

Violin Concerto by Peter Fischer

Completed in 2013

Movements I and II premiered with John Gilbert violin, and David Becker, conductor, with the Texas Tech Symphony Orchestra, March 31, 2014. Movement III is the piano reduction, John Gilbert, piano, and Jason Sifford, piano.

The first movement is a modified sonata form, using pitch centers of G and Db as harmonic/melodic poles instead of traditional modulatory thematic key areas. The first part of the exposition features two lyric themes while the second part uses a contrasting fast theme. Traditional development material follows, with wild violinistic passages interspersed with expansions of the lyric material. The recapitulation reverses the pitch centers of the melody and harmony to Db and G, varying both, with further expansion of the slow lyric material composed this last spring. A dramatic rhythmic coda completes the movement incorporating material from the second theme area. The second movement is a large-scale ABA, beginning and ending on a D sonority with lyric themes in the outer sections and rhapsodic passages in the middle section. The third movement is a modified rondo, centered on the pitches Eb and A. It is fast and energetic, but with hints of slow material inserted at various points. This slow material is realized as an Adagio section later, before releasing back into the fast material and concluding with a dramatic Finale. The last passages take advantage of the five pitches used as foundations in the three movements.

The pitch centers for the three movements are derived from the harmonic language for much of the work. The harmonic language, therefore, is based on fifths (G-D-A) and alterations to fifth based harmonies (substituting Db and Eb for the central D of the fifths sonority. Additional complex sonoric structures are constructed from this basic foundation. Most of the harmonic language displays an absence of thirds to the bass pitch, although both thirds are allowed in the same sonority—the basic idea is to avoid triadic implications or in the case of both thirds being present, to create ambiguity. The melodic content also avoids thirds, with noted exceptions in the beginning violin theme in the second movement, and in passages where stepwise motion would create thirds to the bass. In the end I was striving for a fresh language, but still with lyric neo-Romantic tendencies.

It was indispensable to work with a concert violinist during the creation of this concerto. Dr. Gilbert's playing of new and adventuresome violin writing, and his suggestions, encouragement, and criticism were essential to realizing the work.