

ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: JS Bach's Suite IV, BWV 1010, for Violoncello Solo: Consideration of Sources for Performance Practice and Musical Interpretations Related to Implied Polyphony

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Harmonic motion in JS Bach's Suite IV, BWV 1010, from his set of unaccompanied cello suites, is interpreted in various ways in professional performances by both cellists and bassoonists. Although polyphony is clearly present in this suite through use of double-stops, sustained pedal tones, and arpeggiated chords, the music is mostly presented as a single musical line. This research considers whether, when polyphony is implied rather than distinct, differing perceptions and interpretations of the underlying harmony are evident in performers' choices of articulation and phrasing. Background on the scholarly sources used for reference to determine historically informed performance practice for Bach's unaccompanied cello suites is included, especially related to the role of bowing/articulation for musical expression and presentation of implied polyphony. An objective approach for locating implied polyphony in single instrumental lines, as presented by Stacey Davis in her article "Implied Polyphony in the Solo String Works of J.S. Bach: A Case for the Perceptual Relevance of Structural Expression" (*Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 23, no. 5 [June 2006]: 423), is applied to excerpts from the Prelude and Courante of Suite IV of Bach's cello suites. Davis's cumulative three-step system for identifying implied polyphony includes evaluation of the horizontal dimension of phrases and contrapuntal voice leading. This is accomplished through measurement of larger interval size as well as degree of contour change and degree of conjunct motion surrounding the larger interval. This data as a method of identifying presence of implied polyphony provides a basis for comparison of interpretation choices by cellists Pablo Casals, Bruno Cocset, Yo-Yo Ma, and Mischa Maisky, and bassoonists Hubert Mittermayer Nesterovskiy and Reuven Mark Mozes.