

PORTFOLIO OF RECORDED
PERFORMANCES AND EXEGESIS:

The Perspective of the Composer and Performer:
The Interpretation and Performance
of Selected Flute Works

by

Lowell Liebermann and Robert Beaser

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Abstract

This submission investigates the interpretation and performance of selected solo and chamber works for flute by American composers Lowell Liebermann (b.1961) and Robert Beaser (b.1954). The exegesis presents a discussion of the interpretation and preparation of the included works from two differing perspectives. First, it examines the repertoire from the perspective of the composer, drawing on audio recordings of interviews and lessons conducted by the author in the United States of America. Second, it reviews the recitals from the perspective of the performer with emphasis on the preparation and performance of the selected repertoire.

The discussion draws on two recitals by the author and associate artists that were recorded and presented in Elder Hall, The University of Adelaide on 11 December 2008 and 16 June 2009. Excerpts from the recitals are used to demonstrate the discussion and the CDs of the complete recitals are therefore integral to the submission.

CD 1

<i>Sonata for Flute and Guitar Op. 25</i>	Lowell Liebermann
<i>Variations for Flute and Piano</i>	Robert Beaser
<i>Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44</i>	Lowell Liebermann
<i>Trio No. 2 for Flute, Cello and Piano Op. 87</i>	Lowell Liebermann

CD 2

<i>Concerto for Flute and Orchestra Op. 39</i>	Lowell Liebermann
<i>Trio No. 1 for Flute, Cello and Piano Op. 83</i>	Lowell Liebermann
<i>Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23</i>	Lowell Liebermann

Statement

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Natalie Zwar

October 16, 2009

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1. Introduction

A performer develops their own interpretation of a musical composition based on the indications made by the composer and through personal exploration of the music. During the interpretation process, the performer is confronted with many questions and challenges. In order to clarify these interpretational difficulties for performance, the performer will often seek recordings and publications relating to the composition. Whilst these may be effective in providing another performer's interpretation or author's opinion, details of the composer's intentions for their works are rarely available.

This exegesis presents a discussion of the interpretation and performance of selected flute compositions by Lowell Liebermann and Robert Beaser in order to provide the opportunity for performers to clarify interpretational challenges. First, it explores Liebermann's *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* and *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44* and Beaser's *Variations for Flute and Piano* from the perspective of the composers, drawing on audio recordings of interviews and lessons with the composers conducted by the author in the United States of America. Second, it addresses the application of the knowledge gathered from these discussions and lessons to the remaining recital repertoire with specific reference to the author's recorded recitals presented in Elder Hall, The University of Adelaide on 11 December 2008 and 16 June 2009.

As time progresses through the twenty-first century, many flautists worldwide perform to great acclaim the challenging and virtuosic works by Lowell Liebermann and Robert Beaser. Due to the number of performances that these works receive and the many interpretational challenges that they present to the flautist, it is beneficial to document the composer's intentions in the current time in order to provide a resource for performers of the future.

Robert Beaser's *Variations for Flute and Piano* has been included in the research due to the demanding nature of the work and the interpretational difficulties this composition presents to the flautist. Based on research to the time of this submission, no previously conducted performance research on *Variations for Flute and Piano* is available. Thus performers are unable to obtain information for the development of their interpretation of this work. Moreover, few recordings of

Variations for Flute and Piano exist, with the only known recordings at the time of submission being those by flautists Susan Glaserⁱ, Paula Robisonⁱⁱ and Leonard Garrison.ⁱⁱⁱ This exegesis therefore offers unique insights into the performance of this composition through documented discussion with the composer and recorded demonstration of interpretation and performance.

The works of Lowell Liebermann included in this study were selected due to their popularity and regular performance within Australia. The current research has identified many recordings of *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*^{iv} and *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44*^v due to their popularity; however few exist for the *Sonata for Flute and Guitar Op. 25*^{vi}, *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra Op. 39*^{vii} and of the more recent *Trio No. 1 for Flute Cello and Piano Op. 83*^{viii} and *Trio No. 2 for Flute Cello and Piano Op. 87*^{ix}. This submission aims to provide recordings of these included works and a supporting discussion detailing the interpretational challenges in order to contextualise the composer's thoughts and intentions for performance.

Research has also revealed that American authors Jeannine Dennis^x, Lisa Garner^{xi} and Lisa McArthur^{xii} address the compositions of Lowell Liebermann; however they discuss these works with regard to stylistic analysis. In the theses of Garner and McArthur, performance of the selected works and discussion of interpretational challenges is not addressed. Only Dennis discusses selected performance aspects of the *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* and *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44*, but approaches this solely from the perspective of the performer with no documentation of the composer's intentions. This submission therefore aims to investigate the perspective of the composer and performer in order to provide a resource to assist performers in the interpretation of the included works.

2. The Intentions of the Composer

This section focuses on interviews conducted by the author with composers Lowell Liebermann and Robert Beaser in the United States of America. The *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*, *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44* and *Variations for Flute and Piano* were performed for the composers during these sessions. Excerpts are documented in the discussion and are provided on an accompanying compact disc (refer CD 3) in order to further demonstrate the thoughts and intentions of the composers.

a) Lowell Liebermann - *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*

The *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* (hereafter *Sonata*) was discussed and performed with composer Lowell Liebermann, during an interview held on 29 December 2007 in New Jersey, United States of America.^{xiii}

Phrasing

Lowell Liebermann challenges the performer in the *Sonata* through lyrical sustained phrasing and highly virtuosic passages. He draws on the entire register of the flute throughout the work, demanding exceptional dynamic control from the flautist and many tonal contrasts in the sound. One of the greatest challenges that the performer first faces in the preparation of the *Sonata* is to sustain the sound and maintain the direction of the phrases in the opening movement. Liebermann pushes the performer to achieve the breath control and marked phrasing at the slow tempo indicated. Therefore, the opening tempo and phrasing were the first aspects discussed with the composer. Liebermann stated that the metronome marking is to “indicate the character that’s wanted” and whilst a player should strive to achieve the marking indicated, they must also “sustain” the phrase and maintain “interest”. The opening of the *Sonata* is therefore to be “drawn out” and give the feeling of “being suspended” (refer CD 3 – track 1, 1:10).

Paula Robison for whom the work is dedicated, and who premiered the work at the 1988 Spoleto Festival with pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, also commented on these opening phrases in an interview held in New York City on 14 December 2007^{xiv}, stating that the opening of this work must have “luminosity and a mysterious quality”^{xv} and that there needs to be “a large degree of scale in the flutists playing”^{xvi} between the opening and the *fortissimo* entry at Figure 30. According to Robison, one of the biggest challenges in the preparation of this work, is “finding the atmosphere”^{xvii} in the opening phrases of the first movement. It is critical for both instrumentalists to be aware of the atmosphere that they wish to convey, particularly in the piano, drawing the correct sound from the instrument on which to lay the suspended line of the flute.

Liebermann also referred to the flautists perception of the phrase length, stating the importance of the flautist “conceptualising” their own part together with the piano rather than concentrating on the flute’s melodic line alone which can often lead to a flautist’s fear of the phrase length. This opening section was recorded with the composer (refer CD 3 – track 2) and these directions were taken into account in the performance of this work (refer CD 2 – track 8).

Balance

As a flautist, balance of sound is often problematic in the low register when performing with piano. Balance often becomes an even greater problem in the situation where rehearsals are held in a practice venue rather than the performance hall, presenting differing acoustic properties to the performers. Important balance considerations must be taken into account in the performance venue, such as the acoustics of the hall, the differing registers of each instrument during the work which will affect projection and the melodic interest between the instruments.

For the performance of twentieth and twenty-first century music, a flautist must be particularly careful not to make decisions to alter any specific dynamic markings or the register of the instrument from that indicated until they are fully aware of the composers intentions and have considered all possibilities for greater projection of sound and clearer articulation. Liebermann also emphasised the importance of balance and observation of the indicated dynamics, commenting on a number of occasions within the *Sonata* where the flute is at times not heard clearly beneath the piano due to the low register and dynamic level indicated. Liebermann stated that these sections are “intentional” and that they should not be altered to “be heard”, rather the flute should “emerge from the piano texture”. At bar 32 in the first movement for example (see Figure 1), where the flute is in the low register with a heavy texture in the piano, Liebermann stated that he “knew that the flute would be covered at the bottom” when he wrote it and that the choice of register was “completely intentional”. He also stated that the work is “very much a duo sonata and at certain points, the flute is definitely accompanying the piano”.



Figure 1 Lowell Liebermann, *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*. King of Prussia: Theodore Presser, 1988 (1st Movement, bar 32).

Another important balance consideration that arose when playing the work with the composer was at bar 38 (see Figure 2) where Liebermann stated that the flautist should not “try and make anything” of this phrase as the flute is intended to accompany the piano and should not “draw attention away from the melody” (refer CD 3 – track 2, 3:10).

Figure 2 Lowell Liebermann, *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*. King of Prussia: Theodore Presser, 1988 (1st Movement, bars 36-40).

Liebermann also referred to the overall balance between the flute and piano in the *Sonata*, stating that the piano should always be played with the lid completely open on “full stick unless there is a real acoustical problem”. Liebermann stated that “it is far easier for a pianist to control the sound (on full stick) and it doesn’t necessarily make it softer on a short stick”. He went on to explain that in the situation where the piano lid is closed or on a short stick the pianist will have to work much harder to achieve clarity of sound and colour.

Indications

During interpretation of a new work, the performer can be unsure of the composer's intentions indicated by the markings in the music. One example of such an indication found in the *Sonata* is the *estatico* marked at bar 60 (see Figure 3). Research has shown that this marking is interpreted differently by many flautists. Liebermann stated that this section of the work calls for a transparency in the tone and an “ethereal sound” with an “airy” quality. In particular he suggests that a flautist draw this feeling from the piano's running lines beneath (refer CD 3 – track 3, 1:15).



Figure 3 Lowell Liebermann, *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*. King of Prussia: Theodore Presser, 1988 (1st Movement, bar 62).

Another indication discussed was the *ritenuto* at bar 79 (see Figure 4). Liebermann stated that the marked *ritenuto* is to be quite “drawn out” and “deliberate” across the bar preceding the marking at bar 79 (refer CD 3 – track 5, 0:35). Liebermann also referred to the pedal markings in the piano, stating that these must be carefully adhered to by the pianist and not overlooked as they “are meant very specifically” (refer CD 3 – track 4).

The image displays a musical score for Lowell Liebermann's *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*. It is divided into two systems. The first system features a flute part with a melodic line and a piano accompaniment with a rhythmic pattern. The second system shows the flute part with a melodic line and the piano accompaniment with a rhythmic pattern. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *ppp*, and *pp oscuro*, and performance instructions like *rit.* and *a tempo (♩ = 40)*. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems.

Figure 4 Lowell Liebermann, *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*. King of Prussia: Theodore Presser, 1988 (1st Movement, bars 76-82).

Contrast

An important performance consideration of the *Sonata* relates to the contrasts that must occur between the flute and piano. During the second movement, Liebermann made reference to the contrasting characters in the flute and piano at bar 27 (refer CD 3 – track 8, 0:15), stating that the flute should be “free and seductive” and should use “*rubato*” in this section whilst the piano remains unrelenting and “obsessive” underneath.

b) Lowell Liebermann - *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44*

The *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44* (hereafter *Soliloquy*) presents a number of challenges to the flautist during interpretation for performance. The work was discussed with composer Lowell Liebermann on 29 December 2007 in New Jersey, United States of America^{xviii}, with attention to tempi, character and contrast. It was played in its entirety to enable the composer to review the interpretation with the author. The full recording of this performance has been provided on the accompanying compact disc to enable reference to demonstration in the following discussion and to serve as a resource to other flautists in the interpretation of this work (refer CD 3 – track 9). Due to the use of no bar lines throughout the work, reference to the printed score is given in the format of page number and line.

Tempo

The first tempo consideration that was discussed with the composer was the *Molto lento* (see Figure 5). A performer may find the *Molto lento* lacks direction in the phrase at the tempo indicated. According to Liebermann, this section is “to be played with a lot of *rubato*” and the “implied counterpoint is meant to be brought out”. He stated that most often it “isn’t the slowness of the tempo”, but rather the “way someone is approaching it”.



Figure 5 Lowell Liebermann, *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44*, King of Prussia: Theodore Presser, 1994 (*Molto lento*, page 4).

The second tempo consideration that was raised by Liebermann was at the first *Allegro* section (see Figure 6). He stated that this section should be “steady, focusing on the rhythm and underlying harmonic structure so that it sounds deliberate”. Liebermann also stated that the following *Allegro* section (refer printed score: page 6) should also be played with a “rhythmic” emphasis in the same manner.



Figure 6 Lowell Liebermann, *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44*, King of Prussia: Theodore Presser, 1994 (*Allegro*, page 4).

Notation

Liebermann emphasised the importance of accurate division between the notation at the beginning of the *Molto lento* and the triplet figure (see once again Figure 5, page 9). This must be divided carefully and accurately so that the listener is aware of the change in notation.

Liebermann also stated that the flautist should be “aware of the rests”. These should be heard as complete silences without continuity to the next musical thought. For example, at the concluding *Molto lento*, the performer should think of “listening to the silences, almost as if you are listening for a response”.

Dynamics

Liebermann stated that a performer must take insight “from what a composer doesn’t write as opposed to what is written” (refer CD 3 – track 12). This was in relation to creating greater contrast between the *piano* and the *piano espressivo* (line 6 – page 3) at the opening of *Soliloquy*. Liebermann stated that this “implies that something different is wanted there”. The work should not start too expressively and should leave room for development of the opening idea throughout.

c) **Robert Beaser - *Variations for Flute and Piano***

An interview was conducted with composer, Robert Beaser on 4 January 2008 in New York City.^{xix} During this session the work *Variations for Flute and Piano* (hereafter *Variations*) was discussed and the flute part was performed solo for the composer, focusing on the interpretation of the work for performance. Audio excerpts from this session are included on the accompanying compact disc (refer CD 3) to enable reference to the following discussion and to serve as a resource in the interpretation of this work for future performances. Excerpts of the final recorded performance in Elder Hall on 11 December 2008 are also referred to throughout the following text to enable demonstration of the aspects discussed (refer CD 1).

The Score

The author was provided with the manuscript to compare breath markings and notation with the score from which the work was to be performed, published in 1982 by the Helicon Music Corporation. Many indications remained identical to those in the original manuscript which are very specific and comprehensive with the exception of minor changes to the phrase markings. The greatest difference discovered and discussed with the composer was regarding the transition run into Variation 5 in the flute score which had notes added from the original manuscript. Beaser made comment on this subject, stating that the change had been made by him and that it should not be considered to be played “in time”.

Beaser also discussed the engraving of the manuscript stating that this publication “was one of the last pieces in America to be engraved by the old-fashioned plate method” before computer programmes took over the process, further noting that the publisher was very particular in copying everything on the original manuscript.

Structure

During the interview, Beaser addressed the structure of the work, stating that “across three movements” he writes “five variations per movement”. The first movement was intended “to feel like variation form”, where “the second and third movements were more through composed” (refer CD 3 – track 16, 1:00). Beaser also described the structure of the final movement of *Variations* as “reversed”, explaining that the final movement is based “on *sonata allegro* form”, which traditionally “is associated with the first movement of a sonata”.

Theme

After the opening theme was performed to him, Beaser stated “the world of the piece is in this opening theme so you really want to be able to get that full world”. He also emphasised the importance of ‘mapping’ the “gestures” throughout the music.

Beaser also stated that, “the piece is a dialectic of opposites” and that the performer should “bring out the parts that are opposite in the theme”. He instructed that the opening phrase is to be “innocent” and “very light” with “*rubato*” and “playfulness” and then towards the *agitato* (in the second measure) there needs to be a little “gruffness” and “more growl” (refer CD 3 – track 18). In the theme Beaser stated that there needs to be immediate contrasts, and when similar contrasts occur throughout the piece they should be approached in the same manner. Beaser also stated that time needs to be taken over the *poco rit* found in bar 3, with “*rubato*” over the last 3 grace notes to the *pianissimo* G (refer CD 1 – track 3, 1:00). This provides the transition into the *semplice* section to follow (see Figure 7).



Figure 7 Robert Beaser *Variations for Flute and Piano*, Miami: Helicon, 1982
(Theme, bar 3).

Beaser explained his use of marked accents; “In my music, if you see an extra mark like an accent the first thing a performer should think is ‘Why does he want an accent there?’ and ‘What does that mean in the context of the phrase?’”. At the conclusion of the theme, these accents “mark the ending” of the opening statement (refer CD 1 – track 3, 1:18). The marked accented notes and the “ending gesture” then appear throughout the work, and need to be emphasised in the theme so that they may then be recalled in the following variations.

Variation 1

Beaser suggested that at bar 8 and bar 31 a “percussive” articulation should be used for the *staccato* quavers (see Figure 8). Beaser has marked these with *ritmico* and *sentito*. So in respect to these markings these quavers must be rhythmic and by the use of this percussive articulation they will be better heard as they descend in the lower register (refer CD 1 – track 3, 1:50).



Figure 8 Robert Beaser *Variations for Flute and Piano*, Miami: Helicon, 1982 (Variation 1, bars 7-8).

At bar 17 throughout the *spectral* section, Beaser spoke of the importance of the flautist thinking in terms of the “directionality of the phrases” (refer CD 3 – track 19). Throughout this section to bar 28, *crescendo* and *decrescendo* markings have also been added to indicate the intended direction of this line and should be carefully observed (refer CD 1 – track 3, 2:18).

Variation 2

Beaser stated that the phrase should “move towards the downbeat of bar 47 and back” and the quintuplets should be “smooth” and unaccented. Beaser stated that “even though the flautist needs to negotiate the fives, the listener shouldn’t hear them” and that the flautist should strive to maintain “directionality” in the phrase (refer CD 3 – track 20).

Variation 3

In Variation 3 Beaser stated that this variation requires “more *dolce*”. In particular he suggested to take time from the *dolce* marked at bar 103, and particularly at the *cantando* at bar 107 (see Figure 9) (refer CD 1 – track 3, 5:28).

The image displays a musical score for Variation 3, covering bars 102 to 108. The tempo is marked as *Meno mosso* with a metronome marking of 60 (♩ = 60) and 90 (♩ = 90). The score is written for flute and piano. The flute part begins at bar 102 with a *p dolce* marking and continues through bar 108 with a *p semplice* marking. The piano part is marked *As a hymn* and *pp sub.* at the beginning. At bar 106, the flute part is marked *cantando* and *pp cresc.*, while the piano part is marked *sfz*. The score concludes at bar 108 with a *mp* marking for the flute and *p dolce* for the piano. The piano part also includes markings for *mf*, *p*, and *mp t.v.*

Figure 9 Robert Beaser *Variations for Flute and Piano*, Miami: Helicon, 1982 (*Variation 3*, bars 102-108).

At bar 112, it was stated that the flautist can “take time” in this bar, ensuring the first beat is expressive at bar 113 in preparation for the *dolce* ‘broader’ section at bar 115 (see Figure 10) (refer CD 3 – track 21).



Figure 10 Robert Beaser *Variations for Flute and Piano*, Miami: Helicon, 1982 (Variation 3, bars 112-114).

Variation 4

Beaser explained that at bar 150 the flautist needs to “lay into the instrument more” and that the *sempre fortissimo* must be reached (see Figure 11). He stated that at the *meno mosso* (bar 166), the flautist should take time in this bar before returning to the original tempo at bar 167.



Figure 11 Robert Beaser *Variations for Flute and Piano*, Miami: Helicon, 1982 (Variation 4, bars 149-153).

Variation 5

In Variation 5 Beaser stated that the repeated semiquavers at bars 199 and 204 should have a “percussive articulation” and sound “agitated”. He also emphasised the importance of bringing out the accents in bars 204 and 205 to further create the “agitated” feeling required.

Variation 6-8

Beaser stated that the flute can “be very free” at bar 92. It is important here, according to Beaser that the flute maintains an independence from the piano line, but “must also line up at certain places”. Beaser then stated that from bar 105 both flute and piano must “keep building the intensity” so that the piece does not stop “driving forward”.

Cadenza

Beaser explained that the *glissando* to the flutter on the second line should be “smooth and gradual” (see Figure 12).

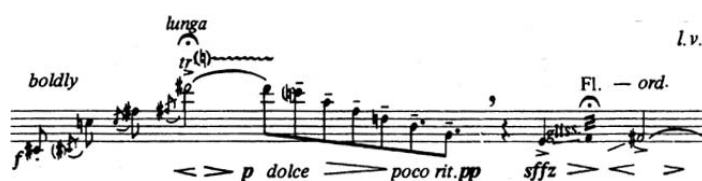


Figure 12 Robert Beaser *Variations for Flute and Piano*, Miami: Helicon, 1982 (*Cadenza*, Variation 9, line 2).

Beaser also stated that the reason for not rhythmically notating a number of runs was due to the fact that he intended them to be “as fast and ‘tossed off’ as possible”. He explained that here the performer should make a difference between the rhythmically notated runs and these faster runs that should sound more like “a sweep”.

Summary: The three works discussed in this section make specific demands on the performer and present unique difficulties in interpretation. Nevertheless, similarities between the *Sonata*, *Soliloquy* and *Variations* can be found. The performer should approach each work on its own merit, paying specific attention to the composer’s indications on the page and continually aiming to extend the dynamic and tonal range of the flute. Whilst this section has focused on three works, many of the challenges discussed here have further application to other works by these composers as will be seen in the next section.

3. The Interpretation of the Performer

In this section, Liebermann's *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* and *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44* and Beaser's *Variations for Flute and Piano* are discussed from the perspective of the performer with reference to the recorded performances on 11 December 2008 and 16 June 2009 at Elder Hall, The University of Adelaide. This is followed by a discussion of the application of knowledge gained through research to the remaining recital repertoire.

a) Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23

Phrasing

Sustained breath control and phrasing are critical in the preparation of this work for performance. In the first movement, Liebermann pushes the flautist to achieve drawn out phrases at an extremely slow tempo marking, requiring control and endurance from the performer.

In the recorded performance of this work, the marked tempo was achieved and phrases were played with the intended tone quality (refer CD 2 – track 8). Having reflected on this performance with the aim to discuss the difficulties of interpretation, it is clear that in future performances, the ends of phrases in the opening of the first movement should be better sustained with the use of a narrower and less intrusive vibrato. Although this section was rehearsed successfully, these aspects were not achieved in the recorded performance.

Balance

The first consideration regarding balance was found at bar 32 (see once again Figure 1, page 5) where the flute descends below the register of the piano. From the research conducted, Liebermann stated that he “knew that the flute would be covered at the bottom”^{xx} and with this in mind as a performer, it was important here to maintain clear articulation and projection of the lower register. On the recording, the flute is heard effectively as an accompanying figure and is still audible on the recording without alteration to the marked indications (refer CD 2 – track 8, 2:30).

At bar 38 and bar 40 (see once again Figure 2, page 6) Liebermann called for the flute to accompany the piano, and upon reflection of the recorded performance, the flute should have had a less dominant sound at this section of the work. The flautist should aim for non-vibrato, a true *pianissimo* and very little shaping in order to not draw away from the piano. In future performance this section would need to be played at a softer dynamic level and the flute should be less intrusive to the overall sound (refer CD 2 – track 8, 3:10).

Contrast

Throughout the recorded performance most contrasts were achieved effectively. The *movendo* at bar 21 was slightly faster than intended (refer CD 2 – track 8, 1:56-3:08). The marked tempo at bar 30 however, was correct following the *ritardando*, still enabling an effective contrast between the sections of the first movement. At bar 30, the flautist should aim to challenge and extend the volume and projection capabilities of the flute, however pitch must not be sacrificed in this pursuit. This was achieved effectively in this section of the work with the exception of the final transition to the tempo primo during bars 36 and 37 which should be delivered with greater control of pitch.

b) Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44

Tempo

In review of the recorded performance, the opening of the *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44* was above the tempo indicated and rehearsed, which did not allow for the intended sustained lines and marked *rubato*. In future performance this tempo should be better observed and the opening should be ‘free’ and unhurried. At the return of the opening theme marked ‘*piano espressivo*’ on the sixth line of the score, this was also a little fast and whilst the contrast to the opening was achieved with a difference in tone colour, it would be further enhanced if the opening lines were performed at a slower tempo (refer CD 1 – track 6).

The *Molto lento*, found on the second page of the printed score presented interpretational difficulties in regards to the direction of the phrase at the tempo indicated. In the performance venue, this was achieved effectively in the recorded performance, with the acoustics of the hall sustaining the sound throughout this

section enabling a ‘suspended’ line to be achieved throughout each phrase (refer CD 1 – track 6, 1:40).

The Absence of Bar Lines

The *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44* presents a number of interpretational difficulties due to the absence of bar lines. Liebermann had “never written a piece without bar lines”^{xxi} and approached it for the first time in *Soliloquy*.

The difficulty encountered in the interpretation of this work is found on line 5 of page 4 in the Theodore Presser edition (see Figure 13). A question was raised by this performer as to whether the second third register E is in fact an E flat or an E natural. As it appears on the score with the absence of bar lines or clarification, the flautist should perform an E flat observing the previous E flat accidental. On the same line however, there is a marked E flat accidental in the next grouping of notes. This led this performer to conclude that the note in question was in fact an E natural due to the following indicated E flat and the descending harmonic sequence.



Figure 13 Lowell Liebermann, *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44*, King of Prussia: Theodore Presser, 1994 (page 4, line 5).

A second questionable accidental is found on page 6, line 4 (see Figure 14). At the commencement of the fourth line the flautist plays a B flat and at the conclusion of the line, a B is notated without clarification. Without indication of a natural the performer should play another B flat, however in order to remain with the minor third pattern and with consideration to a later notated B flat, this was performed by the author as a B natural.



Figure 14 Lowell Liebermann, *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44*, King of Prussia: Theodore Presser, 1994 (page 6, line 4).

c) Variations for Flute and Piano

The rhythmically and musically complex *Variations for Flute and Piano* challenges the technical and musical capabilities of the flautist. Beaser described his writing for the flute and his approach, stating that he wrote the piece “treating the flute like the violin”^{xxii} (refer CD 3 – track 15).

This work demands careful attention to detail and meticulous preparation. Beaser states that *Variations* is not a sonata in the sense of flute and accompaniment; it’s an “equal partnership”.^{xxiii} Both the flute and piano parts are difficult in the complexities of achieving the technical, rhythmical and musical demands and the voicing is constantly shifting, making the balance between the instruments highly important. *Variations* demands dynamic extremities of both instruments and with both the flute and piano being capable of differing ranges and colours, performers must always be aware of the balance and voicing and take this into account in the preparation of this work for performance.

Due to Beaser’s attention to detail and the accuracy of the engraved edition to the original manuscript on comparison it is important in the preparation of this work that the indications in the music are carefully observed and adhered to. In the recorded performance of this work both performers strived to respect and achieve the indications of the composer and take in to account the research findings (refer CD 1 – tracks 3-5). Due to the nature of the work, achieving a ‘perfect’ live performance is extremely difficult for any flautist and their associate artist. Whilst the performers should strive to achieve an accurate performance of this work, it remains even more imperative to achieve the contrasts, maintain energy and to trace the theme throughout the work. In review of the recorded performance, the contrasts were well achieved overall with attention to rhythmical detail and effective transition between variations.

d) *Sonata for Flute and Guitar Op. 25*

The *Sonata for Flute and Guitar Op. 25* by Lowell Liebermann presents many similar challenges to the flautist as the *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* previously discussed from the perspective of the composer and performer. The long sustained phrases, soft dynamic indications and the wide use of all registers of the flute are found in both of these works and the need for “conceptualising”^{xxiv} the flute and guitar together, suggested by Liebermann for the *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* is particularly important for achieving the directionality of phrasing and creating the many contrasts in this work. This conceptualisation becomes increasingly important in the change of metre that occurs in the Theodore Presser edition between figure 30 and figure 60 (see Figure 15) and again on the return of this same idea at figure 80 (refer to CD 1 – track 1, 2:40).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the first movement of the Sonata for Flute and Guitar, Op. 25. The first system begins at measure 30, marked 'Doppio movimento' and 'p sempre legato'. It features a flute line with a long, sustained phrase and a guitar line with a driving, rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the piece, marked 'poco' and 'p', showing further development of the flute's melodic line and the guitar's accompaniment. The notation includes various dynamics, phrasing slurs, and articulation marks.

Figure 15 Lowell Liebermann, *Sonata for Flute and Guitar*, Bryn Mawr: Theodore Presser, 1993 (1st Movement, bars 30-37).

The second movement of the *Sonata for Flute and Guitar Op. 25* shows strong ties once more to the *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* with its driving *ostinato* figure and unrelenting quaver rhythm. A contrasting melody like the one seen in the second movement of the *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* at figure 125 can be found at bar 50 in the *Sonata for Flute and Guitar Op. 25* (refer CD 1 – track 2, 3:15). Here Liebermann’s suggestion for contrast and a feeling of independence may be applied, giving the feeling of the flute ‘floating’ above the guitar and maintaining independence between the two instruments. This work, like the *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*, is an “equal partnership”^{xxv} and the balance of sound and achieving the appropriate tone colours and dynamic markings relative to the acoustics of the

venue is extremely important in performance. In review of the audio recording made of the first recital (refer CD 1), this was achieved effectively, given the acoustics of the performance venue. The guitar is articulated clearly allowing the flute to be expressive whilst maintaining the overall *pianissimo* indication that returns throughout the first movement of the work. Once again, alterations to dynamic markings or register should only be made in consultation with the composer after all possibilities of greater sound projection and articulation have been explored.

e) Concerto for Flute and Orchestra

The *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra* (hereafter *Concerto*), recorded with piano by the author in the second recital, again shares many similarities with the *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* (hereafter *Sonata*). With *cantabile* lines opening the *Concerto*, this section shares the required feeling of “being suspended”^{xxvi} which Liebermann directs for the first movement of the *Sonata*. The flute should ‘float’ above the quaver accompaniment in the orchestra with directionality in the phrase, a sustained air column and controlled vibrato. In the recorded performance this was achieved effectively, (refer CD 2 – track 1) with the sound projecting well and phrase direction maintained.

The *Concerto*, like the *Sonata* has many virtuosic lines that challenge the performer and require a high level of technical accomplishment for performance. The many changes in tempo and metre require strong communication between the soloist and accompanist and the contrasts in character must be captured quickly and effectively with no signs of preparation in dynamic or tonal colouring to indicate these changes before they occur. A high level of energy must be maintained in the performance of this work and harnessed to create an explosive conclusion. Whilst maintaining this energy, the performer must be aware of tempi and technical control in order to create a successful performance. Great care was taken in rehearsals to ensure that these sections were addressed and clear to both performers and as a result, throughout the recorded performance these contrasts were achieved effectively with technical sections remaining controlled and articulated (refer CD 2 – tracks 1-3).

f) Trio No. 1 Op. 83, Trio No. 2 Op. 87

Trio No. 1 Op. 83 and *Trio No. 2 Op. 87*, whilst differing in instrumentation, make many similar demands of the performer to the previously discussed *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* and *Sonata for Flute and Guitar Op. 25*. Of greatest importance in *Trio No. 2 Op. 87* is the rhythmic accuracy required of all three performers as they traverse many difficult changes of metre and rhythmic groupings. Each instrumentalist must communicate effectively and maintain direction in the phrasing combined with dynamic contrast. The performers in the recorded performance achieved this effectively, communicating well with a clear rhythmical feel maintained throughout the work (refer CD 1 – track 7).

Important balance and intonation considerations must be taken into account in the preparation of *Trio No. 1 Op. 83* and *Trio No. 2 Op. 87*, particularly in unison lines. Liebermann is precise in his indications in the score, with clear tempo markings and dynamics. These indications should be carefully observed with consideration to the acoustics of the performance venue and register of the instruments. With each instrumentalist encountering separate challenges on their instrument in the areas of projection and intonation, it is imperative that balance and intonation are discussed and carefully rehearsed in the performance venue prior to final performance. This was generally well achieved in the recorded performance with each instrument contributing equally to the overall intended sound (refer CD 1 – track 7, CD 2 – tracks 4-7).

As a flautist when performing with a string instrument, finding appropriate places to breathe can be challenging, as string players are able to sustain long phrases without the need for an intake of breath. This is a particular problem when two instruments play an identical line in canon or in unison. Breathing must be negotiated and discussed early in the rehearsal process to enable performers to achieve the long phrasing called for by Liebermann in both *Trio No. 1 Op. 83* and *Trio No. 2 Op. 87*.

Summary: When approaching a new work for the first time, it is important that the performer is able to access resources from the perspective of the composer and of other performers in order to develop an individual interpretation of the work. This section has offered one performer's interpretation and performance that may have broader applications to works of a similar genre for other performers in future years.

4. Conclusion

When interpreting a new musical composition, sourcing documentation on the composer, obtaining a catalogue of preceding works and recordings as well as developing insight into the composer's intentions for the work is a demanding task. Whilst it is almost impossible to document a composer's intentions for every composition, the knowledge gained from documentation of major works such as presented in this research may be applied to similar works by the given composer or from the same genre.

This research has documented the perspective of the composers Lowell Liebermann and Robert Beaser and has demonstrated the interpretation of the performer through the recorded recitals. It is hoped that this research will assist performers in future years in the development of individual interpretation by gaining an understanding of the composer's intentions for the performance of their works.

ⁱRobert Beaser. “Variations for Flute and Piano.” In *Mountain Songs*. Susan Glaser, flute. Compact disc. KOCH records. New York, 2002.

ⁱⁱRobert Beaser. “Variations for Flute and Piano.” In *Paula Robison Plays American Masterworks*. Paula Robison, flute. Tim Hester, piano. Compact disc. Musical Heritage Society New Jersey 5184518, 2006.

ⁱⁱⁱRobert Beaser. “Variations for Flute and Piano.” In *American Reflections*. Leonard Garrison, flute. Compact disc. Albany Records, New York, 2008.

^{iv}Lowell Liebermann. “Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23.” In *American Flute*. Claudia Anderson, flute. Barbara Michaelson, piano. Compact disc. Centaur Records. CRC 2203, 1994. Lowell Liebermann. “Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23.” In *Trio Fedele*. David Fedele, flute. Robert Koenig, piano. Compact disc. ARTEK AR-0034-2, 2006. Lowell Liebermann. “Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23” In *Virtuoso American Flute Works*. Katherine Kemler, flute. Kathleen Rountree, piano. Compact disc. Centaur Records CRC 2146, 1992. Lowell Liebermann. “Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23.” In *Lowell Liebermann Complete Chamber Music for Flute*. Alexa Still, flute. David Korevaar, piano. Compact disc. Koch International Classics. New York 3-7549-2 HI, 2003.

^vLowell Liebermann. “Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44.” In *American Flute Music*. Yvonne C. Hansbrough, flute. Compact disc. Fanfare Publications 000221, 1997. Lowell Liebermann. *Soliloquy Op. 44*. Katherine Kemler, flute. Compact disc. Opus One CD 169, 1994. Lowell Liebermann. “Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44.” In *Lowell Liebermann Complete Chamber Music for Flute*. Alexa Still, flute. Compact disc. Koch International Classics. New York 3-7549-2 HI, 2003.

^{vi}Lowell Liebermann. “Sonata for Flute and Guitar Op. 25.” In *Lowell Liebermann Complete Chamber Music for Flute*. Alexa Still, flute. Franco Platino, guitar. Compact disc. Koch International Classics. New York 3-7549-2 HI, 2003.

^{vii}Lowell Liebermann. “Concerto for Flute and Orchestra.” In *James Galway Plays Lowell Liebermann*. James Galway, flute. Compact disc. RCA. 63235, 1998. Lowell Liebermann. “Concerto for Flute and Orchestra.” In *Liebermann-Symphony No.2 & Flute Concerto*. Eugenia Zuckerman, flute. Compact disc. Delos Music DE3256, 2000.

^{viii}Lowell Liebermann. “Trio No.1. Op. 83.” In *Trio Fedele*. David Fedele, flute. Matthew Herren, cello. Robert Koenig, piano. Compact disc. ARTEK AR-0034-2, 2006. Lowell Liebermann. “Trio No. 1. Op. 83.” In *The New Lyric Flute*. Susan Royal, flute. Natasha Farny, cello. Nathan Hess, piano. Compact disc. Centaur 2907, 2008.

^{ix}Lowell Liebermann. “Trio No.2. Op. 87.” In *Trio Fedele*. David Fedele, flute. Matthew Herren, cello. Robert Koenig, piano. Compact disc. ARTEK AR-0034-2, 2006.

^xJeannine Dennis. *The Life and Music of Lowell Liebermann with an Emphasis on His Music for the Flute and the Piccolo*. Ph.D Dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1999. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 2000).

^{xi}Lisa M. Garner. *Lowell Liebermann: A Stylistic Analysis and Discussion of the Sonata for Flute and Piano, Op. 23, Sonata for Flute and Guitar, Op. 25, and Soliloquy for Flute Solo, Op. 44*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Rice University, 1997. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1997).

^{xii}Lisa R. McArthur. *Lowell Liebermann: His Compositional Style as Derived from Three Flute Works and Applied to Other Selected Instrumental Works*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Lexington, 2002. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms 2002).

^{xiii}The interview with Lowell Liebermann was conducted on 29 December 2007 in New Jersey, USA. A full recording of this interview was made on mini disc. All quotations in this section are drawn from this recording unless otherwise noted.

^{xiv}Paula Robison. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New York, 14 December 2007.

^{xv}Paula Robison. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New York, 14 December 2007.

^{xvii}Paula Robison. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New York, 14 December 2007.

^{xviii}The interview with Lowell Liebermann was conducted on 29 December 2007 in New Jersey, USA. A full recording of this interview was made on mini disc. All quotations in this section are drawn from this recording unless otherwise noted.

^{xix}The interview with Robert Beaser was conducted on 4 January 2008 in New York, USA. A full recording of this interview was made on mini disc. All quotations in this section are drawn from this recording unless otherwise noted.

^{xx}Lowell Liebermann. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New Jersey, 29 December 2007.

^{xxi}Lowell Liebermann. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New Jersey, 29 December 2007.

^{xxii}Robert Beaser. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New York, 4 January 2008.

^{xxiii}Robert Beaser. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New York, 4 January 2008.

^{xxiv}Lowell Liebermann. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New Jersey, 29 December 2007.

^{xxv}Lowell Liebermann. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New Jersey, 29 December 2007.

^{xxvi}Lowell Liebermann. Personal Communication with author. Mini Disc Recording, New Jersey, 29 December 2007.

Appendix A

The Composers

When approaching a new work it is important that the performer seeks to develop an understanding of the composer's influences. Lowell Liebermann and Robert Beaser have received stellar success worldwide in their compositions not only for the flute, but also for many instrumental arrangements. This information will provide a basic understanding of the composers' major influences and will assist by providing insight into their style and approach to writing for the flute

Lowell Liebermann

Lowell Liebermann was born on 22 February 1961 in New York City. He is now regarded as "one of the most widely performed Americans of his generation".¹ He began to compose from a young age and at 15, he had composed his first Piano Sonata. Liebermann gave a debut recital of this work at Carnegie Recital Hall, New York only one year later. In 1979 Liebermann commenced his formal studies at the Juilliard School, obtaining his Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral degrees by 1987.² His composition teachers during this period were David Diamond and Vincent Persichetti and he studied piano with Jacob Lateiner.

Lowell Liebermann freely acknowledges influences of Shostakovich, Liszt, Beethoven and Frank Martin in his works³ which are quoted to be "fluent and tonal" and to be continuing "a tradition of latter day Romanticism inherited from Barber and Prokofiev".⁴

¹ Richard Freed. "Liebermann, Lowell." In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2nd ed. S.Sadie and J.Tyrrell, eds. (London: Macmillan, 2002). vol 14, 659-660.

² Liebermann, Lowell. "Biography." *Lowell Liebermann*. <<http://www.lowellliebermann.com>> (4th September 2007).

³ Liebermann, Lowell. Email conversation with author. 4 February 2007.

⁴ Alison Latham. "Lowell Liebermann", In *The Oxford Companion To Music*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Robert Beaser

Robert Beaser was born in Boston on 29 May 1954. He commenced his formal studies at Yale College where he studied under Jacob Druckman, Toru Takemitsu, Earle Brown and Yehudi Wyner, graduating with a Doctorate in 1985.

Beaser performed with the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra in his youth as a percussionist and conducted the orchestra in the premiere of his first orchestral work, *Antigone* in 1972. Later Beaser studied with Goffredo Petrassi in Rome and Betsy Jolas at Tanglewood.⁵

From 1978 to 1989 Robert Beaser served as co-director and conductor of the New York ensemble, Contemporary Elements, and from 1988 to 1993 he held the position of composer in residence with the American Composers Orchestra. Since 1993, Beaser has been the Chair of the Composition Department at the Juilliard School. He has had commissions from numerous symphony orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic and St Louis Symphony.⁶

⁵ James Chute. "Beaser." In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell, eds. (London: Macmillian, 2001). vol 3, 20.

⁶ The Juilliard School. "Robert Beaser", *Faculty and Staff* <<http://www.juilliard.edu>> (6 September 2007).

Appendix B

Track Lists for CDs

CD 1 - Recording of Recital 1 - 11 December 2008, Sound Engineer: Silver Moon

CD 2 - Recording of Recital 2 - 16 June 2009, Sound Engineer: Silver Moon

CD 3 - Excerpts from interviews and lessons with composers Lowell Liebermann and Robert Beaser.

CD 1

Recital 1

Natalie Zwar, flute

Leigh Harrold, piano

David Sharp, cello

Ben Brakenridge, guitar

Elder Hall, University of Adelaide, 11 December 2008

Lowell Liebermann – *Sonata for Flute and Guitar Op. 25*

Track 1 – I. *Adagio comodo* 8:35

Track 2 – II. *Allegro* 4:33

Robert Beaser – *Variations for Flute and Piano*

Track 3 – I. *Theme, Variations 1 to 5* 8:59

Track 4 – II. *Nocturne, Variations 6 to 10* 9:01

Track 5 – III. *Variations 11 to 15* 6:27

Lowell Liebermann

Track 6 – *Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44* 5:16

Lowell Liebermann

Track 7 – *Trio No. 2 Op. 87 for Flute, Cello and Piano* 21:24

CD 2

Recital 2

Natalie Zwar, flute

Leigh Harrold, piano

David Sharp, cello

Elder Hall, University of Adelaide, 16 June 2009

Lowell Liebermann – *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra* (piano reduction)

Track 1 – I. *Moderato* 11:32

Track 2 – II. *Molto Adagio* 7:52

Track 3 – III. *Presto* 4:53

Lowell Liebermann – *Trio No. 1 Op. 83 for Flute, Cello and Piano*

Track 4 – I. *Allegro* 6:05

Track 5 – II. *Moderato* 4:55

Track 6 – III. *Largo* 7:24

Track 7 – IV. *Presto* 2:29

Lowell Liebermann – *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23*

Track 8 – I. *Lento con rubato* 9:31

Track 9 – II. *Presto energico* 3:20

CD 3

Interview and Lesson with Lowell Liebermann

29 December 2007, New Jersey, United States of America

Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23

Track 1 – Interview: Metronome markings	1:15
Track 2 – Lesson: I. <i>Lento con rubato</i> – bars 1-46	4:35
Track 3 – Lesson: I. <i>Lento con rubato</i> – bars 48-69	2:18
Track 4 – Lesson: I. <i>Lento con rubato</i> – bars 70-79	0:49
Track 5 – Lesson: I. <i>Lento con rubato</i> – Pedal markings	1:02
Track 6 – Lesson: I. <i>Lento con rubato</i> – bars 80-102	2:15
Track 7 – Lesson: II. <i>Presto energico</i> – bars 95-175	1:38
Track 8 – Lesson: II. <i>Presto energico</i> – bars 169-172, bars 27-60	1:17

Soliloquy for Solo Flute Op. 44

Track 9 – Performance of <i>Soliloquy</i>	4:55
Track 10 – Phrasing	0:42
Track 11 – Rhythm	0:35
Track 12 – Dynamics	0:47

Interview and Lesson with Robert Beaser

4 January 2008, New York, United States of America

Variations for Flute and Piano

Track 13 – Interview: Variation Form	1:23
Track 14 – Interview: Compositional Style	0:53
Track 15 – Interview: Writing for the Flute	1:04
Track 16 – Interview: Previous Works and Structure	1:54
Track 17 – Interview: Difficulties of Interpretation	1:34
Track 18 – Lesson: Theme	5:54
Track 19 – Lesson: Variation 1	3:55
Track 20 – Lesson: Variation 2	2:44
Track 21 – Lesson: Variation 3	3:28

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