*, which employs a b-flat¹ in one of the solo passages. In a letter to Henry Skolnick quoted earlier, Bruns mentioned his intention of using BB to a¹ as the range for the soloist. Bruns's lowering of that range by a half step poses no problem, but he extended the range of the solo line to include c-sharp². One could speculate that he exhibited restraint in not allowing himself to use d², his favorite note of climax in the bassoon concertos.

In preparing to play the Contrabassoon Concerto, op. 98, the author would suggest selecting and practicing bassoon etudes by Weissenborn, Milde, Orefici, and Bruns on the contrabassoon in order to develop the technique demanded by the concerto, particularly in the upper register. The studies by

Bruns and Orefici may not be known to many players, but the Milde works are standard. The Concert Studies, op. 26, Nos. 3, 9, and 45, would be particularly helpful in preparing to play the Bruns Contrabassoon Concerto, owing to their use of the upper range.

In matters of balance, the potential soloist should be urged to develop the widest dynamic range possible while still maintaining a good, characteristic sound. Many factors are involved in the contrabassoon's lack of ability to project well. Acoustically, the instrument's bore is far narrower than it should be considering its length. An additional consideration is the placement of the tone holes, many of which open directly toward the player's body, muffling the sound. The performer must compensate for these drawbacks by making a reed light enough to produce a true forte dynamic, while it retains the desired quality of sound. The reed must also possess the ability to produce the upper register pitches so important to this work.

Bruns has built safeguards into each movement by doubling the solo line in places with the orchestral bassoon, which sounds an octave higher than the soloist. Examining a score of the Contrabassoon Concerto several weeks prior to the work's first performance, the author was struck by this unusual practice. After hearing the work with orchestra, it was clear that Bruns was an inventive and creative orchestrator. The support offered by the bassoon helped to carry the solo line through the accompanimental texture and allowed the timbre of the contrabassoon to predominate.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

The four bassoon concertos and contrabassoon concerto of Victor Bruns represent a major contribution to the repertoire of these instruments. As previously mentioned, the idea of featuring the contrabassoon as a concerto soloist is a relatively recent one, and the Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, op. 98, is one of only six concertos for the instrument. The importance of the four bassoon concertos lies not only in their wealth of melodic invention, clever orchestration, and display of compositional skill, but in their very number. Victor Bruns is the only significant composer in the twentieth century to have written multiple concertos for the bassoon. One would need to go back to the virtuoso performers/composers such as Franz Danzi (1768-1826), François Devienne (1759-1803), and François Rene Gebauer (1773-1845) to find composers who have written more than a single concerto-like work for the bassoon.

All of Bruns's concertos are idiomatically written for the instruments. His successful career as a professional bassoonist and contrabassoonist in Leningrad and Berlin attest to his technical skill and ability as a performer. By his own admission, as previously noted, his performing career also was of great benefit to him as regards his practical knowledge of orchestration. Bruns

makes all of the concertos challenging but not impossible to play, with the Concerto No. 4, op. 83, being the most technically difficult of the bassoon concertos. Bruns was fairly conservative as a composer and did not employ any extended techniques in composing these works. The possible need for multiple tonguing in the second and fourth bassoon concertos is the closest the composer comes to exploring new performing possibilities.

An interesting point about the four bassoon concertos and the contrabassoon concerto is that they encompass Bruns's career as a composer, from his earliest surviving work, Opus 5, to his last completed composition, Opus 98. In addition to several structural similarities discussed below, these works show a uniformity of harmonic language and melodic style throughout. As quoted previously, Bruns considered himself to be fairly conservative. It is evident that he was not concerned about adopting an avant-garde style or incorporating modern techniques into his music. The last three bassoon concertos and the contrabassoon concerto are distinguished from the First Bassoon Concerto by their use of multiple movements, their lighter orchestration, and by the skillful use of contrapuntal elements.

The bassoon concertos and contrabassoon concerto share several compositional characteristics. The most obvious of these is Bruns's approach to formal structure. With the exception of the Concerto No. 1, which reflects the school of composition prevalent in Leningrad during the early part of the twentieth century, all of the concertos examined are in three movements, following a traditional fast-slow-fast pattern regarding their basic tempos. An

unusual characteristic of these works is the absence of any movements written in sonata form. Bruns employs arch forms, ternary structures, and rondos, but avoids the standard sonata form. He approaches this expected musical format only twice: in the Concerto No. 1 and in the third movement of the Concerto No. 4. In both cases the theme from the B section returns near the end in the tonic key.

Many of the individual movements also share a similar approach to the establishment of a tonal center. It is very common for these movements to begin in a tonally ambiguous manner and then move to a well-defined tonal center for the statement of the thematic material for that section. Bruns is somewhat eclectic in his use of tonal relationships between formal sections. Rather than limiting himself to traditional tonic-dominant relationships, he freely uses the interval of a second, third, or tritone between tonal areas. It must be mentioned that in his approach to tonality in the bassoon concertos and contrabassoon concerto, Bruns utilized traditional key signatures only in the Bassoon Concertos Nos. 1 & 2. All of the other works make frequent use of accidentals to create their tonal centers.

Another practical performance issue that links the works examined is the lack of metronome markings. Bruns provided these indications only for the second and third concertos. As mentioned previously, Gustave Dherin eradicated these metronome markings in the International Music Company's edition of the second concerto.

In general, the concertos examined are also linked by what may be called Bruns's broad registral gesture, i.e., the composer's frequent setting of thematic material in a manner which utilizes the practical range of the instruments within a relatively brief time span. This gesture occurs with a regularity that cannot be ignored as a compositional trait. Another such trait is Bruns's ascent, usually by step-wise motion, to climax a phrase in the extreme upper range of the instruments. In the bassoon concertos this is usually d², sometime referred to in this study as Bruns's *Lieblingstöne*, or favorite pitch. In the Contrabassoon Concerto, the highest notes are c-sharp² in the first movement, c² in the second, and only a-flat¹ in the final movement.

Bruns's basic concept of the solo cadenza remains constant throughout the concertos examined. All of the cadenzas are metered and are included in the total measure count for each movement. In general, there are two cadenzas in each concerto, a pattern that holds true even in the rhapsodic Concerto No. 1. In the multi-movement concertos these normally occur in the two outer movements. An exception to this practice is the Concerto No. 4, which contains cadenzas in all three movements, although, as mentioned in Chapter 6, the second movement cadenza is more in the nature of an *Eingang* in a classical concerto. A further exception to this employment of cadenzas is the Contrabassoon Concerto, which is the only one of the multi-movement concertos that has an extensive cadenza in the second movement as well as in the finale, but none in the opening movement.

The Bassoon Concerto No. 4 and the Contrabassoon Concerto share a common characteristic regarding the assignment by Bruns of a partner instrument during the slow movement and during the cadenza of the third movement. In the Fourth Concerto, the bassoon is paired with the harp in the second movement, the only such instance in the entire bassoon concerto repertoire. This partnership returns in the final movement as Bruns expands his concept of the cadenza, changing it from an unaccompanied section of the structure to a lightly accompanied duet for bassoon and harp. A similar situation occurs in the Contrabassoon Concerto. In the B section of the second movement, the full thematic material is introduced by the principal horn; when the contrabassoon is given this theme it is a truncated version. In the third movement cadenza, marked “Cad. non troppo, scherzando,” the concept of the traditional cadenza is stretched even further. The section is a duet for horn and contrabassoon, accompanied by a harmonic underpinning in the strings.

Further studies about the music of Victor Bruns might include writings about his other bassoon/contrabassoon works: three sonatas with piano accompaniment; two sets of pieces for bassoon and piano; a set of four pieces for unaccompanied bassoon; a multi-movement work for bassoon and string trio; three sets of pieces for contrabassoon and piano; a trio for tenoroon, bassoon, and contrabassoon; and three suites for three bassoons and contrabassoon. Similar studies of his chamber music might be divided into works for winds and works for strings. The first category could include the

trio for reed instruments, the woodwind quartet, the woodwind quintet, and the sextet for wind quintet and piano. The second category could encompass the three works for string quartet and the two string sextets. Bruns's stage works have received little attention during the last thirty years and should be examined with a fresh viewpoint. The last three ballets and his chamber opera still have not been premiered.

It is a deplorable state of affairs that the body of concertos for bassoon and the concerto for contrabassoon are relegated to relative obscurity owing basically to the unavailability of the published music and to the lack of commercial recordings. Only the Concerto No. 3 has been recorded for commercial distribution, and that LP vinyl record has been long out of print. These works are slowly coming to the attention of orchestral players and university/conservatory teachers in Western Europe and North America, but they still have not attained the standard repertoire status they so richly deserve.

APPENDIX

VICTOR BRUNS: LIST OF COMPLETED WORKS WITH OPUS NUMBERS

1	Music for 3 Clarinets and Bassoon (lost)	
2	Little Suite for 2 Fl., 2 Ob., 2 Bn. (lost)	
3	Suite for Orchestra (lost)	
4	<i>Die Mauer der Erschossenen</i> , for Bass and Orchestra (lost)	
5	Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra Nr. 1 1933 pno. red.	SMP, Feja RAM, Leeds B&H, Feja
6	String Quartet No. 1 1934 (lost)	
7	Filmmusic (lost)	
8	Symphonic Poem for Large Orchestra (lost)	
9	Sonata for Violin and Piano 1937 (lost)	
10	Romance for Bass (Baritone) and Piano 1938 (text by Pushkin)	Feja
11	3 Pieces for Violoncello and Piano 1938	Feja
12	Five Pieces for Bassoon and Piano 1939	Feja
13	Symphony No. 1 1943	
14	Symphony No. 2 1944 (withdrawn)	
15	Concerto No. 2 for Bassoon and Orchestra 1946 pno. reds.	Hof Hof IMC Bel
16	Wind Quintet 1947	Hof
17	String Quartet No. 2 1947	Feja
18	Quartet for Woodwinds 1948	Feja
19	Orchestrapiece 1948	B&H
20	Sonata for Bassoon and Piano 1949	ProM
21	Symphony No. 2 1949	B&H
22	Sonata for Clarinet and Piano 1949	ProM

23	Sinfonietta 1950	B&H
24	Sonata for Piano 1950 (revised in 1961)	Feja
25	Sonata for Oboe and Piano 1950	Hof
26	Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra 1951	Hof
	pno. red.	Hof
27	<i>Das Recht des Herren</i> (Ballet) 1953	B&H
	pno. red.	B&H
	Orchestra Suites I & II from the Ballet 1953	B&H
28	Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra 1952	Hof
	pno. red.	Hof
29	Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra 1958	B&H
	pno. red.	B&H
30	5 Pieces for Piano 1953	Feja
31	<i>Das Edelfräulein als Bäuerin</i> (Ballet) 1955	B&H
	Orchestra Suite from the Ballet 1955	B&H
32	Bassoon Studies for Advanced Students 1955	Hof
33	<i>Neue Odyssee</i> (Ballet) 1957	B&H
	pno. red.	B&H
	Orchestra Suites I & II from the Ballet 1957	B&H
34	Sextet for Woodwind Quintet and Piano 1957	Feja
35	Sonata for Violoncello and Piano 1958	B&H
36	Concerto for Violin and Orchestra 1959	B&H
37	Symphony No. 3 "Dramatic" 1960	B&H
38	String Quartet No. 3 1961	Feja
39	<i>Minna von Barnhelm</i> (Chamber Opera) 1962/67	
	Overture to <i>Minna von Barnhelm</i> 1967	B&H
40	5 Pieces for Bassoon and Piano 1965	B&H
41	Concerto No. 3 for Bassoon and Orchestra 1966	B&H
	pno. red.	B&H
42	Octet for Cl., Hn., Bn., 2 Vns., Va., Vcl., & Db. 1968	
43	Expressions for Violoncello and Piano 1968	Feja
44	4 Pieces for Clarinet and Piano 1968	B&H
45	Sonata No. 2 for Bassoon and Piano 1969	B&H
46	<i>Das Band der Ariadne</i> 1969/71	
	(first part of <i>Theseus</i> , a Ballet-Trilogy)	
47	Symphony No. 4 "Concertante" 1970	B&H

48	Concerto No. 2 for Clarinet and Orchestra 1971	Hof
	pno. red.	Hof
49	Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon 1971	B&H
50	Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra 1972	B&H
	pno. red.	B&H
51	Concerto for Flute and Small Orchestra 1972	B&H
52	6 Pieces for Violoncello and Piano 1973	B&H
53	Concerto for Violin and Small Orchestra 1974	B&H
54	<i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> 1973/74	
	(second part of <i>Theseus</i> , a Ballet-Trilogy)	
55	Little Suite for 3 Bassoons and Contrabassoon 1974	B&H
56	<i>Phaedra</i> 1975	
	(third part of <i>Theseus</i> , a Ballet-Trilogy)	
57	2 Pieces for Contrabassoon and Piano 1975	B&H
58	Concertante Music for Bassoon and String Trio 1976	B&H
59	Concerto No. 2 for Violoncello and Small Orchestra 1977	Feja
60	Sonata for Viola and Piano 1977	B&H
61	Concerto for English Horn and Small Orchestra 1978	B&H
	pno. red.	B&H
62	Little Symphony for 12 Soli Celli 1978	Feja
63	Concerto for Horn and Small Orchestra 1979	B&H
64	Symphony No. 5 1979	B&H
65	2 Bagatelles for Violin and Cello 1980	Feja
66	Concerto for Oboe, Bassoon, and String Orchestra 1980	B&H
67	Symphony No. 6 "Breve" 1980	B&H
68	Little Suite No. 2 for 3 Bassoons and Contrabassoon 1981	B&H
69	Concerto for Viola and Small Orchestra 1981	B&H
70	Chamber Symphony for String Orchestra 1981	B&H
71	String Sextet No. 1 1982	B&H
72	Miniatures for 6 Flutes 1982	Hof
73	Concerto for Double Bass and String Orchestra 1982	B&H
	pno. red.	B&H
74	Concerto for Flute, English Horn, String Orchestra, and Percussion 1982	B&H
75	String Sextet No. 2 1982	B&H
76	Concerto No. 3 for Clarinet and Small Orchestra 1984	B&H

77	Concerto No. 3 for Violoncello and Small Orchestra	1984	B&H
78	Concerto for Orchestra	1985	B&H
79	String Quintet No. 1 (2 Vns., 2 Vas., Vcl.)	1985	Feja
80	6 Pieces for Contrabassoon and Piano	1986	B&H
81	String Quintet No. 2 (2 Vns., Va., 2 Vcls.)	1986	Feja
82	Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violoncello	1986	
83	Concerto No. 4 for Bassoon and Orchestra	1986	B&H
	pno. red.		
84	Trio for Clarinet, Bassoon, and Piano	1987	Feja
85	Concerto for Wind Quintet, Percussion, and Strings	1987	B&H
86	Sonata No. 3 for Bassoon and Piano	1988	Feja
87	Concerto for 2 Clarinets and Small Orchestra	1988	B&H
88	Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano	1988	Feja
89	Concerto for Violin, Violoncello, and Orchestra	1989	Feja
90	Sonata for Flute and Piano	1989	DVM
91	Trio No. 2 for Clarinet, Bassoon, and Piano	1990	Feja
92	Little Suite No. 3 for 3 Bassoons and Contrabassoon	1990	Feja
93	Four Virtuoso Pieces for Bassoon	1989	Feja
94	Four Virtuoso Pieces for Horn	1989	DVM
95	Concertante Suite for Contrabassoon and Piano	1991	Feja
96	Sonatina for Tenoroon (or Bassoon) and Piano	1991	Feja
97	Trio for Tenoroon, Bassoon, and Contrabassoon	1992	Feja
	(or Two Bassoons and Contrabassoon)		
98	Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra	1992	BHE

B&H	Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden
BHE	Bassoon Heritage Edition, Ft. Lauderdale
DVM	Deutsche Verlag für Musik, Leipzig
Feja	Werner Feja Buch-und Musik Verlag, Berlin
Hof	Hofmeister Verlag, Leipzig
Leeds	Leeds Music Corporation, New York
ProM	Pro Musica Verlag, Leipzig
RAM	Russian American Music Publishers, New York
SMP	State Music Publishers, Moscow

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Private Conversations

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