

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SELECTED VIOLIN CONCERTOS: IN SEARCH OF A MISSING
LINK

Yevgeniy Dovgalyuk, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2016

Dissertation directed by: Dr. James Stern
School of Music

My dissertation presented seven violin concertos in three recital programs. Three of these concertos are acknowledged masterpieces performed in established concert venues throughout the world. They are the concertos of Mozart, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky. The other four are less standard and are composed by Viotti, Kreutzer, Rode and Spohr. These less standard concertos were popular during their time yet they seem not to have stood the test of time.

A curriculum devoted exclusively to the standard concertos creates problems for the young violinist. The Mozart violin concertos are often the first standard concertos that the young violin student encounters. They are considered to be the least technically demanding of the standard concertos. The next most advanced standard concertos that the student will usually encounter are Bruch's G minor concerto, Wieniawski's D minor concerto and Barber's concerto. The trouble is that the work on Mozart concertos does not adequately prepare a student for the next most advanced standard concerto. There is a discontinuous leap in the progression of technical difficulty between the Mozart concertos and the next most advanced concertos. Likewise the

standard concerto repertoire provides no smooth historical or stylistic progression between the Mozart concertos and the next most advanced concertos. If the young violinist is limited to the standard repertoire then she has no smooth progression either technical, historical or stylistic. I seek to demonstrate that, by adding concertos of Spohr, Viotti, Kreutzer, and Rode to the standard violin curriculum, one could remedy this problem.

The first and third recitals were performed in the Gildenhorn Recital Hall and the second recital in the School of Music's Smith Lecture Hall, both at the University of Maryland. All three recitals can be found in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

SELECTED VIOLIN CONCERTOS: IN SEARCH OF A MISSING LINK

by

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation presented seven violin concertos in three recital programs. Three of these concertos are acknowledged masterpieces performed in established concert venues throughout the world. The other four are less standard and though once popular they seem not to have stood the test of time. Although there are recordings available of these works they are not as widely performed.

The three canonical concertos that were presented are those of Mozart (his fourth), Beethoven and Tchaikovsky. The four less standard concertos are by Viotti, Kreutzer, Rode and Spohr, respectively. My three recital programs were as follows:

Program 1 – April 7, 2014, 8 pm Gildenhorn Rectial Hall

Kreutzer Concerto No. 19 (26 min)

Viotti Concerto No. 28 (27 min)

Mozart Concerto No. 4 (25 min)

Program 2 – October 31, 2015, 2 pm in Smith Lecture Hall

Rode Concerto No. 7 (18 min)

Beethoven Concerto (44 min)

Program 3 – March 9, 2016, 8 pm in Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Spohr Concerto No. 10 (25 min)

Tchaikovsky Concerto (38 min)

Viotti, Kreutzer and Rode were all violinist composers. They were celebrated as violinists but are less historically significant as composers. The works of these three are historically significant but mostly as they relate to the art of violin playing. Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, on the other hand, are celebrated as composers. The works of these two define the art of composing.

Two of the composers represented in my dissertation are harder to classify in this way. Mozart was a fine violinist but his true significance is as a composer. Spohr also defies the violinist/composer distinction. Like Viotti, Kreutzer, and Rode, Spohr was a virtuoso violinist, but unlike them he composed works that went beyond a purely violinistic interest. Spohr composed music in many genres including symphonies, concertos, operas and chamber music.

There are several reasons why today's young violinist is discouraged from devoting time to Viotti, Kreutzer, Rode and Spohr. It used to be that works of these four composers were part of a young violinist's curriculum. This seems to no longer be the case. Many audition lists for professional orchestras include a Mozart violin concerto and a standard Romantic violin concerto such as the ones included in this dissertation. These same standard works are used in other auditions as well—placement auditions, entrance auditions, competitions. Today's typical violin teacher preparing a student for competitions tends to focus on teaching the standard works. Many competitions provide lists of which concertos are allowed. In doing so, they effectively define great violin playing by means of the standard concertos.

A curriculum devoted exclusively to the standard concertos creates problems for the young violinist. The Mozart violin concertos are often the first standard concertos that the young violin student encounters. They are considered to be the least technically demanding of the standard concertos. The next most advanced standard concertos that the student will usually encounter are Bruch's G minor concerto, Wieniawski's D minor concerto and Barber's concerto. However, the work on Mozart concertos does not adequately prepare a student for the next most advanced standard concerto. There is a discontinuous leap in the progression of technical difficulty between the Mozart concertos and the next most advanced concertos. Likewise the standard concerto repertoire provides no smooth historical or stylistic progression between the

Mozart concertos and the next most advanced concertos. If the young violinist is limited to the standard repertoire then a smooth progression either technical, historical or stylistic is harder to attain.

It is interesting to note that one piece in this project, the Beethoven violin concerto, provides a stepping stone historically and stylistically but not pedagogically. Like concertos by Viotti, Kreutzer, Rode and Spohr the Beethoven concerto can be viewed as a transitional work between the Classical and Romantic styles. Unlike them, it is considered to be an acknowledged masterpiece. However, it is not pedagogically useful in preparing the student for standard Romantic concertos because it requires such artistic maturity that it would be assigned only to the most advanced students.

By adding concertos of Spohr, Viotti, Kreutzer, and Rode to the standard violin curriculum, one could remedy this problem. As a teacher I may have students that need to be slowed down. Some students need more technical preparation before they are ready to study the standard Romantic concertos. The non-standard repertoire provides a smooth progression technically, historically and stylistically.

CANONIC CONCERTOS

Mozart Concerto No. 4

Mozart was a multi-instrumentalist. He was an exceptional player on the keyboard as well as the violin and the viola. After all, his father, Leopold, was an established violin teacher. However, it may be surprising to know that the young boy was a self-taught violinist. Leopold's friend, Andreas Schachtner, tells a story of a seven-year-old Wolfgang, who having acquired a violin but no instruction, one day joined in to sight-read string trios, amazing everyone, including his father.¹

In the development of the solo violin concerto it was Mozart who provided the concerto model for the composers of the nineteenth century. His general design comprised three movements.² The first movements were concerto-sonata, the slow movements were arioso or cantilena in the dominant, and the last movements were rondo finales (actually rondeau finales with clear couplets, following the French form).³

For a long time it was believed that Mozart wrote all five of his violin concertos in less than one year, between April and December of 1775. With recent studies by Wolfgang Plath and Alan Tyson, there is evidence to suggest that the first concerto was actually written in 1773, not 1775.⁴

The classical style was highly influenced by opera. The first movement (Allegro) of Violin Concerto No. 4 begins with a bold statement followed by a more tender theme. Another way to think of the bold and tender themes is to imagine them as characters in an opera. As is typical in Classical concertos there is a place before the coda for a solo cadenza. Cadenzas were

¹ Roeder, *A History of the Concerto*, 136.

² Swalin, *The Violin Concerto*, 4.

³ Roeder, *A History of the Concerto*, 137.

⁴ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 295–296.

usually improvised on the spot in Mozart's day. The second, slow, movement (Andante cantabile) resembles an operatic Aria. A second more playful theme is developed and both ideas are repeated leading up to the solo cadenza. The violinist returns at the end of the movement with a quiet coda. The third movement (Rondeau) is a rondo that uses dance themes (identified as "Danse de Strasbourg"⁵) Mozart may have heard in dance halls. The main theme is a light Contradance (Andante grazioso) contrasted with a livelier triple-meter dance (Allegro ma non troppo). About halfway into the movement there is a relaxed Gavotte. After the cadenza, the quick dance triumphs in the end. The use of dance and folk (exotic) features was to become a strong attribute in the Romantic violin concerto finales and is evident in the finale of this work.⁶

Tchaikovsky Concerto

Tchaikovsky was an established Russian composer by the time he wrote his violin concerto in 1878. Leading up to that time he had completed his first three symphonies, his symphonic poems *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest*, the tone poem *Francesca da Rimini*, the 1st Piano Concerto, the Variations on a Rococo Theme for cello and orchestra, the ballet *Swan Lake*, and the three string quartets.

In 1877, the year before he wrote the violin concerto, Tchaikovsky experienced a sequence of events that were instrumental in the composition of the concerto. Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck, a wealthy patron of the arts and backer of musicians, proposed to support Tchaikovsky financially with one caveat...they may never meet. Besides Tchaikovsky, Madame von Meck had other musicians in her employ including a violinist by the name of Yosif Yosifovich Kotek, one of Tchaikovsky's composition students. It was through Kotek that she

⁵ Roeder, *A History of the Concerto*, 138.

⁶ Ibid.

made her acquaintance with Tchaikovsky.⁷ For sixteen years she supported Tchaikovsky financially, which freed him to pursue his artistic ambitions without the worry of financial instability.

Tchaikovsky began composing his opera on Pushkin's classic romance *Evgeniy Onegin* in early 1877, starting with the scene of Tatiana's profession of love to Onegin. Shortly thereafter, perhaps coincidentally, he received a letter from a conservatory student, Antonina Ivanovna Miliukova, professing her love for him. *Oxford Music Online* asserts that "Tchaikovsky associated openly with the homosexuals in his circle, establishing professional connections and lifelong friendships with some of them, and sought out their company for extended periods."⁸ Despite these homosexual tendencies, he quickly married Antonina in July of 1877. After a few weeks of marriage Tchaikovsky fled, attempted suicide by wading into the frigid Moscow River, and became violently ill. He tried to obtain a divorce but Antonina refused and pursued him the rest of his life.⁹

As part of his recovery Tchaikovsky took a trip to Switzerland with Kotek in early 1878. The two played through many pieces together including Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*. It was this work that inspired Tchaikovsky to write his own violin concerto. He liked the way Lalo "does not strive after profundity, but carefully avoids routine, seeks out new forms, and thinks more about musical beauty than about observing established traditions, as do the Germans." The full concerto was written in about a month with Kotek advising on technical aspects of the solo part. After some consideration Tchaikovsky decided to replace the second movement, which became a standalone piece, the Meditation from *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*.¹⁰ Perhaps Tchaikovsky was

⁷ Steinberg, *The Concerto*, 484.

⁸ Wiley, "Tchaikovsky, Pyotr Il'yich."

⁹ Randel, *The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music*, 906.

¹⁰ Huscher, "Chicago Symphony Orchestra Program Notes."

thinking of the Beethoven Violin Concerto when he considered the transition between the second and third movements. Beethoven provides a place for a short cadenza connecting the second and third movements. Tchaikovsky decided to add transitional material at the beginning of the third movement. There is a short introduction that is followed by a dramatic, cadenza-like, section that leads into the finale.

Tchaikovsky dedicated his concerto to Leopold Auer and inquired whether he would be willing to premiere the work. Auer refused and declared the concerto unplayable. Tchaikovsky was deeply discouraged. He said that “coming from such an authority had the effect of casting this unfortunate child of my imagination into the limbo of the hopelessly forgotten.”¹¹ Adolf Brodsky took on the challenge and premiered the work on December 4, 1881 with the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Hans Richter. For his efforts Brodsky was rewarded with the official dedication of the work, instead of Auer. Auer clarified his position in a letter to the New York magazine, *Musical Courier*, dated January 12, 1912:

When Tchaikovsky came to me one evening, about thirty years ago, and presented me with a roll of music, great was my astonishment on finding that this proved to be the Violin Concerto, dedicated to me, completed, and already in print. My first feeling was one of gratitude for this proof of his sympathy toward me, which honored me as an artist. On closer acquaintance with the composition, I regretted that the great composer had not shown it to me before committing it to print. Much unpleasantness might then have been spared us both...

My delay in bringing the concerto before the public was partly due to this doubt in my mind as to its intrinsic worth, and partly that I found it would be necessary, for purely technical reasons, to make some slight alterations in the passages of the solo part. This delicate and difficult task I subsequently undertook, and re-edited the violin solo part, and it is this edition which has been played by me, and also by all my pupils, up to the present day. It is incorrect to state that I had declared the concerto in its original form unplayable. What I did say was that some of the passages were not suited to the character of the instrument, and that, however perfectly rendered, they would not sound as well as the composer had imagined. From this purely aesthetic point of view only I found some of it impracticable, and for this reason I re-edited the solo part.¹²

¹¹ Steinberg, *The Concerto*, 486.

¹² Ibid., 485.

Critical reaction to the concerto was mixed. One of the most influential critics of the day, Eduard Hanslick, wrote a harsh review in Vienna's *Neue Freie Presse* on December 5, 1881. He wrote that the concerto was "long and ambitious" continuing:

For a while it proceeds soberly, musically, and not mindlessly, but soon vulgarity gains the upper hand and dominates until the end of the first movement. The violin is no longer played: it is tugged about, torn, beaten black and blue... The Adagio is well on the way to reconciling us and winning us over when, all too soon, it breaks off to make way for a finale that transports us to a brutal and wretched jollity of a Russian church festival. We see a host of gross and savage faces, hear crude curses, and smell the booze. In the course of a discussion of obscene illustrations, Friedrich Vischer once maintained that there were pictures whose stink one could see. Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto confronts us for the first time with the hideous idea that there may be musical compositions whose stink one can hear.¹³

Hanslick's criticism is of great historical interest, as the work does not present itself as inflated, pretentious or vulgar to today's ears. Tchaikovsky's lyrical gifts are highlighted throughout all three movements. Even Hanslick admitted that the lovely slow movement made progress in winning him over. Years later Auer wrote, "the concerto has made its way in the world and after all, that is the most important thing. It is impossible to please everybody."¹⁴ Today it is viewed as one of Tchaikovsky's most beloved works.

Beethoven Concerto

The Beethoven Violin Concerto was commissioned by Franz Clement (violinist, conductor and artistic director of the Theater an der Wien) and was not completed until a few days prior to the premiere, which took place on December 23, 1806.¹⁵ Clement's violin playing was described in an article published in 1805 in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, stating that his playing characteristics were marked not by "the vigorous, bold, powerful playing, the affecting, compelling Adagio, the power of bow and tone that characterize the school of Rode

¹³ Ibid., 487.

¹⁴ Ibid., 486.

¹⁵ Ibid., 81.

and Viotti; rather, an indescribable delicacy, neatness, and elegance, and extremely delightful tenderness and purity, are the quality that indisputably place Clement among the most perfect violinists.”¹⁶

Prior to the premiere of the Beethoven Concerto, Clement had limited time to look at the part, and some suggest that he may have been sight-reading at the performance. Beethoven’s pupil Carl Czerny recalled that Clement played “with very great effect” and there was much applause. However, the concerto did not catch on right away. One highly regarded critic, Johann Moser, wrote that “*cognoscenti* are unanimous in agreeing that, while there are beautiful things in the concerto, the sequence of events often seems incoherent and the endless repetition of some commonplace passages could easily prove fatiguing.”¹⁷

“One might be inclined to say off-hand that the most mysterious stroke of genius in the whole work is the famous opening with five strokes of the drum which introduces the peculiarly radiant first subject on the woodwind...” remarked critic, Donald Tovey (1875–1940).¹⁸ These beats are present when the woodwinds are singing the main theme, as the beats are not mere beats; they form the rhythmic and melodic basis for the entire immensely expansive first movement. The Concerto is in D major yet after the second phrase (in the introduction of the first movement) the violins imitate the opening drum motive but on D sharp. This note is deliberately jarring yet it is presented in such a way that it sounds as if it had always belonged to the Concerto. Some have referred to this note as the “dark” in a work that moves “between sunshine and shadow.” Thus there seems to be a duality of character. First there are the rhythmic drumbeats that provide a sense of pulse and perhaps a dark, war-like spirit. Second there are gentle, lyrical and flowing melodies that seem to soothe the spirit. The first and second theme do

¹⁶ Ibid., 83.

¹⁷ Ibid., 84.

¹⁸ Tovey, *Concertos and Choral Works*, 71.

not contrast. They are both lyrical, which is unusual. The second theme is often passed from the orchestra to the soloist or is accompanied by the soloist. The first time the solo violin plays this melody in its entirety is after the cadenza. Here it is played in its simplest form in the lower register of the violin. There are more than twenty cadenzas composed for this concerto by famous violinists including Auer, Flesch, Joachim, Vieuxtemps, and Ysaye to name a few. Joseph Joachim's had been the one most performed until Fritz Kreisler's cadenza surpassed it in popularity.¹⁹

The second movement is often referred to as delicate, soulful and hymn-like. The movement is structured as a modified theme and variations. Beethoven chooses to move away from the established use of variation form and repeats the theme almost verbatim each time, with varying instrumentation. Mostly the orchestra plays the thematic material with the solo violin providing varied material throughout. The second theme is marked *cantabile*. In my opinion this theme is one of the main reasons why this movement is thought of as soulful, and it is one of the highlights of the movement. The reprise of this theme offers an especially lyrical moment with tasteful ornamentation provided by the composer. The fourth variation is played by the solo violin with a gentle and delicate accompaniment provided by *pizzicato* strings. Donald Tovey describes the movement as "one of the cases of sublime inaction achieved by Beethoven and by no one else."²⁰ An abrupt outburst from the orchestra is followed by the soloist's cadenza that leads directly into the third movement without pause. The practice of connecting the second and third movements in this way was typical of the concertos of the French violin school, and Beethoven may have been imitating it. However, there is a notable difference in that the slow movements of most French violin concertos of this period were short and without much

¹⁹ Steinberg, *The Concerto*, 82.

²⁰ Tovey, *Concertos and Choral Works*, 76.

embellishment. Beethoven, on the other hand, gave much attention to his slow movements, which are complex and profound, including in his violin concerto.²¹

The third movement is a sonata rondo whose main theme is daringly simple, consisting of almost nothing but a tonic arpeggio in a rollicking 6/8 time. The intervening episodes include horn calls, call and response, virtuoso passagework and a modal folk ballad. In a joking manner, halfway through the movement, Beethoven calls for two pizzicato notes, the only pizzicato asked of the soloist in the whole concerto. Innovatively, during the soloist's final trill of the cadenza, the orchestra enters, followed by a restatement of the main theme in a distant and unexpected key of A flat. The movement, and the concerto, is brought to an end with a brilliant coda. Beethoven places high demands on soloistic virtuosity and it is in full display throughout the entire movement.

The Beethoven violin concerto was not regularly performed for four decades until a 12-year-old Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) took it in on a European tour with Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) conducting in 1844.²² Joachim was a great proponent of the concerto and, mainly through his efforts, it is recognized as a masterpiece and is to this day performed in established concert venues throughout the world.

²¹ Roeder, *A History of the Concerto*, 192.

²² Libbey, *The NPR Listener's Encyclopedia of Classical Music*, 368.

NON-STANDARD CONCERTOS

Viotti Concerto No. 28

Viotti was considered to be the finest violinist of his time. One of his pupils, Pierre Baillot de Sales (1771–1842), wrote of one of Viotti’s performances: “Everything seemed to flow without effort, softly yet powerfully. With the greatest *elan* he climbed the heights of inspiration. His tone was magnificent, sweet, but metallic, as though the tender bow were handled by the arm of Hercules.” Critics were unanimous in their praise of Viotti’s handling of the bow. Viotti’s playing characteristics are described in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (1811): “A large, strong, full tone is the first; the combination of this with a powerful, penetrating, singing *legato* is the second; as to the third, variety, charm, shadow and light must be brought into play through the greatest diversity of bowing.”²³ Viotti was one of the first violinists to use the Tourte bow and collaborated with Tourte in his quest for perfection.²⁴

Viotti lived in Paris for ten years, until 1792, performing, composing, teaching and conducting. He was able to combine his native heritage so skillfully with the French tradition that the French regarded his legacy as their own. Viotti’s concept of the violin concerto was a fusion of Italian, French, and German elements. His ideas were absorbed and developed by his French disciples and became known as the French Violin Concerto.²⁵

Viotti composed a total of 29 Violin Concertos of which the earliest were composed in Paris and the last ten were composed in London. Interestingly it was not the London but the Paris concertos that were most influential on Viotti’s successors. Viotti seems to challenge the established genre with expanded scope, instances of abrupt modulation, sudden shifts from major to minor, and sometimes a strong symphonic theme such as a resemblance to Mozart’s G minor

²³ White, “Viotti, Giovanni Battista.”

²⁴ Boyden, “The Violin Bow in the 18th Century,” 211.

²⁵ Schwarz, “Beethoven and the French Violin School,” 432.

Symphony in his Concerto No. 7. As Viotti developed his mature style, instead of thematic development and complexities of texture, he chose to use minor keys, emphasize dramatic melodies and turns of harmony that are likely derived from opera.²⁶ A summation of the fate of these concertos is offered by *Oxford Music Online*: “In spite of elements of early Romanticism, Viotti’s concertos are generally marked by restraint, and they balance display with expression and formal clarity. They fell quickly from favor with 19th-century performers, who required more flamboyant virtuosity; however, as études for advanced students they continued to influence the German school as well as the Franco-Belgian. The admiration of some of the finest 19th-century violinists culminated in Joachim’s revival of no. 22 in A minor, for which Brahms, in a letter to Clara Schumann (June 1878), expressed unstinted admiration.”²⁷

Viotti’s Concerto No. 28 in A minor (1803) is written in a standard concerto form. A ritornello-sonata first movement, a song-like second movement dominated by the solo, and a rondo finale. Viotti contributed to the advancement of violin style and technique largely through his mastery of the bow. He was recognized as having a powerful tone, singing legato, having a variety of sound and a diversity of bowing.

Viotti’s Concerto No. 28 fills several of the technical and stylistic gaps between Mozart’s concertos and the standard Romantic concertos. One example of this is Viotti’s use of sixteenth note passages in higher positions as seen in the following example:



²⁶ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 348.

²⁷ White, “Viotti, Giovanni Battista.”

Another example is his use of 32nd note passages:



The following example further demonstrates the increased demands of the soloist through the use of arpeggios:



Kreutzer Concerto No. 19

Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766–1831) was a pupil of Viotti and had also studied with Anton Stamitz (another pupil of Viotti). He served as a violin professor at the Paris Conservatory from 1795 to 1826, and was a co-author of the Conservatory's violin method, *Methode de Violon* (published 1803), with Pierre Rode and Pierre Baillot. The three were highly influential in the French school of violin playing. Their method is based on the principles of Viotti's teachings, and focused on excellence of bowing, power and beauty of tone, left hand technique, as well as bow hold and instrument position. Kreutzer's best known work for violin is his book of 42 Etudes (1796).

Kreutzer's last violin concerto, Concerto No. 19 in D minor (1810) affords several technical and stylistic advancements leading up to the standard Romantic concertos. When compared with Mozart, Kreutzer has a higher demand on the violinist's virtuosity including great leaps, more complex rhythmic elements and more varied passage patterns. Michael Roeder in *A History of the Concerto* describes Kreutzer's contributions to the virtuoso concerto:

Rodolphe Kreutzer was reputed to be a more powerful and rugged performer than his

elegantly polished friend, Rode. Kreutzer's nineteen concertos, completed by about 1809, require a quite different technique to perform. They make frequent use of trills, exposed arpeggios, tricky double stops, and a variety of bowings. At times his concertos are rather dry, a feature replaced at other moments by genuine melodic warmth. His last two concertos, No. 18 in E Minor and No. 19 in D Minor, represent the best of those of his generation of French violin composers.²⁸

The following examples demonstrate the increased demands that are required of the solo violinist:

use of arpeggios with acceleration and large intervallic leaps;



accelerated rhythm (sextuplet 16ths) with very large intervallic leaps;



and use of double stops including sustaining of one note while others are moving and double stop arpeggios.



Rode Concerto No. 7

Rode was well known in his time. He was one of the few composers whose works Paganini performed other than his own. In his early career, Paganini's concerto repertory was largely comprised of works of the French school: Viotti, Kreutzer, and Rode.²⁹ Today Rode is famous for his 24 Caprices for Solo Violin (1822) that are considered to be pedagogical works more complex than the comparable Kreutzer 42 Etudes but less challenging than the 24 Paganini

²⁸ Roeder, *A History of the Concerto*, 202.

²⁹ Ibid., 233.

Caprices.

It is interesting to note that Rode premiered Beethoven's last Violin Sonata, No. 10 (1812), with Beethoven's patron, the Archduke Rudolph on the piano.³⁰ The last movement of the Sonata was written with Rode's style in mind. Beethoven wrote Archduke Rudolph "I did not make great haste in the last movement for the sake of mere punctuality, the more because, in writing it, I had to consider the playing of Rode."³¹

Rode wrote a total of 13 violin concertos that were well regarded in their time but are rarely performed today. These concertos have similarities to the Beethoven Violin Concerto with a large, expansive first movement in a Moderate tempo, a clear slow second movement with lyric melodies and a quick, energetic finale. Concerto No. 7 is considered to be best known of the Concertos and was a favorite of Wieniawski (1835–1880).

Rode's Concerto No. 7 helps to fill some of the technical and stylistic gaps between Mozart's concertos and the standard Romantic concertos. The following examples demonstrate the increased demands that are required of the solo violinist:

rapid arpeggio runs followed by dotted rhythms with trills and turns;



use of finger extensions in higher positions followed by quick octave leaps and arpeggios;



and use of the stopped bowing technique. Stopped bow stroke, also known as hooked bow,

³⁰ Nardolillo, *The Canon of Violin Literature*, 35.

³¹ Forbes, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven, Part I*, 546.

consists of two or more notes under a slur. The bow continues in the same direction but the notes are not part of the same impulse of the bow movement (stopped). In this example the stopped notes are played in rapid succession across multiple strings. Rode clearly marks the 32nd rests, making it clear that the hooked 32nd notes are to be played quickly.



Spohr Concerto No. 10

Spohr was born to a musical family. His father was an amateur flautist and his mother sang and played the piano. At the age of four he taught himself to play a small fiddle and had his first lessons from a French amateur musician. Spohr also showed a gift for composition, which led to study with a member of the Duke of Brunswick's band. When he was 15, Spohr was hired as a chamber musician to the Duke of Brunswick. The group gave weekly performances in the duchess's apartments. The duchess found the music distracting and ordered a thick carpet to be put under the musicians to mute the sound. One day Spohr was playing one of his own compositions and got carried away. A message was sent to him from the duchess, "Her Highness sends me to tell you not to scrape away so furiously." The comment enraged Spohr and he played even more loudly than before and thus was reprimanded by the court marshal.³²

Despite the duchess's disapproval, Spohr's musical talents won him the favor of the duke. The duke offered to give Spohr a proper musical education and asked him to choose a teacher. Spohr's first choice was Viotti but Viotti did not accept Spohr mainly because he was preoccupied at the time with his wine business. Spohr became a student of Franz Eck (1774–1804) who was established in the Mannheim school with its emphasis on clean bowing and

³² Campbell, *The Great Violinists*, 21–22.

expressive execution. Spohr wrote that Eck's style was "powerful without harshness, exhibiting a great variety of subtle and tasteful nuances, irreproachable in his execution of difficult passages, and altogether possessing a great and peculiar charm in performance."³³

In 1803, after hearing Pierre Rode play for the first time, Spohr was so moved that he tried to imitate Rode's playing. He considered himself to be one of the best imitators of the day. Spohr did develop his own individuality but was greatly influenced by Rode and Viotti. It is interesting to note that Spohr published his first violin concerto in that same year.

Spohr achieved great success and was regarded as a virtuoso. He traveled to all of the major European cities. One of his lifetime goals was fulfilled in 1812 when he visited Vienna, where Mozart and Haydn had lived and where Beethoven was living. Spohr made quite an impression in Vienna. One musical journal described him as "unquestionably the nightingale of all the living violinists" and noted that "in fast tempi he masters difficult passages including the most extended reaches with incredible ease, thanks partly, no doubt, to the size of his hand."³⁴ Spohr was well over six feet tall.

Spohr was not only a performer and composer, he was also an important teacher as is evidenced by his published method, *Violinschule* (1831).³⁵ He had close to 200 students including one of the most distinguished English violinists, Ferdinand David, for whom Mendelssohn was to write his Violin Concerto.³⁶

Aside from his performance endeavors, Spohr was also interested in the construction of the violin and experimented with stringing and tuning. His biggest contribution to violin construction was the invention of the chin-rest in 1820, which helped to aid the left hand in

³³ Ibid., 22.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Roeder, *A History of the Concerto*, 210.

³⁶ Campbell, *The Great Violinists*, 25.

accomplishing increasingly complex techniques with greater ease.³⁷ His invention has stood the test of time and is a vast improvement from the traditional hold. Traditionally the violin had been held on the right side of the tailpiece, producing poor posture and the tilting of the head.

There were a few other changes made to the violin and bow that allowed for greater virtuosity of virtuoso violinists such as Spohr and Paganini. Francois Tourte redesigned the bow (perhaps in collaboration with violinists such as Viotti) making it heavier and curving it inward toward the horsehair, allowing the violinist to play with more power as was needed for performing in the larger concert halls throughout Europe. The other change was that the fingerboard, which had been thickened as it approached the body of the violin, was now uniform throughout. This change allowed for greater ease in getting around the violin.³⁸

Spohr's Violin Concerto No. 10 (1810/11) is one of at least 15 violin concertos that he wrote. Both his influences and individuality are noticeable throughout the work. Spohr preferred virtuoso techniques that required a strong and active left hand. These techniques include double stops, wide-reaching tenths and trills and are on full display in the first movement. Due to the size of his hands, Spohr was able to execute double stops and stretches with ease. Spohr is said to have thought of the violin as a singing instrument, and the slow second movements of his concertos can be seen as evidence of this notion. The faster outer movements employ staccato passages that are achieved by a single stroke of the bow drawn in one direction as the notes are stopped. When Spohr played Mendelssohn's Concerto in E minor and included such a staccato passage, the composer remarked to his sister: "See, this is the famous Spohrish staccato which no violinist can play like him."³⁹

Spohr's Concerto No. 10 helps to prepare a violinist for the technical and stylistic

³⁷ Roeder, *A History of the Concerto*, 210.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Campbell, *The Great Violinists*, 25.

demands required of the standard Romantic concertos. The following examples demonstrate the increased demands that are asked of the solo violinist:

use of up-bow staccato;



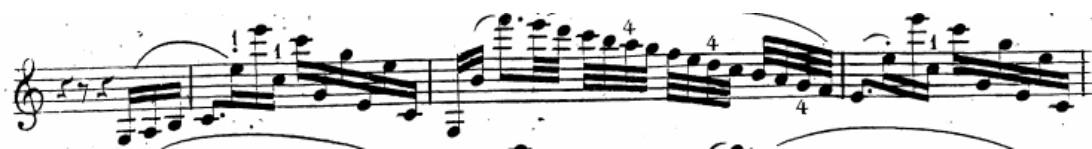
advanced use of double stops with a successive progression including extended reaches to 10ths;



indications to stay on one string, use of higher positions;



and use of broken octaves, large intervallic leaps, quick runs.



CONCLUSIONS

One of the main purposes of this project was to consider the pedagogical and performance value of the non-standard violin concertos as a means to transition from the Classical concerto to the Romantic concerto. My premise was that the technical and stylistic gaps identified in this dissertation could be filled through the study of the non-standard works. To be sure, there are forms of technical and stylistic mastery that need to be acquired before the violinist is able to present an effective performance of the standard Romantic concerto. Some of these may include:

- full mastery of scales and arpeggios including four octave and chromatic scales
- ease in executing great leaps
- proficiency with advanced bowing techniques such as staccato double stops across strings and quick doubling of notes
- varied use of double stops including broken octaves, holding one note while others change, and use of extensions to 10ths
- being grounded with varied use of rhythms including syncopations, triplets, irregular beats, and accelerated runs
- being able to communicate the lyrical, Romantic style with soaring melodies requiring great maturity

The challenges to be found in the works of Viotti, Kreutzer, Rode and Spohr might, to today's young student, appear less daunting than what is required in the later Romantic concertos. However, deeper study of these works, such as I did in this project, reveals something surprising. The works of the earlier composers are not easier than the works of the later ones. They require mastery of a variety of articulations, particularly with the tip of the bow, that, today, seem to have become a lost art. One example of this is the "stopped bowing" identified in the above discussion of the Rode concerto. Violinists are less likely to acquire such bowing idioms through study of the later Romantic works, because such idioms do not occur often enough in those works to provide consistent practice. However, the violinist who has practiced such bowings thoroughly will bring a level of nuance, expressiveness, and agility to

performances of Romantic concertos that might never be acquired through study of those works alone.

APPENDIX

Other Recommended Concertos by Viotti, Kreutzer, Rode and Spohr

Viotti

- Concerto No. 22 in A minor – this concerto is frequently performed today by advanced student players. It has high technical demands of the advancing violinist. Some of the most notable demands are that of scales, arpeggios, trills and double stops. This work was one of the favorites of Johannes Brahms and the famous violinist Joseph Joachim.
- Concerto No. 23 in G major – considered to be less technically demanding than No. 22. A student that needs more technical preparation would benefit greatly through the study of this concerto.

Kreutzer

- Concerto No. 18 in E minor – this concerto is useful in producing a large serious sound, displaying the tone and color of the instrument and offers virtuosic demands.

Rode

- Concerto No. 8 in E minor – this concerto is helpful in developing a good sense of melody and drama. It could be considered to be one of Rode's most beautiful works.

Spohr

- Concerto No. 8 in A minor – this is Spohr's most famous violin concerto and was written to incorporate operatic elements. Spohr was praised not only for approximating singing but also for going beyond what the human voice could do. This concerto is helpful especially in learning how to "sing" with the violin.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boyden, David D. "The Violin Bow in the 18th Century." *Early Music* 8, no. 2 (1980): 199–212.

This article discusses the physical changes in the 18th-century violin bow (about 1700 to 1800) from Corelli to Tourte and Viotti. There are pictures of the evolving bow including details of the heads and frogs. One illustration has a range of dates from 1620 to 1790.

This article helped me to better understand the transitional aspects of violin bows and the importance of the modifications that were made.

Campbell, Margaret. *The Great Violinists*. Robson, 2004.

As the title suggests this book focuses on great, virtuoso violinists. It asserts that the first virtuoso violinist appears to have been the Italian Carlo Farina (1600–40) and provides useful information up to the modern times. This book was especially useful in seeing the influences of various violinists. There is a chart at the very beginning that identifies the teacher-pupil relationships from Corelli to the present day. This chart was especially useful in understanding the profound influence of Viotti. Chapter 4, Viotti and the French Trio, and chapter 5, Nightingale of Violinists, were most useful for the purposes of this dissertation

Forbes, Elliot, ed. *Thayer's Life of Beethoven, Part I*. Revised ed. edition. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991.

This book is an extensive exploration of Beethoven's life. I found it useful in learning about Beethoven's relationship with Rode.

Huscher, Phillip. "Chicago Symphony Orchestra Program Notes." Accessed January 14, 2016. http://cso.org/uploadedFiles/1_Tickets_and_Events/Program_Notes/050610_ProgramNotes_Tchaikovsky_ViolinConcerto.pdf.

These professional program notes include background information about Tchaikovsky and the circumstances surrounding the time that his violin concerto was composed. It was helpful for me read professional program notes in deciding the information that is relevant to this dissertation.

Libbey, Theodore. *The NPR Listener's Encyclopedia of Classical Music*. Workman Publishing, 2006.

A wealth of information is presented in this book including biographies of composers and performers. Most sections conclude with a list of recommended recordings. This book provided useful information about the violinist Joseph Joachim, especially his role in promoting the Beethoven violin concerto.

Nardolillo, Jo. *The Canon of Violin Literature: A Performer's Resource*. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2011.

This book is a valuable resource for violin performers and teachers as it provides information to help assign appropriate works for students' recitals, juries and competitions. It provides essential information such historical, technical and performance information. Other information available is the date of composition, date and performer of premiere, key, duration, instrumentation, and movements of the work. I found it useful in better understanding the relationships between various performers and composers.

Randel, Don Michael, ed. *The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music*. First Edition edition. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1996.

There is a substantial amount of information offered in this dictionary about the more prominent historical figures such as Tchaikovsky. I found this resource less useful for composers of the non-standard works presented in this dissertation.

Roeder, Michael Thomas. *A History of the Concerto*. Portland, Or: Amadeus Press, 2003.

This book is a thorough exploration of the concerto. It was extremely useful for the purposes of this dissertation as it provided relevant information on the evolution between the Classical and the Romantic concertos.

Schwarz, Boris. "Beethoven and the French Violin School." *The Musical Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1958): 431–47.

This article talks about the background of the French Violin School as well as possible influences on Beethoven's compositions. It includes various musical examples. I found it to be very useful in my research, especially with regard to the importance and influence of Viotti.

Steinberg, Michael. *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide*. 1 edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

This book presented useful information about the canonic concertos presented in this dissertation. The non-standard concertos were not included.

Swalin, Benjamin F. *The Violin Concerto: A Study in German Romanticism*. CHAPEL HILL, 1941.

This book is a very good resource in the general study of the violin concerto. It was especially helpful for me in better understanding the history behind the established form of the concerto.

Tovey, Donald Francis. *Concertos and Choral Works: Selections from Essays in Musical Analysis*. Courier Dover Publications, 2014.

Tovey is recognized as an iconic music critic of the early 20th century. This book of 456 pages offers many interesting and thought provoking ideas. It was especially useful in my research of the Beethoven concerto.

White, Chappell. *From Vivaldi to Viotti: A History of the Early Classical Violin Concerto*. Philadelphia: Routledge, 1992.

This book has an abundant amount of information about the history of the violin concerto including historical information, matters of sonority and texture, and matters of form. I found this book especially useful while researching Viotti.

———. “Viotti, Giovanni Battista.” *Grove Music Online*, n.d.

Grove Music Online is one of the primary resources typically consulted in one's research. The article referenced here provides information about Viotti's life, performance style, and works. Information about how the concertos were perceived through time was especially useful.

Wiley, Roland John. “Tchaikovsky, Pyotr Il'yich.” *Grove Music Online*, n.d.

This article provides detailed information about Tchaikovsky and is divided into many sections including childhood and youth (1840–60), study of music (1861–5), first decade in Moscow (1866–76), marriage and its aftermath (1877–85), return to life (1885–8), years of valediction (1889–93), and reception. The chapter on Tchaikovsky's marriage and its aftermath was especially useful in the preparation of this dissertation.