

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: **A SURVEY OF THE UNACCOMPANIED VIOLIN
REPERTOIRE, CENTERING ON WORKS BY
J. S. BACH AND EUGENE YSAÏE**

Yu-Chi Wang, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2005

Dissertation directed by: Professor Gerald Fischbach
School of Music

Unaccompanied works provide a great challenge for violinists. The violin was originally designed to be performed with the support of other instruments. In addition, composers have developed various advanced techniques to enrich their solo violin compositions, for example to create polyphonic effects or to showcase the instrument's capabilities or a performer's virtuosity. Thereby, these works have become known for their technical challenges. A violinist thus faces unusual demands and stresses when performing solo violin works alone on the concert stage and may also use these pieces for musically gratifying and rigorous personal study.

For this dissertation project, a selected series of unaccompanied violin works ranging from the Baroque period to the twentieth century have been performed in two

recitals, recorded for archival purposes, and discussed in this written document. I have primarily chosen solo violin pieces written by the German composer J. S. Bach (1685–1750) and the Belgian composer Eugene Ysaÿe (1858–1931). I have also chosen to study works by Heinrich Biber (1644–1704) and Bright Sheng (b. 1955) as Biber exemplifies a predecessor of J. S. Bach's and Sheng serves as one of Eugene Ysaÿe's followers.

The first recital, performed on May 8, 2002 in the Ulrich Recital Hall at the University of Maryland, College Park, included *Passacaglia in G Minor* (1676) by Heinrich Biber; *Partita No. 3 in E Major* (1720) by J.S. Bach; and *Sonata no. 2, op. 27* (1923) by Eugene Ysaÿe. The second recital, performed on May 11, 2003 in the Main Chapel of the Memorial Chapel at the University of Maryland, College Park, included *Sonata in G Minor* (1720) by J.S. Bach; *Sonata no. 4, op. 27* (1923) by Eugene Ysaÿe; and *The Stream Flows* (1990) by Bright Sheng.

The written portion of this project presents a history of the solo violin genre, an overview of each composer's life, and a discussion of connections and influences among the composers and their works through time. I also suggest fingerings, bowings, technical solutions, and musical interpretations of these pieces based upon my experiences in their study and performance.

A SURVEY OF THE UNACCOMPANIED VIOLIN REPERTOIRE,
CENTERING ON WORKS BY J. S. BACH AND EUGENE YSAÏE

by

Yu-Chi Wang

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Gerald Fischbach, Chair
Professor Bei-Lok Hu
Professor Elisabeth Adkins
Professor Evelyn Elsing
Professor James Stern

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Performing solo violin works is a wonderful and captivating experience. Unaccompanied violin works have always been and will no doubt remain one of my favorite genres. I feel highly privileged to perform these masterpieces. Being a violinist, I constantly feel blessed that I may connect with personal feelings and emotions through my music.

I could never have completed this fascinating journey without my mentors and friends, and my family. Particularly I would like to thank Dr. Elisabeth Adkins for her guiding me through these challenging works. She was always there for me especially when I was almost overwhelmed by the incredible stress in preparing for my recitals. I would also like to thank Dr. Gerald Fischbach for his continuing support and generous help during my studies at the University of Maryland. I have great gratitude also to Dr. James Stern for his suggestions, editing and guidance during this project, and to Professors Evelyn Elsing and Bei-Lok Hu who served on my doctoral committee. I also want to thank Ms. Carol Stone for helping me improve the written portion of this dissertation project.

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Introduction

Unaccompanied violin works provide a special challenge for violinists. This is because the violin is, by nature, a single-line instrument, designed primarily to be heard with the accompaniment of other instruments. Consequently, violinists themselves are primarily trained to perform with the support of other musicians. Unaccompanied music touches on the less-used fringes of violin technique, stretches the polyphonic capabilities of the instrument, demands unrelieved concentration from the performer, and exposes weaknesses of a lesser performer that might normally be hidden by accompaniment. In addition to all of these things, one of the primary motivations for a composer to write unaccompanied violin music is to provide an opportunity for virtuoso display. He is therefore more likely to include obvious hurdles for virtuoso effect in this genre of music.

Many composers of unaccompanied violin music were or are violinists themselves. For them, unaccompanied violin music may have been a means to explore new technical possibilities. The *Passacaglia in G Minor* (1676) of Heinrich Biber (1644–1704) may be considered an early example of this. Without the responsibility of coordinating many instruments or the making of orchestration and voice-leading decisions, such violinist/composers could devote more attention to exploring the technical possibilities of the violin, leading them towards perfection in their own performance.

Violinists cannot play as many notes simultaneously as keyboard players can. They also have no sustaining pedal to make bass notes continue as other notes are sounded. Successful composers of the unaccompanied violin genre have found ways to write so

that an effect of rich polyphony is created, and notes are sustained in the imagination of the listener, imitating the effect of multiple instruments. For this it is necessary to use frequent double, triple, and quadruple stops. These double stops and chords are among the main technical challenges of the genre. They require that violinists be flexible with their left hands and good at extensions. In addition, however skillful the composer has been in creating the effect of polyphony, the performer must exhibit an equal skill and understanding to perform it to full effect.

Purpose

One purpose of this dissertation project is to trace some aspects of stylistic development in unaccompanied violin repertoire from the Baroque Era through the twentieth century. A second purpose is to give readers some suggestions for performing these works, including fingerings and bowings developed from my experience in researching and performing these pieces. Because the time period covered is broad, this project will emphasize the works of two composers, the German J. S. Bach (1685–1750) and the Belgian Eugene Ysaÿe (1858–1931). Both composed a set of six monumental unaccompanied violin works. J.S. Bach wrote *Six Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo* in 1720 and Eugene Ysaÿe composed his *Six Sonatas, Op. 27* in 1923. Additional works will be discussed in order to present a coherent story of stylistic development. Because the Bach and Ysaÿe works are in many ways exceptional, they must be highlighted against a background of what is more normal.

Project Components

As part of this doctoral project, I have performed two public recitals which included some of the unaccompanied works that are examined in this dissertation. The first recital, performed on May 8, 2002 in the Ulrich Recital Hall at the University of Maryland, College Park, included *Passacaglia in G Minor* (1676) by Heinrich Biber; *Partita No. 3 in E Major* (1720) by J.S. Bach; and *Sonata no. 2, op. 27* (1923) by Eugene Ysaÿe. The second recital, performed on May 11, 2003 in the Main Chapel of the Memorial Chapel at the University of Maryland, College Park, included *Sonata in G Minor* (1720) by J.S. Bach; *Sonata no. 4, op. 27* (1923) by Eugene Ysaÿe; and *The Stream Flows* (1990) by Bright Sheng (1955). Recordings of these recitals have been made for archival purposes. The written portion of this project includes this Introduction, four chapters ordered chronologically, from Bach's precursors to Ysaÿe's followers, and a concluding chapter. The document presents a stylistic and historical overview of unaccompanied violin works. In addition, the six works performed in the recitals are analyzed with suggestions made for effective fingerings and bowings, technical solutions, and musical interpretation.

Chapter One

The Precursors of Bach's Solo Violin Works

Among the most monumental unaccompanied violin works in history, J. S. Bach's *Six Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo* are sometimes called the "Violinist's Bible." These magnificent and inspiring works have challenged violinists for many generations. Among the difficulties violinists have to overcome are the challenging and techniques of polyphonic writing employed by Bach, including multiple-stopping. These techniques are discussed in detail later in the paper. In the face of the enormous technical challenges required to execute these works beautifully and effectively, staying focused while playing alone on the concert stage is a second factor that must be considered by the performer.

Before Bach composed his unaccompanied violin works, a number of composers had already laid out templates for this kind of music. Studying these precursors of Bach's unaccompanied violin works may help use have a better understanding of the development of this genre. In the later half of the seventeenth century, four German composers started writing works for unaccompanied violin. Thomas Baltzar (1630–63), Heinrich Biber (1644–1704), Johann Jakob Walther (1656–1705), and Johann Paul Westhoff (1644–1704) developed a polyphonic style of writing that laid the groundwork for Bach's solo *Sonatas and Partitas*. Among them, Biber's *Passacaglia* is perhaps the most significant precursor of Bach's solo violin works. These composers were leading violinists of their time. They made notable contributions to the development of violin playing. They were also pioneering composers of unaccompanied violin repertoire.

In this chapter, Biber's *Passacaglia* is analyzed. Suggestions for fingerings and bowings are also offered. Because this document is written for modern players, these fingerings and bowings are based upon the customs of modern playing. Historical performance practice is not emphasized here.

The Influence of the Viol on Unaccompanied Violin Works

Before the appearance of the violin, the viol was the most popular solo string instrument in the Renaissance and Baroque eras. A bowed string instrument, played held downwards on the lap or between the legs, the viol first appeared in Europe at the end of the fifteenth century, and its popularity grew to the middle of the eighteenth century. The viol was designed to accompany one or more voices. Initially viol performers only doubled vocal lines. After a period of development, viol players started to add embellishments and began to improvise. Through this increased musical freedom, performers began to develop techniques of virtuosity. In this way, the viol began to be transformed from an accompanying instrument into a solo instrument. As one of the first solo bowed stringed instruments, the viol may thus have influenced the development of unaccompanied violin repertoire.

Sylvester Ganassi (1492-1550?) and Diego Ortiz (1510-1570) wrote important treatises concerning playing the viol. Sylvester Ganassi was an Italian instrumentalist and writer. His *Regola rubertina* (Venice, 1542) and *Letitione seconda* (Venice, 1543) were the first two-volume works written about viol playing. In these documents, Ganassi described in detail the fundamentals of playing the family of viol instruments. These

treatises might have thus helped Ganassi's contemporaries and later musicians to understand and preserve techniques of viol playing. Additionally, these treaties contained some unaccompanied pieces. These well-documented unaccompanied works for bowed stringed instruments may have facilitated the subsequent development of the unaccompanied violin repertoire.¹ Diego Ortiz was a Spanish theorist and composer. His *Trattado de glosas sobre Clausulus y otros generos de puntos en la musica de violones* (Treatise on the ornamentation of cadences and other types of passage in the music of viols), published in 1553, is the first printed ornamentation manual for the viol.² With ornamentation, performers have more musical freedom to enrich their music and enhance their virtuosity. Therefore, ornamentation can be regarded as one of the stepping-stones for unaccompanied violin works. Ortiz's treatise offers valuable written documentation of ornamentation, and hence may have also made a substantial contribution to the development of unaccompanied violin works.³

Precursors of Bach's Solo Violin Works

The first printed unaccompanied piece for the violin itself may have been composed by German-born violinist, Thomaz Baltzar (1630–63). His *Two Preludes and an Allemande* can be found in *The Division Violin*⁴ (1685) by John Playford (1623-1687).⁵

¹Jerrie Cadek Lucktenberg, *Unaccompanied Violin Music of the 17th and 18th Centuries: Precursors of Bach's Works for Violin Solo* (D.M.A. diss., University of South Carolina, 1984), 1–3

²Grove Music Online, *Diego Ortiz*

³Lucktenberg, 2

⁴*The Division Violin*, published in 1685, was one the most important publication by John Playford. It contains a collection for the violin and being the first music of this kind made public.

⁵John Playford (1623-1687), publisher and bookseller. During the period 1651–84, he dominated the music publishing trade.

Baltzar was one of the best violinists in his day. He was known for his virtuosity including his fast playing and use of high positions.⁶ In Ex. 1, Baltzar used scordatura⁷, some chordal writing and rapid passages.

Ex. 1: Thomas Baltzar: *Allemande for Unaccompanied Violin*⁸



Other Unaccompanied Violin Works by German Composers

In the late seventeenth century, three violinist-composers, Walther, Westhoff, and Biber, made great contributions to violin techniques in general and also to unaccompanied violin works in particular. These violinists had similarities in their compositional styles, and all tried to extend the possibilities of left hand technique. Their

⁶David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 142

⁷“Scordatura: a term applied largely to lutes, guitars, viols and the violin family to designate a tuning other than the normal, established one.” Grove Music On-line, *Scordatura*

⁸This example is selected from Jerrie Cadek Lucktenberg, *Unaccompanied Violin Music of the 17th and 18th Centuries: Precursors of Bach’s Works for Violin Solo* (D.M.A. diss., University of South Carolina, 1984), Appendix B

compositions included polyphonic passages, which demanded that double stops be played. These composers also enlarged the range of left hand position on the fingerboard. It was common for their works to include third or even fourth position, which was rare in this time. Their performance styles probably influenced one another as well. With the exception of Walther, they all composed important unaccompanied works for violin. Researcher David Boyden considers that these three violinists represent a “school” of violin performance in German during the late seventeenth century.⁹ Thereafter, J. S. Bach inherited the traditions of this school in the first half of the eighteenth century and subsequently composed his monumental six unaccompanied violin works.

Johann Jakob Walther and Johann Paul Westhoff: A Closer Look

Although Walther did not compose any unaccompanied violin works, his innovations in technique were valuable and relevant. Walther was born in Witterda in 1650 and died in Mainz in 1717. He was one of the most important and influential violinist-composers in the late seventeenth century. He was called the “Paganini of his day” by Fetiz.¹⁰ Similar to Biber, Walther was known for his virtuosity including polyphony, double-stopping, and use of high positions. In his compositions, he used fourth position, which extended beyond Biber. Although Walther shared with Biber the fame of virtuosity, their approaches to sound production on the violin were very different. Biber

⁹David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 212-215

¹⁰François-Joseph Fétis (1784-1871): musicologist, critic, teacher and composer. Grove Music Online, *Fetis*

used scordatura intensively, while Walther used imitations of the sounds of animals, birds, and other instruments.¹¹

Westhoff was born in Dresden in 1656 and died in Weimar in 1705. Together with Biber and Walther, Westhoff was held by his contemporaries to be one of the leading German violinists of his day. He was praised for his left hand technique. He frequently used double stops through the fourth position.

Westhoff composed *The Suite for Unaccompanied Violin* in 1683. It is the first known solo violin work which consists of several movements: *Prelude* (Ex. 2), *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, and two *Gigues*. Much later, in 1971, Westhoff's *Six Suites for Violin Solo* (1796) were discovered. These suites were conceived in more than one movement, compared to Biber's *Passacaglia*, which had only one. These *Suites* play a very significant role because they are the first known cycle of unaccompanied violin works written prior to those by Bach. Compared with the *Suite* written in 1683, there are more difficult techniques and more complex structures applied in these suites. Each one of the six suites of 1796 consists of *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, and *Gigue*.

Westhoff's music is different from that of his contemporaries Biber or Walther. As shown in Ex. 2, he did not incorporate high positions or much rapid passagework. The structure and polyphony of the music makes it challenging, however. As shown in Ex. 2, there are twelve measures in multiple stops and the sixteenth notes are written in slurs for a smoother effect. Westhoff's style probably closely resembles the style of Corelli combined with his (Westhoff's) Germany polyphonic tradition.¹²

¹¹Grove Music Online, *Walther*

¹²Jerrie Cadec Lucktenberg, *Unaccompanied Violin Music of the 17th and 18th Centuries: Precursors of Bach's Works for Violin Solo* (D.M.A. diss., University of South Carolina, 1984) 21

Ex. 2: Johann Paul Westhoff: *Suite for Unaccompanied Violin* (1683)¹³, 1st mov.,
Prelude



The Influence of Biber and his *Passacaglia*

Biber was born in Wartenberg. He was a church musician, violinist, and composer best known for his *Rosenkranz Sonatas* (1676). These Sonatas comprise fifteen sonatas for violin and basso continuo, each depicting a different Mystery of the Rosary, and a closing *Passacaglia* for unaccompanied violin. Each of these sonatas was a title of an event in from the life of Jesus Christ. Significant in these sonatas are the uses of

¹³Music is selected from Lukenberg, Appendix C

scordatura. Biber used a different tuning in each sonata except for the first sonata and the closing *Passacaglia*, which are both written in standard tuning. The use of *scordatura* results in different tone colors for each sonata. *Scordatura* also made it reasonable to play some chords and passages which would have been extremely difficult on a regularly-tuned violin.¹⁴

In *Passacaglia*, Biber did not use *scordatura*, although the piece is at least as challenging as the previous the fifteen of the *Rosenkranz Sonatas* wherein Biber often did use *scordatura* to ease the difficulty. Biber used high positions and polyphonic writing to explore idiomatic and virtuosic writing for violin. His work created new demands on the violinists' technique and were more difficult than either Corelli's compositions or Telemann's twelve *Fantasias*, which were written decades after the *Passacaglia*. The use of chords in *Passacaglia* creates resonant acoustics, and the use of running notes reveals a brilliant violinistic virtuosity. Biber's counterpoint played on a single violin was also a breakthrough in violin technique. Davitt Moroney asserts that Biber's *Passacaglia* was the most important precursor of J. S. Bach's six unaccompanied violin works.¹⁵ The *Passacaglia* was constructed of twelve sections with an introduction and a coda. Each section has a different length. The excitement of this piece arises from its construction out of sections which alternately feature chords and arpeggios, set in an increasingly intense rhythmic texture. Violinists may also express their technical expertise through the differing and challenging requirements of the diverse sections.

¹⁴David Moroney, *Biber's Sonata on the Mysteries of Rosary*, CD liner notes, (London: Virgin Classics Limited, 1989), 13

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 36

Ex. 3: Elements of Sections within *Passacaglia*

Variation Number	Measure Numbers	Description of each Section
Motive	mm. 1-2	Ostinato motive with a descending tetrachord
Section I	mm. 3-12	Chords by ostinato and dotted upper melody with the end of monophonic arpeggio with sixteenth notes
Section II	mm.13-18	Eighth- note chords
Motive	mm. 19-20	Ostinato motive
Section III	mm. 20-30	Polyphonic arpeggio with sixteen-notes
Section IV	mm. 31-38	Chords with alternative melodies on different voices
Motive	mm. 39-40	Ostinato motive
Section V	mm. 41-48	Running notes with combinations of varied rhythms; double stops of the thirds and sixths
Section VI	mm. 49-60	Leaped single-note melody Arpeggios with broken octaves
Section VII	mm. 61-72	Ostinatos with sixteenth notes; ostinatos with ascending scales in thirty-second notes
Motive	mm. 73-74	Ostinato motive
Section VIII	mm. 75-87	Chords
Section VIII	mm. 88-100	Chords
Motive	mm.101-102	Ostinato motive
Section X	mm.103-106	Ostinatos with ascending scales in Sixty-fourth notes (the pattern is similar to XIII)
Section XI	mm.107-112	Arpeggios with rhythmic variations
Section XII	mm.113-123	Arpeggios with rhythmic repeating notes
Coda	mm.123-131	Coda with chords

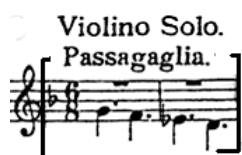
The tonality of the work is G minor. A descending four-note tetrachord motive is presented as an *ostinato*, which can be heard throughout the piece. Though it is written in a variation form, it sounds more like a *toccata*. There are five parts in this one-movement piece indicated as follows: *Introduction – Adagio – Allegro – Adagio – Coda*. These part

changes lead to tempo changes and introduce the opportunity for more freedom of expression into the piece. For an overview of the tempo changes of this piece see Ex. 4 below.

Ex. 4: Tempi Indicated at the Beginning of Each Part of *Passacaglia*

4.1: Beginning: Featuring the Four Note, m. 1

Tetrachord Ostinato



4.2: Adagio: mm. 48–50



4.3: mm. 51–52



4.4: mm. 87



4.5: mm. 122–123



After the motive is presented, Biber uses the four-note tetrachord to sustain the *ostinato*, while adding an upper voice with rhythmic contrast. For example, mm. 3–6 and later mm. 7–10 are different from each other in the upper-voice rhythm. At the end of second pattern, the bass line becomes increasingly intense by virtue of the three sixteenth notes. It is difficult to determine whether m. 1 and m. 12 belong to the first or the second section. I place them in section I due to their episodic function. These two measures create a simple monophonic arpeggio-like melody with slurred bowings (Ex. 5.2).

Ex. 5.1: Section I, mm. 1–11

First Pattern

Passaglia.

 Musical notation for Ex. 5.1, Section I, mm. 1–11. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The title "Passaglia." is written above the first measure. The notation is divided into two patterns. The first pattern is labeled "First Pattern" and the second pattern is labeled "Second Pattern". A "Motive" is indicated by a bracket under the first few notes of the first pattern.

Ex. 5.2: Episode, mm. 11–12



Each of the chords written in sections II, IV, VIII and VIII has its own unique character. Each section should be played in the manner that emphasizes and carries through the melody or “leading voice” most effectively and musically. For example, if the leading voice is on a lower string, then the bow should be rolled from upper string to the lower one and vice-versa. If the leading tone is on a middle string, then the bow should be rolled from the bottom to top and then back to the middle voice note.

In section II, the melody switches back and forth between the middle and upper lines. Therefore, in order to present the thematic melody, the player must plan to use the end of each rolling bow stroke to emphasize these notes. In section IV, the thematic melody is handled in the same way as in first two measures of the piece. The melody rises to the top voice. In order to play a down bow to emphasize the heavy beats, I suggest a bowing of down-up-up. In section VIII, the *ostinato* is placed in the upper voice, so melody is in the lower part. If the *ostinato* is presented in a two-voice passage, a violinist can easily present the lower part. If the *ostinato* is in a three or four-voice passage, however, violinists must plan the bow-rolling as discussed above in order to bring out the melody.

Ex. 6: Section II, mm. 13–15

○ indicates where the melodies go. For example, players should roll the first chord down and up, then make the bow stay on the A string to bring out the first note: D



Ex. 7: Section IV, mm. 31–34



Ex. 8: Section VIII, mm. 73–87

□ shows the four-note ostinato has been put on the upper voice.

→ shows the main melody needed to be brought out.

As for the sections with running notes, it is obvious that Biber built the intensity by increasing the speed of the note values. In section V, the music starts with sixty-fourth notes, but shortly changes to sixteenth notes. Hence, we should treat those sixty-fourth notes as embellishments and not as the main melody. I suggest violinists should slur the first four notes whenever the figure occurs. In addition, in order to bring out the most resonance, players should try to play open strings as much as possible. When the music arrives at section VII, the climax of the piece is reached. Not only does this variation have the longest passage of running notes, but it is also played in the work's highest position, fourth position, which was very rare in Biber's time. The beginning of the first

four measures is written in ascending and descending phrases of sixteenth notes. These passages are relatively easy to play but can serve to enhance the emotion expressed in the passage.

Ex. 9: Section IV, mm. 41–46

Musical score for Ex. 9: Section IV, mm. 41–46. The score consists of three staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The music features rapid sixteenth-note passages with various articulations and dynamics. Handwritten annotations include 'p', 'v', 'p v', and 'p v v'. At the end of the piece, there are handwritten numbers '3' and '2' below the notes.

Ex. 10: Section VII, mm. 65–72

Musical score for Ex. 10: Section VII, mm. 65–72. The score consists of four staves of music. The top three staves are in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music features rapid sixteenth-note passages with various articulations and dynamics. Handwritten annotations include 'p', 'v', 'p v', and 'p v v'. The section is labeled "Section VII" at the top. At the end of the piece, there are handwritten numbers "3" and "2" below the notes.

The emotion of the music intensifies through the use of thirty-second notes and ascending scales. My suggestions for fingerings and bowings are shown in Ex. 10 and 11. The final three sections (X, XI, and XII) show how Biber strives to establish the ending mood. Section X is predominantly composed of sixty-fourth notes while section VII (the climax) is predominantly composed of thirty-second notes. Because the register of notes in section X is not as high as fourth position, however, as in section VII, the climax, it doesn't sound as exciting as does section VII. On the contrary, section X has the effect of flashes of fireworks that end immediately. If section X can be described as flashes, then section XII can be described as the ashes of the fireworks. The repeating notes sound like an echo and vanish gradually into the darkness. The coda is set again in heroic chords that build to an intensity that gradually declines in the end.

Ex. 11: Section X, mm. 103–106

The image displays a musical score for Section X, measures 103 through 106. It consists of three staves of music. The notation includes sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together in groups. There are several annotations above the notes, including the letter 'Y' and the Greek letter pi (π), which likely indicate specific bowing or fingering techniques. The music is written in a single system across three staves, with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The overall texture is dense and rhythmic, characteristic of the 'flashes of fireworks' described in the text.

Ex. 12: Section XII, mm. 112–122

Ex. 13: Coda

How Bach was Influenced by the *Passacaglia*

Biber had inherited the diversified German styles. Furthermore, he successfully merged his personal stylistic unity with the German styles. Biber's innovative approach might have well distinguished him from his contemporaries. While most early Baroque composers frequently used polyphony in their music, Biber was starting to explore

different modes of composition, particularly the use of tonality, which matured later in the Baroque era.¹⁶

The systematic imaginative use of the patterned variation in Biber's *Passacaglia* might have inspired Bach to compose his solo violin sonatas. However, the complexities of Bach's unaccompanied violin works surpassed what Biber achieved. The violin techniques in Biber's *Passacaglia* are also used in Bach's solo violin sonatas. The abundant arpeggios, solid chords, and ascending and descending scales with short notes are all found in Bach's D-minor Chaconne and the E-major Prelude.

Although Biber's works are now considered historically more than musically interesting, it would be a mistake to underrate them. The efforts of such early Baroque composers might have facilitated the evolution of violin performing techniques. Without the explorations of Biber and his contemporaries, J.S. Bach's unaccompanied sonata for violin likely would have technically been less mature than they are.¹⁷

¹⁶Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era- from Monteverdi to Bach* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1947), 219

¹⁷Jerrie Cadec Lucktenberg, *Unaccompanied Violin Music of the 17th and 18th Centuries: Precursors of Bach's Works for Violin Solo* (D.M.A. diss., University of South Carolina, 1984), 1–29

Chapter Two

The Six Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas and Partitas by J. S. Bach: History, Styles, and Performances

J. S. Bach wrote his six unaccompanied works for violin solo in 1720, during what is now known as the late Baroque period.¹⁸ This fruitful time in music history saw the development of many styles and forms by German, Italian, and French composers. Though composers from different countries developed their own nationally distinctive styles, their works also influenced one another significantly. The influence of the Italians held the dominant role when Bach wrote his unaccompanied violin works.

It was also during the late Baroque period that instrumental music began to gain increasing attention. Composers began to use idiomatic writing in their compositions as well as definable structures, including the variation, fugue, concerto, sonata, and suite forms. Other innovations during this time include composition with the basso-continuo accompaniment and the use of contrasting effects, such as in the various movements of a sonata.¹⁹

Bach was remarkable in that he merged many distinct styles successfully while incorporating them artistically into his own personal compositional approach, as Biber achieved in his compositions. One of Bach's noteworthy contributions is the combining of both the traditional and the new styles of music of his time. Musicologist, humanist,

¹⁸The Baroque period includes music written from 1600 to 1750. The six unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas by Bach were composed in 1720, in the late Baroque era.

¹⁹Willi Apel & Ralph Daniel, *The Harvard brief Dictionary of Music* (New York: Pocket Books, a Simon & Schuster division of Gulf & Western Corporation), 27

and Professor of Music at the University of California, Manfred Bukofzer (1910–1955) therefore described Bach’s music as a “fusion of styles.”²⁰ Bach’s works do not serve only to represent the diverse essential elements of music in the Baroque era, however. His compositions, because of their own cohesive nature, beauty, and originality, have also exerted a great influence on musicians of succeeding generations.

This chapter is presented in three parts. In the first part, the stylistic development of J. S. Bach is examined. In the second part, the history and performance of Bach’s solo violin works are investigated. In the third part, some performance debates are addressed, and an overall interpretation of the G-minor Sonata and E-major Partita is suggested by the author. In addition, two selected movements, *Adagio* and *Fugue* from *Sonata No. 1 in G Minor*, are analyzed in some detail.

The Stylistic Development of J. S. Bach

It is important to investigate the stylistic development of Bach, who wrote his violin solo works during his mature period, called the Cöthen Period (1717-1723). To trace the origins of the composition of these monumental works, it is interesting to follow the paths through which Bach matured compositionally and also investigate his interactions with the violinists of his day.

J. S. Bach received his musical training from his father and his elder brother. In addition, J. S. Bach studied music by copying and arranging the scores of great musicians, both his contemporaries and those who preceded him, including

²⁰Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era- from Monteverdi to Bach* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1947), 260-305

Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713), Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741), Georg Frideric Handel (1650–1759), and Georg Philip Telemann (1681–1767), among others. These masters were among the greatest composers in Italy, France, Germany, and England. Through the process of studying and copying the compositions of others, Bach learned to write in a great variety of forms and styles, which he incorporated into his own personal style as well. Thus, his music has had two distinctive and important effects in music history. One has been to present a collection of the techniques and the styles of Bach’s esteemed precursors and contemporaries. The other has been to introduce new methods and ideas to be used by and to inspire the generations of composers who have succeeded Bach.

Bach’s stylistic development as a composer can be divided into four periods historically. In the first or early period (1703–1708), the composer was employed to play organ in Arnstadt and Muhlhausen. During this time, Bach was fully devoted to organ music. His compositional style is thus, not surprisingly, characterized by redundant length and a yet-to-be perfected harmonic method.²¹ Bach was probably still exploring rather than establishing his own approach in this period.

The second period (1708–1717) of Bach’s career development took place in Weimar. Initially he served as an organist and later became the concertmaster of the church orchestra. In Weimar, Bach’s compositional approach began to mature, and Bach formed his own distinctive “Bachian” musical language.²² It was also during this time that the composer successfully merged Italian and German compositional styles; the popular Italian style was characterized by harmonic progression, melodic themes, and clarity of

²¹Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era- from Monteverdi to Bach* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1947), 272

²²“The fugue theme....With its plastic shape and harmonic lucidity, which are no longer Italian or German but thoroughly Bachian, it illustrates the peak of thematic invention in baroque music altogether.” Ibid., 278-9

form.²³ Bach had familiarized himself with these different composing techniques through the process of copying the works of the Italian masters. He studied Vivaldi's violin concertos thoroughly and then transposed selected works to music for organ and harpsichord. The Italian principles and the violinistic writing of Vivaldi both had great influence on Bach's compositional development and on the subsequent writing of his unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas.

Bach was also familiar with Telemann's *Violin Concerto in G Major* (1708), possibly because he had known Telemann personally; Telemann served as the godfather of Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel. Telemann's *Twelve Fantasies, Op. 40:2–13* (1735) for solo violin are an important part of the unaccompanied violin literature. Likely though, Telemann and Bach both influenced each other compositionally.²⁴

Bach's third compositional period (1717–1723), Cöthen, marked an important time in Bach's musical career and his personal life. He was appointed to the positions of Capellmeister (musical director in a royal chapel) and director of chamber music in Cöthen by Prince Leopold. The Prince was a young man and had a great love for music. The position of Capellmeister was among the highest and most honorable for musicians at that time. As Bach enjoyed a successful professional career in Cöthen, he devoted himself also to composing instrumental music, and his works became the musical model for his students, audiences, and contemporaries. He wrote important compositions for harpsichord and organ: *Das Wohltemperirte Clavier (The Well-Tempered Clavier)*, BWV 846-869 (1722); the *15 Two-Part Inventions BWV 772–86* (1723); the *15 Three-Part Inventions, BWV 787–801* (1723); and the *Orgel-Buchlein (Exercises for the Organ) BWV*

²³Ibid., 278-9

²⁴Christoph Wolff, *The New Grove Bach* (New York: W.W. Norton Inc., 1983), 60

599–650 (1713–*circa*1718). He also completed several works for chamber and solo instruments, such as the *Six Brandenburg Concertos, BWV 1046–1051* (1721). It was also during the Cöthen period that Bach composed his six unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas, and also his *Six Suites for Solo Cello, BWV 1007–1012* (1720).

The Cöthen period was also marked by the death of Bach's first wife, Maria Barbara Bach (1684–1720). Bach later married court singer Anna Magdalena (1701–1760). With his second marriage, Bach began to consider moving to another city to gain a better paying job, probably due to the increasing size of his family. There was an opening in Leipzig, Kantor of Thomasschule. The previous Kantor had died and six applicants sought the position. Telemann was among them. Although Telemann was well-known as one of the best German musicians of the time, and was truly famous in Leipzig, he refused to teach Latin, which was one of the required duties of the job. In the end, Bach was awarded the position.

Bach's fourth compositional period (1723–1750) began when Bach moved to Leipzig to serve as Kantor of Thomasschule for the rest of his life. Though Bach felt the Kantorship was a social step down from his previous position as Capellmeister, the salary in Leipzig was satisfyingly higher.

In Leipzig, Bach taught music students at the four principal churches of Thomasschule and also offered musical services for the town. He earned extra financial support by writing compositions for weddings and funerals and he also helped to rebuild and test organs in Leipzig and surrounding towns. In 1729, Bach also served as the director of the Leipzig *Collegium Musicum* (Concert Academy), a small group of amateurs who gathered for concerts with a German orientation. In 1747, at the request of

King Frederick, Bach demonstrated his amazing keyboard and organ performing skills for the guests and musicians at the royal court. The king commissioned him to write a fugue with a theme on the spot. Upon his return to Leipzig, Bach recomposed the piece as the well-known *Musikalisches Opfer* (Musical Offering) (1740–1745). Other important works Bach completed in this period include the *Passion according to St. Matthew* (1740) and *Six Partitas for Keyboard BWV 825–830* (1726–1731), among others.

Bach started to suffer from eye problems in 1744 and underwent corrective surgery in 1750. However, he did not regain his sight, and his overall health continued to decline. Bach died on the 28th of July 1750 and was buried in the St. John's cemetery in Leipzig. Following Bach's death, his name was gradually forgotten for almost a century. Most of his manuscripts were then in the possession of his widow and children, and, subsequently, many of his compositions, especially instrumental works, were lost. The surviving works were collected by Preussische Staatsbibliothek.²⁵ This continues to be the most important collection of Bach's compositions.²⁶

The History and Performance of Bach's Solo Violin Works

Titles and Movements

The title on the front page of Bach's manuscript of his solo violin works is *Six Solos for Violin without Bass Accompaniment*. Perhaps because he thought that music without basso continuo was unusual, Bach wrote this title on the front of each page (Ex. 14 & 15).

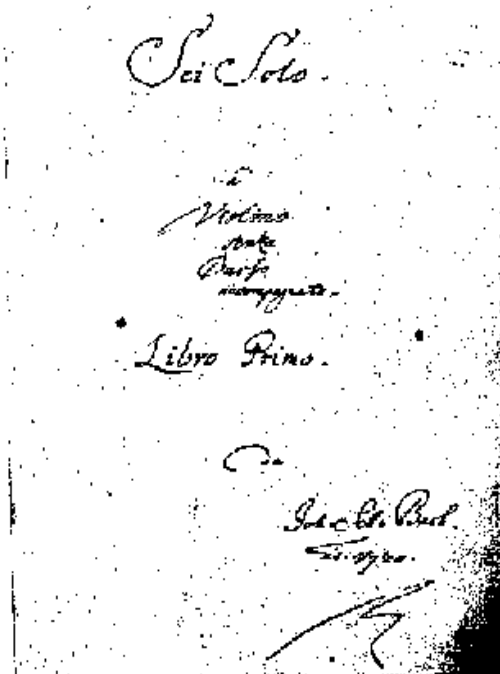
²⁵K Marie Stolba, *The Development of Western Music – A History* (Madison: Brown & Benchmark, 2nd edition, 1994), 330

²⁶R. Elvers and H.-G. Klein, ed., *Die Handschrift Johann Sebastian Bachs, Musikabteilung der Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (Berlin, 1985)

Bach successfully demonstrated his proficiency as a composer for violin in these six works.

The solo violin works comprise three sonatas and three partitas in alternating order totaling thirty-two movements in all. Each sonata begins with an introductory slow movement followed by a fugue, another slow movement, and a fast movement. *Sonata No. 1* is written in the key of G minor. *Sonata No. 2* is written in A minor, and *Sonata No. 3*, in C major, contains the longest fugue movement among the six solo violin sonatas.

Ex. 14: The title page of Bach's Autograph. It reads: Sei Solo a Violino senza Basso accompagnato Libro Primo. Da Joh. Seb. Bach. Ao. 1720 (Six Solos for Violin Without Bass Accompaniment. First Book by Joh. Seb. Bach. In the Year 1720).



Ex. 15: The front of the first page of *Adagio* from Bach. It reads: Sonata G ma a Violino Solo senza Basso by J. S. Bach (Six Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas and Partitas. The title written is: First Sonata for Violin Solo without Bass by J. S. Bach).



Each partita is composed of its own unique combination of dance movements.

Partita No. 1, in B minor, contains a standard sequence of dances: *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, and *Bourrée*. Each movement is followed by a variation called a “double.”

Partita No. 2, in D minor, consists of five movements. The first four movements are arranged in the same order as that found in *Partita No. 1* except that the fourth movement is a *Gigue*, not a *Bourrée*. Extraordinarily, a *Chaconne* is added to the second partita as the final movement. This *Chaconne* is considered to be a most immense and significant piece of music, standing very well on its own. *Partita No. 3*, in E major, is characterized by its delightful and bright colors. The work opens with a famous *Preludio* followed by an unusual sequencing of six dance movements: *Loure*, *Gavotte en Rondeau*, two *Menuets*, *Bourrée*, and *Gigue*.²⁷

²⁷Boris Schwarz, *Bach Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin* (Germany: Deutsche Grammophon, CD liner notes, 1975)

Stage Performances

As described previously, Bach's music was not published widely for almost a century after his death. His solo violin works were written in approximately 1720, but the work in its entirety was not published until 1802. During the intervening time, only amateurs and connoisseurs kept copies of the compositions, and the works were neither performed in public nor even studied seriously by violinists.

The nineteenth century saw the rediscovery of Bach. In 1821, Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) heard Bach's music performed in the home of a friend and was greatly affected. Later, Mendelssohn inadvertently discovered a copy of Bach's *The Passion According to St. Matthew*. In 1829, Mendelssohn conducted a successful performance on March 11 in Berlin. Once the *St. Matthew Passion* was revealed to the world, Bach's music started to obtain growing attention and admiration.²⁸

It was Ferdinand David (1810–1873) who first performed in public what was to become perhaps the most famous movement from the unaccompanied violin works, the *Chaconne* from *Partita No. 2*. David first performed the piece in Leipzig in February of 1840. Ironically, at the premiere of this intentionally solo work, Robert Schumann (1810–1856) played a piano accompaniment with Ferdinand. The concert review in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* (General Musical Newspaper) reported:

A Chaconne in D minor for violin solo by Sebastian Bach, which Concertmaster David performed absolutely beautifully, stirred the most interest on this evening, however...[the passages performed] were very difficult, containing almost all violinistic devices possible, and one sees with some surprise that most things to which modern virtuosi attend in order to excite and

²⁸Joel Lester, *Bach's Works for Solo Violin, Style, Structure, Performance* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999), 6

to amaze the public were in reality invented long ago, actually that violin playing in Bach's time already had reached an astonishing height...Indeed, we might maintain that the finished performance of such pieces as this Chaconne actually would involve a far greater mastery of playing and far more competent artistry than the performance of many, even the most, of the most famous modern virtuoso pieces.²⁹

The David-Schumann concert is historic in that it added sudden momentum to the gain in popularity of Bach's solo violin works. After David, Joseph Joachim (1831–1907), also a virtuoso violinist, performed the works widely, and soon Bach's music became part of the standard performance repertoire. Joachim is also the first violinist who had the courage to perform these solo works actually unaccompanied on the stage. As one of the most prestigious violinists of his time and also a friend of Brahms and Schumann, Joachim exerted a remarkable influence on violin performance in the nineteenth century. Brahms dedicated his *Violin Concerto, op. 77* (1878) and *Double Concerto for Violin and Cello, op. 102* (1887) to Joachim, an artist with splendid musicianship. Brahms once said, in fact, that Joachim was a better composer than he.³⁰

Following the performances by Ferdinand and Joachim, violinists have regarded Bach's compositions as monumental works. The great violinists have all performed Bach works and most teaching methods have at least mentioned and often emphasized the importance of Bach's six unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas. Joseph Szigeti (1892–1973), virtuoso violinist and supreme musician, believed these works "should be the core of a violinist's life."³¹ The importance of these compositions can be seen in the fact that selections from Bach's unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas have become

²⁹Gottfried Wilhelm Fink, ed. by Jon F. Eiche, *A Concert Review from The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: A Collection of Views* (Bloomington: American String Teachers Association, 1985), 62

³⁰Margaret Campbell, *The Great Violinists* (U.K.: Curtis Brown, 1980), 130

³¹Joseph Szigeti, *Szigeti on the Violin*. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1979), 98

required works in many competitions and auditions. They have become respected challenges and have marked important milestones for violinists of many generations.

Arrangements

The unaccompanied violin works have been arranged for other instruments by Bach himself and also by other composers. Bach was known for his interest in making transcriptions of his own works and other composers' works as well. According to one of his pupils, Johann Friedrich Agricola (1720-1774), Bach often played these violin solo works on the clavichord, "adding as many musical components in the nature of harmony to the original scores as he found necessary."³² Some of the pieces and their movements that likely were arranged for other instruments by Bach include an arrangement for the organ of the *Fugue* from the solo violin *Sonata No. 1 in G Minor* in his *Prelude and Fugue in D Minor for Organ, BWV 539*. He also may have arranged the *Fugue* for lute in his *Fugue in G Minor for Lute, BWV 1000* (This arrangement may be done by his son, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710-1784)). Other arrangements are: the *Sonata in D Minor for Harpsichord BWV 964* as an arrangement of Bach's *Sonata No 2 for Solo Violin*, and *Adagio in G Major for Harpsichord, BWV 968* arranged from *Sonata No.3 for Solo Violin*.³³ These arrangements may be seen to serve as documentation of Bach's and the eighteenth century's views of harmony.

³²Joel Lester. *Bach's Works for Solo Violin, Style, Structure, Performance* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999), 23

³³Richard R. Efrati. *Treatise on the Execution and Interpretation of the Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin and the Suites for Solo Cello by Johann Sebastian Bach*. (Atlantis: Musikbuch-Verlag ag Zurich, 1979), 16

In the nineteenth century, several composers including Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn arranged piano accompaniment parts for the Bach unaccompanied violin works. Violinists of their time were not used to the idea of performing alone on the stage.³⁴ The piano accompaniments written by Schumann and Mendelssohn represent the nineteenth century's musical harmonic conception (Ex.16). Note that the harmonic-progression styles of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may differ slightly.

³⁴Joel Lester. *Bach's Works for Solo Violin, Style, Structure, Performance* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999), 23

Ex. 16: Robert Schumann's arrangement of Bach's solo violin works. Selected from *Bach=Schumann: Klavierbegleitung zu den Sonaten für Violine Solo, Heft I* (New York: C.F. Peter's edition, 1961, p. 4). mm. 1-16

4

FUGA
Allegro

Allegro

p

D

p

The image displays a musical score for a fugue. It begins with a single system where the violin part (top staff) plays a complex, rhythmic melody while the piano accompaniment (bottom two staves) is mostly silent, with a few chords and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The second system continues the violin melody with more piano accompaniment. The third system features a key signature change to D major, indicated by a 'D' above the staff, and includes a dynamic marking of *p*. The fourth system shows the violin part continuing with a dynamic marking of *p* and the piano accompaniment providing harmonic support.

The Challenges

Although modern violin techniques have been well developed for the past century, Bach's solo violin works still pose a variety of challenges for violinists. Most technical challenges stem from using the violin to play polyphonically and the resultant need to emphasize the leading voice when playing multiple stops. Also, there is the issue of using authentic Baroque-period instruments versus modern instruments and how best to incorporate contemporary understanding of Bach-era performance practices into performance today.

Multiple stops: Multiple stops are frequently used in these solo works in order to present polyphonic voices, especially in the fugues. Multiple stops increase the difficulty in performing these works. Both scholars and players have been involved in trying to resolve the challenges related to multiple stops.

One difficulty is that multiple stops in Bach's works often involve notes on three or four strings. However, because of the curvature of the violin bridge, it is quite technically demanding for violinists to sustain three or four strings compared with two strings simultaneously. Three, or even four, strings may be played simultaneously but only using a fast bow speed and strong pressure, which creates a loud and intense sound. Hence, players must decide whether they want to arpeggiate the chords, which can create a gentler tone quality, or play the notes all together, depending upon the best effect for any given passage.

A second challenge is how to emphasize the distinct lines of music found within the multiple stops. Bach attempted to create pseudo polyphonic effects or basso-continuo-like

voices in these pieces. Violinists thus have to bring out the basso line by emphasizing some notes and playing others more softly. Performers are required to create illusions — for example that some notes are sustained longer than they really are (even though the bow must leave the string) — in order to bring out separate lines and make all voices heard clearly. This will be discussed in detail later in this paper with reference to the G-minor Sonata.

A third challenge related to multiple stops is that the main melody may be sounded on a lower or middle string instead of the upper. Hence, players must determine whether they want to roll any given bow stroke from bottom to top or vice-versa, depending upon which notes must be highlighted combined with the direction that the bow is moving. Once artistic decisions are made, difficult maneuvers may need to be mastered.

Playing on Period Instruments: Several scholars, including David Boyden (1910–1986), have investigated how to most efficiently play Bach’s multiple stops. Some have argued that the use of an eighteenth-century style bow along with a flat violin bridge would be the most authentic way to present these works (Ex.17&18). Emil Telmanyi (1892–1988) went so far as to invent the “Bach Bow” (Ex.19).³⁵ Many players use their modern instruments and try to overcome the difficulties described above through developing skillful technical solutions. Other violinists choose to perform with Baroque style equipment (period instruments) and a Baroque style of interpretation. Rachel Podger’s recording has served for the author as an important model of this type of performance.³⁶

³⁵Emil Telmanyi, *Some Problems in Bach’s Unaccompanied Violin Music* (The Musical Times, Vol. 96, No. 1343), 14-18

³⁶Rachel Podger, *Six Sonatas for Unaccompanied Violin* (Channel Classics, CCS 12198 & 14498), recorded in 1999.

In Ex. 17, the upper two bows shown below are from the early eighteenth century. The bottom two are from the late eighteenth century. The changes in length, shape, and construction of the bows are quite notable. Period instrumental players of today probably use the bows similar to the two upper bows.

Ex. 17: The Evolution of the Violin Bow³⁷

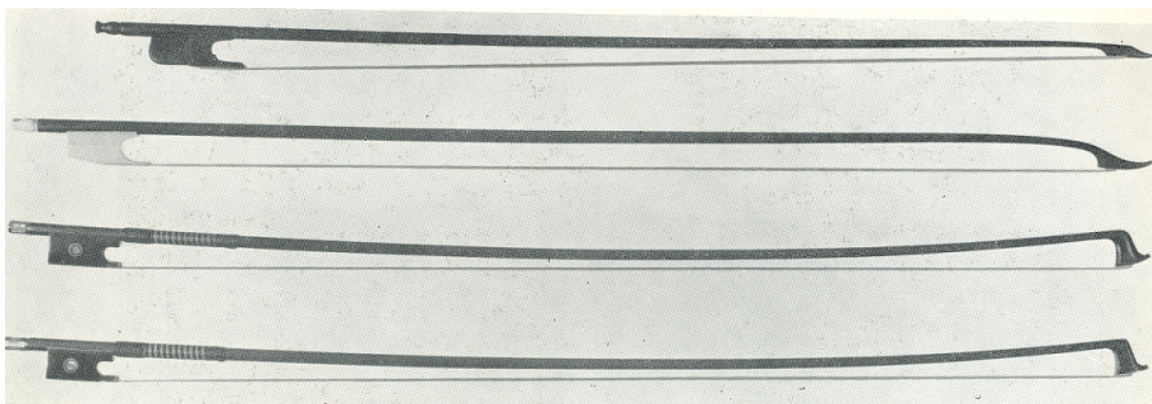
The bows from the top to bottom:

Bow dated 1694

Bow made between 1760-1770

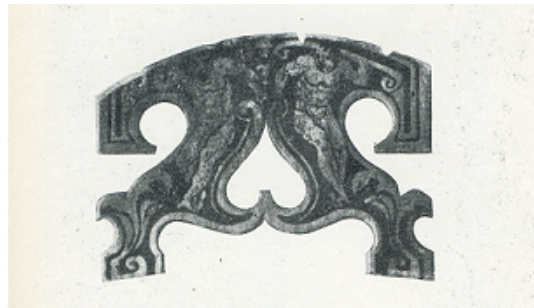
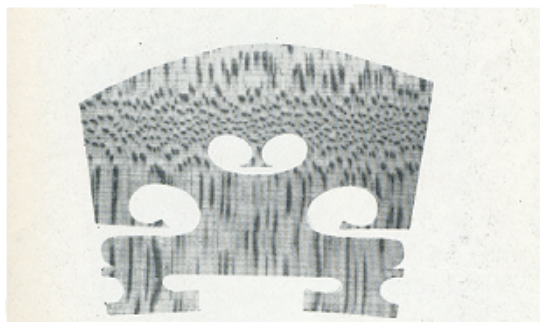
Bow by Tourte *pere*, 1770-80

Bow by F. Tourte, 1800



Ex. 18: The Evolution of the Bridge³⁸

On the left side is a modern viola bridge; on the right is a viola bridge by Antonio Stradivari (1644–1737).

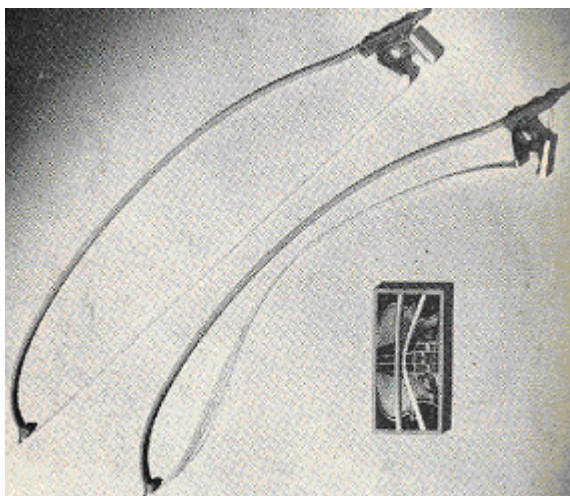


³⁷David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), Plate 38

³⁸Ibid, Plate 27

Ex. 19: The Modern Baroque Bow³⁹

The modern Baroque bow was constructed circa 1955 according to the instruction of violinist Emil Telmanyi, who calls his invention a “Vega” bow. Telmanyi asserted that his Vega bow would provide for the perfect production of Bach’s solo music.⁴⁰



Stylistic Presentation and the choosing of bow strokes: Decisions related to the style of presentation and the choosing of bow strokes are closely associated with one another. Players, therefore, not only need to master the techniques required to execute Bach’s pieces, but they also need to have a full grasp of the concepts underlying Bach’s music in order to decide how to incorporate these techniques. Some examples will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

³⁹Ibid., Plate 40

⁴⁰Emil Telmanyi, *Some Problems in Bach’s Unaccompanied Violin Music* (The Musical Times, Vol. 96, No. 1343), 14–18

Performance, Interpretation, and Analysis: The G-Minor Sonata and E-Major Partita

There is continuing debate about the most appropriate way to perform Bach's and others' Baroque works. Some scholars and specialized players support Baroque performance practices, such as arpeggiating chords slowly, bowing with light détaché bow strokes, using less intense or no vibrato, and playing with a more improvised rhythmic style. Other points of view are very different. For example, recordings by Shlomo Mintz (b. 1957)⁴¹ and Henryk Szeryng (1918–1988)⁴² demonstrate a more Romantic approach that enunciates chords powerfully, and incorporates a splendid vibrato, sustained bow strokes, and a steady and exact mathematical interpretation of tempi and rhythms.

In my opinion, it is important for a violinist to develop one's own interpretation. A performer should embody his or her inclinations and decisions in performances instead of simply following a fixed style decided by someone else. The following paragraphs represent my views on the treatment of selections from Bach's unaccompanied works for violin, based on my analysis of the music combined with the experiences I have had performing these pieces on the stage.

Placed in the beginning of Bach's solo violin works, the G-minor Sonata is a powerful, dark composition which embodies great musical contrasts, and contains four movements: *Adagio*, *Fugue*, *Siciliana*, and *Presto*. The *Adagio* and *Fugue* serve as

⁴¹*Shlomo Mintz - The Six Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin* (West Germany: Deutsche Gramophon, CD), recorded in 1984.

⁴²*Henryk Szeryng - The Six Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin* (Sony Music Entertainment Inc.), recorded in 1965.

important tools for young violinists who often perform these pieces in contests or auditions.

The *Adagio* features a slow but extensively and richly ornamented melody. Chords are used occasionally, which become the underpinnings for the whole melody. The ending of the *Adagio* serves as the harbinger of the embedded theme for the subsequent movement, *Fugue*, which is punctuated by numerous chords on strong beats and is also characterized by contrasts which constructively lead to the climax of the movement. After the climax, the subject is found on the G string, supported by chords piled up until the end. The *Fugue* ends with a flamboyant coda. Further details of the *Adagio* and *Fugue* and suggestions for their performance are discussed later in this chapter.

The *Siciliana* of the G-minor Sonata provides a peaceful contrast to the intense *Fugue* and features a graceful dotted dance rhythm. The movement may be heard as a relaxing conversation between the G (bass) string and its three upper-voice companions. The last movement, *Presto*, is a homophonic composition featuring a perpetual motion style.

In striking contrast with the dark and improvisatory style of the G-minor Sonata is the effect of the pleasant and dancing E-major Partita. E major is one of the violin's brightest keys. In my opinion, the keys of E major and E minor both produce a golden tone on the violin—as with Mendelssohn's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in E minor, op. 64* (1844). The E-major Partita is composed of seven light dance movements: *Preludio, Loure, Gavotte en Rondeau, Menuet I & II, Bourrée, and Gigue*. They are all fairly short in length and also light in musical style. All of the movements convey a joyful temperament.

Preludio begins the Partita and consists of continuous rush of fast sixteenth notes which must be executed cleanly. Endurance and precision is required for both fingering and bowing while care must be taken to reveal the hidden theme. Many violinists, including for example Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908), have performed the *Preludio* independently as a concert piece. In addition, the *Preludio* served as the inspiration for the creation of several later compositions including Eugene Ysaÿe's unaccompanied *Violin Sonata No. 2*, which he dedicated to French violinist, Jacques Thibaud (1881-1953). Thibaud often used the *Preludio* for his warm up before concert performances. Knowing this, Ysaÿe used the theme of Bach's *Preludio* in the sonata dedicated to Thibaud.⁴³

Loure, which follows *Preludio*, is constructed by a slow-moving dance pattern in 6/4 time. The main theme begins with an up-beat pause. The mood is peaceful and lovely, with the singing effect of a hymn. Double stops are found throughout the movement.

Gavotte en Rondeau, in 4/4 time, is a joyful movement with a bright tune. It is a rondo in form with a five-time repeated theme and a charming episode. The form is a-b-a-c-a-d-a-e-a. As is the *Preludio*, the *Gavotte en Rondeau* is often performed separately as a concert piece.

The fourth and fifth movements of the E-major Partita, *Menuet I & II*, are characterized nonetheless by their own distinct styles and rhythms. The former is more extroverted and dignified while the latter is relatively introverted and diminutive. It is conventional to play these two *Menuets* as if connected, and after the second *Menuet* is played, the first one is resumed.

⁴³Margaret Campbell, *The Great Violinists* (U.K.: Curtis Brown, 1980), 69

Bourrée is a short essentially homophonic movement in 2/2 meter with frequent accents on weak beats. The dance is composed in a succinct and decisive style. The first two beats with chords in the main theme create an earthy mood and irregular rhythm.

The *Gigue* offers a cheerful and elegant sequence in binary form as the completion of the musical structure for the E-major Partita as a whole. *Gigue* also serves as a glorious and resplendent ending overall, taking its place as the final movement in Bach's monumental works for unaccompanied violin.

Analysis of the *Adagio* and *Fugue* from the G-Minor Sonata

Adagio

The G-minor *Adagio* serves as the prelude for *Sonata No. 1* and also as the prelude for the whole set of six works. This *Adagio* is composed of deep, broad, and ornamented melodies with chords at the bottom. The starting chord (Ex. 20.1)⁴⁴ provides in the simplest way the most resonant effect that a violinist can create. The chord consists of two open (unstopped) strings: G and D on the bottom and a B flat and G in the first position on the A and E strings respectively. Béla Bartók (1881–1945) also used this chord in the beginning of his *Sonata for Solo Violin, op. 124* (1944) (see Ex. 20.1 and 20.2).

Ex. 20.1: Bach “*Adagio*” in G-minor Sonata, m. 1



⁴⁴Unless specified, the following examples of Bach are selected from *Johann Sebastian Bach Works for Violin, from the Bach-Gesellschaft Edition* (New York: Dover Publication, Inc, 1978)

Ex. 20.2: Béla Bartók *Sonata for Solo Violin, Op. 124, m. 1*



In this movement, a common mistake made by violinists is to concentrate only on the upper melody lines. By analyzing the score closely, it may be seen that the bass notes also form an audible line. Although it is difficult to sustain these notes, there are several ways to bring out the bass line. First, one can leave the bow on the bass notes longer and play them with more weight. Second, one can use a slower bow speed. Third, vibrato may be used to make these bass notes resonate and sing. To vibrate, players need to place their fingers before they pull their bows. The following example shows how these bass notes should be heard. According to Lester, such a compositional feature is called “the underlying bass motion.”⁴⁵

⁴⁵Joel Lester, *Bach's Works for Solo Violin: Style, Structure, Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33-36

Ex. 21: The Underlying Bass Motion, *Adagio*, *Sonata No. 1*, mm. 1–6⁴⁶

It is also important to determine an appropriate and effective tempo for the *Adagio* which should be performed “...at ease, [with] a slow tempo between andante and largo.”⁴⁷ The exact tempo of course may be decided based on personal preference. It is also the player’s choice whether to adhere to a constant tempo or to play the movement with a *rubato* style. Modern violinists usually choose steady, more metronomic tempi. In

⁴⁶Ibid, 34

⁴⁷Willi Apel & Ralph Daniel, *The Harvard brief Dictionary of Music* (New York: Pocket Books, a Simon & Schuster division of Gulf & Western Corporation), 6

their recordings, Jascha Heifetz (1900-1987)⁴⁸ and Itzhak Perlman (1945)⁴⁹, both used a fairly steady tempo, though Heifetz played the movement much faster than Perlman. I suggest choosing a medium slow tempo with a flowing feeling, with a metronome marking between of 52 and 60 for an eighth note. The tempo should allow for each note to be sung while keeping the piece moving forward. Furthermore, I think some *rubato* is acceptable within the constraints of a steady beat overall.

Fugue

This *Fugue* is the most popular from among the three fugues found in Bach's violin solo works. The use of the fugue as a form stands out among the works of Bach who was often praised for his proficient skill composing in this genre. Bach scholar Johann Forkel (1749–1818) asserts: “Never has a fugue been made by any composer which could be compared with one of his [Bach's].”⁵⁰ Bach's final work, *The Art of Fugue*, is considered to be “the theoretical manual of advanced counterpoint...recognized as [one of] the greatest masterpieces of musical arts.”⁵¹

The G-minor *Fugue* can be divided into six sections. Each one is finished with a cadence. The six cadences appear at mm. 14, 24, 55, 64, 87, and 94. Each cadence is presented in a different key and each section has a distinct musical texture.

⁴⁸Jascha Heifetz- *The Six Solo Sonatas and Partitas of J. S. Bach* (RCA Gold Label), recorded in 1952.

⁴⁹Itzhak Perlman – *The Six Solo Sonatas and Partitas of J.S. Bach* (EMI Classics), recorded in 1990.

⁵⁰Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Johann Sebastian Bach- His Life, Art and Work* (New York, Vienna House, 1974), 34

⁵¹Willi Apel & Ralph Daniel, *The Harvard brief Dictionary of Music* (New York: Pocket Books, a Simon & Schuster Division of Gulf & Western Corporation), 19

The first section serves to introduce the main subject which is composed of three motives. The first consists of four repeating eighth notes; the second is a sixteenth-sixteenth-eight motive; and the third is a two eighth-note motive (Ex. 23).

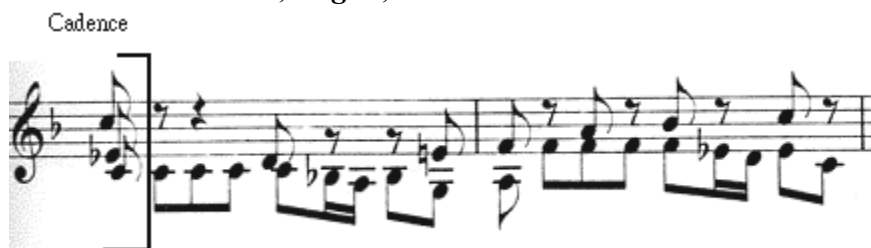
Ex. 22.1: Cadence 1, *Fugue*, mm. 13–14



Ex. 22.2: Cadence 2, *Fugue*, mm. 23–24



Ex. 22.3: Cadence 3, *Fugue*, mm. 55–56



Ex. 22.4: Cadence 4, *Fugue*, mm. 63–64



Ex. 22.5: Cadence 5, *Fugue*, mm. 87–88



Ex. 22.6: Cadence 6, *Fugue*, mm. 94

Cadence

Ex. 23: The three motives from the subject of *Fugue*, m. 1

Allegro.

Motive 1 Motive 2 Motive 3

The first section is followed by a five-measure episode of sixteenth-notes. Bach didn't give up on the basso-continuo effect even in this passage of sixteenths. As a result, there are two horizontal lines within this passage. It is important for players to feel the harmonic progression of the movement in order to understand which notes are more important than others. Ex. 24 below shows how Schumann heard the harmonic progression. The circled notes are meant to serve as the basso-continuo voice.

Ex. 24: *Fugue* along with Schumann's accompaniment.⁵² mm. 7–10

The accompaniment shows one way to hear the harmonic progression in this fugue. It is suggested that players emphasize the circled notes.

The choice of the best bow strokes is also arguable. Some violinists, such as Szigeti, suggest playing this section either in the middle of the bow or near the tip, with a light and separated *détaché* stroke.⁵³ Modern violinists more commonly use a longer bow length with a smooth and connected *détaché*. My opinion is that no matter what kind of bow stroke a violinist chooses, he or she is responsible for bringing out the harmonic progressions, emphasizing the important notes necessary to hear the polyphonic-like voicing. Section I ends in a G-minor cadence.

Section II is written in the highest register (D2) that is employed so far in the solo works. This section may be played softly in order to contrast with Section I. The contrast comes naturally also from the textural differences. Section I consists of two smaller sections with a mounting sense of excitement; two voices at the beginning and three voices subsequently. In the two-voice part, the center notes of the subjects are moving along the circle of fifths, D to G to C to F to B flat to F to C to F. In the three-voice part,

⁵²Bach=Schumann: *Klavierbegleitung zu den Sonaten für Violine Solo, Heft I* (New York: C.F. Peter's edition, 1961), 4

⁵³Josepg Szigeti, *J.S. Bach 6 Sonatas and Partitas* (Vanguard Classics, OVC 8021/22), remade in 1991.

the center notes of the subjects stop moving along the circle of fifths. These notes are F, A, F, D, G, F, and A. Section Two ends in a D-minor cadence.

Ex. 25: The Developed Subjects: circled notes are meant to be brought out. Section II, *Fugue*, mm. 14–24

In the beginning, the structure of Section III is similar to that of Section I; however, Section III is gradually developed with a larger extension and more new elements. The most complex and the longest portion of this piece, this section can be treated as the center of the *Fugue*.

Measures 35-41 comprise a passage of alternated melodies in chords, following a chordal modulation. It is often performed in an arpeggiated manner. The best way to execute these chords is highly debatable. One popular method is presented in the Joachim-Moser edition.⁵⁴ Many modern violinists, including Perlman, Mintz, and Szeryng have performed and recorded the *Fugue* in this manner (Ex. 26) which promotes

⁵⁴Joel Lester, *Bach's Works for Solo Violin: Style, Structure, Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 66

resonance, an acoustic feature that is highly favored by performers in today's large concert halls.

The second part of section III is a sixteenth-note figuration. This type of figuration is also seen in section I. The sixteenth-note figuration in section III, however, is much longer than in section I, and the range of modulation of the former is also wider than that of the latter. This part is a typical pedal-like figuration of Bach's organ work. The key wanders as follows: D- A - G - C - F - E Flat - D Flat – C – G- A Flat –A- G. The key then moves back to G minor with a chordal passage, and finally, section III ends in a C-minor cadence.

Ex. 26: The section in brackets is often played as in Ex. 27. Selected Parts of Section III, *Fugue*, mm. 31–56

Measure 31-34 is a preparation of building up the climax in the arpeggiate section (mm. 34-40). The circled notes are the melodic lines which are meant to be brought by the player.

This part is suggested by the author to be played as in Ex. 27.

The sixteenth-note figuration in the second part of Section III.

D----- A-----

G----- D----- C----- G----- F----- E Flat-----

F----- e Flat----- D Flat----- C----- G-----

A Flat----- A----- A----- G

Cadence

Ex. 27: The arpeggiated section from *Fugue* from the Joachim-Moser Edition⁵⁵, mm. 35–37



Section IV is the shortest and the most difficult one to play technically. The challenge of performing the multiple stops often requires that even the most skillful violinists slow down their tempo.

Section IV begins with a subject in C major, then moves to F major, an octave higher F, B-flat major, C minor, D major, and then to F major again. Despite its short length, the fourth section is the most intense section in terms of fugal development. The subject appears seven times successively, each time in a different key with a different texture (Ex. 28). The thickest textures are located in the B-flat major and C-minor statements of the subject. These statements are played in four strings with three repeating eighth notes. The modulation from B-flat major to C minor increases the tension rising toward this section's peak. Then the tension is gradually released by decreasing the register ultimately to the low B flat on the G string.

⁵⁵Joel Lester, *Bach's Works for Solo Violin: Style, Structure, Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 66

Ex. 28: The Seven Subjects in different keys, Section IV, *Fugue*, mm. 55–62

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff contains a melodic line with several slanted arrows pointing to specific notes, indicating slurred bowing. The bottom staff contains a complex, arpeggiated accompaniment consisting of sixteenth-note chords. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

Section V, which serves as an echo of the *Fugue*, begins with a peaceful but searching sixteenth-note arpeggiated figuration. The difference between the figurations of this section and the earlier four sections is that section V adopts an occasional slurred bowing (Ex. 29). Following the sixteenth-note figure is a fugal modulation in a lower register. One difficulty occurs in voicing the ending subject. Because the melody is stated on the G string, many players, including Mintz and Perlman, have chosen to roll the chords from the upper to the lower strings while others insist on playing these chords in the usual way, from bottom to top (Ex. 30).

Ex. 29: Section V, *Fugue*, mm. 69–71

The image shows a single staff of music in treble clef. It features a sixteenth-note arpeggiated figuration. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is characterized by a steady, rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes.

Ex. 30: Section V, *Fugue*, mm. 82–83



The final section in the *Fugue*, actually the *Coda*, serves as this movement's climax. This passage is written as a pedal point on the dominant with a typical embellished flourish. It is utterly characteristic of the way Bach finished his major organ works. The beginning of this passage is usually played in a slower tempo with *rubato*, setting up the foundation of this section. As the register increases, the tempo goes slightly faster. The feeling of flow is interrupted by the climax of the coda, the appearance of D2 on the E string. The tempo then increases again until the statement of the D-minor chord. Cadenza-like running notes precede a majestic and apt return to the opening G-minor chord found in *Adagio* (Ex. 31).

Ex. 31: Ending of the Coda, *Fugue*, mm.93–94



Chapter Three

Eugene Ysaÿe's Six Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas, Op. 27

Eugene Ysaÿe's own six unaccompanied sonatas for violin were directly inspired by J.S. Bach's *Six Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas and Partitas*. Ysaÿe attended a recital by Joseph Szigeti in Brussels in 1923 and was deeply moved by Szigeti's performance of the B-minor Partita by J.S. Bach:

I found in Szigeti this quality, rare in our time, of being simultaneously a virtuoso and musician. One senses in him the artist, conscious of his mission as an interpreter and one appreciates him as a violinist who, aware of the problems, put techniques in the service of expression.⁵⁶

Ysaÿe's appreciation for Bach's works for solo violin is also reflected in the following statement:

The genius of Bach frightens one who would like to compose in the medium of his sonatas and partitas. These works represent a summit and there is never a question of rising above it.⁵⁷

After Szigeti's recital, Ysaÿe returned to his home and played his muted violin for hours. The following morning, the exhausted violinist appeared and told his family that he had just composed the outline of six pieces for unaccompanied violin. Ysaÿe spent the next several weeks revising the works, his *Six Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas, Op. 27*, which were published in 1924. The collection soon became one of the most important

⁵⁶Antoine Ysaÿe, *Historical account of the Six Sonatas for Unaccompanied Violin Op. 27 of Eugene Ysaÿe*, (Brussels: Les Editions Ysaÿe, 1968), 4

⁵⁷Ibid.

features in the history of the solo violin repertoire.⁵⁸ Ysaÿe's six unaccompanied violin sonatas are influenced by the violin techniques and musical content of three different periods in music history: the Baroque, Romantic and Early 20th Century Eras.⁵⁹ To best understand these six works, it is interesting to investigate the development of violin technique across these three eras. It is also important to trace Ysaÿe's playing styles and his aesthetic view toward music, as the pieces serve to represent both Ysaÿe's playing style and his artistic vision. This chapter will be divided into three parts. In the first part, the development of violin technique in three musical eras encompassing the time span from Bach's lifetime to that of Ysaÿe will be presented. In the second part, the stylistic and aesthetic views of Ysaÿe will be discussed. Finally, in the third section, Ysaÿe's innovative techniques and the musical content of his *Sonata No. 2* and *Sonata No. 4* will be analyzed in some detail.

Developments in Violin Playing, from the Time of Bach to Ysaÿe

The Establishment of Violin Schools

Ysaÿe's solo violin works followed Bach's by two full centuries. The techniques of violin playing had progressed enormously during this time. A significant phenomenon during this period was the establishment of violin "schools" within which the development of identifiably distinctive approaches to violin technique took place.

⁵⁸Karen D. Hoaston, *Culmination of the Belgian Violin Tradition—The Innovative Styles of Eugene Ysaÿe* (D.M.A diss., University of California, 1999), 18-24

⁵⁹Christian Vachon, *Ysaÿe's Six Sonatas for Solo Violin: Influences and Inspirations*. (D.M.A. Lecture Document, Peabody Conservatory of Music, 2003), 2

Each of these historical schools represents a lineage of mentor-student relationships through which a unique set of violin techniques developed and was conveyed from teacher to student for multiple generations. From the mid-eighteenth century of Bach to the early-twentieth century of Ysaÿe, the most important violin schools were the German, Italian, and Franco-Belgian Schools. Although most distinguished violinists came from these schools, a number of violinists outside these schools also made important and recognized contributions to their art. The most famous composer from among these exceptional violinists is Nicolo Paganini (1782–1840), who developed his own distinctive techniques that greatly impacted the evolution of violin playing.

The German Violin School, established by Biber, Walther and Westhoff, has been considered earlier in this paper as having influenced Bach's composition of his unaccompanied violin works. The German School encompassed Franz Benda (1709–1786) and Johann Stamitz (1717–1757). Leopold Mozart's *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule* (A treatise on the fundamental principles of violin playing) published in 1756, is regarded as the most comprehensive violin treatise of its time and is an exponent of the German School. Its third edition, published in 1787, has continued to influence musicians through the centuries.⁶⁰

The Italian School, formed primarily by Corelli, Vivaldi, Pietro Locatelli (1695–1764), Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770), and Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762), was the predominant school of violin playing from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century. As mentioned earlier, Bach's solo violin works were deeply influenced by Corelli and Vivaldi. Locatelli's *L'arte del Violino, 25 capricci tolti dai 12*

⁶⁰Robin Stowell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 57

Concerti (The Art of the Violin, 25 caprices taken from the 12 Concertos), *op. 3*, published in 1733, might also have influenced Paganini's composing of his *24 Caprices for solo violin, Op. 1* in 1805. Tartini was most famous for his violin concerti and for the *Sonata in G Minor for violin and basso continuo, op. 1, No. 5 "Devil's Trill"* written in 1734. Tartini served as an important violinistic connection between the Baroque and Classical Eras.⁶¹

The French School was likely the most influential school of violin playing from the Classical Era (1750–1823) to the early twentieth century. The founding violinist of the French School is often thought to be Giovanni Battista Viotti (1753–1824). Viotti studied with Gaetano Pugnani (1731–1798), who was also an important Italian-school violinist. Viotti played an important role in the transition of violin technique from the Italian School to the French School.

Many of Viotti's students, including Pierre Baillot (1771–1842), Pierre Rode (1774–1830), and Rudolphe Kreutzer (1766–1831), wrote important violin études. These études documented Viotti's principles of violin playing and became important conveyors of the French School techniques in the nineteenth century. They have also become major pedagogical materials used in preparation for violin performance today.

In the late eighteenth century, as the French school gained prevalence, the Italian Paganini appeared as an "independent," a magnificent composer with stunning performance technique who earned the nickname "devil of the violin." Paganini's *24 Caprices*, discussed later in this chapter, have remained among the most challenging of violin works of all time.

⁶¹Robin Stowell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 61–62

The Belgian Violin School was formed in 1840. Knowledge of the French School was spread to Belgium by Auguste de Beriot (1802–1870). Beriot had received his instruction directly from Viotti and from students of Viotti, and subsequently Beriot passed his knowledge and experience along to his own students in Belgium. Among them, Henri Vieuxtemps (1820–1881) and Lambert Massart (1811–1892) became important figures in violin pedagogy. Many of the students of Vieuxtemps and Massart became important violinists, including Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880), Cesar Thomson (1857–1931), Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962), and Eugene Ysaÿe. Because of the close connection of the French and Belgian schools, these two schools are often grouped together as “The Franco-Belgian School”. The Franco-Belgian School continues to influence many great violinists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Ysaÿe played a significant role in composition and performance from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. A member of the Franco-Belgian School, he contributed many important and innovative violin techniques. His six unaccompanied violin sonatas are his most important works. These pieces, with their challenging technical demands and compelling musical expression, have become recognized components of the violin repertoire, worthy of performance on the modern concert stage.

Unaccompanied Violin Works from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century

Many unaccompanied violin works were composed in the centuries between Bach and Ysaÿe. These pieces serve to illustrate and elucidate the development of violin

technique during this time. An overview of these works will also contribute to an understanding of Ysaÿe's works and their subsequent influence on his successors.

Études constituted an important class of unaccompanied violin works seen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ultimately, many of these unaccompanied compositions became popular concert pieces. Paganini, Kreutzer, and Rode all composed effective educational works, many of which were also found worthy of concert performance. An étude —defined as “an instrumental piece, usually of some difficulty and most often [written] for a stringed or keyboard instrument, designed in the first place as a technical exercise but the better for having artistic value”⁶²—differs from an exercise in that an étude is expected to have some artistic merit whereas an exercise need only serve to improve technique.⁶³ Given their artistic character, it is reasonable to regard étude as members of the unaccompanied genre. In this chapter, selected études that are currently used in teaching, performed on the modern stage, and can also be traced as influential antecedents to Ysaÿe's solo violin works, are discussed.

A second type of unaccompanied violin work written in quantity in the years between Bach and Ysaÿe is the cadenza, defined in the *Grove Dictionary of Music* as “the conclusion to a phrase, movement or piece, based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression or dissonance resolution.”⁶⁴

Violinists have consistently written cadenzas for themselves, based on their own technical level of proficiency, in order to express themselves while highlighting their strengths as performers. Ysaÿe himself wrote several such cadenzas. The cadenza genre

⁶²Marie Stolba, *A History of The Violin Étude to About 1800*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 2

⁶³Ibid., 3

⁶⁴Grove Music Online, *Cadenza*

of unaccompanied violin works is beyond of the scope of this dissertation and hence will not be discussed further.

It became increasingly popular for composers to write unaccompanied works for their instrument beginning in 1920. Many of these compositions were influenced by Ysaÿe's performances and also by the solo violin works that he wrote himself. In the following paragraphs, several unaccompanied violin works composed during the wide span of time from Bach to the successors of Ysaÿe will be examined in chronological order. For this discussion, this time period is divided into three sections. The first section ranges from the period of Bach's contemporaries (just after 1700) to the end of the eighteenth century. The second section refers to the entire nineteenth century. The third section begins in the twentieth century and continues, to include Ysaÿe and his contemporaries and successors until 1950.

Selected Unaccompanied Violin Works from 1700 to 1800

The unaccompanied works of Biber and Westhoff (written before 1700) are thought to serve as the foundation for polyphonic writing in unaccompanied works for violin. J. S. Bach extended the scope of his compositions from that of these earlier works, and also artistically merged musical styles (such as the establishment of tonality) and forms (such as those of the sonata and the partita) into his six unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas. Bach thus set down an important landmark in violin literature. In addition to Bach's solo compositions, however, many other works of this genre also have some historical importance and were written by violinists in order to explore for themselves the technical possibilities their instrument, alone.

One such violinist, Pietro Locatelli, was a student of Corelli in the early 1700s. Corelli died, however, when Locatelli was only sixteen years old. Locatelli soon developed his own techniques and his personal innovations are demonstrated in his *25 Caprices*, the most well-known of which is the 23rd caprice, “*The Harmonic Labyrinth*.”

Locatelli’s works seem to have had a great influence on Paganini’s own *24 Caprices*.⁶⁵ The twelve cycled fantasias of George Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) composed in 1723 for violin without bass have also constituted an important contribution to the repertoire for solo violin. These pieces are often regarded as excellent preparation for the study of Bach’s solo violin works.⁶⁶ They are characterized by variations and are less technically demanding than most other unaccompanied works.

In 1720, Gieseppe Tartini published his *L’Arte dell’arco a siano 50 variazion per violino e sempre collo stesso baso sopra la piu bella quatta del Corelli, opera 5* (The art of bowing by Fifty Variations, original theme by Corelli). The theme for this unaccompanied work was retrieved from the fourth movement, *Gavotte*, of *Corelli’s Sonata, op. 5, No. 10* composed in 1700. Tartini’s is a technically demanding work and a version with piano accompaniment, arranged by Fritz Kreisler in 1910, has become a popular concert piece.

Also a student of Corelli, Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762) documented his teaching philosophy and knowledge of violin techniques in his book *The Art of Playing on the Violin*, written in 1751. Although the description and explanations of certain

⁶⁵Margaret Campbell, *The Great Violinists* (U.K.: Curtis Brown, 1980), 97

⁶⁶Elfreda Sewell Gleam, *A Selected, Graded List of Compositions for Unaccompanied Violin, with Preparatory Studies* (D. A. diss.: Ball State University, 1979, 1-27).

techniques are too short and according to Stowell, are difficult to understand,⁶⁷ this book is still of importance as it conveys information that was found valuable to Geminiani's many students including Matthew Dubourg (1703–1767). As indicated in the listing *String Music in Print* by Margaret Farish, Geminiani also wrote two unaccompanied violin sonatas including the *Sonata in B-flat major for unaccompanied violin*; the name of the second sonata is not given.⁶⁸

Bartolomeo Campagnoli (1751–1827)—a student of Nardini who in turn studied with Tartini—has been praised for his “clean and fluent but old-fashioned method.”⁶⁹ Campagnoli's major contributions are his pedagogical works, and his unaccompanied violin pieces, all written after he moved to Leipzig in 1797, include *Six Fugues, Op. 10*; *Thirty Preludes, Op. 12*; *Six Polonoises, Op. 13*; *Fantasia et Cadences, Op. 17*; *Seven Divertissements, Op. 18*; and *101 Pieces et Progressives, Op. 20*.

The *Twenty-four Studies (Matinées)* (thought to have been published in 1794 or 1800) by Pierre Gaviniés (1728–1800) represent the major styles of violin techniques of the eighteenth century. Gaviniés was a student of Jean-Pierre Leclair, 1697–1764, an important French violinist prior to Viotti, who referred to Gaviniés as “The French Tartini.”⁷⁰ Gaviniés' *24 Caprices for the Violin*, written in 1800, were unsurpassed in complex artistry and difficulty until Paganini contributed his works in this genre. Gaviniés' pieces include complex passages using fourth to seventh position in the left

⁶⁷Robin Stowell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 55

⁶⁸Margaret Farish, *String Music in Print* (New York: R. R. Bower Co., 1965), and *Supplement to String Music in Print* (New York: R. R. Bower Co., 1968)

⁶⁹Grove Music Online, *Bartolomeo Campagnoli*

⁷⁰*Ibid*, *Gaviniés*

hand. His caprices are also more artistic than those of his predecessors' and are imbued with splendid expressivities incorporating a variety of styles and moods.

Selected Unaccompanied Violin Works from 1800 to 1900

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, many violin études and caprices were written by recognized violinists. Some of these works remain important sources of modern violin pedagogy and are also treated as short concert pieces, including Paganini's difficult and highly respected *24 Caprices*.

There is limited information available about Federigo Fiorillo (1755–1823); whom he studied with and by whom he was influenced is not clearly documented. Fiorillo is known, however, to have been a proficient viola and mandolin player. He was also the prolific composer of 70 opus numbers and 200 works. His fame stems primarily from his *36 Caprices for Violin Solo, Op. 3*, published in 1810. These caprices, expressive musically, are also quite technically demanding, and they have taken a significant place in the genre of pedagogical works along with those of Kreutzer and Rode.⁷¹

Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766–1831) was often regarded as a violinist of the French school, although there is no evidence that he studied with any French School violinists. Kreutzer greatly admired Viotti and was influenced by Viotti's styles of playing and writing⁷². Kreutzer's *Method de Violon* (written with co-authors are P. J. Rode and P.M. Baillot in 1803) became part of the curriculum at the Paris Conservatory. In addition, Kreutzer's *Forty-Two Études* has been one of the most important collections of violin études since it was first published in 1807. These études convey a wide range of bowing

⁷¹Grove Dictionary, *Music and Musician*, Vol. 8, 884

⁷²Grove Music Online, *Kreutzer*

and fingering techniques, although some of these pieces may be considered lacking in artistic content.⁷³ Generally, these works are considered less difficult than those of Fiorillo, Gaviniés and Rode.

Pierre Rode (1774–1830) held an important position in the French School and was Viotti's most important student.⁷⁴ Rode designed courses of violin study with Kreutzer and Baillot (see above) for the Paris Conservatory. He also composed, in 1815, a collection of his own studies, *24 caprices en formes d'études*, comprised of études written in each of the 24 major and minor keys. Most of the caprices do not exceed fifth position and are monophonic, yet they are suffused with musical expression. Rode's caprices are considered to have the same degree of technical difficulty as those of Gaviniés, while Fiorillo's are thought to be slightly easier to master.

The virtuosity of Nicolo Paganini drew the attention of not only violinists but also of other instrumentalists, such as Chopin, Liszt and Rachmaninoff. Liszt arranged Paganini's *24 Caprices* into a successful piano version and Rachmaninoff adopted into one his own compositions, *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, op. 43* (1934), a theme borrowed from *Paganini 24th Caprice*. Paganini was also a proficient composer as is indicated by his skillful orchestrations, and his lyrical themes and effective orchestral accompaniments have contributed to the continuing popularity of his concerti to this day.

Paganini's caprices are among the most difficult of collected études. These études require extremely well-controlled and advanced technique, including flexibility in the left hand (required to play unisons, tenths, and double-harmonics), strength of the left-hand fingers (needed for effective left-hand *pizzicati*), and skillful use of the bow (in order to

⁷³K Marie Stolba. *The Development of Western Music –A History* (Madison: Brown & Benchmark, 2nd edition), 227

⁷⁴Grove Music Online, *P. Rode*

execute *ricochet* and *staccato* passages). Exuding a brilliant and *bravura* style characteristic of the Romantic Era, these caprices remain a magnificent challenge for violinists today. Paganini's violin solo pieces also include *Due Mervell (Duet for Solo Violin)*, (1806–08); *Introduction and Variations on the Aria "Nel cor piu non mi sento" from the Opera "La bella molinara" by Giovanni Paisiello* (1821); *Variations on the Theme of "God save the King"* (1829); and *Sixty Variations on the Theme of "Barucaba" Op. 14* (1835).

Although Paganini did not teach nor did he form or belong to particular school of violin playing, he did greatly influence Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880) and Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (1814–1865). Wieniawski's collection *Ecole Moderne Etudes-Caprices Op. 10*, composed in 1854, contains ten études. They are considered to be more difficult than those of Fiorillo, Gaviniés, and Rode. Ernst was thought of as copying the many feats of Paganini's performances, although Ernst never confined himself to copy others.⁷⁵ His *Six Polyphonic Studies*, written in 1865, demonstrate his own personal musicality. Some of his works even exceed Paganini's caprices in difficulty. Each of Ernst's studies was dedicated to a violinist who was one of his contemporaries. Ysaÿe likely adopted this idea in his six solo violin sonatas. *The Last Rose* by Ernst, published in 1865, a beautiful theme with diverse variations, has remained a popular stage piece.

Selected unaccompanied violin works from 1900 to 1950

By the end of nineteenth century, solo violin works had become a popular genre and were composed by both violinists and composers. While many of these works remain

⁷⁵H.W. Ernst: *Six Polyphonic Studies*. (Hamburg: Musikverlag Hans Sikorsky), 2

unknown or lesser-known, the dissertation study conducted by Virginia Geesaman, *Twentieth Century Literature for Unaccompanied Violin 1900-1970*, has provided a valuable documentation of the solo violin literature from 1900 to 1970.⁷⁶ The following chart is based on Geesaman's listing. Works are listed in chronological order. Dates of death have been updated where necessary.

Ex. 32: Selected Unaccompanied Violin Works from 1900 to 1950 (Geesaman, p. 201–203)

Year	Title of Work	Composer and Original Nation
1900	<i>Sonata opus 42, no. 1–4 fur Violine allein</i>	Max Reger (1873–1916), Germany
1901	<i>Sonata pour Violon solo opus 22, no. 2</i>	Joseph Jongen (1873–1953), Belgium
1902	<i>Praeludium und Fuge in a moll</i>	Max Reger (Ibid.)
1905	<i>Sonaten op. 91, no. 1–7 fur violine solo</i>	Max Reger (Ibid.)
1909– 1912	<i>Praeludium und Fuge, op. 117, no. 1–8</i>	Max Reger (Ibid.)
1911	<i>Recitative and Scherzo for Violin alone</i>	Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962), Germany
1914	<i>Praeludium und Fuge, op. 131a, no. 1–6</i>	Max Reger (Ibid.)
1915	<i>Praeludium in e moll</i>	Max Reger (Ibid.)
1921	<i>Fantaisie pour Violon seul, op. 9a</i>	Alois Haba (b.1893–1973), Czechoslovakia
1922	<i>Musik fur Violine solo, op. 9b</i>	Alois Haba (Ibid.)
1923	<i>Praeludium und Thema mit Variationen, op.</i>	Carl Nielsen (1865–1931), Denmark

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⁷⁶Virginia Geesaman, *Twentieth Century Literature for Unaccompanied Violin 1900-1970*, (DMA diss., The University of Iowa) 1972

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 1924 | <i>Sonata fur Violine solo, op. 31, no. 1&2</i> | Paul Hindemith (1895–1963),
Germany |
| 1924 | <i>Sonata, op. 33, fur Violine Solo</i> | Ernst Krenek (1900–1991), America |
| 1924 | <i>Six Sonatas pour Violon seul</i> | Eugene Ysaÿe (1858–1931),
Belgium |
| 1925 | <i>Deux Recitatifs pour Violon seul</i> | Paul Arma (1905), Hungary |
| 1928 | <i>Sonata in G dur</i> | Ernstguido Naumann (b.1890),
Germany |
| 1928 | <i>Preludio e Presto per Violion Solo, op. 52</i> | Carl Nielsen (Ibid.) |
| 1930 | <i>Study on a Choral (in the style of Stamitz)</i> | Friz Kreisler (Ibid.) |
| 1931 | <i>Sonata per Violino Solo</i> | Williem Pijper (1894–1947),
Holland |
| 1934 | <i>Sonata in d moll</i> | E. Naumann (Ibid.) |
| 1935 | <i>Second Sonata for Violin alone</i> | Alexander Jemnitz (1890–1963),
Hungary |
| 1935 | <i>Sonata in D dur</i> | E. Naumann (Ibid.) |
| 1940 | <i>Obra para Violin Solo</i> | Richard Engelbrecht (b. 1907),
Germany |
| 1940 | <i>Sonata for Solo Violin</i> | Vincent Persichetti (1915–1987),
America |
| 1941 | <i>5 Miniatures and Encore</i> | Johan Franco (1908–1988),
Netherlands |
| 1942 | <i>Passacaglia: Variations on a Ground</i> | Richard Arnell (1917–1988),
England |
| 1944 | <i>Sonata for Solo Violin</i> | Bela Bartók (1881–1945), Hungary |
| 1944 | <i>Sonata fur Violine allein, op. 31, no.2</i> | J. N. David (1895–1977), Austria |
| 1944 | <i>Sonata for Solo Violin</i> | Johan Franco (Ibid.) |
| 1944 | <i>Elegie for Viola or Violin Unaccompanied</i> | Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971),
Russia |
| 1945 | <i>Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin</i> | Vittorio Giannini (1903–1966), |

		America
1946	<i>Yeraz (The Dream)</i>	Alan Hovhanness (1911–2000), America
1947	<i>Partita in G Minor for Solo Violin</i>	Antony Hopkins (b. 1921), England
1947	<i>Sonata, op. 115</i>	Sergei Prokofieff (1891–1953), Russia
1947	<i>Sonata in Modus Lascivus</i>	Tibor Serly (1900–1978), Hungary
1948	<i>Sonate pour Violon seul</i>	Artgur Honegger (1892–1955), Switzerland
1948	<i>Aptote for solo Violin</i>	Elisabeth Lutyens (1906–1978), England
1948	<i>Sonata in E for Violin Alone</i>	Albert Spalding (1888–1953), America
1949	<i>Introduction and Allgro for Solo Violin</i>	Lennox Berkeley (1903–1989), England
1949	<i>Partita, op. 37, no. 1 “Es steht ein Lind in jenem Tal”</i>	Johann Nepomuk David (1895–1977), Austria
1949	<i>Monologue for Solo Violin</i>	Richard Yardumian (1917–1985), America
1950	<i>Sonata for Violin</i>	Lionel Nowak (1911–1995), America
1950	<i>Ballade for Violin (Unaccompanied)</i>	Ben-Zion Orgad (b. 1926), Israel

Ysaÿe’s Unaccompanied Works for Violin: Innovative Techniques and Historical Accounts

Development of Innovative Techniques by Ysaÿe

Ysaÿe is well-recognized for his invention of technique. David Oistrakh (1908–1974) praised Ysaÿe’s sonatas and Ysaÿe himself as “the greatest innovator after Paganini.”⁷⁷ Gingold described Ysaÿe’s works as “[bridging] the gap between the old and new schools of techniques.”⁷⁸

The “old schools of technique” refers to methods used to play tonal music.⁷⁹ From the Baroque era to the early-twentieth century, tonal music predominated and included the elements of major and minor keys, scales, and harmonies. In violin parlance, two notes played one after another are referred to as an interval. Two notes played at the same time are called a double stop. More than two notes played simultaneously is a chord. The traditional intervals, double stops, and chords on the violin—those that appeared before the twentieth century—are those consisting of tonality-based intervals with thirds, sixths, octaves, and tenths predominating; Paganini’s *24 Caprices* include all of these traditional elements.

In the early twentieth century, composers increasingly began to compose music consisting of atonal elements.⁸⁰ In response to this trend, new techniques on the violin were required. For example, intervals other than the traditional ones are now often seen in violin music, including unisons, seconds, fourths, fifths, sevenths, ninths, and elevenths.

⁷⁷Lev Ginsburg, *Ysaÿe*, (Neptune City: Paganianina Publication, 1980), 331

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 533

⁷⁹Michael Kim Buckles, *A Structured Content Analysis of Five Contemporary Étude Books for the Violin*, (DMA diss., the Louisiana State University, 2003), 8

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 24-27

Hence, violinists and teachers have started to write pieces to provide practice in newly required areas. However, many teachers and researchers still bemoan the lack of materials providing good preparation for playing much of the music written since the beginning of the twentieth century. Flesch has referred this “lack [of] modern study material, which might serve as a preparation for atonal violin concertos.”⁸¹ Max Rostal writes: “violin playing has undergone such rapid development over the past six decades that I felt the need to respond to the new demands of the standards it has attained today.”⁸² In his revised edition of Carl Flesch’s *Scale System*, Rostal provides practice of the following: fingerings which do not conform to diatonic patterns; four octave scales, reflecting the increased use of the higher positions in modern music; double-stops in unisons, fourths, fifths, and sevenths; and whole-tone and quarter-tone scales.⁸³ He has also composed two relevant concert etudes, *Study in Fourths* and *Study in Fifths*.

Ysaÿe is considered to be the first violinist to address the concept of specific modern violin techniques. In his *Ten Preludes* for violin solo, he wrote: “I planned a work of advanced modern techniques based on the planning of intervals from the unisons to the tenths.”⁸⁴ Although Ysaÿe intended his works for the practice of modern violin techniques, he insisted that these works should be fundamentally tonal. He wrote: “I assure you that it is not dissonant, it is even quite harmonious and new, at least as far the tonal effect is concerned.”⁸⁵

⁸¹Carl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing, Book I* (New York, Carl Fischer, 2000), 91

⁸²Carl Flesch, *Scale System: Scale Exercises in All Major and Minor Keys for Daily Study (A Supplement to Book I of the Art of Violin Playing)*, revised edition by Max Rostal (New York: Carl Fischer, 1987), preface

⁸³Michael Kim Buckles, *A Structured Content Analysis of Five Contemporary Étude Books for the Violin*, (DMA diss., the Louisiana State University, 2003), 15

⁸⁴Eugene Ysaÿe, *Ten Preludes for Violin Solo, Op. 35*, (Brussels: Scott Press, 1952), 7

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 8

We may speculate that Ysaÿe held the same belief in writing his solo sonatas as he did composing the *Ten Preludes*. The collections were written only four years apart; the sonatas were finished in 1924 while the preludes were presumably composed in 1928.⁸⁶ In the following paragraphs, the use of modern intervals, harmonies, and chords in Ysaÿe's second and fourth solo violin sonatas will be examined.

The Historical Context of Ysaÿe's Six Solo Sonatas

Ysaÿe dedicated each of his six solo violin sonatas to a friend. Each was a well-known violinist. The six sonatas were dedicated respectively to Joseph Szigeti, Jacques Thibaud, Georges Enesco, Fritz Kreisler, Marthieu Crickboom, and Manuel Quiroga.

Ysaÿe addresses the purpose of dedicating his sonatas to the violinists in the following statement.

The dedication of a composition could assume historical importance. We would like that, henceforth, the violinists performing the master's sonatas in public, mention them by name of the artists to whom they are dedicated, in the same way as one says the "*Kreutzer Sonata*". It would be a token of homage to their predecessors and to those who give life to music: THE INTERPRETERS, too often forgotten by the musicologists.⁸⁷

Hence, Ysaÿe composed each sonata in accordance with the playing styles of the dedicatee. Like Ysaÿe, Szigeti was devoted to performing contemporary music. Béla Bartók dedicated his *Contrasts, Trio for Violin, Piano, and Clarinet, op. 116* (1938) to Szigeti, and Sergey Prokofiev (1891–1953) dedicated his *Concerto for Violin and*

⁸⁶Ch. Radoux Rogier, Editor's Preface from the *Ten Preludes* (Brussels: Scott Press, 1952), 9

⁸⁷Antoine Ysaÿe, *Historical Accounts of the Six Sonatas for Unaccompanied Violin, op. 27 of Eugene Ysaÿe*. (Brussels: Les Editions Ysaÿe, 1968), 18

Orchestra, No. 1, op. 19 (1917) to Szigeti as well. Szigeti's playing has been praised for his sophisticated musicianship and artistic vision. He is also regarded as a humanist.⁸⁸

Ysaÿe's first sonata is deemed to be the most modern among the six because of the obscure tonality and dissonant harmony of its first and second movements. Therefore, its style matches Szigeti's interest in contemporary composition. In addition, the form is closely related to that of Bach's solo violin sonatas. The first movement is a very slow *Grave*, with heavy chords. Ysaÿe used frequent chromatic scales in this movement. The dissonant acoustic is driven by intervals of seconds, sevenths, and diminished fourths and fifths. The second movement, *Fugato*, contains magnificent polyphonic passages. The third movement, *Allegretto Poco Scherzoso*, compared with the previous movements, has a more obvious tonality of B-flat major. The theme is particularly attractive in that there are some passages incorporating Debussy-like effects including runs consisting of fifths and fourths. The *Finale Con Brio* begins with energetic and furious chords. The sonata overall is a versatile piece exhibiting alternations of moods and techniques.

The first sonata is a challenging piece to play. Unusual techniques are included such as runs in thirds, fourths, fifths, and sixths, and extended arpeggios. Another special effect is the *tremolando ponticello*, which requires placing the bow very near the bridge and using a very fast and repeated bow stroke. This technique was quite advanced at the time the work was written.

The second sonata is dedicated to Jacques Thibaud, who was a very close friend of Ysaÿe's. Ysaÿe entitled the first movement *Obsession*, referring to the obsession with Bach shared by both Thibaud and Ysaÿe. Its themes selected from Bach's E-major

⁸⁸Margaret Campbell, *The Great Violinists* (U.K.: Curtis Brown, 1980), 218

Preludio were inspired by Thibaud's use of the prelude as a part of his daily practice.⁸⁹

The themes in the sonatas that are written by Ysaÿe reflect his strenuous efforts to create his own music independent of Bach's. Ysaÿe wrote: "I simply wrote music for and through my violin, while trying to escape from Bach. I confess that I sweat blood and tears, and I nearly gave it all up, feeling crushed by the giant of music."

The second movement is entitled *Malinconia* (Song of Sorrow). Ysaÿe used a funeral motive, *Dies Irae*, obtained from 13th-century Gregorian Chant. This movement conveys a melancholic theme, with the last phrase presented as a chanted rendition of the death motive. The third movement shows the Belgian virtuoso's remarkable technique. Ysaÿe relied upon the *Dies Irae* theme to compose a set of variations. The movement's title, *Danse Des Ombres—Sarabande* is intended to mean "Dances of the Deaths." There are six variations with varied rhythms and colors. The sixth variation is among the most difficult to play. The fourth movement, *Les Furies* (The Goddesses of Anger), is a virtuosic movement with chords in thirds, fourths, and fifths. *Sul ponticello* passages create a remarkable contrast with the others. The whole movement ends with a flamboyant cadence.

The third sonata is the most frequently performed of the six. Its popularity is probably due to its short length; it is a one-movement piece of about ten minuets. In addition, violinists may be intrigued by the dynamic, romantic, and expressive style of the work. This sonata was dedicated to Georges Enesco. Ysaÿe said, "I have let my imagination wander at will. The memory of my friendship and admiration for

⁸⁹Margaret Campell, *Oscar Shumsky- Ysaÿe Sonatas*, CD liner note (Nimbus Records)

Georges Enesco and the performances we gave together at the home of that delightful Queen Carmen Sylva have done the rest.”⁹⁰

The fourth sonata is the most classical in terms of the style and form. It was also Ysaÿe’s favorite from among the six. Dedicated to Fritz Kreisler, this piece was tailored to Kreisler’s “robust playing and the full sonority of his tone.”⁹¹ The first movement is a prelude-like introduction followed by a splendid *Allemande*. The second movement is constructed by using a *leit-motif*-like phrase. This motive is placed throughout the whole sonata. It is said that Ysaÿe suggested the violinist add an extra phrase in the beginning without an indication in the music.⁹² The last movement employs rapidly alternating *détaché* and *spiccato* bowing.

The fifth sonata was dedicated to Mathieu Crickboom. He was a student of Ysaÿe and served as the second violinist in Ysaÿe’s string quartet. Ysaÿe was impressed by Crickboom’s “depth of feeling and the serenity of his playing.”⁹³ Many innovative techniques are seen in this piece, such as left-hand pizzicato and percussive passages.

The sixth sonata was dedicated to Manuel Quiroga, a Spanish violinist whose career was cut short when he died at the age of 46. The work is often thought of as the most difficult piece from among the six sonatas and was written in a romantic style with Spanish characteristics. As with the third sonata, the sixth contains one movement, but is lighter and more fanciful than the third.⁹⁴

⁹⁰Antoine Ysaÿe, *Historical Accounts of the Six Sonatas for Unaccompanied Violin, op. 27 of Eugene Ysaÿe*. (Brussels: Les Editions Ysaÿe, 1968), 11

⁹¹Ibid., 12

⁹²Margaret Campell, *Oscar Shumsky- Ysaÿe Sonatas*, CD liner note (Nimbus Records)

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Antoine Ysaÿe *Historical Accounts of the Six Sonatas for Unaccompanied Violin, op. 27 of Eugene Ysaÿe*. (Brussels: Les Editions Ysaÿe, 1968), 16

Ysaÿe as Violinist and Composer

The Life of Ysaÿe

Ysaÿe was born in 1858 in Liège, Belgium. His father, Nicolas Ysaÿe, an amateur violinist and conductor of amateur music societies, was young Ysaÿe's primary violin teacher. Once Ysaÿe was admitted to the Liège Conservatory at the age of seven, he began to study with Desire Heynberg. Due to his irregular attendance, Ysaÿe was dismissed from the conservatory when he was ten years old. Later, in 1872, he was readmitted to upon the recommendation of Henri Vieuxtemps who had heard Ysaÿe playing Vieuxtemps' *Concerto No. 5* when passing by Ysaÿe's house and was greatly impressed. The composer recommended Ysaÿe to the class of Rodolph Massart (1811–1892) a renowned teacher at the conservatory who also recognized and deeply appreciated Ysaÿe's talent. Ysaÿe won several competitions in a few years and then went on to study with Wieniawsky, also at the conservatory.

During the four years from 1874 to 1878, Ysaÿe had studied with Vieuxtemps in Paris. During that time, Ysaÿe befriended a formidable array of French composers including Cesar Franck (1822–1890), Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921), Vincent d'Indy (1851–1931), Ernest Chausson (1855–1899), Gabriel Faure (1845–1924), and Claude Debussy (1862–1918). Ysaÿe played an important role in introducing these composers' works to the world, and these composers in turn dedicated their works to Ysaÿe. Ysaÿe also served as concertmaster in orchestras in Berlin for three years, from 1879 to 1882. Meanwhile, through the patronage of the renowned pianist Anton Rubinstein, Ysaÿe was able to arrange a solo tour in Russia, Hungary and Scandinavia.

Ysaÿe returned to Paris in 1883, and in 1885 he successfully premiered both the *Symphonie Espagnole, op. 21* (1874) by Edouard Lalo (1823–1892) and the *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* by Saint-Saëns in Paris. Ysaÿe had made his mark as a soloist, and in the following years, he premiered these works which were also dedicated to him: *Violin Sonata in A Major* (1886), by Franck; *Concert in D Major for violin, piano and string quartet* (1891) and *Poème for violin and orchestra* (1896) by Chausson; *String Quartet No. 1 in D Major* (1890) by d'Indy; *String Quartet* (1893) by Debussy; and *Violin Sonata in G Major* (1892) by Lekeu.

Ysaÿe's career reached to its apex when he began his tour in America in 1894. He performed in major concert halls throughout the United States until 1914. By this time he had gradually shifted the focus of his career to conducting, probably due to the decline in his playing caused by a combination of neuritis and diabetes. Ysaÿe had worked as the conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra from 1918 to 1922. He returned to Belgium to perform his last concert in 1930, and later finished his opera *Pier li Houyeu* in 1931.

The story of Ysaÿe's death is as romantic as that of his life. According to his son, Antonie Ysaÿe, on the night of the violinist's death, a young violinist, Phillip Newman, was called to Ysaÿe's house. He performed Ysaÿe's fourth sonata for solo violin outside of the room where Ysaÿe lay dying. Antoine recalled that the "maestro"

"...tried to raise himself, straining to catch every shade of expression. Then came the last chord, and in the silence which followed he said: "Splendid...the finale just a little too fast." This was Ysaÿe's last statement. He never spoke again.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Antoine Ysaÿe and Bertram Ratcliffe, *Ysaÿe, His life, Work, and Influence* (London: William Heinemann, 1948), 153

Ysaÿe as a Violinist

Ysaÿe is regarded as the most important violinist of the Belgian School. As a student of Massart, Wieniawsky, and Vieuxtemps, he also inherited the traditions of the French school. He then artistically merged his unique personal styles into his playing including his wonderful sound, his precise technique, and his imaginative interpretation.⁹⁶ His playing was highly praised by his contemporaries. Carl Flesch (1873–1944) described him as “the most outstanding and individual violinist I have ever heard.”⁹⁷ Ysaÿe’s violin playing was particularly distinguished by his magnificent vibrato. Flesch praised Ysaÿe’s vibrato as “the spontaneous expression of his feeling, a whole world away from what had been customary until then: the incidental, thin-flowering quiver only on expressivo notes.”⁹⁸ Joseph Szigeti also appreciated Ysaÿe’s sound: “the beautiful, chaste, closed vibrato....Ysaÿe’s unthrobbing lovely cantilena as I still remember it.”⁹⁹ Ysaÿe’s use of vibrato continuously (instead of only on selected notes) was truly pioneering in his day.¹⁰⁰

Ysaÿe had remarkable influences on other musicians, both composers and violinists. According to his son, there are over 60 compositions dedicated to Ysaÿe; this confirms the close relationship he had with his composer contemporaries. Ysaÿe also influenced a great many violinists, during his time and subsequently. Violinists such as Joachim and Pablo de Sarasate (1844–1908) (who actually became professional performers earlier than did Ysaÿe), and Cesar Thomson (1857–1931) and Jenö Hubay (1858–1937) were all

⁹⁶Grove Music Online, *E. Ysaÿe*

⁹⁷Carl Flesch, *Memories of Carl Flesch*, translated by Hans Keller (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 78-79

⁹⁸Ibid, 78-79

⁹⁹Joseph Szigeti, *Szigeti on the Violin*, 174

¹⁰⁰Gordon Shepherd Baughman, *The Ten Preludes for Unaccompanied Violin, op. 35 by Eugene Ysaÿe* (Ann Arbor: UMI, diss., 1976),

impressed by Ysaÿe's performances. Violinists of the succeeding generation including Georges Enescu (1881–1955), Carl Flesch, Bronislaw Huberman (1882–1947), Fritz Kreisler, Joseph Szigeti and Jacques Thibaud, all have expressed their deepest admiration for Ysaÿe and were also influenced by Ysaÿe's selection of repertoire. Modern violinists continue to be influenced by Ysaÿe through his students, such as Joseph Gingold (1909–1995) and Louis Persinger (1887–1966).

Ysaÿe as a Composer

Ysaÿe was highly respected both as violinist and composer. Although violinists after him, for example, Fritz Kreisler, composed small-scale violin works, it has been extremely rare for performing violinists to compose large-scale works, such as violin concerti and operas, as did Ysaÿe. Although Ysaÿe never formally studied harmony or composition, and sometimes it is said that his music lacks subtlety, his works are always full of harmonic originality.¹⁰¹

Also a fairly prolific composer, Ysaÿe completed over sixty compositions. Antonie Ysaÿe divided the works into the following categories: for solo violin, for two violinists, for violin and piano, for violin and orchestra, for two violins and orchestra, for viola solo, for cello solo, for violin and viola, for cello and piano or orchestra, for piano trio, for string quintet, for quartet and orchestra, for string trio, for orchestra, and one opera. Ysaÿe's compositions for violin solo and for violin with orchestra include, among many others, his *Two Mazurkas Op. 10* (1893); *Poeme Elegiaque, op. 12* (1895); *Chant d'Hiver*

¹⁰¹Grove Music Online, *E. Ysaÿe*

op. 15 (1902); *Ten Preludes, Op. 35* (1928); and *Six Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas, Op. 27* (1924).

Ysaÿe's Influence on Modern Violin Technique

Ysaÿe is regarded as the first modern violinist.¹⁰² The word “modern,” here, refers to the music of the twentieth century.¹⁰³ This view is supported by two contributions made by Ysaÿe to the music of his contemporaries. First, Ysaÿe was devoted to performing new music and, as stated above, encouraged many young composers, such as Debussy and Franck. Second, Ysaÿe created innovative violin techniques inspired by the demands of the pioneering musical styles that appeared during his lifetime.

As an active musician closely involved with his contemporaries, Ysaÿe was famous for his sense of the surrounding musical environment. This can be seen through his promotion of the works dedicated to him. Although the composers of these pieces were not always well-known at the time, Ysaÿe respected their work highly and did not hesitate to promote their compositions through their frequent performance. He revealed his discernment through performing works he felt had great potential but whose value was not always immediately recognized by the public at first hearing. In the same way that Ferdinand David and Joseph Joachim helped to popularize Bach's solo sonatas in the nineteenth century, Ysaÿe's insight and energy significantly influenced the reception of many violin works of composers from the early twentieth century.

Not only was he keen to promote new works, Ysaÿe was also determined to contribute innovations in violin techniques to the modern musical world. Unlike other

¹⁰²Grove Music Online, *E. Ysaÿe*

¹⁰³Willi Apel & Ralph Daniel, *The Harvard brief Dictionary of Music* (New York: Pocket Books, a Simon & Schuster division of Gulf & Western Corporation), 319

composer-violinists in history (such as Biber, Vivaldi, and Vieuxtemps), Ysaÿe intentionally worked to develop novel violin techniques (e.g., quarter-tones, 6-note chords, etc.) that would be of use to subsequent generations as well as to his peers.¹⁰⁴

In history, the development of violin playing has reflected the parallel status of the development of musical content, such as the styles, forms, and textures popular at a given time. For example, the techniques which Bach incorporated into his unaccompanied violin works were meant to suit the musicality of late Baroque period. Similarly, Ysaÿe incorporated innovative techniques into his compositions. Ysaÿe's musical and technical insights, however, are now seen to have been even ahead of his time, while Bach is thought more to have simply merged existing styles from his day. As a musician living in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Ysaÿe had opportunity to witness dramatic changes in compositional style and form. He was born in a period when the ideas of Romanticism had started to bloom in musical societies.¹⁰⁵ During his adulthood, Impressionism started to spread to the musical circles in Paris.¹⁰⁶ By the end of his life, Neoclassicism started to obtain more attention thanks to the efforts of composers such as Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971).¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, startling new musical styles such as

¹⁰⁴Robin Stowell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 66

¹⁰⁵“Designation for the major musical movement of the 19th century...It may be divided into three periods: early Romanticism, 1820-50....mid-Romanticism: 1850-90....late Romanticism, 1890-1920 ... longing for the something nonexistent, a propensity for dream and vision, for the fantastic and the picturesque, for strong emotion and vivid imagery....”, Apel, *Harvard brief Dictionary*, 253

¹⁰⁶“An artistic movement of the late-19th and early 20th centuries represented in music chiefly by Claude Debussy (1862-1918).....Eminently French in character, it is a music which seems to hint rather than to state; in which suggestions of tonal colors take the place of logical development; a music which is as vague and intangible as the changing lights of the day and the subtle noises of the rain and the wind”, Apel, *Harvard brief Dictionary*, 140

¹⁰⁷“Neoclassicism is a movement of the 20th century which is essentially a reaction against the subjectivity and unrestrained emotionalism of late Romanticism. It is characterized by the adoption of aesthetic ideals and of forms or methods derived from the music of earlier masters, especially those of the 18th century such as Bach....”, Apel, *Harvard brief Dictionary*, 189

Serialism were just beginning to appear.¹⁰⁸ Ysaÿe's questioning attitude toward some of the modern forms he encountered can be seen in the following statement:

I receive a new score and I am taken aback. I sometimes get the impression of a monstrous workshop of gifted, but negative individuals. Music cannot survive with additions that are disparate, inconsistent, assembled with a crumbling mortar or concrete. These [scores] are fabrications for snobs, similar to the unsightly products of the modern plastic arts. One draws a nose in order to put it in the place of an ear.

The cubism, futurism, don't they hide a weakness or incapacity to care for detail—as did our fathers—to follow a logic, a rationale, an equilibrium, a harmony? Isn't it necessary to fear that these exasperations are the preamble to the end of the reign of beauty? I have a sensation of uneasiness in hearing these things. Art, which seemed to me to be a unique and perpetually unfinished monument, to which each generation, each school comes to lay its stone, has it spoken its last words?¹⁰⁹

Although Ysaÿe may have doubted the value of some new music, he did not ignore the need to invent techniques to respond to the continuing development of new systems of composition. His foremost student, Joseph Gingold, wrote:

Ysaÿe always kept abreast of the foremost currents of his time... He believes it important to assimilate the new music of this time and to add its new principle to the body of technique at the disposal of musicians. He was a leader in the field of musical performance the like of which our generation does not know.¹¹⁰

As a great inventor of violin techniques, Ysaÿe represented the foremost status in transition from the playing of the old school to the modern playing. Ysaÿe's innovative techniques of the modern playing are discussed in the following paragraphs.

¹⁰⁸Serialism is also regarded as the "twelve-tone technique". It is "a twentieth century method (1920–) of musical composition devised by Arnold Schonberg (1874–1951) as a means of motive construction and unification within the general framework of atonal music, replacing traditional principles of melody, harmony, and tonality...", Apel, *Harvard brief Dictionary*, 318

¹⁰⁹Antoine Ysaÿe and Bertram Ratcliffe, *Ysaÿe, His life, Work, and Influence* (London: William Heinemann, 1948), 197

¹¹⁰Lev Solomonovich Ginzburg, *Joseph Gingold- Ysaÿe's Solo Violin Sonatas- E. Ysaÿe* (Neptune City: Paganiniana, 1980), 532-33

Innovative Techniques As Seen in Ysaÿe's Unaccompanied Sonatas No. 2 and No. 4

The following examples show how Ysaÿe created his own compositional notation and how he incorporated into his sonatas the themes of J. S. Bach and others. Ysaÿe's inventive use of intervals, harmonies, and chords which consist of the non-traditional intervals of seconds, fourths, fifths, and sevenths are also shown. The composer also used a variety of scale systems including quarter-tone scales, chromatic scales, and whole-tone scales. Another significant invention is his unique application of left-hand fingerings. His unusual use of fingerings is systematically demonstrated in his *Ten Preludes*. Ysaÿe incorporated the use of these fingerings into his solo violin sonatas in a way that contributes to both their efficiency and their virtuosic effect. Also distinctive is the way in which Ysaÿe combined or quickly alternated the many novel and challenging musical devices found in his pieces.

























Ysaÿe had a very clear idea of how he wanted his sonatas to be played. Hence, he provided a chart of symbols on the front page of his sonata manuscript explaining the abbreviated instructions he provided throughout the works concerning such issues as bow distribution, use of vibrato, and techniques for the playing of specific chords.

The examples and analyses that follow in this chapter provide a detailed look at many of Ysaÿe's technical innovations as they appear in his second and fourth sonatas. Ysaÿe's own views of some of the techniques are also provided. In addition it is my hope to provide some useful suggestions in the practice, interpretation, and performance of these works, which not only are technically challenging but also serve as profound expressions of Ysaÿe's artistic ideas.

Ex 33: Symbols on the front page of the six solo violin sonatas by E. Ysaÿe¹¹¹

Signes - Abréviations.

(Translation to English)

- Les 4 cordes; $\bar{m}\bar{i}-\bar{l}\bar{a}-\bar{r}\bar{e}-\bar{s}ol.$  (The four strings E-A-D-G.)
- En se maintenant sur une corde  (While being maintained on a string.)
- Doigt immobile: - - - -  (Finger motionless - not moving the finger.)
- Poser le doigt sur la quinte juste:  (To position the finger on the perfect fifth.)
- Rentez à la position: - - -  (Remain in the position.)
- A la pointe: - - - - -  (At the point.)
- Au talon: - - - - -  (At the frog.)
- Au milieu: - - - - -  (In the middle.)
- Note jouée isolément -  (Note played separately.)
- Le quart de ton au dessus  (The quarter tone to the top.)
- Le quart de ton au dessous  (The quarter tone to the bottom.)
- Le sautillé: - -  (Notated.)
- Le détaché à la corde:  (Notated.)
- Employez tout l'archet:  (Use the entire bow.)
- Archet court:  - Archet long:  (Bow runs - Bow long.)
- Vibrant: -  - Sans vibrer:  (Vibrate - Without vibrato.)
- Sans presser:  - Sans hâte: -  (Without pressing - Without haste.)
- Bien mesuré:  - Bien rythmé:  (Well measured - Rhythmic.)
- Marqué - accentué: >>> (Marked - accentuated.)
- Les accords ainsi notés: - -  (The chords notated as)
- S'exécutent par un rapide arpeggio. *Ar.*  (are carried out by a rapid arpeggio.)

N.B. Sans contester que les procédés techniques soient du domaine individuel, on peut dire, avec certitude, que l'artiste qui regardera de près les doigtés, coups-d'archet, nuances et indications de l'auteur, se rapprochera toujours plus rapidement du but.

E. Y.

(N.B. Without disputing that the technical processes come within the individual province, one can say, with certainty, that the artist who will look closely at the fingerings and bow strokes, nuances and indications of the author, will always approach the goal more quickly. -E.Y.)

¹¹¹English translation is selected from Karen D Hoatson, *Culmination of the Belgian Tradition- The Innovative Style of Eugene Ysaÿe*, (DMA diss., University of California, 1999), 26

The passages in Ex. 34 illustrate Ysaÿe's use of other's themes in his own works. Ex. 5a shows themes borrowed from the E-Major Prelude of J. S. Bach while Ex. 34 c and 34 d show two instances of Ysaÿe's use of the *Dies Irae* theme. This theme is originally from the plainchant of Christian liturgies. The composer has remained anonymous. The theme was probably written before the thirteenth century. In 1250, Thomas of Celano (d c1250) wrote the text. Many composers have incorporated the *Dies Irae* theme in their compositions, including W. A Mozart (1756–1791) in his *Requiem* K. 626 (1791). Ex. 34 b shows the complete theme with its text.¹¹²

Ex. 34: Use of Borrowed Themes

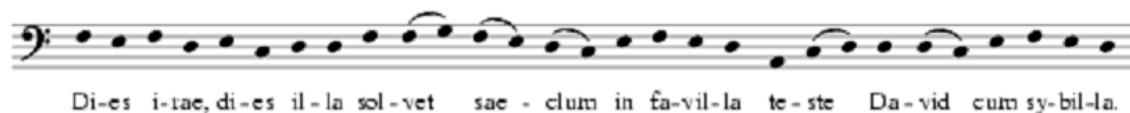
Ex. 34 a: Themes borrowed from Bach in *Ysaÿe Sonata No. 2, 1st movement, mm. 1–9*

Ysaÿe tried to bring out the contrast between these two themes as seen with the circled dynamics markings.

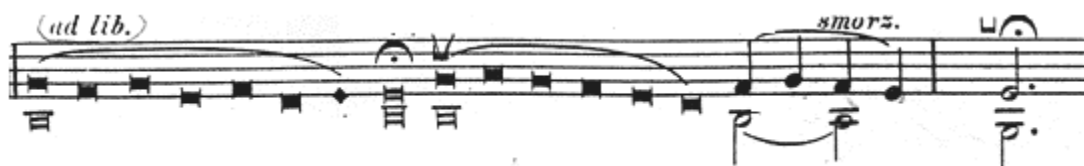
The image shows three staves of musical notation. The first staff is labeled "Bach e major Prelude" and features a circled dynamic marking of *p leggiero*. The second staff is labeled "Bach E major Prelude" and features a circled dynamic marking of *p*. The third staff is labeled "Ysaÿe's contrast theme" and features a circled dynamic marking of *ff*. A circled section of the third staff is labeled "Intervals of fourth and fifth". A circled section of the first staff is labeled "Ysaÿe's contrast theme" and "cour."

¹¹²Grove Music On-line, *Dies Irae*

34 b: The Original *Dies Irae* Theme



34 c: *Dies Irae* as seen in Ysaÿe's *Sonata No. 2*, 2nd movement, mm. 24–25



34 d: *Dies Irae* again in *Sonata No. 2*, 3rd movement, mm. 1–8



Ysaÿe believed that a modern violinist must develop facility in playing unison figures. In his *Ten Preludes* collection, emphasis of the unison is seen in the opening prelude. Ysaÿe states: “Apart from the rare instance — the occasional double stop of an open string with its equivalent fingered on the next string — I do not think that the unison has really come into practical use.” In his six solo violin sonatas, however, Ysaÿe himself frequently employed unison figures. Mostly these unisons occur either at the beginnings or the ends of phrases. Ex. 6a shows the unison at beginning of a phrase and example 6b shows a unison occurring at the end.¹¹³ My suggestion for playing a fingered unison is that a player should set the lower string finger first (the fourth finger), and then find the

¹¹³Eugene Ysaÿe, *Ten Preludes for Violin Solo*, Op. 35, (Brussels: Scott Press, 1952), 13

location of the higher string finger (the first finger). This motion can prevent injury to the fourth finger that might be caused by over-stretching.

Ex. 35: Use of Unison

35 a: Sonata No. 2, 2nd movement, m. 13



35 b: Sonata No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 67–68



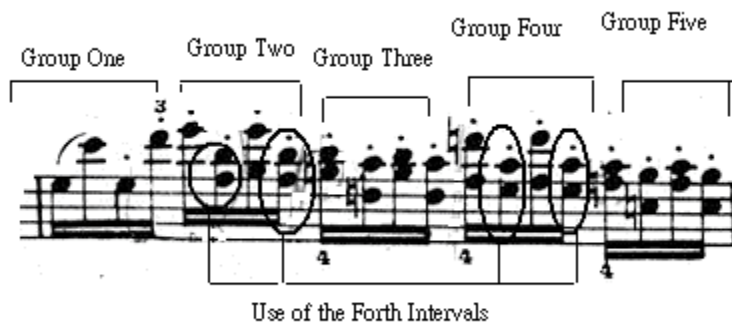
The circled notes in Ex. 36 below demonstrate the interval of a second, which creates a dissonant sound. Ysaÿe provided practical and effective fingerings for playing seconds. Using his fingering below for example, the player places both the first and fourth fingers simultaneously, thus sustaining the F sharp long enough to create the minor dissonant sound. My own suggestion is to cross between the A and E strings smoothly to produce an effect similar to a double-stopped second. Additionally, the accent on the G is important in generating a significantly dissonant effect.

Ex. 36: Use of the Interval of a Second
Sonata No. 4, 2nd movement, mm. 31–32



In his *Ten Preludes*, Ysaÿe indicated “the diatonic scale in perfect fourths...is still impracticable nowadays.”¹¹⁴ In his unaccompanied violin sonatas, the fourth usually appears with other double-stopped intervals (such as fifths or sixths). The following example demonstrates Ysaÿe’s skillful use of the rapid alternation between different double stops. My suggestion is that these chords should be played in groupings determined in terms of the player’s left-hand position or ‘set.’ In this case there would be five left-hand sets. A player should not think of the individual double stops due to the fast tempo and complicated fingerings, rather the player should practice attaining the hand sets and play the passage by alternating among these.

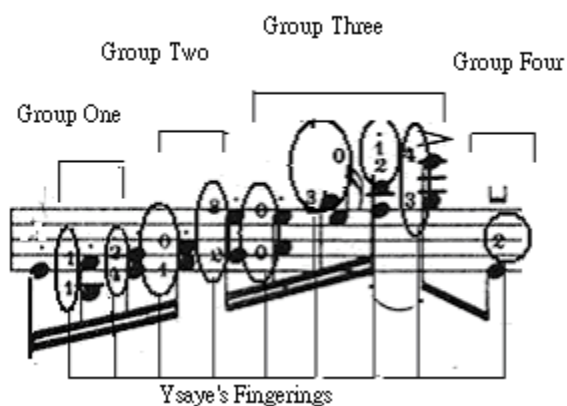
Ex. 37: Use of the Fourth Double-Stopped Intervals
Sonata No.4, 3rd, movement, m. 59



¹¹⁴Eugene Ysaÿe, *Ten Preludes for Violin Solo, Op. 35*, (Brussels: Scott Press, 1952), 21

Ex. 38a also shows the quick alternation of double-stopped intervals, in this case consisting of thirds, fourths, fifths, and sixths. Given Ysaÿe's good fingerings for this passage, my suggestion is to divide these notes into the groupings shown below when playing in a fast tempo. I also suggest playing the last note by itself. Players are often inclined to rush the first eight notes. Since the ninth note is the climax of the passage and should not be played out of tempo, one must play the tenth note (the last one) with a slightly prolonged timing. This timing of the last notes has two purposes. One is to pull back from the hurried tempo of the previous notes, and the other is to set the tempo for the slower passage which follows.

Ex. 38 a: Quick Alternation of Varied Double- Stopped Intervals
Sonata No. 4, 3rd Movement, m. 24



Ex. 38 a (Measure 24) is seen here in context in Ex. 38 b. *Giocosamente* means “joyfully” or “jokingly.” As indicated by the *meno mosso* marking, the tempo at the 3/8 section should be slower than in the previous passage. The tempo of the 3/8 section should also be in same range as that of the *A Tempo* section in the first movement.

Ex. 38 b: Sonata No. 4, 3rd movement, mm. 23–27

Example 38a

Ysaÿe took advantage of open strings in the following passage of double-stopped fifths. The effect is impressive, resonant, and brilliant and draws upon the characteristic sonority of the violin while the technical demands are not high. Players only have to stop three notes, the highest, the middle, and the lowest notes of passage. Use of open strings also provides players with ample time to shift.

Ex. 39: Use of the Fifth Double-Stopped Interval with Open Strings
Sonata No. 2, 4th movement, mm. 92–94

The high registered note

The middle registered note

The low registered note

The high registered note

The middle registered note

The low registered note

The ending: the octave note

a Tempo.

ff

Notes are used of the open strings

Although the sixth is a traditional interval in violin music, it is unusual to see such a leap using sixth as illustrated in Ex. 40. In this passage, players have to shift, extend, and also use a contraction of the left hand. The contraction of the hand into half position serves to facilitate shifting. It is quite characteristic of Ysaÿe to make significant demands on the flexibility of the left hand.

Ex. 40: Use of the Double-Stopped Sixth Interval, Requiring Left-Hand Flexibility, *Sonata No. 2*, 4th movement, mm. 12–13

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes a double-stopped sixth interval (G4 and E5) on the first beat. Below the staff, several annotations are present:

- Two upward-pointing arrows labeled "Shift" are positioned above the first and second beats.
- Two downward-pointing arrows labeled "Extend" are positioned below the first and second beats.
- A bracket labeled "Contraction of the left hand as a shifting device in the half position" spans the first two beats.
- A bracket labeled "same position" spans the third and fourth beats.
- Two upward-pointing arrows labeled "shift" are positioned above the third and fourth beats.
- Handing numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) are written above the notes to indicate fingerings.

The passage in Ex. 41 shows dissonant sevenths resolved harmonically to thirds. The alternation of these double stops is rapid. It is a challenge both to play the passage with good intonation and also to bring out the melodic lines. Ysaÿe's two accents on the second beat in m. 5 help to highlight the pause in this passage. Although he didn't place these accents in the next measure, it is my suggestion to play the measure as if they were there.

Ex. 41: Use of Seventh Double-Stop Intervals Resolving Rapidly to Thirds
Sonata No. 2, 4th movement mm. 5–6

The image shows a single staff of music with two measures. The first measure contains two groups of double-stops, each consisting of a seventh interval. The second measure shows the resolution of these intervals into thirds. Arrows point from the text below to the specific intervals in the notation. Fingerings 1, 2, and 3 are indicated for the notes in the double-stops.

Use of the seventh double stopped intervals The dissonance of the seventh intervals is resolved by the third interval

Use of the seventh double stopped intervals The dissonance of the seventh intervals is resolved by the third interval

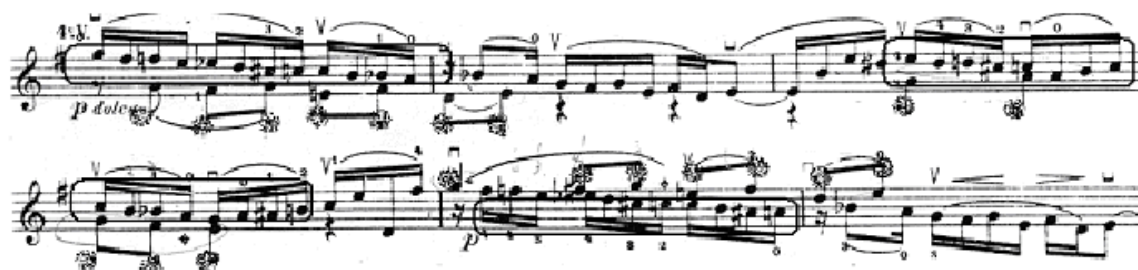
The trilling passage seen in Ex. 42 requires good coordination of the left and right hands. It is my suggestion to make a small accent on the trilled notes, which facilitates the necessary coordination.

Ex. 42: Use of Trills in Fast Passagework *Sonata No. 4, 3rd movement, mm. 43–46*

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves contain fast, rhythmic passages with trills. Trills are indicated by a 'w' symbol inside a circle above or below the notes. Accents are shown above the notes. A piano (*p*) dynamic marking is present in both staves.

Ex. 43 illustrates a chromatic scale accompanying the *Dies Irae* theme. Players should bring out the lower melody clearly. It is a common tendency to overly emphasize the upper chromatic scales because of their difficulty.

Ex. 43: Use of the Chromatic Scale with the *Dies Irae* Theme
Sonata No. 2, 3rd movement, mm. 37–42



As mentioned before, Ysaÿe was influenced by composers such as Debussy and Franck who were his contemporaries. Hence, Ysaÿe frequently emulated their styles in his works, for example through his use of the whole-tone scale. Ex. 15 illustrates Ysaÿe's application of a whole-tone scale to music for the violin using these notes: G–A–B–C sharp–E flat–F-natural–G. It is also interesting that Ysaÿe wrote a *spiccato* passage to follow the whole-tone scale, which is played *legato*. To bring out the exotic and brilliant effect of this passage, the player needs to create a notable dynamic contrast and play the scales with apparent ease.

Ex. 44: Use of the Whole-Tone Scale *Sonata No. 4, 3rd movement, mm. 13–14*



In Ex. 45, a mixed arpeggio is constructed using two different types of scales; one is a traditional E-minor scale (seen in mm. 1 and 4) and the other is a chromatic scale (seen in mm. 2, 3). The chromatic scale consists of the notes: E–F–F sharp–G–G sharp–A–B flat–B–(C)–C sharp–D–E flat.

Ex. 45: Use of Mixed Scales, *Sonata No. 2*, 3rd movement, mm. 59–62

use of the traditional e minor scale use of the chromatic scale

use of the chromatic scale use of the traditional e minor scale use of the chromatic scale

Ysaÿe frequently used non-traditional arpeggios, as seen in Ex. 46 that might be called ‘extended arpeggios.’ Ysaÿe also provided practical fingerings.

Ex. 46: Use of Extended Arpeggios *Sonata No. 4*, 1st movement, mm. 1–5

Lento maestoso (MM. 72 - ♩)

B.R.

Ex. 47 shows a rare example combining harmonics and left-hand pizzicato found in Ysaÿe's works. Perhaps due to their differing playing styles, unlike Paganini, Ysaÿe only infrequently used harmonics and left-hand pizzicato in his music.

Ex. 47: Use of Harmonics and Left-Hand Pizzicato
Sonata No. 4, 2nd movement, mm. 44–46

Ex. 48 illustrates two technical challenges. *Ponticello* is a special effect that requires drawing the bow very close to the bridge. The passage also calls for quick alternation between *ponticello* and ordinary slurred bowing. Ysaÿe uses this device of quick alternation of techniques quite frequently in his works.

Ex. 48: Use of *Ponticello* Bowing Sonata No. 2, 4th movement, mm. 37–42

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff begins with a circled annotation "(sul Ponticello)" above the first few notes. The bottom staff has a circled annotation "(Ponticello)" above a section. Dynamics include "pp" and "ppp". There are also circled annotations "(ord.)" and "(ord.)" above notes in the top staff.

Ysaÿe not only used Right-hand *pizzicato* in the passage shown in Ex. 49, he also indicated that the players must bring out the motive conveyed through the circled notes.

Ex. 49: Use of Right-Hand *Pizzicato* Sonata No.4, 2nd movement, mm 1–7

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff has a circled annotation "Quasi lento. (Pizz. - avec vibrations)" above the first few notes. The bottom staff has a circled annotation "cédez." above a section. Dynamics include "mf", "dim.", and "p".

This passage illustrated in Ex. 50 is to be played *legato*. However, Ysaÿe indicated “*canto poco marcato*” in order to emphasize the importance of the theme conveyed through the circled notes. It is my suggestion to play this passage with a detached *marcato* bowing—stopping the bow between each note while crossing the strings very smoothly—and to use more bow on the thematic notes to emphasize the melodic line.

Ex. 50: Use of Legato Bowing with *Marcato* Indication *Sonata No. 4*, 2nd movement, mm. 31–32



Ex. 51 shows the quick alternation of *détaché*, slurred, and *spiccato* bowing. I suggest that the players may lightly lift up the right wrist while playing *spiccato* bowing. This posture can help the bow jump on the strings naturally. When playing the *détaché* bowing, players may lower the right-hand wrist to encourage the bow to remain on the strings.

Ex. 51: Use of Rapid Alternation of Types Bow Strokes *Sonata No. 4*, 3rd movement, mm. 1–4

Chapter Four

Unaccompanied Violin Works after the Era of Eugene Ysaÿe (1950 to present): An Example by Bright Sheng

The music of the second half of the twentieth century is characterized by diversity. Musical elements have been selected from various sources, such as country music, jazz, rock and rap. While Western composers, such as John Cage (1912–1992) and Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) have been greatly influenced by Eastern artistry, Eastern composers, likewise influenced by Western music, have gained international attention. Such Eastern composers include Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996) from Japan, Chou Wen-chung (b. 1923) from China, and Isang Yun (1917–1995) from Korea.¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, increasing numbers of Asian composers are writing unaccompanied works for the violin. For example, Japanese composer Yuji Takahashi (b. 1938) wrote *Sieben Rosen Hat Ein Strauch for Violin Solo* (Seven Roses in the Bushes, 1979); Chinese composer Bright Sheng (b. 1955) wrote *The Stream Flows* (1990) in the solo violin genre; and Taiwanese composer Chang-Huei Hsu (1929–2004) wrote *Five Preludes, Op. 16 for Violin Solo* (2000). Most of these Asian composers have studied music in the West, and they have tried to combine musical elements from their cultural backgrounds. Isang Yun studied both at the Paris Conservatory (from 1956–1957) and at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik (from 1958–1959). Yun asserts that his works have been

¹¹⁵K Marie Stolba. *The Development of Western Music – A History* (Madison: Brown & Benchmark, 2nd edition), 653–683

deeply influenced by Korean culture, while their instrumentation and structure are essentially Western.¹¹⁶ Chou Wen-Chung received his Master of Arts degree from Columbia University in 1954. He is now an internationally renowned composer for his successful fusion of Western and Eastern musical elements in his compositions.¹¹⁷

A student of Chou Wen-Chung, Bright Sheng has followed in his teacher's steps, merging both Eastern and Western musical components into his compositions. Sheng launched his international career after he received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in November 2001. He has been proclaimed as "a fresh voice in cross-cultural music" and "an innovative composer who merges diverse musical customs in works that transcend conventional aesthetic boundaries".¹¹⁸ Sheng composed *The Stream Flows* for violin solo as a work commissioned by the Foundation for Chinese Performance Arts for Nai-Yuan Hu. *The Stream Flows* is an excellent example of Sheng's cross-cultural fusion of Eastern and Western musical elements.

The life and works of Bright Sheng serve to demonstrate how Western and Eastern culture may reciprocally influence each other and thereby shape a novel form of music, and it is interesting to examine the Chinese components that Sheng has adapted into Western frameworks. Therefore, this chapter has three sections which provide a biography of Sheng, a discussion of the Chinese musical components found in his works, and an analysis of Sheng's piece for solo violin, *The Stream Flows*.

¹¹⁶Grove Music Online, *Isang Yun*

¹¹⁷Ibid, *Chou Wen-Chung*

¹¹⁸Internet Source: http://www.schirmer.com/composers/sheng_bio.html

The Life of Bright Sheng

Still living and working, Bright Sheng—his Chinese name is Zong Liang Sheng—is one of the most active Chinese-American composers.¹¹⁹ He was born in Shanghai in 1955 to a family of high social standing. His father a medical doctor and his mother an engineer, Sheng started piano lessons with his mother at the age of four.¹²⁰

When Sheng was eleven years old in 1966, the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) in China began. The Cultural Revolution is usually regarded as a tragedy for Chinese civilization. Huge numbers of cultural and artistic documents were destroyed during this period as the Chinese people were forced by the new centralized government to abandon their traditional customs.¹²¹ During this period of time, Sheng’s family was categorized as belonging to one of the “Five Black Classes (i.e., wealthy landlords, reactionaries, wealthy peasants, conservatives, and criminals).” These “classes” were held in disfavor by the government. Therefore, Sheng was forced to serve in labor camps for “rehabilitation.” Sheng later recalled this experience: “the most tragic time in recent Chinese history. . . I was one of the millions of Chinese who were the witnesses, victims, and survivors of the Cultural Revolution.”¹²²

When Sheng was sent to the labor camps in Qinghai (a province near Tibet), his piano skills helped him to gain a position in a Folk and Dance Troupe. The mission for this Troupe was to entertain the local population. Sheng later recalled that he benefited

¹¹⁹Xiao-Qiang Pan, *A Study of Seven Tunes Herd in China for Solo Cello by Bright Sheng* (DMA diss., University of Northern Colorado, 2003), 1

¹²⁰Ibid, 1

¹²¹Chiung-Tan Hsu, *Fusion of Musical Styles and Cultures in Bright Sheng’s Opera “The Song of Majnun”* (DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 1999), 5

¹²²Bright Sheng, *Hun (Lacerations): In Memoriam 1966-1976 for Orchestra*. (Perspectives of New Music 33, 1995), 560

tremendously from this experience in Qinghai. He discovered and collected many beautiful folk songs which later became his most important compositional components after he came to the United States in 1982. In Sheng's words: "I did not realize then what a great influence this folk music [in Qinghai] would have on me. To this day, Qinghai folk music is a strong inspiration in my writing."¹²³

After the period of the Cultural Revolution came to an end, Sheng was admitted into the Shanghai Conservatory of Music as a composition major. Sheng studied music theory and the compositional devices of Western music at this time. He also studied Chinese music through classes in the Chinese Music Department. Sheng asserts that this study of Chinese music helped him greatly to understand Chinese artistic and compositional traditions.¹²⁴

Sheng received a master's degree from Queens College of City University of New York in 1984 and a doctoral degree from Columbia University in 1993. His major teachers were George Perle, Hugo Weisgall, Chou Wen-Chung and Leonard Bernstein. Chou and Bernstein were the most important mentors in supporting Sheng's efforts to fuse Western and Eastern musical styles in his innovative compositions. Chou shared Sheng's compositional interest,¹²⁵ and Bernstein was enthusiastic and supportive saying: "What do you mean, "Impossible"? Everything is a fusion, the works of Brahms, Bartók, Stravinsky and my own."¹²⁶

¹²³Michelle Harper, "Bringing East and West through Music, an Interview with Bright Sheng," The Journal of the International Institute, 2; Internet Source, <http://www.beloit.edu/pubaff/events/sheng.html>

¹²⁴Xiao-Qiang Pan, *A Study of Seven Tunes Heard in China for Solo Cello by Bright Sheng* (DMA diss., University of Northern Colorado, 2003), 10

¹²⁵Grove Music Online, *Chou Wen-Chung*

¹²⁶Su Sun Wong, *An Analysis of Five Vocal Works by Bright Sheng* (DMA diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1995), 8

Sheng is a prolific composer. His first published work is *Two Poems from the Sung Dynasty* written in 1985. His “*Hun (Lacerations)*”: *In Memoriam 1966–1976* was commissioned and premiered by Gerard Schwarz and the New York Chamber Orchestra in 1988. This performance was a success and marked the blossoming of Sheng’s career. Other large scale works such his operas *The Song of Majnun* and *The Silver River* were finished in 1992 and 1997 respectively. *The Stream Flows* was commissioned by the foundation for Chinese Performing Arts in 1990 and premiered by violinist Nai-Yuan Hu on Oct. 20, 1990 at Jordan Hall in Boston, Massachusetts.¹²⁷ All of Sheng’s works are published by G. Schirmer, Inc.

Sheng has also won numerous prizes, including the Art Song Competition in 1979 and the Chamber Music Competition in China in 1980. He has also received recognition from the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Naumberg Foundation, the Jerome foundation, the Tanglewood Music Center, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Koussevitzky Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. He was also the first runner-up for a Pulitzer Prize in 1989 and 1991.¹²⁸

Sheng has been appointed to many notable positions in orchestras and universities. He served as composer-in residence for the Seattle Symphony and the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1992, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival in 1993, and as an artist-in residence at the University of Washington in 1994 and 1995. He has been invited to give lectures at the Juilliard School, the Peabody Conservatory, Princeton University, Harvard

¹²⁷Bright Sheng, *The Stream Flows for Solo Violin* (Milwaukee, WI; G. Shirmer, Inc, 1999), 1

¹²⁸Ting-Ju Lai, *Volume I: A Perspective on Ethnic Synthesis in Twentieth Century Art Music with a focus on An Analysis of String Quartet No. 3 by Bright Sheng; Volume II: Fly to the Moon* (D. M. diss. : University of California, 2001), 4

University, and the University of Chicago. Sheng also served as a member of the composition faculty at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor since 1995.

One of the most proficient composers merging Eastern and Western styles today, Sheng is especially well situated to achieve a balance between the two cultures. Chinese by birth and childhood experience and specifically trained in Chinese Music at the Shanghai Conservatory, Sheng, through extensive study in the United States and through analyzing the great masters' works from Bach to Bartók, has also adapted himself to the many forms of Western music. Sheng has succeeded in artistically and persuasively combining an Eastern inspired internal spontaneity with a logical exterior provided by Western compositional frameworks.¹²⁹

Chinese Musical Components in Sheng's Works

Use of Folk Songs

Among the composers preceding Sheng, Béla Bartók in particular inspired Sheng's cross-cultural musical fusion. According to Sheng, "Bartók is one of my role models, especially in the way he fused East European folk music with the 'highly cultural' German musical traditions."¹³⁰

Sheng believes both of two different forms, Eastern folk music and Western classical music, should be treated as equally important musical components. In his view, musical

¹²⁹Ting-Ju Lai, *Volume I: A Perspective on Ethnic Synthesis in Twentieth Century Art Music with a focus on An Analysis of String Quartet No. 3 by Bright Sheng; Volume II: Fly to the Moon* (D. M. diss. : University of California, 2001)

¹³⁰Bright Sheng, *Chinese and Western Music*, Internet Source, http://www.schirmer.com/composers/sheng_essay1d.html).

fusion must go beyond a simplistic incorporation of one musical element into the domain of another. Above all, asserts Sheng, a composer should have a complete understanding of different musical components so that fusion of substantive artistry may be achieved. A true transformation occurs when “the two [elements], seemingly opposites, meet at their most original end.”¹³¹

Sheng’s unique experience of working and performing in Qinghai served to provide him with rich resource of authentic Chinese folk songs. He has adapted many of these songs in his works. Some examples include *Two Folk Songs from Qinghai for Chorus and Orchestra*, written in 1989; *Seven Tunes Heard in China for Solo Cello*, composed in 1995; and *The Stream Flows* which, as stated above, was written in 1990 for solo violin. Because many of Sheng’s works are based in the Chinese pentatonic scale system, his works are suffused with second, third, fourth and fifth intervals. As a result, the triad, a major musical element of Western harmony, does not figure prominently in Sheng’s works.

Use of the Chinese Notation System

The primary system of notation in Chinese music is the Chinese pentatonic scale system or “The Five-Note Mode.” Chinese musicians have been using this system for thousands of years and it is very complex. There are several combinations of Five-Note Mode scales. The names of the five notes are Gong, Shang, Jue, Zhi and Yu respectively. The Chinese Five-Note Mode is similar to the pentatonic scale described in Western music theory. There are other modes used in the Chinese music also. For example, when

¹³¹Ibid.

two additional notes, Bianzhi and Biangong, are added to The Five-Note Mode, the notation system is called “The Seven-Note Mode.” In the following example, a comparison of Chinese and Western pitch and notation systems is shown.¹³²

Ex 52: A Comparison of Chinese and Western Pitch and Notation System¹³³

Contemporary Western Pitches	Contemporary Western solmization	Contemporary Chinese cipher notation	Traditional Chinese names of the five/seven tones	Traditional Chinese notation in Chinese characters
G	Sol	5	Gong	合
A flat				
A	La	6	Shang	四
B flat				
B	Ti	7	Jue	一
C	Doh	1		上
C sharp			Bianzhi	
D	Re	2	Zhi	尺
E flat				
E	Mi	3	Yu	工
F	Fa	4		
F sharp			Biangong	凡
G'	Sol	5	Gong	六
A' flat				
A'	La	6	Shang	五

¹³²New Grove Dictionary, 639-640

¹³³The chart is modified from “New Grove dictionary”, 2nd edition, 640

Each of the Five-Note Modes can start with any of the above five notes. When the first note begins with “Gong,” the result is the Gong mode. When the first note begins with “Shang,” the Shang mode results. Additionally, the Chinese modes can be located on any set of the pitches. The following example shows five Five-Note Modes and demonstrates that the pitches of Gong are all located in the key of C. Since these modes share the same key signature (C), they are called the “Same Gong System.” The nature of the Chinese modal system provides great flexibility in modulation. A valuable resource describing the Chinese notation system is *Hanzhu Diaoshi Jiqi Hesheng* (Modes and Harmony of Han) by Ying-Hai Li, published by Shanghai Yinye Chubanshe in 2001.

Ex 53: Five modes of the “Same Gong Mode in C”.

The image displays five musical staves, each representing a different mode of the 'Same Gong Mode in C'. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are represented by quarter notes on a five-line staff. Below each staff, the corresponding Chinese mode name is listed, followed by the sequence of notes in pinyin characters.

Mode	Notes (Pinyin)
1. Gong	gong shang jiao zhi yu gong
2. Shang	shang jiao zhi yu gong shang
3. Jiao	jiao zhi yu gong shang jiao
4. Zhi	zhi yu gong shang jiao zhi
5. Yu	yu gong shang jiao zhi yu

The following example is the fragment of a Mongolian folk song, “Mu Ge.” The first phrase ends with a Zhi on D and the second phrase ends with a Gong on G. Therefore, “Mu Ge.” can be described as a song in “G Gong Mode”.¹³⁴

Ex. 54: Fragment of a Mongolian Folk Song *Mu Ge*¹³⁵



Analysis of Sheng’s Solo Work, *The Stream Flows*

Sheng’s East-West fusion *The Stream Flows* is composed of two parts. The first part is quite lyrical in contrast with the second part, which is a fast country dance. Sheng entitled the two sections: ♩ = 54 (part one), and ♩ = 104–108 (part two). Sheng adapted a Chinese folk song in the first section, and a three-note motive (based on the Five-Note Mode) in the second section. Sheng also employed several Western compositional devices in this work such as development of the theme, the use of Western structural form, the incorporation of bitonality, and the variation of the timbres of the violin. These characteristics are discussed in the following paragraphs.

¹³⁴ Xiao-Qiang Pan, *A Study of Seven Tunes Herd in China for Solo Cello by Bright Sheng* (DMA diss., University of Northern Colorado, 2003), 67

¹³⁵ Ex. 53, 54 are selected from Pan, page 34, 61.

Part One: ♩ = 54

Sheng adapted a famous folk melody of the same name from southwestern China in the first section of *The Stream Flows*. Sheng recalled: “The freshness and richness of the tune deeply touched me when I first heard it . . . Here I hope that the tone quality of a female folk singer is evoked by the timbre of the solo violin.”¹³⁶ The folk song is originally from the Yunnan province, a continuation of the Tibetan plateau. The province occupies an area of 394,000 square kilometers, a size similar to that of the state of California in the United States. Yunnan’s western border is shared with Myanmar, and the southern border is shared with Laos and Vietnam. Thus, while Han is the major race in China, there are many minorities living in Yunnan. This diverse cultural environment is quite conducive to the development of folk songs.

As indicated in the quotation above, Sheng intended to imitate a soprano singing voice through his use of the violin in *The Stream Flows*. To convey the natural sense of a familiar song being sung with spontaneity, he also composed his piece with many changes in the time signature. Sheng furthermore indicated frequent use of slides on the violin, again to imitate the female singing voice.¹³⁷

The Stream Flows is a love song describing a young girl’s eager longing for her sweetheart. When she sees the moon, she recalls her lover is far away from her. She thinks he might be walking on the mountain but the distance makes her think he is walking on the sky. When she is looking at the river and feeling the breeze blowing up to the hill, she wishes her lover could hear her calling. In the following example, the lyrics are presented in three ways. The first is an English translation using Chinese

¹³⁶Bright Sheng, *The Stream Flows* (G. Schirmer, Inc, 1999), 1

¹³⁷Ibid, 1

Romanization.¹³⁸ The second shows the original Chinese characters. The third is the English translation of the meaning of the lyrics.¹³⁹

Ex. 55: Chinese text and English translation of the lyrics in the Yunnan folk song *The Stream Flows*.

Xiao He Tang Shuei ____ The Stream Flows

Ai Yue Lian Chu Lai Liang Wang Wang Liang Wang Wang

The rising moon shines brightly,

Xiang Qi Wo De A Ge Zai Shen Shan

It reminds me of my love in the mountains

Ge Xiang Yue Liang Tian Shang Zou Tian Shang Zou

Like the moon, you walk in the sky,

Ge A Ge A Ge A Shan Xia Xiao He Tang Shuei Qieng Yiou Yiou

As the crystal stream flows down the mountain.

Y Zhen Qing Feng Chuei Shang Po

Ni Ke Xing Jian A Mei Jiao A Ge

A clear breeze blows up the hill.

My love, do you hear I am calling you?

The original folk song is composed in the Chinese Yu Mode. The starting note of this mode is C. The whole C-Yu mode consists of five notes: C–E flat–F–G–B flat. Ex. 56 shows the original score of the folk song as it appears in *Zhung Guo Min Jian Ge Qu*

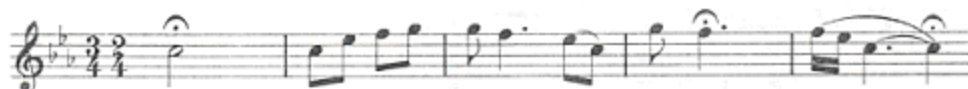
¹³⁸The English translation by Chinese Romanization is provided by the author.

¹³⁹The English translation is provided by Bright Sheng, *The Stream Flows* (G. Schirmer, Inc, 1999), 1

Ji (_____, *A Selection of Chinese Folk Songs*) with the English translation
(Chinese Romanization) by the author.¹⁴⁰

Ex. 56: The score of the original folk song *The Stream Flows* which is adapted in Sheng's composition by the same name

Xiao He Tang Shuei _____ (The Stream Flows)



Ai Yue Lian chu Lai Liang Wang Wang Liang Wang Wang

Ai Yue Lian chu Lai Liang Wang Wang Liang Wang Wang



Xiang Qi Wo De A Ge Zai Shen Shan Ge Xiang Yue Liang

Xiang Qi Wo De A Ge Zai Shen Shan Y Zhen Qing Feng



Tian Shang Zou Tian Shang Zou Ge A Ge A

Chuei Shang Po Chuei Shang Po Ge A Ge A



Ge A Shan Xia Xiao He Tang Shuei Qieng Yiou Yiou

Ge A Ni Ke Xing Jian A Mei Jiao A Ge

¹⁴⁰Zhong Guo Min Jian Ge Qu Ji (_____, *A Selection of Chinese Folk Song*), (Beijing: Ren Min Yin Yue Chu Ban She, 1980(____: _____)), 240

Sheng skillfully incorporated the melody of this lovely song into his own work. He chose the first two melodies to construct the themes of his composition for solo violin. The first melody is retrieved from the first phrase of the song which has an initial upward turn as seen in Ex. 57. The first long note indicates a sigh from the lovelorn girl. In the beginning of his piece, Sheng transposes the melody to the key of A and adds a slide to the sighing note to emphasize the character of the human voice (see Ex. 58).

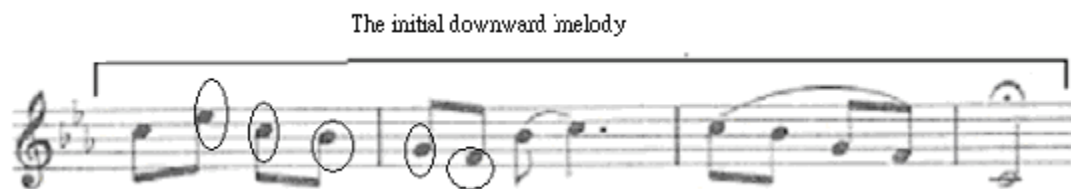
Ex. 57: The Initial Upward Melody, Yunnan Folk Song, mm. 1–5

The "Sigh" note The initial upward melody seen
in the first five notes

Ex. 58: The first theme, from Sheng's, *The Stream Flows*, mm.1–4

Sheng next adapts the downward melody of the second phrase from the folk song. He transposes this melody first to the key of B flat and then to C sharp (see Ex. 59, Ex. 60).

Ex. 59: The Initial Downward Melody, Yunnan Folk Song, mm. 5–8



Ex. 60: Sheng's Adaptation of the Downward Melody, *The Stream Flows*, mm. 5–9

The B flat downward melody The C sharp downward melody

In this manner, the upward and downward melodies are used to construct the whole of part one. Sheng further develops the structure in this section through frequent transposition of the keys. The keys encountered in measures 1 through 28 are: A (mm. 1–5), B flat (mm. 5–9), C (mm. 9–10), A (mm. 11–17), E flat (mm. 18–20), C sharp (mm. 20–21), C (mm. 22–23), G sharp (mm. 24–28). Following m. 29, through the use of double stops on the violin, the first section becomes polyphonic and bitonal—two different keys appear in two distinct voices simultaneously. Alternating dissonant intervals such as augmented fourths, fifths, and sevenths and diminished fourths and fifths appear frequently as shown in Ex. 61.

Ex. 61: Bitonal Passages in Sheng's *The Stream Flows*, mm. 45–50

The image displays two staves of musical notation for a violin part. The first staff, measures 45-50, is marked with *ff* and *fff*. It features a complex bitonal texture with various modes and intervals. The second staff, measures 51-56, is marked *più mosso* and includes triplets. The notation includes various accidentals and dynamic markings.

Yu mode in G. It is G-Bflat-C-D-(F)-G

Yu mode in G sharp. It is G sharp-B-C sharp-D sharp-F sharp

Yu mode in G sharp. G sharp-B-C sharp-D sharp-F sharp

Yu mode in D. Same as the previous lower voice.

Yu mode in D. It is D-F-G-A-C.

Yu mode in C sharp. It is C sharp-E-F sharp-G sharp-B (A sharp as an accidental note).

Sheng also uses a variety of timbres on the violin in this work. At the end of the first section, he includes both natural and artificial harmonics. These harmonics are presented in the second, fifth, and octave intervals. Sheng finally indicates *sul tasto* in mm. 60–64 bringing part one to a peaceful and conclusion with a remote feeling (Ex. 62).

Ex. 62. Harmonics in Sheng's The Stream Flows, Part One, mm 55–64

Harmonics in the fifth interval

Harmonics in the second intervals Harmonics in the fifth and octave intervals

Part Two: ♩ = 104–108

A three-note motive is seen throughout the second section of Sheng's piece and consists of two intervals, the major second and the minor third. These intervals are recognizable components of the Chinese Five-Note Mode¹⁴¹ and lend an Eastern character to the work. There are four compositional techniques used by Sheng in developing part two of his composition. First, Sheng transposes the three-note motive to different keys throughout the section as shown in Ex. 63. Second, Sheng adds an extra interval to the motive, the perfect fifth. The passages in such cases consist of a four-note motive (Ex. 64). Third, Sheng employs bitonality in this section when the three-note motive appears in two voices simultaneously in different keys as illustrated in Ex. 65. Fourth, the composer uses the four open strings on the violin (G, D, A, and E) as a distinctive musical element. The four open-stringed notes are in the melody and, at other times, as accompaniment as seen in Ex. 66. Eastern harmonies are thus artfully fused

¹⁴¹This information is directly provided by Bright Sheng in his email, 04/23/2005

with Western style as these four compositional devices are used either individually or in combination throughout the second section of Sheng's moving composition.

Ex. 63: The Transposition of the Three-Note Motive in Sheng's *The Stream Flows*, Part Two, mm. 111–117

Three-note motive as G-A-C

(on the string)

pp

Three-note motive as G sharp-A sharp-D sharp

Three-note motive as B flat-C-F

legato

(*pp*)

Ex. 64: The Four-Note Motive with a Perfect Fifth in Sheng's *The Stream Flows*, Part Two, mm. 121–130

Four-note motive as C, D, F, G

Four-note motive as D, E, G, A

Four-note motive as E flat, F, A flat, B flat

Four-note motive as A, B, D, E

cresc. poco a poco

Four-note motive as E, C sharp, D sharp, F sharp

mp (*cresc.*) *f*

Four-note motive as C sharp, D sharp, F sharp, G sharp

Ex. 65: Bitonality in Sheng's *The Stream Flows*, Part Two, mm.169–177



Three-note motive as E-F sharp-A



Three-note motive as B flat-C-E flat

Ex. 66: Open Strings as Accompaniment in Sheng's *The Stream Flows*, Part Two, mm. 83–105

Three-note motive as F sharp-G sharp-B

The musical score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with the instruction "accel. al arco" and a tempo marking of "♩ = 120". It features a circled motif of three notes (F sharp, G sharp, B) with the annotation "pizz. arco". The second staff continues with "arco (sul D)" and another circled motif of three notes (G sharp, B, C sharp) with the annotation "pizz. +". The third staff has a circled motif of three notes (B flat, C, E flat) with the annotation "pizz. +". The fourth staff has a circled motif of three notes (F, A flat, B flat) with the annotation "pizz. +". The fifth staff is marked "As as above" and "fff". The score includes various performance instructions such as "sim.", "arco", "pizz.", "sul D", and "fff".

Three-note motive as G sharp-B-C sharp

Three-note motive as B flat-C-E flat

Three-note motive F-A flat-B flat

As as above

The Compositional Philosophy of *The Stream Flows*

Bright Sheng successfully merged Eastern and Western compositional styles in this highly creative and effective work. As quite a contemporary piece (composed in 1990), the effect of the music somehow is tonal. However, this tonality is not merely the result of employing a Western music system. The tonal impact of this piece occurs also through

the incorporation of a beautiful Yunnan folksong which, as with most Chinese songs, is based in the Chinese pentatonic Five-Mode Notation system.

Sheng, however, has successfully used many Western compositional techniques in *The Stream Flows*, such as the development of themes and the use of other Western structures and devices, such as contrasting dynamics. He also applies bitonality in this work (though based within the Chinese scale mode) and an irregular temporal structure (Ex. 65). As for violin techniques, Sheng employs harmonics, both artificial and natural and also *ponticello* bowing in the second section. Moreover, he has incorporated left and right hand *pizzicato* in chords using all four open strings (Ex. 66).

The Stream Flows is a short piece and it is not technically demanding for violinists. However, many Western performers may be confused by Sheng's free and spontaneous mood and the philosophy conveyed in this piece, since the lyric is selected from Asia and the melody is composed by the Asian people. A better understanding of the general philosophy of the Chinese people as it applies to this work may help a violinist to perform this work. In my understanding, an important Chinese philosophy is that of the virtue of balance, as seen in Tai-Chi.¹⁴² Hence, certain compositional techniques conventional to Western music—such as the building up of a climax or having as a destination a goal based in tonality—are not essential to the thinking of a Chinese-trained musician. Although Sheng is a skillful composer trained in the West, his native country still influenced him deeply in his philosophy of life, and this should be expressed in the performance of this great work.¹⁴³

¹⁴²Tai-Chi, a traditional Chinese martial art, has been developed for many hundred of years in China. It is also developed by immigrated Tai-Chi teachers in the western countries nowadays.

¹⁴³Bright Sheng, *Chinese and Western Music*, Internet source, http://www.schirmer.com/composers/sheng_essay1d.html).

As discussed before, Sheng developed Part One by transposing the initial upward melody and the initial downward melody to other keys. These two motives are presented alternately by continually changing keys. However, this music seemingly has no intent to create a climax due to its frequently transposed keys. Hence, the player may find it is difficult to find a musical direction when playing this part (the direction here refers to the conventional directions applied in the traditional western music. The general rules are tonic as a statement, subdominant as a transition, dominant as a destination, and back to tonic at the end).¹⁴⁴ The player may also find it is difficult to convey the intention of the music if they are striving to interpret the piece in a Western manner. My suggestion is that the player may find this music much more meaningful if he does not search necessarily for a climax or a destination. As the structure of this section is not meant to be straightforward, I suggest that its interpretation should be alternatively intimate and indirect.

The country dance (Part Two) is characterized by a fast tempo and exciting dancing rhythms. Unlike Part One, Part Two has a livelier mood. The motive of a strong syncopated pause drives the music in a forward direction. In contrast with Part One, therefore, the player should find it is necessary in Part Two to build toward a climax, which is gradually created by the transposition of keys in upward-tending registers. In my point of view, Part Two is founded more in a “Western” musical style, while Part One is more influenced by traditional Chinese musical aesthetics.

Sheng’s fusion of Eastern and Western compositional techniques has gained him international attention. As demonstrated by his numerous awards and frequent

¹⁴⁴Elie Siegmeister, *Harmony and Melody* (California: Wadsworth Publishing company, Inc., 1966), 3-53

appointments at universities and conservatories, his music is highly regarded in our time. This interest can also be seen through his frequent commissioned works, including *The Stream Flows*, premiered by Na-Yun Hu, a renowned Taiwanese violinist; and another piece, *Seven Tunes Heard in China*, which was premiered by the internationally acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Sheng has served as composer-in residence for the Silk-Road project since 2002. He and other musicians have been searching for a way to merge Western and Eastern music by bringing musicians from all over the world together, performing, sharing their compositional ideas, and bringing to wider attention instruments unfamiliar to Westerners, such as the Er-Hu from China.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵Bright Sheng, *The Silk Road Project*, Internet source, <http://www.silkroadproject.org/music/artists-comp-alpha.html>

Chapter Five

Conclusion

As demonstrated through many examples in this paper, unaccompanied works for violin indeed pose distinctive challenges. As discussed earlier, many solo compositions have been written with the intention of highlighting the virtuosity of performers or to train violinists in innovative or difficult areas of musicianship. These pieces therefore tend to be especially demanding technically. Excellent technique is hardly sufficient, however, in order to succeed with solo works. The violin was originally intended to be played with the support of other instruments. With no one else on the stage to cover weaknesses or to provide musical companionship, violinists performing solo pieces must achieve near perfection on a difficult instrument. Virtuosity and a strong individualistic character are therefore two important inherent characteristics of successful solo violinists and also the solo compositions themselves.

I have been intrigued by what may motivate composers to write solo violin works. I have come to believe that the musical aesthetic of a given era influences, at least in part, the drive of composers to create solo works. The key characteristics of virtuosity and individualism seem to be important artistic values particularly in the periods when solo violin works were popular. There is a dearth of unaccompanied violin works, for example, composed in the Classical era, when composers relied heavily upon tradition and form, composing, for violin, mostly sonatas and chamber music works that do not strain the performer overly much. In contrast, a great many solo pieces for violin were

composed in the Baroque, Romantic, and Modern eras when both virtuosity and individual expression were more highly valued.

According to the Harvard dictionary, the visual art of the Baroque period is sometimes characterized as “grotesque” and “in corrupt taste.”¹⁴⁶ Baroque music is highly expressive, individualistic, and irregular. In my opinion, the aesthetic viewpoints leading to the composition of such works would also be ideal to motivate composers to create solo compositions. While unaccompanied violin works do not seem to have been a particularly popular genre in this era, the writing of such works represents a departure from expectation and in this way serves as an expression of the aesthetic of uniqueness, valued in the Baroque era, matching the inherent character of individuality that is important in solo works as discussed above. The unaccompanied violin works of Biber and Bach discussed earlier in this paper may serve as examples to support this view.

Other fruitful periods for the composition of solo violin works are the Romantic era and the twentieth century. In the Romantic era, Paganini, an amazing virtuoso himself, wrote highly original and innovative concert études. This was completely in line with the aesthetic view of the Romantic era which was certainly in accordance with the expression of both individualism and virtuosity. In the twentieth century, widening access to and understanding of different cultural experiences has become an important feature in the development and appreciation of music. During this time, solo violin works have been popularized by composers from diverse countries and cultural backgrounds (as discussed in detail in Chapters Three and Four). Needless to say, such diversity fosters great originality and individuality in arts. At the same time modern instruments, halls, and

¹⁴⁶Willi Apel & Ralph Daniel, *The Harvard brief Dictionary of Music* (New York: Pocket Books, a Simon & Schuster division of Gulf & Western Corporation), 26

compositional and playing techniques all lend themselves also to the expression of virtuosity in performance. Hence, the solo violin works of the Baroque, Romantic, and Modern eras may share important features and intentions despite their being the products of very different times in history.

As a violinist myself, I am particularly intrigued by the aesthetic views expressed in the unaccompanied violin works. As a performer, I find it interesting and important to acquire the best possible understanding of the aesthetic intentions underlying a piece in order to decide which messages I should endeavor to convey to the audience. The concepts of individualism, virtuosity, and originality characteristic of the solo violin repertoire are very appealing to me. Wagner's following statement concerning virtuosic performance resonates with me personally. In Wagner's words: "The real dignity of the virtuoso rests solely on the dignity he is able to preserve for creative art; if he trifles and toys with this, he casts his honor away. He is the intermediary of the artistic idea."¹⁴⁷

In accordance with Wagner's view, it has also been my goal to be a servant to the preservation of creative arts as expressed through music. Performing the unaccompanied violin works, I feel privileged to convey the composers' musical words through my own honest personal interpretation. Biber, Bach, Ysaÿe, and Sheng all composed extraordinary works of art which combine demanding violin technique with profound musical artistry. In particular, Biber and Ysaÿe are regarded as both virtuosic performers and recognized composers. Their legacy has been to demonstrate how violinists who both compose and perform may contribute distinctive art arising from these two perspectives simultaneously. On the other hand, Bach and Sheng, not violin virtuosos themselves (although Bach did play the violin), have made a great contribution to the solo violin

¹⁴⁷Grove Music Online, *Virtuoso*.

works through their creative efforts directed toward the fusion of different styles, forms, and cultures.

The musical environment has changed enormously in modern times. The rapidly evolving and expanding worlds of media and technology are playing increasingly important roles in the recording and broad dissemination of music. While we as a society avail ourselves of the advantages and conveniences of these technologies, I still see music as a basic means for expressing one's very personal feelings and individuality. A performer always has to pursue one's best level of accomplishment in the areas of technique and musicianship.

It has been a fascinating journey, and an honor, to choose, study, and perform a series of unaccompanied violin works for this dissertation project. Through my experience with these solo works, I have learned that the inherent characteristics of unaccompanied music provide an ideal opportunity for addressing the facets of music I most value—the expression of inner emotion and the striving to attain at my personal highest level of virtuosity. Bright Sheng stated: “Music is both a product of humanity and a treasure for humanity to share.”¹⁴⁸ As a violinist, through the study and performance of Sheng's works and those of others, I will continue to pursue my goal of combining artistry and service to humanity through my music.

* * * * *

¹⁴⁸Bright Sheng, *The Silk Road Project*, Internet source, <http://www.silkroadproject.org/music/artists-comp-alpha.html>.

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