

PART ONE

Contexts

1 Theories of the concerto from the eighteenth century to the present day

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Discussing his G major Piano Concerto early in the last century, Maurice Ravel writes that it 'is a concerto in the strictest sense of the term'.¹ At approximately the same time, the critic F. Bonavia explains that Beethoven's Violin Concerto represents 'no conscious departure from the accepted criterion of what a concerto should be'.² But what is the 'strictest sense' of concerto and the 'accepted criterion' of its ontological status? At one level, the concerto is all-too-easy to define, at another level, intractably difficult to pin down. In broadest terms a concerto from the eighteenth century through to the present day is expected to feature a soloist or soloists interacting with an orchestra, providing a vehicle for the solo performer(s) to demonstrate their technical and musical proficiency; in practical terms, concertos demonstrate multifarious types of solo–orchestra interaction and virtuosity, often provide as much of a showcase for the orchestra as for the soloist(s) and sometimes dispense altogether with the hard-and-fast distinction between soloist(s) and orchestra. Given the extraordinary diversity of works labelled concertos, it is no wonder that critics, composers and musicologists – indeed, musicians of all shapes and sizes – have on the whole steered clear of systematic theorizing about the genre. The concerto's capacity for reinvention over its venerable 400-year history – even in 1835 a reviewer for the *Gazette musicale* praised Chopin's E minor Piano Concerto for 'rejuvenating such an old form'³ – has ensured its fundamental elusiveness, its longevity as a genre and, in all likelihood, its deeply ingrained popularity with the musical public at large.

While protracted theorizing about the concerto is rare, aside from on technical matters such as form,⁴ there is no shortage of opinion about the genre's aesthetic status and about prerequisites for composing popular and musically successful works. The wide diversity of theoretical and critical views over the last two centuries focuses in particular on two perennially controversial topics that lie at the heart of the concerto: the nature of the interaction among participants, solo and orchestral alike, and, by extension, the function of the 'accompanying' orchestra; and the nature of the music given to the soloist(s). Theoretical and critical debate on these topics influences and is influenced by compositional practice, thus making a highly significant contribution to the continued vitality, transformability and popularity of the concerto genre.

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Virtuosity and the interaction of the soloist and orchestra in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respected theorists and critics castigate excessive virtuosity in concertos, believing that it detracts unequivocally from a listener's aesthetic experience. Johann Georg Sulzer's influential *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (*General Theory of the Fine Arts*, 1771–4) contains several swipes at the concerto on account of purportedly extreme virtuosity; Heinrich Christoph Koch (1787) explains that composer-performers 'stuff their concertos with nothing but difficulties and passages in fashion, instead of coaxing the hearts of their listeners with beautiful melodies'; and Johann Karl Friedrich Triest (1801) neatly sums up the received wisdom of his age in claiming that 'hardly one in a hundred [concertos] can claim to possess any inner artistic value' representing the 'special proving ground for virtuosity' instead.⁵ Later writers continue this critical trend: reviewers for *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* repeatedly stress in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century that bravura passages with meagre accompaniment will in no way suffice for concertos; writers on early performances from the 1830s and 1840s of Chopin's piano concertos – by no means the most technically challenging of early nineteenth-century virtuoso works – criticize the 'unprecedented and unjustified' difficulties and 'extravagant passages', asking 'what more do the hands need?' and the composer and critic Robert Schumann offers 'a special vote of thanks' in 1839 to 'recent concerto composers for no longer boring us with concluding trills and, especially, leaping octave passages' as they had earlier in the century when excessive virtuosity was *à la mode*, coming down heavily on virtuoso-composers whom he likens to popular entertainers.⁶ Indeed, late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers, not just Schumann, often equate virtuosos – including writers and performers of concertos – with non-aesthetic phenomena, Sulzer and Koch likening solo roles in many concertos to those of acrobats, Friedrich Rochlitz claiming that virtuosos 'are interested only in the good or bad execution of difficulties and so-called magic tricks, just as tightrope walkers are interested only in keeping their balance on the high wire' and James W. Davidson asserting that for the virtuosos 'repose is nauseous – unless it be the repose indispensable to a winded acrobat'.⁷ Davidson continues in this vein with an uproarious account of Anton Rubinstein's performance of a Mozart piano concerto in 1858, clarifying in no uncertain terms that the virtuoso's self-aggrandizement ruined the listener's experience of the work:

A 'lion' in the most leonine sense of the term, he treated the concerto of Mozart just as the monarch of the forest, hungry and truculent, is in the habit

of treating the unlucky beast that falls to his prey. He seized it, shook it, worried it, tore it to pieces, and then devoured it, limb by limb. Long intervals of roaring diversified his repast. These roarings were ‘cadenzas’. After having swallowed as much of the concerto as extended to the *point d’orgue* of the first movement, his appetite being in some measure assuaged, the lion roared vociferously, and so long, that many . . . admitted that, at all events, a ‘lion’ could be heard from the ‘recess’ in St. James’s Hall. Having thus roared, our ‘lion’s’ appetite revived, and he ate up the slow movement as if it had been the wing of a partridge. (Never did the slow movement so suddenly vanish.) Still ravenous, however, he pounced upon the finale – which having stripped to the *queue* (‘*coda*’), he re-roared, as before. The *queue* was then disposed of, and nothing left of the concerto.⁸

Late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers often consider active interaction between the concerto soloist and the orchestra an ideal foil for ‘excessive’ solo virtuosity. While Koch, for example, is as willing as Sulzer to point the finger at empty virtuosity in late eighteenth-century concertos, he is unwilling to condemn the entire genre to aesthetic oblivion as a result, mounting a spirited defence of its genuine aesthetic qualities in the hands of practitioners such as C. P. E. Bach and Mozart. For Koch, the accompanying voices in the best concertos ‘are not merely there to sound this or that missing interval’ but rather to engage in a ‘passionate dialogue’ with the soloist, expressing approval, commiseration and comfort.⁹ Forcefully countering the prevailing distrust of the concerto, Koch’s remarks also foreshadow nineteenth-century concerns. Schumann describes the ‘severing of the bond with the orchestra’ in many early nineteenth-century works, bemoans the possibility that piano concertos with orchestra could become ‘entirely obsolete’ and issues a clarion call for ‘the genius who will show us a brilliant way of combining orchestra and piano, so that the autocrat at the keyboard may reveal the richness of his instrument and of his art, while the orchestra, more than a mere onlooker, with its many expressive capabilities adds to the artistic whole’.¹⁰ The ideal concerto for writers at *La Revue et Gazette musicale* also focuses on ‘equality and dialogue between the solo instrument and the orchestra’ rather than on issues such as the showcasing of the soloist or form.¹¹ Indeed, dialogue has served as one of the most popular metaphors for productive exchange between the soloist and the orchestra over the last 200 years, from Koch’s comments on C. P. E. Bach and Mozart and Schumann’s on Ignaz Moscheles through to the proliferation of twentieth-century references by composers, critics and performers as diverse as Donald Tovey, Elliot Carter, Joseph Kerman and Glenn Gould.¹² For Carl Dahlhaus, solo–orchestra dialogue is ‘a sine qua non of the traditional concerto movement’.¹³

Symphonic dimensions to concertos, as recognized by nineteenth-century writers, also depend upon protracted interaction between the soloist and the orchestra (albeit not necessarily of a co-operative kind) and prominent roles for the orchestra. Whereas in 1800 a writer for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (presumably the editor Friedrich Rochlitz) distinguishes Mozart's symphonies and concertos on account of the 'grandeur' of the former and the 'intimacy' (close to the spirit of his quartets) of the latter,¹⁴ subsequent critics draw attention in a positive way to the symphonic attributes of concertos. Thus, nineteenth-century French writers praise Henri Litolff for 'absorbing the virtuoso', which duly 'gained, rather than lost, in power' in his *Concerto symphonique* No. 4, Op. 102, and Brahms for a 'greater fusion within the whole' in the Piano Concerto No. 1 that results in 'a more elevated musical interest than the technical feats which are the essence of the non-symphonic concerto'.¹⁵

At the heart of orchestral involvement in concertos is the issue of *how* they interact with the soloist(s), of what the interaction of the protagonists represents in anthropomorphic terms. Ultimately, the rich hermeneutic tradition in regard to solo–orchestra relations has its origins in the uncertain etymology of the term 'concerto', which derives in all likelihood from the Latin *concertare* (to agree, act together), the Italian *concertare* (to compete, contend), or the Latin *conserere* (to consort).¹⁶ Embracing this ontological imprecision brings to the fore contrasting co-operative and competitive types of interaction. Critics in the eighteenth century, for example, are collectively attuned to both types of motivation. Johann Mattheson (1713) describes a scenario whereby 'each part in turn comes to prominence and vies, as it were, with the other parts', subsequently (1739) drawing attention to the 'contest, from which all concertos get their name',¹⁷ Johann Gottfried Walther speaks of the 'rivalry' between concerto protagonists¹⁸ and Augustus Frederick Christopher Kollmann (1799) suggests that the concerto is capable of representing the kind of confrontation witnessed in C. P. E. Bach's famous trio sonata, 'A Conversation between a Cheerful Man and a Melancholy Man'.¹⁹ Other eighteenth-century critics, in contrast, paint pictures of collaboration, Johann Joachim Quantz (1752) explaining that each orchestral participant 'must regulate himself in all cases by the execution of the soloist, . . . always do his share' and yield to the soloist's tempo when he or she 'gives a sign to that effect' and Heinrich Koch (1793) identifying sentiments such as 'approval', 'acceptance', 'commiseration' and 'comfort' on the part of the orchestra.²⁰ Confrontation tends to dominate nineteenth-century discourse on interaction and is often linked to the symphonic qualities of concertos. Thus, Joseph Hellmesberger and Bronislaw Hubermann debate whether Brahms's Violin Concerto, Op. 77, is *for* the orchestra and *against*

the soloist or vice versa (Hubermann suggests that the violin ‘wins’), and Maurice Bourges argues that Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4 in G is *against* the soloist on account of the orchestra’s ‘sudden interruptions’ and brusque curtailment of solo passages.²¹ In a letter to Nadezhda von Meck from 1880, Tchaikovsky offers a famously uncompromising interpretation of solo–orchestra confrontation in the piano concerto. Maintaining that the tone of the piano renders it incapable of blending with that of the orchestra, he identifies

two forces possessed of equal rights, i.e. the powerful, inexhaustibly richly coloured orchestra, with which there struggles and over which there triumphs (given a talented performer) a small, insignificant but strong-minded rival. In this struggle there is much poetry and a whole mass of enticing combinations of sound for the composer . . . To my mind, the piano can be effective in only three situations: (1) alone, (2) in a contest with the orchestra, (3) as accompaniment, i.e. the background of a picture.²²

Virtuosity and the interaction of the soloist and orchestra in twentieth-century writings

Twentieth-century writings continue to focus on themes prevalent in the nineteenth century. Criticisms of excessive virtuosity are not uncommon even in scholarly discourse of the last thirty years or so: John Warrack talks disparagingly, for example, of the ‘finger music of [Weber’s] First [Piano] Concerto and its passages in which the virtuoso is clearly meant to be seen at least as much as heard’.²³ Equally, critics are often eager to stress that a particular work transcends the status of straightforward, solo-dominated display piece; thus, in Schumann’s Violin Concerto, ‘Specific virtuoso styles . . . are not invoked for their own sake, but are rather put to the service of a specific musical function’ and in Dvořák’s Cello Concerto, the composer’s intentions are not ‘to dazzle’ but rather ‘focused much more on the expansion of timbre and the interaction between the cello and the other instruments’.²⁴ On the whole, however, recent scholarship is marked by a greater receptivity to the aesthetic virtues of virtuosity than in earlier scholarly eras; a good case in point is Joseph Kerman’s careful broadening of the concept to include *virtù*, with its constituent bravura, mimetic and spontaneous qualities.²⁵

Not surprisingly, given the diversification of the genre to include works such as concertos for orchestra, twentieth-century composers and critics also put significant emphasis – like their nineteenth-century counterparts – on the symphonic dimension of works. Karol Szymanowski writes that his Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 35, is ‘really . . . a symphonic work for quite

large orchestra with solo violin'.²⁶ Bartók describes his Concerto for Orchestra as 'symphony-like' and David Cooper claims it can be situated in the nineteenth-century symphonic tradition.²⁷ Georges Enescu baldly describes Beethoven's Violin Concerto as 'a great symphony. The violin has a leading voice, but it is merely one of the many orchestral voices which make up the whole.'²⁸ And Sibelius explains a Prokofiev violin concerto (probably No. 1) as 'a symphonic unity where the violin plays a subordinate role'.²⁹ While the origins and development of the symphonic concerto remain a matter of scholarly debate – Dahlhaus goes against the grain, for example, in considering it 'foolish' to describe Beethoven's concertos as precursors and Schumann's as prototypes³⁰ – neither its important generic status nor its implications for prominent orchestral involvement and interaction with the soloist(s) are in doubt. Even those who disapprove of symphonic characteristics in concertos (in both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries) clarify that the balance of soloist(s) and orchestra – and by implication their interaction – is paramount: Carl Czerny, likening the orchestra to 'inferior objects in a picture, which are merely introduced for the purpose of setting the principal object in a clearer light' counsels against 'an overlaid accompaniment' since it 'only creates confusion, and the most brilliant passages of the pianist are then lost'; Donald Tovey is adamant that the opening orchestral section of a Classical concerto 'remains truly a ritornello and does not merge into pure symphonic writing' but also maintains that this section prevents the orchestra from seeming 'unnaturally repressed' after the entry of the soloist, transcending mere 'support'; and Sibelius dislikes the symphonic qualities of Prokofiev ('Quite the opposite of my view') on account of the subordination of the soloist.³¹

In a similar fashion to their nineteenth-century predecessors, twentieth-century composers and critics regularly highlight contrast, conflict and struggle in the concerto, imbuing these types of interaction with symbolic social significance.³² Thus, Richard Strauss describes his Cello Concerto, which survives only as sketches for a three-movement work (1935/6), as a 'struggle of the artistic spirit [the cello] against pseudo-heroism, resignation, melancholy [the orchestra]', and John Cage explains his Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra (1950–1) as an opposition of 'the piano, which remains romantic, expressive, and the orchestra, which itself follows the principles of oriental philosophy', simultaneously representing the contrasting phenomena of control and freedom.³³ Nicky Losseff's explanation of the broad-ranging musical and social significance of confrontation and opposition in the concerto – supporting and supported by the long-standing tradition of anthropomorphic description of interaction – reflects a substantial body of twentieth-century opinion: 'The dualities and oppositions inherent in the virtuoso piano concerto makes it the

most suitable genre in which to explore the struggle of subjectivity against the external world, since the encounter between lone soloist and orchestra is in more than one sense representative of conflict: between the single, elite individual and the group, and between a single instrumental part which yet constitutes “half” of the music against the very large collection of colours and timbres which collectively form its complement’.³⁴ In a description from 1974 of his Concerto for Orchestra, Elliott Carter returns to the idea of contrasting types of interaction co-existing in a work, again assigning social significance to the roles of the orchestral protagonists. Explaining that he ‘[extends] to the orchestra the kind of individualization of instruments . . . tried for the four players of [the] Second Quartet’, in which individuals in the group ‘are related to each other in what might be metaphorically termed three forms of responsiveness: discipleship, companionship and confrontation’, Carter ‘[treats] the orchestra as a crowd of individuals, each having his own personal expression’.³⁵

Twentieth-century theories of solo–orchestra interaction and its social significance, however, are not limited to *ad hoc* commentary. Anglophone critics have paid serious scholarly attention to the hermeneutic and semantic resonance of concerto interaction since Donald Tovey’s seminal essay ‘The Classical Concerto’ from 1903. With characteristic eloquence, Tovey links the oppositional nature of the concerto to a compelling social scenario:

Nothing in human life and history is much more thrilling or of more ancient and universal experience than the antithesis of the individual and the crowd; an antithesis which is familiar in every degree, from flat opposition to harmonious reconciliation, and with every contrast and blending of emotion, and which has been of no less universal prominence in works of art than in life.³⁶

Solo–orchestra interaction is inherently dramatic for Tovey, since the concerto itself is a ‘highly dramatic and poetic art form’.³⁷ Thus, the soloist ‘[thrusts] the orchestra into the background, while at the same time the orchestra has . . . its say and need not seem unnaturally repressed as it probably would seem (supposing it to be at all powerful) if it were employed only to support the solo’. In short, ‘the solo should first be inclined to enter into dialogue with the orchestra – the speaker should conciliate the crowd before he breaks into monologue’.³⁸

Like Tovey, later writers on concerto interaction recognize the powerful dramatic impact and the historical and contextual significance of solo–orchestra interaction in eighteenth-century repertoires such as Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos and Mozart’s piano concertos.³⁹ (Analogies with drama, for Mozart’s works at least, extend back to the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well, finding their original inspiration in Koch’s

aforementioned descriptions of dialogue in the Classical concerto, which he likens to that of ancient tragedy.⁴⁰) Two recent, socially motivated readings of Mozart's concertos, by Susan McClary and Joseph Kerman, are especially provocative (and problematic). Both explain piano/orchestra relations in metaphorical terms – Kerman as 'a composite metaphor for Mozart and his audience and *their* relationship' and McClary as 'a soloist and a large communal group, the orchestra . . . [enacting] as a spectacle the dramatic tensions between individual and society'⁴¹ – but fail to marshal convincing stylistic and historical evidence in support. Kerman regards the Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K. 491, as a 'deeply subversive work' where 'power relations are in doubt', concluding by implication that Mozart must have felt alienated from his audience at this stage.⁴² But Mozart finished K. 491 on 24 March 1786, only three weeks after completing his less demonstrative Piano Concerto No. 23 in A, K. 488, a work that surely upholds Kerman's 'tacit contract'⁴³ between composer and audiences; thus, a fundamental shift in Mozart's mindset in the short intervening period is unlikely. Moreover, the highly sophisticated solo–orchestra dialogue in the solo exposition and recapitulation sections of K. 491/i and powerful confrontation in bars 330–45 of the development are better understood as intensifications of pre-existent processes of exchange from his thirteen preceding Viennese piano concertos (1782–6), rather than as departures from his stylistic *modus operandus*.⁴⁴ McClary also allows metaphorical interpretation to cloud analytical judgement, overstating her claim for piano/orchestra opposition in K. 453/ii. In order to recognize the piano after the pauses in bars 33–4 as either 'the individual voice, heroic in its opposition to the collective orchestral force' or 'flamboyant, theatrical, indulgent in its mode of self-presentation',⁴⁵ for example, we have to overlook the co-operative dialogue in which they engage moments later (bars 42–7). Similarly, McClary's interpretations of the beginning of the recapitulation – 'Just at the moment at which the soloist seemed hopelessly lost in despair, the orchestra valiantly salvages the situation, returns the piece to the comfort of "rationality"' and 'It could just as easily seem . . . that the organic necessities of the individual are blatantly sacrificed to the overpowering requirements of social convention' – rest on her questionable claim that the tonic C major is the product of an 'irrational' modulatory process in the orchestra (bars 86–90).⁴⁶ In fact, the modulation from C sharp to C is achieved with arpeggiated material that grows directly from the end of the piano's preceding phrase (bar 186) – suggesting 'rational' engagement with, not disengagement from, the soloist – and with an entirely comprehensible $G\sharp - g\sharp - E^7$ (III⁷) – G^7 (V⁷) – C (I) chord progression.⁴⁷ Ultimately, Kerman's and McClary's articles offer a salutary lesson: socially charged readings of concertos, while true to the prevailing spirit of

anthropomorphic interpretation, only hold scholarly water if supported by sufficiently nuanced analytical, stylistic and contextual arguments.

Kerman offers a more protracted, and more satisfying, account of the concerto genre – with interaction at its core – in his book, *Concerto Conversations*.⁴⁸ Proceeding empirically rather than systematically, he usefully explains and sets in musical context phenomena associated with interaction such as ‘particularity’, ‘the distinctive characteristics of the solo and the orchestra in any particular context’, ‘polarity’, a type of ‘duality’ in which engagement between protagonists is lacking, and ‘reciprocity’, marked by solo–orchestra engagement and by processes of ‘replay’, ‘counterplay’ and ‘coplay’.⁴⁹ But his critical acceptance of a plethora of possible roles for soloist and orchestra that includes ‘eavesdropper, tease, survivor, victim, mourner or pleurant, minx, lover, critic, editor’, and that provokes a free-wheeling ‘relationship story’ for Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, gives pause for thought.⁵⁰ Is the identification and application of a wide range of roles for concerto participants a legitimate hermeneutic practice in the present scholarly era, when not accompanied by thorough consideration of the historical, contextual or critical implications of each role? Critical justification of distinctions between types of solo–orchestra behaviour – especially finely refined types – provides a formidable challenge. But the rigorous explanation and justification of concepts and phenomena used to describe solo–orchestra interaction is surely one of the pressing hermeneutic concerns for twenty-first-century concerto criticism. Advances in this area will ensure the continued relevance of creative, anthropomorphic interpretation to scholarly debate.

Theories of form in the Classical concerto

The most popular topic in critical discourse on concertos – especially those of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – is first-movement form. While formal designations have varied considerably over the last 200 years, formal theories have remained closely linked to the underlying aesthetic currents of concerto criticism discussed above. This is especially apparent in explanations of works from the Classical period, a crucial juncture in the aesthetic and formal history of the genre encapsulating both the emergence of the concerto as a credible aesthetic force after overwhelming critical condemnation and the vivid confluence of old and modern formal practices (ritornello and sonata).

Formal descriptions of the first movements of Classical concertos often recognize, implicitly or explicitly, a hybrid of sonata and ritornello

structures. In the late eighteenth century, Koch, the era's most influential writer on instrumental form, identifies four ritornello and three solo sections that appear alternately (three ritornellos and two solos in the later *Musikalisches Lexikon* of 1802), equating the latter with the three principal sections of a symphonic movement (designated exposition, development and recapitulation in the nineteenth century).⁵¹ Two hundred years later, most critics still write in a similar way, freely combining ritornello and sonata designations. A good case in point is Daniel N. Leeson and Robert D. Levin's intelligent codification of Mozart's piano concerto first movements into opening ritornello, solo exposition, middle ritornello, development, recapitulation, ritornello-to-cadenza and final ritornello sections.⁵² In between, a predominantly symphonic conception of concerto form takes root. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century with Carl Czerny's inference of close thematic correspondences between the first tutti and first solo sections and Adolf Bernard Marx's appropriation of sonata and first-movement concerto forms, and culminating at the end of the century with Ebenezer Prout's interpretation of the first two sections as a 'double exposition',⁵³ formal theories are closely aligned with general commentary on the symphonic attributes of works.

Above all, descriptions of first-movement concerto form have consistently overlapped with perceptions of solo–orchestra interaction in the concerto and with emphasis placed upon the active involvement of the orchestra. Two of the earliest writers on concerto form, Quantz (1752) and Joseph Riepel (1755), encourage judicious inclusion of small-scale tuttis in solo sections – as well as describing large-scale ritornello–solo alternation – thus implicitly acknowledging lively solo–orchestra interaction: Quantz writes that 'The best ideas of the ritornello must be dismembered, and intermingled during or between the solo passages'; and Riepel advocates the inclusion of fragmented or altered versions of ritornello motifs in solo sections.⁵⁴ Riepel's admission that he 'now and again . . . [borrows] a few measures from the solo, that is, measures that have already been heard in the solo',⁵⁵ to begin the second tutti also points towards a transmission of material from soloist to orchestra that will result in active exchange between protagonists. In a similar vein to Quantz and Riepel, Kollmann (1799) suggests that the first solo 'is occasionally relieved by short Tuttis, to keep up the grandeur of the piece',⁵⁶ imbuing orchestral involvement in this section with a vital function. Koch formalizes this kind of orchestral participation as fervent solo–orchestra interaction: 'As a segment of the whole . . . [the orchestra] is involved in the passionate dialogue and has the right to show its feelings concerning the main part through short phrases. To this end, these voices do not always wait for the conclusion of the incise or phrase in the

principal part, but throughout its performance may be heard alternately in brief imitations.⁵⁷ Thus, 'passionate dialogue' comprises both evolving solo–orchestra relations across a concerto as a whole – 'Now in the allegro it tries to stimulate his noble feelings still more; now it commiserates, now it comforts him in the adagio'⁵⁸ – and immediate give and take in individual solo sections.

Two of the most influential twentieth-century Anglophone writers on the Classical concerto, Tovey and Rosen, also draw attention to the interdependence of formal shape and solo–orchestra interaction and relationships. Tovey explains that the first-movement arrangement of an opening ritornello section for the orchestra followed by a section highlighting the soloist is musically and affectively intuitive, since it 'brings out the force of the solo in thrusting the orchestra into the background'.⁵⁹ The forms of the concerto, moreover, express the antithesis of individual and crowd 'with all possible force and delicacy'.⁶⁰ For Rosen, 'the latent pathetic nature of the form' comprises 'the contrast and struggle of one individual voice against many'; furthermore, the 'dynamic contrast between soloist and orchestra' best exhibited in Mozart's and Beethoven's works contains many 'formal and coloristic possibilities'.⁶¹

Tovey and Rosen's discussion of form as it relates to the role of the orchestra also resonates with earlier writings on the Classical concerto in the formal and affective function assigned to the initial orchestral ritornello/exposition. Both critics argue that it is a predominantly preparatory section; it has 'much the effect of an *introduction*' for Tovey and 'always conveys an introductory atmosphere' for Rosen since what is 'most important . . . about concerto form is that the audience waits for the soloist to enter, and when he stops playing they wait for him to begin again'.⁶² Introductory qualities have been assigned to this section from the late eighteenth century onwards,⁶³ but rarely in a way that downplays its formal significance. In fact, this orchestral section fulfils an essential role in introducing the content of the movement. As Koch asks rhetorically, implicitly recognizing its structural importance: 'does not the first ritornello of a concerto have just the same relationship with the contents of the solo part as the introduction of a speech with its contents?'⁶⁴ Critics such as Kollmann who demand concision – 'nothing should be introduced in it, but Subjects or Passages, which are to be elaborated in the course of the movement' – also acknowledge that the section as a whole has a vital formal function, exhibiting 'the number and sort of instruments that shall be used in the Concerto; and . . . [impressing] on the ear of the hearer the Key and Mode, the principal Subjects and the Character of the Movement'.⁶⁵ The 'double-exposition' theoretical model, moreover, could be interpreted as the initial orchestral section transcending its

introductory function, even assuming the status of 'primary' exposition.⁶⁶

One recent interpretation of first-movement form in the Classical concerto, dividing it into four main periods '[articulated] into a hierarchy of parts' in line with Koch's theory of 'punctuation', explains that the first orchestral section (period one), subsequent solo section (period two), and recapitulation (period four) can be thought of as a tripartite narrative in which 'the orchestra tells the story as it knows it', the soloist then 'tells his version' and the soloist and orchestra finally 'reconcile and synthesize their two versions'.⁶⁷ Irrespective of how we understand the formal significance of the orchestra's initial section, it would seem that concerto form actively encourages this kind of narratological speculation, just as solo–orchestra interaction encourages anthropomorphic interpretation. The rich hermeneutic potential that derives from the synergy of form and interaction in the Classical concerto – and from analogous synergies in earlier and later works as well – will no doubt ensure enlightening and provocative interpretations of concertos, as well as of their aesthetic and theoretical foundations, for generations to come.