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The Bassoon Sonatas of Victor Bruns: An

analytical and performance perspective (with an

annotated bibliography of works for bassoon)

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**The Bassoon Sonatas of Victor Bruns:  
An analytical and performance perspective  
(with an annotated bibliography of works for bassoon)**

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## **Abstract**

Sonata repertoire for bassoon and piano is rather narrow in scope and quantity when compared to sonata repertoire of other woodwind instruments. Outside of the sonatas for bassoon and piano of Etler, Hindemith, Hurlstone, Saint-Saëns, and Wilder, works are relatively few and rarely played. Representative works from the mid-to-late twentieth century are often difficult even to locate. Fortunately, a substantial body of sonata repertoire lies in the three sonatas for bassoon and piano by Victor Bruns (1904-96). Bruns was one of many bassoonist-composers, most of whom were professors at the Paris Conservatory, who added to the relatively small amount of repertoire for the instrument, yet his works are relatively unknown. In addition to these three sonatas, Bruns composed music for bassoon including: four bassoon concerti, a contrabassoon concerto, three additional works for bassoon and piano, two pieces for contrabassoon and piano, numerous pedagogical etudes and studies, and chamber music in various genres.

Bruns was a prolific composer of symphonic music, instrumental concerti, chamber music, and music for the stage. Unfortunately, the majority of his works are relatively unknown outside Germany and Eastern Europe, and many are out of print, sold in manuscript only or difficult to obtain. The purpose of this thesis is to provide, through a detailed examination of his three sonatas for bassoon and piano and an annotated bibliography of works for bassoon, an analytical and performance perspective of the unique compositional style of Victor Bruns.



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## Introduction

Sonata repertoire for bassoon and piano is rather narrow in scope and quantity when compared to sonata repertoire of other woodwind instruments. Outside of the sonatas for bassoon and piano of Etler, Hindemith, Hurlstone, Saint-Saëns, and Wilder, works are relatively few and rarely played. Representative works from the mid-to-late twentieth century are often difficult even to locate. Fortunately, a substantial body of sonata repertoire lies in the three sonatas for bassoon and piano by Victor Bruns (1904-96). Bruns was one of many bassoonist-composers, most of whom were professors at the Paris Conservatory, who added to the relatively small amount of repertoire for the instrument, yet his works are relatively unknown. In addition to these three sonatas, Bruns composed music for bassoon including: four bassoon concerti, a contrabassoon concerto, three additional works for bassoon and piano, two pieces for contrabassoon and piano, numerous pedagogical etudes and studies, and chamber music in various genres. Many of these works are discussed in Chapter Seven.

Bruns was a prolific composer of symphonic music, instrumental concerti, chamber music, and music for the stage. Unfortunately, the majority of his works are relatively unknown outside Germany and Eastern Europe, and many are out of print, sold in manuscript only or difficult to obtain. The purpose of this thesis is to provide, through a detailed examination of his three sonatas for bassoon and piano and an annotated bibliography of works for bassoon, an analytical and performance perspective of the unique compositional style of Victor Bruns.

The three sonatas were dedicated to prominent bassoon performers and pedagogues in the former East Germany. Through interviewing the dedicatees as well as their former students and colleagues, it has become obvious that Bruns’s music was highly regarded and played an important role in Berlin and in the former East German compositional scene of the twentieth century. “He was a gifted composer who wrote much for our instrument and was a very modest, dear person who took great joy in having his works performed.”<sup>1</sup> “The biggest joy that someone could give to Bruns was to play his music.”<sup>2</sup>

It is the intention of the author to help to make Bruns’s works for bassoon (solo and chamber music) more mainstream in the United States. A greater awareness of his music will hopefully lead to an interest in publishing the out-of-print and unpublished works.

The following system of ranges will be employed in discussing the sonatas:



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<sup>1</sup> Fritz Finsch, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 11 March, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Mathias Baier, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 9 April, 2003.

## Chapter One

### Biographical Information and Overview of Compositional Style

Victor Bruns was born into a musical family on August 15, 1904, in Ollila, Finland. Although ethnically German, the Bruns family maintained a summer home in Finland while living the remainder of the year in Leningrad where Bruns's father was a businessman. Bruns recalls, "music was beloved in our house. My mother played piano, and . . . wanted all three children . . . to learn an instrument. So, we received instruction: I [took] piano, the oldest violin, and the youngest cello; we performed as a trio."<sup>3</sup>

Victor's father passed away in the revolution of 1917. The family struggled financially, but "music was still beloved, and that was beautiful."<sup>4</sup> Victor received his first musical training at a German school in Leningrad where he studied piano. His oldest brother played violin in the school orchestra. He asked Victor if he would like to play in the orchestra with him and brought a bassoon [home] with him. "Until then, I had no idea about this instrument."<sup>5</sup> Bruns began to take private lessons with the principal bassoonist of the Maryinsky Theater, Vassily Gavrilov. Bruns had no way to pay for the lessons, but Gavrilov suggested the following, "'as you are working in a market garden you can bring me some fresh vegetables each time.' So Bruns would turn up for his lessons with the bassoon and a rucksack full of vegetables." Gavrilov insisted, "Mr. Bruns, you must become a musician, it will provide a piece of bread, and since you have no father. . . ."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Victor Bruns, "A Conversation with Victor Bruns." Interview by Reiner Kontressowitz. *Inform I*, (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d.), 32.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Bruns entered the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in 1924 at age 20, auditioning on the Mozart Concerto, to study bassoon with Alexander Vassiliev, the solo bassoonist of the Leningrad Philharmonic. Following graduation, Bruns successfully auditioned for a position with the Leningrad State Opera and Ballet. His time in the opera orchestra provided a venue for meeting composers including Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Berg, Stravinsky, and Hindemith. He also studied composition with Vladimir Stscherbatschow (Shostakovich's teacher and a former student of Maximilian Steinberg who was, in turn, a former student of Rimsky-Korsakov) while there. "In the thirties, Victor got to know Prokofiev in Leningrad and was very impressed with his music. Together with three classmates, he played [Prokofiev's] *Humorous Scherzo*, op. 12 for 4 bassoons for [the composer]. Prokofiev was Victor's model. Prokofiev and Shostakovich had an influence on his style; later Boris Blacher [influenced his style]." <sup>7</sup> It was at this time that Bruns began to study composition seriously. "There were many composers that came to me with their chamber music works, to play with and listen, and that was, for me, the cause to compose."<sup>8</sup>

In 1938 at age 34, however, Bruns was forced to leave Leningrad on Stalin's orders that all ethnic Germans be expelled. After spending time as a copyist in a music-publishing house, Bruns later accepted a position with the Berlin *Volksoper*, playing bassoon and contrabassoon, until the orchestra stopped operating in 1944. Although Victor's home was bombed in the war and his bassoon was lost, he was able to borrow a bassoon and win a position in the *Berlin Staatsoper*. From 1946 to 1969 Bruns held a position as contrabassoonist with the Berlin *Staatskapelle*.

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<sup>7</sup> Waldemar Bruns, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 12 April, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Victor Bruns, "A Conversation with Victor Bruns," 33.

Beginning in 1946 Bruns studied with Boris Blacher, a prominent mid-twentieth-century Berlin composer. Drawing upon the experience Bruns had in the orchestra, Blacher encouraged him to compose solo and chamber music, mediums that Bruns performed and heard on a regular basis. The influence of Blacher and Bruns's own experiences within the orchestra, referred to by Bruns as his "third [composition] teacher,"<sup>9</sup> resulted in numerous compositions for solo instruments and small chamber ensembles. Bruns found great joy in composing for his colleagues in the orchestra. Consequently, he rarely wrote on commission.

Brun's compositional output totals over ninety works in addition to the works published without opus in the pedagogical collection *Das Fagott*. Within this six-volume set Bruns wrote an additional thirty-three pieces, making him the most prolific bassoonist/composer in the history of the instrument.

The majority of Bruns's works follow axioms stated in his conversations with Helge Bartholomäus in an interview celebrating his 87<sup>th</sup> birthday. "I am always asked for something melodious and tuneful which needs to be straightforward and rhythmically interesting. The most important thing [for me] is [to] present the characteristic features, tone colors, and possibilities of the instrument[s] in question."<sup>10</sup> It is the interest generated through lyricism and rhythm that weaves the strongest thread through his solo, chamber, and symphonic music. His imaginative melodies and abundance of varying rhythmic elements, always changing to characterize different thematic areas, is fascinating. Bruns consistently inverted main themes, used large intervals and sequences

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<sup>9</sup> Helge Bartholomäus, "Victor Bruns.," *Double Reed* 14 No. 3 (Winter 1991): 39.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

to reach climaxes, and continuously developed melodic and rhythmic material throughout his works.

Blacher urged Bruns to avoid fugal writing while encouraging him to explore a greater complexity of rhythm in his compositions. These developments in Bruns's music, can be analyzed on several different levels: rhythmic elements as they apply to thematic areas, rapid rhythmic motion in slow movements, and the presentation and development of rhythmic motives. "Rhythmic motives are somewhat normal and important in Victor's music. He intended it."<sup>11</sup> Bruns trademark *anacrusis motives*, detailed in Chapter Two, permeate his compositions.

Of utmost importance to Bruns next to lyricism and rhythm was formal balance, a trait epitomized throughout his works. Peter Bruns referred to his great uncle's music as being composed "with a high quality of architecture."<sup>12</sup> Adherence to traditional classical forms, although not always rooted in expected classical harmonic events, is found in much of his music. For the most part, sections are clearly delineated and themes often return completely unchanged or with only slight variations of melody, harmony or texture. Motivic clarity, another calling card of the neoclassic, is found throughout his works, including the development of motives and themes in cadenza sections of concerti *and* sonatas, a distinctly unique approach.

Much like the neoclassic elements in the music of Hindemith and Prokofiev, Bruns imitated antiquated models of form, texture, and counterpoint. His liberal use of pedal points and juxtaposition of duple and triple subdivision, combined with such unique linear traits as using diatonic, octatonic, and whole-tone scales simultaneously

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<sup>11</sup> Waldemar Bruns, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 12 April, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Bruns, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 7 March, 2003.

(separated between instruments), shape the *Brunsonian* sound referred to throughout this paper.

He composed in well-established genres: symphonies, string quartets, concerti, wind quintets, and various other chamber works from duos to octets, using these genres as a basis for new experiments. Some of the works also seem to be direct descendants of earlier compositions. The *Octet for String Quartet, Bass, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Horn*, op. 42 (1968), for example, shares the same instrumentation as Schubert's great *Octet in F Major*, D. 804 (which itself followed Beethoven's *Septet in E-flat Major*, op. 20). His *Sextet for Wind Quintet and Piano*, op. 34 (1957), follows works for the same instrumentation by Françaix, Poulenc, Rheinberger, and Thuille.

Bruns "thought he was kind of a neoclassicist, but he never considered himself to compose in a style of any school. He always said, that he would not like too many experiments, his music had to be playable. [It] would have to have clear rhythms and clear melodies. He never wanted to be [as] "modern" as possible and never wanted to be avantgardist."<sup>13</sup> The varied and unusual influences on Bruns resulted in a distinctive cosmopolitan style deeply rooted in the foundations of neoclassicism. He considered his most influential *teacher* to be the orchestra itself. As a member of the Leningrad State Opera, Berlin Volksoper, Berlin Staatsoper, and the Berlin Staatskapelle, he came in contact with some of the most influential and respected composers of the day. "Encounters of this sort, and meeting with such contemporary composers . . . as Alban Berg (the performance of *Wozzeck* [in Leningrad] was a major event), Schrecker, Milhaud, Honegger, Stravinsky, Hindemith, and others,"<sup>14</sup> formed his basis for

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Bartholomäus, "Victor Bruns," 38.

composition. Simply hearing the sound and style while sitting in the orchestra provided Bruns with the impetus to compose. “At home I have no scores,” remarked Bruns in a 1989 interview with Reiner Kontressowitz, “I did not need to study all of Wagner, I *heard* him. For a composer it is so important to sit in an orchestra.”<sup>15</sup>

Due in part to his traditional aesthetic, especially his fondness for lyricism, Bruns’s music is “well liked, especially by the *normal* audience, and, of course by wind players.”<sup>16</sup> “[His] music is performed relatively often in [the former] East Germany, [but] less since his death. In [the former] West Germany, Victor’s [music] was little known.”<sup>17</sup> Although Bruns spent the majority of his compositional career in the former East Berlin, he “was not a political person”<sup>18</sup> and, therefore, was not interested in becoming a member of the Society of Communist Composers even though membership in such an organization afforded one the privilege of having works widely promoted and performed. Bruns preferred writing for his friends and colleagues.

Bruns often worked closely with the performers for whom he wrote. Professor Fritz Finsch, to whom the third sonata for bassoon and piano was dedicated, recalls, “I often visited him with my students and, together, we worked through his compositions. He gave us much freedom over the arrangement of tempi and phrases.”<sup>19</sup> “My first personal meeting with Victor Bruns,” recalls Finsch’s former student Mathias Baier, current solo bassoonist of the *Berlin Staatskapelle*, “I owe to my teacher. When we worked on a piece of Victor Bruns it was always a highpoint to play the work for the

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<sup>15</sup> Victor Bruns, “A Conversation with Victor Bruns,” 35.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Bruns, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 7 March 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Waldemar Bruns, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 12 April 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Mathias Baier, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 9 April 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Fritz Finsch, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 11 March 2003.

composer.”<sup>20</sup> Peter Bruns, a cellist and son of Victor Bruns’s nephew Waldemar Bruns, wrote, “It was rarely necessary [for Bruns to work so closely with the artists] when he composed for wind instruments, but with string instruments he did not feel that he knew enough about them without the help of the artists.”<sup>21</sup> Bruns found it comical that every musician for whom he wrote wanted the same thing: “It must be melodic, thematic, . . . clear and rhythmically interesting.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Baier.

<sup>21</sup> P. Bruns.

<sup>22</sup> Victor Bruns, “A Conversation with Victor Bruns,” 35.

## Chapter Two

### The Sonatas for Bassoon and Piano

The three sonatas for bassoon and piano embody a significant cross section of Bruns's style. They were written at twenty-year intervals spanning roughly forty years of his compositional career. Prior to a detailed analysis of the three sonatas, however, a general discussion of form, harmonic language, melodic content and rhythm, as well as traits specific to Bruns's understanding of the bassoon will be described.

It is in regard to form that Bruns shows the most similarity to other neoclassicists of the twentieth century. Much of his training came from his performance and understanding of the music of Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Hindemith, and Shostakovich. His time in the ballet, opera, and symphony orchestras provided him such an opportunity. Classical forms are used throughout the bassoon sonatas with a strong reliance on sonata, concerto, and song forms. These sonatas are all in a three-movement construction with written-out cadenzas, highly reminiscent of late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth-century solo concerti. This quasi-concerto form construction of a bassoon sonata is one calling card of the unique compositional style Victor Bruns employed throughout his career as he utilized a similar construction in sonatas for other instruments. In the sonata form movements, contrasting thematic areas typify the expositions, and development of thematic material often occurs immediately following its presentation and in the cadenzas. Silence, a change in tempo or clearing of harmonic and/or melodic texture often separates thematic areas in these highly sectionalized sonatas. Sections are also delineated by the use of descriptive terms. The pedagogical pieces written for the early

volumes of *Das Fagott* (1977) mirror this trait with expressive terms such as *dolce*, *cantabile*, and *espressivo* (see Chapter Seven) denoting new sections.

Harmonically, Bruns was fundamentally a tonal composer with an eclectic style, borrowing freely from the same musical language used by Stravinsky, Hindemith, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich. Peter Bruns described his great uncle's style as "tonal in a personal way."<sup>23</sup> Chromaticism is found throughout all three sonatas, combining functional chromaticism in diatonic modes with octatonic and whole-tone scales. Although Bruns understood and sparingly employed 12-tone technique, it was not central to his compositional language. "We spoke one time (when I was a much younger man) about his opinion of twelve-tone music," writes Waldemar Bruns. "He was of the opinion that this meant a broadening [of possibilities], but he didn't see twelve-tone music as the sole possibility. He [did] integrate it, as far as I understand it, in his compositions."<sup>24</sup> Although Bruns claimed that he was "not interested in 12-tone music,"<sup>25</sup> in a 1989 interview he definitely understood the concept and often composed atonal melodies that conformed to 12-tone ideas. For him, the dodecaphonic technique went no farther than the use of melodic occurrences, as he never attempted to develop a 12-tone row contrapuntally. His opinion about the *experiment* with the technique leads to a deeper understanding of his mentality. "In my opinion, 12-tone music has confused an entire generation. The Russians less so, but the Germans experimented too much with it. For that reason, there were significant composers in the Soviet Union such as Prokofiev and

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Waldemar Bruns, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 12 April, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Victor Bruns, "A Conversation with Victor Bruns," 36.

Shostakovich. Schönberg, [however], will never be so large [of an interest] for the public as the previously mentioned or Stravinsky.”<sup>26</sup>

Bruns wrote within tonal centers rather than diatonically. Although the first sonata is the only one of the three in which he utilized a key signature, it is tonally centered on G rather than solely in the key of G major or G minor. Bruns abandoned the use of key signatures in later works. His layering of various scales (octatonic, whole-tone, diatonic), a trait found in his mature works, creates the effect of highly elaborate, harmonically complex music. This horizontal approach to composing might be better referred to as neo-renaissance in style. For example, Bruns often treated the right and left hands of the piano as different harmonic palettes (i.e., a diatonic melody in the left hand versus a whole-tone melody in the right hand). The inclusion of the bassoon often resulted in three diverse layers as illustrated in the opening of the second movement of the second sonata. This linearity is a thread that weaves through many of his mature compositions. It is certainly one of the main aspects of the Brunsonian sound referred to throughout this document. Bruns also relied heavily on the juxtaposition of tertian chords a tritone or semitone apart. Although he did not seem interested in such an analysis of his music, set theory will be employed in discussing the third sonata. Due to the lack of leading tones, cadential areas were often blurred, resulting in an increase in length of thematic material. Consequently, the sonatas often require a significant amount of rubato to correctly portray the phrase structure. As intriguing as Bruns’s eclectic harmony is, it was with melody and rhythm that Bruns felt most comfortable.

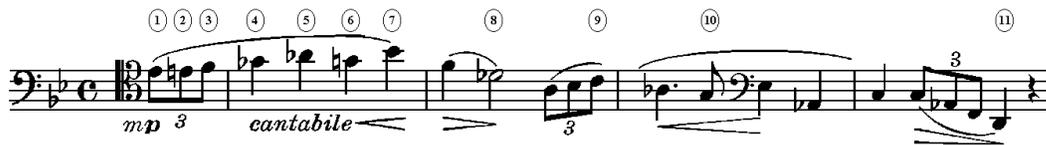
Bruns melodic language is solely rooted in the *cantabile*. An early bassoon teacher, Alexander Vassiliev, instructed him, “Victor, you must play like a singer.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Bruns made this a trademark of his compositional style. Throughout the three sonatas, stylistic directions such as *cantabile*, *dolce*, and *espressivo* are abundant. Melodies throughout the three sonatas contain an expansive variety of range, timbre, articulation, and virtuosity. On a rudimentary level, his melodic language is described as containing “themes and melodies that go easily into the ears.”<sup>28</sup> On isolated occasions, however, themes are atonal (a trait seen throughout the chamber works also). It is evident that Bruns was conscious of 12-tone technique, including it to a small degree in each sonata. The first theme of each sonata points to such an interest. Example 1 illustrates the themes.

**Example 1a** Sonata No. 1, Movement I, main melody



**Example 1b** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, main melody



<sup>27</sup> Bartolomäus, “Victor Bruns,” 37.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Bruns, Electronic Mail to Eric Stomberg, 7 March 2003.

**Example 1c** Sonata No. 3, Movement I, main melody



As noted earlier, the lack of significant cadential areas led to extended and often asymmetrical melodies. Due to these lengthy melodies, small motivic kernels of principal themes were often subjected to inversion, augmentation, and diminution rather than the entire melody being subjected to contrapuntal techniques. Each sonata contains a unique collection of disjunct yet well-constructed, flowing melodies. The second theme of the second sonata is an example of this type of construction. The four-measure theme, tonally centered on D, abruptly changes style by alternating between lyrical and disjunct fragments (Example 2).

**Example 2** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, mm. 27-30

Another intriguing aspect of Bruns's melodic content in the sonatas is the rhythmic motives associated with them. His signature "anacrusis motives" that begin each sonata

in addition to the rhythmic motives that pervade the sonatas as a whole, illustrate techniques used throughout much of Bruns's compositional career. The specific "anacrusis motives" that help to unify the sonatas first movements also supply material for development and expansion. Example 3 contains the "anacrusis motives" from each sonata.

**Example 3a** Sonata No. 1, Movement I, mm. 1-5, anacrusis motive

The musical score for Example 3a consists of three staves. The top staff is a single melodic line in bass clef, starting with a whole rest followed by a half note G4, a quarter note F4, and a half note E4. A box highlights the final two notes, F4 and E4, with the markings *mp* and *cantabile*. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a piano (*p*) and *dolce* marking. It features a series of chords: a half note chord (G4, B4, D5), a quarter note chord (F4, A4, C5), a half note chord (E4, G4, B4), a quarter note chord (D4, F4, A4), a half note chord (C4, E4, G4), and a quarter note chord (B3, D4, F4). The bottom staff is a bass line in bass clef with a whole rest followed by a half note G3, a quarter note F3, and a half note E3.

**Example 3b** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, mm. 1-2, anacrusis motive

The musical score for Example 3b consists of three staves. The top staff is a single melodic line in bass clef, starting with a half note G4, a quarter note F4, a half note E4, and a quarter note D4. A box highlights the first two notes, G4 and F4, with the markings *mp* and *cantabile*. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a piano (*p*) marking. It features a series of chords: a half note chord (G4, B4, D5), a quarter note chord (F4, A4, C5), a half note chord (E4, G4, B4), a quarter note chord (D4, F4, A4), a half note chord (C4, E4, G4), and a quarter note chord (B3, D4, F4). The bottom staff is a bass line in bass clef with a whole rest followed by a half note G3, a quarter note F3, and a half note E3.

**Example 3c** Sonata No. 3, Movement I, mm. 8-9, anacrusis motive

The image shows a musical score for Example 3c, Sonata No. 3, Movement I, mm. 8-9, anacrusis motive. The score is in 4/4 time and features a bassoon part (top staff) and a piano accompaniment (bottom two staves). The bassoon part begins with a melodic line marked 'mp' and 'cant.'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with a dynamic marking 'p' in the second measure.

The precise treatment, development, and expansion of these motivic kernels will be taken up in analysis of the specific sonatas. Equally important to the analysis of Bruns's style, however, are compositional traits related to his understanding of the intricacies, possibilities, and shortcomings of the bassoon. It is in this facet that Bruns truly excels as a composer of sonata repertoire for bassoon.

Brun's understanding of the bassoon led to a perfect marriage of dynamics, texture, and blend. The bassoon is an instrument whose job it often is to blend with other instruments or to provide a bass line. Nevertheless, masterful orchestrations by Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Schubert, Shostakovich, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Ravel allow the bassoon to sparkle without being buried in the orchestral texture.

Brun's approach to texture also shows a great understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument. The blending quality of the bassoon has often become a problem in much of its repertoire, but Bruns's understanding of the acoustic principles of the bassoon gave him the ability to rarely place it in blending danger. *Fort*e writing in the piano part, for example, is generally saved for introductions, interludes, and transitions while the bassoon is not playing. When Bruns wrote unison for piano and bassoon, the

more penetrating tenor range of the bassoon is often used to avoid being absorbed by the piano.

Bruns utilized the instrument's highest tessitura to provide emotional climax in addition to ideal balance between bassoon and piano. From a performance standpoint, melodies were advantageously written, giving the bassoonist a chance to utilize an enormous dynamic range without being lost in the piano timbre. In the cadenzas, motives were developed with the technical intricacies of the bassoon in mind.

Endings of movements are carefully written in an effort to clear out the accompanying texture while allowing the bassoon timbre to predominate. This thinning-out or cleansing of texture is also a harmonic calling card of Bruns's style. A relaxation of the melodic line often goes hand-in-hand with a resolution of harmonic tension. In the same manner that Eugene Bozza (1905-91) is known for his use of flippant grace notes to conclude works, Bruns used this cleansing of harmony. Distinctive beginnings and endings of movements are stylistic characteristics seen throughout his compositional career.

### Chapter Three

#### *Sonate für Fagott und Klavier, Op. 20 (1949)*

The first sonata for bassoon and piano, dedicated to Johannes Zuther, presents Victor Bruns's post-Leningrad style following his forced removal from the city in 1937. Among the many neo-classic and neo-romantic traits, Bruns's early compositional style is captured in this eighteen-minute work. The dedicatee, Johannes Zuther, was a bassoonist in the Südwestfunks Symphonie Orchester and referred to in Will Jansen's *The Bassoon* as a "fine chamber player who in times past was heard on the radio."<sup>29</sup> Although dedicated to Zuther, Bruns premiered the sonata in the American-controlled Charlottenburg section of Berlin at the Städtische Musikbücherei in 1949, assisted by the pianist H. Wonneberger.

Three years prior to the composition of the sonata, Bruns began studying with Boris Blacher on the recommendation of Johannes Schüler, a respected conductor in Berlin. Upon showing Schüler his compositions, possibly including the *Sinfonie Nr. 2*, op. 14 written in 1944 (which was later withdrawn by Bruns), Schüler remarked, "Yes, you have a good Leningrad [education], but [your work] is all too thickly orchestrated, and it lacks development. I [will] send you to Blacher."<sup>30</sup> Blacher's analysis was similar to Schüler's, "it must all be lighter, do not make everything so thick, try development. Here is a small triplet, try to make something out of this trifle."<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, the triplet became a typical rhythmic element central to the rest of his compositional career. Perhaps

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<sup>29</sup> Will Jansen, *The bassoon: its history, construction, makers, players, and music*. (Buren: Frits Knuf, 1978-1984), 1853.

<sup>30</sup> Victor Bruns, "A Conversation with Victor Bruns," 34.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

following Blacher's advice, the triplet is the central rhythmic element of the first movement of the op. 20 sonata.

Brun's style evolved a great deal from the first to the third sonatas. In many ways, this early sonata appears to be more a project than a mature composition. There is a definite dichotomy between sections of music that are thickly scored (the style that Schüler and Blacher criticized) and attempts to compose in a new style, one that was more contrapuntal and innovative. This is also apparent in his *Bläser Quintett für Flöte, Oboe, Klarinette, Horn, Fagott*, op. 16 (1947) and the *Quartett für Holzbläser*, op. 18 (1948). All three compositions contain music that addresses the issues Blacher criticized while containing the more dense style of writing. Brun's discontent with the *Quartett*, op. 18 resulted in the premiere not occurring until 1995. Helge Bartholomäus, a member of the Berlin Bassoon Quartet, was instrumental in convincing Brun that the piece was viable. See Chapter Seven for a description of the work.

The nucleus of many stylistic traits, specific to the sonatas as a group, can be seen in the first sonata. Although some techniques are overused, many compositional aspects tested in this early sonata are refined in the second and third sonatas. The first movement is characterized by highly concentrated sections presenting stylized Brunian compositional devices (i.e., inversion of main themes, duple versus triple subdivisions of the beat, climaxes achieved through sequence, pedal points). Devices such as inversion, augmentation, and imitation can be readily found in the first sonata, but it is not until the second that these devices become fully integrated into Brun's style. These stylized compositional devices, employed by Brun in the op. 20 sonata, provide a realistic starting point in discussing the evolution of his style.

The first movement can be seen as a quasi-rondo form. The following diagram presents a formal analysis of the movement.

**Diagram 1** Sonata No. 1, Movement I, formal analysis

Section	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A'</i>	<i>B'</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>A</i>
Tempo	<i>Allegro non troppo</i>	<i>Poco animato</i>	<i>Poco poco meno</i>	<i>a tempo</i>	<i>Poco Animato: Animato</i>	<i>Poco tranquillo</i>
Measures	1-22	23-62	63-93	94-125	126-74	175-204
Tonal Center	G	D	G	G	E	G
Other Features	Rondo Theme (lyrical)	Triplets in perpetual motion	Rondo Theme (inverted)	Theme is a tritone higher than <i>B</i> theme	No triplets; pedal point	Rondo Theme

Whereas the rondo theme is characterized by lyricism, the second thematic area, *Poco animato*, is characterized by briskly moving triplets in perpetual motion between piano and bassoon. The tonal relationship of the two thematic areas, tonic to dominant, illustrates one aspect of the neoclassic style in which Bruns wrote for much of his life. Following an inverted statement of the rondo theme (*A'*) and a transposition of the *B* theme a tritone higher (*B'*), a transition brings about a third thematic section (*C*). This developmental section is devoid of a true melody and, therefore, lacks the interest found in the first two sections. A pedal C with a juxtaposition of the tritone C/F-sharp in the bassoon part concludes the section and brings about a return to the final statement of the rondo theme. Bruns's use of tritone relationships, atonal melodies, and brief chromaticism, all of which are illustrated in this movement, make it more appropriate to refer to his harmonic language as being centered on a specific tonic rather than

diatonically based. For example, the end of the first movement introduction clearly demonstrates the tonic G but does not provide a third to delineate between major or minor mode (Example 4).

**Example 4** Sonata No. 1, Movement I, mm. 19-22

The musical score for Example 4 consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. It contains two measures: the first measure has a half note G (mf) and a half note C (p) with a slur over them; the second measure has a half note G (p) and a half note C (p) with a slur over them. The bottom system has a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains two measures: the first measure has a half note G (mp) and a half note A (mp) with a slur over them; the second measure has a half note G (p) and a half note C (p) with a slur over them. Below the grand staff, there are two tritone symbols (G and C) with a slur over them, indicating the interval between the tonic G and the tritone C.

Further solidifying the analysis of tonal centers versus diatonicism, Bruns relied heavily on two intervals, the tritone and second, which equally disrupt any sense of tertian harmony in the first movement. Building to the climax of both the *B* and *C* sections, Bruns utilizes different tritone relationships to build tension towards the apex of the phrases as seen in Example 5.

**Example 5a** Sonata No. 1, Movement I, mm. 51-54

This musical score for Example 5a shows the piano and bassoon parts for measures 51-54. The piano part features a complex texture with triplets and tritones in octaves. The bassoon part has a melodic line with a phrase apex marked. Annotations include 'Tritones in Octaves' pointing to specific intervals in both parts and 'Apex of the Phrase' pointing to a peak in the bassoon's melody.

**Example 5b** Sonata No. 1, Movement I, mm. 159-67

This musical score for Example 5b shows the bassoon and piano parts for measures 159-67. The bassoon part has a melodic tritone highlighted. The piano part features a C pedal point with tritones created against it. Annotations include 'Melodic Tritone' pointing to a tritone in the bassoon's melody and 'Tritones in Octaves' pointing to intervals in the piano's left hand. A bracket at the bottom indicates 'Tritones created against C Pedal'.

Pedal points similar to those illustrated in Example 5b are pervasive throughout the first movement, often being used to separate thematic sections. A lengthy pedal constitutes much of the C section, and a pedal point in the bassoon, which brings the first

movement to a close, also acts to clear the texture. Notice the slowing of rhythmic motion in addition to the pedal point in Example 6.

**Example 6** Sonata No. 1, Movement I, mm. 196-204

The musical score for Example 6 consists of three staves. The top staff is in bass clef and contains a single note, G, which is held throughout the passage, labeled as 'Pedal G'. The middle staff is in treble clef and features a melodic line with chromaticism, including a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics are marked as *p* and *pp*. A bracket below the score indicates 'Slowing of rhythmic motion'.

It is as a composer of melodies that Bruns was most successful. Although the opening melody of the first sonata is atonal, essentially presenting the concept of a 12-tone melody, (see Example 1a), the melody is *cantabile*. His use of chromaticism and atonal melodies is a function of his lyrical *melodic* goal rather than an element of his *harmonic* style. The harmonies that support these chromatic melodies are often actually tonally centered. Layering different melodic and harmonic schemes (atonal melody, diatonic harmony, and octatonic countermelody) will be described in Chapter 5.

The second movement, *Andante tranquillo*, most clearly illustrates the dichotomy between Bruns's style prior to meeting with Boris Blacher and the types of revisions he began to make after his studies. Written in ternary form, the movement contains three aspects of Bruns's mature style: large intervals that are used to heighten the dramatic effect of the music, sequential patterns, and a varied repeat of the main thematic area (A—B—A'). Although Bruns found economy in the use of forms that are thematically

repetitive (song form, rondo form, sonata form, concerto form), the overtness of the repetitiveness within the first sonata is often academic. Within the recurring themes Bruns utilized longstanding compositional techniques such as octave displacement, rhythmic variance, and inversion.

The five-measure melody that begins the movement is rhythmically active and juxtaposes lyrical step-wise movement with rhapsodic 16<sup>th</sup>- and 32<sup>nd</sup>- note flourishes. Bruns developed each subsequent statement of the main melody with the addition of even more non-harmonic tones, syncopation, and repetition. The final statement of the melody, beginning a diminished seventh higher than the original, illustrates the resulting rapid rhythmic figures that embellish and elongate the original melody. Example 7 illustrates the original (7a) and final (7b) statements of the melody.

**Example 7a** Sonata No. 1, Movement II, mm. 4-8



**Example 7b** Sonata No. 1, Movement II, mm. 14-21



The developmental middle section (*B*) is of special interest in that the first part of the section differs dramatically from the long, seamless melody of the opening of the movement. The melodic gestures are brief and sequential development of small motivic cells (see Example 8) illustrate the working through of ideas presented to Bruns by Blacher. Notice the imitation between the bassoon and piano (*a*), the sequential development of the minor-second motive (*b*), and the octave displacement, which prolongs the apex of the phrase (*c*).

**Example 8** Sonata No. 1, Movement II, mm. 45-51

The image displays a musical score for two systems, each consisting of a bassoon part (top staff) and a piano part (bottom staff). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system (mm. 45-51) features two systems of music. The first system has two staves. The top staff (bassoon) has three phrases labeled 'a', 'a', and 'b'. The bottom staff (piano) has two phrases labeled 'a' and 'b'. The second system has two staves. The top staff (bassoon) has two phrases labeled 'b' and 'c'. The bottom staff (piano) has two phrases labeled 'b' and 'c'. The annotations 'a', 'b', and 'c' are placed above the staves and connected to the corresponding musical phrases by lines.

The third movement follows the tonally closed harmonic pattern of the first and second movements. Beginning in D major with an alberti-bass figure, the movement presents different tonal areas while using the tonal center D as a rondo key area that returns in alternating sections. The opening section illustrates a layering of harmonic concepts by juxtaposing the D-major alberti-bass figure with a three-note motive in A-flat

major, again illustrating Bruns's preoccupation with the tritone in his harmonic and melodic languages (Example 9).

**Example 9** Sonata No. 1, Movement III, mm. 1-5

A-flat Major

*mf* *mp*

D Major—Alberti Bass

Formally, the movement is in two large sections. The first, *Allegretto grazioso*, presents a typical song form construction (ABA) and the second section, *Allegro giocoso*, centers around two main themes: an ostinato figure and an unadorned scalar melody. The movement is atypical of Bruns's mature compositions, which tend to be formally straightforward and symmetrical. Following the two sections, a written-out cadenza develops a three-note motive from the opening of the movement. The cadenza leads to a brief codetta that brings the movement to a close in D major. Diagram two illustrates the formal structure of the movement.

**Diagram 2** Sonata No. 1, Movement III, formal analysis

	First Section			Second Section			
Theme	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A'</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C'</i>	<i>Cadenza</i>	<i>Codetta</i>
Tempo	<i>Allegretto grazioso</i>	<i>dolce/cantabile</i>	<i>a tempo</i>	<i>Allegro giocoso</i>	<i>Grazioso e giocoso</i>	<i>Quasi Cadenza</i>	<i>Tempo I</i>
Measures	1-14	15-32	33-41	42-154	155-94	195-230	231-51
Tonal Center	D	D-flat	D	E	D	N/a	D

Melodically, the varied themes give the movement a wandering effect. This movement, more than the first two, reflects the type of writing Bruns was working to change. Themes are only briefly developed, and transitions between sections are not always effective. Isolated instances, however, of the new writing are seen with the developmental aspect of the *B* theme. The syncopated repeat of the main theme illustrates the types of revisions Blacher had suggested (Example 10).

**Example 10** Sonata No. 1, Movement III, mm. 15-18; 19-22

Main Theme

Syncopated Main Theme

This early sonata is fundamental to understanding Bruns's unique compositional style. Each movement presents a conflict between the thickly scored music that characterized his early works and the *new* style of music within which Boris Blacher urged Bruns to compose. The second sonata (Chapter Four) illustrates the lasting

changes Bruns made to his style in the twenty years separating the first and second sonatas.

## Chapter Four

### *Zweite Sonate für Fagott und Klavier, Op. 45 (1969)*

The second sonata for bassoon and piano contains some of the most poignant, retrospective, and ornate music Bruns composed for bassoon. He dedicated the sonata to Otto Pischkitl, former Professor of Bassoon at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. The sonata was premiered on Bayrischer Rundfunk in 1971 with Pischkitl and Herbert Kaliga, piano.

Bruns sustained very strong ties to classical formal structure throughout the second sonata. Although the type of harmonic motion that defined form in the classical era (i.e., root movement by fifth at cadential areas) is not followed, the sonata is, nonetheless, neoclassic in its formal organization.

Formally, the first movement consists of a hybrid sonata form incorporating a cadenza between the two thematic areas of the recapitulation. There is a certain motivic clarity that pervades the first thematic area, which helps to unify the exposition. Bruns employed an altered version of the traditional double exposition form as seen in Diagram 3.

**Diagram 3** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, formal analysis

Section	<i>Exposition</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Recapitulation</i>
Theme	<i>A—A'—B—B'</i>	<i>C (inversion of A)</i>	<i>A'—Cadenza—B'—Coda (B—A)</i>
Tempo	Allegro non troppo	Poco Animato	None given
Measures	1-44	45-70	70-135
Tonal Center	e—D	Various	E

Both thematic areas in the exposition conform to general topics of themes in Bruns's sonata form movements: The first theme is more virtuosic and contains larger intervals; the second is lyrical and includes scalar motion. Although the first thematic area is written mainly in E minor and the second thematic area in D major, an analysis with Roman numerals would be impractical. Much of the harmonic and melodic content of the sonata is based, to some degree, on the very intervals that destroy a sense of tonal progression: the tritone and the minor second. Cadential areas are often harmonically ambiguous, as seen at the end of the first thematic area where Bruns layers diatonicism and octatonicism. This linear approach, writing in different planes of harmony, is a main stylistic trait seen throughout Bruns's compositions.

Rather than lead directly into the second theme with a transition, the first section is brought to a close, allowing the aural palate to clear with a measure of rest, before proceeding with the second theme. Although similar to the slowing of rhythmic motion at the end of the first movement of the first sonata (Example 6, page 27), this example also illustrates the use of silence to delineate between sections (Example 11).

**Example 11** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, mm. 25-28

The musical score for Example 11 consists of three measures. The first measure features a forte (*f*) dynamic and is labeled 'c Tonal Center'. The second measure is a whole rest, labeled 'Silence'. The third measure features a mezzo-piano (*mp dolce*) and piano (*p dolce*) dynamic and is labeled 'D Tonal Center'. The score includes piano and bass staves with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics.

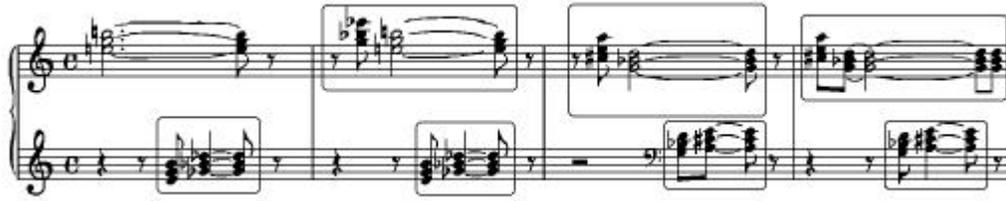
The development section subjects material from the first thematic section, namely the *anacrusis motive*, to various contrapuntal techniques. This motive reappears at the beginning of the development, but descends a tritone (Example 12a) instead of the perfect fourth heard in the exposition (Example 12b).

**Example 12a** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, mm. 45-46

**Example 12b** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, mm. 1-2

The chordal punctuation above which the motive is developed juxtaposes triads that further illustrate Bruns's fondness for the tritone and second. Example 13 illustrates the juxtaposition between triads separated by a second. Notice the tritones created between chord members of the two triads.

**Example 13** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, mm. 45-48



The development contains three separate sections in addition to a closing section. Compositionally significant in the development is the use of an inverted statement of the opening theme as shown in Example 14.

**Example 14** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, mm 55-58



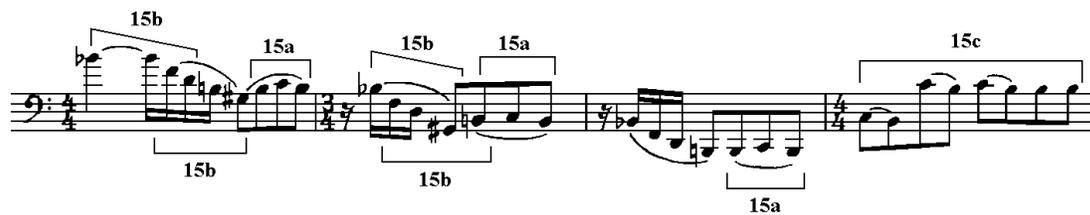
The inclusion of a cadenza provides the apex of the movement. Harmonically, Bruns precedes the cadenza with a major-major seventh chord rather than the typical eighteenth- and nineteenth- century tradition of preceding a cadenza by a dominant six-four chord. The cadenza, more so than the quasi double-exposition form, reveals to the performer and listener alike that this is not a conventional sonata, but rather an amalgamation of a concerto and a sonata.

In addition to subjecting material from the exposition to development, the cadenza transforms thematic material from the development section itself. The continuous developmental aspect of Bruns's writing, displayed in the second and third sonatas, is yet

another attribute of his style. Melodically, frequent use of appoggiaturas and chromatic upper neighbor tones adds a heightened state of lyric romanticism to the cadenza.

Example 15a illustrates the minor second, upper neighbor-tone gestures. This motive, in addition to the harmonic alternation between overlapping dominant and diminished seventh chords (Example 15b: B-flat dominant seventh/G-sharp diminished seventh), gives the cadenza a feeling of confinement.

**Example 15** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, mm. 109-11



Instead of the expected cadential trill to conclude the cadenza, Bruns used a string of appoggiaturas (Example 15c) as a transition into the coda, which contains brief encounters of the two main thematic areas. The lyrical second theme returns first, stated a major second higher, followed by half of the first theme. The movement concludes with an augmentation of the main theme, which brings about a clearing of harmonic texture. Although the movement contains a plethora of E-minor triads, the final E-major triad creates a picardy third, another neoclassic trait utilized by Bruns.

The second movement, *Andante tranquillo*, presents some of the most lyrical writing in all of the sonatas. The movement is composed in ternary form with a varied return of the opening material (*ABA'*). A brooding, whole-tone ostinato figure introduces the asymmetrical five-four meter of the movement. Numerous chromatic notes and a

consistent juxtaposition of duple and triple subdivision of the beat characterize the opening eight-measure *molto cantabile* melody, rooted firmly in D minor. Both of these traits are melodic trademarks of Bruns's slow movements. Example 16 illustrates the first three measures of this melody.

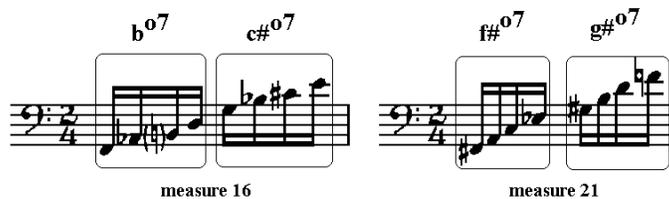
**Example 16** Sonata No. 2, Movement II, mm. 2-4



Bruns continued to use routine compositional techniques such as imitation, variation, and the technique of octave displacement of resolutions, to highlight his melodies.

Silence, a faster tempo indication, and a change in texture separate the first and second thematic areas. The second theme epitomizes the distinctive melodic style of Bruns with its numerous diminished-seventh arpeggios and trading of melodic ideas between piano and bassoon. Yet another use of the interval of a second is shown in the sequential treatment of fully diminished seventh chords in the second thematic area. The roots are related in each example by a major second (Example 17).

**Example 17** Sonata No. 2, Movement II, m.16, 21



This thematic area is divided into two parts. The second part is taken directly from the second thematic area of the first movement. This use of cyclicism further solidifies the neoclassic label to describe Bruns's style. Example 18 illustrates the original use of the melody in the first movement (Example 18a) and its return in the second movement (Example 18b).

**Example 18a** Sonata No. 2, Movement I, mm. 27-28



**Example 18b** Sonata No. 2, Movement II, mm. 29-30



This example does not conjure up the cyclic music and motives found in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, but the economical technique of borrowing from one's self is evident.

Rather than utilizing silence to delineate sections, Bruns foreshadowed the return of the opening material with *poco ritardando*, before the *Tempo I* indication. The return of the main melody, presented by piano instead of bassoon, is elaborated with a newly composed counter-melody based on a transposition of the intervals of the first three notes of the melody itself (Example 19).

**Example 19** Sonata No. 2, Movement II, m. 45

Transposition of the first three notes of the melody

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Bassoon (Counter-melody)' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Piano R.H. (Melody)'. A bracket above the Bassoon staff highlights a specific sequence of notes, with the text 'Transposition of the first three notes of the melody' written above it. The Piano R.H. staff shows a triplet of notes, indicated by a '3' above the notes.

The counter melody builds up to a heightened emotional state with the sighing motives and an unvarying rhythm that prolongs the final climax of the movement. In bringing the movement to a close, Bruns, once again, allowed the harmony to clear while the bassoon and piano sustain a pedal D. The pitch class D, sustained in three different octaves, acts as a link to the tonal area of the third movement. The correlation between tonal centers and the asymmetrical quintuple meter (the second movement is written in 5/4 meter and the third movement in 5/8) also helps to link the movements.

The third movement, containing sections in 4/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, and 9/8, presents the only use of compound meter in the three sonatas. Metrically, this movement is highly reminiscent of the pedagogical work, *Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene*, op. 32, which contains twelve etudes centered on the eighth-note pulse in simple and compound meters

(see Chapter Seven, pages 56-57). The movement is in ternary form with a concluding cadenza and codetta. Diagram 4 illustrates the formal structure.

**Diagram 4** Sonata No. 2, Movement III, formal analysis

Section	A	B	A	Cadenza + Codetta
Theme Areas	<i>a1, a2, a3, a4—b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>a1, a2, a3, a4—b</i>	<i>b'—a—closing material</i>
Measures	1-111	112-33	134-227	228-64
Tonal Center	A/D	Bb	A/D	A
Meter	5/8, 6/8	7/8	5/8, 6/8	6/8

The first thematic area is presented in four melodic subsections (*a1, a2, a3, a4*). As seen in earlier compositions, Bruns used stylistic and dynamic markings to delineate many of the sections. In this movement, section *a2* is marked *dolce*, section *a3* is marked *cantabile*, and sections *a1* and *a4* are marked *mezzo forte* (Example 20).

**Example 20a** Sonata No. 2, Movement III, theme *a1*, mm. 5-13

The musical score for Example 20a consists of two staves in bass clef. The top staff begins with a *mf* dynamic marking and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet. The bottom staff provides harmonic support with chords and bass notes, marked with a *f* dynamic. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

**Example 20b** Sonata No. 2, Movement III, theme *a2*, mm. 16-22



**Example 20c** Sonata No. 2, Movement III, theme *a3*, mm. 23-30



**Example 20d** Sonata No. 2, Movement III, theme *a4*, mm. 32-36



Silence separates the first theme from the second. The first thematic area is characterized by lyricism and the persistent, yet quirky 5/8 meter, whereas the second is angular and repetitive in 6/8 meter (with occasional 9/8). Bruns's understanding of the impressive staccato produced by the bassoon perhaps led to the abundance of staccato playing, marked *brillante*, in this movement.

The *grazioso* middle section of the movement, centered on B-flat but visiting many tonal centers, presents a disjunct melody in 7/8 meter. Motivically driven, the theme is quickly subjected to inversion and used as a countermelody above the original

theme. Motives are also imitated between bassoon and piano, giving the section a developmental character.

A repetition of the first and second themes leads into another cadenza, again evoking the character of a concerto. The material for the third movement cadenza is taken from the second theme (*B*). A brief codetta brings the movement to a close in A minor with three resounding dominant to tonic eighth notes. The following example illustrates Bruns's eclectic use of harmonic motion as the measures preceding the A minor ending suggest the unrelated key area of F minor (Example 21).

**Example 21** Sonata No. 2, Movement III, mm. 260-64

The musical score for Example 21 is presented in two systems, each with a bass clef on the left and a treble clef on the right. The first system is labeled "F minor" and contains four measures of music. The second system is labeled "A minor" and contains four measures of music. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as *sf* (sforzando).

## Chapter Five

### *Sonate Nr. 3 für Fagott und Klavier*, Op. 86 (1988)

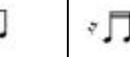
The third sonata for bassoon and piano, written in 1988, was dedicated to Fritz Finsch, solo bassoonist of the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, bassoonist with the Berlin Octet, and professor of bassoon and chamber music at the *Hochschule für Musik “Hanns Eisler”* in Berlin. Although many similarities can be found between the last sonata and the works of decades earlier, there is a new complexity in this sonata that truly epitomizes Bruns’s late style. Unfortunately, due to illness requiring a lengthy hospital stay, Professor Finsch was unable to give the premiere. Mathias Baier, solo bassoonist with the Deutschenstaatsoper and a former student of Finsch, worked closely with Bruns and gave the premiere at the Schauspielhaus Berlin with Michael Stöckigt, piano. Further clouding the issue of the premier, a *festschrift* published by Breitkopf & Härtel in honor of Bruns’s 85 birthday, noted Rainer Luft as the bassoonist. Ironically, Luft also became ill before the premier, and Bruns asked Mathias Baier to premier the work.

What becomes truly evident in the third sonata is Bruns’s simultaneous layering of diatonic, octatonic, and/or chromatic scales. In *Soundings*, Glenn Watkins refers to this layering technique in the music of Stravinsky. “Such diatonic-octatonic linkage has been demonstrated by van der Toorn to be central to Stravinsky’s personality . . . and may owe its genesis to an admiration for similar formations in the works of Rimsky-Korsakov, *Sadko* in particular.”<sup>32</sup> This diatonic-octatonic *linkage* is also central to Bruns’s compositional personality in his later works. During his years in Leningrad, Stravinsky’s style had a tremendous effect on Bruns as he sat in the ballet orchestra playing

Stravinsky's music. Additionally, Bruns's studies with Stscherbatchov, a pupil of Steinberg (who was a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov), begun in 1926, provide a direct link to Rimsky-Korsakov. "The so-called octatonic scale, now recognized as a prime structural resource in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russian music [was] first extensively employed by Rimsky-Korsakov and thereafter by his pupils, conspicuously including Stravinsky."<sup>33</sup>

The first movement of the third sonata is in a *sonatina* form consisting of three contrasting thematic areas. Although there is no development proper, Bruns developed motivic material throughout each section with considerable use of imitation and sequence. Each thematic area is centered on a specific tonal area and corresponding rhythmic motive, while alternating between tonally closed and tonally open sections (Diagram 5).

**Diagram 5** Sonata No. 3, Movement I, formal analysis

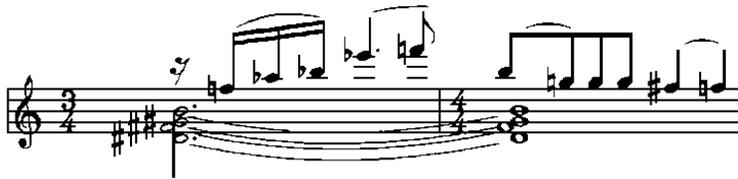
Section	Intro.	A	B	C	A	Coda
Measures	1-8	9-36	37-92	93-129	130-153	154-168
Tonal Area	e-flat (d-sharp)	D-sharp	e	A	D-sharp	D-sharp
Rhythmic Motive						

The sonata opens with an eight-measure phrase that alternates between triple and quadruple meter, and immediately illustrates another of Bruns's individual traits: enharmonic spellings are employed that confuse the harmonic scheme. Bruns chose, in

<sup>32</sup> Glenn Watkins, *Soundings*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 229.

the opening of this sonata and in many other works, to write “with a simplistic notation that [often] distorted the line, [rather than an] enharmonic notation requiring double flats [or double sharps].”<sup>34</sup> To illustrate, the opening motive of the third sonata could have been written either in E-flat minor or D-sharp minor. Example 22 shows the given notation (notice the minor-minor seventh chord built on G-sharp, combined with a diatonic melody, essentially in E-flat minor) and the *corrected* notation in E-flat minor (Example 22a) and D-sharp minor (Example 22b).

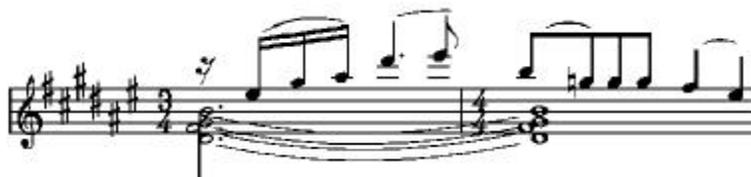
**Example 22** Sonata No. 3, Movement I, mm 1-2, given notation



**Example 22a** *corrected* notation in E-flat minor



**Example 22b** *corrected* notation in D-sharp minor



<sup>33</sup> Richard Taruskin, “Defining Russia Musically: *Historical and hermeneutical essays*” (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 342.

<sup>34</sup> William Waterhouse, Electronic Mail to Eric Stomberg, 17 March 2003.

Melodically, each section contains a different assortment of kernels that are assigned to one particular rhythmic motive (see Diagram 5). The *A* section expands upon the melody and rhythm of the introduction. The *anacrusis motive* (see Example 1c, page 17) is used extensively throughout this first section. The *B* section is the largest in scope and complexity, having a rhapsodic character and presenting a theme that combines a tritone accompaniment with an octatonic melody, while the *C* section embodies strings of descending seconds and appoggiaturas with its individual rhythmic motive. These rhythmic motives help to separate thematic areas, while offering a springboard for development.

The intricacies of this movement are best seen in the layering technique referred to earlier and a set theoretical analysis of certain motives. Each section provides a different combination of sets that are presented and subsequently developed. The pitch class sets 015, 013, and 01234, utilized by Bruns in the sonata, exhibit the heavy reliance on the minor second interval (Example 23).

**Example 23** Sonata No. 3, Movement I, Pitch sets 015, 013, 01234

The image displays three musical examples, each consisting of a piano-style arrangement with a treble and bass staff. The first example, labeled 'Pitch Set 015', shows a melodic line in the bass staff with notes G4, A4, B4, and C5, and chords in the treble staff. The second example, labeled 'Pitch Set 013', shows a melodic line in the bass staff with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, and G5, and chords in the treble staff. The third example, labeled 'Pitch Set 01234', shows a melodic line in the bass staff with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, and G5, and chords in the treble staff.

The pitch class sets, shown in Example 23, are mainly found in melodic lines and in sequential patterns. Four sets (013, 0125, 0134, 01347) are rhythmically developed in the

first thematic area. Example 24 shows the set 013 as the nucleus of melodic and rhythmic development.

**Example 24** Sonata No. 3, Movement I, mm. 22-23

Pitch Sets 013

The image shows a musical score for Example 24, titled "Pitch Sets 013". It consists of three staves. The top staff is a bass clef staff with a 5/4 time signature, containing a melodic line with notes grouped by boxes and labeled with dynamics *p* and *mp*. The middle staff is a treble clef staff with a 5/4 time signature, containing a piano accompaniment with chords and moving lines, also labeled with *p* and *mp*. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a 5/4 time signature, containing a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

01347 is utilized in sequence to bring about the return of the movement's main theme.

Example 25 illustrates the minor second sequential treatment of the set.

**Example 25** Sonata No. 3, Movement I, mm. 28-32

The image shows a musical score for Example 25, titled "Main Theme". It consists of a single bass clef staff with a 5/4 time signature. The first three measures are labeled "01347" and are connected by a bracket with a circled "m2" below it, indicating a minor second interval. The next two measures are also labeled "01347" and connected by a bracket with a circled "m2" below it. The final measure is labeled "Main Theme" and is marked with a hairpin crescendo and the dynamics *ff espress.*

The opening melody of the *B* section illustrates diatonic/octatonic layering with four measures that firmly establish the key of E minor (notice the tritone relationship between E and B-flat on alternating beats) followed by the octatonic set 0,1 presented by the bassoon (Example 26).

**Example 26** Sonata No. 3, Movement I, mm. 39-41

The musical score for Example 26 consists of three measures. The first two measures are labeled "E minor" and feature a complex texture with multiple voices in both hands. The third measure is labeled "Octatonic 0,1" and shows a shift in the harmonic language, with a more rhythmic and melodic focus in the right hand and a simpler accompaniment in the left hand.

Bruns utilized pedal point and planing as harmonic devices in the *C* section. Opening with an A pedal, the movement progresses towards the tonal center of D, giving a sense of a tonic to subdominant relationship. Bruns's brief use of planing in the middle of this section, however, disturbs any sense of a common-practice harmonic progression. The two examples of planing are separated by a minor second and highlight the layering of diatonicism in the piano left hand (E-major/C-minor chords) with planing in the piano right hand (Example 27).

**Example 27** Sonata No. 3, Movement I, mm. 106-07, 109-10

The musical score for Example 27 illustrates two instances of "Planing". In the first example, the left hand plays E major chords while the right hand plays a series of chords that move by a minor second, creating a planing effect. The second example shows C minor chords in the left hand with a similar planing figure in the right hand. Both examples are marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

The second movement is a three-part form (*ABA*) similar to the middle movement from of the first two sonatas. The *cantabile* first section (*A*), firmly rooted in A minor, is characterized by an abundance of non-harmonic tones. The middle section (*B*) is much

longer and harmonically complex than the music that surrounds it. A unique transition used prior to and following the *B* section once again illustrates the layering technique found throughout the sonata with an atonal melody, bi-chords, and a pedal tone (Example 28).

**Example 28** Sonata No. 3, Movement II, transition theme

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a transition theme. Each system consists of three staves: a bass clef staff for the melody, a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the piano accompaniment, and a separate bass clef staff for the pedal point. The first system is labeled 'Atonal melody' and 'Bi-chord (G/F dim.)', with dynamics 'f' and 'espress.' in the melody and 'ff' in the piano part. The piano part features a complex, layered texture with overlapping chords. The pedal point is marked 'E Pedal'. The second system is also labeled 'Atonal melody' and 'Bi-chord (A/E-flat)', with dynamics 'ff' and 'espress.' in the melody. The piano part continues with similar layering, and the pedal point is marked 'G Pedal'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The *B* section begins with a march-like ostinato, above which a wailing melody utilizing the descending minor second predominates. The second part of this section demonstrates melodic interaction between bassoon and piano, with an intertwining of the melodic line

and its disjunct counter melody. The piano and bassoon exchange the melody and counter melody every measure.

The transition back to the *A* material is harmonically unsettled with movement between the tonal centers of B-flat, D-flat, C-sharp, and G-sharp. This instability builds to an extension of the transition material (Example 28), presenting different triads against a C-major triad. Example 29 illustrates Bruns's eclectic harmonic mindset with the various chords against a C pedal and a Neapolitan relationship to A minor.

**Example 29** Sonata No. 3, Movement II, mm. 73-76

The image shows a musical score for Example 29, Sonata No. 3, Movement II, measures 73-76. The score is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). A 'C major Pedal' is indicated above the bass line, which consists of a sustained C note. The upper voice contains a series of chords and melodic fragments. The chords are labeled as follows: D-flat major, B-flat major, A-flat major, B-flat major, A-flat major, B-flat major, and A minor. A 'Neapolitan' relationship is indicated between the A-flat major and A minor chords. The score also includes a dynamic marking 'P' (piano) and a fermata over the final A minor chord.

The third movement *Allegro giocoso* again presents one of Bruns's favorite rhythmic calling cards: the staccato triplet. Although in simple rather than compound meter, the rhythmic motion of this movement closely resembles the *Poco animato* section of the third movement of the second sonata (written in 6/8 meter). The staccato triplet is also found extensively in the *Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene*, op. 32, the *Vier Virtuose Stücke*, op. 93, the *Fünf Stücke*, op. 40, and many chamber music works including bassoon. The first and third sections of this three-part song form extensively incorporate the staccato triplet, and the middle section, *Poco meno e grazioso*, consists of a slow-moving, languid melody in 6/4 that is angular in construction. Once again, following

neoclassic traits of phrase construction, the middle theme is lyrical in nature. Diagram 6 illustrates the form of the movement.

**Diagram 6** Sonata No. 3, Movement III, formal analysis

Section	A	B	A	Cadenza	Coda
Tempo	<i>Allegro giocoso</i>	<i>Poco meno e grazioso</i>	<i>A tempo</i>	<i>Non troppo</i>	<i>Animato</i>
Measures	1-36	37-61	62-110	111-34	135-48
Tonal Area	C (G)	D (A)	C	A	D

A return of the opening material (A') is followed by a rhapsodic section, which eventually leads to a cadenza. Bruns developed motivic material in the cadenza with the use of two specific rhythms: the triplet and the dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm. The motives are subjected to sequence, imitation, and other contrapuntal devices in five distinct sections that lead to a climax with the highest note of the movement, D5. A brilliant *Animato*, with bassoon and piano in octaves, finishes the movement in D major with D5 sounding *fortissimo* in the bassoon.

Harmonically, the movement is tonally open, beginning in the tonal area of C and ending in D. Among the three sonatas, this is the only occurrence of a movement beginning and ending in different tonal areas. The *Poco meno e grazioso*, which begins in D major, visits many other tonal areas and includes more examples of the layering technique referred to throughout discussion of this sonata. Example 30 shows diatonic triads in E minor layered with chromatically descending triads.

**Example 30** Sonata No. 3, Movement III, mm. 47-48

Triads: e Eb D Db C B Ab A B e Eb D Db C B Ab A B

*mf*

E minor B major E minor B major (enharmonic)

The sonata solidifies many stylistic traits experimented with in the first sonata and worked out in the second. The consistency with which Bruns composed over the forty years separating this sonata from the first is remarkable. Even with the experimental first sonata, written during Bruns's time with Boris Blacher, many melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic traits are seen time and time again. In comparing the bassoon sonatas with Bruns's other works, the similarities are extensive.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion

Victor Bruns was a prolific composer of concerti, chamber music, and music for the stage. His three sonatas for bassoon and piano are significant in a genre that contains relatively few compositions. Bruns is also one of very few composers who wrote more than one sonata for the instrument. An analysis of his three sonatas for bassoon and piano provides an excellent panorama of the evolution of stylistic traits throughout his career, while demonstrating the numerous melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic traits that define his compositional style. His cosmopolitan approach, resulting from varied influences and experiences, is deeply rooted in the axioms of neoclassicism seen also in the music of Prokofiev, Stravinsky, and Hindemith. His consistent approach to form, melodic structure, and counterpoint also illustrates a connection with music of an earlier time.

It is my hope that this thesis will provide a greater understanding of Victor Bruns's style while drawing attention to the vast amount of music he composed for bassoon. The sonatas deserve serious consideration for recital programs with their distinct melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic textures.

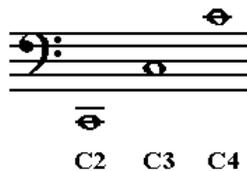
The annotated bibliography that follows provides, for the first time, a detailed list of pedagogical, solo, and chamber music that Bruns composed.

## Chapter Seven

### Annotated Bibliography of Pedagogical, Solo, and Chamber Music for Bassoon

This bibliography contains an annotated list of music Victor Bruns composed for solo bassoon, bassoon and piano, chamber music involving bassoon, and works for contrabassoon. The list is separated chronologically into pedagogical music, solo music, bassoon and piano music, contrabassoon and piano music, and chamber music. It is my hope that this annotated list, after being published in the journal of the *International Double Reed Society*, will help to promote the unique music of Victor Bruns while also creating a possibility to have more of his works re-issued and recorded. When possible, information about the publisher, premier, and duration has been included. The four concerti for bassoon and orchestra and the contrabassoon concerto are not discussed here, as Dr. Bruce Gbur has given an extensive study to them in a dissertation document from the University of Georgia (2001).

For the purpose of this bibliography the following system of ranges will be employed:



Pedagogical (bassoon and contrabassoon)

*Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene*, Op. 32 (1955)

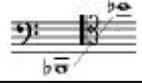
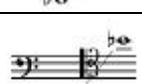
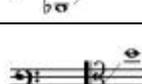
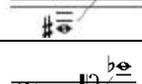
Publisher: Hofmeister (7194)

Duration: 1-2 minutes each

The twelve etudes in this collection provide a brief introduction to Bruns's style with many rhythmic and melodic patterns typical of his style. Pedagogically, these etudes are helpful in introducing differences in phrase structure, harmonic language, and mixed meters to the young bassoonist. The etudes have no key signatures and employ a significant amount of tenor clef; they are excellent sight-reading material.

Many of the etudes contain complex rhythms, compound meters (each etude adds another eighth note to the meter signature), numerous accidentals, and atypical phrase lengths. A majority of the etudes are composed in ternary form with the return of the opening material often being ornamented. As with many of Bruns's compositions, the etudes utilize the majority of the practical range of the bassoon (B-flat1—D5). The following chart summarizes the etudes with regard to tempo, key area, range, meter, and pedagogical importance.

*Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene, Op. 32*

Etude	Tempo	Key Area	Range	Meter	Pedagogical importance
1	<i>Allegro non troppo</i>	G		2/8	Staccato articulation Tenor clef
2	<i>Allegro sostenuto</i>	D		3/8	Tenor clef Accidentals
3	<i>Andante (Burleske)</i>	A		4/8	Dotted rhythms
4	<i>Moderato (gemächlich)</i>	D		5/8	Changes of register
5	<i>Andantino cantabile</i>	F/a/e		6/8	High bass clef Tenor clef
6	<i>Allegro scherzando</i>	C		7/8	Staccato articulation Tenor clef
7	<i>Allegro giocoso</i>	A		8/8, 4/4, 2/4, 3/4	Rapid articulation Off-beat accents (A 4/4 signature is missing in m. 30)
8	<i>Andante molto tranquillo</i>	B		9/8, 4/4	Various groupings of 9/8 meter (2+3+4, 4+3+2, 3+2+4)
9	<i>Moderato</i>	C		10/8 (5/4), 3/4, 4/4, 2/4	Ties over the beat and bar line Staccato articulation
10	<i>Andante (quasi alla marcia)</i>	E-flat		11/8 (4/4 + 3/8)	Rapid articulation of the same note Various groupings of 11/8 meter
11	<i>Andantino con moto</i>	F		12/8	Ascending slurs (flicking) Arpeggios
12	<i>Allegro vivace</i>	D		4/4, 3/4	Duple vs. triple subdivision Triplets

*Das Fagott* (1978)

Publisher: Deutscher Verlag für Musik

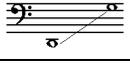
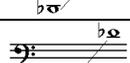
Duration: varied

Victor Bruns composed thirty-three pedagogical pieces for bassoon and contrabassoon included in Werner Seltman's and Günther Angerhöfer's six volume pedagogical collection, *Das Fagott*. Seltman and Angerhöfer solicited many new etudes, including Bruns's, for the collection. His compositions are entered here in the order they appear in *Das Fagott*, but without opus number, as they were never individually published.

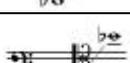
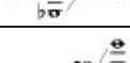
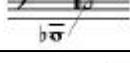
The first three volumes consist of lessons that contain tone studies, scale studies, and etudes for newly learned notes. The fourth volume is comprised of duets, while newly composed works for bassoon and piano are found in the fifth volume. The sixth volume is dedicated to the contrabassoon and includes technical studies, orchestral excerpts, and a comprehensive fingering chart with numerous alternate fingerings.

The following charts summarize the etudes written by Bruns for *Das Fagott*. These etudes can provide a valuable supplement to the Weissenborn *Method* or other pedagogical methods through their unique melodic and harmonic language. The charts provide lesson and etude number, title, key area, range, meter, and pedagogical importance.

*Das Fagott* –Volume I

Lesson/ Etude	Title	Key Area	Range	Meter	Pedagogical importance
7/3	<i>Allegro marciale</i>	F		2/4	Introduction to C-sharp 3 Syncopation
12/2	<i>Andante tranquillo</i>	D/d		2/4	Introduction to D2 Ornamented theme
17/3	<i>Tempo di Menuetto tranquillo</i>	G/g		3/8	Introduction to B-flat3 Menuet style
19/1	<i>Scherzando</i>	D		2/4	Introduction to C4
22/2	<i>Adagio</i>	F		2/4 + 3/4	Introduction to D-flat2 Slurring, staccato
23/3	<i>Allegretto grazioso</i>	C		3/8	Introduction to D-flat 4 32 <sup>nd</sup> notes

*Das Fagott*—Volume II

Lesson/ Etude	Title	Key Area	Range	Meter	Pedagogical importance
37/3	<i>Andante con moto</i>	D		5/8	Phrasing and interpretation
42/3	<i>Allegro non troppo</i>	B		2/4 + 3/4	Duple vs. triple subdivision
44/3	<i>Andante tranquillo</i>	B-flat		2/4 + 3/4	Dotted 8 <sup>th</sup> —16 <sup>th</sup> patterns Large intervals
51/1	<i>Moderato con eleganza</i>	B		3/8	Octave slurs (F-sharp) Mordents
54/3	<i>Tranquillo, tempo di valse</i>	D		3/16	Diminished 7 <sup>th</sup> arpeggios
61/3	<i>Moderato grazioso</i>	F		12/8	Sustaining a phrase through rests
64/3	<i>Andante sostenuto</i>	n/a		4/8, 6/8	Simple vs. compound duple

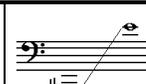
*Das Fagott*—Volume III

Lesson/ Etude	Title	Key Area	Range	Meter	Pedagogical importance
72/3	<i>Allegretto leggiere</i>	B		6/16	Rapid tonguing
81/3	<i>Allegretto non troppo</i>	Many		6/8	Down slurs Hemiola
85/1	<i>Allegro giocoso</i>	B		3/4	Duple vs. triple subdivision Syncopation
89/2	<i>Larghetto</i>	D		4/4, 2/4	Quintuplets Sextuplets

*Das Fagott*—Volume IV  
Duets (described on pages 94-95)

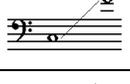
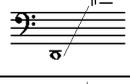
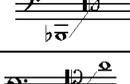
Duet	Title	Key Area	Range	Meter	Pedagogical importance
No. 8	<i>Allegretto giocoso</i>	G		2/4	Matching articulation between parts
No. 20	<i>Moderato</i>	C		2/4	Matching articulation and dynamics between parts
No. 25	<i>Allegro non troppo, quasi danza</i>	C/D		8/8	Importance of 8 <sup>th</sup> -note subdivision (3/8 + 2/8 + 3/8)

*Das Fagott*—Volume V  
Bassoon and Piano (described on pages 72-73)

Piece	Title	Key Area	Range	Meter	Pedagogical importance
No. 10	<i>Andantino</i>	G		6/8	Repeated 2-measure phrases Syncopation in 6/8
No. 19	<i>Klavierstück mit Fagott</i>	D		5/2	Various subdivisions of half-note beat

*Das Fagott*—Volume VI (Contrabassoon)

The exercises, etudes, and studies in this volume are organized in various lessons that address specific technical challenges on the contrabassoon. The *studies* are based on orchestral repertoire, and the *etudes* address specific difficulties of articulation, meter, and range. The given range is for the written pitch.

Lesson	Title	Key Area	Range (written)	Meter	Pedagogical importance
2 (Study)	<i>Andante con moto</i>	A		4/4, 2/4	Based on <i>Fidelio</i> (Ludwig van Beethoven)
3 (Etude)	<i>Andante</i>	C		4/4	D-flat3—E-flat3 combination Slurring
4 (Study)	<i>Largo</i>	f		4/4	Based on <i>Don Carlo</i> (Giuseppe Verdi)
5 (Etude)	<i>Allegretto giocoso</i>	D		5/8, 6/8, 4/8	Staccato articulation
6 (Study)	<i>Adagio: Allegro</i>	F		4/4	Based on <i>Katerina Ismailova</i> (Dmitri Shostakovich)
7 (Etude)	<i>Quasi Adagio</i>	E		3/4, 5/4, 4/4	Large down slurs
9 (Etude)	<i>Allegro non troppo</i>	C		4/4, 3/4	Large articulated intervals (ascending and descending)
10 (Study)	<i>Allegro</i>	Var.		4/4	Based on <i>Salome</i> (Richard Strauss)
11 (Study)	<i>Mäâige Viertel</i>	N/a		2/4, 3/8, 4/4	Based on <i>Wozzeck</i> (Alban Berg)
12 (Etude)	<i>Andante tranquillo</i>	f		7/8, 6/8, 8/8	Various groupings of 7/8
15 (Etude)	<i>Andante risoluto e con moto</i>	D		4/4, 3/4, 2/4	Rapid technique Extreme range

## Solo Music

*Vier virtuose Stücke für Fagott solo*, Op. 93 (1989)

Publisher: Werner Feja (KMB 10)

Premier: Berlin, 1989

Performer: Helge Bartholomäus, bassoon

Dedication: Helge Bartholomäus

Duration: 8 minutes

“The Four Virtuoso Pieces, Op. 93 for solo bassoon, are intended for concert, competition, and study purposes. The four pieces are rhythmically and melodically difficult and well suited to the bassoon with their harmonic and technical construction.”<sup>35</sup>  
The pieces alternate between slow and fast movements in the style of a baroque sonata.

The first piece, *Andante tranquillo*, is characterized by a rhythmic motive that unifies the ternary form movement. Three-note rhythmic groupings predominate including an *anacrusis motive* typical of Bruns’s style. The second piece in the set, *Allegro Scherzando*, is reminiscent of the first etude of the *Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene*, op. 32, making it clear that Bruns often worked out and reused material from earlier compositions. The work is reminiscent of a march in the style of Prokofiev. Composed, once again, in ternary form, the “return” contains an exact repetition of the opening material with a brief coda bringing the work to a close. The middle section juxtaposes triple and duple subdivisions of the beat.

The opening of the third piece, *Andante sostenuto*, is closely related to the second movement of Bruns's third sonata, op. 88 in regard to the numerous rhythmic motives employed throughout. The last piece, *Allegro giocoso*, exploits wide intervals and the juxtaposition of duple and triple subdivisions of the beat in a through-composed form. A section of triplets in perpetual motion bring about the climax of the work.

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<sup>35</sup> Helge Bartholomäus, "*Vier virtuose Stücke für Fagott solo*, op. 93: liner notes," (Berlin: Musik- und Buchverlag Werer Feja), 1991.

## Bassoon and Piano Music

### *4 Stücke für Fagott*, Op. 12 (1939)

Publisher: Unpublished (manuscript score)

Premier: Not known

Duration: 16 minutes

These early works for bassoon and piano present a look into Bruns's early compositional style. The collection consists of four pieces instead of the original five, because somewhere during his move from Leningrad to Berlin Bruns lost the first piece and never bothered to rewrite or reconstruct it. The pieces were written between July and September of 1939 and are all dated by Bruns himself.

The most distinguishing features of Bruns's early style are the use of key signatures, symmetrical four-measure phrases, and predominate use of ternary form found throughout the four pieces. The first, *Humoresk*, is in ternary form with a coda. The outer sections are in G minor and the middle section, *meno mosso (quasi Moderato)*, is in E-flat major. This section shows Bruns's interest in modal mixture with the juxtaposition of the notes G and G-flat. The second piece, *Ruhige Weise*, is also in ternary form and contains many similarities to the first bassoon sonata, op. 20 with the melismatic return of the opening material. This piece contains very lyrical writing that lies comfortably on the instrument. The third piece, again composed in ternary form, is reminiscent of the early twentieth-century Russian composers in that the return of the opening material quickly juxtaposes E major and E-flat major. The codetta that brings the work to a close is reminiscent of Prokofiev's "wrong-note" technique. The fourth piece,

*Rondo*, presents the only compound meter of the set. The work is a five-part rondo (ABABA) with the *B* section in 5/8 meter. The rondo theme is characterized by a five-note motive first heard in the *Moderato* introduction to the *Allegro* movement. The writing is straightforward and well constructed for balance between piano and bassoon. These pieces would be wonderful for the young bassoonist to begin work on collaborating with a pianist. They involve tenor clef and the writing ascends to C5 on occasion. Although they are not an introduction to Bruns's mature style, these pieces will certainly find their way onto the stage once they are published.

***Sonate für Fagott und Klavier*, Op. 20 (1949)**

Publisher: Edition Pro Musica (Nr. 95)

Premier: Berlin, 1949

Performers: Victor Bruns, bassoon; H. Wonneberger, piano

Dedication: Johannes Zuther

Duration: 18 minutes

The first sonata for bassoon and piano presents Bruns's early compositional style. With many neo-classic and even neo-romantic traits, Bruns's early style is captured in this eighteen-minute work. Three years prior to the composition of the sonata, Bruns began studying with Boris Blacher, who suggested, "it must all be lighter, do not make everything so thick, try development. Here is a small triplet, try to make something out of this trifle."<sup>36</sup> Perhaps following Blacher's advice, the triplet is the central rhythmic

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<sup>36</sup> Victor Bruns, "A Conversation with Victor Bruns," 34.

element of the first movement of the op. 20 sonata. The triplet also became a typical rhythmic element central to Bruns for the rest of his compositional career.

The nucleus of many stylistic traits, specific to all three bassoon sonatas, can be seen in the first sonata. The first movement of the sonata is characterized by highly concentrated sections presenting stylized Brunsonian compositional devices (i.e., inversion of the main themes, duple versus triple subdivisions of the beat, climaxes achieved through sequence, pedal points). Contrapuntal devices such as inversion, imitation, and augmentation can be readily found in the first sonata.

The first movement can be seen as a quasi rondo form. Whereas the rondo theme is characterized by its lyricism, the second thematic area, *Poco animato*, is characterized by briskly moving triplets in perpetual motion between piano and bassoon. Following an inverted statement of the rondo theme and a transposition of the second a tritone higher, a transition brings about a third thematic section. This “developmental” section is devoid of a true melody and, therefore, lacks the interest found in the first two sections. A pedal C with a juxtaposition of the tritone C/F-sharp in the bassoon part concludes the section and brings about a return to the final statement of the rondo theme. Bruns’s use of tritone relationships, atonal melodies, and brief chromaticism, all of which are illustrated in this movement, make it more appropriate to refer to his harmonic language as being centered on a specific tonic rather than diatonically based. Further solidifying the analysis of tonal centers versus diatonicism, Bruns relied heavily on two intervals, the tritone and second, which equally disrupt any sense of tertian harmony in the first movement.

The second movement, *Andante tranquillo*, most clearly illustrates the dichotomy between Bruns’s style prior to meeting with Boris Blacher and the types of revisions he

began to make after his studies. Written in ternary form, the movement contains three aspects of Bruns's mature style: large intervals that are used to heighten the dramatic effect of the music, sequential patterns, and a varied repeat of the main thematic area (A—B—A').

The five-measure melody that begins the movement is rhythmically active and juxtaposes lyrical step-wise movement with rhapsodic sixteenth- and thirty-second-note flourishes. Bruns developed each subsequent statement of the main melody with the addition of more and more non-harmonic tones, syncopation, and repetition.

The developmental middle section is of special interest because the first part of the section differs dramatically from the long, seamless melody of the opening of the movement. The melodic gestures are brief and sequential development of small motivic cells illustrate the working through of ideas presented to Bruns by Blacher.

The third movement, beginning in D major with an alberti-bass figure, presents different tonal areas while using the tonal center of D as a *rondo key area* that returns in alternating sections.

Formally, the movement is in two large sections. The first, *Allegretto grazioso*, presents a typical song form construction (ABA); the second section, *Allegro giocoso*, centers around two main features: an ostinato figure and an unadorned scalar melody. The movement is atypical of Bruns's mature compositions, which tend to be formally straightforward and symmetrical. Following the two sections, a written-out cadenza develops a three-note motive from the opening of the movement. The cadenza leads to a brief codetta that brings the movement to a close in D major.

*5 Stücke für Fagott*, Op. 40 (1965)

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 7502, out of print)

Premier: Bayerischer Rundfunk, 1978

Performers: Achim von Lorne, bassoon

Dedication: Fritz Finsch

Duration: 18 minutes

Bruns composed these pieces as pedagogical works for students, but they also work well as short recital pieces. The five pieces are individually conceived and do not share specific traits. They provide the young bassoonist with many opportunities to work on style, technical issues, and range. In an East German Radio interview (*DDR Rundfunk*) in 1984, Bruns stated that he did not compose the pieces to be performed as a set, but rather in different combinations. Following this interview, Fritz Finsch, dedicatee of the third sonata and the impetus behind these pieces, performed them in their entirety.

The first piece, *Tempo di marcia*, includes such issues as the juxtaposition of triple and duple subdivision, abundant accidentals, and staccato tonguing. The second piece, *Andante*, the longest work in the set at four minutes, has long phrases in 5/4 meter. It is ideal for work on lyrical legato playing of disjunct melodies. The third piece, *Andante scherzando*, presents rapid staccato tonguing in a humorous style, emphasizing rapid tonguing of the same note. The fourth, *Andantino grazioso*, written mainly in 7/4, presents long and irregular melodies alternating between slurred and articulated step-wise motion and requiring frequent use of rubato. The last piece, *Allegro giocoso*, recalls the

feeling of the opening march, but slightly faster. A cadenza at the end of the movement gives the set a bravura ending.

*Zweite Sonate für Fagott und Klavier*, Op. 45 (1969)

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 7519, out of print)

Premier: Bayrischer Rundfunk, 1971

Performers: Otto Pischkitl, bassoon; Herbert Kaliga, piano

Dedication: Otto Pischkitl

Duration: 15 minutes

The second sonata for bassoon and piano contains some of Bruns's most poignant, retrospective, and ornate music. He sustained very strong ties to classical formal structure throughout the second sonata. Formally, the first movement consists of a hybrid sonata form incorporating a cadenza between the two thematic areas of the recapitulation.

There is a certain motivic clarity that pervades the first thematic area, which helps to unify the exposition. Both thematic areas in the exposition conform to general topics of themes in Bruns's sonata form movements: The first theme is more virtuosic and contains larger intervals; the second theme is lyrical and includes scalar motion. Much of the harmonic and melodic content of the sonata is based, to some degree, on the very intervals that destroy a sense of tonal progression: the tritone and the minor second.

Rather than lead directly into the second theme with a transition, Bruns brought the first section to a close, allowed the aural palate to clear with a measure of rest, and

proceeded with the second theme. The development section, which contains three separate sections in addition to a closing section, subjects material from the first thematic section to various contrapuntal techniques.

The cadenza provides the apex of the movement. In addition to subjecting material from the exposition to developmental techniques, the cadenza transforms thematic material from the development section itself. Melodically, the frequent use of appoggiaturas and chromatic upper neighbor tones adds a heightened state of lyric romanticism to the cadenza. The cadenza reveals to the performer and listener alike that this is not a conventional sonata, but rather an amalgamation of a concerto and a sonata. Instead of the expected cadential trill to conclude the cadenza, Bruns used a string of appoggiaturas as a transition into the coda, which contains brief encounters of the two main thematic areas. The lyrical second theme returns first, a major second higher, followed by half of the first theme. The movement concludes with an augmentation of the main theme, which brings about a clearing of harmonic texture and solidifies the tonal center E.

The second movement, *Andante tranquillo*, presents some of the most lyrical writing in all of the sonatas. The movement is in ternary form with a varied return of the opening material (*ABA'*). A brooding whole-tone ostinato figure introduces the asymmetrical 5/4 meter of the movement. Numerous chromatic notes and a consistent juxtaposition of duple and triple subdivision of the beat characterize the opening eight-measure *molto cantabile* melody, rooted firmly in D minor.

Silence, a faster tempo indication, and a change in texture separate the first and second thematic areas. The second theme epitomizes Bruns's distinctive melodic style

with its numerous diminished-seventh arpeggios and trading of melodic motives between piano and bassoon. This thematic area is divided into two parts. The second part is taken directly from the second thematic area of the first movement. This use of cyclicism further solidifies the neoclassic label to describe Bruns's style.

The return of the main melody, presented by piano instead of bassoon, is elaborated with a newly composed countermelody based on enharmonic spelling of the intervals of the first three notes of the melody itself. The countermelody exhibits the build up to a heightened emotional state with sighing motives, an unvarying rhythm that prolongs the climax, and juxtaposition of duple and triple subdivision. These three events culminate with step-wise motion to the apex of the phrase.

The third movement, containing sections in 4/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, and 9/8, presents the only use of compound meter in the three sonatas. Metrically, this movement is highly reminiscent of the pedagogical work, *Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene*, op. 32, (see pages 56-57). It is in ternary form with a concluding cadenza and codetta.

The first thematic area is presented in four melodic subsections (a1, a2, a3, a4). As seen in earlier compositions, Bruns used stylistic and dynamic markings to delineate many of the sections. In this movement, section *a2* is marked *dolce*, section *a3* is marked *cantabile*, and sections *a1* and *a4* are marked *mezzo forte*.

Although lyricism and the persistent, yet quirky 5/8 meter characterize the first thematic area, the second is angular and repetitive in 6/8 (with occasional 9/8). The *grazioso* middle section of the movement, centered on B-flat but visiting many tonal centers, presents a disjunct melody in 7/8 meter. Motivically driven, the theme is quickly

subjected to inversion and used as a countermelody above the original theme. Motives are also imitated between bassoon and piano, giving the section a developmental character.

A repetition of the first and second themes leads into another cadenza, again evoking the character of a concerto. The material for the third movement cadenza is taken mainly from the second theme. A brief codetta brings the movement to a close in A minor with three resounding dominant-to-tonic eighth notes.

***Das Fagott (Band 5: Kompositionen für Fagott und Klavier) (1978)***

Bruns composed two pieces for bassoon and piano for inclusion in the pedagogical collection, *Das Fagott*, by Werner Seltman and Günther Angerhöfer. The pieces are entered here without opus because they were never individually published. Range and approximate duration are included for pedagogical use.

**No. 10 *Andantino* (1'15'')**



The *Andantino* is written in a waltz-like style throughout. Composed mainly in G minor, the work introduces the young bassoonist to varying ensemble situations: solo playing, intertwining melodic line between bassoon and piano, and accompanying. The piano part is straightforward and easy to sight-read.

**No. 19 *Klavierstück mit Fagott* (2'20'')**



The *Largo* challenges the young bassoonist with the 5/2 signature.

The *molto cantabile* melody presents many precarious slurs in addition to various subdivisions of the half note beat. Octave doubling of the notes in the low range of the piano gives the continuous variation movement a brooding and ponderous mood.

***Sonate Nr. 3 für Fagott und Klavier*, Op. 86 (1988)**

Publisher: Werner Feja (KMB 10)

Premier: Berlin, June 5, 1990

Performs: Mathias Baier, bassoon; Michael Stöckigt, piano

Dedication: Fritz Finsch

Duration: 15 minutes

Although many similarities can be found between this sonata and the works of decades earlier, there is a new complexity in the sonata that truly epitomizes Bruns's late style. What becomes truly evident in the third sonata is simultaneous layering of diatonic, octatonic, and/or chromatic scales. In his text *Soundings*, Glenn Watkins refers to this layering technique in the music of Stravinsky. "Such diatonic-octatonic linkage has been demonstrated by van der Toorn to be central to Stravinsky's personality . . . and may owe its genesis to an admiration for similar formations in the works of Rimsky-Korsakov,

*Sadko* in particular.”<sup>37</sup> This diatonic-octatonic linkage is also central to Bruns’s compositional personality in his later works. During his years in Leningrad, Stravinsky’s style had a tremendous effect on Bruns as he sat in the ballet orchestra playing Stravinsky’s music. Additionally, Bruns’s studies with Stscherbatchov, a pupil of Steinberg (who was a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov), begun in 1926, provide a direct link to Rimsky-Korsakov.

The first movement of the third sonata is in a *sonatina* form consisting of three contrasting thematic areas. Although there is no development proper, Bruns develops motivic material throughout each section with considerable use of imitation and sequence. Each thematic area is centered on a specific tonal area and corresponding rhythmic motive.

Melodically, each section contains a different assortment of kernels that are assigned to one particular rhythmic motive while the anacrusis motive is used extensively throughout this first section. The first thematic area expands upon the melody and rhythmic motives of the introduction. The second thematic area is the largest in scope and complexity, having a rhapsodic character and presenting a theme, which combines a tritone accompaniment with an octatonic melody, while the third thematic area embodies strings of descending seconds and appoggiaturas with its individual rhythmic motive. These rhythmic motives help to separate the thematic areas, while offering a springboard for development.

The opening melody of the second thematic area illustrates diatonic/octatonic layering while Bruns utilized pedal point and planing as harmonic devices in the third

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<sup>37</sup> Glenn Watkins, *Soundings*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 229.

thematic area. The two examples of planing are separated by a minor second and highlight this section of the movement.

The second movement is in a three-part form (*ABA*) similar to the middle movement from of the first two sonatas. The *cantabile* first section (*A*), firmly rooted in A minor, is characterized by an abundance of non-harmonic tones in the bassoon melody. The middle section (*B*) is much longer and more harmonically complex than the music that surrounds it. A unique transition used prior to and following the *B* section once again illustrates the layering technique found throughout the sonata with an atonal melody, bi-chords, and a pedal tone. The *B* section begins with a march-like ostinato, above which a wailing melody, utilizing the descending minor second, predominates. The second part of this section demonstrates melodic interaction between bassoon and piano, with an intertwining of the melodic line and its disjunct countermelody. This countermelody, contrary to the layering technique found in many other instances throughout the movement, is essentially diatonic with an abundance of non-chord tones.

The transition back to the *A* material is harmonically unsettled with movement between the tonal centers of B-flat, D-flat, C-sharp, and G-sharp. This instability builds to an extension of the transition material, presenting different triads against a C major triad that results in a Neapolitan “cadence” to A minor.

The third movement *Allegro giocoso* again presents one of Bruns’s favorite rhythmic calling cards: the staccato triplet. The staccato triplet is also found extensively in the *Fagottstudien für Fortgeschrittene*, op. 32, the *Vier Virtuose Stücke*, op. 93, the *Fünf Stücke*, op. 40, and many chamber music works including bassoon. The first and third sections of this three-part song form extensively incorporate the staccato triplets and

the middle section, *Poco meno e grazioso*, consists of a slow-moving, languid melody in 6/4 that is angular in construction. A return of the opening material is followed by a rhapsodic section, which eventually leads to a cadenza. The cadenza subjects two rhythmic motives to development: the triplet and the dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm. These motives are subjected to sequence, imitation, and other contrapuntal devices in five distinct sections that lead to a climax with the highest note of the movement, D5. A brilliant *Animato*, with bassoon and piano in octaves, finishes the movement in D major with D5 sounding *fortissimo* in the bassoon.

The sonata solidifies many stylistic traits experimented with in the first sonata and worked out in the second. The consistency with which Bruns composed over the forty years separating this sonata from the first is remarkable. Even with the experimental first sonata, written during the time Bruns had first encountered Boris Blacher, many melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic traits are seen time and time again. In comparing the bassoon sonatas with Bruns's other works, the similarities are striking.

*Sonatine für Tenorfagott (oder einfaches Fagott) und Klavier*, Op. 96 (1992)

Publisher: unpublished (manuscript score and part)

Premier: Amsterdam, May 11, 1992

Performers: Richard Moore, fagottino; Tim Raymond, piano

Duration: 8 minutes

Bruns wrote *Sonatine*, op. 96 as a “preliminary exercise”<sup>38</sup> to the *Trio für Fagottino, Fagott, und Kontrafagott*, op. 97. This work provided a forum for experimentation in writing for the fagottino (tenor bassoon pitched in F). The British bassoonist Richard Moore had asked several composers to write music for the tenor bassoon after commissioning a modern counterpart to the eighteenth-century instrument from the bassoon maker Guntram Wolf. Bruns accepted the offer but included an alternative part for modern bassoon in addition to the fagottino part. Mr. Moore premiered the *Sonatine* on the fagottino, but the version for bassoon is yet to be premiered.

The three-movement work has many similarities to Bruns’s other works for bassoon and piano in regard to rhythmic elements, melodic content, and formal organization. The outer movements utilize the *Brunsonian anacrusis motive* (see Chapter 2, Example 3).

The ternary form first movement is characterized by the use of eighth-note triplets in the outer sections. The *cantabile* middle theme in D-flat major provides relief from the persistent triplets. The piano texture is rather thin, allowing the timbre of the fagottino to be heard easily.

The second movement, also in ternary form, presents phrases of irregular lengths that digress from the types of cohesive melodies found in the second and third sonatas for bassoon. The piano is truly accompanimental throughout the movement.

The third movement utilizes syncopation within the main theme, and the middle section is developmental in nature. As with many of Bruns's *giocosso* movements, his admiration of Prokofiev's music is evident. Melodic and rhythmic motives are not developed in any movements of the *Sonatine* to the extent that they are in the three bassoon sonatas.

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<sup>38</sup> William Waterhouse, Electronic mail to Eric Stomberg, 3 July 2002.

## Contrabassoon and Piano Music

### *Zwei Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 57 (1975)

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 7540)

Premier: Berlin Rundfunk, 1981

Performers: Otfried Bienert, contrabassoon; Herbert Kaliga, piano

Duration: 12 minutes

Bruns composed these pieces on request for the 1975 contrabassoon audition for the Gewandhaus Orchestra. They were never used at the audition, but were later premiered by Otfried Bienert. Bienert also premiered two of the quartets for bassoon and contrabassoon (opp. 55, 68). These two pieces are in ternary form and contain different tempo indications for the contrasting middle sections. The first movement is tonally centered on D, but begins with bi-chords a tritone apart. The melodic writing is extremely lyrical with abundant large intervals, appoggiaturas, and other non-harmonic tones. The *cantabile* main theme, in 5/4 meter, is presented in very symmetrical four-measures phrases. The middle *espressivo* section, *poco animato*, provides contrast with its march-like dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythms.

A waltz movement, including a cadenza for the contrabassoon, constitutes the second piece. The outer sections show a preference to Bruns's favorite rhythmic unit—the triplet. The middle section, *Andante Umoristico*, presents a light-hearted combination of staccato, silence for comical effect, and trills, all which evoke a type of carnival music.

Although few, the *Breitkopf* edition does contain errors as checked against the manuscript score.

***Sechs Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 80 (1986)**

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 7539)

Premier: Miami, June 23, 1990

Performers: Henry Skolnick, contrabassoon; José Lopez, piano

Duration: 12 minutes

In 1986 the Gewandhaus Orchestra once again asked Bruns to compose music for their contrabassoon audition. Yet again, the work was never used at the audition but had its premier in the United States with Henry Skolnick, contrabassoon and José Lopez, piano, at the University of Miami.

The work consists of six short pieces in contrasting styles; any combination of which would work well in recital. The collection begins with a march-like movement. The retrospective second and third pieces, both written *Andante*, are technically and musically challenging, and the fourth piece is a *scherzando* in the style of Prokofiev. The last movement is the most substantial of the set. This sectionalized movement begins with a recitative that presents two-and-a-half octaves of the contrabassoon's three-octave range. Three sections constitute the main body of the movement before a return to the opening recitative. The movement concludes with a cadenza, a trait found in many of his works, which leads to a climax in the highest tessitura of the contrabassoon. Much like

the *Zwei Stücke für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, op. 57, the Breitkopf edition has errors ranging from missing slurs to questionable notes.

***Koncertante Suite für Kontrafagott und Klavier*, Op. 95 (1995)**

Publisher: unpublished (manuscript score)

Premier: Berlin, 1996

Performers: Otfried Bienert, contrabassoon; Michael Stöckigt, piano

Dedication: Otfried Bienert

Duration: 17 minutes

This work was written for Bruns's contrabassoon successor at the Staatskapelle Berlin and has never been published. The suite consists of four movements that twice explore the contrabassoon's highest tessitura (D5). Overall, the piano writing is less busy than in Bruns's other works for a single instrument and piano. However, the texture created by this writing in addition to the separation of range between piano and contrabassoon (the right and left hands of the piano are often in treble clef, far above the contrabassoon) allows the contrabassoon to be heard. The first movement begins with a lyrical contrabassoon introduction to the main body of the movement. Much like earlier compositions, use of the triplet pervades the movement and the suite. The second movement is the only slow one, and the last two provide cadenzas. Overall the work is "very awkward under the fingers and seems to lack inspiration when compared to the contrabassoon concerto that came after it."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Henry Skolnick, Electronic mail to Eric Stomberg, 21 August 2003.

## Chamber Music

*Bläser Quintett für Flöte, Oboe, Klarinette, Horn, Fagott*, Op. 16 (1947)

Publisher: Hofmeister (Score—1535, Parts—1536)

Premier: Berlin, 1947

Performers: Hans Frenz, Flute; Bernhard Schnase, oboe; Heinrich Geuser, clarinet;

Pawelick, horn; Willy Fugmann, bassoon

Duration: 18 minutes

The woodwind quintet provides a significant look into Bruns's early style. It was written one year after he began studying with Boris Blacher. Blacher suggested to Bruns that he should work for clearer textures with lighter scoring and less fugal writing while also composing in genres that better suited him, namely, concerti and chamber music. Bruns wrote an astounding amount of chamber music and this quintet is the earliest chamber work that survives.

Throughout the quintet, Bruns used stylistic or tempo indications to separate sections. The first movement is characterized by his favorite rhythmic motive—the triplet. Illustrating the style Blacher had criticized, thick scoring and blanket dynamics pervade much of the movement. With some adjusting of dynamics, however, the movement is very successful. This sonata-rondo movement presents two main melodies, one in G minor and the other in D major (with a return in C major), in addition to an introduction highlighting the clarinet.

The bassoon introduction to the ternary form second movement presents a Neapolitan relationship (G-flat major) to the F-minor first theme. A middle section, largely in A minor, varies from the outer sections with its syncopated rhythms. The third movement scherzo is complete with a trio that contrasts the scherzo theme in tempo (*Allegretto grazioso* vs. *Presto*) and meter (2/4 vs. 6/8). The fourth movement finale presents one of Bruns's most successful melodic styles—*giocoso*. An oboe solo, utilizing staccato notes and syncopation, provides the main theme for this rondo movement. Bruns's interest in representing music of an earlier time is shown in his stylistic directions for the second thematic area (*quasi à la gavotte*). A rhapsodic section, dominated by a virtuosic, chromatic flute solo, constitutes the third thematic area in the five-part rondo movement. It is unfortunate that a work of this quality is not frequently programmed along side the standard woodwind quintets.

***Holzbläserquartett für Flöte, Oboe, Klarinette, und Fagott*, Op. 18 (1948)**

Publisher: Accolade (ACC 4101)

Premier: Athens, Georgia, March 14, 1995

Performers: Ronald Waln, flute; Dwight Manning, oboe; Theodore Jahn, clarinet; Bruce

Gbur, bassoon

Duration: 21 minutes

“The woodwind quartet, op. 18, was written between July 1947 and February 1948, and [Bruns] did not consider it worth publishing. Thanks to the intervention of the Berlin bassoonist Helge Bartholomäus, one of the best works for this combination was

saved from destruction”<sup>40</sup> and published in 2003. The quartet is indeed a notable contribution to the few significant works written with this scoring (i.e. Elliot Carter—*Eight Etudes and a Fantasy*; Jean Françaix—*Quatour*; Villa-Lobos—*Quatour*). The world premier took place in Athens, Georgia at the request of the American bassoonist Bruce Gbur. “I felt that the piece was every bit as strong as the Woodwind Quintet (op. 16). I wrote to [Bruns] expressing my opinion and stating that I would like to perform the work. I added that if he strongly objected to the work’s performance, to please write to me immediately and I would not program it.”<sup>41</sup> When Bruns did not reply, Gbur programmed the work on his doctoral chamber recital with faculty members from the University of Georgia. “This quartet was [later] premiered [in Germany] with success in 2001”<sup>42</sup> by *Kammermusik Berlin* (Iris Jess, flute; Gudrun Reschke, oboe; Alexander Roske, clarinet; Mathias Baier, bassoon).

Overall, the quartet is rhythmically complex and representative of Bruns’s early compositional style with the use of key signatures, thick scoring, and numerous effects that were honed in subsequent works. Bruns also wrote this work while studying with Boris Blacher in Berlin. The difference in sophistication of scoring and balance from the woodwind quintet to the woodwind quartet is impressive.

The *Allegro giocoso* first movement begins, similar to many of Bruns’s compositions, with an introduction to the main theme. The quasi sonata-rondo movement includes a lengthy development section in which Bruns utilized numerous contrapuntal devices such as imitation, fugal writing, inversion, and fragmentation. The second thematic area returns immediately following the developmental section, creating a

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<sup>40</sup> Bodo Koenigsbeck, Liner Notes, *Holzbläserquartett*, op. 18, (Warngau: Accolade, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Bruce Gbur, Electronic mail to Eric Stomberg, 21 February 2004.

sonata-rondo form (ABCBA). The second movement, *Andantino con moto*, opens with a clarinet ostinato in F minor above which a plaintive melody is presented by the flute. The second thematic area brings about a key change to G major, followed by a repetition of the theme in D-flat major (an early example of the Brunsian trait of tritone juxtaposition). Following a brief *animato* section, the main theme returns accompanied by sustained notes instead of the opening ostinato figure. The closing section exhibits a rhythmic *ritardando* as the note values gradually become slower. The *Presto* third movement opens with an energetic dialogue of accompanimental staccato quarter notes until a melody in hemiola appears in the bassoon. A section marked *Andante grazioso* follows the opening section but has only fragments of melodic interest. Following a return of the opening material, the ternary form movement concludes with a disjunct coda that employs numerous unusual silences.

A lengthy clarinet cadenza, somewhat reminiscent of the *Scheherazade* cadenzas, opens the *Allegro moderato* finale. The sectionalized movement presents the most challenging ensemble playing of the quartet with technically and rhythmically demanding writing. The energetic march-like *Allegro animato* juxtaposes duple and triple subdivision. The closing section, firmly solidifying the key of D minor, acts as a transition into the *Allegretto con moto*, written in 8/8 meter. After a brief change to 7/8 a return to the original meter is highlighted by a rhythmically complex ostinato figure between clarinet and bassoon. The third section of the movement returns to the opening key of D minor with a slightly slower tempo (*Tempo I, ma poco tranquillo*) and a clarinet solo reminiscent of the introduction. A concluding *animato* section is highlighted by a virtuosic flute part that, unfortunately, brings the work to an abrupt end.

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<sup>42</sup> Waldemar Bruns, Electronic mail to Eric Stomberg, 12 April 2003.

*Sextet for Wind Quintet and Piano*, Op.34 (1957)

Publisher: unpublished (manuscript score and parts)

Premier: Berlin, October 13, 1957

Performers: Peter Fremerey, Flute; Hans-Georg Rast, Oboe; Oskar Michallik, Clarinet;

Karl Steinbrecher, bassoon; Helmut Kranz Horn; Hans Löwlein, piano

Duration: 16 minutes

The Sextet was premiered at the Berlin Staatsoper with soloists from the Staatskapelle and Hans Löwlein, pianist. “After that, it incomprehensibly disappeared.”<sup>43</sup> To this date it is still unpublished. Although plans had been made for the work to be published in the United States, the rights to the work have been returned to the Bruns family.

The manuscript shows Bruns’s editing with ten crossed out measures, changes in enharmonic spellings, and re-scoring of parts. It is highly likely that these changes came after working with the musicians who premiered the sextet, as Bruns was well known for his close-knit relationships with the performers.

Following a brief introduction, the sonata-form first movement begins with an alberti-bass figure above which the clarinet presents the main thematic material, a jovial melody utilizing grace notes, trills, and triplets. The second theme begins with an oboe solo accompanied solely by winds, followed by a piano solo accompanied by clarinet, horn, and bassoon. The main melody returns in inversion following a brief section of development to bring the movement to a close.

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<sup>43</sup> Mathias Baier, Berlin, to Eric Stomberg, Athens, Ohio, 9 April 2003.

The main theme of the second movement, a lyrical oboe melody accompanied by bassoon ostinato, is preceded by an introduction. The movement is through-composed and contains different scoring combinations of the six instruments. The third movement, *Allegro giocoso*, is characterized by short motives developed throughout with sequence and inversion. A section marked *Allegro vivo* is reminiscent of the first movement with its alberti-bass accompaniment. A return to the movement's main theme leads to an exciting coda.

The piano writing is less complex than in the sonatas Bruns wrote for wind or string instruments with piano. Throughout much of the sextet, the piano provides a rhythmic drive with persistent motives while alternating between solo and collaborative roles.

***Oktett für Klarinette, Fagott, Horn, 2 Violinen, Bratsche, Cello  
und Kontrabaß, Op. 42 (1968)***

Publisher: unpublished (manuscript score and parts)

Premier: Vienna, 1969

Performers: Philharmonisches Oktett Berlin

Dedication: Der Kammermusikvereinigung der Berliner Philharmoniker

Duration: 17 minutes

The octet was written for and premiered by the Berlin Philharmonic Octet. The fact this work was premiered by the West Berlin ensemble in Vienna illustrates the significance that Bruns's music had in post-World War II-divided Germany. This typical

Schubertian instrumentation had been revived in Germany with groups such as the Berliner Oktett (Berlin Symphonie Orchester musicians—East Germany) and the Philharmonisches Oktett Berlin (Berlin Philharmonic musicians—West Germany) commissioning works from some of the most significant composers of the time. Other composers, including Bruns's composition teacher Boris Blacher, the Frenchman Jean Françaix, and Paul Hindemith composed octets for similar instrumentation.

The parts are still in manuscript, but an initiative to publish them in commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bruns's birth is presently underway. The *Andante tranquillo* introduction begins with an ostinato in the first and second violins under which low strings present the melody. The main body of the movement, *Allegro animato*, uses the introduction melody as its foundation. The second theme, presented by first violin, contains wide intervals against a homorhythmic accompaniment. Following a developmental section, the recapitulation highlights the second thematic area with a *dolcissimo* version of the theme presented by clarinet. The second movement starts with a lengthy bassoon solo accompanied by string quintet. This section perhaps planted a seed for the *Konzertante Musik für Fagott und Streichtrio*, op. 58 (1976). The third movement, *Allegro vivace*, begins with string quintet. Following this brief introduction, the clarinet takes over the main theme. The movement is characterized by driving rhythms and rhythmic unisons between multiple instruments. A cadenza for solo bass precedes the driving 12/8 section that ends the work with excitement.

***Trio für Oboe, Klarinette, und Fagott*, Op. 49 (1971)**

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel (Nr. 7522; out of print)

Premier: Berliner Rundfunk, 1974

Performers: Walter Weih, oboe; Helmut Hofmann, clarinet; Herbert Heilmann, bassoon

Duration: 15 minutes

The trio is a substantial work and one of the more interesting in the genre. In a genre dominated by twentieth-century French composers such as Auric, Bozza, Dubois, Françaix, Ibert, Pierne, Tansman, and Henri Tomasi, the Bruns Trio offers a completely different style and sound. The lengthy four-movement work includes virtuosic writing for all three instruments and numerous stylistic settings. Unfortunately, the work is out of print, and the original published version by Breitkopf und Härtel (Leipzig) includes no oboe part. The score reads “Partitur ist zugleich Oboenstimme” (The score is also the oboe part).

The first movement, *Allegro animato*, begins with an energetic four-measure unison introduction to the main melody. This introduction, written dodecaphonically, shows Bruns’s interest with 12-tone music. The movement showcases the oboe with its two contrasting themes. Characterized by escape tones in the melody and descending minor seconds in the accompaniment, the *dolce* main melody is especially appealing. Bruns utilized many creative traits here, including an inversion of the main theme, combination of the two thematic ideas at the climax of the movement, and a refrain-like use of the 12-tone introduction. The arch form second movement opens with a clarinet solo, while also containing emotional outbursts from all three instruments. Bruns

dramatic use of silence before returning to the opening clarinet melody is quite poignant. The third movement, *Tempo di valse grazioso*, juxtaposes a witty waltz and a march, both utilizing Bruns's favorite rhythmic element—the triplet. The ternary-form movement (waltz—march—waltz) creates a special timbre with its sarcastic grace notes and awkward silences.

The fourth movement presents a brilliant theme with variations. The *Andante grazioso* theme, largely in E minor, is only a half-minute in length. The five variations contain arguably the most unique music of the trio. Each variation has a unique connection with the theme. Oddly, the first variation utilizes the ending of the theme for its melodic content. The second variation is most assuredly a reference to “Ballet of the chicks in their shells” from Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The lilting dance of the third variation is interrupted by a playful development of rhythmic motives before a brief return to the dance, which rounds out the ternary-form variation. Similar to the first variation, the fourth uses the end of the theme, and the writing is also reminiscent of the march section of the third movement. The final variation opens with a brooding bassoon ostinato in 5/8 meter. The ostinato and odd-meter melody, presented first by the clarinet, immediately demonstrate the playful style (*giocoso*). A return to common time brings about a *Maestoso* version of the theme.

*Kleine Suite für 3 Fagotte und Kontrafagott*, Op. 55 (1974)

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel (Score PB 3966; Parts EB 7619)

Premier: Berliner Rundfunk, 1976

Performers: Herbert Heilmann, Dieter Hähnchen, Hans-Dieter Seidel, bassoons; Ottfried  
Bienert, contrabassoon)

Duration: 10 minutes

This quartet is the first of three for three bassoons and contrabassoon that Bruns composed (opp. 55, 68, 92). Bruns's idiomatic writing for bassoon and contrabassoon makes these quartets gems of the genre. Their multiple movement construction offers changes of pace from *cantabile* slow movements to dramatic and energetic *allegros* and *giocosos*. Bruns masterful writing is illustrated in the separation of range between the principal bassoon and the contrabassoon, often placing the former in the tenor range. Interestingly, the third bassoon line is often written higher than the second, similar to orchestral horn scoring. The overall effect, however, is one of a perfect blend of four soloists. Classical formal structure predominates in the quartets, and indications such as *dolce*, *grazioso*, or *cantabile* often accompany the clearly delineated sections.

The first quartet (op. 55) opens with a slow introduction to its ternary form *Allegro giocoso* (one of Bruns's favorite tempo and style designations). Staccato eighth-notes and dotted-eighth-sixteenth rhythms predominate in this short movement. The second movement, *Allegretto scherzando*, opens with a jaunty melody in 7/8 that evolves into a witty and energetic display of disjunct melodies offset with lyrical *dolce* passages. The third movement, *Largo*, opens with a homorhythmic section presenting parallel ninth chords. The principal bassoon dominates the middle section of the ternary-form

movement before a return to the opening homorhythmic music. The fourth movement, *Tempo di valse grazioso*, contains highly imitative music that is evenly distributed with thematic subjects or fragments finding their way into all four parts. The opening and closing sections are sparsely scored and hint at pointillism. The fifth movement, *Allegro animato*, highlights the third bassoon with a witty and sarcastic melody in the style of Prokofiev. A lengthy *giocosso* section predominates the middle section before an exact repeat of the opening material. A codetta firmly establishes D as the tonal center and brings the movement to a close.

***Konzertante Musik für Fagott und Streichtrio*, Op. 58 (1976)**

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel (Score PB 3943; Parts 7617)

Premier: Berlin, 1979

Performers: Herbert Heilmann, bassoon; Friedrich-Carl Erben, violin; Arnim Orlamünde, viola; Wolfgang Bernhardt, violoncello)

Duration: 17 minutes

This three-movement work shares many similarities to the well-known quartets by Devienne and Danzi for the same instrumentation (bassoon, violin, viola, cello), but also presents stark contrasts to them. Most certainly a diminutive bassoon concerto complete with first and third movement cadenzas, Bruns generally used the string trio as a supporting ensemble here. Although he wrote for every possible combination of the instruments, Bruns was very fond of the timbre created by bassoon and cello in octaves.

The first movement, *Allegro animato, ma non troppo*, illustrates traits that typify Bruns's style: the rondo form movement presents three versions of the rondo theme (original statement, imitation at the quarter note, in inversion); the developmental middle section subjects the rhythmic motive of the rondo theme to inversion, fragmentation, and other contrapuntal techniques; and the written-out cadenza alternates between the rondo theme's rhythmic motive (eighth-note—two sixteenth-notes) and a staccato articulation reminiscent of the third thematic section.

The second movement, *Andante tranquillo*, sets the bassoon against homorhythmic, muted strings. Within the first thematic area, the bassoon quickly ascends to D5, which acts as the apex of the arch-shaped theme. The second thematic area contains much more melodic interplay between the strings and bassoon. An inverted statement of the main theme constitutes the third part of this ternary-form movement. The *Allegro giocoso* third movement begins with a lighthearted, march-like rhythm in the strings above which the bassoon presents the staccato *giocoso* theme. The ternary-form movement includes an *Andante grazioso* middle section that combines the staccato articulation of the first section with playful grace notes (minor seconds). A cadenza covers a large portion of the bassoon's range (B-flat1-D5), and the coda, marked *brillante*, brings the movement to a close in C major.

***Das Fagott (Band 4: Duette)*** (1978)

Bruns composed three duets for two bassoons for inclusion in the pedagogical collection *Das Fagott* of Werner Seltman and Günther Angerhöfer. The duets are entered here without opus, because they were never individually published. Range and approximate duration are included for pedagogical use.

**No. 8 *Allegretto giocoso*** (45'')



This short duet emphasizes matching staccato articulation between parts, Dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythms, and accidentals in simple duple time, and presents an *espressivo* second theme that contrasts the *giocoso* main theme. It is a good introduction to the style and language of Bruns's bassoon music.

**No. 20 *Moderato*** (1')



This duet in C major includes various articulations, changes in dynamics, and a homorhythmic middle section written mainly in thirds. This section would afford a student the opportunity to match articulation and intonation. Written entirely in simple duple meter, a brief *espressivo* section adds variety to the articulated *scherzando* melody.

No. 25 *Allegro non troppo, quasi danza* (1'30'')



The duet, written mostly in 8/8 meter (3/8+2/8+3/8), presents challenges in sustaining consistent eighth-note subdivision. The second bassoon part is suitable for work on staccato low register playing, while the first bassoon part focuses on different rhythmic combinations within the given meter.

*Kleine Suite Nr. 2 für 3 Fagotte und Kontrafagott*, Op.68 (1981)

Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel (Score PB 3966; Parts EB 7619)

Premier: Berlin, 1984

Performers: Herbert Heilmann, Frank Heintze, Hans-Dieter Seidel, bassoons; Ottfried Bienert, contrabassoon

Duration: 10 minutes

Written seven years after the first *Kleine Suite*, op. 55, the op. 68 quartet is one of the finest pieces of chamber music Bruns composed. His mastery of the instruments and understanding of texture combined with his creative melodies make the *Kleine Suite Nr. 2* one of the best pieces in this genre.

The opening slow introduction gives way to a sectionalized *Allegro animato* movement. The sporadic use of 5/4 measures gives the march-like movement an uneven feeling. The music from the slow introduction returns, this time in the *allegro* tempo, to conclude the movement. The second movement, *Andante tranquillo*, provides a dramatic

change to the fast-paced first movement. The opening eight-measure phrase quickly soars up to D5 for the principal bassoon. Following this expressive introduction, a contrabassoon obbligato accompanies homorhythmic major triads in ascending minor seconds by the trio of bassoons. The closing section is preceded by a measure of silence and a principal bassoon solo reminiscent of a slow movement of a symphony or string quartet by Shostakovich. The third movement *Allegretto à la danza*, opens with a brilliant ostinato above which the first bassoon presents the atonal main theme. Elaboration and expansion of the ostinato figure unify the through-composed movement. A whimsical scherzando leads to a climactic *cantabile* contrabassoon solo.

The yearning chromatic melody of the fourth movement *Andante sostenuto* is a stark contrast to the previous scherzando movement. Although melodically chromatic, the first section is largely in A minor. The middle section of the ternary-form movement is a less contrapuntal *poco animato*, highlighted by a section of parallel major seconds that bring about the climax of the movement. The *Allegro giocoso* fifth movement evokes the sound of early twentieth-century Russian neoclassicists. Written in sonata-rondo form (A-B-A-C-A-Codetta), this movement, along with many of the *giocosos* written by Bruns, masterfully blends a tuneful melody with bravura writing for the instruments. The sixth movement, *Allegro leggiero*, opens with a diabolical march in C-sharp minor followed by a chorale section in A major. Repetitions of the chorale melody occur in F-sharp major and D major before a brief closing section. The minute-and-a-half finale provides a fantastic conclusion to the quartet.

***Trio für Klarinette, Fagott, und Klavier*, Op. 84 (1987)**

Publisher: Werner Feja (KMG 3)

Premier: Berlin, September 19, 1989

Performers: Heiner Schindler, clarinet; Ingo Reuter, bassoon; Lisa Gogolin, piano

Duration: 17 minutes

The two trios for clarinet, bassoon, and piano are in manuscript form as published by Werner Feja. The Feja edition consists of a full score and a combined clarinet/bassoon part; both are difficult to read.

The opening movement, *Allegro sostenuto*, utilizes a quirky triplet motive, which is used throughout the movement. The movement is sectionalized, and although some sections are successful, the overall feeling of the movement is disjunct and awkward. The second movement, *Andante tranquillo, ma con moto*, begins in A minor with a *cantabile* melody that quickly ascends to F-sharp<sup>6</sup> in the clarinet line. Numerous instances in which the clarinet quickly ascends to its altissimo range sound unsupported and misplaced. Bruns must have been aware of this issue because he wrote several *ossia* passages for the clarinet in this movement. The coda of this sonata-form movement approaches Bruns's more unique style found in his more successful chamber music. The third movement, *Allegro giocoso*, is in a ternary form with a coda. The A section is characterized by a persistent five-note ostinato above which a chromatic melody is presented in fast rhythmic values. The middle *grazioso* section presents much slower rhythmic durations while using a three-note ostinato to hold the section together. A return of the opening

section leads to the coda in which the bassoon and clarinet play in unison for the first time in the trio.

The *Trio Nr.1* is a peculiar composition that often feels disjunct and haphazard in its construction. Awkward transitions and uncharacteristic writing undermine its classical formal structure. For example, when one or both of the winds are playing the piano is often only accompanimental in nature. This writing is much different than that seen in Bruns's sonatas for solo instrument and piano. Texturally, the sonority Bruns creates by writing predominately in the clarinet's altissimo range is peculiar. One hypothesis is that the poor health of Bruns's wife during the late 1980s (she died in 1990) made composing difficult at this time. He was the sole caregiver for his wife and, although he normally composed at the piano, he was reluctant to do so with her declining health.

***Trio Nr. 2 für Klarinette, Fagott, und Klavier*, Op. 91 (1990)**

Publisher: Werner Feja (KMG 4)

Premier: Berlin, 1990

Performers: Mathias Glander, clarinet; Holger Straube, bassoon; Viola Straube, piano

Duration: 18 minutes

The second trio for clarinet, bassoon, and piano suffers from many of the same oddities as the first: awkward use of the clarinet's altissimo range, odd transitions, and uninspired melodies. Bruns wrote even more *ossia* passages for clarinet than in the first trio, and they are more successful than the original passages.

The opening movement is in four sections, one of which contains a Ländler. Bruns's preoccupation with the triplet gives the movement a static mood. The second movement, *Andante tranquillo*, opens with a *cantabile* melody for the bassoon. The middle section, *Piu mosso*, provides the apex of the ternary-form movement with its faster rhythmic durations and harmonic intricacies. A return to the opening material, played in octaves by clarinet and bassoon, brings the movement to a close. Although the second movement is the most successful of the work, it still lacks a true sense of progression and development throughout.

The *Allegro animato* third movement is written in three sections with a coda. The coda is the strongest part of the movement, evoking a march from a Shostakovich symphony. Bruns also uses a "wrong-note" technique, similar to that of Prokofiev, to make the section unique. The two trios (opp. 84, 91), although initially undertaken by Bruns to add repertoire to the piano trio genre (clarinet, bassoon, piano), lack the ingenuity and appeal of Bruns's mature compositions.

***Kleine Suite Nr. 3 für 3 Fagotte und Kontrafagott*, Op. 92 (1990)**

Publisher: Werner Feja (FGQ 5)

Premier: Berlin, May 17, 1991

Performers: Gerhard Rapsch, Thomas Kollikowski, Helge Bartholomäus, bassoons;

Stanislav Riha, contrabassoon

Duration: 12 minutes

This quartet was dedicated to the Berlin Bassoon Quartet and edited by one of the quartet's members, Helge Bartholomäus. The quartet, in multiple movement form, is similar to the construction of the first two quartets (opp. 55, 68). Bruns had aimed to create a quartet in which the contrabassoon played a more soloistic role.

The first movement resembles the opening movements of the two earlier quartets with its slow introduction to a march-like movement in ternary form. The middle section, a frolicking ländler in F-sharp major, seems unrelated to the E-minor main theme except for the major second connection (E and F-sharp) typical of Bruns's style. The main theme of the second movement *Andantino con moto* is an augmentation of the principal theme of the first movement. The mixing of triple and quadruple meter gives the movement a quasi-waltz feeling. The transition and second thematic area of the binary-form movement continue to borrow freely from first movement material. The opening of the *Allegro animato* third movement is extremely reminiscent of the third movement of the third sonata for bassoon. The body of the movement alternates between first bassoon solos and full ensemble writing mostly in homorhythmic style. The opening introduction motive returns to conclude the movement. The fourth movement is perhaps the strongest

movement of the quartet with its haunting 17-measure introduction (*Andante drammatico*). The transition to the *Allegro molto agitato* is reminiscent of the transition from the *Largo* (Movement IV) to the *Finale* (Movement V) of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 9. The andante tempo returns with a lengthy contrabassoon solo and a return to the opening solemn procession. The fifth movement *Allegro giocoso* draws thematic material from previous movements. This borrowed material, found in the middle section, is surrounded by newly composed music. Interestingly, the main theme of the finale movement supplied a theme for the first movement of the *Trio für Fagottino, Fagott und Kontrafagott*, op. 97 written two years later.

***Trio für Fagottino oder Fagott (I), Fagott (II) und Kontrafagott*, Op. 97 (1992)**

Publisher: Feja (KMB 22)

Premier: Frankfurt, August 12, 1992

Performers: Richard Moore, fagottino; William Waterhouse, bassoon; Henry Skolnick,  
contrabassoon

Duration: 12 minutes

This is the last work of Bruns's long and prolific career. The trio, dedicated to the bassoon scholar William Waterhouse, includes an optional part for modern bassoon (to replace the fagottino). The writing here presents Bruns's unique melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic language and is much stronger than the clarinet, bassoon, and piano trios opp. 84 and 91. Discrepancies exist between the manuscript and the version published by Feja.

The opening *Allegro leggiero* is a showpiece for the fagottino. Most of the movement is dominated by the upper-most voice with only occasional homorhythmic ensemble writing. The ternary-form movement juxtaposes an energetic march-like allegro against a waltz-like *grazioso*. Brunian traits such as harmonic movement by half-step and driving rhythms characterize the movement. The solo material in the second movement *Andante tranquillo* is more evenly distributed among the instruments as a plaintive arch-shaped melody grows out of a motivic kernel found in the contrabassoon introduction. Again written in ternary form, the middle section stands out with its triplet rhythms and dialogue between fagottino and bassoon. The quasi-circus march third movement, *Allegro scherzando*, presents a formidable challenge for the solo fagottino with numerous chromatic notes, awkward leaps, and rapid articulation. The continuous variation of the main melody results in a rousing *animato*, which brings the movement to an exciting conclusion. The fourth movement *Allegro giocoso* is composed in an arch form (ABCAB) with the middle section (C) borrowing music from the first movement *grazioso* waltz. The first section (A) introduces a dialogue between fagottino and bassoon. The scherzo (B) arrives without transition and comes to an end with closing material taken from the opening (A). Following a repeat of the first and second sections, a brief coda based on the A material concludes the trio.

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