

**VIOLIN TEACHING IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM**

*In Search of the Lost Instructions of Great Masters — an  
Examination of Similarities and Differences Between Schools of  
Playing and How These Have Evolved*

**OR**

*Remembering the Future of Violin Performance*

**Gwendolyn Masin**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy, August 2012. School of  
Music**

42145

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ABSTRACT  
**Violin Teaching in the New Millennium**

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**Remembering the Future of Violin Performance**

*by*

**Gwendolyn Masin**

**Doctor in Philosophy, Music**

**Trinity College, Dublin, August 2012**

This thesis addresses a number of issues that have developed in the concepts and practices of violin pedagogy and performance since World War II. In particular it identifies the ways in which cultural transnationality has diminished the distinctiveness of various historic schools of violin playing and pedagogy, and has led to practices and concepts within teaching that threaten a historically and artistically informed view of what it means to learn the instrument. It compares current practice with those that prevailed between the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the decades immediately after World War II, and identifies a lack of published treatises by contemporary pedagogues. A discussion of the genealogy of teaching between distinguished pedagogues of today and those of the 18<sup>th</sup> century identifies important issues of technique and of artistic heritage that are endangered, plus concepts that are maintained by the best teachers and must be preserved. A vast amount of data regarding this genealogy has been gathered so as to provide a far-reaching family tree that is accompanied by an infogram. The second part of the thesis consists of an extended discussion of the various approaches taken by the author's teachers (including Shmuel Ashkenasi, Herman Krebbers, Igor Ozim, Ana Chumachenco and Zakhar Bron) to specific technical and artistic challenges. It concludes that one of the most potentially valuable counterweights to these tendencies would be the establishment of an Internet database that would be available to students and pedagogues alike. Both the methodology and the content of this thesis would be a valid starting point for such a database.

## Summary

This thesis is primarily concerned with addressing issues that have arisen in violin pedagogy over the last sixty years or so. In particular, it addresses some challenges to the artistic and technical heritage of violin pedagogy and playing — challenges that threaten the ability of young players to develop as well-informed musicians whose technical and artistic decisions are rooted in the accumulated wisdom of centuries of violin playing. Although a number of these issues have been discussed in isolation by other authors, this is probably the first attempt to present them in a broad historical and cultural context, and to make specific recommendations about how their consequences might be ameliorated.

The thesis is in two parts. Part 1 identifies transnationality as a primary cause of the dislocation between modern pedagogy and the artistic heritage on which such pedagogy has, until recently at least, rested. It examines some of the consequences of transnationality for the practice of violin pedagogy, and compares contemporary practice with that which prevailed prior to World War II. It finds that two particular developments are of concern. The first is the lack of comprehensive written treatises by distinguished pedagogues of the last fifty years or so. The second is the competitive pressure on teachers and students alike, which has led to serious difficulties in giving professional students the amount of individual attention that they need, and has also led, especially at preliminary levels, to a striking increase in the amount of group-teaching, as distinct from individual lessons.

Part 1 compares this situation with that which prevailed from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the years immediately after World War II. It considers the lives and ideals of many of the greatest violin pedagogues of that two-hundred-year period, and places these teachers in the context of specific schools of playing and pedagogy that arose in that time. It also considers the extent to which the distinctiveness of such schools has diminished over time, and discusses the largely undesirable consequences of young players becoming uninformed by being unaware of the richness that this diversity of schools offers when making interpretative, artistic or technical choices. This part of the thesis is also deeply concerned with the genealogy of teaching, with how ideas developed by one teacher might be adapted by another,

and how some concepts of good playing have endured in the two-hundred-years since the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Part 2 is an account of the various technical approaches that the author has encountered in lessons with a number of the great pedagogues of the last twenty years or so. It celebrates the differences of opinion on specific topics, emphasises the similarities in approach and thinking to various elements of playing, and discusses controversial or unorthodox methods concerning an array of technical challenges or techniques.

Part 2 does not claim to offer a systematic or comprehensive account of technical strategies. However, it does demonstrate the central importance of studying with foremost pedagogues who have thought deeply about their craft, about art, and life in general. Part 2 is also the place where specific opinions on some of these technical topics are offered.

The entire project is conceived as a starting point for what might well be a very much larger topic — namely, an international database, edited by professionals, that offers string instrumentalists, and violinists in particular, a new and all-encompassing platform for observation of the development of the violin as an instrument, and an informed forum for players. It could start at the invention of the instrument and trace a thorough line through history with particular emphasis on teaching since the 1960's up to today. Discussion forums could offer the basis of new articles within the database and renowned teachers themselves might be enticed to offer ideas when asked direct questions by the international community as opposed to facing the arduous and lonely task of writing a treatise.

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David Oistrakh: "Look after each note, they have such a short life". (Comment made in  
person by Oistrakh to Ronald Masin)

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## **Acknowledgements**

My parents, Ronald Masin and Maria Kelemen for their endless support of my undertakings and for stoking the fires of my curious mind; the teachers with whom I had the opportunity to study, whose advice has been priceless and whose faith in me is precious; my research supervisor Dr Martin Adams for his enthusiasm and furtherance of this thesis; Miklós Váli for his assistance with the Family Tree Infogram in the Appendix; and all the musicians discussed in this thesis, alive or sorely missed. Their legacy shines bright and breathes life into the music of those who pay homage to them.

# Part 1

## Remembering ...

### Historical Background

## Introduction

### *1.1 Aims of this Thesis*

This thesis has three main aims. Firstly, it examines how violin teaching in the past correlates to teaching in the present. In order to do that, it traces a line back from current pedagogues to their forefathers and it shows that, although there is disagreement in opinions amongst teachers today, oftentimes views are shared. More importantly, this thesis aims to divulge some of the approaches that are taken by contemporary pedagogues to matters of technique and performance practice.

Secondly, it aims to show how modern methods of communication and travel have affected violin teaching over the last 25–30 years. In particular, it will demonstrate that the distinct schools of violin teaching associated with the forefathers of current pedagogues have become less distinct. And it will show that this trend towards fast communication and travel raises serious artistic challenges to the encouragement of an individual approach to interpretation and the development of sound teaching methodologies.

The latter ties in with the third main aim that the author hopes to add voice to: considering that the art of teaching an instrument is primarily passed down by one-to-one individual lessons, and that there is a lack of published teaching-material by the foremost teachers of our times, it would be desirable to establish an international database. This database could be virtual, it should be ever-expanding, offering teachers themselves a source as to where to safe-keep their ideas, and students a

platform where they can divulge knowledge learned and discuss this in appropriate forums. The database would benefit from being monitored by a librarian or editor, therefore leading to an encyclopedia-like treasure-trove of contemporary teaching practice. Because this thesis includes detailed observations on schools of playing going back into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and observations about the teaching practices of contemporary teachers whose roots can be traced back to those schools, the thesis could be used as the starting-point for such a database. Ultimately, the database will provide interested readers access to tricks of the trade, to a variety of means whereby violinists have solved technical challenges, and to the relationships between those challenges and artistic results.

The thesis is therefore distinct from the growing field of performance studies in music epitomised by scholars and scholar-performers such as John Rink, Nicholas Cooke, Simon McVeigh and Eric Clarke, and by research centres and networks such as the AHRC Research Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (based in England, mainly at Cambridge). Such studies tend to be inherently interdisciplinary. For example, they include elucidating how musical performance operates as a component of social structures and practices specific to certain times and places, the development of performance practice through close empirical study of historical recordings and/or musical scores, the psychological study of performance from the perspectives of performers and audiences, with relationships between aesthetic concepts and performance practice, and with understanding the roles of musical performance within broader concepts of human creativity. By contrast, this thesis is concerned with defining and critiquing technical and pedagogical principles and practices specific to the violin (though some of these are also transferrable to other string instruments). However, the database that will emerge from this thesis may well prove helpful to future work in the area of performance studies.

This thesis is likely to be read by string players of an advanced level of ability and is worded accordingly. That is to say, it presupposes both a certain familiarity with the terminology used in the thesis and that references to specific points of technique are understood prior to reading.

Unless otherwise mentioned, observations on technique and the interpretation of specific pieces are based on lessons I have taken with the individual teachers. Those lessons were documented by hand-written notes, and recorded on video or audio tape, and a detailed analysis of those tapes was undertaken. Many of the observations by individual teachers voiced here could, in themselves, form the basis for further writing, such as opinions concerning bowing technique, vibrato, or that mainstay of many a musician: scales.

## **1.2 Conceptual Background and Artistic Motivation**

A number of writers have explored the history of violin playing. The most important publication relating to the early history of violin technique is David Boyden's *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761*. Although some details of this book's research findings have been superseded, it says much about its value that it is still in print, more than 45 years after its initial publication.<sup>1</sup> Boyden deals with the period immediately before that with which this thesis is concerned. On the other hand, the period from the last half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present, has not been subject to the same kind of scholarly overview that the Baroque period has.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the subject is too vast for such singular treatment? For example, it might be significant that one of the few studies to have explored this period in detail has very specific boundaries. I refer to Philippe Borer's study of Paganini<sup>3</sup>, his techniques, and their relationship to violin playing in the 150 or so years since that master's death.<sup>4</sup>

The present thesis aims to build on the work of Borer and others by demonstrating some of the ways in which concepts and techniques from that post-Baroque era have been transmitted and adapted into the present day, especially through the relationships between, on one hand, present-day practice and practitioners, and on

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<sup>1</sup> David Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761: and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> The absence of a detailed and scholarly overview of violin playing, teaching and technique since c. 1800, equivalent to Boyden's work on the early violin and techniques, is also suggested by the contrasted styles of the *New Grove* article on the violin. The overview from 1829 (section 5 of the article) is markedly less detailed in its discussion of technique than the earlier sections.

<sup>3</sup> Philippe Borer, *The Twenty-Four Caprices of Niccolò Paganini, their significance for the history of violin playing and the music of the Romantic era* (Zurich: Michel Scherrer Verlag, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Philippe Borer, *La Pagina e l'Archetto Bibliografia violinistica storico-tecnica e studi effettuati su Niccolò Paganini* (Genoa, 2003).

the other hand, such evidence we have of violin playing in the later years of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

For much of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Italian School of violin playing dominated European concepts of modernity and virtuosity. This was a natural result of a long-standing international fashion for all things Italian, including music and musicians — a natural consequence of Italy's leading cultural position as the birthplace of the European Renaissance, and the explosion of art of all kinds that took place there from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. European composers travelled to Italy to study with Italian masters. For example, Hans Leo Hassler (1564–1612) was among the first in a long line of German musicians who studied in Italy, in his case in Venice, where he encountered, among others, Giovanni Gabrieli (1554–1612), and from whom he learned much about the styles and techniques of polychoral composition for which Venice was famous. Germans who followed him south of the Alps included Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672), Johann Froberger (1616–1667) and Johann Kaspar Kerll (1627–1693). Moreover, many Italian composers and players were employed in the courts of northern Europe; and often these émigré musicians included violinists.

However, the prominence of the Italian style brought about the eclipse of many distinctive local traditions of playing and composition. From the late 16<sup>th</sup> century most countries in Europe saw a significant growth in the popularity of the violin — and other members of the violin family, as an instrument at court, church and home. Most regional violin styles reflected long-standing creative traditions, often transferred to the violin from other instruments. For example, the 1659 publication *The Division Viol* by the English composer, theorist and player Christopher Simpson (c. 1602–1669), was a high-point in a tradition of playing and composition that, in England, stretched back well over 100 years. When the publisher John Playford (1623–1686/7) produced a collection of pieces (in this case by various composers) called *The Division Violin*, in 1685, he was appealing simultaneously to the long-standing English interest in the playing of divisions on a solo instrument, and to the rising interest in the violin.



In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and especially after the Restoration in 1660, a number of continental violinists had settled in London, and one of the most widely admired of these was the Italian Nicola Matteis (?–c. 1713). By the time Playford produced his book, Matteis had already capitalised on the rising English fashion for Italian music by publishing *Arie diverse per il violino* in 1676. The Italian title may be significant as an appeal to fashion; though follow-up volumes were given English titles.

The north-European fashion for Italian music and musicians reached a high point in the near-universal admiration accorded to the playing and compositions of Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713). Among the many people who travelled to hear him and his famous orchestra play in Rome was the French-born German composer and theorist Georg Muffat (1653–1704), who got to know Corelli personally in the early 1680s. The encounter encouraged Muffat to produce works that directly imitated the style of the much-admired Italian; and he was only one of a host of north-European imitators.

This interest in Italian music was also reflected in the fact that many Italian musicians worked in north-European courts. So, when the German-born, but (significantly) Italian-trained Handel (1685–1759), and the Italian violinist and composer Geminiani (1687–1762) settled in London in the second decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they were reflecting a trend that was already well-established; though in their cases their employment was focused less around court than around music-making in public concerts. In that respect they were helping to establish a pattern that was to be the dominant one in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Italian School of violin playing was dominant in most countries of Europe by the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; and this was maintained into the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most scholars identify Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755–1824) as the pivotal figure in defining and disseminating the techniques that lie at the heart of most European schools of violin playing in the early part of that century. For example, if one reads a description of his ideals, that appeared in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* of 3 July 1811, it seems that it could well apply to most of those great violin virtuosos of whom we have direct evidence in the form of recordings, or secondary evidence in the form of written descriptions, either of their playing or in the virtuosos' written treatises:

A large, strong, full tone is the first; the combination of this with a powerful, penetrating, singing legato is the second; as the third, variety, charm, shadow and light must be brought into play through the greatest diversity of bowing.<sup>5</sup>

Many scholars identify Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840) as the culminating manifestation of this old Italian tradition. His mastery of the instrument, his unparalleled influence within the cult of the virtuoso, plus the fact that his life as well as his performances lived up to the Romantic ideal of artistic individuality, ensured that many aspects of his playing techniques have lain at the heart of violin playing ever since.

If there was one country in which Italian tastes and methods of playing had serious and enduring native competition, it was France. In the 1660s and '70s, Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687) had trained the French court orchestra to such a level that it was widely regarded as the most disciplined and virtuosic string group in Europe. Though it should be noted that Lully was of Italian origin. German and Austrian orchestras gradually eclipsed the Paris orchestra's reputation during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, notably the famous group trained at the court of Mannheim by Johann Stamitz (1717–1757). However, the distinctive style of French orchestras was still recognised in the late decades of that century: it is no coincidence that W.A. Mozart's "Paris" Symphony K297, opens with a striking use of "*le premier coup d'archet*" — a rising, rapid, unison scale which, if it is to achieve its maximum effect, requires very tight ensemble. Local lore held that the Paris orchestra's ability in this and other devices was rooted in a continuation of the discipline that stretched back to Lully; though visiting musicians, including Mozart, often reported that the device was not as distinctive as Parisians claimed.<sup>6</sup>

However, the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century also saw a development in Paris that might well go some way towards explaining why, in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, French-style playing and virtuosos assumed an increasing international reputation and gradually assumed a dominance that had formerly belonged to the

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<sup>5</sup> As in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, article "Viotti".

<sup>6</sup> See *New Grove* article "Coup d'archet".

Italians. In that period Paris became one of the main European centres for public concerts, which often included concertos, symphonies and other orchestral works. As in London, Vienna and Prague, such concerts rose to a new kind of prominence in musical life; and so did the virtuoso soloists — be they pianists, violinists or whatever, who were often primary attractions for the paying audience. Moreover, it was French instruments and their makers that set the pattern for what was to become an almost universal practice — rebuilding old instruments to achieve greater projection and other changes of tone, ultimately resulting in today's modern violin.

So, alongside the international fame of touring Italian violinists such as Viotti and Paganini, there arose a number of French players who, in the longer term, were to be at least as influential as the Italians. For example, and like Geminiani and Viotti before him, Pierre Baillot (1771–1842) became not only a widely admired player; he also followed in the footsteps of these Italians by writing treatises that were designed not for the amateur players who had been the main target for such treatises in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, but for professionals.

The dominance and international fame of figures such as Viotti, Paganini and Baillot is one of the main reasons why, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, national Schools became somewhat less distinct than they had been. For example, if one reads accounts of violin playing in England and Italy in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, it becomes clear that the differences between them are far greater than was to be the case between, for example, the German Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) and the French Lucien Capet (1873–1928). Also, many virtuosos of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century lived and worked outside their native land and therefore spread to other nations schools of playing that reflected the virtuoso's own artistic origins. For example, Leopold Auer (1845–1930) was born in Hungary, studied violin in Budapest, Vienna and Hanover, and for 50 years until the Russian Revolution in 1917, taught in the St Petersburg Conservatory, where the methods of this central European had a deep influence on what has come to be called the Russian School of violin playing. One of the main reasons for this increasing international fluidity was the greater ease of travel that was facilitated by the growth of railway networks throughout Europe. In all respects, that diminishing in the distinctiveness of national Schools, and the increasing fluidity of stylistic

boundaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is a smaller-scale version of what has happened worldwide since World War II.

Most of the present-day players with which this thesis is concerned can trace their ancestry back to one or more of these musicians active in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and further back to Viotti. However, that ancestry is more than mere genealogy, for in many cases specific aspects of their playing techniques and teaching methods can be traced back to one or more of these important figures.

Violin players, no less than other performers, have tended to be aware of their ancestry in great performers and teachers; and that has often gone hand-in-hand with an awareness of the technical and artistic heritage of their ancestors. However, a number of changes in recent times have put that awareness under threat. One might feel a certain satisfaction in knowing that, for example, Joseph Joachim was your great-great-great grand teacher. But unless one is aware of the broader context, of the specific technical, artistic and aesthetic ideals that made Joachim a great player, and one can aim for equally high ideals (even if they differ aesthetically and technically from Joachim's — as they inevitably will), one's confidence is mere boasting. It is partly to address this decline in awareness of artistic heritage and of the high artistic ideals that such awareness brings, that this thesis is concerned with the ancestry of present-day players.<sup>7</sup>

This decline of awareness can be seen as both a cause and effect in a dilution of artistic heritage; and this thesis will argue that one of the main reasons for this dilution, is the growth of international communication and travel. Therefore this thesis is also seeking to address some of the challenges raised by this growth, both for violinists in their day-to-day work as players and for violin pedagogy. In this

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<sup>7</sup> The sound and playing techniques of earlier generations are unrecoverable, even if such playing is preserved in recordings. One of the main reasons for this is that aesthetic and artistic ideals and priorities change at least as much as technique does. One of the most eloquent and authoritative arguments in support of that point has been made by Robert Philip, in an article published when the CD collection of Elgar's complete electrical recordings first appeared. As Philip says, the fact that the orchestral players' techniques in the 1920s and '30s are designed to serve the aesthetic and artistic priorities of their time leads him to conclude that earlier styles of playing are largely unrecoverable, even if one tried to imitate a recording. These conclusions are, he says, "both uncomfortable and inescapable", especially in the inferences they have for many practitioners in the historical performance movement. "The Recordings of Edward Elgar (1857–1934): Authenticity and Performance Practice", *Early Music* 12 (1984), p. 481–489.

respect at least, the subject of the thesis and its approach are entirely original, for although a number of articles and books have considered the impact of modern communication on music, these have tended to concentrate on two main areas — cultural studies and the increased mobility of musicians at conservatoire level and above.

Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and especially since World War II, the musical language of the West (both popular and classical) has been increasingly used and appreciated in cultures far beyond the geographical borders of those places in which western music has its main roots. But the fact does not explain what is happening or how. For the purposes of a critical and historical discourse on this subject, “transnationality” is perhaps the most appropriate term for defining these developments.

### Transnationality

The origins of the term lie in observations made by American and English intellectuals such as Randolph Bourne (1886–1918) and Norman Angell (1872–1967). It arose from their somewhat different but essentially compatible analyses that viewed many of the developments in Europe that led to World War I as being rooted in tensions between the increasing economic interdependence of the nation-states and empires of Europe, the contractual requirements inherent in international capitalism, and the cultural and political grand-standing that was an inevitable corollary of what Angell called “mystic patriotism”.<sup>8</sup> For example, Angell wrote in 1921 that “... the remedies of an international kind to which we are now being forced, all confirm... that much of Europe lives by virtue of an international, or more correctly, a transnational economy”; and just five years earlier Bourne had written that “We have transplanted European modernity to our soil, without the spirit that inflames it and turns all its energy into mutual destruction... America is coming to be, not a nationality but a transnationality, a weaving back and forth, with the other lands, of many threads of all sizes and colors.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Norman Angell, *Fruits of Victory* (London: Collins, 1921), p. vii.

<sup>9</sup> Angell, *Fruits of Victory*, p. 63; Randolph Bourne, “Trans-National America”, *Atlantic Monthly* 118 (July 1916), p. 86–97. (<http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/rbannis1/AIH19th/Bourne.html> — accessed 03/09/11).

Although there are significant differences between the two authors' positions, the meanings they attach to transnationality are sufficiently congruent for the term to be workable in the context of this study, because it implies neither a policy that seeks to break down international boundaries nor deliberate cooperation between distinct nations. For example, transnationality does not suggest the cooperation of sectional interests that is implied in the term internationality. Rather, transnationality arises out of a mutual interest in something that inherently transcends borders; and it arises through all the parties involved being aware of that something's inherent value. For example, this meaning can be seen in the name and the policies of one of the most famous organisations that promotes itself as transnational, Médecins sans Frontières.

One of the most thoughtful pieces of work to have explored transnationality in music (though he hardly ever uses the term) is Roy Shuker's 1994 book *Understanding Popular Music*.<sup>10</sup> Now in its second edition (2001), reprinted many times, and since 2005 available via digital printing, this is one of the earliest specimens of cultural studies to consider as a whole both how technological developments such as the internet and digital media have affected the practice and dissemination of popular music, and how ease of communication and travel have affected styles of popular music internationally. Although Shuker's primary concern is with "how meaning is produced in popular music" and with meanings as "particular sets of cultural understandings",<sup>11</sup> he addresses a number of issues that are relevant to this study, even though the nature of this study, and the kinds of music with which it is concerned, presuppose a level of shared international understanding that is not necessarily part of the cultures of popular music. In particular, his fourth chapter, "We are the World: State music policy, cultural imperialism and globalisation", demonstrates that genres, practices and understandings that formerly were associated with geographically and culturally distinct places, have become equally valid for widely differing cultures, even though meaning and practice continue to differ.

Shuker makes trenchant, and often humorous observations about the ways in which state policy throughout the world has, as a manifestation of cultural prestige, always

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<sup>10</sup> Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Shuker, *Understanding* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), p. x.

tended to favour the promotion of classical music over popular music.<sup>12</sup> However, there are analogies between the aims of this study and his comments about the ways in which western (mainly American) popular idioms have become an international currency. He observes that, although many commentators within cultural studies have seen this as a form of post-colonial cultural imperialism,<sup>13</sup> local cultures have proved remarkably resilient at appropriating such idioms for their own purposes.

This tension between the homogenising consequences of the spread of western idioms and the continued vigour of local culture can be seen in classical music, and in violin playing and pedagogy in particular. Especially in oriental cultures with long histories of indigenous “high-art” music such as Japan and, above all, China, those tensions are particularly acute and have received considerable attention from academic authors working in music. This is not the place to review those specific tensions; though it is worth noting that music education in Hong Kong, with its long history of English colonisation (1842–1997) and subsequent status (since 1997) as an internationally accessible Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China, has received more attention than many other places.<sup>14</sup> Although most of these studies are primarily concerned with repertoire (e.g. whether to teach western music or native classical music) and with the attitudes of teachers, pupils and parents to the perceived value of these repertoires, they frequently touch on issues of teaching methodology and performance in ways that relate to the growth of musical transnationality. For these reasons and more, my initial observations about the effects of transnationality on classical music pedagogy, and on violin pedagogy in particular, concentrate on the relationship between oriental and western cultures. As we shall see in the longer term, the results of the tensions between cultural imitation and cultural assimilation in oriental countries are an intense version of changes that have taken place in violin pedagogy in western cultures.

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<sup>12</sup> Shuker, *Understanding* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), see especially p. 67–69.

<sup>13</sup> Shuker, *Understanding* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), p. 69 ff.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Wing-Wah Law and Wai-Chung Ho, “Values Education in Hong Kong School Music Education: A Sociological Critique”, *British Journal of Educational Studies* 52 (2004), p. 65–82; Wai-Chung Ho and Wing-Wah Law, “Challenges to globalisation, localisation, and sinophilia in music education: A comparative study of Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Taipei”, *British Journal of Music Education*, 23 (2006), p. 217–237.

The tension between the local and the international is embodied in the status that many oriental cultures have given to western classical music, especially since World War II. One of the most striking phenomena of the last 60 years has been the rise in ability and status of western-classical players from countries with distinguished histories of indigenous art music such as Korea, Japan and China, and the concomitant rise of high-quality orchestras in those countries. This might be seen as a receptive form of internationalism; but it has to be acknowledged that this receptiveness has been by no means passive. For example, one of the most striking aspects of published literature — and of anecdotal evidence from westerners with extensive experience of working with oriental musicians, is the extent to which these cultures have appropriated western classical music in ways that can differ strikingly from the practices of those of western cultures.

In order to explore relationships between oriental and western approaches to instrumental pedagogy, it is helpful to start with Bennett Reimer's observations on music education in China. These were published in 1989; and although much has changed in the following 30 years or so, Reimer's comments remain a valid starting point for a consideration of those relationships.

One of Reimer's primary concerns was with "A few issues raised by China's practices and their implications for music education in the United States".<sup>15</sup> He finds much to praise about the work of Chinese teachers, but notes that "some culturally supported behaviour patterns in China tend to enhance certain aspects of group learning, whether in music or in any other subject or school activity" and that "China's culture promotes conformity and individuality in different proportions than our own [American] culture, with the balance more towards homogeneity than we are used to."<sup>16</sup> He notes that schools at primary and secondary level tend to lack music specialists, and that, for various reasons, a startlingly large proportion of music students at secondary, and even at tertiary level, are unable to read staff notation; yet against that lies a very high level of achievement in solfège and, often, a

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<sup>15</sup> Bennett Reimer, "Music Education in China: An Overview and Some Issues", *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 23 (1989), p. 65–83.

<sup>16</sup> Reimer, "Music Education in China", p. 66.



striking level of ability in instrumental technique.<sup>17</sup> On a more general note about music education and the training of teachers, Reimer observes that at that time (the late 1980s) there was little evidence of firm methodological training for music teachers; and in particular that there was a tendency for the teaching of music to concentrate on skills and on performance learned via imitation more than by the insights that arise from broad musicianship. However, his comparison with the United States is not nearly as favourable to the latter as one might expect, for he notes that, while provision of trained, specialist music teachers at primary and secondary levels is wider than it is in China, it is still deficient.

According to Reimer (and others, as we shall see), one the most deep-seated, culturally based contrasts between music teaching in the West and in oriental countries is the tendency for the latter to view music-making as an outcome of physical skills, rather than as the result of a broadly based concept of music that values aesthetic insights and individual imagination as components in the spectrum of abilities contributing to strong music-making. In particular, Reimer links this skill-based concept of music-making to the almost complete absence of a philosophical base for music education in China.

Philosophy attempts to discover that which is (a) unique and (b) essential about a subject. What is it about music and the arts that makes them unlike anything else in which humans can engage? What is it about music and the arts that it is essential for all humans to share? . . . What is not explained is how and why the arts "humanize." The excellent argument is offered that the arts enhance imagination, giving free rein to human originality and creativity. The task of philosophy in this matter, as in all other such claims, is to explain precisely how and why the arts have something to do with imagination.<sup>18</sup>

So, although Reimer identifies a specifically Chinese emphasis on music-making as an outcome of skills that are essentially physical and based more on imitation than on breadth of artistic thought and practice, he also recognises that the reductive

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<sup>17</sup> Reimer, "Music Education in China", p. 68 and 70.

<sup>18</sup> Reimer, "Music Education in China", p. 81.

problems this raises are not confined to China. They are worldwide issues that, largely because of China's historical and cultural position, are especially evident there; though he also notes that a firm philosophical base is far from prevalent in the United States. Indeed, Reimer says that his

experience in China forced me to view music education in the United States from a different perspective. I have become more proud of its achievements and more dismayed with its shortcomings.<sup>19</sup>

One of the considerable strengths of Reimer's work is the fact that he does not approach the subject from a position of superiority. The way he turns the light he has shone on China back on to his home country, and finds that lacking too, is a practice more rare than it should be; and it gives his observations a moral weight that deflects possible accusations of cultural superiority.

In that light, and in the light of innumerable anecdotal statements from distinguished western teachers, one of the main challenges in the international spread of western classical music is that the philosophical basis for sound pedagogy, often poor enough in the commodity-driven view of education that tends to prevail in the West, can be even more pronounced in cultures that have an entirely different political and philosophical history. Inevitably, the most disciplined approaches to music pedagogy tend to assimilate the practice of western classical music into a largely native cultural and philosophical framework. It is, perhaps, also inevitable that the most widespread and influential example of such assimilation in string pedagogy should come from Japan — the first oriental country to have a deep impact on western economic and industrial power and on western manufacturing.

In 20<sup>th</sup>-century classical music, the Suzuki method is one of the most striking instances of cross-cultural assimilation and, in the method's history in the West, a prime example of transnationality. It was developed by Dr Shin'ichi Suzuki (1898–1998), whose father had been a famous maker of traditional Japanese string instruments, and who, in line with the Meiji dynasty's policy of westernisation from

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<sup>19</sup> Reimer, "Music Education in China", p. 83.

the 1870s onwards, became an increasingly successful maker of violins, using mechanised methods of manufacture. Shin'ichi studied violin with two pupils of Joachim, notably with Karl Klingler in Berlin from 1921 to 1928 (where he met his wife and future collaborator, Waltraud). On his return to Japan he founded performance groups, including the Tokyo String Orchestra, and developed the thinking and practices on music and music teaching that are now known as the Suzuki method — though it should be noted that he never described it as a method.

Although Suzuki's pedagogical methods have acquired international currency, they are deeply rooted in a philosophy of life which manifests aspects of oriental philosophy. Like many great educators, Suzuki believed in the value of music and music-making both as a contributor to complete human experience and to the formation of character; moreover, he believed that his methods were applicable to any kind of skill. The writings and methodology, on which he started working in the 1930s, are deeply rooted in the relationship between a child and the adults by whom the child is surrounded in its early years, especially its parents. Although Suzuki himself left no comprehensive written account of his pedagogical methods for music teaching, the substance of his philosophy can be gleaned from his book *Nurtured by Love: The Classic Approach to Talent Education*<sup>20</sup>, as much a personal memoir as a statement of pedagogical methods.

Suzuki's methods spread worldwide with remarkable rapidity, partly because they were so successful at producing large numbers of string players who had, at a young age, serious technical facility. By the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was widely used in Europe; and in the United States had become one of the most widespread methods of string pedagogy.

This is not the place to embark on a critique of the Suzuki method. However, it is appropriate to note that criticisms of its results by string players who have been brought up in a traditional western framework of string pedagogy tend to focus on points similar to those noted by Reimer as being culturally embedded in Chinese pedagogy. Such criticisms are especially inclined to observe that, because of the

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<sup>20</sup> Shin'ichi Suzuki and Waltraud Suzuki (translator), *Nurtured by Love: The Classic Approach to Talent Education* (New York: Exposition Press, 1969).

initial emphasis on rote learning, on playing in a group, and on memorisation, a high proportion of players taught using the Suzuki method do not become good readers, and that, because of the emphasis on group-learning and using recordings as models, players tend to learn by imitation and are not inherently equipped to develop the individual insight and creative thought that is prized in western concepts of music. As two distinguished educators, Larry Scrip and Rena F. Subotnik have observed,

... the characterization of his [Suzuki's] teaching as "talent development" allows him to claim that prior musical talent has relatively little to do with the success of his violin method. Despite the worldwide acclaim for unprecedented success in training young musicians to memorize violin repertoire at an early age, Suzuki's approach is thought to be too narrowly focused on instrumental skills and does not lend itself well to general musical abilities, including the ability to read, compose, or analyze music.<sup>21</sup>

On the other side of the argument, it is important to note that a number of commentators have attributed the dominance of group-teaching to the method's transplantation to the West.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, advocates argue strenuously that such deficiencies are not inherent to the Suzuki method; rather, they arise from poor teaching, which is to be found in teaching worldwide, regardless of methodology. Many such arguments point out that, as with all pedagogical methods, there is a danger of the method being treated as if it is a body of fixed procedures, an end in itself; and if that happens, regardless of the method, the pupil's understanding and experience of music suffers. Such arguments are frequent on internet bulletin boards and discussion groups.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in 1985, one of the most widely admired Suzuki practitioners and researchers in music education in the USA, John Kendall, warned

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<sup>21</sup> Larry Scrip and Rena F. Subotnik, "Directions for Innovation in Music Education: Integrating Concepts of Musical Giftedness into General Educational Practice and Enhancing Innovation on the Part of Musically Gifted Students", in Larisa V. Shavinina (ed.), *The International Handbook on Innovation* (Oxford: Elsevier Science, 2003), p. 485–512, p. 485.

<sup>22</sup> For a balanced, historically informed overview of the Suzuki method and its migration to the west, see Margaret Mehl, "Cultural Translation in Two Directions: The Suzuki Method in Japan and Germany", *Research and Issues in Music Education*, 7/1 (September 2009).

<http://www.stthomas.edu/rimeonline/vol7/mehl.htm>, accessed 02/09/11.

<sup>23</sup> See for example, <http://www.violinist.com/discussion/response.cfm?ID=8225>, accessed 05/09/11.

that “the dangers of ‘cultism’ and narrow, dogmatic interpretations of the pedagogical approach have not disappeared.”<sup>24</sup>

The issues surrounding the Suzuki method are important for this thesis in four main respects. Firstly, in terms of numerical success and geographical spread, it is perhaps the most strikingly successful example of transnationality in instrumental pedagogy. Secondly, although there is no shortage of evidence, albeit mainly anecdotal, to validate the criticisms that are directed at the method, the best academic evidence suggests that many of those problems arise when teachers adopt a fixed approach that ignores the breadth of thought and practice that Suzuki himself fostered, and that the best practitioners of this method have understood and brought into their own teaching. Thirdly, as the many discussions on the internet show, the Suzuki method has a vast network of support groups, teaching literature and materials; and while this is undoubtedly a strength in principle, it can also encourage a lack of individuality in thought and a tendency to seek over-simplistic solutions to the challenges of good music teaching — a widespread problem that will be discussed at greater length later in Part I of this thesis.

The fourth aspect, and arguably the most important one, is that the Suzuki method implicitly attacks one of the most deep-seated concepts in western music — that the best music and music-making depends on an individual’s interpretation of artistic heritage and even on the much-disputed idea of genius. Suzuki’s entire philosophy is directed away from those concepts and instead towards what he called “talent education”. Like Zoltán Kodály and Carl Orff, he believed both that inherent musicality is far more widespread than is usually recognised, and that, given the right education, most children can be taught to become proficient performers. However, his concepts take this further than any of his European counterparts. As Margaret Mehl has observed,

If we should single out one element as having particular appeal for the Japanese and which challenged Western assumptions more than anything else, it would be the emphasis on effort over inborn talent. The prevailing

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<sup>24</sup> John Kendall, *The Suzuki Violin Method in American Music Education*, Revised edn. (Los Angeles: Alfred Music Publishing, 1985), p. 7.

belief in the early twentieth century was — and to a large extent still is — that talent is something inborn or bestowed by God or, in Paganini’s case, by the Devil... Indeed, one typical feature of training in the traditional arts in Japan is conspicuously absent from the Suzuki Method: the so-called *iemoto* system, where the hereditary master or *iemoto* strives to retain complete control over how the art is transmitted and the disciples, including their teacher, aim to follow the master as closely as possible.<sup>25</sup>

This represents a striking and apparently deliberate evasion of some of the most important aspects of music education as historically practiced in the West. Although great educators such as Kodály and Orff share some of the details of practice taught by Suzuki, including a passionate concern that aural experience should precede and form the basis for experience of notation, nobody has taken that emphasis as far as Suzuki. Even more importantly, his method seeks to side-step one of the most important aspects of historically rooted methods of instrumental pedagogy — the belief that the best models for aspiring players are the most brilliant practitioners, those who, more often than not, are brilliant not only because of their physical skills, but also because those skills are also informed by a broad view of music and of what it means to be a musician. As we shall see, in this respect the Suzuki method has embraced some of the more questionable aspects of modern pedagogic practice — or perhaps it has anticipated them?

A number of the characteristics identified above in Suzuki-based teaching have emerged in pedagogical practice outside the Suzuki method. One of the claims that this thesis will make is that these characteristics are essentially reductive, and that they have arisen because of cultural changes that are associated with internationality. It will further be claimed that these are damaging to the artistic heritage on which western music and music-making is founded.

The rapid spread of the Suzuki method contrasts vividly with the gradually accumulated heritage of traditional methods of violin pedagogy in the West. From

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<sup>25</sup> Mehl, “Cultural Translation in Two Directions”.

the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the growth in popularity of the violin, both as an instrument for professional players and for amateurs, led to the publication of a large number of pedagogical treatises. Some of these were designed for players of any calibre; others were aimed at the accomplished professional. However, the differences between the treatises is less significant than their sheer number, and the fact that they were almost always written by musicians who were renowned as teachers or players or, more usually, both. For example, although the following list is not exhaustive, it includes many of the most widely disseminated and influential treatises of this kind, and indicates both the number and geographical spread of such treatises. (Dates are those of the first edition and all information is as in the *New Grove*, unless otherwise indicated.)

Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762), *The Art of Playing on the Violin*, (London 1751)

Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770), *Trattato di Musica secondo la Vera Scienza dell'Armonia*, (Padova 1754)

Leopold Mozart (1719–1787), *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*, (Augsburg 1756)

Francesco Galeazzi (1758–1819), *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica*, (2 Vols, Rome 1791 and 1796 — the violin treatise is in the second volume)

Bartolomeo Campagnoli (1751–1827), *Metodo della meccanica progressiva per violino*, (Milan c. 1797)<sup>26</sup>; *Nouvelle méthode de la mécanique progressive du jeu de violon*, (Leipzig c. 1824, English translation 1856)

Pierre Baillot (1771–1842)/Pierre Rode (1774–1830)/Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766–1831), *Méthode de violon*, (Paris 1802/1803)

Carl Guhr (1787–1848), *Über Paganini's Kunst die Violine zu Spielen*, (Mainz 1829)

Jacques-Féréol<sup>27</sup> Mazas (1782–1849), *Méthode de Violon*, (Paris 1829)

Louis Spohr (1784–1859), *Violinschule*, (Vienna 1833)

Pierre Baillot (1771–1842), *L'art du violon: nouvelle méthode*, (Paris 1834)<sup>28</sup>

Charles-Auguste de Bériot (1802–1870), *Méthode de violon*, (Paris 1858)

<sup>26</sup> According to Borer, *La Pagina e l'Archetto*, p. 27.

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Féréol, not Féreol according to Alberto Bachmann, *An Encyclopedia of the Violin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), p. 378.

<sup>28</sup> Publication date is 1835 according to Borer, *La Pagina e l'Archetto* p. 20.

Ferdinand David (1810–1873), *Violinschütle*, (Leipzig 1867)<sup>29</sup>

Otakar Ševčík (1852–1934), *Schule der Violintechnik* op. 1, (Prague 1881),  
*Schule der Bogentechnik* op. 2, (Leipzig 1895), *Violinschule* op. 6,  
 (Leipzig 1904–08)

Carl Courvoisier (1846–1908) *The Technics of Violin Playing on Joachim's Method*, (London 1899)

Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) and Andreas Moser (1859–1925), *Violinschule*,  
 (Berlin 1902–1905)

Lucien Capet (1873–1928), *La Technique Supérieure de l'Archet pour Violon*,  
 (Paris 1916)

Leopold Auer (1845–1930), *Violin Playing As I Teach It*, (New York 1921)

Demetrius Dounis (c. 1886/94–1954), *The Artist's Technique of Violin Playing*, (New York 1921)

Carl Flesch (1873–1944), *Die Kunst des Violinspiels*, (Berlin 1923 and 1928)

Izrail Markovich Yampolsky (1905–1976), *Osnovi skripichnoy applikaturi*  
 [The Principles of Violin Fingering], (Moscow 1933)

Ivan Galamian (1903–1981) (with Elizabeth A.H. Green (1906–1995),  
*Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1962)

Frederick Neumann (1907–1994), *Violin Left Hand Technique: a Survey of Related Literature*, (Urbana, IL 1969)

Paul Rolland (1911–1978), *The Teaching of Action in String Playing*, (1966–71) [A sequence of films and a book.] Available from  
[www.paulrolland.net](http://www.paulrolland.net)

József Szigeti (1892–1973), *Szigeti on the Violin*, (New York 1969)

Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999), *Six Lessons with Yehudi Menuhin*, (London 1971)

Herbert Whone (1925–2011), *The Simplicity of Playing the Violin*, (London 1972) and *The Integrated Violinist*, (London 1976)

Kató Havas (b. 1920), *Stage Fright – Its Causes and Cures with Special reference to Violin Playing*, (London 1973) [Also available online as a sequence of videos via [www.katohavas.com](http://www.katohavas.com)]

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<sup>29</sup> Publication date is 1867 according to Borer, *La Pagina e l'Archetto*, p. 30.



Yuri Isayevich Yankelevich (1909–1973), *Grundsätzliches zuhaltungsfragen beim Violinspiel*, (Leipzig 1979)<sup>30</sup>

Ronald Masin (b. 1937) and Maria Kelemen (b. 1938), (*Violin Technique – The Natural Way*, (Buren 1982)

Ljerko Spiller (1908–2008), *Kinder lernen Geige spielen*, (Zurich 1982)

Robert Gerle (1924–2005), *The Art of Practising the Violin*, (London 1983)

Ruggiero Ricci (b. 1918), *Left-Hand Technique*, (New York 1988)<sup>31</sup>

Max Rostal (1905–1991), *Handbuch zum Geigenspiel*, (Bern 1993)

Simon Fischer, *Basics*, (London 1997)<sup>32</sup>

Zakhar Bron (b. 1947), *Etüdenkunst*, (Berlin 1998)

Alexander Jakovlevich Brussilovsky (b. 1953), *Yuri Yankelevitch et l'École Russe du Violon*, (Fontenay-aux-Roses 1999)<sup>33</sup>

However, since Galamian's *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* appeared in 1962, no large-scale treatise has been published. More recent contributions to the field share a common tendency to concentrate on specific aspects of technique or of general violinistic practice. For example, Simon Fischer's *Basics* is a collection of articles essentially consisting of practical instructions. Similarly, Bron's *Etüdenkunst* is a selection of tips on how to practise and perform a certain number of etudes. In other words, a distinction appears when comparing the latter two works with, for instance, Flesch's *Die Kunst des Violinspiels* and Galamian's *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, which are thorough and systematic expositions of principles underlining technique and interpretation.

As has already been explained, current conditions in violin pedagogy mean that the artistic climate is not amenable to the production of a large-scale treatise. With current conditions I refer to the accelerated pace of living that sees many performing instrumentalists and teachers travelling widely and frequently, and dealing with

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<sup>30</sup> Not a treatise. However, the author adds this contribution to the list as an exception due to Yankelevich's impact on violin playing and teaching. This essay by Yankelevich, a student of Abram Ilich Yampolsky, appeared in a German translation in the book *Violinspiel und Violinpädagogik, Beiträge sowjetischer Autoren zum Instrumentalunterricht*, edited by Kathinka Koch-Rebling (Leipzig: VEB Verlag für Musik, 1979), p. 61–75.

<sup>31</sup> Regrettably, the name of the editor, Lois Sabo Skelton, was not mentioned in the final publication of Ricci's well-known book.

<sup>32</sup> Despite extensive searching, the date of birth of Simon Fischer is unknown to the author.

<sup>33</sup> This title is in two parts. The first part contains two essays written by Yankelevich in a French translation. The second part contains interviews and testimonies of Yankelevich's former students.

administration of a magnitude they were not confronted with before — Email brings with it not only an unwritten expectation of immediate answer, but also due to the ease with which one can “post” a “letter”, a tendency to increase the volume of communication, leaving little to no time to summarise their approach to teaching in written form in a comprehensive manner.

This largely negative consequence of technological growth and ease of travel has been commented on by violinists. For example, Simon Hewitt Jones, a performing instrumentalist and researcher at the Royal Academy of Music in London, has discussed the effects that ease of travel has had on the specific identities in schools of violin playing.<sup>34</sup> On 16 May 2010, he questioned whether it was still possible to identify any one thread of teaching based on, for example, the American School of playing, or the German School. He continues that his theorising is based on the idea that advanced modes of travel and use thereof internationally have affected the so-called purity of a style, and that the principles upon which any one school is built are inevitably altered by such easy discourse between players of differing schools. This raises yet again the question of whether such developments in the modern use of technology, including the ever-increasing progress in digital media, are diluting the richness of experience that geographically distinct heritages of pedagogy and performance have achieved over the last few hundreds of years. This question becomes all the more potent when one considers that, as explained above, outstanding musicians either do not, or are unable to, take it upon themselves to document and monitor changes and progressions of development.

The crucial point here might well be that these technological developments, allied to ease of travel, are working against one of the most fundamental aspects of western music’s historically rooted modes of dissemination. Although there is no shortage of treatises on violin playing (and most other instruments) from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the learning of an instrument was essentially passed down from one generation to the next orally, by personal contact with the teacher and with one’s peers and superiors. Such contact, in a world in which travel was so much harder than it has become since the advent of cheap air travel since the 1970s, and the

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<sup>34</sup> See *Simon Hewitt Jones, Violinist* <http://www.simonhewittjones.com>, accessed 27/12/10.

development of the internet and digital media since the early 1990s, was inevitably concentrated around a more limited number of people, be they teachers, players or fellow-students. As we have seen, it was common practice for such teachers to disseminate their ideas on playing by writing treatises; and although reading and working from the treatise could not replace the value of working with the master himself, the treatise was, ideally at least, a record of the master's ideas.

There is an interesting analogy with the way that European folk music was preserved — just as the practice of it was undergoing change and even declining under the pressure of industrialisation and the comparative ease of travel that was made possible by the development of railways. Collectors such as Cecil Sharp (1859–1924), and composer-collectors such as Béla Bartók (1881–1945) and Kodály (1882–1967) preserved as much of the most basic musical components of folk music as they could; and Bartók in particular was notable for his use of recordings in the field. But, just as with the issues of violin performance practice in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century mentioned above, such preservation in notation or recording could not ensure exact reproduction among later generations; and one must question whether such reproduction is even desirable.

Nevertheless, the preservation of this repertoire has assured its survival, albeit in forms different from those in which the collectors first heard it. The ability of a composer of the stature of Bartók to incorporate folk music within his compositions, be it by quotation or by adapting stylistic elements of it into the new, composed context, is just one of many testaments to the value of the initial efforts at preservation.

The analogy with the value of the written treatise on violin playing is that nobody could expect, by reading the treatises of Baillot or Menuhin, to be able to reproduce their playing styles. However, the value of the treatise, as with the collected folk song, lies in the extraordinary adaptability of the ideas of great artists. The treatise represents the best expressions that the author could achieve of his ideas. As such, it is the repository of his wisdom, just as folk music represents the collective artistic wisdom of the people.

Until comparatively recently, the documentation of teaching an instrument was part of the tapestry of life as a musician. The progressive disappearance of such documentation in recent times threatens the survival of one of the essential parts of any holistic approach to learning an instrument, not only from a historical perspective but also from a purely pedagogical one.

The issue is epitomised by the following observations and conclusions that arise from the points made above about internationalism and its effects on violin pedagogy and on the relationship with the heritage of violin teaching, and about the impact of digital media on the practice of teaching.

A) There is nowadays comparatively little financial incentive for advanced violin teachers to document their ideas and approaches to teaching. This is in marked contrast to the past and arises largely because modern methods of communication have tended to replace the role of manuals such as those listed above. Not all teachers, including some of those with whom I have studied, are natural writers; but the decline of the expectation to write, and of the necessity of writing can only reinforce the reluctance of those teachers who otherwise might have been able to produce a written treatise.

B) In the context of violin teaching, the use of technology is inclined to work against one of the most important aspects of music-learning and -making — the fact that music is essentially a collaborative art (even with solo works, a musician goes into a kind of contract with the work and the composer). For example, the videotaping of classes is an often-used short-cut for present-day students, replacing the effort required to take down written notes that incorporate the teachers or the student's ideas and give the student time for reflection.

Moreover, issues of copyright, as well as the privacy of the teacher, tend not to encourage the widespread dissemination of videotaped lessons. Although it can be argued that videotaping gives the student access to a lasting record of every detail of the lesson, the fact remains that, no matter how profound any given statement of a teacher on camera, its impact is likely to pale in comparison with the cognitive understanding that can be gleaned

from access to the complete thought-process that lay behind it, and which in turn is far more likely to occur when the teacher is physically present.

A further problem with video-classes is the inherent loss of immediacy. No matter how high the quality of technological apparatus involved, merely talking or writing about music is inevitably imprecise. Not being able to have the shared experience of meta-communication leaves out one of the most fundamental exchanges between master and student: the tailored passing-down of knowledge.

C) The awareness of, and interest in, being a musician with a holistic understanding of music as a manifestation of human culture appears to have lessened in recent times, and not only among students. It is revealing that most conservatories in England now include classes on professional development — on how to forge a career. Moreover, although most conservatories now include compulsory modules on music history and analysis, these are survey courses that are not inherently attached to the student's instrumental studies.

Such utilitarian practices are antithetical to the idea of studying to become a well-rounded musician, and compare poorly to the practices of just one generation ago. For example, as little as forty years ago, at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles, it was taken for granted that a well-rounded musician would have had the opportunity to perfect their craft through learning their instrument's history and teaching, and imitating their predecessors.

This plea for the value of imitating predecessors might seem paradoxical, given the guarded comments made above about the tendency in Asian cultures for students to learn by imitation. However, the kinds of imitation that emerge from an informed education about the philosophical and artistic heritage of acknowledged masters is very different from imitation based on a group of one's peers, or on the anonymity of listening to a recording. Indeed, the Suzuki method's deliberate omission of any concept of *iemoto*, mentioned above, suggests that some of its practices have anticipated the utilitarian, reductive policies that have emerged in the West only within the last 30 years or so.

Moreover, the concept of guided imitation of the masters lies behind the now unfashionable practice of learning techniques of composition via stylistic studies. And that in turn is a musical equivalent of the concept of imitation that can be seen in other arts. For example, even in his early teens the artist Pablo Picasso was a skilled user of optical illusions, perspectives, and an outstanding imitator of Dutch and French masters, as a visit to the Picasso Museum in Barcelona will show.

D) The importance of a student understanding a modern-day teacher's artistic heritage lies in what such understanding can contribute to a student's ability to think creatively and to expand their practice by individual experimentation. Upon having a keen knowledge thereof, the student's clarity of thought in experimenting with this knowledge, in developing their technique, and in finding ways of playing most suitable to them and the music they are working with, will be at a higher level. In other words, breaking the rules profitably can only be done with relish when one knows the rules in the first place.

E) In my experience, the very concept of schools of teaching is not widely understood. Nobody has recorded the processes that have occurred over the last 30 years or so, whereby specific schools of teaching and playing have changed, and led to the emergence of hybrid schools. With this thesis, I attempt it, and am in a distinctive position to do so. As far as I am aware, I am the only person of my generation who has deliberately set out to study with such a wide range of some of the foremost purveyors of modern-day teaching, with the specific aim of encountering the main schools of the immediate past.

Most recently (March 2011), an opusculé entitled *Violintechnik* was published by Schott Verlag that underlines the aforementioned statement.<sup>35</sup> According to the sleeve of the book, the author, Jeanne Christée, studied with Tibor Varga, Herman Krebbers, Nathan Milstein and Franco Gulli. Coincidentally, the book begins with a discussion of theses akin to some of

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<sup>35</sup> Jeanne Christée, *Violintechnik* (Mainz: Schott Music GmbH, 2011), p. 202.

those outlined in *Violin Teaching in the New Millennium*, and draws a family tree — even if less expansive than that provided here and not entirely flawless. For example, Oscar Back’s surname is continuously misspelled as “Bach” and Paganini is misleadingly made a student of Kreutzer. Nevertheless, one paragraph rings true. During an interview with Arabella Steinbacher, Jeanne Christée documents the following:

Jeanne Christée: You became a student of Ana Chumachenco following beginner studies according to the Suzuki Method. Chumachenco, who via her father is a “grand student” of Auer (Russian School), and via her later teacher, Ljerko Spiller (student of Enescu and Thibaud), a student of the French School. Moreover, she studied with Joseph Szigeti and Sándor Végh, representatives of the Hungarian method (*sic*). Do you feel associated with these great traditions?

Arabella Steinbacher: From the start, my teacher focused on musicality, and thus I didn’t spend any time considering the specific technical details of the various schools.<sup>36</sup>

*Quod erat demonstrandum...*

<sup>36</sup> Jeanne Christée, *Violintechnik* (Mainz: Schott Music GmbH, 2011), p. 202. Original quote reads: Jeanne Christée: Nach Anfangsunterricht in der Suzuki-Methode wurden Sie Schülerin von Ana Chumachenko, die durch ihren Vater eine „Enkelschülerin“ von Auer (Russische Schule) ist, und durch ihren späteren Lehrer Ljerko Spiller (Schüler von Enescu und Thibaud) auch aus der Französischen Schule stammt. Außerdem studierte sie bei Joseph Szigeti und Sándor Végh, Vertretern der ungarischen Methode. Fühlen Sie sich diesen großen Traditionen verbunden?

Arabella Steinbacher: Meine Lehrerin hat von Anfang an den Schwerpunkt auf die Musikalität gelegt, und so habe ich mich mit den spezifisch technischen Details der verschiedenen Schulen gar nicht beschäftigt.”

### **1.3 Terminology and Translations**

The observations listed about technique can be applied to almost any piece, affording the reader the possibility of gaining as much insight as I can provide into the individual teacher's advocated methods. The observations are divided into relevant categories of specific aspects of technique. The name of the teacher who mentions whichever particular aspect is highlighted in bold for ease of reading at its first mention within the relevant section. In certain cases, comparative comments on the same technical matter have been provided, allowing the reader immediate collation of one teacher's theory to another.

References to the anatomy of the hand are as follows:

There are three joints to each finger, namely,

- (1) The distal interphalangeal joint: the joint at the top of the finger.
- (2) The proximal interphalangeal joint: the middle joint of the finger.
- (3) The metacarpophalangeal joint: the joint where the finger joins the hand. The metacarpophalangeal joints shall be referred to as "knuckles" throughout my writings.

The thumb has only one interphalangeal joint.

The metacarpal bones are situated just below the fingers, and the carpal bones of the hand lie closest to the wrist.

The thenar eminence is a descriptive term for surface anatomy at the base of the thumb. The hypothenar eminence is a descriptive term for surface anatomy under the little finger and along that side of the palm.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, where possible, the author intends to identify and name each finger consistently according to whether they form part of the right or left hand. Therefore, the right hand's fingers are named thumb, index finger, middle finger, ring finger, and little finger. The left hand's fingers are named thumb, first finger, second finger, third finger, and fourth finger.

All translations from German, Dutch, Italian, and Hungarian are the author's own, unless otherwise stated.

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<sup>37</sup> Anatomical descriptions drawn from Richard S. Snell, *Clinical Anatomy by Regions* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2007).



## 1.4 Music in Theory and Practice

“Writing about music is like dancing about architecture,” is a statement so coveted that according to Bartlett’s *Familiar Quotations*<sup>38</sup>, it has been accredited to musicians as varied as Frank Zappa, Elvis Costello and Laurie Anderson. It would seem that this quote is born of an opinion that music (and particularly performance practice, one presumes) is not an art form that can be written about logically. Underlining this, the neuroscientist Rodolfo Llinás, when addressing musical performance points out, “the neural processes underlying that which we call creativity have nothing to do with rationality. That is to say, if we look at how the brain generates creativity, we will see that it is not a rational process at all; creativity is not born out of reasoning.”<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, for any professional musician, that which neurologists call voluntary imagery may dominate much of conscious and even subconscious life. It can be suggested that any artist is always at work, even when that is not visibly evident. Thus, for a professional, performing musician, the process of interpretation appears to take place not only during conscious contemplation of a piece but also during subconscious thought.

However, the act of interpreting a piece in performance, (as distinct from the process that, over time, led the performer to his or her decisions) is one that generally occurs at an advanced level of music-making, one not attainable without technique. Without technique all man-made (as opposed to digitally-produced) music will eventually grind to a halt, as each individual artist is reminded of his or her own technical limitations. From these limitations of technical ability follows the outcome thereof, which can include psychological burdens so vast that musicians find themselves blocked, their creative output having reached the ceiling of their capacity to actually

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<sup>38</sup> See John Bartlett, Justin Kaplan, General Editor: *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations: A Collection of Passages, Phrases, and Proverbs Traced to Their Sources in Ancient and Modern Literature (17th Edition)* (Boston, New York, London: Little, Brown and Company, 2002).

<sup>39</sup> Rodolfo Llinás, *I of the Vortex*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), quoted by Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia* (New York: Knopf, 2007), p. 38.

recreate music. In other words, without the necessary technique, the subsequent delivery of art will be slave to the limitations of the performer.

### **1.5 “Art is Science Made Clear”<sup>40</sup>**

It is not my intention to write about music or the art of music performance, but rather about that which is fundamental to the production of music, specifically to that of violin music: technique, the mechanics<sup>41</sup> of it, how to acquire and apply it, and the art of practising. Numerous elements of technique have a profound impact on interpretation, and indeed the creation of a particular interpretive approach — technique, by way of mechanics, being the appliance used to favour a specific auditory and/or visual outcome. Whatever about chicken-and-egg stories, that is, whether technique facilitates both the processes leading to the act of interpretation in performance and the ability to deliver that interpretation, or vice versa, it is undeniable that technique is indispensable and is to be found at the genesis of all performances of classical music.

The centrality of technical ability, and the need to acquire it by extensive practice, is demonstrated by far more than the ubiquitous anecdotal evidence offered by professional musicians for generations. For example, over the last sixty years or so, a number of studies have explored the extent to which acts that demonstrate musical ability, as demonstrated in performance or in composition, depend on in-born talents, such as physical ability on an instrument and a well-developed inner ear. Some of these studies, such as Hans-Jürgen Eysenck’s *Genius: the Natural History of Creativity*<sup>42</sup>, have placed the argument within a broad framework of artistic creativity as a component of general human psychology — and many of these, including Eysenck’s, have thereby made important contributions to the debates about nature-

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<sup>40</sup> “L’art c’est la science faite clair.” Jean Cocteau, *Le Coq et l’Arlequin: notes autour de la musique — avec un portrait de l’auteur et deux monogrammes par P. Picasso* (Paris: Éditions de la Sirène, 1918). English translation by Rollo Myers (London: Egoist Press, 1921).

<sup>41</sup> By mechanics of technique I mean the physical aspects involved in producing sound. Definitions = mechanic: moving the right arm to produce sound; technique is how one moves the right arm to produce sound. From a hierarchical point of view, mechanics are at the bottom of the ladder, and technique in the middle, forever stuck between it and that which is at the top, namely, music and its interpretation.

<sup>42</sup> Hans-Jürgen Eysenck, *Genius: the Natural History of Creativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

versus-nurture. Others have been much more specific in their focus on musical ability, often because they see it as an unusually specialised human attribute. One of the most striking modern studies of this kind, which draws on a wide range of research undertaken over the last 50 years or so, is John Sloboda's article "Musical Ability", in *The Origins and Development of High Ability*.<sup>43</sup>

Sloboda's definition of musical ability is primarily rooted in cognitive psychology, and its relevance to the Cocteau quotation at the beginning of this section is, I hope, self-evident.

Those who have applied the concepts and methods of contemporary cognitive psychology to music... would say that musical ability is a particular sort of acquired cognitive expertise, entailing at its core the ability to *make sense* of musical sequences, through the mental operations that are performed on sounds (real or imagined).<sup>44</sup>

According to this definition, and with reference to Cocteau's image, understanding music does not consist in knowing what its components are; it consists in understanding in its own terms the art that these components create, and that understanding emerges only when the listener (be it a performer or not) is able to "make sense" of the way in which those components are put together.

As in a number of studies undertaken by anthropologists and psychologists over the last 60 years or so, Sloboda comes out more in favour of the nurture side of the debate.<sup>45</sup> He does not argue directly against the importance of inherent ability, and makes this clear in the fascinating discussion that followed the symposium at which his paper was presented;<sup>46</sup> but he does argue strongly that with or without such inherent ability, high achievement is deeply conditioned by environmental factors, including deep learning through the kinds of repetitive practice that are necessary in the acquisition of technique.

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<sup>43</sup> John Sloboda, "Musical Ability", *The Origins and Development of High Ability — Ciba Foundation Symposium* 178 (2007), p. 106–118. This symposium focused in detail on claims Sloboda had made earlier, notably in *Exploring the Musical Mind: Cognition, Emotion, Ability, Function* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>44</sup> Sloboda, "Musical Ability", p. 106.

<sup>45</sup> See also, for example, John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973).

<sup>46</sup> Sloboda, "Musical Ability", p. 114–118.

It is therefore fascinating that one of the seminal studies of special ability, by Francis Galton (1822–1911), who coined the phrase “nature versus nurture” and demonstrated the importance of heredity, also emphasised the importance of such repetitive practice. Eysenck points out that, in his 1869 book *Hereditary Genius*, Galton saw the concept of genius as residing primarily in a person’s reputation. However, as Eysenck says,

Galton also recognized, indeed emphasized, natural ability as the major source of genius, and hence of reputation. By ‘natural ability’ he meant ‘those qualities of intellect and disposition, which urge and qualify a man to perform acts that lead to reputation. I do not mean capacity without zeal, nor zeal without capacity, nor even a combination of both of them, without an adequate power of doing a great deal of very laborious work. But I mean a nature which, when left to itself, will, urged by an internal stimulus, climb the path that leads to eminence . . .’<sup>47</sup>

The fact that these two researchers — who lie almost at the opposite sides of the “nature versus nurture” debate, have both emphasised the importance of labour in the cultivation of ability, lends academic support to the importance of this thesis’s topic. Moreover, the relevance of such labour to acquiring great musical ability, and the dangers of over-reliance on natural ability are demonstrated by numerous well-documented instances. Artur Rubinstein (1887–1982) is one such case. His natural abilities were so prodigious that, before the age of 20, he had ceased taking piano lessons of any kind. For about 25 years, until around 1932, he relied on his inherent ability and years of experience (he had made his first public appearance at the age of seven) to sustain him. But then, in his early 40s he recognised the limitations this was imposing on his playing. For several years, this most gregarious of artists withdrew from public life to concentrate on honing his technique and developing musical insight. When he returned to the concert platform in 1937, his audiences observed “A new discipline balancing brilliant temperament... [and] previously grudging critics recognized his place among the great players of the century.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius* (London, 1869), p. 33. As in Eysenck, *Genius*, p. 22.

<sup>48</sup> Information from *New Grove*, article “Artur Rubinstein”.

These debates about nature versus nurture reinforce the validity of my motivation to compile and compare that which I have observed over the past decade of my studies. That motivation grew out of two main areas. Firstly there is an awareness of the importance of the laborious and disciplined study of technique. The second is an awareness that many violin students are not as fortunate as I to have had the opportunity of entering the classes of renowned contemporary pedagogues. Because of this, and because of the limited number of treatises written by such pedagogues, most violin students do not have access to some of the most important ideas about technique that such pedagogues have to offer.

This limitation in access is intensified by increasing pressure on the time of pupils and pedagogues alike. Many of the latter are unable to teach all the students eager for moments of their time. Waiting-lists to be allowed entrance into a high-level music class at an institute of higher, secondary, or even primary education have become the norm, leading prospective students to introduce themselves to their preferred teachers years before possible entry into the class.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, the decision to apply for such a class operates under the assumption that a teenager is already sufficiently versed regarding the reputations and styles of teaching of different pedagogues, that he or she is able to discern to whom they should present themselves in the first place.

The Dutch violinist Herman Krebbers (b. 1923) commented on this state of affairs during an interview that he gave whilst in Lehrte, near Hanover, where he was teaching a masterclass at the time.<sup>50</sup> He observed that the standard of playing of young students had become very high in recent years. Nevertheless, or perhaps because of this, the number of applicants for his masterclasses far exceeded the amount of possible participants. Not only in Lehrte but also at all the other masterclasses he used to give, he felt obliged to pick the best candidates. On top of this, sometimes up to half the students asked him for private lessons as well. He could not oblige the students' wish however, as his capacity to work was already pushed to its maximum by a filled roster. He has also observed that the demands made of musicians and the expectations that come with such demands are rising on a

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<sup>49</sup> A revealing discussion of this point among a number of young violinists can be seen at <http://www.violinist.com/discussion/response.cfm?ID=7470>, accessed 10/9/11.

<sup>50</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 36.

yearly basis. With higher standards of playing, there has been a simultaneous rise in competitiveness.<sup>51</sup>

The availability of such high-level masterclass programmes has also been affected by cuts in subsidy for culture and the arts, in, for instance, the fusing of orchestras and the demise of ensembles due to lack of funding. This lack of funding also affects education, leaving students at a masterclass, often young children, to pay not only for tuition but also for travel, room and board. Krebbers was allocated forty-five minutes in which to teach one student. This was, in Krebbers' opinion, far too short a lesson if one were to teach really well. "I am not a great altruist, but I want to see happy children when this masterclass is over. That is what gives me unbelievable inner joy and confirmation".<sup>52</sup>

Krebbers is surely not alone in wanting to see that aforementioned happiness, an emotion many contemporary teachers struggle to deliver as time constraints simply do not allow for them to teach all the young hopefuls who knock on their doors. They are therefore prevented from achieving those levels of insight that are implied in Cocteau's vivid image.

## **1.6 The Teacher as Eternal Student**

A teacher not only bears responsibility for the overall development of a pupil but also holds the key to many a student's psychology, which, in turn, is a vital element in constructive learning. For instance, the Israeli violinist Shmuel Ashkenasi (b. 1941) frequently discusses the state of a player's mind during performance, stressing that approaching a work or specific passage as if it were easier goes a long way towards allowing the student not only to relax but also to produce a smoother, indeed, an easier sound.

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<sup>51</sup> Herman Krebbers stopped teaching by 2008 and also sold the greater part of his violin and bow collection by 2009 – as communicated to the author by Krebbers during telephone conversation on Krebbers' 87<sup>th</sup> birthday, 19 June 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 37. Krebbers' original quote reads: „Ich bin kein großer Altruist, aber ich möchte, wenn diese Master Class beendet ist, glückliche Kinder sehen. Erst das gibt mir eine unglaubliche innere Freude und Bestätigung.“

After some years of study with the Slovenian Igor Ozim (b. 1931), Ozim told me (with a mischievous grin), “I am not a psychologist — but I am a very good psychologist.”<sup>53</sup> Further to this, Ozim, who has vast patience for detailed work, and might, at first inspection, seem to be primarily concerned with honing a student’s craft, has said, “...that which marks the difference between a very good and just a good teacher is intuition that does not halt at analysis or diagnosis. It is difficult to explain. Intuition as such is anyway difficult to define, but I would be wary of leaving things up to analysis alone. It is about the sizing up of a person. Intuition always comes first, analysis thereafter.”<sup>54</sup> To be quite clear, and stating that which might be obvious to some, Ozim continues, “Admittedly, teachers with great intuitive faculty quickly reach their limits when their powers of intuition are not coupled with equal prowess [in analysis]. I would not like to say that one is more important than the other, just that both together make for a really good teacher.”<sup>55</sup>

How a teacher plays can indicate a lot about how they teach. For example, in the case of the Portuguese pianist Maria João Pires (b. 1941) who is not only one of the world’s most accomplished musicians but, at an age when others have long stopped taking the international concert platforms by storm, still tours frequently.

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<sup>53</sup> On one occasion, during my first year of study with Ozim, I came just under two minutes late to a lesson. The lesson was to have started at 9am. Ozim was sat in his chair, quite enraged at my tardiness. This anger was notable only in the atmosphere that lay in the room: it was certainly not due to a raised voice or other such unsubtle indication that would reveal a person’s true emotion. The reason for my lateness was of no consequence. As punishment for my lack of punctuality, and given that Ozim is certainly not a man to agree with Oscar Wilde’s “punctuality is the thief of time” (from “The Picture of Dorian Gray”, Chapter Four), all my lessons for the remaining year took place at 9am... and there was plenty of year left. Initially, I thought that this was a way for Ozim to show me that coming late for an appointment lacks respect, and that even two minutes are precious in the course of an elite study-period. I was to learn however, that, although this may or may not have been part of Ozim’s motivation, essentially he knew that I am not a morning person, needing quite some time, regardless of how much sleep has been slept, to be mentally and physically fully awake. In the professional music world, the luxury of such a phenomenon cannot be indulged. One should always be ready to play to the best of one’s abilities, whatever the weather, time-zone or day.

<sup>54</sup> Urs Frauchiger, *Der eigene Ton, Gespräche über die Kunst des Geigespielens* (Zurich: Ammann Verlag & Co., 2000), p. 159. Ozim’s original quote reads: „...was den sehr guten Lehrer vom nur guten unterscheidet, ist die Intuition, die es nicht bei der Analyse oder der Diagnose beläßt. Es ist schwer zu erklären, wie Intuition ohnehin schwer zu definieren ist, aber ich würde mich davor hüten, alles nur der Analyse zu überlassen. Es geht um das Erfassen der Person. Die Intuition kommt immer zuerst, die Analyse nachher.“

<sup>55</sup> Urs Frauchiger, *Der eigene Ton*, p. 159. Ozim’s original quote reads: „Freilich stoßen Lehrer mit großer intuitiver Fähigkeit rasch an ihre Grenzen, wenn diese nicht mit einem ebenso großen Können gekoppelt sind. Ich möchte nicht sagen, daß eines von beiden wichtiger ist, nur beides zusammen macht einen wirklich guten Lehrer aus.“

I have had the good fortune to hear her play live on two recent occasions — in recital at Vienna's Konzerthaus in October 2007 and as a soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra under the baton of John Eliot Gardiner in Paris' Salle Pleyel in February 2008. Prior to the performances in both instances, I spent the day with Pires, talking with her at length about her approach to teaching and performance.

Pires is a very small woman, built like a child, and whilst in Central Europe during winter, suffers from the cold, being of Portuguese background and living in Brazil as she does. So, how does this tiny woman, tired from travelling, and confronted with a new, unknown instrument every day in locations that allocate her little time to practise, play as lucidly as she does?

Pires has a manner of playing that transcends technique, a performance style beyond details of posture and trivial considerations such as how many notes her hands can stretch at a time. When one experiences her playing, one forgets to observe details of execution, one stops taking notes. In her hands, even the most ambitious professionals amongst us relax and simply listen. But this does not imply that Pires is uninterested in technical ability or awareness — in the broadest sense. For example, she is interested in correct breathing whilst playing and works with her pupils on physical and breathing exercises that, while they may be specifically directed towards the physical demands of pianism and of that instrument itself, are not necessarily to be practised in the vicinity of the instrument. The mechanics of technique are of secondary importance to her.

Indeed, with a highly accomplished player who has an abundance of skills and experience of the concert stage (such as Pires herself), one can move beyond the motions of basic playing. That which the teacher wishes to convey is not any more about the purely physical, it is about general approach, and about philosophy and psychology. This is one of the most likely casualties of any approach to teaching that does not depend on extended, close contact with a master pedagogue.

That breadth of thought and practice as a teacher requires far more than breadth of knowledge and experience with instrumental technique: it also arises through breadth of experience in life. One of the most striking cases of this in my experience is the



Hungarian pianist, György Sebök (1922–1999), with whom I worked in the last years of his life. He acknowledged that one of the main reasons he survived a concentration camp was the fact that his captors appreciated his immense talent.<sup>56</sup> I met him first in Dublin when he was invited by Maria Kelemen, a fellow Hungarian, to give masterclasses. I was so intrigued by his otherworldly playing that I had the audacity, the kind that possibly only a teenager could muster, to ask him to play with me. He obliged for more than two years, showing me, amongst many other things, how to read scores vertically, a necessity that many young violinists unwittingly ignore due to perpetually being confronted with single-line melodies in the sheet music they read from.

His life was, quite literally, etched on his physique. One might expect a holocaust survivor to be bitter, ravaged by emotional pain and traumatised by horrific memories. However, Sebök bore testament to the spirit of many survivors — his approach to teaching, both at the piano and in chamber music, was a highly philosophical one. He often borrowed from literature, quoting, amongst others, Marcel Proust, Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle), Ludwig Wittgenstein, and, of course, the great composers themselves. Rather than discussing movements made by the hand and arm on the keyboard in terms of anatomy, he used imagery, such as likening the human movement to the movements of water. As a performer, he played as he taught, his hands supple, moving fluidly across the keys, his pedalling work exact but seemingly effortless, his interpretations evoking images, stories and poetry. That broadly imaginative, deeply humanitarian view of the teacher's role, is supported by obituaries written by those who knew him.<sup>57</sup>

However, before a musician can reach this sort of enlightenment one needs to study. Among the teachers I have encountered directly, I have found Ozim's views on the relationship between laborious study and artistic insight especially enlightening. For an advanced player, the statement he has made to me and others, that "A teacher is a student's second pair of ears", is understandable; but for a student still struggling

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<sup>56</sup> As Sebök told me during conversation in 1999, "The Nazis kept me alive because they enjoyed my piano-playing".

<sup>57</sup> For example, that on the website of Indiana University, where he taught for many years. <http://www.indiana.edu/~iuihsl/1sebok.htm>, accessed 28/6/11.

with intricacies involving physical skill on their chosen instrument, further explanation will go some way to offering a more thorough teacher's job-description.

Ozim explores the instrument with the calm of a craftsman, not fevered, and only does so to pass his knowledge on to others.<sup>58</sup> In response to this, Ozim notes that, as a third-level violin student, one starts from a basis already, namely, the fundamental ability to play. Practising, he says, is nothing other than self-tuition; and in turn, tuition from a master is nothing other than teaching others how to teach themselves. Practising at home should be a continuation of the lessons one has received. A good student's ambition to improve is a given; a good teacher should have ambition for continuous self-improvement and development of their knowledge.<sup>59</sup> The opinion that practising at home should be like a continuation of the lesson one has received was also expressed by Galamian in his *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, a book that Ozim recommends to his students.<sup>60</sup>

In the interview he gave to Urs Frauchiger, Ozim confirms that both for teacher and student, curiosity is a fundamental part of tuition, an engine that guides one towards the desired result of insight. He goes on to couple the attributes of curiosity with those of scepticism. Being critical of information and abilities one has acquired drives one towards personal progress. However, Ozim warns, excessive scepticism towards oneself can be poisonous as it can paralyse a player's development. Ultimately, a musician should practise with a healthy portion of doubt about his or her skills, so as to continuously strive for perfection; but when playing, a musician's self-belief should dominate performance.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Urs Frauchiger, *Der eigene Ton*, p. 157. Translated from a statement given by Urs Frauchiger as part of a question to Ozim. The original statement reads: „Sie waren schon immer ein Geigen-Forscher, ein Fährtensucher im Dschungel des Potentials der Geige mit allen seinen Gefahren und Fähnissen. Das sind andere auch, Paganini war es in einem übersteigerten, schon fast pathologischen Maß. Sie aber machen es mit der Ruhe der alten Handwerker, ganz unfebrig, und Sie machen es nur insofern für sich, als Sie es andern weitergeben wollen.“

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* p. 157—158. Ozim's original statement reads: „Man beginnt auf der Basis eines Grundkönnens, man geigt ja schließlich ganz anständig. Üben ist nichts als Selbstunterricht, und Unterrichten wiederum ist nichts anderes, als den Leuten beizubringen, wie sie sich selbst unterrichten sollen. Zu-Hause-Üben soll eine Fortsetzung der Stunde sein...Ein guter Lehrer muß die Ambition haben, sich immer weiterzuentwickeln.“

<sup>60</sup> Ivan Galamian (with E.A.H. Green), *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), p. 93.

<sup>61</sup> Based on Urs Frauchiger, *Der eigene Ton*, p. 158.

Apart from aiding the process of learning, Ozim believes talent to be definable as a collection of many skills, among which curiosity is a crucial ingredient. This might seem an unusual characteristic to list but in fact, curiosity can mean the ultimate difference between a great talent that never finds a platform (under the assumption that they would be interested in finding one), and a prolific talent. With very few exceptions, and regardless of occupation, those with true interest in and curiosity for their chosen field have the ability to work long hours at an exceptionally high level of concentration and exactness, and experience joy in doing so. In that perspective at least, Ozim's views are entirely consistent with those of Galton and Sloboda mentioned above. Ozim's riposte to the often-heard comment "that is a talented guy, it's a pity that he is so lazy," is that "if he is lazy, he is not talented."<sup>62</sup>

The best teachers are usually well aware of the central role that they play, or should play, in the life of an individual student, both for that student's ability on the instrument, and in the student's view of life and learning. In particular they tend to be aware of the dangers of over-dependence on the teacher. For instance, Italian-born Ana Chumachenco considers herself not so much a teacher but rather a violinist who gives tips to those who study with her. She strongly wishes for her students to learn independence from, as opposed to dependence on, a teacher. Like others in the pantheon of great contemporary teachers, she strives to enable students to see that all technical problems, even those that, in the student's perception, are towering ones, can be overcome. As with so many issues that arise in teaching, and in line with the comments of Hermann Krebbers mentioned above, the most effective approaches to technical challenges — those that inherently instil confidence in the students, arise when the teacher combines technical awareness with psychological understanding. For example, the Hungarian teacher André Gertler (1907–1998), stated, "Anybody can play the violin. Bring the streetsweeper in from the street. I will teach him to play."<sup>63</sup> This was his response to pupils whom he felt were about to lose heart in the face of technical challenges that they felt were insuperable. His statement, backed by his self-confidence in his own abilities both as a musician and as a teacher, proved

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* p. 169–170: „Das ist ein begabter Kerl, schade, daß er so faul ist.“ Ozim's reply to this is: „Wenn er faul ist, ist er nicht begabt.“

<sup>63</sup> Quoted from Maria Kelemen's Introduction, written in the autumn of 1979, to *Violin Technique — The Natural Way*, Ronald Masin and Maria Kelemen, (Buren: Frits Knuf, 1982), p. 15.

very effective — his students realised that there were no towering problems, just work to be done and ground to be covered, step by step.

That holistic view of the teacher's role is one of the most striking differences between teaching methods of the past and present, especially since World War II; and it is therefore all the more important that documentation of this view and the teaching practices that arise from it, is available to students in the future. One example of this is the attention that many teachers now pay to matters such as posture based on an informed awareness of anatomy, to efficient methods of practising, and a holistic approach to the profession in general. In modern times, a good teacher not only works on a student's steady progress in the present; he or she also takes preventative measures for the future that in earlier decades were not considered.

Ozim has often commented on this heightened awareness of the holistic nature of good teaching. He was born in 1931, and has remarked that, in the days of his youth, a number of violinists suffered from burn-out at the age of forty; others played out of tune or technically unsatisfactorily. He ascribes the blame for this to bad teaching, and in particular to an over-reliance on mechanical views of practising and on a mode of thinking that over-values the length of time spent practicing regardless of content and approach. Nowadays, he finds that, from a physiological perspective, violinists play more flawlessly, with less physical tautness. Thus, at the age of forty when physical tonicity decreases, enough energy remains for the violinist to play efficiently.<sup>64</sup>

## **1.7 Modern Times**

The world we live in now is, paradoxically, expanding rapidly in an effort to make distances smaller, be that in the geographical sense or on the route to knowledge. This has had a profound effect on violin teaching and playing, an effect rooted in two particular consequences of this expansion that have had a profound influence on the matters under discussion in this thesis. One is a change in hierarchies of knowledge;

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<sup>64</sup> Urs Frauchiger, *Der eigene Ton*, p. 162.

another is the homogenisation of cultures under a general tendency towards globalisation.

The access we have today to information brings with it the advance of instant gratification via the media and the Internet to any questions we might pose. This has not necessarily been only a good thing. For instance, Internet search engines, the birth of *Wikipedia* in 2001 and sensationalised news-reporting by privatised and heavily-sponsored TV channels have brought with them a stream of information that is unreliable and does not discriminate between that which is authoritative and that which is unsubstantiated. To keep it digital (and tongue-in-cheek) by citing the relevant article in which the following information appeared, let us take *Wikipedia* as a point in case: “the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit”<sup>65</sup>, is a site that has been criticised for being riddled with inaccuracies, at one time even displaying misinformation about one of its founders, Larry Sanger.<sup>66</sup> It must be said however, that thanks to constant visits to the site by countless editors, the matter was quickly settled and the inaccuracies put right. The birth of immediate access to information via the Internet also brings with it easily-consumed, bite-size morsels of knowledge at a click; however, this knowledge is both unhierarchised and unreliable.

It is those aforementioned constant visits to a website and the quick revision of an incorrect statement that bear an indication of our fast-moving way of life. The reasons for writing this thesis lie partly in the accelerated speed at which we work, travel and communicate.

Teaching is a business in as much as the teacher earns his or her living by it, and business is based strongly on supply and demand. The increase in demand for teaching has intensified in recent decades and thereby changed the nature of the business. One of the most striking consequences of this is an increase in group teaching as normal practice. The public wants to see “long-term drop-out rates lessen”<sup>67</sup> amongst early learners and, although many members of the public are not

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<sup>65</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

<sup>66</sup> See Dan Mitchell, *Insider Editing at Wikipedia* (Published by The New York Times on <http://www.nytimes.com>, 24/12/05).

<sup>67</sup> Quote taken from an Email circulated on 28 January 2008 by the Irish Association of Music Schools.

fully informed when it comes to teaching approaches such as the Suzuki Method, every parent who wants to bring their child closer to music wants to see their child continue along the road of learning, as opposed to abandoning the subject at hand. To this end, music schools in Western Europe are starting to cater to demand. This can be observed at the Musikschule of Berne where a recent job placement (as advertised in music journals such as the Schott Verlag-distributed “Das Orchester” and the “Schweizer Musikzeitung” in the closing months of 2007) for a violin teacher implicitly suggested that applicants be open to and experienced at group teaching for students from the age of three onwards. Seminars held under the umbrella of the Irish Association of Music Schools include workshops that specifically encourage a change towards group teaching.

There are certainly advantages to group teaching; but concentrated individual attention, by definition, cannot be paid to a student during group teaching sessions. Due to how we work in this “digital age”, many musicians are intent on being specialists in their particular field so as to excel in a market that is more competitive than ever before — for a performing musician, this means hours of daily practice.

To exemplify the views of an internationally recognised master of violin pedagogy, it is worth considering a comment made by Ozim.

“Many violinists are lazy and stupid. Lazy because they do not bother to look in a book to find out anything for themselves but, instead, prefer to be spoon-fed by a teacher. And stupid because, once they have come to the point where they realise that they could be independent, they do not know where to start searching for information.”

With this sentiment, Zakhar Bron, in turn, might agree.<sup>68</sup> Ozim adds,

“alongside their work, young people have too little time to live. Look at [Fritz] Kreisler: he played chess, performed magic tricks, was gregarious, went to museums, collected incunabula and more besides, and the youth of today live in greater isolation, in greater competition, they have to play

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<sup>68</sup> See the section on Tone Production for Bron’s statement on the three main principles that define his teaching approach.

faster, cleaner, faultlessly so as to bring their statement to the Everyman.

However, this statement is based on a life that no longer is one!”<sup>69</sup>

Ergo, the well-informed Renaissance man is a rare being amongst violinists today.

And it shows.

For instance, where in times past such diverse and outstanding talents as Emil Gilels, Dmitri Kabalevsky, Aram Khatchaturian, Leonid Kogan, David Oistrakh, Sviatoslav Richter, Mstislav Rostropovich and Dmitri Shostakovich were part of the musical landscape under the Muscovite sky, all of them teaching at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory (with the notable exception of Richter), such birds have flown. The history and politics of the Soviet Union, and then of Russia, have played a big part in the exodus that has occurred amongst Russia’s finest artists and today, it seems, there is no single epicentre in the world of teaching that can boast such a line-up. In turn, migration has intensified, creating the competitive market in which not only musicians grow up today. In the words of Ronald Masin as communicated to me on 15 January 2008 via Email: “Do not forget that with the advent of aeroplanes and the subsequent freedom that travel offers, people were not bound by their local conservatories anymore.”

With the advances made in technology, artists all over the globe are travelling, sharing their ideas and acquiring more knowledge. Less than fifty years ago, this was not the norm, hence there was more rigidity in school of thought and it was easier to define the various schools of violin-teaching. Even where violinists were acknowledged to have contributed to more than one school, the cross-fertilisation, unlike in many cases today, was clear, not only historically but also as far as technique and approach were concerned. A short list of players whose relationship to more than one specific school is definable and distinct includes: Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880), who had a great influence on the Franco-Belgian<sup>70</sup> School as well as

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<sup>69</sup> Urs Frauchiger, *Der eigene Ton*, p. 174. Ozim’s original quote reads: „Die jungen Leute haben neben der Arbeit zu wenig Zeit zum leben. Schauen Sie Kreisler: Er hat Schach gespielt, gezaubert, hat gern Gesellschaft gehabt, ging in Museen, hat Inkunablen gesammelt und was weiß ich noch alles, und heute leben die Jungen in großer Isolierung, in einem großen Konkurrenzkampf, sie müssen schneller, sauberer, makelloser geigen, um ihre Aussage an den Mann und an die Frau zu bringen. Aber diese Aussage basiert ja auf einem Leben, das keines mehr ist!“

<sup>70</sup> Franco-Belgian is a term used by the author to signify the French and Belgian schools of violin playing.

the Russian School; Henri Vieuxtemps (1820–1881), who had a great influence on the Franco-Belgian School as well as the Russian School; Leopold Auer (1845–1930), who had a great influence on the German, Russian and Austro-Hungarian<sup>71</sup> schools. There is also a distinction made between “old” Russian School (also known as the Soviet School) which includes teachers such as Pyotr Stolyarsky (1871–1944) and Izrail Yampolsky (1905–1976), and the “new” Russian School, whose most famous ambassadors include Leonid Kogan (1924–1982), David Oistrakh (1908–1974), and Ivan Galamian (1903–1981). In the case of the latter school, once again a wider influence is felt, as both Galamian and Josef Gingold (1909–1995) are seen as having been fundamental in the establishment of the American School. In more recent teaching, Max Rostal (1905–1991) taught an approach based on the German School, one passed down to his student Igor Ozim (b. 1931) who in turn takes not only from the German, but also the American School.

Therefore, while cross-fertilisation continues to take place, it is no longer clear, in a world where the boundaries between schools of thought and practice are far less distinct than they used to be, exactly what part of the total sum of any one player, might be attributed to a specific heritage.

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<sup>71</sup> Austro-Hungarian is a term used by the author to signify the Viennese and Hungarian schools of violin playing.



## ***1.8 A Brief Outline of the Main Schools and Their Advocates***

### **German School**

Louis Spohr (1784–1859)

Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) (used the right hand technique taught by Spohr; see also Austro-Hungarian School)

Leopold Auer (1845–1930) (see also Russian and Austro-Hungarian Schools)

### **French School**

Giovanni Battista Viotti (1753–1824)

Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766–1831)

Pierre Rode (1774–1830)

Martin Marsick (1848–1924) (see also Austro-Hungarian School)

Carl Flesch (1873–1944) (see also Austro-Hungarian School)

Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962) (see also Austro-Hungarian School)

George Enescu (1881–1955) (see also Austro-Hungarian School)

### **Franco-Belgian School**

André Robberechts (1797–1860)

Charles-Auguste de Bériot (1802–1870)

Hubert Léonard (1819–1890)

Henri Vieuxtemps (1820–1881) (see also Russian School)

Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880) (see also Russian School)

Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931)

### **Russian School**

Henri Vieuxtemps (1820–1881) (see also Franco-Belgian School)

Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880) (inventor of the “Russian Grip”; see also Franco-Belgian School)

Leopold Auer (1845–1930) (see also German and Austro-Hungarian Schools)

Pyotr Solomonovich Stolyarsky (1871–1944) (see also Soviet School)

Mischa Saulovich Elman (1891–1967)

Jascha Rubimovitch Heifetz (1901–1987)

Ivan Alexandrovich Galamian (1903–1981) (see also American School)

Nathan Mironovich Milstein (1903–1992)

David Fyodorovich Oistrakh (1908–1974)

Leonid Borisovich Kogan (1924–1982)

### **Soviet School**

Pyotr Solomonovich Stolyarsky (1871–1944) (see also Russian School)

Abram Ilich Yampolsky (1890–1956)

Izrail Markovich Yampolsky (1905–1976)

Yuri Izayevich Yankelevich (1909–1973)

Vladimir Teodorovich Spivakov (b. 1944)

### **American School**

Louis Persinger (1887–1966)

Ivan Alexandrovich Galamian (1903–1981) (see also Russian School)

Josef Gingold (1909–1995)

Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999)

Isaac Stern (1920–2001)

### **Austro-Hungarian School**

Joseph Böhm (1795–1876) (initially studied with his father and later briefly with Rode, by whom he was greatly influenced)

Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (1814–1865) (studied with Böhm and a great admirer of Paganini)

Jakob Dont (1815–1888)

Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) (see also German School)

Leopold Auer (1845–1930) (see also Russian and German Schools)

Martin Marsick (1848–1924) (see also French School)

Jenö Hubay (1858–1937)

Carl Flesch (1873–1944) (see also French School)

Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962) (see also French School)

George Enescu (1881–1955) (see also French School)

Sándor Végh (1905–1997)

## **1.9 Outstanding Written Contributions to the Art of Violin Playing**

As has been demonstrated in 1.2 above, manuals containing instructions for the art of violin playing were relatively abundant in the late 18th century. Some of those manuals written between approximately 1750 and 1840 were to lay foundations of practice in pedagogy and playing that have proved particularly enduring. That period would prove to be critical in the history of the instrument, especially as it was then that the ascendancy of the French over the Italian School became evident.

The following list of treatises is therefore a chronological one that begins with Geminiani's foundational *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751), and culminates in the 1830s with Spohr's *Violinschule* (1832) and Baillot's *L'art du Violon: nouvelle méthode* (1835). These are, as Robin Stowell writes, "seminal works of violin instruction".<sup>72</sup> According to a wide range of written authorities and current practice within violin pedagogy, they have remained significantly influential on violin technique and teaching. In Part II of this thesis, occasional reference will be made to one or more of these treatises, to provide comparisons with contemporary approaches to issues of technique.

Therefore, this list provides a means of tracing many of the central issues in how technical, philosophical and pedagogical issues within violin playing and teaching have developed, as well as changes that the violin as an instrument has undergone. The list is not exhaustive; but the most important treatises of the last 250 years include:

### **Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751)**

Geminiani (1687–1762<sup>73</sup>) was one of the most prominent violinists of his time. His influence on the development of violin technique through his performance,

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<sup>72</sup> Robin Stowell, "In principle: Violin Pedagogy Through the Ages. 1: Leopold Mozart's *Violinschule*". *The Strad*, September 2007, vol. 118 No. 1409, p.66.

<sup>73</sup> Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 7. However, according to

compositions and teaching was remarkable. This influence was felt largely in such places as Great Britain and Ireland, where he spent more of his time than in his home country of Italy. Spreading the doctrine of his master, Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713), he wrote a treatise, published in London in 1751, spanning just over fifty pages, and which would go on to be translated in languages such as French and German soon after it first became available to the public.<sup>74</sup> The work is probably the best-known summation of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Italian method of violin playing and an invaluable source for study of late Baroque performance practice, giving detailed information on vibrato, trills and other techniques.

In this treatise, Geminiani discusses posture, holding the violin just below the collarbone without support from the chin, and the “Geminiani grip” which refers to the optimum finger, wrist, hand and elbow placement in the first position (a matter referred to in Leopold Mozart’s treatise), the four left fingers each stopping a string (fourth finger on the G string, third finger on the D string and so on) at the same time. To exemplify the foundational nature of Geminiani’s precepts, it is worth mentioning that Maria Kelemen, for instance, still uses this technique today when working with young students, both in its aforementioned position of the fingers on the string and in reverse.

How to hold the bow is outlined, the hand gripping the bow slightly higher than modern violinists play today, that is, somewhat along the heel of the bow as opposed to at the heel. The subjects of interpreting music according to a composer’s intentions and playing as accurately as possible are touched upon. Interestingly, Geminiani advocates playing with a continuous vibrato and using ornamentation for the purposes of expression.<sup>75</sup>

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Marc Pincherle, *Les Instruments du Quatuor* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), p. 78, Geminiani’s dates of birth and death are 1680–1762. The *New Grove* has the same dates as Stowell.

<sup>74</sup> For further information, see Robin Stowell, *op cit.*, see footnote 26.

<sup>75</sup> Information partially drawn from Robin Stowell, “In principle: Violin Pedagogy Through the Ages. 1: Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule*”, *The Strad*, September 2007, vol. 118 No. 1409, p. 67–69.

## **Leopold Mozart, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* (1756)**

No matter how important Geminiani's treatise might be, it was eventually overshadowed by Leopold Mozart's, which would become the seminal book of that century. Printed in Augsburg in 1756, it drew on Italian influences, particularly that of Giuseppe Tartini and Pietro Locatelli, and with it, Mozart intended to "pave a way for music-loving youth which shall guide them with certainty to good taste in music".<sup>76</sup> It is likely that Mozart was familiar with Tartini's *Trattato di Musica secondo la Vera Scienza dell'Armonia* published in 1754.<sup>77</sup>

Johann Joachim Quantz in his *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*<sup>78</sup> which appeared four years before Mozart's treatise, included instruction on musical notation, the correct reading of rhythm and note values, and ornamentation, mainly aimed at the orchestral player, that person being the leader of the orchestra or a *ripieno* player. Teachers of today, when instructing their students to immerse themselves in Leopold Mozart's treatise (usually at a time when a student begins researching styles of Baroque or Classical playing) often suggest reading Quantz, and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*<sup>79</sup> parallel to it.

Written for teachers and their pupils, in what Mozart claimed to be the first comprehensive way, the treatise spans twelve chapters which include information on notation of music, rhythm and time-measure, notes on how to hold the bow, music theory, a guide to bowings, sound production, position changes, ornamentation and embellishments, and good execution of any reading of music.

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<sup>76</sup> Quote extracted from Mozart's own dedication to the Archbishop of Salzburg; Leopold Mozart, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948).

<sup>77</sup> Giuseppe Tartini, *Trattato di Musica secondo la Vera Scienza dell'Armonia*. (Padova: Nella Stamperia del Seminario, 1754).

<sup>78</sup> Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Facsimile — Berlin: Johann Friedrich Voß, 1752).

<sup>79</sup> Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Berlin: In Verlegung des Auctoris, printed by C. F. Henning, vol. 1: 1753; vol. 2: 1762).

**Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica con un saggio sopra l'arte di suonare il violino analizzata ed a dimostrabili principj ridotta* (1791 and 1796)**

The Turin-born violinist, teacher and composer Francesco Galeazzi's two-volume *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica con un saggio sopra l'arte di suonare il violino analizzata ed a dimostrabili principj ridotta*, appeared in 1791 (first volume) and 1796 (second volume). The first volume includes elementary musical theory and instruction on violin technique, general performance practice and provides a study plan spanning the first three years of learning for beginners. The second volume offers a brief history of music and studies of a compositional nature, discussing harmony, melody and counterpoint.

In the first volume Galeazzi writes, “for the violin, it is absolutely necessary that the first scale be in G and not in C as they badly teach”.<sup>80</sup> Galeazzi's plea for the more user-friendly scale of G, as opposed to the traditional scale of C major, anticipates several 19<sup>th</sup>-century treatises.

Galeazzi was deeply interested in the relationship between practice and theory, and in this respect his chapter on intonation “Dell' Intonazione” (vol. 1, p.101–122) stands out. Like Tartini, he strictly applies the proportions of the syntonic diatonic scale (24–27–30–32–36–40–45–48<sup>81</sup>), writing, “all keys or modes are perfectly similar as far as the proportions and the distances between their respective scale degrees, or sounds, are concerned. These proportions are indicated in the following Table: 8/9 (major tone), 9/10 (minor tone), 15/16 (diatonic semitone), 8/9 (major tone), 9/10 (minor tone), 8/9 (major tone), 15/16 (diatonic semitone).”<sup>8283</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica con un saggio sopra l'arte di suonare il violino analizzata ed a dimostrabili principj ridotta*. (Rome: Pilucchi Cracas, vol. 1: 1791), p. 49. The original statement reads: “per il violino è assolutamente necessario, che la prima Scala sia in tono di G e non in C come malamente insegnano.”

<sup>81</sup> 24 (c), 27 (d), 30 (e), 32 (f), 36 (g), 40 (a), 45 (b), 48 (c') correspond to the proportions of the syntonic diatonic scale. Authors after Tartini have recognised the syntonic scale as the fundamental violin scale including Galeazzi, Courvoisier and Joachim/Moser (see: *Violinschule*, Berlin: Simrock, 1905, vol. 2, p. 16 „Das Resultat unserer Untersuchungen stellen wir in der folgenden Übersicht zusammen: 24–27–30–32–36–40–45–48.“).

<sup>82</sup> Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica con un saggio sopra l'arte di suonare il violino analizzata ed a dimostrabili principj ridotta*. (Rome: Pilucchi Cracas, vol. 1: 1791), p. 105. The original statement reads: “tutti i Toni, o Modi sono perfettamente tra di loro simili in quanto alle proporzioni, e distanze de loro gradi, o suoni. Tali proporzioni sono indicate nella Tavola seguente: 8/9(T.ma.), 9/10(T.mi.), 15/16 (S.ma.), 8/9 (T.ma.), 9/10(T.mi.), 8/9 (T.ma.), 15/16 (S.ma.).”

**Carl Guhr, *Über Paganini's Kunst die Violine zu Spielen, ein Anhang zu jeder bis jetzt erschienenen Violinschule nebst einer Abhandlung über das Flageoletspiel in einfachen und Doppeltönen* (1829)**

The gradual ascendance of the violin virtuoso gathered pace in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most explicit printed manifestation of that rise came in 1829, when Carl Guhr's *Über Paganini's Kunst die Violine zu Spielen, ein Anhang zu jeder bis jetzt erschienenen Violinschule nebst einer Abhandlung über das Flageoletspiel in einfachen und Doppeltönen* was published. The German Guhr (1787–1848), who himself was a violinist of considerable ability, wrote an account of Paganini's performance style based on Guhr's personal observation of the Italian virtuoso, and describes the violinist's physique, technique and approach to playing. Technical elements discussed include passages on bow-strokes, left-hand pizzicato, and particularly, the use of harmonics in single- and double-stopping.

**Louis Spohr, *Violinschule* (1832)**

In 1832, Spohr's contribution to the German School, the pivotal *Violinschule*, was published in Vienna. Spohr was a German violinist, composer and conductor, a student of Johann Friedrich Eck (1766–1810), who in turn was a representative of the Mannheim School of Johann Anton Stamitz (1717–1757). However, Spohr was strongly influenced by the playing style of the French violinist and composer, Pierre Rode (1774–1830). Although he did not have direct tuition from Rode, Spohr admitted that he sought to emulate him, for he “modelled his execution” after that of Viotti's famous student<sup>84</sup>.

Spohr toured Germany, Italy and the Netherlands with success<sup>85</sup>; he was a celebrated performer, credited with having a refined taste and secure technique, and was one of the first violinists to actively concern himself with the relationship between bow

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<sup>83</sup> For more information about sound, vibration, resonance and the basis of tone, see James Beament, *The Violin Explained* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). See also Philippe Borer, “The chromatic scale in the compositions of Viotti and Paganini: A turning point in violin playing and writing for strings”, in: *Niccolò Paganini Diabolus in Musica*, edited by A. Barizza and F. Morabito, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, p. 91-120. See also René Brüderlin, *Akustik für Musiker* (Kassel: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1995).

<sup>84</sup> Philippe Borer, *Aspects of European Influences on Violin Playing and Teaching in Australia* (University of Tasmania: M.Mus. diss., 1988), p. 30.

<sup>85</sup> See Louis Spohr, *Selbstbiographie* (Kassel und Göttingen: H. Wiegand, 1860).

speed, bow pressure and the contact point of the bow on the string for tone production. All of these matters, and many more, are featured in detail in his *Violinschule*.

Spohr's influence as a teacher is attested by his distinguished list of pupils. Perhaps the most famous of these is Ferdinand David (1810–1873), who was the leader of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig and dedicatee of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's Violin Concerto in E minor, Opus 64.<sup>86</sup>

However, he was also deeply influential in other areas. For example, as a conductor, Spohr was amongst the first, along with Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826), to make use of a baton.<sup>87</sup> As a violinist, he is credited with the invention of the chin rest around 1820, which, with the inclination towards virtuoso playing during his lifetime, is an aid that might be considered a means to an end.<sup>88</sup> However, it should also be noted that some of the greatest virtuosos of that time, such as Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840), Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (1814–1865) or Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880), did not use a chin rest.

Spohr's *Violinschule* was intended as a guide almost as much for the teacher as for the advanced student and discusses cogent principles, marked by the use of carefully chosen words, and extensive exercises. It is divided into three sections, the first of which addresses the violin's construction and its maintenance, the bow, plus the recently-invented chin rest. The middle section discusses violin technique and musical rudiments and the final section focuses on style, presentation and interpretation.

In the second section of the book, Spohr describes two ways of holding the violin. The first of these suggests positioning the chin rest directly over the tailpiece, the second describes the placement of the chin partially on the belly of the instrument to the left of the tailpiece and partially on the tailpiece itself. Today, a violin-maker might argue that the latter suggestion would dull the sound of the instrument.

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<sup>86</sup> Alberto Bachmann, *An Encyclopedia of the Violin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), p. 403.

<sup>87</sup> David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 446.

<sup>88</sup> David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 369.



After providing his fingering-suggestions for scales, Spohr also recommends the use of unsounded anticipatory notes when changing positions, a device still used today by pedagogues such as Ozim. Spohr writes that sliding effects should not accompany shifts in general playing; but certain fingerings he adds to musical examples suggest that Spohr was being careful to distinguish between a glissando that arises because of lazy changing of position, and the use of audible slides for the purpose of expressive effect.

A number of Spohr's specific technical recommendations should be recorded here, either because they were new developments that have remained influential, or because they have become superseded. On the topic of double-stopping, Spohr emphasises the importance of equal division of bow pressure on both strings, irrespective of dynamic. Concerning four-note chords, he moves away from upward or downward swift arpeggiando execution and instead recommends breaking the chords upwards in twos. Furthermore, Spohr suggests playing pizzicato chords with the violin held like a guitar, plucking the notes with the right-hand thumb (an action that today might be considered the mark of either a somewhat lazy, or laid-back violinist). Concerning bow-hold, he tells the reader that no separation should occur between the index finger and the other fingers on the bow, a position that can be seen when observing Krebbers' execution of the bow-hold. Furthermore, he supports the use of pressure exerted by the index finger exclusively.

Spohr's initial discussion of vibrato bears similarities to Mozart's in that it calls the technique "tremolo". Spohr discusses four vibrato speeds: a fast movement used for accentuated notes; a slow movement for sustained notes; a movement that speeds up during crescendo and one that slows down during diminuendos.

Spohr writes of "richtiger" and "schöner Vortrag"<sup>89</sup>, which translates as "correct" and "beautiful performance" and, at the start of *Violinschule*'s third section, states that he values the beautiful over the correct one. He further indicates that a beautiful performance must nevertheless be correct. To this end he lists what he finds are the

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<sup>89</sup> As read in May 2008 on <http://www.koelnklavier.de/quellen/spohr/kap3-1.html>, which contains parts of the original source material of *Violinschule*.

essential marks of a correct performance. This includes “reine” (translated as “pure”) intonation — even if Spohr advocates equal temperament — and the precise administering of rhythm, keeping a given tempo without speeding up or slowing down unless advised in the written music, and the exact execution of dynamics, ornaments, slurs and so on. In other words, Spohr recommends strictly adhering to the score. He goes on to discuss not only concerto playing but also quartet and orchestral playing.

Concerning his advocacy of equal temperament, “Spohr’s notion that singers should be taught intonation from the equal temperament of the piano excited Hauptmann’s<sup>90</sup> mingled indignation and amusement”.<sup>91</sup>

Spohr — in light of his contemporary Paganini’s immensely skilled capacity for the violinistic equivalent of acrobatics, as well as his imaginative approach to the showing of these skills through his compositions — was rather conservative in his opinion of virtuosity. Spohr appeals to the reader to strive for nobility in their playing and to leave aside false claims to expertise in matters of technical ability that might result in empty, meaningless shows of virtuosity.<sup>92</sup>

### **Pierre Baillot, *L’art du Violon: nouvelle méthode* (1835)**

Baillot’s *L’art du Violon* is his second contribution to violin methods. His first, compiled together with Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode is entitled *Méthode de Violon* and was published in Paris in 1802/1803. The three men were admirers of Giovanni Battista Viotti and had set out to develop the Italian tradition of playing as propagated by Viotti. When the *Méthode de Violon* appeared, it set a new standard for French violin text and, with the establishment of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris in 1795, solidified the acknowledgement of the French School.

With his *L’art du Violon: nouvelle méthode*, Baillot set out to do what many writers do when embarking on their second book on methodology — amend anything he

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<sup>90</sup> Moritz Hauptmann was a German violinist, composer and music theorist, as well as a friend and pupil of Louis Spohr. In addition, Hauptmann was Joseph Joachim’s composition teacher.

<sup>91</sup> Llewellyn S. Lloyd, *The Musical Ear* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 76.

<sup>92</sup> Louis Spohr, *Violin School* (London: R. Cocks & Co, 1843), introduction.

forgot to mention thirty years prior, or present ideas that had been developed since the first publication. Baillot shows consistency from the very start — each new idea is explained, then worked into exercises and finally, finds its application within the context of a piece relevant to the idea.

In part one of his book, which focuses on matters of technique and style, Baillot sets out a number of his principles. These include a relaxed posture, with the feet placed in a natural position and the emphasis of body weight to the left side. He discusses the benefit of holding the instrument at a 45-degree angle, with the chin to the left of the tailpiece, and the possibility of using padding to aid a comfortable hold on the instrument. The “Geminiani grip”, also advocated by Leopold Mozart, is deemed to be good but Baillot develops the positioning and flexibility of the left-hand thumb.

Baillot’s thoughts include the discussion of the Tourte bow, the progressive design of bow that was the subject of heated debated at that time. He believes that this new bow has great potential, and so advocates its use. Moreover, he no longer advocates a relatively simple stroke whereby each up or down-bow has its set speed, but incorporates both slow and fast strokes within one up or down-bow. Baillot also discusses a comprehensive list of the fast bow strokes, from *détaché* to flying staccato as well as specialised techniques such as *col legno* and *sul ponticello*.

Concerning the areas of left and right hand, he describes ornamentation and tone production, as well as questions of taste such as *tempo rubato*. Of particular note when it comes to the aforementioned areas, Baillot described three types of “undulated sounds” — the first being a sound that moves in waves due to a shifting of weight along the stick of the bow, as originating from differing pressures exerted thereupon by the right hand. The second is vibrato. Finally, Baillot describes sound when the two effects are combined, resulting in what is none other than a bow vibrato.

### **Charles-Auguste de Bériot, *Méthode de violon* (1858)**

Charles-Auguste de Bériot is generally accredited as having established the Franco-Belgian School of violin playing. The teachings of Giovanni Battista Viotti (who

encouraged Bériot on his path), Pierre Baillot (with whom he briefly studied), Pierre Rode, and Rodolphe Kreutzer were developed by the native Belgian and teacher at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles from 1843 until 1852. He resigned due to failing eyesight — a handicap he shared with a successor at the Conservatoire, André Gertler – that would develop into full blindness by 1858. However, his career was finally brought to a close not by lack of sight, but by a paralysis of his left arm in 1866.

Bériot was among the most explicit in aiming for a sound influenced by the human voice. It seems likely that in this he was influenced by the rise of the bel canto style of opera associated with Bellini (1801–1835) and others. Indeed, his wife was the famous Spanish mezzo-soprano Maria Malibran (1808–1836), who was particularly admired for her singing of Bellini. A further guide was Malibran’s father, Manuel García (1775–1832), from whose singing treatise *Exercises and Method for Singing* (London, 1825) the violinist drew inspiration. Bériot also brought some of Paganini’s virtuoso vocabulary to his students in Brussels.

In his *Méthode de violon* Opus 102 (Paris, 1858), the first two parts of which are devoted to technique, the third to style, Bériot focuses on “imitating the accents of the human voice” and consistently compares the voice and vocal repertoire with that of the violin. He believes violinists should aim to match singers’ diverse shades of articulation — particularly of consonants, their expression in the phrasing of melodies, and should hone a “method of separating words and syllables to give them more emphasis and accentuation” according to the prevailing sentiment or character of any piece.<sup>93</sup>

Bériot likens the bow to a singer’s breath or even larynx, and observes the hierarchy within a bar and the traditional rule of down-bow by marking “all the long syllables with a down-bow, and the short with an up-bow.”<sup>94</sup>

He also considers portamento an important ingredient for facilitating cantabile, and again draws comparisons with the voice when he aligns a cantabile style of playing

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<sup>93</sup> Charles-Auguste de Bériot, *Méthode de violon*, 3<sup>ème</sup> Partie, (Paris: Schott, 1858), p. 211.

<sup>94</sup> Charles-Auguste de Bériot, *Méthode de violon*, 3<sup>ème</sup> Partie, (Paris: Schott, 1858), p. 212.

with the singing of “two notes joined by the same syllable in vocal music”. Furthermore, he encourages violinists to sing, and to do this endorses the use of solfège, or solfeggio — the ancient practice of vocalising of notes to syllables such as *do, re, mi* and so on, stating that it is “the basis of a musical education”.

Regarding posture and the holding of the instrument and bow, much of what Bériot writes reflects Baillot. For example, when it comes to practice technique, he continues Viotti’s “la gamme muette” which involves very light, slow and sustained bowing in scales. For chords, Bériot advocates spreading them slightly and always emphasising the highest note.

Like Galeazzi, Bériot begins scale studies with G major, rather than C major. Concerning vibrato, he refers to “soft”, “medium” and “loud” vibrato, these seemingly aligned with dynamic as opposed to speed or breadth of oscillation.

Bériot’s favour towards a predominantly vocal style of violin performance was continued by his compatriot Hubert Léonard (1819–1890), who succeeded Bériot at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles. Léonard too published a number of works on violin playing, including *Premiers principes du violon* Opus 47.

### **Ferdinand David, *Violinschule* (1867)<sup>95</sup>**

A violin professor at the Leipzig Conservatoire from its inception in 1843, contemporary of Charles-Auguste de Bériot, and a student of Louis Spohr, Ferdinand David develops the four basic vibratos that his teacher had set down in his *Violinschule* of 1832.

The first part of *Violinschule* is written for beginners, the second for advanced students.

The treatise has a largely musical content consisting of exercises and duets designed for use with a teacher, but it also includes significant textual instruction and a number of illustrations, notably of the typical German right-arm position with the elbow low and close to the body.

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<sup>95</sup> Partially based on Robin Stowell, “In principle: Violin Pedagogy Through the Ages. 4: Bériot, Joachim and Moser”, *The Strad*, December 2007, vol. 118 No. 1412, p. 66–69.

The bow is held along the distal interphalangeal joint of the first three fingers in a rigid fashion, thereby forcing the wrist into suppleness.

Also notable is his varied use of scales, his recommendation of the “Geminiani” grip, his appreciation of the relationship between bow speed, bow pressure and contact point. Unlike Spohr, he does not reject springing bowings. Moreover, he expands on his teacher’s basic vibratos, describing thirteen different types, all of which relate to dynamic expression. He also discusses the technique for vibrating the open G string, by placing the third finger in the first position on the D string — the player strokes the G string but not the D string to achieve the desired result. Furthermore, David lists techniques such as left-hand pizzicato, single and double artificial harmonics, and simultaneous bowing and pizzicato.

### **More Austro-German Treatises in brief (c. 1881–1899)**

The Franco-Belgian School’s performing style, incorporating springing bowings and flying staccato, contrasted strongly with the on-the-string preference of most German players.

Louis Spohr’s student, Ferdinand David, used many of Spohr’s principles and developed them. David’s students did so in turn. Spohr’s principles provided the foundation for David’s pupils Henry Schradieck (1846–1918) and Carl Courvoisier (1846–1908).

Courvoisier, following his schooling under David, studied for a short time with Joseph Joachim who warmly endorsed *Die Grundlage der Violintechnik* (1873), *Die Violin-Technik* (1878), and *The Technics of Violin Playing on Joachim’s Method* (1899).

### **Otakar Ševčík, *Schule der Violintechnik* Opus 1 (1881), *Schule der Bogentechnik* Opus 2 (1895), *Violinschule* 6 (1904–08)**

Ševčík’s works largely comprise fully written-out exercises. Each exercise is designed for the student to be able to target a specific point of technique and to work it out by using the exercise, rather than a piece belonging to the major repertoire of the violin. There is an element of “dryness” in this approach, because the exercises’

repetitive nature and simple musical structure lend little to the imagination. However, Ševčík, like few others, drills the student in precise mechanical movements that build security, strength and precision for both left- and right-hand techniques. Moreover, if introduced by the teacher at the right time, a passage that proves difficult in a composition can be worked out in a micro-setting. Nearly every technical element can be practised using his exercises and thereafter placed into context within a major composition for violin. The exercises tend to be short — Ševčík reduces each element of technique that an exercise is written for to its smallest component. Often, an exercise can be repeated in different fashions, using new bowings or tempos, whilst maintaining the same pitches. This is in order to ensure the student focuses only on the most specific point of any exercise. I believe Ševčík's studies should be used as part of practice at a certain point in any student's experience, but with caution — the sheer repetition of not only the physical movements but also the music itself can be draining vis-à-vis the artistic values of a player or indeed lead to a certain misplaced obsessiveness.

### **Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser, *Violinschule* (1902–05)<sup>96</sup>**

The three-volume *Violinschule* was written in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and published under the names of Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) — a disciple of David and pupil of Böhm — and his pupil and assistant Andreas Moser (1859–1925). The text was largely written by Moser, though Joachim influenced and approved of Moser's views and contributed performing editions, with cadenzas as appropriate, of the 16 works included in the third volume.

*Violinschule* is generally regarded as being representative of the German School, and aims to cultivate technical skills that “serve the object of genuine music”<sup>97</sup>. It rejects the “Geminiani grip” for the establishment of the left-hand position and emphasises the role of scales in developing left and right-hand technique.

The study of melodic minor scales precedes that of harmonic ones; economy of shifting is valued in the pursuit of true intonation; and the customary prioritising of

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<sup>96</sup> Partially based on Robin Stowell, “In principle: Violin Pedagogy Through the Ages. 4: Bériot, Joachim and Moser”, *The Strad*, December 2007, vol. 118 No. 1412, p. 66–69.

<sup>97</sup> See Stowell, “In principle: Violin Pedagogy Through the Ages. 4: Bériot, Joachim and Moser”, *The Strad*, December 2007, vol. 118 No. 1412, p. 69.

the third position over the second, and “uneven” (odd-numbered) positions generally, is rejected.

The left thumb is to achieve dexterity in shifting; portamento is endorsed as a means of expression and of preserving uniform timbre, with the precondition that one uses the portamento discerningly and, in keeping with Spohr’s principles, the starting finger undertakes the slide and the intermediate notes are nearly inaudible. Sliding with the second finger of the two fingers is considered faulty except when sliding to a harmonic. Neither the illustrations nor the text corroborate Carl Flesch’s criticisms of Joachim’s allegedly cramped and unnatural bowing style, caused by a combination of a low elbow and a high wrist.

Joachim and Moser argue a number of points made by their predecessors and peers: they disagree with Leopold Mozart’s conviction that the bow arm should be held low consistently, and instead believe in free movement of the upper arm at the shoulder joint. They criticise Spohr’s rejection of the selective use of artificial harmonics and left-hand pizzicato but broaden Spohr’s bowing vocabulary to include spiccato and springing bowings as fundamental bow strokes. They also cite Spohr on the use of vibrato, recommending its selective introduction only where expression demands it and recognising “the steady tone as the ruling one”.<sup>98</sup> They oppose Bériot’s method of chord arpeggiation, preferring simultaneous execution of the notes of three-note chords wherever possible. However, as with Bériot’s *Méthode*, singing provides the tapestry upon which matters of phrasing and articulation are woven: the addition of words to the opening bars of Joachim’s Romance Opus 2 clarifies the accentuation, character and vibrato usage.

Volume three comprises ten short essays by Moser on “style and artistic performance”. Some of these essays discuss topics already mentioned in the first two volumes: vibrato, portamento, accentuation, phrasing, timbre and ornamentation. Other focus on the honesty with which the interpreter relays the composer’s indications regarding expression, style and delivery; the benefits of uniform orchestral bowing; the relationship between violin and continuo; tempo modification,

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<sup>98</sup> See Stowell, “In principle: Violin Pedagogy Through the Ages. 4: Bériot, Joachim and Moser”, *The Strad*, December 2007, vol. 118 No. 1412, p. 69.



rubato and prolongation; and the appreciation of idiosyncracies of style of individual interpreters and styles of performance that derive from a player's national heritage. Joachim and Moser note, "It is not sufficient to play the note correctly... the living spirit of a work of art must be made apparent if its reproduction is to make any impression."<sup>99</sup>

### **Leopold Auer, *Violin Playing As I Teach It* (1921)**

Hungarian-born Leopold Auer (1845–1930), a student of Jakob Dont and later Joseph Joachim, was one of the foremost teachers of his time. He taught in Saint Petersburg for nearly fifty years and spent time during a few summers teaching in London and Dresden as well. After the Russian Revolution of 1917 he moved to New York and also travelled to Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music to teach. His legacy of teaching is unbroken: for example, his practices were followed by his student Efrem Zimbalist (1890–1985), and in turn, Zimbalist's pupil, the Israeli Shmuel Ashkenasi (b. 1941) has taught at the Institute since 2007/2008.

Auer was primarily a teacher for advanced students, often the last stop before a student became a fully-fledged professional. The testament of his teaching is impressive, for some of his students are amongst the most influential violinists of the last century. They include Mischa Elman (1891–1967), Jascha Heifetz (1901–1987), Nathan Milstein (1904–1992), Oscar Shumsky (1917–2000) and, of course, Efrem Zimbalist.

Auer produced two treatises; his second, the eight-volume *Graded Course of Violin Playing* (1926) discusses his approach from the very beginnings of a violinist's study. His first treatise, *Violin Playing As I Teach It*, is aimed at advanced students and teachers.

Auer emphasises a number of topics of interest that set him apart from other teachers before him and of his own time. These include his injunction to play without a shoulder rest; to consider the chinrest most carefully and have it moulded to shape the physique of the player best; moving the thumb forward for the "Geminiani grip"

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<sup>99</sup> See Stowell, "In principle: Violin Pedagogy Through the Ages. 4: Bériot, Joachim and Moser", *The Strad*, December 2007, vol. 118 No. 1412, p. 69.

and holding the neck of the violin as high as possible, so as to loosen the left hand's grip on the violin, therefore accommodating greater freedom of movement for, as an example, expert position changes. This is in line with Auer's opinion that the distance travelled from one note to the next when shifting should be inaudible.

Auer also discusses physiological and psychological factors. He concerns himself for instance with the idea of using pressure from the wrist instead of the arm when stroking the bow and prescribes searching for a singing tone when playing. He also writes that concentration and self-criticism are great teachers when it comes to practising, patience, intonation and sound production.

The subject of vibrato is considered. Auer, like Joachim, uses it as a means of expression and embellishment but is convinced that not every note should be vibrated, because this can become a ploy to camouflage poor intonation.

On practising scales or exercises for the left hand's agility and stability, Auer describes the employment of diatonic and chromatic scales for strength and independence amongst the fingers, as well as scales in thirds, fourths (for stable intonation when playing artificial harmonics), sixths, octaves and tenths. He also lists trills as part of daily practice, to build up the strength and speed of the fingers.

When it comes to fingering, Auer laid out principles still followed by many. For instance, he suggests shifting position when changing stroke, as opposed to changing position when slurring notes on one bow. He also believes, in not only a realistic but also entirely unpedantic manner, that fingerings are to be tailored to the individual, considering that each hand is shaped differently.

Chords are to be executed two notes at a time, not one plus two or one plus three, with a light attack from the right wrist and the sounding point being between the bridge and the fingerboard.

In the final chapters of the book, Auer writes about ornamentation, specific techniques such as pizzicato and harmonics as well as questions of interpretation, style, tone production, stage fright and repertoire.

In 1925, Auer would go on to publish a book showing his taste concerning interpretation for selected works in his *Violin Masterworks and their Interpretation*.

### **Demetrius Constantine Dounis, *The Artist's Technique of Violin Playing* Opus 12 (1921)**

Essentially continuing where Ševčík left off, Dounis wrote his vast work as a further contribution to the development of technical skills demanded by 20<sup>th</sup>-century compositions. *The Artist's Technique of Violin Playing* is one of the longest studies that Dounis devised — others include *The Absolute Independence of the Fingers* Opus 15 (1924) and *The Violin Players' Daily Dozen* Opus 20 (1925), the latter comprising twelve fundamental exercises for the left and right hands, planned as a means for getting the player thoroughly warmed up ahead of performing larger works from the standard repertoire. Later works, such as *The Higher Development of Thirds and Fingered Octaves* Opus 30 (1946) provide the player with “means towards absolute mastery... in this particular branch of left hand technique.”

As a student, Dounis simultaneously studied violin with the Czech-born František Ondříček (1857–1922) as well as medicine at the University of Vienna. His keen knowledge and awareness of physiology can be observed in his exercises. For instance, the correct ergonomics of violin playing, such as the horizontal and vertical movements of the left hand, and muscle development (as well as relaxation of the muscles), finger strength, independence of the left fingers and the correct bow hold were primary concerns. All of these are reflected in his studies.

Dounis also highlighted the role of the brain in violin playing and practicing. In his general remarks prefacing *The Artist's Technique of Violin Playing* he writes, “the true technical training of the violinist is not merely a training of the arm and fingers but, principally, a training of the brain and memory. The fingers and the arm should obey perfectly the intention of the player in order to be able to perform any movement with complete mastery.” He goes on, “what we call technique is nothing but a series of brain-reflected movements. The secret lies in building up these movement pictures into a rational, logical whole — namely, technique.”

The primary intent of Dounis' Opus 12 was to clarify issues related to violin practising. He writes, "the object of this work is to indicate a method of solving all the problems of higher technique of both hands, with the least possible expenditure of time and energy, and to provide definite suggestions for mastering all technical difficulties. In other words, this book aims to teach THE TRUE METHOD OF PRACTISING."<sup>100</sup>

Opus 12 is in two parts — the first part aimed at the left hand, the second at the right. In part II, Dounis suggests that the entire right hand technique can be reduced to two basic strokes, the simple and the accentuated *détaché*. The former refers to the drawing of the bow with no audible change of bow between strokes. The latter refers to a strong accent placed at the start of each stroke. These comments are accompanied by a diagram entitled "Genealogical Picture of Bow Strokes" which traces *spiccato*, *legato*, flying *staccato* and *martelé* back to either simple or accentuated *détaché*.

### **Carl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing* (1923–28)**

Carl Flesch, a compatriot of Auer, was a prolific pedagogue and, like Auer and Joachim, a legend in his own lifetime and to this day. He had been awarded his *premier prix* as a student at the Conservatoire de Paris in the class of Eugène Sauzay (1809–1901), who, in turn, had been taught by Martin Marsick and Pierre Baillot. Flesch, like Auer, was the teacher of some of the most renowned violinists of the last century, amongst them Max Rostal (1905–1991), Ginette Neveu (1919–1949) and Ida Haendel (b. 1923). He travelled a lot in his profession as teacher, holding posts in Berlin and at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Later, he also taught at the Conservatory of Lucerne, Switzerland.

Included in the list of published works he left behind are *Urstudien für Violine*, printed in 1911, which are warm-up exercises and involve the principal mechanical movements made by the body to play the instrument. Thereafter appeared *Das*

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<sup>100</sup> Quotes as written by Demetrius Constantine Dounis, *The Artist's Technique of Violin Playing Opus 12*, p. 8 and p. 11, *The Higher Development of Thirds and Fingered Octaves*, p. 219 from *The Dounis Collection, Eleven Books of Studies for the Violin* (New York: Carl Fischer, 2005).

*Skalensystem für Violine* (1926), a veritable bible of scale systems in all the keys where basic forms of the left hand position are developed, and are still in wide use today. It was followed in 1931 by *Das Klangproblem im Geigenspiel*.

Flesch was innovative in his approach to fingering, moving away from tradition as can be observed in *Alta Scuola di Diteggiatura Violinistica*, published posthumously in 1960 and, unusually, in Italian. It later appeared in English and German. Flesch saw fingerings more liberally than his contemporaries, defining it as a question of taste and a link of expression between performer and composer, where the performer would add a personal touch to the intentions laid out by the composer. He proceeded to outline ways to personalise fingerings.

Flesch's monumental contribution to treatises was *Die Kunst des Violinspiels*, which was published in two volumes, the first in 1923, the second in 1928. To date, it was the most comprehensive and detailed outline of the principal schools of violin playing of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a compendium designed for teachers to advise their students in an informed way, offering information on most violin-specific topics, from technique and methodology to issues of physiology and overcoming psychological obstacles. It aims to offer the reader logical conclusions to specific problems encountered when practising, and to this day it seems to be a work that offers considered answers to almost any question imaginable within violin playing. Nearly 90 years after it was written, most violin teachers still advise their students to read it, as the work of an author who is scholarly but not pedantic, and rational but unrestricted in his thought processes.

The first volume of *The Art of Playing the Violin* focuses primarily on technical principles. Flesch details all aspects of left- and right-hand technique in minute detail, outlines the ideal posture when playing (which includes three possible positions for the feet) and, like Auer, advocates playing without a shoulder rest. For shifting, Flesch uses inaudible intermediary notes. He describes three different types of shift: a continuous slide involving one finger; a slide where the finger that stops the string at the start shifts to an intermediary note before another finger stops the string for the last note at the end of the slide; and a slide where the finger that stops the intermediary note slides to the top note and where the intermediary note is played

by a different finger to the one that began the first note. Flesch describes a vibrato that encompasses finger, wrist and arm, used at various times in variable proportions in direct relation for expressive effect.

Flesch identifies three principal bow grips; the Franco-Belgian, German and Russian. In his description one failing becomes clear — his description of the finger-joints is imprecise. Without the accompanying images, a position could be entirely misunderstood. The Franco-Belgian grip involves the index finger having contact “at the extreme end of its second joint”; German grip involves the index finger having contact with the bow “between the first and second joints”; Russian is described as the index finger touching the bow “at the line separating the second from the third joint” and involving greater pronation of the arm. Flesch prefers the Russian grip as it provides greater sonority and stability.

Involving both left and right arms, Flesch discusses the performance practice of chords, preferring three-note chords spread two by two and four-note chords three by two.

Concluding the first volume, Flesch discusses varied bowings and techniques of memorisation.

In the second volume of *The Art of Violin Playing*, Flesch describes general musical principles including metre, rhythm and accents, the last of which include dynamic, rhythmic and agogic accents. He also discusses ornamentation, articulation, dynamics, tempo, phrasing, style, and general characteristics of music depending on the origin of a composition.

Later, Flesch discusses parameters a player is confronted with when going on stage, and how it could impinge on the performance. These include technical, acoustical, visual, spatial, physical, and psychological elements.

This second volume concludes with musical examples from eleven composers and an analysis of rubato in Hungarian folk music. It is interesting to note that Joachim, Auer and Flesch were all Hungarians. They are at the origins of most of the teachings

of the violinists mentioned in this thesis with exception of some of those of Russian descent. Regardless of the countries in which they taught — Auer in Moscow, Joachim in Hanover and Flesch in Berlin — and the information they gleaned on their travels, the foundation of their teaching was based upon the Hungarian School.

### **Izrail Markovich Yampolsky, *The Principles of Violin Fingering* (1933)**

First published in English in 1967, this contribution to a highly specialised aspect of technique initially appeared in Russian in 1933, with a Preface written by David Oistrakh (1908–1974). It is a comprehensive consideration of not only universal observations towards the art of fingering, but also other principles of the left hand. In his Foreword, Yampolsky outlines the significance of fingering in playing style and its impact on performance. He argues that many violinists have not taken the topic seriously enough and that the “Soviet violin school, which has developed to a high degree the traditions of the pre-revolutionary school of violin playing, pays great attention to fingering disciplines.”<sup>101</sup>

In the Introduction, Yampolsky outlines a brief history of the violin and its development from its early appearance (where the neck was shorter and thicker than it is today) and subsequent way of playing to modern-day instruments and resulting technique. Of note is the information pertaining to the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Russian violinist Ivan Khandoshkin (1747–1804) who, in his *Russian Songs with Variations* for violin and bass, published in Amsterdam in 1781, “was the first to use the virtuoso technique of playing on one string only (the G string).”<sup>102</sup>

Following this introduction are twenty-five chapters, beginning with a discussion of basics such as the movements and placement of the fingers on the fingerboard, the tuning of the instrument in fifths, positions on the fingerboard and position changes. Chapters eight until fifteen examine diatonic and chromatic scales, broken thirds and arpeggios as well as sevenths, thirds, sixths and octaves. Yampolsky gives examples of these, as well as applications of them in the major repertoire.

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<sup>101</sup> Izrail Markovich Yampolsky, *The Principles of Violin Fingering* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 1.

<sup>102</sup> Izrail Markovich Yampolsky, op cit., p. 8.

From chapter sixteen onwards, Yampolsky discusses the very advanced techniques of mixed types of double-stopping and chords, the relationship between fingerings and bowings, recurring patterns in fingerings, harmonics and enharmonic changes including in-depth tables, and closes the book with analysis of how fingerings affect intonation, and expressive sound qualities such as glissando and portamento. He closes with a discussion of cantilena style and the quality of tone as influenced by fingerings.

In his conclusion, Yampolsky writes, “For any one style of musical performance there exists its own particular complex of technical devices which are in a manner of speaking the technique of that style. Technical considerations spring from artistic considerations, and have no absolute significance [...] If the elements of dynamics and bowing belong to the technique of the right hand, the timbre of the instrument is basically a question of left hand technique – the type of vibrato, the use of portamento, position playing — all connected with the choice of fingering.”<sup>103</sup>

### **Shin’ichi Suzuki, *The Suzuki Method* (1950)**

*The Suzuki Method* is, strictly speaking, not a thesis or manual as such. However, the long-reaching arm of Shin’ichi Suzuki’s philosophy has spread so wide that it would be a mistake not to acknowledge its impact on violin education. Born in 1898, Suzuki lived to be one-hundred years old; and his legacy has produced vast numbers of violinists, including a number of noted professionals such as Etō Toshiya, Toyota Kōji, Kobayashi Takeshi, Kobayashi Kenji, Suzuki Shūtarō, Urakawa Takaya, Kuronuma Yuriko, Shida Toshiko and Satō Yōko.<sup>104</sup>

Suzuki was a student of Andō Kō who had been a student of Joachim. After completing his studies with Kō, Suzuki was taught by another Joachim student, Karl Klingler, in Berlin. Suzuki began trying out his ideas in group-education classes where students numbering as many as forty were taught a few exercises, simple enough for everyone to understand and repeat. The following day, these exercises were reviewed and, once assured that the whole class had remembered and grasped

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<sup>103</sup> Izrail Markovich Yampolsky, op cit., p. 129.

<sup>104</sup> List of students from *New Grove*, article on Suzuki.



them, new exercises were added. Suzuki made the success of this formula the basis of his violin method, begun in Sainō Kyōiku Kenkyū-kai, Matsumoto (founded in 1950), and by 1952 nearly two hundred students graduated successfully.

The basis of the Suzuki method remains largely unchanged today — disciples of the philosophy give group lessons where simple melodies, ranging from Boccherini and Bach to Marais and Mozart are taught through imitation. In some instances, the material is imparted with the aid of audio tapes, other times the teacher plays a piece and the class imitates it.

As has been argued in 1.2 above, the greatest strength of the method is its greatest weakness: Suzuki devised his method not so much to create outstanding violinists but for the purpose of the development of an individual's character through talent education. For instance, the reading of music notation is not taught from the beginning of a student's education, leaving those who desire independently to explore the violin repertoire in a weak position. In the worst case, an evolved player is set back once the reading of music is introduced in later years. Technical virtuosity is not necessarily neglected; far worse, due to the notion of group lessons, students might manage to copy complex technical techniques but without correct positioning or control of the fine and gross motor-movements.

However, as has already been discussed in 1.2 above, some of these problems may arise largely because of an individual teacher's practice, rather than because of inevitable limitations within the philosophy, approach or method. For example, many teachers who have been trained within the method do use individual lessons, with all the benefits this can bring. However, it must be recognized that, with Suzuki's method more than any other, too many teachers have confused the virtue of simplicity and the vice of simplification. Too often, the result is a misguided, simplistic approach to the entire subject of music. And within violin teaching, a lot of misguided teaching happens because the teacher is neither well-skilled nor well-versed on the actual subject of violin playing.

**Ivan Galamian (with Elizabeth A.H. Green), *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (1962)**

Due to a mixture of nerves, health issues and a particular fondness for teaching, Galamian, whose roster of students reads like a who's-who of American violin playing, became one of the fountainheads of the American School.

*Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* is testament to his progressive approach, which rests in particular on the connections he makes between physical movement and mental control. Playing the violin can be considered to be as demanding as any athletic undertaking, and is often compared to a sport. Furthermore, the cerebral approach behind sports such as golf or tennis, where the concept of each movement is first mapped out in the mind and only then physically realised, is one Galamian might have approved of.

The main principles behind Galamian's approach to technique and interpretation are the physical, mental and aesthetic-emotional factors. The physical involves the anatomical condition of the individual; the mental factor is "the ability of the mind to prepare, direct and supervise the muscular activity" and the aesthetic-emotional factor is the term used for explaining creativity and originality of expression provided via technical skills that have already been acquired.<sup>105</sup>

"The foundation upon which the building of technique rests... lies in the correct relationship of mind to the muscles, the smooth, quick and accurate functioning of the sequence in which the mental command elicits the desired muscular response."<sup>106</sup> This mental-physical relationship is referred to by Galamian throughout his work as "correlation".

*Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* is divided as follows. An introduction focuses on perceived deficiencies in teaching systems of Galamian's time. Chapter One discusses technique and interpretation, telling of the general approach to teaching that Galamian had; and in that respect *Principles* differs from older treatises, which usually start by discussing mechanics, followed by technical aspects and conclude with matters concerning interpretation and style.

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<sup>105</sup> Ivan Galamian (with E.A.H. Green), *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), p. 3.

<sup>106</sup> Ivan Galamian (with E.A.H. Green), *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), p. 5–6.

In Galamian, the left hand is looked at in Chapter Two, the right hand in Chapter Three. An entire chapter is devoted to the techniques of practising on the violin. The conclusion is written for teachers, and primarily reminds the reader that individual students have individual needs; a student must be assessed as completely as possible by the teacher before study ensues, ensuring the chance to best guide the student according to their needs. Galamian writes, “Teaching according to rigid rules is teaching of the wrong kind.”<sup>107</sup>

Concerning interpretation, Galamian goes back to one of the earliest concepts in musical performance — rhetoric. He draws parallels between performers and orators, by aligning the speaker’s vowels with a singing tone that has a smooth beginning and ending, and consonants with the performer’s percussive or accentual elements.<sup>108</sup>

Where the “Geminiani grip” was a method of finding a good position for the left hand on the violin, Galamian works from the setting of an octave to frame of hand. This means that, for instance, in the first position, the octave A–A on the G and the D strings, as performed by the first and fourth finger, set the left hand’s basic frame. Within this frame the second and third finger are placed whether in semitones or whole tones. “The octave frame should be retained in each position, with the fingers reaching their assigned spots (by normal placement or by extensions) without abandoning the feel for this frame.”<sup>109</sup> Galamian discusses two main groups of shifts, calling these the “complete shift” and the “half shift”. The complete shift involves sliding the whole hand from one position to the next, whereas the half shift allows the thumb to remain in position but its flexibility enables fingers to move between notes and positions within the range of movement allowed by the thumb’s position. Moreover, Galamian recognises four different types of shift involving the finger: a) where the shift is begun and concluded on one and the same finger; b) shifts begun with one finger and concluded by a different finger on arrival; c) a shift begun with

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<sup>107</sup> Ivan Galamian (with E.A.H. Green), *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), p. 105.

<sup>108</sup> From Robin Stowell, “In principle: Violin Pedagogy Through the Ages. 6: Galamian and Fischer”, *The Strad*, February 2008, vol. 119 No. 1414, p. 58–63.

<sup>109</sup> Ivan Galamian (with E.A.H. Green), *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), p. 20.

one finger and continued by the finger of the arrival point; d) extension of a finger into a new position, after which the hand follows.

Concerning the right hand, Galamian was inspired by the teachings of Lucien Capet, with whom he studied in Paris. Thus, his chapter on bow hold and strokes is written in a most clear and precise fashion. Galamian promotes a “natural” bow grip that allows the player comfort and freedom. However, the position of the hand on the bow is subject to continuous modification depending on bow division, dynamics and tonal colours. Galamian describes bow strokes in detail, beginning with legato, and taking the reader through various détaché strokes, as well as intricate techniques such as martelé, collé, flying staccato and spiccato, as well as ricochet and the “roulé” stroke.

To offer two examples of how a statement from *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* can be understood, I refer to the section entitled “Technique and correlation” in Chapter One. On page 6, Galamian writes:

The question becomes, thus, one of how to improve the correlation. The answer is that the player has to present the mind-muscle unit with problems to solve, problems that proceed from the simple to the ever more complex. The problems best suited for this purpose are those of rhythm and coordination. They will be dealt with in some detail in the chapter On Practicing. Here it is sufficient to say that such problems may take the form of a) a variation of time values (rhythms) which are the concern of the left hand, of b) bowing patterns for the right hand, of c) the combination of both of the preceding as coordination problems, and finally of d) the superimposition of accents which may further complicate the problems to be solved.

a) can be misleading. Surely rhythms and time values depend on the coordination of both hands? In specific response to Galamian’s point, **Ozim** thinks that rhythmic variation depends on the stroke. For example, on a long note, rhythmic values lie in the right hand, that is, a legato note of four beats repeated depends on the stroke. Rhythmic feeling on a long legato stroke with five different pitches to the stroke,

however, depends on the left hand. In other cases, it is a question of coordination of both hands.

In Chapter Two, page 14, in the section entitled “Left Arm” Galamian writes:

The elbow, however, is never rigidly set. Whatever its basic placement, it changes its position beneath the instrument as the fingers move across the strings. When the fingers approach the G string, the elbow moves more to the right; for the E string, more to the left, except in higher positions when it pulls to the right for all players concerned.

Ozim teaches according to this principle. However, there are exceptions to the rule, one such being fifths. When teaching fifths, Ozim instructs his students that the elbow moves in the direction of the higher string so that the finger has an equal angle and pressure to the strings, that is: sounding the A and the D on the G and D strings in the first position with the first finger means that the elbow is out to the left, “aiming” its angle, as it were, to the D string.

### **Paul Rolland, *The Teaching of Action in String Playing* (1966–71)**

Hungarian-born violist Paul Rolland began a string research project at the University of Illinois that resulted in *The Teaching of Action in String Playing*. His approach was more scientific than his predecessors, comparing the motor skills involved in playing to those in sports or dance. His main point of interest lay in early study, his belief being that, if taught well from the start, the resulting abilities of a player would be secured. Thus, his teaching methods were based on logic and a systematic approach to learning. He encouraged other teachers to lead their students as clearly and concisely as possible through the given lessons, and exhausting analysis of all aspects of playing was a part of this process. Each action and muscle group had a reason for being used; and none was employed that did not have a necessary part in performance technique. Rolland's ideas are supported not only by a book but also by demonstrative films aimed at guiding the first two years of study. He emphasised relaxed movements, good posture and correct position in order to result in healthy sound production and accuracy.

### **József Szigeti, *Szigeti on the Violin* (1969)**

Szigeti's opus is not only a fundamentally exciting read, it is filled with ideas and performance tips pertaining to the many extracts of music therein. His work reads as a virtual masterclass, scolding and jokes included. Spiced with anecdotes and stories from his life, his treatise covers much ground, his personality echoed even within the titles of his chapters. One such title is "Continues the foregoing by speculating on the recital's chances of survival in the twenty-first century and touches upon the emergence in our own times of the game of chance called 'Competition'". Another chapter "Begins with a dictum of Carl Flesch about the importance of the orchestral player in the state of music in general and about the sins of omission and commission of teachers which in turn leads into saddening data concerning quacks, spurious claims and the like".

Unlike other treatises, one has the impression of hearing the author speak, his countless thoughts concerning the approach to technique and performance practice are laid out in a way that is not only precise, but musical. Perhaps one of the most distinct differences between Szigeti's work and that of others is exactly that — the

musicality of his approach to everything he teaches. *Szigeti on the Violin* is not particularly well-organised, appears to have no systematic progression of thought as should be found in a method, and discussion of something as basic as intonation is conspicuously absent, except for a telling passage that puts things simply.

There Is No Substitute For Perfect Intonation. Beauty of tone, perfection of technique, sense of style, the faculty of transmitting the essence, the poetry, the passion of a musical composition, all these gifts will be of no avail if the cardinal virtue of perfect intonation is missing. So let me repeat: There Is No Substitute For Perfect Intonation.<sup>110</sup>

But it is precisely this brazen and outspoken voice, this somewhat haphazard style of thought — not unexpected from a student who once performed at a circus in Germany under a pseudonym<sup>111</sup> — that makes me inclined to agree with Szigeti's own conclusion about some of the German treatises discussed above.

... as I look at it now... I see... a typically Germanic urge for 'completeness' which they call '*Restlosigkeit*'... While gathering these materials, my labours have not been sordidly mechanistic like the work which went into those manuals. While working on it I have been constantly in the presence of Music.<sup>112</sup>

### **Yehudi Menuhin, *Six Lessons with Yehudi Menuhin* (1971)**

The tutor by Yehudi Menuhin grew out of six films called *Violin* that centred on the maestro teaching young students at the Yehudi Menuhin School of Music (established in 1963).

The author takes the reader from early stages of knowledge on the playing of the instrument, to the more advanced stage of ability that is described in the sixth lesson. Thus the book is as useful to a beginner as it is to a professional violinist.

In the first chapter of the book, Menuhin, deeply moved by the discovery of yoga in his later years, writes solely about general preparatory exercises that focus on

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<sup>110</sup> József Szigeti, *Szigeti on the Violin* (London: Dover Publications, 1979), p. xxii.

<sup>111</sup> From Margaret Campbell: *The Great Violinists*. (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1981), p. 161.

<sup>112</sup> József Szigeti, *Szigeti on the Violin*, (London: Dover Publications, 1979), p. 226–227.

breathing, posture, stretching and warming-up; slowly the exercises evolve into movements akin to those made when playing the violin. Later lessons delve into the actual playing of the instrument, always accompanied by a strong emphasis on posture and a holistic approach to playing. The lessons are accompanied by illustrations depicting Menuhin demonstrating even the most basic movements. At the close of the final lesson, an appendix discussing daily practice exercises and warming-up exercises can be found, as well as Menuhin's tips on care of the violin and bow.

### **Kató Havas, *Stage Fright, its Causes and Cures, with Special Reference to Violin Playing* (1973)**

Havas' body of work includes other titles, such as *A New Approach to Violin Playing* (1961) and *The Twelve Lesson Course* (1964). It is arguable that these might be of more value when it comes to the technical details of violin playing. However, I choose to concentrate on *Stage Fright* as an example of how much more light has been shone on the mind of the performing instrumentalist in a century that saw psychotherapy become dinner-table conversation. With the attention lavished upon Sigmund Freud at the turn of the century, and the growth of the cognitive sciences, the consideration of neurological factors seeped into the approach to teaching and performing amongst musicians.

Havas shows this well in her book, which concerns itself specifically with the analysis and overcoming of stage fright. Drawing on the Magyar gypsy violinist as the perfect example of one unaffected by the anxieties that grip so many classical players when performing in front of an audience, Havas draws on social, historical and psychological aspects as she lays out her case. The book zones in on specific topics of dread such as the physical aspects of stage fright that could involve dropping the violin, the trembling bow arm, playing out of tune and playing in high positions. Havas goes on to discuss mental aspects of stage fright such as being afraid of not playing loud or fast enough, the panic associated with memory lapse and the social aspect of fearing not being good enough.



The book closes with extensive tips on the art of practising and a guide to preparing for performances ranging from concerts to auditions and examinations. Menuhin, in a letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 1974, praised Havas on *Stage Fright*, describing it as being “worth its weight in gold”.

### **Zakhar Bron, *Etüdenkunst* (1998)**

One of the most sought-after pedagogues of our time, Zakhar Bron’s contributions to violin playing are not only formed around his students’ achievements but also by way of DVDs (thirteen exist to date and include complete accounts of Bron’s approach to concertos by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Rieding, Wieniawski and Vivaldi as well as pieces by Franz Waxmann, Ernest Chausson, and Christian August Sinding) and his *Etüdenkunst*.

Bron’s study draws on eight etudes from Dont’s *24 Etudes and Caprices*, two etudes from Wieniawski’s *Etudes and Caprices* Op. 18, and three caprices from Paganini’s *24 Caprices* Opus 1. Each piece is used to exemplify the practise of a particular point of technique or to discuss common stumbling blocks and how to prevent or cure them. Although interesting and detailed, Bron’s work is not a replacement for lessons with the master himself.

To illustrate this point: Paganini’s *Caprice No. 17* is discussed over three-and-a-half pages. My own notes on the same caprice, however, span over fourteen pages. This count does not include three versions of the sheet music which are riddled with pencil comments, fingerings, bowings and diagrams by the teacher’s own hand.

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Unlike some well-known pedagogues of the past, many of today’s finest violinists have not written about their approach. A notable exception is the posthumous publication in German that appeared in 1993 written by and concerning Max Rostal’s principles of violin playing. The English edition followed in 1997. The dates of publication are somewhat deceptive however. Rostal had been working on his “Handbook” for a number of years, reaching back to the 80’s, prior to his death in

1991. The book's final editing and production was partially overseen by his wife, Marion, who still resides at Lake Thun in the Canton of Berne<sup>113</sup>. This is one of the last books that cover aspects of violin technique relevant in today's pedagogy.

Contemporary renowned teachers such as Shmuel Ashkenasi, Zakhar Bron, Ana Chumachenco, Herman Krebbers and Igor Ozim, have not published treatises concerning their methods so far. As explained in the earlier parts of this thesis, this is due in part to lack of time — the aforementioned teachers have such hectic schedules that no moment remains to describe their approach to teaching in written form. As mentioned previously, Bron has released DVDs tracing his approach to certain works, and has made notes to and edited a number of the most ubiquitous virtuosic etudes as published by the German Ries & Erler Verlag (see his biography below for more information), but no written account of his approach exists to date. Although the recording of his method or approach to teaching a specific composition onto a media format such as a DVD is certainly note-worthy, a young student, or one who is not familiar with the principles of the Russian School of violin playing, might not have the skills required to know how to apply information as taught in one piece, to another.

Ashkenasi approached me personally to write about his views on teaching, which he planned to convey via dictation — these plans have been postponed due to his busy schedule. When I asked Ozim why he has not put his approach to paper, he told me that, because he is constantly developing his approach to teaching, he is of the opinion that his ideas might seem outdated to him within a decade of publication of his hypothetical book. Thus, the pillars of existing documentation, on which violinists have built their technical insight and oversight, have not been consistently tracked and investigated into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This implies that the current generation of students lacks systematic documentation of contemporary violin teaching as well as a structured discussion of the roots of latter-day techniques. Moreover, the likelihood for students to have the privilege of

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<sup>113</sup> As communicated to the author, during telephone conversation on 4 December 2010, by Beat Lüthi, managing director of publishing house Müller & Schade who published Rostal's book and worked closely with both the author and the author's wife.

studying with the direct descendants and erstwhile students of old masters, who could orally and visually impart upon them an up-to-date knowledge of teaching methods, is dwindling over time.

Silence shrouds evolvment concerning writings about technique by well-known pedagogues published after 1988, the date of publication of Ricci's *Left-Hand Technique*. On top of this, access to information about technique as it is currently being taught is not easily obtained let alone translated into various languages.

### **1.10 Knowing the Price of Everything but the Value of Nothing<sup>114</sup>**

During my studies I came to realise that the notes I was taking alongside the recording of the tuition on video or audio tapes were precious, not only from a monetary point of view (lessons with some of the teachers mentioned in this thesis can cost up to 400 U.S. Dollars), but also from a historical point of view. Those students who have been fortunate enough to study in the classes of the exemplary pedagogues mentioned in this thesis have not necessarily received the same impressions on the information delivered in the lessons they took; and often this is because, astonishingly, many did not record their lessons or take notes.

There are certainly a number of reasons for this oversight. Krebbers tells of a situation that he experienced in an interview he gave to Ralf Noltensmeier.<sup>115</sup> Krebbers begins by stating that during his study time, it was common practice to listen to the lessons of one's classmates. In his case, his teacher, Oskar Back, insisted on this. At a masterclass Krebbers gave in Brussels, a young Japanese student turned out to be of lesser ability than her counterparts. As she brought her violin under her chin and began to play, half the auditors stood up to leave. The door not yet open, Krebbers in turn stood up, more angry than he ever recalled being, and asked what

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<sup>114</sup> Cecil Graham: "What is a cynic?"

*Lord Darlington*: "A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing." Oscar Wilde, "Lady Windermere's Fan", Act III. Also, "Nowadays people know the price of everything, and the value of nothing." Oscar Wilde, "The Picture of Dorian Gray", Chapter Four.

<sup>115</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 33.

they thought they were doing. Those who had stood up to leave named a duty that they, just at that very moment, had to fulfil. To this Krebbers said: “I will wait now for five minutes. You are free to leave, this is not a prison. But anyone who leaves now need not return to my classes.”<sup>116</sup> Thereupon, everyone sat back down.

Linking in with his previously mentioned thoughts concerning the laziness and stupidity of violinists, Ozim adds that, without a doubt, specialisation is more prevalent than it was in his youth, when the purely emotive abilities of a musician would often dictate the primary qualities of a performance. The emotion that a performer could convey was deemed important, not whether a trill was played starting from above or below the note, whether a note would halt at a given point, or whether the ornamentation in a French piece was really different to that in a German one.

...thereto we paid heartily little attention and we all also knew heartily little about it. Only, then one realises that there exists the wonderful *bon mot* of Max Rostal: ‘Today one knows whether one should play a trill from above or below, whether it should be taken from left or right, but one cannot trill.’ There is a truth to that, one should be wary of this. There is also a certain arrogance amongst so-called specialists, who opine that, of the few existing books of the period in which they are specialised, only they have read them.<sup>117</sup>

A combination of several factors leads directly to the conclusion that the information given above is a starting point for a potentially endless project of documentation that links historical methods of teaching to the methods of the greatest pedagogues of recent times:

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<sup>116</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 33. Krebbers’ original quote reads: „Ich warte jetzt fünf Minuten. Wer weggehen will, der darf gehen; das hier ist kein Gefängnis. Aber wer jetzt geht, der braucht nie wieder in meinen Unterricht zu kommen.“

<sup>117</sup> Urs Frauchiger, *Der eigene Ton*, p. 162–163. Ozim’s original quote reads: „...darum haben wir uns herzlich wenig gekümmert, und wir haben alle auch herzlich wenig davon gewußt. Nur gibt es dann das wunderbare Bonmot von Max Rostal: «Heute weiß man, ob man einen Triller von oben oder von unten, von links oder von rechts her nehmen soll, nur trillern kann man nicht.» — Da ist auch etwas Wahres dran, man muß sich davor hüten. Es gibt auch eine gewisse Arroganz der sogenannten Spezialisten, die meinen, daß nur sie die paar Bücher über die Zeit, auf die sie spezialisiert sind, gelesen haben.“

- A) the almost complete absence of written accounts by those recent pedagogues ;
- B) the endless internet forums that discuss questions of methodology directly concerning the teachers listed in this thesis;
- C) my daily encounters with violin students, which constantly demonstrate the need to fill the gaps in information, knowledge and experience discussed above.

In that light, the information in this thesis might go some way to allowing others a partial insight into the “secrets” of technique that are being applied today. In the words of Bron, “In art, there are no limits to improvement. Truly gifted artists always try to learn more.”<sup>118</sup>

This argument for modern documentation is consistent with other areas of contemporary thought and practice in music. For example, the early music movement has been crucially dependent on historical documentation; and has sought to use such documentation as a starting point for understanding historical playing techniques. Whether one is concerned with proper style of ornamentation, with tempi, with the techniques of playing previously obsolete instruments, or with reconstructing the contexts in which the music was performed, the role of documentation has proved central.

It is therefore a paradox of our times that while the growth of electronic methods such as Email has made communication easier, these new methods are simultaneously threatening the survival of documentary records. The sheer range of documentation possibilities has given rise to claims that aural and visual media no longer require anyone to write about anything — we can see and hear for ourselves.

However, seeing and hearing are not the same as looking and listening. The latter can be experienced only through truly understanding the material with which one is dealing; and that understanding involves, in turn, a journey of the intellect. Teaching

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<sup>118</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 16. Bron’s original quote reads:  
Denn in der Kunst sind der Verbesserung keine Grenzen gesetzt. Die wirklich begabten Künstler versuchen immer, dazuzulernen.“

can be split into two fundamental groups of approach, namely, from the outside in and the inside out. In the case of the former, one observes and listens to others, copying what is understood as best possible and, to a certain extent, experiencing second-hand. The latter, due to the nature of knowledge being drawn from an individual — particularly in the case of putting thoughts and actions into words — leads to a sense of “owning” the information gained. Therefore, without either one-to-one teaching and/or written documentation, one might observe performing instrumentalists many times without being able to replicate their movements fully and, more importantly, unveil the “secrets” of their hallmark sound.

Not too long ago, one could turn on the radio and know from the first notes of a piece which violinist was playing. Nowadays, even specialists are hard-pushed to distinguish who the interpreter is when confronted with a piece of music performed by a well-known present-day musician. The 20<sup>th</sup> century, more than any previous, was a time of prominence of the various schools of violin playing, the sound or visual effect of any one being distinctly recognisable. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the emphasis is on a player’s individuality, in lieu of a solid foundation based on the technique of any one school, and, dare I say it, a certain laziness or wariness in the teacher to establish the discipline necessary, not just for a student but for themselves, to see a method through from beginning to end. Alongside the modern-day customary complaint of “everyone sounds the same nowadays” (mainly exclaimed by musicians who grew up between 1940 and 1970 when the individual sound of many a performer was instantly recognisable), a vast number of today’s violinists, old and young, suggest that cross-fertilisation of national violin schools has occurred. The older, distinguished pedagogues of our time do indeed dabble with ideas, both of a technical and musical nature, from other schools of teaching. But they do so from a highly informed position that is far more rooted in, and aware of, the individuality of schools than are many younger players and teachers. An example of this is Ozim, who follows principles taught to him by Max Rostal but also follows principles based on the so-called American School, epitomised by Ivan Galamian and, to a lesser extent, Efrem Zimbalist.

Although one should be wary of generalising an already vast topic such as technique (“Everyone sounds the same nowadays”), what can be said is that one is easily

caught in a middle ground between not recognising a school of playing at all when observing a player and immediately recognising a school of playing by the way a performer holds the bow or even recognising a teacher by the way a performer plays. Ozim's mark can be seen, for instance, in the signature hold of the violin where the thumb of the left hand is opposite the first and second fingers.

Another result of thorough immersion in any one school is an instantly recognisable visual and aural signature. It can be suggested that part of the reason that violinists such as David Oistrakh (Russian School), Arthur Grumiaux (Franco-Belgian School) and Jascha Heifetz (Russian School) had such an instantly recognisable sound was in part due to their intense rendering of the schools of playing from which they came.

I will not attempt the impossible, which is to say that I will not try to give an account of all the possible elements of violin technique in use today. I will offer a selection of that which I have seen, heard and been taught by the teachers with whom I studied, at the time of my studies with them.

## Family Tree (Les Écoles Modernes) — All Roads Lead to Viotti

Essentially, this Family Tree has been devised to illustrate the line of heritage to the author's teachers. Thus, many influential violinists have not been listed. This is not an oversight or lack of acknowledgement of other important figures whose contributions to the world of music continue to be heard and observed to this day. An example of this is Pablo de Sarasate (1844–1908) whose teacher Jean-Delphin Alard (1815–1888) (→ Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti) has not been included in the Family Tree.

Eminent exponents of the Baroque movement and of the school of historically informed interpretation are conspicuously absent from the Family Tree. One could say that through their original and innovative approach, these musicians have short-circuited, as it were, the traditional line of descent, deriving their knowledge mostly from the study of ancient writings and sources.

Findings are based in part on Marc Pincherle, *Les Instruments du Quatuor* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), and as in the *New Grove*, unless otherwise indicated

In order to facilitate an overall view of a complex pattern of connections, this Family Tree is also presented as an infogram in the Appendix. It is suggested that the text below is read in conjunction with that infogram.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> With gratitude to the graphic designer and visual artist Miklós Váli, who introduced me to the concept of this infogram and assisted with some of its details.



**Giovanni Battista Viotti (1753–1824), founding father of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century French School** → *most famed student of Giulio Gaetano Gerolamo Pugnani (1731–1798) → student of Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770) – who received basic musical training from Franciscan friars – and Giovanni Battista Somis (1686–1763), who was a pupil of Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713), who also taught Francesco Saverio Geminiani who was reportedly called “Il Furibondo”, the Impassioned One, because of his expressive rhythms. He was not the only one to be called names – Niccolò Paganini was rumoured to be in league with the devil. What we know for sure is that he was influenced by Auguste Duranowski... a former student of Viotti.*

Students of Viotti:

Baillot (Pierre-Marie-François de Sales) (1771–1842)

Bériot (Charles-Auguste de) (1802–1870), also a student of Baillot and Robberechts

Cartier (Jean-Baptiste) (1765–1841)

Duranowski (Auguste) (1770–1834)

Kreutzer (Rodolphe) (1766–1831)

Robberechts (André) (1797–1860), also a student of Baillot

Rode (Jacques-Pierre-Joseph) (1774–1830)

Pixis (Friedrich-Wilhelm) (1785–1842)<sup>120</sup>

Student of Pixis (→ Viotti):

Mildner (Mořic) (1812–1865)

Student of Mildner (→ Pixis → Viotti):

Bennewitz (Antonín) (1833–1926)

Students of Bennewitz (→ Mildner → Pixis → Viotti):

Halíř (Karel) (1859–1909), also a student of Joachim

Karbulka (Joseph) (1866–1920)

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<sup>120</sup> Alberto Bachmann states the year of birth of Pixis to be 1786 in an edition of his *An Encyclopedia of the Violin* (New York: D. Appleton, 1925) p. 390, as does H.C. Colles (editor), *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, third edition (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 193.

Ševčík (Otakar) (1852–1934)

Student of Karbulka (→ Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti):

Stolyarsky (Pyotr Solomonovich) (1871–1944), also a student Mlynarski

Students of Ševčík (→ Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti):

Huml (Václav) (1880–1953)

Zimbalist (Efrem) (1889–1985), also a student of Auer

Student of Huml (→ Ševčík → Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti):

Spiller (Ljerko) (1908–2008), also a student of Thibaud and Enescu

Student of Spiller (→ Huml → Ševčík → Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti)

+ (→ Thibaud → Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti) + (→ Thibaud → Ysaÿe → Vieuxtemps → Bériot → Viotti):

Chumachenco (Ana) (b. 1945), also a student of Szigeti and Végh

Students of Baillot (→ Viotti):

Bériot (Charles-Auguste de) (1802–1870), also a student of Robberechts and Viotti

Habeneck (François-Antoine) (1781–1849)

Maurin (Jean-Pierre) (1822–1894), teacher of Lucien Capet (1873–1928)

Mazas (Jacques-Féréol) (1782–1849)

Robberechts (André) (1797–1860), also a student of Viotti

Sauzay (Eugène-Charles) (1809–1901), also a student of Marsick

Student of Bériot (→ Viotti):

Vieuxtemps (Henri) (1820–1881)

Students of Rode (→ Viotti):

Böhm (Joseph) (1795–1876)

Lafont (Charles-Philippe) (1781–1839)

Student of Robberechts (→ Viotti):

Bériot (Charles-Auguste de) (1802–1870), also a student of Baillot and Viotti

Students of Habeneck (→ Baillot → Viotti):

Lalo (Edouard-Victor-Antoine) (1823–1892)

Léonard (Hubert) (1819–1890)

Students of Léonard (→ Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti):

Marsick (Martin-Pierre-Joseph) (1848–1924), also a student of Joachim and Massart  
(Lambert) (1811–1892)<sup>121</sup>

Marteau (Henri) (1874–1934)

Thomson (César) (1857–1931)

Students of Marsick (→Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti):

Enescu (George) (1881–1955), also a student of Ysaÿe

Flesch (Carl) (1873–1944), also a student of Grün and Sauzay

Sauzay (Eugène-Charles) (1809–1901), also a student of Baillot

Thibaud (Jacques) (1880–1953), also a student of Ysaÿe

Student of Thomson (→ Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti):

Back (Oskar) (1879–1963), also a student of Grün and Ysaÿe

Student of Back (→ Thomson → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti) + (→

Ysaÿe → Vieuxtemps → Bériot → Viotti) + (→ Grün → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Krebbbers (Herman) (b. 1923)

Students of Enescu (→ Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti):

Grumiaux (Arthur) (1921–1986), also a student of Dubois

Menuhin (Yehudi) (1916–1999), also a student of Persinger

Spiller (Ljerkko) (1908–2008), also a student of Huml and Thibaud

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<sup>121</sup> Wieniawski, Fritz Kreisler, František Ondříček (the teacher of Demetrius Dounis), and Martin Marsick, all studied with Massart. Massart's teacher was Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766–1831), who in turn was a student of Johann Stamitz. None of the aforementioned men are directly connected via their studies to Viotti. However, according to Alberto Bachmann, *An Encyclopedia of the Violin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), p. 370, Kreutzer was an admirer of Viotti and drew on his playing for inspiration, not least because Kreutzer was largely self-taught.

Students of Persinger (→ Ysaÿe → Vieuxtemps → Bériot → Viotti) + (→ Thibaud → Marsick → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Thibaud → Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti):

Menuhin (Yehudi) (1916–1999), also a student of Enescu

Ricci (Ruggiero) (b. 1918)

Stern (Isaac) (1920–2001)

Students of Thibaud (→ Ysaÿe → Vieuxtemps → Bériot → Viotti) + (→ Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti):

Persinger (Louis) (1887–1966), also a student of Ysaÿe

Spiller (Ljerko) (1908–2008), also a student of Huml and Enescu

Szeryng (Henryk) (1918–1988), also a student of Flesch

Students of Flesch (→ Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti) + (→ Sauzay → Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti) + (→ Sauzay → Baillot → Viotti) + (→ Grün → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Haendel (Ida) (b. 1928)

Hassid (Josef) (1923–1950)

Moodie (Alma) (1898–1943)

Neaman (Yfrah) (1923–2003), also a student of Rostal

Neveu (Ginette) (1919–1949)

Rostal (Max) (1905–1991), also a student of Rosé

Szeryng (Henryk) (1918–1988), also a student of Thibaud

Students of Rostal (→ Flesch → Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti):

Brainin (Norbert) (1923–2005)

Brandis (Thomas) (b. 1935)

Neaman (Yfrah) (1923–2003), also a student of Flesch

Nissel (Siegmond) (1922–2008)

Ozim (Igor) (b. 1931)

Peinemann (Edith) (b. 1937)

Students of Vieuxtemps (→ Bériot → Viotti):

Hubay (Jenö) (1858–1937), also a student of Joachim

Ysaÿe (Eugène) (1858–1931), also a student of Wieniawski (Henryk) (1835–1880)  
and Massart (Lambert)

Students of Ysaÿe (→ Vieuxtemps → Bériot → Viotti):

Back (Oskar) (1879–1963), also a student of Grün and Thomson

Crickboom (Mathieu) (1871–1947)

Dubois (Alfred) (1898–1949)

Enescu (George) (1881–1955), also a student of Marsick

Gingold (Josef) (1909–1995)

Milstein (Nathan Mironovich) (1903–1992), also a student of Auer, Goldstein and  
Stolyarsky

Persinger (Louis) (1887–1966), also a student of Thibaud

Thibaud (Jacques) (1880–1953), also a student of Marsick

Students of Böhm (→ Rode → Viotti):

Dont (Jakob) (1815–1888)

Ernst (Heinrich Wilhelm) (1814–1876)<sup>122</sup>

Grün (Jakob) (1837–1916)

Hellmesberger (Georg) (1800–1873)

Joachim (Joseph) (1831–1907)

Student of Dont (→ Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Auer (Leopold) (1845–1930), also a student of Joachim

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<sup>122</sup> Ernst dates of birth and death according to Alberto Bachmann, *An Encyclopedia of the Violin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), p. 354.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich\\_Wilhelm\\_Ernst](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_Wilhelm_Ernst) stated that 1812 is the correct date of birth (accessed 06/9/11).

Students of Auer (→ Dont → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Elman (Mischa Saulovich) (1891–1967)

Heifetz (Jascha Rubimovich) (1901–1987), also a student of Stolyarsky

Milstein (Nathan Mironovich) (1903–1992), also a student of Goldstein, Stolyarsky  
and Ysaÿe

Mlynarski (Emil) (1870–1935)

Sibor (Boris Ossipovich) (1880–1961)

Zimbalist (Efrem) (1889–1985), also a student of Ševčík

Student of Mlynarski (→ Auer → Dont → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Auer → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Stolyarsky (Pyotr Solomonovich) (1871–1944), also a student of Karbulka

Student of Sibor (→ Auer → Dont → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Auer → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Mostras (Konstantin Georgiyevich) (1886–1965)

Student of Mostras (→ Sibor → Auer → Dont → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Sibor → Auer → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Galamian (Ivan Alexandrovich) (1903–1981), also a student of Capet

Students of Grün (→ Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Back (Oskar) (1879–1963), also a student of Thomson and Ysaÿe

Flesch (Carl) (1873–1944), also a student of Marsick and Sauzay

Students of Hellmesberger (Georg) (→ Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Hellmesberger (Joseph) (1828–1893)

Rosé (Arnold) (1863–1946)

Students of Joachim (→ Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Auer (Leopold) (1845–1930), also a student of Dont

Burmester (Willy) (1869–1933)

Courvoisier (Carl) (1846–1908)

Eldering (Bram) (1865–1943), also a student of Hubay

Halíř (Karel) (1859–1909), also a student of Bennewitz

Hubay (Jenö) (1858–1937), also a student of Vieuxtemps

Huberman (Bronislaw) (1882–1947)

Klingler (Karl) (1879–1971)

Marsick (Martin-Pierre-Joseph) (1848–1924), also a student of Léonard and Massart

Moser (Andreas) (1859–1925)

Powell (Maud) (1868–1920)

Vécsey (Ferenc) (1893–1935), also a student of Hubay

Students of Hubay (→ Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Vieuxtemps →  
Bériot → Viotti):

Bachmann (Alberto) (1875–1963)

D'Aranyi (Jelly) (1893–1966)

Eldering (Bram) (1865–1943), also a student of Joachim

Fehér (Ilona) (1901–1988)

Fenyves (Lóránd) (1918–2004)

Gertler (André) (1907–1998)

Geyer (Stefi) (1888–1956)

Ormandy (Eugene) (1899–1985)

Pártos (Ödön) (b. 1907–1977)

Rubinstein (Erna) (1903–1966)<sup>123</sup>

Székely (Zoltán) (1903–2001)

Szigeti (József) (1892–1973)

Telmányi (Emil) (1892–1988)

Vécsey (Ferenc) (1893–1935), also a student of Joachim

Végh (Sándor) (1912–1997)

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<sup>123</sup> Born “about 1906” according to Alberto Bachmann, *An Encyclopedia of the Violin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), p. 395.

Zathureczky (Ede) (1903–1959)

Students of Gertler (→ Hubay → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Masin (Ronald) (b. 1937)

Kelemen (Maria) (b. 1938)

Students of Végh (→ Hubay → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Chastain (Nora) (b. 1961), also a student of Chumachenco

Chumachenco (Ana) (b. 1945), also a student of Spiller and Szigeti

Höbarth (Erich) (b. 1956)

Students of Fehér (→ Hubay → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Ashkenasi (Shmuel) (b. 1941), also a student of Zimbalist

Perlman (Itzhak) (b. 1945)

Zuckerman (Pinchas) (b. 1948)

Student of Zimbalist (→ Auer → Dont → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Auer → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Ševčík → Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti):

Ashkenasi (Shmuel) (b. 1941), also a student of Fehér

Students of Stolyarsky (→ Karbulka → Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti) + (→ Mlynarski → Auer → Dont → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Mlynarski → Auer → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Gilels (Elizabeth Grigorievna) (1919–2008), also a student of Yampolsky (Abram Ilich) (1890–1956)

Goldstein (Boris Emanuilovich) (1922–1987), also a student of Yampolsky (Abram Ilich)

Grach (Eduard Davidovich) (b. 1930)

Heifetz (Jascha Rubimovich) (1901–1987), also a student of Auer

Milstein (Nathan Mironovich) (1903–1992), also a student of Auer, Goldstein and Ysaÿe

Oistrakh (David Fyodorovich) (1908–1974)



Students of Oistrakh (David Fyodorovich) (→ Stolyarsky → Karbulka → Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti) + (→ Stolyarsky → Mlynarski → Auer → Dont → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Stolyarski → Mlynarski → Auer → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Bron (Zakhar Nuchimovich) (b. 1947), also a student of Oistrakh (Igor Davidovich) and Goldstein (Boris Emanuilovich) (1922–1987)

Kagan (Oleg Moiseyevich) (1946–1990)

Klimov (Valery Alexandrovich) (b. 1931)

Kremer (Gidon Markusovich) (b. 1947)

Kuschnir (Boris Jakovlevich) (b. 1948), also a student of Belenky (Boris Vladimirovich) (1911–1987)

Mordkovich (Lydia Mendelevna) (b. 1944)

Oistrakh (Igor Davidovich) (b. 1931)

Pikaizen (Victor Alexandrovich) (b. 1933)

Student of Ashkenasi (→ Fehér → Hubay → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Zimbalist → Auer → Dont → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Masin (Gwendolyn) (b. 1977), also a student of Bron, Chumachenco, Kelemen, Krebbers, Masin, and Ozim

Student of Bron (→ Oistrakh (David) → Stolyarsky → Karbulka → Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti) + (→ Oistrakh (Igor Davidovich) → Stolyarsky → Karbulka → Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti) + (→ Goldstein (also a student of Yampolsky) → Stolyarsky → Karbulka → Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti) + (→ Oistrakh (David) → Stolyarsky → Mlynarski → Auer → Dont → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (→ Oistrakh (David) → Stolyarsky → Mlynarski → Auer → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Masin (Gwendolyn) (b. 1977), also a student of Ashkenasi, Chumachenco, Kelemen, Krebbers, Masin, and Ozim

Student of Chumachenco (→ Spiller → Huml → Ševčík → Bennewitz → Mildner → Pixis → Viotti) + (Spiller → Thibaud → Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti) + (→ Spiller → Thibaud → Ysaÿe → Vieuxtemps → Bériot → Viotti) + (→ Spiller → Enescu → Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti) + (→ Véggh → Hubay → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti) + (Szigeti → Hubay → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Masin (Gwendolyn) (b. 1977), also a student of Ashkenasi, Bron, Kelemen, Krebbers, Masin, and Ozim

Student of Kelemen (→ Gertler → Hubay → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Masin (Gwendolyn) (b. 1977), also a student of Ashkenasi, Bron, Chumachenco, Krebbers, Masin, and Ozim

Student of Krebbers (→ Back → Thomson → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti) + (Back → Ysaÿe → Vieuxtemps → Bériot → Viotti) + (→ Grün → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Masin (Gwendolyn) (b. 1977), also a student of Ashkenasi, Bron, Chumachenco, Kelemen, Masin, and Ozim

Student of Masin (→ Gertler → Hubay → Joachim → Böhm → Rode → Viotti):

Masin (Gwendolyn) (b. 1977), also a student of Ashkenasi, Bron, Chumachenco, Kelemen, Krebbers, and Ozim

Student of Ozim (→ Rostal → Flesch → Marsick → Léonard → Habeneck → Baillot → Viotti):

Masin (Gwendolyn) (b. 1977), also a student of Ashkenasi, Bron, Chumachenco, Kelemen, Krebbers, and Masin

## The Teachers

Between 1984 and 2007, I studied with the following teachers:

**Maria Kelemen – Private tuition, Cape Town, Dublin, 1984–1988**

**Ronald Masin – Dublin Institute of Technology, College of Music, 1988–1996**

**Herman Krebbers – private tuition, Amsterdam, 1990–1996**

**Igor Ozim – Hochschule der Künste, Berne, 1996–2000**

**Ana Chumachenco – Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Zurich, 2000–2002**

**Zakhar Bron – Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Zurich, 2002–2004**

**Shmuel Ashkenasi – Musikhochschule, Lübeck, 2004–2006**

**Thomas Brandis**, a concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, taught me at various masterclasses both in Germany and Liechtenstein between 1997 and 1999. Brandis is a student of Rostal. I partook in masterclasses given by **Nora Chastain**, a student of Ana Chumachenco, in Lenk, Switzerland in August 2007. In 2007 I received a number of private lessons from **Boris Mikhailovich Garlitsky** at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse in Paris, where he teaches. (Garlitsky was a student of his father, Mikhail Abramovich Garlitsky, who was the founder of a Soviet violin method only available in Russian entitled “Шаг за шагом” (“Step by Step”) and a teacher at the Gnessin School for Gifted Children in Moscow; later a student of Yankelevich at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow.) I performed Johannes Brahms’ Violin Concerto for **Franco Gulli** (a student of József Szigeti) on the occasion of his masterclasses in Dublin in 1995. I was auditor at lessons given by **Boris Kuschnir** in the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole in Tuscany in January 2005. **Siegmund Nissel** was my chamber music teacher at a number of masterclasses, including one at the West Cork Chamber Music Festival. **Gerhard Schulz**, second violinist of the Alban Berg Quartet and a student of Shmuel Ashkenasi, taught me at Prussia Cove in Cornwall in the late 90’s. In 1995, followed two weeks of lessons during the London Masterclasses with **Grigori Yefimovich Zhislin** (a student of Yankelevich). My lessons with **Pierre Amoyal** (a student of

Heifetz), **Erich Höbarth** (a student of Végh), **György Pauk** (a student of Zathureczky), **Eduard Schmieder**, and **Antje Weithaas**, were brief but interesting. In this thesis, I will focus on what was relayed to me by my main teachers and will, where relevant or possible, include ideas of many of the violinists listed in this paragraph.

Outside the stated years of study with my teachers, I followed masterclasses that they conducted time and again, as well as receiving private tuition in some cases, both during and after my studies with an individual. Tuition received from other instrumentalists such as the pianists Yefim Bronfman, Peter Frankl, György Sebök, and Maria Tipo, are not directly listed here.

The following list of teachers consists of three categories, bearing direct relevance to the subject of this thesis:

- A) Teachers with whom I have studied;
- B) Many of those who taught my teachers;
- C) Teachers whose influence is pervasive, even if they did not directly teach me or one of my teachers.

### **Shmuel Ashkenasi (b. 1941)**

The Hungarian School of teaching was the formative one from the beginning of Shmuel Ashkenasi's violinistic life. Born in Tel-Aviv in 1941, Ashkenasi was a child prodigy, taught by Hungarian-born Ilona Fehér (1901–1988). She had been a student of Jenő Hubay in Budapest and initially taught Ashkenasi at her home in Holon. Some of the outstanding violinists to come out of her class include Pinchas Zukerman (b.1948) and Shlomo Mintz (b. 1957).

Ashkenasi left Tel-Aviv to become a student at the Philadelphia-based Curtis Institute of Music, where he had been accepted into the class of Efrem Zimbalist as a scholarship holder. In his first year at the Institute, Ashkenasi was primarily taught by Zimbalist's assistant, Toshiya Eto (1928–2008).

Zimbalist, a student of Leopold Auer and Otakar Ševčík, was not only a violin pedagogue at The Curtis Institute of Music, but had also been appointed as director

in 1941, by the institute's founder, Mary Louise Curtis Bok (1876–1970). In 1943 she and Zimbalist were married, and he continued as director until 1968.<sup>124</sup>

Ashkenasi quickly caught the attention of the international music community by capturing prizes at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1962, Belgium's Queen Elisabeth Competition and the Merriwether Post Competition in Washington. Amongst the works performed at those competitions were sonatas by Johann Sebastian Bach from the Sonatas and Partitas for unaccompanied violin; and to this day, Ashkenasi remains not only a highly-skilled, but also an informed player of baroque music. This might be in part to his teacher Zimbalist, who devoted a lot of time to the research of early literature on the violin. He spoke about this in detail in an interview given to Samuel and Sada Applebaum.<sup>125</sup>

This award-laden violinist then embarked on a rich and varied solo career, performing with many of Europe's and America's best orchestras. He also played duo recitals with such notable pianists as Rudolf and Peter Serkin, Murray Perahia and Menahem Pressler. Ashkenasi recorded a disc of both Paganini Violin Concertos for Deutsche Grammophon with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, as well as both Beethoven Romances and Mozart's A Major Violin Concerto KV219 for the Tudor label.

Ashkenasi founded the Vermeer Quartet in 1969 and has remained its leader throughout its long history. The quartet has a large discography and was nominated for a Grammy three times: for its interpretation of Haydn's "The Seven Last Words of Christ" (Alden Productions CD 23042) and for two Naxos label recordings, namely, the complete Bartók string quartets and, on a second disc, the Shostakovich and Schnittke piano quintets with Boris Berman. At the end of 2007, the quartet retired, after a farewell tour that took its members all over the world. To show the vast repertoire and popularity of the quartet, after two acclaimed concerts in Geneva on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2007, where they performed, amongst other pieces, two of Mozart's String Quintets together with former member, the violist Nobuko

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<sup>124</sup> Dates of Zimbalist's directorship of The Curtis Institute of Music gathered from <http://www.curtis.edu/html/21135.shtml> in June 2008.

<sup>125</sup> Samuel and Sada Applebaum, *The Way They Play, Illustrated Discussions with Famous Artists and Teachers, Book I* (New Jersey: Paganiniana Publications, 1972), p. 213–221.

Imai, I congratulated Ashkenasi. He told me that, in the two months preceding November, the quartet had played forty different pieces. The Vermeer Quartet, based as they were in Chicago, were quartet in residence at the Northern Illinois University and Fellows at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. They also spent many summers on the coast of Maine as the featured ensemble for the Bay Chamber Concerts.

A noted teacher, Ashkenasi held the post of interim professor at the Musikhochschule Lübeck until 2008, is professor of violin at Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois, and began working as a violin professor at his alma mater, the The Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia, in 2007/2008. His students include Anke Dill (also a student of Chastain), Viviane Hagner, Louise Higgins, Roman Patočka (concertmaster of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin as of 2007), Gerhard Schulz (also a student of Végh), Yvonne Smeulers (also a student of Krebbers and Bron), Jan Talich of the Talich Quartet, Julien Zufferey and members of the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Lyric Opera of Chicago.<sup>126</sup>

### **Oskar Back (1879–1963)**

Born of Hungarian parents in Vienna, Oskar Back studied violin at first with his father and later with Jakob Grün. On finishing his studies with Grün, Back moved to Brussels aged sixteen where he received lessons from Eugène Ysaÿe and César Thomson. When Thomson was unable to teach because of his own concerts, Back would take Thomson's place, thereby starting his pedagogical experiences at an early age. In 1898 he was named an official teacher at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles which, at the time, enjoyed a very good international reputation for its violin teaching.

In 1919 he left Belgium for Amsterdam, largely because during and after the World War I, as a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Back had not felt appreciated in Belgium. After having coached members of the Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest, in 1921 he was offered a position as violin pedagogue at the newly-created

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<sup>126</sup> Biographical information gathered from conversations with Shmuel Ashkenasi. He read and corrected his biography as it stands here during masterclasses in Berlin in June 2008.

Muzieklyceum in Amsterdam, an institute he would remain faithful to until his death. Back would establish himself in the Netherlands as one of the country's most influential pedagogues and was naturalised there in 1935.<sup>127</sup> His students included Theo Olof, Herman Krebbers, Alma Moodie, Wim Noske, Davina van Wely en Emmy Verhey. According to accounts by both Krebbers (via direct conversation with me) and Olof (via his writings), it is said that Back was very strict with his pupils, had a formidable insight into psychology, was passionate, short-tempered, extremely industrious, generous and charming. He treated all his students equally whether they were professionals or amateurs, the only difference in approach being that, "the amateurs were subjected to slightly less heartfelt scolding."<sup>128</sup>

Olof, who shared the position of concertmaster of the Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest in Amsterdam with Krebbers, noted in several of his books<sup>129</sup> that the only thing that stood between Back being what could have been "een der grote podiumfiguren van zijn tijd",<sup>130</sup> or "one of the great podium figures of his time" was Back's stage fright. It was primarily his students that had the privilege of hearing Back play. On one occasion he took to the stage during the colourfully festive jubilee celebrations of the Amsterdam Muzieklyceum. Together with Ferdinand Helman (a teaching colleague of Back) and ten students each from each from Back's and Helman's classes, twenty-two violinists played the Preludium of the third Partita BWV 1006 for violin solo by J.S. Bach. This was the only time that Olof, who knew Back for over thirty years, experienced a stage performance by Back. Olof writes,<sup>131</sup> "het Preludium duurt drie minuten, en in deze drie minuten ging Oskar Back door drieduizend hellen. Dat was na afloop duidelijk." ("the Preludium lasts three minutes, and in these three minutes Oskar Back went through three-thousand hells. That was clear afterwards.")

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<sup>127</sup> Biographical information gathered from an article by A.W.J. de Jonge, *Back, Oskar (1879-1963)* (Den Haag: Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland, 1994).

<sup>128</sup> Theo Olof, *Daar sta je dan opnieuw* (Nieuwkoop: Uitgeverij Heuff, 1973), p. 111. The original excerpt reads: "Ter completering van dit misschien wel wat eenzijdige beeld, moet ik hier onmiddellijk aan toevoegen, dat Oskar Back zich altijd gaf, met hart en ziel, bij elke leerling, ook de niet-beroeps. Misschien werden die iets minder hartstochtelijk uitgescholden, maar dat was dan ook het enige verschil."

<sup>129</sup> Theo Olof, *Daar sta je dan opnieuw* (Nieuwkoop: Uitgeverij Heuff, 1973), p. 109–116 and Theo Olof, *divertimento van en over theo olof* (Den Haag: Bert Bakker Daamen NV, 1968), p. 127–133.

<sup>130</sup> Theo Olof, *Daar sta je dan opnieuw* (Nieuwkoop: Uitgeverij Heuff, 1973), p. 109.

<sup>131</sup> Theo Olof, *Daar sta je dan opnieuw* (Nieuwkoop: Uitgeverij Heuff, 1973), p. 110.

Back dedicated his life to teaching and to his students on a very fundamental level, urging his students to play for and gain opinions from distinguished contemporaries such as the violinists Adolf Busch (1891–1952), Nathan Milstein (1904–1992) and Jacques Thibaud (1880–1953), the conductor, Pierre Monteux (1875–1964), and even Queen Elisabeth of Belgium (1876–1965, a renowned music-lover and patron of the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels, one of the most well-regarded competitions in the world), who was a student of Back's.

His only vice seems to have been smoking and a penchant for playing bridge. However, it cannot be the second that affected his health; Back was not only strict with his students, he was strict with himself – he was never ill and expected the same from his pupils. However, when nature finally did hit, it did so tragically. The last ten years of his life were spent teaching, being a much-respected jury member and even driving albeit with an artificial leg.

May 1951. The *Chapelle de la Reine Elisabeth*. The *Concours* is over and Her Majesty is receiving all the participants and jury members. All are standing in the beautiful sunshine, on the *bordes*, David Oistrakh, [Leonid] Kogan, [Yehudi] Menuhin, [Jacques] Thibaud, [George] Enesco, and many more. A car stops, with difficulty the last jury member to have arrived steps out. Leaning heavily on his walking-stick, he shuffles, foot by foot, those few meters to the *bordes*. He does not want to be supported by anyone. His face is wet from the strain and pain. Oskar Back never allowed himself to not attend due to illness...<sup>132</sup>

Shortly after his eightieth birthday Back had to stop teaching for health reasons and died in a hospital in Belgium.

In later life one of his deepest wishes was realised, initially aided by donations from his own students — the establishment of a foundation that would allow young,

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<sup>132</sup> Theo Olof, *Daar sta je dan opnieuw* (Nieuwkoop: Uitgeverij Heuff, 1973), p. 114–115. The original excerpt reads: “Mei 1951. De Chapelle de la Reine Elisabeth. Het Concours is beëindigd en Hare Majesteit ontvangt alle mededingers en juryleden. Allen staan in de stralende zon op het bordes, David Oistrach, Kogan, Menuhin, Thibaud, Enesco en nog vele anderen. Een auto stopt, moeizaam stapt het laatst aangekomen jurylid uit. Zwaar leunend op zijn stok, schuifelt hij voetje voor voetje de paar meters naar het bordes. Hij wil door niemand ondersteund worden. Zijn gezicht is nat van inspanning en pijn. Oskar Back liet geen verstek gaan...”



talented, impecunious violinists to receive financial support. The Stichting Studiefonds Oskar Back led to another initiative: in 1967 the first Nationaal Violconcour Oskar Back, a bi-annual national violin competition, was held in the Netherlands, its prizes taking the form of bursaries. Since then the competition has helped to bring forth such formidable players as Emmy Verhey (in its inaugural year), Vera Beths (1969), Jaap van Zweden (1977), Saskia Viersen (1991), Sonja van Beek (1993), Liza Ferschtman (1997) and third-prize winner Janine Jansen (1993).<sup>133</sup>

### **Zakhar Bron (b. 1947)**

Zakhar Bron was born in the city of Oral (Uralsk) in 1947. His mother was a concert pianist, his father an amateur violinist. Noting that the child was gifted, Bron's first teacher Alexei Bolotin, who taught in Bron's native city, advised that the young violinist be sent to Odessa. Bron was admitted to the Stolyarsky School of Music in Odessa (Pyotr Solomonovich Stolyarsky, 1871–1944, had been the teacher of David Oistrakh and Nathan Milstein), in the class of Arthur Zisserman. After two years in Odessa, he moved to Moscow where he stayed for twenty years, first studying under the guidance of Boris Goldstein at the Gnessin School, a music school for exceptional talent that he attended for six years, and later in the class of Igor Oistrakh (b. 1931, the son of David Oistrakh) at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory.<sup>134</sup>

Bron participated in various violin competitions, becoming a laureate of the Soviet "All-Union" competition in 1969, the Henryk Wieniawski International Violin Competition in Poznan in 1977 and the twelfth prize-winner in 1971 of the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels, in which year he finished his studies.

In an interview given to Ralf Noltensmeier in 1997,<sup>135</sup> Bron explains that he did not set up his own class immediately. He reasons that due to the presence of such violinists as David Oistrakh, Yuri Yankelevich and Leonid Kogan, the

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<sup>133</sup> Information concerning the Nationaal Violconcour Oskar Back and part of Oskar Back's biography gathered from the Dutch website, <http://www.oskarback.nl/content/view/31/47/> in January 2008.

<sup>134</sup> Information communicated to the author by Nadezhda Korshakova, assistant to Bron since December 2003 at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Zurich.

<sup>135</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997).

aforementioned men belonging to “the golden age of the Russian school”<sup>136</sup>, Moscow had an abundance of great pedagogues in the 70’s. Further to this he tells the interviewer that in Germany, on completion of the Bachelor of Music, there exists the possibility of extending one’s studies by doing a postgraduate study entitled “Konzertexamen” or “Concert Exam”. Bron calls the Russian equivalent of the Concert Exam “Aspirantur” (in Russian, аспирантура, which describes a postgraduate study). Bron goes on to say that during “Aspirantur” in Russia, a music student is expected to act as assistant to his or her teacher. Bron’s first forays into teaching were undertaken in this manner, as Igor Oistrakh’s assistant. However, on finishing his studies, he did not attempt to set up his own class in Moscow, believing that he could not have realised his pedagogical ideas there, “new ideas would have called for a stronger protagonist [than I thought I was]; or one would have had to show an accordant amount of achievements [via one’s students], which is, of course, not possible in the beginning.”<sup>137</sup>

On engagement as a teacher in 1974 at the Special Music School for Children, part of the Novosibirsk Conservatory in Siberia, he began to gain a strong reputation as an accomplished pedagogue. This is the school where violinists of worldwide repute were trained, often on a daily basis by Bron. Bron’s Glinka Conservatory class includes names such as Maxim Vengerov (b. 1974, soloist, teacher and conductor), Vadim Repin (b. 1971, soloist), Nikolai Madoyev (b. 1973, soloist) and Natalia Prischepenko (b. 1973, leader of the Artemis Quartet). After fourteen years in Novosibirsk two things happened: perestroika, and international recognition via Vengerov and Repin winning the top prizes in various international competitions including the Carl Flesch Competition (Vengerov) and the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition (Repin).

Bron began receiving invitations to Western Europe; through contact with the pianist, conductor and founder of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival Justus

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<sup>136</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 11–12. Bron’s quote originally reads: „Schließlich lebten in dieser Zeit in Moskau noch sehr berühmte Lehrer, etwa David Oistrakh, Jurij Jankelewitsch oder Leonid Kogan; es war noch die goldene Periode der russischen Schule.“

<sup>137</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 12. Bron’s original quote reads: „Neue Ideen hätten dort eines starken Protagonisten bedurft; oder aber man hätte entsprechende Erfolge nachweisen müssen — was natürlich am Anfang nicht möglich ist.“

Franz, negotiations to gain a permanent teaching position were initiated with the Musikhochschule in Lübeck. He was invited to become Professor at the Royal Academy in London, the Conservatory in Rotterdam, the Musikhochschule in Lübeck and the Escuela Superior de Musica in Madrid, all of which he accepted. However, he concentrated his effort on the latter two schools and especially his class in Lübeck gained international fame, where Vengerov, Repin, Madoyev and Prischepenko finished their studies, having moved from Novosibirsk to Lübeck to be with their professor. In 1997 he moved from the Musikhochschule in Lübeck to the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne and in 2002 took up a position as violin professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Zurich.

Bron is also prolific when it comes to published material. Amongst these, there is a four-hour DVD focusing on how Bron teaches Henryk Wieniawski's second Violin Concerto in D minor. It has appeared in AMA-Verlag's 2001–2005 catalogue alongside a printed edition of the work with Bron's fingerings and bowings. Furthermore, in 1998, Ries & Erler Verlag in Berlin printed Bron's "Etüdenkunst", a collection of studies commented upon and edited by Bron. The edition includes studies by Jakob Dont, Henryk Wieniawski and Niccolò Paganini.

To this day, Bron spends most of his time on the road, teaching in Zurich, Cologne, and Madrid, and giving masterclasses in Sweden, Japan, the U.K., Poland, Bulgaria, Russia and Germany. He still regularly plays recitals himself and has been a member of the jury in numerous competitions including the Fritz Kreisler International Violin Competition in Vienna, the Pablo Sarasate International Violin Competition in Pamplona, Spain and the International Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition in Poznan.

His students are regularly ranked amongst the prize-winners in competitions, and even a partial list reads like a who's-who of the violin world: Vadim Gluzman, Chloe Hanslip, Daniel Hope, Latica Honda-Rosenberg, Mayuko Kamio, Daishin Kashimoto, Tamaki Kawakubo, Mayu Kishima, Berent Korfker, Priya Mitchell, Mikhail Ovrutsky, and Kirill Troussov.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Biographical information gathered from "Quest for artistry", Carlos Maria Solare for *The Strad*, September 1996, vol. 107 No. 1277, p. 869–873; and from conversations between the author and Zakhar Bron.

### **Lucien Capet (1873–1928)**

Born in Paris in 1873, Capet studied at the Conservatoire de Paris in the class of Jean-Pierre Maurin. He was appointed concertmaster of Charles Lamoureux's orchestra in 1896 and formed the highly acclaimed Capet Quartet in 1893. The quartet was subject to various changes in line-up but Capet was always the quartet's leader.

Like many other accomplished violinists of his time, Capet composed a number of works including five string quartets, two sonatas for violin and piano and *Poème* for violin and orchestra.<sup>139</sup>

He was a well-known teacher, having held posts in the Conservatoire de Bordeaux from 1899–1901, and the Conservatoire de Paris as of 1907. However, Capet is perhaps best remembered for his definitive treatise on bow technique, *La Technique Supérieure de l'Archet pour Violon*, which appeared first in Paris in 1916. The book was later translated into German, entitled *Die Höhere Bogentechnik*. Capet died in the city of his birth in 1928.<sup>140</sup>

### **Nora Chastain (b. 1961)**

Born on 25 September 1961<sup>141</sup> in Berkeley, California, Nora Chastain, granddaughter of the American composer Roy Harris (1898–1979), began her violin lessons with Anne Crowden. Her studies continued at the Cincinnati Conservatory and later at the Juilliard School in New York with Dorothy DeLay and in Europe with Alberto Lysy, Sándor Végh, Ana Chumachenco and Sir Yehudi Menuhin. Chastain was a prize winner at the Menuhin Competition in Paris in 1985 and was awarded the annual “Förderpreis der Europäischen Wirtschaft” in Zurich in 1993.

Aged sixteen she made her debut in Berlin playing Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto and since then has been a regular guest with such orchestras as the San Francisco

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<sup>139</sup> For details of Capet's compositions, see *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 3, p. 751.

<sup>140</sup> Biographical information based on Lucien Capet, *La Technique Supérieure de l'Archet pour Violon* (Paris: Editions Senart, 1927).

<sup>141</sup> Date of birth communicated to the author via Short Message Service on 22 April 2008.

Symphony, the Orchestre de Paris, Cincinnati Philharmonia, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra and the Symphony Orchestra of Berne. She is a founding member of the Menuhin Festival Piano Quartet and Trio Kreisleriana (a piano trio) and her chamber music activities have brought her to many of the world's capitals, including Frankfurt, Hamburg, Berlin, Bonn, Paris, Milan, Zurich, Geneva, Edinburgh, Washington D.C., New York, Boston, San Francisco and Sydney.

Nora Chastain is professor of violin at the Universität der Künste Berlin and the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Zürich. Until 2004 she held a professorship at the Musikhochschule Lübeck. A main focus of her teaching is the integration of the American and European traditions of violin playing of the last 50 years. Her past students include Julia Becker, currently leader of the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich; Zsolt Visontay, leader of the Philharmonia Orchestra London; Heime Müller, second violinist of the Artemis Quartet and professor at the Universität der Künste in Berlin (also a student of Schmieder); Esther Hoppe of the Techler Trio (piano trio); Chouchane Siranossian (also a student of Bron), appointed leader of the symphony orchestra of Saint Gallen, Switzerland in 2007; Nimrod Guez, leader of the viola section of the Bayerisches Rundfunk symphony orchestra (also a student of the viola pedagogue Barbara Westphal who in turn studied with Perlman and Michael Tree of the Guarneri Quartet) and Anke Dill, professor of violin studies at the Musikhochschule Stuttgart and former assistant of Chastain in Lübeck (also a student of Ashkenasi).<sup>142</sup>

### **Ana Chumachenco (b. 1945)**

Ana Chumachenco was born in Padua and is of Ukrainian descent. She grew up in Argentina, receiving her first violin lessons from her father, himself a former pupil of Leopold Auer. She later studied with Ljerko Spiller in Buenos Aires, Yehudi Menuhin, and the Hungarians Sándor Végh, and József Szigeti. She returned to Europe at the age of seventeen and within a year had won the gold medal at the Carl Flesch Competition in London, and had gained the fourth prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels.

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<sup>142</sup> In part, taken from Nora Chastain's official website, <http://www.norachastain.com> in April 2008.

Along with her husband, the violist Oscar Lysy, she formed the Munich String Trio and took a chair as professor of violin studies at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Munich in 1988. She taught at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Zurich between 2000 and 2002. Chumachenco regularly gives masterclasses, including those in Verbier and Lenk. She is guest leader of Camerata Berne and is a member of juries at prestigious, international competitions.

Chumachenco is a much-loved teacher, not only for her wealth of knowledge but also because of her kind nature and the deep interest she has in her students. Well-known past pupils of include Gabriel Adorján (also a student of Ozim), Julia Fischer, Susanna Yoko Henkel, Arabella Steinbacher and Lisa Batiashvili.<sup>143</sup>

### **Carl Flesch (1873–1944)**

Carl Flesch studied with Jakob Grün, Eugène Sauzay and Martin Marsick. He was an industrious writer, penning, amongst other works, two volumes of *The Art of Violin Playing* which is concerned with technique and artistic realisation and instruction; *Violin Fingering, its Theory and Practice*, a veritable encyclopedia on the subject; *Apropos of Paganini's Secret*, an article he wrote for The Strad magazine; a booklet entitled *Das Klangproblem im Geigenspiel* (The Problem of Sound in Violin Playing); his memoirs *Erinnerungen eines Geigers* and a small book, the publishing of which he sponsored himself, entitled *Sinnsprüche* (Aphorisms), which he gave as a gift to his friends and was a collection of anecdotes, mottos and *bons mots*. One quote from the book, „Hinter goldenem Wort liegt oft ein eisern Herz“ (p. 33) translates as, “Behind a golden word oft lies an iron heart”.<sup>144</sup>

Flesch also composed and edited various studies including his own *Urstudien für Violine*<sup>145</sup> and that staple of daily practice, the Carl Flesch Scale System<sup>146</sup>, conceived as a supplement to Book 1 of *The Art of Violin Playing* in which Flesch had presented a compilation of scales and broken chords. Because of lack of space,

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<sup>143</sup> Biographical information gathered from conversations with Ana Chumachenco.

<sup>144</sup> A full list of the works written by Flesch, as mentioned in his biography, are to be found in the Bibliography. A number of the works mentioned are included in Philippe Borer *La pagina e l'archetto, bibliografia violinistica storico-tecnica e studi effettuati su Niccolò Paganini* (Genoa: Comune di Genova, Assessorato Comunicazione e Promozione della Città, 2003), p. 35.

<sup>145</sup> Carl Flesch, *Urstudien für Violine* (Berlin: Ries & Erler, without a date).

<sup>146</sup> Carl Flesch, *Scale System, scale exercises in all major and minor keys for daily study* (New York: Carl Fischer, 1926).

he had presented these scales and chords in the key of C, and expected students to undertake transpositions to other keys themselves. He was very disappointed to realise that many students, his and those of others, did not bother to do this, which led to a result of excellence solely in the key of C major.

The scale system encompasses all twenty-four major and minor keys and consists not only of standard scales that include at least three strings for its complete execution, but also of scales practised on single strings as well as arpeggios, scales in thirds, sixths, octaves and fingered octaves, tenths, single harmonics and double-stop harmonics.

### **Ivan Galamian (1903–1981)**

Born in 1903 in Tabriz, Persia, Galamian became one of the most influential violin teachers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He studied violin at the School of the Philharmonic Society in Moscow with the Russian Konstantin Mostras (1886–1965) from 1916 until his graduation in 1919. Between 1922 and 1923 he studied under Lucien Capet in Paris. Invited to become a faculty member of the Russian Conservatory in Paris, he taught there from 1925 until 1929. In 1937, Galamian moved to the United States of America and, beginning in 1944, taught violin at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and became the head of the violin department at the Juilliard School in 1946. Coinciding with the start of his career at Curtis, he founded the Meadowmount School of Music in Westport, New York, in 1944, teaching there every summer. The Meadowmount School for accomplished young violinists, violists, cellists and pianists still exists, and lists musicians such as Yo-Yo Ma and Lynn Harrell among its distinguished alumni. Galamian was made honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music in London in 1965 and held honorary doctorates from Oberlin College and the Curtis Institute.

He is probably the last major figure in violin pedagogy to have written a comprehensive treatise; and his *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* and two volumes of violin method books, *Contemporary Violin Technique* are an invaluable

conspectus of his ideas about violin pedagogy and playing.<sup>147</sup> Galamian incorporated aspects of both the Russian and French schools of violin technique in his approach.

His remarkable success as a teacher is possibly most easily shown by the list of international stars that have come from his class. Galamian's pupils include Kyung-Wha Chung, Glenn Dicterow, Erick Friedman (also a student of Jascha Heifetz), Jaime Laredo, Itzhak Perlman, Michael Rabin, Pinchas Zukerman (also a student of Ilona Fehér) and Paul Zukofsky. Dorothy Delay and Lewis Kaplan were both his teaching assistants, later going on to become renowned teachers in their own right. Galamian died in New York in 1981.<sup>148</sup>

### **André Gertler (1907–1998)**

Born in 1907 in Budapest, Hungary, André (originally Endre) Gertler taught at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles and died in Brussels in 1998. He left Hungary in 1928 for Belgium as he felt that he would be better able to build a career outside of Eastern Europe — Hungary had been left devastated after World War I.

A student of Jenő Hubay (who, in turn, had been a student of Joseph Joachim), Gertler succeeded his teacher at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles. Gertler performed throughout the world both as an accomplished soloist and as a chamber musician (he founded the Quatuor Gertler) and was known for his virtuoso playing and his sonorous tone. He was an admirer and friend of Béla Bartók (1881–1950) and played with the latter in violin-and-piano duos on numerous occasions. Gertler is widely regarded as one of the most authentic interpreters of Bartók's and Kodály's music for strings. He recorded widely with colleagues, including his wife, the pianist Diane Andersen, and Josef Suk (1929–2011), with whom he produced a celebrated recording of Bartók's Violin Duos.

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<sup>147</sup> Ivan Galamian (with E.A.H. Green), *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962); Frederick Neumann and Ivan Galamian, *Contemporary Violin Technique Volume 1, Scales and Arpeggio Exercises with Bowing and Rhythm Patterns* (New York: E.C. Schirmer Publishing, 1962); Frederick Neumann and Ivan Galamian, *Contemporary Violin Technique Volume 2, Double and Multiple Stops in Scale and Arpeggio Exercises* (Boston: Galaxy Music Corporation: 1977).

<sup>148</sup> Biographical information drawn in part from Ivan Galamian (with E.A.H. Green), *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), from biographical information by Washington D.C.-based The Catholic University of America's Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, <http://music.cua.edu/faculty/gatwood/galamian.cfm> in October 2007, and from *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 7, p. 91.



A dedicated pedagogue, he created the so-called “Gertler Technique” which was based on the idea that the violinist should be physically relaxed when playing and use as much of the natural weight found in his/her limbs as possible, as opposed to using force. He was invited to teach all over Europe, and the extensive list of past pupils includes Atar Arad, Hugh Bean, Joshua Epstein, Michael Frischenschlager, János Fürst, Yair Kless, Emmanuel Krivine, Augustin Leon Ara, Ronald Masin, Maria Kelemen, János Maté, Brendan O’Reilly, Myriam Quersin, Roger Raphael, André Rieu, Ruth Shahar, Meyer Stollow, Rudolf Werthen, Mary Zinman-Ingham and Yossi Zivoni.

Gertler was a sought-after jury member at many violin competitions and received various honourable titles including Commandeur de l’Ordre de Léopold II (Belgium), Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France), Officer of the Order of Gustav Vasa (Sweden), Order of Pro Cultura Hungarica (Hungary), Order of Merit (Poland), Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music London (UK) and Honorary President of the European Bartók Society (Belgium).<sup>149</sup>

### **Jakob Grün (1837–1916)**

The Hungarian violinist and teacher, Jakob Grün, was born in Pest, and studied with Joseph Böhm in Vienna. He made numerous successful tours of Europe in addition to becoming concertmaster of the Imperial Opera at the Vienna Conservatory, where he also taught a number of famous students over a time of thirty-two years.<sup>150</sup>

According to the description of Carl Flesch in *Erinnerungen eines Geigers*<sup>151</sup> (Memories of a Violinist), Professor Grün was a small, unimposing, physically

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<sup>149</sup> Biographical information gathered from conversations with Ronald Masin and Maria Kelemen.

<sup>150</sup> Alberto Bachmann, *An Encyclopedia of the Violin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), p. 359.

<sup>151</sup> Carl Flesch, *Erinnerungen eines Geigers* (Zurich: Atlantis Verlag, 1960), p. 27–28. Flesch’s quote reads: „Im September 1886 meldete ich mir zur Aufnahmeprüfung, trug das 7. Konzert von Bériot vor und wurde anstandslos in die erste Ausbildungsklasse von Professor Grün aufgenommen. Jakob, genannt J. M. Grün (1837–1916), war ein kleines, unscheinbares Männchen mit auffallend un schönen Gesichtszügen. Als Mensch gutmütig und etwas beschränkt, als Geiger gewissenhaft, korrekt und trocken, war er als Lehrer für seinen Beruf begeistert, voll väterlicher Güte für seine Schüler. Seine künstlerische Laufbahn hatte unter keinem glücklichen Stern gestanden. In jungen Jahren gelangte er dadurch zu einer gewissen Berühmtheit, daß Joachims Demission in Hannover und dessen Übersiedlung nach Berlin indirekt mit seiner Persönlichkeit zusammenhing. Grün war nämlich in Hannover, wo er damals in Hoforchester tätig war, von Joachim zum Kammermusiker vorgeschlagen, jedoch wegen seiner jüdischen Herkunft abgelehnt worden, was Joachim, im Hinblick auf die eigene

unattractive man. As a person he was good-natured and somewhat parochial, as a violinist diligent and correct, enthusiastic about his profession as a teacher and full of fatherly benevolence towards his students.

His artistic career was not born under a lucky star — as a youth, Grün achieved a level of fame for being the indirect cause of Joachim's resignation in Hanover and his subsequent move to Berlin. Grün, who prior to Joachim's resignation had been working as a violinist in the Court Orchestra in Hanover, had been recommended to the court authorities by Joachim as being suitable to work as a chamber musician. However, the recommendation was declined because of Grün's Jewish extraction. This line of reasoning aggrieved Joachim, not least because of Joachim's own descent, and led him to pen his notice.

At the end of the 1860's, Grün was appointed concertmaster of the Vienna Imperial Opera, as successor of Joseph Hellmesberger (1828–1893). However, Grün did not meet the Viennese concert-going audiences' taste. His witty and sardonic precursor soon made Grün the target of his mockery and for a long time "Grün jokes" amused the world of music. Grün became more and more agitated by this state of affairs and must also have suffered physical inhibitions as a by-product of the situation as, in 1880, the eighteen-year-old Arnold Rosé, who had been appointed co-leader of the orchestra, began having to play Grün's solos during the orchestra's appearances. Considering the fact that Grün was forty-three years old at the time, one can imagine

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Abstammung, als Kränkung empfand und ihn zum Einreichen seines Abschiedsgesuches veranlaßte. Ende der sechziger Jahre wurde Grün als Konzertmeister an das Wiener Hofopern-Orchester als Nachfolger Hellmesberger verpflichtet. Grün entsprach jedoch in keiner Weise dem Geschmack des Wiener Publikums. Sein witziger und boshafter Vorgänger erwählte ihn bald zur Zielscheibe seines Spottes, und lange Zeit trugen die von Hellmesberger erdachten ‚Grün-Witze‘ in hohem Maße zur Erheiterung der musikalischen Welt bei. Grün scheint dadurch immer nervöser geworden zu sein und muß wohl auch an störenden psychischen Hemmungen in seiner Kunst gelitten haben; denn 1880 wurde ihm in der Gestalt des achtzehnjährigen Arnold Rosé ein zweiter Konzertmeister an die Seite gesetzt, der statt seiner die Soli zu spielen hatte. Wen man bedenkt, daß Grün erst 43 Jahre alt war, als ihm in solch brutaler Weise bedeutet wurde, daß seine solistische Laufbahn zu Ende sei, so kann man sich vorstellen, welch schwer seelische Erschütterungen dieser Schicksalschlag in ihm ausgelöst haben muß. Um so intensiver widmete er sich dem ihm von jeher weit mehr zusagenden Lehrberuf, in welchem er es auch zu bedeutendem Ansehen brachte. Als eingefleischter Jungeselle verbrachte er sein ganzes Leben mit seiner Mutter, die ihn auch in späteren Jahren noch wie ein kleines Kind behandelte und der er vollkommen hörig war. Unter seinen Schülern sind außer mir selbst hauptsächlich Franz Kneisel, Wessely, Lewinger, Rebner und Frau Hochmann zu erwähnen. Auch ein erheblicher Teil der Geiger des Wiener Hofopernorchesters sowie des im Jahre 1885 gegründeten Bostoner Symphonieorchesters entstammte seiner Schule. Mit 70 Jahren trat er in den Ruhestand — ein Ereignis, das durch ein Festkonzert gefeiert wurde, in dem seine hervorragendsten Schüler mitwirkten.“

the trauma he must have suffered when, in such a brutal way, it was suggested that his solo career was over. He therefore dedicated himself to a teaching career, which appealed to him far more than his performance activities and for which he gained great repute.

Grün's students included Oskar Back, Carl Flesch, Rosa Hochmann-Rosenfeld, Franz Kneisel, Max Lewinger, Adolf Rebner and Hans Wessely. A considerable number of violinists from the Viennese Imperial Opera, as well as those from the Boston Symphony Orchestra, established in 1885, also studied with him.

His prestige as a teacher is indicated by the fact that his retirement at the age of seventy was marked with a concert at which his most distinguished pupils performed. He would die nine years later in Baden near Vienna.

## **Jenő Hubay (1858–1937)**

Jenő Hubay, whose original surname was Huber, was born in Budapest. In November of 1879, proud of his Hungarian origin, he would ask for and be granted permission to change his name from the German-sounding Huber to Hubay.<sup>152</sup> His father, Károly, was the concertmaster and later, conductor of the National Theatre of Budapest, founder and first violinist of the Huber Quartet, and a well-known pedagogue.

Hubay received his first violin aged five and took his initial studies under the guidance of his father. Soon it became apparent that the child possessed great talent for the instrument and it was decided that he should study with Joseph Joachim, who had been director of the Berlin Hochschule für Musik since 1868.

Aside from benefiting from Joachim's teaching, whose method was linked to that of his master, Joseph Böhm, and the latter in turn to that of Viotti, Hubay had the privilege of hearing the Joachim Quartet in their performances of Beethoven's late quartets and the new Brahms quartets. After three years of study in Berlin, during which Hubay completed both his secondary school and his Hochschule education, the teenager returned to Budapest in 1876.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, music and music education flourished in Hungary, particularly in Budapest. This was due in part to Ferenc Liszt, who at the time resided in that city. On his return to Budapest, Hubay soon became not only an admirer but also a chamber music partner of Liszt. However, regardless of his standing as a musician and the success he enjoyed from his introductory concerts in Hungary, no job or prospect thereof was offered to him. Having no justifiable reason to remain in Hungary, and with the help of a letter of recommendation written by Liszt to Camille Saint-Saëns, Hubay arrived in Paris in 1878 with just his violin, very little money and even less knowledge of the French language. In Saint-Saëns'

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<sup>152</sup> Biographical information translated from Ferenc Halmy and Maria Zipernovszky's Hungarian-language, *Hubay Jenő* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976), p. 28, which is in turn based on the original facsimile of Hubay's memoirs as archived in the libraries of Budapest. Hubay's self-penned memoirs have not been published to date.

residence he met the elite of Paris at elegant soirées but Hubay himself lived in miserable quarters, barely able to afford his basic sustenance.

Hubay decided he should meet the Belgian-born Henri Vieuxtemps (1820–1821) whose reclusive life, in part due to his failing health, did not lessen his standing amongst those in the Parisian world of music. While waiting in Vieuxtemps' drawing-room, Hubay whiled away the time, sight-reading Vieuxtemps' new Violin Concerto which was on the music stand. Twenty-five years later Hubay recalled this moment in his memoirs<sup>153</sup> Upon entering the room, Vieuxtemps asked the young violinist what it was he wanted. Hubay, somewhat ill at ease under the stern gaze of the white-haired musician, replied that he was a Hungarian violinist who had great admiration for Vieuxtemps' compositions and that he had come to pay the great man his respects. Vieuxtemps asked Hubay to play for him and thus Hubay chose Vieuxtemps' fifth Violin Concerto, Vieuxtemps accompanying him on the piano. Vieuxtemps became enthusiastic and called for his daughter to accompany Hubay. When the last note of the concerto had sounded, Vieuxtemps stood up, embraced Hubay and declared, "here is my successor in Brussels".<sup>154</sup>

These words would prove to be important: from their first meeting onwards, Hubay became a regular guest at Vieuxtemps' home, spending day after day at Rue Chaptal and playing Vieuxtemps' works at his request. This close contact also enabled Hubay to become familiar with Vieuxtemps' manner of violin teaching, so much so that one decade later, music critics still called him a Vieuxtemps pupil. Nevertheless, and regardless of Vieuxtemps' personal request to Jules Étienne Padeloup, the omnipotent organiser of the Sunday matinée "Concerts Populaires" and a rather mediocre conductor, to allow for Hubay to perform in the series, Hubay was unable to break in to the Parisian musical scene.

Hubay continued to hone his skills and like so many of his contemporaries, was an all-round musician. He played the piano very well and loved to compose. Ironically,

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<sup>153</sup> Biographical information translated from Ferenc Halmy and Maria Zipernovszky's Hungarian-language, *Hubay Jenő* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976), p. 29.

<sup>154</sup> Biographical information translated from Ferenc Halmy and Maria Zipernovszky's Hungarian-language, *Hubay Jenő* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976), p. 30. The original quote reads, "lásátok, ez lesz az én utódom Brüsszelben".

it was as a composer that he first became well-known among the French public, when he composed a paraphrase for violin and piano of Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore*. Hubay sent the transcription for violin to Massenet, who liked Hubay's version so much that he orchestrated it himself and asked Padeloup to perform it with Hubay at the Cirque d'Hiver in Paris. The concert took place in 1880 and the next day the French press had begun dubbing Hubay "a new Paganini".<sup>155</sup>

From then on, his career as a performing artist took off. Vieuxtemps recommended Hubay for the post of the recently deceased Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880) at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles, a position Hubay would hold from 1882 until 1886. He was therefore stepping into a distinguished lineage within the Belgian School, for successive holders of the post had been the school's founder, Charles-Auguste de Bériot, then Vieuxtemps and thereafter Wieniawski. Twenty-three-year-old Hubay accepted the post on the conditions that he would be allowed to continue his work as a soloist and could keep his Hungarian nationality. The first condition was met by the appointment of an assistant who took over Hubay's class in his absence, the second by the Belgian Minister of the Interior who had to give permission for concession to be granted as hitherto only Belgian nationals had been allowed to teach at the Conservatory.

Hubay, beyond his function as a teacher of the violin, also taught chamber music at the Conservatory as much as he wished. In total, he taught six hours a week, leaving him time to compose, found a string quartet and a piano trio and pursue a career as a soloist.<sup>156</sup> In 1886, whilst on a concert tour in Hungary, the Minister of Culture offered him a post at the Budapest Music Academy, offering him *carte blanche* for both his work and remuneration. Hubay considered the offer carefully. He was torn between the fact that he already taught at one of the most esteemed Conservatories in Europe, was appreciated by other members of the staff there and enjoyed the respect of his pupils and the Belgian public, and by his personal desire to return to his home country and contribute to shaping the musical future there.

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<sup>155</sup> Biographical information translated from Ferenc Halmy and Maria Zipernovszky's Hungarian-language, *Hubay Jenő* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976), p. 41. The quote is from the newspaper *Gil Blas*, signed by the music critic known by the pseudonym Magnus, shortly after the performance that took place on 19 December 1880 at 2pm.

<sup>156</sup> Biographical information translated from Ferenc Halmy and Maria Zipernovszky's Hungarian-language, *Hubay Jenő* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976), p. 48–49.

In June 1886 he presented his last group of students for examinations at the Conservatory. Seven of them received the highest qualifications, including the Dutch Bram Eldering (also a student of Joachim), who would later be the teacher of Adolf Busch, amongst others. In the same year, Hubay returned to Budapest to take up his position of teacher of violin studies and chamber music at the Academy. The position he took was one his father, Károly, had held before him until his death in 1885.

Shortly after his arrival he founded the Hubay-Popper Quartet, named after the first violinist and cellist. Their concerts became important events in the cultural life of Budapest and were followed by extensive European tours. The quartet also proved to be important for international ties: on invitation by the quartet, Brahms presented his works with the quartet for the first time in December 1886. This was an exceptional moment seeing as at this stage of his life Brahms was leading a rather solitary existence. Beyond this, Brahms had had a quarrel with one of the more influential people in his life, namely Joachim, and had stopped sending his manuscripts to the latter's home in Berlin. Brahms would perform five more times with the Hubay-Popper quartet, the final appearance taking place in 1891. Furthermore, in 1891 Joachim visited Budapest after an absence of ten years. He gave three concerts there, one with the Hubay-Popper quartet and one with his former pupil, Hubay.

By 1899, the results of Hubay's teaching had become manifest when he presented ten-year-old Stefi Geyer to the Hungarian public. Further child prodigies who emerged from Hubay's class included Ferenc Vécsey and József Szigeti.

In this time, personalities walking the halls of the Academy included such important figures as Ernő Dohnányi (1877–1960), Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967) and Leo Weiner (1885–1960), of whom the last two were to become famous in music education, as well as for composition. There was nothing accidental about the emergence of such talent at the Academy — the creation of the Academy in 1875 was prompted partly by the need to accommodate Ferenc Liszt's pupils who were flocking to him from all over the world. During the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the common language in the Academy at that time was German as many of the other teachers were of Czech and Austrian nationality. In the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup>

century when Hungarian musicians such as Koessler, Hubay, Popper and Thoman became teachers at the Academy, the German-orientated atmosphere became less marked; and this also coincided with an increasing national awareness within Hungary as a whole. The building of concert halls and the Opera House as well as the founding of new orchestras rendered it unnecessary for the nation's talents to seek their fortunes abroad. Hubay remained active at the Academy until his death. During his time as a pedagogue at the institute he had become director of it in 1921 whilst retaining professorship of his class, and had seen the change of the institute's name to Ferenc Liszt Music Academy.

Over the half-century that Hubay had worked as a violin teacher, he had established a school of violin playing, the Hungarian School, sufficiently distinct and distinguished to be internationally recognised as being of equal importance as Leopold Auer's Russian School in Saint Petersburg, and the school of Carl Flesch. However, it is interesting to note at this point, that the four greatest violin schools active during Hubay's lifetime were all led by violinists who had been born in Hungary: Leopold Auer, Carl Flesch, Joseph Joachim and Hubay himself.<sup>157</sup>

Generations of violinists had been tutored by Hubay and his pupil, assistant and the successor of his position as director and professor at the Ferenc Liszt Music Academy, Ede Zathureczky. Zathureczky's students include Sándor Devich, Albert Kocsis, Péter Komlós, Dénes Kovács, and György Pauk.

Many of Hubay's students perpetuated his methods in various parts of the world: André Gertler in Belgium, Ödön Pártos and Ilona Fehér in Israel, Lóránd Fenyves in Canada, Emil Telmányi in Denmark, and Zoltán Székely in the United States.<sup>158</sup> It must be noted that part of the reason that Zathureczky stayed in Hungary whilst other Hubay students left was due to "numerus clausus", a condition allowing for less than 6 percent of students in Hungary at this time to be Jewish. This policy was introduced in 1920 and is widely regarded as being one of the first anti-semitic acts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by a state government. Gertler, Ormandy (formally Jenő Blau),

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<sup>157</sup> From *Jenő Hubay and the Modern Hungarian Violin School*, a lecture at Ferrara University by Cheniston K. Roland, 2003.

<sup>158</sup> Biographical information taken from Ronald Masin and Maria Kelemen, *Violin Technique – The Natural Way*. (Buren: Frits Knuf, 1982), p. 135–137.



Pártos, and Fehér all left on graduating from Hubay's class — their Jewish background making it impossible for them to stay.

In 1928 Hubay wrote a letter to Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931), drawing the Belgian violinist's attention to Hubay's student Gertler. Ysaÿe had been Hubay's successor at the Conservatory when the latter moved to Budapest in 1886. Ysaÿe himself had studied with Wieniawski, Vieuxtemps and the Liège-born Massart.<sup>159</sup> Soon thereafter, Gertler became a member of the faculty of the Conservatory, teaching chamber music at first.

Hubay had planned to write, in Hungarian, a book that would encompass a concise history of the origins of the violin as an instrument. Only the earlier part of this project was completed, consisting of a chapter on instruments and their labels entitled "The Violin as a Solo Instrument". Furthermore, he had wished to include a short biography on each of the great violin virtuosos from the 17<sup>th</sup> century until his own time, to include a technically-graded order of recommended works, and an account of his approach to teaching.<sup>160</sup> Hubay had played on a borrowed Antonio Stradivari before buying his own Nicola Amati violin.

### **Joseph Joachim (1831–1907)**

Even a century after his death, Joachim's influence still reaches down to violinists of the present day, due not only to the legacy of his teaching but also because of his impact on some of the most important violin concertos in the repertoire.

Born in Kittsee, which was then in the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and today part of Austria's Burgenland, he was the son of Hungarian Jews. Two years after his birth, his family moved to Pest, during which time he took up the violin and, aged eight, continued his studies in Vienna, most significantly with Joseph Böhm (1795–1876).

Thanks to his cousin, Fanny Wittgenstein (the grandmother of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein), he was taken to live and study in Leipzig when he was

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<sup>159</sup> Alberto Bachmann, *An Encyclopedia of the Violin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), p. 413.

<sup>160</sup> Biographical information translated from Ferenc Halmy and Maria Zipernovszky's Hungarian-language, *Hubay Jenő* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976), p. 150.

twelve, whereby he came into contact with Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Having studied Beethoven's Violin Concerto for four years, the child prodigy performed it (and in doing so, brought it out of virtual obscurity and re-established it) under Mendelssohn's baton in London on 27 May 1844. Critics hailed his performance as a triumph, including the quality of the cadenzas that he wrote himself:

Beethoven's violin concerto, which belongs to the class of symphonies, so grand and varied is its design, was played by young Joachim in a manner which caused astonishment in the oldest musicians and professors of that instrument, who discover in a boy only 13 years of age, all the mastery of the art which it has cost most of them the labour of a life to attain, if indeed any of them have reached to the same excellence by which he is in all respects distinguished.<sup>161</sup>

Beethoven's Violin Concerto was not the only work Joachim revived — during a time when unaccompanied Bach was rarely played without piano accompaniments (for instance, Robert Schumann offered accompaniments of this sort), the solo violin sonatas deemed too “naked” to perform without an additional soundscape, Joachim played Bach's solo sonatas and partitas in accordance with Bach's original concept.

Joachim later taught for a brief period at the Leipzig Conservatorium and was Ferdinand David's partner in the first desk of the Gewandhaus Orchestra. Following periods in Weimar (to which he had been invited by Ferenc Liszt) and Hanover, Joachim moved to Berlin in 1866 where he became a focal presence at the Hochschule für Musik. Three years later he formed the Joachim String Quartet; the ensemble quickly came to international repute, heralded amongst Europe's finest.

In 1903 Joachim made five recordings comprising two solo movements from the solo sonatas and partitas by Bach, his Romance in C Major and two Hungarian Dances by Johannes Brahms (Testament SBT2 1323), the legacy of which remains a valuable source of information about styles of violin playing in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>161</sup> *The Times*, 28 May 1844, pg. 4, review of the Philharmonic Society's concert the previous night.

Joachim taught a host of outstanding violinists who would pass on his styles of teaching and interpretation, such as Leopold Auer (who studied with Joachim in Hanover and later taught in Saint Petersburg), Carl Courvoisier (author of *Technics of Violin Playing on Joachim's Method*, London: The Strad Library, No. I, 1894), Bram Eldering (who also studied with Hubay and later taught in Cologne), Karel Halíř (who was a member of the Joachim Quartet), Jenő Hubay (who would go on to teach in Budapest), Bronisław Huberman, Karl Klingler (who later taught in Berlin), Andreas Moser (who was assistant to Joachim), Maud Powell, Sidney Robjohns (who later taught in London), Theodore Spiering (who became concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic in 1909) and Ferenc Vécsey, (he studied first with Hubay, then Joachim and is the dedicatee of the Sibelius Violin Concerto).

Joachim also conducted and commissioned new music, and was well-informed on the topic of musicology. To show this last credential, Joachim's edition of the sonatas and partitas by Bach included Bach's version of the notation alongside Joachim's edited rendering. His historical awareness of performance style matched that of his collaborator Brahms, who in turn was one of the most historically aware composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Joachim left a number of compositions, including pieces such as his two Romances, three violin concertos and orchestral works such as Two Marches. Brahms consulted Joachim on two of his concertos, namely those for violin, and for violin and cello, and Joachim advised Bruch on his G minor Violin Concerto. Joachim was the dedicatee of and advisor to Dvořák's only Violin Concerto. He also wrote a cadenza for the Brahms Violin Concerto, as well as for the Beethoven Violin Concerto and the last two Mozart Violin Concertos, KV 218 and KV 219. All these cadenzas are still played in concert halls on a regular basis.<sup>162</sup>

### **Maria Kelemen (b. 1938)**

My mother, Maria Kelemen (originally Mária), is the descendant of a long line of professional musicians from Eastern Europe. Born in Budapest in 1938, she began

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<sup>162</sup> Biographical information drawn from Andreas Moser, *Joseph Joachim: Ein Lebensbild* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Brahms-Gesellschaft, vol. 1: 1908; vol. 2: 1910) and "Father Figure" by Tully Potter for *The Strad*, August 2007, vol. 118 No. 1408, p. 48–51.

playing the piano at the age of six, the violin at the age of seven and later switched to the viola, aged twenty.

Kelemen's grandmother, Emilia Juhasz-Schoffan (1875–1957), was a pianist who graduated from the Ferenc Liszt Academy at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Juhasz-Schoffan became the founding director of a private music school on the Pest side of the city in 1919, the only school that remained privately-owned and operated during the Communist era which started in 1948 and lasted until 1989. Following the Second World War, Klara Kelemen-Juhasz (1904–1998), the daughter of Emilia, and in turn a pianist with degrees from the Ferenc Liszt Academy, took over direction of the school until her death in 1998. Kelemen studied in the Béla Bartók Conservatory from 1952 until 1956 when she left Hungary after the Uprising; with the aid of a Ford Scholarship, she went to Brussels, having been accepted as a student of André Gertler. She received the Premier Prix for violin at the age of twenty and the Premier Prix for viola one year later, having picked up the latter instrument only twelve months prior.

Aged twenty-five she became the leader of the viola section of the Kunstmaand Orchestra (the name of the orchestra was later changed to the Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and is now known as the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra), having previously gained orchestral experience as a tutti player in the Antwerp Philharmonic Orchestra in Belgium. An established chamber musician, co-author (see the biography of Ronald Masin for more information) and author of essays and articles on pre-kindergarten instrumental education for several Hungarian specialist magazines, she established the Kodály Centre in Cape Town in 1984 having decided to devote herself to teaching.

Her husband, Ronald Masin, was offered the post of senior lecturer at the Dublin Institute of Technology, College of Music in 1987 and thus the family moved to Ireland. By founding her own school, the Young European Strings School of Music in Dublin, in 1988, the strong tradition of teaching that was passed down to Kelemen has been kept alive (see the biography of Ronald Masin for more information).<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Biographical information gathered from conversations with and approved by Maria Kelemen.

Kelemen is an acknowledged expert in the field of teaching the very young, gifted student.<sup>164</sup>

### **Herman Krebbers (b. 1923)**

Born in Hengelo, The Netherlands, in 1923, Krebbers, like Ashkenasi, was a child prodigy whose talent so astounded the Dutch public, that they lovingly gave him the vernacular nickname, “The Paganini of the North”.

Krebbers’ family was not particularly musical. However, his father, who worked in factory by day, earned some extra money by taking to the saxophone in the evenings and accompanying silent films in cinemas. Krebbers has professed a not-untypical love/hate relationship to his instrument as a child. He does not look back on his childhood with great fondness, did not have a particular longing for the violin when he was young but does say that he knew from an early age that he enjoyed performing in front of an audience.

The conductor of the Arnhem Orkest Vereniging, now the Gelders Orkest (known as The Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra outside of the Netherlands) based in Arnhem, capital city of the province Gelderland in the Netherlands, had been searching for a young, gifted leader and became aware of Krebbers. Thus, aged seventeen, Krebbers left school to begin work as concertmaster of a professional orchestra. In 1950 he joined the Hague’s Residentie Orkest (known as the Hague Philharmonic outside of the Netherlands) as its concertmaster and, tandem to that position, was named professor at Amsterdam’s Muzieklyceum (now the Conservatory of Amsterdam) in 1956.

Krebbers became concertmaster of the Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest in Amsterdam in 1962. During all the time of his orchestral activity, Krebbers enjoyed an active and successful career both as a soloist and chamber musician. To give examples of this: in the 1990’s, *The Strad* magazine named Krebbers’ recording of the Brahms Violin Concerto with the Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest as the best in comparison to twenty-one other reviewed recordings of that composition; he

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<sup>164</sup> Statement based on an article entitled “Never too young” written by David Denton for *The Strad*, September 1996, vol. 107 No. 1277, p. 908–911.

received a gold disc for his recordings of the Beethoven Violin Concerto, the Brahms Violin Concerto, and Mozart's KV 211 and 218 Violin Concertos; Krebbers was a member of the Amsterdam Kamerorkest (Amsterdam Chamber Orchestra) and of the Guarneri Trio, which were made up of Krebbers, the pianist Danièle Dechenne and the cellist Jean Decroos. In 1975/76 Krebbers added another teaching post to his busy schedule, namely as that of professor at the Robert Schumann Hochschule in Düsseldorf.

That busy schedule was cruelly put to a halt on 2 August 1979 (a day Krebbers has said he would never forget<sup>165</sup>) when a sailing accident, from which he was saved by being pulled out of the water by his right arm, caused doctors to believe that the violinist would never be able to play again. During the course of five years Krebbers was unable to move his right arm without pain. Nevertheless, he continued to teach both in Amsterdam and in Düsseldorf, foregoing the demonstration of passages on the instrument and substituting this with verbal instruction only. After seven years, without telling his doctors of it, he secretly resumed playing. It felt to him as if he had never been away from the instrument partly because he had been so involved and in touch with teaching and music and also because of his photographic memory, which affords him the luxury of being able to play, randomly, just about any passage from any piece he knows, at will. At first only his students were aware of this but very soon the Dutch media caught wind of the wonder and relayed the story in its every detail. Friends Krebbers trusted advised him not to become active again as a soloist reasoning that, no matter how well he might play, the risk that audience members hungry for sensationalism would attend his performance, only to say at the end of a concert that one could hear that the performer had been in an accident, was simply too great. To this day, Krebbers believes this to be a great psychological truth.<sup>166</sup> Krebbers however did perform concerts with his duo partner, Theo Olof, and with his students.

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<sup>165</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 30.

<sup>166</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 34. Krebbers' quote originally reads: „Sie [gute Freunde] haben zu mir gesagt: ‚Selbst wenn Du so schön spielst wie nie zuvor, besteht das Risiko, daß Leute aus Sensationsgier ins Konzert kommen, um anschließend zu sagen, man könne eben doch hören, daß Du einen Unfall gehabt hast.‘ Das halte ich bis heute für eine große psychologische Wahrheit.“

Krebbbers' international reputation as a soloist was thus superseded by his reputation as a pedagogue. In homage to Krebbbers' modesty I add a statement of his in "acknowledgement" of the previous sentence:

I tell you, a concertmaster, regardless of whether active in Amsterdam, Berlin or Cleveland, can never really have a worldwide career. Even when one has an excellent reputation... one is not engaged to perform by foreign orchestras... Since I have fully turned to pedagogy, I can say that, as opposed to former times, I now truly have gained an international reputation. I would never have expected it in this form.<sup>167</sup>

At the forefront of violin pedagogy not only in The Netherlands, Krebbbers continues to give masterclasses throughout the world. He has left a mark on the development of talent no less indelible than that of his own teacher, Oskar Back. In Krebbbers' impressive list of past students one can count Vera Beths, Jeanne Lamon, Catherine Leonard (also a student of Masin, Schmieder and Ricci), Rudolf Koelman (also a student of Heifetz), André Rieu, Yvonne Smeulers (also a student of Bron and Ashkenasi), Yayoi Toda, Emmy Verhey (also a student of Back) and Frank Peter Zimmermann.

Krebbbers made several recordings for the Philips label, a number of which are still available. Krebbbers has been and is a jury member of numerous national and international competitions both for young and established talent such as the Nationaal Violconours Oskar Back (Oskar Back Violin Competition) in Amsterdam and the International Violin Competition Leopold Mozart in Augsburg, and is the inspiration behind the Herman Krebbbers Violin and Cello Concours, which is being held for the third time in 2007.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzelmann Verlag, 1997), p. 34. Krebber's quote originally reads: „Ich sage Ihnen, daß ein Konzertmeister, egal, ob er in Amsterdam, Berlin oder Cleveland tätig ist, nie eine wirkliche Weltkarriere machen kann. Selbst wenn man einen ausgezeichneten Ruf hat,... wird man von fremden Orchestern nicht engagiert... Seitdem ich mich völlig der Pädagogik zugewendet habe, kann ich nun aber sagen, daß ich mir im Gegensatz zu früher einen wirklichen Weltruf erworben habe. Das hätte ich in dieser Form nie erwartet.“

<sup>168</sup> Biographical information gathered from conversations and written communication between the author and Herman Krebbbers during February 2008.

## **Boris Kuschnir (b. 1948)**

Born in Kiev one year later than Bron, Kuschnir studied the violin with Boris Belenky at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow and later with David Oistrakh, as well as chamber music with Valentin Berlinsky, the cellist of the Borodin Quartet. Kuschnir founded the internationally renowned Moscow String Quartet in 1970, and was a member until 1979. He also founded the Wiener Schubert Trio in 1984 and the Vienna Brahms Trio in 1996. With Mikhail Kopelman, leader of the Borodin Quartet from 1976 until 1996, he co-founded the Kopelman Quartet in 2003.

In 1981 he moved to Austria, a country of which he acquired citizenship in 1982. Concertmaster of the Bruckner Orchestra of Linz until 1983, he took up two teaching posts that he still holds today: at the private Conservatory of Vienna in 1984 and at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz in 1999. The Austrian Bundespräsident Dr Thomas Klestil bestowed the job title of “Professor” to Kuschnir in 1999.

His international reputation was sealed thanks to the success of his outstanding pupils, amongst them Lidia Baich, Dalibor Karvay, Vahid Khadem-Missagh (also a student of Ozim), Julian Rachlin, Patricia Kopatchinskaja (also a student of Ozim) and Nikolaj Znaider.

Kuschnir regularly gives solo, festival and chamber music performances in some of the world’s most established concert halls and has been a jury member of numerous competitions such as the Tibor Varga competition in Switzerland, the Michael Hill competition in New Zealand, the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels, the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow and the Premio Paganini in Genoa. Recordings of his are available on EMI (the complete Mozart trios, 1991) and on Naxos (the complete Schumann piano trios, 1999).

Kuschnir plays on the “La Rouse Boughton” Stradivarius violin (1703), the use of which was awarded to him by the Austrian National Bank.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Biographical information gathered from conversations with Boris Kuschnir and retrieved in November 2007 from his German biography as released on Kuschnir’s official website, <http://www.boriskuschnir.com>.



## **Ronald Masin (b. 1937)**

My father, Ronald Masin (originally Mašín), born in 1937 in Rotterdam, was a student of André Gertler's, entering the class in Brussels at the age of eighteen. Of Czech-Dutch descent, Masin decided of his own accord to begin studying the violin — his parents loved music but were not musicians themselves. Masin became the leader of the Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra (previously known as the Kunstmaand Orchestra, currently called the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra) at the age twenty-six, and in that time worked and played with such luminaries as David Oistrakh, Henryk Szeryng and Zino Francescatti. Masin held the position for twenty years until taking the decision to teach full-time. Masin's influence on orchestral life in the Netherlands is apparent to this day as his bowings and markings continue to be in circulation amongst orchestras in the country. On a trip to the Netherlands in January 2010, I went past the library of the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra looking for a score that I knew they would have. Upon engaging with the Director of the library during which we introduced ourselves to one another, he disappeared briefly, rummaging around various shelves along a number of corridors. He returned triumphantly carrying scores by Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, and Dmitri Shostakovich, to name a few, all of which are marked in my father's familiar handwriting and are regularly played from by current ensembles in the country.

The Kern Ensemble, which he and Maria Kelemen founded in 1966 in Amsterdam, recorded for EMI and undertook many tours, both in The Netherlands and throughout Europe and the Americas. The Ensemble consisted of four members – Ronald Masin, violin; Maria Kelemen, viola; Bob Reuling, cello and Rinus Groot, piano. This arrangement allowed the members to play a large range of duos, trios and quartets, hence the title “Kern”, meaning “core” or “nucleus”. The Ensemble ceased a full concert schedule in 1980.

Together with Kelemen, he wrote a book entitled *Violin Technique — The Natural Way*<sup>170</sup>, which appeared in The Netherlands and America and was a comparative

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<sup>170</sup> Ronald Masin and Maria Kelemen, *Violin Technique – The Natural Way*. (Buren: Frits Knuf, 1982).

study of various violin schools. However, the book mainly focuses on the Hungarian School as taught by Gertler. The authors of *Violin Technique — The Natural Way* describe each of Rodolphe Kreutzer's 42 Studies<sup>171</sup>, first published in 1796, in the manner in which they were taught by teachers of the Hungarian School, explaining the purpose of each study and how they should be practised. Masin was invited to become professor of violin studies and head of the string department at the University of Cape Town, Republic of South Africa, from 1984 until 1986 and was a senior lecturer at the Dublin Institute of Technology, College of Music, from 1987 until his official retirement in 2002. Kelemen set up a private school specialising in the teaching of young, gifted string instrumentalists in Dublin in 1988. Called Young European Strings School of Music, it is a follow-up to the school she had begun whilst in Cape Town, which she named Kodály Centre in homage to the Hungarian composer and educator whose methods inspired her approach to teaching. The music school in Dublin enjoys great success, the orchestras, ensembles and chamber music groups of the school and its individual pupils winning a vast number of awards annually, both in Ireland and overseas.

Ronald Masin has taught at the school since 1999. Two generations of Irish concert violinists have passed through his hands since 1987, many of whom now enjoy international careers, including Catherine Leonard (also a student of Eduard Schmieder, who now holds the position formerly held by Heifetz at the University of Southern California; Krebbers and Ruggiero Ricci), David O'Doherty (also a student of Pierre Amoyal who in turn was a student of Heifetz), Clíodhna Ryan (also a student of Schmieder), Dara Daly and Gina Maria McGuinness (also a student of Ashkenasi). Masin teaches to this day both in Ireland and abroad and sits on various juries of international competitions.

Masin was the central protagonist in the re-establishment of the Irish branch of the European String Teachers Association in 1989.

Moreover, the Music Instrument Fund of Ireland, Masin's brainchild, was established in 1997 in order to support music performance in Ireland by helping

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<sup>171</sup> Rodolphe Kreutzer, *42 Studies (42 Etudes ou Caprices pour le Violon)*. (New York: G. Schirmer, 1894).

young musicians to achieve their full potential with high-quality string instruments dating back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. So far, forty students have benefited from this scheme. All of them have continued in the field of music, which, for some, might not have been the case without a MIFI instrument.<sup>172</sup>

### **Igor Ozim (b. 1931)**

Igor Ozim is currently professor at the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg, a post he has held since 2003. Born in Ljubljana, Slovenia, into a family where both his parents played the piano and his elder brother the violin, he took up the violin with local teacher and professor Leon Pfeifer at the age of five. Pfeifer himself came from the Prague School. The child's progress was so rapid that, aged only eight, he was admitted into Pfeifer's class at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana. In total, Ozim studied with Pfeifer for thirteen years, before beginning his studies with Max Rostal in London. He would study with Rostal for two years. In 1951 he won the gold medal at the Carl Flesch Competition in London and followed this up with a first prize at the ARD Competition in Munich in 1953. After these prizes, he embarked on a rich solo career performing with some of the world's best orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, and the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra.

His repertoire includes over sixty violin concertos, numerous contemporary pieces, many of which he premiered, and countless chamber and solo works. His discography includes two volumes of virtuoso violin pieces for the Koch Schwann label that he recorded with the long-standing accompanist of his class in Berne, Anna de Capitani. In 1985 he formed the Arion Trio together with the pianist Ilse von Alpenheim and violoncellist Walter Grimmer. For the Swedish BIS label the Trio recorded Franz Schubert's complete chamber music for piano and strings on a four-CD production and the complete piano trios by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart on a two-CD production. Invited guests on the Schubert recording are the violist Claudio Veress and double bass player Andreas Cincera; the Mozart recording features Veress' playing too, as well as that of clarinetist Antony Morf.

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<sup>172</sup> Biographical information gathered from conversations with and approved by Ronald Masin.

Like Bron, Ozim was also approached by his fellow classmates for advice during his studies in London with Rostal. “Somehow, already in that time, I had a reputation for showing interest in how things work, how things are done... I was always interested in how one produces something, how one does it on the violin.”<sup>173</sup>

As a teacher, Ozim is much in demand, not least because of his extraordinary industriousness. His first teaching post was in Ljubljana in 1961. He has simultaneously held professorial positions in the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne (he was instated in 1963), the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna (where he taught for only a short time in the 1990’s, leaving the post in 1997) and the Hochschule der Künste in Berne (1984–2003<sup>174</sup>).

His past pupils include Gabriel Adorján (also a student of Chumachenco), Karel Boeschoten (also a student of Krebbers), Christiane Hutcap (who was his assistant for many years and now has her own class in Rostock), Wonji Kim (his current assistant in Salzburg), Patricia Kopatchinskaja (also a student of Kuschner), Keisuke Okazaki (also a student of Bron), Piotr Plawner, Katrin Scholz, Monika Urbaniak (his assistant during his time teaching in Berne, who now holds her own post in Berne) and Carolin Widmann. All of the aforementioned violinists enjoy international solo careers. Some are esteemed chamber musicians too, such as Gabriel Adorján, who currently holds the post of concertmaster at the Berlin Komische Oper and the Bayerische Kammerphilharmonie and is the violinist of the Zurich Piano Trio.

Ozim was president of the European String Teachers Association from 2002 until 2005, a post held before him by Yehudi Menuhin (1984–1993) and Max Rostal (1974–1983); and he continues to give at least four masterclasses a year throughout the world, in addition to his teaching commitments in Salzburg. He is a member of

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<sup>173</sup> Urs Frauchiger, *Der eigene Ton*, p. 157. Ozim’s original quote reads: „Irgendwie hatte ich schon damals den Ruf, daß ich Interesse zeigte, wie die Sachen ticken, wie sie gemacht werden... mich hat immer interessiert, wie man etwas herstellt, wie man es macht auf der Geige.“

<sup>174</sup> Dates of service in Berne as communicated to the author by Ozim during conversation in Salzburg in May 2008.

juries at various international competitions including the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis.<sup>175</sup>

Ozim bases his approach on that which he learned from Rostal in the 1950's, and furthermore supports Ivan Galamian's and Lucien Capet's teachings. Ozim uses notation that was partially conceived by Rostal for indicative use in sheet music, such as symbols for bow division, as well as principles of fingerings, bowings and phrasing. Ozim teaches scales and rhythmic exercises devised by Galamian<sup>176</sup>; and incorporates various aspects of Capet's theories on bow technique within his own teachings. Ozim garnered the latter from Capet's *La Technique Supérieure de l'Archet pour Violon*. As with all good teachers, Ozim's method is based on years of accumulated experience and the development of his own ideas and those of his mentors. Both being a master of and teaching every aspect of technique, he is very concerned that his students have their basics well under control — essentials such as sound intonation, highly-developed left-hand skills, exact rhythm and a knowledge of the full score. For instance, his students, when they come with new pieces, play from the piano score, the fingerings and bowings marked into the violin voice of it, only later switching to the solo violin part of the piece.

Concerning his emphasis on technique, Ozim has said: “We artists are simple folk. Somehow we are craftsmen. The profession of circus-people, which I greatly admire, is close to ours: advanced craftsmanship and — with the good ones — an innate wish to offer others joy.”<sup>177</sup>

## **Max Rostal (1905–1991)**

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<sup>175</sup> Biographical information based on conversations with Igor Ozim, and in part on an interview with Ozim by Margaret Campbell, entitled “Curiouser and curiouser”, *The Strad*, July 1995, vol. 106 No. 1263, p. 696–699.

<sup>176</sup> Ivan Galamian devised a system of scalar exercises in which keys follow one another alphabetically (as opposed to the order of the circle of fifths). Hence, one follows a G Major scale by an A Major scale and so on. Once the scales are learned, the student can focus attention on a wide range of rhythmic exercises, all of which are to be practised on the scales themselves. Frederick Neumann and Ivan Galamian, *Contemporary Violin Technique Volume 1, Scales and Arpeggio Exercises with Bowing and Rhythm Patterns* (New York: E.C. Schirmer Publishing, 1962).

<sup>177</sup> Urs Frauchiger, *Der eigene Ton*, p. 166. Ozim's original quote reads: „Wir Künstler sind einfache Leute. Der Beruf der Zirkusleute, den ich sehr bewundere, ist unserem sehr nahe: Hohes handwerkliches Können und — bei den guten — ein angeborenes Bedürfnis, andern Leuten Freude zu machen.“

Born into a Jewish family in Cieszyn (then a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire) in 1905, Max Rostal gave his first performance at the age of six. He expressed regret at not having had a childhood, his father requesting that he practise between six and eight hours daily. Skipping his childhood, however, lent him self-critical objectivity. In retrospect, he found it implausible that aged ten he performed three violin concertos in one evening.<sup>178</sup>

He studied with Arnold Rosé in Vienna and later with Carl Flesch in Berlin; the Rostal family moved to Berlin in 1920 where Rostal metamorphosed from “Wunderkind” to distinguished soloist and chamber musician of international renown. Rostal won the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy prize, the oldest classical music prize in Germany, in 1925. Other winners of the prize have included the pianists Wilhelm Backhaus, Wilhelm Kempff (who won as both a pianist and composer), Otto Klemperer and Max Trapp, as well as composers such as Kurt Weill, Berthold Goldschmidt and Engelbert Humperdinck.

Rostal became the assistant of Flesch in 1928 and in 1930 became a professor of violin studies at the Berlin Musikhochschule making him the youngest teacher there at the time; he was forced to leave the post in 1933, the year the National Socialists came to power in Germany.<sup>179</sup> Rostal emigrated to England where he started anew, at first concentrating on his solo career. His discography includes recordings of sonatas by Delius, Elgar and Walton, currently available on the Testament label.

Between 1944 and 1958 he was professor of violin studies in London’s Guildhall School of Music. Between 1957 and 1982 he taught at the Cologne Hochschule für Musik and from 1958 until 1985 he was head of the Meisterklasse for violin in the Konservatorium of Berne (in recent years, the Konservatorium of Berne has been renamed Hochschule der Künste after its inclusion into the University system in Switzerland). In Berne, his assistant for a time was Berta Volmer with whom he also built his class in Cologne.

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<sup>178</sup> Max and Leo Rostal, *Violin-Schlüssel-Erlebnisse* (Berlin: Ries & Erler, 2007).

<sup>179</sup> There is discrepancy in the date of Rostal’s beginning as professor of violin studies (as opposed to assistant of Flesch, a post he took in 1928 according to *Violin-Schlüssel-Erlebnisse*) in Berlin. *Violin-Schlüssel-Erlebnisse* state the date to be 1931 whereas *Handbuch zum Geigenspiel* states that the date is 1930.

Rostal was a co-founder of the European String Teachers Association and his students include Norbert Brainin, Siegmund Nissel and Peter Schidlof of the Amadeus Quartet, Thomas Brandis, Thomas Füre, Kurt Guntner, Ulf Hoelscher, Igor Ozim, Edith Peinemann, Leon Spierer and Thomas Zehetmair.

In 1991, the year of his death, he started a competition in Berne that bears his name. The Max Rostal Competition is open to violinists and violists and will, in 2009, be hosted by the Universität der Künste in Berlin.

Violinists the world over have greatly benefited from compositions that he edited as well as numerous pedagogical works that he wrote, the most comprehensive one being *Handbuch zum Geigenspiel*, which was translated into English under the title *Handbook of Violin Playing*, with a foreword in both cases by Igor Ozim.<sup>180</sup> The book, like the method taught by Rostal, discusses the craft of playing the instrument in a thorough way, with great attention to details of technique.

A further book of note written by Rostal is *Ludwig van Beethoven: Die Sonaten für Klavier und Violine, Gedanken zu ihrer Interpretation* in which the author analyses each of Beethoven's ten Sonatas for piano and violin in detail, discussing not only matters of interpretation including dynamics and agogic but also elements of technical execution such as fingerings and bowings.<sup>181</sup> Rostal died in the city of Berne and was succeeded at the Konservatorium there by his student, Igor Ozim.

### **Ljerko Spiller (1908–2008)**

Born early in the last century, Spiller was in a position to impart knowledge of both historical as well as violin-specific value to those who studied with him. The master began to play the violin at the age of four and following his completion of secondary school, continued his musical studies at the Music Academy in Zagreb. He performed his first concert at an early age and at the end of the 1920's was awarded a stipend from the French government in Paris. He studied in Paris under Gaston

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<sup>180</sup> Biographical information drawn from Max Rostal, *Handbuch zum Geigenspiel* (Berne: Müller & Schade, 1997).

<sup>181</sup> Max Rostal, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Die Sonaten für Klavier und Violine, Gedanken zu ihrer Interpretation* (Munich: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1981).

Poulet and later with Jacques Thibaud. Less than two years after his arrival, he was named professor at the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris. This was followed by an engagement as concertmaster and then an appearance as first violinist of the academy's quartet. In 1935, on participating at the International Violin Competition (Henryk Wieniawski) in Warsaw, he gained 4<sup>th</sup> prize amongst 120 candidates. This sealed his breakthrough to the international stages of the world. During a concert tour that followed the competition, he went to Argentina and stayed as concertmaster of the Radio Symphony Orchestra. He taught at the University of Buenos Aires and founded a children's orchestra there. Spiller's establishment in Argentina coincided with the eve of World War II. Of Jewish origin, Spiller was now far from the threatening grip of the Nazis.

In 1970 he introduced his own method by way of group lessons for children. Although he had already guided students such as León Spierer (former concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra) and Luis Michal (concertmaster of the State Opera in Munich) towards their successful careers, Spiller was now inundated with requests from students who wanted to be taught by him.

His list of students included Ana Chumachenco (professor at the Hochschule für Musik, Munich), Nicholas Chumachenco (professor at the Hochschule für Musik, Freiburg in Breisgau), Carlos Laredo (concertmaster in Basel), Carlos Kleiber (conductor), the brothers Alberto and Oscar Lysy (professor at the Yehudin Menuhin School in Switzerland, and principal violist of the Symphony Orchestra of the Bayerischen Rundfunk respectively), and Antonio Spiller (concertmaster of the Symphony Orchestra of the Bayerischen Rundfunk). One of the world's foremost chamber orchestras, Camerata Bariloche from Argentina, is composed primarily of Spiller students.

Until his 97<sup>th</sup> year, Spiller was a lively, energetic man, continuing his teaching by way of private lessons in Buenos Aires or in Patagonia, to which he flew every two



weeks. He continued to teach internationally as well, was a jury member of various competitions, and president of the Concours International “V. Huml” in Zagreb.<sup>182</sup>

Spiller was renowned for his formidable memory. He knew vast amounts of the violin repertoire by heart, recalled fingerings and bowings without prompting from scores, heard which fingerings his students were using; and he was that which outstanding teachers are: patient and ready to correct intonation issues, rhythmic inaccuracies and colour palettes.<sup>183</sup>

His book *Kinder lernen Geige spielen*<sup>184</sup> is greatly admired. In it, Spiller’s observations concerning physiological requirements, introduction to music studies and inner-ear training, his argument to begin the teaching of the left hand in the third position, and the encouragement of improvisation as part of a violinist’s skills on the instrument are notable.

Moreover, Spiller was a gifted storyteller when it came to disclosing details of his life. Those taking part in courses he gave, young and old, violinist or cellist, were enthralled by his accounts<sup>185</sup>.

### **Sándor Végh (1905–1997)**

Végh is one of the most prominent teachers from the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian School. For example, his pupils include Ana Chumachenco, who cites him as having had a great influence on her playing, and Gerhard Schulz, second violinist of the Alban Berg Quartet, and who also studied with Ashkenasi.

Végh was born in Kolozsvár, Hungary, in 1905 and died near Salzburg in 1997. He was a student of Jenő Hubay and studied composition with Kodály in Budapest. Renowned as a chamber musician, he was a member of the Hungarian String Quartet at its foundation, and founder of the Végh String Quartet.

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<sup>182</sup> Biographical information gathered from „Ljerko Spiller – ein großer Lehrer“, Adelheid Kramer for *European String Teachers Association Nachrichten*, March 2009, No. 61, p. 6–7; and from conversations between the author and Ana Chumachenco.

<sup>183</sup> Gathered from conversations between the author and Ana Chumachenco.

<sup>184</sup> Ljerko Spiller, *Kinder lernen Geige spielen. Eine neue Methode für die Anfänge auf der Geige. Für Kinder von 6 oder 7 bis gegen 10 Jahren; im Gruppen- oder Einzelunterricht* (Zurich: Musikhaus Pan, 1982).

<sup>185</sup> Biographical information gathered from „Erinnerungen an Ljerko Spiller“, Thomas Zehetmair for *European String Teachers Association Nachrichten*, March 2009, No. 61, p. 5.

1940 would be a turning point for the young violinist: he accepted a teaching post as professor at the Liszt Academy in Budapest; he left the Hungarian Quartet, where he had quickly gone from being its leader to being its second violinist having relinquished his position to Zoltán Székely; and began the Végh Quartet as its leader. The latter quartet would go on to win the top prize at the International Music Competition in Geneva in 1946 and, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, was among the most frequently heard and popular string quartets of its day touring as it did throughout Europe, North and South America and Canada. Tandem to this, Végh's reputation as a great pedagogue gradually made waves.

Erich Höbarth, who was the concertmaster of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and is currently guest leader of the Camerata Berne, and leader of the Concentus Musicus Vienna, the Quatuor Mosaïques and András Schiff's Cappella Andrea Barca, joined the Végh Quartet as second violinist in 1977 by invitation of Végh himself, who had been teaching the twenty-one year-old Höbarth prior to this. At music courses, Höbarth became Végh's assistant for a time.

Végh was both a returning figure at Pablo Casals' Prades Festival and the Zermatt Festival in Switzerland, as well as teaching at the Conservatories of Basle, Freiburg, Düsseldorf and later, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, where he taught until his death. A co-founder of the Prussia Cove Music Sessions in Cornwall (now under the direction of cellist, Steven Isserlis), Végh was appointed honorary Commander of the British Empire and awarded "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur" (he became a French citizen in 1953).<sup>186</sup>

Höbarth describes his former teacher as a dictatorial man, who, when in the presence of talent made every effort to further it, and when in the presence of a less able player, became cynical and slighting. As with many of his Hungarian counterparts portrayed in this thesis, Végh taught not only by way of demonstration but also made careful use of words; although heavy and inflexible of body, his mind was quick and his teachings peppered with stories, metaphors and symbols. He was able to teach

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<sup>186</sup> Biographical information based on *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 19, p. 590.

every student in a very individual way and was accomplished at keeping the audiences at his masterclasses entertained, even if this entailed the student's hands becoming cold after twenty minutes of Végh's witty monologues.

When Höbarth left the Végh Quartet as well as the Camerata Salzburg after some years, the latter of which Végh was artistic director of from 1978 until his death in 1997, Végh admonished him for leaving. Nevertheless, Höbarth remembers his former pedagogue with immense admiration, respect and fondness, a testimony to Végh's continued effect on his heirs.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Erich Höbarth's account based on conversations with him in March 2008.

## Part 2

### ... Present and Future

#### Technical and Pedagogical Practice

The following material has been sourced from direct contact with the teachers mentioned therein, during lessons that I received from them. These lessons were taped on audio, or audio-visual systems, and continue to be a great source of inspiration. It is unfortunately not possible here to discuss each lesson I was given – watching one lesson consumes between 60 and 90 minutes, analyses thereof can take up to 6 hours. I have not used all the material in my possession since it would have necessitated extending the scope of the present dissertation unreasonably. Therefore, Part 2 is a selection of topics that were of common interest between various teachers. The chronology of the lessons referred to is laid out in the section in Part I above, “The Teachers” (pp. 87–88).

### The Left Hand

#### *Action and Anticipatory Movements of the Left Hand*

I have often found it quite amusing to compare one pedagogue’s intentions to another’s. I imagine that a truly colourful clash of opinions were to occur should said pedagogues ever discuss their opposing ideas. Were **Kuschnir** and **Bron** ever meet so as to compare notes when it comes to the following point, they would most likely disagree with one another: In concern to the left hand fingers’ reaction to the placing of fingers on the string in sequence, the two gentlemen promote vastly different opinions. Kuschnir believes in taking fingers *away* from the string after playing a note so as to enable the next note to be sounded whereas Bron speaks of *preparing* a note i.e. actively practicing the coordination between mind and fingers of placing fingers in such a way that they “think” ahead and are, literally, in place without exactly touching the string, just before they perform. This might sound obvious but is

in fact a concept that has to be trained over time and most certainly needs to be preened each day anew. Another detail on which their opinions seem to differ is where it is the fingers are placed after they have been active: Kuschmir suggests placing them to the side of the violin, as explained in the previous chapter, whereas Bron suggests leaving them hovering above the string.

**Kuschmir** has said that if one observes the young Asian violinists of today such as Sarah Chang and Midori, one sees that they do not make any unnecessary movements in their left hands. (This comment is not meant for vibrato but purely for the shape of their hands when they perform passage-work or double-stopping/chord-stopping.)

Thus, he suggests that one prepares the left hand before playing anything with the bow (this is a golden rule that all teachers I know agree on — the left hand moves before the right hand) and that one only practises what is necessary as opposed to hampering one's playing with unnecessary movements that often not only work against one's performance but are also very difficult to remove once a piece has been learnt.

As well as this, Kuschmir speaks of taking fingers away on time, as contrasted with preparing the next note on time. It is common that a teacher suggests that one "prepare" a particular finger of the left hand, that is, as one plays note A, the finger that will play note B already hovers in place, ready to be placed on the string. Hence, for Kuschmir to suggest that the finger be taken away on time is interesting. (Although I do believe that this could result in notes being played for too short a period of time as they are removed from the string too fast.)

Unlike teachers such as **Ozim**, **Bron** and **Ashkenasi**, Kuschmir thinks that fingers that are leaving the string should go to the side of the violin's neck, not up into the air.

What none of these teachers would disagree with is the principle that the left hand moves before the right. Although a lot of students are honed to do this during fast passage work, it is equally important to remember this when playing slow passages.

The difference in sound quality is remarkable when the principle is followed continuously.

### ***Angle of the Elbow***

**Ozim** believes in the active changing of the angle of the elbow whilst playing to aid changing of strings, changing of positions, intonation and ease of performance. Thus, the arm is angled towards the bow arm when playing on the lower strings (more so on the G string, less so on the D string), is level to the chest on the A string, and angles slightly towards the player's left when playing on the E string. In Ozim's view, this changing of the angle of the elbow results in the left hand being able to move around the instrument more securely and easily.

When going into the higher positions on all the strings, one should move the elbow up a little and angle it towards the bow arm. This allows the left hand to be more mobile and for the fingers to fall accurately and with greater agility on to the strings.

When playing fifths using one finger, which can often be a hazardous undertaking, rather than trying to angle the finger on to the string in a bid to adjust the intonation, Ozim suggests changing the angle of the elbow. This automatically changes the angle of the finger as it stops the strings. Each fifth has its own placing on the strings (and each violinist has a different body and a different instrument), therefore it is up to the violinist to explore the possibilities and find the positions accordingly.

### ***Artificial Harmonics***

**Ozim** has observed that many violinists when performing an artificial harmonic — that is, the simultaneous use of one finger (commonly the first finger) to press the string fully, and a second finger (commonly the fourth finger) placed lightly on the string to sound the note — straighten the fourth finger.

For those violinists who straighten their fourth finger at all times, this may not be a point of interest, but for those who generally play with rounded fingers unless

performing artificial harmonics, making the exception for harmonics does not constitute consequent technique.

In the worst case, this inconsistency leads to intonation problems and unreliable execution of artificial harmonics. Hence, seeing as Ozim advocates keeping the fingers rounded on the string at all times wherever possible, he recommends keeping the fingers rounded when performing artificial harmonics.

Furthermore, Ozim thinks harmonics should be played near the bridge, with a lot of pressure in the fingers of the left hand as they press the strings. Draw the bow slowly. Watch for the non-vibrating part of the string as it is very interesting to see how the string is actually stopped twice, that is, the string vibrates from the left hand down as normal, but then, depending on the harmonic played, the string stops vibrating as it “divides into two” and then, usually near the end of the fingerboard, starts vibrating down towards the right hand.<sup>188</sup>

### ***Basic Position of the Violin***

Students often ask whether the violin is held by the chin or by the left hand/arm. **Ozim** answers this question concisely. The violin is not so much held as supported by the collarbone and left hand. Ozim compares the position to the structure of a bridge. The violin (bridge) is supported by the collar bone on one side and by the left hand on the other. Moreover, oftentimes when explaining this, Ozim will demonstrate without the use of a shoulder rest, so that the visual field is clear for the student. Ozim, like all those I have worked with, strongly recommend holding the violin straight, parallel to the floor at most times. Masin likens this position to the violin being “flat as a table”. Only when the instrument is parallel to the floor, not moving side to side or up and down, can all the mechanics of playing function at optimum impact.

### ***Fingerfertigkeit***

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<sup>188</sup> See René Brüderlin, *Akustik für Musiker* (Kassel: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1995), for more information on acoustics.

“Fingerfertigkeit” is the general term used in German to describe the agility, fluency, and dexterity of the fingers as they move around the strings of the violin, and is an attribute honed in the class of **Ozim**. The better the *léger de main*, the more virtuosic and secure the results. Professor Hans Sitt, (1850–1922) the Czech-born teacher, composer and violinist, composed tutorials entirely based upon the training of prestidigitation, exercises that revolve around the repetition of certain intervals, repeated on all strings, that, however monotonous of tune, nevertheless garner terrific results.

Part of the point of the volubleness of the fingers is the ability to play so exactly and with such clarity that the right hand is not obliged to aid the left hand’s stopping the strings. Thus, a legato passage is clear and each note played is audible because the left fingers are able to articulate well. An example, drawn from my lessons with Ozim, where this can be shown is in the fourth movement of Schubert’s “Trout” Quintet in A Major, D.667. In bar 29 of the first Variation, the first set of notes (three triplet semiquavers followed by a normal quaver, all housed within one slur) should be played with one impulse of the bow, that is, with a gradual (and subtle) decrease of sound from the first note to the fourth note. The bow strokes the string evenly, neither altering its speed after the first note has sounded nor having weight added to it by way of the right arm. The articulation of the notes is primarily conducted by the exact finger-fall of the left fingers. What one often hears, however, is a resurgence of sound on the third note, or a surge of sound at the beginning of each note. This is not due to artistic interpretation but is far more a side effect of technical imprecision. The left-hand fingers should do most of the work and the bow should not “help” the articulation of the notes by becoming affected by a portato movement, resulting in second, third or fourth impulses after the initial impulse is performed on the first note of the four.

When it comes to how the fingers fall on the string, **Bron**, **Chastain**, **Kelemen**, **Masin** and **Ozim** all agree: the movement when the finger is lifted from the string comes from the knuckle. When the finger falls on the string, the movement, hammer-like, comes from the knuckle as well.



## ***Fingerings***

**Ashkenasi** has constructed some rules of fingering as follows and ad verbatim:

- Ashkenasi has a dislike to changing strings when this occurs within the interval of a semitone. To that end, he often devises fingerings that enable the player to change strings during a whole-tone interval.
- Fourths, fifths and octaves are “cold” intervals, which is why he “warms up” such intervals by adding a glissando in either ascending or descending form (dependent on context).
- Ashkenasi tries to shift on half steps where possible.
- Shift on rests, the beat, bow changes, small semitones (Ashkenasi defines a “small semitone” to be, for example, E to F), and between phrases.
- Big semitones, that is, those that have same-name notes in sequence, such as F to F sharp, or C or C sharp, should be played with different and not by one and the same finger. If one must change strings, it is better to change on a whole tone or on a big semitone, as opposed to a small semitone.
- Semitone rules are for when one plays alone, that is, a single melody line, or fast. When playing polyphonically, such as a discord, one can do whatever one wants, that is, place the discord in many different ways on the fingerboard.
- Shifting on a small semitone (E to F, for instance) is desirable if you go to an *appoggiatura*, so as to accentuate or emphasise it.
- F sharp to G is quite close, hence using one finger to sound both makes intonation sense.
- F to F sharp is quite far, hence the use of two separate fingers to sound the notes. F to F sharp is not as far as a whole step, but it is nearly as far.
- When playing polyphonically, if it is not a discord, then small semitones (E to F) become big and big semitones (F to F sharp) become small.
- When performing a 1-(1)-4 shift, ensure that the intermediary note hardly sounds — otherwise it disrupts the line of the phrase or the melody.

## ***Formation of the Left-Hand Fingers***

Generally, teachers suggest that the fingers of the left hand are all at a similar angle when landing on the string. This leads to more consistency in matters such as independence of the fingers and intonation.

In the case of a player's fingers not being similarly aligned at the point of contact with a string — for instance, the first and second finger fall at one angle, and the third and fourth finger at a different angle on impact with the string — **Bron** has the following suggestion: upon taking the instrument into the hand, rather than positioning the fingers of the left hand on to the string into the normal playing position, allow the thumb to make full contact with the neck of the violin, thereby eliminating the gap that normally occurs between the instrument, the thumb and the knuckle of the first finger. All four fingers should now be placed on a string. Once this step has been taken, the player slowly brings the posture of the hand into the usual position. This is achieved by lowering the arm, so that the gap between the neck of the violin, the thumb and the knuckle of the first finger opens up. The hand's position does not change in this time, it is only the arm that is lowered. The player will now see and feel that the angle of all the fingers to the string is similar. To remind oneself of this optimised position of the hand without continuously repeating the exercise, it is worthwhile noting that adjusting the left elbow position has a positive effect on the placement of the fingers on the string.

**Ozim**, unlike Bron for instance, uses the tips and not the pad of his fingers when playing. Ozim teaches a rounded position of the hand above the strings, higher than the stance most commonly associated with the Russian School. Moreover, he believes in a rounded fourth finger so as to have optimal joint flexibility when vibrating and only stretches this finger when reaching for one or more notes in a higher position than that of the rest of the hand.

**Ashkenasi** believes that the fourth finger of the left hand should fall flat on to the fingerboard, that is, the joints of the finger are extended, not rounded. This belief is unlike that of **Ozim**, who believes that the fourth finger should have the same

rounded appearance as the other fingers. Ozim teaches his own students his approach, but at masterclasses when teaching students he sees less frequently, although he cannot instigate a change in the left hand in a short time, he does insist that the fourth finger not be flat on the fingerboard when playing harmonics. Ashkenasi, when wanting students to get an impression of how he advises the position of the hand to be, suggests performing a trill with the fourth finger so as to give an example to the student of how the fourth finger should fall on the fingerboard, that is, the first, second and third finger fall rounded on the string, and the fourth finger falls flat on the string.

Moreover, Ashkenasi believes that playing semitones is easier with a flat fourth finger. Ashkenasi states that in days gone by, violinists all tended to play with a rounded fourth finger, but nowadays more and more performers play with a flat fourth finger. Ashkenasi, in fact, plays with all his fingers falling flat on to the fingerboard. The way to achieve this can be done in two ways, separately or combined. If the player moves the thumb back towards the scroll or if the player moves the left elbow away from the torso (not toward the bow arm, but away from it), or a combination of both, the fingers will fall more flat on to the fingerboard.

In Ashkenasi's opinion, the fourth finger is inferior to the others, both in length and in thickness. The other three fingers are not going to be as flat on the fingerboard as the fourth finger because they are longer. If the fingers are particularly fleshy, long or large, then the possibility to lie them flat are also lessened. The vibrato movement once the fingers are flat does not come more from the arm than is usual. The performer can execute any kind of vibrato, as one would with rounded fingers. Ashkenasi's reason for flattening his fingers is primarily for the sake of vibrato. He believes that one has to work less at vibrating when the fingers are flat. When the fingers are rounded, one has to turn the fingers more when vibrating; one turns less when the fingers are flat but the results are the same.

**Kelemen** has observed that many students, regardless of ability or age, have a fourth finger that curls into the palm of the hand, or even below the violin's neck when playing. To correct this, she advises that the student aligns the fourth finger with the G string. That is, regardless of where the left hand finds itself on the finger board, or which finger is playing (bar the fourth), the fourth finger should reach for the G

string, hovering above it. Students find this exercise particularly difficult, as it requires self-discipline and strength. The latter is exactly the point of the exercise, that is, to stabilise the formation of the hand, strengthen it, and allow the fourth finger to be in a position to act as quickly as the other fingers can.

## ***Glissando***

**Ozim** is of the opinion that the perfect glissando is initially fast in its movement from the base note, and slows down as it proceeds to the note upon which it will finally rest. To show the example, one can imagine the rounded finger on a flat surface, such as a table, and observe the finger moving from fast to slow along the table's edge.

**Kuschnir** distinguishes two types of glissandi, namely, those covering short distances and those covering long distances.

Short distances: for instance, when playing a D on the G string in the third position on a down-bow with the second finger, you can travel to the F on the same string with the same finger, played on an up-bow, by either starting the glissando on the down-bow or by starting the glissando on the up-bow. If performing the latter, the up-bow in fact still includes the note D as it moves to the F. In both cases one can change down-bow for up-bow on the first note, the process described above still remains the same.

Long distances: when playing two notes on the same string, with one finger performing both notes and the first note is played down-bow with the second being performed on an up-bow (again, this is interchangeable), start the glissando on the down-bow and keep sliding, also as you change the bow from down to up. The process is halted once you've reached the second note somewhere shortly after the up-bow started. Kuschnir suggests making a diminuendo on the actual slide to avoid the glissando sounding laboured.

**Kelemen** teaches what she calls the "Heifetz" glissando very clearly. She describes it as a glissando that sounds as "long and sensuous as a woman's never-ending legs." For example, an F is followed by a C, beginning in the first position with the second

finger on the D string and ending in the fourth position with the third finger. One can practise the F to the A, where the second finger slides from the first note to the second, followed by the third finger played the B which then slides on the same finger to the C. Alternatively, the second finger, playing the F, can slide to the G (second position) which is followed by the third finger sounding the A (second position) and sliding up to the final note C. The possibility for further variance within the same pitch example arises when the second finger is immediately replaced by the third finger on the G, or when the third finger is replaced by the fourth finger on the A.

### ***Intonation***

Intonation: a daily struggle for every string player. **Ozim** has said that the mark of a good violinist is the ability to correct a note that is out of tune quickly, before a listener has even remarked it. Ozim's approach to intonation is based on absolute intonation, that is, A is equivalent to 440 Hz or the tuning of the piano, as opposed to a leading-note system which Ozim finds can lead to problems within the harmonic structure of a piece. Ozim has also said that tuning the A string too sharply (443 Hz and 444 Hz) on an old instrument can lead to too much tension on the instrument.

**Ozim** suggests practising with the use of natural harmonics when learning a new piece. Thus, instead of playing the note E on the E string in the fourth position with the fourth finger, one sounds the harmonic of the same note on the same place. This aids speedy knowledge of the topography of the instrument and helps the ear to acclimatise to the music. The violinist becomes familiar with the placing of the harmonic E, and once the violinist starts to play the note E instead of the harmonic E, the left hand knows where to go and the inner ear can imagine the note before it is played.

Posed with the question whether G sharp and A flat are the same note, **Ozim** believes that, based on absolute, that is, well-tempered intonation, the answer is yes. He goes on to explain that, in a D Major scale, played slowly and based on the base note of D, the fourth, fifth and octave are always in harmony. The faster the player performs,

the more the leading note comes out, that is, the third and seventh. Ozim reminds the student that a diatonic semitone has a greater distance than a chromatic semitone, that is, from E to F is a relatively big distance, and is therefore called a diatonic semitone, whilst the smaller distance between F and F sharp is called a chromatic semitone. In a faster tempo, one recognises the difference between diatonic (big) and chromatic (small) semitones when they do not belong to the separate harmony. The third and the seventh become the bigger semitone. Diatonic and chromatic semitones exist in the leading notes in the faster tempi so make them come out even more.

Ozim recommends checking intonation with open strings. He suggests cross-checking with the nearest whole tone when practising. For instance, when playing F sharp on the E string with the first finger, the nearest whole tone in the form of an open string is E. The notion is also based on the key that the player is performing in. For instance, if playing a fifth, in the form of a B on the A string in the first position, stopped by the first finger, together with a F sharp in the first position on the E string, then the double-stop needs to be in tune with the open D string. When playing an open G string, together with a G on the D string with the third finger, a B with the first finger on the A string and an open E string, one bases the intonation of the chord with the top notes, in this case, the open E string, as these notes are sounded longest.

Concerning fifths, only vibrate these when the strings are narrow and close and the left-hand fingers creating the fifth are covering the string enough to vibrate and remain relatively in tune without falling inbetween the strings, or other such natural disasters...

**Masin** is of the opinion that one should take caution when playing with the use of harmonics, such as in Niccolò Paganini's Opus 1, 24<sup>th</sup> Caprice in A minor. In the tenth variation, the greater part of the music takes place on the E string. The variation begins in the seventh position and then proceeds to flit between various positions. In this high register and with numerous greater or smaller position changes, the use of harmonics can be most helpful. However, if one does make use of the possibility of playing harmonics instead of ordinary notes, one should be careful not to intonate too high as harmonics tend to be on the low side. Therefore, one should intonate according to the harmonics.

**Ashkenasi** is of the opinion that semitones on the violin should be played close to one another, especially in a fast tempo, except for those that are called by the same name. By “same name” Ashkenasi means G–G sharp or B–B flat. Thus, an E on the A string should be played a little sharp, and the E flat on that same string, a little flat. A sharp to B, however, are played close to one another.

If semitones are not played alone (melodic) but are played with accompaniment (harmonic) and in a slow tempo, Ashkenasi suggests that the semitones not be played as close to one another. For instance, play a double-stop on the G and D strings in the first position, the note on the G string sounding the note C and the note on the D string sounding the note E (third finger on C, first finger on E). These are followed by C and F (third finger on C as previously, second finger on F). The moving notes on the D string, E–F, would be placed very tightly on the fingerboard if played alone. When the C comes into the equation the E–F are placed further apart to be in keeping with the pitch of the C. Resting the fingers in the double-stop grip, if one plays the E–F alone one quickly realises that now the semitones are clearly too far apart from one another.

Differences in principles that are striking between Boris Kuschnir and Zakhar Bron, both tutored in the Russian School of violin playing and both having studied for some time with the legendary David Oistrakh, concern intonation. **Bron** is an advocate of the left hand fingers following a very fluid manner on the string and is a great believer in keeping fingers above the string but not necessarily on the string when another finger is playing as he believes this to be counterproductive for the suppleness of the hand when it comes to vibrating. **Kuschnir** however suggests in certain instances that if one finger plays on the string and another is held down at the same time, this in fact aids the anchoring of the hand and the subsequent stability of the intonation.

## ***Natural Harmonics (and the Natural Fear They Can Evoke in the Player)***

**Ozim** suggests that when sliding from a real note into a natural harmonic, the two notes in different positions relatively far apart, one take plenty of time to slide to the natural harmonic. This cuts down the chance of missing the correct intonation of the harmonic considerably. There is tendency amongst violinists to slide into natural harmonics too quickly, due to a fear of missing the note — this phenomenon is not as paradoxical as it may seem. In a moment of stress, such as when sight-reading fast passages or playing a new work from memory, the player begins to speed up their fine motor movements as a result of fear of the aforementioned passage or work in the player's mind. This fear contributes to clutter in the mind, the resulting effect of this being that the movements that contribute to the production of sound are sped up. This phenomenon can also be observed in relation to dynamics. Where a player reads various notations in close proximity of *crescendo*, the player might begin to play at a faster tempo. The inverse of this is the reading of various notations in close proximity of *diminuendo*, resulting in a slowing of tempo.

Furthermore, **Ozim** recommends not lifting the finger that plays the harmonic too soon from the string. Oftentimes, a player, concerned primarily with sounding the harmonic well, might forget to ensure that the finger that sounds the harmonic remains on the string until the very end of the sounding of the harmonic. The reason for this might lie in that, for many violinists, a harmonic is a device used mainly in virtuoso pieces. In such pieces the harmonic can be followed at great speed by another note in a different position, requiring the player to think ahead and prepare for the jump from one position to the next. When a passage does not include harmonics, the player naturally keeps the finger on the note to be sounded as long as required by the composer. However, with harmonics, rather than keeping the finger rounded on the string (especially in the case of the fourth finger), players finish the movement of the finger not by keeping it steady on the string but instead by lifting the finger upward. Ozim believes that a harmonic that is not executed by a finger that is actually on the string will not sound.



## ***Nerves (One Side)***

It can happen that through extensive practice or imprecise placing of the fingers on the strings, a nerve gets “trapped” under the pad of the finger. This occurs most frequently in the index finger after repeated playing of octaves or fingered octaves, in other words, double-stopping. The discomfort is generally accredited to too much exertion of pressure on a finger or the placement of the finger on the string in a haphazard fashion.

One is best advised to take a break from playing when the discomfort appears but, should one not be in a position to do so, I received the following suggestion from **Chumachenco**. When one “taps out” the finger on a flat surface, such as a table, it is possible to alleviate the discomfort in such a way that one can resume practising immediately.

## ***(The Cheat’s Guide to) Octaves***

Performing passages made up primarily of octaves can be a pain, quite literally, especially for those with small hands. Securing sound intonation for both notes over multiple bars can lead to exasperation in the professional player.

**Krebbers** has a sly trick that he professes to using himself, also on stage. However, it is to be used with caution and under the assumption that one has indeed spent time practising octaves and has mastered them to a certain degree of prowess. In passages that contain normal (as opposed to fingered) octaves, Krebbers emphasises the lower of the two notes by stroking the lower string more strongly than the upper string. As soon as he hears that the upper note might be out of tune with the lower (indeed, a professional can pre-empt a falsely-placed note and rectify the future mistake), he leaves the upper note completely, only returning to it when he is confident that the note will be in tune. In fact, under the assumption that octaves are executed basically in tune, if one plays the lower well, with sound intonation and good guidance of the bow across the string, the upper note will swing along with it sympathetically (as its first harmonic) without the player explicitly stroking the string of the upper note. In

other words, the upper string resonates alongside the lower string as the string of the lower note is stroked. To achieve this, one practises octaves with both fingers in place but strokes only the string of the lower one. One also has to ensure that the lower notes of an octave passage are continuously in tune. One does so by ensuring that these are in tune to open strings and not just to one another. Ensuring the latter is still more effective than ensuring the secure intonation of both notes.

**Ashkenasi** is of much the same opinion as Krebbers, suggesting the emphasis of the lower string of an octave for the purpose of intonation.

**Bron** goes so far as to play passages that could be played with a basic 1/4 fingering as no audible slide need occur, in fingered octaves, 1/3 — 2/4. Whether this is due to his personal wish to be highly professional at all times, to show his technical capabilities, or because he is blessed with large hands and fingers, hence allowing him to play fingered octaves with ease, remains open to debate. When playing octaves where one note is an open string, do not vibrate the stopped string as it tampers with the intonation. This is obviously not the case for normal octaves, where both strings are stopped, and one should vibrate.

To practise fingered octaves, **Masin** suggests the following: start practising fingered octaves in the third position, going as far as the fifth position, on a major scale across the four strings. Once the hand is used to this, one can start working on the lower positions by shifting down a semitone from the original starting note, and after completing the full scale, one goes down another semitone from the starting note of that last scale, and so on. The hand sits more on the third finger (fingering = 1, 3), and on the fourth finger (fingering = 2, 4) than the first or second fingers. Like this, the hand is at its optimum flexibility to stretch down to the first two fingers. Do not start getting lazy and shifting any semitones in the major scale by repeating a 1, 3 or 2, 4 fingering. Stick to 1, 3; 2, 4; 1, 3; 2, 4, and so on.

### ***Pressure of the Fingers on the Strings***

A common issue for players is the excessive use of pressure of the fingers on to the strings. Despite its ubiquity, few teachers attempt to resolve the problem, although it

can be both seen and heard. Seen, by the whiteness of the pads of the fingers on the string, and the clenched grip around the neck of the violin; heard, during position changes when intermediary notes are too audible, or during vibrato when this is impaired due to lack of flexibility or range of movement.

**Kelemen** loosens the grip on the instrument and the pressure on the strings as follows.

The student picks up the violin as usual. However, instead of putting the left hand to the neck of the violin as per usual, one turns the hand around with the fingers landing on the string as if the strings were piano keys and the hand of the player in the position a pianist assumes when playing. In this position, the student presses the strings down with no more force than needed. This tends to come naturally, as the hand and arm are in a position that it assumes throughout actions during a normal day. The thumb's role in this exercise is simply to rest around the neck of the violin. Once the student has pressed down all the strings with all the fingers one after another, the hand is turned back to the normal position. Now the student tries to recall the feeling from before. Like this, the student realises that no more force need to be placed on the strings than is necessary.

Should the excessive pressure on the strings not only come from the fingers but also from a stiff wrist, Kelemen uses vibrato exercises to loosen the joint.

### ***Portato-Glissando***

In virtuoso pieces, chromatic descending scales played with one and the same finger occur, such as in Pablo de Sarasate's "Zigeunerweisen" (in the part of the piece marked "Lento"). In Niccolò Paganini's Caprices, such as Opus 1, Caprice 13 in B major (first two bars), a similar technical style is written, albeit as a double-stop continuously using the same two fingers. **Ozim** suggests that for such passages, one should not press with the left-hand finger(s) on to the string (which is the general tendency amongst violinists when first confronted with a portato-glissando, a musical effect that demands precision from the very off-set) and that the distal interphalangeal joint of the finger(s) should be free of tension. When one focuses on

relaxing the distal interphalangeal joint the rest of the hand will follow suit, thereby allowing for malleability and flexibility of movement which, in turn, aids the performance of a well-sounding portato-glissando.

### ***Position Changes***

When it comes to the avoidance of an audible slide such as from G sharp to A on the D string, the former note performed with the third finger and the latter performed with the first finger, **Ozim** suggests to lift the first finger immediately after the G sharp has sounded and to not slide the finger along the string whilst moving to the next note if that next note is performed by another finger. This is important for all flawless, inaudible executions of shifts, in his opinion.

**Masin** believes that, when shifting, the last note before the change of position should be played to its full length so as to allow the player to have more time to go to the next note, especially in passages where an audible shift is not desired.

During fast slurred passages that span several beats, there can be an abundance of position changes, many of which might be audible due to the slurs. Those audible, as opposed to silent, shifts often occur because of technical problems, ones that can, to a certain extent, be eradicated without sacrificing the quality of sound in a phrase or the line of a phrase. In many cases, there are various options when it comes to the change of position, for instance, moving from the third to the first position could take place on note X, Y or Z. Aside from considerations such as whether to move on a semitone (which is often desirable, and suggested by all the latter-day teachers mentioned in this thesis), when reflecting on which of three possible notes to make the shift, **Ashkenasi** suggests that it helps to make a shift in position on a beat as opposed to before or after a beat. This is because one can mildly show the beat by way of the bow, thereby allowing for the shift to be nearly inaudible.

If a shift is bigger than a fourth, **Ashkenasi** suggests opening the hand. To describe what is meant, I take two descending notes to a bow, in this case F played on the A string in the third position with the third finger, followed by B on the A string in the

first position played by the first finger. Instead of directing the shift over an intermediary note of D, as played by the third finger in the first position, opening the hand entails playing the E stopped by the third finger on the A string as the intermediary note. If ascending, that is, playing from B to F, the intermediary note is a C sharp played by the first finger in the second position.

When it comes to lucid, fluid, quick position changes, **Bron** engages a particular technique in case of the following. For example, a situation where in a G is followed by an A flat on the E string, where G is played by the first finger in the second position and A flat is played by the first finger in the third position and both notes are slurred, practise a very legato change going from G to A flat back down to G, then back up to A flat and so on.

The finger should be highly flexible, moving reminiscent of a belly dancer. The movement is fast and fluid, hardly remarkable when one hears it.

### ***Trills***

In a situation where a D on the A string is written in the music, where the note is played with the second finger in the second position and the trilling note, E, with the third finger in the second position, one places the second finger on the string and then lets the third finger fall on the string to trill.

**Bron** disagrees with this and suggests that both fingers fall on to the string simultaneously.

If trilling the note from above, one should definitely land with both fingers on the string at the same time as opposed to first the third and then the second finger being placed on the string, and if trilling from below, the third finger should hover above the string very close enabling it to react quicker when the trilling starts. This technique underlines one particular feature of technique that students from the class of Bron excel at: the left hand being prepared in advance of motions being made by the right hand.

Another example of this readiness of the left hand is in the following instance whilst playing the note A in the third position with the first finger on the E string, followed

by G natural in the fourth position played by the third finger on the A string. Bron advises that the third finger should hover above the string level to the note it will play, literally ready to pounce. However, this should not compromise the quality of the vibrato on either note at any point. Generally, Bron teaches his students to prepare fingers of the left hand in time regardless of the tempo one is playing at.

## The Right Hand

### ***A Synopsis of Bounced or Springing Bow Techniques and How to Practise Them (According to Ozim)***

Springing bow techniques are spiccato, ricochet, sautillé (or saltellato) and flying staccato.

Spiccato comes from flying détaché whereby the bow is thrown or bounced freely on the string, without holding back the movement thereof with the right hand.

The movement is as with détaché, activated by the elbow.

The relationship between how far the bow is from the string and how much bow one uses has a strong effect on the resulting sound.

The principle of springing bow techniques is akin to throwing a ball. Important factors are the correct angle of the bow to the violin, as would be when measuring the distance of a ball to the ground.

Courage is called upon to cast the bow on to the string and the preferred method to teach spiccato is to begin with ricochet exercises where the bow is bounced on the string as loosely as possible. To begin, allow the bow to simply fall on to the string, without holding the movement back by the fingers of the right hand. Once this feeling has become natural, one can continue the ricochet movement by performing four notes to one bow of ricochet, at first only on down-bows, later on down and up-bows. From four notes, one reduces to three, then two and finally to one note. At the point where one executes one note both on an up and down-bow, one realises that the ricochet has translated to the basic spiccato movement, from which it came in the first place.

Examples of studies where one can practise ricochet and spiccato movements include Kreutzer's *42 Studies*, Rode's *24 Caprices*, and Ševčík's *Schule der Violintechnik* Opus 1, parts I, II, III, and IV.

A bouncy arpeggio is basically a ricochet over the strings. This can be practised on Dont's *Etudes and Caprices No. 19* and Paganini's *Caprice No. 1*, for instance. Antonio Bazzini's *La Ronde des Lutins* has instances of a long ricochet, that is, numerous notes to one bow, as does Maurice Ravel's *Tzigane*, in which there is one instance where the composer indicates sixteen notes on one bow.

Spiccato can also be executed with the help of collé and practised with rhythmic exercises as detailed in Galamian's *Contemporary Violin Technique Volume 1, Scales and Arpeggio Exercises with Bowing and Rhythm Patterns*. A range of dynamics can be practised too, changing the point of contact between bow and string to perform a variety of volumes. Flexibility can be practised by alternating between spiccato and legato bowings, by way of Rode's *24 Caprices*, and Ševčík's *Schule der Violintechnik* Opus 1, parts I, II, III, and IV. Tempos can be alternated using scales (Ozim uses the Galamian scale system). Particular emphasis is placed on beginning exercises both on an up and on a down-bow and practising string changes. Spiccato needs weight from the right arm on the bow to create a full sound.

Sautillé (French)/Saltellato (Italian) movements are initiated by the wrist (as opposed to the elbow), therefore resulting in a more stabbing quality of sound than with spiccato. Once again, détaché is at the root of the technique which leads to sautillé. To practise the movement, use an object such as a credit card. Place the card on its broadest side on a table, holding it in the right hand as one would the bow. Observe the movement as one strokes the card from left to right and right to left, activated by the wrist. The card should make horizontal lines and not swerve in rounded shapes. Following a clear visual understanding of the movement, one should try the same movement on the instrument, first with the card, and then with the bow. It is important to observe that the wrist is the catalyst for the movement and not the fingers, the bow moving up and down and not from side to side. Once again, exercises to practise the movement can be found in Ševčík's *Schule der Violintechnik* Opus 1, parts I, II, III, and IV and in Kreutzer's *42 Studies*. Performance pieces to focus on sautillé include Paganini's *Moto Perpetuo*, Ferdinand Ries' *Perpetuum Mobile*, and Ottokar Nováček's *Perpetuum Mobile*. (For more information, see also Collé under "Basic Bowing Techniques According to Ozim" below.)



Flying staccato is a movement that combines the dropped and bounced bow with a pulling motion. The first note is often the most difficult, as the first impulse generally leads to the rest of the passage being executed clearly and thrillingly. Ozim's students practise the movement on Paganini's *Caprice No. 21*. The staccato movement in combination with *collé*, leading into ricochet can be found in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor, Opus 64. In the first movement, entitled *Allegro molto appassionato*, the cadenza finishes with a series of semiquavers built on flying staccato. Executed at best, the passage starts in a tantalisingly slow tempo, accelerating into *Tempo primo* by the time the orchestra enters with the main theme of the movement.

### ***Ansatz (or the Changeless Change)***

The beginning of a note, known as "Ansatz" in German is, per definition, a vital point of departure for anything that follows it. To the question of whether the quality of the Ansatz of a note can be the same at the tip of the bow as at the heel, **Bron** has the following answer: The quality of the Ansatz of a note cannot sound exactly the same at the tip as at the heel. The bow is heavier at the heel than at the tip and the right hand is closer to the string at the heel than at the tip, therefore the sound will be "heavier" at the heel.

Instead of stroking the bow at the tip on the down-bow and up-bow in identical movements when changing, one should make a figure of eight (this figure can be clearly seen in the movement of the right wrist, where pronation and supination take place in turn) which shows itself in a movement at the tip of the bow that goes from playing with all the hair of the bow on the down-bow at the tip to playing with only half the hair at the start of the up-bow at the tip.

Further to this, in a *forte* passage when arriving at the tip of the bow on a down-bow, the bow can be close to the bridge, the player making use of all the hair of the bow. At the start of the following up-bow at the tip, the player should go slightly away from the bridge and tilt the bow then immediately go back to the bridge making use of all the hair again. One goes away from the bridge at the start of an up-bow at the

tip because one cannot achieve the same sound at first on an up-bow as one can on a down-bow. By going away from the bridge, the sound of the down-bow resonates for a moment and by the time the player goes back to the bridge, the sound is equalised. Bron advises a wrist at the heel that is relaxed but not purposely bent.

**Kuschnir**, however, advocates a bent right wrist at the heel.

According to **Bron**, the length of the Ansatz should not be too long, nor should the bow move too fast or too slow. The bow should be “impulsive”. The initial impulse that is required by the bow to sound the Ansatz should not be repeated in the vibrato of the left hand. The vibrato should be whatever it is — that is, fast, faster, slower, and so on — at the beginning of the Ansatz and then remain continuous.

The bow should show some sort of differentiation in speeds. If it remains just fast throughout, there is no more sense of “attack” to the note. For example, one suggestion is that the beginning of the note has a fast bow. Thereafter, the bow slows down after its beginning.

Although Bron never explained it in so many words to me, by way of demonstrating it, the realisation of the “secret” of the “changeless change” became apparent to me. The seamless changing of bow at the tip, certainly in slower passages, is achieved through the following: on the down-bow, the bow is flat on the string, all hair of the bow lying flat too. On changing at the tip of the bow from down to up-bow, via mobility of the right hand, one turns the bow so that the hair now lie slanted on the string, towards the player. On the up-bow, the dynamic should be the same, although to practise, one can release weight from the bow on the up-bow. With the hair slanted on the up-bow, the dynamic on the up-bow will be less than the down-bow anyway. However, during the up-bow, one can return to using all the hair of the bow on the string.

When wishing to change smoothly from one string to the next at the heel, the interplay of index finger and little finger is key. When going to a higher string, the little finger steers the weight of the bow (the thumb is also involved). When going to a lower string, the index finger primarily steers the bow. To practise, work on the

interplay of the index and little finger at the heel on two strings but statically, that is, without pulling the bow.

When playing between, for instance, A and E string in quick succession and slurred, where played at the tip of the bow, move the wrist to change strings and keep the elbow level, as if it were playing only one note. Furthermore, when changing strings at the tip of the bow, be aware of the feel of the bow in the hand by having only the thumb and index finger hold the bow. The other three fingers are lifted for this exercise. Like this, one gets a different feeling of the bow. Then, whilst keeping the bow static on the string, that is, not making any sound, practise the following for a down-bow: the movement, also when playing, comes from the elbow and slightly from the lower arm, though not too much. Do the same for the up-bow. For the up-bow, the movement comes from the wrist although, again, not too much. The movement of the up-bow from the wrist as the main motor is minimal. When changing bow at the heel, the bow must remain parallel to the string. A further exercise to increase understanding of the movement of crossing the strings is to perform a down-bow on, for example, the A string. On reaching the tip of the bow, one stops, the bow on the string. Then, statically and without producing sound, change the bow's angle via the arm so that it now lies on the E string. Thereafter, stroke an up-bow from the point of rest, that is, the tip of the bow. This exercise can be transferred to any number of other techniques for the left hand (stopping the hand before a position change; stopping the hand before a string change), the right hand (when practising a bowing technique such as martelé), and both hands (awareness of the effect of the left hand on the right, and right hand on the left when practising vibrato) as it encourages preparation and awareness of mind and body before embarking on a different movement to that previous. It is particularly advisable to include this preparation when introducing new knowledge.

## ***Accents***

**Kuschnir** suggests that when performing accents at the heel of the bow the little finger of the right hand animates the accent. Therefore, balance between thumb and little finger is very important. If the index finger is the one that makes the larger impulse when producing the accent, the resulting sound is often scratched and

aggressive. To prove his point, Kuschnir demonstrates what he means by holding the violin and placing the bow on the string at the heel. He thereafter raises his right wrist at the heel, not aligning it<sup>189</sup> again until just after the starting to pull the bow. Kuschnir stresses that the knuckles of the right hand must be aligned, that is, no metacarpophalangeal joint should be lower or higher than that of the index finger. The knuckles are the “federung”, the suspension (in the mechanical sense of the word) that allows the bow to be alive on the string and thus this position is very important for good execution of movements with the bow.

**Ozim** suggests to do the following so as to produce accents: firstly, touch the string and make a soundless but good contact with it before pulling the bow. The bow is pulled faster in the case of an accent than on an unaccented note. Do not land on the string from the air unless this is stipulated. Also in the case of chords or double-stops, first make contact with the string before beginning to pull the bow to avoid an ugly, harsh contact at the beginning of the chord or double-stop.

There is also such a thing as interpretation of an accent, of course. In the case of *sforzatos*, Ozim believes there to be two types. The most common one is a sudden accent on the beginning of the marked note. It is stronger than a typical accent, and more expressive, and in slow movements is also executed by the left hand, involving various vibrato speeds. It can also be delayed by the right hand in slow movements. The second type of *sforzato* is sometimes used by Beethoven where the marked note is started normally, with a swelling of the note relatively soon after it is begun. Mendelssohn, Schumann and Schubert used *sforzatos* as an indication of the most important note of a phrase. *Sforzatos* can generally be understood as having more to do with expression, whilst accents are of rhythmic nature. The volume of a *sforzato* is usually only equivalent to the dynamic in which it appears in the music.

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<sup>189</sup> “aligning it” — whereby I mean: to have the right arm positioned in one line, without any kinks or bends (caused by voluntary alterations of the composition of the joints) in this line.

## ***Basic Bowing Techniques According to Ozim***

Legato = smooth sound, good connection between notes.

Détaché = separate strokes.

Martelé = involves putting pressure on the bow, and then releasing this pressure rapidly, generally resulting in intense notes with full attack and pauses between them. The notes are performed between the middle of the bow and the tip, or the middle of the bow and the heel. Lift bow away from string when jumping from the tip to the heel. This bowing is the basis of the flying détaché. The martelé accent feels like a kind of pressure in the hand, like squeezing a lemon. After the fast initial stroke, the relaxed stroke is détaché. As with staccato, the technique is characterised by impulses from the wrist or first finger (fast reflex movements).

Collé = according to Ozim, this is the only fingerstroke in right-hand technique. Collé is a stroke that a player should be able to perform at all points of the bow, that is, heel, middle and tip. Collé is primarily used in slow spiccato along with an elbow and forearm movement. The bow returns to the string at the end of every note in collé when practising. Ozim teaches that collé comes from the shoulder. The player comes down on to the string with the bow in a fast movement, then a slower movement just before touching the string. The fingers become involved when the player touches the string, the length of sound in relation to the stroke of the fingers. One should mind the balance between the thumb and little finger as this is intrinsically important to the whole stroke. On completing the stroke, the player “pulls” the bow up again, straight, as if there were a spring underneath the elbow. This “pulling” up of the bow is a very quick movement as if a rubber ball had suddenly knocked the elbow from underneath, and is a very fluid movement as soon as the stroke of the fingers and the relating sound on the string has finished. The little finger can only fall from the bow if one does not stroke parallel to the bridge. The thumb on the down-bow should always be naturally — therefore slightly — rounded, and not extremely straight, so as to contrast with the roundness of the thumb on the up-bow. To get a feel of the movement of the fingers and, especially, the thumb, practise the finger movement vertically, that is, alongside the edge of a music stand.

Like this one can see that the thumb has to move “down” and not “out” and that the bow has to move in straight lines parallel to those of the music stand. Another way to get a feel of the stroking movement is to practise the stroke of the fingers on the string. In practice, the stroking movement is lifted from the string as soon as the action is finished. When trying to feel the movement, stroke continuously along a string, both up and down-bow, to realise how long the fingers alone can create a sound without the use of the rest of the arm and how much the thumb must bend in on the up-bow, and to be aware that the bow must move parallel to the bridge. Another idea for getting the feel of the fingers and thumb movement is to use a credit card instead of the bow on the strings. A further suggestion for getting the feel of the thumb movement is to practise letting the thumb slide straight down a pencil or the side of the heel of the bow in an up and down movement whilst the other fingers remain steady, as if holding the bow in the usual position. In general, and in collé as well, the thumb should always be held more in the corner of the leather of the heel of the bow, not hooked too deep between leather and wood at the curve. One has much more control of the bow if it is held correctly. The point of lifting the arm (from the shoulder) in collé, especially exaggerated when practising one note at a time in a slow tempo, is so that the pupil is aware that the arm lifts in on the axis, not out, that is, the bow moves parallel to the bridge as it leaves and comes back down on the string and not all over the place in the air, often the result of an uncontrolled arm, or, in the worst case, uncontrolled wrist action. As collé is practised faster, this movement gets smaller. Another reason that the bow is lifted from the string as soon as the fingerstroke is completed is so that the fingers, as they do the stroke, have freedom of movement and do not stay locked. As stated before, to get the fingerstroke concept right, pull the bow on the string with the fingers alone, not involving the wrist. The student will see that the fingers move in a parallel movement to the bridge and not in or out in an uncontrolled manner. A short list of reminders when practising collé includes:

- remembering to stroke parallel to the bridge, not throwing the bow haphazardly
- lifting the bow with the arm, stroking with the fingers
- collé should feel like one is playing an elegant version of ping-pong
- fingers are fast, arm movement is slow
- practise stroking the bow with just the fingers while the bow remains glued to the string

- the sound of collé can be compared to that of pizzicato, the difference being that collé is performed with the bow
- prepare collé with the fingers. The bow leaves the string when the fingers bend up and down

Spiccato = in slow form, this stroke is created by forearm movements. When played fast, the wrist is included in the movement, leading on to ...

Sautillé = “knocking” the violin with the movement of the knuckles. A supple wrist movement is included.

Ricochet = comes from spiccato. Is a controlled movement, originating however from “throwing” the bow on to the string. All the hair of the bow should be used to execute the stroke.

Staccato = a very defined sound, can be performed up or down-bow. Comes from martelé. The wrist or index finger can be used to help to initiate the movement. The stroke comes from the natural possibility to jump with the bow. Sticking to the string with the bow is imperative for optimal control. Lean on the bow, otherwise the bow will not stick to the strings.

When changing strings, use more bow and do not let the right arm angle the bow, that is, the bow should not be skew to the bridge or too close to it. If the bow comes too close to the bridge it can result in an unwanted *ponticello* sound. Aim to perform a crescendo on staccato notes, particularly at the end of a slur, and not a diminuendo. The impulse of the staccato (be that active in the ring finger or the index and middle finger) must not get smaller, as this creates a “shaking” of the bow instead of a staccato. Let go of the impulse, that is, the finger or fingers responsible for the impulse should relax between notes, otherwise there is no air between notes, resulting in the sound becoming “sticky” and too much in the string.

Flying staccato = Instead of throwing the bow, stay on the string. When performed slowly, the movement is akin to collé performed on up-bows. When performed fast, the bow is “thrown” on the string and the resulting staccato flies through the air, over the string. Ozim angles the bow for better results.

## ***Bow Division***

**Krebbers** is of the opinion that many teachers focus mainly on the development of the student's left hand during teaching. As a result of this, the right hand is paid too little attention to. The player is very concentrated on the activity of and in the left hand and in so doing, strokes the bow rather carelessly across the strings, as if the movement of the bow is a by-product of sound, an occurrence of incidental nature.<sup>190</sup>

Interestingly enough, many students who have been encouraged to develop their left-hand technique to almost inhuman levels of perfection have hang-ups about exactly this skill and find themselves terrified of mistakes that the left hand might make. Were the student to focus on the division of the bow he or she would find that, in this case, the right hand helps the left. Difficult left hand passages are greatly aided by premeditated bow division.

For instance, the "feel" of a fast, slurred passage containing many notes is vastly different if taken on an up-bow instead of a heretofore practised down-bow, or vice versa. **Bron** suggests that specifically using less bow at the start of the slur followed by more bow on the last notes of that slur will result in a far smoother and easier-sounding run.

**Krebbers** believes it to be an error to overlook the action of the bow arm. The correct division of the bow is fundamentally important for the musical line. Also good ensemble-playing with a piano is a question of bow-technique, seeing as, in Krebbers' opinion, a Beethoven Sonata is a work for piano and violin, not the contrary. In Beethoven, the violinist should match his or her sound to that of the piano. Krebbers has in fact said that good bow-division constitutes eighty per cent of a good sound.

**Brandis** is a firm believer in the use of the whole of the right arm whilst playing and how this movement will affect bow division and resulting sound production. By

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<sup>190</sup> Krebbers' opinion in the section on Bow Division is based in part on Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogik im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzmann Verlag, 1997), p. 35.



including the upper arm and shoulder, one allows oneself to naturally use more bow whilst playing.

Few other teachers I have met focus on bow division as much as **Bron** does in nearly every lesson. A principle of bow division that Bron believes in, for instance, is that the note before a culminating note, that is, the note before the most expressive note of the line — which could refer, for example, to the highest note — should not be less expressive than the culminating note. In other words, the note before prepares the important one, through development of sound, vibrato, and/or dynamic. All these factors are strongly influenced by the bow and how much of it is left to stroke those last two notes. This is particularly acute when both notes are bound together. The reason for this penultimate note having to be equally expressive is that if it is not, the final note will be less impressive than it could have been. Bron allows students to experiment with both versions, one where the penultimate note has been carefully considered, particularly in view of bow division, and one where this is not the case. The student quickly hears the difference, recognising that where the penultimate note is not equally expressive, the final note appears weak in comparison to the version where the penultimate note was expressive.

In regard to the last notes of slurs, Brons suggests to practise these longer than they appear, as they usually get “swallowed up” once one plays in tempo. This holds true also for fast, *détaché* passage where there is a common tendency for the last note of a set of notes, a bar, or a passage to “disappear” amongst those notes that follow it.

### ***Bow Hold***

According to **Chastain**, there should be flexibility in the fingers of the right hand. One should remember that the function of the joints is to move. Good use of the fingers allows more control of the bow. She suggests practising familiarity with holding the bow between only index finger and thumb. The index finger is placed on the bow between the distal and proximal interphalangeal joints. The bow is held by the side of the thumb, and not by the pad of the thumb. Chastain plays with the index finger quite high on the bow. The thumb should be bent when playing at the heel,

and straight when playing at the tip. Chastain suggests trying to pull the bow across the strings using only the index finger and thumb. Spiccato can also be practised in this manner by getting the bow to bounce in its middle using only the index finger and thumb. Once the bow bounces and the joints of the fingers are really moving, add the middle finger to the bow, then the ring finger and lastly, the little finger. Thereafter, remove the little finger, the ring finger and the middle finger. Look for the “sweet spot”, that is, the point where the bow bounces best and the sound quality is good. There should be no “extras” in the sound production, that is, no scratchy notes or the like. The stick needs to move parallel to the bridge at all times and the stick must remain steady, not dancing around the hair of the bow but aligned and secure on the string. If the stick is unsteady and moves from side to side, correct the movement — it is either the hand, the fingers’ or the arms’ fault. Practise both legato and détaché movements using just the thumb and index finger. The hardest part of the bow to do the movement will be at the heel and it will also be difficult to achieve an equal sound throughout the length of the bow, so it is important to take the time to work on these.

**Ozim**, like Auer, promotes a bow hold that involves the index finger touching the stick between the distal and proximal interphalangeal joint. He refers to this as holding the bow “high” on the index finger, or “deeply” on the index finger. The thumb and middle finger lightly touch each other when holding the heel but this is due to their position and not forced. The ring finger plays a big role as it steadies the bow. The relationship and balance between the thumb and little finger is very important and one which Ozim spends time making his students aware of. The third and fourth fingers should not lose contact with the side of the heel. If the fingers lose contact with the heel, it results in the bow tilting away from or towards the bridge, thereby only using half the hair of the bow, which is not beneficial when wishing to play with a full sound. If raising the wrist, there is a direct result on the bow as it influences tilting too. Ozim is adamant that his students stroke parallel to the bridge. If not, fingers lose control of the bow as the angle is less optimal for full contact between fingers and heel. This is only one reason, as Ozim believes that stroking parallel to the bridge ensure better sound production and one that is constant from heel to tip, as well as the best position from which to perform particular bowing techniques. Should it be that a student presents with short arms, the violin should not

be held too far out to the left. If said student's arms are too short to cope with resting the little finger on the bow when playing at the tip, then care should be taken to ensure that the bow is under control again by its middle, or sooner than that point where possible. Ozim's belief that the little finger should be on the bow at all times is in marked contrast to the Russians **Bron** and **Garlitsky** who relax the little finger from around the middle of the bow onwards towards the tip. Ozim is the only teacher I studied with who has a fail-proof tip if wishing to eradicate a raised wrist at the heel: to help a smooth transition between up and down-bow, practise lifting the index finger when playing at the heel. This activates the emphasis on feeling the balance between the thumb and little finger. It is important to keep the level of the wrist even and not bend it in any direction during this exercise.

**Ashkenasi**, in concern to the notion held by Bron and Garlitsky that when one travels from the middle of the bow to the tip and back, the little finger will either leave the bow or relax (albeit on the bow) agrees in broad lines. He too keeps the finger relaxed or off the bow at these points unless he needs to lift the bow, which he then does with the aid of the fourth finger.

### ***Bow Speed, (Main Entry: <sup>1</sup>Bow Speed [verb], Most Difficult Challenge: the Deceleration of)***

To aid the slowing down of a right arm that moves the bow too quickly across the strings, **Chastain** and **Masin** suggest the following: imagine that, as one strokes the bow across the strings, one feels resistance that slows down the speed of the bow. To practise this, the teacher's hand provides resistance on the student's forearm, thereby slowing down the speed of the student's arm as it strokes. Note that Masin is a student of **Gertler** (Gertler used the example described to explain how to slow down bow-speed) who in turn studied with **Hubay** and Chastain is a student of **Chumachenco** who studied with **Végh**. The latter was a student of Hubay. **Ashkenasi** refers not to bow speed but to "using a slow bow". **Krebbbers** refers to it as "saving the bow".

Chastain also uses the phrase “direction without dynamic”. This refers to giving a passage direction by speeding up or slowing down the bow without there being a change in dynamic. Thus, “direction without dynamic” means to give form to a passage via bow speed, giving the impression of movement without changing the volume of sound.

### ***Nerves (the Other Side)***

Moving from this idea to the execution of any sound production, **Kuschnir** mentions that when one has a “zitternde Bogen”, that is, a shaking bow/bow arm (a common phenomena usually occurring when the player is nervous) whilst performing on stage, it is often due to the wrist being dropped too quickly (heel to tip), that is, the wrist was high at the heel and then dropped to be aligned with the rest of the arm too quickly and thus creates the audible shaking of the bow. The issue of a “nervous” bow is one **Bron** is aware of. He suggests taming the problem by use of the following combination. Slightly tilting the bow with supination (where the bow is angled away from the bridge) automatically stops the shaking of the bow if one also pulls the bow on instead of using the bow too sparingly on the string. The more sparing the use of the bow, the more audible the sound of the shaking, which is caused by motoric movement in the muscles when nerves come into play.

**Ozim** suggests that to avoid a trembling bow, lay the bow on the string; after all, something that lies cannot tremble. Also, in *piano*, do not hold the bow too tightly, that is, do not grip the bow.

**Ashkenasi** too has a view in this regard, one named “Toblerone bow” by the author due to the jagged edges of the trembling bow resembling the shape of the famous Swiss mountain, the muse of the chocolate bar, namely the “Niesen”. By pressing the bow with the index finger, one will stop the “bounce”. However, if one needs to play softly, then counterpress with the fourth finger. Like this, one is lifting with the fourth finger (in order to play *piano*) and pressing with the first finger, thereby steadying the bow. Thus, the constellation is like a triangle: thumb, index finger and little finger press. If the player does this in the air without the bow, the three fingers form an upside-down triangle. This technique is to be used between the tip and the

middle of the bow. At the heel, or towards the heel, do not lift with the little finger, the player should lift with the arm. Doing so, you lift the whole bow. Tilting the bow, the hair towards you and the stick facing downwards towards the strings will also help alleviate a nervous bounce in the bow. The bow will bounce most when the stick is above the hair. If one presses, the bow will rarely if ever bounce. It usually bounces when one needs to play softly, and in so doing, one releases the bow out of its (possibly too strong) hold. All of this applies to soft dynamics. In a loud dynamic, due to the weight of the right arm being involved, the bow will almost never bounce as a result of nerves. To this end, Ashkenasi tries to finish passages that end in rests on a down-bow (heading towards the tip of the bow) and not on an up-bow (heading towards the heel). Furthermore, Ashkenasi believes that there should always be some weight on the bow. One can lift the little finger (between middle and tip of the bow) but then one has to press with the ring finger and this is not as effective as using the fourth finger, although it can work. The third finger is farther away from the fulcrum of the bow, the thumb being the fulcrum in this case. The little finger is, in conjunction with the thumb, the fulcrum, that is, the support about which the lever pivots. The heel is the heaviest part of the bow and the thumb and little finger are responsible for balancing and levelling out the fact that the tip of the bow is (in most cases) lighter. At the tip of the bow, the bow just rests on the string, hence one can lift the little finger off the bow. However, at the heel one needs the fourth finger. Ultimately, one wants to avoid a “jumpy” or nervous bow in a *piano* passage; if all this technical detail still renders the player nervous on stage, the simplest thing to do is play a little louder. The resulting sound will not be as beautiful a *pp* as the player might have originally strived for but at least the bow will not bounce.

When asked his opinion on this subject, **Brandis** offered three solutions.

- One should trust oneself to not keep the bow but to rest one’s weight via the bow on to the string, as then the bow cannot stutter on the string.
- Tilt the bow towards yourself at the beginning of a piece. Like this your bow will not tremble.
- Learn the ability to breathe correctly before and during a performance. This can be practised through yoga or other similar activities that involve conscious breathing coupled with physical movement or exercise.

## ***Relaxing the Right Shoulder***

**Weithaas** suggests the following in relation to relaxing the shoulder. Rest the right elbow on a music stand, the stand running in a straight line from the hand to the elbow. Now the student is told to lean all their weight on the lower arm, relaxing the arm on to the stand completely. Thereafter, the student runs the lower arm along the bottom of the stand, thereby leaving the stand bit by bit. The feeling of the relaxed right arm intact, the student now proceeds to transfer the feeling just experienced to the action of playing.

## ***Pronation and Supination***

Both **Ashkenasi** and **Ozim** use these terms to discuss the angle of the bow on the string. Pronation and supination are medical terms, used to describe elbow movements. In reference to the bow, pronation is when the hair of the bow tilt towards the player's face, and supination is where the hair of the bow tilt towards the violin's scroll. Moreover, Ozim does not appreciate tilting the bow by way of the wrist. He suggests using the right thumb to create the effect. How the rest of the right-hand fingers move accordingly is a reaction of the rolling movement of the thumb. Furthermore, when Ozim observes unconsidered tilting of the bow in a player, he quickly advises to keep the violin up because although the bow may be straight, the thumb not rolling it in any other direction than is conducive to all the hair of the bow stroking the string, and the bow moving parallel to the bridge, as soon as the left arm moves the violin up or down, the bow slants towards the bridge or towards the fingerboard. When Ozim observes that a student continuously tilts the bow by way of the right wrist, he uses the analogy of a motorcyclist standing still at a traffic light, literally revving to go on with the journey. The revving motion is created by the wrist being pulled back, and it is exactly this movement that the student should try when playing as it immediately straightens the right wrist.

## ***Ricochet***

On the matter of ricochet, there is a slight difference to approaches within the Russian School where comparing **Kuschnir** and **Bron**'s responses. Where Kuschnir

employs a bent wrist, to aid the start of a ricochet passage as he believes it creates the necessary bounce of the bow on the string, Bron advocates a simpler start to the ricochet by letting the bow land upon the string with the wrist in a relaxed position. Bron believes that the bounce of the bow on the string will come by definition of the bow being suppler in the middle, which is where he and others commonly agree on the starting point of the bow for ricochet.

When teaching ricochet, **Kuschnir** suggests that the right wrist be held high and bent at the heel. Drop the wrist for the first ricochet note to hear how well that first note sounds.

During ricochet passages, **Bron** suggests tilting the bow away from the bridge. The hair of the bow will then all lie flat, making the ricochet far easier to execute.

There is the tendency for a violinist, overcome by too many challenges at once, to find their right hand imitating the left. Pre-empting that possibility, **Ozim** suggests that in passages of ricochet where the pitches of notes ascend by semitones into high positions, the distances of the stopped notes as executed by the left hand becoming smaller as it ascends, one should not let this affect the right hand by pulling the bow less as one performs ricochet. Accordingly, the bow should be pulled at a steady rate during a ricochet passage regardless of what the left hand is playing.

Furthermore, during ricochet passages where four notes on a down-bow are followed by four notes on an up-bow, Ozim emphasises that one use one impulse for all eight notes. Should one attempt to use a separate impulse on the up-bow, the bow will lie flat, breaking the ricochet. In the case that the passage contains many notes, all divided into four notes to a bow, the impulse should be executed on the down-bows only.

## ***Staccato***

**Ashkenasi, Bron, Chumachenco, Krebbers, Masin and Ozim** all agree that by tightening the bow hair too much there is no longer any vibration of the stick and the bow will not produce the individual sound that every fine bow can. The sound becomes smaller and the natural vibration inherent to a bow is lost. The latter can be

observed easily when executing staccato as, if the hair is wound too tightly, the bow is far less resilient.

Further to this, **Ashkenasi** is of the opinion that due to the bow's shape at its tip, there is no flexibility in it and hence he avoids playing at the very tip of the bow bar during lyrical passages.

**Ozim** also believes that there should not be too much pressure on the string from the left hand when performing staccato. The movement comes from the wrist regardless of which fingers are most instrumental when performing the bowing technique. To avoid a stiff upper arm, one may tilt the bow towards oneself, that is, with pronation of the arm, on up-bows. Like this, the bow's hair appears to face the player, the stick of the bow closer to the strings. On down-bows, the bow turns towards the scroll, that is, with supination of the arm. Like this, the bow's hair turns towards the scroll, the stick of the bow closest to the player. It should be stated here that many players perform staccato with a tightening of the upper arm muscles and use this event alone to coax the staccato on to the string. Ozim does not teach like this at all, as he finds that this "reflex" staccato (which a number of players simply have by nature) is not reliable when on stage and overcome by nerves. I have this "reflex" staccato by nature, and although it was always fairly reliable, under Ozim's tuition I relearned the stroke over a period of three months, during which I practised the movement on open strings before translating it to scales (practised with rhythmic variations), etudes and finally, pieces. The new reflexes learned were slower and more from the wrist, hand and fingers than the upper arm. Those in the upper arm led to markedly more erratic and unequal sound production in comparison.

Ozim teaches the movement in the fingers as two possibilities, both options executed in controlled but quick fashion. The first option is aided by some pressure emitted from the ring finger, that is, a "pushing" movement, on to the heel of the bow. The wrist, when in action for this particular bowing technique, may be angled lower than it usually would, particularly on the down-bow. The movement induced by the ring finger can be compared to the movement one makes when turning a door knob from left to right. The second option is a more pointed movement, emitted by index and middle finger, and comparable to chickens pecking at seeds on the ground. In both cases, the hand is held lightly on the bow but in a controlled manner.



Although the movement comes from martelé, the faster end of the movement comes from tremolo. Some important ingredients for a relaxed yet controlled staccato are pressure (from the hand), air between impulses, and a horizontal stroke. When I began to study staccato with Ozim, my reflexes were very fast — this is generally a good thing, but can lead to stiffness in the arm when playing a very fast form of staccato. Ozim continuously reminded me not to stiffen or cramp the muscles of my upper arm in order to obtain a controlled staccato. Students who relearn staccato should be cautioned not to return to their natural or known staccato during learning of the new one as this will halt the learning process. Patience, as so often before, is key.

So as to control the staccato, practise a slow tremolo (the wrist strokes, as opposed to the arm; in the case of fast tremolo, the little finger leaves the bow between the middle and the tip) to relax the arm. The student can angle the arm on staccato but should bring the arm back to a normal position on arriving at the middle of the bow.

Oftentimes, the first and second note are the most difficult notes to sound. Angling the arm and, by extension, the bow's point and angle of contact with the string helps. One must consider, however, to avoid unnecessary accents on the first note of the staccato line, unless otherwise specified. Tilting the bow in or out (pronation/supination), on down and up-bows is something that the student is encouraged to experiment with. In my case, tilting the bow towards me on an up-bow allows my staccato to sound better. Some players find it helpful to take the stance of a down-bow staccato on the up-bow, that is, the wrist is lower than its common playing angle, the bow tilted towards the violin's scroll. The only difference between up- and down-bow staccato is that on the up-bow staccato using the down-bow staccato-hold the arm is either in its natural position or angled slightly away from the torso and towards the scroll. If the arm were angled in the opposite direction, that is, towards the wall behind the player, the wrist would be forced. On down-bow staccato the concept is the same as on the up-bow staccato although the wrist is lower than the usual angle at which it should perform.

When first practising staccato according to Ozim, tempo and speed are unimportant. Regularity is where focus should lie. The first note, as stated before, can prove the most difficult to execute, so to make the initial experience easier, it is advisable for

the student to start the process in the middle of the bow as opposed to the tip. The middle of the bow provides the place where the most success at that first note is guaranteed. Once this is mastered, move up the bow a little, day by day until ultimately reaching the tip. Later, when the movement has become organic, the first note can be transferred to the tip of the bow immediately, where necessary.

Ozim suggests to practise the staccato in rhythmic variations is helpful, but at the start, simply repeating each note is already beneficial. Play a slow tremolo at regular intervals to relax the arm, on all strings so as to get a good feel for the movement. Remember to prepare the left elbow in advance of a string change. This will cut out the chances of losing time and sound during a string change and moreover, there will be less of a physical challenge when changing strings.

Ozim advocates that staccato should have the same sound quality regardless of whether played at the heel or at the tip. Once the basic movement has been understood, it is possible to start threading it into a piece. It is wise to practise the piece with spiccato, so as to know the notes well before embarking on the new staccato stroke. Begin the piece with a metronome mark of 140 to the quaver on the first day. The next day, increase the mark to 145. Thereafter follows 150, 154, 158 and 162. At 162, increase by two until 190. It is important to remember that staccato should be practised on all strings and, if practised carelessly, can affect the quality of the “bite” on the various different strings.

Ozim teaches that down-bow staccato starts in the middle of the bow and goes until the tip. On up-bow staccato one can go to the heel. The little finger is not used until the middle of the bow. At this point, if the little finger has not been resting on the bow until then, it rests on the bow now for the journey from middle to heel. At the heel, the staccato becomes more of a jump-like movement than anything else. It should not be forgotten that playing faster comes naturally, it is regularity that should be strived for. One will find that after a certain mark on the metronome, one naturally begins to speed up whether using a metronome or not.

If, in the worst-case scenario, the staccato at the tip never gets the desired “bite”, start the staccato a little lower on the bow. Bowings and division of the bow

therefore become measured as required. Once the metronome mark 208 is equal to the quaver (equivalent of 104 to the crotchet) the rest, until 130 to the crotchet comes quite naturally, day by day, whether using a metronome or not.

### ***String Crossings***

**Schulz** has reduced all the movements of the bow arm to the movements one uses when using spoons. So a serving spoon, the biggest in the collection can be used to serve oneself and another. It is a movement that comes from the upper arm involving bigger muscle and the entire arm. The soup spoon is a smaller movement, morphing into a fore arm movement. The dessert spoon involves the wrist and some fore arm movement, the coffee spoon involves the wrist alone, in a circular fashion.

**Ozim** believes that basic movements for string crossings can be divided into three categories. A slow crossing involves the whole arm. A crossing at medium speed requires involvement of the lower arm and wrist in legato, and from the elbow in détaché. A fast string crossing is primarily executed by the wrist.

### ***The Bow as Extension of the Violinist***

**Chumachenco** has a somewhat unorthodox but effective way of making violinists aware of the role of the bow in sound. To allow a student to feel that the bow is an extension of their arm, especially for those who have stiff or static wrists, ask the student to make a fist. With the bow placed on the violin, ask the student to make a fist again, this time around the bow. The student, if they have trouble making a fist around the heel of the bow can hold the bow between thumb and index fingers, stretching out the fingers away from them, very straight.

Following this, the student curls their fingers around the heel of the bow and plays like this for a while. This helps to eradicate an overly bent right wrist whilst playing, and adds to the flexibility of the bow arm. Strength in the bow is nothing without suppleness and flexibility in the arm and hand, according to Chumachenco. In the words of Chumachenco to the student she was teaching at the time: “I want to see you when I go for lunch, waving your bow around, circling your arms, sweeping the

floor with your bow... just everything, all day, the bow held in your fist, the bow an extension of your arm!”

## ***Tone Production***

Although ultimately a matter that concerns both left and right hands, the sounding of a tone can begin solely with stroking the bow across an unstopped string, hence the placing of this topic within the section concerning the right hand.

The teachers I have known personally approach the subject of tone production from the very start of their interaction with a student. With the marked exception of **Ozim** who, at the start of his work with a new student, usually emphasises such elements as intonation and rhythmic exactness as being quintessential, both of which are largely disconnected to the actual quality of overall sound, most teachers believe that a high quality of tone production and a student’s striving thereof is the key to good playing. This is not to say that intonation and rhythmic exactness are not vital to professional performance. Both are clearly hurdles that need to be overcome on a daily basis. However, sound as heard in the inner ear and the realisation thereof in every player’s own way — “own” because I believe that one’s personal “voice” is amongst the qualities that differentiates a good player from an exceptional player — is not only a matter of practice but also one of cultivation.

**Bron**, in answer to the question of how his way of teaching might be defined, states that quality of sound ranks as the first element of particular importance.<sup>191</sup> (Placed second is the choice of repertoire and a continual reassessment of already-played compositions by the student. Third place is given to encouragement of independence within the student.)

Bron believes that there is a fundamental problem that all string players share. Unlike on, for example, a piano, a pre-existing tone quality is not present on a string instrument. Naturally, an artistic tone on the piano requires mastery but the production of an elementary tone on the violin requires a certain level of technique.

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<sup>191</sup> Bron’s opinion on tone production is based on quotes printed in Ralf Noltensmeier, *Große Geigenpädagogen im Interview* (Kiel: Peter Götzmann Verlag, 1997), p. 13.

Many children, for years on end, will not concern themselves with the standard of their own sound. However, one cannot truly work at an artistic level if one leaves the immense role that sound plays by the wayside. Via sound in all its shading and nuances, the artist lends expression to his or her ideas, feelings and passion.

It is not unusual for a young violinist to believe that they are performing in an artistic way but that a listener does not hear this artistry. Therefore, the striving for a fine sound is closely connected with the ability to truly listen to oneself and work in a self-critical manner. Only thus can one achieve steady progress. Bron explains further that he tries to move away from young students' infantile tone as soon as possible.

**Ashkenasi** of course has plenty of ideas concerning tone production, some already listed in this thesis. He also has a visual guideline when playing, which is to stroke with the bow over the F holes on the violin so as to produce the best sound quality.

Moreover, when creating a *piano* dynamic, both weight and speed of the bow play their part. It depends on the sound the player wants. Bow speed certainly is a factor but weight plays an even bigger part (lifting weight for *piano* dynamic, not adding weight). A slower bow speed, however, does create a softer dynamic, but this speed equation is definitely secondary to the weight issue.

**Garlitsky** suggests that, to aid the exploration of *piano* dynamics, lift the weight of the little finger off the bow or, depending on the length of the right arm, lift the little finger off the bow altogether when playing from and between approximately the middle of the bow to the tip. Like this, one loosens the grip on the bow, thereby no longer “carrying” the bow but instead, allowing the bow to land and travel on the string with its own natural weight.

Like this, exploring various *piano* dynamic colours becomes easier as, according to Garlitsky, one no longer “carries” or “holds” the bow.

**Krebbers** has frequently stated “Stok verdeeling is 85% van de interpretatie,” which translates as, “bow division is 85% of the interpretation”. During a lesson I enjoyed with him in Amsterdam in April of 1999, he relayed that he had recently been on the

jury of the Sibelius Competition in Helsinki, Finland. He was amazed and baffled that the jury members, who went out with one another for dinner night after night, talked about many things including the competitors but not one breathed a word about bow division. Krebbers had the impression that his colleagues did not spend too much thought on the matter.

**Chumachenco** and **Ashkenasi** use a partially visual aid in order to encourage their students to learn to play more “in the string”. There is namely tendency, particularly amongst the young, to land on the string from above which brings with it an aggressive sound as the bow literally hits the string. Ashkenasi likens this to a helicopter landing — a vertical landing therefore. He advocates for an “aeroplane-like” landing, that is, a horizontal landing on the string, in other words, starting from the string. Moreover, Chumachenco uses the letter “U” as a comparison for the movement that the right arm makes when playing in (and then out) of the string. The “U” being the desired letter and not a “V”, the “V” representing quite formidably the line the bow makes when landing from the air, hitting the string and then, in a jabbing motion, leaving the string again. It is in the curve of the “U” that the idea is most tangible: one nearly sees the dropping of weight of the arm into the string, and then the lifting of that weight at the end of the note. Divided on the bow, the beginning of the stroke is light, the middle is heavy, and the end is light once again.

### ***Using All the Hair of the Bow***

**Ashkenasi** suggests to use the thumb as the main motor when wishing to use all the hair of the bow. By straightening the thumb slightly, the bow rolls over the pad of the thumb and is immediately placed in a position where all the bow’s hair stroke the string.

**Ozim** on the other hand, suggests lowering the wrist a little (but not so low as to put unwanted strain on to the joint nor of impinging upon the natural movement), much in the manner of one revving the handles of a motor-bike. The downward movement of the wrist sets the full use of the hair on to the string.

## The Left and Right Hands

### *Acoustics, Expression and Posture*

It has become quite fashionable in recent years for violinists to turn to their audience when playing, the violin's scrolls facing the audience directly, as a means of expression. In fact, it was taught by Dorothy DeLay that students show with their faces and expressions what they felt. However, in **Ozim**'s opinion, it still sounds and looks better if the violinist faces stage right. "Our expression is in our hands, not our face. It is self-deceit if the player thinks that by facial expression alone, the audience will hear more or differently. It is alright if facial expression whilst playing is spontaneous... but if it is taught, it is artificial and of no acoustic use."<sup>192</sup>

### *Chords*

**Kuschnir** is of the opinion that the bass of a chord must vibrate. However, a common mistake is made which is that musicians, in their various convictions, overemphasise the sound production of the bass note of a chord. A bass note, in fact, sounds best when executed lightly by the bow as opposed to being pressed out of the string by the bow. One could liken this to the pressing of a shirt — as if one is trying to draw the sound out of the instrument, not press the tone into it. The bass should be played less strongly than the tenor, alto and soprano notes. In this fashion, the bass note has most resonance and in fact, a longer life, than if the note is pressed out of the string. The end of all chords should have a slight diminuendo so that they all sound slightly separated and not like one indistinguishable mass of continued sound.

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<sup>192</sup> As communicated to the author in Salzburg in May 2008.

## ***Correlation Between Left and Right Hands***

**Chastain** recommends using the bow to aid the left hand, that is, a fast bow generally means that the left hand moves faster too. By that logic, slow bow is equal to slow vibrato and fast bow is equal to fast vibrato. This theory works for the younger student whose vibrato is too slow. Another exercise would be to move the bow really fast, *détaché* on the string, playing just one note and trying to move the vibrato as fast as the bow moves. Alternatively, pull the bow fast on the longer notes in one-octave scales so as to achieve faster vibrato. Please beware, as **Ashkenasi** would suggest, that this speeding up of the bow will promote “explosions” of sound in the general stroke, therefore, do not let the fast bow exercise be practised too much.

**Bron** will certainly disagree with Chastain’s objective. He is a strong believer in independence, be that between fingers on either hand, or the two arms in relation to one another. He excels at offering exercises to his students that involve complex coordination skills and shows well that one does not necessarily need a fast bow to play *forte*, nor a slow bow to perform *piano* dynamics. Moreover, using much bow does not have to mean the promotion of a strong sound, just as using little bow does not have to result in a transparent, soft sound.

**Ashkenasi** thinks much along the lines of Bron in this regard.

**Ozim** believes that in *piano*, one should use a lot of bow, sometimes inclined, placed near the fingerboard, and that the bow should be pulled fast when executing a note. In *forte*, use less bow, all the hair of the bow stroking the string near the bridge and with a bow that is pulled more slowly.

Ozim believes that if the right hand is relaxed, the left hand will be too, the reflex in the left hand being the same as that of the right hand. That is, the body is one and each side mirrors itself. If the left hand is stiff, it affects the right hand as the “stiffness” passes through the back to the opposite hand. As a runner moves the muscles in their legs in harmony, so should a violinist move the muscles in their



arms. Although the arms may perform different actions, one moving vertically, the other horizontally, they are mirror images of one another. Movement of each side of the body is controlled by the contralateral (opposite) motor cortex of the brain. Thus, the motor cortex of the right hemisphere of the brain (which lies towards the rear of the frontal lobe) governs the movements of the left side of the body. To execute a movement in the left hand, for example, signals originating in the motor cortex of the right hemisphere travel down a neural pathway comprising a series of neurones (nerve cells), which cross over the midline of the brain and end in the muscles of the left hand.<sup>193</sup> Therefore, if the right hand is relaxed, the left hand will be too, promoting a free vibrato as opposed to a stiff, locked vibrato.

However, the most intrinsic and evolved balance between left and right arms would suggest complete independence between both arms with little to no correlation between movements, including division of the bow, and so many varied principles of technique that the very notion of a “principle” becomes obsolete. At this point, the art of violin playing comes to the fore. I save the secrets on how to achieve this for my future writings...

A further consideration regarding correlation between both hands involves an entirely different point, as relayed by **Masin**. His teacher, Gertler, subscribed to the principle that the left and right hand should never come too close to one another, that is playing very high on a string with the bow at the heel was advised against. Gertler believed that a certain amount of distance between the two hands was necessary at all times. The reasons for this are three-fold. Firstly, from a musical perspective it is more natural to play high notes from the middle of the bow upwards. Secondly, from a physical perspective, there is more tension in the body if there is such extreme closeness between the two hands and thus, creating space between the two will ease the upper body. Finally, from a visual perspective, the player will look far less “cluttered” when performing wide, generous movements as opposed to narrow movements.

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<sup>193</sup> This statement is by Dr C A Ling MB ChB, taken from the book *Michaela's Music House, The Magic of the Violin* (Bern: Müller & Schade, 2009), p. 30.

## **Legato**

Legato: the holy grail of bow technique. It can be argued that during a legato phrase, the various schools of teaching can be distinguished most easily.

**Ashkenasi** – an all-rounded player, gifted at both legato and articulated phrasings. Ashkenasi however has a dislike not so much to inability in his students of playing legato phrases well, but more of the speed of the bow during those phrases. He observes that many players distribute bow speed in such a manner as to create a rush of sound – known by Baroque specialists as a “belly” in the production of a note – in the middle of any given note. This is due to the relative ease with which one slowly draws the bow at the start of a note, and then pulls it faster towards the middle, only to result in a slowing down of bow speed towards the end of a note/stroke. Ashkenasi calls this unfortunate sound production “an explosion in the middle of a note”. This pulling or pushing of bow speed in the middle of a note, unless clearly specified in the music or wanted as a particular effect by the performer, is generally due to a lack of discipline on the part of the player. It is with considerable effort and patience that this habit can be exchanged in favour of a measured bow speed on all notes.

Ashkenasi’s most effective antidote begins with the following question accompanied by the symbol of an accent above a note: “what is an accent”? His answer is, “a short diminuendo”. The likening is clear both in terms of the visual, where an accent looks like a reduced diminuendo, as well as sound production, where a note with an accent is fast version of a note subject to a diminuendo. Ashkenasi then continues to teach that at each start of a note, one produce an accent and then continue the note in the dynamic attained at the end of the accent.

**Bron** – undoubtedly one of the greatest means by which Bron and his students distinguish themselves from many others today, Bron excels at legato and continuously talks about during teaching, not only in the left but also the right hands. He focuses on connections, those between notes, shifts, chords, up and down-bows, dynamics, in short, every aspect of technique can be “connected” and should be.

**Chumachenco** – an avid fan of portato, Chumachenco, particularly in music from the classical era, continuously emphasises individual notes by way of pressure from the index finger or articulation created by the right arm.

**Krebbbers** – like Chumachenco, Krebbbers’ playing uses portato as a characteristic of his style. His détaché-stroke is very pronounced and his legato can be understood more as an approach to phrasing than a consistent search for a smooth sound.

**Masin** – legato is very much a part of the expressive language of both the Hungarian and Franco-Belgian schools. Masin, like some of the players he admires such as Henryk Szeryng, Arthur Grumiaux, Zino Francescatti and André Gertler, plays with a very robust sound where the legato is interrupted with articulation activated by a combination of the left hand (both finger placement and vibrato) and a wide range of bow speeds.

**Ozim** – sharing the belief that entire passages can be born from one impulse, Ozim has a clear understanding of legato in the right and left hands. For instance, in bar 29, Variation I of the fourth movement of Schubert’s Trout Quintet, the first set of notes consists of a semiquaver triplet slurred to a quaver. Ozim insists that these four notes be played from one impulse, that is, a barely audible diminuendo over four notes, as opposed to two diminuendos, where the second diminuendo provides a resurgence of sound. The left-hand fingers do the work and the bow should not try to “help” by becoming affected by a portato movement or a second or even third impulse after the initial impulse.

## **Ornaments**

**Ozim** believes that, in baroque music, trills should be started from the top and not the bottom note as there is always a character of the suspension to a trill. Thus, a bar containing the notes G and F sharp with a trill on the latter, sounds, once executed, like G followed by another G followed by the trilling F sharp.

By the time of the classical era, for instance in the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, if the aforementioned bar contains the note E after the F sharp (G, F sharp,

E), the player should start the trill with the main note (F sharp) and not the G so as to emphasise the line. However, ornamentation need not only be a matter of trills, mordents and so on. On a more fundamental level and although not strictly seen as ornamentation, slurs over notes also form a musical line and the difference in sound between slurred and detached notes is immense. To this end Ozim intones, “slurs are not bowings, slurs are articulation”.<sup>194</sup> Particularly in the baroque era, slurs over two notes suggest an emphasis on the first note of each slur. Dots above notes, on the other hand, do not necessarily imply that they be shorter but certainly imply that those notes with dots above them not be slurred, hence the suggestion that dots above notes are to be played separate, also in sound quality.

**Ashkenasi** has many ideas concerning ornamentation but one particular comment is heard time and again. It is in relation to how notes are played, and is a reflection on the precision of their execution, regardless of speed. Notes performed in quick succession of one another should not sound like a “scribble”, as Ashkenasi calls it. This word evokes so many associations, all of which, in my opinion, perfectly describe what it is Ashkenasi is expressing. Generally, without need for much further explanation, the student leaves more space between notes, breathes a line more naturally or slows down when performing the previously “scribbled” passage again.

## ***Phrasing***

Most teachers do not have hard and fast rules when it comes to phrasing, but **Ozim** believes in the “correct” performance of a phrase. Two components of this belief are that, firstly, a correct phrase has its strongest or highest point towards the start or on the highest pitch of the phrase. Secondly, the last note of a phrase, particularly before a rest, is not accented and must be played markedly less strong of volume than the preceding notes, where the latter have already been in a state of continuous diminuendo from the last high point unless otherwise marked in the score.

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<sup>194</sup> As communicated to the author in Salzburg in May 2008.

## **Pizzicato**

Just as it is clear to any curious musician that there is a myriad of options connected to any technical aspect of playing, so it is clear that pizzicato is not just a one-dimensional effect, producing sound as executed by the right hand.

**Ozim** teaches that, as a general rule, when stopping the strings during chordal passages, the right hand follows the formation of the left hand, as opposed to simply plucking the strings in a straight line from left to right. That is, a chord built up of the notes A on the G string (stopped with the second finger in the half position), E on the D string (stopped in the first position with the first finger) and an open A string, should be plucked with the right hand following a line that moves from the bridge on the G string towards the scroll of the violin on the A string. This movement of the right hand is based on considerations concerning the optimal resonance of the violin, the G string, in the chord built up as stated, being the shortest string, the A being the longest string. To illustrate the opposite movement in the right hand of the example given previously, in the case of a chord built up of the notes A on the D string (as played with the fourth finger in the first position), D on the A string (played with the third finger in the first position), and G on the E string (played with the second finger in the first position), the chord is plucked in a line that moves from the scroll towards the bridge of the instrument. In the case of a chord where several strings are equally long, one should pluck in the direction of the majority of longer strings.

To create different dynamics, the finger (or fingers, as the case might be) that pluck the string follow the same principles as the bow does, according to sounding points on the violin. When creating a *forte* dynamic, one moves the bow towards the bridge. When creating a *piano* dynamic, the bow moves towards the fingerboard. Hence, in the case of a note or notes played on a single string, rather than plucking straight across the string(s) parallel to the bridge in a careless fashion — which creates a short, pinched sound — one should pluck along the length of the string in a movement that starts either towards the bridge or the scroll of the violin and ends in a position that is opposite to the sounding point at the beginning of the note. Thus, three notes in succession that are to be played in *diminuendo* are executed as follows:

the first note is played nearer to the bridge, the second is played closer to the fingerboard and the last note is played on the fingerboard, possibly with a movement that ends in the direction of the violin's scroll.

**Masin** teaches that for longer plucked notes, the most important thing is the beauty of the tone. For instance, strumming a chord in the direction of your left-hand fingers to elongate the sound, strings and vibrations is optimal. For fast plucked notes, the most important thing is precision. In fast passages and on single notes, pluck across the strings as if you would be going in the direction of the bow on a normal down-bow, as this guarantees agility. Often on chords, you will find that the right thumb is not leaning on the fingerboard, whereas, in faster passages, the right thumb will hold on to the fingerboard for support.

### ***Playing Without a Shoulder Rest***

The shoulder rest is an invention that has caused the violin world to debate its pros and cons.

Playing without a shoulder rest has a certain number of advantages. The most obvious ones are:

- More freedom of movement in the left hand and arm
- An improvement in certain technical elements of left hand coordination which playing without a shoulder rest demands
- An improvement in the overall stance of a performer. Where before the performer might have had the unfortunate habit of moving the scroll of the instrument towards the floor when descending from a higher to a lower position, this downward movement of the torso and therefore of the instrument, becomes nigh impossible when performing without a shoulder rest as the violin would quite literally slip from the instrumentalist's hold. When playing without a shoulder rest (in the modern, as opposed to the baroque style), the violin, per definition, is held straight or raised upwards, an altogether better position for the spine of the instrumentalist. It should be noted here that there is a vast difference between playing with the violin's scroll parallel to the floor/with the violin's scroll pointing towards the ceiling and with the violin's scroll pointing towards

the floor. Namely, when the violin's scroll points towards the floor the distances for the left hand from one note to the next are felt to be larger by the player than when the violin's scroll is parallel to the floor

- A possible improvement in the scope and control of vibrato-speeds as the finger falls at a different, and arguably better, angle to the string as it would if one were playing with a shoulder rest
- The right arm, in many cases, is more extended when playing with a shoulder rest. This leads to an increased need of application of more pressure to the string. That increased pressure employs not only the hand or wrist but also the arm, which in turn leads to unwanted tension and discomfort in the players body
- The slight difference in sound of the instrument – as it is not gripped at the ribs by the feet of the shoulder rest, there can be improvement in the timbre or the strength of the volume of the instrument
- For those with shorter necks (generally male players), playing without a shoulder rest is advised for the purpose of comfort as there is often not enough physical space between the player's collarbone and chin to enfold the violin plus a shoulder rest as well

There are teachers (**Leopold Auer, Jascha Heifetz, Nathan Milstein, Mischa Elman, David Oistrakh, Aaron Rosand, Eduard Schmieder** and **Nora Chastain** to name a few) who advocate playing with the violin resting on the clavicle as opposed to the shoulder as they believe that the player's eye should look down the fingerboard to the scroll, the left arm placed well under the instrument, hence allowing for greater freedom of movement in the left hand as the hand is placed well above the strings. When playing or practising without a shoulder rest **Chastain** holds the violin up with the scroll nearly pointing to the ceiling to enable downward shifts without pulling the instrument out from under the chin.

A number of "bad habits" as far as technique goes are also avoided if playing without a shoulder rest, such as gripping the violin too hard with the weight of the head, locking the jaw whilst playing, raising the left shoulder or clamping the violin's neck between thumb and the index finger's metacarpophalangeal joint.

**Ozim** is a great believer in teaching his students how to play without a shoulder rest. He does not expect them to play like this on stage but does suggest that, through trying it, one can improve certain aspects of one's technique. Interestingly, Ozim played his whole life with a shoulder rest until about the age of forty, when, after reading a vast number of books on the subjects of violin playing, methodology and anatomy, he decided to play without a shoulder rest. It is the opinion of Ozim that it can take months to get used to playing without a shoulder rest and to adjust technique for this purpose if a violinist has had no experience of it until that point. To this end, he points out the following when playing without a shoulder rest:

- The inside of the metacarpophalangeal joint of the finger stopping the string should touch the violin's neck until the third and preferably until the fourth position. Like this you avoid shifting from the first to the third position or the second to third position awkwardly
- Regardless of playing with or without a shoulder rest, the student should be aware that the violin's neck rests on the metacarpophalangeal joint of the thumb in the lower positions
- The thumb should not move up or down in position before the rest of the hand when shifting positions. In other words, the thumb should not prepare the hand for a change of positions before that change takes place
- In respect to position-changing, the violin does not necessarily rest in a straight line between the left hand and the chin. At the point in time of a position change, the violin's scroll will, and should, go up. Avoid putting too much pressure on the violin with the chin – shifting the hand on the violin's neck will prove itself easier to execute than if one had tried to "hold" the instrument with the head and shoulder
- The thumb must be opposite the second finger (middle finger) by the third position
- In the third and fourth positions the inside of the metacarpophalangeal joint of the index finger should still touch the neck of the instrument when playing on any string. When moving slowly through the positions, the metacarpophalangeal joint touches the neck of the violin but when performing swift changes of position, the metacarpophalangeal joint does not touch the violin's neck. This means that, when changing position at speed between the first and fourth position, the metacarpophalangeal joint touches the side of the violin in the first



position but then leaves the neck of the violin on the shift and in the fourth position plays without the metacarpophalangeal joint touching the wood. It should be noted that those with smaller hands will find that they need to come out from under the violin with their left elbow more, the pad at the top of the distal interphalangeal joint touching the violin's neck when playing, whereas those with larger hands can comfortably play whilst touching the neck of the violin lower on the distal interphalangeal joint

- When practising without a shoulder rest, bow long legato notes. Whilst doing so, bring the violin from its normal resting place on the collarbone (the violin parallel to the floor) to a higher position (the scroll of the instrument pointing towards the ceiling) and then back down to the initial starting position. Also, from its normal position (the violin parallel to the floor), make circular movements with the instrument and move the violin from left to right and right to left. These three variations are done to emphasise the point that the violin rests on the collarbone when playing without a shoulder rest, and to enable the feeling of carrying the instrument between the collarbone and the metacarpophalangeal joint of the thumb, thereby creating a bridge structure (collarbone and thumb) for the instrument to lie upon
- Ensure that the thumb is opposite the middle finger when playing in the lower positions, but not so much so that the thumb becomes tensed as it is extended too far forward. However, the thumb should be forward enough (as opposed to backwards, towards the scroll of the violin, the position of which also creates tension in the muscles at the base of the thumb) for there to be an opening in the hand between the curve of the thumb and the index finger as it holds the neck of the violin. A preliminary exercise to this end involves the violinist placing the tip of the thumb on the left side of the violin's neck, the thumb's nail facing upwards. The metacarpophalangeal joint of the index finger touches the bottom of the violin's neck. The left upper and lower arm form a right angle. From this position, slowly move the thumb into the usual playing position; the elbow rotates into place nearer the torso thereby moving the index finger in to position, the tip of the index finger now ready to perform. Note the natural space created between the curve of the thumb and the index finger. Return to this exercise any time upon realising that the necessary space between the thumb and index finger

has diminished and, as a result of this, the hand has begun to grip the neck of the violin

- The left elbow and its functions are used much more when playing without a shoulder rest
- If the student does not align the left elbow enough with the front of the torso, the place where the violin rests on the collarbone will shift constantly, unsettling the technique of the left hand notably
- The small space created between the curve of the thumb and index finger when playing should also be apparent when playing without a shoulder rest. Should the position of the hand slip when first beginning to play without a shoulder rest and the space mentioned previously not occur, one should not only review the position of the left hand but also reconsider the chin rest — if it is too shallow or flat, this can affect the parameters. For those with a long neck, consider placing more cork between the instrument and the chin rest so as to elevate the height of the chin rest. Experimenting with the place where the chin rest is, that is, to the left of the instrument or in the middle of the instrument can also make a marked difference. For those with long limbs, having the chin rest in the middle of the instrument (Anne-Sophie Mutter plays without a shoulder rest and the chin rest is positioned in the middle of her instrument) helps to free the movement of the arms when playing
- Only when playing without a shoulder rest does the thumb (often) go down the violin's neck before the rest of the hand when shifting position. When playing with a shoulder rest, the hand always travels simultaneously with the thumb when shifting.

## ***Practising***

The succinctness of the title of this section entirely belies the magnitude of what the word entails. “Practising” as an activity in itself has been referred to on many an occasion in this thesis, both implicitly and explicitly, and without a doubt could form the basis of a lengthy thesis in and of itself. However, in this particular section I wish only to express some general principles as taught to me by **Krebbers**.

- Krebbers believes that one should always practise in the correct part of the bow. That is, when practising a spiccato passage for intonation challenges, still practise on the place of the bow where one will ultimately perform the passage, regardless of the fact that one is focusing on the intonation at the given time.
- Practising too slowly blocks the left-hand fingers. For instance, practising a fast-moving passage too slowly will not lead to much. The intonation will undoubtedly be compromised as semitones will eventually fall closer together when performed in tempo than they do in a slow tempo. Therefore, practising too slowly will lead the player to play semitones at bigger distances to one another. Furthermore, practising only for intonation slows down the speed, reflexes and dexterity of the hand. The hand does not get used to the quick changes or shifts that might be required in faster passages. And not only that, Krebbers would explain with a twinkle in his eye, practising too slowly will most definitely drive a student mad.
- When practising, one must remember that one is essentially training muscle memory. Every time a passage that includes mistakes is repeated, the mistake is physically embedded deeper into the player and will prove more difficult to correct later. Movements that are not integral to any specific passage are learned by the body and so, if a player physically performs differently on stage to how they practised — a player might move more or less when performing on stage — the slightest alteration in posture could affect that player's comfort or stability whilst playing.
- It appears that it cannot be said enough, according to **Bron** and Krebbers. The left hand should always move before the right hand. This coordination is deemed extremely important and the rule should be systematically followed with discipline, particularly when practising.
- When going from one double-stop to another (with or without a shift), or from a single note to a double-stop, focus on the lower note. It is much easier to stop the correct notes like this and tends to sound more beautiful and warm.
- Take a pencil and analyse the score. Thereafter, mark things such as “major third” and “minor third”. One will be amazed at how much indicating the intervals, one after another, particularly in more complex passages, can help to visualise and prepare individual notes so they really sound in tune. Like this, one also becomes aware of exactly what one is doing. Marking intervals as they

occur in sequential passages and/or in passages where the fingers of the left hand have to perform awkward or difficult formations helps no end.

- Vibrate on up-bows! Many violinists have a tendency not to, particularly when they are practising.

## **Rubato**

In **Oistrakh**'s playing one can clearly hear his approach to rubati. Oistrakh's playing is anything but metrical, with clear flexibility in tempo and agogic. According to Ronald Masin, Oistrakh verbatim pronounced:

“As long as you are on time at the beginning of given beats or at the head of particular bars, you can go ahead or stay longer on notes according to your own taste or whim of the moment.”

## **Scales**

**Ashkenasi** and **Chumachenco** generally do not practise scales with their advanced students.

**Bron** uses Elizabeth Gilels' scale system.<sup>195</sup>

To describe some essential thoughts that Bron has voiced concerning his approach to scales, the scales and arpeggios in G are used as an example.

- Bron, like Ozim, uses a fingering that involves playing open strings on the ascent and covered strings, stopped by the fourth finger in the first position, on the descent. Gilels' scales are written in 2/4 time, in semiquavers with one slur for the entire ascent and one for the entire descent. However, Bron uses varying rhythms on scales. These rhythms are primarily used to teach bowings, particular strokes and techniques, whereas Ozim sometimes involves rhythms for the primary goal of mastering the precision of their execution. I highlight some of those here, followed by a more in-depth look at some particular strokes:

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<sup>195</sup> Elizabeth Gilels, *Daily Exercises for the Violinist, 24 Scales and Arpeggios* (Hamburg: Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, 1978).

- A) Bowings are divided according to groups, and starting with legato. In legato, the slurs initially include two bound quavers, followed by four. There after follow sets of triplets, then eight quavers to a bow, and so on.
- B) Martelé follows legato, practised between middle to the tip of the bow, beginning at a slow speed and increasing into a fast tempo. Whilst practising, Bron is mindful to remind his students to open the right arm enough from the elbow, and to ensure that following the initial attack of a note, the rest is performed with a light touch. The initial attack should not be too long as it will not sound. Bron asks the student to follow their ear (as opposed to attempting to measure the length of attack) to determine how fast the movement of the martelé should be and the achieving of the desired sound production. If the bow has too much speed, the resulting sound will be one of ponticello. As the pause between notes decreases to advance the speed of the tempo, an exercise to practise coordination is to sound two notes to a bow, that is, the first note with martelé followed by the next pitch in the lightness of sound that ensues at the tail of a martelé note. Moreover, as the pause between notes decreases, the bow should be moved towards the tip.
- C) Spiccato gradually progressing into sautillé follows martelé. As is in line with sound production according to the Russian School, the bow stays close to the string and each note is begun from the string, and not by landing on to the string and already in movement. Ultimately, the strokes are played in the middle of the bow, which is its natural balance point.
- D) The “Viotti bowing” is taught following sautillé. See H) for more information.
- E) The “Paganini bowing” is taught following sautillé. The scale moves in semiquavers, four notes to a set. The bowing is as follows: the first note is separate, the second and third notes are slurred, the fourth note is separate. Every first note of a set of four is accented. The complexity of the stroke is not in least due to its asymmetry. In general, the player should not use too much bow except for at the tip. Bron advises using a flautato stroke on all but accented notes, thereby aiding optimal bow division.
- F) The next bowing technique is referred to as the “Thibaud stroke”, as it was taught by Jacques Thibaud. Notes are consistently played to the value of a crotchet, beginning on an upbow. The first note is performed at the heel, the second at the tip, the third at the heel, the fourth at the tip, and so on. The movement can be compared to the manner in which Ozim teaches collé. Here, however, it is the shoulder and not the fingers of the right hand that are most fundamental to the movement. Bron partially utilises the stroke to show that many players raise their right shoulder when playing at the heel. By practising this stroke, one can focus on freeing-up the right shoulder. In practising this stroke, the sound production of each note is barely audible. In fact, exponents of the stroke such as Carl Flesch, who performed with Thibaud on several occasions and whom we can savely assume held his colleague in high esteem, states the following on page eighty of his *Die Kunst des Violinspiels*, “Der Kuriosität halber sei hier noch einer durch *Thibaud* ausschließlich zu Übungszwecken eingeführten Strichkombination gedacht, durch welche eine bedeutende Kräftigung der Finger der rechten Hand bewirkt wird”.

- G) Bron begins with a simple legato bowing over four notes. When performing them, Bron advises playing in such a way that the last note of the first set of four moves forward in tempo, using plenty of bow and a light sound followed by a first note of the second set also light in sound. First practise with a rest between the third and fourth notes of the first set so as to get an idea of the bow division in a form of slow motion. Also practise the repeating the fourth note of the first set in connection with the first note of the second set. Thereafter, practise without repetition, and then later without the rest. The aforementioned principle is also implemented when performing six, eight or more notes to a bow. One has to calculate the amount of bow that the last note will require and how to most smoothly make the transition to the first note of the next stroke. Throughout this, the right hand has to perform as legato as possible.
- H) Bron incorporates what is commonly known as the “Viotti bowing” in scales. This stroke generally takes place at the upper half of the bow and involves performing the first note of the scale (or a passage in a composition) detached and with an accent. The following notes are played by slurring two notes to a bow. The second note is also accented. The stroke can also be practised at double speed to heighten physical awareness. The student should use their right wrist for the stroke – the fingers of the right hand are also involved, but the wrist generates their involvement. The impulse occurs on the accented note, the note thereafter being performed in a state of relaxation, before the next impulse ensues. The movement of the stroke can be broken down by practising a scale beginning on a semiquaver followed by a dotted quaver, followed by a semiquaver and so on, in détaché. There should be no pause after the first note, only between the second and third note, that is, after each “relaxed” reaction to the impulse. Thus, the first note is one of “action”, the second note is its “reaction”. The “action” or “active” note is a form of martelé. The movement related to this is the “reaction” movement and comes from the right wrist. This stroke can also be practised on Kreutzer Study number 2.
- I) A further rhythmic variation begins on one detached note, followed by two notes slurred, followed by one detached note, and so on. Due to the asymmetry that ensues, the student is asked to ensure that the bowing is always correct and that one plays quadruplets and not triplets, that is, one creates an accent on the first note of every set of semiquavers, as opposed to on the first of every three notes. One should always use the same amount of bow to perform the scale, as bow division is key. Everything except for the accented first note should be played lightly and with flexibility in the sound. Assume the thinking of one impulse being responsible for three notes (one detached, two slurred) as opposed to creating an impulse on the start of each down or up-bow. There is an element of the “Viotti bowing” here too. The same bowing can be adapted to suit Kreutzer Study number 3.
- J) Not all of Bron’s rhythmic variations appear tricky at first. The difficulty in the following example comes as a surprise to nearly every student who attempts it. Play a scale, repeating each note four times with a sautillé-spiccato stroke at a tempo of 86 to the crotchet. The right shoulder must be completely relaxed and the student should concentrate on producing a *forte*

sound by using the natural weight of the right arm and wrist. Following this, the student repeats each note twice at the same speed. On completion of a scale in this manner, the student performs a scale where each note is repeated three times. At this point, the most common reaction is for the student to be amazed at the difficulty of playing an uneven amount of repetitions per note. The reason for the difficulty lies in the actuality that most players are not used to physically relaxing on an up-bow, only on a down-bow. One can kickstart the feeling at the beginning of the exercise by using more bow on the first of the three repeated notes. To get used to the movement, one can build a rest into the scale every three notes, but not between the first and the second note. This rest, however, needs to be deleted from the scale once the movement has been understood by the player. This is because the essence of the exercise is to attain a physical understanding of the relaxed feeling in the body on an up-bow. Once the player has mastered playing the three notes in tempo at the upper half of the bow, the exercise should be transferred to the lower half of the bow, and finally to the middle of the bow.

- Following single-note scales, the Gilels system continues with scales in thirds. Bron advises ensuring that any given rhythm be executed precisely, and to play legato throughout. Moreover, legato does not only refer to the right hand. The position changes, for instance, should be performed in legato, the left hand moving smoothly between positions. The arm must move between positions in one motion. If the distance between fingers during performance of a third is different to the previous double-stop, adjust the fingers but not the arm. When practising the ascent, focus lies on the upper note of the thirds, and when descending, on the lower note. When changing strings, the right hand must continue to play legato. The student must also ensure that the left hand does not grip or cling to the neck of the violin. Bron frequently places his index finger between the index finger and thumb of the student's left hand when they perform thirds in a bid to physically remind the student to perform with a relaxed stance. For more information concerning Bron's approach to teaching thirds, see his *Etidenkunst*, in particular the remarks on Dont's Etude number 8 concerning rhythmic exercises for the left hand. Each parameter of how to practise thirds needs to be mastered before embarking on a full sequence of thirds. If the separate preliminary exercises are not learned well, the time spent on practising a full sequence is lost, the student having accomplished nothing more than confusing the muscles of their arms and hands, rather than performing each individual and intricate movement well. Preliminary exercises should not be

practised too slowly so that once performing a scale in thirds, one can more easily follow the melodic line.

- Following thirds, Gilels moves on to sixths. Bron emphasises practising changes of double-stops, positions and strings. If one plays a non-stop legato with the bow, it will automatically positively influence the left hand to move smoothly on the strings. If one does not play legato in the left hand, it will become difficult to hear one's own mistakes. It is important to observe that the left hand is at the correct angle to the strings from the beginning. This includes the principle that the fingers that are required to stop the strings to execute the sixth after the note the student is playing are ready to be placed on to the string in the correct position in advance of that actual movement taking place. At this point it should be noted that the preparation of the fingers in advance of the stopping of a sixth is done by the fingers alone and not by the forearm. Often, student involves the forearm at this stage in a bid to simplify the movement of the fingers but this is not helpful for gaining optimal mobility. If one exercises the fingers alone, only the wrist will be somewhat involved, leading to skilful playing of sixths at speed. In an instance where double-stopping necessitates the inclusion of one and the same finger to stop different strings in quick succession, the student is advised to move cautiously. To clarify, herewith an example involving two double-stops: B, played on the G string in the first position with the second finger and G, played on the D string by the third finger in the first position followed by C played on the G string in the first position by the third finger and A, played on the D string in the first position by the fourth finger. The third finger plays the upper voice of the first double-stop and the lower voice of the second. In order to do so well, move from G to C without lifting the finger from the strings, or changing the angle of the finger. Instead, slide between the notes with a smooth movement. The fourth finger as part of the second double-stop has to stop the string at exactly at the same time that the third finger arrives to the position in which it can sound the lower voice of the second double-stop. As the sixths proceed, the player will realise that the higher positions, particularly after the fourth position, create a greater difficulty in keeping the left hand at an optimal angle to the strings. To aid this, after performing a sixth in a higher position,



sustain the lower voice but lift all the other fingers from the string. Only when this has been done should one pursue the next double-stop.

- Fingered octaves are considered next. Before embarking on a full scale, two preliminary exercises are recommended. To stabilise the hand, Bron begins by playing the first octave, stopped by the first finger on the lower note, and the third finger on the upper note. Let us use the notes A, in the first position on the G string, and A on the D string for this example. Rather than continuing to B (stopped by the second and fourth finger), Bron practises the change of position first, that is, moving up to the C, as played by the first finger on the G string in the third position, and C on the D string, stopped by the third finger. On sounding the C in this manner, one moves the hand back to the first position from the first octave A. Practising this position change a few times allows the hand to get used to the stretch created between first and third finger, and the shortening of the string and its consequences on the formation of the hand as one goes up the positions. The second preliminary exercise begins once again on the octave A with the first finger stopping the G string in the first position. The next double-stop is B, played by the second finger on the G string and the fourth finger on the D string. Now the player resumes the A octave, followed again by the B octave. The fifth double-stop is C, played by the first finger on the G string in the third position. Only once the entire scale has been practised in this manner, does Bron begin to work on the scale as printed. A common mistake whilst playing fingered octaves is that the fourth finger intermittently rests on the third finger. This should certainly be avoided.

**Kelemen, Masin** and **Krebbbers** all use the Flesch scale system with their students, primarily for the stabilisation of the left hand and, as with Ozim, the continuous evolution of bow strokes.

**Ozim** uses the Galamian scale system and Flesch's system for the performance of arpeggios.

Ozim uses scales as a tool to study large aspects of technique in a very systematic manner.

It is not possible to explain every exercise within scales that Ozim teaches, as this itself could form the basis of a thesis, thus the most basic parts are explained here.

Ozim breaks down the learning and use of scales into parts as follows:

#### Part I

The scales are performed over three octaves in every major and minor key. The basic tempo is 43 to the crotchet and four quaver notes are slurred at a time. The stroke one begins with is legato, as it is easier to work on intonation in this manner than if the stroke is détaché.

#### Part II

Rhythms are implemented at this point. The tempo lies between 43 and 46 to the crotchet.

Legato: over time and due to increased speed of rhythms, the overall speed of notes as they follow one another will increase. One starts as before with four quavers to a slur (and bar) for an entire scale in 2/4 time. This is followed by two sets of triplets to a slur (and bar); eight semiquavers to a slur (and bar); two sets of sextuplets to a slur (and bar); sixteen demisemiquavers to a slur (and bar); and four sets of sextuplets to a slur (and bar).

Détaché: one follows similar patterns as with legato, beginning with four quavers, followed by two sets of triplets and so on. However, further variation is offered in the form of bowings: starting down-bow and playing everything at either the upper or the lower half of the bow or alternatively, starting up-bow and doing the same.

Martelé, variation 1: The tempo for the scale is 48 at its slowest, 53 at mid-speed and 56 at its fastest. In its first rhythmic variation, the first two notes of the bar are played legato and the second two are separate. Following this, the next rhythm is a set of triplets slurred followed by three separate notes. The slurred notes take up the full length of the bow, the separate notes are played approximately on half bows. During the course of the three notes performed on approximate half bows, the player should make their way back down to the heel of the bow in preparation for the next set of three slurred notes.

The rhythms continue as with legato until one reaches two sets of sextuplets. At the point at which one embarks on eight semiquavers, the tempo becomes too fast to do a martelé. At this point one performs eight notes legato followed by eight notes détaché and continues in this manner until twenty-four notes are performed to a bow as before.

Martelé, variation 2: This series of rhythmic exercises on a scale is particularly good for building up staccato. One resumes a scale beginning in a slow tempo and performing two notes to a legato slur on a down-bow followed by two martelé notes on an up-bow. The first of the two martelé notes is spread over a half bow, from tip to middle, the second note is performed from the middle to the heel.

The next step involves playing one set of triplets on a legato, down-bow slur, followed by three notes of martelé on an up-bow. Between the range of four and twenty-four notes to a bow, a steady series of staccato notes at ever-increasing speed will develop.

Martelé, variation 3: As in variation 2, but starting the notes on an up instead of a down-bow. This is particularly good for cultivating a down-bow staccato.

Martelé, variation 4: A combination of variations 2 and 3, this version sees the player performing the scales devoid of legato, only in martelé, beginning the scale on a down-bow, and later on an up-bow. Therefore, the player will incorporate both down and up-bow staccatos.

Collé: The scale begins with two crotchets to a bar. At the point where the notes are increased to four, one observes that a spiccato is forming. As one increases the amount of notes to a bar, the spiccato turns into sautillé approximately at the point when twelve notes are performed per bar.

### Part III

Arpeggios are introduced when practice of basic strokes on scales has been exhausted.

Rhythmic models are practised on arpeggios too, much as with scales, with down and up-bow strokes alternating at the start of an arpeggio.

### Part IV

The next step is the careful practice of stretches, shifts and position changes.

A) In its first instance, the student practises each finger individually, starting in the first position. Four crotchets are played in a bar. All exercises explained here are performed on the D string starting from the first position unless otherwise mentioned.

For instance, the first note, sounding E is played by the first finger. The player performs two crotchets to a slur, the first note being E, the second note being F natural played by the first finger in the second position. Following this, two more crotchets are played on a slur. The first finger once again sounds the F natural and then slides the finger/hand back down to E in the first position.

The next bar begins with the E once more; this time the first finger slides to the F sharp. The exercise continues thus until the octave is reached. Then the exercise is transferred to the following finger, that is, the second finger and continues until all fingers have been exercised. Following this, the exercise is transferred in its entirety to another string.

B) Moving on from this first exercise, the next incorporates an intermediary note resulting in:

E played by the first finger, a grace note F by the first finger in the second position, culminating in G with the second finger in the second position. The third and fourth crotchet of the bar are the same notes in reverse. However, the intermediary note on the descent is not F but F sharp, performed this

time by the second finger instead of the first, thereby practising the semitone relation between the first note of a slur and the following intermediary note.

In the second bar, the structure is as before but this time, the notes are E, grace note F sharp, and then G sharp. The descent is the same. Here one has practised the whole tone ascent between E and F sharp and the whole tone descent between G sharp and F sharp.

The third bar ascending is E, G, A; descending is A, F sharp, E, resulting in the practising of the minor third between the first note of each slur and the intermediary note.

The fourth bar is E, G sharp, A sharp ascending; A, F sharp, E descending, thus practising the major third. The fifth bar is E, A, B ascending; B, F sharp, E descending, thereby practising the interval of a fourth. The exercise continues in this manner until one has reached the octave and then continues in the same vein by beginning with the second finger, playing the intermediary note with the second finger and the second crotchet with the third. The fingerings in all their variations are:

1 – (1) – 2; 2 – (2) – 3; 3 – (3) – 4; 1 – (1) – 3; 2 – (2) – 4; 1 – (1) – 4

where a digit in brackets denotes the intermediary (or grace) note.

On completing all these possibilities, the exercise is continued on a different string from the beginning once again.

C) In this exercise, the student practises changes in quick succession between one finger and the next. Thus, beginning with the second finger sounding F, the first finger slides up to the G flat in a rhythmic formation that is two semiquavers followed by a quaver. The quaver note is to the pitch of F stopped by the second finger, to which the hand returns, after sounding the G flat semiquaver. In the next instance, the F is succeeded by a G natural and then goes back down to F; thereafter follows F to A flat, and so on, until the octave is reached.

The fingerings in all their variations are:

2 – 1; 3 – 2; 4 – 3; 3 – 1; 4 – 2; 4 – 1.

On completion, the exercise is transferred to another string.

D) To round off Part IV, Ozim proposes practising Kreutzer Study number 11 as it incorporates both stretches and position changes.

#### Part V

Thirds are used to practise three main elements:

- A) Coordination of the fingers – done by rhythmic variances of placement of the fingers
- B) Trills
- C) Position changes

The practising of thirds involves elements A) to C) as follows:

The finger that follows that stopping the higher note of the third is raised and lowered (sounding a fourth when on the string), thus forming a slow trill in the upper voice. For example, the third is formed by C on the G string played in the first position by the third finger, and E on the D string played in the first position by the first finger. Now the second finger is introduced, sounding F sharp on the D string. The second finger is lowered and raised so as to form four sets of semiquavers. On completion, the third and first finger that form the interval of a third slide from the first position into the second to form D (on the G string) and F sharp (on the D string). Now the exercise is continued by raising and lowering the second finger to sound G sharp, and so on.

Every variation of this sequence is performed, that is, forming a trill on the lower voice; forming a third and then trilling an interval of a second on the upper voice and doing the same on the lower voice.

Each form of the double-stops described are also performed in rhythmic variations. For example, instead of four sets of semiquavers, the student plays the third to the length of a quaver, followed by the exercising of the trill on a triplet semiquaver. Alternatively, the triplet semiquaver is performed first, followed by the quaver, and so on.

When exercising, Ozim reminds his students that the sound production must be smooth. The notes are performed on slurs, the *Fingerfall* occurring within the slurs, and position changes must be done in legato.

The thirds are begun on the G and D string, up to the fourth or fifth position. On completion, the exercise is resumed in the first position on the D and A strings, and so on.

Variations of this first elementary exercise in its different appearances continue through various stages. At a more advanced level, the fourth finger is introduced to add focus to individuality of the fingers within a given formation of the hand.

The culminating exercise is a full scale in thirds.

## Part VI

The exercises in Part VI are transferred to sound sixths.

## Part VII

Part VII concerns the study of octaves.

A) Starting on the G and D strings in the first position, the student places the first finger on the lower string to sound the A and the fourth finger on the D string to sound A.

Using quavers slurred two by two, the hand now shifts from a quaver A to a quaver B flat, continuously using the first finger to sound the lower octave and the fourth to sound the higher octave. The second set of quavers incorporates B flat back to A. The third set of quavers begins on A followed by B natural. The fourth set is B natural back to A. The fifth set begins once again on A, culminating in C natural on the second quaver. This is followed by C natural back to A. The exercise continues like this until the octave is reached.

B) On having reached the octave, the descent begins, from A down to A flat; A flat back to A; A to G natural; G natural back to A and so on, until one reaches the starting octave in the first position.

C) Now the student can embark on octaves within a chromatic scale context, following the same instructions as per A) and B), albeit in direct succession, that is:

A to B flat; B flat to B natural; B natural to C, and so on.

D) This involves the same instructions as per A) and B), but now in whole tones, that is:

A to B; B to C sharp; C sharp to D sharp and so on until reaching the octave before commencing the descent.

E) As before, but now in minor thirds, that is:

A to C natural; C natural to D sharp; D sharp to F sharp and so on until reaching the octave before commencing the descent.

F) As before, but now in major thirds, that is:

A to C sharp; C sharp to F natural; F natural to A, and then descending.

On completion, the exercise is transferred to another string.

#### Part VIII

The exercises in Part VIII follow the same route as those described in Part V but now sound sevenths instead of thirds.

#### Part IX

The exercises in Part IX follow the same route as those described in Part V but now sound fourths.

#### Part X

The exercises in Part X follow the same route as those described in Part VII but now sound tenths. Due to their nature, they incorporate more rhythmic variations than envisioned during octave exercises.

#### Part XI

Part XI involves practising fifths. The exercises are built on two crotchets slurred to one another at a time, followed by one minim, before continuing with two more crotchets and so on.

Beginning in the first position, the lower note is sounded on the first crotchet, and then the fifth is formed by performing a double-stop on the second crotchet. Thereafter, the fifth is stroked slowly on a minim. The next set sees the hand move up into the second position and sounding the lower note first, and so on.

## Part XII

Part XII involves the practising of the “framework” of the hand (see “The Right Fourth Finger and Posture in General” for more elaboration).

Starting on the D string, the first example sees the fourth finger in the first position sound A.

The rhythmic value of the notes in the exercise are quavers, of which four are slurred at a time.

The A is sounded first, followed by the open D string, followed by A, and lastly D. Thereafter, the hand moves to the second position.

Now the first quaver is a B, followed by the open D string, then B, then D.

Thereafter, the hand moves to the third position, the first note sound C, and so on.

This is the basis of the exercise, and in its variations on all strings, it also incorporates the other fingers, for instance:

In the third position on the D string, the fourth finger sound C, followed by G performed by the first finger, then C, then G again

## Part XIII

Part XIII involves the practising of string changes in legato.

A) At first the student plays open G string, followed directly by the open D, A and E strings, the four notes slurred to one bow. On having completed the stroke on the E string, a pause is made, the bow kept on the string. Now the descent is performed.

In its next variation, the exercise is performed once again, this time leaving out the rest. Lastly, the exercise is performed, starting on the upper string and going to the lowest, once again without a rest.

B) The same as in A) but leaving out the upper string; in its next variation, the player strokes only the D, A and E strings.

C) As in A), but using only two strings at a time, for example, G and D. Thereafter, beginning on D and finally, beginning on the A string.

Kreutzer Study number 13 lends itself very well to the practice of smooth string changing as well.

## ***The Right Fourth Finger and Posture in General***

Some teachers advocate that the fourth finger leave the bow when playing between the middle and tip of the stick. This is especially prominent in the Russian School of teaching. **Ozim** suggests that the fourth finger can but does not have to, depending a little on the length of the player’s right arm and a lot on where the player holds the violin. If the violin is held very far out from the upper body, then Ozim thinks that

the fourth finger will not stay on the bow. If the player has to lift the fourth finger due to the length of the arm, then they should, as otherwise the player would strain their right wrist by not lifting the fourth finger. However, no matter whether the player lifts the finger or not, the violinist must ensure that by the time the bow is once again stroked at the middle of the stick, the hand is rounded and the fourth finger is on the bow. Ozim himself advocates use of the fourth finger on the stick, claiming that all depends on the height of the player and the length of the player's arms. Ozim finds that most violinists attach too little importance to this matter and continues: "many people turn their heads away from the audience whilst playing. I do not think they should. I think that when one plays, one still should look like a normal human being... look at fiddle players, including students in my class. The kids take no notice of this. In this concern what I tell them goes in one ear and out the other as quickly as possible. It means nothing to them, how they stand or how they use their bodies. They can twist their bodies and play the fiddle but they will pay for it later. Everybody pays for it. The rule is to have the violin somewhere where you are comfortable."<sup>196</sup>

When demonstrating, Ozim has a natural posture and also shows that, when removing the instrument from under his neck, his posture is still akin to one that would never have held a violin in the first place. Ozim believes that to have the violin too far out to the left is inconvenient and that readdressing posture has to be balanced out very delicately. For instance, tall people should have the violin further out to the left than normal as otherwise, their bow will not stroke parallel to the bridge.

Ozim notes that it used to be the case that students were taught to be comfortable. However, the important thing is not to be just comfortable with the left hand positioning — which would entail that the violin is held as far to the left as possible for the individual, thereby incapacitating free and well-executed movement of the right hand — but comfort is also a question of adjustment if the player uses a shoulder rest. Underlining the theory that the violin rests on the collarbone and is held in the left hand, a good starting point to re-evaluate posture is to stand straight,

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<sup>196</sup> As communicated to the author in Salzburg in May 2008.



hands by the sides of the body and only then to place the violin under the chin, thereby ensuring that the head and hips are twisted as little as possible and more aligned with the natural curve of the spine and thus allowing for more comfort of playing in the right hand. Like this, one adjusts the violin to the body, and not the body to the violin. Essentially, no one other than the player can decide what is most comfortable for any individual but each player should consider it of high importance to reassess their own posture until the playing of the violin looks, sounds and feels as comfortable and natural as it can be.

## ***Vibrato***

Dear God,

Grant me that I vibrate:

- all first and fourth fingers
- the first short note after a long one
- the last note before and the first note after a shift
- the culminating note of a shift
- when I cross a string
- and in diminuendo

Amen

Thus reads the official prayer of the class of **Igor Ozim**, one that his students have translated into numerous languages. I had the honour of extending the hand-written journal in which the words, by translating the prayer into Dutch.

**Masin** vibrates from above the string as opposed to the hand being level with or even “below” the level of the strings. (There are three basic ways to place the left hand on the violin. One is from “above” meaning that the hand is held quite high above the strings – it is the preferred method of many men who have long arms and/or big hands. The second is considered a “normal” positioning of the hand on the instrument, the fingers curving easily on to the strings, the hand neither high nor low in proportion to the angle of the string. Thirdly, one can play “below” the level of the strings, the hand holding the violin’s neck quite deeply, the arm often held in such a

way that the violin is not straight, its scroll pointing towards the floor.) Like this, the hand is always free and clear of tension.

For equality of vibrato speed and texture, Masin believes that ideally the hand should be in the same position from the first position right up to the *n*th position, the arm being the motor that moves the hand up and down the neck of the violin.

In fast passages where all fingers need to be fast and flexible, Masin's fourth finger is rounded, the tip of the finger effecting the pressing of the strings, enabling it independence and the same quick reactions as the other three fingers. Masin thinks that a straight fourth finger is less quick and articulate in its movements, a topic he discussed in Amsterdam (October, 1974) with **David Oistrakh** and on which Oistrakh agreed with Masin. When the fourth finger is straight, the muscles at the base of that finger are tensed. This affects the speed of reaction and the agility of the finger.

In a slow, *forte* passage Masin will flatten the distal interphalangeal and proximal interphalangeal joints of the fourth finger, thereby playing with the fleshy pad of the finger. The result of this straightening of the fourth finger is a warmer, more *cantabile* or *dolce* sound. However, in certain slow, *piano* passages, Masin does not find it necessary to affect change in the rounded fourth finger by way of straightening it as, in his view, not as much energy or strength is needed for sound production. To give direct examples of a slow, *forte* versus a slow, *piano* passage: slow, *forte* passages could be such as the opening phrases of the violin solo in the second movements of the Tchaikovsky (D Major, Opus 35) or Sibelius (D minor, Opus 47) Violin Concertos where, accompanied by a large orchestra, each lyrical note needs to be sustained and well-projected. A slow, *piano* passage such as in Mozart's fifth Violin Concerto in A major, KV 219, accompanied by a smaller orchestra and made up of notes that are usually shorter in length vis-à-vis the long notes of the aforementioned romantic composers, and also being in the classical style, will need a less rich sound, hence a rounded, fourth finger will suffice.

This entire section on Vibrato could also have been placed in "The Left Hand" but vibrato is very much a joint effort of both left and right hands. Masin attests to this

by repeatedly telling his students that beautiful sound production is an equation, a balanced mixture between the speed of the vibrato and the contact and intensity of the bow on the string. The louder the music gets, the more players have a tendency to force in the left hand. Masin believes that doing the opposite is more apt. The louder or more intense one needs to play, the less pressure (which is equal to more freedom to vibrate) there should be on the string. The understanding of the music, its musical line and the synchronisation of the left and right hands has a great effect on the quality of the vibrato. For instance, a diminuendo has to be made organically, the right hand lessening the sound production, the left hand not necessarily doing so. In fact, the left hand often becomes “louder” not by more pressure but by more movement.

Masin also believes that formation of the fingers of the left hand will have an impact on vibrato. In fast passages, he plays with rounded fingers, close to and above the strings, the position of the hand “loose”, the thumb lightly touching the neck of the instrument. In slower passages, he remains with his hand close to and above the strings, but vibrates with a flatter finger resulting in more of the pad of the finger stopping the string. This is because he believes that a flatter finger offers more intensity and a warmer sound to cantabile passages whereas for a fast passage the fingers need to be rounded to offer optimal velocity on the string. This rounded finger also has a sharper sound quality, effective for the precision work in faster passages.

One important point that Masin emphasises is that of the position of the index finger. It must be free and not “hooked”, as the latter will cause an unwanted field of tension. Also, from the fifth position onwards, the knuckles of the hand must go “in”, that is, flatten out and be in a line. Masin practises vibrato on scales where each note, regardless of which finger plays it in which position, should vibrate in the same manner as the note before, and where it is not recognisable from the sound production which finger is stopping the string.

On vibrato, Masin has stated, “The right and left arms and hands, in my opinion, make an ‘electric circle’. The balance between the two hands is crucial for sound production. Too much right-hand pressure will result in the sound becoming

squashed. The pressure must always be measured and dictated by the musical line.”<sup>197</sup>

**Pauk** talks about position of the hand in relation to vibrato as well. He believes that no hold should occur between the neck of the violin and the hand (thumb and index finger). In this position, the hand is free, that is, no stiffness or gripping of the violin takes place, and one can perform a free vibrato. Stiffness or gripping would lead to a flexed thenar eminence and rigid hand, leading to diminished range of motion.

**Ashkenasi**'s little finger is not rounded (unlike, for example, **Ozim**'s, who believes that the little finger should always be round on contact with the string, with the exception of notes that are played in higher positions without an actual change of position, that is, when stretching for a note) but is straight and because the hand is above the string he can vibrate freely from the little finger, the metacarpophalangeal joint and the left arm. The wrist is relatively static, compared to the finger, the metacarpophalangeal joint and arm. Ashkenasi is not fond of arm vibrato except when used on the little finger (and, one assumes, in conjunction with technically-complex passages that need to sound well, such as ones involving octaves, tenths and so on).

The playing of the violin needs ample spatial imagination on the part of the violinist as during performance, much is blocked from vision by the instrument itself. This makes learning to play the instrument particularly hard for young students. Moreover, a violinist needs to have or build up physical strength so as to perform to the best of individual abilities. Should they lack physical strength many players cannot fully explore vibrato as they place too much weight on the lower arm, hence rendering the arm, wrist, hand and fingers inflexible.

When teaching the young, gifted student the complicated technique of vibrato, **Kelemen** immediately uses imagery instead of purely the sense of feeling to guide the young student and has the following approach: the violin is held in the playing position. Instead of telling the student to place the left elbow towards the right of the torso in a bid to elevate the tips of the fingers in relation to the string (which results

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<sup>197</sup> As communicated to the author in September 1999.

in more freedom of movement of the wrist, hand and fingers), an action a young student might not understand and sometimes leads to an exaggerated tightening of the left biceps which then spreads to the muscles in the lower arm, suggest to play with the violin on the right side of the hand (as seen from the point of view of the player). Following this, the student extends the lower arm in the direction of the scroll thereby also moving the upper arm away from the rib-cage. The student is reminded to have the thenar eminence to the right of the violin's neck.

Now the student should have the necessary freedom that allows for varying speeds of vibrato and increased agility when changing positions, the awareness of the correct use of the biceps raised, the muscles of the lower arm not tensed. The young student should be made aware that there is a difference between the role of the upper and lower left arm. To achieve this, the student is asked to hold the left arm in the position it would take if the violin were to be held. Following this, the student is asked to bend the arm at the elbow in the direction of the student's face, the wrist loose. The student is thereafter asked to wave at themselves with their hand.

At a later stage, Kelemen starts vibrato exercises in the fourth position, starting with the second finger. The reasons for this are that in the fourth position, the palm of the hand rests against the rib of the violin thereby preventing over-use of the wrist when beginning to learn vibrato. The second finger is used first as it is generally the strongest and also the finger that has the most amount of possible freedom of movement on the string. Kelemen proceeds to move the student's second finger in the fourth position in the pendulum-like movement of the vibrato with her own hand before embarking on exercises with the student to allow for the student to hear what a vibrato could eventually sound like (resulting in the student's realisation that a vibrato is something worth striving for) and also to ensure that the student's finger and hand is relaxed enough.

Often, the pivotal note in a change of position goes unvibrated due to careless technique. When it comes to vibrating the note before and after a shift, as well as the note of the shift, (assuming all three are of a different pitch and slurred) in a slow or moderate tempo, **Ashkenasi** suggests helping the left hand with the aid of the right by practising the following: lift the bow slightly off the string just after the first note

and before the note of the shift. On having achieved the feeling of the slight lift of the bow off the string, one can practise all three notes on the first pitch only, so as to hear what it is the bow is doing without deflecting the player's attention by a change in pitch. One hears that the first and last notes are smoothly legato, the second note slightly separated from the first. On having clearly recognised this sound, one can resume practising the stroke with the correct pitches of the three notes, reducing the gap in sound created by the lifting of the bow. Ultimately, the lifting of the bow will be barely audible, if at all, and the second note of the three will have its own personal dose of vibrato, one in keeping with the quality of the vibrato on the note immediately before and after the second note.

**Bron** involves his arm in the movement of vibrato, but this involvement neither makes his vibrato one exclusively motored by the arm nor even a continuous element of his sound. Bron masterfully includes it where he sees fit. This goes some way to explaining why, when vibrating in the third position Bron does not approve of the player's wrist resting against the rib of the violin. Bron believes that resting or leaning on the wrist in this position will hinder the full range of movement.

**Chastain** uses the following exercises for easing the tension in the forearm, promotion of independence of the left-hand fingers, a continuous vibrato, and the ability to shift position and still vibrate. The benefits of the vibrato exercises, which can be practised on any scale, are immense.

- A) Position the hand in the first position. Place the left-hand fingers on the string. Now lift fingers and have them go towards the scroll. Allow the thumb to pendulate against the neck of the violin as it performs the vibrato movement unaided by the four fingers. Ensure that the fingers, when not on the string, do not hang below the neck of the violin.
- B) Once this movement has been repeated a number of times, allow the first finger to fall on the string. Chastain likens this to an old beach ball being dropped to the floor. The ball does not bounce back up (its an old beach ball and air does not fill it completely anymore...) but instead, does a little jump or two before rolling on its way and/or coming to a standstill. Alternatively, imagine a gymnast landing from a difficult leap. When the gymnast lands on

his feet, a slight resonance pulses briefly through his body. That same resonance can be found in the index finger. The finger falls with a hammer-like effect on the string, doing a slight pendular movement before it comes to a standstill. Repeat the first finger falling on the string a few times. The movement of the finger leaving the string should be as fast as the finger landing on the string. Do the movement with each finger in turn.

- C) To increase difficulty, after each finger has had its turn, leave fingers lying on the string, that is, the first finger lands on the string. The first finger remains on the string as the second finger lands on the string, and so on.
- D) Now practise a basic one-octave scale as follows: first allow each finger to fall on the string separately as you perform the scale. Then do the same scale but this time, keep the fingers on the string.
- E) Finally, on one string at a time, practise shifts. Starting with the first finger, go from B to C on the A string in the first position. Then using the same finger, practise shifting from B to D, then from B to E, and so on. Do this with finger in turn, on every string, only ascending and not descending. Warming up like this will relieve tension and allow the student to reconsider the vibrato movement, which should mean that the wrist, like the fingers and the shifts and position changes, use a flowing, forward movement. The wrist should not extend backwards towards the scroll of the violin in an exaggerated fashion when vibrating. The scale can be performed slurred or on separate bows. When playing it, ensure that the three fingers not stopping the string are absolutely free. The student can try moving the fingers that are not stopping the string while performing the scale so as to assess the level of freedom and lack of tension in those fingers. The fingers not used to stop the string should primarily move in a pendular fashion, in the direction of the violin's scroll and forward towards the violin's bridge, all the while parallel to the violin's neck. To achieve a literal feel for what the three fingers that are not stopping the string should feel like, the student can try the following: the violin is held at the neck with the left hand, in front of the student, only the thumb and, for instance, first finger touching the neck of the instrument. Allow the violin to settle into the light grip of the thumb and first finger and once the student feels secure in this position, let the other three fingers be

free. This feeling is similar to the one that should be transferred to the instrument whilst playing one-finger scales.

Further vibrato exercises suggested by Chastain:

- A) Work with having optimal joint movement in the fingers. The starting position of the hand on the violin is one where all four fingers and the thumb are extended. The final position is one where all fingers and thumb are curled into a rounded position. The transition between the two movements translates as a “flapping” movement. The student should try to keep the wrist straight and not extended towards the violin’s scroll. It helps to imagine that someone is pushing the back of the left hand when the student goes from the extended finger position to the curled finger position. This exercise is good for reminding the student of the flexibility of the joints in the fingers. Should the student experience difficulty performing it, remember that the palm of the hand in relation to the violin’s neck is always the same, regardless of whether the fingers are in the extended or curled position. If the teacher wishes to emphasise how the thumb and finger look in the curled position, hold the left hand in the air, without the violin; press the pad of the thumb on to the nail of the finger, pushing the nail down into the palm of the hand with the thumb. Like this, one gets a visual view of the extent to which the fingers can be bent along the joints. The left wrist should not be involved in the movement of extending and curling the fingers, especially not in a movement that sees the wrist bending to the violin’s scroll. Imagine, that the fingertips of the left hand down to the elbow of the left arm form a straight line. If you hold the left arm up, without the violin in it, and then extend and curl the fingers, you can view the movement of the wrist. It should move with the movement of extending and curling the fingers in such a way that the wrist does not fall out of line. Once the movement is correct, continue it (extending/curling) a number of times slowly. Thereafter, stop completely. Next, perform the movement (extending/curling) again but much faster, resulting in the sound of a full vibrato. The latter is difficult. An easier forerunner of the aforementioned exercise is to do the slow, measured extending/curling movement and from that to flow into the full vibrato movement without stopping. Like this, the chance of performing the



movement continuously and well are certainly increased. Once mastered, you can move on to exercise with a pause between the measured and the fast movement as previously described.

- B) Have the thumb only at the violin's neck. "Flap" the extended fingers back and forth. The student can hold the violin with the right hand at the rib to stabilise the instrument. Ensure that the left wrist is never extended towards the scroll.
- C) Let one finger at a time fall, hammer-like, on to the strings. When the student lifts the finger back up, ensure that it is done so with speed. Do not use the biceps for the action of the brief vibrato-like movement of the fingers, use only the hand where possible. Practise the vibrato as described in previous exercises. Practise in whole tones to give the finger the space to vibrate. To exercise the prior section E) in more detail, one can begin with C on the A string in the first position, played by the second finger. Now place the third finger close to the second and shift to the note D. Thereafter, start once again on the C and use the third finger to slide to E in the second position on the A string. Now go back to C and slide with the third finger to F in the third position, and so on. Only the second finger needs to be kept down whilst doing the exercises, the others do not have to be on the string. During execution of this exercise, the player notices that vibrating when shifting, sliding or changing position is difficult. In this exercise, you practise exactly this aspect all the way up the string. Perform the exercise with each finger on each string.
- D) Place the fourth finger, which is the hardest to vibrate, on the string. The fourth finger makes a sweeping movement across the strings. It sounds as follows: on the D string, begin in the first position. The fourth finger sounds the note D. Thereafter, it slides up to its octave on the same string. Now it returns to the original D and thereafter slides to C on the D string in the third position. Following this, it returns to the original D, then slides to B in the second position. The sequence is complete when the D slides to its neighbouring E with the fourth finger in the second position and then returns to D in the first position. On reaching the D, vibrate it alone, using the movement similar to that of sweeping across the string as you did previously. Move the joints in the little finger as well.

E) A further scale involves starting on the B on the E string, stopped by the second finger in the third position. The note is stroked for the length of a minim, détaché. It is followed by the same note to the value of a crotchet on a new bow, slurred to a B on the A string, stopped by the first finger in the first position. The next note, to the value of a crotchet is the same B as before, followed, on a slurred bow, by A on the E string in the second position. This A, is played anew, to the value of a minim, and slurred to the B on the A string as before. The scale continues in this manner, incorporating the F on the A string in the fourth position stopped by the second finger, finally landing on C in the first position on the A string played by the second finger. This scale incorporates not only position changes, but also string changes and can be practised on any other string and with any other combination of fingerings.

For more on Chastain's ideas concerning vibrato, see also "Correlation Between Left and Right Hands" (p. 167) in this thesis.

The author believes, to a certain extent, that the bow leads the left hand in vibrato. Moreover, tone production goes hand in hand with varying speeds of vibrato, as well as the myriad different colours one can produce, and the creation of each musical statement governed by that colour.

**Ozim** believes that the hand should be very relaxed whilst playing vibrato. In the higher positions (fifth onwards), practise an arm vibrato before working on a hand vibrato. Do not forget that the vibrato comes from the fingers' distal interphalangeal joint. Keep the thumb very relaxed in the higher positions, but do not let the violin "wobble". The tips of the fingers should press the string down, their angle to the left, that is, marks from the strings should be visible on the left side of the fingertips when viewed with the palm facing the player. The strings should be stopped by the tips of the fingers with no flesh touching a string which the player is not performing on at the time.

In Ozim's opinion, the arm vibrato is best used in octaves or other passages that have a certain level of technical challenge for the left hand, particularly one where using a

hand vibrato compromises the quality of the intonation or the position of the fingers on the strings. To learn an arm vibrato, Ozim starts in the second position with the second finger, this being the longest finger and having the most range of movement. Move the arm slowly until you can work the speed up to suit your own needs. The thumb remains static all the while. The finger will shift, in relatively big movements across the string. After this has all taken place successfully, begin to localise the movement. The arm still moves, but now, instead of shifting haphazardly, the movement starts to come from the distal interphalangeal joint. The movements are all very soft and relaxed.

Furthermore, Ozim advises his students not to leave fingers on the string unnecessarily when vibrating, as this causes tension in the hand, resulting in poor vibrato. For example, when playing a D on the A string in the first position with the third finger, do not place the first or second finger on the string unless either of these are needed in quick succession after sounding the D.

## Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that several issues relating to the current practice of violin pedagogy and performance are cause for concern. Although the reasons for the rise of these issues, and in some cases their consequences within music as a whole have been discussed by other writers, this is the first time most of them have been considered within the context of violin and string pedagogy and playing.

- 1.) The differences between those schools of violin teaching and playing that, before World War II, were recognised as being distinct from one another have diminished markedly within the last sixty years or so.
- 2.) Although a blurring of boundaries has been gradually evident at least since railways started facilitating comparatively rapid travel and general communication, that blurring has become much more evident in the last sixty years, and the main reason for this is the general cultural phenomenon of transnationality in all areas of human activity.
- 3.) Within violin pedagogy and performance, one of the most problematic consequences of this transnationality, and of the associated tendency to reduce complex ideas and practices to the simplest possible common factors that can be identified within all cultures, is that violin students are not being taught the differences between the historic schools of practice. This inevitably means that those who are brought up in a single line of schooling are likely to know little, if anything at all, about any approach to violin playing and teaching other than the one that they learned from their teacher. Therefore, the students' knowledge and awareness within the context of the greater field of violin teaching and playing is wanting. The very features that distinguish one school from another are not being imparted in such a way as to be clear to students.
- 4.) This is a paradox, for although technology (principally electronic) has facilitated the storage and dissemination of vast quantities of information, students are less well equipped to approach such information in a spirit of critical enquiry, and therefore are less well equipped to use that information

in a way that broadens their thinking and practice. For example, information retrieved from the Internet tends to be diluted into easily digestible bites, and it is often not evident whether the source of the information can be trusted.

- 5.) Pressure on the time and energy of students and teachers alike has led to a marked decline in the production of treatises by distinguished pedagogues; and this in turn has fuelled a tendency for students to be unaware of the genealogy of teaching and practice that stretches back two-hundred years or more, and of the rich variety of techniques and concepts that underlay the artistic decisions made by great players of the past.
- 6.) The effects that all these factors have had on violin pedagogy are largely undesirable. In particular, they have led to a tendency, on the part of few teachers as well as many students, to believe that modern methods of communication and dissemination such as video can replace one-to-one contact with the teacher. Moreover, seeing as being a teacher in current climates is financially lucrative only if one is well-established, more students than ever before opt into playing in orchestras and do not continue the line of teaching from their masters. This tends to lead to gaps in the genealogy of teaching because the most successful students are not necessarily turning to teaching themselves, and those who are retiring now are not being succeeded by people of equal seniority and experience.
- 7.) The historic roots of the art of teaching the violin are being undermined by the general cultural tendency to emphasise a player's individuality. This is at the expense of a player seeking to be rooted, and of an audience appreciating a player in a context broader than the immediate experience.

The thesis has suggested various ways in which these undesirable developments might be countered. In particular, teachers and pupils should aim to draw on the possible benefits of the Internet by using its possibilities for information storage and dissemination in a way that is much more methodologically and historically focused than is the case with the numerous bulletin and discussion boards devoted to string playing, and that seeks to use video in ways that are more structured than tends to be the case in most masterclasses disseminated by this means. The thesis offers both the

methodological starting point for a more beneficial type of use, and exemplifies the kinds of material that might be used for those purposes.

- 8.) To assist in developing an awareness of historical roots, it has drawn on the lives and practices of a number of main figures from the various schools, from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, and has discussed some of the main characteristics that distinguished those schools from one another.
- 9.) It has demonstrated the relationships between contemporary pedagogues with whom the author has studied and the schools of teaching and playing that are their specific heritages.
- 10.) By comparing the personal experiences of the author in the methods used by the distinguished pedagogues with whom she has studied, plus others of whose approach to teaching she is aware, the thesis demonstrates the variety of their approaches to specific technical issues. This shows that there are often multiple solutions to a single challenge of technique, and suggests that an awareness of that multiplicity enriches the student's range of choice.
- 11.) It is another paradox of the developments outlined above that, although specific schools are being taught less and less, there is evidence that entirely new schools are emerging. Many of these no longer insist on one particular approach and share many features with the general cultural tendencies that accompany transnationality. In particular, these appear to embrace an *à la carte* attitude to the choices that players may make, one example being the increasing tendency for teachers to borrow from elements of teaching on other instruments, for instance, cellists basing their approach to playing on how violinists perform, and vice versa.
- 12.) This thesis has explored aims, methodologies and conclusions that are distinct from those already associated with the growing field of performance studies. Rather than working with empirical data, it has presented conclusions derived from the intersection between the historical evidence of written treatises and the objectively reported experience of the author in working with contemporary pedagogical masters. However, it might well be the case that much of the evidence presented here about relationships between historical and contemporary practice will prove useful within the context of future work in performance studies.

13.) Both in the practice of research and in the writing up of conclusions, this thesis shows that the stance of the researcher/author is a critical component in fulfilling its aims. In order to present a range of options within teaching practice — options available to any student in approaching a range of technical and philosophical issues, the researcher has to present information without bias, even if one's personal preference might be for another. In that way the thesis has given the reader space to form his or her own opinion on the matter under consideration. This is essential if the thesis is to form the basis for further research along the lines discussed in 14.) below.

14.) These findings — both the historical study in Part 1 and the technical discussions in Part 2 — could form the starting point for a large Internet database that would encourage students and teachers alike to think of their subject in ways that maintain an awareness of historical roots, of the rich variety available in studying the various schools of violin playing, and in developing foundations of violin pedagogy that are therefore solid enough to meet the challenges presented by cultural transnationality.

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## **Appendix**

### **LES ÉCOLES MODERNES**

#### **All Roads Lead to Viotti**

*Family Tree Infogram of Teachers and Pupils, from Giovanni Battista  
Viotti (1753-1824) to Gwendolyn Masin (1977)*



