

Introducing Jānis Ivanovs and his *Cello Concerto in b minor*

By

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Submitted to the graduate degree program in the School of Music and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

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Date Defended: April 16, 2014

The Lecture Recital Committee for HYERIM JEON certifies that this is the approved
version of the following document:

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Abstract

Jānis Ivanovs (1906-1983) was one of the most distinguished Latvian composers in the twentieth century yet he is virtually unknown outside of Latvia and the former U.S.S.R. This document will present a brief biography of this composer and discuss the context of his career. Although the paper is primarily focused upon the *Cello Concerto in b minor* (1938) any discussion of Ivanovs' post-Romantic musical style must also discuss his twenty-one symphonies which are his best known works. The paper will discuss the early performance history of the concerto and will give a detailed form analysis of the piece. The paper is intended to introduce this important composer and his music to musicians and audiences outside of the Baltic region and will conclude with a discussion of the specific challenges the work has for cellists.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

While visiting Riga, Latvia in the summer of 2011 during the eight hundred tenth Anniversary Festival Celebration, I became acquainted with the nationalistic classical music of Latvia through a performance of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra. Finding the music intriguing and interesting, I searched for recordings of Latvian classical music. I found a recording of Jānis Ivanovs' instrumental music that included separate concerti for violin, piano, and cello.

The *Cello Concerto in b minor* peaked my interest because, upon further research, I discovered that this was the only concerto composed for cello by Jānis Ivanovs and it was quite popular, being considered standard repertoire for cello in Latvia, yet unknown to the rest of the world. Due to the piece's stunning beauty, characterized by post-Romantic lyricism and Latvian folk music influence, I not only had a strong desire to perform it when I returned to the United States, but wished to share it with an audience outside of the Baltic Region as well.

While attempting to find a printed score for the piece, I quickly determined that the *Cello Concerto in b minor* was not published outside of Latvia. Materials concerning Jānis Ivanovs and his works were also not easy to come by and, when found, were written in Latvian and/or Russian thus making it a great challenge to learn more about him and his music. Due to the difficulty that I had in attempting to obtain the printed music to his concerto¹ and to locate written material about Jānis Ivanovs, it seemed that it would be worthwhile to undertake a

¹ I finally obtained a scanned copy of a hand written score directly from the National Library of

project researching Jānis Ivanovs and his *Cello Concerto in b minor*. The undertaking of this project resulted in the creation of this document that serves as an introduction of this Latvian composer to a larger audience. Throughout this paper I will present biographical information about Jānis Ivanovs and give an introduction to his musical style as demonstrated through his orchestral works. I will also discuss the *Cello Concerto in b minor* with attention to a brief analytical discussion of its form and stylistic features. Lastly, I will mention early performances of the piece and present final thoughts about how this work could be integrated into the cello literature for intermediate to advanced students, covering some important techniques that the work requires.

Chapter 2

Biography

Jānis Ivanovs was born on October 9, 1906 in the small Eastern Latvian town of Preili, Latgale. He studied composition with Jāzeps Vītols and conducting with Georg Schneevoigt at the Latvian State Conservatory in Riga. He graduated in 1931 and then began what would become a long association with Latvian Radio. He would eventually become the artistic director of the Latvian Radio Committee. In 1944, Ivanovs joined the faculty of the Latvian State Conservatory and became full professor in 1955. He was also the president of the Soviet Latvian Composers' Union.² During his lifetime he received two important awards; the People's Artist of the Latvian SSR in 1956 and People's Artist of the USSR in 1965.³

Latgale, located in the eastern part of Latvia, shares its Latvian border with Lithuania, Russia, and Belarus. The region is heavily saturated with the ethnic cultures of Latvians, Lithuanians, Russians, Poles, and Belarusians along with a strong Jewish population as well. This mixture of ethnic cultures was partially due to the periodic occupations of the Latgale region by Poland and Russia, resulting in many cultural influences that accumulated in the region throughout the centuries.

The landscape of Latgale, consisting of forests, hills and lakes, differs greatly from much of Latvia with a much more rural and rustic landscape. In referring to his home region of Latgale, Ivanovs described the scenic area as a place to “think and to philosophize.”⁴ In addition

² Online Naxos Library, http://www.naxos.com/person/Janis_Ivanovs/23981.htm

³ Jānis Ivanovs, *Janis Ivanovs. Volume 2: Symphony no. 3: The Cloudy Mountains: Concerto for Cello*, England: Campion Cameo, 1999.

⁴ Ibid.

to being the birthplace of Jānis Ivanovs, the Latgale region (Example 1) was the birthplace and inspiration of Latvia's greatest poet, philosopher, and playwright Jānis Rainis (b.1865- 1929).⁵

Example 1: Latgale, Latvia



Ivanovs is mostly remembered for his 21 symphonies and is regarded as being the most distinguished Latvian symphonist. Since his death his works have been evaluated more diversely and have become better rooted in Latvian society. All of his symphonies have been recorded and released as albums. The British company *Campion Cameo* has re-released these recordings in CD format.⁶

The development of Ivanovs' musical style, throughout the course of half a century (1932-1982), can be heard through his twenty-one symphonies, which often portray the folk music and the traditions of Latvia, as they were affected and changed through decades of war, occupation, and political conflict. Nevertheless, he composed in many other genres as well

⁵ A Latvian poet, playwright, and a politician. He wrote a collection of poetry *The Sowing of the Storm*. He also wrote *Fire and Night* and *The Golden Horse*. <http://www.rainis.org/index.html> (accessed Mar. 13, 2014).

⁶ Jānis Ivanovs, <http://lmic.lv/core.php?pageId=747&id=289&profile=1> (accessed Nov. 10, 2013).

including two other concerti, five symphonic poems, and numerous vocal, piano, and chamber works.⁷ His earliest compositions were mainly piano miniatures influenced by Chopin and Scriabin blended with his own unique melancholic, ethereal and sometimes foreboding style.⁸ These features were often evoked by the landscape of the Latgale region, in which the composer lived.

After completing three movements of his *Symphony No. 21* in 1983, Jānis Ivanovs died on March 27 in Riga. Ivanovs did not see Latvia gain independence in 1990 and his music is still largely unknown outside of the former Iron Curtain countries.⁹

⁷ Appendix A

⁸ Jānis Ivanovs, *Janis Ivanovs. Volume 2: Symphony no. 3: The Cloudy Mountains: Concerto for Cello*, England: Campion Cameo, 1999.

⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 3

Style

Jānis Ivanovs was Latvia's premier composer during the Twentieth Century. Latvian folk songs and the landscape of the Latgalian region influenced his musical style deeply. Also, his musical style and forms were affected by political events such as the Soviet regime and Nazi invasion in 1941. The Latvian composer and music critic, Marģeris Zariņš, described Ivanovs' music stating:

Yes, truly! The music of Janis Ivanovs is always a battle with something- something that bothers, something that delays, something that stands in the way. Jānis Ivanovs is like lightning and the thunder that periodically cleans the air with its luciferistic sounds. It seems to me that his symphonies are like antique Greek tragedies with their purifying catharsis... The dearest to me is Jānis Ivanovs' natural disposition to harmonic lucidity, which, to him, has never become banal or epigonic. That is perhaps because it has a large intellectual and emotional charge.¹⁰

Jānis Ivanovs' musical output is divisible into three stylistic periods: Latvian folk music period, characterized by highly expressive, lyrical, song-like writing and influenced by the beauty of nature; the War period, characterized by high energy, simple forms, complex harmonies, and the use of polytonality; and the Late period with reminiscences toward his early works, characterized by mature highly dramatic and sophisticated music.

Latvian Folk Music Influence (1930 – 1938)

As with other European and American composers Latvian composers during the 1930s, such as Vītols, Graubins, Medinš, were developing their artistic styles by borrowing heavily from regional folk music. Ivanovs was no exception. This period of influence produced his first three symphonies and the *Cello Concerto in B Minor*. In addition to Latgalian folk influence,

¹⁰ Marģeris Zariņš, <http://lmic.lv/core.php?pageId=747&id=289&profile=1> (accessed Nov. 10, 2013).

Ivanovs' individual style was also influenced by composers Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky with their dependence on *cantabile* melodies.

Ivanovs first three symphonies, along with his early period symphonic poems, were composed programmatically in order to evoke the natural landscape and culture of his native province of Latgale. Specific landmarks that Ivanovs immortalized musically included Rāznas ezers (Lake Razna – symphonic poem for wind orchestra) and Mākonkalns (Cloudy Mountain – symphonic poem), characterized by lush, highly expressive moments of rich color and exotic harmonic progressions.

Symphony No. 1, *Poema-sifornia* (1933) was composed as a one-movement work. The first section, characterized by beautiful long melodies and written in a singing style, calls to mind the music of Tchaikovsky. Back and forth dialogue between the woodwinds and cellos propels the section forward. The middle section sounds like Khachaturian - short and fast rhythms, scored prominently in the oboe and other woodwinds. The concluding section of the symphony features long notes and the use of large, open intervals brings the piece to a close as the strings play soft and light pizzicati.

Latgales ainavas (Latgalian Ladsapes - 1935), a symphonic suite, was another work composed as a musical depiction of the diverse natural landscape of Latgale. Once again dialogues between winds and strings are used to musically portray the diversity of the landscape from lakes to hills and open fields.

Symphony No.3 reveals Ivanovs' mastery of his lyric style.¹¹ This piece was also his first attempt at utilizing the traditional four-movement structure of Common Practice music.

¹¹ His 2nd symphony in D minor was written in 1937 after his sixteen-minute Latgalian Ladsapes was finished. The score and parts for symphony No. 2 were lost for years: the only copy was thought to have been destroyed in the World War II bombing of the Latvian Radio library. Ivanovs used themes from the symphony in his film music for *The Late Frost* later in 1955.

Although minor formal shortcomings were evident in the compositional craft of the piece, “the final movement does not resolve the musical arguments of the symphony as cogently as do Ivanovs later exercises in this form,” it is still a great example of a “lyrical piece, elegiac and resigned in the outer movements, rapturously expressive in the slow movement, but jovial and energetic in the scherzo.”¹² Also, the broadly emotional slow movement again portrays his affection for his homeland and his love of folk music.

War Period (1939 – 1969)

As with most creative artists who lived through the horrors of World War II, Ivanovs was deeply touched by the harshness and human tragedy that was conferred upon the world. These feelings led Ivanovs to compose music that made use of more complex harmony, polytonality, and much higher energy. Although Ivanovs still made use of traditional Latvian folk melodies and still garnered influence from the Latgalian landscape, however the context in which these melodies and influences was used differed greatly from the first period. The music composed during this time period was much more political. Also, while working at Latvia Radio he was able to become familiar with Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* and *Sacre du Printemps*, Ravel’s *Daphnis and Chloe*, Honegger’s *Pacific 231*, as well as compositions by Respighi, Dukas, and Bartok, which could not be heard in the Conservatoire or the concert halls of Riga.

The Soviet Army first occupied Latvia in 1940. This occupation would last 50 years. Ivanovs composed his *Symphony No. 4, Atlantis* the following year in 1941. Written in the same year that the Nazis invaded Latvia during World War II, the opening of this work clearly portrays a different side of Ivanovs composing technique. With movements titled ‘*Message of Plato*,’ ‘*Poseidon-Papylon*,’ ‘*Aedes Sacra*,’ and ‘*On a Dreadful Day, on a Dreadful Night the*

¹² Ibid.

Island of Atlantis Disappeared, Drowned in the Sea,’ this work is clearly programmatic in nature, depicting the story of Atlantis. However, a much more aggressive sound is noticed in the writing. Harsher dissonances and contrasting dynamics contribute to a Mahler-esque composition. Heavy use of timpani and chimes in the opening movement also create a martial sound that is reinforced by upward modulating sequences that contribute to the creation of tension. Interesting scoring innovations are also made in this piece; notably, the use of alto saxophone as a prominent solo instrument, and the use of female chorus. This symphony, at 42 minutes in length, was also the longest symphony composed by Ivanovs.

Following World War II, as the Nuremberg trials were occurring, Ivanovs composed his *Symphony No. 5 in C major* in 1945. This work was one full of conflict, darkness, roughness, longings for justice, and yet hope indicative of his optimism. It was a work that looked forward to a brighter future.¹³

In the Soviet Union, composers such as Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Khachaturian were forced to write in simple idioms in order to be understood by the masses and conform to the Communist ideology. During this time, Ivanovs composed the brightest and most harmonious of his compositions: “neither before nor after were his works so well balanced and classically ordered.”¹⁴ However, as a result of the Communist Party’s decree against formalistic music in 1948, performances of Ivanovs’ fourth and fifth symphonies were for many years prohibited.¹⁵

Symphony No. 6 Latgalian is very melodic and it illustrates scenes of the sufferings and final freedom of his native land. The finale was overloaded with optimism and depicted the victory of the new order. The Soviet and Latvian musical establishment joined in his praise as

¹³ Jānis Ivanovs, *Symphonies Nos. 5 and 12*, Munich, Germany: Marco Polo, 1996.

¹⁴ Jānis Ivanovs, *Janis Ivanovs. Volume 2: Symphony no. 3: The Cloudy Mountains: Concerto for Cello*, England: Campion Cameo, 1999.

¹⁵ Jānis Ivanovs, <http://lmic.lv/core.php?pageId=747&id=289&profile=1> (accessed Nov. 10, 2013).

the composer celebrated his fiftieth birthday. The Latvian composer and music critic, Mārgeris Zariņš said,

Jānis Ivanovs is like thunder and lightning cleansing the air with his Luciferic sounds. His symphonies are like ancient Greek tragedies, filled with ecstasy and purification.

For this symphony he was awarded the USSR State Prize in 1950.

The Iron Curtain had prevented Ivanovs from becoming familiar with developments in music in the West but he had access to compositions by Shostakovich and Khachaturian and eventually he learned of developments in twentieth Century by Stravinsky and Martinu can be found in the music of Jānis Ivanovs. Other compositions that became popular in the 1950s are the music for films such as *The Late Frost* (1955) and *The Son of the Fisherman* (1956); at this time Jānis Ivanovs was in favor with the authorities and received almost every possible award and his scores were published, printed and recorded.¹⁶

On March 25th 1949, there was a second great wave of mass deportations from Latvia. Probably Ivanovs had believed some of the promises about the creation of a beautiful democratic country; he had welcomed the political and economic changes in Latvia especially in his native Latgale and the cultural activity with his music being performed in the biggest cities of the USSR and broadcast on Moscow Radio.¹⁷ It had seemed possible to build a flourishing socialist and national Latvia. The dedicated ‘Soviet Communists’ in Latvia suddenly denounced this growing nationalism and the reaction of Moscow was repressive in 1949. The Latvian government was discharged and pro-Russian agents replaced all nationally oriented ‘Latvian Communists’.¹⁸ National traditional festivities such as celebrating the summer solstice were prohibited and

¹⁶ Jānis Ivanovs, *Janis Ivanovs. Volume 2: Symphony no. 3: The Cloudy Mountains: Concerto for Cello*, England: Campion Cameo, 1999.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

firemen were sent out to extinguish the ritual bonfires on St. John's night.¹⁹ The intensity of ideological manipulation softened somewhat after the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953. Jānis Ivanovs was gradually able to recapture the depth of psychological expression he had attained earlier, in his ninth, tenth, and eleventh symphonies.²⁰ In the thirteenth Symphony *Symphonia Humana* (1969) Ivanovs deals with wider social themes, being dedicated to the hundredth birthday of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.²¹

Late Period and Reminiscences (1970 – 1983)

In his late period in the 1960s he entered a time of reflection and introspection. He adapted some of the principles of neoclassicism to his post-Romantic style. For instance in his fourteenth to sixteenth Symphonies, he reveals a tendency towards simpler forms and writes for a smaller chamber orchestra.²²

Jānis Ivanovs' new symphony reveals one more aspect of the composer's talent; although it has no program, the work is felt to be a summing-up of long and profound meditations on life, on society and the lofty mission of man on earth. This symphony for chamber orchestra consists of three movements: the first movement is vigorous and abounds in complex sonorities, it is well set off by the concentrated and profoundly philosophical second, with a long improvisatory violin solo, and a driving finale.²³

¹⁹ The night before midsummer Day

²⁰ Gryunfel'd, N. *Yanis Ivanov*. Moscow 1959

²¹ "Musical Culture of the Latvian SSR." *Informatsionnyĭ Biulleten' Ordena Lenina Soiuz Kompozitorov SSSR = USSR Union of Composers Information Bulletin* 7-8 (1972): 3-10.

²² Oxford Music Online,

http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/13997?q=janis+ivanovs&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit (accessed Nov. 1, 2013).

²³ "Janis Ivanovs' Fourteenth Symphony (in Russian)." *Informatsionnyĭ Biulleten' Ordena Lenina Soiuz Kompozitorov SSSR = USSR Union of Composers Information Bulletin* 1 (1972): 6.

Beginning with his *Symphony No. 19* and continuing up to his *Symphony No. 21* (1983, completed by *Juris Karlsons*)²⁴, Ivanovs' symphonic music became decidedly more dramatic, monumental, and even philosophic. Ivanovs became more deeply involved with psychological and philosophical concepts, and his musical language developed towards a more complex harmony, making use of polytonality and linear polyphony.²⁵

Ivanovs' last completed symphonic work, *Symphony No. 21 in E flat Major* (1981) is his most personal work and serves as a good example of his final period. Ivanovs himself states, "These are memories, if you are willing to know what you are today, you should remember what you have been and should know what road you have followed..."²⁶

In the *Symphony No. 21* the strings and a harp start at the beginning of the first movement with a long melody line in unison that is followed by aggressive short sixteenth note motives in the strings with dynamic contrast in the brass and timpani. Frequently the movement is disturbed by powerful orchestral recitative-like passages. According to Ivanovs' biographer, Ludvigs Kārklīņš,

These orchestral recitatives direct the musical development into the road of impetuous seeking and struggle. Restrained chimes as if to confirm the deeper meaning of the struggle and its place in eternity.²⁷

Repeated dotted rhythms by the strings make the second movement deeply tragic.

However, Ivanovs still has his love of melody that he establishes in the full string sections and

²⁴ (b. 1948) A Latvian composer. He graduated from Jānis Ivanovs' composition class at the Latvian State Conservatory in 1972 and then worked as sound director of Latvian Radio (1968-75) and of the State Art Theatre (1975-82).

²⁵ Jānis Ivanovs, *Janis Ivanovs. Volume 2: Symphony no. 3: The Cloudy Mountains: Concerto for Cello*, England: Campion Cameo, 1999.

²⁶ Jānis Ivanovs, *Symphonies Nos. 8 and 20*, Munich, Germany: Naxos, 2004

²⁷ Ibid.

woodwinds. Karklins states, "This movement is the summit of Latgale' great music-maker's symphonic confession - the song of songs of his soul!"²⁸

The third movement has folk dance character; *Menuetto: Reminiscenza* is a look back to his early and Soviet works such as his *Symphony No. 8*. Majestic gestures and vigorous energy characterize the finale of this symphony.

The notation of the symphony seems to be covered by a kind of golden glitter, texture and tone color couplings blooming like muted, dispersed sunlight, sketch out many associative notions, reflecting the world of the composer's ideas and feelings, and the reality of today.²⁹

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 4

Cello Concerto in b minor

The earliest important concerti composed for the cello by Latvian composers were *Elēgiskais koncerts* (Elegiac Concerto) (1889) by Andrejs Jurjāns (1856- 1922), *Koncerts čellam* (1929) by Jānis Mediņš (b.1890), and *Koncerts čellam ar orķestri h moll* (1938) by Jānis Ivanovs.³⁰ These works held fast to professionalism faithful to the traditions of the Latvian school of composition characterized by an “exciting actualization of a brilliant plan.”³¹ The three concerti were subject to characteristics that permeated much of the music that was composed within Latvia at the time. Dr. Ilma Grauzdiņa of the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, when discussing the concerti stated: “All of these works share a basic tone: they are dominated by impassioned, lyrically dramatic feelings, which the cello’s resonance most likely dictated to the author of each piece.”³²

Ivanovs’ *Cello Concerto in b minor* was composed in three movements: *Allegro moderato*, *Adagio/Andante*, and *Moderato/Allegro*. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, was composed in a modified sonata form. The second and third movements both employed a three-part form, however devoid of the standard two-theme development of sonata form; the second and third movements make use of a ternary form (A B A’). The third movement, while a ternary

³⁰ Jurjāns was the first Latvian professional composer and classicist of Latvian music. He represented the romanticism of 19th century Europe that was liked with national schools, patriotic themes and folk music. His musical style was shaped by Russian musical traditions and German romanticism as well as deep influence by Latvian folk music. Mediņš, a Latvian composer, who was one of the conductors of the Latvian National Opera starting in 1920 and, from 1928 to 1944. He was the conductor of the newly founded Latvian Radio Orchestra.

³¹ Jānis Ivanovs, *Instrumentālie koncerti*, Latvia: Tuviem un Taliem, 2008.

³² Ibid.

form, also serves a primary role in the overall macro formal organization of the piece as it recalls thematic material from the first movement.

The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, composed in a sonata form with several subtle yet significant modifications, consists of an exposition (measure 1 to 56), a development (measure 86 to 132), re-transition (measure 133 to 139), and recapitulation (measure 140 to 157). The last four measures marked *pesante* serving as a short coda. As expected of the exposition, the main theme is presented by solo cello in measure 2 following a brief introduction firmly establishing b minor as the key center. (Example 2)

Example 2. 1st movement, the main theme ³³



This impassioned theme sets the tone for the whole concerto. The opening interval of a minor second (F sharp to G) is quickly broadened to a minor sixth (F sharp to D) which sets into motion a lyrically passionate descent weaving chromaticism into the melody creating a push to a cadence in the subdominant (e minor). This 'half cadence-like' pause is followed by a temporary modulation of the first theme up by half step placing it within the key center of c minor. The following measures (13 to 43) serve as a secondary segment of the opening theme. To develop the first theme Ivanovs uses the rhythms and descending chromatic figure of the opening theme

³³ Original score from the National Library of Latvia.

in transpositions beginning on Eb (m.14), G (m.18), B (m.25), and D# (m.28). This leads into a restatement of the main theme now performed by the entire orchestra (m.44). This section is once again firmly in b minor. (Example 3)

Example 3. 1st movement, the main theme played by the orchestra (m.44)

The second theme is presented from measure 58 again following a one-measure introduction that shifts the key center out of b minor. Traditionally, in sonata form, one would expect the key center to be placed within that of the dominant, however, Ivanovs modifies the traditional harmonic progression of sonata form. Ivanovs uses the introductory measure (m. 57) to establish the dominant (F-sharp) pitch class within the tonal spectrum, but places it within an A-flat seventh chord with a raised fifth. The F-sharp permeates the harmonic texture as expected, but is colored by the presence of A-flats. In a style reminiscent of Dvorak's *Cello*

Concerto the second theme, shorter in length, continues with fast, even note values in presentation through to where the development begins.

The development begins in measure 86 and is clearly identifiable by a change in mood. The lyrical and rhythmically simple melodies of the exposition give way to a much more technical line of sixteenth notes in measures 86 to 90. (Example 4)

Example 4. 1st movement, *piu mosso* (m. 86)

The image shows a musical score for two staves, treble and bass clef, in 4/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music is marked 'Piu mosso'. The score shows measures 86 to 90. The melody is highly technical, featuring sixteenth notes, triplets, and various ornaments. The first staff has a circled '8' at the beginning. The second staff has a circled '9' at the beginning.

This somewhat abrupt meter and technical diversion ends just as quickly as it began as the first theme is immediately developed in measure 91. (Example 5)

Example 5. 1st movement, *Tempo I* (m. 90)

The image displays a musical score for Example 5, 1st movement, *Tempo I* (m. 90). The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system shows a piano introduction with a dynamic marking of *p* and a *Tutti* section starting at measure 6 with a dynamic marking of *f* and *col ped.*. The second system continues the development with a dynamic marking of *f* and the word *Fiat* at the end. Handwritten annotations include a circled '6' above the first system and various markings above the second system.

Material from the first and second themes is developed continuously throughout the following measures. The primary focus of the development is derived from the interplay of half steps between dotted half notes initially stated in the first theme (m. 2).

In measure 112, *piu mosso*, a return to the technical sixteenth note material from measure 86 is presented this time combined with triplets. (Example 6)

Example 6. 1st movement, *piu mosso* (m. 112)

The musical score for Example 6, 1st movement, *piu mosso* (m. 112) is presented in five staves. The first staff is marked "Piu mosso" and contains a circled "8". The music is in 2/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and slurs. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, triplets, and dynamic markings.

This time, however, instead of ending abruptly, this technical passage continues as Ivanovs' scoring joins the disjunct line of the cello with more development of lyrical material, this time inspired by the second theme. As the cello continues its triplets the horn and trumpet enter with melodic content that shifts the focus of the cello's line from solo to accompaniment. (Example

7)

Example 7. 1st movement (m. 122)

Retransitional material occurs from measures 133 to 139 as the development comes to an end. The use of trills in the cello on a C recalls the interplay of a minor second that immediately resolves by half step found in measure 2. As to be expected a downward resolution from C to B takes place between measure 138 and 139 thus beginning the recapitulation once again in the key of b minor.

The short recapitulation is once again a modification made by the composer of the traditional sonata form. As expected b minor is firmly established throughout the entirety of the recapitulation but instead of a restatement of both themes, the themes are joined together creating one central idea. In addition the cello rests for the remainder of the movement while the orchestra plays the Recapitulation. The second theme serves as material that leads directly into a short coda in b minor. (Example 8)

Example 8. Coda of the 1st movement, *pesante* (M. 154 to the end)

The musical score for the coda of the first movement is marked *Pesante* and *sempre ff*. It consists of two staves. The first staff contains a series of chords, with a handwritten *adagio* above it. The second staff contains a series of chords, with a handwritten *adagio* above it. The piece concludes with a final cadence, marked with a double bar line and a fermata. Handwritten annotations include *div* below the first staff and *adagio* above the second staff.

The second movement, *Adagio/Andante*, composed in a ternary form (A – m. 1 to 23, B – m. 31 to 86, and A' – m. 87 to 114) fulfills a traditional role as the slow movement within the concerto form. The highly dramatic quality of this movement's theme is achieved once again through the use of a large leap that is then filled in with stepwise motion. The opening A section begins with an introduction given by the horns in the key center of E-flat. (Example 9)

Example 9. 2nd movement (m. 1)

The musical score for the beginning of the second movement is marked *Adagio* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 66-69$. It consists of two staves. The first staff is for the Horns (*Corni pp*) and the second staff is for the Bassoon (*Fag.*). The Violoncelli (*V-celli poco marcato*) part is indicated by a bracket above the second staff. The score begins with a horn introduction in E-flat major, marked with a circled *II* and a *V* above the first staff.

This chorale-like beginning sets the stage for the cello to enter with the main theme in measure 8.

The main theme presented here, although within the key area of E-flat, possess a certain modal

exoticism that arises from the consistent use of the notes C-flat and D-flat within its line.

(Example 10)

Example 10. 2nd movement, modal main theme (m. 8)

After the initial presentation of the theme, the horns once again present the chorale-like passage.

Following this short interlude, the main theme is revisited, this time in the clarinet.

The B section (m. 31 to 86) begins as the clarinet plays the closing notes of the main theme and new material is presented in the orchestra in the form of forward pushing triplets and an inversion of the initial downward leap of a fifth that characterized the opening notes of the main theme. This section contains two beautiful melodic lines that are both prominent within the texture and form a dialogue between them. The first melody (m. 32 to 39) is played by flute, clarinet, and oboe while the cello provides accompaniment. (Example 11)

Example 11. 2nd movement (m32)

The musical score shows a complex texture with multiple layers. The top staff contains a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics. The piano accompaniment is characterized by intricate rhythmic patterns, including triplets and quintuplets. The woodwinds (Corni, Cl., Ob., Fl.) provide harmonic support and melodic counterpoints, with dynamic markings ranging from piano (p) to forte (f).

Following the presentation of the second melodic line of the B section, a modulation occurs in measure 48 that brings the movement into the concerto's home key of b minor. This modulation ushers in the beginning of the push towards the climatic high point of the movement. The interpolation between duple and triple figures in the melody increases the overall dramatic build to the line. Peppered with multiple tempo markings indicating *accelerando* and a general build in dynamic from measures 48 to 69, the climax is reached in measure 70 in the key center of c minor. The continual mixture of rhythmic figures between quintuplets, triplets, and duple figures reinforces the highly dramatic quality of the climax.

The return of the A section occurs in measure 93 as the cello once again plays the main theme of the second movement. Although the accompaniment is different than that of the original A section, the thematic material is virtually identical. After the cello presents the

thematic material a variation on the chorale-like feature that began the movement is presented once again in the horns this time with the cello joining in as well. The movement ends as solemnly as it began. (Example 12)

Example 12. 2nd movement (m.100 to the end)

The image displays a musical score for the 2nd movement, Example 12, spanning from measure 100 to the end. The score is written for a string quartet and woodwinds. The top staff is the first violin, followed by the second violin, then the viola and cello. The bottom two staves are for the bassoon and double bass. The key signature is B minor (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (pp, p), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (poco). Handwritten annotations in red ink are present, including a large 'V' and 'poco' markings. The woodwind parts are labeled 'Corni' and 'Fag.'.

The third movement, *Moderato/Allegro*, composed in a large three-part form (A B A'), makes use of new thematic material of its own accord, but also brings the concerto full circle as thematic material from the first movement is recalled.

The opening A section begins with a dramatic harmonic pronouncement in the orchestra firmly declaring b minor once again. What follows is the first of two short unaccompanied cello

cadenzas. Instead of using the term 'cadenza' Ivanovs labels these passages *Rubato, recitativo*.

This opening cadenza section does not yet provide any main thematic material for the movement, but is developmental in nature, recalling rhythmic motivic elements from the first two movements. The opening four measures of the recitative also seem to provide foreshadowing of what will become the main theme of the movement, although the rhythm is not identical.

(Example 13)

Example 13. 3rd movement, *recitativo, rubato* (m. 3)

Following the close of the first recitative in measure 16, another orchestral interlude takes place, once again in b minor. After this short interruption, the cello again enters *recit. rubato*. The use of recitative (cadenza) within the movement also provides a climactic dramatic highpoint to the work that brings the emotional quality of the entire piece to a point. The emotional motivic declarations of the recitative create a somewhat tarantella-like quality throughout the movement. This time the action is much more dramatic with highly technical

passages that lead into the first presentation of the main theme of the third movement. (Example 14) The *allegro moderato* begins in measure 35.

Example 14. 3rd movement, main theme (m. 29)



With the beginning of the *allegro moderato* the main theme is finally presented in its true form. Again Ivanovs precedes the cello entrance with another four beat introduction in the orchestra. (Example 15)

Example 15. 3rd movement (m. 35)

The middle B section of the third movement, beginning at the *meno mosso*, (m. 64) recalls the languid lyric melody from the second movement. This melody is presented by bassoon and horns, and is preceded again by a four beat introduction. (Example 16)

Example 16. 3rd movement, *meno mosso* (m. 64)

In measure 95, marked *piu mosso*, Ivanovs recalls material of the first movement. The cello continues its sixteenths, triplets and trills to develop melodic content in the B section. This leads to a revisiting of the main theme from the first movement. Development of this material leads into the final restatement of the third movement's main theme in measure 135.

The final A' section of this movement (m. 135 to 148), marked *allegro*, restates the main theme one last time. After a short statement of the theme, groups of trills connect to a second statement of the theme that then pushes into a coda. The coda (m. 149 to 156) utilizing dramatic upward scales of sixteenth notes creates strong alternations between the dominant and tonic

harmonies. Thus firmly establishing once and for all the key area of b minor. The cello finishes with dramatic rising scale passages and sforzando double stops. (Example 17)

Example 17. Section A' and Coda of the cello

The image displays a handwritten musical score for cello, consisting of six systems of staves. The first system begins with a circled measure number '24'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents (>), and dynamic markings like 'mf' and 'sf'. The score features a mix of melodic lines and block chords. The second system contains wavy lines above the staff, likely indicating vibrato or a specific performance technique. The third system includes a circled measure number '28'. The fourth system shows a melodic line with a wavy line above it. The fifth system features a melodic line with a wavy line above it and a double bar line. The sixth system shows a melodic line with a wavy line above it and a double bar line. The score concludes with a final double bar line.

Chapter 5

Early Performances

Listeners first heard Ivanovs' cello concerto in Riga on March 12, 1939. Cellist Atis Teihmanis and the Latvijas Radiofons Symphony Orchestra led by Jānis Mediņš performed the piece. At that time Teihmanis, a native of Liepāja, was one of the best cellists in Latvia. He had studied under Professor Alfrēd Ozoliņš at the Latvian Conservatory from 1925 to 1930 and he had trained in Paris and Salzburg. From 1932 to 1944, Teihmanis worked as a soloist and principal cello with the Radiofons Orchestra.³⁴

Example 16. Atis Teihmanis (1907- 1987)³⁵



³⁴ Jānis Ivanovs, *Instrumentālie koncerti*, Latvia: Tuviem un Taliem, 2008.

³⁵ Ibid

During the war, the score for Ivanovs' cello concerto was lost, but the composer rewrote the work from memory in 1945. Cellist Ernests Bertovskis performed this second edition of the concerto several times. He also frequently performed the second movement apart from the concerto in various versions with organ, piano, and in an arrangement for cello ensemble.

Bertovskis, another Liepāja native, began his cello studies at the conservatory in 1940, training under Atis Teihmanis. He grew into a first class professional musician in the first years after the war, when he studied with Ēvalds Berzinsks. Bertovskis always reserved a special place in his repertoire for works by Latvian composers.³⁶

Example 17. Ernests Bertovskis (1924- 1996)³⁷



³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 6

Final Thoughts

Jānis Ivanovs' *Cello Concerto in b minor* epitomizes all that is representative of Ivanovs post Romantic style. Since the piece is considered standard repertoire in Latvia, performed frequently by students studying music aging 17 and up, this piece is accessible by a wide range of performers. Even still there are a number of technical and musical issues that a less experienced performer must consider when studying this piece.

- Correct interpretation of Ivanovs' post-Romantic style
- Facility of rhythmically technical passages
- Facility of hand shifts and double stops
- Facility of performing with good intonation

The most important issue to tackle when studying and performing this piece is a correct interpretation of Ivanovs' style. Quick shifts of color within the musical line require extra attention. The way in which the bow is used in order to facilitate the execution of musical phrases must be considered. For much of the piece a very connected bowing will produce a more focused sound.

Bringing out articulations such as accents and tenuto's requires attention to bow speed and distribution as well. A performer must be able to properly execute shifting between lyrically connected moments and more detached dance-like figures. Dynamics, bow speed and vibrato are all connected within the piece. Since many of the musical lines are longer and Ivanovs' writing creates longer musical ideas vibrato is wider and continual throughout the phrase.

Another issue to consider in addition to style is how to handle the rhythmically technical passages within the piece. Whereas the main themes of the work or not taxing, the rhythmic

developments of those themes require a firm understanding of polyrhythms. In addition to possessing good internal pulse, the performer must be able to execute duple and triple rhythmic figures against each other while also performing quintuplets and other larger groupings of notes. The style of the piece effects the execution of these figures as emphasis should be given to certain notes based upon the agogic weight of certain passages. Other rhythmic passages require a strong adherence to pulse. In the first and third movements, sixteenth notes must be kept absolutely even as the tempo pushes forward.

Due to the highly lyrical nature of the piece hand shifts must occur smoothly so as to not create any breaks in the line. Transition from first position to thumb position is common and requires special attention to maintain proper intonation and a consistency in tone quality. Double stops, effecting hand position as well, require special attention. In addition emphasis with the bow on the lower string results in a balanced and focused sound when executing all double stops, including octaves. This emphasis on the lower string allows the performer flexibility to adjust whereas equal pressure on multiple strings freezes the left hand and restricts dynamic and color changes in the right hand. Awareness of the musical line created through the double stops is of key importance.

The use of chromaticism and the use of stepwise motion within much of the melodic content of the piece creates urgency for special attention to be made to intonation. Careful placement of half steps within chromatic passages is necessary in order to insure proper intonation with the accompaniment. String crossing and hand shifting also has a strong effect on intonation and should be approached with diligence in order to insure proper intonation is achieved.

Jānis Ivanovs was an accomplished and prominent Latvian composer of the middle 20th century whose works deserve to be performed more often outside the borders of Latvia.

Although he is mostly famous for his 21 symphonies, his *Cello Concerto in b minor* is also a true treasure worthy of being considered as an important work of the standard cello literature.

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APPENDIX A

List of Works by Jānis Ivanovs

Etudes and Variations in F sharp minor for piano (1930)

Piano Sonata (1931)

String Quartet No.1 (1932)

Symphony No. 1 (1933)

“The Song of Latgalian Shepherd (Latgales gana dziesma)” for voice and accompaniment (1935)

“Pictures from Latgalian Landscapes”, suite No.1 for orchestra (1935)

“In My Homeland (Manas dzimtenes puse)” for voice and accompaniment (1936)

“On the Sauleskalns (Sauleskalna)” for voice and accompaniment (1937)

“The Faith of a Ploughman (Araja ticiba)” for voice and accompaniment (1937)

“Land, Land, Daugava (Zeme, zeme, Daugavina)” for voice and accompaniment (1937)

Symphony No, 2 in D minor (1937)

Concerto for cello and orchestra in B minor (1938)

“Evening of Agluna (Aglunas vakars)” for voice and accompaniment (1938)

“The Cloudy Mountain (Padebesu kalns)”, symphonic sketch for orchestra (1938)

Symphony No.3 in F minor (1938)

“Rainbow (Varaviksne)”, symphonic sketch for orchestra (1939)

“Legend (Legenda)” for wind orchestra (1940)

“Razna”, poem for wind orchestra (1940)

“Solemn Prelude (Sviniga preludija)”, for symphony orchestra (1940)

Festive Prologue for orchestra (1940)

Symphony No.4 “Atlantis” in E flat minor for orchestra and women’s chorus (1941)

“Land of Mara (Maras zeme)” for voice and accompaniment (1943)

Symphony No.5 in C major (1945)

String Quartet No.2 in C minor (1946)

Variation for piano in E minor (1948)

Symphony No.6 “Latgale” (1949)

Concerto for violin and orchestra (1951)

Five Preludes for piano (1952)

Symphony No.7 in C minor (1953)

Symphony No. 8 in B minor (1956)

Music to the film “The Fisherman’s Son (Zvejnieka dēls), suite for symphony orchestra (1956)

Music Paintings from the film “Frost in Spring (Salna pavasari)”, suite for symphony orchestra (1956)

“Bear–Ripper (Lāčplēsis)”, symphonic poem (1957)

Variations- Etudes in F sharp minor for piano (1959)

Concerto for piano and orchestra in G minor (1959)

Overture Svētku uvertūra (Celebratory Overture) for wind orchestra (1959)

Symphony No. 9 (1960)

Andante for cello quartet (1961) – string orchestra

“Sonata Brevis” for piano (1962)

“Novella brevis” for brass band (1962)

Poema Capricciosa for violin and piano (1963)

Symphony No. 10 (1963)

Svinīgā prelūdiņa (Solemn Prelude) for wind orchestra (1963)

Vocalisations for mixed choir (1964)

1. An Autumn Son (Rudens dziesma)
2. Migratory Birds (Gajputni)
3. A Rainy Day (Lietaina diena)
4. Cumulus (Gubu makoni)
5. A Drawing (Zimejums)
6. Mist (Migla)
7. A Native Landscape (Dzimtenes ainava)
8. Memory of the Heroes (Varonu pieminai)
9. A Prelude (Preludija)
10. A Wintry Morning (Ziemas rīts)
11. An Elegy (Elegija)
12. Devotion (Jusma)

“Andante Replicato” for piano

Symphony No. 11 in E flat major (1965)

Twenty-four sketches for piano (1966)

“Sorrowful Poem (Poema Luttuosa)” for string orchestra (1966)

Poema capriccios/ Duo for cello and piano (1966)

Symphony No. 12 “Sinfonia energica” (1967)

Overture Svētku uvertīra (Celebratory Overture) for symphony orchestra (1967)

Symphony No. 13 “Symphonia Humana” (1969)

Symphony No. 14 “Sinfonia da camera” for string orchestra (1971)

Symphony No. 15 “Sinfonia Ipsa” (1972)

Three exercises for piano, sonatina for piano (1973)

Poem for chamber orchestra and chamber choir (1973)

Symphony No. 16 (1974)

Trio for violin, cello, and piano (1976)

Symphony No. 17 in C major (1976)

Sinfonietta for string orchestra (1977)

Symphony No. 18 (1977)

“Song (Dziesma), poem for choir and orchestra (1978)

Symphony No. 19 (1979)

Symphony No. 20 (1981)

Five Preludes for piano (1982)

Symphony No. 21 (1983)

Symphony No. 22 (1983) – Unfinished

Other Works:

“Blue Lake”, symphonic poem

Chamber Symphony