AN EXAMINATION OF COMPOSITIONAL STYLE AND CELLO TECHNIQUE IN *12 HOMMAGES Á PAUL SACHER*

by

RYANE DUNNAGAN

(Under the Direction of David Starkweather)

ABSTRACT

To celebrate the 70th birthday of Swiss conductor Paul Sacher, Mstislav Rostropovich commissioned twelve composers to write a works for solo cello based on Sacher's last name. Rostropovich invited Conrad Beck, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Benjamin Britten, Henri Dutilleux, Wolfgang Fortner, Alberto Ginastera, Cristobal Halffter, Hans Werner Henze, Heinz Holliger, Klaus Huber, and Witold Lutoslawski to each write a variation for solo cello. All agreed and, with the exception of Berio and Henze, completed works in time for the premiere. Ten of the twelve compositions were performed by Rostropovich himself and were premiered on May 2nd, 1976 in Zürich, Switzerland. This document divides these works into three categories based on extended cello technique and compositional innovation and clarifies any notational and technical issues.

INDEX WORDS: Paul Sacher, Mstislav Rostropovich, Benjamin Britten, Conrad Beck, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Wolfgang Fortner, Cristobal Halffter, Witold Lutoslawski, Henri Dutilleux, Heinz Holliger, Alberto Ginastera, Hans Werner Henze, Klaus Huber, extended cello technique

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PREFACE

The publishers are recognized for permission to include the following musical examples:

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INTRODUCTION

Background on Paul Sacher

Paul Sacher (1906–1999) was an internationally known conductor, collector, and patron involved in a wealth of music written or performed during his lifetime. Born in Basel, Switzerland, to an affluent family, he was trained as a cellist and musicologist. Sacher spent his wealth generously on musical causes, fostering a number of monumental compositions and premiere performance groups. For many years he was a leading figure in his native country, in 1926 founding the Basel Chamber Orchestra, a performance group devoted to pre-classical and contemporary music. In 1954 the group merged with the local conservatory to form the *Musikakademie der Stadt Basel*, which Sacher directed until 1959. He was also an advocate of Swiss music, and directed various ensembles that toured throughout Europe.

Although he was a noted conductor and musician, perhaps Sacher's greatest legacy is the unique catalogue of works he commissioned, a large portion now known as modern classics. Most notable is Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste,* written for the Basel Chamber Orchestra, which is now a staple of the concert repertoire. Other composers such as Stravinsky, Britten, and Hindemith are among the many composers who were commissioned by Sacher.

An avid music collector and proponent of twentieth-century music, Sacher established the Paul Sacher Foundation in 1973. Located in Basel, Switzerland, the collection houses scores,

manuscripts, sketches, and various memorabilia relating to many of the great composers with whom Sacher collaborated during his lifetime. In addition to Sacher's own collection, the foundation houses collections devoted to the works of individual composers. These include notable composers such as Bartók, Stravinsky, and Reich, as well as a larger collection of various twentieth-century works obtained by the Basel Chamber Orchestra.

Sacher's lifelong dedication to the performance and patronage of twentieth-century composition led him to a friendship with another major figure in music, Mstislav "Slava" Rostropovich (1927–2007). Considered one of the best cellists of the twentieth century, Rostropovich commissioned and performed over one hundred works. This close relationship with Rostropovich as well as other major musical figures allowed Sacher deep insight into the mind of the composer and the performer. There are numerous personal accounts by composers such as Conrad Beck and Benjamin Britten as to the relationships that Sacher developed.

In 1976, Mstislav Rostropovich organized a concert as a seventieth birthday tribute to Sacher. The famous cellist and advocate of new music solicited twelve of Sacher's friends and colleagues to collaborate, writing a complete set of variations dedicated to Sacher. Rostropovich suggested that the primary motive spell out the last name of the honoree, creating a type of musical cipher, and that each work contain variations of the theme. Rostropovich invited Conrad Beck, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Benjamin Britten, Henri Dutilleux, Wolfgang Fortner, Alberto Ginastera, Cristobal Halffter, Hans Werner Henze, Heinz Holliger, Klaus Huber, and Witold Lutoslawski to each write a variation for solo cello based on Sacher's name. All agreed and, with the exception of Berio and Henze, completed works in time for the premiere. Ten of the twelve compositions were performed by Rostropovich himself and were premiered on May 2nd, 1976 in Zürich, Switzerland.

Sacher's seventieth birthday celebration took place in the Zürich *Tonhalle*. Rostropovich performed the cycle by presenting Britten's theme, and followed by playing the works in groups of threes. In addition to the performance, Rostropovich supplied explanations of each work with the aide of his friend and interpreter, Constantin Regamy. The musical elements included in the festivities were not merely limited to the homage. The first movement of Bartók's *Divertimento for String Orchestra* and the finale of Honeggar's *Second Symphony* were also performed.

The composers invited to participate in this "unconventional Festschrift" were a vastly diverse group of musicians, representing many of the compositional techniques formed in the twentieth century.[1] Within this group, very few shared the same compositional aesthetic or style, and many were even hostile toward each other. Boulez, an avid proponent of total serialism, had at one point referred to non-serial composers as useless. He even staged a walkout at one of Henze's concerts protesting Henze's lack of devotion to serialism. Berio and Dutilleux compared serialism to fascism and criticized Boulez for spending more time in the media spotlight than composing. Beck, Britten and Ginastera spent time adopting a more neoclassical approach to their music, focusing on regional styles and traditions. Regardless of their differences, each composer had a fondness for Sacher and contributed to the birthday tribute.

One might wonder why such an eclectic group of composers were chosen, or even why they all agreed to participate. The common thread among these men was the relationships that each shared with both Sacher and Rostropovich. Some were close friends or acquaintances, while others had only professional relationships. The composers were not arbitrarily chosen, but were carefully picked by Rostropovich to contribute to the collection.

[1] Peter Palmer, *Tempo*, No. 194, (October 1995): 53.

Discussion of the Sacher Theme and Variations is incomplete without a consideration of Paul Sacher's personal relationships with the individual composers who participated in the homage. In addition to discussing the music, I have included the letters written and presented to Sacher alongside the commissioned works. Organized by Rostropovich, the book, *Dank an Paul Sacher*, is a collection of anecdotes and notes of admiration by composers, musicians, and proprietors of new music. Of the twelve asked to compose, eight contributed letters or notes. It is evident in the writings how Paul Sacher valued and fostered personal relationships with these composers, as well as with others in the musical community. Portions of these letters are included in this study when appropriate.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine in detail the variety of cello technique employed within the twelve compositions. Each composition is discussed in terms of instrumental technique, and divided into one of three categories. I also highlight specific moments in each piece in order to discuss the music from a pedagogical perspective. The compositions are separated into categories ranging from traditional to avant-garde. This is based upon the scope of cello technique involved in performance and the level of compositional innovation.

Right hand cello technique prior to the twentieth century consisted of various bowing styles contrasted with limited types of *pizzicatos.*[2] Cellists and composers rarely sought to venture beyond traditional tonal guidelines or to experiment with all of the timbral possibilities of the instrument. As new compositional processes and new tonal languages developed, composers began to expand the timbral and physical limits of the cello. This included new

[2] Definitions of italicized terms are located in the glossary.

techniques such as extensive *col legno* or *ponticello* sections, drawing the bow across the tailpiece, and playing on the other side of the bridge. Although a few of the commissioned composers such as Beck and Britten stayed within the traditional norms, the majority of the twelve Sacher variations include a wide range of extended cello techniques.

The cello technique encompassed throughout the twelve Sacher pieces is extremely varied. This study discusses the solo works by grouping them into three categories employing certain parameters including cello technique, structural elements, and certain musical characteristics. Cello technique ranging from traditional to more avant-garde such as alternate tunings, *quarter tones*, indeterminate pitches, playing beyond the bridge, and techniques borrowed from other instruments are included. Compositional innovation such as musical form, sonorities, and graphic notation are also considered.

This study provides an overview of the common threads found throughout the works in each category, as well as overarching concepts that permeate all twelve compositions. A summary of these findings is included at the end of each corresponding chapter.

Each piece is discussed with attention to the techniques and compositional characteristics within the music that not only represent the aesthetic of the composer, but that are challenging to perform. The study also examines unusual technical issues, clarifies ambiguous markings, and includes insight from the composers as to how the music is to be performed.

Excerpts of the twelve compositions are employed throughout the study for illustrative purposes.[3]

[3] Full references to the scores are located in the Bibliography.

Need for Study

Although there are a number of published articles, books, and dissertations dedicated to a few of the composers in the collection, there are no sources that examine the pieces in their entirety from a performer's perspective. Of these, only a few have found their way into the standard repertoire. Witold Lutoslawski and Henri Dutilleux's Sacher variations are very popular and frequently performed works. The Lutoslawski is unique for its use of quarter tones, and the Dutilleux is noteworthy for its employment of alternate tuning.

Of the available scholarship, only one source discusses the twelve pieces as a complete unit. Lisa McCormick's master's thesis touches on the historical events that led to this unconventional birthday present, and examines the relationships of the collaborators as well as their relationships with Sacher himself. Taken from a more psychological perspective, the study focuses on the "social circumstances surrounding the composition of music," and highlights the "collective nature of musical activity."[4]

Several dissertations include one of these pieces as part of a specific composer's output, but do not discuss the entire group of Sacher dedications.[5] Grouping these works by technique, instrumentally as well as compositionally, reveals similarities that assist in comprehending the individual pieces as one cohesive unit.

Performances of the Sacher variations are rare. There is only one audio recording and very few concerts or recitals that have presented the music as a whole.[6] In addition, there is no scholarship dedicated to the study of this music from a pedagogical perspective. While there are a few sources that deal with extended cello technique, the majority of literature written on the

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[4] Lisa McCormick, "Hommages A Sacher: A Case Study in the Commissioning, Composition, and Performance of New Music in the 1970's" (Master's thesis: Oxford University, 2000), 1.

[5] *12 Hommages a Paul Sacher Pour Violoncelle* (Universal Ed, 1980).

[6] *12 Hommages a Paul Sacher Pour Violoncelle*, Patrick and Thomas Demenga, ECM Records 1520/21, 1995.

subject takes a broader approach. Most sources deal with the problems associated with comprehension of new symbols, and concentrate on "codifying one way for future composers to symbolize their music."[7]

My goal is to create a greater awareness of the remaining works that are not performed on a regular basis, and to make them more accessible to cellists in order to add them to the cello concert repertoire. I have also clarified any ambiguous markings or instructions present in the music.

[7] David Cope, *New Music Notation* (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1976), xi.

CHAPTER 2

CONSERVATIVE WORKS USING TRADITIONAL CELLO TECHNIQUES

The most traditionally written of the twelve compositions are the works by Conrad Beck and Benjamin Britten. These two pieces utilize traditional cello technique, as well as conventional musical forms and notation. While both compositions share similar musical characteristics, they differ in scope and form.

Benjamin Britten

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) and Paul Sacher had been friends and colleagues for twenty years prior to Rostropovich's request. In the notes to the published edition of *Tema 'Sacher'* there is mention of an initial partnership in 1956, but perhaps the more documented collaboration was Sacher's commission and premiere of Britten's *Cantata Academica* in 1960. Although this was the only work of Britten's to be commissioned by Sacher, the two remained close friends until Britten's death in 1976.

Britten's legendary relationship with Rostropovich was most likely the reason the composer was asked to contribute to the collection. The cellist and composer began their friendship in September 1960 at the British premiere of Shostakovich's first Cello Concerto. Britten attended as a guest of the composer, while Slava was the soloist and dedicatee. Introduced by Shostakovich immediately following the concert, Rostropovich seized the

opportunity and begged Britten to write for the cello. Britten, equally enamored with the cellist, agreed:

> I was taken completely by his genius and personality when I heard him perform in London in September 1960 and, although I was never previously attracted to the cello as a solo instrument, I was determined immediately after this occasion to write something specially for him.[8]

The next day, Britten agreed to write a sonata under the condition that Rostropovich would premiere the work the following summer at the Aldeburgh Festival. Britten would go on to write many pieces for Rostropovich, including the *Symphony for Cello and Orchestra* and three suites for solo cello.

When Benjamin Britten was approached by Rostropovich to compose a variation for Sacher's birthday, the composer was in the last year of his life and already seriously ill. Britten agreed to not write a variation, but rather supplied the keynotes based on Sacher's name. It was these notes that were used as the cantus firmus for the remaining eleven compositions. Britten's *Tema 'Sacher,'* his final composition for solo cello, is by far the shortest and most compact of all the Sacher Variations.

The piece opens with a partial statement of the hexachord, "S-A-C-H," located in the upper voices of a three chord melodic fragment. The third chord in the fragment contains the only half step in the hexachord and highlights the interval by using descending eighth notes. This serves as rhythmic contrast to the half notes employed in the first two beats. Britten repeats the "S-A-C-H" in the second measure, using the same rhythm, this time placing the notes up an octave. The next two measures rely on repeating eighth-note figures in groups of five. Here Britten begins up yet another octave and writes a descending line, in contrast to the first two

[8] Margaret Campbell, *The Great Cellists*. (Victor Gollanz Ltd: London, 1988), 283.

measures. He completes the hexachord in the first two beats of m. 3, allowing the first entire statement of the hexachord.

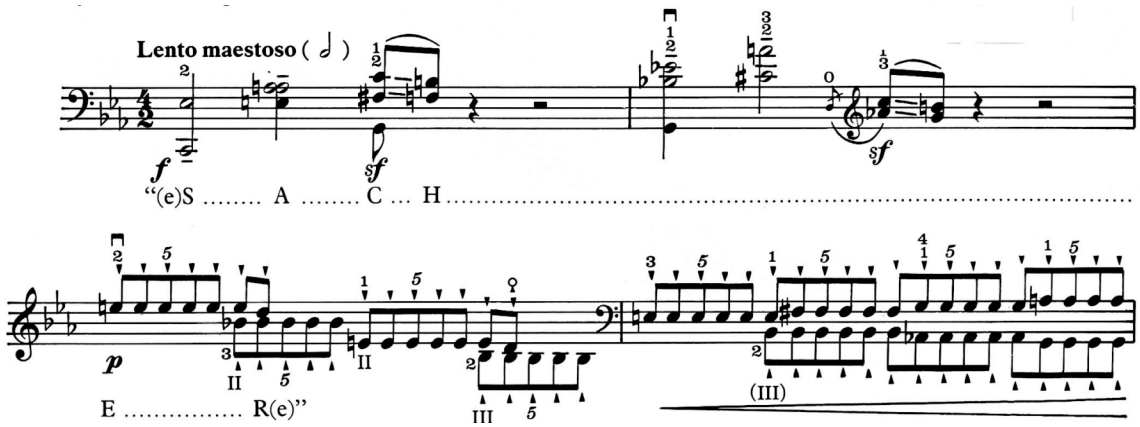
The next two measures, mm. 5-6, are in the same rhythmic pattern as the opening, but the melodic movement is inverted and the "S-A-C-H" pitches are now the root or middle voice of each chord. Measures 7 and 8 are rhythmically equal to measures 3 and 4, but continue to be inverted, ascending three octaves. Britten revisits the opening and ends the work in m. 10 at the *Largamente*, this time completing the hexachord in two measures, the notes shared between the upper and middle voices. The final three measures restate the partial four-note hexachord presented at the beginning. The incomplete hexachord is repeated twice, Britten never giving the D in the original ending, although he does supply as *ossia* containing the final letter. Britten ends the work with a seemingly unrelated C to D-flat eighth-note figure. This type of motion permeates the piece, with Britten accelerating the rhythm in order to highlight the half-step relationship.

Comprised of fourteen measures and only one minute in length, Britten's contribution remains true to his compositional aesthetic, combining tradition with innovation. While the notes themselves have been predetermined, Britten inventively varies the motivic treatment both rhythmically and melodically. In such a brief composition, he is able to retain characteristics of traditional writing while repeating the predetermined material in a new and interesting way.

The type of cello technique used in Britten's homage is extremely traditional. Although he does exploit a four-octave range of the instrument, he does so with the instrument's conventional timbral capabilities in mind. There are no harmonics or quarter tones, and the melodic progressions stay within the limits of traditional tonality. The chords and double-stops are easily playable, arranged to be fingered comfortably.

Britten does not call for extreme dynamics or abrupt changes of timbre, but rather keeps in line with traditional notation by writing crescendos, accents, and marcato markings. He makes no use of pizzicato, a favorite technique of twentieth-century composers, and found in his larger works for cello.

Although Britten's work is more traditional, he does favor the modern technique of dictating virtually every nuance to the performer. Throughout the work, almost every beat indicates either a different dynamic marking or a specific bowing technique. There are two alternating rhythmic sections, which are further highlighted by Britten's choice of bowing technique. For the purpose of this comparison, the first measure states the A material, while m. 3 is the B material. Much of this piece is composed in two-measure segments.



Ex. 2.1: Britten, *Tema 'Sacher,'* mm.1-4.

In the A section, Britten places *tenuto* markings over the first two beats, suggesting that the performer play the fragment in a connected, or legato manner. The third beat does not have a tenuto but rather a double-stop half-step *glissando* in eighth notes. This type of bowing

articulation, coupled with rhythmic acceleration, helps to propel the motion forward. The dynamic markings help exaggerate the effect and highlight the half-step glissandos. The first two beats are to be played forte with a *sforzando* on the third beat, again highlighting the half-step relationship.

In the B section, Britten adds *martelé* markings over each eighth note, instructing the performer to play on the string with a crisp attack. Again, Britten wants the performer to highlight the half-step relationship. He writes five eighth notes per beat, but carries the melodic line over to the next beat, resolving it by half-step. In contrast to the A section, he begins each two-measure unit in piano and quickly crescendos, propelling the music to the next section.

Section C, measures 12-15, contains additional material. Britten marks the quarter note double-stops with tenuto and *staccato* markings, also instructing the performer to play *risoluto*, or bold. This suggests that each double-stop is to played to its full quarter note value and to allow a short amount of space between each chord. Britten finishes the music by briefly returning to the B material of eighth notes, this time writing them forte. The addition of a third section establishes the composition as a ternary form, a three-part form that was extremely popular in the Baroque and Classical Eras and an aesthetic that Britten frequently favored.

What is most important to understand when performing the work, and undoubtedly any of Britten's music, is the emphasis that Britten places on contrast. The performer should play each section as written, following the dynamics and bowing articulations diligently. It is precisely these contrasts that make such an abbreviated piece of music interesting to play and uniquely Britten.

There is nothing new or unusual in Britten's composition, leaving one to question if this was a choice of the composer to write the theme in a simple or clear statement as the impetus for others, or merely a reflection of his state of mind at the end of his life. For whatever reason, Britten sets up the remaining eleven Sacher contributors to expand and explore new motivic and timbral possibilities.

Conrad Beck

Conrad Beck (1901–1989) was one of Paul Sacher's oldest and dearest friends. The two had a relationship since the 1920s, exchanging letters and spending vacations together. In Beck's birthday letter to the conductor, he speaks of the first time Sacher requested a composition.

> You wrote to me that you had founded a chamber orchestra in Basel and that you were searching for new program material and asked if I had a piece which would be appropriate for what you wanted to do. Already in this gesture is revealed a basic aspect of your nature. Basel and Paris have always been culturally close, and surely it would not have been difficult for you to find there in Basel what you were after. But you were interested in establishing contact with a young musician–a countryman, by the way–who had shown that he could find his way home.[9]

Sacher had commissioned many pieces from Beck during the course of their relationship, and was one of the first to promote his music. Beck moved to Basel in 1933 and became one of Sacher's most frequently commissioned composers.

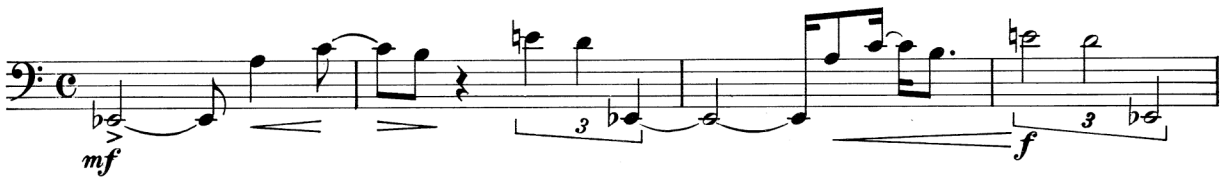
Beck's relationship with Rostropovich is unclear at best. Although he had written one sonata and one sonatina for cello many years earlier, Beck had never composed for solo cello or

[9] Mstislav Rostropovich, *Dank an Paul Sacher* (Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag: Zürich, 1976), 52-53. All translations by Christa G. Carollo unless otherwise notated.

for Rostropovich. It is likely that they had previously met through Sacher, but it is undoubtedly Beck's relationship with the conductor that led Rostropovich to include Beck in the homage.

Beck's *Drei Epigramme für Violoncello Solo* is a three-movement, seven-minute work in standard sonata form with very traditional notation and rhythms. Beck uses rhythm to create a sense of forward motion, employing dynamics and contrasts of pizzicato and *arco* to give melodic color. He stays true to his compositional aesthetic, composing with an inclination toward Classical and Baroque styles. There are no *artificial harmonics* or non-traditional timbres or techniques, aligning the work with a more typically nineteenth century compositional aesthetic. His homage is unique in its simplicity, restraint, and lack of virtuosity. Beck initially states the Sacher hexachord, using it as a point of departure for the remainder of the music.

The first movement, marked *Moderato*, begins with the only complete statement of the Sacher hexachord. Beck spells out the name three times before quickly moving onto partial fragments of the melody, never returning to the hexachord in its entirety. Avoiding abrupt changes in dynamics or register, Beck uses various rhythms to add interest and contrast. The movement begins in 4/4, changing to 3/4 in m. 25, then returning to the original meter for the last two measures. Example 2.2 shows the first two complete statements of the Sacher hexachord.



Ex. 2.2: Beck, *Drei Epigramme für Violoncello Solo*, mm. 1-4.

In the second movement, simply titled *Tranquillo*, Beck never states the hexachord. The meter is carried over from the first movement, alternations of 4/4 and 3/4. Beck once again uses subtle changes in dynamics, focusing on rhythm to add interest. The movement stays within a three-octave range, the melody never leaping more than an fifth.

The third and final movement, marked *Vivo*, incorporates more extended techniques. Here, Beck asks the performer to pizzicato for the first time, repeatedly alternating between plucked chords and a bowed melodic line. This movement also makes no use of the Sacher hexachord, focusing on intervals of a fifth rather than the predetermined notes. In contrast to the other two movements, Beck rapidly alternates the meter, expands the melodic range, and jumps intervals over an octave.

The third movement is the most difficult to perform. Here Beck couples traditional ternary form with modern compositional techniques. The constant change of meter, combined with a fast tempo, makes the music rhythmically challenging. The alternations of pizzicato and arco also prove difficult, particularly the pizzicato chords. Beck writes each chord by building them in fifths, which can be very difficult to play. Once a performer determines how the chord should be played, fingerings may be considered. Beck does not write arpeggiated chords, but rather three notes to be played at one time. In this case, the performer must choose to either use one finger per string or to block the chord, with one finger across all three strings.

While it seems that Beck has composed movements 1 and 2 in a more traditional manner compared to movement 3, all share one very notable modernist trait: Beck writes each movement without a key signature, using accidentals as needed. This type of writing has become common among composers as tonality has progressed outside traditional key signatures.

The level of cello technique exemplified in Beck's homage is traditional. He writes with the instrument in mind, composing chords that fit easily in the hand, rarely writing large leaps, and never includes either natural or artificial harmonics. Unlike Britten, Beck writes virtually no bowing articulations, nor does the he dictate every musical nuance. Beck allows the performer a certain amount of musical freedom while sticking to traditional guidelines and easily accessible cello technique.

Both Benjamin Britten's *Tema 'Sacher'* and Conrad Becks's *Drei Epigramme für Violoncello Solo* pay tribute to composers and forms of the past. By using traditional forms and notation, both composers identify with the ideals of neoclassicism and its place in a more progressive musical society. A reaction to the excesses of Romanticism, many composers sought to return to the more formal and less expansive forms and structures of the eighteenth century. The melodic and harmonic material remains distinctly modern, but avoids the programmatic tendencies and emotionalism of the Romantic Era. Both Britten and Beck were considered neo-classic composers, elements of which are reflected in their contributions.

While both Beck and Britten composed using similar musical parameters, they each wrote uniquely different pieces on the Sacher hexachord. Britten's contribution focuses entirely on the notes supplied by the name, while Beck uses the cantus firmus briefly and as a departure point to elaborate upon other motivic ideas. In regards to cello technique, they are both firmly rooted in tradition. When assembled alongside more avant-garde composers, such as the ones included in this collection, Britten and Beck appear very rooted in compositional tradition, and are therefore the most easily accessible for classically trained cellists.

CHAPTER 3

WORKS USING LIMITED EXTENDED CELLO TECHNIQUES

The majority of the Sacher variations represent a cohesive blend of traditional techniques with the innovative avant-garde. While each piece is different in style, all seven composers utilize similar effects such as artificial harmonics, quarter tones, ponticello, and col legno, alongside conventional notation and classical forms. These types of effects are used prevalently throughout the twentieth century, and many composers readily incorporated them into their compositions.

Luciano Berio

The initial meeting of Luciano Berio (1925–2003) and Paul Sacher is unclear at best. It is most likely they were acquaintances, having possibly met through Pierre Boulez. Sacher first displayed an interest in Berio in 1974 where he conducted a concert of the composer's music with the Basel Chamber Orchestra.

Berio's *Les Mots Sont Allés* (The Words Have Gone) is a one movement, three-minute composition. An experienced linguaphile, Berio expressed great interest in vocalization and language, and their relationship to music. In this piece, described as a *recitativo* for solo cello, Berio instructs the performer to play intimately as if one was speaking. The work quietly states the Sacher hexachord from the beginning, and gradually deviates from the motto, the rhythms

becoming increasingly irregular and the tempo intensifying. The music finally settles, highlighting the first pitch in the series, and returns to the same mood as the beginning.

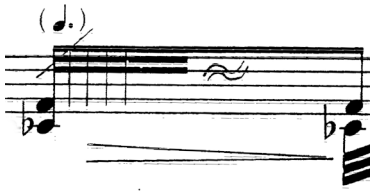
Although Berio did not necessarily explore new ways to produce sound on the cello, he did incorporate twentieth-century techniques. The frequency of these effects coupled with his compositional aesthetic result in a work that is a blend of tradition and modernist technique.

Berio employs various tempo and timbral changes in order to propel the harmonic language forward. The music is composed without bar lines, but is extremely specific regarding tempo markings, timbre and dynamics. Dictating virtually every nuance, Berio left no decision to the performer and allowed very little to chance. He frequently alternates between ponticello*, sul tasto,* and ordinary tone quality and even specified the speed of the cellist's *vibrato* at certain points in the music by providing detailed footnotes.

The traditional notation used by Berio is reassuring. There is no need for a legend to define any symbols or ambiguous markings as the music is written without such devices. On closer inspection, the music takes a more modern turn. In the slower opening sections, virtually every note is marked with a different dynamic and specific bowing articulation. The faster, agitated section is more focused on alternations of ponticello and ordinary playing and less concerned with dynamics.

The second page offers a few markings that need clarification. Berio notates the metered repetitions using very specific markings. He places the durational value in parentheses above the repeated pitch, a slash through the first note in the beamed group, and wavy lines that eventually replace the thirty-second note values. In this case, all of the markings are referring to the rhythm: the parentheses providing the length of the note, the slash signifying to play the note as fast as

possible, and the wavy lines representing indeterminate rhythm. Essentially a *tremolo*, the following excerpt is from the fifth line on the second page.



Ex. 3.1: Berio, *Les Mots Sont Allés,* line 12.

Although the level of cello technique required to perform Berio's contribution is conventional, there are instances where notation, lack of bar lines, change of register, and excessive dynamic markings can be problematic. Even with these few issues, this music is not technically demanding to the point of being virtuosic. For Berio "writing for a virtuoso worthy of the name may also count as the celebration of a particular understanding between composer and performer, and bear witness to the human situation."[10]

Berio's *Les Mots Sont Allés* was not performed in its entirety at the birthday concert. In 1976, Berio was in the process of composing another work for Rostropovich, *Ritorno Degli Snovidenia*, a concerto for cello and small orchestra. It premiered under the direction of Paul Sacher in 1977 with Rostropovich as the soloist. Berio did not have time to complete his homage at the moment of Rostropovich's request, but did finish a portion of the work for the celebration. The completed version was submitted in 1978.

The relationship between Berio and Sacher fostered more collaborations and premieres of Berio's music. It is perhaps in the title to this work that Berio expresses his admiration for

[10] Felix Meyer ed., *Settling New Scores: Music Manuscripts from the Paul Sacher Foundation* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1998), 63.

Sacher. By stating that the "words have gone," he implies that words cannot express how he feels about Sacher. It is not the words that "usually predominate at celebrations; what counts are only the sounds that linger on."[11]

Pierre Boulez

Pierre Boulez (b. 1925) and Paul Sacher first met in March 1951. Boulez had been earning a living playing the Ondes Martenot, an early electronic instrument with an eerie waving sound, and was called in to play for a production of Arthur Honeggar's *Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher* at the *Basel Stadttheater*. Sacher had known of Boulez prior to this performance. Five years earlier, he had approached Honeggar inquiring about new and interesting young composers. Honeggar named Boulez, describing him as the only "talented rogue" enrolled in his wife's counterpoint class. Although they had previously known of each other and each were friends with Honeggar, the decisive meeting did not take place until May 1958.

It is surprising that Sacher and Boulez were friendly, considering their opposing views on music and composition. Sacher was a part of the old establishment, aligning himself with neoclassical composers. Boulez, perhaps the most provocative of the younger generation of composers, was attempting to guide the avant-garde. The meeting between the two could have been disastrous, but Boulez apparently made a good impression. In the 1960s Sacher invited Boulez to teach composition and conducting classes at the Basel Music Academy, and on numerous occasions arranged for Boulez to conduct the Basel Chamber Orchestra.

Over the next forty years, Boulez and Sacher developed a friendship and a musical partnership, helping to renew an interest in Western music. Oddly enough, Sacher never

[11] Klaus Schweizer, Liner notes, *12 Hommages A Paul Sacher Pour Violoncelle*, Patrick and Thomas Demenga, perf., ECM Records 1520/21, 1995, 11.

commissioned a piece from Boulez. Nevertheless, Boulez did compose three works associated with Sacher, *Messagesquisse* being the first.

Messagesquisse is one of two pieces in the collection that were not performed at the birthday concert. Boulez departed from Rostropovich's instruction to write for solo cello, composing a cello septet, consisting of one "violoncelle principal" and six "tutti cellos." Originally titled *Message(s),* the premiere took place in July of the following year at the Rostropovich Competition. It was not until twenty years later that Rostropovich himself performed the work.

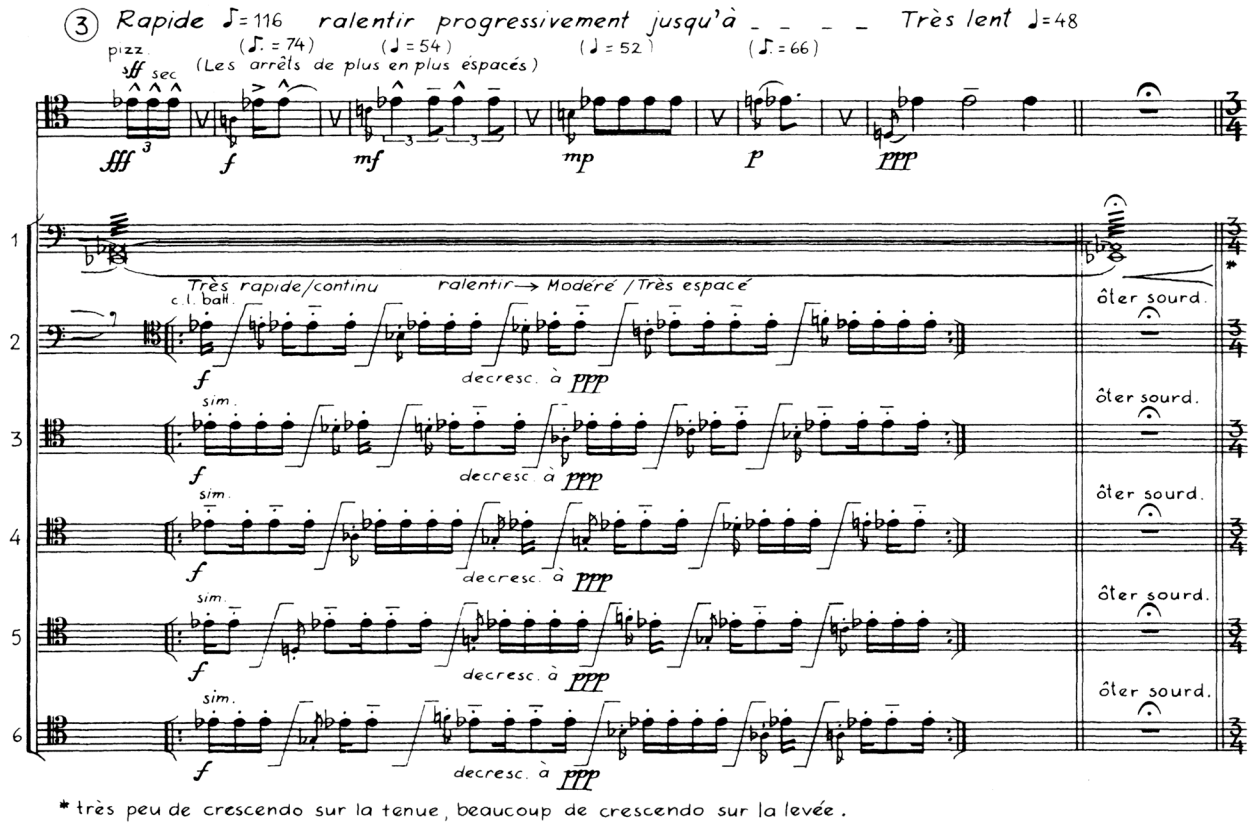
Messagesquisse is a nine-minute work, subdivided into four sections, and deeply rooted in the systems of serialism. The title of the work, literally a combination of the words "message" and "sketch," refers to the musical ideas presented throughout the piece. In the preface to *Messagesquisse*, Boulez writes:

> Messages are often secrets
> Music has this advantage:
> no words,
> messages are essentially personal,
> decrypted by each according to the influence of the moment.
> A figure - symbolic (reduced)
> notes - symbolic (multiplied)
> rhythms - symbolic (diffracted)
> which arrange a certain number of messages, multiple, divergent,
> which move some feelings, symbolic point.[12]

Boulez transformed and rearranged the hexachord many times, also employing other ciphers, such as the rhythmic spelling of Sacher's name in Morse code. These rhythms "permeate the pulsating sixteenth-note figures in the center of the piece to form a super ordinate pattern of

[12] Mstislav Rostropovich, *Dank an Paul Sacher* (Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag: Zürich, 1976), 91. Translation by Lauren Nossett.

accents."[13] The serial techniques employed in the music are complex, with the pitch material centered on the first note of the hexachord. The rhythmic patterns, along with Boulez's six transformations of the pitches, or row, provide the basic material for the composite texture of the piece. Example 3.2 shows the first complete rhythmic realization of the Sacher hexachord represented in Morse code. The solo line and line 6 contain the pitches in the original order, while parts 2-5 illustrate a rotation of the row.



Ex. 3.2: Boulez, *Messagesquisse,* page 3.

[13] Felix Meyer ed., *Settling New Scores: Music Manuscripts from the Paul Sacher Foundation* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1998), 221.

The level of cello technique exemplified in Boulez' homage is strikingly traditional in contrast to his innovative compositional techniques. What is new is how he incorporates the various timbres, and how they are presented melodically. He includes pizzicatos, ponticello, harsh tremolos, and murmuring *trills* to help delineate sections within the one movement work.

The composition begins with the Sacher hexachord intoned in sustained harmonics. Boulez alternates between natural harmonics that sound an octave above the written pitch and artificial harmonics that sound an octave and a fifth above the note. The opening section is followed by a passage marked by nervous bowings and quiet trills. The next section features strikingly varied timbres by using drastic changes of dynamics, and alternations between ponticello and pizzicato. The final section is brief and characterized by restless motion. The harmonic and rhythmic language comes to an abrupt stop, at times all of the parts playing in unison.

Boulez is extremely specific in his writing, and provides detailed information to the performers on style and articulation. For example, in the opening passage (mm. 1-7) he instructs the solo to play with no rhythm at all, telling the *tutti* section to follow the bowing of the principal cello. In the following section (mm. 8-14), he gives detailed instruction on how to space the pitches according to resonance, and supplies a description of the *col legno battuto*, striking the string with the stick of the bow.

Boulez made use of triangular, square, and the traditional "bird's eye" fermatas placed throughout the work. These fermatas are coupled with instructions such as "very short" and "barely hanging," and are not be held as long as the traditional fermata.

The solo cadenza includes another non-traditional marking. Along with more specific performance instructions, Boulez inserted a slash through the stem of the first note of some of

the beamed sixteenth-note groups. All the notes in the beamed group are to be played fast as possible. He also occasionally marks a slash at the end of grouped notes, indicating that the final note is the only note to be hurried, in essence writing a mini accelerando. No legend is provided, but rather Boulez writes instructions at the bottom of each page and even over the notes themselves. All of the instructions provided by Boulez are to be carefully considered, and are an integral part to a successful performance of the music.

The challenge of *Messagesquisse* is not necessarily the notes written by Boulez, but rather the manner in which they are to be performed. The harmonics are playable, the rhythms are easily accessible, and the balance of the ensemble has been carefully considered. The six accompaniment parts color the solo line, reinforce pitches, and emphasize accents. The cello techniques displayed are conventional and should be easily understood. The difficulty lies in the extra-musical associations and slight nuances that are to be exhibited by the performer. The work is a pairing of traditional cello technique with avant-garde compositional innovation.

Wolfgang Fortner

It is readily apparent that Wolfgang Fortner (1907–1987) and Paul Sacher were close friends and colleagues, however there has been no scholarship published explaining how the two initially met. Sacher clearly held Fortner in high regard, regularly featuring or premiering his music in Basel. In the letter he wrote to Sacher for his seventieth birthday, Fortner gives insight into their relationship:

> Of course, my relationship with the conductor, Paul Sacher, who repeatedly performs my compositions and with whom I have conversed throughout the years, is different from that of a mere reader of literature to the great Thomas Mann. But it is indeed the composer, who, so intimate with the fantasies but also the theories which determine a newly completed piece, needs a partnership with an

> artist who is not only able to read his scores and who has the technical ability to perform them well, but who has the special gift of interpreting of the other's work…For me, my acquaintance with Sacher is one of the rarest of fortunes life can offer.[14]

The first meeting between Fortner and Rostropovich is equally unclear. Fortner did compose a handful of works for cello, including a concerto in 1951. Although it is certain that Fortner knew of Rostropovich, the homage to Sacher is the only project on which the two collaborated.

Wolfgang Fortner's *Theme and Variations for Solo Cello* is moderate in terms of twentieth-century cello technique. Almost eight minutes in length and organized as a theme and three variations, Fortner incorporated traditional notation and form with a more modern compositional language. Fortner organized the music by separating it into six-note groupings, or hexachords. The Sacher hexachord and its compliment, the remaining six pitches in the series, are the primary melodic material for *Theme* and *Variation 1*.

The Andante theme, stated in its entirety at the beginning, spells the cantus firmus in natural notes and harmonics. Fortner wrote the hexachord in a descending line that spans two octaves and is easily playable in first position. The incorporated harmonics are readily playable and present no challenge. The remainder of the *Theme* section repeats the Sacher hexachord two more times, once in retrograde, and continues the pattern of alternating harmonics and natural notes. The hexachord is notated in traditional notation throughout and does not employ any extended cello technique.

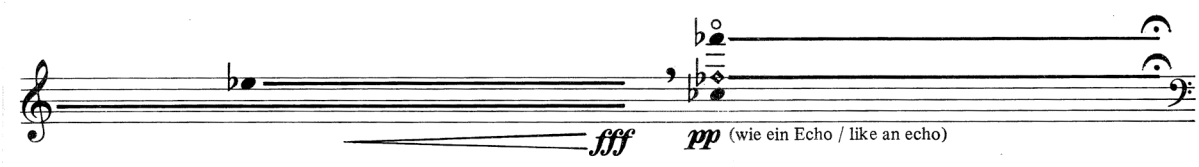
Variation I is notated and composed in a completely different vein. Fortner composed this section without bar lines, alternating compact collections of notes with large expanses of improvisatory passages. The variation begins a flourish of the given pitches, allowing the

[14] Mstislav Rostropovich, *Dank an Paul Sacher* (Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag: Zürich, 1976), 59.

performer to play in a free tempo. He then supplied the complimentary hexachord in artificial harmonics and instructed the player to "improvise very quickly, using the given harmonics in any you wish." The D-flat is especially difficult. The other five pitches can be easily played on the D-string and switching strings while playing artificial harmonics can be challenging. These harmonics prove problematic if played in the written order, but Fortner wrote that they may be rearranged to facilitate easier playing.

Fortner continues the variation, simplifying the hexachord by writing it in quarter notes. He composes absent of meter and instructs the performer to play "at an unhurried pace." Fortner writes for the performer to play certain pitches without any specific rhythm. The only problematic moment occurs with the "echo," as Fortner describes it. He writes, in treble clef, a C-flat with an F-flat harmonic (the sounding note being a C-flat two octaves above the written pitch) and an F-flat natural harmonic written an octave above the harmonic. In order to facilitate the pitches, it is best to respell the double-stop enharmonically. As a result, the written notes produce a B harmonic on the D string with an E-natural harmonic on the A. The two pitches produced are a fifth apart, the higher pitch being supplied by the harmonic on the D string. This double-stop can be problematic, trying to balance the hand between a natural note and a harmonic. Although there are various fingering options, the performer choosing the most comfortable for their own hand, one possible solution is to play the C-flat not a harmonic, but rather as a natural or solid note. Example 3.3 shows the problematic double-stop.

The composition briefly returns to the same flourished notes as the beginning, this time in pizzicato. The movement closes with the Sacher hexachord in double-stops, all easily playable. The variation ends with one final statement of the Sacher hexachord, gradually fading away into nothing.



Ex. 3.3: Fortner, *Theme and Variations for Solo Cello*, *Variation I*, line 9.
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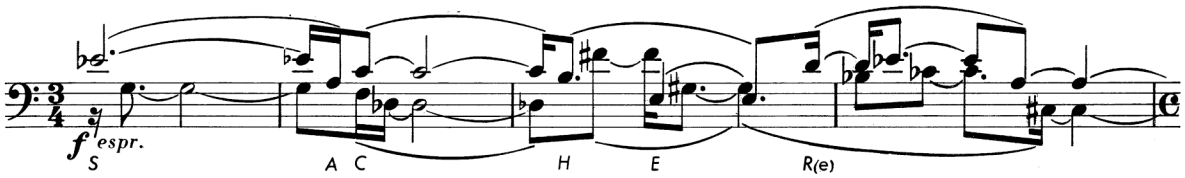
Variation II is in strict tempo and uses no progressive cello technique, in contrast to the previous material. This time the Sacher hexachord is stated in sixteenth-note triplets and is marked *sempre staccatissimo*, meaning to play as *staccato* as possible throughout. The music quickly jumps octaves in an arpeggiated manner, which allows the performer to play three to five notes in one hand position. The technical challenge of this movement is the abrupt changes of register coupled with the *Presto* tempo marking. Fortunately, many of these notes can be played in one hand position and do not pose any technical problems.

Variation III combines traditional structure with serial techniques. Here Fortner composes in canon, a musical device dating from the fourteenth century. In the opening, the top voice contains the predetermined pitches, and the bottom voice utilizes the remaining notes. Fortner eventually departs from this voicing, focusing on rhythm. He instructed the performer to play each entry in exact time, shortening the long notes in the other voice if necessary to facilitate playing from a technical standpoint. Fortner explains 'to make the structure of the rhythmical canon (13/1/11/3/7/2/5) clearly audible, each voice entry must be made exactly in time."[15] The following example shows the canon.

[15] Wolfgang Fortner, *Theme and Variations for Solo Cello* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1976).



Ex. 3.4: Fortner, *Theme and Variations for Solo Cello*, *Variation III*, mm. 1-4.
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Fortner composed the majority of his homage rooted in tradition, but applied serial techniques. The hexachord is treated as the main focus of each movement, Fortner fully incorporating the notes. The contrast between the aleatoric *Variation 1* and the carefully directed rhythms of the other movements is exemplary of Sacher's connection to the music of the past as well as the music of the present and future.

Cristobal Halffter

Spanish composer and conductor Cristobal Halffter (b. 1930) spent a large part of his career attempting to revitalize Spanish music. Early on, Halffter's writing imitated Bartók and Stravinsky, and later included twelve-tone technique. He felt that Spain was trapped in a "tonal, psueudo-populist neoclassicism," and sought to incorporate his native music with the music of the European avant-garde.[16] He became very successful in his native country and eventually established himself as a part of the international music community.

Halffter and Sacher first met in 1969 at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Basel, where they were both on the jury. Halffter, who had idolized Sacher in his

[16] Felix Meyer ed., *Settling New Scores: Music Manuscripts from the Paul Sacher Foundation* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1998), 223.

student years, soon realized that Sacher was no longer a myth but was "of greater worth in reality."[17] The two quickly became friends and colleagues, Sacher frequently inviting Halffter to conduct the Basel Chamber Orchestra in premieres of his own as well as other composer's works. Over one hundred of Halffter's works have been housed at the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel since 1989.

Halffter was obviously chosen as one of the twelve invited composers on behalf of the friendship that he and Sacher shared. Prior to Rostropovich's request, there is no evidence that the cellist and composer had ever met. Although there had been no previous collaborations between the two, they quickly forged a friendship. Shortly following the completion of the project, Halffter composed his *Second Cello Concerto*, dedicated to Rostropovich.

Cristobal Halffter's *Variations on a Solo Theme by Sacher* is a one movement, six-minute work that explores the tonal capabilities of the cello using a mix of traditional and contemporary notation. Although Halffter's notation and technical expectations are not extremely progressive, he does compose with a more modernist aesthetic. He specifies types of vibrato and exact lengths of fermatas down to the second. There are alternations between moments of quiet with long, sustained notes, and moments of almost cadenza-like frenzy. Seemingly more concerned with the exact timing of the movement rather than exploring the tonal capabilities of the cello, Halffter set up the music in four contrasting sections, only presenting the hexachord in its entirety in the beginning and in retrograde at the end.

In the opening, Halffter presents the hexachord, each given note followed with an ascending or descending run. He marks specific timings for each held note or fermata, giving the most emphasis on the first two pitches in the series. The final pitch, D, is followed by an

[17] Mstislav Rostropovich, *Dank an Paul Sacher* (Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag: Zürich, 1976), 86.

accelerando and a crescendo that gives the line forward motion. This type of writing creates an opening section reminiscent of an improvised *cadenza*, but with every nuance dictated by the composer.

The following section presents the hexachord in an incomplete inversion. Halffter composes a type of *cantilena*, a Baroque vocal style, writing the series in long, sustained note values, even doubling the staff in order to highlight the different voices. Here Halffter paves "the way for derivatives and fragmentations of the initial series and its transpositions."[18] The rhythm gradually accelerates and the texture becomes thicker with double-stops that lead to another section of cadenza-like chromatic outbursts.

Following the canonic double-stop section, Halffter begins to explore with timbre and gives more rhythmic license to the performer. In the ninth line, he begins to insert a slash through the first note in each frantic section between fermatas. Coupled with the tremolo markings already present, the slash denotes an accelerando, almost a type of feathered beaming, where the player is to play the notes increasingly faster throughout the passage. As a general rule, one slash through a note or set of notes means to play the group of notes fast. Coupled with a crescendo and alternations of fermatas, it is more effective to play the first note slightly longer than the others. Example 3.5 shows this technique.

The music continues at an accelerated pace, creating an upward sense of motion, to the point of indeterminate pitches at the top of a fleeting ascending passage. The piece ventures one step further on the next line, Halffter writing the marking *hysterisch*, meaning hysterical in German, and improvised dashed rhythms, in order to propel the motion forward.

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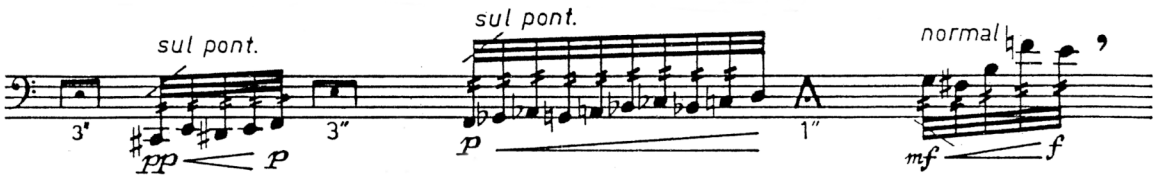
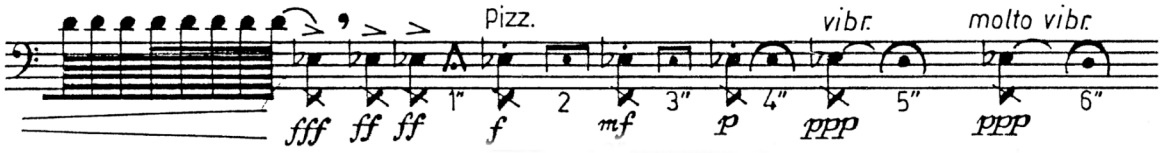
[18] Felix Meyer ed., *Settling New Scores: Music Manuscripts from the Paul Sacher Foundation* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1998), 224.



Ex. 3.5: Halffter, *Variations on a Solo Theme by Sacher*, line 9.

In the twelfth line, Halffter returns to the hexachord, focusing on the first letter, E-flat, and interspersing fermatas in order to highlight the pitch. Halffter varies lengths of fermatas by using graphic notation in addition to specifying the durations in seconds. The fermatas increase in length by one second each time, alternating with the first pitch in the series.



Ex. 3.6: Halffter, *Variations on a Solo Theme by Sacher*, line 12.

Upon moving to D, the first note in the retrograded series, the pitches are held in longer durational values and with short fermatas. The remainder of the hexachord is stated backwards, extending the length of held notes until the E-flat is presented, instructing the performer to hold the note with extended duration and to decrescendo until the pitch is no longer audible.

Halffter's entire work is based on contrasting sections of frantic, hurried passages and moments of long, sustained notes reminiscent of a vocal line. The only two statements of the hexachord, presented at the beginning and at the end in retrograde, are presented in entirely different ways. The music is absent of bar lines, containing fermatas and changes of tempo to

delineate sections. Although the level of technique in Halffter's dedication contains traditional cello technique, he does hint toward a more modernist ideal of composition and tonal exploration.

In some of his later works for cello, Halffter exploits the instrument's possibilities by adding noise tones and experimenting with varying degrees of ponticello and tremolo. Although the technical demands of this earlier work do not include extended techniques, when combined with Halffter's compositional aesthetic as a whole, the composition lies in the middle of the spectrum.

Witold Lutoslawski

Polish composer, conductor, and pianist Witold Lutoslawski (1913–1994) joined Sacher's circle relatively late in his life. Although there is no mention in the literature of their first meeting, it is logical to assume that one of their earliest connections was made in 1970 at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Basel. Lutoslawski's *String Quartet* was performed and well received, and Sacher undoubtedly took notice of the composer's work.

Their first professional contact mentioned in the literature is Sacher's commission of an oboe concerto in the early 1970s. Heinz Holliger, who also composed a work for the homage, was the oboe soloist. He requested that the concerto become a double concerto for oboe and harp for him to perform with his wife, Ursula. The work, completed in 1980, led to more commissions from Sacher: *Chain 2* (1984), a violin concerto dedicated to Anne-Sophie Mutter; and *Interlude* (1990), a work for small orchestra.

Lutoslawski and Rostropovich had been friends and colleagues since the early 1950s, and there is no doubt that Lutoslawski's inclusion in the birthday homage was a direct result of his

relationship with the cellist. At each meeting, Rostropovich, asking the composer to write a concerto, promised, "I can't guarantee I will play it well, but I will certainly play it often."[19]

Slava's wish was granted. In 1968, the London Philharmonic Society commissioned Lutoslawski to compose a cello concerto, with Rostropovich as the soloist. Almost immediately, Rostropovich asked Lutoslawski if he could play for him so that he could become more familiar with his approach toward the instrument. Lutoslawski agreed, and the two met in the composer's Warsaw apartment. Here, Rostropovich performed one of the Britten suites and asked to hear recordings of the composer's music. After listening to a few recordings and following along to scores, Rostropovich declared, "I want to play ***this*** music."[20]

Following the meeting at Lutoslawski's apartment, the two were never able to collaborate throughout the composition of the work. In 1969, Rostropovich published his now infamous letter attacking the Soviet censorship of the arts. Following an investigation into his career, the two were not allowed to interact in person. Consequently, the two collaborated through letters. On October 14, 1970, Lutoslawski's Cello Concerto premiered with the Bournemouth Symphony, with Rostropovich as the soloist. Weeks later, the Soviet government revoked the cellist's passport. Young cellist Heinrich Schiff replaced Slava for the subsequent performances of the concerto until the restriction was lifted in 1972. Rostropovich continued performing the concerto and promoting Lutoslawki's work, even designating a performance of it as a first prize in the Rostropovich International Cello Competition in 1977.

In 1976, Lutoslawski considered his homage a small bagatelle, possibly being overshadowed by other larger works he was composing at the time. Alternatively, it can quite possibly be understood as the coda to his long-term collaborative partnership with Rostropovich

[19] Steven Stucky, *Lutoslawski and His Music* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1981), 91.
[20] Ibid.

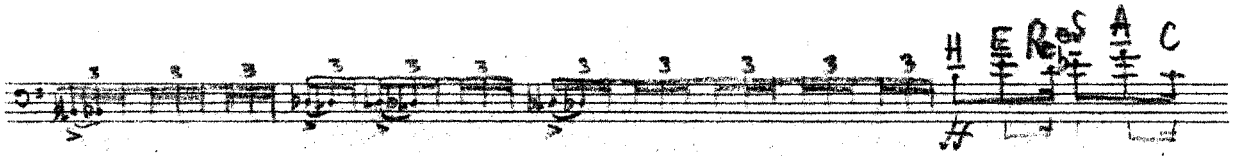
on his the Cello Concerto. One of the most well known compositions of this set, Lutoslawski's *Sacher Variation* has found a place in the standard cello repertoire.

Of all the contributions in the 1976 homage project, Lutoslawski's is one of the few that remain within the guidelines that Rostropovich set. A short, one-movement work in a "free prose rhythm," the piece clearly outlines the Sacher hexachord in boisterous eighth-note clusters, interspersing them with quiet murmuring tremolos.[21] Using the complete Sacher hexachord twenty-one times throughout, Lutoslawski never alternates the pitches within the row and highlights the motto by placing the letters over the corresponding notes. He alternates this with sections of hurried quarter tones, until eventually the predetermined hexachord takes over. Like the *Cello Concerto*, Lutoslawski's *Sacher Variation* makes use of certain extended techniques and requires brilliant virtuosity.

Lutoslawski composed absent of bar lines, a favorite technique of contemporary composers. He separated sections by inserting fermatas, and included tempo markings at the beginning of each section. The music does not include col legno or other alternative bow techniques, and seems to focus on quarter tones rather than timbre.

The first statement of the Sacher hexachord is in progressive rhythmic diminution. The *S* is presented as a quarter note, the *A* and *C* as eighth notes, and the *H*, *E*, and *R* are notated as eighth-note triplets. Of the twenty-one complete "Sacher's" that the composer presents, the first is the only one composed in that manner. The remaining variations are presented in eighth notes and are juxtaposed against the fast trill-like quarter tone figures. The final variation is unique in that it is situated amongst two stacked chords, the only chords in the entire piece. Example 3.7 shows Lutoslawski's quarter tone notation and the Sacher hexachord written in eighth notes.

[21] Peter Farrell, *Notes*, vol. 38, no. 4 (June 1982): 937.



Ex. 3.7: Lutoslawski, *Sacher Variation*, line 13.

The extended techniques involved in this work are centered on the compositions nearly constant use of quarter tones. Production of quarter tones require a new level of technique on the part of the performer, requiring the cellist play much smaller intervals on the fingerboard. The idea of the quarter tone is a relatively new concept in Western music. This challenges the performer's aural ability, as well as alters the traditional hand position, requiring an entirely new system of fingerings. The fingerings, and even the notation of these, were clarified with the help of Rostropovich during he and Lutoslawski's collaboration on the *Cello Concerto*.

Alberto Ginastera

Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) brings a different programmatic element to the collection. While all of the composers used the Sacher hexachord, only Ginastera fully incorporates other images or ideas in his work. A proponent of serialism, he continually sought to combine music and images from his native country with the devices of the avant-garde. In the preface to the composition, the composer explains his extra musical influences:

> **Puneña No. 2**, Homage to Paul Sacher, is a re-creation of the sonorous world of this mysterious heart of South America that was the Inca Empire, the influence of which one can still feel in the north of my country, as well as in Bolivia and Peru.[22]

[22] Alberto Ginastera, *Puneña No.2: Hommage à Paul Sacher, Op. 45* (London: Boosey and Hawkes,1977).

Ginastera goes into further detail about each movement. He states that the first movement is a love song based on both the six pitches supplied by the Sacher hexachord and a pre-Columbian melody that contains the six complimentary notes needed to complete the twelve-note collection. The second movement, a Carnival dance, is also based on the Sacher hexachord, evoking images of Indian drums and colorful costumes.

At an early age, Ginastera had established himself as one of the most successful supporters and proponents of Argentine music. Identifying with the *gauchesco* (cowboy) tradition, his style combines modern compositional techniques with the folk music of his country. By 1941, he was considered one of the leaders in the Argentine music community and held a position as a composition professor at the National Conservatory. Political strife in his country between 1941 and 1956 resulted in Ginastera being removed and reinstated twice from his post, and at one point forced him to take a two-year sabbatical in the United States. After marrying the Argentine cellist Aurora Natola in 1971, the two moved to Geneva, Switzerland, remaining there until his death.

Sacher and Ginastera most likely met through Ginastera's wife Aurora, a professional colleague of Rostropovich. Both living in Switzerland for the last twelve years of Ginastera's life, Sacher and Ginastera must have met at some point and found they had a strong connection. Although Sacher never premiered or commissioned a work of Ginastera's, all of the composer's manuscripts were deposited in the *Sacher Stiftung*.

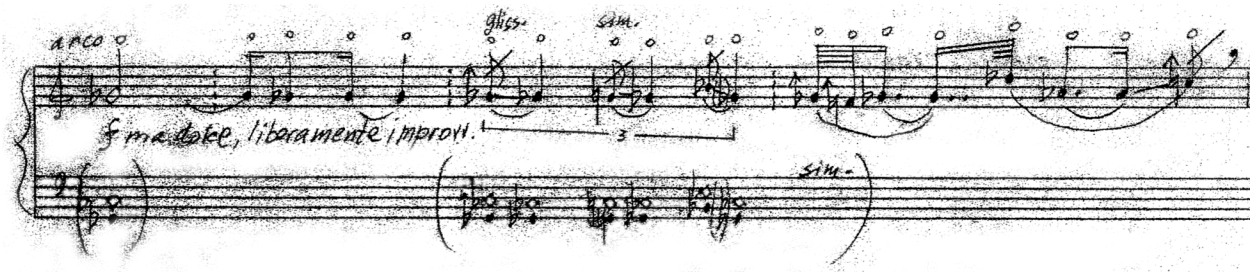
There is no record of Rostropovich and Ginastera's initial meeting. Although it is possible they met through the conductor Igor Markevitch, it is more likely that Ginastera's wife Aurora introduced them. However the meeting occurred, Rostropovich and Ginastera's professional relationship blossomed after collaborating on the tribute to Sacher. In 1978

Rostropovich conducted the premiere of the revised version of Ginastera's *Cello Concerto No. 1* with Aurora as the featured soloist. Prior to his death in 1983, Ginastera had planned to write more orchestral works for Slava to conduct.

Puneña No. 2: Hommage à Paul Sacher is typical of works from Ginastera's late period. Classified as a neo-expressionist, he composed using polytonal and serial techniques, always incorporating the music of his native country. He represents the music of Argentine primitive cultures with an imaginative use of contemporary compositional methods. Using such devices as irregular rhythm, the twelve-tone system, and extended cello technique, Ginastera created one of his more avant-garde compositions for the Sacher tribute.

Ginastera readily combined imagery into his music. The title, meaning "belonging to the Puna," references the Quechua language and region of the central Andes in South America.[23] Referring to the Andean high plateaus, as well as the anxiety that one may experience at a high altitude, the work evokes images of the Peruvian mountains and the Incan empire.

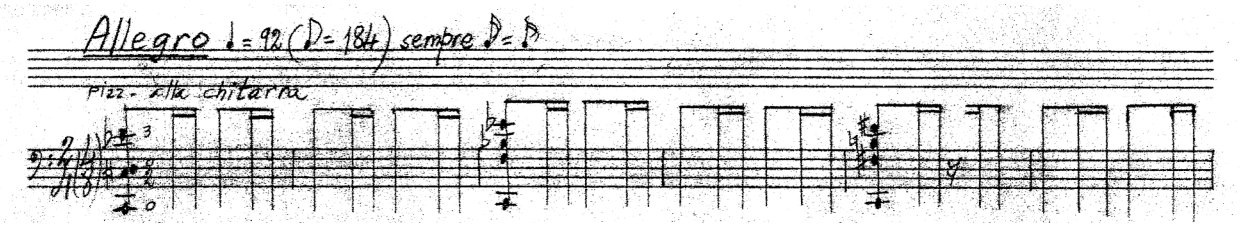
The two movements also incorporate imagery and are closely related to one another. The first movement, *Harawi*, is a sorrowful love song. The movement features low artificial harmonics, producing a deep and haunting quality, imitating the sound of *kenas*, a native instrument similar to an alto-flute.



Ex. 4.5: Ginastera, *Puneña No. 2: Hommage à Paul Sacher*, mvt. 1, mm. 19-22.

[23] Alberto Ginastera, *Puneña No.2: Hommage à Paul Sacher, Op. 45* (London: Boosey and Hawkes,1977).

The second movement, titled *Wayno Karnavalito*, is a chaotic Carnival dance. Using the Sacher melody, Ginastera composes rhythms of *charangos* [24] and drums, evoking images of masks, ponchos, and colorful costumes. In the opening, Ginastera mimics the sound of the *charango*, instructing the cellist to strum the strings like a guitar. The pitches in each chord are supplied when they first appear. The performer is to repeat the pitches and observe the rhythm. The following is an example of Ginastera's notation:



Ex. 4.6: Ginastera, *Puneña No. 2: Hommage à Paul Sacher*, mvt. 2, mm. 1-4.

Ginastera's innovative compositional style coupled with the sounds and images of South America produce a work that can be difficult to perform and interpret. Known for frequently retracting works for revision, Ginastera was immensely concerned with posterity. He understood that a good performance was paramount to establishing the success of a composer and would only allow a work to be premiered if he felt that adequate rehearsal time had been given. This obsession led him to supply a list clarifying the markings he incorporates into the music. The list gives specific notation relating to quarter tones, indeterminate sounds, and unconventional indications of fingerings and tempo changes. He also includes directions for the cellist, specifying to pizzicato chords like a guitar, meaning to use the fingers to pluck or strum the

[24] A small South American stringed instrument belonging to the lute family, typically having five pairs of strings.

strings simultaneously, and to place the bow in the middle of the fingerboard to create a more covered sound.

Ginastera's particular attention to detail and concern with a successful performance edition resulted in a score that contains no pedagogical issues. The extended cello techniques are clearly marked and carefully explained. Focused on incorporating primitive Andean imagery and music, Ginastera used extended technique to further his goal of merging music of his native country with the music of the European avant-garde.

Henri Dutilleux

Henri Dutilleux (b. 1916) and Paul Sacher had known each other for a relatively short period of time prior to Rostropovich's request. The two had been friends since 1971, introduced to one another by Rostropovich. They began to exchange letters and spent time together at Sacher's Shönenburg estate.[25] In his letter, Dutilleux describes the first time he visited Sacher and discussed Dutilleux's cello concerto *Toute un monde lointain*….

> That night, however, in the impressive calm of the place, I could hardly find sleep: I thought only of those who had preceded me in in this room – twenty, thirty, forty years ago – and without feigned modesty, I asked myself, if it wasn't sacrilegious to be here. We had looked at a few of the most valuable manuscripts of the many works which had been inspired and premiered by Paul Sacher and which witness his extraordinary role as discoverer as well as patron of the music of our time at the international level.[26]

Dutilleux's letter continues with a discussion of his first night at Shönenburg, mentioning the other composers and musicians who had stayed there before him. He takes particular interest

[25] Paul and Maja Sacher's primary residence.
[26] Mstislav Rostropovich, *Dank an Paul Sacher* (Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag: Zürich, 1976), 71.

in Bartók and his *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste*, a work Sacher commissioned in 1936, and which he later quotes in the first movement of *3 Strophes sur la nom de Sacher*. Dutilleux felt a strong connection with Bartók. Dutilleux was particularly honored when Sacher commissioned a work from him 1985, with one stipulation that the instrumentation be the same as Bartók's 1936 work. In 1992, Dutilleux sold the majority of his sketches, manuscripts, and correspondences with Sacher to the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, also promising to deposit the remainder of his collection there in the future.

Dutilleux and Rostropovich had been friends and colleagues since the 1960s. Introduced to one another by the conductor Igor Markevitch, Slava immediately began asking the composer to write a cello concerto. Dutilleux agreed and Rostropovich premiered the resulting work, *Toute un monde lointain…* in 1970.

Dutilleux's inclusion in the homage project was natural due to his active friendship with Rostropovich and Sacher. His connection with the cellist and the patron was well established with the success of *Toute un monde lointain….* Drawn to the quality of Rostropovich's tone in the higher register, Dutilleux purposefully exploited the upper range of the cello in his own cello concerto. In his homage, Dutilleux balances this by focusing on the lowest register of the instrument, additionally requiring that the cello have a *scordatura* tuning.

Dutilleux's *3 Strophes sur la nom de Sacher* represents the most cohesive blend of tradition and innovation. The three-movement work combines elements of traditional technique with alternate tunings, col legno, pizzicato, glissando, graphic notation, and even a musical quotation from Bela Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste*. Dutilleux presented the first movement in 1976 for Sacher's birthday, adding two other movements in 1982. The title of the suite, *3 Strophes sur la nom de Sacher*, refers to the idea of returning, and perhaps "being put

into rhyme."[27] Since my primary focus is on the events surrounding the concert in 1976, I will only discuss the first movement of the suite.

Dutilleux was known for creating impeccable scores, compositionally and visually. He would spend long hours agonizing over his manuscripts, even refusing to publish works if he was not satisfied with their appearance. His contribution was "original and distinctive, carefully crafted," with each variation or strophe being printed on foldout sheets so one can see the entire movement as a whole.[28]

In addition to a visually stunning score, Dutilleux also introduced a new form of notation to compensate for the *scordatura*. He had found other composers notation in *scordatura* works confusing. *Scordatura* notation alternates between sounding pitch on normally tuned strings and transposed pitch on retuned strings, following the fingerings as though tuned normally. Dutilleux was determined to write a sounding pitch score. Rostropovich advised Dutilleux that an as-fingered transposed score might be more useful for future performers. Consequently, Dutilleux combined the two notational styles, creating a hybrid notation now widely used by many composers.

The *scordatura* tuning for the lower two strings is notated in both tablature and pitch notation, with the C string tuned to a B-flat and the G string tuned to an F-sharp. There are various reasons why a composer would choose a different tuning. It facilitates otherwise impossible or difficult pitch combinations, and changes the timbre of the instrument in order to increase the resonance of certain pitches or harmonics. Dutilleux retuned the cello to increase the range, employing the B-flat to F-sharp interval of an augmented fifth quite frequently throughout the first movement.

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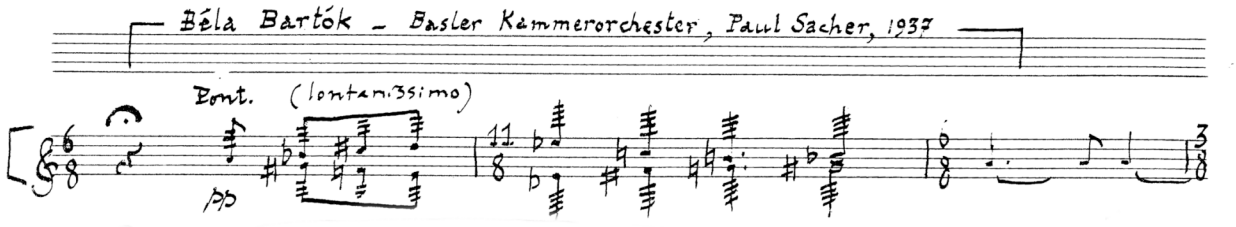
[27] Klaus Schweizer, Liner notes, *12 Hommages A Paul Sacher Pour Violoncelle*, Patrick and Thomas Demenga, perf., ECM Records 1520/21, 1995, 10.
[28] Peter Farrell, *Notes*, vol. 42, no. 1 (September 1985): 155.

The first movement relies heavily upon technical effects such as left hand pizzicato, col legno, and ponticello. Dutilleux also incorporated harmonics, both natural and artificial, to color the melody. One interesting effect is the *tremolo bisbigliando,* presented toward the end of the movement. This term, usually referring to a type of harp technique, means to whisper or rapidly repeat the note(s) at a low volume, strumming the strings with both the left and right hands. The effect is a somewhat similar to the soft strum of a guitar and produces a watery sound.

At the close of the movement, Dutilleux quotes a brief passage from Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste*. Written in ponticello tremolos and directed to be performed *lontanissimo*, meaning "in the distance," Dutilleux called to mind Sacher's role in the composition of one of the monumental works of the twentieth century.



Ex. 3.8: Dutilleux, *3 Strophes sur la nom de Sacher*, mvt. 1, mm. 45-47.

Another connection can be made between Dutilleux's work and Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste.* The primary focus at the beginning of the movement is the note E-flat. This is the first pitch in the Sacher hexachord, and is used for "primary resting points" in the first portion of the piece.[29] The listener thus perceives the note to be of importance, and integral to the music. At the close of the movement, Dutilleux quotes Bartók, and follows this

[29] Nathan Cook, "Scordatura Literature for Unaccompanied Violoncello in the 20th Century: Historical Background, Analysis of Works, and Practical Considerations for Composers and Performers" (DMA dissertation, Rice University, 2005), 92.

with seven measures focusing on the pitch A. The harmonic movement from E-flat to A is identical to the harmonic motion in Bartók's famous fugue from the same 1936 work.

There are no insurmountable technical issues in the first movement. The music benefits from exaggerated effects, such as holding fermatas as long as possible and letting pizzicato notes ring to their full potential. The more technically challenging sections of the music are generally coupled with effects such as ponticello or accelerando. The sections that alternate frequently between arco and pizzicato can also be a coordination challenge. Dutilleux writes arched lines, allowing a small amount of time for the notes to ring and for switching between the effects.

The second and third movements continue the *scordatura* tuning, left hand pizzicato, harmonics, and ponticello bowings that were introduced as melodic coloring in the first movement. In these movements, Dutilleux clearly spelled out the Sacher hexachord with letters written over the corresponding pitches. Although the hexachord is used in the first movement, the pitches are never explicitly labeled. In the second movement, the hexachord is stated only once at the end. In the third movement, Dutilleux made use of mirror techniques. The hexachord is presented in ponticello, and then is immediately written backwards in ordinary notes. The effect is furthered visually with the letters of the Sacher hexachord written over the pitches as they would reflect in a mirror.

CHAPTER 4

AVANT-GARDE WORKS USING RADICAL EXTENDED CELLO TECHNIQUES

Three of the twelve compositions rely heavily upon extended cello technique, such as left hand pizzicato and drawing the bow on the opposite side of the bridge. These three works, Heinz Holliger's *Chaconne for Cello Solo*, Hans Werner Henze's *Capriccio for Cello Solo*, and Klaus Huber's *Transpositio ad Infinitum*, are rooted in twentieth-century tradition and incorporate distinctive elements that make each composition unique to the individual composer. Whether written in free form or borrowing compositional techniques from previous eras, each piece pushes the limits of cello technique and has a unique aesthetic, separating them from the others in the collection.

Heinz Holliger

Heinz Holliger's (b. 1939) is primarily known as an instrumentalist. He held the position as the solo oboist with the Basel Symphony Orchestra for three years before concentrating on a solo career. Holliger revolutionized the oboe by introducing technique such as double trills, glissandos, multiphonics, and harmonics. Many of the world's leading composers, including Henze, Huber, Lutoslawski, and Berio, wrote for Holliger. A large number of these works were commissioned and premiered by Sacher.

Interested in composition early on, Holliger's primary teacher was Veress Sándor, although he also studied with Boulez at the Basel Academy. He quickly became a prominent

member in the local music community, and was close to Sacher throughout his life. Always a proponent of Swiss talent, Sacher continued to commission works for and composed by Holliger. Holliger's manuscripts, although presently in his possession, have been promised to the Paul Sacher Foundation at a later date.

One can assume that Holliger and Rostropovich had, at the very least, been acquaintances, belonging to the same social circles. Although there is no record as to the nature of the relationship that Holliger and Rostropovich shared, there is no doubt that Rostropovich would have wanted to include Swiss talent in the homage. Following the 1976 concert, the two collaborated on both solo and small ensemble compositions.

Holliger's *Chaconne for Cello Solo* is a nine-minute composition that combines Baroque variation techniques with modern notation and extended cello technique. Organized in six short sections, each based on the Sacher hexachord, Holliger pays tribute to Sacher's continuous efforts to align the old with the new. The variations steadily increase in speed, with each one becoming more rhythmically complicated. The escalating rhythmic complexities, coupled with the increasing amount of extended technique, leave the success of the work on the "brink of executability."[30] Holliger, seemingly aware of this, writes:

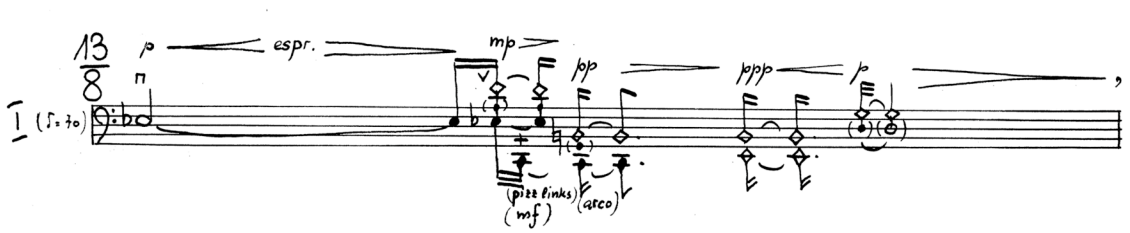
> The metronome directions are (abstract) ideal values which may be slightly amended as below in accordance with the interpreter's abilities. The initial tempo, must be ♪ = 70 in every case.[31]

All of the variations, and the majority of the *Post Scriptum*, are written in 13/8 meter. The smaller division of the beat, coupled with thirteen beats per measure, makes the music difficult to

[30] Klaus Schweizer, Liner notes, *12 Hommages A Paul Sacher Pour Violoncelle*, Patrick and Thomas Demenga, perf. ECM Records 1520/21, 1995, 12.
[31] Heinz Holliger, *Chaconne for Cello Solo* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1976).

organize. Generally, a compound meter can be subdivided into smaller groups, in this case 3+3+3+4. Holliger does not consider traditional subdivisions of the bar, but seems to purposefully ignore them, creating an imbalance to the music. He does however compose using alternative methods of organization.

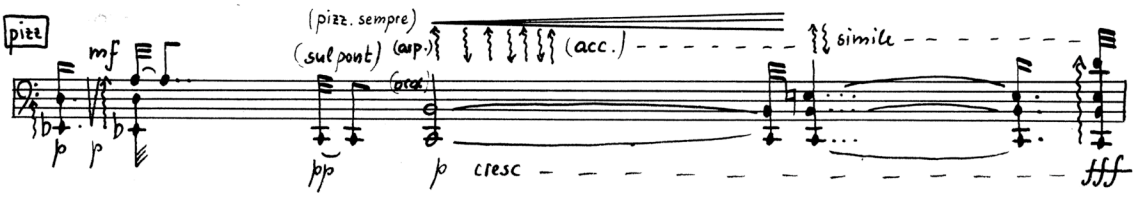
For example, in the first measure or line, the Sacher hexachord is rhythmically centered on a dotted eighth note, creating a mirror rhythm within the measure. Holliger focuses on the predetermined notes and chooses to use the C and the B, or H, as the center pitches, creating balance by leaving two pitches on either side. He does not apply a rhythmic palindrome to every measure, but continues to proportionally space the material.



Ex. 4.1: Holliger, *Chaconne for Cello Solo*, *Variation I*, m. 1.

Variation I almost exclusively focuses on the Sacher pitches. With the exception of the effect created by the glissandos, Holliger strictly adheres to the hexachord, focusing on the harmonic relationships by stacking notes vertically. He highlights the E-flat, each measure beginning on the pitch, using effects such as tremolo, artificial harmonics (written in parentheses at pitch), left hand pizzicato, ponticello, and *col legno tratto*. The dynamics play an important role in coloring the music, generally remaining within the parameters of piano, only reaching a true forte dynamic once in the entire movement.

Holliger employs certain extended techniques throughout the work. He is specific in notating how and in which direction chords should be broken, and using Roman numerals to specify on which string notes should be fingered. Generally, his notation is clear, with only a few instances needing clarification. In the third measure (see Example 4.2), the E-flat/D double-stop is notated with an upward strum from the lower pitch. Holliger writes what appears to be a "V," instructing the performer to crescendo through the next strummed pizzicato chord. This chord contains the same pitches as the previous chord with the addition of an A. Holliger notates that both chords be played piano, with the second chord making a crescendo to mezzo forte, the A being the loudest note. This crescendo is written vertically in order to assure that it will be applied to the strummed notes of the second chord. The unorthodox crescendo could be misinterpreted because the markings are written very close together and are difficult to discern.



Ex. 4.2: Holliger, *Chaconne for Cello Solo*, *Variation I*, m. 3.
Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz – Germany.

In *Variation II*, the rhythm becomes more complex and the extended techniques increase in difficulty. Holliger becomes more specific about vibrato, asking the player to vary the type, and occasionally notating the speed. He continues to use the Sacher pitches, writing longer rhythmic durations to highlight them, and adds other notes in smaller rhythmic values. Another addition to the music is the use of multiple commas, or breaths, that Holliger places at the end of

most measures. In the previous variation, he uses a single comma to signify a breath or an expanse of time. Here, he begins to use two or three commas, indicating to double or triple the amount of time the performer should take between measures.

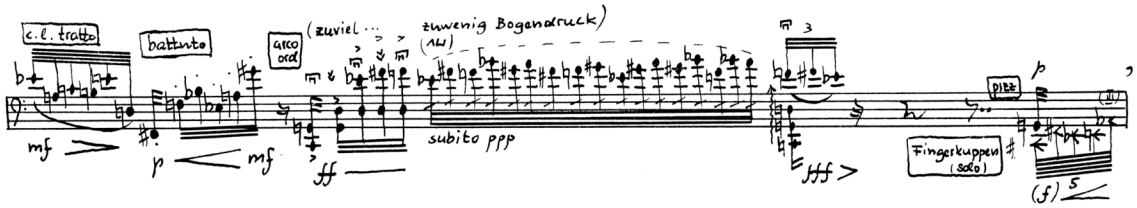
Holliger continues to play with the idea of tempo in the second variation. He supplies a metronome indication of 80.5 to the eighth note, a tempo marking that does not exists on standard metronomes. Almost comical when considering his original instruction concerning flexible tempos, Holliger is suggesting that the variation be slightly faster than the beginning material. He continues the unorthodox metronome markings in the third variation, writing 92.5 to the eighth note.

Variations III, *IV*, and *V* continue to build on the idea of increasing rhythmic and technical complexities. While Holliger does not introduce any new effects, he does use them more readily, alternating frequently between pizzicato and arco while making full use of the dynamic range of the cello.

Variation VI introduces a new set of technical and notational issues. Holliger introduces more varied forms of pizzicato, instructing the performer to use the fingernails, the right hand, and forcefully hammered fingers on the fingerboard for a more accented effect. Holliger clearly delineates between types of pizzicatos, devising accented note heads that indicate to "strike the strings with the finger-ends.[32]

Holliger also employs single and double *down bows* and *up bows* to describe the amount of bow pressure employed on certain notes. He does so by inserting another down or up bow inside the traditional marking. Example 4.3 shows Holliger's imaginative use of the bow markings, as well as a few of the accented note heads at the end of the excerpt.

[32] Heinz Holliger, *Chaconne for Cello Solo* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1976).



Ex. 4.3: Holliger, *Chaconne for Cello Solo*, *Variation IV*, m. 1.
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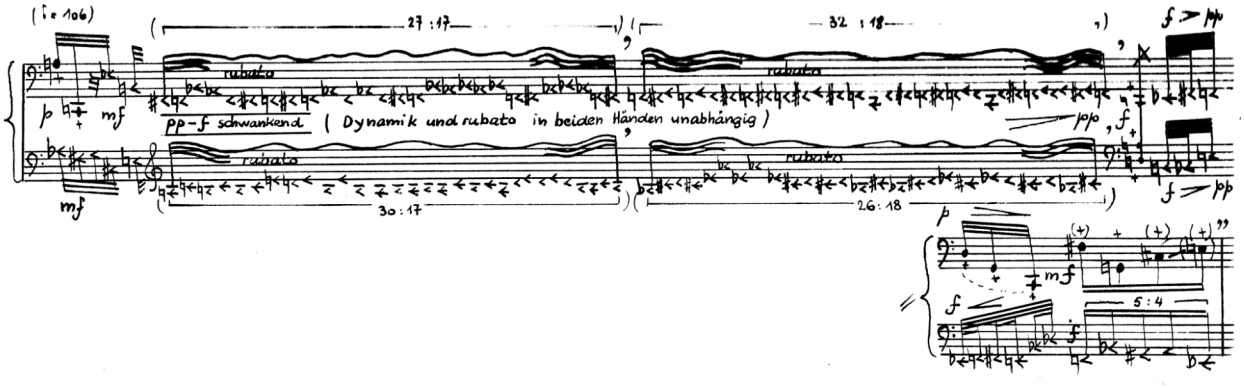
Holliger adds a "P.S." that doubles in meaning as an addendum to the work, and represents the monogram of the honoree. He composes the *Post Scriptum* section in two distinct voices in a duet between the left and the right hands. Holliger marks each measure to reflect the speed of each previous variations in retrograde, systematically returning to the original opening tempo. In contrast, the thematic material does not present itself as it has in the previous variations, and there is no use of the Sacher hexachord. He additionally severs connections to the other movements by eliminating bowed effects, composing the entire section using various types of pizzicatos.

On the third line, Holliger instructs the performer to vary the rhythm and dynamics in both hands, supplying a ratio as to the number of repetitions each voice should make in each section. For example, in the third line, Holliger writes 27:17 over a section of notes to be played by the left-hand, meaning that twenty-seven thirty-second notes should be played in the time frame of seventeen thirty-second notes. He writes these ratios in both hands, also including a *rubato*. Like the metronome markings, these should be carefully considered, but can be adjusted to the technical ability of the performer.



Ex. 4.4: Holliger, *Chaconne for Cello Solo*, *Post Scriptum*, m. 3.
Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz – Germany.

The final three measures represent the culmination of the extended technical and rhythmical complexities that Holliger has utilized throughout the work. For the first time in the entire composition he changes the meter, alternating between 17/32 and 18/32 time signatures. Holliger layers the extended techniques, supplying every note with some type of effect. Holliger creates an ending that is completely absent of the Sacher hexachord and that does not have any ties to traditional tonality.

Various issues make this composition more difficult to approach. Holliger is inconsistent in his notation of measured notes and tremolo, occasionally excessively marks certain effects. In the first three variations, he consistently places four slashes through stems of notes to denote thirty-second note rhythms, this type of marking traditionally meaning tremolo. In the last three variations and the *Post Scriptum*, the difference between measured notes and tremolo is unclear. Since the variations are each written progressively faster, it becomes difficult to differentiate between the two. He also writes dashed slurred lines indicting that notes under the line be played with one gesture. This helps to clarify effects between groups of notes, such as tremolo or ponticello, as well to separate sections of arco and pizzicato. The glissando markings are also

inconsistent. Holliger will occasionally places a line between pitches, but will also simply write the abbreviation above the note. This choice is based upon the proportional notation as well as other effects that are incorporated into the passage. Further complicating issues of notation, the published edition is in Holliger's own handwriting and there is no version in standard type.

Holliger's contribution is truly a unique blend of old and new. A tribute to his friend and mentor Paul Sacher, he is also commenting on Sacher's continuing search to balance the music of the previous eras with new and innovative concepts and ideas on the forefront of the twentieth-century musical idiom.

Hans Werner Henze

German composer Hans Werner Henze (b.1926) had been a part of the international music scene for almost twenty years prior to the Sacher homage. Having previously been a composition student of Wolfgang Fortner in the 1940s, he and Sacher had no doubt known of one another. Henze had been extremely successful in the late 1940s, securing a contract with Schött and composing works in a variety of genres. Rejecting formalism, he wrote music concerned with outside influences and drew inspiration from a wide range of renowned writers and poets. Although he experimented with serialism early on, the majority of his works have reverence to the past. Feeling alienated from the European avant-garde Henze spent much of his time in Italy writing, composing, and critically evaluating his compositional methods. It was here that Henze first considered the interaction of text and music. This type of instrumental poetry permeates much of Henze's work. Although he was influenced by composers of previous eras, Henze's music demonstrates a decisively progressive twentieth century aesthetic.

In the late 1960s Henze became deeply involved in politics and his music and writings often took an overtly political tone. Aligning himself with the socialist movement, these ideals were echoed in a large portion of his instrumental works. In the mid 1970s, Henze began a period devoted to compositional revision of some of his earlier works. During this time Henze also continued to compose, received honors, and held several teaching positions.

Henze and Sacher met in 1958 when Sacher commissioned the first of many works from Henze, *Sonata per archi*. In his letter Henze speaks of the many commissions and premieres, the two sharing a long and prosperous collaborative friendship. Henze was frequently a guest at Schönenburg, the two keeping track of each other's careers between visits. He admired Sacher's meticulous performance preparation and felt that Schönenburg was the ideal workshop to prepare music for the public.

It is surprising, given his political views, that Henze would allow himself to be involved in a patronage relationship, much less with one of music's largest capitalist benefactors. An avid proponent of socialism, Henze was aware that he relied upon the social elite for his audience and his livelihood. Although in opposition to his socialist ideals, he could not have had a better patron than Sacher. In his letter to Sacher, Henze speaks fondly of his visits to Schönenburg and thanks him for twenty-five years of friendship and patronage. It is evident in his writings that he greatly admired Sacher and was hoping to affect positive change inside the power structure of the elite.

It is reasonable to assume that Henze was asked to participate in the homage because of his relationship to Sacher and not Rostropovich. Henze and Rostropovich most likely established some sort of connection through their mutual acquaintance Benjamin Britten. Henze and Britten had been friends and colleagues for many years, Henze even dedicating his *String Quartet No. 5*

to Britten following the composer's death in 1976. Britten and Rostropovich had a long-standing personal and professional relationship, collaborating on a variety of works for cello.

In addition to his admiration for Sacher, it is also reasonable to assume that Henze accepted the commission because Rostropovich requested a work for solo cello. Henze never cared for cello sonatas, as the following entry from his autobiography clearly states:

> A sad Sunday: on the radio some glum piece for cello and piano by Shostakovich. I can't stand cello sonatas, this impossible combination of banging and scraping, helplessness and pathos, with the piano's silvery cascades of notes paying not the slightest heed to the desperate actions of the cello as it scrapes away in its tartly tormented fashion. I try to find another station…[33]

Composing for Rostropovich did not provide any additional incentive. Slava's persona as an international virtuoso did not coincide with Henze's political ideals, thus Henze distanced himself from Rostropovich and the musical elite. Despite his opinions concerning the instrumentation and the performer, Henze accepted the commission, realizing the importance of paying tribute to his friend and colleague.

Henze's *Capriccio for Cello Solo* is a one-movement, nine-minute work, deeply embedded in the styles and forms of the past combined with new sonorities and extended technique. In the preface to the composition, Henze describes the form, calling it "clearly recognizable," stating that sections are reminiscent of a French overture, the center of the work revolving around the Sacher hexachord.[34] The original version, although not played at the birthday celebration but finished in 1976, was more concise. The present concert version, edited by cellist Heinrich Schiff and published in 1981, is an extended adaptation of the work. Unlike

[33] Hans Werner Henze. *Bohemian Fifths: An Autobiography* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1999), 277.
[34] Hans Werner Henze, *Capriccio for Cello Solo* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1987).

other composers who added movements to expand their music, Henze kept the one-movement form, inserting new extended sections between the original material, increasing the length threefold.

Henze's 1981 concert version has little in common with the version he submitted in 1976. The original is written without bar lines or tempo markings, and shares very little melodic material with the version edited by Schiff. It is unclear why Henze's homage was not included in the birthday celebration. That same year Henze premiered his opera, *We Come to the River*, and founded the *Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte* for the promotion of new music. With large-scale projects to complete, it is probable that Henze did not complete the work in time for the premiere, submitting it following the birthday concert. The 1981 edition, better–known and more readily performed, is the subject of this discussion.

Henze includes a legend alongside the score, supplying explanations for each notational marking. Using a mix of traditional and non-traditional symbols, he creates a list that is clear and concise. The first symbol Henze provides in the legend is the marking for pizzicato. In the score, Henze does not write the words arco or pizzicato when a change is desired. Henze places a plus (+) over each note to be plucked with the right hand. The fingerings supplied by Schiff coupled with the sign can easily be misunderstood as a left-handed pizzicato, which is traditionally marked in this fashion. Although he never asks for left-hand pizzicato, the mark is initially confusing.

Henze provides five symbols to represent space or time in the music. He writes a comma to represent a short breath or space, a very common marking, but includes a square fermata, representing a longer breath or halt. Typically, twentieth-century composers who sought to vary the lengths of fermatas used three types: triangular, square, and rounded. The triangular fermata

represents the shortest of the fermatas, the square a moderate hold, and the traditional arched or rounded one the longest. In Henze's homage, he chooses to use the square fermata to represent space in the music. In this case, the marking is not a true fermata, but rather a hold that is longer than a traditional breath. In addition to a square fermata, Henze also includes three types of arched fermatas.

Henze also includes symbols for playing indefinite pitches beyond the bridge. He gives specific instructions concerning vibrato, even asking the cellist to vibrate the width of a quarter tone in the middle of the *Vivace* section. One interesting symbol is the "N" Henze uses to indicate normal playing, meaning to play with the bow. In works of previous eras, a performer would play ordinary or normal technique when an arco was written or in the absence of a marking.

At the bottom of the legend, Henze states that an accidental applied before a note is in effect for the individual note and not for the entire measure. Although not an issue of extended technique, Henze's decision to not carry the accidental through the measure is not typically seen in measured music and can initially be problematic for the cellist.

The inclusion of bar lines and tempo markings clarify and organize the material. Although there are sections without bar lines, the majority of the work is written in strict time. By combining both spatial and traditional barred notation, Henze changes meter frequently, relying on the eighth note as the constant.

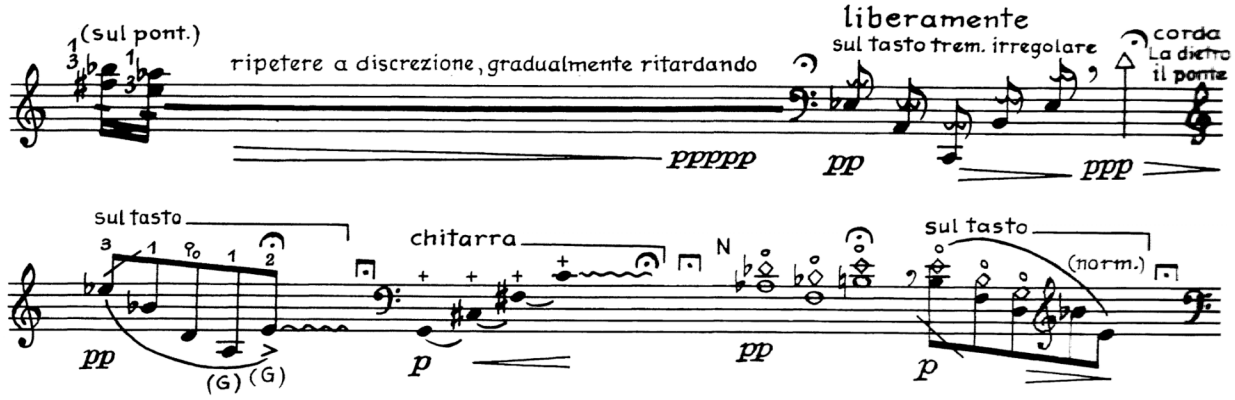
In collaboration with Schiff, Henze composed an easily accessible piece that leaves little in question. One inconsistency is his use of language. He uses a combination of Italian and German markings, some of which may be unfamiliar to the performer. Possibly due to his collaboration with Schiff, Henze writes certain directions in Italian and gives the German word

in parentheses. The same is not true of the original version in which Henze only used Italian markings.

The opening of the *Capriccio* is composed in a slow compound meter and is not based on the Sacher hexachord. Henze varies the time signature, alternating between 6/8 and 9/8 meter. There are no extended cello techniques, but rather fluctuations of left-hand pizzicato and normal playing for contrast. The *Vivace* section frequently changes time signature and contains sections that are written absent of bar lines. Henze includes the predetermined pitches throughout the music.

Henze does apply extended techniques, the majority of which are located in the middle of the *Vivace*, coincidentally where he also composes without bar lines and proportionally spaces the music. He begins this section instructing the performer to play ponticello and to repeat the pitches at will, gradually slowing down. Henze then changes effect by writing irregular tremolos to be played sul tasto. Here, Henze uses notation not supplied in the legend. He writes the pitches, in this case the first five in the Sacher hexachord, and adds flags on either side of the stem, instructing the player to play over the fingerboard and to tremolo irregularly.

The next section is to be played entirely behind the bridge. This material encompasses all of the extended techniques Henze has used throughout the music. He writes for the player to play over the fingerboard, to use an extremely wide vibrato, to emulate an Italian guitar, and to play artificial and natural harmonics. The various types of fermatas inserted allow the cellist time to properly prepare for the change of effect, as well as to let the sonorities of the previous sections properly resonate.



Ex. 4.7: Henze, *Capriccio for Cello Solo*, *Vivace*, page 11.
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The second proportionally notated section of music occurs five measures later, and is the only section that builds pitches vertically. Henze writes for the material to be played quiet, calm, and always in motion. Composing without stems, Henze is less concerned with rhythmic values, the character being more important. The performer should take great care in connecting each double-stop, making sure as to not accent changes, playing as legato as possible.

Henze never specifically identifies the Sacher pitches. Most of the composers highlighted each time they utilized the motto, but Henze chose not to label them. Never composing an entire spelling of the Sacher hexachord, Henze explains his treatment of the pitches in his opening description. He states that the pitches are "more or less recognizable as such and appear as they might in a rondo, manifesting themselves in the most varied forms and continually changing into different constellations."[35]

Both versions of the *Capriccio* are clear and concise. Henze's impeccable hand-written score is equally as clear as the printed concert version published five years later. The original version with its proportional notation, lack of tempo markings, new notational symbols, and

[35] Hans Werner Henze, *Capriccio for Cello Solo* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1987).

rhythmic ambiguity is entirely modern. The revised concert version incorporates more traditional notation, using bar lines and metronome markings. The revised *Capriccio* is an easily accessible work for solo cello that employs a large variety of extended cello techniques.

Klaus Huber

Klaus Huber (b. 1924) and Paul Sacher had a longstanding collaborative relationship. Huber, a Swiss native, attended the Zürich Conservatory, studying violin and composition. He held various teaching positions prior to accepting a music theory teaching position in Basel. In 1975, Huber won the Composer's Prize of the Swiss Composers' Association, eventually serving as chair for the organization. Always promoting Swiss music, Sacher frequently commissioned works from Huber. In his letter for the birthday tribute, Huber praises Sacher for his great contribution to new music:

> The creation of an enviable open podium was accomplished. Alongside, a continuous chain of support for composers developed. Those who needed support – Bartók, Honeggar, Martin, Burkhard, Martinu… -- and other who (no longer) needed it, (because they had already arrived or had sufficiently established themselves) – Stravinsky, Boulez, Henze, Fortner… -
>
> Possession → my discipline (?!)
> Discipline → my possession
>
> What an impressive gallery, the works commissioned by Paul Sacher and written for him and his two chamber orchestras. Consider the works would not exist in the 20th century: the most recent history of music would have to be rewritten![36]

Although there are no accounts of an initial meeting between Huber and Rostropovich, one can assume they were introduced through Sacher. Sacher's estate was constantly entertaining guests, the majority of them musicians. Rostropovich spent much time at Shönenburg, and was

[36] Mstislav Rostropovich, *Dank an Paul Sacher* (Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag: Zürich, 1976), 77.

very close to Sacher and his circle of friends. While it is safe to assume that the two were at least acquaintances, there is no doubt that Huber was asked to contribute because of his relationship to Sacher.

Huber's contribution to the homage is typical of his compositional aesthetic. Not working within the parameters of established forms, Huber's *Transpositio ad infinitum* seems to gradually unfold with no reference to traditional structure, creating the most innovative form of all the works. Huber allows the performer to determine the order of the six tranquil "P-A-U-L" fragments, interspersing them between eight hurried sequences. These inserts, titled *Piano dolce con espressione*, *Aliquote*, *Undertones*, and *Lento,* include the cipher and delineate sections. The first letters the of these titles spell out "P-A-U-L," but include two versions of each of the vowels, making a total of six "strongly subjective-personal fragments" that are to be played in between the sequences.[37] The idea of chance and infinite possibility even extends to the *Transpositio ad infinitum*, Huber suggesting that the fragments be inserted between the sequences at the performer's discretion and that the work may be transposed and performed by any instrument.[38]

Even within the complicated framework of the piece, Huber still manages to use the Sacher hexachord in its entirety, albeit only four times in the twelve-minute work. The complete hexachord is presented once in the *Piano dolce con espressione*, twice in the *Lento*, and once at the very end.

In his instructions, Huber makes clear that a consistent tempo should be kept so that the quarter note relationship is maintained. Huber invites the performer to choose the tempo that is

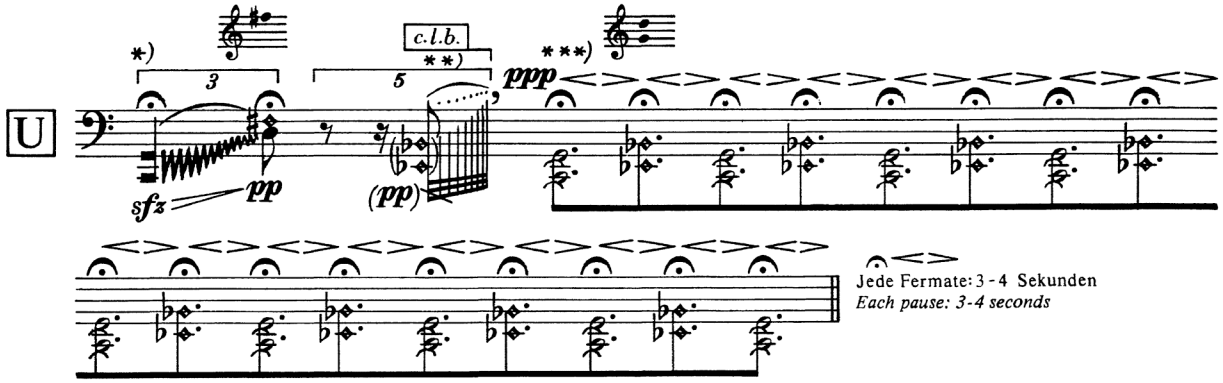
[37] Klaus Huber, *Transpositio ad Infinitum* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1977).

[38] It is important to note that in Huber's manuscript the six fragments are placed after the eight numbered sections. In the printed edition, they are incorporated throughout the music.

"in accordance with his technical ability – gauged according to the quickest/most difficult passages."[39] He also gives the performer liberty to improvise notes at their discretion.

For the two fragments titled *Undertones*, Huber provides detailed descriptions pertaining to bow technique. He informs the performer to "draw the bow very slowly and with fairly strong pressure" across the C and G strings where they are attached at the tailpiece, producing a "violent jarring noise."[40] Huber also instructs the player to use the bow in a wandering manner, sliding it from one side of the bridge to the other. Example 4.8 shows both effects.

Huber also addresses issues concerning left-hand technique. He asks the performer to play certain glissandos with one finger during tremolo, creating a "very delicate upper partial glissando."[41] He also includes finger taps in the later numbered sections. Here, the performer is asked to forcefully hammer the finger against the fingerboard, creating a percussive effect.



Ex. 4.8: Huber, *Transpositio ad infinitum*, *Undertones*, page 9.
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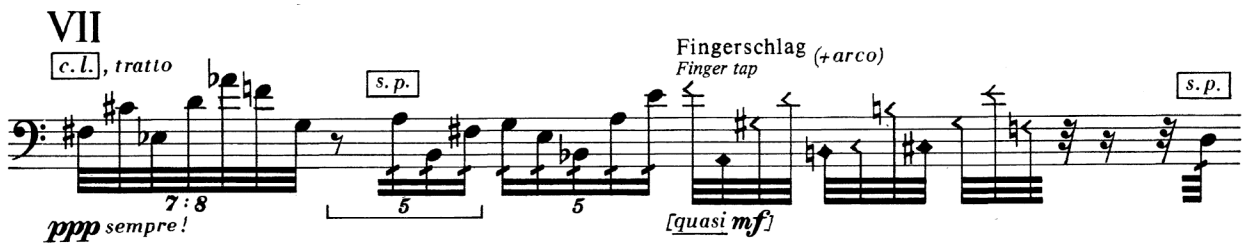
[39] Klaus Huber, *Transpositio ad Infinitum* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1977).
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

In some instances, Huber combines effects from both hands. For example, the seventh section uses a variety of techniques, frequently alternating between moments of pizzicato and *fingerschlag*, coupling them with ordinary bowing, and *col legno tratto*. The combination of effects can challenge the performers coordination.



Ex. 4.9: Huber, *Transpositio ad infinitum*, *Variation VII*, page 10.
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Although Huber's instructions are clear, his inconsistent use of an exclamation mark at the end of certain Italian terms such as *col legno tratto* and *molto risoluto*, is puzzling, as he does not use the mark every time he instructs the performer to use the effect. The exclamation marking is placed in both piano and forte sections, indicating moments of dramatic change.

The majority of performance difficulties in *Transpositio ad infinitum* are an issue of coordination. Most performers would be challenged by the alternations of pizzicato and arco.

Huber composes with very specific sounds and techniques in mind. He provides detailed explanations of the notation, and specific directions on how to perform each nuance. The piece explores extended techniques, creating new sounds and percussive effects. This extended pallet of timbre is combined with a complex form, producing a truly unique and progressive composition.

CHAPTER 5

THE SACHER BIRTHDAY EVENT

A good portion of the Sacher cello works have found their way into the concert repertoire while also appearing in recordings and reviews. Although these pieces have been recognized individually, their importance as a group has been overlooked. There is only one recording of all twelve works and the entire collection has never been performed in one concert. Since Rostropovich's death in 2007 there has been a resurgence of interest in the Sacher pieces and other music written for Rostropovich. The Czech cellist František Brikcius is performing all twelve works in their entirety for the first time in Prague in May 2011.

Very little has been written about the actual birthday concert on May 2, 1976. While there are accounts of the relationships that the collaborators shared with one another, there is insufficient information about the program or any of the official festivities that occurred that day. There is one photograph of Sacher, Rostropovich, and five of the composers on stage at the *Grosser Tonhallesaal* in Zürich directly following the concert.[42] On stage, Sacher, Halffter, Ginastera, Lutoslawski, Fortner, and Dutilleux are facing Rostropovich and applauding. Rostropovich, seemingly collecting music from his music stand, is humbly smiling. It is unclear if all the contributing composers attended the celebration.

In addition to the photo, there is a brief mention of the order in which Rostropovich performed the works. Of the twelve compositions, only ten were performed that day. Pierre Boulez' *Messagesquisse*, written for seven cellos, was not logistically possible. Boulez originally

[42] Felix Meyer ed., *Settling New Scores: Music Manuscripts from the Paul Sacher Foundation* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1998), p. 220.

sought to have Rostropovich record the six accompaniment cello parts, with plans to have them played over a loudspeaker while Slava performed the principal cello part. Hans Werner Henze's *Capriccio* was also not performed that day. We do not know why this happened but it is likely that the piece was submitted late.

On Wednesday April 28, 1976, Paul Sacher celebrated his seventieth birthday. The festivities took place over nine days and in two cities. The opening gala occurred Friday, April 23rd in Basel with Pierre Boulez conducting two of his own works, the chamber cantata *Le Marteau sans Maître* and his memorial to Stravinsky *...explosante-fixe….* The celebrations continued five days later with Rostropovich performing three of the Bach suites in the Basel Cathedral.

On Sunday, May 2nd the festivities moved to Zürich. The decision to move the celebrations to Zürich was a logical one, Sacher having been an integral part of the musical scene in the city for many years. The *Collegium Musicum*, a group Sacher co-founded in 1941, hosted the event at the *Grosser Tonhallesaal*. Described as a "musical matinee," this Sunday afternoon concert was five days after Sacher's seventieth birthday.[43]

The closing concert did not consist solely of Rostropovich's performance. In addition to Slava's contribution, the first movement of Bartók's *Divertimento for String Orchestra* and the last movement of Honegger's Symphony No. 2 were performed. Both works had great significance for Sacher. The *Divertimento*, commissioned by Sacher in 1939, was Sacher and Bartók's last collaborative work. Honeggar's Second Symphony was commissioned by Sacher in 1937 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Basel Chamber Orchestra. The two works for

[43] Felix Meyer ed., *Settling New Scores: Music Manuscripts from the Paul Sacher Foundation* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1998), p. 221.

orchestra opened the concert, followed by words of congratulations from friends and colleagues. Rostropovich then took the stage.

Rostropovich chose to perform Britten's contribution first, followed by the remaining nine works, separating them into groups of three: Beck, Holliger, and Huber; Halffter, Berio, and Fortner; and Dutilleux, Lutoslawski, and Ginastera. While the groupings of the pieces are documented, there is no evidence suggesting the order within each grouping or as to even the order of the groups themselves. In addition to performing, Rostropovich also spoke about each work. With the help of an interpreter, composer Constantin Regamey, Slava explained the work to the audience prior to each performance.

The concert program contained approximately an hour and a half of music. In addition, people close to Sacher spoke of his contributions to music and of their admiration of his achievements. Rostropovich also presented Sacher with letters written for him by close friends and colleagues.

Rostropovich's choice of groupings was most likely based on finding a balance in terms of cello technique and compositional aesthetic. It is obvious that the series should begin with Britten's work. Britten's contribution demonstrates the Sacher pitches and is clearly written as the theme, setting up the remaining nine works as variations.

The first group of three consisted of one traditional piece and two avant-garde works. Beck's homage is clearly reliant on the motto, and never makes use of extended techniques. In contrast, Holliger's work is perhaps the most avant-garde, relying heavily on extended technique and making very little use of the Sacher hexachord. Huber's contribution, similar to Holliger's in his radical use of technique, highlights the Sacher pitches by separating them into sections that are titled using the letters from Sacher's first name. If he indeed performed Holliger's piece in

the middle of the grouping, Rostropovich balanced the music in terms of style while placing the pieces that make greater use of the Sacher pitches at the beginning and the end.

The second group included the music of Halffter, Berio, and Fortner. As previously mentioned, Berio's work was a much different, 1976 version that was replaced in 1978. Although there is no published edition of the 1976 work, it is probable that Berio's contribution was similar to the compositional style of the later version. These three works each make a comprehensive blend of tradition and the avant-garde and are moderate in their use of extended techniques. Each work quietly begins and ends with the Sacher hexachord and they are the more song-like within the collection.

The final group was made up of the works of Dutilleux, Lutoslawski, and Ginastera. Each work is novel in its approach to the given material, fully incorporating the Sacher hexachord while providing a specific programmatic element. Dutilleux's work is the only selection to contain alternate tuning and to incorporate hexachords from other important Sacher commissions. The Lutoslawki piece alternates the traditionally notated cantus firmus with passages in quarter tones. Ginastera's contribution, the only work to rely on imagery, makes use of the music of the Andean culture combined with elements of the European avant-garde. Each of these three works is memorable in their emphasis on one particular technique and any of them would be an appropriate choice to close a concert.

These contributions to contemporary cello literature have made a considerable impact on solo cello repertoire. This is an astounding addition of twelve new works by some of the most influential composers of the twentieth century, all written for one specific occasion. It was an outstanding way of celebrating the birthday and the life of an important musical figure, Paul Sacher.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The works dedicated to Paul Sacher and based on the spelling of his last name are characteristic of each composer's compositional aesthetic. Although the works share a common thread, the Sacher hexachord is written in all possible forms. Some of the works cleverly disguise the hexachord while others incorporate the pitches in a clearly recognizable manner, the hexachord presenting itself in a variety of ways. In certain works the pitches use strict serial techniques while in others works the hexachord is transformed into an ornamental flourish or ornate phrase.

It is the commonality of both the hexachord and the birthday dedication that groups the works in one context and as a complete collection. It was a feat to commission works from twelve of the more prominent musical figures of the twentieth century, and only a musician of the stature of Mstislav Rostropovich could have seen the collection to its fruition. Rostropovich's efforts greatly expanded the repertoire and furthered the use of new compositional techniques on the cello.

The compositions by Britten and Beck use traditional notation and no extended cello technique. These two composers found inspiration in the musical forms of the past and integrated them into their works. Both works written in traditional form, Britten's theme fully incorporated the motto and established the six Sacher pitches as the primary hexachord, while Beck chose to use the pitches briefly as a point of departure.

The works by Berio, Boulez, Fortner, Halffter, Lutoslawski, Ginastera, and Dutilleux blend traditional and modern compositional techniques. These seven compositions are written using traditional notation, and are interspersed with extended cello techniques such as col legno, ponticello, and left hand pizzicato. While some of the composers use proportional notation to give a sense of breadth to the music, others supply extremely specific tempo markings or vary the time signature in order to achieve rhythmic precision.

The compositions by Holliger, Henze, and Huber are the more extended works in terms of technique, concept, and notation. These three composers used the Sacher hexachord while composing with great innovation of both style and form. Although these works are technically challenging, the music is easy to understand and the legends clarify the technical devices and effects.

In terms of style, this array of works encompasses all of the main propensities of twentieth-century music. Compared to other works in the cello literature, this collection makes inordinate demands on the cellist's virtuosity and technique. Several of these works are considered standard cello repertoire of the twentieth century, creating an appropriate addition to the legacy of a great patron and musician.

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Arco (It.: 'bow') - Used alone or as *coll'arco* after a passage marked pizzicato.

Artificial harmonics - Harmonics that are not naturally produced by the string and are obtained by fingering the written note and lightly touching the string a perfect 4th above. They are generally notated by writing diamond-headed notes a perfect 4th above the main note.

Col legno (It.: 'with the wood') - A term in string playing meaning to set the strings of the instrument in motion using the wood of the bow rather than the hair. Col legno gives a dry, staccato effect.

Col legno battuto (Ger. *geschlagen*) - tapping the string with the wood of the bow

Col legno tratto (Ger. *gestrichen*) - drawing the wood across the string

Down bow - to draw the bow from the frog to the tip

Fingerschlag (Ger.) -tap the fingers against the fingerboard in a hammered motion.

Glissando (italianized, from Fr. *glisser*: 'to slide') - Term generally used instructing a performer to execute a passage in a rapid, sliding movement. Composers will often write a solid line between the pitches.

Martelé (Fr.: 'hammered') - A percussive on-string stroke produced by an explosive release following heavy initial pressure on the string, and a subsequent stop of the arm before the next note. The result is a sforzando-like attack with rests between strokes.

Ossia - (It.: 'alternatively') - A word used in musical scores to mark an alternative passage.

Pizzicato (It.: 'plucked') - A direction meaning to pluck the string(s) of a (generally bowed) instrument using the fingers. It is normally abbreviated 'pizz.'

Ponticello (It.: 'on the bridge') - An instruction to bow close to, or even on, the bridge. This effect encourages the higher harmonics, producing a thin, nasal, glassy sound.

Quarter tone - An interval half the size of a semitone or half-step.

Staccato (It.: 'detached') - An individual note separated by a silence of articulation. In 20th-century notation the staccato is generally articulated by a dot over or under the note.

Sul tasto (It.: 'on the fingerboard') - An instruction to bow or pluck near or over the fingerboard.

Tremolo (It.: 'trembling') - The rapid reiteration of a note or chord by using back-and-forth strokes of the bow.

Trill - A type of embellishment that consists of rapid alternation of the main note with another tone above or below it.

Up bow - to draw the bow from the tip to the frog

Vibrato (It.: 'to shake') - A regular fluctuation of pitch that is produced by moving the finger backwards and forwards, aided by the wrist and by the forearm.

All definitions are adapted from the Oxford Dictionary of Music, 2nd edition.