

Tachophobia

a sonata for solo cello

(August 2008)

Richard Whalley

Tachophobia

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Duration: c. 20 mins

Programme note

Dark, broody

With playful rubato; dance-like – Driven; possessed

Cantabile

Prestissimo

This cello sonata takes two very different sources for its inspiration: J.S. Bach and Tarantino's film *Deathproof* (2007). Bach speaks for himself: how can one not think of him when writing for cello? Where Tarantino's orgy of fast cars, beautiful women, a twisted predatory male and adrenalin fits in perhaps takes more explanation. In writing this piece two qualities of Tarantino's film impressed me: its gutsy yet intimate cinematography (there are no special effects; all stunts are real) and its simple black-and-white symmetrical structure, causing the second half of the film to be viewed in a particular way having been set up by the first half.

The sound of the cello is remarkable for its expressive range. From darkly sinister to highly-strung intensity to the sweetest lyricism, perhaps no instrument lends itself better to a musical representation of the qualities I was impressed by in *Deathproof*. The four movement structure – inspired by the symmetry of the film – is designed to exploit contrast. Thus the four movements are organised: lyrical/dark – physical/light – lyrical/light – physical/dark. The climactic final movement is in fact an attempt to depict the intense speed, physical excitement, and inescapable fear of a car chase.

This sonata was composed for the cellist Oliver Coates during the spring and summer of 2008.

Tachophobia

(i)

A great deal of flexibility is welcome in the first half of this movement - in terms of rhythm, timbre, vibrato, bow speed, etc. and even to some degree pitch. Especially earlier on the player should aim to blur string crossings. As the music becomes more lively later on, so the scope for flexibility is replaced by greater precision.

Glissandi / portamenti: = uneven slide, con vib.; = even slide, senza vib.

Dark, broody $\text{♩} = 76$

Richard Whalley

always very expressive and flexible; almost weeping

con sord

Violoncello

Dark, broody $\text{♩} = 76$

always very expressive and flexible; almost weeping

con sord

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Dark, broody $\text{♩} = 76$

always very expressive and flexible; almost weeping

con sord

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Dark, broody $\text{♩} = 84$

heavy

pushing forward slightly

flautando

non flaut.

sul pont.

poco sul pont.

nat.

(8ves optional here)

again, pushing forward

shadow upper 8ve

51 $\text{J} = 92$
 Bass clef 5/4 4/4 3/4 2/4 5/4 4/4 3/4 4/4
 pp mf mf mf (sim.) p pp

57 (IV) (III)
 espress. sul pont. p pp p p vib.
 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

62 poco rit.
 mf p poco accel. IV gliss. gliss. gliss. gliss. mf
 a tempo nat.

67 pushing forward
 gliss. gliss. gliss. pp poch. cresc.
 mp mp mp pp poch. cresc.
 $\text{J} = 104$ nat., poco flaut.

72 accentuated rhythm; increasingly lively
 p

78 (melting) espress. III, II (or IV, III if too big a stretch)
 pp p 3 3 3 3

83 II, I; rhythm becomes more accentuated
 p cresc. p cresc.

88 Lively $\text{J} = 120$
 molto sfz f f sfz f

94 Slower, more flexible $\text{J} = 84$
 f dim. $\text{p semplice, sempre portamenti}$

100 sul tasto nat. sul tasto
 pp p pp pp pp pp pp pp

105 remove mute
 nat. pp pp pp pp pp pp pp ff
 attacca

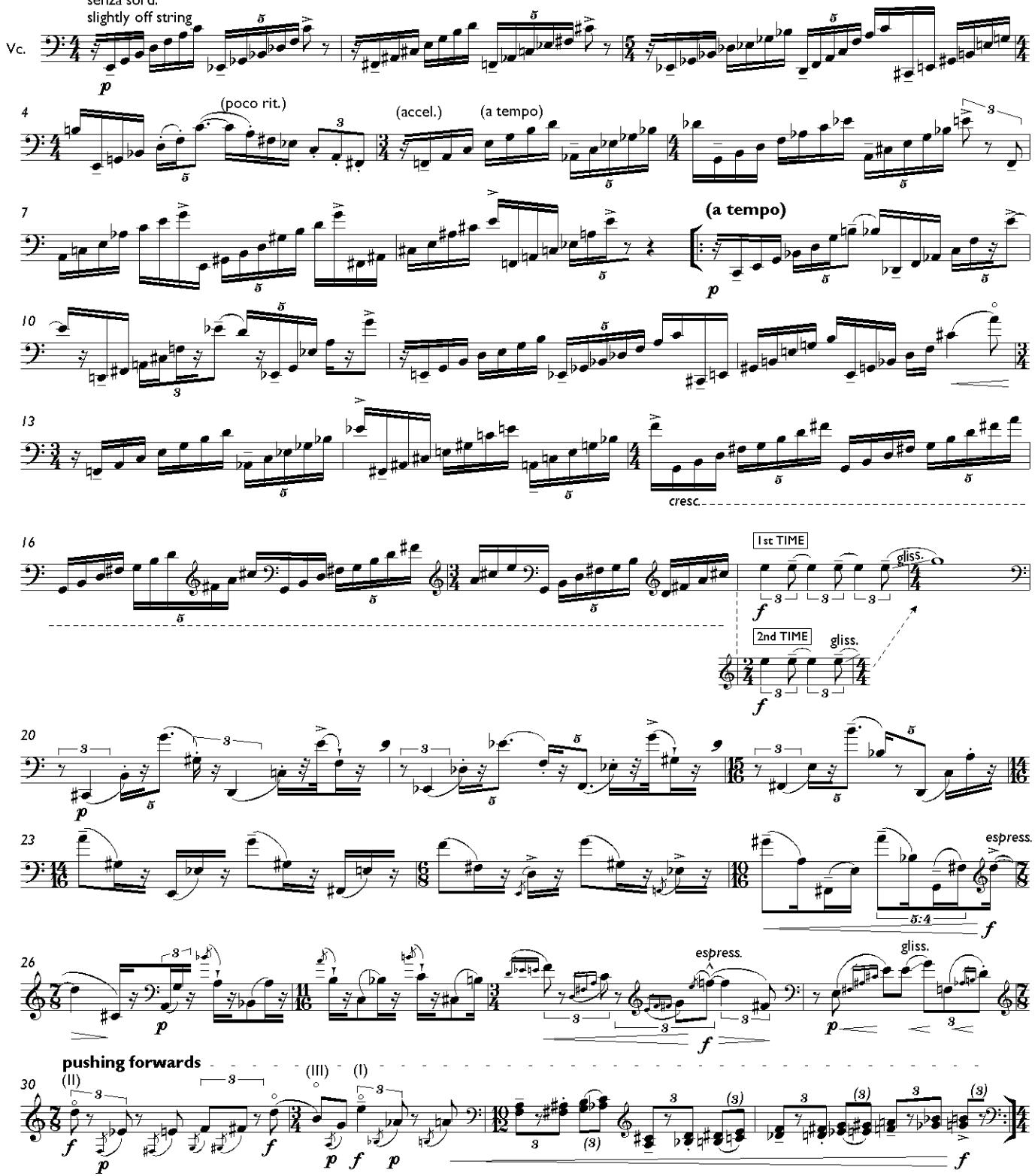
(ii)

3

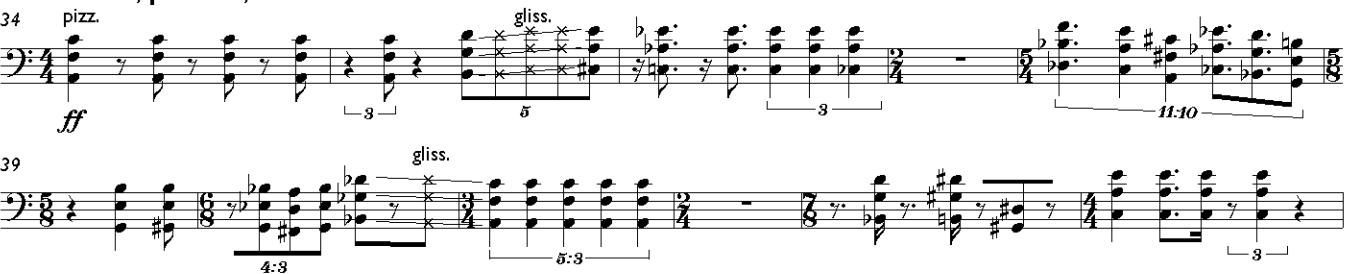
With playful rubato; dancelike, $J=92$

senza sord.

slightly off string

Vc. 

Driven; possessed, $J=138$

pizz. 

Musical score for orchestra, page 10, measures 45-73. The score consists of two systems of music. The top system starts at measure 45 with a dynamic of *v*, followed by a section with a 5:3 time signature and a dynamic of *f*. The bottom system starts at measure 50 with a dynamic of *ff*. Both systems feature complex harmonic structures with many sharps and flats. Measure 55 includes a 3:2 ratio. Measure 61 contains a section labeled "sempre gliss." with a dynamic of *meno f, cresc...*. Measure 67 features a 6:5 time signature. Measure 73 concludes the page with a dynamic of *ff*, a section labeled "sffz", and a melodic line ending with a fermata.

Tempo I, but more intense than before

without rubato (except where marked)

Musical score for page 10, measures 80-96. The score consists of two systems of music for bassoon and piano.

Measures 80-82: Bassoon part features sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 80: dynamic *f*. Measure 81: dynamic *p*, tempo *(poco rit.)*. Measure 82: tempo *(accel.)*, dynamic *f*, tempo *(a tempo)*.

Measures 83-86: Bassoon part continues with sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 83: dynamic *p*, tempo *(a tempo)*. Measures 84-85: dynamic *f*. Measure 86: dynamic *meno. f*.

Measures 87-90: Bassoon part continues with sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 87: dynamic *v*. Measures 88-89: dynamic *v*. Measure 90: dynamic *cresc.*

Measures 91-93: Bassoon part continues with sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 91: dynamic *v*. Measures 92-93: dynamic *p*, tempo *cresc.*

Measure 94: Bassoon part begins a new section with a treble clef, dynamic *p*, and tempo *ff*. The piano part has a sustained note. Measure 95: dynamic *ff*, tempo *ff*.

Measure 96: Bassoon part ends with a glissando (dynamic *ff*) and a final dynamic *ff*.

more flexible

99 *pp*

101 *p* *f* *espress.*

105 *p* *f* *espress.* *gliss.*

pushing forwards

109 (II) (III) (I) *f* *p f p* *ff*

Driven; possessed, $\text{♩} = 138$

113 (arco) *ff* *gliss.*

117 *11:10* *4:3* *5:3*

122 *5:8*

126 *heavy* *ff* *ff*

132 *11:6* *5:3* *4:3*

136 *increasingly heavy bow strokes* *ff* *ff*

142 *p cresc.* *→*

149 as before, non flaut.

Tempo I, suddenly relaxed, lilting

156 pizz.

159

163

166

170 cresc.

174 (vib.) (sempre pizz.)

Suddenly slower very gradual accel.

ff p

178 (vib.)

f

182 A tempo (vib.) gliss.

p f p

186 (vib.) (gliss.) poco rit. (3) (3)

f p f p mf (3) (3) pp

(iii)

Timing: notation is proportional, and the timings of each "bar" are based on an assumption that each system is approximately 15 seconds long, subdivided into three groups of 5 seconds, denoted by ticks on the upper line of the stave. This is a guide to what is required, but some flexibility in the actual timing is welcomed.

Note lengths: ♩ = < 0.5 secs ; • = c. 0.5 - 1 secs ; o = > 1 sec (can be much longer in some cases).

arco; cantabile 5" 5" 5"

II con sord. (6") (8.5")

Vc.

(18) + (9'') + (I) (6.5'')
 (20) + (7'') + (6'') sul tasto (6'')
 (23) + (4.5'') + (5.5'')
 (25) + (8'') + (arco) (I) (5.5'') + (I) (4.5'') + (I)
 (28) (7'') + (II) (6.5'') + (4.5'')
 (31) + (7'') + (5'')
 (33) + (9'') + (5.5'')
 (35) + (10'') p diminuendo
 (36) (11'') + (5'') attacca; remove mute
 (only play final C# if performing this movement alone)
 ppp