

György Ligeti

Sonate

for Viola Solo / für Viola solo / pour alto solo

(1991–1994)

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*Die Sonate für Viola solo ist ein Kompositionsauftrag der Stadt Gütersloh
(zusammen mit dem Festival d'Automne, Paris, und dem South Bank Centre, London).*

*La Sonate pour alto solo est une commande de la Ville de Gütersloh
(avec la participation du Festival d'Automne à Paris et du South Bank Centre, Londres).*

First Performance: *"Loop"*
18 November 1991 in Vienna
Garth Knox, Viola

"Facsar"
28 March 1993 in Geneva
Jürg Dähler, Viola

The complete Sonata
23 April 1994 in Gütersloh
Tabea Zimmermann, Viola

Uraufführung: *„Loop“*
18. November 1991 in Wien
Garth Knox, Viola

„Facsar“
28. März 1993 in Genf
Jürg Dähler, Viola

Vollständige Sonate
23. April 1994 in Gütersloh
Tabea Zimmermann, Viola

Première représentation: *«Loop»*
18 Novembre 1991 à Vienne
Garth Knox, Alto

«Facsar»
28 Mars 1993 à Genève
Jürg Dähler, Alto

Sonate complète
23 Avril 1994 à Gütersloh
Tabea Zimmermann, Alto

Preface

The viola is seemingly just a big violin but tuned a fifth lower. In reality the two instruments are worlds apart. They both have three strings in common, the A, D and G string. The high E-string lends the violin a powerful luminosity and metallic penetrating tone which is missing in the viola. The violin leads, the viola remains in the shade. In return the low C-string gives the viola a unique ascerbity, compact, somewhat hoarse, with the aftertaste of wood, earth and tannic acid.

Two chamber music works awoke my love of the C-string many years ago; in Schubert's last string quartet (in G major) and in the slow movement of Schumann's Piano Quintet the dark elegance of the viola comes to the fore – also often in orchestral works by Berlioz. In 1990 I heard Tabea Zimmermann play the viola in a WDR concert in Cologne; her particularly vigorous and pithy – and yet always tender – C-string was the starting point for my fantasies of a viola sonata. With the plan of a sonata to be written later already in my head, I wrote the short viola piece *Loop* (now the second movement of the sonata) in 1991 as a birthday present for Alfred Schlee, the excellent publisher. In 1993 I wrote *Facsar* (now the third movement) in remembrance of my dear composition teacher Sándor Veress who died in Bern and who was an unjustly neglected composer – his music must be performed again! It was also in 1993 that Klaus Klein enquired about a first performance in Gütersloh and Tabea Zimmermann agreed to play the complete sonata. The movements 1, 4, 5 and 6 are therefore new; I dedicated the two outer movements to Tabea Zimmermann, the fourth movement to Klaus Klein and the fifth to Louise Duchesneau, my colleague of many years.

1st movement *Hora lungă*: It evokes the spirit of Romanian folk music which, together with Hungarian folk music and that of the Gipsies, made a strong impression on me during my childhood. However I do not write folklore or use folkloristic quotations, it is rather allusions which are made. *Hora lungă* literally means "slow dance" but in the Romanian tradition this is not a dance but are sung folk melodies (in the northernmost province of the country, Maramures, in the centre of the Carpathian mountains), nostalgic and melancholy, richly ornamented. There is a striking similarity to the "Cante jondo" in Andalusia and also folk music in Rajasthan. Whether this has something to do with the Gipsy migration or is a common, old indo-european, diatonic melodic tradition is hard to decide. This movement is played exclusively on the C-string and in it I make use of natural intervals (pure major third, pure minor seventh and also the 11th harmonic).

2nd movement *Loop*: The title refers to the form; the same melodic figures are repeated, continually varied rhythmically and played progressively faster in tempo. Double-stoppings are played throughout with one of the notes always being an open string. The performer is therefore compelled to carry out daring position changes which in the fast section of the movement creates a "dangerous virtuosity". In addition this movement must also be played in the spirit of jazz: elegant and "relaxed".

3rd movement *Facsar*: The title is a Hungarian verb meaning “to wrestle” or “to distort”. In Hungarian this word is also associated with the bitter sensation felt in the nose when one is about to cry. It is also a double-stopping movement, a type of measured dance with displaced twisted modulations: pseudo-tonal.

4th movement *Presto con sordino*: From a regular perpetuum mobile movement (just as in my harpsichord work *Continuum*) through polyrhythmic accentuation and the use of the contrasting character of the individual strings, partially concealed, illusionistic melodic fragments are gradually peeled away: more or less in the spirit of Mauritz Escher.

5th movement *Lamento*: Strict two-part writing mainly consisting of parallel seconds and sevenths. Indirect influence of various ethnic cultures; similar two-part writing in seconds is found in the Balkan area (Bulgaria, Macedonia, Istria), the Ivory Coast and Melanesia (on the island of Manus).

6th movement *Chaconne chromatique*: Allusions to the famous Bach chaconne should not be expected! My sonata is much more unassuming, does not historicize and also cannot support monumental forms. I use the word chaconne in its original meaning: as a wild exuberant dance in strongly accentuated three-four time with an ostinato bass-line.

György Ligeti
Translation: Lindsay Gerbracht

1. Hora lungă	12
2. Loop	14
3. Facsar	16
4. Prestissimo con sordino	18
5. Lamento	20
6. Chaconne chromatique	22

Durata: ca. 22'

Sonata

für Tabea Zimmermann

1. Hora lungă

(1994)

György Ligeti
* 1923

Lento rubato e molto dolente, ♩ = 76

*) $\frac{12}{16}$ sempre sul IV - al fine

*) ↓, ↓, ↓ indicate downward microtonal departures from normal intonation: ↓ is about a quarter tone lower, as with the 11th harmonic (which is 49 cents lower); ↓ is about a sixth of a tone lower, as in the 7th harmonic (which is 31 cents lower); ↓ the very slight deviation (14 cents lower) which is the difference between the major third of the tempered scale and the natural scale. (The harmonics of the C string serve here as a model for the harmonic series of F).

*) ↓, ↓, ↓ zeigen mikrotonale Intonationsabweichungen nach unten an: ↓ entspricht etwa einer Vierteltonvertiefung, wie beim 11. Oberton (49 cent tiefer); ↓ entspricht etwa einer Sechsteltonvertiefung, wie beim 7. Oberton (31 cent tiefer); ↓ entspricht etwa der sehr kleinen Abweichung (14 cent tiefer), dem Unterschied zwischen temperierter großer Terz und Naturterz. (Die Flageolett-Töne der C-Saite dienen hier als Modell für die Obertöne von F.)

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19 *p* *mf* *f* sempre molto espr.

22 *più f* appassionato dolente *ff*

25 *cresc.* *fff* *f* *ff*

28 *fff* intenso (always with the full length of the bow) (stets mit der ganzen Länge des Bogens) *ffff* poco dim. *ff* *f*

31 *ff* *mf* *p* „da lontano” senza vibr.

34 *poco a poco dim.*

37 *ppp* morendo

Durata ca. 4'50"

(play even if the uppermost harmonics hardly sound)
(spielen, auch wenn die obersten Flageolets kaum mehr klingen)

2. Loop

(1991)

Molto vivace, ritmico - with swing, ♩ = 320

8 $\left[\begin{smallmatrix} 5+3 \\ 16 \end{smallmatrix} \right]$ 10 $\left[\begin{smallmatrix} 4+6 \\ 16 \end{smallmatrix} \right]$ 8 $\frac{8}{16}$ 10 $\frac{10}{16}$

changing of bar
sim: Taktwechsel

5 *mf sub.*

9

13 *ff sub.*

17 *p sub.* II III

21 *mf sub.*

25

29 *ff sub.* *p sub.* II III

Double stoppings always with one open string.
Accentuate each note.

Doppelgriffe stets mit einer leeren Saite.
Jeden Ton akzentuiert spielen.

33 *mf sub.*

37

41 *ff sub.* *p sub.*

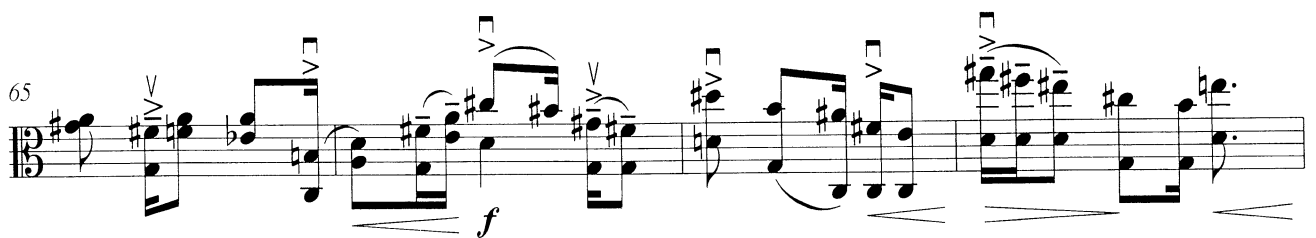
45 *f*

49

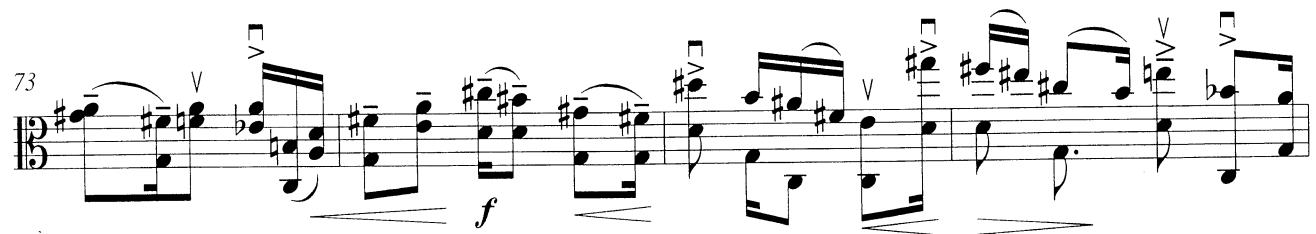
53 *ff sub.* *p sub.*

57 *f*

61 *ff sub.* *p sub.*

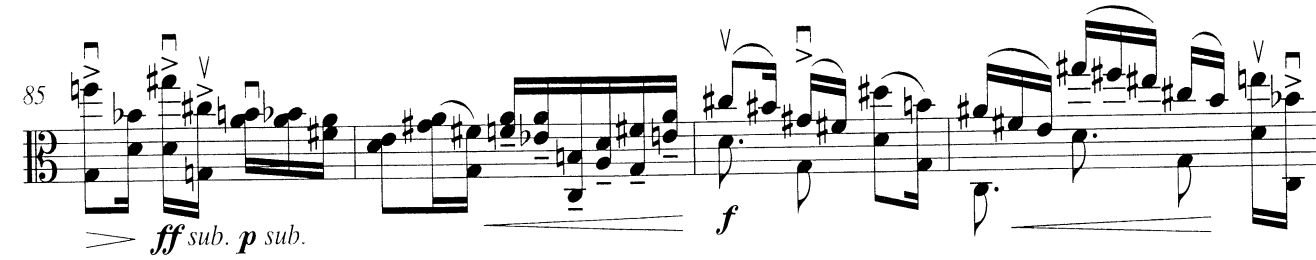
65 

69 

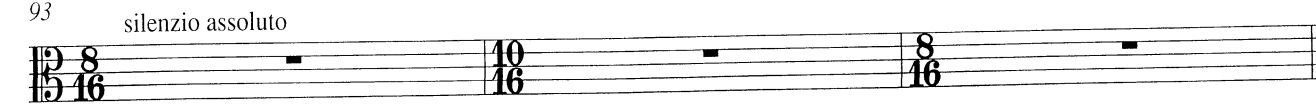
73 

77 

81 

85 

89 

93 

Veress Sándor emlékére

3. Facsar

(1992)

Andante cantabile ed espressivo,

with swing, ♩ ca. 84sul IV sin al segno \oplus

The musical score is written for a four-string electric guitar in a 5/8 time signature. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo and mood are indicated as 'Andante cantabile ed espressivo, with swing, ca. 84'. The performance instruction is 'sul IV sin al segno \oplus ', and the dynamic is 'mf legato'. The score consists of eight staves of music, with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 29 marked at the beginning of their respective lines. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. There are several instances of vibrato (marked with a 'v' and a wavy line) and accents (marked with a '>'). Fingering is indicated by Roman numerals (I-IV) and a '0' for the natural harmonic. The piece concludes with a final chord in the 29th measure.

33

II
IV
III
0 *)

IV

37

mp

41

molto espr.

45

IV
0
III

mf

49

53

f *cresc. e accel. poco a poco*

Più mosso

57

ff

61

dim. e rit.

*) The chord is broken downwards.

*) Den Akkord nach unten brechen.

für Klaus Klein

4. Prestissimo con sordino

(1994)

So schnell wie möglich

12 | 7+5 |
4 | 4 |

alla corda

The musical score consists of six systems of music, each with a staff and a dynamic marking below it. The dynamics and articulations are as follows:

- System 1: *pp* *mfpp* *mfpp* *sempre sim.*
- System 2: *f p f p > pp mfpp* *mfpp* *sim.* *mfpp < mf > pp mf pp* *sim.*
- System 3: *< mf p f p < f p > pp mf pp* *sim.* *f = ff > p f p*
- System 4: *f p > pp mfpp* *sim.*
- System 5: *f = ff p f p mf p f p* *sim.*
- System 6: *ff* *p sub.* *pp < mf f p*

*) Double stoppings always with one open string.

*) Doppelgriffe stets mit einer leeren Saite.

12

pp *f* *pp* *mfpp* *f* *ff*

13

cresc. *fff* *f p* *pp mfpp* *mfpp* *mf p* *f p*

14

15

f p *f* *ff p ff* *p f p* *f p mf p* *f* *ff* *fff*

16

cresc. *fff* *pp sub.* *mf pp sim.* *f* *ff* *pp*

17

18

mf *f* *ff* *fff pp sub.* *mf pp sim.* *f p* *f p* *f p*

19

f p f p f p *sim.* *ffp f p* *sim.*

20

21

ff p f p *f p* *sim.* *ff p* *f p* *ff p*

22

f p *sim.* *ffp* *f p* *sim.*

23

24

mfpp sim. f p f p sim.

25

f p f p f p mfpp sim. < f p f p sim. mfpp f ff fff mf

27

sub. pp sim.

28

f p f p sim. ff

30

mf pp mf pp < f p mfpp < f p > mfpp < f p sim.

31

ff p ff pp mf pp sim. f p < f p f ff p mf pp mf pp

33

f p < f ff pp sub. mf pp mf p f p ff mf pp

34

ff p ff pp sub. mf pp mf pp ffff sub.

via sord. *)
(very quickly / sehr schnell)

attacca il Lamento

Durata ca. 1'15"

*) Simply throw the mute away.

*) Den Dämpfer einfach wegwerfen.

für Louise Duchesneau

5. Lamento

(1994)

Tempo giusto, intenso e barbaro, ♩ = 152

senza sord., alla corda

*)

subito: **fff** con tutta la forza, feroce

7

sul tasto, flautando

pp da lontano

ord.

sub. **fff** (feroce)

13

19

sul tasto, flautando

pp

25

ord.

sub. **fff**

31

sul tasto, flautando

ffff

fff

pp

Meno mosso, ♩ = 112

37

suoni reali

arm., ord.

III

IV

pp

*) Double stoppings with one open string where possible.

*) Doppelgriffe mit einer leeren Saite, überall wo möglich.

43

49

a tempo

Meno mosso

sub. ffff tutta la forza

p

55

poco rall.

sempre pp

60 *(rall.)*

sul tasto, flautando

ppp

attacca, ord.
 Durata ca. 2'50"

für Tabea Zimmermann
 6. Chaconne chromatique
 (1994)

Vivace appassionato (molto ritmico e feroce), *) ♩ ≈ 144

p misterioso

mp

mf

mf

cresc. poco a poco

*) Bring out the impetuous, dance-like character with copious, differentiated accentuation.

*) Den wilden Tanzcharakter mit reicher und differenzierter Akzentuierung zur Geltung bringen.

36 *(cresc.)* *f cresc.*

42 *(cresc.)* *ff*

47 *f* *cresc. espr.*

52 *= più f* *ff*

56 *(cresc.)* *fff* *tutta la forza*

61 *ffff grandioso*

66 *fffff intenso*

70

73

cresc. estremo - - - *fffff* *pp sub.*

76

79

allarg. - - - **Meno mosso, molto cantabile**
sul tasto

cresc. molto - - - *fff* *pp sub. „da lontano“*

84

90

con espressione

95

rall. - - -

dim. - - - *pppp*

Durata ca. 2'40"