AN ANALYSIS OF HONEGGER’S CELLO CONCERTO (1929):
A RETURN TO SIMPLICITY?
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Literature available on Honegger’s Cello Concerto suggests this concerto is often considered as a composition that resonates with Les Six traditions. While reflecting currents of Les Six, the Cello Concerto also features departures from Erik Satie’s and Jean Cocteau’s ideal for French composers to return to simplicity. Both characteristics of and departures from Les Six examined in this concerto include metric organization, thematic and rhythmic development, melodic wedge shapes, contrapuntal techniques, simplicity in orchestration, diatonicism, the use of humor, jazz influences, and other unique performance techniques.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Honegger’s Cello Concerto was composed in 1929 for cellist Maurice Maréchal. This work was written during the avant-garde movement when French composers looked for a return to lighter and simpler compositions. Although Honegger stands as an important but overlooked musical figure in modern music, over recent years, scholarly writings have surfaced to allow detailed examinations on his musical background, aesthetics and compositional preferences. A large amount of research focuses on Honegger’s best-known compositions; however there has not been much detailed research on Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Literature available on Honegger’s Cello Concerto reveals that this concerto is often considered to be a composition that resonates with Les Six traditions. It is branded with other compositions Honegger composed in the early 1920s, and is said to be music that is light, optimistic and lyrical.\(^1\) Additionally the concerto is often considered to be music containing simple four-bar phrases, with light use of humor and jazz references.\(^2\) Harry Halbreich’s book, titled *Arthur Honegger*, described the Cello Concerto as a light and modest work.\(^3\) However, despite claims that the music is simplistic, light, and perhaps not an appropriate object for aesthetic contemplation, I will argue against these claims by illustrating how sophisticated and worthy of artistic merit the composition really is. Studying the Cello Concerto in light of Honegger’s background and aesthetic preferences will set him apart from his Les Six contemporaries and reveal different styles and characteristics that are

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incorporated in the concerto. The purpose of this study is to convince musicians, scholars and listeners that Honegger’s Cello Concerto reflects not only Les Six influences, but it also reflects salient features that depart from Erik Satie and Jean Cocteau’s ideal for French composers to return to simplicity. Characteristics of this concerto include metric organization, thematic and rhythmic development, the use of wedge shapes, the juxtapositions of fourth and tritone, the use of contrapuntal techniques, simplicity in orchestration, diatonicism, the use of humor, jazz influences and unique performance techniques. Conventional tonal analytical methods are used for this study.
CHAPTER II

HONEGGER’S MUSICAL AESTHETICS

Honegger’s Germanic influences stemmed from his admiration of Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Richard Strauss and Richard Wagner, which dominated his early appreciation for music.\(^4\) He was also a member of Les Six, a group that was initiated by Erik Satie and continued by Jean Cocteau to establish new French nationalistic compositions.

Musicologists agreed that the official recognition of the group was after the publication of Henri Collet’s two articles about the six composers in January of 1920.\(^5\) The group was brought together as a reaction to Teutonicism and French impressionism.\(^6\)

Although Honegger was a member of Les Six, he made a clear attempt to separate himself from the group’s aesthetics because he did not want to be seen as a composer that only composed light, banal and witty music. In his book, *I Am a Composer*, Honegger stressed his devotion to Bach’s music by saying,

> I do not cultivate an admiration for the music of the fairgrounds and music hall, but on the contrary for that of chamber and symphonic music at its most grave and austere. … I attach great importance to music architecture which I would never like to see sacrificed for literary or pictorial reasons. I also have a perhaps exaggerated tendency to return to polyphonic complexity. My great model is J.S. Bach.\(^7\)

In Keith Waters’ dissertation, he also acknowledged Honegger’s admiration for Beethoven’s musical organization specifically seen in thematic developments and Bach’s contrapuntal techniques. Waters went further to address that Honegger often used the methods mentioned above without the common harmonic language: for example, traditional voice leading

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\(^6\) Ibid., 25.

\(^7\) Honegger, *I Am a Composer*, 93-94.
featuring the proper use of thirds, fourths and fifths.\textsuperscript{8} In Honegger’s Cello Concerto, he often uses tonal centers to mark different sections and important arrival points.

Even though Honegger admitted that his musical aesthetics did not align strictly with Les Six, some of his music in the early 1920s still reflected much of the characteristics of this group. According to Waters, Honegger’s compositions in the 1920s are typical works that reflected Les Six’s musical influences. Waters states,

In addition, some of Honegger’s compositions written during the 1920s indeed reflected the lighter French tradition attributed to the group [Les Six], such as the piano works \textit{Sept pieces breves} (1920), \textit{Le Cahier romand} (1923), the vocal work \textit{Six Poesies de Jean Cocteau} (1923) and the \textit{cello concerto} (1929). In their lucid diatonicism, simple four-bar phrasing, use of humor, and jazz references, these compositions share characteristics with other representative works of \textit{Les Six}.\textsuperscript{9}

This concerto, written in 1929, represents not only characteristics of Les Six, but also other characteristics that are related to Honegger’s diverse background and musical aesthetics. The following chapter highlights different compositional techniques Honegger uses in the Cello Concerto. Some compositional techniques are associated with Les Six characteristics and others represent non Les Six characteristics.

\textsuperscript{8} Waters, “Rhythmic and Contrapuntal Structures,” 5.

\textsuperscript{9} Waters, “Rhythmic and Contrapuntal Structures,” 12.
CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS OF HONEGGER’S CELLO CONCERTO

The Formal Structure of the Cello Concerto

One of the clearest Les Six characteristics in the Cello Concerto is its simpler formal structure. Utilizing sonata form, Honegger achieves various culminations and arrival points by using binary key relations. Unlike the typical concerto structure that includes an orchestra tutti before each solo entrance, Honegger allows the solo cello in this concerto to play throughout three movements without long pauses. Similar to Saint-Seans’ Cello Concerto, there is no indication of long pauses between the three movements. It is customary to perform all three movements of Honegger’s Cello Concerto *attacca*. The formal structure of the cello concerto follows a traditional three-movement scheme of fast–slow–fast (see Table 1).

Table 1. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Overview of Movements I, II, and III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cello Concerto</th>
<th>Formal Structure of Movements I, II and III</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement I – (Fast)</strong></td>
<td>Introduction – Exposition – Development – Recapitulation – Coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo (quarter note = half note)</td>
<td>C/b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 1-157</td>
<td>F#/f#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Tonalities</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement II – (Slow)</strong></td>
<td>A – B – A’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lento</td>
<td>F#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 158-212</td>
<td>C/C#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Tonalities</td>
<td>F#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement III – (Fast)</strong></td>
<td>Exposition – Development – Recapitulation – Coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegro Marcato</td>
<td>C/F#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 213-432</td>
<td>Eb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Tonalities</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first movement of the concerto is in sonata form with an introduction and a coda framing the exposition, development and recapitulation. Although the eighteen measures of the introduction begin with a tempo indication of Andante with a meter of 3/4, the exposition quickly changes meter to 2/2 with “quarter note equals half note” as a new tempo indication.\(^\text{10}\)

The second movement stands as a slow contrasting movement following the first movement. The tempo indication of this movement is Lento with a meter of 3/4, similar to the opening in the first movement. The second movement outlines an A-B-A’ form, where A and A’ share recurring themes and motifs. The B section showcases a solo cello cadenza and is followed by a brief accompanied cadenza. Unlike the first movement where the solo cello sometimes plays the accompaniment for the orchestra, the solo cello in the second movement always plays the melody while the orchestra plays the accompaniment. The returning section after B in Movement II is labeled as A’ because although the melodic material is the same, the accompaniment is different than in the first A section.\(^\text{11}\)

The third movement contrasts the second movement with a lively tempo indication of Allegro Marcato and a 2/2 meter. In this movement, Honegger takes the motif from the first movement and develops it through various wedge shapes. The central motif in Movement III is a rhythmically-driven wedge pattern that is first heard in Movement I as the second theme’s counter subject. Honegger also includes a tonal center of F-sharp in the second theme of the exposition to remind listeners of both movements I and II.\(^\text{12}\)

The overall fast–slow–fast sequence of movements includes the sonata form of the first and the third movements and the ABA’ form of the second movement. These aspects project

\(^{10}\) Refer to Ex. A.1. in the Appendix for a complete example of themes and motifs of Movement I.

\(^{11}\) Refer to Ex. A.2. in the Appendix for a complete example of themes and motifs of Movement II.

\(^{12}\) Refer to Ex. A.3. in the Appendix for a complete example of themes and motifs of Movement III.
formal symmetry and simplicity that is reminiscent of Les Six. Also, Honegger does not restrict himself to the traditional key relationship of tonic and dominant in this concerto. Instead, he focuses on the binary tonal relationship of tritones C and F-sharp. The tritone relationship within each movement is expanded and manifests in the overarching tonal scheme of all three movements. In addition to using recurring principal tonalities, Honegger further ties these movements together by developing melodic and rhythmic motifs from the first movement in Movements II and III.

Structure of the Concerto by Rhythmic and Metric Organization

Table 1 demonstrates the formal structure of the Cello Concerto by referencing its tonal centers in different sections. This section presents a more detailed analysis of the structure of the concerto by looking into its rhythmic and metric organization.

Honegger experiments with a mathematical and musical concept in this concerto, which he also used in Pacific 231. When Honegger commented on Pacific 231 in his biography, he said “To tell the truth, in Pacific, I was on the trail of a very abstract and quite ideal concept, by giving the impression of a mathematical acceleration of rhythm, while the movement itself slowed.”

In Pacific 231, Honegger works with the concept of gathering speed while slowing down the tempo markings, whereas in the Cello Concerto, he reverses the concept by slowing down the speed while increasing the tempo markings.

The concept of combining mathematical acceleration of rhythm and deceleration of tempo marking suggests that Honegger sometimes plans rhythmic and metric organization

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separately from musical material. His abstract concept of rhythm in this concerto lies in the relationship of the quarter note to the half note and vice versa (see Table 2).

Table 2. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Metric Structure of Movements I, II and III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mvt. I</th>
<th>Mm. 1-18 Andante, Tempo 3/4</th>
<th>Mm. 19-131 Exposition through recapitulation</th>
<th>Mm. 132-150 Tempo 2/2</th>
<th>Mm. 151-157 Coda: Cyclic return of solo theme and theme I</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mvt. II</td>
<td>Mm. 158-162 Lento 3/4</td>
<td>Mm. 163 2/4</td>
<td>Mm. 164-180 3/4</td>
<td>Mm. 181-183 Solo, Stringendo 4/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mvt. III</td>
<td>Mm. 213-412 Allegro Marcato 2/2</td>
<td>Mm. 413 4/4</td>
<td>Mm. 414-419 Lento 3/4</td>
<td>Mm. 420-424 -- 2/2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout the concerto, Honegger uses numerous meter changes. If the tempo of the quarter note remained the same throughout the concerto, then Honegger would not have succeeded with the manipulation of note values and tempi. With the introduction of theme I in Movement I, Honegger changes the meter from 3/4 to 2/2. This simple meter change indicates a slowing down of rhythm and gives the impression of a mathematical deceleration. However, Honegger adds a tempo marking of quarter note equals half note (♩ ♩), which accelerates the tempo. On top of tempo changes, there is also a consistent meter-change pattern in movements I and III. The recurring pattern of 3/4 going to 2/2 occurs twice in Movement I (m. 19 and m. 77).
151), once in connecting Movement II to Movement III (m. 213), and once more in the Lento section of Movement III (m. 420).

Although Honegger does not mark the tempo change of quarter note equals half note and vice versa in Movement II, the second movement still contains different meter patterns just like the outer movements. The opening 3/4 pattern is followed by a 2/4 pattern at m. 163, defining a four-measure recurring bass line, as well as a five-note motif played by the tuba. The end of section A is interrupted by section B in m. 181, which is in 4/4. The return of A’ in m. 184 is once again written in 3/4 meter.

In the third movement, the 2/2 meter starting at m. 213 is interrupted by the unusual 4/4 meter in m. 413. It is followed by the cyclic return of the 3/4 meter section of the orchestra and solo theme from Movement I in mm. 414-419.\(^{14}\) In this section, Honegger omits the marking of half note equals quarter note (\(\frac{1}{2}\)\(\frac{1}{2}\)), but he inserted a 4/4 meter as a slow transition to the 3/4 meter in the \textit{Lento} section in m. 413. In this section, the tempo is slightly slower than in the opening of the concerto because of the Lento marking. By m. 420, Honegger assumes the performers will automatically use the tempo marking of quarter note equals half note (\(\frac{1}{2}\)\(\frac{1}{2}\)). He omits the tempo indication because it is a cyclic return of the solo theme and theme 1 in Movement I.

The different sections in the concerto seem to be clear and easily identifiable based on the meter changes. However, when the occurrences of meter changes are compared with the entrances of motifs and phrases, the clear structure becomes blurred in a few areas. Table 3 identifies sections where the entrance of the melodic phrase does not occur exactly at the same time as the meter change.

\(^{14}\) Refer to Ex. A in the Appendix for orchestra and solo themes from Movement I.
Table 3. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Comparison chart on meter changes and melodic phrases, Movements I, II and III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Meter change</th>
<th>Melodic phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mvt. I - Theme I</td>
<td>m. 19</td>
<td>m. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mvt. I – Cyclic return of solo theme and theme I</td>
<td>m. 132</td>
<td>m. 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mvt. II – solo Cadenza</td>
<td>m. 181</td>
<td>m. 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mvt. II – A’</td>
<td>m. 184</td>
<td>m. 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mvt. III – Cyclic return of theme I</td>
<td>m. 420</td>
<td>m. 419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the thirteen meter changes in the concerto, there are five sections where the entrance of the thematic material does not line up with the meter changes: there are two instances in Movement I, two instances in Movement II and one instance in Movement III.

In Movement I, the first appearance of theme 1 occurs in m. 18. It enters one measure before the meter changes from 3/4 to 2/2 in m. 19. This order of appearance happens once more in the cyclic return of theme 1 in Movement III. The thematic material enters in m. 419, one measure ahead of the meter change in m. 420. Other sections in table 3 above demonstrate meter changes that occur before the entrance of the thematic material. In the cyclic return of the solo theme and theme 1, the meter changes in m. 132 from 2/2 to 3/4, and the thematic material does not enter until one measure later in m. 133. Similarly, in Movement II, the solo Cadenza’s entrance played by the solo cello starts one measure later in m. 182, rather than m. 181, where the meter changes from 3/4 to 4/4. The most delayed entrance of the melodic line is observed in the return of A’ in Movement II at m. 194. The moment of the return of A’ is blurred because the meter suggests the return of A’ happens at m. 184, but the thematic material suggests the return of A’ starts at m. 194, which is a ten-measure difference instead of the usual 1 measure difference. Despite the inconsistencies, there is still uniformity within these sections with blurred
entrances. The first and the last sections, m. 19 and m. 420, both allow the melodic entrance to take place one measure ahead of the meter change, whereas in all other sections the meter changes first, and the entrance of the melodic material is delayed.

The rhythmic organization in this concerto of slowing down of rhythm while increasing the tempo markings, and vice versa, is made possible by the constant change of meters and tempo markings. Rhythmic and metric organization in this concerto is another tool in which Honegger organizes his music in addition to using thematic developments. It is not a typical characteristic of Les Six’s simplicities, but it is rather a representation of a more complex way of musical organization typical to Honegger’s compositional process.

Thematic and Rhythmic Development

Honegger expressed his ideal concept for thematic development in his interview with Bernard Gavoty:

I frequently compare a symphony or a sonata with a novel in which the themes are the characters. After we have made their acquaintance, we follow their evolution, the unfolding of their psychology. Their individual features linger with us as if present. Some of those characters arouse feelings of sympathy, others repel us. They are set off against one another or they join hands.  

This quotation suggests that thematic development is essential in Honegger’s music. Once a theme for a movement has been presented, this theme is expected to be transformed within the movement or it is expected to evolve throughout the entire composition. Themes within the composition could either work together to compliment each other or they could be set against each other to create polyphonic complexities.

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15 Honegger, I am a Composer, 74.
Themes and motifs in this concerto are often derived from a minute cell of musical thought. Ex. 1 shows how various themes and motifs develop within and throughout different movements.

Ex. 1. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, themes and motifs in Movements I, II and III.  

The two-note motif from Movement I in mm. 1-2 opens the concerto. This two-note motif (A1) transforms to theme I (A2) in the exposition in mm. 18-26. The whole step from notes D to C remains consistent in theme I, but the order of their appearance is reversed.

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16 Example 1 shows the development of themes with blue brackets. All musical examples are played by Solo Cello except A1 (Violin I) and C3 (Trumpets).
Rhythmically, theme I transforms from a 3/4 meter to a 2/2 meter in m. 19 with a tempo marking of quarter note equals half note (♩·♩), making the tempo increase in its speed by half.

The solo theme (B1) in mm. 2-18 takes on a very simple outline of the C major triad. Its melodic contour covers three octaves of C major. Each of the four phrases from mm. 2-18 ends on a note that defines a C major triad. This solo theme transforms into F-sharp major (B2) in the development in mm. 64-91 along with a rhythmic augmentation. The meter changes from a 3/4 meter in the introduction to a 2/2 meter in the development. The length of the notes in (B2) is expanded into quarter and half notes from the eighth and sixteenth notes in (B1).

In the exposition of Movement I, new melodic material is introduced in theme 2 (C1) in mm. 33-41. (C1) is paired with a counter subject that I will refer to as the nucleus motif (C2). The nucleus motif draws from the rhythmic cell from the orchestral two-note motif (A1), and reverses the order of the sixteenth and the dotted eighth notes. Theme 2 (C1) and the nucleus motif (C2) appear again in mm. 94-97 (C3) in canonic imitation expressed by different instruments. The canonic imitation (C3) in mm. 94-97 contains both theme 2 and the nucleus motif and Honegger adds imitative gestures and layering of different instruments to it. The end of the nucleus motif in m. 34 is also the main building block in Movement III, appearing in theme 1 (C4) in mm. 213-303. The wedge shape in m. 34 in the first movement transforms into the central melodic characteristic in Movement III.17

In the second movement, the solo theme consists of two phrases. The first phrase (D1) begins in m. 161 with F-sharp. The range of the phrase climbs to C-sharp, a fifth higher than the opening pitch. The second phrase (D2) enters in m. 169 and extends the range to F-sharp, completing the one octave range from the starting pitch of phrase one. These two phrases (D1

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17 See Ex. C in the Appendix for themes and motifs of Movement III.
and D2) in the second movement transform into the counter theme of theme 2 in Movement III (D3) in m. 286. The range of (D3) is the combination of (D1 and D2) in Movement II. The triplet rhythm from (D1 and D2) is augmented from eighth triplets to quarter triplets in (D3).

The characteristic of Honegger’s thematic organization in this concerto may possibly be seen as a Les Six quality. However, according to Honegger’s own aesthetic preferences and Keith Waters’ observation of Honegger’s compositional style, the intricate planning of thematic development in this concerto seems to connect directly to Honegger’s admiration for Beethoven’s structure of thematic developments.

Simplicity in Orchestration and Diatonicism

The first movement of Honegger’s Cello Concerto begins with an introduction of eighteen measures. This opening demonstrates Les Six’s style in a few manners. Within the first eighteen measures, Honegger includes simple homophonic textures in the orchestration, the use of a basic repeated harmonic progression in the supporting instrumental voices, clear diatonic scale patterns in the solo cello and the demonstration of transparent four-bar phrasing (see Ex. 2).
Example 2 demonstrates the three moving parts in the introduction. These main sections include the strings (mm. 1-2, 5-6, 13-14, 17-18), the bassoon and horn accompaniment and the solo cello (mm. 2-5, 6-9, 10-13, 14-17). The harmonic progression of the opening from mm. 1-18 is between tonic and subdominant (I-IV-I-IV-I-IV-I-IV-I-IV), separated into small sections of mostly four bar phrases, except the last two measures. The first tetrachord of notes C-D-E-F in the bass line appears in the accompaniment every four measures in succession while the violins play the same dotted rhythmic motif. These two-measure segments (mm. 1-2, 5-6, 13-14, 17-18) act as the beginning of a four-measure phrase and are answered by both the solo cello melody and the wind accompaniment. The repeating two-measure segments and the four-measure phrases are interlocked by a long held note in the solo cello part.
The woodwind phrases (mm. 2-5, 6-9-10-13, 14-17) consist of a pattern that travels from subdominant to tonic. This pattern gives the introduction an almost plagal connotation, and generates consistent waves of diatonic Swells. Each time the strings walk up the tetrachord of notes C-D-E-F in the first half of the phrase, the woodwinds answer in downward notes of F-E-D-C over the second half of the phrase, creating a basic diatonic melodic pattern (see Ex. 3).

Ex. 3. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Finale extraction of strings and 2nd bassoon parts, Movement I.

In Ex. 3, the second bassoonist plays a rhythmic augmentation and tonal inversion of the notes that occur with each of the string entrances. The second bassoon moves down by step from notes F to C, using the first tetrachord notes of the C-major scale (F-E-D-C). This alternation of the stepwise motion from note C walking up to note F in the strings and from note F walking down to note C in the winds create the recurring diatonic wave.

Since the cello solo occurs simultaneously with the bassoons and horn accompaniment in the introduction, Honegger creates a conversational passage that begins with the strings and the conversation is answered by the winds and solo cello. Honegger separates the conversation into two categories: the consistent range of the accompaniment parts and the solo cello that is represented by one big downward gesture that outlines the tonal center of C major. Between every string accompaniment, the solo cello outlines a diatonic melody with wind
accompaniment. These four-bar phrases are divided by long notes (pitches E, C, G, C) in the solo cello line (see Ex. 4).

Ex. 4. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Finale extraction of solo cello, arrival notes of solo theme, Movement I, mm. 2, 5, 9, 13 and 17.

The solo cello outlines a clear C major triad, spanning three octaves in a downward gesture. The solo theme starts from a high note C in m. 2 and arrives on E at the end of the first phrase in m. 5. The second phrase, mm. 6-9, starts from note A and goes downward and pauses on note C in m. 9, one octave lower than the opening pitch. The third phrase, mm. 10-13, outlines the beginning phrase from C and a downward motion to G in m. 13. The last full phrase, mm. 14-17, begins from G and goes downward to note C in m. 17.

The characteristics of simplicity in orchestration and diatonicism in the concerto represent Les Six traditions. The light orchestration reflects a simple and a clear texture, while the repeated tetrachord and the solo cello’s outlining of the C major triad give a calm and translucent character to the opening of Movement I.

Imitation, Contour Shapes and Polyphonic Complexity

To contrast the light orchestration and diatonicism in the opening of Movement I, Honegger also uses canonic imitation and polyphonic complexities in this concerto. In his biography, Honegger gives credit to J.S. Bach for his adaptation to complex polyphonic
compositions. Example 5 demonstrates how Honegger uses the *nucleus motif* in mm. 33-34 of Movement I and expands it later with canonic imitation as well as polyphonic complexity in m. 77 and mm. 83-86.

Ex. 5. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extractions from the orchestral score, imitation and polyphonic complexity, Movement I, mm. 33-34, m. 77, mm. 83-86.

Honegger uses the entire string section in m. 77, but he divides the strings to upper and lower sections. The lower voices: viola, cello and contrabass, enter with the *nucleus motif* on the downbeat of m. 77. The lower string entrance is followed by the upper strings on beat three: violins I and II. This imitation develops into a more complex canonic imitation later in mm. 84-85. Mm. 84-85 have four clear canonic imitations of the nucleus motif. The complexity of the imitations lies in the division of the one measure motif and the assignment of the divided motif to different voices where the string section is paired with the bassoons, horns and trumpets. Cello and contrabass start the *nucleus motif* on beat one in m. 84 and the bassoons take over the motif on beat two. This exact imitation repeats at m. 85. The viola enters on the second beat of m. 84 with the triplets that begin the *nucleus motif* and the horns take over and finish the motif on beat

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three of m. 84. The second violin begins the *nucleus motif* on beat three of m. 84, and the second trumpet takes over the motif on beat four of m. 84. Last, the first violin starts the triplet motif on beat four of m. 84 and the first trumpet takes over the motif on beat one of m. 85. As seen in Ex. 5, mm. 83-86 demonstrate an aurally and visually complex polyphonic texture from the different timbres used for each imitation.

The *nucleus motif* continues its transformation in mm. 92-96. In Ex. 6, Honegger divides the *nucleus motif* and assigns it to two trumpets and a French horn. The imitation technique here is similar to that of m. 77 because the motif is again divided in half. The division of the motif is between beats two and three and the imitation enters every two beats in each measure. The first trumpet begins the motif on beat one and the second trumpet takes over and finishes the motif on beat three. The first trumpet part, which begins on the downbeat of m. 92 is paired with the horn part and the second trumpet part, which both enter on beat three of m. 92. In Ex. 7, Honegger continues to use imitations in Movement II and he also uses reversed contour lines to create mirror images.
Ex. 6. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extractions from the orchestral score, imitation and polyphonic complexity, Movement I, mm. 92-96.

Ex. 7. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extractions from the orchestral score, contour shapes, Movement II, m. 185.
Example 7 above demonstrates Honegger’s use of reversed contour lines to create mirror images in Movement II. After the solo cello cadenza, the orchestra accompaniment plays a series of imitations. The string section in m. 185 plays a wedge shape with B-flat as its center. On the first beat of m. 185, the wedge starts from E-flat and closes on B-flat. On the second beat, the wedge opens from E-flat to B-flat. The woodwinds expand on this reverse contour shape started by the strings on beat one of m. 185. In the first half of m. 185, the flutes and the first oboe have the descending contour shape and the second oboe and the clarinets have the ascending contour shape. This pattern is reversed in the second half of m. 185. The flutes and first oboe play the ascending pattern, while the second oboe and the clarinet play the descending pattern.
Ex. 8. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extractions from the orchestral score, reverse contour shape and mirror image, Movement II, mm. 194-196.

The reversed contour shapes develop even further in Ex. 8 above. In m. 194, the short wedge shapes in the strings are added to the woodwind pattern, creating another layer of complexity. Unlike Ex. 7, where there was no exact mirror image, Ex. 8 demonstrates a mirror image, a reverse contour shape and imitation. Honegger takes the ascending and descending patterns and assigns them to different voices. In m. 194, the first flute plays the descending pattern (1a), and it is answered by the second flute with the ascending pattern on beat two of m. 194 (2b). This ascending pattern on beat two is answered by another descending pattern played by the first flute on beat three of m. 194 (1a). The descending and ascending patterns in the flutes continue from m. 194-195 and they are mirror images of each other, with the central axis on F-
sharp or G-flat, (1a) is the mirror image of (2a) as well as (2b). The imitation of the descending line starts from first flute in m. 194 (1a) and travels to the first clarinet (1b) on beat two in the same measure. However, the notes of the clarinet imitation are entirely respelled with enharmonic notes. The ascending pattern begins in the second clarinet (2a) on the third beat of m. 194 and travels to the second flute (2b) in m. 195.

Ex. 9. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extractions from the orchestral score, imitation, Movement III, mm. 367–371.

Honegger continues to use imitation as a contrapuntal technique in Movement III. He takes theme 2 from Movement III and assigns the Themenkopf of theme 2 to various parts entering on different beats. In Ex. 9 above, Honegger pairs theme 1, played by the solo cello, with theme two. However, instead of assigning theme 2 to one part, Honegger assigns theme 2 to multiple orchestral parts to create polyphonic complexity and imitations. The tuba begins theme
2 on beat four of m. 367 and the bassoon enters with theme 2 on the downbeat of m. 368. The clarinet enters with theme 2 next on beat two of m. 368, and the oboe follows with theme 2 on beat three of m. 368. Finally the flute enters last with theme 2 in m. 368 on beat four. Each tutti instrument plays out theme 2 as far as possible before a chord interrupts both themes 1 and 2 in m. 372.

Imitation, contour shapes and polyphonic complexity are central characteristics of this concerto. These characteristics are aligned with Bach’s contrapuntal techniques more so than Les Six qualities. Honegger continues to use different contrapuntal techniques seen in the next section.

Wedge Shapes and Juxtaposition of Fourths and Tritones

Honegger permeates the concerto with the use of wedge shapes, fourths and tritones. The use of tritones is also seen in the overarching tonal scheme of the concerto discussed previously in *The Formal Structure of the Cello Concerto*. Theme I of Movement III comes from the nucleus motif in Movement I. This correlation forms the most significant wedge shape relationship between Movements I and III. The chromatic wedge shapes in Movements I and III often open to intervals of a fourth or a tritone, which underline the struggle of fourths and tritones throughout the concerto. Example 10 is a collection of musical examples from Movement I that demonstrate various wedge shapes that open to fourths and tritones.
Ex. 10. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, wedge shapes, Movement I.

| No. 1 | Solo Cello  
m. 34 | B\text{---}D \text{---} A | Interval: 4th |
| No. 2 | Solo Cello  
m. 36 | B\text{---}D \text{---} G\flat | Interval: Tritone |
| No. 3 | Solo Cello  
m. 40 | C\text{---}D\sharp \text{---} A\flat | Interval: 4th |
| No. 4 | Solo Cello  
m. 50  
Contra Bass | B\text{---}C\flat \text{---} D \text{---} A | Cello: 7th 
Contra Bass: 4th |
| No. 5 | Viola  
Cello  
Contra Bass  
m. 70 | E\text{---}F\flat \text{---} G\flat \text{---} D | Interval: 4th |
| No. 6 | Viola  
Cello  
Contra Bass  
m. 77 | E\text{---}F \text{---} G \text{---} C\natural | Interval: Tritone |
| No. 7 | Horns  
m. 92  
1\textsuperscript{st} Trumpet  
2\textsuperscript{nd} Trumpet | D\text{---}E \text{---} F \text{---} C \text{---} F \text{---} C | Horns: 4th 
1\textsuperscript{st} Trumpet and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Trumpet: 4th |

The first appearance of a wedge shape in Movement I occurs in m. 34. It is the counter subject of theme 2 in Movement I.\textsuperscript{19} Throughout Movement I, Honegger plays with different variations of wedge shapes, and many of them consist of intervals of fourths and tritones. In Ex. 10 above, wedge number 1 (m. 34) opens from note B upwards to D and downwards to A, creating the interval of a 4\textsuperscript{th}. Honegger pairs this first wedge with wedge number 2 in m. 36, which opens from note B upwards to D, and downwards to G-sharp, creating a tritone to contrast

\textsuperscript{19} Refer to Ex. A in the Appendix for themes and motifs in Movement I.

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wedge number 1. Wedge number 3 is similar to number 1, but it begins on note C, a half step higher than note B. Wedge number 4 is unique because Honegger pairs a reversed wedge shape in the tutti cello directly on top the normal wedge in the contrabass line. This multi-voice wedge shape has the cello wedge start from an interval of a seventh and closes on note G-sharp. Simultaneously, the contrabass plays a wedge shape that is the same as wedge number 1, but two octaves lower. The next two wedges, numbers 5 and 6, are similar to the first and second wedge shapes in m. 34 and m. 36. They start on a note a fifth lower than the original wedge shape.

Viola, cello and contrabass play both wedges in m. 70 and m. 77. The first of these wedges in m. 70 starts with note E and opens upward to G-sharp and downwards to D-sharp, creating an interval of a fourth. The wedge in m. 77 starts from note E and opens to a tritone. Finally, number 7 in Ex. 10 has numerous wedge shapes that start from m. 92 and go until m. 96, and these wedges are played by three different instruments. The wedges played by the French horn in number 7 of Ex. 10 are complete wedge shapes. However, the wedges played by the trumpets in number 7 of Ex. 10 are separated in halves. The first trumpet plays the first part of the wedge and the second trumpet takes over and finishes the wedge. The trumpets start the wedge pattern in m. 92, then, half way through playing the wedge shape, the horns enter with the same wedge and overlap the wedge texture.

Honegger did not use wedge shapes that open to fourths and tritones in Movement II, but he did include the use of the fourth (B) and the tritone (B-sharp or C) intervals in relationship to the tonal center of F-sharp. Example 11 shows the opening five-note motif in the Tuba in Movement II.
Ex. 11. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, five-note motif, Movement II, mm. 158-162.

The five-note motif in mm. 159-160 begins and ends with C-sharp, which is a fifth above F-sharp. The center note of the motif is A, leaving the second note and the fourth note to pair with each other. But instead of using the same pitch for the second and fourth note, Honegger chooses to use the tritone (B-sharp or C) and the fourth (B) of the tonal center F-sharp. The second note, B-sharp, is a tritone away from F-sharp. If B-sharp is respelled enharmonically as C natural, this section can be seen as a part of the overall struggle between the notes C and F-sharp in this concerto. The fourth note of the motif in m. 160 is B natural, which is a fourth above F-sharp. The five-note motif plays on top of a rhythmic drone on F-sharp, making the contrast of the tritone and the fourth obvious.

The solo cello cadenza from mm. 179-183 also suggests the struggle of the fourth (B) and the tritone (B-sharp or C) of tonal center F-sharp. The struggle ultimately resolves when F-sharp returns as the main tonal center in section A’ (see Ex. 12).
Mm. 182-183 from the cello cadenza has four sections and each section begins with note C: the downbeat of m. 182, the first and second fermata of m. 183 and the last ascending passage in m. 183 begin with note C. Although the tritone (B-sharp or C) in the key of f-sharp minor outlines the four sections in mm. 182-183, the interval of a fourth (B) appears consistently after the tritone (C) to make a contrast. The struggle of the intervals ultimately resolves to the tonal center of f-sharp minor (m. 194) at the end of the cadenza. At the end of section A’, m. 212, the solo cello plays an interval of a fourth down from F-sharp to C-sharp in m. 211. To contrast the fourth, the contrabass answers with an interval of a tritone, going down from C-sharp to G in m. 212, once again, highlighting the overall struggle of the fourth and the tritone in Movement II (see Ex. 13).
Ex. 13. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, end of Movement II, mm. 211-212.

Movement III establishes its tonal center in C from mm. 213-247. The introduction of theme II brings the tonal center of Movement III back to F-sharp before the tonal center C returns at the end. Example 14 shows wedge shape intervals of the solo cello part in Movement III. The wedge shapes of the solo cello line slowly evolve through the third movement. The first and the second wedge shapes both open to a tritone apart. In wedge shape number 3, the order of the last two notes are inverted and it opens to a fourth apart. Wedge number 4 uses the first note of every triplet group and opens to a tritone apart. In m. 409 and m. 410 of wedge number 5, the wedge in m. 409 inverts the last two notes and opens to a fourth apart, while the wedge shape in m. 410 opens to a tritone apart.
Ex. 14. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, wedge shapes, Movement III.

The struggle of fourths and tritones intensifies as the solo cello plays the two transitional triplet passages in mm. 238-248 and mm. 357-366. In both triplet passages, beats one and two are paired together, similarly beats three and four are paired together. In all measures, the first notes on beats one and two as well as the first notes on beats three and four all share the common interval of a fourth, with the exception of the circled notes in Ex. 15. The notes that are circled in blue signify the interval difference of a tritone, and the notes circled in red are intervals that are neither fourths nor tritones. In m. 238, the first notes on beats one and two are G and D, they are a fourth apart. Beats three and four of m. 239 are circled in blue, indicating that A-flat and D are a tritone apart. In each of the triplet passages, there is one exception that is circled in red. The exception in m. 241 of the first passage has G and E-flat, which are a major third apart. The
exception in m. 360 of the second passage has D and B-flat, which are a minor sixth apart (see Ex. 15 and 16).

Ex. 15. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, triplet passage of fourths and tritones, Movement III, mm. 238-248.
Ex. 16. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, triplet passage of fourths and tritones, Movement III, mm. 357-366.

All of the musical examples used in this section titled *Wedge Shapes and the Struggle of Fourths and Tritones* point towards Honegger’s use of wedge shapes as a contrapuntal technique. The intervals that wedge shapes open to suggest Honegger’s intricate planning for using the underlying struggle of the fourth and the tritone. This section describes musical characteristics that are not aligned with Les Six’s influences.

**Recurring Rhythmic Bass Pattern in Movement II**

Honegger incorporates another contrapuntal device in Movement II by using a recurring bass pattern to accompany the solo cello. The bass pattern in this Movement Is different from traditional bass patterns because Honegger strips the bass line of any melodic movement.
Instead, he creates a recurring rhythmic pattern based on a single note, F-sharp, and he assigns the bass line to two orchestral instruments: timpani and contrabass.

The rhythmic pattern appears at the beginning of Movement II at mm. 158-162. The bass pattern consists of four measures and it repeats within section A of this movement. The repeating bass pattern is sometimes separated by an inserted measure. Honegger assigns the bass line to muted timpani on F-sharp and the contrabass playing *col légno*.\(^\text{20}\) By assigning the contrabass to play *col légno*, Honegger transforms the contrabass into a percussive instrument like the timpani, therefore unifying the aural effect of the recurring bass pattern (see Ex. 17).

Ex. 17. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, repeating bass line, Movement II, mm. 158-162.

\(^\text{20}\) *Col légno* is a technique for string instruments where the player strikes the string with the wood of the bow.
Ex. 18. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extractions from the piano score, repeating bass line, Movement II, mm. 158-179.

The bass pattern in Ex. 18 above is an extraction from the piano score that combines the timpani and the contrabass parts into the piano left hand. The letters A to E in red designate where the complete and incomplete bass pattern repeats. Letters A, B, C and D are groups that contain the four measures of the repeated rhythmic pattern. Letter E is an incomplete repetition where there are only two measures of the bass pattern. Honegger inserts one measure of bass pattern in between letters A, B and C (m. 158, m. 163 and m. 168). Each of these inserted measures is rhythmically different. The 3/4 meter in m. 158 changes to 2/4 meter in m. 163. The inserted measure before letter C in m. 168 returns to a 3/4 meter. Honegger purposefully placed the notes in the inserted measures on different beats to avoid consistency. The beginning of the rhythmic bass patterns B and C matches the entrances of the solo cello melody in Movement II.
The repeated bass pattern seems to be related to a *basso ostinato* of the baroque era. However the repeated bass pattern in this Movement I is on one note and it is rhythmically and metrically much more complex.\(^{21}\) It does not resonate with Les Six characteristics.

**Humor, Wit and Mockery**

In Charles Rosen’s book titled *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, he describes a change in how wit and humor is used in compositions during the late eighteenth century: Rosen states that humor slowly became a musical characteristic that is independent from non-musical allusions. He also describes wit as a musical characteristic that is created when the unexpected is made the expected and when nonsense is made into sense.\(^{22}\) For example, the quick juxtaposition of dynamic differences, sudden change of characteristics and the use of enharmonic spellings to create a distinction between tonalities as a musical pun all points toward the idea of making the unexpected the expected. “The incongruous seen as exactly right, the out-of-place suddenly turning out to be just where it ought to be – this is an essential part of wit.”\(^{23}\)

In a similar manner, Honegger achieves characteristics of humor, wit and mockery in this concerto by changing the intensity of orchestration, dynamics, character, and he works with the combination of timbres with different instruments. In the first movement, mm. 54-57 demonstrate the first encounter of wittiness in the concerto. The wittiness is shown in the conversational qualities between the solo cello in mm. 54-55 and the responses of the oboes, bassoons and the strings in mm. 56-57 (see Ex. 19).

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21 *Ostinato* is a term that describes a continually repeated phrase or rhythm.


23 Ibid., 96.
The character of the music leading from m. 45 to m. 54 is very driven. The solo cello plays theme 2 of the exposition accompanied by a short variation of the counter subject in the tutti cello and bass line with *col légno* in m. 50. Theme 2 culminates when the solo cello plays the triplets at m. 54 leading to the downbeat of m. 55. The phrase ends with a pizzicato chord in the solo cello and it is interjected by the winds in mm. 56-57. The oboe and bassoon rhythm at mm. 56-57 relaxes and it contrasts the characteristics of the solo cello part. The change of timbre and character between solo cello and the winds creates a sense of sarcasm and mockery. Conversations between the solo cello, the winds and the strings repeat again at mm. 58-61.

Ex. 20 demonstrates mocking characteristics that appear in the *tutti* orchestral parts after the solo cello cadenza at m. 194 in Movement II. In the orchestral passage, mockery is represented again by the sudden change of intensity, character, dynamics and timbre. At the end
of the solo cadenza, the solo cello plays in a very high register in double stops and trills from mm. 184-193. Contrasting the *fortissimo sostenuto* solo cello passage, the orchestra answers with a light and flippant texture marked in *sempre piannissimo*. The use of the triangle in m. 194 further highlights the characteristic of flippancy.

Ex. 20. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, Movement II, mm. 194-196.

The two-note motif in the strings of m. 194 permeates throughout the A’ section in Movement II. This mocking theme begins at m. 184 and overtakes the entire second movement from m. 194. The contrast of characteristics applies not only to the solo cadenza and section A’, but it also applies to the A and A’ section of Movement II. The opening of Movement II is somber and dark. The three elements in the A section include the rhythmic bass pattern, the melody of the solo cello and the accompaniment played by the tuba, bassoon and bass clarinet. The overall characteristic of section A is dark and melancholic. In contrast, section A’ returns with the same solo cello melody, but the orchestral tutti is entirely replaced by the two-note
motif in m. 184. In the A’ section, the accompaniment voices are flutes, clarinets, bassoons, trumpets, tuba, triangle and the strings. The overall timbre of A’ is fuller and has a more polyphonic texture in comparison to the opening A section.

Movement III begins with a very driven theme in the solo cello that was taken from the nucleus motif from Movement I. The first theme has a quick tempo that is further encouraged by the block chords in the orchestral accompaniment from mm. 213-259. The opening driven characteristics of Movement III is contrasted by a humorous section that begins at m. 260 and goes until m. 371 with interruptions. The rhythmic accompaniment pattern in m. 260 suddenly changes the mood of Movement III and it is joined by theme 2 in m. 269 (see Ex. 21). Ex. 21. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, Movement III, mm. 267-273.

There are three elements in this humorous section. The first element is the steady pulse provided by the bassoons, horns and the clarinets. The bassoons play a steady pulse from mm. 260-269 and the horns take over the pulse from mm. 269-286. The clarinets continue a different rhythmic pulse from mm. 286-299. The second element in this section is the melodic theme 2, which is played by the solo cello in mm. 269-285. Theme 2 is marked as piano cantabile, which contrasts theme 1 of this movement with a change of character. It also contrasts the opening by
using half and whole notes, instead of the driving eighth notes. The long slurs, the soft dynamic marking and the word *cantabile*, all indicate lyrical and long phrasings, which are the opposite extreme of the opening character of Movement III. To create more humor, theme 2 is interjected by a series of mocking sounds played by the flutes, clarinets and trumpets. Example 22 demonstrates the four sections that interrupt theme 2.

Ex. 22. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, mockery, Movement III, mm. 272-273, m. 276, mm. 280-281 and mm. 284-285.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mm. 272-273</th>
<th>Clarinet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m. 276</td>
<td>Flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 280-281</td>
<td>Flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 284-285</td>
<td>Clarinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme two in the solo cello is separated into four phrases indicated by long slurs. Within each long phrase, Honegger inserts a mockery interruption played by the clarinet, flute and trumpet. In the first phrase of theme two (mm. 269-273), the clarinet blares its quarter-note triplets in forte to contrast the soft lyrical line played by the solo cello. The second phrase of theme 2 (mm. 273-277) played by the solo cello interrupted by three different instruments in the same measure. The one measure interruption in m. 276 is played by the flute on beat two, the clarinet on beat three, and the trumpet on beat four. The third phrase of theme 2 played by the
solo cello (mm. 277-281) is interrupted by the flutes playing quarter note triplets descending downward in m. 280 and the trumpet continues the interruption in m. 281. The last phrase of theme 2 played by the solo cello (mm. 281-285) is interrupted by the clarinets in m. 284 and the trumpets in m. 285. Each of these four interruptions within theme 2 demonstrates mockery created by the interjections played by the flute, clarinet and the trumpet. It is as if these wind and brass instruments are thumbing their noses at the lyrical second theme. Mockery continues as the oboe, bassoon, flute, clarinet, trumpet and violin I begin to imitate the solo cello by playing theme 2 after m. 285. The oboe begins first from mm. 285-289, bassoons enter from mm. 287-299 and violin I enters from mm. 298-293. The flute enters from mm. 293-297, and the tuba plays theme two from mm. 342-257 in flutter-tongue. The mockery finally ends when all six instruments: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, violin I and the tuba, chime in one last time to mock the solo cello in mm. 367-371. Humor and mockery are significant characteristics of the group Les Six because its music is often considered to be light and flippant. Honegger includes the use of humor as well as jazz elements in this Cello Concerto.

Syncopations and Jazz Influences

The period after World War I gave audiences in Paris a wider opportunity to hear jazz music because of the large amount of Americans traveling to Paris. While jazz music was being popularized in France, the avant-garde composers were searching for new ways to re-identify their musical aesthetics. Many French avant-garde composers embraced characteristics of the new jazz sounds and incorporated elements into their own compositions. Although these new

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compositions influenced by jazz elements may not necessarily be recognized as real or actual jazz by the American standards, they are compositions that remind listeners of jazz because of its characteristic and elements. By incorporating jazz elements into their compositions, the avant-garde transformed American jazz, and made it one of their tools to create new musical aesthetics in the French music scene.

Not every Les Six composer embraced jazz elements in their compositions. Milhaud, Auric and Honegger were the only composers that took advantage of jazz influences and expanded it in their own respective works. Out of the three Les Six composers who embraced jazz, Milhaud was the most outspoken and most influenced by it.\(^\text{26}\)

Most of Milhaud’s comments on jazz focus on the use of syncopation, percussion, new instruments and new performance techniques. Milhaud also characterized Jazz as free, spontaneous, improvisational and dramatic.\(^\text{27}\) Although not all of the elements Milhaud observed about Jazz could be found in the Cello Concerto, the use of syncopation and unique performance techniques are present in the Cello Concerto.

Syncopation is a jazz element that permeates the entire concerto. Honegger interrupts the normal stress accents to blur bar lines in all three movements. In the first movement, notes are often placed on the off-beats to create a shift of the bar line. Notes are also tied over the bar lines to create a sense of freeness. Section A of Movement II is written in a way that removes the sense of regular beat patterns, making it difficult for the audience to grasp where the bar lines and strong beats are. Movement III plays with the disruption of the normal two and three beat patterns by displacing accented downbeats without changing meters.

\(^\text{26}\) Jeffery H Jackson. \textit{Making Jazz French}, 117.

Example 23 above demonstrates syncopations in Movement I. Theme 1 from mm. 18-26 is the most obvious syncopated section in this concerto. The solo cello begins theme one on the second beat, which silences the downbeat and shifts the accent to the second beat of m. 18. The rest on the downbeat of m. 18 substitutes the expected note for an opening phrase. Theme 1 also uses syncopation by suspension over the bar lines. The suspension is created by sustaining the fourth beat of m. 19 to the downbeat of m. 20 in the solo cello part. The tied over whole note from mm. 21-22 in the solo cello also creates a suspended rhythm over the bar line, therefore blurring the presence of the bar line. The melody in the solo cello shifts to an off beat syncopation where the stress of the beat is delayed in m. 22 and m. 24. The melody falls on an off beat pattern and the entire melody is shifted back by an eighth note. Theme one from Movement I is also accompanied by syncopated harmonies in the clarinets and the bassoon in
mm. 25-26. Each of the orchestral entrances from mm. 18-26 also demonstrate syncopation by suspension over the bar line and off beat syncopation.

In mm. 25-26, Honegger uses a missed-beat syncopation where the accompaniment parts do not fall on the expected downbeat of the measure. Instead, the bassoon and the viola enter on the unexpected second eighth note of the downbeat to create suspension. Mm. 48-49 demonstrate an off beat suspension where the whole melody is delayed by one eighth note to create a sense of broadening in the solo cello. In mm. 130-131, Honegger uses syncopation as a tool to write out a slowing down of the tempo along with the indication of *poco ritardando* and *molto diminuendo*.

In section A of Movement II, Honegger takes the idea of blurring the bar line to another level by removing the sense of strong beats all together. By using syncopation, Honegger creates a sense of an improvisational melody in the solo cello part and an accompaniment without the persistence of steady beats.

Example 24 demonstrates the three moving parts in the opening of Movement II. The combination of the timpani and the contrabass creates the rhythmic bass pattern. The beats of this monotone bass line rarely land on normal stress accents and create an irregular pattern. The timpani enter on the third sixteenth-note of beat three in m. 158, and the second eighth note of beat two in m. 159. The contrabass enters on the last thirty-second note of beat three in m. 159, and plays a group of sixty-fourth notes on the last sixteenth note of m. 160. The irregularity of the bass line makes it impossible for the listener to locate the bar line.
Ex. 24. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Extraction from the orchestral score, syncopations, Movement II, mm. 158-162.

The muted tuba plays the five-note motif from mm. 159-161. This melody enters on the second beat of m. 159 and the last note suspends over to the downbeat of m. 161. The missed-beat entrance of the tuba melody and the suspended syncopation on the last note add to the blurring of the bar line. The solo cello enters with the solo theme in m. 161. This theme played by the solo cello also uses syncopations in mm. 161-162 to blur the bar line.

In contrast with Movement II, Movement III is very rhythmical and driven (see Ex. 24). Even though there are syncopated ties and off beat suspensions, the sense of rhythmic pulse is always present. In this movement, Honegger plays with the switching between a two and a three pattern by shifting accent beats without changing the meter. Theme 1 of movement three begins in m. 213 and goes to m. 227. The theme starts with a strong pulse in a two pattern. The solo cello plays a steady melody in quarter notes and eighth notes without syncopation for eight measures from mm. 213-220. From mm. 221-223, syncopation by suspension is used to shift the accent to a three pattern. This creates two measures of hemiolas. The pattern switches back to a two pattern in m. 224, and again to a three pattern in mm. 225-227.
Ex. 25. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Syncopations, Movement III, mm. 220-227, mm. 300-302, mm. 348-355, mm. 392-398.

A piano score extraction from mm. 300-302 in Ex. 25 above demonstrates the chords played by tutti strings. The circled eighth notes on beats three of mm. 300 and 301 are played by the horns and trumpets. The strings play a series of accented chords. In m. 300, they play the chords on the first and the fourth beats. In m. 301, the chords are placed on the second and fourth beats. In m. 301, the chords enter on the second eighth note of beat one to create a syncopated rhythm.

The next syncopated passage is in the solo cello part from mm. 348-355 in Ex. 25. In this section, the solo cello accompanies the tuba playing the flutter-tongue melody. The short entrances of the solo cello in this section are often placed on the off beats, and are tied over to the downbeats, creating a sense of unease because of the lack of pulse. In addition, the entrances
are marked with accented articulations on weak beats. Finally, mm. 392-398 in the example above demonstrate identical syncopated passages that overlap, but one passage is delayed by one beat. The solo cello begins the melody on beat two of m. 392 on a quarter note E. Violin I enters with the same passage on the same beat, but omits the quarter note. This creates a complete chaotic aural sensation because Honegger assigns the two melodies to be played simultaneously, but one of them is delayed by one beat.

Although syncopation is a characteristic that is widely seen in many genres of music, syncopation used in this Cello Concerto is most likely connected to Honegger’s and Milhaud’s exploration of jazz elements in France in the 1920s.

Unique Performance Techniques

Honegger is not the first composer to use *col légno* in a composition. Col légno produces a percussive pitch and the quality of the pitch is determined by the distance of the bow from the bridge at the contact point. Since string players do not all strike the same place on the string while playing *col légno*, the cluster sound from an entire string section playing *col légno* is most likely different from a single player using this technique. *Col légno* creates a soft timbre that is easily covered with thick orchestration and loud dynamics. A new aspect of how Honegger uses *col légno* in this concerto is to which instruments he assigns *col légno* to, and what other instruments he pairs *col légno* with to create a balanced orchestration.

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28 *Col légno* is an Italian term. It means to strike the string instrument with the stick of the bow, creating a percussive sound.

Example 26 above shows that Honegger marks *col légno* for the tutti cello and contrabass in mm. 50-51. It is unique because Honegger leaves out the upper strings and only assigns *col légno* to the lower string players. The struck pitches in the lower string instruments are not as audible as in the upper strings, therefore the timbre is easily covered. However, Honegger balanced the timbre of this section by lightening up the orchestration. In m. 50 of Movement I, the *col légno* played by the tutti cello and the contrabass is set against the solo cello with a dynamic marking of *piano* while the tuba holds a whole note and the timpani play triplet eighth notes on the downbeat. This combination of instrumental choices not only allows the *col légno* in the lower strings to be heard, but it also foreshadows the timbre in the opening of Movement II (see Ex. 27).
Ex. 27. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Unique performance technique, Movement II, mm. 158-162.

The opening of Movement II shares a similar instrumentation as mm. 50-51 in Movement I. The contrabass is assigned with a rhythmic col légno bass line that is paired with the timpani. Although Honegger turns the contrabass into a percussive instrument by using col légno, the thin and striking pitches produced by the contrabass are still different from the round tone produced by the timpanist. The juxtaposition of two very different timbres of percussive instruments adds another unique technique in this concerto.

Another aspect of uniqueness in this section is that the opening five-note motif is given to a muted tuba. The tuba is typically used in slow moving bass lines while doubling other low instruments. However, Honegger gives the opening motif to the tuba to demonstrate a more lyrical approach to this instrument (see Ex. 26). Around the late nineteenth century, the French school began to use a more lyrical approach to brass instruments.29 This idea is further carried out in the next passage where Honegger gives the entire second theme of Movement III to the tuba (see Ex. 28).

Ex. 28. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Unique performance technique, Movement III, mm. 342-357.

The tuba line in Ex. 27 has a range of two octaves with long lyrical slurs. To challenge the long lyrical lines, Honegger adds Flatterzunge to the tuba passage. Flatterzunge is a typical technique for the wind instruments and some brass instruments, but it is rarely used for the tuba player. To accompany the Flatterzunge tuba part, the solo cellist plays glissando leaps that sometimes have a range of two octaves. The fast and large intervals in the solo cello part are unique and challenging because it is not customary for cellists to perform repeated big leaps in quick succession. This compositional style is unique, challenging and virtuosic for both the solo cellist and the tuba player.

Honegger’s inclusion of unique performance techniques is a part of his search to include jazz elements in this piece. Since Honegger and Milhaud were both in Les Six and were contemporaries, the addition of using unique performance techniques is most likely related to their common goal to create new French music.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In this study I observed different characteristics found in Honegger’s Cello Concerto in light of his musical background and aesthetics. Honegger’s Cello Concerto composed in 1929 certainly represents the French avant-gardes’ return to simplicity. The concerto demonstrates clarity, simplicity, use of humor and jazz elements. However, the Cello Concerto equally represents Honegger’s musical aesthetics that stem from his admiration for Beethoven and Bach through the use of traditional formal structure, thematic and rhythmic transformations and the use of contrapuntal devices.

This concerto stands apart from music that solely represents Les Six influences because it is not composed for the sole purpose to fulfill the avant-garde expectations. Honegger was never fully convinced of composing music only for Les Six’s ideal of French nationalistic music because he did not want to restrict himself with the guidelines set up by Cocteau. Honegger was viewed as a composer who composed mainstream French music as well as a composer who embraced his Germanic influences.30

This study helps demonstrate Les Six musical influences seen in the overall formal simplicity of the concerto, simplicity in orchestration and diatonicism in the opening of Movement I, humor and mockery, and jazz elements demonstrated by the use of syncopation and unique performance techniques. The concerto also represents Honegger’s love for Beethoven’s thematic organization and Bachian counterpoint. Adding to these organization techniques, Honegger adds to the formal architecture of the concerto by using rhythmic and metric organization, wedge shapes, tritone relationships and a repeated bass pattern.

The presence of all the different characteristics studied in this concerto argues that Honegger’s style of composition could be seen as weightier than those of his Les Six contemporaries. This Cello Concerto may be seen as a work that has typical Les Six characteristics, however, other salient features of this Cello Concerto should also be considered. This work is a fair representation of Les Six, but it is also a work that demonstrates Honegger’s diverse background and musical aesthetics.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{31} This study serves to provide a complete analytical overview of Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Other musicological research outside of this study’s scope that could be further investigated includes topics on bitonality, cyclic returns and allusions to American Indian music.
APPENDIX

MUSICAL EXAMPLES OF MOVEMENTS I, II AND III
Ex. A.1. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Themes and Motifs of Movement I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Movement</th>
<th>Themes &amp; Motifs</th>
<th>Principal Tonalities/instrument</th>
<th>Musical Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> mm. 1-18</td>
<td>Orchestra 2-note motif mm. 1-2</td>
<td>C Violin I</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solo Theme mm. 2-18</td>
<td>C Solo Cello</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exposition</strong> mm. 18-53</td>
<td>Theme 1 mm. 18-26</td>
<td>C Solo Cello</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theme 2 mm. 33-41</td>
<td>b Solo Cello</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counter subject of Theme 2 mm. 33-34 (nucleus motif)</td>
<td>b Solo Cello</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong> mm. 54-105</td>
<td>Intro. Solo Theme mm. 64-91</td>
<td>F♯/f♯ Solo Cello</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canonic Imitation of Theme 2 &amp; Nucleus motif mm. 94-97</td>
<td>d/D Trumpets</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recapitulation</strong> mm. 106-151</td>
<td>Theme 1 mm. 106-121</td>
<td>D going to G Solo Cello</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theme 2 mm. 122-131</td>
<td>b going to C Trumpet</td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coda</strong> mm. 132-157</td>
<td>Solo Theme mm. 133-150</td>
<td>C Solo Cello</td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theme 1 mm. 150-157</td>
<td>C Solo Cello</td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="Example" /></td>
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</table>
Ex. A.2. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Themes and Motifs of Movement II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Movement</th>
<th>Motivic Material</th>
<th>Principal Tonality/Instrument</th>
<th>Musical Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 158-181</td>
<td>Solo theme in 2 phrases mm. 161-178</td>
<td>F-sharp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orchestra motif &amp; accompaniment mm. 159-161</td>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Timpani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contrabass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section B</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 182-193</td>
<td>Solo Cadenza mm. 182-183</td>
<td>C/C-sharp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accompanied Cadenza: Solo &amp; Orchestra mm. 184-192</td>
<td>E-flat/E</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Solo Cello</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solo transition to A’ m. 193</td>
<td>F-sharp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Solo Cello</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section A’</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. 194-212</td>
<td>Solo theme in 1 phrases with 2 echos mm. 197-209</td>
<td>F-sharp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orchestra theme &amp; Accompaniment mm. 194-202</td>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ex. A.3. Honegger’s Cello Concerto. Themes and Motifs of Movement III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third Movement</th>
<th>Motivic Material</th>
<th>Principal Tonality</th>
<th>Musical Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exposition</strong>&lt;br&gt;mm. 213-303</td>
<td>Theme 1&lt;br&gt;mm. 213-227</td>
<td>C major</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Example 1" /></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transition triplets&lt;br&gt;mm. 236-247</td>
<td>C minor</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Example 2" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theme 2&lt;br&gt;mm. 269-285</td>
<td>F# major</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Example 3" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counter theme of theme 2&lt;br&gt;mm. 286-300</td>
<td>F# major</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Example 4" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong>&lt;br&gt;mm. 304-337</td>
<td>Accompaniment to new theme 3&lt;br&gt;mm. 304-342</td>
<td>E-Flat major</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Example 5" /></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theme 1&lt;br&gt;mm. 312-316</td>
<td>E-Flat major to E major</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Example 6" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Theme 3&lt;br&gt;mm. 526-337</td>
<td>E-Flat major</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Example 7" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recapitulation</strong>&lt;br&gt;mm. 338-413</td>
<td>Theme 1&lt;br&gt;mm. 338-342</td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Example 8" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition triplet&lt;br&gt;mm. 357-366</td>
<td>G minor</td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Example 9" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canon of imitation of Theme 2&lt;br&gt;mm. 367-371</td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="Example 10" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cyclic Return</strong>&lt;br&gt;mm. 414-424</td>
<td>Introduction from Mvt I&lt;br&gt;mm. 1-18</td>
<td>C major</td>
<td><img src="image11" alt="Example 11" /></td>
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<td><strong>Coda</strong>&lt;br&gt;mm. 425-432</td>
<td>Theme 1&lt;br&gt;mm. 425-432</td>
<td>C major</td>
<td><img src="image12" alt="Example 12" /></td>
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**Scores**


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