

Samuel Barber: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 14

This edition of Barber's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* began, for the most part, due to changes in technology used to reproduce printed sets of orchestral material. For many years, orchestral parts (as well as scores accompanying hire material) were reproduced using a *diaz* process. Master sheets copied on a translucent medium were placed on top of a photosensitive paper which was fed through a machine and exposed to UV light; the master sheets would be removed and the photosensitive paper was then processed with an ammonia vapor resulting in a positive image of the master sheet. The original parts for this work were reproduced in this manner, and for many years Schirmer provided 11" × 14" orchestral parts—a standard size for orchestral hire material.

This "ammonia vapor" process was later replaced by photostatic ("Xerox" type) reproduction. The newer machinery was capable of running 18" × 24" cut sheets, producing full-sized, stitched and trimmed 11" × 17" conducting scores as well as 11" × 14" stitched orchestral parts. With the advent of digital technology, photostatic copiers eventually became outdated, and the machines that were relied on to reproduce orchestral material were no longer being produced or supported by manufacturers and distributors. Our best option was to utilize the largest digital means of reproduction available and in 2004 the Schirmer Rental Library began working with the Xerox Docutech. The cut sheet size that could be run through the machine was smaller than the 18" × 24" sheets we had previously used, and the result was that our orchestral hire material would be printed as 9.5" × 12.65" booklets. After 64 years, the printed image of the parts to the Barber Violin Concerto shrunk roughly 15% from how it had originally been copied.

As a key work in both the Schirmer catalogue and the violin repertoire, it was decided that a new set of parts based on the new booklet specifications should be produced. The second movement of the orchestral string parts had originally been copied on a single page, which was fine when printed at 100%, but which suffered from the resultant reduction of digital reproduction. There also existed an *extensive* list of errata, documenting discrepancies between the published full score and parts that had been accumulated over the decades by various performers and by MOLA (the Major Orchestra Librarians' Association) librarians.

When I began this project, I believed it would be a relatively simple one: computer engrave a "rough score" —incorporating the errata— from which new parts could be extracted and then proofread against the published 1956 full score. We would then have a new set of accurate orchestral parts matching the 1956 score, which would be legible at 9.5" × 12.65". Once the content of the errata lists were marked in a score for production, I questioned how there could be so many errors in a set of parts in use since 1948, which had been performed and recorded during Barber's lifetime—even with Barber himself on the podium in 1951. Were the documented discrepancies errors in the parts, or errors in the published score? The very first measure contains a discrepancy between what is in the orchestral first violin part and what is printed in the published score released in 1956.

We lack a copy of the solo part from the orchestral hire material, therefore I compared the solo violin part paired with the piano score against the solo line printed in the 1956 full score. I discovered that both the solo part and 1949 reduction contain an extra measure in Movement I between rehearsals 5 and 6, and also between rehearsals 11 and 12. I contacted Barbara Heyman, Barber's biographer, to discuss this

and to inform her of the work we were doing on the Concerto. At her suggestion, I obtained a copy of the piano reduction from the American Music Collection at the New York Public Library, in addition to copies of the original orchestral manuscript and Barber's personal copy of the revised 1948 full score—both on file at the Library of Congress. After comparing the sources I obtained, I met with Heyman to show her what I found regarding the differences in the sources. While most were minor, we realized they needed to be addressed even if we lacked information and materials to make decisions on how to rectify such discrepancies. Heyman's advice was to consider Barber's personal copy of the score as the viable, reliable source for the content being printed in the new edition.

Sources consulted in the preparation of this edition:

- A) Full score manuscript completed November 20, 1939:
Library of Congress (*First page of music missing; measures 1-6.*)
- B) Full score revised 1948 fair copy, Barber's personal score—annotated "la mia copia S.B."
Library of Congress
(*Barber conducted the work in Germany, 1951 with Charles Turner as soloist. This is the edition of the score Schirmer would have supplied for performances prior to the publication of the 1956 full score.*)
- C) Full score published 1956 Plate no. 44057c (corrected):
Schirmer sales item HL50339370
- D) Piano score (second printing May 21, 1948?) Plate no. 40010c Copyright 1942:
American Music Center score collection of the New York Public Library
- E) Piano score "Revised Version" Plate no. 40010c Copyright 1942, 1949:
Schirmer sales item HL50337010
- F) Solo violin part "Revised Version" Plate no. 40010c Copyright 1942, 1949:
Charles Turner papers. The New York Public Library Music Division: Archives and Manuscripts collection.
- G) Orchestral parts revised 1948:
Schirmer Rental Library
(*Orchestral material used at the 1941 premiere has not been located. It is also unknown if a revised copy of the solo violin part was prepared for the 1948 revision as one was made available for sale with the piano reduction.*)

The first published edition of the Concerto by Schirmer was the piano score and solo violin part (Plate no. 40010) released in December 1942; the year following the work's premiere. A copy from this first printing could not be located for research on this edition. The piano reduction was created from the orchestral score by Barber himself. Five-hundred copies of the edition were printed with the inventory lasting roughly five and a half years. A "corrected" second printing of five-hundred fifty-four copies came off press on May 21, 1948. I believe the second printing is the generation of the piano score that was obtained from the New York Public Library (Plate no. 40010c © 1942) "Source D" for research on this edition. In this piano score, one will find discrepancies primarily in Movement II between the printed reduction and the orchestration in Barber's full score manuscript completed November 20, 1939; "Source A." Barber completed his revisions to the work in November 1948, months after the second printing of the piano reduction was released, supervising the copyists working on the full score and parts, for a performance by the Boston Symphony, with Ruth Posselt as soloist, which took place in January 1949. A "revised" version of the piano score and solo part "Source E" (© 1942, 1949) was then released in June 1949, requiring Schirmer to destroy the stock of the second printing. Records indicate four-hundred ninety-four copies of the second printing were on hand on January 11, 1949; therefore the bulk of the second print run was destroyed. Looking at this time line, one can only ask why did Schirmer print a second (albeit corrected) run of five-hundred fifty-four copies of the piano score in May of 1948 when Barber was still revising the work?

The published full score was released in 1956, and the solo violin line in the published sources are mostly identical; however, they do not match that which appears in Barber's own score, "Source B." For the most part, the orchestral materials available from Schirmer *do* match Barber's score. Most of the tempo indications printed in the 1956 full score match those found in the earlier published piano scores—but not in Barber's revised score. The alterations to Movement I were not carefully applied to the revised piano reduction, "Source E," as extra measures from the original orchestration remain in the published piano reduction (and solo part) in two places. A discrepancy in the location of rehearsal number 17 in Movement I is also found among the sources. Schirmer destroyed a large quantity of stock of the piano reduction in June 1949 when the revised version was released. As the revised reduction as printed in 1949 does not match Barber's 1948-49 revised orchestral score, was it possible Barber was asked to keep the work as printed in the 1949 piano score when the full score was in preparation for publication in 1956? Could it be that the errata compiled over years documenting errors in the orchestral parts actually provide insight into what had possibly been omitted in the 1956 publication of the full score?

Considering the care Barber took to revise the orchestral parts in preparation for the 1949 performance by Ruth Posselt, why weren't the hire materials later corrected to "match" the 1956 full score—unless the score itself is what contained errors? After making the revisions in 1948, Barber wrote to his uncle, Sidney Homer, regarding the revisions stating "All this took a good deal of time, and it is no pleasure to fix up old things—also new parts, copyists, etc. Anyway, I did it and it is much improved. I just returned from Boston and the performance was beautiful and a great success." The performance referenced by Barber, is the January 1949 performance by Ruth Posselt with the Boston Symphony, Koussevitzky conducting (*Koussevitzky Conducts Barber* www.pristineclassical.com). The orchestral parts Schirmer had provided since the 1948 revision match Barber's personal score and Posselt's 1949 performance. It is interesting—and at the same time puzzling—that all recordings made after the January 1949 performance follow the 1956 published score, including one recorded live by Posselt in 1962. Composers have made alterations (major and/or minor) for which there may be no surviving documentation, and therefore when sources are compared and inconsistencies discovered, the answer to the question "What was the composer's true intention?" can be painfully hard to answer. No one is presently capable of answering such questions, and I have found no correspondence, or sets of proofs, that may shed light on the discrepancies between the previously existing editions. In this edition, choices have been made which for the most part reflect the content found in Barber's personal score.

This edition contains both alterations and corrections to the 1956 full score. Notable differences requiring explanation have been footnoted while others (true copying errors substantiated by reviewing Barber's scores) have simply been made. Most of the changes appear in the phrasing of the solo violin line, which now reflects what is found in Barber's personal score prepared for the 1949 performance by Posselt. A change made to the violin solo is found in Movement II at rehearsal 8. Here, the part as found in Barber's revised score was not used in the 1956 edition and instead reprints the solo violin line from the earlier published piano reductions. Interestingly, Charles Turner prepared for the 1951 performances in Germany, which Barber conducted, using a copy of the solo violin part "Source F," sold with the piano reduction; ironically, this violin part does *not* match what is printed in the orchestral score Barber used to conduct that performance. There are no annotations made by Turner in his part to match Barber's score; therefore, one may conclude that Barber may have reconsidered the alteration he made when revising the work in 1948 as performed by Posselt, or he may have decided to leave the solo line as it was printed in the existing publications. In this edition, the content found in Barber's score is included as an *ossia* without eradicating what has been printed in the 1956 full score and earlier piano reductions. One therefore has the option to perform the passage as revised by Barber in 1948, or as it was documented in the other published editions.

When Barber revised the work in 1948, he made changes in the orchestration of Movement III leading up to, and at rehearsal 7. Rehearsal 7 is where the solo violin line differs depending on whether one is being accompanied by orchestra or piano—when played with piano, the soloist is given material from the orchestral flutes. Prior to the revision, the solo violin and flute I played a moving triplet passage in unison for the three measures prior to and after rehearsal 7. In his revision, the violin alone plays a revised triplet passage (notes altered) up to rehearsal 7 with the flute entering with a modified triplet passage at rehearsal 7. What remained printed as the first three beats in the piano reduction and solo violin part at rehearsal 7 prior to this corrected edition, was the flute line from the original orchestration; the content had never been altered to match the revised material found in Barber’s orchestration. Therefore, since 1948, when played with piano, the first three beats of rehearsal 7 did not match any notes played by the orchestral counterpart. Another small detail has been changed in the final 5th and 6th measures of Movement III; the first note of each beat is written an octave higher in Barber’s score compared to the 1956 full score and piano reductions. I have opted to print the higher octave as what should be played but have included the lower octave as found in the 1956 score in small, parenthetical notes.

The first structural change made by Barber in 1948 appears in Movement I at rehearsal 5. This is where an extra measure had remained in the piano reduction and solo part since 1949. In the 1956 full score in the 3rd and 4th measures of rehearsal 5, bassoons play sextuplets matching the other winds and brass while in Barber’s revised score, his original 1939 manuscript, and publisher’s parts, the bassoons sustain their pitches played as whole notes. While all errata lists have indicated the publisher’s bassoon parts should be changed to match the rhythm printed in the 1956 score, this edition prints these two measures as the whole notes found in both Barber orchestral sources. Other minor alterations have been made, such as the addition or removal of ties or slurs and a few changes in dynamics that appear to have been incorrectly copied from Barber’s sources. In the orchestral parts there is just one truly outstanding question: “Is the first violin section to double the opening note played by the soloist for two beats?” In the opening measure of Schirmer’s orchestral Violin I master, and in Barber’s score, the Violin I section plays the same D as the soloist. The orchestral Violin section begins *mf*, then diminuendo to *p* over two beats; however the 1956 published score omits the half note D from the Violin section altogether. Considering one finds annotations made by Barber in his score where he wanted to check the accuracy of a particular part, or alterations he wanted made, why didn’t he mark the note *tacet* if the Violin section was to omit this note? In this edition of the score, and in the parts now available, the half note “D” in the Violin I section is printed in the score with cue-sized notes—a conductor may leave it in, or take it out, according to their and the soloist’s preference.

We set out to prepare a new set of parts which could be reproduced on our digital copiers—never thinking we would modify the work itself in any way. We also did not set out to produce a corrected edition of the full score, and therefore the initial 112 page “rough score” — prepared for the sole purpose of producing a new set of orchestral parts that contained individual staves for each instrument in the orchestra— was completely redone and edited. While one will notice differences between past editions of the solo part, piano score, full score and this present edition, what should be most noticeable by conductors, soloists, rehearsal pianists, orchestral musicians, and orchestral librarians is that the full score, orchestral parts, piano score and solo violin part are finally in agreement with each other.

—David Flachs
Director of Production
G. Schirmer, Inc.
October 2014