A PLAYER’S GUIDE:
LERA AUERBACH’S 24 PRELUDES FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, OP. 46
by
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(Under the Direction of Michael Heald)
ABSTRACT
Lera Auerbach’s use of the violin in her 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, Op. 46 marks an important point in the development of the prelude genre. These recently written preludes pose challenges to violinists who choose to learn them. They include an unfamiliar genre, a relatively unknown composer, and a scarcity of instructive resources for modern techniques that are normally available to violinists.

This dissertation addresses these issues by providing four things: first, an historical overview of the keyboard prelude. Second, an examination of Auerbach's compositional style and unique contributions to the development of the prelude genre. Third, a discussion of the specific issues that exist in addressing the technical and musical difficulties of these preludes. Fourth, a description of the choices I made in addressing these issues. In addition to this paper, my CD recording of Auerbach's preludes will present violinists with tangible evidence of my artistic choices as well as provide a resource in studying these preludes.

INDEX WORDS: Lera Auerbach, Auerbach, violin, violin prelude, keyboard prelude, prelude
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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2014
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May 2014
DEDICATION

To my fellow violinists
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has had a part in helping me reach the end of my academic career. I am blessed to have family, friends, teachers, mentors, and colleagues who have invested their valuable time, resources, and energy in order for me to realize my dreams.

A big thank you to Greg Hankins for his fantastic piano playing and shared passion in Lera Auerbach’s music. Thanks also to Mark Maxwell for all the work he did in recording and editing my CD.

To Professor David Haas: Thank you for always showing genuine interest in my ideas and for offering helpful input on how to clearly articulate my thoughts. To Professor Maggie Snyder: Thank you for all the life advice and for bringing out my inner violist! To Professor Michael Heald: Thank you for patiently guiding me through this degree and for teaching me the essence of true artistry.

To Kristen: You know I could not have done this without you. Thank you for always pushing me to keep going. Your love and support have meant the world to me.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The prelude as a genre has evolved significantly over its five hundred year history. Composers like Buxtehude, Corelli, J.S. Bach, and Chopin all helped to transform both the form and function of this once simple improvised piece into sets of twenty-four preludes that cycle through all major and minor keys. Although the violin has had some limited involvement in its history, until now the twenty-four prelude set has been exclusive to the keyboard. Lera Auerbach’s 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, Op. 46 therefore marks an important point of progression for the development of the prelude as a genre.

Auerbach’s Preludes for Violin and Piano were composed in 1999 and are not yet part of the standard violin repertoire. Consequently this poses some particular challenges to a violinist who may wish to study and perform them. First, the genre of the keyboard prelude is not one with which many violinists may be especially familiar. Secondly, Lera Auerbach's compositional style and existing body of work are not readily known by most violinists. Thirdly, there are no performance editions or specific etudes that may assist a violinist in overcoming the technical and musical difficulties in Auerbach's preludes. While each of these challenges merits its own individual study, this project will offer violinists an introductory guide to Lera Auerbach's 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano by providing four things: First, an historical overview of the
keyboard prelude and the important composers who made contributions to its evolution. Second, an examination of Auerbach's compositional style and unique contributions to the development of the prelude genre. Third, a discussion of the specific issues that exist in addressing the technical and musical difficulties of these preludes. Fourth, a description of the choices I made in addressing these issues. In addition to this paper, my CD recording of Auerbach's preludes will present violinists with tangible evidence of my artistic choices as well as provide a resource in studying these preludes.

Though this paper will examine Lera Auerbach's personal voice and compositional style, it will not include any theoretical analysis of her preludes. Furthermore, this project will not provide a new performers edition of the score, nor will it provide any newly written etudes with which to approach the technical difficulties that these preludes pose.

Need for Study

One of the great benefits of studying the violin is the vast repertoire we have to explore and enjoy. There are almost an overwhelming number of concertos, sonatas, showpieces, and etudes by many of the great composers of the Common Practice Period. However, this great asset also poses a problem: Instructors in the United States tend to focus solely on the existing body of violin repertoire when teaching their students. Take for example the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). This national organization is a leader in string pedagogy with its membership being represented in universities and conservatories around the country. ASTA has published a graded repertoire list beginning with a foundational level which is followed by levels 1-10. This list accounts for the absolute beginner all the way to the advanced student.¹ Another

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example is the teaching tradition of Kurt Sassmannshaus. Sassmanshaus, who is a violin
instructor of international repute (and actively involved in ASTA) also has his own published list
of graded violin repertoire. His list is similarly organized into 10 levels of increasing difficulty. While both lists may have discrepancies in how to grade certain repertoire, both draw exclusively from the standard violin repertoire. There are many valid reasons that can be argued for why violin teaching should be structured this way and the purpose of this paper is not necessarily to challenge the existing traditions of pedagogy. The fact remains, however, that it is possible for a student in this country to study the violin for twenty years and never learn a substantial work written during those twenty years. Therefore, if a student decides to learn a newly written work like Auerbach's 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, Op. 46, (s)he will be faced with some new obstacles, most of which have to do with the shortage of tools and information that are commonly at their disposal.

To help illustrate this point, consider the resources a student normally has when learning any of the standard concerti in the violin repertoire: dozens of audio and video recordings, multiple performance editions, analytical studies written to address specific technical difficulties in several concerti, and the guidance of any number of teachers who have performed and taught these concerti for years. Contrastingly when learning Auerbach's preludes, this wealth of resources essentially disappears. There is one recording of the complete set, no performance

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3 Lera Auerbach, 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, Perf. Vadim Gluzman and Angela Yoffe (BIS Records, 2003), CD.
editions, no analytical studies published for these preludes, and no long-standing stylistic traditions for Auerbach's preludes as they exist for any of the standard violin concerti.4

Review of Literature

Although Lera Auerbach is arguably one of the most brilliant composers of her generation, very little scholarship exists about her compositional style and body of work. In my research thus far, I have encountered only one study of Auerbach's 24 Preludes for Violin and Piano, this being a doctoral dissertation written by Kimberly Hain in 2010 at Florida State University.5 While Hain’s paper provides a history of the prelude from its beginnings up through the time of Chopin, the main thrust of her paper is limited to a discussion of the compositional elements that give Auerbach’s preludes a sense of large-scale unity. In terms of my historical research, Willi Apel6 and F.E. Kirby's7 books on the history of keyboard music were useful in providing detailed information on the keyboard prelude, especially in regards the genre's origin and early development through the 18th century. Also helpful was Eric Beureman's8 2003 doctoral dissertation in which he traces the development of the twenty-four prelude set by examining and classifying the prelude sets of forty-six different composers. In addition to general historical information on the keyboard genre, I also researched several sources for material pertaining to the prelude sets of J.S. Bach, Chopin, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, Debussy,

4 Some concerti have specific stylistic traditions that have been passed down for several generations.
and Shostakovich. Keller, Gavoty, Leikin, Harrison, Schmitz, and Mazullo's books each examine one of the previously mentioned composers and his specific impact on the evolution of the keyboard prelude. In my discussion on approaches to interpreting Auerbach's preludes, John Rink's book proved helpful in examining the balance between musical intuition and informed choices. Robert Philip's book traces the history of recording in classical music and discusses the many impacts it has had on the current performance of music. This assisted me greatly in organizing and articulating my thoughts on my experience of recording Auerbach’s preludes.

Lera Auerbach’s Biography

Lera Auerbach is a Russian-born, American composer who is quickly gaining worldwide recognition and popularity. At age 40, she already has a collection of ninety-five published compositions that comprise operas, ballets, orchestral works, chamber music, concertos, solo instrumental and vocal works. Auerbach's music has been performed by many of today's most renowned orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic, Dresdner Philharmoniker, and Staatskapelle Dresden, where she served as

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composer-in-residence. Also a talented pianist, Lera Auerbach appears regularly with many of the world's leading soloists and chamber musicians including Gidon Kremer, Vadim Gluzman, Hillary Hahn, David Finckel, Alisa Weilerstein, and Kim Kashkashian.

Auerbach completed her bachelor and master's degrees at the Juilliard School where she studied piano with Joseph Kalichstein and composition with Milton Babbitt and Robert Beaser. She is also a 2002 graduate of the Hannover Hochschule für Musik. She has been composer-in-residence for several international music festivals and is the recipient of numerous awards, her most recent being the 2012 ECHO Klassik award for her ballet *The Little Mermaid*. Auerbach is published exclusively by Hans Sikorski.


\[18\] Ibid.


CHAPTER 2
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE KEYBOARD PRELUDE: FROM ITS ORIGINS THROUGH CHOPIN

The musical term prelude originally described an improvised piece that formally introduced the mode or key of a succeeding work. The first mention of keyboard preluding comes from 14th century church records that indicate that the organ was used to freely improvise instrumental preludes for the purposes of introducing the choral music of the service and emotionally preparing the congregation for worship. Because of the prelude's inherent improvised nature, not many surviving examples exist from this time period. The earliest extant keyboard preludes come from southern Germany in a 1448 tablature by Adam Ileborgh. Labeled under the heading "Here begin preludes in various modes [keys] written in the modern style…" Ileborgh’s collection of five short pieces represents the first idiomatic keyboard music not based on previously existing vocal forms. These transposable preludes were characterized by flowing, stepwise motion in the right hand accompanied by either sustained dyads or a slow stepwise motion in the left hand. However what set this "almost revolutionary style" apart from earlier forms was its metric freedom. Contrasting interplay between the two hands in addition to this

23 Ibid., 37.
metric freedom encapsulated the prelude's improvisatory quality. Two other important 15th century sources that mention the keyboard prelude are the *Buxheimer Orgelbuch* and Conrad Paumann's treatise on organ playing entitled *Fundamentum organisandi*. Both of these documents distinguished two types of prelude writing: "simple sustained chords (*schlicht*) and florid passages (*colorist*)".25

Over the next one hundred years, the keyboard prelude style became more organized in the compositional writings of Hans Kotter and Leonhard Kleber. The length of the prelude was beginning to grow (Kotter’s longest being sixty-six measures) and various elements such as imitation and sequence were introduced to the form. Kotter also experimented with vocal techniques in his preludes and composed several with three and four-part settings, some of which include antiphonal writing.26

From the latter half of the 16th century through the 17th century, various prelude developments emerged throughout northern Germany, France, England, and Italy. In northern Germany, the beginnings of the Baroque *praeludium pedaliter* appeared as a result of the organ teaching of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck.27 This ternary form of prelude featured “a free opening section, an imitative or fugal middle section and a free closing section.”28 The *praeludium pedaliter* reached its highest point of sophistication in the organ playing of Dieterich Buxtehude. His virtuosic preludes were written with motivic elements that unified the internal structure of


26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.
the preludes. The prélude non mesuré of French origin was developed in the compositions of Louis Couperin, Nicolas Lebégue, J.-H. D’Anglebert, and Gaspard Le Roux. Unique to the prélude non mesuré was the absence of traditional meter and rhythmic notation. John Bull’s Fitzwilliam Virginal Book epitomizes the development of the prelude in England. The seven preludes in this book are characterized by highly decorative writing including “broken octaves in the left hand, arpeggios, rapid tone repetitions, and virtuosic scales through more than three octaves.” In Italy, Arcangelo Corelli began to include preludes in larger works such as his violin and chamber sonatas. This served as a model for later Baroque sonatas and suites by François Couperin and J.S. Bach.

With the advent of equal-temperament at the end of the 17th century, composers began writing sets of preludes and fugues in multiple keys. However, it was Bach’s two sets of twenty-four preludes and fugues in The Well-Tempered Clavier that were the first to utilize all twenty-four keys. Composed in 1722, Bach intended these pieces to be primarily educational in nature. His sets are organized chromatically beginning in C major and ascending to b minor. The preludes from both sets reveal incredible variety in style and form including two- and three-part inventions, ariosos, a concerto movement, and a sonata movement. As Keller states, this gave

29 Ibid.
31 Apel, 221.
32 Ledbetter and Ferguson.
33 Bach’s title page to this work includes the phrase “composed and written down for the profit and use of musical young people eager to learn...” Herman Keller, The Well-Tempered Clavier by Johann Sebastian Bach, trans. by Leigh Gerdine (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1976), 17.
34 Ibid, 27.
many of the preludes “greater significance than their fugues” and ultimately allowed the prelude to be “raised to individual prominence.”

After Bach composed *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the genre was largely ignored by composers for the remainder of the 18th century. The Baroque prelude and fugue was replaced by the Classical piano sonata. However in the 19th century a general interest in older forms allowed the prelude to regain popularity. Composers such as Muzio Clementi, Johann Baptist Cramer, and Friedrich Kalkbrenner wrote groups of preludes, but Johann Hummel was the first composer after Bach to write a set of twenty-four preludes that included all keys. His preludes revealed “more virtuosity, harmonic complexity, thematic independence, and stylistic diversity than [other] collections before him.” Hummel’s set, which has been largely forgotten, was an important precursor to the prelude cycle as it exists today.

Published in 1839, Chopin’s Preludes, Op. 28 marked a turning point in the prelude genre by fundamentally changing the function of the keyboard prelude. Contrary to their traditional use, the preludes in Chopin’s set do not formally introduce any particular piece. Instead the preludes individually seek to communicate a distinct emotion or idea within its smaller structure. Each prelude is unique in its wide range of length, form, style, technical difficulty, and emotional character. Ferguson writes that “In no other collection of pieces [...] did Chopin reveal his artistic

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35 Keller, 27.


37 Mostly for educational purposes. Hain, 15.

38 Ibid, 15.

self as fully as in the twenty-four Préludes, Op. 28. Unlike Bach’s The Well Tempered Clavier, Chopin’s preludes are organized according to the circle of fifths (C major, a minor, G major, e minor, etc.). This organization has led some to believe that Chopin’s preludes should be viewed as a single prelude cycle as opposed to twenty-four independent pieces. Kresky contends that the harmonic relationships (resulting from the circle of fifths) between preludes also imply a musical chronology from the first prelude to the twenty-fourth. He states that, “The Chopin preludes seem to be at once twenty-four small pieces and one large one.”

40 Ledbetter and Ferguson.
41 Kresky, xv
42 Kresky, xviiii
CHAPTER 3
SIGNIFICANT PRELUDE SETS IN THE TRADITION OF CHOPIN

Chopin’s 24 Preludes, Op. 28 inspired subsequent generations of pianists to compose their own prelude sets based on his model. The discussion in this chapter will focus on some of the most famous prelude sets composed in the past one hundred and fifty years. Each set contains innovative elements while still mirroring the eclectic style that Chopin established. These historically significant sets will help provide a backdrop for understanding Auerbach’s Preludes for Violin and Piano.

Alexander Scriabin

Scriabin boasts an impressive output of over eighty keyboard preludes. His Preludes, Op. 11, published in 1897, represent the first complete set of twenty-four preludes by a Russian composer. Following Chopin’s model, Scriabin’s preludes are organized according to the circle of fifths. His preludes also attempt to convey a single mood or character. His chromatic writing style includes musical elements of early 20th-century Russian culture such as church bells and traditional dances and folk tunes. He did not view his set of preludes as one complete cycle and wrote that “every prelude is a short composition that can exist by itself, independently of other

preludes.” He rarely performed the entire set and even had his publisher print the preludes individually or in smaller groupings.

**Sergei Rachmaninoff**

Rachmaninoff composed his twenty-four preludes over a period of eighteen years. His famous Prelude in C-Sharp Minor (Op. 3, No. 2) was written in 1892. This was followed by the ten preludes of Op. 23 and the thirteen preludes of Op. 32 published in 1904 and 1910 respectively. Although he did not publish his preludes as a single set, all twenty-four keys are represented. While Rachmaninoff’s preludes are generally longer than those of Chopin and Scriabin, the themes are concise and organized in comparison to his other works. His preludes, similar in purpose to those of his romantic predecessors’, explore a wide range of emotion and have been described as “musical evocations of external visual stimuli.” They are also some of the most technically difficult pieces he composed for the instrument and show off both his virtuosic skill and understanding of the piano. Instead of organizing his preludes chromatically or by circle of fifths, Rachmaninoff simply alternates major and minor keys with no apparent pattern. This lack of pattern provides for some relationships (parallel, harmonic, shared chords) between the preludes, however there appears to be no compelling evidence that all twenty-four preludes form a single cohesive unit.

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45 Leikin, 51.
46 Ibid.
49 Harrison, 111.
Claude Debussy

The Préludes by Debussy are organized into two books, each containing twelve preludes. The first book was published in 1910 (the same year as Rachmaninoff’s Op. 32) and the second book was published in 1913. Debussy included titles at the end of every prelude to describe the particular mood or scene he intended to convey. He also rejected convention by not using all twenty-four keys or ordering his preludes according to any formal key structure. The tonal language, atmospheric quality, and diverse colors of these preludes are typical of his writing style. Schmitz writes that only Debussy could “characterize so sharply and so briefly the infinite array and range of subjects” which “brought the prélude to its highest point of development.”

Dmitri Shostakovich

Shostakovich wrote his 24 Preludes, Op. 34 in the first few months of 1933. Ordered by the circle of fifths, this set is arguably the first glimpse at Shostakovich’s mature style. His preludes are effective in portraying a broad range of moods and scenes and are characterized by rhythmic energy in genres such as the waltz, march, and gavotte. Also recognizable in these preludes is Shostakovich’s use of sudden chromatic changes in the harmonies. These unexpected moments help express the playfulness, sarcasm, and irony in his music.

In addition to the 24 Preludes, Op. 34, Shostakovich also composed a set of twenty-four preludes and fugues (Op. 87) in 1951. It is based on Bach’s Well Tempered Clavier, even

harmonically alluding to the work several times.\textsuperscript{53} However, this set also follows Chopin’s model by exploring “a great diversity of emotions, expressions, and characters.”\textsuperscript{54} Similar to Kresky’s argument in regards to Chopin\textsuperscript{55}, Mazullo suggests that Shostakovich’s choice in ordering Op. 87 according to the circle of fifths allowed him to “chart an emotional progression throughout the cycle.”\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 27-28.
\textsuperscript{54} Mazullo, 53.
\textsuperscript{55} Kresky, xv
\textsuperscript{56} Mazullo, 194.
CHAPTER 4
LERA AUERBACH’S PRELUDES

Lera Auerbach composed three sets of preludes in 1999, one of which is her set for violin and piano. All three sets are true prelude cycles that function as cohesive units. Of her Op. 46, Auerbach wrote, “The challenge was not only to write a meaningful and complete prelude that might be only a minute long, but also for this short piece to be an organic part of a larger composition with its own form.”58 She also stated that “The context and order of the Preludes are very important for their comprehension.”59

Kimberly Hain contends that this sense of large scale unity within the preludes can be explained by musical narrative. In her dissertation, she argues that Auerbach’s Preludes for Violin and Piano are symbolic of the human experience with death being the inevitable end.60 Auerbach speaks to this idea when she states “in the last Prelude there are all 24 tonalities. If you think of life, the last Prelude is in D minor, the key of requiem which carries the history of death. Some say that when one dies there is an image of the whole life condensed, that you see all the memories of your life at one time. This is the 24 keys all at once.”61

57 The other two sets are her 24 Preludes for Piano, Op. 41 and 24 Preludes for Violincello and Piano, Op. 47
58 Hain, 11.
60 Hain, 78.
61 Ibid, 56.
Although there is evidence that this set of preludes is a complete cycle, it should be noted that Auerbach has published a suite for violin and piano based on Op. 46 that uses only ten of the preludes from the original set. Furthermore, there is a CD recording by violinist Daniel Hope which includes only Preludes 8 and 15 from the set.\(^\text{62}\) This would seem to indicate that Auerbach has additional ideas about both the independence of individual preludes and the possibilities of alternate groupings.

Auerbach’s writing in these preludes has been described as polystylistic.\(^\text{63}\) A single hearing of this work reveals the styles and influences of multiple composers both past and present. It is as if Auerbach was a compositional sponge, soaking up the styles of several composers and then squeezing them back out with her own voice amongst them. In reference to this she remarks, “The special character of the pieces lies in regarding familiar things from an unexpected perspective and discovering that these things are not what they may seem to be at first glance.”\(^\text{64}\) One of the ways Auerbach achieves this is by using various compositional tools such as moments of extreme character and dynamic shift, sudden silence, and strong dissonances at points of expected resolution. She excels at the element of surprise.

Auerbach does follow the Chopin tradition by ordering her preludes according to the circle of fifths. Between certain subsequent preludes a clear harmonic relationship between keys

\(^{62}\) Lera Auerbach, et al., *Spheres*, Perf. Daniel Hope and Jaques Ammon (Deutsche Grammophon, 2013), CD.


\(^{64}\) Ibid.
can be readily heard. However because her writing is not strictly tonal, the harmonic relationship between other preludes cannot be so easily distinguished by a listener.

Another nod to tradition in Auerbach’s Preludes for Violin and Piano can be found in Prelude No. 16. This prelude which has no bar lines or time signature, which is reminiscent of the French prélude non mesuré style. There are of course differences in the fact that the exact note values are known and a tempo marking has been provided, but the few striking similarities are worth mentioning.

The most obvious and unique feature of this set of preludes is the inclusion of the violin. The violin however is not meant to overshadow the piano; in other words this work is not twenty-four preludes for violin with piano accompaniment. This work requires a collaboration on the part of both musicians, which is why Auerbach has catalogued this set under the chamber music genre.

The range of technical difficulty for both instruments in these preludes is wide. Preludes 3, 8, and 15 for example are quite accessible to an amateur violinist and pianist, while conversely Preludes 5, 6, 14, and 24 require virtuosic skill from both players. Yet one doesn’t get the sense that Auerbach writes technically challenging music solely to show off the capabilities of either instrument. Instead it appears that every passage (no matter the level of technical difficulty) is only in service of the musical ideas or emotions being communicated.

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65 For example between Preludes 2 and 3.
66 For example between Preludes 16 and 17.
67 There are dotted bar lines that may suggest certain divisions of notes.
69 The specific technical difficulties in the violin part are discussed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.
CHAPTER 5
DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING AND RECORDING AUERBACH’S PRELUDES

Technical Difficulties

One obvious technical challenge in this work is that every prelude is written in a different key. Some of the more demanding key signatures (g-sharp minor, f-sharp major, e-flat minor) are not found with great frequency in the standard violin repertoire. A typical approach (outside of daily scale practice) in addressing this problem would be to find etudes written in these keys. My search of the established literature however yielded only two sources that focus on these specific keys: Jacob Dont's 24 Etudes and Caprices, Op. 35\(^70\) and Henry Schradieck's The School of Violin - Techniques, Book 1.\(^71\) Dont's twenty-fourth caprice is written in E-flat minor and exercise twenty in Schradieck's book systematically cycles through every key. While two etudes are probably not sufficient for developing proficiency in difficult keys, these few exercises were nonetheless useful aids in my study.

Another technical hurdle in Auerbach's preludes is the many double stops and string crossings that form the intervals of seconds (major and minor) and ninths (major and minor). These complementary intervals are not ones that are normally practiced in a daily regime of scales and arpeggios. It is interesting to note that two of the main scale systems\(^72\) that violinists use today contain double stop scale exercises in every interval (unison, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, octave)


\(^72\) The scale systems of Carl Flesch and Ivan Galamian. For full citation see bibliography.
seventh, octave, and tenth) that is normally possible to play on the violin except for seconds and ninths. To address this difficulty, I created my own scale exercises using seconds and ninths to help familiarize both my ear and left hand with the sound and hand shape of these intervals respectively.

Lastly, Auerbach calls for a number of effects in her preludes including pizzicato, natural and false harmonics, *sul ponticello* (pizzicato and arco), *sul tasto*, glissando (pizzicato and arco), portamento, and a section which instructs the violinist to "use both hair and wood of the bow in order to produce hissing sounds." While each of these effects presents its own challenges and potentials, I will discuss only a few of the specific effects which were particularly difficult or unique.

Prelude No. 9, marked “pizz. alla balalaika”, is composed mainly of three- and four-note chords in an attempt to replicate the sound of the traditional Russian stringed instrument. The violinist is instructed to strum these chords with both down and up stroke motions of the arm. To accomplish this, I experimented with the use of different fingers and finger combinations and eventually chose to use only my index finger to play these chords. I found however, that my finger was consistently getting stuck between strings which caused me to lose tempo and voice the chords unevenly. Ultimately I discovered that by turning my index finger almost completely on its side and brushing the strings with less weight and more speed allowed me to overcome these problems.

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There are several preludes which require the use of false harmonics.\textsuperscript{75} In general the two previously mentioned scale systems\textsuperscript{76} contain helpful exercises in the practice of false harmonics. Practicing these exercises slowly was helpful in learning how to sustain a false harmonic under one bow for extended periods of time.

Preludes 3 and 16 are written almost exclusively \textit{sul ponticello}. While this effect is used with some regularity in the orchestral repertoire, to play an entire movement of a solo work \textit{sul ponticello} can be an enlightening experience. Prior to studying these preludes, I viewed \textit{sul ponticello} as one-dimensional effect that is accomplished simply by bowing next to the bridge. However I as began experimenting with bow speed, bow pressure, and point of contact (of the bow’s proximity to the bridge),\textsuperscript{77} I was pleasantly surprised to discover that \textit{sul ponticello} is actually an effect that is filled with possibilities of tone and color. This process also held true with pizzicato sections marked \textit{sul ponticello} in Preludes 8 and 20.

A particularly unique use of an effect is the glissando in measures 21-24 of Prelude No. 8.\textsuperscript{78} This glissando begins at nearly the top of the fingerboard on the G-string and slides down over four measures until the open G-string is reached. The difficulty in this passage lies in executing a single, steady glissando despite the slow tempo marking.\textsuperscript{79} I found that careful attention had to be given to my left hand with regard to consistent finger pressure. This was

\textsuperscript{75} Preludes 1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 15, and 24.

\textsuperscript{76} The scale systems of Carl Flesch and Ivan Galamian. For full citation see bibliography.

\textsuperscript{77} Not too unlike what a violinist would normally do to find various colors and sounds in their playing.

\textsuperscript{78} Lera Auerbach, \textit{24 Preludes for Violin and Piano} (Hamburg: Musikverlag Hans Sikorski GmbH & Co. KG, 2003), 11.

\textsuperscript{79} Andante.
especially critical at moments of bow change in order to prevent any interruption of the glissando.

Interpretative Choices

The musical obstacles in Auerbach's preludes are directly linked to the aforementioned lack of traditional resources that exist when studying her work. Lera Auerbach's music has not yet been performed, recorded, taught, analyzed, or written about enough for there to exist an accepted “Auerbachian” style. Therefore the process of interpreting her music (as opposed to works within the standard violin repertoire) is quite open-ended.

The fact that Auerbach’s preludes are polystylistic and draw upon the influences of many composers does provide violinists with a helpful starting point with regard to interpretation. I decided to approach the interpretation of these preludes by playing in the style of the given composer I heard represented. I felt that this would accurately reflect Auerbach’s earlier quoted idea of “the familiar.”\(^{80}\) I also tried to emphasize the unexpected moments, the extremes in character and dynamic, and the strong dissonances that occur throughout the cycle in order to bring out the “unexpected.”\(^{81}\)

There were places in several of the preludes where I did not follow the score literally. Sometimes this was to take time, change a dynamic, or create a color or timbre. This was done not to ignore Auerbach’s wishes but to capture what I felt was the spirit of the music. This aspect


of interpretation is what Rink has called “informed intuition.” This term "recognizes the importance of intuition in the interpretative process but also that considerable knowledge and experience generally lie behind it.”

I was first attracted to Auerbach’s Preludes for Violin and Piano through the only recording of the work. Therefore I am well aware that my interpretation of these preludes has been influenced by Gluzman and Yoffe’s playing. I believe however that my interpretative approach, my knowledge of the styles I heard represented in these preludes, my time spent in score study, and my “informed intuition” allowed me to have have a unique and convincing interpretation that is revealed in my CD recording of this work.

Practical Issues of Recording

The first decision in recording was to define the overall goals I had in the editing process. Robert Philip, in his book *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*, articulates the frustrations musicians face in editing when he writes “the modern expectation of accuracy in every detail, particularly on a CD, puts great pressure on musicians and record producers not to let a single blemish be heard on the finished recording.” I wanted a recording that accurately reflected my interpretation of Auerbach’s preludes and yet I also wanted a recording that was technically clean enough not to distract from the communication of the music. To this end I did edit portions of the

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83 Ibid.
85 Rink, 36.
preludes to eliminate certain technical mistakes and moments of poor ensemble. However I
purposely chose to include some “blemished” takes that I felt carried the spirit and energy of the
music in place of takes that were technically precise but musically bland.

The second decision made was in balancing the voices of the two instruments. The piano
writing in some of Auerbach's preludes is quite bombastic and can easily overpower the violin
line. In live performance, the pianist would of course have to temper their playing so that both
instruments could be heard. In the recording however, I felt that it was more important to capture
the unfettered spirit of the music. Consequently, rather than lessening the piano playing, I instead
decided to make the appropriate balance adjustments during the editing process. In some
instances this meant decreasing the overall piano volume in the final recording mix.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


