

J.S. Bach Cello Suite No.2, Prelude

The opening Prelude is homogenous in its texture of running 16th notes, from which a recurring habit of pausing on the second beat of the bar stands out as a distinctly Sarabande-like feature. Its opening arpeggio spelling out the D minor triad sets out a pattern of similar arpeggiated approaches to this second-beat pause that will pervade the movement as a whole, building tension in waves of melodic and harmonic sequences that seek ever higher ground.

William Walton Viola Concerto

The Viola Concerto by William Walton was written in 1929 and first performed at the Queen's Hall, London on 3 October of that year by Paul Hindemith as soloist and the composer conducting. It is known for its intense emotional depth and virtuosic demands on the soloist. It had been written with the violist Lionel Tertis in mind, and he took the work up after initially rejecting it. The concerto established Walton as a substantial figure in British music and has been recorded by leading violists internationally. Walton revised the instrumentation of the concerto in 1961, he thinned the orchestration, reducing the woodwind from triple to double, omitting one trumpet and the tuba, and adding a harp for the final version.

I. Andante comodo

The first movement, marked *andante comodo*, is described as a regular but condensed sonata form. After a three-bar introduction in which muted strings and low clarinet establish the tonality of A minor the viola enters with a melancholy 98 theme, in the middle register of the instrument. The pace quickens and a series of viola chords leads to the second subject, a tranquil theme in D minor, for the viola in its lower register. The themes are developed at varying dynamics and speeds. There is no formal cadenza. After a vigorous *tutti* the movement ends quietly with the melancholic theme with which it began, clashing A Major over A Minor harmonies and unsettling the listener before quietly dying away.

II. Scherzo and trio

The second movement, faster and lighter in character, with a more relaxed and whimsical atmosphere. It is unusually for a concerto, it features playful and dance-like elements. It is The viola's virtuosity is highlighted as it navigates

through rapid passages and lively rhythms, often engaging in dialogues with the orchestra.

III. Finale – allegro moderato

In the words of the musicologist Christopher Palmer, "Here Walton pulls out all the stops". It is the longest of the three movements and as Frank Howes puts it in his study of Walton's music, it gathers up the mercurial emotions of the first two movements and reveals their serious purpose. The first theme is lively, elongating the rising fourths heard in the scherzo to rising fifths. The second subject, deriving from the rocking figure of the first movement, is in the minor key. The development section mainly features on the first theme, gradually dividing it into fragments accompanying a long cantabile theme for the viola and later the woodwind. In the recapitulation, the first theme is given to the full orchestra, and the second to woodwinds and horns, with a viola counter-theme. A development passage leads to the coda that draws the earlier themes into a characteristic Walton fugal treatment, leading to the climactic synthesis of the themes. The concerto concludes with a delicate, introspective coda, which brings the work to a quiet and contemplative ending, leaving a lasting impression on the listener.