

**Victor Bruns (1904-1996): The Last Three
Commissioned Compositions for Bassoon, Tenor
Bassoon and Contrabassoon**

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Chapter One - Introduction

Victor Bruns (1904-1996) was a highly respected bassoonist and composer in Germany. In his professional life, he performed with many prestigious orchestras in both Russia and Germany. His compositional output was varied and numbered almost 100 works. During his lifetime he was awarded for his work as both a performer and composer. He was frequently requested to compose music for colleagues and received a number of commissions from patrons in Germany and overseas. Despite his prominent profile during his lifetime he has been largely forgotten today.

Although Bruns was born in Finland, he lived in Leningrad until his emigration to Germany in 1938. He moved to Berlin before the Second World War, where he lived and worked until his death. After the war the sector in which he lived became a part of East Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic. Thus he worked under communist rule until the reunification of Germany in 1990.¹ As a performer, he obtained the position of second bassoonist at the Berlin Volksoper from 1940-1945 before attaining the dual position of second bassoonist and contrabassoonist at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin in 1946, which he held until 1969. He commenced composition while studying in Leningrad from 1924 to 1931, and continued throughout his life until the last composition he completed in 1992. His extensive output included concerti and sonatas for many orchestral instruments,² as well as chamber music for both wind and string instruments in various combinations. In symphonic and stage music genres Bruns composed six symphonies, six ballets, a chamber opera, and various other works for small orchestral ensembles. Almost all of Bruns' music was performed and well received in East Germany and other Eastern Bloc countries. Throughout his lifetime Bruns received prizes and honours for his work in both performance and composition, gaining wide recognition from officials, colleagues and other musicians.

¹ The *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR), known in English as the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was the Soviet occupied zone from 1946. The communist state was founded in 1949 and ruled until 1989. In 1990 East Germany was reunited with the former West German state *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (BDR) known in English as the Federal Republic of Germany. This will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three.

² These included flute, clarinet, oboe, english horn, french horn, trumpet, violin, viola, violoncello and double bass. For a list of complete works see Appendix.

Bruns preferred to compose traditional genres such as concerti, string quartets and symphonies. He was influenced by the Romantic traditions of Brahms and Mahler, and often spoke of the work of Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Hindemith and Bartok as models for his compositions.³ Bruns may not have acquired the degree of success or notoriety of his composition teacher Boris Blacher or fellow student Dmitri Shostakovich,⁴ but his music was nevertheless popular with his audiences of the time.

Despite the prominence Bruns achieved in his professional profile, scores of his music became increasingly difficult to obtain in his later years and after his death. Most of his music was published by Breitkopf & Härtel, Accolade and Feja, though some is now out of print.⁵ There have been few recordings of his compositions. Only one of his bassoon concertos was recorded on LP in East Germany, a recording which is now out of distribution.⁶ There have been three recordings produced in Berlin of Bruns' chamber music, namely the bassoon quartets⁷ and woodwind quintet.⁸

This thesis will focus on the last three compositions Bruns wrote for tenor bassoon, bassoon and contrabassoon. While these works are written for three different bassoons and date from the decline of his public prominence, thus have not received the appreciation that they deserve, it is nevertheless warranted that they be included in the standard repertoire for bassoon.

Bruns composed ten solo pieces for bassoon which were written at evenly spaced intervals throughout his career. There are four concerti for bassoon and orchestra: No. 1 (1933/4), No. 2 (1946), No. 3 (1966) and No. 4 (1985), as well as three sonatas for bassoon and piano (1949, 1969 and 1986), two collections of pieces for bassoon and

³ Victor Bruns, "Gespräch mit dem Komponisten Victor Bruns," interview by Reiner Kontressowitz, *Inform 1* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1989): 32-44.

⁴ Shostakovich was a student at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire between 1919 and 1925.

⁵ Scores to Bruns' works are not commonly held in Australian libraries or readily available in music stores.

⁶ Victor Bruns, *Bassoon Concerto No 3, Op. 41, Violin Concerto, Op. 36*. Herbert Heilmann (Bassoon). Berlin, DDR. NOVA VEB Deutsche Schallplatten, 885185. LP Record.

⁷ Victor Bruns, *Originalwerke für drei Fagotte und Kontrafagott*. Das Berliner Fagottquartett. Classic Studio, CS 12 308, Compact disc, and Victor Bruns, *Fagotti Variabili*. Das Berliner Fagottquartett. 1993, Berlin, Classic Studio, 315 2133, Compact disc. The Berlin Bassoon Quartet were established in West Berlin and comprise of Gerhard Rapsch, Thomas Kollikowski, Helge Bartholomäus (bassoons) and Stansilav Riha (contrabassoon).

⁸ Victor Bruns, *Bläserquintett Op. 16*. Quintettsolisten der Deutschen Oper Berlin. June 1998, Meistersaal Berlin, Compact disc.

piano (1939, 1965) and one collection of pieces for unaccompanied bassoon (1991). For solo contrabassoon Bruns wrote three collections of pieces with piano (1975, 1986 and 1991). Bruns' first concerto for contrabassoon and orchestra (1992) was his last completed composition. In addition to this repertoire for bassoon, Bruns composed three quartets for bassoon and contrabassoon, as well as several other chamber works which include bassoon.

From his long orchestral career playing bassoon and contrabassoon Bruns gained the advantage of understanding the capabilities of each instrument, and was thus able to write compositions that highlight their respective characteristics and possibilities of virtuosity. Because Bruns' works are so well suited to the instrument, they deserve to be studied and performed.

With the exception of the Hindemith *Sonate for Bassoon and Piano* (1938) and the *Scherzo* (1950) by Stefan de Haan, both of which are performed frequently, the solo repertoire for bassoon written by German composers in the twentieth century has been small. There have been more popular concerti written by composers from other countries.⁹ Interestingly, there has been an abundance of solo repertoire composed since the turn of the twentieth century for the competitions at the Paris Conservatoire, which remain popular choices for student recitals today despite the inappropriateness of performing this French repertoire on a German instrument.¹⁰

In addition to solo literature, there has been a long tradition of German and French composers writing teaching material for bassoon. At the Paris Conservatoire many bassoon professors composed pedagogical works for their students, and although their compositions remain a valuable addition to the repertoire they were intended to be used for the instruction of the French instrument.¹¹ Although Bruns never taught

⁹ Popular concerti today include those by Gordon Jacob (1947), André Jolivet (1954), Henri Tomasi (1957), Jean Françaix (1979). Recent contributions to the literature have been from Sofiya Gubaydulina (1975), Karlheinz Stockhausen (1977), Luciano Berio (1995) and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (1992).

¹⁰ Concert solos written by Eugène Bozza, Alexandre Tansman, Charles Koechlin, Henri Dutilleul and Marcel Bitsch are still performed frequently today. It should be noted that the French instrument has a different fingering system to that of the German instrument. This performance issue will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

¹¹ Some of the most highly regarded bassoon professors were Etienne Ozi, Louis Marie Eugène Jancourt, Eugène Bourdeau, Gustave Dhérin and most recently Maurice Allard. For a concise overview

bassoon at a Conservatoire, he did write several studies that were included in Seltman and Angehöfer's *Das Fagott*¹² as well as another study for advanced pupils.¹³ These works have not been remembered as well as the pedagogical works of other German composers.¹⁴

As it was for other East German composers, the music of Victor Bruns was published, performed in East Germany and frequently broadcasted on *Berlin Rundfunk* (East German Radio).¹⁵ Although his music and Berlin Rundfunk was available in West Germany, it was not widely performed in other Western countries, as distribution was made difficult by the political circumstances resulting from the division of Germany. For this reason, Bruns' music was seldom performed in the West, and remains unknown to many instrumentalists today.

That of Bruns' bassoon music that is available in the West can be attributed to the interest of fellow bassoonists. Some of his music was obtained and performed in West Berlin.¹⁶ Manuscripts also slipped through the Iron Curtain, either via performers who published them in their home countries, or through Bruns' correspondence with colleagues in the U.K, France, the U.S.A, China and Australia. While these colleagues perpetuated Bruns' music through performances of his work, it remains the case that few student bassoonists are aware of or encouraged to play his music.

see Michael Burns, 'Music written for Bassoon by Bassoonists: An Overview', *The Double Reed* 24, no. 2 (2001): 51-65.

¹² Werner Seltman and Günter Angehöfer, *Das Fagott: Schulwerk in sechs Bänden/ The Bassoon: A Tutor in six Volumes*, trans. William Waterhouse (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1977). In this collection of six volumes Bruns contributed 33 pedagogical pieces: 17 for bassoon solo, 3 for two bassoons, 2 for bassoon and piano and 11 studies for contrabassoon.

¹³ Victor Bruns, *Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene, Op. 32* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1957).

¹⁴ Bassoon Studies by Carl Jacobi, Christian Julius Weissenborn, and Ludwig Milde have remained standard instructional material.

¹⁵ East German radio broadcasts were received in West Berlin. See Helge Bartholomäus, interview by the author, Berlin, 20 July 2004 and Henry Skolnick, interview by the author, Melbourne, 1 July 2004.

¹⁶ There were performances of Bruns' music on West Berlin Radio stations, *RISA (Radio in Sektor Amerikanische)* and on *SFB (Sender Freies Berlin)*. Hans Lemke was bassoonist with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra from 1961, with whom he performed many of Bruns' compositions on radio broadcast, including the Bassoon Concerto No. 2, Op. 15, performed on RIAS – Berlin in 1973. Hans Lemke met Victor Bruns when he was preparing to perform this Concerto. The composer visited West Berlin for the rehearsals and performance. The *Konzertante Musik für Fagott und Streichtrio, Op. 58*, was also performed by Lemke on SFB – Berlin in 1979. See Hans Lemke, conversation with the author, Berlin, 24 July 2004. Bruns' music was performed in West Berlin on a number of occasions up until 1989, which will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Of the three bassoon compositions to be examined in this thesis, two were commissioned, although all three were written for and dedicated to fellow bassoonists. The Sonatina for Tenor Bassoon and Piano, Op. 96, is dedicated to Richard Moore. The Trio for Tenor Bassoon, Bassoon and Contrabassoon, Op. 97, is dedicated to William Waterhouse.¹⁷ The Concerto for Contrabassoon, Op. 98, is dedicated to Henry Skolnick.¹⁸ The last three compositions of Bruns were all completed around the same time between 1991 and 1992. All three pieces were premièred by their dedicatees. However, they have been seldom performed since their premières. The Sonatina, Op. 96, has only been performed on three occasions, each time by Moore. Similarly the Trio, Op. 97, has been performed on three occasions by two different ensembles. The Concerto, Op. 98, has only been performed twice with orchestra and once with piano reduction, with Skolnick as the soloist on each occasion. It is hoped that this thesis will play a small role in the dissemination of these works, as well as promoting the bassoon compositions of Bruns in general.

Bruns' works for tenor bassoon and contrabassoon make a particularly significant contribution to the bassoon literature. The tenor bassoon is a rare instrument, and its repertoire is sparse. The contrabassoon has a small solo repertoire, despite the fact that the instrument was developed further throughout the twentieth century, and composers became increasingly interested in exploiting it as a solo instrument.¹⁹

The secondary literature on the life and music of Victor Bruns is limited. There is one published interview, a leaflet produced by Bruns' main publisher Breitkopf & Härtel, three articles in German, and various articles in other German periodicals.²⁰ Because of the small amount of material available, research for this thesis involved undertaking interviews with Bruns' family, friends and colleagues. Interviews with

¹⁷ The history of dedication and commission of this work is complex, and will be discussed further in this thesis.

¹⁸ Skolnick requested Bruns to compose the piece, although the commission came from the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra of which Skolnick was a member at the time of the commission. Joanne Walbridge donated the finances to the orchestra for the commission in memory of her mother, Doris Rothchild. This will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

¹⁹ Since the first solo composition for the contrabassoon, *Bassnachtigall* (1922) by Erwin Schulhof, there have been solo works with orchestra composed by Ruth Gipps (1969), Ralph Nicholson (1969) and Terje Lerstad (1982, 83). Concertos have also been written for the contrabassoon by Gunther Schuller (1977) and Donald Erb (1984). The most recent contributions to the instrument's literature were by Walter Hekster (1990) and Graham Waterhouse (1996/1998).

²⁰ Secondary literature will be explored in Chapter Two.

Waldemar Bruns, a nephew of Victor Bruns, and Waldemar's sons, Jürgen and Peter Bruns, were invaluable in providing personal information on Victor's life and works. Interviews were also held with bassoonists Richard Moore, Henry Skolnick and Helge Bartholomäus.²¹ All three had both close contact with Bruns, and were directly connected with the works studied in this thesis. The information gathered through this considerable undertaking will present a new and original contribution to the existing body of literature on Bruns' life and works.

Of the three works in this thesis, the Trio, Op. 97, is an available publication.²² As the Sonatina, Op. 96, was only published in 2004, the study of this work was first made using the original manuscript obtained from Richard Moore.²³ A current edition of the Concerto for Contrabassoon, Op. 98, is still in the process of publication.²⁴ The original manuscript was generously made available by Helge Bartholomäus for the purposes of this study. As there are no commercial recordings of the pieces being studied, private recordings were obtained from the interviewees.

Bruns' many manuscripts are dispersed between friends, family and library collections. Even though Bruns was in the habit of giving his scores to colleagues, a large number of original manuscripts are still kept within the Bruns family. All other scores, manuscripts and correspondence of Bruns are held in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek (Staats und Universität Bibliothek) in Dresden. While many accessible manuscripts were witnessed on a visit to this library, there is still a large amount of material yet to be catalogued, and currently unavailable to the general public.

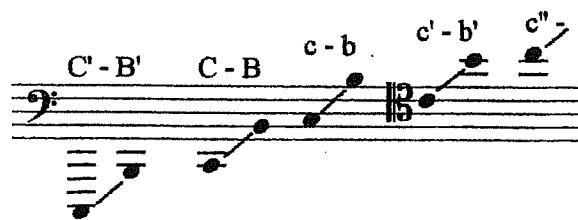
²¹ Bartholomäus is a member of the Berliner Bassoon Quartet, which recorded two of Bruns' bassoon quartets. The *Kleine Suite No. 3 für drei Fagotte und Kontrafagott*, Op. 92 was dedicated to the Berliner Bassoon Quartet. Helge Bartholomäus was also given the dedication to the unaccompanied solo bassoon work, *Vier Virtuose Stücke*, Op. 93. The bassoon quartets will be discussed briefly in Chapter Five.

²² See Victor Bruns, *Trio für Fagottino, Fagott und Kontrafagott*, Op. 97 (Berlin: Music-und Buchverlag Werner Feja, 1995).

²³ See Victor Bruns, *Sonatine für Fagott und Klavier*, Op. 96 (Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag, 2004).

²⁴ The publication of this work has been a tangled affair. An edition with the orchestral score was produced in 1996, and Bruce Gbur edited the piano reduction in 2001. See Victor Bruns, *Concerto for Contrabassoon*, Op. 98 (Fort Lauderdale: Bassoon Heritage Edition, 1996). Since the sale of the publishing house, Bassoon Heritage Edition, Henry Skolnick returned the rights to Waldemar Bruns, the executor of Bruns' estate, in order for the work to be published by Hofmeister. The new edition is yet to be released.

Chapter Two of this thesis will present a review of the existing literature. A short biography of Bruns, including details about the influences on his compositional style, will be presented in Chapter Three. Chapter Four will look at the capabilities and characteristics of the bassoon and provide examples of how Bruns composed idiomatically for the instrument. A similar investigation of the contrabassoon and tenor bassoon will be undertaken in Chapter Five. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight will discuss the last three works respectively and examine how Bruns exploited the characteristics of the bassoons through his compositional style. To situate these works within their biographical context, the commission history of each work will be outlined. It is of particular interest that new information on each of these works has been obtained through interviews and correspondence with the dedicatees.



Key for pitch notation²⁵

²⁵ This figure outlining the notation of pitch has been taken from William Waterhouse, *The Bassoon* (London: Kahn & Avril, 2003). All discussion of musical examples in this thesis will use this abbreviated notation.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

There is little secondary literature on Victor Bruns. He does not receive an entry in the standard English encyclopedic source, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* or the German equivalent, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. William Waterhouse briefly mentions the compositions for bassoon and contrabassoon written by Bruns in his article entitled “bassoon” in *The New Grove*.²⁶ In Will Jansen’s standard reference work *The Bassoon: Its History, Construction, Makers, Players and Music*, no biographical data about Bruns is given, and Jansen only lists seven editions of Bruns’ works throughout his six volumes.²⁷ Similarly, in *Fagott Bibliographie* by Burchard Bulling, an equally standard text which catalogues compositions for bassoon, only eleven entries of his bassoon works are listed.²⁸ The most comprehensive listing of Bruns’ works for bassoon is that by Bodo Koenigsbeck in his *Bassoon Bibliography*, which recorded all solo compositions, pedagogical works and chamber music for bassoon that had then been published.²⁹

During Victor Bruns’s lifetime, most articles published about him were written in German. The German bassoonist Helge Bartholomäus wrote several articles on Bruns’ life and compositions, the first appearing in *Oboe-Klarinette-Fagott* in 1991.³⁰ It was subsequently translated into English by William Waterhouse for an issue of *The Double Reed* published in the same year.³¹ This article provides the most comprehensive biography of the composer, outlining his life as a youth and student in Russia through to his professional career in Berlin. Also included is a complete list of works current at the date of publication. Waterhouse also wrote an article for *The Double Reed* in 1986 giving a brief introduction of Bruns’ life, study, and professional career as performer and composer, as well as listing the solo and chamber

²⁶ William Waterhouse, ‘Bassoon’, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 2: 873-894.

²⁷ Will Jansen, *The Bassoon: Its History, Construction, Makers, Players and Music*, 6 vols (Buren, The Netherlands: Fritz Knuff, 1992), 2: 1095; 3: 1155, 1411, 1443, 1524.

²⁸ Burchard Bulling, *Fagott Bibliographie* (Wilhelmshaven, Germany: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1989).

²⁹ Bodo Koenigsbeck, *Bassoon Bibliography* (Monteux, France: Musica Rara, 1994).

³⁰ Helge Bartholomäus, ‘Victor, fang mit kleinen Sachen an! Der Fagottist und Komponist Victor Bruns wurde 87’, *Oboe-Klarinette-Fagott* 6, no. 4 (1991): 186-193.

³¹ Helge Bartholomäus, ‘Victor Bruns’, trans. William Waterhouse, *The Double Reed* 14, no. 2 (1991): 37-41.

compositions by Bruns for double reed instruments.³² These articles provided invaluable biographical data for this thesis. Bartholomäus also wrote two more articles about Bruns, which were published in celebration of Bruns' 90th Birthday (1994)³³ and in remembrance of his death (1997)³⁴. In each, Bartholomäus wrote of the composer's activities since his first 1991 article, giving details of new works and their premières, and also sharing personal anecdotes.

Breitkopf & Härtel, the main publisher of Bruns' work, produced a leaflet in 1989 with a concise biography of the composer and a list of his published works.³⁵ In the same year, an interview with Reiner Kontressowitz was published in the German periodical *Inform*.³⁶ This document presents the composer's personal account of his life as well as his opinions on his own and other compositions. The same volume also includes information on new works by contemporary composers including Victor Bruns, as well as the details of recent performances and reviews.

The premières of Bruns' compositions were reviewed in a number of German periodicals. Two periodicals, *Musik und Gesellschaft* and *Das Orchester*, regularly presented information on Bruns' life and works. Because East Germany was generally proud of its culture and held its artists and composers in great esteem, effort was made to document their works in a number of periodicals.³⁷ These journals were used to put the date of compositions and premières of works in perspective. Additional information about to whom the compositions were dedicated was also accurately

³² William Waterhouse, 'Victor Bruns', *The Double Reed* 9, no. 2 (1986): 18-19.

³³ Helge Bartholomäus, 'Victor Bruns zum 90. Geburtstag', *Rohrblatt* 9, no. 3 (1994): 99.

³⁴ Helge Bartholomäus, 'Er war ein selten gutiger, descheidener und froher Mensch: Zum Tode von Victor Bruns', *Rohrblatt* 12, no. 1 (1997): 30.

³⁵ Horst Richter, 'Victor Bruns' in *Informationsbroschüre von Breitkopf & Härtel Musikverlag und Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1989).

³⁶ Victor Bruns, "Gespräch mit dem Komponisten Victor Bruns", Interview by Reiner Kontressowitz *Inform* 1, (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1989): 32-44. While this was the only published interview with the composer, he was interviewed on East German Radio in 1984. See Victor Bruns, *Sendung zum 80zigsten Geburtstag 15.8.94. Interview mit Victor Bruns*. Radio DDR, Berlin, 15 August 1984, Author's personal recording, Compact Disc.

³⁷ One such periodical published, in which Bruns received many entries, catalogued all premières of new works by East German composers during 1976-1985. Ludwig Müller, *Zeitgenössisches Musikhappen in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. Zehnjahresregister Berichtsjahr 1976-1985* (Dresden: Eigenverlag der Sächsischen Landesbibliothek, 1990).

noted. Bruns also appears in another catalogue which lists German premières, although not all of his music that had been performed was entered.³⁸

Since Bruns' death there have been two DMA dissertations written in the United States on his bassoon compositions. Bruce Gbur studied and presented an appraisal of the four bassoon concerti and the contrabassoon concerto.³⁹ The most recent dissertation, by Eric Stomberg, concentrated on the three sonatas for bassoon.⁴⁰ This dissertation included an annotated bibliography of all the compositions for bassoon and contrabassoon in which both the Sonatina and the Trio were commented upon briefly. A diploma dissertation was written in German by Josephine Treyße.⁴¹ This was a concise biographical overview derived from information received from friends and family relative Waldemar Bruns, and also makes general comments on the composer's output.⁴²

To appreciate the quality of Bruns' writing for bassoon, tenor and contrabassoon, the abilities and characteristics of each instrument have been examined. The standard sources from the literature, such as those by Waterhouse, Jansen and Langwill,⁴³ were used, as well as one lesser known article by Moore.⁴⁴

The most important part of this study was gathered from interviews conducted with colleagues and family of Victor Bruns, which also contributed a significant amount of material. Ethics approval was granted by The University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) before the interviews took place. All but two interviews were conducted in English. On the occasions where both English and German were

³⁸ Bonner, *Katalog, Band 1; A-K* (München: K.G Sauer Verlag GmbH and C.o, 2000). In this German catalogue listing performances of new works only the compositions Op. 5 to Op. 78 of Bruns are recorded.

³⁹ Bruce Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos and Contrabassoon Concerto of Victor Bruns" (DMA diss., University of Georgia, 2001).

⁴⁰ Eric Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas of Victor Bruns: An analytical and performance perspective (with an annotated bibliography of works for bassoon)" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 2004).

⁴¹ Josephine Treyße, "Victor Bruns – Sein Leben und Werk" (Diplomarbeit, Hochschule für Musik "Carl Maria von Weber" Dresden, 2001).

⁴² Waldemar Bruns was also interviewed by the author for this thesis.

⁴³ Invaluable sources were William Waterhouse, *The Bassoon* (London: Kahn & Avril, 2003) and also Waterhouse, 'Bassoon', 873-894. Other secondary sources used were Lyndesay Graham Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon* (London: E. Benn, 1965), and Jansen, *The Bassoon*.

⁴⁴ Richard Moore, 'The Renaissance of the Tenor Bassoon', *Double Reed News* 19 (May 1992): 37-39.

used a family member of the interviewee was present to act as translator. Two of the interviewees were closely connected to the commission of the works studied in this thesis. All interviews were supplemented by correspondence with the author. The discussions from the interviews were also transcribed by the author. Given that there are so few secondary sources on Bruns' life and works, it is hoped that this new information will provide a valuable addition to the literature. The research undertaken for this thesis was generously assisted and greatly supported by the interviewees, who share with this author the desire that Bruns' work be further disseminated.

Chapter Three - Biography

Victor Bruns lived through most of the twentieth century. Born in Russia of German parents, he experienced the Russian Revolution (1917) and the Great War; in Germany he survived the Second World War and the Cold War in East Germany. These tumultuous events shaped the lives of a generation and the way in which they overcame their struggles and difficulties became a part of their character. In the world of art, Bruns experienced contemporary musical trends first hand, which provided stimulus for his own compositions although he generally exhibited a tendency towards traditional forms. There were particular circumstances in Bruns' life, both personal and musical, that had consequences for his compositional career. The biographical overview of Bruns' life that follows will be presented in such a way as to highlight these circumstances and consequences, and the contexts of his compositions for bassoon.

Family and life in St. Petersburg

Victor Bruns is considered a Germanic composer, despite being neither born nor raised in German territory. He was born into Russian citizenship on the 15th of August, 1904 in Ollila, a small village in South East Finland, where his family had their summer house.⁴⁵ In 1809 Finland had become a grand duchy of Russia under the rule of Alexander I,⁴⁶ making it possible for Russian citizens to own land and property in Finland.⁴⁷ However Victor's grandfather, Karl Christoph Bruns (1831-1913) had been born in Bremen, and as a consequence his son and grandsons were considered to be of German heritage.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 186.

⁴⁶ Finland was a part of the Swedish kingdom from the 12th century until 1809. Sweden had to give the south-eastern part of Finland to Russia at the end of the Great Northern War (1713-21). When Alexander I invaded Finland in 1808, Finland gained autonomy from Sweden and became a grand duchy of Russia, until the Russian revolution when Finland declared their independence in 1917. See *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Finland."

⁴⁷ Treyße, "Victor Bruns", 2.

⁴⁸ Treyße, 2. Although, Victor's parents were born in St. Petersburg they were known as 'Reichsdeutsche'. The standard English translation is Imperial Germans which denotes citizens of the German Empire. This term will be referred to and discussed further in this thesis.

Both of Bruns' parents were born in St. Petersburg.⁴⁹ His father, Victor Karl Adolf Bruns, (1864-1917) was a salesman for a German firm and died in Moscow just before the October Revolution. Victor's mother was born Irma Adele Sophie Salomé in 1877 and died in Leningrad in 1936. Victor was the second of three sons: his brothers were Erich Bruns (b 1900, St. Petersburg, d 1978 Berlin) and Friedrich Bruns (b 1906 St. Petersburg, d 1994 Wiesbaden).

Victor and his brothers spoke both Russian and German at home and school. Victor attended a German school in St. Petersburg, where he later took music instruction. There was a strong musical background in the Bruns family. Their father sang in the local choral society and their mother played the piano. Victor was taught to play the piano by his mother, and his brothers Erich and Friedrich learnt to play the violin and the cello respectively. The three brothers often played chamber music at home.⁵⁰

Erich Bruns encouraged Victor to play bassoon in the student orchestra at the technical school where Erich was a student. At around the age of fifteen Victor started his bassoon lessons with Vassily Gavrilov, the principal bassoonist with the Opera at the Mariinsky theatre.⁵¹ After the death of their father, the family struggled financially.⁵² Such was Victor's motivation to learn bassoon that his mother sold a golden ring in order to purchase an instrument. At this time Victor worked in a local market garden, and an arrangement was made by which he could pay for his lessons with fresh vegetables from the market.⁵³

During his lessons with Gavrilov, Victor studied the bassoon *Etudes* by Milde⁵⁴ and Mozart's Bassoon Concerto in Bb, K191. In 1924 Victor Bruns took his entrance exam to the Leningrad Conservatory, playing the first movement of the Mozart Concerto accompanied on piano by Gavrilov's daughter.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ St. Petersburg was known as Petrograd during 1914-1924 and then the city was known as Leningrad during 1924-1941 before reverting back to its original and current name, St. Petersburg.

⁵⁰ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 186.

⁵¹ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 10. The exact date that Victor started bassoon lessons is unknown. Further information on Gavrilov is also unavailable.

⁵² Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 32.

⁵³ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 186.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Milde (1849-1913). See entry in Koenigsbeck, *Bassoon*, 289.

⁵⁵ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 186.

Study and Work in Leningrad

Bruns studied at the Leningrad Conservatory between 1924 and 1927, taking bassoon lessons from Alexander Vassiliev, the principal bassoonist with the Leningrad Philharmonic.⁵⁶ In his instruction he would have continued work on the Milde studies and the bassoon concertos by Mozart and Weber. As he had limited access to scores of bassoon sonatas at that time, the main focus of his studies was on orchestral excerpts.⁵⁷

The St Petersburg Conservatory had experienced no major changes to the curriculum from its opening in 1862 until the mid 1920s. Instruction was offered in voice, piano or orchestral instruments, composition and music history, whereby students majored in one of these areas and undertook a standard six year program of musicianship, compulsory piano instruction, music history and literature. Only when students had progressed part-way through their studies, were they offered classes in harmony, counterpoint, composition and orchestration. In 1925, during the period of Bruns' attendance, there was a curricular reform which offered new options for major study. The specialty programs of five year duration were in the areas of composition, musicology, performance and education.⁵⁸ The main arbiters of the reform were Vladimir Vladimirovich Shcherbachyov⁵⁹ (1887-1952) and Boris Asafyev (1884-1949) who headed the sub-departments of composition and musicology respectively. Originally students would not have commenced composition lessons until their third or fourth year of study; however Shcherbachyov's reforms initiated a syllabus which

⁵⁶ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 10. No further information on Vassiliev is available. Several sources confirm that Bruns started bassoon lessons at the Conservatory in 1924. Gbur states he graduated in 1927, however he began composition studies in 1926 and continued till 1931. This will be discussed further.

⁵⁷ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 188. Fellow bassoon students at this time and friends of Bruns included Mischa Fiodorov and Fedor Sakarov, however biographical details for these bassoonists are unknown. See also Treyße, "Victor Bruns", 6.

⁵⁸ Robert W. Oldini. 'Conservatoires, III, 4: Russia and Eastern Europe', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 6: 318.

⁵⁹ There are different transliterations of the composer's name; Shcherbachyov, Shcherbachov, Sherbachev and Shcherbachev. Throughout this paper the spelling used has been taken from the Grove entry. Genrikh Orlov/Lyudmila Kovnatskaya, 'Shcherbachyov, Vladimir Vladimirovich', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 23: 241-242. The birthdate listed has been taken from Grove also. A later birthdate of 1889 was published in *Biographical Dictionary of Russian/Soviet Composers*, eds Allan Ho and Dmitry Feofanov, (Connecticut, USA: Greenwood Press, 1989), 482.

allowed students in their first year to start writing their own original compositions.⁶⁰ Notable graduates from the conservatory during the 1920s include Shostakovich and the conductor Yevgeny Mravinsky.⁶¹ Mravinsky conducted an early composition of Bruns', a film score (Op. 7).⁶²

Although Bruns had completed his bassoon instruction at the Conservatory in 1927, he commenced composition lessons with Vladimir Shcherbachyov in that year, and continued studying with him until 1931.⁶³ Additionally, as Bruns started composition during the curricular reform at the Leningrad Conservatory, he had had the advantage of beginning his compositions in his first year of study. Born in Warsaw, Shcherbachyov studied between 1908 and 1914 at the Petrograd Conservatory with Anatoly Lyadov and Maximilian Steinberg, among others. He taught composition at the Leningrad Conservatory during 1924-31.⁶⁴ Shcherbachyov's early compositions, such as his Symphony No. 1, generally show characteristics of Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov as well as Skryabin.⁶⁵ His later compositions were influenced by Symbolist poetry, especially the works by Blok.⁶⁶ He was also influenced by late Romantic composers such as Mahler and Richard Strauss. As a teacher he rebelled against the rigid coursework, offering his students the freedom to compose with their own style and to develop their own technique.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ David Hass, *Leningrad's Modernists: Studies in Composition and Musical Thought, 1917-1932*. American University Studies, Series XX, Fine Arts, vol 31 (New York: Peter Lang Publishers Inc., 1998), 81-84.

⁶¹ Lyudmila Kovnatskaya. 'St Petersburg', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 22: 120-122. Yevgeny Mravinsky (1903-1988) was conductor for the Leningrad State Theatre of Opera and Ballet from 1932-38 and then musical director of the Leningrad Philharmonic from 1938-1988.

⁶² Treyße, "Victor Bruns," 7. It is presumed the film score, Op. 7 dates between 1927 and 1931, during his composition studies. The title of the film that it accompanied is unknown. This work was one of the early compositions that were lost in Bruns' emigration, to be discussed later.

⁶³ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 10. It is not clear whether this study was taken privately or at the Conservatory, as the documentary evidence is imprecise. In a program note written by Horst Richter for a Staatskapelle Concert, 21-22 October 1993, he states Bruns commenced bassoon instruction at the conservatory in 1924, and two years later, at the same time Bruns auditioned for the Leningrad State Opera and Ballet Orchestra, he commenced a five year composition programme with Shcherbachyov. From this it can be believed that Victor Bruns had indeed undertaken a standard five year programme, as outlined by Shcherbachyov's reforms, at the Conservatory, graduating by 1931.

⁶⁴ Larry Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900-1929* (Westport, Connecticut, USA: Greenwood Press, 1994), 133-148.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 134.

⁶⁶ Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Blok (1880-1921), Russian poet and leader of the Russian Symbolism movement.

⁶⁷ Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, 143. See also entry in Igor Boelza, *Handbook of Soviet Musicians*, ed. Alan Bush (London: Pilot Press, 1943): 52-53. Shcherbachyov had many pupils who later became

Bruns initially acquired his compositional style from his first teacher, Shcherbachyov. A significant idiosyncratic feature of Shcherbachyov's compositions was his approach to recapitulation of material. For example, he often employed in his compositions, and encouraged his students to use, this feature of presenting motifs from previous movements in the final movement as a way of summarizing.⁶⁸ Bruns employed this device in most of his compositions: at the end of a movement, he often repeats the main theme and uses material from the first movement in the last movement as a method of achieving formal unity.

It was expected that composition students would learn to write piano reductions of their orchestral scores. For Bruns, having had previous instruction in the instrument, it would have been natural to write piano scores for all of his compositions. It has often been said that Victor would compose at the piano.⁶⁹

As a student, Victor Bruns' early compositions were influenced by the music of contemporary composers and by his musical experiences in Leningrad. He declared Sergei Prokofiev to be one of his models for composition.⁷⁰ The Russian composer made a concert tour of the Soviet Union in 1927 to Moscow and Leningrad.⁷¹ He made a visit to the Leningrad Conservatory at which time Bruns played for him.⁷² After the concert, which included the Classical Symphony and Prokofiev performing one of his Piano Concertos,⁷³ there was a reception where Victor Bruns and three other bassoon students performed Prokofiev's arrangement for four bassoons of his "Humorous Scherzo," No 9 of the Op. 12 piano pieces.⁷⁴ This performance was to

notable composers, including Gavriel N. Popov (1904 - ?), Aro L. Stepanyan (1897 - ?) and E. Mravinsky.

⁶⁸ Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, 139.

⁶⁹ Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author, Berlin, 12 July 2004.

⁷⁰ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 190. See also Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 33.

⁷¹ This concert tour in January 1927, which included Moscow and Leningrad, was given by the composer on his return to Russia. See Dorothea Redepenning, 'Prokofiev, Sergey', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 20: 404-423.

⁷² Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 33. See also, Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 10 and Bartholomäus, interview with the author, who confirms the authenticity of this account.

⁷³ Included on the programs for the concerts performed in Moscow was Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 26. It is presumed that it was the same Piano Concerto performed by Prokofiev in the concerts in Leningrad. See Redepenning, 'Prokofiev', 413.

⁷⁴ This arrangement was published as *Humorous Scherzo for four bassoons, Op. 12.9*. In the edition's notes it is explained that a Petrograd art dealer had invited Prokofiev to take part in a concert, shared

remain a firm memory for Bruns, and later inspired his own compositions for bassoon quartet.

Bruns explained that his models for composition, in addition to Prokofiev, were Stravinsky, Hindemith and Bartok.⁷⁵ He was influenced by other composers of the Russian school, which would have included Shostakovich, as a consequence of living and studying in Leningrad. It is believed that Bruns may have played in the orchestra for the première of Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No. 1.⁷⁶ Bruns commented that this performance, in 1926, of Shostakovich's graduation piece from the Leningrad Conservatory was a success for the young Soviet composer.⁷⁷ The impression made on Bruns by his fellow graduate can be heard later in his own compositions, which show melodic traits of Shostakovich, especially in the solo parts for bassoon in Bruns' concerti and quartets for bassoon.⁷⁸

As a student, Victor Bruns played piano for silent films, a popular entertainment at that time.⁷⁹ Bruns met his future wife, Helene Maria Wetzel, whilst working at a silent film theatre, the 'Titan' on Nevsky Prospekt. Helene was born in St Petersburg in 1903, the daughter of an Austrian violinist who had a position with the Mariinsky-Kirov Theatre. They married on 22 May, 1929.⁸⁰ The Brunes had wished to have children, but their wish remained unfulfilled. Victor Bruns adored children, and doted

with Maxim Gorky, the Russian author was born Alexsei Makisimovich Peshkov (1868-1936), and Jascha Heifetz (1901-1987) who was a famous violinist born in Lithuania, studied violin at St Petersburg and immigrated to America. See also, Henry Skolnick, interview with the author, Melbourne, 1 July 2004.

⁷⁵ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 190. See also Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 35.

⁷⁶ Bartholomäus, interview by the author. Whether Bruns did play in the première is uncertain. The première of Symphony No. 1 was given by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra on the 12 May 1926, by radio broadcast. See David Fanning, 'Shostakovich, Dmitry', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. eds. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 23: 279-311. However Bruns could have heard this performance.

⁷⁷ Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 33-44.

⁷⁸ Bartholomäus, interview by the author. It has been frequently commented by musicians who have played or heard music by Bruns that there were influences of Shostakovich. See also Skolnick, interview, 2004.

⁷⁹ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 188.

⁸⁰ Treyße, "Victor Bruns," 9.

in particular on his nephews and grand-nephews.⁸¹ His nephew Waldemar Bruns once suggested that his uncle's compositions were his children.⁸²

After two years of bassoon study at the conservatory, he auditioned for the second bassoon position with the Leningrad State Opera. He was a member of this orchestra until 1937.⁸³ During his years at the Opera, Leningrad was a centre in Russia for avant-garde music. Composers who had their works performed include Milhaud, Honegger, Hindemith and Shostakovich.⁸⁴ Bruns was exposed to a great deal of important contemporary music through his career. Whilst employed with the State Opera, Bruns was in the orchestra for the Soviet première of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* in 1927. Bruns remembered the première as being a great success, saying that he would never forget the impression Berg gave as he greeted the orchestra.⁸⁵ The Mariinsky Theatre promoted works by new composers and was known for performing contemporary repertoire, including works by Stravinsky, Schreker and Krenek.⁸⁶ It is also believed that Bruns played in the Soviet première of Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf* in 1928.⁸⁷ These early opportunities provided a rich variety of experiences which Bruns subsequently drew from for his own compositions.

Early compositions

His first compositions were chamber music pieces, later exploring vocal and orchestral genres. The first two works were for woodwind ensembles; "Musik für 3 Klarinetten und Fagott," Op. 1⁸⁸ and "Zwei kleine Suiten für 2 Flöten, 2 Oboen und 2 Fagotte," Op. 2. The first composition Bruns wrote for bassoon as a solo instrument was Concerto No 1, Op. 5 which was Bruns' final assessment piece for his

⁸¹ The account is shared by other members of Victor's extended family, See Peter Bruns, conversation with the author, Dresden, 26 July, 2004. Bruns' regard for children often extended to the families of fellow bassoonists. See Bartholomäus, interview with the author, 2004.

⁸² Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author.

⁸³ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 188. Although Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," (p. 10) gives the date as 1938. Bruns confirms in the interview with Kontressowitz (pp. 32-33) that after two years at the Conservatory, he auditioned for the orchestra, where he remained until 1937.

⁸⁴ Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 33.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Kovnatskaya, 'St Petersburg', 121.

⁸⁷ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 12. See also Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 33 and Treyße, "Victor Bruns," 8.

⁸⁸ Dates for these early works are unknown, however it is assumed by Gbur that Op. 1-4 were written during his studies (1926-1931). See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 12. For a complete list with details of the dates of composition, dedications, premières, and other performances of all of Bruns' works see Appendix.

composition studies.⁸⁹ Bruns gave the first performance of this work in 1934 with the Leningrad Philharmonic conducted by Albert Coates.⁹⁰

Bruns experimented with other genres of composition during his years of study including string quartets, symphonies, vocal works and film music. The Bassoon Concerto, Op. 5 is the only piece from this period to have been published.⁹¹ It is believed that the rest of Opus numbers 1-9 were lost in his emigration from Soviet Russia to Germany.⁹²

From Russia to Germany

The time in between the two World Wars were turbulent for those living in Europe, and like all others Victor Bruns and his family felt the full impact of the momentous social changes. The relationship between Germany and the Soviet Union was insecure. On 23 August 1939 a non-aggression pact was signed between Hitler and Stalin.⁹³ In years preceding this agreement and the outbreak of World War Two, Stalin had begun to expel any potential enemies of the state, including civilians who were considered suspicious or dangerous. All immediate members of the Bruns family were classed as *Reichsdeutsche*, or persons of German heritage. Germans were seen by Stalin as enemies, and consequently the Bruns family was harassed by the Soviet police and were forced to leave Russia in 1937-8.⁹⁴ There are two historical terms for Germans who lived in Russia; *Reichsdeutsche (-r)*, German citizens who possessed a

⁸⁹ Treyße, "Victor Bruns," 8. See also Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 34.

⁹⁰ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 12. Although Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 189, stated the première was in 1933, Gbur has proven that the date of the performance was in 1934.

⁹¹ Published in Russia in 1934. Reissued by Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d., and Werner Feja, 1993.

⁹² Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 13.

⁹³ Also known as the 'Hitler-Stalin Pact' or the 'Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact'. See also "German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact," *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Vol 5: 212. This agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union was signed in Moscow by the Soviet Minister Molotov and the German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop. It was designed to be a non-aggression treaty agreed upon by both parties not to go to war with each other. The treaty also included a partition of Poland to be divided between both parties. After the agreement was signed, in the early hours of September 1, 1939 Hitler ordered German troops to invade Poland. See Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II. Essays in Modern German and World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 168-181. See also Martin Gilbert, *History of the Twentieth Century* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002), 262-263.

⁹⁴ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 2. See also, Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 188.

German passport, or *Volksdeutsche* (-r), who were members of a German ethnic group.⁹⁵

Bruns' mother, Irma Adele Sophie, was tragically killed in Leningrad during a robbery in 1936. During the difficult Stalinist years both of Victor's brothers were arrested on suspicion of espionage. In 1937 they were imprisoned for ten months before being forced to emigrate to Germany. Victor Bruns experienced less severe treatment, although he was made to leave Leningrad in 1938.⁹⁶ During the late 1930s the *NKVD*, the Soviet Secret Police, arrested and deported many Soviet Germans, on suspicion of being spies for the German Reich.⁹⁷ The fates of the ethnic Germans found participating in espionage were imprisonment, deportation or execution. Fortunately German passport holders were allowed to leave Russia unharmed and relocate in Germany.⁹⁸

As his brothers had moved to Berlin a year earlier, it was to the German capital that Victor Bruns fled. Helene Bruns' departure was delayed: she had to wait for a time in Russia until she received permission to leave.⁹⁹ It was not until some time during 1939-40 that she was able to join her husband in Berlin.¹⁰⁰ Victor was able to secure work as a music copyist and freelance musician for various orchestras. He immediately made contact with fellow bassoonists, Hans Muller, Gerhard Tuchtenhagen and Erich Rose, in Berlin who assisted him in finding permanent work.

⁹⁵ The standard English translation of *Reichsdeutsche* (adj. *reichsdeutsch*) is Imperial Germans. *Volksdeutsche* (adj. *volksdeutsch*) translates as Ethnic Germans. It appears that these terms were historical rather than genealogical. The terminology *Volksdeutscher* can be translated as a person who was of German breed living abroad and who were not German citizens (ie. *Reichsdeutscher*). See Ingeborg Fleischauer and Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Germans Past and Present* (London: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1986): 68. The literature that uses these terms is unclear on the differences in citizenship, and it appears that the meaning of these terms has changed through history. Ethnic Germans considered themselves ethnically German, even though they did not live in Germany. The reasons related to belonging to an ethnic German group were based on the persons having German culture, speaking the German language or having ancestors born in Germany, although the persons did not hold citizenship. Imperial Germans (*Reichsdeutsche*) relates specifically to a period in history (1871-1945), whereby the word denotes people from the German Empire, or simply refers to German citizens.

⁹⁶ Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 33.

⁹⁷ Otto J. Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999): 30-33. The Soviet government evacuated many Ethnic Germans and German citizens before and during World War Two.

⁹⁸ Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author.

⁹⁹ The reason for this is unknown. Helene was born in St. Petersburg to a German father. Having German nationality she would have been known as a German citizen. Presumably Helene had to wait for her German passport to be issued.

¹⁰⁰ Treyße, "Victor Bruns," 10.

He eventually gained a position as second bassoonist with the Berlin Volksoper in 1940, where he remained until 1944.¹⁰¹ As soon as Bruns arrived in Berlin he began composing. The *Five pieces for Bassoon and Piano*, Op. 12 (1939)¹⁰² and two symphonies, No. 1, Op. 13 (1943) and No. 2, Op. 14 (1944), date from the early Berlin years.

In 1944 the members of the Volksoper and their families were evacuated to Hirschberg in Silesia.¹⁰³ Shortly after this, most of the orchestral members including Bruns were drafted into the *Volkssturm*.¹⁰⁴ On 18 October, 1944 an almost defeated Hitler decreed that all able-bodied men aged between sixteen and sixty must assist in the defense of the Third Reich. The civilian army was initiated to supplement the regular armed forces in its defense of Germany.¹⁰⁵ As Victor fell into this category he was one of many who were called for civilian service.¹⁰⁶

In 1945 Silesia was occupied by Soviet troops and Bruns was incarcerated in a Soviet prison until December 1945.¹⁰⁷ This was an extremely dangerous position for Bruns to be in as he was Russian-German, and could be seen by Russians as a traitor. Fortunately, he was engaged to act as a translator between the Russian guards and the German prisoners. As he was useful to his captors, Bruns survived imprisonment,

¹⁰¹ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 189. See also, Treyße, "Victor Bruns," 11.

¹⁰² There are only four pieces for bassoon and piano that remain as Opus 12, as the first piece was presumed lost in moving from Leningrad to Berlin. Bruns did not rewrite the first piece. See Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 64.

¹⁰³ Hirschberg, now known as Jelenia Góra, was in Silesia, (Gr. Schlesien) a historic region, now a part of south west Poland. In 1939 Silesia was occupied by Germany who held possession until the end of World War Two. Since 1945 Silesia became a part of Poland with a small area in Czechoslovakia. See *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Silesia."

¹⁰⁴ Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author. It is supposed that Victor Bruns was drafted for the *Volkssturm*, which was the German civilian home defence organization. This term is not to be confused with *Wehrmacht*, the official name of the combined army, navy and air force of the Third Reich.

¹⁰⁵ Gilbert, *History*, 303. Most encyclopaedic translations of *Volkssturm*, defines the group of men, aged between sixteen and sixty. See *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "The World Wars." However, some historians have different accounts. One of them, for example, states that every male between the age of fifteen and fifty-five were called up to serve in the army. See Antony Beevor, *Berlin, The Downfall 1945* (Australia: Penguin Books, 2003): 98-99.

¹⁰⁶ When the orchestral members were drafted, Helene Bruns returned to Berlin. It is believed that Helene sent Victor's bassoon from Hirschberg to Berlin; however, it was lost in the post. See Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 189. Gbur's account differs, in that Bruns' wife returned to Berlin with his bassoon. During the war a large proportion of Berlin was bombed including Bruns' apartment, destroying everything, as well as his bassoon. See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 13.

¹⁰⁷ It is supposed that Bruns was a prisoner of war, as many *Volkssturm* members were captured by the Soviet Army, regardless of whether they were a part of the *Wehrmacht*. In this Eastern area, German, Russian and Polish prisoners were held in temporary prisons before being sent to camps or forced labour. See Beevor, *Berlin*, 98-99, 103-104.

though he suffered dystrophy along with extreme malnourishment. He was eventually discharged and was able to return to his wife in Berlin.¹⁰⁸

When Bruns finally returned home to Berlin at the end of 1945, the victorious allied nations were deciding on how they should govern the city and country.¹⁰⁹ Victor Bruns and his wife inadvertently settled in the sector that was to become East Berlin, unable to anticipate the significant social and political changes that were to eventuate.

Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin

In 1946 Victor Bruns successfully auditioned for the position of second bassoon and contrabassoon at the Deutsche Staatsoper.¹¹⁰ He did not accept the principal bassoon position when it was later offered to him, as he wanted to have more time for composition. He was a member with the Staatsoper until his retirement in 1969.¹¹¹ This was a privileged position for Bruns, and he gladly accepted the honour and abided by the conditions set by his employers.¹¹²

Boris Blacher

It was recommended to Bruns by conductor Johannes Schüller that he should resume composition lessons, and suggested as a teacher Boris Blacher (1903-1975). Blacher was born in China to German-Baltic parents and studied composition with Friedrich Ernst Koch at the Berlin *Hochschule für Musik* from 1924. He later undertook

¹⁰⁸ Treyße, "Victor Bruns," 11. See also Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author.

¹⁰⁹ After Germany's defeat in the World War, Germany and Austria were divided into four sectors with each of the four victorious allies governing a sector. This led to the division of Berlin and Vienna into similar sectors. In Germany, the Western sectors were controlled by the French, British and American powers and became known as the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (BRD), the official name of the Federal Republic of Germany, also known as the former West Germany. The Eastern Sector was controlled by the Soviets. On October 7, 1949 the Soviet occupied sector of East Germany became known as the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR) or German Democratic Republic (GDR), with East Berlin as its capital. See also, John Ardagh, *Germany and the Germans*, 369.

¹¹⁰ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 189. The Deutsche Staatsoper, also known as the Berlin Staatsoper. The Staatskapelle which will be referred to later denotes the name of the ensemble used for orchestral and chamber music concerts.

¹¹¹ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 14.

¹¹² Since 1919 the Staatsoper had been administrated by the German Ministry of Culture. After the war, the Staatsoper lay in East Berlin and continued to be financially supported by the Ministry, however the house administration and its musicians had to live and work by the Communist ideology of the newly established DDR. See Heinz Becker, Richard D. Green, Hugh Canning, Irme Fábíán, Curt A. Roesler, 'Berlin', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan 2001) 3: 365-382.

advanced musicological studies with Friedrich Blume and Erich Moritz von Hornbostel, among others. After teaching composition from 1945 to 1948 at the International Music Institute in Zehlendorf, West Berlin, Blacher was professor of composition at, and from 1952 director of, the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, a position he held until 1970.¹¹³ Though his music had been deemed by the Nazis in 1938 to be ‘degenerate’, Blacher was a respected composer and professor.¹¹⁴

Blacher believed that Bruns had a talent to write concerti and not symphonies. It has been suggested that Blacher was strict with his students, and would discourage them from following a path if he thought they would not be successful.¹¹⁵ As Bruns was an orchestral musician he used his experience of instrumental works in order to compose Ballets and Concerti that would highlight his knowledge of instruments’ characteristics, often commenting that his orchestral experience was his third composition teacher.¹¹⁶

It has been suggested by fellow bassoonists that Bruns’ first composition teacher, Shcherbachyov, provided inappropriate compositional techniques which adversely affected Bruns style of composition.¹¹⁷ In their private lessons, Blacher tutored Bruns in methods to lighten his predominately dense writing and instructed him on developing smaller ideas.¹¹⁸ Some of the compositional features that Blacher encouraged in Bruns were his interest in expressive melodies and rhythm. Compositions for or including bassoon that were written under Blacher’s instruction were the Bassoon Concerto No. 2, Op. 15 (1956), Wind Quintet Op. 16 (1947), Woodwind Quartet, Op. 18 (1948) and a Sonata for Bassoon and Piano, Op. 20 (1949). The *Orchestral Piece*, Op. 19 (1948) was dedicated to Blacher. However, in defiance of his teacher, Bruns also wrote “Symphony No. 2,” Op. 21 (1949).¹¹⁹ Other

¹¹³ Josef Häusler, ‘Blacher, Boris’, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. eds. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillian 2001), 3: 659. The Berlin Hochschule für Musik was situated in Mitte, East Berlin.

¹¹⁴ Gbur, “The Bassoon Concertos,” 14.

¹¹⁵ Skolnick, interview by the author.

¹¹⁶ Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 35. See also Bartholomäus, ‘Victor’, 190.

¹¹⁷ Bartholomäus, interview by the author. See also, Skolnick, interview by the author.

¹¹⁸ Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 34-35.

¹¹⁹ Gbur, “The Bassoon Concertos,” 5. The “Symphony no 2,” Op. 14 was withdrawn by the composer and the title was given to Op. 21. This work still remains unpublished.

works that were completed after this instruction were mainly sonatas for other wind instruments and chamber music.

Bruns liked to compose music for his friends and colleagues to play. From 1951, Victor received frequent invitations to write solo works and large scale orchestral works. As a result of his prestigious position at the Staatsoper, and the high regard in which he was held by the musicians and audiences, if he wrote a piece for a colleague it was generally programmed by the Staatsoper or Staatskapelle and premièred by that performer.¹²⁰ As well as composing for his friends, he also made dedications of his works to his colleagues. Some of the compositions he wrote upon request were the *Konzert für Klarinette und Orchester*, Op. 26, composed in 1951 for the solo clarinetist of the Berlin Staatskapelle Oskar Michallik and the *Konzert für Oboe und kleines Orchester*, Op. 28 was written in 1952 for Hans Werner Wätzig.¹²¹

His compositional output in the 1950s was broad, including concerti, symphonies, chamber and solo instrumental works, ballets and one opera. Of his solo concerti, four were written for bassoon and one for contrabassoon, with varying numbers for violin, viola, violoncello, trumpet, oboe and clarinet. In addition to the concerti for bassoon, Bruns wrote three sonatas for bassoon and piano, an unaccompanied bassoon piece, etudes and collections of pieces for both bassoon and piano and contrabassoon and piano. He dedicated bassoon works to Professor Fritz Finsch, Herbert Heilmann, Otto Pischkitl and Otfried Bienert.¹²² Bruns also wrote for and dedicated compositions to family members.¹²³

Ballets

Bruns wrote six ballets and one chamber opera. The most successful stage works were the first three ballets, which were produced and performed by the Staatsoper Ballet.

¹²⁰ Skolnick, interview by the author.

¹²¹ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 16.

¹²² Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 191.

¹²³ Bruns dedicated to his brother, Friedrich Bruns, *Sechs Stücke für Violoncello und Klavier*, Op. 52 (1973). On occasions, Bruns' grand-nephews premièred his compositions. The *Sonate für Violin No. 2*, Op. 88 (1988) was premièred by Jürgen Bruns. The first performance of the Cello Concerto, No. 3, Op. 77 (1984) was given by Peter Bruns in 1989 with the Dresden Staatskapelle. In 1991, Jürgen Bruns directed his Kammer-Orchester in the first performance of Chamber Symphony, Op. 70 (1981). See Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 191. See also, Helge Bartholomäus, 'Victor Bruns zum 90. Geburtstag', 99.

All of the ballets were written for the Staatsoper, Bruns working in collaboration with Albert Burkat. The first ballet, *Das Recht des Herrn (The Lord's Privilege)*, Op. 27, was completed in 1953. Bruns also took two suites for orchestra from the ballet, both of which were performed regularly by the Staatskapelle. After the success of this work, Victor Bruns was recognized as a noteworthy composer.¹²⁴ Burkat and Bruns worked together on the next ballet, *Das Edelfräulein als Bäuerin (The Nobleman's daughter as Farmer's wife)*, Op. 31, during 1954-55 and the Staatsoper performed the work in 1955. From this work he extracted one orchestral suite. It was the third ballet, *Neue Odyssee (New Odyssey)*, Op. 33, composed during 1956-7 which received the greatest success. It was first produced by the Staatsoper in 1957. The work is about a German soldier who returns to his family after the Second World War. The work received many favorable reviews.¹²⁵

Although he subsequently composed other stage works, it was *Neue Odyssee*, Op. 33 that would earn him the most success and honour. Over a period of five years, this ballet was performed forty-five times by the Staatsoper.¹²⁶ It also toured to Munich and Prague, as well as being produced in Poland, the former Soviet Union and Cuba. In 1960, on the basis of the success of this work, Bruns was awarded the *KunstPreis der DDR*, the Art Prize of the German Democratic Republic.¹²⁷

Victor Bruns was to receive more prizes and honours in his career. In 1959, he received the title *Kammervirtuos* (chamber virtuoso) from the Berlin Staatskapelle. After he retired from the Staatsoper, the orchestra voted to bestow upon him the prestigious status of *Ehrenmitglied* (honorary member) in 1971. At the annual meeting of the International Double Reed Society in 1986, he was elected honorary

¹²⁴ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 17.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 18.

¹²⁶ Werner Otto, Wolfgang Jersak and Marion Schöne, *Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin* (Berlin: 1980): 24, 133. From 16 November 1957 to 30 December 1962 there were forty-five performances of *Neue Odyssee*. The ballet was performed in Prague (at the Smetana-Theater) on 25 May 1959 and in München (Deutsches Theater) on 1 April 1960.

¹²⁷ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 19. See also Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 191.

member.¹²⁸ In addition to this award Bruns later received in 1992 the first honorary membership of the IDRS-Deutschland.¹²⁹

Bruns wrote one chamber opera and three more ballets, none of which were ever produced. The chamber opera *Minna von Barnhelm*, Op. 39 (1962-7), was based on a play of the same title by Lessing. Bruns collaborated with Burkat again on a trilogy of ballets called *Theseus*, comprising *Das Band der Ariadne*, Op. 46 (1969), *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Op. 54 (1974), and *Phaedra*, Op. 56 (1975).

During the time Bruns' first ballets were written and produced, the *Intendant* (general manager) at the Staatsoper was Max Burghardt.¹³⁰ When Burghardt retired in 1963 he was replaced by Dr. Hans Pischner, who remained Intendant until 1984. Despite the success of Bruns' previous ballets, Pischner was not interested in producing these new works.¹³¹

Living in East Germany

Like all inhabitants of East Germany, Bruns and his wife had to accept the living and working conditions of the Communist state.¹³² As a key part of the communist ideology was patriotism, the residents of the GDR expressed pride in their cultural and sporting achievements. Sport and the arts were government funded and promoted. For instance, contemporary composers such as Paul Dessau, Udo Zimmermann and Siegfried Matthus all received premières of their works with the Staatsoper.¹³³ Theatre productions were generally subsidized, which made tickets affordable.

¹²⁸ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 191. See also Ed Lacey, 'New Honorary Members of the I.D.R.S', *The Double Reed* 9, no. 2 (1986). This article was reprinted. See Ronald Klimko, ed. 'Honorary Members of the International Double Reed Society – Part I: To 1988', *Journal of the IDRS* 26 (1988): 46-47.

¹²⁹ This coincided with Victor Bruns' 88th Birthday at the IDRS Conference in Frankfurt in August 1992. See Bartholomäus, 'Zum Tode von Victor Bruns', 30.

¹³⁰ Gbur, 'The Bassoon Concertos,' 19. Max Burghardt had that position at the Staatsoper from 1954-1963.

¹³¹ Ibid., 19-20. It was suggested that the reason for this may have been because Victor Bruns was a member of neither the Musician's Union nor the Communist Party. See also Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author, who confirmed this fact. Bruns was expected by other composers who were members to join both the Union and Party. His non-membership may have had some economical and political effect on his composition career.

¹³² Anne McElvoy, recounted a story in the preface to her book, *The Saddled Cow. East Germany's Life and Legacy* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1992). Stalin was asked how East Germany will take to Communism, and he replied that East Germany would take to Communism like a saddle does to a cow.

¹³³ Becker, 'Berlin', 377.

The standard of living in the GDR was considered to be of reasonable quality, and basic goods were subsidized so that the necessities of life were affordable. Although housing was of poor quality, the rents were low.¹³⁴ Although social welfare was available for the unemployed, full employment was generally obtainable and promoted by the government, therefore providing job security for many employees. East Germans, were led to believe that they had advantages not afforded to those in the West; however, one of the many disadvantages of living in a socialist regime was that citizens were continuously supervised by the government and there was enforced restrictions on travel to the West.

Bruns, like many GDR residents, learnt to accept life under Communist rule, preserving traditional values and finding comfort from the greyness of life in their family and friends.¹³⁵ Bruns and his wife lived modestly in a small one bedroom apartment. It appears they owned few possessions, but their positive attitude towards life was a direct consequence of their personal experiences. For example, Bruns had a secure position with the Staatsoper, offering privileges such as tours to other Eastern Countries.

The Berlin Wall 1961-1989

Life for East German citizens became increasingly difficult when the government decided to build a border between East and West Berlin. The resultant restrictions of the East German border did not appear to affect Bruns. His secure employment with the Staatsoper meant that Bruns was happy to remain in East Germany. Other citizens were less fortunate.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ John Ardagh, *Germany and the Germans, After Unification: New Revised Edition* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 373-5.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Between the years 1949 to 1969 an estimated 230 000 East Germans emigrated to the West. In 1961, the number of people leaving the East, of which the main proportion were young and educated citizens, had increased to an average of 30 000 people a month. The government, lead by Walter Ulbricht (1893-1973), the leader of the GDR during 1953-71, was concerned about the effect that these valuable citizens leaving East Germany would have on the economy. As a precaution, the State Police erected a border between East and West Berlin. The Berlin Wall, officially termed the 'Anti-Fascist Protection Barrier', was built supposedly to protect the residents from an invasion of West Germans, although it was clear that the East German government were blocking the easy escape route to West Berlin. The construction of the Berlin Wall started on the night of August 13th, 1961 and was completed on January 5th, 1964. See Ardagh, *Germany*, 370-405. See also Gilbert, *History*, 426.

Before the wall was erected in 1961 there were no travel restrictions between East and West Germany. However after the wall was erected, there was strict policing on the border gates up until the time the wall was demolished in November 1989.¹³⁷

Comments from West German residents and travelers from the West also prove that it was a challenge to visit East Germany during this time.¹³⁸

Bruns was fortunate that the restrictions enforced by the Socialist regime appeared to have no impact on his compositions. He did not experience any harassment from the government, although many artists and authors did encounter persecution by the *Staatssicherheit*.¹³⁹ Although Bruns may not have traveled to the West during his professional career, he was not prevented in his retirement from travelling to West Berlin, to hear performances of his work.¹⁴⁰

Retirement

Retired citizens of the GDR were allowed to travel to the West.¹⁴¹ Bruns had made contact with many bassoonists in both East and West Germany, and as a result saw many of his compositions performed in both East and West Berlin. One of the many friendships Bruns had was with the bassoonist Helge Bartholomäus. Bruns first met the fellow bassoonist in 1984 at the composer's 80th birthday party, to which Bartholomäus had been invited. Bartholomäus went to East Berlin especially to meet

¹³⁷ Becker, 'Berlin', 365. The State laws were enforced to the extent that East German police and border guards had authority to shoot any person who attempted to cross the border illegally. See Gilbert, *History*, 439. While many citizens accepted the political situation, others rebelled against the deprivation of their freedom. Many people risked their lives trying to escape the shackles of the Socialist state. Erected where the American border gate stood is *Haus am Checkpoint Charlie*, a museum commemorating the Berlin Wall, where accounts of these people and artifacts are exhibited. See Werner Sikorski and Rainer Laabs, *Checkpoint Charlie and the Wall. A Divided People Rebel* (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag, 2003).

¹³⁸ See Skolnick, interview by the author and Bartholomäus, interview by the author. Although Westerners were supposedly allowed to move freely in East Germany, in reality their travel was generally obstructed.

¹³⁹ The *Staatssicherheit*, (or 'Stassi' as it was more generally known) was the secret police of the GDR. This secret organization monitored the community in search of dissidents. The state police also compiled dossiers on citizens; artists or intellectuals especially were closely observed. Those presumed to be acting against the socialist regime were harassed and often publication of their work was denied. Rebellious citizens were imprisoned or expelled from the country. See Ardagh, 396-401.

¹⁴⁰ Cf., Chapter One, p. 4, refer to footnote 16.

¹⁴¹ Skolnick, interview by the author. For female pensioners over sixty and male pensioners over sixty-five, travel was permitted to the West for up to sixty days per year. It was seen by the government that it would not be a great loss if these citizens stayed in the West. The government was more concerned with younger people and married couples emigrating, hence tighter restrictions for the working population. See Ardagh, *Germany*, 407.

the composer, after which their acquaintance was continued.¹⁴² Bruns later gave Bartholomäus his *Kleine Suite für drei Fagotte und Kontrafagott, Nr. 2*, Op. 68 for the *Berliner Fagottquartett* to play.¹⁴³ Bruns went to West Berlin in June 1989 with his colleague Willi Erkins to hear this work performed at a concert in Zehlendorf.¹⁴⁴ Bartholomäus suggested that Bruns compose another bassoon quartet. Although the composer did not agree immediately, a short time after that he composed the *Kleine Suite für drei Fagotte und Kontrafagott, Nr. 3*, Op. 92 (1990) for the Berlin Bassoon Quartet.¹⁴⁵ The première of this work was in 1991, presumably with Victor Bruns in attendance.¹⁴⁶ The quartet, which was dedicated to the group, was composed with the players in mind. In particular it is believed that Bruns wrote the contrabassoon part to exploit the virtuosity of the group's contrabassoonist.¹⁴⁷ Bruns also dedicated the *Vier Virtuose Stücke für Fagott solo*, Op. 93 (1989) to Helge Bartholomäus.¹⁴⁸

It has been suggested that the best compositions of Bruns' career were produced during the period before the Wall was erected.¹⁴⁹ After the success of his ballet *Neue Odyssee*, Bruns wrote some exceptional chamber pieces for wind and strings including the Sextet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn and Piano, Op. 34 (1957). Bruns reached the peak of his compositional powers just before he retired from the Staatsoper in 1969. The Octet for Clarinet, Bassoon, 2 Violin, Viola, Cello and Bass, Op. 42 (1968) was his most successful work from this period.¹⁵⁰ Due to his increasing success Bruns received four commissions from the time he retired until his last composition. The first was requested by the Berliner Staatskapelle in 1970 to

¹⁴² Bartholomäus, interview by the author.

¹⁴³ Ibid. The Berlin Bassoon Quartet was founded by members of the Deutschen Oper (West Berlin), Gerhard Rapsch, Rolf Thürmann, Helge Bartholomäus (bassoons) and Stansilav Riha (contrabassoon) in 1986. Since 1991 Thomas Kollikowski replaced Thürmann.

¹⁴⁴ Bartholomäus, 'Zum Tode von Victor Bruns', 30.

¹⁴⁵ Bartholomäus, 'Victor Bruns zum 90. Geburtstag', 99.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. The première took place in Berlin on 17 May, 1991. See Ronald Klimko, 'Bassoonist's News of Interest', *The Double Reed* 14, no. 2 (1991).

¹⁴⁷ Bartholomäus, interview by the author. The Berlin Bassoon Quartet also recorded the *Kleine Suite No. 2*, Op. 68. See Victor Bruns, *Originalwerke für drei Fagotte und Kontrafagott*. Das Berliner Fagottquartett. Classic Studio, CS 12 308, Compact disc. The *Kleine Suite No. 3*, Op. 92 was recorded by the same group. See Victor Bruns, *Fagotti Variabili*. Das Berliner Fagottquartett. 1993, Berlin, Classic Studio, 315 2133, Compact disc.

¹⁴⁸ See Victor Bruns, *Vier Virtuose Stücke für Fagott solo*, Op. 93 (Berlin: Musik- und Buchverlag Werner Feja, 1992).

¹⁴⁹ Skolnick's comment was based on personal opinion and discussions with fellow bassoonists. See Skolnick, interview by the author.

¹⁵⁰ The Octet, Op. 42 was requested by the Berlin Philharmonic Octet who premièred the work in Vienna in 1969. The fact that Bruns was asked by a West Berlin ensemble to compose the work indicates the prominence that he had acquired by this time. See Stomberg, 'The Bassoon Sonatas,' 87.

celebrate the 400th anniversary of the orchestra. The result was Sinfonie No. 4, *Konzertante für Bläserquintett und Orchester*, Op. 47.¹⁵¹ Another concert work for wind quintet was commissioned by the city of Plauen. The *Konzert für Bläserquintett, Schlagzeug und Streichorchester*, Op. 85 (1987) was premièred by the City of Plauen Orchestra in 1988.¹⁵² Bruns was to be commissioned twice late in his career, the first being for the Trio, Op 97 and the last was for the Concerto, Op. 98.¹⁵³ Although Bruns received many requests from colleagues for works, the majority were happily composed free of charge. It is believed that Bruns' income after he retired was sourced from the sale of his publications and performances of his works.¹⁵⁴

In his retirement, Bruns wrote more than half of his composition output. It is also believed that the *Concertante Music for Bassoon and String Trio*, Op. 58 (1976) was an exceptional composition from this period.¹⁵⁵ With the exception of the *Theseus* ballet trilogy and Symphonies Nos. 4, 5 and 6, all compositions from this period were concerti and chamber music for winds and strings. Of these works, nine were for solo bassoon, contrabassoon or tenor bassoon.¹⁵⁶ The solo bassoonist Herbert Heilmann was an inspiration for many of Bruns solo bassoon works and chamber works including bassoon.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 83. See also Hans-Peter Müller, 'Victor Bruns: IV Sinfonie', *Musik und Gesellschaft* 21 (October 1971): 663-664.

¹⁵² Bartholomäus, interview by the author. See Appendix for date of première.

¹⁵³ Although Bruns was commissioned for both of these works he only accepted the payment for the Concerto, Op. 98. Both of these works will be discussed individually in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight.

¹⁵⁴ Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author. See also Bartholomäus, interview by the author. It appears that while Bruns was employed with the Staatsoper, he did not accept any commissions. Waterhouse speculates that according to the Communist ideology it was not acceptable to receive other monetary rewards for personal pursuits. See William Waterhouse, conversation with the author, Cheltenham, 3 August 2004. From other accounts it can be confirmed Bruns did receive commissions in his retirement, although his main income was gained from his publications and the stipend received from GEMA – an organization from which payment was received for performances of original work.

¹⁵⁵ Skolnick, interview by the author.

¹⁵⁶ See works composed after 1969 on Appendix.

¹⁵⁷ Skolnick is of this opinion. See Henry Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 14 April, 2004. Herbert Heilmann was the solo-bassoonist of the Berlin Staatskapelle from 1950 to 1989. He premièred many of Bruns' works, which included three of the Bassoon Concerti; No. 2, Op. 15 (composed in 1946, premièred in 1951) and No. 3, Op. 41 (1966/1970). The Bassoon Concerto No. 4, Op. 83 (1986/1989) was composed by Bruns for Heilmann to play at a performance before his retirement from the Staatskapelle. See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 65. Heilmann also played in the premières of other chamber works, including the Trio, Op. 49, the *Zwei Kleine Suiten*, Op. 55 und Op. 68 as well as the *Konzertante Musik*, Op. 58. See Appendix.

Bruns' composition started to diminish in quality at the onset of his wife's illness in the early 1980s,¹⁵⁸ when Helene was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Victor preferred to care for her at home, as an alternative to a nursing home. During this difficult time for Bruns, he felt less inspired to compose, and as a consequence the works produced during this period are generally considered to be less effective. Victor cared for Helene for nearly a decade before she died on 15th May, 1990.

The fall of the wall

Other factors contributing to the instability of this era were the eventual destruction of the Berlin Wall, and the fall of communism.¹⁵⁹ The period between Autumn of 1989 (September – October) to March 1990 has been named *Die Wende* or 'the change'.¹⁶⁰ This term reflected the mood and the emotions that were experienced by most of the East Germans at that particular time.¹⁶¹ As music and theatre were not affected by the restraints of socialism, the larger institutions fared well under capitalism. All of the prestigious institutions, including the two opera companies in East Berlin (the Deutsche Staatsoper and the Komische Oper), the Semper Oper (Dresden) and the Gewandhaus (Leipzig) were certain to survive the change. For eight full time Orchestras in East Germany, however, their survival looked uncertain.¹⁶² At midnight on the 2nd of October, 1990 the GDR ceased to exist and the unification of the two Germanies was announced on the 3rd of October.¹⁶³ As Victor was retired the political

¹⁵⁸ Skolnick gave this opinion, also based on discussion with fellow bassoonists. See Skolnick, interview by the author. See also Treyße, "Victor Bruns," 24-25.

¹⁵⁹ In September of 1989, rallies began with people demonstrating for democracy. Throughout October and November these demonstrations continued in many East German cities, especially in Leipzig and Dresden. See Gilbert, *History*, 602-3. The government was so concerned about the protestors that they decided to lessen the severity of the restrictions on travel. At a press conference on 9 November 1989, the minister Günter Schabowski announced that the government was to open the borders, effective immediately. See Anna Funder, *Stasiland* (Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2002), 65. Just as quickly as the Wall had been erected, it was demolished. With it the old regime quickly collapsed. By the end of 1989, the Stasi offices were stormed and files seized. However, the ministers of the Stasi Authority managed to destroy a significant number of personal files that were collected before the organization disbanded in early 1990. It was estimated that one in three citizens had a secret file possessed by the authorities. See Ardagh, *Germany*, 439. For more personal accounts, See also Funder, *Stasiland*, 262-269.

¹⁶⁰ Ardagh, *Germany*, 421.

¹⁶¹ There was a feeling of euphoria and also of bewilderment at the collapse of a regime that held residents imprisoned for over forty years. However, as the West entered the East, the free market was introduced and for many artists and actors, their livelihoods were at stake as theatres and orchestras faced financial cuts and individual artists faced losing monetary grants. Consequently, as well as the feeling of jubilation, those significantly affected also felt depressed by the uncertainty of their livelihood. See Ardagh, *Germany*, 479-80.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 481.

¹⁶³ Gilbert, *History*, 610.

changes would not have affected him, although his pension may have been affected as the governments were changing over.¹⁶⁴

Victor was active for his entire life, and continued composing up until 1992. However on New Year's Eve that year relatives found that Victor had suffered a series of strokes.¹⁶⁵ He had to live in a nursing home for the last years of his life. Relatives remember that Victor was not the same man as he used to be after the strokes. Although he tried to continue composing, it was difficult for him,¹⁶⁶ as he was becoming increasingly forgetful.¹⁶⁷ He died on the 6th of December, 1996. At his funeral, nephew Waldemar Bruns spoke of him as being a generous, modest and contented person.¹⁶⁸

Bruns intended that there be 100 opuses, however he never completed the last two. Bruns left a sketch for an 'Oktett für sieben fagotte und kontrafagott' which would have been Op. 99. It was hoped by Victor's relatives that Bartholomäus would finish the octet however there was not sufficient material for the work to be completed.¹⁶⁹ He also left incomplete a work for string orchestra, Op. 100.

¹⁶⁴ Skolnick commented that Bruns experienced delay in receiving his pension during the unification. See Skolnick, interview by the author. However, relatives of Victor Bruns denied that his pension was ever stopped. See Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author.

¹⁶⁵ Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author.

¹⁶⁶ Peter Bruns, conversation with the author.

¹⁶⁷ During the time Victor Bruns was living in the nursing home, his fellow bassoonist friends were to pick him up one day in order to attend a concert where one of his compositions was to be performed, presumably the Flute Sonate, Op. 90 (1989). However, on arrival to the nursing home Bruns was declared missing by the nursing orderlies, only to be found later already at the concert. Victor took part in the after concert activities, however when questioned about it the next day he declared he did not remember. See Skolnick, interview by the author. This story was passed on to Skolnick by Werner Feja.

¹⁶⁸ Bartholomäus, 'Zum Tode von Victor Bruns', 30.

¹⁶⁹ Bartholomäus, interview by the author. See also Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author.

Chapter Four - Compositions for Bassoon

Bruns frequently commented that the most important feature of his compositions was to present the characteristic tone colours and possibilities of the solo instrument.¹⁷⁰ As Bruns was a bassoonist he understood the technique and capabilities of the instrument so that his solo compositions for bassoon frequently exploit the versatility, timbral variety and virtuosic aspects idiomatic to the instrument.

Bruns' concerti and sonatas for bassoon are comparable in virtuosity to other notable works from the repertoire such as the Mozart and Weber Concerti.¹⁷¹ The writing for the bassoon in Bruns' compositions often sounds virtuosic, even though for the educated player with an adequate technique the music is usually comfortable to play: that is, the technical passages are generally composed to suit the instrument naturally.¹⁷²

Some of the characteristics of the instrument that are well-utilized in Bruns' works are the range of tone colours that are available in different registers. Other features that he exploits are the broad pitch range, the agility of movement that can be achieved on the instrument, often between the low and high registers, as well as other characteristics which are general to woodwind playing, such as a wide variety of possibilities in articulation. The capabilities of the bassoon will be discussed in isolation in order to assess how well Bruns featured the characteristics of the instrument in his compositions.

Attributes and Capabilities of the bassoon

Bassoon tone depends on the particular player, instrument, crook and reed. Words that are used to describe the general tone of the bassoon are dark, rich, smooth and full. In

¹⁷⁰ For instance Bruns made such comments to both Kontressowitz and Bartholomäus. See Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 34-35. See also Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 190.

¹⁷¹ Concerto in Bb, K 191(1774) by W.A. Mozart and Concerto in F, Op. 75 (1811/1822) by C.M. von Weber are frequently studied and performed by student and professional bassoonists.

¹⁷² This opinion is shared by Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 30.

particular, the sound of the bassoon should be focused and centred.¹⁷³ To some extent, tone is dependent on a player having a well-formed embouchure.¹⁷⁴

The bassoon has a range of around three and a half octaves, from B' flat to either f'' or g'', this compass dividing into the three registers, each of which has a different tone colour. This is due to the instrument design and the complex fingering layout that the instrument imposes.¹⁷⁵ The lower octave, B' flat to B flat, is the most resonant part of the instrument, producing dark and sonorous colours. The next octave, B flat to b flat, is the middle range of the instrument and has a predominantly mellow timbre. The tenor octave, b flat to b' flat, has a clearer, though less resonant sound, as more harmonics are produced. The notes above b' flat are penetrating, as the fundamental and its harmonics produce a piercing timbre. The difference in timbre in each of the separate registers is one of the characteristic charms of the instrument available for composers to exploit.¹⁷⁶

The upper register on the bassoon requires experience and skill to produce due to the complex nature of the instrument's acoustics.¹⁷⁷ An accomplished player would have to apply more wind pressure in combination with an appropriate embouchure to allow the notes to speak.¹⁷⁸ The tenor register is often employed by composers in orchestral compositions as this octave can usually project over the orchestra. This is evident in slow melodies and in solo or accompanying lines, however composers are usually advised to avoid writing for the bassoon to play above the tenor register, in particular

¹⁷³ Waterhouse, *The Bassoon*, 160-161.

¹⁷⁴ The term Embouchure denotes the application of lips/mouth to the reed. For a comprehensive discussion on the correct form and use of Embouchure, see Waterhouse, *The Bassoon*, 86-100. See also Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 148.

¹⁷⁵ Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 3-5. Detailed study of acoustics and instrument design is beyond the scope of this thesis. For further discussion see Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 143-151.

¹⁷⁶ Langwill, 148. See also Waterhouse, 'Bassoon', 873.

¹⁷⁷ Waterhouse, *The Bassoon*, 141.

¹⁷⁸ Waterhouse, 'Bassoon', 876.

the notes c'' to e'' flat, as these notes are problematic to produce.¹⁷⁹ Most bassoonists agree that high notes are quite strenuous and challenging to execute.¹⁸⁰

The appropriate use of breath support is an important factor in playing the bassoon. For bassoon, as for most wind instruments, the most effective method is the use of abdominal breathing.¹⁸¹ The technique of breathing is mastered through exercises. This technique involves a quick inhalation and a controlled exhalation.¹⁸² Breath support is the result of an effective use of the breath (both inhalation and exhalation).

Interesting technical anomalies have arisen from the practice of performing French repertoire on a German instrument. On the French instrument, whose fingering system is entirely different to that of the German instrument, the higher notes are more easily reached than on its German counterpart.¹⁸³ Solo repertoire written in the twentieth century by French composers was written with the French instrument in mind, and often required the performer to play the high register, extending to the note e'' and occasionally even to f'.¹⁸⁴ Many orchestral pieces often required the instrument to play extreme high notes.¹⁸⁵

Due to the different colours available on the instrument, there are particular notes and key areas that are more resonant than others. Some of the preferred keys used by

¹⁷⁹ Hector Berlioz, *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes. Berlioz's orchestration treatise: a translation and commentary*. Translation and commentary by Hugh Macdonald (U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 112-113. Since Berlioz first wrote his treatise in 1844 there have been many developments to the instrument. Berlioz, however, was writing about the French instrument which became unpopular after the 1930s when the German bassoon gained favour. Nevertheless these are also legitimate observations for the German instrument.

¹⁸⁰ Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 4. This opinion is commonly shared by many students, amateurs and professional bassoonists.

¹⁸¹ Waterhouse, *The Bassoon*, 69-73

¹⁸² Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 2: 816. Breathing technique involves the collective use of the respiratory system, mouth, lips and tongue.

¹⁸³ Waterhouse, 'Bassoon', 876. These works are mainly played today on German instruments, however, the pieces are extremely difficult to master whereas they can be played with facility on a French bassoon.

¹⁸⁴ An example of a competition solo in which the solo line extends to f', is the *Prélude et Scherzo* by Paul Jeanjean, written in 1911. For discussion of the contest solos see Kristine Klopfenstein Fletcher, *The Paris Conservatoire and the Contest Solos for Bassoon* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 101.

¹⁸⁵ Two famous examples from orchestral repertoire in which the bassoon player is required to perform the note e'' include the Overture to Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (1845), bar 290, and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913), last bar of the First Part. See Fletcher, *The Paris Conservatoire*, 101.

composers of tonal music are D, G, C, F, B flat, E flat, A and their relative minors.¹⁸⁶ In addition, examples of the most resonant notes on the bassoon are the low notes E down to B' flat, and in all octaves the note F sharp (that is, F sharp, f sharp and f' sharp) is inherently sonorous.¹⁸⁷

A composer must be aware of what fingerings are possible on an instrument. The design of the bassoon means that many of the fingering combinations required to play the instrument are complex. The bassoon is the only instrument of the woodwind family that employs every finger to play it.¹⁸⁸ It is a physiological fact that not every finger has the same strength, which means that in order to have an exceptional fingering technique a player must practice technical studies, as well as scales and arpeggios, to gain independence and co-ordination of the fingers.¹⁸⁹

Another acoustic problem that is inherent in the instrument is the limitation to the range of dynamic level and balance within an ensemble context. This problem arises as a result of the construction of the instrument, the type of crook and the reeds that are used. A frequent comment made by conductors is that the bassoon can not be heard with sufficient volume in certain passages. Contrarily, the reverse comment is sometimes made: that the bassoon is overpowering.¹⁹⁰

Bruns' compositions for bassoon

Bruns was aware and presented the full gamut of tone colours across the range of the instrument in many of his solo works for bassoon. This characteristic feature of his compositions can be found in his main themes.¹⁹¹ An example of this is in the first movement of the third Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra, Op. 41. Example 1 shows bars 1-27 of this movement.

¹⁸⁶ Berlioz, *Grand traité d'instrumentation*, 112. These keys are listed as appears in Berlioz's treatise. Inexplicably the key of A appears last in this list, despite the cycle of fifths order that the listing implies. From a performer's point of view, the key of A is not especially sonorous. It could be considered that these keys are preferred by most wind instrumentalists as they are less complicated. A player would encounter fewer accidentals when playing these keys.

¹⁸⁷ The sonority of the notes singled out will be discussed in some of the following examples.

¹⁸⁸ Waterhouse, *The Bassoon*, 126-127. See also Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 2: 772-3. For other wind instruments at least one thumb is used by the player to hold the instrument whereas on the bassoon a player must use the left thumb to control at least 9 keys, and 4 keys are operated by the right thumb.

¹⁸⁹ Waterhouse, *The Bassoon*, 127.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹⁹¹ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 50.

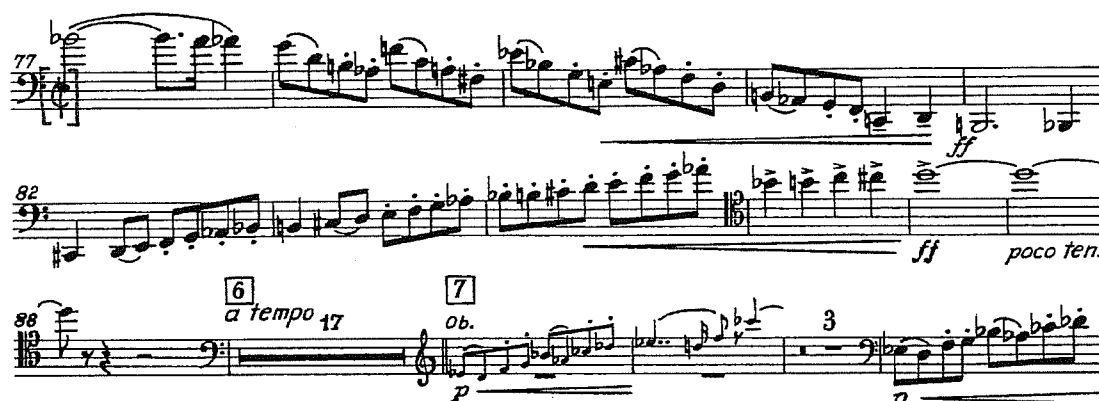


Example 1: Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41 I (bars 1-27)¹⁹²

The opening theme spans across three octaves, (B' flat to b'). This passage also highlights many of the bassoon's sonorous notes mentioned previously. Bruns has also employed a favoured key for the bassoon, the key of D, as he knew the resonance of this key would project and achieve a sonorous effect. In the 16 bar phrase, bars 8-24, Bruns presents the main theme on the tonal centre of D and pivots the melody around certain notes, such as all octaves of D and F sharp, of significance for both harmonic purposes and their sonorous timbre. These notes are prominent because they are given the longest note values. The arch-like melody begins on D then rises to d' (bar 11) and rises again to b' (bar 14) before resting on f' sharp (bar 15). Having reached its height, the melody then begins to fall. It rests on d' (bar 19) then on F sharp (bar 22), before ending on a prolonged D. The last three notes of this phrase - B' flat, C sharp and D - are used for the resonant colours characteristic of the instrument. Even though these highlighted notes have inherent intonation problems, they are considered to have an aesthetically pleasing resonance.

¹⁹² Victor Bruns, *Konzert für Fagott und Orchester, Nr. 3, Op. 41* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel Musikverlag, 1972). All subsequent examples from this work are taken from this publication.

Example 2 shows bars 77-111 of the same movement.



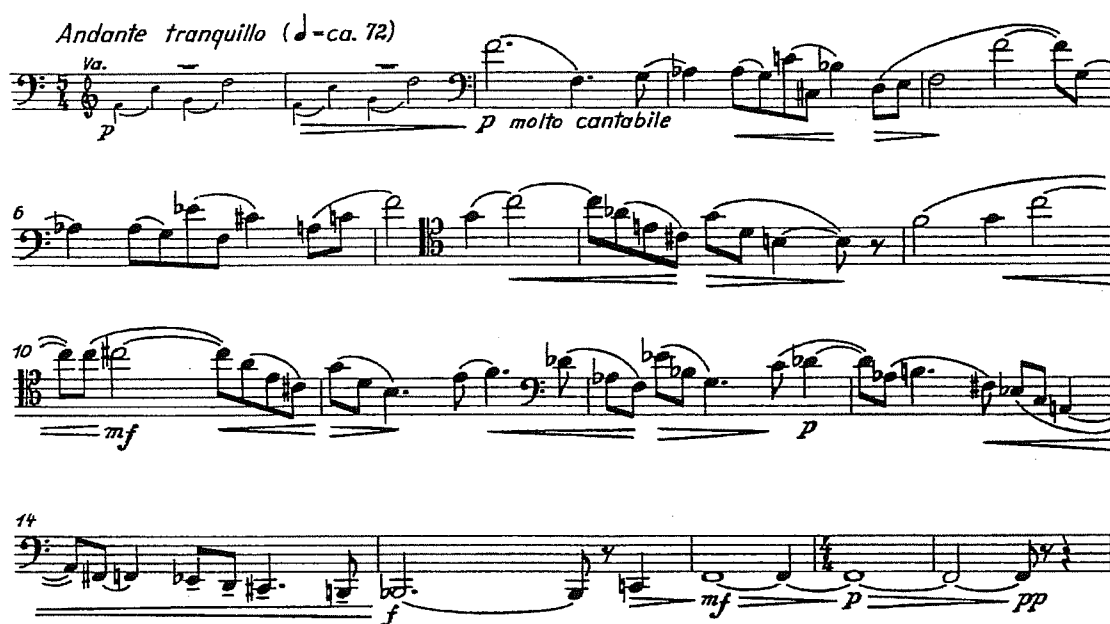
Example 2: Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41 I (bars 77-111)

In this movement a climax is reached by the end of the first subject, at bar 88. It is achieved by demonstrating the bassoon's complete range; however, this time the range is displayed in a shorter time frame and extended to the highest note yet heard in the movement, d⁷.¹⁹³ Thus, in the space of six bars the passage ascends in a step-wise motion with a crescendo from the lowest note B⁷ flat to the note d⁷. Bruns well understood the limitations of the German instrument and although he was aware of the possibility of producing extremely high notes, he generally did not write higher than the pitch e⁷. This example is one of few occasions where Bruns writes in the extreme high register, however the step-wise approach to the note and the marked articulation assists in the easy execution of the phrase. There are many examples of such a step-wise approach to the extreme notes in Bruns' compositions for bassoon. In addition to having extensive knowledge on what articulation and fingering was possible on the instrument, Bruns understood the demands on breath control that such phrases made on the player. In both passages cited above, Bruns writes the phrasing in appropriate breath lengths.

Another way Bruns exploited the different colours available on the bassoon was to contrast the three register-defined timbral variations in presenting the same main

¹⁹³ The cadenza of the third movement employs material taken from the first theme of the first movement. There Bruns especially exploits the high tessitura of the instrument. Of particular note is that Bruns extends the pitch range employed so far slightly further to the pitch e⁷ flat in bar 188, testament to his sensitivity to the virtuosic potential of the instrument. He also included an alternate passage in the solo part which omits this pitch. See Victor Bruns, *Konzert für Fagott und Orchester, Nr. 3, Op. 41* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel Musikverlag, 1972), third movement, bars 169-203.

theme. Example 3 shows bars 1-18 of the second movement of Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41.



Example 3: Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41 II (bars 1-18)

In the A section of this ternary form, Bruns presents the main theme in the tonal area of F minor, which is another well-sounding key on the instrument. This passage is another instance of Bruns' habit of employing the whole compass of the instrument within his theme: the 16 bar phrase employs the range of B[♭] flat to c[♯] sharp. However in this case, the three different timbres specific to the three octaves of the instrument's compass are clearly audible: the lower octave is sonorous, the middle to high octave has a *cantabile* quality and the piercing high register is used for climactic effect. In this instance, the theme is initially presented in the middle to tenor register, bars 3-6, 11-13, and approaches the climax of the phrase in the extreme high register, bars 7-10, before descending to the lowest register, bars 14-18. The climax of the phrase is reached in a different manner to that of Examples 1 and 2: the slow approach to the extremely high notes has an intensifying effect. The arch-like melody pivots around the pitch f[♯], and a melodic figure which ascends to the note c[♯] is stated twice before eventually rising to the pitch c[♯] sharp.¹⁹⁴ Passages like these are commonly described as having a heart-rending effect on the listener.¹⁹⁵ Many other slow movements from

¹⁹⁴ Similarly to Example 1, Bruns extends the pitch range later in this movement to the high note d[♯], which is reached at bar 51, and is approached by step and with a crescendo.

¹⁹⁵ Berlioz described the high register as sounding painful and dolorous, an effect most useful in slow movements or in accompanying lines. See Berlioz, *Grand traité d'instrumentation*, 114.

Bruns' works apply this feature, which is said to be reminiscent of similar bassoon solos from Shostakovich's symphonies.¹⁹⁶ The end of the theme is similar to Example 1 in that it approaches the last note of the theme from a resonant, *forte*, B[♭] flat highlighting the sonorous timbre of that register of the instrument.

Example 4 shows bars 62-83 of the same movement, which represents the repeat at the end of the movement of the main theme that was shown in Example 3.

Example 4: Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41 II (bars 62-83)

This passage is a transparent example of Bruns' fondness for registral and timbral contrasts. The theme is here presented an octave lower than its initial appearance, with the result that the darker timbre of this register achieves a markedly different effect to the predominately high register of the opening theme. This compositional feature has been used to similar effect in other bassoon repertoire.¹⁹⁷ The thematic content is identical to the original statement until bar 75. At that point the theme descends to the

¹⁹⁶ This solo bears resemblance to the bassoon solo in the fourth movement of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 9 (1945). Many performers have commented on how the compositions of Bruns reflect the influence of Shostakovich. Cf., Chapter Three, p. 17, refer to footnote 78.

¹⁹⁷ There is an instance in the second movement of the Concerto for Bassoon and Strings (1949) by Gordon Jacob (1895-1984) where the composer states the opening theme in the extreme register, and the repeat of the main theme at the end of the movement is written an octave lower.

note B; however it does not reach the lowest note (B flat) as in the beginning, but rather rises to f[♯], pivots around this note and then ends on a prolonged f[♯].¹⁹⁸

Bruns takes advantages of the gamut of articulation possibilities on the bassoon, in particular the degrees of differentiation possible within staccato and legato articulation. In Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41, throughout the third movement and in some passages of the first movement, Bruns makes a feature of rapid staccato tonguing and the juxtaposition of triplet and duplet figures. The challenge for the performer is to make the rhythmic differences in these passages clearly defined. The finger-tongue co-ordination involved in executing such staccato figures is also difficult, though an accomplished player with an adequate technique would find them manageable to execute.

Later in the third movement legato triplet runs are exploited. Example 5 shows bars 217-246 of the third movement of the Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41.



Example 5: Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41 III (bars 217-246)

¹⁹⁸ The last six bars are described as a brief coda which reinforces the beginning tonality. Gbur agrees to this formal description of bars 78-83 as coda. Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 58. Bruns demonstrates in attention to structural balance in this second movement by ending on the same pitch on which the opening phrase begins. The repeat of this theme also demonstrates the recapitulation feature which became a stylistic trait of Bruns' compositions. Cf., Chapter Three, p. 16.

On the page this passage looks technically daunting; while in practice it is challenging for the performer to make the rhythmic figures smooth and even, the scales and arpeggios employed follow a logical pattern, facilitating the achievement of good legato.

This passage at the end of the movement and of the piece borrows material from the first movement. The final ascending scale to the note d", in bars 238-242, is almost identical in material terms to the end of the first subject of the first movement.¹⁹⁹

As is generally the case in Bruns' works, in Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41 the balance between the bassoon and the orchestra can be achieved to good effect.²⁰⁰ When the solo bassoon is playing, it is often accompanied only by strings and percussion or by the winds alone. Only for tutti sections is the whole orchestra employed. Bruns was sensitive to acoustical issues, particularly in *piano- pianissimo* passages, where generally he writes for the bassoon to play in the tenor register and reduces the orchestral texture in order for the bassoon line to project.²⁰¹

Bruns experienced first hand the frustration of making the sound of the bassoon project within an ensemble situation. In his works for bassoon and piano, Bruns was accomplished in writing well-balanced piano parts; he had a background in piano and understood the acoustics of the piano as well as he did those of the bassoon.²⁰² Indeed it was common for Bruns to compose at the piano,²⁰³ and in his studies at the Leningrad Conservatory he received training which enabled him to make piano reductions of his compositions with ease.²⁰⁴ An instance of Bruns' mastery of acoustical balance is the beginning of the second sonata for bassoon and piano, Op. 45. The opening dynamic marking for the piano is *piano*, yet the bassoon is marked *mezzo forte*. The dynamic level for both instruments increases to *forte* in bar 20.

¹⁹⁹ Compare bars 238-242 of the above passage to bars 84-88 shown in Example 2.

²⁰⁰ The instrumentation for this Concerto is single woodwind, 2 french horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, percussion and strings.

²⁰¹ This is evident in the coda of the second movement of Bassoon Concerto No. 3, Op. 41, where Bruns reduces the texture to strings and percussion only. As the dynamic level of the orchestra decreases, the tenor note of the bassoon is still audible. This is also apparent in the piano reduction.

²⁰² This opinion is shared by Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 20.

²⁰³ Waldemar Bruns, interview by the author. Cf., Chapter Three, p. 16.

²⁰⁴ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 30. All published piano reductions of Bruns' orchestral works are by the composer himself.

Example 6 shows bars 17-24 of the first movement of the Bassoon Sonata No. 2, Op. 45.

Example 6: Bassoon Sonata No. 2, Op. 45 I (bars 17-24)²⁰⁵

Despite the *forte* indication, the piano shadows the bassoon melody in various registers, so that the bassoon melody projects through the *forte* accompaniment.

²⁰⁵ Victor Bruns, *Zweite Sonate für Fagott und Klavier, Op. 45* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel Musikverlag, 1975). All subsequent examples from this work are taken from this publication.

Example 7 presents the climactic point in the first movement of the Bassoon Sonata No. 2, (bars 45-52).

45 *Poco animato* (♩ = 120)
f espressivo
 49
f
mp cantabile

Example 7: Bassoon Sonata No. 2, Op. 45 I (bars 45-52)

Both instruments are playing *forte* and *espressivo*, however Bruns composes with sympathetic consideration for the solo instrument. The bassoon utilizes its low register, which does not naturally project easily; however Bruns orchestrates the solo and accompaniment voices in such a way that the bassoon is always audible. Bruns offsets the rhythm in one instrument against the other: the piano enters first and the bassoon follows and interjects when the piano is silent or is sustaining a note. In this manner the bassoon is audible and balanced with the piano.

In Bruns' compositions for bassoon and piano he is sensitive to the acoustic of each instrument. In general the dynamic level for the accompaniment is *piano*, and only in solos, introductions or interludes does the piano play *forte*. In passages where both instruments are playing Bruns generally writes the bassoon line in the tenor register, which projects easily and it is clearly audible.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 21.

Another characteristic feature of Bruns' style that is present in this Sonata is that the solo melody begins with an anacrusis. Example 8 shows the first four bars of the Bassoon Sonata No. 2, Op. 45.



Example 8: Bassoon Sonata No. 2, Op. 45 I (bars 1-4)

The anacrusis in the bassoon melody (bar 1) is used as a small motif that is developed throughout the movement. It can be heard again in repeat statements of the theme such as in bars 20-23 shown in Example 6. The motif also appears as the melody develops, for example in bars 45-49 shown in Example 7. This device is commonly used for the beginning of the first movements of each of Bruns' bassoon Sonatas. It can also be heard in the Sonatina and the Trio.²⁰⁷

All of the examples that have been discussed demonstrate characteristics commonly found in Bruns' compositions for bassoon, and which became part of Bruns' compositional style. Examples 1 and 2 present Bruns' fondness of employing a broad pitch range, often within one theme or phrase. Bruns was aware of the gamut of tone colours and the register-specific timbres inherent on the bassoon, which is evident in Examples 3 and 4. Other characteristics of the instrument that Bruns exploited well were the agility possible in moving within the wide compass and the degrees of articulations achievable on the instrument. As shown in Examples 6 and 7, Bruns was also sensitive to the acoustics of the instrument and consequently composed solo compositions that were well-balanced with their accompaniments. The last stylistic feature shown in Example 8 became particular to Bruns' compositional style. The characteristics evident are proof that Bruns understood and exploited the possibilities of the bassoon well, which resulted in solo compositions that effectively display the instrument.

²⁰⁷ Stomberg also makes this observation, pp. 19-20. The use of this feature in the Sonatina and the Trio will be discussed individually in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

Chapter Five - Compositions for other sizes of bassoon

The contrabassoon

Victor Bruns played the contrabassoon professionally and composed for the instrument three works with piano, various etudes and four ensemble compositions. He was familiar with the capabilities and the limitations of the contrabassoon, and his contrabassoon compositions, like those for the bassoon, capture well its idiom, and occasionally present technical challenges to the performer. The characteristics of the instrument will be examined in order to demonstrate Bruns' proficiency in writing for contrabassoon.

It is the 1879 instrument made by Heckel on which all modern contrabassoons are now based.²⁰⁸ A compact model stands about 122cm tall and the length of the bore is around 5.5m.²⁰⁹ In the twentieth century there have been many attempts in Germany and the US to resolve acoustic problems with the instrument. Guntram Wolf, an instrument maker from Kronach, Germany, has constructed the most innovative instrument to date. His first model *Contraforte*, was produced in 2001, and has a wider bore which produces a more powerful sound and while still retaining its tone quality.²¹⁰ Performers have commented on the success of the instrument, adding that many pieces that are usually difficult to play on a traditional contrabassoon are more manageable on the *Contraforte*.²¹¹

Use of the contrabassoon in orchestras can be traced back to Beethoven, where the instrument added strength to the bass lines in the finales of Beethoven's Fifth and

²⁰⁸ The history of construction and use of the contrabassoon, although not as extensive as that of the bassoon, is nonetheless complex and varied. There were many different makes and sizes of the instrument throughout the nineteenth century.

²⁰⁹ Waterhouse, *The Bassoon*, 19-20.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 21. The *Kontraforte* (or *Contraforte*) was Wolf's invention, based on his models of *Kontrafagotte* (Contrabassoons), however it was Wolf's intention that his improved model, the *contraforte*, could replace the contrabassoon where the instrument is normally employed. The *contraforte* has been well received by players as it is claimed to be stronger in sound than a conventional contrabassoon with no loss of character or tone. For more information on the *Contraforte* see Guntram Wolf, 'The new Contrabassoon in 2002 – a new Design', *Double Reed News* 60 (Autumn 2002), 26-28.

²¹¹ Henry Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 22 April, 2005. Skolnick comments that he played Bruns' contrabassoon pieces (Op. 57 and Op. 95) on the traditional instrument with difficulty not experienced when he played them on the *Contraforte*.

Ninth Symphonies. In the twentieth century the instrument has been given a more substantial role by composers such as Ravel, Schoenberg, Berg and Stravinsky.²¹² The composition of works for solo contrabassoon, however, is a relatively recent trend. As previously mentioned in Chapter One, the first solo composition for contrabassoon was written by Erwin Schulhof in 1922. There have since been many more contributions to the repertoire, especially in the later years of the twentieth century.²¹³

Attributes and capabilities of the contrabassoon

The technique required to play the contrabassoon is similar to that required for bassoon. Nevertheless there are several significant differences in tone, fingering and reeds.²¹⁴ Tone on the contrabassoon can also be described as being “rich”, “full”, having body and no “buzz.”²¹⁵ The production of tone on the contrabassoon is undertaken in fundamentally the same manner as on the bassoon, with correct embouchure and adequate breath support being essential. In addition, however, on contrabassoon a player needs to give greater attention to the resonance of the instrument in order to perform with accurate intonation.²¹⁶

While different models of contrabassoon produce different pitch ranges, normally the sounding compass for a modern contrabassoon is B[♭] - c[♮], notated an octave higher.²¹⁷ There are some models that, with an extension bell, can reach down to A[♭] or A[♮] flat.²¹⁸

²¹² Waterhouse, ‘Bassoon’, 891. In particular the contrabassoon part in Schoenberg’s Chamber Symphony, No. 1, Op. 9 (1906) although doubling the double bass for most of the work, was a virtuosic part for the time. In Schoenberg’s *Gurrelieder* (1901-11), which employs an extremely large orchestra, there are two contrabassoons in the score. Another example of two instruments appearing in a large score is in Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* (1913), in which there is four bassoons, one contrabassoon with the fourth bassoon doubling on a second contrabassoon.

²¹³ Cf., Chapter One, p. 5, refer to footnote 19.

²¹⁴ Cornelia Anderson Biggers, *The Contra-bassoon: A Guide to Performance*, (Bryn Mawr: Elkan-Vogel, Inc., 1977), 8.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Waterhouse, *The Bassoon*, 19. Thus the pitch range B[♭] - c[♮] would be as written as B[♭] flat - c[♮]. Although Biggers agrees that the contrabassoon may only play up to the pitch c[♮] (written c[♮]), she differs from Waterhouse in describing the range as being B[♭] flat - f[♮] (written B[♭] flat - f[♮]) (p. 9).

²¹⁸ Waterhouse, ‘Bassoon’, 891. Biggers states that normally the instrument can produce the pitches B[♭] or even B[♮] flat, while some models descend to A[♭] or even A[♮] flat (p. 9). The range differs in Berlioz’s treatise, where he stated that the written range was an octave smaller: B[♭] flat - f[♮] (notated B[♭] flat - f[♮]). However Berlioz did not write for the contrabassoon often, due to the difficulty in finding players and the unavailability of the instrument in France. See Berlioz, *Grand traité d’instrumentation*, 116. Presumably Berlioz was unaware of the potentially broader range of the instrument.

The reed used on the contrabassoon is considerably larger than that used on a bassoon. The fingering is similar to that of bassoon, except for the higher register where a player would need to experiment with the fingerings in order to produce the correct pitches with good intonation. Generally the upper register of the contrabassoon is weaker than its middle to lower registers.²¹⁹

Another challenge in playing the instrument is the demands on breathing. As the contrabassoon is considerably longer than the bassoon, a player needs a larger quantity of air, and needs to use it more efficiently, to produce a good sound. The breath technique on the contrabassoon applies the same principles as those on the bassoon: a player needs good breath support to produce tone. In addition, the size of the contrabassoon requires the player to have more strength and muscle control in general.²²⁰

In performance there are commonly difficulties with the projection of the contrabassoon's sound and with its intonation. As the instrument is pitched so low, it is a challenge in tutti sections for the performer to play loudly enough to be heard without compromising the quality of the sound. It is also challenging to play with good intonation as, given its low register, it is often quite difficult to hear the centre of the pitch.²²¹ Dynamic graduations are produced on the instrument through breath support and air control. As with the bassoon, the performer makes adjustments to their support and control to correct intonation. Another challenge encountered by contrabassoonists is to possess the strength and stamina to play long sustained notes. However, difficulties in the execution of fingering and in breath control are progressively remedied through training exercises similar to those studied on the bassoon.

²¹⁹ Waterhouse, 'Bassoon', 891. Within the normal range of B' flat to c'', a player would find it comfortable to play only up to the g', after which the higher notes are generally weaker. See Waterhouse, *The Bassoon*, 19-22.

²²⁰ Biggers, *The Contra-bassoon*, 20.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

Bruns' compositions for contrabassoon

Being contrabassoonist for the Staatsoper, Victor Bruns knew the instrument well. He wrote eleven etudes for the contrabassoon which were published in Seltman & Angenhöfer's *Das Fagott*.²²² These studies covered various aspects of technique: articulation, fingering, and the high register. Bruns made good use of his orchestral experience in the composition of these pedagogical compositions, as many are based on various passages for contrabassoon from the standard orchestral and operatic repertoire.

The first solo composition Bruns wrote for the contrabassoon was the *Zwei Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 57 (1975). He later wrote perhaps a more virtuosic piece, the *Sechs Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 80 (1986). Both of these works are suites, and are of two and six movements respectively.²²³ Bruns' last solo work for contrabassoon that predates the Concerto, Op. 98 was the *Concertante Suite for Contrabassoon and Piano*, Op. 95 (1991). Skolnick, who has performed all three of these works, holds the opinion that increasing technical demands were placed on the player from the first through to the last.²²⁴

Bruns also wrote three bassoon quartets which included the contrabassoon. Each quartet bore the same title, *Kleine Suite für drei fagotte und kontrafagott*; No. 1, Op. 55 (1974), No. 2, Op. 68 (1981) and No. 3, Op. 92 (1990).²²⁵ In these ensemble pieces the interaction and balance between the instruments is successfully handled, and the contrabassoon is afforded many virtuosic passages. Bruns also wrote one trio

²²² Werner Seltman and Günter Angenhöfer, *Das Fagott*. Cf., Chapter One, p. 4, refer to footnote 12.

²²³ These pieces were originally written to be used as audition sight reading material, though they were never used for this purpose. Today they are played as recital pieces. Often the two sets are played together as a single suite, although Bruns made a comment in a radio interview (15/08/84) that the two sets of *Stücke* for bassoon could be played either singularly or together as a whole. See Victor Bruns, *Sendung zum 80zigsten Geburtstag 15.8.94. Interview mit Victor Bruns*. Radio DDR, Berlin, 15 August 1984, Author's personal recording, Compact Disc. See also Henry Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 18 March, 2004.

²²⁴ Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 22 April, 2005. Skolnick premièred the *Sechs Stücke*, Op. 80 in 1990 in Miami. He also performed the *Zwei Stücke*, Op. 57 on numerous occasions both in the U.S.A and the U.K, including a performance at the IDRS Conference in Manchester in 1989. See Henry Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 18 March, 2004. See also Ron Klimko, 'Bassoonists' News of Interest', *The Double Reed* 14, no. 2 (1991). See also Terry B. Ewell and Jeffrey P. Vach, eds. 'Interesting Performances From A to Z', *The Double Reed* 13, no. 2 (1990).

²²⁵ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 192-193.

composition which included the contrabassoon, *Trio für Tenorfagott, Fagott und Kontrafagott*, Op. 97 (1992).²²⁶

The works for solo contrabassoon have been described by performers as being similar in style though they differ in their degree of technical challenge. As an example, the *Zwei Stücke*, Op. 57 is suitable for players with a relatively modest level of accomplishment. Throughout the piece it generally employs the low to middle registers, which appears less demanding. At the end of the last movement the solo line approaches the extreme high register, which would be technically challenging: playing with correct intonation in the high register is troublesome on the traditional contrabassoon.²²⁷ Example 9 shows the highest pitch that appears at the end of the cadenza in the second piece, where the solo line ascends from B' flat to the b flat (written b flat - b' flat) before settling on the pitch a (written a') in bar 179.



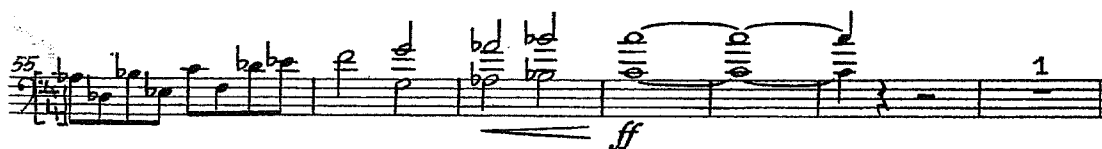
Example 9: *Zwei Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 57 II (bars 157-186)²²⁸

In the *Sechs Stücke*, Op. 80, Bruns writes for the whole range of the contrabassoon. Example 10 shows *Sechs Stücke*, Op. 80 I (bars 55-61).

²²⁶ The *Trio für Tenorfagott, Fagott und Kontrafagott*, Op. 97 (1992) will be discussed later in this thesis.

²²⁷ Skolnick, interview by the author. See also Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 22 April, 2005.

²²⁸ Victor Bruns, *Zwei Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 57 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1975).



Example 10: *Sechs Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 80 I (bars 55-61)²²⁹

At the end of the first piece the melody line extends to the pitch c' (written c''). While there is an option given by the composer for the passage to be played an octave lower (from bars 56-60), presumably his preference was for the extreme high register to be played. The same challenges as for the Op. 57 appear here; that is that the achievement of good intonation in the high register requires careful attention to fingering and breath support.

A common trait in Bruns' music is to feature a large proportion of the instrument's range in one phrase or in a short space of time.²³⁰ Example 11 shows bars 1-19 of the sixth of the *Sechs Stücke*, Op. 80.



Example 11: *Sechs Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 80 VI (bars 1-19)

The beginning of this last movement opens with a solo recitative which presents the range of two and a half octaves, C' sharp - a flat (written C# - a' flat).²³¹ Bruns presents his ideas in four-bar phrases, which demonstrate appropriate consideration of the performer's breathing needs.

²²⁹ Victor Bruns, *Sechs Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 80 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1986). All subsequent examples of this work are taken from this publication.

²³⁰ Cf., Chapter Four, pp. 36-38.

²³¹ Stomberg also makes this observation, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 80.

Example 12 presents the last passage of the sixth movement from *Sechs Stücke*, Op. 80 VI (bars 87-99).



Example 12: *Sechs Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 80 VI (bars 87-99)

The last movement finishes with a climactic ascending scale to the high register, which is another characteristic feature of Bruns' style.²³² This passage features a melody founded on triplet rhythms, which increases in speed and volume as the line ascends to the high tessitura. A brilliance of sound is achieved when ultimately the note a flat (written a' flat) is reached in bar 97. A performer would need an exceptional fingering technique and adequate breath control to master the technical challenges presented in this passage.

It has been suggested that musical and technical quality can be considered an indication of Bruns' enthusiasm for a compositional project. There are a small number of compositions, the *Concertante Suite for Contrabassoon and Piano*, Op. 95 (1991) being one, the composition of which it appears Bruns had little interest in for many reasons.²³³ This work was written shortly after the death of his beloved wife Helene. It is also possible that the years directly after the fall of the GDR left Bruns uninspired to compose. The suite was written for and dedicated to his colleague Otfried Bienert;²³⁴ in later years such requests from former East German colleagues appeared

²³² See Stomberg for a similar observation, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 80. Cf., Chapter Four, pp. 38, 41-42.

²³³ Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 14 April, 2004.

²³⁴ Otfried Bienert succeeded Bruns as contrabassoonist at the Staatsoper. He and Herbert Kaliga (piano) gave the première of the *Zwei Stücke*, Op. 57 on an East Berlin radio broadcast, (13 October 1981). See Ludwig Müller, *Sozialistisches Musikhappen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Uraufführungen 1981* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1982), 29. Henry Skolnick, who gave the première of the *Sechs Stücke*, Op. 80 (see footnote 224), suggested that Bienert was unhappy that he

to be less stimulating for Bruns.²³⁵ Consequently this work is the least successful of the three works for solo contrabassoon; it is difficult to perform, as the writing does not always capture the idiom of the instrument as effectively as the early pieces.²³⁶

The tenor bassoon

The tenor bassoon, which Bruns includes in two late works, the Sonatine and the Trio,²³⁷ remains a relatively unknown instrument with very little repertoire written for it. There are two types of smaller-sized bassoons, namely the “tenor bassoon” and the “octave bassoon,” also known as the “fagottino.”²³⁸ The tenor bassoon, whose name has been popularly truncated to “tenoroon,” is a transposing instrument, usually pitched in F but occasionally pitched in G.

The history of small bassoons being constructed can be traced back to the invention of instruments from the dulcian family.²³⁹ As most wind instruments exist in families comprising discant, alto, tenor and bass instruments, the higher pitched bassoons were presumably a contribution to replicating this assortment.²⁴⁰ Initially the instrument was primarily intended for military use, to be played by soldiers on horseback, made possible by the fact that the instrument was lighter and shorter. It has been documented that the tenor bassoon was used as a substitute for cor anglais in the opera houses of Bordeaux in the nineteenth century. Another explanation for their existence was that they were used for the instruction of small children.²⁴¹

missed the opportunity for the next première, and that Bruns wrote the *Concertante Suite* and made the dedication to appease the disgruntled player. See Skolnick, interview by the author.

²³⁵ Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 22 April, 2005.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Details and descriptions of these works will be presented in Chapters Six and Seven.

²³⁸ Waterhouse, ‘Bassoon’, 873-895. The tenor bassoon is also known as bassoon quinte or bassoon quart (French), or tenorfagott (German).

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Richard Moore, interview by the author, London, 5th August, 2005.

²⁴¹ Richard Moore, ‘The Renaissance’, 37. Two famous bassoonists started to learn the instrument on the tenor bassoon. The earliest account is believed to be that of Georg Wenzel Ritter (1748-1808), who began to learn the tenor bassoon at the tender age of eight. And Carl Bärmann (1782-1842) who was a pupil of Ritter was ten when he began instruction on the tenor bassoon. See also Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 1: 115 and Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 106. More recently it is believed that the English bassoonist Vernon Elliott (1912-1996), began his studies on the tenor bassoon. See Moore, interview by the author. However, Waterhouse doubts that Elliott graduated on to a working tenor instrument. See William Waterhouse, letter to the author, 30 January 2005. For contemporary stories of children learning the tenor bassoon, See “A Tenoroon lives!”, *To the World’s Bassoonists*, Vol III (Dec 1973). See also Moore, ‘The Renaissance’, 38. Some performers are of the opinion that for young

From the time of their conception in the seventeenth century through to the most recent developments in the twentieth century, different models of small bassoons have been produced by both French and German makers. It is believed that most bassoon manufacturers have made a tenor bassoon.²⁴² The first octave-bassoon was made by the German instrument maker Denner in the seventeenth century.²⁴³ Later there was an octave bassoon produced by the French maker *Savary* in 1827.²⁴⁴ Also in France *Evette & Schaeffer* exhibited in 1889 a family of tenor instruments of different pitches (D flat, E flat, F and G).²⁴⁵ In their 1920 catalogue Heckel advertised a Fagottino in F.²⁴⁶

In 1989 Richard Moore approached Guntram Wolf of Kronach, Germany, to commission him to make a modern tenor bassoon.²⁴⁷ To comply with other professional models built by Heckel and Buffet which were pitched in F, Moore asked Wolf for his instrument to be made to this pitch.²⁴⁸ This tenoroon was completed in January 1992 and since then Wolf has produced a range of tenor and octave bassoons, including the professional model in F and an instrument in G, which is more suitable for children between the ages of seven and ten. The makers, Howarth and Moosman, have since followed Wolf's lead to produce modern instruments for school use.²⁴⁹

Despite the growing availability of instruments there is little repertoire specifically written for the tenor bassoon. One of the earliest compositions to use small bassoons

pupils, a transposing instrument is more burdensome to learn, and the dearth of repertoire, for both compositions and tutors, is problematic.

²⁴² Moore, 'The Renaissance', 37.

²⁴³ Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 106. Johann Christoph Denner (1655-1707) established the family-owned wind instrument workshop in Nuremberg. The three keyed octave bassoon is now held in a Boston catalogue. See William Waterhouse, *The New Langwill Index: A Dictionary of Musical Wind Instrument Makers and Inventors* (London: 1993): 85-87. See also Waterhouse, 'Bassoon', 893.

²⁴⁴ Constant Pierre, "La Facture Instrumentale à l'Exposition 1889," (Paris: 1890): 25-29; translated by and quoted in Will Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 1: 116-117.

²⁴⁵ Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 1: 116. See also Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 5, 108. Originally *Buffet-Crampon*, the firm *Evette & Schaeffer* manufactured both wind and brass instruments during 1885-1929. In 1930 the company reverted to its original name. See Waterhouse, *The New Langwill Index*, 109-110.

²⁴⁶ Moore, 'The Renaissance', 37. Despite the "toy" appearance, documentary evidence, and the fact that they were produced by several manufacturers, even if only as an experiment, suggests that at various times there were performers who showed interest in performing on these instruments.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, This will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

²⁴⁸ Richard Moore, personal communication (Email), 21 April 2005.

²⁴⁹ Waterhouse, 'Bassoon', 893.

dates from the eighteenth century: a *Parthia No IV* by J.G.M Frost.²⁵⁰ The *Parthia* was scored for the unusual combination of two horns, two octave bassoons, two tenor bassoons and two bassoons.²⁵¹ The inclusion of these small bassoons, which were at the time most uncommon, might be explained by the speculation that the work was written for a particular ensemble in Zwickau that had these instruments.²⁵²

There has not been a great demand for the contemporary use of tenor bassoon as a solo instrument. In the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, players such as Eugène Jancourt²⁵³ and E.F James²⁵⁴ were known to use the instrument in recitals.²⁵⁵ In 1980 William Waterhouse gave a recital at Wigmore Hall, featuring in the program his arrangement for tenor bassoon of a *Serenata for Cor Anglais and Piano* (c1835) by Fernando Lickl.²⁵⁶ Waterhouse gave other performances with the tenor bassoon that year, including a BBC radio broadcast and at the Edinburgh Convention where he performed the *Serenata* and his arrangement for two tenorboons and bassoon of the *Parthia No. 2 for two Oboes and Bassoon* by František Xaver Dušek.²⁵⁷ Waterhouse

²⁵⁰ Ibid. There are no biographical details available for Frost. There are references to Georg Kasper Trost, however there has been some confusion over this name. Langwill, in *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 109, uses the name Johann Kasper Trost, which he quotes from the spelling used in the article by H. Jean Hedlund, 'Ensemble Music for Small Bassoons', *The Galpin Society Journal* 11 (May 1958): 78-84. Jansen explains that from manuscript copies and confirmation from other historians the composer's name should be read as J.G.M Frost. See Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 1: 120-121. See also Karl Ventzke, 'Ensemble Music for Small Bassoons', *The Galpin Society Journal* 30 (May 1977): 151-153. The manuscript is now housed in the Ratschulbibliothek in Zwickau, East Germany.

²⁵¹ According to a program note, the *Parthia* was written by Johann Georg Michael Frost around 1786 when he was employed as a wind player to the court of Dresden. See Terry B. Ewell, ed. '18th Annual IDRS Conference Royal Northern College of Music Manchester, U.K. August 12-17, 1989.' (Boulder, Colorado: International Double Reed Society, 1999).

Frost's daughter Caroline Wilhelmine (1784-1822) was married in 1806 to Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Grenser (1764-1813) who was an instrument maker in Dresden. There are catalogues which include octave bassoons made by Grenser. See Waterhouse, *The New Langwill Index*, 145-146.

²⁵² Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 1: 120-121. Another composition featuring small bassoons that predates the Frost *Parthia*, was the *Cantata No X* by F.W Zachow (1663-1712), also spelt Zachau, who was known to have been Handel's teacher and composer of Church Cantatas and keyboard music. The date of this cantata is unknown, though it is presumed to have been written sometime after Zachow's appointment as organist and director at the Marienkirche, Halle in 1684. In this score of the cantata there are parts for two *bassonetti*, which according to Jansen are not mentioned in any other literature and presumably denote small bassoon or fagottini, 120. See also Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 110.

²⁵³ Louis Marie Eugène Jancourt, (1815-1901), French bassoonist, soloist and pedagogue.

²⁵⁴ Edwin Fred James, (1860/61-1920/21), English bassoonist for whom Elgar wrote his 'Romance' in 1909.

²⁵⁵ Waterhouse, 'Bassoon', 893. See also Moore, 'The Renaissance', 37. See also Anthony Baines, *Woodwind instruments and their History*, 2nd Ed. (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1962), 337.

²⁵⁶ Moore, 'The Renaissance', 38. This performance was given on 9 December, 1980. Information about Lickl is sketchy. The Austrian family of Lickl is listed in *Grove*. It is presumed that the *Serenata* was composed by Aegidius (Ferdinand) Karl Lickl (1803-1864).

²⁵⁷ See Eric Peterson and Jeffrey P. Vach, 'Notes on the Edinburgh Convention', *The Double Reed* 3, no. 2 (1980). František Xaver Dušek (1731-1799) composer, pianist and teacher, wrote many parthias

visited Australia in 1984 and performed a guest recital at the Victorian College of Arts, performing again the Lickl *Serenata* on tenor bassoon.²⁵⁸

In the late 1980s, Richard Moore was keen to couple his commissioning Wolf to produce an instrument with commissions for works to be composed specifically for it. Victor Bruns was one of the two composers commissioned by Moore to write a piece for the modern tenor instrument.²⁵⁹

Attributes and capabilities of the tenor bassoon

There is some scholarly disagreement about the pitching and the range of the tenor bassoon. As it is listed in Berlioz's *Treatise* the tenor bassoon is pitched a fifth higher than the normal bassoon.²⁶⁰ That is, the score would be notated a fifth lower than sounding pitch. Therefore the instrument would be pitched in G for a composition written in C. Waterhouse's description of the tenor bassoon accords with this specification. He adds that though more recent instruments are usually pitched in F, the tenor bassoon is occasionally pitched in G or even in E flat.²⁶¹ Langwill explains that while the tenor bassoon was originally in G, a fifth above the normal bassoon, the tenor instrument in F became popular after circa 1830.²⁶² More specifically, Jansen agrees that the first tenor bassoons were pitched in G, but that between 1825 and 1835 the instruments were pitched in F. Players favoured the latter pitch for ease of transposition.²⁶³ As previously noted, the modern tenor bassoon has models both in F and in G.

for various wind combinations. This arrangement of the second of his *6 Parthias for two oboes and bassoon* (c1763) was edited by R. Komorous, (Toronto: E.C Kerby; 1978). The original manuscript is held in Prague. Waterhouse adapted this work for two tenoroons and bassoon, See Waterhouse, personal communication (Email), 29 April 2005.

²⁵⁸ Terry B. Ewell and Jeffrey P. Vach, eds. 'Interesting performances from A to Z', *The Double Reed* 7 no. 2 (1984).

²⁵⁹ Waterhouse, 'Bassoon', 893. The other commissionee was the English composer, Timothy Raymond. See Moore, 'Renaissance', 38. See also Moore, interview by the author. The works that resulted from this commission process will be discussed in the following chapters.

²⁶⁰ Berlioz, *Grand traité d'instrumentation*, 116.

²⁶¹ Waterhouse, 'The Bassoon', 893.

²⁶² Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 107. Anthony Baines does not mention the instrument in G although writes of the tenor bassoon in F, pitched a fourth above the bassoon. See Baines, *Woodwind instruments*, 337.

²⁶³ Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 1: 118.

Berlioz describes the tenor bassoon in G as having a range F to f', (written B' flat to b' flat).²⁶⁴ Moore writes of his modern instrument in F as having a range of E flat to a'', (written B' flat to e'').²⁶⁵

Even though Berlioz did not write for the tenor bassoon he was of the opinion that its ability to play loudly and its less sensitive tone colour could be a useful addition to wind bands.²⁶⁶ Contrarily, Constant Pierre (1890) did not think highly of the instrument. He questioned its purpose claiming that the sonorous tone colours characteristic of the bassoon were lost in the upper register of the tenor instrument. He added that the tenor bassoon in F had exceptional quality in neither volume nor sound.²⁶⁷ In comparison to the bassoon the modern tenor instrument has been described by Moore as being of lighter tone; it is still closely linked to its parent instrument, though its timbre is similar to that of a bass oboe or cor anglais.²⁶⁸ Considering that the tone and timbre is far inferior to the bassoon and that it does not extend the pitch range significantly, there is little that the tenor bassoon can do that a regular bassoon cannot. This may explain the dearth of repertoire for the tenor instrument.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ Berlioz, *Grand traité d'instrumentation*, 116.

²⁶⁵ Moore, 'The Renaissance', 38. The upper limit of the bassoon and tenor bassoon are virtually identical.

²⁶⁶ Berlioz, *Grand traité d'instrumentation*, 116.

²⁶⁷ Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 1: 117. See also Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 107-108.

²⁶⁸ Moore, 'The Renaissance', 38. Victor Bruns wrote two compositions for the tenor bassoon, both of which are to be discussed later in this paper.

²⁶⁹ Jansen questions for what reason the octave, quart and quint bassoons were manufactured, to the extent that he describes the octave bassoon and the small bassoons in f and g, as "freaks in the history of woodwind instruments." See Jansen, *The Bassoon*, 1: 123.

Chapter Six - Sonatina for Tenor Bassoon and Piano, Op. 96

The Sonatina came to be composed during a long chain of events that began with the experiences of bassoonist Richard Moore at the IDRS Conference in Manchester in 1989. During the conference there was the first modern performance of the Wind Partita by J.G.M Frost using two octave bassoons, two tenor bassoons, two bassoons and two horns.²⁷⁰ For this performance the octave and tenor instruments used were copies made by Guntram Wolf from original Grenser instruments.²⁷¹ Wolf exhibited his instruments at this conference. After seeing the instruments and hearing the modern performance, Moore became interested in the performing capabilities of the tenor bassoon. He approached Wolf to make a modern tenoroon using the German fingering system as a model. Though Wolf was more interested in producing small bassoons for small children to learn on, he nevertheless accepted the commission in November 1989. He constructed a prototype instrument for Moore, which was completed in January 1992.²⁷²

In expectation of the instrument being completed, Moore approached the IDRS to feature the instrument at the 1992 Conference in Frankfurt.²⁷³ Having gained their interest and consent Moore decided to commission a piece for a bassoon ensemble including tenor bassoon to play at the conference. Moore was already familiar with the compositions of Victor Bruns, and in particular favoured the composition Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon, Op. 49. He was encouraged by colleagues, in particular William Waterhouse and Henry Skolnick, to ask Bruns to write a piece for the tenor instrument. In the summer of 1991, Moore wrote to Bruns to commission a trio for the modern tenor bassoon, bassoon and contra bassoon.²⁷⁴ Bruns began work immediately, although it was not the Trio that he started composing. He wrote to

²⁷⁰ Moore, interview by the author. Although in the interview Moore uses the spelling *partita* he refers to *Parthia No. IV* by Johann Georg Michael Frost. Cf., Chapter Five, pp. 55-56. Moore also uses this spelling of *Partita* in his article, 'The Renaissance', 38.

²⁷¹ Original instruments copied by Wolf were made by the German instrument maker Heinrich Grenser. See Conference Program, Terry B. Ewell, ed., '18th Annual IDRS Conference Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, U.K, August 12-17, 1989', (Boulder, Colorado: International Double Reed Society, 1999).

²⁷² Moore, 'The Renaissance', 38.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

Moore in October of 1991 to inform that he had written “*ein Kleines Werk - eine Sonatine für Tenorfagott mit Klavier*.”²⁷⁵ The Sonatina for Tenor Bassoon and Piano, Op. 96 (1991) was written as a study piece in preparation for the composition of the Trio for Tenor bassoon, Bassoon and Contrabassoon, Op. 97 (1992). Bruns wanted to familiarize himself with the instrument, and explore how he might write for it before composing the commissioned piece. Later that month, Moore received from Bruns the manuscript copy of the Sonatina.²⁷⁶ In January 1992, Moore travelled with Waterhouse to Kronach, Germany to collect the new tenor bassoon from Guntram Wolf, after which they drove to Berlin to visit Bruns. Although the composer never accepted any payment for the Sonatina, Bruns happily dedicated it to Moore.

The Sonatina, Op. 96 was premièred by Moore on the 11 May, 1992 as a part of a bassoon festival produced by the *Musiekzentrum De Ijsbreker* in Amsterdam.²⁷⁷ The Dutch organization holds contemporary music events throughout the year as well as staging an annual festival, *De Ijsbreker* for the purpose of showcasing avant-garde music and works for instruments which are not usually considered to be solo instruments.²⁷⁸ In 1992 the festival’s theme was the bassoon; many bassoonists from different countries participated in interviews, exhibitions and concerts. Moore also commissioned Tim Raymond to write a companion piece for tenor bassoon and piano to be included on the program with the Sonatina. The result, *Lost Music*, was

²⁷⁵ Letter to Richard Moore from Victor Bruns, Berlin, 6 October 1991. Unless stated otherwise, all letters cited in text are unpublished. See also Moore, interview by the author.

²⁷⁶ Letter to Richard Moore from Victor Bruns, Berlin, 24 October 1991. Even though in Moore’s article, ‘The Renaissance’, 38, he writes that he received the Sonatina in November of 1991, an examination of the letters to Moore from Bruns confirms Bruns sent the composition with this letter.

²⁷⁷ Moore, ‘The Renaissance’, 38. See also Moore, interview by the author. The festival was held during 9-11 May 1992. See also Conference Program, ‘de Fagot (the bassoon) programma 9-11 May, 1992. *Musiekcentrum de “ijsbreker”*’. (Amsterdam: Nieuwe Muziek – New Music, 1992). Moore’s performance was programmed on a concert also featuring the Netherlands première of compositions for bassoon and synthesizer by Johnny and Mayumi Reinhard. In addition to the works by New York bassoonist Johnny Reinhard, the programme also featured the Concerto for Bassoon and low Strings (1975) by Sofiya Gubaydulina with bassoon soloist Milan Turković.

²⁷⁸ William Waterhouse, ‘De Fagot/The Bassoon: A report on the Amsterdam Bassoon Festival, May 9-11, 1992’, *The Double Reed* 15, no. 2 (1992). There were approximately twenty works which had their world première performances at this conference. Among many composers, Elliott Schwartz was commissioned to write a new composition for the festival. The result, Chamber Concerto No. 5 for Bassoon, Piano and String Quartet was premièred by William Waterhouse with Elizabeth Waterhouse (piano) and the Utrecht String Quartet.

performed with the composer on piano.²⁷⁹ The Sonatina, Op 96 was performed again later that year at the IDRS conference in Frankfurt.²⁸⁰

Victor Bruns did not know the tenor instrument as well he did the bassoon and contrabassoon. The Sonatina was an experiment; he used it as an exercise to write for the transposing instrument and to discover its capabilities. As Bruns felt anxious about writing for the tenor bassoon he sought advice from bassoonists Bartholomäus and Angehöfer, particularly in regards to the instrument's range, character and degree of agility.²⁸¹ One piece of advice that they offered was to write the part for bassoon and then transpose it for the tenor instrument.²⁸² Bruns gained further information about the abilities and limitations of the instrument from his correspondence with Moore.²⁸³

It appears that Bruns acted upon the advice received and wrote the part first for bassoon to aid him in transposing it for tenor bassoon; thus the work came into existence with two bassoon parts – one for tenor bassoon and the other, of identical sound, notated for bassoon. However, when the Sonatina was recently published by Hofmeister (2004) only the bassoon part appeared; the tenor bassoon part was omitted. While the original intention was that the version for bassoon be published as merely an alternative to that for the tenor instrument, the publishers were of the view that a score for this more usual combination would more likely reach a wider audience.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁹ See Conference Program, 'de Fagot (the bassoon) programma'.

²⁸⁰ This performance also featured the première of the Trio for Tenor Bassoon, Bassoon and Contrabassoon, Op. 97. See Conference Program. Terry B. Ewell, '21st Annual Conference, der Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany, August 11-16, 1992', (Boulder, Colorado: International Double Reed Society, 1999). Both the Sonatina, Op. 96 and the Trio, Op. 97 was performed again at the IDRS Conference in Pheonix, Arizona. See Terry B. Ewell and Yoshiyuki Ishikawa. eds. '27th Annual IDRS Conference Arizona State University Tempe, Arizona June 2-6, 1998', (Boulder, Colorado: International Double Reed Society, 1999).

²⁸¹ In a letter to Richard Moore from Victor Bruns dated 6 October 1991, Bruns writes of the communication and advice he gained from his colleagues, Bartholomäus (Berlin) and Angehöfer (Leipzig).

²⁸² Bartholomäus, interview by the author.

²⁸³ Between July 1991 and May 1992 Bruns wrote eight letters to Moore discussing his progress with the compositions and requesting information from Moore on the capabilities of the tenor instrument. Unfortunately the letters from Moore to Bruns were not available for examination at the time of the writing of this thesis.

²⁸⁴ William Waterhouse notes in Victor Bruns, *Sonatine für Fagott und Klavier, Op. 96* (Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag, 2004). For the discussion of this work references will be made to this publication by Hofmeister for bassoon and piano. The discussion of musical examples will mention the sounding pitch – and not the notation for the tenor bassoon.

In the notes to the edition Waterhouse expresses his concerns about the composer's eccentric notation.²⁸⁵ Despite the fact that the piece is tonal, the way in which it is notated does not visually reflect this. Bruns chose to write using accidentals rather than the conventional use of a key signature. Moore has also described Bruns' notation as eccentric.²⁸⁶ According to Moore, Bruns, indicative of East German composers generally, preferred not to write double sharps or double flats; instead the enharmonic equivalent is used, even though this may appear out of place and difficult to read.²⁸⁷ The use of accidentals rather than key signature is characteristic of Bruns' later works. Inexplicably, while Bruns writes the manuscript score for the Sonatina using accidentals throughout, he uses key signatures in the extracted tenor bassoon part.²⁸⁸

While in his music for bassoon Bruns usually chooses keys that suit the instrument, the keys chosen for the Sonatina are more difficult to play. According to Moore, in the Sonatina good intonation is difficult to maintain, in good part because of an inappropriate choice of keys.²⁸⁹

An additional challenge to good intonation was the inherent vagaries of the instrument. The prototype upon which Moore performed this work still had problems with the bore and position of tone holes. The octave vent was also placed in an ineffective position, which meant that the higher register and fingerings were complicated to produce.²⁹⁰

The Sonatine, Op. 96 bears witness to the profound influence of the music of the late romantic period on Bruns.²⁹¹ This can be seen in his choice of sonorous timbres and expressive melodies, which might be described as being reminiscent of those of Tchaikovsky or Brahms. Moore was of the opinion that Bruns was never interested in

²⁸⁵ Ibid. There was a delay in the release of this work as Waterhouse was of the opinion that the enharmonic notation was confusing and should be revised.

²⁸⁶ Moore, interview by the author.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. See also Bartholomäus, interview by the author.

²⁸⁸ The manuscript score consists of piano, bassoon and tenor bassoon. The extracted tenor bassoon part exists with the manuscript; however, a separate extracted part for bassoon was not witnessed at the time of the writing of this thesis. The published edition for bassoon and piano is loyal to the reproduction of the manuscript score.

²⁸⁹ Richard Moore, personal communication (Email), 11 February, 2005.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Moore, interview by the author.

writing music of the kind composed by his avant-garde contemporaries.²⁹² In interviews Bruns has commented that he preferred Classical and Romantic music, and that he was never interested in composing twelve-tone music.²⁹³ The Sonatina displays many characteristic features of Bruns' style, especially in its melodic shape, textual clarity and interesting rhythms.

Each movement of the Sonatine, Op. 96 is in ternary form and follows the convention of using the tonic key for the outer sections and a contrasting key for the middle section. Moore has suggested that this work reflects influences from Prokofiev.²⁹⁴ For example the staccato, syncopated rhythms in the finale are similar to those passages in the music of Prokofiev which use the bassoon to comical effect.

The first movement utilizes the pair of keys, C sharp minor and G flat major. To play in these keys the tenor bassoon would have to read in G sharp minor and D flat major respectively. The two contrasting sections of this movement present different melodies and utilize rhythm effectively to differentiate their characters. The theme for both the first and third sections is a flowing melody dominated by legato triplets. In the second section Bruns sounds a different legato melody; it is presented twice, initially in duplets, and then in triplets.

As is characteristic of Bruns' music for bassoon, the opening phrase in the first movement uses almost the full range of the tenor instrument. The first theme also begins with an anacrusis, which became another feature of Bruns' style.²⁹⁵ Example 13 shows bars 1-17 of the Sonatina for Bassoon and Piano, Op. 96.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Victor Bruns, interview by Kontressowitz, 36. Also on a DDR radio interview Bruns made similar comments; "Ich bin kein extrem Komponist." See Victor Bruns, *Sendung zum 80zigsten Geburtstag 15.8.94. Interview mit Victor Bruns*. Radio DDR, Berlin, 15 August 1984, Author's personal recording, Compact Disc.

²⁹⁴ Moore, interview by the author.

²⁹⁵ Stomberg makes a similar observation, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 77.

Example 13: Sonatina for Bassoon and Piano, Op. 96 I (bars 1-17)²⁹⁶

The triplet melody displays the whole gamut of timbral variety possessed by the instrument by exploiting the full range of the tenor bassoon from E to a' sharp, (written B to e' sharp).

On two occasions in this movement the range is extended further, to b': at bar 27 within the cantabile second section theme and at bar 46 within the repeat of this theme at the end of the second section. In the very last phrase of the movement Bruns repeats the opening phrase and extends the range further, to c'' sharp at bar 63, which is in fact the highest note in the whole piece. Although the full sounding range of the tenor bassoon is E flat to a'', (written B' flat to e''), Bruns chooses to move within a slightly smaller compass in this work.

The second movement pairs the keys of G sharp minor and D minor (written E flat minor and A minor). The movement begins and ends in a manner characteristic of Bruns' writing: the theme is of broad range and features a climactic rise to the high b'.

²⁹⁶ Victor Bruns, *Sonatine für Fagott und Klavier, Op. 96* (Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag, 2004). All subsequent examples of this work are taken from this publication.

The giocoso third movement is in D major (A major for the tenor) and begins with a Brunsian anacrusis motif. There are a greater number of technical challenges in this movement, which through rapid staccato and legato semiquaver passages provides the player with the opportunity to display to impressive effect the capabilities of the instrument. It has been suggested that the staccato would be easier to facilitate on the tenor bassoon than on the bassoon, due to the fact that its smaller scale has less resistance than on bassoon and a player would require less effort to produce the notes.²⁹⁷ One such passage appears in the middle section of the third movement. Example 14 shows bars 16-26 of the third movement of the Sonatina for Bassoon and Piano.

Example 14: Sonatina for Bassoon and Piano, Op. 96 III (bars 16-26)

There are fast moving semi-quaver patterns, often requiring fast finger technique to execute the leaps between notes. The impressive technicality of this passage creates excitement and subsequently leads to a trademark Brunsian climactic rise to the highest note of the movement, b', in bar 39.

There is one other passage near the end of the movement which presents some challenges in the choice of fingering combinations. A performer would need to

²⁹⁷ Moore, personal communication (Email), 11 February, 2005. The term Resistance is used to denote the degree to which the instrument resists as a result of the instrument's length and type of bore.

experiment with alternative fingerings to correct intonation discrepancies which might otherwise occur; however in Moore's experience, the required tempo is such that in the faster passages it is often impossible to use these alternatives, and poor intonation is often unavoidable.²⁹⁸ The design of the tenor instrument also raises difficulties for those accustomed to bassoon fingering. Despite the fact that the tenor bassoon is smaller in height and lighter in weight than the bassoon, there is no point of balance as there is on the bassoon. The instrument is held as is the bassoon, however an experienced bassoon player would feel awkward holding a tenor bassoon and consequently the execution of fingering in rapid passages may be problematic.

As the tenor bassoon has a lighter timbre than the bassoon, Bruns writes the scoring suitably lightly. The piano part is written with dynamics matched to those of the tenor part. The texture is generally homophonic, with more florid passages restricted to piano solos or interludes. In terms of balance, Bruns has shown here the same sympathy to the acoustic properties of the tenor instrument as he shows to those of the bassoon. When the tenor bassoon has the solo line the piano accompaniment is usually marked *piano*; however on the few occasions when the piano is marked *forte*, the texture is usually homophonic and its rhythms simple, or it highlights the tenor voice by shadowing it in a different register.

There are several discrepancies between the published Sonatina and the original manuscript. Some are merely minor rhythmic differences; however, some pitches were changed or omitted by the composer in order for the melody to fit within the instrument's range or to assist in the execution of phrasing.

In explanation of the following inconsistencies it must be considered, as previously mentioned, that Bruns wrote the bassoon part first then transposed the part for the tenor.²⁹⁹ The composer may have intended changing the rhythm, though the reason for

²⁹⁸ Ibid. In this correspondence Moore describes his experiments in correcting intonation on the prototype instrument. Subsequent to the prototype model Guntram Wolf made for Richard Moore, adjustments have been made to the bore of the instrument with some success. Wolf, however, has concentrated more on improving the design for the tenor instruments intended for teaching students, to the neglect of the professional model.

²⁹⁹ Bartholomäus, interview by the author. The inconsistencies exist between the manuscript score and the extracted tenor bassoon part from the manuscript. The published edition for bassoon is consistent to the manuscript.

this is unclear. One example of alteration of the rhythm occurs in bars 10 and 59 in the first movement; on the second beat three quavers is changed to a crotchet and quaver.³⁰⁰

On the next two examples also from the first movement Bruns may have made amendments in order to facilitate breathing or articulation, but there is no obvious need for a breath mark or assistance in executing the marked articulation, so the reason for the alteration is unknown. In the rhythm that appears in bars 20, 41 and 43, the first quaver note was altered to a quaver rest. In bars 22-24 and bars 37-40 the articulation was altered from a tongued pattern to a slurred-tongued pattern.

The alteration in rhythm in bar 29 of the second movement was made by the editor. This correction may have been designed to match the rhythm used at similar points in other statements of the theme (in bars 7 and 62), even though it appears from the manuscript that the composer deliberately intended bar 29 to be played with the different rhythm.

On the last alteration, from the finale, it appears that the composer changed the pitch in order that the note fit within the range of the tenor bassoon. In bars 52-55 in the extracted tenor bassoon part all of the notes - A - are an octave above the note that would have been the literal transposition.³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ This alteration in rhythm has consequently a change in pitch.

³⁰¹ The published edition for bassoon is consistent to the manuscript.

Chapter Seven - Trio for Tenor Bassoon, Bassoon and Contrabassoon, Op. 97.

Upon its completion Bruns sent the manuscript score of the Sonatina to Moore in October 1991, in order to gain feedback about whether the composition suited the instrument.³⁰² In his next letter Bruns wrote that he had started to compose the Trio für Fagottino, Fagott und Kontrafagott, Op. 97,³⁰³ the work that Moore had originally commissioned. At the same time Bruns was also composing the Concerto for Contrabassoon, Op. 98 for Henry Skolnick.³⁰⁴ The Trio was completed by January 1992, and was presented to Moore and Waterhouse when they visited Bruns in Berlin.³⁰⁵

The history of the dedication of the two works for tenor bassoon is a tangled affair. Bruns dedicated the Sonatina to Moore, even though this was not the piece that Moore had requested.³⁰⁶ As Waterhouse was one of the people who had suggested to Moore that he ask Bruns to compose the Trio, and he had travelled to Berlin with Moore, Waterhouse received the dedication of the Trio.³⁰⁷ It was further suggested by Moore that as Waterhouse was present and was a friend of Bruns, it was a natural and generous gesture by the composer to dedicate the piece to his colleague.³⁰⁸

As in the Sonatina, in the Trio Bruns initially conceived the tenor bassoon part as if it were for bassoon, and then transposed it up a fourth. Despite his experience with the

³⁰² Moore, 'The Renaissance', 38. In the article Moore writes that he received the letter in November, however after examining the letters from Bruns to Moore, it appears that the date was in fact October 1991. Cf., Chapter Six, p. 59, refer to footnote 276.

³⁰³ Letter to Richard Moore from Victor Bruns, Berlin, 18 November 1991. In a later letter dated Berlin, 28 November Bruns had finished three of the four movements of the Trio. See Victor Bruns, *Trio für Fagottino oder Fagott (1), Fagott (2) und Kontrafagott, Op. 97* (Berlin: Musik-und Buchverlag Werner Feja, 1995). Despite the fact that the title bears the name of *Fagottino*, which usually denotes the octave bassoon, this work is written for the tenor bassoon. Recently instrument makers have advertised both tenor bassoon (in F and G) and octave bassoons under the same name, Fagottino.

³⁰⁴ The Concerto for Contrabassoon, Op. 98 will be discussed further in Chapter Eight. Moore comments that on the visit to Bruns (January 1992) the composer showed Moore the score to the Concerto that he was composing. See Moore, interview by the author.

³⁰⁵ Moore, 'Renaissance', 38.

³⁰⁶ Cf., Chapter Six, p. 59.

³⁰⁷ Moore, interview by the author. In the edition published by Werner Feja, Helge Bartholomäus erroneously notes in the Preface that in addition to the work being dedicated to Waterhouse it was written for him at his request. In this instance, the first hand accounts of Waterhouse and Moore are the more reliable.

³⁰⁸ Moore, interview by the author.

Sonatina, Bruns was still anxious about writing for the tenor bassoon.³⁰⁹ As occurred in the publication of the Sonatina, it was intended that in the Feja publication of the Trio the alternative part for bassoon be included in order for the work to be able to be played by two bassoons and contrabassoon. There are differences between the tenor bassoon part and the alternative bassoon part due to the difference in register between the two instruments.³¹⁰

As Moore, Waterhouse and Skolnik were friends, Moore suggested that they play the première of the work together. With a prospective performance in sight, Moore is of the view that Bruns composed the piece with these particular performers in mind.³¹¹ The Trio was premièred at the IDRS Conference in Frankfurt on the 12 August, 1992 by Moore on tenor bassoon, Waterhouse on bassoon and Skolnick on contrabassoon.³¹² The second performance of the Trio was given by the same players at the IDRS Conference in Tempe, Arizona on the 6 June, 1998.³¹³ The Trio was part of the performance which was given by William Waterhouse, Graham Waterhouse, Richard Moore, Bruce Gbur and Henry Skolnick as a memorial tribute to Victor Bruns.³¹⁴ The alternate version for two bassoons and contrabassoon was first performed at Ludwigslust on the 22 April, 1995.³¹⁵

The Trio in its original version was recently performed at the IDRS Conference at Monash University, Melbourne on the 30 June, 2004.³¹⁶ It was originally intended

³⁰⁹ Bartholomäus, interview by the author. Cf., Chapter Six, p. 60.

³¹⁰ See Bartholomäus, notes in preface, Victor Bruns, *Trio für Fagottino, oder Fagott (1), Fagott (2) und Kontrafagott*, Op. 97 (Berlin: Musik-und Buchverlag Werner Feja, 1995). The score of the publication is for tenor bassoon, bassoon and contrabassoon. The manuscript score includes the alternative bassoon part.

³¹¹ Moore, interview by the author.

³¹² See Conference Program. Terry B. Ewell, ed. '21st Annual Conference, der Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany, August 11-16, 1992' (Boulder, Colorado: International Double Reed Society, 1999). On this program Moore also played a movement of the Sonatina. Cf., Chapter Six, p. 60.

³¹³ See Conference Program, Terry B. Ewell and Yoshiyuki Ishikawa, eds. '27th Annual Conference, Arizona State University, Tempe Arizona, USA, June 2-6, 1998' (Boulder, Colorado: International Double Reed Society, 2000).

³¹⁴ Cf., Chapter, Six, p. 60, refer to footnote 280. Moore performed the Sonatina again in this program, which also featured duets for two bassoons composed by Bruns, and the *Concertante Suite for Contrabassoon and Piano*, Op. 95 performed by Skolnick.

³¹⁵ On this occasion, the players were Helge Bartholomäus and Thomas Kollikowski (bassoons) and Stanislav Riha (contrabassoon). It is believed that this version has not been performed since.

³¹⁶ See Conference Program. '33rd Annual Conference, Monash University Clayton Campus, Melbourne, Australia June 29 - July 3, 2004' (Melbourne: International Double Reed Society). This program was not accessible online at the time of writing this thesis.

that the performers for this occasion be Waterhouse, Moore and Skolnick. Moore, however, declined to perform the work again with the tenor instrument he had, as he wanted the instrument to be improved before he used it again in performance.³¹⁷ Instead, the piece was included in a program given by the Konzert der Familie Pantzier.³¹⁸

Moore commissioned Bruns to write an ensemble piece for tenor bassoon, bassoon and contrabassoon because he wanted an interesting composition that would employ the unusual tenor instrument. The advantages of this instrumentation were that it would provide a balanced texture, and that the three instruments employed in the piece present three different tone colours.³¹⁹ Such consideration of the instrument's registers is similar to that of Bruns' Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon, Op. 49, a piece Moore admired. Even though the registers of each instrument overlap they are differentiated by their distinct timbre.

It is Moore's opinion that of Bruns' last three works, the Trio, Op. 97, is the most successful.³²⁰ Many believe that it is a more convincing ensemble piece than the other trio compositions of around the same time, the two trios for clarinet, bassoon and piano, Op. 84 (1987) and Op. 91 (1990), which are less successful in the handling of the individual instruments of the ensemble.³²¹ Both Op. 84 and Op. 91 pieces were written for East German colleagues and it is generally believed that Bruns may not have felt any enthusiasm for writing these works.³²² As noted in Chapter Three, Bruns' work may have felt the impact of the general negative attitude felt by East Germans as a result of the demise of communism, and the deteriorating health of Bruns' wife almost certainly contributed to a decline in the quality of his

³¹⁷ Moore, interview by the author.

³¹⁸ The family members who played the Trio were Heide on fagottino in F, Lydia on bassoon and Stefan on the contraforte.

³¹⁹ Moore, interview by the author. Cf., Chapter Five, pp. 47, 57 for discussion of tone colours of tenor bassoon and contrabassoon.

³²⁰ Moore, interview by the author.

³²¹ For instance Stomberg is of the opinion that the writing in the Trio, Op. 97, is stronger than the writing in either of the Trios, Op. 84 or Op. 91. See Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 101.

³²² Skolnick, personal communication with the author (Email), 22 April, 2005. See also Skolnick, interview by the author.

compositions.³²³ The rallying effect of having his dear friends consult him and play his last three compositions had a motivating effect, with successful results.³²⁴

As is the case in the Sonatina, in the Trio Bruns does not notate the score using a key signature, preferring to use accidentals. Unlike in the Sonatina, Bruns chose keys for the Trio that were easier to manage on the tenor bassoon. Again, the intonation difficulties of the prototype instrument posed problems in performance of the work. According to Moore, the bore and tone holes needed adjustment. The octave keys were not positioned correctly, especially in the third octave which means that intonation suffers when playing passages in the high register.³²⁵

The first movement, *Allegro leggiero* is in ternary form. It begins and ends seemingly in a minor with E major for the middle section; however, the tonality is on many occasions ambiguous. The tenor bassoon starts the solo melody with an ascending anacrusis.³²⁶ The beginning sets the pattern for the whole work in that the tenor bassoon features as a soloist while the bassoon and contrabassoon take accompanimental roles. Bruns often composes off-beat rhythms as an accompaniment to the solo line, creating a sense of momentum.³²⁷ Typical of Bruns' chamber music style, especially in the later works, such textures ensure the projection of the solo instrument and are interesting to listen to. Another characteristic feature of Bruns' writing is the harmonic movement by step,³²⁸ as is evident in Example 15, taken from the first movement of the Trio, bars 15-23.

³²³ Moore, interview by the author. See also Skolnick, interview by the author.

³²⁴ Skolnick, interview by the author.

³²⁵ Moore, personal communication (Email), 11 February 2005. Moore adds the new instruments (the models for children) by Guntram Wolf have had the bore improved, however the professional model has been neglected, especially the issues of addressing the facilitation of the third octave. Cf., Chapter Six, p. 61.

³²⁶ Bartholomäus commented that the opening of the Trio has a similar beginning to the Bassoon Quartet No. 3, Op. 92. See Victor Bruns, *Kleine Suite für drei Fagotte und Kontrafagott, Nr. 3, Op. 92* (Berlin: Musik- und Buchverlag Werner Feja, 1992). The ascending upbeat in the solo line for the first movement of the Quartet (bar 10) can be compared to the beginning solo part of the first movement of the Trio, Op. 97 (bar 2). This "anacrusis" feature beginning first movement themes has been identified as a typical feature of Bruns' compositional style. See Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 19-20, 77. Cf., Chapter 4, p. 45 and Chapter 6, pp. 62, 64.

³²⁷ This device is similarly used in the Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon, Op. 49. In the fourth movement, variation two the accompaniment voices play off-beat rhythmic figures. See Victor Bruns, *Trio für Oboe, Klarinette und Fagott, Op. 49* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1979), IV movement, variation II, bars 1-6.

³²⁸ Stomberg also observes this, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 102.

Example 15: Trio for Tenor Bassoon, Bassoon and Contrabassoon, Op. 97 I

(bars 15-26)³²⁹

In bar 17, the contrabassoon plays a short melodic motif which is repeated in bar 20. The motif is then sequenced by ascending chromatic step in bars 21 and 22, the accompanying bassoon and tenor bassoon following in kind.³³⁰

In the second movement, *Andante tranquillo*, also in ternary form, the solo melody is evenly distributed between the instruments.³³¹ In the key of c minor, it begins with a contrabassoon solo, the material of which is then taken over by the tenor bassoon. The second section presents the most intricate ensemble writing of the piece. Example 16 shows an excerpt from this section (bars 19-27).

³²⁹ Victor Bruns, *Trio für Fagottino, oder Fagott (1), Fagott (2) und Kontrafagott*, Op. 97 (Berlin: Musik- und Buchverlag Werner Feja, 1995). All subsequent examples of this work are taken from this publication.

³³⁰ This device can also be seen in Bruns' Quartets for three Bassoons and Contrabassoon. See first movement in Victor Bruns, *Kleine Suite für drei Fagotte und Kontrafagott*, No 2, Op. 68 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel Musikverlag, 1984): bars 52-55.

³³¹ Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 102.

Example 16: Trio, Op. 97 II (bars 19-27)

The solo line is interwoven between the tenor bassoon and bassoon. Initially the tenor has the solo, but from bar 19 and then in bars 21-25 the solo line is supported by the bassoon playing in parallel thirds. Example 17 shows bars 28-42 of the second movement of the Trio, Op. 97.

Example 17: Trio, Op. 97 II (bars 28-42)

From bars 27-34 there is a dialogue of triplet figures between the tenoroon and bassoon. The introduction of the quicker subtriplets and semiquavers from bar 34, coupled with ascending scalar movement leads to a climax in bar 39 with the tenor bassoon playing a high d'' (written a'). The movement ends in typical Brunsian manner, with the repeat of the main theme, which was originally stated by the contrabassoon, played here by the bassoon.

The Trio reflects Bruns' previously discussed mastery of ensemble balance. A clear instance of this is shown in Example 18, bars 1-13 of the third movement of the Trio, Op. 97.

Example 18: Trio, Op. 97 III (bars 1-13)

When the tenor bassoon has difficult passages to play it is only accompanied by either one instrument or by both instruments sparingly, in order that the tenor's passage work projects clearly.

The next example demonstrates the intricate ensemble writing employed further in this movement. Example 19 shows bars 14-21 of the third movement of the Trio, Op. 97.

The musical score for Example 19 consists of two systems of three staves each. The first system covers bars 14-17, and the second system covers bars 18-21. The instruments are bassoon (top staff), tenor (middle staff), and contrabassoon (bottom staff). The notation includes various melodic lines, rests, and dynamic markings such as *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4.

Example 19: Trio, Op. 97 III (bars 14-21)

The solo and accompaniment voices share similar melodic ideas; initially between the tenor and contrabassoon in bars 14-17, then between the bassoon and tenor in bars 18-21. In this manner the three instruments share the role of soloist to ensure the projection of the solo line. The last six bars of the movement features a homophonic passage which creates a rhythmic climax.³³² This is another common feature of Bruns' chamber compositions.³³³

The fourth and final movement *Allegro giocoso*, in c sharp minor, follows the formal pattern 'ABCAB'. Bruns borrows thematic material from the first movement: in particular, the waltz melody of the third section, *Poco meno e grazioso* bears resemblance to the middle *Poco meno e grazioso* section of the first movement. Bruns has also employed rhythmic motifs similar to those in the first movement, such as the juxtaposition of triplet and duplets from the A section, here presented in the A section of this final movement.³³⁴ This compositional feature originated from Bruns' teacher

³³² Many have noted this feature: See for example Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 102.

³³³ This device can be heard in the end of the final movement of Bruns' Woodwind Quintet. See Victor Bruns, *Bläserquintett für Flöte, Oboe, Klarinette, Horn und Fagott, Op. 16* (Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag, 1954): bars 127-133.

³³⁴ Compare from the first movement; bars 11-14 in the bassoon part with from the final movement; bars 7-11 and bars 15-16 in the tenor bassoon part; and bars 13-14 in the bassoon part. There is also a

Shcherbachyov, who taught his students to use this kind of recapitulation in their final movements as a method of encapsulating the whole work.³³⁵

As in the third movement, the tenor bassoon has some challenging passages in the finale. Such an instance is the first 20 bars of the final movement, shown in Example 20.

Example 20: Trio, Op. 97 IV (bars 1-22)

Chromatic runs and staccato triplet figures appear in the tenor bassoon part. The fingering for such passages might on first appearance seem challenging to a bassoonist; however it is quite manageable on the tenor instrument.³³⁶ In the finale the writing for the tenor bassoon is generally in the high register. The highest pitch, d'' (written a'), is approached twice, in bars 68 and 76 in the C section. As in the

similar rhythmic motif used in the *Kleine Suite für drei Fagotte und Kontrafagott, Nr. 3, Op. 92*: See the opening of the third movement: bars 1-4.

³³⁵ Cf., Chapter Three, p. 16. For similar comment see also Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 102.

³³⁶ Moore, personal communication (Email), 11 February, 2005.

Sonatina, in the Trio Bruns writes no higher than d'' (written a') for the tenor bassoon, even though the instrument can play as high as a'' (written e'').³³⁷

It is believed by those who have played or studied the work that there are a handful of discrepancies between the publication by Feja and the original manuscript.³³⁸ There are two such inconsistencies found. In bar 22 of the first movement in the manuscript score the tenor bassoon has the sounding note c' (written g), which is inconsistent with the written note in the alternative bassoon part in the manuscript, d'. The editor of the Feja publication has corrected Bruns' apparent error; in the tenor bassoon part the sounding note has been amended to a (written d'). The harmonic movement suggests the editor's amendment is correct.

Another instance of inconsistency between the manuscript and the Feja publication appears in the second movement, bars 4-5. In the bassoon part of the manuscript there is the written note e natural (bar 4) while in the Feja publication the note is written e flat. Confusion is added when in bar 5 of the manuscript, an e flat is indicated in the bassoon part. Considering Bruns' harmonic style, the first e in bar 4 should be e natural, then again in bar 5 the first e should be e natural, changing to e flat on the fourth beat.

There are two instances where the manuscript and Feja publication are consistent yet there are inconsistencies between the tenor bassoon part and the alternative bassoon part. One such example shows a difference in register for the tenor bassoon. In bar 11 of the second movement, in tenor bassoon part the first note sounds g, written d. In the optional bassoon part the first note is written G. Bruns may have intended the register difference of an octave in order for the tenor bassoon to project over the ensemble.

The second inconsistency, again in the second movement, shows a difference of rhythm in the solo melody. In bar 28 the rhythm in the tenor bassoon part is different

³³⁷ Cf., Chapter Five, p. 57.

³³⁸ See Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 101. See also Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 22 April, 2005.

to that written for the optional bassoon part. It is unknown why Bruns wrote two different rhythms.³³⁹

³³⁹ In the performance of the Trio at the IDRS Conference, Pheonix, Arizona in 1998, Moore played the rhythm indicated for the optional bassoon part. Victor Bruns, *Trio for Tenor Bassoon, Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, Op. 97. Richard Moore, William Waterhouse and Henry Skolnik. (Arizona: IDRS Conference, 1998), Performer's personal recording, Compact disc.

Chapter Eight - Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, Op. 98

The American contrabassoonist Henry Skolnick was a student when he first met Victor Bruns in East Berlin in 1984.³⁴⁰ It was Skolnick who, on a later visit in 1989, first suggested to Bruns that he write a concerto for the contrabassoon.³⁴¹ This suggestion was made at one of the many parties given for the composer, on this occasion at the home of Helge Bartholomäus. Although the idea was supported by other colleagues, including Bartholomäus, it was initially disregarded by Bruns. However, Skolnick felt that Bruns could be convinced to write the piece.³⁴²

When Skolnick returned to the United States, he approached the musical director of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, of which he was a member at the time, to commission Bruns to write the Concerto. Skolnick also asked the director to program the première of the work with the Orchestra when the commission was completed. Approval was given on the condition that Skolnick would find a supporter to finance the commission. Fortuitously, a donation was made to the Orchestra by Joanne Walbridge for a composition to be written in memory of her recently deceased mother, Doris Rothchild.³⁴³ The money was then wired to Bruns, who on receipt of the commission began work on the Contrabassoon Concerto.³⁴⁴ Bruns was most grateful for the financial reward and international importance that this commission represented. Skolnick commented that Bruns was excited about the prospect of writing a composition for the USA, a country he had never visited.³⁴⁵ The Concerto was started in autumn of 1991, around the time the Sonatina for Tenor bassoon and Piano, Op. 96 was being completed. The work was finished by February 1992 after the composition of the Trio for Tenor Bassoon, Bassoon and Contrabassoon, Op. 97.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁰ Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 18 March, 2004. Victor Bruns gave Skolnick copies of his solo contrabassoon works, Op. 57 and Op. 80, of which Skolnick gave several performances in the U.K and U.S.A.

³⁴¹ Ibid. See also Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 22 April, 2005.

³⁴² Skolnick, interview by the author.

³⁴³ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 82-83.

³⁴⁴ Skolnick, interview by the author.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Cf., Chapter Six p. 59, and Chapter Seven p. 67.

The Concerto, Op. 98 was premièred by Skolnick with the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra in February of 1996.³⁴⁷ The second and most recent performance of this concerto with orchestra was by Skolnick again at the IDRS Conference in Melbourne, July 3rd 2004.³⁴⁸ The Concerto, Op. 98 was also performed in the composer's piano reduction version by Skolnick and Jose Lopez on piano on 5th June 1996, at the IDRS Conference which was held at Florida State University in Tallahassee.³⁴⁹

This concerto is considered to be the most challenging composition that Bruns wrote for the contrabassoon. The technical demands it places on the soloist include the execution of a broad pitch range, control in high register passages, fingering, dynamic, balance, projection and breathing.³⁵⁰

During the composition process Skolnick and Bruns had a year long correspondence, within which they discussed the design of the concerto, including the range for the solo line.³⁵¹ Bruns wanted to know the range of Skolnick's instrument, as he envisaged using the range of B' to a' (written B to a").³⁵² Skolnick was exploring the potential range of the instrument at that time, hoping to extend it by experimenting with adjustments to the reeds. He discussed this with Bruns, who incorporated Skolnick's suggestions into his thinking.³⁵³

³⁴⁷ Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 18 March, 2004. Bartholomäus erroneously wrote in 'Zum Tode von Victor Bruns', 30; that the première was in May of 1996. Gbur explains that première of the work was delayed for four years and that several dates were proposed before the eventual performance on the 21 February, 1996. See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 82-85. Skolnick confirms this account.

³⁴⁸ See Conference program, '33rd Annual Conference, Monash University Clayton Campus, Melbourne, Australia June 29 - July 3, 2004' (Melbourne: International Double Reed Society). This performance was memorable as it coincided with the centenary year of Bruns' birth.

³⁴⁹ See Conference Program Terry B. Ewell, '25th Annual IDRS Conference Florida State University Tallahassee, Florida June 1-5, 1996'. (Boulder, Colorado: International Double Reed Society, 1999).

³⁵⁰ See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 96-99. See also, Skolnick, interview by the author. See also Skolnick, personal communication (Email) 14 April 2004.

³⁵¹ Skolnick, interview by the author. Skolnick and Bruns exchanged letters for a year during the composition of the concerto. Although attempts were made to obtain copies of Bruns correspondence to Skolnick, they were unavailable at the time of writing this thesis.

³⁵² Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 84. Gbur details certain points of Bruns' letter to Skolnick, dated Berlin, 23 November 1991.

³⁵³ An example and discussion of range are to follow.

Another concern that Bruns discussed with Skolnick was the contrabassoon's potential to project over the orchestra.³⁵⁴ Skolnick mentioned to Bruns a compositional device to facilitate this that was used by an American composer, Clark McAlister, in his double wind quintet: that of doubling the solo line at the octave.³⁵⁵ Their discussion of this successful device may have prompted the composer to use it for certain passages in the concerto.³⁵⁶ This doubling technique occurs throughout the whole concerto. Although this writing strengthens the solo line, care must be taken to ensure accurate intonation. An example of its success is the passage from bar 76 in the first movement, shown in Example 21.

³⁵⁴ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 83-84. According to Gbur, Bruns expresses his concern over the instrumentation and projection of the contrabassoon in letters to Skolnick dated Berlin 28 October 1991; Berlin 23 November 1991 and Berlin 16 December 1991.

³⁵⁵ *Bottom's Dream* for double wind quintet by Clark McAlister. In this piece, in which contrabassoon takes the solo status, McAlister writes effectively for the contrabassoon within a thick texture by doubling the contrabassoon line with bassoon at the octave. Skolnick was contrabassoon soloist for the first performance on 23 June, 1990. See Henry Skolnick, 'Letters to the Editor: Details of a Contrabassoon Recital', *The Double Reed* 13, no. 2 (1990).

³⁵⁶ Skolnick, interview by the author. Gbur states (p. 84) that Bruns mentions the use of the doubling of certain contrabassoon passages with bassoon in letters dated Berlin 16 December 1991 and Berlin 6 January 1992. In the latter, Bruns makes the further comment that if in practice projection were not a problem then the doubling part may be omitted.

81

Fl.

Fag.

Cor.

Tromp.

Horn

V. I.

V. II.

Viola

Cello

Bass

85

357

Victor Bruns

22. 24. System

Example 21: Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, Op. 98 I (bars 76-89)³⁵⁷

Here the contrabassoon's rapid staccato notes are doubled by the bassoon, which supports it and assists in making the solo line audible.

³⁵⁷ The published edition of the Contrabassoon Concerto was unavailable at the time of writing this thesis and study was made from a manuscript copy. Despite the poor quality of the handwritten score the musical examples from this work have been taken from this Manuscript. Victor Bruns, *Konzert für Contrafagott und Orchester*, Op. 98 (Manuscript Copy).

In the concerto Bruns was keen to take advantage of the talents of other instrumentalists within the orchestra by writing soloistic parts for them. In response to Skolnick's advice,³⁵⁸ Victor wrote solo roles for horn and percussion. For example, the cadenza in the final movement features a dialogue between horn and contrabassoon.³⁵⁹

The first movement of the concerto begins in c sharp minor and ends in C major.³⁶⁰

The form of this movement is A-B-A-B-Coda. As occurs in other of Bruns' bassoon concertos Bruns presents the full range of the instrument within the first theme of the work. In this first movement, Bruns experiments with pushing the upper limit of the contrabassoon's range. Example 22 is the opening phrase of the first movement.

³⁵⁸ In a letter from the composer to Skolnick, dated Berlin, 23 November 1991, Bruns writes that he was interested in highlighting the talents of principal horn player of the Florida Philharmonic, Andrew Lewinter. See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 83-84.

³⁵⁹ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 84. Gbur gathered this information from letters from Bruns to Skolnick dated Berlin, 23 November 1991 and Berlin, 6 January 1992.

³⁶⁰ The tonality in the first movement is often ambiguous. Concluding in a different key than that at the beginning is uncommon in Bruns' music. Gbur observed that Bruns experimented with using third-relationships for tonal centres in this work. Gbur makes additional comments to his argument that the closing tonalities for the three movements are C major, E minor and G major. See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 95-96.

Example 22: Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, Op. 98 I (bars 6-20)

Here the contrabassoon's solo normal range (to c') is extended with the inclusion of c' sharp (written c'' sharp).³⁶¹ To produce this note a player must either provide alternative fingerings or experiment with the shape of the reeds in order to achieve

³⁶¹ From his communication with Skolnick, Bruns was inspired to include this c'' sharp for a climactic effect. In many of his other solo works for bassoon, Bruns utilized the high note d'' for points of climax. Gbur speculates that perhaps Bruns had to restrain himself from reaching his "lieblings" tone (d'') in this concerto. See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 98.

accurate intonation.³⁶² Because Bruns instinctively knew that notes in this range would be difficult to play, he orchestrated the first bassoon to double the solo line at the octave in bars 14-15, in order to reinforce the contrabassoon.

Throughout the concerto Bruns orchestrates so that the solo instrument is always balanced with the orchestra.³⁶³ His orchestration is sensitive to the acoustic of the instrument, so that he scores the orchestra lightly during the contrabassoon solos. The solo line is accompanied either by wind, brass and percussion or by strings and percussion; only the opening, closing and middle *tutti* sections employ the full orchestra. For instance the contrabassoon's opening phrase in the first movement (shown in Example 22) is accompanied by strings and percussion with the dynamic marking *pianissimo*. The contrabassoon is accompanied by the full orchestra for the first time in bars 31-33, the first point of climax in the movement; although the dynamic level of the orchestra reaches *forte* in bar 33, the contrabassoon is again doubled at the octave by bassoon so that it projects clearly.³⁶⁴ Regardless of the assistance provided by the bassoon, the contrabassoonist must utilize a wide dynamic range in order to perform this work.

The second movement, in e minor, is in a compound ternary form: A-B-Cadenza-A. The mood of the movement is more solemn than the first. Bruns uses here typically Romantic melodic contours that ascend and descend in a crescendo-diminuendo effect. He frequently employs such melodic shapes in order to give intensity to his slow movements. This feature directly relates to the teachings of Bruns' first composition teacher, Vladimir Shcherbachyov, who encouraged his students to use this device.³⁶⁵ The opening theme of the second movement is one such instance of this feature. Example 23 shows bars 5-15 of the second movement of the Contrabassoon Concerto, Op. 98.

³⁶² Skolnick mentions he experimented with a different method of making his reeds in preparation for this work. See Skolnick, interview by the author.

³⁶³ Henry Skolnik, interview 2004

³⁶⁴ There are two other instances of the bassoon doubling the contrabassoon at the octave: in bars 31-34 in the second movement and in bars 28-32 in the third movement. On both occasions this writing, which appears in similar points of climax, strengthens the solo line and assists projection of the crescendo passage in preparation for the orchestral tutti.

³⁶⁵ Hass, *Leningrad's Modernists*, 85. This common romantic idiom of creating tension and release through melody and dynamic is consistent in Bruns' style. Skolnick commented on the orchestration and expression of this movement bearing resemblance to the works of Mahler. See Skolnick, interview by the author.

Andante tranquillo

Contra

Example 23: Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, Op. 98 II (bars 5-15)³⁶⁶

There is an arch melody encompassing a broad range of the instrument. The eleven bar theme is written for the range from B'' (written B') to the high c' (written c''). The upper register, although troublesome for intonation, is made manageable by being reached by step. This melody requires the player to project a smooth and full tone in all three registers. This seemingly long phrase would challenge the player's breath control; it would require the performer to breath in appropriately placed breaks within the phrase.³⁶⁷ If successfully executed, this passage displays to impressive effect the full compass and variety of tone colours available on the instrument.

In this movement Bruns pairs the principal horn with the contrabassoon in presenting some of the thematic material.³⁶⁸ The horn introduces the theme of the second section at bar 17, which the contrabassoon takes over at bar 21. These two instruments are paired later in the work.

Another feature of Shcherbachyov's teaching was the use of recapitulation. He taught his students to repeat motivic fragments or small passages in the conclusion of a movement or in final movements as a way to highlight important parts of the piece.³⁶⁹ These fragments or passages were small remembrances of motifs or main themes,

³⁶⁶ This example and example 24 have been extracted from the manuscript copy.

³⁶⁷ Skolnick commented on the long phrase requiring strategic breathing. See Skolnick, personal communication (Email), 14 April, 2004.

³⁶⁸ Similarly in the Bassoon Concerto No. 4, Op. 83, Bruns uses the harp as a partner instrument. See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 71-81.

³⁶⁹ Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, 139. Cf., Chapter Four, pp. 41-42.

used to give unity to the movement itself or, if used on a cross movement level, to the whole work. In many of Bruns' slow movements, including this concerto, he repeats the opening theme at the very end of the movement.

The third movement, in G major, has a similar compound ternary form but with a variation: A-B-A-Cadenza-A. The opening phrase for the contrabassoon is shown in Example 24.



Example 24: Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, Op. 98 III (bars 8-17)

It features articulation characteristic of instruments of the bassoon family, such as the passages with repeated staccato notes and rapid semiquaver phrases, which were a feature of Bruns' manner of writing for the instrument. In bars 8-14 the staccato articulation and moving semiquaver patterns make for an impressive and virtuosic effect.

There are many instances of imitative writing in this movement. The theme is developed from bars 20-22 with the clarinet, which is answered by the contrabassoon in bars 23-24. The oboe repeats the clarinet statement in bars 25-27, which both the bassoon and contrabassoon answer in bars 28-32, sounding in octaves.³⁷⁰ That the principal melodic line is interspersed between several instruments of the orchestra is a departure from the normal practice of the orchestra being the accompaniment subservient to the solo instrument within the concerto genre. One reason why Bruns may have orchestrated the melody in this way was that he was most concerned with

³⁷⁰ Imitative writing recurs in the second statement of the A theme, between clarinet and contrabassoon (bars 75-79) and between oboe and bassoon doubling contrabassoon (bars 80-88).

the projection of the contrabassoon and therefore composed the melodic line in a manner so that it would be easily heard within the texture of the orchestra.

Example 25 shows the cadenza in this final movement of the Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, Op. 98.

89 *poco ten.* *Cad. mantroppo scherzando*

Fl. *mf*

Ob. *mf*

Cl. *mf*

Fag. *mf*

Cor. *mf*

Tramp. *mf*

Yoblag. *mf*

Contrab. *mf*

V. I. *mf*

V. II. *mf*

Viola *mf*

Cello *mf*

Bass *mf*

90 *poco animato e accelerando*

2. *mf*

trif. *mf*

Yoblag. *mf*

I. *mf*

II. *mf*

ola. *mf*

llo. *mf*

ap. *mf*

Star Nr. 22, 24 Systeme ©

Example 25: Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra, Op. 98 III (bars 89-103)

There is an interesting dialogue between french horn and contrabassoon.³⁷¹ The cadenza is very brief, however over the eleven bars the two instruments share ideas in a call-and-response fashion which increases in rhythmic, dynamic and textural intensity until concluding with an ascending scale on the contrabassoon, which reaches the note a flat (written a' flat). The orchestra then finishes the movement with an eight bar coda based on theme 'A' material.

The examples discussed show the various challenges in this work, which is the most technically difficult of Bruns' solo works for contrabassoon. The discussion of the doubling device shown in Examples 21 and 22, demonstrates Bruns' knowledge of writing for the instrument so that it projects over the orchestra. Example 22 and Example 23 present the broad pitch range and extension of the upper register. It is evident from these examples that the soloist must employ the wide variety of tone colours available on the instrument. Other features of the instrument such as its

³⁷¹ As previously explained Bruns designed this to complement the horn player of the Florida Philharmonic, a close and respected colleague of the soloist.

characteristic articulations, both staccato and legato, in fast technical passages are presented in Example 24. The cadenza shown in Example 25 employs an innovative approach in using two instruments to present the solo melody. This manner of writing is successful in ensuring the solo melody is clearly audible.

Chapter Nine - Conclusion

The motivation for this paper was to promote the lesser known compositions for bassoon by Victor Bruns as well as to discuss how well he wrote for each instrument; bassoon, contrabassoon and tenor bassoon. It is hoped that by this discussion of both the works studied in this thesis and Bruns' compositions for bassoon in general, they will be considered to be worthwhile additions to the standard repertoire for bassoon.

The most significant feature of Victor Bruns' compositional style was that he always captured well the unique characteristics of the solo instrument. His years of orchestral experience as a bassoonist and contrabassoonist provided him with an expert knowledge of what worked well on the bassoon. He took full advantage of certain aspects of the instrument, such as its agility, the wide pitch range and the distinctive tone colours of each of its three registers. Bruns often wrote passages which appear to be technically challenging; however, as they are effectively written for the instrument, they are easily managed by an experienced player, often with the reward of producing an effect of dazzling virtuosity.

Bruns was also sensitive to the limitations of the instrument. His compositions are effective in that the surrounding texture is always well-balanced with the solo instrument. An example of this is when he employs certain compositional devices that enhance the resonance of a solo line within an orchestral score. In sonatas or in chamber music also, Bruns is sensitive to the instrument's scope for timbral and dynamic variety.

Bruns' two compositions that incorporate that rare instrument, the tenor bassoon, are significant in two respects; they serve by bringing the instrument to a wider audience, and they add to a repertoire of an instrument for which little has been composed. The exceptional quality of writing in Bruns' compositions, as demonstrated in Chapters Six and Seven, should ensure that they fulfil both roles. The fact that Bruns wrote a solo piece for the tenor bassoon, the *Sonatina*, Op. 97, is almost reason enough for the composition to be embraced into the sparse repertoire available for the instrument. The *Trio for Tenor bassoon, Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, Op. 97, not only includes

the tenor bassoon, but adds an unusual combination to the standard repertoire for bassoon. The recent publication of both Op. 96, and Op. 97, in versions where bassoon substitutes for tenor bassoon increases the opportunity for these fine works to be performed.

Bruns demonstrates an exceptional knowledge of the nature and potential virtuosity of the contrabassoon in the Trio, Op. 97 and the Contrabassoon Concerto, Op. 98. The Concerto is undeniably as worthy an addition to the contrabassoon solo repertoire as works from more prominent contemporaries. Both thematic substance and cadenzas pose challenges to the player's control of timbre, fingering and intonation in the upper register, with excellent rewards for those who persevere. The result is one of richness and brilliance for player and audience alike. It is with interest that the publication of this work be followed.

The literature on Bruns' bassoon compositions have currently seen dissertations written focused on the concertos, the sonatas, and with this study, the last three compositions. An area of study still left open is Bruns' chamber music which includes bassoon, of which there is a great deal, displaying equally exceptional pieces of writing for bassoon. It would be rewarding to see these works resurfaced for further study and performance. In order for that to occur, publications would need to be made available.

It is the author's intention that Bruns' works be disseminated further. Not only the bassoon repertoire, but the other symphonic and stage works of Bruns, that are of equally exceptional quality. This would be a large undertaking, and would require the dedication of those that hold the same opinion and desire to see this music promoted.

On a smaller level, it is the author's desire to perform the other concerti, sonatas and chamber works. It is believed that the opportunity for the premiere of the published edition for bassoon, Sonatine, Op. 96, is still available. Through more performance, it is desired that the music of Bruns will be promoted and further interest generated. Another avenue for dissemination is the publication of this study, with the intention that the information would reach a wider audience.

Appendix

Victor Bruns: List of Works

Solo works for Bassoon, Contrabassoon and Tenor Bassoon

| Opus | Work | Dedication | Première | Publication |
|------|---|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 5 | Konzert für Fagott und Orchester Nr. 1 (1933) | | Victor Bruns and Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, Albert Coates (Conductor), 9 April, 1934. | Leeds (1948) Feja (1993) B&H† |
| 12 | Fünf Stücke für Fagott und Klavier (1939) ³⁷² | | N.B Only four pieces remain | Feja |
| 15 | Konzert für Fagott und Orchester, Nr. 2 (1946) | Professor Willi Fugmann | Herbert Heilmann and Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra, G. Pflüger (Conductor), 1951. | Hofmeister (1954)† IMC (1958) |
| 20 | Sonate für Fagott und Klavier (1949) | Johannes Zuther | Victor Bruns and H. Wonneberger, Berlin 1949. | Pro Musica (1952) |
| 32 | Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene (1955) | | | Hofmeister (1957)† |
| 40 | Fünf Stücke für Fagott und Klavier (1965) | Fritz Finsch | Achim von Lorne, Bayrische Rundfunk, 1978. | B&H (1968) |

³⁷² This collection only consists of four pieces; it is believed the first piece was lost in Bruns' emigration to Germany. See Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 64.

| | | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 41 | Konzert für Fagott und Orchester, Nr. 3 (1966) | Herbert Heilmann | Herbert Heilmann and Berlin Staatskapelle, Heinz Rögner (Conductor), 16 March, 1970. ³⁷³ | B&H (1972) |
| 45 | Sonate für Fagott und Klavier, Nr. 2 (1969) | Otto Pischkittl | Otto Pischkittl and Herbert Kaliga, Bayrische Rundfunk, 1971. | B&H (1975) |
| 57 | Zwei Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier (1975) | | Ottfried Bienert and Herbert Kaliga, Berlin Rundfunk (DDR), 13 October, 1981. ³⁷⁴ | B&H (1991)† |
| 80 | Sechs Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier (1986) | | Henry Skolnick and José Lopez, Miami, 23 June, 1990 . | B&H (1991)† |
| 83 | Konzert für Fagott und Orchester, Nr 4 (1986) | Herbert Heilmann | Herbert Heilmann and Staatskapelle Berlin, Walter Weller (Conductor), 14 June, 1989. ³⁷⁵ | B&H Hofmeister (2004) |
| 86 | Sonate für Fagott und Klavier, Nr. 3 (1988) | Fritz Finsch | Mathias Baier and Michael Stöckigt, Berlin, 5 June, 1990. | Feja (1991)† |
| 94 | Vier Virtuose Stücke für Fagott solo (1989)* | Helge Bartholomäus | Hans-Peter Steger, Dresden, 26 January 1985. ³⁷⁶ Helge Bartholomäus, Berlin, 1989. | Feja (1992) |
| 95 | Konzertante Suite für Kontrafagott und Klavier (1991) | Ottfried Bienert | Ottfried Bienert and Michael Stöckigt, Berlin March, 1996. | Feja ³⁷⁷ |

³⁷³ Hans Peter Müller, 'Victor Bruns: Fagottkonzert', *Musik und Gesellschaft*. 20 (May 1970): 339-340.

³⁷⁴ Ludwig Müller, *Sozialistisches Musikschaffen in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Uraufführungen 1981* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1982): 29.

³⁷⁵ Ludwig Müller, *Zeitgenössisches Musikschaffen in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Uraufführungen 1989* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1990): 13.

³⁷⁶ Ludwig Müller, *Zeitgenössisches Musikschaffen in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Uraufführungen 1985* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1986): 43.

Although some authors quote the performance by Bartholomäus as the première, confusion arises as to the date of completed composition.

³⁷⁷ Werner Feja intended to publish the Concertante Suite for Contrabassoon and Piano, however, this edition is yet to be released.

| | | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------|--|---|
| 96 | Sonatine für Fagot (Tenorfagott) und Klavier (1992) | Richard Moore | Richard Moore and Timothy Raymond De Ysbreker, Amsterdam, 11 May, 1992. | Hofmeister (2004) [†] |
| 98 | Konzert für Kontrafagott und Orchester (1992) | Henry Skolnick ³⁷⁸ | Henry Skolnick and Florida Philharmonic, Duilio Dobrin (Conductor), 21 February, 1996. | Bassoon Heritage Edition - Hofmeister* |

Chamber Music

| Opus | Work | Dedication | Première | Publication |
|------|---|------------|----------|--------------------|
| | Humoresque “Die vier lustigen Kollegen” (four bassoons) | | | MS Bartholomäus |
| | Marsch (four bassoons) | | | MS Bartholomäus |
| 1 | Musik für 3 Klarinetten und Fagott | | | Lost |
| 2 | Zwei kleine Suiten für 2 Flöten, 2 Oboen und 2 Fagotte | | | Lost |
| 6 | Streichquartett (1934) | | | Lost |

³⁷⁸ The Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra was commissioned by the Florida Philharmonic, with a donation made by Joanne Walbridge.

| | | | |
|----|---|---|---|
| 16 | Bläser quintett für Flöte, Oboe, Klarinette, Horn, Fagott (1947) | Hans Frenz (Flute), Bernhard Schnase (Oboe), Heinrich Geuser (Clarinet), Pawelick (Horn), Willy Fugmann (Bassoon); Berlin 1947. | Hofmeister (1954) [†] |
| 17 | Streichquartet Nr. 2 (1947) | | Feja, B&H |
| 18 | Holzbläserquartett für Flöte, Oboe, Klarinette, und Fagott (1948) | Ronald Waln (Flute), Dwight Manning (Oboe), Theodore Jahn (Clarinet), Bruce Gbur (Bassoon); Athens, Georgia, 14 March, 1995. ³⁷⁹ | Accolade (2003) |
| 34 | Sextett für Flöte, Oboe, Klarinette, Horn, Fagott und Klavier (1957) | Peter Fremerey (Flute), Hans-Georg Rast (Oboe), Oskar Michallik (Clarinet), Karl Steinbrecher (Bassoon), Helmut Kranz (Horn) and Häns Löwlein (Piano); Berlin Staatsoper, 13 October, 1957. | Feja# |
| 38 | Streichquartett, Nr. 3 (1961) | | Feja, B&H |
| 42 | Oktett für Klarinette, Fagott, 2 Violinen, Viola, Violoncello und Kontrabass (1968) | Der Kammermusikvereinigung der Berliner Philharmoniker | # Philharmonisches Orchester Berlin, Vienna 1969. ³⁸⁰ |

³⁷⁹ See Stomberg, "The Bassoon Sonatas," 83. The first performance of this work in Germany was played by "Kammermusik Berlin" – Iris Jetz (Flute), Gudrun Reschke (Oboe), Alexander Roske (Clarinet), and Mathias Baier (Bassoon) – on 29 September, 2001 in Würzburg. See notes by Bodo Koenigsbeck in Victor Bruns, *Holzbläserquartett für Flöte, Oboe, Klarinette und Fagott, Op. 18* (Warrngau: Accolade Musikverlag, 2003).

³⁸⁰ This work was written for the West Berlin ensemble, the Berlin Philharmonic Octet, who premiered the work in Vienna.

| | | | |
|----|--|---|---------------------------|
| 49 | Trio für Oboe, Klarinette und Fagott (1971) | Walter Weih (Oboe), Helmut Hofmann (Clarinete) and Herbert Heilmann (Bassoon), Berliner Rundfunk, 1974. | B&H (1979) ³⁸¹ |
| 55 | Kleine Suite für 3 Fagotte und Kontrafagott (1974) | Herbert Heilmann, Dieter Hähnchen, Hans-Dieter Seidel (Bassoons), Offried Bienert (Contrabassoon), Berliner Rundfunk, 1976. | B&H (1984) |
| 58 | Konzertante Musik für Fagott und Streichtrio (1976) | Herbert Heilmann (Bassoon), Friedrich-Carl Erben (Violin), Arnim Orlamünde (Viola), Wolfgang Bernhardt (Violoncello), Berlin Staatsoper, 26 September, 1979. ³⁸² | B&H (1982) |
| 62 | Kleine Sinfonie für 12 Violoncelli (1978) | | Feja |
| 68 | Kleine Suite Nr. 2 für 3 Fagotte und Kontrafagott (1981) | Herbert Heilmann, Frank Heintze, Hans-Dieter Seidel (Bassoons), Offried Bienert (Contrabassoon), Berlin Schauspielhaus, 12 November, 1984. ³⁸³ | B&H (1984) |

³⁸¹ This publication does not include the oboe part. Written on the score, mentions the fact that the score is in place of the oboe part.

³⁸² Ludwig Müller, *Sozialistisches Musikschaffen in der Deutschen Demokratische Republik: Uraufführungen 1979* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1980): 20. See also "September und Oktober 1979 uraufgeführt." *Musik und Gesellschaft*. 29 (December 1979): 755.

³⁸³ Ludwig Müller, *Zeitgenössisches Musikschaffen in der Deutschen Demokratische Republik: Uraufführungen 1984* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1985): 25. See also Beate Nauenburg, 'Uraufführungen von Victor Bruns', *Musik und Gesellschaft*. 35 (January 1985): 52-53.

| | | | | |
|----|---|--|---|---------------------------|
| 71 | Streichsextett Nr. 1 für 2 Violinen, 2 Violoncelli (1982) | Dem Schweriner Streichquintett der Mecklenburgischen Staatskapelle | Werner Mentzel, Günther Hanisch (VI), Hubertus Nicklisch, Hartmut Juch (VIa), Frank Matzke, Bernd Martin (VIc), Schwerin, 14 January, 1983. ³⁸⁴ | B&H (1988) ³⁸⁵ |
| 72 | Minatüren für 6 Flöten (Picc, Fl. (4), Alt Fl.) (1982) | | Manfred Friedrich, Matthais Schmidt, Mathais Bust, Herman Wolfram, Otto Rülemann, Thomas Beyer, Deutsche Staatsoper, Berlin, 31 January 1983. ³⁸⁶ | Hofmeister# |
| 75 | Streichsextett Nr. 2 für 2 Violinen, 2 Violoncelli (1983) | Dem Erben Quartett | Karl Eben, Ralf-Reiner Haase (VI), Arnim Orlamünde, Wolfgang Bernhadt (VIa), Michael Scheitzbach, Ulrich Stetter (VIc), Berlin Schauspielhaus, 12 November, 1984. ³⁸⁷ | B&H (1988) |
| 79 | Streichquintet Nr. 1 für 2 Violinen, 2 Violoncello (1985) | | Werner Mentzel, Gabrielle Mentzel (VI), Hubertus Nicklisch, Hartmut Juch (VIa), Frank Matzke (VIc), Schwerin, Mecklenburgischen Staatskapelle, 21 September, 1986. ³⁸⁸ | B&H, Feja |

³⁸⁴ Ludwig Müller, *Zeitgenössisches Musikschaffen in der Deutschen Demokratische Republik: Uraufführungen 1983* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1984): 17.

³⁸⁵ In the same publication includes the String Sextet No. 2.

³⁸⁶ Müller, *Uraufführungen 1983*, 27.

³⁸⁷ This work was premiered on the same program as the Kleine Suite Nr. 2. See Müller, *Uraufführungen 1984*, 18.

³⁸⁸ Ludwig Müller, *Zeitgenössisches Musikschaffen in der Deutschen Demokratische Republik: Uraufführungen 1986* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1987): 19.

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|----|---|--|-----------------------------|
| 81 | Streichquintett Nr. 2 für 2 Violinen, Viola, 2 Violoncelli (1986) | Erben Quartet, Egbert Schimmelpfennig (Kl), Berlin Schauspielhaus, 18 January, 1988. ³⁸⁹ | Feja (1992) |
| 82 | Trio für Klavier, Violine, Violoncello (1986) | | Unpublished |
| 84 | Trio Nr. 1 für Klarinette, Fagott, und Klavier (1987) | Heiner Schindler (Clarinete), Ingo Reuter (Bassoon), Lisa Gogolin (Piano), Berlin Schauspielhaus, 18 September, 1989. ³⁹⁰ | Feja (1991) [†] |
| 91 | Trio Nr. 2 für Klarinette, Fagott, und Klavier (1990) | Mathias Glander (Clarinete), Holger Staube (Bassoon), Viola Straube (Piano), Berlin, 1990. | Feja (1991) [†] |
| 92 | Kleine Suite Nr. 3 für 3 Fagotte und Kontrafagott (1990) | Gerhard Rapsch, Thomas Kollikowski, Helge Bartholomäus (Bassoons), Stanislav Riva (Contrabassoon), Berlin, 17 May, 1991. | Feja (1992) [†] |
| 97 | Trio für Tenorfagott, Fagott und Kontrafagott (1992) | Berliner Fagottquartett - Berlin Bassoon Quartet William Waterhouse ³⁹¹ | Feja (1995) ^{†393} |

August 1992.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ Ludwig Müller, *Zeitgenössisches Musikschaffen in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Uraufführungen 1988* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1989): 20.
³⁹⁰ Müller, *Uraufführungen 1989*, 33.

³⁹¹ The Trio for Tenor Bassoon, Bassoon and Contrabassoon was commissioned by Richard Moore.

³⁹² The alternate version for two bassoons and contrabassoon was first performed by Helge Bartholomäus, Thomas Kollikowski (bassoons) and Stanislav Riha (contrabassoon) at Ludwigslust on the 22 April, 1995.

| | | |
|----|--|-------------|
| 99 | Oktett für 7 Fagotte und Kontrafagott (fragment) | Unpublished |
|----|--|-------------|

Solo works for wind and strings

| Opus | Work | Dedication | Première | Publication |
|------|---|--------------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| 9 | Sonate für Violine und Klavier | | | Lost |
| 11 | 3 Stücke für Violoncello und Klavier (1938) | | | Feja |
| 22 | Sonate für Klarinette und Klavier (1949) | Heinrich Geuser | | Pro Musica (1951) |
| 24 | Sonate für Klavier (1950) | | | Feja |
| 25 | Sonate für Oboe und Klavier (1950) | | | Hofmeister (1954) [†] |
| 26 | Konzert für Klarinette und Orchester (1951) | Oskar Michallik | | Hofmeister (1965) |
| 28 | Konzert für Oboe und Kleines Orchester (1952) | Hans Werner Wätzig | | Hofmeister (1956) [†] |

³⁹³ Publication by Werner Feja includes the optional part for bassoon. See Victor Bruns, *Trio für Fagottino oder Fagott(1), Fagott (2), und Kontrafagott, Op. 97* (Berlin: Musik- und Buchverlag Werner Feja, 1995).

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|----|---|------------------|--|
| 29 | Konzert für Violoncello und Orchester (1958) ³⁹⁴ | Bernhard Günther | B&H (1965) |
| 30 | Fünf Stücke für Klavier (1953) | | Feja |
| 35 | Sonate für Violoncello und Klavier (1958) | | B&H |
| 36 | Konzert für Violine und Orchester (1959) | | B&H |
| 43 | Expression für Violoncello und Klavier (1968) | | Feja |
| 44 | 4 Stücke für Klarinette und Klavier (1968) | | B&H (1973) |
| 48 | Konzert für Klarinette und Orchester Nr. 2 (1971) | Ewald Koch | Hofmeister (1983) |
| 50 | Konzerte für Trompete und Orchester (1972) | Willi Krug | Willi Krug, Rundfunk Sinfonie Orchester Berlin, (1979) |
| 51 | Konzert für Flöte und kleines Orchester (1972) | | Wolf-Dieter Hauschild (Conductor), March, 1977. Manfred Friedrich, Berlin Staatskapelle, Berlin, 1974. ³⁹⁵ B&H |

³⁹⁴ Most Bibliographies list this work as being completed in 1958; however, Gbur states it was one of two works completed in 1953. The other work being the Piano pieces, Op. 30. See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 17. Whether or not the date could be a mistake on publisher's part is uncertain.

³⁹⁵ Hans-Peter Müller, 'Victor Bruns 70', *Musik und Gesellschaft* 24 (August 1974): 507-508.

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|----|--|------------------|--|
| 52 | 6 Stücke für Violoncello und Klavier (1973) | Friedrich Bruns | B&H (1977) [†] |
| 53 | Konzert für Violine und kleines Orchester Nr. 2 (1974) | | B&H |
| 59 | Konzert für Violoncello und kleines Orchester Nr. 2 (1977) | | Feja |
| 60 | Sonate für Viola und Klavier (1977) | Manfred Schumann | Manfred Schumann (Vla), Joachim Freyer (Kl), Berlin, 26 September, 1979. ³⁹⁶ |
| 61 | Konzert für Englischhorn und kleines Orchester (1978) | Dieter Wagner | Dieter Wagner, Orchester der Komischen Oper, Joachim Willert (Conductor), Berlin, 22/23 February, 1980. ³⁹⁷ |
| 63 | Konzert für Horn und kleines Orchester (1979) | | Gerhard Meyer, Konzert der Mecklenburgischen Staatskapelle, Dieter-Gerhardt Worm (Conductor), Schwerin Festival, 24 November, 1981. ³⁹⁸ |
| 65 | 2 Bagatellen für Violine und Cello (1980) | | Feja |

³⁹⁶ Müller, *Uraufführungen 1979*, 18.

³⁹⁷ Michael Dasche, 'Kammerorchesterkonzert mit Uraufführung von Victor Bruns', *Musik und Gesellschaft* 30 (May 1980): 293. See also 'Von Februar bis April 1980 uraufgeführt', *Musik und Gesellschaft* 30 (June 1980): 360. Müller records première as 22 February, 1980. See Ludwig Müller, *Sozialistisches Musikschaffen in der Deutschen Demokratische Republik: Uraufführungen 1980* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1981): 10.

³⁹⁸ Müller, *Uraufführungen 1981*, 13. See also 'Von Oktober bis Dezember 1981 uraufgeführt', *Musik und Gesellschaft* 32 (February 1982): 100.

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|----|--|---|-----------------------|
| 66 | Konzert für Oboe, Fagott und Streichorchester (1980) | Walter Weih (Ob), Herbert Heilmann (Fg), Kammerorchester “Musica Nova” der Staatskapelle Berlin, Hartmut Hänchen, 3 October, 1981. ³⁹⁹ | B&H Hofmeister (2004) |
| 69 | Konzert für Viola und kleines Orchester (1981) | Matthias Worm, Philharmonisches Orchester Frankfurt/Main, Anton Nanut (Conductor), 4 September, 1989. ⁴⁰⁰ | B&H |
| 73 | Konzert für Kontrabass und Streichorchester (1982) | Hans-Heinze Dawecke, Orchester d. Philharmonischen Gesellschaft, Helmuth Steinbach (Conductor), 2 July, 1984. ⁴⁰¹ | B&H (1986) |
| 74 | Konzert für Flöte, Englishhorn, Streichorchester und Schlagzeug (1982) | Werner Tast (Fl), Dieter Wagner (Eh) Rundfunk Orchester Leipzig, Hans-Jörg Leopold (Conductor), Rundfunk d. DDR – Leipzig, October 1988. ⁴⁰² | B&H |

³⁹⁹ Müller, *Uraufführungen 1981*, 18. See also ‘Von Oktober bis Dezember 1981 uraufgeführt’, *Musik und Gesellschaft* 32 (February 1982): 100.

⁴⁰⁰ Müller, *Uraufführungen 1989*, 13.

⁴⁰¹ Müller, *Uraufführungen 1984*, 13.

⁴⁰² Müller, *Uraufführungen 1988*, 15.

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|----|--|---|-------------------|
| 76 | Konzert für Klarinette und Kleines Orchester Nr. 3 (1984) | Oskar Mischallik, Orchester d. Theaters Dessau, Hans-Jörg Leopold (Conductor), 10 February, 1988. ⁴⁰³ | Hofmeister B&H |
| 77 | Konzert für Violoncello und kleines Orchester Nr. 3 (1984) | Peter Bruns, Dresden Staatskapelle, Dresden, 1989. ⁴⁰⁴ | B&H |
| 78 | Konzert für Orchester (1985) | Staatskapelle Berlin, Horst Stein (Conductor), Berlin, 21 October, 1993. ⁴⁰⁵ | B&H |
| 85 | Konzert für Bläserquintett, Schlagzeug und Streichorchester (1987) | Bläservereinigung Berlin, Orchester d Staaht Plauen, Klaus Dieter Demmler (Conductor), Plauen, 1 December, 1988. ⁴⁰⁶ | B&H |
| 87 | Konzert für 2 Klarinetten und kleines Orchester (1988) | Oskar Michallik | B&H |
| 88 | Sonate für Violine und Klavier Nr. 2 (1988) | Jürgen Bruns ⁴⁰⁷ | Feja |

⁴⁰³ Ibid, 11.

⁴⁰⁴ Helge Bartholomäus, 'Victor, fang mit kleinen Sachen an!' Der Fagottist und Komponist Vivtor Bruns wurde 87' ['Victor, begin with the little things!'] The bassoonist, composer Victor Bruns turns 87'] *Oboe-Klarinette-Fagott* 6, no 4 (1991): 191. Although Bartholomäus writes later that the première by Peter Bruns was in November, 1992. See Helge Bartholomäus, 'Victor Bruns zum 90. Geburtstag', *Rohrblatt* 9, no. 3 (1994): 99. Peter Bruns also performed this Concerto in Suhl with the Suhler Philharmonie and Klaus Morgenstern (Conductor) on 21 March, 1989. See 'Reaktionen', *Inform* 1 (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1989): 11.

⁴⁰⁵ Concert Program, 'Sinfonie Konzert – Der Staatskapelle Berlin', (Berlin, 21/22 October, 1993).

⁴⁰⁶ Müller, *Uraufführungen 1988*, 1. This work was commissioned by the city of Plauen.

⁴⁰⁷ Bartholomäus, 'Victor Bruns zum 90. Geburtstag', 99. Bartholomäus omits further details as to the place and date of this première.

| | | | |
|----|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 89 | Konzert für Violine, Violoncello und Orchester (1989) | Not been performed | Feja |
| 90 | Sonate für Flöte und Klavier (1989) | | B&H |
| 94 | 4 Virtuose Stücke für Horn solo (1989) | Prof. Peter Damm | Feja (1994) |
| 0 | <i>Valse Grazioso</i> für Klavier | | B&H Accolade (2003) |

Symphony

| Opus | Work | Dedication | Première | Publication |
|------|---|---------------|----------|-------------|
| 3 | Suite für Orchester | | | Lost |
| 7 | Filmmusik | | | Lost |
| 8 | Symphonische Dichtung für großes orchester | | | Lost |
| 13 | Sinfonie Nr. 1 (1943) | | | Feja |
| 14 | Sinfonie Nr. 2 (1944) | | | |
| 19 | Orchesterstücke (1948) | Boris Blacher | | B&H (1953) |

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|----|--|---|---|------------|
| 21 | Sinfonie Nr. 2 (1949) ⁴⁰⁸ | | | |
| 23 | Sinfonietta für Orchester (1950) | | 1953. ⁴⁰⁹ | B&H (1954) |
| 37 | Sinfonie Nr. 3 "Dramatische" (1960) | | Staatskapelle Berlin, Heinz Röttger (Conductor), Berlin, 1962. ⁴¹⁰ | B&H |
| 47 | Sinfonie Nr. 4 Konzertante für Bläserquintett und orchester (1970) | Staatskapelle Berlin - "400jährigen Jubiläums" | Staatskapelle Berlin, Werner Egk (Conductor), 10 May, 1971. ⁴¹¹ | B&H (1989) |
| 64 | Sinfonie Nr. 5 (1979) | Staatskapelle Berlin | Staatskapelle Berlin, Heinz Fricke (Conductor), Berlin, 18 June, 1987. ⁴¹² | |
| 67 | Sinfonie Nr. 6 "Breve" (1980) | | Staatliches Sinfonieorchester Neubrandenburg, Fred Buttkewitz (Conductor), Neubrandenburg, 10 September, 1981. ⁴¹³ | B&H |
| 70 | Kammersinfonie (1981) | | KammerSymphonie Berlin, Jürgen Bruns (Conductor), Berlin, 1991. ⁴¹⁴ | |

⁴⁰⁸ Bruns withdrew the title of the earlier work and gave to Symphony No. 2, Op. 21. See Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 16.

⁴⁰⁹ Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 16. Gbur states the date of première as 1953 however, further details about this performance is uncertain. It has been documented that the work was performed later by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, conducted by Helmut Seydelmann in 1960. See Horst Richter, 'Victor Bruns', In *Informationsbroschüre von Breitkopf und Härtel Musikverlag und Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1989).

⁴¹⁰ Richter, 'Victor Bruns'.

⁴¹¹ Hans-Peter Müller, 'Victor Bruns: IV Sinfonie', *Musik und Gesellschaft* 21 (October 1971): 663-664. This work was commissioned by the Staatskapelle for their 400th anniversary concert.

⁴¹² Müller, *Uraufführungen 1987*, 1

⁴¹³ Karsten Bartels, 'Victor Bruns: Sinfonie Op. 67', *Musik und Gesellschaft* 33 (February 1982): 94-95. See also Müller, *Uraufführungen 1981*, 1.

Vocal and Stage Works

| Opus | Work | Dedication | Première | Publication |
|------|---|------------|---|-------------|
| 4 | <i>Die Mauer der Erschossenen</i> (<i>The Firing Squad Wall</i>) für Baß und Orchester | | | Lost |
| 10 | Romanzen für Bass oder Baritone und Klavier (text from Pushkin) | | | Feja |
| 27 | <i>Das Recht des Herren</i> (<i>The Lord's Privilege</i>) (Ballet) (1953) Piano reduction. Orchestral Suites I & II (1953) | | Staatsoper Ballet, 12 July 1953. | B&H (1954) |
| 31 | <i>Das Edelfräulein als Bäuerin</i> (<i>The Nobelman's Daughter as Farmer's Wife</i>) (Ballet) (1955) Orchestral Suite (1955) | | Staatsoper Ballet, 1955. ⁴¹⁵ | B&H |

⁴¹⁴ Bartholomäus, 'Victor', 191.

⁴¹⁵ Although the Staatsoper produced the first performance in 1955, it is uncertain whether the première was in Berlin or in Leipzig. See Richter, 'Victor Bruns'.

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|----|---|---|-------------------|
| 33 | <i>Neue Odyssee (New Odyssey)</i> (Ballet) (1957) Piano Reduction. Orchestral Suites I & II (1957) <i>Minna von Barnhelm</i> (Comic Opera) (1962/67) Overture to <i>Minna von Barnhelm</i> (1967) <i>Das Band der Ariadne</i> (1969/71) Ballet trilogy <i>Theseus</i> part one | Staatsoper Ballet, 16 November 1957. ⁴¹⁶ | B&H (1960) |
| 39 | <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> (1973/74) Ballet trilogy <i>Theseus</i> part two | | Overture - B&H |
| 46 | <i>Phaedra</i> (1975) Ballet trilogy <i>Theseus</i> part three | | |

⁴¹⁶ The Berlin Staatsoper gave forty-five performances of this ballet between 1957 and 1962. The ballet was also performed at the Prague Spring Festival on 25 May, 1959 as well as in other East European cities. Gbur, "The Bassoon Concertos," 18-19. See also Werner Otto, Wolfgang Jersak and Marion Schöne, *Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin* (Berlin, DDR: Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, 1980), 24, 133.

Publishers

Accolade – Accolade Musikverlag und Notensversand

B&H – Breitkopf & Härtel

Feja – Musik- und Buchverlag Werner Feja

Hofmeister – Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag

IMC – International Music Company

† Publication also available from Accolade

Publication details are uncertain. It is presumed the rights to unpublished works remain with Waldemar Bruns (executor of Bruns' estate).

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