

Analysis of Performance Techniques in the First Movement of Haydn's Cello Concerto in C Major

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Abstract

This paper takes the first movement of Franz Joseph Haydn's Cello Concerto in C Major (Hob. VIIb:1) as the research object and analyzes its playing technique and musical performance in depth. As one of the founders of the Viennese Classical School, Haydn's musical style combines the counterpoint and polyphony of Baroque music and is known for its rigorous structure, beautiful melody, and simple and clear harmony. This article summarizes the compositional background of the concerto, pointing out that it was composed during the period when Haydn was employed by the Esterhazy family, and was dedicated to the court cellist Josef Weigl, combining showmanship and singing. Then he analyzes its musical characteristics from three aspects: structure, melody, and harmony, pointing out that it adopts the typical three-movement structure of classicism, with a natural and symmetrical melody that is full of singing, and a harmony that is mainly functional and logical. Finally, the structure of the first movement is analyzed in detail, and the playing techniques of each part, such as bow running, string changing, finger trembling, and handle changing, are discussed. It provides technical references for performers.

Keywords

Haydn; Cello Concerto; Performance Technique.

1. Introduction

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was one of Austria's greatest composers and one of the founders of the Viennese classical school. Haydn demonstrated musical talent at an early age, and as a teenager, he received a systematic musical education in the choir of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. This exposure to a large number of religious and baroque musical works had a profound influence on his later compositions.

Haydn's musical style was heavily influenced by Johann Sebastian Bach, as reflected in the use of counterpoint and polyphonic techniques. Fugue form is used, for example, in the Sun Quartet Op. 20. The theme of the first movement of the Keyboard Sonata Hob. XVI: 52 unfolds through imitation and variation. In *Die Schöpfung*, Genesis, Haydn utilizes extensive counterpoint techniques. In the "Kyrie" of the *Missa in tempore belli*, Haydn creates a Bachian religious style through imitation and interweaving of the voices, giving the work power and mystery. Haydn's musical works also inherited the German and Austrian musical cultural traditions and formed his unique musical language. He established the four-movement structure of the symphony and was honored as the "Father of the Symphony" and "Father of the String Quartet". His works are known for their rigorous structure, beautiful melodies, and clear and simple harmonies. His Symphony No. 104 "London" demonstrates Haydn's maturity in symphonic composition with its grand structure and vivid themes. In contrast, the "Emperor" String Quartet (Op. 76, No. 3) has become the most famous string quartet for its beautiful melody and subtle counterpoint. The "Emperor" String Quartet (Op. 76, No. 3) is a classic in the field of string quartets with its beautiful melodies and exquisite counterpoint. In addition, his compositions were a

refinement and development of the classical form, and his symphonies and string quartets provided an important model for future generations, exerting a profound influence on later composers such as Mozart and Beethoven.

In this paper, we will take the first movement of Haydn's Violin Concerto in C major as the object of study, and discuss its performance techniques and musical performance. Although Haydn's violin concertos are few, each of them demonstrates his unique insights and superb skills in string music composition, and the C major violin concerto, as one of his masterpieces, not only has a typical classical style but also incorporates Haydn's profound understanding of violin playing techniques. However, there are few discussions and research on the musical style and playing techniques of this work. Therefore, this paper examines the background, structure, and technique of this work, hoping to provide some new inspiration for players who study this work.

2. Background of the Cello Concerto in C Major

According to traditional music historiography, Haydn's Cello Concerto in C Major (Hob. VIIb:1) was composed in the early 1760s. However, based on recent scholarship, some scholars have suggested that the work may have been composed between 1740 and 1760. During this period Haydn was employed by the Esterhazy family as a court musician. During this period Haydn was employed by the Esterhazy family as a court musician and was responsible for composing a variety of instrumental works for the court orchestra of Prince Nicholas. This concerto was written for the famous court cellist Josef Weigl, who was the principal cello of the Esterhazy Orchestra at the time. Based on Weigl's playing characteristics, Haydn fused virtuosic and vocal compositional features within the classical concerto paradigm.

The work was discovered in 1961 by the Czech musicologist Poulkert in a manuscript in the collection of the Prague National Library, after having been buried for two hundred years. This discovery not only filled a gap in the literature of cello concertos from the Classical period but also revealed Haydn's important contribution to the development of the early Classical concerto genre [1]. In his compositions, Haydn keenly utilized the acoustic characteristics of the cello, such as its range and tonal expressiveness, and demonstrated the musical tension of the cello through systematic contrasts of registers and diverse configurations of bowing techniques.

3. Analysis of the Musical Characteristics of the Cello Concerto in C Major

Haydn's Cello Concerto in C Major is a classic representative of classical music. This work embodies the characteristics of classical period music in three aspects: structural layout, melodic form, and harmonic logic. It is a perfect combination of rational musical form and emotional expression, which follows the norms of classical music and is full of moving musical expression.

3.1. Rigorous Classical Structure

Haydn adopted the three-movement structure typical of the Classical period in this concerto, with each movement having a clear compositional layout. The first movement (Allegro) is in sonata form and consists of a presentation section, an unfolding section, and a recapitulation section. In the Exposition section, the main theme is presented in C major, with a vibrant melody, while the secondary theme moves to the dominant key (G major) for a more lyrical contrast. The unfolding section enhances the music's drama through tonal changes and motivic development, and finally returns to the main key in the recapitulation section, creating a complete structural closure. The second movement (Adagio) has a three-part structure (ABA'), with a long, lyrical cello melody. This movement gives full play to the cello's warm, soft tone as if the human voice were chanting, demonstrating Haydn's exquisite control of the melodic line.

The third movement (Allegro molto) is in rondo form (ABACA), with a light and lively theme, and at the same time characterized by the rhythms of a folk dance. The interludes (B and C sections) contrast with the theme and culminate in a gorgeous virtuosic passage at the end. This clear three-movement layout makes the whole work both contrasting and unified, reflecting the pursuit of formal beauty in classical music.

3.2. Beautiful and Simple Melody

Haydn's melodic compositions are known for their naturalness, symmetry, and sing-along nature, and these traits are fully reflected in this work. The phrases of this work are usually in units of 4 or 8 bars, echoing back and forth to form a balanced aesthetic. For example, the main theme of the first movement consists of two contrasting 4-bar phrases, the former full of dynamics and the latter more fluid. Rhythmically, the piece is based on a steady beat, with occasional use of appoggiaturas or syncopations to add variety. The final movement's pirouette theme creates a joyful dance atmosphere with its jumping cadence. The smoothness of the melodic lines is based on the use of major scales, while avoiding the more complex chromatic changes in the melody, making the music sound bright and pleasant. Especially in the slow movement, the cello's melody is as lilting as an aria, showing Haydn's deep understanding of singing melodies.

3.3. Clear Functional Harmony

The use of harmony is an important feature of classical music, and Haydn demonstrates highly logical harmonic thinking in this concerto. The whole piece is centered on the main key (C major), and the tension and color of the music are enhanced by the contrast of the dominant key (G major) and other closely related keys. The first movement shifts from C major to G major in the introduction, while the introduction explores more tonal possibilities, and finally returns to the dominant key in the recapitulation, resulting in a tonally complete resolution. Functional harmony predominates throughout the piece, and the harmonic progression is based on the functional framework of principal-subordinate-subordinate, emphasizing the clarity of the termination. The end of the phrase often adopts the V-I (genus-to-master) perfect termination to make the music paragraph clear. At the same time, Haydn is also good at using decorative harmonic techniques such as sustained notes and passing tones, which add delicate emotional expression under the premise of maintaining harmonic purity. In addition to this, the Baroque legacy is still visible in the work, such as the tradition of playing through the bass line and improvisational ornamentation.

Through the logical development of thematic motifs, the clarification of structural forms, and the equality of instrumental dialogues, Haydn pushed the concerto genre towards the mature stage of classicism, laying the foundation for the concerto compositions of Mozart and Beethoven.

4. Study of Form Analysis and Performance Techniques

4.1. Analysis of Musical Structure

This paper focuses on the first movement of Haydn's Cello Concerto in C major. The movement is written in a typical sonata style (as shown in Figure 1), and it is organized in a double-presentation structure, with orchestra and soloist parts. The exposition (1-21bars) consists of three parts: the main theme (1-7bars) unfolds in the key of C major, adopting a medium tempo and 4/4 time, with a bright and lively theme; the secondary theme (8-17bars) shifts to the key of G major, with a strong contrast between the melody and the main theme; and the closing theme (18-21bars) returns to the main key of C major, completing the conclusion of the movement. The solo exposition (22-58bars) is also divided into a main theme (22-30bars, C major), a transition (31-36 bars, C major), and the secondary theme (37-40 bars), in which the

transition assumes the function of transposition and transitions the music to the secondary theme. It is worth noting that the solo part has a more streamlined chorus than the orchestra version. The closing theme (41- 58 bars) continues the key of the secondary theme (G major) and sets the stage for the unfolding section. The development group (59-96bars) is divided into four sections based on tonal changes: A minor (59- 67 bars), E major (68- 77 bars), A minor (78- 83 bars), and G major (84-96bars), which enhances the tension of the music through tonal contrasts. The recapitulation (97-128bars) returns to the key of C major, and the main theme (97- 101 bars) and the secondary theme (119- 121 bars) are naturally connected by the transition (102- 118 bars), which is finally wrapped up by the closing theme (122- 128 bars). The coda (129- 136 bars) makes a concluding statement in the key of C major, reinforcing the structural integrity of the movement [2]. The opening of the piece begins with the orchestra, the orchestra presenting the section with the powerful main chords of the string section setting the tone, and the bright and lively theme is continued again by the entrance of the lead cello, which cleanly unfolds the solo melody of the exposition. The sub-part follows strictly the tonal relationship of the classical sonata form, shifting from the dominant key of C major to the dominant key of G major. This tonal shift between the main theme and the secondary theme is one of the typical features of classical music composition. As the founder of the Viennese classical school, Haydn systematically established and perfected this principle of tonal contrast in his works, making it an important structural element of the classical sonata form [3]. The melodic line is formed by upward molding to make the melody more fluid. The weak rising syntax and the alternating weave of eighth notes and sixteenth notes form a delicate contrast of light and dark. The music gives a relaxed and bright, creating a positive atmosphere.

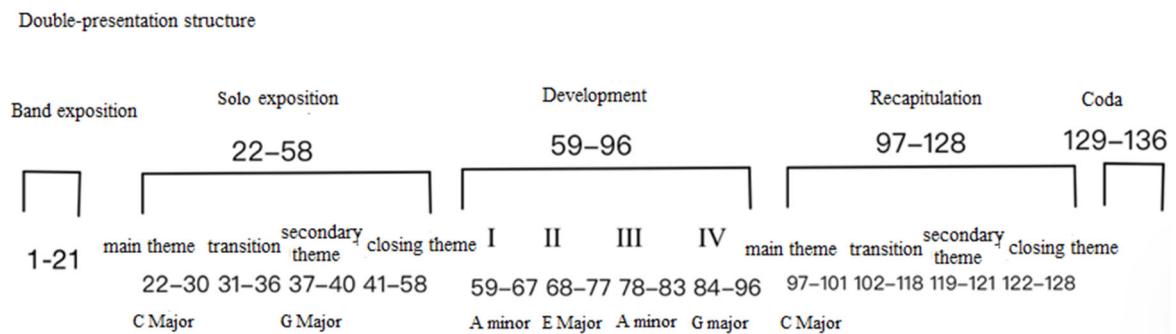


Figure 1. Musical Structure

4.2. Analysis of playing techniques

The first C major chord at the beginning of the movement needs to be played with fullness and power, and the right-hand bowing is especially important (as shown in Music example 1). Since the cello is not a keyboard instrument like the piano, the four chords cannot be played at the same time, but have to be split into intervals. At the same time, we have to pay attention to the power of the right hand's bow, to make each string vibrate when we play a chord, and at the same time, we have to pay attention to the angle of the string change, to keep the power of the right hand's bow and to transfer it to the second beat of the note. Don't be angular when changing strings; the tone must be rounded and not dry, so the vibrato of the left hand is very important, and the speed of the vibrato is from slow to fast. The strength of the vibrato is from light to strong, but the movement is as wide and relaxed as possible. When you start to learn, you can practice with empty strings to find the right way of playing the bow. The main chord is followed by fast 32nd and 16th notes, which need to be played with the right-hand bow distribution and quick left-hand transposition, as well as visualizing the melody as a long phrase

rather than focusing on individual notes. 27 bar from the weakest to the most varied of tones (as shown in Music example 1). This can be practiced by changing the position of the bow and the point of contact and finding a tone that matches the character of the melody. The thirty-second note that immediately follows should be played cleanly, without slurring, while changing handles quickly, which can be solved by practicing slowly. The linking section of the piece is a free, relaxed feeling, so be careful to stick to the long vibrato, full timing, and subtle changes in strength.



Music example 1. 21- 29 bars

The entry into the development group is still in the dominant key of G major, and a move into the key of A minor follows the unfolding. The emergence of thirty-two notes, broken chords, and clusters of sextuplets in the weaving material creates a dense, technical passage while bringing the music to a climax (as shown in Music example 2). Tonally, there is a shift from a minor to an E major, and then to a G major at the end. The thirty-second notes, which require a lot of left-hand running in this section, are the focus of practice. Keep the left hand granular and tapping on the fretboard, while at the same time not distorting the shape of the left hand with fast runs, and relaxing the arm and thumb to press the strings with the body's gravity. The same goes for the double stops, keeping the shape of the hand without stiffening the thumb, and adjusting the angle of the fingers to the strings.



Music example 2.40-41bars

The quintuples starting at 67 bar has a lot of jumping and shifting, so make sure to keep the rhythm accurate while shifting quickly with the left hand (as shown in Music example 3). The right hand also has a lot of string crossing and jumping bows, so pay attention to the point of contact of each bow change, and try to play in a way that saves the bow's amplitude, so that you can play quickly and accurately. In daily practice, you should practice slowly, keeping the right elbow at a certain height, and use the arm to drive the right hand to make fast string crossings. The left and right hands should be well coordinated with each other, or else they may swallow or blur the sound in actual playing. During the change from mi to high mi in 80 bar, there should be no slides (as shown in Music example 3). In 81 bar, the tr must be played consistently, not broken, and the number of tr should be played for the full duration of the note. When the right hand is carrying the bow, be careful not to weaken the bow naturally at the tip of the bow, but to keep it gradually and gradually strong.

Music example 3.65-91bars

The recapitulation switches to F major to present the theme, and the weaving incorporates new material derived from the unfolding section, such as leaping sixteenth notes, triplets, and sextuplets combining to form structural echoes. The coda comes after a florid section in which the orchestra plays the theme melody of the presenting section, reinforced by the brass section and the rapidity of the string section, and culminates in a brilliant full cadence in the key of C major. The main points of the recapitulation section are the same as in the previous sections and will not be repeated in this article.

5. Summary

This paper has accurately grasped the stylistic features of the first movement of Haydn's Cello Concerto in C major by analyzing in depth the correspondence between the compositional structure and performance techniques. Based on respecting the classical style norms, it injects personal musical perception and performance analysis to show the charm of this classical work.

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