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Musical Signification in Biber's Rosary Sonatas

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Abstract

This monograph examines musical signification in Heinrich Biber's *Rosary Sonatas* (ca. 1678), a set of sixteen pieces for violin and *continuo*. The sonatas are mostly known for their striking use of *scordatura* (altered tuning) and the copper-engraved illustrations in the original manuscript that reference the Mysteries of the Rosary, a meditative Marian practice that originated in the Middle Ages. Musical signification and meaning in the *Rosary Sonatas* have been widely discussed in recent years. The sonatas have been studied in terms of programmaticism and rhetoric, and scholars have proposed the application of broader analytical views that encompass aspects of Biber's spiritual affiliations as a Bohemian-Austrian baroque *Kapellmeister* in Salzburg, who was closely related to Rosary confraternities (Gilles 2018, Strand-Polyak 2013). Building on this earlier work, I apply Robert Hatten's theory of virtual agency to the *Rosary Sonatas* (Hatten 2018). This theory grants agency to diverse elements of music through perspectives such as gesture, movement, and embodiment, among others. It is divided into four levels of agency: Actants, Agents, Actors, and Subjectivity. Hatten also includes an appendix level called Performance where an analyst/performer can offer practical, performative suggestions that sustain the analytical findings of the previous levels.

Through the application of the theory of virtual agency, I produce interpretative results that greatly enhanced my relationship with and understanding of two *Rosary Sonatas*, *The Annunciation* and *The Agony*. In both cases, the results are subjective and personal but still grounded in Biber's music. They have practical significance for an analyst/performer as I offer applications to articulation, bowing, choices about dynamic contrast, pacing, among others. Ultimately, the theory of virtual agency not only helped to

interpret Biber's sonatas but to further manifest their connection with the Mysteries of the Rosary.

Keywords

Heinrich Biber, Rosary Sonatas, Violin, Musical Hermeneutics, Musical Semiotics, Musical Signification, Virtual Agency.

Summary for Lay Audience

This monograph examines a set of sixteen pieces for violin and accompaniment composed in the baroque era by Heinrich Biber (1644-1704). These pieces are called the *Rosary Sonatas*, because illustrations in the original manuscript reference the Mysteries of the Rosary. (The Rosary is a Catholic meditative practice that originated in the Middle Ages, and its Mysteries are significant events in the life of Jesus and Mary.) Through the lens of Robert Hatten's theory of virtual agency, I explore musical meaning in two of the sonatas: "The Annunciation" and "The Agony". Hatten's theory grants agency (i.e., the capacity to act) to diverse musical elements. By analyzing musical gestures, I identify such elements and imagine them as virtual characters within a musical narrative or environment. Finally, I present a subjective interpretation of the sonatas, supported by my analysis, along with performance suggestions for violinists. This monograph is one of the first studies to apply Hatten's theory and shows how it enhances the interpretation and understanding of music. The monograph also discusses Biber's biography, background information on Hatten's theory, and the manuscript for the *Rosary Sonatas*, including a novel interpretation of the decorative images that appear at the end of particular sonatas.

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Introduction

The Bavarian State Library has a manuscript from the seventeenth century with no title page, just a piously written dedication letter in Latin.¹ It states that the music contained in that manuscript was “consecrated to the honour of the Fifteen Sacred Mysteries” of the Rosary.² The manuscript consists of fifteen sonatas for violin and *basso continuo*, plus a final *passaglia* for solo violin.³ Each piece requires a different altered tuning (*scordatura*), “elaborated with persistent diligence and with great artifice.”⁴ Each sonata has, in the place of a title, a copper-engraved illustration showing one of the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. These pieces remained unknown until their publication in 1905, and now they are the best-known pieces by their author, the baroque composer and virtuoso violinist Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber.

Previous research has addressed the sonatas’ historical and religious contexts in seventeenth-century Salzburg, and also aspects of embodied performance related to Biber’s use of *scordatura*.⁵ However, these studies have not fully explored musical signification. Musical signification is an intentionally broad concept that celebrates how various approaches to meaning converge to illuminate music’s nature, structure, and relation to the

¹ *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, abbreviated BSB, called *Bibliotheca Regia Monacensis* before 1919.

² [...] *Haec omnia Honori XV*. [...]. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), dedication letter, BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich. The Rosary is a catholic meditative Marian practice that traces its origins to the Middle Ages.

³ It is written in the manuscript as *passaglia*.

⁴ [...] *sedulâ cum diligentîâ, et secundum possibilitatem magno artificio elaboratam reperies*. [...]. Biber, “Mystery Sonatas.”

⁵ Scholarship on musical embodiment highlights the role of human bodies in performance and listening.

human being.⁶ Musicians and scholars disagree about the *Rosary Sonatas* musical meanings. These sonatas have been labeled as representational, programmatic, or simply sacred music with no connection to the Mysteries of the Rosary besides their copper engravings. Even though the question of meaning in the *Rosary Sonatas* has been around since their first publication in 1905, new analytical perspectives—under the umbrella concepts of musical hermeneutics and semiotics—can bring original ideas, readings, and performance interpretations to the discussion of their musical meaning. They can shed some light on questions regarding their meaning. For example, how are Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas* meaningful? How do they represent particular biblical characters, dialogues, or events? And how can performers bring out these meanings?

To answer these questions, I apply Robert S. Hatten’s theory of virtual agency for Western art music to two *Rosary Sonatas* (*Sonata I The Annunciation*, and *Sonata VI The Agony*).⁷ Virtual agency refers to the capacity of a virtual being to act in a determined environment. A virtual being does not properly reside in the world, so it has a virtual existence via musical elements like topics, narratives, and gestures. These beings are identified as actants, human agents, and actors inside the music.⁸ Hatten’s theory of virtual agency proposes four levels of agential analysis that allow the analyst to identify and verbalize the agential capacities of some elements of music. These levels touch upon specific elements of music starting from an analysis of gestures, identification of human

⁶ Esti Sheinberg and William P. Dougherty, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Music Signification* (Oxford: Routledge, 2020), 1. Signification “is a re-cognition of interactions grounded in aesthetic, biological, cognitive, cultural, historical, and physical facts—all of which shape and influence our understanding of the world.”

⁷ Robert S. Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

⁸ Actant is a person, creature, or object playing a role in a narrative.

agents, actors, and finally link everything to the analyst's subjectivity. The theory also includes an appendix level called Performance where an analyst who is also a performer can actually propose performance suggestions to improve the analytical-agential results of the main four levels. Chapter 2 explains Hatten's theory of virtual agency and offers background information.

Before that theoretical discussion, Chapter 1 touches on biographical aspects of Biber's life and his Jesuit background, connecting his education to rosary devotion. It gives a chronological description of his travels around central Europe (Wartenberg–Opava–Kroměříž–Salzburg). It also includes his more important job posts and employers (the bishops Liechtenstein-Castelcorneo, and Khuenburg). In this chapter, I briefly focus on his last post in Salzburg, Salzburg's context during the counter-reformation movement, and Khuenburg's influence in the creation of confraternities that pursued rosary devotion. I also describe Biber's main characteristics as an innovative and prolific composer. I succinctly discuss the original manuscript of the *Rosary Sonatas* and its copper engravings, including a novel interpretation of some of the ending decorative images. This chapter addresses historical information on the Rosary, its structure and practice in Biber's time, its relation to the confraternities of Salzburg, as well as a review of recent musicological work on Biber.

Chapters 3 and 4 correspond to the analytical portion of this monograph. Each chapter represents a complete virtual agential analysis of one of the aforementioned *Rosary Sonatas* (*The Annunciation* and *The Agony*, respectively). In these two case studies, I apply Hatten's theory using all the four levels of agency and also the performative level. This means that in addition to the virtual agential analysis on the sonatas, I am also considering how to perform it, providing different readings along with performative suggestions. In both cases, the theory of virtual agency allowed me to produce not only a thorough analysis

of gestures but also a more subjective, hermeneutical analysis. Through the analysis of the music, I devised interpretative ideas that are highly personal. Yet the theory of virtual agency provides the means to connect the analyst's subjective results back to the music itself. This enhances musical interpretation and performance.

Finally, the monograph provides a conclusion and four appendices. The first one is a scanned version of the manuscript provided by the *Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek* via the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP) – Petrucci Library. (This manuscript is in the public domain.) Second, I include a selection of ending decorative images taken from the manuscript that evoke recognizable images. Third, I incorporate the biblical quotations that describe the Mysteries of the Rosary analyzed through the two case studies. And finally, for the promotion of the *Rosary Sonatas*, I consider it important to include a current list of recent recordings.

There is a need for research on the *Rosary Sonatas* that can help performers to understand their meaning and signification, linking concepts such as embodiment to a plausible musical interpretation. From a general perspective, there is a superficial understanding of Biber's *Rosary Sonatas* where violinists—solely focused on the extraordinary technical challenge of the *scordatura*—catalogue these pieces as oddities in the violin repertoire, leaving them out of the common recital repertoire. Research on this matter contributes to the ongoing re-evaluation and re-interpretation of Biber's musical achievements, particularly his *Rosary Sonatas*. These analyses will help performers to better understand and interpret Biber's *Rosary Sonatas*. I hope that violinists, knowing more about the *Rosary Sonatas*, will be willing to play them more often. In that regard, my research advocates for a reconsideration of Biber's violin music as an influential and

meaningful musical resource that should not be neglected in violin performance and pedagogy.

Chapter 1. Biber and the *Rosary Sonatas*

Who was Heinrich Biber? How did his education and career—and broader historical circumstances—affect his musical output? This chapter touches upon Biber’s biography and his Jesuit background. It gives a chronological description of his travels around central Europe (Wartenberg–Opava–Graz–Kroměříž–Salzburg). It includes his more important job posts and employers (the bishops Liechtenstein-Castelcorno and Khuenburg). It also describes the main characteristics of Biber’s compositional style. Later, I summarize recent musicological accounts of the *Rosary Sonatas*, describing the original manuscript (copper-engravings, and ending decorative images). I also offer a brief explanation of the importance of the Society of Jesus and the Counter-Reformation movement as elements that influenced Biber’s artistic environment. Finally, I describe the practice and structure of the Rosary devotion and its importance for Biber, Khuenburg, and the confraternities to which they belonged.

Background

Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber was a Bohemian-Austrian violinist and composer. He was born in Wartenberg, Bohemia in August 1644 and died in Salzburg on May 3, 1704.⁹ There are no records about his early years, and it is not even possible to “determine when he first left Wartenberg.”¹⁰ Paul Nettl (1960) suggests that “Biber’s first teacher was the local organist, schoolteacher, and cantor, Wiegand Knöffel [also written as Knöstel or Knöfee], a

⁹ Wartenberg is now known as Stráž pod Ralskem. It was named Vartenberk until 1946. Biber was baptized there on August 12, 1644. Eric Thomas Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1991), 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

drunkard and rabblrouser.”¹¹ According to Eric Thomas Chafe, this is possible since “Biber must have spent his earliest years in his native town” due to the unlikely possibility “for a family of the social standing of Martin Biber’s to have moved.”¹² Martin Biber was Heinrich’s father. As stated in his baptismal entry, Martin’s occupation was *Schützen*, translated as “hunter, guncharger, or field guard,” according to Chafe.¹³

At some point in his early years, Biber should have received competent—probably expert—instruction on violin and viola da gamba.¹⁴ In addition to this, we know that Biber also played “Violin Bass (i.e., cello) [...] with considerable ability.”¹⁵ The question of where and with whom Biber studied composition and violin (including viola da gamba and cello) is a topic for debate. Chafe mentions that “Prague, Reichenberg, Dresden, and Vienna” are possible places where Biber could have studied music. In terms of teachers, Chafe proposes Antonio Bertali and Johann Heinrich Schmelzer as possible candidates since both composers were “prominent at the Vienna court.”¹⁶

According to Elias Dann and Jiří Sehnal, Biber “may have studied at a Jesuit Gymnasium in Bohemia.”¹⁷ Lindsey Strand-Polyak suggests this gymnasium was

¹¹ Ibid. Paul Nettl, “Heinrich Franz Biber von Bibern,” *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 24 (1960): 62. Nettl’s source was Wilhelm Feistner, *Geschichte der Stadt Wartenburg* (Reichenberg, 1928).

¹² Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 1.

¹³ Ibid. Nettl “Heinrich Franz Biber von Bibern” includes a facsimile of Biber’s baptismal record.

¹⁴ Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 1.

¹⁵ Ibid. 8. We know this thanks to a letter between Kar Liechtenstein-Castelcorno and Johann Heinrich Schmelzer. Paul Nettl, “Die Wiener Tanzkomposition in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts,” *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 8 (1922): 169.

¹⁶ Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 2. Nettl “Heinrich Franz Biber von Bibern, 63.” Guido Adler, Introduction to *Heinrich Franz Biber: Acht Violinsonaten 1681*, (Vienna: Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich 11, 1898) v.

¹⁷ Elias Dann and Jiří Sehnal, “Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001—), accessed December 1, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03037>.

“probably the one at Opava, a town about 200 miles northwest of Vienna.”¹⁸ It is known that in the early 1660s Biber “was in contact with other musicians from Opava and other Jesuit gymnasia at that time” including Pavel Vejvanovský, “who was studying with the Jesuits in Troppau.”¹⁹ Before 1668, Biber worked for Prince Johann Seyfried Eggenberg in Graz, “where Philipp Jakob Rittler and Jakob Prinner were also employed.”²⁰ In 1668, Biber “became a *valet de chambre* and musician to the Bishop of Olmütz, Karl Liechtenstein-Castelcorno, in Kroměříž, where [...] Vejvanovský was director of the *Kapelle*.”²¹ The Liechtenstein-Castercorno family were great lovers of music, especially the Bishop.

Kroměříž

Liechtenstein-Castelcorno had a special interest in musical performances. His letters to important members of “the Vienna court (including Schmelzer for over a decade)” attested that he was constantly looking for new music.²² In his correspondence to Schmelzer, he references Schmelzer’s famous programmatic (or representational) musical compositions (*Fechtschuele* [fencing school], *Pastorella*, and *Vogelgesang* [birdsong]). He also gives a

¹⁸ Lindsey Strand-Polyak, “The Virtuoso’s Idiom: Spectacularity and the Seventeenth-Century Violin Sonata” (PhD dissertation, Los Angeles, University of California Los Angeles, 2013), 113.

¹⁹ Elias Dann and Jiří Sehnal, “Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von.” Quoted from Strand-Polyak, “The Virtuoso’s Idiom,” 113.

²⁰ Elias Dann and Jiří Sehnal, “Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von.”

²¹ *Ibid* (my emphasis). This Catholic priest is also known as Karl II von Liechtenstein-Kastelkorn, Prince-Bishop of Olomuc. It is unknown when exactly Biber entered the service of Liechtenstein-Castelcorno. Nettle suggests as early as 1666 to 1668. Nettle “Heinrich Franz Biber von Bibern,” 63. Sehnal proposes that Biber worked in Kroměříž no more than two years. Jiří Sehnal, “Die Kompositionen Heinrich Bibers in Kremsier (Kroměříž),” *Sborník Praci Filosofické Faculty Brněnské University* (1970) 21.

²² Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 8. Nettle, “Die Wiener Tanzkomposition,” 167.

“detailed report” of the last one. This illustrates to us one of Liechtenstein-Castelcorno’s “musical leanings,” one that Schmelzer himself “acutely called *pizaren Sachen* (bizarre things).”²³ This may not only refer to music with representational characteristics but also the use of *scordatura* in the violin.²⁴ It is not known if Liechtenstein-Castelcorno influenced Biber’s education and musical production, or if Biber’s musical personality greatly influenced the bishop to have a preference for bizarre music. The fact is that Kroměříž became an important musical center in those years thanks to Liechtenstein-Castelcorno himself, who was hugely interested in music, and Vejvanovský, who was “the most prolific composer” and “the greatest trumpet player of the region.”²⁵

In the summer of 1670, Biber was sent to Absam to purchase instruments from the violin maker Jakob Steiner. Instead of visiting Steiner, “Biber entered the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg, Maximilian Gandolph von Kuenburg.”²⁶ Liechtenstein-Castelcorno felt deeply offended by Biber after he left him *insalutato hospite* (“without first obtaining leave”).²⁷ Even Schmelzer described Biber’s act as a “disgraceful abuse.”²⁸ The bishop soon after started to look for replacements with musical qualities similar to Biber’s. Through correspondences between the bishop and Schmelzer, we can deduce those qualities as a multi-instrumentalist violinist with “a considerable ability” to compose.²⁹ After a few years, the bishop stopped his attempts to find or develop that musical profile in

²³ Ibid. Nettle, 168,170.

²⁴ Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 8.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Elias Dann and Jiří Sehnal, “Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von.” This Catholic priest is also known as Max Gandolf/Gandalf von Kuenburg, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg.

²⁷ Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 9. Schmelzer’s letter of November 2, 1670. It is published in Nettle, 169.

²⁸ Ibid. Nettle, 168.

²⁹ Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 8.

the violinists of the region. He also stopped looking for *scordatura* works. As such, Chafe suggests that Liechtenstein-Castelcorno's musical taste was "strongly influenced by the striking musical individualism he had encountered for two years."³⁰ This reflects Biber's musicianship and outstanding input into Kroměříž's musical environment. It is not known if Biber had planned to abandon his post at Kroměříž. Chafe invites us to consider two things to understand Biber's transgression: his salary in Salzburg, even in his early years, "was higher than that earned by Vejvanovský after thirty years of service [...] and Salzburg was unquestionably a much more active musical center than Kroměříž."³¹

Salzburg

In Salzburg, under the service of Khuenburg, Biber's career flourished: "the archbishop appreciated music for string instruments and Biber rose rapidly in the social scale."³² On May 30, 1672, Biber married Maria Weiss, daughter of a merchant from Salzburg. They had eleven children, but only four survived childhood, two sons and two daughters. Both his sons were musically gifted and received musical education from his father. Karl Heinrich was the most accomplished and eventually became Kapellmeister. The two daughters entered the service of the church. Maria Cäcilia, the eldest daughter, was a nun in the convent of St. Clara in Merano. Anna Magdalena also was a nun at the Benedictine convent of Nonnberg, where she became mistress of the novices.³³

³⁰ Ibid. Nettle, "Die Wiener Tanzkomposition," 170-1.

³¹ Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 9-10.

³² Elias Dann and Jiří Sehnal, "Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von."

³³ Ibid. The Nonnberg Abbey (*Stift Nonnberg*) is a monastery in Salzburg, Austria.

In 1677, Biber performed his music for Emperor Leopold I and received a gold chain.³⁴ In 1679, Biber was appointed deputy Kapellmeister. Two years later, he petitioned Leopold I for promotion to the ranks of the nobility after playing for him for a second time. After a second application to Leopold I (1690), he was raised to the rank of knight, with the title of Biber von Bibern. As a result, the new Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg of that year, Johann Ernst von Thun und Hohenstein, appointed him lord high steward.³⁵ This ends Biber's social career.³⁶ Biber enjoyed a good international reputation during his lifetime. According to a biographical note that his son Karl Heinrich submitted for Johann Mattheson's *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte* (1740), "Biber was highly esteemed at the Bavarian court."³⁷ It also "indicates that he was well known in the emperor's dominions and in France and Italy for his music rather than from concert appearances."³⁸ This is consistent with the fact there is no information on Biber as a touring violinist. He was also well known in Munich where he was decorated at the Bavarian court twice. At the end of his life, Biber composed mostly sacred music, operas, and school dramas.³⁹

³⁴ This gold chain can be seen in some depictions of Biber—for example, in the engraving of his *Sonatae violin solo* (Nuremberg, 1681). The emperor is also known as Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Hungary, Croatia, and Bohemia.

³⁵ There is an "apparent decline in Biber's sonata production" in 1687 due to new bishop Ernst. According to Chafe, Ernst was "unmusical." Thus, "music was confined to special functions and performed less for its own sake." Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 185.

³⁶ Elias Dann and Jiří Sehnal, "Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von."

³⁷ Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 11. *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte* is an anthology of biographies of German musicians compiled by the German composer, singer and music theorist Johann Mattheson (1681-1764).

³⁸ Elias Dann and Jiří Sehnal, "Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von."

³⁹ Ibid.

The Society of Jesus

As mentioned earlier, Biber studied under the influence of the Jesuits. The Society of Jesus is a religious order of the Catholic Church that focuses its endeavours on education, research, and cultural pursuits. In the seventeenth century, Jesuits “were very protective of the emotive, sensual, and highly rhetorical music that they commissioned.”⁴⁰ That explains some aspects that involve the *Rosary Sonatas*. According to most sources, the *Rosary Sonatas* were only performed privately during sessions of the Rosary Confraternity of Salzburg, an association over which Khuenburg presided and to which Biber belonged. The *Rosary Sonatas* then were offered to Khuenburg, performed privately by Biber himself inside the confraternity, and never published.⁴¹ According to Chafe, the names Ignaz and Franz do not appear on Biber’s baptismal record.⁴² Biber used both names in his publications from Salzburg (1670-1704), for example, the dedication page of the *Rosary Sonatas*. Strand-Polyak (2013) proposes that the “addition of the names of the founders of the Jesuit order—St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis Xavier—certainly suggests Biber’s increased awareness of and affinity with the movement.”⁴³ In addition, this also reflects “the spirit of the Counter-Reformation, prevalent in Bohemia and Austria as in most

⁴⁰ Roseen Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s Rosary Sonatas,” *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 4, no. 2 (2018): 102, doi: <https://doi.org/10.17132/2377-231X.1105>.

⁴¹ Like Biber, Khuenburg received a Jesuit education. The *Rosary Sonatas* may have been performed during the Rosary Week (the first week of October) in the chambers of the city’s Confraternity of the Rosary. This possibly refers to the *Aula Accademica*. Giles (2018, 75-90) offers some insight about the connection between the *Rosary Sonatas*’s engravings and performance, and the Marian paintings that decorate the *Aula Accademica*. Julia Wedman’s recording of the *Rosary Sonatas* includes pictures of all the *Aula Accademica*’s paintings. Julia Wedman (violin), *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*, Dorian Sono Luminus DSL92127, 2011, compact disc.

⁴² Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 1.

⁴³ Strand-Polyak, “The Virtuoso’s Idiom,” 114.

Catholic countries in the period of the Thirty Years' War" (1618–1648) and The Council of Trent.⁴⁴

Biber, the composer

“...of all the violin players of the last century Biber seems to have been the best, and his solos are the most difficult and most fanciful of any music I have seen of the same period.” Charles Burney (1789)⁴⁵

Biber composed instrumental, vocal, sacred, and secular music for a large variety of ensembles. He was not only regarded as a virtuoso violin composer, but also as a polychoral church music composer. In terms of vocal music, we find operas, school dramas, large cantatas, and masses.⁴⁶ His most monumental composition is the *Missa Saliburgensis à 53 voci* which is considered one of the largest-scale pieces in Baroque music as it was composed to take advantage of the available organs, and space for singers and musicians at the Salzburg Cathedral. For instrumental music, Biber composed works for solo violin, and ensemble. Some of his compositions can be considered experimental and representational. For example, *Battalia à 10*, specifically its second movement “*Die liederliche Gesellschaft von allerley Humor*” [“The Dissolute Company of All Sorts of

⁴⁴ Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 1. The Counter-Reformation was a Catholic movement that opposed the Protestant Reformation that originated with Martin Luther and his *Ninety-Five Theses* (1517). The Counter-Reformation internally restructured the church, founded seminars, reformed religious orders, and more diligently watched spiritual movements and practices. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) “enacted the formal Roman Catholic reply to the doctrinal challenges of the Protestants.” It was “prompted by the Reformation.” EB Editors, “Council of Trent,” in *Britannica Academic*, (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 2021–), accessed August 22, 2022, <https://academic-eb-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/levels/collegiate/article/Council-of-Trent/73300>.

⁴⁵ Charles Burney, “Of the Progress of Music in Germany during the Seventeenth Century,” in *A General History of Music: From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 580.

⁴⁶ Some of these works have been lost.

Humor”] is an early approximation of polytonality. It simultaneously combines songs in different keys. On the other hand, Biber’s *Sonata representativa* or *Representatio avium*, as stated by its name, has the intention to represent songbirds musically. His most known and played works nowadays are the *Rosary Sonatas* for violin and *continuo*, especially those which require *scordatura*.⁴⁷

The Rosary

The spiritual practice of rosary prayer is highly relevant for Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas*. The Rosary is a medieval devotional and meditative Marian practice that emerged in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and was closely linked to the Dominican order.⁴⁸ It consists of the repetitive reciting of the three more common and representative prayers of the Catholic Church, *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, and *Gloria Patri*, among other prayers. These prayers appear in Table 1.1. Nathan Mitchell notes that the rosary “has varied little in form (round beads strung on cord or wire), structure or content,” and today it “may be found on every continent (with the possible exception of Antarctica).”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Elias Dann and Jiří Sehnal, “Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von.”

⁴⁸ On the origins of the rosary, see Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

⁴⁹ Nathan Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary: Marian Devotion and the Reinvention of Catholicism* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 1.

Table 1.1. Main prayers in The Rosary. Strand-Polyak (2013)⁵⁰

Rosary Text-English	Rosary Text-Latin
<p>Sign of the Cross. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen</p>	<p>Signum Crucis In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.</p>
<p>Apostles Creed I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.</p>	<p>Symbolum Apostolorum Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem, Creatorem caeli et terrae; et in Iesum Christum, Filium eius unicum, Dominum nostrum; qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine; passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus; descendit ad infernos; tertia die resurrexit a mortuis; ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipotentis; inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos. Credo in Spiritum Sanctum; Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam; Sanctorum communionem; remissionem peccatorum; carnis resurrectionem; vitam aeternam. Amen.</p>
<p>The Lord’s Prayer (Our Father) Our Father Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen</p>	<p>Oratio Dominicae (Pater noster) Pater noster, qui es in caelis, sanctificetur Nomen Tuum. Adveniat regnum Tuum, fiat voluntas Tua, sicut in caelo et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie, et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris, et ne nos inducas in tentationem, sed libera nos a malo. Amen.</p>
<p>The Angelic Salutation (Hail Mary) <i>[Pray three times]</i> Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.</p>	<p>Salutatio Angelica (Ave Maria) <i>[Pray three times]</i> Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; Benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.</p>
<p>The Minor Doxology (Glory Be) Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and</p>	<p>Doxologia Minor (Gloria Patri)</p>

⁵⁰ Strand-Polyak, “The Virtuoso’s Idiom,” 122.

to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.	Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto, sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.
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The Rosary may be used as an individual devotional practice. For group prayer, it may be led by a Guide, who starts the prayers to which the congregation responds. While reciting the prayers, practitioners must visualize, embody, and meditate on important events in the life of Mary and Jesus (e.g., The Annunciation, and The Crucifixion). There were fifteen mysteries sorted into three sets—Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious mysteries—and each set was associated with a particular day of the week.⁵¹ Table 1.2 lists these mysteries. It shows that there are five mysteries within each type of mystery. For example, The Joyful Mysteries encompass The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Nativity, The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and The Finding of Jesus in the Temple.

Table 1.2. List of The Rosary Mysteries

Joyful Mysteries (Monday, Thursday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Annunciation - The Visitation - The Nativity - Presentation of Jesus in the Temple - The Finding of Jesus in the Temple
Sorrowful Mysteries (Tuesday, Friday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Agony in the Garden - The Scourging at the Pilar - The Crowning with Thorns - The Carrying of the Cross - The Crucifixion
Glorious Mysteries (Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Resurrection - The Ascension

⁵¹ Nowadays, the Rosary includes the Luminous Mysteries. They were introduced in 2002 by Pope St. John Paul II in the apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*. John Paul II, “Apostolic Letter: Rosarium Virginis Mariae,” Vatican: The Holy See, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, October 16, 2002, accessed December 13, 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20070209235726/http://www.vatican.va/holy_fathr/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginismariae_en.html.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Descent of the Holy Spirit - The Assumption of Mary - The Coronation of Mary
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Each *Rosary Sonata*—except the final *Passaglia*—corresponds to a mystery of the Rosary, and so they can also be sorted into the three categories shown in Table 1.2. The practice of the Rosary was important in Salzburg at that time, especially in the sociocultural environment of Biber.

“Rosary Sonatas for a discordantly prepared lyre”

The *Rosary Sonatas* (also called Mystery Sonatas or Copper-Engraving Sonatas) were never published in Biber’s lifetime; the manuscript was discovered much later when it came into the possession of the German naturalist, musicologist, and music collector Karl Franz Emil von Schafhauhl (1803-1890). After his death, it passed to the Bavarian State Library in Munich, Germany, and was published in 1905 by the Austrian musicologist Erwin Luntz.⁵² The manuscript of the *Rosary Sonatas* includes fifteen sonatas for violin and *continuo* plus one *Passaglia* for unaccompanied violin.⁵³ The manuscript of the *Rosary Sonatas* has a copper-engraved illustration on the first page of each sonata showing a Mystery of the Rosary—that is, an important event in the life of Mary and Jesus. These illustrations are printed and not drawn, and this creates “a hybrid presentation of print and manuscript.”⁵⁴ In the manuscript as well, beside each copper-engraved illustration—except

⁵² Strand-Polyak, “The Virtuoso’s Idiom,” 108.

⁵³ Biber’s *Passaglia* ends the set of the *Rosary Sonatas* but is not a *Rosary Sonata*. It differentiates from the *sonatas* due to its instrumentation, tuning (not required *scordatura*), and content of the engraving (the Guardian Angel instead of a Mystery of the Rosary).

⁵⁴ Strand-Polyak, “The Virtuoso’s Idiom,” 108.

the one in the *Passaglia*—the specific tuning for each sonata is indicated.⁵⁵ Fourteen of the *Rosary Sonatas* require *scordatura*. *Sonata I The Annunciation*, and *Passaglia (The Guardian Angel)* require normal tuning.

Due to the *scordatura*, the *Rosary Sonatas* are written in *Griffnotation* (handgrip notation) in which the written notes do not indicate sounding pitches but rather finger placements.⁵⁶ For the analyses in the following chapters, I account for the *scordatura* by adding plus and minus signs (+, −) along with numbers to the notated pitch names. (In this system, 1 represents a displacement of one semitone, 2 represents a displacement of a whole tone, and so forth.) For example, the first notes that open *Rosary Sonata VII (The Scourging at the Pillar)* are C (pickup), and C with E-4 (double stop, see Figure 1). The *scordatura* for this sonata is C, F, A, and C'. Therefore, the sounding effect on the downbeat is a resonant unison of two Cs played on different strings.

⁵⁵ The term *scordatura* comes from the Italian *scordare*, to mistune. The term is applied largely to lutes, guitars, viols, and the violin family to designate a tuning other than the normal, established one. David D Boyden, Robin Stowell, Mark Chambers, James Tyler, and Richard Partridge, “Scordatura,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001—), accessed October 17, 2019, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000041698?rskey=3FhDBv&result=1>.

⁵⁶ Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas*,” 72.



Figure 1. First measure of the *Allamanda* of *Rosary Sonata VII, The Scourging at the Pillar* (copper-engraving, *scordatura*, m. 1). Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

The *scordatura* required in these pieces is a source of some discussion. Biber himself briefly describes it in the dedication letter to Khuenburg: “You will discover that my lyre with four strings is discordantly prepared in fifteen alterations and elaborated with persistence, diligence and with great artifice.”⁵⁷ The *Rosary Sonatas’ scordatura* is the most advanced example of this technique among the entire violin repertoire.⁵⁸ *Scordatura* requires the distortion of the normal tuning of the violin, and by extension, the creation of an uncomfortable or strange performative-technical space.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Heinrich Biber, “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich. English translation quoted from Strand-Polyak, “The Virtuoso’s Idiom,” 109. See Appendix A. According to Chafe, “perhaps most of the set [of the *Rosary Sonatas*] was written at Kroměříž,” and “compiled them to present to the archbishop” Khuenburg in 1676. Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 186. See also, Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s Rosary Sonatas,” 78.

⁵⁸ Strand-Polyak, “The Virtuoso’s Idiom,” 111.

⁵⁹ For example, *Sonata XI The Resurrection* has the greatest displacement from the standard tuning. For more information, see Jonathan De Souza, “Instrumental Transformations in Heinrich Biber’s Mystery Sonatas,” *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 4 (2020): 2.2, <https://doi.org/10.30535/mt0.26.4.1>.

Musicological research on Biber's *Rosary Sonatas* has three important points of view: programmaticism, embodied musicology, and rhetoric. Chafe (1991), after "wrestling with the problem of programmaticism in the *Rosary Sonatas*," talked about the impossibility of finding a programmatic structure to some of the pieces, even though he also acknowledges some clear representational moments.⁶⁰ William S. Newman (1959) agrees that the *Rosary Sonatas* "are not programmatic in the more literal sense [...]. At most, they are symbolic in the sense that Bach's organ chorale preludes are."⁶¹ According to Charles Brewer (2011), "what is more difficult to define is [...] how Biber addressed the symbolic and programmatic aspects implied by his dedication and engravings [...]."⁶² Not all the *Rosary Sonatas* can be analyzed in the same way. Each *Rosary Sonata* requires a slightly different analytical approach, just as the meaning of the illustrated Mysteries can be interpreted from various perspectives. Furthermore, each *Rosary Sonata* has a different structure, although they share dance movements. Regardless of that, certain gestural characteristics are repeated throughout the entire cycle. For example, the fast thirty-second notes that appear in *Sonata I (The Annunciation)*, *Sonata VI (The Agony of the Garden)*, and *Sonata IX (Jesus Carries the Cross)* could be a representation of a specific biblical character—such as the Archangel Gabriel and his words—or of moments where revelatory messages are stated. In sum, scholars disagree about how programmatic the sonatas are.

Strand-Polyak (2013) stated that the *Rosary Sonatas* "invite modes of analysis that combine Biber's virtuosic, compositional and devotional training, deepening our

⁶⁰ Strand-Polyak, "The Virtuoso's Idiom," 120. Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 187-8.

⁶¹ William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 217-8.

⁶² Charles Brewer, *The Instrumental Music of Schmelzler, Biber, Muffat and their Contemporaries* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 307.

notions of performance and practice.”⁶³ She also made connections with the embodiment required while performing the *Rosary Sonatas* and Loyola’s *Exercitia Spiritualia* (Spiritual Exercises). This is a handbook of meditations that were a fundamental part of the Society of Jesus since its foundation. They were carried out by the members of Society of Jesus upon enrollment. Loyola’s process in *Exercitia Spiritualia* relates to both the processes at work in the rosary prayer and Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas*. This refers to the preparation required by the practitioner-performer before the exercise of Loyola’s and Biber’s works. For Strand-Polyak, the creation of a ritual space is also important in both accounts. In Loyola’s exercises, the practitioner should withdraw from society to vividly meditate on Catholic teachings.⁶⁴ In the same way, a performer of the *Rosary Sonatas* would prepare the instrument—by changing its tuning—to be able to unveil the music that is hidden by the *Griffnotation*. In addition to this, Strand-Polyak argued that these pieces “can be understood as a multi-sensory experience that offers unique and different perspectives for the audience and the performer,” and that the experience of performing these pieces is “akin to the practice of the rosary meditation itself.”⁶⁵ Strand-Polyak also proposed “that the *Rosary Sonatas* are meant to evoke the performative process and corporeal experience of reciting the prayers of the rosary itself.”⁶⁶

Roseen Giles argued that in Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas* “musical technique is transformed into an emblematic representation of Mystery.”⁶⁷ Musical technique serves to

⁶³ Strand-Polyak, “The Virtuoso’s Idiom,” 112.

⁶⁴ Loyola’s exercises promote an “imaginative meditation” where the practitioners must visually imagine entering into religious scenes, and mysteries. Thus, they embody characters that can play active or passive roles in a biblical narrative.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 112-3.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 121.

⁶⁷ Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas*,” 104.

manifest an ekphrasis between the symbolic abstraction of a Mystery and the language of music. Originally, ekphrasis is “an explanation or description of something.”⁶⁸ Thus, musical technique may help to describe a Mystery’s detachment from lay understanding. In other words, Biber’s transformed musical technique is an evocative, descriptive, and performative musical representation of a religious text. On the issue of their notation, she suggests that “the score is an encoding that can only be solved with the key of the scordatura and the acoustical properties of the violin itself,” thus “the music is only ‘real’ insofar it is realized.”⁶⁹ Similar to Strand-Polyak, Giles offers some insight regarding the connection between the practice of the Rosary and the performance of the *Rosary Sonatas*. Both actions require not only the process of learning the words (or notes) and their meaning but also the performance of an exercise where two different things happen at the same time. In other words, the physical motion of the fingers after learning the notes will produce a sound that does not match our musical-technical expectations learned over the years as violinists. In the case of the Rosary, the recited words do not match the mental meditation, visualization, and embodiment of the Mystery. Concerning Biber’s *scordatura*, Giles suggested that it “was shaped by Jesuit understandings of the spiritual power of rhetoric.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Currently, the word ekphrasis refers to “a literary device in which a painting, sculpture, or other work of visual art is described in detail.” “Ekphrasis, n.,” in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2021–), accessed February 2, 2022, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/59412?redirectedFrom=ekphrasis>. For a recent account of the concept of ekphrasis in relation to music see Natalia Skomorokhova, “Musical Ekphrasis in Concert: Case Study of Alexey Khevelev’s Chagall Vitraux” (DMA diss., University of Western Ontario, 2019), *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*, 6588, <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/6588>.

⁶⁹ Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s Rosary Sonatas,” 74.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 104.

Biber “uses scordatura emblematically to bridge the physical and spiritual in the same way that Jesuit rhetoric achieved a ‘reciprocal qualification between word and image.’”⁷¹

In sum, previous research has shown that the *Rosary Sonatas* have musical characteristics that suggest different interpretative scopes: a not fully accepted programmaticism, a rhetorical reading connecting the Rosary’s prayers and music, and an embodied musicological view that encompasses *scordatura*, meditation, and Jesuit religious practices. In addition to this, I will also add to the discussion an iconographic aspect of the *Rosary Sonatas* that has not been deeply discussed yet: the ending decorative images. At the end of each sonata, there is an ornamental design that beautifully finishes each sonata. At first glance, the contours seem to have no special significance, but upon closer inspection, we realize that the images are not always the same. The manuscript’s copyist added decorations that can resemble symbolic elements of some of the mysteries in play.⁷² From my perspective, there are five examples of this symbolic resemblance: *Sonata VI (The Agony)*, *Sonata IX (The Carrying of the Cross)*, *Sonata XIII (The Descent of the Holy Spirit)*, *Sonata XIV (The Assumption)*, and *Sonata XV (The Coronation)*.⁷³ *The Coronation*’s ending decorative image is the clearest (see Figure 1.1). It shows a crown over a moon in a waxing crescent phase.⁷⁴ Undoubtedly, this references the coronation of

⁷¹ Ibid. 78.

⁷² According to Chafe, the traditional belief that the *Rosary Sonatas*’s manuscript “is an autograph can be neither affirmed nor denied, since the painstakingly copied manuscript reveals little on the way of personal handwriting characteristics.” Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 284, note 13.

⁷³ Further information of the ending decorative image of *The Agony* is included in Chapter 4, (Virtual Agency in *The Agony*). Images of the rest of the cited ending decorative images are included in Appendix B (detail of five ending decorative images of Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas*).

⁷⁴ The waxing moon is a typical iconographical attribution to the Virgin Mary (for example, in the iconographic representation of Our Lady of Guadalupe).

the Virgin Mary by the Holy Trinity. (I will return to these ending decorative images in Chapter 4.)



Figure 1.1. Detail of the ending decorative image from the *Rosary Sonata XV (The Coronation)*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

The Rosary, Khuenburg, and Biber

Biber’s patron Khuenburg was “a fervent promoter of rosary devotions and confraternities in honor of the Blessed Virgin.”⁷⁵ He was educated—like Biber—under Jesuit training, in Rome at the *Collegium Germanicum*. According to Giles, “Marian devotion was a deeply personal concern” for Khuenburg, and his “enthusiasm for the Rosary likely originated in his Jesuit education.”⁷⁶ Khuenburg “founded a fraternity in honor of the Virgin and was

⁷⁵ Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s Rosary Sonatas,”

^{78.}

⁷⁶ Ibid.

himself a member of the brotherhood.”⁷⁷ As mentioned before, it is possible that Biber performed the *Rosary Sonatas* “as postludes to Rosary devotions in the Salzburg Cathedral [...] or had a function in the devotions of the Rosary confraternities.”⁷⁸ These confraternities were vital to the art and culture as they proposed a “vernacular religion” that according to Mitchell, “reframed Catholic identity primarily through practices rather than through theological argument or homiletic persuasion.”⁷⁹ In addition, the source for the Rosary engravings of Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas* was a confraternity charter from 1678 recently discovered in 2008 in the *Archiv der Erzdiözese Salzburg*.⁸⁰

One of these confraternities was the Confraternity of the Assumption of the Virgin, directed by Khuenburg during Biber’s time.⁸¹ The Rosary devotions of this association took place at the *Aula Accademica* (also known as *Große Aula* [Great Hall]). The hall belongs to the University of Salzburg and is decorated with “paintings depicting the Mysteries of the Rosary.”⁸² Some of the depictions can be considered Marian as they include Mary as an important element of the event, even though she does not have an active role in all of the mysteries. An example of this is the painting *The Scourging* (1637) by Adriaan Bloemaert.⁸³ The Counter-Reformation spirit of Salzburg at that time, Khuenburg’s Jesuit

⁷⁷ Ibid. Chafe, *The Church Music of Heinrich Biber*, 186.

⁷⁸ Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s Rosary Sonatas,”

⁷⁹ Eugen Schmitz, “Bibers Rosenkranzsonaten,” *Musica* 5 (1951): 235-6.

⁷⁹ Nathan Mitchell, *Meeting Mystery: Liturgy, Worship, Sacraments* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006), 128.

⁸⁰ Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s Rosary Sonatas,”

⁷⁸ Schmid, “Die ‘Rosenkranz-Sonaten’ von Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber,” 91.

⁸¹ The confraternity was chartered by Prince-Archbishop Paris Lodron in 1634. Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s Rosary Sonatas,” 80.

⁸² “All the students at the University of Salzburg belonged to this confraternity, and their main religious obligation was the prayer of the Rosary.” Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s Rosary Sonatas,” 80.

⁸³ This painting is included in Giles, “Physicality and Devotion in Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s Rosary Sonatas,” 82.

religious background and his conviction towards Rosary devotion propitiated and inspired Biber to compose the *Rosary Sonatas*, and dedicate them to Khuenburg. The *Rosary Sonatas* are then not only a collection of sonatas with strange tunings, but also an example of a piously written music in a society that was religiously reforming itself.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed Biber's biography, offering a chronological description of his travels around central Europe. This section of the chapter shows the particular journey of Biber, as virtuoso violinist and composer born in a small town in the north of Bohemia who became a knight, Lord High Steward, and Kapellmeister of Salzburg Cathedral. This chapter also described the main characteristics of Biber's experimental and representational style.

Recent musicological accounts of the *Rosary Sonatas* by Strand-Polyak and Giles propose an embodied view that encompasses *scordatura*, meditation, and Jesuit religious practices such as the Rosary devotion and the *Exercitia Spiritualia*. Their accounts suggest that the practice of the Rosary and performing the *Rosary Sonatas* are connected as both require not only the process of learning the prayers and their meaning (learning the notes) but also the performance of an operation where two different actions happen simultaneously. This refers to the disparate connection between recited words and mind meditation in the Rosary, and physical performance and resulting sounds in the *Rosary Sonatas*. At the end of that section, I included a personal interpretation of some of the ending decorative images that symbolically resemble the Mystery in play. I also offer brief descriptions of the importance of The Society of Jesus and the Counter-Reformation movement as elements that influenced Biber's musical and artistic environment. Finally, I described the practice and structure of the Rosary devotion and its importance among Biber, Khuenburg, and the

confraternities to which they belonged to shed light on the historical context around the *Rosary Sonatas*.

After exposing the debates about programmaticism in the *Rosary Sonatas* that seem stuck, how do we move forward in our investigation on the *Sonatas*' meaning and representational content? To solve that problem, we need to apply a well-developed theory of musical semiotics. The next chapter, then, will describe Robert S. Hatten's theory of virtual agency.

Chapter 2. Virtual Agency in Music

The first time I heard Biber’s *Annunciation*—specifically the first movement, *Preludium*—I imagined myself in front of an angel that was talking to me. He was talking very fast and loudly. Even though I understood everything he said, the awe and impression terrified me greatly. In other words, there was *someone doing something* in the music. What was the nature of the entity I witnessed? Robert S. Hatten would describe it as a virtual agent, an entity that can act but does not properly reside in the real world.

Hatten’s 2018 book, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, proposes four levels of agency and also includes an appendix level involving performance suggestions.⁸⁴ The present chapter describes each of these levels, including the musical—or even extra-musical—aspects that an analyst should identify to produce a virtual agential analysis. The appendix level “Performance” is quite interesting if the analyst is an actual performer since this level allows performative suggestions. Hatten’s theory has two foundational concepts: Virtuality and Agency. In this sense, virtuality references something that is not real but has real effects. In Charles Sanders Peirce’s definition, “A virtual X ... is something, not an X, which has the efficiency (*virtus*) of an X.”⁸⁵ An example of this can be virtual musical instruments. A virtual piano is not a real piano as you cannot touch it. But it can produce real sounds and music. In some cases, these might be indistinguishable from a real piano’s sounds. In Hatten’s theory, virtuality does not refer to the concept of

⁸⁴ Robert S. Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

⁸⁵ The Latin term *virtus* can be translated as strength. Charles S. Peirce, “Virtual,” in *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, vol. 2, ed. James Mark Baldwin (London: Macmillan), 763.

virtual reality (VR) used in immersive technology as in video games and other instances. On the other hand, agency refers to the capacity of a being to act in a determined environment. Succinctly, virtual agency can be understood as the capacity of a virtual being to act. Thus, the combination of both concepts and their relation to music's expressive meaning ground Hatten's agential theory.

A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music completes a trilogy of books by Hatten on musical meaning, where gesture and emotion play a primary role. The first and second books are *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* (1994) and *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes* (2004).⁸⁶ These early accounts glimpse a virtual-agential interpretation of music through the close analysis of musical gestures. Because of this, the chapter must consider the concept of musical gesture, defined by Hatten as “energetic shaping through time.”⁸⁷ But first, to provide a background to the theory, I will briefly review relevant literature, including Steve Larson's theory of musical forces, and Seth Monahan's and Paul Kockelman's four-part theories of agency—from which Hatten developed his own rather different agential stages.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), and *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004).

⁸⁷ Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes*, 102, and 134-7.

⁸⁸ Seth Monahan, “Action and Agency Revisited,” *Journal of Music Theory* 57, no. 2 (2013): 321–371; Steve Larson, *Musical Forces* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 2012); Paul Kockelman, *Agent, Person, Subject, Self: a Theory of Ontology, Interaction, and Infrastructure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Background

Hatten's theory has an extensive list of precedents. It encompasses different disciplines that contribute to studies of musical signification. For example, Hatten identifies in his theoretical corpus the semiotic-Peircean approaches of authors such as David Lidov, Naomi Cumming, and Vincent Colapietro, the narratological accounts of John Rink and Byron Almén, and performative perspectives developed by Roger Graybill and Edward Klorman.⁸⁹ These theoretical accounts look for connections between music and its possible virtual, fictional, and agential capacities that help to construct musical meaning. Among the most referenced ones are Edward T. Cone's "groundbreaking theory of implicit and virtual agents controlled by an overarching persona," Larson's description of musical forces (which will be further explained later in this chapter), Eero Tarasti's semiotic approach to musical actors, and Lawrence Zbikowski's "explorations of musical analogs for human actions."⁹⁰ Finally, two theoretical models present four agential levels, as Hatten's agential

⁸⁹ Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 10. David Lidov, *Is Language a Music?: Writings on Musical Form and Signification* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2005). Naomi Cumming, *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000). Vincent Michael Colapietro, *Peirce's Approach to the Self: a Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). John Rink, "Translating Musical Meaning: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 217-38. Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008). Roger Graybill, "Whose Gestures? Chamber Music and Construction of Permanent Agents," in *New Perspectives on Music and Gesture*, ed. Anthony Gritten and Elaine King. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011) 221-41. Edward Klorman, *Mozart and the Music of Friends: Social Interplay in the Chamber Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁹⁰ Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 10. Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974). Steve Larson, *Musical Forces* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 2012). Eero Tarasti, *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Lawrence Michael Zbikowski *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

theory does: Monahan's "proposal of four levels of virtual agency", and Kockelman's four constructions.⁹¹ These theoretical frameworks incited Hatten's "rather different levels of virtual agency for music."⁹²

Monahan, in his article "Action and Agency Revisited" (2013), theorizes agency as an idea that has "pervaded music-analytical writing" for centuries.⁹³ He proposes four agent classes: the individuated element, the work-persona, the fictional composer, and the analyst. For Monahan, "any element that could be understood as a kind of dramatic character" is considered an individuated element.⁹⁴ Those elements are "individual themes, motives, gestures, keys, chords, topics, and even pitch classes." According to Monahan, the elements that conform to his first agential class only constitute a role in a dramatic trajectory that they do not control; they are only participants.

On the second level, Monahan proposes the concept of work-persona. He succinctly describes it as "the work itself, personified."⁹⁵ He draws this concept from Carl Dahlhaus's "aesthetic subject" and Hatten's discussion of identifying with musical motifs.⁹⁶ Through Monahan's concept of work-persona, we can imagine "all of a work's events as occurrences within a single psyche."⁹⁷ Hence, at this level, the work can be imagined as a virtual human agent, incorporating the concept of virtuality into the understanding of a musical work.

⁹¹ Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 10, 17.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Monahan, "Action and Agency Revisited," 321.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 327.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 328.

⁹⁶ Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven und seine Zeite* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1987); Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes*, 30.

⁹⁷ Monahan, "Action and Agency Revisited," 329.

In Monahan's study, the third agent type is the fictional composer. It refers to the person "postulated by the analyst as the controlling, intending author of the musical text."⁹⁸ Monahan uses the term fictional to distinguish it from the historical composer. The historical composer, then, is the human being that wrote the music at a certain time. By contrast, the fictional composer is an interpretative construct, an agent that composed the music. This directly connects to Michel Foucault's distinction between "authors" (fictional composers) and "writers" (historical composers).⁹⁹

Lastly, the fourth agent type in Monahan's study is the analyst him- or herself. The analyst "stands in the same relation to the analytical text as the fictional composer stands to the musical work."¹⁰⁰ Monahan also describes it as "the most ubiquitous" among his four agent classes.¹⁰¹ Through considering the analyst as an agential persona, we can then ponder our pre-existing knowledge of the analyst, and thus pre-imagine the kind of analysis he or she would pursue. This exemplifies as well the issue of the capacity—or incapacity—of an analyst to produce an analysis free of bias and pre-understandings of a musical work. In Monahan's words, these analyses would have to come from a disembodied mind. Monahan's four types of agents are a balanced combination of music-related and non-music-related agencies. The individuated element (musical characteristics) and the work-persona (the work itself with a human-virtual agency) refer to the musical work itself. On the other hand, the fictional composer and the analysts are elements outside of the music.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Michel Foucault, "What is an author?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rainbow. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 101-20.

¹⁰⁰ Monahan, "Action and Agency Revisited," 322.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 333.

Contemporaneous to Monahan's study are Kockelman's four agential constructions. They are described in his book *Agent, Person, Subject, Self: A Theory of Ontology, Interaction, and Infrastructure* (2013).¹⁰² They come from a sociological perspective that is not particularly associated with music at first sight. Still, they also served as an inspiration to Hatten's four levels of agency, along with Monahan's. Kockelman describes them as capacities that are "seemingly human-specific and individual-centric" that help to understand "modern social processes."¹⁰³ These four capacities are agency, subjectivity, selfhood, and personhood. According to Kockelman, agency should be perceived as a "causal capacity" that has a meaningful end. Subjectivity is a "mental capacity" that can hold mental states and express speech acts.¹⁰⁴ Selfhood is the "reflexive capacity" that carries "one's own actions."¹⁰⁵ And finally, personhood is the "sociopolitical capacity" that holds the "rights and responsibilities" of "being an agent, subject, or self."¹⁰⁶ Specifically, the first two of Kockelman's agential capacities (agency and subjectivity) can be related to Hatten's virtual agents' capacities and his fourth agential level (subjectivity) respectively.¹⁰⁷ Table 2.1 lists Monahan's and Kockelman's four agential levels. Both of them are precursors of Hatten's four virtual-agential constructions. They also served as inspiration for Hatten's theoretical scaffolding.

¹⁰² Paul Kockelman, *Agent, Person, Subject, Self: a Theory of Ontology, Interaction, and Infrastructure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁰³ Ibid, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Hatten's virtual agents are endowed with the capacity to act in a virtual environment. Further discussion and explanation of Hatten's levels of Virtual Agency are included in the section Analysing Virtual Agency of this chapter.

	Kockelman	Monahan
1	Agency	The individuated element
2	Subjectivity	The work persona
3	Selfhood	The fictional composer
4	Personhood	The analyst
	<i>From a sociological background</i>	<i>Musically applied</i>

Table 2.1. Four-level structures of the contemporaneous agential theories by Kockelman and Monahan. Both are precedents of Hatten’s virtual agential theory.

Larson’s theory of musical forces is also closely related to Hatten’s virtual agency.¹⁰⁸ Larson proposes an analogical use of the physical forces of nature to understand those found in music, and through the application of them to “contribute to a larger theory of expressive meaning.”¹⁰⁹ For example, he describes musical forces that correspond to gravity, magnetism, and inertia:

Gravity, by analogy to our human experience, is the tendency to descend to a stable platform (stability here determined by tonal context). Magnetism is the tendency to move in either direction to the closest stable pitch in a given collection’s alphabet, or scale. And inertia is the tendency of a given state, process, or patterning to continue.¹¹⁰

The opening of Biber’s *Rosary Sonata II (The Visitation)* can be used to exemplify the three musical forces: gravity, magnetism, and inertia (see Figure 2.1). The first three notes of the violin line create a descending line (E, C#, F#+2) that resolves in the next bar due to the magnetism that draws the leading tone to the tonic (F#+2 to G+2).¹¹¹ Measures 3–5 help to illustrate gravity along with inertia. Inertia appears in this passage in the continuing

¹⁰⁸ The basic precepts of Larson’s theory are a fundamental aspect of the first agential level in Hatten’s theory. More information is included in the section Analyzing Virtual Agency of this chapter. See, Larson, *Musical Forces*.

¹⁰⁹ Larson, *Musical Forces*, 3.

¹¹⁰ Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 47.

¹¹¹ +2 refers to the addition of a complete tone (two semitones) due to the required *scordatura* of the sonata (A, E, A’, E’). Thus, the sounding pitches are G# and A.

process of descending eighth notes that arrive on D (IV^6 with a 7-6 suspension) on the second beat of m. 4. Tonal gravity appears in the scalar descent, which comes to rest on the tonic A in m. 5 (third beat). Larson’s theory of musical forces helps us analyze and identify significant gestural events in the opening phrase of Biber’s *Visitation*. Larson’s musical forces give a sense of direction, energy, and arrival to the music. They also set landmark points for other deeper analyses.



Figure 2.1. Examples of gravity (G), magnetism (M), and inertia (I) in *Rosary Sonata II, The Visitation* (copper engraving, *scordatura*, and mm. 1-5). Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

Hatten’s Theory of Musical Gesture

As briefly mentioned before, Hatten’s theory of virtual agency builds on his own work on music gesture and meaning. This was published in two books: *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, and *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes*. According to Lidov, in *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, Hatten “integrates perspectives from semiotics, music theory, and music history to construct a new mode of interpretation of Beethoven’s late style.”¹¹² On this account, Hatten puts in a central position the concept of markedness,

¹¹² Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, ix.

which is “the asymmetrical valuation of an opposition.”¹¹³ An example of this can be the asymmetrical opposition between standard tuning and scordatura. Standard tuning is unmarked, and scordatura is highly marked as it must be indicated in the score and is used only for particular compositions, in addition to the performative challenge that it represents.¹¹⁴ A musical example of the valuation of opposition involves major vs. minor modes. According to Hatten, this opposition, “apparently equipollent” is “actually asymmetrical” due to “the wider range of potential expressive states that” the major mode has. Minor mode is marked and “consistently conveys tragic.” On the other hand, major mode is unmarked. As the most common mode, it can convey “not simply the opposite (comic)” but also the heroic, and the pastoral.¹¹⁵ In sum, markedness refers to the characteristics of a musical entity that provide “greater specificity of meaning.”¹¹⁶

In the same account, Hatten explains that the process at work that links sound and meaning is mediated by habits of association that produce correlations. These, when strategically earned, finally produce interpretations.¹¹⁷ In this account, Hatten started to hint at the need for deeper approaches to analysis. In the conclusion, Hatten states that “no musical reading that insists on literalness of factitious security can ever fully ripen into a satisfying expressive interpretation, for either the performer or the listener.”¹¹⁸

In his second book, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes*, Hatten elaborates a more specific theoretical scaffolding to understand or classify musical gestures.

¹¹³ Ibid, 291.

¹¹⁴ Jonathan De Souza, “Instrumental Transformations in Heinrich Biber’s Mystery Sonatas,” *Music Theory Online* 26, 4 (2020): <https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.26.4.1>.

¹¹⁵ Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 36.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 291.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 275.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 280.

Through musical examples ranging from Johann Sebastian Bach to Gustav Mahler, Hatten proposes ways to examine the use of musical topics and tropes. According to Hatten topics are “patches of music that trigger clear associations with styles, genres, and expressive meanings.”¹¹⁹ Examples of this are the pastoral, characterized by the use of pedals, and the fanfare, characterized by the use of trumpet-like musical lines or interventions. The opening measures of Biber’s *Rosary Sonata V (The Finding of Jesus in the Temple)* are an example of a trumpet-call fanfare mainly due to its gestural characteristics. (See Figure 2.2).



Figure 2.2. *Preludium* of *Rosary Sonata V, The Finding* (copper-engraving, *scordatura*, m. 1). Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

Tropes are the emergent “interpretative synthesis of [...] otherwise contradictory [and meaningful] topics that are juxtaposed in a single functional location or rhetorical moment.”¹²⁰ The opening of Biber’s *Rosary Sonata X (The Crucifixion)* offers a combination of two rather different gestures. (See Figure 2.3). The first bar contains long relaxed notes that set the mood in a calm and obscure manner. On the other hand, measure

¹¹⁹ Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes*, 2.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

2 offers a rather rhythmical dance-like topic that possibly references a rather dramatic *siciliana*.



Figure 2.3. *Preludium* of *Rosary Sonata X, The Crucifixion* (copper-engraving, *scordatura*, mm. 1-3). Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

Hatten also offers a theory of musical gesture, first introducing the concept from an interdisciplinary perspective and then developing it in musical terms.¹²¹ Hatten grounds “the role of gesture as one manifestation of an evolutionary refined capacity to interpret significant energetic shaping through time.”¹²² Among his considerations on this subject, he proposes that human gesture is a “fundamental and inescapable mode of understanding that links us directly to music’s potential expressive meaning.”¹²³ In this account, Hatten explored the “internal character” of gesture “as an invisible or molar unit of energetic shaping through time.”¹²⁴ Thus, musical gestures can “be understood as synthetic entities

¹²¹ Ibid, 1.

¹²² Ibid. Hatten’s definition of gesture as a “significant energetic shaping through time” is still the same in his *Theory of Virtual Agency*.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 287.

with emergent affective meaning.”¹²⁵ In the conclusion, Hatten talks about how we can identify within gestures “at least one fundamental agency.”¹²⁶ This refers to gestures’ “independent life force” as well as their emergent “individual subjectivity defined by interactions with other agencies.”¹²⁷ In addition, “the journey of that agency” creates a dramatic trajectory “as a unique realization of an expressive genre.”¹²⁸ This triple connection between musical gesture, expression, and agency foreshadows Hatten’s theory of virtual agency.¹²⁹

According to Hatten, music gestures can showcase five functional categories. These are spontaneous, thematic, dialogical, rhetorical, and tropological. Biber’s *Intrada* of *Rosary Sonata XII (The Ascension)* can help to explain some of Hatten’s five categories (see Figure 2.4). Hatten defines spontaneous as “the composer’s injection of energy” that fits a “unique human gesture.”¹³⁰ The *staccato* eighth notes in m. 1 spontaneously start the movement. Biber injects energy to the music, referencing drum strokes played by a human entity. I imagine a court or military musician. These repeated eighth notes also serve as the thematic material of the *Intrada*. Hatten defines a thematic gesture as “a constructed entity possessing energy and affective character.”¹³¹ The drum-strokes effect references a military fanfare with pompous character. In addition to the thematic characteristics of the repeated eighth notes, we can notice that the subsequent musical gestures are rhythmically related to them—for example, repeated sixteenth notes (mm. 2-3, 6, 12-13), and ascending scales (mm.

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid, 290.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid. Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 15.

130 Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 17.

131 Ibid.

5 in the baseline, and 8 in the violin line) among other instances. For Hatten, a rhetorical gesture refers to “a marked disruption” that suggests an external agential source.¹³² This can be seen in m. 4 with the pickup. The two-note descending gesture (A-2-D+2, D+2-G+5) not only makes a rhythmic and gestural contrast against the repeated G+4 notes but it also references the musical topic of a horn call.¹³³ Thus, Biber’s *Intrada* forms a musical passage that fuses different gestural properties. In sum, Hatten’s functional categories can overlap—as they do in this passage—but they point out diverse and specific aspects of the music that provide meaning.



Figure 2.4. *Intrada* of *Rosary Sonata XII, The Ascension* (copper-engraving, *scordatura*, mm. 1-13). Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

¹³² Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 17.

¹³³ The *scordatura* required in *The Ascension* is C, E, G, C'. Thus, the sounding pitches will be G-E, E-C.

Continuing Hatten's earlier work on musical gesture, *A Theory of Virtual Agency* proposes the "gesture-emotion-agency triad." This refers to the capacity of the combination of these three elements to produce meaning. As Hatten describes it, "the interaction of gesture, agency, and emotion enables us to triangulate meaning."¹³⁴ Hatten proposes the application of this concept to secure an interpretation when musical elements are difficult to interpret. According to Hatten, when one or two of the elements of the triad are secure, they can help an analyst to infer the remainder.¹³⁵

The opening theme of Biber's *Rosary Sonata IV (The Presentation)* can briefly exemplify the application of Hatten's triad (see Figure 2.5).¹³⁶ The opening gesture of the violin line (A, D, G-2, F#-2) is an ascending D minor arpeggio (tonic) that sets up the dominant chord (A, V⁶).¹³⁷ The melodic contour of the gesture arrives through a descending semitone to the dominant chord balancing the ascending-leap characteristic of the previous arpeggio. This allows us to interpret the ascending D minor arpeggio as a musical gesture that prepares or calls the listener's attention to the dominant chord. The next eight-notes (E-2, C#, B-2) are written through rhythmic diminution drawn from the opening gesture.¹³⁸ Structurally, they are different from the ascending D minor arpeggio, but both have at least one characteristic in common: the last note before the downbeat lands on the first pulse

¹³⁴ Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 39.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 38.

¹³⁶ It is important to mention the numerological analysis pursued by James Noel Clements in "Aspects of *Ars rhetorica* in the Violin Music of Heinrich Biber (1644-1704)" (2002).

¹³⁷ The *scordatura* required for *The Presentation* is A, D, A', D'. Thus, the sounding pitches will be F and E.

¹³⁸ The musical gesture of the pickup to measure 3 (three eighth-notes followed by a quarter-note) is rhythmically halving the opening gesture (three quarter-notes followed by dotted quarter-note). The sounding pitches are D, C#, and A due to the *scordatura*.

from a higher note (G-2 to F#-2, and B-2 to G-2).¹³⁹ These gestural characteristics spark a rather emotional interpretation.

The opening theme of *The Presentation* seems to express a contained feeling of expectant fear. Harmony changes are always happening on downbeats after the higher melodic note. The harmonic rhythm gives the music a continuous forward motion that will be subsequently repeated through the variations. So, the affect of the opening bars encompasses not only the expectant feeling but also a sensation of walking that is again exploited through repetition. Having two elements of Hatten's triad already verbalized (gesture and emotion)—and in correlation to the given symbolic meaning of the copper engraving—we can infer a human agential capacity immerse in the *ciacona*, a walking feeling.¹⁴⁰ The *ciacona* is a baroque dance in which “limitless extendibility allows for the creation of a momentum sustainable over an appreciable length of time.”¹⁴¹ The gestural and emotive characteristics of the opening measure allows a human agential interpretation of motion as a walking sensation. In addition, this agential interpretation is associated with the content of the mystery (The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple). Here, Mary, mother of Jesus, Saint Joseph, and Jesus (in Mary's arms) visit the temple, offer sacrifices and receive revelatory messages from Saint Simeon and Anna the Prophetess that caused certain fear in Mary. Mary and Joseph walk in the temple in order to accomplish and

¹³⁹ The sounding pitches are F to E, and A to F due to the *scordatura*.

¹⁴⁰ *Ciacona* as it appears in the manuscript. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), *Sonata IV (The Visitation)*, BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

¹⁴¹ The chaconne traces its origins “in Spanish popular culture during the last years of the 15th century, most likely in the New World” (Mexico). Alexander Silbiger, “Chaconne,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001–), accessed February 17, 2022, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000005354>.

experience these events.¹⁴² In sum, the musical characteristics of the opening theme of Biber's *Presentation* exemplify Hatten's gesture-emotion-agency triad. The analysis of a musical gesture produced an emotive reading that allowed an interpretative connection with a human agency.

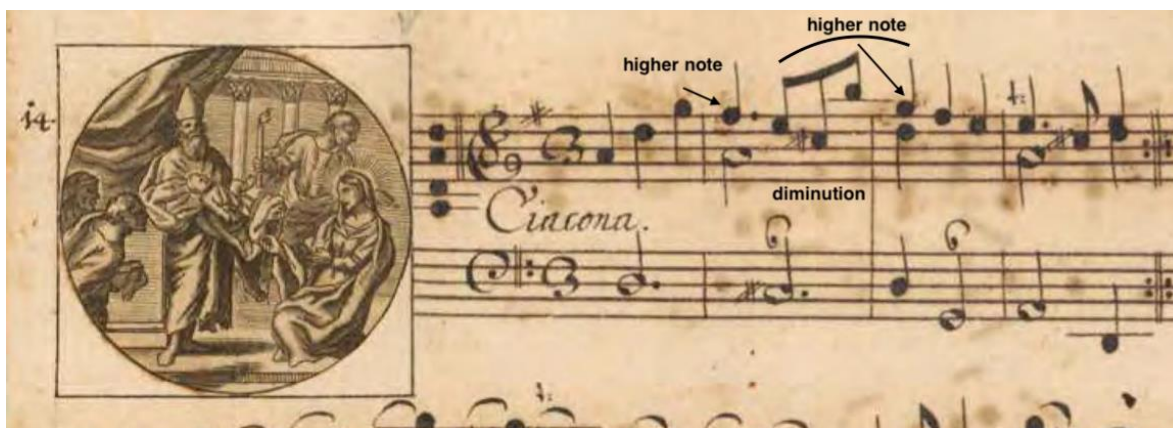


Figure 2.5. Opening theme of the *Ciacona* in *Rosary Sonata IV, The Presentation* (copper-engraving, *scordatura*, mm. 1-4). Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

Another concept that is particular to Hatten's account is *melos*. It comes from Greek music theory and refers to the combination of “melody with its associated text and movement.”¹⁴³ Hatten's usage of the term is an integrative merger between all the elements that constitute music: *melos* is “the continuity of coordinated musical elements in a work as

¹⁴² The Presentation is described in the New Testament (Luke 2:22-39), and it is included in the “Appendix C: Biblical quotations.” It is worth noting that consecrating the firstborn to the Lord was a mandatory Jewish law of that time.

¹⁴³ According to Thomas J. Mathiesen—drawing from Aristides Quintilianus—“Music in [the] sense of a performing Art was called melos...” See Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999) 25-6. Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 99.

they unfold to produce a coherent musical discourse.”¹⁴⁴ Those elements are melody (including its gestural inflections, and secondary parameters of expression such as dynamics, articulations, etc.), counterpoint, harmony, thematical and topical unfolding, among other elements.¹⁴⁵ According to Hatten, *melos* “embraces all the intertwined strands” that capture the “listener’s focal attention during a course of a work.”¹⁴⁶ Thus, it “refers to the continuity of coordinated musical elements in a work as they unfold and produce a coherent musical discourse.”¹⁴⁷ In sum, I have briefly reviewed Hatten’s account on musical signification. I explored the two four-level musical agential theories of Monahan and Kockelman, Larson’s Musical Forces and Hatten’s Theory of Musical Gesture including his gesture-emotion-agency triad, and his specific use of the term *melos*. The next section of this chapter will address Hatten’s Theory of Virtual Agency.

Analyzing Virtual Agency

As briefly explained in the introduction of this chapter, Hatten’s theory of virtual agency is a culmination of his work on gesture and emotion. Hatten’s theory sees agency in musical elements such as movement, gesture, embodiment, topics, tropes, emotion, narrativity, and performance. This agency is assigned to agents (beings that have agential capacities). In music, according to Hatten, there are two types of agents: actual and virtual. Actual agents are listeners, performers, composers, teachers, and so forth. Virtual agents reside in the

¹⁴⁴ Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 99.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. If we already understand the concept of music as a combination of various elements, the term *melos* can result somewhat redundant. From another perspective, *melos* can be understood as a theoretically augmented definition of the merger of elements that constitute music.

music itself. Paraphrasing the definition of agency, we can state that Hatten's previously mentioned virtual agents have—to some degree—a virtual capacity to act in a determined virtual environment. Thus, in Hatten's theory, musical elements have agential capacities, being not only passive objects.

In his theory, Hatten proposes four levels of agency (plus an appendix level related to performance, see Table 2.2). Level 1, "Virtual Actants," refers to the unspecified virtual roles that are "impersonal and not necessarily human."¹⁴⁸ At this level, musical elements like "texture, dynamics, and melodic gestures" can portray them.¹⁴⁹ "Steve Larson's metaphorical application of physical forces" can be applied to describe the "virtual environment." Those forces include gravity, inertia, and magnetism.¹⁵⁰

Level 2, "Virtual Human Agents," looks for human-like musical characteristics such as dialogues, human bodies or minds evoked in the music, or even stock characters like the wise old man or the reluctant hero. At this level, topics and tropes are searched for and included in the analysis. "Nuances of harmony, *tessitura*, and rhythm and meter" are analyzed as well as the emotions felt by the Virtual Human Agents.¹⁵¹

Level 3, "Virtual Actors" focuses on the interaction of musical elements found in previous levels—that is, how they are part of a narrative and develop a story together. It also aims to identify what kind of story is projected through music. This level focuses its attention to examine large-scale form (for example, contrasting sections and thematic development).

¹⁴⁸ Jonathan De Souza, "Guidelines for Analyzing Virtual Agency," unpublished manuscript, 2020, electronic file.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 47. De Souza, "Guidelines for Analyzing Virtual Agency." See Larson, *Musical Forces*.

¹⁵¹ De Souza, "Guidelines for Analyzing Virtual Agency."

Level 4, “Virtual Subjectivity” is where the analyst looks for hermeneutical, and personal interpretations of the music. At this level, finding connections between the emotions felt by the analyst can help to reinterpret the internal drama of the music. This level promotes a reflection on the inner life or spirituality of the analyst. At this level, it is important to identify aspects of musical unity and disunity to better sustain the interpretation. As an appendix to the four levels, Hatten includes the “Performance level.” It invites the performer to propose a personal interpretation-performance of the music based on the agential analysis pursued in the previous levels. Personal performance decisions can be verbalized and explained at this level.

Table 2.2. Levels of Virtual Agency

1. Virtual Actants
2. Virtual Human Agents
3. Virtual Actors
4. Virtual Subjectivity

Appendix Level: Performance

These four levels of virtual agency need the understanding of four transformative inferences: Virtualizing an actant, Embodying a Virtual Agent, Fictionalizing Virtual Actors, Interiorizing Virtual Subjectivity, plus Engagement and Participation (appendix level “Performance”). To explain these transformative inferences, Hatten also provides several key concepts that explain each of the inferences. For example, Virtualizing an Actant requires “several lower-level capacities” that allow to “perceive and interpret sonic emissions.”¹⁵² These capacities are “Gestalt perception,” “Cross-modal generalization,”

¹⁵² Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 18.

“Generative,” “Individuating,” “Effect,” and “Action.”¹⁵³ Thus, it is possible to virtualize musical agency by applying the lower-level capacities of each one of the transformative inferences following the analytical needs of a selected passage of music.

Conclusion

I found this theory of analysis useful and relevant for theorists and performers. As stated by Hatten, “virtual agency provides a coherent grounding for understanding” music’s significance as it provides “a semiotic bridge from music’s virtual energies” to their expressive meaning.¹⁵⁴ It aids in developing a broader understanding of musical phenomena since it links views of music analysis and interpretation that are not usually combined: music theory and music performance. It gives equal importance to elements that are traditionally forgotten in music theory (e.g., movement, and embodiment) by giving agency to various musical aspects. It also brings back an emphasis on rhetoric, which is essential to the interpretative-performative analysis of music, particularly baroque music. Also, it gives a voice to performers nourished by hermeneutical and theoretical analyses of music. The multiplicity of meanings, answers, or interpretations is characteristic of Hatten’s interpretative view. Therefore, performers can use Hatten’s theory to enrich their performances while respecting musicological research. Hatten ties everything together in a theory that enables a holistic comprehension of music, helping to explain and theorize the virtual power of music. With the *Rosary Sonatas*, in particular, it sheds light on the current state of research on their musical signification. It compiles the performative aspect of their *scordatura*, the written music, their rhetorical content, and their relation (narratological or

¹⁵³ Ibid, 18-9.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 18.

dramatical) to the Mysteries of the Rosary. To demonstrate, the next two chapters will explore virtual agency in two *Rosary Sonatas*, Sonata I (The Annunciation), and Sonata VI (The Agony).

Chapter 3. *The Annunciation*

The first copper-engraved illustration in the *Rosary Sonatas* manuscript portrays St. Gabriel Archangel, on the left, surrounded by clouds and holding a branch from Paradise in his left hand (see Figure 3.1). He is facing Mary, who looks down with her hands in a praying position. In the upper part of the illustration, a dove represents the Holy Spirit, shining rays of light on Mary.¹⁵⁵ This biblical event is described in the Gospel according to St. Luke as follows:

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-38, New Revised Standard Version [NRSV])

¹⁵⁵ The dove is a traditional representation of the Holy Spirit descending to rest upon a biblical personage producing then a miracle, or revealing God's will. It has been used since the beginning of Christianity. There is a strong iconographical tradition of divine conception "by hearing," depicted with rays or words going into Mary's ear. An example of this is *Dreikönigsaltar, linker Flügel: Verkündigung an Maria* (circa 1400) by Rogier van der Weyden.

This event is the Annunciation and it is the first Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. The illustration is followed by the violin's tuning for this sonata (G, D, A, E). This tuning corresponds to the normal tuning of the violin. In other words, *scordatura* is not required.¹⁵⁶ Sonata I (“The Annunciation”) has three movements: *Preludium*, *Aria allegro – variatio – Adagio*, and *Finale*. The first movement contains a musical setting that recalls the dialogue between Mary and Gabriel described in Luke. How can this dialogue guide interpretation? The following virtual agential analysis offers an answer to this question.



Figure 3.1. Copper-engraved illustration and *scordatura* indication in *Rosary Sonata I The Annunciation*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

¹⁵⁶ *Sonata I (The Annunciation)* and *Sonata XVI Passaglia (The Guardian Angel)* are the only two *Rosary Sonatas* that do not require *scordatura*.

Virtual Agential Analysis

Level 1, “Virtual Actants”

The *Preludium* has a great amount of action, motion, and drama. In approximately half of the bars, the violin plays thirty-second notes that create a sense of continuous motion.¹⁵⁷

Thirty-second notes are keeping the music in an almost erratic motion, traveling over a considerable portion of the baroque violin’s *tessitura*. They are grouped in two passages (mm. 1-9, and mm. 13-17). Between these fast passages, and at the end of the second one, there are moments of silence—at least in the violin part, but potentially for the *basso continuo* too—that contribute to a drastic rhythmic-intensity change between the intricate thirty-second notes and the calmer rhythm of the longer notes. At this point, it is possible to identify two actants with contrasting characteristics, a “thirty-second notes actant” and a “longer notes actant.” In the quest of labeling these two actants concisely, I suggest “A” and “B” respectively.

This movement is in D minor. Measure 1 suddenly opens the music giving a small introduction to Actant A (see Figure 3.2). It is a rhythmic gesture that will not appear again in the rest of the movement. It serves only to catch the attention of the listener, and then take it through the intricate melodic and improvisatory line of Actant A. Note that the ending of the introductory gesture and the beginning of the Actant A (m. 2) share the same note (D). The rhythmic structure of this introductory gesture does not stylistically belong to the intricate and improvisatory mood of Actant A (French overture-like rhythms). It seems out of context with no further musical connection to the rest of the *Preludium*, although it shares the action and drama I mentioned earlier. Its basic melodic contour (A-D-D’) starts

¹⁵⁷ Thirty-second notes appear from bars 2-6, 13-17, and 19-20.

from the dominant, descends rapidly in conjunct motion to the tonic and immediately jumps up an octave. It is a moment full of energy that will be dissolved, balanced—or even forgotten—through Actant A’s intricate and long intervention. In other words, the drama of the introductory material is balanced by a gestural response of Actant A that is almost eight measures long (mm. 2-9).¹⁵⁸



Figure 3.2. Detail of *Rosary Sonata I (The Annunciation)*. Mm. 1-2. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

In m. 7, there is a momentary break in the forward motion propelled by the thirty-second notes. The Bb (dotted quarter note) serves as a stopping point for the fast notes, as well as a connection to a faster passage of descending broken thirds in sixteenth notes that concludes Actant A’s first intervention in m. 9. This sixteenth-note passage helps to reduce the momentum caused by the rapid succession of thirty-second notes in the preceding bars. There is an eighth-note silence written at the end of Actant A’s first intervention that can be expanded in performance to prepare the entrance of Actant B (see Figure 3.3). As mentioned earlier, Actant B offers an opposite musical mood to Actant A since it has longer

¹⁵⁸ By forgotten, I mean that the focus of attention of the listener will quickly move towards the thirty-second notes line.

notes and slurs. This rhythmic contrast can suggest a dialogical interchange that will be examined in Level 2, “Virtual Human Agents.” It is worth noticing that Actant B’s bass line moves—unlike Actants A’s long tonic pedal on D. In mm. 10–11, there is a contrapuntal interaction (motivic repetition) between the violin and the bass line that will be further described in Level 2.

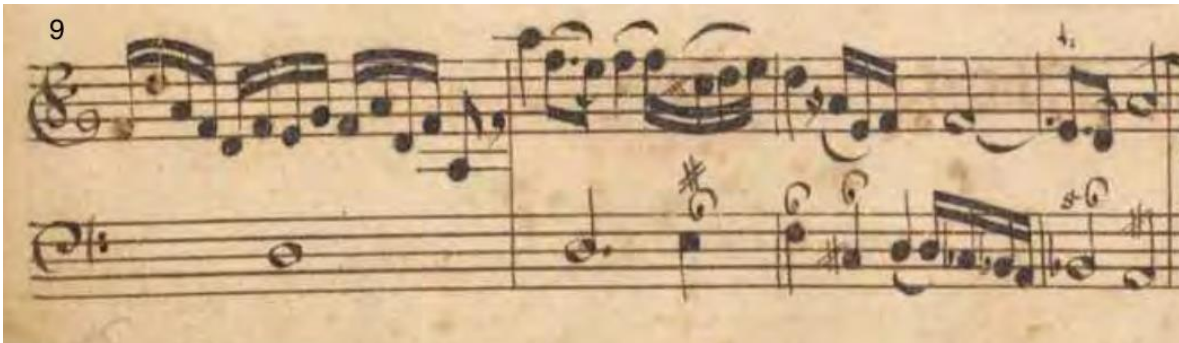


Figure 3.3. Detail of *Rosary Sonata I (The Annunciation)*. Mm. 9-12. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

Actant A’s second intervention starts immediately after the Phrygian half cadence (HC) in m. 12. As in its first intervention, it is erratic and quasi-improvisatory, but this time in the dominant (A). Actant A’s second intervention is brighter, because of the underlying A major harmony. This luminous environment is diluted by the ending of the intervention through a descending D melodic minor scale. Actant A’s ending gesture differs from its first intervention, although both end on a low A. As described earlier, Actant A’s first intervention reduces the momentum caused by the thirty-second notes. Instead, the second intervention ends suddenly, adding drama to the gestural change that Actant B’s second intervention will produce.

Actant B's second intervention is shorter than the first, but both have linking characteristics at the end of their gestures. As the ending of Actant B's first intervention connects to the beginning of Actant A's second intervention (mm. 12-13), the melodic figure that ends on Bb in m. 19 connects to the ending material of the movement. I locate the ending material already in m. 19, starting from the eighth note slurred into a thirty-second note (Bb) (see Figure 3.4). The ending material shares characteristics of the two Actants and offers a form of gestural conclusion to the *Preludium*. It includes a short passage of thirty-second notes over iv that—with a dramatic jump from G to a high Bb—connects to a passage of descending intervals with slurs over the dominant. The music of the passage tends to guide the listener to a calm resolution. The two-note slurs tend to slow the momentum created by the Actant A-like subdominant passage and the fast notes of m. 21 and the first beat of m. 22. Another aspect is the descent (from G to D) that can be observed in the last three written bars (see Figure 3.5). Starting on m. 22 (second half of the third beat), a descent in register can be traced from the high G to the final D where the rest of the notes are adding ornaments around it. At this point of the analysis, we can clearly identify two actants that manifest different kinds of energies.



Figure 3.4. Detail of *Rosary Sonata I (The Annunciation)*. Mm. 19-24 of the *Preludium* and first 4 measures of the *Variatio*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.



Figure 3.5. Detail of *Rosary Sonata I (The Annunciation)*. Mm. 22-24 of the *Preludium*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

Level 2 “Virtual Human Agents”

The introductory gesture of m. 1 involves a paeon-like rhythm and a dotted rhythm that references a French overture.¹⁵⁹ According to Judy Tarling, this introductory gesture

¹⁵⁹ Paeon-like rhythm refers to a gesture of three short notes followed by one long note. It is best known in Baroque music for its use in French overtures and entrées as an arresting opening gambit to attract the attention of the listener. Judy Tarling, *The Weapons of Rhetoric: A Guide for Musicians and Audiences* (St. Albans: Corda Music, 2004), 81, 173.

“arouses the spirit to attention in a trumpet-like call.”¹⁶⁰ In other words, the French overture’s rhythms help to evoke a state of surprise and expectation that prepares the listener for the interaction of Actants A and B.

The gestural difference between Actants A and B suggests a dialogue: Actant A appears first and B responds. Actant A is fast, frantic, and unstable. It has a wide *tessitura* and quasi-improvisatory characteristics. On the other hand, Actant B is *cantabile*, calmer, and steadier. Now that I gave such opposite characteristics to Actants A and B, they can be considered as *Agents* A and B. This is a key difference from Level 1 since we are now imagining Actants A and B as musical agents with human characteristics. Both agents express contrasting feelings: a frantic agent in opposition to a responding calmer agent. As briefly mentioned in the preceding level, Agent B’s interventions have moving bass lines—this is in contrast to the pedal tones that support Agent A’s interventions. In m. 10 (Agent B’s first intervention), there is a rhythmical exchange between the violin and the bass line. Through a rhythmic reduction of the violin line, we observe a pattern of two quarter-notes, one quarter-note slurred into a sixteen note, and three sixteenth-notes written in a turn-like gesture that resolves into the downbeat. The same pattern can be observed in the bass line of m. 11 (see Fig. 3.6). The mordent symbols suggest other possible rhythms to be added; in the violin part, these varied rhythms—interpreted as ornaments—are written out. The basic rhythmic structure is shared, and this exchange between the two instruments increases the rhythmic variety of the *Preludium*. This rhythmic exchange helps to balance the long pedal passage of Agent A’s first intervention (see Fig. 3.2). Another distinct aspect of Agent B is its singing quality. Agent B can be sung by a human—possibly female—voice since its

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 81.

tessitura is not as wide as Agent A's, and its velocity is far from the frantic thirty-second notes.

The figure displays three staves of musical notation. The top staff, labeled 'Rhythmic pattern', shows a sequence of notes: a quarter note, two eighth notes, a quarter note, and a final eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The second and third staves are labeled 'Violin reduction' and 'Basso continuo' respectively. The violin staff starts at measure 10 and the basso continuo staff starts at measure 11. Both staves show the same rhythmic pattern as the top staff, with the violin staff using a treble clef and the basso continuo staff using a bass clef. The basso continuo staff includes a sharp sign (#) under the second sixteenth note of the final beat, which the caption identifies as a historical notation for C^b.

Figure 3.6. Rhythmic pattern observed in mm. 10 and 11 in the violin and *basso continuo* lines respectively. The notated C^b in the second sixteenth-note of the last beat of m. 11 in the *basso continuo* is a historical notation for C^b in this context.

Agent A's second intervention (m. 13) provides an emotional contrast to its first intervention. Since it is written in the dominant (A), it offers an optimistic response to Agent B and at the same time, creates a contrasting triumphant version of Agent A. Agent B responds shyly in m. 18 and connects its singing line to the ending material. The ending material in the subdominant (mm. 19-20) gives an impression of a memory of the frantic Agent A's thirty-second notes. This can also be interpreted as a short restatement of the musical ideas declared by Agent A. Finally, the beginning of the ending material in the dominant (pickup to m. 21) portrays a dramatic rhetorical exclamation that will start the breaking of the momentum created by the previous passage in the subdominant.¹⁶¹ A jump

¹⁶¹ This particular jump can be identified as the rhetorical figure of *exclamatio* or *saltus duriusculus*. Although the jump is not happening inside one musical phrase, it is happening between two musical phrases. For more information on this rhetorical figure see Rubén

of a minor seventeenth is extremely dramatic and will—in performance—suggest taking time between the two notes. The ending material over the dominant (m. 21) gives an impression of winding down, reducing the rhythmical intensity of the thirty-second notes. Biber adds a new musical motive of two-note slurs of descending notes that eventually lead to a somber long D that ends the movement.¹⁶² The final perfect authentic cadence (PAC)—as it releases tension and is satisfying—might suggest a positive ending.

Level 3 “Virtual Actors”

Here the biblical annunciation will help us to reconfigure our dialogue, and recognize and rename our agents. They now become Virtual Actors since the biblical context adds a narrative context. Agent A might represent Gabriel communicating a message from God. Agent B would represent a terrified Mary witnessing an angelic apparition, receiving a revelatory message, responding, and accepting her destiny as the mother of Jesus.

In the understanding that gestural contrasts correspond to the dialogue described in Luke (1: 26-38), Agent A’s first intervention corresponds to Gabriel’s first utterance: “Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!... Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God...” From this perspective, the thirty-second notes represent the words spoken by Gabriel, including the agential breaking of momentum (mm. 7-9). The dramatic descent in broken thirds leading to the low A in m. 9 corresponds to the revelatory and powerful last declaration of Gabriel: “and of his kingdom, there will be no end.” In this way, the written

López-Cano, *Musica y retórica en el barroco* (Barcelona: Amalgama Edicions, 2011). 141-3.

¹⁶² This motif cannot be considered a *pianto* (sign) since it has not descending minor seconds. Nevertheless, descending intervals under two-note slurs could be associated with the idea of sighing or even weeping.

eighth-note silence represents actual silence between Gabriel's declaration and Mary's response as in a dialogue.

Agent B corresponds to Mary, responding to Gabriel. Mary's first response—which is a question to Gabriel—is: “How can this be since I have no husband?” This short question, as posed by Mary, can be associated with Agent B's gestural characteristics. As described before, Agent B has a singing quality that encompasses voice-like *tessitura* with slurs and calmer rhythms—in comparison to Gabriel's frantic thirty-second notes. The singing quality, the *tessitura*, and other characteristics previously described serve to virtually embody the passage as a human voice, specifically a female one, that is responding to Gabriel with a fearful question. Gabriel answers that with a long explanation: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.” This response corresponds then to Agent A's second intervention. At this point, it is interesting to notice how the passage is in the dominant, and the violin is high up in its register. This correlates to Gabriel's words about the Holy Spirit (represented as a dove in the illustration, see Image 3.1) and “the power of the Most High”—as one of the elements of the Christian Trinity that reside “in the heights.”¹⁶³

¹⁶³ The Holy Spirit represented by a dove hovering in the heights in the copper-engraved illustration (see Image 3.1) also serves to explain the connection of the higher violin register as referencing the Christian Trinity that resides “in the heights.” The Christian Trinity refers to the doctrine that holds that God is one God but three coeternal and consubstantial persons.

After Gabriel's answer, Mary responds with "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord." This is represented in the music of m. 20 and the first two beats of m. 21—that is, Agent B's second intervention. As described before, this last intervention of Agent B connects with the ending material. The ending material in the subdominant (mm. 20-21) is a clear and succinct reference to Gabriel's words. This correlates with Mary's last phrase: "let it be to me according to your words." Thus, the ending passage in the subdominant serves to correlate Gabriel's words with Mary's acceptance of them.

As previously described, Gabriel reveals God's intentions to Mary. He talks to her in a language that Mary should understand. But receiving a salutation plus a revelatory message from a being that does not belong to the earthly world is an experience that would cause an extreme level of stress. The voice and words uttered by Gabriel would sound like nothing ever heard by Mary before, so Biber's intricate passages of thirty-second notes might be a symbolic approximation to how Gabriel's revelatory message would have been received and experienced by Mary. Both Gabriel's passages are intricate and difficult to assimilate. They are energetic and produce a strong impression on the listener. On the other hand, Mary's responses are calm, fearful, and to some degree innocent. In the Annunciation, Mary can communicate and even ask a question to an angel, an opportunity that is not common at all. Her fearfulness and bewilderment are represented by reducing the rhythmic intensity, opting for a longer singing line that produces a striking gestural change after Gabriel's interventions. In sum, the *Preludium* offers an encounter of two characters, Gabriel and Mary, where a revelatory message from God is presented and responded to by a human female charged with fear, doubts, and misunderstanding.

The biblical narrative also suggests an interpretation of the movement's opening gesture as the moment of the apparition of the archangel (m. 1). The paeon-like rhythm is

used “to attract the attention” combined with “a trumpet-like call” (last beat of m. 1).¹⁶⁴ It is remarkable how Biber chooses these two elements of attention calling, emulating the possible effect that an angelic epiphany would produce in a human being. In other words, the angelic epiphany will also attract the attention of a bystander as a supernatural and surprising phenomenon. Thanks to the biblical narrative, the identification that turns virtual human agents into virtual actors not only facilitates the analysis, but also adds a distinctive signification to the human agents as characters that act and react to each other. Table 3.1 shows agents A and B’s correlation to actors Gabriel and Mary, as well as their respective characteristics.

Table 3.1. Agential characters A and B

Actant/Agent name	Actor name	Characteristics	Measures
A	Gabriel	Thirty-second notes	2-6, 13-17, 19-20
B	Mary	Slurs, longer notes, not thirty-second notes	10-12, 18

Table 3.1 groups the different agential characters mentioned during the analysis along with their location.

¹⁶⁴ Tarling, 81, 173-4.

Level 4 “Virtual Subjectivity”

Imagining an angelic epiphany is a deep and personal task. There are sources that explain the Annunciation that can help to assimilate this special event such as guided meditation books on the Rosary or the Christian practice of the *Angelus* prayer (see Fig. 3.7). The *Angelus* is a “devotion consisting in the repetition three times daily (early morning, noon, and evening) of three Hail Marys with versicles and a collect as a memorial of the Incarnation. A bell is rung three times for each Hail Mary and nine times for the collect.”¹⁶⁵ In the *Angelus*, the believer re-enacts the scene of the Annunciation, speaking the words of both Gabriel and Mary. Level 4 “Virtual Subjectivity” allows the assimilation of the virtual actors as elements co-existing in one subjectivity—in other words, in one mind. Then, there is a correlation that is worth noting between an *Angelus* practitioner and an agential analyst or performer. Through the reciting of the words pronounced by Gabriel and responded by Mary, the practitioner can not only remember (as recalling an important event in the life of Mary) the mystical conception of Jesus, but also re-enact and to some extent embody the Annunciation to Mary. This allows us to address key questions that can connect the biblical annunciation and Hatten’s fourth agential level: How might I find both Gabriel and Mary in myself? What part of myself bears a message from God? And what part of myself has been chosen and accepts God’s plan?

¹⁶⁵ “Angelus,” in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 2013–), accessed April 9, 2021, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199659623.001.0001/acref-9780199659623-e-251?rskey=SS7vHZ&result=256>.

Figure 3.7. The Angelus Prayer

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
 R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.
 Hail Mary, full of grace,
 The Lord is with Thee;
 Blessed art thou among women,
 And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
 Holy Mary, Mother of God,
 Pray for us sinners,
 Now and at the hour of our death. Amen
 V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
 R. Be it done to me according to thy word.
 Hail Mary. . .
 V. And the Word was made flesh.
 R. And dwelt among us.
 Hail Mary. . .
 V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
 R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
 Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Music, as a phenomenon formed by actual agents, may help interiorize the virtual actorial roles of Gabriel and Mary in one subjectivity. A useful analogy can be traced among Gabriel and Mary, and performer and audience. Performers—identified by Hatten as an actual agent—share a message with their audiences. As a performer, I can identify with Gabriel as a messenger that needs to be heard and hopefully understood. A performer—after receiving the message/music from the composer—delivers it directly to the audience that is desirous to take it and embrace it. As an active audience member, I am also willfully open to receive the music from the performer—as Mary listened to Gabriel’s salutation and message. As audience members, we do not know what are we going to experience during a performance. We do not know the message in advance. We can even question the emotions we are feeling while the performative act is still happening—just as Mary’s doubt is

represented by her questions to Gabriel. As previously described, Mary accepted her destiny as the mother of Jesus, just like we accept the performance. We accept the message, and the performative experience becomes part of our subjectivity. Certainly, more personal, and spiritual interpretations can be explored at this level. And all of them will share subjective degrees of validity. For this investigation, I use a less personal example that I still consider explanatory. Below, I continue describing Biber's *Annunciation* using personal analogies connecting the *Angelus*.

I draw an analogy between a bell ringing and the introductory material of m. 1.¹⁶⁶ A bell after being stroked by a clapper produces an attacked clear tone that decays and allows other tones to sound, the harmonics. In the *Preludium*, the first note (A) appears in a sudden way having a clear attack at the beginning. Its sound will decay slightly allowing the paeon-like rhythm to be heard.¹⁶⁷ The notes of the paeon-like rhythm (G, F, E, D) can be imagined as “resulting harmonics” of the first note—in an analogy of the ringing bell—as a first musical gesture that suddenly starts the music. The pickup to m. 2, which Tarling describes as a trumpet-like call, completes the moment of Gabriel's apparition. In this respect, there is a parallel between the opening of Biber's *Preludium*, with its musical dialogue, and the opening of the *Angelus* prayer, with its subjective meditation on the Annunciation.

Level 4 “Virtual Subjectivity” allowed us to interiorize in one subjectivity the virtual actors Gabriel and Mary with the help of the *Angelus* prayer. I compared them

¹⁶⁶ More details can be added to this imaginative claim in the quest of being more specific and thoughtful about this mystery. The Annunciation took place at noon on March 25 (nine months before Christmas) in Nazareth according to the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, the Christian festivity of The Annunciation takes place on March 25.

¹⁶⁷ The sound decaying of the first note (A) would be naturally produced by a baroque bow due to its convex design.

analogically with actual agents of music (performer and audience). I also imaginatively describe the opening musical gesture of the *Preludium* as the sound of the *Angelus* bell. The next section of this analysis will provide performative suggestions that will improve the interpretation of this movement.

Performance Level

How might a violinist communicate this hermeneutic reading in performance? The first bar of the *Preludium* has an element of spontaneity as it tends to portray an angelic epiphany. According to my previous agential analysis, I described this bar as a church bell ringing at noon.¹⁶⁸ To obtain the effect of stroking a bell—and by extension, a sudden and surprising sound—the violinist may use a strong attack on the first note (A).¹⁶⁹ I suggest that the attack should be produced from the string by grabbing the string with the bow hair. This produces an initial rough sound, but it results in an effective sudden and surprising sound. Thanks to the convex structure of the baroque bow, the long A will naturally decay after the initial attack as the bow moves down. The upper third of the bow is a good area to play the paeon-like rhythm with a less defined sound and thus, make the descending tetrachord as a quick sound effect that simulates the harmonics produced by a clapper stroke on a bell. In other words, by playing the paeon-like rhythm in a less defined sound area of the bow, I pretend

¹⁶⁸ The specificity of imagining a church bell ringing at noon comes from—besides the tradition of praying the *Angelus* at noon—the axiomatic idea that the Annunciation happened during day time. Imagining a church bell ringing at night would suggest other situations as in Camille Saint-Saëns' *Danse macabre*, Op. 40.

¹⁶⁹ All my performance suggestions refer to baroque violin performance. In other words, I recommend performing these sonatas using a baroque violin, bow, and the required *scordatura*. Most recordings of these pieces follow this standard.

to unite the long note and the paeon-like rhythm in one musical gesture that subjectively represents a church bell sound and the virtual apparition of Gabriel.

The trumpet-like call then will be played with the whole bow. This allows reaching the frog to play the D in m. 2, using half of the bow. The thirty-second notes will be played in the middle of the bow naturally with less bow and more weight, trying to obtain a certain degree of seriousness.¹⁷⁰ Another aspect that can help to enhance the agential characteristics of the thirty-second-note passages is the application of expressive timing variation. This can be observed in the highly dynamic rendition by Riccardo Minasi (2008) where the thirty-second notes (Gabriel) are performed in a fast and virtuoso way that highly contrast Mary's responses.¹⁷¹ The eighth-note rest of m. 9 can be interpreted as a general pause where the *basso continuo* should also stop, potentially at the same time as the violin. This prolonged silence will allow the audience to focus the attention on the contrasting melody on Mary's response.

Mary's responses to Gabriel should be played in a very delicate manner. A dynamic change—contrasting with a considerable *forte* introduction—can be greatly effective to express the fearfulness of Mary's responses. The treatment of the bow for Mary's interventions should almost be motionless and airy, emulating a frightened female voice. To accomplish this, I suggest using less bow-hair (half-hair technique) and a faster speed of

¹⁷⁰ This performance proposal only focuses on key points of the *Praeludium* where specific execution can be applied to enhance the agential analysis. Thus, I will not touch on the expected performance principles of baroque playing. For this, I recommend Walter Reiter, *The Baroque Violin & Viola: A Fifty-Lesson Course* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

¹⁷¹ Riccardo Minasi, violin, "Sonata I: Praeludium, Variatio, Aria Allegro, Varatio, Adagio, Finale - The Annunciation," *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*, Arts 477358, 2008, compact disc.

the bow with almost no weight.¹⁷² Starting from the F of m. 11, adding a pronounced *crescendo* that arrives into m. 13 will prepare the entrance of Gabriel's second intervention on the dominant. For Gabriel's second intervention, I propose a slightly different treatment of the thirty-second notes. In this passage, Gabriel refers to the Holy Spirit and God. For this reason, the thirty-second notes can be played more lightly. This is particularly important in the high notes of m. 16. The high notes along with the colour that the dominant (A) produces, allows the violin to have a more singing timbre. Adding extra weight to those notes can produce an unwanted brilliant or even squeaky sound.

The lofty sound of Gabriel's second intervention can be altered as the line goes into the low A of m. 17. From the beginning of the descending D minor scale, a *crescendo* with a slight *accelerando* can help to exaggerate the phrasing rhetorically as the musical line falls into the low register of the violin.¹⁷³ This will help to exaggerate the drama of this passage in accordance with the powerful last statement of Gabriel: "For with God nothing will be impossible." The entrance of the bass line in m. 18 can be freely delayed, like the suggested general pause between mm. 9 and 10. In m. 19, the violin can make a *crescendo* that connects the ending material in the subdominant. For this material, I suggest an weighty sound similar to the one in the tonic (Gabriel's first intervention). I also suggest that its ending should be abrupt and violent, representing Gabriel's departure. I imagine this moment as abrupt as his apparition—and this is how I understand the extreme change of *tessitura* of m. 20. Once more, I suggest taking time between the low G and the high Bb. In

¹⁷² These recommendations in the treatment of the bow tend to explain everything in general terms. Phrasing still needs to be performed and particularly exaggerated in a baroque performance following basic principles of rhetoric. Thus, Mary's interventions should not have a single, homogenous timbre. They should still have timbral variety.

¹⁷³ I recommend only a slight *accelerando* in a melodic *rubato* style. I do not suggest that the tempo should speed up overall.

baroque performance, such extreme changes of register require time to be executed. This will also help to clear out the subdominant mood before the ending material in the dominant. Finally, to express the *piano*-like effect of the two-note slurs of mm. 22-24, I suggest applying a quicker speed of the bow at the beginning of each slur. A *ritardando* starting from m. 23 can be also very effective to prompt the calm and accepting feeling of Mary at the end of the mystery.

Conclusions

Through this analysis of Biber's *preludium*, I have described the musical forces that show characteristics that can hermeneutically link musical events with characters in the biblical Annunciation described by Luke. Through the four virtual agential levels of Hatten's theory, I have identified the aforementioned musical forces as actants, recognized their human characteristics, granted them actorial roles, and finally, I have suggested a subjective interpretation of the music. In addition, I have proposed performative suggestions aimed to enhance the agential interpretation and present this movement as an interaction between two contrasting virtual agents, Gabriel and Mary.

Chapter 4. The Agony

The copper engraving for this sonata shows Jesus kneeling in an outdoor location. He is looking at an angel surrounded by clouds. The angel holds a chalice that is shining rays of light on Jesus. Below the angel's clouds a branch can be observed—possibly referencing an olive tree.¹⁷⁴ Close to the centre of the illustration, there is a mountain that has three olive trees in front of it. On the left of the illustration, there is a small wooden shack with three men standing on the door's threshold.¹⁷⁵ They are looking at Jesus. On the right, a bearded man is sleeping. All these elements, shown in Figure 4.1, can be identified after a reading of the Gospel of Luke:

He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.” [Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.] When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”¹⁷⁶ (Luke 22:39-46, NRSV)

The other men besides Jesus (three men in the distance inside the wooden shack and the bearded sleeping men) can be identified as four apostles. Three of them are still in the place where the Last Supper was held. In other words, the wooden shack can represent the Cenacle (also known as the Upper Room), the place where Jesus shared his last meal with his disciples before his Crucifixion. The copper engraving shows other visual elements

¹⁷⁴ This mystery of the Rosary is also known as The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane or Christ on the Mount of Olives.

¹⁷⁵ This can also be a gate into a walled garden.

¹⁷⁶ The four standard gospels describe the Agony (see Appendix C “Biblical Quotations” for the other three accounts).

described in Luke’s text, such as the apparition of “an angel from heaven” holding a chalice, referencing Jesus praying “remove this cup from me.”



Figure 4.1 Detail of copper-engraved illustration. *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, each *Rosary Sonata* contains an ending decorative image that indicates the actual end of the piece. These ending decorative images can add symbolic meaning and re-confirmation of the *Rosary Sonatas*’ connection to the mysteries of the Rosary—besides the obvious reference to them through the copper-engraved illustrations. In the case of *The Agony*, Luke reports that when Jesus was praying to his Father (God) more earnestly “his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.” In medicine, this is a rare condition known as hematidrosis (also named hematohidrosis). It “is a rare phenomenon in which blood is excreted with sweat upon exposure to extreme physical or emotional stress.”¹⁷⁷ Jesus physically suffered this

¹⁷⁷ Mahmoud I. Elbadry Marwa Saad Badry, Abdul-Rahman Abdul-Majeed Ragab, and Mohammed Elrabie Ahmed, “Hematohidrosis: Reports and Update of Clinically

condition and blood fell from his body—or face—to the ground. I would argue that the image of a blood drop falling can be found in the ending decorative image of *The Agony* (see Figure 4.2). If we rotate the image a quarter turn towards the left (anticlockwise), this representation is clearer (see Figure 4.3). This ending decorative image could represent not only the hematidrosis suffered by Jesus during The Agony but also the Christian concept of the Blood of Christ as a symbol that recalls the Eucharist—just established in the Last Supper—and the blood that will be shed by Jesus in the Passion.¹⁷⁸



Figure 4.2 Detail of ending decorative image. *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

Mysterious Phenomenon,” *Indian Journal of Otology* 26, no. 2 (2020): 99-102.
https://doi.org/10.4103/indianjotol.INDIANJOTOL_135_19.

¹⁷⁸ In Roman Catholicism, the Eucharist—also known as Holy Communion or the Lord’s Supper—is a sacrament instituted by Jesus himself during the Last Supper, where he gave bread and wine to his disciples. For Catholics, the bread and wine in the Eucharist are Jesus’s body and blood. The Passion is the final period of the life of Jesus and it can encompass all the events occurred since his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem to his Resurrection. This includes the Last Supper, the Agony in the Garden, Crucifixion, and death, among others.



Figure 4.3. Detail of ending decorative image rotated a quarter towards the left (anticlockwise). It could reference a blood drop falling in a flat surface represented by the end bar lines. *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

Rosary Sonata VI, then, references the first Sorrowful Mystery, The Agony in the Garden. It requires a dissonant *scordatura* (Ab, Eb, G, D) that allows for thirds and unisons between the second and third strings (A and D strings in standard tuning, see Figure 4.1). *The Agony* is divided into several small parts: *Lamento*, *Adagio-1*, *Presto*, *Adagio-2* (a sarabande-like section in 3/2 meter), *Adagio-3*, a final *Adagio-4* in 12/8, and then a section in “8/12” meter. Despite the unorthodox meter signature, the “8/12” section is in common time.¹⁷⁹ Each *Adagio* concludes a larger section of the piece; therefore, *The Agony* may be understood as a sonata with four small movements: *Lamento*, *Presto*, “Sarabande,” and “*Adagio* 12/8-8/12” (see Table 4.1). These movements bear musical characteristics that

¹⁷⁹ There is no title/tempo indication in the *The Agony* for the 3/2 section on m. 46. I name this section as “sarabande” based on its triple meter and use of a typical sarabande rhythm (half note - dotted half note - quarter note). This is an augmented version of the rhythm “a” shown in Ex. 4 in Richard Hudson and Meredith Ellis Little, “Sarabande,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001–), accessed June 15, 2021, <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000024574>.

may represent specific events, moods, and feelings endured by the characters in the biblical event of The Agony.

Table 4.1 Proposal of movements in Biber's *Agony*

<i>Lamento – Adagio</i> ¹	<i>Presto – Adagio</i> ²	3/2 Sarabande – <i>Adagio</i> ³	<i>Adagio</i> ⁴ (final)
mm. 1-21	mm. 22-45	mm. 46-93	mm. 94-112 (end)

The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane is a crucial and painful moment during Jesus' Passion. After having the Last Supper in the Cenacle, Jesus withdraws from his disciples and goes to pray at "the Mount of Olives." He was extremely fearful and anxious about the events that would occur the next day (scourging, crucifixion, and death). He was under intense stress. He cried out to his apostles, asking them to stay awake and pray with him, but they were so tired that they easily fell asleep. They did not understand what Jesus was feeling and why he was so nervous. While praying, Jesus asked his father to be released from that awful destiny, but he was also willing to carry out his father's commands. An angel "appeared to him and gave him strength" to accept what will happen, but Jesus, as a human being, suffered greatly regardless. In sum, he felt doubtful and tempted to escape from an excruciating death. How does Biber represent this in *The Agony*? How can Jesus' feelings, actions, and reactions be found and interpreted in the piece? How might Biber create a musical atmosphere of expectant fear, and prayer-like melodic lines in the violin? What is the role of the *scordatura* in this particular sonata? And finally, how listeners and performers can enhance their relation to this piece? The following virtual agential analysis sheds light on these questions focusing on selected musical passages from the sonata.

Virtual Agential Analysis

In this analysis, I focus on some passages that I find approachable from a virtual agential perspective. In other words, I select passages that show clear agential results. The first part of this exercise is a gestural analysis. I describe the passages by looking at their textural and gestural characteristics. At the second stage of analysis, I combine the first three virtual agential levels (Virtual Actants, Virtual Human Agents, and Virtual Actors). For this, I choose passages that—after being described gesturally—show marked characteristics that evoke specific agential properties. That shows another way to apply Hatten’s theory, where the analyst works freely through the levels using different analytical tools. I then turn to Level 4, Virtual Subjectivity, with an exploration of music and alchemy on the quest to understand Jesus’ Agony as a self-transformation. Finally, at the Performance Level, I explore passages where performative suggestions can improve the agential findings.

Gestural Analysis

The first musical phrase of the *Lamento* suggests two musical environments (mm. 1-6, see Figure 4.4). It starts with both instruments playing a long, somber C-minor chord. The stability created by the first chord allows the violin to present a melodic gesture that shows a combination of movement and rest. This gesture comprises three short descending eighth notes, outlining a C-minor triad, succeeded by a half note. I call this gesture the “*Lamento* gesture.” It repeats, an octave lower, in m. 3. This repetition continues the gravity effect started by the descending arpeggio in m. 2, though it produces a different texture as it requires double stops. The combination of double stops and lower register may produce a slight increase in dynamic. This may be interpreted as a reinforcement of the lamenting musical environment of the first three measures, not only suggested by the music but

specifically indicated by the movement's title. On the first three measures, the continuo sets up a background musical environment (an expansive virtual space opened up by the sustained chord) where the *Lamento* gesture stands out against it. The musical environment changes in m. 4: the violin plays an inverted, ascending version of the *Lamento* gesture, and the bass line moves, introducing a melodic figure that will be imitated by the violin in m. 5. Together, these changes produce a lighter musical environment. The *Lamento* gesture—as a lamenting actant—constitutes an important musical element in the first two movements of the sonata (*Lamento* and *Presto*).



Figure 4.4. Detail of *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Mm. 1-6 of the *Lamento*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

In the violin part, m. 7 combines two elements already presented, the *Lamento* gesture and the *basso continuo*'s melodic rhythm (two eighth notes, and two sixteenth notes). (See Figure 4.5). This phrase (mm. 7-8) has more forward movement, since it combines a succession of melodic rhythms that culminates with the third beat of m. 8 (arriving at Eb major).¹⁸⁰ The musical mood lightens up at m. 9 due to the brighter harmony and higher register of the violin. The addition of slurs also creates a more caring and expressive gesture (mm. 9-10). This is followed by a passage with chords in the violin that

¹⁸⁰ Or second pulse since the first two movements are indicated *Alla breve*.

tend to mark beats 1 and 2 of m. 11 due to their low register. In the same measure, the second eighth note of the second beat (C-2) serves as a pickup to the short two-voice interchange in the violin line (m. 11).¹⁸¹ This concludes the *Lamento* section on Bb major and opens the transitional and chromatic *Adagio*¹. The chromatic movement and harmonic progression (struggling against the stability established in m. 12) intensify the environment until it reaches the dominant G major, marked with a *fermata*. This is followed by an extended passage with two voices in the violin (mm. 15-21).



Figure 4.5. Detail of *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Mm. 7-22. It includes the *Adagio*¹ and portions of the *Lamento* and *Presto*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

The two-voice section gives a slight impression of a dance, due to its repeated rhythm (one dotted-eighth note and one sixteenth note) and the *alla breve* meter. In addition, the rhythm just described produces a sensation of restlessness. But the lamenting mood of the movement is still present due to the descending motion of the melody, first presented by the two voices of the violin (mm. 15-17) and later by the *basso continuo* (m. 18), combined

¹⁸¹ -2 refers to the subtraction of a complete tone (two semitones) due to the required *scordatura* of the sonata (Ab, Eb, G, D). Thus, the sounding pitch is Bb.

with an ascending chromatic line in the violin. In m. 18, this chromatic line reaches a dramatic and musically *meraviglioso* moment of the *Adagio*¹ (m. 19); that is, the unison effect of a double concert G produced by the *scordatura* (F#+1 and A-2).¹⁸² *Meraviglioso* (wonderful) is one of the three Italian terms used by Lindsey D. Strand Polyak to describe Biber's score and *scordatura*.¹⁸³ I interpret the resonant unison effect of this passage—thanks to the *scordatura*—as wonderful because it is uncommon to hear in a normally tuned violin. The intensity of m. 18, enhanced by the violin chromatic line (D+1, D#1, E+1, and E#+1), is also supported by the *continuo* on the fourth beat, as the bass line ascends chromatically from Ab to A (in parallel sixths with the violin).¹⁸⁴

After this chromatic line in the *basso continuo* (m. 18), we can observe another kind of movement in the bass with more melodic characteristics. Here, the bass takes on the role of a secondary actant, instead of an environmental element. In m. 19, we see a descending and ascending bass line (G, F, and Eb descending, then B, C, D ascending) in eighth notes that contrasts with the sustained double concert G unison in the violin. This descending-ascending contour in the bass helps not only to supplement texture but also to keep the music moving forward. As a virtual actant, the bass adds energy to the music. While we are amazed by the *meraviglioso* effect of the double concert G unison in the violin, the *basso continuo* is already preparing the next passage, and eventually drawing our attention to the next bar. Thus, the eighth notes of m. 19 are connected to the chromatic ascending line of

¹⁸² The sounding pitches are G and G due to the required *scordatura* (Ab, Eb, G, D).

¹⁸³ The other terms are *ingegno* (intelligence), and *concetto* (concept). Lindsey D. Strand-Polyak, "The Virtuoso's Idiom: Spectacularity and the Seventeenth-Century Violin Sonata" (PhD dissertation, Los Angeles, University of California Los Angeles, 2013), 111.

¹⁸⁴ The sounding pitches are Eb, E, F, and F# due to the required *scordatura* (Ab, Eb, G, D). The notated A# in the last beat of m. 18 in the bass line is a historical notation for A \flat .

m. 20 (Eb, E, F, F#), which supports the dramatic intervention by the violin that closes the *Adagio*¹⁸⁵. This dramatic violin intervention responds in a striking way to the *meraviglia* presented before by the double concert G effect. It tends to increase the intensity of the passage in a sort of rhetorical *exclamatio* (exclamation).¹⁸⁵ The gesture combines not only a tritone *saltus duriusculus* (dissonant leap) but also double stops on a fanfare rhythm (dotted eighth note and sixteenth note) that finish the movement.¹⁸⁶

The *Presto* contains three different sections. Section 1 (m. 22 to the first half of m. 28) is based on the *Lamento* gesture from the opening. Biber varied the descending concert C-minor arpeggio by adding passing tones, and changing the half note into four arpeggiated eighth notes (see Figure 4.6). Section 1 is rhythmically built on eight sixteenth notes (head) followed—or responded to—by four eighth notes (tail). The sixteenth notes are slurred in groups of two by two, starting on the second sixteenth note. This creates an unstable feeling that helps to further vary—and possibly hide—the *Lamento* gesture. As in m. 4 of the first movement, we can see increased motion in m. 24. Now, the sixteenth notes in the first half of the bar are followed by another group of eight sixteenth notes. This new group is distinct from the previous ones due to a different intervallic arrangement. Instead of being mostly passing tones of an arpeggio, here we see a minor sixth, a perfect fourth, a minor second, and a diminished fourth. This small variation to the sixteenth-note gesture presented twice at the beginning of the *presto* adds drama and anxiety to the music.

¹⁸⁵ This is similar to Biber's *Annunciation* in m. 21. Even though the exclamation is not occurring inside one musical phrase, the expressiveness of the leap—facilitated by the previous rest—provokes an exclamatory effect.

¹⁸⁶ Previously, I called the dotted eighth-note and sixteenth note rhythm “dance-like and restless” (*Adagio*1, mm. 15-18). In m. 20, I describe it as a fanfare rhythm because of the repeated pitches. This rhythm is strongly associated with the French overture in the baroque era, but I do not think *The Agony* evokes that musical topic.



Figure 4.6. Detail of *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Mm. 16-27. It includes the *Adagio*¹ and a portion of the *Presto*. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

After the gestural variation of m. 24, we now observe the eighth-note segment (tail) from the *presto* gesture in the first half of m. 25. Thus, the varied sixteenth notes from the second half of m. 24 also serve as a “first element” or head for the four eighth notes of m. 25.¹⁸⁷ From the second half of m. 25 to m. 26, the sixteenth-note element is repeated three times and also transposed to a higher register each time. This intensification—as a virtual actant that adds energy to the music—not only allows the music to move forward, but it also leads the attention to the ending of Section 1 of the *Presto* (first half note of m. 28). After the emotional triple repetition of the sixteenth-note element, we find again the eighth-note element displaced in the first half of the bar (m. 27). In this case, the eighth notes lead to a

¹⁸⁷ I interpret this as a musically unimportant reflective moment where the musical passage may begin something new. Curiously, this moment occurs at the middle of Section 1 of the *Presto*. On the next bar (m. 25) we observe the repetition of the sixteen-note elements that leads to the end of the section.

circulatio on F-2 that resolves Section 1 in the relative major (Eb), achieving a more encouraging mood after the intensity of the sixteenth-note elements.¹⁸⁸

The second section of the *Presto* (second half of m. 28 to m. 43) is one of the most touching musical passages of *The Agony* (see Figure 4.7). For the violin, the first phrase (starting on m. 28) is constituted by pulsing eighth notes in double stops, slurred in groups of four marked with dots suggesting the execution of a *portato* stroke.¹⁸⁹ The *basso continuo* works again not only as simple harmonic support but also as a contrapuntal secondary actant that adds drama to the music. In m. 31, the bass line shows an ascending chromatic line quite similar to the one observed at the ending of the *Adagio*¹ (m. 20). In the second half of m. 33, a new musical idea starts after the previous phrase ends on the dominant (G). The new idea involves sixteenth notes slurred in groups of two, with each note of the groups on a different—but neighboring—string. This musical-technical arrangement will be maintained for the rest of the sixteenth notes of the second section of the *presto*. This string-crossing technique is known as *bariolage*. In this section, the *bariolage* produces an effect of floating, or weightlessness as the stroke and the slurs tend to hide the rhythmical and repetitive characteristics of an extended sixteenth-note passage.

¹⁸⁸ *Circulatio* is a rhetorical figure. It refers to a “melodic line that oscillates around a note.” *Línea melódica que oscila alrededor de una nota*. López-Cano, *Música y retórica del barroco*, 138. Translation by the author. The sounding pitch is Eb due to the required *scordatura* (Ab, Eb, G, D).

¹⁸⁹ “Bow vibrato” is a more common term in baroque violin performance that refers to the effect of articulating notes under a slurred without stopping the bow. This stroke is also known as *louré*. Bow vibrato is more commonly used as an improvisatory ornament added by a performer. In this case, the effect is explicitly written with dots over/under the eighth notes.



Figure 4.7. Second page of *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Mm. 27-45. It includes the *Presto* and the *Adagio*². Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

The weightless effect produced by the *bariolage* is intensified in mm. 36 and 37, due to the appearance of another *maraviglia*. Once more, the *scordatura* allows consecutive resonant unison effects that otherwise, in a standard tuned violin, will be difficult to execute. Also, a standard tuned violin cannot attain the same resonant effect. In the second half of m. 36, the notation alternates between the notes F# and A, and in m. 37 G and Bb. But due to the *scordatura* required for *The Agony* (Ab, Eb, G, D), these notes may be read as F#+1 and A-2, and G+1 and Bb-2. Each pair of altered notes produces a single sounding pitch: the first pair produces a G; the second, an Ab. These are resonant unison effects similar to the one from m. 19 of *Adagio*¹. In these cases, instead of just writing a long resonant unison, Biber augmented the expressive possibilities of the effect. The *bariolage*

technique in those unisons increases the expressivity of the passage. It elevates the gesture to a higher level that touches wonder. The mood of it is not only a lamenting and sorrowful one, it is also marvelous due to those uncommon unisons. Immediately afterward, the violin itself responds aggressively—or dramatically—to the previous double unisons (m. 38). Here, the *bariolage* spans three strings (instead of only two), taking us back briefly to the markedness of the sixteenth notes. That is due to the double stops in the lower register.¹⁹⁰ Finally, the *Adagio*² (mm.44-45) finishes the movement with the eighth-note gestures from mm. 28-33. There is a short interplay of this gesture between the violin and the *basso continuo*. This gesture is closely related to the *Lamento* gesture of the first movement (three eighth notes followed by a half note).

At the last two bars of the sarabande-like movement, there is a gesture that violently disrupts the calm atmosphere achieved by the preceding long notes (mm. 78-81). This intricate thirty-two-note gesture contrasts with the chorale-like texture of the long notes (violin's double stops E+1/C-2 and D+1/A-2) from mm. 78-79.¹⁹¹ The opposition of gestures is strongly exaggerated by the contrasting dynamics in the score (*piano* and *forte*). These are the first dynamic markings written in the sonata.¹⁹² They help to indicate the rhetorical importance of the passage. There is also a sudden metrical change from 3/2 to a 2/2 *alla breve*. I draw a connection here with the angelic representation of Gabriel in the

¹⁹⁰ In addition, there are some similarities between the sixteenth-note passages of Section 1 and 2 of the *Presto*. Biber uses sixteenth notes under two-note slurs for both passages. The difference between them is the placement of the slur. This important difference produces two distinct characters: the first is more *cantabile* and quasi-improvisatory; the second, more stable and solemn.

¹⁹¹ Sounding pitches are F/Bb and Eb/G, due to the sonata's *scordatura* (Ab, Eb, G, D).

¹⁹² In the second section (m. 100, turned around meter of 8/12) of the final *Adagio*⁴ there is a continuous dynamic interplay between *piano* and *forte* changing each bar. Those are the only two examples of a written dynamic indication in the entire *Sonata*.

previous analysis of *The Annunciation*. This passage deserves a closer look at a higher agential level to fully unravel a possible connection to the first Rosary Sonata.

With this passage of thirty-second notes (m. 80), the mood of the *sarabande*-like movement gives way to a more extroverted and dynamic one. The gestural characteristics of the violin part can suggest some rhetorical readings. The ascending-descending contour of the scale-like, quasi-improvisatory passage of the violin reaches a high C-2 and slows down the rhythmic intensity to sixteenth notes, following a broken downwards pattern that arrives at a low D+1.¹⁹³ Immediately afterward, the violin introduces contrasting material with long notes and slurs.¹⁹⁴ Here, there is also a sudden tempo change to *Adagio* (*Adagio*³). The melody of this part is more *cantabile* and expressive due to the melodic slurs that delineate the lamenting gesture of m. 83, especially the *pianto*-like slurs of beats 3 and 4.¹⁹⁵ Beats 3 and 4 of m. 84 augment the tension of the music with chromatically ascending parallel sixths between the *basso continuo* and the violin (Ab–A and G-2–G#-2 respectively) that arrive dramatically on the dominant (G). The violin once more performs thirty-second notes whose internal assortment of pitches recalls *The Annunciation's prelude* passages that represent Gabriel. This second intervention of fast notes responds to the longer and slurred notes of the previous passage (mm. 82-83). Once more, this can be related to the dialogical disposition of contrasting gestures that I note in my analysis of *The Annunciation*.

¹⁹³ Sounding pitches are Bb and Eb due to the required *scordatura* (Ab, Eb, G, D).

¹⁹⁴ Again, I draw a connection here with *prelude* of *The Annunciation* regarding the dialogical disposition of contrasting or differentiated gestures.

¹⁹⁵ An appropriate example of the *pianto* gesture is constituted by descending minor seconds.

Continuing with *The Agony*, the last thirty-second notes passage of the violin (m. 86) finishes with a high E-2, the highest note played by the violin so far (see Figure 4.8). This note in particular can be performed in a brilliant way, by playing a natural octave harmonic on the E string. This resonant high E-2 note is followed by a written caesura (a silence equivalent to a dotted quarter note) that breaks the momentum created by the fast notes of the violin. Those flashing and quasi-improvisatory passages on the dominant (G) elevate the mood of the music (mm. 80-81 and 86). (This is similar to the effect produced by the dominant (A) passage of m. 13 in the prelude of *The Annunciation*.) The pickup to m. 87 represents the beginning of a passage that I identify as the climax of the sonata. It is highly expressive due to the thickening of the texture. The violin plays two voices at the same time that respond to each other, have ascending or descending chromatic motion, and also keep in dialogue with the *basso continuo*. Below, I will describe some expressive features of this climactic moment.¹⁹⁶



Figure 4.8. Detail of *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Mm. 86-93. Ending of the *Adagio*³. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

¹⁹⁶ Another characteristic of the passage is the feeling of being in *alla breve*, due to the way it is written and performed by a violinist. It requires a bow-stroke change at the middle of the bar.

In m. 87, we observe the *pianto*-like stroke that gives a lamenting impression for the soprano line in the violin (see Figure 4.8). In the next bar (m. 88), we encounter an interchange of rhythms. This is a case of imitative counterpoint between the two voices of the violin (a quarter note followed by two eighth notes). The two-eighth-note rhythmic element will be used throughout the rest of the passage as pickups to the downbeats of each subsequent bar (from mm. 88 to 92). As mentioned before, the first two-eighth-note element as a pickup appears in m. 88 in the soprano line of the violin. It appears again in m. 89 in the violin's alto line and reaches its lowest register in m. 90 when is played by the *basso continuo*. In the next bar (m. 91), it is played again by the *basso continuo* but in a higher register. Finally, the violin's alto line plays it as a pickup to the final long note of the passage in m. 93. We can easily observe how the eighth-note element moves downwards and passes through all the voices of the passage. It reaches a low point and starts going upwards again. Then, it becomes the element that finishes the passage as it prepares the final long note with a gesture that chromatically resolves the chord on a Picardy third (C major).¹⁹⁷

The final *Adagio*⁴ of *The Agony* comprises two rather differentiated sections. The first section (pickup to mm. 94-99) evokes a dance in 12/8 (see Figure 4.9). It has a calmer mood that contrasts with the expressive climax of the previous *Adagio*³. Its main gestural element is an eighth-note pickup that leads into a longer rhythmical gesture. This gesture can be two slurred eighth notes or simply a quarter note (which are rhythmically equivalent). In the first case, the two slurred eighth notes will have a downward movement of a third or fourth, and the first slurred eighth note will be the same as the pickup. This

¹⁹⁷ The last eighth note of m. 92 chromatically resolves the passage. It goes from E+1 to D#+1 (sounding F to E).

small musical gesture enhances the feeling of gravity on the beats where it appears. This evokes the aforementioned court-dance-like mood. After the first slur of m. 94, we have the second case of the main gestural element of the passage (eighth-note pickup to a quarter note, see Figure 4.9). In this case, the pickup note will be always higher in pitch than the longer note. When both gestural elements combine, we observe a larger repeated gesture of a pickup note that initiates a downward motion.¹⁹⁸ Biber plays with these elements, combining them to create a passage that serves as a musical interlude that relaxes the mood before the final section of the sonata.



Figure 4.9. Detail of *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Mm. 94-99. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

The last section of *The Agony* is enigmatic from the beginning (see Figure 4.10). In the manuscript, the meter indication is written as 8/12, a rather mysterious marking that may allow further interpretations.¹⁹⁹ For this level of agential analysis, I will simply treat it as 4/4. Starting from m. 100, we find a simple dynamic interplay between *forte* and *piano*—in other words, an echo effect. The violin plays two voices that have the same rhythm. The musical gesture that is used in this passage is simple. It is constituted by a group of four

¹⁹⁸ We can also observe a variation of this gesture. In m. 98, there is an upward motion on beats one and two that prepares the ending of the passage in the dominant (G).

¹⁹⁹ I elaborate more on the interpretation of this meter in level 4 of this analysis.

quarter notes that starts on the second beat and ends on the downbeat of the subsequent bar. This element is repeated as an echo (*piano*) after it is played *forte*. In addition, the notes of each group are shortened when repeated. In the repetition, they appear as arpeggiated eighth notes followed by eighth-note rests. I identify four different bundles (repeated four-note groups): A (mm. 100-101), B (mm. 102-103), C (mm. 104-105), and D (mm. 106-107). Each bundle has a specific dialogical capacity: bundle A states an idea, B responds to it, C re-states the idea with some variation, and finally, D accepts it.²⁰⁰ Finally, the last four bars of the sonata (mm. 108-112) contain bundle A and D. Biber restates the first musical idea and concludes the sonata simply and calmly using an element (bundle D) that suggests acceptance.



Figure 4.10. Detail of *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Measure 100 to the end. 8/12 section. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

Through this analysis of some gesturally marked passages of *The Agony*, we have explored places where deeper virtual agential analysis can take place. We also identified

²⁰⁰ Other interpretations can also be used here to understand the capacity of each bundle. Further agential levels will propitiate freer readings.

some musical passages that show some actantial characteristics. In the next section of this analysis, I select three passages whose gestural characteristics are suitable for higher agential analysis. These three passages relate to two different concepts that surround Jesus' agony: hope and suffering. As both concepts are felt and experienced by Jesus himself, they will improve our understanding of Jesus' place in the last level of virtual agency, Virtual Subjectivity.

Hope and Suffering across Three Levels of Virtual Agency: Virtual Actants, Virtual Human Agents, and Virtual Actors

The Angel

As with *The Annunciation*, the explicit reference to the biblical Agony through the copper engraving directly influences our interpretation of the sonata. The biblical Agony described in the gospel of Luke provides us a specific narrative and also specific actors.²⁰¹ As described in Luke, Jesus withdrew from his disciples—after asking them to pray—and prayed by himself to his Father.²⁰² Then an angel “appeared to him and gave him strength.” Here I draw a connection between *The Annunciation*'s prelude and *The Agony*. I interpret the rapid notes of *The Agony* in mm. 80-81 and 85-86 as representing the angel's apparition, and by extension his words of encouragement to Jesus. The disruption caused by the sudden dynamic change and rhythmic intensity of the thirty-second notes is similar to the one observed in *The Annunciation* (m. 13) when Gabriel responds to Mary's fearful questioning. Speculatively, the angel appears to Jesus to remind him that the process he

²⁰¹ Luke's description of The Agony centers on Jesus. He describes what Jesus said and felt while interacting with other actors (disciples and angel), and he also describes what the other actors do. We see an active interaction between Jesus and them, but Luke does not describe what they say and think. The Agony is described differently in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark (see Appendix C).

²⁰² Jesus said to his disciples: “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”

will endure and suffer has a divine goal: to eliminate sins from humanity through his Passion.²⁰³ This lofty goal of his Father implies that Jesus' "suffering and death" will redeem humanity.²⁰⁴ His Passion will lead to his death on the cross, and he was aware of this outcome. As briefly mentioned in the introductory section of this analysis, Jesus as a human was suffering extreme psychological fear and stress. The apparition of an angel with a message that aims to console his acute feelings may have left a comforting impression on his soul, if we speculatively interpret the angel's message as a message from God.

Throughout the next six bars (mm. 80-86) of Biber's *Agony*, we can virtually imagine a conversation between the angel and Jesus. *Adagio*³'s contrasting effect of responding to fast notes with longer and slurred notes creating a more melodic and *cantabile* line is similar to what we encountered in Mary's responses to Gabriel in *The Annunciation*.²⁰⁵ The long and slurred notes of mm. 81-85 in *The Agony* may represent Jesus's response to the angel's comforting message (mm. 80-81). Therefore, the thirty-second notes on mm. 85-86 are the angel's response to Jesus. These thirty-second notes are highly energetic due to the speed

²⁰³ Traditionally, Gabriel is the archangel that communicates verbally with humans. Besides his prominent role as the angel of The Annunciation, he is also known as the angel of the revelation. In Islam, it is believed that Gabriel revealed *The Quran* to the prophet Muhammad. This does not mean that Gabriel appeared to him physically, as "the angel came to him sometimes in the shape of a man." Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam: A Comprehensive Discussion of the Sources, Principles and Practices of Islam* (Lahore, Pakistan: The Ahmadiyyan anjuman ishā'at Islām, 1950), 174. From a personal and highly speculative perspective, I would suggest that the angel that appeared and communicated a comforting message to Jesus during his agony was Gabriel. This idea further enhances the relation between Biber's *Annunciation* and *Agony* that I wish to establish.

²⁰⁴ This is a distinctive Christian doctrine of atonement. On the other hand, Judaism and Islam emphasize that even though "God requires obedience to the moral law," he "will forgive those who are genuinely penitent for their wrongdoing" as he is just and merciful. Keith Ward, *Religion and Human Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 186.

²⁰⁵ See mm. 10-12 and 18 of *The Annunciation*.

and intricacies of the figuration. As earlier described, they are in the dominant (G) giving a luminous impression that can be interpreted as hopeful.

Final *Adagio*⁴

The final *Adagio*⁴ has characteristics that can exemplify virtual human agency. As mentioned before, the final *Adagio*⁴ functions as a separation between two dramatic moments of the sonata (*Adagio*³ and 8/12 section). The dance-like gesture in mm. 94-99 evokes a human-like sensation of falling and rebounding. This is closely related to the flexing of the knees in a slow court dance performed to salute a dance partner or to mark a certain pulse of the music. On the other hand, the calmer mood of this interlude could be interpreted as a peaceful garden, or backwater, giving the impression of a virtual environment. The need for this backwater is human, as a human being needs moments of silence, moments to rest or recover hope. If we imagine the place where this passage can analogically be placed within the biblical narrativity of the agony, it might represent a moment of hope in Jesus' vision of his future. Jesus is in the middle of his agony while suffering extreme stress and fear, yet he still trusts his father's commands and has hope for the final result. At the end of the passage (m. 99), the violin is high up in its register playing arpeggios in the dominant (G). This can be again connected with the concept of hope as a human mood. In the case of the suffering Jesus, the source of his hope comes from God, in other words, "the Most High." Thus, Jesus looks up to the heights to feel hope from God. In addition, this can also be interpreted as the moment when Jesus sees the Angel mentioned in Luke and also represented in the engraving of the sonata. We can hear that in the ascending, hopeful gestures in the violin (pickup to the fourth beat of m. 98 and m. 99).

Jesus' suffering - Hematidrosis

The alleviating impression of the angel's message does not last long though, as according to Luke, after the angel departs, Jesus prays "more earnestly" and experiences hematidrosis. We can find this contrast again in the music. After the last thirty-second notes of the violin that represent the angel's message, we encounter the dramatic, and texturally more saturated climax of *The Agony* described before (mm. 87-93). The climax reminds us that even after talking with the angel and receiving a comforting message from God, Jesus is still "deeply grieved." The slurs of m. 87 can be interpreted as poignant sighs that "denote sorrow, anxiety, and desire."²⁰⁶ Jesus is suffering all those feelings at the same time. He feels sorrow and anxiety for the punishment and humiliation he will receive during his upcoming trials that will lead to his death. Jesus—as a divine being incarnated in flesh—suffers the human fear of physical pain and death, and desires to continue living. The gospels of Matthew and Mark describe the desire of Jesus to elude his destiny:

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." (Matthew 26:39)

He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." (Mark 14:3)

Jesus, then, is calling to his *Abba* for help. He states that he does not want to experience human pain and death. But he is willing to follow his father's commands, fulfilling his destiny. The climax of *The Agony* is intensified by the thickening of the texture produced by the two-voiced violin part and the chromatic motion in both instruments, which is

²⁰⁶ "Suspiro," in *Diccionario de la lengua española* (Real Academia Española, 2014–), accessed October 6, 2021, <https://dle.rae.es/suspiro?m=form>. *Aspiración fuerte y prolongada seguida de una espiración, acompañada a veces de un gemido y que suele denotar pena, ansia o deseo*. Translation by the author.

eventually alleviated through the Picardy third of m. 93. This feeling of relief may be interpreted as Jesus' acceptance of God's will.

The final section of the sonata can offer ground for an interpretation of an element that Jesus is suffering: hematidrosis. The echo notes (marked *piano*) may represent the sound of drops of blood falling on the ground (m. 100-112, ending). (See Figure 4.11). If we considered the *forte* notes as the primal version of this musical gesture, its counterpart (echo) is being varied in three ways—through written dynamics, duration, and articulation—all of which are easy to identify in the music. For example, in mm. 101-102 we can see the words *piano* and *forte* respectively. In the subsequent measures, the indications are abbreviated with *p:* and *f:*. Regarding duration, the echo gesture is constituted by alternating eighth notes and eighth rests. So, the original gesture was rhythmically diminished. In terms of articulation, between the soprano and alto voices in the violin, there are inclined lines in the original manuscript that might suggest arpeggiation (see Figure 4.11).²⁰⁷ In other words, instead of performing both notes simultaneously, they could be performed as two sixteenth notes. The combination of these three changes dramatically enhances the echo effect. This is an echo effect that is exaggerated since it is not only made through the *lontano* repetition of a musical gesture. It is reduced and transformed into a quieter, and more nervous and fearful gesture. We can interpret blood

²⁰⁷ I can mention here two recordings of highly respected historically informed performers that arpeggiate at these inclined lines: Andrew Manze (violin), Richard Egarr (organ and harpsichord), and Alison McGillivray (cello), *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*, Harmonia Mundi HMG507321/22, 2016, compact disc, and Rachel Podger (violin), Marcin Świątkiewicz (harpsichord/organ), Jonathan Manson (cello/viola da gamba), and David Miller (theorbo/archlute), *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*, Channel CCSSA37315, 2015, compact disc.

drops falling on the ground of the Garden of Gethsemane in the middle of the night as Biber did: short and painful pulsations of agony.



Figure 4.11. Detail of *Rosary Sonata VI (The Agony)*. Measure 100 to downbeat of m. 102. Inclined lines between the soprano and contralto line in the violin suggesting arpeggiation. 8/12 section. Heinrich Biber. “Mystery Sonatas,” original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.

Through this analysis that combines the first three levels of virtual agency, we have explored passages from Biber’s *Agony* where two concepts in Jesus’ experience can be interpreted: hope and suffering. These feelings or states of mind can be helpful in order to approach the next level of virtual agency, “Virtual Subjectivity.” Here I will explore Jesus’ agony through the lens of alchemy.

Agony, Alchemy, and “Virtual Subjectivity”

“After my great suffering and torture / I am risen, clarified, and immaculate.”
*Rosarium Philosophorum*²⁰⁸

The Agony (first Sorrowful Mystery) represents not only psychological pain and suffering. Symbolically, it also represents a process of transformation.²⁰⁹ For Hatten, Level 4 “Virtual Subjectivity” allows all characters and elements found in The Agony to be within one consciousness. In other words, in one virtual mind reside the agonized Jesus, the angel that brings hope, the sleeping disciples, and myself, the analyzer. Thus, parts of me correspond to each of these characters. The dialogue between Jesus and the angel is then an inner dialogue going from fear and anxiety to acceptance. Jesus accepts God’s will fulfilling his destiny. That is a process of self-transformation. The Agony is then a crucial moment in the transmutation of Jesus as he takes on his resurrected and destiny-fulfilled identity. In order to explain how The Agony can be understood as a process of self-transformation, I approach Biber’s *Agony* via mystical ideas associated with seventeenth-century alchemy.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Anonymous, *Rosarium Philosophorum* (Frankfurt: Cyriacus Jacob, 1550). Quoted in Alexander Roob, *The Hermetic Museum: Alchemy & Mysticism* (Köln, Germany: Taschen, 2001), 520.

²⁰⁹ From a broader perspective, the idea of a process of transformation can also describe Jesus’ entire Passion.

²¹⁰ Theologically, reading The Agony as a process of self-transformation is problematic since in Christian teaching Jesus’ human and divine natures are combined: “two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.” The Chalcedon Formula in Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 1947), 73. During The Agony, Jesus’s will is at one with that of his Father. Therefore, my interpretation of The Agony should be seen not as a theological argument but an alchemical exploration that serves to imaginatively showcase some distinctive sections of Biber’s *Agony*.

Alchemy was “the study and practical craft in the medieval and early renaissance period concerned with the nature and transformation of physical substances.”²¹¹ Historically, alchemy is regarded as the precursor of chemistry, and traces its origins to ancient Egyptian culture. Yet it was also associated with spiritual transformation and religious traditions. For example, medieval Latin alchemic treatises suggest Christian mysticism.²¹² During the early baroque era, alchemy was still being investigated and had spiritual or religious associations in seventeenth-century England.²¹³ Contemporaries of Biber (1644-1704), including the British scientists Robert Boyle (1627-1691) and Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1726), wrote extensively about alchemy.²¹⁴ Newton, for example, was concerned with the creation of the Philosophers’ Stone, among other topics, and “wrote more than a million of unpublished words on” alchemy.²¹⁵ Both scientists explored

²¹¹ “Alchemy, n. and adj.,” in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford University Press, 2022–), accessed April 13, 2022.

<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/4691?rskey=vZInWO&result=1&isAdvanced=false>.

²¹² Robert M. Schuler, “Some Spiritual Alchemies of Seventeenth-Century England,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41, no. 2 (1980): 293–318.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/2709463>. Christian mysticism refers to the mystical practices and theories related to Christianity. It includes “religious ecstasies (religious experiences during alternate states of consciousness),” rites, and myths, to name a few. Dan Merkur, “Mysticism,” in *Britannica Academic* (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 2000–), accessed April 13, 2022, <https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/mysticism/109481>.

²¹³ Schuler, “Some Spiritual Alchemies of Seventeenth-Century England,” 293.

²¹⁴ Boyle was an Anglo-Irish “natural philosopher and theological writer.” He is best known in the field of chemistry. Boyle “maintained a lifelong pursuit of transmutational alchemy, endeavoring to discover the secret of transmuting base metals into gold and to contact individuals believed to possess alchemical secrets.” Lawrence M. Principe, “Robert Boyle,” in *Britannica Academic* (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 1998–), accessed April 15, 2022, <https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/Robert-Boyle/16071>. Newton was an “English physicist and mathematician, who was the culminating figure of the ‘Scientific Revolution’ of the 17th century.” Richard S. Westfall, “Isaac Newton,” in *Britannica Academic* (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 1999–), accessed April 15, 2022, <https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/Isaac-Newton/108764>.

²¹⁵ The Philosophers’ Stone—also known as *lapis philosophorum*, *magnum opus*, “the tincture” or “the powder”—is “in Western alchemy, an unknown substance sought by alchemists for its supposed ability to transform base materials into precious ones, especially

alchemy discreetly, as alchemy's popularity as a respected research subject was already declining by the end of the seventeenth century.

Alchemical models of transformation were based on the creation of the Philosophers' Stone or *Magnum opus*.²¹⁶ Through this process, alchemists hoped to turn "common metals such as iron, lead, tin, and copper ... into more valuable metals."²¹⁷ "Colour changes were carefully watched" throughout the process, and so its stages were associated with colours.²¹⁸ The first step, *nigredo* (blackness) indicates "the death of the old material." *Albedo* (whiteness) is "the colour required to change into silver," and *rubedo* (redness) is "the highest stage" as it is "the colour required for change into gold".²¹⁹ Overall, then, the creation of the *Magnum opus* consists of a process where a *materia prima* ("mysterious chaotic source material") "is guided towards a redeemed state of perfect harmony."²²⁰

Because this alchemic process was linked to both chemical and spiritual transformation, it can help expand our understanding Jesus' Agony. In this process, Jesus

gold and silver." They "also believed that an elixir of life could be derived from it" and that the stone could "cure illnesses, prolong life, and bring about spiritual revitalization." EB Editors, "Philosopher's stone," in *Britannica Academic* (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 2009–), accessed April 15, 2022, <https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/philosophers-stone/98794>. Jane Bosveld, "Isaac Newton and the Philosophers' Stone," *Discover* 31, issue 6 (July-August 2010): 74, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=51508731&site=ehost-live>.

²¹⁶ Latin for "Great work." There some discrepancies on how many steps the process has. Some sources suggest four or more steps. For example, George Ripley (1415-1490) in his *Compound of Alchemy* suggested twelve steps. George Ripley, and Stanton J. Linden, ed., *George Ripley's Compound of Alchemy (1591)* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001).

²¹⁷ EB Editors, "Philosopher's stone," in *Britannica Academic* (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 2009–), accessed April 15, 2022, <https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/philosophers-stone/98794>.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Roob, *The Hermetic Museum*, 123.

as a man is the *materia prima*. The human Jesus suffers the process of purification where he feels “the despair, madness and fears of abandonment” as he doubts himself and asks for help from God. He also realizes that his apostles are sleeping, completely indifferent to his feelings and his cry to pray for him. His Agony in the Garden represents the beginning of an alchemical transmutation that will culminate in his Resurrection.²²¹

The three stages of this process also guide my analysis of virtual subjectivity in Biber’s *Agony*. I link the first movement, *Lamento*, to what is described as *nigredo*. The lamenting characteristics described in my gestural analysis can be interpreted as a musical representation of despair, sadness, and fear. The Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung (1875-1961) described *nigredo*’s main goal as “the dissolution of defenses on a psychic and bodily level, so that a new self-structure, the *lapis*, could be created.”²²² The long, low notes of the *basso continuo* create an effect of loneliness where the only thing that stands out is the *lamento* gesture, a gesture charged with sadness due to its melodic characteristics.

When the angel appears (m. 80), the music changes dramatically to a more exuberant mood. The music is quicker, more intense, and louder. I interpret this short passage as the *albedo*. Jung described this alchemical stage as the moment where “despair, madness and fears of abandonment were overcome.”²²³ Thus, the angel brings comforting words and feelings that relieve Jesus’ suffering.

Finally, I locate the *rubedo* stage in the last movement, specifically in the 8/12 section (m. 100). According to Jung, *rubedo* is a step intrinsically connected to blood, “the

²²¹ Biber also represents Jesus’ Resurrection in *Rosary Sonata XI (The Resurrection)*.

²²² Carl Gustav Jung, and Nathan Schwartz-Salant, *Jung on Alchemy* (London: Routledge, 1995), 34.

²²³ *Ibid*, 35.

redness of life.”²²⁴ The musical reference to blood drops, described in the previous section of this analysis, clarifies this alchemical interpretation. As mentioned before, I interpret the *lontano* echo effect as blood drops falling to the ground. This is mainly due to the idea that Jesus was suffering hematidrosis. But this association with blood can be interpreted differently if we considered the 8/12-meter indication. What is a twelfth in musical meter?²²⁵ In most Western art music, the bottom number in any meter signature is a power of 2 (4, 8, 16, etc.). Through the 8/12 meter indication, Biber perhaps transports us to another dimension of music and meter, an alternative reality that only exists inside *The Agony*. In this dimension, I suggest that Jesus experiences and foresees the blood that he will lose to fulfill his destiny—the same blood that some hours before he ceremonially shared with his *twelve* disciples. This might explain Biber’s odd time signature of 8/12, as a reference to the twelve apostles. The blood that Jesus is sweating is not only his blood, but is also the blood that represents the union with his new Christian community. Here, Jesus is giving up blood, “the colour required to change into Gold”, to die and be resurrected, to transcend his human existence.

How might these subjective ideas about the concept of The Agony help us interpret Biber’s *Agony*? I would argue that Biber’s *Agony* is a symbolic piece that is not conclusive by itself. It is a window that allows our musical imagination to flourish in the mystery of

²²⁴ William McGuire, and Hull R. F. C., *Jung Speaking* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 229.

²²⁵ A copyist’s mistake can be another explanation for this time signature. This is less interesting but more possible. Theoretically, a “twelfth note” would be an eighth-note triplet (i.e., twelve of them fit into a whole note). It is possible that this time signature was the result of a copyist’s mistake. Yet this is not the only unusual time signature in the *Rosary Sonatas*: another example appears in *The Resurrection* with 3/1 meter referencing the Holy Trinity (the Three in One). Thus, both *sonatas* are alchemically related through unusual, symbolic time signatures.

the agony. Biber gives us passages that symbolically represent elements and concepts we associate with The Agony: the *lamento*, the angel's interaction with Jesus, his physical and psychological pain, and his hematidrosis (blood drops). Therefore, it allows us to confront the drama of this particular event in Jesus' life by linking it analogically with alchemical process of spiritual transformation. That helps us to subjectively interpret the musical elements of *The Agony* as signs of events of change that are occurring in Jesus' mind or psyche. And performers and listeners can identify with that virtual subjectivity. During The Agony, a self goes alone through a process of enduring acute discomfort to fulfill its destiny, to be transformed, to obtain a kind of resurrection.

Performance Level

Opening – *Lamento* gesture

All the passages described in the previous agential analysis can be analyzed and musically enhanced through the Performance Level. For present purposes, I will touch upon five small sections among the four proposed movements of *The Agony*. I start with the opening of the *sonata*, the *Lamento*. In my view, the *Lamento* should be played at a slow tempo (eighth note = 50-70 BPM). The first chord (C minor, m. 1) can be played with a tiny accent whose purpose is to grab the attention of the listener from the beginning. In terms of violin technique, the accent should be played from the string, following baroque violin principles of attack of the sound. The first chord can be long; imagining a *fermata* over it will help to show the freedom, and also the solitude of the music. I also suggest taking advantage of the natural decay of the sound of the baroque bow (going from the frog to the tip) to create a long diminuendo almost to *niente*. This enhances the sadness and sorrow that the *lamento* portrays. The eighth notes in the violin line should be played calmly, and

possibly with no strict rhythm in the first three bars. The violin line needs to be sung freely, but with direction. Thus, each eighth requires a little more bow than the previous one to show more clearly the downward motion (upward motion in m. 4) of the descending notes. This will also help to increase the importance of the middle of the bar (third beat) as a resting point.

Presto – First part

Following the baroque performance practice for two-note slurs, the baroque violin player should focus on executing each slur clearly, so the little two-note contours of the passage can be heard (mm. 22-26). Since the two-note slurs are placed in the middle of each beat, the first note needs to be played with a faster bow and little pressure, and the second note then will be played with less speed but digging on the string more. This more clearly presents the notes from the *lamento* gesture. Thus, direction also needs to be considered to relate the *Presto* to the *Lamento*. Each stroke of the two-note slurs needs more bow, so the arrival in the third beat is more intense. In other words, I suggest executing *crescendi* to the lower range of the sixteenth-note elements each time they appear. In m. 24, I propose two different *crescendi*. The first one is not as exaggerated and goes from the second sixteenth note to the first sixteenth note of the third beat. The second one (more dramatic) goes from the second sixteenth note of the third beat to the downbeat of m. 25.²²⁶ I would perform the eighth-note segment (tail) of the *Presto* with less contact with the string and short bow. This will follow the baroque performance practice of disjunct motion. I will also avoid exaggerating the shorter stroke or *spiccato* or *staccato* techniques. These techniques would add too much energy, or “spark” to music which mood is lamenting, and anguish.

²²⁶ A similar approach can be applied on m. 26.

Presto – Second part

As I described in the gestural analysis, the second part of the *Presto* is one of the most touching moments of *The Agony* (mm. 28-43). Here, Biber made use of a handful of violin techniques that help elevate the drama of the music. In terms of speed, I suggest a slightly slower tempo in relation to the first part of the *Presto*. Starting on the third beat of m. 28, we explicitly find dots over/under each of the eighth notes (two voices in the violin line). At the same time, we found slurs in groups of four eighth-notes. This clearly suggests the application of a bow vibrato. This technique (similar to *portato* or *louré*) needs a continuous motion in the right hand while increasing the contact (pressure) on each eighth note. In other words, the bow never stops. *Crescendi* and *diminuendos* could also show the downbeat on each bar. For example, the four eighth notes in the second half of m. 28 in the violin line should direct the attention to the downbeat of m. 29. I also suggest playing them with an up bow. The first eighth note of the m. 29 can be played with a tiny *tenuto* mark that shows the natural importance of the downbeat. The subsequent three eighth notes will be played in *diminuendo*, and the first eighth note of the third beat of m. 29 will also be played with a *tenuto* mark showing again the hierarchical importance of the middle of the bar (less than the downbeat). In m. 31, this approach can vary a little due to the chromatic motion of the *basso continuo*. Here I suggest a long *crescendo* that arrives dramatically to m. 32. Right after the downbeat of m. 32, I suggest a *diminuendo* that will end the bow vibrato section.

In the second half of m. 33 the *bariolage* section starts. Here, Biber made use of the *meraviglioso* effect of uncommon string-crossing unisons. To increase the drama of the phrase that starts in the second half of m. 35, I would begin with a soft dynamic (e.g.

piano). At the beginning of m. 36, I suggest starting a long *crescendo* that goes till m. 38. As the *crescendo* increases, I advise paying attention to the distance between strings, especially in the second half of m. 36 and the first half of m. 37. This is exactly where the *meraviglioso* moment occurs—in other words, two consecutive uncommon unisons played in *bariolage* (F#+1 and A-2, and G+1 and Bb-2, i.e., G and Ab). To increase the effectiveness of the unison, the motion of crossing strings of the *bariolage* should be reduced, almost playing a continuous double stop that slightly alternates pressure between strings. I think this approach can be continued afterward. In m. 38 an arpeggiation that shows the uncommon open-string (D+1 – A-2) resonance of the C minor chord can be applied to increase the drama of the music and in response to the proposed *crescendo*. For this arpeggiation, I suggest increasing the pressure at the beginning of each stroke (lower note, B+1) and releasing it for the open strings.

The “angel from heaven”

In my agential analysis, I locate the apparition of the angel in m. 80. I approach this passage similarly to how I approach the *Prelude* of *The Annunciation*. The thirty-second notes can be played fast and in a quasi-improvisatory manner. I also suggest playing them in the middle of the bow with sufficient contact (pressure) on the string. This is to exaggerate the dynamic indication (*forte*). The first note of m. 80 (slurred from the previous bar) can be played long as it shows the beginning of a new passage of music whose mood is quite contrasting from the 3/2 Sarabande-like section. To clearly show the melodic contour of the thirty-second notes in m. 80, I suggest shortly elongating the duration of the first note of each group of eight notes. Since the sixteenth notes of the last beat of m. 80 and the first half of m. 81 are in disjunct motion, I suggest performing them using a *spiccato* technique

that adds energy to the music. This passage contrasts with the mood at the beginning of the sonata, so this energetic stroke can help to express such a difference. Jesus' words to God—like Mary's responses to Gabriel—are written with longer notes and a more *cantabile* line. This is the opportunity for the violinist to sustain more the sound with the bow, and to add extra ornaments such as vibrato. The high B flat-2 (pickup to m. 83) is a suitable place for a vibrato that starts slowly and speeds up at the end as the A-2 approaches.

8/12 Section

To provoke a powerful reaction from the audience—and in light of my agential ideas of Jesus' feelings of despair and cry for help—I propose that the first four notes of the passage (*forte*) have to be accented and played with the whole bow (mm. 100-101). These four notes may be played in the same fashion as we try to emphasize the drama of the gesture. Exaggerating the baroque bow stroke technique of down and up (*forte* and *piano*) may not be helpful in this case. I propose a more sustained approach of the bow to the first four notes. On the other hand, the echo (*piano*) should be played at the tip of the bow with a very little bow. I suggest trying to imitate the sound of *pizzicato* with the bow. Still in *piano*, a sufficient pressure of the bow on the string should be considered in combination with a very small stroke and a reduced amount of hair. (An adventurous violinist could even perform the echoes with *pizzicato*, to enhance the reference to blood drops.) The *basso continuo* could approach the passage in a way that supports this idea. For example, playing more notes (filling each beat with complete chords) in the *fortes* and just playing the left hand on the *pianos*. In terms of motion, I think the echo effect can be played at a slightly slower tempo. This will produce an even more marked *lontano* effect. This performance advice can be applied in the entire passage. Reducing the possible musical variations of the

performance of the passage brings out the strangeness of the music (in relation to the rest of the sonata). This can help to interpret my view of the passage as music coming from a different dimension showcasing the blood drops that Jesus sheds during his Passion.

Conclusions

Through this analysis of Biber's *Agony*, I have described musical gestures that can be potentially analyzed in terms of virtual agency. They show characteristics that can hermeneutically link music with events in Luke's biblical narrative of the Agony in the Garden. Drawing on Hatten's four virtual agential levels, I have identified the aforementioned musical forces and gestures as actants, recognized their human-like characteristics, granted them actorial roles (Jesus and the angel), and suggested a subjective interpretation of the music that draws on alchemy. Finally, I have offered performance suggestions aimed at enhancing the agential interpretation, and by extension the performance of some sections, including the 8/12 section of the sonata—which is arguably one of the most intriguing musical passages, not only in *The Agony* but in the *Rosary Sonatas* as a whole.

Conclusion

My monograph's main contribution is the application of the recent hermeneutical theory of virtual agency to Biber's *Rosary Sonatas*. This theory allowed me to devise interpretations that are subjective yet still valid. Through the analysis of musical gestures in Biber's *Annunciation* and *Agony*, I was able to connect my analysis to my performance and interpretation of the music. For example, in my virtual agential analysis of *The Agony*, I (the analyst) found Jesus going through a virtual experience of agony. I analogically identified Jesus as a *materia prima* that was alchemically accepting suffering to eventually obtain resurrection (as a *Magnum opus*). This sheds light on not only Biber's music but also a secondary object of study, the Mysteries of the Rosary. In other words, I not only learned more about the music and my relation to it as a performer, but I also enhanced my understanding of a Mystery of the Rosary. Thus, Biber's *Rosary Sonatas* are fertile space for analysis using Hatten's theory of virtual agency.

This theory embraces a holistic comprehension of music that can encompass, continue, and enhance the analytical perspectives proposed by Strand-Polyak and Giles. Their perspectives look for connections between Ignatian practices (*Exercitia Spiritualia*), Jesuit religious traditions of meditation and contemplation, and the actual practice of the Rosary. As an example, their perspectives connect the drastic *scordatura* changes of each *Rosary Sonata* with the concept of ritual space that is embodied by the performer. Hatten's theory allows embodiment as part of an array of other elements that surround the phenomenon of music. For instance, Level 4, "Virtual Subjectivity" facilitates verbalizing the connection between the analyst/performer's inner life (e.g., personal-psychological burdens, or spirituality) with the music through a self-reflective process of analysis. As

such, Hatten's theory greatly expands analytical perspectives on music. In the case of the *Rosary Sonatas*, this is particularly useful and illuminating. Since the explicitly proposed topic of the sonatas is religious, a theoretical scaffolding that supports and includes the analyst's inner spirituality is ideal. Its application helps to verbalize the profound meanings embedded in the *Rosary Sonatas*. These meanings can greatly alter our interpretation and performance of the sonatas, intensifying our connection with the music as performers, and enhancing our analytical results.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed, level-by-level analysis of *The Annunciation*. It can be beneficial for violinists—or musicians in general—willing to get closer not only to Biber's music but also to Hatten's theory. *The Annunciation's* analysis followed a clear progression of Hatten's virtual levels starting from a simple analysis of two contrasting elements that interact with each other, leading to the connection between Biber's *Annunciation*, the *Angelus*, and the analyst's subjectivity. This intuitive and hermeneutical exercise helped me to interpret music's meaning and relation to myself. This represents an aspect that is crucial—if not essential—to performers since we perpetually look for new ways to learn, interpret, and enjoy music. In the appendix level "Performance," I provided musical possibilities for interpretation that were derived from the music itself through the application of Hatten's theory. This shows how Hatten's analytical procedures can greatly improve performers' interpretations as the final analytical results will always be personal, but musically grounded. Thus, my research provides new knowledge to violinists looking to improve their understanding of the evocative virtual power of some musical elements of these pieces, suggesting new possibilities for interpretation.

My monograph is one of the first examples of the application of Hatten's theory to music. It represents a modest hermeneutical experiment guided by the study and analysis of

music gestures that are interpreted as virtual entities that have an agential capacity inside a piece of music. Biber's *Rosary Sonatas* are curious—and effective—spaces for agential analysis. They provide plenty of elements (e.g., copper engravings, and *scordatura*) that greatly nourish the analyst's vision and interpretation. Further research on this matter will improve the general understanding of the *Rosary Sonatas*. For example, agential analyses of the rest of the *Rosary Sonatas* would be extremely useful for violinists in general, especially for baroque violinists who are trying to interpret them not just musically but in terms of what they represent. In other words, Hatten's theory can help violinists to consider and interpret the biblical mysteries of the Rosary. The analytical approach used here could also be applied to violin repertoire beyond Biber (e.g., David Lang's *Mystery Sonatas*, or even Johann Sebastian Bach's *Sonatas and Partitas*). Parts of Hatten's theory can be also be used pedagogically. For example, a violin instructor may use lower levels of the theory (Virtual Actants, and Human Agents) to explain interpretative aspects of music to a student. Finally, my research provides insight into the most recent ideas that aim to explain, theorize, and give meaning to the *Rosary Sonatas*. In addition, my research also sheds light on musical semiotic studies that include aspects of musical performance. In analysis, performance, and teaching, this theory of virtual agency can enhance the performer's relationship with the music.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Manuscript of the Rosary Sonatas.

Heinrich Biber. "Mystery Sonatas," original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich. (Public Domain).

Mus. Mss. 4123

Biber

[Sammlung von Liedern, Singschulen, etc.] (Autograph.)

[Faint handwritten notes and markings]

Mus. Mss. 4123

Mus. No. 89/7

**CELSISSIME AC REVERENDISSIME PRINCEPS
DOMINE, DOMINE CLEMENTISSIME.**

Harmoniam Soli Iustitia et Luna sine macula consecratam TIBI tertio
Lucei, quam ab utroq; Civino suscepisti humiliter dedico. Filius enim dignitate sa-
cra nihilans, Matris Virgineum Virgo defendis honorem; Deo pro merito a Filio Christo ca-
lesti munda nutritis, a Matre Maria gratis lactans. Quae primam de suo beatissimo Nomi-
ne sumpsit Litteram, primam Tuo Celssimo Honori imposuit. Sic Maria Maximilianum
condecoravit. Quatuor Choris Chelym meam instructam quinoecim vicibus discordatam
diversisque Sonatis, Preludijs, Allegandis, Courant, Saraband, Strips, Ciaconâ, Variationib,
usq;. Una cum Basso continuo seculâ cum diligentia, et severam possibilitatem magno
artificis elaboratam reperies. Causam si aumen scire velis enucleabo. Hac omnia Ho-
noti XV. Sacronem Missienonem consecravi, quem cum Tu ferentissime pronoveas.

CELSISSIME TIBI



TIBI flecto poplite dedico.

Humilimus Servus.
Honor. Ignat. Franciscus Biber.

[Faint handwritten notes and signatures]



Præludium.



Variatio.



This page of handwritten musical notation consists of two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system is marked *Aria allegro.* and includes a section labeled *Variatio.* The second system is marked *Adagio.* The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and phrasing slurs. The paper shows signs of age with some staining.

This page continues the musical notation from the first page, featuring two systems of treble and bass staves. The notation is dense with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, indicating a more technically demanding section. The paper is aged and shows some staining.

Finale.

Handwritten musical score for a finale, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The notation is dense with many beamed notes and rests. The paper shows signs of age and staining.

Sonata.

Handwritten musical score for a sonata, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The notation is dense with many beamed notes and rests. The paper shows signs of age and staining.

Allana:

Presto.

Piano

Forle.

Piano

10



Sonata

Allegro.

Adagio.

This page contains the first system of a musical score. It features a circular engraving in the upper left corner, depicting a religious scene with several figures. The score is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs) and includes the title "Sonata" and performance markings "Allegro." and "Adagio." The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C).

Concerto.

This page contains the second system of the musical score, starting with the marking "Concerto." The music continues on two staves. The notation includes various rhythmic values and accidentals. The page concludes with several empty staves at the bottom.

Double.

Adagio.

44



Ciaccona.

Musical score for the first system, featuring a treble and bass staff with various notes and rests.

Musical score for the second system, continuing the piece with treble and bass staves.

Handwritten musical score on aged paper, featuring multiple staves with complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings. The score includes several systems of music, with dynamic markings such as *Allegro piano* and *Allegro*. The notation is dense, with many triplets and sixteenth notes. The paper shows signs of age, including yellowing and foxing.

Continuation of the handwritten musical score, showing more complex rhythmic patterns and a decorative flourish at the end. The notation is dense, with many triplets and sixteenth notes. The paper shows signs of age, including yellowing and foxing. The score concludes with a decorative flourish on the right side of the page.

18



Preludium.

Presto.

Musical score for two staves (treble and bass clef) with various notes, rests, and ornaments. The piece is titled "Preludium" and "Presto".

Allegro.

19

Musical score for two staves (treble and bass clef) with various notes, rests, and ornaments. The piece is titled "Allegro".

Jugue.

Handwritten musical score for 'Jugue'. The score is written on four systems of two staves each. The top staff of each system is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex, rhythmic melody in the upper voice with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the lower voice. The paper shows signs of age with some staining.

Saraban.

Handwritten musical score for 'Saraban'. The score is written on four systems of two staves each. The top staff of each system is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex, rhythmic melody in the upper voice with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the lower voice. The paper shows signs of age with some staining. The word 'Cresc.' is written in the second system.

22



Lamento.

Adagio.

Allegro.

Handwritten musical score on four staves. The first staff begins with a circular vignette and the tempo marking "Lamento." The second staff has "Adagio." and the third has "Allegro." The music is written in a historical style with various note values and rests.

23

Adagio.

Handwritten musical score on four staves. The music continues from the previous page, featuring complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings. The tempo marking "Adagio." is present on the bottom staff.

This page of handwritten musical notation consists of two systems of staves. The first system has two staves, with the upper staff containing a complex melodic line and the lower staff providing harmonic support. The second system also has two staves, with the upper staff continuing the melodic development and the lower staff showing dynamic markings such as *Piano.* and *forte.* The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks.

This page continues the handwritten musical notation with two systems of staves. The first system has two staves, with the upper staff featuring a melodic line and the lower staff showing dynamic markings such as *Adagio.* The second system also has two staves, with the upper staff continuing the melodic development and the lower staff showing dynamic markings such as *f* and *fz*. The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks.



5

Allegretto.

Vivacito.

243

This block contains the first system of handwritten musical notation on page 127. It features a circular vignette in the upper left corner depicting three figures. The music is written on two staves per system, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo markings are *Allegretto.* and *Vivacito.*. The number 243 is written near the end of the second system.

244

Sarab.

342

This block contains the second system of handwritten musical notation on page 127. It continues the musical piece on two staves per system, maintaining the treble clef and one sharp key signature. The tempo marking *Sarab.* is present. The number 342 is written near the end of the second system.

Variatio

Handwritten musical score for the first system, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The notation includes a complex melodic line with many sixteenth notes and a bass line with simpler rhythmic accompaniment. The word "Variatio" is written in the first measure of the treble staff.

Handwritten musical score for the second system, continuing the piece. It features similar notation to the first system, with a treble clef, one sharp key signature, and 3/4 time signature. The piece concludes with a decorative floral flourish in the final measure of the treble staff.



30

Sonata. Ragio.

Andante.

Handwritten musical score on a single page, featuring two systems of staves. The first system includes a circular vignette in the upper left corner and the title "Sonata. Ragio." written in a cursive hand. The music is written in a single system with two staves per system, using a treble and bass clef. The tempo marking "Andante." is written in the middle of the first system. The notation includes various note values, rests, and ornaments.

Handwritten musical score on a single page, continuing the piece from the previous page. It features two systems of staves, each with two staves per system. The notation is consistent with the previous page, showing complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The paper shows signs of age and staining.

Juque

Handwritten musical score for 'Juque'. The score is written on four systems of two staves each. The first system includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The music consists of a melodic line in the upper staff and a bass line in the lower staff. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as '6' and '76'. The paper shows signs of age with some staining.

Souble. Prof.

Handwritten musical score for 'Souble. Prof.'. The score is written on four systems of two staves each. The first system includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The music consists of a melodic line in the upper staff and a bass line in the lower staff. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as '4#', '6', and '76'. The paper shows signs of age with some staining.

34

Double.

Handwritten musical score for measures 34-37. The score is written on four systems, each with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The word "Double." is written in italics at the beginning of the first system. The paper shows signs of age with some staining.

Handwritten musical score for measures 38-41. The score is written on three systems, each with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music continues with eighth and sixteenth notes. The final system ends with a decorative flourish. The paper shows signs of age with some staining.

36



Sonata.

Musical score for a Sonata, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Musical score for a *Corrente*, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The piece is characterized by a fast tempo and features several triplet markings (indicated by the number '3') and a fourth-note marking (indicated by the number '4').

28

Allegro

This block contains the first system of handwritten musical notation, spanning measures 28 to 33. It consists of four systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks. The word "Allegro" is written in cursive at the beginning of the first system. The paper shows signs of age, including some staining and foxing.

29

This block contains the second system of handwritten musical notation, spanning measures 34 to 39. It consists of three systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The notation continues with complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The number "29" is written at the end of the first system. The bottom of the page shows several empty staves, indicating the end of the written music on this page.

40

Finale.

Handwritten musical score for the Finale section, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Passion.

Handwritten musical score for the Passion section, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with frequent chords and rests. The word "Piano." is written at the end of the fourth system.

This image shows the top page of a handwritten musical manuscript. It contains two systems of music, each consisting of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system begins with the marking "And." (Andante). The second system includes the marking "Variatio." (Variation). The notation is dense, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together in groups. The paper is aged and shows some staining.

This image shows the bottom page of the handwritten musical manuscript. It continues the notation from the top page, featuring two systems of staves with treble and bass clefs. The music is highly rhythmic and complex, with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The paper is aged and shows some staining.

44

Adagio.

Handwritten musical score for measures 44-47. The score is written on four systems of staves. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is in a minor key, indicated by one flat. The tempo is marked 'Adagio.' The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. A '2+3' marking is present above the second system. The paper shows signs of age and staining.

45

Handwritten musical score for measures 45-48. The score is written on four systems of staves. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music continues from the previous page, featuring complex rhythmic patterns and dense textures. The paper shows signs of age and staining.

Handwritten musical score on three systems of staves. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a historical style, featuring complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The paper shows signs of age, including some staining and discoloration. The third system ends with a decorative flourish.

Handwritten musical score on four systems of staves. The first system includes a circular vignette on the left depicting a figure, possibly a deity or allegorical figure, surrounded by clouds. The word "Sonata." is written below the first staff. The second system features dynamic markings: *piano.*, *forte.*, *piano.*, and *forte.* The third system continues the melodic and rhythmic development. The fourth system features a prominent triplet pattern in the treble clef staff. The paper shows signs of age, including some staining and discoloration.

Handwritten musical score for three systems, measures 40-65. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 3/4 time signature. The first system (measures 40-45) features a treble staff with rapid sixteenth-note passages and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. Dynamic markings include *piano*, *forte*, *piano.*, *f*, and *fz*. The second system (measures 46-51) continues the treble staff's rapid runs, with a *fz* marking. The third system (measures 52-65) shows the treble staff with triplet markings (1, 2, 3) and a *fz* marking. The bass staff includes a key signature change to one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The piece concludes with the signature "C. W. Bach" and the name "C. W. Bach" written below the staff.

Handwritten musical score for three systems, measures 66-95. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The first system (measures 66-71) features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The second system (measures 72-77) continues the melodic line in the treble staff. The third system (measures 78-95) shows the treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

50

Handwritten musical score for page 50. The page contains three systems of staves. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a historical style, featuring various note values, rests, and ornaments. The first system begins with a treble clef staff containing a melodic line with several ornaments, and a bass clef staff with a supporting line. The second system continues the melodic development in the treble staff. The third system features a prominent melodic line in the treble staff with a series of ascending notes, while the bass staff provides a steady accompaniment.

Handwritten musical score for page 51. The page contains three systems of staves. The first system shows a treble clef staff with a melodic line that continues from the previous page, and a bass clef staff with a supporting line. The second system features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a supporting line. The third system consists of a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a supporting line. The notation is consistent with the previous page, showing various note values, rests, and ornaments.

This image shows a single page of handwritten musical notation. It contains four systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The notation includes various note values, rests, and bar lines. The paper is aged and shows some staining.

This image shows a single page of handwritten musical notation, similar to the one above. It contains four systems of staves. The word "Fragio." is written in the first system. The notation includes various note values, rests, and bar lines. The paper is aged and shows some staining.

54



Introdu.

Aria Tubicinam.

Solo Violone.

Handwritten musical score for a solo violone. It begins with a circular engraving of a religious scene, likely the Resurrection, with figures gathered around a tomb. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. It features a single melodic line with a basso continuo line. The first section is labeled 'Introdu.' and the second section is labeled 'Aria Tubicinam.' with a 'Solo Violone.' instruction.

Allamanda.

Handwritten musical score for an Allamanda. It is written in G major and 3/4 time. The score consists of a single melodic line with a basso continuo line. The piece is marked with a tempo of 'Allegro' and includes various ornaments and trills. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

56

Courante.

Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Courante." The score is written on six staves, with three systems of two staves each. The first system is numbered "56". The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The word "Courante." is written in italics below the first staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Soubre.

Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Soubre." The score is written on six staves, with three systems of two staves each. The first system is numbered "56". The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The word "Soubre." is written in italics below the first staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

58



Sonata

piano.

forte.



piano.

59



Handwritten musical score for two pieces: "Gauch." and "Guine." The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system, labeled "Gauch.", consists of two staves with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second system, labeled "Guine.", also consists of two staves with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Sambada." The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system consists of two staves with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second system, labeled "Sambada.", also consists of two staves with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The piece concludes with a decorative flourish on the final staff.

78



Andante

Grave.

Adagio.

Andante

Handwritten musical score on a single page, featuring four systems of staves. The first system includes a circular vignette and the tempo marking *Andante*. The second system has the marking *Grave.* The third system has the marking *Adagio.* The fourth system has the marking *Andante*. The music is written in a historical style with various note values and rests.

Handwritten musical score on a single page, featuring four systems of staves. The first system continues the musical piece. The second system has the marking *Fine.* The third and fourth systems continue the musical notation. The paper shows signs of age and wear.

The top page of the manuscript contains four systems of musical notation. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The notation is dense, with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. The paper shows signs of age, including some staining and foxing. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The music continues across the page with various rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

The bottom page of the manuscript contains three systems of musical notation, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The notation continues from the top page, showing complex rhythmic figures and melodic passages. The bottom of the page features two empty staves, suggesting the end of a section or the start of a new one. The paper is aged and shows some discoloration and staining.

Handwritten musical score on page 147, measures 60-67. The score is written in a system of four staves (two treble and two bass clefs). The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. The word "fina." is written in the second staff at measure 64. The paper shows signs of age and staining.

Handwritten musical score on page 147, measures 68-76. The score continues on a system of four staves (two treble and two bass clefs). The notation is dense, featuring many sixteenth notes and slurs. The word "76s" is written in the second staff at measure 70. The paper shows signs of age and staining.

69

Guigue.

70



Sonata.

Musical score for a Sonata, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The music features various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. The paper shows signs of age with some staining.

Trin.

Musical score for a Trio, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The music features various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. The paper shows signs of age with some staining.

This page of handwritten musical notation consists of two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The music is written in a historical style, likely from the 18th or 19th century. The upper system features a treble staff with a complex, flowing melodic line characterized by many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and a bass staff with a more rhythmic accompaniment. The lower system continues this style, with the treble staff containing numerous triplets and sixteenth-note passages, while the bass staff provides a steady accompaniment. The paper shows signs of age, including some staining and foxing.

This page continues the handwritten musical notation from the previous page. It also consists of two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The notation remains consistent in style, with the treble staves featuring intricate melodic lines and the bass staves providing accompaniment. The paper is aged and shows some foxing and staining, particularly in the lower half of the page. The handwriting is clear and consistent throughout.

74

Canzon.

Sarabanda.

Handwritten musical score on three systems of staves. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a historical style, featuring complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The paper shows signs of age, including foxing and staining. The third system ends with a decorative flourish on the right side.

Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Pisragalia". The score is written on six systems of staves, each with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is dense and rhythmic. In the upper left corner, there is a circular illustration depicting a winged figure, possibly an angel or a cherub, standing next to a seated figure. The title "Pisragalia" is written in a cursive hand below the illustration. The page number "77" is visible at the end of the first staff.

Handwritten musical score on page 153, top section. The page contains seven staves of music. The first staff begins with the number 70. The tempo markings *travagio.* and *allegro.* are present. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and rests.

Handwritten musical score on page 153, bottom section. The page contains seven staves of music. The tempo marking *adagio* is present. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and rests. The page concludes with several empty staves at the bottom.

Handwritten musical score on four staves. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 3/4. The music consists of a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The word "piano." is written below the fourth staff. A blue rectangular stamp is located in the lower-left quadrant of the page, containing the text "BIBLIOTHECA REGIA MONACENSIS".

A large, blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely the reverse side of the musical score. The paper shows signs of wear, including discoloration and small brown spots.

Nr. 116 Ausgang: Feb. 1974
I. Schäden: 76 67 2 20 20 20
II. Behandlung: 25 29 32 38 40 47

Appendix B: Five ending decorative images from Biber's *Rosary Sonatas*

Heinrich Biber. "Mystery Sonatas," original manuscript (ca. 1678), BSB Mus. ms.4123, n.d. Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Munich.



1. Detail of *The Agony*



2. Detail of *The Carrying*



3. Detail of *The Descent*



4. Detail of *The Assumption*



5. Detail of *The Coronation*

Appendix C: Biblical quotations

The Presentation in the Temple

Luke 2:22-39 (NRSV)

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord),” and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that we would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory to your people Israel.” And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At the moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

The Agony

Matthew 26:36-46 (NRSV)

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and

taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

Mark 14:32-42 (NRSV)

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.” He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

John 18:1 (NRSV)

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

Appendix D: List of recent recordings (selection)

Beznosiuk, Pavlo, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Timothy West (narrator), Richard Tunnicliffe (viola da gamba), Paula Chateaufeuf (theorbo), David Roblou (harpsichord). Avie AV0038, 2004. Compact disc.

Bismuth, Patrick, violin. *Biber: Sonates du Rosaire*. Ensemble La Tempesta. Alpha ALPHA491, 2019. Compact disc.

Daskalakis, Ariadne, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Ensemble Vintage Köln. BIS BIS2096, 2015. Compact disc.

Goebel, Reinhard, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Musica Antiqua Köln. DG Archiv E4316562, 1991. Compact disc.

Holloway, John, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Davitt Moroney (chamber organ and harpsichord), Stephen Stubbs (lute/chitarrone), Andrew Lawrence-King (harp/regal), Erin Headley (gamba/lirone). Erato 5620622, 2002. Compact disc.

Homburger, Maya, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Camerata Kilkenny. Maya Recordings MCD0603, 2007. Compact disc.

Kaakinen-Pilch, Sirkka-Lisa, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Battalia. Ondine ODE12432D, 2014. Compact disc.

Lautenbacher, Susanne, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Vox CDX5171, 1998. Compact disc.

Lotter, Rüdiger, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Lyriarte. Oehms OC514, 2005. Compact disc.

Manze, Andrew, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Richard Egarr (organ and harpsichord), Alison McGillivray (cello). Harmonia Mundi HMG507321/22, 2016. Compact disc.

Martinson, Christina Day, violin. *Biber: The Mystery Sonatas*. Boston Baroque. Linn CKD501, 2018. Compact disc.

Melkus, Eduard, violin. *Biber: Mystery Sonatas*. Huguette Dreyfus (harpsichord), Karl Scheidt (lute), Lionel Rogg (organ). DG Archiv 4531732, 1997.

Minasi, Riccardo, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Bizzarie Armoniche, Elena Russo (cello). Arts 477358, 2008. Compact disc.

Piérot, Alice, violin and direction. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Les Veilleurs de Nuit. Alpha ALPHA038, 2003. Compact disc.

Podger, Rachel, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Marcin Świątkiewicz (harpsichord/organ), Jonathan Manson (cello/viola da gamba), David Miller (theorbo/archlute). Channel CCSSA37315, 2015. Compact disc.

Reiter, Walter, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Cordaria. Signum SIGCD021, 2002. Compact disc.

Rônez, Marianne, violin. *Biber: Rosary Sonatas & Passacaglia for Violin*. Affetti Musicali. Winter and Winter 9100292, 1998. Compact disc.

Ruhadze, Igor, violin. *Biber: Mystery Sonatas*. Ensemble Violini Capricciosi. Brilliant Classics 95291, 2017. Compact disc.

Schmitt, Helena, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Aeolus AE10256, 2016. Compact disc.

Sepec, Daniel, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Hille Perl (viola de gamba), Lee Santana (archlute, theorbe), Michael Behringer (organ, harpsichord). Coviello COV21008, 2010. Compact disc.

Siedel, Annegret, violin. *Biber: Rosenkrank Sonaten*. Bell'arte Salzburg. Berlin Classics 0300531BC, 2013. Compact disc.

Tur Bonet, Lina, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Musica Alchemica. Pan Classics PC10329, 2015. Compact disc.

Wallfisch, Elizabeth, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Rosanne Hunt (cello), Linda Kent (organ). ABC Classics ABC4766831, 2008. Compact disc.

Wedman, Julia, violin. *Biber: The Rosary Sonatas*. Dorian Sono Luminus DSL92127, 2011. Compact disc.

Performance Events



STUDENT RECITAL

April 4, 2019
6 p.m., von Kuster Hall
Frangel Lopez-Cesena, *violin*
Brian Cho, *piano*

Ancient dance for violin and piano T. Hosokawa
(b. 1955)

Ciaconna from Partita no. 2 in D minor BWV 1004 for violin solo J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Poème élégiaque in D minor, Op. 12 for violin and piano E. Ysaÿe
(1858-1931)

- Intermission -

Manifiesto for violin solo J. A. Márquez
(b. 1950)

Sonata no. 2 in D minor, Op. 94a for violin and piano S. S. Prokofiev
(1891-1953)
Moderato
Presto
Andante
Allegro con brio

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of
Musical Arts in Performance degree.*

*Special thanks to Western University's
Don Wright Faculty of Music String Bank for the generous loan of the Pedrinelli (1847)
violin used in this performance.*



STUDENT RECITAL
Waived due to COVID-19

March 20, 2020
6 p.m., von Kuster Hall
Frangel López-Ceseña, *violin*

Sonata in B flat major, KV 454, No. 32 for piano and violin
Largo; Allegro
Andante
Allegretto
W. A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Pieza para violín y piano
S. Revueltas-Sánchez
(1899-1940)

Brian Cho, piano

Violin Sonata No. 2 (*Quasi Una Sonata*)
A. G. Schnittke
(1934-1998)

Megaria Halim, piano

- Intermission -

Sonata in A major for piano and violin
Allegretto moderato
Allegro
Recitativo-Fantasia
Allegretto poco mosso
C. Franck
(1822-1890)

Johnathan Raine, piano

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance degree.

*Special thanks to Western University's
Don Wright Faculty of Music String Bank for the generous loan of the Ceruti (1844)
violin used in this performance.*



STUDENT RECITAL

April 12, 2021
8 p.m., von Kuster Hall
Frangel López-Ceseña, *violin*

Bird Song for violin and piano

V. Fung
(1975)

Nick Busch, piano

Polyphonic Étude VI for Solo Violin, "The Last Rose of Summer"

H. W. Ernst
(1814-1865)

Suite para violín y piano

Grave
Despacio con insistencia
Andante
Alegre y gracioso
Lento rubato
Allegretto

M. Enríquez-Salazar
(1926-1994)

- Intermission -

Three pieces for violin and piano

Allegro
Lentamente
Allegro

S. Revueltas-Sánchez
(1899-1940)

Violin Sonata No. 2 in G major for violin and piano

Allegretto
Blues
Perpetuum mobile

J. M. Ravel
(1875-1937)

Brian Cho, piano

Rabo de nube for violin and piano

S. Rodríguez-Domínguez
(1975)

Johnathan Raine, piano

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance degree.

FRANGEL LÓPEZ CESEÑA

Curriculum vitae

EDUCATION

- 2022 – D.M.A. in Violin Performance. Don Wright Faculty of Music. The University of Western Ontario. London, Ontario, Canada.
- 2018 – M.M. in Violin Performance. School of Music, Theatre and Dance. Colorado State University. Fort Collins, Colorado, USA.
- 2017 – B.M. in Violin Performance. Higher School of Music. National Institute of Fine Arts. Mexico.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2022 – Concertmaster, Acapulco Philharmonic Orchestra, Mexico.
- 2022 – Violinist, Aguascalientes Symphony Orchestra, Mexico.
- 2021 – Western Summer 2021 Student Internship. University of Western Ontario. Canada.
- 2018 – Founding violinist of Camerata del Pacífico. BCS, Mexico.
- 2017 – Violinist at Colorado State University Conducting Seminar Orchestra. USA.
- 2015 – Founding violinist of the Baja California Sur Philharmonic Orchestra. Mexico.
- 2015 – Founding violinist of the Zanolli String Quartet, Mexico.
- 2013 – Substitute Violinist, National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico.

PUBLICATIONS

- 2020 – Analysis of the Preludium of the Rosary Sonata No.1 in D minor for violin and basso continuo The Annunciation by H. I. F. von Biber: An Angelic Dialogue. *The Music Times* vol XIV No. 4 July-August 2020: P. 13.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/musicresearchpres/4/>.
- 2013 – Julián Carrillo Trujillo, creador del sonido 13. *Tesituras* Año 4, No. 5 Agosto 2011 – Marzo 2013: P. 19.

CONFERENCES

- 2020 – Analysis of the *Preludium* of the Rosary Sonata No.1 in D minor for violin and basso continuo The Annunciation by H. I. F. von Biber: An Angelic Dialogue. First International Research Meeting of Students in Music and Musicology. University of Evora, Portugal. November, 28-30.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2017 – First Place, Concerto Competition. Colorado State University, USA.
- 2014 – First Place. II National Violin Competition “Tomas Ruíz Ovalle.” Autonomous University of Zacatecas, Mexico.
- 2014 – Best interpretation of the work of a Mexican composer in the II National Violin Competition “Tomas Ruíz Ovalle” Autonomous University of Zacatecas, Mexico.
- 2008 – Attestato di partecipazione. First youth encounter for peace, tolerance and dialogue. Project supported by Claudio Abbado and Sabina Colonna-Prete. Torino, Italy.
- 2008 – State Youth Award. Government of the State of B.C.S., Mexico.
- 2006 – Award for Cultural Excellence. Government of the State of B.C.S., Mexico. 2006.