

# Cello Concerto

October 22, 2015–January 25, 2016

Duration: about 27 minutes

for Bonnie Thron and Grant Llewellyn

I have had the pleasure of making music with cellist Bonnie Thron and her husband clarinetist Fred Jacobowitz since 2008. When she asked me in the summer of 2015 to write her a cello concerto, I got started as soon as other projects were done.

This cello concerto is in four movements:

I. Over the Stone (Tros y Garreg)

Adagio; Cyflym; Adagio; Cyflym; Cymedrol; Ychydig yn gyflymach [9']

II. Heart Song Largo [8']

III. Contradanza Fidelio [2']

IV. Schlimmbesserung Vivace [7:20]

The theme for the first movement is the traditional Welsh song “Tros y Garreg”, or “Over the Stone”. The song is attributed to Rhys Bodychen, who fought at the Battle of Bosworth Field on the side of the Tudors against Richard III in 1485. The lyrics reflect on those who have fallen in battle. This melody has been altered from the original by George Thompson, who published Welsh airs in 1809, 1811, and 1817. I prefer his version for this purpose to the original. Note that the end of the melody resembles the theme from the last movement of J. S. Bach’s *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5*, which factors into my treatment. Also, the traditional harp music of Wales led me to have an important harp part throughout this concerto.

I made a point of using particularly incomprehensible, unspellable, and unpronounceable Welsh words for tempo markings in the first movement. *Cyflym* means “fast”; *Cymedrol* means “moderate”; *Ychydig yn gyflymach* means “a little faster.”

The very short third movement started life back about 1990 as the second movement of my *Fourth Sonata for Solo Violin*. (There is a total of ten such sonatas.) Until recently I thought it was a tango, as I am easily bored with details in music theory and sometimes don’t look things up. In fact, it is a contradanza, a dance form originating in Havana—hence the tempo marking “Fidelio”. The solo cello part can be performed by itself in a pinch. The instrumentation in the third movement is the same as the rest of the piece, except that it lacks the second trumpet.

The fourth movement is titled *Schlimmbesserung*, which is German for “an effort to make things better that ends up making things worse”.

## Performance notes

Instrumentation: two flutes (first flute doubles piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, harp, solo cello, and strings.

In the first movement, measures 163-176, and 273 to the end, the solo part is marked *tutti*. The soloist is playing with the orchestra, and it doesn’t matter that it cannot be heard distinctly. There are several passages through the piece where the orchestra will probably overpower the solo cello. In those places, the cello can be amplified, thus allowing full volume for the ensemble.

As the harp has a prominent part, it should be located in proximity to the soloist, not in the back as usual.

Accidentals hold through the measure and not beyond, and do not apply to octaves.

Cover art: frontispiece from *Musical and poetical relicks of the Welsh bards* by Edward Jones, 1784.

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# Cello Concerto

## I. Over the Stone (Tros y Garreg) [9']

Bill Robinson

Theme  
Adagio (♩.=52)

1 (double picc.) Flute  
2 Flute  
2 Oboes  
2 Clarinets in B $\flat$   
2 Bassoons  
2 Horns in F  
2 Trumpets in B $\flat$   
Timpani  
Harp  
Solo Cello  
I Violin  
II Violin  
Viola  
Cello  
Double Bass

[Sections marked between (tutti) and (solo) are optional for the solo cello.]

*p* *mp* *mf* *f*

Theme  
Adagio (♩.=52)

10 Solo  
Vc.  
DB

*mp* *f* *mf*  
*mp* *f* *mf*  
*mp* *f* *mf*

Musical score for measures 30-33. The system includes a cello line and a grand piano accompaniment. The cello line starts with a dynamic of *ff*. The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with multiple staves, including a right-hand staff with a *ff* dynamic and a left-hand staff with a *pp* dynamic. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 12/8.

Musical score for measures 34-37. The system includes a cello line and a grand piano accompaniment. The cello line starts with a dynamic of *p* and ends with *ff*. The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with multiple staves, including a right-hand staff with a *pp* dynamic and a left-hand staff with a *pp* dynamic. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 12/8.

Musical score for measures 38-42. The system includes a cello line and a grand piano accompaniment. The cello line starts with a dynamic of *ff*. The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with multiple staves, including a right-hand staff with a *pp* dynamic and a left-hand staff with a *pp* dynamic. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 12/8.

Musical score for measures 43-46. The system includes a cello line and a grand piano accompaniment. The cello line starts with a dynamic of *ff*. The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with multiple staves, including a right-hand staff with a *pp* dynamic and a left-hand staff with a *pp* dynamic. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 12/8.

48 Adagio (♩=52) *p dolce*

48 Adagio (♩=52) *mp* *p dolce*

*ff* *mf* *p* *pp* *p dolce*

*dolce* *mf* *p* *pp* *p*

54 *cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

54 *cresc.* *(mf)* *f* *8va*

*cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

58 *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *pp* *p* **62**

58 *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *pp* *p*

*mf* *f* *mf* *p*

*8va*

63 *mp* *mf*

63 *mp* *mf*

*mp*

67 *mp* *p* *pp* *rit.*  $\text{♩} = 110$  Cyflym

67 *mp* *p* *mp* *rit.*  $\text{♩} = 110$  Cyflym

73 *mp* *cresc.* *mf* *f*

73 *cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

*mp* *cresc.* *(mf)* *f*

81 *ff*

81 *ff*

*ff*

89  $\text{♩} = 110$  95

89 *ff* *ff*

*ff*

96

102

110

112

119

129 *almost a tempo* *p* *rit.*

138 *Cymedrol* *(♩ = 86)*

146 *f* *ff* *dim.* *(mf)*

154 *(mp)* *p*



163 (tutti) (♩=♩)

*ff*

163 (♩=♩)

*ff*

*ff*

172

(solo)

180

*ff* *p*

*p*

Rea Rea

182

*mp* *mf*

182

*mp* *mf*

*mp* *mf*

Rea Rea Rea Rea Rea Rea Rea Rea Rea

191

196

191

Rea Rea Rea Rea Rea \*

Cello Concerto Mov. 1

201 *accel.* Ychydig yn gyflymach (♩ = 50) *mp*

201 *accel.* Ychydig yn gyflymach *mp* (♩ = 50) *mp*

201 *mp*

210

210

222 (♩ = ♩) *p* *cresc. p. a p.* (*mp*) (*mf*)

220 (*p*)

220 *p* *cresc. p. a p.* (*mp*) (*mf*)

229 *f*

229 *f*

229 *f*

236

*p* | *ff*

236

*p* *ff*

*p* *ff*

242

243

243

*mf*

248

252

252

*mf*

248

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

259

256

256

*cresc.* *f* *ff*

256

*cresc.* *f* *ff*

*cresc.* *f* *ff*

262

262

269

271 (tutti)

269

276 (solo)

276

280

*ff* *p* *pp*

280

# II. Heart Song

[8']

**Largo** ♩ = 50

*1*

2 Flutes

2 Oboes

1 Clarinet in B $\flat$

2 Clarinet in B $\flat$

1 Bassoon

2 Bassoon

1 Horn in F

2 Horn in F

2 Trumpets in B $\flat$

Timpani

Harp

Solo Cello

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

*pp*

*p*

*mf*

*pp*

**Largo** ♩ = 50

21 *mf* *f* *mp* *mf*

23 *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *p*

28 *30* *30*

31 *p*

35 *p* *mp*

38 *mf*

39

42 *ff*

42 *ff*

42 *f*

46 *ff*

46 *ff*

50 *mp* *cresc.* *mf*

50 *mp* *cresc.* *mf*

56 *mp* *cresc.* *mf*

56 *8va* *Leg.* \*

60 *pp* *legato* *p*

60 *pp* *p* *8va*

64 *mf* *rit.* *a tempo* *f*

64 *mf* *rit.* *a tempo* *f* *3* *3* *3*

*8va* *mf* *f* *3* *3* *3* *mp*





81

81

Lea Lea Lea Lea Lea Lea Lea \*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

85

85

*p*

85

*p*

*p*

8va

89

89

*p*

90

*pp*

89

*p*

90

*pp*

*pp*

8va

94

94

*rit.* ----- *a tempo*

94

*rit.*

8va

*a tempo*

*pp*

Fidelio ♩ = 66

1 (Fl. 1) *mp* *mp+* *f*

2

2 Oboes

1 Clarinet in B<sup>b</sup> *mp+* *f*

2 *f*

1 Bassoon *mp*

2 *mp*

1 Horn in F *mf*

2 *mf*

Trumpet in B<sup>b</sup> 1

Timpani *mp* *mf*

*sempre non arpeggio*

Harp *mp* *mf* *f*

Solo Cello *mp* *f*

Violin I *pizz.* *mp* *arco* *f*

Violin II *pizz.* *mp* *arco* *f*

Viola *pizz.* *mp* *arco*

Cello *pizz.* *mp* *arco*

Double Bass *pizz.* *mp* *arco*

Fidelio ♩ = 66

13 *p*

13 *Rea* \*

13 *Rea* \*

15 *p*

15 *Rea* \*

15 *Rea* \*

15 *Rea* \*

18 *mp*

18 *Rea* \*

18 *Rea* \*

20

23 *f*

23 *mp* *f*

27 29

*ff* *mp* *f* *ff* *non stacc.*

*ff* *mp* *f* *ff*

*ff* *mp* *mp* *f*

8va 8va 8va

33 *rit.*

*ff* *p* 3

*rit.* *ff* *p*

8va 8va 8va \*

*ff* *p*

8va \*

(rit.)

38 3 *pp*

*rit.* *pp*

6 6 6 6 8va \*

8va \*

# IV. Schlimmbeserung

[7:20]

51

Vivace (♩ = 104)

2 Flutes  
2 Oboes  
2 Clarinets in B $\flat$   
2 Bassoons  
2 Horns in F  
2 Trumpets in B $\flat$   
Timpani  
Harp  
Solo Cello  
Violin I  
Violin II  
Viola  
Cello  
Double Bass

The first system of the score includes staves for 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets in B $\flat$ , 2 Bassoons, 2 Horns in F, 2 Trumpets in B $\flat$ , Timpani, Harp, Solo Cello, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The Solo Cello part begins with a melodic line marked *f*. The Harp part has a few notes in the first measure. All other parts are currently silent.

Vivace (♩ = 104)

2 Ob.  
2 Bn.  
Hn. 2  
Solo  
Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
DB

The second system of the score includes staves for 2 Oboes, 2 Bassoons, Horn 2, Solo Cello, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The Solo Cello part continues with a melodic line marked *f*. The 2 Oboes part has a melodic line marked *f*. The 2 Bassoons part has a melodic line marked *f*. The Horn 2 part has a melodic line marked *f*. The Violin I part has a melodic line marked *f*. The Violin II part has a melodic line marked *f*. The Viola part has a melodic line marked *f*. The Violoncello part has a melodic line marked *f*. The Double Bass part has a melodic line marked *f*. The Solo Cello part has a melodic line marked *f*.

19 25

*f dim. p*

*f p*

*f*

Ped. \*

26

*p*

34 35

*f*

*f*

*f*

39

*f*

43 *ff*

47 **48**

51 *ff* *f* *f dim.* *p*

57 **62** *f*





86

86 *8va*

87

88

89

This system contains measures 86 through 89. It features a cello line at the top and a piano accompaniment below. The piano part includes a complex texture with triplets and chords. The cello line has some grace notes and rests.

90

90

91

92

This system contains measures 90 through 92. The piano accompaniment continues with intricate patterns, while the cello line has more active melodic movement.

93

93

94

95

96

97

*ff*

*8va*

This system contains measures 93 through 97. Measure 95 is marked with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The piano part has a prominent chordal texture, and the cello line has a long, sustained note in measure 95.

98

98

99

100

101

102

*ff dim.* *mf*

*8va*

This system contains measures 98 through 102. The piano part features a complex texture with many chords. The cello line has a melodic line with some grace notes. Dynamics include *ff dim.* and *mf*.

105 106

*mp* ----- *p*

105 106

*p*

8<sup>va</sup>-----

*p*

111 118

111 118

8<sup>va</sup>-----

118

119 118

*pp*

119 118

*pp*

8<sup>va</sup>-----

*pp*

126 128

*cresc.* ----- *ff*

126 128

*cresc.* ----- *ff*

*ff*

*cresc.* ----- *ff*

129

129

132

132

*ff*

136

136

137

137

8va

*ff*

*p*

139

139

*ff*

*p*

146

146

146

*f*

*mp*

*p*

147 *p*

155 *pp* *p cresc.* **163**

155 *p cresc.* **163**

*p cresc.* **163** *8va*

164 *(mf)* *f* *ff*

164 *(mf)* *f* *ff*

*(mf)* *f* *ff* *8va*

168 *ff dim.* *(mf)* *(mp)* *pp*

168 *ff* *dim.* *(mf)* *(mp)* *pp*

175

Musical score for measures 175-179. The score is in 4/4 time. It features a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. The cello line starts with a rest, then enters with a melodic line. Dynamics include *p* and *ff*. There is a *8va-* marking above the piano part in measure 179.

180

Musical score for measures 180-182. The score is in 4/4 time. It features a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. The cello line has a melodic line with some grace notes. Dynamics include *ff*.

183

Musical score for measures 183-187. The score is in 4/4 time. It features a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. The cello line has a melodic line with some grace notes. Dynamics include *fff*. There is a *8va-* marking above the piano part in measure 185.

188

Musical score for measures 188-192. The score is in 4/4 time. It features a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. The cello line has a melodic line with some grace notes. Dynamics include *fff*, *p*, and *pizz.*