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ELEGIES FOR CELLO AND PIANO BY BRIDGE, BRITTEN AND DELIUS:
A STUDY OF TRADITIONS AND INFLUENCES

MUSICAL ARTS PROJECT

A musical arts project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
in the College of Fine Arts
at the University of Kentucky

By

Sara Gardner Birnbaum

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Benjamin Karp, Professor of Cello Performance

Lexington, Kentucky

2012

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ABSTRACT

ELEGIES FOR CELLO AND PIANO BY BRIDGE, BRITTEN AND DELIUS: A STUDY OF TRADITIONS AND INFLUENCES

In the western classical tradition, the violoncello has developed a reputation for its soulful, vocal qualities. Because of this distinction, many composers have written elegiac works for the cello. This document comprises studies of three twentieth-century British elegies for cello and piano, each explored against a backdrop of poetic, societal and musical influences. The results reveal several common tropes of mourning, both musical and extra-musical, which can be applied to further studies of musical works.

KEYWORDS: Elegy, Cello and Piano, Frederick Delius, Benjamin Britten, Frank Bridge

Sara Gardner Birnbaum

November 16, 2012

ELEGIES FOR CELLO AND PIANO BY BRIDGE, BRITTEN AND DELIUS:
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In Memory of Kia

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Musical Examples.....	v
Part I: Monograph	
1. Introduction.....	1
2. What is an Elegy?.....	5
3. Frank Bridge: <i>Elégie</i> (1904).....	10
4. Benjamin Britten: “Elegia” (1961).....	19
5. Frederick Delius: <i>Elegy</i> (1930).....	31
6. Conclusion.....	43
7. Ideas for Performers.....	48
Part II: Program Notes	
January 22, 2010 Recital: Mendelssohn and Shostakovich.....	52
May 10, 2010 Solo Recital: Bach, Bloch, & Hindemith.....	57
November 22, 2011 Chamber Music Recital: Mozart, Webern & Brahms....	63
December 1, 2011 Concerto Performance: Haydn.....	69
Appendices	
Appendix A: Outline of Bridge’s <i>Elégie</i>	71
Appendix B: Outline of Britten’s “Elegia” from Sonata in C, Op. 65.....	72
Appendix C: Outline of Delius’s <i>Elegy</i>	73
Appendix D: <i>Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard</i>	74
Bibliography.....	78
Vita.....	80

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

3.1. Bridge, <i>Elégie</i> , mm. 1–4.....	11
3.2. Strauss, <i>Don Quixote</i> , opus 35, solo cello part, mm. 747–753.....	11
3.3. Schumann, “Und wüssten’s die Blumen, die kleinen,” from <i>Dichterliebe</i> , Op. 48, vocal part, mm. 1–2.....	12
3.4. Purcell, “Dido’s Lament” from <i>Dido and Aeneas</i> , basso continuo part, mm. 14–19.....	13
3.5. Bridge, <i>Elégie</i> , H. 47, cello part, mm. 1–11.....	13
3.6. Bridge, <i>Elégie</i> , H. 47, cello part, mm. 23–39.....	13
3.7. Bridge, <i>Elégie</i> , H. 47, mm. 32–43.....	15
3.8. Bridge, <i>Elégie</i> , H. 47, mm. 44–48.....	16
3.9. Bridge, <i>Elégie</i> , H. 47, mm. 53–58.....	16
3.10. Bridge, <i>Elégie</i> , H. 47, mm. 66–80.....	17
4.1. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 9–12.....	20
4.2. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 1–3.....	21
4.3. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 1–10.....	22
4.4. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, cello part, mm. 4–5.....	22
4.5. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 44–45.....	23
4.6. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 22–25.....	24
4.7. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 44–48.....	25
4.8. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 61–65.....	26
4.9. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 83–89.....	27
4.10. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, cello part, with elegiac feet superimposed above the staff, mm. 4–11.....	29
5.1. Delius, <i>Elegy</i> , cello part, mm. 1–4.....	33
5.2. Delius, <i>Elegy</i> , mm. 30–32.....	34
5.3. Chopin, “Marche funèbre”, from <i>Piano Sonata No. 2</i> , Op. 35, mm. 1–4.....	34
5.4. <i>Taps</i>	35
5.5. Delius, <i>Elegy</i> , mm. 17–18.....	35
5.6. Delius, <i>Elegy</i> , mm. 37–45.....	37
5.7. Delius, <i>Elegy</i> , mm. 40–42.....	38
5.8. Delius, <i>Elegy</i> , mm. 1–4.....	41
5.9. Delius, <i>Elegy</i> , mm. 49–54.....	41

Part I: Monograph

1. Introduction

The initial inspiration for this project was my study of Benjamin Britten's "Elegia," the central movement of his 1961 Sonata in C for cello and piano. As a cellist, my experience of elegies up to this point was mostly limited to works of the Romantic era, when the term "elegy" referred to a generally sad or mournful musical work. However, the elegy has also been a genre of poetry for thousands of years. In the literary world, it has developed a set of traditions and characteristics separate from those in musical elegies. Despite this apparent separation, I found a surprising connection between Britten's "Elegia" and traditional poetic elegies. Britten's creative, genre-crossing concept of the elegy led to my interest in discovering other influences on musical elegies. I wanted to learn how other composers applied both musical and non-musical aspects of the elegy to elegies for cello and piano.

While the number of well-known, popular cello elegies is relatively small, the number of cello elegies in existence is quite large. A scan through Henk Lambooi and Michael Feves's *A Cellist's Companion*, the most comprehensive catalogue of cello literature published to date, reveals approximately forty-four elegies for solo cello.¹ This number does not include any works for more than one cello or cello and another instrument (which most likely make up the bulk of cello elegies). It also does not include movements within a sonata or suite titled "Elegy" or works with titles like "In Remembrance" or "In Memoriam." Works without any programmatic titles, but still elegiac in nature, have also been left out of this count. They might

¹ Henk Lambooi and Michael Feves, *A Cellist's Companion: A Comprehensive Catalog of Cello Literature*. (Utrecht: Henk Lambooi and Michael Feves, 2007), 657–664.

include Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85 and the *Adagio* movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Sonata No. 5 for Cello and Piano, Op. 102, No. 2. Britten's final suite for solo cello, Op. 87, which ends with a traditional Russian hymn for the departed, would also be excluded from this list, even with its very strong elegiac ties. Despite all of these exclusions, forty-four elegies, remarkably, still remain, proving the strength of the relationship between the cello and the elegy.

Where did this strong connection originate? Perhaps the association emerged from the popular idea that the cello is the instrument that most closely resembles the human voice. This concept is rooted in several similarities between the two instruments. The comfortable range of the cello (where we spend most of our time) falls in the natural range of the human voice. When notes get uncomfortably high for a cellist, they also get too high for a vocalist. Also, like the vocalist, the cellist can slide or glissando from one note to another, covering every microtone in between. But perhaps the most important connection between the cello and voice is the one that is most difficult to describe. The cello's richness of tone, and the soulfulness and depth of its sound, reaches out and touches listeners. Just as it is difficult to say why sound can engender human emotion in general, it is equally challenging to say exactly why the cello is particularly capable of this power. Nevertheless, the connection between the cello and the human voice has existed for hundreds of years and continues to be a well-known fact in the musical world today.

Benjamin Britten was not the only twentieth-century British composer who wrote an elegy: there at least ten well-known examples. Frank Bridge's *Elégie* stands out among the others because he was Britten's composition teacher, and perhaps

some musical ideas were passed on from teacher to student. Frederick Delius's *Elegy* is also striking because it was inspired by poetry, which makes it an intriguing pairing with the Britten. (Although Delius's elegy was originally written for cello and chamber orchestra, its more common version is the reduction for cello and piano, which is why it is included in this study.) These three composers' works make an interesting trio of elegies.

Bridge, Britten and Delius wrote their elegies at three very different times of their lives. Bridge was young, just out of conservatory. Britten was in his late forties: not old, but with considerably more life experience under his belt. Delius, finally, was in his late sixties, very ill and near death. Their various points of view led each to focus on different qualities in their elegies. Bridge's youthful piece is primarily focused on a pure, internal sorrow and mournfulness. Britten's elegy is darker, more complex, and reflects more outside influences. Delius focused on a British poetic elegy that was very personal and close to his own experience. These three different perspectives on life and loss led to three original musical elegies.

The British nation has a long tradition of poetic elegies, including Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Adonais," and W.H. Auden's "In Memory of W.B. Yeats." It is difficult to say when the British elegiac tradition began; perhaps it was as long ago as when the Ancient Romans arrived. Nevertheless, from the sixteenth century onward, the elegy has been a major British poetic genre. These three well-read, well-educated English composers spent their lives amidst this elegiac tradition, especially in a period of such nationalistic pride as the turn of the twentieth century.

Bridge, Britten, and Delius certainly all shared a love of poetry. Britten and Bridge are known best for their art songs (and Britten for his operas), a specialty one could not have without an equal love for, and understanding of, both music and poetry. Bridge's instrumental works are also often titled with poetic and literary references, indicating that he often thought in song and poetry. Britten paid great attention to poetic detail. His friend Edith Sitwell, the editor of 1959's *The Atlantic Book of British and American Poetry*, sent Britten a copy of this book as a gift. Britten wrote in a letter to her about how the original Shakespearean spellings used in her book inspired him. He remarked, "I think Tytania so much more awe inspiring than Titania – don't you think? And surely pronounced with a long 'I'? – like Titan?"² This comment shows great attention to detail in the English language: it indicates how closely he read. Delius also felt poetry very deeply. In fact, Thomas Gray's famous "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" was a major inspiration for Delius's *Elegy*.³

These three composers' similar backgrounds provide a common backdrop against which their differences are striking. Although they did share a nationality, an historical period and a love of poetry, their varied personalities and maturity led to a diverse range of elegiac interpretations. These similarities and differences highlight both what is universal about human grief and how different it can be.

² Benjamin Britten, *Letters from a Life: The Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten 1913–1976*, vol. 4, 1958–1965, ed. Philip Reed and Mervyn Cooke. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), IV: 205.

³ May Harrison, "Delius," in *A Delius Companion*, ed. Christopher Redwood (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 105.

2. What is an Elegy?

Before discussing the elegiac qualities of these musical works, it is important to uncover the rich and varied characteristics associated with the term “elegy.” It has been defined variously as:

- 1: a song or poem expressing sorrow or lamentation, especially for one who is dead
- 2: a poem in elegiac couplets
- 3a: a pensive or reflective poem, typically highly subjective and usually sorrowful, nostalgic, or melancholy
- 3b: a musical composition in pensive or mournful mood⁴

The first definition is the most widely known today. Despite the fact that the elegy was not tied to grief and loss until the sixteenth century and after, this quality can be found in all three musical elegies. They might depict mourning using different musical vocabularies from one another, but all are saturated with feelings of grief and loss.

The second definition is based on the world’s oldest elegy: the Ancient Greek elegy. For the Ancients, the word “elegy” referred primarily to a characteristic poetic meter, built of couplets. This meter was passed on to the Romans, of whom Ovid is recognized as the master of the form. The subjects of early poetic elegies varied widely, though some were mournful and many were erotic.

The Ancient Greek elegy was often sung or recited to the accompaniment of the flute or aulos. In this way, the elegy was already connected to music. Perhaps this connection was made through the Greek myth of Pan and Syrinx. The story goes

⁴ “Elegy,” *Webster’s 3rd New International Dictionary, unabridged* (online, Merriam-Webster, 1993).
http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.uky.edu/openurl/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:ilcs-us&rft_id=xri:ilcs:ft:websters:Z200928126:2 (accessed September 27, 2012).

that Pan, as he often did, decided that Syrinx was the most beautiful nymph that he had ever seen and that he must have her. Trying to escape Pan's advances, Syrinx asked the river nymphs to turn her into a marsh reed. When Pan reached out to grab Syrinx, all he held in his arms was a collection of reeds. He sighed a despondent sigh, blowing the air into the reeds, making a "thin plaintive sound." Pan bound the reeds together into an instrument saying, "This communion with you I will always have, Syrinx."⁵ This story created, or explained, an association in Ancient Greece of the flute (or "pan pipes") with the loss of a loved one, an attempt to connect to that lost one after they are gone, and perhaps the loss of one's youth and virility.

The terms "pensive" and "reflective," found in our third definition, are also omnipresent in the musical elegy. Thoughtfulness is a part of sorrow or lamentation, and as we will see, this quality often presents itself musically as repetition. Regarding the subjectivity of elegies, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the great English Romantic poet, said, "Elegy is the form of poetry natural to the reflective mind. It *may* treat of any subject, but it must treat of no subject *for itself*, but also and exclusively with reference to the poet himself."⁶ Thus, the narrator must be present in the elegy: *his/her* experience of the sorrow is what makes it a true elegy. Although this aspect of the elegy is much harder to identify in a musical context, it is important to keep in mind that this subjective emotional content is what gives the elegy such poignancy and power.

⁵ Ovid. *Metamorphoses*, trans. Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2010), 27.

⁶ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Specimens of the Table Talk of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: John Murray, 1835), II: 268.

One of the most important books published on the science of mourning and grief is Elizabeth Kübler-Ross's *On Death and Dying*. This book, published first in 1969, outlines the five stages of grief that have become completely integrated into our cultural understanding of loss. These stages are: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Kübler-Ross's book was published almost a decade after Britten's elegy was written and half a century after Bridge's elegy was composed. However, these concepts, though first formalized by Kübler-Ross, had existed for centuries, and perhaps millennia, as aspects of the human grieving process. The fact that Kübler-Ross's ideas tie into these artistic depictions of mourning shows that these musical elegies are part of a larger psychological world, which is perhaps what makes them so moving.⁷

Peter Sacks analyzes generations of English poetic elegies in *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats*. In his introduction, he defines several important societal conventions of mourning that he then, throughout the book, shows to be depicted in centuries of English poetry. Sacks explains:

Among the conventions [of mourning] to be interpreted in this way are the use of pastoral contextualization...the use of repetition and refrains, the reiterated questions, the outbreak of vengeful anger or cursing, the procession of mourners, the movement from grief to consolation, and the traditional images of resurrection.⁸

Aside from the traditional images of resurrection, a quality often missing in twentieth-century art, all of these characteristics exist in at least one of these three elegies. The use of repetition is present in all three elegies, while Bridge and

⁷ Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, M.D., *On Death and Dying* (New York: Scribner, 1969), 9.

⁸ Peter M. Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 2.

Britten's nearly monothematic works take it to an elevated state. The pastoral context is most clearly present in Delius's elegy, which corresponds with his deep love of nature.

Several of Peter Sacks's conventions of mourning also connect to Kübler-Ross's five stages. These conventions are the "outbreak of vengeful anger and cursing" and the movement from "grief" to "consolation." Anger is Kübler-Ross's second stage. "Grief" can most likely be equated with Kübler-Ross's stage of depression. This connection becomes clearer when one notes that grief is introduced as a phase that one must leave to get to "consolation," which is Sacks's equivalent to Kübler-Ross's movement from depression to acceptance.

A "procession of mourners" has long existed in elegiac music. As early as the fifteenth century, composers would write musical "laments" to mourn the loss of a political or musical hero. A tradition of this genre is to list living composers by name to join the mourning. In Josquin des Prés's *La Déploration de Jehan Ockeghem*, Josquin includes a "roll-call of the mourning musicians' names" and "call[s] on surviving composers to put on their mourning garments for their 'good father.'"⁹ The procession of mourners also brings to mind the most literal "procession of mourners:" the funeral march, a tradition already tied to music. Britten and Delius both use aspects of this trope of mourning in their elegies.

There have been many qualities associated with the elegy around the world over the last couple of millennia. It would be impossible to write an elegy without conjuring up societal and poetic elegiac concepts. Some composers were open about

⁹ Alec Robertson, *Music of Mourning & Consolation* (London: Praeger, 1967), 214.

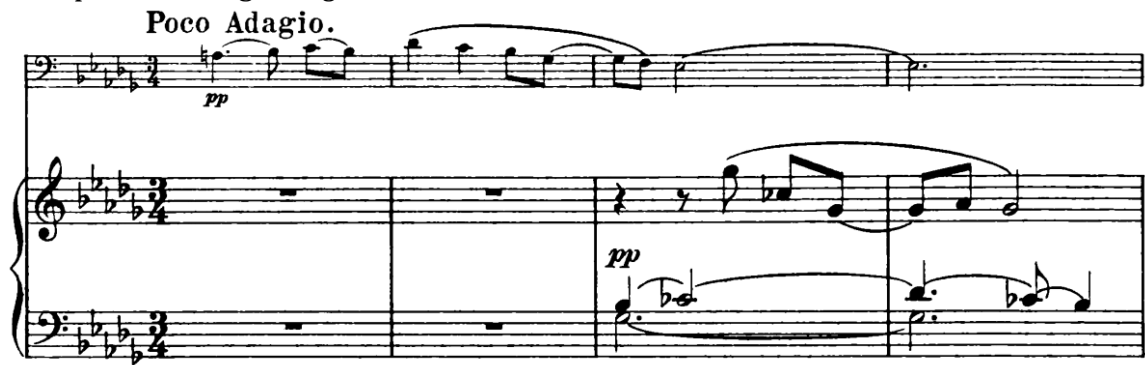
what influenced their music. Delius, for instance, spoke about how his *Elegy* was inspired by Gray's poem. Others may have been less aware of how their compositions reflect their national and cultural understanding of elegies and mourning. In any case, looking at these compositions through the lenses outlined above reveals a much deeper understanding of each of these composers' concepts of the "Elegy."

3.
Frank Bridge (1879–1941)
Elégie (1904)

Frank Bridge wrote his *Elégie* in 1904, though it was not published until 1911. Bridge was only 25 when he composed this short, stand-alone work. In the same year he also graduated from the Royal College of Music in London with degrees in violin and composition. *Elégie* was dedicated to Ivor James (1882–1963), a cellist who both attended the Royal College of Music and played in the English String Quartet with Bridge. None of the current biographies of Bridge mention any loss or tragedy in Bridge's personal life at this time, although that doesn't necessarily mean there was none. Most likely, the inspiration for Bridge's work was not personal. Rather, he was doing what students do: emulating works of the masters. Gabriel Fauré wrote an immensely popular *Élégie* for cello and piano in 1883. Bridge even titled his piece in the French language: *Elégie* (although Bridge's spelling does not include the proper acute accent on the first "E").

The most striking characteristic of Bridge's *Elégie* is the simplicity of the cello melody. There are no double stops, few melodic intervals larger than a step, and it is altogether very singable. The cello plays the melody for most of this work, with the piano playing a nearly purely accompanimental role, giving the cello the role of narrator. The piece opens with unaccompanied cello (Example 3.1), creating a sense of an individual and the subjective perspective that Coleridge spoke of as being a very important aspect of the elegy. As listeners, we associate this simple unaccompanied melody with a single person, and thus connect this piece to a single person's subjective story.

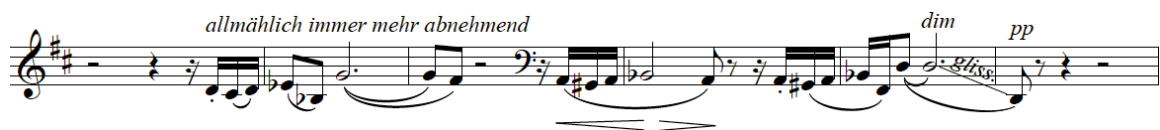
Example 3.1. Bridge, *Elégie*, mm. 1–4.



This solitary mourner also brings to mind the pastoral elegy, a related elegiac tradition, which “begins with an expression of grief and an invocation to the Muse to aid the poet in expressing his suffering.”¹⁰ By invoking a scene of solitude, Bridge has created an appropriate setting for the process of mourning to begin.

Bridge depicted a sorrowful, mourning quality with the use of many sighing shapes in his melody. In music, sighs are often depicted in downward moving melodies, directly resembling the sound of a human sigh. These sighs can come in various musical and emotional forms. A downward *glissando* portrays Don Quixote’s final sighing breath in the solo cello’s final notes of Richard Strauss’s *Don Quixote* (Example 3.2).

Example 3.2. Strauss, *Don Quixote*, opus 35 solo cello part, mm. 747–753.



Dichterliebe song cycle. The following portion of the text (lines 1–4) provides a particularly dramatic description of the sorrow that the narrator of this song is feeling:

If the little flowers but knew it,
How deeply hurt is my heart,
They would be weeping with me,
To heal my pain.¹¹

The poetry is full of anguish, and it is vocalized with several downward scales (Example 3.3).

Example 3.3. Schumann, *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48, “Und wüssten’s die Blumen, die kleinen,” mm. 1–2.



The sigh is a musical trope going back to the dawn of music. It can be found in most every musical genre. Another famous example is from the Renaissance composer William Byrd's *Ye Sacred Muses*, a lament for the composer Thomas Tallis. On the phrase "and music dies," there is a long, slurred downward motion in the melody.¹² Additionally, in Dido's famous lament from Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, the repeating bass line is a downward chromatic scale, known as the "lament tetrachord" (Example 3.4). Although the "sigh" is not in the vocal line, the bass line gets the concept across clearly.

¹¹ Robert Schumann *Dichterliebe*. New York: International Music Co., 1954. Text translated by Edith Braun, p. II.

¹² Robertson, *Music of Mourning & Consolation*, 218.

Example 3.4. Purcell, “Dido’s Lament” from *Dido and Aeneas*, basso continuo part, mm. 14–19.

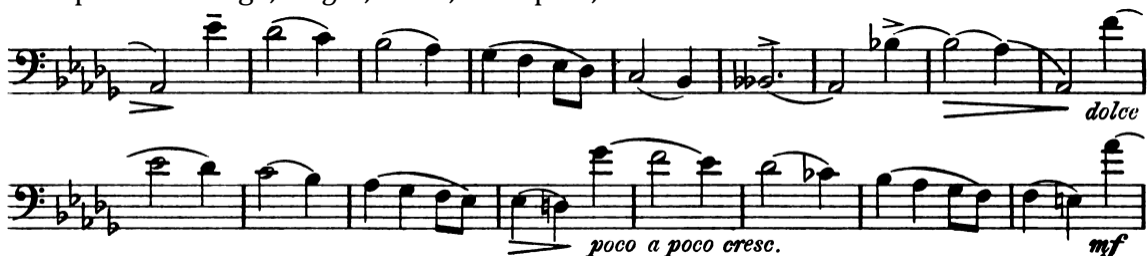


Bridge wrote two different sighs in his elegy. One is an arch-shaped melodic line (Example 3.5). This is the primary motif of the opening and closing passages. The other is a purely downward melody (Example 3.6), which is the central melodic core of the middle section. Both of these shapes are repeated several times in their respective passages. This permeating sighing motif creates a pronouncedly sorrowful mood. Each time the melody rises, it inevitably falls: a gloomy metaphor under which this piece exists.

Example 3.5. Bridge *Elégie*, H. 47, cello part, mm. 1–11.



Example 3.6. Bridge, *Elégie*, H. 47, cello part, mm. 23–39.



Peter Sacks identifies textual repetition as a key quality of elegiac poetry. In an analogous way, the repeated questions and thoughts about death help an individual work his way through a loss. Sacks explains that repetition is “one of the psychological responses to trauma. The psyche repeats the shocking event, much as

the elegy recounts and reiterates the fact of death.”¹³ This is often a response to tragedy: the mind keeps going over it again and again as a means to come to terms with the event. Bridge used a great deal of repetition in this piece. The piece opens with a four-measure arch shape in the cello reaching to a D \flat (Example 3.5). The following four measures (measures 5–8) also have an arch, but this time it reaches higher to an F. The third repetition (measures 9–11) changes after the first measure and reaches the highest apex of all: a D \flat an octave higher than the first. This increase in melodic range with each repetition can be understood to symbolize greater and greater striving for answers. As the melody reaches further, so does the urgency of the protagonist’s thoughts.

The simple ABA structure of Bridge’s *Elégie* (Appendix A), outlines a three-stage journey from grief to anger to consolation. In the A sections the cello and piano share simple, quiet melodic lines. The tonal center of the opening lies somewhere between D \flat major and B \flat minor, with an emphasis on the dissonant A \sharp leading tone. The texture of this passage is relatively thin, the tessitura is in the middle range for both instruments, and its tonality is consistent, if a bit hazy. The minor key establishes that this is a mournful piece, but light texture, comfortable tessitura, and consistent tonality add a relaxed feeling to the opening.

The understatement of the opening passage is reminiscent of the Greek concept of elegy in one way: Bridge created the “thin plaintive sound” of the pipe.¹⁴ There are no dynamic variations in the first 11 measures (Example 3.5). The entire

¹³ Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats*, 23.

¹⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 27.

passage remains at the opening *pianissimo* dynamic, despite the arch shape in the melody, which typically brings a dynamic swell with it. Bridge created a pale, feeble sound, taking the listener to the emotional world of Pan, sighing despondently into an armful of reeds. In a moment of great sorrow, particularly before one has yet had a chance to comprehend what has occurred, the response is often a quiet understatement of emotion.

The B section is far more agitated and depicts a progression towards the “anger” stage of grief. Bridge created this effect in the piano with a long crescendo and gradual rise in pitch over thirty-two measures of syncopated eighth notes (Example 3.7).

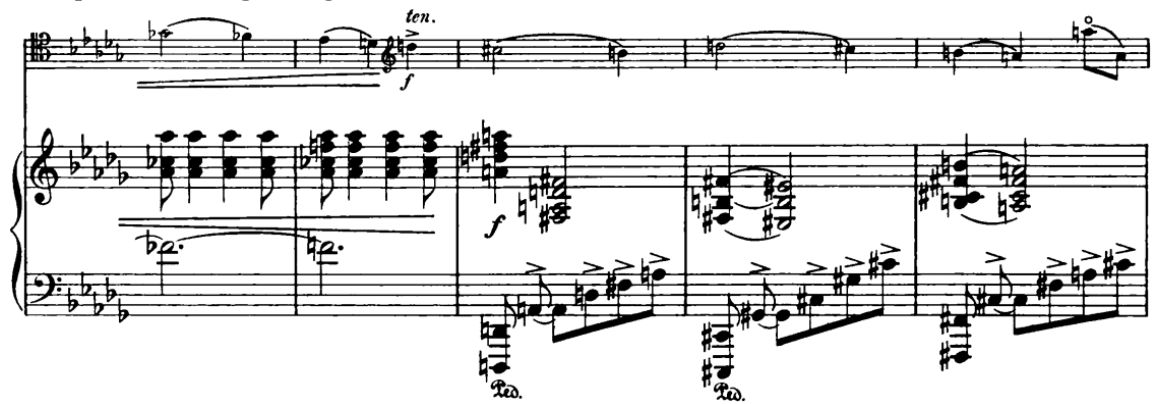
Example 3.7. Bridge, *Elégie*, H. 47, mm. 32–43.

The musical score for Example 3.7 consists of two systems, each with a cello line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is D-flat major (three flats). The cello line features a long, rising melodic line of eighth notes, with a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) and a crescendo hairpin. The piano accompaniment consists of syncopated eighth notes and chords, with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a crescendo hairpin. The piano part includes a long, rising melodic line of eighth notes, with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a crescendo hairpin.

The cello contributes to the tension by repeating the downward sighs over and over, each time starting at a higher pitch. At the culmination of this passage, the key suddenly shifts unexpectedly from D \flat major to D major (Example 3.8). An upward half-step modulation (as any pop music producer knows) is a guaranteed way to

create an instant uptick in intensity. Bridge heightens the emotional intensity of this modulation further by changing the underlying rhythmic texture in the piano. The piano moves from static, syncopated chords to arpeggiated chords, with each note of the arpeggiation accented. The piano's loud, crashing chords portray a boiling over of anger that has been building up for the previous thirty-two measures.

Example 3.8. Bridge, *Elégie*, H. 47, mm.44–48.



After eight measures in D major, the music releases back to D \flat major in measure 54, at the highest dynamic level in the entire piece (Example 3.9).

Example 3.9. Bridge, *Elégie*, H. 47, mm.53–58.



The return to D \flat begins a long fall to the very bottom of the cello's range. The rhythmic vitality of the piano drops out, leaving long, held chords. The cello falls through three octaves to a low D \flat , and finally the A theme returns (Example 3.10)

Unlike the beginning, the cello holds a low D \flat while the piano re-introduces the theme.

Example 3.10. Bridge, *Elégie*, H. 47, mm. 66–80.

The musical score for Example 3.10, Bridge's *Elégie*, measures 66–80, is presented in two systems. The top system shows the cello line and the beginning of the piano accompaniment. The cello line starts with a 'rall.' marking, followed by 'a tempo'. The piano part begins with a 'mf' dynamic, then 'rall.', then 'p', and finally 'pp a tempo'. The piano part includes arpeggiated chords and triplet figures. The cello part includes a long note and a final held note. The bottom system continues the piano accompaniment with triplet figures and arpeggiated chords, while the cello part holds a low D \flat note.

After the piano plays the first phrase, the cello takes over the melody and ends the piece on a held D \flat over three measures of arpeggiated D \flat major chords in the piano. These final measures in a stable major key suggest that the narrator has reached a state of peace through this process.

Compared to the elegies discussed later, this is a relatively simple work. There might be coincidental connections to the Greek elegy, but Bridge mainly focused on the primary, modern interpretation of the elegy as an expression of grief and sorrow. Yet, perhaps because of this simplicity, it is a very effective evocation of grief. Sometimes grief is simple in nature. Additionally, the perfect repose found in

the D \flat major closing is a very appealing, if a bit unrealistic, portrayal of consolation. Benjamin Britten, however, had a much darker, more complex perspective on grief than that of his former composition teacher.

4.
Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)
“Elegia” (1961)

Britten’s “Elegia” is the central movement of his five-movement Sonata in C for cello and piano, written for Mstislav Rostropovich. In a sonata that is mostly characterized by its sense of humor, this movement carries much of the emotional weight of the entire piece. In some performances, it is the longest movement of all five. When compared to Bridge’s *Elégie*, Britten’s “Elegia” is more complex, though it still shares many qualities with Bridge’s composition. Some tropes of mourning are inescapable and universal, which makes them recognizable to the listener, and thus useful to the composer.

Britten used several of the same musical qualities as Bridge to create a sorrowful, mourning feeling. The simple, soft, opening cello melody hearkens back to the simplicity of Bridge’s voice-like melody, as well as to Pan’s reeds. The musical sigh also features prominently throughout Britten’s piece, though he took it one step further than Bridge. Bridge’s sighs are purely melodic, whereas Britten created “sighs” of volume at the same time: along with the drop in pitch, there is a diminuendo (Example 4.1). These two-dimensional musical sighs create a more vivid depiction of grief.

Example 4.1. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 9–12

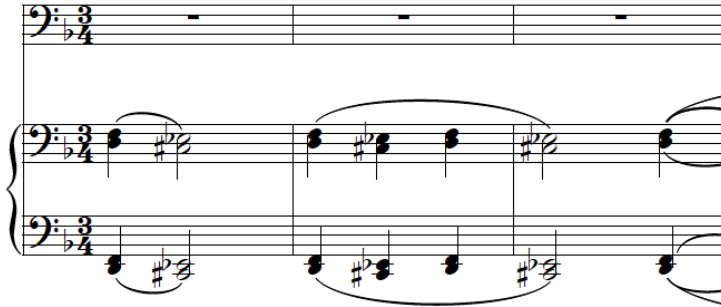


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Britten also created a sorrowful mood by using secundal harmonies. The motifs of the entire five-movement sonata are based on intervals of the second. In the other movements, this interval is used to a playful effect, with frequent use of melodic seconds. In this movement, the second has been transferred to the harmony, creating a discordant, dark texture. The piano opens the movement with a D and F in the low register, then moves to C# and Eb, an enharmonically spelled major second (Example 4.2). In this low range, the notes rumble, creating a very ominous opening. Adding to the flavor of the moment, the dyad is spelled as a diminished third, rather than a major second, creating a notational dissonance. As musicians, we are not accustomed to seeing a C# and Eb as part of the same chord. The visual might lead performers to sound that chord with particular darkness, or at least to think twice about why it is written that way. Britten used these kinds of harmonies throughout the “Elegia.” (Other examples of diminished thirds can be found in the piano part of Example 4.1.) In the world of the “Elegia,” the second is

not a dissonance that will be resolved; secundal harmonies (and their diminished third counterparts) are the norm.

Example 4.2. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 1–3.



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Britten also suggested a procession of mourners with the pace and rhythmic patterns of his elegy. The cello's consistent quarters at Britten's slow $\text{♩} = 50$ metronome marking could be the pace of a slow, funereal march. Although the meter is in three, the frequent hemiolas in the cello melody make the melody sound like it is in two, which makes a more suitable walking meter. However, the grouping of notes makes the procession a little off-kilter. The first phrase, marked by the slurs in the piano part, is six quarter-note beats long, as is the second phrase. However, the third phrase is nine beats long (Example 4.3). This metrical dissonance between the meter, the march feeling, and the phrase lengths makes an uneasy, discomforting feeling.

Example 4.3. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 1–10.

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Britten also used repetition, another quality of elegiac verse. The entire work is based on a very small amount of material. The cello’s first five notes (or their gestural shape) appear prominently in every section of the movement. This basic melodic building block is depicted in Example 4.4.

Example 4.4. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, cello part, mm. 4–5.

Sonata in C, Op. 65 by Benjamin Britten

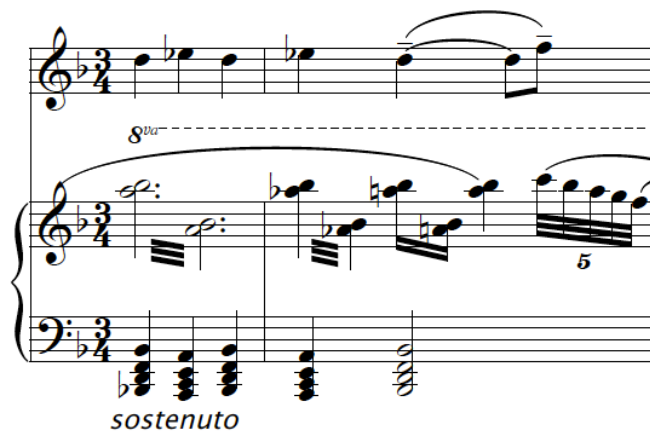
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Britten’s repeated use of this fragment depicts reflection: every proceeding musical thought is a reflection on this one core bit of melody. Britten seems to be puzzling

over this small melodic fragment by trying it out in many different contexts. In poetry, the idea of “he is gone” can be repeated every which way, eventually becoming comprehensible to the narrator. Likewise, this melody returns in a high tessitura at a *fortissimo* dynamic (Example 4.5), and at a low point (Example 4.6), portraying very different emotions from those shared in the opening.

Example 4.5. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 44–45.



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Another striking quality of Britten’s “Elegia” is his use of bell-like sounds. Britten wrote his massive *War Requiem* the year after he wrote this sonata, and bell sounds feature prominently in the “Sanctus” of the *War Requiem*. In a 1962 *Tempo* article, Peter Evans points out Britten’s use of octave tremolos in the piano and percussion to make bell sounds.¹⁵ Beginning in measure 44 of the “Elegia,” we encounter very similar tremolos (Example 4.5), only this time an A \flat and B \flat bell are ringing at the same time. In the context of the “Elegia,” this bell sound could evoke

¹⁵ Peter Evans, “Britten’s ‘War Requiem’ *Tempo*, No. 61/62, Spring–Summer (1962): 33.

thoughts of church funereal services. Additionally, the discord of the bells reminds the listener of the grief that accompanies such loss.

Like Bridge, Britten traced a mourner's journey from grief, through anger, to consolation in his elegy (Appendix B). The movement's basic form is ABABA: an extended ternary form. The opening section (Example 4.3) is very similar to the opening of Bridge's *Elégie*: a soft, simple cello melody above minimal accompaniment sets the sorrowful scene. The pitch range of both instruments is in the mid-low range, and the dynamic is *piano*. This passage is also nearly monorhythmic, with the only variation between the lines being the rare eighth notes in the cello.

The B section opens with an undeniable sense of emptiness. The dynamics are *ppp*, the cello is on its lowest note and the piano is in an exceptionally high range (Example 4.6). The middle of the tonal range is empty. The rhythmic density is also very low: the only rhythmic propulsion, if one can call it that, is the high-pitched echo in the right hand of the piano.

Example 4.6. Britten, "Elegia" from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 22–25.

The musical score for Example 4.6 shows measures 22–25 of "Elegia" from Britten's Sonata in C for cello and piano. The cello part (bass clef) is marked *poco a poco crescendo ed animando* and *ppp poco marcato*. The piano part (treble and bass clefs) is marked *ppp marcato in legato*. The piano part features a high-pitched echo in the right hand.

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However, as this section progresses, the cello line rises, gradually filling in the harmonic register. The cello's harmonic density also increases from single notes to double stops, then to triple stops, and finally to quadruple stops, while the piano's rhythmic density increases from quarters to eights to triplet eights to sixteenths, all the way to 32nd sextuplets. Through all of this growth, the dynamics climb steadily from *ppp* to *ff*. In the twenty-two measures of this section, the music moves from sparse and quiet to thick, heavy and loud.

In the central section of the piece, the narrator reaches his angry outburst (Example 4.7). The seconds prominently ring in the piano's upper register. This harshness is worlds away from the earlier murky, soft seconds. The sounds in this passage may bring to mind yelling, shaking or stomping: gestures of intense anger. This emotional climax occurs exactly halfway through the measure numbers, and therefore at the center of the entire sonata. Through many downward crashes of multi-tuplets in the piano, and sighs in the cello, the music exhausts itself.

Example 4.7. Britten, "Elegia" from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 44–48.

The musical score for Example 4.7 is presented in two staves. The top staff is for the cello, written in a single line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It begins with the dynamic marking *ff espress.* and contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. The bottom staff is for the piano, written in two lines (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat. It begins with the dynamic marking *ff* and the instruction *sostenuto*. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns, including multi-measure rests for 5 and 6 measures, and various articulations like slurs and accents. A dashed line connects the two staves, indicating a close relationship between the parts.

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The return to the B material (Example 4.8) is similar to its first iteration: *ppp* dynamics and the cello in a very low range. But something has changed: the piano is in a low range as well. Everything has collapsed and the music has reached its lowest point. The first sign of movement is when the piano tremolos begin again, low and rising step-by-step. The cello's only response to this attempt at movement is an eerily static arpeggio in an empty, stark quintal tonality. It is as if the cello is paralyzed by grief. Throughout this passage the piano goes back and forth between very low tremolos and the high echoing material from the original B section. It is as if the piano can't find itself: lost between two very different worlds.

Example 4.8. Britten, "Elegia" from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 61–65.

The musical score for Example 4.8 consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows measures 61-65. The cello part (top staff) has a long, sustained note in the low register, marked *pp*. The piano part (bottom staff) features a tremolo in the low register, marked *ppp*, and a rising step-by-step tremolo, marked *(sempre pp)*. The piano part also includes a section marked *una corda*. The second system shows measures 61-65. The cello part has a series of triplets, marked *pp chiaro*. The piano part has a series of triplets, marked *tre corde*, and a section marked *una corda*. The score is in 3/4 time, key of C major.

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This passage may be heard as the moment after all the anger is purged and one is only left with numbness. There is no dynamic greater than *pp*, no crescendi or diminuendi, the cello is muted, and the piano is pedaled alternately *una corda* and *tre corde*. The harmonies change, but not in a way that suggests progress. No matter where the piano harmonies go, the cello repeats the same arpeggio in response.

At last, in the final A section, the cello regains its voice. In a texture similar to the start of the movement, the opening material returns, though in an altered version. In addition, the cello is still muted, so even though the melody is very similar, it does not sound with the same strength. The piece ends on octave As in the cello and piano (Example 4.9). Though this piece hovers somewhere between D Aeolian and A Phrygian, the piece began clearly centered in D. Therefore, the final As sound like they want to resolve to a D. The music has come to a place of stillness, perhaps consolation, but the story isn't over. The cello hopes to finally reach a tonic D. Instead Britten completely thwarts that wish and starts the following movement with an accented A♭.

Example 4.9. Britten, "Elegia" from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, mm. 83–89.

The musical score for Example 4.9 shows the final measures of the 'Elegia' from Britten's Sonata in C for cello and piano. The cello part (top staff) has a melodic line that ends on an octave A. The piano part (bottom staff) has a complex harmonic texture with a final octave A. Dynamics include *pp* and *ppp*. The piece ends with a double bar line.

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The use of ancient Greek modes in the “Elegia” brings up the striking connection between the rhythm of the cello melody and that of the traditional Greek and Latin elegiac meter. Britten was an avid reader and, according to the Britten-Pears library catalog,¹⁶ he probably owned two copies of Ovid’s *Selected Works*, containing examples of several Latin poetic meters. Moreover, Britten wrote a work for solo oboe entitled *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid* in 1951, a decade before writing the cello sonata. Britten’s interest in ancient Latin poetry was deeply rooted.

According to *Merriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature*, elegiac meter is:

In classical prosody, a distich (two lines), the first line of which is a dactylic hexameter and the second of which is often misleadingly called pentameter . . . In actuality the second line is made up of two hemiepe, or two and a half dactyls followed by another two and a half dactyls.¹⁷

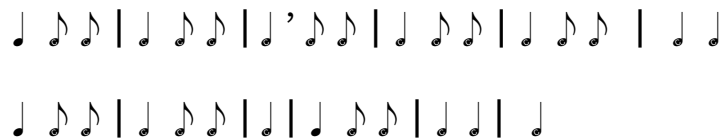
A dactylic foot is either made of two long syllables or one long and two short. This is easier understood in diagram form. In the diagram below, “U” is a short syllable, “—” is a long syllable, “|” shows the division between feet, and “’” is the caesura: a pause traditionally placed after the long syllable of the third foot on the first line. (The underlined “UU” can either be two short syllables or one long.)

— UU | — UU | — ’ UU | — UU | — UU | — —
 — UU | — UU | — | — UU | — UU | —

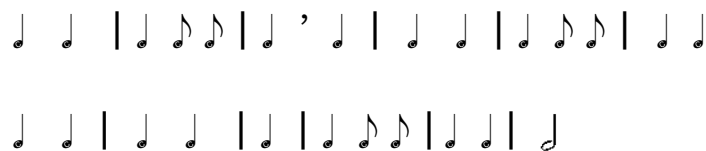
¹⁶ “Books and Periodicals” Britten-Pears Foundation, accessed October 1, 2012 <http://www.brittenpears.org/page.php?pageid=537>.

¹⁷ “Elegy,” *Merriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature*, 370.

Translated into traditional Western musical symbols (again, remembering that any of the pairs of eighth notes can be combined into a quarter note):



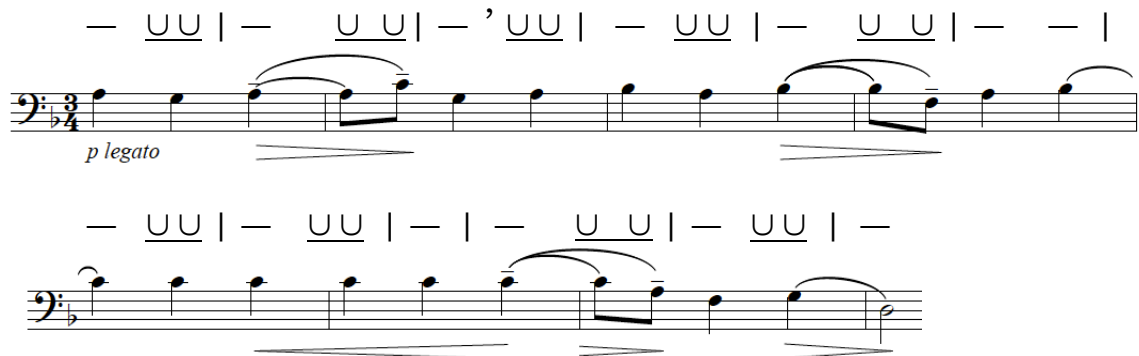
Compare the above meter with the rhythm of the cello melody, with ties removed, in measures 4–11 of Britten’s “Elegia:”



When one accounts for the fact that two short syllables can be paired into one long syllable, the rhythms are exactly the same. (I left the foot markers in to highlight this fact.) The caesura even falls in its traditional place, which is distinguished by the end of slurs in both the cello and piano part.

The relationship between Britten’s original melody and the elegiac meter is clear (Example 4.10), despite the ties over the bar line that obscure it.

Example 4.10. Britten, “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano, Op. 65, cello part, with elegiac feet superimposed above the staff, mm. 4–11.



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Britten did not discuss this concept in his letters to Rostropovich, or in any other currently documented writing. But it is clear that he was very interested in poetry, in elegiac poems in particular, and the rhythmic match is striking. Britten also titled his piece “Elegia,” which is both Italian and Latin for “elegy.” While this rhythmic pattern might not change how the “Elegia” affects the lay listener, it adds a level of gravitas and depth that is truly remarkable.

The journey taken in Britten’s “Elegia,” as compared to that in Bridge’s *Elégie*, is a long and arduous one. The emotions are far more complex and vivid: the sorrow more gut wrenching and the bleakness breathtaking. Perhaps it was the two extra decades of life, or the two devastating wars England had recently been through, that brought this deeper perspective to Britten, or it just might have been his personality. The combination of literary and musical inspiration in the “Elegia” is a beautiful representation of Britten’s characteristic joining of these fields. Delius also brings these two fields together, but in a very different, and much more personal, way.

5.
Frederick Delius (1862–1934)
Elegy (1930)

In comparison to Bridge and Britten, Delius wrote his elegy from a very different perspective. He was extremely ill: paralyzed and blind from syphilis. He would die only four years later. Throughout his long illness, he composed by dictating, first to his wife, and eventually to the young composer, Eric Fenby (1906–1997). *Elegy* was written for, and dedicated to, Beatrice Harrison, a cellist for whom Delius wrote his Cello Concerto and Cello Sonata. *Elegy* was composed and published with a *Caprice*. Separating itself from the *Caprice*, the *Elegy* held an important role in British history: “At the outbreak of World War Two the music that broke the silence after Chamberlain’s broadcast announcement that Britain was at war was Beatrice’s recording of the *Elegy*.”¹⁸ That was a large silence to fill, but Delius’s *Elegy* both mourned the tragedy and extolled the virtue of fighting through it.

Like Britten, Delius was inspired and influenced by poetry, particularly Thomas Gray’s eighteenth-century poem, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.” According to May Harrison, Beatrice’s violinist sister, “he had insistently expressed a wish to be buried in the South of England (as some of the little English Churchyards reminded him on Gray’s *Elegy*, one of his favourite poems, and upon which his last ‘cello work, “Elegy,” was based).”¹⁹ Peter Sacks brings up one of the most striking connections between Gray and Delius’s elegies: “[Gray’s] ‘Elegy’ mourns a particular

¹⁸ Katrina Fountain, “In A Surrey Garden: The Story of the Harrison Sisters.” *Delius Society Journal* 87 (1985): 8.

¹⁹ Harrison, “Delius,” 105.

death over and above those of the obscure villagers. This individual death, albeit imaginary, is that of the poet himself.”²⁰ Delius must have felt a personal connection to this concept in the poem. As sick as he was, and had been for quite some time, Delius likely sensed that he was writing his own elegy.

Gray’s poem (found in its entirety in Appendix D) is also striking in its use of silence as the predominant metaphor for death—a metaphor that must have rang true mightily to a composer. Sacks points out “a specific attention given to sounds that emerge from a predominating silence.”²¹ To a composer, perhaps the greatest tragedy of death is losing his ability to express his musical voice, leaving him mute. The following passage from Gray’s *Elegy* provides an excellent example of Gray’s focus on the loss of voice:

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor’s voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull, cold ear of Death? (lines 41–44)²²

There is a clear focus on silence, exemplified by the words, “fleeting breath,” “silent dust,” and the “dull, cold ear of Death.” The poem also provides a solution to fend off the silence: Gray’s narrator creates immortality through the epitaph that comes at the end of the poem:

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frown’d not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark’d him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav’n did a recompense as largely send:*

²⁰ Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats*, 133.

²¹ Ibid., 134.

²² Ibid., 134.

*He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God. (lines 117-128)²³*

This epitaph will be Gray's narrator's voice for the years after his death. Likewise, Delius's voice finds immortality in his *Elegy*.

Delius depicts grief and sorrow differently from Bridge or Britten. The thin, plaintive song is gone. The work opens with a horn call in the cello (Example 5.1), connecting to Sacks's pastoral context and the pastoral scene of Gray's poem. Like Bridge's *Elégie*, it reminds us of a solo mourner, only this time he is playing his horn instead of singing or playing the flute. And instead of being open and full of consonant intervals, as one expects from a horn call, this horn call is trapped in the interval of a tritone, F# to C.

Example 5.1. Delius, *Elegy*, cello part, mm. 1–4.



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The cello is in a very uncomfortable harmonic place: the *interval del diablo*. It is hard not to see a connection to Delius's paralysis, trapped inside his own body. Delius must have been in a torturous state, being a composer, unable to compose on his

²³ Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." In *Wadsworth Anthology of Poetry*, ed. Jay Parini (Boston: Thompson Wadsworth, 2006), 156.

own. This horn call continues prominently throughout the opening section, and as secondary material in the later passages.

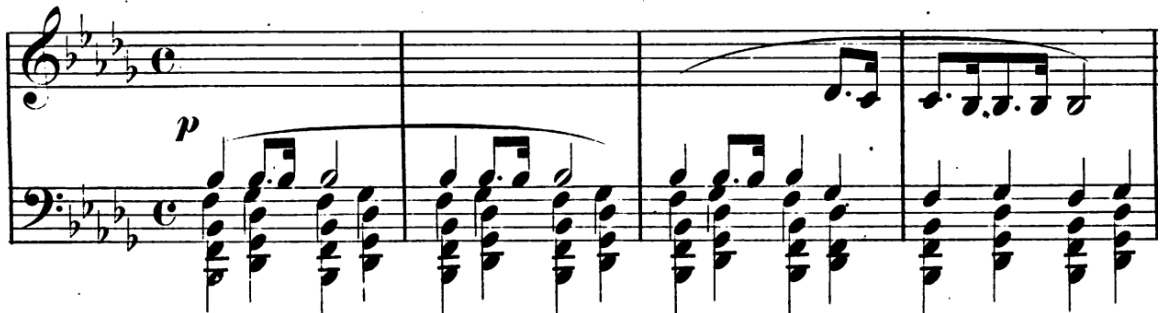
The other main melodic concept evoked in Delius's *Elegy* is a funeral march: one of the most recognizable tropes of musical mourning that exists. The dotted rhythms in the cello melody (Example 5.2) are reminiscent of marches like the *Marcia funebre* from Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, the first movement from Mahler's Symphony No. 2, the opening "Requiem Aeternam" of Britten's *War Requiem*, or Chopin's famous *Marche funèbre* from his second Piano Sonata (Example 5.3).

Example 5.2. Delius, *Elegy*, mm. 30–32.

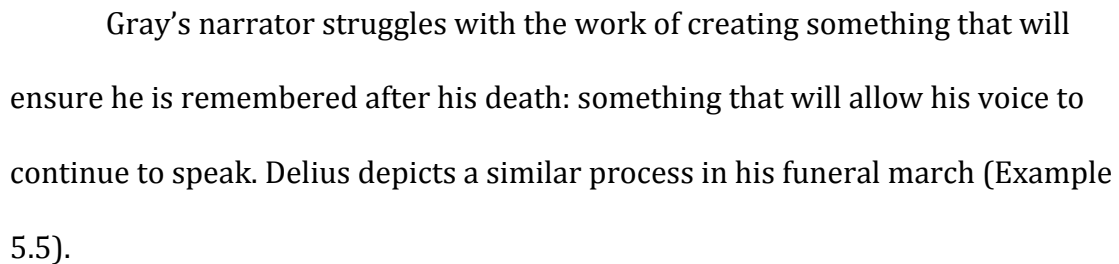


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Example 5.3. Chopin, "Marche funèbre", from *Piano Sonata No. 2*, Op. 35, mm. 1–4.



Example 5.4. *Taps.*



The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, with the vocal melody in the treble clef and the piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment, with the vocal line ending on a final note. The piano accompaniment concludes with a final chord. The score is written for a single voice and piano.

35

The piano moves with steady quarter notes. The roots of the piano chords progress in a traditional fashion from tonic to dominant and back (though with less traditional harmonies built above). Finally, the music has escaped the stillness and begun to move. Marches suggest motion, progress, and persistence: the opposite of paralysis. The tonal progressions in the roots of the chords add to this metaphor of growth. In this melody, we sense he is succeeding at escaping his paralysis.

The anger that is the emotional peak of other elegies doesn't seem to exist here. The musical peak, which arrives about three-quarters of the way through the piece (Example 5.6), is a repetition of the march melody with a few changes. It is now marked at a forte dynamic, with the piano marked "marcato." Although some of the chords have changed (the third beat of measure 37 changed from a B minor seventh to a B half-diminished seventh), there is no dramatic increase in dissonance over the previous statement (Example 5.5). Britten used extreme dissonance and Bridge used persistent accents to depict anger in their elegies, but those qualities are not present here. Instead of being angry and upset, Delius faces death by working ever harder to move forward, trying more passionately to create a voice that will continue after he is gone.

Example 5.6. Delius, *Elegy*, mm. 37–45.



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Although the march creates a sense of some progress, several harmonic qualities of the music contribute to the lost feeling that was introduced in the horn call motif. When harmonies move in an unexpected direction, as they increasingly do as the march moves along, it creates a feeling of a lack of control over one's environment: a feeling that often coincides with loss and sorrow. Leonard B. Meyer suggests that emotion is created in art through suspense, waiting for the resolution we hope for, but fearing it may not come.²⁵ Delius depicts the consolation and relief that evaded him in life as harmonic progressions that evade their expected conclusions. The harmonies of the passage below (Example 5.7) reveal several of these unexpected, unresolved harmonic movements.

²⁵ Leonard Meyer. *Emotion and Meaning in Music*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 28.

Example 5.7. Delius, *Elegy*, mm. 40–42. (Chords are numbered to ease discussion.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

DM⁹⁻⁸ F^{#o} BMm⁷ Ger⁺⁶ AMm⁴⁻³ FM AMm⁷ Dm F^{#o7} AMm⁷ B^{o7}

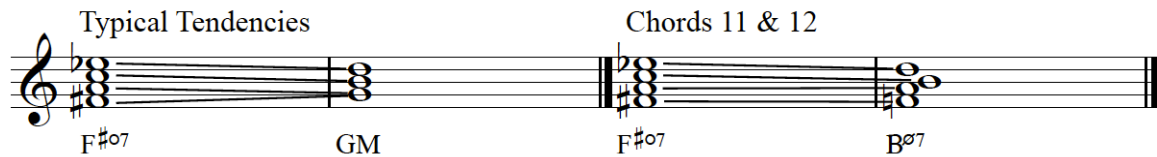
I iii^{4/3} VI^{7(#3)} #iv^{b6} V² bIII⁶ V² i⁶ V² vii^{7/IV} vi^{4/3}

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One harmonic trend that stands out in this passage is the number of dominant seventh chords and how none of them resolve the way they should by traditional harmonic rules. The dominant, in general, has the strongest harmonic pull of any tonal chord: it wants to move to a root position tonic. However, in the above passage, this wish is thwarted each time. It moves both to III⁶ and i⁶, neither of which are a root position tonic chord. Even more strangely in chords 10 and 11, the V² moves to a vii^{7/IV}, which is completely unexpected. Additionally, each dominant chord is in third inversion, the least stable form of the dominant, which reduces the strength of its harmonic pull. Despite the rhythmically strong, forward feeling of the march, the progress, both tonally and emotionally, is proving evasive.

Another example of this evasion and disappointment comes in the unexpected chord transition between chords 11 and 12. Chord 11 is an F[#] diminished seventh chord (with the B in the cello line as an anticipation of the following chord), which has a strong tendency to resolve to a G major chord.

However, chord 12 is a B \flat 7. The typical tendencies of the notes of an F \sharp diminished chord are: F \sharp →G, A→G, C→B, and E \flat →D. The F \sharp diminished chord in measure 42 follows a less typical path: F \sharp →F \natural , A→A, C→C, E \flat →D. All of the notes either stay the same or move down by a half step, and the F \sharp defies our most basic expectation of its rising to the G:



Delius has created his own musical sigh, only this time it is in the harmony. Bridge's sighs were in the melodic shape, and Britten's were in the melodic shape and dynamics. However, Delius's sighs are subtly placed in the harmonic motion.

Delius also creates a sighing shape with his use of frequent tonal suspensions. A suspension is formed when one or several notes from a previous chord continue to sound in the following chord, thereby creating a temporary dissonance. Eventually, the dissonance is resolved when the suspended note(s) from the previous chord resolve down by step. There is a 9-8 suspension in chord 1 and a triple-suspension between chords 5 and 6. There is also a suspension-like movement (multiple tones moving down by step) between chords 10 and 11. Although all but one of the "suspended" tones are not technical suspensions, but instead passing tones, their downward resolution creates the sensation of a suspension.

There is also a great deal of modal mixture in the above passage (and throughout the piece), which adds to the unsettled feeling. The passage opens with a

D major chord (chord 1), but the next tonic chord is in the minor mode (chord 9). Non-tonic chords are also taken freely from both the major and minor modes. There are two chords with B as their root: Mm^7 and \emptyset^7 . F^\sharp serves as the root of both half and fully-diminished chords, while an F^\natural also appears as the root of a major chord. There is not a single tonal system in which all of these chords can exist. This free movement between harmonic modes is disorienting and creates a sense of helplessness.

Delius makes some auditory sense of these unexpected harmonic movements by using stepwise motion. Although the chords in the above passage do not necessarily follow a logical harmonic progression, they are often reached through stepwise motion. In the first measure of Example 5.7, chords 1–4 have stepwise motion down in the piano bass and stepwise motion up in the cello. In the following measure (chords 5–6) Delius uses planing (a popular compositional technique in the impressionistic music of France, where Delius lived nearly half of his life) to move from one chord to the next. The quality of the chords changes slightly, from a minor seventh to a major/minor seventh, but otherwise all the voices move together. Although stepwise motion does not make these non-tonal progressions any more tonal, they do become more comprehensible to the ear and add to the metaphor of progress through step-by-step motion.

Though anger is not present, Delius's *Elegy* traces a path from grief to consolation. This journey is illustrated in the change of the horn calls from the beginning to the end of the movement. The work opens with the tritone calls (Example 5.8). They show up throughout the piece (in the frame of a tritone and

other intervals), both as the melody and hiding within the accompaniment to the march. When all the marches are done and the texture thins out to what it was at the beginning, the horn call returns as the prominent melody. But this time, it is finally tonally grounded. The piano plays a D minor seventh chord and the cello plays the horn call centered squarely on a D (Example 5.9). This recurrence of the horn call also has a new time signature, with one more beat per measure than the opening. This temporal expansion creates a sense of increased relaxation.

Example 5.8. Delius, *Elegy*, mm. 1–4.



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Example 5.9. Delius, *Elegy*, mm. 49–54.

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You might note how the cello arrives at the D: through the movement of a tritone. The grief remains, but there is some comfort as the cello fades away, firmly

grounded in D. Throughout this work, there is an uncertainty of key. The tonalities that endure for a significant period of time are based in unstable intervals and uncertain roots. And in moments of tonality, a quick enharmonic modulation often shakes up any sense of key. In finally reaching a firm tonal center in the final measures, Delius depicts the relaxation and relief in one's final acceptance of death, in hopes that the work done prior will ensure that his voice is not silenced for eternity.

6. Conclusion

Although all three composers depicted similar emotional scenarios, they used different means of inspiration to create them. Bridge's motivic simplicity indicates a more meditative elegy. There are no conscious poetic or societal influences: his elegy expresses pure emotion. Britten took an abstract rhythm from an ancient elegiac form and turned it into an original, modern work of music. Delius embraced the pastoral traditions of the elegy, depicting both a lone horn call and a traditional funeral march. All the while, the overall emotional path of the piece was inspired by one of his favorite English elegiac poems.

Despite their varied sources of inspiration, these three elegies were written in remarkably similar forms. All are in a ternary form, with the central section being the emotional peak. Bridge, the youngest of the three at the time of composition, wrote the most clear-cut ABA form. Britten, a somewhat older composer when he wrote his elegy, expanded the form to an ABABA double-ternary form. Delius's form seems to return to the ABA simplicity found in the Bridge, though the lines are blurred when the A theme shows up in the B section. Nevertheless, the arch-shaped emotional path is clear in all three works.

Bridge's arch of emotion is created with several music elements, outlined in Appendix A. The dynamics begin at *pp*, rise to *ff* at the climax, and then fall back to *pp* at the end. The tonal centers also rise in the middle. The opening is centered on D \flat , but at the peak of the movement, the key center rises to D \sharp . At the climax of the entire piece, the music falls back to D \flat . The range of pitch-centers literally creates

an arch shape. Additionally, the range of pitches also creates an arch. In the A sections, the cello and piano are both in a middle range, but in the B section, the tessitura widens, and at the peak (the move to D tonality), it is at its widest. By the return to the A section, the range of pitch has narrowed back to what it was at the beginning. Bridge's use of one melodic shape for the outer sections, and another for the central section, highlights the differentiation between the three sections.

Britten's arch of emotion is emphasized by several dramatic musical changes, summarized in Appendix B. The rhythm begins slowly and nearly monorhythmically then rises to loud, rapid tremolos in the central section. In the closing section, it returns to the slow, simple rhythms. Additionally, the dynamics begin in *p*, rise dramatically to *ff* in the middle, and sink to *ppp* at the end. At the same time, the texture moves from thin and simple to very dense in the middle, then back to very thin. The tessitura also follows this dramatic arch shape. Both the cello and piano begin in a relatively low range, then at the *ff* peak, the instruments are covering a wide, five-octave range. Finally the piece closes with both instruments returned to a low, small range.

Delius created this shape with similar techniques, shown in Appendix C. Like Bridge, he features two different melodies to clearly differentiate sections: the horn call, prominent in the outer sections, and the funeral march, predominant in the middle. The dynamics also follow an arch shaped path, from *p* to *f* to *p*. The harmonies are also stable (if dissonant) at the beginning, unstable in the middle (with many quick modulations) and finally stable again at the end. The rise and fall in harmonic tension created by these varying harmonic worlds would also create an

arch. Additionally, the rhythmic drive begins very low, rises in the funeral march, and then falls back down to a vague, hazy rhythmic world. The rhythmic world at the end is even hazier than it was at the beginning because it has moved to a 5/4 meter from a more stable 4/4.

This arch-shaped ternary form is reminiscent of the shape of the pastoral elegy, an ancient poetic form. The Merriam-Webster's *Encyclopedia of Literature* defines this genre:

[The pastoral elegy] follows a rather formal pattern. It begins with an expression of grief and an invocation to the Muse to aid the poet in expressing his suffering. It usually contains a funeral procession, a description of sympathetic mourning throughout nature, and musings on the unkindness of death. It ends with acceptance, often a very affirmative justification, of nature's law.²⁶

The pastoral elegy, in its simple form, highlights the major similarity in structure between these works. It begins with the solitary call to the muse to begin the expression of grief. The peak comes when all of nature joins in the mourning and the narrator experiences anger and frustration over the reality of death. Finally, the narrator reaches a place of acceptance of the inevitability of death, and the emotions have calmed.

Kübler-Ross's five stages of grieving also track an arch of emotion. She came to this conclusion in a very different field from the composers: she interviewed dying patients and their families. Her five stages begin with denial, where emotion and intensity are low because the reality has not sunk in yet. The next stage is anger, the peak of emotion, followed by bargaining, which adds logic (however illogical the attempted bargain may be), which reduces the force of the primal emotion.

²⁶ "Elegy," *Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature*, 370.

Depression follows, which is another reduction in energy, but still a heightened emotional state. The final stage is acceptance, whose calm state is, by far, the lowest in emotional energy of all of the stages.

There are many works of music written in a ternary form, but these three elegies display a significant emotional change from the first A section to the last that is not found in the average ternary movement. In the five stages of grief, denial is not the same emotion as acceptance, despite being the beginning and end of the stages. Likewise, the opening sections of the elegies are not the same as the final ones, despite being made of essentially the same material. Bridge's ending is the most similar to the beginning out of the three, with the only changes being the instrumentation (the piano plays the melody in mm. 68–70), a fermata on the cello's final G \flat and the elongated final D \flat major chord. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that Bridge's *Elégie* is really a work of juvenilia.

Britten uses timbre and dynamics to depict the change in the music's emotional perspective from beginning to end. His "Elegia" ends with the cello muted, while it opened with the cello playing normally: something changed through the journey of the piece, leaving the cello with a smaller voice than when he began. This smaller voice is emphasized by the fact that the cello begins in a *p* dynamic, but the last A section begins at *pp*. Similarly in the piano part, the opening section is *p*, but the final A section is *pp* and *ppp*. A resignation or loss of strength seems to be suggested by these changes.

Delius's *Elegy* shows great change in the range and harmony of the cello's horn call from beginning to end. The opening harmonies are dissonant, and in an

uncomfortable range of the cello. The closing horn call is in a grounded tonality, and a much more comfortable, lower range. Additionally, the dynamics are *p* at the opening, but *ppp* at the end. Lastly, the change in meter from 4/4 at the beginning to 5/4 at the end creates a sense of repose and stillness that distinguishes the ending from the beginning.

These changes, particularly in the Britten and Delius, are significant. Often, ternary movements bring a sense of relief and comfort with the return of the A section: it brings a feeling of coming home again. However, these elegies do the opposite. Rather than simply repeating what was stated at the beginning, the closing music has been significantly affected by what happened in the middle. Because of the emotional journey it has gone through, the music cannot return to the emotional state in which it began. Instead of a circular journey, as the ternary form suggests, this is a linear one.

The similarity of shape between these various depictions highlights the universal experience of mourning. In musical elegies, the griever follows this emotional path, whether depicted in a funeral march, an ancient poetic meter, a chorus of sighs or cultural traditions of mourning not even touched on in this document. In fact, this path would most likely be found in documents of mourning across artistic genres. Each of these composers has turned their experience of grief into a living, breathing work of art. This art's enduring message can connect to listeners and, perhaps, even aid them through their own individual periods of mourning.

7. Ideas for Performers

In light of the above ideas about these various elegies and their uses of different characteristics of mourning, some points stand out as considerations performers need to keep in mind.

All three pieces have one similar characteristic: challenging dynamics. The Bridge and Britten are made of one large crescendo followed by one large diminuendo. The Delius shares the same general shape, though with a bit more dynamic variation. The performer must respect these markings of the composers and plan a smooth development of sound throughout the piece, requiring the use of bow control and variation in color and vibrato. One might think of emulating the thin, plaintive sound of the flute in the quietest sections — a non-vibrato sound would certainly be useful here. And in the loudest sections, a full, rich vibrant sound will help emphasize the hugeness of the moment.

Another challenging aspect of the dynamics is the musical sigh. If one looks at the Britten cello melody (Example 4.10), there are four diminuendi and one crescendo. Yet the passage starts at *piano* and ends at *piano*. Therefore, in order to not diminuendo into oblivion, the cellist needs to make up some volume or reinterpret these diminuendi. One possibility is to build up the sound subtly after each diminuendo, but if it is done too obviously, the music might induce seasickness. Instead, I propose the cellist focus on the sound of a human sigh. The start of the sigh is often louder than the equivalent person's speaking voice. Therefore, one can put a gentle vibrato and bow speed stress on the beginning of each sigh. This subtle

change is the most natural way to create these musical sighs without adding more dynamic variation than Britten wrote. The tenuto markings he placed on many of these sighs also hint at this solution.

There is another aspect of the musical sigh that requires particular attention by the performer. When a human sighs, there is smooth journey in pitch from top to bottom. Even though music is written in scales, the performer must create an illusion of that gradual fall. Of course, a printed downward scale should not be turned into a glissando. But the tone has to travel evenly all the way down the scale to help create the illusion of the sigh.

This concept applies to melodic gestures beyond those in a sighing shape. To create a musical depiction of the subjective aspect of the elegy, the cellist must emulate the sound of a human to generate an image of an individual narrator. There are several ways to help create this impression. First, the human voice naturally glides from one pitch to another. If the cellist allows the bow changes and shifts to create harsh cuts from one pitch to another, the illusion of song will be lost.

Secondly, humans must breathe. These composers left many openings in the music where a vocalist would naturally breathe. The instrumentalist must not get carried away in his ability to create endless sound. The break in sound in which the speaker catches his breath and regroups can be one of the more emotionally striking moments in the work. The composers of these three works leave many spaces in which the cellist can take a breath: the performer just has to find them.

However, there are moments in these elegies in which emulating the sound of a human voice is not appropriate. The opening cello line of the Delius *Elegy* does

not resemble a song. The intervals are difficult to sing, there are lots of leaps, and it is written with no inflection, all which would be challenging to perform without great vocal training. Here the cellist must recreate a different musical sound: that of the horn. The cello and horn are often brought together in orchestral works to share a melody, due to their similarities in range and tone. Two of the particularly beautiful qualities of the horn are the pure tone and clean transitions between pitches, even through leaps. This purity of tone, calling for a subtle vibrato and clean shifts, is what the cellist should be aiming for.

Britten's use of the elegiac form brings up two matters of concern for the performer. One is to highlight the dactyl feet, which means playing the melody in two, even though the meter of the piece is in 3. This will bring out the elegiac rhythm. This feeling of a duple meter, contrasting with the triple meter that the piece is written in, adds to the internal tension of the music.

In addition, Britten's use of the poetic caesura indicates that his use of slurs should be highlighted as well. The first break in the cello melody, which falls in the place where a traditional caesura falls in the elegiac meter, is created musically with a break in slurs in the piano and cello. (The cello slurs in this movement should be considered a bowing, whereas the piano slurs are what indicates the length of a phrase.) Therefore, the cellist should study the piano part and mark where the breaks in slurs occur. At those locations, it is important that both the cellist and the pianist create enough of a breath to make the end of the phrase clear.

Finally, it is important for performers of these, and all works, to learn about them before learning the notes. Upon first glance at these three elegies, they might

not appear to reveal much. It takes time to break through the obvious musical ideas to find a great deal more under the surface. There tends to be an attitude in the performers' community that studying the stories behind the music does little to improve the performance. To the contrary, learning about the context of these works is the only way to have a chance to perform them in a way near to what the composers intended. This work is not taking us away from our instruments. It is bringing us closer.

The more familiar we become with these musical tropes, the better musicians we can become. Here we have outlined several tropes of sorrow and mourning for the cello. One could undertake a similar project with any other instrument or emotional state. The more our vocabulary increases as musicians, the more vividly we can create these works for the audience. In the end, isn't that the point of what we do?

Part II: Program Notes

January 22, 2010 Cello Recital
Mendelssohn and Shostakovich
Niles Gallery, UK Fine Arts Library

Cello Sonata No. 2 in D major, Opus 58 (1843)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Felix Mendelssohn's second sonata for cello and piano was dedicated to the Polish cellist, Count Mateusz Wielhorski. Mendelssohn's previous works for cello were written for his brother, Paul, an amateur cellist. Mendelssohn composed some of his most successful, enduring music in the same year as this sonata. The most famous of these works is his incidental music to *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*.

The first movement of the sonata begins with a rush of energy. The pulsing eighth notes in the piano give a rhythmic drive to the heroic cello melody. The feeling is similar that of the opening movement of Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony*, which he wrote more than ten years earlier.

The *Allegretto Scherzando* paints a picture that brings to mind the fairies from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The short, playful notes in the piano and the *sempre pizzicato* cello melody tiptoe around each other. It reminds the listener of little mischievous forest creatures. The second theme provides a contrast with a bowed, legato melody.

The *Adagio* movement reveals a very important influence on Mendelssohn: Johann Sebastian Bach. Mendelssohn was critical to the rediscovery of Bach's music in the Romantic era. He conducted a performance of the St. Matthew Passion in 1829, bringing Bach's music back to the public's attention. The *Adagio* of the cello

sonata opens with a Bach-style chorale in the piano, to which the cello responds with a recitative-like lament. The cello recitative and chorale then merge into a lush, operatic sound. The movement closes with the piano taking over both recitative and chorale, over the cello's G pedal tone.

The final movement begins with a burst of energy and never slows down. The heroic theme is introduced with running sixteenth notes, traded back and forth between the two instruments. This movement runs along as if a game between friends, each one trying to top the feat performed last by the other. As in much of Mendelssohn's chamber music, the piano plays both an equal melodic role to the cello as well as an endless stream of rapid accompanimental runs of notes.

Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, Opus 107 (1959)

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Shostakovich composed his first cello concerto in 1959. It was dedicated to, and premiered by, Mstislav Rostropovich (1927-2007), the cellist responsible for many of the great cello works of the twentieth century. Shostakovich would follow this piece with another cello concerto, also written for and premiered by Rostropovich, in 1966.

Though it is hard to tell in the performance today (with the orchestral part reduced to a single piano), the orchestration is surprisingly sparse, considering the powerful emotions portrayed in this music. There are only two players in each woodwind section, and one solo horn is the single brass representative. Some horn players refer to this piece as concerto for cello and horn, due to the horn's

prominent part. The only percussion instruments are timpani and celesta. In comparison, Shostakovich's 11th symphony, written only two years prior, employs three of each woodwind instrument, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, and eight different percussion instruments. Both works use full string sections. Perhaps Shostakovich was being sensitive to the fact that it is difficult for a single cello to be heard over a full wind and brass section. More likely, however, is that Shostakovich was seeking a bare sound.

The piece is divided into four movements, which, at first glance, appears different from the standard three-movement concerto form. In the twentieth century, composers were experimenting with all sorts of new forms for concerti, but it turns out Shostakovich was staying very close to the fast-slow-fast, three-movement model form. His first movement is fast (*Allegretto*). The second movement is slow (*Moderato*). The third movement is entirely a solo cello cadenza, linking the second movement to the fourth. The final fourth movement is very fast (*Allegro con moto*), and the piece ends with the typical concerto's burst of energy at the close. Standard concerto form does not grant the cadenza its entire own movement, but excepting that anomaly, this concerto follows a traditional form.

The first movement begins with a solo cello statement of the famous four-note DSCH motif. The winds respond with a rhythmic motif of eighth-eighth-quarter. These motives appear throughout the concerto in many permutations, both in the melody and the accompaniment. The solo cello also introduces the second theme: unrelenting G's, with the only changes being to notes that are half-steps and tritones away. These harmonies permeate the entire movement.

The second movement is a drastic change from the rhythmic intensity of the first. It is much more introspective and reflective. The main theme is reminiscent of a melancholy folk song, though with a large amount of chromatic embellishment, further emphasizing its dark nature. The movement closes with a strikingly spooky sound: the cello plays the theme one final time in false harmonics, with the celesta filling in the melody where the cello drops out. This spine-tingling duet ends with a very soft timpani roll, which transitions directly into the cello cadenza.

This is no ordinary cadenza, and there is a reason why Shostakovich made it its own movement. Depending on the performer this cadenza can take up to seven or eight minutes to play. It is incredibly virtuosic, not only demanding extraordinary stamina from the performer, but also requiring extended techniques of left-hand pizzicato, contrapuntal double stops, melodic pizzicato chords and large leaps covering the entire range of the instrument. It begins with the mood and themes of the second movement, but then goes on to introduce new themes of its own. At the end of a breathtaking series of scales and leaps, the orchestra joins in to begin the fast-paced race to the finish that is the fourth movement.

The final movement of the concerto, despite the use of folk-like melodies, has a frenetic, harrowing feel to it. From the unrelenting pace of the cello part, to the scream of the E-flat clarinet, there is no doubt of the incredible power of this final movement. When the horn restates the DSCH theme from the first movement, it sounds like we may be in for a moment to breathe. But as it turns out, this motif heralds the coda of the piece, a series of nearly impossible cellistic feats. It is so fatiguing that in this final passage Rostropovich would famously grab the bow with

his fist, as opposed to the proper bow hold, to maintain power through to the end. Despite its short length (most performances last only about four to five minutes), this movement leaves the audience and performers breathless.

May 10, 2010 Solo Cello Recital
Bach, Bloch, & Hindemith
Niles Gallery, UK Fine Arts Library

Suite for Solo Cello, No. 5 in C minor, BWV 1011 (c. 1720)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

J.S. Bach's C minor suite for solo cello is the fifth of his six cello suites. The cello suites were written during his Cöthen period, which was defined by Cöthen's Calvinism, which did not allow for any music in the church. Because he was no longer writing church music every week, this period saw an outpouring of instrumental music, including the Violin Sonatas and Partitas and the Brandenburg Concerti.

The fifth cello suite is the only Bach cello suite that uses *scordatura* tuning, which means the tuning of the open strings of the instrument are altered in some way. In this piece, the A string, the highest string of the cello, is tuned down a major second to a G. This gives the cello a much darker timbre than the standard tuning, which suits the dark, mournful mood of the C minor suite.

The first movement of the suite is a Prelude and Fugue. The Prelude is written in the style of a French Overture, with its many dotted rhythms. This introduction leads into a long fugue, which is the only fugue that Bach wrote in his cello suites. The Allemande also has a rhythmic style similar to the French Overture, with lots of dotted rhythms. It generally sounds less rustic than other Allemandes of Bach's cello suites. The Courante is fast and wild and the music never takes a breath.

The Sarabande is like none other written. Unlike most Sarabandes, which are predominantly chordal, this Sarabande is one solitary, rhythmically simple, line,

travelling slowly up and down the range of the cello. It creates a powerfully lonely, isolated feeling that makes this movement the emotional center of the suite. In a typical Sarabande, there is an emphasis on the second beat of each measure. In this Sarabande there is no accent, but the second beat of each measure is a dissonance a semitone away from the desired note. This contributes to the somber tone of the suite. The two Gavottes offer a contrast in style. The first is rustic and boisterous, while the second lithely flies around like a hummingbird. The final movement, the Gigue, is again based in dotted rhythms. It also returns to the *pesante* boisterousness of the first Gavotte.

Through the different styles of each movement, the suite, as a whole, rarely strays from its dark, ominous beginnings. There are hints of hope and light, but those are brief and fleeting. The darkness always returns.

Suite for Solo Cello, No. 1 (1956)

Ernest Bloch (1880–1959)

Ernest Bloch was a Swiss composer who came to the United States in 1916. He was director of the Cleveland Institute of Music from 1920-1925, then moved to California to head the San Francisco Conservatory of Music from 1925-1930. He spent the last 18 years of his life in Agate Beach, Oregon.

Bloch is known best for the music of his “Jewish” phase, such as the cello concerto, *Schelomo*, inspired by the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes, and his *Three Pieces from Jewish Life*. This music was characterized by a Jewish sound, which

included folk-like songs and rhapsodies that used scales with augmented second intervals as well as specific Jewish references, like the sound of the shofar.

During his final years in Agate Beach, while sick with cancer, he wrote several works for solo strings: two suites for solo violin, one suite for solo viola and three suites for solo cello. The first two cello suites were dedicated to the cellist Zara Nelsova. (The third suite presumably would have also been dedicated to her, but there was a miscommunication between the two of them before it was published.) In these later years Bloch abandoned his signature Jewish sound and wrote more abstract compositions. One can detect a heavy influence of Bach's Suites on these works. After all, when composing suites for solo cello, who could escape their shadow?

Bloch's first suite for solo cello consists of four movements. The Prelude begins with monorhythmic arpeggios relying heavily on open strings, reminiscent of the "Prelude" to Bach's G Major cello suite, one of the best-known cello works of all time. However, as Bloch's opening movement develops, it moves away from Bach's pattern-prelude style. It moves towards a more rhapsodic, improvisatory style.

The second movement is a perpetual motion piece, which flies up and down the cello. Small interludes of a simple folk-like melody, which foreshadow the simple song-like style of the Canzona, interrupt the rapid movement. The perpetual motion ends when the notes rise to the top range of the cello, like a balloon rising into the sky until it rises out of sight.

The third movement, "Canzona," begins with a simple melody, which is developed and fragmented as the movement moves along. The final movement of

Bloch's suite, marked "Allegro," is reminiscent of the finale gigue of Bach's cello suites with its dotted rhythm and triple meter.

While Bloch's music does not use traditional tonality, its pitch centricity still keeps the listener tonally grounded. To further tie the movements together, the movements' tonalities are all related tertially to the opening movement's C tonality. The first movement is centered in C, demonstrated by the many phrases that begin on an open C-string. The second movement bounces between the tonal centers of E and A. The Canzona is tonally centered in A. The final movement returns to a clear C, and even makes a claim for C major, as it begins and ends with strong C major chords.

Sonata for Solo Cello, Opus 25, No. 3 (1922)

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

Paul Hindemith was a composer of the early 20th century, known mostly for developing his own system of tonality. Upon first listening to this piece, this harmonic sound is often the feature that listeners notice first. To one accustomed to traditional tonality, it sounds like never-ending dissonance. This sound is appropriate for the time period in which Hindemith was writing. In 1922, the European continent was still reeling from the effects of the World War One. The darkness of this period comes through in the discordance, violence and deep sorrow of this sonata.

There are two different formal patterns that tie these five movements together. The first is one of overall symmetry. The outer movements are serious,

strong and steadfast. They have driving dotted rhythms and large, brash chords, invoking militaristic images. The second and fourth movements are more playful. The second is often said to sound like a drunken man stumbling his way down the street, complete with hiccups. The fourth is a rapid perpetual motion piece, which sounds like little mice skittering around a field. Finally, the central, third movement stands alone. It is the only slow movement of the five, and holds the bulk of the emotional weight of the entire work. While the outer movements fight through the trouble, and the second and fourth movements playfully ignore the grief, the third movement is the only one that addresses the sorrow directly.

Hindemith also groups the movements tonally, marking the first two movements as one section, the middle movement as another, and the last two movements as the third section. The first movement sets us in a C-centered tonal world, starting with open C and G-strings. Despite what occurs after this opening harmonically, the listener remembers the C as home base. However, the movement ends on a G, the dominant, leaving an open-ended feeling that is completed when the next movement begins on a C. The second movement also ends on a C, closing the first large section of the five-movement work. As mentioned before, the third movement stands alone, longer than either of the other large sections of the piece. This movement also closes on a C, giving a sense of finality. The final section, the fourth and fifth movements, play with the expectation that Hindemith has developed that the piece will end on a C. The fourth movement is tonally evasive, but ends on a clear G, which wants to resolve to a C. However, Hindemith plays with this expectation, and the finale is based in C#, closing with a piercing, sharp *pizzicato*

C#. Although many of the harmonies between these tonal points are difficult to describe, Hindemith's harmonic outline helps guide the unfamiliar listener through.

November 22, 2011 Chamber Music Recital
Mozart, Webern & Brahms
Recital Hall, Singletary Center for the Arts

String Quartet No. 21 in D Major, K. 575 (1789)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Mozart wrote his twenty-first string quartet for the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm II, who was an amateur cellist. (Beethoven's first two sonatas for cello and piano were also dedicated to this important patron.) Upon listening, one can quickly see cellistic influence on this piece. Instead of playing an accompanimental role, as the cello does in most quartets of this era, the cello is treated as an equal to the first violin. It is thus no surprise why this piece is being performed on a cellist's chamber music recital.

Surprisingly for a work commissioned by a cellist, the first movement opens without the cello. The two violins and viola begin the movement, with the viola playing a typical cellist's role: the bass. This opening demonstrates how Mozart manages to alter the typical roles of individual instruments while still maintaining the beautifully balanced, Classical sound that his audience expected. After the first phrase, the cello enters as the bass instrument, freeing the viola to play the melody. At the arrival of the second theme, the cello introduces the new melody, before passing it around to each of the members of the quartet. This level of equality throughout the quartet makes a very rich and interesting texture.

The second movement is written as an operatic love duet between the first violin and cello. They trade beautifully embellished melodies, giving the cello a chance to play the tenor lead next to the violin's soprano. Despite the fact that most

of the movement is a duet between the first violin and cello, there is also a melody in this movement, like in the first, that is passed around all four instruments.

The third movement of this quartet is the traditional minuet and trio. The minuet is very playful, with subito dynamics catching the listener constantly by surprise. The Trio is when the cello really gets to shine. With the violins playing the accompanimental role of the middle voices, and the viola playing the bass line, the cello is free to be the melodic instrument for most of the passage.

The cello introduces the finale melody, playing in a duet with the viola, which plays the bass line. When the violins enter, the fun begins. The instruments are constantly playing in duets, seemingly dancing around each other, teasing, and chasing. There are canons, changes in accompanimental patterns, and fiery triplet runs for all the instruments. The duets are often paired with the two violins together and the two lower instruments together, though not always. Sometimes it seems that one duet is commenting on the other. But they all gather together at the end for a strong cadential pair of chords to close the piece.

Langsammer Satz (1905)

Anton Webern (1883–1945)

Webern wrote his *Langsammer Satz* (“Slow Movement”) when he was only 22 years old and had just begun to study with Arnold Schoenberg. While Schoenberg is known today for his serial works, this movement shows another side of Schoenberg’s influence. In his early years, Schoenberg wrote in the Wagnerian language of endlessly soaring melodies and heart-wrenching Romantic

chromaticism. Shortly after this piece was written, Webern quickly moved to purely atonal and serial works. Although it was written in 1905, *Langsammer Satz* was not published until long after Webern's death, which occurred in 1945. Perhaps the reason it remained unpublished for his entire life was because it was dramatically different from the voice for which Webern became known at the height of his career.

Webern plays with overlapping rhythms, particularly with 2:3 and 4:3 polyrhythms, creating an endless flow of tension. (This rhythmic quality can also be found often in Brahms' chamber music.) There is also a great deal of chromaticism, adding more tension to the texture. Particularly profuse is his use of appoggiaturas and suspensions – patterns of harmonic tension and downward release. This theme suggests a sighing motif throughout the work, a gesture one might associate with young love.

From the moment this short work begins, the listener is enveloped in a warm, rich sound. The opening c minor theme is repeated several times, with each instrument getting a chance at the melody, and each time with a different textural backdrop. It begins in the first violin and then moves to the viola, then to the second violin. (We can forgive Webern for only giving the cello the melody once, since he was still a very young composer at this time.) A second theme, marked with the direction "*sehr ruhig*," meaning "very calm," emerges out of the softening of the first climax. To emphasize the tranquility of the closing passage, Webern indicates that mutes should be used.

One can see Webern playing with different string techniques, such as *pizzicato*, mutes, and *ponticello*, which makes it clear that this is a student work.

However, through the simple structure and indications that this work is a student piece, the constantly changing, lush musical backdrops make it a very effective, expressive depiction of beauty.

Piano Quartet No. 3 in C minor, Op. 60 (1875)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Brahms wrote his first two piano quartets in 1855. He began to write his third in that same year. More than a decade later, he began to revise the third, and finally completed and premiered it in 1875. Brahms was a careful, deliberate composer, who did not have the rapid writing abilities of a composer like Mozart. Several of his works (including his first symphony) were long-term projects like this one.

This quartet is full of dark, romantic anguish. Some have even nicknamed the piece “Werther,” named after the hero of Goethe’s epistolary Romantic novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. In the novel, the hero suffers from an unrequited love until he can take it no more and shoots himself. This emblematic Romantic story bears a clear resemblance to the mood and atmosphere of this piano quartet.

The first movement opens with a four-octave *forte* C in the piano. The strings respond, after what feels like an endless wait, with a soft, legato melody. The piano and strings go back and forth in this manner. Finally, the strings break the tension with octave sixteenth-note scales. This moment begins an unrelenting forward-moving pulse. The rest of the music alternates between this aggressive mood and

static, tension-filled moments. At the end of the movement, the opening mood returns, and the movement ends in the same grief that held the beginning.

The second movement, "Scherzo," is much more dramatic and aggressive than the typical scherzo. Its rhythmic drive is exhilarating. Even the contrasting sections, marked by slurs and longer lines, maintain the unstoppable forward motion. Perhaps the greatest surprise comes at the end of the piece, where the piano is tumbling forward with triplets and the strings play B octave trills for four measures, finally resolving to a C, which is also then held for four measures before the final chords. In such a fast-moving movement, the surprise of having all four strings hold one note together for such a long time highlights the excitement.

The third movement, "Andante," is perhaps the most beautiful piece of music Brahms ever wrote. It provides a much-needed break from the grief and woe of the first two movements. It is in E major, with a gentle rhythmic flow. The tender, affectionate opening cello melody is glorious. There are hints of chromaticism and the minor mode in the melody, indicating that the darkness has not entirely departed. But in a place of such beauty, one can finally find brief respite from the gloom.

The final movement returns to C minor. The violin introduces the melody, over an endless stream of agitated eighth notes in the piano. These eighth notes have a pattern that is very reminiscent of Beethoven's famous opening four notes of his Symphony No. 5: three eighth notes of the same pitch, followed by a (sometimes longer) different note. This piano quartet is also in the same key as Beethoven's iconic "fate" symphony. It is well known that Brahms was deeply aware of the large

shadow of Beethoven that loomed over him. No doubt, as he wrote this piece, he felt Beethoven looking over his shoulder. The *sturm und drang* that opens the movement is briefly interrupted by a tranquil chorale theme in the strings, which sounds like a prayer amidst the turmoil. The piece ends surprisingly: everyone winds down. The strings' melody gets shorter and shorter, as if they are running out of breath, and the piano winds down a chromatic scale. The final notes are two short, *forte* C major chords. It's hard to say whether this is a positive or negative ending. However, it is oddly familiar to the end of poor Werther: dramatic, brief and surprisingly ambiguous as to its outcome.

December 1, 2011 Concerto Performance
Haydn
Concert Hall, Singletary Center for the Arts

Cello Concerto in C major, Hob. VIIb/1 (c. 1761–5)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Haydn's C Major Cello Concerto was written during Haydn's first years composing for the Esterházy Court. It was written for Joseph Franz Weigl, a cellist of the Esterházy Orchestra, who Haydn had recommended for the job. Haydn and Weigl were, in fact, close friends, as evidenced by Haydn being the godfather of Weigl's son.

The concerto manuscript was lost during Haydn's lifetime, but was rediscovered in 1961 by Prague National Museum archivist, Oldřich Pulkert. Miloš Sádlo gave the 20th century premiere of the concerto in 1962 in Prague with Charles Mackerras conducting the Czech Radio Symphony. The work quickly became one of the most popular concerti in the cello repertoire.

All three movements of this concerto are in traditional double exposition Classical concerto form. The orchestra tutti introduces the main themes at the beginning of each movement before the soloist enters and restates the same themes. An orchestral tutti also introduces the development and recapitulation. Near the end of the recapitulation, the orchestra drops out and the soloist plays a cadenza. In Haydn's time, the soloist likely would have improvised this cadenza, but most cadenzas performed today have been written in advance, either by a composer or by the soloist himself. Finally, the orchestra enters with one last tutti and closes the movement.

The opening “Maestoso” is characterized by a proud, regal melody. The contrasting theme is more legato and singing. The middle “Andante” movement is reminiscent of an afternoon spent in an idyllic pastoral setting. Above the soft orchestral foundation, the cello sings a relaxed and somewhat improvisatory melody. One can practically hear a gentle river flowing by during this movement. The finale is a race to the finish of rapidly flying eighth notes, in both the solo cello and the orchestra. As is typical of concertos from this era, the finale is the only movement of the concerto without a cadenza. To fit one in might halt the thrilling momentum of this movement.

Sara Birnbaum wrote the cadenzas used in tonight’s performance, in honor of, and inspired by, her new Kentucky home.

Appendix A:
Outline of Bridge *Elégie*

	A	B	A
Measure	1–13	14–67	68–80
Tonality	D \flat M/B \flat m	D \flat M \rightarrow D M \rightarrow D \flat M	D \flat M
Dynamics	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i> < <i>ff</i> > <i>p</i>	<i>p</i> (< <i>mf</i>) <i>pp</i>
Melodic shape	arch	downward	arch
Pitch range			
Cello	middle	low to high	middle
Piano	middle	middle, rising \rightarrow very wide	middle
Texture	Melody and accomp.	Melody and accomp.	Melody and accomp.
Rhythmic patterns	Mostly eighths, some cross rhythms in piano.	Syncopation in piano \rightarrow Irregular (m.46)	Same as opening

Appendix B:

Outline of Britten “Elegia” from Sonata in C for cello and piano

	A	B	A	B	A
Measures	1-21	22-43	44-55	56-74	75-89
Pitch center	D	C	D	C	? → D
Dynamics	<i>p</i>	<i>ppp < ff</i>	<i>ff > PP</i>	<i>pp/pppp</i>	<i>pp/pppp</i>
Pitch range					
Cello	low	low → high	high → low	low	middle
Piano	low	high	v. high & v. low → low	low/high	low
Texture	monorhythmic	Thin → thick	thick	thin	monorhythmic

Appendix C:

Outline of Delius *Elegy*

	A	B	A
Measures	1-16	17-49	50-54
Pitch Center	D/B \flat - G \flat - b stable	b - d - b - d - f unstable	D stable
Dynamics	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i> < <i>f</i> > <i>p</i>	<i>p</i>
Pitch range Cello Piano	high low	high → low mid → high	low full
Texture	melody and accomp.	often monorhythmic	melody and accomp.
Motifs	horn call	march & horn call	horn call

Appendix D
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard
by Thomas Gray

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
 The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
 The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,

Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,

If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,

Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault

The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust

Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?

Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,

Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid

Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;

Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,

Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page

Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;

Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,

And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,

The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:

Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,

And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast

The little tyrant of his fields withstood;

Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,

Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,

The threats of pain and ruin to despise,

To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,

And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone

Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;

Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,

And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,

To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,

Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,

Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God.*

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Vita

Degrees Earned

Cleveland Institute of Music
Master of Music in Cello Performance, May, 2009

Longy School of Music
Graduate Performance Diploma in Cello Performance, with honors, May 2007

Boston College
Bachelor of Arts in English, Honors Program, May, 2004

Professional Positions Held

Abilene Philharmonic, Substitute Cello
2012-present

East Texas Symphony Orchestra, Substitute Cello
2012-present

Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra, Section Cello
2012-present

Plano Symphony Orchestra, Substitute Cello
2012-present

Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra, Section Cello
2011-present

New World Symphony, Semi-Finalist
2008-2012

Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Associate Member
2009-2010

Mansfield Symphony Orchestra, Core Cello
2007-2009

Firelands Symphony Orchestra, Section Cello
2008-2009

Atlantic (formerly Hingham) Symphony Orchestra, Section Cello
2006-2007

Scholastic and Professional Honors

John Jacob Niles String Quartet Fellowship
2009-2012

Winner, University of Kentucky Symphony Concerto Competition
2011

National Repertory Orchestra
2008

National Orchestral Institute
2007

Virginia Payton Bacon Scholarship for Cello Studies
2005-2007

Order of the Cross and Crown Honors Society
2004

Golden Key Honors Society
2003

Winner, Boston College Concerto Competition
2002

Sara Gardner Birnbaum