

FACTFILE: GCE MUSIC

AOS1 SET WORK ANALYSES: MUSIC FOR ORCHESTRA 1700 – 1900



Vivaldi: Concerto in G major for 2 Mandolins (RV 532)

First and second movements

This concerto, one of Vivaldi's most popular, was almost certainly written for the Ospedale della Pietà - the orphanage for girls in Venice where Vivaldi taught violin. Although he wrote a vast number of concertos in a variety of forms, this work exemplifies many of the features of a typical Vivaldi concerto:

1. It follows the **three-movement fast/slow/fast pattern** favoured by Vivaldi and other northern Italian composers such as Torelli.
2. The first movement is based on the **ritornello** principle where a recurring theme in the tonic, dominant and other related keys, is played by the full ensemble interspersed with contrasting solo material.
3. The principal theme of the opening movement is based around the notes of the **tonic triad**.
4. Motifs are generally short, are often based around **cadential progressions** and are extended through the use of **sequence**.
5. The slow movement is in **binary form** with the accompaniment based on the same note values throughout.
6. The instrumental forces are scaled down in the solo sections and slow movement to allow the soloists greater prominence.
7. Idiomatic writing for the solo instruments, who either work together in parallel movement or answer each other **antiphonally** - the Concerto for 2 Trumpets in C major RV537 is a useful comparison.

First movement:

The opening bar of the ritornello theme, which is presented at the outset by the full ensemble, is based around the notes of the **G major triad*** with the addition of a lower auxiliary note (a) and conjunct movement (b). The second and third bars concentrate on the **rhythmic cell of 2 semiquavers and a quaver** (c) and the interval of a **falling sixth** (d).

Ex. 1: VI. 1 (bb. 1-3)

The 2 mandolins play in **unison** with the first violins throughout the ritornello and they are generally **doubled a third lower** by the second violins. The harmonisation of the first five bars consists entirely of **tonic** and **dominant** chords with subtle harmonic support added (on the prescribed recording at least) by organ **continuo**. Bar 5 begins with a restatement of the theme which deviates towards the dominant in bb. 6-7 where motif (c) is subjected to **inversion** and **repetition** before a **perfect cadence into D major** at b. 8. The next phrase (beginning back in G major) features repetition of **semiquaver scales** (see b. 1) and **arpeggios** which modulate to C major in b. 9. These two bars are then used in an **ascending sequence** in bb. 10-11 leading to D major again. The G major triad filled in with an inversion of (c) is used as a 2-bar and then a 4-bar repetition to which a perfect cadence in the tonic is added. This subtlety of phrasing and motivic construction contradicts the notion that Vivaldi's concertos are simply formulaic.

Ex. 2: Vl. 1 (bb. 12-15)

A passage of continuous semiquavers in **thirds** between first and second violins at b. 16 (the mandolins drop out momentarily) coincides with a sudden change to the **tonic minor**. The semiquavers, whose **anacrusis** harks back to the opening of the movement, create first an **ascending** and then a **descending sequence** before a cadence in G minor at b. 18 (note the 3-bar phrasing). These bars are then repeated in G major (plus the mandolins) and the perfect cadence on the half-bar in b. 21 signifies the end of the opening ritornello.

The first solo episode, which begins at this point, is not completely distinct from the ritornello and indeed has many rhythmic and melodic links: the group of 4 semiquavers and the lower auxiliary note all originate in the opening bars.

Ex. 3: Mandolin 1 (bb. 21-23)

The first mandolin is answered by the second in **antiphonal** style while the accompaniment is reduced to **unison** violins and violas who provide a typically **Baroque running bass** in continuous quavers. At b. 26 the second mandolin imitates the first's scalic passage in semiquavers at two beat's distance. This leads to A major where, over an **ostinato figure** in the strings emphasising the note A, the mandolins (using frequent repetition) alternate A major and D major arpeggios. Frequent **reiteration of the note A** in the solo parts (the figure which appears at bb. 34-35, for example) is both typical of the mandolin and also gives the impression of an **inverted pedal point**.

At b. 41 the ritornello, or at any rate a truncated version of it, is introduced in the dominant, D major, by the full ensemble. Vivaldi customarily shortens the ritornello sections during the course of a concerto movement and in this case he uses only the first 3 bars followed by the repetitive bars which first appeared at bb. 12-15.

The second solo episode begins at b. 47 with a combination of **scalic** and **arpeggiac** semiquaver ideas with obvious links to previously heard material. This is immediately used in an **ascending sequence** and then **imitated** by the second mandolin. The first mandolin motif consisting mainly of repeated notes (b. 49), is followed by a bar of trills and this is imitated at one bar's distance by the second mandolin simultaneously forming an **ascending sequence** which is both simple and yet effective:

Bar	Chord	Mandolin 1	Mandolin 2
49	D major	Semiquavers	
50	G major	Trills	Semiquavers
51	C major	Semiquavers	Trills
52	F# diminished	Trills	Semiquavers
53	B minor	Semiquavers	Trills
54	E minor	Trills	Semiquavers
55	A minor	Semiquavers	Trills

The accompaniment is again slimmed down but this time to the more normal **basso continuo**. The wide leaps in the solo parts in bb. 56-60 always fall to the note B, also reinforced in the bass, over which the harmonies alternate between B major and E minor at first every minim beat and then every crotchet beat. Going into b. 61 the **three-semiquaver anacrusis** (b. 8), **repeated semiquavers** (b. 34-35) and **inversion of the scale** (b. 36) are amalgamated in a new part of this episode which is still based upon alternating tonic and dominant harmony in the key of E minor, the relative minor. **Parallel thirds** continue in the mandolins at b. 63 forming ascending and descending sequences which are then repeated. Another example of repetition (bb. 65-66) leads to a perfect cadence into E minor at b. 67. At this point it sounds as if there is going to be a statement of the opening material in E minor but, after only one bar, Vivaldi jumps to G major and splices together bb. 1-3 and bb. 16-21 to make a partial ritornello.

The episode which begins halfway through b. 76, has much in common with the first solo episode of this movement (bb. 21-40) namely **semiquaver arpeggios** exchanged between the two solo parts, **reduced forces** (violins and violas only) in the accompaniment and a reliance on **tonic and dominant harmonies**. This is followed by a typically Vivaldian **ascending sequence** which modulates as follows:

Bar	80	81	82
Chords	G/C	A/D	B/Em

The pattern is broken in the second half of b. 83 where the accompanying strings persist with an **ostinato figure** on D while the mandolins' semiquavers outline D7 and G chords. This

eventually resolves onto G major at b. 86 and for the next 9 bars various brief motifs, which are derived either rhythmically or melodically from the ritornello, are tossed between the soloists: b. 87 = b. 1; b. 88³ = 8²; b. 88⁴ = b. 5³ and b. 91 = b. 61. Eventually the mandolins join together in thirds and a series of repetitions and cadential trills herald the final appearance - not of the full ritornello - but of a mere 3 bars (formerly bb. 19-21) to bring the movement to a close.

The structural summary of the whole movement is, therefore:

Bar	Key	Content
1	G major	Full ritornello (tutti)
21	G major/D major	First episode (solo)
41	D major	Partial ritornello (tutti)
47	D major/E minor	Second episode (solo)
67	E minor/G major	Partial ritornello (tutti)
76	G major	Third episode (solo)
101	G major	Partial ritornello (tutti)

Second movement:

The slow movement is a **simple binary form** (the repeats are omitted in the specified recording) in which the orchestral forces, like the previous movement's first and third episodes, are restricted to pizzicato violins and violas in unison **without any continuo support**. The pizzicato strings, who maintain a steady quaver pulse throughout, blend with the tone of the mandolins in a three-part texture of restrained delicacy.

Triplet semiquavers predominate in the scalic opening melody, which is immediately repeated by the second mandolin. The implied harmonies alternate between E minor and B major with the rising **tritone** in the melody (F# to C) giving the latter the feeling of a minor ninth chord.

Ex. 4: Mandolin 1 & Vl. 1 (b. 1)

This **triplet motif** is then developed by **repetition, imitation** and **descending sequence** in bb. 106-108. Half way through b. 108 the mandolins come together in **parallel thirds** over a repeated D in the strings leading to a perfect cadence (ornamented by the conventional trills) in G major at the double bar.

Dotted rhythm is introduced at the start of the second section and, after a modulation to A minor, the music returns to the tonic at b. 112. **Triplets** return at the end of this bar - an inversion, in fact, of the opening melody - and this is extended in b. 113 by way of lower auxiliary notes. On the chosen recording there is much **spontaneous ornamentation** (mostly trills and mordents) in the solo parts during this passage. Both mandolins take up the triplets until a perfect cadence in the tonic key is reached at b. 116. After several bars of dialogue between the soloists (also based on triplets), the remainder of the movement, in common with many passages in Vivaldi, is entirely composed of cadential progressions with perfect cadences in E minor occurring at bars 119-120 and 121. The imitation of certain bars between the two soloists means that the two sections of this movement are, slightly unusually, 7 and 11 bars long respectively.

The binary structure is, therefore, as follows:

Section	Key
A (7 bars)	E minor - G major
B (11 bars)	A minor - E minor



Mozart: Symphony No. 39 in Eb major K 543

First Movement

The last three symphonies of Mozart (1756-1791) represent the culmination of his contribution to this genre in their perfection of form and expression. The Symphony in Eb major (K. 543) is the first work of this triptych which includes the Symphony No. 40 in G minor (K. 550) and the Symphony No. 41 in C major (K. 551) known as the *Jupiter*. One notable aspect of the orchestration of K. 543 is that clarinets are included in place of oboes and that they are given a much more prominent role than in any other Mozart symphony.

The first movement, which is in **sonata form**, begins with a slow introduction whose stately tutti chords and dotted rhythms indicate from the outset that this is to be a substantial work. It is also worth mentioning that other works by Mozart in the key of Eb major, such as the Piano Concerto K. 482 and the Overture to *The Magic Flute*, have a similarly imposing opening. Bars of *forte* alternate with bars marked *piano* in which a descending scale in demisemiquavers occurs in the violins:

Ex. 1: (bb. 1-2)

The music modulates through F minor at b. 7 (note the presence of **syncopation** and **chromatic appoggiaturas**) and reaches the dominant at b. 9. Over a **dominant pedal point** (bb. 9-13) Mozart engineers a passage of sublime craftsmanship in which the harmonic background (consisting of a **descending sequence of suspensions**) is provided by sustained wind chords. The foreground consists of the **demisemiquaver scale** from b. 2 which is used in **imitation** between first and second violins while the flute provides a countermelody based on **arpeggios**. The dominant pedal continues at b. 14 against which the lower strings have an inverted version of the scalic motif. This is also treated sequentially and modulates as follows:

Bars 14-15	Bar 16	Bar 17	Bar 18	Bar 19	Bar 20
Bb 7	Eb	C7	F min	Eb 7	Ab

A **diminished seventh chord** in b. 21 begins the transition back to the tonic key (and ultimately to the movement's main Allegro). The actual interval of a **diminished seventh (A to Gb) followed by a descending chromatic scale is used** in imitation and this leads to a Ic – V cadence in b. 25.

The Allegro's first subject contains numerous musical features - many of which are typical of the **Classical period**:

Ex. 2: (bb. 26-33)

Bar	Instrument	Musical feature
26-27	Violin 1	Melody based on tonic triad
27-28	Horns	Imitation of violin 1
29	Violin 1	Appoggiatura
30-31	Violin 1	Inversion of triadic motif
31-32	Bassoons	Imitation of violin 1
33	Strings	Perfect cadence
26-33	Tutti	Balanced (4-bar) symmetrical phrasing

This material is repeated at b. 40 with altered orchestration – cellos and basses are imitated by clarinets and flute – and leads towards a tutti statement of another triadic theme at b. 54.

Ex. 3: Violin 1 (bb. 54-57)

The chromatic continuation of this idea (bb. 58-59) is repeated and, although a new idea featuring wide leaps occurs at b. 62 and the music begins to modulate, any notion that the transition to the second subject is under way is contradicted by a strong perfect cadence in Eb at bb. 70-71. The bridge passage actually begins at b. 71 where tutti chords accompany **descending semiquaver scales** (a link to the slow introduction, perhaps) which are used in **descending** and then **ascending sequence**. Mozart prepares for the arrival of the second subject by first emphasising the dominant of the dominant (i.e. F major) in bb. 83-90 and then using a new motif – first heard in unison strings at b. 89 – in a descending sequence which leads to the dominant key at b. 98.

Over a **dominant pedal** provided by double basses and horns in **octaves**, the first of the themes which constitutes the second subject material is shared between violins and flute:

Ex. 4: Violin 1/Flute (bb. 98-101)

These four bars are repeated and are followed by a two-bar phrase for clarinets in thirds and is treated as a descending sequence. Yet another melodic idea (note its five-bar phrasing) occurs at b. 110. It is first presented by violins and violas accompanied by **pizzicato quavers** in cello and double bass and is then taken up by clarinets and bassoons with a countermelody added by the violins in octaves.

Ex. 5: Violin 1 & 2 (bb. 110-114)

The vigorous codetta for full orchestra beginning at b. 119 includes a phrase (bb. 125-129) which is repeated with different harmonisation at bb. 130-134 so that it ends in the dominant key (Bb major). The final cadential bars of the exposition are based on material which first appeared at b. 89 in the bridge passage.

Following the customary exposition repeat, the relatively short development section begins by taking the motif from b. 141 (originally b. 89 in the bridge passage) through unrelated keys such as G minor (bb. 143-144) and Db major (bb. 145-146). Mozart then brings back second subject material (b. 110) in the key of Ab major- the subdominant - but alters the ending of the phrase so that it finishes in C minor at b. 160. At this point the motif from the bridge passage (b. 89) forms a descending sequence in which the cellos and basses are imitated by the first violin. More transitional material (originally from b. 84) begins in C minor at b. 168, deviates via a Neapolitan chord (bb. 172-173) and diminished triad (bb. 174-175) but ends with an imperfect cadence in C minor at b. 179. After a silent bar the link to the recapitulation is provided by three dominant minor ninth chords arranged in a circle of fifths which resolve onto the tonic in b. 184:

Bar 181	Bar 182	Bar 183	Bar 184
C min 9th	F min 9th	Bb min 9th	Eb major

The recapitulation then proceeds as normal (bb. 184-222 are identical to bb. 26-64) until a change of harmony in b. 223 leads the music into Ab major where the material of the transition is reworked by transposition so that it ends in Eb major at b. 254 where the second subject returns as expected. Apart from the addition of a trill in b. 285 and the upward extension of b. 295, the recapitulation of the group of themes which constitutes the second subject and is similarly regular.

The structural elements of this movement may be summarised in tabular form:

Bar	Key	Content
1	Eb	Slow introduction
26	Eb	First subject
71	Eb/Bb	Bridge passage
97	Bb	Second subject
119	Bb	Codetta
143	G min+	Development section
184	Eb	Recapitulation of first subject
228	Ab/Eb	Bridge passage
254	Eb	Recapitulation of second subject
276	Eb	Coda



Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 in Eb Major (Eroica)

Fourth Movement

Beethoven's Third Symphony was completed in 1803 and received its first public performance on 7th April 1805 in Vienna's *Theater an der Wien*. It was originally dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte but when he crowned himself Emperor Beethoven changed the title to *Sinfonia Eroica* – “composed in memory of a great man” and dedicated it to Prince Lobkowitz. It is scored for standard **Classical** forces: double woodwind, two trumpets and timpani with the only addition being a third horn. This is Beethoven's longest symphony – apart from his Ninth – and it is in the scale of its construction and range of expression that it looks forward to the symphonies of the Romantic period.

The theme on which the variations of the finale are based had already been used by Beethoven on several occasions:

- (i) as one of a collection of contredanses WoO. 14 No. 7;
- (ii) in a set of variations for solo piano Op. 35; and
- (iii) as the finale of the ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus* Op. 43.

The movement begins in the “wrong” key of G minor with a stormy **semiquaver passage** for strings but repeated Bb7 chords in bb. 6-11 prepare for the tonic key and the entry of the theme. What Beethoven actually introduces at b. 12 is the **bass line of the theme** – the Op. 35 variations begin in the same way with an *Introduzione col Basso del Tema* – played in **octaves** by pizzicato strings.

Ex. 1: Vl. 1 (bb. 12-19)

The binary structure of the theme - two eight-bar sections each consisting of two four-bar phrases - is a model of Classical balanced phrasing, with the repeat of each half featuring the wind imitating the strings on the off beats:

A bb. 12-19 **A1** bb. 20-27
modulating to the dominant

B bb. 28-35 **B2** bb. 36-43
returning to the tonic

The first variation (b. 44) presents the **bass line theme** in the second violins, while the **simple quaver counterpoint** added by the cellos and first violins produces frequent **appoggiaturas**. Repeat marks now enclose the A and B sections.

A cumulative effect is achieved in the second variation (b. 60) as violas are added to the texture. The first violins have the bass line theme which is now accompanied by a mainly scalar counterpoint in triplet quavers. Other features of this variation include **inversion** (bb. 62-63 in second violins), **chromaticism** (b. 66 in cellos) and a **modulation** to the subdominant (bb. 72-73). As in the previous variation, both sections are repeated.

In the third variation (b. 76) the oboe presents the actual **contredanse** theme for the first combined with its bass line played by **pizzicato** cellos and double basses, bassoon and horns.

Ex. 2: Ob. Vlc. Cb (bb. 76-83)

Harmonic support in **thirds** and **sixths** is provided by the other woodwind instruments while the second violins and violas have **offbeat quavers**. Beethoven resorts to the “double variation” pattern where the A section is immediately varied (b. 84): the theme is given to first violins and violas in octaves, the offbeat quavers are transferred to the wind and the cellos and double basses introduce a **new scalar counterpoint** consisting of continuous semiquavers which are derived from variation 4 of the Op. 35 piano variations. The second part of the theme (b. 92) is also played twice: first by the oboe and then by the violins in octaves.

A brief transitional passage begins at b. 107 using the semiquaver motif from the second part of the theme in an **ascending sequence** which is harmonised with a **diminished seventh chord**. This ends on a G major chord (bb. 115-116) which prepares for the next variation which follows at b. 117 in the key of C minor. The bass line of the theme now occurs in the first violins with **imitative entries** similar to b. 44 in cello, clarinet and bassoon. This theme, with a continuation, which includes a semiquaver figure derived from b. 92, is treated as the subject of a **fugato**.

Ex. 3: Vl. 1 bb. 117-125/Ob. b. 92

The exposition of the fugato proceeds as follows:

b.117	C	Violin 1
b. 123	G	Violin 2
b. 131	C	Viola
b. 138	G	Clarinet & bassoon

The subject is developed using **stretto** (bb. 143-148), **inversion** and **fragmentation** (bb.153-157), ascending sequence (bb. 159-162), and diminution (bb. 164-171). During this process the music modulates freely: F minor (b. 140), Bb minor (b. 155), Ab major (b. 159) and D minor (b. 169). The climax of this passage of contrapuntal complexity is the **fortissimo diminished seventh chord** at b. 171 after which the flute and first violins emerge with the **contredanse theme in the key of D major** at b. 175. The accompaniment, comprising pizzicato cellos and double basses on the beat with offbeat quavers in second violins and violas recalls the initial appearance of this theme at b. 76. The A section of the theme is immediately varied at b. 183 with a startling reduction in orchestral forces to solo flute, oboes and first violins. The harmonisation of the B section, which features a virtuosic flourish for solo flute, wavers between **dominant minor ninth** and **major ninth chords**. This juxtaposition also occurs in the reworking of this material in triplet quavers (b. 200) which exploits the contrast between unison strings and repeated chords in the wind.

A four-bar link (bb. 207-210) introduces a turbulent G minor section whose **dotted rhythm**, **acciaccaturas** and **restless semiquaver accompaniment** make it sound like new material. The bass line, however, is the same as b. 12 as is the structure: **A - A - B - B**.

Ex. 4: VI. 1 Vlc. Cb. bb. 211-214

Rather than develop the second half of the theme, the B section (b. 227) is also based on the **bass line motif** (now in the flutes, bassoons and first violins) beginning in the key of C minor and returning to the tonic. The final cadence is repeated (bb. 247-248) and then the harmonic rhythm contracts so that the chords change on every crotchet beat rather than every bar resulting in an emphatic ending in G minor.

The sustained G on the horns provides a link to the next variation which begins at b. 258 with the theme (in its original form) played by the flute and first violins in octaves. Combined with the bass line motif, this four-bar segment turns to C minor at b. 266 and **modulates via a circle of fifths**:

b. 266	C minor
b. 270	F minor
b. 274	Bb major
b. 277	Eb major

Having reached Eb major at b. 277, another fugato begins in which an **inverted version** of the bass line is combined with continuous semiquavers whose scalic pattern provides a link to b. 92:

Ex. 5: VI. 1 VI. 2 bb. 277-280/Ob. b. 92

The entries of the bass line theme can be traced as the fugato progresses:

b. 277	Eb	Violin 2
b. 284	Bb	Viola
b. 292	Eb	Cello and D. bass

The entries at b. 292 and b. 303 are combined with a **syncopated variant** of the contredanse melody in the flutes and horns respectively. As the fugato builds to a climax, the bass line is **fragmented** and brought in on the second beat of the bar (rather than the first) in an **ascending sequence** (bb. 309-312). Forward momentum is increased at b. 318 where the first three notes of the subject in **diminution** are used in **imitation** between violas and second violins. The **descending sequence** beginning at b. 321 leads, via an augmented sixth chord on the last quaver of b. 327, to an extended **dominant pedal point** over which the fragmented version of the bass line theme appears in minims, then crotchets and finally quavers. The sense of anticipation is enhanced when the music arrives on a dominant seventh chord at b. 338 which is further coloured by minor ninth (b. 342-343) and major ninth (b. 346-347) inflexions.

The next variation (b. 349) is in a slower tempo – **Poco andante** – and begins with an eloquent paraphrase of the contredanse theme (now double dotted) for wind alone. This section of the theme passes to the strings and is rendered even more expressive by alterations to its harmonisation such as the introduction of diminished seventh chords on the second beat of b. 357 and b. 359 and a chain of suspensions in b. 363. The **semiquavers**, which feature in the B section of this theme, are contrasted with the clarinet's **semiquaver triplets** in the background while the theme itself is varied through the introduction of **appoggiaturas** (b. 365-366), chromatic scale (b. 368) and **chromatic appoggiaturas** (bb.369-370). The rhythmic complexity of the second statement of the B section (b. 373) is due to the juxtaposition of **semiquavers**, **triplet semiquavers**, **dotted rhythm** and **syncopation** in a dramatic crescendo.

The “heroic” mood returns at b. 381 where the contredanse theme from b. 76 (without repeats) occurs in clarinets, bassoons, horn and lower strings as a triumphant fortissimo. The triplet semiquavers from the previous variation form the basis of the accompaniment in both **arpeggio** form (violin 1) and as repeated notes (violin 2 and violas) thereby providing continuity.

A postlude based on a **rising tonic arpeggio** followed by a **perfect cadence** leads to Ab major at b. 404 and then G minor at b. 420. Despite the underlying G pedal, **harmonic uncertainty** is introduced in the passage which follows through the frequent use of diminished seventh chords. The music subsides to a pianissimo which is interrupted by a return of the G minor passage which opened

this movement now even more agitated and marked **Presto**. The key of this coda changes to Eb major by b. 435 where the horns and bassoons play a fanfare-like version of the first two bars of the contredanse theme. The music drives forward to an assertive conclusion the final 21 bars of which are based on repetitions of the tonic chord.

The structure of this movement is a subtle reworking of the **Classical variation form** in which there are really two themes: the **contredanse melody** and its **bass line**. Some variations follow the structure of the original themes fairly closely while in other places Beethoven uses motifs from the original material as the starting point for passages of contrapuntal ingenuity. The form of the finale may be summarised as follows:

Bar	Key	Content
1	G min	Introduction based on semiquaver scales
12	Eb	Bass line of theme in pizzicato strings
44	Eb	Bass line theme & counterpoint in quavers
60	Eb	Bass line theme & counterpoint in triplet quavers
76	Eb	Contredanse melody and bass line presented together
107	Eb/G	Transitional passage
117	C min	Bass line theme used as subject of fugato
175	D	Contredanse melody in flute
207	D	Transitional passage
211	G min	New theme in dotted rhythm over bass line
258	C	Contredanse theme in flute
266	C min	4 bars of contredanse and bass line used as free fugato
349	Eb	Poco andante version of contredanse
381	Eb	Fortissimo statement of contredanse
431	G min	Same material as b. 1 Presto
435	Eb	Coda – fanfare version of contredanse



Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major Op. 77

Third Movement

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) composed his only violin concerto in 1878 in response to a request from his friend, the violinist Joseph Joachim who was the soloist at its first performance in Leipzig on 1st January 1879. Brahms consulted Joachim on some of the solo writing and the Hungarian character of the concerto's rondo finale is perhaps a homage to Joachim who was Hungarian by birth.

The first eight bars of the **rondo theme** begin in D major and modulate (via a descending sequence) to B minor. This is presented by the soloist (including double stopped thirds, sixths and one four-note chord) and then repeated by the full orchestra with the woodwind and horns taking over the solo material. The next ten bars begin in B minor at b. 17 and modulate to A major at b. 21 which in turn prepares for the return of the opening phrase as an orchestral tutti at b. 27. The **descending sequence** is, however, varied through clever manipulation of its note values producing a **cross-rhythm** typical of Brahms:

Ex. 1: Solo VI. (bb. 4-8) & VI. 1 (bb. 30-35)

The soloist re-enters at b. 35 with a passage of **vigorous arpeggios in triplet semiquavers** which exploit various aspects of violin technique: **multiple stopping, string crossing and spiccato**. Once again Brahms enlivens a descending sequence at bb. 41-42 by introducing cross-rhythm (even the semiquavers are beamed across the barline). Another descending sequence (bb. 43-44) and a transitory modulation to C# minor (b. 46) lead eventually to a B major chord at b. 49. **Virtuosic scales** in the solo part, initially in triplet semiquavers and then in demisemiquavers, are accompanied by **pizzicato chords** and this passage prepares for the new section which begins at b. 57.

The movement's second theme consists of a **rising scale in dotted rhythm** which is played in **octaves** by the solo violin and immediately **inverted** in the bassoon and lower strings.

Ex. 2: Solo VI. (bb. 57-59) & Vc./Cb. (bb. 59-61)

The harmonisation of this idea (E7) at first suggests the dominant key (A major) but far from being clearly established, this is contradicted by **frequent**

modulations to other keys such as B minor (bb. 61-62) and E major (bb. 63-64). The **Neapolitan** relationship between F major and E is also exploited between b. 65 and b. 70. Bar 73 is an orchestral restatement of b. 57 this time over a solid **tonic pedal point** provided by first and second horns in octaves, a timpani roll and **syncopated** double basses. Tension is created as the multiple stopped chords in the solo part try to pull the music towards B minor (bb. 79-82) and the **ascending sequence** in the orchestra (bb. 82-84) drags it back (via a diminished seventh chord on the second beat of b. 84) to D major. The **repetition** and **imitation** of the minor third (F# to A) in the first violins and winds alludes to the rondo's principal theme but its harmonisation leads to F# minor at b. 89 before sidestepping into D major for its proper return at b. 93.

The first eleven bars of this reprise are identical to the opening of the movement but from b. 105 the music moves up sequentially landing in G major at b. 108. Here the rondo theme's parallel thirds, accompanied by the solo violin's arpeggios, are developed in a descending sequence which begins in the woodwind and passes into the violins. The music deviates to C major (bb. 112-114) before a new dolce theme in 3/4 is introduced in G major at b. 120. Note the close imitation between the solo violin and the orchestral violas.

Ex. 3: Solo VI. & Vla. (bb. 120-121)

The expressiveness of this melody is heightened by the repeated **chromatic appoggiaturas** (A# to B) in the solo part in bars 122-123. Although this has very much the feel of a new "C" section, it is interspersed with some development of the rondo theme (bb. 124-127) after which the episodic material is restated by the oboe in the key of E major at b. 129 accompanied by a much more expansive solo part. When the music reaches the key of C minor at b. 136 Brahms uses several musical devices. The first and second violin part in b. 137, for example, is an augmentation of third beat of b. 120 while bars 141 and 142 contain both **descending sequence, imitation** (between first violins and lower strings) and **hemiola**.

The end of this interlude is signified by a recapitulation of material from earlier in the movement. The **scalic passages** in the solo violin at b. 143-149 relate back to bb. 49-56 and the

octaves in **dotted rhythm** at b. 150 and b. 166, which constitute the “B” section of the rondo, were first encountered at b. 57 and b. 73. This second occurrence of the “B” material is now one tone lower thereby suggesting the key of G major rather than the dominant, A major. Apart from this transposition, it is largely unchanged until b. 175 where a few extra bars lead to the reappearance in G major of the orchestral tutti based on a repeated minor third (originally b. 85 in the key of D major). Rather than return immediately to the rondo theme as before, Brahms avoids predictability by referring back to the second part of the theme (originally b. 17). This is extended by transposing the music of bb. 18-24 up a third at b. 191 and reversing the roles of the woodwind and upper strings. The reordering of this music makes the eventual orchestral statement of the principal theme in the tonic key at b. 203 all the more satisfying.

Having alluded to the rondo theme, Brahms uses **fragments** of it to take the music off in new directions both **tonally and rhythmically** speaking. Particularly dramatic is the alternation between solo violin and full orchestra in bb. 215-218 (a characteristic trait of the Romantic concerto) in which the first violins’ high D coincides with the return of D major. The imperfect cadence in bb. 220-221 initiates a passage for the soloist where **increasing virtuosity** (*double and triple stopping, trills, rapid arpeggios and scales*) creates a feeling of moving towards a climax. The sense of urgency is enhanced by a **series of trills** in the solo part which **rise chromatically** (bb. 243-244) and orchestral references to previous material: the semiquaver motif of b. 1 as an ascending sequence in the first violins at b. 242 and the dotted rhythm of b. 57 in thirds in the violins at bb. 245-246. A **descending sequence of virtuosic semiquaver triplets** (b. 251) leads to a long **dominant pedal point** which begins at b. 255. While the solo part is obviously connected to the movement’s opening theme, the horns provide a more subtle rhythmic link. The pedal point culminates in a pause on a **dominant seventh chord** in b. 265 which is then embellished as a **solo cadenza** in the following bar (a cadenza traditionally occurs on the second inversion of the tonic chord).

This ushers in the coda - marked *Poco più presto* - in which a triplet version of the rondo theme is accompanied by a **martial tonic/dominant bass line** and **turn-like grace notes**. The prevalence of triplets lends this statement a **feeling of 6/8 time** and Brahms manipulates the rhythm to produce a seven-bar phrase as opposed to the original eight.

Ex. 4: Solo VI. (bb. 271-277)

The soloist repeats this an octave higher at b. 279 and the music modulates to the dominant after which four bars in octaves (bb. 289-292) introduce the “B” material. This occurs in the solo violin part filled out with bravura semiquavers combined simultaneously with its inversion in the woodwind where **imitation** and **fragmentation** also feature. The triplet patterns of b. 283 return at b. 304 (only now in the tonic rather than the dominant) and likewise the semiquaver variant of “B” which begins in the tonic at b. 315 and modulates to the subdominant. The tonic is regained via a **rising chromatic scale** in the cellos and double basses and a perfect cadence into b. 327. The final phase of the coda begins here with the triplet version of the rondo theme in the wind accompanied by a **descending chromatic phrase** in unison strings. This occurs again at b. 331 and each time soloist answers with **syncopated double and triple stopping** and **rapid rising scales** - the last of which finishes on a brilliant high D. At b. 339 the note D is sustained in first and second violins, cellos and horns resulting in a simultaneous tonic pedal and inverted pedal. The woodwind, in octaves, play a descending chromatic phrase while the soloist, in double stopped sixths and thirds, fragments the principal theme. The solo violin’s triplets give way to quavers at b. 343 giving the impression of a *ritardando* and at the same point the harmonisation consists of a repeated plagal cadence using the minor subdominant chord, G minor. The movement ends **firmly in D major** with **three solid tutti chords**.

In the finale of this concerto Brahms does not adhere rigidly to the normal rondo or sonata rondo structure. The most obvious deviation is the restatement of the “B” material at b. 150 in the subdominant before the rondo theme returns at b. 203. The movement may, however, be summarised as follows:

Bar	Key	Content
1	D	Rondo theme
57	A	B theme
93	D	Rondo theme
120	G	C theme
150	G	B theme
203	D	Rondo theme
267	D	Coda

