

A STUDY OF UNSUK CHIN'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

by

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To my dear parents Jae Ku Seo and Junghee Yoo

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Musical Examples.....	vii
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Appendices.....	x
Introduction.....	1
Chapter I: Unsuk Chin, Her Musical Style, and the Violin Concerto.....	2
Chapter II: Violin Concerto, Movement I.....	21
Chapter III: Violin Concerto, Movement II, III, and IV.....	60
Appendix: List of Works by Unsuk Chin.....	99
Bibliography.....	101

List of Musical Examples

Example 1.1. Berg's Row in His Violin Concerto.	19
Example 2.1. Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 1–5.....	27
Example 2.2. Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 22–26, Marimbas I and II..	29
Example 2.3. Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 2–7 and mm. 38–42, Solo Violin	34
Example 2.4. Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 65–69, Solo Violin	37
Example 2.5. Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 134–138.....	42
Example 2.6. Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 134–137 and mm. 146–149, Solo Violin	44
Example 2.7. Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 136–139 Violins I and II ...	46
Example 2.8. Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 244–247.....	55
Example 3.1. Chin, Violin Concerto, Second Movement, mm. 1–23, Solo Violin.....	62
Example 3.2. Chin, Violin Concerto, Second Movement, mm. 1–5	73
Example 3.3. Chin, Violin Concerto, Third Movement, mm. 20–26	75
Example 3.4. Chin, Violin Concerto, Third Movement, mm. 31–37, Violins I and II.....	78
Example 3.5. Chin, Violin Concerto, Third Movement, mm.78–84	81
Example 3.6. Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 1–6	89
Example 3.7. Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 34–39, Solo Violin.....	90
Example 3.8. Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 1–5, Solo Violin.....	92
Example 3.9. Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 57–59, Solo Violin.....	92
Example 3.10. Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 36–38, Solo Violin.....	93

Example 3.11. Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 90–93, Solo Violin.....	93
Example 3.12. Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 114–122, Solo Violin...	94
Example 3.13. Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 215–221, Solo Violin...	94
Example 3.14. Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 145–152	96

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Scoring of Chin, Violin Concerto.....	16
Figure 2.1. Diagram of Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement	23
Figure 2.2. Rhythmic Patterns used in Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement.....	29
Figure 2.3. Rhythmic Patterns in Part A1	29
Figure 2.4. Instruments and Patterns in mm. 1–9	30
Figure 2.5. Rhythmic Patterns and Transfers in Part A1	33
Figure 2.6. Unfolding Versions of Circle of Fifth	34
Figure 2.7. Repeated Figures in Part A2.....	36
Figure 2.8. Rhythmic Patterns in Part A2, mm. 63–105.....	37
Figure 2.9. Instruments and Rhythmic Patterns in Part A2	38
Figure 2.10. Instruments and Rhythmic Patterns in Part B1.....	41
Figure 2.11. Instruments and Rhythmic Figures in Part B2, mm. 134–155	45
Figure 2.12. Rhythmic Changes of the Solo Violin in Part C1.....	54
Figure 3.1. Diagram of Chin, Violin Concerto, Second Movement.....	61
Figure 3.2. Solo Violin’s Phrasing and Used Intervals in Part A, mm. 1–47	62
Figure 3.3. Entrances of Pitches in the Solo Violin in Part C, mm. 81–118	66
Figure 3.4. Diagram of Chin, Violin Concerto, Third Movement.....	69
Figure 3.5. Diagram of Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement	87

List of Appendices

Appendix. Work List by Unsuk Chin	99
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Introduction

Unsuk Chin (b. July 14, 1961) received international recognition within Europe for her *Akrostichon-Wortspiel* [Acrostic-Wordplay] (1993), but it was after winning the prestigious Grawemeyer Award in 2004 for her Violin Concerto (2001) that she started to gain attention in North America. Chin's music is generally considered to be timbral. It is full of unique colors but does not evoke any particular culture or style of traditional Asian or Western music, even though she was raised in South Korea and studied in Germany, where she has been living for decades. This document attempts to reveal Chin's compositional processes in her violin concerto.

The first chapter introduces a biographical sketch of the composer, including her childhood in South Korea and the period of her study with György Ligeti (1923-2006) in Germany. It also offers a general guide to her musical style and her activities as a composer. In the latter part of the chapter, I provide information on her Violin Concerto and her other five concertos (to date).

The second chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the concerto's first movement, focusing on Chin's treatment of developmental and variational processes and highlighting her use of the character of the violin itself.

Finally, the last chapter offers a formal and stylistic analysis of the rest of the concerto: the slow second movement, the scherzo-like third movement, and the closing last movement, at the end of which material from the very beginning of the concerto returns.

Chapter I: Unsuk Chin,

Her Musical Style, and the Violin Concerto

The premiere of Unsuk Chin's *Akristischon-Wortspiel* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London in 1994 was more than a professional success; it was a personal triumph. During the late 1980s, Chin had struggled to find her voice after her former teacher, György Ligeti (1923-2006), had encouraged her break away from the post-avant-garde aesthetic (including integral serialism) that had been central to her work. Around that time, Chin began to work as a freelancer at an electronic music studio in Berlin. *Akristischon-Wortspiel* ended this spell of composer's block, as her first full-fledged acoustic composition since working with Ligeti.

The premiere of *Akristischon-Wortspiel* brought a publishing contract with Boosey and Hawkes. Since then, Chin has composed around thirty works and has won critical acclaim throughout Europe, her home country of Korea, and the Americas. Studying her Violin Concerto demands understanding the complex and diverse resources Chin has drawn upon during her distinguished career as an international composer.¹

Early Life and Education

Chin, now a resident of Berlin, grew up in the suburbs of Seoul, South Korea. The political and economic difficulties created by the Korean War cast a shadow over Chin's childhood. She did not come from a wealthy family, and though she had an interest in music, her

¹. "Childhood and Education," interview by Stephan Dress, in *Chin Unsuk, Miraewi Akborul Geurida* [Unsuk Chin, Drawing the Score of the Future], ed. Stefan Dress, trans. and rev. Hee-Kyung Lee (Seoul: Humanist, 2012), 29–52. Musicologist Stefan Dress collected and published writings about Unsuk Chin and her music in German. His volume includes some interviews and writings by the composer and others, as well as the composer's sketches, pictures, work lists, and recording lists. The book indicated here is the Korean; Lee added several items. Much of the biographical information in this chapter comes from this translation.

opportunities for formal training were limited. Chin's father, a Presbyterian pastor, introduced her to music when she was two years old. He got a piano for his church, and he taught his daughter the fundamentals of reading music and playing the piano. She was fascinated by the instrument's sound right away. Unfortunately, her family could not afford any formal lessons, but she learned enough to play the piano every Sunday in services (starting around at age eight) at her father's church – which was an education in itself. She learned to transpose on the spot and took wedding gigs to help support the family financially.

Her middle school music teacher encouraged her to become a composer, and although Chin originally intended to become a concert pianist, she followed her teacher's advice. She continued to teach herself, learning the basics of music theory and counterpoint from books that belonged to her older sister, who was a voice major. Chin also was able to borrow scores and recordings from the music classroom at her middle school. In an interview with Stephan Dress, a German musicologist who has undertaken extensive study of Chin and her work, she recalled feeling like she was in heaven when she got the score for Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.² Chin copied out scores – she specifically has recounted writing out Tchaikovsky symphonies – and listened to music as much as she could.³

Chin applied for admission to college two times, and on her third attempt she was accepted to Seoul National University (in 1981), where she received her first formal education in composition. Her teacher, Sukhi Kang (1934-), was one of the composers who had introduced avant-garde music to Korea, and he had a special interest in electronic music. Kang had studied with Boris Blacher (1903-1975) in Berlin and with Isang Yun (1917-1995) in Hanover. Chin was exposed to what she terms “the Western post-war avant-garde,” including the works of Ligeti,

². Ibid., 37.

³. “Daring to Cross Many Boundaries,” *US Asians*, accessed April 6, 2015, <http://usasians-articles.tripod.com/unsuk-chin.html>.

Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Pierre Boulez.⁴ At the time, this repertoire was not well known in Korea, and it opened up a new musical world to Chin. She admitted that until then, her knowledge of modern music only extended to Stravinsky.⁵ Her *Gestalten* [Figures] (1983), which was written in serialist style, was selected for the ISCM World Music Days in Canada and for the UNESCO Rostrum of Composers in 1984. One year later, with her university graduation work *Spektra* (1985) for three cellos, she won the International Composers Award from the Gaudeamus Foundation in Amsterdam.

Chin was most drawn to the music of Ligeti. When she was selected as a recipient of a DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst) fellowship in 1985, she moved to Germany to study with him for three years at the University for Music and Theater in Hamburg. As Chin has reflected, Ligeti seemed like the only composer who created a large-scale but logical musical flow. Unfortunately, Chin faced great difficulties when she began studying with Ligeti. She had been writing music with a European avant-garde approach, but Ligeti criticized her, saying that she was imitating experimental and serialist composers. By that time, Ligeti had abandoned an avant-garde style as well.⁶ He strongly encouraged Chin to find and develop her own approach. Chin recounts,

At that time[,] I already had had success in two important international competitions. But when I showed him these prizewinning pieces, he would only shake his head and say: “Throw all this away. There is nothing original in these pieces.” This was very hard, though I somehow knew myself that I hadn’t found my own voice in these works. I had a compositional crisis, which lasted for three years: I couldn’t compose anything.⁷

⁴. Ibid.

⁵. “Mixed Identity and Word Play,” interview by Patrick Hahn, in Dress, *Chin Unsuk*, 57.

⁶. “Daring to Cross Many Boundaries.”

⁷. Ibid.

Chin confessed that this period was painful and that she “existed in a constant state of depression.”⁸ After completing *Trojan Women* (1986, rev. 1990) for three female singers, female chorus, and orchestra, she did not compose any piece for three years, from 1986 to 1989. Later Chin discarded her compositions that were based on serialism, deleted them from her work list, and identified *Trojan Women* as the first work in her oeuvre.⁹

Electronic Music

After studying with Ligeti, Chin left Hamburg in 1988 and moved to work as a freelance composer at the Electronic Music Studio of the Technical University of Berlin. She admits that the experience helped her find her own style in writing music. Chin’s first electronic piece was *Gradus ad Infinitum* (1989) for magnetic tape. She has composed six other electronic compositions since. In an interview, she explained the appeal of electronic musical composition during this difficult period in her life:

Since I had a hard time writing music after I gave up the post-serial music, I wanted to begin with a completely new approach... Since the process of composing electronic music is very abstract and complicated, it requires a total revamping of how one thinks about music. After that, my point of view towards music has changed and I could apply that into my acoustic music when I returned to writing acoustic composition again. It was indeed very helpful for me to find a way to write music with my own voice.¹⁰

Chin likes the idea that she can explore one simple sound unit in diverse ways in electronic music composition. Out of this unit, she can create a very complex sound – or a completely different sound – by compounding and transforming it. Nonetheless, Chin has said that her interest in electronic music is not as great as her interest in the work process in the

⁸. Yong-Wan Park, “Chin Unsuk: At the Forefront of Contemporary Music,” *Koreana* 21, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 67, quoted in Jong Eun Lee, “Inside the Hyper-Instrument: Unsuk Chin’s Double Concerto” (DMA diss., University of Washington, 2014), 10.

⁹. Work list (including omitted works) in Appendix.

¹⁰. Appendix, interview with Hae Young Yoo, March 18, 2005, in Hae Young Yoo, “Western Music in Modern Korea: A Study of Two Women Composers” (DMA diss., Rice University, 2005), 143.

electronic studio. She likes that she can find something new by experimenting with sounds with different devices.

As Chin mentioned in her interview with Dress, she applies principles from electronic composition in acoustic music. For example, the way she treats the musical elements in her Piano Etude no. 6, “Grains” derives from granular synthesis¹¹, an electronic music technique.¹² In the third movement of her Violin Concerto, Chin draws upon a modified version of this technique. Chin also has written works that call for both acoustic and electronic resources. She has said that her composition *Xi* [Kernel or the smallest source unit] (1998) for ensemble and electronics [sic] is the one that most combines electronic music with conventional instruments.

As much as Chin has been interested in electronic resources, her compositional techniques and approaches in many ways have remained traditional. For example, she writes concertos, and she uses gestures that are familiar – the light style of the scherzo or operatic, lyrical lines. I strongly agree with Kay Kyurim Rhie’s statement in her dissertation about Chin’s music concerning how electronic music influence exists within Chin’s broader style:

It is also noteworthy to see how Chin experimented with applying classical concerns – e.g. a developmental narrative, the contrapuntal principle of juxtaposing related materials, etc. – to electronic sounds. If her experience with electronic music added to her aural imagination, certain classical concerns seem always to have been a constant in her music from earlier in the decade. The mathematical, contrapuntal, serial, interval-based, and/or collage principles are some of the salient technical features in her music throughout her career. Such tendencies distinguish her as a composer with fundamentally classical tendencies rather than an electronic composer focusing mainly on sound analysis/synthesis.¹³

¹¹. Granular synthesis is a technique involving very brief clips – each just a fraction of a second. A more detailed discussion of this technique is given in Chapter III.

¹². “Mixed Identity and Word Play,” interview by Hahn, in Dress, *Chin Unsuk*, 76.

¹³. Kay Kyurim Rhie, “Quilting Time and Memory: the Music of Unsuk Chin” (DMA diss., Cornell University, 2009), 14–15.

Aesthetics and Style

Eastern and Western Music

One might expect that Chin's music would have Korean or Asian qualities, because of her heritage, but the reality is far from simple. She did not follow the approach of Isang Yun, who had taught her teacher, Sukhi Kang. Yun was born in Korea and had a career as a composer in Germany, and he purposely blended Western and Eastern qualities in his music. When Chin arrived in Germany, she found that many expected her to be like Yun or other Asian composers who synthesized musical traditions. This was not her interest.

Chin prefers to consider her music as having no particular ethnic quality. Music journalists have agreed. According to the British music critic Paul Griffiths, "[H]er music makes no parade of national flavor."¹⁴ Chin has drawn upon some characteristically Asian sources. For example, her work *Su* (2009) is a concerto for the Chinese *sheng*, but she does not try to highlight its Asian associations. Instead, she focuses on exploring the sound of the instruments, rather than trying to bring out Asian qualities or traditions.

Ironically, it was Ligeti who introduced Chin to many kinds of non-western music. She has stated that she is particularly interested in Balinese gamelan music, which also appealed to Debussy.¹⁵ In an interview with the news group US Asians, she explained:

I am highly fascinated about non-European musical cultures. I am especially fascinated about the sound world of Balinese gamelan music. It has been an inspiration for many pieces by mine [sic], e.g. my orchestral pieces. In my opinion, the conventional orchestral setting is a European relict of the 19th century, although there are of course great masterworks written for it. So I often call for an array of extra instruments. Through this, I always try to introduce a

¹⁴. Paul Griffiths, "An Introduction to the Music of Unsuk Chin," Boosey & Hawkes, 2012, http://www.boosey.com/pages/cr/composer/composer_main.asp?composerid=2754&ttype=INTRODUCTI ON&ttitle=In%20Focus.

¹⁵. The gamelan: "A generic term used for various types of Indonesian orchestra. These vary in size, function, musical style and instrumentation, but generally include tuned single bronze gongs, gong-chimes, single- and multi-octave metallophones, drums, flutes, bowed and plucked chordophones, a xylophone, small cymbals and singers"; Grove Music Online, s.v. "Gamelan," by Margaret J. Kartomi and Maria Mendonca, accessed on August 14, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/45141>.

completely different colour into my compositions based on my experience of non-European music.¹⁶

Chin's interest in non-Western sounds has a very direct manifestation in her Violin Concerto. Like her Double Concerto (2002) and her Piano Concerto (1995-1996), the Violin Concerto calls for a number of percussion instruments (twenty-three, to be precise).¹⁷ Several of these, including the Javanese gong, the zanza [sanza], the guiro, and the claves, are non-Western or not typically used in Western art music. Sometimes Chin highlights non-Western instruments, and sometimes she has conventional orchestral percussion instruments imitate non-Western ones. For example, the steel drum, which appears at the very beginning of her Violin Concerto, is rare even in contemporary orchestral pieces. Its metallic sound evokes the timbre of gamelan music.¹⁸

Chin's use of rhythmic construction, especially in her Violin Concerto, Piano Concerto, and Double Concerto, also is related to the gamelan. As Rhie has argued, superimposition of ostinatos of rhythmic layers with small rhythmic differences is derived from gamalen music.¹⁹ More detailed explanations will be given in Chapter II.

Musical Style

Chin's oeuvre includes songs, concertos, solo pieces, chamber music, orchestral music, opera, and electronic works. Almost of her works carry evocative titles. For example, she has written the *Miroirs des temps* (1999) for four singers and orchestra, *Cantatrix Sopranica* (2004-2005) for two sopranos, countertenor and ensemble, and *Rocaná* (2007-8) for orchestra. However, none of her six concertos carry such expressive titles.

¹⁶. "Daring to Cross Many Boundaries."

¹⁷. This exceeds the number employed in violin concertos in earlier eras. Even for Tchaikovsky and Sibelius, one or two timpani were sufficient. Bartók called for fewer than ten percussion instruments in his violin concertos.

¹⁸. "In violin concerto, the composer begins the piece with marimbas and steel pans to evoke the sound of a bamboo gamelan ensemble called jegog"; Rhie, "The Music of Unsuk Chin," 25.

¹⁹. Rhie, "The Music of Unsuk Chin," 24.

Regardless of the genre, her work is often described as timbral music. Paul Griffiths muses upon the brilliant sound worlds Chin creates:

This iridescence, where does it come from? Colours shimmer, float and weave over Unsuk Chin's music, and their sources are multiple. They are produced by harmonies that reflect natural resonance, building up, as in her *Violin Concerto*, from the basic acoustic facts of octave and fifth. More directly, these colours derive from chimings built into the music: the sounds of the piano, of bells and of the large, delicately handled percussion sections that feature in Chin's scores for orchestra or ensemble... With her mobile sound, sound evanescent and perhaps illusory, she makes ear and mind race – and be glad to race through such gleaming soundscapes.²⁰

As Griffiths suggests, the “sources” that make Chin's music so rich and vivid in timbre are very simple musical elements. They are particular pitches, harmonies, rhythms, or instrumental techniques that she develops to create complex works.²¹ For example, in her *ParaMetaString* (1996) for tape and amplified string quartet, Chin employs *col legno* as the core fundamental subject²² of the music in the second movement. Her cello concerto (2008-2009, rev. 2010), starts and ends with G# and that note penetrates the first movement.²³ In *Acrostic-Wordplay*, she uses the D Major triad as the main subject and develops it throughout the fifth movement.²⁴

Chin frequently uses repetition of small patterns and textures. It is not surprising that Chin mentioned in an interview with Rhie that Claude Debussy and Igor Stravinsky are her

²⁰. Griffiths, “An Introduction to the Music of Unsuk Chin.”

²¹. Chin's approach might derive from her teacher Ligeti. He liked to use this strategy, especially when he started to depart from serialism. In his *Musica ricercata* (1951-53), Ligeti developed the note A throughout the first movement. Just like Ligeti's *Violin Concerto* (1992), Chin's *Violin Concerto* (2001) opens with solo violin playing open strings, focusing the interval of fifth. Doori Yoo, “Two Etudes by Unsuk Chin: No. 1, in C, and No. 6, *Grains*, for Piano” (DM diss., The Florida State University College of Music, 2013), 8–10.

²². In this document, the term “subject” is used as described in the Oxford Dictionary of Music: “Term in mus[ic] analysis meaning a motif, phrase, or melody which forms a basic element in the construction of a comp[osition].” Oxford Music Online, s.v. “Subject,” accessed on December 3, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e9925>.

²³. Unsuk Chin, “ParaMetaString,” in Dress, *Chin Unsuk*, 316; Jorg Konigsdorf, “Cello Concerto,” *Ibid.*, 233; Habakuk Traber, “Cello Concerto,” *Ibid.*, 228–29.

²⁴. Doori Yoo, “Two Etudes by Unsuk Chin,” 10.

continuous inspiration.²⁵ This technique, along with block form and unexpected changes, resembles Debussy, who liked to repeat, juxtapose, superimpose, and alter his musical images.²⁶ The same is true of Stravinsky who, as Rhie notes, “boldly use[d] repetition as one of the main form-building tools.” J. Peter Burkholder has observed, Stravinsky “elevate[d] rhythm and tone color to a position equal to pitch and motive as determinants of the form, shape, and progress of the music.”²⁷ This certainly can be seen in Chin’s music, including her Violin Concerto.

Chin has looked to color and literature for inspiration. For example, her *Trojan Women* draws upon Euripides, and her *Akrostichon-Wortspiel* uses Lewis Carroll’s *Alice through the Looking Glass* and Michael Ende’s *The Endless Story*.²⁸ Perhaps this is part of why the words “lights” and “dreams,” along with “timbral,” often appear in discussions of her music style. Chin explains:

My music is a reflection of my dreams. I try to render into music the visions of immense light and of an incredible magnificence of colors that I see in all my dreams, a play of light and colors floating through the room and at the same time forming a fluid sound sculpture. Its beauty is very abstract and remote, but it is for these very qualities that it addresses the emotions and can communicate joy and warmth.²⁹

Chin’s opera, *Alice in Wonderland* (2004-07, rev. 2011-12), features a kaleidoscope of orchestral color, making the audience feel like they are in a fairy tale. The titles of some of her works, such as *Kalá* (2000) for soprano and bass soloists, mixed chorus and orchestra, *Rocaná* [Room of Light], and *Spektra*, also have visionary associations.

²⁵ Rhie, “The Music of Unsuk Chin,” 7.

²⁶ J. Peter Burkholder and Claude V. Palisca, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Western Music*, vol. 3, *The Twentieth Century*, 6th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 23.

²⁷ Ibid., 153; Rhie, “The Music of Unsuk Chin,” 7.

²⁸ Lee, “Inside the Hyper-Instrument,” 12.; Chin, “Composer’s Notes,” Boosey and Hawkes, 1993, <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Unsuk-Chin-Akrostichon-Wortspiel/7177>.

²⁹ “Snapshot,” Boosey and Hawkes, 2003, http://www.boosey.com/pages/cr/composer/composer_main.asp?composerid=2754&ttype=SNAPSHOT&title=Snapshot.

At first, Chin's music might not seem simple, but even though she pursues complexity, she believes that music should be meaningful to audiences of varying backgrounds. When asked the question, "What is the goal of life as a composer?" she responded:

My music doesn't belong to any school. I want to write music that speaks to all kinds of people: I never write pieces for my composer-colleagues. I write pieces for many different types of listeners. For me, a good piece of music is one in which people from all different groups maybe don't understand everything but can at least get something out of it. It is very important to me that my music speaks to all of these people on a certain level.³⁰

In desiring to reach a diverse audience, Chin places herself among composers like Haydn for whom this was also important.³¹

Activities and Reception as Composer

Chin has served as a composer-in-residence for many major orchestras, including the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and the Philharmonie in Essen. Currently, she serves as a composer-in-residence at the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra in Korea.³² Chin helps introduce contemporary music to Korean audiences and educates young musicians by holding concerts, seminars, and master classes.³³

She has been commissioned by major performing organizations, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester

³⁰. Appendix, interview with Hae Young Yoo, in Hae Young Yoo, "Western Music in Modern Korea," 146.

³¹. J. Peter Burkholder, Donald J. Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 7th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 438.

³². "Biography," Boosey & Hawkes, September 2015, http://www.boosey.com/pages/cr/composer/composer_main.asp?composerid=2754&ttype=BIOGRAPHY&ttitle=Biography.

³³. Frank Harders-Wuthenow, "Contemporary Music Series, 'Ars Nova,'" in Dress, *Chin Unsu*, 131–46.

Berlin, and the Ensemble Intercontemporain. She only writes works when she has been commissioned, whether by an orchestra, an opera, or other entity.

Her compositions have been performed all over the world. Her recognitions include the Grawemeyer Award (2004), the Arnold Schoenberg Prize in 2005, and the Prince Pierre Foundation Music Award (2010).³⁴ The Grawemeyer Award and her first CD release from Deutsche Grammophon in 2005 helped to attract attention in Europe. Chin is relatively less known in the American continents, but her reputation has been growing. For example, *Alice in Wonderland* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Opera, and in 2012, the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis gave the American premiere of that work.³⁵

Chin has been the subject of several scholarly studies, including those by Habakuk Traber and Arnold Whittall.³⁶ She also has given interviews in Europe, the Americas, and Korea.

³⁴. "Biography," Boosey & Hawkes.

³⁵. Appendix to Dress, *Chin Unsuk*, 458.

³⁶. Arnold Whittall, "Unsuk Chin in Focus: Meditations & Mechanics," *The Musical Times* 141 (Spring 2000): 21–32.

The Violin Concerto (2001)

Chin's Concertos

Like her other five concertos, Chin's Violin Concerto came about from a commission, this one from the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester, an orchestra in her adopted hometown of Berlin. Concertos constitute a major portion of Chin's work list, having been written for orchestras or ensembles in Europe, America, and Asia. The Violin Concerto was preceded by the Piano Concerto (1996-97), which was commissioned by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Her subsequent concertos include the Double Concerto for Piano, Percussion, and Ensemble (2002), written for the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris and Radio France, and the Cello Concerto (2008-, rev. 2010) written for Alban Gerhardt and commissioned by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.³⁷ Her *Šu* for sheng and orchestra (2009, rev. 2010) was written specifically for the Berlin-based *sheng* player Wu Wei.³⁸ He premiered this work with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra at the Suntory Music Foundation Summer Festival. The composition was commissioned by the Suntory Hall International Programme, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Philharmonie Essen, and ZaterdagMatinee.³⁹ Her latest concerto, the Clarinet Concerto (2014), was jointly commissioned by the Swedish Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra (Göteborgs Symfoniker), WDR Symphony Orchestra in Cologne, Philharmonia Orchestra, the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic.⁴⁰

Chin's concertos exhibit both conventional and novel elements. As mentioned previously, Chin usually gives her compositions an evocative subtitle, but this is not the case with the

³⁷. Index, Dress, *Chin Unsuk*, 453–59; Maris Gothóni, “Programme Note,” accessed June 24, 2016, <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Unsuk-Chin-u/52419>.

³⁸. Andrew Clements, “Unsuk Chin: Piano Concerto; Cello Concerto; *Šu* Review—Reimagining the Concerto Form,” *The Guardian*, August 13, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/aug/13/unsuk-chin-piano-concerto-cello-concerto-su-review>.

³⁹. Index, Dress, *Chin Unsuk*, 453–59.

⁴⁰. James M. Keller, “Notes on the Program,” *The New York Philharmonic*, September 2014, 26 <http://nyphil.org/~media/pdfs/program-notes/1415/Unsuk%20Chin-Clarinet%20Concerto.pdf>

concertos, except for *Šu* for Sheng and Orchestra (Su means “God of Air”). Her overall design is fairly conventional in terms of the number of movements. Her concertos for piano, violin, and cello have four movements each, and the clarinet concerto has three. In most of her concertos, the orchestra and the soloist work together, but this is not the case in the Cello Concerto. As Chin has observed, in this composition, the antagonism between the orchestra and the soloist is prominent.⁴¹

Her two non-traditional commissions – her *Šu* and her Double Concerto – depart more from tradition, likely because of for whom they were commissioned. Both pieces are written as a single movement, and neither have conventional scoring. Her *Šu* showcases the *sheng*, a traditional Chinese mouth organ. Similarly, the Double Concerto features an unusual solo combination – prepared piano and percussion. Chin scores the work for an unusually small ensemble – just nineteen players.

Chin describes her first concerto, the Piano Concerto, as having been influenced by “every epoch in piano literature – from Scarlatti to the present.”⁴² As Chin explains, in this piece she consciously stepped away from Romanticism and its legacy in two important ways. The orchestra does more than merely accompany the soloist, and the soloist does not only focus on virtuosic display.

⁴¹. “About the Cello Concerto and the *Šu* Concerto,” interview by David Allenby, in Dress, *Chin Unsuk*, 252.

⁴². Unsuk Chin, “Composer’s Notes,” Boosey & Hawks, accessed August 15, 2015. <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Unsuk-Chin-Piano-Concerto/247&langid=1>.

The Violin Concerto: Origin and Overview

In 2001 and 2002, Chin served as composer-in-residence at the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin. The Violin Concerto, the Piano Concerto, and her *Miroirs des temps* (1999, rev. 2001) were performed by the orchestra during her residency.⁴³ On January 20, 2002, the Violin Concerto premiered in Berlin under the baton of Kent Nagano, with Viviane Hagner as soloist. Since then, the work has been performed around the world, including in Europe, North America, and Asia. Chin was awarded the prestigious Grawemeyer Award in 2004 for this concerto.⁴⁴

The concerto is about twenty-seven minutes long and consists of four movements: moderate opening movement, a slow movement, a scherzo-like third movement, and a finale. This structure resembles the traditional order of movements in symphonies. Although Chin writes for a soloist and orchestra, as is typical of traditional concertos, she employs an unusually large number (twenty-three) of percussion instruments, as shown in Figure 1.1. At least six players are needed to cover the percussion parts. It is not only the quantity of the percussion instruments that distinguishes her concerto, but unusual instruments like the lithophone and Chin's distinctive and constantly changing combinations of instruments. She does not use the same percussion forces from movement to movement, but a metallic timbre pervades the concerto. Chin also calls for substantial upper brass, with four horns and trumpets each.

⁴³. "Life as a Composer and the Music Society in Korea," interview by Hee-Kyung Lee, in Dress, *Chin Unsuik*, 103.

⁴⁴. Habakuk Traber, "Violin Concerto," in Dress, *Chin Unsuik*, 216; "Biography," Boosey and Hawkes.

FIGURE 1.1 Scoring of Chin, Violin Concerto

2 Flute (2 Piccolo)
2 Oboe (2 English Horn)
2 Clarinet in B (2 Clarinet in E♭)
2 Bassoon
1 Contrabassoon

4 Horn in F
4 Trumpet
2 Trombone
1 Tuba

Celesta
Cembalo
2 Harp

Percussion (5 + Timpani)
Glockenspiel, 2 Vibraphones, Xylophone, 2 Marimbas, Lithophone, Antique Cymbal, Chime (tubular bell), Cowbells, Triangle, Handbecken paar [pair of hand cymbals], 3 Cymbals on stands (suspended cymbals), 3 Tam-Tam, Thunder sheet, Metal Block, Javanese Gong, 3 Timpani, Bass Drum, 2 Tambourine, 2 Snare Drum with String, Steel Drum, Zanza [Sanza], Guiro, Claves

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Virtuosity and the Violinistic Composition

Chin's concertos require virtuosity from the soloists, which results in formidable technical challenges. When Chin composes, she always looks for something new. Alban Gerhardt, who premiered Chin's Cello Concerto, said there were not many familiar things for him in the score.⁴⁵ Chin's Violin Concerto is no exception. She once mentioned in an interview with Dress that she was not quite satisfied with her Violin Concerto due to its excessively demanding solo

⁴⁵. Konigsdorf, "Cello Concerto," Dress, *Chin Unsuik*, 237.

violin part.⁴⁶ She confessed that she did not realize how hard the solo part was when she finished the concerto.⁴⁷

This concerto is deeply related to the intrinsic qualities of the violin itself. In her compositions, Chin likes to draw out the potential of the instruments for which she writes. Her impressions of the instruments and the excitement and inspiration their sounds give her are important as she writes an instrumental piece.⁴⁸ From an instrument's unique acoustic character, she gleans the fundamental musical ideas for her composition and then expands those ideas to frame and structure the work.

For the Violin Concerto, these fundamental qualities of the violin are its four open strings: G, D, A, and E. They become the fundamental pitches of the concerto. The work starts with the four open strings in the solo instrument. For the remainder of the composition, the interval of the perfect fifth plays a central role. Chin also represents the violin's range of expressive characters and idiomatic sounds as well. Harmonics, pizzicato, *col legno*, and other instrumental techniques are used as subjects in parts and movements. It is even possible to distinguish between parts and movements by considering their particular techniques. Harmonics and pizzicato are distinct features of articulation in the first and third movements, respectively.

Relation to Tradition

Chin's piece does not use tonality, but it starts and ends with the quartet of open-string pitches. These pitches are significant in different ways in every movement and are especially emphasized in the first and last movements. This emphasis may be analogous to tonal music, which starts and ends with the same key area.

⁴⁶. "About Composition," interview by Dress, in Dress, *Chin Unsuk*, 73.

⁴⁷. "Unsuk Chin on Unsuk Chin," web video documentary, directed by Tommy Pearson, Boosey & Hawkes, accessed October 25, 2016, <http://www.boosey.com/podcast/Unsuk-Chin-on-Unsuk-Chin/100716>.

⁴⁸. "Life as a Composer," interview by Lee, in Dress, *Chin Unsuk*, 110.

One of the evidences of the influence of tradition is the cadenza toward the end of the first movement (at m. 212). In traditional concertos, the solo instruments often compete with the orchestra and lead the music. However, in Chin’s Violin Concerto, there is little hint of competition, and the solo instrument and tutti orchestra share prominence.

Chin’s Violin Concerto has a similar opening to those of the violin concertos of Alban Berg and Ligeti. All three concertos use essential properties of the violin as a main component of the work. And it is obvious from the beginning of each. They all open with the four open strings of the violin and build out from there.

Berg’s Violin Concerto (1935) famously starts with the four open strings of the violin. The solo violin softly touches all four strings from G up to E and down again, accompanied by harp and clarinet. Even though this is similar to the beginning of Chin’s Violin Concerto, Berg’s piece is based on twelve-tone technique, and the four notes of the open strings are the first, third, fifth, and seventh notes of the row that Berg chose for this concerto (that is they are not adjacent notes in the row). The final four notes of the row are the first four notes of the Bach chorale “Es ist genug!” [“It is enough!”]. In the first ten bars of the first movement (which he indicated as introduction), Berg presents the four open strings and then starts to add the other notes from the row.⁴⁹ This is similar to how the opening of Chin’s Violin Concerto unfolds. Even though her concerto is not based on twelve-tone technique and though she does not have a row in the piece, she adds other notes to the four open strings. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 1.1 Berg’s Row in His Violin Concerto



⁴⁹. Michael Steinberg, *The Concerto A Listener’s Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 92–105.

Upon first hearing, Ligeti's Violin Concerto (1989-93) might sound like improvisatory music. It begins with the solo violin's four open strings as well, and it almost sounds like an orchestra in the process of tuning, just as writers also have observed about Berg's concerto. Ligeti uses harmonics in both the solo violin and the orchestral strings throughout the first movement, as does Chin in the first movement of her Violin Concerto. Chin creates an impression of improvisation, with the harmonics in the solo violin line, especially at the beginning of the first movement. Harmonics are one of the main musical ideas that Chin develops or unfolds; they are not merely decoration.

Timbral Music

Like Chin's other works, her Violin Concerto is full of colorful timbre. Contrasting changes of timbre throughout create a special aura and luminous sonorities. Chin once said, "to be a composer means for me to be a craftsman, who tries to realize their own aural dream."⁵⁰ The combination of the violin's unique or natural sound and specific instrumental techniques contribute to recreating the "aural dream" here. The fabric of Chin's fantasy are her own compositional gestures, which include special attention to percussion instruments, complex textures: juxtaposing, superimposing, and repeating rhythmic patterns and layers.⁵¹ Her fairly simple and clear structure allows her to create timbral variety, gradually unfolding musical ideas through combining repetition and development. This allows the audience to understand these more easily than they could if also trying to track a complex formal structure.

⁵⁰. "Daring to Cross Many Boundaries."

⁵¹. Juxtaposition and superimposition are similar, but not identical. Juxtaposition implies placing things next to each other, whereas superimposition implies layering things atop each other. For further information, consult the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In this document, I primarily use the word "layers" to refer to different instrumental groups.

Chapter II: Movement I

Introduction

Previous scholars who have studied Unsuk Chin's Violin Concerto have focused on two parameters: timbre and, to a lesser extent, texture.⁵² However, as is the case with any musical work, formal analysis clarifies compositional structure and facilitates performance. This principle applies to Chin's Violin Concerto, especially its first movement, which is based on developmental and variational processes that differ from a traditional formal approach. From a practical standpoint, analyzing the form is imperative because of Chin's complex writing for the solo violin and the orchestra; performers easily can lose track of their place when they only focus on small units. Beyond the matter of ensemble, however, there are other compelling reasons to consider the form of Chin's concerto and its various movements. Understanding the form and the structure of each movement allows performers to play Chin's complex music as a dramatic whole rather than segment by segment.

No existing studies of Chin's Violin Concerto address performance issues, despite the concerto's extreme technical demands in the solo violin part. The only study of the composition in English appears in Rhie's dissertation "Quilting Time and Memory: The Music of Unsuk Chin," but Rhie's analysis focuses on the concerto's relationship to gamelan music. Of the two dissertations in Korean about Chin's Violin Concerto, the one by Chanmi Park has a substantial analysis of the first movement.⁵³ Park considers how Chin's Violin Concerto is a timbral work, and she discusses how that timbre is created and how it works alongside other musical elements. Her dissertation also explores form, and her analysis of the sectional divisions in the first

⁵². The same is true of analyses of Chin's works more generally.

⁵³. The other dissertation, Heekyung Lee's "A Study of Unsuk Chin's Violin Concerto (2001)," provides a short, general overview of the work.

movement generally agrees with the analysis in this chapter, which is outlined in Figure 2.1. However, she focuses more on describing the material within each section than on analyzing the whole structure. Even though she does not define the movement as in a sonata form (and neither do I), she identifies the three major sections in the movement as introduction, development, and closing; these are the divisions listed in Figure 2.1 as Group A, Group B, and Group C.

FIGURE 2.1 Diagram of Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement

Group	Part	Chin's Tempo	Section	Internal Division
Group A	Part A1 (mm. 1–63)	♩ = ca. 92–100	Section 1 (mm. 1–38)	mm. 1–9 and mm. 10–20/20–38
	Part A2 (mm. 63–105)	♩ = ca. 88–92	Section 2 (mm. 38–63)	
			Section 1 (mm. 63–80)	
			Section 2 (mm. 81–105)	
Group B	Part B1 (mm. 106–134)	♩ = ca. 96	N/A	
	Part B2 (mm. 134–155)	♩ = ca. 88–92	N/A	
	Part B3 (mm. 155–186)	♩ = ca. 100–108	N/A	
	Part B4 (mm. 186–211)	♩ = ca. 76–80	N/A	
Group C	Part C1 (mm. 212–243)	♩ = ca. 100, <i>tempo rubato</i>	Section 1 (mm. 212–235)	
	Part C2 (mm. 244–253)	♩ = ca. 80	Section 2 (mm. 235–243)	
	Part C3 (mm. 253–264)	♩ = ca. 132	N/A	
	Part C4 (mm. 264–300)	♩ = ca. 122–132	N/A	

In contrast to Park, I propose that the first movement has both variational and developmental characteristics. The diagram in the chart above reflects this interpretive perspective. Unlike Park, I do not suggest a trajectory of sonata form. I present a four-tiered approach, dividing the first movement into groups and parts, and then sometimes into sections, one of which also has internal divisions. Thus, the words “group,” “part,” and “section” have a specific meaning in my analysis. Chin herself clearly divides the movement into ten parts that are differentiated through tempo. Each of these parts is unified through techniques, pitch content, rhythmic figures, and other means, but not melody. In one sense, each part is a variation in itself, but at the same time, these parts work together to create larger forms.

Paradigms for analyzing variation and development as part of the same process have been proposed by Mary Wennerstrom. In her *Form in Twentieth-Century Music*, she notes that differentiating between developmental and variational processes is challenging –and perhaps impossible.

It is difficult to separate developmental procedures from variational ones, since both terms indicate some transformation of initial material with a retention of certain essential original features. Indeed, it is perhaps impossible to distinguish between these intertwined techniques as *processes*; as form-creating devices, however, it is possible to distinguish developmental sections (units in which small bits of material are treated to many *different* presentations and combinations) from variational sections (units which are dependent on basically *one* type of presentation of material, if not on the retention of an entire phrase structure or shape).⁵⁴

Although I believe that all of the parts have both variational and developmental features, I will show that some parts exhibit more developmental characteristics than others.

Wennerstrom also has noted that some composers focus on variation at the micro level, conducting their processes across very tiny chunks of music, rather than on the macro level.⁵⁵

⁵⁴. Mary Wennerstrom, “Form in 20th-century Music,” in *Aspects of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Gary E. Wittlich (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 18.

⁵⁵. Wennerstrom, “Form in 20th-century Music,” 34.

In addition to...more straightforward variation techniques, composers have also dealt with “variation” as a complex of interrelated small units. There is often no “theme” as such, only basic generating material. The only difference between this sort of procedure and a continuous developmental piece is the sectionalization; the variation works are divided into specific sections (“variations”) which are internally unified by a similar method of presentation (texture, rhythm, etc.).⁵⁶

Chin’s Violin Concerto is a perfect case study in this sort of compositional approach. In the first movement of her Violin Concerto, there is no main theme, just core materials: the four open strings of the violin, harmonics, and quintuplet rhythms. Chin combines these materials differently throughout the movement. She continuously develops and intensifies material within parts. Her distinctive and continuous transformation makes the contrasts between the parts and sections all the more dramatic.

Group A

Part A1 (mm. 1–63): mm. 1–9 and mm. 10–20/20–38; 38–63

Section 1: mm. 1–9

Of all the parts in the first movement, Part A1 has the most internal divisions. Mm. 1–38 constitute Section 1 of Part A1. In the first nine measures, Chin presents the foundational texture that she will vary throughout the movement; her first expansion of this texture occurs in mm. 10–38. Section 2 begins at m. 38. Although not marked with a change in tempo, this is another point of obvious division, as the solo violin starts to play quicker notes and as more instruments join the accompaniment.

⁵⁶. Ibid.

Like her teacher, Ligeti, Chin employs complex, multi-layered textures.⁵⁷ This movement begins with three different layers of sound in the orchestra, in addition to the solo violin line. As Arnold Whittall has noted in his study of concertos since 1945, composers often write demanding parts for the orchestra.⁵⁸ Chin is no exception. The orchestral parts are difficult to play because of their complex rhythms – often built upon quintuplets – and because of the precision required to align the different layers.

The sound the three orchestral layers and the soloist produce together in the first nine measures is a bit blurred due to the soft dynamic and the rhythmic complexity in the marimbas. As shown in Musical Example 2.1, the double bass (which is joined by the contrabassoon) has a muted pedal D; the steel drum plays long-held trills; and the marimbas have more active lines that feature quintuplet rhythms. The solo violin, which enters in the second measure, has the same rhythmic pattern as the marimba II, although unlike it, the violin starts with a sixteenth rest. Despite their rhythmic similarities, the solo violin and the marimba II do not share the same melodic contour. The solo violin line, marked *piano*, nevertheless stands out against the soft orchestral backdrop.⁵⁹

⁵⁷. Peter Edwards discusses about the layers in Ligeti's violin concerto in his dissertation. Peter Edwards, "The Music of György Ligeti and His Violin Concerto: A Study in Analysis, Reception, and the Listening Experience" (Cand. Philol. diss., University of Oslo 2005).

⁵⁸. Arnold Whittall, "The Concerto since 1945," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Concerto*, ed. Simon P. Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 161.

⁵⁹. Park also analyzes the texture as having three layers + solo violin

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 2.1 Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 1–5

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The ostinato created by the marimbas I and II evokes gamelan music, a tradition that Chin has identified as a source of inspiration, as mentioned in the first chapter. The two instruments continuously play their rhythmic pattern, and the melodic contours are repeated every two and a half measures (cf. Musical Example 2.1). Ostinato is an essential element of traditional gamelan music, and Chin also opens with an ostinato in two other concertos, the Double Concerto and the Piano Concerto. As Rhie observes in her dissertation, these three concertos by Chin present ostinatos frequently, whether as foreground or background.⁶⁰ However, as Rhie points out, there is a difference between traditional gamelan practice and the ostinato: “[W]hile the persistent ostinatos [in gamelan music] most immediately create a static, drone-like quality, ostinatos in Chin’s music also create a rhythmic interest that leads to forward momentum.”⁶¹ For example, at the beginning of the concerto, Chin establishes 1 + 4 and 4 + 1 patterns, then starts to insert 2 + 3 and 3 + 2 patterns, creating more constant rhythmic activity. It is precisely this momentum that makes analyzing the form of Chin’s Violin Concerto necessary – and fascinating.

In terms of rhythm, the movement is dominated by quintuplet patterns, which Chin will vary throughout the movement. The concerto begins with continuous quintuplets in both of the

⁶⁰. Rhie “The Music of Unsuk Chin,” 23.

⁶¹. Ibid

marimbas and the solo violin. Their quintuplet patterns are summarized and labeled in Figure 2.3, which illustrates the rhythmic patterns used in Part A1. The patterns of the marimbas are symmetrical in a sense; marimba I's underlying pattern combines (a) and (b); marimba II's underlying pattern combines (b) and (a). Chin makes the rhythms even more complex through ties, which creates rhythmic variation.

Like the marimba II, the solo violin's underlying pattern combines (b) and (a), but because of when the solo violin enters, it aligns with the marimba I, as shown in Musical Example 2.1 (see the boxed material). These two instruments rhythmically align, but their pitch changes do not always occur at the same time, since they occasionally have tied-over notes at different times. The other two patterns shown in Figure 2.3, (c) and (d), are only found in the double bass (and contrabassoon) and steel drums. Figure 2.4 summarizes the distribution of rhythmic patterns and pitches in the first ten measures.

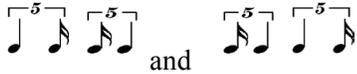
FIGURE 2.2 Rhythmic Patterns used in Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement

Pattern	Rhythm	Place used	Notes
(a)		Part A1	4+1
(b)		Part A1	1+4
(c)		Part A1	
(d)		Part A1	
(e)		solo violin in part A1 38–63	1+2+2
(f)		solo violin in part A1 38–63	2+2+1
(g)		Part A2	3+2
(h)		Part A2	2+3
(i)		Part A2	2+3
(j)		Part A2	
(k)		Part B1	

FIGURE 2.3 Rhythmic Patterns in Part A1

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
			
4 + 1	1+4		
Marimba I:		Marimba II:	Solo Violin:
(a) + (b)		(b) + (a)	(b) + (a)
			

FIGURE 2.4 Instruments and Patterns in mm. 1–9

Instrument	Features
Marimbas I & II	Alternating interlocking patterns of five sixteenths 
Steel Drum	Trill patterns
Double Bass	Muted D4
Solo Violin	Freely unfolding rhythmic groupings of notes/patterns of D–A–D: D (D) A D A D A D A D mm. 1–4 mm. 5–6 mm. 7–9

Chin’s palette of pitches, like her palette of rhythms, is restricted in the first nine measures. All the instruments play only four pitches: G, D, A, and E, which are the open strings of the violin. Like Ligeti, whose Violin Concerto also began with emphasizing the open strings of the violin, Chin places special importance on harmonics. In mm. 1–9 (and in fact, until m. 38), the solo violin’s unfolding line includes only open strings and natural harmonics. There is no memorable melody at the beginning, but the harmonics introduced in the solo violin will play a significant role in the movement, coming back in ever-changing combinations. The harmonics, along with other musical elements such as pitches, texture, and certain layering, take on the role of themes in traditional concertos like those of Mozart and Tchaikovsky. Alternating between open strings and harmonics, especially harmonics in high positions (which Chin specifically calls for), might cause physical difficulties for players. Chin is similar to Ligeti, who opens his concerto with the solo violin alternating rapidly between the open strings D and A at the soft dynamic of *pppppp*.

Section 1: mm. 10–20/20–38

In the next section, mm. 10–38, Chin develops her musical ideas through making gradual changes in rhythm, pitches, and instrumentation. She first expands these ideas in mm. 10–20, and then makes a few further changes in mm. 20–38, when the harps join for the first time and the marimbas start to include new rhythmic patterns.

Like in the opening nine measures, the texture in mm. 10–38 has a solo violin line plus three layers in the orchestra. All the instruments from before continue to play, and the harps join in m. 20. The most noticeable development is that Chin adds more pitches. G, D, A, and E remain central, and the solo violin first plays E in m. 11 and G in m. 15.

The solo violin and the orchestra also start to explore other notes. This is similar to the opening of Ligeti's *Violin Concerto*. In that work, during the first six measures, the solo violin alternates only between the open strings A and D. Then the open strings G and E appear, and after m. 11, there are even more pitches. Unlike Ligeti, Chin mixes natural harmonics with open strings right from the beginning.

The added notes are B, F#, C#, and G#, which are on the sharp side of the circle of fifths. The double bass shows this development clearly. In mm. 1–9, the bass had only played D, but beginning in m. 10, the double bass starts to move, too. It uses all of the violin's open string notes – although because the double bass's line moves slowly, it takes longer for it to cycle through all of them – before incorporating the newly introduced pitches. There is no particular pattern in the way that Chin introduces new notes.

Throughout this section, the solo violin also begins to explore more diverse registers. When the harps join the ensemble in m. 20, they double one or two notes of the solo violin in every measure. The doubled notes are usually the open strings of the solo violin. In the marimbas' parts, new rhythmic patterns are mixed into their old patterns beginning in m. 22 as shown in Musical Example 2.2 (boxed rhythms are new patterns). The new patterns are different kinds of

quintuplets, and these changes are not quite audible, though they make the marimbas' already complex lines even more challenging. The dynamic remains quiet throughout.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 2.2 Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 22–26, Marimbas I and II



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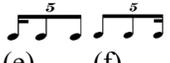
Section 2: mm. 38–63

Section 2, which begins in m. 38, is the last division in Part A1 before the major break that will initiate Part A2. Some obvious changes emerge. The new rhythmic character in the solo violin is very audible. Its diminished rhythmic values, which have irregular accents, give speed to the music. The very first dynamic change in the movement occurs in the solo violin part at m. 38. Its dynamic moves up to *mezzo piano*, although the rest of the instruments stay *piano*. However, the overall volume is slightly louder because there are more instruments than before. There are also some changes in the orchestra parts. In m. 38, a new layer, composed of woodwinds and horns, jumps in. The woodwinds have lines consisting of short notes with staccato markings and rests, which create punctuation-like effects. The horns present comparatively longer-phrased patterns – in fact, they pick up the rhythmic patterns the marimbas had in the previous section.

There are some less obvious changes as well that begin in m. 38, and most involve rhythmic articulations that gradually intensify and transform the music. Figure 2.5 shows how rhythmic patterns are introduced and traded between instruments in Part A1. The double bass plays a mix of old and new rhythmic patterns, and its line also starts to include harmonics, imitating the sound of the solo violin. Starting in m. 38, the cello replaces the contrabassoon in playing with the double bass. Throughout the rest of Part A1, sometimes the cello and double

bass play the same notes, and sometimes they play a semitone apart from each other. In terms of layering, the steel drum drops out at m. 38, and the timpani joins the orchestra. It plays the rhythmic pattern the marimbas had in the first ten measures. The note D that the timpani holds is the same note that the double bass held for nine measures at the beginning of the movement. In m. 42, shortly after the beginning of this last division within Part A1, the harps start to play two lines apiece instead of one. They also change their pattern, taking the rhythmic patterns the marimbas had previously – especially the modified one that appeared beginning in m. 22.

FIGURE 2.5 Rhythmic Patterns and Transfers in Part A1

Rhythm	mm. 1–10	mm. 10–20, 20–38	mm. 38–63
 (a) (b)	Marimbas	Marimbas, harp doubles	Timpani/ Horns / Harps
 Trills (c)	Steel drum	Steel drum	None
 (e) (f)	None	None	Solo violin

Beginning in m. 38, Chin explores more notes in the solo violin part beyond the four notes B, F#, C#, and G#, which are already added in the previous section. The new added notes are C, A# (Bb), and F. In both the previous section and this one, the added notes follow the perfect fifth intervallic relationship established by the violin's four open strings. An interesting thing to note – beyond this fifth relationship – is the order of the newly added notes. In the solo violin part, in mm. 11–38, the four notes on the right side of the circle of fifths are added. Then in mm. 38–62, the three notes on the left side (except D#) appear. Chin's approach to adding new notes is different in each case. In Section 1 of Part A1, from m. 10 to m. 38, new notes only appear as harmonics, whereas in Section 2, its newly added notes appear as normally fingered notes.

FIGURE 2.6 Unfolding Version of the Circle of Fifth

(D#) A# F C | G D A E | B F # C# G#
↓ ↓ ↓
mm. 38–63 | open strings | mm.1–38

Musical Example 2.3 shows the solo violin’s entrance material at the beginnings of both sections within Part A1 (cf. Figure 2.1 for a map of Part A1, its sections, and internal divisions). As can be seen in the score, the violinist’s line has become more physically demanding by the beginning of Section 2. Jumping around demands extra physical work, as do the newly-introduced, almost incessant quintuplet sixteenths and constant string crossings. The accented notes occur only in the inner melodic line that emerges at m. 38.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 2.3 Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 2–7 and mm. 38–42

Solo Violin’s Entrance in Part A1, section 1, mm. 2–7



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Solo Violin’s Entrance in Part A1, section 2, mm. 38–42



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Chin’s approach to treating the other layers in the orchestra differs from that in the previous section. All the accompaniment parts played more or less constantly in the previous section, but now they come in and out fairly regularly, with gaps between each entrance.

Dynamic changes are new, too. Beginning in m. 43, crescendo markings start to appear in the woodwind instruments: first to *mp*, then to *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. In fact, all parts get louder at the ending. The solo violin crescendos to *ff* at the ending (m. 63) after two sets of hairpins to *mf* at mm. 45 and 51. The ending is quite obvious with these dramatic dynamic changes, which are reinforced in two other ways. The horns abandon their own pattern and double the double bass and cello parts. The solo violin's rhythmic pattern breaks down and turns into a fast, collapsing, descending line that falls into along double stop on G and D, lowest possible double stop on the violin.

Part A2 (mm. 63–105)

At m. 63, for the first time in the movement, Chin reduces the texture, dropping out all instruments except for the grand cassa (bass drum) and solo violin. The forceful grand cassa diminuendos from *mezzo forte* to *pianississimo* over the next five measures as the solo violin holds out a drone G and D on its open strings. The tempo also changes, but it is not easy to hear at first, as neither the grand cassa nor the solo violin give a strong sense of meter and rhythmic pulse.

Unlike in Part A1, there are no dramatic sectional breaks in Part A2, although there are several significant changes at m. 81; thus, I divide Part A2 into Section 1 (mm. 63–80) and Section 2 (mm. 81–105). Even so, throughout Part A2 Chin employs a process of repetition and expansion, in terms of pitch and rhythmic content. One could also regard this section as elaborating the patterning of the solo violin in the opening section, since the solo violin line now consist of perfect fifth double stops. When Chin restarts the process of repetition and expansion in m. 63, she inserts the figure of G and D open strings, recalling her focus on open strings at beginning of the work. This time, however, she takes her focus on open strings in different direction. Within Part A2, there are figures that repeat, unlike in Part A1. She places the same G–D double stop figure in mm. 67, 75, 80, and later she moves it up a fifth to the D and A open

strings in mm. 97, 100, 102. Beginning in m. 81, which has other changes in the orchestra as well, she also adds an ascending glissando in the solo violin. This figure appears by itself in mm. 86, 91, and 94, and then in conjunction with the D–A double stop in m. 100. She also turns this figure into an ascending and then descending line in mm. 98 and 102–3, again in conjunction with the D–A double stop.

FIGURE 2.7 Repeated Figures in Part A2

mm.	Figures	Table Legend: G–D + D–A + ↑↓
63	G–D	
67	G–D	
75	G–D	
80–1	G–D+↑	
85–6	G–D+↑	
89–90	G–D	
90–1	G–D+↑	
94	↑	
97–8	G–D+D–A+↑↓	
100	D–A+↑	
102–3	D–A+↑↓	
105	G–D	

Throughout Part A2, the solo violin continuously plays double stops, all of which are perfect fifths. As in Part A1, the solo violin only has open strings and natural harmonics. As before, the four notes G, D, A, and E are treated as the main pitches, but in a different way due to the double stops. From m. 63 to m. 72, the solo violin only presents the four open strings pitches (either the open strings themselves or harmonics); other pitches will come later. This passage is

quite similar to the opening of the movement⁶² – once again suggesting both variational and developmental procedures.

The soloist continues to have quintuplet rhythms, but these are not the same quintuplet rhythms as in Part A1. These new rhythmic patterns consist of a dotted eighth note and an eighth note, creating a 3 + 2 or 2 + 3 pattern, not the 1 + 4 or 4 + 1 of Part A1. These rhythmic figures are shown in Figure 2.8. Sometimes the old rhythmic patterns appear between statements of the newer pattern, such as in m. 70. As shown in Musical Example 2.4, 2 + 3 and 3 + 2 do not always appear in mirror image, as had the rhythmic patterns in Part A1.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 2.4 Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 65–69, Solo Violin

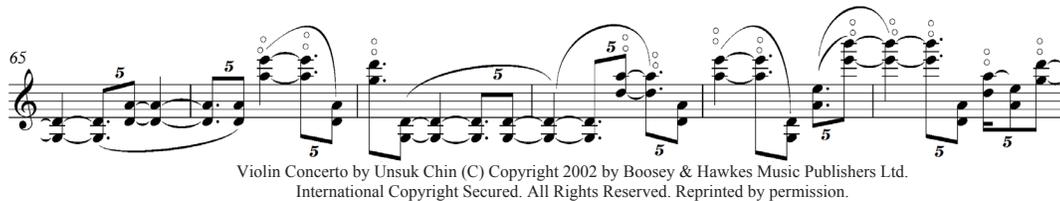
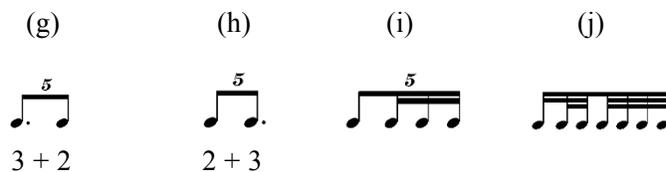


FIGURE 2.8 Rhythmic Patterns in Part A2, mm. 63–105



The slower tempo and quieter accompaniment part, along with rhythmic augmentation in the solo violin, create a completely different character than in Part A1. The solo violin unmistakably becomes the center of attention, instead of blending into the orchestral texture as much as it had in Part A1.

⁶². The passage is similar to the opening of the movement in terms of the orchestral setting, including the harps and doubling the solo violin.

After the great thinning out of the texture at the beginning of Part A2, the accompaniment parts start to come in more and more frequently until m. 81, and then decrease for the remainder of the section. At the beginning, the only instrument playing in the orchestra is the grand cassa. It is also the only instrument that play continuously through Part A2. In a sense, the grand cassa takes over the roles the marimbas and the timpani had in mm. 1–37 and 38–61, respectively; the marimbas and the timpani do not appear in Part A2. The grand cassa features the rhythmic pattern of (b) + (a) until m. 89 then moves on to the pattern of (b) + (h).

As Part A2 goes on, other instruments are added. The harps join first, doubling the solo violin and then the woodwinds. Later the vibraphone and glockenspiel join in mm. 87 and 98, respectively, imitating the harps' texture. Chin's approach to these rhythmic patterns is significant. Every instrument that appears in Part A2 has its lines made up of the rhythmic pattern (a), (b), (g), and/or (h), unlike in Part A1, in which they did not share patterns. The effect of combining patterns of 1 + 4 and 4 + 1 with 2 + 3 and 3 + 2 in all instruments – not just the solo violin – generates greater momentum.

FIGURE 2.9 Instruments and Rhythmic Patterns in Part A2

Instruments	Join measure numbers	Used rhythmic patterns
Solo violin	63	(a), (b), (e), (g), (h)
Grand cassa	63	(a), (b), (h)
Harps	68	(a), (b), (g), (h)
Woodwinds	69	(a), (b), (g), (h)
Strings (Violin I, Cello)	81	(a), (b), (g), (h)

The accompaniment part begins to get thicker beginning in m. 81, where the solo violin presents a new ascending line that adds harmonics double stops to its basic pattern (cf. Figure 2.7). In this measure, the orchestral strings – violin I and cello – come in imitating the harmonics sound of the solo violin part; this is the first presentation of the violins. In other ways, Section 2

of Part A2 is very much like Section 1. As mentioned previously, Chin ties together Part A2 by repeating certain figures – most notably, open string drones. At the beginning of Section 2, she introduces the ascending harmonics figure that she will repeat four more times (mm. 86, 91, 94, and 100). Within Section 2, she also includes an ascending and descending harmonics figure two times (m. 98 and mm. 102–103). A dotted quarter double stop of D and A concludes Part A2. Part A2 had started similarly but with the pitches G and D instead of D and A; in a sense, Chin mimics the convention of moving to V in traditional concertos.

Group B

Part B1 (mm. 106–134)

Group B consists of four parts: Part B1 (mm. 106–134), Part B2 (mm. 134–155), Part B3 (mm. 155–186), and Part B4 (mm. 186–211), each of which have a similar number of measures. However, Part B2 and Part B4 are in a slower tempo, and Part B1 and Part 3 are in a faster tempo, creating a fast-slow-fast-slow structure. Group B has both variational and developmental elements. It goes back to the beginning in terms of its orchestration and pitch content, reducing the pitches and then expanding out again across Group B. The solo violin still features harmonics and double stops as in Group A, but in a different way. The quintuplet rhythm also is still treated as a main rhythmic pattern, but it is combined with other new rhythmic patterns.

The orchestration and pitch content at the beginning of Part B1 recall the opening of the movement – once again, giving us a sense of starting over, or starting a new variation. As in Part A1, the solo violin plays harmonics over the long-held D pedal point in the steel drum (with trill). However, a viola plays instead of the double bass, and Chin leaves out the marimbas entirely. Thus, the solo violin stands out more than in Part A1.

The solo violin's line includes both single-note (i.e., not double-stop) harmonics and open strings, as in Part A1, and accented double stops, as in Part A2. These are freely mixed

together, and they consistently create ascending and descending contours. The double stops usually are fifths and thirds, but there are seconds as well. The non-accented single line consists of the four open-string notes G, D, A, E, plus B, which starts to appear beginning in m. 120. Except pitch B, every note involves open strings or harmonics. The solo violin remains *piano*, with some hairpins, for B1, and then has big crescendo beginning in m. 125 and continuing through to m. 133. The main rhythmic division in the solo violin is still quintuplet, but the figuration is even more active than in Part A1 and Part A2. Now the solo violin consistently plays rhythmic pattern (k), which consists of quintuplet sixteenth notes (cf. Figure 2.2) The only exception is the dotted half note in the very last measure of Part B1.

As mentioned above, at the beginning of Part B1, the orchestration is very similar to that of the opening of Part A1. In the seventh measure of Part B1, Chin starts to make changes in the orchestra. She presents five different layers of accompaniment. One is created by the steel drum, playing the same role as in Part A1 holding the note D for couple measures then moving to other pitches. This time Chin specifies two steel drums instead of one, and they present harmonies instead of a single line. The bassoon and contrabassoon join and double them beginning in m. 117. The second layer that comes in m. 112 consists of the strings: viola, cello, and double bass. These lower strings move together rhythmically. In m. 112, the violins I and II take over the role the harps had in Part A by doubling the solo violin; so do the crash cymbals (*becken paar*), which join the orchestra for the first time in m. 119. M. 112 marks the first time that all the orchestral strings at the same time. The harps I and II that also join in m. 112 present the rhythmic pattern (e) or (f), which was mainly used in the second section of Part A1 (mm. 38–63). The woodwinds (flute, oboe, and clarinet) create another layer, playing lines with small contours that go up then down together, even though they have different rhythmic patterns. These contour lines seem like fragments of the solo violin line in this Part B1. The harps and woodwinds play in alternation, unlike in Part A2, in which the woodwinds alternated with themselves.

FIGURE 2.10 Instruments and Rhythmic Figures in Part B1

Instruments	Rhythmic Figures
Solo violin	(k)
Steel drum	(c) trill, (d) trill
Bassoon, contrabassoon	(c)
Violin I & II, cymbals	(a), (e), (f), (g), (h)
Harps I & II	(e), (f)
Woodwinds: flute, oboe, clarinet	(k)

In Part B1, some layers in the orchestra tend to imitate the solo violin. This is the first time there is borrowing going on between the instruments, including the soloist, at the same time. The woodwinds have fragments of the solo violin line (but with lengthened rhythmic values); the crash cymbals and violins I and II double the solo violin; and lastly the low strings – viola and double bass – present harmonics, which is the solo violin’s main feature throughout. There had been some borrowings in the preceding Part A2 as well (see m. 81 and following); however, those were more passive than in Part B1. Orchestral instruments doubled the notes and shared the rhythmic patterns of the solo violin line. Unlike that, in Part B1, the borrowings are obvious, as shown in Musical Example 2.5. This creates internal unity within the section. At the same time, Part B1 still has links to other sections (and other parts) because of the focus on harmonics and the four open string notes.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 2.5 Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, Part B2, mm. 134–138

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There is a long crescendo leading to the end Part B, beginning in m. 125 and ending in m. 133 with G–D open strings in the solo violin. Sudden changes transpire in the orchestra beginning in m. 131, four measures before Chin places the tempo marking that initiates the next section. The way Chin ends Part B1 is similar to the way she closed the previous sections. Tensions rise with crescendos in every part, and a descending line moves to a long-held, low note in the solo violin.

Part B2 (mm. 134–155)

In Part B2, the most notable and audible change is in the solo violin. Throughout this part, the solo violin now features only double stops (and sometimes decorative triple and quadruple stops), with no harmonics. This is the first part in the movement that has no harmonics in the solo violin. Instead, the solo violin now turns to a new technique – glissandi – that are presented with tremolos. Doori Yoo noted in her dissertation about Chin’s Two Etudes for Piano, “Chin’s Violin Concerto is another example that demonstrates the blurring of sound – in this case, by frequent use of glissandi and tremolo between half steps in the strings. This effect can be compared to using a modulation slider in electronic keyboards or synthesizers. The modulation slider changes the pitch only very slightly by adding vibrato to the sound, which makes the pitch unstable.”⁶³

Several other significant changes occur in the violin line. Instead of using only perfect fifths, Chin now also uses seconds and tritones as double stops. Melodically, the solo violin emphasizes major and minor thirds, as Park has noted in her dissertation.⁶⁴ Musical Example 2.6 illustrates this, and also the one exception. As can be seen, when the solo violin plays a decorative quadruple stop in m. 146, the topmost line jumps a seventh up, but second line up still moves by a third. Park sees these quadruple stops as the beginning and/or climax of the phrases. However, she does not mention about the break of the third relationship, at m. 146. The combination of the break in the line and the larger leap in the upper voice helps set off the new phrase. Chin also creates a sense of variation and development through the pitches of the quadruple stop. At the beginning of Part B2, she had started with G-D-A#-E, but here she alters some of the pitches by a half step, writing G#-D-A-E. These two quadruple stops highlight the tritones, one of the new and important intervals in this section.

⁶³. Doori Yoo “Two Etudes by Unsuk Chin,” 18–19.

⁶⁴. Chanmi Partk “A Study on the Timbre in Unsuk Chin’s <Violin Concerto>” – Focused on the 1st movement” (diss., Hanyang University, 2014), 48.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 2.6 Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 134–137 and 146–149.

mm. 134–137, Solo Violin



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mm. 146–149, Solo Violin



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Still the main rhythm is the quintuplet. As in Part A2, the solo violin's line in Part B2 combines rhythmic patterns that had been presented in previous parts or instrumental lines but in different groupings. For example, it combines the rhythmic pattern (a), first heard in Part A1; the rhythmic pattern (g), from Part A2, and the rhythmic pattern (e), from Part A2, Section 2 (cf. Figure 2.2). The solo violin line also includes half notes for the quadruple stops the beginning of Part B2 and at the beginning of the second phrase m. 146. This is the first time there have been regular half notes – not dotted half notes or tied half notes – in the movement in the solo violin line. Chin creates a mirroring: the first time, the upper two notes are half notes and the bottom two are sixteenths; the second time, the values are reversed.

The orchestra falls into four layers in Part B2. Layer 1 consists violins I and II; Layer 2 includes the lower strings (viola, cello, and double bass) and horns; Layer 3 consists of woodwinds and harps; and Layer 4 is the vibraphone. As in the solo violin, Chin reuses rhythmic patterns presented in previous parts by combining them differently in the orchestral lines here.

FIGURE 2.11 Instruments and Rhythmic Figures in Part B2, mm. 134–155

Layers	Rhythmic Figures	From
1: Violins I and II		The solo violin in Part B1
		The solo violin in Part A1 (mm. 38–62)
2: Lower strings (viola, cellos, double bass) and horns		The lower strings in Part B1
3: Woodwinds (flute, oboes, clarinets, bassoon) and harps		The solo violin in Part A1, also used in harps in Part B1
4: Vibraphone		The vibraphones in Part B1 (mm.131– 133)

Part B2, Chin expands the number of lines in violins I and II by giving each two-part divisi, creating a total of four lines. The upper lines in the first and second violins have the same rhythmic figures, but not at the same time, and not with the same melodic contours, as shown in Musical Example 2.7. The same is true of the lower lines. The upper lines present a quintuplet that consists of five sixteenth notes, which resembles the solo violin’s rhythmic pattern (k) in Part B1. The lower lines present a combination of the rhythmic patterns (e) and (f).

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 2.7 Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 136–139, Violins I and II



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The cellos, which belong to Layer 2, also play *divisi*, but they move together. The lower strings are the only instruments to play consistently throughout the Part B2. In both Layer 1 and Layer 2, harmonics play a significant role. Harmonics have been a main component in the solo violin from the beginning of the movement, although the solo violin does not play them in Part B2. All the strings' lines include harmonics, except the second cello. The upper lines of the violins I and II include harmonics only at the ends of rhythmic groupings, and then only sometimes. The string section has greater intervals than the solo violin, but like the solo violin it emphasizes perfect fifths, tritones, and seconds (but not thirds).

Layer 3 consists of the woodwinds. At the beginning of Part B2, in m. 134, the oboes and the clarinets play the same pitches as the solo violin: G-D-A#-E. The woodwinds' line is rhythmically augmented; they hold out these pitches, then move to the pitches of the solo violin's first double stop (F#-C) at the end of m. 135 (and they add in C# and A). The oboes and clarinets then pass their figuration over to the horns (who belong to Layer 2) in m. 137. In m. 130, woodwinds – flute, clarinet, oboe, and bassoon – start to move along with the harps, who also belong to Layer 3. The rhythmic pattern that they have is like the harps' pattern in Part B1. Finally, the vibraphones I and II form a fourth layer as they continue their pattern from the end of Part B1.

As in Part B1, Chin tries to imitate the solo violin with the orchestra but in more obvious ways. If the woodwinds only copied the contour of the solo violin line in Part B1, they now play the fragment of the solo violin line with the same pitches. As an obvious example, the oboes and the clarinets at the opening is alike the beginning of the solo violin; the woodwinds present the augmented version of the solo violin part. Along with it, the strings attempt to imitate the solo violin employing the harmonics in all the string parts and employing rhythmic patterns in the violins I and II.

The way Chin prepares the end of Part B2 is different from before. There are crescendos in some parts towards the end, but a drone open string in the solo violin is missing. There had

been drone open strings at the end of each part. Part A1 had a G–D (m. 63); Part A2 had a D–A drone (m. 105), and Part B1 had a D drone (m. 133). Instead, all the layers play at the same time. The solo violin glissandos down from D to G–D with tremolo, preparing the Part B3, in which glissando with tremolo figures prominently in the solo violin line.

Part B3 (mm. 155–186)

In Part B3, the solo violin still features double stops with glissando and tremolo, as in Part B2, and the double-stop intervals are similar, still moving by thirds. However, the solo violin's melodic units are much shorter than in Part B2; the violin often has two or three double stops, then a rest. Since the solo violin presents fragments from Part B2 rather than the full melodic line, Part B3 can be seen as a variation or developmental of Part B2. Chin also breaks up the double stops with single-note gestures (ex. mm. 162, 169, 180) and adds staccato marks throughout. The rhythms used in the solo violin are the quintuplets that had already been presented in the previous parts.

The solo violin presents the melodic cell of E–C–A–F#, and this cell is played by some other instruments, too. For example, from m. 155 to 156, the flutes have E–C–A–F# in their line. Also, in the first harp's part, the melody line of E–C–A–F# constantly appears. This is the first time that the orchestra imitates both the contour and pitches of the solo violin in the movement. Before, it tried to imitate the solo violin's harmonics, timbre, or general contour. Each instrument imitates this melodic cell, but not always with all the notes.

The orchestration seems complex, with many layers; however, it largely is divided into four layers that resemble the orchestration of Part A1. Layer 1 is the harps, which remind us of the marimbas in Part A1. The harps have the same pattern as had the marimbas, presenting the rhythmic patterns of (a) and (b). Just like the marimbas had, the harps present the patterns for certain amount of time, then add new notes and change the rhythmic pattern. Also like the marimbas in Part A1, the harps have an important role in presenting pitch content. The marimbas

had played G, D, A, and E, the main pitches of Part A1; the harps play the main notes of Part B3: E, C, A, and F#.

Layer 2 has similar affinities with Part A1. The violins I and II are like the double bass in Part A1, with long-held notes and especially the pedal point of D in the second line of the violin II. Layers 3 and 4 resemble the respective layers of the harps and the horns later in Part A1, after m. 38. Layer 3 consists of the percussion instruments, lower strings (viola, cello, and double bass), and some of the woodwinds (bassoon and contrabassoon). The lower strings play pizzicato, creating a percussive sound. Part B3 presents the most percussion instruments so far. Layer 4, composed of woodwinds (piccolo, flute, oboes, and clarinets) that move rhythmically together, resembles the layer of the horns in Part A1.

Just like Part B2, Part B3 does not conclude with an open string drone. Up to the end of Part B3, all instruments maintain their patterns, and there are some crescendos as the orchestra moves toward the meter change that initiates Part B4. Even though individual instruments keep their patterns, the texture changes, with more instruments being added in. Specifically, Chin adds in the lower strings, the bassoon, and more percussion instruments. In the percussion lines, intensity builds as breaks between statements shorten. Part B3 concludes with the abrupt change in the solo violin in m. 186.

Part B4 (mm. 186–211)

The very first meter change in the movement occurs at the beginning of Part B4; the music is now in 5/8, which is divided as 3 + 2. Chin creates metric confusion by stressing different beats or off beats with *sforzandi* in every measure. For example, in m. 186, Chin divides the sixteenth note patterns as 6 + 4, while the next bar is divided as 3 + 3 + 4. Chin creates an additional challenge for the performers by stressing different beats in different instruments.

In Part B4, the solo violin has longer phrases than in the previous part and has continuous sixteenth notes. This new material is reminiscent of the solo violin in Part B1, which also had running sixteenth notes. The contour of the solo violin is quite simple. It mostly moves by stepwise motion, resulting in less dramatic changes of register than in some previous passages.

As in Part B1, the solo violin line consists of accented double stops and single notes, which continue through m. 197. The double stops also receive *sfz* markings. Beginning in m. 198, the single notes have staccato markings rather than accents. At this point, in m. 200, the solo violin line starts to incorporate a sextuplet descending line (mm. 200, 204, 207) and a nontuplet descending line (mm. 203, 206, 208). At the ending of Part B4, the triplet appears, which can be seen as a preparation of the next part, which features many triplets.

What is different from Part B1 is that there are no harmonics or quintuplet rhythms. For the first time in the movement, both of the main elements – quintuplet rhythms and harmonics – disappear in the solo violin line. However, harmonics can be seen in the orchestral violin parts at mm. 201, 204, and 205, just as Chin had kept harmonics in the string lines when she took them out of the solo violin in Part B2. Unlike before, Chin uses artificial harmonics. Without the harmonics and quintuplet rhythms, the violin line presents a more familiar type of writing for violinists, with fast running sixteenth-notes, even though the line poses challenges with accents on every note and irregularly stressed beats.

The woodwinds sometimes mimic the solo violin's descending line (mm. 198, 201, 204), though they move mostly by thirds, not by step. These lines stick out providing punctuations and this is the only obvious imitation of the solo violin in the orchestra. There is no quintuplet rhythm in Part B4, in either the solo violin or the orchestra. While the solo violin continuously presents running sixteenth-notes throughout Part B4, the orchestra mainly presents dotted quarter notes. At first, the score might look complex, with lots of instruments in the orchestra. However, most of them move together rhythmically, making for a simpler texture than previous parts. Due to less complex texture, the solo violin's running line does not go unheard. Compared to the previous

parts, the roles of the solo violin and the orchestra are somewhat reversed. In Part B4, the solo violin is the one in constant motion, while the orchestra provides short, pointed interjections of sound, with no long-held notes throughout the part. This can be seen as a preparation for the cadenza, since the solo violin is becoming more prominent and virtuosic and distinct.

At the end of Part B4, a drone open-string G returns, and it is found at the end of a flowing descending line. Unlike in the previous parts that concluded with drones, there are decrescendos instead of crescendos. This open-string G serves as a link to the cadenza-like material that begins in m. 212.

The solo violin's character creates an arch structure in Group B. In the outer two parts (Part B1 and Part B4), the solo violin features running notes constantly, while in the inner two parts (Part B2 and Part B3), the solo violin features double stops with glissandi and tremolos.

Group C

Part C1 (mm.212–235/235–243)

Group C is where the accompanied cadenza appears, which occurs in Part C1 (mm. 212–243). The other three parts are Part C2 (mm. 244–253), Part C3 (mm. 253–264), and Part C4 (mm. 264–300). Group C is the only group in this movement that has meter changes – in addition to tempo changes – between every part. In Group C, Chin creates drama. She begins with a sudden timbral change, placing a cadenza in Part C1, and then builds tension with a rhythmic accelerando in the solo violin line. The music bursts out in Part C2, with thick and loud orchestration, which is followed by Part C3, where only the orchestral strings continue playing. Lastly, the solo violin takes over in Part C4 and then leads to the end of the movement.

With the tempo change back to 3/4 in m. 212, suddenly all the instruments disappear, and only the violas and the solo violin remain. The divisi violas hold the notes G and D all the way through m. 224. In the middle of m. 225, the upper line of the viola moves from D to F, so the

dyad becomes G and F. Part A and Part B also had featured sustained lines, but this is the longest thus far.

There is a reason for this dramatic change: above the pedal point, the solo violin presents cadenza-like passages. Insertion of a cadenza in near the end of the first movement is a practice in traditional concertos. In Ligeti's Violin Concerto, there is a cadenza toward the end of the concerto. Unlike in Chin's concerto, he left it for performers to improvise.

Even though the solo violin is accompanied by the violas (and later by horns and cymbals beginning in m. 235, at Section 2), the solo violin line has the character of a cadenza. It has many arpeggio-like passages that depart from the materials of the previous parts. This is reminiscent of the beginning of Berg's Violin Concerto, where arpeggio-like contours are presented in both the solo violin and orchestra. Just like in Berg's concerto, here the solo violin line does not have traditional triads, but has contours that suggest arpeggios. Rhythmic augmentation and diminution are found throughout. The tempo marking of *rubato* – the only marking of this sort given in the movement – supports this section being a cadenza. This tempo indication gives the section more freedom (on top of the pedal point in the orchestra) compared to the very beginning of the movement, where the solo violin was locked in with the marimbas and other instruments.

Part C1 divides into two sections that are differentiated by change in accompaniment, which is created through changes in timbre. As mentioned above, in Section 1 (mm. 212–234), the violas are in charge of the accompaniment, and in Section 2 (mm. 235–243) the horns and the three cymbals take over. The horns in Section 2 first present pedal points on B, D#, F, and A; beginning in m. 241, they play pedal points on F#, A, C, and E. These four notes that come at the end are related to the melodic cell F#, A#, C, E, the main pitch content for the subsequent Part C2. Part C1 has the lightest orchestration in the movement, only presenting pedal points at the dynamic of *pianissimo*, allowing the solo violin to stand out more here than anywhere else.

In Section 1, the solo violin features arpeggio-like contours above the persistent pedal point. The solo violin line rarely has step-wise motion. Until m. 225, the lines always depart from

open G (G3), the lowest note on the violin itself. The high point of the arpeggios slowly climbs from open E (E5) to B6. D4 is emphasized beginning in m. 225, where the upper viola line changes its pitch to F.

Rhythmic changes within Part C1 are notable in the solo violin. Chin's written-out rhythmic augmentation and diminution in Part C1, summarized in Figure 2.12, resembles the rhythmic flexibility in cadenzas. It is a large-scale rhythmic *accelerando* which also engages with the enlargement of intervals in the solo violin line; initially, most of the intervals are thirds, and they grow into larger intervals like fifths, sixths, and sevenths. The solo violin's line starts with triplets that consist of eighth notes. Then, beginning in m. 200, the line is composed of sixteenth notes. In m. 223, the soloist's music begins to accelerate, as quintuplets are mixed with sixteenth notes. Beginning in m. 231, the material moves faster for three measures because of an *accelerando*, and then a *ritardando* pulls the tempo back just before the horn entrance in m. 235. In m. 235, sextuplets move the line forward again. Chin's use of rhythmic changes is different than in the preceding parts, in which rhythmic patterns were treated as the main musical subject.

FIGURE 2.12 Rhythmic Changes of the Solo Violin in Part C1

Measure	212–219	220–222	223–234	235–240	241–243
Rhythm					

From m. 231 to m. 234, double stops break up the arpeggio-like contours. On the last beat of m. 234, the solo violin makes a rapid decrescendo from *forte* to *piano* while playing a minor second (C3-D) tremolo. Section 1 has been pushed toward this point of arrival because of the G and then the D pedal points. In Section 2 of the cadenza, beginning in m. 235, the arpeggio like-line resumes, but the phrasing of each contour is shorter than in Section 1, and the pedal points are gone. Once again, the solo violin does not play a closing gesture on open strings; instead, it maintains its pattern of ascending then descending as it moves into Part C2.

Part C2 (mm. 244–253)

Part C2 is a nine-measure link between C1 and C3. The orchestration features a radically different texture and timbre than that of the previous parts, even though the solo violin continues its patterning. Part C2 has the thickest orchestration in the first movement. Since the preceding part had the simplest orchestration, the contrast is maximized. In Part C2, there are two patterns that show contrasting characters. Pattern 1 is characterized by sustained chords (mm. 244, middle of 247– middle of 248), and Pattern 2 is characterized by fast moving notes (mm. 245–middle of 247, middle of 248–253). The patterns are repeated twice in alternation to intensify the contrasts.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 2.8 Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 244–247

The image displays a page of a musical score for the first movement of a violin concerto by Unsuk Chin, specifically measures 244 through 247. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. At the top left, there is a box containing the number '1/38'. The tempo is indicated as 'd=ca.80'. The measures are numbered 244, 245, and 246. The solo violin part is circled in blue. The woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B-flat, Bassoon, Horn in F, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba) and strings (Violin I and II, Viola, Violoncello, Kontrabaß) are shown with their respective parts. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, mf, f, cresc., dec.), articulation (acc., stacc.), and phrasing slurs. The solo violin part features a fast-moving line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

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In Pattern 1, the chord produced by the woodwinds and the strings supports the solo violin, which plays a fast-moving line. The solo violin's line in m. 244 is composed of the notes

A#, F#, C and E; the strings play A#, E, and C; and the woodwinds play A, C, and E. Pattern 2 is composed of triplets, quintuplets, sextuplets, and septuplets. The two patterns contrast in register and dynamic as well. Pattern 2 stays in the middle register, while pattern 1 remains in a higher register (except the violins II and violas). Pattern 1 starts *piano* and then crescendos to *forte* or *fortissimo*. Pattern 2 begins *mezzoforte* and then crescendos to *fortissimo* or *fff*. There are more instruments added in pattern 2: horns, trombones, tuba, timpani, grand cassa, and the lower strings (cello and double bass). These play in the dynamic range between *forte* and *fff*. The brass, with the dynamic marking of *fp* and then a crescendo to *fortissimo*, especially enhance the contrast between the two patterns.

During Pattern 2, the solo violin features an arpeggio-like line with sixteenth notes, which is a continuation of its fast-moving line during Part C1. However, the solo violin inserts septuplets before it moves back to its Pattern 1 material and before it moves on to Part C3. During Pattern 1, the solo violin mainly focuses on the four notes F#, A#, C, and E. As stated previously, the solo violin and each instrument in the orchestra have different rhythms and melodic contours, but they have the same main pitches.

Part C3 (mm. 253–264)

With the tempo change to 6/4 in m. 253, a sudden change of orchestration occurs. All the instruments drop out, except for the upper strings (violins I and II, and violas), which take on a role similar to that of the solo violin in the previous section and are marked *subito mezzopiano*. Even the solo violin disappears in Part C3; this is the first and only place that the solo violin does not play in the first movement. Throughout Group C, parts are repeatedly differentiated by drastic changes in orchestration, creating an overall arc of small (Part C1), big (Part C2), small (Part C3), and big (Part C4).

There are three layers in Part C3. Layer 1 consists of violins I and II, which play running sixteenth notes marked staccato. Layer 2 is composed of the violas, which feature tremolos in longer note values than the violins. Layer 3 is the cello, which joins the other two layers a measure later. The cello line features short notes with *col legno* technique (as *sul point* technique in Part B4), which creates sound effects.

A slight change starts in m. 259. Now the running sixteenth notes in violins I and II are marked with accents rather than staccato. The beats in the violins are stressed irregularly with *sfz* markings; these markings line up vertically with the *sfz* markings in the other instrumental layers. Violins I and II resemble the solo violin in Part B4 because of the running sixteenth notes with accents. The double bass joins the cello beginning in m. 259 and also features *col legno* technique. Starting in m. 261, the harmonics start to appear in violins I and II, and this is where the tambourine takes over the role of the cello and double bass. One measure before the end of Part C3, Chin adds heavy brass instruments: four horns, three trumpets, and two trombones. The trombone feature tremolo with flutter-tonguing technique. The snare drum and the tambourine join them. They prepare for the next part with a crescendo from *piano* to *fortissimo*.

Part C4 (mm. 264–300)

The last part, Part C4, is thirty-seven measures of coda. Once more, Chin creates a drastic timbre change. Only strings were heard for almost the entirety of the preceding part, but now the only instruments heard – except for the solo violin – are the brass. The timbral color is radically different, but the orchestration is still quite simple. There is only one layer in the orchestra, and it plays short sixteenth notes intermittently while the solo violin plays constantly. The solo violin seems to continue the patterns of violins I and II from the preceding part. The solo violin line plays sixteenth notes, either double stops or single notes, with accents.

All instruments prepare for the ending by going back to the main four pitches: G, D, A, and E. The horns start to hold the note D beginning in m. 288; they end with D in m. 295. The three trumpets also end with the notes E, A, and D a measure before. Then the solo violin takes over the note D from the horns in m. 295 and glissandos down to a D and G double stop. This double stop is heard in the last two and a half measures of the movement, mm. 298–300. The solo violin closes out the movement alone, turning the focus entirely to the solo instrument.

Conclusion

As seen above, in the first movement, the main pitches (G-D-A-E), rhythms (different kinds of quintuplets), and techniques (harmonics, glissando, double stops etc.) are used throughout the movement. Chin introduces them in the beginning of the movement and repeats them for quite a bit of time so that the audiences can be exposed to them and recognize them as the main features. Listeners can enjoy the process without having to follow the many small changes and irregular patterns that are so difficult for performers to track.

The orchestra is not in opposition to the solo instrument. It is not simply an accompaniment to the virtuosic soloist, but on an equal footing with it. The orchestral writing is as demanding as the violin's, and orchestra and violin work together as an organic whole. Chin's approach to orchestration in each instrumental part contributes to the movement's unique timbre that functions as a tool of organization of the movement.

The main elements of this movement are deeply related to the nature of the violin itself. Chin's concertos are usually based on the character of the solo instrument. The fact that Chin focuses on the four pitches G, D, A, and E clearly confirms this.

Chapter III: Movement II, III, and IV

Movement II

After the incessant motion of the first movement, Chin finally offers a gentle, long-breathed melody line at the beginning of the second. From there she will move into stormy episodes in the orchestra; passages reminiscent of birdsong; a dark, wedge-shaped melody; and finally a modified version of the opening material. Chin thus creates an arch form, A-B-C-A', as outlined in Figure 3.1. As in her Piano Concerto, this movement features a variety of styles. The quiet and lyrical outer two parts contain diverse types of trills and tremolo, as well as harmonics. Climaxes occur at the ends of Part B and Part C.

This movement is simpler than the previous one in terms of orchestration and use of rhythmic patterns. Within this concerto, the second movement calls for the most percussion instruments, giving it a distinctive timbral palette. At the beginning, the orchestra's texture is quite different than the solo violin's, but after that, the orchestra blends with the soloist.

FIGURE 3.1 Diagram of Chin, Violin Concerto, Second Movement

Part	Measure	Meter	Chin's Tempo	Notes
A	1	3/4	♩ = ca. 60	
	27	2/4	♩ = ca. 132–138	Episode
	33	3/4	♩ = ca. 60	
	41	2/4	♩ = ca. 132–138	Episode
B	48	3/4	♩ = ca. 60	No sonic break but formal overlap/elision
C	81	3/4	♩ = ca. 72–76	Tempo change occurs a measure before
A'	118/119	3/4	♩ = ca. 60	Elision: the horns and strings ends in m.118, while the other instruments start new phrases.
	125	2/4	♩ = ca. 132–138	Episode
	131	3/4	♩ = ca. 60	
	136	2/4	♩ = ca. 132–138	Episode
	141	3/4	♩ = ca. 60	

Part A (mm. 1–47)

In Part A, the solo violin has a free, soft, and high lyrical melody, even as the orchestral instruments play short notes and do not have sustained lines. One of the most striking features of the soloist's melody is its large leaps and irregular pacing. The intervals that appear most frequently are the seventh and the fifth; the latter also had been important in the first movement. Figure 3.2 shows the intervals in each of the soloist's phrases. The variety of intervals used expands until the middle of Part A; then it decreases. Throughout, the fifth and the seventh remain important. Unlike in the first movement, tritones are significant, as for example in mm. 5–6 and m. 10. These large leaps create interest within the soloist's slow-moving melodic line.

Another telling feature is Chin's selection of pitches. In Part A, the most frequently used pitches are those of the four open strings, as well as the pitches F \sharp , C \sharp , and B. The solo violin starts with the pitches of an A⁷ chord: E, A, G, and C \sharp , in that order. Unlike in the first movement, which did have triadic structures, this chordal structure is very audible. The soloist's

line then starts to move on to other pitches. Chin eventually includes all the pitches of the chromatic scale, but F is delayed, not appearing until m. 19.

FIGURE 3.2 Solo Violin’s Phrasing and Used Intervals in Part A, mm. 1–47

Measures	Intervals Used
1–4, 5–8	T, 5, 7
9–14	2, 4, T, 5, 7
14–23	2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9
23–32	3, 5, 7, 8
32–34	2, 5, 7

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.1 Chin, Violin Concerto, Second Movement, mm. 1–23, Solo Violin

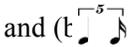


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From the outset of the movement, Chin creates metric ambiguity. The solo violin does not align with the orchestra metrically, and neither party seems to be in the meter indicated – 3/4. The solo violin frequently has the rhythmic value of a dotted quarter note, but these dotted quarters are often tied over the bar line. The solo violin flows like it is in 6/8 more than in 3/4 (for example, in m. 1, the first dotted quarter note after the eighth rest and the next quarter note tied to eighth note suggest the metric pattern of 6/8). Meanwhile, the orchestra usually plays four dotted eighth notes per measure, especially in mm. 1–21, which feels more like duple meter. Chin balances the regularity of the orchestral articulations against the irregularity and unpredictability

of the solo violin line and its pacing. This gives the piece a steady pulse, even though it does not reinforce the notated meter. This especially helps the solo violinist, since there is only one pulse, unlike in the first movement, which had many rhythmic layers.

For the first three measures, only the harp and the celesta play with the solo violin. As in the opening movement, Chin emphasizes the violin's four open-string pitches and not just in the solo line. In the first measure, the harp plays a descending line, moving from E to A to D to G, before jumping up to C# in the second measure. The solo violin enters an eighth note later, taking four measures to play all these pitches (except for D). If one only considers the violin line, this sounds like an A⁷ chord, although Chin intentionally does not treat it like one. Later, the movement also closes with the pitches of an A major triad. By beginning the movement with the outline of this chord, Chin sets up A as one of the main pitches in the movement. As mentioned earlier, C#, F#, and B play an important role in Part A. C# appears at the opening, and F# and B appear in the following phrase in the solo violin.

In Part A, the orchestra has two layers: one consists of percussion and harps, and the other consists of winds and strings. The first layer presents dotted eighth notes, which are an unusual choice for the 3/4 meter found at the opening; the second layer which only plays from time to time presents the rhythmic patterns of (a)  and (b)  from  st movement. Later, the strings have two episodes of disruptive running notes, in mm. 27–32 and mm. 41–47. These episodes initially create some ambiguity in the sectionalization. The first episode appears in m. 27, which also contains a meter change to 2/4. In this passage, the solo violin sustains a high F#, and the orchestral violins move in eighth notes and sixteenth notes, playing many thirds and seconds. This is the first time the orchestra has been active while the soloist is not.

This sudden change seems like a division between sections, but soon the old materials reappear at the tempo change in m. 33. Beginning in m. 27, Chin seems to prepare for Part B. She changes the mood all of a sudden with the first episode, then brings back a lyrical melody line in the solo violin. However, the solo violin also starts to change, adding trills, which are a main

musical component in the following Part B. The orchestra moves away from its steady pulse. A similar short episode occurs in m. 32 and moves directly into Part B.

Part B (mm. 48–80)

In Part B, Chin creates the effect of a fantasia. The solo violin leaves behind its lyrical lines and large leaps, and some of the gestures sound like improvisation. The soloist's line now sounds like birdsong – although Chin has never publicly identified this section as such – and mostly stays in a very high register, even higher than in Part A (Chin changes the register dramatically between parts; in Part C, the register will plunge to its lowest point in the movement.) The movement's opening had offered a seemingly operatic – and even unending – melody, but it is hard to follow a melody line in Part B. At the beginning, the solo violin plays harmonics, tremolos, trills, and rapid successions of notes. The orchestra intermittently joins in. At first, the music alternates between dark and bright. As Part B progresses, the texture becomes denser, and the solo violin's bird-like character becomes more sinister.

Throughout Part B, the orchestra blends with the solo violin and has a character similar to it. The orchestra stays in a relatively high register, like the soloist. Harmonics are dominant in both the violin and the orchestra. Trills and tremolos are important as well, and the winds play flutter-tonguing. Many percussion instruments appear in Part B, but they meld into one general timbre rather than presenting distinctive, individual sounds.

The changes in character within Part B are easy to hear. Beginning in m. 61, where the solo violin starts its second phrase, the texture becomes denser and the mood becomes unsettled. Chin introduces quick dynamic changes. The solo violin line includes *fp* markings; these always follow crescendos and can appear on any beat, giving a sense of instability. The dynamic level in the orchestra builds, and more strings join the orchestra. These make the texture thicker and lead to the climax that moves directly into Part C.

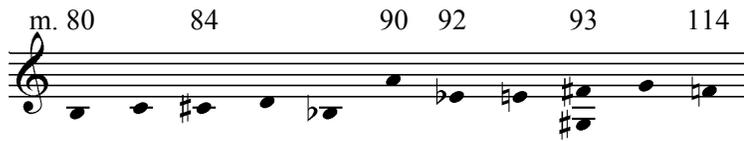
The harps' material in mm. 53–58 becomes a link across movements. These repeated plucking figures, which only appear once, come back in the next movement, especially in the Part As. It is one of the examples in this concerto of how Chin uses old material from previous movements.

Part C (mm. 81–118)

Part C projects a disturbed and unsettled mood. The music becomes heavier, as the solo violin's register suddenly plunges just at the moment when the orchestration grows much thinner. The solo violin's strong line features trills and glissandi in a very low register, sounding almost like bees. The trills are different from those in Part B, which had fingered tremolos and trills. In Part C, Chin uses regular trills instead, creating a denser and darker sound. The fast hairpin dynamic changes (with *fp*, *p<ff>p*) from the second half of Part B continue. Winds and strings present sustained notes and trills from time to time; these sustained lines act as punctuation. There are very few percussion instruments.

Chin's use of pitch design is interesting in Part C. The solo violin starts with the note B3. The notes B3 and C4 are emphasized for the first two and a half measures, and then Chin starts to add other pitches. The newly introduced pitches move outward from B, creating a wedge shape, though the A disrupts this shape a little. Chin adds C♯, then D, then B♭, then A, then E♭, then E, then F♯, then G♯, and finally G. (As in Part A, Chin skips F; F will not appear until m. 114, until nearly the end of Part C). This very literal expansion gesture is quite different than the soloist's line at the beginning, which was characterized by large leaps.

FIGURE 3.3 Entrances of Pitches in the Solo Violin in Part C, mm. 81–118



The solo violin's four phrases within Part C help reinforce important pitches. The first phrase (mm. 81–89) begins and ends with B. Within the phrase, the pitches B and C are emphasized, and C# and D also appear. The second phrase (mm. 90–100) begins with A and ends with G#, and Chin begins to introduce double stops. The third phrase (mm. 101–113) begins with G and D and ends with D and A; B and C remain important pitches.

One could see the third phrase going all the way to m. 118; in m. 113 the line continues, but the texture changes; I interpret mm. 113–118 as a separate phrase. It presents quite a different texture, with tremolos and *sul ponticello* double stops. The pitch F, which Chin had avoided throughout all of Part C, finally appears in m. 114. Short, strong orchestral tutti appear after each of these phrases, in mm. 89–90, 100–102, 118–120. As is typical of Chin, the texture changes suddenly and the music grows louder toward the end of the part.

Part A' (mm. 119–148)

Part A' begins very quietly, in contrast to Part C. As in Part A, Chin includes lyrical passages and two orchestral episodes in 2/4. The latter appear in mm. 125–130 and mm. 136–140. Including episodes in the movement evokes the Baroque solo concerto with its ritornellos, and perhaps rondo form and fugue episodes as well, even though the function is quite different because the two episodes have similar content. However, Part A' is shorter than Part A and differs in several ways. First, the orchestration is much more transparent. The number of instruments is notably fewer, and the orchestral lines are less active, with more sustained notes. The episodes in

2/4 continue to have running notes in the strings, but now these are played *col legno* and *sul ponticello*, projecting a different timbre.

The solo violin plays harmonics throughout Part A'. This timbre further differentiates Part A' from Part A, even though both feature lyrical melody lines with large leaps. Chin does not use the same melodic contour in Part A' as she had at the beginning, which had suggested an A⁷ chord. This is quite different from a traditional form or recapitulation, in which the theme comes back in exactly the same shape. Here, even though the melody from Part A does not reappear, Chin surely gives a sense of its return. As in the first movement, this is one of the ways that Chin approaches the processes of variation and development. In the first orchestral episode in Part A', the solo violin holds the pitch E instead of F# (which it had in Part A), and in the second episode, it constantly changes pitches (A#-F#-G-C#) rather than sustaining one. The movement ends with an A major triad. These changes make the phrase less grounded and more delicate.

Movement III

Chin does not identify the short, dissonant third movement as a scherzo, but in the program note for the concerto's premiere, Traber says that "the third movement is close to... a traditional 'scherzo' movement."⁶⁵ More broadly, this fits within what Traber sees as a classical aesthetic in the work. In this movement, it is the form itself that is strongly classical, rather than the compositional process or style. Of all of the movements in the concerto, this has the most conventional form. I also interpret the third movement as a scherzo, even though Chin does not follow all of the conventions of the scherzo.

Scherzos have been a mainstay of classical repertoire since Beethoven, but they typically belong in symphonies or sonatas.⁶⁶ Having a scherzo movement in a violin concerto is not common. Among the violin concertos to include scherzos are Prokofiev's Violin Concerto no. 1 in D major, op. 19 (1915) and Shostakovich's Violin Concerto no. 1 in A minor, op. 77 (1947-48). Ligeti did not include a scherzo in his violin concerto (its third movement is an Intermezzo); Berg did. However, this scherzo appears in the second half of the first movement, not as an entity of its own (there are only two movements in the concerto). Neither Berg's nor Chin's scherzos have a bright affect, but apart from that they are quite different. Berg focuses on melodic lines and uses a Carinthian folksong as he creates a *rustico* character, and Chin showcases techniques such as pizzicato and glissando.

The third movement can be analyzed as a modified scherzo and trio. The ABA'B'A'' form is easy to hear; an outline of the movement is provided in Figure 3.4. One might consider this five-part structure as a rondo form; however, there is only one episode to define it as a rondo.

⁶⁵. Habakuk Traber, "Programme Note," 2002, rev., Boosey and Hawkes, <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Unsub-Chin-Violin-Concerto/15183>.

⁶⁶. Ryan McClelland, *Brahms and the Scherzo: Studies in Musical Narrative* (Farnham: Routledge, 2016), 1.

Even though Part B lacks two contrasting sections, the part contrasts with Part A, fulfilling the character of trio. Haydn used this ABABA form for one of his string quartets and so did Beethoven for the scherzo in his Symphony no. 7.⁶⁷ The analysis shows divisions of parts, then sections, which, as in the first movement, align with Chin's tempo markings. Unlike the first movement, Chin also uses contrasting meters to create breaks between sections.

FIGURE 3.4 Diagram of Chin, Violin Concerto, Third Movement

Part	Section	Measure	Meter	Tempo	Main Techniques
Part A	Section A	1–16	5/8	♩ = ca.176	Bartok pizzicato, pizzicato
	Section B	17–26	5/16	♩♩ = ca.72–76	Glissando, pizzicato, trill
	Section A'	27–30	5/8	♩ = ca.176	Pizzicato
	Section B'	31–45	5/16	♩♩ = ca.92–96	<i>Col legno</i> , glissando, harmonics, tremolo
Part B		46–59	5/8	♩ = ca.176	Bartok pizzicato, glissando melodic line, pizzicato
Part A'	Section A''	60–75	5/8	♩ = ca.176	<i>Col legno</i> , glissando, pizzicato,
	Section B''	76–91	5/16	♩♩ = ca.80	Bartok pizzicato, glissando, pizzicato, tremolo
Part B'		92–105	5/8	♩ = ca.152–160	Glissando, harmonics, pizzicato, <i>sul ponticello</i>
Part A''	Section A'''	106–112	3/4	♩ = ca.80	Pizzicato
	Section B'''	113–123		♩ = ca.88–96	<i>Col legno</i> , pizzicato

⁶⁷. Grove Music Online, s.v. “Ternary form, 3. After 1750” by W. Dean Sutcliffe, accessed on September 20, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/27700>.

The meters of 5/8 and 5/16 permeate the movement, producing irregular groupings that are conducive to the rhythmic and metric play typical of the scherzo.⁶⁸ Furthermore, this emphasis on five resembles the first movement, in which various quintuplet rhythms were important. 5/8 is the baseline meter. As can be seen in Figure 3.4, all parts, except for Part A'', begin in 5/8. Although Part B' has a marking of ♩ = ca.152–160, all other passages in 5/8 have the same tempo, ♩ = ca. 176. Within the A Parts, Chin alternates between 5/8 and 5/16, changing the tempo of the 5/16 each time.

Within this short movement, Chin employs a variety of techniques, including pizzicato, Bartok pizzicato, *col legno*, glissando, harmonics, trills, and tremolo. Figure 3.4 illustrates how, as in the first movement, Chin uses techniques to help differentiate between sections, though in this movement the changes come in closer succession. Different combinations of techniques create a distinct character for each part or section and help provide structure. Unlike in a conventional scherzo and trio, the initial material – the A Parts – are brighter than the contrasting material, the B Parts. The recurrences of Part A emphasize *col legno* and pizzicato. Though pizzicato is also present in the B Parts, dissonant glissandi with wide dynamic oscillation are more prominent. Contrasting with the A Parts, in which the plucking sound is dominant, the B Parts present legato melody lines whose pitches are connected by glissandos, creating a melancholy mood. This movement does not show any tonal difference between the two types of parts – scherzo and trio – as in traditional scherzo movements; however, Chin clearly indicates contrasts between them. Throughout the movement, Chin has the orchestral strings all use the same technique – either pizzicato or *col legno* – at the same time. In the A Parts, the orchestral string techniques match those of the soloist; in the B Parts, they do not.

In the third movement, Chin returns to a faster tempo. Her writing for the instruments, including the solo violin, does not call for the minute rhythmic divisions found at the opening of

⁶⁸. McClelland, *Brahms and the Scherzo*, 4.

the concerto. At times, the writing seems pointillistic, both in the orchestra and in the solo line. Sound effects are more memorable than themes, as episodes of pizzicati alternate with wailing glissandi.

Although changes in pitch are not as audible as changes in technique and texture, Chin does move between sections that emphasize the four core pitches in the solo violin (G-D-A-E) of the concerto and those that emphasize others. Chin highlights the main pitches in a variety of ways: through sustained chords, quadruple stops at the beginnings of sections, orchestral entrances and the beginnings of phrases, and contour. In particular, A# is emphasized, both by itself and along with open string pitches. When B and F# are highlighted, they always appear with other pitches.

Part A (mm. 1–45)

Throughout Part A, Chin returns to the percussive timbres she had laid aside in the second movement, but the sound she creates is very different than in the first movement. She does not employ as many percussion instruments as in the first movement; instead, she asks all instruments to play percussively, without sustained sounds. The solo violin plays pizzicato. The only non-percussion orchestral instruments she includes are harps, cembalos, and pizzicato and *col legno* strings, none of which can sustain long notes. Chin even indicates for the timpani to use the woodblock and to have short articulations; she also includes snare drum, grand cassa, xylophone, zanza, and clash cymbals.

Part A consists of four sections, each of which has a distinct set of techniques. The first section has repeated wave-like pizzicato chords; the second section has descending pizzicato lines in all the strings. The short dance-like third section quickly moves into the final section, whose *col legno* descending lines in the solo violin prepare for the dark timbre of Part B. In Part A, the

solo violin blends well with the orchestra's sound. In Part B, the soloist's line, whose notes are connected by glissandos, is more distinct, though it shares the dark mood of the orchestra.

Section A: mm. 1–16

After a pulsing two-measure orchestral introduction, the solo violin enters with a single pizzicato quadruple stop. The notes – all open strings, G-D-A-E – once again establish the core pitches of the concerto.⁶⁹ As in the first movement, Chin will build out from these pitches, allowing new notes to gain structural importance throughout the movement. Like most of the gestures in this section, the chord enters on the third eighth note of the bar, obscuring the downbeat.

More pizzicato chords follow in the solo violin, and then in mm. 10–12, the line changes to pizzicato running notes. Usually in scherzo movements, the challenge for violinists is controlling the bow while playing light spiccato, but here rapid pizzicati create a different sort of difficulty. As in the scherzo of Prokofiev's first violin concerto, percussive timbres permeate the orchestra as well. Most of the instruments play pizzicato or – if they are not strings – short ordinary notes with accent markings.

The orchestra enters on the downbeat of the first measure; this is one of the few times it will do so in the section. Otherwise, the orchestra also tends to enter in the middle of the measure. In the orchestra, the four pitches of the violin's open strings are significant. When the cellos and basses enter (m. 1), they play these notes pizzicato. Later in the section (m. 14), they use Bartok pizzicato.

Throughout Section A, Chin does not have consistent layers as she did in the first movement; the instruments come and out. Percussion instruments, including the timpani, snare

⁶⁹. This evokes the opening of the second movement, Aria I of Stravinsky's Violin Concerto (1931) in which the solo violin features succession of pizzicato chords in the second measure. The presented pitches are G, D, A, E, and C#.

drum, grand cassa, xylophone, and zanza, contribute to the timbre in this section. The cellos and basses play together or close together, as do the upper strings, harps, and cembalos. This second group creates a wave-like effect through their repeated-pitch figures, which have hairpins of $p < f >$ and $p < mf >$ (mm. 4–5, mm. 9–10, and mm. 14–15). By beginning in the middle of the bar and extending into the next bar, these patterns blur the meter. They follow the same melodic contour as the solo violin, intensifying the impact of its rapid lines.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.2 Chin, Violin Concerto, Third Movement, mm. 1–5

The musical score for measures 1-5 of the Violin Concerto by Unsuk Chin is presented in a multi-staff format. The instruments included are Timpani, Snare Drum, Grand Cassa, Harp 1, Harp 2, Cembalo, Solo Violin, Violin I and II, Brass, Violoncello, and Kontrabaß. The score shows intricate rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as p , mf , and f . A tempo marking of $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 176$ is present. The score is marked with a circled '5' at the end of the fifth measure.

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Section B: mm. 17–26

The texture change at the beginning of Section B is quite audible. Although the change of meter to 5/16 may not be obvious, the faster tempo is. Unlike in Section A, Section B features two different patterns that are played by two different instrumental groups. One group is the harps

and the cembalos. They sustain a trilled A# all the way into m. 25, the penultimate measure of the section. The other group includes the solo violin, the orchestral violins, and the violas. All violinists play descending lines, marked *fp*, which always start from the note A#. In Section A, there were more gradual dynamic changes; however, Chin uses *fp* to create sudden change. A# will play an important role in several of the sections to come.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.3 Chin, Violin Concerto, Third Movement, mm. 20–26

The musical score shows measures 20 through 26. At the top, the percussion parts (2 Snare-Drum, G. Cassa) and Cembalo are indicated. The woodwinds (Hf. 1, Hf. 2) and strings (Solo VI., VI. I, VI. II, Bra.) are also present. Measure 20 is marked with a circled '20' and measure 25 with a circled '25'. The Solo VI. part has a descending line starting on A# with dynamics like *fp* and *gliss*. The strings play a sustained trilled A#.

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These descending lines sometimes include glissandi. The violas have the same figure but without glissando. Chin creates metric confusion by creating time-lags between all these string parts. Each instrumental line starts on a different beat and has an accented *fp* at different times, as shown in Musical Example 3.3. Thus, the note A# is heard every measure and on every beat. The ending gesture in the last two measures of the section is similar to the closing gestures in the first movement, with descending lines and crescendos.

As Rhie mentioned in her dissertation, the repeated figures in this section have a “granular” texture. Granular synthesis is a technique from electronic music. Stefania Serafin explains:

[A] sound grain can be defined as a short sonic snippet of about ten to a hundred milliseconds, an elementary particle as opposed to a complex soundscape. By combining different grains over time, and by overlapping several grains at the same instant of time, interesting sonic effects can be produced. The synthesis technique in which different sound grains are combined is known as *granular synthesis*.⁷⁰

According to Rhie, we should understand Chin’s texture as granular because “the solo violin and the orchestra present repeated attacks,” although this occurs “in staggered entries as well as against instruments that play sustained chords.” She concludes, “The result is that the granular quality is more veiled and integrated into the whole texture of the entire ensemble.”⁷¹

Section A': mm. 27–30

Section A' is four measures long. The solo violin line is from mm. 10–12 in Section A; this is like the return of the first section in the traditional scherzo. The solo violin presents a line of pizzicato running sixteenth notes interspersed with grace notes, while the pizzicato strings and xylophone provide accompaniment. After having highlighted A#, Chin once again emphasizes

⁷⁰. Stefania Serafin, “Computer Generation and Manipulation of Sounds,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Electronic Music*, eds. Nick Collins and Julio d’Escriván (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 207.

⁷¹. Rhie, “The Music of Unsuk Chin,” 11.

the violin's open strings. The grace notes are always open strings: G, D, or A. These grace notes always move to a D or an E (whether fingered or an open string). The orchestra's line contains a greater variety of rhythms than in Section A or Section B. Chin's accents often fall in unexpected places, such as the third eighth or the last sixteenth of the bar. This helps connect the third movement to the conventions of the scherzo genre. For example, Brahms often used techniques like hemiola and metric displacement in his scherzo movements, as did Beethoven and Schumann.⁷² Chin follows this tradition, creating metric ambiguity throughout the movement.

Section B': mm. 31–45

In Section B', Chin returns to 5/16. Like Section B, Section B' features descending lines in the solo violin, and instead of the harps and cembalo playing trills, the winds now provide a sustained chord. For the first time in the movement, the solo violin switches to *col legno*. Its line even includes glissando with decrescendo from *forte/mezzo forte* to *piano*, which resembles sound effects. It might look quite different with a *col legno* glissando mark, but it has the same gesture in the solo violin as in Section B. Both of these sections present descending glissandi lines, but the details are different. Chin institutes many changes: from *pizzicato* to *col legno*, from regularly fingered note to harmonics, from *fp* to decrescendo markings, and she inserts breaks between every descending line. Again, this is like some of the conventional scherzos and trio in which the B material concludes the scherzo section. By doing this, Chin prepares the conclusion of the first Part A.

Chin's writing consists of three layers in the orchestra. The clarinets and the horns form the first layer, playing a sustained chord throughout the entirety Section B'. Only one of these is

⁷². McClelland, *Brahms and the Scherzo*, 4.

an open string pitch on the violin. Chin is moving away from the open string pitches. A#, which had been important in Section B, is present as Bb.

The second layer consists of divisi violins I and II, which play *col legno* through the entire section, like the soloist. (However, their patterns are very different from those of the soloist). Pairs of lines are mirrored rhythmically, like the marimba I and marimba II patterns at the opening of the first movement. In each measure, Violin I.1 always plays a sixteenth note on the downbeat, which is followed by two eighth notes; Violin II.2 always plays an eighth note, a sixteenth note, and then an eighth note. As in Musical Example 3.4, Violin I.2 and Violin II.1 play the retrograde of each other's patterns.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.4 Chin, Violin Concerto, Third Movement, mm. 31–37, Violin I and II

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The third layer consists of the lower strings, which are in dialogue with the solo violin. Their lines are similar to those of the soloist in Section A, but now *col legno* instead of pizzicato is the main technique. The orchestral strings, like the solo violin, create a new timbre by combining *col legno* technique with harmonics and tremolo. As Chin concludes Part A, not only does she employ the greatest number of techniques thus far in the movement; she initiates a significant timbral change.

Part B (mm. 46–59)

Part B is characterized by its sound of crying, a melancholy wailing created by continuously connected phrasing. Ordinary *arco* is heard in the solo violin for the first time in the movement. Chin indicates that the solo violin should play *molto legato* and that all its notes are connected by glissandi. In this section, the solo violin starts and ends with a long-held E6, and presents glissandi up and down – not just down, like in Section B', and these glissandi appear in a high register with recursive hairpins. The solo violin's intense glissandi, which sometimes include the interval of the tritone, contribute to the throbbing mood of Chin's melodic writing for the solo violin in the B Parts.

The melodic writing for the solo violin in this movement is similar to that in the second movement (especially at the beginning), with big intervallic jumps in a high register. However, in this movement, Chin has a more elaborate style, with glissandi and more frequent and bigger dynamic changes.

Unlike Part A, Part B does not have subsections. The percussive style of the orchestra does not match with the *molto legato* markings of the solo violin, and the dynamics often do not align either. Chin calls for more diverse instruments in Part B compared to the preceding Part A. At the end of Part B, the solo violin descends two octaves. It then plays a quadruple stop that includes the open strings G, D, and E, along with A#. The gesture prepares for the beginning of Part A'.

Part A' (mm. 60–91)

Section A'': mm. 60–75

The solo violin starts the section with quadruple pizzicato in m. 60, as at the beginning of Part A. However, the pizzicato includes A# instead of A, introducing dissonance. This breaks the balance of the perfect fifth that has been the center of the concerto. This is the first time that Chin

substitutes A# for A within the quadruple stop pizzicato. Another notable change occurs in the orchestral strings. The violin lines are the same as in Section A, but the violas, cellos, and double basses employ *col legno* instead of pizzicato. By mixing those two, Chin creates a somewhat different timbre than in Part A. A return of Section B' – where *col legno* first appeared – is missing in Part A', but Chin alludes to Section B' through the *col legno* technique. Also, Chin now includes flute, which plays a high register and adds a woodwind timbre.

Section B'': mm. 76–91

The orchestration is conspicuously bigger in Section B'', which calls for more instruments than any other section of the movement yet. Winds and more percussion instruments join the orchestra. Chin incorporates more techniques than in Section B; she calls for Bartok pizzicato, glissando, pizzicato, tremolo. There are several other differences between the two as well. Unlike in Section B, the solo violin does not align with the orchestral violins. It instead collaborates with the harps and cembalos, presenting chords rather than single note lines. Like in Section B, the orchestral violins have running sixteenth notes, but their lines now ascend every time. Also, the dynamic marking *fp* is replaced by a crescendo from *piano* to *forte* throughout the entire section. The lower strings, which were not used in Section B, play Bartok pizzicato, and the violas are now in quadruple rhythms instead of triplets.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.5 Chin, Violin Concerto, Third Movement, mm.78-84

Fl.

Ob.

Klac
in B

Fig.
K. Fig.

Hr.
in F

1
2
3
4

Trp
3/4

Pos.
Tuba

Xyl.

Marimba

Snare
Drum
& Cassa

Harp 1, 2

Cembalo

solo VI.

VI. I

VI. II

Bra.

V. C

K. B

80

80

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Chin had emphasized A# in Section B, but Section B'' is more complex with thicker orchestration. As in Section B', the winds play a sustained chord; here the pitches are A, B, C#, D. Whereas the orchestral violins' descending line in Section B always started with the note A#, in Section B'', their ascending line starts with the note G and then moves to D, A, or E. In one sense, Chin is reestablishing the four open string pitches after having emphasized A#. In another sense, she adds B and C#. From Section B'', Chin moves directly into Part B'.

Part B' (mm. 92–105)

In Part B', the orchestration is similar to that of Part B, but more instruments are added, and it has a thicker sound. The winds now sustain a chord; it has the pitches A, B, C, F#. B already has been significant; F# will remain an important pitch for the remainder of the movement. The most notable change in Part B' is the soloist's line. Chin inserts running thirty-second notes between the glissandi. The solo violin also sings an octave higher than in Part B, and with *sul ponticello*, creating metallic sound that enhances the violent color. At the end of the part, harmonics are added to the glissandi, maximizing the fading sound.

Part A'' (mm. 106–123)

Part A'' is in 3/4; this is the only place in the movement that this meter occurs. This part sounds faster and more compact than Part A. Divisions of five still exist in the quintuplets in the strings in Section A''' and in the solo violin in Section B'''.

***Section A'''*: mm. 106–112**

Section A''' begins with quadruple stop pizzicato, as did Section A and Section A''. However, the pitches are different. Section A started with G/D/A/E; Section A'' started with

G/D/A#/E. Section A''' starts with G/F#/A#/E, once again giving importance to F# and A#.

Section A''' has similar orchestration to Section A'', but it is simpler.

***Section B'''*: mm. 113–123**

In Part A'', Chin eliminates middle two sections and jumps right into the last section, where *col legno* is pervasive. If Part A had the return of both subparts like in the conventional scherzo, here Part A'' proceeds without the repeat of the subparts as Chin closes the movement. That is, in Part A'', Chin only has one iteration of the material of Section A and Section B. The Section B was more active and Chin choose to end the movement by recalling the quieter Section B'. Set in a slightly faster tempo, Section B''' starts without the solo violin. Now the upper strings present two different ideas, unlike in Section B'. While two lines of the violins play pizzicati, four other lines of violins and violas present tremolo with *col legno* technique. Also, the lower strings feature pizzicati in triplet rhythms. However, the strings soon drop out and all the upper strings turn to pizzicati as the solo violin joins in m. 117. As at the opening of the movement, the solo violinist plays a quadruple-stop open-string pizzicato chord. Until the solo violin enters, the winds support the strings by holding notes that consist of the pitches of the four open strings of the violin, and their line strongly. In Section B', the winds held notes other than those four, but Chin closes the movement by highlighting the pitches of the violin's open strings. Even the timpani contributes by hitting the notes G and D (along with C). The solo violin joins with G-D-A-E grace notes in m. 117 after a short break of four measures, then it highlights the pitches B then F#, which had been important, especially beginning in Section B. These two pitches also were treated as important in the preceding movement. The movement ends *ppp*, with the pitch F# in every instrument.

Movement IV

The last movement is self-standing, with its own new characters and musical ideas, yet it is also the conclusion of the violin concerto as a whole. Chin begins the movement by introducing dance-like passages in the solo violin and orchestra that will be varied and developed later in the movement, especially in Part B, before she turns to material from the very beginning of the concerto. Furthermore, in Part A and Part B, some materials from the first movement will come back and be varied and developed, preparing a grand conclusion for the work.

Throughout the movement, Chin presents a variety of characters, moving into violent passages before ending the concerto by recalling the calm opening of the first movement. Once again, the orchestra also imitates the solo violin's character and timbre, especially at the opening and the closing. At the beginning, the orchestra imitates the solo violin's dance-like style and sharp timbre by presenting pointillistic passages in a high register, and at the end, every instrument in the orchestra plays harmonics, producing the same timbre as the solo violin. This sort of imitation had occurred in the third movement, in which the solo violin and the orchestra both focused on a percussive timbre, mostly conveyed through pizzicato.

The fourth movement has the most obvious and closest resemblance to the first movement. Besides directly recalling the very beginning of the concerto at its conclusion, this movement evokes other parts from the movement as well, especially Part B2 and Part C. Elements from each are drawn upon and presented in different ways. The first and last movements also share structural similarities, although the last movement is much shorter and has fewer subdivisions. As in the first movement, the overall structure consists of three parts: beginning-development/variational passages-closing (coda). The tempo changes in both movements follow a slow-fast-slow-fast pattern (and so on). The tempo changes align with the part divisions, but as shown in Figure 3.5, in the last movement, tempo changes appear within

parts and occur more frequently. By using similar materials and structures in the first and last movements, Chin helps unify the concerto.

Recalling the beginning of the concerto at the end of the last movement does more than simply create unity; it emphasizes the violin’s sound. In all the movements, Chin has highlighted the open strings and resonance of the violin as an instrument. Here she does so in the most obvious of ways; she uses open strings and their pitches in harmonics, and she excludes almost all other pitches.

FIGURE 3.5 Diagram of Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement

Part	Section	Measure	Chin’s Tempo	Notes
Part A	A1	1–34	♩. = ca. 132–140	Pointillistic
	A2	34–56		Overlap to A1, double stops
Part B	B1	57–89	♩. = ca. 120–126 (mm. 57–73)	
			♩. = ca. 120–126 (mm. 76 – 85)	
	B2	90–122	♩. = ca.120–126 (mm. 90–100)	
♩. = ca.180 (mm.101–122)			16 th note patterns, groups of 5, ending with arpeggios	
B3	123–140	♩. = ca.140–150	Stepwise patterns, groups of 4, leading to double-stops	
Part C		140–166	♩. = ca.152 (mm. 140–141)	Break in texture, “cadence” in orchestra
			♩. = ca.96 (mm. 141–143)	
			♩. = ca.80 (mm. 144–166)	Solo violin returns to musical material from movement I

Part A: mm. 1–56

The two sections in Part A, unlike in the first movement, have contrasting characters. Section A1 features aggressive dance-like lines reminiscent of Aaron Copland with syncopation and offbeat accents in the solo violin and simple pointillistic accompaniment in the orchestra. Section A2, set in a notably lower register, features sustained lines in both the solo violin and the orchestra. As in the first movement, the solo violin moves from a single line to double stops between sections.

Section A1: mm. 1–34

The fourth movement offers the first sustained dance-like material in the whole concerto. The character of this section is created by sharp syncopations in the soloist's line along with repetition of short but strong two-note figures and eighth-note groups, as shown in Musical Example 3.6 (the first two-note figure appears in m. 2; sometimes the notes are of the same length, sometimes not). These ascend or descend and align with sharp dynamic changes in the solo violin. The solo violin plays in a high register, and every instrument in the orchestra also is in a high register (and the lower strings are missing entirely). The solo violin plays *sul ponticello*, as do the orchestral violins, which play unison *arco* on E5. This use of *sul ponticello* and the sudden crescendos on single notes in the orchestra create a metallic and sharp timbre. The orchestra's accompaniment is pointillistic and presents conversation-like exchanges with the solo violin's disjointed line. Together with the irregular melodic groupings, this line works against projecting the notated meter of 12/8. As Section A1 progresses, the two-note figure comes less frequently and the eighth-note group, which was always three notes in the beginning, starts to have more than three. Section A1 closes with a double-stop tremolo glissando descending line in the solo violin, which becomes the main feature in the following Section A2.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.6 Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 1–6

The image shows a page of a musical score for the Violin Concerto by Unsuk Chin, Fourth Movement, measures 1-6. The score is written for a full orchestra and a solo violin. The instruments listed on the left are: Picc., Fl., Ob., Klar. in E♭, Klar. in B♭, Fag., Hr. 1-4, Trp., Pos., Tuba, Saxen-spiel, Glomphon, Trigl., Celesta, Hr. 1-2, solo Vi., VI. I, VI. II, Bra., V.C., and K.B. The Solo Violin part is the most prominent, featuring a melodic line with dynamic markings such as *p*, *mp*, and *f*, and the instruction *sul pont.* (sul ponticello). The orchestral accompaniment consists of chords and rhythmic patterns in the woodwinds and strings.

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Section A2: mm. 34–56

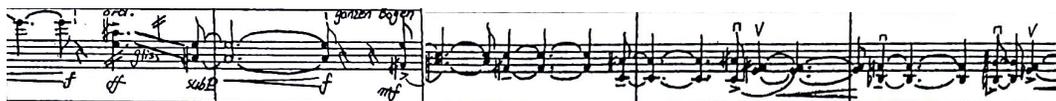
After the dance-like opening, Section A2 offers heavier lines and a darker character.

Even though the beginning of the section overlaps with Section A1, this feels like a new section

because the solo violin line is different from Section A1. However, the orchestra's overall framework stays quite similar, with some changes. The overall register is lower than in the preceding section, except in the orchestral violins and violas, which still play in a high register. The upper winds and the percussion feature short interjections, as in Section A1. The lower strings continue their pattern (sustained notes) from the preceding section, and the horns join them. The steel drum appears and helps create a different timbre than in the previous section, which is typical of Chin, who often switches percussion instruments when she changes timbre.

The solo violin's line has greater similarity to Part B2 of the first movement than to Section A1 of the fourth movement, and one can easily recall Part B2 by listening. The solo violin's double stops, overall melodic contour, register, and rhythmic profile (although there are no quintuplets in Section A2) evoke Part B2 of the first movement. However, the double stops are in a variety of intervals, and unlike in the first movement, they are almost never perfect fifths (except mm. 42–44, 53–54). The glissandi tremolo that was significant in Part B2 (cf. Musical Example 2.5) of the first movement appears at the beginning of Section A2 as well. This is not simply a preparation for Part C, where a more obvious return of first movement material appears; it is also another example of developmental variational processes, but this time Chin works across movements as well as within them. Toward the end of Section A2, the music becomes ever more complex and violent with thicker orchestration.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.7 Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 34–39, Solo Violin



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Part B: mm. 57–140

Part B is developmental and variational, as materials from Part A reappear in several ways; Chin also recalls passages from the first movement. The climax of the movement occurs at the end of Part B. Beginning in m. 57, Chin builds toward this moment, and she creates drama by changing meter more frequently than anywhere else in the movement. She drives the part toward the climax by varying and developing ideas from Part A of this movement, and in each section of Part B she incorporates some material from the first movement as well. Chin accumulates the ideas from both the A Sections of this movement and the C Parts of the first movement and intensifies them gradually and progressively throughout Part B to prepare the climax and conclusion.

Within a series of active and virtuosic lines, Chin calls for diverse timbres, from lyrical to sharp to metallic. Insertion of different kinds of percussion instruments enhances timbral contrasts. Chin intensifies the moment right before the change to Part C, which brings back the opening material of the concerto, by employing the metal block and tubular bells (*rohrenglocken*) for the first time.

Section B1: mm. 57–89

Section B1 can be seen as a variation of Section A1, a development of it, or both. The solo violin returns to playing a single line, as at the opening of the movement, and the dance-like character also comes back. However, in both the solo line and the orchestra, the style is no longer pointillistic and disjointed. The violin plays continuously, creating a lyrical affect as well as a dance-like one. Chin fills in the violin's line, adding notes into a line that is close to the original, as shown in Musical Example 3.9. The orchestra also plays longer lines. Its sharp sound effects are gone, and the writing is very dense and thick. Other changes affect the solo violin as well. It is back in a high register, but it now explores others, too. The soloist's line features spiccato,

glissando, and harmonics – but not the *sul ponticello* found at the opening of the movement. Chin calls for the greatest variety of techniques so far in the movement. The overall timbre is warmer and the character more passionate than at the opening.

Once again, Chin changes the texture suddenly toward the end of the section, at m. 86, by employing long-held harmonics, which also was one of the main materials in the first movement.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.8 Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 1–5, Solo Violin



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MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.9 Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 57–59, Solo Violin



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Section B2: mm. 90–122

As Chin moves out of Section B1, the writing become distinctly less lyrical. Section B2 consists of three subsections, and each has a different figuration in the solo violin. The writing in the first subsection (mm. 90–100) is like that of Section A2, with a similar rhythmic profile and double stops in the solo violin. However, the line moves faster, as shown in Musical Example 3.11, creating forward momentum. Chin now adds in descending glissandi with spiccato in the soloist's line, which is about an octave higher than in Section A2. Accents and staccato markings help create a sharper character. This relationship between Section A2 and Section B2 is similar to

the one between Part B2 and Part B3 in the first movement. Once again, Chin shows her developmental and variational techniques here over two different movements.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.10 Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 36–39, Solo Violin



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MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.11 Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 90–93, Solo Violin



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In the second subsection (mm. 101–113), the solo violin line alternates between harmonics and regularly fingered notes, creating large leaps between each pitch. This aids in moving from the higher register of the preceding material to the lower register that follows. However, the music does not feel like it has direction, with the violin jumping back and forth and not having a line.

The last subsection (mm. 114–122), which is the transition to next Section B3, recalls the cadenza section of the first movement (Part C1 and Part C2) and can be seen as a compressed version of it. Unlike the preceding material, this last subsection has momentum along with the rhythmic crescendo (the number of the notes in one measure increases from 4 to 10, 12, 14, 15, and 18). As shown in Musical Example 3. 12, Chin first gives the solo violin slurred arpeggio-like figures, which mostly contain thirds. She then writes spiccato arpeggios that have larger intervals. Finally, the solo violin has an ascending line that moves into Section B3. All these figurations were introduced and emphasized in Part C1 (cf. Musical Example 3.13) and Part C2

(cf. Musical Example 2.8) in the first movement. All the orchestral instruments except the bassoons and horns play tremolos, creating tension.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.12 Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 114–122, Solo Violin

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MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.13 Chin, Violin Concerto, First Movement, mm. 215–221, Solo Violin

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Section B3: mm. 123–140

In the final section of Part B, the solo violin presents running single notes and double stops, with its line crossing spanning four octaves. Chin had used similar figuration in Part C4, the last section of the first movement; here, this figuration directly precedes the reminiscence of the first movement that closes the concerto. The orchestral instruments feature various kinds of the techniques that they had used before, such as tremolo, glissando, and flutter-tonguing. Strong gestures in the solo violin and the orchestra drive the music toward its climax. The timbre becomes metallic and percussive, with even the strings playing *sul ponticello*. The first movement had closed with these gestures, but the last movement pushes beyond by going back to material from the opening of the concerto, creating something like a long delayed – but not necessarily

expected – return. However, as mentioned above, Chin helps establish this return throughout Part B. She begins with developing and varying the ideas from the A Sections of this movement in the same way that she used in the first movement. Then she recalls the ideas from the last part of the first movement, intensifying them.

Part C: mm. 140–166

After the stormy climax, the strings present tremolos marked *molto sul ponticello*. These grow fainter and fainter, setting the mood for the return of material from the very beginning of the concerto. Chin brings back the concerto’s opening material in 3/4, as in the first movement. The solo violin plays a soft melody line that is composed mostly of harmonics and open strings.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.14 Chin, Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, mm. 145–152

The musical score for measures 145-152 of the Violin Concerto, Fourth Movement, by Unsuk Chin. It features a solo violin part and a string ensemble. The solo violin part is marked *ppp* and *molto sul ponticello*, playing a melodic line with harmonics and open strings. The string ensemble provides a tremolo accompaniment, also marked *ppp* and *molto sul ponticello*. The score includes dynamic markings such as *decresc.* and *ppp*, and articulation markings like *acc.* and *stacc.*. The measures are numbered 145 and 150.

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The four open strings pitches once again are predominant, and the two opening quintuplet rhythmic patterns return (). The distinctive marimbas and steel drum combination from the beginning of the first movement now are gone. Only the strings, imitating the solo violin with harmonics and open strings, remain in the orchestra (except the last three bars where the flutes, vibraphones, and harps appear). Some of the strings play *sul ponticello* tremolo harmonics, which sound like background noise. The solo violin closes the concerto quietly with a drone on D and A harmonics.

The timbre of this ending has a roughness not found at the opening. The marimbas no longer play, and the solo violin has fewer open strings. If the solo violin began with D and A and repeated them for a long time before slowly adding new pitches at the opening of the concerto, it now adds the new pitches quickly, even though it also starts with D and A. The open strings – the open strings themselves, not simply their pitch classes – appear a lot less than in the beginning of the first movement, resulting in having more harmonics notes than open string notes. The resonance of the initial material has faded and been transformed, indicating the grand close of the concerto.

Conclusion

Chin shows her unique sonic world in her Violin Concerto. It is not familiar in a traditional sense; it does not grab the listener with a grand orchestral tutti or a memorable theme. Chin catches our attention with a dream world: the floating solo violin line, the vivid resonance, the continuous but often unexpected timbral changes. She draws us in ever more deeply as the concerto unfolds. We sense her expanding the palette of pitches, introducing new orchestral voices, building momentum through continually evolving rhythmic patterns. In the second movement, Chin surprises us with dissonant lyrical lines, so different from what she has established up to that point. Next, she delights us with contrasts: percussive episodes and melancholy wails, short gestures and longer lines, sharp dynamic changes. As she draws her concerto to a close, Chin refreshes us with dance-like phrases for the first time in the piece. She gives us a sense of satisfaction and completion by bringing back the dream world she created at the beginning.

This imaginative and colorful fantasy derives ultimately from the character of the solo instrument. The four open string pitches of the violin, G-D-A-E, and their perfect fifth interval relationship are used as main musical ideas. Diverse instrumental techniques, including harmonics, trills, tremolos, *col leno*, glissando, and pizzicato, are treated as main musical components.

Despite all the unconventional aspects of the concerto, the way Chin frames it evokes convention. She has a four-movement structure; the first movement is the heaviest, and it is followed by a slow second movement, a scherzo-like third movement, and a final movement that concludes by bringing back the opening of the concerto. However, a close look at the concerto enables one to find her distinct compositional approach that is scrupulously planned out. Chin begins with the simple musical ideas mentioned above, and then she develops and varies them,

even though the music is not always goal-oriented, in the sense that tonal music is. There are also many places of abrupt change. Chin constantly attempts to develop and/or transform the music through compositional techniques such as juxtaposition, multi-layering, textural shift, and rhythmic subdivision, which are often accompanied by rhythmic ostinatos.

The concerto might be perceived as complex or even improvisational music at first listening. Examination of each movement allows one to understand that Chin's logic is not as complicated as it first appears. This logic that traverses the concerto creates a distinct "timbral music."

Appendix

Work List by Unsuk Chin

1983	<i>Gestalten</i> for flute, violin and piano
1985	<i>Spektra</i> for three cellos
1986	<i>Canzone</i> for piano
1986, rev.1990	<i>Troádes</i> (Trojan Women) for three female singers, female chorus and orchestra
1989	<i>Gradus ad Infinitum</i> for tape
1991–1993	<i>Akrostichon-Wortspiel</i> for soprano and ensemble
1992	<i>El Aliento de la Sombra</i> for tape
1993	<i>Santika Ekatala</i> for orchestra
1993–1994	<i>Allegro ma non troppo</i> for tape
1994, rev.1997	<i>Fantaisie mécanique</i> for five instrumentalists
1995–1996	<i>ParaMetaString</i> for string quartet and tape
1995, rev.2003	<i>Piano Etude No. 2 (Sequenzen)</i>
1995, rev.2003	<i>Piano Etude No.3 (Scherzo ad libitum)</i>
1995, rev.2003	<i>Piano Etude No. 4 (Skalen)</i>
1996–1997	<i>Piano Concerto</i> for piano and orchestra
1998	<i>Xi</i> for ensemble and electronics
1999–2000	<i>spectres.speculaires</i> for violin and electronics
1999, rev.2001	<i>Miroirs des temps</i> for ATTB soloists and orchestra
1999, rev.2003	<i>Piano Etude No. 1 (in C)</i>
2000	<i>Kalá</i> for soprano and bass soloists, mixed chorus and orchestra

2000	<i>Piano Etude No. 6 (Grains)</i>
2001	<i>Violin Concerto</i> for violin and orchestra
2002	<i>Double Concerto</i> for piano, percussion and ensemble
2003	<i>Piano Etude No. 5 (Toccata)</i>
2003–2004	<i>snagS & Snarls</i> for soprano and orchestra
2004–2005	<i>Cantatrix Sopranica</i> for solo voices and ensemble
2004–2007	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> , opera
2006–2007	<i>Double Bind?</i> for violin and electronics
2007–2008	<i>Rocaná</i> (Room of Light) for orchestra
2008–2009	<i>Cello Concerto</i> for cello and orchestra
2009, rev. 2010	<i>Šu</i> for sheng and orchestra
2009, rev.2010	<i>Gougalon-Szenen aus einem Straßentheater</i> (Scenes from a Street Theater) for ensemble
2010–2011	<i>Fanfare chimérique</i> for two ensembles of wind and brass with electronics
2011–2012	<i>cosmigimmicks</i> for ensemble
2012–2013	<i>Graffiti</i> for large ensemble
2014	<i>Clarinet Concerto</i> for clarinet and orchestra
2014	<i>Le Silence des Sirènes</i> (The Silence of the Sirens) for soprano and orchestra
2014–2015	<i>Mannequin</i> (Tableaux vivants) for orchestra
2015–2016	<i>Le Chant des Enfants des Étoiles</i> (The Song of the Children of the Stars) for children's choir, SATB chorus, organ and symphony orchestra

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