

PERFORMANCE-PRACTICE ISSUES OF THE CHACONNE
FROM PARTITA II, BWV 1004, BY JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

by

CARMELO DE LOS SANTOS

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ABSTRACT

The Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin, BWV 1001-1006, by Johann Sebastian Bach pose tremendous problems for violinists, on modern and period instruments alike. The main problem, which generations of violinists have been trying to solve, lies in the nature of the instrument. Due to the shape of the bridge, it is physically impossible to execute most of the chordal passages as Bach notated them. Two other problems arose during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Bowings changed in response to the modifications made to the structure of the violin and the bow in the early nineteenth century. New fingerings were necessitated by the introduction of steel strings in the early twentieth century and also resulted from the highly Romantic style of playing by the virtuosos of that time. Further problems concern cadential trills, vibrato, and tempo.

The Chaconne from Partita II, BWV 1004, shares with the other movements of the Sonatas and Partitas similar problems, and it also presents problems peculiar to itself, such as the rearticulation of the eighth notes in the first eight measures. Another example concerns the arpeggio passages in measures 89-120 and measures 201-8. Bach indicated how to start the first

passage by writing out how it should be performed, but this indication cannot be carried out for the entire passage.

In this document I examine the performance traditions of the past as revealed by editions, treatises, recordings, and secondary sources. I evaluate the solutions presented by the different sources and offer suggestions on how to resolve the various problems.

INDEX WORDS: Johann Sebastian Bach, Chaconne, Partita II, BWV 1004, Violin,
Performance-Practice

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DEDICATION

To my family, friends, and all who may learn something in this document, both intellectually and practically.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | v |
| CHAPTER | |
| I INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| <u>Performance Problems</u> | 1 |
| <u>Solutions of the Past</u> | 3 |
| <u>The Term Chaconne</u> | 7 |
| <u>Brief Analysis of the Piece</u> | 7 |
| <u>The Choice of Editions and Recordings</u> | 11 |
| II PROBLEMS OF TEMPO, VIBRATO, AND TRILLS | 20 |
| <u>Tempo</u> | 20 |
| <u>Vibrato</u> | 27 |
| <u>Trills</u> | 31 |
| III THE PROBLEM OF CHORDS | 34 |
| <u>Historical Perspective</u> | 34 |
| <u>Problems of Chords in the Opening Theme</u> | 41 |
| <u>The Execution of Chords</u> | 47 |
| IV PROBLEMS OF ARPEGGIOS | 67 |
| <u>Historical Perspective</u> | 67 |
| <u>Measures 89-120</u> | 73 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| <u>Measures 201-8</u> | 80 |
| V PROBLEMS OF ARTICULATION..... | 87 |
| <u>Sustained Strokes</u> | 88 |
| <u>Detached Strokes</u> | 105 |
| VI PROBLEMS OF FINGERINGS..... | 114 |
| <u>Historical Perspective</u> | 114 |
| <u>Editions</u> | 118 |
| <u>Recordings</u> | 129 |
| VII CONCLUSION..... | 131 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 136 |
| APPENDIX..... | 147 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Performance Problems

The Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin, BWV 1001-1006, by Johann Sebastian Bach pose tremendous problems for performers, both violinists on modern instruments and violinists on period instruments alike. The main problem, one that generations of violinists have been trying to solve, has to do with the very nature of the instrument. Due to the shape of the bridge, it is physically impossible to execute most of the chordal passages as Bach notated them. Although we know that the bridge used in Bach's time was somewhat flatter than the one used later in the modern models, it still presented the same difficulty of holding chords for a duration longer than a brief attack. It seems as if Bach disregarded those limitations and created an "ideal" music.

The Chaconne from Partita II, BWV 1004, is the longest and one of the hardest single movements in the violin repertoire. It shares with the other movements of the Sonatas and Partitas the same problem of chords, and it also presents problems peculiar to itself, such as the rearticulation of the eighth notes in the first eight measures. Another problem specific to the Chaconne concerns the arpeggio passages in mm. 89-120 and mm. 201-208. Bach indicated how to start the first passage by writing out how it should be performed, but this indication cannot be carried out for the entire passage. The second passage has no indication of performance at all.

The arpeggio passages are not physical problems like the chords, but are problems of performance. Although we have other examples of arpeggio passages in the Baroque literature for comparison, e.g., Corelli and Vivaldi, the interpretation of the Chaconne's arpeggios is still much disputed.

Two other problems are products of the 19th and 20th century eras: bowings and fingerings. The first is the consequence of the transformation of the violin's and bow's structure at the beginning of the 19th century. The second is due partly to the new steel strings introduced at the beginning of the 20th century, and partly to the highly Romantic style of playing by the virtuosos of that time. With the change in the violin's structure and bow shape, performers were able to produce a more powerful sound and give that sound a greater singing quality (*legato*). For that reason the technical and stylistic parameters changed. Violinists started using more bow, "longer" bows, and the bouncing qualities of the new bow. In addition, steel strings – and their more brilliant, sometimes harsher sound – made the use of open strings (especially the E string) something to be avoided. Moreover, the new class of violin virtuosos used extreme fingerings and portamentos to produce a more emotional rendering of the Chaconne in accordance with the tastes of the time. Although many of the excesses have been swept away in the last thirty or forty years, mostly by the period instrument movement, some of them are still present today.

Cadential trills, vibrato, and tempo constitute further problems. Many books and articles deal with these more general performance issues, but, as many modern violinists simply do not pay enough attention to them, these issues need reiteration within the context of the Chaconne.

Solutions of the Past

It is not known for whom Bach wrote the Sonatas and Partitas (1720). Some speculate that he composed them for Johann Georg Pisendel, a composer of violin solos, for Joseph Spiess, principal violinist of the court at Cothen during Bach's tenure there, or simply for himself. In any case the Sonatas and Partitas, and especially the Chaconne, require a level of mastery and command of the violin with which perhaps only a few of Bach's contemporaries could cope. Henry Roth states: "We read, for example, that Corelli, the 'father of violin playing,' was so aggravated by his inability to execute the fifth position F on the E string...that 'his death was hastened.'"¹ Bach's son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, comments on his father's abilities as a string player: "In his youth, and until the approach of old age, he played the violin cleanly and penetratingly, and thus kept the orchestra in better order than he could have done with the harpsichord. He understood to perfection the possibilities of all stringed instruments. This is evidenced by his solos for the violin and for the violoncello without bass. One of the greatest violinists told me once that he had seen nothing more perfect for learning to be a good violinist, and could suggest nothing better to anyone eager to learn, than the said violin solos without bass."²

Bach's perfect understanding of the possibilities of the violin is seen in the organ-like sonority and polyphony he coaxes from such a small instrument with its limited range. But the early Romantics did not share our admiration of the work as it was written. In the first-known public performance of the Chaconne on February 14, 1840 by Ferdinand David (1810-1873),

¹ Henry Roth, *Violin Virtuosos: From Paganini to the 21st Century* (Los Angeles: California Classics Books, 1997), 2.

² Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, eds., *The Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*, revised, with a supplement (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966), 277.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy accompanied him by playing his own free realization of the harmony on the piano. This “historical concert” was a huge success with musicians and critics. The idea that the Chaconne, as well as the other movements from the Sonatas, needed a piano accompaniment to fill in the harmony was common. Robert Schumann, too, wrote a piano accompaniment, and many others followed.

In the absence of a good performance edition of the Chaconne, performance traditions passed orally from teacher to student. This process is illustrated in the following discussion between Karol Lipinski (1790-1861) and his pupil Joseph Joachim (1831-1907). Lipinski was the concertmaster of the Royal Saxon Orchestra in Dresden and was said to have been the preeminent Bach-player of the time. Lipinski is supposed to have said that some passages of the Chaconne required the application of the recoiling bow, the rapid arpeggiation of a chord from bottom to top and back, and cited the German violinist Johann Peter Salomon (1745-1815) for having performed it in this way.³

The first printed edition of the Sonatas and Partitas was issued in 1802 by Nikolaus Simrock (1751-1832).⁴ It consisted only of the notes, based on unknown manuscripts, and made no attempt to solve the performance problems. Subsequent editors, however, did address the performance problems. In 1843, David issued the first performing edition of the nineteenth century, and his interpretation was the most influential in that time. Joachim was the first to use Bach’s autograph (rediscovered in 1906) and reprinted it in modern notation alongside his edited version in 1908. He was the first to popularize the Bach solo sonatas at a time when his

³ See Andreas Moser, “[Joachim Plays Bach],” in Jon F. Eiche, ed., *The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: A Collection of Views* (Frangipani Press, 1985), 112-13.

⁴ Johann Sebastian Bach, *Six Solos for Violin without Bass Accompaniment* (Bonn: Simrock, 1802). A facsimile reprint of this first edition has been published by the scholar Sol Babitz (Los Angeles: Early Music Laboratory, 1971).

contemporaries either ignored them or played them superficially. Several further performance editions followed, including those by Leopold Auer (1917), Carl Flesch (1930), and Adolf Busch (1931).

The edition by Jan Hambourg in 1935 marked a new era in editorial styles that included editions by Joseph Haber (1952), Jean Champeil (1959), Maxim Jacobsen (1961), and Tadeusz Wronski (1970). These editors shared a common editorial approach, the *Klangnotation*, a technique of notation that transfers to the score the exact sounds that can be produced on the instrument. Robert Murray points out that this kind of notation, “while helpful to less advanced students, obscures the music to the point where it becomes difficult for the artist to detect the contrapuntal lines.”⁵

The search for a solution to playing chords went further. German musicologist Arnold Schering, with the support of other colleagues and performers, “discovered” the existence of the “Bach bow.” This discovery was based on honest, but erroneous, interpretations. The Bach bow is a specially bent bow that makes it possible to sound three- and four-voiced chords by the action of a spring mechanism that releases or tightens the tension of the bow hair as needed. This bow allowed the performance of the chordal passages as Bach wrote them. As Eduard Melkus pointed out, this bow never existed in Bach’s time and it is “a peculiar late-romantic flower.”⁶

Numerous solutions for the arpeggios were also presented in many editions and treatises following the trend of *Klangnotation*. In addition, the 20th century was marked by the rise of highly individual personalities and violin virtuosos, many of them performing and recording their own solutions for these passages.

⁵ Robert Murray, “The Editions,” in Eiche, 32.

⁶ Eduard Melkus, “The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: Some Thoughts on the History of its Interpretation,” in Eiche, 138.

The period-instrument movement made important contributions to the appreciation and performance practice of these works. Sol Babitz (1911-1982), David Boyden (1910-1986), and Robert Donington (1907-1990) are among its most influential scholars. However, they were criticized for being too academic and not skilled enough as performers. “Thus, the separation of historical scholarship from the mainstream violin world created a schism between those interested in historical accuracy and the major conservatories of the world.”⁷

This schism was in a way exacerbated by the edition of Ivan Galamian in 1971. Although he proclaims to faithfully follow Bach’s manuscript – he includes the facsimile of the autograph at the end of his edition – he seems to have edited the work ignoring all the available scholarship of the time. Since Galamian was the most influential violin teacher in America in the last forty years, it is easy to see how the two streams of violin performance, the Romantic-modern tradition and the early instrument movement, broke apart.

The recent *Urtext* editions, while laudable in their aim to remain true to the autograph, abandon the modern violinist (and perhaps the Baroque violinist too) by failing to provide interpretative notes. They also often offer editorial bowings and fingerings of questionable quality.

The goal of this document is to examine the performance traditions of the past, in the context of present Baroque scholarship, and to present solutions for the problems previously described as faced by a performer on the modern violin. Insofar as the Chaconne is a compendium of the techniques used in the Sonatas and Partitas, it can be viewed as a microcosm of the whole, combining single-note texture with chordal passages.

⁷ Elizabeth Imbert Field, “Performing Solo Bach: An Examination of the Evolution of Performance Traditions of Bach’s Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas from 1802 to the Present” (D.M.A. diss., Cornell University, 1999), 10.

The Term Chaconne⁸

Prior to 1800, the *chaconne* (French, also *chacony*; Italian *ciaccona*, *ciacona*; Spanish *chacona*) was a lively dance that usually used variation techniques but not necessarily ground-bass variation. After 1800 it became a set of ground-bass or ostinato variations, usually of a serious character. Most *chaconnes* are in triple meter. There is considerable dispute over the terms *chaconne* and *passacaglia*. Arguments apart, it is safe to say that they have in common a variable number of brief sections, usually of two, four, eight, or sixteen measures, each terminating with a cadence that leads without a break into the next section.

Brief Analysis of the Piece

One of the Chaconne's peculiarities is its length. This Chaconne has 257 measures, in contrast to the first four movements of the Partita II, which have 155 measures combined and without repetitions. Most recordings of the Chaconne range from eleven to sixteen minutes in duration. Its duration is even more impressive considering that Bach did not have at his disposal the musical structures developed in the Classical period, especially sonata form. Additionally, Bach did not employ one of the primary resources in a Baroque composer's arsenal, tonal contrast, but concluded every four-measure phrase with some sort of cadential motion arriving on the tonic D. Furthermore, Bach placed another set of limitations on himself by composing this majestic work for a four-stringed, soprano-register instrument.

⁸ From A. Silbiger: "Chaconne," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 11 March 2004), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

Bach employed a number of elements in this composition to transcend these limitations and create a piece of this scale. One of them is the variation technique. The Chaconne is a continuous series of variations on a *basso ostinato* and its related chord progression presented in the first four measures (Ex. 1). There are sixty-four statements of this four-measure bass

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of the Chaconne. The bass line is in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The chords are labeled below the staff: Dm: i, ii⁰₂, V⁶₅, i, VI, (iv), iv, (V), i. The treble line shows a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Ex. 1. Chord progression of the opening four measures (from *BG* edition).

progression. The four-measure theme itself is structured to facilitate further development. At first, the harmonic rhythm alternates between half-notes and quarter notes. At the end of the phrase, however, the chords change every quarter-note (see Ex. 1). The melodic rhythm accelerates as well from dotted quarter note-eighth note-quarter note to sixteenth notes. At the end of the second statement (m. 8) Bach introduces the dotted eighth note followed by two thirty-seconds (Appendix).⁹ This figure intensifies the end of that statement while anticipating the melodic rhythm of the following one. This process of introducing new elements at the end of a statement and using it as a developmental link appears on many occasions throughout the piece.

⁹ The appendix is a copy of the entire Chaconne. The edition used here is from the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* ("New Bach-Edition"), Series VI, Volume I, published separately by Bärenreiter (see subheading *The Choice of Editions and Recordings* below, no.10). Besides the regular measure numbering, I added a number in parentheses in the beginning of each statement (every four measures) and letters in squares to indicate pairs of statements.

In the larger structure, the piece is divided in three sections (three-part form). The first section is in D minor (mm. 1-132), the second in D major (mm. 133-208), and the third in D minor again (mm. 209-57). Bach uses the change of mode as the primary element of contrast.

Before each change of mode there is an intensified harmonic and rhythmic activity, and each new section begins with the slower rhythmic motion that is characteristic of the opening of the Chaconne. Once the new section begins, the same process of growth continues as in the first minor-mode section. There is a natural rhythmic acceleration in each section and it affects the character of the statements.

Each section of the piece is shorter than the previous one. The first minor-mode section has 33 statements, the major-mode section 19 statements, and the last minor-mode section 12 statements. This gradual shortening of the sections allows the highly intensified cadence at the end of each section to start even sooner than in the previous one.

Another compositional device that enhances the form is the pairing of statements. Most of the statements occur in pairs (with the exception of statements 31, 38, 57, and 60) in which the second is similar to the first but intensified. Examples are easily identified in the piece. For instance, at the end of statement 4 (m. 16) the dissonance created by the suspended D is more intense than in the equivalent measure in statement 3 (m. 12). In statement 6 (m. 23), Bach adds a G sharp to the descending chromatic line that was not present in the previous statement (m. 19). In statement 8, we hear the basic melodic line of the previous statement but with a more elaborate embellishment in sixteenth notes.

Pairing happens also on a larger scale. After the first pair of statements (the eight-measure “theme”), pairs A and B (mm. 9-24) are motivically related through the dotted eighth and two thirty-second note figure. The intensifying factor is the chromatic descending line in the

bass in pair B, contrasting with the diatonic line of pair A. Pairs C and D are also similar in melodic rhythmic motion, both starting with eighth notes and moving to sixteenths. The difference is that in pair D the bass line is chromatic again. If we go even further, we can see how Bach makes a bigger pairing, a coupling of pairs A and B with C and D, connected by a mirroring of harmony (the diatonic bass line versus the chromatic line). Although probably imperceptible to the listener, the underlying compositional process helps to create interest and hold the form together.

Bach increases the activity of a few elements while decreasing others, thus balancing the piece and leaving new elements for further exploration. For example, the first statements of the piece gradually start to diminish in texture from three- and four-voice chords to the single-line writing of statement 8 (m.29). This thinning of texture is achieved at the same time as the melodic rhythm increases in speed. Another example is found in statements 10 through 14, where the rhythmic speed stays the same (sixteenth notes) while the bow articulation gets more complex. The same occurs in statements 17 and 18, where the thirty-second notes are first slurred and later separated in statement 19. In statement 22, the thirty-second notes form an almost complete step-wise melody. In the following statement, the use of arpeggios introduces a wider melodic span while the rhythm remains the same. This compensation process occurs in many instances throughout the piece.

In order to maintain interest throughout this long piece, Bach saves certain compositional elements until late in the movement. For example, in statement 41 he introduces a motive of three repeated notes for the first time, although they could arguably be derived from the opening melody in the second measure of the movement. This repeated-note motive connects statements 41 through 52. Another example is the use of pedals. The first instance occurs during the

repeated note motive in statements 41 and 42 mentioned above. The second instance is found in statements 58 through 60. Yet another example occurs at the very end of the piece, where Bach introduces triplet rhythm for the first time (statements 61 and 62). He also skillfully explores harmony in the last section, especially with the first definitive appearance of the Neapolitan chord in measure 243.

The Choice of Editions and Recordings

I. Editions:

There are more than fifty editions of the Sonatas and Partitas that have been printed since 1802. Comparing and examining each one of them would be simply impossible. Instead, 19 editions were chosen. These 19 editions fall into two categories: scholarly and performing editions. Scholarly editions, sometimes called *Urtext* editions, are based on manuscripts believed to be authentic by the scholars who edit them. Here we used two of these editions: the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition of the complete works of Bach, 1879, edited by Alfred Dörffel (1821-1905) and the edition by Günter Hausswald (1908-1974) published in the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* in 1958. The remaining are performing editions that were produced with the goal of assisting the performer in his/her effort to realize the “composer’s intention.” They offer fingerings, dynamics, tempo, expressive markings, bowings, and, sometimes, alteration of rhythmic values. Here is a brief description of these editions arranged chronologically, and the importance of their study.

1. 1843, Ferdinand David (1810-1873)

As previously indicated, David's interpretation of the Sonatas and Partitas (and especially the *Chaconne*) was the most influential performing edition of the nineteenth century, and, perhaps, even of the twentieth century. This edition was created for use by the Leipzig Conservatory. Its sources are the manuscripts of the Berlin Library (for a discussion of the manuscripts, see the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition and the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* below). David offers few fingering suggestions and he changes bowing according to the style of his time. He was, however, the first to write out arpeggiation for mm. 89-120 and mm. 201-8.

2. 1865, Joseph Hellmesberger (1828-1893)

The source of this edition is unknown, probably the same used by Simrock or Simrock's edition itself, based in their numerous similarities in articulations.¹⁰ This edition was the most popular one from the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Joseph Szigeti (1892-1973) it "was the most used version for several decades about the turn of the century."¹¹

3. 1879, Alfred Dörffel (1821-1905)

This is the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition of the complete works of Bach, Volume 27 (hereafter *BG*). Dörffel was a pianist, organist, and critic. He based his edition on the six sources found in the Berlin Library, including three manuscripts and three prints (one of which was Simrock's). Dörffel believed that one of the manuscripts was a copy made by Anna Magdalena (Bach's wife). Her manuscript was for a long time considered to be the autograph because of the

¹⁰ See page 4 for a brief discussion of Simrock's edition.

¹¹ Joseph Szigeti, "Differing Interpretations of the Opening and Closing Bars (*Chaconne*)," in Eiche, p. 126.

similarity of her handwriting with Bach's. The *BG* edition was sought by every musician interested in historical accuracy until Bach's autograph was discovered in 1906.

4. 1900, Eduard Herrmann (1850-1937)

Despite the fact that Herrmann claims to “keep strictly in accord with the original; not to modernize the expression,”¹² he follows many of David's concepts. Herrmann's edition marks one small step toward authenticity, very small indeed, but important, nonetheless. He follows as much as possible the pitches and rhythms of the “original” (most likely the *BG* edition) and retains most of the bow articulations found there.

5. 1908, Joseph Joachim (1831-1907) and Andreas Moser (1859-1925)

This edition is the catalyst of a new approach towards the work, one that aimed at the composer's intentions. Joachim and his pupil Moser had at their disposal Bach's autograph and they used it as the basis of their edition. This edition is still used today, and it can be easily found in music stores. Many editors and performers followed the trends initiated by them. These trends are a simplification of fingerings and a closer observation of the original articulation. Although they still show elements of David's romanticisms, their edition represents the first conscientious departure from that tradition.

6. 1917, Leopold Auer (1845-1930)

Auer was responsible for the popularization of the Sonatas and Partitas in the early twentieth century. As a world-renowned pedagogue – his pupils included Jascha Heifetz, Mischa Elman, Efrem Zimbalist, Toscha Seidel, and Nathan Milstein – he instilled an appreciation of these works not only for their technical difficulties but for their inherent musical merits as well. Auer had no qualms about imposing the stylistic concepts of his time, including many types of

¹² Eduard Herrmann, “Foreword,” *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sonatas and Partitas for the Violin*, ed. Eduard Herrmann (New York: Schirmer, 1900).

bowings like *spiccato*, *martelé*, and thrown strokes, as well as uniformity in tone and *portamenti* (expressive slides from one note to another).

7. 1930, Carl Flesch (1873-1944)

Flesch was another venerated teacher of the twentieth century. His pupils include Szymon Goldgerg, Ida Haendel, Max Rostal, Henryk Szeryng, Joseph Hassid and Ginette Neveu. His edition offers a mixture of David's romanticism with Joachim's search for authenticity.

8. 1931, Adolf Busch (1891-1952)

Busch's edition makes an important contribution towards authenticity. He adheres to the original articulations wherever possible and proposes, for the first time, the use of one string for each polyphonic voice "so that in playing a piece of four inner parts, each part shall have its own string."¹³

9. 1935, Jan Hambourg (1882-1947)

Hambourg introduces a new approach to the execution of chords. He cites Leclair's sonata *Le Tambeau* (Ex. 5) as an example for breaking the chords from top to bottom. Perhaps this was an erroneous conclusion, but nevertheless it pointed towards a more scholarly-based execution.

10. 1958, Günter Hausswald (1908-1974)

Hausswald was a German musicologist and editor of the Sonatas and Partitas for the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* ("New Bach-Edition"), Series VI, Volume 1, in 1958 (hereafter *NBA*). This edition was released as a separate publication by Bärenreiter in 1959. It is based on Bach's autograph, and it is considered the definitive scholarly edition of these works. In 2001,

¹³ Adolph Busch, "Preface," *Johann Sebastian Bach, Sonatas and Partitas Violino*, ed. A. Busch (London-Hamburg: N. Simrock, 1931; revised 1952).

Bärenreiter reprinted the Sonatas and Partitas, edited by Peter Wollny. This edition has no substantial differences, at least not in the Chaconne, from the edition published in 1959 by Hausswald.

11. 1959, Jean Champeil (dates not available)

Champeil's revolutionary edition was received by the traditionalists with ridicule and by the historically aware musicians with admiration. He boldly introduced, for the first time in an edition, ideas such as inequality, over-dotting, and non-vibrato. Each movement is preceded by quotations of various sources of the Baroque period that apply to that particular movement.

12. 1961, Maxim Jacobsen (dates not available)

Jacobsen's edition is the most eccentric among the performing editions. It is basically a study edition, separating the variations in order to isolate technical problems. He also doubles the note values to facilitate reading. His fingerings are based on the Romantic tradition, and he even suggests *portamenti*. His edition is interesting because it represents a strong contrast with some other editors of his time (e.g., Champeil and Mostras).

13. 1963, Konstantin Mostras (1886-1965)

Mostras taught at the Moscow Conservatory from 1922 to his death. He played a significant role in the development of the Soviet violin school. Among his pupils were Ivan Galamian and Mikhail Terian. His edition is included here because it was the most widely used in the Soviet block at the same time when Galamian's edition was the most influential in America. Their similarities cannot be overlooked and they helped, probably unintentionally, to form a global approach to the Sonatas and Partitas.

14. 1970, Tadeusz Wronski (dates not available)

Wronski was the first to add a facsimile of the autograph alongside his edition.

Apparently, however, Bach's autograph did not serve him as a model, since he makes numerous changes in articulation, adds dynamics, and applies jumping strokes. Nevertheless, he claims in his preface that "we are now clearly approaching the ideal rendering."¹⁴

15. 1971, Ivan Galamian (1903-1981)

Galamian was the most influential pedagogue in America for the last forty years. His edition is perhaps the most widely used by modern violinists in America to this day. His inclusion of a facsimile of the autograph in the back of his edition creates a sense of authenticity that is far from the actual reality. In fact, he follows many of the Romantic conventions like splitting slurs, hooking bows, and using uniformity of tone. On the other hand, he does avoid *portamento* as much as possible, generally by means of an extension, and indicates no dynamics.

16. 1978, Efrem Zimbalist (1890-1985)

Zimbalist was considered, with Elman and Heifetz, to represent Auer's school at its best. He taught at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia from 1928 to 1968. Among his best-known students were Oscar Shumsky and Norman Carol. His edition is included here as an example of contrast between the old and the new generations. Zimbalist carried with him, well in the late 1970s, the Romantic tradition deriving from his teacher, Auer.

17. 1979, Max Rostal (1905-1991)

Rostal pushed the concept of fingering extension and contraction to the limit. His edition can be considered one of the cleanest concerning fingering, using almost no *portamento*. He adheres to the idea, proposed by Busch, of distinguishing the contrapuntal voices through the use

¹⁴ Tadeusz Wronski, "Preface," *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sei Solo A Violino senza basso accompagnato*, ed. Tadeusz Wronski (Cracow: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1970), 5.

of separate strings. He also advocates the simultaneous attack of chords whenever possible, a concept derived from the Romantic tradition. His strongest contribution is the concept of phrasing according to the linear counterpoint, combined with the careful use of string crossing.

18. 1981, Henryk Szeryng (1918-1988)

Szeryng's edition is a product of his Romantic background and a disguised scholarship. He preserves Bach's original notation but provides his own concept by means of altered articulation (in dotted slurs above or below the notes), dynamic markings, bowing and expression markings. He was a celebrated violinist and enjoyed a reputation of being one of the best performers of Bach's unaccompanied works. His edition is included here to allow a comparison with his own recording of 1967.

19. 1987, Wolfgang Schneiderhan (1915-2002)

Schneiderhan is one of the editors of the edition issued by G. Henle Verlag. This edition consists of two volumes. The first is a scholarly edition by Klaus Rönna based on Bach's autograph, but also using two other manuscripts as correctives for some minor discrepancies. The second volume is a performing edition made by Schneiderhan. It is astonishing how his edition can present such an old-fashioned approach to performance practice. Schneiderhan offers a variety of bowings and fingerings rooted in the traditions of early twentieth-century romanticism.

II. Recordings

Six recordings on the modern violin and six recordings on the Baroque violin were chosen for analysis. The intention is to identify the changing traditions of the past and the new trends of the present.

A. Modern Violin

1. 1952, Jascha Heifetz (1901-1987)

Heifetz is synonymous with violin virtuosity. Some critics dislike his way of playing Bach, calling it overly-Romantic, but Heifetz treated these works with respect until the end of his career (there is a video recorded in 1971 where Heifetz performs the Chaconne). Heifetz is the embodiment of Auer's school, and the link between teacher and pupil will be explored later.

2. 1956, Joseph Szigeti (1892-1973)

Szigeti was considered by many as an authority of Bach's interpretation. He was a performer with strong ideas about music, especially about the interpretation of Bach. His playing reflects much of the Romantic tradition, though it is closer to Joachim's approach than David's. There is a link between Szigeti and Joachim; Szigeti was a pupil of Jenő Hubay (1858-1937), and Hubay was pupil of Joachim.

3. 1961, Arthur Grumiaux (1921-1986)

Grumiaux was the iconoclast of the violin. Many considered his interpretations of the Sonatas and Partitas as the ideal realization of polyphony on the violin: clean chords, pure intonation, and clarity of texture.

4. 1967, Henryk Szeryng (1918-1988)

As stated before, Szeryng was considered an authority on the Sonatas and Partitas. We will examine not only his edition in comparison with his recording, but also his legacy as a Flesch student.

5. 1988, Itzhak Perlman (b. 1945)

Perlman's recording embodies the musical concepts of his teacher, Ivan Galamian. Perlman is considered one of the greatest violinists of his generation. Galamian's concepts for these works are still the mainstream tradition of today.

6. 1995, Christian Tetzlaff (b. 1966)

This is the newest recording that will be examined here. Tetzlaff is an accomplished young violinist who received much acclaim for his recording of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas in 1995. His approach to Baroque music on the modern violin may give us a clue to the future direction of mainstream violinists.

B. Baroque Violin

The recordings made on the Baroque violin give an idea of the current conventions of early music performance. With the exception of Sigiswald Kuijken's (b. 1944) recording of 1981, all the other recordings were made recently: 1997, Ingrid Matthews (date not available); 1997, Elizabeth Wallfisch (b. 1952); 1997, Monica Huggett (b. 1953); 1997-9, Rachel Podger (date not available); and 2000, Christoph Poppen (date not available). In this document we will attempt to determine the reason for an increase in the popularity of recordings on the Baroque violin in the last decade.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEMS OF TEMPO, VIBRATO, AND TRILLS

Tempo

I. Historical Perspective

Tempo is one of the most controversial aspects of performances of Baroque music. The criticisms are usually that tempos are too fast for the early instrument performers and too slow for the performers in the Romantic tradition.

One important element of tempo is *rubato*, the stretching or broadening of tempo within the context of a given pulse. In a piece like the Chaconne, some degree of rhythmic flexibility is expected. Otherwise the characters of the different variations would not be perceived (see the discussion of rhythmic acceleration and tempo in the analysis). It was a common notion that the performer should have some freedom of expression within the main pulse. Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773) said: “I do not pretend that a whole piece should be measured off in accordance with the pulse beat; this would be absurd and impossible.”¹ Leopold Mozart (1719-1787) in his famous treatise said: “The first of two, three, four, or even more notes, slurred together, must at all times be stressed more strongly and sustained a little longer; but those following must diminish in tone and be slurred on somewhat later. But this must be carried out

¹ Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752; trans. Edward R. Reilly as *On Playing the Flute*, London & New York: Schirmer Books, 1966), 284.

with such good judgment that the bar-length is not altered in the smallest degree.”² Pierre Baillot (1771-1842), the most influential teacher of the Paris Conservatory during the first half of the 19th century, also agreed with this idea when he wrote: “Expression sometimes allows for a slight alteration in the time, but either this alteration is graduated and virtually imperceptible or the beat is simply merely disguised, that is in pretending to miss it for a moment, one finds oneself soon afterwards following it exactly as before.”³

It is interesting how the perception of tempo *rubato* changed in the last century. “Indeed, for the second half of the twentieth century in particular, musical time has been seen more in terms of a disciplining element of the musical texture than a constituent of expressive performance. Most players trained within the last few decades will doubtless recall the exhortations of their mentors against rhythmic ‘inaccuracy,’ and any unspecified manipulations of tempo, especially the *accelerando*. And yet, by contrast, earlier epochs (and even the first third of the twentieth century) saw musical time as an elastic constituent of expressive playing.”⁴ This strictness of tempo supported the common perception that Baroque music was “heavy” and “boring,” and it may have helped to trigger the early-music movement.

The Baroque concept of a beat was a constant, regular *tactus*. It was of moderate speed and was compared by various writers to the human pulse. James Grassineau (1715-1767)

² Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer grundlichen Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756; trans. Editha Klocker, as *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948), chapter VII, section 2, §5.

³ Pierre Marie François de Sales Baillot, *L’art du violon* (Paris, 1834; trans. Louise Goldberg as *The Art of the Violin*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 264-268.

⁴ David Milson, *Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003), 149.

proposed to link this *tempo ordinario* to one beat per second (quarter note = 60).⁵ Quantz suggested the pulse at eighty beats to the minute (quarter note = 80).⁶ Although Quantz's tempos, when applied to Bach, seem too fast, the chances are that tempos in the time of Bach were generally faster than what the Romantic tradition conceived.

In the foreword to his edition, Champeil quotes Johann Nicolaus Forkel (1749-1818) – a friend of Wilhelm-Friedman, Bach's oldest son – on Bach: “[Bach] astonished his contemporaries by the rapidity of the tempi with which he played his own compositions.”⁷ He also quotes Johann Friedrich Agricola (1720-1774) – first pupil of Bach and later of Quantz – and Heinrich Nikolaus Gerber (1702-1775) – also a pupil of Bach: “He conducted with great precision and with a very rapid tempo.”⁸

Although tempos could be faster than the Romantics conceived, we should not forget that Bach's stylized dance forms tend to differ somewhat from their original dance models, often slowing down and becoming more flexible in rhythm and phrasing.

Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) gave four characteristics that distinguish the *chaconne* and *passecaille*, two of which relate to tempo: “... the *chaconne* proceeds more deliberately and slowly than the *passecaille*, not the other way round; ... the former prefers the major keys, while the latter prefers the minor; ... the *passecaille* is never used in singing, like the *chaconne*, but only for dancing, hence naturally has a quicker movement; and finally, ... the *chaconne* has a

⁵ James Grassineau, *A Musical Dictionary* (London, 1740), discussed in David Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 469.

⁶ Quantz, *Versuch*, 283.

⁷ Jean Champeil, “Foreword,” *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sonates et Suites pour violon seul*, ed. Jean Champeil (Paris: Heugel and Co., 1959), iv.

⁸ Ibid.

constant bass theme, which, though one occasionally deviates from it for variations and from fatigue, soon reappears and maintains its position.”⁹

The problem of tempo for the dance movements in the Sonatas and Partitas, and specifically the Chaconne, is almost unanswerable. How can we know precisely how Bach intended it to be performed? How can we know the tempos that past violinists observed? All we can do is make an informed guess based on the treatises, editions, and books available to us. Most Baroque musicologists of today think that the tempos of stylized dances should be closer to the original dances. Judy Tarling states about the performance of Bach’s Chaconne: “It may be distant from the danced form in tempo, in complexity and in its development of the basic chaconne structure, but in the performance of any chaconne, it is important to maintain the harmonic structure clearly, regardless of any fanciful variations, and keep a dance swing to the rhythm.”¹⁰

II. Editions

Among the editions studied here, few from before the 20th century supplied tempo markings. Some 20th century editors give tempo suggestions as well as instructions such as *ritardando*, *rallentando*, *tranquilo*, etc., but most agree that tempos should not vary too much throughout the work. Herrmann (1900) indicates a quarter = 52. Throughout the edition there are markings of *poco ritenuto*, *sostenuto*, *ritenuto poco*, and *pesante*. Hambourg (1935) gives a metronome marking of a quarter = 50. The only tempo marking is an *allargando* in the final measures. Champeil (1959) gives a more radical tempo marking, a quarter = 80, perhaps because

⁹ Johann Mattheson, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*. Hambourg: 1739, as quoted in Judy Tarling, *Baroque String Playing for Ingenious Learners* (Hertfordshire, UK: Corda Music Publications, 2000), 103.

¹⁰ Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 105.

he is more concerned with the dance character of the piece. His edition has just one tempo indication, a *sostenuto* at m. 177. Wronski (1970) is less extreme, indicating a quarter = 60.¹¹ Perhaps the fact that Champeil and Wronski suggest faster tempos is an indication of a deeper awareness of Baroque performance issues brought by a scholarly historical perspective.

None of the editions after 1963 showed any tempo markings, with the exception of a lone *ritenuto* at m. 76 in Wronski's edition. This may indicate that modern editors are not willing to commit themselves to a specific tempo or that they expect the performers to be knowledgeable about Baroque performance practice and to make their own choices.

III. Recordings

A. Modern Violin

While most of the editions surveyed here agree that tempos should not vary too much throughout the work, this is not the case with the recordings. Especially with the recordings in the Romantic tradition, we notice a wide range of rhythmic fluctuation. Almost invariably, the tempos chosen are slow, and when the melodic rhythm accelerates (especially to sixteenths and thirty-second notes), so does the pulse.

The first example is Heifetz's recording of 1952. Born in 1901, Heifetz was a famous pupil of Auer, studying with him for six years. Although he follows Auer's recommendation to begin the Chaconne in a *Grave* tempo,¹² his recording fluctuates the most as far as tempo is concerned. He starts out with a slow tempo, a quarter = 54-56, and reaches an astonishing quarter = 80-82 in statements 15 through 17. He then slows down to almost half the speed in statement 21, reaching a quarter = 46, only to accelerate to a quarter = 72 eight measures later, in

¹¹ This marking is not printed in Wronski's edition but it is suggested in his companion book, p. 106.

¹² Leopold Auer, *Violin Master Works and their Interpretation* (New York: Carl Fischer, 1925), 23.

statement 23. At the beginning of the second section he plays at a quarter = 46. In statement 39 he reaches the fastest tempo of his rendering, a quarter = 84. These varied tempos illustrate how much *tempo rubato* Heifetz used in the Chaconne. He would at times make strong *rallentandi* or *accelerandi* in order to change the character of a variation, yet he managed to maintain unity throughout the piece. Heifetz wisely used the natural melodic rhythm to accelerate or decelerate the tempo.

Szigeti was born in 1892 and was taught mainly by Jeno Hubay, a virtuoso violinist who was a pupil of Joachim. His recording reflects much of the Romantic tradition, especially in the choice of tempo. At the same time, there is a search for some kind of purity of interpretation that was an inheritance of Joachim, especially in the choice of fingerings and in the avoidance of portamentos. This recording of 1956 is the slowest here analyzed, ranging from a quarter = 40 in the beginning of the major section (statement 34) to a quarter = 60 in statements 15-19. At the end of the first minor section (statement 33, m. 132), he makes an enormous *rallentando* not found in any other interpretation.

Szeryng's recording of 1967 was considered by many to be one of the most perfect recordings, along with the 1961 recording of Grumiaux. The difference between them is that Szeryng is overall much slower and steady, ranging from a quarter = 48-70. A pupil of Flesch, he seemed not to have followed his teacher's advice: "The fundamental tempo may be thought of as being, approximately, quarter = 60, hence not too slow."¹³ Grumiaux is also steady, but he chooses a faster tempo, a quarter = 56-58 in the opening theme, with an overall lighter conception.

¹³ Carl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, 2 vols., trans. Frederick Herman Martens (New York: Carl Fischer, 1924-30), 2:149.

Perlman's recording is overall steady and in a slow tempo, resembling Szigeti's interpretation. Like Szigeti, he also plays the opening theme in a slow tempo, a quarter = 40. By statement 7 he is already playing at a quarter = 57-9. The fastest tempo is achieved in statement 17, reaching a quarter = 69-70. His fastest tempo is much slower than Heifetz's a quarter = 84.

The last recording on a modern violin is by Tetzlaff released in 1995. Born in Germany in 1966, he studied in his native country as well as in the United States. His recording of the Sonatas and Partitas was awarded the *Diapason d'or*, the French award for the recording industry. His interpretation is very much informed by the style of the Baroque early instrument movement. Tempo is faster and more uniform, ranging from a quarter = 60-64 in the opening theme to a quarter = 70 in statements 39 through 44. An example of this uniformity is the choice of tempo from the end of the major section to the second minor section, statements 51 through 53 and on. Tetzlaff maintains the same tempo of a quarter = 62 throughout this transition, in contrast to all the other recordings which follow the Romantic tradition of slowing down in the minor area. In this manner he keeps the dance-like flow, without being inexpressive.

B. Baroque Violin

In general tempos are faster and lighter than with the modern violin performers. Kuijken has the fastest interpretation, ranging from a quarter = 60 in the opening to a quarter = 82 in statement 17. Poppen gives the most moderate tempo, ranging from a quarter = 48 in the opening to a quarter = 73 in statement 39. Huggett reaches the slowest tempo among the early instrument performers, a quarter = 43 in statement 32 (the recapitulation of the opening at the end of the first section).

Vibrato

I. Historical Perspective

Vibrato (also called *tremolo*, *ondulazione*, *tremolio*, *Bebung*, *Schwebung*, *tremblement*, *tremblement serré*, *balancement*, *ondulation*, *flatté*, close shake and other less common terms) has been associated with the violin since its invention. The existence and technique of vibrato is well documented by several authors. According to Martin Agricola (c. 1486-1556), “one also produces vibrato freely to make the melody sound sweeter.”¹⁴ Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) claimed that the use of vibrato was one of the great attributes and attractions of the violin, “particularly the ornaments and vibrato of the left hand, which compel those who hear it to confess that the violin is the king of instruments.”¹⁵

As to the frequency of its use, there are disagreements among authors of the 18th century. Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762) advised that “it should be made use of as often as possible.”¹⁶ Leopold Mozart held the opposite opinion: “Now because the tremolo [vibrato] is not purely on one note but sounds undulating, so would it be an error if every note were played with the tremolo [vibrato].”¹⁷ Roger North (1651-1734) also warns against using vibrato (or wrist shake) too much: “I must take notice of a wrist shake, as they call it, upon the violin, which without doubt is a great art, but as I think injured by overdoing; for those who use it well never let a note

¹⁴ Quoted in Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 58.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (London, 1751; facsimile reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 8.

¹⁷ Mozart, *Versuch*, 203.

rest without it, whereas it ought to be used as the swelling wave, coming and going, which would have a much better effect.”¹⁸

Available evidence suggests that vibrato was employed sparingly and discreetly in the 19th century in order to enhance special moments in the music, particularly long sustained notes or the final note in a phrase. Louis Spohr (1784-1859)¹⁹ and Baillot²⁰ speak in detail in their treatises on the careful application of vibrato. David, responsible for the “rediscovery” of Bach’s Chaconne, said about its use: “The vibrato may be made slowly as well as quickly, but must not be employed too frequently nor without sufficient reason.”²¹ Joachim and Moser agree with this view. Moser warns “against the habitual use of the tremolo, especially in the wrong place. A violinist whose taste is refined and healthy will always recognize the steady tone as the ruling one, and will use the vibrato only where the expression seems to demand it.”²²

We get similar remarks from pedagogues of the first part of the 20th century. Flesch states: “From a purely theoretic viewpoint, the vibrato, as the means for securing a heightened urge for expression should only be employed when it is musically justifiable.”²³ Auer goes even further: “I forbid my students using the vibrato at all on notes which are not sustained, and I earnestly advise them not to abuse it even in the case of sustained notes.”²⁴ It is surprising to notice that Flesch’s own performances and Auer’s most famous students such as Mischa Elman

¹⁸ Quoted in Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 58.

¹⁹ Louis Spohr, *Violinschule. In drei Abtheilungen. Mit erläuternden Kupfertafeln*. (Vienna, 1832; trans. C. Rudolphus, London, 1833).

²⁰ Baillot, *L’art du violon*.

²¹ Ferdinand David, *Violinschule* (Leipzig, 1864; trans. London, 1874), 43.

²² Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser, *Violinschule* (Berlin, 1902-5; trans. A. Moffat, 1905), 2: 96.

²³ Flesch, *The Art*, 1:40.

²⁴ Auer, *Master Works*, 62.

(1891-1967) and Heifetz used the continuous vibrato of which they disapproved. The reason for that discrepancy could be the confrontation of their 19th century tradition with the new aesthetics of the early 20th century. Henry Roth (dates not available) explains that “the changing tastes of audiences demanded playing that expressly emphasized sensuality of sound. In the inevitable struggle between old and new the ‘sensual’ players of tonal opulence were destined to triumph.”²⁵

The main catalyst of the “sensual” sound was the young Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962). Many accounts of his playing emphasize that he was the first violinist to use a continuous vibrato. This “new” continuous vibrato, still in vogue today, was an intrinsic tonal constituent instead of an ornament as described by authors of the 18th and 19th century. From this point on, due to Kreisler’s innovation and that of other great violinists of this time, a continuous vibrato has been expected, even in Baroque music.

II. Editions

Since vibrato is usually not marked into scores we can only imagine, with some degree of knowledge based on their writings, how some editors would have played and taught the Chaconne. We can also listen to some of their recordings and those of their pupils. Editors who also made recordings on the modern violin include Joachim, Auer, and Flesch.²⁶

²⁵ Roth, *Violin Virtuosos*, 34.

²⁶ For further recordings of this generation of violinists see Discography on Milson, *Theory and Practice*, 271-2.

III. Recordings

A. Modern Violin

All recordings on the modern violin showed the use of the continuous vibrato, with the admirable exception of Tetzlaff. His performance should not be seen as strictly in the Baroque style, but he strives for authenticity in the examined recording.

B. Baroque Violin

All the performers on the Baroque violin agree with the general idea expressed by Tarling: “Whenever vibrato is used, it should be combined with a bow-stroke which matches the affect required: slow, swelling bow-strokes with vibrato in the middle; a fast bow-stroke combined with vibrato at the beginning of a note; a quick vibrato on a short emphatic bow-stroke, etc. The increase in sound, and the speed of vibrato should match each other, and similarly, with the decrease in sound the vibrato should subside.”²⁷ In general, “mainstream” violinists have the distorted idea that a historically aware performance should have no or very little vibrato, to which Donington replies: “Using no vibrato is a purely modern mistake.”²⁸

²⁷ Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 62.

²⁸ Robert Donington, *String Playing in Baroque Music* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), 68.

Trills

I. Historical Perspective

There are several places in the Chaconne where a trill could – in fact, should – be used, even though none is indicated. Cadential trills in the Baroque period were “very essential”²⁹ and “indispensably necessary.”³⁰ Because this was understood, Bach did not mark any trills into his autograph of the Chaconne.

As a purely melodic ornament, the Baroque trill (also called *cadence*, *tremblement*, *trille*, *pincé renversé*, *Triller*, shake, *trillo*) could start either with the upper or the lower note. However when the trill was a harmonic ornament (cadential trills), the trill started from the upper note, on the beat, and with a slight prolongation of the upper note, since it is the upper note that gives the dissonance effect.³¹

There are at least three moments in the Chaconne where a trill is essential: at the end of each of the three main sections (mm. 132, 208, and 256). There are also other places where a cadential trill could be used: at mm. 16, 140, 148, and 184.

II. Editions

Of the editions used in this document, only Champeil’s suggests trills beyond those decorating the cadences of the three main sections. He adds trills to the cadences in m. 16 and m. 184, both starting with the upper note on the beat. Most of the editions had trills on mm. 132,

²⁹ Pier Francesco Tosi, *Opinioni de’ cantori antichi e moderni*, (Bologna, 1723; trans. J.E. Galliard as *Observations on the Florid Song*, Bologna, 1743; facsimile reprint, 1967), 42.

³⁰ Quantz, *Versuch*, chap. IX, i.

³¹ For further information on trills see Boyden, *History*, 450-3.

208, and 256, but with the trill starting on the main note. Only the editions by Rostal and Schneiderhan show trills starting with the upper note. The editions by Herrmann, Hambourg, Mostras and Wronski are the exceptions among the performing editions, showing no trills at all. While Wronski includes no trills in the Chaconne, in his preface he makes some suggestions for the execution of the trills marked by Bach throughout the Sonatas and Partitas. It would be interesting to know if the other three editors did not suggest trills because they did not approve of their use in performance or because they assumed the performer would add them.

III. Recordings

A. Modern Violin

Three of the six recordings on the modern violin studied here contained no or few trills in performance. Grumiaux is the only one with no trills at all. Heifetz and Szeryng added a cadential trill only at the very end of the movement, in m. 256. Perhaps this was a time when being true to the autograph meant playing only the notes Bach notated. It is important to reemphasize here that Grumiaux's and Szeryng's recordings were considered to be (and perhaps still are by some people) the pinnacle of technical and musical achievement in the performance of the Sonatas and Partitas.

Szigeti played very much in accordance with Joachim and Moser's edition. Both the edition and the recording have an added lower B-natural as part of the trill termination (or *Nachschlag*) in m. 132 (Ex. 2) and similarly in m. 208. We should not forget that Szigeti studied



Ex. 2. Joachim & Moser's edition, m. 132.

with Hubay, a pupil of Joachim. Another pupil-teacher correlation is found between Perlman and Galamian. Galamian notated trills in parentheses with a bow change at the end of the main sections. Perlman plays in accordance with those indications, diverging only by starting the trills with the upper note.

Praise should be given to the recording of Tetzlaff. He not only plays the obvious trills at the end of the main sections but also adds cadential trills in mm. 16, 140, and 184. All the trills start with an accented upper note on the beat. This is in accordance with the Baroque rules, and the music sounds lighter and more natural than the Romantic approach.

B. Baroque Violin

Two more measures were included in the list of "essential" trills by the early period performers: mm. 16 and 184. The trills in mm. 140 and 148 varied according to personal taste. Poppen adds no trills at all to these measures. Huggett, Matthews, and Kuijken add no trill to m. 148. Wallfisch does not trill in m. 140. Podger plays all the trills, and even adds another on the third beat of m. 151.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF CHORDS

Historical Perspective

At the end of the 17th century, the Germans developed the polyphonic style for the violin to the highest degree. While composers like Schmelzer (1620-1680), Biber (1644-1704), Walther (1650-1717), and Westhoff (1656-1705) advanced this genre considerably, it was Bach who perfected it and took it to its zenith with the Sonatas and Partitas.

The title “The Problem of Chords” reflects the common misconception among “mainstream” performers (performers in the Romantic tradition) that Bach expected the music to be played exactly as written. Chords represent a problem to us because the tradition of playing them was lost. Not only that, but a new tradition of playing chords, created in the first half of the 19th century, replacing the old one.

First we have to understand the nature of the problem. It is physically impossible to play the Sonatas and Partitas as they are written. The curved shape of the bridge does not allow a three-note chord to be sustained longer than a brief attack. Four-note chords are even harder to attain, much less to sustain. If we look at the first three measures in the Appendix, we can see that the bottom two notes in the second beat cannot be sustained. Some performers argue that the earlier violin, with its lower and less curved bridge, could sustain three- and four-note chords.

The lower curvature of the bridge did make chords easier to manage but only if played loudly and shortly. This is not significantly different on the modern violin. The Baroque bow also has no particular features that allow it to sustain three or four strings simultaneously.¹ Sol Babitz (1911-1982) demonstrated how impossible it is to play a number of passages in Bach's Sonatas and Partitas under any condition (Ex. 3).²



Ex. 3. Passages in the Sonatas and Partitas where a literal execution is impossible on the violin.

The viol treatises of the 17th century show the conventional use of arpeggiation on three- and four-note chords from bottom to top, with the bottom note as the strongest in the chord, usually played on the beat (Ex. 4). Christopher Simpson (c. 1602-1669) says: “When two, three,



Ex. 4. Execution of chords in the Baroque.³

¹ See Introduction, pp. 5-6, for a brief discussion of the “Bach” bow.

² Sol Babitz, “Difference between eighteenth-century and modern violin bowing,” *The Score* 19 (1957): 53-5. The asterisks on the example mean notes that are impossible or at least awkward to execute.

³ Example from Sol Babitz, *The Violin: Views and Reviews* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, American String Teachers Association, n.d.), 24.

or more notes stand over one another they must be played as one, by sliding the bow over those strings which express the sound of the said notes ... be sure always to hit the lowest string first; and let the bow slide from it to the highest, touching the middle notes in its Passage betwixt them.”⁴ David Boyden (1910-1986) amplifies: “For single chords, Simpson uses down-bow; for consecutive chords he alternates down-bow and up-bow.”⁵

In the 18th century the same tradition continues. Quantz states: “If a rest follows [the chord], the bow must be lifted from the string (*absetzet*) ... if no rest follows, the bow remains on the highest string. In both cases the lowest notes, in slow as well as rapid tempo, must not be held but touched swiftly one after the other... And because this chord is used to surprise the ear with an unexpected vehemence, those chords after which rests follow must be played quite short and with the greatest strength of the bow, namely with the lowest part; and when a number follow each other, each must be played down-bow.”⁶ Here we see a discrepancy between Simpson’s and Quantz’s treatises. While Simpson suggests down-bow and up-bow for consecutive chords, Quantz suggests all down-bow. The performer should decide this matter according to the speed of the chords. Boyden says: “Quantz’s method is particularly appropriate where chords are followed by rests.”⁷ When a faster and longer succession of chords is presented (as is the case in many places on the Chaconne) the consecutive down/up bow advised by Simpson seems more suitable.

⁴ Quoted in David Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 275.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752; trans. Edward R. Reilly as *On Playing the Flute*, London & New York: Schirmer Books, 1966), chapter XVII, sec. 2, para. 18.

⁷ Boyden, *History*, 440.

Rousseau's Dictionary also treats chords as arpeggios: "There are some instruments on which one can play full chords only by arpeggiating, such as the violin, the violoncello, and the viol, and all those which one plays with a bow; for the convexity of the bridge prevents the bow from being able to touch on all the strings at once ... What one does by necessity on the violin, one practices by choice on the harpsichord."⁸

Other accounts also indicate the method of breaking the chord downward when the sustained voice occurred in the lower parts of the chord. Apparently Rameau was the first to advocate that: "At places where one cannot easily perform two or more notes together, either one arpeggiates them, stopping on that [note] from the side of which the melody continues; or one gives the preference, sometimes to the notes at the top, sometimes those at the bottom, according to the following explanation."⁹ In his Sonata V, Book III, Leclair suggests a way of spreading a chord downwards and immediately upwards (Ex. 5).¹⁰



Ex. 5. Leclair, Sonata V.

As seen in the above quotation by Rameau, sometimes two notes could be played together, rather than arpeggiated to emphasize polyphony. Tarling says: "The imagination of the player should be brought to bear on the possibilities for an effective chord performance. How

⁸ J. J. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, Paris, 1768, as quoted in Boyden, *History*, 437.

⁹ Jean Philippe Rameau, *Ouvres Complètes*, Paris, 1895-1914. Vol. II, as quoted in Boyden, *History*, 437.

¹⁰ Example from Boyden, *History*, 437.

long to dwell on the bass note, how quickly to slide the bow across, and how long to sustain the top note or notes? There is no set formula.”¹¹ She advises that it would be inappropriate to sustain the top two notes of the chord if this produces an interval of a fourth or fifth, since intervals of a third, sixth or octave produce a more pleasant and harmonious result.

Although arpeggiation was used in most chords, it was possible in certain passages to simultaneously attack three-note chords if the character of the music required it. Tarling gives, as an example, the opening of Veracini’s Sonata op. 2 (Ex. 6).¹² Leopold Mozart (1719-1787), who has little to say about chords, implies that this was the only way of playing them: “There are still a few more figures in which occur three notes standing above each other, which must be taken together at the same time and in one stroke.”¹³



Ex. 6. Sonata op. 2 by Veracini.

In the early 19th century, the tradition of arpeggiating chords was still in use. At that time, however, attempts to make three and four-note chords sound simultaneously were in fashion.

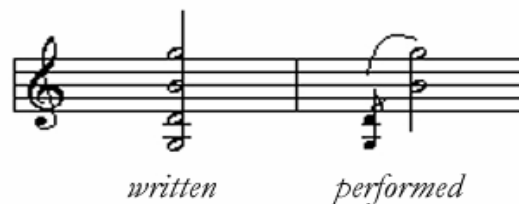
¹¹ Judy Tarling, *Baroque String Playing for Ingenious Learners* (Hertfordshire, UK: Corda Music Publications, 2000), 149-150.

¹² *Ibid.*, 150.

¹³ Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756; trans. Editha Knecker as *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948), ch. 8, sect. 3, para. 16.

Baillot, touching superficially on this matter, said only how a three-note chord could be attacked simultaneously.¹⁴ He describes a way of playing four-note chords that closely resembles charlatanism. The stick would be detached from the frog, passed underneath the violin while the hair would be in contact with the four strings and the frog hold together with the stick.¹⁵ This desire to play chords simultaneously was perhaps related to the advent of the new violin model and bow with which performers attempted to transcend the instrument's limitations. This was the time of the great *virtuosi* like Charles Philippe Lafont (1781-1839), Nicolo Paganini (1782-1840), Ludwig Spohr (1784-1859), and Wilhelm Ernst (1814-1865). These *virtuosi*, and many others who followed, were also composers, and they created hundreds of concertos and showpieces employing multiple-note chords that aimed to transcend the limitations of the violin.

The modern way of playing chords is the “2 + 2 method,” where the chord is broken upwards in two halves, the lower two notes played together shortly before the beat, while the upper two notes are played together on the beat and sustained evenly (Ex. 7). Spohr was the first to advise this practice in his *Violinschule* (1832): “At the four-part chord of the first bar the bow



Ex. 7. The “2 + 2 method.”

¹⁴ Pierre Marie François de Sales Baillot, *L'art du violon* (Paris, 1834; trans. Louise Goldberg as *The Art of the Violin*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 85.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 227-8.

performers on the modern violin, as we listen it in many recordings and live performances in recitals and competitions, despite all the available scholarship.

Problems of Chords in the Opening Theme

Before we comment on the practical issues of playing a chord, it is necessary to discuss the “unplayable” notation of the opening measures of the Chaconne. Should the up-beats be reiterated along with the lower parts or should they be left alone? The upbeats are impossible to play as Bach notated them. This has been a source of discussion for many years. It is not the purpose of this document to give a final verdict on the subject but to summarize findings and lead the performer to his/her own conclusions.

Boyden says: “Violin notation of early times, especially as to rhythm, was approximate, and the polyphony is written in long note values to show the player the musical progression and to help him distinguish the melodic and harmonic functions of the different voice parts.”¹⁷ With the exception of Wronski, Mostras, and Galamian,¹⁸ all editors studied in this document rewrote the opening measures, modifying the rhythm of the chord from half notes to dotted quarters. The remaining eighth note received two different treatments. The first group of editors, David, Hellmesberger, Herrmann, Auer, Flesch, Hambourg, Jacobsen, and Szeryng, reiterated the bottom voices along with the top eighth note. The second group, Joachim, Busch, Zimbalist, Rostal, and Schneiderhan left the eighth note as written.

¹⁷ Boyden, *History*, 429.

¹⁸ Their editions only reprinted Bach’s notation, even if they corroborated different executions.

Champeil was the only editor who rewrote the top voice in the chords as double-dotted quarter notes and turned the last note into a sixteenth note, following the Baroque practice of double-dotting.¹⁹ The scholar Sol Babitz also suggested this practice.²⁰ Melkus argues against this practice in the Chaconne by saying that Bach was well known for his meticulously careful notation. The most compelling case is a comparison of the opening eight measures with mm. 137-146 (Ex. 9 and 10). If in mm. 137-146 the melodic rhythm is in eighth notes, there is no



Ex. 9. Opening eight measures (from *BG* edition).

¹⁹ See Champeil's Foreword to his edition, pp. i-ii, where he quotes Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Leopold Mozart, and Joachim Quantz regarding this rule.

²⁰ Babitz, *The Violin*, 29.



Ex. 10. Mm. 137-46 (from *BG* edition).

reason to play the opening in double dotted rhythm. Melkus points out that an interpretation faithful to the text might be the correct one. “From this example we learn that even in a sarabande the dotted rhythm does not *have* to be overdotted.”²¹

The editors who indicated reiteration of the chord on the eighth note in the opening eight measures implied a *forte* dynamic and a slow tempo (see the discussion of tempo in Chapter I). Most of the editors of this group suggest an up-bow on the eighth note and a down-bow retake on the second beat of the next measure because of the characteristic *chaconne* rhythm (Ex. 11).



Ex. 11. Retakes at the second beats of Chaconne's opening (David's edition).

²¹ Eduard Melkus, “The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: Some Thoughts on the History of its Interpretation,” in Jon F. Eiche, ed., *The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: A Collection of Views* (Frangipani Press, 1985), 145.

Only Hambourg and Szeryng indicated consecutive down and up-bows (no retakes).

Hellmesberger was the most extreme, suggesting down-bows for every chord (Ex. 12). This



Ex. 12. Hellmesberger's edition, opening measures.

majestic gesture embodies the Romantic tradition of playing the Chaconne. Philip Spitta (1841-1894) expresses this conception: “The hearer must regard this chaconne as some phenomenon of the elements which transports and enraptures him with its indescribable majesty.”²² This was strong language, no doubt, but nonetheless a correct understanding of the affect associated with the dance in the Baroque. Quantz, for example, expressed this idea of grandeur in the same terms: “A *chaconne* is also played majestically.”²³ Szigeti called Hellmesberger's down-bows “false ‘monumentality,’” but notes, “yet at the time, probably thousands of violinists played it thus and tens of thousand of listeners accepted it at its face value.”²⁴

None of the editors who reiterate the chord on the eighth note justify their preference, although Flesch did so in his book *Art of Violin Playing*. He explains that to play the last eighth note without a chord “entails the loss of a goodly part of the splendid primal power of the

²² Philipp Spitta, “[The Chaconne for Violin],” in Eiche, 68.

²³ Quantz, *Versuch*, 291.

²⁴ Joseph Szigeti, “[Differing Interpretations of the Opening and Closing Bars],” in Eiche, 129.

theme.”²⁵ Szigeti also talks about “the loss of grandeur and power” caused by this practice.²⁶

Perhaps this practice was so aligned with the idea of majesty expressed by Spitta that few opposed it.

There are at least three good reasons not to reiterate the chord on the eighth note. The first was expressed by Moser in his edition co-edited with Joachim: “The chaconne is a dance, in which, in spite of the natural accent on the first crotchet [quarter note], the weight of the main accent falls on the dotted crotchet on the second beat of each bar, and this further necessitates that the last quaver [eighth note] should be the lightest possible upbeat. The dance rhythm with its ‘fatalistic energy’ can only be brought out clearly when the last quaver is not burdened by a heavy double stop.”²⁷ Champeil condemns the Romantic habit of playing heavy up beats “under the pretense of playing with grandeur.”²⁸

Rostal gives the second reason: “Since the quaver of the third bar is invariably played without the full chord, I play the first two bars likewise, playing the quaver on its own, and thus deviating from the treatment of bars 185 to 200 [where Bach supplies full chords].”²⁹ The possible explanation is that the eighth note in m. 3 is not usually played with a chord because of its difficult fingering (two intervals of fifths generates a bit of discomfort). In addition, the reiteration of the bottom two notes of the previous chord would cause a dissonance between the

²⁵ Carl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, 2 vols., trans. Frederick Herman Martens (New York: 1930), 2:151.

²⁶ Szigeti, in Eiche, 127.

²⁷ Andreas Moser, “Foreword,” *Johann Sebastian Bach: Six Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo*, eds. Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser (Berlin: Bote und Bock, 1908; reprint, New York: International Music Co., n.d.).

²⁸ Jean Champeil, “Foreword,” *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sonates et Suites pour violon seul*, ed. Jean Champeil (Paris: Heugel and Co., 1959), i.

²⁹ Max Rostal, “Editor’s Notes II,” *Johann Sebastian Bach: Drei Sonaten und drei Partiten für Violine allein BWV 1001-1006*, ed. Max Rostal (Leipzig: Peters, 1979), 142.

melody and the bass (C and B-flat). From among all editors of the first group, only Herrmann tried to come up with a solution by rearticulating F with the C (Ex. 13). All the others either left the eighth note in mm. 3 and 7 without a chord (David, Hellmesberger, and Auer, Ex. 14) or, even worse, reiterated the chord on the dotted quarter for the eighth note in m. 7 (Flesch, Jacobsen, Hambourg, and Szeryng, Ex. 15).



Ex. 13. Herrmann's edition, mm. 1-3.



Ex. 14. Hellmesberger's edition, mm. 1-7.



Ex. 15. Flesch's edition, mm. 1-7.

The third and most compelling reason is offered by Rostal in the quotation above. Bach himself writes out every upbeat chord in mm. 185-200 (with two intriguing exceptions in m. 186 and 187, see Appendix). Why did Bach rewrite every chord in these measures if he intended the chords to be reiterated at the opening? He could have saved himself considerable tedious work by following his own notation at the opening of the movement. This is strong evidence supporting the editors who left the upbeats of the opening measures without chords.

The Execution of Chords

Three types of chord execution will be studied in the Chaconne. They are exemplified in three different passages and they can be applied throughout the Sonatas and Partitas. The first

type appears in the first eight measures, the Chaconne's theme, and is essentially a chord with the melodic voice on the top. The second type of chord is found in m. 9, containing the melodic voice on the bottom. The third type of chord is found in mm. 10-16 with the melodic voice in the middle.

Melodic Voice on the Top (mm. 1-8)

1. Editions


There are specific instructions in violin treatises of the 20th century about the modern technique of playing chords. Auer follows the “2 + 2 method” and even warns the performer about the “incorrect” way of arpeggiating the chords in the opening of the Chaconne (Ex. 16).³⁰ He also proposes a new way of playing four-note chords by simultaneously attacking three notes before the beat and holding the top two notes on the beat (second measure in Ex. 16). Flesch observes the same method and he calls it “the nearest compromise to the completely broken chord.”³¹

³⁰ Leopold Auer, *Violin Master Works and their Interpretation* (New York: Carl Fischer, 1925), 23.

³¹ Carl Flesch, “Preface,” *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sonaten und Partiten für Violine solo*, ed. Carl Flesch (Leipzig: Peters, 1930), 2.

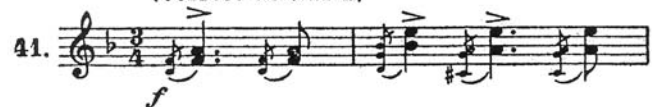
For instance:

(Written) (Incorrect execution)

40. 

but they must be played *firmly*, with a full tone, thus:

(Correct execution)

41. 

yet without any scratchy, rosiny tonal by-product!

Ex. 16. Auer's treatment of the chords for the opening measures.

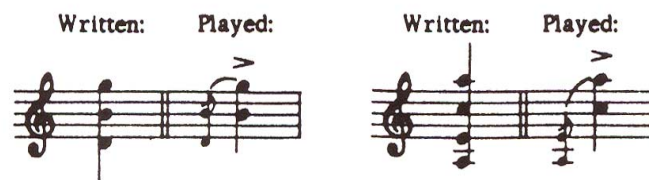
Szeryng, a pupil of Fleisch, stretches this concept of minimum arpeggiation to the limit. He states in his edition: "in order to avoid rhythmical distortions, one should strive for a type of chord playing characterized by the least possible amount of arpeggiation. The parts can be played simultaneously in three-part chords and almost simultaneously in four-part chords."³² Rostal, another pupil of Fleisch, also suggests the same concept in his edition: "even with a modern bow the player should be able to sustain a three-part chord without giving to arpeggiate; in the case of four-part chords, using the modern bow some spreading cannot be avoided, but it can be executed with such dexterity that the impression of beginning simultaneously is produced."³³ Szeryng's recording is the perfect example of control over this new conception of polyphonic playing.

Galamian never specifically illustrated in writing how to play the opening of the *Chaconne*. Nevertheless, his ideas about chords are clearly expressed in his book *Principles of*

³² Henryk Szeryng, "Foreword," *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo*, ed. Henryk Szeryng (Mainz: Schott, 1981), 13.

³³ Rostal, *Drei Sonaten*, 132.

Violin Playing and Teaching.³⁴ They are further exemplified in his most famous students' performances of the piece. He conforms to the "2 + 2 method" by writing: "If a three-note chord is broken, the usual procedure is to attack the low and middle notes together before the beat and then to move over to the highest note in such a way that the middle and high note are sounded together exactly on the beat"³⁵ (Ex. 17). However, Galamian also advises the simultaneous attack



Ex. 17. Galamian's treatment of chords.

of three-part chords. It is very unlikely that he endorsed an unbroken chord for the opening measure based on the recording of one of his most celebrated students, Itzhak Perlman. Throughout the piece, Perlman plays all the three- and four-part chords, with the melody on the top, using the "2 + 2 method." Galamian also indicates other less used types of three- and four-part chords, all broken before the beat (Ex. 18).



Ex. 18. Galamian less used types of breaking chords.

³⁴ Ivan Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 88-92.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

2. Recordings

A. Modern Violin

The recordings on the modern violin can be divided in two groups. In the first, which includes Heifetz, Grumiaux, Perlman, and Tetzlaff, the “2 + 2 method” was followed. In the other, including Szigeti and Szeryng, a more unbroken approach was observed, as laid out by Auer and Flesch. It is worth mentioning that the second group has a more forced sound than the first. The aim of their performances was to produce a violin sound that was as close to the sound of an organ as possible. The result is a heavier performance. The violinists of the first group have a cleaner, less forceful sound and a clearer texture.

B. Baroque Violin

Kuijken gives the impression of playing in the “2 + 2 method.” All the others play the bass notes on the beat, following the Baroque conventions (see p. 36-9). Huggett, Poppen, Podger, and Wallfisch arpeggiate the chords, sustaining the top two notes. Matthews is the only one to play two notes on the beat and two notes after it.

Melodic Voice on the Bottom (m. 9)

As seen above in the quotation by Rameau (p. 38), it was a common Baroque practice to arpeggiate a chord downwards if the melody was in the bottom. The practice was also followed in the Romantic tradition, as it is even today both by the “mainstream” and Baroque players. However, for a reason that might be other than merely technical, not all the editors and performers agree on this practice for m. 9. The dilemma is whether to emphasize the F in the

soprano, as the first note of the melody in the previous variation, or the D in the bass, as the first note of the melody in the next variation (Ex. 19). This chord was treated in four different ways. The first group turned the chord up. The second group turned the chord from the top down. The third group used the “recoiling” bow, arpeggiating the chord from bottom to top and back. The fourth group attacked the chord simultaneously and then proceeded to the bottom voice.



Ex. 19. Mm. 7-9 (from *NBA* edition).

First group (chord turned up)

1. Editions

Rostal states in the “Concluding Remarks” of his edition: “The first variation of the Chaconne may well have been interpreted by David’s contemporaries as follows [Ex. 20].”³⁶



Ex. 20. David’s execution given by Rostal (mm. 9-12).

³⁶ Rostal, *Drei Sonaten*, 132.

This example illustrates the type of chord execution employed by the first group. It is not clear from David's edition that he wanted the chord arpeggiated up. He slurs the D and the E in the bottom voice of m. 9, suggesting a legato bowing that could only work if the chord was arpeggiated down (Ex. 21).



Ex. 21. David's edition, m. 9.

Flesch clearly modified Bach's original notation in order to turn the chord up (Ex. 22).



Ex. 22. Flesch's edition, m. 9.

This is contrary to Flesch's own explanation of this passage in his book *The Art of Violin Playing* where he advocates the "recoiling" technique for this chord (Ex. 23)³⁷:

³⁷ Flesch, *The Art*, 1:155.

As chords in general and the avoidance of needlessly breaking them has already been treated in Part One of this work, the only remaining question is how chords are to be broken when thematic considerations forbid the natural break upward:

806. *Bach, Chaconne*

In breaking the chords in the usual manner the theme would sound as follows:

807. (the same)

Instead of:

808. (the same)

The only correct mode of execution from the thematic standpoint may be expressed in notation as follows:

809.

Ex. 23. Flesch's treatment for mm. 9-16.

2. Recordings


Most of the recordings illustrated the practice of the first group. Szigeti and Perlman turned the chord using the "2 + 2 method." Surprisingly, Kuijken, on the Baroque violin, also plays in this manner. All other early instrument violinists adhere to the Baroque practice of playing the bottom voice or voices on the beat before arpeggiating up. Since this was the same practice used for the subsequent chords in mm. 10-16, we will deal with it in detail when discussing the next type of chord.

Second group (chords turned from the top down)

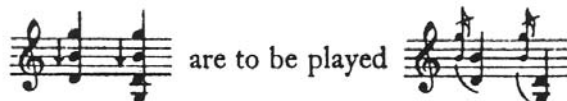
1. Editions

Only Hambourg and Wronski clearly indicated the execution of the chords from top to bottom by printing downward arrows (Ex. 24-5). Hambourg mentions Leclair's famous example from *Le Tombeau* to support this procedure, giving examples from the fugues of Sonatas III and I by Bach (Ex. 27).

CHORDS:

Three-string chords marked underneath with Q, thus:  are to be played by striking the three strings simultaneously.

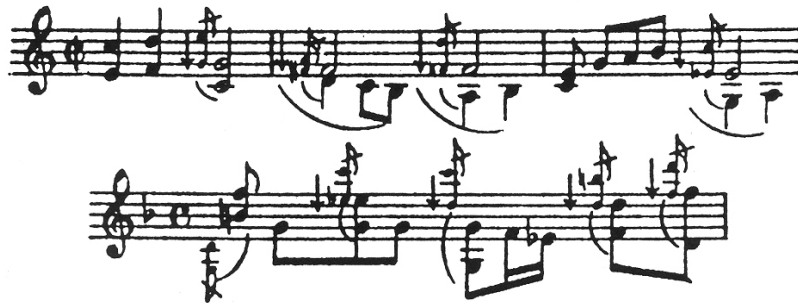
Three- and four-string chords marked at the side by a downward-pointing arrow:



Ex. 24. Hambourg's edition, p. 2 (Abbreviations).



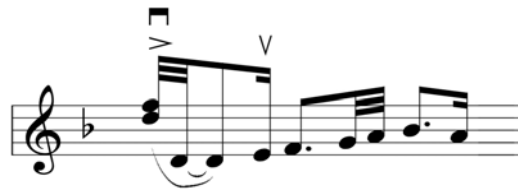
Ex. 25. Hambourg's edition, mm. 9-11.



Ex. 26. Hambourg's edition, examples from Sonatas III and I (Introductory Notes).

2. Recordings

Heifetz, Grumiaux, and Tetzlaff played the chord in m. 9 downwards, with the top voices on the beat, in a transformed version of the “2 + 2 method” (Ex. 27).



Ex. 27. Chord execution by Heifetz, Grumiaux, and Tetzlaff, m. 9.

Third group (“recoiling” bow)

The third way of playing the chord in m. 9, the so-called “recoiling” method, was not explicitly mentioned in the editions analyzed. We can only infer its use by looking at indications of executions for the next type of chord, chords with the melodic voice in the middle. Since this technique was widely used for that type of chord, we will explore it later in detail. None of the recordings cited here provided examples of this technique.

Fourth group (simultaneous chord attack)

Whenever this method was used in performing the chord of m. 9, it was observed in the subsequent chords, mm. 10-16. For that reason we will deal with it in the discussion of the next type of chord. Szeryng's recording was the only one to use a simultaneous attack (Ex. 28).



Ex. 28. Szeryng's simultaneous chord attack, m. 9.

Melodic Voice in the Middle (mm. 10-6)

This passage was also treated in four different ways. The first group turned the chord up. The second group turned the chord from the top down. The third group used the "recoiling" bow. The fourth group attacked the chord simultaneously and then proceeded to the primary voice.

First group (chord turned up)

1. Editions

As mentioned in the first group of the previous type of chord (melodic voice on the bottom), Rostal suggested that David and his contemporaries would most likely have arpeggiated the chords up in this passage (see Ex. 20). David's notation of the chords in his edition supports this conclusion (Ex. 29). The eighth note followed by a sixteenth note rest in the tenor voice

suggests equal importance of all voices and clearly indicates that the chord should be turned up, following the “2 + 2 method.” Joachim uses the same notation in his edition (Ex. 30). Rostal may have been mistaken to suggest that Joachim played in the recoiling manner (Ex. 31).



Ex. 29. David's edition, mm. 9-12.



Ex. 30. Joachim's edition, mm. 9-12.



Ex. 31. Rostal's theory of Joachim's execution.

It is not hard to understand why he notated it in this way. In the article “[Joachim Plays Bach],” Moser explains how Joachim changed his mind about the recoiling bow: “Apparently persuaded of the correctness of these opinions [the suggestions made by Lipinski], Joachim, returning again to Leipzig, now practiced the Chaconne following them and played it one day for Mendelssohn. He, however, clapped his hands together over his head and shouted to him quite excitedly: ‘How can you indulge in such overrefined maneuvers? Play Bach’s pieces confident in the way you played before, and above all keep in mind that intelligent, truly musical persons hear not only with the outer ear, but with the inner as well, and consequently always know from whence a motive comes and whither it goes; for the unmusical there is in any case no cure, such as you wish to effect for the passage in question according to the advice of David, Lipinski, or someone else!’ This exclamation served Joachim as long as he lived.”³⁸

2. Recordings

None of the recordings on the modern violin used the method of arpeggiating upwards. However, all of the performers on Baroque violin did follow this approach. Boyden suggests a reason for this difference, giving this specific passage as an example and following Quantz’s instructions (see quotation on p. 37). Boyden says that the dotted notes conventionally implied short rests. “Observing this convention would permit the player to break the first chord according to Quantz, to follow the chord by a brief rest at the dot, and to take the sixteenth note in an up-bow.”³⁹ If Quantz’s suggestion is observed, the chords would have to be quickly arpeggiated upwards, placing the bottom voice on the beat followed by a short rest.

³⁸ Andreas Moser, “[Joachim Plays Bach],” in Eiche, 113.

³⁹ Boyden, *History*, 441.

Tarling gives a more aesthetic reason for this method: “The heavy downward spread chords often heard on modern interpretations of the unaccompanied sonatas for violin by Bach are needlessly aggressive and instead of enhancing the contrapuntal line, only serve to obscure it in a series of accents which disturb the affect of the music. The ear picks up the expected notes from elaborate double stops where a thematic line is threaded through the phrase, without the player having to use tricks to emphasise [sic] certain notes in an unnatural and confusing way.”⁴⁰

The similarity of the David-Joachim approach and the Baroque violinists of today is striking. There are two hypotheses: either David and Joachim were following the “old” school of playing, or they followed their own musical instincts as advised by Mendelssohn. The only difference is that David and Joachim attacked the chord before the beat, while the performers on Baroque violin choose to attack on the beat. The only exception among the early instrument recordings is Kuijken, who follows the “2 + 2 method.”

Second group (chords turned from the top down)

The only editor who suggests arpeggiating the chord from the top to the bottom is Hambourg (see Ex. 25). This is likely to create the kind of “heavy downward spread chords” that disturbs Tarling (see quotation above). Wronski discontinues the use of downward arrows, as in the chord of m. 9, but strangely adds one for the four-part chord of m. 13, given that the intervening chords in mm. 10-2 are implicitly to be played bottom to top. None of the recordings reflected this method, as this method is rapidly disappearing from modern playing.

⁴⁰ Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 155.

Third group (“recoiling” bow)

1. Editions

None of the editors explicitly suggested the recoiling bow in their editions. Flesch was the first one to describe it in his book *The Art of Violin Playing* (see Ex. 23). Galamian also suggested a similar method for the passage illustrated in Ex. 32. “It is preferable to do the turning



Ex. 32. Galamian’s explanation of the “recoiling” bow.

of the chord in such a way that the melody note on the D string, which is attacked on the beat, can be kept sounding throughout, the bow not losing contact therewith at any time. Such a rendition is shown as (a) in the example. This, however, involves a great amount of pressure in order to sound three strings simultaneously. If this cannot be done without undue accent, then the method under (b) should be applied; but in this latter case one must try to keep the D string sounding as long as possible so that the reiteration is barely noticeable. The actual turning to the upper string and return should be done very rapidly.”⁴¹

⁴¹ Galamian, *Principles*, 91-2.

It is easy to see how Galamian's first choice is a modification of his second choice, the recoiling method. The fact that he preferred the more simultaneous attack to the recoiling method is relevant, and it could mean that he considered recoiling as an imperfect and easier way of playing.

2. Recordings

Heifetz and Grumiaux are the only performers to use the recoiling bow. Heifetz, a pupil of Auer, shows us exactly what his teacher advocated for this passage, the recoiling bow. Flesch, also a pupil of Auer, gives us another hint in his writings (see Ex. 23 above) of what would be Auer's idea, for he assimilated much of Auer's suggestions. Grumiaux's sound quality is so pure that he obviously prefers the recoiling bow for that passage in order to keep the sound unforced.

Fourth group (simultaneous chord attack)

1. Editions

The next method of playing chords evolved from the recoiling method and can be seen as an extension of it. It is not clear who employed it for the first time. Champeil gives the first hint in his edition. He omits a detailed description of the chords but states in his notes: "In order to facilitate the production of the chords, play near the fingerboard."⁴² There is a question of whether Champeil – the first to give precise instruction in a performance edition of the conventions of the Baroque period – suggests the chords should be struck simultaneously. This would be surprising, if not disappointing, since it would go against all his markings to make the Chaconne lighter. It would be more logical to think that he follows Quantz in this matter, since

⁴² Champeil, *Sonates*, XII.

he draws much from Quantz to support his conclusions (see quotation from Quantz on chords, p. 37).

Jacobsen provides the most intriguing execution when he writes: “Each trichord is played with heavy pressure of the bow stick on the finger-board. The bow is held one inch above the nut and slowly dragged simultaneously across the three strings for a length of 2 inches, making a loud scraping noise.”⁴³ He notated the chords to be played as *appoggiaturas* to the main voice, with accents on that voice after the chord, producing a very unusual effect (Ex. 33).



Ex. 33. Jacobsen's edition, mm. 9-12.

Rostal quotes Flesch's statement that "a correct rendering may only be accomplished at the expense of a somewhat forced tone-production alien to the instrument." To that he adds: "Since then the technique of the violin and bowing has advanced; nowadays it need not necessarily amount to assault and battery on the ear."⁴⁴ Rostal proposes the possibility of playing this passage close to the original notation (Ex. 34). Rostal's comment clearly implies the idea of

⁴³ Maxim Jacobsen, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Violin Solo-Sonaten und Partiten*, ed. Maxim Jacobsen (New York: Peters, 1961), 19.

⁴⁴ Rostal, *Drei Sonaten*, 139.






Ex. 34. Rostal's simultaneous execution of chords, mm. 9-12.

evolution in violin playing. The new way of executing chords simultaneously seems to be, for him, a perfected way of playing Bach's Sonatas and Partitas.






Szeryng also suggests the simultaneous attack on chords: "In order to avoid rhythmical distortions, one should strive for a type of chord playing characterized by the least possible amount of arpeggiation."⁴⁵ He then gives a schematic diagram of how three- and four-part chords should be executed. Notice that the chord with an asterisk is the method he recommends for playing this passage in the Chaconne (Ex. 35).

⁴⁵ Szeryng, *Sonatas*, 13.

three-part:

| | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |
| Theme in the | upper part | middle part | lower part |

four-part:

| | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  | or ^{*)}  |  |
| Theme in | Soprano | Alto | Tenor | | Bass |

Ex. 35. Szeryng's edition (Performance Directions).

This method is the same as prescribed by Galamian. Szeryng explains how unbroken chords can be accomplished: "Non-arpeggiated playing of chords is facilitated by means of a relatively restricted use of the bow. We can avoid unsuitable accents and roughnesses by starting with the middle part of the bow (never at the frog) and near the fingerboard (directing the bow towards the bridge after the initial attack). The quitting of parts which are not sustained should not be too sudden, but should be accomplished as skillfully and inaudibly as possible."⁴⁶

2. Recordings

The performance with the most forced and unnatural sound is by Sziget. Szeryng is a model for those who feel that this passage (and other passages in the Sonatas and Partitas) should be played non-arpeggiated. Perlman follows Galamian's first suggestion on how to play this

⁴⁶ Ibid.

passage (see p. 59-60). Surprisingly, Tetzlaff, who clearly aims for a more historically aware performance, follows the same method here, a method that draws more from the Romantic tradition than from Baroque practice.

CHAPTER IV

PROBLEMS OF ARPEGGIOS

Bach adds the word *arpeggio* to two passages in the Chaconne, mm. 89-120 and mm. 201-208. For the first passage Bach provides a model for its performance but not for the second one. Editors and performers have applied a variety of approaches to these passages since David's "rediscovery" of the piece in 1840. To understand these approaches we first have to try to grasp the original meaning of *arpeggio* in a historical context.

Historical Perspective

I. 18th Century

According to Leopold Mozart, the word *arpeggio* comes from *arpa* (harp in Italian).¹ François Couperin (1668-1733) says that the origin of the *arpeggio* may be found in the Italian *sonades* (sonatas).² It consists of a series of chords with the instruction *arpeggio*, conventionally played in a set of rhythmic patterns. Sometimes the word *arpeggio* was omitted, but the composer expected its execution. Geminiani was the first to give systematic examples of how

¹ Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer grundlichen Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756; trans. Editha Kocker, as *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948), ch. 8, sec. 3, para. 18.

² François Couperin, *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* (Paris, 1716), as quoted in David Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 406, fn.8.

arpeggios could be executed in his book *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751), Ex. XXI. He gives eighteen ways of arpeggiating a three-measure progression, the first three of which are shown in Ex. 36.³



Ex. 36. Geminiani's *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751), Ex. XXI.

L'Abbé le fils gives thirteen examples of arpeggiation with a few suggestions for fingering in his *Principes du Violon* (Principles of the Violin), three of which are shown in Ex. 37.⁴

³ Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (London, 1751; facsimile reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 28.

⁴ L'Abbé le fils, *Principes du Violon* (Paris, 1761; facsimile reprint Genève: Minkoff, 1976), 50.

Exemples pour apprendre à faire toutes sortes d'Arpeggio sur trois cordes.

Arpeggio

Même Arpeggio noté par Abbreviation.

Arpeggio d'Octave, et de Sixte, pour monter et descendre la main diatoniquement avec des Coups d'Archet différents.

1^{er} Coup-d'Archet

II^e Coup-d'Archet

III^e Coup-d'Archet

Ex. 37. L'Abbé le fils' *Principes du Violon*.

The majority of the arpeggios provided by Geminiani and L'Abbé le fils start on the bottom note for acoustic reasons. Once the bass note is sounded it generates harmonics that help to produce more resonance. In fact, there is only one example in Geminiani's treatise that starts on the top note. However, downward arpeggiation was also discussed and used. François Duval (1673-1728) comments in his Sonata VII, book V, for violin and basso continuo (1715): "This

piece can be arpeggiated in different ways; everything in chords of three or four notes ought to be arpeggiated.”⁵ He then gives models of arpeggiation starting on the top note (Ex. 38).⁶



Ex. 38. François Duval’s Sonata VII, book V, for violin and basso continuo (1715).

Leopold Mozart made the most relevant comments on arpeggios. “The style of performing these broken chords is partly indicated by the composer; partly carried out by the violinist according to his own good taste.” He then gives six examples of arpeggios and adds: “As the Arpeggio is indicated in the first bar of each example, so must the following notes, written one above the other, be continued in the same manner.”⁷

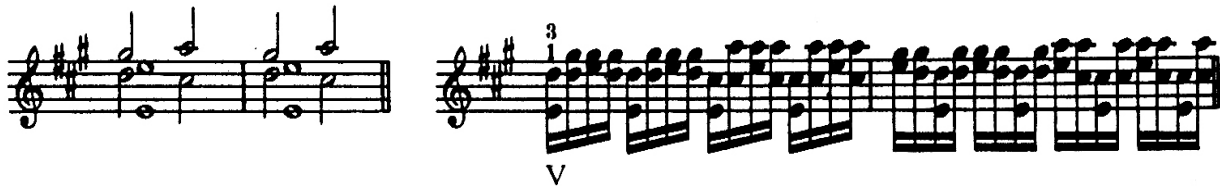
In his treatise (1791), Francesco Galeazzi (1758-1819) divides arpeggios into three categories: *arpeggi sciolti*, *arpeggi legati*, and *arpeggi misti* (detached, slurred, and mixed arpeggios). He agrees with Leopold Mozart: “if it is so notated at the beginning, its bowing, as well as the disposition of the notes, is to be continued throughout the same passage.” He adds: “if the indication is for separate bows, it should be continued separated; if it is slurred, it is continued with the same bowing that is prescribed at the beginning.” Galeazzi considered slurred arpeggios “almost all trivial, commonplace, and in bad taste. Although once much used, they are

⁵ Quoted in Boyden, *History*, 439.

⁶ Boyden, *History*, 439.

⁷ Mozart, *Versuch*, ch. 8, sec. 3, para. 18-9.

now considered insufferable by those of good taste.”⁸ He also states that if the arpeggio is made of four notes it will be necessary to bow the notes two by two (that is, in double-stops), in such a way that each pair of strings is touched consecutively (Ex. 39-40).



Ex. 39. Galeazzi's *Elementi*, arpeggiation in double-stops.



Ex. 40. Representation of Galeazzi's arpeggiation in open strings.

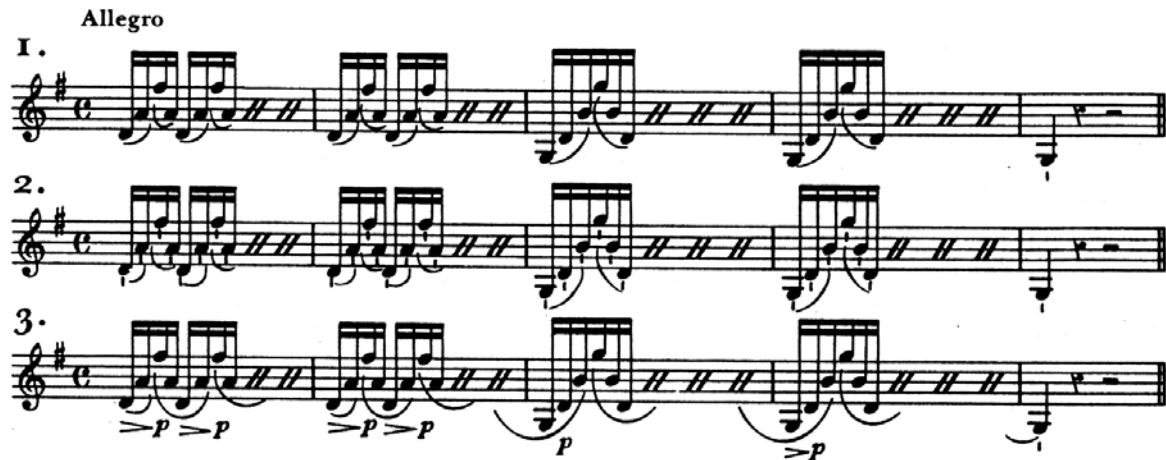
II. 19th Century

Baillot gives a concise survey on arpeggios in his treatise (1834). He speaks about the importance of artistic expression in arpeggios: “One should pick out an effect in them, that is to say something which stands out above everything else. This effect can be produced by emphasising the bass notes and playing the other notes piano, by bringing out the melody in the

⁸ Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica, con un saggio sopra l'arte di suonare il violino analizzata, ed a dimostrabili principi ridotta* (2 vols., Rome, 1791-6, 2nd ed., vol. 1, 1817), art. 14, 181-90, as quoted in Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 156-7.

top part, by varying the bow, or indeed by executing all the arpeggios as evenly as possible.”⁹

Ex. 41 contains simple arpeggios he included in his treatise.



Ex. 41. Baillot's arpeggiation.

III. 20th Century

The concept of arpeggiation was known in the previous centuries to be an element of improvisation. As composers discontinued the use of unnotated arpeggio passages in their music in the early nineteenth century, performers and teachers omitted its discussion as an improvisatory art. Arpeggios were considered in various methods as exercises to develop right hand technique (see for instance Sevcik's *School of Bowing Techniques*, Op. 2, Schradieck's *School of Violin Technics*, Book 3, and other methods).

⁹ Pierre Marie François de Sales Baillot, *L'art du violon* (Paris, 1834; trans. Louise Goldberg as *The Art of the Violin*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 212.

Measures 89-120

I. Editions

Bach provides a clear model in the first measure of this passage (Ex. 42). If we would



Ex. 42. Bach's model, m. 89 (facsimile of autograph).

follow Mozart and Galeazzi's opinions, the entire passage would be performed using the same rhythmic pattern and bowing designated by Bach. Champeil was the only editor to faithfully follow Bach's model. All the other editors gave their own versions for the execution of the passage. David was the first to write out all 32 measures of arpeggiation, an example that was followed to the end of the 20th century. His successors not only copied some of his ideas but also added many expressive markings and dynamic nuances. No two editions match each other. The amount of detail is so overwhelming that describing them all would be a tedious task. Instead, we can observe two general approaches. The first was established by David and followed by Hellmesberger, Herrmann, Auer, Flesch, Hambourg, Jacobsen, Mostras, Zimbalist, Rostal, and Szeryng. In this approach the arpeggios are made up of complex patterns that change every section; the following passage has four sections, each eight measures long. David's most original

pattern, copied by all editors of this group, occurs in the second section, mm. 97-104 (Ex. 43, mm. 97-8 of that section).



Ex. 43. David's edition, mm. 97-8.

The second approach was established by Joachim and was followed by Busch, Champeil, Wronski, Galamian, and Schneiderhan. It is closer to Bach's model and less bound to the section structure. The different arpeggio patterns occur in order to facilitate execution of quadruple chords, for which Bach does not provide a model. The quadruple chords received a variety of treatments also shared by the first group of editors. Some were just "compressed" in order to continue Bach's model for triple chords, creating a double-stop (Ex. 44-5); some received a sextuplet pattern (Ex. 46); others a sixth-fourth note pattern (Ex. 47); others a more complex treatment (Ex. 48-9); and even removal of notes from Bach's original text, where the pattern takes precedence over the notes (Ex. 50-1). Both groups of editors applied a variety of bowing patterns to these basic figurations.



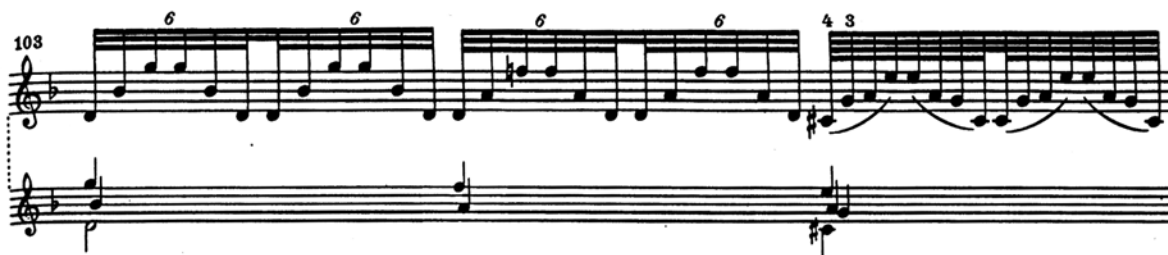
Ex. 44. Champeil's edition, mm. 103-4, ("compressed" pattern).



Ex. 45. Joachim's edition, mm. 103-4.



Ex. 46. Joachim's edition, mm. 105-6.



Ex. 47. Galamian's edition, m. 103.



Ex. 48. Galamian's edition, m. 105.



Ex. 49. Busch's edition, m. 117-8.



Ex. 50. Schneiderhan's edition, m. 106.



Ex. 51. NBA edition, m. 106 (compare with Schneiderhan's edition above).

Tarling gives two contradictory statements. Referring to mm. 89-120, she says: “the arpeggios should be played in a strict rhythmic pattern to fit [the moving lower part] with the moving middle part, even though there is a static pedal note in the bass.” And later she adds: “In a sequence of these chords the pattern may be varied, perhaps starting in triplets and accelerating to semiquavers as the sequence progresses, and three note chords change to four-note chords. The notes may be played slurred, separate, or a mixture of the two according to context. It is usually more satisfying harmonically to commence with the lowest note of the written chord.”¹⁰

Flesch offers a long explanation for his treatment of this passage in *The Art of Violin Playing*. Here he defends the change of figuration at every eight measures: “The whole section comprises 32 measures, which belong together, harmonically and melodically – which form a unit. On the other hand, however, it is only with very rare exceptions that *Bach*, in conformity with the principal theme, has shaped the individual variations other than as eight-measure sections. There is no reason to suppose that *Bach* has made an exception in this case. Only the unified notation of the chords could lead one to think so. Did *Bach* actually intend to prescribe a definite line of march for the player by his manner of noting the first arpeggio? This, in view of his large-minded style, opposed to pedantry of every kind, is hardly to be taken for granted.”¹¹

¹⁰ Judy Tarling, *Baroque String Playing for Ingenious Learners* (Hertfordshire, UK: Corda Music Publications, 2000), 153.

¹¹ Carl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, 2 vols., trans. Frederick Herman Martens (New York: Carl Fischer, 1924-30), 2:153.

II. Recordings

A. Modern Violin

Heifetz and Szeryng were the only performers with a similar, yet not identical, approach to David. They included in their renderings the famous David figuration (see Ex. 43). The remaining performers mix David and Joachim's approaches.

Szigeti pays tribute to David by using his suggested *ricochet* (a series of notes made by a thrown stroke) in the last section (Ex. 52).



Ex. 52. Szigeti's execution as in David's edition, m. 113.

Perlman did not adhere to Galamian's edition, but he kept Bach's model for the first two sections, after which he uses a bowing suggested by Flesch (Ex. 53).



Ex. 53. Flesch's edition, mm. 103-5.

Grumiaux was the only one to keep thirty-second notes throughout the passage, adding some double-stops when quadruple chords needed it (the “compressed” model of Ex. 44). What prevented him from playing according to Bach's model was the bowing used for the last two sections, the same bowing suggested by Herrmann (Ex. 54).



Ex. 54. Herrmann's edition, m. 105, pattern starting on third section.

Tetzlaff used two basic patterns: thirty-second notes in mm. 89-100 and sextuplets from m. 101 onwards. This approach was similar to some recordings on the Baroque violin.

B. Baroque Violin

The early instrument performers can be divided in two groups: the first followed Bach's model through the entire passage (Kuijken, Mathews, and Wallfisch) and the second started with Bach's model but switched to sextuplets in m. 97 onwards (Podger, Huggett, and Poppen). The first group treated the quadruple chords in two ways. Kuijken and Wallfisch used sextuplets when necessary, whereas Mathews used the "compressed" model (see Ex. 44). Poppen offers the most intriguing performance by playing the sextuplets very lightly and almost *ricochet*, the same bowing suggested by David in the last section (see Ex. 52).

Although the early instrument performers have their slight differences, on the whole the group uniformly chooses less extravagant bowing and rhythmic patterns and a simpler, more unified execution of the arpeggios.

Measures 201-8

I. Editions

David's edition not only served as a model for the previous passage, but in this passage it was copied in some way or other by all the editors except for Zimbalist, Champeil, Galamian, and Schneiderhan. Even Joachim, Busch, and Wronski – who belonged to the second group in the previous passage – now literally copied David's notation in double-stops (see Ex. 55). Compare it with Bach's autograph (Ex. 56).



Ex. 55. David's edition, mm. 201-8.



Ex. 56. NBA edition, mm. 201-8.

The problem with this passage might be simply semantic regarding the definition of arpeggio. *New Grove* states, “arpeggio (It. from *arpeggiare*: ‘to play the harp’): The sounding of the notes of a chord in succession rather than simultaneously.”¹² If arpeggio means a succession of notes of a chord, the question is raised as to why David and his followers use double-stops in arpeggio passages. The treatises of Geminiani, L’Abbé le fils, and Galeazzi give

¹² “Arpeggio,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 11 March 2004), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

us some clues to the answer. While none write specifically about this matter, they all give musical examples that involve some kind of double-stops. For instance, in Ex. 44 we saw a “compressed” double-stop also found in examples from Geminiani and L’Abbé le fils (Ex. 57-8).



Ex. 57. Geminiani, example 8.



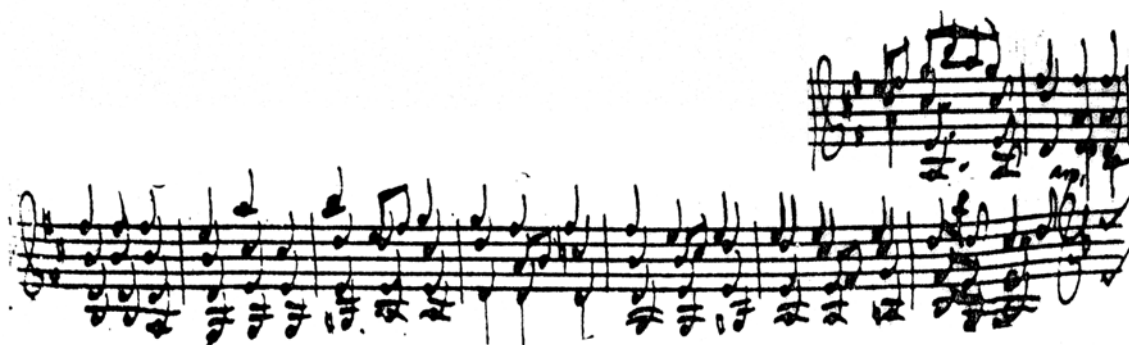
Ex. 58. L’Abbé le fils, example 2.

Perhaps the best example for the passage in question is found in Galeazzi’s treatise. He recommended the execution of quadruple chords strictly in double-stops (see Ex. 39). If Galeazzi’s method would be followed in mm. 201-8, it would sound as in Ex. 59. This is not the exact notation used by David, but it is easy to see how his figuration could have evolved. In this way, improvised arpeggiation *could* have involved some degree of double-stops.



Ex. 59. Application of Galeazzi's method in mm. 201-2.

Another problem of this passage is where to start the arpeggio and when to stop it. Bach did not include a model for this passage. His placement of the abbreviation *arp.* (*arpeggio*) under m. 201 is not clear (Ex. 60), and it is also unclear when to stop the arpeggios since there is no indication for it.



Ex. 60. Facsimile of Bach's autograph, mm. 200-8.

Nine of the editors started the arpeggiation on the first beat of m. 201. The remaining eight started it on the second beat. Perhaps the reason to start on the second beat is because the

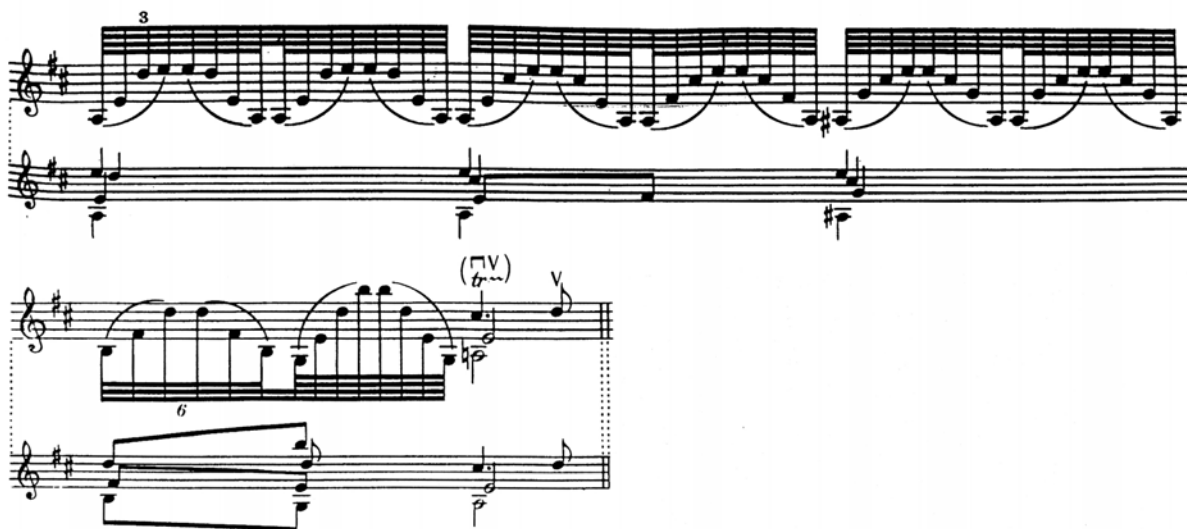
chaconne rhythm emphasizes this beat. Eduard Melkus, a renowned authority on Baroque violin, disagrees: “The arpeggio part in variation 51 (bar 201) most probably begins with the first beat (contrary to most editions and interpretations), because almost all the variations begin the new movement not with the second beat (as would be logical from the upbeat beginning in bar 1), but already on the first beat; namely, variations 3, 7-10, 14-7, 19-23 (the first arpeggio), 31, 36, 38, 39, 45, 54, 55, 57, and 61.”¹³ There is no logical explanation for the editor’s choice in this matter. It looks like each one of them treated this problem according to their own musical taste. Perhaps this is a reflection of the ambiguity that Bach himself explores in the piece.

The majority of the editors notated the chords on the first beat of m. 208 to be played as chords, not as part of the arpeggio section. Champeil, Galamian, and Schneiderhan, the editors who treated the arpeggio passage as *arpeggios* and not as double-stops, arpeggiated those chords (Ex. 61-3). Herrmann is the exception among the editors who followed David’s notation, for he breaks the chords in m. 208 (Ex. 64).



Ex. 61. Champeil’s edition, mm 207-8.

¹³ Eduard Melkus, “The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: Some Thoughts on the History of its Interpretation,” in Jon F. Eiche, ed., *The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: A Collection of Views* (Frangipani Press, 1985), 147.



Ex. 62. Galamian's edition, mm. 207-8.



Ex. 63. Schneiderhan's edition, mm. 207-8.



Ex. 64. Herrmann's edition, mm. 207-8.

II. Recordings

A. Modern violin

All performers comply with David's notation (although with some differences in bowing). Most also start the arpeggios on the first beat of m. 201 and play chords in m. 208. The exceptions are Szeryng, who starts the arpeggios on the second beat, and Tetzlaff, who breaks the chords in m. 208 as in the preceeding measures. Surprisingly, Tetzlaff do not follow the more historically correct approach of playing this passage in arpeggios (compared with the Baroque violin recordings).

B. Baroque violin

All performers play this passage in arpeggios as described in *New Grove*. They also start the arpeggios on the second beat of m. 201. The chords in m. 208 do not receive a unanimous treatment. Wallfisch, Huggett, and Poppen arpeggiate them as in the preceeding measures. Kuijken, Mathews, and Podger play them as regular chords, although the chords are naturally arpeggiated by Baroque convention.

CHAPTER V

PROBLEMS OF ARTICULATION

There are two basic problems in the Chaconne regarding articulation: sustained and detached strokes. In fact, these two elements form the basis of the whole bow technique. To understand their use in any period of music history is to understand the style of that particular time. Therefore, they constitute problems of style rather than problems of technique. Comparing the Romantic tradition, which is still the modern mainstream way of playing, with the Baroque style of Bach's time can give us clues to understand how these works were performed in the past and how they can be played in the present.

The key to understanding the differences between the Romantic and the Baroque styles rests largely on the type of bow used. François Tourte (1748-1835) developed his revolutionary design which provided the basic model for the modern bow during the late-eighteenth century. This new model was longer than the previous one, evolving from a straight shape to an inward curve. It also gained more height and, as a result of this, more power in the upper half. The basic bow-stroke used with this type of bow is less lifted and more on the string. While the pre-Tourte models were designed to be comfortably managed in the lower half, the modern model uses the upper half for passagework in a more sustained stroke. The elasticity of the area in the middle of the bow gives more spring and lightness to fast notes, contrary to the pre-Tourte bows, which did not leave the string as easily. As a result of these changes, the style of playing became more sustained and articulation in general was lost.

Sustained Strokes

There are three types of problems involving sustained strokes in the *Chaconne*: the long slurs indicated by Bach; the “3-1 figure” bowing (three sixteenth notes under a slur followed by a separate one, or vice-versa); and the dotted rhythms, which are derived from the “3-1 figure” but represent a special problem in the *Chaconne*.

I. Long Slurs

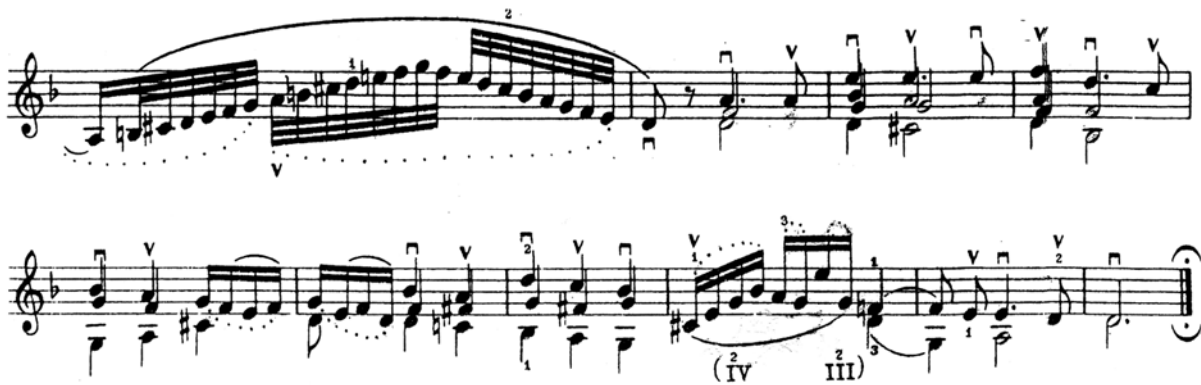
Bach notated long slurs in mm. 29, 45, 47, 49-51, 248, and 255 (long slurs meaning more than a beat under a slur). In the Romantic tradition these long slurs were considered too long and awkward. There is a question as to whether Bach intended the slurs as bowing indications or whether he expected the performer make the appropriate changes. Leopold Mozart raises the question: “If, and when they should be slurred or detached? Both depend on the cantilena of the piece and on the good taste and sound judgement of the performer, if the composer has forgotten to mark the slurs, or has himself not understood how to do so.”¹ Apparently this was not the case with Bach. Bach is known by Baroque scholars for being quite precise in his bow indications for strings. The only true autograph known today (the one used in Joachim’s edition) suggests that Bach wrote it as a fair copy for performance purposes.² If closely followed, Bach’s markings are unequivocal as to his musical intentions once the style is understood.

¹ Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer grundlichen Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756; trans. Editha Knocker, as *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 83.

² At the end of each staff there are “directs,” showing the initial notes of the next line, and at the bottom of each right-hand page are the instructions *V[olti] S[ubito]: volti presto*. For details see Jon F. Eiche, “Background,” in Jon F. Eiche, ed., *The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: A Collection of Views* (Frangipani Press, 1985), 22.

1. Editions

The treatment of the long slurs defies any categorization. The only editor to give the original notation for all the long slurs was Mostras, although he suggested bow changes in mm. 248 and 255 by using dotted slurs (Ex. 65). All others heavily editorialized the long slurs.



Ex. 65. Mostras' edition, mm. 248-57 (see mm. 248 and 255 for the slurs).

Again, as in the arpeggio passages, David was the most influential editor for later generations. It is quite obvious that David based his edition on the manuscript (or manuscripts) used by Dörffel in the *BG* edition. The *BG* edition was widely used until the autograph was found by Joachim and used for his edition. After him, editors tended to use the autograph as the basis for their editions, although Auer, Hambourg, and Zimbalist show some vestiges of the older version (perhaps old habits of playing). There are some significant differences in articulation between the *BG* and *NBA* editions, and the editors who followed the *BG* edition cannot be blamed for its numerous inaccuracies. For instance, compare mm. 29 and 47 in the *NBA* edition and the *BG* edition (Ex. 66-9).



Ex. 66. *NBA* edition, mm. 28-9.



Ex. 67. *BG* edition, mm. 28-9.



Ex. 68. *NBA* edition, mm. 45-7.



Ex. 69. *BG* edition, mm. 45-7.

These differences of articulation are due to the ambiguities in the manuscripts that Dörffel used. In the preface for the edition published by Henle, Klaus Rönnaun says: “Not even connoisseurs of Bach’s orthographical practices for bowing are always able to assign the bowing

marks unambiguously to the notes. Although carefully written, it is sometimes unclear where the bowing marks begin and end.”³

In general, however, the changes in articulation go beyond differences in the manuscripts. They were deliberately made in order to conform to a style, namely, the Romantic style. David and his successors changed articulation beyond recognition. Compare Ex. 68 above with David’s treatment of m. 47 (Ex. 70).



Ex. 70. David’s edition, m. 47-8.

The next four editors, including Joachim and Auer, copied David in this measure. Only three editors were faithful to the autograph: Busch, Champeil, and Mostras. Even the more modern editors like Galamian, Rostal, Szeryng, and Schneiderhan created their own bowing for this measure (Ex. 71-4).



Ex. 71. Galamian’s edition, m. 47.

³ Klauss Rönna, “Preface,” *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sechs Sonaten und Partiten für Violine Solo*, ed. Klauss Rönna (Munich: G. Henle, 1987), v.



Ex. 72. Rostal's edition, m. 47.



Ex. 73. Szeryng's edition, m. 47.



Ex. 74. Schneiderhan's edition, m. 47.

Another passage that was characteristically modified was mm. 49-51. Again, David inspired his successors to make their own choices of bowing (Ex. 75-9). Even more modern editors like Galamian and Schneiderhan still uses some “fancy” bowing (Ex. 80-1).



Ex. 75. David's edition, mm. 49-51



Ex. 76. Hellmesberger's edition, mm. 49-51.



Ex. 77. Auer's edition, mm. 49-51.



Ex. 78. Hambourg's edition, mm. 49-51.



Ex. 79. Zimbalist's edition, mm. 49-51.



Ex. 80. Galamian's edition, mm. 49-51.



Ex. 81. Schneiderhan's edition. Mm. 49-51.

Perhaps the most commonly adulterated slurs are in mm. 248 and 255. The longest slur of the Chaconne is in m. 248, covering three beats (Ex. 82). It is interesting that David and the



Ex. 82. NBA edition, m. 248.

editors after him, up to Auer, maintained the original slur in m. 248. After Auer, all editors split the bow in some way most likely for the purpose of creating a sense of “grandeur.” Even Champeil is not an exception, marking a different bowing with dotted slurs (Ex. 83).



Ex. 83. Champeil’s edition, m. 248.

The slur in m. 255 is also traditionally split in various ways. For all editors, the ending of the Chaconne is majestic, and splitting the slur generates the power necessary to convey its grandiosity. Zimbalist even adds a “*nobile*” at this measure (Ex. 84). Melkus, once more,



Ex. 84. Zimbalist’s edition, mm. 252-7 (*nobile* in m. 255).

disagrees with this view: “The discrepancy between the notation and most modern interpretations is particularly striking at the conclusion of the work. According to modern formal principles, a *forte* is expected at the end of such a monumental movement (this also assures the personal success of the player), and so Bach’s intention is altered by subdividing the slurs, by

high positions, etc. But if we read the ending without bias, in the third- and second-to-last measures it shows a hemiola, which is underlined by the slurring together of the eight sixteenth notes, and after all the many chords, tapers off into two parts and an *unisono* conclusion. Was Bach's intention then more of a piano ending, as we find it so often in the baroque era? If one plays the original bowing, the conclusion will automatically finish quietly.”⁴

2. Recordings

A. Modern Violin

Most of the performers split the long slurs in order to create a more legato sound. There are a few insignificant exceptions, and when they occur it is hard to tell if an “original” performance was intended, since the general sound production and style are clearly Romantic. Tetzlaff is the closest to the original, although only four out of the eight measures analyzed are played according to the autograph, mm. 29 and 49-51.

B. Baroque Violin

Unexpectedly, most of the changes were found among the Baroque violinists. Minor adjustments in order to accommodate bowing are inevitable, but changing articulation in Bach is something to be carefully considered. Tarling suggests: “ Breaking slurs for the convenience of what happens next in the music is not good practice... If a slur is split, the phrasing and articulation will automatically be changed. Often the effort involved in maintaining a slow bow to execute the marked slur is part of the effect required: it should sound held back.”⁵

⁴ Eduard Melkus, “The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: Some Thoughts on the History of its Interpretation,” in Eiche, 148.

⁵ Judy Tarling, *Baroque String Playing for Ingenious Learners* (Hertfordshire, UK: Corda Music Publications, 2000), 144.

Matthews', Wallfisch's, and Kuijken's most evident change in Bach's long slurs occurs in mm. 49-51. A probable purpose for the change was to accentuate the beginning of the descending scale, each time on a down-bow. If played as originally notated, each subsequent measure would have a different bow direction for the slur (Ex. 85).



Ex. 85. Bowing used by Matthews, Wallfisch, and Kuijken, mm. 49-51.

Mathews and Wallfisch made another surprising change at m. 248 by splitting the slur for “grandeur.”

II. The “3-1 figure”

The “3-1 figure” (three sixteenth notes under a slur followed by a separate one or vice-versa) is found in mm. 4-5, 30-2, 37-45, 53-69, 77-9, 84, 124, 149-52, and 210-28. This type of sustained bowing became a problem for the Romantic performer because the new Tourte bow required evenness in sound. The 3-1 pattern is uneven by nature since the bow speed spent in the single note has to be three times faster than the slurred notes if the player wants to be in the same part of the bow. Galamian expresses this “problem” in his treatise *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*: “The immediate problem is that the sudden increase in speed produces an increase in sound. If such a dynamic change is not desired, then a quick adjustment has to be made by

reducing the pressure for exactly the right amount to compensate for the increase in speed. This necessarily involves, also, a simultaneous move of the sounding point toward the fingerboard.”⁶

In reality, evenness of sound was *not* expected from slurs in the Baroque style. Leopold Mozart is the writer with the most to say about the use of slurs: “Often three, four, and even more notes are bound together by such a slur and half-circle. In such a case the first thereof must be somewhat more strongly accented and sustained longer; the others, on the contrary, being slurred on to it in the same stroke with a diminishing of the tone, even more and more quietly and without the slightest accent.”⁷ Slurring was part of Baroque rhetoric, not just a bow technique.

1. Editions

Mm. 4-5, 45, 47, 59, 65-7, 69, 84, 124, 149-51, 210-2, 214-5, and 217-20 were not included in the comparison of editions because these measures differ in the *BG* edition and *NBA* edition. The manuscripts used for Dörffel’s edition probably had different indications of articulations for these passages. The editors who used his edition either believed those markings were original or simply did not pay attention to the correct articulations.

Mm. 61-2 are examined here and serve as models for the “3-1 figure” in the entire piece. With the exceptions of Champeil and Mostras, most of the editors do not follow the autograph. These measures receive two treatments besides Bach’s original. David created the first type of treatment by tying four notes under a slur (Ex. 86). Hellmesberger, Herrmann, Joachim, and

⁶ Ivan Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 56.

⁷ Mozart, *Versuch*, 220.

Auer followed him. Strangely, Joachim does not observe the autograph that he notates in the second staff (Ex. 87).



Ex. 86. David's edition, mm. 61-2.



Ex. 87. Joachim's edition, mm. 61-2.

The second treatment, the “hooked” bow, is given by Busch. In this treatment, the last note is tied with the previous three in a detached way (Ex. 88). Flesch, Wronski, Galamian, Zimbalist, Rostal, and Szeryng follow him. This is by far the most common way of playing the “3-1 figure,” especially in faster passages (see the discussion below on dotted rhythms). Hambourg is the first to observe Bach’s original bowing (see Appendix), followed by Champeil, Jacobsen, Mostras, and Schneiderhan.



Ex. 88. Busch's edition, mm. 61-2.

2. Recordings

There is a clear distinction of approach between the modern violinists and the early instrument violinists. The latter play the original articulation notated by Bach while the former play the two types of Romantic articulation described above. Heifetz is the only one to follow David's bowing for mm. 61-2 (also notated in the edition of his teacher Auer). Tetzlaff, Perlman, Szeryng, Grumiaux, and Szigeti play the second type of articulation, the "hooked" bow.

III. Dotted Rhythms (mm. 8-24)

As said before, the dotted rhythms are essentially a "3-1 figure" and, therefore, present the same bow problem. Dotted rhythms in this context mean a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, like the ones found in mm. 8-24 and 210-6. Dotted rhythms made up of dotted quarter notes and eighth notes, as found in the opening theme, are not included here because they are more easily manageable. Here we will discuss mainly mm. 8-24 since they constitute a more difficult performance problem.

The dotted rhythm pattern in mm. 8-24 presents two problems: the first is its length and the second is its bowing. In his edition, Champeil recommends the use of double dotting for the entire Chaconne (see Chapter II, "Chords in Practice"). Baroque writers recommend the use of

double dotting, including Bach's son, Carl Philip Emanuel Bach: "Whatever the tempo of a movement, the short notes which follow the dotted notes are always played shorter than the written text indicates. So often is this so that it would be superfluous to add dots to the long notes or supplementary flags to the tails of the short notes."⁸ If the double dotted rhythm is applied to the opening theme, it also should be applied to the rest of the movement.

Bach does not indicate any special articulation for mm. 8-24. Quantz advises this about executing unslurred dotted rhythms: "The semi-quavers [sixteenth notes] following the dots must always be played very short and sharply in slow and quick tempos; and since dotted notes generally express something of the majestic and sublime, each note, if no slur stands above it, requires a separate bow-stroke; for it is not possible to express the short note after the dot as sharply with the same stroke, by detaching the bow, as can be done with a new up-stroke."⁹

Leopold Mozart gives a technique of execution with a group of four notes: "... if the first and third note be dotted, each note is played separately and with a special stroke, in such manner that the three-stroked notes [i.e., a dotted eighth, a sixteenth, and a dotted eighth] are played very late and the following note [a sixteenth note] played immediately after it with a swift change of bow." Tarling calls this stroke the "zigzag" bow. She gives an example of dotted rhythms in triple time: "this rhythm may be performed by working down the bow for two or three beats on each down bow, and retaking the bow by lifting just before the next strong beat, giving one

⁸ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen*, 2 vols., (Berlin, 1753-62; trans. W. J. Mitchell as *Essay on the true art of playing keyboard instruments*, New York, 1949), as quoted in Jean Champeil, "Foreword," *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sonates et Suites pour violon seul*, ed. Jean Champeil (Paris: Heugel and Co., 1959), i.

⁹ Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752; trans. Edward R. Reilly as *On Playing the Flute*, London & New York: Schirmer Books, 1966), chap. XII, sec. II, para. 13.

accent per bar.”¹⁰ Below is an example of this technique applied in mm. 17-20. Since the main beat of the Chaconne is the second, it is natural to retake the bow before attacking the second beat (Ex. 89).



Ex. 89. “Zigzag” bow. The slashes mean bow retake.

With the advent of the Tourte model, the Baroque practice of focusing on the lower part of the bow was lost, and evenness of all parts of the bow was sought. François-Antoine Habeneck (1781-1849) gives an example of the execution of dotted figures: “There is a third way which is widely used, particularly where there is a long series of these notes of unequal value and where the playing must be louder. It consists in playing the dotted note and the note following it in the same bow... One should use a lot of bow on the first note and play the second with a slight jerk of the wrist.”¹¹ This Romantic technique of playing dotted rhythms is still much used today.

1. Editions

None of the editors prints Bach’s original articulation in mm. 8-24. They all suggest either slurs or the “hooked” bow (two strokes in the same direction). The figure in m. 8 (a dotted

¹⁰ Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 96.

¹¹ François-Antoine Habeneck, *Méthode théorique et pratique de violon* (Paris, c. 1839), as quoted in Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 196.

eighth note followed by two thirty second notes) is slurred by most of the editors in one way or another, a practice initiated by David (Ex. 90). The first editor to print this figure unslurred is



Ex. 90. David's edition, m. 8.

Hambourg; Wronski, Galamian, Rostal, and Schneiderhan followed him. Mm. 18, 20, and 22 have two beats of dotted rhythms that are widely slurred (Ex. 91). Wronski, Galamian, and Schneiderhan are the only editors to leave all the dotted rhythms unslurred, although they use the “hooking” technique.



Ex. 91. Hellmesberger's edition, mm. 18-23 (see mm. 18, 20, and 22).

2. Recordings

A. Modern Violin

All performers play the dotted rhythms as written (no double dotting). Tetzlaff gives the feeling of lightness by playing a little faster (in general, the faster the performance the less double dotting is required since this technique tends to drag the tempo). All performers use the “hooked” bow. Tetzlaff and Perlman are the only ones to play Bach’s original articulation (non legato) in mm. 18, 20, and 22.

B. Baroque Violin

With the exception of Kuijken, all Baroque violinists play double dotted rhythms. Apparently, none of them use “hooked” bowing, and they seem to use the “zigzag” technique. Poppen, who uses slurs in mm. 17-24 (Ex. 92), is the only one to break from this otherwise “unified” approach to the passage.



Ex. 92. Poppen slurring, mm. 17-24 (same as Flesch’s edition).

Detached Strokes

In the Romantic tradition of violin playing there are generally three types of detached strokes: *détaché*, *martelé*, and *spiccato*. Although the name *détaché* initially meant “detached,” it has come to mean a smooth stroke on the string (no lifting), generally played on the upper half of the bow. It is not “detached” at all and at times can be perceived as *legato*. *Martelé* is a stroke derived from the *détaché*, also on the string but with an accent at the beginning and a clear stop after each stroke (usually played in the upper half). *Spiccato* is used for short bouncing strokes, usually played in the lower half.

All these strokes had different meanings and names throughout the centuries. The advent of the Tourte bow model and the French school of the 19th century were responsible for most of the changes. The French term *détaché* is derived from *staccato* (“detached” in Italian). Although etymologically both terms have the same meaning, *staccato* meant in the 17th and 18th centuries a clear detached stroke on the string in the lower half of the bow.¹² Since the beginning of the 19th century, *staccato* has meant a series of *martelé* in one direction (also firm *staccato*).

In the Baroque period, *spiccato* did not mean a thrown stroke, as we know today. In fact, *staccato* and *spiccato* had similar meanings. Sébastien de Brossard (1655-1730) defines *spiccato*: “*separer, disjoindre*: detach or separate the sounds from the others. A special term for stringed instruments, a bit like *staccato*.”¹³ Michel Corrette (1707-1795) gives a definition of

¹² For further information see Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 134-6.

¹³ Sébastien de Brossard, *Dictionnaire de Musique* (Paris, 1703), as quoted in Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 136.

“staccato or spiccato” as: “should be played dry [sec], without drawing the bow, and well detached, as often found in largos and adagios of concertos.”¹⁴

The “detached” stroke of the Baroque (*staccato* or *spiccato*) only means separate bows and nothing else. This stroke has a “bite” for each note, and if the bow wants to bounce away from the string it should be allowed to do so as long as the basic stroke starts on or near the string again. The modern concept of *spiccato* as a thrown stroke should not be applied to this music.¹⁵

Much of the Romantic bow technique was applied to Baroque music during the 19th century without an accurate understanding of Baroque articulation. The modern *détaché* (as legato in the upper half of the bow) should not be used in fast passages of Baroque music. Quantz states: “... sustained and flattering notes must be slurred to one another, but gay and leaping notes must be detached and separated from one another.”¹⁶ The modern *martelé* also is not suitable for Baroque music. Tarling says: “This is not a stroke suitable for the design of a Baroque bow, as the upper half of the bow is very weak due to the tapering of the stick.”¹⁷

I. Editions

The Romantics used two passages of the Chaconne for a display of detached stroke techniques: mm. 65-76 and 153-176. The main strokes used for these passages were *spiccato* and *détaché*, though *martelé*, *legato*, flying *staccato* (a series of *spiccato* strokes in one direction, generally up-bow), and *sautillé* (a faster and shorter *spiccato*) were also employed.

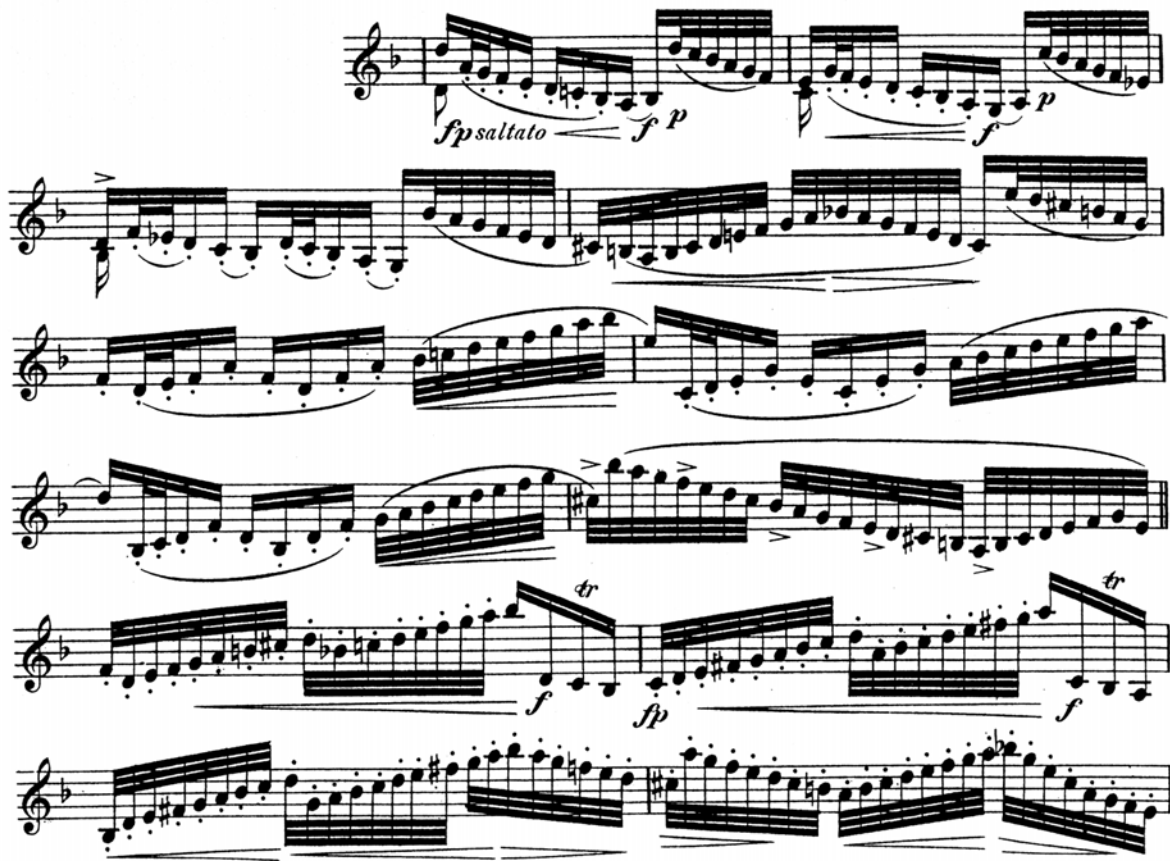
¹⁴ Michel Correte, *L'Ecole d'Orphée*, (Paris, 1738), as quoted in Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 136.

¹⁵ For further information see Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 134-6.

¹⁶ Quantz, *Versuch*, 123.

¹⁷ Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, 136.

Mm. 65-76: Once again it was David who started a tradition of playing flying *staccato* in mm. 65-71 and he suggests the use of *sautillé* in mm. 73-6, though not expressly marked but implied by the dots on the notes (Ex. 93).



Ex. 93. David's edition, mm. 65-76.

Herrmann is the first editor to suggest *détaché* in mm. 73-6, also implied by the dashes on the notes (Ex. 94).



Ex. 94. Herrmann's edition, mm. 73-6.

Busch totally disregards Bach's articulation by slurring the long beats in mm. 73-6. He was followed in this by Hambourg and Champeil (Ex. 95).



Ex. 95. Busch's edition, mm. 73-6.

Mostras and Schneiderhan are the only editors to print Bach's original notation. Even editors who include Bach's autograph either in facsimile or in a lower stave (Joachim, Flesch, Wronski, Galamian, and Rostal) do not absolutely comply with Bach's directions (Ex. 96).



Ex. 96. Flesch's edition, mm. 65-8.

Mm. 153-76: By far the most frequently used stroke in this passage is the *spiccato*, a model set by David. He also adds accents in the repeated note motive (Ex. 97).

pp

poco a poco cresc.

ff

Ex. 97. David's edition, mm. 153-76.

Busch is the only editor to add slurs in mm. 153-5 (Ex. 98).



Ex. 98. Busch's edition, mm. 153-5.

Flesch adds very specific articulation marks in this passage, varying from *spiccato* symbol to *détaché* symbol (Ex. 99).



Ex. 99. Flesch's edition, mm. 153-8.

Hambourg is the first to use *détaché* throughout the whole passage, followed by Champeil, Mostras, Wronski, and Galamian. Hambourg also adds some “phrasing” marks in the form of slashes (Ex. 100).



Ex. 100. Hambourg's edition, mm. 153-7.

The only editors to leave Bach's original articulation are Mostras, Galamian, and Schneiderhan. However, Schneiderhan suggests in a footnote: "Each note is given a short half bow stroke up to M. 177, even when playing a crescendo." This implies the use of *martelé*. The other two editors do not comment in writing on the execution of this passage.

II. Recordings

A. Modern Violin

Mm. 65-76: Szigeti and Heifetz follow David's edition by playing flying *staccato* in mm. 65-72 (see Ex. 93). Szeryng and Perlman follow Flesch's edition by playing *martelé* (see Ex. 92). Grumiaux and Tetzlaff are the only modern violinists to play in the Baroque tradition of *staccato*, a stroke that can also be described as a mixture of *détaché* and *spiccato*.

In mm. 73-6, Szigeti, Grumiaux, Szeryng, and Perlman play *détaché*. Heifetz play the slurs suggested by Auer (Ex. 101). Tetzlaff again play the Baroque *staccato*.



Ex. 101. Auer's edition, mm. 73-6.

Mm. 153-76: Szigeti and Heifetz follow David in playing plain *spiccato*. Szeryng and Perlman play a shorter *détaché*, but still in the upper half of the bow and on the string. Grumiaux and Tetzlaff again use the Baroque *staccato*. All of them use more *legato* as the passage comes to a *crescendo* at the end (mm. 165-76).

B. Baroque Violin

All violinists play mm. 65-76 with the Baroque *staccato*. There are some differences in articulation in mm. 153-76. Mathews and Wallfisch play it with the Baroque *staccato*. Kuijken plays it with a plain *spiccato*, as would a modern violinist. Huggett and Poppen play a *quasi détaché*, still on the lower half of the bow, but more on the string. Surprisingly, Podger plays a plain *détaché*, though most likely in the lower part of the bow.

CHAPTER VI

PROBLEMS OF FINGERINGS

With a single exception in the *Gavotte en Rondeau* from Partita III, m. 34 (Ex. 102), Bach gives no indication of fingerings in the entire Sonatas and Partitas. In order to understand the fingering for his music, we have to look for clues in the music and writings of his time. It is also important to understand the changes of style that affected the choice of fingering, from when the Sonatas and Partitas were composed, to this day.



Ex. 102. Facsimile of Bach's autograph, *Gavotte en Rondeau* from Partita III, m. 34.

Historical Perspective

I. 17th Century

The use of open strings was common. In the first part of the century, the fourth finger was sparingly used and only applied for the flat notes of the open strings (D-flat, A-flat, and E-

flat) and for B-flat and B-natural on the E string. In some cases an extension of the fourth finger was used to reach a C on the E string. In fact, the fat neck of the Baroque violin made the use of the fourth finger more inconvenient than on the modern violin. Open strings were used more often, as gut strings made the difference between open and stopped strings less noticeable than the metal and wound strings devised in the end of the 19th century.

In general, lower positions were used except when higher positions were needed in more virtuoso pieces.¹ The main reason for that restriction was the lack of mechanical support in the form of a chin-rest (invented c. 1820) or shoulder-rest (invented in the early 20th century). This impediment forced the performer to restrict the use of shifting to positions beyond the second position, otherwise the instrument could fall.

By the end of the 17th century, the level of violin playing was higher, particularly in Italy and Germany. Boyden says, “a good violinist of the time was accustomed to playing in the third and fourth position in Italy, and, in Germany, a virtuoso confidently navigated the sixth and seventh position.”² Composers like Biber, Schmelzer, and Walther, the precursors of German polyphonic music, made frequent use of the sixth position, the highest position used by Bach in the Chaconne (see Appendix, mm. 87-8).

II. 18th Century

The use of open strings had become more restricted. There were two reasons: firstly, to correct intonation when the strings were out of tune; secondly, to avoid the difference in timbre between open and stopped strings. Roger North (c. 1726) recommends “sounding all the notes

¹ See David Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 155, for an example by Uccellini (1649) showing the use of the sixth position.

² Boyden, *History*, 250.

under the touch [stopped], and none with the strings open; for those are an harder sound than when stopt, and not always in tun.”³ Leopold Mozart: “Open strings are too loud compared with stopped notes, and pierce the ear too sharply.”⁴

Leopold Mozart is the first writer known to recommend the use of a single string to obtain tonal uniformity, although Melkus warns that “since Leopold Mozart was by no means an innovator but only combined the best knowledge of his day, we may also assume that such aesthetics had already existed and been practiced for some time.”⁵ Leopold Mozart gives an example for the application of this uniformity (Ex. 103): “The descent could already be made at



Ex. 103. Leopold Mozart, tonal uniformity.

the note G (*), but not only do you remain up there, but after the descent in the fifth bar you re-ascend in the sixth. The same happens in the seventh and eighth bar. As now from the fourth bar

³ James Wilson, *Roger North on Music* (London, 1959), as quoted in Judy Tarling, *Baroque String Playing for Ingenious Learners* (Hertfordshire, UK: Corda Music Publications, 2000), 74.

⁴ Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer grundlichen Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756; trans. Editha Knoch, as *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 101.

⁵ Eduard Melkus, “The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: Some Thoughts on the History of its Interpretation,” in Jon F. Eiche, ed., *The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: A Collection of Views* (Frangipani Press, 1985), 146-7.

onward everything is played on one string, a pleasing result is obtained owing to the equality of the tone.”⁶

Galeazzi also gives an extensive survey on tonal uniformity in his treatise. He states in Rule I: “In expressive passages string changes should be attempted as little as possible; one should not play on four strings that which can be played on three, nor on three that which can be executed on two, nor on two that which can be performed on one.”⁷

Leopold Mozart gives a detailed account on shifting. Shifting is important because it can dictate the use of fingering. His numerous examples in chapter VII of his treatise show the careful avoidance of *portamento* (an expressive slide) in his choices of fingering, although there are a few exceptions. *Portamento* was not the rule for him, but it occasionally occurred for expressive means.

It is important to realize that the second half of the eighteenth century saw the appearance of the Classical style, a period when homophony (a single melodic line with accompaniment) was prevalent. Polyphonic music for solo violin was almost non-existent in this period. Composers explored even more the melodic qualities of the instrument, and uniformity of tone through the choice of fingering was a way of achieving the described homogeneity. This trend was carried through the nineteenth century and is still in use today.

⁶ Mozart, *Versuch*, 159.

⁷ Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica, con un saggio sopra l'arte di suonare il violino analizzata, ed a dimostrabili principi ridotta* (2 vols., Rome, 1791-6, 2nd ed., vol. 1, 1817), vol. 1, part 2, art. 7, as quoted in Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 118.

Editions

Double stops and chords present few problems due to their limited possibility of fingerings. Bach was very careful when writing polyphony for the violin. He masterfully employed the four strings for each polyphonic voice. In order to make the voices clearer, the performer should use open strings and lower positions whenever possible. This not only facilitates the perception of the voices but also allows a greater resonance of the instrument.

The problems with fingerings in the Chaconne occur mainly in passages of single notes. The Romantics, with their tonal uniformity, perceived those passages as melodies. They used as many notes as possible in one string in order to enhance melodic uniformity. This is in clear opposition to Bach's polyphonic writing. He used linear counterpoint in many of his compositions. Linear counterpoint is the technique of combining two or more melodic lines in one, in such a way that the voices are interpolated one after the other forming a continuous line. This technique was employed in the Chaconne in mm. 25-57, 69-83, 125, 153-64, 217-28, and 255. For the purpose of our study, we will compare the passage in m. 25-48 in all editions and recordings. From that passage, three measures from each pair of statements that received the most varied treatment were chosen for the analysis, mm. 26-8 (from the first pair of statements), mm. 33, 36, and 40 (from the second pair of statements), and mm. 41, 47 and 48 (from the third pair of statements). Occasionally a few other measures worthy of attention were examined.

I. Mm. 26-8

David notates the most widely used fingering in his time, the three measures being in the first and third positions (Ex. 104). The use of the second position in this period was restricted, probably because it recalled the “old style of playing.”



Ex. 104. David's edition, mm. 26-8.

Hellmesberger introduces a strange fingering in the first beat of m. 27, perhaps in order to obtain more resonance from the open D string (Ex. 105). He also implies a *portamento* in that measure (from G to D) with the third finger and another in m. 28 (from G to B-flat). The *portamento* in m. 28 was not used by any other editor.



Ex. 105. Hellmesberger's edition, mm. 26-8.

Herrmann is the first editor to suggest using the G-string from the second beat of m. 26 to the first beat of m. 27 (Ex. 106). He was followed in this by Auer, Flesch, and Jacobsen. An

important contribution made by Herrmann was the use of extension of the fourth finger in m. 28, also used by Joachim, Auer, Busch, Flesch, Hambourg, Jacobsen, Galamian, Rostal, Szeryng, and Schneiderhan. This type of extension was common in the Baroque period.⁸



Ex. 106. Herrmann's edition, mm. 26-8.

Joachim follows the simpler example of David and Hellmesberger in mm. 26-7, but instead of using the third position he uses the second (Ex. 107).



Ex. 107. Joachim's edition, mm. 26-8.

Busch is the first editor to simplify fingerings throughout the piece. He explains in the introduction of his edition that "it has been my endeavour, as far as possible, to assign to each part its particular string on the violin, so that in playing a piece of four inner parts, each part shall

⁸ See Tarling, *Baroque String Playing*, for a quotation by John Playford (1623-1685) on the use of fourth finger extension, 72.

have its own string.”⁹ An example is m. 27, where he recommends the second position (implied by the third finger in the preceding measure, Ex. 108). Hambourg, Mostras, Wronski, Galamian, and Rostal use the same fingering.



Ex. 108. Busch's edition, mm. 26-8.

Champeil gives the simplest fingerings from among all the editors (simple meaning the use of lower positions and open strings). Surprisingly, Champeil uses a harmonic in m. 27 not found in any other edition (Ex. 109). Boyden says: “There is no evidence that the natural



Ex. 109. Champeil's edition, mm. 26-8.

⁹ Adolph Busch, “Introduction,” *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo*, ed. Adolph Busch (London-Hamburg: N. Simrock, 1931; revised 1952), col. 1.

harmonic of an octave above the open string, so common today, was employed then as a substitute for the fourth finger in fourth position. Harmonics are not commonly found in this period, and Leopold Mozart rejects them altogether, except for pieces entirely in harmonics.”¹⁰

At the same time, Champeil omits fingering in m. 28, implying the use of first position. This fingering would be more suited for a Baroque performance. He also uses a simpler fingering in m. 32, choosing not to shift to third position as is usual in the Romantic tradition (Ex. 110).



Ex. 110. Champeil's edition, m. 32.

Mostras proposes a fingering for m. 28 that is different from the models by David, Hellmesberger, and Herrmann (Ex. 111). This fingering dampens the natural ringing of the bottom A-natural after the bow leaves the note. Wronski and Zimbalist also use the same fingering.



Ex. 111. Mostras' edition, m. 28.

¹⁰ Boyden, *History*, 575.

Schneiderhan offers an unusual fingering for m. 27 (Ex. 112). This fingering is based on the Romantic tradition, and is not commonly found in modern editions.



Ex. 112. Schneiderhan's edition, m. 27.

II. Mm. 33, 36, and 40

David gives a clear example of his era's indifference towards linear counterpoint in mm. 33, 36 and 40 (Ex. 113). In m. 33 he implies the use of the fourth finger on G-sharp, breaking the soprano line across two strings. He does the same in m. 36 using the fourth finger on the C-sharp, thus breaking the descending line F-E-D-C#. In m. 40 he indicates two very Romantic effects, using a harmonic on the G-natural and placing the last four sixteenth notes on the same string as the bottom C-sharp.



Ex. 113. David's edition, mm. 33, 36, and 40.

Hellmesberger and Auer copie him in m. 36. The majority of the editors, with the only exceptions of Hambourg, Champeil, and Rostal, follow his treatment of m. 40.

Hellmesberger provides an alternative fingering for m. 33, which Herrmann and Auer follow (Ex. 114).



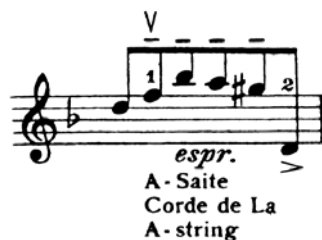
Ex. 114. Hellmesberger's edition, m. 33.

Joachim uses second position in m. 33 (Ex. 115), also used by Szeryng and Schneiderhan.



Ex. 115. Joachim's edition, m. 33.

Busch introduces the most widely used approach in m. 33. He suggests starting this passage already on the A-string, probably to conform to the same treatment usually given to the following two measures (Ex. 116). Flesch, Jacobsen, Mostras, Wronski, Galamian, Zimbalist, and Rostal use the same approach, though with different fingerings.



Ex. 116. Busch's edition, m. 33.

Flesch gives a most unusual treatment, not followed by any other editor, to mm. 32, 36, and 38 (Ex. 117). These examples embody the Romantic approach stretched to the limit by the use of tonal uniformity.



Ex. 117. Flesch's edition, mm. 32, 36, and 38.

Hambourg is the first to suggest first position in m. 33 (Ex. 118). Champeil, Jacobsen,



Ex. 118. Hambourg's edition, m. 33.

Mostras, Wronski, Galamian, Zimbalist, and Rostal follow him. Hambourg also suggests an interesting fingering for m. 40 (Ex. 119). He chooses to skip the D-string between the A and C-sharp in order to clarify the counterpoint. Champeil omits any fingering for this measure, but likely follows the same fingering.



Ex. 119. Hambourg's edition, m. 40.

Rostal proposes the most unusual fingerings for mm. 36 and 40 (Ex. 120). It is clear that he separates the voices by assigning them to different strings. He achieves this by using a substitution technique in m. 36 and by using contraction in m. 40. Most early instrument performers would disapprove of the first method in this specific context, but contraction was a well-known device in the Baroque period.¹¹



Ex. 120. Rostal's edition, mm. 36 and 40.

¹¹ See Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (London, 1751; facsimile reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), example II. Geminiani advocates the use of a finger for each chromatic note, thus creating contraction. He says: "Two Notes cannot be stopped successively with the same Finger without Difficulty, especially in quick Time."

III. Mm. 41, 47, and 48

David sets a strong tradition in these measures, when he suggests they be performed on the G-string (Ex. 121). He was followed by many generations of musicians, and even the most



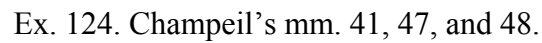
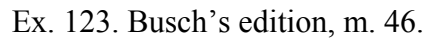
Ex. 121. David's edition, mm. 41, 47, and 48.

modern editors use his approach in some way or another (Mostras, Wronski, Galamian, Szeryng, and Schneiderhan).

The first editor to break from this tradition was Busch. He notates m. 41 to be played on the D-string, and in the next measure he uses a simpler fingering not used before (Ex. 122). But contradictorily, he proposes m. 46 to be played on G-string (Ex. 123). Champeil was the first editor to suggest simpler fingerings for these measures (Ex. 124).



Ex. 122. Busch's edition, mm. 41 and 42.



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The last example is by Rostal. In m. 46 he uses an open string on A in order to separate the voices between two strings (Ex. 126).



Ex. 126. Rostal's edition, m. 46.

Recordings

Listening for fingerings in a recording is a difficult task. We cannot always be sure about the choices made by the performer. In the recordings on the modern violin this is even harder. Tonal uniformity and continuous vibrato can sometimes deceive the ear. Here are general impressions based on attentive listening. However, some nuances of the performance can only be observed live, by making assumptions from editions, or in interviews with the performers.

A. Modern Violin

Szigeti seems to follow the Romantic tradition set by David, Hellmesberger, and Herrmann. He frequently plays passages on the G-string and uses *portamenti*. Heifetz also follows that direction, but the addition of his powerful vibrato combined with *portamenti* gives a more virtuoso rendering. Grumiaux is more historically correct in the choice of fingerings, always trying for simpler positions, though avoiding the open strings. Szeryng's fingering can be seen in his edition. They are in general less Romantic than the others. Perlman follows exactly

his teacher's edition and is also less Romantic. Tetzlaff is the only performer on the modern violin trying a Baroque approach, though in mm. 33 he uses the A-string, in m. 45 third position, and the last three notes in m. 48 also the third position. Other than that he uses lower position and does not use *portamenti*.

B. Baroque Violin

The early instrument performers, like some of those playing the modern violin, choose lower positions and open strings whenever possible. Kuijken gives a lone exception in m. 25 by starting in third position.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Historical performance, a performance aimed at the recreation of the composer's original intention, does not belong exclusively to our times. Already in 1739, Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) wrote: "The greatest difficulty associated with the performance of someone else's work is probably the fact that keen discernment is necessary in order to understand the real sense and meaning of unfamiliar thoughts. For those who have never discovered how the composer himself wished to have the work performed will hardly be able to play it well. Indeed, he will often rob the thing of its true vigour and grace, so much so, in fact, that the composer, should he himself be among the listeners, would find it difficult to recognize his own work."¹ Baillot, in 1834, also refers to the search of the composer's intention: "Style is the choice of expressive means. The composer and performer have a choice of expressive means; this choice is style. We apply this thought to the artist's taste. His choice of means will let us know without fail what pleases him, what captivates him, what carries him away. He will be judged on this choice, which results from what he feels. Begin by studying composers of the past."²

This document examined not only the traditions of Bach's time but also the changes in style that were applied to his music. Throughout the years, the Sonatas and Partitas underwent a myriad of manipulations by generations of performers. These manipulations occurred partly by

¹ Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739), 484, as quoted in Robin Stowell, *The Early Violin and Viola: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xiii.

² Pierre Marie François de Sales Baillot, *L'art du violon* (Paris, 1834; trans. Louise Goldberg as *The Art of the Violin*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 12.

the prevailing style of the time and partly by the performers' personal taste. The history of violin performance can be partially traced through the editions of the Sonatas and Partitas after 1843, the year David printed the first performing edition. The Chaconne was the first piece from the set to receive an in-depth treatment by the editors, and it probably served as a model from which stylistic decisions were made for all six works.

The two distinctions of violin style made in this document are the Romantic tradition and the period-instrument movement. The Romantic tradition has its roots in the early 19th century, mainly with the Paris Conservatory. The period-instrument movement has its roots in the late 19th century. The name "movement" loosely means a group of performers and scholars collaborating in the effort to revive the music of the past in a style close to its conception. These two traditions have existed side-by-side to this day, although they are rapidly merging.

David can be considered the "father" of the Romantic tradition. His interpretation of the Sonatas and Partitas influenced many generations. Some of his suggestions for arpeggios, bowings (articulation), and fingerings are still observed today. His influence on the performers of the nineteenth century was particularly strong, as the editions of Hellmesberger and Herrmann testify. Auer, a student of Hellmesberger and Joachim, chose to follow many trends in Hellmesberger's edition and passed them to his students, thus carrying the Romantic tradition into the 20th century. Joachim was the first to diverge from the Romantic tradition and can be seen as an innovator in the approach to Bach's Sonatas and Partitas. Flesch expands Auer's legacy, though acknowledging some of Joachim's findings. Jacobsen and Zimbalist offer editions that are merely products of the Romantic tradition.

Joachim stands as the catalyst of a new style of playing. At the end of the nineteenth century, he was already promoting the idea of historically aware performances. He directed a

Bach festival at Eisenach in 1884, where Bach's B minor Mass was performed with original instruments. In his *Violinschule* he writes: "In order to do justice to the piece which he is about to perform, the player must first acquaint himself with the conditions under which it originated. For a work by Bach or Tartini demands a different style of delivery from one by Mendelssohn or Spohr. The space of a century that divides the two first mentioned from the last two means in the historical development of our art not only a great difference in regard to form, but even a greater with respect to musical expression."³

Bach's autograph, discovered in 1906, triggered a new approach towards the Sonatas and Partitas, one that aimed towards authenticity. Joachim was the first to include the autograph in an edition. Despite the fact that Joachim belonged to the Romantic tradition, his few innovative suggestions inspired later editors and performers to search for more authentic interpretations. Busch and Hambourg picked up this trend in the early 30s. Busch's edition offers an arpeggio realization similar to Joachim's, with some original articulations and in some instances simpler fingerings. Hambourg also offers a few original articulations and simpler fingerings. Champeil tries to radically break away from the Romantic tradition by offering an edition based on formal scholarship. He applies many techniques used in the Baroque, such as double-dotted rhythms, inequality, ornamentation, and faster tempos.

The editions of Mostras, Wronski, Galamian, Rostal, Szeryng, and Schneiderhan also begin with the autograph. They take a step further than Busch and Hambourg in the direction of "authenticity" by offering the autograph along with their interpretative suggestions, either showing their markings in dotted lines above the autographs' notation (Mostras and Szeryng), referring to the *NBA* edition for comparison (Rostal and Schneiderhan), or including the

³ Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser, *Violinschule* (Berlin, 1902-5; trans. A. Moffat, 1905) 3:5.

facsimile of the autograph (Wronski and Galamian). They use Bach's original articulations to various degrees and offer simpler fingerings than past editors in the Romantic tradition.

However, some of their markings are still deeply rooted in that Romantic tradition. This practice has diverted many modern performers and pedagogues from pursuing true performance-practice studies and experimenting with early instruments. The mainstream performers of today who use their editions have their style still based on the Romantic tradition.

In the recordings, a growing tendency towards authenticity was perceived. The recording of Tetzlaff (1995) shows that modern violinists are starting to incorporate some of the conventions of the Baroque period popularized by the period-instrument movement, such as the use of less vibrato, faster tempos, ornaments, and faithfulness to the composer's articulation.

It is becoming more and more difficult to determine to which tradition certain performers belong. How can we define Tetzlaff? Can we say that he is a mainstream violinist just because he plays on a modern instrument? Or is he a historically aware performer because he uses some of the Baroque conventions? Perhaps both? There are no definite answers to these questions.

The same blending of tradition can be observed among the recordings on the Baroque violin. There are some differences of approach between Kuijken's recording (1981) and the recordings of Podger (1999) and Poppen (2000). Kuijken applies Baroque performance-practice conventions to the extremes in his playing: almost no vibrato, constant use of open strings, arpeggiated chords, and the rule of the down bow (the strong beats played down bow). Podger and Poppen should not be viewed as following the Romantic tradition, but they take more liberties in the use of the rules: more vibrato when necessary, use of stopped notes when an open

string is an option (and because of that, more uniformity in tone), and the use of chords in the “2 + 2 method”.

The Sonatas and Partitas still enjoy a special place in the modern violin repertoire. Practically all violin competitions in the world require some movement from the set. Their technical and musical mastery are still the test of an accomplished violinist.

However, the decreasing number of recordings of the Sonatas and Partitas on the modern violin may be an indication of the struggle of mainstream performers who lack a knowledge of Baroque conventions. As seen in the example of Tetzlaff, it is not necessary to abandon the modern instrument in order to play Baroque music, but a serious study of those conventions should be undertaken before the performer can understand the style of the music. On the other hand, the increasing number of recordings of these works on the Baroque violin shows that musicians and audiences are interested in listening to Baroque music when it is approached with a more historically accurate performance-practice. The future will tell how performers on the modern violin will deal with this problem, whether by withdrawing from the performance of pre-Romantic music, or by obtaining and applying the knowledge necessary to perform that music on their instruments.

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APPENDIX

Edition from the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* ("New Bach-Editon"), Series VI, Volume I.

Ciaccona (1)

(2)

A (3)

(4)

B (5)

(6)

C (7)

(8)

D (9)

(10)

E (11)

(12)

(12) 45

36 (31) [BRIDGE]

121

123

O (32)

125

P (34)

131

(35)

137

Q (36)

142

(37)

147

(38) [BRIDGE]

151

R (39)

154

(40)

157

160

S (41)

163

(42)

166

T (43)

169

(44)

172

U (45)

175

(46)

179

V (47)

184

(48)

191

W (49)

(50)

198 **X** (51) *arpeggio*¹

204 (52) **Y** (53)

210 (54)

214 **Z** (55)

220 (56)

223 (57) [BRIDGE]

226

228 **AA** (58)

230

(59)

233

(60) [BRIDGE]

236

BB (61)

239

242

(62)

244

246

(63) [THEME]

248

(64)

252

¹ "arpeggio" gehört möglicherweise erst zum zweiten Viertel. "arpeggio" possibly belongs to the second crotchet.