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## An Historical Study of the Solo Concerto Cadenza

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AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE SOLO CONCERTO CADENZA

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A Covering Paper  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington State College

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Music

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by  
Toni Christine Rydman  
August, 1968

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The study of the solo concerto cadenza is one that encompasses the areas of performance, history and theory. Even though the cadenza occupies a small place in the total music literature, it is a sort of microcosm of music. It would be impossible to make a study of the cadenza without completely understanding the concerto and related forms of music. An historical study such as this can lead to deeper understanding of the music to be performed.

#### II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Ad libitum. At liberty (at the discretion, or whim, of the performer.

Cadenza.

. . . a free fantasy for the solo instrument without accompaniment of the orchestra, based on themes and motifs of the exposition. The cadenza is richly ornamented with runs, passages, trills and a manifold display of virtuosity; in regard to contrapuntal elaboration and modulation, it is not restricted.

Double sonata-allegro form. "A variant on sonata-allegro form often encountered in the first movements of concertos written during the Classical and early Romantic periods" (9:232). This form has two expositions, one for

orchestra alone and the other for solo and orchestra together.

Point d'orgue. The place left for a cadenza in a concerto.

Section. This word will be a synonym for movement, except that it will refer to works that are connected without pause.

### III. A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE CONCERTO

Definition of the concerto. To fully appreciate the cadenza, one must understand the concerto, which can be a most exciting form of music. As Sir Donald Francis Tovey (24:6), a noted music historian, states:

Nothing in human life and history is much more thrilling or of more ancient and universal experience than the antithesis of the individual and the crowd . . .

The concerto is one of the few musical examples of this conflict. Girdlestone (8:15) speaks to the same point: "The essence of the concerto lies in the struggle between the orchestra on one hand, and the solo instrument, or group of instruments, on the other." He elaborates further:

The orchestra uses its polyphony, its mass, its colour; the soloist, his virtuosity. Semi-quavers and demi-semi-quavers are his only means of defence against the weight and colour of the band. Take away this defence and his instrument is just one among fifty; the orchestra crushes and absorbs it.

Need for cadenza. This need for virtuosity is probably one of the main reasons for including a cadenza in a concerto --it adds the weight and force necessary to the soloist's side of the balance of the scales. The word balance is particularly appropriate, since if one side is weighted more than the other, the excitement produced by the tension of uneven forces may be lost. For example, the piano concertos of Chopin are generally felt to lack excitement, since the composer did not understand the orchestra and overshadowed it with the piano.

Form of the concerto. The concerto is traditionally constructed in three movements, arranged as follows: fast, slow, fast. Usually written for a solo instrument, those for piano, violin, and violoncello are the most numerous, although there are concertos for almost every instrument or for a combination of instruments. (Brahms wrote one for violin and violoncello.)

Limitations of the paper. Since some limitations must be established for this paper, the study will deal with the cadenzas in the solo concerto only, excluding even some concertos which have been called by other names, such as Berlioz's "Harold in Italy" which is really a viola concerto. This study will trace the cadenza historically from its beginnings to the present, culminating with a discussion of modern performance practices.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STUDY

#### I. THE PRE-CLASSICAL CADENZA

Origin of the cadenza. The beginnings of the cadenza can be found in early folk music. As Veinus (25:40) states:

The habit of expanding a cadence into a brief coloratura cadenza can be traced back to folk sources (e.g., the cadence of the well-known English folk song, Westron Wynde); while improvisation, which is the heart of the cadenza, is a medium natural not only to folk expression, but a creative technique practiced more or less widely in every age from the Greeks to modern times.

In the arias of the "Bel Canto" period, can be found further development of this idea in vocal music. It was the practice of vocalists (particularly the popular castrati) to show off their voices. A description can be found in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (4:12):

The custom [of the cadenza] was most probably originated by singers, who seized the opportunity afforded by the chord of six-four on the dominant immediately preceding the final close of an aria or scena to show off the flexibility, compass and expressive powers of their voices to the highest advantage; so that, the piece coming to an end immediately afterwards, the audience should have the impression of astonishment fresh in their minds to urge them to applause.

An example of one of these cadenzas is found in the Oxford Companion to Music (21:144):

Example I: Vocal Cadenza.

The musical score for Example I: Vocal Cadenza consists of five staves of music in treble clef. The first staff begins with the lyrics "in al" and features a melodic line with some grace notes. The second staff continues the melody with similar phrasing. The third staff is characterized by a rapid scale-like passage with many beamed notes. The fourth staff includes a trill marked "tr" above a note. The fifth staff concludes with the lyrics "to mar." and a final melodic phrase.

This example illustrates several features of the Baroque cadenza. It often contained trills, scale passages, arpeggios and may other vocal or instrumental devices. Often, the cadenza of the eighteenth century had little or no relationship to the musical material of the aria or concerto.

Cadenzas of Handel. During the Baroque era, vocal and instrumental music were closely allied, and many practices of vocal music can be found in instrumental music. Handel, who wrote both vocal and instrumental compositions, provides examples of cadenzas in each of these styles. In the Handel organ concertos, like the arias in operas and oratorios, there is ample opportunity for free improvisation by the performer. Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (4:393) states:

In the second movement of his [Handel's] organ concerto in D minor (Number four of the second set) are to be found no less than six places marked organo ad libitum, with a pause over the rests in the accompaniments, indicating that the player (that is to say, he himself) was to improvise.

The literature is not without its amusing incidents, such as one revealing some of the problems of the cadenza which has been related in the Oxford Companion to Music (21:143-4).

. . . [Handel's] public chaff [ridicule] of a famous violinist of the period who extemporized too long and wandering a cadenza in the accompaniment of a song is well remembered to this day.

"One night, while Handel was in Dublin, Dubourg having a solo part in a song, and a close [cadence] to make ad libitum, he wandered about in different keys a great while, and seemed indeed a little bewildered, and uncertain of his original key; but at length, coming to the shake [trill] which was to terminate this long close, Handel to the great delight of the audience, and augmentation of applause, cried out, loud enough to be heard in the most remote parts of the theatre, 'You are welcome home, Mr. Dubourg.'" (Burney's Commemoration of Handel.)

Cadenzas of Bach. At this time composers were already showing a reluctance to leave the cadenza to the whims of the performer. Bach (1:27-31) in his Brandenburg Concerto Number Five set a precedent for future composers by writing out a full length cadenza for clavier. In his concertos, numbers one and eight, he wrote out the cadenza and also left additional space for the performer to ad lib (2:312-13; 270-71).

## II. THE CLASSICAL CADENZA

Cadenzas of Mozart. Mozart wrote a great number of concertos which are considered fine examples of the classical concerto. Therefore it is fitting that a discussion of the classical cadenza use these works as a basis for discussion. A fermata over a Tonic six-four chord (point d'orgue) and labeled cadenza ad libitum can be found frequently in Mozart's concertos. Sometimes it is found only in the first movement, however, many times it is found in two or all three of the movements. The cadenza in the first movement was evidently thought to be the most important and was usually the longest. Beethoven even gave specific directions that the cadenza in the third movement of the G Major Piano Concerto should be short (14:333).

Placement of the cadenza. The diagram which follows (9:132) of the first movement form of the concerto, used by the majority of classical composers, shows the point at which the cadenza in the classical concerto occurs. This form is sometimes called the double sonata-allegro form.

First theme (orchestra only)  
 Second theme (orchestra only)  
 First theme (solo and orchestra)  
 Second theme (solo and orchestra)  
 Development (solo and orchestra)  
 First theme (solo and orchestra)  
 Second theme (solo and orchestra)  
 Coda, part one (this section is usually very short, in the nature of a transition, and for orchestra only)

Cadenza (solo instrument only)

Coda, part two (orchestra only or solo and orchestra)

Cadenza in a Mozart concerto. Hutchings (11:4), in his analysis of the D Minor Concerto, K.V. 466 of Mozart, found that the total number of bars in the first movement was 398 (excluding the cadenza), and that the piano rests for at least 131 of these. The chart below outlines the main sections of the first movement of this concerto.

1.	Orchestral prelude	76 bars	
2.	Piano with orchestra	94 bars	
3.	Orchestra alone	22 bars	
4.	Piano with orchestra	63 bars	
5.	Piano with orchestra	110 bars	
6.	Orchestra alone	33 bars	interrupted by cadenza

Balance between solo and orchestra. As suggested above, there must be a delicate balance between the soloist and the orchestra to create the excitement that can be generated in a conflict between the individual and the crowd. If the orchestra (crowd) is dominant, the soloist (individual) may be submerged and that excitement lost. In a concerto such as the one in D Minor cited above where the orchestra plays about one-third of the movement by itself, there must be additional force or weight given to the soloist. The cadenza can add both length and interest to the side of the individual so that the opposing sides might be more equal.

Eighteenth century performance practices. Leopold Mozart (15:206), the father of the famous composer, has left us an account of the way in which a cadenza was performed in the eighteenth century.

Before beginning a cadenza which at the end of a solo is improvised thereto, it is customary to sustain a long note either on the key-note or on the dominant. On such a long-sustained note and increasing tremolo can always be used. For example: At the close of an adagio, one can play thus:

Example II: Leopold Mozart's example of a cadenza:

The image shows three musical staves in G major (one sharp). Each staff begins with a long note on the key-note (G) or dominant (D), followed by a tremolo. The first staff is labeled 'From the key-note.' and shows a sequence of notes with 'down' and 'up' markings. The second staff is labeled 'From the dominant.' and shows a similar sequence. The third staff shows a sequence of notes with 'down', 'up', and 'down' markings.

Mozart cadenzas available today. Thirty-six cadenzas written by Wolfgang Mozart for his concertos are available in print today. See Appendix A for his concertos in a list (11:207). These, however, were written for his friends and students rather than for himself. In one of his letters, he wrote about the Concerto in D Major, K.V. 175 - "Whenever I play this concerto, I play whatever occurs to me at the moment" (25:74-75).

Mozart's performance of the cadenza. The cadenza Mozart played for his concertos usually contained references to the thematic material of the movement. He may have used an entire theme or fragments of a theme. He may have modulated through many keys, used sequences or imitative passages, or a short improvised development section.

Discontinuation of the cadenza. The eighteenth century idea of the cadenza was to give the impression "that the solo performer, worked up to an artistic frenzy, had burst away from his companions to indulge himself in the unrestrained expression of his enthusiasm." It would seem that many times a performer must have given careful thought to his cadenzas ahead of time and may even have written them down. Composers probably felt that if something were actually written down it would not be left to the whim of the performer. There was a practice among performers of this period of using the same cadenza for many different concertos. This must have contributed to the composers' dissatisfaction with the practice of improvisation. As Hill (10:13-14) puts it:

. . . when performers were guilty of the crime of introducing one stock cadenza in different concertos by different composers, the clamorous clatter of the keys became the death-rattle of the improvised cadenza.

Beethoven's written cadenza. At any rate, composers soon became dissatisfied, and we find that Beethoven wrote out a full cadenza in the Concerto in  $E\flat$ , even adding a note to make certain the player would not furnish his own.

"'Non si fa una cadenza, ma attacca subito il seguente' - Do not make a cadenza, but go on at once to the following" (4:394-95).

Beethoven's accompanied cadenza. Beethoven also was not content with leaving the soloist alone during the cadenza. In the  $E\flat$  Concerto he accompanies the cadenza from the fourteenth bar (20:57; 4:395). (Other examples of the accompanied cadenza may be found in Elgar's Violin Concerto (20:57), Khachaturian's Violin Concerto (12:44-48), and Rimsky-Korsakov's Concerto for Trombone and Piano. See Appendix B for the cadenzas in the Rimsky-Korsakov Concerto.)

### III. THE ROMANTIC CADENZA

Cadenzas of the Romantic period. With the exception of the Brahms Violin Concerto, almost all Romantic composers have followed the practice begun by Beethoven and have either written out their own cadenzas or have left them out entirely. Often, the cadenza as performed or written in the Romantic period, like the Baroque cadenza, had little or nothing to do with the musical material of the concerto, but was merely a show of virtuosity.

A cadenza of Schumann. Schumann (22:37) wrote a cadenza in the A Minor Concerto for Piano and Orchestra which is generally considered one of the finest examples of a cadenza in the concerto literature. Culshaw (7:44) describes it:

. . . it gives the soloist ample opportunity for display but never degenerates into mere pyrotechnics, and its rhapsodical treatment of both the main theme and a fragment from a subsidiary idea constitutes piano music of the most entrancing quality.

Cadenzas of Mendelssohn. Even though Mendelssohn omitted cadenzas in the Piano Concertos in G Minor and D Minor, he included one in the Violin Concerto in E Minor. In his Correspondence with Ferdinand David, a noted violinist of the time, he asked the violinist's advice (25:184):

. . . is it playable and correctly noted? I want the arpeggios to begin at once in strict time and in four parts up to the tutti. I hope this will not be too exacting for the performer . . .

In this same concerto he also achieved more unity in the concerto as a whole by moving the cadenza further ahead in the first movement. Instead of appearing at the end of the movement, the cadenza follows the development section serving as a transition between the development and the recapitulation. As Veinus (25:174) puts it: "It is no longer a brilliant parasitic growth. It works humbly for a living, or for the greater glory of music. . . ."

Mendelssohn provides us insights into performance practices of the early nineteenth century in this amusing incident recounted by Percy Scholes (21:144):

When it was over, all said it was a pity that we had made no cadenza; so I at once hit upon a passage in the first part of the last tutti where the orchestra has a pause, and Moscheles had nolens volens [willy nilly] to comply and compose a grand cadenza. We now deliberated, amid a thousand jokes, whether the small last solo should remain in its place, since of course the people would applaud the cadenza. "We must have a bit of tutti between the cadenza and the solo," said I. "How long are they to clap their hands?" asked Moscheles. "Ten minutes, I dare say," said I. Moscheles beat me down to five. I promised to supply a tutti; and so we took the measure, embroidered, turned and padded, put in sleeves a la Mameluke, and at last with out mutual tailoring produced a brilliant concerto. We shall have another rehearsal today; it will be quite a picnic, for Moscheles brings the cadenza, and I the tutti."

Cadenzas of Brahms. It has been mentioned that Brahms allowed room for an improvised cadenza in the Violin Concerto; however, in the Piano Concerto Number One in D Minor, he includes a written one in the second movement and two shorter ones in the third movement (5:54, 78-9, 89).

Cadenzas of Liszt and Chopin. The concertos of Liszt and Chopin do not contain cadenzas possibly because the entire concerto is so rhapsodic and free a cadenza would be anti-climactic.

Cadenzas of other Romantic composers. Other late Romantic composers many times included cadenzas in their concertos. Saint-Saens even introduces his Piano Concerto Number Two with a quasi-cadenza solo and inserts a full cadenza later in the movement (18:1, 21-22). As stated above,

Khachaturian (12:44-48), Elgar (20:57) and Rimsky-Korsakov furnished accompaniment to their cadenzas. Rachmanioff (16:35), in the Piano Concerto Number Three, gives the performer a choice of two parallel cadenzas, one more difficult than the other.

#### IV. THE MODERN CADENZA

Twentieth century cadenzas. Enough time has not elapsed to give one the historical perspective that is needed to completely understand the music of the twentieth century. However, some definite statements can be made about the cadenza in the early part of the twentieth century. After studying concertos of Bartok, Berg, Bloch, Copland, Milhaud, Ravel, Prokofieff, Schoenberg, Sessions and Walton, it was found that only four of these composers added cadenzas to their concertos, and not one has left a space for the performer to improvise! Bloch (3:3, 56-57) and Schoenberg (19:42) each wrote a cadenza in the first movement of his Violin Concerto. Copland (6:47-48) included one in the third movement of the Piano Concerto and Shostakovitch (23:69-70) used a lengthy one to connect the third and fourth sections of his Violin Concerto.

Twentieth century trends. There seems to be a return in the modern era to a cadenza which utilizes themes from the

body of the concerto, rather than merely displaying the technical virtuosity of the performer, as had been the practice in the nineteenth century.

A cadenza of Copland. Copland's Piano Concerto (6:47-48) precedes the cadenza with the instructions: "sempre marcato e molto ritmico" (always detached and very rhythmic). This may be indicative of a tendency to limit further the freedom of the performer.

#### V. MODERN PERFORMANCE PRACTICES

Preferred source of cadenza. When performing a concerto where the cadenza has been left to the performer, most authorities recommend that the modern performer use the cadenza supplied by the composer whenever one is available. If one written by the composer is not obtainable, there are several other suggested sources, including other composers, virtuosi, or music editors.

Other sources of cadenza. If the composer did not provide a cadenza, the next best source would be other outstanding composers. Such composers as Clementi (21:143), Beethoven (10:14; 11:205), and Hindemith (25:79) have written cadenzas for Mozart piano concertos. Many times, however, it is impossible to obtain cadenzas written either by the composer or other fine composers and it becomes

necessary to go to still other sources. Many great performers, such as Joachim, the virtuoso violinist contemporary with Brahms, have written down the cadenzas they themselves used. The cadenzas written by Joachim for the Violin concertos of Brahms (20:57; 21:144) and Beethoven (21:144) are thought to be among the finest available. Another source might be the cadenza provided in the music by the editors. (A good edition should indicate the source.) Ironically, it is felt that the last person to supply a cadenza should be the performer as it would be almost impossible to imitate the harmonic and melodic structure of earlier periods and would be quite difficult to enter into the spirit of another age.

## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### I. SUMMARY

This paper has attempted to cover all eras of music with a detailed study of the solo concerto cadenza. It has traced the cadenza from its beginnings in folk music through the Baroque era where it was a practice of the performer to improvise freely. In the Baroque era also were the beginnings of the written cadenza in the concertos of Bach. In the concertos of Mozart the cadenza again was left to the performer. Beethoven, however, wrote out at least one of his cadenzas showing that he was not satisfied with the practice of improvisation. In the Romantic period, with the exception of the Brahms Violin Concerto, the cadenza, if there was one, was written by the composer, a practice that has been continued in the modern era.

#### II. CONCLUSIONS

The writer feels that this study helped her to understand the concerto principle more clearly, and learn more about performance practices of each period in music. The organizing and writing of this paper has helped immeasurably in forming ideas and expressing them clearly. The results of

a study such as this can culminate in deeper understanding which leads to a more intelligent performance.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### CONCERTOS WITH MOZART'S CADENZAS AVAILABLE (11:207)

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| K. 175 in D                      | Movement One and Two. Two versions of each cadenza.          |
| K. 246 in C                      | Movement One, two cadenzas. Movement Two, three cadenzas.    |
| K. 271 in E flat                 | Two cadenzas available for each movement.                    |
| K. 365 in E flat<br>(Two pianos) | Cadenzas to Movements One and Three.                         |
| K. 382                           | Supplementary rondo to K. 175.                               |
| K. 413 in F                      | Cadenzas to Movements One and Two.                           |
| K. 414 in A                      | Cadenzas to all movements, two for Movement Two.             |
| K. 415 in C                      | Cadenzas to all movements.                                   |
| K. 449 in E flat                 | Cadenza to Movement one.                                     |
| K. 450 in B flat                 | Cadenzas to Movements One and Three.                         |
| K. 451 in D                      | Cadenzas to Movements One and Three.                         |
| K. 453 in G                      | Cadenzas to Movements One and Two. Two sets.                 |
| K. 456 in B flat                 | Two cadenzas to Movement One, One cadenza to Movement Three. |
| K. 459 in F                      | Cadenzas to Movements One and Three.                         |
| K. 488 in A                      | Cadenza to Movement One.                                     |
| K. 595 in B flat                 | Cadenzas to Movements One and Three.                         |

A thematic guide to the cadenzas will be found under Section 624 of Alfred Einstein's edition of Kochel's catalogue, 1937. The Breitkopf and Hartel edition of the cadenzas is, of course, out of print. The whole series have been recently issued in a good edition by Broude Brothers of New York.

APPENDIX B

CADENZAS FROM RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S CONCERTO  
FOR TROMBONE AND PIANO

Example I: Cadenza from the second section.

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the Trombone part, starting with a dynamic marking of *f* and a *p* marking. It features a melodic line with slurs and a *stringendo* instruction. The middle and bottom staves are the Piano accompaniment, with the middle staff in treble clef and the bottom staff in bass clef. The piano part consists of chords and rhythmic accompaniment.

The second system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the Trombone part, starting with a *Cadenza* marking and a dynamic marking of *f ad libitum*. The middle and bottom staves are the Piano accompaniment, with the middle staff in treble clef and the bottom staff in bass clef. The piano part consists of chords and rhythmic accompaniment.

The third system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the Trombone part, starting with a dynamic marking of *f* and a *p* marking. It features a melodic line with slurs and a *stringendo* instruction. The middle and bottom staves are the Piano accompaniment, with the middle staff in treble clef and the bottom staff in bass clef. The piano part consists of chords and rhythmic accompaniment.

## Example II: Cadenza from the third section.

The image displays a musical score for a cadenza, organized into three systems. Each system consists of three staves: a top staff with a bass clef, a middle staff with a treble clef, and a bottom staff with a bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first system begins with a 'T' marking above the first staff and a dynamic marking 'f' below the first staff. The second system features a 'Cres.' marking above the top staff. The third system includes a 'vcl.' marking below the first staff. The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks such as accents and slurs.

*f* *mf* *mf poco a poco accel.* *accel.*

*cresc.* *f* *f* *f*

APPENDIX C

GRADUATE RECITAL PROGRAM

CENTRAL WASHINGTON STATE COLLEGE  
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

GRADUATE RECITAL

TONI C. RYDMAN, Baritone Horn  
TEKLA A. HERTZ, Piano

PROGRAM

I

Bist du bei mir

Johann Sebastian Bach

Concerto in f minor

George Frederick Handel

Grave  
Allegro  
Largo (Sarabande)  
Allegro

II

Cortege

Pierre Max Dubois

Danse Sacree

Henri Tomasi

INTERMISSION

III

Kaleidosuite

Ray Bert Johnson

Moderato  
Presto  
Largo  
Moderato Espressivo

IV

Concerto for Trombone and Band

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Allegro Vivace  
Andante Cantabile  
Allegro-Allegretto

Hertz Recital Hall  
July 14, 1966  
8:15 P.M.

APPENDIX D

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

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