2014

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra

Joshua Burel
CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA

By

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A Dissertation submitted to the
College of Music
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Music

Degree Awarded:
Spring Semester, 2014
Joshua Burel defended this dissertation on April 11, 2014.

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In Memory of
Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krasa, Pavel Haas, and Gideon Klein
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deep appreciation for my teacher and mentor Dr. Ladislav Kubik who has actively been involved in my development as a composer. Thank you for your commitment to my music, career, and growth as a person. I would also like to express my gratitude to my violin teacher Dr. Benjamin Sung who has inspired me to pursue big dreams. It is from your encouragement and support that many of my dreams have become a reality. I would like to thank Dr. Matthew Shaftel for taking an interest in my development as a successful musician. You have been a constant source of inspiration, big ideas, and optimism. I would also like to thank Dr. Clifton Callender for challenging my understanding of music and supporting my music and performance through What Is Noise.

Thank you to my friends, colleagues, and mentors at Florida State University. I have learned so much from all of you and have received so much support from this community of musicians. Each of you has shaped me into a better musician and it has been a great honor for me to work with all of you and be apart of such a supportive musical community. Thank you to everyone who has performed my music. I cannot thank you enough for all of your hard work and dedication. Thank you to the Theodore Presser Foundation for supporting my research and inspiring this piece.

Thank you to my friends, colleagues, and mentors at Western Michigan University who have consistently supported me. I specifically would like to thank Mrs. Renata Artman Knific who has always been there for me. Thank you to the Merling Trio who has constantly inspired my love for chamber music and challenged me to grow as a violinist. Thank you to Dr. John Lychner who has been a mentor to me for many years. I cannot thank you enough for your support. Thank you to my friends from Kalamazoo who have encouraged me from afar.

I would like to thank my family for all of the support they have given me over the years. Thank you for all of the visits to Florida, the many phone conversations, and the visits home to help me relax and stay focused. Thank you to my wife Melissa whose love and encouragement has always been a source of comfort and inspiration for me to do my best work. I would not have been successful in this program without you.

Finally, thank you to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for this amazing opportunity to study at Florida State University. May my life bring you glory and honor.
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ABSTRACT

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra was written in response to my research involving Czech composers Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krasa, Pavel Haas, and Gideon Klein and their connection with the Holocaust. During my studies I traced these composers’ footsteps through Prague, Terezín, and Auschwitz. This work aims to convey the turmoil these composers endured under the Nazi regime while celebrating their lives and urging humanity to look at the horrors of the Holocaust in order to consider our current societal issues of genocide. Thus, it straddles the line between programmatic narrative and less explicit non-descriptive music.

There are many philosophical compositional aesthetics that I will address with this concerto. The first is the conflict created between the programmatic music used to instill a specific dreadful picture and the less explicit music that creates a general feeling of despair. This is further complicated by the second aesthetic decision to juxtapose large symphonic sections with distinctive chamber qualities of the concerto. The symphonic sections allow for the orchestra to explore the depths of the emotional turmoil while the soloist competes to be heard or is completely ignored in a metaphoric representation of the millions of voices lost in the Holocaust. The concerto divisions contrast these symphonic sections and allow the soloist to represent the voice of an individual that is allowed to speak.

Formally this piece directly challenges the structure of the traditional classical and romantic violin concerto where the most substantial musical material is located in the first movement while the second and third movements remain significantly smaller. This work features a shorter first and second movement that gains momentum toward the last movement to allow for the gravity of the piece to be centered in the last portion of the concerto instead of the first.

The first movement introduces the audience to the unpleasant nature of this piece while shifting its focus from the full orchestra to the solo violin in order to prepare for the imminent distress that follows in the last two movements. The second movement is a processional march depicting the struggle of the soloist to overcome the persistent ostinato that ushers the violinist into the most substantial third movement. The final movement features the fastest music, illustrating the horrific situation and concludes with an introspective epilogue focused on the violinist’s cry for humanity.
INSTRUMENTATION AND PERFORMANCE NOTES

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets (1 Clarinet in B-Flat, 1 Clarinet in A)
2 Bassoons

2 Horns
2 Trumpets in B-Flat
2 Trombones (1 Tenor Trombone, 1 Bass Trombone)
1 Tuba

Timpani (5)
Percussion – 3 players (Snare Drum, Tom-toms, Bass Drum, Tam-tam: thin 30” Paiste ideal, Medium Suspended Cymbal, Large Suspended Cymbal, Triangle, Chimes)

Celesta

Solo Violin

Strings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snare Drum</th>
<th>Tom-toms</th>
<th>Bass Drum</th>
<th>Tam-tam</th>
<th>Large Suspended Cymbal</th>
<th>Medium Suspended Cymbal</th>
<th>Triangle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In the opening of the third movement, the tam-tam should be bowed to create a shrieking sound similar to the sound a large rusted metal door would make when it is slammed shut.

Movements II and III should be played attacca.

Score in C

Duration: approximately 23 minutes
Concerto for Violin and Orchestra
In Memory of
Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krása, Pavel Haas, and Gideon Klein

I.

Joshua Burel (2014)
poco rit.

Slowly

q = ca. 70

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Bsn. 1
Bsn. 2
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Cel.
Solo Vln.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Bsn. 1
Bsn. 2
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Cel.
Solo Vln.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

"Slowly dying ~ ca. 70"

Attacca

"Slowly dying ~ ca. 70"

Attacca
With Desperation and Intensity ~ca. 60
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Joshua Burel graduated with honors from Western Michigan University where he received his Bachelor of Music degree in Violin Performance and Music Education and his Master of Music degree in Composition. He is the recipient of several awards including the Theodore Presser Music Award for his project *Czech Composers and the Holocaust: Engaging History through Composition and Performance*, a Downbeat Music Award for his orchestral performance of Mahler’s *Symphony No. 1 “Titan,”* and Goodwill Ambassador Award from the city of Holland, MI as a member of the International Holland String Quartet.

An accomplished violinist, Joshua has performed in the United States, Europe, and Mexico having played with many orchestras and chamber ensembles throughout his career. He recently recorded Ernst von Dohnanyi’s *Symphony No. 2* under the Naxos Music Label with the Florida State University Symphony Orchestra and will be performing at Carnegie Hall as a member of the new music ensemble What Is Noise this spring. His own compositions have been performed throughout the United States and his work *Roanoke* will be featured at Carnegie Hall in May 2014. In 2011, he was commissioned to write his *Sonata No. 2 for violin and piano “Subharmonics,”* which explores an extended violin technique allowing players to produce notes below the G-string. He is currently working on a piece for Duo Rodinia as part of a collaborative project initiated by the duo to commission and perform new works by living composers.

Joshua has studied composition with Richard Adams, C. Curtis-Smith, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich and violin with Renata Artman Knific, Amanda Walvoord Dykhouse, and Ellen Rizner. He is currently completing his Doctor of Music degree in Composition at Florida State University where he studies composition with Ladislav Kubik and violin with Benjamin Sung.