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– ein Angebot des Max-Reger-Instituts Karlsruhe

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Beyond reverences:
Max Reger's Violin Romances in context

veröffentlicht am 8. März 2021

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Redaktion und pdf-Layout: Jürgen Schaarwächter

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To David Jones in gratitude

I.

Of Max Reger's orchestral music, mostly the works of the middle and later era are nowadays taken seriously by musicians and scholars alike, the opinion frequently being that earlier the composer was still on his way in finding clarity and reasonable symphonic design: particular mention in this respect is frequently made of the Sinfonietta in A major, Op. 90, of 1904-5, and the Violin Concerto in A major, Op. 101, of 1907-8. A more focused look at Reger's orchestral output quickly dispels such a notion, rather placing those densely composed works in close affinity to the huge upheavals in musical matters by that time from Russia to Vienna, from Paris to Scandinavia or New England.

Yet this was only one aspect of Max Reger's orchestral music. A look into his orchestral output up to 1904[1] displays quite a different composer, mostly using more modest means but of no less idiosyncratic musical character. Some of the most substantial surviving output from this period are the two Romanzen for violin and orchestra (or piano), Op. 50 (1900), which have suffered particular neglect in spite of their fairly easy availability for several decades.[2] Their opus number, obviously, pays reverence to Beet-

[1] A full listing of the works currently definitively known to have existed reads as follows: Overture in B minor, WoO I/1 (1888, lost), *Heroide* - Overture in D minor, WoO I/2 (1889), Symphony in D minor, WoO I/3 (1890, 1st movement only), Symphony in B minor, WoO I/5 (1895-6, lost), Piano Concerto in F minor, WoO I/4 (either lost or fragment, 1894-6), *Scherzino* in C, WoO I/6, for horn and strings (1899), incidental music for 'living tableaux', *Castra vetera*, WoO V/1 (1899–1900), Zwei Romanzen for violin and orchestra, Op. 50 (1900), Organ Concerto WoO I/7 (fragment, lost), Symphony in D minor, WoO I/8 (1902, fragment of 1st movement), Serenade in B♭, WoO I/9, for winds (1904, 1 movement only); Deutsche Tänze, Op. 10 nos. 1, 5–7 & 11 (orchestrated 1894, no. 11 incomplete), *Elegie*, Op. 26 no. 1 (orchestrated for small orchestra, 1898); Heinrich Geist, *Albumblatt* (orchestrated for small orchestra, 1898).

[2] The Romanzen were published in June 1901 by Jos. Aibl of Munich, and the editions were taken over by Universal Edition of Vienna in 1904, who are still selling the piano scores and offer, on a loan basis, full score and orchestral parts; newly-set scores were published in vol. 7 of the Reger Gesamtausgabe (ed. Heinz-Ludwig Denecke; Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, [1964]: 25–52), and these full scores were reprinted in 2002 by Musikproduktion Höflich of Munich.

hoven's second Romanze for violin and orchestra, Op. 50, and if Reger subsumed two Romanzen under one opus number, this only counts for his economy in applying opus numbers in spite of his quick workmanship, which frequently has evoked criticism, particularly from those who considered themselves especially self-critical[3] – similar cases in point are his two Clarinet Sonatas, Op. 49, and his three big Chorale Fantasias, Op. 52, also from 1900. While these sonatas were instigated by a conversation accompanying a private rehearsal of the Brahms Op. 120 sonatas, Adalbert Lindner, who had been instrumental in this discussion, gives no clue whatsoever for Reger's reasons to write two violin romances, which had already been mentioned in a letter as early as 2 May 1900.[4] The slightly earlier *Scherzino* in C WoO I/6, for horn and strings, had been intended for performance in Weiden on 9 December 1899, the piece remained unperformed until long after Reger's death. For the Op. 50 Romanzen there was not even a prospect of a possible performance in its orchestral guise requiring, additional to strings, double woodwind, two horns and timpani. After the rather successful performance of most of the incidental music for 'living tableaux', *Castra vetera*, WoO V/1, in Wesel on 6 May 1900,[5] Reger may have felt confident enough to write orchestral music of sufficient substance (he had been discontented with the *Castra vetera* music, which remained unprinted until 1975).

As the Reger Thematic Catalogue tells us,[6] the main work on the orchestral scores of the Romanzen was undertaken from June to 10 July 1900, the piano scores being prepared in close relationship to the orchestral scores. As with most of Reger's earlier works, full compositional pencil drafts have not survived; this does not mean that Reger had destroyed them, rather it was common for him to discard them after completion of the works.[7] The manuscripts which Reger had submitted, and which remained with the publishers,[8] offer little evidence concerning eventual changes of concept during compo-

[3] As it is nowadays well known, Reger was the most self-critical of composers and abandoned a considerable number of works.

[4] Letter from Max Reger to Ella Kerndl, 2 May 1900; Meininger Museen, Sammlung Musikgeschichte/Max-Reger-Sammlung, Br 011/3.

[5] Cf. Jürgen Schaarwächter, 'Reger und das Theater: Castra Vetera o. op.', in *Reger-Studien 7. Festschrift für Susanne Popp*, ed. Siegfried Schmalzriedt and Jürgen Schaarwächter (Stuttgart: Carus, 2004) (Schriftenreihe des Max-Reger-Instituts, XVII): 123–139, particularly 134–138.

[6] *Verzeichnis der Werke Max Regers und ihrer Quellen – Reger-Werk-Verzeichnis (RWV)*, ed. Susanne Popp in collaboration with Alexander Becker, Christopher Grafschmidt, Jürgen Schaarwächter and Stefanie Steiner (Munich: G. Henle, 2010 [2011]): 206–212.

[7] While from Op. 56 onwards (June 1903) complete compositional drafts have frequently survived, this is only very occasionally the case earlier, e.g. with the Chorale Fantasia on 'Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn!', Op. 40 no. 2, two of the eight Lieder, Op. 43, or the Organ Pieces, Op. 59. These earlier drafts from the Weiden period were presented to Adalbert Lindner when Reger moved with his family to Munich on 1 September 1901; they are now in the Stadtmuseum Weiden, Max-Reger-Sammlung. (The Opus number 56 had originally been reserved for a Piano Quintet in C minor which was eventually published as Opus 64.)

[8] The full scores, piano scores and parts have survived in the possession of the Universal Edition, Vienna, on permanent loan at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, L1.UE.391. (scores and orchestral parts) and L1.UE.392. (piano scores and violin parts) respectively.

sition. The number of corrections by way of erasure are not too extensive, and Reger's handwriting is easy to read. As with nearly all of his scores, they are typically in black and red ink, black ink for the music itself and red ink for all performing markings such as phrasing, dynamics, etc. The full score of the first Romanze has at its end the dating 10 July 1900, while the second is dated 26 June; the piano scores are likewise dated 17 July and 29 June respectively. In order to clarify every detail, Reger even included complete title pages and copyright information on the opening page of each of the full scores and the piano scores.

Reger submitted the full performing materials to his publishers, Jos. Aibl of Munich, on 21 October 1900, and it was to take until June 1901 until he received his reference copies of both the full and the piano scores, i.e. while he was still living in Weiden in the Upper Palatinate, shortly before his house-move to Munich. Josef Hösl reports a private side-reading play-through of the pieces at Reger's Weiden parental home in their piano guise, using Joseph Reger's violin,[9] and he recalls the 'icy coolness, even despondency' of the audience's reaction at this afternoon tea in the Reger home, particularly Joseph Reger's, which was only lifted when Reger asked Hösl's sister Maria to sing some of his lieder.[10] In his memoirs Hösl admitted that, seeing the pieces for the first time, he had hardly understood them.[11]

In order to save money, the full scores and orchestral parts were part-engraved, part-etched. Reger dedicated the first Romanze to his music publisher, Eugen Spitzweg,[12] in gratitude, and the second Romanze to his physician in Weiden, Berthold Rebitzer,[13] who must have given him support during the Weiden period, 1898–1901. For both Romanzen (full and piano scores) Reger received a remuneration totalling 1.200 Marks.[14]

Even if he may have had envisaged performances of the orchestral versions of the two Romanzen, it was to take considerable time until they were to take place: in fact, there is in the archive of the Max-Reger-Institut only one performance recorded of the first

9 Josef Hösl, *Vom Türmerbuben zum Kammervirtuosen [Erinnerungen]*, [ed. Ernst Hösl] (Munich: Jaeger & Partner, 2005): 264.

10 Josef Hösl, 'Mein Verhältnis zu Max Reger', *Mitteilungen der Max Reger-Gesellschaft* 12 (July 1934): 6.

11 Josef Hösl, *Vom Türmerbuben zum Kammervirtuosen [Erinnerungen]*, [ed. Ernst Hösl] (Munich: Jaeger & Partner, 2005): 265.

12 Together with his brother Otto Spitzweg (1843–1921), who is known to have been fairly unmusical, Eugen Spitzweg (1840–1914), a nephew of the Biedermeier painter Carl Spitzweg, was the owner of the music publishing firm of Jos. Aibl in Munich. When Eugen Spitzweg's health declined by 1902-3, the brothers decided to sell their publishing house to the Viennese Universal Edition, which was realized in 1904. At first the Jos. Aibl imprint remained intact, now however with the new publishing place Leipzig, where also the Universal Edition had a branch.

13 The dedication to Rebitzer (1864–1931) was amended to the score only after this had been submitted to the publisher.

14 Together with the Romanzen the following compositions were submitted for publication: the two Clarinet Sonatas, Op. 49, the twelve Lieder, Op. 51, the Three Chorale Fantasias, Op. 52, the *Silhouetten* for Piano, Op. 53, and the two Sacred Songs WoO VII/30. While all other compositions were duly printed and published in June and August 1901, the Clarinet Sonata in F# minor, Op. 49 no. 2, was postponed until end of 1903.

Romanze in its orchestral guise during Reger's lifetime, at Graz in 1913;[15] even the performances with piano apparently remained fairly few.

While not giving the slightest hints of their genesis, Adalbert Lindner offers at least a short description of the pieces' merits: 'The consecrated role models, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, have evidently and almost equally contributed to the creation of these finely chiselled mood pictures, and yet at the same time one feels from the first to the last note imponderables which reveal to us the modern composer. The soul of the master lives here in wondrous highland mood, in the deepest immersion in the mysteries of his divine art. Note only the solo part, which is almost constantly moving in a high and highest position, especially the conclusions of both romances, which evaporate ghostly into the highest regions!'[16] In fact, we have here a composer of the deepest density, and one might even dare describe these two comparatively simple compositions (though comparatively simple only in comparison to other Reger orchestral works[17]) as slow movements of, if one may say so, two unwritten Violin Concertos of Reger. As early as 1902 Karl Straube, organist and one of Reger's foremost early promoters, had written: 'Reger is a born composer of Adagios! The slow movements of his chorale fantasias with the soft line of his melismas, the perfervid *Largo con gran espressione* of the Violin Sonata [Op. 41] are clear evidence of this; and what are the two romances for solo violin and orchestra (Op. 50) other than objects of this kind – truly, one has to resort to the creations of the greatest in order to find similarly introverted chants of chaste passion.'[18]

Albert Wotruba, in a review of the scores, remarks: 'The constant fighting and wrestling weakens the receptivity; the conclusion leaves too cold.'[19] This did, however, not affect the effect the music made at an early performance of the first Romanze (in the version with piano) at the Bayerischer Hof Hotel in Munich on 1 May 1902,[20] Theodor Kroyer describing the work as 'a magically delicately woven tone poem soaked in golden warmth'.[21] The all-Reger programme was stormily applauded, Reger reporting to Lindner: 'Dr Kroyer bravely and steadily keeps my banner! But people were eventually flabbergasted about the Op 50 No I *Romanze*; I had to show myself again and again to the crowd as the "ancient creature (Urthier) of Romanze!"'[22]

[15] See below.

[16] Adalbert Lindner, *Max Reger. Ein Bild seines Jugendlebens und künstlerischen Werdens* (Stuttgart: J. Engelhorns Nachf., 1922): 189, 3rd edition (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1938): 237.

[17] At a Graz performance of the first Romanze in early 1913, conductor Ernst Veit had to stop the orchestra due to lack of togetherness. Cf. Otto Hödel, 'Graz', *Die Musik* 12/12 (March 1913): 376.

[18] Karl Straube, 'Max Reger', *Die Gesellschaft. Münchener Halbmonatsschrift für Kunst und Kultur* 18/3 (February 1902): 176.

[19] Albert Wotruba, 'Kritischer Anzeiger. Max Reger. Op. 50. Zwei Violin-Romanzen mit Orchester- oder Klavierbegleitung. München, Jos. Aibl', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 69/12 (19 March 1902): 181.

[20] The performers were Wilhelm Sieben (violin) and Oskar Wappenschmidt (piano), at an 'Evening of Novelties' by various composers, held by the Akademischer Orchesterverband München.

[21] Theodor Kroyer, concert review, *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Munich) (No. 120, 2 May 1902, evening paper).

[22] Letter from Max Reger to Adalbert Lindner, 29 May 1902; Stadtmuseum Weiden, L 38.

II.

As the pieces clearly have a symphonic stature, offering the soloist no opportunity to shine 'in virtuoso fashion', and are Reger's first orchestral compositions bearing an opus number, they too contradict the frequent critical judgement of a composer still trying to find his way as a master of orchestral writing. As will be shown, the Romanzen follow a rough kind of ternary form, yet without a literal repeat of the introductory section but rather each with a kind of recapitulation, thus in fact stressing their symphonic character.

The first Romanze in G major is in clear ternary form (finely proportioned to sections of 35, 31 and 37 bars each), and although the recapitulation is largely only signalled in the orchestral part from bar 67, Reger's structural design is easy to comprehend. An essential means is however the comparatively free elaboration of thematic material in the last section of the composition, avoiding too much duplication and offering an overabundance of detail. Even a change of moods may be found: the work opens 'molto espress.', and if Reger frequently only writes 'espress.' and not 'molto espress.' this is rather a sign of economy than gradual expressive markings. After the opening the thematic material is repeated by way of variation from bar 26, the 'recapitulation' proper begins only in bar 76, when the main thematic material is repeated. In both cases G major is clearly the tonal basis of this section, while Reger's modulative power is at work in the more microscopic inner structure of each section. The middle section, from bar 36, is harmonically significantly more explorative, attaining however an inner bond through two strings of expressive increases marked 'Più mosso', the first time additionally marked 'con passione ed agitato', ending each in a return to the opening *Andante sostenuto* (now without the initial remark '(ma un poco con moto)'), and never really leaving the harmonic spheres of the G major harmonic family. It is evident that much of Reger's harmonic thinking starts off from Brahms, whose Violin Concerto is lurking behind one or another corner particularly in the outer sections and in some of the thematic material, but Reger's particular attention to dynamic detail, which we know from as early as his very first published works, makes a significant difference (whence executed properly in performance). This additional layer removes the music from any Brahms imitation and places it in its own distinctive vein.

The Second Romanze in D major (which Reger some years later called 'utterly amiss', while simultaneously promising to get the score sent to violinist Ossip Schnirlin[23]) is of a similar conception to start with, but the radical avoiding of any kind of 'recapitulative character' (from bar 78) leads us into musical thinking far beyond the era of Brahms and his contemporaries, also being very 'Regerian' both in its harmonic thinking and thematic/motivic treatment. The steady pulse of the 3/8 metre in the orchestra is frequently overgrown either by expansions and sumptuous garlands supplied by the violinist, or by gradual alterations of tempo ('poco rit.', 'rit.', 'sempre poco

[23] Letter from Max Reger to Ossip Schnirlin, 17 June 1904; Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung, Ep. Ms. 373.

a poco stringendo', 'Più mosso', 'più agitato', 'Più andante', 'Più Allegro'). The character of 'romance' derives mainly from both this elastic momentum and the elaborate and sophisticated treatment of the solo part, frequently marked 'espressivo' or 'molto espressivo'.

Interestingly, Reger, in the outer sections of the first Romanze and in all of the second Romanze, does entirely without double stops in the solo part, but employs plenty of trills in the slower outer sections of both Romanzen. The second Romanze much more strongly explores the upper registers of the violin, also frequently asking for leaps of an octave or even larger intervals. The number of notes to be played by the solo instrument in both Romanzen (regardless of motivic or decorative value[24]) is striking, the treatment of the solo part in both pieces in fact being strongly individual:

Table 1: number of notes played by the solo instrument in the Reger Romanzen, Op. 50

	Romanze no. 1	Romanze no. 2
	164 notes (35 bars)	294 notes (47 bars)
	345 notes (31 bars)	406 notes (30 bars)
	232 notes (37 bars)	214 notes (45 bars)
total	741 notes (103 bars)	914 notes (122 bars)

The culmination of the soloist's virtuosity in the first Romanze concentrates in the first half of the middle section, while in the second Romanze particularly the first section is much more ambitious, and the middle section offers a rest of near on nine bars (bars 61–69), after which the marking 'espressivo' or 'molto espressivo' attains prominence in place of virtuosity.

In his comparison of the Beethoven and Reger Romanzen, Heinz Ramge not only stresses the fact that there are parallels concerning the overall length of the Romanzen between Beethoven and Reger (Beethoven 92 and 103 bars respectively, Reger 103 and 122 bars), but also that the number of bars of Beethoven no. 2 (Op. 50) is identical to Reger's Op. 50 no. 1. It is not altogether surprising to spot the key relationships between the four works (Beethoven G major/F major, Reger G major/D major). The discovery that in both Beethoven's and Reger's second Romanze the number of bars without the solo violin increases with respect to the overall work is slightly more unexpected:[25]

[24] Each trill is counted as one note only.

[25] Heinz Ramge, 'Max Regers Orchesterbehandlung, insbesondere seine Retuschen an Meininger Repertoirewerken', (PhD diss., University of Marburg 1966): 170; cf. also ibid.: 81.

Table 2: Number of bars in which the solo violin is resting

Beethoven no. 1 Op. 40	21 of 92 bars
Beethoven no. 2 Op. 50	27 of 103 bars
Reger Op. 50 no. 1	13 of 103 bars
Reger Op. 50 no. 2	20 of 122 bars

Ramge is one of the very few authors who have ever explored the Op. 50 Romanzen in closer detail, in connection with his research on the development of Reger's orchestration.[26]

'The first Romanze begins with a three-time juxtaposition of strings and wind instruments, in keeping with the beginning of Beethoven's first Romance, who brings the unaccompanied solo violin and orchestral *tutti* twice in succession. But with Reger this mutual replacement only happens once at the beginning; in Beethoven it appears again, in the form just described. In the course of Reger's first Romanze both groups, woodwinds and strings, run alongside one another with equal rights; the winds form counter-voices against the lines of the strings and vice versa. Rarely are the same tone sequences found in both groups; Parallel movements between the winds and strings only occur occasionally – the 2nd bassoon occasionally being used as a bass reinforcement in octaves with the double basses. Parallel movements are scarce within the wind section, for example at the beginning of the first *Più mosso* [bar 36] (clarinets, bassoons in thirds in the same direction) and in the middle *Andante sostenuto* (likewise) [from bar 48]. Linkings of parts are much more common in unison or in the octave. The two horns are likewise often included in these linkings of parts; they are introduced gradually and with care, and even in the further course the parallel movement of the two horns can only be observed in the second *Più mosso* [from bar 59].'[27]

As noted by, amongst others, Fritz Stein, Reger was already by this time not willing to use the kind of orchestration he might have learnt at the conservatoire. Well-acquainted with a wealth of music through unfettered access to the music library of Hugo Riemann and his frequent visits to the local music libraries and music shops, as well as already being a prolific reviewer both of sheet music and concerts,[28] he rejected for himself the brilliant orchestration used by many cmposers attracted to the 'Neudeutsche Schule'. 'How easily he could have copied established models in orchestral music even

[26] Ibid.: 78–82.

[27] Ibid.: 80. Referring to Karl Hasse (*Max Reger* (Leipzig: C.F.W. Siegel, [1921]) (Die Musik, Sammlung illustrierter Einzeldarstellungen, 42–44): 99), Ramge sees in the coupling and linking of instrumental parts an 'organ-like' compositional thinking (ibid.: 79).

[28] Cf. Susanne Popp, *Der junge Reger. Briefe und Dokumente vor 1900* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2000) (Schriftenreihe des Max-Reger-Instituts, XV), Hermann Wilske, *Max Reger. Zur Rezeption in seiner Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Breifkopf & Härtel, 1995) (Schriftenreihe des Max-Reger-Instituts, XI): 320–334 (reprinting Reger's complete music reviews), and Jürgen Schaarwächter, '"Einige andere Konzerte, die Genüsse recht zweifelhafter Natur boten, übergehe ich." Reger als Konzertkritiker', in *Reger-Studien 8. Max Reger und die Musikstadt Leipzig. Kongressbericht Leipzig 2008*, ed. Susanne Popp and Jürgen Schaarwächter (Stuttgart: Carus, 2010) (Schriftenreihe des Max-Reger-Instituts, XXI): 289–305 (reprinting Reger's complete concert reviews).

at a young age.'[29] But as he was attracted rather to unfashionable paths largely untrodden by his time (e.g. by his new approach to organ music, and his partiality for absolute music, and chamber music in particular[30]), he recognized, as Brahms did, 'that his own tonal language also needed its own orchestral style.'[31] As Reger's former pupil Karl Hasse put it: 'Here too, Reger was under a mysterious compulsion to handle the problems from the side where they are the *most difficult*, to get the stones for his work out of deep, half-buried shafts.'[32] As early as 1891 Reger had stated his belief in a long letter to his former teacher, Adalbert Lindner:

'*Instead of transcending each instrument, of allocating each instrument its place in the great drama of the symphonic movement*, instead of the instruments contradicting each other, of always moving in a spirited dialogue, so that they then unite in a Herculean blow to the overwhelmed listener as we have it in Beethoven's 1st to 9th symphony – instead of this ideal of a style that has absolute freedom of mind written on its banner, which has spiritualization on its forehead – a mere clutter of instruments! Those mean cornets, tubas!

Tubas don't belong in the symphony orchestra! Why are they crushing all *instrumental colours* with insane brass! Believe me in a Beethoven symphony e.g. Eroika [sic] Pastorale, 5. 4. 7 8 9., when the 2 *horns*, 2 trumpets firmly pierce their tonic, dominant through the orchestra, and if you consider the huge, gigantic gale blowing through it, it affects the listener so – please forgive my frankness – as something immense!

Remember e.g. that we have natural horns in Beethoven. Do imagine a gigantic composition with modulation in the development into the most distant keys (e.g. Eroika). Don't you think that the horns and trumpets hold the whole thing together like sky-striving columns if they always & always maintain the basic tones of the key! Yes, I don't deny that Beethoven had written some in the horns & trumpets differently if he had had our valve instruments! You can see it especially when the orchestra goes in unison and horns & trumpets suddenly leave out a note! Yes, I am happy to hear that they are blowing it all the way these days – but that you make the brass the ruler of the orchestra! No! You'd rather take military music straight away! They can blow even "harder"! [...]

I am absolutely not against that our modern orchestra should *actually* have 4 horns 2 trumpets & 3 trombones in the symphonic textures, if not based e.g. on any other ideas!

Of course you can also take less.

[29] Fritz Stein, *Max Reger* (Potsdam: Athenaion, 1939) (Die großen Meister der Musik): 144. Stein, who was a close friend of Reger's, reminds us that Reger 'was familiar with the nature of the instruments from early on – after all, he played himself, apart from the piano and organ, violin and cello' (ibid.).

[30] Cf. also Reger being seen as an 'ancient creature', p. 4.

[31] Fritz Stein, *Max Reger* (Potsdam: Athenaion, 1939) (Die großen Meister der Musik): 144–145. How critical Reger later was particularly of Brahms's orchestral textures can easily be seen in the amendments and annotations in his conducting scores of Brahms orchestral music, available online at http://musikgeschichte-meiningen.de/digital/reger_partituren_start.html (accessed 17 December 2020) (see also Sven Marco Kraemer, 'Die Retuschen Max Regers in den Meininger Dirigierpartituren der Brahms-Symphonien vor dem Hintergrund der Musikauffassung von Johannes Brahms', MA thesis, University of Mainz, 2011, and Christiane Wiesenfeldt, '"Sie und ich wollen Brahms dienen ..." Max Reger, Fritz Steinbach und die Retuschen in Brahms-Sinfonien', *Die Tonkunst* 1/1 (2007): 20–44). As a conductor of the Meininger Hofkapelle, Reger conducted all four of Brahms's Symphonies, the Second Symphony more than twenty times.

[32] Karl Hasse, *Max Reger* (Leipzig: C.F.W. Siegel, [1921]) (Die Musik, Sammlung illustrierter Einzeldarstellungen, 42–44): 99.

Brahms has his orchestra like that. Brahms is the great Walhalla we have today! Nor am I against to write something harmonically more individual than Haydn! But believe me, to invent all the *harmonic* things they are trying to invent these days which they are praising as such great progress, all these have been done long ago and much better by our great immortal Bach! Certainly! Take a look at his chorale preludes – if that isn't the finest objective and yet most subjective music! Because what I don't feel **myself**, I **can't** objectify, I can only paint *feeling's expression* – but not the feeling **itself** [.]'[33]

Based on this position, Fritz Stein elucidates Reger's contrapuntal thinking:

'Neither does Bach "orchestrate" in a modern way, he develops his quite obligatory instrumental parts in perfect thematic and motivic concentration individually or in groups (see, for example, the Brandenburg Concerts). At first, his disciple adopted this *concertante* style faithfully, but he overlooked that his modulatory differentiated expression had, by the means and the increased number of parts of the modern full orchestra, to lead to an exaggeration of this *concertante* principle. Hence the notorious "overload" and "thickening" of his first orchestral scores, in which the instruments are not separated from each other in groups, but almost each one independently plays music in a dense polyphonic network. [...] Hence the difficulty of performing this music.'[34]

Stein misses, however, the fact that this concept of increased complexity is a general stylistic feature to be found in several composers contemporaneous with Reger.

Alexander Becker has, in his thorough examination of Reger's orchestration, referred to the Op. 50 Romanzen in one particular place, relating to the special importance that Reger assigns to the oboe:

'In the thematic presentation of the Romanze op. 50 no. 2 [...] the perception of the leading upper part in an otherwise all-string texture is entrusted to the first oboe. The oboe here replaces the first violins in a texture that is visibly expressive by the crossing of the cello and viola parts and the playing of upper and middle parts in octaves (this is also underlined by the *sul D* instruction of the cellos going parallel to the oboe) in order to expose the soon following solo violin entry sonically. Hardly any other wind instrument, and probably not the clarinet, would come into consideration for Reger in the orchestra – especially since the usage of the oboe as a preparatory solo colour in connection with a work with solo violin can, of course, appear very natural and extremely legitimate through the model of Brahms's Violin Concerto in D major op. 77.'[35]

[33] Letter from Reger to Adalbert Lindner, 20 July 1891. Published in Susanne Popp, *Der junge Reger. Briefe und Dokumente vor 1900* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2000) (Schriftenreihe des Max-Reger-Instituts, XV): 106f.

[34] Fritz Stein, *Max Reger* (Potsdam: Athenaion, 1939) (Die großen Meister der Musik): 145.

[35] Alexander Becker, 'Untersuchungen zur Instrumentation in Max Regers Orchesterwerken', (PhD diss., Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT), Karlsruhe 2009 [2012]), https://d-nb.info/1024312844/34 (accessed 17 December 2020): 106.

Example 1. Max Reger, Romanze in D major, Op. 50 no. 2, orchestral score, first edition: Munich: Jos. Aibl, 1901, bars 1–5 (merged)



On the textural particularities of the second Romanze, Ramge writes:

'The score of the second Romanze shows a more relaxed instrumentation than that of the first; increase points and in particular the *Più allegro* are to be excluded. And there is another difference: woodwind and strings are more closely related here, i.e. there are also counter-voices to the strings in the wind instruments, yet the parallel movements and couplings of voices are not limited to the wind instruments, but they almost always encroach upon the strings. Parallel movements (in thirds) can be found in the following combinations: clarinets, 2nd violins, violas; horns, violas; bassoons, violas; flutes, clarinets, violas; flutes, clarinets, oboes, violas; also in the woodwind themselves: oboes, clarinets; clarinets, bassoons; flutes, oboes, clarinets; flutes, clarinets, bassoons; flutes, clarinets. The more relaxed instrumentation also results from the fact that, apart from the final bar, the entire instrumentation is only used in one bar (bar 66). Reger makes greater use of string divisions and *tremolos* in the second as compared to the first Romanze. The horns are used in the same way as in the first Romanze, mostly to amplify wind or string parts; the only solo part of the 1st horn in bars 95–99 should be emphasized.'[36]

As often with Reger, we have in the two Romanzen pieces of complementary rather than similar character. Their dense motivic treatment, beginning in the very first bar (for example with two contrapuntally different appearances of one main motif appearing simultaneously in the second Romanze[37]), make clear that we have here, although on a smaller orchestral scale, fully grown mature compositions of Reger's.[38]

A comparison of Reger's Op. 50 orchestral Romanzen to his Violin Concerto reveals a clear connection both with respect to formal as well as to proportional aspects; the slow movement of the Violin Concerto is, so to speak, an even fuller-grown such slow movement as compared to the Romanzen written some seven to eight years previously. Sandra Florence McColl, in her thesis on formal organisation in Reger's orchestral works, stresses that there are also elements of sonata movement form in the Concerto's Largo,[39] which is customary in several of Reger's slow movements, but can also, in fact, be found in the Op. 50 Romanzen.

[36] Heinz Ramge, 'Max Regers Orchesterbehandlung, insbesondere seine Retuschen an Meininger Repertoirewerken', (PhD diss., University of Marburg 1966): 80–81.

[37] Three-note figure upwards in Ob I and Vlc, inverted (dotted) figure downwards covering the same space of interval in Vln II (2); this motif in its dotted form is to open the solo part in bar 13. More conventional (i.e. identical in orchestra and solo instrument) is the treatment of the opening motif in the first Romanze.

[38] Another similarity is the orchestral treatment in the final bar of both Romanzen, omitting the oboes from as early on as writing out the scores (cf. the MS scores).

[39] Sandra Florence McColl, 'Formal Organisation in the Orchestral Works of Max Reger' (MLitt thesis, University of Oxford 1986 [1987]): 96.

Table 3: Number of bars of the slow movements of the violin concertos of Beethoven, Brahms, Reger, and Edward Elgar[40]

Beethoven, in D major, Op. 61: Larghetto, G major (attacca Finale)	90 bars
Brahms, in D major, Op. 77: Adagio, F major	116 bars
Elgar, in B minor, Op. 61: Andante, B♭ major[41]	132 bars
Reger, in A major, Op. 101: Largo con gran espressione, B♭ major[42]	142 bars[43]

It may not be too surprising that the slow movement of the Brahms Concerto is likewise in ABA' form, as is the slow movement of the Reger's Concerto,[44] though of truly symphonic approach, surpassing the earlier Romanzen not only in scope and ambition. The connection between Reger's Violin Concerto and the Romanzen has briefly been highlighted by Harold Truscott, in Robert Layton's *Companion to the Concerto*: 'The slow movement, [...] starting with one of Reger's most beautiful ideas, [...] pursues a quietly meditative path, with occasional moments of passion, on the lines of a somewhat more closely structured companion to the Romances, Op. 50. It has a moment of breathtaking harmonic beauty towards the end.'[45] The specific character of Reger's writing particularly in this music has been commented upon by Alexander Schmuller, one of the earliest performers of the work: 'The broad, deep melody and the spirit of inspiration celebrate their wedding here. Without hesitation I give my opinion that Beethoven could have put his name under the main material of the Largo. The figurative improvisation of this unusual largo spins away in a language that, freed from the last burden of matter, lives entirely in transcendent worlds. Here the line is not drawn to length, but to infinity, and the art of figuration, which becomes an independent melodic organism, is unparalleled.'[46]

40 Edward Elgar's Violin Concerto was written in 1909-10, and is near contemporaneously to Reger's, which was composed from April 1907 to April 1908. Elgar's Concerto was premiered on 10 November 1910 by Fritz Kreisler, conducted by the composer, while Reger's Concerto received its first performance on 15 October 1908 by Henri Marteau and the Leipzig Gewandhausorchester conducted by Arthur Nikisch. First impulses to write a violin concerto had been instigated by 1904 (Reger) and 1905 (Elgar) respectively. – Different tempos and metres notwithstanding, all four slow movements in performance usually take between 10 and 15 minutes, Beethoven now frequently being played fairly quicker, while the duration of the Reger movement, when taking the metronome markings seriously, should be no more than ten minutes.

41 Leaving B♭ major fairly early on, Elgar moves in the spheres of G major/E major (from bar 22), D♭ major (from bar 29) and D major/B major (from bar 48) before returning to B♭ major eventually in bar 78.

42 As from bar 1 Reger roams through various spheres of keys, though frequently stating the central key of B♭ major.

43 This is 20 bars longer than the D major Romanze, Op. 50 no. 2.

44 The three sections of the Violin Concerto *Largo* are structured thus: section A, bars 1–50; section B, bars 51–93; section A', bars 94–142; cf. Sandra Florence McColl, 'Formal Organisation in the Orchestral Works of Max Reger' (MLitt thesis, University of Oxford 1986 [1987]): 96–100.

45 Harold Truscott, 'Four romantics: Reger, Pfitzner, Schmidt and Korngold', in *A companion to the concerto*, ed. Robert Layton (London: Christopher Helm/New York: Schirmer 1988 [1989]): 263.

46 Alexander Schmuller, 'Reger en zijn Viool concert', in Concertgebouw Programme, Den Haag, 18 March 1923: 9.

Example 2. Max Reger, Violin Concerto in A major, Op. 101, orchestral score, first edition: C.F. Peters, 1908, 2nd movement, bars 57–63



Also concerning orchestral complexity and refinement, the Violin Concerto shows another step in Reger's development, as the composer wrote whilst composing, to his publisher: 'it is much more difficult to orchestrate such a thing than a purely orchestral

work; in a violin concerto every note has to be considered'.[47] The intricate textures that Reger applied to the score, not only concerning the treatment of orchestral instruments, but also concerning the relationships by way of dynamic markings, are immediately obvious (ex. 2).

III.

After he had realized that it was not so easy to achieve orchestral performances of his Op. 50 Romanzen (particularly in Germany, where performances of 'full violin concertos' still were the standard by that time, only occasionally replaced by a shorter one-movement 'Konzertstück'), Reger returned to the genre of Romanze for violin, with piano only, after some years' time. Whilst considering his G major contribution of just 30 bars WoO II/10 of 1901 to be 'occasional music of the worst kind – *for me*',[48] he coupled another, much more substantial Romanze, in E minor, in the small double opus 87, for violin and piano, of 1905, with a very short *Albumblatt* – the Romanze on the other hand being anything but small-size or unsubstantial. Quite the contrary: the E minor Romanze is no less ambitious than its two Op. 50 predecessors – which lends even further contrast to his clarinet sonatas (the 'laggard' Op. 107 of 1908-9 as opposed to Op. 49 of 1900). It might be possible that Reger initially had considered Op. 87 no. 2 as a slow movement to an otherwise uncomposed violin sonata (obviously the F♯ minor Op. 84 Sonata for violin and piano, which although composed near-contemporanously with the Romanze and lacking a slow movement, was in its full score entirely independent from the Romanze[49]).

Like the second Op. 50 Romanze, the Op. 87 piece (with a total of 134 bars) opens *Larghetto* (with the additional marking 'nie schleppend'), and from the 'pp' beginning the strong expression within the piece is evident. A first 'forte' increase is reached in the piano introduction in bar 7, soon followed by plenty of moments intricately marked 'pp', 'meno pp', 'p' or 'mp' respectively, with lots of *crescendi* and *decrescendi*. As in the other two Romanzen, the piece is roughly in ternary form, the middle section (beginning only in bar 54) being proportionally similarly long as in Op. 50 no. 2. The 'recapit-

[47] Letter from Reger to Henri Hinrichsen, head of C.F. Peters music publishers, 14 January 1908. Quoted from *Max Reger. Briefwechsel mit dem Verlag C. F. Peters*, ed. Susanne Popp and Susanne Shigihara (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmler, 1995) (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Reger-Instituts, 13): 225.

[48] Max Reger, letter to the publishers Carl Lauterbach & Max Kuhn, 22 October 1902. Published in Max Reger, *Briefe an die Verleger Lauterbach & Kuhn*, Part 1 [1902-5], ed. Susanne Popp (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmler, 1993) (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Reger-Instituts, 12): 38. The piece in tiny ternary form (9+12+9 bars), which still receives comparatively frequent performances in its original form as well as in adaptations for various solo instruments, had been published as a musical contribution to the *Neue Musik-Zeitung*, where it was published in November 1901. When exactly Reger composed this Romanze, is unknown.

[49] Reger's MS autograph score of the sonata (now in the Münchner Stadtbibliothek, M 1172 1537/53) proves beyond doubt that there was never an intention of incorporating the Romanze into the sonata. The drafts of both the sonata and the Op. 87 pieces are currently, apart from one leaf from the sonata's first movement, to be considered lost, as is the original MS autograph score of Op. 87.

ulation' section (from bar 90) is even more remote from the 'exposition's' original guise, the violin part even more freely developed and the thematic material largely confined to the piano. Apart from a slightly flexible momentum (marked by a few 'rit.' and 'a tempo'), Reger does entirely without general changes of tempo, thus unifying the piece as a whole.

There are some special traits that distinguish the Op. 87 no. 2 Romanze from the earlier two of Op. 50: Not only is the first section proportionally significantly longer than in Op. 50, caused by a long introduction in the piano (the violin entering only in bar 27, i.e. mid-way in the first section), but also the proportionalities between piano and violin in the piece are altogether different:

Table 4: number of notes played by the solo instrument in the Reger Romanze in E minor, Op. 87 no. 2, and of the bars in which the violin is resting

	notes played	bars in which the violin is resting	total of bars
	129 notes	36 bars	53 $^{2}/_{3}$ bars
	276 notes	3 bars	35 $^{1}/_{3}$ bars
	343 notes	0 bars	45 bars
total	748 notes	39 bars	134 bars

The increasing density of the solo part is striking, while the textures in the piano are fairly similar to those in Op. 50, both with respect to playability as to performance markings.

Example 3. Max Reger, Romanze in G major, Op. 50 no. 1, piano score, first edition: Munich: Jos. Aibl, 1901, bars 94–96



Example 4. Max Reger, Romanze in E minor, Op. 87 no. 2, score, first edition: Leipzig: Otto Forberg, 1905, bars 126–129



Unlike in the Violin Concerto, the harmonic development in Op. 87 no. 2 is largely rooted in E minor and its relative keys, not just G major (e.g. bars 19, 42, 51, 58, 119) but frequently progressing towards E major (bar 63, and 112, from whence E major is slowly settling as the closing key from bar 128), though passing of course also through farther keys such as A major, B♭ major, C major, D♭ major, F major or F♯ major.

After Op. 87 no. 2 Reger never again returned to the subject of Romanze for violin and piano/orchestra, although of course there are several violin solo sections in some of his later orchestral music, most notably in the Concerto in the Old Style, Op. 123, and in the *Four Tone Poems after A. Böcklin*, Op. 128. Andante and Rondo capriccioso in A major for violin and Orchestra, 'Op. 147' = WoO I/10, was begun only by end of April 1916 and remained unfinished by the time of Reger's death on 11 May.[50]

IV.

At least since the early 19th century there had been increasing interest in Romances for violin and accompaniment, either in the *salon* guise with piano, or in its more ambitious concept with orchestra.[51] Beethoven's famous examples, Opp. 40 and 50, in G and F major respectively (and hence in close tonal connection to the Reger), of 1800/1 and 1798 respectively, belong to the first instalments in this direction,[52] the earlier piece not

[50] This late work, for which the opus number 147 was envisaged, intended as an easier to perform smaller concert work for violin and orchestra, was written for the violinist Adolf Busch. After Reger's death Florizel von Reuter, a noted American violinist with a strong penchant in the occult, completed the work as a Sinfonische Rhapsodie for violin and orchestra, allegedly sanctioned from beyond by Reger himself. (Cf. Christopher Grafschmidt, 'Wie von Geisterhand … "Opus 147" und seine "Vollendung" durch Florizel von Reuter', in *Immer Reger. Geschichte und Aufgaben des Max-Reger-Instituts*, ed. Max-Reger-Institut, Stuttgart: Carus 2007: 125–152.) Far from fulfilling Reger's conception, it has been performed only rarely. A new completion of the piece, prepared by Thomas Meyer-Fiebig in 2013, has hitherto remained unperformed and unprinted.

[51] Of course, there are also Romances for somewhat more unusual forces, for example solo violin, one or more further either string or wind instrument(s), and piano.

[52] The instrumental 'Romanze' was a fairly recent development from the second half of the 18th century, the exact meaning of the term having become unclear over the past centuries, and common features rather being tempos tending to the slower side, and a 'songful' or 'romantic' character (Rainer Gstrein, 'Romanz/

being immediately successful. Slow movements of violin concertos had by that time frequently attained quite an ambitious scale, both by way of form and in their thematic/motivic structural processes. Yet it was to take the so-called Romantic era to give the genre of Romanze for violin a particular boost, both due to its inherent atmosphere of romance, yearning and melancholy, due to the possibility of building, in the framework of a comparatively simple structural (usually) ternary design, a particularly strong 'character piece' in the Romantic sense. Romanzen for violin with orchestra for use in the concert hall came more and more into vogue only by middle of the 19th century, prominent exponents being Max Bruch, Antonín Dvořák, Johan Svendsen,[53] Christian Sinding,[54] Camille Saint-Saëns, and Ralph Vaughan Williams.[55] In the years prior to Reger's, there had been published Romanzen for violin and orchestra, amongst others, by Arnold Krug (F.E.C. Leuckart), Gaston Borch (Augener), Achille Simonetti[56] (Ricordi) (1898), Richard Burmeister (Breitkopf & Härtel), Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (Novello), and Peter Erasmus Lange-Müller (Friedrich Hofmeister/Nordisk Musikforlag) (1899).[57] It may be that Jos. Aibl, Reger's then exclusive publisher, was lacking

romance/Romanze', in *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, 16th consignment, Stuttgart: Steiner, winter 1988/9: 18). It is striking that the genre of 'Romanze' is strongly pertaining to aesthetic developments in German speaking countries in the first decades of the 19th century, initially as a self-standing type of piece, but eventually losing much of its individuality. Gstrein remains in his substantial contribution to the discussion of the term (one of very few coverages of the instrumental Romance at all) rather vague with respect to the (instrumental) Romanze from 1850, mostly referring to Romanzen for piano or for orchestra (without solo instrument), stressing that by end of the 19th century there was hardly any clear terminology concerning the usage of the term (Gstrein, op. cit.: 20); Reger used the term both for organ and piano pieces as well as for his three Romanzen for violin. Most researchers in the past fifty years have contented themselves with writing on the use of the term in vocal music, especially in opera.

53 It is said that when Johan Svendsen was asked in 1881 to write a Romance for violin and orchestra, the Norwegian composer had completed the piece within a day (Svendsen's recollections, quoted in Finn Benestad and Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe, *Johan Svendsen: The Man, the Maestro, the Music*, trans. William H. Halversen (Columbus, OH: Peer Gynt, 1995): 195). Svendsen had not expected the Romance in G major, Op. 26 to become his most popular composition ever.

54 It may be interesting that Sinding attended the first performance of Reger's Violin Concerto in 1908, Henri Marteau, the soloist of the performance, reporting to Reger: 'I spoke to Sinding a couple of days ago. He is still completely under the spell of the Violin Concerto.' (Letter from Henri Marteau to Max Reger, 18 October 1908, quoted from *Max Reger. Briefe eines deutschen Meisters. Ein Lebensbild*, ed. Else von Hase-Koehler, Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1928: 193.)

55 Although not thus titled, Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* definitely belongs to this genre. – It may also be borne in mind that likewise Romances for any other kind of solo instrument with orchestra and piano were a favourite means of musical expression, including bassoon (Edward Elgar, 1910), french horn (Camille Saint-Saëns, 1874), euphonium (attrib. Carl Maria von Weber but actually hardly composed before 1850), or double-bass (Franz Joseph Keyper, as early as 1786). Reger's 1901 G major Romanze for violin and piano WoO II/10 was also published in arrangements for piano with violoncello, flute, french horn (all in 1910, i.e. during Reger's lifetime), clarinet, oboe, trumpet, or viola; additionally there are arrangements for violin and organ and violin and small orchestra.

56 Violinist and composer Achille Simonetti (1857–1928), born in Turin but from 1891 living in England, very probably met Reger during the latter's visit to England in May 1909 (he enquired personally concerning concert tickets; cf. Max Reger, *Briefe an den Verlag Ed. Bote & G. Bock*, ed. Herta Müller and Jürgen Schaarwächter (Stuttgart: Carus, 2011) (Schriftenreihe des Max-Reger-Instituts, XXII): 67).

57 Cf. https://www.tobias-broeker.de/app/download/17635738/Broeker3Ed.pdf (accessed 18 December 2020).

a similar composition and, in order to add an according work to its portfolio, suggested to Reger to write such a work.[58] While neither of the aforementioned works of the 1898/1899 years, nor the Reger Romanzen,[59] has survived in the concert repertoire,[60] a comparison of the Reger contributions to Romances for violin and orchestra by other composers reveals both similarities and Regerian specifics. A natural similarity is the priority of the solo part, although its treatment is naturally very singular in each case. The solo part of the Saint-Saëns Romance in C major, Op. 48, of 1906, begins fairly simply, but steadily increases in difficulty, particularly in the quicker middle section. Sinding's Romanze in D major, Op. 100, of 1910, is in many places comparable to Reger's first Romanze of Op. 50, both in the initial separate usage of the wind and string sections of the orchestra, though Reger's combining of both takes place quicker than Sinding's (on the other hand, it is with 233 bars far longer than any of Reger's Romanzen[61]). The more or less 'conversational tone' of some passages in the solo parts is technically surprisingly similar, although Reger uses the upper registers much more frequently:

[58] The bulk of the Reger-Aibl correspondence currently appears to be lost, although some postal items infrequently resurface on the autograph market.

[59] The only commercial recordings of the Reger Op. 50 Romanzen were made in 1973 (Pina Carmirelli, Heidelberger Kammerorchester, Richard Laugs; Da Camera Magna), 1981 (Hans Maile, Radio-Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Uros Lajovic; Koch Schwann/Deutsche Grammophon), 2010 (Kolja Lessing, Göttinger Symphoniker, Christoph-Mathias Müller; telos) and 2011 respectively (Tanja Becker-Bender, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Lothar Zagrosek; hyperion).

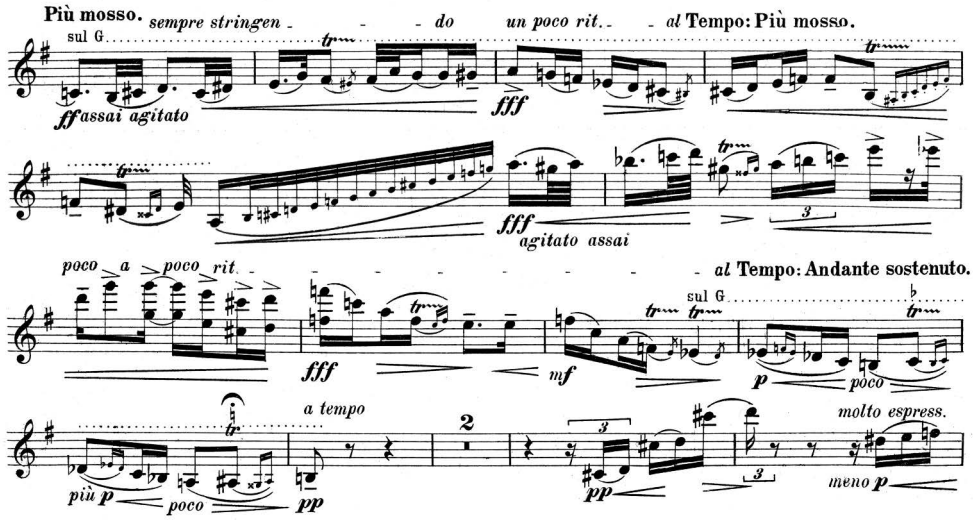
[60] The Coleridge Taylor Romance in G major, Op. 39, the only of the other Romances mentioned above which has recently been unearthed, was issued on CD in 2007 on the Lyrita label (Lorraine McAslan, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Nicholas Braithwaite). Of Lange-Müller, at least his Violin Concerto in C major, Op. 69 (1902) was revived for CD.

[61] The main tempo marking is *Andante*, the middle section marked *Più animato*.

Example 5. Christian Sinding, Romanze in D major, Op. 100, violin solo part, extracted from the full score, first edition: Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910, bars 87–112 (merged)



Example 6. Max Reger, Romanze in G major, Op. 50 no. 1, violin solo part, first edition: Munich: Jos. Aibl, 1901, bars 56–71



Sinding asks for a slightly larger orchestra (additional to Reger's orchestral forces he requests a harp, 2 more horns (i.e. a total of four), and 2 trumpets, while Reger in fact with 2 woodwind each plus timpani is only slightly larger in size than Beethoven nearly a hundred years earlier (Beethoven's orchestral forces are 1 flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns and strings). Reger's orchestral treatment frequently takes over motivic and thematic functions as well, thus implementing a symphonic dimension well beyond the scope of most contemporaneous Romanzen.

The much earlier Romanzen of Bruch (in A minor, Op. 42, of 1874), Dvořák (in F minor, Op. 11, of 1879) and Svendsen (in G major, Op. 26, of 1881), though certainly not easy, are technically less demanding both in the solo and the orchestral portions than the later works.[62] The Svendsen strongly relates to Beethoven, but also provides a link to e.g. Coleridge-Taylor,[63] while the Dvořák has a much more individual character, in the orchestral portion highlighting solos for the woodwinds, thus being a model for Sinding. Bruch's Romanze, initially intended as the first movement of a new Violin Concerto, relates both to Beethoven and Schumann, but is similarly a quintessential 'romantic' Romance for violin and orchestra, full of songful yearning and, as Rainer Gstrein might call it,[64] sentimentality.

While the Romances by Lange-Müller and Coleridge-Taylor, to name but a few of those contemporaneous to Reger's, all offer a similar ternary form (with lengths of 162 and 186 bars respectively), they differ from Reger's contributions e.g. by way of harmonic and modulatory daring, but also by way of virtuosity both soloistic and orchestral, Reger surpassing them mostly by far. One example may show the rhythmical complexities that Reger presents in the D major Op. 50 Romanze, bars 47–49 (ex. 7) as opposed to one of the last pages of the Lange-Müller Romanze, also in D major, Op. 63 (ex. 8 – note the frequent change of metre). And not only does the music text alone differ strongly, but in particular Reger's level of dynamic refinements is not comparable to all other works (exx. 9 and 10 show in each case the 'recapitulation' of the 'A' section), although Burmeister's rhythmic complexities and demands on the soloist are not inconsiderable.[65]

[62] With 134 (Bruch), 219 (Dvořák) and 179 (Svendsen) bars respectively, these three Romanzen are more substantial than both Reger's as well as Beethoven's, but foreshadow the Sinding Romanze.

[63] It may be mentioned that, most uncontemporaneous to all these, English composer Michael Hoppé composed in 2003 a Romance for violin and orchestra in quite a similar, most eclectic vein.

[64] Rainer Gstrein, 'Romanz/romance/Romanze', in *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, 16th consignment, Stuttgart: Steiner, winter 1988/9, and 'Romanze', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd edition, ed. Ludwig Finscher, Sachteil vol. 8, Kassel/Basel: Bärenreiter/Metzler, 1998: cols. 532–534. The Bruch Romanze opens with identical wind chords as an obvious reference (reverence?) to Robert Schumann's Cello Concerto Op. 129, also in A minor, published in 1854.

[65] With 208 bars, Burmeister's Romanze belongs to the longer violin romances of the time.

Example 7. Max Reger, Romanze in D major, Op. 50 no. 2, orchestral score, first edition: Munich: Jos. Aibl, 1901, bars 47–49 (merged)



Example 8. Peter Erasmus Lange-Müller, Romance in G major, Op. 63, orchestral score, Leipzig/Copenhagen: Friedrich Hofmeister/Nordisk Musikforlag [no year given], bars 134–139



Example 9. Max Reger, Romanze in G major, Op. 50 no. 1, piano score, Munich: Jos. Aibl, 1901, bars 63–76



Example 10. Richard Burmeister, Konzert-Romanze in G major, Op. 7, piano version, Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1899, bars 58–75



Yet, while most of his contemporaries use techniques of orchestration deeply rooted in the late 19th century, Reger even in his Op. 50 Romanzen foreshadows the future developments of the Twentieth century. His dynamic markings, as nearly always in his music, show particular attention to detail, shadowing the separate sections of the orchestra meticulously (even frequently when instruments are coupled or linked). The sophisticated markings related to the dynamics both in the solo as in the orchestral part, encompassing the entire span of softest *piano* to double *forte*, show the advancedness of Reger's musical thinking, only little of which can also be found in contemporaneous

Example 11. Max Reger, Romanze in G major, Op. 50 no. 1, orchestral score, first edition: Munich: Jos. Aibl, 1901, bars 13–18 (merged)



compositions by others. In fact Reger overcomes the 'Romanze' character to some extent by exploring the music to the most expressive of extremes. Sometimes the dynamic markings of woodwind and strings are disconnected from each other (ex. 11), a stylistic means which frequently has been associated with Reger's early successes as an organ composer, but which was prevalent by this time anyway and will also be found in most of early Viennese atonal music.[66]

V.

It is striking that in the post-1914 years the next generation, not just the composers directed into new compositional techniques and procedures, discarded increasingly if not altogether genres like the Romance for violin and accompaniment. This not only applies to the 'avantgardists' such as Schönberg and his school, it likewise applies to composers as diverse as Schreker, Hindemith, Pfitzner, Busoni,[67] or Franz Schmidt.[68] In fact, Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* of 1914 (rev. 1920), which to some extent may have been foreshadowed by Coleridge-Taylor's Romance, may be a kind of final point to the development of the Romanze for violin and orchestra. Vaughan Williams, using very similar orchestral forces as Reger,[69] transfers the genre onto the level of the tone poem, underlaying extra-musical imagings (a poem of George Meredith) to the music and thus re-defining the genre altogether; the solo and orchestral portions are, though thematically interlocked, disproportioned as the solo part, frequently playing unaccompanied, directs the orchestra's harmonic development; the pentatonic harmony used can frequently be found in Vaughan Williams; the new direction the composer takes is clearly shown in a review of the first performance in *The Times*: It 'showed serene disregard of the fashions of to-day or of yesterday. It dreams its way along in "many links without a break", and though it never rises to the energy of the lines "He is[,] the dance of children, thanks Of sowers, shout of primrose banks,"[70] the music is that of the clean countryside, not of the sophisticated concert-room.'[71] Thus it provided, in its very own and individual way, a counterpoint to Reger's Romanzen of some fifteen years previously.

66 E.g. Karl Hasse, *Max Reger* (Leipzig: C.F.W. Siegel, [1921]) (Die Musik, Sammlung illustrierter Einzeldarstellungen, 42–44): 99.

67 Busoni's sole composition in this direction is an Albumblatt in E minor of 1916 for flute (or muted violin) and piano BV 272.

68 One of the few exceptions was the 'late-comer' Ottorino Respighi with his *Poema autunnale* from 1925, premiered in 1926 in Berlin.

69 The sole differences between Reger and Vaughan Williams are that the Englishman asks for a triangle instead of timpani and is content to use one oboe only. Like Reger, also Vaughan Williams provided a version of the work for violin and piano, completed in 1914 but first performed only on 15 December 1920 at the Shirehampton Public Hall; the first performance of the orchestral version of *The Lark Ascending* took place on 14 June 1921 at the London Queen's Hall.

70 Quotations from George Meredith's poem *The Lark Ascending* (1895).

71 'British Music Society – An "Unknown" Programme', *The Times* (15 June 1921): 8.