
Global Culture Reproduction through The String Orchestra' Repertoire

(The Role of Brandenburg Concerto III BWV 1084 J.S Bach toward the Skills and the musical Spirit of Strings Ensemble Students at the Pasundan University Music Study Program)

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Abstract

The selection of repertoire on a musical ensemble is quite important, especially in the context of rehearsal in the non-professional string ensemble community. It is very common if there is a diversity of skill levels in each member. Such diversity will usually be a common obstacle when it comes to determining a shared repertoire. An overly difficult repertoire (advance) will be difficult for some members otherwise an easy one will create a bored atmosphere for members who are already proficient. Even the role of unbalanced work will make some members may struggle while others will become bored so that the rehearsal atmosphere is not conducive. The author observed that there is an interesting repertoire that is often used as an ensemble rehearsal material in the bowed string's formation, namely Brandenburg Concerto no. III BWV 1048 Part III in G Major by Johan Sebastian Bach for 3 violins, 3 violas, 3 cellos and 1 double bass. This work is often used as an alternative work together in the community environment of string orchestras in Bandung, and based on the observation of the author of this work is often used in several workshops and ensemble learning materials, with a relatively balanced role, this complex-sounding work has techniques and finger positions that can still be reached by players in the skill range level 3-5 ABRSM. The authors collected data through observations, interviews and documentation on Unpas Music Study Program students who had played this work. After being described and analyzed, the authors found that this work had a significant role in improving ensemble skills playing in string ensembles that would indirectly also improve their individual skills especially for advanced entry-level string instrument students.

Keywords: Brandenburg Concerto III, String Orchestra, Music Ensembles, Baroque, Bach.

1. Background

The musical ensemble is a group of people who play music together, Pono Banoë (2003:133) explains that the meaning comes from French which has the meaning of a musical troupe playing together using certain musical instruments. In

general, ensembles are grouped into two i.e. similar and mixed ensembles.

As the definition of ensemble is to play music together, it is necessary to have togetherness, in the context of musicals, togetherness is interpreted as an attempt to create unity, the unity of sound is defined as the ability of

individuals in the group who consciously play a role together mixing different musical components into one musical purpose. Unity is created if accompanied by technical capabilities and understanding of the work presented, the technical ability to create balance, blending, even at the top level (advance) is the ability to process or bring the collective role to the level of detail.

In addition to technical ability and understanding, playing ensembles requires musical awareness both individually and collectively. Individual awareness in groups is a vital part of other technical abilities. The performers in the ensemble should be aware of the musical roles performed by themselves among other roles as well as the overall results of the sound in groups. Individual consciousness should be able to sense how much sound the instrument produces in a group, in the context of time even an individual should be able to sense how fast or slow the tempo is in his group, not to mention if it

extends to the territory of his musical expression or interpretation and so on.

String ensembles is included into Similar Ensemble, this ensemble has a wide spectrum of sound ranges, certainly in the context of auditive aesthetics or that can still be heard by the human ear, it should meet the lowest sound range or low register namely contrabass, bass accommodated by double bass instruments as well as Violoncello, tenor region which is also mostly accommodated Violoncello and or middle register namely Alto violin or viola , and the high register of soprano regions by violin, to sopranino is the area of violin instruments on the high register.

The characteristics of the string ensemble choir tend to be more homogeneous when compared to the sound characteristics of wooden inflatable ensembles for example; bassoon, standard flute, Bb clarinet, oboe and French horn in F, the ensemble tends to be more heterogeneous because it is a combination of various instrument

families (oboe family, flute family, clarinet family, horn family etc.) although generally categorized in the inflatable family of wood, but the homogeneity of the string ensemble does not necessarily make this ensemble easier in making the mix of sounds or balance of sounds collectively.

Good balance and mixing as a successful unity in the string ensemble must be supported by its fundamental capabilities both technically and nontechnically. Technically the players should be able to master how to produce good sound using the instrument, how to position the right and effective fingering, how to use the correct bowing technique, etc., while non-technical things include how to express or play it according to the context of the musical interpretation etc.

To achieve good ensemble quality is also not enough if only through the improvement of individual capabilities, there needs to improve groups/collective capabilities as well. It is not uncommon to see groups of

string ensembles that are good in individual capability but still not producing good ensemble quality. Both in a unified sense and a mixture of sounds in playing together. This is because the ability to play individually with the ability to play in an ensemble are two things that each need special attention.

Individual skill improvement can be achieved through individual technical rehearsal, through gradual rehearsal using etude or lesson or even using small works to concerto adapted to the development of the individual's abilities. While the capabilities on ensemble are generally initiated through ensemble works, from the easy to the hardest, but the ensemble skills as described earlier are sometimes not specially trained as well as individual rehearsals (through technique, etude, pieces to concerto) but through the work chosen to be trained and worked directly and repeated, certainly with rehearsal records done with the correct supervision, thus making our muscle memory and motoric become not only

trained but skilled, as well as having sensitivity affectively.

Choosing an ensemble work is not as easy as choosing an individual work, for individual works we can easily select it by measuring the ability of the individual, while in the ensemble, the selected work sometimes has varying difficulty levels, the skill level of the work does not necessarily match the ability of each member of the ensemble, sometimes the work of the ensemble is too difficult (advance level) can only be played by a few people and will certainly make other members difficult, whereas overly basic work (beginner) can cause boredom for the already proficient, although there are also mix levels (varying difficulty levels) but the diversity is not automatically suitable in the situation and conditions in the ensemble members, so sometimes there are other ways through adaptation or instrumentation (customization) but this becomes a new problem in terms of instrumentation, instrumentation of existing works that are oriented solely

on skill alone sometimes even damaging the aesthetic sound or instrumentation alignment of the work.

Some works that tend to be texturally homophone are usually chosen to be material for community ensembles, but textures like this have a static role that is the distribution of melodic roles and accompaniment (melody with accompaniment) in the same instrument continuously so that it tends to be unbalanced, sometimes players who get more difficult roles will be more likely to be worked on and noticed by coaches, whereas those who play static roles (bottom line) usually violoncello or other roles (inner voice) usually viola or violin to long for waiting and this brings boredom so that it becomes the reason for absence at the next rehearsal.

The above illustration does not apply to professional orchestras, but the above is common in ensembles community which in the context of the continuity of community management of non-professional ensembles, the repertoire becomes an important

variable. Inappropriate strategies in determining the repertoire will result as mentioned above, boredom due to the difficulty or uninterested towards the work played, especially for amateur groups which the formation in ensembles that tend to change as in the student orchestra community or other non-professional communities.

The above is a factual condition at a time when writers have been observing string ensembles since 2013. First, when the author began to join the student activities of the string ensemble held outside of the academic activities of Unpas, scheduled every night and arranged regularly, secondly through the activities of string ensemble in the Animé String Orchestra community, third when joining other orchestra community groups in Bandung. Other information was also obtained through interviews with senior alumni of Unpas Music Study Program who had participated in the workshop by performing the same repertoire, namely Brandenburg Concerto III, JS. Bach Part I.

The work attracted the author's attention since it had always been used as a joint work trained on various generations of generations both in the student ensemble community and in the aforementioned non-professional community ensemble groups. The baroque work had a polyphonic texture that characterized composition in the 16th century, the polyphonic texture tended to give a balanced role to every instrument in the ensemble. Balanced means that between violin 1.2 viola, cello and double bass have the same portion, each accommodating the role of melody, harmony, ornamentation, and equality in each of its registers.

Another concern is that this work sounds complex due to the intertwining of independent roles that form polyphonic sound effects but is still in a fingering position that can be reached for entry-level players, but is still challenging to play for advanced players in the range between grade 3 and grade 5 when referring to ABRSM.

The balance is also something that corresponds to the name of the

concerto's work, a group of solos by Pono Banoe (2003:92) defined as a solo instrument with a complete orchestra, consisting of 3 parts such as the form of a sonata. The concerto for a group of solos is known as the Grosso concerto. This is what the author then focused on, it is about the material used to enhance the ability of the string ensemble that is the work of Brandenburg concerto III in G By J.S Bach part I for the string orchestra by providing an equally important role for each member, with the research objects are students of Music Study Program Unpas who take major or minor string instruments, whether it is violin, viola, cello and double bass.

From the above thought the author intends to further examine that Brandenburg's work has a role in improving individual and ensemble skills. And the authors want to examine the problems with students in the Music Study Program Pasundan University who take the Ensemble String Courses that have played or departed from the work mentioned as a role to improve the individuals and

ensemble skills. This research aims to elaborate more on the role of Brandenburg's work on the ensemble skills of the Music Study Program Pasundan University students' in the following title, The Role of Brandenburg Concerto NoIII BWV 1048 Part I In G Major Johan Sebastian Bach towards the String Ensemble Students' Skills on the Music Study Program, Pasundan University.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The data supporting the assumptions of the above authors is then systematically described and discussed in writing for matters relating to the role of Brandenburg concerto III Sebastian Bach's work towards improving the skills of the String Ensemble Students on the Music Study Program, Pasundan University.

The design of this research was done by explaining the detailed and sequential events of students while playing this work of concerto III Brandenburg, along with its role in

improving ensemble playing skills. Data collection is carried out by conducting observation during routine rehearsals, interviews with speakers as well as the collection of documentation of recordings and notes.

3. Discussion

Based on the authors' observation result, on Pasundan University campus there is an evening activity that is an ensemble rehearsal out of the String Ensemble course. The evening activity is held because students like to play the string ensemble and they want to unite all students of string instruments in this campus. This is in accordance with what Widyatun said (2005:24), motivation is something that evokes a desire within a person to perform various actions. In this case, the students were motivated and moved to create an evening activity, which was an ensemble rehearsal out of the String Ensemble course.

During the program, students then planned to play the ensemble

works beyond the teaching materials given in the String Ensemble course. The ensemble's rehearsals include classics such as Divertimento Mozart Cannon Johann Pachelbel and Capriol Peter Warlock, not only classical works that are used as rehearsals but combined with arrangements of popular songs.

As time went on the students felt the works were unbalanced for them, such as the role of the Violin section which was too difficult while the role of cello and contrabass which was as accompaniment was quite easy to play. This condition makes the rehearsal become unproductive, Then the students decided to choose a balanced work. The balanced work here means not one accompanied by the other but each instrument is as important as having its own melodic role and also has the same level of difficulty. They finally select Brandenburg Concerto No.III.

Refer to ABRSM, at least participants must pass grade 4 to play concerto work. In the ABRSM ensemble syllabus, the ensemble work

is divided into three level namely Primary, Intermediate and Advance. The three levels divided by the difficulty of a work. Because in the ABRSM ensemble syllabus list the Primary works such as Concerto was absent. While the Advance list began to play the works from classic and romantic era. The Brandenburg Concerto No.III was included into the work before the classical and romantic era called the baroque era, hence this work is categorized as Intermediate ensemble, because it is in the midst of the difficulty of Primary and Advance. What these String Ensemble students do is a learning activity that skips its stages. To play on this work students starts by looking at references at YouTube, observing other communities and invite alumni to give technical and nontechnical advice.

It corresponds to what Prastowo mentioned (2011:24-25) about the functions of teaching materials for teaching participants, such as: A) Students can learn with the absence of a teacher or friends B) Students can learn anytime and

anywhere they want. C) Students can learn at their own pace. D) Students can study in their own chosen order. E) Help the students to become independent. F) As a guideline for students that will direct all of their activities in learning and as the substance of competence that should be learned or mastered.

From the selection of the work, this teaching material also plays an important role towards the students' skills. The data from interviews and observations then being analyzed, which reveals that there are some student skills that have been mastered from the Brandenburg concerto No.III In G Major part I, according to Robbins (2000:494-495) the skills are divided into 4 categories, namely:

3.1. Basic Literacy Skill

Basic skills that must be possessed by everyone such as reading, writing, counting and listening. In playing the work of Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 In G Major part I, a player must surely have

mastered the basic techniques in playing string instruments, the most basic thing in playing a string instrument is to know how to hold the string instrument with well and proper posture, know how to swipe the string instrument properly and correctly, and also has to know the tone in the string instrument. In this basic skill one must understand how to read music scores and also be able to calculate the rhythm, tempo and the rhythm in music score. Because the student has decided the play the work as a rehearsal material, it can be concluded that the student has mastered the basics skill in playing string instruments and reading music scores.

3.2. Technical Skill

Technical expertise that gained through learning technically. After mastering basic skills in playing string instruments and reading scores, one must also know the basic techniques swiping such as *detache*, *legato* and *staccato*. By mastering the basics of playing string instruments, the

detache, *legato* and *staccato* techniques have been understood by the students of the StringEnsemble-course.

3.3. Interpersonal Skill

Everyone's skills in communication each other such as listening to someone, giving opinions and working as a team. In playing ensembles, one must be able to interact socially with other while doing a work. This skill of course is acquired when students do the work, because it shows how each individual understands each other's roles and listens to each other's opinions.

3.4. Problem Solving

A person's skill in solving problems by using logic or feelings. In playing the ensemble sometimes the problem can affect the effectiveness of rehearsal. One's expertise in solving problems while working on work for example: can identify problems and come up with ideas to help other individuals to open their minds in solving problems. Problem Solving

skills are needed so that the conditions during rehearsal remain conducive and effective.

After the author has observed and analyzed the above data, Brandenburg concerto NoIII In G Major part I has an important role towards the students' skills, covering the technique as well as non-technique capacity. It can be seen in the following table.

SKILLS	
Technique	Non-Technique
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowing • Crossing Strings • Combination of bowing legato and detache • Combination of bowing legato and sparate bows • Detache barok • Technique in holding baroque bow • Fingering • Knowing position 1st, 3rd& 4th • Knowing to use shifting • Intonation in G Major tone • Expresion • Dynamic • Tempo Expresion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the role of melody and music accompaniment • Knowing the influence of era towards a work • Knowing the baroque music character • Knowing the baroque music style • Knowing polyphonic texture • Knowing harmony background • Listening to each other

Table 4.2 Skill in Brandenburg Concerto NoIII In G Major part I (source: private)

4. Conclusion

After a long analysis process, the researchers finally came to some conclusions for the research conducted on the work of Brandenburg Concerto NoIII In G Major Part I Johann Sebastian Bach who became teaching and rehearsal material to be worked on jointly by the Ensemble String students of Pasundan University as the subject of the reserach. Analysis conducted on student skills. This work is quite important to the skills of students, because in this work there are aspects that can develop the students' skills in terms of technique and non-techniquecapacity.

In terms of technique, this work can develop students' skill such as, Bowing techniques on string instruments that include Crossing Strings, Combination of bowing legato and detache, Combination of bowing legato and separate bows, Baroque Detache and how to hold a bow in baroque era.

In non-technique part, students can develop an understanding of ensemble play and interpretation of the work such as, understanding the role of melody and accompaniment, hearing each other, knowing the influence of the times on a work, knowing and understanding the character of baroque music, knowing the texture of Polyphony, knowing the interval of tone in harmony background textures and students know the style of the work in baroque times.

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