

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: A STUDY OF SELECTED COLLABORATIONS:
PREPARING AND COACHING PIANO CHAMBER
MUSIC FOR PERFORMANCE

Ying-Shan Su, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2021

Dissertation Directed by: Professor Rita Sloan
School of Music, Piano Division

Every devoted musician strives for excellence in performance. In chamber music rehearsals, it is crucially important that this same devoted musician should do more than simply get the music ready for successful performance. The work of rehearsal involves striving to fulfill the intentions of the composer, an effort which will hopefully satisfy both the musicians and the audience. It is equally important for musicians to learn more about shared leadership and collaborative teamwork, which lie at the heart of the chamber music genre as well as at the heart of the rehearsal itself. This entire process requires proper guidance towards the relevant information and knowledge and I feel that the type of learning and development acquired through a successful chamber music experience will benefit music students and encourage them to take ownership of their musical growth and long-term learning.

However, a major roadblock to acquiring this knowledge is the lack of written pedagogical material. Therefore, in this dissertation, topics pertaining to music preparation and the rehearsal process involved in the three programs of selected piano chamber music as well as related coaching ideas will be discussed. Hopefully, the performances along with this document will contribute to the information available on

how one learns to organize and prepare for piano chamber music performances in a more systematic and group-oriented way.

The recital programs were presented on September 30th and December 8th, 2020, and March 30th, 2021. Recordings of these three recitals can be found in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

A STUDY OF SELECTED COLLABORATIONS: PREPARING AND
COACHING PIANO CHAMBER MUSIC FOR PERFORMANCE

by

Ying-Shan Su

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2021

Advisory Committee:

Professor Rita Sloan, Chair

Professor Bradford Gowen

Professor Katherine Murdock

Professor James Stern

Professor Denny Gulick, Dean's Representative

© Copyright by
Ying-Shan Su
2021

Acknowledgements

By the lake where I go for walks stands a sign that both amuses me and makes me ponder. “Do not go in or on water!” says the sign. Well, if it takes boldness to walk in water because what is under water might be unknown, it certainly takes faith to walk on water. “Come,” he said, and I followed.

As a first-generation college student, I think it is fitting that the completion of this final degree should be dedicated to my parents. I am also thankful for my two precious siblings, who took on the family responsibility while I was finding my path on the other side of the world and made it much easier for me to be a non-traditional oldest child.

To my “village” – without my church family, friends, teachers, mentors, colleagues and all my music collaborators, I would not have grown to be the same person. Professor Rita Sloan, who has been more than a teacher and mentor to me, was the main inspiration for this dissertation. Thank you for treating me like a professional musician from our first lesson, always valuing and answering my questions, and guiding me to finally trust in myself as a pianist. As I am about to close this chapter of my life and move on to pursue a career as a teacher, I will keep in mind what my old piano professor used to tell me and what these teachers have done for me: to be patient with myself and to treat others with gentleness, for the human heart is delicate and should be cared for and cherished.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
Recital Program I	vi
Recital Program II	vii
Recital Program III	viii
Recording Track Listing	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Before the First Rehearsal	4
Chapter 3: Considerations for Different Instruments	11
Chapter 4: Rhythmic Challenges	18
Chapter 5: Ensemble Issues	29
Chapter 6: Stylistic Interpretations	33
Chapter 7: Rehearsal Discussions and Coaching Ideas	43
Chapter 8: Conclusion	47
Bibliography	49

List of Tables

Table 4-1: Bartók, <i>Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion</i> , first movement, structural analysis and metronome markings	21
---	----

List of Figures

Example 4-1: Schumann, <i>Märchenerzählungen</i> , Op. 132, first movement, mm. 1–4	23
Example 4-2: Schumann, <i>Märchenerzählungen</i> , Op. 132, first movement, mm. 59–63	24
Example 4-3: Lutosławski, <i>Partita</i> , third movement, mm. 42–46	25
Example 4-4: Bartók, <i>Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion</i> , first movement, mm. 301–309	26
Example 4-5: Lutosławski, <i>Partita</i> , fifth movement, mm. 92–100	28
Example 6-1: Mozart, <i>Trio in E-flat major</i> , K. 498, first movement, mm. 1–4	34
Example 6-2: J. S. Bach, <i>Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach</i> , list of ornaments written out by J. S. Bach for his son W. F. Bach	35
Example 6-3: Kurtág, <i>Hommage à R. Sch.</i> , Op. 15d, third movement, excerpt	37
Example 6-4: Lutosławski, <i>Partita</i> , fourth movement	38
Example 6-5: Kurtág, <i>Hommage à R. Sch.</i> , Op. 15d, third movement, excerpt	39
Example 6-6: Kurtág, <i>Hommage à R. Sch.</i> , Op. 15d, sixth movement, m. 7	39
Example 6-7: Kurtág, <i>Hommage à R. Sch.</i> , Op. 15d, first movement, excerpt	40
Example 6-8: Kurtág, <i>Hommage à R. Sch.</i> , Op. 15d, sixth movement, m. 11	41
Example 6-9: Lutosławski, <i>Partita</i> , first movement, mm. 33–36	41

Recital Program I

September 30, 2020, 8:00PM

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Partita (1984)

Witold Lutosławski
(1913–1994)

- I. *Allegro giusto*
- II. *Ad libitum*
- III. *Largo*
- IV. *Ad libitum*
- V. *Presto*

Violin Sonata in B-flat major, K. 454 (1784)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

- I. *Largo – Allegro*
- II. *Andante*
- III. *Allegretto*

Intermission

Violin Sonata No.2 in A major, Op. 100 (1886)

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

- I. *Allegro amabile*
- II. *Andante tranquillo – Vivace – Andante – Vivace di più – Andante – Vivace*
- III. *Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante)*

Qian Zhong, violin
Ying-Shan Su, piano

Recital Program II

December 8, 2020, 8:00PM

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Trio in E-flat major, K. 498 (1786) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

- I. *Andante*
- II. *Menuetto*
- III. *Rondeaux: Allegretto*

Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano (1938) Leo Smit
(1900–1943)

- I. *Allegretto*
- II. *Lento*
- III. *Allegro vivace*

Intermission

Hommage à R. Sch., Op. 15d (1990) György Kurtág
(b. 1926)

- I. (*merkwürdige Pirouetten des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler*) [The marvelous pirouettes of the conductor Johannes Kreisler] *Vivo*
- II. (*E.: der begrenzte Kreis...* [Eusebius: the limited circle...]) *Molto semplice, piano e legato*
- III. (*...und wieder zuckt es schmerzlich F. um die Lippen...*) [...and again Florestan's lips quiver painfully...] *Feroce, agitato*
- IV. (*Felhő valék, már süt a nap...*) (*töredék-töredék*) [I was a cloud, now the sun shines... (fragment-fragment)] *Calmo, scorrevole*
- V. *In der Nacht* [In the Night] *Presto*
- VI. *Abschied (Meister Raro entdeckt Guillaume de Machaut)* [Farewell (Master Raro discovers Guillaume de Machaut)] *Adagio, poco andante*

Märchenerzählungen, Op. 132 (1853) Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)

- I. *Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell*
- II. *Lebhaft und sehr markiert*
- III. *Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck*
- IV. *Lebhaft, sehr markiert*

Natalie Groom, clarinet
Kimia Hesabi, viola
Ying-Shan Su, piano

Recital Program III

March 30, 2021, 8:00PM

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Sonata for Two Pianos in D major, K. 448 (1781)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

- I. *Allegro con spirito*
- II. *Andante*
- III. *Molto Allegro*

Yurong “Ria” Yang, piano II

Intermission

Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, Sz. 110 (1937)

Béla Bartók
(1881–1945)

- I. *Assai lento – Allegro molto*
- II. *Lento, ma non troppo*
- III. *Allegro non troppo*

Jessica McKee, piano II
John McGovern, percussion I
Corey Sittinger, percussion II

Lecture

Recording Track Listing

Recital #1,

1-1: Witold Lutosławski – Partita

1-2: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Violin Sonata in B-flat major, K. 454

1-3: Johannes Brahms – Violin Sonata No.2 in A major, Op. 100

Recital #2,

2-1: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Trio in E-flat major, K. 498

2-2: Leo Smit – Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano

2-3: György Kurtág – Hommage à R. Sch., Op. 15d

2-4: Robert Schumann – Märchenerzählungen, Op. 132

Recital #3,

Track 1-3: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Sonata for Two Pianos in D major, K. 448

3-1: I. *Allegro con spirito*

3-2: II. *Andante*

3-3: III. *Molto Allegro*

Track 4-6: Béla Bartók – Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion

3-4: I. *Assai lento – Allegro molto*

3-5: II. *Lento, ma non troppo*

3-6: III. *Allegro non troppo*

3-7: Lecture

Chapter 1: Introduction

I came to the United States in August 2013. Prior to that, I had never cooked anything except instant noodles and fried eggs. Growing up in Taiwan, rice was my staple food. Although I could say that I had very strong opinions and good judgment about the taste and quality of rice, I did not know how to cook it! After one semester of consuming cafeteria food, I decided it was time for me to call my mom and learn how to cook. I tried mom's rough ratio (she learned everything by experience, so there were no specific measurements in any of her recipes) and other methods that I got from friends or the internet. Eventually I set up my own system for cooking white rice, brown rice, half of each, and the occasional mixture with other grains. The system has worked well so far, but I am sure it will be ever-changing, depending on the cooking device I use and on new preferences of taste and texture that I may have in the future. All of this learning has helped me move from having a good appreciation for rice to actually making good rice!

In another example from my life, I once took a trip to the National Portrait Gallery with one of my artist friends. Prior to that, I had never understood how to appreciate modern portrait paintings. As my friend and I stood in front of a series of true-to-life, realistic looking portraits, all I could think was, "If we can take pictures of people with high resolution cameras, why does anyone still want to paint a portrait of someone?" My friend all of a sudden broke the silence. Pointing at the hands of the person in one the portraits, she said, "See how much more detailed those hands are, compared to the person's eyes?" She then explained to me that the eyes are usually where artists pay the most attention when they paint a portrait, but this artist had chosen a different emphasis. "And notice the care put in to show the texture and shade of that sweater," she continued, "but look – the scarf is almost impressionistic!" That was an eye-opening moment for

me. Following her guidance, I began to see the possible thinking process and design of the painter. With these principles in mind, I then re-examined that group of paintings and saw details that I had not seen before. I started to ask her more questions while also beginning to form my own opinions.

Music preparation and coaching are similar to what I tried to depict with these two vignettes. I took part in my first chamber music collaboration when I was in third grade, and I have played in many lessons and performances since then. As a doctoral student in collaborative piano, I have spent countless hours preparing chamber music for performance. However, during this preparation, I have noticed how heavily my partners and I have been relying on chamber music coaches to instruct us in improving ensemble issues and making better choices for stylistic interpretations. Over time I began to wonder, how can I be more independent in this process? In other words, instead of passively receiving coaching, I would like to equip myself with the relevant knowledge to become a more effective chamber music collaborator and, eventually, a skilled and helpful chamber music coach.

In this project, through the presentation of three varied programs of selected repertoire written for (1) violin and piano; (2) clarinet, viola and piano, and (3) piano duo and piano duo with percussion, I will address the following topics in the subsequent chapters:

Chapter 2: Before the First Rehearsal

Chapter 3: Considerations for Different Instruments

Chapter 4: Rhythmic Challenges

Chapter 5: Ensemble Issues

Chapter 6: Stylistic Interpretations

Chapter 7: Rehearsal Discussions and Coaching Ideas

Language existed before grammar was organized. In the same way, music emerged way before musical rules were deduced and systematized. This is not a rule book. Rather, it is more like a travel journal of learning, full of personal observations, questions, searches for answers, digestion and contemplation of musicians' collective knowledge and experience, shared passion, and commitment to the peerless art form of piano chamber music.

Chapter 2: Before the First Rehearsal

Extra-Musical Preparation

In “An Open Letter: Prepare for Your Chamber Coaching,”¹ David Finckel, renowned cellist and co-director of the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, gave advice to young musicians on the aspects of playing chamber music to which they should pay attention prior to rehearsals or chamber music classes. These aspects include the right attitude, instruments and physical tools, and music preparation. Just being musically prepared is not enough to make a rehearsal go smoothly; all members should also be physically and mentally ready to participate in the rehearsal. Combining Finckel’s advice with my personal thoughts, here is a summarized list for the preparation of music scores and the needed physical tools prior to the first rehearsal.

Music Score

1. One of the scholarly edited editions is the most optimal.
2. Generally, it makes communication easier if the entire group is using the same edition. If all ensemble members happen to have different editions, markings in the discrepancies would be helpful.
3. In most cases, measure numbers or rehearsal numbers/letters are printed in these so-called “Urtext” editions, but members should mark them in if they are missing.
4. All members are highly encouraged to get a copy of the full score and try to play from the full score several times before meeting with the group. For purposes of this study, the full score would be the piano part.

¹ David Finckel, “An Open Letter: Prepare for Your Chamber Coaching,” <https://artistled.wordpress.com/2010/01/06/students/>.

5. Markings of fingerings, bowings and entrance cues for your part as well as others' are important, not only because they are crucial for each individual's effective practice, but also because they are helpful for rehearsal discussions (even though changes might be made after discussion). If dynamic markings exist in another part but are missing in your part, they should be marked in, if applicable.
6. Individual members should pencil in "work in progress" and "ideal for performance" metronome markings for their parts. These markings should be shared with other members prior to the first rehearsal.

Instruments and Physical Tools

1. The instrument should be in good shape for the upcoming rehearsal.
2. There might be accessories or tools that are indispensable for the work about to be rehearsed (a mute, labels and tools for prepared piano...), for your instruments (rosin, spare strings, extra reeds, a soaker cup filled with water...), or your personal needs (bandages for pianists who tend to have split fingertips...), and they should be readily available.
3. A tuner, a metronome, an audio or video recording device and several sharpened pencils are all crucial for effective rehearsals.
4. It is helpful to keep a rehearsal journal, however, try not to let the journal writing get in the way of rehearsal discussions.

Music Preparation

Most professional musicians are aware that in order to make rehearsals effective, all participants should learn the rhythms and pitches of their parts correctly before coming to the first meeting. Nevertheless, there is a major difference between chamber

music and solo music. Since chamber music is written for more than one player, all players involved should know more than just the individual parts to really make the best use of rehearsal time. Seeing the development of musical genres and how composers have tried to make all musical instruments equal partners in chamber musical works they composed, all chamber musicians should try to reflect that attitude of equality. In a sense, each member needs to take on the mindset of a conductor. Imagine how an orchestra rehearsal would go if the conductor came in without having thoroughly studied the full score, marked in all important cues, decided on some initial interpretive ideas, and formed a clear rehearsal plan? To be honest, it would feel like a waste of time. Having clear ideas and goals to achieve simply makes musicians work more strategically, efficiently and engagingly.

For chamber music rehearsals where there is no conductor in the room, the leadership does not naturally fall on the person to whom the performance is going to be credited. From the beginning of the musical preparation, each member should have a comprehension of the tempo, structure, harmony, phrasing, articulation, and style of the entire piece, as well as knowledge of the composer and the compositional background of the piece. Ideally, rehearsals can be focused on achieving interpretational goals and making sound improvements, instead of working out basic synchronization issues and other logistics.

In reality, sometimes rehearsal time has to be devoted to solving some of these problems, especially during the preparation of a piece that is written in an unfamiliar style, a piece that is rhythmically complicated or undefined (without meter or conventional rhythmic notation), or a piece that has intricate rhythmic interplays or

unfamiliar soundscape (with electronics or other setups). However, this type of problem-solving should not overshadow other goals.

Many resources are available to aid in music preparation, including treatises, correspondence and other resources about composers, style and performance practice. For musical elements, composers left clues for performers to discover and interpret in the music score, so it is important to study the score carefully. With earlier composers, the lack of markings or the changed definition of markings is something that can be clarified by referring to treatises. Metronome markings found in earlier works can frequently be an addition by editors, so it is always important to check one or more reliable editions. With twentieth and twenty-first century composers, even with exhaustive notation and markings, the performers are still supposed to “infer meaning and ‘character’ from what was written in the score,” as pianist Peter Hill recounted about his lessons with Messiaen, and “no matter how complex the notation the music should never sound ‘like an étude.’”²

From score studying, members will begin to see technical challenges and form interpretive ideas that need to be practiced individually or rehearsed with the ensemble. When it comes to listening to recordings, some musicians believe that it will hinder the formation of an independent interpretation, while others think it can be informative to listen to one or multiple recordings to get the feel for the overall tempo and character of the piece. Truth be told, it is not so easy to copy another musician’s interpretation, since musical interpretation is multifaceted and dealing with linear time. Even so, recordings can occasionally be misleading, particularly the ones in which composers performed their

² Peter Hill, “From Score to Sound” in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 132.

own compositions but did not follow the notes or markings they themselves put on paper. I think if one has a genuine curiosity for the music and tries to incorporate creative thinking in the process of music preparation, whether or not to listen to recordings can be left up to the individual's preference.

Music Preparation: Pianist's Preparation

Pianists have the advantage of playing the instrument that can create harmonies. Here are the steps suggested for pianists to follow when they are preparing an instrumental accompaniment in *Accompanying Skills for Pianists*.³

1. Play the melodic line, whether it appears in your part or in the part of another instrument.
2. Play the bass line with the melodic line to feel harmonic tensions, relaxations, and breathing spaces in the phrasing.
3. Discover the musical textures in the piece by studying the score and listening to recordings.
4. Sight-read the accompaniment at a manageable tempo with an awareness of texture, dynamics, articulations, tone colors, and style.
5. Practice the accompaniment to work out problems of rhythm, fingering, articulations, difficult passages, pedaling, dynamics, touches, and tempo.
6. Play the accompaniment while humming, whistling, or thinking the instrumental parts, and anticipate possible problems in phrasing, ensemble, and balance.

In addition to this list, here are some steps I include during my preparation.

1. Play the harmonic structure.

³ Deon Nielsen Price, *Accompanying Skills for Pianists* (Culver City, CA: Culver Crest Publications, 2005), 179.

2. Play the harmonic structure while singing or playing the melodic line.
3. Practice with a recording at half speed or 75% speed.
4. Single out the rhythmic elements. Tap/clap/play one part while reciting the other part(s) or tap/play all parts together, similar to the two-part rhythm exercises found in the Kodály method.⁴ This is useful for passages with complicated rhythms (the slow movement of a Classical sonata and definitely all over the place in contemporary pieces) or passages where different parts are written in different subdivisions (typical for Brahms).
5. Record practice excerpts and listen to one part while thinking about or playing the other part, especially passages where the piano part is complicated or technically difficult to play.

Music Preparation: Rehearsal Plan

As individual members familiarize themselves with the piece and start to exchange metronome markings and other ideas with each other, it is time to set up a rehearsal plan and some short-term and long-term goals with which the group can measure progress throughout the rehearsals. If any subgroup needs to rehearse passages that do not involve the entire ensemble, this should also happen before the first group rehearsal. For instance, for the Bartók sonata for two pianos and percussion, the two pianists and two percussionists should have several subgroup rehearsals within each pairing before all four players meet for the first group rehearsal. As another example, in a

⁴ The “Kodály concept of music education,” also known as the “Kodály method,” is a systematic music education method developed by Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967) and his associates, in which he composed a series of two- and three-part singing and reading exercises for the purpose of fundamental music training.

standard piano trio setting, string players can have a subgroup rehearsal to work on bowing and intonation without having the pianist involved.

Chapter 3: Considerations for Different Instruments

Before getting into the discussion of rehearsal techniques for the chosen repertoire, it is important to briefly introduce the instruments that are included in these settings: piano, violin, viola, clarinet and percussion, and the special considerations for these different instruments.

Piano

Since the original design by Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655–1731) in the 1720s, the piano as a keyboard instrument has undergone many changes to become the modern-day concert grand piano. During Mozart's time, the fortepiano was still not a standardized instrument. It was a smaller and lighter instrument than today's piano. Generally, it had about five octaves in the late eighteenth century. The fortepianos Mozart was more familiar with, whether the Stein piano that he mentioned in his letter to his father in 1777, or the Walter piano that he acquired in 1782, had the simpler hammer mechanism called the Viennese action, in which the hammer head points toward the player and is fixed on the key. When the key is pressed, the hook to the hammer is released right away, resulting in faster attacks and a more sensitive response to the player's touch. The smaller hammers were covered with deer skin, which struck clearer attacks and mimicked the speaking and conversational quality in Mozart's music much better than the modern piano.

Knee pedals started to appear on fortepianos in this time period. Instead of using the foot to press down the pedals, the performer raised his knee to press a lever. The right knee pedal would raise the damper, which is similar to the sustaining pedal on a modern piano. The left knee pedal would activate a "moderator," which caused a mechanism to

insert a layer of woven fabric between the strings and the hammers so that when the hammers struck the strings, the instrument created a veiled tone. On Mozart's own piano, the right knee pedal would only lift the dampers of the higher register, which is similar to the pedal effect on an English piano. This helped to make the melody part sound more song-like, since the strings in the upper register would be open and vibrate sympathetically, while keeping the bass notes clearly detached.⁵ Another trait worth mentioning is the straight stringing inside these fortepianos; all the strings were parallel to each other, and thus had more distinct differences in register. In all, loudness was not the goal for which these instruments were built, but clarity, vividness, fine nuances and expressivity.

The modern piano—which was fully developed by the mid-nineteenth century—was not descended from the Viennese fortepiano but from the English fortepiano. The English fortepiano was much more robust to begin with because of its different mechanism. To put it in a simple way, an English piano could create larger sounds because of its more complicated mechanism, but was not good for repeated notes, since it took extra time for the action parts to return to their at-rest positions. In 1821, based on the tradition of the English piano action, Sébastien Erard (1752–1831) invented the “double escapement,” which is closer to the modern grand piano action. This piano action had better control and power, thereby allowing a pianist to repeat notes quickly. The industrial revolution also contributed to the production of stronger strings and the casting for the iron frames, which could hold the tension of thicker and tighter strung strings to help create the stronger sound of the modern piano.

⁵ Paul Badura-Skoda, “Mozart without the Pedal?” *The Galpin Society Journal* 55 (2002): 335.

Other changes in the evolution of the modern piano included bigger hammers covered with dense wool felt, more common use of pedals, and cross-stringing. In crossed stringing, the strings are installed diagonally on two bridges, creating more resonances with the overlapping of the lower register and the mid register. The modern piano is more powerful and sustains sounds better than its predecessors. Its sound can cut through larger ensembles and balance with percussion instruments. However, it also takes much more force to play this modern instrument. By comparison, it takes about four times as much force to depress a key on a modern piano as it would to depress a key on a Viennese fortepiano. The key on a modern piano also has twice the depth of a key on a Viennese fortepiano.

Violin and Viola

The violin and viola belong to the same instrument family, and their names are derived from the Medieval Latin *vitula*, meaning “stringed instrument.” In comparison to the development of the piano, the design of the violin was essentially complete in the early eighteenth century. According to Abram Loft, “What we hear in the instrument is, basically, what the earlier composers and listeners also heard and appreciated as the essential nature of the instrument.”⁶ In terms of size, the viola has never been standardized. Its highest string tends to have a more piercing and nasal timbre than the other strings. If the violas were to be built in the ideal size to give their lower strings enough length for the most optimal sound, they would be too long for the violists’ arms. Hence, this instrument acquired its more reserved and mellow sound quality.⁷

⁶ Abram Loft, *Violin and Keyboard: The Duo Repertoire, From 17th Century to Mozart* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973), 13.

⁷ David D. Boyden and Ann M. Woodward, “Viola,” *Grove Music Online* (2001).

For modern classical string players, wound strings with synthetic cores are more commonly used. The E string for the violin is an exception – it is almost always a steel string, be it plain, plated or wound. This is one of the contributors to the focused and brilliant sound quality of the high register of the violin. Sometimes players might use wound gut strings or plain gut strings for certain repertoire or for a specific color they want to create. In general, since viola strings are thicker than violin strings, it may take a little more time for violists to make their instruments “speak.”

Clarinet

The word *clarinette* is a diminutive form of *clarine*, meaning “little bell.” The clarinet has a mouthpiece (where the reed is attached), a barrel, and the body that consists of two joints and a bell. The clarinet in B \flat became more predominant after the mid-eighteenth century, but there are chamber music works written for both clarinet in B \flat and clarinet in A. The register encompassed by the B \flat clarinet is divided into four (in sounding pitches): chalumeau (D 3 –G 4), throat (A $^{\flat}4$ –B $^{\flat}4$), clarion (B 4 –C 6) and altissimo (D $^{\flat}6$ –G 6 , or higher). The chalumeau register has a dark and rich tone, which is the most distinctive of this instrument. The clarion register is bright and has been described as “sounded from afar rather like a trumpet.”⁸ The register in between these two is the throat register, in which the notes are slightly weaker and duller. The highest register of the clarinet is the altissimo register, which can be shrill and is frequently utilized for special effect or showcasing contrasting ranges in contemporary music.

⁸ Janet K. Page, K.A. Gourlay, Roger Blench, and Nicholas Shackleton, “Clarinet,” *Grove Music Online* (2001).

Percussion

In German, *Klavier* is the word for piano, meaning a “key-bearer,” and a keyboard instrument is called a *Tasteninstrument*, which means a musical instrument played by *tasten* – touching. Percussion, in the same language, is called *Schlagzeug*, which literally means gears that are played by *schlagen* – beating, hitting or striking. It could mean striking on bouncy surfaces of different levels of tension, such as timpani, snare drum and bass drum, or striking on hard surfaces of different materials, such as the wooden surface of a xylophone, the metal surface of triangle, tam-tam and cymbals or other hard material. As composers in the twentieth century became more interested in experimenting with orchestral color and texture with unconventional instrument combinations, the percussion section in the orchestra setting became more important and began to expand, sometimes even including newly invented instruments.⁹

Tuning

Violinists, violists, clarinetists and timpanists all customarily tune their instruments to concert A (A4, following the ISO system, or pitch A440–442, sometimes up to 443 or 444, especially in Europe), but there are sometimes other pitches pianists can provide to them for tuning. Since the piano is equal-tempered, a perfect fifth on a piano is slightly narrower than a perfect fifth on a just-tempered instrument. Therefore, it is crucial for the pianist to provide not just A4 for string players to tune to, but also the note that is a fifth below, which is D4, at the same time. Often, violists also need the pianist to play the C4, which is the pitch of their lowest string, for them to have a final check after they finish tuning all four strings. Some clarinetists prefer to tune to B♭4, so it is always

⁹ James Holland and Janet K. Page, “Percussion,” *Grove Music Online* (2001).

important for pianists to check with their chamber partners about their preferred tuning pitch. Because it takes a little time for wind instruments to warm up, they tend to go sharp initially and probably need to be tuned again once they are warmed up. Wind players can also alter pitches by blowing differently or by changing the lip pressure.

Articulations

Based on the operating principles of different instruments, articulations on each of these instruments are executed differently. Other than *pizzicato* (in Italian, “plucked,” plucking the string to create a percussive sound), the violin and viola articulations are created by applying various bow strokes, such as (1) *legato* (It., “bound”): connected bowing, (2) *portato* (It., “to carry”): rearticulating or pulsing the notes joined in one bow stroke, (3) *détaché* (in French, “separated”): separate but smooth bow strokes for each note, (4) *martelé* (Fr., “hammered”): a type of *détaché* stroke with an initial “biting” on the string, (5) *staccato* (It., “detached”): shortened and detached notes played by the bow remaining on the string (in contrast to *spiccato*, which is an off-the-string bow stroke), (6) *tremolo* (It., “trembling”): repeating a note rapidly with very little bow to create the trembling effect, (7) *sul tasto* (It., on the fingerboard), or *flautando* (It., “flutelike”): drawing the bow lightly and rapidly across the string with a point of contact over the end of the fingerboard to create a flutelike sound, (8) *sul ponticello* (It., near the bridge): a loud and metallic tone created by playing close to the bridge, and (9) *col legno* (It., “with the wood”): striking the string with the back side of the bow.

Clarinet articulation, sometimes called “tonguing,” requires a player to use the tip of the tongue to briefly stop the reed vibrations to separate or reiterate notes. To change articulations, percussionists often have to try different mallets/beaters on the same

instrument, switch to a different instrument (of another brand, another design, another size, another level of tension...), or experiment with attacks of varied speed, pressure or the combination of both. Although the fingering and bowing techniques for string instruments generally have remained the same since the late eighteenth century, the performance practice and aesthetic view of articulation, vibrato, portamento and legato playing has changed drastically since then. Furthermore, some standard bowing techniques were also deployed later by twentieth-century composers in different combinations, along with later-discovered extended techniques, to create innovative timbre.

Introduction to Chapters 4-6

The first step to problem-solving is to recognize the problem. In the case of a rehearsal, the criteria are simple – if the music does not sound right or the physical execution of it does not feel right, something is probably wrong. The next step is locating and defining the problem. This step can easily be overlooked, resulting in inefficient rehearsals. In other cases, students may be given direct instructions on how to solve the problem when they would be better off receiving guidance to help them discover it for themselves. When musicians take the time and thought to identify the problem first, the application of problem-solving tactics will be most effective.

How chamber musicians work collaboratively to tackle the challenges and put parts together is similar to building something creative and smart like LEGOs, or something complicated and intricate like cuckoo clocks. Even after having exchanged metronome markings with one another, all members still need a trial run-through of the movement or several passages before they can find a tempo for the movement or several tempi for different sections of the piece. Various questions might emerge during rehearsals. How does the group communicate about rhythms if each member has a different perception of a rhythmic pattern, pulse of the section or phrase rhythm? How does the group talk about signaling entrance cues in time and in character? How will they address unifying onsets and releases of notes, matching phrasing, articulations and agogic accents? There are also issues about balancing of voices and blending of sound. And the ultimate question: what is the period style or the personal style of the piece of music, and is there a better approach to realizing it?

In the following three chapters, I will try to define issues that my chamber groups encountered when rehearsing my dissertation recital programs, which would be roughly categorized into rhythm, ensemble and style, along with pertinent music examples and possible rehearsal tactics.

Chapter 4: Rhythmic Challenges

a. Tempo and Metronome Markings

Is there really a right tempo or an innate tempo of a piece?¹⁰ Traditionally, music compositions come with tempo markings or other descriptive language that does not directly address the tempo per se but gives hint to the character of the music. Some composers prefer to give specific metronome markings, but whether they should or could be strictly followed is another matter. Sometimes the tempo is decided based on technical reasons, personal feelings or taste.¹¹ With music that has no designated metronome markings, the group may choose to agree upon a number or a range of numbers for the tempo, just to have an objective reference. Sometimes the tempo does not have to be concretely decided at the beginning of a rehearsal; instead, as the group starts to play together, a workable tempo might gradually emerge by the end of the rehearsal. It is always better to play a piece well than to play it fast, because technical reasons matter, and the integrity of the music also matters. Regardless of tempo indications, a slower tempo might need to be taken at the beginning stage of any work. Before a chamber group can construct a structurally complicated, harmonically unfamiliar or technically

¹⁰ Kurt Adler, *The Art of Accompanying and Coaching* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1985), 113.

¹¹ Robert Spillman, *The Art of Accompanying: Master Lessons from the Repertoire* (New York: Schirmer, 1985), 61.

challenging piece with security and arrive at the ideal performance tempo, rehearsing with different stages of “working tempo” is necessary.

With music that has clear metronome markings, the group may find that the tempo is too fast and almost unplayable, or that there are too many metronome markings of which to keep track. For instance, in Bartók’s *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, the metronome markings were almost unachievable and there are twenty-one metronome markings just in the first movement itself. However, by laying out all the metronome markings in a chart and combining it with the structural analysis of this movement (Table 4-1), we can begin to see the relationships between these metronome markings and the overall plan for pacing (using a dotted quarter note as the basis of these markings): (1) the first theme and most of its related sections are marked as $\text{♩} = 132$ or *Tempo I*, (2) the second theme and its related sections are all marked as *tranquillo*, $\text{♩} = 104$, (3) the third theme and its related sections are marked as $\text{♩} = 176$ or faster ($\text{♩} + \text{♩} = 63 / \text{♩} = 189$ in mm. 133–155 and $\text{♩} + \text{♩} = 69 / \text{♩} = 207$ in mm. 386–404), (4) sections between a fast and a slow section share a transitional tempo range of $\text{♩} = 120$ -126 (mm. 195–261 and mm. 309–326), (5) the tempo of the transition section (mm. 175–194) should be close to *Tempo I* (*quasi Tempo I*, $\text{♩} = 144$, compared to 132), and (6) the marking *Un poco maestoso*, $\text{♩} = 112$ only shows up once at the beginning of the Recapitulation, and this section is both the loudest section and goes to the highest register of the entire movement.¹²

¹² The number 274 is in the golden ratio with 443, which is the total number of measures of this first movement. Hungarian musicologist Ernő Lendvai (1925–1993) based his analysis on the golden section and used this movement and other examples to explain how the golden ratio and Fibonacci numbers appear recurrently as an important principle in Bartók’s compositions.

Table 4-1. Bartók, *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, first movement, structural analysis and metronome markings

Introduction				Main theme group	Second theme
mm. 1–12	13–17	18–20	21–31	32–83	84–90
Assai lento	poco a poco accel.	Un poco più mosso	poco a poco accel. e sempre più agitato al	Allegro molto	Un poco più tranquillo
♩ = ca. 70		♩ = ca. 92		♩. = 132	♩. = 104

Second theme (continued)			Third theme		
91–94	95–100	101–104	105	106–114	115–132
Tempo I	Un poco più tranquillo	Tempo I - rallent. al	Più tranquillo	poco a poco string. al	Più mosso
♩. = 132	♩. = 104		♩. = 104		♩. = 176

Dev. of third theme		Dev. of second theme		Transition
133–155	156–160	161–172	173–4	175–194
Vivo	pochiss. allarg.	Meno mosso, tranquillo	rit.	quasi Tempo I (Vivo)
♩.+♩. = 63		♩. = 104		♩. = 144

Dev. of first theme and transition material				Recap. of main theme group	
195–216	217–61	262–272	273	274–290	291
Tempo I (non troppo vivo)		Un poco più tranquillo	poco allarg. al	Un poco maestoso	poco rit.
♩. = 126	♩. = 120			♩. = 112	

Recapitulation of second theme			Recapitulation of third theme		
292–308	309–326	327–331	332–380	381–385	386–404
Tranquillo	Mosso	poco rall.	Vivo	poco rall. – accel. al	Vivacissimo
♩. = 104	♩. = ca. 120–126		♩.+♩. = 66–63		♩.+♩. = 69

Recapitulation of third theme (continued)					Coda	
405–412	413–415	416	417–431	432	433–441	442–443
pochiss. allarg.	Meno Vivo	allarg.	Quasi a tempo	poco allarg. al	Tempo I	poco allarg.
	♩. = 176		♩. = 176–152		♩. = 132	

The introduction section excluded, there might arguably be only three, if not four, basic tempi in this movement for the group to discuss. Parallel sections (for instance, all the *tranquillo* sections) can be rehearsed back-to-back before each applicable tempo is set up. Once these basic tempi are familiarized, the give-and-take around them and the

transitional tempo in between them can be something with which the group has fun. The same analytic method for pacing could also be applied to Leo Smit's *Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano* (1938).

b. Meter and Metric Accent

In any given meter, there is an inherent scheme of strong and weak beats, or in music theorist Joel Lester's words, "an accent is a point of emphasis."¹³ The strong beats in this metric scheme are called metric accents. When the scheme is interrupted by the duration of notes (such as a hemiola pattern) or different groupings of beats (such as a 5+3 groupings of eighth notes in a 4/4 measure), the resulting dislocated strong beats will create a strong sense of rhythm. In most music from the Classical period, metric accents usually coincide with harmonic changes and cadential points, and this coordination between the two elements goes hand in hand with the establishment of regular phrases.¹⁴

With Schumann, instead of changing the four-bar phrase structure, he changed the relationship of metric accent and harmony to create a sense of playfulness and poetry in musical phrases. For performers, bringing out the nature of metric ambiguity and tempo flexibility caused by this relationship is important. At the beginning of the first movement of Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen*, Op. 132, something always felt odd to me. First, it was written in 2/4 with the metronome marking designated to the eighth note value. Second, if the first beat of the accompaniment pattern could be repeated once more to subsequently turn the introduction into a full measure, all the bass notes and bar lines would be shifted a half bar earlier and make the metric accents match the harmonic

¹³ Joel Lester, *The Rhythms of Tonal Music* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 58-61.

accents. This would have made opening this movement much easier for me to play (Example 4-1). However, this change would spoil the design of the “correct” phrases when the music finally arrives at the dominant functional area (Example 4-2). For rehearsing this type of music, I would suggest going from the end of the piece and tracing backwards to find the climactic moment and shifting points where the relationship of these two types of accents change, and then plan out the pacing of the movement. For maintaining the continuity of phrases with metric ambiguity, the main things to remember are the crossing of the bar lines and the continuation from one phrase to another.

Example 4-1, Schumann, *Märchenerzählungen*, Op. 132, first movement, mm. 1–4

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Clarinet in B, Viola, and Piano. The tempo is marked "Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell" and the time signature is 2/4. The piano part includes a tempo marking of ♩ = 96. The score consists of four measures. The Clarinet part starts with a rest followed by a half note. The Viola part starts with a rest followed by a half note. The Piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and accents.

Example 4-2, Schumann, *Märchenerzählungen*, Op. 132, first movement, mm. 59–63

c. Basic Pulse for Differed Grouping and Subdivision

Passages where different instruments are playing very different rhythms simultaneously or where rhythmic patterns suddenly change quickly might be judged as rhythmically complicated. However, beneath the surface level of changing patterns, multiple layers of diverse grouping or different subdivisions, there is usually a fundamental beat or pulse. When rehearsing such passages, the first step is to reduce the patterns to the level of its basic pulse. In this passage from the *Largo* movement of Lutosławski's *Partita* (Example 4-3), the basic pulse changes from quarter note at rehearsal 35 to eighth note at rehearsal 36, with *rit.* at the end of this passage. There is actually an intensification of pacing here with the shortening of the basic pulse value before the *rit.* into the following *poco meno mosso* section.

Example 4-3, Lutosławski, *Partita*, third movement, mm. 42–46

The image shows a musical score for Lutosławski's *Partita*, third movement, measures 42-46. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system (measures 42-43) features a treble clef staff with a melodic line marked 'mf' and 'p', and a piano accompaniment marked 'poco f' and 'p'. The second system (measures 44-46) features a treble clef staff with a melodic line marked 'mf p' and 'pp', and a piano accompaniment marked 'mf p' and 'pp'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Another example is from the first movement of Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (Example 4-4). Although the written meter is 9/8 for this movement, you can see the basic beat is neither a dotted quarter note nor an eighth note here. Indeed, upon seeing this passage, the intuitive response should be counting all the eighth notes and trying to play two layers of groupings against each other (2+2+2+3 for both pianos and 2+2+3+2 for both percussion parts). Nevertheless, treating each measure here as a big three (three beats of quarter note) and a small three (three beats of eighth note) and perceiving the last xylophone note in each measure as a responding afterbeat to the piano parts in the grouping of small three is probably a better solution for creating an integral sound for this melodic passage where both piano parts are marked *espressivo*.

Example 4-4

Bartók, *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, first movement, mm. 301–309

The image displays a musical score for Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, first movement, measures 301–309. The score is arranged in two systems, each with five staves.

System 1 (Measures 301–309):

- P. I:** Right piano part, featuring complex rhythmic patterns and chromatic movement. Dynamics include *mp, espr.*
- P. II:** Left piano part, characterized by block chords and rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *ppp* and *p*.
- Perc. I:** Percussion I, playing a rhythmic pattern marked *Trgl.* and *(sempre c. l.)*. Dynamics include *ppp* and *p*.
- Perc. II:** Percussion II, playing a rhythmic pattern marked *Xyl.* and *p*.

System 2 (Measures 301–309):

- P. I:** Right piano part, continuing with complex textures. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.
- P. II:** Left piano part, featuring melodic lines with slurs and accents. Dynamics include *mf, espr.* and *f*.
- Perc. I:** Percussion I, playing a rhythmic pattern marked *Trgl.*.
- Perc. II:** Percussion II, playing a rhythmic pattern marked *Xyl.*.

d. Perpetual Motion with Irregular Phrasing

With music that moves in perpetual motion, it is helpful to mark where a repetitive pattern occurs and repeats – if only things could always be so neat! In his *Partita*, one of the Baroque traits that Lutosławski incorporated was the motor rhythm (although he did not write it with regular phrasing as that in Baroque music). In this passage from the coda of the fifth movement (Example 4-5), the phrasing/bowing is marked with slurs in the violin part. By comparison, besides the groups of five notes in mm. 92–94, there is no clear indication of phrasing in the piano part. In rehearsals, we should practice this passage following the written violin phrasing by shaping the slurred notes and inserting a tiny pause between each phrasing. We should also practice this passage following the written meter by adding an accent on the first note of every group of three eighth notes. What we want to maintain in such a perpetual motion passage is rhythmic steadiness and continuity with a strong sense of energy and direction. Trained musicians are accustomed to stressing the beginning of a slur/pattern, tapering the tail of it, or getting softer and slower at a bar line. Here are some suggestions for practicing this passage against these ingrained habits: whether playing the written pitches with your instruments or reciting the rhythms with numbers or syllables at the given dynamic level, make sure you (1) crescendo to the end of each slur, (2) crescendo to the end of each measure, (3) crescendo to the end of a section with repetitive patterns or similar patterns (the end of m. 94, end of the previous slur in m. 98 and end of measure 100), (4) pay extra attention to the upbeat/ weak beat before the bar line so it does not get rushed.

Example 4-5, Lutosławski, *Partita*, fifth movement, mm. 92–100

Presto (♩ = c. 168)

Violin

Piano

pp

94

69

f

97

70

100

pp

Violin

Piano

pp

94

69

f

97

70

100

pp

Chapter 5: Ensemble Issues

General Issues

How does an ensemble start a piece? Can one of us conduct the piece like Sir Georg Solti did when he recorded Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* with Murray Perahia, Evelyn Glennie and David Corkhill? As renowned chamber music coach Robert Spillman suggested, the ensemble should breathe together:

It is important that you remember to breathe with your partner with the music. First of all, it makes it easier to get started together. Second, you need that alert, alive feeling of moving forward that comes from keeping your body active and energetic. Third, the phrases in the music breathe (as does your partner) whether the music is vocal or not.¹⁵

Along with the breath, instrumentalists can signal a preparatory beat to the pianist with the movement of the tip of the bow, the bell of the wind instrument, or simply a nod. The preparatory beat should reflect both the character/mood and the subdivision/basic pulse of the opening theme,¹⁶ since feeling the same basic pulse and moving in the same prepared motion with a specifically characterized sound in mind will help the ensemble start confidently and in character.

In order to play well as an ensemble, each group member must cultivate the practice of listening to the other participants at all times. If one frequently cannot hear other members well, one might be playing too loud or at a tempo beyond one's current technical capability. The next step is to know what aspects of ensemble playing one should listen for in rehearsals in order to improve ensemble playing. When one's ear is tuned to hearing both the interaction between parts and the sum of all parts, one can begin

¹⁵ Robert Spillman, *The Art of Accompanying: Master Lessons from the Repertoire* (New York: Schirmer, 1985), 59.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 68

to hear discrepancies and imbalances in the ensemble playing and start to find possible solutions for the noted issues. Here are some common ensemble issues that one can pay attention to:

1. Does the ensemble begin a phrase with unified and clean onset and release the ending note of a phrase together? Pianists should also watch the coordination between lifting fingers from the keyboard and the foot from the pedal.
2. Are members matching their attacks and articulations when they are supposed to? If not, maybe each member can take turns to “fake play” or play with “air bow,” especially for homophonic passages or shared thematic materials. To match the attack speed with instrumentalists, pianist can try to mimic the motion with which the instrumentalists would play their instruments (moving with a bow arm, breathing into the piano or pretending fingertips are percussion mallets...)
3. Are members matching their phrasing and rests when they are supposed to? Try to sing the phrase in different ways and confer amongst the members on the most agreeable interpretation. For long rests, try counting in subdivisions.
4. Is the quality of sound production sacrificed in a passage due to insufficient time for string crossing, breathing, leaps in register in the piano part, the switching of percussion mallets, or tuning and movements between percussion instruments? Even at the professional level, musicians are constantly searching for better strategies to make these movements more fluid, but sometimes the best option is to pencil the extra time in the score and take it.

Balance Issues for Certain Ensembles

Violin and Piano

When playing with most instruments, pianists generally should give more bass support. “Playing solo [piano music] one becomes used to balancing one’s right hand with a certain quantity of bass tone, but this amount may not be sufficient if there are other instruments playing.”¹⁷ To achieve the matching bass tone for different settings, pianists should learn to voice the bass part in several ways. A pianist should take care that the use of the sustaining pedal matches the violinist’s sound with *vibrato*. No matter which instruments the piano is accompanying, however, playing with clean pedaling is always crucial since articulations and differences in registration are usually more prominent and distinct on any instrument other than on a modern piano. When playing with violin, pianists should strive to match the violin’s legato sound and articulations. They ought to be particularly mindful of sound balance when the violinist is playing on the lower strings and playing *pizzicato*.

Clarinet, Viola and Piano

As opposed to a traditional piano trio, where the cello is the bass instrument, in this ensemble, the piano serves as the bass instrument. Composers who write music for this group of instruments typically assign the viola to the middle register and the areas right below and right above that to the piano, thus assuring no conflicts within a register. When the viola plays in its brighter and higher register, its voice is as powerful as the clarinet in its higher register. When the viola has melodic material in these pieces, the piano part is usually accompanying as bass support. If the clarinet is playing melodic

¹⁷ Philip Cranmer, *The Technique of Accompaniment* (London: D. Dobson, 1970), 78.

material simultaneously with the viola, but they are not harmonizing each other, the two melodic lines are typically moving in contrary directions or alternating with each other. From my experience playing Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen*, the only balance issues occur in the second movement where the piano texture is too thick, and in the third movement where the piano inner voice is active and overlaps with the viola melodies. Treating passages with thick chordal texture, pianists can try to voice the chords differently. As for issues with active inner voices, which are prevalent in Schumann's writing, pianists should try to play the inner voices with their fingers close to the keys and yield the middle register to the viola melodies.

Chapter 6: Stylistic Interpretations

For modern performers, approaching the styles of different periods can be challenging. Some performers go to great lengths in pursuit of so-called historically informed performance. In Cone's *Form and Style*, he writes:

Now we go so far in our attempts to reconstruct historically correct interpretations that we often lose the music itself. We forget that, until very recently, composition and performance were always inseparable, that the present-day concept of interpretation as an independent subject of study and an art in itself is comparatively new and often entirely misleading. Besides, the rules of performance of the past were never meant to be applied in a restrictive way. They were never meant to be *applied* at all: they were—so far as they existed—merely expressions of the necessary relationship between the musical form and its physical expression. To take them more literally than that today is to misread them.¹⁸

I do not think he means to completely negate the value of studying historical performance practice, but I agree that music interpretation should be combined with performers' understanding of the composition through the lens of the performance practice and aesthetic taste of the current time.

In other words, if the perception of *Andante* and *Allegro* in our modern timeframe has become drastically different from what it was in Quantz' or Türk's time (generally), I would not insist on following their charts of metronome markings when performing, for example, Mozart's Violin Sonata in B-flat, K. 454. The tempi from my experience with this sonata were ♩ = 68–72 for the *Largo* introduction and ♩ = 138–144 for the *Allegro* first theme, with which there was a *Doppio movimento* relationship between the two basic pulses. The tempo relationship resulted from the consideration of achieving good sound

¹⁸ Edward T. Cone, *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), 58.

production and a singing quality in passages that have fast-moving notes, which was one of the “important constituent of the tempo equation.”¹⁹

Knowledge of performance practices in embellishment, ornamentation and improvisations also help when making decisions about embellishments and cadenzas in Mozart’s music. For instance, the opening theme in his “Kegelstatt” trio has a prolific gesture with sixty-fourth notes, which at the first glance looks as if it should be read as literal note values. (Example 6-1) However, after examining treatises, the notation should be understood as one way of spelling out a *gruppetto*, or a turn, which does not have designated note values (Example 6-2). Being aware of such factors as the distinct differences in registration a fortepiano can present, the timing a singer might take in singing a Mozart aria, or the type of orchestration he would likely use in his opera writing can inform our ideas of timing, pacing and sound production.

Example 6-1, Mozart, *Trio in E-flat major*, K. 498, first movement, mm. 1-4

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Clarinetto in S \flat /B, Viola, and Pianoforte. The tempo is marked "Andante" with a double asterisk. The key signature is two flats (B-flat major/E-flat major) and the time signature is 6/8. The Clarinetto part is mostly rests. The Viola part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a sixteenth-note figure, then moves to piano (p). The Pianoforte part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a sixteenth-note figure, then moves to piano (p).

¹⁹ Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 295.

Example 6-2, J. S. Bach, *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*, list of ornaments written out by J. S. Bach for his son W. F. Bach

Explication unterschiedlicher Zeichen, so gewisse *manieren*
artig zu spielen, andeuten.

The image shows a musical staff with six measures of ornaments. Above the staff are various ornament symbols. Below the staff, the ornaments are labeled: Trillo, mordant, trillo und mordant, cadence, Doppelt-cadence, and idem. The 'cadence' ornament, which consists of a single note with a mordant-like flourish, is circled in red.

In approaching each of Schumann's and Brahms' individual styles, greater consideration is required in how they created formal-design and tonal-plan with their own special harmonic and rhythmic languages. By paying attention to their compositional designs and structures, performers will more readily capture the quintessence of the contrasting themes and bring out inner voices and special rhythmic designs extra effectively (especially in the movements where dance rhythms are incorporated, such as the second movement of Brahms' second violin sonata). They will also be able to shape phrases in more emotive ways and further develop the larger scheme of a movement or a piece. Fanny Davies²⁰ characterizes Brahms' manner of interpretation as "free, very elastic and expansive, but with a balance of fundamental and surface rhythms. He listened intently to inner harmonies, laying great stress on good basses. His economical marks of expression were intended to convey the inner musical meaning. The sign < > (hairpins) often occurred when he wished to express great sincerity and warmth, applied not only to tone but also to rhythm. He would linger not on one note alone, but on a

²⁰ Fanny Davies (1861–1934) was one of Clara Schumann's most famous students. She made the first London performances of Brahms' Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114 with Richard Mühlfeld (1856–1907) and Robert Hausmann (1852–1909) and the first London performance of Brahms' Violin Sonata in D minor with Joseph Joachim (1831–1907).

whole idea, as if unable to tear himself away from its beauty. He would prefer to lengthen a bar or phrase rather than spoil it by making up the time into a metronomic bar.”²¹

In regard to performing music written in the twentieth or even the twenty-first century, Peter Hill spoke against “literal-mindedness” with the example of Webern’s *Variations*, Op. 27,

A study of the work’s performance history shows that for years pianists took the score’s austere appearance at face value: performances were rigorously impersonal, adding nothing to the very few marks of expression on the page. In due course it emerged, thanks to the efforts of Webern’s pupils, that this was the opposite of his intention, and that what he really had in mind involved a constant interplay of rubato and light-and-shade. Why, then, did Webern not write down these nuances? Perhaps they were too subtle to specify, or perhaps too dependent on the instincts of individual pianists (Webern included) to make mandatory.²²

With contemporary compositions, I think it is worthwhile to familiarize ourselves with the special compositional techniques utilized before we can decide how to interpret the music with rubato and light-and-shade. Listed here are the techniques included in my recital pieces:

1. Secundal, quartal or quintal harmony

These chords are built with seconds, fourths or fifths, which are frequently used in Bartók’s folk-influenced music.

²¹ Fanny Davies, “Some Personal Recollections of Brahms as Pianist and Interpreter,” in *Cobbett’s Cyclopaedic Survey of Chamber Music* (London, Oxford University Press, 1929), summarized in Colin Lawson, *The Early Clarinet: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 97.

²² Peter Hill, “From Score to Sound” in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 131.

2. Klangfarbenmelodie

A melodic line that is split between several instruments that “requires a highly refined sense of shaping and blending.”²³

Example 6-3, Kurtág, *Hommage à R. Sch.*, Op. 15d, third movement, excerpt

Feroce, agitato

The musical score excerpt shows three staves: Clarinet in Si^b, Viola, and Piano. The tempo is marked "Feroce, agitato". The Clarinet part begins with a dynamic of *f sfz* and features several slurs and accents. The Viola part starts with *f sfz* and includes the instruction "senza sord.". The Piano part is divided into upper and lower staves, with dynamics ranging from *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano) to *sfz* (sforzando). The score includes various performance markings such as accents, slurs, and dynamic changes.

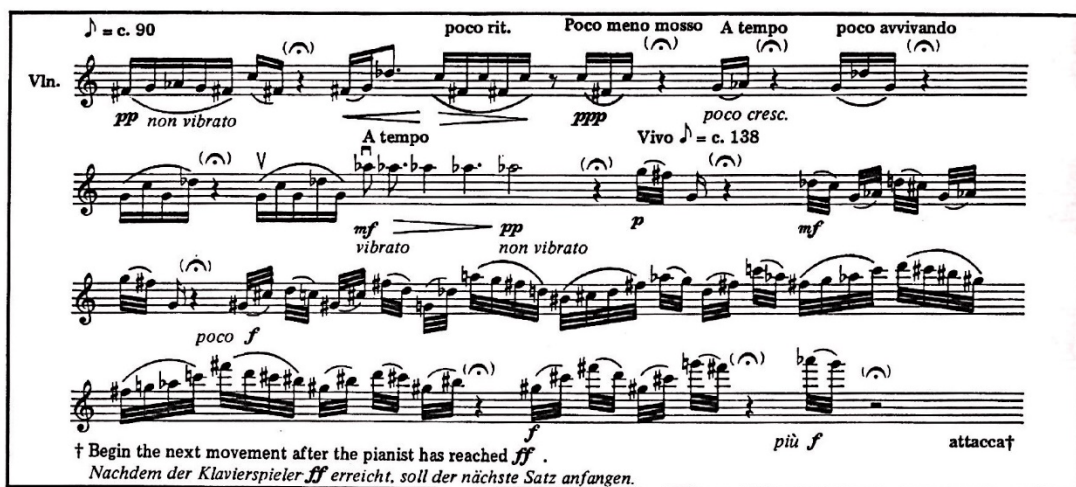
3. Controlled aleatory music

Completely notated passages in which the parts of the ensemble are not asked to be synchronized exactly, which is Lutosławski’s own design.

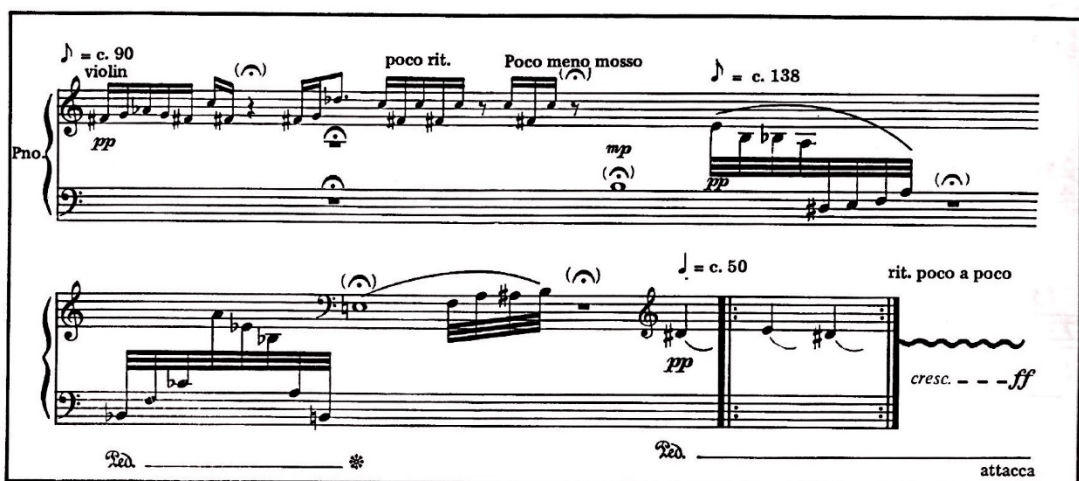
²³ Joel Lester, *Analytic Approaches to Twentieth-Century Music* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 53.

Example 6-4, Lutosławski, *Partita*, fourth movement

4. AD LIBITUM*



† Begin the next movement after the pianist has reached *ff*.
Nachdem der Klavierspieler *ff* erreicht, soll der nächste Satz anfangen.



* The violin and piano parts should not be co-ordinated in any way.
Die Geigerstimme und die Klavierstimme sollen überhaupt nicht koordiniert werden.

4. Extended techniques for special timbre

a. Flutter-tonguing

Wind players, instead of regular tonguing, flutter their tongues to create a fluttering, airy and noisy sound effect.

Example 6-5, Kurtág, *Hommage à R. Sch.*, Op. 15d, third movement, excerpt

b. Rapidly-changing bowing for timbre

The quick-alternation between *col legno battuto*, *sul tasto* and *sul pont.* These bowing techniques can create a quick shift of viola timbres in this example.

Example 6-6, Kurtág, *Hommage à R. Sch.*, Op. 15d, sixth movement, m. 7

c. String *glissando* and timpani *glissando*

Although this technique was developed before the twentieth century, similar to the bowing techniques listed above, it was not usually utilized to create special timbres for chamber music until the early twentieth century.

5. Use of extreme registers and fast shifts in register

To couple with the discovery of new timbres, contemporary composers also started exploring the extreme registers of instruments more often.

Example 6-7, Kurtág, *Hommage à R. Sch.*, Op. 15d, first movement, excerpt

The image shows a musical score excerpt for Kurtág's *Hommage à R. Sch.*, Op. 15d, first movement. The score is for Clarinet in Si (Cl in Si), Viola (Vla), and Piano (Pf). The tempo is marked 'Vivo'. The piano part features a complex texture with multiple layers of notes and rests, marked with 'pp' and 'p, secco'. The clarinet part has a melodic line with a 'pochissimo' dynamic marking and a 'rinf.' marking. The viola part has a 'p, secco' marking. The score is marked 'op. 15d' in the upper right corner.

6. Layered texture of relatively independent components

In the sixth movement of the *Hommage*, which alludes to isorhythmic technique, the pianist needs to use all the piano pedals—the soft pedal, the sustaining pedal and the sostenuto pedal—in a creative way to achieve the written dynamics and note values. In Example 6-6, the pianist needs to leave the first right hand secundal chord ring until the third to last beat of m.7, while moving the right hand to play the E6 of that wide-spread interval which is marked *pppp* on the same beat. The choice of which pedals to

use in order to achieve the dynamics, articulations and note values is not written but left for the pianist to decide.

7. Microtones and quarter tones

Those pitches that are between semitones are usually notated with modified conventional notations (with arrows to indicate slightly sharper/flatter or with modified “#” and “b” symbols).

Example 6-8, Kurtág, *Hommage à R. Sch.*, Op. 15d, sixth movement, m. 11

poco a poco aumentando e più appassionato

ppp

espr.

Solo molto in rilievo

sul tasto

gliss.

molto espr. soffocato

poco a poco cresc.

Example 6-9, Lutosławski, *Partita*, first movement, mm. 33–36

33

mp p

mf p

poco f p

f

poco rit.

p

poco f

p

poco rit.

Generally, the relationship between pitches on a smaller scale²⁴ and the careful attention to sonority are the focal points of Kurtág's *Hommage à R. Sch.*, Op. 15d and Lutosławski's *Partita*. Nevertheless, in Lutosławski's own words,

Everything in a musical work must be the result of “invention” or “inspiration.” And although the results of elaborating a piece of music are necessarily connected with the composer's “technique,” all the elements of the latter, all the “ways of operating with sounds” by an authentic composer are but a product of an inspiration and may be applied several times. In a word: technique is the fruit of inspiration.²⁵

This statement stands true for all composers to some extent, and it poses important points for performers to consider before jumping to any simplified interpretive ideas.

²⁴ “Kurtág spent a year (1957–8) studying in Paris, attending the classes of Messiaen, Milhaud and Max Deutsch. It is the parallel consultations with the art psychologist Marianne Stein, however, that he cites as being of most importance. When Kurtág presented her the sole work he completed in Paris, an extensive piano piece, Stein's advice was that his compositional voice would be most effectively developed if he set himself simple musical tasks, such as exploring the various ways of connecting two notes.” in Rachel Beckles Willson, “Kurtág, György,” *Grove Music Online* (2001).

²⁵ Lutosławski, *The Notebook of Ideas* (MS, Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel), 17 Nov. 1961, in Zbigniew Skowron, *Lutosławski Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 9.

Chapter 7: Rehearsal Discussions and Coaching Ideas

When leading a rehearsal or a coaching session, the coach may have some personal opinions to begin with, but he or she should be prepared to gravitate towards achieving a cooperative opinion, whether that stays close to the person's original idea or deviates from that completely. In Robert Spillman's words:

There may be occasions when you feel that your partner on any instrument is making a musical decision out of technical complacency. Then you are certainly encouraged to suggest that he try an alternative method. If your way sounds less interesting, please be objective enough to realize it; if your way is obviously more satisfying to your partner's, fine. If you disagree, then it is pretty generally held that a disputed passage should be performed one way or the other, not both ways simultaneously. Remember that we are not actually warriors; we are lucky enough to be practitioners of a very harmless and unbloody business. There are many things in the world worse than playing someone else's way.²⁶

Stating one's personal opinions or comments up front is probably not the best way to begin a conversation that can immediately benefit all group members and improve the musical collaboration, especially if you are a part of a newly formed group or coaching a group that is new to you. Instead, open questions, affirmation, reflective listening, and summary reflections (OARS) might be better communication strategies for the early stage of rehearsals or coaching sessions. In other words, the leader or the coach here is almost serving as a facilitator, trying to encourage all group members to feel safe and contribute ideas to the discussion. When in this type of discussion, it is important to try to stay open, positive, engaging and flexible to all members' input and provide words of affirmation or say "thank you" after hearing each person's contribution.

²⁶ Robert Spillman, *The Art of Accompanying: Master Lessons from the Repertoire* (New York: Schirmer, 1985), 73.

Here is a list of some open-ended questions a coach can ask a group. Prior to asking these questions, the group has presumably performed the entire movement or the entire piece for the coach. Having opportunities to practice performing movements or pieces in their entirety is crucial for the group's preparation for performance, since the heightened level of focus and sensitivity caused by nervousness during performance can only be simulated in a performance setting. There are undoubtedly many more suitable questions beyond what this list can contain, but these hopefully can serve as a start.

1. What is the tempo marking here? Can you explain it in relation to the passage that has the fastest notes in this section/movement?
2. Does that tempo work for the entire movement? If not, why?
3. What is the pulse you can feel in this passage/section/movement? Is that the same as the written meter? If they are not the same, can you explain the relationship between the two?
4. What is the dynamic marking here? Can you explain it in relation to other dynamic markings in the same passage/section?
5. Are there interesting and/or challenging rhythms in this section/ movement for you?
6. Are there repeats? What is your plan for the repeats?
7. Are there repetitive materials? What is your plan for that?
8. What melodic materials do you find? How would you like to phrase them?
9. Are the melodic materials repeated? What is your plan for that?
10. What is the overall style/character/mood of this section/movement/piece?
11. What is the general sound of this section/movement/piece based on the style/character/mood that you have observed?

12. Are there contrasting themes? Can you describe their characters/moods?
13. Are there interesting/unfamiliar markings in this piece? How do you understand/approach them?
14. Can you talk a little bit about the composer?
15. Can you talk a little bit about this piece?
16. What do you like about your performance?
17. What would you like to change about your performance?
18. Does any section of the piece need more rehearsal? If so, why?
19. Are there passages you need help with fingering/bowing/any other technical aspect?
20. Are there passages in which you need help with sound production?
21. Are there passages in which you need help with cueing/intonation/balance/sound blending/any other ensemble issue?
22. Can you see/hear each other well with the current physical setup (sitting or standing/seating/relative position and distance between each player)?
23. Who is playing the melodic material in this passage/section? Can you describe what it sounds like? If it is a contrapuntal passage, can you explain each of the entrances in order?
24. Who is providing the steady rhythmic element in this passage/section? Can you describe what it sounds like?
25. Are there passages you need more help/support from your chamber partner(s)? Where are they, and what type of help/support do you need?

If all group members have agreed to take turns leading each rehearsal, some of these questions can also be altered to apply to rehearsal discussions. Sometimes concrete verbal answers to some of these questions are not necessary, but it is always worthwhile to give these questions some thought.

Always be on the lookout for new information. Sometimes you cannot easily put this new information into words; sometimes one can have a perfectly clear and concise image in one's mind of a sound, a form, a phrase, or a kind of intensity, but this image does not need to be verbalized in order to be useful. This preverbal knowledge, as it were, is especially useful to musicians, and to accompanists perhaps most of all.²⁷

“Listen-play-discuss-decide” is another possible formula for chamber music rehearsals, “in which ensemble members (a) listen to one member’s suggestion or critique, perhaps rephrasing it to determine if all members understand the suggestion; (b) try the suggested interpretation or solution, making sure to wholeheartedly try the suggestion; (c) discuss whether the suggested approach worked well or not; and (d) as a group, decide on an interpretation or solution. To avoid extended discussions and fairly consider each member’s ideas, discussion should follow a suggestion rather than precede it.”²⁸ Since this is a formula with shared leadership and critiques involved, perhaps this is more suitable for the group after all members begin to feel safer with each other.

²⁷ Robert Spillman, *The Art of Accompanying: Master Lessons from the Repertoire* (New York: Schirmer, 1985), 100.

²⁸ Margaret H. Berg, “Promoting “Minds-On” Chamber Music Rehearsals,” *Music Educators Journal* 95, no. 2 (2008): 50.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This project has been both a humbling experience and a journey of faith. Coming from a Taiwanese background, it has always been difficult for me as a pianist to clearly and forcefully state a definitive approach to a pedagogical goal. We are more inclined to be students who ask for advice or follow instructions. Even being in teaching roles, we are much more accustomed to giving suggestions with metaphors and descriptive language rather than clear-cut statements.

As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, the goal of this project is not to create a comprehensive treatise or encyclopedia on music preparation and coaching, but to create a prototype of a rehearsal/coaching manual with a more pragmatic approach. Just as a symphony could be spun out from a “germinal motif,” a separate paper or book could and should be developed from any of the ideas or aspects that I have written about in this document, in relation to real music preparation and performance. Although it is impossible and unnecessary to explain everything about music or everything in a piece of music, if music skills and taste are learned and can be acquired rather than simply being innate, I as a learner or teacher of music, at least wanted to be able to keep asking whys and respond to whys by pointing students to the right resources or guide their thinking processes at times. There is also only so much the music notation system can contain; we need to read beyond the text to go from the original stage of understanding the composition to the highest level of interpretational nuance. As Joel Lester put it in a nutshell:

The differences between top-notch student performances and readings by the greatest artist are rarely a matter of hitting the right notes. Rather, innumerable barely perceptible nuances are what often distinguish a great performance. But what a difference does nuances make! Some musicians

seem to have a knack for making those nuances. In effect, they speak the language innately. For the rest of us mere mortals, all the knowledge we can apply can be of help.²⁹

It was the pedagogical and ultimately autodidactic value of the related knowledge to performance that I was (and still am) interested in learning and applying when I teach. Looking at some ideas of which I barely scratched the surface and the many things documented here that I might have a completely different opinion about in the future, I have to remind myself that “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,” but “not all who wander are lost.”

The goal of any education in music performance is to hopefully have the student become their own teacher. The goal of an education in chamber music should also hopefully have the same result. Even though working with chamber music coaches is interesting and enlightening, at a certain point, we must become those coaches ourselves. In this way, the traditions of coaching can be transmitted to the generations of pianists yet-to-come.

²⁹ Joel Lester, “Analysis and Performing Mozart,” *College Music Symposium* 51 (October 2011), <http://dx.doi.org/10.18177/sym.2011.51.sr.14>.

Annotated Bibliography

Adler, Kurt. *The Art of Accompanying and Coaching*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1985.

This book on vocal coaching provides incidental information relevant to chamber music playing and approaching stylistic interpretation.

Badura-Skoda, Paul. "Mozart without the Pedal?" *The Galpin Society Journal* 55 (2002): 332–50. JSTOR.

This article is an analytic argument for Mozart's use of pedal in his compositions.

Berg, Margaret H. "Promoting "Minds-On" Chamber Music Rehearsals." *Music Educators Journal* 95, no. 2 (2008): 48–55. JSTOR.

This article encourages the empowerment of students to engage in the problem-solving opportunities inherent in chamber music rehearsals.

Brown, Clive. *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750–1900*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

This comprehensive treatise includes a large number of first-hand resources. By comparing and contrasting different evidence and accounts, the author tries to point out informative insights about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century performance practice.

Brown, Clive, Neal Peres da Costa, and Kate Bennett Wadsworth. *Performance Practices in Johannes Brahms' Chamber Music*. Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 2016.

Consulting historical accounts on the performance style of Brahms, Joachim and their immediate circle (colleagues and pupils) and the analysis of Brahms' cylinder recording, these essays try to present an all-encompassing description on how Brahms' performing style could influence performers decision-making in the performance of his chamber music, mostly for piano and string instruments.

Cranmer, Philip. *The Technique of Accompaniment*. London: D. Dobson, 1970.

This book covers the fundamental ideas about collaborative piano.

Hill, Peter. "From Score to Sound." In *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, edited by John Rink, 129–143. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

This essay discusses the interpretation of the written score as it relates to the performance experience.

Lawson, Colin. *The Early Clarinet: A Practical Guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

A manual guide providing historical context that informs modern interpretations.

Lester, Joel. *Analytic Approaches to Twentieth-Century Music*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1989.

This book provides simplified insight into the mainstream compositional styles and techniques of twentieth-century music.

Lester, Joel. *The Rhythms of Tonal Music*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.

This book seeks to serve as a resource that brings together the different components that rhythm encompasses, touches and effects.

Loft, Abram. *How to Succeed in an Ensemble: Reflections on a Life in Chamber Music*. Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 2003.

A memoir of highlights of the author's chamber music career, this book also provides reflections on chamber music playing and teaching.

Loft, Abram. *The Duo Repertoire, Vol. I: From 17th Century to Mozart*. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973.

This book gives insight into the historical context of standard repertoire for violin and piano duo.

Moore, Gerald. *The Unashamed Accompanist*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1961.

A summation of the necessary qualities of a successful collaborative pianist.

Price, Deon Nielsen. *Accompanying Skills for Pianists*. Culver City, CA: Culver Crest Publications, 2005.

This book serves as a guide to developing collaborative skills for pianists.

Smallman, Basil. *The Piano Trio: Its History, Technique and Repertoire*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

This book covers the historical development of the piano trio genre and lists standard repertoire and compositional background.

Spillman, Robert. *Art of Accompanying: Master Lessons from the Repertoire*. New York: Schirmer, 1985.

In the chapters that cover chamber music playing, the author provides suggestions for approaching specific repertoire for personal and ensemble practice.

Music Scores Used in Recitals

Bartók, Béla. *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1942.

Brahms, Johannes. *Sonatas for Piano and Violin*, edited by Hans Otto Hiekel. Munich: Henle Verlag, 1975.

Kurtág, György. *Hommage à R. Sch. for Clarinet (also Bass Drum), Viola and Piano, Op. 15d*. Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1996.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. *Sonatas for Piano and Violin*, Vol. III, edited by Wolf-Dieter Seiffert. Munich: Henle Verlag, 1995.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. *Trio in E-flat major for Piano, Clarinet and Viola, "Kegelstatt-Trio," KV 498*. Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 2016.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. *Works for Two Pianos*, edited by Wolf-Dieter Seiffert. Munich: Henle Verlag, 1992.

Schumann, Robert. *Märchenerzählungen for Clarinet, Viola and Piano, Op. 132*, edited by Ernst Herttrich. Munich: Henle Verlag, 2010.

Smit, Leo. *Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano*. Amsterdam: Donemus, 1948.