

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 Tutors 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 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

[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 piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets. The dynamic marking *ff* is present at the end of the system.

Musical score for measures 34-37. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets. The dynamic markings *p*, *pp*, and *ff* are present throughout the system.

Musical score for measures 38-42. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets. The dynamic marking *pp* is present at the beginning of the system.

Musical score for measures 43-46. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets. The dynamic marking *ff* is present at the end of the system.

48 Adagio (♩=52) *p dolce*

48 Adagio (♩=52) *mp*

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

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

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

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

f *8va*

cresc. *(mf)* *f*

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

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

mf *f* *p*

8va

62

63 *mp* *mf*

63 *mp* *mf*

mp

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

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

81 *ff*

89 *ff* $\text{♩} = 110$ 95

96

102

110

112

119

rit.

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

138 *Cymedrol* *(♩ = 86)*

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

154 *(mp)* *p*

163 (tutti) (♩=♩) *ff*

163 (♩=♩) *ff*

172 (solo) *ff* *p* 180

182 *mp* *mf*

182 *mp* *mf*

191 196

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

236

p | *ff*

236

p | *ff*

p | *ff*

Measures 236-242: Cello part with dynamic markings *p* and *ff*. Piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *p* and *ff*. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 242.

242

243

242

242

Measures 242-248: Cello part with dynamic marking *mf*. Piano accompaniment with dynamic marking *mf*. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 248.

248

252

248

mf

mf

ff | *mf* | *mf*

Measures 248-256: Cello part with dynamic markings *mf* and *ff*. Piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *mf*, *ff*, and *mf*. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 256.

256

259

256

cresc. | *f* | *ff*

256

cresc. | *f* | *ff*

cresc. | *f* | *ff*

Measures 256-266: Cello part with dynamic markings *cresc.*, *f*, and *ff*. Piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *cresc.*, *f*, and *ff*. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 266.

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* *f*

46 *ff*

8^{va}

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*

8va *mf* *f* *mp*

81

81

ff

ff

ff

ff

Lea Lea Lea Lea Lea Lea Lea *

85

p

85

p

p

8va

89

p

90

pp

89

p

90

pp

pp

8va

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 \flat *mp+* *f*

2 *f*

1 Bassoon *mp*

2 *mp*

1 Horn in F *mf*

2 *mf*

Trumpet in B \flat 1

Timpani *mp* *mf*

sempre non arpeggio

1 Harp *mp* *mf* *f*

2

1 Solo Cello *mp* *f*

2

1 Violin *pizz.* *mp* *arco* *f*

2 *pizz.* *mp* *arco* *f*

Viola *pizz.* *mp* *arco*

Cello *pizz.* *mp* *arco*

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

Fidelio ♩ = 66

27 29

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

ff *mp* *f* *ff*

ff *mp* *mp* *f*

8^{va} 8^{va} 8^{va}

33 *rit.*

ff *p*

rit. *ff* *p*

ff *p*

Lea Lea Lea *

ff *p*

Lea Lea Lea *

rit.

38 *rit.*

pp

rit. *pp*

pp

Lea Lea Lea Lea *

8^{va}

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 chordal accompaniment. 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*.

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 *f* **62**

63 *ff*

63 *ff*

63 *ff*

8^{va}

8^{va}

68 *p* 73

68 *p* 73

68 *p* 73

76 *cresc.* *f*

76 *cresc.* *f*

76 *mf* *f*

8^{va}

cresc. *(mf)* *f*

83 *ff* 83 *ff* 8^{va}

83 *ff* 83 *ff* 8^{va}

83 *ff* 83 *ff* 8^{va}

8^{va}

8^{va}

86

Musical score for measures 86-89. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a complex texture with chords and triplets. The cello line has a melodic line with some grace notes. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

90

Musical score for measures 90-92. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part continues with a dense texture of chords and moving lines. The cello line has a melodic line with some grace notes. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

93

Musical score for measures 93-95. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a complex texture with chords and moving lines. The cello line has a melodic line with some grace notes. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4. A dynamic marking of *ff* is present.

98

Musical score for measures 98-101. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a complex texture with chords and moving lines. The cello line has a melodic line with some grace notes. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4. Dynamic markings include *ff dim.* and *mf*.

105 106

mp ----- *p*

105 106

p

8^{va}-----

111 118

111 118

8^{va}-----

118

119 118

pp

119 118

pp

8^{va}-----

pp

118

126 128

cresc. ----- *ff*

126 128

cresc. ----- *ff*

8^{va}-----

cresc. ----- *ff*

129

132

136

137

139

146

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 system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. Dynamics include *p* and *ff*. A *8va-* marking is present above the piano part in measure 179.

180

Musical score for measures 180-182. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. Dynamics include *ff*.

183

Musical score for measures 183-187. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. Dynamics include *fff*. A *8va-* marking is present above the piano part in measure 185.

188

Musical score for measures 188-192. The system includes a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of two staves. Dynamics include *fff*, *pizz.*, and *p*.