

William Walton and the Violin Concerto in England between 1900 and 1940: from Elgar to Britten

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WILLIAM WALTON
and
THE CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN IN
ENGLAND BETWEEN THE 1900 AND
1940
from Elgar to Britten

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To William and Susana Walton

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My family that supports my education with love and wisdom.

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PREFACE

The aim of this dissertation is to present a study and an historical-musicological analysis of the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra of Sir William Walton, discussing more specifically the shape of the Concerto for Violin in England between 1900 and 1940, taking in consideration the works of Charles Villiers Stanford, Edward Elgar, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Frederick Delius, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Arthur Somervell, Arnold Bax and Benjamin Britten.

The thesis is divided in three parts:

- the first discusses the Concertos for Violin and Orchestra of the composers active in England between 1900 and 1920: Stanford*, Elgar, Coleridge-Taylor, Delius.
- the second discusses the Concertos for Violin and Orchestra of the composers active in England between 1920 and 1940: Vaughan Williams, Somervell, Bax, Britten.
- The third part discusses the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra of William Walton.

At the beginning there is a brief digression on the shape of the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra between the XIX and XX century in Europe, aimed to provide base knowledge of the characteristics of this musical form and to initiate a comparison between the various national composing styles.

Each part is introduced by means of a generic historical-musical description of England and presents, after a biographical exposition of the composers, a formal, structural, harmonic and aesthetic analysis more or less extensive of the single concerts, along with a study of the technical aspects of the performance and a reflection on the composer-performer relationship. At the end of each part a comparative compendium is presented.

The first and second part are entirely developed in function of the third, that discusses exclusively and in a more detailed manner the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra of William Walton, the work that provoked the most interest in me.

To conclude the introduction, in the appendix there are some unpublished quotes, gained during the research work for this dissertation, given by well-known composers, regarding some of the discussed concertos, particularly in relation to Walton's. I believe this to be a precious contribution, that enriches and completes a reflection started in the dissertation, on the purely technical aspect of music for violin of British composers in the first half of the XIX century.

* Concerto in D major Op.74 (1899), last concerto for violin and orchestra of the XIX century in England.

THE CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA

On starting a musicology investigation on the Violin Concerto in England between 1900 and 1940, seems to be useful to precede some observations on the profile of this musical form in Europe between the XIX and XX century, in order to assess, with a comparative point of view, the different national styles that characterized it and the different intentions and compositional that governed it.¹

The classical period, between the end of the Eighteenth century and the first Nineteenth century, was a period of intense changes. The Concerto for violin was adjusted in accordance with the principles of sonata form, which gradually went to replace the baroque form of the refrain, the presence of the rondo as third movement and the double exposure was definitively affirmed. The cadences were settled and the use of continuous went disappearing; orchestral accompaniment was usually in homophonic style, providing for a lighter texture, especially in the sections of only. The melodies of the violin became more singable and the writing in the registers of the instrument was increased, this is because the improvement of technical continued to show new possibilities for the instrumental practice. Lastly, with the apparition of the modern bow from 1780, by Francois Tourte, the attention was turned to the purity of the sound and to the implementation of a sound supported; furthermore, with the introduction of a new type of chinrest, was strongly favorite the ability of the left hand and so a more complex writing. From the second half of XIX century, on the basis of typically Romantic expressions and idioms, further changes were made to the form of the concert. The form of the refrain was definitively abandoned in favour of sonata form and cyclical form, with a significant formal expansion of the first movement, especially in final codas; it was abandoned the use of double exposure.

The second slow movement, initially linked to the last one and conceived as his introduction, became an independent movement. The final, incorporating national elements, could use melodies and rhythms of popular dances and sometimes be in the form of scherzo. The cadences

¹ Arnaldo Bonaventura *Storia del violino, dei violinisti e della musica per violino*, Ed.Lampi di Stampa;

Robin Stowell *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, Cambridge University Press;

Mark Katz *The Violin: A Research and Information Guide*, Routledge;

Michael Thomas Roeder *A history of the concerto* Amadeus Press

were now an integral part of the concerto form and often were the same composers to devote themselves to the writing of these. The section of the solo, that it was increasingly characterizing as virtuoso, often accompanied the orchestral tutti; the lyrical possibilities of the violin were emphasized. During the first romantic period orchestral interventions were reduced to a minimum, while during the second half of the century was favoured a symphonic use of the orchestra. The writing, that preferred the use of minor tonalities, included the presence of chromatisms and modulations to remote tonalities through rhythmic drawings more and more complex, the frequent use of syncopated and changes of time. The violin technique was perfecting further with the use of effects such as harmonics, false harmonics, left hand pizzicato and through bow strokes, as spiccato, ricochet and picchettato.

The wide repertoire of Concertos for violin and orchestra of the XIX century consists of the work of three different groups of composers.

The first of these is represented by those musicians strongly related to the traditional form of the classical period, which sees in the Concertos for violin of Louis Spohr (1784-1859) and Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) the maximum expression.

In particular the Concerto for violin and orchestra in E minor, Op. 74 of Mendelssohn, composed between 1838 and the 1844, certainly one of the most fascinating works of the whole violin repertory, embodies through the singing and purity of its themes and through the energy and virtuosity of the solo writing, the emotional feeling of the romantic artist.

The German composer, although linked to the form in three movements of the classical concerto, introduces the idea of unity requesting an execution without pause between a movement and the other, moving in this way to the cyclic form.

The second group is represented by composers-violinists as Nicolò Paganini (1784-1840), Charles de Bériot (1802-1870), Henry Wieniawski (1835-1880), Henry Vieuxtemps (1828-1901), whose writing appears totally to the service of solo virtuosity, as maximum expression of the technical possibilities of the violin.

The second half of the 19th century was a period historically marked by several political and social changes and with the statement and the growth of the principle of nationality, the National music schools were born.

The third group consists of composers violin of some of these schools, as: Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), Robert Schumann (1810-1856), Edouard Carlo (1823-1892), Joseph Joachim (1831-1907), Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), Max Bruch (1834-1920), Camille Saint Saens (1835-1921), all inspired by musical culture of their country.

For example the Concerto of Tchaikovsky, written in 1878, one of the first Russian concertos for violin, has a strong national character not only for the presence as third movement of the Russian dance called

Trepak, but also for the presence of themes and melodies of the popular tradition.

Tchaikovsky dedicated the Concerto to Leopold Auer, one of the greatest violin teacher of the Twentieth century. The use of dedicating a concerto to a particular performer will become a common custom during the Twentieth century, as we will see .

Of the same year,1878, is the Violin Concerto in D major op. 77 of Johannes Brahms, one of the most representative concertos of the romantic epoch; in three movements, dedicated to Joseph Joachim, was defined by Wieniawski "un playable" and Pablo de Sarasate refused to play it.

The writing for a solo instrument is technically complex and plans the frequent use of double stops, quick passages of scales and arpeggios, numerous rhythmic variations.

After we have briefly recalled the evolution of the concerto for violin and orchestra between the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth century, we want to consider now its progresses and changes during the

Twentieth century, presenting realities of this form, contemporaneous to Britannic one, object of our study.

The Twentieth century was for the musical writing a period of intense linguistic, stylistic and formal transformations both in symphonic composition and in instrumental.

One of the first concertos for violin of the Twentieth century is the neo-romantic Concerto in D minor op.47 of Jean Sibelius (1865-1957), composed in 1903 and revisited in 1905. Virtuosity and melodies of Nordic atmospheres are balanced "...in an important orchestral and a dazzling solo writing" ².

In the first movement, allegro in sonata form, the development section is substituted by a wide cadenza

that starts over a timpani roller, in place of the classic figuration of arpeggio presents in the concertos of the XVIII century.

The second movement, adagio in form of romanza, opens with the only orchestra which introduces the lyric and dramatic melody of the violin, accompanied in the first part by dissonances of brass.

² J.Herbage The Concerto, Ralph Hill

The last movement, in form of rondo, is structured on a clear rhythmic drawing announced by timpani and low strings, that the solo will develop virtuosistically with variations of double stops, broken octaves, harmonics and trills.

Other concertos definable neo-romantic are the Concerto in A minor, op.82 of Alexander Glazunov (1865-1932), written in 1904 in brilliant style and organized with a unitary structure that links the three movements between them and the cadenza: the Concerto op. 33 of the Danish Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) of 1911 and the Concerto in D major op. 35 of Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957), composed in 1945, dedicated to Alma Mahler and performed for the first time in 1947 by Jascha Heifetz.

The neo-romantic Concerto in A major op. 101 of Max Reger (1873-1915), written in 1908, with “.. him strongly chromatic language, extended significantly the limits of the tonality”, influencing the composer

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) and the Second Wiener School, constituted in Vienna between 1903 and 1925, by a group of composers directed by Arnold Schoenberg and his scholars Anton Webern (1883-1945) and Alban Berg (1885-1935). From a post-romantic music writing, through a chromatic atonal expressionism, the Second Wiener School shored to the dodecaphonic serial technique of Schoenberg. The Violin Concerto op.36 of Arnold Schoenberg, was written in America during his “voluntary” exile from the Nazi Germany. Schoenberg wrote about his work: “I’m happy to add to the repertory another unplayable piece”. The Concerto, in which is used the dodecaphonic technique, is in the traditional form of three movements and the violin writing is so complex, that a famous violinist of the time said to the composer: “You will have to wait a violinist with six fingers to play it” and Schoenberg answered “I can wait.”.

The first performance was the 6 December 1940 with the violinist Louis Krasner and the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

Louis Krasner was the one who commissioned in 1935 to Alban Berg the writing of a violin concerto.

During those years Berg was working to his Lulu and was the death of his close friend, Manon Gropius, daughter of Alma Mahler and Walter Gropius, to convince him to work at the Concerto, giving it the character of a Requiem and dedicating it “To the memory of an angel”.

The concerto is composed by two parts, each one is divided into two sections that “making an emotional unity”³.

The first part, the most static, opens with a dreaming *Andante* in sonata form, with an arpeggio of the four open strings of the violin, G - D - A - E, followed by an *Allegretto*, a movement of dance with two trios, the first one a waltz and the second one a landler, a typical popular dance of the Carinzia.

The second part, which violently contrasting with the first one, opens with an *Allegro* “ which is concluded with a climax of terrifying effect”, then followed by an serene *Adagio* based on the choral “Es ist genug” of J.S. Bach.

The writing of Berg uses the dodecaphonic technique and the serial use of the chromatic scales, favoring a complex treatment of the orchestral interventions, in oppositions or in support of the soloist, which tests

virtuosistic elements as octaves, harmonics, arpeggios on four strings, left hand pizzicato.

The Violin Concerto in D major of Igor Stravinsky, written in 1931 for the violinist Samuel Dushkin, is considered one of the greatest examples of neo-classic style. This style, developed between the two World Wars, is characterized by a return to balanced and clearly perceptible thematic structures, which use the tonality and the modality to reproduce the tonal system of the baroque style concerto or of the first wieners school of Mozart and Haydn.

The movement's titles *Toccata*, *Aria*, *Capriccio*, suggesting the clear intent of the composer to recover the concertato style typically baroque.

The same Stravinsky underlined the affinities between the finale of his Concerto and the Concerto for two violins of J.S.Bach, his favourite violin, in particular: “... the duet of the solo violin with a violin of the orchestra”.

The orchestration of the Concerto is in a chamber style and not in a symphonic style, as for the most part

of the nineteenth century concertos, and there aren't cadenzas, not being Stravinsky interested to the virtuosistic instrumental aspect. “ Virtuosity end in itself occupied a little part in my Concerto and I think that technique difficulties of the piece are relatively modest”.

³ M.Carner The Concerto, Ralph Hill

Composed in Switzerland in 1939 during the exile from the Nazi Germany, Paul Hindemith wrote his Concerto for Violin and Orchestra as expression of a moment of agitation for the spread of the Second World War.

During the 1939 in Switzerland also another composer was working to a concerto for violin, Samuel Barber (1910-1981). His Concerto op. 14 is in three movements: the first one Allegro, opens with a solo cantabile of the violin, without any orchestral accompaniment; all the movement seems to have more the character of a sonata than a concerto. In the second movement the introduction of one oboe anticipates the intervention of rhapsodic theme of the violin, and then reappears again at the end of the movement.

The final Presto is the movement of the solo virtuosity.

Another work written in 1939 is the Violin Concerto in A minor of Ernest Bloch (1880-1959), dedicated to Joseph Szigeti.

In Italy the violin literature was enriched by the Concerto in D major op. 35 of Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924), written 1899, and by the Concerto Gregoriano of Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936), which structure is based on the introduction of the violin of thematic fragments of early music.

The Twentieth century was for West Europe and Russia a moment of identity recognize and of absolute capacity in instrumental composition.

The Hungarian composer Bela Bartok (1881-1945) wrote two violin concertos. The Concerto No.1, composed between 1907 and 1908, dedicated to the violinist Stefi Geyer, was published posthumous in 1956. The Concerto is structured into two movements, Andante sostenuto and Allegro giocoso.

The Concerto No. 2, composed between 1937 and 1938, dedicated to the Hungarian violinist Zoltan Szekely, is written in the verbunkos style, a dance and a Hungarian musical genre of the XVII century. The concerto is in three movements Allegro, Andante, Allegro. The first movement Allegro non troppo is in sonata form in the tonality of B minor; the second movement Andante tranquillo is in the form of theme and variations (six) in G major. The last movement, Allegro molto, in sonata and cyclic form, presents variations of the opening movement.

The Polish composer Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937), composed the Violin Concerto No. 1, op. 35 in 1916, and the Violin Concerto op. 61 in 1933. While the Concerto No. 1 was written during an impressionistic phase, the Concerto No. 2 was inspired by popular music of the Polish region Tatra.

Composers like Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953), Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978), Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) contributed with their works to the formation of a wider violin concertos repertory in Russia.

The Concerto No. 1 in D major of Prokofiev, written between 1916 and 1917, is divided into three movements *Andantino*, *Scherzo*, *Moderato*, in cyclic form and with the use of a reduced orchestration.

The Concerto No. 2 in G minor op. 63, composed by Prokofiev in 1935, is in three movements *Allegro*, *Andante*, *Allegro* and opens with a simple melody derived from the popular repertory of the Russian music, then elaborated during the first two movements.

The finale develops a theme of rondo echoing Hispanic atmosphere. Prokofiev wrote: " The number of places in which I wrote this Concerto reveals the kind of life that I'm obligated to live.

The principal theme of the first movement was written in Paris, the theme of the second movement in Voronezh (Russia), the orchestration was finished in Baku and premiere was given in Madrid".

Khachaturian composed the Violin Concerto in D minor op. 46 during the 1945, he wrote: " when in 1940 I started to think at the Concerto for Violin, my head was full of the sounds of the violin of Oistrakh", to whom then he dedicated the work. The Concerto characterized in him three movements -*Allegro con fermezza*, *Andante sostenuto* and *Allegro vivace*- by the alternation of typical Russian elements as the presence of particular rhythmic figurations and melodic drawings of intense emotional and expressive charge.

Dedicated to David Oistrakh are also the two Violin Concertos of Dmitri Shostakovich.

The Concerto No. 1 in A minor, op. 77, composed between the 1947 and 1948, is divide in four movements -*Nocturne*, *Scherzo*, *Passacaglia*, *Burlesque* - with the presence of a cadenza that link the last two movements.

The Concerto No. 2 in C sharp minor op. 129, the last Concerto of Shostakovich, written in 1967, is structured in three movements, *Moderato*, in sonata form, *Adagio*, divided in three parts with a central cadenza and the final *Allegro* in rondo form.

The form of the Concerto for violin and orchestra was therefore differently conceived and defined during the centuries; the violin literature is today a clear testimony of this continue and complex transformation.

Certainly a transformation determined by several complex factors, as the born of the modern luthiery , the perfecting of the instrumental technique, the diffusion of determinate stylistic current, the affirmation of the virtuosity and of the figure of the soloist, the diffusion of the public concert, the dedication of the concerto to a particular performer or composer.

We think that this brief historical compendium of the Violin Concerto in classic, romantic and modern epoch , could favoring, during the dissertation, the individuation of those elements of affinity and similarity or on the contrary of originality and singularity that characterize and distinguish the violin concertos of British composers of the first half of the Twentieth century from those of their contemporaneous colleagues.

In conclusion we present a chronology of the years of composition of the concertos that we will examine (highlighted in bold) and those above quoted , useful to define with more clarity the temporal order.

1844 Mendelssohn

1878 Tchaikovsky, Brahms

1899 **Stanford** , Busoni

1904 Glazunov

1905 Sibelius

1908 Bartok, Reger

1910 **Elgar**

1911 Nielsen

1912 **Coleridge-Taylor**

1916 **Delius**, Szymanowski

1917 Prokofiev

1921 Respighi

1925 **Vaughan Williams**

1930 **Somervell**

1931 Stravinsky

1933 Szymanowski

1935 Berg, Prokofiev

1936 Schoenberg

1938 **Bax**, Bartok

1939 **Walton, Britten**, Hindemith, Barber, Bloch

1945 Khachaturian

1948 Shostakovich

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

The introduction to part one proposes, starting from the reflections of a German critic of the first Twentieth century, a summary of the history of English music between the Eighteenth and Nineteenth century, useful to define the cultural conditions of a nation and the artistic tendencies of British composers

that precede those examined from us in this dissertation.

In 1914 the German writer and essayist Oskar Adolf Hermann Schmitz published in Monaco "Das Land Ohne Music" (the land without music), text in which the artistic musical incapacity of British composers, and more in general the incapacity of the whole United Kingdom, after Henry Purcell, is polemically sustained .

So during the first decades of the Twentieth century, the United Kingdom was frequently mentioned by critics and scholars of the rest of Europe, strong of their numerous and alive national musical identities, as " the land without music".

On wanting to fully comprehend the conclusions of the critic analysis of Schmitz and the reasons of the diffusion of the expression "land without music", we need to research in the historical and musical events the causes of the "absence" of music in Great Britain between the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth century.

The social and aesthetic evolution of music in Great Britain during the XVIII century, results strongly influenced by the presence , for more than fifty years, of the German composer Georg Friedrich Händel, arrived in England in 1710 , " whose music drama *Rinaldo*, represented in London the following year, steadily introduced the fashion of Italian opera" ⁴.

Different researchers sustain the hypothesis according to whom the natural evolution of British music has been altered, and even stopped, after the death of Purcell in 1695, by the presence of Händel " Is otiose to speculate on which future of the British music could have been without the influence of Händel. Certainly the genius of Purcell didn't have immediate continuers, but his music was admired by many . England would have been able to produce splendid results if it had been given the possibility to arise freely. " ⁵

⁴ Edward Lockspeiser *Dizionario della Musica e dei Musicisti* UTET pp.391

⁵ *ibidem*

In parallel the Italian melodrama of Händel, during the first half of the Eighteenth century, was going to set against a new theatrical comic genre the Ballad Opera or semi-opera, composed of singing and recitation,

whose first production was at the *Beggar's Opera*, with a libretto of John Gay and music inspired by popular melodies of that epoch.

The diffusion and popularity of ballads opera, the formation of a taste for the folkloric element, with a consequent formation of a wide repertory almost exclusively vocal of songs and glees, the lack of national figures able to contribute to the renewal of a musical identity characterized by a strong reference to Purcell, seem to determine, from the second half of the Eighteenth century, a gradual decline of the classical music in England.

The presence in addition of numerous foreign musicians on the British soil, as Francesco Geminiani and Johan Christian Bach in the Eighteenth century, Muzio Clementi and Felix Mendelssohn during the Nineteenth century, considerably obfuscated the modest work of those few English composers, among which William Shield, Charles Dibdin and William Boyce, made inhabits of a "land without music".

This period of difficulty, incapacity, of real music cultural crisis was gradually passed from 1837, year of beginning of the Victorian Period, when through the contribute of numerous British composers, like

John Field (inventor of the pianistic form of the nocturne), William Sterndale Bennett (remembered for his opera *The Bohemian Girl* of 1843) and Arthur Sullivan (author of the famous *Savoy Operas*), a slow formation of a new national music identity was determined.

Hubert Parry (active in the field of choral music) and Sir Charles Stanford, of which we will analyze the Violin Concerto, were among the protagonists of the English musical Renaissance, happened in the late

"The development of democratic institutions strongly influenced the musical activity, at first in a worldly sphere and then on tendencies and style of composers which ended that period so poor of original music creations"⁶.

In 1878 concert organizations were founded, as the "People's Concert Society", which put them side by side to those born during the Eighteenth century, with the purpose of making accessible the listening of classical music to all social classes, ending in this way the elitist fruition of music

⁶ ivi, pp.392

in England, favoring anyway the diffusion of music written by foreign composers, often taken as model by British composers.

Not much careful to the contemporaneous tendencies was Sir Edward Elgar, “undoubtedly the composer of this period in which is always fully expressed the national spirit”⁷ that, as Charles Stanford and Frederick Delius, the last composer of the “Renaissance” generation, we will examine widely in next chapters.

The British Musical Renaissance, definition used for the first time in 1882 by a music journalist of the Daily Telegraph⁸, Joseph Bennett, represented a moment of artistic capacity of incredible vigour that permitted to the Great Britain to offer a new national style at the rest of Europe and to become an active and productive music reality.

After having briefly recalled music historical events in Great Britain in the period between Purcell and Elgar, we want to come back to consider the text of Schmitz and in particular the expression “the land without music”. We were proposed to comprehend the motivation and the reasons of this expression.

The Great Britain lived its moment of cultural crises during the XVIII century, when, as we recalled, the lack of national composers able to fill the artistic void leaved by Henry Purcell, the born of a popular genre like that of ballads opera and the presence in British soil of some among the most appreciated foreign musicians, determined the absence of one music national style, the fall of the opera and instrumental music and the emergence of a constant request, in particular from England, of “imported” music models.

“The land without music” seems therefore an inappropriate definition for the Victorian Great Britain, which on the contrary was able to give life to a renewed national music identity and determined that phase in the British music called “Renaissance”, of which Sullivan, Stanford and Parry were artificers.

The thesis of Schmitz, according to whom the Great Britain hasn’t been able to evolve musically, seems to not consider or to not comprehend, maybe because it was written in 1914 when the importance of the phenomenon of the “Renaissance” wasn’t understand.

The reasons of the use of the expression “land without music”, extended to the British music reality of the end of the Nineteenth century seem so rooted in a behavior of German critics and

⁷ *ibidem*

⁸ Merion Hughes *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press 1850-1914: Watchmen of Music*, Ashgate 2002

scholars, in clear anti-English polemic, inspired by a strong nationalistic component, unable to recognize the originality and the artistic authenticity of new British composers.

The study of the Concerto for Violin in England between 1900 and 1940, will be anticipated from some considerations on the last of the British concertos for violin of the XIX century, the Violin Concerto of Charles Stanford, written during the 1899.

EDWARD ELGAR

CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA IN E MINOR OP.61

"I wish Elgar would write something for the violin....it would be certainly effective"⁹ with these words the violinist Fritz Kreisler exhorted the British composer during an interview to the Hereford Times in 1905, to write a violin concerto.

In 1906 Elgar granted the request of the Austrian virtuoso, dedicating himself to the composition of the Concerto from 1909, when he received the official commission from the Royal Philharmonic Society.

The work of written, conceived at the beginning in Hereford, where the composer was living with his wife, was sketched in Italy, during a stay in Italy 1909, and then finalized in London between June and July 1910.

Despite the direct knowledge of the violin playing, Elgar turned in May 1910 to the musician W.H.Reed, concert master of the London Symphony Orchestra, for receiving technical suggestions about the writing of the solo part of the Concerto and for listening, in September, a first private performance, at the "home of Herbert Brewer in Gloucester".¹⁰

The first public performance was held on 10 November 1910 at the Queen's Hall of London, with Fritz Kreisler conducted by same Elgar.

The score of the Concerto, dedicated to the violinist Fritz Kreisler, was published with the insertion of a Spanish subtitle, wanted by the composer: "Aquí està encerrada el alma de...." quotation of the romance *Gil Blas* of the French writer Alain-René Lesage.

"The quotation is generally accepted with reference to Alice Stuart-Wortley [daughter of the English painter John Everett Millais] close friend of Elgar, generally recognized as the principal source of inspiration of the composer for this work."¹¹

⁹ Fritz Kreisler Hereford Times 7 October 1905

¹⁰ W.H.Reed Music & Letters, Vol.16, No.1 (Jan., 1935), pp.36

¹¹ The Elgar Society and The Elgar Foundation website <http://www.elgar.org/>

First movement . *Allegro*

The *allegro*, in sonata form, begins with a wide orchestral exposition , in a typically classic symphonic style, structured into two sections : measures 1 - 30 the first one ; measures 31- 69 the second one .

In the first section there are four different themes, that for their brevity , as in the analysis of Hebert Byard, we should define them "phrases"¹².

theme (a)



theme (b)



The melodic drawing of theme (a), exposed by the first violins for two times , moves to theme (b) in the fifth measure , which is repeated a second time in the seventh measured , in a syncopated writing.

theme (c)



theme (d)



The theme (c) of measure tenth , that recourse for three times with different orchestrations and tonalities , brings to theme (d) , that concluded the first section of the orchestral exposition with a development in twelve measures.

theme (e)



theme (f)



¹² Herbert Byard, Edward Elgar from The Concerto Ralph Hill

The second section, more modular, is constituted of a theme (e), a cantabile of the low strings, linked to theme (f), harmonic variation of the melodic drawing of theme (b), whose development moves, with an intense climax of strings and winds, to a new affirmation of theme (a), followed *nobilmente* by the entry of the solo violin that concludes the long orchestral exposition.

The British composers renews the standard opening *tutti* through the use of short thematic drawings, keeping them close in a continue flow of the melody, originally distributed through the whole orchestra, in search of that timber variety distinctive of the elgarian writing.

The soloist, after a short section of *recitativo*, "in which completely dominates the scene, as if a great philosopher suddenly decides to clarify the issues in suspense of an animated discussion in which his scholars have just intervened"¹³, presents a new exposition of theme (b), *cantabile e largamente*, now elaborated in the rhythm and strongly modular.

Then follows a lyrical variation of theme (e) in the tonality of G major, concluded by the orchestra with the momentary resumption of theme (a), which anticipates the new intervention of the solo in the tonality of F # minor, a moment of virtuosistic reworking (chords, broken octaves, chromatic descendant scales) of theme (c) and theme (e).

The climax of the solo violin resolves in a orchestral *tutti*, first with a resumption of theme (d), *con passione*, then with the resumption of theme (e), *maestoso*, a very modular episode followed by the resumption of theme (a) first by the orchestra and then with a new *recitativo* of the soloist, accompanied by four muted horns, echoing the rhythmical drawing of theme (d).

The soloist continues to elaborate themes (e), (d), (c) in a wide passage, moment of intense harmonic instability, concluded by the return to the tonality of B minor with the clear exposition in fortissimo, first by the solo and then by the horns, of theme (d), followed by theme (e).

The final coda, introduced by the orchestra with the syncopated version in fortissimo of theme (b), *con fuoco*, concludes the first movement with a solistic passage of arpeggios and double stops, with an authentic cadence in the tonality of B minor.

¹³ Herbert Byard, Edward Elgar from The Concerto Ralph Hill