

Preface

Johannes Sperger (1750–1812) was a virtuoso of the Viennese violone, an ancestor of the modern contrabass with seven frets and four or five strings tuned from high to low A-F#-D-A-(F5). Like other string soloists of this period, Sperger often tuned the strings of his Viennese violone up a half step, making it a transposing instrument. Sperger read from a solo part in D, with the music sounding in Eb. This was the case for Sperger's *Concerto No. 2 in Eb major*, composed from April 17–30, 1778.

From 1777 until 1783, Sperger worked in the court orchestra of Prince Joseph Batthyány, Archbishop of Hungary, in Pressburg (now Bratislava), under concertmaster Anton Zimmermann (1741–1781). In *Konzertante Musik für Kontrabass in der Wiener Klassik [Concertante Music for Contrabass in the Viennese Classical Period]* (1969, 164), Adolf Meier reports that in 1778 the Pressburg court orchestra roster included 21 musicians: 4 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 1 bass (Sperger), 1 baryton, 3 oboes, 2 clarinets, 1 bassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, and 1 harp (no harpsichord). Thus, a modern basso continuo group for this concerto would include at least two cellos (one as ripieno), with bassoon and/or contrabass as optional ripieno instruments.

The Pressburg court orchestra roster in 1778 also included a copyist named Joseph Kinel, who may be the unknown copyist to whom Meier attributes the manuscript parts for this concerto in his *Thematisches Werkverzeichnis der Kompositionen von Johannes Sperger [Thematic Catalogue of Compositions by Johannes Sperger]* (1990, 33).

Of Sperger's eighteen contrabass concertos, the second is the earliest concerto with extant autograph fermata embellishments, consisting of two cadenzas and two alternative lead-ins, which appear on a loose-leaf page listed in the fragments and sketches section of Meier's catalogue (79). The cadenzas for the first two movements open with thematic quotations, and an incipit of the Rondo theme follows the second alternative lead-in. This source shows Sperger's early style of embellishing fermatas and serves as a guide to the process of creating new cadenzas and lead-ins for performers.

In the Allegro cadenza for the first movement, this edition combines the two alternative endings, labeled *Anhang [Appendix]*, into a continuous cadenza following the order in which they appear

in the source. The first appendix begins after the internal trill, while the second appendix appears in this edition as the final bar of the cadenza. In addition to the continuous version of this cadenza in this edition, performers may spontaneously end the cadenza after the internal trill or skip from the fermata on the downbeat of the final bar to the three notes before the ending trill. If the ending arpeggios in this cadenza prove too unidiomatic to realize in solo tuning, then performers can adapt the cadenza by transposing passages down an octave as needed or by creating new figurations. Sperger's additions to this cadenza invite the performer to approach it as a starting point in a creative process rather than as a final product.

In the Adagio cadenza for the second movement, this edition presents the two endings from the source, leaving the choice up to the performer. The bariolage progression in the first ending is more idiomatic in Viennese tuning than in solo tuning, while the double-stop progression in the second ending gives performers an option that is accessible in either Viennese tuning or solo tuning.

The third movement contains three lead-in fermatas, which Sperger labeled with the word *Ferma*. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) referred to these shorter fermata embellishments as *Eingänge* in letters to his father and his sister, while Daniel Gottlob Türk (1750–1813) used the term *Fermaten* in his *Klavierschule [School of Clavier Playing]* (1789). The same lead-ins for these three fermatas appear in the autograph score and the manuscript solo part. The alternative lead-ins from the fermata embellishments page correspond to the harmonic context of the last fermata in the Rondo. The second alternative lead-in leads to an ossia restatement of the rondo theme an octave higher than it appears in the manuscript solo part. These five examples give performers a variety of models to emulate when creating new lead-ins, whether composed, sketched, or improvised.