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# **Contemporary and historical performance practice in late eighteenth-century violin repertoire**

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**observations on articulation, bow strokes, and interpretation**

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of the degree of the Doctor of Musical Art in violin performance

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## **Abstract**

Since the 1970s, historically-aware performances of late eighteenth-century repertoire (and that of Mozart and Beethoven in particular) have prompted demands for a finer stylistic awareness on the part of the performer. Articulation in late eighteenth-century repertoire is of particular importance in this regard. In violin performance, bow strokes constitute the primary technique with which to render articulatory effects. In this study, I consider not only the link between the theoretical discussions of historically-informed performance (HIP) practitioners and the conventions of mainstream performance practice on the violin, but I investigate how best to merge musicological discussions of HIP with the practice of frequently performed repertoire on modern instruments today.

Violin bow models play an important role in any discussion of articulation and bow strokes, and the use of old-style instruments represents the main divergence between HIP and mainstream performance. In this regard, observations on execution with the bow models used during the Classical era are important, and the differences between the so-called transitional bows and modern bows in performance will be informed by my own practice with a copy of a 1785 bow.

Notation, which conveys the interpretative instructions of the composer, is one of the major areas of critical research of contemporary studies of the performance practices of the Classical era. Slurs, staccato markings, and passages without any articulation markings will be discussed from an interpretative perspective. Editorial issues of music scores and contemporary violin performances of the Classical repertoire will be touched upon, in conjunction with the consideration of performers' interpretative choices and understandings of late eighteenth-century notation.

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# Index

## Example List

Introduction .....	10
1. Chapter 1: The Bow .....	13
1.1. The Transitional Bow Models .....	16
1.2. Observations on Execution with the Transitional Bow and the Modern Bow .....	21
1.3. Discussion on the Practice .....	28
1.3.1. The Kinds of Sounds and Articulations .....	29
1.3.2. Approaches and Traditions .....	31
2. Chapter 2: Performing Styles and Slurs .....	37
2.1. The Slur .....	39
2.2. The 'Accented – diminuendo' Controversy .....	58
3. Chapter 3: Staccato and Staccato Markings .....	64
3.1. Dots and Strokes for Staccato Strokes .....	65
3.2. Staccato Marks in Other Uses .....	72
3.3. Discussion of the 'Dualism' of the New Mozart Edition .....	80
4. Chapter 4: Figures and Passages without Slurs and Other Articulation Marks .....	85
4.1. Bowings Implied in Unmarked Passages or Figures .....	86
4.2. Performing Traditions Implied in the Bow Stroke of Unmarked Notes .....	97
4.3. Recordings: Contemporary Performance Practice of Classical Repertoire for the Violin .....	106
Conclusion .....	116
Appendices .....	125
Bibliography .....	127

## Example List

- Ex.1.2.1** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 62 – 67.
- Ex.1.2.2** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 113 – 116; *Violin Concerto No. 4 in D major, K.218, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 53 – 56.
- Ex.1.2.3** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano,*  
*op. 47, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.* bar 13 – 18.
- Ex.1.2.4** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 28 -30.
- Ex.1.2.5** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano,*  
*op. 47, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.* bar 45 – 47.
- Ex.1.2.6** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 76 – 78.
- Ex.1.2.7** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano,*  
*op. 47, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.* bar 117 – 124.
- Ex.1.3.2.1** P. Baillot, *The Art of the Violin,* ex.12.23, pp. 173.
- Ex.1.3.2.2** P. Baillot, *The Art of the Violin,* ex.12.55, pp.186.
- Ex.2.1.1** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 74 – 79.
- Ex.2.1.1a** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*mov.* bar 77 – 79.
- Ex.2.1.2 /2a** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Sonata in A major, K. 305, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 30 – 35.
- Ex.2.1.3 /3a** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and*  
*Piano, op. 47,1<sup>st</sup> mov.* Bar 91 – 105.
- Ex.2.1.4 /4a** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and*  
*Piano, op. 47,1<sup>st</sup> mov.* bar 410 – 426.

- Ex.2.1.5** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano*, op. 47, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. bar 91 – 105; bar 410 – 426.
- Ex.2.1.6 /6a /6b /6c** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano*, op. 47, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. Var. 3 Minore.
- Ex.2.1.7 /7a** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano*, op. 47, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. bar 234 – 238.
- Ex.2.1.8 /8a /8b** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano*, op. 47, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. bar 300 - 320.
- Ex.2.1.9** Clive Brown, *Performance Practice*, ex. 6.31. Haydn, String Quartet op.64/4/ii.
- Ex.2.1.10 /10a /10b** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano*, op. 47, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. Var. Maggiore.
- Ex.2.1.11** J. Haydn, *String Quartet Nr. 6 in E flat major, Hob.III/op.64*, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov.
- Ex.2.2.1** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219*, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. bar 23 – 28.
- Ex.2.2.2** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano*, op. 47, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. bar 489 – 492.
- Ex.2.2.3** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano*, op. 47, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov. bar 263 – 267.
- Ex.3.1.1** T. -J. Tarade, *Traité du Violon, Rondeau de Mr. Davaux*, pp.60.
- Ex.3.1.2** Leopold Mozart, *Treatise*, chapter VII §6
- Ex.3.1.3a /3b** F. Fiorillo, *36 Caprices for the Violin, etude 21*.
- Ex.3.1.3c** H. E. Kayser, *Thirty –six Elementary and Progressive Studies for the Violin, etude 1*.
- Ex.3.1.4** Beethoven, *Violin Sonata in D major, op.12 Nr.1*, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. bar 127; W. A. Mozart, *Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major, K.305*, 1<sup>st</sup> mov. bar 5; G. G. Cambini, *Nouvelle Méthode*, except of Haydn's Symphony no. 85.
- Ex.3.1.5 /5a /Ex.3.1.6** Leopold Mozart, *Treatise*, chapter 1, section 3 §17.



- Ex.3.2.1** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No.5 in A major, K.219, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov.*  
bar 23 – 28.
- Ex.3.2.2** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano, op. 47, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov. Var. 2.*
- Ex.3.2.3** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov.*  
bar 98 – 101.
- Ex.3.2.4** A. Stamitz, *Viola Concerto No.2, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov.*
- Ex.3.2.5** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219, 1st mov.*  
bar 202 – 209.
- Ex.3.2.6** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Sonata in C major, K. 296, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.* bar 29  
– 36.
- Ex.3.2.7** Leopold Mozart, *A treatise*, chapter 4 §29.
- Ex.3.2.8** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No.5 in A major, K.219.*
- Ex.3.2.9** G. G. Cambini, *Nouvelle Méthode, 2<sup>nd</sup> Part ; T. –J. Tarade, Traité du violon*, Chapter 10.
- Ex.3.2.10** J. F. Reichard, *Violin Concerto in E-flat major.*
- Ex.3.2.11** L. Mozart, *a Treatise*, VI, §8; XII, §13.
- Ex.3.2.12** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No.5 in A major, K.219, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov.*  
bar 1 – 4.
- Ex.3.3.1a** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Sonata in C, K.6, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov*; W. A. Mozart, *Violin Sonata in D, K.7, 3<sup>rd</sup> mov*; W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto in B flat major, K.207, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*
- Ex.3.3.1b** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto in G major, K.216, 1<sup>st</sup> mov*; W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 4 in D major, K.218, 1<sup>st</sup> mov*; W.A. Mozart, *Violin Sonata in F major, K.376/374d, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov.*
- Ex.3.3.2** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Sonata in A major, K. 305/293d, 1st mov.*
- Ex.3.3.3** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 98 – 103.
- Ex.3.3.4** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*
- Ex.4.1.1** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 100 - 107.

- Ex.4.1.2** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 215 – 224.
- Ex.4.1.3** N. Paganini, *24 Caprices no.24, op.1, Var. 2.*
- Ex.4.1.4** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*
- Ex.4.1.5 /5a /5b** W.A. Mozart, *Violin Sonata in C major, K.303, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov.* bar 74 – 79.
- Ex.4.1.6** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov.*  
bar 91 – 96.
- Ex.4.1.7** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219, 2<sup>nd</sup> mov.*
- Ex.4.1.8 /8a** L. van Beethoven, *Sonata No. 9 'Kreutzer' for Violin and Piano, op. 47, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.* bar 210 – 217.
- Ex.4.2.1** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 138 – 140: G. Henle Verlag Urtext.
- Ex.4.2.1a** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 138 – 140: Wilhelmj Edition (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, ca.1883);  
Léonard/Marteau Edition (Leipzig: Steingraber, 1909);  
Léonard/Nadaud Edition (Paris: Costallat et Cie, ca.1910) .
- Ex.4.2.1b** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 138 – 140: Francescatti Edition (New York: International Music Company, 1965).
- Ex.4.2.2** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 138 – 140: Saint-Saens Edition (Paris: Durand, 1916).
- Ex.4.2.2a** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 138 – 140: Auer Edition (New York: Carl Fischer, 1917); Hubay Edition (Budapest: Rosznyi, 1918).
- Ex.4.2.3** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 138 – 140: Rostal Edition (Mainz: Schott MusiK International, 1971).
- Ex.4.2.4** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 181 – 185: Rostal Edition (Mainz: Schott MusiK International, 1971).

- Ex.4.2.5** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 181 – 185: Wilhelmj Edition (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, ca.1883);  
Léonard/Marteau Edition (Leipzig: Steingräber, 1909) ;  
Léonard/Nadaud Edition (Paris: Costallat et Cie, ca.1910) ; Saint-  
Saens Edition (Paris: Durand, 1916) ; Auer Edition (New York: Carl  
Fischer, 1917); Hubay Edition (Budapest: Rosznyi, 1918);  
Francescatti Edition (New York: International Music Company, 1965).
- Ex.4.2.6** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 189 – 190.
- Ex.4.2.7** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 189 – 190: Comparison between Marteau and Nadaud.
- Ex.4.2.8** L. van Beethoven, *Violin Concerto in D major, op.60, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 189 – 190: Hubay Edition (Budapest: Rosznyi, 1918).
- Ex.4.3.1** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 48 – 52.
- Ex.4.3.2** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 48 – 52: Y. Menuhin Bowing.
- Ex.4.3.3** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 48 – 52: G. Kremer Bowing.
- Ex.4.3.4** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 48 – 49.
- Ex.4.3.5** W. A. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D major, K.211, 1<sup>st</sup> mov.*  
bar 48 – 52: I. Perlmann Bowing.