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The Evolution of Viola Playing as Heard in Recordings of William Walton's Viola Concerto

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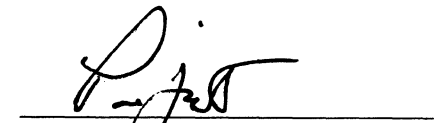

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ABSTRACT

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This document examines the evolution of viola playing as heard through recordings of William Walton's Viola Concerto, written in 1929. The sixteen commercially issued recordings of the concerto, unevenly spaced, offer a variety of interpretative approaches. Its first performers were indebted to a style of performance practice with roots in the Romantic era, which emphasized the individuality of the performer above other considerations. Hallmarks of this style are tonal beauty, overt emotionalism and a freely subjective approach that included alterations to the music. The performers used portamento liberally, not yet demonized as a sign of poor taste, and thus had a uniquely vocal style of phrasing. Early violists' interpretations are striking for their flawed uniqueness, but, as we move toward the 1960s, a more modern approach takes over. It is characterized by fidelity to the score and consistent technical perfection, as well as less use of portamento in favor of continuous vibrato. The personal input of the performer is less pronounced; he is now more a conduit for the composer's intentions. Modern violists thus take fewer liberties and sound more alike, while exhibiting an

unprecedented level of technical assurance. The reasons for this increase in homogeneity will be discussed. In addition, violinists' recordings of the Walton will be examined for signs of a violinistic mode of interpretation of the Walton.

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INTRODUCTION

William Walton's career was in its early stages when he composed his Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, upon the suggestion of conductor Thomas Beecham. Its success catapulted him to the forefront of British classical music, due in part to Walton's having solved problems inherent to writing for solo viola and orchestra. Throughout, he makes us unaware of the viola's less brilliant tone with respect to the violin and of the ever-present danger of being covered by an unconcerned orchestra. Walton's orchestration is transparent yet brilliant, especially in solo passages. Moreover, the concerto has emotional depth, richness, a profusion of ideas and the technical assurance of an already fine composer.

By the time the piece was completed, the viola's long-awaited ascent to a position of recognition and admiration had already begun, due to the efforts of the great English violist Lionel Tertis. Tertis initially disliked the concerto and declined to perform it, thus leaving the role of performer at the premiere to Paul Hindemith. Walton's Concerto was well received; Tertis realized his initial misjudgment and became the piece's most prominent performer for eight years after its premiere. Other violists began to know and learn it, notably the celebrated Scottish violist William Primrose, whose performances and recordings of the piece helped to build his reputation.

It is fascinating to observe the changes in viola technique and interpretative approaches through the studio recordings of the piece. The first was made in 1937 by Frederick Riddle, a distinguished English violist, with the composer conducting. (Sadly, Paul Hindemith performed the Concerto only at its premiere and never recorded it. Tertis never recorded it either.) Walton also conducted the Concerto in recorded performances by Primrose and the violinist Yehudi Menuhin in 1947 and 1968 respectively. This raises a further point to be considered: the concerto has been recorded successfully by three distinguished violinists playing on the viola, as well as by "native" violists, and their respective contributions differ tellingly.

In all, there are sixteen recordings, somewhat unevenly spaced, with five made before 1976 and the rest since. They give us a rich microcosm of viola playing in the last seventy years, showing significant changes in interpretation and larger trends in viola playing. While the early recordings show clear traces of a Romantic style of performance, with its emphasis on tonal beauty, virtuosity for virtuosity's sake and a highly individualistic, even idiosyncratic approach, the later recordings as a whole demonstrate greater homogeneity in interpretative approaches. As part of my general considerations of technique and interpretation, I will specifically examine portamento, tempi, rubato, vibrato and treatment of the musical text. I will also attempt to compare less absolute interpretative elements of these performances, such as their emotional impact and thus try to answer the question of what direction viola playing and performance practice have taken since the first major 20th-century viola concerto was written.

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CHAPTER I

William Walton and the Viola Concerto

William Walton was born in 1902 in Oldham, Lancashire, England, to Charles Alexander Walton, a singing teacher, organist, and choir master, and Louisa Maria Turner, a contralto. As a young boy, Walton learned the piano, organ, and violin, but never played any of them well.[1] At age ten, he was accepted as a chorister at the Choir School of Oxford, more for the good and inexpensive education it provided than for Walton's musical training. Walton's father did not intend for his son to become a musician, and at the time did not recognize his true talent.[2]

Walton was on the verge of having to abandon his schooling at various points in his childhood when funds became scarce. This was the case in 1914 when World War I began and his father lost income from students, and in 1916 because of his mother's prolonged illness. Luckily, Dr. Thomas Banks Strong, Dean of the school, saw potential in the boy and arranged for a scholarship.[3] Walton knew that he had to distinguish himself at school in order to avoid working at home and feared that he would be unneeded once his voice broke. He therefore put his energy to composition, where he was largely self-taught. He wrote, "I must make myself interesting somehow or when my voice breaks I'll be sent back to Oldham. What can I do?

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[1] Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (London: The Boydell Press, 2001), 4.
[2] Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 6.
[3] Lloyd, 6.

Write music. So I did."[4] Walton was accepted to Oxford University as an undergraduate at the unusually young age of 16, again with help from Dr. Strong and some lucky timing. As so many college-aged young men were at war, there was ample scholarship money available for Walton. However, he failed his Responsions[5] three times and thus never received a degree. Walton was also very fortunate at this point in his life to meet the Sitwell family; that is, the artistic siblings Edith, Sacheverell and Osbert. They supported Walton financially for years, gave him a place to live, took him on trips, and exposed him to people influential in the music world.[6]

Walton's compositions from this early period include *A Litany* for unaccompanied mixed chorus from 1916 and the Piano Quartet from 1918; songs such as *The Winds* and *The Tritons,* as well as *The Passionate Shepherd* for tenor and ten instruments, from 1920. *A Litany* is an early example of Walton's bittersweet romanticism which carries through to his Viola Concerto and perhaps shows the beginning of Edward Elgar's influence.[7] He admired the older composer greatly, even though this was an unpopular sentiment at the time. Walton was also exposed to contemporary music of the day, notably by attending concerts in Manchester with his father. The Piano Quartet shows influence from Maurice Ravel.[8] This piece uses a technique later seen in the Viola Concerto, in that the opening theme in the violin recurs throughout the piece in various guises.

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[4] Ibid., 7.

[5] See Charles Luther Williams, *The American Student and the Rhodes Scholarships at Oxford University* (Detroit: Sprague Publishing Company, 1905), 20-21, "Responsions are simply a written examination in certain specified subjects. The subjects for examination are mathematics, Latin and Greek. No English, no science, no French, no German is required."

[6] Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: R. Hale, 1984), 12.

[7] Lloyd, 4.

[8] Maurice Hinson and Wesley Roberts, *The Piano in Chamber Ensemble: An Annotated Guide* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 516.

There were many musical trends that influenced the English musical aesthetic, as well as that of Walton, in the early 1920s. Sergei Diaghilev's Russian Ballet became popular and caused "rather a jolt" in Walton,[9] and with it came Igor Stravinsky and his latest works. French composers Ravel, Debussy, and the members of Les Six were also quite influential,[10] and jazz also joined the scene after the war to become a craze in the English capital. However, the Second Viennese School was not heard much in concert until the 1930s, and Walton was said to have laughed when he first heard Arnold Schoenberg's Six Little Pieces for Piano Op. 19.[11] On another hand, Walton's early atonal string quartet, performed at a contemporary composers' conference in 1921, impressed Alban Berg so much that he introduced him to Schoenberg.[12] All of these musical experiences helped to form Walton as a composer.

Walton's next pieces, *Façade* and the overture *Portsmouth Point*, were a product of these new influences. *Façade* was written to accompany Edith Sitwell's poems of the same name, which were a nonsensical collection of words used to evoke emotions; based on word rhythms and onomatopoeias.[13] Its first performance was in 1922 in a private audience for artists, when the piece was deemed perplexing but became a great success with the public in its following performance in 1926. *Façade* shows Walton's characteristic wit and rhythmic snap, as well as rich melodies and romantic style. *Portsmouth Point* was written while Walton was in Spain with

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[9] Kennedy, 21.
[10] See Michael Steinberg, *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 493. The English critic David Cox has said about Walton's early works that "Walton began like a seventh member of *Les Six*. The style was marked 'continental,' pointed with wit and satire, bursting with exuberance. Nothing folksy."
[11] Kennedy, 12.
[12] Ibid., 25-6.
[13] Lloyd, 45.

the Sitwells and depicts, in musical form, the rambunctious life of British 18th-century sailors. The influence of Stravinsky's music and jazz is evident in the rhythms of the score, as well as those of the Catalan dance *sardana*. While in Spain, Walton also wrote *Siesta*, a short piece for orchestra, whose melodies exhibit his characteristic lyricism and romanticism.[14]

The Sinfonia Concertante for orchestra with piano obbligato, written in 1927, was Walton's last major composition before his Viola Concerto. It shows influences from the Russian composers Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov, as well as from Ravel, and it foreshadows the Viola Concerto in its pensive lyricism and ambiguous harmonic modulations. Walton composed the Concerto when he was only 26 but at full maturity as a composer. He wrote, in 1928, while composing the concerto, that it was "by far my best effort up to now."[15] Later, when the concerto was finished, he remarked, "my style is changing. It is becoming more melodious and mature."[16] The creation of the piece was suggested by the conductor Thomas Beecham; there were few commissions of new music in the contemporary sense at that time,[17] as pieces were usually written for a person or an occasion.

The concerto was dedicated to Christabel McLaren, later Lady Aberconway, who was Walton's love interest at the time and a lifelong friend.[18] Beecham already had a soloist for the concerto in mind, namely Lionel Tertis, the foremost viola soloist at the time. Although Walton was known to have a made a typically dry description of knowing the viola for its "rather awful

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[14] Ibid., 77.
[15] Kennedy, 47.
[16] Ibid., 48.
[17] Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 14.
[18] Lloyd, 15.

sound,"[19] the instrument fit perfectly with his personal style of lyricism and plaintive melancholy. At the time, there were few examples of viola solos, and Walton was influenced by those that were known at the time. These were Berlioz's symphony *Harold in Italy* with viola obbligato and Hindemith's Kammermusik No. 5 for Viola and Orchestra, Op. 36 No. 4 from 1927.[20] Even Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante was not well-known, and staples of today's repertoire for the instrument, such as the early classical works by Franz Anton Hoffmeister and Carl Stamitz, had yet to be resurrected. Therefore, one cannot overstate just how major an event this was; for the first time in over a hundred years, a major talent in the world of musical composition was dedicating his creative forces to a viola concerto.[21]

It is fortuitous that Walton was reaching his maturity as a composer at the same time that the viola was becoming recognized as a solo instrument, due solely to the efforts and talents of Lionel Tertis. It is not an exaggeration to say that, had it not been for Tertis, this and many other works for viola would have never been written. Before him, there was no viola tradition—he started everything. He taught viola passionately,[22] expanded its repertoire, developed a philosophy behind its place in chamber, orchestra, and solo repertoire. This makes

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[19] Christopher Wellington, preface to *William Walton Edition*, Vol. 12, *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra*, by William Walton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), vi.

[20] In fact, a few bars in the solo viola part of the Walton are identical to the Hindemith. The second movement of the Hindemith ends with the same double-stopped cross-relations that Walton uses as a building block for much of the Viola Concerto.

[21] Hindemith was yet to write his most important concertante works for viola. While he had already written the still obscure Kammermusik No. 5, Op. 36, no. 4, the better known pieces such as *Trauermusik* for viola and strings (1936) and especially the popular viola concerto *Der Schwanendreher* (1937) were yet to arrive.

[22] See John White, *Lionel Tertis: the First Great Virtuoso of the Viola* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 2006), 6. To illustrate just how important it was to have a serious viola pedagogue at the time, it should be noted that the conservatories in France and Belgium had no viola teachers until the early 1900s and the Berlin Hochschule until the early 1920s.

him an even more important figure for violists than Pablo Casals, born on the same day as Tertis,[23] is for cellists.

Tertis was born in West Hartlepool, England, in 1876, to Polish-Jewish immigrant parents and began to play the piano at age three, and by age six was already performing.[24] Nevertheless, his true passion was the violin. There was never enough money to pursue this dream, however. At age thirteen, Tertis left home with his parents' blessing to earn his living as a pianist in hopes of one day being able to study the violin. He did so at sixteen, when he enrolled at Trinity College in London, studying intermittently as funds would allow.[25] It was not until he was nineteen that he was asked by a fellow student to play viola in a string quartet, because there were no viola students at the school. At that time, viola playing was at an overall low level, as Tertis attests:

> When I first began to play the viola as a solo instrument, prejudice and storms of abuse were my lot. The consensus of opinion then was that the viola had no right to be heard in solos, and indeed, the consideration of its place in the string family was of the scantiest. It was not only a despised instrument, but its cause was far from helped by the down-and-out violinists who usually played it. The executants in those days were violinists too inferior to gain a position in orchestras as such. A wretchedly low standard of viola-playing was in fact accepted simply and solely because there was no alternative.[26]

Tetris taught himself to play the viola, as there were no teachers. There was little known repertoire, and what was written rarely went above the second ledger line in treble clef – in

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[23] White, 1.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 3.
[26] Lionel Tertis, *My viola and I* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1991), 16.

other words, nothing above fourth position on the A string. Tertis learned and performed violin concertos such as those of Felix Mendelssohn and Henryk Wieniawski, playing them a fifth lower than written, to show that the viola could sound good in the high register.[27] He did meet opposition, notably from Alfred Gibson, the violist in the Joachim Quartet, who said, "I suppose the next thing is, you will be playing behind the bridge! The viola is not meant to be played high up - that is the pig department!"[28] Others took notice, but responded more positively. Tertis quickly became the violist in the Wessely String Quartet and the first violist in the Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra, where he played the first performance of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra, K. 364 (320d) in modern times.[29] In 1904, Tertis left the orchestra to devote his time to solo viola and began recording viola repertoire and transcriptions starting in 1920. Some of those recordings are Johannes Brahms' Sonata in F Minor in 1928, several pieces by Fritz Kreisler, and Arnold Bax's Sonata, written in 1922.

Tertis was on the faculty of the Royal Academy of Music and would play up to six recitals a season, mostly with music of British composers written for him.[30] He played many arrangements as well, including the transcription of Elgar's Cello Concerto, which the composer himself authorized and conducted,[31] and Vaughan Williams' *Flos Campi* suite for solo viola, small chorus and orchestra. He commissioned many viola concertos, including those of Bax, Benjamin Dale, and York Bowen. Ironically, the one that has most stood the test of time, the Walton, was among those Tertis did not like at first. When Walton mailed Tertis the completed

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[27] Ibid., 4.
[28] Ibid., 18.
[29] White, 71.
[30] Tertis, 43.
[31] Ibid., 94-100.

score, he sent it back without explanation.[32] His later account was that the piece seemed too modern to him at first. He wrote:

> I was unwell at the time; but what is also true is that I had not learnt to appreciate Walton's style. The innovations of his musical language, which now seem so logical and so truly in the mainstream of music, then struck me as far-fetched. It took me time to realize what a tower of strength in the literature of the viola is this concerto, and how deep the gratitude that we who play the viola should feel towards the composer...[33]

Perhaps a more direct explanation came from Tertis's widow Lilian, who said, "Lionel couldn't imagine that a chord containing [both] C sharp and C natural could possibly sound well."[34] Tertis's rejection is said to have affected Walton greatly, but a friend of his, a producer at the BBC, thought of a solution and contacted Paul Hindemith, who graciously agreed to perform the work in spite of the short notice.[35] Not only a composer but a noted violist of the era, he gave the premiere of the concerto on October 3, 1929, with the composer conducting the Henry Wood Symphony Orchestra. The two had become friends at a composers' conference years earlier, but for reasons unknown, this was Hindemith's only performance of the piece, ever.[36] Tertis attended the performance and did not like how Hindemith played the concerto, saying, "The notes, certainly, were all there, but the tone was cold and unpleasing and the instrument he played did not deserve to be called a viola, for it was far too small."[37] Walton himself said that Hindemith's technique was excellent, but that he "just stood up and played."

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[32] Lloyd, 92.
[33] Tertis, 36.
[34] Wellington, preface, vi.
[35] Steinberg, 497.
[36] Lloyd, 94.
[37] Tertis, 37.

These opinions are hardly surprising from today's perspective, as Hindemith's viola playing is now considered to be a bit of a dead end in viola history, small instruments notwithstanding. However, Tertis did realize that he was wrong in writing off the piece. He embraced the work and immediately started performing it on numerous occasions, such as on his American tour in the early 1930s with the Chicago Symphony, the BBC Symphony and the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich.

The reaction of the London audience after its premiere was enthusiastic and the concert was considered a success, even though the only rehearsal that took place was a disaster. Walton is said to have spent the entire night before the concert correcting numerous mistakes in orchestra parts, while Hindemith wrote to his wife the day of the rehearsal that "[the concerto] won't be up to much... Walton has only had one rehearsal in which he managed to play the first movement just once. The orchestra is bad, consisting mainly of women, and English ones at that."[38]

Critics, however, were enamored of the concerto. H.C. Colles of The Times wrote:

> After the full score of the elder composer [Bax], the low scale of the tone, partially conditioned, no doubt, by the nature of the solo instrument, made its color sound a little drab. Once the ear had adjusted itself to the new values, its subtlety, its rhythmic vitality, and its lyrical charm were evident enough. The mastery and the handling of the material chosen and the restraint which has been imposed on its facility constitute a real and astonishing advance in the composer's development.[39]

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[38] Paul Hindemith, *Selected letters of Paul Hindemith*, ed. and translated by Geoffrey Skelton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 54.

[39] Wellington, preface, vi.

Eric Bloom of the *Musical Times* was smitten:

> The success of the Viola Concerto by William Walton might almost be said to have amounted to a sensation, were it not that the music made an impression, not a mere hit. It is one of the most remarkable of recent compositions, British or otherwise, the more so because it does not draw attention to anything but sheer quality.[40]

Dissenting voices included Edward Elgar, who "deplored the fact that such music should be thought fit for a stringed instrument,"[41] while Hindemith's manager Willy Strecker suggested in a letter to Hindemith's wife after the premiere that Walton was second-rate, as was the piece.[42] However, in what was Lionel Tertis's first performance of the Viola Concerto with orchestra, at a composers' conference in Liège in 1930, the string of great reviews continued. Walton wrote to a friend that his arm "fatigued of writing autographs after the concert" and that "walking on and off stage [due to ovations] tired us more than playing."[43] In a radio broadcast of the concerto from Edinburgh in 1932 with Lionel Tertis as soloist, it received such ovations that it had to be repeated live in the second half of the program.[44] Other than Tertis, other violists who performed the concerto in concert in the early years were Bernard Shore, Frederick Riddle and William Primrose.[45] This strong exposure undoubtedly contributed to the Viola Concerto's popularity among violists and concert-goers alike, which has steadily continued to this day.

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[40] Ibid.
[41] Kennedy, 52.
[42] Skelton, 98.
[43] Wellington, preface, vii.
[44] Tertis, 71.
[45] Lloyd, 98.

As far as Walton's oeuvre is concerned, it has been suggested by many that this was one of his finest compositions, and it is still one of the most performed.[46] His other concertos include those for cello and violin, the latter written for Jascha Heifetz, who commissioned it at the urging of William Primrose.[47] Walton also wrote two symphonies, the cantata *Belshazzar's Feast*, a sonata for violin and piano and another string quartet; his music for films and operas met with less success. Walton did not compose much, and in his last years most of his works were arrangements. The overall trajectory of his career must have been a bitter pill for him to swallow. Having started as a successful modern composer in his youth, his music began to be considered old-fashioned in the 1950s and 60s due to its pronounced Romantic tendencies, his reputation never quite recovered during his lifetime.[48] However, a more balanced view of his music currently has ensured the steady popularity of a number of his works.

While Walton wrote nothing else for solo viola, the legacy of his Viola Concerto in inspiring other composers to write for it found a convert in none other than Béla Bartók. Just like Tertis before him, William Primrose tirelessly commissioned a number of composers to write works for the viola, and naturally was not successful in getting everyone he approached to agree. Bartók was initially reluctant when he was approached by Primrose in 1945, saying that he did not know enough about the viola as a solo instrument, but Primrose would not take no for an answer. He insisted that Bartók wait before making a final decision and invited him to

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[46] Steinberg, 493.

[47] Kennedy, 92.

[48] As early as 1939, when his successful Violin Concerto was first performed but criticized for being so Romantic, Walton said in an interview to the *New York Times*, "Today's white hope is tomorrow's black sheep. These days it is very sad for a composer to grow old ... I seriously advise all sensitive composers to die at the age of 37. I know: I've gone through the first halcyon period and am just about ripe for my critical damnation."

a performance of the Walton Viola Concerto that Primrose was scheduled to give several months later in New York City, where Bartók lived during the final years of his life.

Bartók agreed but could not attend due to illness. Luckily, the concert was broadcast and having listened to it, he was impressed with the Walton and its use of the viola as a solo instrument and accepted Primrose's commission to write a concerto.[49] The qualities that have made the Walton Viola Concerto so successful and prompted a major composer such as Bartók to change his mind about the viola as a solo instrument will be examined in the following chapter.

[49] See William Primrose, *Walk on the north side: memoirs of a violist* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 185, for a detailed account on how Bartók's concerto was commissioned.

CHAPTER II

Walton's Viola Idiom

The Walton Viola Concerto is known as one of the best viola concertos to date, able to hold its own against the finest of concertos written for any instrument. The reasons for its initial success are many. The British public was eager for the Next Big Thing in classical music—the frustration with the lack of compositional genius in the British Isles compared to the musical superpowers of the Continent has not subsided since the days of Henry Purcell. However, the eagerness to praise a new talent was justified. The modernist spikiness of Walton's *Façade* was supplemented in this piece by a new romanticism and found an individual maturity in combining these diverse elements. The husky, darkly passionate sound of the viola proved a perfect match for the bittersweet contemplation of the music.

This piece showed a more mature Walton and his developed personal style, his characteristic exploitation of conjunct motion in melodic lines, as well as wide intervals such as sevenths and ninths.[50] Other devices we find in the Walton Concerto are the added-note major-minor diatonic harmony, which gives the music its bittersweet flavor, and syncopated, irregular rhythmic patterns that thrust the music forward. Frank Howes wrote, "It is generally agreed that in the Viola Concerto Walton gave the most characteristic expression of his mind. Each of its three movements is strongly defined, and they contain between them most of the idioms,

[50] See the solo viola line in Example 2.3, p. 25-29.

stylistic tricks of speech, the peculiar dynamism and the sharp orchestration that are the superficially recognizable features of his work."[51]

The structure and form of the concerto will be described before getting to the technical elements of the concerto that make it work so well for the viola. The first movement, *Andante comodo,* is the slow movement of the piece, unlike most concerti, whose slow movement is the middle one. Formally, it is a condensed sonata form, beginning with a lyrical melody in the viola that suggests both major and minor harmonies. The second theme, also played by the viola above a pizzicato accompaniment, is restless but contemplative, leading to a climax punctuated by the brass. The recapitulation finds the opening theme now played by oboe and flute, with a viola obbligato in counterpoint, and the movement ends in hushed tones. The second movement, *Vivo, con molto preciso,* is a brief, exciting scherzo. It is in rondo form, although its episodes sometimes occur next to each other without the main theme in between. The viola trades fast rhythmic figures with the orchestra, until the brass introduces a second, equally energetic theme. Throughout the movement, Walton breaks up the melodies with sudden offbeat accents and changes of meter that keep the energy flowing to the end. A solo bassoon introduces the slightly comical first theme of the final and most substantial movement, *Allegro moderato,* which is in a very free sonata form. Unlike most classical concerto finales, in which the soloist's virtuosity is elaborated upon, Walton summarizes the emotions and materials of previous movements here and reveals their deeper emotional purpose.[52] Both the solo viola and various sections of the orchestra take up the motives of the beginning, until the

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[51] Frank Howes, *The music of William Walton,* 2nd edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 79.
[52] Ibid., 86.

viola introduces a new, more plaintive theme. The exuberant orchestra-only fugue includes portions of all three themes, ending with a tragic epilogue in which the soloist returns to a melody from the first movement, while a bass clarinet[53] plays the opening of the Finale as an ostinato underneath. The piece ends quietly, again contrasting major to minor harmonies, and focusing on the viola's earnest, introspective tone quality.

The form of the Walton resembles Elgar's Cello Concerto, Op. 85, in that it begins with a slow, ruminative first movement, followed by a scherzo, while the most weight is found in the finale, at the end of which are elegiac and contemplative recollections of the principal theme of the opening movement. Its connections to Sergei Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 19 are even more apparent.[54] The opening of the Walton echoes the first theme of the Prokofiev, while Walton's first-movement recapitulation—just like Prokofiev's, which is introduced by double stops of the soloist—starts with a woodwind melody matched by solo line's improvisatory triplets. Likewise, toward the end of the last movement of both works, the very opening theme of the concerto returns while a portion of the main theme of the Finale serves as accompaniment.

Technically speaking, The Walton Viola Concerto is effective due to some clever writing on Walton's part. He minimized the string parts whenever the solo viola plays and found effective ways to lessen the contrast between tutti and solo parts, such as with specific dynamics, effective combinations of textures, registers, rhythms, as well as contrasting

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[53] In the 1929 orchestration of the Viola Concerto, this ostinato is played by the cellos.
[54] See Atar Arad, "Walton as Scapino," *The Strad*, February 1989, 138-141.

directions of melodic lines of the viola versus the accompaniment, all in order not to cover the soloist. The orchestration calls for a large orchestra which is rare for a string concerto, especially one written for an instrument whose tone is rich but not penetrating, not to mention its acoustic shortcomings.[55] And yet, the full orchestra in Walton's orchestration encompasses a broad scope of colors and emotions in such a way that the solo viola always comes out.

The composer orchestrated the concerto twice, the second time in 1962. The 1929 version is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, three trumpets, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, as well as strings. The violins, violas, cellos and basses were to be reduced to four, three, two, two and one stands when the soloist plays. The 1962 version eliminates one flute, one oboe, one clarinet, contrabassoon, one trumpet and adds a harp. Here the string section is reduced to four, three, three, two and two stands respectively during solo sections. Walton wrote in a letter to the Oxford University Press in 1961, "I think it is an improvement on the old version particularly as regards to clarity and definition."[56] However, these changes do not always serve to lighten the texture; some of them change the color. The piccolo, English horn, and bass clarinet are still present, adding body, there is an extra stand of cellos and basses during the solos, and the reduced brass does not affect the solo line much. The harp, which

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[55] See Henry Barrett, *The Viola: Complete Guide for Teachers and Students*, second edition (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1978), 107. The viola suffers from an inadequate size for its tuning; were it to match the perfect acoustics of the violin, it would need to have string length of 21 inches, which would make it impossible to play whether on the left shoulder or between one's legs, like a cello. Therefore, necessary compromises in viola sizes and models have always existed, and because of them the sound of the viola remains vulnerable to being overwhelmed by other instruments.

[56] Wellington, preface, viii.

Walton had not used much prior to writing the concerto, shows his evolved concept of orchestral sound for Walton in his later years.

The new orchestration, however, was not entirely a critical success. The critic Ronald Chrichton wrote, "one wished that just this once they had gone back to the old scoring with triple wind and without harp - no doubt the revisions make life easier for the solo, but the smoothing and streamlining tone down the acerbity that was very much part of the music, while the harp brings it nearer the Tennysonian euphony of Ischia and the later period,[57] very beautiful, but different."[58] Getting acquainted with the original orchestration is only possible via recordings, and there is but one recording with it in the last fifty years, that of Lawrence Power. Walton confusingly said that the new orchestration was preferable but that the old one could still be performed.[59] However, the new version is almost always played. Luckily, both versions have a profound understanding of issues in coupling the viola with orchestra and any issues with the later one are purely aesthetic.

Walton's reduction of the string section during the viola solos allows the solo viola to remain dominant. Essentially, the work is scored for two orchestras: a chamber orchestra during the solos and a full orchestra during the tutti. Apart from this, the composer recognized that what covers up a solo viola is not so much the brass as other strings. One may think that trombones and trumpets are too heavy an accompaniment for a lone violist, and while their

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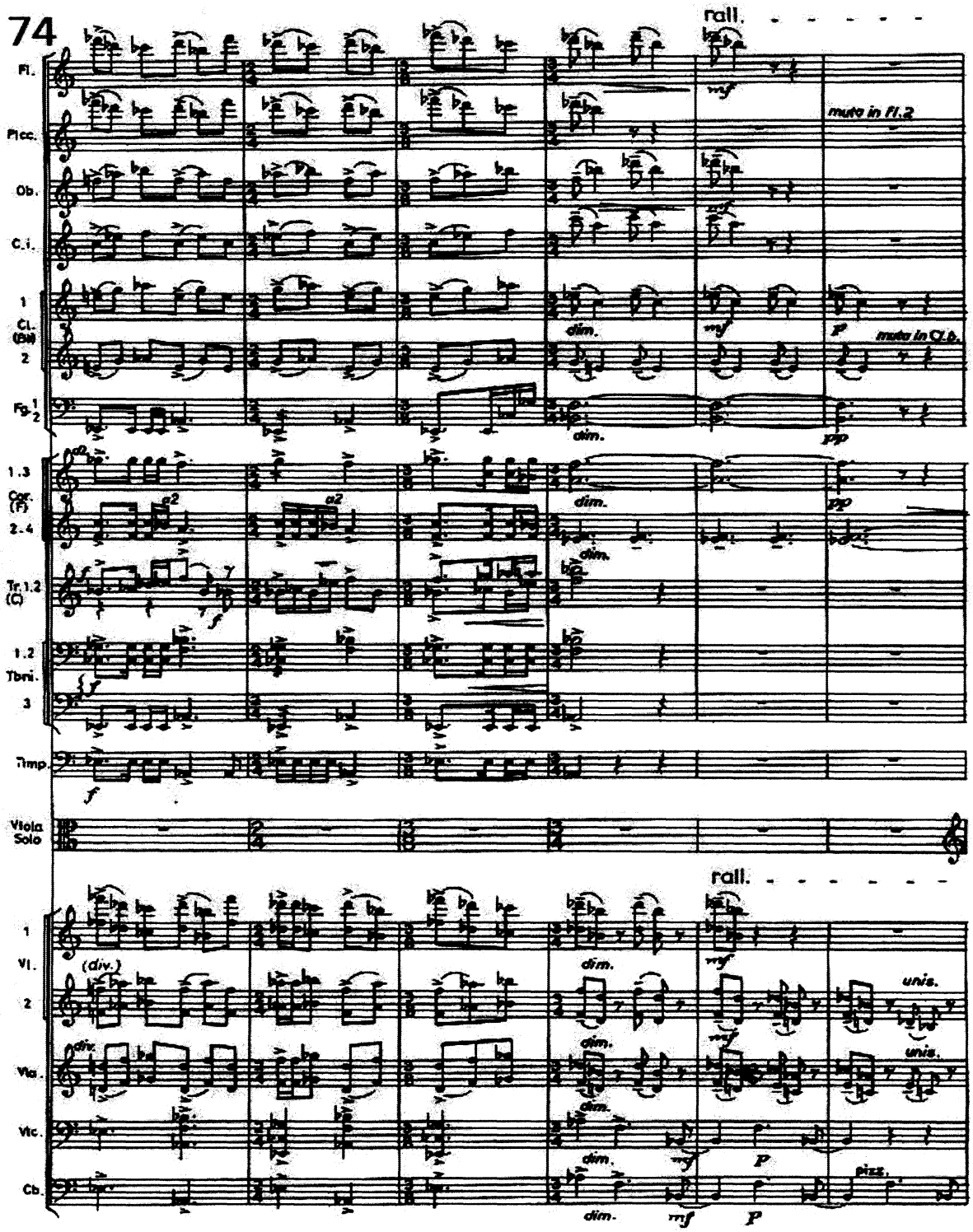
[57] Ischia is a volcanic island in the Tyrrhenian Sea, at the northern end of the Gulf of Naples. Walton lived here full-time from 1949 until his death.
[58] Ibid., ix.
[59] Ibid., viii. From a letter Walton wrote to Alan Frank in 1961, "I agree about the Viola Concerto, that the new version need not cancel out the original - it just may be on occasion more convenient."

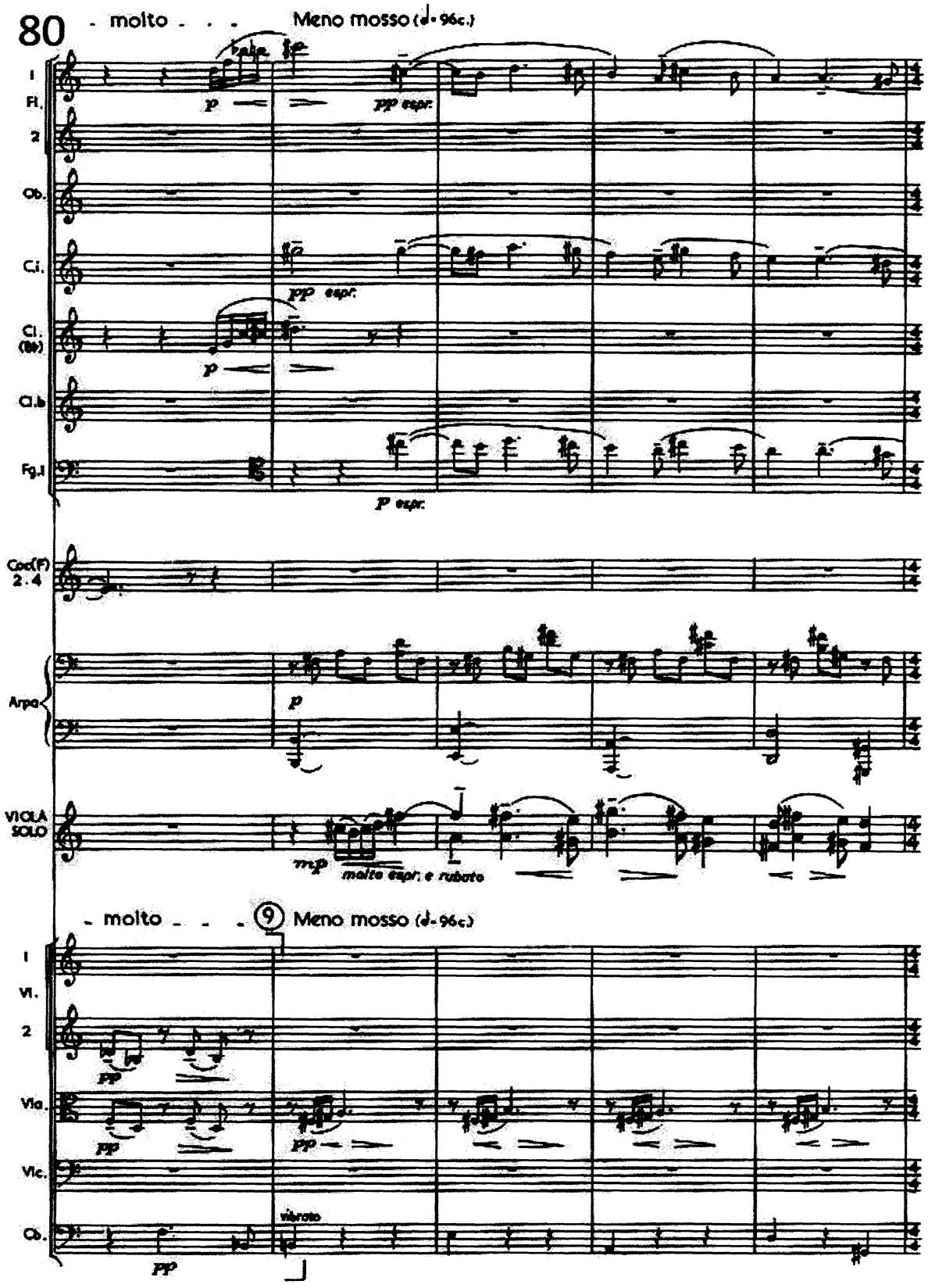
fortissimo dynamics can overpower anybody, at more moderate dynamics they are so different in tone that the solo viola can stand out clearly against them.

Walton's juxtapositions of the full orchestra tutti and the solo sections are seamless and natural, and the solo sections are not lacking in comparison. A perfect example is in the first movement, in the build up to a full orchestral tutti in m. 74 (Example 2.1). Here, the force of the entire orchestra is used, creating a grand climax. Every instrument plays with the exception of the soloist and all are marked forte, with accents on certain notes.

The orchestra dies away with a general decrescendo and the brass drops out first, then the woodwinds, then first- and second-violins, until there are only pianissimo violas and low strings. This sets up the next viola entrance at m. 80, where it plays the melody, in a high register in canon with the horn and flute. The viola stays in the foreground because of the addition of the double-stopped sixths, but the melody becomes more interesting with the canonic voices moving against it, the lines moving in different rhythms and directions. In addition, some of the violas play commentary underneath the soloist's entrance at m. 80, giving a bed of color and texture upon which the viola lies. Even though there are so many lines occurring at this point, the viola is clearly the main melody, which gives some relief to the ear after the preceding complexity of the tutti.

Example 2.1. *Viola Concerto,* 1st mvt., mm. 74-84.

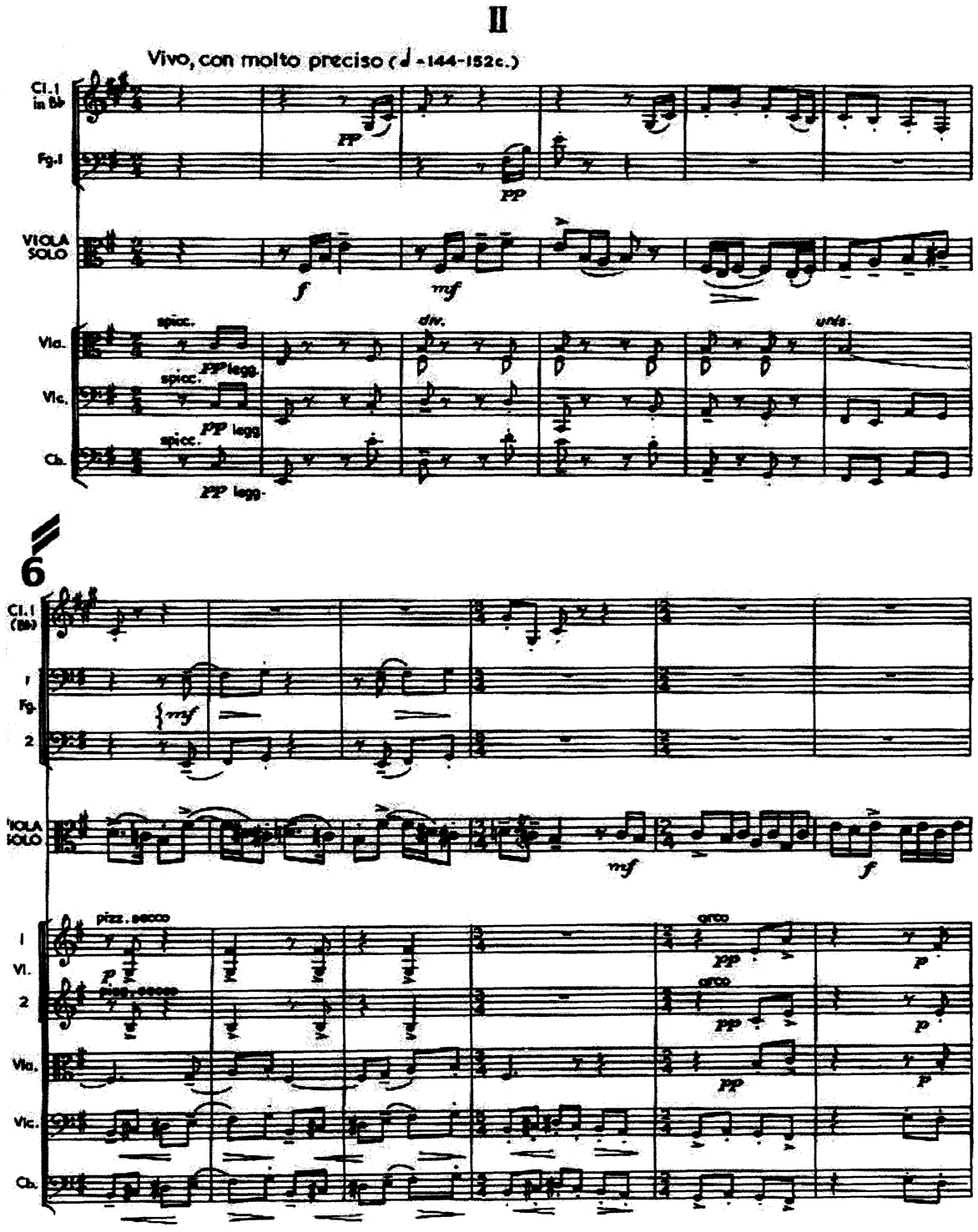


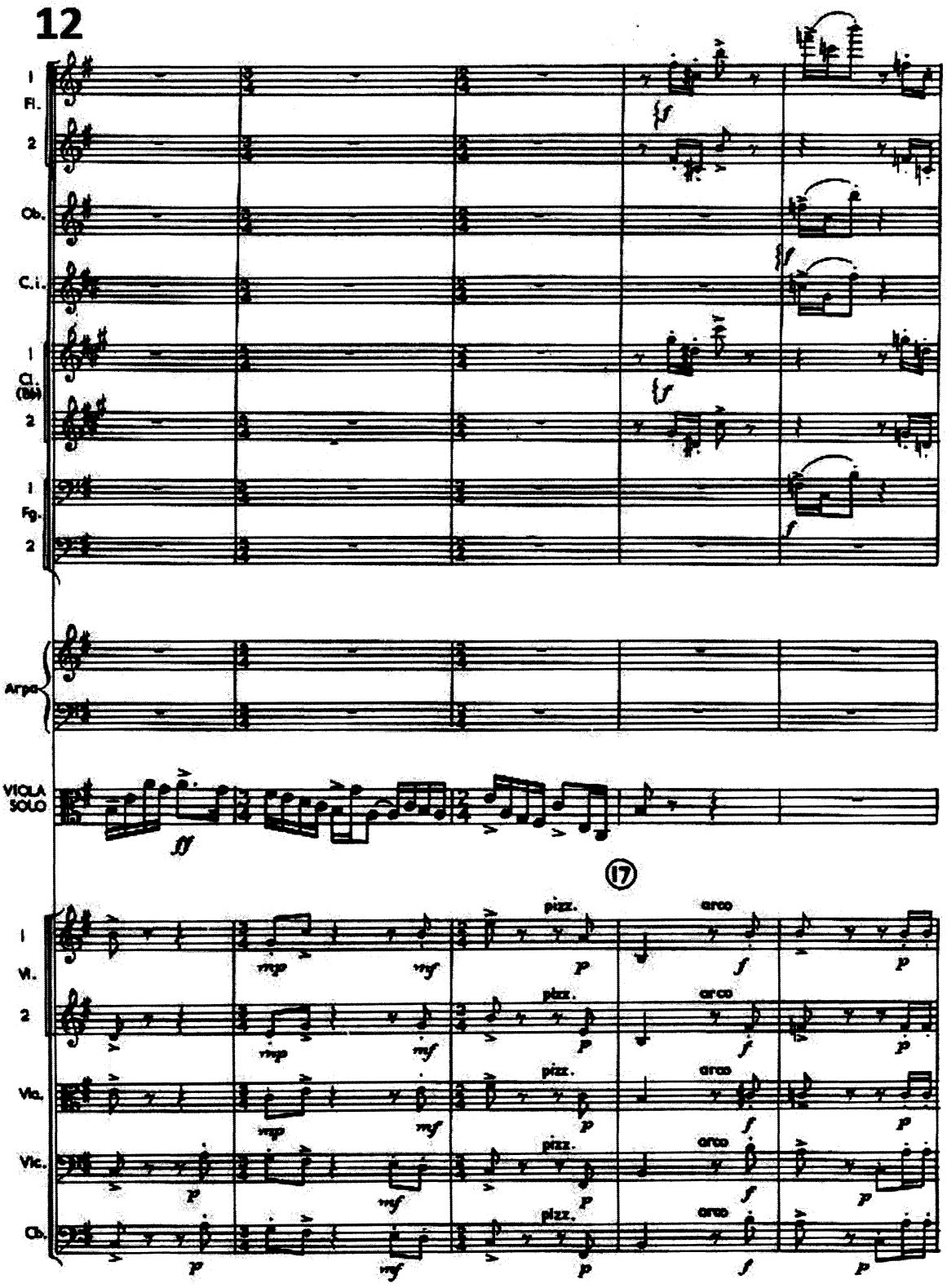

80
- molto - - -
Meno mosso (♩. 96c.)
I Fl. 2
Ob.
Cl.
Cl. (Bb)
Cl.b
Fg.I
Cor(F) 2.4
Arpa
VIOLA SOLO
- molto - - -
9
Meno mosso (♩. 96c.)
I Vl. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.
vibrato

Walton's dynamic markings also play a large role in allowing the viola to be heard throughout. Often, as expected, the viola line will be marked louder than the other lines, especially the strings. As mentioned above, it is the string parts that have the potential to mask the viola line due to the similar tone color. The second movement begins with only a one-beat introduction in the viola section before the viola solo begins the theme of this unorthodox rondo (Example 2.2). The superiority of this opening theme is apparent; the accompaniment is pp and short while the viola solo plays mf and f. In m. 7 the bassoons double the violas, however the bassoons are marked mf while the violas are pp. The bassoons are justifiably marked higher without risking covering the soloist because of the difference in range and timbre. Walton shows his mastery by keeping the violas soft, adding color and depth to the line without competing with the soloist.

Texturally, Walton brings out the solo viola line contrasting it with the accompaniment—that is, the viola solo will have a legato melody with pizzicati underneath. At rehearsal number 4 in the first movement the viola utilizes its rich, low register which can easily be obliterated by other instruments, but in this case the solo viola is accompanied by pizzicato strings, marked p. In this way the whole range of the viola is used, especially the viola's unique low register, allowing Walton to use a broader color palette to create many different emotions.

Example 2.2. *Viola Concerto,* 2nd mvt. mm. 1-16

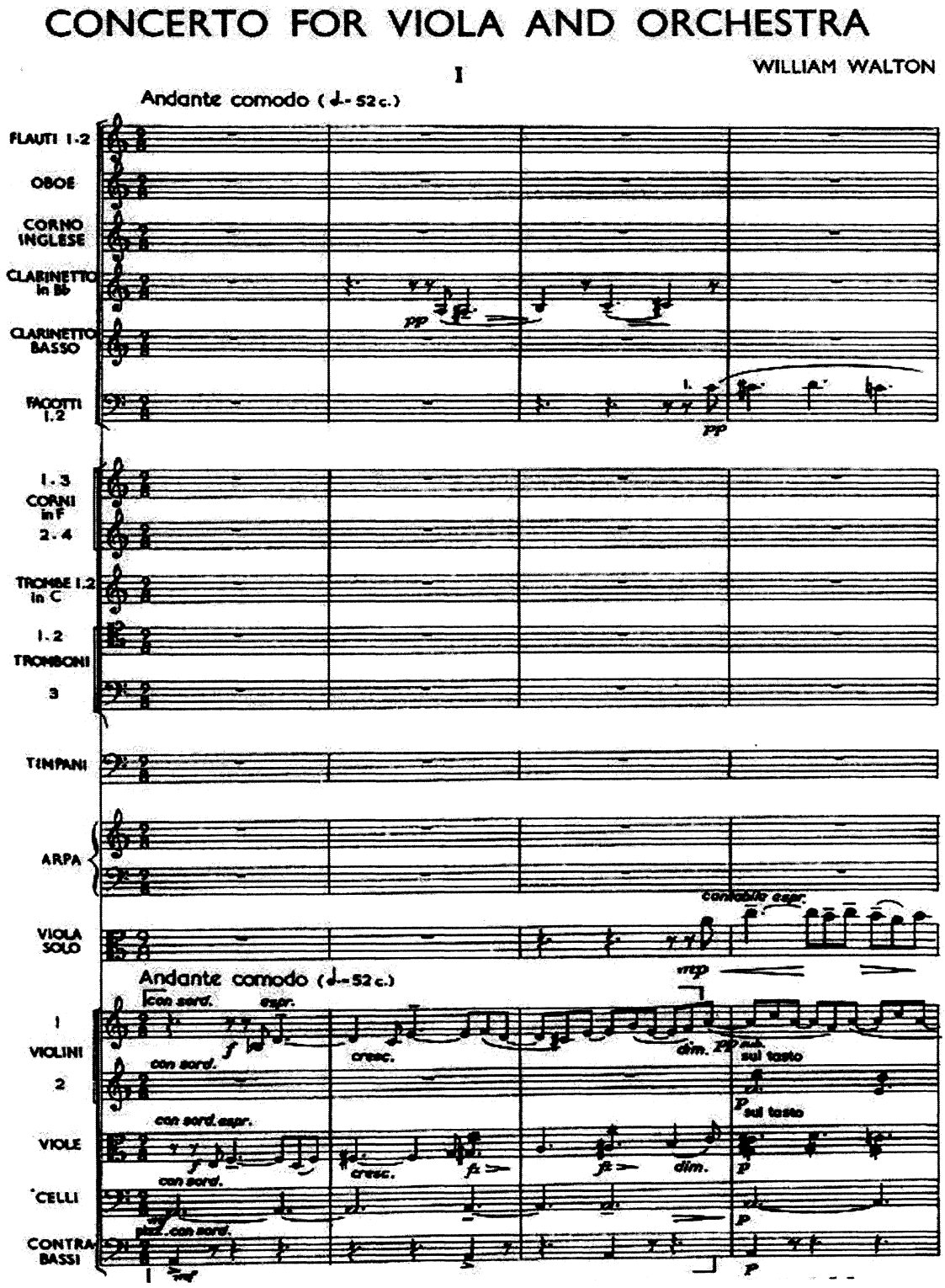


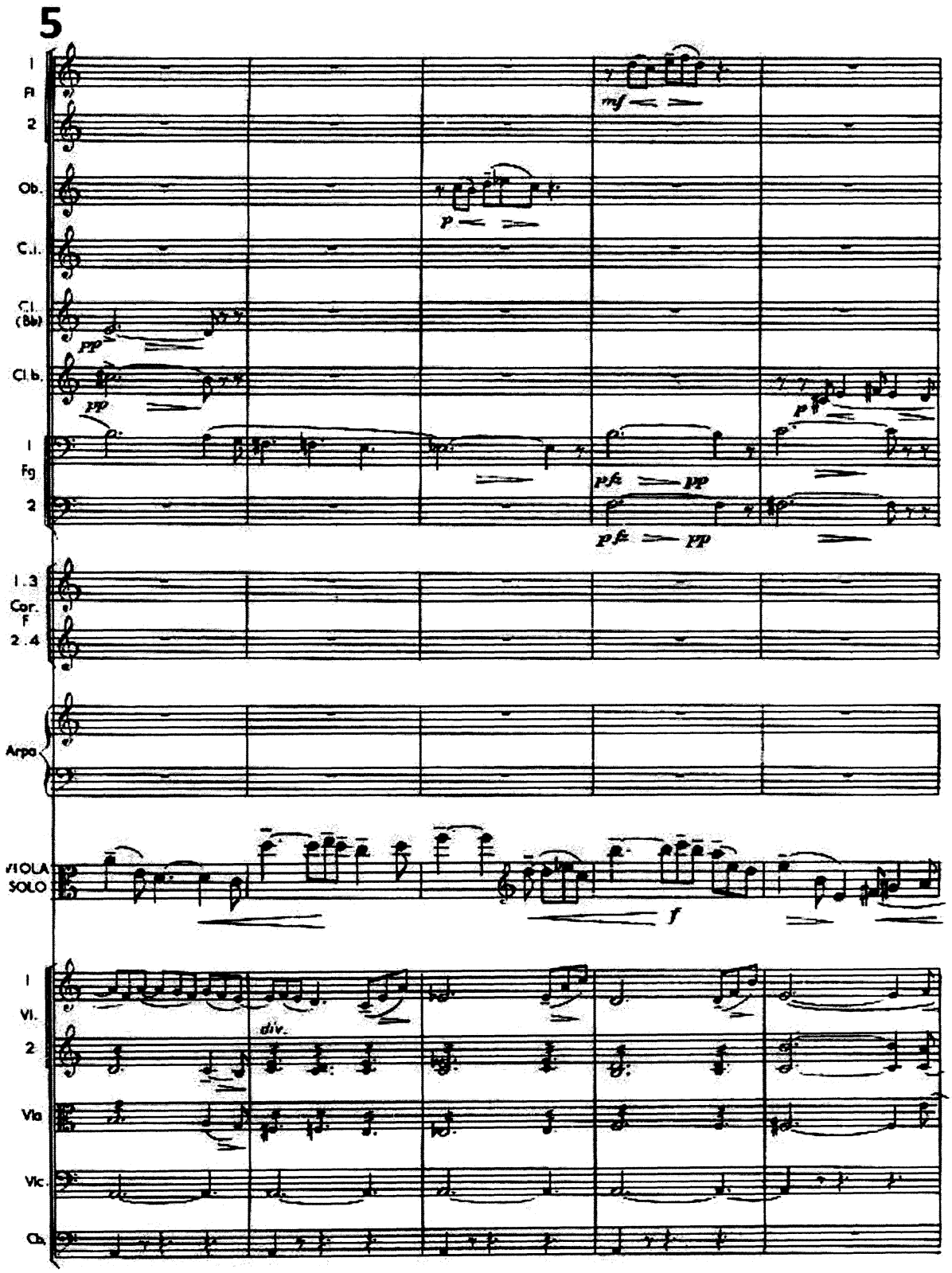

12
1 Fl.
2
Ob.
C.i.
1 Cl. (Bb)
2
1 Fg.
2
Arpa
VIOLA SOLO
17
1 Vl.
2
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.
pizz.
arco

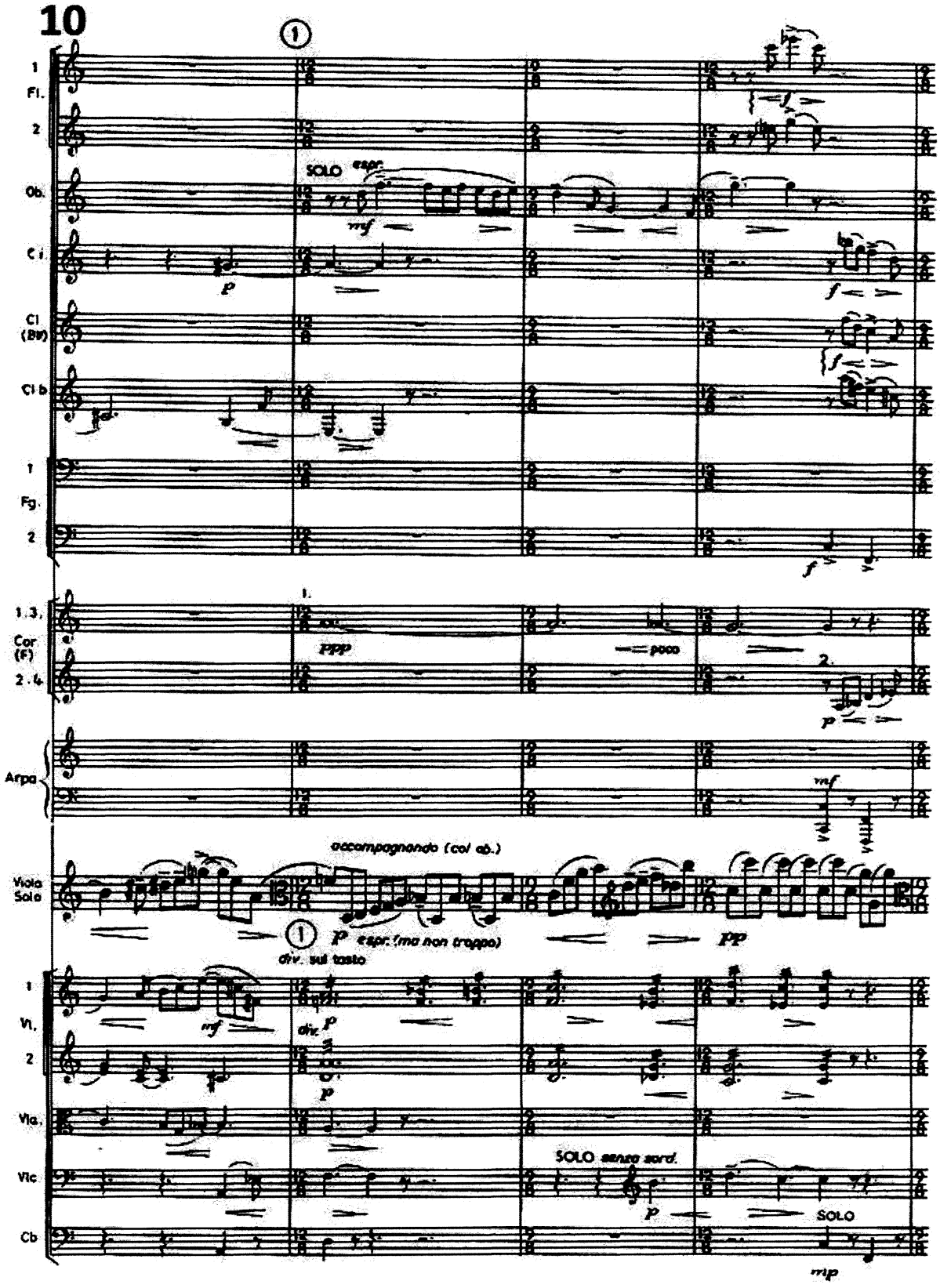
In the solo part, Walton wisely took advantage of the upper register of the viola, underused in its day, and made the most of the viola's unique low register that Primrose seemed to distrust.[60] Additionally, the use of opposing registers between the soloist and orchestra allows for the solo viola to be heard, especially above instruments with more power and at higher dynamics. The beginning of the concerto is a good example (Example 2.3). It opens with a short introduction in the muted strings and clarinet in low registers, setting the tone for the rich color of the viola. The melody ascends, leading to the solo viola playing in a higher register and making its entrance seem brilliant by comparison. Although the solo viola begins in unison with the first violins and continues in the same register, often doubling them, the viola stands out due to the reduced number of strings and its indication of mp *cantabile espressivo* as compared to piano *sul tasto* marking in the upper strings, which are also muted. The strings thus add a shimmering background to the solo viola, without interfering.

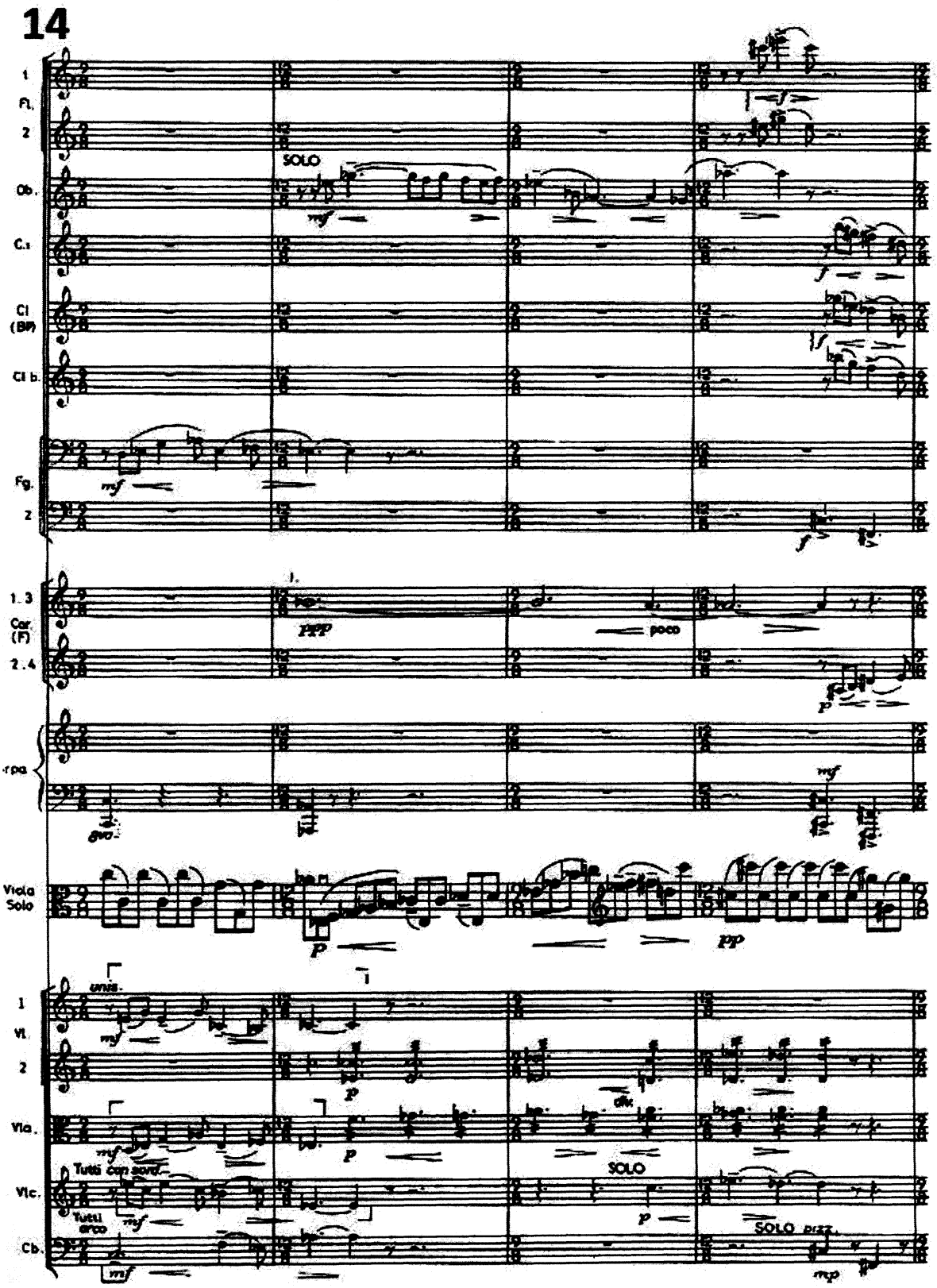
[60] Dalton, 197. William Primrose states, "Keenly aware of the reputation the viola had gained as a nasty, growling, and grunting instrument, especially when used in a solo function, I was ever on the lookout on the ways of offsetting this presumption. Among other devices I used was to contrive to play rapid, virtuosic passages an octave higher than was the composer's intention, in order to avoid that unseemly scrubbing that so often resulted from placement on the two lower strings."

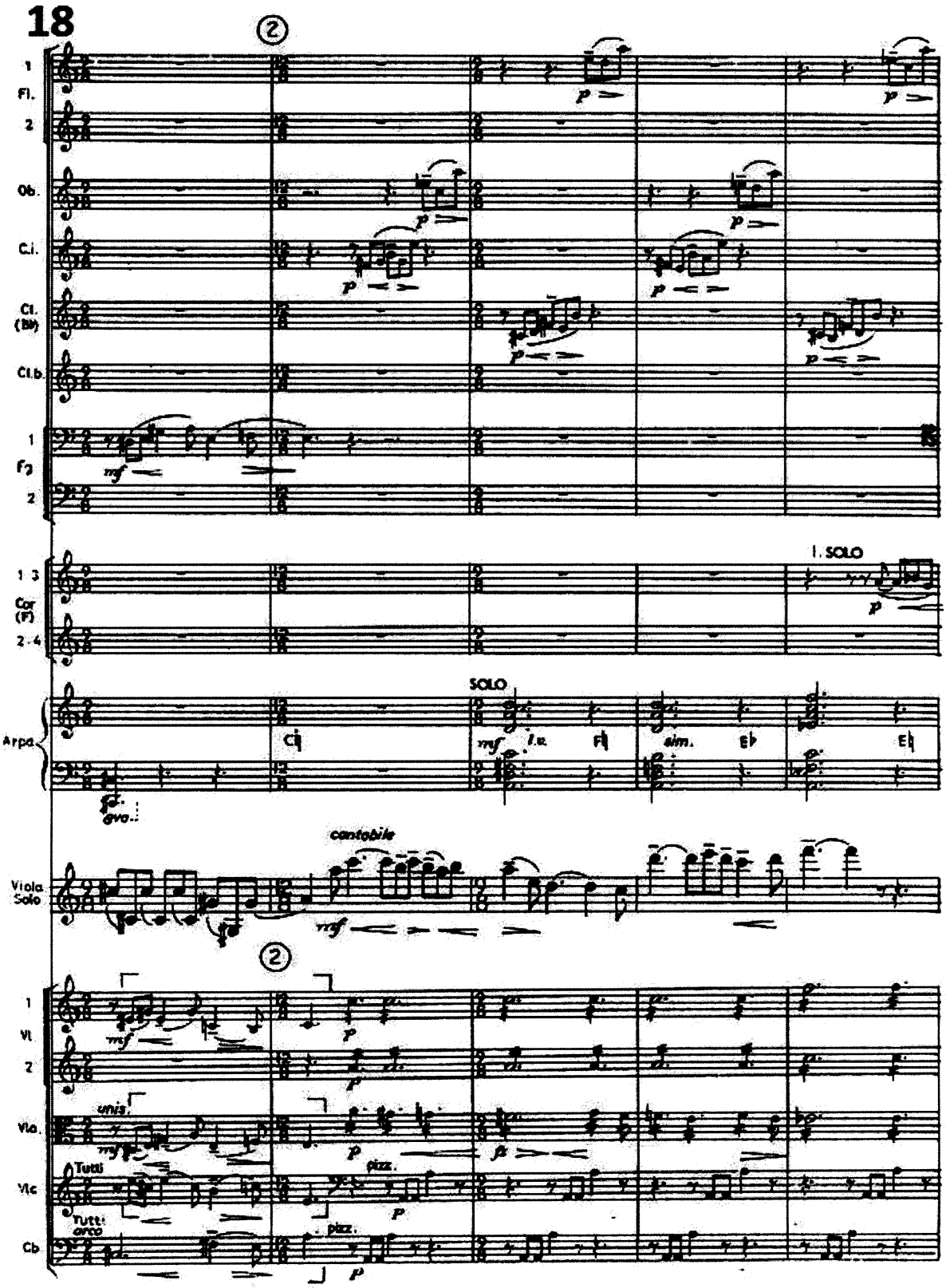
Example 2.3. *Viola Concerto,* 1st mvt., mm. 1-22




5
1
Fl
2
Ob.
C.I.
Cl.
(Bb)
Cl.b.
1
Fg
2
1.3
Cor.
F
2.4
Arpa
VIOLA
SOLO
1
Vl.
2
Vla
Vlc.
Cb.
mf
p
pp
pp
pfz
pp
p
pfz
pp
f
div.


10
1
Fl.
2
Ob.
Cl.
Cl (Bb)
Cl b
1
Fg.
2
1.3.
Cor (F)
2.4
Arpa
Viola Solo
1
Vl.
2
Vla.
Vlc
Cb
SOLO espr.
mf
p
f
ppp
poco
accompagnando (col ob.)
espr. (ma non troppo)
pp
div. sul tasto
div.
SOLO senza sord.
mp


14
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob.
C.a
Cl (Bb)
Cl b.
Fg. 1
Fg. 2
Cor. (F) 1.3
Cor. (F) 2.4
Harp
Viola Solo
Vl. 1
Vl. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.
SOLO
Tutti con sord.
Tutti arco
SOLO
SOLO

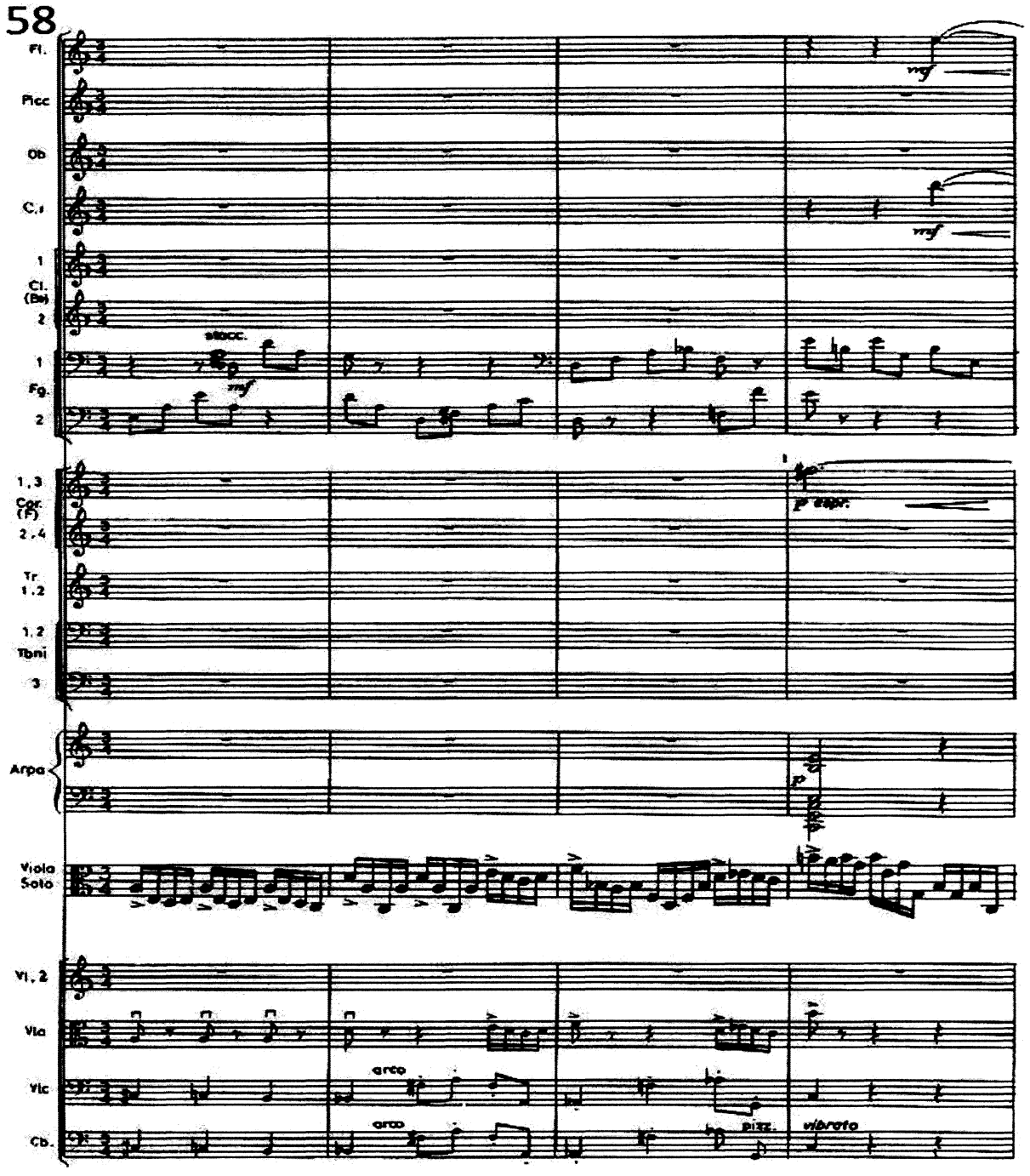

18
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob.
C.i.
Cl. (Bb)
Cl.b.
Fg 1
Fg 2
Cor (F) 1 3
Cor (F) 2 4
I. SOLO
Arpa
SOLO
Viola Solo
cantabile
Vl. 1
Vl. 2
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.
unis.
Tutti
Tutti
arco
pizz.

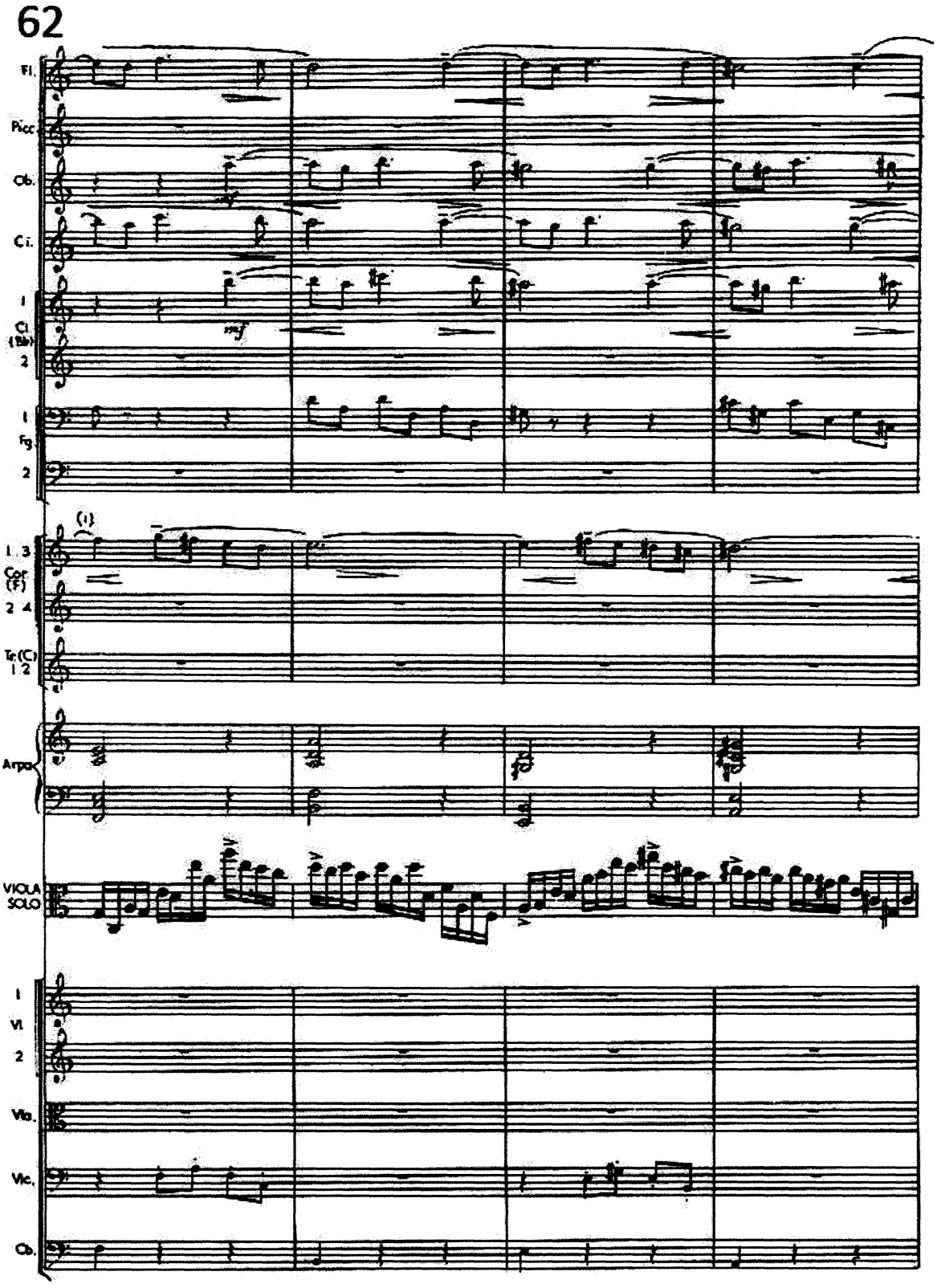
At m. 13 Walton also uses registers to bring out the viola line. Here, the viola plays a pianissimo ostinato figure in the upper register while the woodwinds and strings have the melody, marked forte and mezzo forte. This is effective because the strings and woodwinds have the main melody, or fragments of it, giving the piece variety, but the viola is situated in such a brilliant range that it is heard clearly. When the oboe plays the opening viola theme in m. 15 the viola raises its volume and lowers its range while the strings play piano sul tasto tremolos until the viola ascends to its ostinato as the oboe finishes its melody. During this interplay, the listener's attention is constantly drawn from one focal point to another.

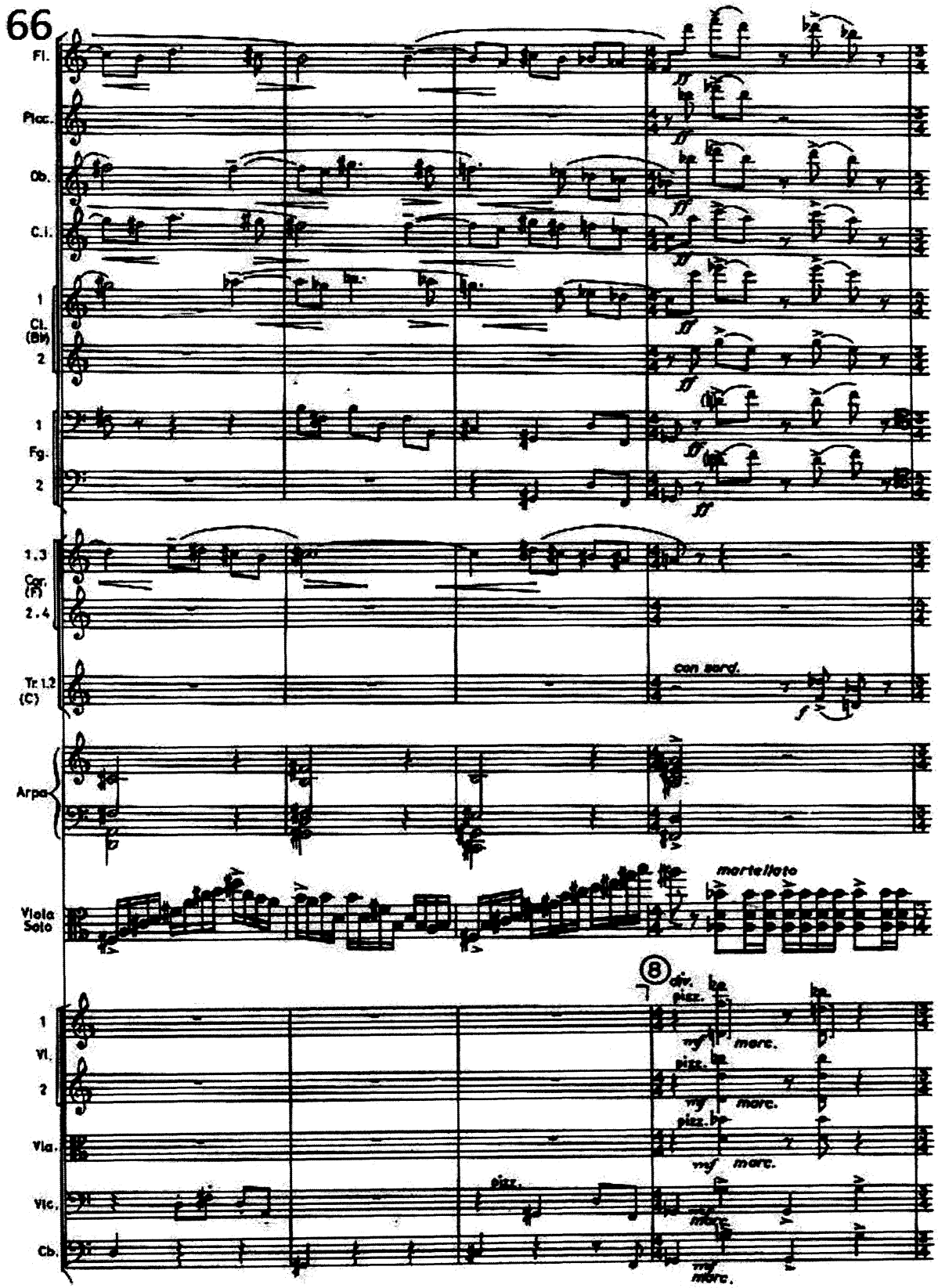
Walton uses varying rhythmic counterpoint to allow multiple lines to be heard with clarity. At m. 58 in the first movement the viola begins a passage of fortissimo sixteenth notes, which move throughout its whole range accompanied by an increasingly thick orchestra (Example 2.4). The strings stay out of the way, but the slow oboe, clarinet, and horn melodies are all marked solo while the bassoons trade a bass ostinato with the celli. The viola stands out alongside woodwind melodies because of its rhythmic intensity and the jagged contours of its lines, adding drama to this passage.[61]

[61] This technique is also used in the second movement after the theme has been fully stated by the viola and the orchestra begins to comment, at rehearsal number 17.

Example 2.4. *Viola Concerto,* 1st mvt. mm. 58-69




62
Fl.
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
1
Cl. (Bb)
2
1
Fg.
2
(1)
1, 3
Cor (F)
2, 4
Tr (C)
1, 2
Arpa
VIOLA SOLO
1
Vl.
2
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.


66
Fl.
Picc.
Ob.
C.I.
1
Cl. (Bb)
2
1
Fg.
2
1.3
Cor. (F)
2.4
Tr 1.2 (C)
con sord.
Arpa
Viola Solo
martellato
8
div.
pizz.
mf
marc.
1
Vl.
2
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.

Because the Walton Viola Concerto utilizes so many different instruments, there is a wide palette of tone colors displayed. Because of the difference of the tone colors, the viola can be easily heard while giving the piece variety. At rehearsal number 6 in the first movement the winds have a high, unison, forte, Mahler-esque tutti, followed by mid-range mezzoforte sixteenth-note scales in the viola. This contrast in color highlights the viola's entrance by the sheer contrast of timbre. In addition, the viola is playing against rhythmic trumpet chords in a similar register. Meanwhile, the clarinets and bassoons play forte in the low register, adding contrast. Because of the difference in timbre, the viola cuts through easily and the passage creates an effective color that has not been heard before (Example 2.5).

Whatever the technical devices, the Walton Viola Concerto could not be as powerful a work if it did not contain highly inspired, personal and beautiful music. This concerto is a sincere account of Walton's soul, of that sensuous uncertainty and frustrated longing that is so typical of him. We sense struggle with the pain of his childhood, his alienation and yearning and the ultimately inescapable shadow of the unhappy environment in which he grew up.[62] His music was not the product of abstract inspiration, but of an innate need to express himself. The epilogue of the Viola Concerto is one of the most beautiful passages in all his music,[63] whose mood is one of resignation. The process of gathering up what has happened before expands the

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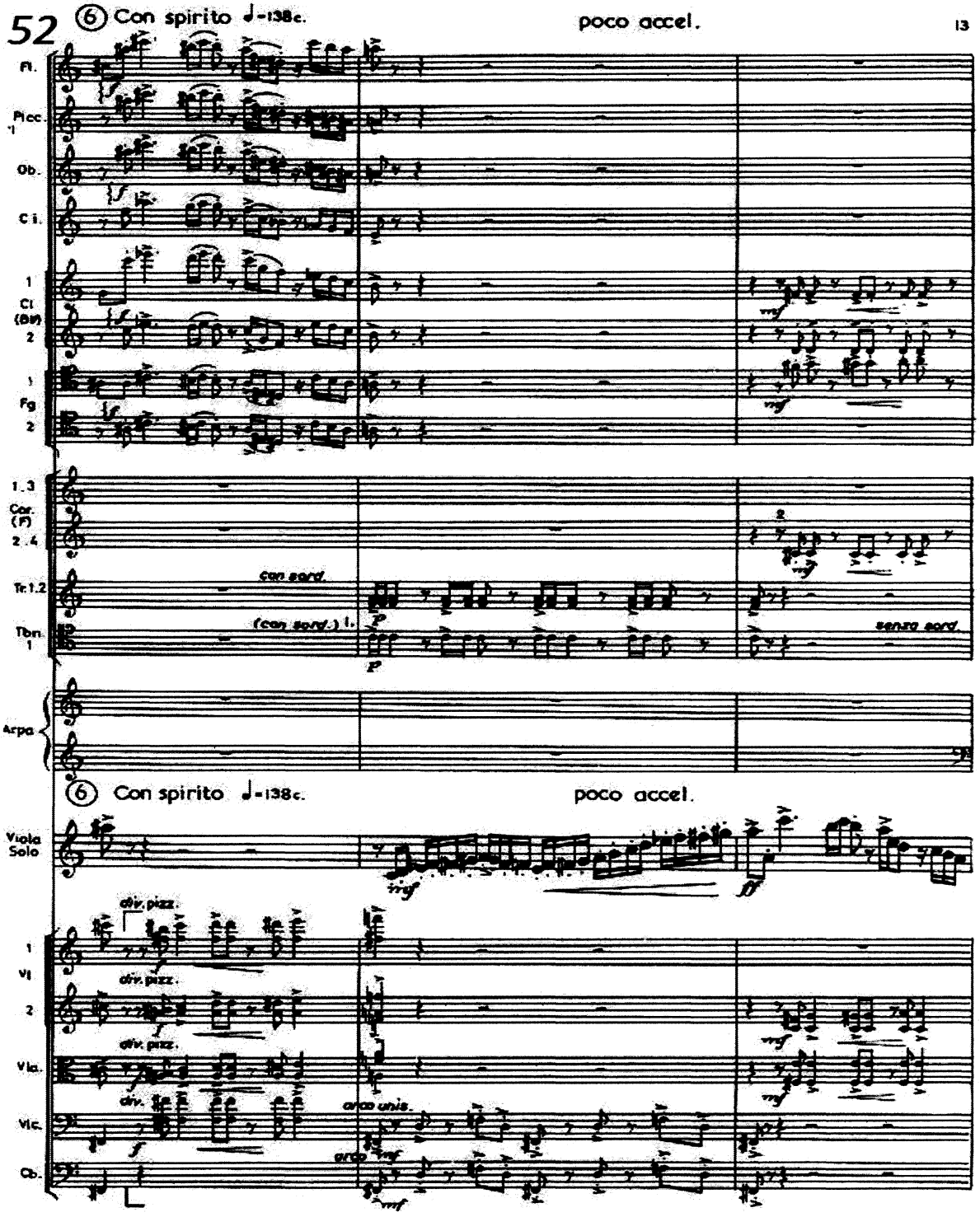
[62] See Lloyd, 4, for the following anecdote about Walton's childhood. When he was ten, his father saw a newspaper ad for choristers at Christ Church Cathedral School in Oxford and applied for Walton to be admitted. But, when it was time to audition, Walton and his mother missed their train because Walton's father had not returned home the previous night, and, as it turned out, had spent the fare money at the local pub. His mother borrowed the money, made the trip but was late. Luckily, she successfully pleaded for her son to be heard and he was accepted.

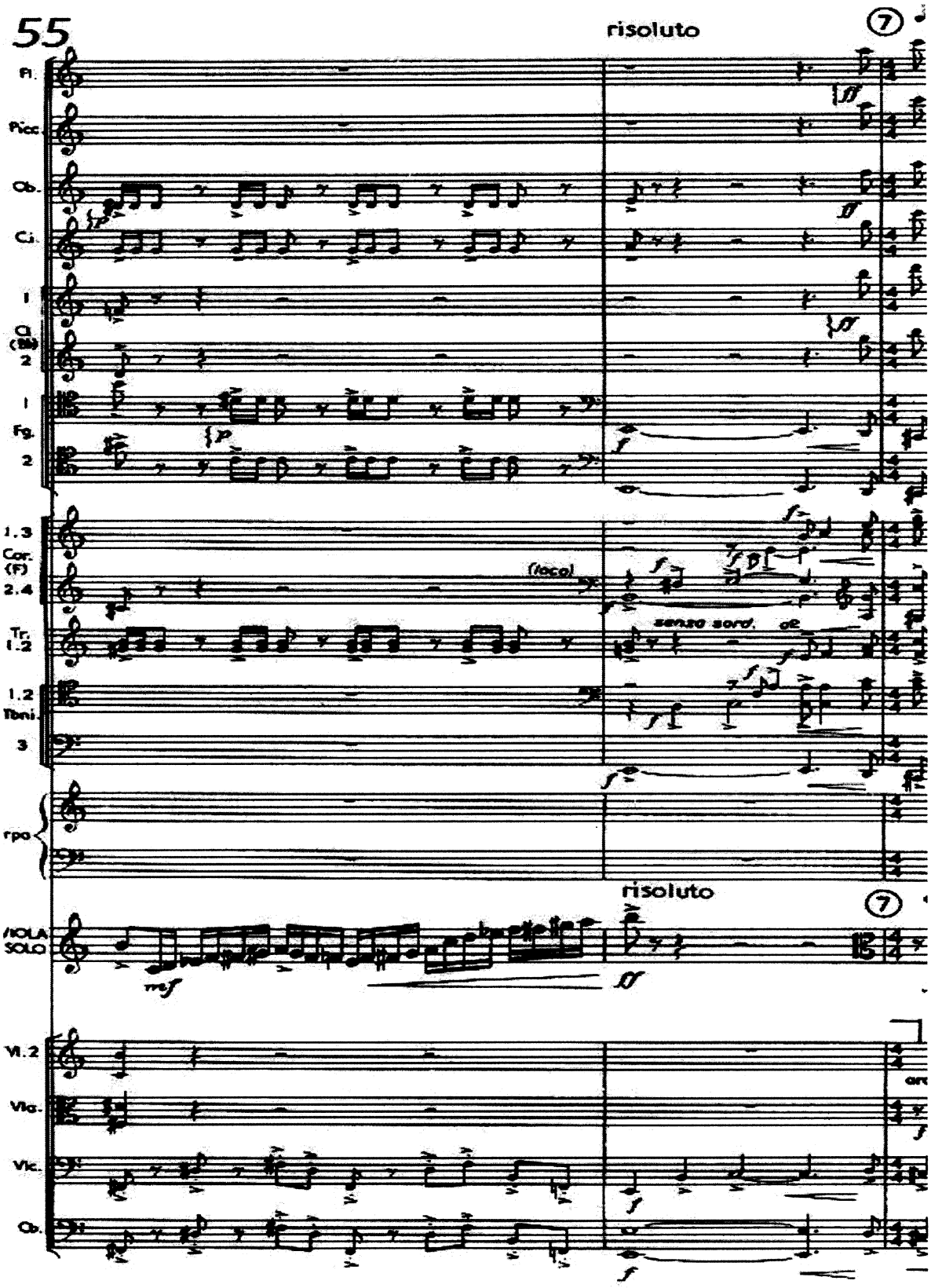
[63] Howes, 51.

Finale's emotional range from a bizarre beginning to a transcendent conclusion. It is precisely this kind of inspired writing that keeps attracting violists to this piece and will continue to do so, far into the future.

Walton's Viola Concerto has remained one of the few viola concertos that rank highly in the repertory, together with Bartók's unfinished Concerto and Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher*. What Walton did so well in this piece is let the overall tone of the concerto grow freely out of an essential tone quality of the instrument, and this is the most crucial part of his viola idiom. A number of other recent viola concertos share that same quality, such as those by Krzysztof Penderecki, with its deeply intimate nostalgia, and Alfred Schnittke, with its melodramatic lamenting that ends in tragedy and bleakness. Walton's Viola Concerto made the expansion of viola repertoire possible in ways no viola piece had done before, and for that, it will always remain unique.

Example 2.5. *Viola Concerto,* 1st mvt. mm. 52-56




55
risoluto
7
Fl.
Picc.
Ob.
Cl.
Cl. (Bb) 1
Cl. (Bb) 2
Fg. 1
Fg. 2
1.3 Cor. (F)
2.4 Cor. (F)
(loco)
senza sord.
Tr. 1.2
1.2 Tboni.
3 Tboni.
Tpo
risoluto
7
VIOLA SOLO
mf
Vl.2
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.

CHAPTER III

The Golden Age of Viola Playing?

Walton's Viola Concerto came at a perfect time for the composer, as well as for violists everywhere. Lionel Tertis's tireless efforts had given the viola more repertoire, exposure and prominence than ever before. And now, violists finally had a concerto that could rightfully be called a masterpiece, the first such piece in the modern era. The recordings from the early decades of the concerto are few, but those that we have are fascinating for their compelling individuality, in spite of occasional sloppiness by modern standards. The performance practice of this period is closely related to the ideals of the Romantic era whose influence extends well into the 20th century, as the recordings selected here show. But, what made this performance practice unique, and how does it manifest itself in the recordings of the Walton?

Primrose famously said that the viola was an instrument without a tradition.[64] This bold statement should not obscure the fact that, true as it is, violists of the early 20th century had to start with some existing tradition, even if not specifically a viola tradition. Since the viola is the closest to the violin in technique and sonority, it is unsurprising that violin performance practice of the time when the Walton was written had a strong influence in these early interpretations. The violin has been consistently popular in Western music since it first

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[64] Dalton, 1.

appeared in present form, about four hundred years ago. The interest of composers in its possibilities only slightly diminished during the comparatively brief period of the Romantic era, when the piano was the preferred instrument. Most great composers at the time were pianists by training and wrote a great deal for the instrument and considerably less for the violin. As the Romantic era waned, so did the unassailable place of the piano in the musical pantheon. The violin regained its footing, its popularity grew further and its repertoire continued to be enriched. For example, in the 1930s alone, at least six violin concertos were written that remain firmly in the repertoire to this day: those of Stravinsky, Bartók (Concerto No. 2), Prokofiev (Concerto No. 2), and Walton, as well as Alban Berg and Aram Khatchaturian.[65]

The first half of the twentieth century is considered the golden age of violin playing because of the many unique violinists that emerged on the world scene.[66] A critical mass of good teaching, improved technique and unique talents, all of which managed to find fertile ground thanks to a bigger audience than ever before, differentiated this era from all others. Although Fritz Kreisler and Jascha Heifetz were the dominant figures, many other violinists, such as Jan Kubelik, Bronislaw Huberman, Mischa Elman, Toscha Seidel, Váša Příhoda and Efrem Zimbalist left illustrious legacies. All of the preeminent violists of the era were violinists originally and belonged to the same tradition of string playing. This tradition had many distinguishing characteristics: it emphasized individuality in performing style and uniqueness as a value in performance; a performer had every right to exploit virtues such as bravura and

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[65] Steinberg, 217.
[66] Robin Stowell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 84.

tonal beauty to the fullest extent in order to distinguish himself.[67] Overt emotionalism and signature mannerisms, such as omnipresent portamento (not yet demonized as a sign of poor taste), were the hallmarks of the Romantic style. As a result, the notable string players of this era are easily distinguishable one from another in a way that few have been since. Modern values such as fidelity to the score above all other priorities, consistent technical perfection, and awareness of the performance practice of the composer's lifetime were largely unknown. The viol(in)ist was not only a vital liaison between the composer and the audience but also a dominating factor in an interpretation. The interpreter was someone who had the right to make changes to the music in his own image, rather than invariably respect the composer's intentions. His role was rooted in Romantic grandeur and, as long as he moved his audience, he could do no wrong. Mischa Elman described this in the following anecdote:

> Once, at a recital of a violinist colleague of mine, while I was still applauding his playing of the Bach *Chaconne*, a lady tapped me on the shoulder. Leaning forward, she murmured, "that was enjoyable, but it wasn't Bach, was it Mr. Elman?" To which I replied "I'm sorry madame, but I never heard Bach play it." So don't say, "this is not Schumann," or "this is not Mendelssohn." There is no such thing as *right* and *wrong* interpretation when you deal with the higher echelon among *established artists.* Who can say what is right or wrong if the listener is completely captivated by what is played?[68]

The most individual ingredient of any performer is his tone, and the beauty of tone in this period is the subject of envy of many a string player in our time. Gut strings, no longer the only choice for string players but still the most popular, had their own sound, very full and

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[67] Allan Kozinn, *Mischa Elman and the Romantic Style* (New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1990), ix.
[68] Ibid., 34-35.

complex, with many overtones. Their instability and fickleness has diminished their popularity, but there is no doubt that, in the hands of the greatest string players of the early 20th century, gut strings helped elevate the violin family sound to a whole new level. Interestingly, that did not necessarily mean variety in sound colors. Because the gut strings could offer an especially gorgeous "default" sound, this factor in combination with the contemporary emphasis on individuality above all, meant that having a unique sound was more crucial than timbral variety.

As far as the interpretations of the Walton in this Romantic style are concerned, we have three recordings to consider. These are the recordings by Frederick Riddle and William Primrose; the latter recorded the Walton twice. Tertis retired shortly before the first recording of the piece was made, in 1937.[69] He had meant to record the piece but ultimately asked Riddle, then 25, to step in for him ten days before the sessions were to start. Riddle apparently learned the piece from scratch in that short a time, which testifies to his abilities.[70] He was already a distinguished violist, playing solo engagements as well as with the London Symphony Orchestra. He was later appointed Principal Viola of the London Philharmonic, where he remained for decades. Among his many later accolades, Riddle premiered Malcolm Arnold's Viola Sonata as well as Arthur Benjamin's Viola Concerto.[71] As evasive as Walton could be on the subject of his favorite performers, he is said to have strongly preferred Riddle's to everyone else's interpretations of the concerto. This preference went so far as to prompt Walton to include

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[69] At the age of 61, he made the decision to retire as he felt that his bow arm had begun to be affected by rheumatism.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Alan Denson, "Frederick Riddle," *The Independent*, February 25, 1999.

Riddle's minor revisions to the viola part in the official edition of the piece by Oxford University Press. This was the viola part included with the piano accompaniment until 1962, when the revised orchestration was published.[72]

Riddle's is the first of the three recordings of the piece Walton conducted, and he impresses us immediately with solid intonation and facility, both clearly coming across regardless of the limitations of contemporary recording technology. He consistently cheats a little when negotiating big leaps or double stops, stopping the bow to find the notes on the fingerboard. Although this was likely a result of technical limitations, it gives a pleasantly affected quality to his phrasing and becomes an expressive device. Riddle's sound is restrained and wiry but beautiful, with continuous yet narrow vibrato; he uses it more as a gentle underlining shimmer to the notes than for rich warmth and expressive vitality, as is the norm today.[73] In this regard, Riddle is indebted to an earlier part of the 20th century, and a modern player would not vibrate this way. His tone lacks a diversity of colors but the clarity of his phrasing and refined vision of the piece make up for it. His sound slightly lacks that lavish luxuriousness that all great soloists at that time had, but has a nobility and uniqueness that is memorable. His portamento is abundant but tasteful. This sensitive slide between two distant notes for expressive purposes was a point of contention for some time, and a number of books on violin playing have advised against its casual use.[74] Riddle uses it frequently, unlike modern

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[72] Ibid., x.

[73] White, 10.

[74] See Leopold Auer, *Violin Playing as I teach it* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1921), 64, "The *portamento* becomes objectionable and inartistic, - resembling more than anything else, it seems to me, the meowing of a cat – when it is used in a languishing manner, and used continually… The violinist

players. In our day and age, such slides have fallen out of favor as something appropriate only for the "café violinist."[75] But with Riddle, just within the first twenty five measures of the first movement, there are twelve instances of portamento. He employs it gently and with a fine sense of timing, usually waiting to get closer to the next note before sliding to it, but not as close as one would in a shift between positions. This makes his portamento less noticeable than it otherwise would be, while adding a measure of individualistic expressivity. His tempos are on the slow side throughout the movement. The sixths at number 9 are almost obscured by the winds (Example 2.1, p. 20) but we can tell that Riddle handles the technical difficulty of the passage well. His *inquietamente* is almost skeletally bare-sounding yet, even without tonal richness, he expresses the anxiety of these lines deeply.

Riddle plays the second movement at a fast tempo of quarter note = 135. This is noteworthy considering that in the first orchestration of the concerto, the tempo was marked as 116 per quarter note, slower than in the 1962 version, where it was set at 144-152.[76] Riddle's tone is wiry and his intonation is a notch less solid than in the first movement, but he sounds comfortable. He gets around the hurdles in this very demanding movement well, especially at the conclusion of the scherzo, and he observes Walton's articulation markings pretty well. The

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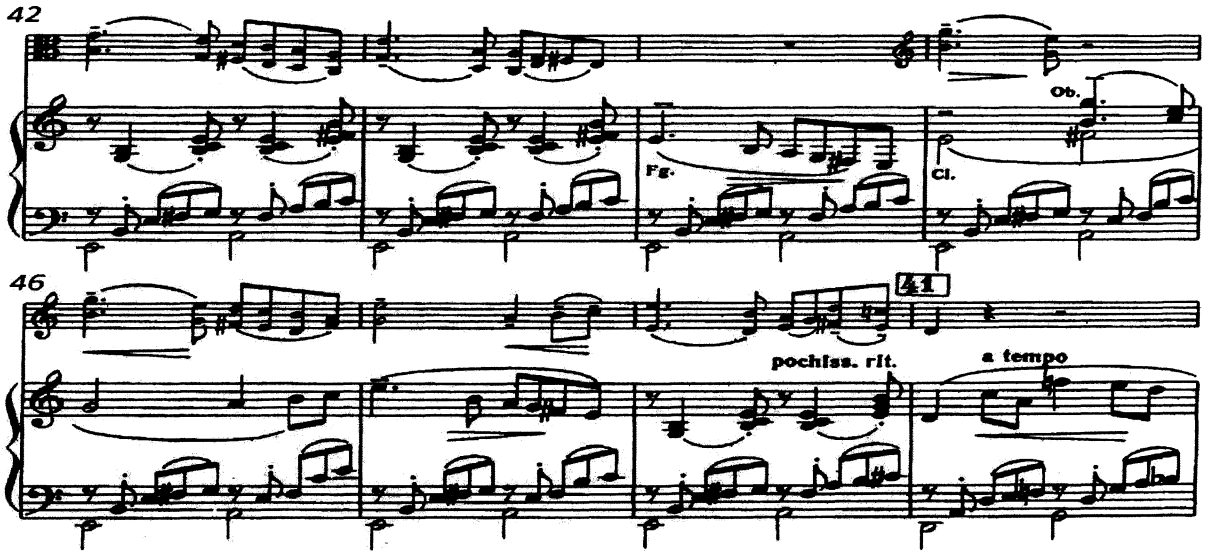
who is tempted to make careless use of the *portamento* will find that it is the easiest thing in the world to turn this simplest of expressive means into caricature..." Also see Carl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, translated and edited by Eric Rosenblith (New York: Carl Fischer, 2000), 16, "The expressive, song-like connection between the two notes should be the consequence of the heightened need for personal expression. That is why our best violinists permit themselves absolute freedom in the matter of the type of portamento. Freedom however is not 'license'. A true artist ought to have enough self-discipline to forgo a beautiful-sounding and tempting portamento if it does not fit the expressive content of the work."

[75] David Milsom, *Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance: an Examination of Style in Performance, 1850-1900* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), 102.

[76] For a complete listing of performance tempos in selected recordings, see Appendix B (p. 90-91)

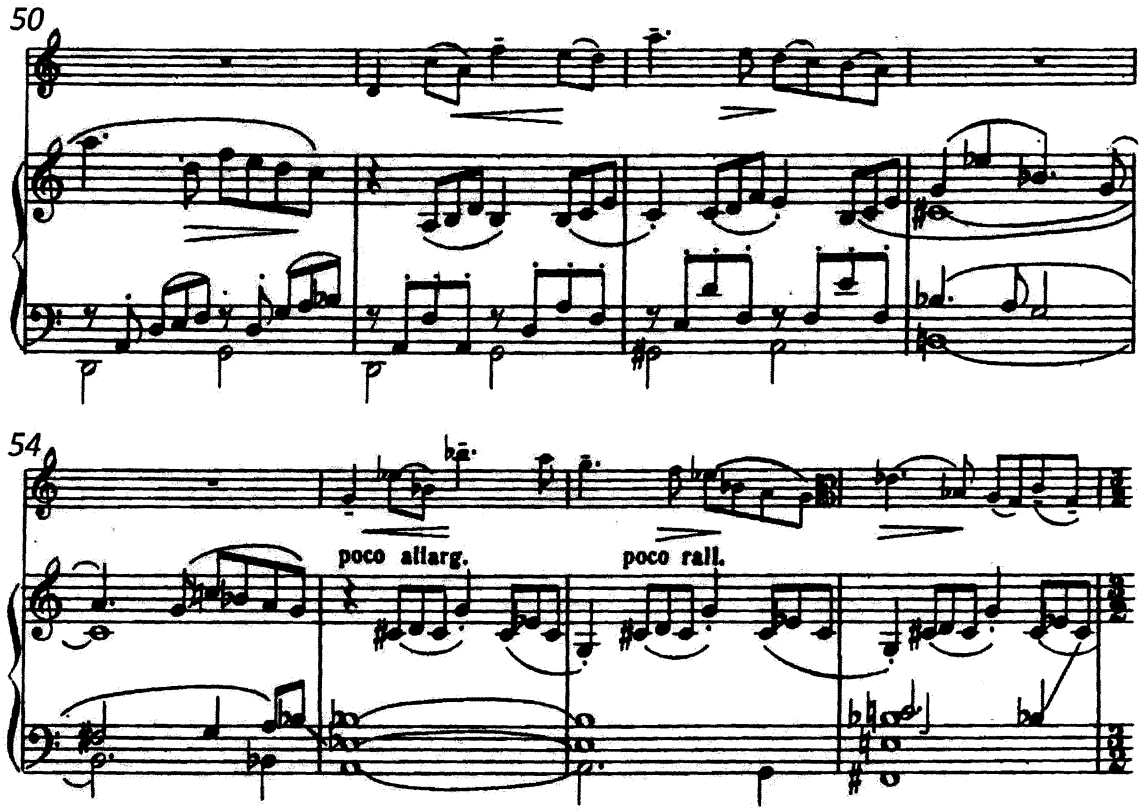
third movement is one of the fastest on record, starting at half note = 86, just as the composer originally suggested. The soloist's entry is a little shaky, possibly due to the breathless tempo. The clarinets' entry at m. 49 is a remarkable moment: their agogic liberty in (mis)interpreting the notated rhythms is a good example of period performance practice (Example 3.1). In m. 50, each of the eighth notes on the third and fourth beats is of a different length, the first one the longest of all, which gives them a very *parlando* quality. While the gestural, organic flow the clarinetists attain is remarkable, the distortion of note values of this kind for expressive purposes would be unimaginable today, as agogic accents remain associated with the Romantic style of performance practice.[77] (Riddle, however, takes less freedom in his slightly aloof response.)

Example 3.1, *Viola Concerto*, 3rd. mvt., mm. 42-57[78]



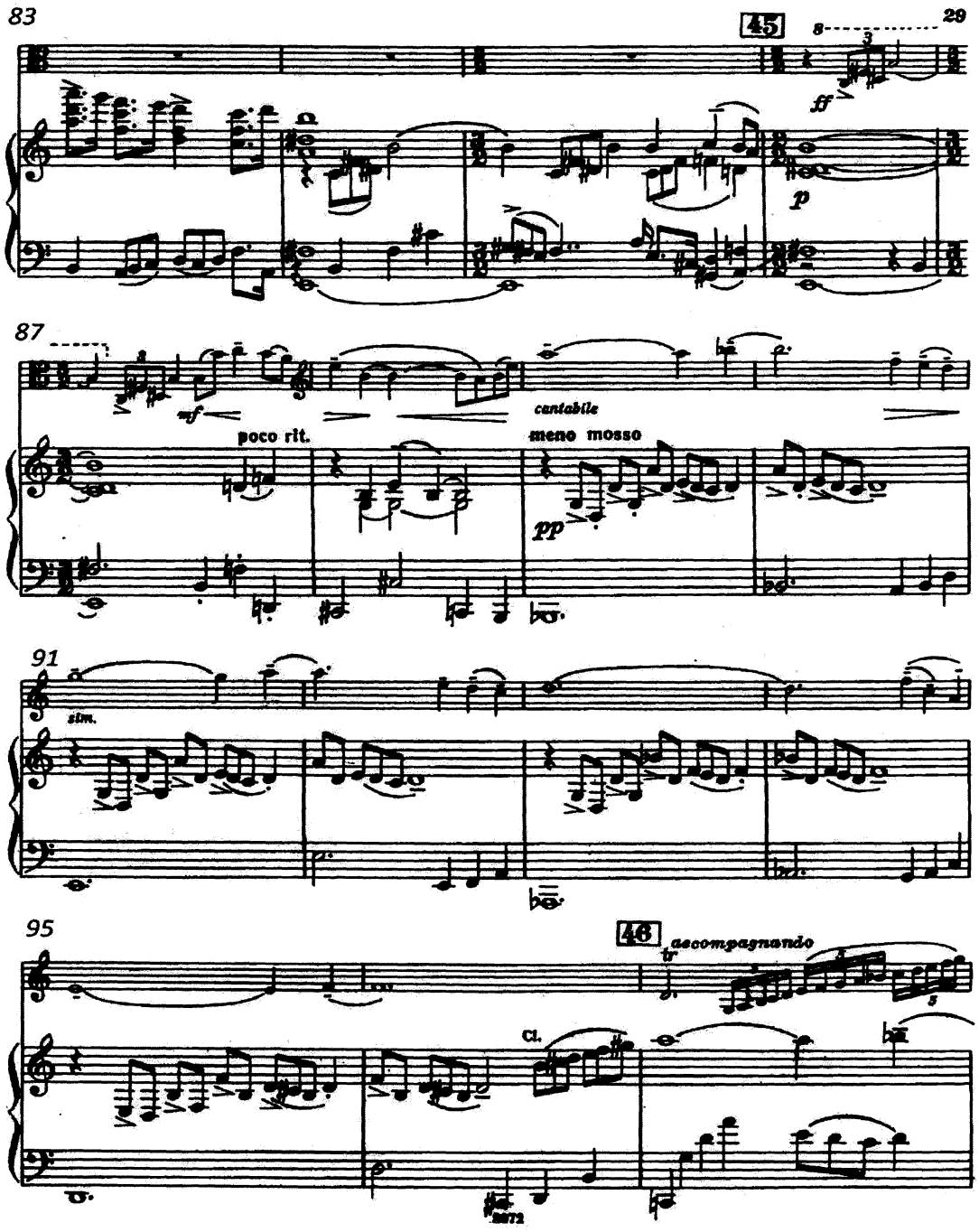
[77] Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 57.

[78] Excerpts from the piano reduction will be used in this and other music examples where the details of orchestral parts are less relevant.



His six instances of portamento in mm. 89-95 adds to the reminiscing tone of this section and is another example of the power it has when judiciously used. In spite of its tastefulness, one cannot imagine a modern violist employing that much portamento in these seven measures.

Example 3.2. *Viola Concerto,* 3rd mvt. mm. 83-97



As an example of 1930s viola performance practice, this is an impressive undertaking, especially considering that editing recordings was not possible at the time.[79] While anecdotal evidence suggests that the average violist was still weaker than the average violinist at the time, we have an example of a remarkably capable and accomplished viola soloist who could hold his own in any era. Riddle is solid in every way, and his authority is unquestionable. His interpretation, while more straitlaced than those that would follow immediately, exhibits the same traits of subjectivity and a strong personal imprint on the music, mostly in the evidence of his portamento and his inimitable tone which rarely changed regardless of the character of the music.

The next two recordings are by William Primrose, the greatest violist of all time and one who carried Tertis's torch to heights hitherto unknown. Even today, Primrose remains unsurpassed in terms of technical mastery, individuality of sound, influence, and commissioned works. Born in 1904, Primrose was a student of the legendary Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, who encouraged him to switch to viola.[80] After a career as a quartet violist, he began playing with the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini in 1937. His career as a soloist took off after he left the orchestra in the early 1940s. He played chamber music with all of the greatest soloists of the era, including Heifetz, Arthur Rubinstein, Gregor Piatigorsky and others. Composers who wrote music for him other than Bartók include Darius Milhaud, Benjamin

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[79] Magnetic audio tape, initially developed for military purposes, is what made sound editing possible, but its use in the music industry did not become widespread until the early 1950s.
[80] Primrose, 9.

Britten and Edmund Rubbra and he also made many successful arrangements for the viola.[81] Primrose's technique was legendary. When he performed Paganini's Caprices, Mischa Elman, who was in attendance, quipped, "It must be easier on the viola!"[82] Just like Heifetz's influence among violinists, Primrose's effect on the viola world cannot be overstated. He brought the standard of instrumental technique, in large part due to his own teaching and the example he set as a widely acclaimed artist, to a level not seen before.

In the first of the two recordings of the Walton that Primrose made, he is accompanied by the Philharmonia Orchestra, with the composer conducting. It comes from 1946, also the year of his recording of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*, the first of its kind.[83] His opening tempo in the Walton is slightly faster than most, at dotted quarter note = 55. This results in some slightly awkward chases between the soloist and orchestra, such as at m. 19, with string bass rumbling pizzicatos dragging behind clumsily (Example 2.3, p. 27). Such flaws in this and other recordings of the era show less concern for precision in recordings as opposed to today's omnipresent perfection, seen in all recent recordings of the Walton. Primrose's sound is extraordinary: burnished, noble and richly expressive. For example, his charming cascade into m. 30 is Heifetzian in his authoritative persuasiveness. His indulgent but arresting portamento in m. 36, going up on the G string, is an example of the stylistic period Primrose belonged to, which prized personality and uniqueness over quality, text-fidelity and consistency (Example 3.3).

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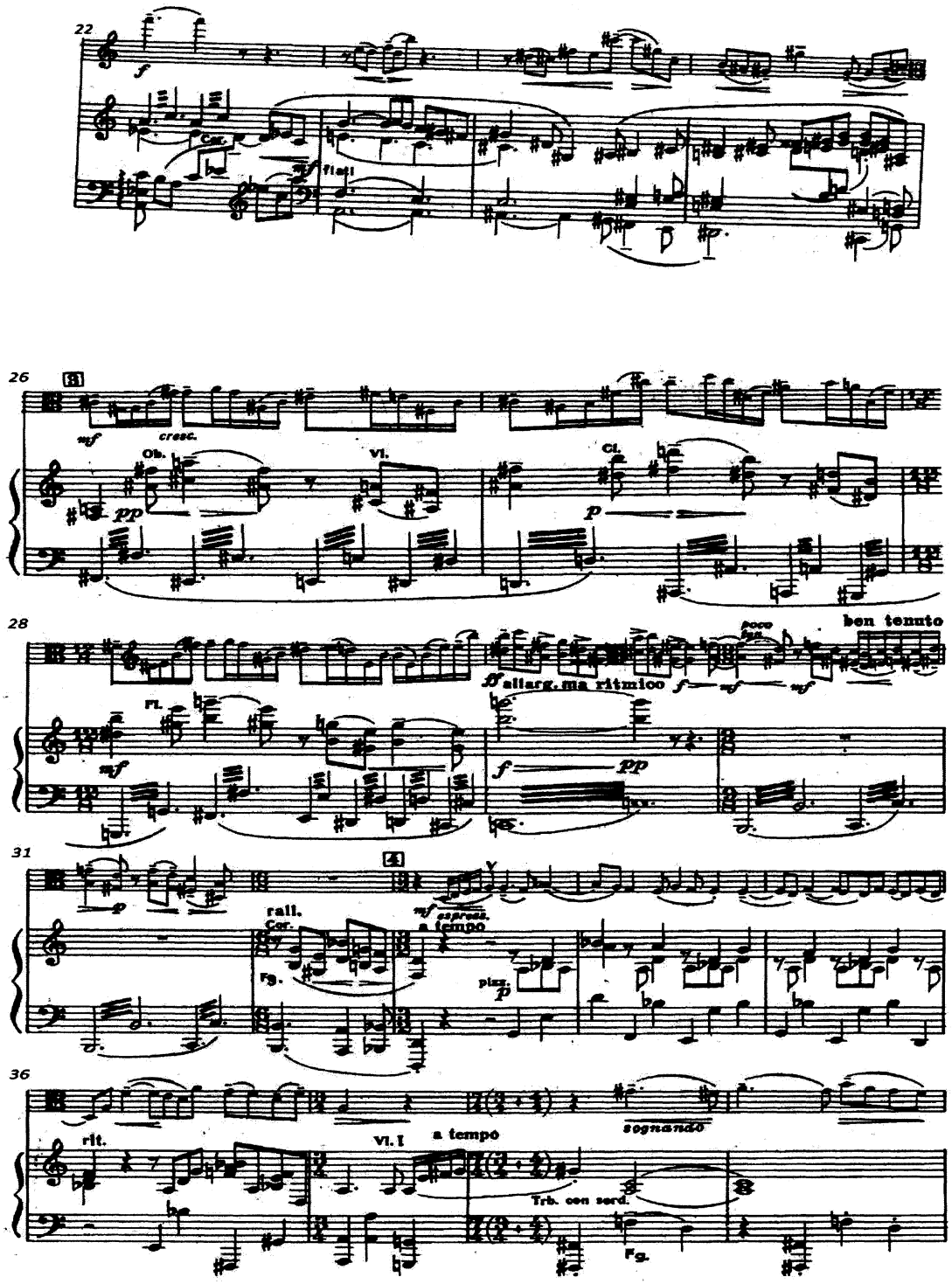
[81] Ibid.
[82] Dalton, 185.
[83] William Primrose. *Hector Berlioz: Harold in Italy, Op. 16*. With Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. H.M.V.DB6261-5. LP record.

Example 3.3. *Viola Concerto,* 1st mvt., mm. 22-39.



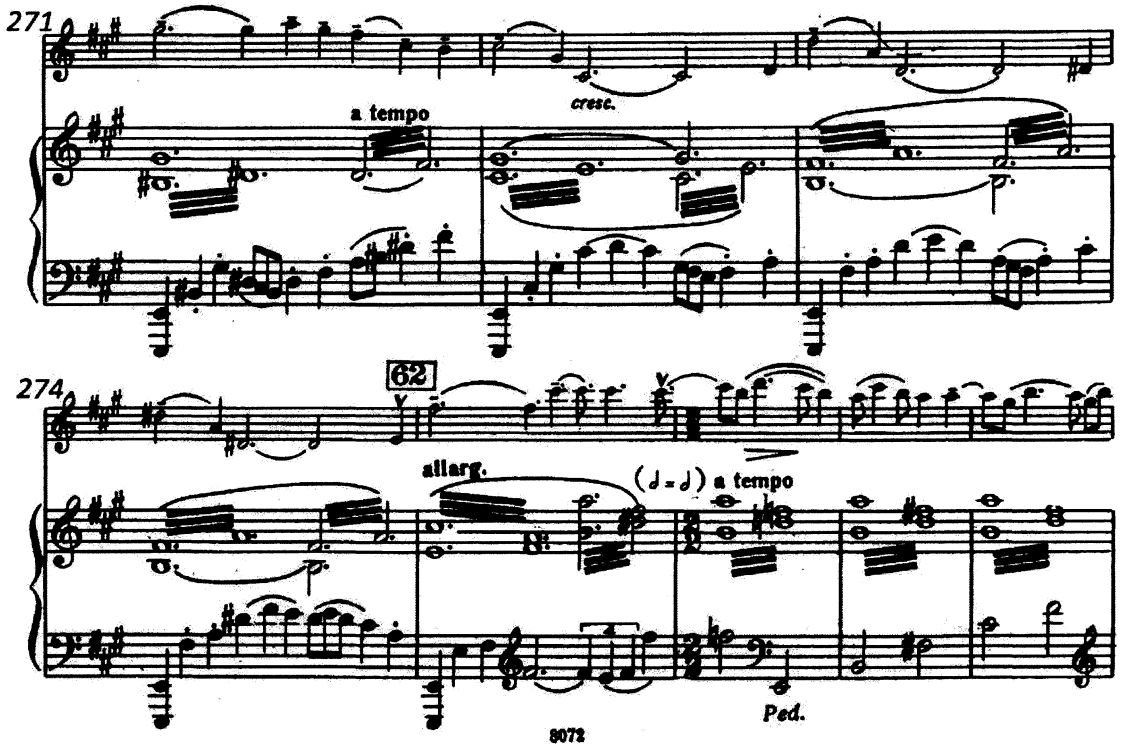
Just as the Romantic tradition of string playing allows, Primrose is only approximately following the rhythmic values in the coda, elongating certain notes and shortening others. His personal imprint on this section is exactly what we might expect from an authoritative soloist of the period, even if the whirlwind effect of his rhythms departs from the effect that Walton might have had in mind.

His second movement is the fastest on record, at a quarter note = 154. This is no doubt impressive, although quite breathless a performance. The approach here is that of a bygone era: while it makes for a spectacular display of an individual performer's virtuosity, one wonders how much it serves the music. The movement begins to sound like a fast race just for the sake of speed itself, instead of the playful but significant interplay of musical ideas that Walton created. This represents, in the spirit of the times in which it was recorded, a performer's demonstration of virtuosic technique above all other considerations.

The third movement starts at half note = 86, which again seems to slightly push the limits of comfort. Primrose's dignified, plush sound makes up for some of his impatience with the many melancholic sides of this, central movement of the piece. However, his dialogues with the clarinets and oboes in mm. 41 to 58 are similar to what Riddle had done previously, (Example 3.2, p. 46). He also takes the note values only as an approximation of what is expected, stretching certain eight notes and significantly shortening others, something that would be unimaginable today, but his charm and intuitive, personal phrasing are remarkable. Interestingly, he seems more responsive to the winds than Riddle in this same dialogue. In m. 89, Primrose makes the first of two mistakes that would never have made it past the editing

desk in more recent years. He changes the notes late, from A to B flat (Example 3.2, p. 46). More obviously, in the coda in m. 275, he plays the C sharp so out of tune it literally sounds like a C natural, and holds it into m. 276 (Example 3.4).

Example 3.4. *Viola Concerto*, 3rd mvt., mm. 271-278



This creates a rather wretched moment, which considering his marvelous viola playing is puzzling. It is said that Primrose's problems with hearing started at around this time. This could be a symptom. One could also argue that the emphasis on creating technical perfection in recordings was less intense at the time. The Romantic tradition prized individuality over technique and looking at it from this perspective, these intonation flubs are not significant, whereas from today's perspective they would be unacceptable. This is why it is assumed the

producer deemed these errors insufficient to derail publication, something that would have likely happened today. Furthermore, overdubbing was not possible at the time, and additional takes of the complete third movement would have been arduous.

The other recording that Primrose made of the Walton concerto, with Malcolm Sargent conducting the Royal Philharmonia Orchestra, is from 1954. It is generally considered to be the more successful of the two, even though the faulty intonation caused by Primrose's hearing problem is worse than in previous years. Apart from that, the beauty of Primrose's sound as well as his personality shine through like few others. The composer did not conduct, but was said to be present at this recording. As he did in his 1946 recording, Primrose played the solo part with many changes. He performed certain passages an octave higher, in order to avoid "unseemly scrubbing... on the lower strings,"[84] and he added octave doublings, most likely to indulge his virtuosic tendencies, which was acceptable in this era. Although he pressed the composer on several occasions to express a preference, Walton remained evasive. Only later did it emerge that he definitely preferred the viola part as he had written it.[85] One could say that Walton had more faith in the sonority of the viola and its peculiarities than Primrose. It is a sign of the times that the foremost viola soloist of the era felt he needed to make the viola more like a violin to make it work. Primrose made similar changes to a number of pieces he performed,

[84] Dalton, 197.
[85] Ibid.

such as in the Sonatas by Johannes Brahms, Op. 120, which he incorporated into his edition of them.[86]

Primrose was not alone in making such changes to the solo viola part of the Walton Concerto back then. In 1930, Walton's publisher Oxford University Press released Lionel Tertis's edition of the viola part, sold separately, in which he similarly transposed a number of passages an octave higher or added octave doublings. Tertis's personal copy contains even more alterations.[87] Few performers would make such adjustments today, especially without prior agreement of the composer.[88] This was a product of a soloist-knows-best approach, long abandoned, that testifies to the more informal treatment of the score in this era. Riddle makes no changes to the viola part, but it should be noted that the speed with which he had to learn the piece before the recording took place could not have allowed for a more personal approach to the score and possible alterations to it.

Primrose starts the first movement at a fairly leisurely tempo, of dotted quarter note = 54. The intonation consistently suffers in a number of occasions where the soloist goes high on the A string, such as a rendition of the theme in mm. 19-22. These flaws were more acceptable in an age that was more forgiving of imperfection in recordings or performances. He seems less concerned with colors and variation than with a fundamentally special tone. His sixths in rehearsal number 6 get a beautiful change of timbre. It is as though playing with timbres was a

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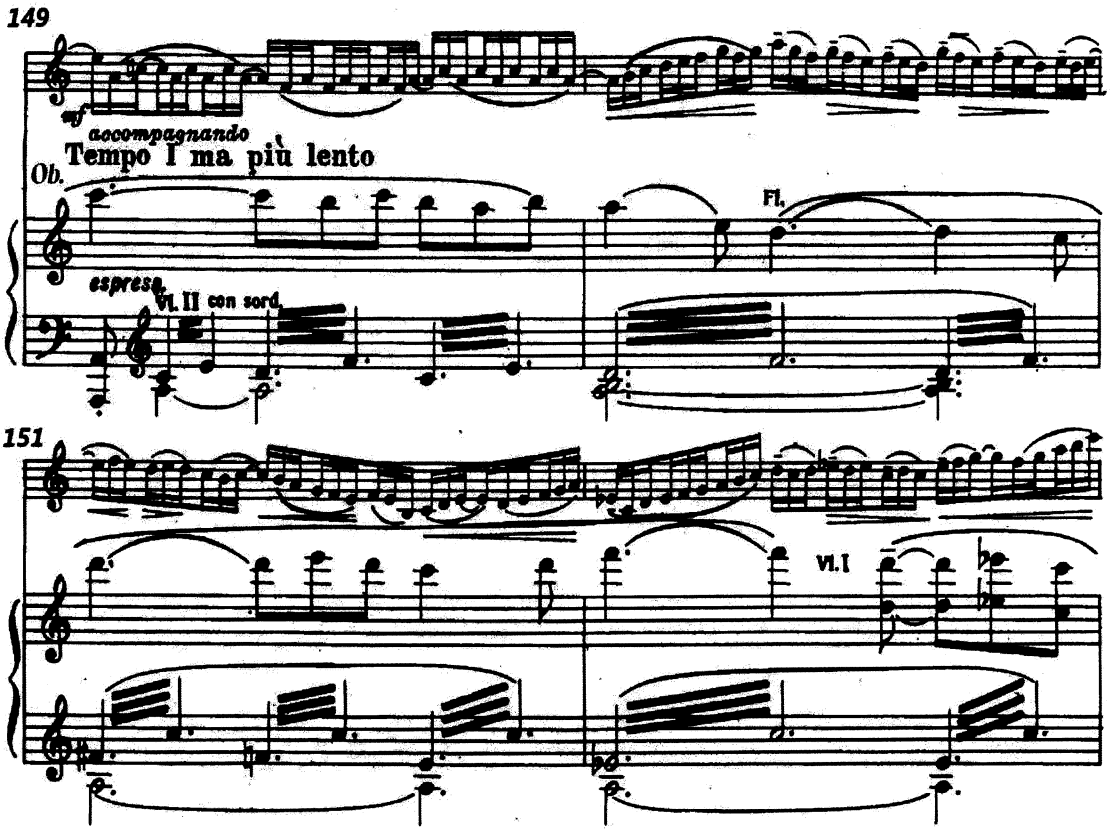
[86] Ibid., 188.

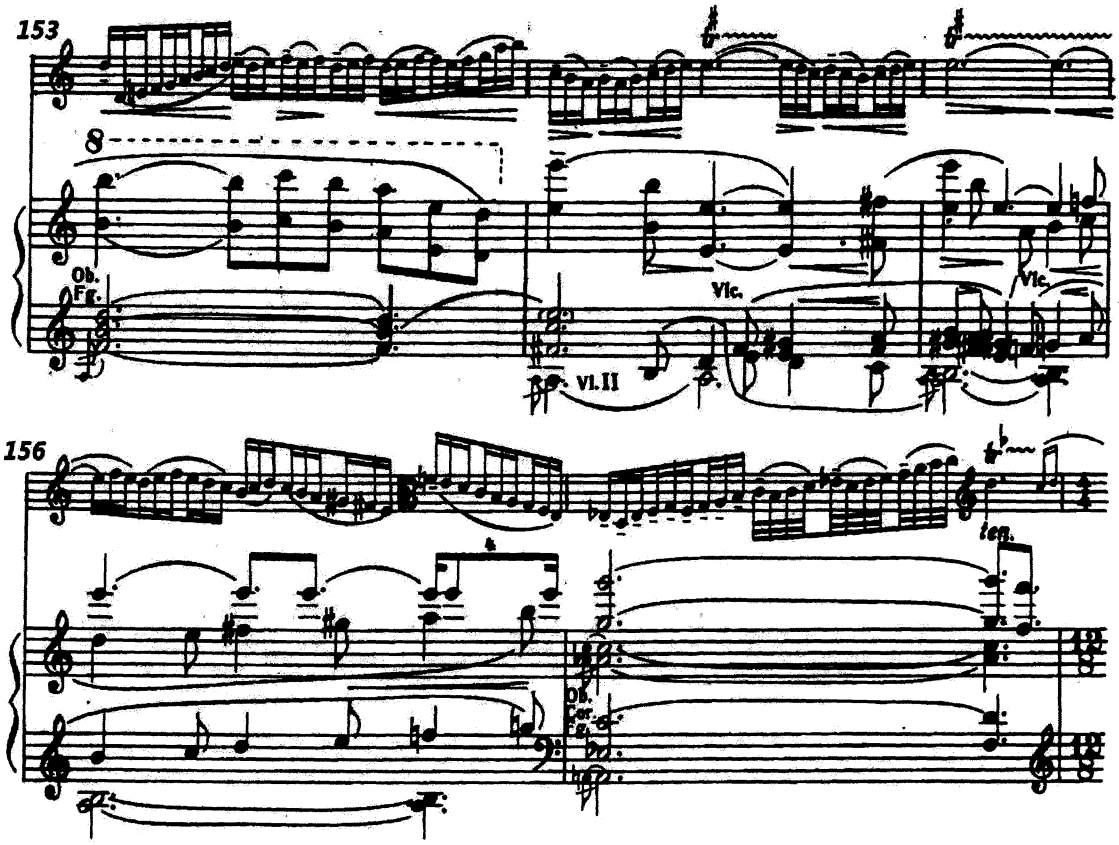
[87] Wellington, preface, vii.

[88] The only recording of the Walton Viola Concerto in which the soloist employs most of Primrose's changes of the viola part since he recorded his is that of violist Karen Dreyfus from 2001, indicating the extent to which this approach has fallen out of favor.

luxury in this period, unneeded if the performer had a strongly distinct and expressive sound, and best used only at the most special moments. In general, Primrose's tempos are on the fast side and his drive makes the movement sound impetuous, notably in the accompanied cadenza and in the coda, where the trepidation that his unnecessarily rapid passagework creates is effective if unfaithful to the score (Example 3.5). He plays m. 149 as though it consisted of tremolos. Furthermore, the mm. 150-157 rush forward, although Primrose elongates slurred same-note sixteenths that connect one beat to another in order to match the pulse of the accompaniment.

Example 3.5, *Viola Concerto*, 3rd mvt., mm. 149-157





The second movement flies by at a breathtaking quarter note = 148. Primrose dazzles with his command of the viola, apart from some intonation snafus. He still sounds comfortable and the hunt-like character of the music projects throughout. In this case, one cannot argue that Primrose's change of the tempo does not work, as much as it goes against composer's instructions. Primrose ignores most of Walton's diverse articulation markings in this movement and plays most of it spiccato, just as he did in his 1946 recording of it. The weightiest part of the concerto, the finale, starts at half note = 82. Primrose is commendably sensitive to the changes in thematic material and mood of the music, such as in the introduction of the second theme and its repeat later in the movement.

Primrose's vibrato is the least dissimilar of these elements from that of a modern performer, as his continuous use of it and its richness would be considered ideal even now. The only exception would be his sporadic use of different colors within both vibrato and tone, as a modern performer would be expected to employ such variations more often. Portamento is used very similarly in both of Primrose's recordings, that is to say, tastefully and without self-indulgence, but in a way that would be considered old-fashioned and mannered today. A good example is the last twelve measures of the concerto in the 1946 recording, where it is plentiful and highly expressive. In spite of Primrose's timelessly good taste, contemporary violists tend not to play those measures in this manner. His portamento is opulent and more noticeable than that of Riddle and one wonders if modern-style vibrato precludes more use of portamento,[89] as using both in high amounts could quickly escalate into bad taste.[90] In other words, the opulence of Kreislerian vibrato clashes with the sumptuousness of portamento in such a way that the two may be mutually exclusive. Both Riddle and Primrose use portamento to emphasize certain emotional qualities of the music, and not as a way to call attention to the sensual attractiveness of their own sound. Similarly, they use agogics only to highlight the inflection of phrase while maintaining its integrity.

These three recordings are good examples of a Romantic, individualistic approach to performance. If compared to the objective and more detached modern performance practice of

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[89] Milsom, 75.

[90] Many violin technique books from the early 20th century, such as those by Flesch and Auer, as well as Gruenberg's *Violin Teaching and Violin Study* focus chiefly on the aesthetics of portamento, rather than the technique; that is, they give examples and detailed advice on how to avoid overuse and bad taste when using this device, leading us to believe that this was indeed the preoccupation with them.

today, it is not hard to conclude that the former captures our hearts. The lure (and promise) of uniqueness never fails to attract, and these violists, working within an identifiably Romantic tradition, provide that in abundance. There is little doubt that the best performers of this era had many unique features; their tone was captivating in its beauty and intensity and their overtly emotional style moved the audience deeply. Other features of their style demonstrate an overriding and sometimes blunt superimposition of personal mannerisms onto the music that could include alterations of the music itself. Today's performance practice reflects different ideals, but one has to recognize the validity and appeal of the Romantic approach. Its principles were based on a different philosophy of the performer's place in a performance, and it is necessary to note that all performance styles are ultimately fleeting. Even the more objective flaws of the approach seen here, such as lack of variety in the approach to tone and vibrato, have to be put in this context to understand why such attitudes were acceptable at the time.

As far as the history of viola performance, the artistic and technical level of these early recordings is extraordinary, especially if one considers the neglect the viola had suffered immediately prior to their creation. These achievements stand as an impressive first phase in what has become a tradition of viola performance. As will be explained later, the expressivity and compelling individuality of these recordings remain a towering achievement, unsurpassed to this day.

CHAPTER IV

Violinists as Violists

Browsing the recordings of the Walton Concerto for Viola and looking at the names of the soloists for the first time can be both perplexing and amusing. This is due to the fact that there are three well-known violinists among the names of the soloists, namely Yehudi Menuhin, Nigel Kennedy and Maxim Vengerov. This indicates how far the repertoire for the Cinderella of string instruments has come. Furthermore, it shows that viola technique is similar enough to that of the violin that a fine violinist can master it. Or does it? How well did these violinists play the viola in the recordings, and what do they have in common as musicians? Do they give evidence of a consistently violinistic mode of interpretation or attitude toward the viola?

There are many technical issues a violinist must consider when attempting to play the viola. Left-hand technique is not especially different, and violinists' reaction times in passagework and double stopping are slightly faster than that of violists', which is helpful.[91] However, elements such as vibrato need more adjustment; the viola requires a slower vibrato than that of the violin in order to underline its uniquely somber and less brilliant character. The bow arm needs more fine-tuning still.[92] The reaction times of viola strings are slower than those

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[91] Dalton, 5.
[92] Ibid.

of violin strings, as they are heavier and thicker. In addition, the viola in its current models, that is to say, being normally between fifteen and seventeen and a half inches in length, is not as acoustically perfect as the violin. This means that in its current incarnation, viola tone and resonance leave something to be desired and it is up to the violist to compensate for these deficiencies. Common methods for doing so include slower bow speeds and consequently less bow per note, as well as playing many strokes in lower parts of the bow. Increasing the resonance of viola tone with fluid follow-through of the bow arm is another helpful technique. As compared to the violin, violists have to play with more weight on the string from the right arm, but not pressure. Most violas are particularly sensitive to undue bow pressure, in which case the sound tends to be muted or choked.

The viola has never been considered a virtuoso instrument, and understandably so. The lack of brilliance in its sound is certainly an issue, but in addition to that, the physical demands of playing the viola are noticeably greater than those of the violin. The awkwardness of its size and weight are considerable, resulting in numerous roadblocks to bravura playing. For example, left-hand fingers have to stretch uncomfortably in order to reach a tritone between the index finger and little finger on the same string, something no violinist has to worry about. These are but a few of the issues violinists face when first attempting to play the viola well.

Until recently, the temporary excursions of violinists into the viola world were mostly restricted to performing chamber music. In the case of Nicolò Paganini, enamored with his newly acquired Stradivari viola, that excursion included commissioning a work from Hector Berlioz in 1833 that was to include a concertante viola part. Once Paganini received the work, a

symphony with viola obbligato entitled *Harold in Italy*, he famously declined to play it, saying to Berlioz, "This is not at all what I want, I am silent a great deal too long. I must be playing the whole time."[93] Other violinists who played the viola on occasion were not so proactive as to attempt to expand the viola repertoire, but they rank among some of the greatest violinists of all time. They include Ignaz Schuppanzigh, a friend of Beethoven's and the first violinist of the group that premiered many of his quartets; Henry Vieuxtemps and Joseph Joachim, both of whom composed pieces for viola; Henryk Wieniawski, David Oistrakh, Yehudi Menuhin, Pinchas Zukerman, Shlomo Mintz, Nigel Kennedy and Maxim Vengerov.[94] Among these we find a number of 20th-century luminaries, and their viola playing expanded beyond chamber music into performances of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante. David Oistrakh famously performed this piece with his son Igor as the violin soloist, for example.

Now that violinists started performing an actual work for solo viola with orchestra, we can only guess at why. Surely, the quality of the piece aroused their attention, but another motivation emerges if we look into what pieces the Walton is coupled with on disc. As LPs contain about 22 minutes per side and CDs about 74 minutes per disc, the Viola Concerto, usually around 23 minutes in length, would be insufficient for either medium by itself. Both Menuhin and Kennedy pair it with Walton's Violin Concerto. Vengerov couples it with another contemporary work for violin by Walton's compatriot Benjamin Britten (the concertos are also close in their date of composition—Britten's is from 1940). Thus, none of these violinists went

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[93] Hector Berlioz, *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, translated and edited by David Cairns (London: Everyman's Library, 2002), 202.

[94] *Famous violin players*. http://www.viola-in-music.com/famous-violin-players.html (Accessed March 11, 2011)

further in exploring viola concertos by adding another one to the disc; rather, they stopped at one piece as if filling out a violin concerto recording with one for viola. (Not a single violist who has recorded the Viola Concerto has paired it with a violin piece on disc.)

This also raises the question how much the novelty of putting a viola and a violin concerto together by the same composer (or a compatriot and contemporary, in the case of Vengerov) and performed by the same person had to do with this pairing. Obviously, the pairing is an outstanding and unique tour-de-force for any soloist. No other two instruments are similar enough that the same person can master them sufficiently for such a feat. The motivations of record companies on what will best sell their recordings in a crowded marketplace cannot be ruled out either. Sadly for us, the best violist of all violinists today, Pinchas Zukerman, has not recorded the Walton Viola Concerto.[95]

The biographies of these violinists are as fascinating as their recordings; moreover, details of their careers reveal their further motivations for performing and recording the Viola Concerto. The earliest recording of these three comes from 1968, and it is that of Yehudi Menuhin. Born in 1916, his importance in the world of violin playing and music in general cannot be exaggerated. Menuhin displayed astonishing talent at an early age. In 1929 he played with the Berlin Philharmonic under Bruno Walter's baton, in an evening that consisted of three

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[95] "WALTON. Violin Concerto (1939). Viola Concerto (1929). Nigel Kennedy (violin, viola); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra / André Previn. EMI digital EL749628-1; EL749628-4." *Gramophone*, January 1988. 42.

concertos, those by Bach, Brahms and Beethoven.[96] In 1932, Menuhin recorded Elgar's Violin Concerto with the composer conducting, and subsequently made the first complete recording of Johann Sebastian Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin. After building his early career on performances that feature a stunning virtuosity that is deeply rooted in the Romantic tradition discussed in Chapter III, he experienced substantial physical and artistic problems. His bow arm began to lose its suppleness and control as early as 1938 and a wobbly sound became characteristic of Menuhin's playing for the rest of his career.[97] Careful practice and study, combined with meditation and yoga, helped him deal with these issues, but his playing from his later years is different from his early endeavors. Because of his growing awareness of styles and performance practice, he could be considered the first "modern" violinist in that his interpretative stance became less idiosyncratic and because he became informed of historical performance practices.

Menuhin was the kind of artist that always searched for new meanings and unlike many of his violinist contemporaries, he ventured in surprising directions that took him very far from his roots. His collaborations with Stéphane Grappelli and Ravi Shankar are legendary, as are his humanitarian efforts. Regardless of his violinistic issues, the magnetism of his performances from any period, as in his recordings of the Beethoven sonatas with the pianist Wilhelm Kempff from 1970, is undeniable.

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[96] Jonathan Weiner, "Menuhin, Yehudi," in *American national biography*, Vol. 26, ed. by Mark C. Carnes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 387.

[97] Paul Festa, "The Century's Most Beloved Violinist Brought To His Life The Brilliance He Lost In His Music | Yehudi Menuhin, 1916-1999," *Salon*, March 16, 1999, http://www.salon.com/entertainment/music/feature/1999/03/16feature.html (accessed March 11, 2011).

Menuhin recorded the Walton with the New Philharmonia Orchestra in 1968, conducted by the composer himself. We are immediately struck by his curiously fast vibrato, not necessarily to be attributed to lack of understanding of viola sounding but to his own idiosyncrasies. However, one wouldn't say that Menuhin's vibrato goes against the viola's instrumental demands. Rather, it is just a quirk that is quickly overshadowed by other, more prominent characteristics of his approach to the instrument. A paucity of colors in Menuhin's sound tends to downplay the several moods in the contrapuntal sections of the first movement and elsewhere. However, a certain tormented quality in his wiry, astringent tone, all too common in his later years, fits the character of the viola's sound well. Here we encounter an important facet in a violinist's quest to play the viola successfully. In addition to the objective, definable issues of sound creation and vibrato, there is little doubt that violinists have to have a penchant for that darker, more bitter and intense tone of the viola—the sound that is unique in its expressivity and stands apart from either the violin or the cello in character. No amount of practice can replace that, and it is fascinating to observe to what extent these three violinists capture it. Menuhin immediately strikes us as only moderately successful, as his shaky viola tone lacks depth and vibrancy appropriate for its lower, less brilliant voice.

The first movement, overall, is expressive, and Menuhin handles the double stops and other technical hurdles reasonably well. The second movement is played with a variety of articulation but downplays the perky, cheeky virtuosity of the music. Lack of bite throughout somewhat diminishes the contrast of this movement with the rest of piece, although it should be noted that it is questionable whether the composer intended this movement to be a virtuoso

vehicle, something Primrose had made it into. The Finale starts fast, and Menuhin seems unable to relax in moments that need it, in the many moods of this movement. Nervous excitement, a trademark of his later years possibly due to his troubled tone production, almost manages to sound genuine in moments where Walton's music takes an exhilarating turn. Menuhin creates a effective and somber epilogue with glimpses of his past mastery in some moments, especially in the sublimely expressive sound that so impressed audiences throughout the world some thirty to forty years before.

Menuhin does a fine job as violist but does not approach the depth of internalization needed to truly convey the viola's character in this unique concerto. His sound overall remains violinistic in character—that is, sinewy, soprano-like and insufficiently somber and dark. It appears as though Menuhin's struggles with his primary instrument merely expanded into his violistic ventures, occasionally creating a successful result due to his idiosyncrasies as a player.

Menuhin's disciple Nigel Kennedy is one of the few violinists from in the British Isles to have developed an international reputation in the past one hundred years. Born in 1956, he was a pupil at the Yehudi Menuhin School of Music, a specialized music school in Surrey, England, and later studied at the Juilliard School with Dorothy DeLay. At the age of 16, Kennedy was invited by Stéphane Grappelli to appear with him at Carnegie Hall, and this was the official beginning of Kennedy's numerous collaborations with artists outside of Western classical music. Kennedy made his recording debut in 1984 with Elgar's Violin Concerto, which won

Record of the Year at the 1985 Gramophone Magazine Awards and launched his career.[98] His recording of Vivaldi's The Four Seasons in 1989 sold over two million copies and became one of the best-selling classical albums ever.[99] Since taking a five-year sabbatical from performing in the 1990s, Kennedy has made albums with jazz, rock and klezmer musicians as well. In 1999 he recorded The Kennedy Experience, which features improvisational recordings of music by Jimi Hendrix.[100]

Kennedy recorded his first jazz album for the label Blue Note Records in 2005. He has since said that "from now on, at least 50 per cent of my endeavor is going to be in the jazz field."[101] Kennedy is famously eccentric and that, in addition to his many "crossover" projects, has made him a controversial figure. His critics will cite his allegedly fake English working-class accent and incessant swearing, not to mention his haircuts and outfits, because of which he has derisively been compared to the entertainer Liberace.[102] However, even Kennedy's detractors will admit that his honesty in what he pursues in music is unquestionable. The British conductor Sir Simon Rattle, who collaborated with Kennedy on numerous occasions, defended his musicianship and personal integrity thusly, "To know who Nigel is, you have to listen to his playing and look at his eyes while he's playing."[103]

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[98] Gerald Brennan, Allen Schrott and Chris Woodstra, eds., *All Music Guide to Classical Music: The Definitive Guide to Classical Music* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005), 684.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Sholto Byrnes, "Nigel Kennedy: All jazzed up," *The Independent*, April 2, 2007.
[102] John Preston, "Nigel Kennedy: 'I didn't want to be the Des O'Connor of the violin'," *The Daily Telegraph*, June 8, 2008, sec. Culture.
[103] Ibid.

The peculiarities of his violin playing translate exceptionally well to the viola. Kennedy's slow vibrato and slightly whiny if expressive sound both work well, and his usual lack of colors is almost unnoticeable given his skillful phrasing and rubato. He sounds a bit labored in virtuosic passages of the concerto, not unlike even the finest of violists. This is obvious in rehearsal numbers 6 to 7, for example, and especially in the infamous ending of the second movement, mm. 226-261. Kennedy does not resort to anything other than a straightforward reading of the concerto, but that should not come across as a sign of a simplistic interpretation. He is fully aware of the sensuous, almost frustrated longing that is quintessentially Waltonian. His second movement is among the faster ones on record, and his interpretation stays springy and energetic while resorting to slight exaggerations of articulation. Kennedy's stroke is mostly percussive spiccato throughout, which is not quite in line with the score, with its variety of articulations throughout.

The Finale starts briskly and continues in that same energetic vein, moving forward even in the most contemplative passages. He does an uncommonly good job of introducing the last orchestral tutti of the piece with his inspired playing in the jazzy section of the movement. That is not surprising, however, considering his and the conductor André Previn's work in jazz. Overall, Kennedy's tone fits the idiosyncrasies of the viola, and he captures the contemplative, mournful character of its sound, with that slightly labored intensity we have come to cherish as uniquely appropriate in a violist. His effort is very good, although we wish for more depth in his tone on lower strings.

Lastly, Maxim Vengerov is another violinist of the highest caliber who devoted his creative forces to the Walton. Born in 1974, Vengerov showed his extraordinary talents to the world by winning the Grand Prize at the renowned Carl Flesch International Violin Competition in London at the age of 16. Concert engagements followed, both solo and with orchestras, as well a contract with a major record label. To date, Vengerov has made over 30 CDs, several of which have won awards such as "Artist of the Year" from the Gramophone magazine, an Edison Award, and a Grammy for the recording of the Walton Viola and Britten Violin Concertos.[104]

In 1997, he became a UNICEF Envoy for Music and has since performed for children in Uganda, Thailand and the Balkans, as well as in various multimedia educational projects. Vengerov has studied Baroque violin extensively, as well as improvisation with the French jazz violinist Didier Lockwood and tango as part of a viola concerto composed for him by Benjamin Yusupov. In 2005, he took a well-publicized break from performing to concentrate on conducting, rest and "to ride across America on a Harley Davidson."[105] He took another break from performing in 2008, this time because of a shoulder injury, and by all accounts he has not returned to full-time performing. While certainly not as flamboyant as Kennedy, Vengerov is a born performer and his flair and boundless enthusiasm add to his charisma.

Vengerov's tone in the Walton Viola Concerto is consistently bright even in the lowest register, such as in the second theme of the first movement. While it is a matter of taste, a tenor-

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[104] "EMI Classics - Maxim Vengerov – Biography," EMI Classics - Virgin Classics, http://www.emiclassics.com/artistbiography.php?aid=50 (accessed March 11, 2011)
[105] Adrian Hamilton, "Maxim Vengerov: The showman," *The Independent*, January 22, 2005.

like sound has been favored by most violists since the time of Lionel Tertis. It should be noted that Vengerov played a Stradivari instrument on this recording,[106] and the old Italian master's violas are noted for their soprano-like sound, unloved by most violists. On the viola, Vengerov's fast vibrato sounds awkward, and his tone has a general lack of colors. He eschews Walton's melancholic bittersweetness in favor of a more driven approach; between rehearsal numbers 7 and 8 (Example 2.4, p. 31-33) or the *inquietamente* at rehearsal number 10. On the other hand, Vengerov savors slower tempos more than usual in the first movement as well, starting at a very placid quarter note = 39. Vengerov's use of portamento is a rarity among modern performers of the Walton. His use of it is frequent and tasteful, save for an unabashedly long slide up on the A string into m. 8, for example (Example 2.3, p. 26). Although debatable, it is difficult to see what musical purpose is served by this slide and it comes across as a matter of changing positions on the fingerboard and not of expression. Vengerov gives a playful yet powerful rendition of the scherzo movement, with real reveling in articulation changes. Unsurprisingly for a virtuoso of his caliber, he tosses the difficulties of the final sixty measures of the movement with aplomb. He begins the Finale with a more melancholic rendition than most, not to mention his restrained tempo of half note = 61, much slower than indicated. Vengerov gives a great deal of weight to the third movement, which, while central to the concerto, seems distended in his interpretation. His recapitulation is the slowest of all on record, with a sluggish quarter note = 72, much slower than the composer's indication of quarter note = 108. This does not really work save for some tasteful slides, especially since he plays this section

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[106] "Circles of beauty: Fill your stockings with the best CDs of 2003," *The Economist*, December 11, 2003.

with the somewhat jumpy, intensely vibrated and hardly violistic tone. Vengerov, moreover, has difficulty maintaining this tempo and is barely able to sustain the bow at times. As a result of these very slow tempi, his last movement is the longest of all recordings of the Walton, at 16 minutes and 23 seconds. Generally, Vengerov impresses with his peerless command of left-hand technique, as well as his interpretative intensity. However, his concept and realization of viola sound, crucial in this matter, goes the least far of all three. His exaggeratedly slow tempi come across as an attempt to sound as expressive as possible, while a more convincing expressivity could have been achieved with a better command and internalization of a vibrato suited to the viola.

In sum, violinists as violists are a recent and limited branch of performance practice as far as solo literature is concerned, and it will likely remain that way. No matter how we look at it, viola repertoire is unlikely ever to reach the quality and quantity of that for the violin, so performing any viola piece, even possibly the best viola concerto of all, will remain an esoteric activity for violinists. The difference in character of the instruments' sound and personalities, as well as the technical requirements and the time needed to master and truly internalize them, will inevitably make it so most violinists are ill-suited to play viola music, even with good intentions, and these recordings show that, albeit each to a different degree. Simply, playing both viola and violin equally well is unlikely for anyone.

It is unfortunate that the sample of violinists who have recorded the Walton Viola Concerto is so small, as having more recordings could possibly lead to identifying broader patterns in their interpretations. Currently, one cannot say that there is anything connecting

these three, except that idiosyncrasies of their violin playing consistently reflect onto their violistic efforts. Menuhin's expressive yet astringent violin tone finds a reflection in his viola playing; Kennedy's whiny sound, slowly vibrated, sounds very good on the viola, in spite of the occasional lack of depth; and ultimately, Vengerov's trebly, overtly brilliant tone and faster vibrato leave us wanting. These idiosyncrasies seem to be what determines how successful these violinists ultimately are on the viola, but there is no violinistic mode of interpretation per se. Additionally, their interpretative tendencies do not clearly distinguish them from the *echt* violists' renderings of the Walton, save for the violinists' generally unremarkable viola tone. Kennedy does merit special mention for getting the most expression and depth out of his.

The reasons for pairing these works with a violin concerto do give an impression of using the Walton Viola Concerto as a filler for a disc, which is a slightly disappointing sign of a lack of vision or philosophy behind these attempts. It is hard not to sympathize with Primrose's acerbic comments about "moonlighting violists," the violinists who "trespass on the violists' domain"[107] and thus add little to viola performance practice.

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that a certain deep human quality connects the three musicians here in an important way. The real discovery is made when studying these violinists' careers: what connects them is a search for a new, different way to express oneself but also to *find* oneself. If we compare Menuhin, Kennedy and Vengerov to other great violin virtuosos, like Heifetz, Itzhak Perlman, Vadim Repin or Anne-Sophie Mutter, their careers are more conventional, consisting of about a hundred recitals, chamber music and concerti per year

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[107] Dalton, 12-13.

and some teaching, all firmly within the realm of classical music. But the paths these three took are unique. As an adult, Menuhin dedicated himself wholeheartedly to many activities as a force for good in the world. He pursued surprising creative directions, leading us to believe he was looking for an elusive kind of home, an inner piece that never came.[108] Vengerov took a similar route once he got to his early 30s, likewise searching for something entirely different and new in styles very far from his Soviet violin school roots, as well as humanitarian work. Kennedy has gone the farthest and his "excesses" are widely known; while part of his image, they seem genuine.[109] That deep, inner, and not necessarily musical search, may be precisely what took them to explore the viola and its repertoire, as that was a logical step in seeing what one can do with one's instrumental skills and human qualities further and further away from safety, in looking for new frontiers.

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[108] Menuhin's obituary from the printed edition of *The Economist* on March 15, 1999, notes, "The many articles written since his death are in accord that he was an unusually good man. Not merely decent and kind, but that he encompassed goodness. 'Saintly' is a word that crops up from time to time. Saints have to be brave, as he was when, after the second world war, he became the first Jew to play with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, under Wilhelm Furtwängler, condemned by many for pursuing his career in the Hitler era; and as he was when he spoke up for the Palestinians in Israel..."

[109] Stephen Pettitt, "Nigel Kennedy is back," *The Sunday Times* (London), April 6, 2008.

CHAPTER V

Recent Performances of the Walton Concerto

Recent recordings of the Walton, while more numerous than ever, show less interpretative individuality than those of the more distant past and, when compared to the number of violists who have recorded the Viola Concerto in recent decades,[110] only a few unique personalities compare favorably to those of the Romantic style of performance practice. The level of technical perfection observed within these efforts is impressive, but this has not resulted in more individuality among the performers. On the contrary; as a whole, there is more uniformity than before. In this final chapter, I will examine the possible causes for that, in addition to exploring the effects of the recording medium on these interpretations. The underlying question here is how contemporary performance practice relates to that of the great violists of yesteryear.

Of the performers who have recorded the Walton Concerto recently, violists Lawrence Power, Nobuko Imai and especially Yuri Bashmet have joined the rarified ranks of viola

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[110] Since the Viola Concerto was first performed in 1929, sixteen recordings have been commercially issued. Out of those, only five were released before 1976. Those were recordings by Frederick Riddle, William Primrose (two), Paul Doktor and Yehudi Menuhin. More than twice as many have been released since. The soloists on these recordings are Yuri Bashmet (two), Nobuko Imai, Lawrence Power, Paul Neubauer, Peter Schidlof, Maxim Vengerov, Nigel Kennedy, Tatiana Masurenko, Helen Callus and Karen Dreyfus.

soloists. Before going further, I will summarize Bashmet's career and significance because he is the most important violist on the world scene since William Primrose. His biography as well as "brand recognition" goes even further than that of the Scottish luminary. Born in 1953, Bashmet has been the first violist ever to give a solo recital in a number of major concert halls, including La Scala, the Concertgebouw and Carnegie Hall.[111] He has appeared with all the world's leading orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Concertgebouw, the Vienna Philharmonic and many others. In 1993, the London Symphony Orchestra presented a four-concert Yuri Bashmet Festival.

A household name such as his has continued the string of successful commissions from major composers. In addition to Alfred Schnittke, whose enormously successful Viola Concerto Bashmet premiered in 1986, composers Sofia Gubaidulina, Giya Kancheli, John Tavener, Poul Ruders, Vytautas Barkauskas and Edison Denisov have all written works for him.[112] Moreover, the activities and prestige of a star performer on a formerly neglected instrument must have prompted more talented youngsters everywhere to pick up the viola instead of the violin, thus enriching and solidifying viola performance everywhere. Bashmet's example and prestige have inspired others to try similar musical choices and have increased the awareness of the viola among the general public. It is interesting that between Primrose's retirement from performing in the early 1960s due to hearing loss and Bashmet's appearance on the world scene in 1976, there was no international viola superstar. I would argue that Bashmet has helped continue the

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[111] Brennan, Schrott, and Woodstra, 94.
[112] Ibid.

momentum that the viola started enjoying with the efforts of Tertis and Primrose, and that this is an important part of his legacy.

Bashmet's recording of the Walton from the mid-1990s is striking for his sensual tone, as is always the case with Bashmet at his best. His *espressivo* at rehearsal number 4 is beautiful (Example 3.3, p. 49) and the transition into ensuing *sognando* is effective due to his sensitive and striking changes of timbre and sense of timing. Walton's meditative ramblings combine well with Bashmet's sense of timing and emotionally charged suspense. His energy is infused with a noble, unforced sensuality that gives the piece a dimension no other soloist has explored. The sweep of his phrasing in the coda is unparalleled, while his understated conclusion is unusually effective. In the second movement, Bashmet holds back but retains excitement throughout. Even though his tempo is quarter note = 133, he sounds slow due to his relaxed manner. His interpretation remains above the virtuosic attractions of the movement. The third movement begins at a leisurely pace of half note = 70. The way he takes over the motives from the orchestra in dialogues with the winds shows peerless musicianship and awareness of musical structures surrounding the solo line. Bashmet underlines the promising, gentle dreaminess of the epilogue and not the hopeless dimension of the music. Overall, he shows a deep understanding of this piece while sounding completely recognizable in every note. His is a modern performance in that he takes few liberties and employs very little portamento, yet within that framework, his personality comes through unabated and just as intensely as those of Riddle and Primrose.

On the other hand, recordings of Tatiana Masurenko and Hellen Callus are indicative of the lack of individuality one finds in a substantial portion of recent interpretations. Masurenko,

a professor at the Hochschule für Musik "Felix Mendelssohn-Bartoldy" in Leipzig, recorded her Walton in 2005. Her recording, while very good, ultimately suffers throughout from lack of excitement. More importantly, her warm, beautiful sound with deep vibrato becomes a means to an end after a while, something that attracts attention to itself while not contributing to the big picture. Her ease of playing and assuredness do little to communicate. There is not much illumination of the different moods and directions that the piece takes, but as opposed to a Romantic-era performer, her personal input does not make up for that. Masurenko's portamento is usually ascending and never descending, and like with all modern violists, its overall use is much more limited than that in the Romantic era.

Hellen Callus, a professor of viola at the University of California at Santa Barbara, recorded her Walton in 2006. Her rich tone is dark and delectable, with slow vibrato. She starts the first movement at dotted quarter note = 42. Callus remains faithful to the score, and the few interpretative liberties she takes, such as playing a virtuosic passage *sul ponticello*, are refreshing, as they stand out in an era where such changes to the music are rare. Her second movement is dawdling at around quarter note = 120 and any notion of *vivo* as indicated in the movement's title is dispelled. The sound in this movement is strangely devoid of almost any vibrato, unlike in the rest of the concerto, but this has no discernible expressive purpose. On the other hand, Callus respects Walton's articulation markings carefully. The third movement starts in a somewhat lethargic mood, at half note = 68. The soloist focuses on bringing out a sustained, legato quality as much as possible. She seems the most at home when the music takes a

meditative turn. The coda, while pretty, makes us wish for a more unique timbre, for something yet unheard.

Looking at recent recordings of the Walton, one marvels at the number of fine players we have, as well as the qualities they possess. It is important to point out that this is in no way dismissive of the amount of talent one finds. Technique, dedication, study, musicianship, inspired playing and a good tone are there in every recording. However, only a handful of these recent releases are as expressive or awe-inspiring as the Riddle or the 1954 Primrose, flawed as those were. As a whole, modern artists take fewer liberties and sound more alike.

The reasons for this homogeneity are many. Only a few of the modern performers have a truly memorable tone, and few employ portamento freely, both crucial ingredients for the kind of unsurpassed individuality we have long admired with Romantic-style performers. It is certain that the modern suppression of portamento and its replacement with continuous vibrato as the primary medium for tonal expression[113] is partly to blame for that. I would argue that their fall from grace has been a loss for all string players. In the second edition of the George Grove *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, portamento is defined as "a gradual carrying of the sound or voice with extreme smoothness from one note to another… which can only really be executed by the voice or by the bowed instrument."[114] The clues are all in that sentence. Strings have a unique advantage in being closer to the human voice in sonority than other instruments, but this glorious advantage has partly diminished with less use of portamento. The modern

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[113] Milsom, 107.

[114] John Alexander Fuller Maitland, "Portamento," in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by John Alexander Fuller Maitland (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1922), Vol. 3, 795.

insistence on disguising shifting between positions on the fingerboard as much as possible has made the sound of string instruments more "instrumental" and less vocal. If a unique tone in a string player is akin to a unique, memorable human voice, it is logical that the containment of an inescapable characteristic of singing, that is, the necessity of sliding between distant notes, hurts the uniqueness of expression of the performer and thus his ability to connect with the listener. In addition, the use of portamento is personal and individualistic, something that makes a performer much more identifiable. Interestingly, in the modern recordings of the Walton, it is descending portamento that has disappeared more than the ascending one. This may be because sliding downward is never needed for technical reasons, as opposed to sliding upward, which may be necessitated by the difficulty of shifting into very high positions. Thus, the few modern performers who use portamenti more liberally do not resemble Riddle or Primrose in their use of it, as the old masters used the descending variety to emphasize the poignancy of the phrase, something we rarely hear today. In other words, even when portamento is used, it is never only for expressive purposes.

It is hard to ascertain why portamento began to fall out of favor in the early 1930s, but as mentioned in Chapter III, the rise of rich, continuous vibrato and its mutual exclusivity with portamento is likely one of the causes. It makes sense as continuous vibrato is not particularly objectionable in terms of taste even when used poorly, that is to say, without variation. However, portamento in the hands of an inexperienced performer can be unbearably slurpy sounding, so modern vibrato may have taken over as a less controversial choice. In addition, orchestral playing suffers if portamento is freely used by individual players, so one can imagine

how the use of this device has not been encouraged in recent decades, with the rise in scope and seriousness of orchestral training. Another factor in the decrease in the use of portamento may be related to less use of gut strings on the violin. The forcefully brilliant, harsher sound of metal and synthetic strings, combined with modern sound setup with its primary focus on projection in a large space, make for a less mellow, less human voice-like violin sound. That change has contributed to the disappearance of the tonal opulence and expressivity Riddle, Primrose and their violinist brethren had. In addition, it is easy to imagine how sliding between distant notes on the modern violin, with its piercing tone, would be less pleasant and appropriate that on buttery, suave and warm gut strings. This new aesthetic has spread into string playing as a whole, but the viola, not suffering from as drastic a transformation in tone in spite of its setup changes, could be uniquely suited for a return to more use of portamento. It may be time for violists to lead a change in modern performance practice.

Having heard the recent recordings of the Walton, a listener will think that modern violists make no mistakes. This is one of the effects that sound recording has historically had on performance[115] and its effect on creating homogeneity can be observed in these recordings. It is important to remember that recorded music is mediated music and not live music put on record, as modern digital sound editing can greatly alter a recording from its unedited state. Processes such as rhythm quantization and pitch correction can correct unsteady rhythm and

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[115] See Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010) for a thorough discussion of the effects sound recording has had on performance and our perception of music in general.

faulty intonation,[116] but even without such recent developments, overdubbing and splicing have been making recordings more perfect than live performances for many decades now. Estimating the extent of use of these techniques on the recent recordings of the Walton is not possible, but one notices omnipresent precision, which is not quite the case with the Riddle or Primrose recordings. It is unthinkable that stretches of bad intonation could make it into a commercially released recording today, as it did with Primrose's Walton both times, which is telling. Recordings serve as a way to disseminate performing standards and style, as we emulate what we hear. Listening to how people play and what technical and interpretative approaches are out there affects us greatly, as that is sometimes the only way to acquire knowledge of an important performer's style and technique. As a result, we strive to play more perfectly, take fewer chances and contain our emotional input in order to live up to unforgiving modern technical standards, largely created by recordings. This has affected the performers' ability to express themselves as deeply as in the era where such concerns were less prevalent.

There are fewer and fewer liberties taken with the musical text in modern recordings of the Walton, which has its own share of consequences. Tempi and articulation to a lesser degree are the two things that modern violists keep taking with a grain of salt. The tables in Appendix B (p. 90-91) clearly demonstrate that tempi in the Walton have remained flexibly interpreted to this day, and without a discernible pattern. Otherwise, dynamics, pitches and rhythm are not altered by modern violists. The reasons for that could be explained not only by recordings and their promulgation of perfectionist tendencies, but also by the canonization of the composer,

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[116] Ibid., 50.

especially after the composer has died and the score becomes the only connection between us and his intentions. The modern trend is to treat the performer as a conduit for the composer's intentions, and a more literalist approach to the score is a consequence of that. As a result, the subjective input of the performer has been suppressed, supposedly for the sake of a greater good. It is not a stretch to imagine that suppressing the personal imprint of the performer onto the music has resulted in more homogeneity. The two elements of the musical text that remain flexibly interpreted, that is, tempi and articulation, are something that may depend on technical considerations, the level of comfort of the performer, and other more tangible elements. This is especially noticeable in the recordings of the second movement of the Viola Concerto, where even modern players take some liberties. Even though Walton wrote two differing metronome indications throughout the original and revised scores, we have been conditioned to take them with a grain of salt because of composers' sometimes erratic markings.[117] They remain one of the few things in the score that are meant to inspire rather than dictate.

All in all, the dearth of individuality in recent performances of the Walton, save for tempo choices, which remain varied, is explicable by larger trends in performance practice and not by something prosaic, such as lack of talent when compared to the "glorious" past. The bigger picture is unlikely to change until tastes and attitudes toward the performer's role in an interpretation change as well. A reaction to recent performance practice trends is inevitable and it will be fascinating to observe which of the aforementioned reasons for uniformity fall into disfavor. Currently, the recording medium is the only one that is appropriate for evaluating

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[117] John Rockwell, "Pondering Beethoven's Metronome," *New York Times*, February 19, 1987.

performance practice, although that may be about to change too. The medium of YouTube, a video-sharing website that allows anyone to upload and share videos with millions of viewers instantly, has had its share of the recordings of the Walton and its future effect on the study of performance practice could be substantial. As far as the Viola Concerto is concerned, we mostly find recordings of students' performances, the aforementioned commercially issued recordings with no actual video of the performance, but few other worthwhile efforts. Of interest are a ninety-second video excerpt from the third movement of the Walton as recorded by Vengerov,[118] as well as a television studio recording of a portion of the second movement by the Austrian violist Peter Schidlof[119] from 1968, not the same as his live audio recording of the Walton from 1974, recently issued on CD. Neither of these alters the impression we get from the audio recording, except to say that Schidlof's noble, distinctive but flawed performance on CD gets confirmation on video, where his cool exterior only reinforces the impression of detachment we get from the audio.

The ubiquity of audio recordings makes us forget that the visual component of the performance, taken for granted before the invention of the phonograph, is no longer a given when music is stored for later consumption. The effect of seeing as well as hearing a performer can have a significant impact on how the performer is perceived. One need only consider the violinist Jascha Heifetz, often considered cool and detached due to his emotionless stare when performing. As early as 1925, a reviewer noted that he seemed "cold, calm, dispassionate... do we not feel slightly chilled, anxious perhaps, for less mastery and more humanity?" but then

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[118] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abpXVCq9Sdg
[119] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9g95ICdXDgY

commented that "these impressions are to some extent corrected by Heifetz [sic] records. There is certainly a hint of passion, of tenderness."[120] YouTube makes the complete performance more commonplace once again, and its "uneditedness" could give a more realistic picture of where performance practice is or may be going. A new medium such as this one will help evaluate performance practice better, but may also bring changes in the performance aesthetic itself, not unlike what sound recording did in the previous century.

One thing is for certain. As a whole, the efforts of these artists clearly show that the state of viola playing is healthier than ever, and whatever uniformity we find in recent recordings of the Walton, the flipside of it is that there are more good violists, and there is a bigger audience and more interest in recording them, than ever before. Great violists are still out there and their efforts are just as remarkable as in the time of William Primrose, in spite of the straitjacketing that has resulted from the suppression of portamento, the canonization of the composer, and perfectionism. The more one listens to the recordings of the Walton, the more changes in performance practice fade in comparison with what has remained the same. The search for a unique voice but especially the importance of finding and having one, for the performer and also for the listener, has not changed. Different as performance practice may be today from that in the past, the human spirit and inspiration find a way through whatever means they are given, and they must find it if a piece of music is to keep living in the present and remain relevant to the human experience. The unquestionable artistry of these modern violists ensures that the instrument they play is in the limelight and that its repertoire continues to expand

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[120] "Gramophone Celebrities XIV—Jascha Heifetz," *Gramophone*, November 1925.

because of their labors. Ultimately, these are the most important tendencies one can observe within these different efforts.

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APPENDIX A – Table of Recordings

Bashmet, Yuri. *Bruch Double Concerto – Walton Viola Concerto.* With André Previn, London Symphony Orchestra, et al. Recorded February 1994, February 1996. RCA Red Seal 901564. Compact Disc.

Callus, Helen. Walton Viola Concerto in A minor. With Marc Taddei and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Recorded 2006. ASV Living Era CD DCA1001. Compact disc. Includes Vaughan Williams Suite for Viola and Orchestra, Howells Elegy, and Bowen Viola Concerto in C minor.

Dreyfus, Karen and Glenn Dicterow. *From Bow to String.* With Jerzy Swoboda and the Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra. Recorded 1997 5822. Compact disc.

Masurenko, Tatjana. British Viola Concertos. With Garry Walker and the NDR Radiophilharmonic. Recorded 2005 884613. Compact disc.

Menuhin, Yehudi. *The Great EMI Recordings.* With William Walton, New Philharmonia Orchestra, et al. Recorded 1971. Released April 2009 64131. 51 compact discs.

Power, Lawrence. *Walton Viola Concerto (original 1928-9 version), Rubbra Viola Concerto.* With Ilan Volkov and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Recorded September 2006. Released 2007. Hyperion Records CDA67587. Compact disc.

Primrose, William. *Primrose: Berlioz, Walton, Casadesus.* With William Walton and the Philharmonia Orchestra. Recorded 1946. Released 2005. Naxos 8.110316. Compact disc.

Rozhdestvensky, Gennadi. *Walton Concerto for Viola and Orchestra in A minor.* With Yuri Bashmet and the Grand Symphony Orchestra of Radio and Television, et al. Recorded 1996. Revelation RV10010. Compact disc. Includes Britten's Spring Symphony, Op.44.

Vengerov, Maxim. *Britten: Violin Concerto – Walton: Viola Concerto.* With Mstislav Rostropovich and the London Symphony Orchestra. Recorded December 2002 5575102. Compact disc.

Walton, William. *Walton conducts Walton: Belshazzar's Feast, Viola Concerto, and Façade Suites Nos. 1 & 2.* With Frederick Riddle, London Symphony Orchestra, et al. Recorded December 1937, October 1943. Released 2002. Pavilion Records Limited GEM 0170. Compact disc.

Walton, William. *Walton: Symphony No.2 – Viola Concerto.* Lars Anders Tomter, Paul Daniel, and the English Northern Philarmonia. Recorded April 1995. Naxos 8.553402. Compact disc.

Walton, William. *Walton: Viola Concerto, Sonata for String Orchestra, Hindemith Variations.* Nobuko Imai, Jan Latham-Koenig, and the London Philharmonic. Recorded 1992. Chandos 9106. Compact disc.

Walton, William. *Walton: Viola Concerto – Violin Concerto.* Peter Schidlof, Sir Colin Davis, BBC Symphony Orchestra, et al. Recorded 1974. Carlton Classics 1565691732. Compact disc.

Walton, William. *Walton: Violin Concerto – Viola Concerto.* Nigel Kennedy, André Previn, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Recorded September 1987. EMI Recordings Limited EL749628-1; EL749628-4. Compact disc.

Walton, William. *William Walton, The Centenary Edition.* Paul Neubauer, Andrew Litton, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, et al. Recorded 1995. Decca Music Group Limited 470 508-2, 4 compact discs.

Walton, William and Paul Hindemith. *Walton: Concerto for Viola and Orchestra – Hindemith: "Der Schwanendreher."* William Primrose, Sir Malcolm Sargent, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, et al. Recorded 1954. Columbia Records Y35922. LP record.

Walton, William and Paul Hindemith. *Walton: Viola Concerto (revised version) – Hindemith: "Der Schwanendreher."* Paul Doktor, Edward Downes, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Recorded 1968. Columbia Records 32160368. LP record.

APPENDIX B

Tempos taken by performers - 1962 Orchestration

Tempi	1st Movement			2nd Movement	3rd Movement		
Performer and Recording Year	*Andante comodo* Dotted Quarter Note = 52	*A tempo* (Reh. #4) Quarter Note = 104	*A tempo* (Reh. #9) Quarter Note = 96	*Vivo e molto Preciso* Quarter Note = 144-152	*Allegro moderato* Half Note = 76	*Meno mosso* (4 after Reh. #40) Half Note = 54	*A tempo* (Reh. #61) Quarter Note = 108
Paul Doktor (1968)	47	94	95	131	69	50	99
Yehudi Menuhin (1969)	39	85	72	124	84	53	109
Peter Schidlof (1974)	54	96	87	144	80	50	133
Yuri Bashmet (1988)	46	95	79	133	70	42	130
Nigel Kennedy (1990)	39	87	75	130	80	45	116
Paul Neubauer (1991)	46	104	90	142	72	51	101
Nobuko Imai (1993)	43	102	84	133	68	45	90
Yuri Bashmet (1994)	46	92	84	140	72	44	90
Lars Anders Tomter (1995)	45	89	86	127	68	45	98
Maxim Vengerov (2004)	39	76	69	136	61	36	72
Karen Dreyfus (2006)	45	106	91	126	72	42	88
Hellen Callus (2006)	42	93	85	120	68	33	87
Tatiana Masurenko (2006)	50	102	82	130	73	43	93

Tempos taken by performers - 1929 Orchestration

Tempi	1st Movement			2nd Movement	3rd Movement		
Performer and Recording Year	*Andante comodo* Dotted Quarter Note = 58	*A tempo* (Reh. #4) Quarter Note = 96	*A tempo* (Reh. #9) n/a (Performed at Half Note =)	*Vivo e molto Preciso* Quarter Note = 116	*Allegro moderato* Half Note = 84	*Meno mosso* (4 m. after Reh. #40) n/a (Performed at Half Note =)	*A tempo* (Reh. #61) Half Note = 48
Frederick Riddle (1937)	55	106	72	135	86	62	47
William Primrose (1946)	55	94	82	154	86	62	37
William Primrose (1954)	54	96	82	148	82	60	36
Lawrence Power (2007)	46	101	80	142	72	48	35