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## Bohuslav Martin# and His First Cello Sonata: A Performance Guide

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF MUSIC

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ  
AND HIS FIRST CELLO SONATA:  
A PERFORMANCE GUIDE

By  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The First Sonata for Cello and Piano by Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959) is a work that has been undeservingly neglected in performance history. This treatise makes this work more approachable for performers, from both a musical and a technical standpoint. The historical and musical context of the piece was examined, and the work was analyzed from a performer's perspective. This treatise presents these findings, followed by a series of preparatory technical exercises for the cello.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959) was a prolific twentieth-century Czech composer. Coming from a unique background and absorbing a vast array of influences over the course of his lifetime, Martinů developed into one of the most distinct musical voices of the twentieth century. Despite his musical accomplishments and the widespread success of some of his works, his First Sonata for Cello and Piano has failed to establish itself within the mainstream cello repertoire. This is likely due to the relative inaccessibility to the printed music,<sup>1</sup> and to the musically and technically demanding nature of the piece.

The intention of this paper is to address some of the challenges associated with this sonata. Chapter 2 provides a biographical background of the composer, and establishes an understanding of some of Martinů's most significant influences. Chapter 3 creates a context of this work within the composer's output by providing a general idea of some of his most striking and significant works. Building on the context established in the previous chapters, Chapter 4 addresses the background and significance of Martinů's First Sonata for Cello and Piano in particular. Chapters 5 and 6 address the musical and technical challenges of the piece. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of each movement, with musical suggestions for performance. Chapter 6 offers some preparatory technical exercises that are designed to isolate some of the technical challenges of this piece.

In the canon of cello sonatas, Martinů is the only prominent Czech composer to provide full-length sonatas as an addition to the repertoire. While he did in fact write three sonatas, the scope of this paper is to focus on the first one. Martinů offers a unique musical voice to twentieth-century literature, one that blends his Czech roots with influences from his time in Paris, while also offering distinctly new ideas. This sonata incorporates the innovative rhythmic drive that is distinctly recognizable as Martinů's, with the treatment of color and effect that is so

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<sup>1</sup> Accessibility to the score has improved greatly with improvements to communication and technology, although this score is still only available through the publisher in Europe. In the United States, music can be purchased through United Music Publishing's American affiliate, Boosey & Hawkes, through their website: <http://www.boosey.com/shop/prod/Martinu-Bohuslav-Cello-Sonata-No1-Cello-Piano/640006>.

typically French. These diverse influences are filtered through the lens of a Czech composer who strongly believed in the importance of those national roots. An understanding of these varied influences and interests, along with musical and technical understanding of the piece, is crucial to a successful and convincing performance of this work. The establishment of this multi-faceted understanding is what the writer hopes to provide for performers.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIOGRAPHY

Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959) was born in the small country town of Polička, which is located on the border of Bohemia and Moravia in the Czech Republic. Martinů's father was a shoemaker, in addition to being the keeper of the church tower of St. James the Great. The latter resulted in a rather unusual childhood environment for the young composer. Martinů was raised in relative isolation until age eleven, living atop the church tower looked after by his father. This upbringing inevitably impacted the lens through which Martinů viewed the world and therefore composed; as described by his longtime friend and biographer, Miloš Šafránek:

To Bohuslav it often seemed as though the change of the seasons-the arrival of spring, the summer storms, with their lightning and thunder, the autumn winds, and the winter snows-reached him at first hand, direct from heaven, before the little antlike people on the earth below received them. But even these elements were always clearly etched, entirely without any veil of romantic mist, because in the dry climate of this country fogs are almost unknown...For him humanity could attain significance only when it involved large groups of people, such as funeral processions winding slowly from the church to the festivities; or the occasional military maneuvers, which to him appeared like a game of animated toy soldiers, with little cannon, horses, and wagons. But on Sundays and holidays and nearly every weekday morning the sound of conventional organ music and the singing of churchgoers were wafted up to him. And the rhythmical passing of time, its every second, was ceaselessly marked by the ticking of the large tower clock.<sup>2</sup>

Martinů began his musical education at an early age, starting violin lessons at age seven and taking up composition just a few years later. He entered the Prague Conservatoire to continue his violin studies in 1906, at age 16, but was expelled in 1910 for "incorrigible negligence."<sup>3</sup> This was a result of a number of things: failure to keep up with his coursework, his preoccupation with works of theater and literature that seemed to distract him from his studies, and an unusual social nature that some experts have posthumously diagnosed as Asperger's

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<sup>2</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: The Man and his Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944), 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 47-48.

Syndrome.<sup>4</sup> A few years after this dismissal, at age twenty Martinů returned to his hometown of Polička, where he began making his living by teaching violin and piano lessons, and occasionally joining the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in the second violin section. After another brief stint at the Prague Conservatoire, where he was a student of violinist and composer Joseph Suk, Martinů left his homeland in 1923 and relocated to Paris to devote himself to composition.<sup>5</sup>

Although he felt a deep connection to his homeland, Martinů felt that his musical education must be continued outside of its borders. Some of the opinions, ideals, and ways of thinking that were instilled in him during his studies and upbringing did not properly embody his idea of Czech expression or values. In his own words,

What impelled me to get to know French culture were more serious considerations. Instinctively I felt, even when I was still young and couldn't analyze or think clearly, that there were things, opinions, that are served up to us, that do not and cannot find an echo in our national spirit, in our national Czech expression, and that there are things artificially preserved, which divert our national spiritual development into a domain that is not native to our Czech expression, that becomes a caricature and needlessly exhausts our energies... What I went to France in quest of was not Debussy, nor Impressionism, nor musical expression, but the real foundations on which Western culture rests and which, in my opinion, conforms much more to our proper national character than a maze of conjectures and problems.<sup>6</sup>

Musical innovations that had appeared elsewhere in Europe, namely in the music of Mussorgsky and Debussy, were very late to reach Prague. Once they did, they were filtered through the harsh scrutiny of German musical criticism, which was heavily dominant in Czech musical culture. Revolutionary works and trends were condemned by these critics as “lacking ‘an idea’ and a programme or content that could be expressed in words.”<sup>7</sup> Debussy, who Martinů called “the great revelation of his life” was the recipient of this harsh criticism, as were some of Martinů’s mentors, teachers, and most beloved Czech composers. Dvořák, Janáček, Novák, and

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<sup>4</sup> James F. Rybka, *Bohuslav Martinů: The Compulsion to Compose* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), ix-xi.

<sup>5</sup> Jan Smaczny, "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

<sup>6</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 87-88.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 50.

Suk were all criticized in turn for their “naturalism...lack of thought-content and their too great stress on tone colouring and tone volume.”<sup>8</sup>

In order to reconcile the disparity between what he felt was being blindly dispersed at the heavily German-influenced Czech schools and what he considered to be a true realization of Czech expression, Martinů sought some distance from the Czech music scene, and found refuge in the creative freedom that was so abundant in Paris. While he originally arrived in Paris in 1923 with a brief, three-month scholarship to study composition with Albert Roussel, Martinů made Paris his home for the next seventeen years, making annual visits home to Czechoslovakia.

Martinů settled in the artists’ quarter of Montparnasse in Paris, and even considering his poverty, he loved Parisian life. He drew inspiration from the city, and connected with a group of other non-French composers, later known as *L’École de Paris*.<sup>9</sup> Martinů spent a great deal of time at the *Café du Dome*, the favorite meeting place of *L’École de Paris*. Towards the end of his life, after he settled in the United States and following the war, Martinů was asked by a pupil what he missed most about Paris. His answer was simple: “Les cafés.”<sup>10</sup>

Martinů was an avid reader and took daily walks along the Seine, often buying the books that would gradually fill his apartment. Despite his inclusion by many other artists, Martinů tended to keep to himself, and was not prone to traveling in the most elite Parisian social circles. As remarked by Pierre-Octave Ferroud:

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<sup>8</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 50.

<sup>9</sup> L’École de Paris was comprised of composers originating from Eastern and Central Europe who were working in Paris between the two World Wars, including Martinů, Alexandre Tansman, Marcel Mihailovici, Tibor Harsányi, and Alexander Tcherepnin. In Tansman’s own words, “It was not a school in the normal sense of the word but rather a group of composers from Eastern and Central Europe. We were bonded by a deep friendship as well as an attachment to France and its culture. Certainly our interests were closely tied to the period of our youth, but we never built ourselves “a little shrine,” nor did we present ourselves as an artistic group united by a technical or aesthetic slogan. Each of us – whether Mihailovici, Martinů, or Harsányi – went his own way. A sort of “École de Paris” had always existed, for the capital of France served as a constant magnet for artists. They drew on French sources and enriched their own, unique ethnic contributions...For Paris is capable of giving artists a superb feeling of balance, without taking away their individuality.”

Liudmila Zinov’evna Korabel’nikova, *Alexander Tcherepnin: The Saga of a Russian Emigré Composer*, ed. Suellen Hershman, trans. Anna Winstein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 67.

<sup>10</sup> Erik Anthony Entwistle, “Martinů in Paris: A Synthesis of Musical Styles and Symbols” (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002), 10.

He disappears for weeks together, without informing anyone. When you think he is still in Paris, he is in Prague. If he is thought to be in Prague, he is in the country. His intuition is such that, conversing with him, one has the immediate impression that he is acquainted with the book-selling world, with the world of the theatre or the latest exhibition. And yet he has not been seen about and one is inclined to believe that he has acquired his knowledge in dreams, so secret is the source from which it springs.<sup>11</sup>

Late in 1926 Martinů began living with Charlotte Quennehen, who worked as a dressmaker and financially supported the impoverished composer. Despite his mother's disapproval, he married Quennehen in 1931. In addition to providing the financial support that Martinů so desperately needed, Charlotte took care of many day-to-day tasks that he struggled with, and championed her husband's work throughout his life and after his death.

In 1937, Martinů met a young Czech composer and conductor named Vítězlava Kaprálová, and encouraged her to come to Paris as his composition student that fall. This relationship quickly developed into an intense affair. Following Kaprálová's studies and after she had returned to Czechoslovakia, Martinů penned many passionate letters asking her to run away with him to America.<sup>12</sup> Eventually, Kaprálová began an affair with writer Jiří Mucha, marrying him in 1940 before tragically dying of tuberculosis just two months later. The intensity of his feelings for Kaprálová, entwined with her tragically short life was an overwhelmingly traumatic series of events for Martinů, and the cause of much grief for the composer.

While he was suffering this personal tragedy, Nazi forces invaded Czechoslovakia in March of 1939. Upon hearing of the invasion of his homeland, Martinů attempted to join the military, but was turned away because of his age. As an alternative, Martinů composed the nationalistic work *Polsni mše* ('Field Mass'), which he dedicated to the Free Czechoslovak Army Band. This piece caused him to be blacklisted by the Nazis, which put him and his wife in a precarious position as Nazi forces spread throughout Europe. Martinů and his wife stayed in Paris as long as they could, fleeing to the South of France in 1940 just as the German army arrived in the city. They stayed for several months in Aix-en-Provence before sailing for the United States in March of 1941. During his time in the US, Martinů taught at various schools, including the Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood, MA), Princeton University, and others.

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<sup>11</sup> Pierre-Octave Ferroud, "A Great Musician of Today: B. Martinů," *The Chesterian* XVII, no. 122 (March-April 1937): 90.

<sup>12</sup> Jan Smaczny, "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

In the summer of 1946, while teaching at Tanglewood, Martinů suffered a serious fall, which slowed his compositional output and delayed his return to Europe. Recovery from this fall was quite slow, and Martinů did not steadily produce compositions again until 1948. Having accepted a teaching position at the Prague Conservatoire at the end of the war, Martinů was not able to make the journey back to Europe until 1953, when he received the aid of a Guggenheim scholarship. Although he returned to Europe at this time, Martinů never returned to Prague, spending his final years in France and Switzerland, following one final trip to New York.<sup>13</sup> Martinů died of stomach cancer at a sanatorium in Switzerland in August of 1959.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Jan Smaczny. "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Thompson, *Dictionary of Twentieth-century Composers, 1911-71* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973), 313.



## CHAPTER 3

### AN OVERVIEW OF MARTINŮ'S WORKS

Martinů was not known for his organizational prowess. With no system of counting, cataloguing, or keeping track of his works, he was often inattentive to the locations of his scores, and had to be reminded of works that he had written previously and seemed to have no memory of at all.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately, Belgian musicologist Harry Halbreich catalogued all of Martinů's published compositions, assigning each one an H. number based on its date of publication. This system creates a catalogue of Martinů's works, which are generally grouped into three categories, and are identified by chronology as well as where the composer lived at the time. These three compositional periods are: early compositions in Polička and Prague (1902-1923), Paris (1923-1940) and his final years, which were spent in both the United States and in Europe (1941-1959).

Martinů was a prolific composer, displaying facility in composing within many different genres and instrumentations. In total, he composed sixteen operas, twenty-three ballets, fifty works for orchestra, twenty-eight concertos, and about ninety chamber works. Additionally, he wrote over one hundred works each for solo piano and different arrangements involving the voice.<sup>16</sup> In particular, Martinů displayed ease and enjoyment in working within the genre of chamber music, and produced chamber music steadily throughout his lifetime.

#### 3.1 Early Years in Polička and Prague (1902-1923)

Prior to his move to Paris in 1923, Martinů's compositions are firmly grounded in the Czech nationalist style, following in the compositional footsteps of Smetana and Dvořák.<sup>17</sup> Many prominent Czech composers, including Martinů, viewed their works as a reflection of the struggle inherent in their desire for artistic independence from the romantic tradition. This

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<sup>15</sup> Brian Large, *Martinů* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1975), 157.

<sup>16</sup> Robert C. Simon, *Bohuslav Martinů: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 27-53.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Kent Perry, "The Violin and Piano Sonatas of Bohuslav Martinů" (DMA diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1973), 9.

conflict was described as a war “where the generals were composers and the infantry were orchestras... There have been periods in Czech history where the people, deprived of personal and religious freedom and of their mother tongue, have expressed in music their love and veneration for all that was denied them, defiance and rebellion against all who tyrannized over them.”<sup>18</sup> The nineteenth century provided a surge in Czech nationalism, as the Hapsburg monarchy relaxed, leading to a rediscovery of Czech history, language, and culture.<sup>19</sup> During this time, composers such as Smetana, Dvořák, Janáček, and Novák produced many new works that were enriched with folk idioms, rather than the cosmopolitan style that had pervaded the romantic tradition.<sup>20</sup>

This Czech resurgence occurred just prior to Martinů’s lifetime, and had a heavy impact on the generation of composers just before Martinů, who would become his mentors and teachers. This inevitably impacted Martinů in turn, and traces of this national influence can be seen in his works throughout his lifetime. Some clearly identifiable Czech elements that can be found in the music of Martinů are polka rhythms, *Svaty Vaclave* chorales,<sup>21</sup> and stylized folk tunes.<sup>22</sup> These richly nationalist Czech traditions and styles were ingrained in Martinů from an early age and even after the absorption of many new styles and influences, he consciously strove to retain this Czech flavor.

Slavic characteristics...are much more marked in Bohuslav Martinů. Living in Paris, he may be called the most promising musician of the younger generation. The richness and strength of his inspiration, his overflowing temperament, which at times threatens to disregard form, reveal him as a most forceful creative power...Martinů is a supreme

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<sup>18</sup> David Yeomans, *Piano Music of the Czech Romantics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Vladimír Štěpánek and Gohumil Karásek, “Czech Music,” preface in *An Outline of Czech and Slovak Music*, Vol I (Prague: Orbis, 1964).

<sup>21</sup> *Svaty Vaclave*, or St. Wenceslas hymn is one of the earliest examples of Czech music, dating back to the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, and possibly much earlier. This hymn was popular during the nationalist intensity of the Czech nationalistic resurgence of the nineteenth century, and was set by many composers during this time. Its popularity was such that it was considered a candidate for the Czech national anthem in 1918.

Jan Smaczny, “Czech Republic,” *The Oxford Companion to Music*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed December 9, 2016, [http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e1773?q=st+wenceslas+chorale&search=quick&pos=5&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e1773?q=st+wenceslas+chorale&search=quick&pos=5&_start=1#firsthit).

<sup>22</sup> Erik Anthony Entwistle, “Martinů in Paris: A Synthesis of Musical Styles and Symbols” (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002), viii.

master of rhythm though of a different type...Martinů, with his more personal, compact rhythm – often suggesting a dance style – may be called a master of vertical rhythm.<sup>23</sup>

The earliest surviving composition of Martinů's is a string quartet titled *Tri Jezdci*<sup>24</sup> ('The Three Horsemen') that depicts the story of the three Czech noblemen who spread the news of the burning of Jan Hus.<sup>25</sup> Martinů composed this quartet in 1902 at age eleven, prior to any formal compositional training. Its treatment of the motivic narrative is straightforward, which is a clear foreshadowing of Martinů's "cell" style of composition that would appear in the 1930's, and will be discussed in the following section.<sup>26</sup> The quartet is written in three brief movements, played without pause. It is based on a ballad by Jaroslav Vrchlický (1853-1912), one of the most well-known Czech lyrical poets.<sup>27</sup> Straightforward – and sometimes quite literal – in its depiction of the text, Martinů's early Czech nationalist influence shines through clearly in this composition. Despite this straightforward and sometimes clumsy writing, this early piece already contains hints of compositional elements that would eventually become prominent trademarks of Martinů's style. First, Martinů's interest in color is apparent in the exploration and marked contrasts in this work. This interest in color and sound would arguably draw him to the music of Claude Debussy and Albert Roussel, leading him to make Paris his home for seventeen years. Second, despite Martinů's use of simple rhythmic patterns in this piece, he uses rhythm as featured element of the work. This use of rhythm as a foundation for a work will become one of Martinů's most identifiable compositional traits.

The year of 1908 marked a turning point for Martinů's musical development. At this time, Martinů first heard Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the German Theatre in Prague and

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<sup>23</sup> Nikolai Lopatnikoff, "Independents in Central Europe," *Modern Music* 8, no. 4 (1931): 31-32.

<sup>24</sup> Robert C. Simon, *Bohuslav Martinů: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 27-53.

<sup>25</sup> Jan Hus was the most important Czech religious figure of the fifteenth century. After much conflict with the Western Schism, he was convicted of heresy at the Council of Constance and burned at the stake in 1415.

Matthew Spinka and František M. Bartoš, "Jan Hus," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., accessed March 24, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Jan-Hus>.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Kent Perry, "The Violin and Piano Sonatas of Bohuslav Martinů" (DMA diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1973), 15.

<sup>27</sup> Keith Anderson, "Bohuslav Martinů: String Quartets Nos 1 and 2 and Tri jezdcí," *Naxos Music Library*, accessed January 19, 2017, [http://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs\\_reviews.asp?item\\_code=8.553782&catNum=553782&filetype>About%20this%20Recording&language=English#](http://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs_reviews.asp?item_code=8.553782&catNum=553782&filetype>About%20this%20Recording&language=English#).

was profoundly impacted by it. In addition to the polytonal and polyrhythmic effects that were so revolutionary, Martinů was most inspired by the fact that “music was a law unto itself, that Debussy composed as freely as he breathed, without any rational musical systems.”<sup>28</sup> This reaction to the music of Debussy was a true catalyst towards Martinů’s rejection of the Czech musical education system, and fueled his desire to broaden his musical influences.

Martinů’s notoriety was clearly established with the premiere of his large-scale cantata *Czech Rhapsody* (1919), which is heavily grounded by his Czech nationalist roots. Written as a reaction to events surrounding World War I, this work stands out stylistically from the composer’s other works up to this point. It is structurally straightforward, and contains no traces of Impressionism, echoing the undisguised nationalism that can be seen in the works of Bedřich Smetana. Following the premiere of *Czech Rhapsody* in 1919, Martinů was considered one of the most prominent Czech composers. Continuing to explore his Czech nationalist roots, in 1920 the composer traveled to Slovakia to study folk songs.<sup>29</sup>

In 1920, Martinů became familiar with the work of Albert Roussel, the French composer who would later become his teacher and colleague. In particular, he heard a performance of Roussel’s Symphony No. 1, written between 1904-1906 and subtitled *Poeme de la forêt* (‘Poem of the Forest’). Contrary to the implication of the subtitle, this is not a programmatic work. Rather, it is a depiction of the four seasons, and it evokes characteristics of both Debussy and Vincent d’Indy, who was Roussel’s teacher.<sup>30</sup>

One final influence that Martinů absorbed just before his move to Paris was that of English madrigals, which he heard in Prague in 1922 performed by the English Singers. Works by William Byrd, Thomas Weelkes, and Thomas Morley inspired Martinů with fresh ideas. He was captivated by their free horizontal part-writing, scarcity of counterpoint, and relatively simple polyphonic structure. Lacking what Martinů considered to be overly complicated modern

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<sup>28</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 51.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 84.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Whitehouse, “Roussel: Symphony No. 1, Le poeme de la foret,” *Naxos Music Library*, accessed December 6, 2016, [http://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs\\_reviews.asp?item\\_code=8.570323&catNum=570323&filetype=About%20this%20Recording&language=English#](http://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs_reviews.asp?item_code=8.570323&catNum=570323&filetype=About%20this%20Recording&language=English#).

compositional devices, he found these works to be deeply innovative and moving, and he drew inspiration from early madrigals for many years to come.<sup>31</sup>

In his early works, some identifiable tendencies that will remain throughout Martinů's lifetime are already evident. First, his Czech upbringing instilled him with a deep national pride, which is clearly audible in these early works. Although his rejection of the Czech musical education system led him to seek instruction elsewhere, he was always in pursuit of the true essence of Czech music. Second, even his earliest compositions foreshadow the features that will be so prominent in his fully developed works: his cell method of composition, rhythmic drive, and his predilection for medieval compositional devices. Third, these early works demonstrate an awareness of color and compositional freedom that drew him to the music of Debussy and Roussel. This exposure and interest led him to leave his homeland in pursuit of a different musical direction. Over the approaching seventeen years that the composer would spend in Paris, his writing would be exposed to many new influences, and undergo a great deal of change. However, these early compositional features and influences would remain.

### **3.2 Paris (1923-1940)**

Martinů's musical exposure broadened greatly after his move to Paris, and his compositions reflect this influence of new styles. He continued to draw from the early influences he had absorbed up to this point, and built on them as he settled into Paris life. Originally intending to study in Paris for only three months, Martinů did not waste any time in getting to work on his compositions, or on the intentional absorption of what his new surroundings had to offer him. From the onset of his time in France, Martinů was exposed to two new significant influences: his teacher, Albert Roussel, and the music of Igor Stravinsky.

In Martinů's first meeting with Roussel in 1923, he received the direct advice to do two things: compose choral works and focus on developing his counterpoint skills. Although he had traveled to Paris to receive instruction from Roussel, he ignored both of these pieces of advice. This was a reflection of the nature of their relationship; rather than receiving direct compositional instruction from his new teacher, Martinů gained a broader sense of the

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<sup>31</sup> Jan Smaczny, "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

organization of musical ideas, and benefitted from a shared interest in the purity of sound and form that both composers wished to capture in their works.<sup>32</sup> This relationship, and the information that he gained from his teacher in Paris was fundamentally important in Martinů's search to find his unique voice as a composer.

In addition to the direct personal relationship between Roussel and Martinů, some parallels can be drawn between the two composers' development. Said of Roussel and his music: "Although he remained an outsider in French music, Albert Roussel...touched on almost all the stylisms of his era on the way to forging a highly personal idiom."<sup>33</sup> The same can be said of Martinů, with the addition that Martinů remained an outsider of Czech music as well. Both were inspired – especially early on in their careers – by the sounds of Impressionism, and both composers translated this influence in a less literal sense: implementing some elements of Impressionistic color and style while retaining a neo-Classical sense of balance and form, and relying heavily on rhythm. The works of Roussel can be classified into three main periods of composition: early works exhibiting Impressionist tendencies, middle period of exploration utilizing complex harmonic language and new musical territory, and the fully mature and unique idiom of his final period. This final period is hallmarked by a return to European neo-classicism, complex counterpoint, and reliance on rhythm,<sup>34</sup> and exhibits the greatest audible likeness to the works of Martinů. At the time that Martinů came to study with Roussel in 1923, he was in the midst of his exploratory middle period, which went on until about 1925. Considering the two composers maintained a close relationship as colleagues and friends until Roussel's death in 1937, it is significant to note the parallels in their individual evolutionary processes.

Martinů's interest in Stravinsky's music was sparked in 1924 after performances in Paris of *Petrushka*, *The Rite of Spring*, *A Soldier's Tale*, and *The Wedding*. Martinů was impressed by what he considered to be the true essence of the Russian spirit, and how Stravinsky was able to capture and convey it throughout these works. In the words of Šafránek, "So far as I know, Martinů never expressed himself with such passionate enthusiasm and frankness about the work

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<sup>32</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 94-95.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Whitehouse, "Roussel: Symphony No. 1, 'Le poeme de la foret,'" *Naxos Music Library*, accessed December 6, 2016, [http://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs\\_reviews.asp?item\\_code=8.570323&catNum=570323&filetype=About%20this%20Recording&language=English#](http://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs_reviews.asp?item_code=8.570323&catNum=570323&filetype=About%20this%20Recording&language=English#).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

of any other composer [than Stravinsky], for his manner of writing, even when it was a matter of his deepest convictions, was always moderate and reserved.”<sup>35</sup>

The distinct influence of Stravinsky on Martinů’s writing can be seen in the 1924 composition *Half-Time*. Said of this work: “Among the earliest results from his Parisian years was his ‘orchestral-rondo’ *Half-time* (1924), a work clearly inspired by Stravinsky’s Russian ballets. Although he defended the work from being a Stravinskian plagiarism, his polemical essays imply his desire to provoke the Czech critics with the sounds of the Parisian milieu.”<sup>36</sup> Relying on less traditional rhythms, which are “liberated from the tyranny of the bar line,”<sup>37</sup> *Half-Time* is a depiction of a Czech-French football (soccer) match, and is Martinů’s take on everyday life events that the composer considered to be “more vital than many of the different slogans under which music today proceeds along beaten paths.”<sup>38</sup> Some of the most salient features of this piece are audibly reflective of Stravinsky. Most noticeably, these are apparent in Martinů’s treatment of rhythm and tonality, as well as orchestration. Given the prominence of these compositional elements, this piece is remarkably demonstrative of Stravinsky’s influence on Martinů.

In addition to the influence of Stravinsky that is apparent in *Half-time*, this orchestral piece is substantial in that it marks a turning point in Martinů’s compositional style, and looks forward to his future works. A few prominent features of this piece that will become fixtures in Martinů’s later works are ragtime patterns, uneven rhythms, and polyrhythmic systems created from subtle patterns. The fact that many of these compositional trademarks center around rhythm is perhaps another remnant of the deeply-rooted Czech nationalism: Martinů remarked in 1941 that “the music of Czechoslovakia is rhythm – strong, vital rhythm.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 98-99.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas D. Svatos, “Bohuslav Martinů,” *The Orel Foundation*, accessed December 5, 2016, [http://orelfoundation.org/index.php/composers/article/bohuslav\\_martinu/](http://orelfoundation.org/index.php/composers/article/bohuslav_martinu/).

<sup>37</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 101.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Bohuslav Martinů, “An Interview in English: USA 1942,” *Bohuslav Martinů Institute*, accessed December 9, 2016, <http://www.martinu.cz/en/martinu/martinu-speaks/an-interview-in-english-usa-1942/>.

The appearance of ragtime patterns in *Half-time* is an indication of an additional influence that Martinů is clearly exploring in the later 1920's: jazz. Elements of jazz are most easily seen in *The Soldier and the Dancer* (1927), *Les larmes du couteau* (1928), *Les trois souhaits* (1929), and *Le Jazz* (1928).<sup>40</sup> While these specific works, all dating from the late 1920's, exhibit the most literal exploration into jazz and ragtime idioms, traces of these influences can be detected in many of his later compositions: in his treatment of rhythm and syncopation, harmony, and texture. Specifically, Martinů's use of syncopation would later become somewhat of a trademark of his style. Czech conductor Václav Neumann, who recorded the first complete cycle of Martinů's symphonies in the 1970's remarked: "Martinů's love of syncopation is a highly special feature of his music; he is incapable of expressing any musical ideas in standardized values – he consistently transforms it into syncopated shape, shifts the accent to the unaccented beat."<sup>41</sup>

Martinů's concentrated exposure to new influences occurred over the course of the 1920's during his first years in Paris, while he was working most closely with Roussel. This period of absorption was a central stage of his evolution as a composer, and was an integral part of the process by which he found his own unique voice as a composer. The process of absorbing influences and discovering his voice did not cease after the 1920's, but this was a period of great growth and learning for Martinů, the remnants of which would continue to appear in works for the rest of his compositional career. Martinů's works from this period are characterized by a syncopated, rhythmic language that blends jazz, Stravinsky-like primitivism and Czech folk elements. Martinů created works of great contrasts during this decade: humor and parody were balanced by sober musical language, conservative consonance was met with dissonant, more "distinctly modern" content, and pastoral folk tunes were set against musical harshness.<sup>42</sup>

Following this decade of exploration, contrasts, and absorption of new influences, the 1930's was a period of fusion, in which Martinů merged these widely variable influences into a unified style.

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<sup>40</sup> Jan Smaczny. "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

<sup>41</sup> Jaroslav Mihule, liner notes to *Martinů: Symphonies*, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra with Václav Neumann, Supraphon 11 0382-2, CD, 1989.

<sup>42</sup> Erik Anthony Entwistle, "Martinů in Paris: A Synthesis of Musical Styles and Symbols" (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002), ix.



After producing works in the 1920's that were clearly influenced by Stravinsky, jazz, dance, or neoclassicism, Martinů's music in the 1930's coalesced into a relatively unified style. It reflected not only his inspirations from Paris, but also his renewed interest in folk music and a fascination with the Baroque concerto grosso. This synthesis emerged as early as 1931 with the Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra, H. 207, and would continue throughout the decade.<sup>43</sup>

This unification of styles that occurred throughout the 1930's coincided with a more literal return to the roots of his homeland, expressed by the use of folk themes and elements from his Czech and Moravian upbringing, collaborating with artists and authors from Prague, and garnering attention as the leading voice of Czech music.<sup>44</sup> During this time, he wrote a number of theater works based on Czech folklore, and incorporated many folk songs into his works without the "complications of modern music."<sup>45</sup> Martinů's music of this period can be characterized as a synthesis of Baroque compositional forms and procedures with the folk music and culture of Czechoslovakia. This fusion can be seen clearly in works such as his ballet *Spalicek, Staroceska rikadla*, written for a women's choir, and *Kystice*, which is a collection of ballads for soprano, tenor, bass, mixed chorus, and orchestra.<sup>46</sup>

The years between 1931-1937 marked a period of intense creativity for Martinů, and a period in which he was able to articulate "what he had in his head."<sup>47</sup> His reputation as a leading Czech composer grew, granting him performances in Prague and Brno, as well as in Berlin, London, Boston, and Venice.<sup>48</sup> Works from this period that demonstrate the growth of his success as a composer include his First Cello Concerto (1931), premiered in Berlin, and his Concerto for string quartet and orchestra (written in 1931 and premiered in 1932), performed in London and followed shortly thereafter by an American premiere in Boston.

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<sup>43</sup> Robert C. Simon, *Bohuslav Martinů: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 5.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 139.

<sup>46</sup> Jan Smaczny, "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

<sup>47</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 172.

<sup>48</sup> Jan Smaczny, "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

In the 1930's he began using a new compositional technique that was not a development of subjects or themes, but instead, a series of "cells" which provided organic growth to a composition.<sup>49</sup> Cells were created by using a limited number of pitches, and were then developed in a variety of ways. Martinů referred to this method of composition as a "geometric" approach.<sup>50</sup> This organized approach creates a sense of motivic unity throughout an entire piece, and is a method of composition that is prevalent in many of Martinů's works from the 1930's and later.

Following the richly prolific period from 1931 to 1937, 1939 was a difficult year for Martinů, both personally and creatively. He struggled to finish compositions, half-heartedly made plans to leave Europe for America, and was wrapped up in a passionate but troubling affair with a student, Vitezslava Kaprálová.

The approach of war at the end of the thirties coincided with the composer's intense affair with his pupil Vitezslava Kapralova, and his symbolic use of national elements gained new potency (and, given Kapralova's premature death at age 25 and Martinů's future destiny as an exile, poignancy as well). The works from this period mark the end of the most significant chapter in Martinů's life, one that yielded a fascinating and rich musical legacy.<sup>51</sup>

During this time, and immediately before the composition of his First Cello Sonata, he returned to his fascination with madrigals, and wrote a cycle of eight short vocal pieces entitled *Madrigals*. Set to selections of Czech folk poetry depicting a love story, this piece was a true combination of modernism, Renaissance forms, and Czech nationalism. Despite the enthusiastic reception after a reading of this piece, Martinů never published it, remarking "I don't think they are good, so they will remain in my drawer."<sup>52</sup> Šafránek speculated that the composer's dislike of the work had more to do with the textual subject matter, rather than the music itself.

Immediately following the composition of *Madrigals* in March of 1939, Nazi forces occupied Czechoslovakia, which was devastating to Martinů.

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<sup>49</sup> Richard Kent Perry, "The Violin and Piano Sonatas of Bohuslav Martinů" (DMA diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1973), 15.

<sup>50</sup> Erik Anthony Entwistle, "Martinů in Paris: A Synthesis of Musical Styles and Symbols" (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002), 42.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, ix.

<sup>52</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 189.

Although separated from Czechoslovakia, the tribulations of his homeland affected Martinů profoundly, and its occupation by the Germans in 1939 caused him infinite sadness. He found an outlet for his feelings in the Sonata for cello and piano No 1. Apart from a set of *Fairy Tales* for piano, dedicated to his pupil the ailing Vitezslava Kaprálová, it is the only composition ascribed to that traumatic year. It is dated 12 May.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.3 Martinů's Final Years:

#### The United States (1941-1953) and Return to Europe (1953-1959)

After spending seventeen years in Paris and following the stress caused by the war, Martinů had some difficulty adjusting to life in the United States. He spent a few months in a state of lethargy, not writing any music and not wanting to make any decisions.<sup>54</sup> However, after receiving a warm welcome - he was quite well known as a composer in the United States by the time of his arrival – he eventually settled into his new life and this was a period of great creativity for him.<sup>55</sup> In addition to all six of his symphonies, he produced two operas, and a large number of chamber works in this final compositional period.<sup>56</sup>

The first work that Martinů completed in the United States was his *Concerto da Camera*, H. 134 for violin and string orchestra with piano and timpani, dated August 20, 1941. It had been commissioned by Paul Sacher before Martinů's departure from Europe, and its completion was delayed a number of times. Martinů wrote to Sacher a number of times explaining these delays, once stating "The new life absorbs me too much and does not give me time to think about myself. I am counting now on summer for gathering and ordering my thoughts."<sup>57</sup>

Throughout his entire output, Martinů's works are written within the framework of harmonic tonality, despite the presence of dissonant harmonies throughout.<sup>58</sup> This is particularly

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<sup>53</sup> Kenneth Dommett, liner notes to *Bohuslav Martinů Cello Sonatas*, Steven Isserlis and Peter Evans, Hyperion H55185, CD, 1988.

<sup>54</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 201.

<sup>55</sup> Jan Smaczny, "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

<sup>56</sup> Robert C. Simon, *Bohuslav Martinů: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 27-53.

<sup>57</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 202.

<sup>58</sup> Jan Smaczny, "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

evident in his final compositional period, and can be clearly seen in his six symphonies, written between 1942 and 1953.

The availability of several, well-organized American orchestras made symphonic composition immediately relevant to his activities, which resulted in the five symphonies written in the years 1942-46 and several other orchestral works. His instrumental idiom loosens up at this time from the tighter, neoclassical approach of the previous decade and his sound becomes harmonically warmer as well. With virtually no knowledge of his pre-American music, Martinů's immediate reputation in some U.S. critical circles even became one of a romantic symphonist.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to clearly tonal harmonic language, Martinů's works from this period highlight his distinctive treatment of cadences. The most notable of these cadences, sometimes known as the Moravian cadence, is a modified plagal cadence. "The Moravian cadence can be seen as an exotic form of the plagal cadence, enriched by placing a dominant thirteenth chord on the subdominant degree."<sup>60</sup> The prevalence of this cadence is an indication of circling back to his Czech roots. Other evidence of this nationalistic influence can be seen in his harmonization of themes in sixths and thirds, as well as the widespread usage of second-inversion chords.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to the general compositional features that are solidified by the end of his Paris period and into his final compositional period, Martinů did a great deal of writing and introspection during his time in the United States. This was in part due to the proposition of a biography on Martinů by his friend, Miloš Šafránek, which was published in 1944, and also as a result of the great amount of teaching that Martinů was doing at the time. This new role as a composition teacher led him to look inward and analyze his compositional process, in addition to the analysis of his works. A glimpse of this self-reflection can be seen in the program notes that he provided for his fourth symphony, written in 1945.

The whole analysis can give a picture of the work, but it does not bring us much nearer to understanding the form, which is the spirit of the work and which depends on many other factors than the work with the themes and the structural design, the balance of the material used. The structure of a work is something fixed and definite, whereas the form is alive, and its expression, symbol, is always a new reactional element at the moment of the work's realization, it is "sensation" actively and plastically realized not in the course of analysis, but again in the active approach and attitude of the listener to the work, that

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<sup>59</sup>Thomas D. Svatos, "Martinů on Music and Culture: A View from his Parisian Criticism and 1940s Notes" (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2001), 79-80.

<sup>60</sup>Michael Crump, *Martinů and the Symphony* (Rochester: Boydell & Brower Ltd, 2010), 140.

<sup>61</sup>Jan Smaczny, "Martinů, Bohuslav," *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/17940>.

is, in the course of the actual communication, performance, and committing to the memory and its absorption into the spiritual process.<sup>62</sup>

This importance and expression of form above all is something that Martinů had been striving for throughout his career, and which is made abundantly clear in this final compositional period. As stated by Šafránek,

In Martinů's view, America accelerated his development and return to the classical principles of music. In Paris sometimes a speculative technical side appeared to his composition; now he does not force it and remains within reasonable limits. Perhaps it is not only the influence of America, the trend had already set in Paris, but America hastened it and helped him throw off certain restrictions imposed by a too great preoccupation with technique.<sup>63</sup>

Martinů felt somewhat stifled by his life in the United States, complaining of his "uniform surroundings" and that his "monotonous environment" detracted from the diversity of character in his works.<sup>64</sup> Despite the overwhelmingly positive response to his first five symphonies, all written in the United States between 1942 and 1946, a common thread of character uniformity can be traced throughout, and this uniformity seemed to bother Martinů.

Following his years in the United States, where Martinů returned to his classical sensibilities, the composer returned to Europe in 1953. These final years were spent living peacefully, and writing with intense creativity. This creativity and freedom of composition introduces Martinů's final compositional approach, in which he explores the balance of fantasy against the previously-prioritized form above all. In his own words, his writing of this time is

not relying so much on the theme, but more on fantasy, and partly in not exploiting the theme to the limit; that is I do not squeeze it dry in variations till there is nothing left of it but a husk. So when I feel that the theme has been made use of, I start something else, with a little fantasy; however, the shape changes considerably (which causes the critics trouble), but that does not mean that there is no shape.<sup>65</sup>

This implies a straying from the "cell" approach developed over the 1930's during his time in Paris, and a freer style of composition. The first elements of fantasy in Martinů's works

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<sup>62</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 244.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 202.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Kent Perry, "The Violin and Piano Sonatas of Bohuslav Martinů" (DMA diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1973), 20.

<sup>65</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 312.

is seen in his 1938 *Concerto Grosso*, followed by *Symphonic Fantasies* (1953), *The Rock* (1957), and *Parables* (1957).<sup>66</sup> This uninhibited freedom of composition continues throughout his final years.

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<sup>66</sup> Richard Kent Perry, “The Violin and Piano Sonatas of Bohuslav Martinů” (DMA diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1973), 21.

## CHAPTER 4

### SONATA NO. 1: BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Towards the end of his time in Paris, amidst growing uncertainty in Europe as World War II approached, Martinů's compositional output slowed considerably. During this time, Martinů completed only a few new works. One of these was his First Cello Sonata, H. 277, which he composed in 1939, but did not publish until 1949. Prior to this sonata, Martinů's writings featuring the cello include his *Concertino* (1924) – which was also his first concerto-style work – and the first of his two duos for violin and cello (1927). He composed the first of his two cello concertos in 1930, and another followed in 1945.<sup>67</sup>

At the difficult and tumultuous time around the composition of his First Cello Sonata, Martinů attended a concert in Paris where he heard a Bach Suite for strings, oboes, and trumpets. He remarked to a pupil with tears in his eyes: "It came over me that it is so strange and odd that something so beautiful can still exist in the world."<sup>68</sup> The angst that the composer was feeling due to the impending war and his inevitable flight from Paris is likely to be a contributing factor to the heightened expression in the piece.

In the summer of 1938, less than a year before completing his first sonata for cello and piano, Martinů completed the Double Concerto for Two String Orchestras, Piano, and Timpani. Due to cultural and personal events going on at this period in the composer's life, as well as some compositional similarities between the two pieces, comparisons have been drawn between the two works:

The feeling of unrest so eloquently expressed in the Double Concerto...is again predominant in the first movement of the sonata, which for Martinů is unusually dramatic and declamatory. But whether its mood was dictated wholly by outward events has been questioned. Some feel that a more intimate but undisclosed emotional disturbance may have had a hand in its creation.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Dommett, liner notes to *Bohuslav Martinů Cello Sonatas*, Steven Isserlis and Peter Evans, Hyperion H55185, CD, 1988.

<sup>68</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 189.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

In his own words, Martinů describes the Double Concerto: “Its notes sang out of the feelings and sufferings of all those of our people who, far away from their home, were gazing into the distance and seeing the approaching catastrophe. It is a composition written under terrible circumstances, but the emotions it voices are not those of despair but rather of revolt, courage, and unshakable faith in the future.”<sup>70</sup>

Martinů’s First Cello Sonata is richer in personal expression than many of the composer’s other works. As discussed earlier, the year of its composition was a difficult one for Martinů; the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, his troubled affair with Kaprálová, and his stunted compositional output impacted the composer profoundly. The specific inspiration of the work is unknown, but it seems to be an expression of a personal experience that brought him much strength and happiness, but also much grief. In the words of Šafránek, “This [sonata] is in sharp contrast to compositions of the type *Tre Ricercari*,<sup>71</sup> for it is full of spontaneous intensity, passionate and singing.”<sup>72</sup>

While he was living and working in Paris, Martinů became friends with the French cellist Pierre Fournier, to whom he dedicated this sonata as well as the revised version of his First Cello Concerto. It was said of their relationship: “He [Fournier] eagerly sought out harpsichord compositions by Bohuslav Martinů, to whom he was affiliated by a long-time musical and human bond.”<sup>73</sup> Martinů’s restrained disposition often kept him from forging close, personal bonds with other people, but between himself and Fournier, there was a great deal of professional, musical, and personal admiration and respect.

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<sup>70</sup> Chris Morrison, “Bohuslav Martinu: Double Concerto for 2 string orchestras, piano & timpani, H. 271” accessed December 6, 2016, <http://www.allmusic.com/composition/double-concerto-for-2-string-orchestras-piano-timpani-h-271-mc0002357301>.

<sup>71</sup> *Tre Ricercari* was composed for chamber orchestra in 1938 for the International Music Festival in Venice. It is a setting of three *ricercare*, which was a popular instrumental compositional style in the late Renaissance and early Baroque. These pieces are written with free form, and project a light-hearted optimism that contrasts the intensity of Martinů’s First Cello Sonata.

Robert Angus, “Bohuslav Martinu: From Bach to Xenakis” accessed January 20, 2017, <http://graphicwitness.org/music/linernotes/martinu.htm>.

<sup>72</sup> Miloš Šafránek. *Bohuslav Martinů: The Man and his Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944), 74-75.

<sup>73</sup> Gregory Terian, “The Lost Score: Pierre Fournier & the Martinů Cello Concerto No. 1,” *Martinů Revue* X, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 6-7, accessed December 9, 2016, [http://www.martinu.cz/data/mrevue/000000017\\_1.pdf](http://www.martinu.cz/data/mrevue/000000017_1.pdf).



The premiere of the piece was given in Paris by Pierre Fournier and Rudolf Firkušný on May 19, 1940 as Charles de Gaulle's troops were attempting to hold off the German army just one hundred miles away. As Martinů recalled some years later of this occasion, "it was the last greeting, the last ray, from a better world. For some few moments we grasped what music can give and how it can make us forget reality."<sup>74</sup> As recounted by Šafránek,

Pierre Fournier and Rudolf Firkušný played this sonata at the last concert of the Société pour la Musique Contemporaine (formerly Triton) in Paris on May 19, 1940, in the hall of Archives de Danses. The atmosphere at the performance was unusually moving, for at that time everyone was breathless with tension over the uncertainty of France's fate; and the heartfelt demonstrations of the audience were as much a tribute to Czech artists as to his great and forceful compositions...three weeks after the performance of the Cello Sonata Martinů had already fled from Paris.<sup>75</sup>

Almost immediately following this premiere, Martinů and his wife fled Paris for the south of France, where they would remain for a few months before their move to the United States. The scarcity of public performances of this work today may be in part due to the fact that the printed music is not readily available, especially in the United States. Due to the composer's hasty departure from Paris, many of his scores were scattered, including this one. This piece was not published until 1949, a full ten years after its initial premiere. As noted by Šafránek in 1944: "In the winter of 1940 he composed one of his best chamber works, the First Sonata for cello and piano, the manuscript of which is unfortunately at this moment inaccessible somewhere in France."<sup>76</sup> The score was presumably lost for some time after Martinů fled Paris in 1940, at which time the composer had only four scores in his possession (none of which were his First Cello Sonata). The rest of his scores were sent for safe-keeping to a friend in Nevers. Despite his plans to travel to Nevers and retrieve them, Martinů never made the trip, leading to the scattering of many of his manuscripts across Europe.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1961), 189.

<sup>75</sup> Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: The Man and his Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944), 74-75.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Brian Large, *Martinů* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1975), 80.

## CHAPTER 5

### SONATA NO. 1: ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE

In addition to the scarcity of scores, this piece is performed so rarely because it is both musically and technically demanding for the cellist. In order to make these musical demands more manageable for performers, I have created an analysis and performance guide. In each of the following sections, I have included a musical analysis for each movement – done with the intention of performance in mind – as well as performance suggestions. Following the analyses, preparatory technical exercises are collected in Chapter 6.

#### 5.1 Movement 1

The first movement of Martinů's Cello Sonata No. 1, *Poco allegro*, contains a great deal of drama; more than is typical of the composer's works. In the words of Šafránek, "Martinů encloses his passionate sensitivity, not, however, in the romantic version, but in the original intention of the pre-Beethoven form."<sup>78</sup> This "pre-Beethoven" intention evokes a term that is often associated with Martinů: neoclassicism. Although the origins of this common association between Martinů's works and neoclassicism is not always immediately clear, in this instance, it applies to Martinů's treatment of form. This first movement is in sonata form, with clearly delineated exposition, development, and recapitulation sections, which are marked by Martinů's treatment of thematic material. A classical sense of balance is present in the proportions between these sections: rather than the expansive, romantic interpretation of sonata form, Martinů opts for a brief development, and instead places the apex of tension in the expansive coda section. Even within this fairly traditional sonata form, the substantial coda section is one unexpected formal feature. It occupies roughly a third of the entire movement, and serves to both introduce new material and reuse some familiar material in what could be considered the one successful point of arrival in the movement.

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<sup>78</sup> Miloš Šafránek. *Bohuslav Martinů: The Man and his Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944), 74-75.

In addition to the neo-classical elements present in this first movement, triadic harmonies and tonal fluctuations recall the composer's Czech roots. The previously mentioned drama of this movement is conveyed through unstable tonal centers and the dense concentration of many compositional ideas. This movement contains sequences that build the tension and often have a searching feeling, implying various levels of urgency and not always reaching their goals. Interruptive contrasts in character, outbursts, and abrupt changes of direction create a feeling of unrest.

These outbursts and abrupt changes are illustrated in many ways throughout the movement, and can be found as small and large gestures. On a small scale, Martinů has indicated many swells, which demand not only a dynamic swell – as is literally marked – but often imply an emotional swell as well: a brief increase of urgency, turmoil, exuberance, joy, or sadness, depending on the musical context. An example of this can be seen clearly in measures 117-122, in which a series two-measure swells builds in intensity until it is cut short by a *piano subito* in measure 125.



Figure 1. Swells building intensity, mm. 117-125.

While it is important for the performers to look at and execute these small-scale gestures – as individual gestures within a phrase – it is also essential for the performers to identify the larger ones within the movement. The small swells should create interest and intensity, but not detract from the larger shapes that are needed for the movement to make sense as a whole. On a larger scale, the movement consists of four build-ups of tension: the first three attempts are thwarted before they reach their goal, and the fourth finally succeeds in the final measures of the movement. These large-scale build-ups coincide formally with the main sections of the piece: exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda. The first attempt at a large-scale arrival occurs in measure 1-89, the exposition. Beginning with a dark, mysterious theme marked *Poco allegro*, this section seems to reach a small peak at measure 53, marked at *Allegro* and following an *animando*, which serves to increase the motion and energy. This *Allegro* section continues the previous section's attempts to build, until the repeated falling octaves in measures 85-88 signal its defeat.



Figure 2. Falling octaves, mm. 85-89.

The second attempt begins in measure 89; the start of the build is signaled by a return to *Tempo I*, as well as a return to the opening motivic material in a *piano* dynamic. This second build-up, also identified as the development section, is building with a greater sense of urgency than the exposition; shorter patterns and sequences are building in intensity within the first few

bars of this section. Measures 107-108 offer a brief moment of hopeful respite, articulated by a brief but victorious tonicization of B Major.



Figure 3. Tonicization of B Major, mm. 107-108.

This small victory is followed immediately by a return to the material presented at the beginning of the development, building with even greater intensity than before. This pattern continues throughout the development, and the section as a whole is characterized by shorter, more intense waves of building in addition to great contrasts in character. Moments of joyful exuberance, an example of which can be heard in measures 133-136, are expressed in the jubilant sixteenth notes over an assuredly major harmony.



Figure 4. Jubilant sixteenth notes, mm. 133-136.

Immediately following this triumphant character, the musical material retreats into brooding hopelessness, heard in measures 140-155 in the nervously repeating sixteenth notes, slipping chromatically down into the depths of the cello's range.

The image displays a musical score for measures 140 through 154. The score is written for piano (p) and cello (c). The piano part consists of a single melodic line with sixteenth notes, marked with a *mp* dynamic. The cello part consists of a single melodic line with sixteenth notes, marked with a *p* dynamic. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The tempo is marked *rit.* (ritardando). The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains measures 140-143, the second system contains measures 144-149, and the third system contains measures 150-154. Measure 154 is marked *rit.* and *pp* (pianissimo).

Figure 5. Contrasting character, mm. 140-154.

The following section, the recapitulation, begins at measure 156 and seems to be re-starting the opening material with even more trepidation than the opening. This attempt is brief – only lasting until the coda begins in measure 204 – and is riddled with desperation.

The final attempt to reach the peak of the movement occurs in the coda, beginning in measure 204. This section oscillates between the presentation of new material and the reappearance of material from previous sections, as if the new material is gradually gaining ground against the oppression of the dark opening material. The new material is defiant and confrontational, an example of which can be seen in measures 205-229 in the literal rhythmic confrontation depicted between the cello and piano.



Figure 6. Rhythmic confrontation, mm. 204-216.

This rhythmic confrontation reappears in the coda at measure 291, as part of the final build-up of the movement. The moment of change, at which point it is clear that this final build-up will succeed occurs in measures 305-311, when after fourteen bars of combative counterpoint, the cello and piano are finally in rhythmic unison.

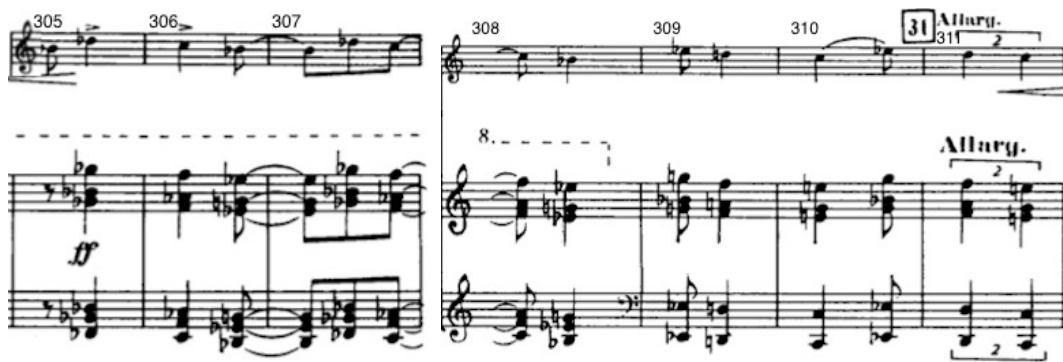


Figure 7. Rhythmic unison, mm. 305-311.

This unification occurs at highest point of tension in the movement and causes a chain reaction, slowing the built tension of the movement in the same manner that a train loses momentum: seeming to grow in grandeur and strength as it releases its speed, largely due to Martinu's expansive use of register. This is illustrated by an *Allargando*, leading to a *Meno* section, followed by the final phrase of the piece, marked *Moderato*. This final phrase, the slowest of the piece, is marked *espressivo molto*, and is a last statement of solemn victory. The tension is drawn out until the very last resolution of the cello.

### 5.1.1 Tempo Considerations

These blustery and driving build-ups that occur throughout the movement can lend themselves to a turbulent and stormy interpretation of character in this first movement. This temperament seems to be well-supported for the bulk of the movement, which is marked *Allegro*, a marking that first appears in measure 53. However, this insistent, driving tempo throughout the movement is called into question by the *Poco allegro* marking at the opening of the piece, and returned to at the beginning of each of the building sections discussed previously. Each of these building sections begins with a return to the original tempo, followed by build-ups back up to the *Allegro* tempo. These tempo fluctuations imply that in addition to these waves of thematic material that always seem to be building in tension, Martinu is creating waves of tempo: roughly one tempo escalation in each of the large sections of the piece. The exception of these escalating waves is in the disproportionately large coda section, which indicates no change in tempo until



the slow-down that occurs in the final bars of the movement. In these bars, Martinů completely up-ends the expectation of a frenzied ending that has been set up by the previously unsuccessful builds, which increase in intensity and desperation. Rather than fulfilling this expectation, Martinů instead drags the tempo through a series of indications to slow down, while simultaneously amassing a great deal of tension, which is held until the very last moment of release, at the cello's final resolution.

These tempo fluctuations provide an ebb and flow in the accumulating energy of the piece, and the manipulation of these fluctuations is one of the most powerful expressive shaping tools within the movement as a whole. Rather than ignoring the tempo variances that are marked by the composer, and rather than treating them as complete releases of the previously built tension of the movement, each of these re-starts at *poco allegro* should be full of the brooding intensity that is released in the more turbulent sections of the work. Additionally, in order to have the full impact of pulling back the tempo within the final bars of the coda, the bulk of the coda section, beginning in measure 204, cannot be as slow as *Tempo I*. Although previously, each large wave re-starts by returning to *Tempo I*, the coda cannot afford to lose the momentum that was gained in the previous sections. This is reflected in the composer's markings leading up to the coda: *Elargir* indicates a broadening or expansion in measure 198, followed by *(Meno)*, which implies a gathering, and perhaps a conservation of energy for later use, and not necessarily a change in tempo. In order to maintain the momentum, a brisker tempo must be maintained, leaving room for the dramatic slow-down at the end of the movement.

### 5.1.2 Rhythmic drive

As is typical of Martinů's prior compositions, this movement is rhythmically driven. His treatment of rhythm is a distinctive signature of his compositional style, and this piece is no exception. Unpredictable patterns and shifting rhythmic gestures are illustrated through syncopation, rhythmic displacement, and irregular bowing patterns that serve to obscure the 3/8 meter – which is inherently an unusual choice for the first movement of a sonata. Immediately from the outset of the opening thematic material, Martinů is pitting two rhythmic ideas against one another: the swing that is a fundamental attribute of the 3/8 meter against the unyielding quarter-note duples that seem both expansive and grounded. This contrast can be seen in the opening bars: the 3/8 swing occurs in bars 1-3, with the contrasting duples in measure 4. Martinů

plays up the swinging quality of the triple meter by implementing a swaying dotted rhythm as the main rhythmic cell of this theme and interspersing scampering sixteenth-notes between the dotted rhythmic motive. This opening rhythmic juxtaposition is presented clearly in the piano alone, and then echoed in the cello part at its entrance in bar 23. The solemn quarter-note duples present some opposition but quickly give way, as the 3/8 rhythmic gestures build in energy and tempo, until the first *Allegro* is marked in measure 53.



Figure 8. Rhythmic juxtaposition, mm. 1-4.

In addition to this rhythmic juxtaposition, Martinů uses rhythmic shifts to obscure the meter. One clear example of this occurs in the coda material, in bars 204-229 (shown in Figure 6.) In this passage, the cello and piano are in direct rhythmic conversation with one another, but in irregular and unpredictable beat patterns that at once conceal the downbeat and recall the repeated syncopations so suggestive of jazz. In a 3/8 meter, which is so typically marked by predictably strong downbeats followed by two weak beats, Martinů treats all three beats with equal weight and importance. This rhythmic treatment implies a character of defiance and confrontation, supported by the markings in the score. Indications include *marcato* in both cello and piano, with repeated accents and small crescendos in the cello part, against sharp staccato chords in the piano.

Following this, the meter is re-established clearly in measure 230 through a series of scales which emphasize the downbeat of each bar. This re-establishment of predictable beat groupings is once again called into question in the following section, beginning in measure 242. The beat is displaced by a repeated emphasis on beat 2, typically so weak in this 3/8 meter.



Figure 9. Clear emphasis on beat 2, mm. 242-247.

In order to achieve the intended effect of these rhythmic gestures, the performers must allow the beat to be obscured or displaced when it is so written. While Martinu is juxtaposing two rhythmic motives in the opening, as described above, there is a larger juxtaposition at play: a clear 3/8 rhythm that follows the established conventions of one strong downbeat followed by two weaker upbeats, versus a 3/8 meter which treats all beats with equal importance. This struggle is one which continues throughout the movement until the final ten bars, marked *Moderato*, in which it is clear that rhythmic convention has lost to the freedom of the victorious but defiant individual – here depicted by the cello. In these bars, the piano loses all rhythmic organization entirely, and the cello plays accented quarter-note values which are completely displaced from the 3/8 meter. The final, almost painful resolution to the final note of the movement occurs unexpectedly but resolutely on beat 3 for the cello.

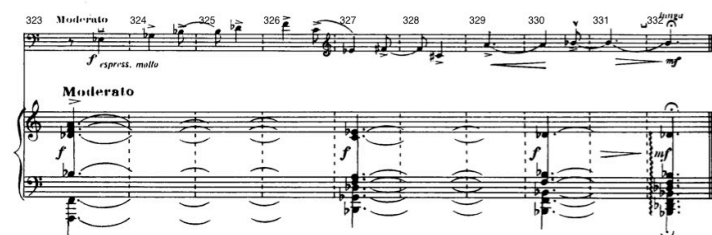


Figure 10. Rhythmic obscurity, mm. 323-332.

In order to fully make these opposing rhythmic treatments clear, it is crucial for the performers to be aware of them, and when they occur in the piece. In this movement, there are three general treatments of the 3/8 meter, which are presented clearly in Table 1.

Table 1. Metric and rhythmic description.

Measures:	Metric and rhythmic description:
1-31	A*. 3/8 meter *Single bars of duple (including 3 against 2) interspersed, which do not adhere to the clear, 3/8 metric hierarchy. These are marked clearly with brackets in the score. Despite the appearance of this rhythmic diversion, this section is still primarily in a clear 3/8 meter.
32-204	A. Clearly 3/8 meter, traditional hierarchy of strong 1 with weaker 2 and 3
204-229	B. Heavy syncopation in both parts, working to obscure the meter
230-241	A. Regular metric groupings return; steady sixteenth note scales give clarity
242-255	C. Metric displacement: regular beat grouping stress traditionally weak beat 2
256-291	A. Clear metric groupings return, stress on beat 1 of each 3/8 bar
292-304	B. Return to heavily syncopated section, meter obscured
305-311	B. Rhythmic unison between all voices, syncopation continues
312-322	A. Metric groupings clearer, gradual slow-down of tempo
323-332	B. <i>Moderato</i> tempo reached, syncopation is the only rhythm present, and bar lines are not solid (in print or in intention.) Strongly rhythmic but the meter is no longer clear.

The first rhythmic treatment adheres to traditional expectations of this meter, and calls for a strong first beat, followed by weaker beats two and three. For identification purposes, these sections have been identified with an “A” in the table. The second demands equal, strong treatment of all beats, and the meter is obscured by this rhythmic equality. This has been noted with a “B”. The final metric treatment involves metric displacement: while there are regular metric groupings, the stress does not adhere to the traditional hierarchy of strong and weak beats. This is notated with a letter “C”.

After clearly identifying the opposing rhythmic and metric language used in this movement, the performers should use that information to inform the narrative of their interpretation. This underlying rhythmic conflict has a strong bearing on the build-up and release of tension that is so crucial to a convincing performance of this work. For example, using the above figure for identification purposes, the “A” sections using regular rhythmic groupings often

coincide with a slight release of tension. Conversely, the “B” and “C” signal heightened tension and greater conflict in the narrative. The clear delineation between these conflicting ideas is what leads to the enormous impact of the rhythmic unison that is finally achieved in measure 305, shown in Figure 7, at which point the previously combative voices join forces to present the heavily syncopated “B” rhythmic material. This assembling of voices leads to the final rhythmic expansion of the movement.

## 5.2 Movement 2

The second movement of the sonata, marked *Lento* is a haunting lamentation for the cello. From the start of the movement, the writing is bleak: staccato bass notes in the piano accompany a meandering but cold melodic line, played in the right hand of the piano. For the first two bars of the movement, neither the meter nor the key are clear. Despite this cold writing, the indication for the melody in the first bar is *piano dolce*, implying a sense of fragility to accompany the cold melodic material. The meter is made clear in the third measure, with clear emphasis on beats one and three in the bass line, coinciding with the appearance of the primary melodic material in the right hand of the piano. Along with this rhythmic clarity comes the indication of *tranquillo*, showing that despite the increase in rhythmic activity, the energy of the movement is not yet building.

The drama of this movement is depicted by the opposition of two main thematic ideas, which are both established in the first fifteen bars. The first theme, appearing in measure 3, is hopelessly meandering and lacks a clear tonal center. It is punctuated by a sparse bass accompaniment of low, repeated staccato notes in the piano’s left hand. While some statements of this thematic material have a sense of urgency and desperation, this first appearance remains trapped in its futile search, and is shown in Figure 11.

The second theme, appearing at measure 13 and shown in Figure 12, is a warm melody that is characterized by clear, major tonality, consonant intervals, and singing triplets. While the first theme is dark, hopeless, and sometimes menacing, the second theme is full of light, optimism, and beauty.



Figure 11. Rhythmic and tonal ambiguity in mm. 1-2, theme 1 in mm. 3-6.

Figure 12 shows measures 12-15 of a musical piece. The music is written for piano, with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measures 12-15 are marked 'mp'.

Figure 12. Theme 2, mm. 12-15.

The conflict builds to a clear climax in the contrasting *Meno* section beginning at bar 28, which is marked *Molto marcato* and shown in Figure 13. The language is much sharper, both rhythmically and harmonically. The metric grouping of beats is clearer than it has been in any

preceding passage, giving an unyielding militant feeling to this passage. This starkly contrasting section seems to be an outlet of frustration, perhaps as a reaction to being stuck between the two main themes of the movement.

Figure 13. Climax, mm. 28-32.

This outburst lasts for a mere eight bars before retreating back to the opening material. The final section of this movement continues to waver between the two contrasting themes. Ultimately, hopelessness reigns: the cello ends on the very pitch it entered on, and the left hand punctuates this retreat with somber, repeated notes.

### 5.2.1 Rhythm and register

In this movement, Martinu relies on two compositional devices to achieve the clear opposition of the two thematic ideas discussed in the previous section: rhythm and register. While the first movement works to obscure the rhythm using syncopation and driving, ever-

changing rhythmic patterns, the second movement obscures the rhythm in a more speech-like manner. Subtle shifts between triple and quadruple meters, paired with gradually changing subdivisions within those meters creates flexible rhythmic groupings that mimic the irregular but expressive qualities of speech. This is presented in contrast to the left hand of the piano, which provides an ominous sense of foreboding by presenting a stolid bass line in a low register. The opening melodic material of the movement, beginning in the piano and then taken over by the cello at its entrance in bar 11, is cautiously seeking something: rhythmically and chromatically unfolding with speech-like melancholy. The success of this effect lies in the fluid rhythmic irregularity present, which contrasts the stability of the rhythm in other sections, namely in the second theme at measure 13, or the *Meno* section at measure 28.

In addition to the implications that come with the rhythmic language of this movement, register is used throughout the movement to signal changes of color and character, and is a primary means of expression. The combined effect of these two compositional devices can be seen clearly in the first appearance of the primary melodic material, beginning in the right hand of the piano in measure 3. This material gradually makes its way down the scale, seeming to lose hope as it does so. After three bars of this searching melody – which also presents the subtle rhythmic friction of two against three – there is a two-bar gesture of sweeping triplets in measure 6, which provides a slight surge of energy, as if the melody has not given up its hopeful search. This two-measure rhythmic surge succeeds in briefly regaining some of the register it had previously lost. However, the melodic material then reappears, one octave lower than previously, and now marked *piano dolce*. This gradual drop in register continues through this iteration of the melody until the entrance of the cello at bar 11, and it sets up the emotional context for the opening: cold and morose, without hope.

Entering into this context, the cello emerges in bar 11 - at the bottom of the instrument's register – and appears to be continuing the meandering, descending melody introduced by the piano previously. However, in bar 12, Martinu uses an expressive leap of a tenth from the cello's middle range to its upper range to introduce a new, poignant but delicate melody. This beautiful tune coincides with the first clear tonality in this movement, and provides a brief moment of relief from the hopeless searching character of the opening. After four bars, this melody recedes back into the searching melody introduced at the opening of the movement.





Figure 14. Registral shifts, mm. 3-11.



Figure 15. Expressive leap and theme 2, mm. 12-16.

Rhythmic intention is a common thread that can be traced throughout the majority of Martinu's compositions, and this slow movement is no exception. While some movements – including the outer movements of this sonata – use rhythm to create frenetic energy and drive, this movement uses the gradual fluctuation of metric patterns to mimic the tender oscillations of

human speech. The delicate exchange between the voices, paired with the cautious unraveling of the primary melodic material creates the effect of an inner dialogue; a conversation that is ripe with meaning and emotion, but which cannot yet be outwardly articulated. This outward expression seems to arrive at the climax of the movement in measure 28, before the narrator retreats back into her private world.

### **5.2.2 Performance considerations**

In order to convey the effect of this narrative, the player must work to smooth out vertical lines and rhythmic divisions. Instead of clearly bringing out each grouping of beats, the melodic line should unfold horizontally. The rhythms should be played evenly, but without rhythmic accents. Any agogic accents should be subtle, and be dictated by the melodic contour, rather than the rhythmic groupings. The intention should be to create phrase groupings that mimic the rise and fall of natural speech. This is supported by the slurs indicated by the composer in measure 1-10; the long slurs in bars 1-5 indicate a desire for longer, horizontal phrases. Following this, the left-hand melody beginning in bar 8 contains slurs which do not correspond directly with beat groupings, but rather follow the contour of the meandering melodic line.

In addition to the expression of horizontal lines, the clear color changes indicated by the composer must be a priority in this movement. Rather than just indicating contrasting dynamics and tempi in this movement, Martinů gives more subtle indications of contrast: throughout this movement, he offers directives of character and color. Words like *dolce* and *tranquillo*, used to varying degrees of intensity in this movement, create a roadmap of internal, emotional development over the course of this movement. If the first movement is an attempt to externally reach a new point of arrival, this movement is affecting a more private, poignant change. This change is most effectively shown through change of color and sound, rather than tempo. To achieve the appropriate variances in color, performers should manipulate and vary their use of vibrato, bow placement and angle, articulation, and the use (or lack) of agogic accents.

## **5.3 Movement 3**

The third and final movement of the sonata, indicated *Allegro con brio*, is immediately combative and confrontational in character, and is in sonata form. The thematic material of the

exposition contains pits the voices against each other from the opening, with relentless rhythmic motives passed between the cello and piano without pause.



Figure 16. Rhythmic confrontation, mm. 1-5.

The character is agitated and hostile, with brief moments of respite that transform the relentless sixteenth notes into playful interjections. One such moment of contrast can be seen in measures 12-13: implications of B Major harmony, and scampering, light sixteenth notes in the piano part project playful buoyancy.



Figure 17. Implications of B Major, mm. 12-13.

This lighthearted material leads directly back to the more combative sixteenth notes from the opening material in measure 14. Although it is presented in *piano* here, the agitated character is still present under the surface, and should be brought out. Measures 19-32 feature a variety of

scale configurations, each building in intensity. This intensity gives way as the second theme appears in measure 46, presenting the first stark contrast of the movement.

Contrary to the jarring intervals and shifting tonal centers of the opening, the carefree second theme presented in measure 46 features major tonality, pleasing thirds and consonant intervals. The charming melodic material is marked *poco meno* and *piano dolce*, which is a clear indication that this section is a lull in the storm that has been raging since the onset of the movement. The contrasting tonal language is accompanied by rhythmic contrast: the driving sixteenth-notes from the opening have transformed into a relaxed, slurred quarter and eighth note pattern, invoking the simple pleasure of a song and complete with a tonic-dominant bass line.

The musical score for measures 58-65 is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 58, 59, and 60. The second system covers measures 61, 62, 63, 64, and 65. The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass staff. The melody is in the upper voice, and the accompaniment is in the lower voice. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p dolce*, *pp*, *mp*, and *mf*. The melody is characterized by slurs and a relaxed, slurred quarter and eighth note pattern. The accompaniment features a tonic-dominant bass line.

Figure 18. Contrasting second theme, mm. 58-65.

This relaxation is interrupted by the arrival at the development section, beginning in measure 66. The development begins with a sudden drop in dynamics and an immediate return to the brisk opening tempo. The tension is heightened immediately, and the carefree character that

was presented in the second theme dissipates. Anticipation is built through accented syncopation in both cello and piano parts. The aggressive sixteenth notes from the opening section reappear in bar 75, now used in the development with sudden dynamic contrasts, shifting tonal centers, and unsettling intervallic leaps. In bar 107 the scalar passages from the exposition return, this time ushering in the second theme in measure 113 that has been transformed since its first appearance: the relaxed thirds have disappeared, leaving a lone, nervous-sounding melodic voice. This is accompanied by unrelenting sixteenth notes in the piano.

Figure 19. Reappearance of second theme material, mm. 113-117.

Although indicated *staccato* and *piano*, this running motor of activity in the accompaniment injects a feeling of disquiet and unease. The tension mounts, eventually leading to the recapitulation in measure 126. Here the opening material is presented in a softer dynamic, creating a suppressed tension, and increasing waves of friction. These waves eventually unleash the coda in measure 167, in which a torrent of sixteenth persists without pause until the final bar of the piece. In the final seven bars of the piece, Martinu orchestrates a massive expansion,

indicated by a *Piu meno* marking, followed by an additional *ritard*, and a sprawling use of register between the two instruments. This expansion creates a feeling of triumph; as if the hero is slowing his gait not due to fatigue or resignation, but because he has finally reached his goal. This is confirmed by the final, victorious C Major chord that is reached by both cello and piano in the final bar of the piece.

The musical score for measures 215-221 shows a cello and piano. The cello part (top staff) has markings: *Più meno* (215), *rit.* (216), *poco* (217), *a* (217), and *poco* (217). The piano part (bottom staff) has markings: *ff* (215) and *mp* (216). A dashed line labeled "8. bassa" is present below the piano part in measures 215-217. The score ends with a C Major chord in measure 221.

Figure 20. Final expansion, mm. 215-221.

### 5.3.1 Rhythm versus meter

As can be said of the preceding two movements, Martinů uses rhythm and meter as foundational elements of character and expression in this final movement. Contrary to the use of rhythm and meter in the previous two movements, in this final movement, these two devices are often pitted against one other to create an underlying sense of friction. This is punctuated by the dramatic, rhythmic confrontation between the voices. At times seeming to cajole each other, and at others seeming to incite frenzy, the confrontation between cello and piano is a distinguishing

feature of the movement and one that presents some collaborative challenges. In order to address these challenges and to support the unrelenting rhythmic drive of the movement, tempo should remain steady and unwavering, excluding the *poco meno* section indicated in measures 42-66 for the second theme. The juxtaposition of the regular and unrelenting rhythm and tempo against the prevalent mixture of meters – primarily 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 – creates the feeling of an unflinching machine: one that is impossible to stop but hard to predict. This can be seen most clearly in the coda section, beginning in bar 167, where unyielding sixteenth notes are set within an almost constantly changing metric framework. If the second movement is largely seen as an inner, private conversation, this movement is insolent and unapologetic in its struggle.

### 5.3.2 Additional performance considerations

In addition to the importance of an unwavering tempo, suggested in the previous section, this movement calls for sharp clarity of articulation, in both cello and piano. The sixteenth notes should be persistently steady, especially when passed between the voices. This challenge is presented immediately at the start of the movement, in the confrontational sixteenth notes passing between cello and piano in bars 1-4. Immediately following this, in bar 5, the first syncopation of the movement appears, and should be brought out by clearly executing the accents marked in by the composer. Instead of lyrical, this motive – which reappears throughout the movement – calls for sharp accented notes with decay.

The inherent desperation of this movement is additionally expressed through sudden shifts in dynamic. Unlike the smooth dynamic shapes that were called for in previous movements, the dynamics shifts in the third movement create sharp, clearly delineated gestures. The exception to this is in the second theme area, which demands the softness and sensitivity of phrasing that might appear in a vocal song.

The final musical challenge presented in this movement is in how to pace the coda, which begins in measure 167. Beginning with a *forte-piano*, there is no marked dynamic change until measure 180, which starts a crescendo to *poco forte*. In the beginning of the coda, it is especially important to reserve sound and energy. This makes it possible to have a more effective climax, once it is reached, and also serves to build anticipation leading up to that arrival. This arrival is not reached until the final bar of the piece, and the tension must build until this point. The *piu meno* in measure 215, as well as the subsequent *ritard* leading to the final resolution – similar to

the end of the first movement, but larger in scale – should create the effect of a massive expansion. The rhythmic rub in measure 215 between the sixteenth notes in the cello and the triplets in the piano part creates a concentration of sound and an increase in tension and activity, which must continue to build until the final chord is reached. This friction, paired with the registral drop of the piano simulates the joining of forces and the sound of an ensemble that is much larger than two musicians. This expansion and arrival must be the most immense of the entire piece; it must complete and fulfill the search that began with the opening of the first movement.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SONATA NO. 1: TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PREPARATORY EXERCISES**

In addition to the rhythmic, musical, and collaborative challenges that are characteristic of this piece, there are numerous technical challenges that require special attention. In order to convincingly convey the musical intention of the work, these technical demands must be mastered. In an effort to make these challenges more manageable, I have created some preparatory exercises and technical suggestions that target some of these demands. By using these preparatory exercises to properly execute some of these demands before tackling the piece as a whole, it allows the performers to prioritize their musical intentions. These exercises by no means present a complete technical evaluation of this sonata, but rather offer an exploration of how to begin practicing some of the work's most challenging passages for the cello.

#### **6.1 Movement 1**

One of the most overt challenges in this movement is the prevalence of double-stopped thirds and sixths throughout. In order to improve fluency in playing these intervals on the cello, it is beneficial to isolate these intervals, and to practice playing them as many different ways as possible. As an example, I have included a series of exercises designed as preparation for the thirds that are presented in measures 54 and 55 of the first movement, and can be applied to the parallel passage found in measures 177-178. The exercises go through a series of variations of how to practice this passage. These various bowings, rhythms, and patterns can then be applied to the many other challenging sections in this piece.

The series of exercises presented below in Figure 21 is designed to improve intonation and agility while shifting between the two different hand positions that are called for. The small note heads indicate pitches that should be fingered with the left hand, but not played with the left hand. This serves to maintain proper hand shape and prepare the left hand to play the double-stops, while allowing the player to target intonation for each note individually.

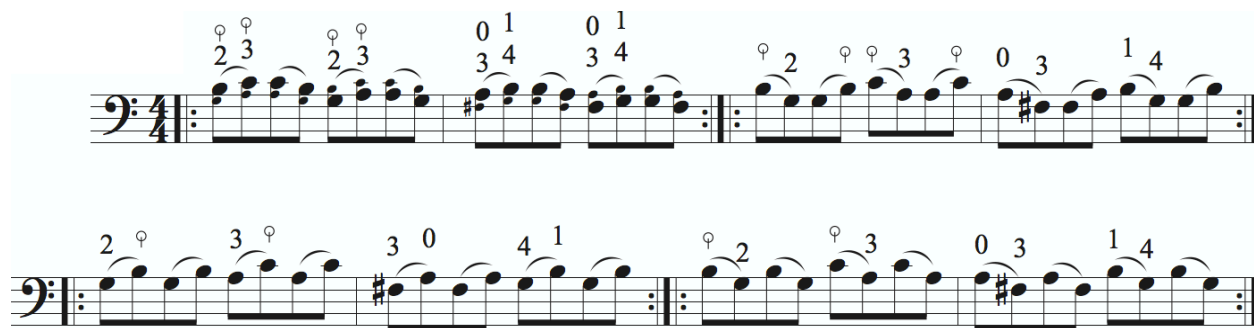


Figure 21. Preparatory exercise for practicing thirds, applies to mm. 54-55, 177-178.

Figure 22 presents a series of bowing and rhythmic variations to be applied to the initial exercise shown in Figure 21.

Bowing  
Var. 1:

Bowing  
Var. 2:

Rhythmic  
Var. 1:

Rhythmic  
Var. 2:

Rhythmic  
Var. 3:

Rhythmic  
Var. 4:

Figure 22. Exercise in thirds, applies to mm. 54-55, 177-178.

In measures 177-178, due to the difficulty in reaching these particular thirds, I would suggest a different fingering than in the previous passage, which is shown below in Figure 23. A second alternative is offered below the staff.



Figure 23. Fingering suggestion for mm. 177-178.

The following set of exercises is designed to improve intonation and finger timing in the technical passage in measures 59-64, as well as 182-187. The first exercise, shown in Figure 24, isolates the double-stops and should be practiced to improve intonation and shifts between positions.

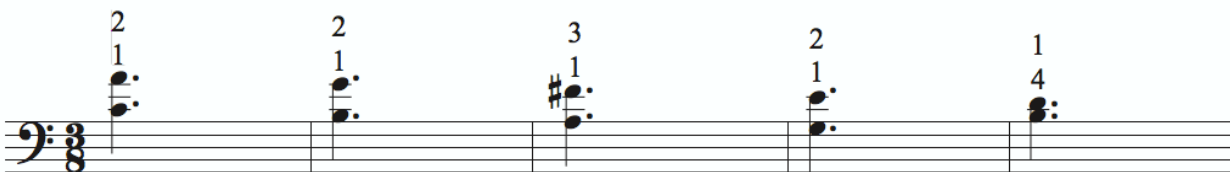


Figure 24. Isolation of intervals, applies to mm. 59-64, 182-187.

After solidifying these hand positions and shifts between the double-stops, the following exercise (Figure 25) and variations (Figure 26) should be practiced to improve timing and finger agility in the oscillating pattern.



Figure 25. Exercise for improved agility, applies to mm. 59-64, 182-187.

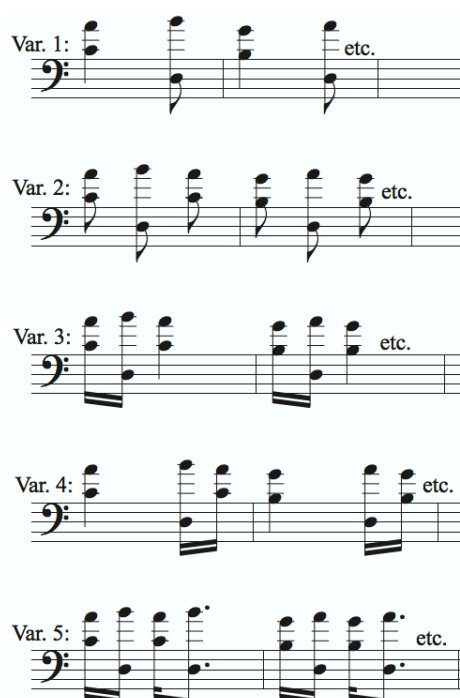


Figure 26. Variations of Figure 26 to improve finger agility, applies to mm. 59-64, 182-187.

The following exercises break down the passage in thirds that appears in bars 101-106. The first exercise (Figure 27) simply isolates the thirds and provides a fingering suggestion to navigate the various intervals in the passage. An alternate figure is offered below the staff. The second exercise (Figure 28) removes the open strings that are written into the piece, so that the player can focus on playing the correct intervals in rhythm before adding the final technical layer, and playing the passage as written. Finally, Figure 29 isolates the string crossing to prepare

the bow arm to play the passage. This exercise should be practiced on open strings with a *legato* bow stroke. After achieving comfort with these exercises, the passage should be played as written.

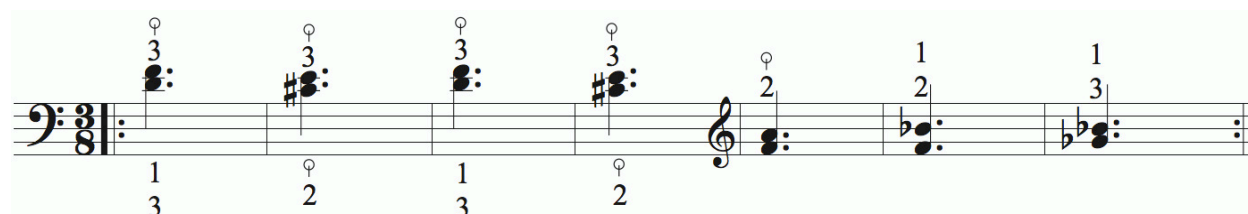


Figure 27. Isolation of thirds, applies directly to mm. 101-106, 256-261; applies indirectly to mm. 125-133, 264-272.

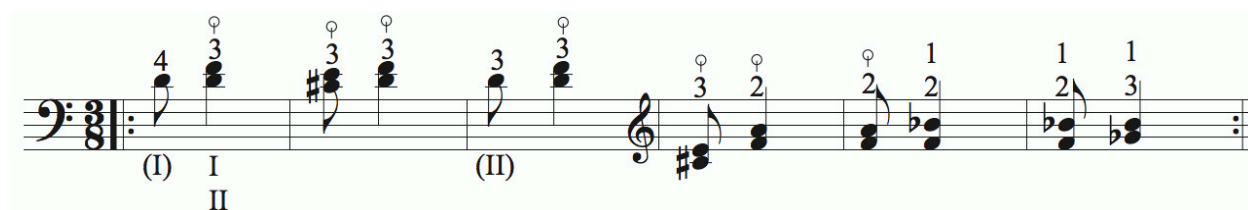


Figure 28. Isolation of intervals within rhythmic context, applies directly to mm. 101-106, 256-261; applies indirectly to mm. 125-133, 264-272.



Figure 29. Isolation of string crossing, applies directly to mm. 101-106, 256-261; applies indirectly to mm. 125-133, 264-272.

## 6.2 Movement 3

A considerable hurdle in this piece, largely in the third movement, is the impediment of unusual bowing patterns. In order to approach these passages with a technical understanding of how to achieve these bowing patterns, it is helpful to practice them outside of the musical context of the piece. In order to do so, I have created some technical exercises designed to target these potentially problematic bowing patterns. The exercises shown below in Figures 30, 31, 32, and 33 isolate bowing patterns that require difficult string crossings. By refining the movement and the clarity of each stroke on open strings, these bowing gestures will not hinder musical intention when placed in the context of the piece. When practicing these exercises, the player should focus on anticipating the string crossing with the upper portion of the bow arm, so that there are no sudden movements. The player should strive for smooth, circular movement in the bow arm. The exercises should be initially played under tempo, and worked up gradually.



Figure 30. Isolated bowing pattern, applies to m. 18.

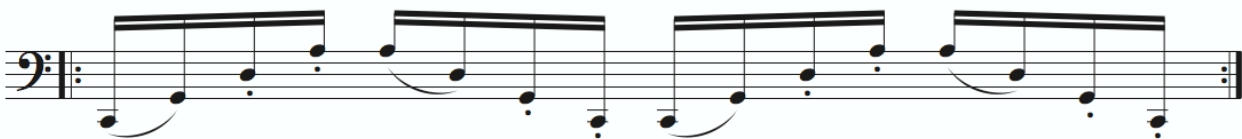


Figure 31. Isolated bowing pattern, applies to mm. 87-89.



Figure 32. Isolated bowing pattern, applies to mm. 98-99.



Figure 33. Isolated bowing pattern, applies to mm. 179-182.

The series of exercises shown below in Figure 34 isolates the intervals so that the difficult left-hand position can be refined. First, the shifts between these positions must be mastered, which is targeted in the first half of the exercise. After achieving comfort with these shifts, the alternating intervals should be added, shown in the second part of the exercise. The focus in these exercises should be on pure intonation, smooth and accurate shifts, and in an open and relaxed left-hand position.

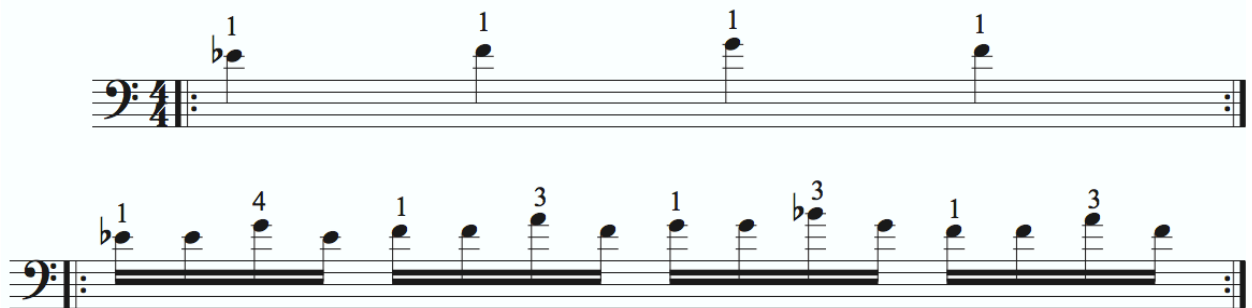


Figure 34. Progressive intonation exercise, applies to m. 98-99.

After achieving comfort with the shifts and perfecting the intonation in the exercises shown in Figure 34, the following exercise should be used to coordinate those shifts with the difficult string crossing. The mechanics of this particular string crossing have already been addressed in Figure 32, and this exercise should be used to combine the already refined string crossings and shifts. After refining the exercise shown in Figure 35, the passage should be played as written.



Figure 35. Exercise to coordinate shifts and string crossing, applies to mm. 98-99.

Figures 36 and 37, shown below, demonstrate a series of progressive exercises to target the sixths that appear in measures 100-101, and which are notoriously difficult for intonation. Figure 36 focuses on refining the difficult shifts required of this passage, and Figure 37 allows for focus on the intonation of the sixths.

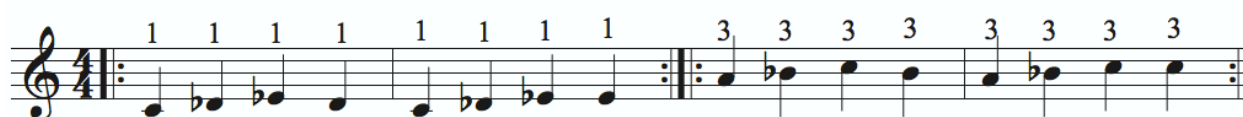


Figure 36. Shifting exercise, applies to mm. 100-101.





Figure 37. Practicing sixths for intonation, applies to mm. 100-101.

After refining the shifts and the hand shape for the sixths in Figures 36 and 37, the following exercises, shown in Figures 38 and 39, should be used to coordinate these double-stops with the string crossing called for in measures 100-101. Following these exercises, the passage should be played as written.

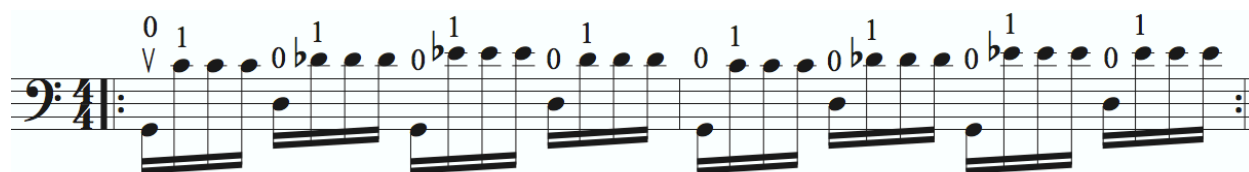


Figure 38. Exercise to coordinate string crossing with shifts, applies to mm. 100-101.

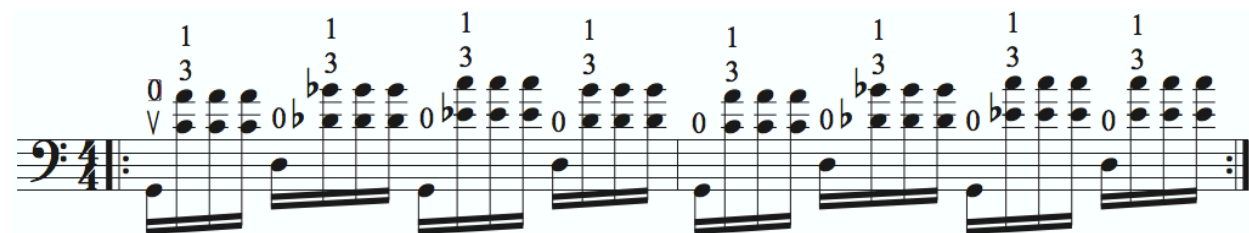


Figure 39. Exercise to coordinate string crossing with double-stops, applies to mm. 100-101.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Considering the Work as a Whole

Following the analysis and detailed consideration of each movement, it is essential to now consider the work as a whole. This ensures a convincing narrative throughout the entire piece, and inevitably informs many of the performance decisions made throughout each movement. The above presentation of how to work each movement in layers – for example, the consideration of small gestures versus larger shapes and gestures in the first movement – can be applied to this final layer: the piece as a whole. While the development and struggle within each movement has been discussed, the relationship between each movement must now be considered as well.

The narrative of the entire sonata can be reduced as follows:

Table 2. Simplification of narrative.

	<b>Beginning temperament:</b>	<b>Conclusion:</b>
<b>Movement 1:</b>	Dark and dissatisfied: yearning and reaching for something	Reaches a point of arrival, but still tinged with instability and dissatisfaction
<b>Movement 2:</b>	Melancholy and searching	Hopeless and desolate
<b>Movement 3:</b>	Retaliation against desolation, defiant struggle	Victory and the fulfillment of the ongoing search

When considering this extremely simplified version of the piece's narrative, it is possible for the performer to judge the relative intensity of each movement. For example, the first movement is indeed attempting to fulfill a yearning for something, but with a sense of naivety. Having not yet experienced the hopelessness of the second movement and the subsequent desperation and frustration of the third leaves the first movement with only partial fulfillment of its intended goal. In the score, this idea of partial fulfillment is supported by a number of things.

First, the fact that the piano and cello do not arrive at the end of the piece together creates a sense of discord. Second, the minor tonality casts a foreboding shadow on this final arrival. Finally, the indication of a *decrescendo* on the final note further implies the presence of some unanswered question.

The second movement, in relation to the first, can be considered an exploration and consideration of this unanswered question. The inward searching quality is a private deliberation of how to proceed. Moments of hope are overshadowed by the feeling that the search is futile, and the movement ends in the abandonment of hope.

Coming out of the despair of the second movement, the final movement can be viewed as a reaction to the narrative of the first two movements. The burst of aggression from the first bar of the third movement is a gesture of retaliation against that despair. This reading of the work as a whole calls for resolute energy in this final movement. Contrasting to the striving of the first movement, the third movement carries with it a sense of tenacity; the unrelenting rhythmic drive depicts a steadfast determination. This determination drives to the end of the movement, leading to the final, complete fulfillment of the narrative's goal, achieved in the final bar of the piece. Contrary to the arrival at the completion of the first movement, this chord arrives firmly in C Major, with an accented, *fortissimo* fermata.

## 7.2 Summary

Bohuslav Martinů was a prolific composer who absorbed a wide array of influences over the course of his lifetime. This variety of influences, in addition to his natural propensity for thoughtful and creative musical composition, shaped him into one of the most noteworthy composers of the twentieth century. Of the vast number of compositions that he completed during his lifetime, his First Sonata for Cello and Piano is a work that has been undervalued in performance history for a number of reasons. In addition to the score being inaccessible for some time, the piece presents a variety of musical and technical challenges. While modern technology and communication has improved the accessibility of the score, the inherent challenges of this work have remained obstacles in the way of the piece's establishment in mainstream performance repertoire.

This paper has addressed these musical and technical challenges, thereby making it more accessible in a number of ways. First, the importance of this work was established by clearly by examining its historical and musical context, which is addressed in Chapters 2 and 3. By cultivating an understanding of this sonata in particular and offering performance suggestions, addressed in Chapters 4 and 5, the piece becomes more musically accessible. Finally, by strategically isolating some of the technical demands of the piece, as is demonstrated in Chapter 6, the piece becomes more technically accessible.

Written at a time in the composer's life that was filled with uncertainty and turmoil, this sonata so eloquently depicts a poignant and rousing narrative. While the origins of that narrative will never be known for certain, the fact that it has great value to musicians and listeners of today is undisputable. This performance guide was created in order that the value and significance of this piece could be observed with more clarity.

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Meghan Carey is currently serving as Assistant Professor at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN. Originally from Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, Ms. Carey was previously an adjunct faculty member at the University of West Florida, where she taught cello, bass, and string literature. An enthusiastic performer of chamber music, Carey spent two years as a member of the Eppes Quartet, the graduate string quartet at Florida State University. Previously, Carey was a founding member of the Judson String Quartet, a Cleveland-based group that placed an emphasis on community outreach performances, and was the recipient of the Francis E. Sykora Outreach Grant through the Cleveland Institute of Music. Carey was a first prize winner of the MENC Pennsylvania State Chamber Group Competition as a member of the Valens Piano Quartet. Ms. Carey also spent a summer as a member of the string quartet in residence at the Interlochen Summer Arts Academy, where she also served as a faculty member. As an orchestral player, Ms. Carey is a member of the Gateway Chamber Orchestra, and performs frequently with the Charleston Symphony, the Mobile Symphony, the Southwest Florida Symphony, and the Tallahassee Symphony. Previously, Carey has held positions as principal cello of Sinfonia Gulf coast, Northern Tier Symphony Orchestra and the Altoona Symphony Orchestra, as well as assistant principal positions in the Williamsport Symphony and the Pennsylvania Centre Orchestra. As the winner of the 2016 Florida State University Doctoral Concerto Competition, Ms. Carey performed as a featured soloist with the University Symphony Orchestra. Carey has performed in masterclasses with Steven Isserlis, Raphael Wallfisch, Colin Carr, Andrés Díaz, Lynn Harrell, and David Finckel. She received her Master of Music degree of the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she was a student of Sharon Robinson. She achieved her Bachelor of Music degree in cello performance from the Pennsylvania State University, as a student of Kim Cook, where she was the recipient of the Eleanor Beene Scholarship Prize.