

Why Bach? Why not Tartini?

Early recordings and the nineteenth-century canon

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Revue et gazette musicale de Paris 1835, on Corelli and taste

... sa manière de jouer du violon n'avait guère de rapports avec celle de nos virtuoses en renom aujourd'hui. A cette époque, la mélodie commençait à se faire jour et prendre place ... à côté de l'harmonie. L'instrument de Corelli ... dut nécessairement suivre et favoriser cette tendance. Et, comme à cette époque les exécutants n'avaient pas la moindre idée des difficultés de toute espèce dont on se joue et dont on abuse même si souvent aujourd'hui, un son plus pur, plein et égal, joint à une phraséologie simple mais expressive au plus haut degré, suffirent pour émouvoir des auditeurs dont le goût n'était ni blasé ni perverti sous plus d'un rapport comme le nôtre.

'Esquisses biographiques', *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 4 (1837), pp. 219–220 (p. 220).

[Corelli's] style of violin playing had hardly anything in common with that of today's renowned virtuosos. At this time, melody had begun to dawn and take its place beside harmony ... Corelli's instrument ... had of necessity to follow and favour this tendency. And, as in this period the performers did not have the least idea of the difficulties of all kinds which are played and also abused so often today, a pure tone, full and even, joined with simple but to the highest degree expressive phrasing, sufficed to move the listeners, whose taste was neither *blasé* nor perverted in more ways than one like ours.

Review of Frank Thistleton, 1904

the purity, simplicity and poetry of the old masters was as refreshing as a draught of clear spring water to thirsty lips. Across the noise and clamour of today come these spirit voices from the dim past ... we could ... fancy ourselves in that lost world of grace and dignity’.

‘Penelope’, ‘Pen Pictures’, *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 7 November 1904, p. 4.

Heinrich Grünfeld on cantilena and older music

Die beste Cellomusik stammt also naturgemäß aus jener Schule, die die **Kantilene** hochhielt, und es ist bezeichnend, daß die ganze moderne Musikkultur, **die expressionistisch an Stelle der Kantilene alle möglichen musik-geometrischen Gebilde setzt**, mit dem Cello gar nichts anzufangen weiß. ... die Cellisten gezwungen, um ihr Repertoire doch einigermaßen zu bereichern und abwechslungsreich zu gestalten, Sachen, die für Geige oder auch für Klavier bestimmt sind, für das Cello zu transkribieren. Ich selbst habe eine große Anzahl solcher Transkriptionen veröffentlicht, so z. B. Kompositionen von **Tartini, Bach, Beethoven, Händel und Boccherini** ...

Heinrich Grünfeld, *In Dur und Moll* (Berlin: Grethlein & Co., 1923), pp. 105–106.

[The best cello music naturally comes from the school that upheld the cantilena, and it is significant that all modern musical literature, which expressionistically substitutes all kinds of musical-geometrical structures for the cantilena, knows nothing of what to do with the cello ... cellists are forced to transcribe for the cello things that are intended for the violin or for the piano in order to enrich and vary their repertoire somewhat. I have published a large number of such transcriptions myself, e.g., compositions by Tartini, Bach, Beethoven, Handel and Boccherini]

Federico Guglielmi: Corelli op.5 no. 1



*Catalogue
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* Français

Cartier, contents list

Baillot on the 18C qualities of the violin

Le Violon ... a pris les différens caractères ... simple et mélodieux, sous les doigts de *Corelli*; touchant et plein de grâce sous l'archet de *Tartini*, aimable et suave sous celui de *Gaviniés*, noble et grandiose avec *Pugnani*, plein de feu, plein d'audace, pathétique, sublime entre les mains de *Viotti* ...

Pierre Baillot, *L'art du violon, nouvelle méthode* (Paris: Depot centrale de la musique, 1834), p. 5.

[The violin has taken different characters ... simple and melodious under the fingers of Corelli; touching and graceful under the bow of Tartini; elegant and soft under that of Gavinies; noble and magnificent under that of Pugnani; full of fire and force, pathetic, and sublime, in the hands of Viotti]

Deldevez on selecting ornaments

N'est-il probable, qu'ils nous les ont transmis par écrit, pour en user **partiellement, et avec une réserve extrême** ? Comment croire en effet, sans cette conjecture, aux qualités éminentes de l'école classique, aux traditions respectées des auteurs célèbres. Aussi, avons-nous conservé à la partie de violon **son texte primitif, l'idée première dans sa simplicité classique** ...

Edouard Deldevez, *Pieces diverses* (Paris : Richault, 1857), i, pp. iv–v.

Is it not likely that they transmitted them in writing to be used selectively and with extreme reserve? How could one believe, without this conjecture, in the eminent qualities of the classic school, of the traditions respected by the celebrated authors? Thus, we have preserved the original text of the violin part, the original idea in its classic simplicity

Adagio

Violin

Piano

p *Cresc. molto* *sf* *p*

p *Cresc. molto*

sf *p* *sf* *p* *Cresc.* *Dim.* *Dim.*

Cresc. *Decresc.* *p*

p *Cresc.* *Dim.* *p* *p*

Nardini, Sonata no. 1 in B flat, ed. Deldevez

Editions of collections of 18C works

Cartier 1797

Deldevez 1857

Alard 1862-1883

David 1867 (and later editions)

Leonard c.1875

Jensen 1889

Alard's *Observations générales*, for all the *Maîtres classiques*

- no dots = on the string
- dots = *sautillé*
- staccato = bow biting into the string,
 - but *strokes* ('points allongés') = lightly lifted bowstroke
- grace notes are carefully marked *either* appoggiatura *or* acciaccatura
- tempi should be moderate in general
 - metronome marks are given following '*ce que nous croyons être la tradition*'

Alard, 2 versions of Nardini, sonata no. 1, Adagio

The image displays a musical score for the first movement, Adagio, of Nardini's Sonata No. 1, as performed by Alard. The score is presented in two systems, each containing three staves: Violin (1st version), Violin (2nd version), and Piano.

Violin (1st version): The first staff of the first system is marked "2e corde [till *]" and features a triplet of eighth notes. The second system includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a trill (tr).

Violin (2nd version): The second staff of the first system is marked "Dolce" and includes dynamics "Cresc." and "Dim.". The second system includes fingerings (2, 1) and a trill (tr).

Piano: The piano part is marked "p" and includes dynamics "cresc." and "dim.". The second system includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a trill (tr).

The second system of the score shows further musical details, including a sixteenth-note triplet in the violin parts and a trill in the second violin part. The piano part continues with its accompaniment.

Alard on Tartini's *Didone abbandonata*

La magnifique sonate que nous donnons ici, appelée la *Didone abbandonata*, indique par son titre le caractère de **douleur et d'expression** qu'il faut exprimer. C'est avec un accent **plaintif** et **suppliant** que le premier morceau doit se jouer, et en employant l'archet d'un bout à l'autre. Il faut rendre le presto avec **feu, passion et énergie**. L'allegro doit se dire moderato, avec **expression et simplicité**.

[The great sonata which we give here, entitled *Didone abbandonata*, shows by its name the character of sadness and expression which it must express. The first movement must be played with a plaintive, supplicating accent, using the bow from end to end. The presto must be given with fire, passion, and energy. The allegro should mean moderato, with expression and simplicity]

Corelli, 'Follia', theme and variation 1, Alard and David

The image displays a musical score for two versions of Corelli's 'Follia': the original theme and its first variation. The score is presented in two staves, labeled 'Alard' and 'David', with various performance instructions and dynamics.

Alard's Version:
Tempo: *Adagio* (♩ = 69)
Mood: *dolce*
The melody is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3).

David's Version:
Tempo: *Adagio*
Mood: *f* > < *f* > < *f* (initially), then *pp dolce*
The melody is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It includes slurs, fingerings, and dynamic markings.

Mezzo Forte Section:
Tempo: *mezzo forte* (♩ = 80)
Mood: *sostenuto*
This section features a more rhythmic melody with slurs and fingerings (0, 1, 2, 3).

Allegretto Section:
Tempo: *Allegretto*
Mood: *p*, *cresc.*
This section is more lively, with slurs, fingerings, and dynamic markings including *p* and *cresc.*

Final Section:
This section includes trills (*tr*) and dynamic markings such as *p* and *f*.

Tartini in the 19C

1846: *L'arte dell'arco* (André)

1855: 3 editions of the 'Devil's Trill' sonata, ed. by Volkmann, Vieuxtemps, and anon.

1858: Henry Holmes (Spohr's pupil) edited 3 sonatas, and a selection of movements in 1859

1864: *L'arte dell'arco*, ed. David 1864

1866: Léonard edited 6 sonatas and the 'Devil's Trill'

1867: David included a sonata in the *Hohe Schule*

Total of 17 publications listed in *Hofmeister Monatsbericht* pre-1867

Bach violin and cello works till c.1930

(excluding versions with piano accompt, and arrs. of cello suites for violin)

Violin

1841 Lipinski
1843 David
1865 Hellmesberger
1889 David & Sitt
1892 Friedrich Hermann
1900 Eduard Hermann
1908 Joachim/Moser
1917 Auer
1922 Marteau
1923 Wessely
1930 Flesch

Cello

1824 Norblin [?]
1826 Dotzauer
1866-7 Grützmacher
1898 Hausmann
1900 Klengel
1907 Becker
1929 Alexanian

Very preliminary stats

So, far, 135 recordings identified from DAHR and Kelly
of which:

- Handel = 37 (at least 8 of H's Largo)
- Bach = 25 (at least 4 Air on G String)
- Tartini = 15 (9 of his variations on Corelli, L'arte dell'arco)
- Corelli = 7

Audio examples

Adolf Busch (1919): Corelli, adagio



Adolf Busch (1921): Tartini, Adagio



Anton and Alma Witek,
members of Bayreuth Festival Orch.



cond. Ernest Schmidt (1928): Bach Double Concerto

Yovanovich Bratza (1929): Corelli 'Follia' Variations
'jolly, vigorous music'

(British musician and musical news, 1931)



Isolde Menges (1928):
Bach, E major sonata, Adagio

