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Unaccompanied works for solo strings provide both artistic and technical challenges and explore both the limitations and possibilities of the instrument. Each composer devised unique and creative solutions overcoming the perceived boundaries of the instrument. This perspective not only reflects their virtuosity but demonstrates the instrument's unrealized potential, which always fascinated me.

One difficulty facing the baroque violist is that there is no unaccompanied music for viola before the 18th century. In fact, they are extremely rare before the 20th century. This evening, I will present transcriptions of three pieces originally for unaccompanied violin, and I will premiere my arrangement of Bach's Lute Suite in C minor (BWV 997).

Johann Paul von Westhoff was one of the greatest violin virtuosos of his time, especially revered for his left-hand technique. His six suites for solo violin are the first published examples of unaccompanied music for this instrument. Each movement in all suites are ordered in a dance suite that is representative of the 17th-century: *allemande*, *courante*, *sarabande*, and *gigue*. Suite No. 5 is representative of his compositional style featuring continuous multiple-stops and implied polyphony.

The *allemande* begins with a pick-up followed by a dense chord on the lower three strings, recalling the opening of an overture. The rest of the A section consists of a thinner two-voice texture. Unexpectedly begins with a chord on the mediant, Westhoff includes numerous small ornamental gestures in the B section. The movement culminates with a grand subdominant chord, after which the melody slowly descends to the cadence in tonic. The *courante* and *sarabande* have similar contrapuntal textures, although they have a very different character. The *courante* displays virtuosic writing by continuous chords on all four strings, and the *sarabande* has a certain calmness achieved through repetition. While the *gigue* appears to be composed of two voices on the surface, Westhoff creates a polyphonic texture that implies several voices. Each voice occupies a different register on the instrument throughout the whole movement.

Although **Johann Sebastian Bach** was best known as the premier virtuoso of keyboard instruments during his lifetime, he was also an accomplished violinist. Bach's six sonatas and partitas are the most frequently performed pieces from the unaccompanied violin repertoire. They were written around 1717~1720 while Bach lived in Köthen, a period in his life where he composed other well-known instrumental works such as the Brandenburg Concertos and the four orchestral suites. It has been suggested that Bach wrote the six sonatas and partitas for Johan

Georg Pisendel, one of the greatest violin virtuosos of his time and the leader of the famed orchestra at the court in Dresden.

The structure of Sonata No. 1 follows the form of the *sonata da chiesa*: a slow and grand opening movement, a fast second movement with imitative textures, a slow and expressive third movement, and a fast finale. The first movement opens with the grand four-voice chord, which produces a fully resonating sound by using two open strings. This relaxed adagio features heavily ornamented lines which are punctuated with four-voice chords, a style that is reminiscent of Bach's skill of improvising at the organ.

Bach was well-known for his mastery of the fugue, in both composition and improvisation, on the keyboard. The second movement is an excellent example of how he adapted this skill onto string instruments. Perhaps the most striking feature of this movement is that it is a four-voice fugue on a melodic instrument, while many of his keyboard fugues are usually in three voices.

The *siciliana* is in the relative major and the lilting rhythms of the dance. It gives the listener rest between the imposing fugue and the fiery presto. The movement is composed of two treble voices and one bass as if Bach was imagining a trio sonata on one violin. The last movement, *presto*, may look the simplest on the surface. However, it is quite amazing to see how Bach could make a single voice imitate the complexity of a piece with many voices. He achieves this by grouping 16th notes and leaps in the line from one register to another, creating the effect of multiple voices.

Although the 12 Fantasias for solo violin by **Georg Philipp Telemann** are shorter and smaller than those of Bach both in length and density, they are excellent examples of idiomatic writing for a solo string instrument. Interestingly, we can observe that there are fugal movements in the first six fantasias, while none is in the latter. This particular formation recalls Corelli's violin sonatas from Op.5 and may suggest that Telemann might have designed his collection of fantasias after Corelli.

Fantasia No. 7 begins with *dolce*. The mellow sonority of the flat key amplifies the sweetness of the movement. The second movement, *allegro*, is full of cheerful, vivid, and animating leaps and syncopations. The following movement, *largo*, is in the relative minor and is serious and sorrowful. The fantasia ends with *presto*, and it has the characteristics of a gavotte: a two-note upbeat placing emphasis on the first beat of the following measure.

Bach's **Lute Suite in C minor** (BWV 997) was written between 1738~1741. Although it is called a lute suite, Bach probably wrote it for the lutenwerk: keyboard instrument whose body was shaped like a lute and used leather plectrums to pluck the gut strings (instead of quill plectrums and metal strings like a regular harpsichord). The inspiration to make this transcription came from two lute arrangements of Bach's unaccompanied works for strings: the fugue from unaccompanied violin sonata in G minor and cello suite in C minor. Learning of these

arrangements made me think, “what if this lute suite was an arrangement of a lost work?” My transcription is an answer to this imaginary question.

In my transcription, I mainly took Bach’s examples as my guideline. I endeavored to preserve what Bach wrote as much as possible while making it idiomatic for the viola and omitting what did not naturally lie under the hands. To his end, I transposed the suite to D minor, especially for the fugue.

The suite opens with a *preludio* composed of continuous 16th notes in stepwise motion and the sequences containing chains of small suspensions. Bach’s use of descending scales in the bass creates a solemn and profound atmosphere. The movement concludes with two quadruple stops on the dominant. These chords both have fermata written over them and are followed by a rest.

The second movement is a fugue in three voices. The subject and countersubject are rather plain: the subject consists of an ascending scale from first to the fifth scale degree, while the countersubject is an ascending chromatic scale. Assuming the subject’s nature, distinguishing and bringing the subject out from its surrounding counterpoint was challenging. This fugue is much longer when compared to his other solo instrumental works due to its *da capo* form. Although the A section could stand on its own as a complete fugue, Bach composed a lengthy B section which is composed almost exclusively of running 16th notes, with little presence of theme. This movement could be seen as a Vivaldian ritornello concerto: the A section of the fugue is like a concerto’s tutti section while the B section is like that of the concerto’s solo section, and the *da capo* represents the concluding orchestral ritornello.

The third movement, *Sarabande*, is built on a pedal tone in the bass. Above this are continuous pairs of descending appoggiaturas, creating a weeping effect throughout the movement. Many chords in the movement contain exquisite dissonances, and it was difficult to decide which to keep and which to omit since it was impossible to contain all of them in the viola.

The fourth movement is a French-style *gigue* with its numerous small ornaments the characteristic *sautillant* rhythms. The suite ends with a double based on the preceding *gigue*. Considering Bach’s melodic line almost always indicates the harmony, I only included some bass notes necessary to complete the harmony, imitating the presto from Bach’s unaccompanied violin sonata in G minor.